

The Community Facilities Plan

I. Summary

This Plan proposes to provide in each community a focal center of activities. These centers may contain a library, a health center, a shopping center, or a school and park. The Community Facilities Plan also provides for basic services including police and fire protection. Other aspects of the Plan include governmental centers, cultural facilities, colleges and universities.

II. Parks and Recreational Facilities

In a recent survey, over half of the residents of Mobile indicated they used Mobile's parks and recreational facilities. Mobile has many opportunities for creating a world class recreational system. One of the primary objectives of the Community Facilities Plan is to project where a facility will eventually be needed and acquire the land in advance of demand. There are many different types of parks and recreational facilities which serve differing populations. Some of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan include:

- Create a series of major parks, connected by parkways to form a unified system of open spaces. For example, create the Three Mile Creek Parkway from the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community to Langan Park. Within major parks, specialized facilities including a zoo or performing arts center should also be considered.
- Enhance waterfront recreational amenities. Mobile is located on Mobile Bay and its tributaries yet there are very few waterfront opportunities. This need has just begun to be addressed with the completion of Cooper Riverside Park and the Western Shore Waterfront Access Study.
- Develop small parks within neighborhoods to augment larger facilities.
- Build playgrounds and tot lots within walking distance of residential areas, preferably near the center of the neighborhoods, playfields and athletic fields for tennis, softball/baseball, basketball, football, or soccer.

III. Educational Facilities

A) Schools

The standards used in determining the sizes of sites needed for elementary, middle and high schools are those recommended by the National Council on School House Construction in its 1958 publication "Guide for Planning School Plants". In general, two sets of criteria can be used for locating school sites, (1) optimum enrollment and (2) maximum service area. They are as follows:

| School | Optimum Enrollment | Maximum Service Area (in miles) |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Elementary (Grades K - 5) | 500-700 | 1/2 to 3/4 radius |
| Middle (Grades 6 - 8) | 1,000-1,200 | 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 radius |
| High (Grades 9 - 12) | 1,200-1,800 | 2 radius |

In addition to planning schools to meet a service area and population size, the Community Facilities Plan also recommends that schools be developed for use as a public recreation facility. After school, nights, weekends, vacation (whenever school is not in session), the public can utilize the recreational amenities of schools.

B) Libraries

Libraries are an essential center of the planned community. The Mobile Public Library has a main branch located on Government Street in downtown Mobile. It also has four branches located throughout the City, and one branch within the planning jurisdiction, a five mile area to the west and southwest of the City limits. The Library's bookmobile also provides assistance throughout the City and County. It makes twenty-nine biweekly stops throughout the Mobile area.

- In general, the Mobile Public Library utilizes a two mile radius as the service area for planning library sites.
- Libraries should also consider pedestrian access and proximity to transportation.

It should be noted here that spacing of library branches inside the I-65 Beltline Highway is less than the two mile radius. This, however, can be attributed to the greater population density inside the I-65 Beltline.

IV. Public Safety and Other Facilities

Mobile is served by four police precincts and by sixteen fire stations, with two more fire stations planned to be built. These two public safety agencies serve not only within the Mobile City limits, but also within the three mile Police and Fire Jurisdiction to the west and southwest of the city limits, an area in excess of 210 square miles.

The planning for these community facilities is primarily conducted by the Police and Fire/Rescue Departments, with technical assistance from the Long Range Planning Division whenever the need arises. The goals for each agency focus on the same concepts:

- Fast and reliable delivery of emergency services

- Upgrade existing facilities, utilize new technologies and continually evaluate locations for additional facilities.