Town of Parrish

Economic Development Strategic Plan

2023

RPC Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

Town of Parrish

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN
August 2023

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INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

The Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) program was designed by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB) to assist its member governments in developing long-term strategies that capitalize on local economic strengths and address its challenges. The EDSP planning process determines market advantages and challenges through data analysis and stakeholder input, as well as identifies potential opportunities and obstacles for local economic and community development within the selected market area. The *Town of Parrish EDSP* is divided into three sections:

Section I: Needs Assessment—This section identifies the historic trends and current characteristics of Parrish's local economy and workforce, and it is composed of 3 chapters:

Chapter 1: Existing Conditions— Provides the background and baseline data trends necessary to help understand Parrish's current market conditions.

Chapter 2: Market Analysis— Evaluates Parrish's consumer spending habits to establish supply and demand patterns and assess historical market trends.

Chapter 3: SWOT Assessment— Outlines the responses given through community engagement and input and outlines the residents' perspectives of Parrish's economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Section II: Strategy Framework Development— This section describes the development opportunities within the community based on the Needs Assessment Analysis and community input. It outlines overarching development themes, and it evaluates the outdoor recreation potential and broadband connectivity of the town as primary development initiatives for the town. This section is also divided into 3 chapters:

Chapter 1: Priority Development Themes & Focus Areas— Outlines the overall development themes for Parrish's future development based on findings in Needs Assessment.

Chapter 2: Outdoor Recreation in Parrish— Evaluates the potential activities Parrish can undertake to support outdoor recreation development within the community.

Chapter 3: Broadband Connectivity— Outlines the current conditions of the town's broadband infrastructure, identifies areas of prominent need, and lists possible sources of funding support for future projects.

Section III: Action Plan— The Action Plan for the EDSP will be developed in accordance with the responses of the SWOT survey published in March 2023 and guidance of local officials. The Action Plan will offer economic goals and strategies for future implementation, and its contents will be created to correspond with the goals described in the RPCGB's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), as well as the targets of Walker County and the Town of Parrish as a collective.

SECTION I:
Needs Assessment

CHAPTER 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

1. Population and Household Trends

As of 2021, the Town of Parrish has a total population of 1,294. The number of residents has remained relatively stagnant since 2000, declining slightly in 2010 but recovering steadily to 2000 levels (see Figure 1). These rates are reflected in the number of households within Parrish, which have also remained relatively stagnant since 2000 (see Figure 2).

Figure 1: Population Change, 2000 to 2021
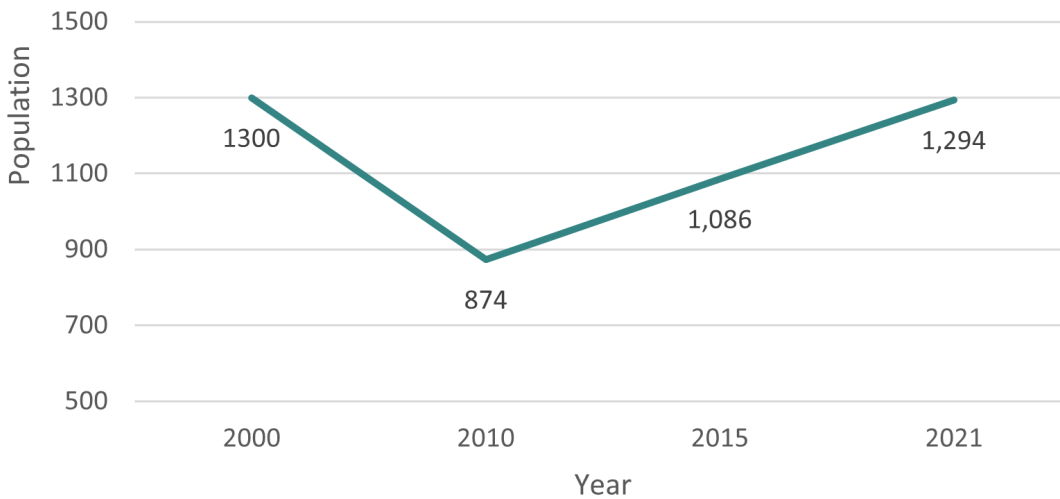
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

Figure 2: Number of Households, 2000 to 2021
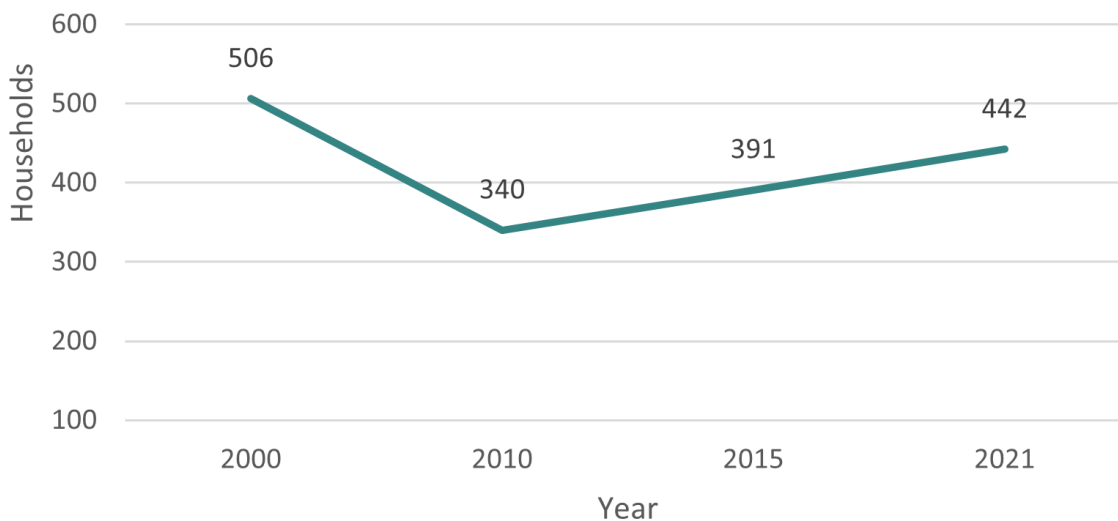
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

2. Age and Sex Distribution

The median age within the Town of Parrish was 35.6 in 2022, which was lower than Alabama's median age rate of 39.8. This gap signifies that Parrish's population is younger and aging at a slower pace than the average Alabama rate (see Figure 3). Parrish has also been aging less rapidly than the U.S. population. Since 2010, the town's median age has increased by only 0.2 years, while the median age of the nationwide population increased by 1.5 years.

Figure 3: Parrish Median Age. 2010 to 2021
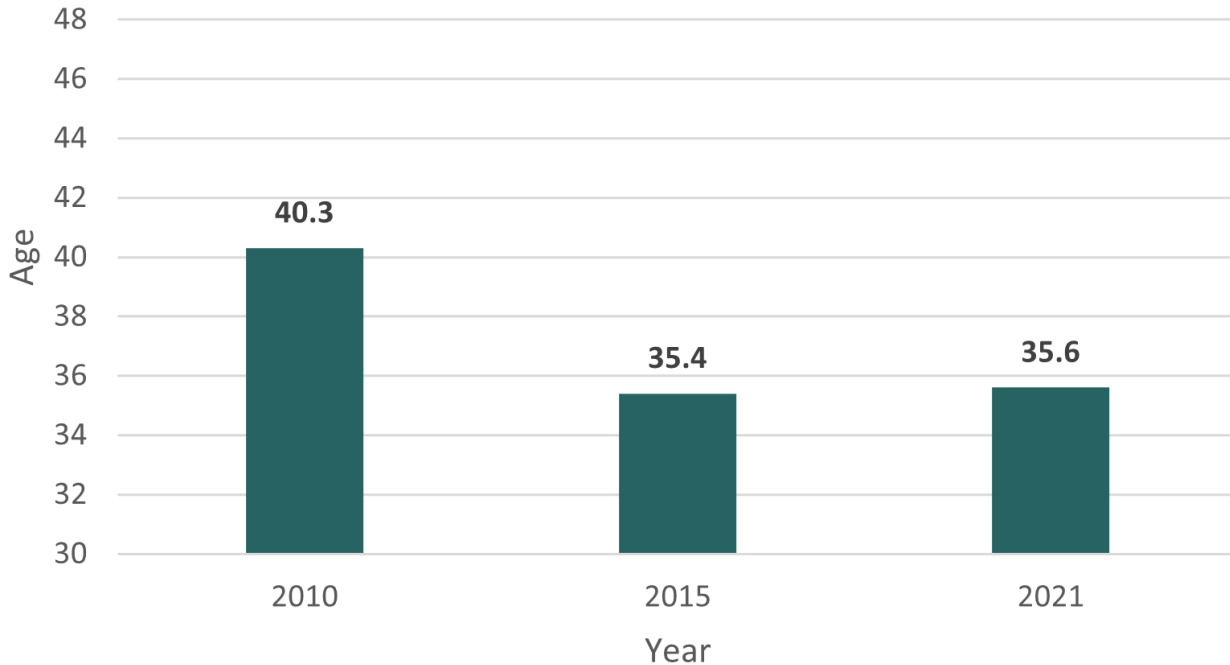
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

The largest source of Parrish's population incline is among young and working-age individuals, or those between 25 to 34 years old, as illustrated in Figure 4. This age group increased by 7 percentage points between 2015 and 2021, while groups with 55 years and above remained stable. Increases in younger age groups poses a potential economic and workforce development opportunity for Parrish. The attraction of young people and families is necessary for supporting current industry through a strong workforce and consumer base, and these trends could also catalyze new economic development initiatives within the town due to growing market demand.

Figure 4: Age Distribution by Percentage, 2010 to 2021
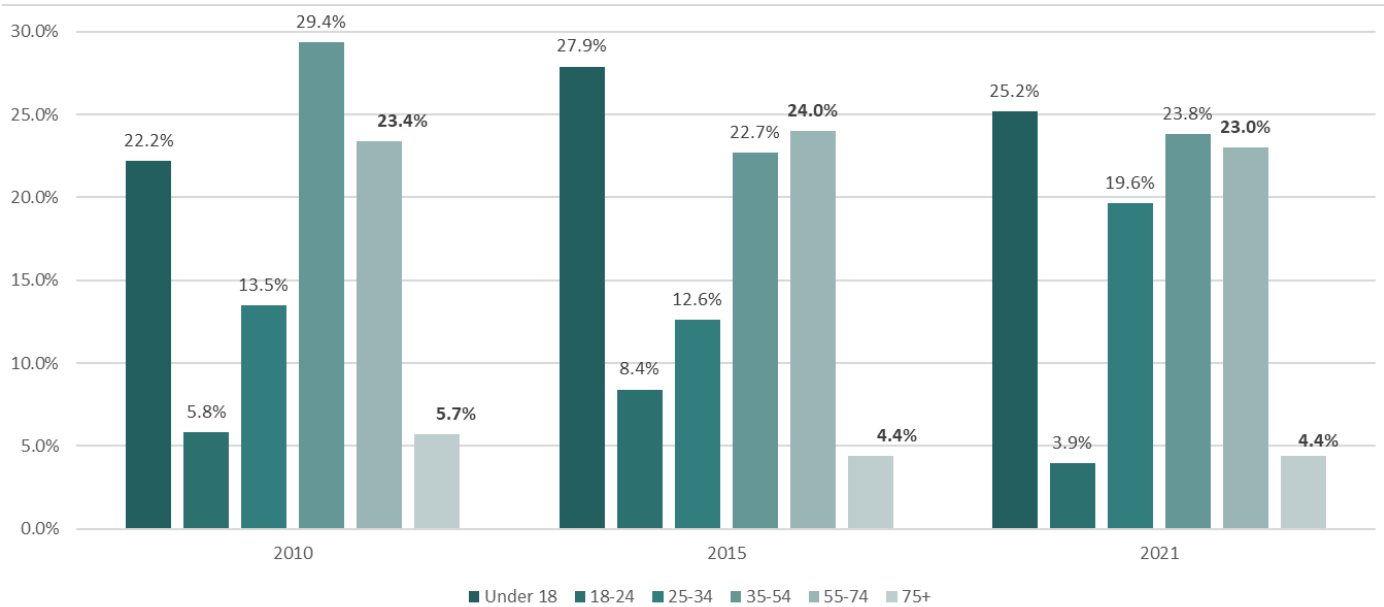
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

In terms of sex distribution, Parrish has more males than the US population rates; 59 percent of Parrish's population is male, compared to slightly above 49 percent of the nationwide population (see Figure 3).

Figure 5: Distribution of Population by Sex
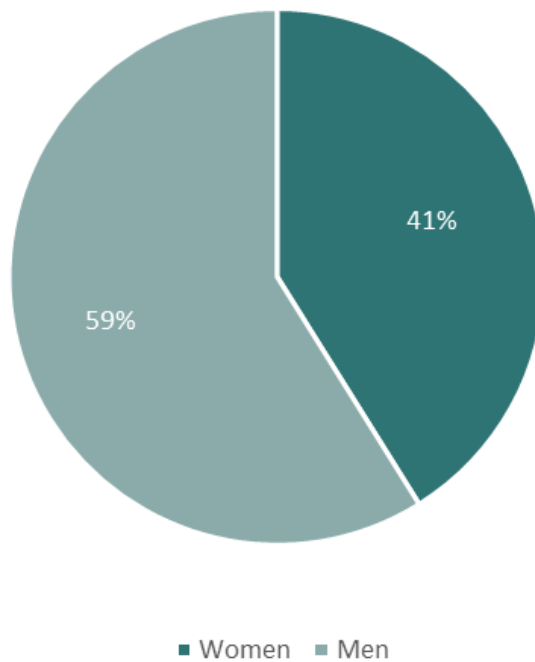
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

3. Racial Distribution

Parrish's population is reflective of statewide diversity levels. In 2020, nearly 67 percent of Parrish's population was white while almost 26 percent was black, compared to 2020 statewide percentages of 67.5 percent and 26.6 percent, respectively (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Distribution of Population by Race in Parrish (2020) and Alabama (2020)
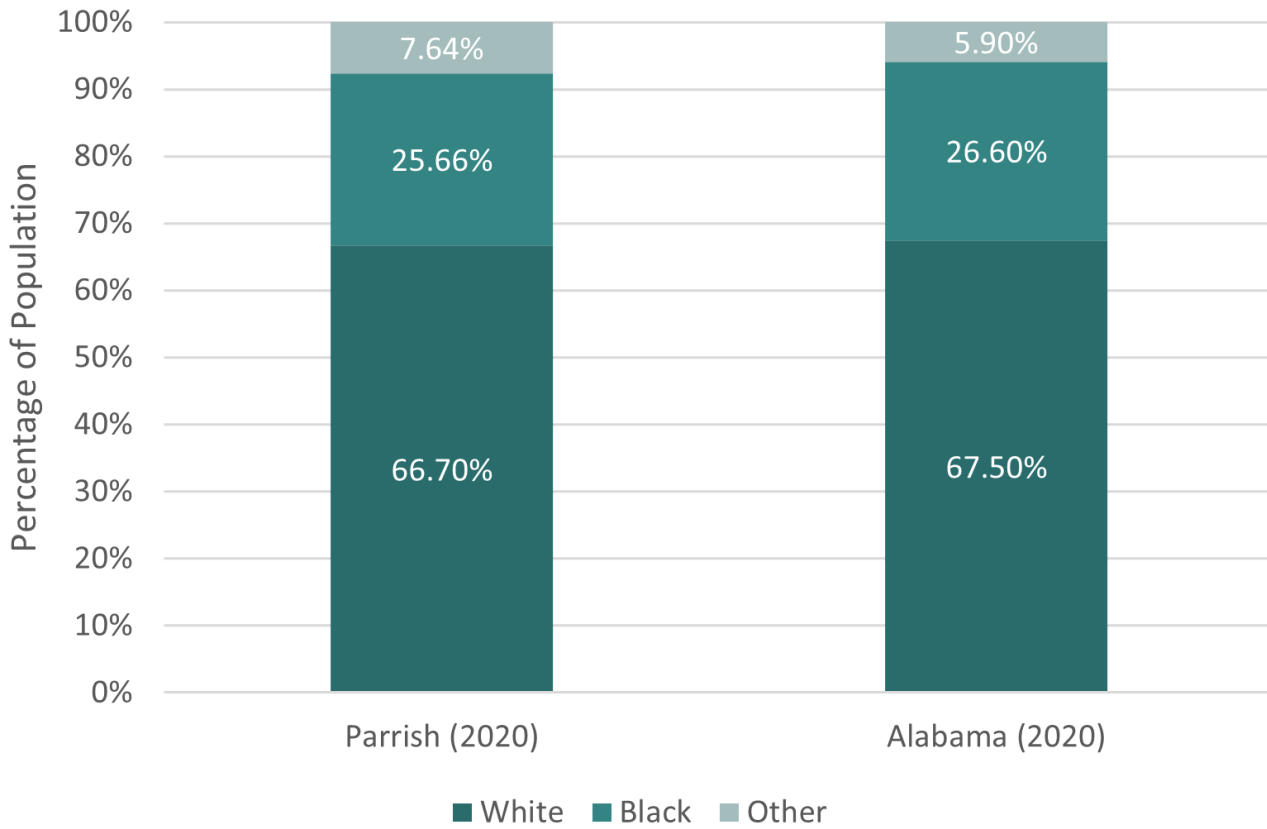
Source: U.S.Census, American Community Survey, 2020

EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Educational Attainment

Figure 7 compares the educational attainment of the working population, or those 25 years and older, within Parrish and the State of Alabama. About 48 percent of Parrish's working age population have a high school diploma as their highest level of education. However, almost 30 percent do not have a high school degree or equivalent, which is higher than the Alabama rate of 13 percent. In addition, 9 percent of residents have some college credits without a college degree, and almost 10 percent have a bachelor's degree as their highest education credential. The percentage of individuals with a graduate/professional degree is much lower than the state's average.

Figure 7: Educational Attainment in Parrish (2021) and Alabama (2020)
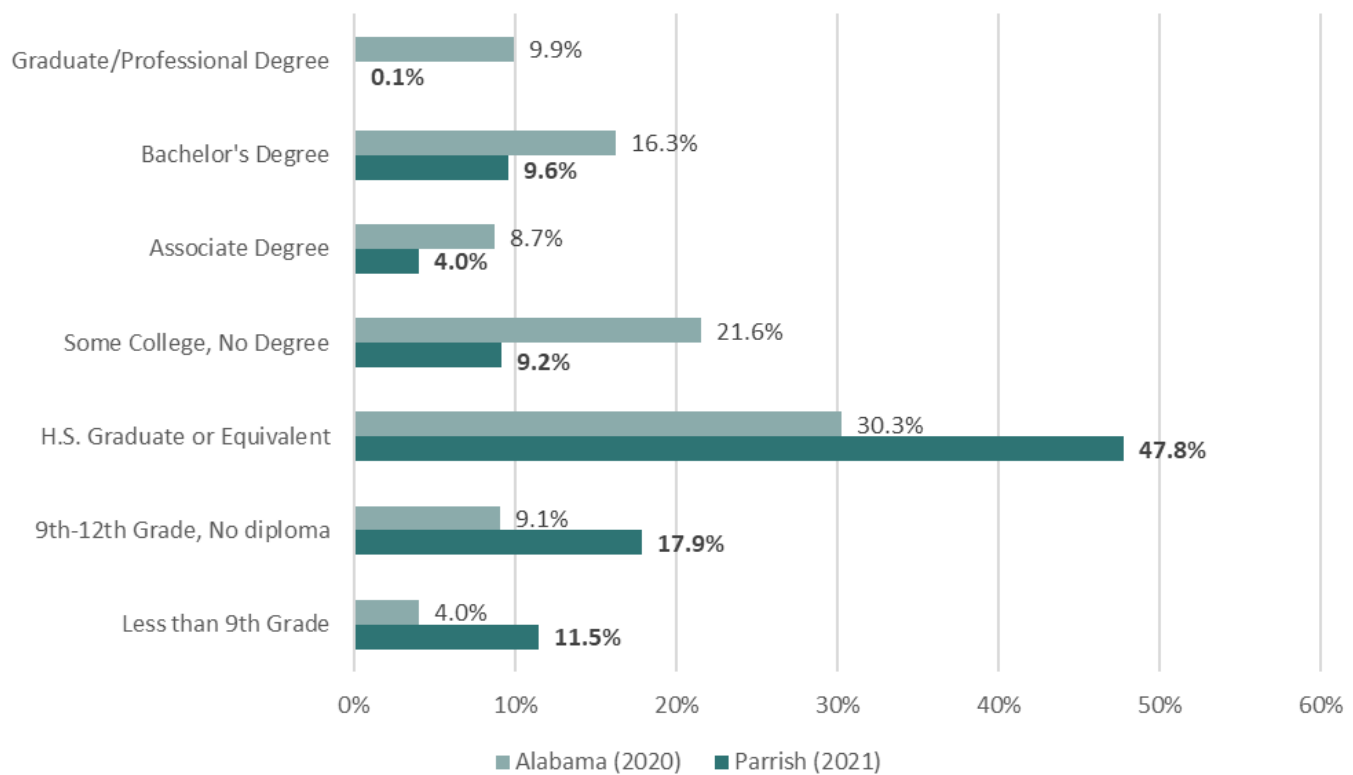
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2020-2021

2. Public School Enrollment

Due to the town's high school closing 2014, Parrish's only public school is the Parrish Elementary Middle School (pre-K through 8th grade). In 2021, 303 students were enrolled (see Table 1).

Table 1: Public School Enrollment, 2016 and 2021

Public School	2021
Parrish Elementary Middle School	303

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2021)

INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

1. Household Income

Parrish's median household income and per capita income remain low compared to county and statewide levels. These terms are defined below:

Median Household Income: This metric is based on the distribution of the total number of households and families, including those with no income, to describe the "middle" of the income range of household earnings within Parrish. The median divides the income distribution into 2 equal parts: half of the cases falling below the median income and half above the median.[1]

Per Capita Income: This measure represents the mean income computed for every man, woman, and child within the town and is derived by dividing the aggregate income earned from the town's income-earning population by the town's total population.[2] Per capita income can be used to determine the average per-person income for an area and to evaluate the standard of living and quality of life of the population.[3]

The town's median household income in 2021 was $33,594, compared to $45,833 in Walker County and $52,035 in the State of Alabama in 2020. In addition, Parrish's 2021 per capita income was $17,016. This figure is significantly lower than both the 2020 Walker County per capita income of $25,330 or the 2020 statewide per capita income of $28,934. Table 2 lists Parrish's median household and per capita income rates, compared to Walker County and Alabama levels.

Table 2: Median Household Income and Per Capita Income for Town, County, and State

Region	Household	Per Capita Income
Parrish (2021)	$33,594	$17,016
Walker (2020)	$45,833	$25,330
Alabama (2020)	$52,035	$28,934

Source: U.S.Census, American Community Survey, 2020 to 2021; Town-Data.com

2. Household Income Distribution by Bracket

Figure 8 outlines the percentages of Parrish households within each income bracket. The largest income bracket in Parrish was less than $15,000, in 2021, which includes 30.1 percent of households. The next largest bracket was $50,000-$74,999, which included over 16 percent of households. The smallest income bracket is the $150,000 to $199,999 range, with only 0.5 percent of households falling in that range.

1   *U.S. Census, QuickFacts, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/note/US/INC110220*
2   *U.S. Census, QuickFacts, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/note/US/INC910220*
3   *Kenton, Will. "What Is Income Per Capita? Uses, Limitations, and Examples".*

Figure 8: Household Distribution by Income Bracket
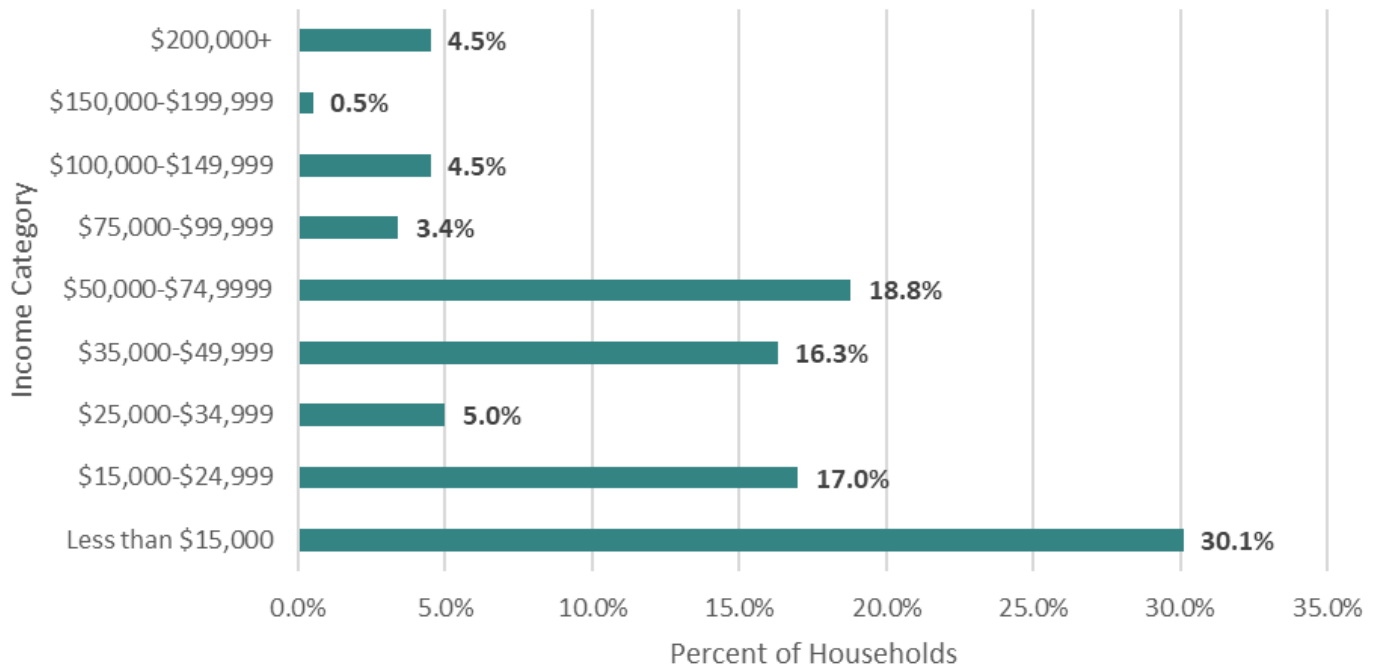
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

Poverty in Parrish

The U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines provide income thresholds which scale up depending on the size of the household – as the number of people in a given household increases, the minimum amount of income necessary for that household to remain out of poverty also increases.

The average household size in Parrish in 2022 was 3 people. For this household size, the median household income for the poverty threshold is $23,030, according to these guidelines. The town's median household income of $33,594 is above this threshold and would meet the income requirements necessary for a household as large as five people ($32,470). However, despite these rates, US Census estimates from 2021 record that over 16 percent of Parrish's residents live below the poverty line.

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

1. Unemployment And Labor Force Participation

The unemployment rate in Parrish was 11.9 percent in 2021. Although the COVID-19 Pandemic likely impacted employment levels within the town, this metric had been increasing over the last decade (with a rate of 7.6 in 2015) at levels higher than both the county and state. However, the unemployment rate only measures the population within an area actively seeking work, not discouraged workers who have left the workforce. The labor force participation rate measures the percentage of the total working age population (or those over 16 years old) against the number of these residents who are actively engaged in the workforce (employed or looking for work).

As illustrated in Table 3, Parrish's labor force participation rate has increased substantially since 2010, though the unemployment rate has also been on rise. This could be due in part to the decline in general population, which could have increased the concentration of residents within the workforce. In addition, Parrish's participation rate has mirrored levels at the state and county level, which have both experienced mild decline since 2010.

Table 3: Labor Force Participation Comparison

Region	2010	2021	Change
Parrish	38.0%	56.0%	47.4%
Unemployment Rate	3.5%	11.9%	240.0%
Walker County	53.4%	52.6%	-1.5%
Unemployment Rate	6.2%	3.7%	-40.3%
Alabama	60.1%	57.2%	-4.8%
Unemployment Rate	5.2%	3.1%	-40.4%

Source: U.S. Census, 2010-2021

2. Daytime Population and Labor Flows

Daytime Population

The daytime population within a market area represents the number of people, residents, or commuters, who are within the town limits during regular working hours (otherwise known as commuter-adjusted population). This metric is calculated by subtracting the number of workers leaving the area for work from summation of the town's population and the workers working within the town:

Commuter-adjusted population = Total resident population + Total workers working in area - Total workers living in area[4]

Commuter-adjusted population measures can help define the consumer base for the town, since often there are commuters within an area that are attracted to the town for work or school. Including commuters in a market analysis can help establish spending patterns and illustrate potential demand for industry, especially retail or food and beverage stores.

Despite relatively stable population rates, Parrish's daytime population was 1,196, meaning that an additional 93 people were present in Parrish during regular business hours (see Table 4). Because a daily influx of nonresidents can boost the consumer base for local businesses such as restaurants, coffee shops, and gas stations, this net positive daytime population illustrates potential demand throughout the local market and provides an opportunity for the Town of Parrish to capture additional sales tax revenues.

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4   *U.S. Census Bureau: "Calculating Commuter-Adjusted Population Estimates"*

Table 4: **Daytime vs. Residential Population**

Population	Number of Individuals
Total Population	1,294
Worker Population	+ 330
Workers Living in Area	- 428
Commuter-Adjusted Population:	= 1,196

Source: U.S.Census, 2021

Labor Flows

Analyzing the labor flow of workers in Parrish can help determine the extent Parrish supplies labor force resources to external areas and/or attracts labor from surrounding areas into the jurisdiction. Since daytime population includes the total number of people, including those who are not in the labor force (children, retirees, etc.), evaluating labor flows can help determine the number of daytime population that is represented by workers.

There are two ways to evaluate labor flows within an area, and those include analyzing the municipality's "Employment Efficiency", or the local employee characteristics, and "Labor Force Efficiency", or the residential labor force characteristics within the area. These rates are listed in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: **Employment Efficiency, Town of Parrish, 2010 – 2020**

Employment Efficiency	2010 Count	2010 Share	2020 Count	2020 Share	Change
Employed in the Selection Area	73	100.0%	187	100.0%	156%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	7	9.6%	7	3.7%	0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	66	90.4%	180	96.3%	173%

Source: U.S. Census, OnTheMap Application 2010 -2020

Table 6: **Labor Force Efficiency, Town of Parrish, 2010-2020**

Labor Force Efficiency	2010 Count	2010 Share	2020 Count	2020 Share	Change
Living in the Selection Area	407	100.0%	343	100.0%	-16%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	7	1.7%	7	2.0%	0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	400	98.3%	336	98.0%	-16%

Source: U.S. Census, OnTheMap Application 2010 -2020

Since 2010, Parrish has experienced a substantial increase in employment within the town. However, though employment opportunities have increase, only 7 workers live and work in the town limits. Over 96 percent of the employment opportunities in the town are filled by workers commuting into the town for their jobs, which is calculated as inflow, and Parrish is supplying 336 workers for jobs in other areas, which is measured as outflow. The Net Labor Flow for Parrish is illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Net Labor Flow, Parrish, Alabama
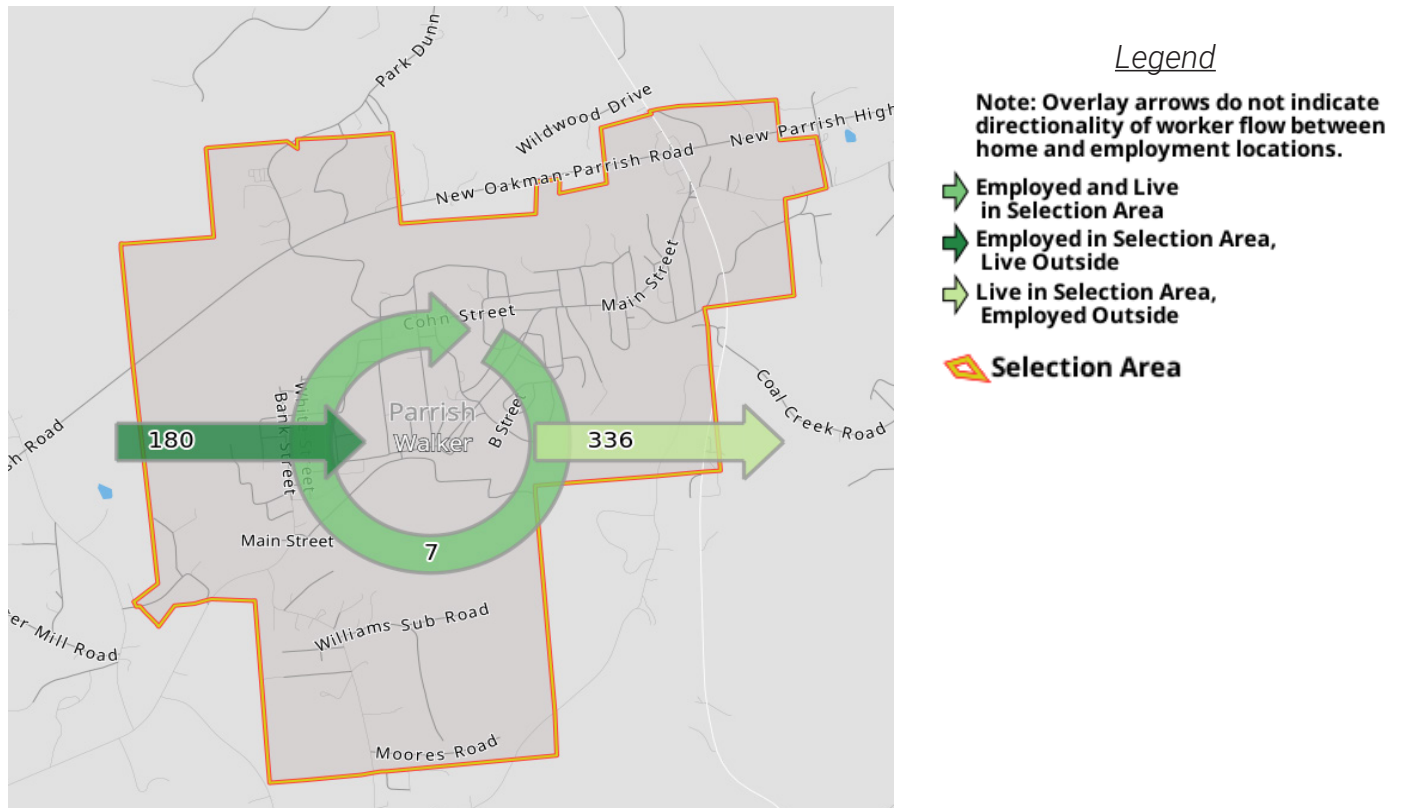
Source: U.S. Census, OnTheMap Application 2010 -2020

3. Employment by Home Area

Measuring employment by home area identifies the industries residents of Parrish are employed in, regardless of where their job is located. In 2019, the most recent year this data was available, residents within Parrish held 376 total jobs, which was an 11 percent decline from 2010 rates. Health Care and Social Assistance was the largest employment for residents, with almost 70 employees. The next largest were Manufacturing and Retail Trade with over 40 employees. The smallest industries per employment were Management of Companies and Enterprises, Information, and Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, with only 3 employees each.

Table 7 (page 17) outlines the employment levels of each industry for 2010 and 2019, and then calculates the percent change in employment between those years in the last column. Ten industries contributed to the decline in residential employment since 2010, with the largest decrease occurring in Transportation and Warehousing, though this category is small relative to other industries. Some of the industries representing a larger portion of the population, such as Manufacturing and Retail Trade, also experienced a decrease. The reductions in employment in these industries may be impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic, which impacted employment trends across the country.

However, 10 industries have also increased over the past decade. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation technically experienced the largest growth, but with only making up 1 percent of total employment, the jobs in this industry are still relatively low. The industry with the largest advancement in both percent change and percentage of employment was Finance and Insurance, followed by Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting.

4. Employment by Work Area

Evaluating employment by work area identifies the employment opportunities within the Town of Parrish. In other words, this metric describes the industries and jobs available in Parrish, regardless of where workers live. As shown in Table 8 on page 18, 9 of the 20 measured industries are not present within the town, yielding no jobs in those industries; those industries are shaded in gray. However, a component of economic growth is analyzing what the community's strengths and assets are and capitalizing on those, so just because an industry is not present does not mean it should be. It may not be viable in the area, and resources would be better spent supporting industries that are.

According to U.S. Census Data, the Town of Parrish had 165 jobs available within the jurisdiction, an increase of nearly 90 percent since 2010. The most significant growth in terms of percent change and percentage of employment was Transportation and Warehousing, which increased by 173 percent over the past decade. However, this industry makes up a small portion of the workforce. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Health Care and Social Assistance experienced the biggest declines over the past decade, with a decrease of 100 percent. These rates may have also been exaggerated due to the pandemic.

Table 7: Industry by Home Area

Industry	2010	2019	Percent Change
TOTAL JOBS	423	376	-11.1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.5%	0.8%	60.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	4.0%	3.7%	-7.5%
Utilities	4.0%	4.0%	0%
Construction	4.3%	4.8%	11.6%
Manufacturing	14.2%	11.4%	-19.7%
Wholesale Trade	4.0%	6.1%	52.5%
Retail Trade	14.4%	11.2%	-22.2%
Transportation and Warehousing	5.0%	2.1%	-58.0%
Information	0.7%	0.8%	14.3%
Finance and Insurance	0.7%	1.9%	171.4%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.9%	1.3%	-31.6%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4.0%	3.2%	-20.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.7%	0.8%	14.3%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	4.7%	4.0%	-14.9%
Educational Services	6.6%	8.2%	24.2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	14.7%	18.6%	26.5%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0.2%	1.1%	450.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	8.0%	10.4%	30.0%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	2.6%	2.1%	-19.2%
Public Administration	4.7%	3.5%	-25.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics

Table 8: Industry by Working Area

Industry	2010	2019	Percent Change
TOTAL JOBS	87	165	89.7%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Utilities	6.9%	4.8%	-30.4%
Construction	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Manufacturing	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Wholesale Trade	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Retail Trade	56.3%	27.9%	-50.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	1.1%	3.0%	172.7%
Information	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Finance and Insurance	0.0%	1.2%	N/A
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2.3%	0.6%	-73.9%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1.1%	0.0%	-100.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	3.4%	0.0%	-100.0%
Educational Services	0.0%	28.5%	N/A
Health Care and Social Assistance	28.7%	0.0%	-100.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	0.0%	24.2%	N/A
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	0.0%	9.7%	N/A
Public Administration	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics

According to this data, the number of jobs in Parrish has increased by 90 percent since 2010. However, though this increase is substantial, there are less than 200 employment opportunities within the town, with one third of those opportunities being within the Educational Services sector. Additionally, the number of workers from Parrish has decreased by 11% during the same time period; however, this could be partially attributed to more work from home and part-time opportunities.

The data points for Employment by Home Area and Employment by Work Area varied significantly as the workforce that makes up each group also varies. There are many more workers leaving Parrish to go to work than the inflow of workers coming into Parrish. Here are some distinctions between those working in Parrish and those traveling outside the town for work:

- There are more Educational job opportunities in Parrish than residents of Parrish who work in Education. This means that many Educational workers are coming in to work in Parrish from other areas.
- Many residents of Parrish work in Manufacturing, Construction, and Wholesale Trade, but these jobs opportunities have not existed in the town in the past decade.
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation jobs are not available in Parrish, but some residents of Parrish work in these areas. This shows that there are Parrish residents with expertise in this area. This is especially important as Parrish works to expand Outdoor Recreation as a development priority for the town.
- There are now more Retail Trade opportunities in Parrish than Parrish residents working in Retail Trade. More workers are being hired from outside the Parrish area to fill these jobs.
- Accommodation and Food Service job opportunities in Parrish have increased substantially from 2010 to 2019 from developments such as the addition of Jack's Family Restaurant, LP. There are now 40 jobs available in this industry in Parrish. This number will continue to grow with additional restaurants and coffee shops, which residents have expressed as priorities for the future.
- Real Estate job opportunities have decreased both in town and for Parrish residents. This fits with recent increases in housing prices and a shift away from purchasing.

Source: RPCGB, 2023

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

1. Housing Affordability

The median value of homes in Parrish in 2021 was $46,100. This rate is much lower than the median home value in Walker County, which is estimated to be $109,600. The share of homes valued below $50,000 makes up the majority of the available housing units in the town, as illustrated in Figure 10. Approximately 30 percent of homes are valued between $50,000 and $99,999, and only 12 percent of homes are valued at over $100,000 Over 85 percent of the current housing units in Parrish are valued at less than $99,999.

According to the most recent Census data, residents in Parrish are spending only 16.3 percent of their income on their mortgages. As a result, the population's overall housing affordability index value of 168 is high, indicating that families earning the median income have more than enough income to qualify for a mortgage loan on a median-priced home. However, these affordability numbers are potentially inflated due to the prevalence of older homes, many of which may be vacant and/or in poor condition.

Figure 10: Housing Units by Market Value, 2022
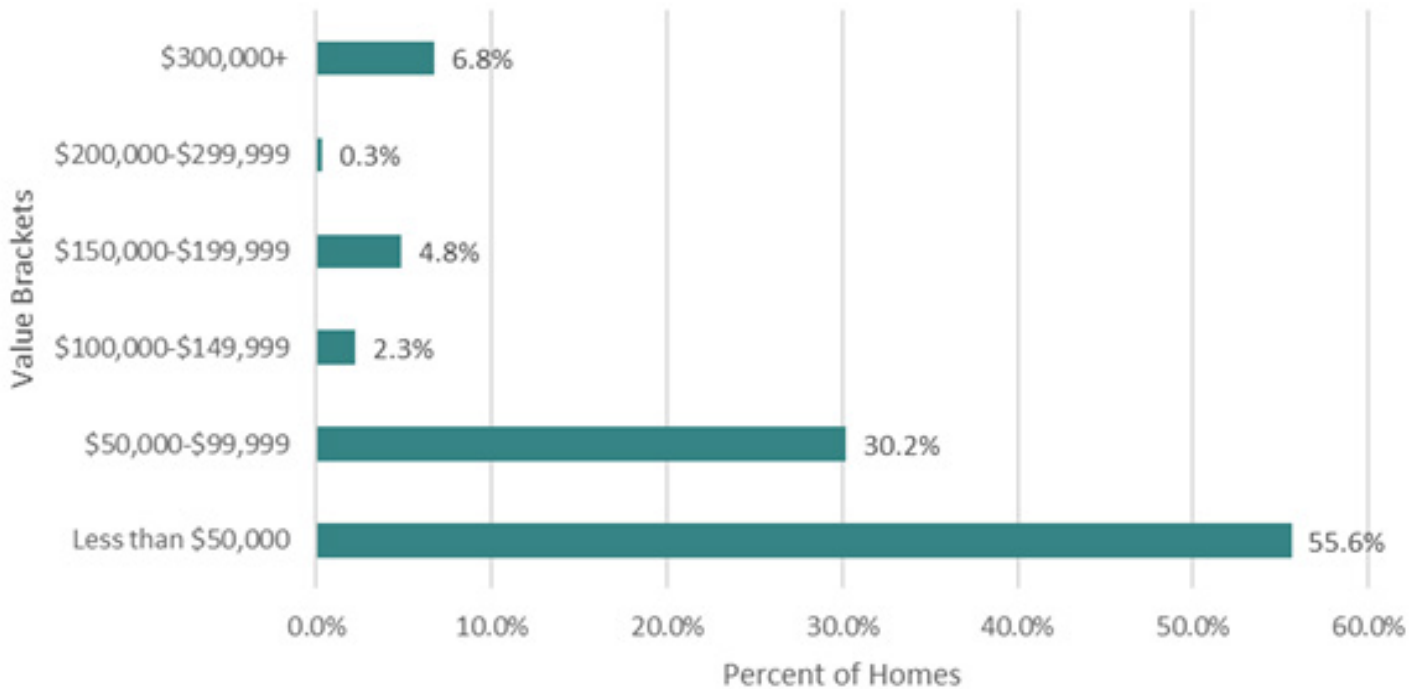
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

2. Housing Age

The value of Parrish's available housing units is likely impacted by the age of its existing housing base. The median year in which all housing units in Parrish were built is 1957, 25 years older than the county-wide median of 1982 and the state-wide median of 1984. Over 17 percent of houses were built before 1940, while 36.2% of houses were built between 1940 and 1960. Almost 25% of houses were built between 1960 and 1980, and 13.8% of houses were built between 1980 and 2000. Only 7.7 percent of houses were built between 2000 and 2020, and no houses have been constructed since then.

3. Housing Occupancy

However, though housing units are older, the occupancy rate for Parrish is relatively high. Nearly 77 percent of homes in Parrish are owner-occupied, and the housing vacancy rate is 23.1 percent. This rate has grown in the last decade, increasing from 17.4 percent (see Figure 11). The increasing vacancy rate indicates a low demand for housing, which impacts the overall local housing market and local property values.

Figure 11: Housing Units by Occupancy Status, 2021
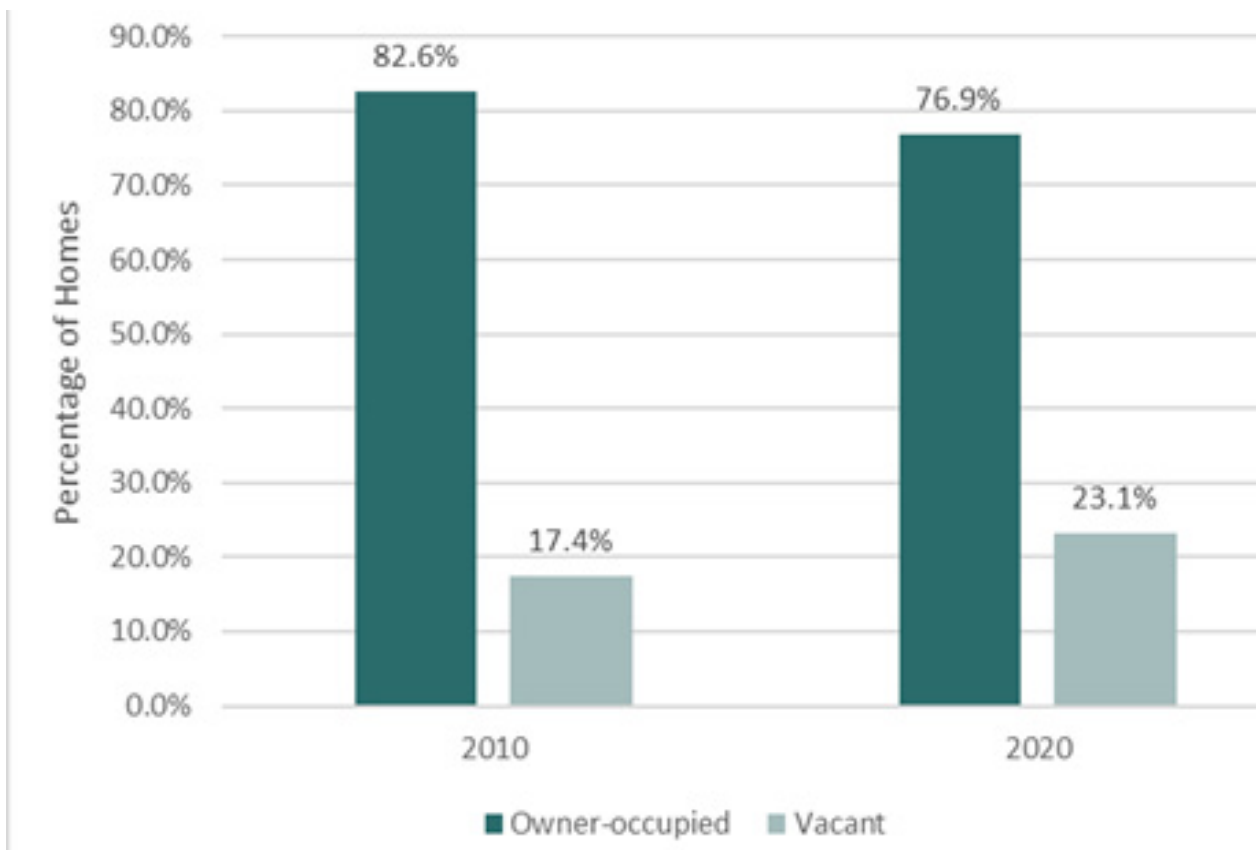
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

In addition, there are currently no rental properties within the Town of Parrish. Rental properties are a flexible and convenient option for residents who may not want to own a home or are not financially able to purchase a home. Including a variety of housing options in future development can help Parrish diversify its housing base and increase its future resiliency.

CHAPTER 2: MARKET ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the Market Analysis is to evaluate Parrish's economic market and give officials and stakeholders a better understanding of local consumer behavior and spending patterns. This section is divided into three different subsections.

1. The **Consumer Behavior** subsection presents data showing local consumer spending and preferences.
2. The **Industry Gap Analysis** subsection shows supply and demand estimates across individual industries, including surplus/leakage data indicating the ratio of nonresident spending in Parrish to resident spending outside Parrish.
3. The **Segmentation Profile** subsection describes the socioeconomic characteristics and lifestyle preferences of the community's residents.
4. The **SWOT Assessment** subsection analyzes the responses given by Parrish residents and stakeholders about the town's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, as well as identifies development priorities derived from public input.

Although the economic terms used in this section will be clarified within the narrative, Table 9 provides definitions of each term for ease of reference.

Table 9: Definition of Terms Used

Term	Definition
LifeMode Group	A market category that generally describes an area's residents based on shared common experiences or relevant demographic traits
Market Potential Index (MPI)	A measure of the likelihood of adults or households in a market area to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the US average.
Retail Gap	The difference between Retail Potential (demand), and Retail Sales (supply). If the difference is positive, then demand outweighs supply, creating a "retail leakage." If the difference is negative, then supply outweighs demand, creating a "retail surplus."
Retail Potential	The amount of spending by an area's residents on retail goods and services. Includes spending both inside and outside of the trade area in which they reside.
Retail Sales	The number of sales of retail goods and services by establishments in area.
Retail Surplus/Leakage	A retail surplus occurs when establishments in a community are selling more than is demanded in the community. A retail leakage occurs when residents of a community are spending on retail goods and services at establishments located outside the community.
Spending Potential Index (SPI)	A comparison of local spending to US averages. Any increase or decrease from a value of 100 indicates difference in spending compared to the national average.
Surplus/Leakage Factor	A measure of the balance between the volume of supply (Retail Sales) generated by an industry and the demand (Retail Potential) in the same industry, within a geographic trade area.
Tapestry Segments	A measure that provides greater detail into a community's distinctive characteristics, including residents' lifestyle choices and consumer purchasing preferences.

I. CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

1. Consumer Spending

Table 10 shows consumer spending for Parrish in 2021 across various spending categories. These categories are not mutually exclusive; instead, they are broad enough to capture a more complete depiction of expenses. Both the total and average amount spent per household represent annual figures. Although this table represents spending by Parrish households, each value includes money spent outside of Parrish as well as within the town. However, it is important to compare local spending levels to a broader average to compare Parrish's market conditions to a larger context. The **Spending Potential Index (SPI)** is a measure than compares local spending to the national average, which is represented by a value of 100. Any increase or decrease from 100 indicates how much more or less spending occurs in Parrish compared to the national average. For example, an SPI of 90 for a certain category of goods or services would indicate that consumers in Parrish spend 10 percent less than the national average on the items within that category.

The largest spending category for residents in Parrish was Shelter, at over $800/month, which includes expenses such as mortgages and rent payments. However, public input suggested this figure is closer to between $300 and $700 per month, citing low home values. However, the SPI for this category was 44, indicating that residents in Parrish spent 56 percent less on Shelter than the national average, which further signifies the low value of homes. The smallest spending category was Personal Care Products & Services, with an average spending amount of $771 per household annually and an SPI of 39. Notably, all spending categories for residents in Parrish have an SPI rate of at least 32 points lower than the national average, indicating that consumers who reside in Parrish spend at least 32 percent less in every category than the average amount spent nationally. This could be an indication of lower prices of goods, overall lower spending levels, or lower household income levels.

Table 10: Consumer Spending by Residents of Parrish, AL in 2021

Spending Category	Total	Household	SPI
Shelter	$4,092,479	$10,129.90	44
Health Care	$1,926,990	$4,769.78	67
Food at Home	$1,621,824	$4,014.41	65
Food Away from Home	$992,337	$2,456.28	57
Entertainment/Recreation	$921,521	$2,280.99	62
Support Payments/Cash Contributions/Gifts in Kind	$699,992	$1,732.65	64
Household Furnishings & Equipment	$580,528	$1,436.95	56
Travel	$526,479	$1,303.17	45
Apparel & Services	$518,912	$1,284.44	53
Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs	$346,780	$858.37	68
Education	$311,638	$771.38	39
Personal Care Products & Services	$311,638	$771.38	39
Total Spending/Average SPI	*$12,748,585*	*$31,555.91*	*56*

Source: ESRI, 2022

2. Consumer Behavior

Another vital component of market analysis is evaluating consumer behaviors and identifying specific products and industries supported by local consumers. One way to analyze consumer behavior is through measuring the percentage of the population that consumes specific goods and services, which signifies the potential demand for the good or service within the area. However, even if a large segment of the population consumes a product, the purchased product is not necessarily desired over another, potentially unavailable, option. This phenomenon is the reason the **Market Potential Index (MPI)** is an important indicator for actual demand in an area. The MPI measures the relative likelihood of the adults or households in a specific trade area to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the national average, which is represented by an MPI of 100. Comparing local consumer behaviors with national averages provides details about the products and services consumers want and the civic attitudes they have, which allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the different investments that are prospering or could eventually prosper in an area.

Consumer spending is analyzed in 3 categories for this analysis: Individuals, Households, and Market Potential Index (MPI). Consumer behavior is shown for both individuals and households because individuals tend to consume different goods and services than households, and separating individual consumer behavior from household consumer behavior allows for more a more comprehensive analysis. The MPI, as stated previously, measures the relative likelihood of consumers in a trade area to exhibit certain consumer behaviors or purchasing patterns compared to the national average, and this analysis is separated from individuals and households to determine trends.

INDIVIDUALS

As illustrated in Table 11, individuals in Parrish have a strong demand for fast food establishments, as 88.8 percent of the population have gone to a fast food or drive-in restaurant in the last 6 months. About 89 percent of the population bought gasoline in the last 6 months, indicating that individuals generally use their vehicles for travel. Smartphone ownership is also prevalent, at 88.7 percent of individuals. All top five consumer preferences had MPI scores close to the U.S. average.

Table 11: Most Popular Consumer Preferences and Behaviors for Individuals

Product/Consumer Behavior	Number of Individuals	Percent of Total Individuals	MPI
Bought gasoline in last 6 months	695	89.3%	101
Went to fast food/drive-in restaurants in last 6 months	691	88.8%	98
Have a smartphone	690	88.7%	96
Read any magazine (paper/electronic version) in last 6 months	659	84.7%	96
Own/used any credit/debit card in last 12 months	656	84.3%	95

Source: ESRI, 2022

Individuals in Parrish had the least demand for travel and vacation spending out of all examined goods and services. Each of the five consumer preferences with the lowest rate of engagement was travel related, and three of them had to do with taking vacations, both foreign and domestic (see Table 12). These categories also had low MPI scores, indicating that Parrish's population has a low demand for such services compared to the general U.S. population. These numbers could be impacted by the pandemic, as travel in general has declined over the past couple of years, as well as the overall income levels for residents within the town.

Table 12: Least Popular Consumer Preferences and Behaviors for Individuals

Product/Consumer Behavior	Number of Individuals	Percent of Total Individuals	MPI
Took 3+ foreign trips by plane in last 3 years	18	2.3%	29
Spent on domestic vacations in last 12 months: $1,500-$1,999	18	2.3%	61
Domestic travel in last 12 months: used general travel website	19	2.4%	41
Spent on foreign vacations in last 12 months: $1,000-$2,999	19	2.4%	63
Foreign travel in last 3 years: used general travel website	22	2.8%	43

Source: ESRI, 2022

HOUSEHOLDS

The goods and services with the highest demand from households in Parrish were mainly staple grocery items that are similarly prevalent in households throughout the U.S., as indicated by their MPI scores (see Table 13).

Table 13: Most Popular Consumer Preferences and Behaviors for Households

Product/Consumer Behavior	Number of Individuals	Percent of Total Individuals	MPI
Households used bread in last 6 months	386	95.5%	101
Households owns/leases any vehicle	365	90.3%	101
Households used fresh milk in last 6 months	327	80.9%	97
Households used fresh fruit/vegetables in last 6 months	317	78.5%	90
Households owns a computer	300	74.3%	91

Source: ESRI, 2022

The household consumer preferences with the least demand were technology related. As listed in Table 14, only 2 percent of households subscribe to fiber optic Internet services, and only 5 percent purchased a video game system in the last 12 months. These categories also had low MPI scores, with fiber optic subscription particularly far below the U.S. average, at 37.

Table 14: Least Popular Consumer Preferences and Behaviors for Households

Product/Consumer Behavior	Number of Individuals	Percent of Total Individuals	MPI
Households subscribes to fiber optic	8	2.0%	37
Households spent $2,000+ on most recent home computer	10	2.5%	52
Households purchased video game system in last 12 months	20	5.0%	64
Households spent $1,500-$1,999 on most recent home computer	22	5.4%	104
Households bought/leased new vehicle in last 12 months	32	7.9%	82

Source: ESRI, 2022

MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX (MPI)

According to the MPI metric, consumers in Parrish are much more likely than the rest of the U.S. population to buy cigarettes at convenience stores, spend at convenience stores generally, only use coupon brands, and place importance on buying American. However, these rates do not necessarily indicate a sizable portion of the residents are purchasing these products, only that the percentage of the population that are making these purchases is larger than U.S. average. The top 5 categories with the largest MPI are listed in Table 15.

Table 15: Most Popular Consumer Preferences/Behaviors for Individuals and Households by MPI

Product/Consumer Behavior	Number of Individuals/ Households	Percent of Individuals/ Households	MPI
Bought cigarettes at convenience store in last 30 days	92	11.8%	165
Spent at convenience store in last 30 days: $100+	230	29.6%	145
Only use coupons brands: usually buy	151	19.4%	142
Buying American is important	387	49.7%	140
Household owns any dog	213	52.7%	133

Source: ESRI, 2022

In addition, as listed in Table 16, residents in Parrish are far less likely to take foreign trips and take domestic vacations, subscribe to fiber optic Internet services, and go to a bar/night club. Many of these consumer behaviors are likely explained by lower income levels in Parrish compared to the general U.S. population, and therefore might not reflect underlying preferences.

Table 16: Least Popular Consumer Preferences/Behaviors for Individuals and Households by MPI

Product/Consumer Behavior	Number of Individuals/ Households	Percent of Individuals/ Households	MPI
Took 3+ foreign trips by plane in last 3 years	18	2.3%	29
HH subscribes to fiber optic	8	2.0%	37
Domestic travel in last 12 months: used general travel website	19	2.4%	41
Went to a bar/night club in last 12 months	55	7.1%	42
Member of any frequent flyer program	80	10.3%	42

Source: ESRI, 2022

II. INDUSTRY GAP ANALYSIS

The industry gap and its corollary leakage/surplus factor can help identify opportunities for local retail expansion or provide evidence that certain expansions could potentially hurt local businesses in specific industries. The retail gap represents the difference between Retail Potential, or demand, and Retail Sales, or supply. Therefore, it statistically measures whether a given industry is experiencing a leakage or surplus. If demand is greater than supply, the retail gap will be positive, indicating that a leakage is occurring, and residents of the community are spending on retail goods and services at establishments located outside the community. In this case, expansion of industry may be beneficial to the area by encouraging local consumers to remain in the community to shop and by drawing in consumers from other areas.

If supply is greater than demand, the retail gap will be negative, indicating that a surplus is occurring, and establishments in the community are selling more goods and services than what is demanded within the area. This can mean that consumers from outside the community are coming to the community to buy certain goods and services. By analyzing sources of surplus, expansion strategies can be created around supporting current industries and their supply chains.

Data Note: Leakage Surplus Factor
The leakage/surplus factor presents a snapshot of the retail opportunity available for a specific industry or subsector, based on its retail gap. It measures the balance between the volume of supply (Retail Sales) generated by the industry and the demand (Retail Potential) within the same industry. The factors range from -100 (a total surplus) to 100 (a total leakage). A negative value represents a market where customers are drawn in from outside the trade area, while a positive value represents a leakage of retail opportunity outside the trade area.

Table 17: Supply and Demand of Industries in Parrish

Industry	Demand	Supply	Leakage/Surplus Factor
Alcoholic Beverages	$124,530	$0	100.00
Apparel & Services	$518,912	$0	100.00
Computer	$39,566	$0	100.00
Entertainment & Recreation	$921,521	$0	100.00
Food Away from Home	$992,337	$1,013,000	2.04
Financial	$23,021,583	$0	100.00
Grocery Stores	$1,621,824	$15,798,000	-89.73
Health	$229,509	$1,179,000	-75.83
Home	$4,856,269	$1,313,000	26.25
Household Furnishings & Equipment	$377,421	$0	100.00
Household Operations	$510,462	$0	100.00
Insurance	$2,116,722	$1,375,000	53.94
Transportation	$2,144,005	$617,000	38.22
Travel	$406,773	$0	100.00
Uncategorized	N/A	$3,028,000	N/A

Source: ESRI, 2022

Overall, the community's demand for goods and services outweighs its current supply. The total Parrish market area possesses approximately $37.9 million in Retail Potential (demand) and $24.3 million in Retail Sales (supply), resulting in a positive overall retail gap of about $13.6 million and a leakage factor of 55.7. The low ratio of businesses to households in Parrish likewise suggests that a small number of industries are inflating the overall supply, because residents have no choice but to leave Parrish for many goods and services. Therefore, the town likely has several opportunities for expansion and/or recruitment.

Only two industries in Parrish possess a surplus: Grocery Stores and Health Stores. There are two additional businesses that contribute to the economy but are uncategorized: Case Knife Outlet and Wayne's Pawn. Son's Grocery and Gross Drug Company not only meet local demand but also provide resources for many consumers outside the community. Grocery Stores have a surplus of $14.2 million, with a surplus factor of −89.7, and Health Stores have a surplus of about $950,000, with a leakage/surplus factor of −75.8. These surplus rates show that much of Son's Grocery and the Gross Drug Company's customer base live outside Parrish town limits.

Every other industry in Parrish possesses a positive retail gap, indicating a leakage. In addition, nearly all these industries have leakage/surplus factors of 100, indicating that no businesses in those industries exist in the community. The largest retail gaps exist in the Apparel, Computer, Entertainment & Recreation, Financial, Household Furnishings & Equipment, Household Operations, and Travel industries. These industries have great potential as no competition in these categories currently exists. Additionally, residents in community meetings have expressed interest in having retail options in these categories, and demand for these products clearly exists.

In addition, the large gap for Entertainment & Recreation supports the idea for more outdoor recreation opportunities in Parrish. Residents in Parrish are spending close to $1 million on recreation-related activities outside of Parrish. More information on outdoor recreation opportunities can be found in Section II.

Categories with low, positive leakage/surplus factors include Food Away from Home, Home, Transportation, and Insurance. This means that there is greater demand than Parrish businesses are able to supply. Additional businesses are needed to close this gap if Parrish wants to contain this spending to the town limits.

The industry for Food Away from Home has a leakage of only $20,000 and leakage factor of 2.0. This does not mean that there is no room for another restaurant. Only two restaurants currently exist – Granny Pooh's Kitchen and Jack's, so greater diversity in food options could lead to greater demand. In this instance, greater supply could lead to greater demand. The leakage/surplus factor also shows that some of the demand for Jack's and Granny Pooh's Kitchen comes from areas outside of Parrish.

The Home Industry has a leakage of $345,000 with a leakage factor of 26.3, and these rates are mostly driven by the Mortgage Payment and Maintenance/Remodeling subsectors. Parrish Water Works is the only business contributing to this sector. In addition, Alfa Insurance is the only business contributing to the Insurance industry, which has a leakage of $972,000 and leakage factor of 53.9.

The Transportation industry has a leakage of $235,000 and leakage factor of 38.2. However, Son's BP is the only gas station in this industry and there are no contributing businesses for Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs.

Due to their large retail gaps and surplus/leakage factors, increasing the number of local businesses in these industries would likely benefit Parrish's market area. However, while these industries represent the greatest opportunities for expansion, they do not necessarily represent industries in which investment is most attainable. Other industries presented in Table 17 have similarly high surplus/leakage factors, but smaller dollar-amount leakages may serve as lower-hanging fruit for investment.

Source: RPCGB, 2023

III. SEGMENTATION PROFILE

The Segmentation Profile illustrates characteristics of Parrish's residents that cannot be derived from quantifiable factors alone. To show these characteristics, the population is arranged into different LifeMode Groups and Tapestry Segments. LifeMode groups arrange individuals into different markets based on shared common experiences or significant demographic traits. Tapestry Segments are subcategories of LifeMode Groups that provide greater detail and specifitown into a particular community's distinctive characteristics. These characteristics give insight into residents' general lifestyle choices, consumer purchasing preferences, and preferred leisure activities, and are therefore used by analysts to more effectively market goods and services within a market area.

Table 18: Population of Parrish, AL by LifeMode Group and Tapestry Segment

LifeMode Group / Tapestry Segment	Percentage of Population
LifeMode Group: Rustic Outpost	100%
Tapestry 1: Rural Bypasses	52.7%
Tapestry 2: Rooted Rural	47.3%

Source: ESRI, 2022

1. Rustic Outpost Life Mode Group

Communities defined as "Rustic Outpost" are characterized by country living. They are typically comprised of older families living in older homes, and their local economies are often dependent on manufacturing, retail, and healthcare industries, with pockets of mining and agricultural jobs. Most residents own their homes as well as at least one vehicle, live within their means, prefer to pay their bills in person, and like to read the newspaper, rather than rely on a digital source of news. Residents in Rustic Outpost areas are also likely outdoor enthusiasts, who grow their own vegetables, love their pets, and enjoy hunting and/or fishing. However, labor force participation is usually low within these areas, and jobs are usually concentrated in skilled and service occupations.

RUSTIC OUTPOST TAPESTRY SEGMENTS:

A. Rural Bypasses

Open space, undeveloped land, and farmland characterize Rural Bypasses. These families live within small towns along country back roads and enjoy the open air in these sparsely populated neighborhoods. Their country lifestyle focuses on the outdoors, gardening, hunting, and fishing. They are more likely to own a satellite dish than a home computer. Although most households do have a connection to the internet, use is very limited. Those who are not yet retired work in blue-collar jobs in the agriculture or manufacturing industries. Other characteristics include:

- An older housing market, with more married couples without children and single households, the average household size is slightly lower at 2.55 and most residents own single-family homes.
- Residents primarily live in rural areas, and this tapestry segment is almost entirely located within the South.
- Labor force participation is less than 50 percent, so income is primarily derived from wages and supplemented with Social Security and Supplemental Security Incomes.

B. Rooted Rural

Rooted Rural is heavily concentrated in the Appalachian Mountain range as well as in Texas and Arkansas. Employment in the forestry industry is common, and Rooted Rural residents live in many of the heavily forested regions of the country. This group enjoys time spent outdoors, hunting, fishing, or working in their gardens. Indoors, they enjoy watching television with their spouse and spending time with their pets. When shopping, they look for American-made and generic products. These communities are heavily influenced by religious faith and family history. Other characteristics of Rooted Rural communities include:

- The housing market is dominated by married couples, few with children at home, and around 80% of homes are owner-occupied.
- Residents have a "do-it-yourself" mentality, and they grow their own produce, work on their cars, and own a riding lawn mower. They also tend to avoid the internet with payment transactions, preferring to pay bills in person.
- The consumer base views clothes are a necessity, not a fashion statement, so they tend to only buy new clothes when old clothes wear out.

Figure 12: Parrish Town Sign

Source: WVTM 13 Birmingham, 2018

CHAPTER 3: SWOT ASSESSMENT

The EDSP planning process included an assessment of Parrish's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). The assessment includes input gathered through an online survey provided to local stakeholders and residents to identify the most pressing economic issues facing the town's economic trajectory, as well as feedback from a public meeting held in Spring 2023. The purpose of the SWOT Assessment section is to outline the development priorities as determined by Parrish's residents and stakeholders through analyzing survey responses.

SWOT RESPONSES OVERVIEW

This section includes the top five Strengths, Weaknesses, opportunities, and Threats facing the Town of Parrish's local economy per the SWOT survey responses. The areas that residents are most and least satisfied with are also identified below. The SWOT survey responses were collected from March 2023 to May 2023.

STRENGTHS

- Cost of Living
- Geographic Location
- Lifestyle and Quality of Life
- Commute Times
- Government/Political Leadership

WEAKNESSES

- Limited Career Opportunities/Trajectories
- Business Environment
- Business Sites/Real Estate
- K-12 Schools
- Natural Environment Limitations

OPPORTUNITIES

- Improve Critical Infrastructure (such as Roads, Water/Sewer, and Broadband)
- Focus on Programs to Recruit/Attract Business
- Provide More Business Support
- Improve Outdoor Recreation Initiatives

THREATS

- Inadequate Housing Supply/Housing Affordability
- Lack of Recreation Activities
- Inadequate Water/Sewer Infrastructure
- Vacant Downtowns/Lack of Resources for Downtown
- Plant Closures/Relocation

RESIDENTS ARE <u>MOST</u> SATISFIED WITH:

Commuting Times to Work and School
Local and Regional Leadership
Cost of Living
Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Initiatives

RESIDENTS ARE <u>LEAST</u> SATISFIED WITH:

Image as Tourist Destination
Appeal to Young Professionals
Apprenticeship Availability
Access to Training/Skills Building Programs
Pedestrians/Bicycle Routes

1. Strengths Summary

The strengths identified by respondents included a strong consensus around the cost of living in the area, the town's geographic location, and the lifestyle/quality of life the town offers. Figure 13 outlines the responses recorded for the question "What are the town's top competitive strengths, or assets?" Respondents were allowed to choose up to three answers.

Figure 13: Parrish SWOT Survey, "What are the town's top competitive strengths, or assets?"
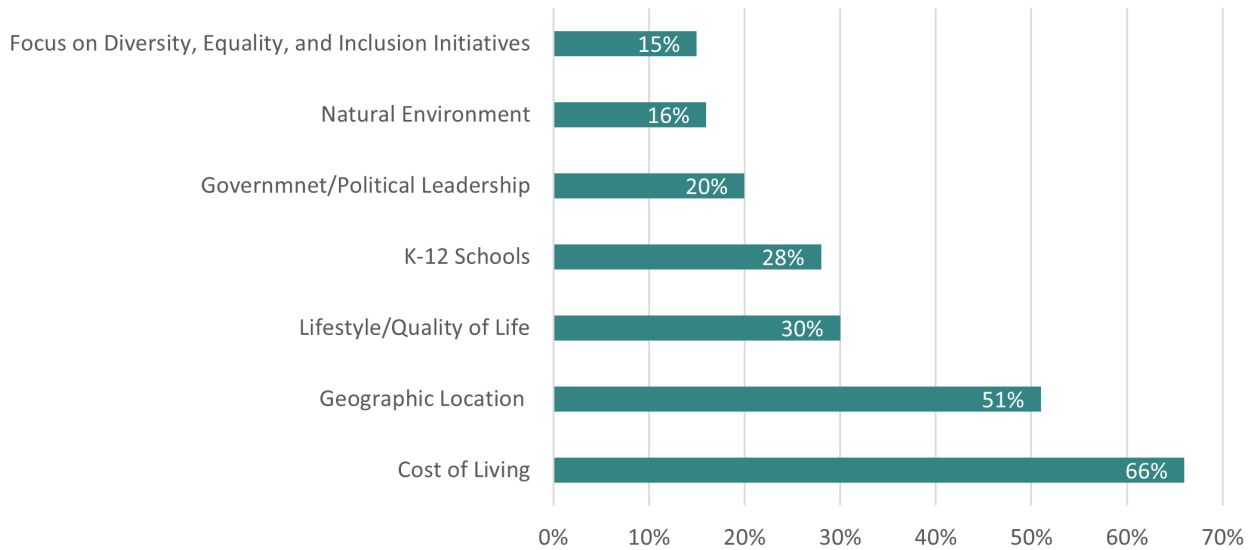
Source: Parrish SWOT Survey, 2023

Residents and stakeholders were also asked to record their perspectives on how well their expectations were met regarding a variety of interest areas divided between Economic Areas and Quality-of Life Areas. The top five weighted responses for Economic Areas are depicted in Figure 14 and include commuting times to work and school as well as diversity, equality, & inclusion initiatives and cost of living.
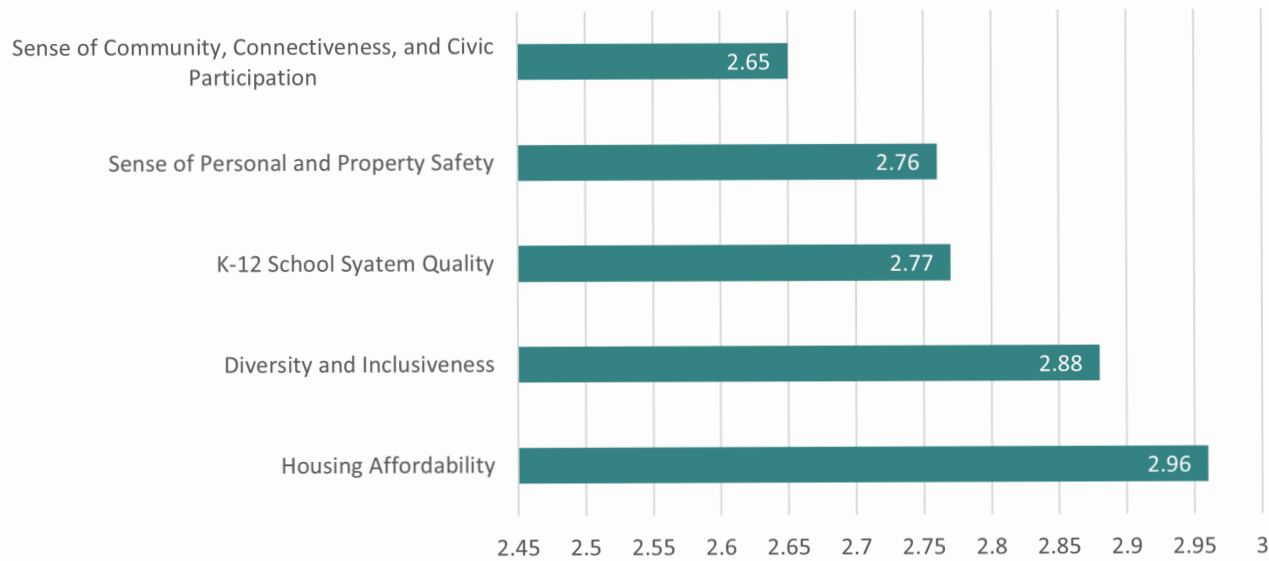
Figure 14: Parrish SWOT Survey, Top Five Ranked Economic Areas
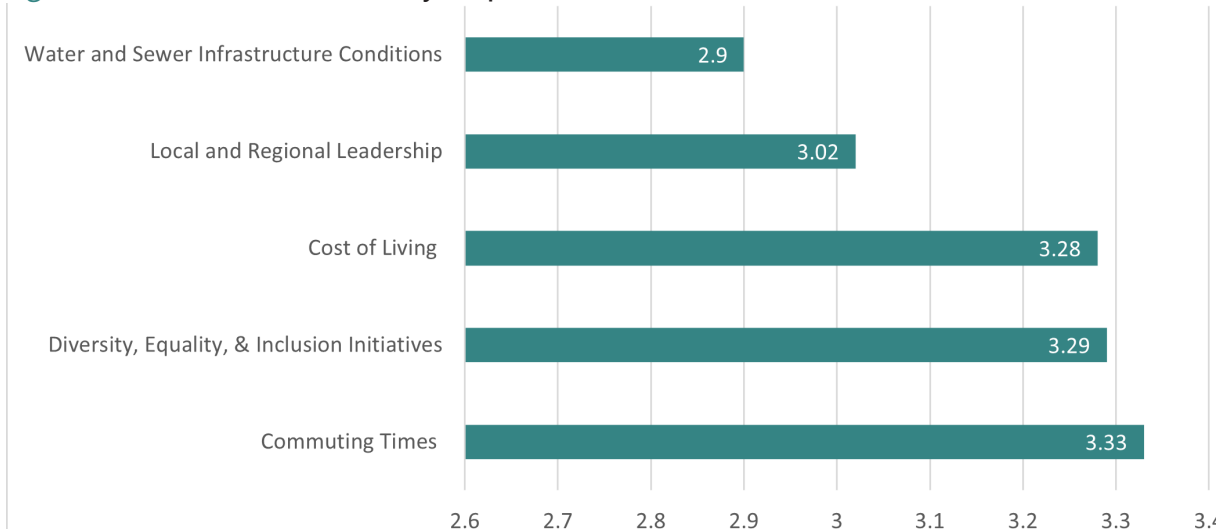
Source: Parrish SWOT Survey, 2023

The five top weighted responses for Quality-of-Life Areas are depicted in Figure 15, with the largest weighted responses including housing affordability and diversity and inclusiveness.

Figure 15: Parrish SWOT Survey, Top Five Ranked Quality-of-Life Areas

Source: Parrish SWOT Survey, 2023

2. Weaknesses Summary

The weaknesses identified by respondents included limited career opportunities/trajectories and the local business environment as the town's largest drawbacks. The list of the top ten weaknesses is illustrated in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Parrish SWOT Survey, "What are the town's top weaknesses, or constraints?"
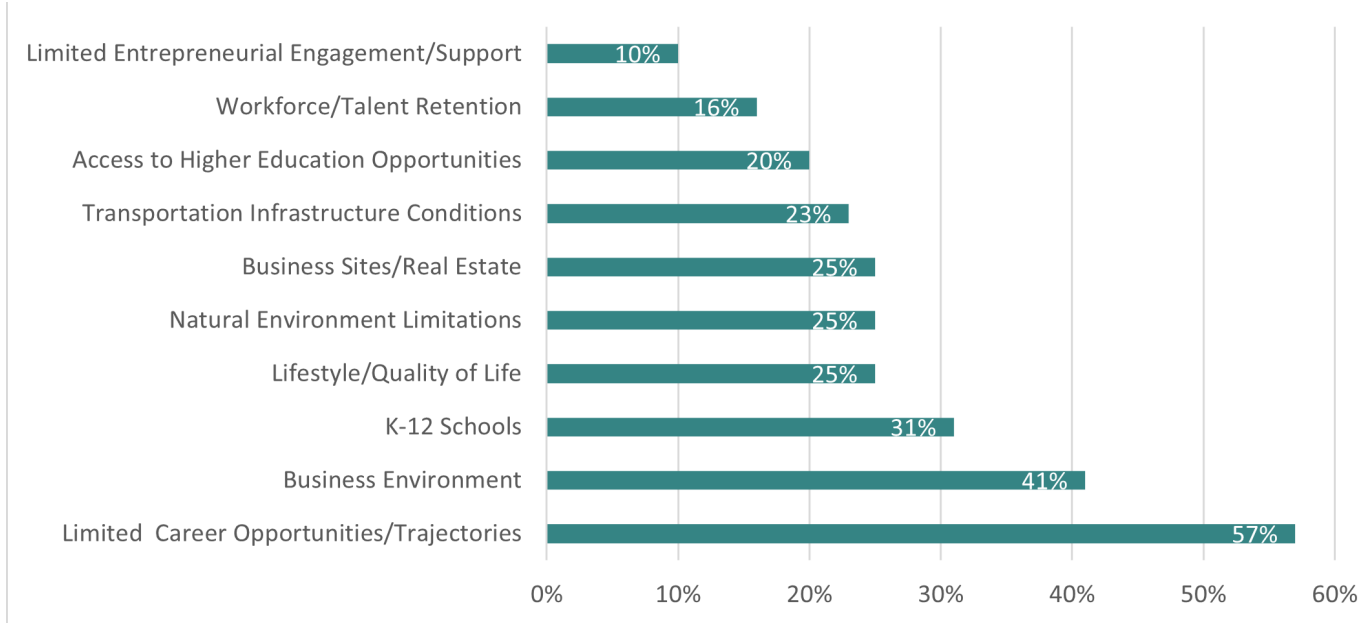
Source: Parrish SWOT Survey, 2023

As for expectations in Economic Areas, image as a tourist destination was listed as the least ranked area, followed by appeal to young professionals and apprenticeship availability. The least ranked areas are listed in Figure 17.
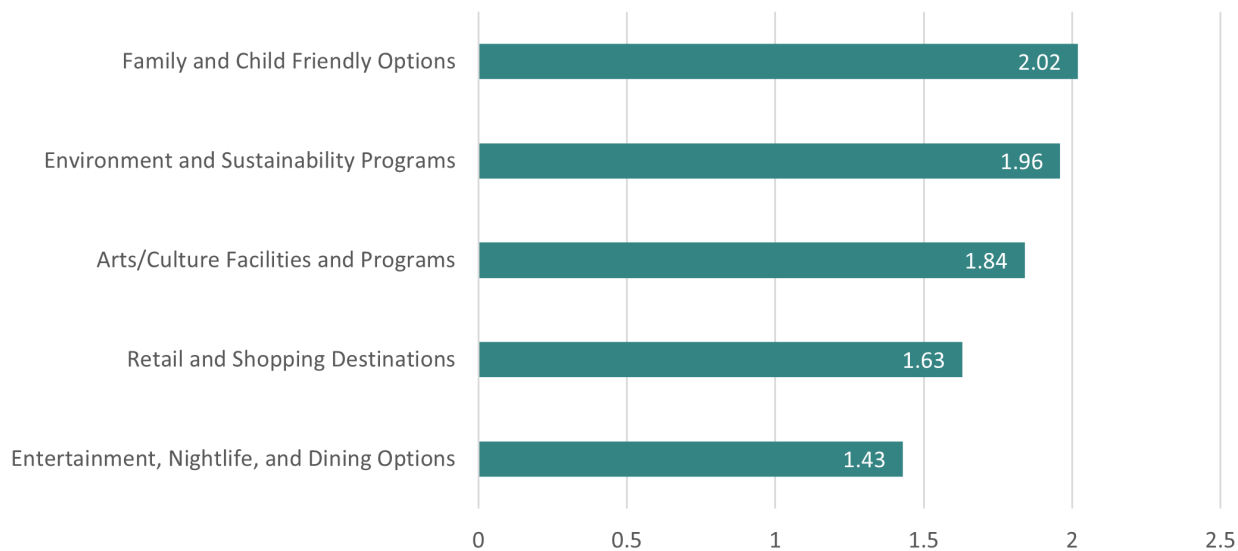
Figure 17: Parrish SWOT Survey, Least Ranked Economic Areas
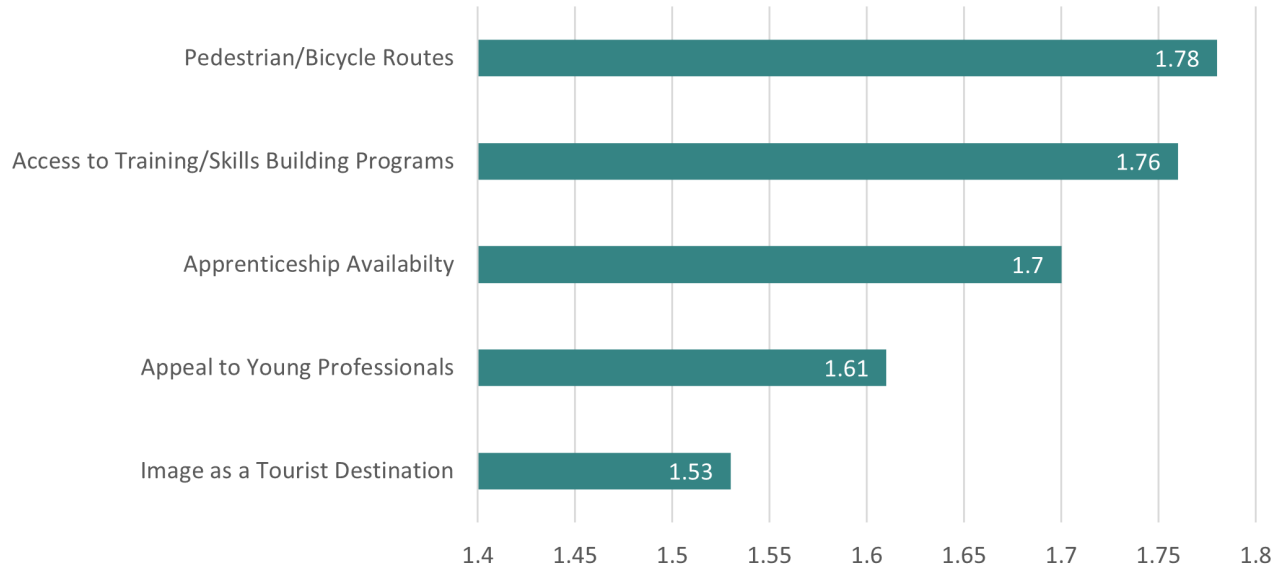
Source: Parrish SWOT Survey, 2023

The least ranked Quality-of-Life areas included Entertainment, Nightlife, and Dining Options as the lowest ranked. The least ranked Quality-of-Life areas are listed in Figure 18.

Figure 18: Parrish SWOT Survey, Least Ranked Quality-of-Life Areas

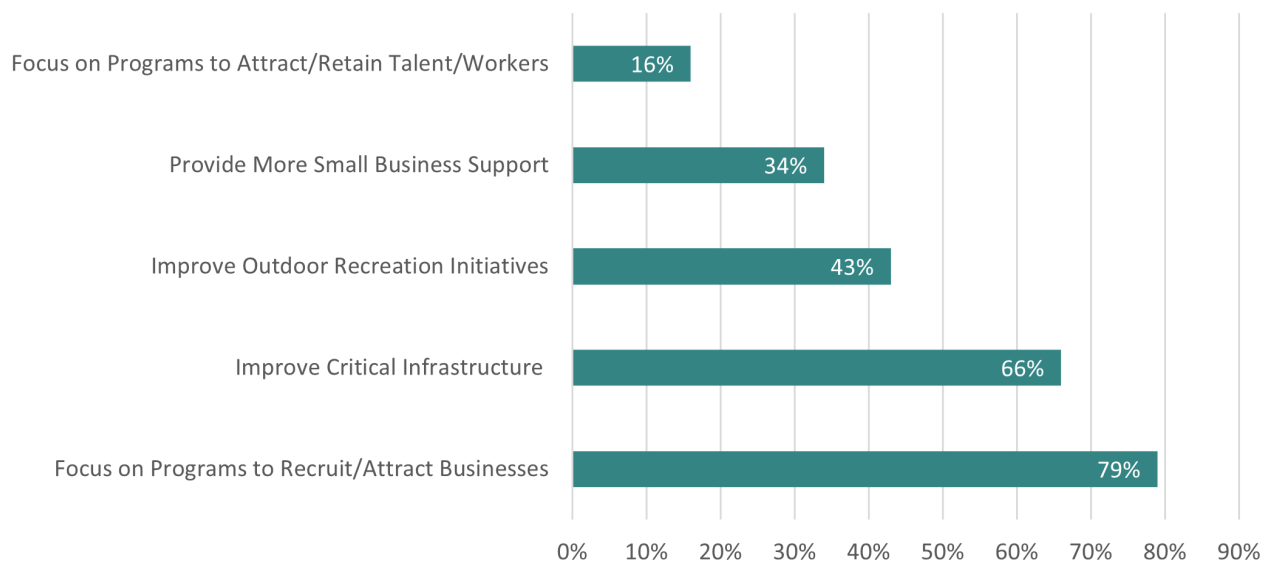*Source: Parrish SWOT Survey, 2023*

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3. Opportunities Summary

Respondents were given a chance to list opportunities they saw within their community unprompted. This open-ended question received an array of responses and a number of opportunities for Parrish's future development. However, most were centered on initiatives the town could take to improve the quality of life for current residents and attract new residents. This included a focus on the creation or expansion of outdoor recreational assets in Parrish, as well as fixing old infrastructure. Some specific responses are listed below:

- "There is nothing new under the sun. Study other small towns that have bounced back from economic problems and work on changing the community mindset. Persistent baby steps in the right direction will be rewarded in the future."

- "Expand town limits north to I22 and south to Nelson Brothers. Retire the debt from the splashpad. Capitalize on the hundreds of acres of brownfields and grayfields on the campus of the century old Gorgas Steam Plant. Create a "town center" somehow around the 4-way stop on Hwy 269."

- "The people make this town. Smiling faces and laughter. We just need the funds to fix these awful roads and have a place like a park with a track and picnic tables. Let's bring this community together."

- "We have an enormous amount of potential within the town for business once some of the property is developed. We have several nonprofit groups that are working to improve the quality of life. We will need more defined parking for businesses upon development. We need cleaner waterways in order to enjoy different opportunities that our community has to offer."

In addition, residents were asked to select their top three most important development priorities for the town's local economy. A wide majority, or 80 percent, ranked improving employment/job opportunities in the top three most important development needs, followed on focuses to retail and recreation opportunities. Figure 19 lists the top 5 selected development priorities for SWOT survey respondents.

Figure 19: Parrish SWOT Survey, Top Five Development Priorities

Source: Parrish SWOT Survey, 2023

4. Threats Summary

Respondents were asked to identify risks and threats to the local economy, too. One of the questions in the SWOT survey asked respondents to identify the economic assets Parrish lacked in comparison to other towns nearby. Figure 20 lists the top five development gaps selected for Parrish.

Figure 20: Parrish SWOT Survey, "Where is the town lacking in development when compared to other towns nearby?"; Top Five Development Gaps
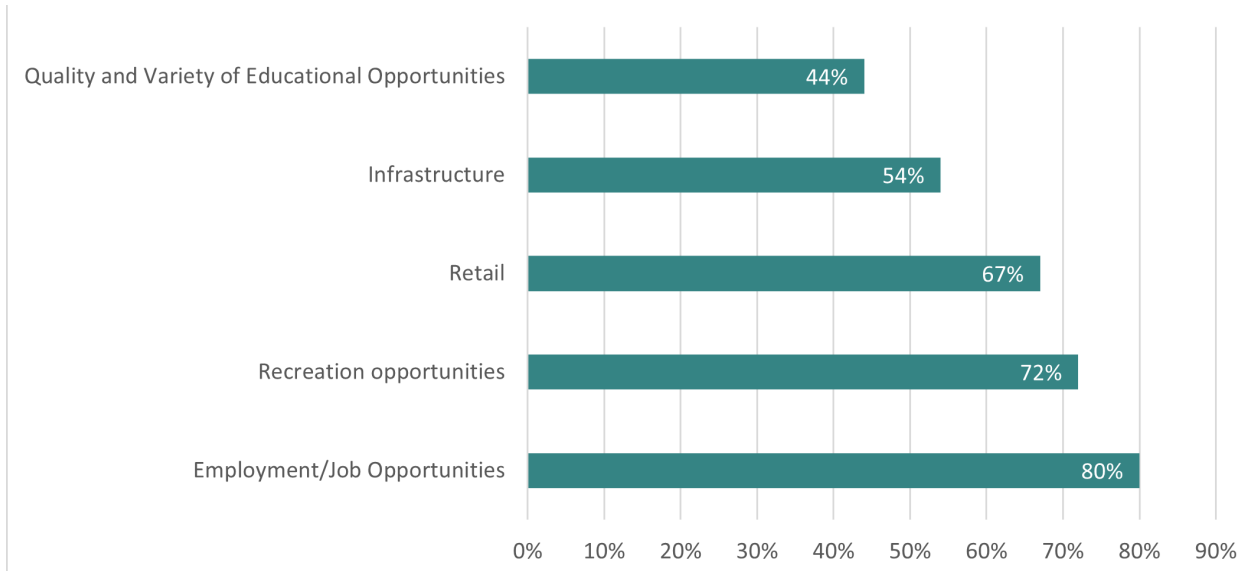
Source: Parrish SWOT Survey, 2023

Residents and stakeholders also ranked the infrastructure development improvements the town needs in order to grow. The largest improvement areas were related to transportation and included road and highway system conditions, pedestrian and bicycle routes, and other recreational infrastructure (such as trails and recreation centers). Broadband Access was also identified as one of the top five infrastructure needs within the town; access to reliable broadband is critical to economic and community development.

Figure 21: Parrish SWOT Survey, Top Five Infrastructure Needs
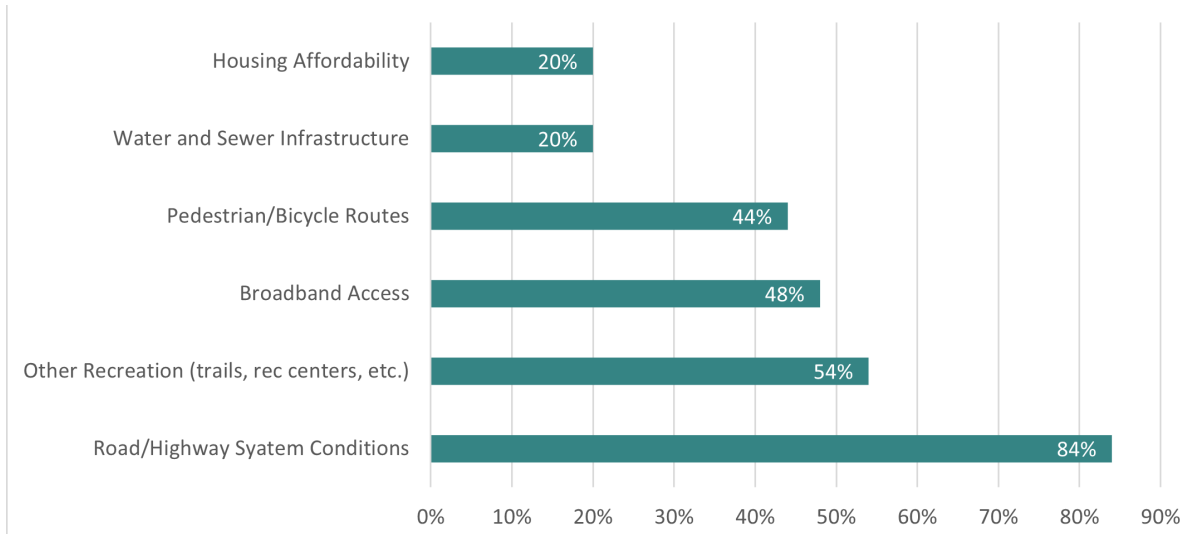
Source: Parrish SWOT Survey, 2023

The SWOT survey also included an inquiry regarding the threats to local economic resiliency, and respondents were asked to rank a list of threats from most to least threatening to Parrish. The weighted responses are listed in Figure 22. The inability to attract or retain population and workforce ranked as the number one threat to Parrish's local economy, and limited/lack of job growth or employment opportunities was recorded as the second largest threat.

Figure 22: Parrish SWOT Survey, Resiliency Threats Rankings

Source: Parrish SWOT Survey, 2023

5. Community Feedback

There was also a public community meeting in April 2023 that generated public feedback on a variety of topics. Community members were excited about future economic development within their town. Residents want more things to do after work, including increased options for restaurants and entertainment, and they also want small businesses, like clothing and shoe stores, to be available within town. Attendees also cited a desire for increased housing development and more affordable housing options, like apartment buildings. There are several vacant buildings that need to be demolished and could be used as sites for housing investment to attract young people to the town. Residents discussed that the town has the capacity to expand their sewer system to both businesses and residential homes, which is an asset for Parrish.

Residents loved the local churches, low cost of living, and close-knit community aspects of living in Parrish. Some challenges cited by residents include road conditions, lack of job opportunities, broadband infrastructure, and closure of the high school, which led to a decline in town pride. However, the town has been utilizing the resources it does have. A local nonprofit is currently using part of the old high school building to open a free store. Since the campus is large, there are many other opportunities for development; some suggestions cited at the meeting included using the building to host community events, create and support a local business incubator, and provide recovery resources to local residents.

SECTION II:
Strategy Framework Development

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

Source: RPCGB, 2023

The Strategy Framework Development section aims to outline the development opportunities within the community based on the data gathered and analyzed in the Needs Assessment as well as input provided by the local community. The plan's strategy framework will describe the town's development themes resulting from the data analysis and stakeholder input, and it will evaluate the potential of Outdoor Recreation and Broadband connectivity as primary development initiatives for the town. This section is divided into 3 different chapters:

- **Chapter 1 – Priority Development Themes & Focus Areas**
- **Chapter 2 – Outdoor Recreation in Parrish**
- **Chapter 3 – Broadband Connectivity**

CHAPTER 1: PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT THEMES & FOCUS AREAS

Several themes became apparent concluding the Needs Assessment, which included data analysis, a SWOT assessment, and community meetings with the public and town leadership. The town wants to focus on redeveloping its identity to better serve its residents and attract newcomers. In addition, the town's infrastructure is in need of critical repairs and improvements. This chapter will further outline these major themes and identify focus areas correlated with each theme.

- **Theme 1 – Enhance Parrish's Sense of Community**
- **Theme 2 – Update & Improve Infrastructure**
- **Theme 3 – Retain Residents and Attract Opportunities**

THEME 1- ENHANCE PARRISH'S SENSE OF COMMUNITY

One of the most prominent ideas conveyed through survey responses and public input was the desire for Parrish to enhance the local sense of community. Parrish is known by its residents as a communal small town, and there is a desire to provide more community gatherings and public spaces for current residents. This section will outline a list of the Focus Areas relating to this theme:

A. Placemaking

Placemaking has become a popular term that describes establishing a stronger sense of community by harnessing local resources, and this can be put into practice in a variety of ways depending on the vision of the community. A great place to start would be by bolstering the town identity with beautification and branding. Branding and marketing strategies can seem daunting, but there are approachable steps to accomplish these ends on a community level. For example, Parrish may want to consider updating the town sign, especially since it is usually the first thing residents and visitors see as they enter town. In addition, creating a recognizable logo and Town of Parrish website could help residents access town information and updates while providing a way for others to learn more about the community and what it has to offer.

In addition to beautification and branding, there are some designations the town can make to enhance the sense of place within Parrish. Though there is currently no zoning in the town, the town can evaluate its existing land uses and designate an area as the downtown as an investment priority and development focus area. The Town of Parrish does not currently have an identified downtown, and therefore there is no natural "heart" of the community. Identifying a downtown would create a sense of place and pride for residents. The town could add murals and a space for community engagement, like a pavilion or picnic tables, to this area. The chosen downtown would need to be in an area that has room for the development of new businesses, as well as a central location for residents and visitors. Once the downtown is determined, the town can decide if other designations are necessary or needed, such as business districts, historic districts, etc. A map of Parrish's existing land uses can be found on Map 1, and Table 19 includes a list of project and implementation ideas for the Placemaking Focus Area.

Source: RPCGB, 2023

MAP 1: EXISTING LAND USES
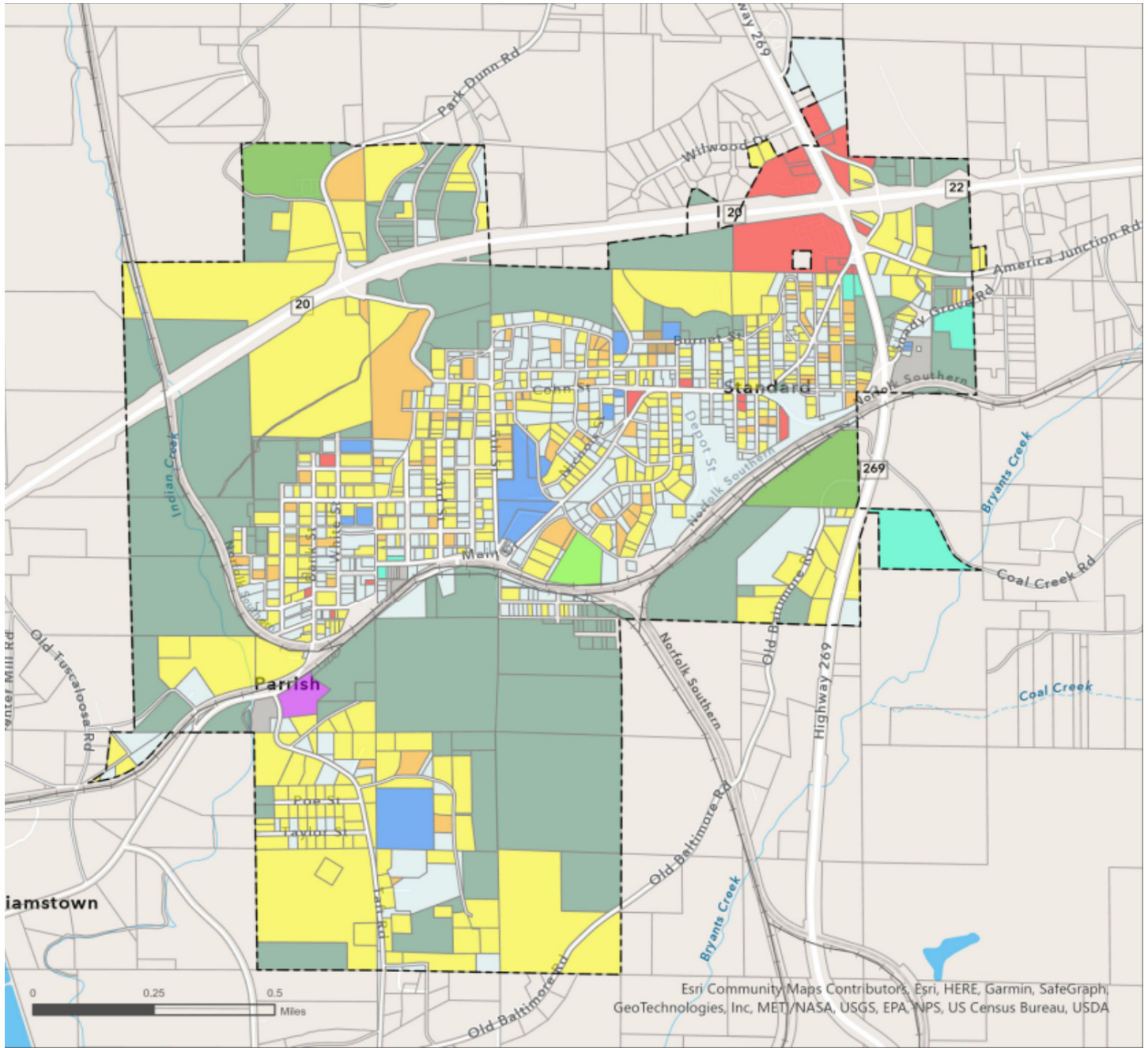
PARRISH, ALABAMA
EXISTING LAND USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- FORESTED
- INDUSTRIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- MOBILE HOME
- MULTI FAMILY
- PARK AND OPEN SPACE
- PUBLIC USE FACILITIES
- SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED
- UTILITIES
- VACANT AND UNDEVELOPED

Total Parcels - 1,141
Total Acres - 1,168
Avg Lot Size - 1.02 acres

CATEGORY	TOTAL ACRES	% OF TOTAL ACRES
Agriculture	5.43	0.46%
Commercial	32.07	2.75%
Forested	429.22	36.75%
Industrial	3.95	0.34%
Institutional	25.80	2.21%
Mobile Home	44.14	3.78%
Multi Family	1.22	0.10%
Park/ Open Space	28.05	2.40%
Public Use Facilities	17.31	1.48%
Single Family Detached	378.81	32.44%
Utilities	6.96	0.60%
Vacant/ Undeveloped	194.94	16.69%

Residential land uses - 36.31%
Commercial land uses - 2.75%
Industrial land uses - 0.34%
Vacant/Undev/Forested - 53.44%

Table 19: Project Ideas- Placemaking Focus Area

Project	Description	Resources
Beautification Committee	• Create official beautification committee consisting of engaged and passion residents who care about Parrish and its future; make a list of desired improvements for implementation and present to town council.	• Town residents • Neighboring communities
Logo & Website Updates	• Update the town logo if desired; create partnerships with local community college or technical school for "logo competition" for local students to design and submit to town. RPCGB can also provide assistance. • Create town website; assign task for updating website to town employee or involved volunteer. If funding is needed to implement, consider seeing if CAWACO is a feasible option. RPCGB can also provide assistance.	• RPCGB; partnerships with local community college or high schools • RPCGB; CAWACO Resource & Development Council (RC&D)-has small grants to assist communities with community development initiatives.
Town Sign Updates	• Work with the beautification committee to design town signs for updates; CAWACO can also be a grant source for this project.	• Beautification Committee; CAWACO RC&D
Downtown Designation	• An option identified for the downtown included in this EDSP is the Main Drive area that connects 1st Street to 5th Street. This was selected as an option because this was the location of the old downtown, and the senior center and waterworks board already have facilities there. The community garden is also located in the area. • Once confirmed, Parrish can focus its redevelopment focuses there, and the town can conduct visioning sessions with residents and stakeholders regarding what priorities residents have and what they would like to have in their downtown district.	• Once determined, RPCGB can provide mapping services or technical assistance to help begin development or visioning processes.
Sidewalk Installation	• Many students walk to the elementary/ middle school, but there are very few sidewalks in town. In addition, creating safe, walkable pathways through town would encourage development and utilization of the designated downtown area as well as attendance at local events. • In addition, there is an opportunity to improve the connectivity of and enhance the safety of walkability between the town's assets, such as the school, the primary residential area, and the local grocery store.	• Once determined, RPCGB can provide mapping services or technical assistance to help illustrate the location of sidewalks within the town's priority areas. • RPCGB can also help the town find funding sources to assist with the construction costs.

B. Strategic Partnerships for Development

Though the Town of Parrish is ready to take steps toward its future, it is important to note that the town will need assistance with developing projects. Especially as a small, rural community with limited capacity, creating strategic partnerships with local and regional agencies will connect Parrish to resources, assist with project implementation, and enhance opportunities. Table 20 lists organizations the Town of Parrish can connect with to establish relationships and acquire project support.

Table 20: Local and Regional Resources for Strategic Partnerships

Agency	Description	Website
CAWACO RC & D	• Resource Conservation & Development Council: A nonprofit organization that connects Central Alabama communities to the resources and partnerships needed to drive economic development in an environmentally sustainable way; has a host of programs dedicated to providing technical assistance & resources to local communities.	www.cawaco.org
The Healing Network of Walker County	• UA nonprofit organization comprised of a coalition of organizations committed to making Walker County a healthier place to live, work and play; goal is to create a comprehensive network of prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery resources related to mental and substance use disorders.	www.hnwc.org
Health Action Partnership – Walker County	• A nonprofit organization comprised of a coalition of organizations committed to making Walker County a healthier place; helps foster community-based collaborations and mobilized local support to drive community change.	www.healthactionpartnership.org
Walker County Commission	• Build upon the existing relationship with county level officials, including District 3 Commissioner.	www.walkercountyal.us
Walker Area Community Foundation	• A nonprofit, grantmaking organization building the permanent capital needed in the Walker County area to daily facilitate community conversations, inspire action, and empower partners.	www.wacf.org
Walker County Economic & Industrial Development Authority	• Walker County's Economic Development agency dedicated to supporting economic development projects in the county.	www.wceida.com
Walker County Chamber of Commerce	• Walker County's chamber organization comprised of local businesses; provides programs and partnerships to support economic development and business growth in Walker County. • Partnership could also create a way to strengthen relationships with current businesses in Parrish.	www.walkerchamber.us
Central Six Alabama Works!	• The regional workforce development council serving Walker County; has a host of services that coordinate private, public, and nonprofit/philanthropic sectors toward creating clear and contiguous pathways to living-wage employment.	www.centralsix.org
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham	• The regional council of government serving Walker County; can provide technical assistance & support for project development & implementation, grant proposal development, and planning services.	www.rpcgb.org

C. Community Enhancement

While economic development activities focus on the economic well-being of the town, community development and enhancement provide the building blocks for economic development to occur. In other words, community enhancement strengthens local assets, relationships, and capacities to increase economic opportunities and market growth. Though this report has prioritized initiatives for economic development, there is a strong desire in the town to invest in constructing a firm foundation for the next phase of Parrish's history. An example of a community development project could be maximizing the resources available to senior citizens. The senior center already has a community garden nearby, and the town could place picnic tables and other amenities by the garden so seniors and other citizens can have a space to visit, rest, and enjoy the garden. In addition, the town could also establish pocket parks in various areas around town, especially within residential areas, to provide more green space for residents to enjoy near their homes. Table 21 gives a list of community enhancement activities to bolster community involvement and support.

Table 21: Potential Community Enhancement Activities

Event Idea	Description
Maximizing Resources for Senior Citizens	• As the residential population ages, it will become increasingly important to invest in resources for senior citizens. The town has a senior center located near the center of town, by the community garden. Amenities such as picnic tables or an outdoor pavilion could be added to this area to make spending time outdoors more comfortable for seniors. • The town could also publish a survey for residents using the senior center to gain additional ideas on how to best serve and meet the needs of these residents.
Community Events/ Festivals	• Residents cited feeling a decrease in town pride since the closure of the High School. Parrish could evaluate potential events/festivals to hold that center around Parrish's history or prominent features to increase community involvement and bolster local pride and support.
Food Truck on Special Events or Weekends	• Residents noted that Parrish has few restaurants in town. The town could invite food trucks to attend events or on weekends to provide a variety of food options for residents and introduce food truck owners to the Parrish market. • The town could identify areas for food trucks to gather (old downtown area, near existing businesses, etc.) based on walkability and accessibility to residents and visitors.
Housing Development & Diversification	• Residents noted, and the data analysis highlighted, that Parrish's housing base consisted primarily of older homes, of which many are dilapidated and/or vacant. This means housing options are limited, and new development is needed to attract and support residential growth. • The town could invest in an array of housing options, including apartments and tiny homes, that are both affordable and feasible for current residents, while also attractive to future residents.
Town Library	• Residents and stakeholders mentioned not having a local library as a need for the community; the town could identify one of the vacant houses/buildings in town, or possibly a room in the old high school, as a location for a library. • The Alabama Library Association and the Alabama Public Library Service may have resources available for communities looking to create a new public library.
Pocket Parks	• Pocket parks have become more popular as they create small community spaces throughout a larger community area. These spaces do not need to be fancy; simple additions like benches and/or flower beds can make outdoor space usable for local residents. • These spaces can be utilized not only for beautification purposes but can also be used to establish the identity and pride of Parrish.

THEME 2- UPDATE & IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE

The conditions of the Parrish' existing infrastructure were a priority area for the town's residents. This theme consists of activities and priorities around the built environment in Parrish that need to be improved for the town to reach its development potential. Each of the Focus Areas are listed and described below:

A. Roads

At the Parrish Community Meeting in April 2023, residents cited the need for infrastructure improvements, especially referring to the town's roads. Many residents must drive over deep potholes on the way to school and work, which negatively impacts driving and local vehicle conditions. The town has worked to repave main roads in recent years and is still prioritizing funding toward road improvements, but additional resources are needed for repaving efforts. However, there are resources that can assist Parrish in conducting these repairs, as well as some project development activities to prioritize areas to assist with grant planning and application. Tables 22 and 23 outline these resources and tasks.
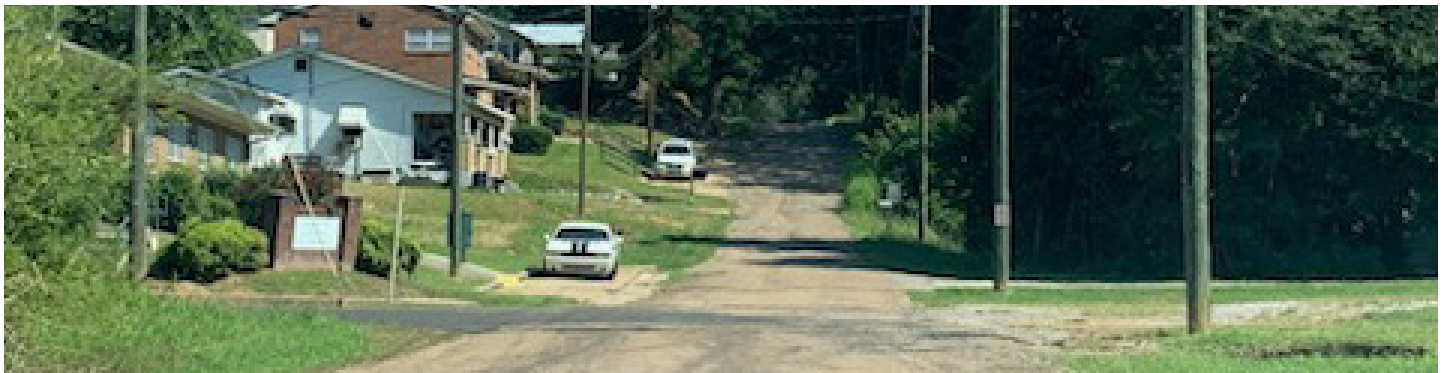
Source: RPCGB, 2023

Table 22: Project Resources: Road Improvements

Name	Granting Agency	Funding Activities
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs (ADECA)	Wide range of infrastructure projects, including road paving activities. More information can be found at www.adeca.alabama.gov/cdbg/
Rebuild Alabama Act Annual Grant Program	Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)	Project applications may be submitted for improvements to any classified road or bridge open to public traffic. More information can be found at www.dot.state.al.us/programs/RAAGrantProgram

Table 23: Project Development Tasks: Road Improvements

Activity	Description
Road Inventory	• Create an inventory of roads with details regarding need; use inventory to prioritize funding opportunities.

B. Vacant Buildings & Lots

In addition, there are many vacant structures in the town, including businesses and residential housing. These structures are not only unsound, but they create blight in the community and present a negative perception of the town's business and residential areas. Investments in demolishing or rehabilitating these structures would not only relieve the town of these negative perceptions, but it would also provide available, open lots for redevelopment opportunities for business and residential growth.

These lots, though dilapidated at the moment, are opportunities for the town to utilize for economic and community development. A project opportunity for a current vacant building is the Bank of Walker County building, located on Highway 78. There are several reuses this facility can have to assist the town, given its location and accessibility. In addition, there are resources available to assist the town in demolition and clearance activities, as well as activities the town can conduct to prepare for these projects, and they are listed in Tables 24 and 25.

Table 24: Project Resources: Vacant Buildings & Lots

Name	Granting Agency	Funding Activities
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs (ADECA)	Wide range of infrastructure projects, including demolition & clearance; more information can be found at www.adeca.alabama.gov/cdbg/.
Brownfields Redevelopment Program	RPCGB Program funded through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	The RPCGB was awarded an EPA grant to fund environmental assessments (EA) on eligible properties in 2022. This program helps communities overcome the cost barriers for EAs on vacant properties and can catalyze local development.

Table 25: Project Development Tasks: Vacant Buildings & Lots

Activity	Description
Vacant Buildings Inventory	• Create an inventory of vacant buildings with details regarding past use and location; use inventory to prioritize funding and development opportunities.
High School Rehabilitation & Reuse	• The previous Parrish High School is no longer used for academic purposes, but it has a lot of potential to be reused for community engagement. Jubilee House, a local nonprofit, is opening up a free store in part of the building. • Other ideas described by residents include spaces for tutoring, AA/NA group meetings, music classes, and the library. • The space could also be used for new programs to serve residents, such as adult education or GED certification classes.
Friendship Center	• Coordinate with the current landowner to develop reuse plans for properties; utilize partnerships and public input to determine best use. • Once plan is determined, the site can be enrolled in programs to conduct site assessments or rehabilitation.

C. Drainage & Flooding Issues

Another infrastructure issue within the town is drainage and flooding. Drainage issues can block streets and houses while damaging roads. A drainage assessment needs to be completed for the town to identify projects, design an action plan to create solutions, and address areas of need. Alleviating drainage and flooding issues will help maintain roads and other areas of critical infrastructure, as well as improve residential and commercial properties that are currently prone to flooding. Resources and tasks for this focus area are listed in Tables 26 and 27.

Table 26: Project Resources: Flooding & Drainage Issues

Name	Granting Agency	Funding Activities
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs (ADECA)	Wide range of infrastructure projects, including drainage and flooding improvements; more information can be found at www.adeca.alabama.gov/cdbg/.

Table 27: Project Development Tasks: Flooding & Drainage Issues

Activity	Description
Drainage Assessment	• A detailed analysis of the existing drainage systems, which identifies the risks and sensitivities within the town and provides comprehensive drainage solutions to safeguard the development and surrounding area.
Drainage & Flooding Areas Inventory	• Create an inventory of areas prone to flooding or with drainage blockages; use inventory to prioritize for funding and development opportunities

D. Broadband

The town's broadband infrastructure needs to be built out to enhance connectivity throughout town. It was noted in the community meeting in April 2023 that citizens have had to work from and attend classes in local parking lots because they do not have broadband access at home. However, the state and county have declared broadband as a major focus, so there are many funding sources available. Chapter 4 will analyze the town's broadband connectivity in depth, as well as provide resources available for Parrish to improve the community's access.

THEME 3- RETAIN RESIDENTS & ATTRACT OPPORTUNITIES

Parrish has opportunities it can utilize for redevelopment efforts. Several strengths were identified in the SWOT survey, and these areas, in coordination with its market gaps, can be used to determine and prioritize economic development projects. In addition, Parrish has available land for development within its jurisdiction, which can lead to partnerships with landowners and future development prospects. When preparing for economic development initiatives, it is important to not only consider the ways a community can grow, but municipalities must also contemplate ways to bolster and support the quality of life for its current residents. Connecting retention of residents to the recruitment of visitors and workforce can bolster Parrish's development potential and provide additional job opportunities to local community members. The focus areas for this theme are described below.

A. Prioritize Quality of Life

The term "quality of life" generally refers to the "standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by an individual or group" (Oxford Dictionary). It aims to capture the overall wellbeing of residents and the community within a local area. However, the overall wellbeing of residents and community has economic impacts for local economies. A recent Brookings report suggests that, in smaller communities especially, having a higher quality of life through activities such as recreation opportunities, cultural activities, and public services is a better indicator of economic success than traditional economic development metrics.* This is likely due to changes in preferences from both workers and the businesses that employ them. People increasingly want to live in an area that they feel will enhance their wellbeing, and investing in activities that support community health and involvement will not only set Parrish up for future success, but these investments will also serve the needs of current residents. A wide range of development activities can be considered when evaluating quality of life factors. For example, outdoor recreation activities have a positive correlation to both health outcomes and attracting visitors. Residents and stakeholders expressed interest in the construction of walking trails around town, which could positively impact health outcomes as well as bolster the town's sense of community. Parrish already has notable assets in the community, such as existing ballfields and the splash pad, that could be further utilized to attract visitors to the area. In addition, residents also conveyed a desire for additional entertainment options in town, such as restaurants.

Austin, Weinstein, et al. "Improving quality of life—not just business—is the best path to Midwestern rejuvenation". January 26, 2022. Brookings.edu.

Investments in small businesses would not only meet the needs of current residents, but it would also provide employment opportunities for workers in Parrish and the surrounding area. The town already has assets like a grocery store, gas station, and pharmacy, and businesses that could further support these existing ventures could be prioritized to strengthen the business community in the area. Tables 28 and 29 list resources and activities that could be considered when evaluating implementation options for this theme.

Table 28: Project Resources: Quality of Life

Name	Granting Agency	Funding Activities
Recreational Trails Program	Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs (ADECA)	Funding for development and construction of recreational trails with an 80/20 match rate. More information can be found at www.adeca.alabama.gov/trails/.
Land & Water Conservation Fund	Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs (ADECA)	Funding program available for nearly all public outdoor recreation activities, from park and ball field improvements to picnic areas and splash pads. Grants have a 50/50 match rate. More information can be found at www.adeca.alabama.gov/lwcf/.

Table 29: Project Development Tasks: Quality of Life

Activity	Description
Quality of Life – Assets	• Create a list of quality of life assets and gaps within the town; use to guide conversations with partners regarding business recruitment, service gaps, and funding needs.
Asset Updates	• Identify assets that need updating (ball parks, sidewalks, community centers, etc.) and prioritize updates for implementation funding.
Walkability Plan	• Utilize partnerships to create a plan for increasing walkability and connectivity within the town around major assets; use plan to establish implementation priorities for funding support.
Volunteer Opportunities	• Develop volunteer opportunities for residents and stakeholders to engage with projects; can engage different community groups to promote activities (clean-up days, etc.)
Support Existing Efforts	• Raise awareness and support for existing programs, such as Little Libraries or Food Pantries conducted by local nonprofit groups.

B. Utilize Existing Assets

Attracting workers and employers to rural areas requires a different approach when compared to larger, more populous areas. Small, rural communities must harness and capitalize on their unique strengths to market their properties and communities. Lower real estate prices, low costs of living, and proximity to major metro areas are all strengths Parrish can leverage to attract investment. The proximity to surrounding town hubs is an asset not only for drawing in visitors, but it also gives Parrish leverage to brand itself as a residential bedroom community for workers who may desire to live in a small-town atmosphere but require a shorter commuting time to work or other necessities. As remote working becomes more popular, it is likely more residents will begin to move father outside the hubs of major cities as housing costs within major areas continues to increase.

The Town of Parrish also has potential development opportunities within the town limits and surrounding area. Privately owned parcels within the town and right outside limits could be evaluated for development, and some development suggestions are outlined in Map 2 (page 51).

A couple of undeveloped parcels are large enough to be used for commercial development, a sector with the largest gap of industry activity within the town, and the proximity of these properties to the town limits would increase the feasibility of extending existing infrastructure, such as water and sewer, to the sites. Partnerships with existing landowners can be a great way to catalyze economic development, especially in smaller communities. In addition, there are parcels along State Highway 269 North, near the Dollar General, that could be engaged for development. In addition to large parcels of land, the old downtown area has flat land along Main Drive that could be used for development. These parcels are smaller and could be used to invest in local businesses such as restaurants, coffee shops, or other small businesses. Over the past decade, the Retail industry has declined within the community; however, Retail establishments in particular were highly requested through public input. These types of establishments not only provide tax revenue for the town, but they also provide employment opportunities for local residents and support the local sense of community. Parrish has large retail gaps in Apparel, Computer, Entertainment & Recreation, Financial, Household Furnishings & Equipment, and Household Operations, as noted in the Needs Assessment, so these types of retail are opportunities the town has for engagement. Lastly, the town has many vacant parcels within its existing residential area that could be evaluated for additional housing development. These parcels could be utilized for a variety of housing types, depending on existing demand and future residential potential. Providing new housing development opportunities could not only provide current residents with different choices for housing, but it could also increase the opportunities for population growth within the town.

Evaluating areas for businesses and development plays a key role in strategic economic development. By identifying these areas, the town can prioritize their investments and coordinate partnerships to develop projects. Parrish could also partner with agencies like the Chamber of Commerce of Walker County to help attract new businesses and strengthen their relationships with existing businesses. In addition, Parrish could utilize relationships with the Walker County Economic and Industrial Development Authority (WCEIDA) to discuss commercial and industrial possibilities. Tables 30 and 31 list resources and tasks the town can consider when planning for business and workforce attraction.

Table 30: Project Resources: Attraction

Name	Description
Walker County Economic and Industrial Development Authority	Can support Parrish with creating public/private partnerships that leverage community resources to support marketing and recruitment efforts.
Chamber of Commerce of Walker County	Can utilize county-wide partnerships to support Parrish's recruitment and job growth initiatives by helping promote sites and attract businesses.
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham	Can assist with mapping available parcels and helping developing market materials for sites.

Table 31: Project Development Tasks: Attraction

Activity	Description
Online Presence	• Establishing an online presence for the town can create awareness of Parrish and the assets the municipality has to offer its residents and future visitors; the website can have a landing page for resources as well as potential sites for development.
Identify & Support Local Talent	• Work with partners to identify local talent pool (potential entrepreneurs, training needs, etc.); determine skills gaps and training resources needed to fill gaps and coordinate with existing programs to upskill workers.
Available Properties	• Establish an inventory process for tracking available parcels/properties in town available for development; work with partners to market sites to potential developers.

MAP 2: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
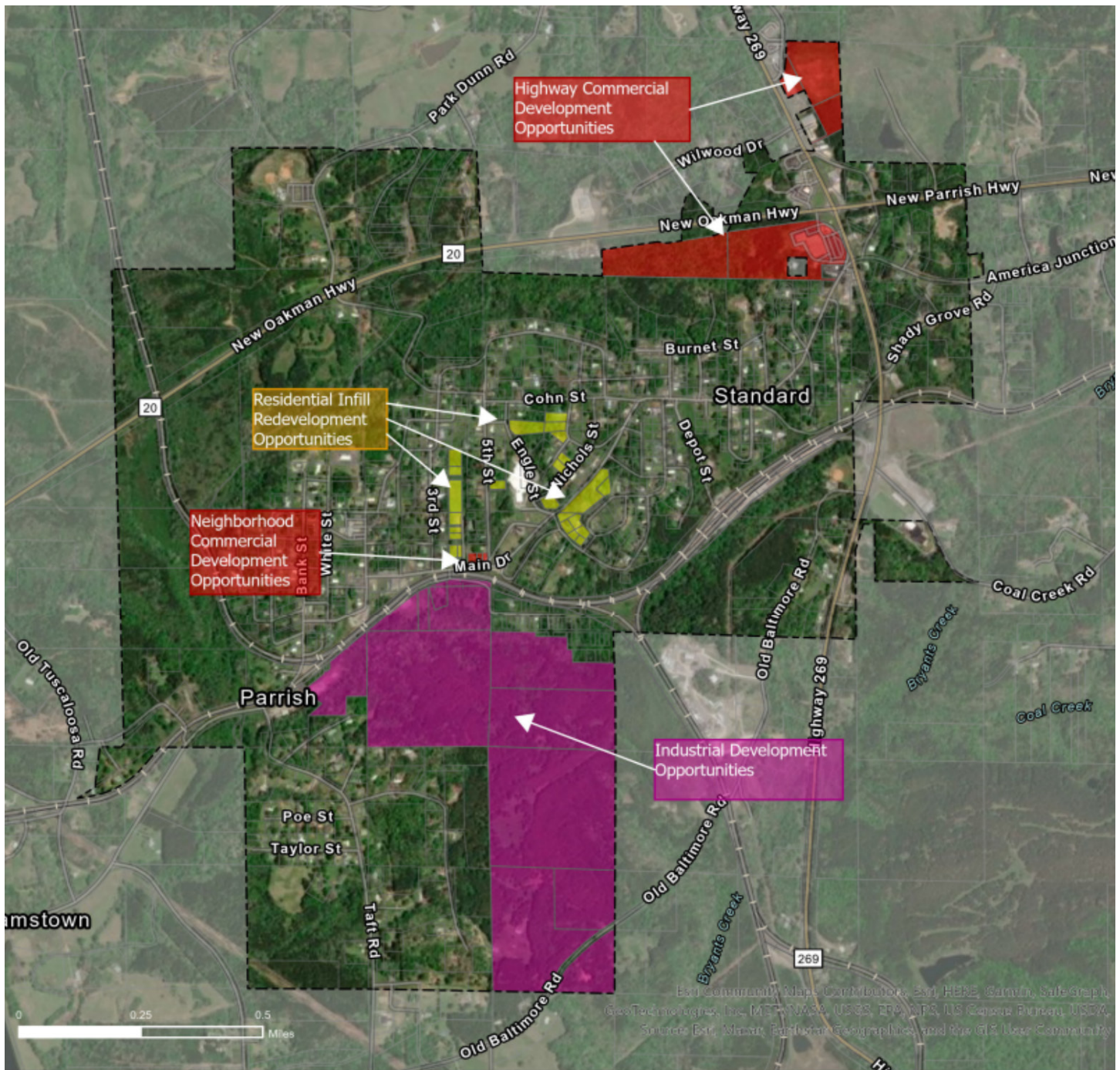
PARRISH, ALABAMA

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES

Potential Sites

POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

POTENTIAL INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

POTENTIAL RESIDENTIAL INFILL

CHAPTER 2: OUTDOOR RECREATION IN PARRISH

Outdoor recreation is becoming increasingly popular as an economic driver in local communities, particularly in rural areas. Opportunities for outdoor-related activities exist throughout the Town of Parrish and surrounding areas. Walker County has acknowledged this asset and has developed partnerships with local agencies like the Walker Area Community Foundation (WACF) to create a county-wide initiative to develop and sustain this industry throughout the area. This chapter will focus solely on the outdoor assets and potential within the Town of Parrish as a means to identify strategies to increase this industry within the town, which can contribute to the success of county and state initiatives, and is divided into 3 sections:

- **Outdoor Recreation: Industry Overview**
- **Outdoor Recreational Development Opportunities**
- **Peer Communities: Case Study Analysis**

OUTDOOR RECREATION: INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Parrish officials and leaders have recognized the town's potential for growth and resiliency through the development and investment of outdoor recreation. The expansion of this industry is not only important to the town, but local residents and stakeholders also recognize the need for these outdoor opportunities. *In a local community meeting held in April 2023, 100 percent of the attendees felt that having outdoor amenities available was "Very Important" to keep current residents and attract new ones.* This section will identify the town's identified outdoor recreation assets and priority activities as next steps for the implementation of this industry.

The Outdoor Recreation industry is comprised of the entire supply and value chains associated with outdoor and ecotourism activities. This includes consumer spending on gear and equipment for participation in outdoor pursuits, but it also includes the costs and demand for travel associated with these and other related activities. Outdoor recreation covers a wide variety of interests and activities, from boating and fishing, to hiking and bicycling. The flexibility offers communities a sustainable and resilient community development tool that can utilize an area's natural assets, making it a strong economic development option, especially for areas where industrial and commercial development options and assets are few and far between.

This industry has made significant gains in rural areas in recent years, as long-term resiliency of smaller communities has been threatened by economic downturns and declines in major industries. Outdoor recreation can provide an avenue for small towns to increase economic diversification. Diversifying the local market base can support communities and leave them less susceptible to economic fluctuations, while retaining things like heritage and culture that are traditionally important to rural towns and cities.

Investing in outdoor recreation not only supports local economies by increasing consumer spending through tourism, enhancing property values, and attracting new talent; it also has proven to improve health outcomes and overall quality of life for the local community as having access to outdoor recreational assets increases physical activity. Improving these health outcomes can also lead to lower healthcare costs and have positive impacts on the overall well-being of residents.

These factors are important because the overall quality of life of residents is imperative for not only the current community, but also in recruitment efforts for future businesses and residents. However, it is also important to current residents. Enhancing quality of life initiatives was listed as a priority for Parrish's citizens according to public input. When asked what successful development means in the EDSP SWOT survey, 45 percent of survey respondents listed "Improving Quality of Life/Lifestyle Amenities" as their answer choice.

Small communities across the country have invested in creating a local outdoor recreational economy; a case studies analysis of peer communities to Parrish that have harnessed outdoor recreation to benefit their local economies can be found in this chapter beginning on page 55.

OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Parrish has a variety of naturally occurring assets and competitive advantages that could be utilized to develop and support an outdoor recreation development, including its advantageous location and existing infrastructure. The town also has access to a couple waterways that could be evaluated for fishing potential. This section will give an overview of Parrish's existing outdoor assets and development opportunities, as illustrated on Map 3 (page 54).

Parrish has a splash pad at its municipal park, along with ball fields and playground equipment. There is also an old walking track that encircles the property. This parcel could be the focus of outdoor recreation for the town in the short term. Several funding opportunities exist to support park updates and outdoor recreational activities. These investments would serve both current residents and attract visitors, since one area of focus for Parrish's Parks and Recreation Department is ensuring the ballfields are utilized. Additionally, a football stadium and basketball gym are attached to the old high school and could be evaluated for further recreational use once priorities and needs are determined.

In addition to these assets, Table 32 lists other areas Parrish can utilize when evaluating outdoor recreation potential.

Table 32: Potential Outdoor Recreation Project Opportunities

Activity	Description
Trail Development	• Abandoned Rail line (Rails to Trails); develop trail around Municipal Park; can identify trail potential in/around available parcels; trails can also be utilized for All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and bicyclists.
Volleyball Court	• Identify area around existing splashpad/park (example: paved slab next to ball field at Town Park)
Ball Park Improvements	• Identify and prioritize improvement needs for existing ball fields at Municipal Park; connect needs to funding opportunities.
Bicycle Park	• The park could be developed to serve a variety of ages.

MAP 3: OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
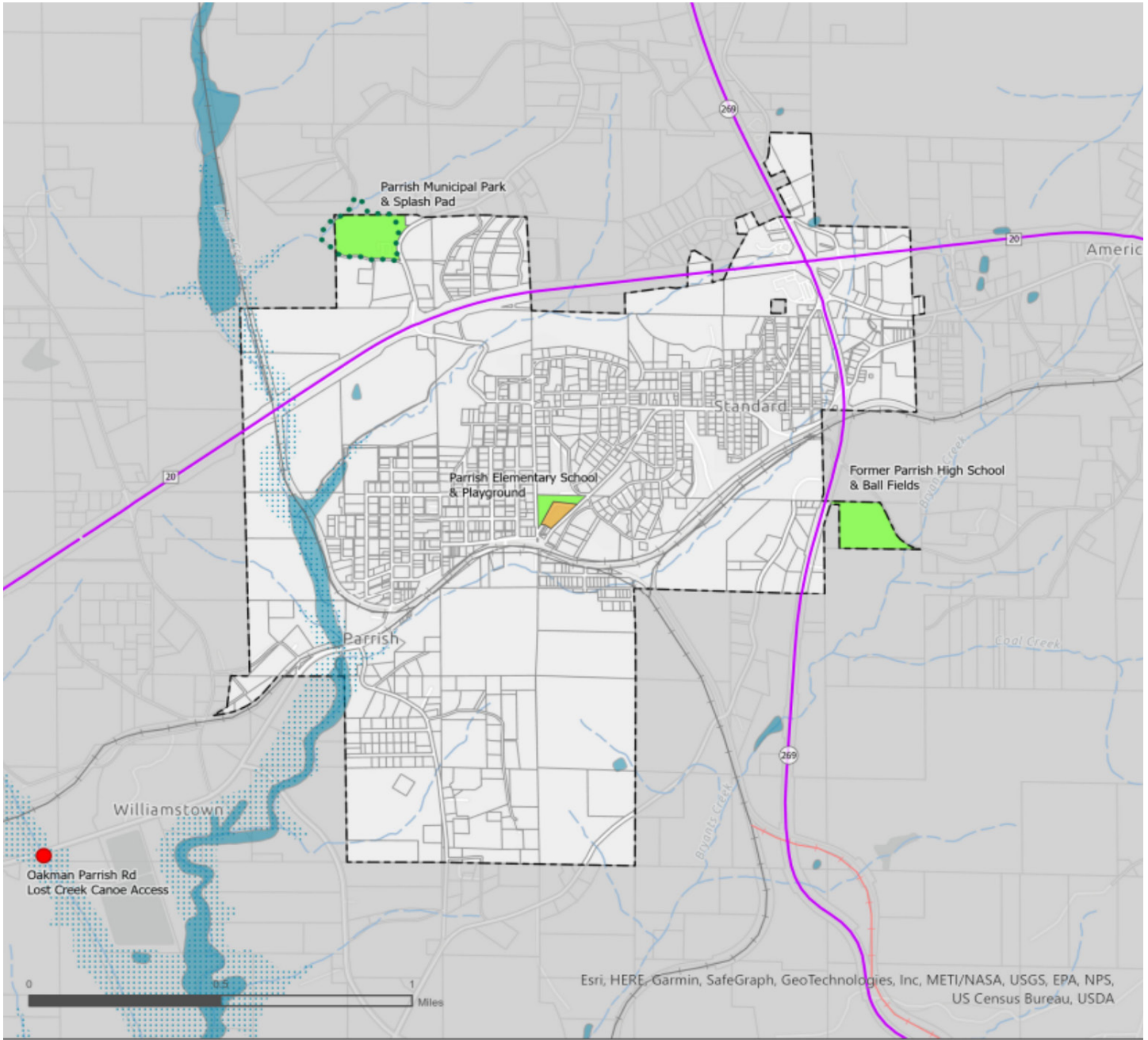
PARRISH, ALABAMA
OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL
ASSETS & OPPORTUNITIES

Municipal & Natural Features

- PARRISH TOWN BOUNDARY
- AREA PARCELS
- WETLANDS
- FLOOD HAZARD AREAS
- RIVERS & STREAMS
- RAILROADS

Exisitng Recreational Assets

- PARKS & PLAYGROUNDS
- BIKEABLE ROADS
- BOAT LAUNCHES

Recreational Opportunities

- PARRISH PARK WALKING TRAIL
- ABANDONED RAIL LINES
- PLAYGROUND EXPANSION

RPC Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

PEER COMMUNITIES: CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Comparing the Town of Parrish to similar communities in other states can help visualize Parrish's options for economic development opportunities. The primary focus for this section is on outdoor recreational ecosystems since Parrish and Walker County have prioritized expanding this industry. Peer towns were selected due to their location in the Southeast region with comparable population numbers to Parrish. Each of these towns has excelled in marketing their assets to both tourists and residents. The selected communities for this analysis are Saluda, North Carolina; Helen, Georgia; and Townsend, Tennessee.

Parrish, Alabama: Overview

Parrish's population comes to just under 1,000 people. The town has a history of coal mines, railroads, and trestle bridges. Anchored by Lost Creek, Parrish has the potential to tap into several outdoor recreation activities like hiking, canoeing, kayaking, and bicycling. OHV/ATV and shooting ranges are also possible activities. Suggestions from a 2018 study by Auburn University include shipping container shops, campgrounds, and OHV grounds near the flood plain by Indian Creek, open bridges for pedestrians and bicyclists, improved bike routes, and family outdoor recreation areas off the highway.

Saluda, North Carolina

Saluda, a town of 630 people, boasts outdoor recreation activities like kayaking, canoeing, ziplining, and hiking. They use their natural environment to create tourist opportunities. There is also a Historic Depot museum that hosts events and volunteer options. The food ecosystem is diverse with seven options for dining. Additionally, there are several art galleries and boutiques in the town. Tourists are welcome to stay in nearby cabins, cottages, campgrounds, and bed & breakfasts. The town hosts several events each month like concerts, art pop-ups, gardening classes, and festivals.

https://www.visitsaludanc.com/

Helen, Georgia

The Helen website describes their town as an "outdoor adventure destination." Along with a travel guide brochure, Helen offers several "things to do," such as outdoor adventures, arts & culture, family fun, history & heritage, vineyards & breweries, and spas. Waterfalls and trails are most popular, but there are other outdoor activities like camping, mini golf, horse stables, tubing, water parks, OHV/ATV grounds, horse drawn carriages, golfing, and ziplining. Lodging options include bed & breakfasts, cabins, hotels, vacation rentals, and campgrounds. Helen is only a town of 545 people, but they have 34 restaurants and 50 shops to visit. Real estate in the town is listed on the main website along with contact information for the chamber of commerce and a "plan your visit" section.

https://helenga.org/

Townsend, Tennessee

Townsend is half the size of Parrish, with only 550 residents. Called the "Peaceful Side of the Smokies," Townsend advertises access to the Smoky Mountains, encounters with wildlife, and fun festivals. The town has outdoor experiences like hiking, fishing, cycling, golfing, water activities, camping, scenic drives, and horseback riding available to residents and visitors, as well as indoor activities such as museums and an arts & crafts directory. The website includes lodging, shopping, and dining options, but they also include information about how people can relocate to Townsend. The last sections of the website have a business directory, town map, newsletter, history resources, and ways to get involved.

https://exploretownsend.com/

Commonalities

Each of the 3 towns has a helpful and dynamic website with links to all outdoor recreation and tourism activities. Creating a welcoming environment includes signage, landscaping, and beautification. A variety of outdoor activities are offered based on the surrounding landscape. Indoor activities are also prioritized and included. All the websites had specific suggestions of how to spend time in the town so tourists can quickly see what it would be like to visit. The websites also included contact, business, and real estate information. This information encourages interaction with local governance and relocation to the town. Table 33 lists additional commonalities between the three peer communities.

Table 33: Peer Communities Comparison

Resource	Saluda, NC	Helen, GA	Townsend, TN
Town Website	X	X	X
Logo & Branding	X	X	
Social Media Presence	X	X	X
Activities List	X	X	X
Interstate Access	X		
Proximity to Large Metro	X		X
Proximity to State/National Park	X	X	X
County/State Partnership		X	X

CHAPTER 3: BROADBAND: POTENTIAL & FEASIBILITY

Residents have indicated that broadband is an important concern for the community. Many residents need internet to work from home, while many children need internet access to complete their homework. It was noted in the community meeting that some residents have had to sit in Jack's parking lot just to access the internet for work or school. With a quarter of residents having no internet service, broadband has become a development priority for the area.

BROADBAND: OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

As defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), broadband is high speed internet access that allows users to access the Internet or Internet-related services at significantly higher speeds than those available through "dial-up" services. The speed of broadband is determined by megabits per second (mbps), which measures the download and upload speed of the internet connection. These factors are further described below:

Accessibility

Broadband can be accessed through a variety of transmission technologies, including satellites, fiber, cable, wireless, or a Digital Subscriber Line (DSL). However, the technology used in a given area depends on several factors, including locality, availability, and cost. Faster speeds are often associated with cable broadband and fiber when compared to satellite and DSL connections.
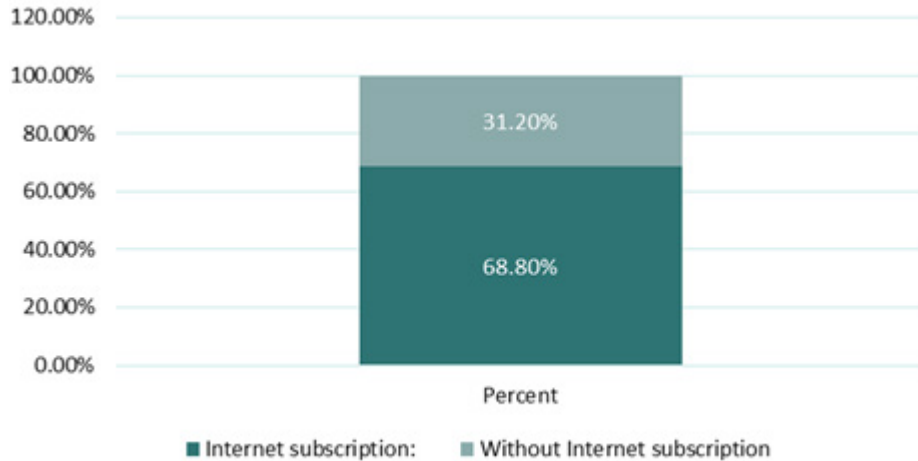
Connection Speeds

The FCC's current minimum standard set for broadband is 25/3 mbps, or the ability to download 25 megabits per second and upload 3 megabits per second. However, as technology progresses, an emerging definition for broadband connection among the Internet Service Providers (ISPs) has been 100/20 mbps, which is significantly faster than the 25/3 mbps standard. This definition has been set by new federal funding programs for broadband, which provide support for areas without 100/20 mbps.

EXISTING BROADBAND CONDITIONS

Currently, according to US Census data, nearly 70 percent of total households within with town have internet subscriptions of some type, while over 30 percent of households do not have access to internet service at their homes (see Figure 23). This rate is higher than state averages, where about 20 percent of total Alabama households do not currently subscribe to internet services.[3] Though a relatively large number of households have access to the internet, the types of connection technology vary, most likely depending on factors such as cost and infrastructure accessibility. The majority of households utilize their cellular data plans for internet access, followed by either cable, fiber, or DSL connections. The least number of users are connected to broadband via satellite services, as illustrated in Figure 24.
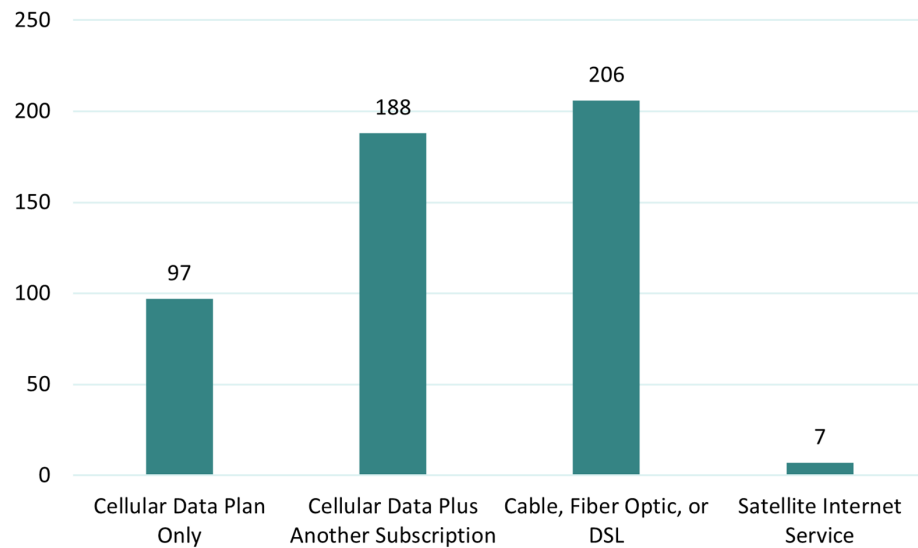
[3] *The Alabama Connectivity Plan, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), page 3*

Figure 23: Internet Subscriptions by Total Household, 2021

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

Figure 24: Type of Broadband Connections Utilized by Parrish Households, 2021

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

In addition, broadband connectivity is directly linked to income in Parrish. Data from the U.S. Census analyzed broadband subscriptions between three income groups. The income groups, the percentage of total households within each income group, and the percentage of households with an internet subscription within each bracket is outlined in Table 34.

Table 34: Parrish Households by Income Bracket, 2021

Income Level	Percent of Total Households	Percent with an Internet Subscription
Less than $20,000	36.9%	49.7%
$20,000 to $74,999	50.2%	74.8%
$75,000 or more	12.9%	100%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

The number of households with internet subscription increased as the household income levels increased. All households earning more than $75,000, which is only 12.9 percent of the total households within the town, had subscriptions to internet services. The ratios of each income group are illustrated in Figures 25 to 27.
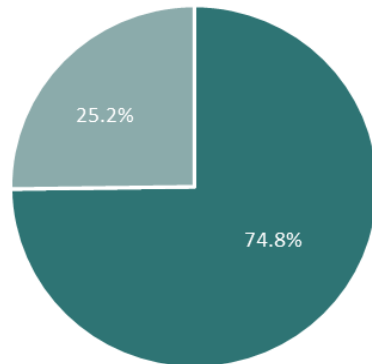
Figure 25: Internet Subscriptions: Household Income Less than $20,000
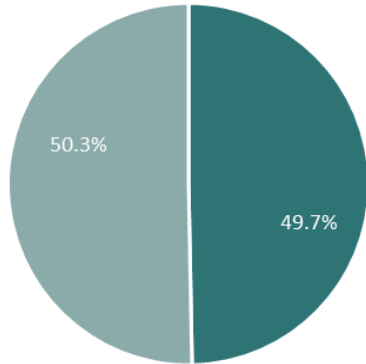
50.3% 49.7%

■ With a broadband Internet subscription   ■ Without an Internet subscription

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

Figure 26: Internet Subscriptions: Household Income, $20,000-$74,999

25.2% 74.8%

■ With a broadband Internet subscription   ■ Without an Internet subscription

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

Figure 27: Internet Subscriptions: Household Income Greater than $75,000

0.0% 100%

■ With a broadband Internet subscription   ■ Without an Internet subscription
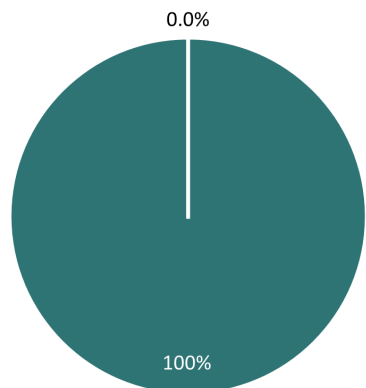
Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2021

CENSUS BLOCK ANALYSIS

The Alabama Connectivity Map, designed and implemented by ADECA, categorizes census tracts by broadband connection levels for 25/3 and 100/20 mbps speeds. These maps illustrate the percentage of addresses within a census block that have access to the speed that has been selected. The connection levels used for the analysis were divided into four groups: 0% (where no address has connection or access); 1%-49%; 50%-80%; and 81%-100%.

For this section, the Alabama Connectivity Map was used to gauge the level of connection for the census tracts within the town. The connection levels did not change between the two speed groups, likely meaning the current infrastructure can be used to support either speed level. Due to this data note, the 25/3 mbps speed level analysis was used for the basis of this section.

Within the Town of Parrish, 10 census tracts (representing 20 percent of total tracts) have no connection to broadband capabilities. Table 35 shows the percentage of census tracts within each connection range, and Figure 28 shows the connection levels for the Town of Parrish and the surrounding area.

Table 35: Parrish Households by Connection Level

Connection Level	Percent of Census Tracts
0%	20%
1-49%	2%
50-79%	2%
80-100%	76%

Source: Alabama Connectivity Map, ADECA, 2023

Figure 28: Town of Parrish and Surrounding Area, AL Broadband Map, 2023

Source: Alabama Connectivity Map, ADECA, 2023

60
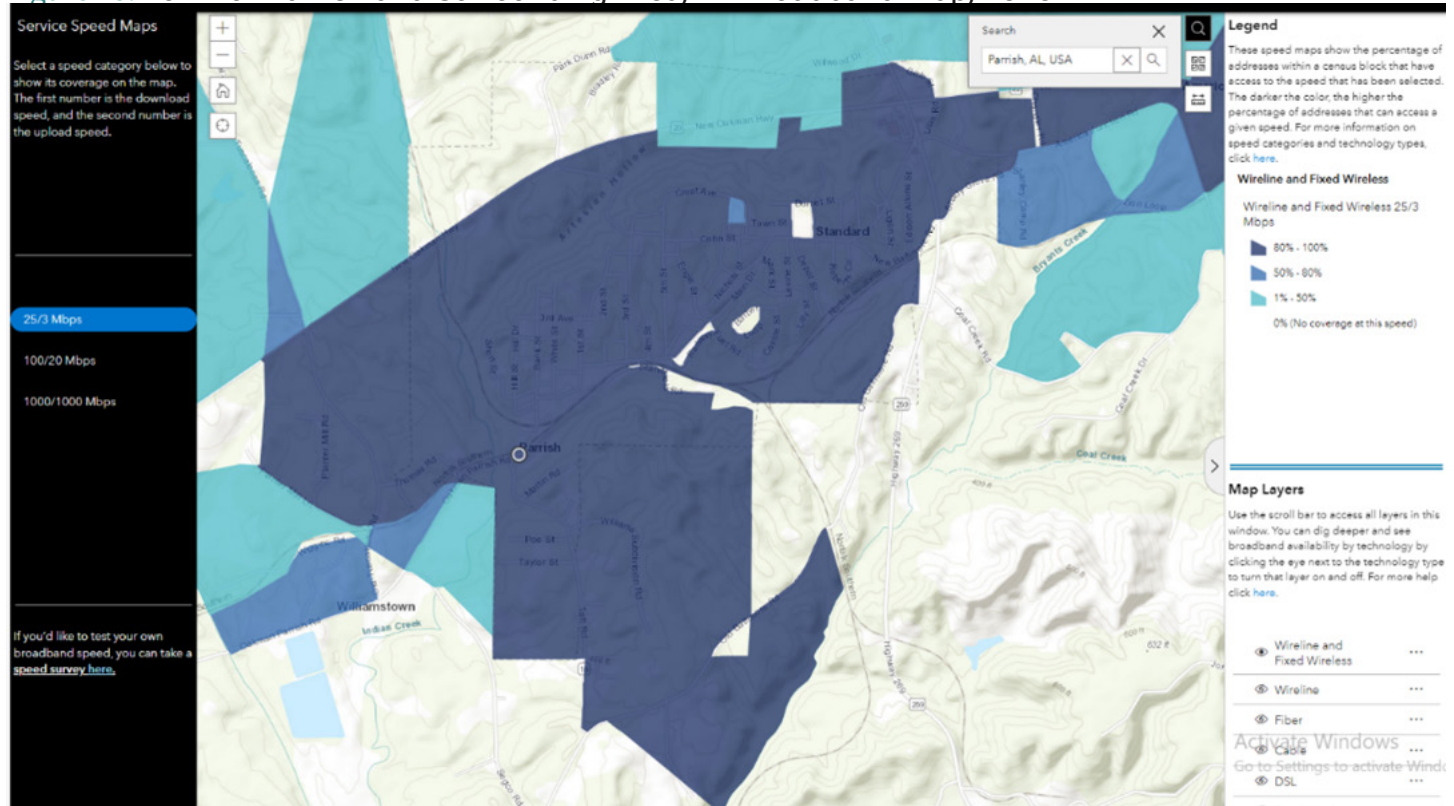
BROADBAND CHALLENGES

Some inherent challenges exist for municipalities to evaluate when considering expanding and/or improving broadband internet service. This section will be dedicated to outlining those challenges, specifically within the jurisdiction of Parrish. According to the Alabama Connectivity Plan prepared by ADECA, "A complex combination of factors—including affordability, device access, digital skills, and language barriers—can inhibit use of the broadband internet, to the detriment of both economic and community development."[4]

1. Infrastructure & Availability

The first challenge to consider when evaluating the feasibility of broadband expansion is the conditions and locations of existing infrastructure within the service area. The types of infrastructure available, along with the available connection speeds, determine the costs and feasible expansion alternatives for possible improvements. For the town, nearly 20 percent of residents with an internet subscription used only their cellular data plan for service, meaning many households do not utilize cable or fiber connection options. These households most likely use cell phones or tablets to connect to internet services, rather than relying on a router or other cabled alternative. Cellular service is a more accessible option for many households, especially those without cable or fiber access, since only a wireless cellular plan and device are needed. However, as the definition of broadband improves from 25/3 mbps to 100/20 mbps, it is likely cellular data technologies will not be able to keep up, as they are currently not able to provide speeds faster than 25/3 mbps.[5]

As noted in Figure 24, over 80 percent of residents use other options, like cable or DSL, for their subscriptions in addition to or in place of a cellular data plan. This means that many areas have access to the infrastructure necessary to connect via cable or fiber. Identifying the types and locations of current broadband infrastructure could provide a road map for improvement planning and implementation.

In addition, as listed in Table 35, 20 percent of parcels within the town limits have no access to broadband. A large portion of the unconnected parcels are located within the northwestern portion of the town, as illustrated in Figure 28. This area includes where the splash pad is located, which is a prime recreational resource for the town. The lack of access to broadband capabilities within this area may present a challenge for outdoor recreation expansion in the area.

2. Costs to Update

Another factor to consider when planning for broadband expansion is the cost of improvements to the town, as well as local Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Alabama has estimated that it will cost between $4 to $6 billion to bridge the rural broadband divide statewide, which includes constructing line extensions from current infrastructure into unserved areas. Due to the costs of installation and the unguaranteed number of users, sometimes the returns on internet investment from user fees aren't enough to cover private providers' costs of building out their networks. This is leading many public entities to focus on investments within "middle-mile" infrastructure, or the hub of fiber connectivity that connects to "last-mile" infrastructure, or the connecting lines to homes and businesses. Investing in middle mile infrastructure would enable last-mile networks; however, the price will likely be significant. More research needs to be done to analyze the factors, costs, and benefits from middle-mile and last-mile investments.

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[4] *The Alabama Connectivity Plan, ADECA, page 23*
[5] *The Alabama Connectivity Plan, ADECA, page 37*

3. Affordability

However, the existence and availability of broadband does not necessarily mean broadband is attainable for residents. Affordability refers to residents of the area having the disposable income necessary to purchase and use a broadband service. The Alabama Connectivity Plan cited that even though federal subsidies exist for these programs, awareness regarding these programs was low. The consumer's cost for broadband should also be considered when planning and implementing broadband expansion.

IMPLEMENTATION INITIATIVES

Fortunately, the rural broadband gap is an issue at the front of the broadband expansion conversation, on both state and federal levels. This section will outline some possible funding programs the Town of Parrish could utilize during the broadband planning and implementation process. In addition to the resources listed in this section, Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), in 2021. This bill prioritizes investments in broadband within rural areas, and further research will need to be conducted over the coming months to identify funding opportunities created through those programs. As noted previously, the state's Alabama Connectivity Plan is the roadmap for state funding and investment programs and should be referenced regarding infrastructure expansion projects.

Table 36: Federal Funding Programs for Broadband Projects

Funding Agency	Funding Program	Funding Range	Match Requirements	Typical Due Dates
Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)	Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization (POWER) Initiative	Up to $2,000,000	Depends on County Designation; Walker County: 50% Match	April
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD)	Community Connect Grant Program	Up to $3,000,000	15% Match Required	December
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD)	ReConnect Loan and Grant Program	Up to $25,000,000	25% Match Required	November

Source: Appalachian Regional Commission; U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD)

Table 37: State Funding Programs for Broadband Projects

Funding Agency	Funding Program	Funding Range	Match Requirements	Typical Due Dates
ADECA	ARC Area Development Program	Up to $200,000	Depends on County Designation; Walker County: 50% Match	August
ADECA	Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant*	Up to $5,000,000	20% Match Required	November

Source: Appalachian Regional Commission; U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD)

*Eligible applicants for the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund Grant are cooperatives, corporations, limited liability companies, partnerships, or other private business entities or unit of governments that currently provide broadband services.

BROADBAND ANALYSIS CONCLUSIONS

Broadband expansion will likely be needed within the Town of Parrish to improve the quality of life of citizens as well as recruit new businesses and residents. The access to high quality broadband within the town is currently limited, and improvements and increased accessibility will be needed to catalyze economic growth, bolster new industry, and support the town's outdoor recreation initiatives.

Several obstacles should be considered when evaluating the feasibility of infrastructure improvements, such as construction costs and affordability concerns for residents. However, as broadband continues to be an interest area on federal and state levels, support for broadband planning and expansion will remain a prominent focal point for funding programs and technical assistance initiatives.

The town is eligible for several funding programs that could support broadband expansion efforts. In addition to funding, it is recommended that the town establish a connection with ADECA's new Digital Expansion Division, the department charged with improving broadband connectivity throughout the state. The division periodically has specialized funding available for technical assistance projects for municipalities, which could further aid the town with developing a feasible and sustainable plan for improving broadband.

SECTION III:
Action Plan

TOWN OF PARRISH: ACTION PLAN

The Town of Parrish Action Plan was developed in accordance with the responses of community engagement efforts, guidance of local officials, and the findings detailed in this report. The Action Plan is organized between Priority Goals and Strategies, both created from ideas in the previous section. The plan also includes a wide variety of project types, ranging from infrastructure improvements to community-centered initiatives, to ensure a comprehensive approach to improving the local economy and to meet the needs of Parrish's current and future residents.

Action Plan Terms:

The following definitions explain the different terms used to develop the action plan:

- **Action Plan:** The strategic direction derived from the SWOT analysis, which is consistent with other relevant state/regional/local plans.
- **Goal:** The broad outcomes or high-level descriptors of the desired outcomes of the Action Plan. They are described using broad qualitative terms and are often intangible.
- **Strategy:** A plan of action designed to achieve or support the achievement of the associated goal.
- **Short-Term:** Strategies that are expected to take under 2 years to complete.
- **Mid-Term:** Strategies that are expected to take 3 - 5 years to fully implement.
- **Long-Term:** Strategies that are expected to take longer than 5 years to complete.

TOWN OF PARRISH: PRIORITY GOALS

The list of goals below was designed in concordance with the themes and priorities developed in the Strategy Development Framework section of this plan, and they are outlined in detail below. Each goal contains corresponding strategies as well as available resources for implementation.

Goal I: Placemaking in Parrish

Catalyzing economic opportunities is a priority for the town, but there is also a desire to build around Parrish's existing assets and historical roots. This goal includes efforts to build Parrish's future potential around the municipality's strengths and bolster the sense of community for current and future residents to enjoy.

Goal II: Invest in Infrastructure

The town has existing infrastructure assets, such as sewer and water capacity, to support development efforts. However, the town is in critical need of improvements to other sources of foundational infrastructure, such as roads and drainage issues. In addition, this goal includes strategies for improving vacant lots and enhancing the town's broadband infrastructure.

Goal III: Retain Residents & Welcome Workforce

Parrish has an opportunity to become a bedroom community for residents who may work in other places but want to live in an area with a small-town feel. However, the town's housing base is aging, and there are many housing improvement opportunities around town for new development. Increased housing availability can provide existing residents with quality housing options and attract new residents to the area. In addition, employment within the community has declined in recent years, and there is a desire to bolster the town's economic opportunities through local business support and retention. This goal will also outline some strategies to enhance Parrish's employment opportunities within the town.

Goal IV: Optimize Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Investments in outdoor recreation can be utilized not only to attract visitors to Parrish, but it can also enhance the quality of life for residents. This goal will outline ways Parrish can optimize their outdoors assets by focusing on strategies to enhance the connectivity of the town, improve existing infrastructure, and expand current efforts.

TOWN OF PARRISH: EDSP ACTION PLAN

Goal I: Placemaking in Parrish- *Strategies & Tasks*

No.	Strategy	Potential Tasks	Timeframe	Resources
1	**Create Sense of Place** through Establishing Online Presence	• Create Town of Parrish Website. • Update Town Logo. • Establish Parrish branding materials.	Short-Term	Town, RPCGB, Community Colleges
2	**Create Sense of Place** through Beautification Initiatives	• Establish volunteer Beautification Committee. • Update Town welcome signs. • Prioritize beautification initiatives. • Organize volunteer clean-up events.	Short-Term	Town, Beautification Committee, Schools
3	**Create Sense of Place** through Existing Land Use	• Evaluate land use for downtown designation. • Identify opportunities for residential and commercial development.	Mid-Term	Town, RPCGB, WCEIDA, Chamber of Commerce
4	**Create Sense of Place** through Connectivity	• Prioritize areas for sidewalk installation to improve safety and walkability in highly visited areas. • Evaluate opportunities to connect existing outdoor assets and the town's primary businesses.	Long-Term	Town, RPCGB, ADECA & ALDOT Grant Funding Opportunities
5	**Enhance Community Connectedness** through Investing in Town Pride	• Host community events or festivals. • Establish relationships with food truck vendors for Parrish events. • Evaluate potential opportunities for farmers market and other community-centered activities.	Mid-Term	Town
6	**Enhance Community Connectedness** through Investing in Community Assets	• Prioritize updates to existing community assets like senior center, community garden, and parks. • Identify areas for additional assets like a library or pocket parks for additional public spaces.	Mid-Term; Long-Term	Town; Various Grant Resources (Project Dependent)

Goal II: Invest in Infrastructure- *Strategies & Tasks*

No.	Strategy	Potential Tasks	Timeframe	Resources
1	**Improve Infrastructure** through Road Improvements	• Create an inventory of municipal roads and utilize list to develop priority areas for funding. • Partner with RPCGB and other resources to develop grant applications for funding assistance.	Short-Term; Mid-Term	Town, RPCGB, County Commission, ADECA & ALDOT Grant Funding Opportunities
2	**Improve Infrastructure** through Enhancing Vacant Lots	• Develop an internal inventory of vacant and/or dilapidated lots and evaluate existing and potential use. • Use inventory to prioritize redevelopment activities. • Partner with RPCGB and other resources to develop grant applications for funding assistance.	Short-Term; Mid-Term	Town, RPCGB, WCEIDA, County Commission, ADECA Grant Funding Opportunities
3	**Improve Infrastructure** through Flood/Drainage Improvements	• Establish list of primary flooding/drainage issue areas in town and prioritize for improvements. • Partner with RPCGB and other resources to develop grant applications for funding assistance.	Short-Term; Mid-Term	Town, RPCGB, County Commission, ADECA Grant Funding Opportunities
4	**Improve Community's Connectivity** through Broadband Infrastructure	• Evaluate and prioritize areas within town that have limited access to broadband services. • Utilize partnerships to develop broadband projects and apply for grant funding.	Long-Term	Town, Local Resource Partners; Various Grant Opportunities (Project Dependent)
5	**Utilize Existing Infrastructure** by Redeveloping Existing Assets	• Evaluate unused space in high school and determine the highest and best use; partner with landowners in town to evaluate uses for vacant buildings/parcels within town. • Utilize partnerships with resources for programing options and redevelopment support.	Long-Term	Town, Local Resource Partners; Various Grant Opportunities (Project Dependent)

Source: RPCGB, 2023

Goal III: Retain Residents & Welcome Workforce *- Strategies & Tasks*

No.	Strategy	Potential Tasks	Timeframe	Resources
1	**Support Retention** through Bolstering Quality of Life Assets and Activities	• Create an inventory of quality of life resources/activities within town to identify current services and gaps. • Utilize determined gaps to prioritize service needs and funding opportunities.	Short-Term	Town, WACF
2	**Support Retention** through Community Involvement	• Establish volunteer opportunities for local residents to get involved with town improvement activities. • Raise awareness and support for existing programs, such as Little Libraries or Food Pantries, conducted by local nonprofit groups within the community.	Mid-Term	Town
3	**Encourage Retention & Attraction** through Housing Diversification	• Identify lots for residential in-fill to increase housing option availability and diversification. • Create an inventory of vacant structures or lots that need to be demolished or cleaned-up for development; use list to determine priority list for funding support. • Work with partners to conduct a housing gap analysis to determine most prevalent needs.	Mid-Term; Long-Term	Town, RPCGB, Various Grant Opportunities (Project Dependent)
4	**Aid Attraction** through Identifying & Supporting Local Talent	• Work with partners to identify local talent pools and service gaps (potential entrepreneurs, training needs, etc.). • Determine skills gaps and training resources needed to fill gaps and coordinate with existing programs to upskill workers. • Collaborate with partners to identify barriers to entering the workforce for local residents.	Mid-Term; Long-Term	Town, Central Six, RPCGB, WCEIDA
5	**Aid Attraction** through Identifying Available Properties for Development	• Establish an inventory process for tracking available parcels or properties in town available for development. • Develop relationships with local landowners and, when applicable, work with partners to market sites to potential developers.	Short-Term; Long-Term	Town, Local Landowners, WCEIDA, RPCGB, Various Grant Opportunities (Project Dependent)
6	**Aid Attraction** by Planning for Future Development	• Identify areas surrounding town limits for possible annexation and/or development. • Partner with local landowners to build relationships for possible development projects.	Mid-Term; Long-Term	Town, Local Landowners, WCEIDA

Goal IV: Optimize Outdoor Recreation Opportunities- *Strategies & Tasks*

No.	Strategy	Potential Tasks	Timeframe	Resources
1	**Optimize Outdoor Recreation** by Investing in Local Assets	• Identify assets that need improvements and prioritize based on need and resources (ball fields, splash pad, park expansion, improvements, etc.) • Use priority list to beginning project development for funding support.	Short-Term	Town, RPCGB, WACF, Various Grant Opportunities (Project Dependent)
2	**Optimize Outdoor Recreation** by Identifying Expansion Opportunities	• Identify areas for outdoor recreation activities such as walking trails, volleyball courts, or bicycle parks. • Determine cost estimates for each and use for project prioritization for funding support.	Short-Term; Long-Term	Town, RPCGB, WACF, Various Grant Opportunities (Project Dependent)
3	**Optimize Outdoor Recreation** by Identifying Opportunities in the Walker County Outdoor Recreation Plan	• Utilize county plan for additional outdoor recreation ideas and partnerships • Increase community education of outdoor recreation options.	Short-Term; Long-Term	Town, RPCGB, WACF, Various Grant Opportunities (Project Dependent)

Source: RPCGB, 2023