IRONDALe ON THE MOVE: CITY OF IRONDALe COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
EXISTING CONDITIONS

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CITY OF IRONDALE
1. COMMUNITY CONTEXT

1.1. INTRODUCTION
The Irondale Comprehensive Plan, which has been branded as Irondale on the Move, is the cooperative effort between the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB), the City of Irondale, the Irondale Commercial Development Authority and the Greater Irondale Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of this plan is to ensure that City of Irondale can be prepared for future growth and change from 2015 through 2040. A Comprehensive Plan is used as a guide to decision-making about the natural and built environment. The plan is used as a guide to making decisions regarding land use, development, growth management and capital improvements. More information on the purpose of a Comprehensive Plan can be found in the next section.

The purpose of this Existing Conditions report is to document, or take a “snap shot” of the existing conditions and trends within the City of Irondale. The information in this document will allow the City of Irondale to better understand its residential and non-residential development pattern, thus enabling the City to plan for the delivery of services and infrastructure to accommodate future residential and economic growth.

1.2. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION
Nestled in the foothills of Ruffner Mountain to the west along the banks of the Cahaba River to the south, Irondale is located approximately six miles to the east of downtown Birmingham. The Irondale city limits stretch west from Crestwood Boulevard at I-20, east to Leeds, south to past the Cahaba River and Rex Lake Road, north to Birmingham, and northeast toward Trussville and unincorporated parts of Jefferson County (see Figure 1.1).

Irondale is bordered by unincorporated Jefferson County and a number of municipalities including Birmingham (west and northwest), Trussville (northeast), Leeds (east), Vestavia Hills (south) and Mountain Brook (southeast). With over 18 miles of interstate, Irondale is located along the major transportation corridors of I-20, I-59, I-459, U.S. 78 and U.S 11 and along the major railroad lines of Norfolk Southern Railroad. The City encompasses approximately 11,014 acres.

1.3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS
Irondale has experienced cycles of boom and bust over its history, beginning when the City was incorporated in 1887. At that time the incorporated area consisted of a circle of land that was one mile in diameter and four blocks deep. There were approximately 200 to 300 residents who had settled in the area.

By 1910 the City of Irondale had 525 residents, few of which could be prepared for the enormous changes which would take place when two railroads, the Georgia Pacific and the Alabama Great Southern Railroad, began extending operations into Irondale. By 1930, the population had grown to 1,517 people, and a number of older wooden structures had been replaced with new brick commercial and warehouse buildings.

By 1950, the City reached a population of 1,876 people and an economic boom had transformed Jefferson County into one of the world’s largest producers of steel. Irondale’s current downtown area is largely reflective of this early 20th century building boom, which responded to warehouse, industrial and mercantile demands of the City. These changes reached their most dramatic state in 1957, when construction of the new City Hall began on its current site.
Figure 1.1: Study Area

City Limits
Railroads
Water

Irondale on the Move: City of Irondale Comprehensive Plan
Like thousands of other cities in America, downtown Irondale began to decline after World War II. The proliferation of the automobile moved residential uses away from our cities and required extensive parking facilities. Downtown Irondale responded to this important shift in a number of ways, but most notably in the development of residential neighborhoods and the shifting of the primary commercial district south of downtown to the U.S. 78 corridor. This response to change was necessary, but has greatly diminished the character and sense of place in Downtown Irondale.

More recently, the City’s Historical District has been in the process of restoration and people continue to work in and around Irondale. However, new business and employment has been slow to come to the area. Over the last few decades, Irondale has continued to gain in population, but at a slower rate than the county. This situation has not stopped Irondale from becoming a progressive City, providing a high quality of life for its 12,500 residents. Irondale is an exceptional southern City, located in “the Heart of North Central Alabama,” the issues of ‘boom and bust’ (though of a different magnitude) are a cause of concern and focus of the citizens and elected officials of the City. The last fifteen years have brought a new outlook to the City and its residents with the commercial and residential development potential which has become a recognizable plus to developers.

2. PLANNING AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPANTS IN LOCAL PLANNING

2.1. PURPOSE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
A Comprehensive Plan is used as a guide to decision-making about the natural and built environment. The plan is used in guiding decisions regarding land use, development, growth management and capital improvements. It provides a framework for guiding public and private decisions that will affect new development as well as reinvestment in existing neighborhoods and business areas. A Comprehensive Plan is based on the residents’ vision of how they want their city to grow in the future—it is a long-term vision (typically covering 15 to 25 years) that may extend beyond the lifetime of those participating in drafting the plan. It is composed of a combination of maps, development policies and design guidelines.

2.2. PLANNING AUTHORITY IN ALABAMA
The Code of Alabama, 1975, Section 11-52-2 authorizes and empowers municipalities to “plan”. This enabling legislation defines the system in which planning is performed by a local government. The local planning system for any city in Alabama consists of three main entities: the City Council, Planning Commission (or Board) and the Zoning Board of Adjustment. These bodies play unique parts in the establishment and administration of policies and regulations intended to maintain a positive quality of life for all citizens in the face of growth and change within the community.

The City Council, the elected legislative body of a municipality, is the major decision-making group within the planning system. The Council is responsible for the use of public revenues to provide and expand local services and facilities (roads, water, sewer, parks, meeting facilities, etc.), a pivotal element in the growth of any community. By establishing a “plan” and a “local planning system”, a city creates a framework in which all decisions are based on community policy and goals for the city’s future, including the ways in which private property is developed.

As provided by State Code, zoning and land subdivision regulations are the two major areas a city may regulate to ensure positive growth. The Planning and Zoning Board creates and adopts the zoning and subdivision regulations, which are then adopted as law by the Council. In administering zoning regulations, all bodies of the local planning system may play a part. The Planning and Zoning Board interacts with the citizen/developer, the Planning and Zoning Board hears zoning requests and submits recommendations to the City Council, which makes the final decision. In this process, a decision or order from a City official may
be appealed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment is intended to ensure that the interpretation and enforcement of zoning regulations does not unfairly affect the use of property. In contrast to the way zoning includes all these groups, land subdivision regulations are controlled exclusively by the Planning and Zoning Board. In order that the local planning system works efficiently and follows the “vision” of the community, it is important that all of the players be familiar with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan; that land regulations support these policies; and that interpretation and enforcement of regulations are in concert with the overall intent of the Comprehensive Plan.

2.3. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE

The Comprehensive Plan guides land use decisions and becomes the foundation of zoning and subdivision choices that are made by the Planning and Zoning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Irondale’s first Zoning Ordinance was adopted and approved by the City Council on June 16, 1998. The Zoning Ordinance is part of the City’s Code and regulates the type, scale and intensity of development that may occur in the specific zoning districts. To fully understand how a parcel of land can be used, one needs to know how the land is planned in the Comprehensive Plan, and then determine how the land is zoned.

The Comprehensive Plan should not be confused with zoning (see Table 1.1). Zoning is a legal mechanism enacted by the whereby land is classified according to specified uses, whereas the Comprehensive Plan is a guide for future growth and development. Zoning is the tool utilized by the City to influence and direct the development of the community to reflect the direction and desired form specified by the Comprehensive Plan. The City’s Zoning Ordinance is one tool used to implement the vision, goals, policies and actions of the Comprehensive Plan. Although they should not be confused with each other, the official Zoning Map and the Comprehensive Plan are tied together as zoning regulations should be adopted in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan itself does not change the Zoning Ordinance or zoning of any property, some of the Plan recommendations will be implemented through text and map amendments. Just as changing the Comprehensive Plan for a parcel of land requires a Comprehensive Plan amendment, changing the zoning for that parcel requires a rezoning application.

Table 1.1: Comprehensive Plan vs. Zoning Ordinance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive Plan</th>
<th>Zoning Ordinance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides general policies, a guide.</td>
<td>Provides specific regulations, the law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describes what should happen in the long-term – recommended land use for the next 20 years, not necessarily the recommended use for today.</td>
<td>Describes what is and what is not allowed today, based on existing conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups.</td>
<td>Deals only with development-related issues under control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible to respond to changing conditions.</td>
<td>Predictable, fairly rigid, requires formal amendment to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Land Use Categories (e.g., residential, commercial)</td>
<td>Zoning Districts (e.g., R1 Residential, C-1 Business Zone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Land Use Locations</td>
<td>Parcel specific zoning designations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base document, declaration of goals</td>
<td>Implementation of goals/plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **GENERAL CITY GOVERNMENT BACKGROUND**

The City of Irondale has over 100 dedicated employees focused on providing stellar service to the citizens, businesses and visitors of Irondale. The Mayor is responsible for all city employees and he oversees the strategic direction of all departments. All department heads report to the Mayor. The City of Irondale departments and services includes: Police Department, Fire Department, Finance Department, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Municipal Court, Senior Citizens Center and Water Department. Details of the services provided by these city departments is included in the next chapter. A description of the duties and roles of the City Council and City Clerk is listed below.

**City Council**

A five member Council governs the City of Irondale. The Council is comprised of the Mayor and Council members who have been elected to serve a four year term. The Mayor and Council members are the leaders and policy makers in the community elected to represent various segments of the community and to concentrate on policy issues that are responsive to residents’ needs and requests. Duties of the Council include establishing goals and policies, enacting legislation, adopting the City’s operating budget, and appropriating the funds necessary to provide service to the City’s residents, businesses, and visitors.

Irondale City Council meetings are held every first and third Tuesday of each month at 7 PM. City Council meetings take place at City Hall located at 101 20th Street South. City Council meetings are open to the public and adhere to the Alabama Open Meetings Act. In addition to regular city council meetings, city council work sessions and committee meetings are held at various times throughout the month. Work sessions are designed to allow the Council to talk on a more in depth level about issues. The Council takes no formal actions at a work session.

The public is provided a 24 hour notice of any city council meeting via notifications posted at Irondale City Hall. Special meetings and public hearings are posted at the Irondale Public Library and the Irondale Post Office in addition to Irondale City Hall.

**City Clerk**

The City Clerk’s Office is the officially designated record keeping agency for the City and is responsible for all public documents both current and archival; prepares agenda, attends, and records the proceedings of all Council meetings; maintains records of all rules, ordinances, and resolutions of the Council; acts as custodian of the City Seal; conducts all municipal elections; performs legal advertising for the City; schedules, coordinates, and plans special events and functions for the Council; and provides general administrative and clerical assistance to the Council.

3.1. **ESTABLISHED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

Boards and commissions are an established feature of municipal government offering citizens an opportunity to participate in the City of Irondale’s governmental affairs. Their activities help to shape or influence public policy in many areas. Although many boards and commissions are advisory, their influence and value can be significant. They make recommendations on a wide range of topics that come before the City Council. The following boards and commissions have been established in Irondale:

**Planning and Zoning Board**

The nine members of the Planning and Zoning Board serve for six year terms and are responsible for the planning, zoning, and subdivision controls for the City. Furthermore, the Board is in charge of approving amendments to the municipal zoning regulations and they conduct of zoning hearings.
**Zoning Board of Adjustment**
Serving four year terms, the nine members of the Zoning Board of Adjustment are charged with hearing appeals from decisions of municipal administrative officers relation to the application of municipal regulations, granting variances, and authorization of uses permitted on appeal.

**Housing Code Abatement Board**
The City’s Housing Code Abatement Board identifies nuisances (abandoned houses blighting neighborhoods) eligible for either improvement or condemnation action.

**Commercial Development Authority**
The Commercial Development Authority partners with the City of Irondale to create economic development opportunities that expand the tax base of the community. The five members of the Authority serve a four year term and must be duly qualified electors of the City.

**Downtown Redevelopment Authority**
Members of the Downtown Redevelopment Authority serve six year terms and are responsible for the promotion of trade and industry and the furtherance of the use of agricultural products and natural resources of the area by inducing new manufacturing projects. The seven member board must be electors and taxpayers of the City.

**Industrial Development Board**
The seven members of Irondale’s Industrial Development Board serve six year terms and promote the recruitment of retail, light industrial, and heavy industrial businesses to the area.

**Library Board**
Irondale’s Library Board is responsible for the operation of the City’s public library. The five individuals making up the board serve four year terms.

**Park Committee**
The Irondale Park Committee is responsible for the overall strategic planning and programming of all Irondale parks. The Park Committee consists of citizens appointed by the Irondale City Council and the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. The committee is chaired by a city council member assigned by the City Council President.

**Tree Commission**
Irondale’s six member Tree Commission is charged with studying ways to best protect the growth and use of trees in the community. The Commission is also responsible for studying, investigation, counseling, developing, and updating annually a written plan for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal or disposition of trees and shrubs in parks, along streets, and in other public areas.

**Water Board**
The Irondale Water System deals with all issues related to the City of Irondale’s water supply. The City Council makes up the Water Board membership.
3.2. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS PLANNING INITIATIVES

The plan for Irondale will build on a 2010 corridor study and data from a 2008 comprehensive plan that was never implemented.

The 2010 study is referred to as the City of Irondale Corridor Study: A Commercial and Transportation Assessment of Selected Corridors. For the study, the City of Irondale contracted with the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Business to provide an analysis and assessment of the City’s primary commercial centers and transportation corridors. Three specific corridors along with their respective commercial centers were examined: Crestwood Boulevard / US 78 Commercial Corridor, Grants Mill Road at the I-459 interchange (Irondale Auto Mall), and Grants Mill Road / Kilgore Memorial Drive (Grants Mill Station).

The Commercial and Transportation Assessments analyzed the retail uses and market potential of selected areas and their relation to the physical aspects and characteristics of the roadways, intersections and traffic volumes. The study examined elements such as jobs, job growth or decline, tax structure, economic base, existing labor force characteristics, as well as the general geographic characteristics of the areas including existing businesses along with site connectivity, accessibility, and condition.

4. HISTORY OF IRONDALE

Irondale was incorporated in October 1887 by approximately 29 residents of a small mining and railroad community just outside Birmingham, Alabama. The original corporate city limits consisted of just four blocks that stretched a half-mile in every direction from the town’s center, which is just north of what is now 20th Street and 1st Avenue South.

According to one story, the name of the City is derived from the iron ore on which the city is located. More specifically, though, the City of Irondale is believed to be named after a furnace that was located just west of the current city limits. Though the furnace and surrounding buildings were officially named Cahaba Iron Works in 1864, the people in the area called it Irondale Furnace.

In early 1888, Irondale had grown to approximately fifty residents, twelve businesses, and a post office. Four churches were established in Irondale in the late 1800s: Cumberland Presbyterian, Irondale United Methodist, Mt. Hebron Baptist, and Irondale First Baptist. By 1910, the population of Irondale numbered 572, and the town had added eight small family stores, a general merchandise store, and a lumber company.

Expansion of Irondale was difficult for a while because the land surrounding it was owned by several mining,
coal, and steel companies, which finally permitted land sales in the mid-1900s.

On the morning of March 25, 1901, Irondale and the Birmingham area were hit by what was reported then as a “cyclone,” but what we now know to be a tornado. According to reports, five people died in Irondale, many were wounded, and approximately 40 houses and businesses were totally destroyed or badly damaged. Although destruction within Birmingham was extensive, by comparison Irondale saw more devastation to its little community.

Other elements of the town’s early growth were the establishing of telephone service in the early 1900s, the beginning of street car service in 1913, and connecting electricity to homes around 1919.

It is because the railways and the iron industry became so closely linked in the 1800s and 1900s that Irondale’s history is intertwined with the railroad industry. The City’s relationship with railroads was solidified in 1951 when Southern Railway’s Ernest Norris Yard – and one of the first automatic switching yards – was built in Irondale.

The year 1951 was also significant for another reason: Irondale got its first library, which started as a room attached to a barber shop. Irondale achieved city status in 1955 when the population reached 2,800. And the first City Hall was dedicated in its current location in 1957 (with an expansion and remodeling to come a few decades later, in 1994).

A history of Irondale would be incomplete without mentioning the Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN), a beautiful locale that attracts thousands of visitors to Irondale annually. The network wouldn’t launch until 1981, but Mother Angelica founded Our Lady of the Angels Monastery on its current location in 1962. EWTN began broadcasting just four hours a day, to 60,000 homes. Today, the network broadcasts twenty-four hours a day and reaches an international audience of millions.
In modern history, Irondale was made famous by the 1991 movie “Fried Green Tomatoes,” based on a novel written by actress and comedienne, and Irondale native, Fannie Flagg about The Whistle Stop Cafe. The real Irondale Cafe began in 1928 as a hotdog stand owned by Emmett Montgomery, one of Irondale’s original land owners. In 1932, Bess Fortenberry – daughter of one of Irondale’s original families, and Fannie Flagg’s great aunt – purchased it from another woman who had added hamburgers, barbeque, and other sandwiches to the menu. Bess sold the Irondale Cafe to Billy & Mary Jo McMichael in 1972. (Billy worked for the nearby Southern Railway and ate frequently at the Cafe.) The McMichaels ran the restaurant – overseeing the Cafe’s rebuilding in its same location, as well as the creation of its official fried green tomatoes batter – until their retirement in 2000. The Irondale Cafe’s current owner, Jimmy Dolan, says they still serve between 600 and 800 fried green tomatoes daily, and many visitors stop to take photos of the restaurant.

The 1905 Fortenberry house still stands in downtown Irondale, just around the corner from City Hall. It was Fannie Flagg’s grandmother’s house and was featured in her novel, though until a visit in conjunction with the “Fried Green Tomatoes” movie, Flagg hadn’t been in the house since she was about six years old. The beautiful old home has two grand front porches, upstairs and downstairs, that still have the porch swing hooks in them.

In 1987, Irondale’s Centennial Committee organized three celebratory events over five months to mark the 100th birthday of the City – unlike other cities around the same time that celebrated their centennials for about two weeks. The Committee’s events included a parade, fireworks, a festival, t-shirts, vintage costume contest, bluegrass music, and even a beard contest.
A “whistle stop” is a place where a train would stop briefly to let off or pick up passengers. Irondale’s railroad tracks along First Avenue North was such a stop as recently as 1940. In an effort to “rekindle some of that whistle-stop atmosphere,” Irondale city leaders started “The Whistle Stop Festival” in 1992 and invested in improvements – including the renovation of the caboose donated by Norfolk Southern and the addition of new sidewalks, benches, and vintage street lamps- to historic downtown Irondale in 1995. Irondale’s annual Whistle Stop Festival has continued each year since.
COMMUNITY PROFILE
1. DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

1.1. POPULATION CHANGE AND PROJECTION

The City of Irondale is approximately seventeen square miles. With an estimated residential population of 12,362 and 5,108 households, there are 743 persons per square mile (1.13 per acre). The population has increased by 26.0% since 2000, including the estimated 2,048 persons in the 2006 East Jefferson Fire District Legislative Annexation (see Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1). Excluding the annexation factor, Irondale has averaged less than one percent increase annually since 2000. Despite this modest growth, the effects of the recession are evident in Irondale. Between 2000 and 2010, Irondale experienced an average annual population growth rate of 2.6%. Between 2010 and 2014 this rate remained stagnant. This slowdown is largely attributed to the lingering effects of the 2008 national economic recession and housing market crisis. The modest growth rate is considered short-term and is not expected to indicate a reversal in the Irondale housing market. It does, however, provide an opportunity for the City to implement a long-term strategy for managed growth before growth resumes. It is estimated that Irondale’s population will continue to grow at a steady rate and will reach 14,186 people in 2040.

Table 2.1: 2000 to 2014 Population Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irondale</th>
<th>Jefferson County</th>
<th>Alabama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000 Population</td>
<td>9,813</td>
<td>662,047</td>
<td>4,447,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Population</td>
<td>12,349</td>
<td>658,466</td>
<td>4,779,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Population</td>
<td>12,362</td>
<td>660,793</td>
<td>4,885,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Population change 2000 to 2014</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>-0.19%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) forecasts for 2014
1.2. **AGE DISTRIBUTION**

The residential population of Irondale is slightly older. The median age has increased from 38.0 in 2010 to an estimated 39.8 in 2014. Like national trends, the senior age demographic in Irondale is growing and at a higher rate than that of the nation. According to U.S. Census estimates, Irondale’s senior population increased by 1.9% since 2010 while the U.S. increased by 0.7%.

As the “baby boomer” population continues to advance in age, their share of the population continues to increase in the City (see Figure 2.2). Persons aged 60 years and older made up 15% of the total population in 1990. By 2010 that percentage increased to 18.2%, and is estimated to make up 21.7% in 2014. The percentage of residents aged 19 years or younger has decreased from 29.5% in 1990 to 25.6% by 2010 and further decreased to an estimated 23.7% in 2014. Though the age group of 19 years and younger has experienced a slight decrease in total percent share, the total number has increased from 2,787 in 1990 to an estimated 2,928 in 2014, a 5% increase. The working age population, residents between the ages of 20 to 59 years, has also experienced a modest decrease in total percent share. The working age population made up 55.5% of the population in 1990, increasing to 56.2% in 2010 and then decreasing to 54.7% in 2014. The total population of this age group, however, has increased from 5,247 in 1990 to an estimated 6,757 in 2014.

The changing age characteristics within the City will translate to changing demands on city services and added market demands for goods and services.

*Figure 2.2: Age Distribution (1990 - 2014)*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) forecasts for 2014
1.3. RACIAL COMPOSITION

The racial composition of Irondale, according to the 2014 estimates, consisted of 58.9% of residents reported as White, 32.5% Black or African American and 8.6% making up the remaining racial categories (see Table 2.2). Persons of Hispanic origin made up 8.0% of the population.

Table 2.2: Comparative Racial Composition (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Irondale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>7,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>4,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/ Alaskan Native</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/ Pacific Islander</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Origin*</td>
<td>989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>12,362</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Defined as an ethnicity, not a racial category

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) forecasts for 2014

1.4. HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The housing characteristics of Irondale have experienced gradual changes over the decades. The characteristics, largely typical for a mature suburban community, include large numbers of single family detached housing and the presence of higher density multifamily developments. There are relatively few vacancies, a steady share of family households, and higher numbers of rental units. As shown in Figure 2.3, the 2014 housing estimates report 5,576 total units with 5,108 occupied units (91.6%) and 468 vacant units (8.4%). Since 1990 the total number of units in the community has increased from 3,742 to 5,576 units, an increase of 49%. Occupied units have increased from 3,560 units in 1990 to 5,108 units in 2014, an increase of 43%. The median age of all housing units in Irondale is 37 years.

The majority of Irondale’s housing market consists of single family detached dwellings (65%), with the remaining units being distributed between condo/multiplex (6.4%), apartments (36.8%), and manufactured/mobile homes (10.2%). Some of Irondale’s housing units have transitioned from owner-occupied to renter-occupied, a typical outcome having been seen in many localities as a result of the recession but also a trend associated with housing age and proximity to the urban core. According to 2014 estimates, the number of renter-occupied units has increased by 72% since 2000. This is likely due in part to instability of Irondale’s residential economic health, a disparity in residential property values, a demand for rentable properties near desirable schools, or a combination of these factors.
1.5. **HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND INCOME**

Irondale's average household size in 2014 was 2.41. Irondale has remained a desirable location for families. Between 1990 and 2014, the number of family households increased from 2,667 (74.9%) to 3,339 (65.4%), an increase of 672 total families (25%). As noted, however, the family household percent share of total households has decreased moderately from 74.9% in 1990 to 65.4% in 2014. The decrease in family households follows that of general national trends that are also indicative of increases in single parent households and multigenerational households. It is also a result of the addition of apartment units through annexation and construction which tend to add more nonfamily households.

Median household income in the City of Irondale has increased from $39,329 in 1990 to an estimated $52,077 in 2014, an increase of 32%. While general income trends have shown increases over time, the City of Irondale has enjoyed a higher rate of increase than that of the State of Alabama and Jefferson County. Since 2010 Irondale residents have experienced a median household income increase of 4% while Jefferson County has decreased by 5% and the State of Alabama has essentially remained unchanged. This increase is due in part to comparably higher wage jobs, higher rates of economic mobility/opportunity and low unemployment.

According to 2014 estimates, 23% of all Irondale households earn under $25,000 per year and 48% of all households earn less than $50,000 per year (see Figure 2.4). The 2014 estimated average income of households in Irondale is $75,516 while the average income for Jefferson County is $63,502. It is additionally estimated that nearly 17% of all households are below poverty (earning less than $19,790 in 2014 for a 3-person household) and 13% of households receive cash public assistance or food stamps/SNAP benefits. Poverty has an opposing effect on the economic vitality of a community. Individuals living in poverty are often at risk of adverse consequences such as poor health and criminal activity which result in reduced labor market participation. Poverty impacts the development of skills, abilities, knowledge and habits that are necessary for active participation in the workforce. Human capital is a fundamental component of
Disposable income, also called surplus income, is the amount of household funds available for spending and saving after paying taxes. The amount of disposable income is an important indicator for the economic health of an area, and it is used to gauge the investment viability of business activity. The amount of income remaining for discretionary spending does not include expenditures on housing, transportation, food, child care, etc.; therefore the amount of truly disposable income, whether it is used for household savings or retail spending, is lower than may be indicated. The 2014 estimated average disposable income in the City of Irondale is $61,156. For comparison, Jefferson County’s average disposable income is an estimated $51,910. The typical household in Irondale possesses about 18% more disposable income than the typical household in Jefferson County as a whole. With an estimated 50% of disposable income being spent on necessities such as housing, food and transportation, the remaining $30,578 represents the actual discretionary (surplus) income available to the average Irondale household. Figure 2.5 represents about 40% of the average household income in Irondale.
1.6. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Education and income are undeniably linked. Irondale is competitive in terms of educational attainment. 24.9% of Irondale adults over age 25 hold a high school diploma, which is slightly lower compared to the 26.6% of adults in Jefferson County, and slightly lower than the 25.7% of adults statewide. 17.0% of Irondale adults over the age of 25 hold a bachelor’s degree, compared to 18.4% of adults in Jefferson County, and 14.3% statewide. 11.6% of Irondale adults over the age of 25 hold a graduate degree, which is the same percentage of that in Jefferson County.

Irondale has been ranked as the 7th Smartest City in Alabama (2015) based on a recent Movoto Real Estate study, which was a tie with the Rocket City of Huntsville. The study ranked over 400 Alabama cities, based on the high school graduation rate, libraries per capita, percentage of residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher and other criteria.

1.7. EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

The Employment Profile is intended to provide an assessment of the city’s existing business and job conditions. This analysis of employment and industry data is necessary to determine the nature of the city’s workforce, the job environment and business activity.

According to estimates based on U.S. Census data, the residential labor force in the City of Irondale is approximately 6,600 residents in 2014. Of those labor force participants, 92.6% are employed and 7.4% are unemployed. Jefferson County’s comparative unemployment rate is 8.6%.
Occupational Characteristics of Irondale Residents
As shown in Figure 2.6, an estimated 52.1% of Irondale’s workforce is employed within the Service Industry, most working in Healthcare, Social Assistance and Educational services. Other primary industries include Retail Trade (12.0%), Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (10.1%), and Manufacturing (5.7%). Wage and employment numbers are important to residents and businesses alike. Workers rely on a living wage to accommodate the needs of their families, while businesses are interested in paying workers a competitive wage to access and retain skilled labor.

Figure 2.6: Employed Irondale Residents by Industry (2014)

Local Employer Characteristics
There are approximately 735 businesses in the City of Irondale employing over 7,300 people. As shown in Figure 2.7, the Service industry makes up 34.1% of Irondale jobs. The Wholesale Trade industry makes up 13.1% of the area jobs, followed by Retail Trade (12.0%) and Management (11.2%). Jobs associated with Construction and Manufacturing make up 8.9% and 7.8% respectively. Business and job growth, particularly those in the Retail and Services industries, typically follow residential population growth. Irondale, however, loses many of those jobs to commercial development in nearby jurisdictions. While many of retail job opportunities are not typically high paying jobs, a greater impact to the City is felt in losses of retail sales tax revenue that could otherwise be spent in Irondale.
As shown in Table 2.3, the largest employers in Irondale in 2015 include Motion Industries (639 employees), Eternal World Television Network (275 employees), Sonic – Williams Motors (240 employees), Wood Fruitticher Grocery, Inc. (215 employees) and Imaging Business Machines (200 employees). These five businesses make up approximately 16% of Irondale’s total jobs. Employment is clustered along primary transportation corridors, in particular U.S. 78 (Crestwood Boulevard), Alton Road and Grants Mill Road near I-459, with the heaviest concentrations found in central Irondale. These concentrations, located primarily along the U.S. 78 corridor, make up 17% of all Irondale businesses and nearly 20% of all Irondale jobs.

Table 2.3: Ten Largest Employers in Irondale (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Industry Type</th>
<th># of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motion Industries Inc.</td>
<td>Industrial Machinery and Equipment</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eternal World TV Network</td>
<td>Religious Organizations</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonic - Williams Motors*</td>
<td>New Car Dealers</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Fruitticher Grocery Company</td>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imaging Business Machines LLC</td>
<td>Computer and Peripheral Equipment</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennametal Tricon Metals and</td>
<td>Rolled Steel Shape Manufacturing</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Existing Conditions

#### 1.8. COMMUNITY PROFILE

Current commuting trends show that people are driving more places at longer distances. Average daily travel times for workers living in the City of Irondale were reported to average 24.8 minutes in 2013 with nearly 1,711 (28%) of employed residents commuting in excess of 30 minutes to work each day. By creating a better balance between jobs and housing units, travel distances for Irondale workers can be reduced while adding additional residential appeal to the community.

An analysis of local commuter data of employment by place of work and employment by place of residence indicates that Irondale residents are not the primary source of labor for jobs located in Irondale. Commuting data indicates that 16% of employed residents of Irondale also work in Irondale (primarily in Health Care and Retail Trade), while 84% of employed residents work outside the City. Primary commuting destinations include Birmingham (47%), Homewood (10%), Hoover (5%) and Bessemer (3%). A more detailed analysis of the workplace destinations of Irondale commuters includes the Birmingham City Center and Southside areas (for jobs in Finance, Professional, Healthcare, and Educational Services), the Oxmoor area (for jobs in Manufacturing and Retail), and Moody (for jobs in Manufacturing and Retail). This separation of jobs and housing increases strain to worker finances, adds congestion to area roadways, and contributes to air quality issues. Better planned development policies can help to reduce travel times, reduce the amount of land developed overall to meet the needs of existing and growing populations, and create greater efficiency in the provision and use of public infrastructure and services.

A ratio of jobs to housing is commonly used to express the concept of jobs-housing balance. It represents a measure between employment and housing. A balance of 1:1 is considered ideal, but such a balance can be an unrealistic expectation for some suburban communities. Irondale’s jobs-to-housing ratio is faring well at just over one job per unit (7,242 jobs/5,576 units) and jobs-to-employed residents at about 1.2 jobs for each employed resident (7,242 jobs/6,111 employed residents). While these ratios are near ideal, opportunities exist for the City to actively recruit businesses that would bring more and higher wage jobs to Irondale. Job growth and growth in higher paying jobs in particular, will have a positive effect on the demand for housing in Irondale.

### 2. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

This section analyzes the land uses, development patterns and zoning in Irondale. Understanding land use patterns in Irondale helps the City identify areas for new development and redevelopment. In addition to identifying locations for various developments, land use patterns also help the City determine where to focus future infrastructure and services.

#### 2.1. EXISTING LAND USE

There is a total of approximately 11,014 acres of land within the current city limits of Irondale. Today, approximately 6,579 acres (60%) of the total area has been developed. Residential development is the primary use of developed land in Irondale, which illustrates the city’s initial development as a bedroom community, from which residents have traveled regularly for work, shopping and other destinations.
Existing land use in Irondale in 2015 is shown in Figure 2.8, and Table 2.4 details the breakdown of acreage per land use within the city limits. The land use classifications are defined and descriptions of the existing land use patterns found in Irondale are discussed by land use classification below.

**Agriculture**
Agricultural land used for farming, timber production accounts for approximately 39 acres (0.4%) of the city’s land area. Land used for agriculture is located off of Karl Daly Road and Amber Hills Road.

**Commercial**
Commercial development takes up 325 acres of land in the city and includes professional offices, lodging, retail and service establishments. This accounts for 3.0% of the city’s total land area. Commercial development includes the following subcategories:

- **General Commercial**
  This category includes a variety of retail and service establishments, lodging and commercial centers containing a mix of retail, service and offices. There are approximately 218 acres (3.0%) of the city’s total land that is currently devoted to general commercial uses. These businesses include individual establishments as well as those located in multi-tenant shopping centers and office complexes. Most retail shopping and dining establishments are clustered around 1st Avenue South and 20th Street South, along Crestwood Boulevard / US 78 and along Kilgore Memorial Drive (i.e Grants Mill Station and the Sam’s Club). The only significant concentrations of office development are along Commerce Boulevard, and some offices are scattered along Ruffner Road and US 78 / Bankhead Highway.

- **Heavy Commercial**
  This category includes outdoor sales establishments, truck rental, mini-storage centers, automotive repair and body shops, construction businesses and other intensive commercial activities that are generally less compatible with residential uses. These uses take up 107 acres in the City. The largest concentration of heavy commercial businesses is comprised of the “Irondale Auto Mall” that is located at the Grants Mill Road and I-459 interchange.

**Industrial**
The industrial land use classification accounts for 548 acres (5.0%) of the City’s total land and is defined as small scale industrial and manufacturing establishments such as plants, factories, and mills that employ power driven machines, materials, handling equipment, and workers who create new products by hand. The industrial land use pattern in Irondale is located along the Norfolk Southern railway and along U.S. 78 / Crestwood Boulevard, Ruffner Road and Alton Road. The largest concentrations of industrial land are located on Alton Road, at the location of the Wood Fruitticher Grocery Co., Inc., and are associated with the Commerce Square Business Park, an industrial park off 1st Avenue.
**Existing Conditions**

**Institutional**
Institutional uses, such as municipal facilities, churches and schools, account for 557 acres (5.1%) of the city’s total land area. The Church of the Highlands off of Grants Mill Road accounts for the majority of institutional land in the city, approximately 115 acres. The four Jefferson County public school sites, including Grantswood Community School, Irondale Community School, Irondale Middle School and Shades Valley High School, account for 85 acres combined. Eternal World Network Television (EWTN) is the largest religious media network in the world and is located off of Old Leeds Road and Grants Mill Road on 36 acres. The Casa Maria Covenant and Retreat House, is off of Belmont Road, and accounts for 21 acres.

**Parks, Recreation and Open Space**
There are approximately 353 acres (3.2%) of the city’s total land area that is maintained for public and private parks and recreational uses, common open spaces serving residential developments, and cemeteries. City of Irondale parks and recreation facilities make up approximately 49 acres all lands devoted to parks and open space. The Southern Skeet and Trap Club, located off of John Rodgers Drive, accounts for 61 acres, and the Pine Tree Country Club golf course accounts for 176 acres.

**Railroad Right-of-Way**
This land use category consists of the 444 acres consisting of the Norfolk Southern Norris Yard and its associated railroad right-of-way. This intermodal yard is on the Birmingham to Chattanooga and the Birmingham to Atlanta mainlines.

**Residential**
Residential development accounts for approximately 2,449 acres in Irondale, making it the largest single use of developed land in the City. While it accounts for only about 22.2% of the city’s total land area, residential development comprises 37.2% of all developed land in Irondale. This category represents a wide variety of residential types, from large homes on multi-acre estates to attached dwellings, such as duplexes and townhouses, to apartments.

- **Low-Density Residential (0-3 dwelling units per acre)**
  Approximately 1,999 acres (18.1%) of the total land area in the City is characterized as low-density single-family residential developments. These low-density residential uses are generally concentrated off of Old Leeds Road, Grants Mill Road, Overton Road, Karl Daly Road, Ratliff Road and Amber Hills Road. The average density is approximately 1.68 dwelling units/acre.
Figure 2.8: Existing Land Use Map

- **City Limits**
- **Existing Land Use**
  - Agriculture
  - General Commercial
  - Heavy Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Institutional
  - Parks, Recreation and Open Space
  - Railroad Right-of-Way
  - Low-Density Residential
  - Medium-Density Residential
  - High-Density Residential
  - Mobile Homes
  - Vacant or Undeveloped
Existing Conditions

• Medium-Density Residential (4-6 dwelling units per acre)
  Approximately 121 acres (1.1%) of the total land area in the city is characterized as medium-density single-family residential development, with an average density of approximately 4.83 dwelling units/acre. These medium-density residential uses are generally concentrated in the downtown area to the east of 16th Street and north of US 78.

• High-Density Residential
  Land used for high-density residential development comprises 167 acres (0.15%) of the City’s land area. Apartment and condominium buildings and complexes include the Enclave at Mountain Brook off Sharpsburg Drive, the Rime Apartments off Beacon Drive, Heritage Place Apartment Homes off US 78 and Heritage Place Drive, Colonial Village Apartments off Edwards Lake Road and Hunter Ridge apartments off of US 11/ Gadsden Highway in Roebuck Springs.

• Mobile Homes
  Mobile homes are another form of single-family housing found in Irondale, totaling approximately 166 acres (1.5%) of land. Most mobile home housing is located in the Eastwood Mobile Home Village (71 acres), off James Albert Drive and in the Irondale Mobile Home Park off Trailer Lane (17 acres).

Vacant or Undeveloped
  Currently vacant and otherwise undeveloped land accounts for the largest portion (40.3%) of the City’s total land area, at 4,435 acres. A majority of the vacant and undeveloped land parcels are large in scale, but several smaller-scale, vacant land parcels can be found within the newer annexed portions of the City. The largest concentrations of vacant land are on the east side of the City, especially along Floyd Bradford Road. There are also large undeveloped tracts along the interstate corridors, especially to the north of the I-459 / I-20 interchange. These areas have not developed previously due to a combination of factors: limited accessibility, lack of water and/or sewer utilities and rugged topography. While there are large tracts of undeveloped land in these fringe areas of the City, there are a significant number of smaller pockets of developable land in more central locations where road access and utilities are available or nearby.

Utilities / Transportation
  The utilities and transportation land use classification accounts for 1,860 acres (16.9%) of the city’s land, and includes the main transportation, infrastructure and utilities in Irondale. Utilities are elements such as sewer, water, gas, telecommunications, electrical infrastructure and their associated easements. The transportation element includes all major road classifications and their associated right-of-way.
Figure 2.9: Existing Zoning Map
### Table 2.4: Existing Land Use (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Land Use</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Commercial</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Commercial</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks, Recreation and Open Space</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railroad Right-of-Way</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Density Residential</td>
<td>1,999</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-Density Residential</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Density Residential</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Homes</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant or Undeveloped</td>
<td>4,435</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities and Transportation</td>
<td>1,860</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>11,014</td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.2. ZONING

The current zoning in Irondale is dominated by the agricultural and residential categories. Approximately 2,523 acres (22.9%) of the land is zoned A-1 Agricultural. The largest residential zoning district is the R-1 Single Family Residential Zone, which requires a minimum lot area of 10,000 square feet, and covers approximately 1,367 acres of land. The planned industrial district is the third largest category, which covers approximately 699 acres of land. The existing zoning map of Irondale is shown in Figure 2.9. Table 2.5 details the breakdown of acreage by zoning district within the city limits. The current zoning district classifications in Irondale and their general characteristics are highlighted in Table 2.6.

### Table 2.5: Existing Zoning by District (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Zone [A-1]</td>
<td>2,523</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Estate Zone [E-1]</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Residential Zone [R-1]</td>
<td>1,367</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Residential Zone [R-2]</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Family (Duplex) Residential Zone [R-3]</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Family (Apartment) Residential Zone [R-4]</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse or Condominium Residential Zone [R-5]</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Subdivision [R-5A]</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Park [R-5B]</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Cluster (Planned Unit Development Zone) [R-6]</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Home Zone [R-7]</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Existing Conditions

#### Table 2.6: General Characteristics of Zoning Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Area</th>
<th>Width (Feet)</th>
<th>Stories</th>
<th>Height (Feet)</th>
<th>Total Minimum Area / Floor</th>
<th>Number of Dwelling Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Zone [A-1]</td>
<td>3 acres</td>
<td>100’</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>1000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>1 unit per 3 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Estate Zone [E-1]</td>
<td>43,560 sq. ft.</td>
<td>100’</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>1,800 sq. ft.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Residential Zone [R-1]</td>
<td>10,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>80’</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>1,600 sq. ft.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family Residential Zone [R-2]</td>
<td>8,500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>70’</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>1,300 sq. ft.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Family (Duplex) Residential Zone [R-3]</td>
<td>7,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>60’</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>35’</td>
<td>1,200 sq. ft. /unit</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Family (Apartment) Residential Zone [R-4]</td>
<td>5 acres</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>800 sq. ft. / unit</td>
<td>9 units per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Condominium District [RCD, R-5]</td>
<td>5 acres (20 units), 10 acres (40 units)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>110’</td>
<td>1,200 sq. ft. / unit</td>
<td>40 units per acre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 2.6: General Characteristics of Zoning Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Zone [C-1]</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Zone [C-2]</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Adult Entertainment Zone [C-3]</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery [C-4]</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Zone [I-1]</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Industrial Zone [I-2]</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Industrial District Zone [I-3]</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Zone [O]</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Zone [INST-1]</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Zone [INST-2]</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities Zone [U-1]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Club Zone [CC-1]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Preferred Business Zone [C-PB]</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-Way / Infrastructure</td>
<td>1,933</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11,014</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Existing Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Area</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Width (Feet)</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Stories</th>
<th>Minimum Lot Floor Area</th>
<th>Number of Dwelling Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse Residential Zone [R-5]</td>
<td>3,750 sq. ft. Min. of 4,360 sq. ft. of land including common area for each town house in the development</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Subdivision [R-5A]</td>
<td>7,500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>50’</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Park [R-5B]</td>
<td>5 acres</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2,400 sq. ft./unit</td>
<td>10 units per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Cluster (Planned Unit Development Zone) [R-6]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Determined by Planning Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Home Zone [R-7]</td>
<td>4,360’</td>
<td>40’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,200 sq. ft.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Zone [C-1]</td>
<td>4,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Zone [C-2]</td>
<td>10,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>750 sq. ft.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Adult Entertainment Zone [C-3]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemetery [C-4]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,400 sq. ft./unit</td>
<td>10 units per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Zone [I]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Industrial Zone [I-2]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Industrial District Zone [I-3]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Zone [O]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Zone [INST-1]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Zone [INST-2]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities Zone [U-1]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Club Zone [CC-1]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Preferred Business Zone [C-PB]</td>
<td>4,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.3. EXISTING DEVELOPMENT FOOTPRINT

Buildings, pavement, sidewalks, parking lots, etc. all combine to form impervious surface, which collects solar heat and produces “heat islands” and, perhaps more importantly, stormwater runoff. Runoff creates flooding potential and discharges harmful pollutants into water bodies. The city limits includes features that are susceptible to runoff, including the Cahaba River, its tributaries and several wetlands, as described in the sections below. Figure 2.10 shows the existing development footprint within the City. Currently, there are approximately 1,127 acres of impervious surface associated with pavement, and approximately 380 acres of impervious surface associated with building footprints.
Figure 2.10: Existing Development Footprint in Irondale

- Development Footprint
- Impervious Surface (pavement)
- Water
- Railroads
- City Limits

Irondale on the Move: City of Irondale Comprehensive Plan
2.4. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES
Through the Visioning Survey and Community Remarks tools on the project website, residents were able to express their primary land use and development concerns in the City of Irondale. The following is a summary of the issues that were mentioned the most:

- The city is in need of a grocery store.
- Designate space for a farmer market.
- Target redevelopment along US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard.
- Need to provide more dining, restaurant and entertainment options (i.e. more sit down restaurants).
- Need to redefine Irondale’s commercial profile and land use. Need to provide more attractive commercial and retail spaces.
- Need to focus on developments that will enhance quality of life – such as creating a network of urban, walkable villages to serve residential neighborhoods.
- Consider pop-up events, food truck rallies, and community gardening.
- Need to revitalize the downtown area with restaurants, bars / nightlife and small businesses.
- Need to capitalize on tourism and provide destination shopping to bring more tax revenue into the City – such as through stores like Ikea, Costco, Super Target, Sprouts, Trader Joe’s.

3. NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

3.1. WATERSHEDS AND WATERBODIES
Irondale lies mainly within the Shades Creek and Cahaba River Watersheds. The Shades Creek watershed extends roughly from Tannehill, flowing northeast through the western area of the Irondale city limits. Portions of the watershed have experienced tremendous residential expansion and development in recent years, which has increased stormwater runoff. Stormwater drainage from urban areas results in more contaminants and pollutants entering this system, impacting both water quality and quantity. The Cahaba River Watershed encompasses the rest of the city limits except for the extreme northern portion of the city (which lies within the Big Black Creek watershed). The main creeks in Irondale are tributaries of the Cahaba River and include Stinking Creek and Shades Creek. Previously, the segments of the Cahaba River that run through Irondale were listed as "impaired" on the Alabama Department of Environmental Management’s (ADEM) 303(D) list, a list that is considered a priority for water quality improvement efforts, but these segments were removed from the list in 2013. The City’s waterbodies consist of small residential lakes and ponds, including Mountain Lake and Lake George that lie in the northeast city limits. Figure 2.11 depicts the existing hydrological resources in Irondale.

3.2. GROUNDWATER
Irondale is located in the Alabama Valley and Ridge groundwater province, and the Bangor and Fort Payne Aquifers make up the City’s major water sources. The City does not rely on surface water collected from rivers and lakes. Irondale’s water supply is not affected by droughts.

3.3. FLOODPLAINS
Approximately 486 acres within the City of Irondale lie within the 100-year floodplain. The City has several areas that are prone to flooding and present natural barriers to development. The most prominent flooding areas are associated with Shades Creek (which flows to the southwest in the west portion of the city limits), the Cahaba River (which generally follows the southern boundary of Irondale) and Stinking Creek (which runs through the northeast portion of the city limits). However, these flood prone areas are not static, and they can expand as land uses change over time. New commercial and residential developments increase the amount of impervious surfaces, which serve to increase the rate and velocity of surface water runoff into the waterways of Irondale and therefore degrading water quality. Additionally, the City maintains a storm water drainage system, and new developments are reviewed to ensure that they meet city requirements. Figure 2.11 shows the flood prone areas as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
Figure 2.11: Hydrology Map

- City Limits
- 100-Year Floodplain
- Wetlands
- Streams

Existing Conditions
3.4. **WETLANDS**

There are approximately 174 acres of wetlands present within Irondale, all of which are vital to the overall health of the City’s ecosystem. Wetlands have many important functions including: providing habitat, filtering and cleaning stormwater, collecting floodwaters, and providing recreational opportunities. According to the National Wetlands Inventory, the following types of wetlands are located in Irondale:

- 32 acres of Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands. These wetlands have characteristics of forested swamps, or bogs. They are saturated seasonally.
- 37 acres of Freshwater Ponds. These wetlands host permanent and artificial saturation and are scattered throughout the city limits.
- 73 acres are Lakes, which include Mountain Lake and Lake George.
- 32 acres of Riverine. This classification is given for the Cahaba River.

3.5. **SOILS**

Soil is the product of parent material, topography, climate, plant and animal life and time. Due to the interaction of these five factors, knowledge of soil types in an area can provide information on topography, erosion patterns, water threshold, construction tolerance and storm water management. Soils are a fundamental natural resource for land use planning. Consideration of soils is important for details of construction like base material for road construction, and they are important for regional planning such as resource preservation (for example, prime agricultural soils) and limitations for development (for example, soils that cannot be used for septic tank absorption fields).

Soils are categorized and ranked for different types of use by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. The most prevalent general soil type in the Irondale area is Nauvoo. The Nauvoo-Montevallo occurs on dissected plateaus, or plateaus that have been severely eroded by creeks and rivers, to create steep relief. The Montevallo-Nauvoo Urban Land and Nauvoo-Urban Land complexes are most associated with the developed portions of the City. Nauvoo fine sandy loam soils are scattered throughout the central portion of the city, mostly to the south of I-20.

**Limitations for Septic Systems and Road Construction**

Gently sloping, thick, permeable soils with deep water tables are most accommodating of septic tank use. As shown in Figure 2.12, approximately two-thirds (or 7,270 acres) of the city limits is comprised of soils that present limitations to septic tank usage and substantially increase the cost of constructing septic systems on them. Use of septic tanks for single-family homes, for instance, can be more expensive in these areas to assure that effluent is properly absorbed and does not cause odors or health problems. Site-specific conditions are verified through soil or percolation (“perc”) tests required by Jefferson County whenever the use of a septic tank is being considered.

Because most non-residential uses require sewer access, this analysis is more important in understanding the implications of soil conditions on residential development, and where such developments should have sewer access or not. The use of new “alternative wastewater management systems” may reduce difficulties represented by these soil conditions. Decentralized, onsite systems may be used, though they will still require adequate areas to absorb treated wastewater.

In Irondale, the soils that present limitations for limited septic tank absorption also present limitations for road construction. In particular, Bodine-Birmingham, Bodine-Fullerton, Docena, Gorgas, Leesburg, Nauvoo-Montevallo, Palmerdale, Sullivan-State and Townley soil associations and complexes are a challenge for septic tank absorption and road construction due to their association with steep slopes, rock outcrops or other obstacles.

**Prime Farmland**

Prime farmland, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is land that has the best
Figure 2.12: Septic Tank Suitability Map

City Limits

Septic Tank Suitability
- Not rated (water, pits, dumps)
- Somewhat limited
- Very limited

The map shows the Septic Tank Suitability across the city with various shades indicating different levels of suitability. The map includes the city limits and specific areas marked with different shades to indicate the suitability levels.
**Figure 2.13: Slopes Map**

- **City Limits**
- **Weighted Slope Percentage**
  - Not rated
  - 1% - 5%
  - 6% - 10%
  - 11% - 15%
  - 16% - 20%
  - 21% - 25%
  - Greater than 25%
combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is available for these uses. It could be cultivated land, pastureland, forestland, or other land, but it is not urban land, developed land or in water areas. Prime farmland tends to be well suited to suburban sprawl and land development. Thus prime farmland is also prime developable land and prone to conversion when in proximity to larger metropolitan areas, such as Birmingham. A USDA prime farmland designation helps growth management and resource conservation efforts in urban growth areas to use zoning and conservation easements to preserve prime farmland resources, maintain local economic diversity, and establish green belts. Nonprofit organizations like American Farmland Trust specialize in helping communities use these techniques.

According to the USDA National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), approximately 441 acres (or 4% of the total land) in Irondale is considered prime farmland. These soils are composed mostly of the Sullivan-State complex and Holston loam soils.

3.6. SLOPES
There are areas of steep slopes—20% and greater—in various locations in the City, particularly along Grants Mill Road and areas to the south of Old Leeds Road (see Figure 2.13). Areas of steep slope pose constraints for land development. Development on steep slopes is more expensive than on flat land and can have unwanted impacts on stormwater drainage and exacerbate erosion. Irondale's topographic features have had a direct influence on the community's past development pattern and will continue to be a factor in the City's future growth. Although specific threshold criteria for steep slopes vary depending upon the type of development activity, the general slope thresholds used to determine where slopes become a significant engineering and design constraint to development are listed below:

- **0-5%**: Well suited to large-scale shopping center development and small-scale individual commercial structures, single and multi-family residences. Acceptable limit for construction of roads and railroads.
- **5-10%**: Truck access becomes difficult and expensive when the slope exceeds 7%, and in areas of slope over 8% road routing is virtually dictated by the terrain. Small-scale, individual, commercial structures on slopes from 5 to 8% with virtually no parking demand or, if provided, with parking garages.
- **10-15%**: Financially impractical for industrial, commercial and townhouse developments. Hillside subdivision for single-family homes and apartment construction is often feasible, with special care taken with design of access roads and parking areas.
- **15-20%**: Point at which engineering costs for most developments become significant and extensive anchoring, soil stabilization, and stormwater management measures must be applied. Single-family homes and apartment construction is possible only if special care is taken in the design of access roads, parking areas, water supply, and sewage disposal. Any road design requires special care.
- **20-25%**: Financially impractical for all development activity. All urban areas which require the construction of roads and the provision of utilities are both prohibitively expensive and extremely damaging to the terrain.
3.7. **PLANT AND ANIMAL HABITATS**

Located in the Cumberland Plateau and Alabama Valley and Ridge physiographic regions, Irondale has a diverse range of plant and animal habitats. Vegetation is predominantly oak-pine forests characterized by willow, birch, sycamore, oak, poplar, and hickory, maple and ash trees. Steeper slopes are dominated by pine trees. Listed below are some of the more ecologically rich areas of Irondale.

- **Cahaba Landing**, located off of Grants Mill Road, is a city maintained canoe launch for enjoying the Cahaba River. The launch provides a 3-5 hour float down the Cahaba to take outpoints at Liberty Park. The Cahaba River and its tributaries are noted as one of the only eight “hotspots of Biodiversity” out of 2,111 watersheds in the contiguous United States by the Nature Conservancy. Moreover, 135 fish species, 35 snail species, 50 known mussel varieties are known to occur within its boundary.

- **Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve**, just to the north of the city limits, is a 1,038 acre urban nature preserve and is one of the largest privately held urban nature preserves in the United States. Once home to iron ore mines and stone quarries, it is recognized for its diverse flora and fauna in an otherwise urban environment.

Irondale does not specifically regulate plant and habitats. Table 2.7 lists the threatened and endangered species in Jefferson County.
### Table 2.7: Endangered and Threatened Species in Jefferson County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Federal Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLAMS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orangenacre mucket</td>
<td>Orangenacre mucket</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern acrotus shell</td>
<td>Southern acrotus shell</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upland combshell</td>
<td>Upland combshell</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fineland pocketbook</td>
<td>Fineland pocketbook</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovate clubshell</td>
<td>Ovate clubshell</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern clubshell</td>
<td>Southern clubshell</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangular kidneyshell</td>
<td>Triangular kidneyshell</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama moccasinshell</td>
<td>Alabama moccasinshell</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark pigtoe</td>
<td>Dark pigtoe</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern pigtoe</td>
<td>Southern pigtoe</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FISH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watercress darter</td>
<td>Watercress darter</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cahaba shiner</td>
<td>Cahaba shiner</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldline darter</td>
<td>Goldline darter</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermillion darter</td>
<td>Vermillion darter</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rush darter</td>
<td>Rush darter</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FLOWERING PLANTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia rockcress</td>
<td>Georgia rockcress</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohr’s Barbara button</td>
<td>Mohr’s Barbara button</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentian pinkroot</td>
<td>Gentian pinkroot</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee yellow-eyed grass</td>
<td>Tennessee yellow-eyed grass</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAMMALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray bat</td>
<td>Gray bat</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern long-eared bat</td>
<td>Northern long-eared bat</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REPTILES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flattened musk turtle</td>
<td>Flattened musk turtle</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plicate rocksnail</td>
<td>Plicate rocksnail</td>
<td>Endangered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round rocksnail</td>
<td>Round rocksnail</td>
<td>Threatened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.14: Functional Classification Map**

**Functional Classification**
- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Road
- City Limits
4. MOBILITY

4.1. INVENTORY OF FACILITIES

Introduction
The City of Irondale is conveniently connected to the Greater Birmingham region, located between the interchanges of Interstates 20, 59 and 459, along with US 78 and US 11. Manufacturing and other industrial businesses utilize the existing freight infrastructure including railroads and highways to move their goods through the region.

Roadways and Roadway Functional Classification
Roadways vary not only in width, design, cross-section, and traffic volume, but also in their function. Roads are classified by the federal government (U.S. Department of Transportation) and State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) according to the transportation function they provide to the community. The functional classification of a road describes the character of service the road is intended to provide. The various road classifications primarily serve two competing functions: access to property and travel mobility depending upon their purpose. Within the city limits of Irondale, there is approximately 185.1 miles of roadways grouped into four distinct roadway classifications: principal arterials, minor arterials, collectors and local streets. These are shown in Figure 2.14.

Principal Arterials serve longer inter-urban type trips and traffic traveling through urban areas, including interstates and state highways. While interstates and freeways are defined as limited access principal arterials, some state highways are defined as full access principal arterials.

The limited access principal arterial roadways within the City or Irondale, totaling approximately 32.5 miles, include:
- I-20 (10.6 miles), including ramps at Exit 133 (2.4 miles) for Kilgore Memorial Drive / Grants Mill Road and at Exit 135 (2.0 miles) for Old Leeds Road.
- I-459 (10.2 miles), including ramps at Exit 27 (1.8 miles) for Grants Mill Road and at partial ramps at Exit 31 (0.4 miles) for Derby Parkway.
- Ramps at I-20 / I-459 interchange (5.2 miles).

The full access principal arterial roadways within the City of Irondale, totaling approximately 12.6 miles, include:
- US 11 / Gadsden Highway (2.0 miles).
- US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard/ Bankhead Highway (10.6 miles).

Minor Arterials provide moderate length trips. They serve a moderate size geographic area and offer connectivity to higher classified roadways such as interstates and principal arterials. The minor arterial roadways serving the City of Irondale, totaling approximately 13.1 miles, include:
- 16th Street (0.6 miles)
- Alton Road (1.4 miles)
- Georgia Road (0.3 miles)
- Grants Mill Road, to the north of I-459 interchange (3.1 miles)
- John Rogers Drive (0.4 miles)
- Kilgore Memorial Drive (1.2 miles)
- Montclair Road (0.2 miles)
- Old Leeds Road (2.8 miles)
- Ruffner Road (2.9 miles)
- Sunset Boulevard (0.2 miles)
Collectors are roadways that serve often definable neighborhoods, which may be bound by arterials with higher classifications. As their name suggests, collector streets ideally “collect and distribute” local traffic, providing a link between local neighborhood streets (i.e. non-arterials) and larger arterials. A collector street may be a major collector or a minor collector.

- **Major Collectors** are longer in length when they are compared to their minor collector counterparts. While a major collector road offers more mobility than access, they may provide access to commercial, residential or have mixed uses. The major collector roadways within the City of Irondale, totaling approximately 14.5 miles, include:
  - Amber Hills Road (2.0 miles)
  - Edwards Lake Road (0.1 miles)
  - Floyd Bradford Road (1.9 miles)
  - Grants Mill Road, to the south of I-459 interchange (1.3 miles)
  - Grantswood Road (2.9 miles)
  - Karl Daly Road (1.7 miles)
  - Montevallo Road (0.4 miles)
  - Overton Road (2.8 miles)
  - Queenstown Road (0.4 miles)
  - Ratliff Road (1.0 miles)

- **Minor Collectors** are public roadways that accumulate traffic from local streets for distribution into arterial (principal or minor) or major collector roadways. A minor collector typically has access to residential uses. However, it may also serve commercial or mixed uses. There are no minor collector roadways within the City of Irondale.

Local Streets are intended to provide the highest degree of land access (short trips at lower speeds), and thus limited mobility, discouraging through traffic. They provide access to individual single-family residential lots, entry and exit to the neighborhood, and connectivity to collectors and thoroughfares. In short, all other roadways not previously listed are considered local streets. Seventy five percent of all the roads within the Irondale city limits are local streets, totaling approximately 112.4 miles.

4.2. **BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES**

In addition to motorized transportation such as automobiles and mass transit, non-motorized transportation, including walking and cycling, is a viable mode of transportation and has increased in use due to recent investments in facilities.

Bicycle and pedestrian travel is facilitated through shared-use facilities, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, wide shoulders (bicycle travel is also acceptable on low-speed, low-volume local streets), on-road signed bike routes and sharrows, as well as shared off-road facilities such as greenways/multi-use trails. Given physical limitations, pedestrian travel is most likely to occur in places where origins and destinations are within one-quarter to one-half mile of each other. Bicycle travel tends to occur where origins and destinations are within two miles, although many cyclists travel greater distances, particularly for commuting and recreation.

**Existing Sidewalk and Bicycle Facilities.**

A majority of the streets within the City of Irondale lack sidewalks. Generally speaking, most of the City’s sidewalks are located in the historic downtown area and the surrounding neighborhood (along 16th Street, 20th Street, 2nd Avenue N.), and in some of the newer subdivisions such as Bainbridge and Grants Mill Crossing.
However, for new developments, the City’s Subdivision Regulations prioritize the need for sidewalks and require a 4-foot wide sidewalk on one side of all local streets. In addition, the city also requires a 4-foot wide (minimum) sidewalk on both sides of all local streets within 2,000 feet of a school.

The City of Irondale has approximately 1.3 miles of on-street bicycle facilities. This consists of a marked bicycle lane (width: >4-feet) on both sides of Grants Mill Road, from the entrance of Grants Mill Station / Sam’s Club to Old Leeds Road.

**Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System**

The *Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System Master Plan* document was completed in 2010 as a joint effort between the Freshwater Land Trust, the Jefferson County Department of Health and the Health Action Partnership to develop a greenway master plan for Jefferson County. The purpose of the plan was to develop bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that would in turn promote healthy choices, use of alternate modes of transportation and protect regional waterways. Approximately 14.4 miles of trails that are a part of the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System (RRRVTS) have been constructed within the City of Irondale. An additional 46.1 miles of trails that are part of the RRRVTS are proposed throughout parts of the City.

The trail types, as defined by the RRRVTS, that exist or are proposed in Irondale include:

- **Type B**: An 8-10 foot wide paved asphalt travels in a dedicated easement that can be donated, purchased, existing easement, or a permanent easement granted by the property owner.
- **Type G**: Bike lanes with new paving at the shoulder.
- **Type H**: Shared-lane markings (sharrow). These are low-volume streets and include sharrow markings and signage to mark the route for shared access.
- **Type I**: Sidewalk with a sharrow.
- **Type K**: Natural surface paths/Separate Path. 3-10 foot wide and occurs in environmentally sensitive areas.

Table 2.8 provides as comprehensive list of the RRRVT trails within the City of Irondale. The Green Systems map is shown in Figure 2.15.
**Figure 2.15: Green Systems Map**

- **Canoe Launch**
- **Existing Trail**
- **Proposed Trail**
- **Parks and Greenspace**
- **City Limits**
### Table 2.8: Existing Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System in Irondale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trial Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Trail System</th>
<th>Trail Type</th>
<th>Existing Trail Length (Miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>16th Street Greenway</strong></td>
<td>Shared-use greenway which travels on 16th Street from 4th Avenue South to Montevallo Road.</td>
<td>RRRVTS: Shades Creek</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grants Mill Road Trail</strong></td>
<td>Street-based trail which currently exists along Grants Mill Road from Grants Mill Station to Old Leeds Road. Proposed portions would extend the trail to the end of Grants Mill Road to Cahaba Landing.</td>
<td>RRRVTS: Shades Creek (Marked Bike Lane)</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irondale Greenway</strong></td>
<td>Natural surface shared-use greenway which begins at the canoe launch on the Cahaba River at Grants Mill Road and travels southwest, following the Cahaba River. The trail ends shortly after the river bends northward to Overton Road.</td>
<td>RRRVTS: Cahaba</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>0.9 (0.7-mile within city limits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overton Mine Trail</strong></td>
<td>Portions of this natural surface shared-use greenway are within Irondale. The trail follows a series of abandoned railroad beds and mining-era roads beds through Freshwater Land Trust Property and others along the Cahaba River near the Carraway-Davis House.</td>
<td>RRRVTS: Cahaba</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>4.7 (0.97 within city limits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Fresh Water Land Trust, Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System*
4.3. **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**
The City of Irondale currently is not served by any fixed-route transit service. The closest Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) routes are located just west of the city limits, with stops at Eastwood Mall along the #17 Eastwood Mall Route (traveling on Montclair Road, Montevallo Road and US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard), and along the #44 Montclair Route (traveling on Montclair Road and Montevallo Road).

However, ClasTran is a regional transportation provider comprised of a consortium of county and local governments, and human service agencies. ClasTran primarily provides weekday subsidized paratransit rides for people who are 60+ traveling in Jefferson, Shelby and Walker Counties, for people who are eligible for paratransit under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and for people who reside in and travel to or from rural Jefferson or Shelby Counties. These individuals must live outside of the Birmingham Jefferson County’s fixed-route transit service boundaries. For people who do not meet the above categories, ClasTran will also provide unsubsidized public transportation rides to anyone residing in the rural areas of these three counties, but travel is on a space-available basis and pay full fare. The fare for riders using ClasTran is $4/one-way trip.

4.4. **RAILROADS**
Railroad service has declined in priority in the US since the 1950's but is still crucial to several industries. Heavy rail is an integral part of modern industrial freight movement. Transportation planning must address available rail options and conditions not only for the benefit of the rail system, but also for points where rail service interacts (or intersects) other transportation systems.

Irondale is a major railway hub for Norfolk Southern Railroad. This railroad bisects Historic Downtown Irondale between 1st Avenue North and 1st Avenue South. Norfolk-Southern owns and operates the Norris Rail Yard in Irondale. Its primary freight line continues west into Birmingham and northeast to Chattanooga. Irondale also has run-through power from KCS, BNSF and UP railways. According to the Irondale railroad ordinance, no railroad train shall be run through or in the city at a greater rate of speed than 25 miles per hour.

Cost estimates were given to the City of Irondale from Norfolk Southern on October 28, 2014, for the establishment of “quite zone” through downtown Irondale to alleviate noise related to the number of trains passing through daily. A one way crossing was estimated at $193,898. A potential quad gate crossing was estimated at $613,516.00.

Irondale is a popular destination spot for train enthusiast of all ages. Irondale’s historic caboose and covered train pavilion host thousands of visitors annually. Over 50 different train lines pass through daily.

4.5. **AIR TRANSPORTATION**
The City of Irondale is served by the Birmingham-Shuttlesworth International Airport (BHM), which is located four miles to the northwest off I-20. In 2014 BHM served 2,624,665 passengers and is the largest and busiest operations a day, averages 301 aircraft operations a day, including 136 flights to 43 airports in 40 cities.

4.6. **ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS**
The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes for the major roadways within the City of Irondale are shown in Figure 2.16 and Table 2.9 lists a summary of the locations along with the AADT estimates. The counts were collected by the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) at count stations in 2013. This AADT data identifies the volume of traffic moving through each roadway segment on an “average” day of the year; and in doing so, assists future planning by providing a baseline number to be analyzed. Aside from the interstates, no four-lane roadway sections in the City of Irondale have high AADT’s (defined as
Existing Conditions

Figure 2.16: Street Connectivity Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Average Daily Traffic (2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3,000 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,001 - 7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,501 - 15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,001 - 30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,001 - 60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,001 - 78,010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

City Limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Irondale on the Move: City of Irondale Comprehensive Plan

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Existing Conditions

Two-lane locations in the City of Irondale where high average daily volumes (close to or greater than 18,000 AADT) occurred are as follows:

- US 11 / Gadsden Highway east of Edwards Lake Road - 24,310 AADT
- US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard east of 19th Street - 23,920 AADT
- Montevallo Road east of Old Montevallo Rd - 18,960 AADT

**Table 2.9: Annual Average Daily Traffic Counts on Road Segments (2013)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>AADT Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-459 between Exit 23 (Overton Rd) and Exit 27 (Grants Mill Rd)</td>
<td>78,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-459 between Exit 27 (Grants Mill Rd) and Exit 29 (I-20)</td>
<td>75,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-20 between Exit 136 (I-459) and Exit 140 (US 78)</td>
<td>70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-459 between Exit 29 (I-20) and Exit 31 (Derby Parkway)</td>
<td>58,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-459 between Exit 31 (Derby Parkway) and Exit 32 (US 11)</td>
<td>57,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-20 between Exit 135 (Old Leeds Rd) and Exit 136 (I-459)</td>
<td>55,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-459 between Exit 32 (US 11) and Exit 33A (I-59)</td>
<td>50,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-20 between Exit 133 (US78) and Exit 135 (Old Leeds Rd)</td>
<td>46,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 11 east of Edwards Lake Road</td>
<td>24,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 78 east of 19th Street</td>
<td>23,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montevallo Rd east of Old Montevallo Rd</td>
<td>18,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Mill Rd between I-20 and US 78</td>
<td>17,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 130 south of Edwards Lake Pkwy</td>
<td>16,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 11 south of I-459</td>
<td>15,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 11 south of Sadler Gap</td>
<td>15,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Mill Rd south of Old Grants Mill Rd</td>
<td>13,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 43 west of Bryan Drive</td>
<td>12,220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 78 west of John Rogers Drive</td>
<td>11,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Rodgers Rd south of US 11 at Railroad</td>
<td>10,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montclair Rd west of Trailer Lane</td>
<td>9,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 78 between Commerce and 28th</td>
<td>9,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants mill Road east of Karl Daly Road</td>
<td>8,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 78 east of Old Leeds Rd</td>
<td>8,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Mill Rd north of Sicard Hollow Rd</td>
<td>7,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 143 south of Summer Place</td>
<td>7,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Mill Rd at Cahaba River</td>
<td>7,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR143 north of Browning Drive</td>
<td>7,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Rogers Drive north of US 78</td>
<td>5,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Rogers Drive south of Main Street</td>
<td>5,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 96 east of US 78</td>
<td>4,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Leeds Rd north of Grants Mill Rd</td>
<td>4,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grantswood Road east of Old Leeds Road</td>
<td>4,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Leeds Rd south of Stonehenge Place</td>
<td>4,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th Street south of Jefferson Street</td>
<td>3,880</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Irondale on the Move: City of Irondale Comprehensive Plan
### Existing Conditions

#### Location AADT Count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>AADT Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alton Rd between Hambrye and Caldwell Rd</td>
<td>3,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th Street between 4th and 5th Avenues</td>
<td>3,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 147 south of Parrish Lane</td>
<td>3,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR 94 east of Alton Rd</td>
<td>3,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overton Rd south of Old Overton Rd</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alton Rd north of Amberhill Rd</td>
<td>2,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Drive east of Alton Rd</td>
<td>2,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruffner Rd north of 2nd Avenue</td>
<td>2,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overton Rd between Hampton Rd and Belmont Rd</td>
<td>2,070</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Alabama Department of Transportation*

#### 4.7. STREET CONNECTIVITY

Figure 2.17 depicts the connectivity in the city’s roadway network by noting three-way intersections and four-way intersections. Unlike dead ends and three-way intersections, four-way intersections are good indicators of connectivity within a street network because they are the most effective at moving traffic. A robust grid network built around four-way intersections can provide multiple travel routes and preclude the need for unnecessarily large arterials and intersections and reduce the number of long, circuitous routes of travel. Within the city limits, downtown Irondale and newer subdivisions that have been built with alleys are the areas that have the strongest foundation for an effective street network. Connected street networks result in dispersed traffic, a highly walkable block system and results in smaller streets that are more suitable for walking and bicycling. Irondale’s grid network of streets should be maintained and expanded whenever possible by linking dead-end streets and subdivisions.

#### 4.8. PLANNED/PROGRAMMED PROJECTS

**Grants Mill south (this project is currently under construction and is nearing completion):**

This project includes the widening of Grants Mill Road from one lane in each direction to two lanes in each direction with left and right turn lanes as required. When completed, Grants Mill Road will taper to three lanes back to the existing two lane east of the Overton Road intersection. The project also includes the widening of Overton Road from two lanes to three lanes to allow for dedicated right and left turn lanes onto Grants Mill Road.

**Grants Mill north (this project is under design):**

The City of Irondale has received ATRIP funding for the widening and improvement of Grants Mill Road (CR 143) from Grantswood Road to Old Leeds Road. The project will widen section of Grants Mill Road from two lanes to a 48-foot wide four-lane section of Grants Mill Road that extends north from Interstate 459 near the intersection with Grantswood Road and continue north approximately 4,200 linear feet to the intersection with Old Leeds Road.

**Resurfacing Projects**

Depending on the availability of funds, the City of Irondale repaves roads every three to four years. As of June 2015, the City of Irondale has the following roadway resurfacing projects scheduled for the summer:

- Cross Timbers Lane
- Grants Mill Drive
- 16th Street North at 2nd Avenue Intersection
- Riverbrook Road
- Fulmar Drive
- LaSalle Lane
Figure 2.17: Street Connectivity Map
4.9. **TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

Through the Visioning Survey and Community Remarks tools on the project website, residents were able to express their primary transportation concerns in the City of Irondale. The following is a summary of the road segments and intersections that were mentioned the most, along with issues of concern. They are displayed in Figure 2.18.

**Major Road Segments of Concern:**

- **Grants Mill Road**
  - Needs widening to four-lanes throughout (especially from Old Leeds Road to I-459).
  - Needs a bike lane to connect with the existing segment between Old Leeds Road and Kilgore Memorial Drive.

- **US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard**
  - Traffic light timing issues need to be fixed from city limits at the I-20 overpass to the Sam’s Club entrance.
  - Needs cross-walks, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
  - Needs repaving (fix potholes), especially at the merge area of Montclair Road at US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard.

- **Old Leeds Road**
  - Needs bike infrastructure or widening.
  - Needs restriping.

- **Ruffner Road**
  - Needs major improvements since portions of the road are very dangerous.
  - Currently the bicyclists are a hazard on the two-lane road. Designated bike lanes are needed in both directions.

- **16th Street**
  - Crosswalks are needed.

- **Alton Road**
  - Needs repaving.

- **Kilgore Memorial Drive**
  - The right-hand turn lane onto Beacon Drive from I-20 needs to be marked as a turn lane.

- **Scenic View Drive**
  - Needs sidewalks, bike lanes and speed bumps. Current safety concern for pedestrians.

- **Overton Road**
  - Needs repaving, including striping and patching of potholes.
  - Needs shoulder areas improved.
  - Needs sidewalks.

- **Belmont Road**
  - Speeding needs to be enforced.
  - The drainage ditch needs to be covered.

- **Beacon Drive / Fulmar Drive**
  - Speeding needs to be enforced or speed bumps should be added.

- **Queenstown Road**

- **Elder Street**
  - City of Irondale should work with City of Birmingham to pick up trash on side of the road.
  - Sidewalk are needed for residents to walk to commercial areas.
Existing Conditions

Major Intersections of Concern:
- Grants Mill Road at Old Leeds Road
  - Needs a right-turn lane from Grants Mill Road onto Old Leeds Road toward the schools.
  - Need to address alignment issues, lighting, traffic light timing, handling traffic at rush hour.
- Grants Mill Road at I-459
  - Need to address intersection curve.
- Grants Mill Road at Overton Road
  - Needs a traffic light.
- Old Leeds Road at I-20 interchange
  - Needs a caution light or traffic light when turning off of I-20 to go left to toward Shades Valley High School.
  - It is hard to turn off of US 78 or pass over the I-20 overpass with the entrance and exit ramps during rush hour.
- Old Leeds Road at Belmont Road
- Grants Mill Road at US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard
- Grants Mill Road at Karl Daly Road
  - It is hard to turn left from Grants Mill Road onto Karl Daly Road.
- US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard at Kilgore Memorial Drive
- 16th Street at 1st Avenue North
- Bonnie Bell Lane at Cornell Drive
- 16th Street at 2nd Avenue North
- Montclair Road and US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard
  - It is dangerous to merge onto US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard by Hamburger Heaven.
- US 78 at Heritage Place Drive (Jefferson Christian Academy)
  - Needs a school zone speed limit.

General Transportation Concerns:
- Signage needs to be updated (especially along US 78 / Crestwood Boulevard).
- Drainage ditches need to be covered on heavily used roads.
- Repaving and pothole repair is needed in many areas, such as 1st avenue North, 2nd Avenue North and the neighborhood to the north of it, 4th Avenue North,
- Need for routine road and shoulder maintenance; good striping / painting for night visibility.
- A quiet zone (crossing where trains cannot blow their horns) is needed for the train horn noise.
- Lack of public transportation is a major issue (need to connect to Birmingham via the Birmingham Jefferson Transit Authority Max Bus System). Since the City of Birmingham has expressed interest in expanding metro area public transportation leading up to the World Games in 2021, then the City of Irondale should make every attempt possible to be included in this expansion.
- The lack of street network connectivity, transportation choices, and complementary land uses at the local level exacerbates congestion as travelers rely on a limited number of options to travel relatively long distances for daily needs, including work, shopping, education, entertainment, medical, and recreation.
Figure 2.18: Major Road Segments and Intersections of Concern

Major Road Segments of Concern
- - - - Major Road Segments of Concern

Major Intersections of Concern
- - Major Intersections of Concern

City Limits
MAP IN PROGRESS
5. UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

5.1. WATER SUPPLY AND DELIVERY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Irondale Water System is operated by the Irondale Water Board provides service to approximately 2,400 residential customers and approximately 386 commercial customers inside the corporate limits. The City has three groundwater wells that are used to sell treated water to residential and commercial customers within the City of Irondale and some areas adjacent to the city limits. Groundwater that is withdrawn from the City’s public wells ranges from an average daily withdrawal of 1,302,200 gallons per day and to a maximum withdrawal capacity of 4,551,200 gallons per day.

The City’s water supply is not affected by droughts, unlike some of the neighboring water systems that generally rely on surface water that they collect from rivers and lakes as a result of rainfall. The main water sources in Irondale are the Bangor Aquifer and the Fort Payne Aquifer. The average daily water usage for the Irondale Water System is 1.07 million gallons per day (mgpd) and the current storage capacity is 4.1 million gallons, which are stored in four water tanks.

The Mayor of Irondale serves as the Superintendent of the Water System, and the City Council serves as the Water Board and holds meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Council Chamber of the Irondale City Hall. The Water Department is located at 5415 Beacon Drive, Suite 123 and oversees the water services network in the City and employees six staff members.

The water rates vary by meter size and usage. A comprehensive list of the rates is shown in Table 2.10. A new automated water meter reading system was installed in 2012 that automatically collects consumption, diagnostic, and status data from water meters in Irondale and transfers that data to a central database for billing, troubleshooting and analyzing. This new system allowed staff to collect the meter readings more efficiently and effectively.

The major waterlines in Irondale consist of 6 inch, 8 inch, 10 inch lines. The location of waterlines is depicted in Figure 2.19: Water Infrastructure Map and does not include the smaller distribution waterlines.

Table 2.10: Irondale Water System Rates (Effective October 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Water Service</th>
<th>Deposit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leasing 5/8-1”</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owning 5/8-1”</td>
<td>$75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2” meter</td>
<td>$150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3” meter</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4” meter</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6” meter</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Water Rates (Determined by size of meter)</th>
<th>Minimum Charge for first 2,000 gallons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/8” meter</td>
<td>$16.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1” meter</td>
<td>$27.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ¼ meter</td>
<td>$42.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2” meter</td>
<td>$90.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3” meter</td>
<td>$142.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2. WASTEWATER COLLECTION AND TREATMENT
The Jefferson County Sanitary Sewer System, which is run by the Environmental Services Department of Jefferson County, provides approximately 45 miles of main line sewer and approximately five miles of pressurized main lines to serve the western and northern portions of the City of Irondale.

A sewer bill includes two charges: a volumetric charge based on your metered water usage and a monthly base charge based on the size of your water meter. The volumetric charge is based on the amount of water metered by the water provider, and for most users, the billed usage is the metered water usage multiplied by an 85% return factor to account for outdoor water use not returned to the sewer (see Table 2.11). Residential customers are billed at a 100 cubic feet rate (equal to 748 gallons), and non-residential users are billed at a 1,000 gallon usage rate. The monthly base charge for residential users ranges from $4.86 to $8.63 for each unit of metered water consumption, while the volumetric charge for a non-residential user is $8.49 for each unit of metered water consumption. The monthly base charge is determined as follows:

**Table 2.11: Jefferson County Sewer Month Base Charge Rates**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meter Size (diameter)</th>
<th>Charge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/8”</td>
<td>$16.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4”</td>
<td>$17.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1”</td>
<td>$22.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 1/2”</td>
<td>$29.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The City of Irondale has an agreement with Alabama Utility Services to furnish wastewater services to the eastern areas of Irondale from approximately Grants Mill Road and Alton Road eastward to the Floyd Bradford Road area. The combining of public and private enterprises is conducive to the city providing attractive services for both residential and commercial ventures in this northeastern portion of the city limits. Poor soils conditions and other limitations in this area has limited development in the past, but the availability of wastewater services will ensure and promote Irondale as a leading and productive city for potential development between the I-20 and I-459 corridors.

5.3. STORM WATER COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

To comply with the Clean Water Act of 1972 enforced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), the municipalities within Jefferson County affected by the Clean Water Act decided that it would be more cost effective and efficient to work together to fulfill the requirements of the law, since storm water does not stop at municipal boundaries. Storm Water Management Authority, Inc. (SWMA) was created as a public corporation by the Alabama Legislature (Act 95-775) to administer the regional storm water program on behalf of the municipalities that were required to comply. Today, the City of Irondale is one of the 27 members of SWMA.

SWMA operates under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit on behalf of its members. SWMA obtains multiple water samples from 50 local creeks, streams, rivers and lakes throughout its 1,200 mile region. These samples are used to identify the source and type of pollutants present in the waterways as well as address specific ways to reduce or eliminate these pollutants. SWMA also inspects and monitors construction sites to control soil erosion and reduce sedimentation in waterways. SWMA maintains a hot line number for residents to report any suspected water pollution sources in their community. All calls to (205)943-5739 are investigated and addressed. The services provided by SWMA include:

- Water Quality Monitoring
- Water Quality Analysis
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Storm Water Complaints
- Erosion and Sedimentation Control Complaints
- Public Education
- Promoting Alternative Development Procedures

The member municipalities are still responsible for the following services:

- Maintaining the Storm Drain System
- Tracking of Pesticide, Herbicide, and Fertilizer Application Rates
- Maintaining Municipal Facilities
- Maintenance on Storm Water Controls
- Hazardous Spill Response
- Erosion and Sedimentation Control Permitting
The City Engineer of Irondale serves as the supervisor for storm water collection and management for site development. The City Engineer is intended to alert developers of the possible harmful effects from any land development project on properties downstream and provide a guideline for evaluation and control of the elements related to storm water that affect the welfare and safety of citizens of the city. In order to provide some control over the harmful effects of development and economic losses due to erosion by flooding, the City Engineer oversees the design criteria listed in Appendix A of The Code of Ordinances – detention requirements are directly related to permit land uses. In general, developments that produce an increase in the amount of storm water runoff may be required to construct storm water detention ponds or other approved types of detention devices as stated in Irondale’s Code of Ordinances, Chapter 15, and Ordinance Number 758-88.

5.4. SOLID WASTE COLLECTION, RECYCLING, AND DISPOSAL

The City of Irondale’s Public Works department provides trash and curbside recycling. Residents are charged $20 per month for garbage, recycling, brush and limb, and non-toxic junk and rubbish collection (see Table 2.12).

Table 2.12: Irondale Garbage Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pickup Schedule</th>
<th>Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>$20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Annual</td>
<td>$110.00 Discounted rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>$220.00 Discounted rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.13 depicts the garbage pickup schedule for Irondale areas. There is no set schedule for trash pickup, however Public Works comes through each neighborhood every week to ten days. Recycling is picked up every Wednesday. The City recycles the following materials: mixed paper, aluminum cans, steel cans, and household plastics #1-7. Items that are not picked up for recycling are plastic shopping bags, foam products, pottery, and glass. The recycling program began in 2014, and has proven to be fairly successful for both the city and residents.

Table 2.13: Irondale Garbage Pickup Schedule (Effective June 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garbage Pickup Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday and Wednesday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alton Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belmont Road South of I-459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Brook Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Mill Road South of I-459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Gardens Neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overton Road Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roebuck Plaza and Highway 11 Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruffner Road Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southside Neighborhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5. **BROADBAND INTERNET AVAILABILITY**

Broadband internet in Irondale encompasses a range of technologies including: Asymmetric xDSL, Symmetric xDSL, Fiber Optic Cable, Copper Wire Cable and Cable Modem. Currently, the City of Irondale is covered by eight wireless broadband service providers. They include:

- AT&T Alabama
- Bright House Networks
- Century Link
- Charter Communications
- Level 3 Communications LLC
- MegaPath Corporation
- TW Telecom of Alabama Inc.
- Windstream Alabama

Within the City limits, most consumers can chose between DSL technology and cable technology. The fiber optic cable network that currently exists in Irondale runs along US 78 / Bankhead Highway, Alton Road and Grants Mill Road and is associated with industries involved in logistics (warehousing and transportation), medical providers, and broadcasting. Table 2.14 depicts the City of Irondale’s percent of population with access to various broadband technology. Table 2.15 provides an explanation of download and upload speeds available from each broadband provider.

**Table 2.14: Percent of the Irondale Population with Broadband Internet Access**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Percent of Population with Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DSL</td>
<td>98.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber Optic Cable</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper Cable</td>
<td>98.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireless Broadband</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Table 2.15: Wireless Broadband Provider Speeds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider Name</th>
<th>Technology Available</th>
<th>Maximum Advertised Download Speed</th>
<th>Typical Download Speed</th>
<th>Maximum Advertised Upload Speed</th>
<th>Typical Upload Speed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AT&amp;T Alabama</td>
<td>Asymmetric xDSL</td>
<td>768 kbps- 50 mbps</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>200 kbps- 10 mbps</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright House Networks</td>
<td>Cable Modem</td>
<td>25 mbps- 50 mbps</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1.5 mbps- 3 mbps</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Century Link</td>
<td>Asymmetric xDSL</td>
<td>768 kbps- 50 mbps</td>
<td>768 kbps- 50 mbps</td>
<td>768 kbps- 6 mbps</td>
<td>768 kbps- 6 mbps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider Name</td>
<td>Technology Available</td>
<td>Maximum Advertised Download Speed</td>
<td>Typical Download Speed</td>
<td>Maximum Advertised Upload Speed</td>
<td>Typical Upload Speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Communications</td>
<td>Cable Modem</td>
<td>100 mbps-1 gbps</td>
<td>50 mbps-100 mbps</td>
<td>3 mbps-6 mbps</td>
<td>3 mbps-6 mbps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3 Communications, LLC</td>
<td>Fiber Optic Cable</td>
<td>Greater than 1 gbps</td>
<td>Greater than 1 gbps</td>
<td>Greater than 1 gbps</td>
<td>Greater than 1 gbps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MegaPath Corporation</td>
<td>Asymmetric xDSL,</td>
<td>1.5 mbps-10 mbps</td>
<td>768 kbps-6 mbps</td>
<td>200 kbps-6 mbps</td>
<td>200 Kbps-6 Mbps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Symmetric xDSL and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copper Wire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TW Telecom of Alabama, Inc</td>
<td>Copper Wire, Fiber</td>
<td>768 kbps-1gbps</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>768 kbps-1gbps</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optic Cable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windstream Alabama</td>
<td>Asymmetric xDSL</td>
<td>3 mbps-6 mbps</td>
<td>3 mbps-6 mbps</td>
<td>200 kbps-768 kbps</td>
<td>200 kbps-768 kbps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Dept. of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, State Broadband Initiative (SHP format June 30, 2014).

Figure 2.20 illustrates the availability of this infrastructure in the City of Irondale. The following technology definitions are from the National Broadband Classroom:

- **Community Anchor Institution**: in Irondale there are four schools, one library, one police station and two fire stations that provide outreach, access, equipment and support services to facilitate greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including low-income, the unemployed and the aged.
- **Copper Wire**: Copper wire technology uses phone lines to transmit data.
- **Asymmetric xDSL**: Digital Subscriber Lines (DSL) transmit information over traditional copper telephone lines via a modem. Asymmetric xDSL is primarily used by residential consumers and typically provides faster download speeds than upload speeds.
- **Symmetric xDSL**: Digital Subscriber Lines (DSL) transmit information over traditional copper telephone lines via a modem. Symmetric xDSL is intended to provide equal speed for sending and receiving data. This arrangement is standard for businesses that move large files among various users, between multiple sources.
- **Cable Modem**: Cable modem service enables users to have access to high-speed internet service using the same coaxial cables that deliver cable TV programming. Users can access the internet without disrupting television programming.
- **Fiber Optic Cable**: Fiber optic refers to the medium and technology associated with the transmission of information through a fiber-optic cable to a broadband connection. One of the biggest benefits of fiber optic cables is that they offer faster speeds over longer distances when compared to traditional copper-based technologies like DSL and cable. In fact, they are capable of reaching speeds of 500mbps and 1gbps respectively.

The City of Irondale has and will continue to develop opportunities for economic development. The development of municipal fiber optic infrastructure within the city would attract new businesses, professionals, and contribute to job creation in Irondale. Encouraging public and private investments in improving broadband infrastructure would give Irondale a competitive advantage for capital investment and future job creation.
Figure 2.20: Broadband Coverage Map

Broadband Availability

- Community Anchor Sites
- City Limits
- Cable Modem
- Copper Wire
- Fiber Optic Cable
- Symmetric xDSL
- Asymmetric xDSL

Figure 2.20: Broadband Coverage Map
Figure 2.21: Community Facilities Map

Community Facilities

- Public Schools
- Private Schools
- Library
- Police Stations
- Fire Stations
- Senior Citizens Center
- Parks and Recreation
- City Limits

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Irondale on the Move: City of Irondale Comprehensive Plan
6. **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

6.1. **SCHOOLS**

Jefferson County Board of Education administers five schools within the City of Irondale. Three elementary schools and one middle school prepares students for grades 9-12 at Shades Valley High School. Table 2.16 lists the public schools in Irondale which include: Grantswood Community School (K5-2nd), Gresham Elementary School (K5-5th), Irondale Community School (3rd-5th), Irondale Middle School (6th-8th) and Shades Valley High School (9th-12th), which houses the Jefferson County International Baccalaureate School (9th-12th). The combined enrollment of these public schools is approximately 3,024 students.

Shades Valley High School is home to the Jefferson County International Baccalaureate School (JCIB). JCIB consistently ranks in the top 20 of the *Washington Post’s* annual “Most Challenging High Schools” list (#11 in 2015, #12 in 2014, #18 in 2013, #14 in 2012) and is the #1 ranked academic high school in the state of Alabama by *Newsweek*. Shades Valley High School also offers students competitive academic variety through the Shades Valley Technical Academies such as an Engineering Academy, Finance Academy, Vocational School, Theater and Dance Academy and a School of Visual Art.

Jefferson Christian Academy and Webster Christian School make up Irondale’s private school options. Jefferson Christian Academy serves students grades K4 through 12th grade while Webster Christian School offers educational opportunities for students in grades K4-8th (see Table 2.17). Locations of the schools are shown in Figure 2.21 on the Community Facilities map.
6.2. **POLICE**

The Irondale Police Department is located at 101 20th Street South and is made up of 41 individuals (32 officers and 9 dispatch personnel) committed to serving the families, schools and businesses of the City. Police stations include the main station at 101 South 20th Street across from City Hall, and a substation is located in Grants Mill Station at 5415 Beacon Drive, Suite 123, as shown on Figure 2.21. The department’s space within City Hall accommodates officers, detectives, administration, communications and case

---

**Table 2.16: Irondale Public Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Schools</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Grades Served</th>
<th>Special Programs</th>
<th>2014 – 2015 School Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grantswood Community</td>
<td>511. Grantswood Rd. Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td>K5-2nd</td>
<td>Parenting classes, family fitness night, service learning opportunities.</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gresham Elementary School</td>
<td>2650 Gresham Dr. Irondale, AL 35243</td>
<td>K5-5th</td>
<td>Academic student of the month, physical education student of the month, school safety patrol.</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irondale Community School</td>
<td>225 South 16th St. Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td>3rd-5th</td>
<td>AMS&amp;T Site (Alabama Math Science and Technology Initiative Site), ARI site (Alabama Reading Initiative Site), student clubs</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irondale Middle School</td>
<td>6200 Old Leeds Rd. Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td>6th-8th</td>
<td>Tutoring available</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shades Valley High School and Jefferson County International Baccalaureate</td>
<td>6100 Old Leeds Rd. Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td>9th-12th</td>
<td>Advanced Placement classes, IB courses, Duel Enrollment courses with local colleges, 4 career technical labs (welding, electrical, automotive service technology, collision repair), fine arts programs.</td>
<td>1,352 (363 students are in the International Baccalaureate Program)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.17: Irondale Private Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private Schools</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Grades Served</th>
<th>Special Programs</th>
<th>2014 – 2015 School Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson Christian Academy</td>
<td>1500 Heritage Place Dr. Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td>K4-12th</td>
<td>Interactive classroom technology.</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webster Christian School</td>
<td>4700 Highlands Way Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td>K4-8th</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
property (evidence and lost/found). A detailed list of police department sworn personnel by occupation and designation, as well as a list of police department equipment is shown in Tables 2.18 and 2.19.

**Table 2.18: Police Department Sworn Personnel (2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>DESIGNATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Operations and Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Patrol, Investigations, Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrolman</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Patrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications Officers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Enforcement Officers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Code Enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Relation Officers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Staff Support Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Positions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Department Secretary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.19: Police Department Equipment (2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VEHICLE/ EQUIPMENT</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MAKE/MODEL</th>
<th>CONDITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patrol Cars</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1999-2014</td>
<td>Ford, Dodge, Chevrolet</td>
<td>Poor-Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Cars</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Dodge</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Vehicles</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19998-2014</td>
<td>Ford, Dodge, Chevrolet</td>
<td>Poor-Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shotguns</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Remington 870</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6.3. FIRE**

The Irondale Fire Department employs 38 full-time firefighters (23 paramedics and 15 EMT-Basics). The Department does not have part-time or volunteer employees. The Irondale Fire Department headquarters is located at 101 20th Street South.

Facilities include three fire stations as shown in Figure 2.21. Station 1 is located at 5308 Beacon Drive and has one Engine Company and one ladder truck. Next, Station 2 is located at 6101 Old Leeds Road and is equipped with one Engine Company as well as one service truck. Lastly, Station 3 is located at 2603 Alton Road and is outfitted with one Engine Company and one reserve engine. A full list of Fire Department equipment is shown in Table 2.20.
Recently, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) upgraded Irondale’s classification from Class 4 to Class 3. The ISO classification grading system ranges from Class 1, which is exemplary, to Class 10, which indicates the program does not meet minimum standards. The upgrade in classification should result in a drop in fire insurance costs for Irondale homeowners and business owners.

Recognizing that a regularly utilized railway runs through the City, plans for the creation of a Mobile Command Post is underway. Investments would include a new fire truck equipped with hazmat capabilities and ladder. Additionally, firemen will be trained in hazmat procedures.

**Table 2.20: Fire Department Equipment (2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle / Equipment</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Make / Model</th>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pumper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Pierce / Impel</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Pierce / Impel</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Pierce / Saber</td>
<td>FAIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>E-One/ Eagle</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>E-One/ Recycle</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-foot aerial ladder truck</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>American LaFrance</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Truck</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Pierce / Rescue</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command Car</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Ford/ Expedition</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire inspector / investigator car</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Ford/ Explorer</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Service Vehicle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Ford/ F-150</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Service Vehicle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Jeep/ Cherokee</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Service Vehicle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Jeep/ Cherokee</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Service Vehicle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>GMC/ Jimmy</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-foot aerial ladder truck</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Pierce / Velocity</td>
<td>On Order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6.4. PARKS AND RECREATION

The Irondale Parks and Recreation Department is located at 9622 YMCA Way and provides and maintains a system of six parks and numerous green spaces for the residents of Irondale. A detailed list of the recreational facilities within Irondale is shown in Table 2.21, and they are displayed in the Community Facilities map in Figure 2.21. These recreational lands include community parks that are developed for intensive public use, such as Ruffner Park; property for more passive recreational uses, such as Ellard Park; and several neighborhood parks throughout the City.

- **Beacon Park** is located off Beacon Drive behind Grants Mill Station. Well lit at night, the park has a brand new kiddie playground, two picnic pavilions, barbecue pits, a walking track, two tennis courts and public restrooms. The annual “Jazz in the Park” free concert is held here.

- Located on Grants Mill Road, **Cahaba River Landing** is a city-maintained canoe launch that provides access to the Cahaba River in the southern portion of the city. Enthusiasts who launch there can enjoy a scenic three-to-five hour trip down the Cahaba with take-out points near Liberty Park. One can also launch north of US 78 and take out at the Grants Mill Road launch site.

- **Ellard Park** is located across from Norfolk Southern Drive on Ruffner Court and is 9.46 acres
of beautiful, scenic, quiet and tranquil surroundings. It is equipped with picnic tables and small barbecue pits. Patrons view it as a great place to sit, walk, and enjoy the day. The park is not lighted and closes at sundown.

- **Grants Mill Station Dog Park** is Irondale’s newest park and the city’s first designated Dog Park. It is located between Grants Mill Station and Beacon Park. The enclosed, 4-acre dog park is a favorite destination for pet owners. Areas are designated for small and large pets, including dog training equipment. Pet owners can watch their dogs exercise from the comfort of nearby picnic tables.

- **Ruffner Park** is located at 301 Ruffner Road on the northern boundary of the city. The park is a scenic 20.3-acre baseball and softball complex with six lighted baseball fields, concession stand, public restrooms, picnic eating areas, a large barbecue pit, and storage buildings. The Irondale Youth Association provides baseball and softball programs for youth girls and boys. Annual participation is in excess of 400 children with guidance by adult volunteer youth associations. Visiting teams and parents declare the facility to be one of the best in the county.

- **Triangle Park** is located on Marion Drive at the intersection of Monticello Road and Montevallo Road in Old Irondale. This is a small, quiet community park with benches utilized by nearby residents and joggers.

- While not located within Irondale, **Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve** is a 1,038-acre urban nature preserve located north of Irondale at 1214 81st Street South in Birmingham, Alabama. It is one of the largest privately held urban nature preserve in the United States. The reserve features both educational and passive recreational programs which foster an appreciation of the natural world through 12 miles of hiking, biking and running trails. Due to its proximity to the City of Irondale, the Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve is considered a great amenity to residents. Because of this, the Parks and Recreation Department and the Irondale Park Committee are working on adding an entrance from Irondale into the Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve.
Committed to providing residents with access to quality parks and green space, the Parks and Recreation Department and Irondale Park Committee are currently planning a number of recreation projects and programs. The Rock Springs neighborhood has a new green space and the City will be selecting design concepts submitted by Rock Springs residents for further improvements. Plans for another green space is underway in Roebuck Plaza.

A highly anticipated project is the Moon River Canoe Launch Project. The Launch Project is being made possible through collaborative partnerships with the City of Irondale, the City of Leeds, Freshwater Land Trust, the Alabama Power Foundation, The Cahaba River Society, The Nature Conservancy, and Alabama Innovation Engine. The Moon River Launch will be the first recreational site developed as part of the recently announced Cahaba Blueway Project. The Blueway, once fully developed, is expected to provide multiple public access sites along the river for boating, fishing, canoeing, swimming, hunting, and hiking. The launch can be reached by turning left from Rex Lake Road onto U.S. 78/Parkway Drive Southwest and then following U.S. 78 for about two miles. The Moon River launch will link launches on Grants Mill Road and Overton Road.

Table 2.21: Irondale Parks and Recreational Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Approximate Acreage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Recent / Anticipated Upgrades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beacon Park</td>
<td>5309 Beacon Drive Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>Kiddie playground, 2 picnic pavilions, barbecue pits, walking track, 2 tennis courts, public restrooms</td>
<td>New playground equipment, new park design, landscaping improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cahaba River Landing</td>
<td>Grants Mill Road Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td></td>
<td>Canoe launch for trips down the Cahaba River</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellard Park</td>
<td>1st Avenue North Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Picnic tables, small barbecue pits, not lighted (closes at sundown)</td>
<td>New playground equipment, new walking trail, open green area improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Mill Station Dog Park</td>
<td>Kilgore Memorial Dr. Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Dog training equipment, picnic tables, special area designation for small and large pets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruffner Park</td>
<td>301 Ruffner Road Irondale, AL 35210</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>6 lighted baseball fields, concession stand, picnic eating areas, large barbecue pit, storage buildings, public restrooms</td>
<td>Fencing around all ball fields have recently been replaced. Anticipate new parking and field and signage improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangle Park</td>
<td>Marion Drive at the intersection of Monticello Road and Montevallo Road in Old Irondale</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>Public benches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.5. **LIBRARY**

The Irondale Public Library is located next to City Hall at 105 South 20th Street. The library has approximately 8,000 sq. ft. with areas for fiction, non-fiction, reference, picture books, audio visuals and computers for children, young adults and adults. There is also a meeting room that is used many times a week by the public and for library functions. The room can hold about 95 people and there are chairs and tables for about 55 people. A listing of current library staff is shown in Table 2.22.

The library is open 7 days a week for a total of 48 hours per week. These hours include 3 week days until 7pm, 4 hours on Saturday, and 3 hours on Sunday. The library currently staffs a total of seven people. Figure 2.22 highlights the 2014 year in review for the Irondale Public Library. There were 21,952 visits to the library, and the library’s databases were accessed by Irondale residents 29,063 times. The library collection includes 53,697 items, of which 31,000 books were circulated in 2014. Among the library card holders in Irondale, 77.7% are adults over age 18 and 22.3% are children under age 18.

**Table 2.22: Library Staff**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Employees</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Full or Part Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coordinator of Public Services</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Library Assistant- Circulation / Youth Services</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Library Assistant- Technical Services</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Library Clerk</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Part-time Pages</td>
<td>15-19 hrs / week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Library is a member of the Public Libraries in Jefferson County (PLJC). The Library’s PLJC membership grants patrons of the IPL access to materials housed within all 40 member libraries in Jefferson County. Other services include: notary public by appointment ($5), fax services ($1/page), free computer access, free Wi-Fi, in-house laptop checkouts, color printing and photocopies ($.20), public meeting room available for reservation, online databases, online access to Homework Help (a service of Tutor.com), as well as entertaining and informative programs for all ages.

Activities provided by the Irondale Public Library include:
- Book Club: Meets the second Monday of each month.
- Battle of the Movies: New movie releases are featured and played once a month.
- Children’s Activity and Story Time: Occurs every other week at various times.
- Lunch & Learn Workshops: Occurs every third Wednesday of the month and features discussions on personal business and finance.
- Various Arts and Craft workshops
- Various Teen Workshops
Figure 2.22: Irondale Public Library 2014 Year in Review

Irondale Public Library
2014 Year in Review

Library Card Holders in Irondale

- Adults over 18: 77.7%
- Children under 18: 22.3%

21,952: # of Library Visits in 2014

Our Digital Collection

- Databases available through AVL and PLC:
  - 43,697
  - 31,000 Book Circulation in 2014
- Hoopla Streaming Video, Music and Audio Books:
  - Launched February 2015
- Zinio 79 Digital Magazines:
  - Launched December 2014

OverDrive eBooks & Audiobooks

- Downloaded by Irondale residents:
  - 2,273 eBooks
  - 1,406 E-audiobooks

Public Libraries in Jefferson County

376,717: # of Library Card holders countywide

PLJC Vans Deliver:

- 4 Million items were transported last year
- People may turn in items at any library in the county. The van picks them up.
- People may request an item from any public library in Jefferson County and pick it up at their library. The van delivers those items.

538 followers

33,264 daily reach

21,696 website visits
6.6. **PUBLIC WORKS**

Public Works Operations is charged with maintaining, repairing and expanding the City’s infrastructure and consists of five departments: Streets and Sanitation, Fleet Maintenance, Parks and Recreation, Beautification and Forestry, and Building Maintenance. The Department is responsible for approximately 200 miles of roads and right of way, and is also responsible for sidewalks, street signs, maintenance, upkeep and repair of all City properties, landscaping of City land and lots, garbage and sanitation.

**Streets and Sanitation**

The Streets department maintains a program of bituminous spot overlays, roadway sealcoating, and concentrated patching and crack sealing when allowed. It is also responsible for street and regulatory signs, pavement marking, the storm sewer system, and tree trimming along the public right-of-way. To facilitate proper maintenance of road surfaces and limit maintenance disruptions, the City’s pavement management program designates seven districts. Each year, the City surveys its roadways for problem areas and takes action to correct pavement problems. A planned pavement management program should provide that the City’s roads are maintained in top condition.

The City has an active program to replace and maintain street signs on City owned roads and streets. The Public Works Department is responsible for replacing any faded or defaced traffic control signs and straighten signs damaged by wind or other forces.

**Fleet Maintenance**

Fleet maintenance is responsible for purchases, repairs, and preventive maintenance on all of the City’s vehicles and equipment for each of the following departments: Police, Fire, Water, Parks and Recreation, Beautification and Forestry, Building Maintenance, Senior Citizens Center and the Library.

The City presently has approximately 300 pieces of equipment consisting of fire trucks, police cars, dump trucks, utility trucks, fleet support vehicles, knuckle boom loaders, backhoes, tractors, mowers, chainsaws, weed eaters and a variety of other types of equipment.

Fleet maintenance provides a vast array of other services to meet the unique needs of each department within the city and the needs of the citizens of the community. For example, fleet maintenance fabricates and welds all city storm drain grates and city beautification award signs, and does all other welding projects that arise for each individual department. Fleet maintenance also supports other departments when adverse weather conditions or unexpected emergencies arise so that the citizens are provided with the best possible service. In addition, fleet maintenance manages a 12,000-gallon fueling station that utilizes a computerized fuel card system and a Health Department required wash bay facility.

**Beautification and Forestry**

The Irondale Beautification Division maintains various landscapes throughout the City and is detailed as follows: US 78 from City Limits to City Limits, Kilgore Memorial Drive, City Hall, Library, Caboose, Flatcar, the Historic District, the Old Leeds Rd at I-20 exits and entrances and flower beds, the shrubs, trees and grass around five pump stations, shrubs, and all flower beds and shrubs throughout the City.
6.7. IRONDALE REVENUE DEPARTMENT
The Irondale Revenue Department is located within City Hall and is responsible for issuing business licenses and regulating the business activities of industries. It is their mission to fairly and impartially apply all laws and regulations dealing with collection of various taxes and fees due to the City.

Irondale citizens can now renew their automobile tags at the Irondale Revenue Department. Tag renewals are processed daily during normal business hours, Monday through Thursday, between 7:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

6.8. BUILDING CODES AND INSPECTION SERVICES
Building Inspections Services is responsible for issuance of Building Permits and for inspecting all commercial and residential construction within the city limits of Irondale. The Building Inspections Services is also responsible for enforcing city ordinances and investigating complaints by citizens dealing with all types of nuisance violations. The Building Inspections Officer and the Fire Marshall make joint yearly inspections of all Irondale Businesses to ensure enforcement of Building and Fire Codes to promote the public welfare.

The following codes and standards have been adopted by the City of Irondale:
- The International Building Code, 2006 Edition, including all appendix chapters, has been adopted in its entirety as the standard building code for the City.
- The International Fuel Gas Code, 2006 Edition, including all appendix chapters, has been adopted in its entirety as the standard gas code for the City.
- The International Plumbing Code, 2006 Edition, including all appendix chapters, has been adopted in its entirety as the standard plumbing code for the City.
- The International Mechanical Code, 2006 Edition, including all appendix chapters, has been adopted in its entirety as the standard mechanical code for the City.
- The International Residential Building Code, 2006 Edition, including all appendix chapters, has been adopted in its entirety as the residential building code of the city except for Section R309.2 shall be amended to add the following: “or shall have installed over each vehicle parking area a smoke detector and heat sensor which shall be installed as called for in IRC 2006, Section R313.”
- The International Existing Building Code, 2006 Edition, including all appendix chapters, has been adopted in its entirety as the existing building code of the City.
- The International Property Maintenance Code, 2006 Edition, including all appendix chapters, has been adopted in its entirety as the property maintenance code of the City.
- The City of Irondale Standard Construction Specifications has been adopted by the city. All standards and specifications contained in such specifications shall be applicable to any person undertaking any contract with the city for public works construction and also to any person who, as owner or contractor, constructs, maintains, repairs or improves any structure or improvement on existing or future public lands, rights-of-way and easements in the City.

6.9. SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTER
The mission of the Irondale Senior Activity Center is the successful aging for all citizens – mentally, physically, socially and spiritually. The center provides many seniors in the community with a place in which to have meetings, parties and other events. Hours of operation are from Monday through Friday, 8 AM – 3:30 PM, and current programming includes arts and crafts, transportation and trips, knitting, ceramics, bingo, meals, bible study, bridge, art instruction, table games, education programs, men’s coffee club, bunco, dominoes and exercise.
The Irondale Senior Citizen’s Center has a 20 passenger bus and a 15 passenger van. The City of Irondale pays for a driver and maintains the vehicles. The vehicles are used to pick up seniors who do not have transportation. The seniors are picked up at home beginning at 8:30AM in the morning and dropped off after 2:30 PM every Monday through Friday. Those who want to be picked up must call the Center before 8:30 AM on the day they want to ride. On Thursday afternoons, the seniors who need to buy groceries are taken to Wal-mart. The vehicles are also used for several day trips each month. The trips are available at a nominal cost to all who attend the Senior Center and the activities are listed in the current month’s newsletter.

6.10. GREATER IRONDALE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
The Greater Irondale Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit professional organization whose mission is to provide members an environment where businesses, organizations and the local community can be successful and enhance the quality of life in the Irondale area. The Chamber serves as a voice for local businesses, promoting the community and representing unified interests to policymakers. In addition to work in Advocacy, Community Development, Membership Services and Membership Development, the Chamber offers many opportunities for members to grow their businesses and their presence in the community, such as: networking membership luncheons, open houses and ribbon cutting ceremonies, educational and training opportunities and social events. In April 2015, the Chamber of Commerce and the Commercial Development Authority of Irondale published the official Irondale City Guide.

6.11. CULTURAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS
The City of Irondale, the Greater Irondale Chamber of Commerce and various area organizations provide the Irondale community with many cultural programming and events for year round opportunities for public enrichment. The following is a list of some of the programs provided:

Annual Events:
- Jazz in the Park: This annual July concert takes place at Beacon Park and features a dynamic lineup of jazz musicians. Organized by the City of Irondale, 2015 marks the 3rd year anniversary of this free event.
- BBQ for Building: Organized by Habitat for Humanity, this annual event features amateur teams who compete in a barbecue cook-off for the title of Grand Champion, live music, and kids’ activities. 2015 marks the 7th anniversary of this event.
- Ms. Senior Irondale Pageant: This pageant supports the Irondale Senior Activity Center. Contestants compete to prove that age is just a number to showcase their talents in various fun filled events.
• Irondale Spring Fest: This family friendly event features live music, food, and arts and crafts from a variety of vendors. Organized by the City of Irondale, 2015 marks the 1st anniversary of this event.

• Irondale Christmas Parade: This annual event takes place in early December and includes a parade which starts at Irondale Community School and ends at Irondale’s City Hall, as well as the ceremonial lighting of the City’s Christmas tree, and a sighting of Santa.

• Whistle Stop Festival: This annual festival spotlights Irondale’s Historic Downtown with live entertainment, and over a hundred vendors selling arts, crafts and food. 2015 marks the 23rd anniversary of this event.

**Irondale Art Council:**
The Irondale Art Council (IAC) promotes the availability of the arts, art education, and art awareness for citizens of Irondale and its neighboring communities. The IAC meets the first Thursday of the month, once a month, in the Library. Below is a list of programs and events sponsored by the arts council.

• “Out of the Blue Art Show and Sale, in the Dale”: This is a reoccurring pop up event that occurs each year. It showcases galleries of local artists and residents, arts and crafts vendors, and food.

• “Flipping for the Arts”: is a repurpose, trash to treasure event that will take place in September 2015. If successful, the show will become an annual event. This show and sale will feature furniture and art that have been repurposed from trash and other material into useable items.

• Art Chalk Walk: The IAC came up with the concept for this Friends of the Library event. The event takes place in April and celebrates National Library Week. At the event, young artists up to age 14 are invited to “make a scene” at the Irondale Public Library by creating a work of art in chalk on the sidewalk.

**Alabama Historical Society:**
The Irondale Alabama Historical Society was founded in 2008, with the purpose to preserve and display the history of Irondale. It is housed in the building known as the “Taxi Stand,” which is next to the Red Caboose on 1st Avenue South in downtown Irondale. The Historical Society does not have a designated time to open, however, all it takes is a phone call to arrange a time for a visit. Inside one can find a collection of over 60 house pictures from research at the Archives of the Birmingham Public Library.

Through the generosity of the local residents, there is a growing collection of articles, pictures and artifacts reflecting life in Irondale.

One of the best finds is a bound copy of city council minutes from 1890 that holds a written account of the city business transacted that year. The notebook, along with about 10 others, was sitting in a box
inside City Hall. Another document highlights the city’s incorporation on October 17, 1887. There were 32 votes for incorporating the area that had been known as the Red Ore community and six votes against the incorporation.

6.12. **COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES ISSUES**

Through public input opportunities, residents have expressed issues regarding community facilities and services:

**Schools:**
- Intern work programs are needed. Work with businesses to provide internships and/or job shadowing opportunities for junior and senior students.
- Increased communication is needed for school events.

**Parks:**
- Safety and maintenance are major concerns. Many people say they go to parks in neighboring municipalities because the city parks are not clean and they do not feel safe. Although parks in neighboring municipalities might have incidents of crime and violence, residents feel difference is that those other parks are beautiful and well maintained.
- Residents also do not use parks due to lack of sidewalks and public transit for access.
- Residents feel that there is a lack of city support for youth and athletic facilities.
- Provide new facilities such as a community center or athletic complex, playground equipment that are ADA compliant, an amphitheater for music and that could be rented for weddings, movies, birthday parties, etc.
- Need more green spaces in areas.

**Fire:**
- Residents worry about citizen safety without a working ladder truck

**Police:**
- Crime is a concern. Crime needs to be reduced so residents feel safer on foot.
- There is a lack of police presence in the shopping areas. Too many people are roaming around Irondale begging for money.
- Need to address the issue with increased loiter on the streets, as well as individuals asking for money around town and at the interstate exit ramps.
- Need a communication system for automated house calls in case of emergencies.
- Address prostitution and other bad activity at trashy motels / hotels.
Existing Conditions

Library:
- Expand the library or build a new library with extended hours and a business center.

Public Works:
- Resurfacing roads needs to be a priority.
- Neighborhoods need to be cleaned up and maintained.
  - Code enforcement should be a priority, such as enforcing parking ordinances that discouraging the parking of vehicles in yards. Enforce litter control.
  - Pick up litter.
  - Address abandoned and blighted lots.
  - Repave streets and repair pot holes.
  - Signs, such as in the Holiday Gardens neighborhood are in disrepair – they are leaning and faded.
  - Need better animal control in- enforce the leash law.
  - Need more sidewalks.
- Need a vacuum truck for leaves.
- Lack of attractive gateways into the city. Get better signage design throughout the City.
- Maintain grounds of public areas including along highways and roadways.
- Prevent slum lords through the strict enforcement of regulations.

Revenue Department:
- The sales tax needs to be lowered to compete with those municipalities surrounding Irondale. Mountain Brook, Hoover, Vestavia Hills and Pinson all have 3% sales tax.
- Need to provide better tax incentives to attract new businesses.

6.13. BUSINESS LICENSE AND TAX INFORMATION

Overview
The license year is based on a calendar year — January 1st through December 31st. All Licenses expire December 31st of each year, unless specified otherwise in the most current City of Irondale ordinance governing Business Licenses.

All licenses must be renewed before February 1st to avoid delinquent penalties. Courtesy renewal notices will be mailed to each license business on file on or about December 15th of each year. Business licenses must be renewed for the calendar year if still in business in the city on January 1st. Applications for new business license are taken daily hours of 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM at the Administration Department, City Hall 101 South 20th Street, Irondale, AL 35210.
Rental – Lease Tax
Each person, firm or corporation engaged in the business of renting or leasing real property to others within the City, will pay an amount equal to 3/10 of 1% of the gross compensations from such business, paid monthly, quarterly or semiannually not later than the 20th day of the month following the reporting period for which you are filing to be considered a timely return.

Lease Tax
Tax which is imposed upon every person engaged in or continuing in the business of leasing or renting tangible personal property. At the rate of (3/4%) percent on every vehicle leased. At the rate of three (3%) percent of the gross proceeds derived by the lessor or renter from the lease or rental of tangible personal property; provided the privilege or license tax on each person engaging or continuing within this city in the business of leasing or renting any automotive vehicle or truck trailer, semitrailer or house trailer, provided further, that the tax levied hereby shall not apply to any leasing or rental, as lessor, by the state, or any municipality or county in the state.

Sales Tax
Taxes that are imposed upon the consumer for purchases made at retail, at the rate of four (4%) upon every person, firm or corporation, engaged in, or continuing within this City in the business of selling at retail any tangible personal property whatsoever, including merchandise and commodities of every kind and character.

At the rate of one (1%) percent on every business selling at retail, any automotive vehicle or truck trailer, semitrailer or house trailer, one (1%) percent of every machine used in mining, quarrying, compounding, processing and manufacturing. On machines used in planting, cultivating, and harvesting farm products, livestock, poultry or farms and the parts made or manufactured for use on or in the operation of such machines.

Use Tax
Tax which is imposed upon the consumer or user of goods or merchandise purchased from vendors located outside the City of Irondale, such goods or merchandise not being subject to the City of Irondale sales tax laws. At the rate of four (4%) percent on the storage, use or other consumption in this city of tangible personal property (not including materials and supplies bought for use in fulfilling a contract for the painting, repairing, or reconditioning of vessels, barges, ships and other watercraft of more than (50 fifty tons burden) purchased at retail for storage, use or other consumption in this city.

At the rate of one (1%) percent on the storage, use or other consumption in this city of any machines used in mining, quarrying, compounding, processing and manufacturing of tangible personal property, purchased at retail on the sale price of any such machine, and on the parts of such machines, attachments and replacements therefor, also on any automotive vehicle or truck trailer, semitrailer or house trailer purchased at retail.

Lodging Tax
Lodging tax is a privilege tax levied on persons, firms, or corporations engaging in the business of renting or furnishing rooms or lodging to transients in the City of Irondale, Alabama. Charges for rooms, lodgings, or accommodations supplied for a period of 180 continuous days or more in any one place are exempt from state, county and municipal lodgings tax. The tax applies to all charges in conjunction with providing such accommodations. The City of Irondale lodging tax rate is 6%. The State of Alabama and Jefferson County also levy lodgings tax.

Jefferson County Business License and Occupational Tax
A business may also need a Jefferson County and/or State of Alabama business license. Jefferson County Occupational Tax calls should be made to Jefferson County Revenue Department.
Alcoholic Beverage License
To apply for any alcoholic beverage license, the application process begins with the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board.

State of Alabama Revenue Office
They will assist a business in applying for a State Sales and/or Use Tax Number.

City of Irondale Sales and Use Tax Breakdown formula:
- 4% City of Irondale
- 4% State of Alabama
- 2% Jefferson County
- 10% Total

7. MARKET ANALYSIS
As part of the existing conditions and trends analysis, a Market Analysis was conducted to identify local economic development opportunities and to recommend specific policy/regulatory actions that will help better position Irondale in various markets. It is intended to provide guidance to stakeholders who are engaged in community and economic development, advocacy, grant writing, business development, and other activities that affect the city. The full report is available as a separate document in Appendix A.