

Introduction

The *Claremont Land Development Plan* serves as the official policy statement of the City of Claremont to guide the physical growth and development of the City for the next 15 to 20 years. The adopted *Land Development Plan* is an official public document that provides general, long-range policy and implementation guidance to the Claremont City Council and Planning Board for decisions concerning the overall growth of the City. The *Plan* allows reasonable flexibility in the direction and rate of growth of the City while working to achieve sound planning objectives.

Developing the Plan

The City of Claremont experienced significant growth in the past two decades and continues to show great potential for further development. The Claremont City Council recognized the importance of having a sound plan in place to prepare for future growth. As a result, the Council charged the eight-member Planning Board with the task of developing a new Land Development Plan in the summer of 2002.

The Planning Board worked on developing the *Plan* for nearly a year. During this time they reviewed basic demographic data about growth, transportation and land use. They also heard from several speakers on specific issues. These included John Tippett, Transportation Planner with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, Trey Wingate, Claremont Engineer with WK Dickson Engineering, and Dean McGinnis, Claremont City Manager. The Board also took a field trip to view developments in Huntersville, NC and Davidson, NC. These developments included newer projects that incorporate progressive and innovative design principles as well as older, poorly designed projects.

The Planning Board also conducted a “Visual Survey,” which required members to photograph all types of developments (residential, commercial, industrial, civic, etc.) that they either liked or disliked. These developments could be located in any community members chose. These pictures were then developed and displayed on a “Like” board and a “Dislike” board to compare and contrast the different types of developments and design principles the Board photographed. This exercise helped the Board determine what types of developments may best fit Claremont in the near future.

Public input was gathered in the form of a public workshop with the Planning Board and a public hearing with the City Council. The Planning Board used the demographic data, speakers’ input, field trip, visual survey and public input to develop the key elements of the Plan. These elements include a Sidewalk and Greenways Map, a Future Land Use Map and Goals and Strategies to form a basis for future growth decisions.

Plan Organization

The *Plan* consists of five sections. The first three sections look at Claremont's demographic, transportation and current land use issues. The final two sections consider future land uses and the goals and strategies to guide future growth decisions. While most strategies recommend a specific action and give a specific timeline for implementation, some strategies are more general and implementation is left to the discretion of City Council.

Claremont Demographics

Population

Table 1 displays population changes between 1980 and 2000 for Claremont, Catawba County, the Unifour (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties), North Carolina and the United States. The 2000 Census originally determined Claremont's population to be 1,038. Upon appeal, however, the US Census Bureau corrected that number to 1,077. The adjusted 2000 population number was not factored into other Census Bureau population analysis such as ethnicity or age.

Table 1. Population, 1980 – 2000							
	1980	1990	Change 80 – 90	% Inc.	2000	Change 90 – 00	% Inc.
Claremont	880	980	100	11.4	1,077	97	9.9
Catawba Co.	105,208	118,412	13,204	12.5	141,685	23,273	19.7
Unifour	270,457	292,405	21,948	8.1	341,851	49,446	16.9
NC	5,580,095	6,632,448	752,353	12.8	8,049,313	1,419,865	21.4
US	226,542,199	248,709,873	22,167,674	9.8	281,421,906	32,712,033	13.1

Source: US Census, 2000.

Claremont added 100 people between 1980 and 1990, an increase of 11.4%. This growth rate outpaced the Unifour and the nation during that time. Claremont added almost another 100 people between 1990 and 2000, but the growth rate (9.9%) fell well below all others compared. The increase in population during the 1990s was largely due to several new developments including Old Savannah, Rachel's Vineyard and White Oak Manor.

Table 2 displays the ethnic makeup of Claremont's population in 2000. Even though Claremont's non-white population increased 2.4% in the 1990s, the City still trails Catawba County (85% white) and the Unifour (87.5% white) in diversity.

Table 2. Claremont Population by Ethnic Group, 1990 – 2000					
Ethnic Group	1990	% of Pop.	2000	% of Pop.	Chg. 90 – 00
White	961	98.1	993	95.7	32
African-American	11	1.1	23	2.2	12
American Indian	2	0.2	1	0.1	-1
Asian & Pacific Islander	6	0.6	15	1.5	9
Other Race	0	0	7	0.7	7
Two or More Races	N/A	N/A	5	0.5	N/A
Hispanic (Any Race)	4	0.4	31	3.0	27
Total	980	100.0%	1,038*	100.0%	58

* The US Census Bureau's update of Claremont's population to 1,077 from 1,038 is not factored into this table.

Source: US Census, 2003.

Table 3 separates Claremont’s population into five age groups;

- Young Children (0-4)
- School Age (5-17)
- Younger Labor Force (18-44)
- Older Labor Force (45-64)
- Elderly (65+)

Table 3. Claremont Age Distribution, 1980 – 2010			
Age	1990	2000	% Change
0-4	44	55	25.0
5-17	163	155	-4.9
18-44	416	420	1.0
45-64	211	269	27.5
65+	146	139	-4.8
Total	980	1,038*	5.9

** The US Census Bureau’s update of Claremont’s population to 1,077 from 1,038 is not factored into this table.
Source: US Census. 2002: NC State Demographics Unit. 2002.*

The “Younger Labor Force” continues to be the most populous age group. The “Older Labor Force,” however, saw the most growth in the 1990s (27.5%). While the “Elderly” group slightly declined in the 1990s, it is expected to see a significant increase in the near future, as “baby boomers” begin to reach retirement age.

The effect of the increasing “Older Labor Force” can be seen in Table 4 by the fact that Claremont’s median age grew more than Catawba County’s and the state’s. Claremont has the highest median age in Catawba County (excluding Brookford), although not the highest in the Unifour. Claremont’s diverse housing market will continue to be significant as portions of the “Older Labor Force” move into the “Elderly.”

Table 4. Median Age, 1980 – 2000					
	1980	1990	% Change	2000	% Change
Claremont	32.4	35.6	9.9	38.2	7.3
Catawba Co.	30.6	34.3	12.1	36.1	5.2
NC	29.6	33.2	12.2	35.3	6.4
US	30.0	32.9	9.7	35.3	7.3

Source: US Census Bureau, 2002; NC State Data Center, 2002.

Housing

Claremont's housing stock, unlike its population, saw a significant increase in the 1990s compared to the 1980s. Table 5 shows, however, that the housing increase in Claremont was not as great as in the surrounding area.

Table 5. Housing Units, 1980 – 2000							
	1980	1990	Change	% Inc.	2000	Change	% Inc.
Claremont	361	402	41	11.4	456	54	13.4
Catawba Co.	39,282	49,192	9,910	20.1	59,919	10,727	21.8
Unifour	100,382	121,418	21,036	21.0	144,874	23,456	19.3
NC	2,274,737	2,818,193	543,456	19.3	3,523,944	705,751	25.0
US	88,692,823	102,263,678	15,570,855	15.2	115,904,641	13,640,963	13.3

Source: US Census, 2002.

As mentioned earlier, this housing increase was largely due to several new developments. Table 6 displays the impact of Old Savannah, Rachel's Vineyard and White Oak Manor during the 1990s as well as their future potential to impact population growth.

Table 6. Neighborhood Impacts on Housing				
Neighborhood	Homes Built 1990 – 2000	Homes Built 2000 – 2002	Vacant Lots as of 2002	Average Assessed Home Values 2003
Old Savannah	14	8	22	\$223,036
Rachel's Vineyard	16	15	28	\$116,223
White Oak Manor	59	32	0	\$75,801

Sources: City of Claremont; Catawba County Tax Department, 2003.

Old Savannah, Rachel's Vineyard and White Oak Manor, along with other existing developments, continue to provide potential residents with a diverse pool of housing choices. This includes larger, higher priced lots, small and affordable lots and town homes. As seen in Table 2, 23 new homes were built in Old Savannah and Rachel's Vineyard alone between 2000 and 2002, which still leaves 50 vacant lots. In addition, White Oak Manor completed its final two buildings in 2003, adding 16 units for a total of 91 units.

Table 7 shows that Claremont's rental housing market decreased over the past 20 years. The City's percentage of renter-occupied units in 1980 was higher than Catawba County's and the state's. This

Table 7. Percent Renter-Occupied Units, 1980 – 2000			
	1980	1990	2000
Claremont	31.0%	28.4%	24.8%
Catawba Co.	24.5%	25.2%	25.5%
NC	28.4%	28.6%	27.2%
US	35.6%	35.8%	33.8%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2002; NC State Data Center, 2002.

percentage, however, fell below the state in 1990 and below the County in 2000. This is due to the fact that the vast majority of new housing built in the 1990s was owner-occupied.

Table 8 shows a significant increase in the median value of owner-occupied housing units during the 1990s (75%). This rate surpassed Catawba County but fell below the state and nation. This increase can be mostly attributed to construction of homes in Old Savannah, Rachel’s Vineyard and White Oak Manor during the 1990s. The 14 homes build in Old Savannah during the 1990s have a median tax value of \$210,450. The 16 homes built in Rachel’s Vineyard during the 1990s have a median tax value of \$116,900. The 59 homes built in White Oak Manor during the 1990s have a median tax value of \$75,400. Considering the median tax values for homes in Old Savannah and Rachel’s Vineyard are well above Claremont’s median owner-occupied housing value, the continuing build-out of these neighborhoods should increase the City’s median value of owner-occupied housing even further.

Table 8. Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units, 1980 – 2000					
	1980	1990	% Change	2000	% Change
Claremont	\$35,800	\$59,700	66.8	\$104,500	75.0
Catawba Co.	\$36,900	\$62,300	68.8	\$103,000	65.3
NC	\$36,000	\$65,300	81.4	\$108,300	65.8
US	\$51,300	\$78,500	53.0	\$119,600	52.4

Source: US Census Bureau, 2002; NC State Data Center, 2002.

Transportation

The Hickory-Newton-Conover Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) primarily plans transportation systems within the City of Claremont through the Hickory-Newton-Conover Urban Area Transportation Plan. Since its inception in 1983, the MPO's planning area has faced significant growth in retail, commercial and residential developments. Several roadways in Claremont are specifically addressed in the most recent edition of the transportation plan, which was used as an aid in determining future land use patterns in the City. The following freeways, major thoroughfares and minor thoroughfares sections are summarized from the "2001 Hickory-Newton-Conover Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan:"

Freeways

I-40

Project Recommendation: It is recommended to widen to 6 lanes the entire section of I-40 within the planning area. The widening is needed to accommodate future traffic growth. The total cost estimate of this project is \$73 million (in 1999 dollars).

Transportation Demand: I-40 serves as a major east-west route for North Carolina through traffic, spanning the Tennessee border to the Wilmington Urban Area. In the Hickory-Newton-Conover Urban Area, I-40 serves both through and local commuter travel. Approximately 45% of the total travel is classified as through trips. The remaining through trips on the interstate are destined to other major arterials in the area such as NC 16, NC 127, and US 321.

Local commuters made up the rest of the trips on I-40. Due to the sprawling nature of the area's urban centers, local commuters have been using I-40 as a convenient route for the inter-city travel as well as other types of travel. The heaviest traffic volume on I-40 was registered along the stretch between Fairgrove Church Road and US 321. This is due to the logistic proximity of the freeway to the regional commercial centers off US 70.

Travel demand on I-40 is expected to increase substantially during the planning period. By the horizon year of 2025, traffic volume will more than double the base year volume. Growth in through trips will exceed the growth of local commuter trips in such that this will constitute approximately 55% of the total traffic.

As a designated truck route, truck traffic on this interstate is heavy, varying between 20% and 27% of the total traffic volume. Only a small portion of the truck traffic originates from the manufacturing and business sector within the area. The largest operation is the Merchants Distribution Incorporation (MDI). The rest of the truck traffic on I-40 is the through travel type. Truck traffic percentage is expected to remain the same in the horizon year of 2025.

Capacity: I-40 is operating within the practical limit of a four-lane freeway in the base year (1992). By the horizon year of 2025, this facility will operate far beyond its practical limit where the projected traffic flow is ranging from 57,000 to 86,000 trips per day (vpd).

Major Thoroughfares

US 70

This major thoroughfare traverses the entire planning area from west to east paralleling I-40. This facility functions as a radial in the planning area serving traffic within, outside and between municipalities. It also provides access to the development along the corridor that varies from manufacturing and industrial plants in Hildebran to commercial centers in Hickory, Newton, Conover and Claremont. The highest concentration of commercial development occurs along the section of US 70 between US 321 in Hickory and US 321 Business in Newton. The existing cross-sections vary from two lanes in Hildebran and Claremont to five lanes in Long View, Hickory, Newton and Conover. Currently, traffic problems are limited to the 2-lane section in downtown Claremont where traffic volume reaches 11,000 trips per day (1999 ADT).

By the horizon year of 2025, capacity deficiency will expand, covering the entire section of US 70 from US 321 in Hickory to Claremont. A 5-lane cross-section is recommended for the section between US 321 Business and the proposed Claremont West Loop. Lastly, the section inside the Claremont Loop should be widened to 3 lanes.

Bunker Hill Road/Lookout Street (SR 1716)

This road functions as a radial connecting the City of Claremont to Oxford School Road (SR 1717). Traffic on this road is light and this condition is expected to continue through the horizon year of 2025. No improvement is recommended for this road.

Catawba Street (SR 1722)

This 2-lane street is the east-west part of SR 1722. It provides a route for traffic between Claremont and the Town of Catawba. Currently, travel on this road is light with the 1999 ADT of 3,200 trips per day. Traffic volume on this facility will increase to 5,200 trips per day by the year 2025. No improvement is recommended.

Claremont Loop

This de-facto loop system will help to reduce future travel pressure from the downtown area of Claremont by diverting traffic (especially through type) away from this area. This 2-lane loop system comprises of two existing and three new-location roads. The existing Centennial Boulevard and its recently completed extension to US 70 make up the north and northeast part of the Loop. The other existing route is Keisler Road (SR 1731). It forms the southern part of the Loop. The extension of Keisler Road to the east and north connecting to US 70 composes the southeast part

of the Loop. This extension will cross both Claremont Road and Catawba Street. The southwest part of the Loop consists of Heart Drive (SR 1929) and the northernmost segment of the proposed Burriss Road Extension. Finally, the extension of Centennial Boulevard to the west and south will connect to Heart Drive at US 70 and make up the northwest part of the Loop. Based on the travel model, traffic volume on the north side of the Loop is anticipated to reach 10,000 trips per day (vpd) by the year 2025. The anticipated volumes on the other parts of the Loop will range from 2,000 to 7,500 trips per day.

Claremont Road (SR 1722/SR 1801)

This 2-lane road is the north-south part of SR 1722. It functions as a north-south route between the City of Claremont and NC 16 and NC 10. With the 2025 traffic volume of only 4,200 trips per day, no traffic problem will be expected and no improvement is recommended.

Oxford Street (SR 1715)

This 2-lane street extends from US 70 in downtown Claremont to Rock Barn Road. It functions as a north-south route providing the only connection to I-40 from the Claremont area. Travel on Oxford Street varies from about 2,200 trips per day on the section north of I-40 to 9,600 trips per day on the southern section. By the design year of 2025, the travel on the southern section is expected to more than double to 20,000 trips per day. To accommodate this traffic, it is recommended that this section of Oxford Street be widened to 5 lanes. No improvement is recommended for the section north of I-40.

Minor Thoroughfares

Catawba Street Extension

Catawba Street currently terminates at Claremont Road. It is recommended that this 2-lane road be extended to South Oxford Road. This proposed extension will provide a connection for travel between Catawba Street and the industrial/manufacturing area in southern Claremont. The projected traffic on this extension is about 3,000 trips per day.

Frazier Drive Extension

Frazier Drive is located in the south section of the Claremont downtown area extending from Claremont Road to South Oxford Road. This 2-lane facility currently provides a connection between Claremont Road and the industrial/manufacturing area off South Oxford Road. The proposed Frazier Extension is recommended for 2 purposes, to straighten out the sharp curve on the western end of the road and to extend its service to the industrial area off Penny Road. A 2-lane cross-section is recommended for the Extension.

Kelly Road and Extension

Kelly Road extends from Heart Drive to Claremont Road (SR 1722) in southern Claremont. This 2-lane road serves the industrial/manufacturing developments along

its corridor and provides a connection for travel in southern Claremont. The proposed Kelly Road Extension will extend from Claremont Road to the proposed eastern portion of the Claremont Loop. The combination of Kelly Road and its extension will form a continuous east-west route in southern Claremont serving the existing and future industrial/manufacturing development in the area. This route will also provide a connection for travel between the proposed eastern and western portions of the Claremont Loop. The projected traffic on this road is about 2,000 trips per day.

South Oxford Street and Extension

This minor thoroughfare extends from US 70 to Frazier Drive south of downtown Claremont. This 2-lane street currently serves the industrial development along its corridor as a connector to US 70. The proposed extension will connect South Oxford Road to SR 1731 in southern Claremont. The combination of South Oxford Road and its extension will create a continuous north-south route serving the future industrial and residential development in the area. A cross-section of 2 lanes is recommended for the Extension.

Transit

Piedmont Wagon

The Piedmont Wagon currently runs four routes serving Hickory, Newton and Conover. While there are several special services provided in the Claremont area, there are currently no plans to add a permanent route to serve the area.

Passenger Rail

The NCDOT determined that Western North Carolina would receive the next expansion of passenger rail service in the State. Plans are underway to initiate service between Raleigh and Asheville with a stop in downtown Hickory. A portion of the former Hickory depot, now entirely occupied by a restaurant, will return to a passenger waiting area. This service is expected to be operational by 2007.

Pedestrian System

Bicycles

Claremont has no plan specifically addressing bicycle transportation. Catawba County is currently working on a bicycle plan that includes each municipality. While the plan has not yet been adopted, it proposes biking routes on Highway 70 (Main St), Catawba Street, North Oxford Street, North Lookout Street/Bunker Hill School Road and S Depot Street.

Sidewalks and Greenways

Claremont's sidewalk system is centered in and extends from downtown (excluding Old Savannah). Claremont's current sidewalk plan is outdated and not used in current sidewalk construction. The Centennial Boulevard Corridor Plan, however,

includes a sidewalk and greenway section. The City has no ordinance requiring sidewalks in new developments other than on Centennial Boulevard.

The City received an NCDOT Transportation Enhancement grant in 2003 to improve sidewalks along the northern section of Main Street between S Depot Street and Lookout Street. Claremont's first greenway, west of Rachel's Vineyard, is currently in progress. Three other greenways are proposed in the Centennial Boulevard Corridor Plan.

Map 1 shows the Claremont Sidewalks and Greenways Map. This map displays the highest priority areas to receive new sidewalks or greenways as development occurs or funds are obtained.

Existing Land Use

Claremont's planning jurisdiction consists of 6.8 square miles (including roads): 2.5 square miles inside its city limits and 4.3 square miles inside its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). A land use survey of all properties in Claremont's planning jurisdiction was completed in January 2003 and continually updated as new developments were approved. Each property was considered to have one of the following primary uses:

- **Single-family Residential:** This category includes any parcel containing a single-family site-built home.
- **Manufactured Home:** This category includes any parcel containing a manufactured home ONLY. Parcels containing a manufactured home and a single-family site-built home were coded as "Single-family" because the site-built home was the more permanent structure.
- **Multi-family Residential:** This category includes any parcel containing a multi-family structure, such as condos or a duplex.
- **Commercial–Office:** This category includes any parcel containing any type of commercial activity or office use, but does not include parcels containing home occupations.
- **Industrial:** This category includes any parcel containing any type of industrial use.
- **Institutional:** This category includes any parcel used by a school, government, church or other institution.
- **Vacant:** This category included any parcels not in use or parcels containing agriculture and/or abandoned buildings.

Table 9 shows the breakdown of land uses by acreage. Residential and industrial uses occupied the most developed land, at 30% and 13% respectively. Vacant land, however, covered over half (51%) of the property in the City. This is even more apparent on the Existing Land Use Map (Map 2), which shows that the majority of vacant land falls inside the City's ETJ.

Table 9. Existing Land Use		
Land Use	Acres	Percent of Property
Single-family	1,019	26%
Manufactured Home	133	3%
Multi-family	22	1%
Commercial-Office	102	3%
Industrial	505	13%
Institutional	133	3%
Vacant	2,004	51%

Source: City of Claremont, 2003.

Future Land Use

The Planning Board developed the Future Land Use Map (Map 3) based on multiple factors, including:

- o Existing land use patterns
- o Study of other municipalities (Field Trip and Visual Survey)
- o Current public water and sewer capacities and future needs
- o Current transportation issues and future needs
- o Emerging development trends in the area

The Future Land Use Map projects each parcel's land use in the next 15 to 20 years, whether the parcel keeps its current land use, is developed or is redeveloped. The categories of the Future Land Use Map are general in nature and describe only types of uses. It is important to note that these categories do not suggest a specific zoning district but only a range of land uses that may fall into several different zoning districts. The categories are:

- o ***Low-Density Residential:*** This category projects residential development that permits **no less** than 12,500 square feet per unit (roughly 3.5 units per acre).
- o ***Medium-Density Residential:*** This category projects residential development that permits **less** than 12,500 square feet per unit (roughly 3.5 units per acre).
- o ***Mixed Use:*** This category projects a combination of residential and commercial-office development. This mix of development may all be included in one building or may be spread through multiple buildings in a single development.
- o ***Commercial-Office:*** This category projects any type of commercial or office use.
- o ***Industrial:*** This category projects any type of industrial use.
- o ***Institutional:*** This category projects any type of institutional uses, such as schools, government uses and churches.
- o ***Park-Open Space:*** This category projects the development of public and/or private parks, including preserved open space.

The Future Land Use Map shows several land development patterns projected for the City over the next 15 – 20 years. These include:

- o The southwestern portion of Claremont currently serves as the industrial core of the City. Considering the City's investment in existing and planned infrastructure, this area should continue to grow industrially.
- o The area on the north side of Old Catawba Road in Claremont's ETJ has the potential to become a viable industrial node. While much smaller than the southwestern industrial core, this area could combine with existing industrial sites (Commscope, Pierre Foods, etc.) and the railroad to create a successful pocket of industrial development.
- o Claremont's northern and southern portions of ETJ are mostly vacant. The majority of existing development in those areas is single-family residential. These areas should continue to gradually develop as low-density residential.
- o The North Oxford Street corridor between Main Street and Interstate 40 and the Centennial Boulevard corridor will provide for the majority of new commercial development. This is due to the corridors' existing developments, available land and proximity to the Interstate 40 interchange.

Goals and Strategies for Future Growth

Goal 1: *Encourage high-quality, progressive and efficient development that enhances the City's sense of community and overall quality of life.*

Strategies:

- A. Review, update and, if needed, develop a new zoning ordinance to ensure it fosters desired types of development. The zoning ordinance process should begin within one year of this plan's adoption and have a target completion time of 18 months.
- B. Review, update and, if needed, develop a new subdivision ordinance to ensure it fosters desired types of development. The subdivision ordinance process should begin within one year of the completion of the zoning ordinance process.
- C. New and existing development regulations should allow, require and/or encourage mixed uses, infill development, redevelopments, open space and increased opportunities for affordable housing.
- D. New and existing development regulations should encourage safe, pedestrian-friendly development through sidewalks, walkways, greenways, site design and other means.
- E. Develop and maintain a citywide Sidewalks and Greenways Map to help plan for future pedestrian infrastructure.
- F. Develop a Future Land Use Map to help guide development decisions. Since land use conditions change over time, the Future Land Use Map should be reviewed every five years.

Goal 2: *Continue to improve and expand the public water and sewer system for use as a residential and economic development tool.*

Strategies:

- A. Continue to work with the City of Conover, Catawba County and other local governments on future public water and sewer projects.
- B. Continue to aggressively pursue state or federal funds available for public water and sewer updates and expansions.
- C. Strive to expand public water and sewer service to all existing developments inside city limits.

Goal 3: *Promote quality design and stewardship of new and existing development.*

Strategies:

- A. Explore design-related guidelines and/or regulations, a design review board, corridor overlays and other means within five years of this *Plan's* adoption to ensure the aesthetic quality of new and existing development.
- B. Explore property maintenance guidelines and/or regulations within five years of this *Plan's* adoption.
- C. Review, update and, if needed, develop new sign regulations. This process may be included in the development of a new zoning ordinance.
- D. Explore the use of amortization for nonconforming uses, such as signs and open storage. This process may be included in the development of a new zoning ordinance.

Goal 4: *Continue to refine a pedestrian-friendly downtown as the commercial and civic center of the City.*

Strategies:

- A. Promote lively development in and around downtown through higher densities, mixed uses, safe sidewalks, quality design and other means.
- B. Continue to aggressively pursue any state or federal funds available to enhance downtown streets, sidewalks, landscaping, utilities and other desirable features.