



# TOWN OF HENNING, TN

## ADOPTED MASTER PLAN

FEBRUARY 2025

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	3	ZONING .....	12
INTRODUCTION .....	3	PUBLIC UTILITIES AND .....	
COMMUNITY GOALS .....	3	INFRASTRUCTURE .....	16
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS .....	3	TRANSPORTATION .....	16
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	4	GOVERNANCE .....	18
COLLABORATION .....	4	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	19
ENGAGEMENT AND PROCESS .....	6	CATALYST AREAS.....	19
<b>HENNING TODAY</b> .....	8	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	23
HISTORY AND DEMOGRAPHICS .....	8	<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b> .....	24
URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY .....	10		
LAND USE.....	10		
HOUSING .....	12		

# TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS..	4	FIGURE 10. TRANSPORTATION MAP .....	17
FIGURE 2. PROJECT MILESTONES .....	6	FIGURE 11. HENNING CORRIDOR STUDY	
FIGURE 3. COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS.....	7	STREET PROPOSAL .....	18
FIGURE 4. HISTORIC MAIN STREET.....	8	FIGURE 12. CATALYST AREAS MAP .....	19
FIGURE 5. REGIONAL CONTEXT.....	10	FIGURE 13. ILLUSTRATIVE VISION FOR	
FIGURE 6. MAIN STREET TODAY.....	11	MAIN STREET .....	20
FIGURE 7. ZONING MAP.....	13	FIGURE 14. MAIN STREET ECONOMIC	
FIGURE 8. ALEX HALEY INTERPRETIVE		OPPORTUNITIES.....	20
CENTER.....	14	FIGURE 15. INFILL DEVELOPMENT	
FIGURE 9. EXISTING LAND USE AND KEY		EXAMPLES .....	21
LOCATIONS.....	15	FIGURE 16. WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD	
		EXAMPLES .....	22



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The Henning Master Plan serves as a framework for guiding new private development proposals, infrastructure investments, regulatory tool improvements, and grant funding to ensure compact, fiscally responsible growth that aligns with the community's goals. This plan was shaped by detailed input and reflection from residents and town staff, which influenced every aspect of its development. It includes a summary of existing conditions, recommendations for development catalyst areas, development policies, and implementation action items. It looks toward the future and is not intended to apply to or impact existing buildings or property use.

Revitalizing the town is crucial, and this need is echoed by the community. This plan proposes growth patterns that leverage the town's economic potential and extends its capabilities to help develop parks and youth facilities, foster development and retail opportunities, and encourage a mix of housing choices. Compact, incremental growth will help lower the cost of new infrastructure such as streets, utilities, public safety, and parks. Incremental growth also helps ensure that new development pays for itself, rather than increasing the tax burden on existing residents and businesses.

## COMMUNITY GOALS

Community goals are derived from community priorities and form the foundation for planning Henning's future. They provide the framework for policy recommendations and implementation actions included in this plan.

- 1. Revitalize downtown Main Street**
- 2. Develop parks and youth facilities**
- 3. Foster economic development and retail opportunities**
- 4. Encourage a mix of housing choices**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This plan includes recommendations for catalyst areas for developments and development policies. The catalyst areas represent locations that should be prioritized for investment, utility service connections, and development. They also provide a structured framework for future zoning, infrastructure, and development decisions within town limits. The development policies will ensure development occurs in an ordered, strategic, and fiscally responsible manner.

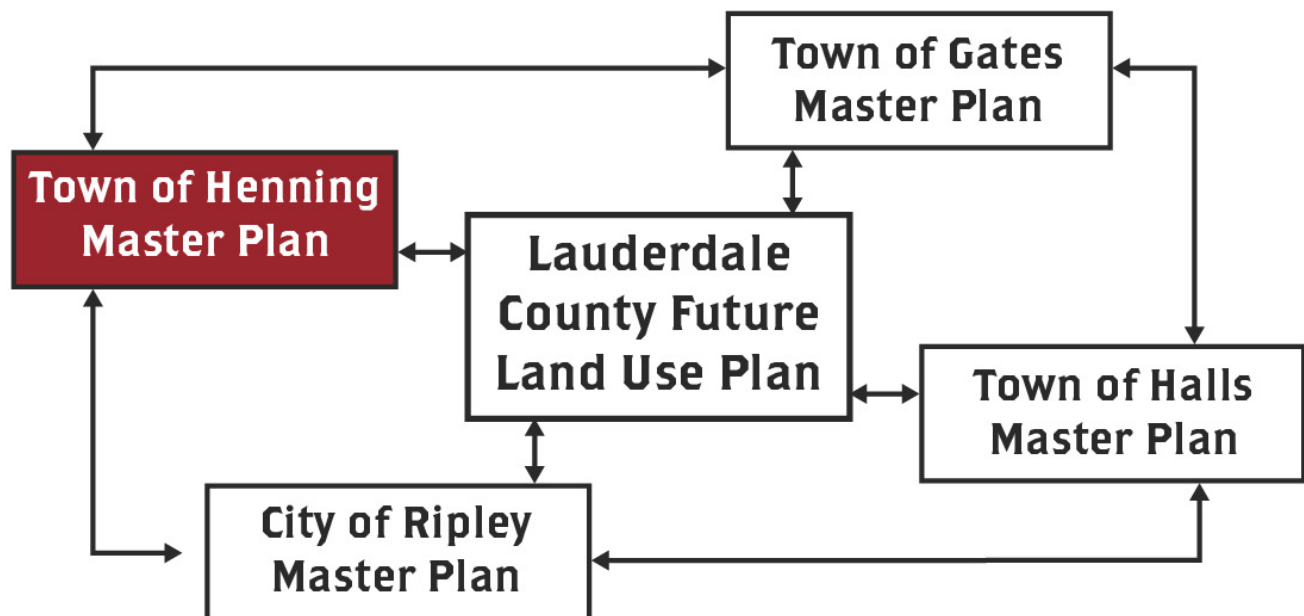
Together, these recommendations help attract developers with similar community values and bring outside investments into the town to further the community's goals.

# INTRODUCTION

## COLLABORATION

The West TN Planning team developed the Henning Master Plan in coordination with the Lauderdale County Future Land Use Plan and master plans for the municipalities of Ripley, Gates, and Halls. This Master Plan integrates with numerous other plans and studies prepared as part of the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) planning services offered to communities in the West Tennessee region impacted by the BlueOval City Megasite. BlueOval City (BOC), a Ford electric vehicle manufacturing facility under construction 30 miles southeast of Henning, is expected to employ 6,000 workers when fully operational.

FIGURE 1. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS



The following planning efforts are either complete or ongoing and have been incorporated into this Master Plan.

- **Regional Planning Activities**

- ▷ West TN Planning Regional Assessment (2023) - Population and employment projections for the 21-county West Tennessee region as well as land use, housing, transportation, and utilities gap analyses.
- ▷ TDOT BlueOval City Transit Study (2023) – Feasibility study of various transit commuting options to BlueOval City.

- ▷ Building Tennessee’s Tomorrow (2022) – Statewide inventory of public infrastructure and needs.
- ▷ TDOT Rural Regional Transportation Plan (2019) – West Tennessee Rural Planning Organization plan.

- **County-Wide Planning Activities**

- ▷ West TN Planning Lauderdale County Future Land Use Plan (In Progress) – County-wide policy document that will guide future growth and development.
- ▷ West TN Planning City of Ripley Master Plan (In Progress) – Consolidated guide for private development, public infrastructure, and funding opportunities in Ripley.
- ▷ West TN Planning Town of Gates Master Plan (In Progress) – Consolidated guide for private development, public infrastructure, and funding opportunities in Gates.
- ▷ West TN Planning Town of Halls Master Plan (In Progress) – Consolidated guide for private development, public infrastructure, and funding opportunities in Halls.
- ▷ West TN Planning Lauderdale County Housing Market Analysis (2024) – Assessment of housing needs and opportunities.
- ▷ Lauderdale County Select Tennessee Property Evaluation Program (PEP) Report (2018) – Industrial property evaluation that identifies county-wide economic development opportunities.
- ▷ Lauderdale County Land Use and Transportation Policy Plan (2010) – Existing policy document guiding county-wide growth and development, and the county’s major road plan.
- ▷ Lauderdale County Ecotourism Master Plan (2018) - Plan to create sustainable and educational landmarks and destinations that attract tourists, make a positive economic change, and respect the culture of the place and people who inhabit it.

- **Henning Planning Activities**

- ▷ Town of Henning Corridor Study (2019) – Assessment of Main Street as a transportation corridor with recommendations for intersection and streetscape improvements.
- ▷ Town of Henning Zoning Ordinance (2007) and Zoning Map (2007) – Regulatory documents governing development.

## ENGAGEMENT AND PROCESS

Stakeholder collaboration and community input form the foundation for the Town of Henning Master Plan. Joint community workshops for the countywide Future Land Use Plan and the community master plans were held from May 20, 2024 through May 23, 2024 at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Northwest in Ripley and the Halls Community Center. Across all workshops, 79 people attended and provided input through a variety of activities. In one exercise, community members allocated “tax dollars” among spending priorities, and in another they identified key services, assets to be preserved, and places for improvement. Attendees also shared their vision for each community. The planning team summarized key findings and presented draft community goals at the final workshop for further input and validation.

FIGURE 2. PROJECT MILESTONES



Additionally, a technical workshop on May 20, 2024 drew stakeholders from across the county, including mayors, elected officials, municipal staff, utility and service providers, state employees, and consultants. Workshop attendees provided valuable input related to ongoing efforts, priorities, opportunities, and future needs across the county and within each municipality. Key needs arising from this community input included:

- Businesses and downtown improvements
- Youth services and activities
- Road and sidewalk improvements
- Fiscally-responsible sewer and water enhancements (i.e., address high water bills)
- Preserving regional farmland

In July 2024, community members came back together to discuss a proposed community center on Main Street in relation to a grant opportunity. The mayor, aldermen, and residents identified a need for additional public space, youth activities, broadband access, and access to healthy food. The community gathered again at the August Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting with 26 residents to discuss a second grant for a BlueCross Healthy Place Town of Henning Park. That engagement further solidified the top three community goals in this plan as critical to meeting the community’s short- and long-term needs.

In September 2024 this plan was discussed with residents and stakeholders to preview draft recommendations and solicit additional feedback.



FIGURE 3. COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS



Paper copies of the draft plan were available at Henning Town Hall and an electronic version was posted online. Both were available for public comment from December 16<sup>th</sup> 2024 to the date of final adoption, which included the required public notices and public hearings at both the Planning Commission and Board of Aldermen meetings.

# HENNING TODAY

## HISTORY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Town of Henning was established by Dr. D.M. Henning in 1873, the same year that Henning's first sawmill, gristmill, and cotton gin opened. Merchants soon followed and opened general stores, a grocery store, and a drug store. The town became an important first train depot in Lauderdale County in the early 1870s and was incorporated in 1883.<sup>1</sup> Henning is the birthplace of Alex Haley, the author of the 1976 book *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. In 1978, Haley's boyhood home in Henning was restored and opened to the public as a museum, and in 2010 the State constructed the Alex Haley Interpretive Center.

Two Choctaw families migrated to Lauderdale County from the Choctaw reservation near Philadelphia, Mississippi in 1952 in response to an advertised need for agricultural laborers. By 1990 approximately 150 Choctaw resided in the community. In 1992, the federal government entrusted 172 acres of land outside of Henning to the Choctaw for government housing.<sup>2</sup> The land, near Hwy 51 and Graves Avenue, currently accommodates homes for Choctaw families and contains an administration building and community center.

FIGURE 4. HISTORIC MAIN STREET



SOURCE: LAUDERDALE COUNTY MUSEUM

Today, Henning is home to approximately 910 residents.<sup>34</sup> The average household income in Henning is \$41,514, with a poverty rate of 33%. The median age in Henning is 37 years, and the racial composition is 72% Black and 18% white.<sup>5</sup> Lauderdale County's economic classification is considered At-Risk by the Appalachian Regional Commission.<sup>6</sup>

Residents of Henning are employed throughout the region and in a variety of sectors, most notably manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, health care and social assistance, retail trade, and public administration.

1 Goodspeed Publishing Company. Lauderdale County History. 1887. Cited in Daniel, Jim. 2022, Feb 4. "Goodspeed's Lauderdale County History, Part 2. TNGenWeb Project. Retrieved from [tngenweb.org/lauderdale/2022/02/04/goodspeed-lauderdale-county-history-part-2](https://tngenweb.org/lauderdale/2022/02/04/goodspeed-lauderdale-county-history-part-2).

2 Dye, David H. 2018, Mar 1. "Choctaws." Tennessee Encyclopedia. Retrieved from [tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/choctaws](https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/choctaws).

3 US Census Bureau. n.d. P1: Race, 2020 Census, Henning town, Tennessee. Retrieved from [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

4 Claritas Environics. n.d. 2024 Population Estimates.

5 US Census Bureau. n.d. "Profile: Henning town, Tennessee." 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2020 Decennial Census (Various). Retrieved from [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

6 <https://www.arc.gov/map/county-economic-status-in-appalachia-fy-2025/>



About half of the workers living in Henning travel less than 10 miles to their jobs, while another 43% travel more than 25 miles to work. Only 6% of Henning's workers live in Henning.<sup>7</sup>

On a county-wide scale, Lauderdale County has a net total of 1,100 people leaving the county for their jobs. In an analysis of 12 counties for commuting flows, 2,278 workers commute into Lauderdale County and 3,407 commute outside of the county.<sup>8</sup>

## KEY TAKEAWAY

Henning is a historically bustling community that now has a high poverty rate, lacks local employment opportunities, and has a shortage of community services.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Henning is situated along SR 209 and Hwy 51, approximately 45 miles northeast of Memphis and 50 miles west of Jackson. The town shares its northern border with Ripley, a city of approximately 7,800 residents. Other nearby communities include Covington to the southwest and Brownsville to the southeast.

BlueOval City (BOC) is a 30-minute drive southeast of Henning, via either Covington or Brownsville. BOC and the associated suppliers and manufacturers are expected to draw more than 21,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs by 2035, driving a need for additional housing and services in Henning and the surrounding region.

Hwy 51, in the western portion of Henning, connects Henning south to Memphis and north to Indiana, via existing portions of the Interstate 69 corridor, which may in the future extend from the border of Mexico to the border of Canada. The proposed route for the Tennessee portion of I-69 passes through the southern tip of Henning, but that segment's feasibility is currently unknown.<sup>9,10</sup>

The Mississippi River runs approximately 20 miles to the west of Henning, through the western portion of Lauderdale County. The Chickasaw National Wildlife Refuge, Fort Pillow State Historic Park, and the Lower Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge, just east of the Mississippi River and west of Henning, provide ample opportunities for outdoor recreation. The Bike Tennessee Ripley-Henning loop is a 38-mile loop running along the edge of the Chickasaw National Wildlife Refuge and connecting to Ripley and Henning. The route follows Main Street and circles past the Alex Haley Museum and Interpretive Center in Henning.<sup>11</sup>

## KEY TAKEAWAY

Henning's location makes it an ideal candidate for near-term growth due to the proximity of BlueOval City and ample nearby opportunities for outdoor recreation.

7 US Census Bureau. n.d. LEHD OnTheMap: Work Area Profile Analysis, 2021 Estimates. Retrieved from [onthemap.ces.census.gov](https://onthemap.ces.census.gov).

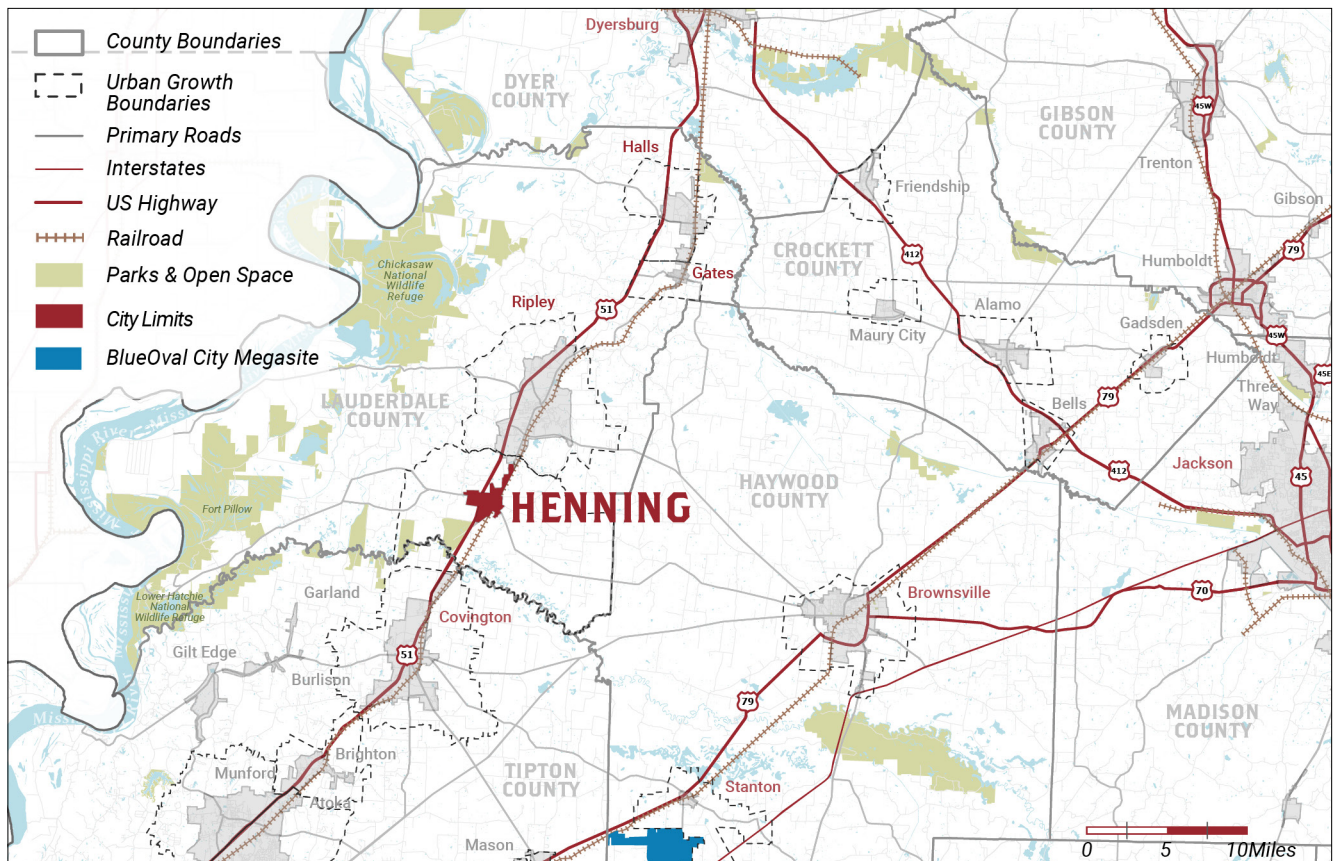
8 <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/demo/metro-micro/commuting-flows-2020.html>

9 Tennessee Department of Transportation. n.d. Interstate 69 Corridor. Retrieved from <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/tdot/projects/region-4/interstate-69-corridor.html>.

10 Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development Local Planning Assistance Office. [2010]. Proposed Development Plan 2010-2030: Lauderdale County, Tennessee.

11 <https://www.tnvacation.com/biketennessee>

FIGURE 5. REGIONAL CONTEXT



### URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

At the time of this plan’s creation, counties in Tennessee have the authority to establish an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) for each municipality within their jurisdiction. Municipalities can only annex property located within their UGB; therefore, updates to the UGB are only necessary if the municipality wants to annex land outside of the currently approved UGB. In general, the Lauderdale County Commission would need to approve any revision to Henning’s UGB. State law in place at the time of an annexation request will govern the annexation process.

The Henning UGB was last updated in 2007 and is currently nearly 40,000 acres, or 23 times the size of the town’s 1,700 acres.

### KEY TAKEAWAY

Henning’s existing Urban Growth Boundary is sufficient for the future needs of the town.

### LAND USE

Henning has preserved much of its downtown street grid along and west of South Main Street and the railroad tracks. Historic homes and mature trees extend half a mile west into a residential area dotted with churches. East of the tracks, homes line SR 87, and the street pattern is rural.

In the past, Main Street housed Henning’s thriving commercial corridor. Now, nearly all Main Street businesses have closed, leaving a row of mostly vacant buildings, many of them in disrepair. The Henning volunteer fire department is situated along Main Street at Haley Avenue. A post office and Town Hall are located a few blocks north on Main Street.

**FIGURE 6. MAIN STREET TODAY**



SOURCE: WEST TN PLANNING TEAM

The Alex Haley State Historic Site, which includes the author’s childhood home, grave site, and a museum, is located approximately three blocks west of Main Street along Haley Avenue and is on the Bike Tennessee Ripley-Henning Bike Loop.

Residential uses currently dominate the occupied property in town, along with churches and a handful of businesses. The Workwear Outfitters distribution center is the largest employer with 300 employees at the south entrance to town.<sup>12</sup>

12 Lauderdale Chamber / Economic & Community Development. n.d. Lauderdale County Employment Figures.

A Valero gas station with a Midway Market convenience store sits at the intersection of Main Street and Graves Avenue on the north end of town. Lauderdale Lumber and Hardware and Dollar General are located along Graves Avenue near Hwy 51 west of Main Street, and Henning Hardwoods is located east of Main Street.

The Choctaw Tribal Community occupies 88 acres of self-governed land that is now the only federally recognized tribal land in Tennessee. More than 200 residents live on the site, and the Tribal Community operates its own public safety, health, and other services.

The Choctaw operate a Multi-Purpose Facility west of Hwy 51 that serves as a recreation center and community gathering space. Additionally, the Choctaw own 130 acres to the south and east of the existing community.

The remaining land in town is primarily used for agricultural purposes. Henning is situated among highly fertile farmland useful for producing cash crops including cotton, corn, soybeans, and wheat.<sup>13</sup> A small stream parallels the railroad tracks, subjecting portions of Henning to flood hazards. Most land falling within the 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard Zone is located outside of developed areas.<sup>14</sup>

## KEY TAKEAWAY

Undeveloped and underutilized land within the existing street grid hold immense potential for community revitalization.

13 USDA. 2022. Land Resource Regions and Major Land Resource Areas of the United States, the Caribbean, and the Pacific Basin. Retrieved from [nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/AgHandbook296\\_text\\_low-res.pdf](https://nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/AgHandbook296_text_low-res.pdf)

14 FEMA. 2023, Sept 21. USA Flood Hazard Reduced Set.



## HOUSING

There are an estimated 391 occupied homes for Henning’s 910 residents, indicating an average occupancy rate of 2.3 people per household.<sup>15,16</sup> Approximately 62% of housing units are owner occupied, and the rest are renter occupied. This is consistent with homeownership rates countywide.<sup>17</sup>

Single-family detached homes comprise three-quarters of Henning’s housing stock mostly located within the town core or directly to the west. Approximately 10% are manufactured homes, and 13% are in small multifamily buildings of fewer than 10 units. Only 2% of buildings have 10 or more dwelling units. A significant portion of the housing stock was built before 2000.<sup>18</sup>

The median household income in Henning is \$41,514. Approximately one-quarter (24%) of Henning households spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs, an indicator of cost burden.<sup>19</sup>

Based on population growth estimates, an additional 2,556 new housing units are needed county-wide by 2035, followed by an additional 1,610 units by 2045.<sup>20</sup>

## KEY TAKEAWAY

Employment growth from BOC will drive up demand for housing leading to a near-term need for improved regulatory tools to guide the expected growth.

## ZONING

The Henning Zoning Ordinance and Zoning map were most recently updated in 2007. The Zoning Ordinance establishes four residential districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4), two business districts (B-1 and B-2), an industrial district (M), a flood hazard area (FH), and an obsolete airport district (A).

The town core is primarily zoned R-2 Medium Density Residential, allowing single-family homes and duplexes. At the north eastern and western ends of the town core, R-3 High-Density Residential Districts allow single-family dwellings, duplexes, townhomes, and multifamily units. At the southern end of town, R-4 High Density/Mobile Home Park allows all residential uses in R-3 as well as mobile home parks. The R-1 Low-Density Residential district, which allows only single-family detached homes or manufactured residential dwellings on minimum 10,000 square foot lots (approximately one-quarter acre) covers much of the remaining town’s land.

Manufactured homes are allowed by right in all of the residential districts, but mobile homes are only permitted by right in R-4, and only within a mobile home park. The residential districts all also allow a variety of other uses as approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals. R-2, R-3, and R-4 allow progressively smaller dwelling types, but the minimum lot sizes remain the same: 7,500 square foot lots with minimum 50’ frontage for single family, minimum 9,500 square-foot lots for duplexes, and 6,000 square-foot lots for townhomes and multifamily.

15 US Census Bureau. n.d. P1: Race, 2020 Census. Retrieved from [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

16 US Census Bureau. n.d. H12: Tenure by Household Size, 2020 Census. Retrieved from [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

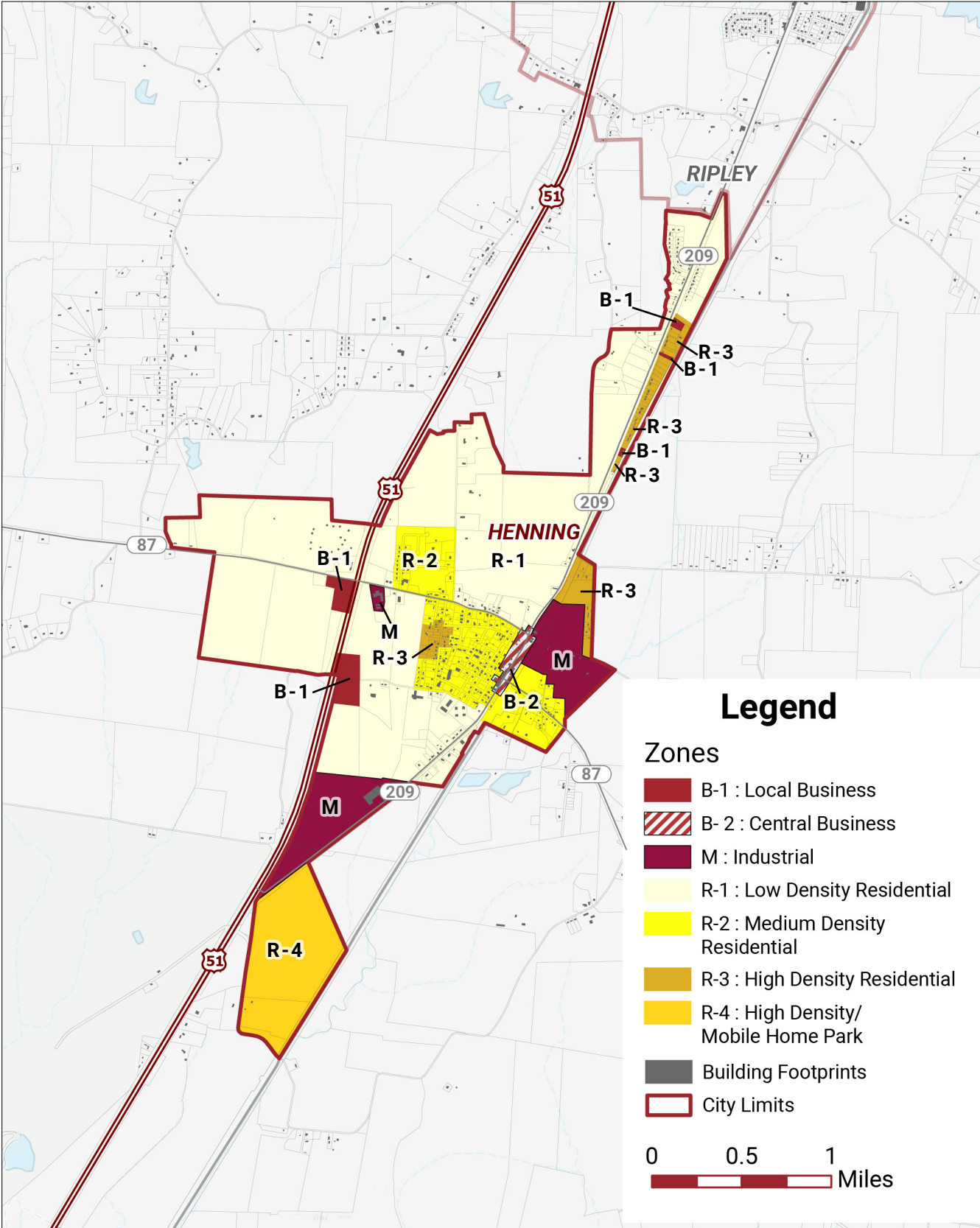
17 US Census Bureau. n.d. B25020: Tenure by Rooms, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

18 US Census Bureau. n.d. S2504: Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

19 US Census Bureau. n.d. S2503: Financial Characteristics, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates. Retrieved from [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

20 West TN Planning Lauderdale County Housing Market Analysis (2024)

FIGURE 7. ZONING MAP





The B-1 Neighborhood Business District governs two locations along Hwy 51 and three small parcels along SR 209 in the northern part of town. Uses permitted include retail sales, personal services, and churches. The B-2 Central Business District is restricted to the downtown Main Street area generally between Graves and Hickman Avenues. Uses permitted include retail sales, services, restaurants, churches, and civic uses. Apartments are only permitted on appeal in a mixed-use building above the ground floor.

Two areas, one on the east side of the railroad tracks near the town core and one along Hwy 51 near the southern end of town, are zoned Industrial. Although the code provides for an airport district, no property is zoned A - Airport.<sup>21,22</sup>

Off-street parking is designated by use and is required in all districts except B-2. Required minimum parking is generally higher than is found in newer zoning codes. For example, multi-family residential is required to provide two parking spaces per unit, regardless of the size of the unit or the number of bedrooms.

No subdivision regulations currently exist, however some provisions for “Group Housing Projects” are in Article XI.

The Henning Municipal Planning Commission (PC) is tasked by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen with recommending a zoning ordinance, zoning map, and subdivision regulations, and providing for its administration, enforcement, and amendment. The Commission was reestablished on May 6, 2024 and consists of six members that meet on an as-needed basis. The Town currently lacks planning support staff.

21 Town of Henning, TN. 2007. Henning Tennessee Zoning Ordinance.

22 Town of Henning, TN. 2007. Henning Tennessee Zoning Map.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

Henning’s Zoning Ordinance includes the elements necessary to meet the needs of the town, however, strategic amendments may help meet community goals for fiscally-responsible development and a mix of housing choices. Planning staff support will be needed to update current regulatory tools and provide online access to those documents.

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Alex Haley Museum and Interpretive Center draws visitors and school groups from across the region. Located a few blocks west of downtown, the museum offers tours that showcase artifacts from Alex Haley’s life.

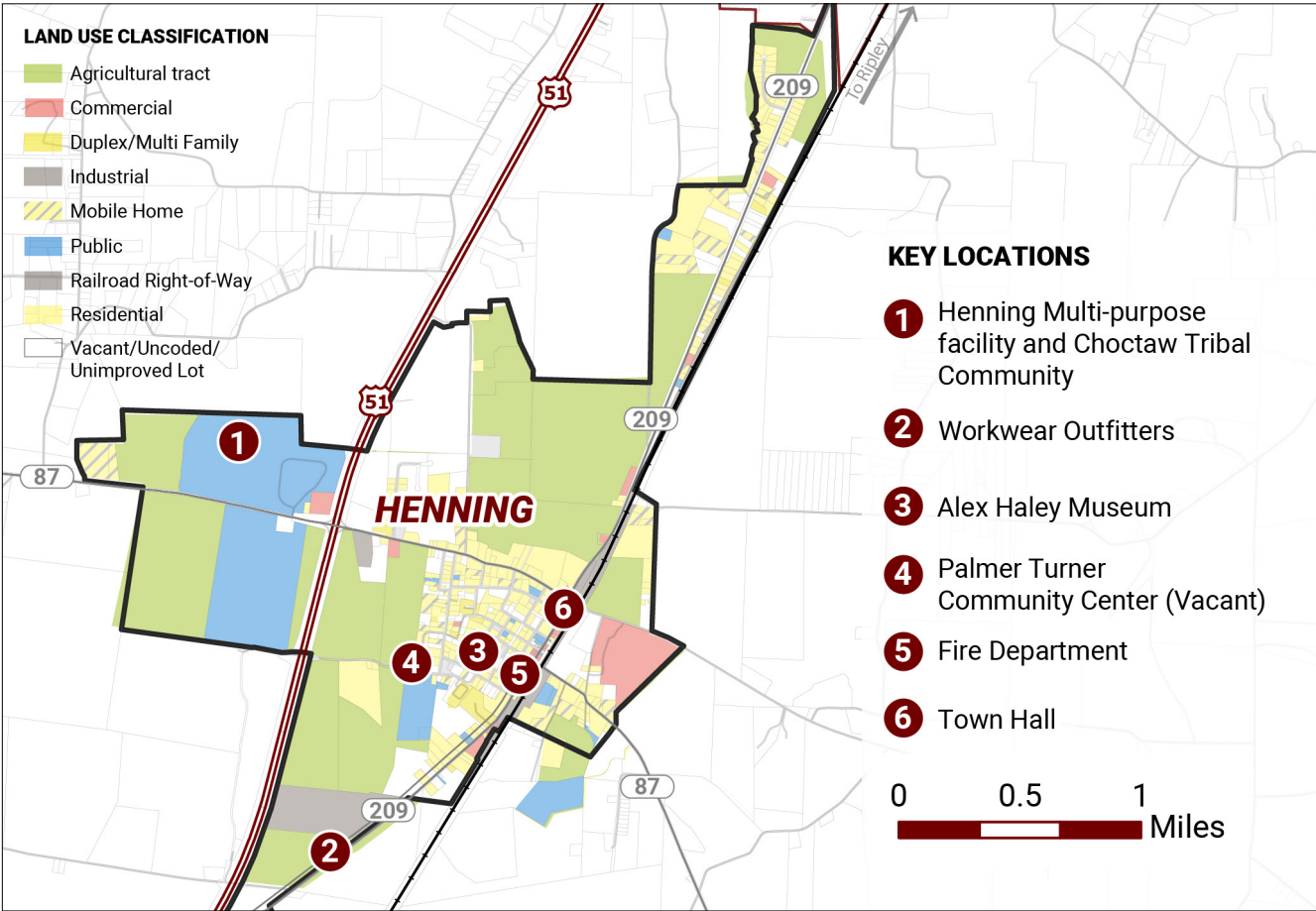
Henning is within the Lauderdale County School District, and the elementary, middle, and high school are located nearby in Ripley. The Henning town hall is centrally located on Main Street; however, the community lacks a storm shelter. A fire department of 15 volunteers serves the town. The Henning Police Department closed in 2023 and the town now contracts with the Lauderdale County Sheriff Department. The town offers trash service that picks up once a week and is operated internally.

### FIGURE 8. ALEX HALEY INTERPRETIVE CENTER



SOURCE: WEST TN PLANNING TEAM

FIGURE 9. EXISTING LAND USE AND KEY LOCATIONS



Henning has no existing parks or playgrounds. Henning residents must travel to Ripley to access various community facilities, including public parks, the Lauderdale County Library, and Lauderdale Community Hospital. The Choctaw Tribal Community west of Henning contains a community and recreational facility, which is open to members of the tribe and available to the surrounding community by reservation.

The West Tennessee State Penitentiary (WTSP) is located in unincorporated Lauderdale County, west of Henning. The facility houses male offenders and has an operating capacity of 980 inmates. The Women’s Therapeutic Residential Center (WTRC) also sits on the grounds of WTSP, and the facility has a USDA certified 360-acre vegetable farm. WTSP offers vocational training programs

in partnership with TCAT and Dyersburg State Community College.<sup>23</sup> A vacant former school and community center owned by the town, Palmer Turner, is on 14.5 acres of land on Church Street.

**KEY TAKEAWAY**

Henning lacks parks, playgrounds, and several critical community facilities, requiring residents to travel to nearby communities for basic services.

<sup>23</sup> Tennessee Department of Corrections. n.d. “West Tennessee State Penitentiary.” Retrieved from [tn.gov/correction/state-prisons/state-prison-list/west-tennessee-state-penitentiary.html](https://tn.gov/correction/state-prisons/state-prison-list/west-tennessee-state-penitentiary.html).

## PUBLIC UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The town provides water, sanitary sewer, and gas services. Electricity is provided by the City of Ripley. New Wave Communications provides cable and internet service, and AT&T provides telephone and broadband service.

The town completed a sewer and water rate study in 2023 where the fund's financial Change in Net Position was estimated to go negative in FY 26 and continue to decline through FY 28, unless rates were increased substantially and tap fees were adjusted to account for actual costs.

Therefore in 2023 rates were increased and a series of recommendations are being completed by the town as a result of that report.

### KEY TAKEAWAY

Development should be focused where utility infrastructure exists, and any new improvements should plan for future utility regionalization or partnership opportunities.

## TRANSPORTATION

The Town of Henning features a walkable central grid west of Main Street with 200-to 400-foot block lengths that could support walkability, appropriately-scaled infill development, and a revitalized Main Street area. However, many of Henning's locally-maintained roadways are in poor condition, with degraded surfaces, missing sidewalks, and inadequate lighting.

On both sides of the central grid, regional roads run generally north/south. Overall, Henning's road network includes nearly 34 miles of roadways, including 7.3 miles of municipal roadways, 12 miles of county-managed roads, and 14 miles

of state-managed roadways. The municipal and county network primarily includes local roads, principal arterials, and minor and major collectors.

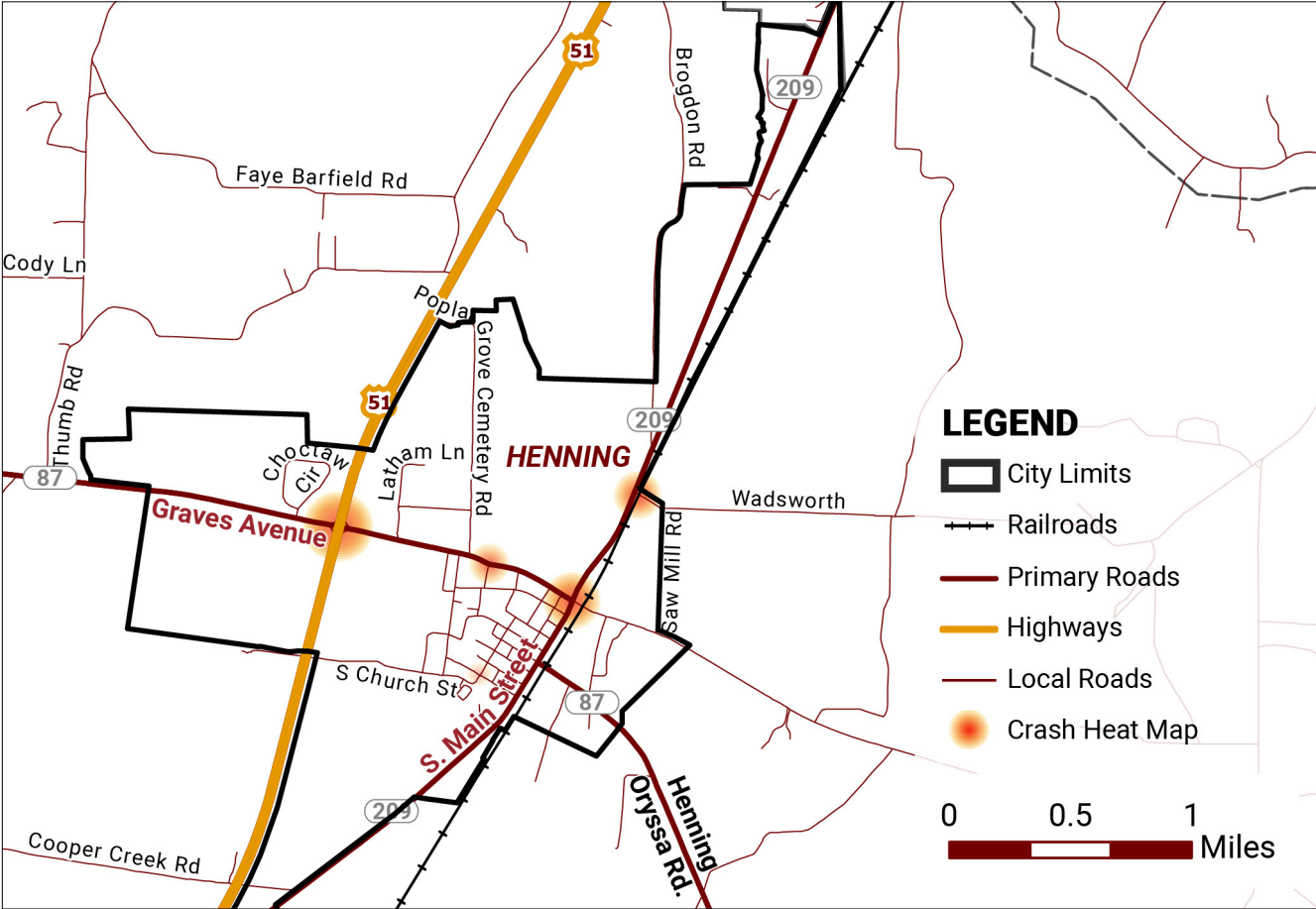
The town's major routes include Hwy 51 at the western end of the town, which carries the highest volume of traffic, with an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 10,500 in 2023. SR-209, also known as Main Street/Chicken George Trail/S Washington Street, is the other major north-south thoroughfare and provides connectivity through the heart of town on the eastern edge of the central grid.

Since 2019, there have been 81 total crashes in Henning, including 48 property damage crashes, 28 minor injury crashes, two serious injury crashes, and one fatal crash. The fatal head-on collision occurred in 2019 along SR 209 north of SR 87 and just south of Wadsworth Road. The crash happened after 9:00 pm in low-light conditions on a roadway segment without lighting. Of the serious injury crashes, one occurred along SR 87 near the Maple Street intersection, and the other occurred at the intersection of Moorer Avenue and S. Church Street.

The remaining crashes are largely clustered along SR 87 and SR 209, with clear clusters in downtown Henning, SR 209 north of Brogdon Road, and the intersection of Hwy 51 and SR 87.

A Class I rail line owned by Canadian National (CN) runs immediately east of Main Street, creating a barrier to movement between the east and west sides of town. There is a grade-separated crossing located on SR 87 (McFarlin East Avenue) just east of downtown. At this location, the roadway reduces to a single travel lane and offers a small pedestrian space, and the underpass has a vertical clearance of eight feet, severely limiting the traffic it can accommodate. The tunnel may become impassible during high water events. Another underpass is located on Graves Avenue, but it does not accommodate pedestrians.

FIGURE 10. TRANSPORTATION MAP



An average, households in Henning spend nearly 28% of their income on transportation, including vehicle costs, transit costs, and the cost of time spent commuting.<sup>24</sup> The Department of Transportation considers a household transportation cost burdened if they spend more than 15% of their income on transportation.<sup>25</sup>

Given limited public transportation options, residents primarily rely on personal vehicles for transportation. The Delta Human Resource Agency offers demand response transit service on a request basis; reservations must be made at least three days before the trip date.

The lack of dedicated bike lanes in Henning presents difficulties for area bicycle users and limits the community’s options for active transportation and leisure cycling, especially given its location on the Bike TN route. Well-maintained local roadways with low traffic volumes are generally suitable for active transportation users of all ages and abilities. Higher-volume roadways and crossings without adequate bicycle infrastructure, however, prevent safe and accessible connectivity on a broader scale.

24 Esri. (n.d.). Transportation Insecurity Analysis Tool. Retrieved June 19, 2024, from <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/0920984aa80a4362b8778d779b090723/page/Transportation-Insecurity-Analysis-Tool/>

25 <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-11/Cost%20Burden%20KPI%20Public%20Summary%20Review%2011.28.2023.pdf>



Generally, sidewalks are limited throughout the town, and where they exist, they are in poor condition and do not provide ADA access, with the exception of limited recent TDOT improvements at Graves Avenue and S. Main Street.

The 2019 Henning Corridor Study, conducted through a TDOT Transportation Planning Grant, proposed numerous streetscape improvements for SR 209 through downtown Henning. The recommendations chapter will discuss revisiting these proposed improvements as redevelopment efforts for the downtown move forward.

The town was awarded a 2021 Multimodal Access Grant from TDOT to implement improvements along SR 209 from McFarlin Avenue to Thum Avenue. Improvements include sidewalks, crossing and ADA improvements, and complete streets elements. That project is currently underway.

**FIGURE 11. HENNING CORRIDOR STUDY STREET PROPOSAL**



## KEY TAKEAWAY

Future growth concerns include maintaining the quality of existing infrastructure/roads, mitigating safety issues including narrow roadways with poor sight distance, providing ADA access and providing multimodal opportunities for current and existing residents.

## GOVERNANCE

The Town of Henning currently employs a part-time mayor and five full-time employees, including an office manager/town recorder, clerk, town superintendent and gas operator, and two public works employees. In addition, there is one part-time street department employee. The town contracts out building permit review and code enforcement to a consultant. Currently the town utilizes a water treatment operator contractor.

## KEY TAKEAWAY

Expected growth will require additional staff, partners, and/or consultant support to provide a consistent level of service to the community.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

Previous planning efforts, technical analyses, and community engagement have informed the recommendations in this Town of Henning Master Plan. This Plan is meant to guide future development decisions and supplements, but does not supersede, the Henning Zoning Ordinance.

The Henning Planning Commission and Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall use this Plan to guide decisions related to land use rezoning requests and development within town limits and for each annexation application within the UGB. In addition, the Commission and Board shall use the Lauderdale County Future Land Use Plan as additional reference for development decisions outside of town limits. Where conflicts arise, this Master Plan shall supersede the Lauderdale County Future Land Use Plan. The plan does not change or restrict the current use of property. As the town reviews development proposals, the town should work with property owners and residential developers to ensure that proposals meet the intent of this Plan and follow code regulations.

This plan should be formally reviewed every five years to ensure consistency and sustainable growth policies and be receptive to changing social and economic trends. If needed, community leaders should amend this plan to reflect current community values and planning principles.

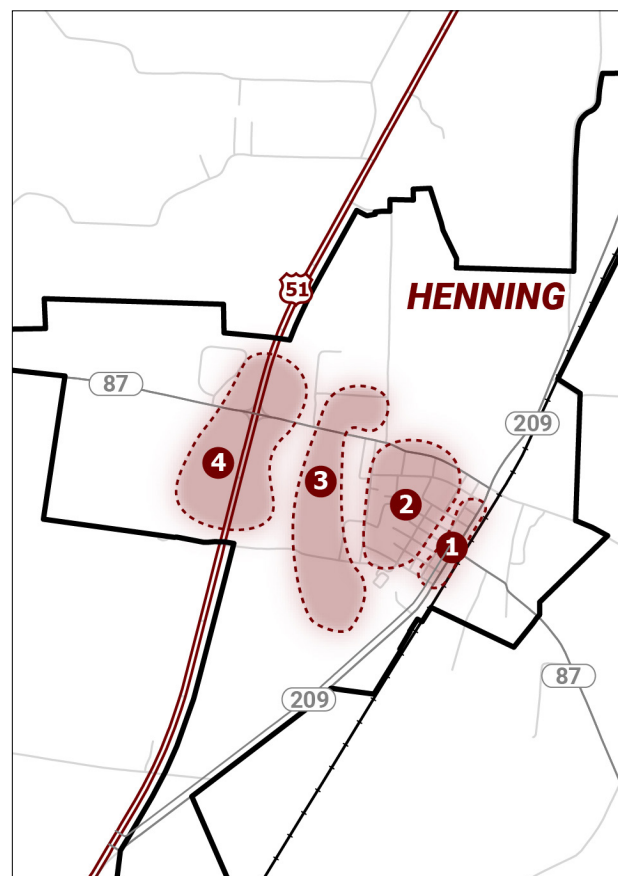
## CATALYST AREAS

The following catalyst areas represent locations that should be prioritized for investment, utility service connections, and development. Development locations outside of these catalyst areas should remain very low-density residential and/or agricultural use to maintain the character desired by the community. Consideration of youth facilities and activities should be top priority as growth occurs.

### CATALYST AREAS:

1. Main Street
2. Infill Development
3. Walkable Neighborhood Expansion
4. Choctaw

FIGURE 12. CATALYST AREAS MAP



**Catalyst Area #1: Main Street**

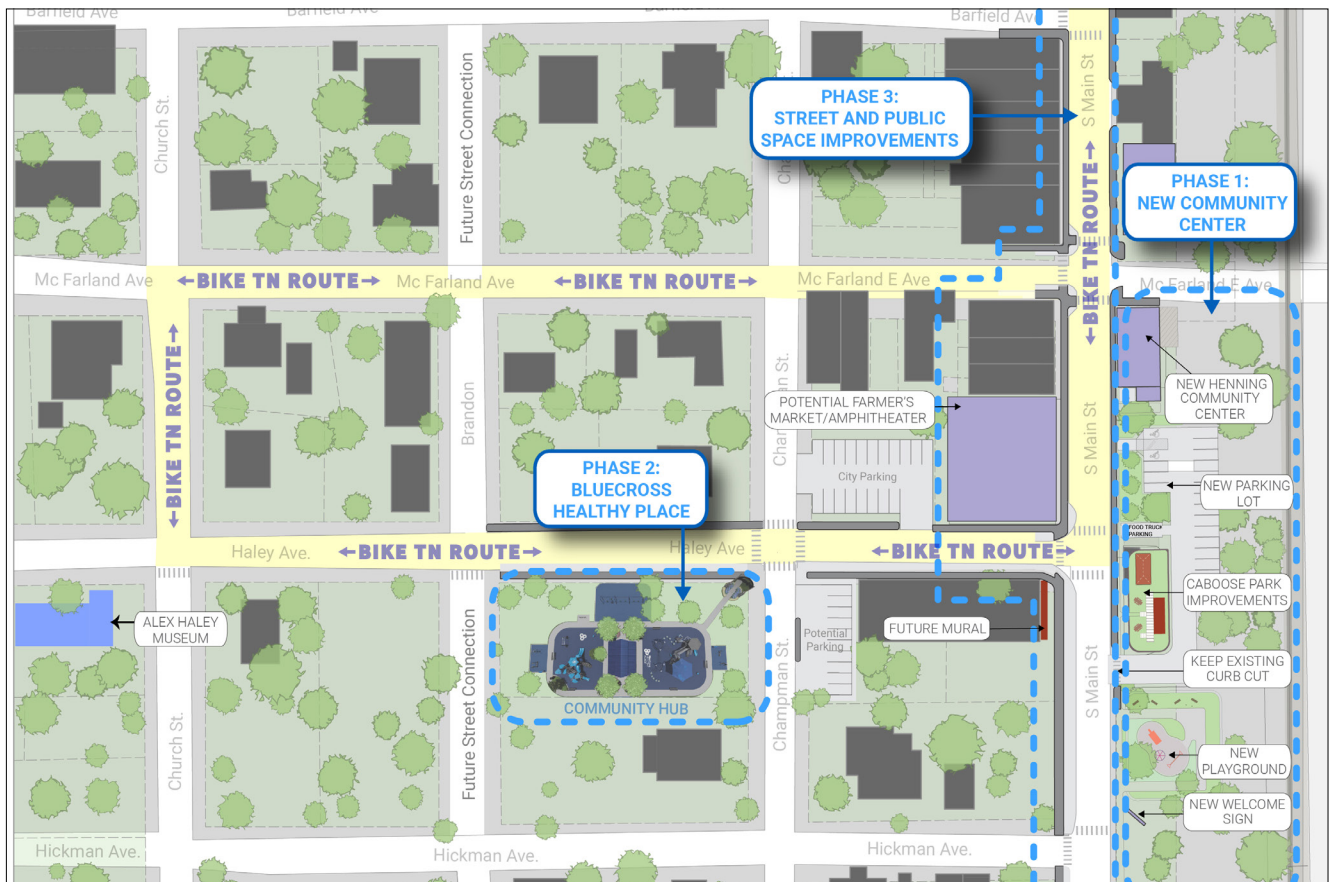
Residents have been saddened to watch their formerly lively Main Street degrade into its currently poor condition. The Town should maintain its walkable grid, re-connecting as appropriate, and focus every effort in revitalizing Main Street back to the traditional small-town character of its past.

With the expected population increase in this area, Main Street provides an opportunity for a vibrant, walkable setting for residents and visitors. The focus should be on attracting more active uses and programs that support small, local businesses and outdoor activity. This will require discussions and partnerships with existing landowners, agreements with developers, and consistent enforcement of the building code to protect the health and safety of the community.

**FIGURE 14. MAIN STREET ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**



**FIGURE 13. ILLUSTRATIVE VISION FOR MAIN STREET**



The 2019 Henning Corridor Study as shown in Figure 11 should be followed to complete the recommended street improvements along Main Street. The Town can also act as a catalyst for revitalization through its ownership of several parcels. The Town's direct investments should include aggressively seeking grants and partnerships for a strategic phasing of connected projects that will create excitement to entice outside investors. The Town has already received a grant for a new community center that will meet the most immediate needs of the community. This project will empower residents with access to technology, digital education, workforce opportunities, a telehealth office, a flexible community gathering space, a food bank, a public restroom, and a safe outdoor playground and park. The facility will be free to the public and available for community events. A BlueCross Healthy Place application has also been submitted to provide an active park and playground. Figure 13 shows an illustrative conceptual phasing of projects, starting with the community center as phase one and the Healthy Place park of phase two. A more in-depth study will be needed to fully understand potential funding sources, viability, and timing of each project, and this vision could adjust as funding opportunities arise.

### Catalyst Area #2: Infill Development

To grow in a fiscally responsible manner, prioritize development in locations where infrastructure already exists and within existing town limits, and utilize existing buildings where feasible. Updated regulations should allow and encourage infill development that includes a variety of residential, mixed use, local business, and civic buildings and ensure building character that complements existing homes. Likewise, the Town should allow existing lots to be re-platted to capitalize on their proximity to Main Street. For example, in some

cases lots could be subdivided to allow for smaller lot sizes and homes affordable to a wide variety of incomes. Minimum five-foot wide sidewalks, safe street crossings, outdoor patio and front porch space, and similar public/private spaces create street activity.

The Town should identify, celebrate, and protect prime agricultural property within town limits. Development along Graves Avenue should be planned to complement the Choctaw properties near Hwy 51.

### FIGURE 15. INFILL DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES



SOURCE: KRONBERG URBANIST ARCHITECTS





### Catalyst Area #3: Walkable Neighborhood Expansion

This catalyst area should ensure fiscally-responsible development and celebrate the town’s rural character. In this area, the town should create a walkable, connected expansion of the town core that expands commercial uses along Graves/SR 87 and provides for a land-efficient, versatile, range of homes available at an affordable price range. To minimize traffic congestion and encourage a healthy lifestyle, residents in this area should be able to access amenities in the town core on foot, by bicycle, or through other means of active transportation.

By updating zoning regulations to allow a mixed of uses and housing types and sizes, such as small-lot detached and attached single family homes and townhomes, development in this area can positively impact the tax base while providing additional revenue for water and sewer system maintenance.

After Main Street has revitalized into a stable and thriving area and the population has grown, additional, appropriately-located small home businesses, neighborhood-scale businesses, and small corner-store retail in this area can begin to serve the expanding population without pulling energy from Main Street.

Private development and public roadway construction and repair projects should extend, solidify, and physically connect to the existing town grid using small block sizes similar to the existing Main Street grid. These projects should be planned and designed so they will connect to future civic uses, retail locations, and regional trails, parks, and open space

FIGURE 16. WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOOD EXAMPLES



### Catalyst Area #4: Choctaw

Work with the Choctaw Nation to help further develop and implement plans for the Hwy 51 corridor to ensure it complements the community goals and aligns with other develop activities planned and underway.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy recommendations are meant to guide the Planning Commission in making recommendations about development proposals to ensure consistency with community goals. As the Town directs development and infrastructure investment, it should focus on catalyst areas to ensure all four community goals can be met through strategic and efficient use of public funding. This can be done by planning for community needs first and aligning development and investment to produce the most community benefit. Planning for suitable development character will ensure development occurs in an ordered, connected, and fiscally responsible manner and help attract developers with similar community values, thus bringing outside investments into the community.

Although Henning has the largest Urban Growth Boundary in Lauderdale County, extending both to Haywood and Tipton Counties, the majority of that land is prime agriculture property without utility extension. Therefore, the Town should focus on building out the existing town limits and making improvements to the infrastructure within the town before it starts to annex property, unless a cost benefit analysis shows a net benefit to the town as a whole.

Any investments in future development must be fiscally responsible. That is, revenue generated from the development must be more than adequate to pay for the cost of infrastructure construction, maintenance, and services. The cost of new water and wastewater connections to development areas should not place any long-term financial burden on existing residents. Future development must be responsible for on- and off-site improvements that are direct impacts of the development, including but not limited to road improvements, upgrades to parks, and the construction of sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle infrastructure, and landscaping. The Town should evaluate development proposals based on long-range construction and maintenance considerations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY






- A. Encourage Main Street development.
- B. Focus and prioritize development near existing infrastructure within town limits, with character consistent with catalyst area descriptions.
- C. Encourage a wide range of housing types, including small-lot attached and detached homes, in a walkable, connected, small block grid pattern.
- D. Ensure development follows the general character of the community, focused on a rural farming lifestyle, large shade trees, and community connection.
- E. Ensure fiscally responsible development. Ensure the cost of new water and wastewater connections to development areas does not place long-term financial burden on existing residents.





# IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation framework shown here provides Town leadership with a series of actions to consider in order to achieve the community goals envisioned in this Plan. Actions are assigned an immediate, on-going, short-term, mid-term, or long-term time frame to guide prioritization. Time frames fall into these general ranges:

-  Quick Wins: **Immediate**
-  Ongoing: **Continually implemented over time**
-  Short-Term: **0-2 years**
-  Mid-Term: **3-5 years**
-  Long-term: **6-10 years**

## GOALS

- 1** Revitalize downtown Main Street
- 2** Develop parks and youth facilities
- 3** Foster economic development and retail opportunities
- 4** Encourage a mix of housing choices

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- A** Encourage Main Street development.
- B** Focus and prioritize development within town limits near existing infrastructure, with character consistent with catalyst area descriptions.
- C** Encourage a wide range of housing types, including small-lot attached and detached homes, in a walkable, connected, small block grid pattern.
- D** Ensure development follows the general character of the community, focused on a rural farming lifestyle, large shade trees, and community connection.
- E** Ensure fiscally responsible development. Ensure the cost of new water and wastewater connections to development areas does not place long-term financial burden on existing residents.

CHECKLIST	WHAT	WHEN
<b>QUICK WINS</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engage with property owners to understand their plans for any growth or development to inform potential partnerships related to public infrastructure planning.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update Charter and assess municipal code updates.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Initiate a process to develop a website to post official meeting notices, agendas, packets, and meeting minutes for government transparency and provide clear information on the town's development process and building permits.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schedule Planning Commission meetings for at least 4 times a year and verify all other requirements are being met to keep an active status per T.C.A. § 13-4-101 Municipal Planning Commission.	
<b>ONGOING</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use this Plan to guide recommendations related to land use and development within town limits and for each annexation application within the UGB. Compare proposals against Community Goals and Policy Recommendations.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage growth of local businesses on Main Street through small business assistance, regular Main Street events and marketing campaigns, and beautification projects. Focus efforts a few blocks at a time to build momentum.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pursue grant funding and partnerships for Main Street improvements and parks and youth facilities.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Actively recruit developers who have a mission consistent with community goals.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use incentives and enforcement to encourage private property owners with poorly maintained properties to sell or renovate their properties. Ensure consistent and regular enforcement of the building code, with enhanced fines as needed.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seek pro bono legal services to secure marketable property title to allow ownership transfer of properties with property title challenges.	

## CHECKLIST WHAT

## WHEN

**SHORT-TERM**

Evaluate current administrative capacity, duties, and procedures to determine if technology or process improvement could lead to efficiencies in staff or consultant time dealing with development approvals, repetitive tasks, or other administrative duties.




Pursue the following Zoning Ordinance amendments:

- a. Reformat ordinance to make digitally searchable and update table of contents.
- b. Update paragraph IV.B.1 which refers to the 1962 zoning map.
- c. Remove Airport overlay district.
- d. Develop a permitted uses chart.
- e. Develop lot width and setback diagrams for easy visualization of information.
- f. Refine definitions to clarify differences in land use and housing types and sizes.
- g. Clarify where home businesses are allowed.
- h. Where appropriate, allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs), adjust minimum lot area and/or maximum lot coverage, and provide flexibility in parking requirements to increase housing development opportunities.
- i. In all zones, assess lot size and width restrictions, maximum lot coverage, height restrictions, setbacks, bulk regulations, accessory structures, parking requirements, and a better mix of uses that supports community goals.
- j. Ensure the regulations allow for a mixed of uses and housing types consistent with community needs.
- k. Consider amending B-1 to allow residential mixed-use, hotel/motel, and/or civic uses.
- l. Consider permitting as a matter of right: schools, public libraries and art galleries, public museums, parks, playgrounds, municipal athletic fields, municipal recreation buildings and centers, and religious institutions in all residential districts.





Develop and adopt subdivision regulations

CHECKLIST	WHAT	WHEN
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Formalize the process for new development and permitting requests and create a development manual with document checklists, graphic flowcharts, and fee schedules to outline the town's approval process and major policies. Post all information to the town's new website.	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan for a storm shelter, potentially within another planned facility.	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop a 5-year capital improvement plan and funding action plan for all town expenditures and improvements to help prioritize and strategize future grant opportunities.	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Work with TDOT to address traffic safety issues with street improvement projects, wayfinding, landscaping, and similar traffic calming measures, while still maintaining full access for through-traffic.	
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### MID-TERM

<input type="checkbox"/>	Require annexation as a prerequisite for the provision of Town-owned water or sewer to any development site.	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluate and update existing government service usage charges and fees.	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish a financial model for growth and a set of financial management performance criteria.	
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### LONG-TERM

<input type="checkbox"/>	Revisit this Master Plan for consistency with community goals.	
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The community members of Henning and Lauderdale County were instrumental in the creation of this plan. A special thanks to Mayor Reed and staff, the Board of Aldermen, Planning Commission, and staff of the Lauderdale Chamber / Economic & Community Development. Numerous regional partners also provided valuable input during the planning process.

*Report prepared by HDR and Gresham Smith on behalf of the West TN Planning team for TNECD.*

Tennessee Department of Economic  
and Community Development  
312 Rosa L. Parks Ave.  
Nashville, TN 37243

office: 615.741.1888

