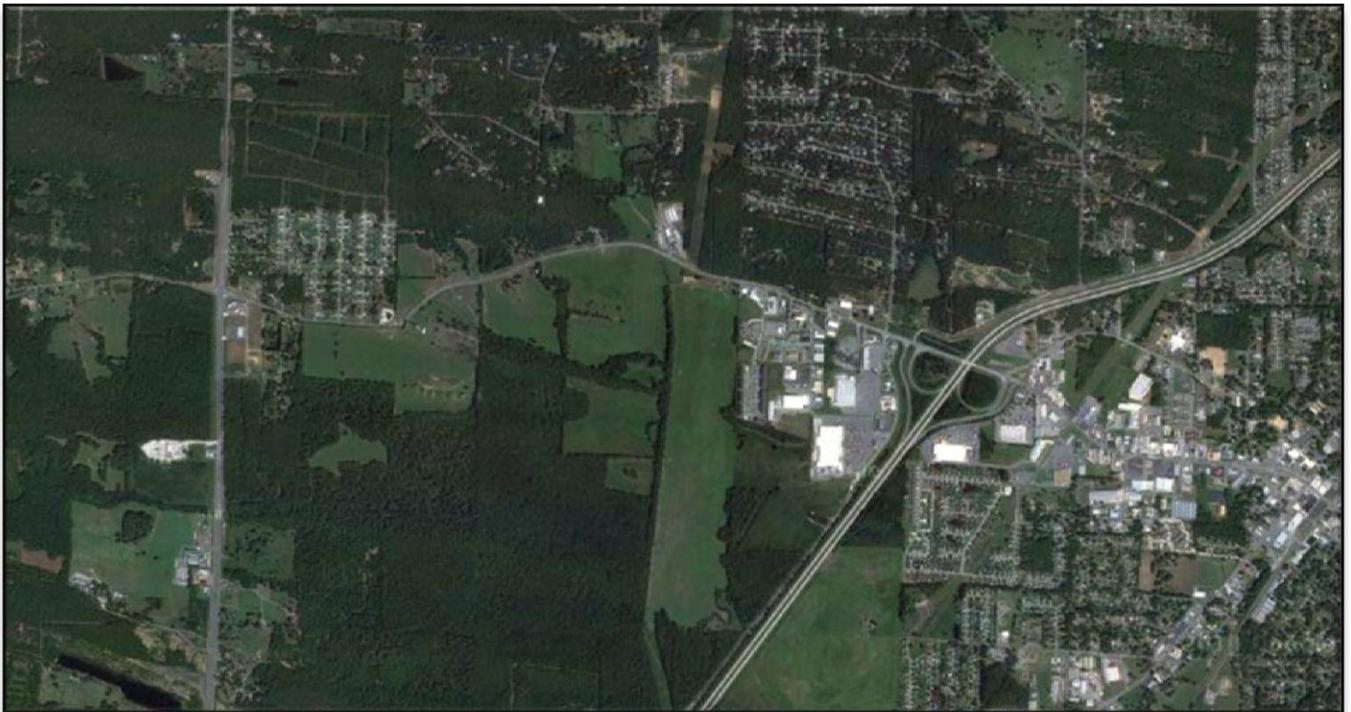


City of Cabot

Main Street Corridor Plan

July 2012



Prepared with
assistance from:



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Introduction

This document sets forth a strategy for the future development of the Main Street corridor in the central to western portions of Cabot, Arkansas. This includes all of Main Street and its primary traffic-shed from 2nd Street in downtown Cabot to Main Street's intersection with Arkansas Highway 5. Although much of the material herein will deal with the neighborhood and areas adjacent to the corridors, this plan deals primarily with the corridor itself.

As a first phase in the general updating of the city's Comprehensive Plan for the Cabot Planning Area, the Cabot Planning Commission began looking at various corridors within the area. The commission made the decision to address the land use, transportation, and re/development issues of the corridors individually in order to allow a more focused analysis of how each corridor fits into the long-range future of the planning area.

Stakeholders for whom the plan this plan affects include the following:

1. Property owners along and adjacent to the Main Street Corridor.
2. Property owners and future business owners along the corridor's undeveloped portions.
3. Cabot residents that shop and travel along Main Street on a daily basis.
4. Residents of the neighborhoods affected by developments along the Main Street corridor.
5. Cabot staff members, particularly those of the Public Works Department and Water Works.
4. Elected and appointed officials of the City of Cabot.
6. Potential residents and investors of the area not included in the above.

Context and Issues

The study area includes a boundary that can generally be defined as those properties falling within the primary traffic-shed of the Main Street corridor, meaning those properties that access the corridor for ingress and egress to other parts of the city. It covers an area of just less than 2,000 acres and forms the primary east-west corridor in Cabot. The corridor can be broken down into the three distinct sub-areas. These include downtown to US Highway 67/67, from US Highway 67/167 to Douglas Rd, and from Douglas Road to Highway 5.

Commercial development dominates land use along the corridor. The age of development generally follows a pattern from east to west, with oldest development in the east and newest in the west. However, certain areas of redevelopment east of US 67/167 buck this trend. Outside of commercial development, a mix of housing densities can be found. Generally speaking multi-family is found adjacent to commercial development, with single-family residential found further from Main Street.

Initial Analysis of the corridor identified and determined the following concerns and issues:

Entire Corridor

1. W. Main St. forms the city's primary east-west corridor.
2. The corridor serves as the city's main commercial strip.
3. Limited connectivity of streets funnels traffic to Main Street for through local traffic trips.
4. Future development of the city will cause traffic growth on Main Street even if no more development/redevelopment occurs on the corridor.
5. Lack of sidewalks along many portions of the road makes it dangerous and uninviting for pedestrians.

Area 1 – East of US HWY 67/167

1. This area is almost entirely built out, meaning most opportunities will be limited to redevelopment.
2. This section of the corridor does not provide a welcoming and attractive gateway into the community.
3. There is no good way to get from the neighborhood south of Main Street to anywhere else without using Main Street.
4. Some areas in the neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor are developed in a way that has yielded an incompatible mix of uses.
5. This portion of the corridor is one of the more dangerous roads in the city according to Metroplan's 2007 City-wide Traffic Study.
6. Traffic for the roadway is projected to almost double in the next 20 years.

7. Lack of access management on the corridor is and will continue to compound the road's congestion problems.

Area 2 – Douglas Road to US HWY 67/167

1. This area is difficult to access except through Main Street.
2. Hillsides north of Main Street present challenges for development.
3. Floodplain south of Main Street could limit further development south of Wal-Mart.
4. The limited industrial development on Arena Road may become obsolete over time and transition to commercial or office uses.
5. Environmental assets and challenges will necessitate careful review of any new development.
6. Additional east-west connectivity between Arena Road and Rockwood Road could help alleviate the generation of unnecessary additional traffic on Main Street.
7. Redevelopment of the “old Wal-Mart” site could yield additional development opportunities for out-parcels in the existing parking lot.

Area 3 – Douglas Road to Highway 5

1. This area is largely undeveloped and appears to be parcelized into very large tracts.
2. Floodplain along the Two Prairie Bayou dominates the areas south of Hwy 89.
3. A large percentage of the land on this portion of the corridor does not have access to sewer utilities.
4. Large portions of the area currently lay outside the city limits.
5. Given projected traffic counts for this road section, heavy development demand will exist in this area.
6. In its current state the corridor has an attractive and rural character.
7. Improper development of the area could lead to serious drainage problems for Hwy 321 and First Street in the future.

Goals and Policies

GOAL 1 – To build and maintain a solid foundation for community growth and development.

Policies – It is a policy of the City that:

- Zoning patterns will conform to the land use component of this plan.
- Developments submittals that build upon and complement existing developments will be encouraged.
- Discourage development in areas that will require inefficient and costly outlays of municipal funds to provide utilities.
- Control the extension or provision of utilities in order to carry out the provisions of this plan.
- Time the development of the proposed planned development areas concurrently with the provision of utilities

GOAL 2 – To enhance the corridor and provide a welcoming attractive gateway for Cabot.

Policies – It is a policy of the City to:

- Promote uses and development that will complement existing development.
- Encourage redevelopment that will enhance the aesthetic character of the corridor.
- Promote new development that is planned combining a variety of design elements and housing types.
- Discourage intrusion of commercial and industrial uses in existing residential areas.
- Preserve existing delineated floodplains and ensure new development does not adversely create flooding issues for existing development.
- Discourage “strip” type development along the corridor.

GOAL 3 – To preserve the functioning and safety of the Main Street corridor.

Policies – It is a policy of the City to:

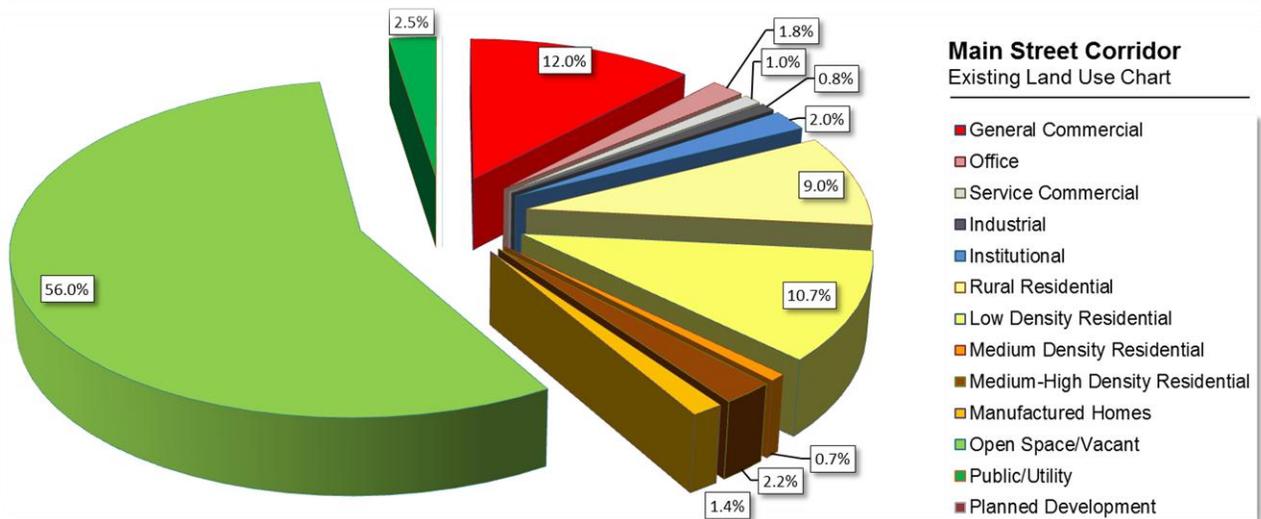
- Encourage and facilitate the development of sidewalks along the corridor.
- Improve the existing street conditions and circulation system to better serve the study area.
- Consider access management in all development proposals.
- Evaluate traffic impacts during the development approvals process.
- Examine both improving connectivity and traffic capacity when making roadway improvements.
- Require that all newly constructed or improved streets conform to city standards and the Master Street Plan.

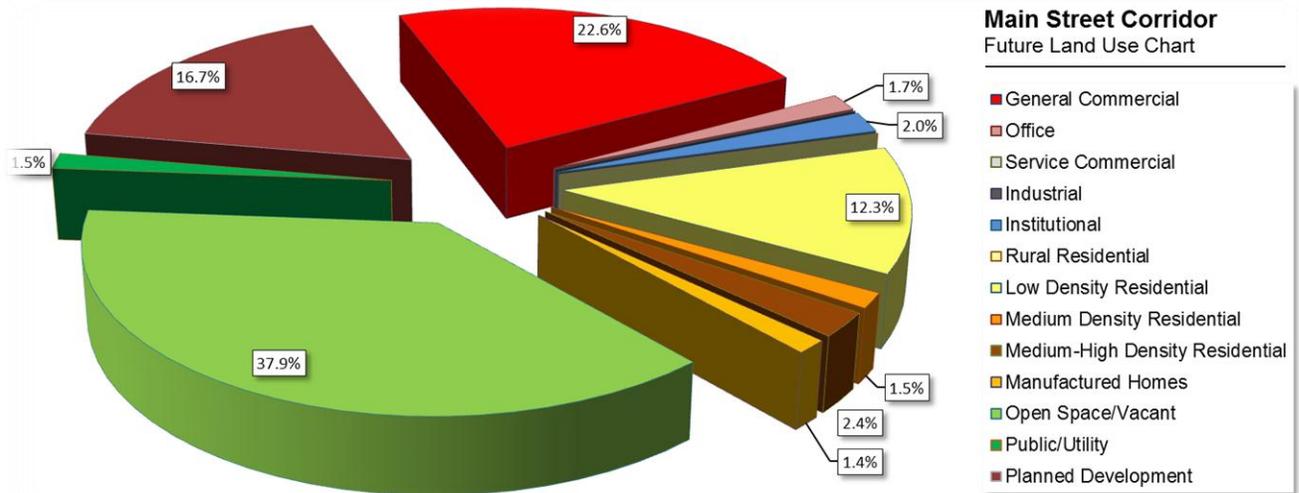
Land Use Analysis

Land Use Study Summary

Basic Facts	Area in Acres	Area in Sq. Mi.	Floodplain
Study Area	1,968.25 ac.	3.08 sq. mi.	700.76 acres

Existing Land Use Type	Existing	Percent	Proposed Future	Percent
General Commercial	236.95 acres	12.0 %	445.72 acres	22.6 %
Office	35.21 acres	1.8 %	32.63 acres	1.7 %
Service Commercial	18.95 acres	0.1 %	0.0 acres	0.0 %
Industrial	16.03 acres	0.1 %	0.0 acres	0.0 %
Rural Residential	177.02 acres	9.0 %	0.0 acres	0.0 %
Low Density Residential	209.81 acres	10.7 %	242.11 acres	12.3 %
Medium Density Residential	14.14 acres	0.1 %	29.50 acres	1.5 %
Med.-High Density Residential	42.86 acres	2.2 %	47.66 acres	2.4 %
Manufactured Homes	26.63 acres	1.4 %	26.63 acres	1.4 %
Institutional	39.21 acres	2.0 %	39.27 acres	2.0 %
Public/Utility	49.27 acres	2.5 %	29.74 acres	1.5 %
Open Space/Vacant	1,102.17 acres	56.0 %	745.55 acres	37.9 %
Planned Development	0.0 acres	0.0 %	329.44 acres	16.7 %





Land use patterns within the Main Street corridor reflect an area that is primarily commercial in character with considerable potential for future development toward the west. The primary land use within the area is currently classified as vacant. Much of this vacant land is wooded and lies within the floodplain. It is heavily concentrated south of Main Street west of its intersection with Douglas Road. All of this area drains into the Holland Bottoms Wildlife Management Area.

General Commercial uses follow, constituting 12% of other land uses in the study area. Over 20% of land uses in the study area are devoted to residential uses. While almost none of these residential uses front on Main Street, they represent a significant share of developed land in the study area.

Considering the proposed future land use allocations, a great deal of the vacant land is projected to remain vacant. Most of the projected vacant land is prone to flooding, causing it to have limited development value. Additionally, overdevelopment of floodplain areas could cause drainage problems downstream. Thus, protection of these areas is important.

However, approximately 530 acres of vacant land are projected to transition to commercial uses and planned development. Continued commercial development is projected surrounding the Main Street interchange on US Highway 67/167. Planned development is proposed to occur primarily west of Douglas Road. It is intended to provide for commercial, office, and residential uses within a large scale site in an integrated manner that accommodates these uses in a planned and harmonious way. Such development should serve to complement the existing surroundings.

Limited additional multi-family residential development is proposed. The development will be concentrated near existing multi-family developments along Locust St. Most of this new development is proposed to come in the form of two, three, and four-family dwellings as opposed to apartments.

Plan Elements

Transportation and Land Use

Main Street currently exists as a three-lane road east of Douglas Road and as a two-lane road west of Douglas Road. The entirety of the roadway is a state highway, badged as Arkansas Highway 89. Therefore, its right-of-way is set and acquired by the State of Arkansas. In addition, improvements to the roadway are made by the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department when funding is put in place by Metroplan, Central Arkansas' transportation planning body.

Currently, the roadway sees approximately 8,900 vehicles per day west of Douglas Road, and 22,000 vehicles per day east of Douglas Road. A Metroplan traffic study of the City of Cabot projects the figures to increase to 13,000 and 35,000, respectively, in the next 20 years. Accordingly, the traffic study calls for major widening of the roadway along its full extent to a four-lane divided boulevard.

Main Street should see a mix of new development and redevelopment occur over the next 20 years. While most are not, some commercial properties along Main Street east of US Highway 67/167 are showing signs of age or have become vacant. The high traffic counts along the corridor will make these areas prime for redevelopment over time. This will present an opportunity to “fix” many of the existing problems on Main Street and slowly transform it to the appealing gateway Cabot deserves. To achieve this, special zoning controls will be needed.

West of US Highway 67/167 lay numerous new development opportunities. Much of this property rests in large parcels of consolidated ownership. Thus, planned development is proposed for the area to allow for master planning of development on the property. In addition, the area currently does not have adequate wastewater utilities to permit urban development of the property. Thus, piece-meal development of the land is less likely in the property's present conditions. Furthermore, planned development of the property will allow for thoughtful development of the property that is sensitive and harmoniously designed to protect and benefit the existing character of the area.

Regardless of new development, traffic will increase along the corridor because it serves as a traffic funnel to US Highway 67/167. However, new development and existing development can certainly hinder the functioning of the roadway. Poor access management can severely impede the ability of a roadway to carry traffic. Limiting access drives, spacing access drives further apart, and restricting left turns out of access drives for new development and redevelopment are a few steps that could be taken to improve and sustain Main Street's capacity and traffic flow. However, these measures will only mitigate existing issues to a certain extent. Widening will be required in the long-range future. In addition access management policies should be developed for the entirety of the corridor.

Redevelopment Overlay District

As previously mentioned the redevelopment potential along Main Street east of US Highway 67/167 necessitates special zoning controls. The recommended zoning control is an overlay district. An overlay district is a zoning district that lays over an existing zoning district. It places additional requirements and standards on the use of those lands beyond what is required in the underlying zoning district.

The proposed Redevelopment Overlay District would be placed along Main Street as shown on the plan map. It would apply design, landscaping, and access management standards to commercial redevelopment, as follows:

1. Front building facades and portions of the sidewalls are to be clad with wood, masonry, rock, stucco, aluminum paneling, or EIFS (exterior insulation and finishing system);
2. A drainage plan for the property approved by the City Engineer will be required;
3. New signage will be ground mounted;
4. Landscaped open space will be required on the site;
5. Parking will be encouraged in the rear or side yards;
6. Mechanical equipment and utilities should be screened;
7. Curb cuts shall be limited to one per 300 feet of frontage, and shared drives may be required.

Road Improvements

Connectivity is a major issue for the study area. For the areas and neighborhoods along the corridor it can be very difficult to get anywhere without using Main Street. As a result, many unnecessary vehicles trips are conveyed onto Main Street. New and additional street connections should help divert unnecessary traffic off Main Street onto parallel routes.

Several new roadways are proposed on the plan map. An extension of Richie Road across US Highway 67/167 to Arkansas Highway 5 should provide a primary alternate route to Main Street for the neighborhood south of Main Street and other areas south of downtown along 2nd Street. A freeway interchange is proposed at the US Highway 67/167 crossing.

Connecting to the proposed Richie Road extension is a North-South minor arterial road. This roadway will run along a power line easement and connect to Mountain Springs Road. Another proposal includes a collector street that will run from the southern end of Arena Road toward the west and connect to Main Street/Highway 89 approximately ½ mile west of Douglas Road. It will run through one of the major areas proposed for planned development. Its construction should help discourage strip commercial development, and make more of the land in the area commercially viable.

Development Constraints

As in many areas, those natural features which give an area physical beauty can also present constraints on future development. Along Main Street these constraints exist in the form of hillsides and floodplains. Much of the land on the north side on Main Street from US Highway 67/167 to Douglas Road are appropriate and attractive for commercial development. However, the hillsides in this area present a challenge for new development. Careful review of commercial developments will be important to ensure that hillside cuts are both safe and leave the landscape unmarred.

For the most part, drainage along the Main Street corridor is not a large problem. This is because of its vast, mostly undisturbed floodplains. However, development pressures on floodplains could pose drainage threats in the future to downstream areas such as the Arkansas Highway 321 corridor. Replacement of natural drainage areas with homes, businesses, and roads without adequate facilities can create drainage problems where such did not exist before. Accordingly, new development along the corridor should not create new drainage problems for properties downstream. This means ensuring development preserves the natural drainage function of the developed property as much as possible. In addition, some high intensity land uses may not be feasibly accommodated without creating adverse drainage issues for neighboring properties. The city should consider limiting high-intensity development where it is uncertain the development would not negatively impact its surrounding area.

Utilities

In fast growing communities development demands can often outstrip utility supply. When utility capacity is not considered during development review, the existing infrastructure is prone to become overtaxed. This often results in costly retrofits and capacity upgrades. As such, new development should first be encouraged in areas where existing utility capacity is sufficient to meet demands. Development of land currently without utilities should occur in tandem with the extension of utilities into those areas. Following these practices will help the city better manage growth and ensure it provides city utility services efficiently at low costs to the taxpayer.

The extension of utilities should also be used as a tool of municipal policy. Some portions of the study area currently lay outside of the city limits. Public utilities will be required for these areas to be developed for their highest and best use. Public utilities should not be extended to these areas unless they become annexed and subject to the zoning controls of the city. This will help ensure these areas develop as long-term assets for Cabot residents rather than long-term liabilities.

Action Plan

Included in this section are actionable steps and goals that will be used to carry out the proposals in the corridor plan.

Plan Implementation Matrix	Time Frame			
	Short (0-3 yrs.)	Medium (3-5 yrs.)	Long (5+ yrs.)	Ongoing
Transportation				
1) Explore improvement of Main Street	✓			✓
2) Extend Richie Road			✓	
3) Extend Dakota Drive south to Richie Road		✓		
4) Construct adequate sidewalks along the corridor		✓	✓	
5) Implement access management policies for Main Street	✓			
6) Develop the proposed North-South Minor Arterial			✓	
Land Use and Zoning				
1) Create a Redevelopment Overlay Zoning District.	✓			
2) Use the land use element of the corridor plan to guide future land use decisions.				✓
3) Explore and study options to address drainage issues within known flood hazard areas outside of FEMA designated floodplains.	✓			
4) Control the extension of city utilities as tool to create incentive for annexation.				✓
5) Work to protect hillsides and other sensitive landscapes in the study area.				✓
6) Encourage development of the vacant tracts in the western portion of the study area to occur through the PUD process.			✓	

Plan Map

