



Tuscaloosa

FORWARD

A STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN TO RENEW AND REBUILD



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The citizens of Tuscaloosa have stepped up to share their best ideas on what their City can become. This document could not exist without their input, insight and great ideas. Further, without the leadership at City Hall that has been exhibited since the tornadoes of April 15 and April 27, there would be no framework upon which to capture these ideas, organize them, and have hope to see them through to a future reality. A thousand thanks to those listed here, and those many others who have contributed in some way to this community plan.

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The Implementation Workbook is a supporting companion document to this Plan that identifies and prioritizes the policies, regulations, incentives, resources, partnerships and capital investments necessary to achieve the initiatives outlined in the Plan, as well as some of the important first moves to get implementation under way. While the Tuscaloosa Forward Strategic Community Plan is an adopted policy document for the City, the Implementation Workbook is a working document that is intended to be updated over time to respond to evolving community needs.

CHAPTER 01:

INTRODUCTION

On April 27, 2011, a tornado left an unprecedented path of destruction through Tuscaloosa. The loss of life, damage to property and emotional strain are a tremendous burden, but the people of Tuscaloosa have courageously united to help each other through this trying time.

When disasters strike, the pain and loss are immense and the road to recovery can seem long and tiring. However, disasters can also reveal a resilience and dedication to community that had been hidden by the bustle of “ordinary” days. We are all reminded about what is truly important and community leaders are challenged to rise to the occasion. It is possible to emerge from a disaster a stronger and more capable city than before.

The Tuscaloosa Forward Strategic Community Plan to Renew and Rebuild is an investment in the idea that through smart decision-making and careful planning Tuscaloosa can become a better and stronger city. The plan represents the community’s vision for the future of Tuscaloosa. It establishes a framework that city government, the private sector, and the public can work from to achieve a common vision. The strategic rebuilding plan balances the hundreds of ideas from thousands of residents who gave their time to help imagine how the rebuilding could be done to maximize the impact of the policies, projects, and other investments that will move Tuscaloosa forward.

Keys to a Successful Plan

HOLDING THE BALANCE

In every disaster recovery effort, there is a balance between the natural desire to put things back exactly as they were as quickly as possible, and the need to take the time to make good decisions. While the hardships that some in the community face are very real, it is also true that almost everyone spoke of the rebuilding as an opportunity to make Tuscaloosa better. This plan is an investment toward that end.

INTEGRATED PROBLEM SOLVING

The large amount of new construction, reinvestment, and community focus is an extremely rare circumstance. All over town decisions are being made about how and where to rebuild. By integrating those decisions, particularly at the city level, opportunities will emerge to coordinate in support of a common vision. Thinking about the long-term and leveraging the impact of every project maximizes the investment.

TRUE COMMUNITY VISION

To maintain momentum in the long-term and to shape a future that is tied to the unique character of Tuscaloosa, the vision for how to rebuild must come from the community. The hundreds of residents who participated in meetings and the thousands who participated online are the source for the ideas in this plan.

Why Plan?



View the “big picture”

A community is like an organism and all the parts must work together in order to sustain the City’s future. A plan works to align city programs, projects and government in a synergistic relationship.



Coordinate local decision-making

Specific community goals in a Plan allow local decision makers to align around a citywide vision and ensure that all projects are supported by the greater community.



Give guidance to landowners and developers

No one wants to build next to a vacant lot with an unknown future. Effective planning will give individual, commercial, and corporate investors the confidence to build in Tuscaloosa.



Establish a sound basis in fact for decisions

The data and analysis incorporated into the Plan allows development decisions to be based on fact.



Involve a broad array of interests in discussions about the future

This Plan incorporates many different voices and a variety of interests which ensures that recommendations are well-rounded and all-inclusive. This allows the community to rebuild in a way that is appealing to all groups.



Build an informed constituency

The public process facilitated during the creation of the Plan builds a strong constituency for the ideas and recommendations. This ensures that development decisions based firmly in the goals of the Plan are supported by a large portion of the community stakeholders.

How is the Plan Used?

THE SCOPE OF THIS PLAN IS TO:

- Craft a high-level vision for the impacted areas
- Propose residential, civic, and commercial land use concepts
- Identify affordable housing opportunities, programs, and resources
- Propose strategies for enhancing neighborhoods
- Show potential connections between neighborhoods

THE SCOPE IS NOT TO:

- Be a citywide plan for Tuscaloosa
- Provide a detailed design document

The Process

While a typical planning process would take months or years, in this case an accelerated timeline focusing on land use and affordable housing options was chosen to provide the most time sensitive guidance as quickly as possible (many related objectives emerged through the planning process and will need further development to implement. For example: energy efficiency, natural resources, health, safety, education, economic development, design standards, and many social programs were clear elements of the community vision but are outside of the scope of this plan).

Over the course of five weeks (from mid-June to mid-July) the planning team met with the established City task force groups, the steering committee, many individual stakeholders, and hosted a public workshop and online forum. Each of those groups played a vital role in the formulation of this draft.

MindMixer (The online forum)

At the time of publication, 4,346 people visited the site which generated 8,672 website visits, 71,211 page views, and 326 original ideas to be considered in the Plan. The participation on this innovative crowd-sourcing site was tremendous and directly impacted the items in the Plan. You will see quotes from the site sprinkled throughout this document and many of the ideas firmly imprinted on the recommendations. This website served as a 24-hour-a-day public forum and allowed for massive community participation and meaningful conversation in a short time.



The Community Workshop

At the community workshop 300 residents worked to establish a common vision for the impacted area and more specific guidance for each of the neighborhoods. The residents also reviewed some of the big ideas that were being suggested through MindMixer and other conversations with stakeholders. Working in teams, community members answered questions about the vision, goals, and character of each place. From this workshop the team built the framework for all of the Plan recommendations.

The Steering Committee

An appointed group of volunteers acted as the Steering Committee. Over the course of the planning process the Steering Committee provided a sounding board for many items, and a high level of feedback to guide the Plan recommendations.

The Core Work Group

The Work Group is composed of members of city staff and the community that are intimately aware of the infrastructure, design and policy that currently supports city operations. This group provided the on-the-ground knowledge necessary to insure recommendations are feasible and integrated across city departments.

Taken collectively, the guidance of online participants, workshop attendees, and members of the Steering Committee and Core Work Group provided the content for the plan. As the rebuilding and planning processes continue, the work and the responsibility of the groups will also continue and ultimately be required to achieve successful implementation of the plan recommendations.

Next Steps for Planning

It is very likely that areas of further study or more detailed analysis will be needed to achieve the high-level vision established in this Plan. While many projects will move ahead, the work to provide detailed plans, individual designs, and analysis of topics not considered in this work will continue for some time.



From MindMixer

We have an opportunity to start from scratch. We should really try and rebuild in a fashion that allows the City to move forward and turn into something better than it was before. More pedestrian friendly. More transit opportunities. More park space. More creative planning so that development compliments what was lost.

Steven D

From MindMixer

This is a great opportunity to participate . . . to make Tuscaloosa sustainable, educational, and delicious!

Genevieve

From MindMixer

We need to make Tuscaloosa the “healthiest city” in Alabama.

NGC

From MindMixer

One of the things that I have always loved about Tuscaloosa is that it has a small town feel, but big enough to support many stores, activities, and lifestyles.

JBellison

From MindMixer

Sure, many homes will have to be brought up to existing Codes. But lets make it easy for people to rebuild.

Bama P

From MindMixer

Thinking long term is of critical importance. We have a great opportunity to incorporate the best ideas from others’ experiences.

Jonathan N.

From community meeting

To create a trusting community that loves where they live, enjoys where they work, can easily get where they need to go and has a safe environment for children through the elderly.

table report

From community meeting

To create a livable all American city with vibrant neighborhoods that are energy efficient, accessible, safe, connected, affordable and sustainable.

table report

From community meeting

One Tuscaloosa – Respecting all communities by supporting each other as we rebuild.

table report

Vision

To courageously create a showpiece of quality of life through vital and unique neighborhoods that are healthy, safe, accessible, connected, and sustainable.



Vision Elements

To interpret and implement the vision requires a firm understanding of its intentions. The following descriptions lay out each element of the vision and provide a more specific level of direction. Every potential recommendation and community project should be viewed through the filter of these elements.

Vital: Build whole and thriving neighborhood centers and corridors that strengthen the economic and social vitality of the community while creating the opportunity for amenity rich and diverse experiences.

Healthy: Improve the health of residents through community design, provide access to healthy food, and reflect the community's pride in athletic tradition by integrating facilities and programs that encourage an active lifestyle.

Accessible: Design homes, businesses, and public places that allow residents of every age and circumstance the freedom to move comfortably within and between neighborhoods.

Safe: Build durable homes and buildings in safe neighborhoods.

Connected: Link Tuscaloosa's neighborhoods in order to increase accessibility by multiple modes of transportation and strengthen the bonds and relationships between neighbors.

Unique: Promote and cherish areas of distinct character with a unique vision and tailored solution for local challenges.

Sustainable: Create neighborhoods that are a model of economic prosperity, cultural richness, and environmental stewardship, and that integrate and enhance natural systems as amenities.

VISION
VISION ELEMENTS



**GUIDING
PRINCIPLES**



BIG IDEAS
KEY INITIATIVES

Guiding Principles

The Plan is organized in a way to help demonstrate how the Vision directly influences recommendations. In the following pages you will see how the Vision informs the Guiding Principles which drive the Big Ideas.

Land Use

Guiding Principle 01

Create compact, walkable village centers that are unique destinations and focal points of activity for surrounding neighborhoods.

Guiding Principle 02

Create well-designed mixed use corridors that serve as attractive gateways to the community and support the city's retail and service needs.

Guiding Principle 03

Preserve and revitalize established neighborhoods.

Guiding Principle 04

Integrate a mix of residential densities, styles, and price ranges within neighborhoods to serve a range of ages, incomes, lifestyles, and housing preferences.

Guiding Principle 05

Support high quality design and construction that is economically viable to develop and affordable to rent, own, and maintain.

Housing

Guiding Principle 01

Create affordable and thriving mixed income communities.

Guiding Principle 02

Construct well-designed homes that are durable, healthy, efficient, and green.

Guiding Principle 03

Locate housing to be transit accessible and connected to employment, services, and amenities.

Sustainability

Guiding Principle 01

Provide sustainability education for professionals, students and other residents.

Guiding Principle 02

Support the design and construction of healthy, energy-efficient and durable buildings.

Guiding Principle 03

Promote and support healthy lifestyles.

Guiding Principle 04

Restore natural systems to benefit the community.

Guiding Principle 05

Expand and enhance the City's environmental services to better manage waste and promote recycling.

Guiding Principle 06

Develop a deep and lasting approach to disaster preparedness through long-term sustainable thinking.

Infrastructure

Guiding Principle 01

Improve connectivity between and within neighborhoods.

Guiding Principle 02

Provide walking, cycling, and transit infrastructure to increase transportation options and reduce traffic on congested streets.

Guiding Principle 03

Enhance the appearance and functionality of major corridors as important gateways and transportation arteries for the city.

Guiding Principle 04

Rebuild damaged infrastructure to address long-standing issues and future needs in a comprehensive and sustainable way.

Guiding Principle 05

Coordinate public facilities to leverage scarce resources and create mutual benefit.




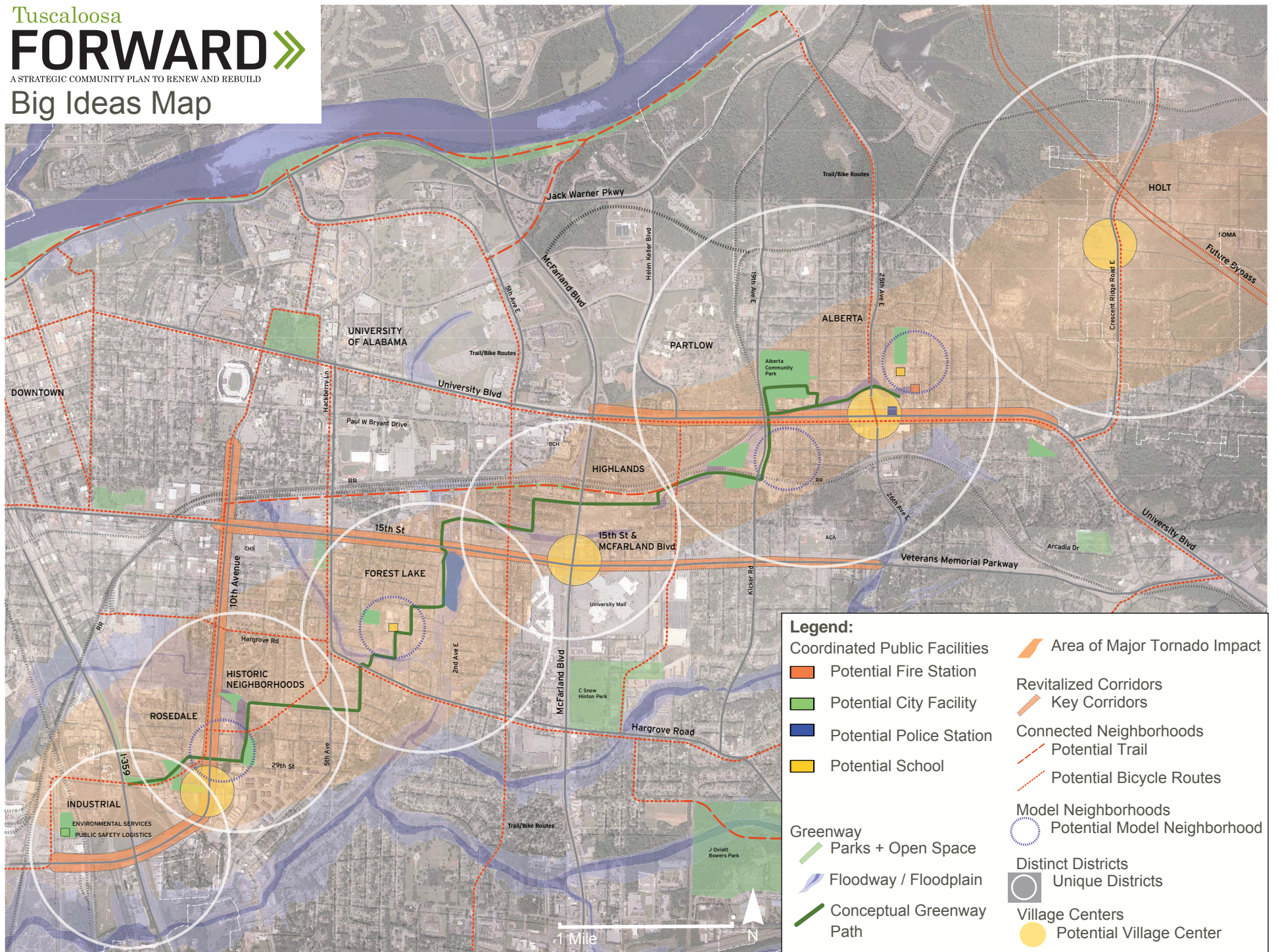
BIG IDEAS

During the planning process, several hundred specific ideas emerged for how and where and what to rebuild as part of a broad-based public dialogue about the future of Tuscaloosa and of the tornado-affected areas. During conversations with a variety of participants in a variety of formats, these ideas often converged around common themes and shared areas of focus, or represented similar concepts that resonated over and over with citizens. These themes are embodied in the seven “Big Ideas” described in this chapter. These “Big Ideas” represent bold and visionary steps that can set Tuscaloosa on a path to become stronger than it was before the tornado. These ideas also have the momentum and consensus necessary to see through the hard work and details of implementation in order to become reality.






















Tuscaloosa Forward’s Big Ideas

- 1: Greenway “Path of Remembrance and Revitalization”
- 2: Connected Neighborhoods
- 3: Village Centers
- 4: Coordinated Facilities and Public Uses
- 5: Model Neighborhoods
- 6: Revitalized Corridors
- 7: Distinct Districts

Tuscaloosa
FORWARD 
 A STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN TO RENEW AND REBUILD
 Big Ideas Map



Legend:

 Coordinated Public Facilities	 Area of Major Tornado Impact
 Potential Fire Station	 Revitalized Corridors
 Potential City Facility	 Key Corridors
 Potential Police Station	 Connected Neighborhoods
 Potential School	 Potential Trail
 Greenway	 Potential Bicycle Routes
 Parks + Open Space	 Model Neighborhoods
 Floodway / Floodplain	 Potential Model Neighborhood
 Conceptual Greenway Path	 Distinct Districts
	 Unique Districts
	 Village Centers
	 Potential Village Center

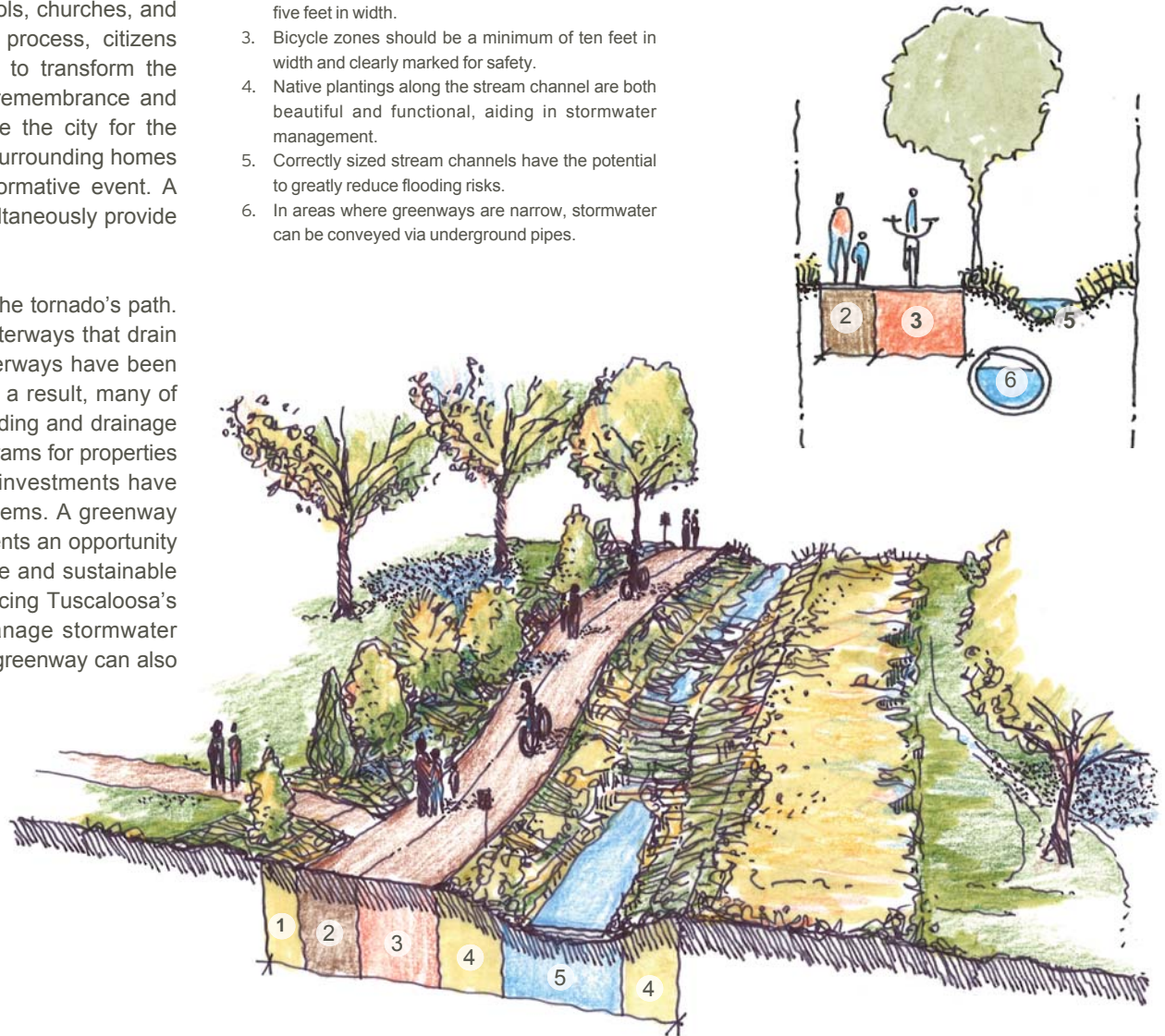
1: Greenway “Path of Remembrance and Revitalization”

The April 27th tornado through Tuscaloosa forced a new geography for the City across traditional boundaries and neighborhoods. Along its path, the tornado passed through industrial areas, commercial corridors, and residential neighborhoods alike, destroying homes, businesses, schools, churches, and infrastructure. During the Tuscaloosa Forward planning process, citizens from across Tuscaloosa coalesced around the big idea to transform the “path of destruction” left by the tornado into a “path of remembrance and revitalization” – an opportunity to reconnect and reshape the city for the better with a greenway that links neighborhoods, benefits surrounding homes and businesses, and memorializes the tragic and transformative event. A greenway corridor along the tornado path would also simultaneously provide environmental, transportation, and recreation benefits.

Designated floodway areas exist within and near much of the tornado’s path. These floodways originally contained the streams and waterways that drain the surrounding area. Over time, these streams and waterways have been diverted, modified, or developed over in many places. As a result, many of the neighborhoods along the tornado path experience flooding and drainage issues. In some areas, the solution has been buy-out programs for properties within the floodway. In other areas, major infrastructure investments have been made to address acute drainage and flooding problems. A greenway corridor tracing the floodways along the tornado path presents an opportunity to address these long-standing issues in a comprehensive and sustainable way that was not possible before. By restoring and enhancing Tuscaloosa’s natural streamways, the greenway corridor helps to manage stormwater runoff, reducing flooding and improving water quality. The greenway can also reintroduce beneficial wildlife into the urban context.

Greenway Sketches

1. Landscape elements can be used to visually separate greenway trails from private property.
2. The pedestrian walkway should be a minimum of five feet in width.
3. Bicycle zones should be a minimum of ten feet in width and clearly marked for safety.
4. Native plantings along the stream channel are both beautiful and functional, aiding in stormwater management.
5. Correctly sized stream channels have the potential to greatly reduce flooding risks.
6. In areas where greenways are narrow, stormwater can be conveyed via underground pipes.



Connecting Tuscaloosa

Neighborhoods along the tornado path are divided by physical barriers such as major roads and railroads, and psychological barriers such as perceptions about safety, proximity, and ease of travel between different areas. A greenway trail for cyclists and pedestrians has the potential to use the very roads and railroads that currently divide neighborhoods as part of a greenway system that will begin to connect neighborhoods together physically, and to alter perceptions about the relationship between different places. A greenway trail provides new mobility options for Tuscaloosa residents to travel between different parts of the city and to access the services and amenities located in nearby activity centers.

A greenway trail that connects parks and public spaces along the tornado path and ties into a citywide parks and open space network will provide enhanced recreation opportunities for residents. Trails promote exercise and support active, healthy lifestyles, while connecting to and integrating with other active recreation facilities. There is also potential to incorporate one or more memorials to the tornado along the greenway path.

The benefits of a greenway corridor extend beyond its boundaries. As an attractive space and visible public investment, it serves as a focal point and amenity for surrounding residential areas, and can function as a tool to revitalize key activity centers and corridors.

How the Greenway “Path of Remembrance and Revitalization” relates to the Vision:

- **Vital:** The greenway functions as an amenity that helps to enhance surrounding neighborhoods and revitalize key activity centers.
- **Healthy:** The greenway provides recreation opportunities and promotes active, healthy lifestyles.
- **Safe:** The greenway helps to manage stormwater runoff, reducing flooding and improving water quality.
- **Connected:** The greenway trail connects neighborhoods by providing new mobility options to travel between different parts of the city.
- **Unique:** A greenway following the tornado path could memorialize the tragic and transformative event.
- **Sustainable:** The greenway simultaneously provides transportation, recreation, and environmental benefits, while enhancing the stability and vitality of surrounding neighborhoods and activity centers.

From MindMixer

This is a great idea [citywide greenbelt] with some major potential. We are fortunate to live in a city that isn't already too congested for an idea such as this to work. If I were a business owner I would certainly want to be located near the green belt.

Joshua S

From MindMixer

I hope that the concept of a “memorial walk”, a green space that follows the path of the tornado, makes it into the final plan! With pocket parks and mementos along the way.

Alison





2: Connected Neighborhoods

Another big idea that emerged again and again was the opportunity to better connect neighborhoods. Connected Neighborhoods include physical connections that improve access and mobility between different areas, but also encompass the social connections that are the bonds and relationships between neighbors.

Physical Connections

Currently, the neighborhoods and corridors along the tornado path have limited walking, biking, or transit options. This necessitates driving for all travel including short local trips, and exacerbates traffic congestion on a street network with limited connectivity. Improved sidewalks, greenway trails, bicycle lanes, and transit together provide transportation options for residents and enhance connectivity between neighborhoods and throughout the city.

The tornado destroyed or damaged buildings along large portions of major transportation corridors in Tuscaloosa, including 15th Street and University Boulevard. As these corridors redevelop, improved building orientation, management of access drives, and internal traffic circulation can help to address traffic flow and congestion issues in these high-traffic areas. With the redevelopment of tornado-affected areas, the time is right to enhance traffic flow and connectivity throughout the city with improvements to street alignments and intersections that currently function inefficiently or even dangerously.

Social Connections

The big idea of Connected Neighborhoods is about more than physical transportation between different areas. It is also about building connections between the residents, organizations, and institutions that make up a neighborhood.

In the aftermath of the storm, neighbors helped one another. Civic institutions, churches, and neighborhood organizations stepped up to provide critical services and assistance to those in need. As Tuscaloosa looks to the future, its citizens can build on this renewed community spirit to establish lasting relationships and partnerships that strengthen connections within and between neighborhoods. As the City and other institutions rebuild damaged and destroyed public facilities, the strategic location, programming, and coordination of these facilities can support the community building and partnerships that improve neighborhood connections.





How Connected Neighborhoods relate to the Vision:

- **Vital:** Enhanced transit options and an improved street network make it easier to shop, work, and play in affected areas; partnerships and relationships strengthen community bonds and neighborhood vitality.
- **Healthy:** Greenway trails, bicycle lanes, and sidewalk connections promote exercise and physical activity.
- **Safe:** Bicycle and pedestrian friendly streetscapes, access management along major corridors, and realignment of dangerous intersections all improve safety.
- **Connected:** Connected Neighborhoods include physical connections that improve access and mobility between different areas and social connections that are the bonds and relationships between neighbors.
- **Unique:** Each neighborhood is strengthened by partnerships and collaboration between its particular civic, social, and religious organizations.
- **Sustainable:** Multiple modes of transportation provide options and reduce vehicle demand; community connections help to support strong, stable, and enduring neighborhoods.

From MindMixer

I think neighborhoods should implement this [Neighborhood Watch] or similar programs to watch out for each other ... This is a GREAT way to get to know your neighbors & to make our community a stronger place with very little effort or expense.

TFCOOKY

From MindMixer

In a town of so many students, bike and pedestrian paths should be a must.

Nita H

3: Village Centers

The big idea behind Village Centers is that the neighborhoods affected by the tornado are more than a collection of houses and businesses. They are communities, each with a distinct identity, character, and aspirations for the future. These communities share a mutual desire to rebuild stronger and better than before while preserving and nurturing their unique qualities. A Village Center concept is a way to rebuild that strengthens neighborhoods and enhances opportunities for residents.

Village Centers are focal points of activity within neighborhoods where shopping, services, amenities, and public buildings and spaces are concentrated. Village centers are designed to be compact, walkable, and fully integrated into surrounding residential areas, so that the services and amenities they provide are conveniently accessible to local residents. At the same time, the shopping, dining, entertainment, and other activities within village centers, delivered within unique and attractive spaces, draw visitors from the wider community whose presence brings energy, excitement, and economic vitality that helps the affected neighborhoods to thrive and prosper.

A variety of housing styles, densities, and price ranges are concentrated within and around Village Centers to provide housing options for residents of different ages, incomes, and lifestyles. This concentration of housing helps to create a critical mass of residents to support the services and amenities provided within the Village Centers and enhances their viability. Focusing housing around Village Centers also maximizes the number of people who are able to access the Village Center by walking, biking, or a short drive.

Throughout Village Centers, quality building design, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, and comfortable public spaces help to define each center as a unique place that reflects and responds to the surrounding neighborhoods.

How Village Centers relate to the Vision:

- **Vital:** Unique and attractive spaces draw visitors whose presence brings economic vitality that helps the affected neighborhoods thrive and prosper.
- **Healthy:** Village Centers are designed to be compact and walkable, and to provide surrounding neighborhoods with local access to necessary services.
- **Safe:** Pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and active public spaces enhance safety and comfort.
- **Connected:** Village Centers are designed to be fully integrated into surrounding residential areas and conveniently accessible to local residents.
- **Unique:** Village Centers present an opportunity to rebuild while preserving and nurturing the unique qualities of neighborhoods in which they are located.





From MindMixer

I imagine these centers to include libraries, post offices, grocery stores, a community center, a community garden, recycling center, a neighborhood weekly farmer's market, and even an annual street fair where vendors from around the area come in, streets are closed down, music and performers come in, and the neighborhood in general gets together and enjoys the day. It'd be great if these could also be sustainable "meccas", LEED buildings, living roof buildings, with solar panels and various educational tidbits for the public.

chau t

4: Coordinated Facilities and Public Uses

The tornado destroyed schools, churches, fire and police stations, and other public facilities that will need to be rebuilt. This big idea envisions planning and coordinating the rebuilding of these facilities in a way that encourages partnerships and mutual benefit between different institutions, and between institutions and the neighborhoods where they are located.

In a time when needs are great and resources scarce, coordinating and potentially colocating public facilities will allow the community to leverage its investments to provide services in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

Through the sharing of physical space and the integration of programming, training, education, and community outreach activities, coordinated facilities can support and encourage collaborative partnerships between institutions.

The location of public facilities within neighborhoods can also be coordinated to strengthen neighborhoods. For example, parks and public facilities can be strategically located as anchors or focal points within neighborhoods. These facilities can be located around public spaces or greenways where they serve as destinations along greenway trails, and where the surrounding public spaces provide capacity and support for the activities of the public institutions.

Examples of coordinated facilities and public uses could include:

- shared City services
- neighborhood schools that accommodate both educational functions and community activities
- community centers and meeting rooms that double as storm shelters in emergency situations
- parks and recreation space located around public facilities to provide opportunities for exercise, recreation, training, and outdoor activities that serve the mission of the adjacent public institutions

How Coordinated Facilities and Public Uses relate to the Vision:

- **Vital:** Coordinating facilities allows the community to leverage investments to preserve scarce resources, even as it improves services and builds relationships between institutions.
- **Healthy:** Coordinated parks and facilities provide opportunities for exercise, recreation, training, and outdoor activities that serve the mission of adjacent institutions.
- **Safe:** Coordinated emergency service facilities can be provided more efficiently and effectively; community centers and meeting rooms could double as storm shelters during emergencies.
- **Connected:** Coordinating facilities encourages partnerships and mutual benefit between different institutions, and between institutions and neighborhoods.
- **Unique:** Public facilities can be strategically located as anchors or focal points within neighborhoods or destinations along greenway trails.
- **Sustainable:** Coordinating facilities encourages partnerships and mutual benefit between different institutions and residents that preserve scarce resources today while strengthening communities for the long term.





From MindMixer

It would be great to incorporate multi-use community centers into the recovery of the impacted neighborhoods to create safe and well-designed spaces for a variety of activities -- everything from "town hall" community meetings to after-school programs (tutoring, arts education, mentorship, counseling, etc.), exhibitions (art and otherwise) and live performances (theatre, music, film, etc.).

Andrew_D

From MindMixer

We also really need to figure out how to incorporate education into the city planning...we have an opportunity to rebuild a school in Alberta, rebuild communities that were affected such as Rosedale Courts - a sustainable future city plan will seek to address the gaps in education as well.

Robin R

5: Model Neighborhoods

Along the tornado path where the impact was most severe, there are entire blocks and subdivisions of homes that were almost completely destroyed. In these areas the challenge of rebuilding goes beyond reconstructing individual homes where they once stood. It is to rebuild entire neighborhoods and create places where communities can flourish. This big idea is to create Model Neighborhoods that illustrate new ways to house the citizens of Tuscaloosa in a manner that addresses both pre-existing challenges and emerging needs. These Model Neighborhoods can help to rebuild Tuscaloosa at the sites where they are located, but they also demonstrate techniques and practices that can be applied across the tornado-affected areas and even citywide.

Elements that could be incorporated into model neighborhoods, and into residential development throughout the city include:

- Neighborhood design that seamlessly integrates a variety of housing styles, densities, and price ranges to provide options and serve diverse needs
- Techniques for integrating pocket parks and open space as amenities within neighborhoods
- Energy efficiency and water conservation features to reduce housing costs
- Home design and construction methods that are durable, safe, healthy, and environmentally sustainable while remaining affordable
- Creative strategies to finance quality housing for developers, owners, and renters
- Innovative approaches to home maintenance and property management to improve the visual appearance and longevity of housing
- Housing construction and neighborhood design techniques that apply quality new housing in a manner that is tailored to, and compatible with local characteristics and needs
- Showpiece sustainable design that includes green building, efficient infrastructure, emerging technology, and natural grasses that clean stormwater and provide ornament.



How Model Neighborhoods relate to the Vision:

- **Vital:** Successful Model Neighborhoods will create places where communities can flourish.
- **Healthy:** Model Neighborhoods include healthy homes that safeguard the health of residents and reduce negative environmental impacts during construction and occupancy.
- **Safe:** Model Neighborhoods include affordable methods of ensuring homes are safe and durable, or demonstrate strategies to provide community shelters within neighborhoods.
- **Connected:** Model Neighborhoods include techniques for integrating pocket parks, public spaces, and greenway trails that link to a larger system.
- **Unique:** Model Neighborhoods include techniques that apply quality new housing that is compatible with, and tailored to local characteristics.
- **Sustainable:** Model Neighborhoods include home design and construction methods that are energy efficient and environmentally sustainable while remaining affordable.



From MindMixer

I'd love to see the addition of a few pocket neighborhoods in Tuscaloosa. In fact, I'd love to live in one... [i]t focuses on making smaller spaces useful. One of these neighborhoods near a school and a market, and the need to drive greatly decreases!

Ashley Y

From MindMixer

Take a look at the Highpoint Community in West Seattle, Washington. This was once a run-down crime ridden area, and is now a lovely residential area of housing for varied socio-economic groups. This housing incorporates green design, energy efficiency, harmonious yet varying structural designs with excellent color selections. It looks like an urban village, and it is centered around a large park. There is a community center for the residents, also. It is very diverse, with people of all races and religions living harmoniously together.

Linda C



6: Revitalized Corridors

Major damage occurred along several important corridors in the city (10th Avenue, 15th Street, and University Boulevard). Tuscaloosa citizens recognize the importance of these corridors and have shared and reiterated the big idea to revitalize these corridors to strengthen the economic vitality of the community, provide needed services and amenities, better connect different areas of the city, improve walkability, and integrate thoughtfully with surrounding neighborhoods.

The corridors affected by the tornado are high-traffic, high visibility areas that serve as major gateways and arteries. They also function as important economic engines with significant concentrations of retail and other businesses. However, these corridors face challenges including dated site design, auto-dominated uses, inadequate landscaping, limited bicycle and pedestrian options, and frequent driveway accesses that reduce safety, inhibit traffic flow, and worsen congestion. Large portions of the affected corridors were developed in a piece-meal manner over time, creating buildings and lots that have become functionally obsolete and difficult to assemble for development serving new uses and activities.

Improved streetscape and building design can enhance the quality and visual appearance of the corridors, encourage pedestrian and bicycle activity, and spur private reinvestment. Better off-street circulation and strategies to manage driveways can improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, and simplify access to corridor businesses. By reconfiguring lots along the corridor, a greater variety of uses and format types can be accommodated. This positions the corridors to better support the city's retail needs and provide desired services and amenities to surrounding residents. From a wider perspective, revitalized corridors can seamlessly integrate with surrounding neighborhoods, efficiently provide vital connections across the city, and promote increased prosperity by fully serving local and community needs.



How Revitalized Corridors relate to the Vision:

- **Vital:** Revitalized Corridors strengthen the economic vitality of the community.
- **Healthy:** Corridors that incorporate bicycle lanes and improved sidewalks encourage physical activity and reduce pollution-creating traffic congestion.
- **Safe:** Improved streetscape design and access management enhance safety along major corridors.
- **Connected:** Revitalized corridors better connect different areas of the city and integrate thoughtfully with surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Unique:** The major corridors in the tornado-affected area can serve as unique gateways and arteries for the community.
- **Sustainable:** Revitalized corridors can integrate with surrounding neighborhoods, provide vital connectivity, and better serve local and community needs in a holistic way.



From MindMixer

Let's work on making existing streets more attractive to the pedestrian and providing more community services (grocery, dining, commercial, and retail) in convenient locations to encourage more pedestrian and cycling activity.

Nathan

From MindMixer

Since 10th Avenue is a major gateway to the city of Tuscaloosa and The University of Alabama, this is the ideal opportunity to improve it.

blc

From MindMixer

If 15th & McFarland is going to be a gateway for the city, it has to be improved visually by putting utilities underground, putting up decorative traffic signals and streamlining the signage.

Kevin T

7: Unique Districts

The tornado path affected many different areas of the city, each with its own identity, history, and character. Rebuilding these areas requires a nuanced approach that recognizes and respects the unique characteristics of each district. Unique goals and targeted solutions for each area provide an opportunity to position neighborhoods and districts to thrive and sustain themselves in the future. These unique attributes are described in detail in the Land Use chapter of this plan.



LAND USE

What, where, and how to rebuild are some of the fundamental questions that face Tuscaloosa as it recovers from the tornado. With large portions of the City damaged or destroyed, land use decisions made during the recovery process will play a major role in shaping the form and character of the community for decades to come. The land use vision outlined in this chapter responds to identified community needs, supports shared community aspirations, and positions Tuscaloosa to thrive and succeed in the future.

Guiding Principles for Land Use

- 1: Create compact, walkable village centers that are unique destinations and focal points of activity for surrounding neighborhoods.
- 2: Create well-designed mixed use corridors that serve as attractive gateways to the community and support the city's retail and service needs.
- 3: Preserve and revitalize established neighborhoods.
- 4: Integrate a mix of residential densities, styles, and price ranges within neighborhoods to serve a range of ages, incomes, lifestyles, and housing preferences.
- 5: Support high quality design and construction that is economically viable to develop and affordable to rent, own, and maintain.

1: Create compact, walkable Village Centers that are unique destinations and focal points of activity for surrounding neighborhoods.

NEEDS

Tornado-damaged neighborhoods share a mutual desire to rebuild stronger while preserving and nurturing their unique qualities. By creating village centers, these neighborhoods can promote and cherish their unique character while positioning themselves to thrive and prosper in the long term. Compact, walkable village centers improve the quality of the built environment, provide needed services and amenities to local residents, and enhance the economic vitality of surrounding neighborhoods by creating places that draw visitors from the wider community.



KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Identify and adopt appropriate zoning tools, development standards, and design guidelines to permit and encourage development of village centers as identified on the Future Land Use Map.

Key Initiative 02

Promote shopping, dining, and entertainment uses within village centers that draw visitors from the wider community, and local service uses that are conveniently accessible to local residents.

Key Initiative 03

Concentrate housing around village centers to maximize access to the service and amenities they provide and increase their viability.

Key Initiative 04

Incorporate pedestrian friendly streetscapes and comfortable public spaces within village centers that create a sense of place and reflect the unique character of surrounding neighborhoods.

Key Initiative 05

Locate and orient uses and structures within village centers to promote walkability.

Key Initiative 06

Develop immediate strategies to prevent piecemeal or haphazard development in specific critical areas, particularly within Village Center and Mixed Use Corridor areas, where the potential is greatest to redevelop in a coordinated way that supports the community vision and strengths for the long term.

**BEST
PRACTICE**

Incorporating Large Retailers

Even large format or “big-box” retail can be incorporated into great, walkable places. Some of the more common examples include:

- **Liner Buildings** – Larger big-box projects will frequently use liner buildings leased to smaller scale retail users. The liner buildings are pulled up to the street to create a main-street feel, masking the parking area and big-box retail behind. Appropriate signage can be used to enhance the stores presence without negatively impacting the walkability of the street.
- **Dual Entrances** –Smaller scale (15,000 – 50,000 square feet) big-box developers will often pull their stores up to the corner of intersecting streets and provide two entrances, one at the street corner and another off the parking lot. This approach keeps the pedestrian orientation of the street while allowing on-site parking to the side and rear of the building.

From MindMixer

Tuscaloosa needs to throw out the decades old Euclidian zoning regulations in favor of a unified land development code that encourages mixed-use, compact, PEDESTRIAN-oriented development in appropriate areas.

MO

From MindMixer

Build housing close to the places people go and you’ll reduce the use of cars. I know it sounds simple, but that’s the key - housing close to jobs, schools, shopping and going out.

ODW

2: Create well-designed mixed use corridors that serve as attractive gateways to the community and support the city's retail and service needs.

NEEDS

The tornado inflicted significant damage on three important corridors (10th Avenue, 15th Street, and University Boulevard) that functioned as major gateways, arteries and economic engines for the City. As these corridors rebuild, there is an opportunity to address long-existing challenges including underutilized and difficult to assemble parcels, dated uses and building design, and excessive driveway accesses. Well-designed mixed use corridors can spur new investment, better support the city's retail and service needs, and thoughtfully integrate with adjacent neighborhoods.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Identify and adopt appropriate zoning tools, development standards, and design guidelines to permit and encourage development of mixed use corridors as identified on the Future Land Use Map.

Key Initiative 02

Encourage a balance of residential, commercial and mixed uses along major corridors.

Key Initiative 03

Emphasize village centers as focal points of activity along major corridors with higher intensity uses concentrated in these locations.

Key Initiative 04

Conduct a retail analysis to study vacancy characteristics, sales leakage, underserved and overserved sectors, and other data to guide decisions about the size, location, and format of new commercial and mixed-use developments along major corridors.

Key Initiative 05

Invest in streetscape improvements at key entryways along major corridors including 10th Avenue, 15th Street, and University Boulevard.

Key Initiative 06

Encourage the private sector to consolidate and reconfigure undersized, shallow, and irregular lots along major corridors to accommodate a greater variety of uses, better manage access, and improve internal site circulation.

Key Initiative 07

Consider selective rezoning to guide rebuilding in sections of major corridors where uses were haphazardly located and poorly integrated, particularly where single-family residences are intermingled with commercial store frontage or industrial uses.



**BEST
PRACTICE**

Retrofitting Auto-Oriented Corridors

With the right vision and rules in place it is possible to reinvent tired, auto-oriented, commercial corridors as vibrant, walkable mixed use places. The thought of refocusing a road from primarily serving the automobile to providing equal attention to the pedestrian can seem daunting, but a few general principles can help in the transition.

- Public improvements such as wide sidewalks, fewer curb-cuts, street trees, and pedestrian scaled lighting help the pedestrian feel safe walking between businesses.
- Allow, and in some cases require, new buildings to build up to the sidewalk helps frame the public realm and encourages walkability.
- Allow on-street parking to add an additional buffer between the street and the pedestrian, create teaser parking to incentivize retail, and to reduce the amount of on-site surface parking businesses must provide.



Images courtesy of Steve Price: Urban Advantage

From MindMixer

I think this would be a great opportunity to enhance the landscaping and aesthetic look of the area that was most greatly impacted and also the existing surrounding area.

Brett S

From MindMixer

My quality of living would significantly improve if 15th Street and surrounding areas were bikeable.

QFWFQ

3: Preserve and revitalize established neighborhoods.

NEEDS

Many of the neighborhoods affected by the tornado face a dual challenge in rebuilding. The immediate challenge is how to restore their communities when so much of the physical fabric of the neighborhood has been destroyed. The long-term challenge is how to preserve neighborhood character when faced with encroachment of incompatible development and a disproportionate ratio of renters to owners. As these neighborhoods rebuild, carefully integrated new development can bring new life to these areas while respecting neighborhood character and responding to community needs.



KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Promote the single-family character of established residential neighborhoods with zoning and other tools to balance the mix of renters and owners within neighborhoods, and to appropriately transition between various housing types and densities.

Key Initiative 02

Locate public uses including schools, parks, community centers, and other uses to be focal points and community gathering places within neighborhoods.

Key Initiative 03

Integrate neighborhood parks, community gardens, and public spaces as amenities within neighborhoods, considering as potential sites those residential lots where owners choose not to rebuild.

Key Initiative 04

Consider neighborhood conservation overlays in neighborhoods where residents share a desire to preserve certain unique neighborhood features and character.

Key Initiative 05

Explore partnerships and programs such as social events, volunteering, and neighborhood beautification activities that can build and strengthen community relationships in mixed owner / renter neighborhoods.

4: Integrate a mix of residential densities, styles, and price ranges within neighborhoods to serve a range of ages, incomes, lifestyles, and housing preferences.

NEEDS

Where tornado damage was most severe, there is a need to rebuild entire neighborhoods and create places where community can flourish. These neighborhoods must be stable and healthy and provide for a range of housing needs. Neighborhoods that mix densities, styles, and price ranges are best positioned to serve varied and evolving housing needs, and to provide affordable housing options with minimal impact on neighborhood quality or perceptions.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Identify and adopt appropriate zoning tools, development standards, and design guidelines to permit and adequately manage residential neighborhoods with mixed densities and housing styles.

Key Initiative 02

Where new housing is constructed in established areas, employ neighborhood design techniques that integrate new development in a manner that is compatible with the character of the existing neighborhood.

Key Initiative 03

Encourage mixed income, mixed density residential development to ensure that all neighborhoods have adequate affordable housing options while avoiding high concentrations of very low-income housing.

From MindMixer

Creating a range of housing choices—whether it is a garden apartment, a row house, or a traditional suburban home— allows all households to find their niche in a smart growth community and accommodates growth at the same time.

John E.
Smart Growth America

From MindMixer

Protecting our tradition and our neighborhoods will be of paramount importance. . . I don't think efficiency and sustainable design are at odds with protecting our heritage. . . Think of all the older homes in town and how they were built with high ceilings, attic fans, front porches, in walkable distance from downtown and commercial areas - all of this was because they didn't have air conditioning and automobiles didn't dominant the city design. I think there is a way to embrace some of their smart planning ideas while protecting what's special about Tuscaloosa.

Andy Grace

5: Support high quality design and construction that is economically viable to develop and affordable to rent, own, and maintain.

NEEDS

Tuscaloosa citizens share a common desire for higher quality development within their neighborhoods, along the City's major corridors, and throughout the community. As the City rebuilds, there is an opportunity to elevate the standard for quality design and construction. Tuscaloosa's existing zoning code is nearly forty years old, with many regulations that are obsolete or that no longer serve a critical public need. As the City develops policy and regulatory tools to implement the community's vision for rebuilding, higher quality can be achieved while also simplifying and streamlining the regulatory environment and review process for development.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Immediately pursue the creation of new zoning tools in critical rebuilding areas, particularly Village Center and Mixed Use Corridor Areas, where the need and potential are greatest to transform the built environment. Pursue a comprehensive zoning code update as a long-term strategy to ensure that the City's land uses and development are focused on achieving the community vision.

Key Initiative 02

Increase predictability, streamline the development review process, and reduce reliance on variances by implementing development standards that simply and effectively regulate land use and development to achieve the community vision. Remove regulations that are obsolete or do not effectively serve current policy objectives and public needs.

Key Initiative 03

Explore model zoning and development codes as potential tools to more effectively implement the community vision for rebuilding, including smart codes, neighborhood conservation codes, form-based codes and others.

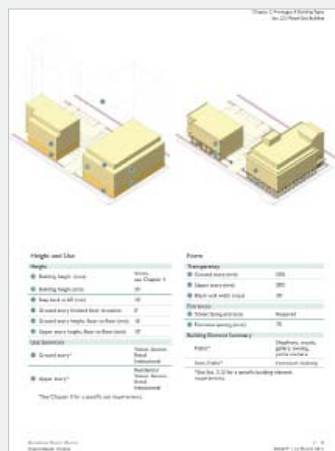
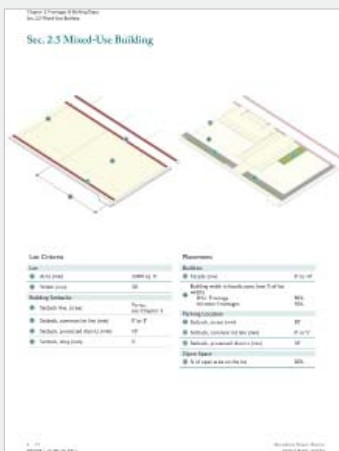


BEST PRACTICE

Graphically Oriented Codes

The past 15 years have seen a great change in development codes. Ordinances that were once unwieldy documents filled with page after page of text-heavy legal jargon are now graphically oriented, streamlined codes written in plain English. There are several advantages to graphically oriented approaches to development codes.

- This transition of style allows modern codes to be read and understood by development professionals and lay persons alike.
- Graphically oriented codes allow the community to broadcast the type of development envisioned in their plan.
- New codes allow communities to be more prescriptive in their regulations. This allows communities to streamline development review and approval, increasing predictability and reducing risk for all involved.



From MindMixer

Incentivize re-building that complies with a Sustainable Neighborhood Development Standard.

Brian

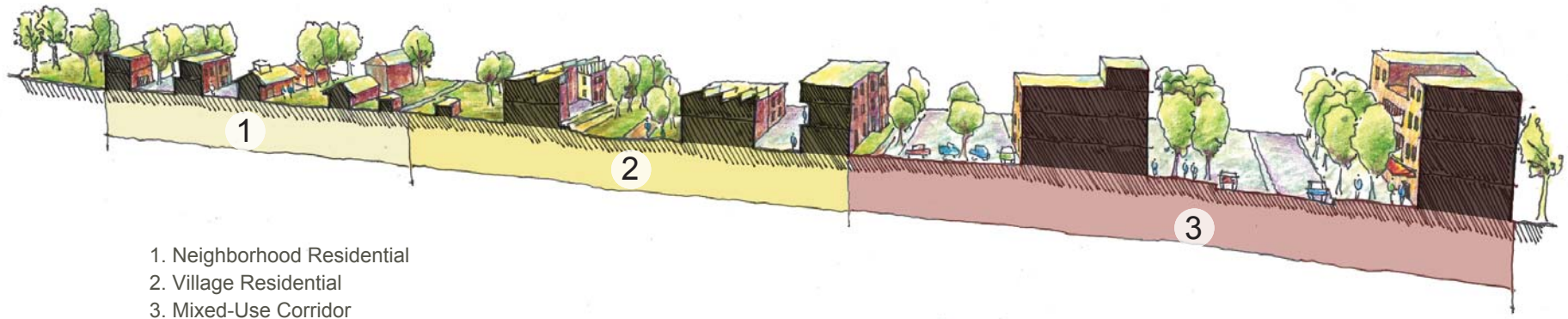
From MindMixer

From what I have seen, there is a strong consensus developing around the need to rebuild Tuscaloosa as a livable, healthy, well-connected, well-built, sustainable city. There is also an urgent need to move as quickly as possible toward those goals. As we know, doing it right and doing it fast aren't especially compatible notions. Adoption of a modified form of the Neighborhood Conservation Code could help bridge that gap.

Jon M.

Future Land Use Map

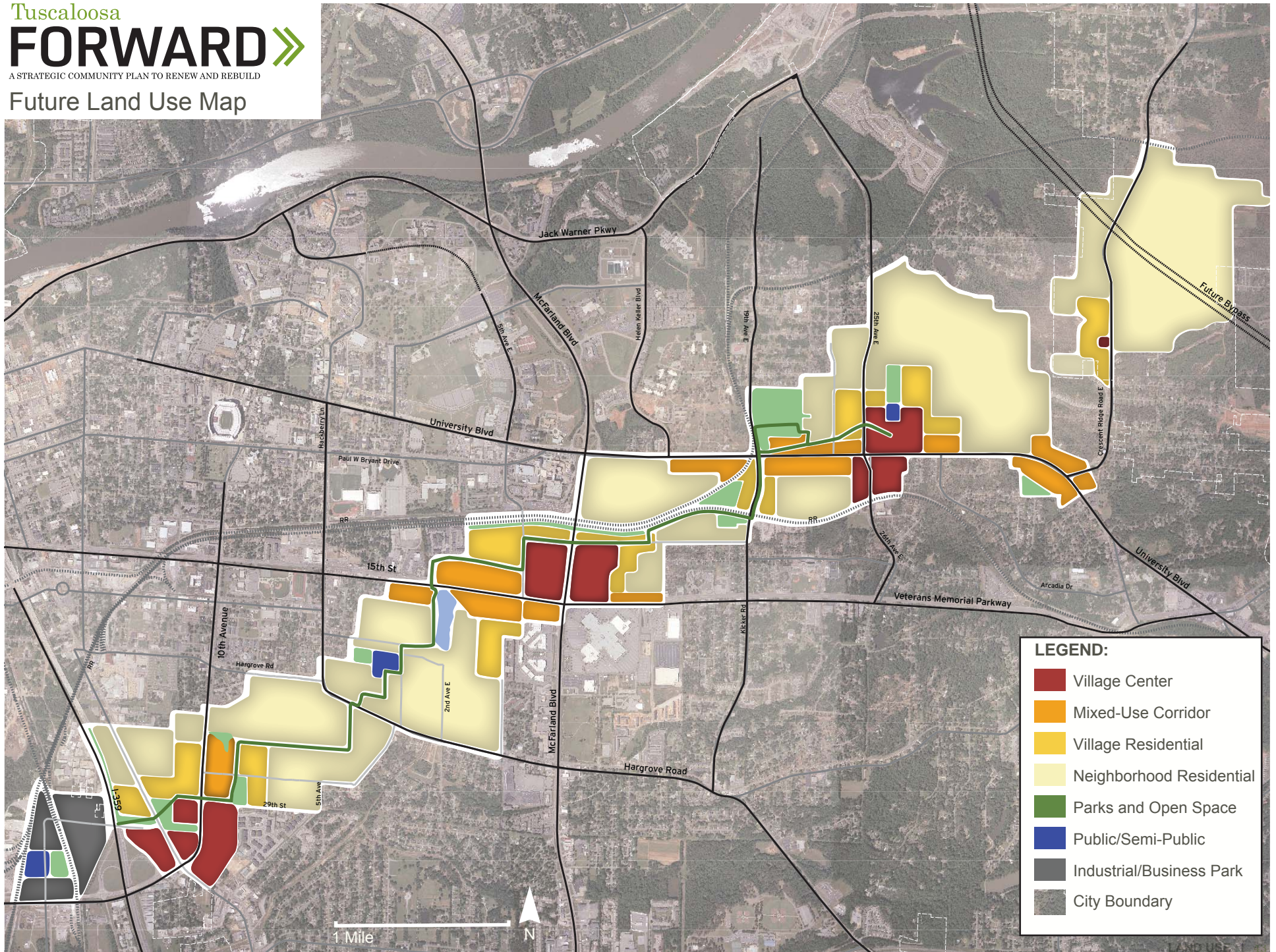
The Future Land Use Map translates the community's vision for rebuilding into a policy tool that can guide specific redevelopment decisions on the ground. The map is intended to serve as a general guide for future land use decisions. It is not a zoning map, and does not prescribe parcel-by-parcel use and design requirements. The categories in this Future Land Use Map contain guidance on appropriate uses, densities, scale and building design. Many of the categories incorporate multiple uses. It is the collection of these characteristics together that defines the development expectations expressed on the map.



Tuscaloosa
FORWARD »

A STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN TO RENEW AND REBUILD

Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use Descriptions

VILLAGE CENTER

Village Centers are attractive, compact, walkable, mixed-use areas that function as focal points for surrounding neighborhoods and key nodes of activity along major corridors. Within Village Centers, local and convenient access to a range of services, amenities, and public facilities enhances shopping, recreation, and community-building opportunities for residents. Village Centers are intended to thoughtfully integrate neighborhood and community retail options with residential housing. Uses adjacent to Village Centers would include denser residential uses and mixed-use buildings that serve as a transition to adjoining residential neighborhoods. Each Village Center is intended to reflect and respond to the unique character and needs of the neighborhoods that surround it.



MIXED-USE CORRIDOR

Mixed-Use Corridors are intended to balance commercial, residential, and mixed uses in a manner that seamlessly integrates with surrounding neighborhoods and serves the diverse needs of each location. Improved streetscape and building design will enhance the quality and visual appearance of these corridors. Thoughtful site layout and circulation will promote viable, well-functioning developments along a corridor with improved mobility and accessibility. These mixed-use corridors will help to strengthen the economic vitality of the community by supporting the city's retail and service needs and accommodating a greater variety of uses and format types.

VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL

Located around and integrated with Village Centers, Village Residential areas feature a compact and carefully integrated mixture of housing of various styles, sizes, densities, and price ranges. Village Residential areas are intentionally located to provide residents with walkable access to nearby services and amenities, and to support Village Centers with a density of residential development that ensures they remain active and vital. While Village Residential areas consist primarily of attached multi-family housing, townhomes, and compact single-family residences, limited commercial and service uses are also possible when thoughtfully located and oriented to be compatible with residential development.



NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL

Less dense than Village Residential areas, Neighborhood Residential areas consist primarily of detached, single-family housing. Neighborhood Residential areas should promote the distinct identity and character of Tuscaloosa's neighborhoods and provide a variety of housing types, prices, and styles to enable a range of economic levels, age groups, and lifestyles to live within a neighborhood. Where possible, schools, parks, libraries, or other public facilities located within Neighborhood Residential areas can act as neighborhood anchors and community gathering places. Convenient walking and biking connects Neighborhood Residential areas to nearby shopping, services, employment, and recreation opportunities via attractive streetscapes and multi-function greenway corridors.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parks and Open Space includes the full range of community and neighborhood parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and other recreation facilities, as well as greenway corridors. This category also encompasses private, undeveloped natural areas. Tuscaloosa Forward envisions a system of interconnected greenways that links neighborhoods, activity centers, community facilities, and park areas. These greenways protect and preserve floodways, enhance natural systems, and help to manage stormwater runoff. A Parks and Open Space system linked by interconnected greenway corridors simultaneously provides recreation, transportation, and environmental opportunities. This open space is both an amenity to surrounding residential neighborhoods and a tool to enhance and revitalize key centers and corridors. There is an opportunity to integrate one or more memorials along a greenway corridor that follows the tornado's path.



PUBLIC / SEMI-PUBLIC

The Public / Semi-Public category identifies three key public uses within the tornado affected area: the site of the City of Tuscaloosa Environmental Services facility west of I-359, the University Place Elementary / Middle School site in Forest Lake, and the Alberta Elementary School in Alberta. These three sites are identified for their role as existing or potential neighborhood anchors, and their high likelihood of remaining public uses as redevelopment occurs. The Future Land Use Map intentionally does not designate every public and semi-public use. In general, these uses should be integrated within the other land use categories in a coordinated way that strengthens community relationships and allows them to function as neighborhood amenities. Public uses include schools, hospitals, police and fire stations, libraries, community centers, and other facilities. Semi-public uses include churches, non-profits, and various social services.

INDUSTRIAL / BUSINESS PARK

Industrial / Business Park areas provide high quality locations to capture future employment growth and support a strong and diversified economy. Industrial / Business Park areas may accommodate large scale facilities that require rail and trucking access and more intensive uses, including manufacturing, assembly, and distribution. These areas, located west of I-359 on the Future Land Use Map, also have the potential to develop with research, technology or other employment uses that could enhance the character and economic impact of this part of the community in a major way.



Unique Districts

The following section describes the future land use vision for four unique districts along the tornado path. The descriptions and sketches in this section are conceptual in nature, illustrating possible scenarios for how the vision elements and big ideas might be applied in different neighborhoods. These sketches are not intended to represent a detailed master plan for the described areas.

ROSEDALE / 10TH AVENUE / THE DOWNS / GLENDALE GARDENS / HILLCREST

For this area, 10th Avenue becomes an attractive gateway to the City and to the University of Alabama with new uses located along a reinvigorated streetscape.

In Rosedale, an area that had been defined by its concentrations of public housing is transformed into a village center where all residents can meet their housing needs in a mixed use, mixed income area that is an appealing destination its own right. With a new village center, 10th Avenue becomes a corridor that supports and strengthens surrounding residential neighborhoods, providing shopping, dining and services in a safe, comfortable, attractive environment.

The character and quality of surrounding neighborhoods is preserved and enhanced with new amenities including carefully integrated pocket parks, community gardens, and other public spaces that simultaneously provide recreation opportunities and address long-standing drainage issues. The neighborhoods are connected to the village center and to other areas of the city with a greenway trail that follows the tornado path and existing floodways.

10th Avenue Corridor Gateway to Tuscaloosa Conceptual Sketch

1. The 10th Avenue Corridor is envisioned as a major gateway to Tuscaloosa.
2. Mixed Use Corridor uses such as offices, retail or residential can front the street, contributing to the gateway effect.
3. Parking for these uses can be placed behind structures to improve the aesthetic appearance of the corridor.
4. Rosedale Park becomes a major node in the proposed Greenway system.
5. The greenway begins at Rosedale Park, extending from the Rosedale Village Center all the way to the Alberta City Center.
6. The Rosedale Village Center is comprised of a mixed-uses, including housing and small businesses.
7. Village Residential areas immediately surround the Village Center, offering a mix of housing choices.
8. Neighborhood Residential areas are comprised of mostly single-family homes located within walking distance to the Village Center.



Conceptual Sketch: 10th Avenue Corridor Gateway to Tuscaloosa

FOREST LAKE

Within the Forest Lake area, a rebuilt elementary / middle school becomes a focal point for the neighborhood and supports the neighborhood as a location for families. Tied closely to the surrounding residences, the new school is designed to serve as a community gathering place.

A greenway trail connects the Forest Lake area to other neighborhoods, linking new pocket parks and community facilities along the way.

The neighborhood enjoys convenient access to an attractive mixed use corridor along 15th Street that carefully integrates with and supports the residential areas.

With effective programs that support the maintenance of properties and clean, attractive streets, the diverse and balanced mix of families, students, owners, and renters becomes an asset for the neighborhood, and its convenient, central location makes it attractive to all.

Forest Lake Neighborhood Conceptual Sketch

1. The rebuilt Forest Lake is envisioned as a Neighborhood Residential area, comprised mainly of single-family residences.
2. Tree planting initiatives will help restore tree-cover, reclaiming the distinctive character of this and other Tuscaloosa neighborhoods.
3. Neighborhood rebuilding should include comprehensive sidewalk repairs to improve walkability.
4. The greenway links Forest Lake to Rosedale, 15th & McFarland and other districts.
5. The school is an example of a coordinated community facility, and can be shared for school and neighborhood events.
6. Community gardens at the school can also be shared and maintained by the neighborhood at large.
7. The Greenway creates a linear park establishing a direct link to the 15th Street Corridor.



Conceptual Sketch: Forest Lake Neighborhood

15TH STREET AND MCFARLAND BOULEVARD

15th Street is transformed from an auto-dominated corridor with sections of underutilized commercial parcels into a highly functional corridor with a balance of residential, commercial, and mixed uses. Improved streetscape and building design enhance the quality and visual appearance of the corridor, encouraging pedestrian and bicycle activity, improving traffic flow, and spurring new private investment.

Located centrally on 15th Street and centrally within the City, a new village center at 15th Street and McFarland Boulevard provides shopping, dining, and entertainment options in a compact, walkable environment with attractive public spaces that serve adjacent residents and the wider community alike. A greenway corridor acts as a central amenity within the village center, while preserving floodways and linking to surround neighborhoods.

15th Street and McFarland Boulevard Conceptual Sketch

1. Mixed Use Corridor uses along 15th Street could include offices, retail, and residential.
2. Surface parking for uses along major corridors can be placed in the center of the block to allow building frontage on 15th St. and the greenway.
3. Streetscape improvements & access management can be coordinated with building placement to create attractive, well-functioning corridors.
4. Village Residential uses may range from multi-story units along the corridor to row or townhouse units within the neighborhood.
5. The greenway provides beautiful frontage and multi-modal access to residential uses, restaurants, and other mixed-uses.
6. Strategically landscaped green space can provide a visual and aural buffer to the railroad.
7. Village Center uses can be arranged to accommodate larger retailers without sacrificing a pedestrian friendly environment.
8. Public Plazas and Greenway links can transform commercial centers into vibrant pedestrian districts.
9. Strategic pedestrian links such as elevated crosswalks or safe, comfortable, well-designed at-grade crossings may be required across major traffic corridors like McFarland Boulevard.



Conceptual Sketch: 15th Street & McFarland Boulevard

ALBERTA

A new village center located along University Boulevard becomes the heart of the Alberta neighborhood and an attractive gateway into the City. Around the village center, housing is rebuilt in close proximity to take advantage of the attractive public spaces and convenient shopping and services. With a blended mix of housing styles and densities at different price levels, all of Alberta's current and future residents are housed comfortably.

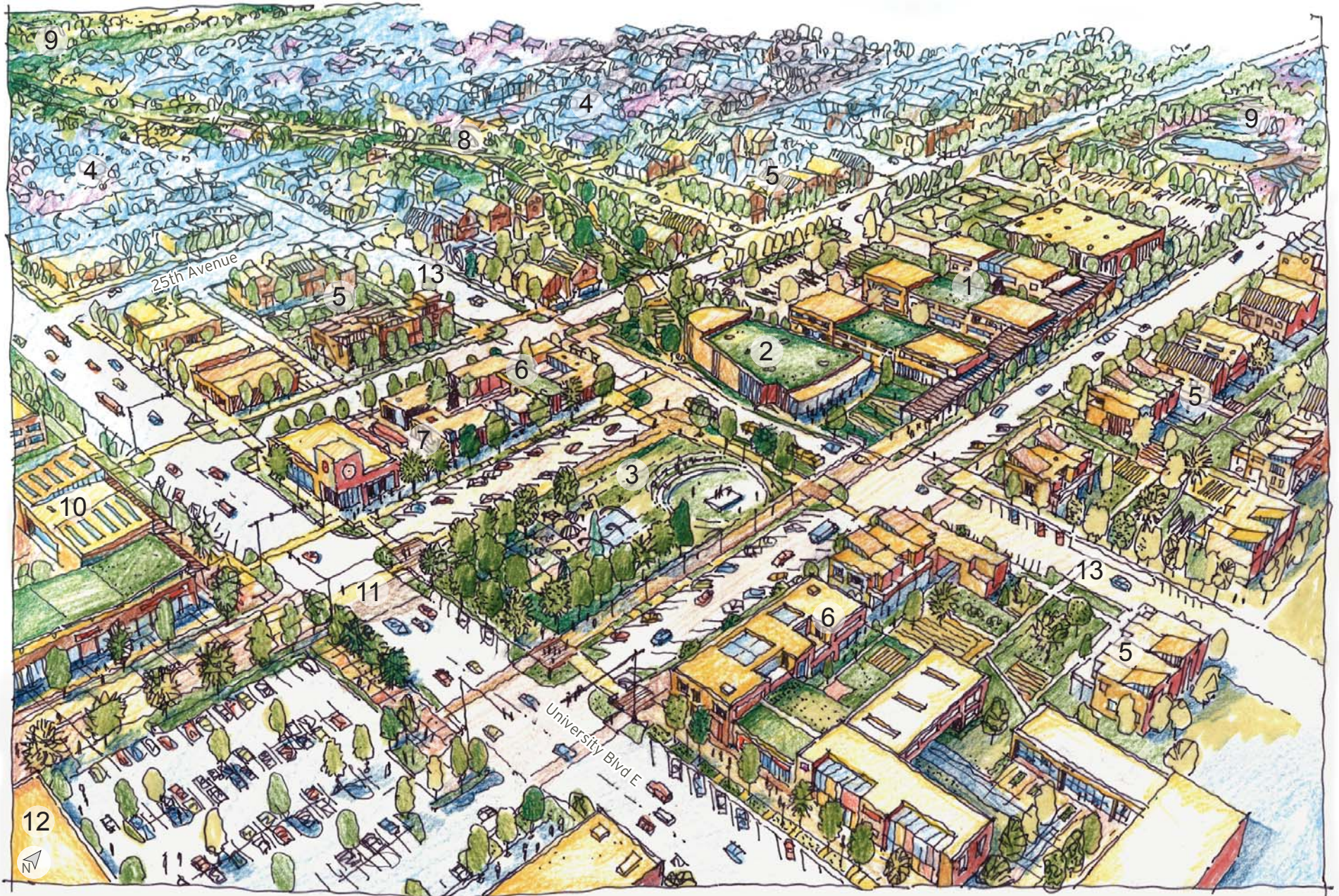
Redevelopment occurs at a neighborhood scale where new housing, retail and public uses are carefully integrated to create a unique place while supporting and enhancing the neighborhood feel.

The village center is anchored by a new school that doubles as a community gathering space. A new police station, fire station, and other facilities also strengthen the neighborhood through their deliberate and coordinated location within the village center.

A greenway corridor along preserved floodways provides recreation and transportation opportunities, and connects the Alberta village center to other parts of the city. The greenway becomes an amenity that enhances the neighborhoods through which it passes.

Alberta Village Center Conceptual Sketch

1. The Alberta school can become the center of a revitalized Alberta Neighborhood.
2. Facilities like the school auditorium can be shared between school and community uses.
3. A village green is dedicated to community events and recreation.
4. Neighborhood Residential zones are comprised mainly of single family homes.
5. Village Residential zones feature slightly denser housing types with shared gardens and green space.
6. Village Center zones feature a mix of small businesses, community services, and housing.
7. Rebuilding the fire and police stations is an opportunity to create coordinated public facilities.
8. The greenway is integrated into the neighborhoods and provides pedestrian and bike connectivity.
9. Alberta Community Park and other open spaces can play a key role in stormwater management.
10. Future redevelopment south of University Boulevard should be integrated into the Village Center concept.
11. Traffic Calming strategies such as bumpouts and clearly-marked crossings can provide better pedestrian connectivity.
12. Uses such as Piggly Wiggly can be incorporated into the Village Center through better landscaping and parking lot design.
13. New connections offer opportunities for greater connectivity.



Conceptual Sketch: Alberta Village Center

HOUSING

Tuscaloosa has received many quality-of-life accolades. It was named one of the “50 Best Places to Launch a Small Business” in 2009 by Fortune Small Business, and one of the “100 Best Communities for Young People” by America’s Promise Alliance. On June 18, 2011, the U.S. Conference of Mayors named Tuscaloosa “The Most Livable City in America”, even as the city struggles to recover from the largest and most violent tornado outbreak in U.S. history.

Since the storm, residents of Tuscaloosa overwhelmingly welcome the opportunity to rebuild Tuscaloosa into a 21st century city. Rebuilding homes to meet the needs of returning residents and newcomers will be an important step towards realizing that goal. Tuscaloosa can boldly step into the future by setting the standards and creating a plan to finance and rebuild homes that are green, affordable, well-designed and transit-accessible, and to offer a full range of housing choices to its citizens in connected and thriving mixed-income communities. Housing that is well-designed, green, and affordable to a range of incomes can help catalyze community and neighborhood revitalization by linking housing improvements with appropriate services, schools, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs.

Recent examples show that it is entirely possible to preserve the cultural character and richness of a city’s past as it embraces the challenges and imagination of the future. Rebuilding homes destroyed by the tornado is an urgent task. But the task will be made so much more meaningful if it can also restore the hopes of hard-working citizens by bringing them home to better neighborhoods. Indeed, those who lost their homes in Tuscaloosa deserve no less.

Guiding Principles for Housing

- 1: Create affordable and thriving mixed-income communities.
- 2: Construct well-designed homes that are durable, healthy, efficient, and green.
- 3: Locate housing to be transit accessible and connected to employment, services, and amenities.

1: Create affordable and thriving mixed-income communities.

NEEDS

The April 27, 2011 EF-4 tornado cut a 5.9 mile long and half mile wide path of destruction through Tuscaloosa, damaging approximately 5,000 units, or over 12 percent of the city's housing stock. Over half of these homes were severely damaged or destroyed. The top challenge identified in Tuscaloosa Rebuild Task Force meetings was the need for immediate housing and funding to rebuild. Although many families have found temporary living solutions, time may be running short for families whose disaster relief funds are depleted or who are doubled up and in need of finding an affordable permanent solution without leaving Tuscaloosa.

The Tuscaloosa Forward Housing Subcommittee and public stakeholders have identified affordable housing, senior housing, student and faculty housing, and overall housing improvements enhancing the quality of life for Tuscaloosa residents as a priority in the rebuilding effort.

The following chart illustrates an estimated number of units to be repaired and rebuilt.

Estimated Rebuild Calculation*

	Total Units	Renter Total (61%)	Single Family (65%)	2 or more units multifamily (35%)	Owner Total (39%)	2234' Single Family (65%)	2 or more units multifamily (35%)
Affected **	2,493	1,521	988	532	972	632	340
Damaged **	1,612	983	639	564	629	409	220
Destroyed **	1,257	767	498	268	490	319	172
Total	5,362	3,271	2,126	1,365	2,091	1,359	732

* Calculation based upon the assumed 5,362 housing units impacted against the statistical percentage of unit type between owner and renter in the storm-damaged area. Information from the US Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. ESRI forecasts for 2010.

** Affected - habitable/repairs needed Damaged - not habitable Destroyed - complete rebuild

According to the 2000 census, the area of Rosedale damaged by the storm has an average household income of \$1,901 - \$9,000. Most of these low-income households reside in properties owned and managed by the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority. Alberta and Holt have average household incomes of \$9,000-\$15,000, indicating a high concentration of very low-income families with Section 8 vouchers as financial rental assistance. The Forest Lake and other historic district areas affected had an average household income of \$15,510 - \$21,500.



Homeowners, particularly low-income homeowners, are faced with the challenge to finance the difference between their insurance coverage and the cost to rebuild.

Due to the loss of student housing, many landlords are vying to rent to students to get higher rental income on vacant units ready for occupancy, limiting the number of affordable units available for permanent relocation of families displaced by the storm. Landlords are renting units anywhere from \$400 - \$700 per bedroom depending on the age of the housing unit. Statistics show that 50% of the affected population was extremely low- to very-low income households. The median income for the affected area is \$28,000, with 35% of the population earning at or below \$16,700 (extremely low) and 15% earning at or below \$27,850 (very low). Two-bedroom affordable rents for the extremely low-income and very low-income families would need to be less than \$415 and \$696 respectively.

The goal of rebuilding and repairing over 5,000 homes within village centers, and connecting neighborhoods efficiently and responsibly, requires an overarching plan supported by a strategic decision-making framework.

This points to the following needs and priorities:

- The need to produce a large number of cost-effective affordable homes may require exploring alternatives to traditional home building construction.
- The need to create financing strategies and structure funding proposals to leverage anticipated disaster funding awards that produce the desired mix of affordable rental and for-sale units.
- The need to identify absentee landlords to address post-storm neglected properties and opportunities for assemblage of land.
- The need to identify and invite development capacity from among the for-profit and the nonprofit sectors to help with rebuilding.
- The need to aggregate capital to implement a comprehensive rebuilding strategy, including the creation of an acquisition fund to purchase land and parcels necessary for large-scale redevelopment.

Key Initiative 01

Assemble land around core areas of development. Having site control of developable land parcels is essential to a strategic redevelopment effort. Some of the land in the affected areas may already be in public ownership. Other parcels may be assembled through out right purchases, long-term leases or some type of owner incentive exchange or buy-back program.

Key Initiative 02

Repair public facilities and infrastructure in priority areas. Expedite the rebuilding of public facilities and infrastructure in areas that have been prioritized for return of residents and new housing production. Rebuilt streets, sidewalks, public transportation, schools and other facilities will signal that these communities are ready for new investment and help attract residents and businesses to invest private sector resources in these areas.

Key Initiative 03

Identify development partners with capacity. Rebuilding after a major disaster requires more than commitment. It takes developers and practitioners, for profit and nonprofit, who have knowledge and proven capacity to complete the tasks and deliver expected results. Investors often look for this kind of capacity before committing their resources. Homeowners also need guidance to help rebuild.

Key Initiative 04

Aggregate public subsidies to leverage private capital. There is never enough money on hand to do all that the plan calls for. The City will need to create financing strategies and structure funding proposals to leverage anticipated disaster funding awards with private investments and low-cost capital. There are examples of capital innovation around the country that can help inform the right strategies here – whether it is pooling acquisition capital for land purchase; credit enhancement or providing permanent subsidies to affordable mixed-income and mixed-used developments.

From MindMixer

I'm concerned about what my neighborhood will become as most of the houses on that street have been demolished and more continue to be demolished. I have lived in this area for 50+ years and I am hopeful that the rebuilding of Alberta will make it a pleasant and safer place to live. I feel like we're a diamond in the rough and with planning and enthusiasm can be an asset to our city. I would love to see sidewalks, parks, shopping all easily accessible to our neighborhoods -- within walking distance being preferred and please -- replant the trees!! We have an opportunity to do great things in these areas.

Sharon C

From MindMixer

The average working person should be able to have a place to live, too, and I wholeheartedly agree with mixed-income neighborhoods. They shouldn't look like housing projects, but like neighborhoods with different sized houses and perhaps some townhomes and garden homes.

Emily B

Key Initiative 05

Build the capacity of local government. As visionary and impressive as city leadership may be, it still requires support and technical advice to execute a daunting recovery and rebuilding effort that may last well beyond a single term or administration. HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development may be a source of assistance and support in this regard.

Key Initiative 06

Identify and utilize federal and state housing programs and policies. HUD offers a wide range of programs -- from actual financing assistance to loan guarantees -- that will assist in immediate recovery and the longer term rebuilding effort. The Southeastern Disaster Tax Relief Act, (not yet enacted at the time of publication) contains helpful tax provisions to encourage investment in the disaster area. It will be important to learn from the Gulf Coast relief and rebuilding advocacy efforts, such as asking congress to allocate and preserve funding dedicated to the redevelopment of public housing and expanding the use and supply of rental vouchers to meet the needs of low-income and special needs individuals. It will also be important to urge congress to grant Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) credit to those lenders and bank investors who may consider lending and investing in the impacted area.

BEST PRACTICE

Access to Capital

The Louisiana Loan Fund (LLF): In southern Louisiana, the Louisiana Loan Fund was originally created to provide financing for acquisition and predevelopment of properties to be built/redeveloped with Low Income Housing Tax Credits after Hurricane Katrina. Along the way, the State of Louisiana and City of New Orleans repurposed the funds to combine with other resources, including funds from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), to address some of the 50,000 vacant and blighted single-family properties scattered throughout the city. In an environment of tightening credits, the City recognized an opportunity to maintain public confidence and keep the production of homes in targeted neighborhoods on track by using the LLF as a committed source on construction loans to later be recouped upon the sale of the homes.

From MindMixer

I would love for those homes to be rebuilt in a way that honors the history of the city AND the people who lost so much on 4/27. I would also like to see changes that reflect how proud we are of our city

Jo

From MindMixer

Duplexes and creative multi-family dwellings would still mesh with the feel of smaller communities. Everyone wants something a little different about their home, so why not incorporate the entire spectrum of housing?

Emily B

BEST PRACTICE

Mixed Income and Public Housing Redevelopment High Point, Seattle Washington

Redevelopment at High Point called for creating a safe, high quality and healthy residential environment with a range of housing types, each constructed to Built Green standards that are fully integrated with the surrounding community. New streets now align and connect with the street grid, new neighborhood facilities and community services operate at inviting locations, and the mix of housing and resident income levels are compatible with the greater neighborhood.

Seattle Housing Authority worked from the start to include residents and community members in redevelopment planning. Through many meetings and collaborative design workshops, the residents and planners kept their eyes on making High Point a home for children and people of all ages and cultures. More than 450 High Point residents and their West Seattle neighbors participated in a design survey and hands-on workshop that considered what the redeveloped High Point should look like.

Community building is an ongoing process, and programs focused on afterschool activities, daycare, healthcare and community gardening will keep residents engaged as neighborhood stewards.

Planning for open spaces and pocket parks



To maintain the green, garden-like feel, the plan designated over 20 acres of land for parks, open spaces, and playgrounds. A four-acre, central park is at the heart of the community. Another park features a large pond and a jogging trail, and several other community and pocket parks are scattered throughout High Point.

Even planting strips along streets will be greener and wider than elsewhere in Seattle. The plan triples the number of previously existing trees. More than 100 mature trees have been retained and about 2,600 new trees planted along streets and parks.

Creating a livable mixed-income community

Completed in 2010, High Point includes housing units for residents with very low incomes (50 percent of area median income or below) and low incomes (80 percent or below) in addition to market-rate rental and for-sale housing in 1,700 new affordable and market-rate homes across its 120 acres. Most homes have private yards and porches. They sit on safe streets with controlled traffic, and show great variety in architecture, with character and styles on each block.

Breathe Easy Homes

Currently, Green Communities has a health study of the Breathe Easy Homes at Seattle's High Point community underway to assess the impact of moving into healthy green public housing on children with asthma.

After the first year of the study, the results were truly amazing. For a modest additional upfront cost of approximately \$5,000, homes are built to the highest level indoor air quality. Children living in the first 35 homes were tested before they moved in, then after one year. As the results show, children with asthma are experiencing a 65% increase in symptom-free days, also, emergency room and urgent care visits are cut by 2/3.

2: Construct well-designed homes that are durable, healthy, efficient, and green.

NEEDS

The design of all housing should be attractive and identify with neighborhood characteristics or historical guidelines. Large scale housing redevelopment will require a holistic approach to connect with existing infrastructure, schools, community facilities and public space. Incorporating “safe” rooms and high wind resistant measures into housing design was identified by stakeholders as important features to consider. Incorporating green and healthy design measures during rebuilding is essential to sustainable development. The City has an opportunity to design a safe and green standard for rebuilding, potentially creating a national model.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Set design guidelines. Design guidelines can be offered and integrative design charrettes required for all publicly subsidized housing developments. (Information for design guidelines and integrative design charrettes can be found at the Enterprise Green Communities website: <http://www.greencommunitiesonline.org/tools/funding/grants/charrette.asp>)

Key Initiative 02

Encourage all new construction and projects with public subsidy to meet the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria or the applicable LEED rating system. There is solid data demonstrating a full return on investment from social, economic and health benefits of building green. Twenty states around the country as well as many major cities, HUD and the USDA have adopted the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria <http://www.greencommunitiesonline.org/> as a threshold for funding affordable housing. A few states including Washington State and Iowa have created an even more climate- and culturally-appropriate overlay to the Criteria, which was developed as a national standard.

BEST PRACTICE

Homeownership and Workforce Housing

Habitat for Humanity Bay-Waveland (Habitat): In late 2005, nearly three-quarters of Hancock County’s housing stock was either lost or substantially damaged when the community took a direct hit from Hurricane Katrina. Despite the difficult conditions within the devastated community, Habitat persisted in its effort to serve not only the needs of low-to-moderate income homeowners, but the community as a whole. Habitat joined with the community to implement strategies for sustainable, environmentally sensitive development and coordinated its efforts with other service-oriented organizations. As a result, Habitat has committed to building all their homes to national recognized green standards (Enterprise Green Communities, LEED, NAHB) to ensure long-term sustainability. Habitat went further by committing to only building in areas outside of the 100-year flood zone, thus protecting the homeowners from another devastating loss in the future. In 2009, the Eco Cottage Program was created as part of FEMA’s alternative housing pilot program to support the housing of Katrina disaster victims with an innovative, eco-friendly alternative to traditional disaster housing— travel trailers and poorly built manufactured homes.



**BEST
PRACTICE**

Green Design Guidelines

Enterprise Green Communities – Enterprise Green Communities is the first national green building program developed specifically for affordable housing. The Enterprise Green Communities Criteria focuses on the use of environmentally sustainable materials, reduction of negative environmental impacts and increased energy efficiency and water conservation while emphasizing designs and materials that safeguard the health of residents and locations that facilitate access to community services and viable transportation options. Enterprise offers tools and resources that are publicly accessible online to support developers, building owners and housing officials make the transition to a greener future including devoted web resources for public housing authorities (http://www.greencommunitiesonline.org/tools/funding/grants/public_housing_authorities.asp) and a network for pre-qualified technical assistance providers <http://tasearch.greencommunitiesonline.org/TASearch.aspx>. The Enterprise Green Affordable Housing Policy Toolkit offers a roadmap for state and local governments working on green affordable housing initiatives. The Criteria are a holistic and nationally recognized framework for green affordable housing that can readily be integrated into any disaster rebuilding efforts by including a provision to meet the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria as a prerequisite for public funding. Certification for meeting the Criteria is offered online at no cost to the developer.

From a strictly financial standpoint, the projected “lifetime” utility cost savings, averaging \$4,851 per dwelling unit (discounted to today’s dollars) are sufficient to repay the average \$4,524 per-unit cost of complying with the Criteria.

The average cost per dwelling unit to incorporate the energy and water criteria was \$1,917, returning \$4,851 in predicted lifetime utility cost savings. In other words, the energy and water conservation measures not only paid for themselves but also produced another \$2,900 in projected lifetime savings per unit.

Measures in the Criteria that do not have easily identifiable financial savings, but undoubted indirect financial benefit, include the integrated design process, ensuring a healthy living environment, reducing construction waste and providing operations and maintenance manuals.

Enterprise Green Communities water calculation assumptions

show that although toilet-flow rates may be low, sink usage and shower runtimes are much longer and account for slightly higher indoor water use. According to the EPA’s WaterSense program, 26.7 percent of our daily water use is consumed by flushing the toilet, 16.8 percent used in the shower, 15.7 percent at the faucet, 21.7 percent for clothes washers, and 5.3 percent for other usage, with the additional 13.7 percent accounted for by leaks. A leaky toilet can waste about 200 gallons of water every day. Currently, Green Communities has a health study of the Breathe Easy Homes at Seattle’s High Point community underway to assess the impact of moving into healthy green public housing on children with asthma.

After the first year of the study, the results were truly amazing. For a modest additional upfront cost of approximately \$5,000, homes are built to the highest level indoor air quality. The above slide highlights the early results of this study: Children living in the first 35 homes were tested before they moved in, then after one year. As the results show, children with asthma are experiencing a 65% increase in symptom-free days, also, emergency room and urgent care visits are cut by 2/3.

Key Findings	
Cost to incorporate Energy and Water Measures	Projected “Lifetime” Utility Cost Savings
\$1,917 per dwelling unit	\$4,851 per dwelling unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Energy and water efficiency measures paid for themselves as well as produced \$2,900 in projected per-unit lifetime savings.	



BEST PRACTICE

Madrone Plaza, Morgan Hill CA

95 for-sale homes, including 69 townhomes and 26 single-family homes

The development incorporates a number of green features:

- Landscaping using native water conserving plants
- Super Low-E glass
- Energy Star light fixtures and appliances
- Low flow faucets, toilets and showerheads
- Low VOC paint
- 90 percent high-efficiency furnaces
- R38 Ceiling Insulation, cellulose recycled wall insulation,
- Radiant barrier sheathing and insulated hot water pipes
- All construction waste sorted and recycled

The homes are offered to middle- and low-income residents, with preference given to people who live or who work in Morgan Hill. Thirty-six of the homes will serve homeowners between 51 percent and 80 percent of the area median income (AMI); 30 will serve homeowners between 81 percent and 100 percent of AMI; and 29 will serve homeowners above 101 percent of AMI. The Morgan Hill California Department of Housing and Community Development BEGIN and California Housing Finance Agency will provide deferred payment loans and down payment assistance to help make the homes more accessible to low-income residents.



3: Locate housing to be transit accessible and connected to employment, services, and amenities.

NEEDS

Developing housing connected to community amenities, within close proximity to retail and public transportation helps improve the connection to jobs, schools, services and provides opportunity-rich neighborhoods for low and moderate income families. Accessibility to transit will be vital for the elderly, disabled or “transit dependent” individual’s ability to accomplish daily activities like shopping and socializing, allowing them to live independently and maintain a high quality of life. This is an opportunity to build mixed income housing along proposed or existing transit hubs or corridors, or within a reasonable distance via a park and ride system

KEY INITIATIVE

Key Initiative 01

Acquire property near transit: Create a plan to acquire land parcels in proximity to transit corridors or with easy access to transit, and prioritize funding support for a range of housing to be built near transit.

BEST PRACTICE

Denver Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Fund and land bank

The purpose of the Denver TOD Fund was to create and preserve at least 1,000 affordable homes along current and future transit corridors in the City of Denver. The Fund makes \$15 million in capital available to purchase and hold sites for up to five years, in anticipation of the opening of new transit stations. The Fund will purchase sites within a half mile of current or future light rail and a half mile of high frequency, high volume bus corridors. The Denver TOD Fund requires the partnership of government, quasi-governmental organizations, banks, nonprofits and foundations. A local nonprofit, the Urban Land Conservancy (ULC), made the initial equity commitment. ULC is a six-year old organization formed by local business leaders who understood the need for an organization that could permanently secure community assets in metro Denver’s urban neighborhoods.

BEST PRACTICE

Oak Haven Apartments

This newly constructed community for seniors ages 52 and over is in Waveland, Mississippi. Oak Haven includes affordable, cottage-style rental homes, a community center and host of amenities, and a full program of on-site resident services. The development includes 80 one- and two-bedroom, single-story duplex and quad-plex homes that range in size from 583 to 836 square feet, surrounded by a pedestrian friendly development near retail, public transportation and community resources. Oak Haven is located on the north side of Waveland’s Spanish Trail, which connects to the area’s main economic artery.

The property features state of the art wind- and water-resistant construction techniques, including concrete-filled insulated form wall systems built to withstand up to 130 mph winds.



SUSTAINABILITY

There is a growing awareness and commitment to focus on sustainable redevelopment in a way that makes Tuscaloosa an even more desirable place to live, and more probable that future generations will call the community home. Indeed, the community is looking at transforming the devastation of the storm into an opportunity that can make Tuscaloosa a national model for sustainable community redevelopment.

It is therefore no surprise that sustainability has emerged as a key element of the Tuscaloosa Forward vision. The community has demonstrated a renewed passion to create neighborhoods that are a model of economic prosperity, cultural richness, and environmental stewardship that integrate and enhance natural systems as amenities.

By so doing, Tuscaloosa can become a national model of comprehensive sustainable redevelopment. To be successful, these efforts will need to be supported by broad-based community education, updated guidelines for appropriate design and construction of buildings, promotion of healthy lifestyles, restoration of natural systems, reconsideration of waste management and a renewed emphasis on long-term thinking over short-term solutions.

Guiding Principles for Sustainability

A key to achieving this aspiration is to understand the breadth and depth of what sustainability means in a community such as Tuscaloosa. To this end, the following Guiding Principles are proposed as a way to organize efforts towards this broader vision of sustainability.

- 1: Provide sustainability education for professionals, students and other residents.
- 2: Support the design and construction of healthy, energy-efficient and durable buildings.
- 3: Promote and support healthy lifestyles.
- 4: Restore natural systems to benefit the community.
- 5: Expand and enhance the City's environmental services to better manage waste and promote recycling.
- 6: Develop a deep and lasting approach to disaster preparedness through long-term sustainable thinking.

1: Provide sustainability education for professionals, students and other residents.

NEEDS

The future of Tuscaloosa relies on people of all ages to understand and support sustainable decisions. While local high school students acknowledged during the planning process that sustainability was not explicitly part of their educational curriculum or day-to-day conversations, the University of Alabama received a grade of B+ on the The College Sustainability Report Card in 2011, with annual improvements every year since 2007. This is a hopeful foundation for a potentially more proactive goal to lead the region and nation in sustainable practices on a college campus.

Much of the implementation of sustainable initiatives at the community-scale will rely on those whose work involves the design, construction, operations, maintenance and regulatory aspects of building the community. Except for a few groups that focus on healthy lifestyles (i.e., biking, food), there does not appear to be a Tuscaloosa-based organization that provides on-going learning opportunities focused on sustainable design, construction, operations and general business/household practices with either overview classes for the general citizenry or technical courses for professionals.



KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Support both formal and grass-roots initiatives that advance educational opportunities for school children of all ages.

Key Initiative 02

Work with local higher educational institutions (University of Alabama, Stillman College and Shelton State Community College) to develop a national model for meaningful sustainable redevelopment through close collaboration of multiple institutions and the community in which they teach.

BEST PRACTICE

Bridging the Gap

A not-for-profit organization that works to make the Kansas City region sustainable by connecting environment, economy and community, through the education of citizens, businesses and government. BTG emphasizes the impact of decisions and behavior on our present and future community and world.

From MindMixer

Educate. Integrate new development of sustainable ideas with the University, students and the citizens of the community. Build a future of educated individuals that understand the process of sustainable practices by involving them within conversations (ie. Providing classes, internships, tours, general information).

AKent_EA

From MindMixer

Knowledge is power. A smarter community is a stronger community.

Paris Vega

2: Support the design and construction of healthy, energy-efficient and durable buildings.

NEEDS

Health and safety have been key components of the overall Tuscaloosa Forward initiative. The need to ensure healthy and safe buildings is critical to a strong Tuscaloosa.

Storm shelters

Since the April tornadoes, the demand for safe places in the community has never been stronger. Because no one can predict where a future tornado might strike, there is a need for improved building standards community-wide that ensure every person has access to a safe place within their building or at a strategically located community shelter.

Durable buildings

Although it is difficult to design and construct buildings that can withstand direct impact by a tornado, damage to buildings that are outside of the storm's direct path can be dramatically reduced through appropriate design and construction strategies. Longer-term efforts for durable buildings would include application of more indigenous and climate-sensitive design and construction principles.

High-performance buildings

High-performance buildings are those that consume minimal resources while providing healthy, beautiful and functional places to live, work, play, learn and worship. Built examples of high-performance buildings are the biggest catalyst for designing and building more. To date, there is one LEED-certified building in Tuscaloosa, a LEED Gold Core & Shell project along the riverfront (2200 Jack Warner Parkway). More examples are needed, and may best be provided through immediate pilot projects. Further, the City could lead by example with their own facilities in the early planning stages.



KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Update building codes to specifically address hurricane and tornado conditions, including standards for safe places in commercial, multi-family residential, assembly, and public facilities.

Key Initiative 02

Develop guidance on building design and construction that is appropriate for Tuscaloosa's bioclimate and create a clearinghouse to disseminate knowledge.

Key Initiative 03

Encourage city facilities to meet LEED Platinum standards.*

Key Initiative 04

Identify and develop one or more pilot projects that pursue the highest levels of sustainability within the Tuscaloosa context.

Key Initiative 05

Amend zoning and building standards where necessary to allow and support strong livable neighborhoods in the impacted areas.

Key Initiative 06

Evaluate incentives, credits, rebates and other funding mechanisms that promote implementation of renewable energy improvements.

* The LEED (or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System is an internationally-recognized green building certification system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

BEST PRACTICE

Green Building Resources

U.S. Green Building Council: Local chapters around the U.S. made up of a community of leaders working to make green buildings available to everyone

Living Building Challenge: Organized imperatives for buildings that are targeting true sustainability (zero negative impact on the environment)

One Planet Communities: A program creating a network of earth's greenest neighborhoods, where it is easy, attractive and affordable for people to live a healthy, happy lifestyle within a fair share of our planet's resources.

From MindMixer

With so many roofs needing repair, it is a unique opportunity for a significant percentage of the population to improve and contribute to energy conservation and efficiency.

Ken M

3: Promote and support healthy lifestyles.

NEEDS

Tuscaloosa is not currently perceived by its residents as a “walkable” or “bikeable” city, but this was a common descriptor of the future Tuscaloosa in many of the community conversations after the storm. The Land Use chapter of this plan identifies opportunities to create livable, walkable neighborhoods. The presence of two active bike clubs in the City encourages a multi-modal transportation infrastructure, but greater support of their efforts is needed to make it a comprehensive and integrated system. In 2011, Alabama was ranked second in a U.S. obesity ranking. The obesity rate for those living in Tuscaloosa County is 33%. Support for healthy eating and active living is needed now.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Support organizations that encourage healthy eating and active living and that provide the infrastructure to do so.

Key Initiative 02

Support local and urban food production.

Key Initiative 03

Match the community’s enthusiasm for spectator sports by supporting participation in complementary active recreation programs.

Key Initiative 04

Support walkable neighborhoods through mixed-use, multi-generational and multi-modal options.

Key Initiative 05

Build upon current efforts to support and enhance bikeability in Tuscaloosa.



**BEST
PRACTICE**

Milwaukee Urban Agriculture Network: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Milwaukee Urban Agriculture Network (MÜAN) is a collaborative effort of Milwaukee-area individuals and organizations focused on advancing awareness of, and activities and policies that will promote, the many ways that local production of food benefits a community. The network is composed of anyone interested in urban agriculture in Milwaukee.



From MindMixer

In some of the damaged areas that lie in the floodplain, where houses and business will not be able to rebuild, the city could create a robust urban farm to support educational opportunities about nutrition, sustainability, agriculture and science.

Andy Grace

From MindMixer

I think an emphasis on parks, recreation, walkable communities and bike paths have the potential to transform the community in a way that promotes activity and fitness. Make this a community that not only watches sports, but actively participates and reaps the benefits of better health.

LuellaJ

4: Restore natural systems to benefit the community.

NEEDS

The natural amenities in any community include soil, nutrients, sunlight, wind, water, flora and fauna. When operating within a healthy ecosystem, these components work synergistically with each other and are interdependent. The collection of these components and how they interact together is also unique to each place. Our human interaction within these ecosystems can be equally synergistic or can be so overbearing that the overall web weakens dramatically. Examples of apparent and hidden needs follow, which if addressed would restore and enhance a robust ecosystem in Tuscaloosa.

Water

The April storm did not significantly alter the pre-storm water conditions in Tuscaloosa. It did, however, open up new opportunities to address flooding problems and to consider a comprehensive approach to water conservation, water quality and stormwater management. Specifically, the proposed greenway in the Big Ideas section will bring multiple benefits to the community. New stormwater strategies can use the resilience of natural systems to handle high-rain events and be more beautiful for the neighborhoods. Further, Alabama is one of the top ten states in water consumption per capita. Before conditions become dire, as they have in other states, an evaluation of water consumption would be beneficial and may make Tuscaloosa a leader in the state of Alabama on water issues.

Energy

As part of an emerging interest in sustainability and an expanding knowledge of energy-efficiency and healthy buildings, the post-storm scenario in Tuscaloosa provides an open door to explore strategies that reduce monthly energy bills for building owners.

Natural Habitats and Wildlife

Since the storm destroyed natural habitat as much as it did human infrastructure, opportunities exist now to re-establish habitats and corridors for wildlife.



BEST PRACTICE

Kansas City, Missouri Overflow Control Plan (OCP)

This plan proposes an alternative approach to mitigate flooding and overflow control issues by way of natural systems in lieu of expensive larger capacity piping. The OCP addresses sewer overflows as well as deferred maintenance, repairs, and overflow control on all parts of the sanitary sewer system. At full buildout, this system will provide substantial ancillary benefits to Kansas Citizens beyond its initial intent, including cleaner air, cooler ambient air temperatures, recreational and aesthetic amenities, and economic development opportunities. Pilot projects have been identified and initiated.

See <http://www.bnim.com/bookshelf/overflow-control-plan>

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Where possible rely on the natural water systems instead of traditional infrastructure pipes to help mitigate high-rain events.

Key Initiative 02

Emphasize native vegetation in the impacted area, particularly in the proposed greenway corridor.

Key Initiative 03

Treat water as a resource and not a waste product by identifying point-source solutions to stormwater issues (such as downspouts that lead to raingardens instead of storm drainage pipes).

Key Initiative 04

Collaborate with Alabama Power to support homeowner energy-efficiency and appropriate renewable energy generation, and educate the community on new and existing options. Create a collaborate partnership with utilities and developers to locate utilities underground in order to enhance durability, improve appearance, and increase property values.

Key Initiative 05

Create partnerships and identify funding mechanisms that support pilot projects to restore and enhance natural systems.

From MindMixer

Anything we can do to reduce rain water run-off will be a plus. Green areas absorb so much more water than paved areas and would help to prevent overloading storm sewers.

Alec W

From MindMixer

Trees add a lot of beauty and shade to a city and make it a pleasant community in which to live. Let's make replanting trees a top priority in our use of the land.

Jane

The best solutions often have a business positive. Low water landscapes look great and save money. Native plants grow the best and are less expensive. Community organizations (Churches) can accept responsibility for public space like the roadside clean up you see on highways.

ODW

5: Expand and enhance the City's environmental services to better manage waste and promote recycling.

NEEDS

The City of Tuscaloosa collects and transports household waste to the Black Warrior Solid Waste Disposal Facility, which has been open since 1977. While West Alabama Regional Commission assessments are not clear on future capacity of this landfill or others in the state, the costs of landfilling our waste can be offset by a more strategic approach to reduce consumption, salvage and reuse when possible, and recycle and compost.

There has been limited curbside recycling services in a few neighborhoods of Tuscaloosa for a few years, including aluminum, steel, some plastics, cardboard, and mixed paper. Glass can be recycled at the local Target. Yard waste in Tuscaloosa is collected and transported to various inert landfills within Tuscaloosa County. Finally, special events exist for recycling hazardous household waste and phone books. The recycling program at the University of Alabama was selected as one of five finalists in the 2010 Southern Association of College and University Business Officers Best Practices competition.



KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Expand curbside recycling city-wide.

Key Initiative 02

Identify community interest in composting and support both individual and community efforts.



From MindMixer

Everywhere there is a public trash can there should be a place to recycle plastic bottles and aluminum cans

chau t

6: Develop a deep and lasting approach to disaster preparedness through long-term sustainable thinking.

NEEDS

There are many facets to a comprehensive civic disaster preparedness plan. Some relate to logistics (what happens during and after an event; who goes where when), which the City has already successfully initiated. Some relate to designing and building systems that minimize, mitigate or eliminate future negative impact of such an event on the community. (For example, a resilient natural waterway has more capacity to accommodate high rain events than pipes do.)

The preparation of such a plan could begin with several key initiatives.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Along with the existing Crisis Action Plan, publish and act upon a more comprehensive disaster preparedness plan that is specific to Tuscaloosa.

From MindMixer

Don't just think outside the box, but get rid of the box.

DG

From MindMixer

It makes sense to think about community storm shelters. These constructs could serve other purposes under normal circumstances (such as community recreation centers, small neighborhood shopping centers, schools, or churches), but could be used as community storm shelters prior to and during tornado warnings.

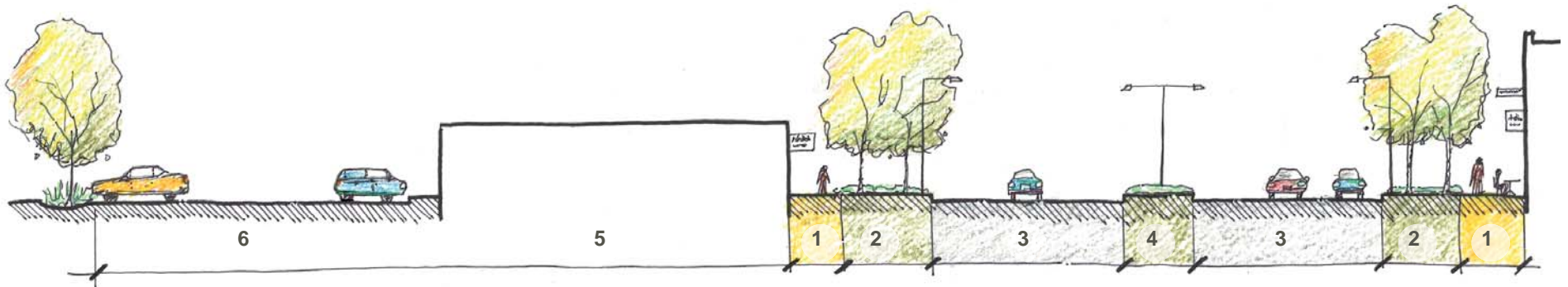
EJ

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

The devastating winds of the April 2011 storm had a significant impact on many existing public facilities and the City's overall infrastructure. The damaged or destroyed public buildings included a fire station, police precinct station, City environmental services building, emergency operations facility, and two schools. Damaged or destroyed public infrastructure included the City's water distribution system, numerous traffic signals, communications facilities, overhead utility services, and power substations. As these critical elements are rebuilt, City projects can lead the way toward better connected communities that are walkable, attractive, sustainable, and built to be resilient and cost effective in the long-term.

Guiding Principles for Infrastructure and Public Facilities

- 1: Improve connectivity between and within neighborhoods.
- 2: Provide walking, cycling, and transit infrastructure to increase transportation options and reduce traffic on congested streets.
- 3: Enhance the appearance and functionality of major corridors as important gateways and transportation arteries for the city.
- 4: Rebuild damaged infrastructure to address long-standing issues and future needs in a comprehensive and sustainable way.
- 5: Coordinate public facilities to leverage scarce resources and create mutual benefit.



Revitalized Corridor Concept

1. Sidewalk zones should be a comfortable width for pedestrians (8-12' width), with as few vehicular interruptions as possible.
2. Landscape zones should allow for the placement of street trees and other plantings that improve the pedestrian experience.
3. The safety and efficiency of the corridor for both drivers and pedestrians can be improved with better access management.
4. The existing median is an opportunity to enhance the corridor aesthetically with plantings, signage, and lighting elements.
5. Buildings within Mixed Use Corridor areas can utilize frontage on both 15th Street and parking areas.
6. With proper landscape screening, surface parking can be accommodated behind buildings, improving the corridor's walkability.

1: Improve connectivity between and within neighborhoods.

NEEDS

The transportation network in tornado-affected areas suffers from limited connectivity. There are few bicycle and pedestrian friendly routes. The street network is lacking in north/south connections, and contains a number of inefficient intersections and excessive curb cuts along some corridors. Together these factors contribute to traffic congestion and limited connectivity. Physical barriers such as railroads also divide neighborhoods and inhibit connectivity. Prior to redevelopment of tornado-damaged areas, there is a short window of flexibility to adjust street alignments that have developed over time in a haphazard way, and to establish logical street connections to improve the connectivity of the transportation network in affected neighborhoods and citywide.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Realign key street intersections in tornado-affected areas where traffic movements are particularly inefficient or dangerous to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, and increase safety (example intersections include: Prince Avenue and 1st Avenue at Hargrove Road and 25th Avenue and 26th Avenue at University Boulevard).

Key Initiative 02

Explore grade separations where railroad crossings create major barriers to connectivity.



2: Provide walking, cycling, and transit infrastructure to increase transportation options and reduce traffic on congested streets.

NEEDS

Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure is limited within the tornado-affected area. Many of the residential neighborhoods affected by the tornado do not have sidewalks. There are no bicycle facilities within the area damaged by the tornado, and few facilities citywide.

As damaged areas redevelop and transportation infrastructure is rebuilt, additional transportation options enhance quality of life for residents while reducing traffic demand.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Develop on and off-street bicycle routes in coordination with the City's plans for a citywide bicycle network.

Key Initiative 02

Develop multi-use trails as part of an interconnected greenway system that includes a central greenway artery tracing the tornado path, and that links to the River Walk, University, and citywide parks and open space system.

Key Initiative 03

Identify, prioritize, and construct sidewalk connections in residential neighborhoods that currently lack sidewalks as these neighborhoods rebuild.

Key Initiative 04

Explore opportunities for coordination and partnership between City and University bus systems to increase the frequency and availability of transit service in the tornado-affected areas and throughout Tuscaloosa.

From MindMixer

I think we should definitely rebuild with a focus on pedestrians/bike riders. Traffic is getting horrible in some parts of Tuscaloosa and many students on campus walk/bike from class to class. If the city was more pedestrian/bike friendly it might encourage students to drop their cars and walk or bike to their favorite off campus locations.

Andrew M

From MindMixer

What we really need to do...is to advertise our mass transit system, and make it simpler to use.

Steven D

From MindMixer

We want to use our bikes for transportation, not just recreation.

Lorraine S

3: Enhance the appearance and functionality of major corridors as important gateways and transportation arteries for the city.

NEEDS

Major tornado damage occurred on several high-traffic, high visibility corridors that pass through the tornado-affected areas. Prior to the tornado these corridors faced challenges including traffic congestion, limited bicycle and pedestrian options, and frequent driveway accesses that reduce safety and slow traffic. As these corridors redevelop, infrastructure improvements in coordination with thoughtful land use planning can transform these corridors into attractive gateways and highly functional transportation arteries for the city.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Develop and implement an access management plan to reduce the number of driveway accesses along major corridors and better coordinate off-street circulation for adjacent uses.

Key Initiative 02

Design and construct streetscape improvements along major corridors including wide sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bus shelters, and landscaping to improve corridor appearance and ease of use for walking, biking, transit and automobiles.



4: Rebuild damaged infrastructure to address long-standing issues and future needs in a comprehensive and sustainable way.

NEEDS

The Tornado path crossed a number of areas with long-standing flooding and drainage issues. Over time, many streams and waterways in the affected areas have been diverted, modified or developed around. Past solutions to stormwater runoff and flooding issues have included property-buy outs and expensive infrastructure installations, but following the tornado a more comprehensive and sustainable approach may be possible. The tornado damaged various types of infrastructure across the city, including water and electricity distribution systems. As this infrastructure is rebuilt, immediate opportunities and long term priorities should be considered as infrastructure investments are made. The community also identified the need to be proactive installing infrastructure to power high-speed communication or wireless communication networks.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Establish a greenway corridor along the tornado path that preserves floodways, manages stormwater runoff and connects neighborhoods with a pedestrian / bicycle trail.

Key Initiative 02

Identify opportunities in tornado-affected areas to efficiently and cost-effectively complete infrastructure improvements that may not be feasible after affected areas redevelop.

Key Initiative 03

Explore the potential to bury power lines in coordination with other necessary construction and infrastructure work as damaged areas rebuild.

BEST PRACTICE

Integrated Stormwater Infrastructure

The creation of a Greenway would greatly increase Tuscaloosa's capacity to manage stormwater. Integrating stormwater management practices into infrastructure projects such as parking lots or streets can also have a major impact.

In Kansas City, MO, the redevelopment of the 12th Street corridor represented an opportunity to manage excess runoff in the highly impervious downtown area. Curb cuts now divert water into planters located in bumpouts along the street. These planters are designed to enhance the aesthetic character of downtown while promoting infiltration and reducing loads on the existing storm infrastructure.



12th Street streetscape inlet planter

5: Coordinate public facilities to leverage scarce resources and create mutual benefit.

NEEDS

The April 27th tornado destroyed a number of public facilities including a fire station, a police precinct station, the City Environmental Services building and emergency operations facility, and schools in the Alberta and Forest Lake areas. The tornado also destroyed a number of private services and institutions including a number of churches and a Salvation Army shelter. As public facilities are rebuilt, decisions will need to be made about where and how to invest scarce resources. Strategically locating and coordinating public facilities can help services be provided more efficiently and cost-effectively, while at the same time enhancing the capabilities and partnerships of coordinating institutions.

KEY INITIATIVES

Key Initiative 01

Identify collocation opportunities for public facilities where capital investments could be leveraged through shared physical space or programming.

Key Initiative 02

Locate public facilities as anchors within neighborhoods, and identify sites adjacent to parks and public spaces that can provide capacity and support for the activities of the public institutions.

Key Initiative 03

Explore partnerships to accommodate educational functions and community activities within neighborhood schools facilities.

Key Initiative 04

Identify potential community center and other public facility sites within neighborhoods that double as storm shelters in emergency situations.

BEST PRACTICE

Coordinated Public Facilities

In the aftermath of a devastating tornado, the City of Greensburg, Kansas faced the challenge of rebuilding many community and school facilities. After exploring the costs of building separate school and city auditorium facilities, it became apparent that combining these needs into one Greensburg School facility was the most efficient use of resources.

The completed school is a flexible facility that hosts events and functions for both the school and the community at large. The success of this coordinated facility has greatly contributed to the school becoming a center of the rebuilt community.



The Greensburg School Library

CONNECTIVITY MAP

Key Corridors are major connectors for the tornado-damaged areas and for the city. The redevelopment of areas adjacent to these corridors should be coordinated with corridor improvements. These efforts should seek to improve walkability and traffic efficiency through better access management and quality streetscape design.

The **Potential Greenway** trail would create pedestrian and bicycle connectivity through the many affected neighborhoods. The Greenway would be fully integrated into the many neighborhoods it passes through, serving as a linear park and stormwater management tool. Linking residential areas to offices, shops and other amenities, the Greenway would greatly increase multi-modal transportation options in Tuscaloosa.

Gateways are entries into revitalized neighborhoods. Because of their ability to create identity, a major emphasis should be placed on the aesthetic and functional improvements of these gateways.

Floodway / Floodplains exist throughout Tuscaloosa. The Greenway follows these flood-prone areas as often as possible, providing improved stormwater management and reducing flooding risks.

Intersection Improvements and realignments in tornado-affected areas can improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, increase safety, and enhance the connectivity of the transportation network.


Railroads create barriers to development and transit that can be overcome through the coordination of streetscape, trail, and bicycle path improvements.

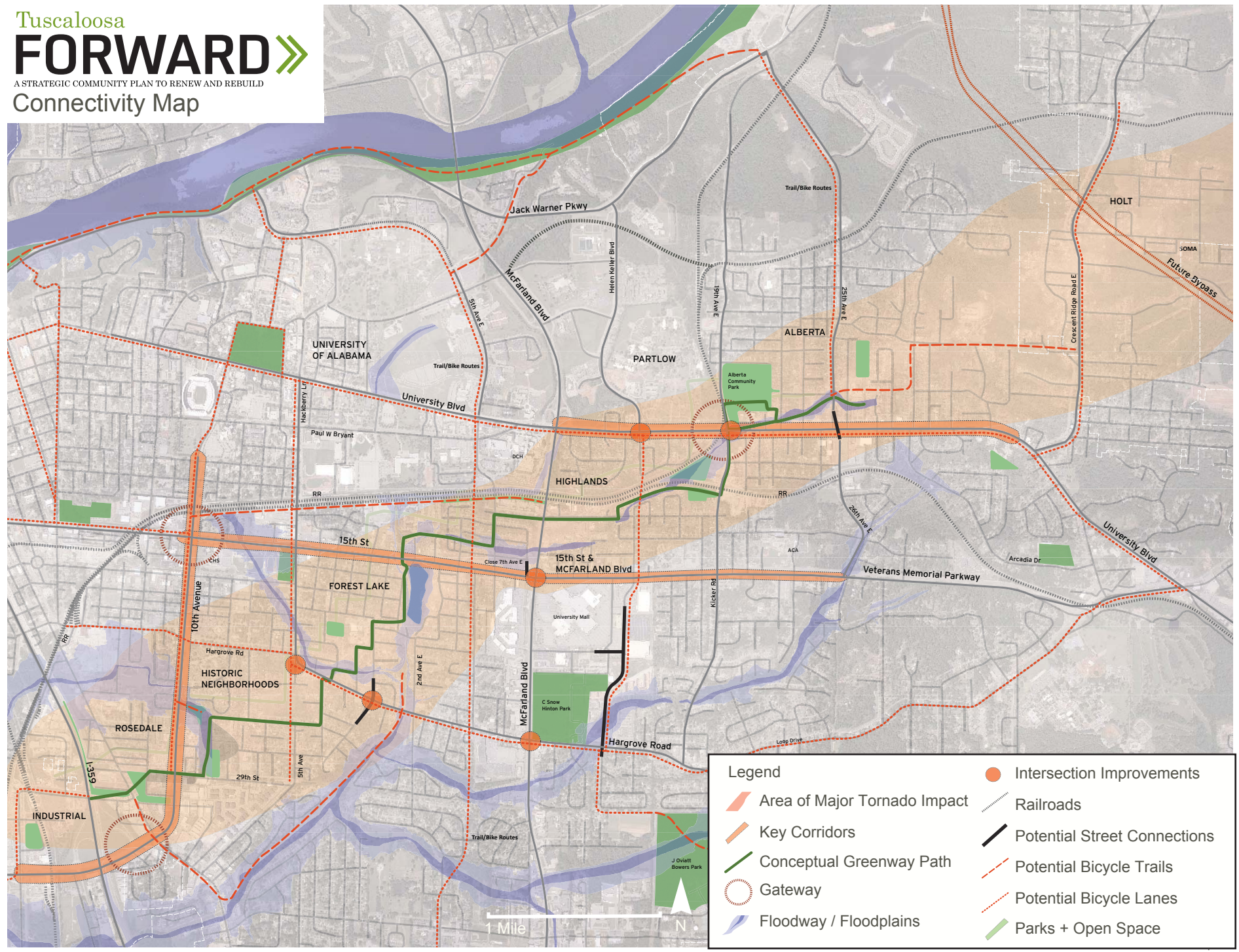
Potential Street Connections that could greatly alleviate traffic flow problems have been identified. These potential connections would require further detailed analysis prior to implementation, but can potentially create greater connectivity and economic development opportunities in the long term.












Potential Bicycle Lanes would be integrated on existing streets and would connect existing amenities and trails with the proposed Greenway.

Potential Bicycle Routes are proposed bicycle trails that connect to existing bicycle infrastructure, proposed bike lanes, and the proposed Greenway.

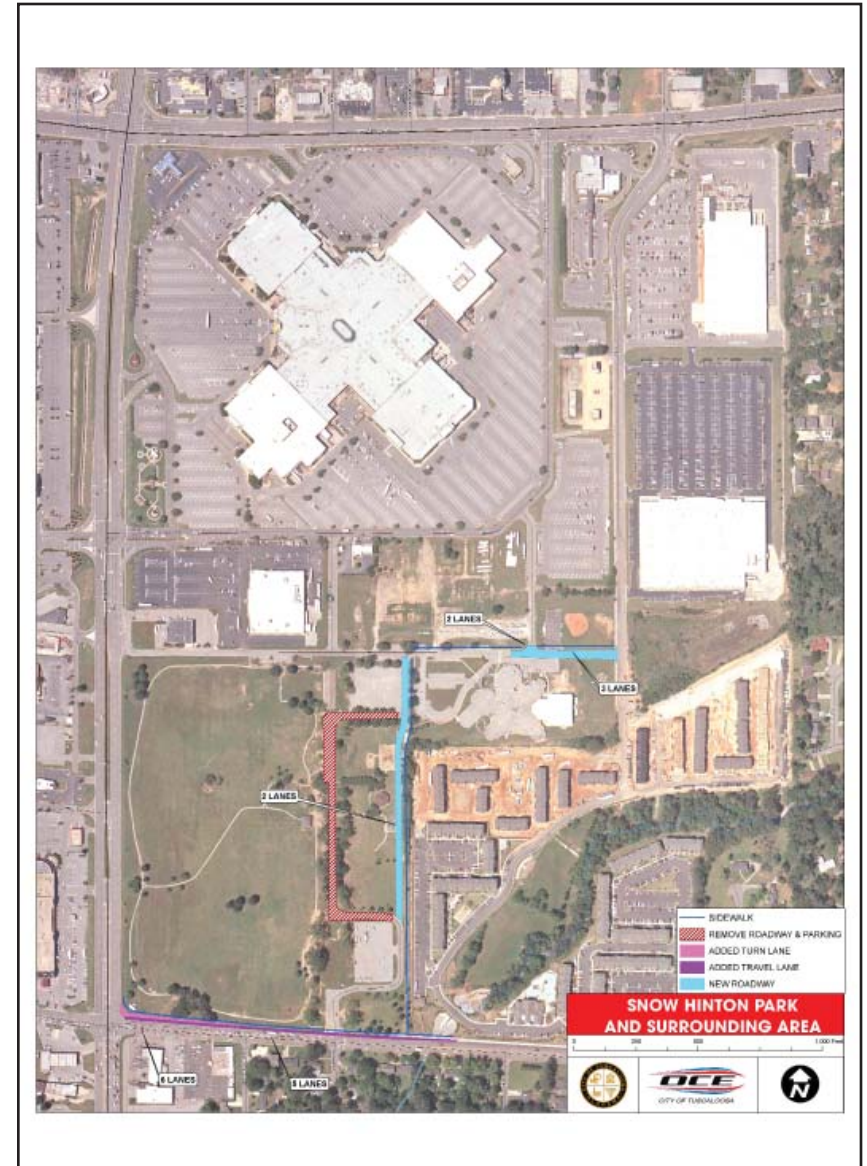
Parks + Open Space amenities exist throughout Tuscaloosa. Connecting these parks would create more comprehensive and accessible recreational opportunities for residents throughout the community.

Tuscaloosa
FORWARD 
 A STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN TO RENEW AND REBUILD
 Connectivity Map

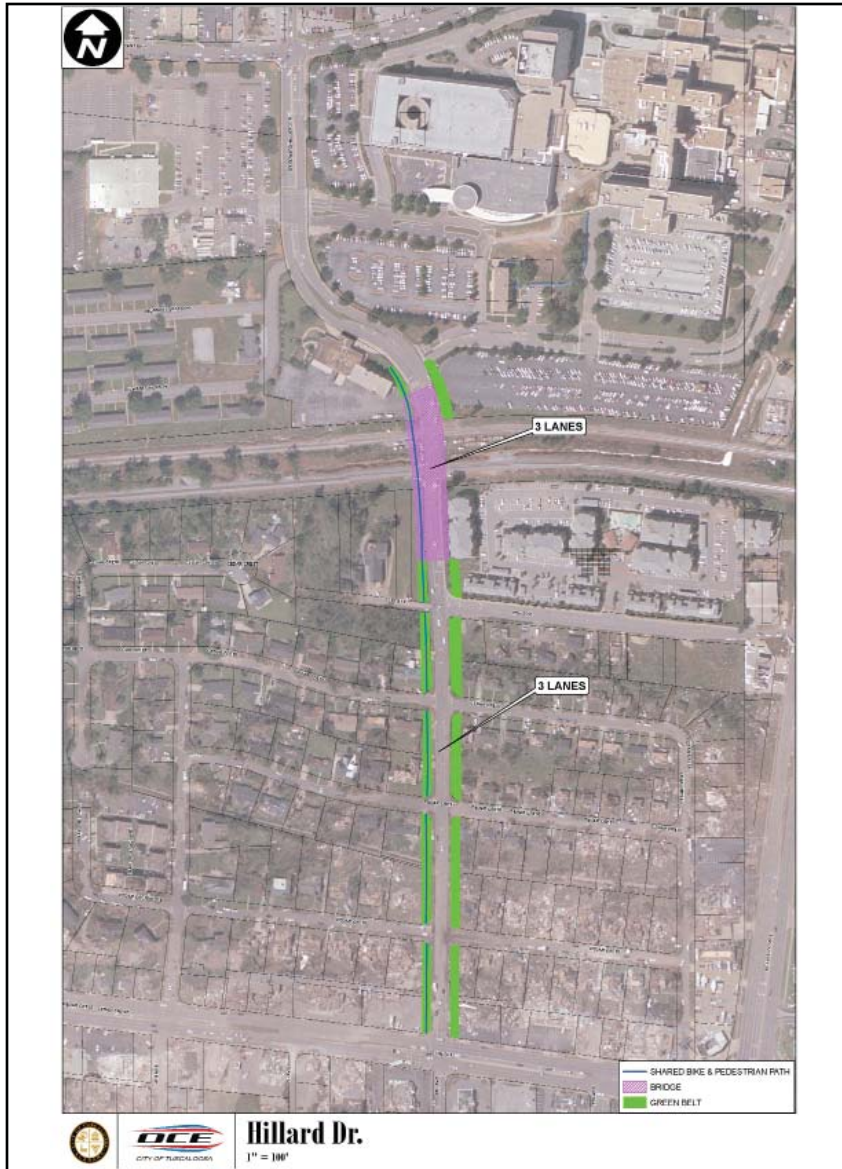


- Legend**
-  Area of Major Tornado Impact
 -  Key Corridors
 -  Conceptual Greenway Path
 -  Gateway
 -  Floodway / Floodplains
 -  Intersection Improvements
 -  Railroads
 -  Potential Street Connections
 -  Potential Bicycle Trails
 -  Potential Bicycle Lanes
 -  Parks + Open Space

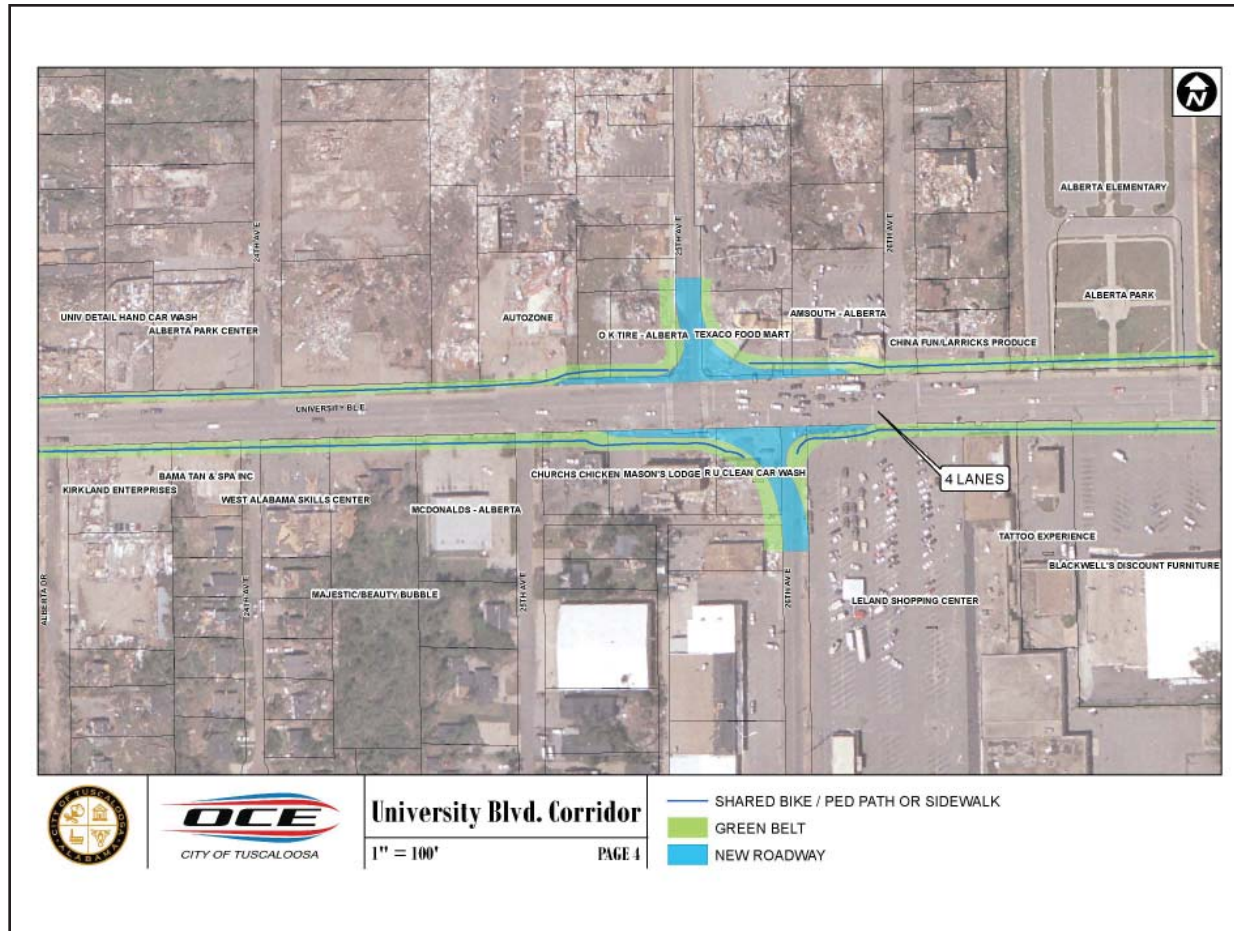
CONCEPTUAL STREET IMPROVEMENTS



CONCEPTUAL STREET IMPROVEMENTS



CONCEPTUAL STREET IMPROVEMENTS



APPENDIX

1. Land Use

- a. Existing Conditions (pre-storm and post-storm summaries)
 - i. Kauloosa Industrial Business Park
 - ii. Rosedale Court/ 10th Avenue/ Historic Neighborhoods
 - iii. Forest Lake Neighborhood
 - iv. 15th Street and McFarland Boulevard
 - v. Alberta/ Crescent Ridge Road

2. Housing

- a. Existing Conditions (pre-storm and post-storm summaries)
 - i. Rosedale Court
 - ii. Forest Lake
 - iii. Alberta City
- b. Challenges for Homeowners
- c. Challenges for Renters
- d. Resources
 - i. City financial mechanisms
 - ii. State financial mechanisms
 - iii. Federal financial mechanisms
 - iv. Federal Policy Priorities
- e. Housing Partners
- f. Additional Best Practices

3. Sustainability

- a. Existing Conditions (pre-storm and post-storm summaries)
 - i. Energy
 - ii. Waste
 - iii. Transport
 - iv. Materials
 - v. Food
 - vi. Water
 - vii. Public Parks
 - viii. Buildings and Neighborhoods

4. Infrastructure and Public Facilities

- a. Existing Conditions (pre-storm and post-storm summaries)
 - i. Stormwater Drainage
 - ii. Water and Sewer
 - iii. Streets and Highways
 - iv. Bicycle Facilities
 - v. Sidewalks and Paths
 - vi. Overhead Utilities

5. Tuscaloosa Forward Town Hall Website Results

- a. One Transformative Project
- b. Vision
- c. Land Use and Urban Design
- d. Housing and Neighborhoods
- e. Infrastructure
- f. Sustainability
- g. Economic Development
- h. Streamline Processes
- i. Partnerships and Collaboration

As residents and businesses move forward to rebuild Tuscaloosa, understanding the conditions that existed immediately prior to and following the tornado's devastation will help inform the possible future of these areas. The following appendix includes a summary of the pre- and post-storm conditions in the areas of land use, housing sustainability, and infrastructure, as well as supplemental resources and best practice information. Finally, a summary of the public comment collected through the crowd-sourcing Mindmixer website is included.

LAND USE

This section provides a summary of the pre-storm and post-storm land use within five distinct areas that experienced the highest degree of devastation from the April 27th, 2011 tornado:

- Kauloosa Industrial Business Park
- Rosedale Court / 10th Avenue / Historic Neighborhoods
- Forest Lake Neighborhood
- 15th Street and McFarland Boulevard;
- Alberta / Crescent Ridge Road
- Forest Lake Neighborhood

Much of the existing conditions narrative is based upon the extensive planning documents prepared for the City over the past ten years. These include: the Citywide Future Land Use Plan; Tuscaloosa 2020; and Specific Area Plans – the West Tuscaloosa Community Plan, the Forest Lake Neighborhood Plan; the University Area Neighborhoods Plan; and the Greater Alberta Community Plan. The City's adopted Future Land Use Plan's six development themes are also a part of the Tuscaloosa Forward Community Plan. These themes are:

- Protect Tuscaloosa's Green Infrastructure
- Maintain Gateways to the City and Enhance Community Character
- Build a City of Neighborhoods
- Expand Transportation and Accessibility Opportunities
- Protect and Reinvest in Older Neighborhoods and Commercial Corridors and Centers
- Support Future Growth of Institutional, Industrial and Commercial Activity Centers.

Kauloosa Industrial Business Park

Pre-Storm Conditions

This is the industrial area just west of the I-359 and 35th Street interchange. It is home to: the City's Environmental Services (garbage collection and recycling operations), Facilities Management, Public Safety Logistics and City Logistics facilities and the Tuscaloosa County Emergency Management Agency, all housed in the 350,000-square foot Curry Building. It also hosts: the City's wastewater treatment facility; CINTAS (uniform services); TAMKO Building Supplies (asphalt roofing products); R.L. Zeigler (prepared meats); PECO Foods (poultry supplier); Supreme Beverages (beer and wine supplier); a private recycling company; and other smaller industrial users. This area has excellent access to rail services and the interstate, as well as local streets. Gateway amenities and landscaping improvements could enhance this important industrial center of Tuscaloosa.

Post Storm Conditions

The tornado destroyed the City's Curry Building and all facilities housed within it. Under the City's rebuilding plan, a new 50,000- square foot Environmental Services facility would be built and possibly include plans to handle an increased load of recyclable materials. There are plans to include at the same location a new 50,000-square foot Public Safety Logistics building to house police and fire equipment, and a new 120,000-square foot City Logistics building to house the City's Maintenance Department. The new Emergency Management Agency building will be located at another location in a 10,000-square foot fortified building and will include the City's 911 hub. Rebuilding plans for privately held facilities such as the CINTAS building and the private recycler's facility are uncertain at this point. Improvements such as upgraded entryways, signage and streetscape features are anticipated as part of the rebuilding of City facilities and other industrial building within Kauloosa Business Park.

Rosedale Court/10th Avenue/Historic Neighborhoods

Pre-Storm Conditions

This area has always had the potential to serve as a major gateway to the University of Alabama (35th Street / I-359 interchange) via 10th Avenue. However, development within this area consists largely of older retail, warehousing and heavy commercial businesses; Rosedale Court, a 16-acre low-income housing project built many years ago and operated by the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority; older single family (mostly rental) and multifamily housing; the Tuscaloosa Armory; the Red Cross; the Salvation Army building which provides shelter to 56 homeless people; and the historic neighborhoods of The Downs, Glendale Gardens, and Hillcrest. The Tuscaloosa Housing Authority was recently awarded an allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits that will replace the existing public housing with 86 units of mixed-income housing development. Historically, there has been a lack of adequate property maintenance; a significant amount of the housing and businesses project a general state of disrepair. The West Tuscaloosa Community Plan recommended addressing the property maintenance issue, improving the streetscape and improving housing conditions throughout the area.

Post Storm Conditions

The tornado had devastating effects on this area of the City. Destroyed buildings included: the Salvation Army and American Red Cross buildings; a substantial portion of Rosedale Court; numerous warehouse buildings; the Tuscaloosa Armory; a large, 40-year old apartment complex east of the Armory; a swath of older homes built around the 1930 – 1950's north of 29th Street and west of 25th Avenue; and homes located in the southernmost portions of the historic neighborhoods of The Downs, Glendale Gardens and Hillcrest. With the exception of perhaps the historic neighborhoods, most of those left homeless by the tornado's destruction were lower income residents with very limited replacement housing options.

Forest Lake Neighborhood

Pre-Storm Conditions

The highly active neighborhood of Forest Lake abuts 15th Street to the north, Hackberry Lane to the west, Hargrove to the south, and the Midtown development to the east. Forest Lake is primarily a single family residential neighborhood of smaller homes, many built post WWII and others built around the 1960's. It is developed along a grid street pattern, but the east-west connectivity of the grid is substantially interrupted by the presence of Forest Lake (privately owned by the 29 adjacent property owners) and two major drainage ways running southward. Many of the streets are narrow, lack curbing and have few sidewalks. Over 50 percent of the single family homes are renter occupied, mostly by students and long term Tuscaloosa residents seeking affordable detached housing. The Forest Lake Neighborhood Plan illustrates a correlation between zoning and ownership. Properties zoned R-1 (larger lots and houses) are more often owner-occupied and properties zoned R-3 (smaller lots and houses) are more often renter occupied.

Forest Lake's strongest assets are the heavy tree canopy, the Lake, and University Place Elementary and Middle Schools, as well as its churches. In addition to the residential development, the northern edge of Forest Lake, adjacent to 15th Street, is bordered by shallow (often less than 150 feet in depth) commercially developed lots primarily zoned "BNS Special Neighborhood Commercial District." One of the major land use conflicts along 15th is the number of multiple curb cuts small commercial properties are permitted. This has substantially degraded the operational characteristics of 15th and limits the opportunity for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely use this corridor, not to mention the reduction in landscaping due to the amount of land devoted to ingress and egress. On the eastern edge of the Forest Lake neighborhood is the large retail center known as "Midtown." However, this development has had limited impacts on Forest Lake due to it being oriented

toward McFarland Boulevard.

The Forest Lake Neighborhood Plan recommended strengthening the single family residential character of the area through revitalization; permitting a mix of residential densities beginning approximately 100 feet east of Forest Lake Drive; permitting the depth of commercial properties fronting 15th Street to extend southward into the Forest Lake neighborhood by a depth of 300 feet west of the lake and by a depth of 600 feet east of the lake; and closing access to 15th Street from 1st, 3rd, and 5th Avenues.

Post Storm Conditions

The tornado's path crossed into the Forest Lake neighborhood just east of the intersection of Hargrove Road with Hackberry Lane. It destroyed or heavily damaged homes along a northeasterly path from Central Church of Christ and University Place Elementary/ Middle School, across Forest Lake (completely destroying all homes on the lake's east and south sides, and many homes north of 18th Street). Before crossing 15th Street, the tornado destroyed or severely damaged most of the fast food restaurants on the south side of this major arterial, including Mike & Ed's, Schlotzsky's, Honey Baked Ham, Smoothie King, Subway, Taco Casa, and McDonald's, as well as a number of other long established commercial businesses. Forest Lake's mature tree canopy is completely gone from around the lake and from approximately 30 percent of the remaining portions of the neighborhood, removing the visual and aural screen from the 15th street commercial corridor.

15th Street and McFarland Boulevard

Pre-Storm Conditions

This area is split by two community plans: The University Area Neighborhood Plan addresses the northwest quadrant west of McFarland Boulevard and north of 15th Street (generally known as the Cedar Crest neighborhood); and the Greater Alberta Community Plan addresses the northeast quadrant east of McFarland Boulevard and north of Veterans Memorial Parkway.

The northwest quadrant (Cedar Crest neighborhood) has many of the residential and commercial characteristics found within the Forest Lake neighborhood. Its 15th Street border is devoted to shallow (less than 130 feet in depth) commercially developed lots zoned "BNS Special Neighborhood Commercial District." The eastern edge of the area abutting McFarland has a Chevron service station, a Chinese restaurant, Krispy Kreme doughnuts, and other commercial businesses. These are very shallow lots (less than 175 feet) zoned BN Neighborhood Commercial District and BGO General Business-Office District. The heart of Cedar Crest is residential and zoned R-1 residential; however, it has drastically different types of residential development and ownership patterns.

East of Dr. Edward Hillard Drive (formerly 6th Avenue), the homes are small (less than 1000 square feet), primarily built right after WWII or earlier, located on small lots; the vast majority are rental units (owned by only a few landlords). There is also a large multifamily complex at the top of the hill adjacent to the railroad tracks. In contrast, west of Hillard Drive, the homes are larger and on slightly larger lots, most built in the 1960's and the majority are owner-occupied. There is a small area on the western edge of this portion of Cedar Crest zoned RMF-1 multifamily zoning.

Although the Cedar Crest area is in close proximity to the University, it has a

major physical barrier – the presence of the railroad track crossing its northern boundary. Although there are a limited number of trains using this track, it can be a significant barrier to access. One of the major land use conflicts along 15th is the number of multiple curb cuts small commercial properties are permitted. This has substantially degraded the operational characteristics of 15th and limits the opportunity for pedestrians and bicyclists to safely use this corridor, as well as a reduction in landscaping due to the amount of land devoted to ingress and egress. The University Area Neighborhood Plan recommended increasing the residential density east of Hillard Drive (going from single family detached to attached units), while maintaining the single family detached designation west of Hillard Drive. No expansion of the commercial zoning was recommended.

The northeast quadrant, bordered by McFarland Boulevard on the west and by Veterans Memorial Parkway to the south, is significantly different from the northwest quadrant (Cedar Crest). This is a predominately commercial quadrant (zoned BN Neighborhood Commercial District), “anchored” by the longstanding Wood Square shopping center that has as its two main tenants Hobby Lobby and Big Lots, and out parcel eateries such as Milos and Full Moon Bar-B-Que. There are a number of other commercial and office uses throughout this quadrant, including a CVS drugstore on the corner of McFarland and Veterans. The area has a “remnant” of older single family residential development (zoned R-3 single family) wedged between the Wood Square shopping center and the CVS drug store, some R-4 zoned multifamily immediately to the east, and further east somewhat newer R-2 zoned single family. Internal commercial circulation is limited to 13th Street and Lynnwood Avenue (13th Avenue) and Eastwood, most of which crosses through single family neighborhoods. The Greater Alberta Community Plan recommended creating a “business overlay corridor” for the commercial portion of this area.

Post Storm Conditions

As the April 27th tornado continued its destructive northeasterly path, it crossed 15th Street and destroyed or severely damaged businesses fronting the arterial (Express Oil Change, Hokkaido restaurant, professional offices, and

others) and a large majority of residential development within the Cedar Crest neighborhood, particularly the eastern portion. As it moved across McFarland Boulevard, it destroyed commercial businesses such as the Chevron service station, Krispy Kreme doughnuts, and other businesses fronting McFarland Boulevard’s east side. It then crossed over McFarland and completely destroyed the Wood Square shopping center. It continued on an alignment with 13th Street, completely destroying World Gym and many professional offices and homes immediately south of the railroad, as well as a substantial amount of the tree canopy within The Highlands and causing damage to homes within this neighborhood.

Alberta/ Crescent Ridge Road

Pre-Storm Conditions

Much of Alberta's development dates prior to the interstate system, when US 11 was the main artery through Tuscaloosa for traffic heading west to Mississippi or east toward Birmingham. Much of the older commercial establishments were developed to service through- traffic as well as residential neighborhoods. After the opening of Interstate 59/20 and competing commercial sites within the City, the commercial area fell on tough economic times. Today, strip commercial development stretches almost the full length of University Boulevard from the viaduct to Crescent Ridge Road, mostly consisting of older commercial centers and stand alone businesses with individual access points. Some of the largest non-residential uses are public / semi-public uses such as Alberta Elementary, the Jaycees Park, Partlow Hospital and churches.

A majority of the land area in Alberta along Crescent Ridge Road is devoted to older single family residential development, much of it built at least 60 years ago, located on small lots lacking sidewalks or curb and gutters. Newer residential development can be found to the northeast and southeast. There is a scattering of older multifamily complexes within Alberta, including a substantially deteriorated complex immediately east of Alberta Elementary, and others primarily west of 25th Avenue and south of 7th Street. The Greater Alberta Community Plan focused substantially on the revitalization of the entire Alberta area; creating a town center; addressing property maintenance and rezoning where necessary; instituting building design standards; the need for streetscape improvements; and improving the walkability of the area.

Post Storm Conditions

The tornado's most eastern area of destruction within Tuscaloosa impacted the heart of the Alberta community and cut across unincorporated areas along Crescent Ridge Road and into the Holt community. The destruction was most heavily felt in a quarter-mile wide swath that stretched for 2.5 miles

from Kicker Road to Hurricane Creek. The tornado destroyed or severely damaged residential neighborhoods along its path as well as many of Alberta's commercial businesses along University Boulevard. The destruction through the Alberta community and across Crescent Ridge Road displaced a large segment of lower income families living in smaller 60+ year old rental housing and older apartments. Alberta experienced the greatest loss and/or severe damage of public facilities – Alberta Elementary, Fire Station 4, the East Police Precinct, and the Police Athletic League building.

HOUSING

According to the City of Tuscaloosa's 2010-2014 consolidated plan, over 53 percent of all Tuscaloosa City households were considered low-income based on 2000 census data. The U.S. Department of Housing Urban and Development (HUD) 2011 median income for a family of four in Tuscaloosa is \$ 55,700.

2010 census reports a total of 40,800 housing units (42 percent owner-occupied; 58 percent renters; 11 percent vacant) in Tuscaloosa. Although 2010 statistics show an average monthly rent of \$366 for the storm-affected area, local market rental information reveals a monthly rent of \$550 - \$650 for a two-bedroom unit. Rental units used for student housing is averaging \$700- \$800 per bedroom, with an average monthly rent of \$1,500 for the same two-bedroom home.

Most of the city's housing stock was built between 1973 (house and condos) and 1980 (multi-family housing), with 65 percent of total housing stock built after 1970. Owner-occupied homes and condos have predominately 3- and 4-bedrooms. Renter-occupied apartments in Tuscaloosa range from 1-3 bedrooms. Housing types are mostly single-family detached, with a mix of 2-50 unit multi-family structures, and some mobile homes.

2010 ESRI information showed a 17 percent vacancy in the affected area totaling an estimated 964 units, with rental housing representing 53 percent, and for sale units at 10 percent. It projected population growth in the damaged area at an annual rate of .98 percent through year 2015. The Tuscaloosa Housing Authority (THA) owns and operates 1,237 public housing units serving very low-income families and individuals and administers 1,000 rental vouchers to low-income households. It has over 700 families on its waiting list.

Single-family detached units account for 65 percent of the unit type for owner-occupied and rental housing in the storm-affected areas. Most multi-family developments affected were used as student housing. 39 percent of the occupied units in the affected area were owner-occupied, while 61 percent were renter-occupied. Of the owner-occupied units, an estimated 41 percent had no mortgages on the property, and as a result, many of these homes did not carry homeowners insurance. The 2010 average home value in the affected area was \$108,409 with a monthly average mortgage payment of \$755. Forty-three percent of all affected homes were valued below \$100,000, 47 percent were valued at \$100,000 - \$199,000, with 10 percent of the homes valued at \$200,000-\$500,000.

The April 27, 2011 tornado damaged approximately 5,000 housing units, or over 12 percent of the city's housing stock. Over half of these homes were severely damaged or destroyed. The Tuscaloosa Forward Housing Subcommittee has identified affordable housing, senior housing, student and faculty housing, and overall housing improvements enhancing the quality of life for Tuscaloosa residents as a priority in the rebuilding effort.

Housing Characteristics & Types in Storm	percent of Total Housing
Damage Area	
Single family detached	60 percent
Single family attached	2 percent
2 family units	3 percent
3 to 4 family units	6 percent
5 to 9 family units	6 percent
10 to 19 family units	8 percent
20 to 49 family units	6 percent
50 or more family units	6 percent
Mobile Home	3 percent
	100 percent

Estimated Rebuild Calculation							
Level of Damage	Total Units	Renter Total (61 percent)	Single Family (65 percent)	2 or more units multifamily (35 percent)	Owner Total (39 percent)	Single Family (65 percent)	2 or more units multifamily (35 percent)
Affected **	2,493	1,521	988	532	972	632	340
Damaged **	1,612	983	639	564	629	409	220
Destroyed **	1,257	767	498	268	490	319	172
Total	5,362	3,271	2,126	1,365	2,091	1,359	732

* Calculation based upon the assumed 5,362 housing units impacted against the statistical percentage of unit type between owner and renter in the storm-damaged area. Information from the US Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. ESRI forecasts for 2010.

** **Affected** - habitable/repairs needed **Damaged** - not habitable **Destroyed** - complete rebuild

Pre-storm Household and Income Characteristics in Storm Damage Area (ESRI report)	Storm Area
Total Population in affected area	10,342
Total Housing Units	5,666
OWNER Occupied units (39 percent of total occupied units)	1,819
RENTER Occupied units (61 percent of total occupied units)	2,885
VACANT Units	964
Housing Units by Value and Monthly Costs	
Median House Value	\$108,409
Median Monthly Mortgage Payment	\$755
Median Monthly Rent Payment	\$366
Households by Income	
Median Household Income 2010	\$28,106
Extremely Low Income (<30 percent of HUD Income Limits*)	35 percent
Very Low Income (51<80 percent HUD Income Limits*)	15 percent
Low to Moderate Income (>81 percent HUD Income Limits*)	50 percent
Demographics	
White households (48 percent are owners)	49.80 percent
Black households (27 percent are owners)	46.20 percent
Other	4.00 percent

* HUD Median Income for 2011 is \$55,700

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Rosedale Court

Pre-Storm Conditions

The Rosedale Court area is 16 acres of very low- and low-income housing operated by the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority. Prior to the storm, THA had been awarded an allocation of 9 percent Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to redevelop 86 units of housing on the same area destroyed by the storm.

Post Storm Conditions

THA encountered a severe loss of housing and office space from the storm. A large percentage of the housing was destroyed and 97 families needed to be relocated. Because the THA has LIHTC financing in place they will rebuild these units with rents at or below 60 percent of the area median income. This will be the first phase of a planned mixed-income development. Financing for the remaining phases have not been secured.

A homeless shelter owned and operated by the Salvation Army was destroyed in the storm. This shelter accommodated 56 beds. The City's 2009 three-year C.H.A.L.E.N.G plan to end homelessness identified that 41 percent of the homeless population is made up of persons with severe mental illness, 15 percent with chronic substance abuse, and 44 percent veterans. At that time, the report indicated a homeless housing gap of 10 units. The loss of this shelter significantly increases that gap. The remaining shelters in the City of Tuscaloosa primarily accommodate woman and children only.

Rosedale Court is fully insured and represents an opportunity for reconstruction similar to McKenzie Court, a successful and vibrant HOPE VI development on the west side of Tuscaloosa. Rosedale Court is also located on 10th Avenue, a gateway to the University Dome, which on game day attracts over 100,000 fans.

Forest Lake

Pre-Storm Conditions

The Forest Lake and other historic district areas affected had an average household income of \$15,510 - \$21,500. Forest Lake is one of the City's older areas and is a vital and popular community of Tuscaloosa. Given its central location, the lake and low crime rate, this community has historically attracted families, seniors and students. The 2005 Forest Lake Specific Neighborhood Plan identifies a 50 percent split between owner and renter occupied housing. It is predominantly an area of single-family residential uses, with the inclusion of a number of multi-family residential units occupied by mostly students located around the perimeter of the community.

Post Storm Conditions

The tornado's path crossed into the Forest Lake neighborhood just east of the intersection of Hargrove Road with Hackberry Lane. It destroyed or heavily damaged homes along a northeasterly path from Central Church of Christ and University Place Elementary/ Middle School, across Forest Lake (completely destroying all homes on the lake's east and south sides, and many homes north of 18th Street). It has a strong neighborhood association which has identified the need to incorporate mixed-use development in the rebuild.

Alberta City

Pre-Storm Conditions

Alberta and Holt have average household incomes of \$9,000-\$15,000. Alberta City represents an area with a high percentage of very low-income rental housing, especially in neighborhoods made up of single-family detached housing. It is also a rich multi-cultural area with very active faith-based communities.

Post Storm Conditions

The Pine Cove development located in Alberta City, a 48-unit LIHTC project for persons 55 years and over, was destroyed and will need to be rebuilt. The only other Tuscaloosa senior housing developments reported by the City's Economic Development and Planning Unit is McConnell Hills, a 100-unit HUD Section 8 new construction development, and CSP Village Apartments, a 40-unit HUD Section 202 project. The 2010 population by age profile for the damaged area identifies 8 percent of the population between ages 55 – 64 and 13.5 percent for 65 and older.

From a housing standpoint, Alberta City is a possible area for the University of Alabama student housing expansion. As enrollment increases, likely to reach 35,000 students within the next 2 to 3 years, the need for more student and faculty housing will increase. This will be an opportunity to rebuild a healthy mix of affordable housing for renters and owners utilizing government programs, THA's section 8 homeownership program and the City's homeownership counseling and down payment assistance programs. Public stakeholder meetings have also identified the opportunity to use the rebuilding of the Alberta Elementary school as the core community structure for large scale neighborhood planning.

CHALLENGES FOR HOMEOWNERS

An average replacement cost for rebuilding a quality 1,200 SF 3 bedroom 2 bath house is approximately \$110,000. Homeowners, particularly low-income homeowners, are faced with the challenge to finance the difference between their insurance coverage and the cost to rebuild.

CHALLENGES FOR RENTERS

Due to the loss of student housing, many landlords are vying to rent to students to get higher rental income on vacant units ready for occupancy, limiting the number of affordable units available for permanent relocation of families displaced by the storm. Landlords are renting units to students for \$700 - \$800 per bedroom with an average 2 bedroom rent of \$1,500. Statistics show that 50 percent of the affected population was extremely low- to very-low income households. The median income for the affected area is \$28,000, with 35 percent of the population earning at or below \$16,700 (extremely low) and 15 percent earning at or below \$27,850 (very low). Two-bedroom affordable rents for the extremely low-income and very low-income families would need to be less than \$415 and \$696 respectively.

RESOURCES

City Financial Mechanisms

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). This program can support the Emergency repair program; Housing Counseling for renters and buyers, including pre-purchase counseling, budget management, default and credit counseling; infrastructure and streetscape improvements around new developments; payment to the Salvation Army for social work services; and contracts with experienced nonprofit(s) to assist seniors and others needing assistance with navigating the complex process of selecting and managing of home repair/rebuilding contractors and applying for public and private recovery resources.

HOME funds. This program provides down payment assistance averaging \$5,000; this can go up to \$15,000 for disabled individuals.

City Acquisition. The City has the authority to acquire property that has not paid on its assessments. The practice is not common – but this may be a mechanism to take over blighted and abandoned property. Center for Community Progress has expertise in adapting local laws to make it possible for municipalities to acquire blighted and improperly maintained privately-owned properties or those for which assessments have not been paid. The City can also study laws/policies of other cities.

Housing Reconstruction 80/20. Through this program for the new construction of single-family units developed on a former single family site, a Contractor can get an interest free loan up to \$100,000. A buyer can get a second mortgage from the City for 20 percent of the total amount to be financed, which is deferred until the first mortgage is paid off or the house is sold. Funded by both CDBG and HOME funds, the program can do three to four homes at a time. The City may be able to tap into Section 108 funding to increase funding capacity for this program.

State Financial Mechanisms

Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program. This program can provide significant resources to help with rebuilding efforts. The City of Tuscaloosa should seek help immediately from the Alabama Housing Finance Authority (AHFA) to fast-track and/or provide advance commitment of its 2012 credits for rebuilding homes in affected areas.

Qualify Allocation Plan. The City can work now to get AHFA to adjust the Qualify Allocation Plan (QAP) for 2012 to prioritize projects that replace tornado-damaged/destroyed housing. Actively work with AHFA to define rebuilding priorities to make sure the City's highest priority projects will score well in the 2012 QAP, including providing additional points for mixed-income developments and housing built to Enterprise Green Communities standards.

Promotion of Best Practices. The City can form study teams of City and AHFA officials to tour high-quality, green and mixed-income developments in Atlanta, Biloxi, Nashville and New Orleans as examples of best practices and disaster rebuilding.

HOME. The HOME Investment Partnerships program is a federally funded program that provides annual allocations that may be used by developers to buy land and build affordable housing.

Step Up. This is a homeownership program designed specifically for moderate-income home buyers who can afford a mortgage, but need help with the down payment. AHFA offers down payment assistance with no sales price limits. Participants may earn up to \$97,300 and remain eligible for the Step Up program, regardless of household size or location.

100 percent financing for Disaster areas. Alabama residents whose homes were destroyed in the April 27 tornadoes may not need a down payment to buy a new home. AHFA, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development, is offering 100 percent financing through its Step Up program for families displaced by severe weather in the counties declared federal disaster areas. Through Section 203(h), FHA helps victims in presidential designated disaster areas recover by making it easier for them to get mortgages and become homeowners or re-establish themselves as homeowners. Individuals are eligible for this program if their homes are located in an area that was designated by the president as a disaster area, and if their homes were destroyed or damaged to such an extent that reconstruction or replacement is necessary.

Habitat for Humanity lending. Working together with Habitat for Humanity, AHFA purchases mortgage loans from Alabama's Habitat affiliates. This process allows the affiliates to receive the loan amount up front in a lump sum while AHFA receives the monthly payments from the affiliates for the life of the loan. The affiliate then uses the up-front funds to build more housing for low-income families. Abiding by AHFA's enabling legislation, the Habitat affiliate solicits the assistance of a local lender to serve as a conduit for the sale of the loan. The affiliate sells the mortgage to the local bank, which then sells the loan to AHFA. This productive cycle unites the local Habitat affiliates, the lending community and AHFA to give Alabama's less fortunate families a chance at homeownership.

Federal Financial Mechanisms

Choice Neighborhood funding. Formerly known as HOPE VI, this program could support the redevelopment of Rosedale. The program may not receive funding in the FY2012 appropriations budget given the current budget environment.

Section 8 program rental assistance subsidies. New vouchers may not be available at this time, although Louisiana was able to secure 3,000 additional vouchers targeted to seniors and permanent supportive housing, following Hurricane Katrina.

Public Housing Comprehensive Grant Program. This program is intended for capital repairs to public housing authority projects. The Housing Authority may also want to explore if it is eligible for additional funds under the replacement housing factor.

Southeastern Disaster Relief Act (PENDING APPROVAL). This act provides for penalty free withdrawals from retirement plans; losses to individual's home and property; tax exempt bond financing; employee retention credit for employers; additional low income housing tax credits through 2013 of \$8 per capita in the disaster area.

Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs. These programs are intended for shelter plus care, supportive housing and single room occupancy. HUD VASH program. HUD has allocated over 20,000 "Housing Choice" Section 8 vouchers to Public Housing Authorities throughout the country for eligible homeless veterans. This program allows veterans and their families to live in veteran-selected apartment units.

US Department of Veteran Affairs Capital grants. These grants provide up to 65 percent of total development cost and per diem funding for supportive housing for homeless veterans.

Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program (AHP). This program provides grants to support specific development projects serving low-income households.

Federal Policy Priorities

The City of Tuscaloosa may consider active engagement with Congress and HUD to push for important federal programs and policies to support rebuilding priorities, such as:

Modification of the National Flood Insurance Program. This program categorizes multi-family properties as commercial buildings and can also provide per-unit coverage. The current program provides maximum of \$250,000 in coverage per structure, regardless of size or number of dwelling units.

Temporary disaster vouchers. If temporary vouchers were made available to the State of Alabama after the tornado outbreak, the city can ensure the expiration date of these vouchers provides ample time for displaced residents to make well-informed decisions and secure permanent housing without the stress of looming unrealistic deadlines. Vouchers provided after Hurricane Katrina were extended multiple times; each deadline added unnecessary stress for residents due to the unpredictability/ uncertainty of whether extensions would be provided.

Special Voucher Allocations. The City can determine housing needs of low-income seniors and special needs populations and consider requesting special allocation of vouchers to address these needs.

Disaster Legislation. The City can actively support disaster legislation introduced by Senator Richard Shelby that includes an additional \$8 per capita in credit authority.

Housing Partners

Local Housing Partner

- City of Tuscaloosa Office of Planning and Economic Development – oversee all of the housing related development programs.
- Alabama Housing Finance Authority
- Regional HUD office
- Habitat for Humanity of Tuscaloosa
- Tuscaloosa Housing Authority
- The West Alabama Community Foundation
- West Side CDC, the only CHDO in City of Tuscaloosa at the moment
- The Community Services Programs of West Alabama – single family rehab
- The Salvation Army
- Private development partners with experience in building affordable and mixed income housing.
- Many private developers own property in Forest Lake and in Alberta.

Exploring assemblage development opportunities with this pool of investors may be an action step required when considering implementation strategies

National Housing Partners

- Enterprise Community Partners
- Southface
- Center for Community Progress

Additional Best Practices

Best Practices from the Gulf Coast: Green, Affordable and Built to Last

Public Housing Redevelopment. Providence Community Housing and Enterprise were selected to plan and develop a new community on and around the site of the former Lafitte public housing development, a 27.5 acre parcel containing 900 apartments in the historic Tremé/Lafitte neighborhood of New Orleans. The development plan emerged from a charrette process that involved residents of the former Lafitte public housing complex in New Orleans shortly after the hurricanes, as well as those who were evacuated to Houston and Baton Rouge.

Key development principles include:

- No net loss of subsidized housing
- Reduced density of the Lafitte site made possible by redeveloping vacant properties in the surrounding neighborhood
- Opportunity for all residents of the old Lafitte community to return
- Meaningful resident involvement in the planning process
- Focus on comprehensive community development, not just housing

When construction is complete, the project will feature 1500 homes and apartments that are healthy and energy-efficient -- a one-for-one replacement of all 900 subsidized apartments and the development of an additional 600 homes for sale to working families and first-time homeowners. The new community is also being developed in partnership with L&M Development Partners, the Lafitte Residents Council and the Housing Authority of New Orleans. The first 134 homes are complete, all of which meet the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria. The next onsite phase of 142 units is currently under construction along with an additional 70 homes in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Land Banks

Atlanta Fulton County Land Bank (AFCLB) - Land banks are effective mechanisms to aggregate and take control of land in strategic locations for development and/or blight removal, with the power to release these parcels at a future time in a manner consistent with the public's interest. An example is the Atlanta Fulton County Land Bank. The AFCLB Authority is a public authority created to efficiently hold, manage and develop tax-foreclosed property, vacant and abandoned property. The Land Bank has been a critical component of the development and redevelopment efforts of the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, community development corporations, non-profit and for-profit developers. These entities and various other stakeholders share a common vision of a city and county that provide a wide array of affordable and market housing combined with vibrant commerce. The Land Bank Authority has had significant involvement in creating affordable housing and promoting economic development by leveraging its unique ability to extinguish and serve as the central disposition entity for certain Sheriff and Marshall Deeds.

SUSTAINABILITY

The following topics were reviewed by the Building Design / Architecture Subcommittee of the Tuscaloosa Forward Core Working Group to understand some pre-storm conditions that tell the sustainability story of any given community: Energy, Waste, Transport, Materials, Food, Water, Green Space and Architecture. What follows is a brief summary of the pre-storm and post-storm status of those topics within the context of Tuscaloosa.

ENERGY

Pre-Storm Conditions

Local energy sources include coal-generated electricity and natural gas with propane in outlying areas. In 2008, Alabama Power instituted a net metering program, which encourages residents and businesses to invest in renewable energy by providing buy-back options for energy production. There is a Residential Energy Code for Alabama (RECA 2004), which is based on the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC 2000). As a voluntary code, it is not clear how widespread it is implemented. The 2006 IECC is a mandatory energy code for buildings constructed or remodeled using state funds, with enforcement beginning December 1, 2008. Information regarding compliance is available at www.bc.alabama.gov.

Post Storm Conditions

As part of an emerging interest in sustainability, and an expanding breadth of knowledge to make the economic, societal and environmental case for energy-efficiency and healthy buildings, the post-storm scenario in Tuscaloosa provides an open door to renewable energy exploration and building standards that put a premium on decreased operational costs for building owners.

WASTE

Pre-Storm Conditions

The City of Tuscaloosa collects and transport household waste to the Black Warrior Solid Waste Disposal Facility near Coker. (This landfill is a Municipal Solid Waste Landfill that meets the Subtitle D requirements of EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976.) This facility was opened in 1977 and as of 2007 reports 2.5 million tons of waste in place, with a Permitted Daily Volume of 1500 tons. These solid waste services are contracted with Waste Management. With regard to recycling, there have been limited curbside services in a few neighborhoods of Tuscaloosa for a few years, including aluminum, steel, plastics (#1 and #2 bottles only), cardboard, and mixed paper. Glass can be recycled at the local Target. Yard waste in Tuscaloosa is collected and transported to various inert landfills within Tuscaloosa County. Finally, special events exist for e-cycling, hazardous household waste and phone book recycling. On the University side, the recycling program at UA was selected as one of five finalists in the 2010 Southern Association of College and University Business Officers Best Practices competition.

Post Storm Conditions

One positive step since the storm (which damaged or destroyed most of the city's garbage and recycling trucks) is that curbside recycling is going city-wide and garbage collection is being reduced to once per week (in lieu of twice) to encourage recycling. There are also several privately owned and operated recycling facilities in Tuscaloosa and in the county. This is a great example of how the status quo can be re-directed in the wake of the storm.

TRANSPORT

Pre-Storm Conditions

The primary mode of transportation in Tuscaloosa is the automobile. Once a streetcar town; the only forms of public transportation available now are the bus in town and the train station for Amtrak passenger service on the New York to New Orleans Crescent Line. There are two bus systems: the Tuscaloosa Transit Authority bus lines and the University of Alabama's Crimson Ride, which primarily covers campus destinations. The City buses are limited in their hours and coverage. The University has made an effort to remove cars from campus and in 2009 announced their car-sharing program with Zipcar (www.zipcar.com/uAlabama/). Zipatlas.com indicates that 10.90 percent of Tuscaloosans carpool to work. There are two bicycle clubs in Tuscaloosa: Druid City Bicycle Club and West Alabama Mountain Biking Association. The former is an organization dedicated to participating in, planning, sponsoring, and encouraging recreational cycling activities in the West Alabama area. The latter focuses on trail maintenance in West Alabama for mountain bike enthusiasts.

Post Storm Conditions

Currently, Tuscaloosa is not perceived by its residents as a "walkable" or "bikable" city. Yet, these were common descriptors of the future Tuscaloosa in many of the community conversations after the storm. There are many opportunities, as identified in the other portions of this plan, to create livable, walkable neighborhoods. The presence of two active bike clubs in the City provides further opportunities to encourage biking/walking as a primary mode of transit (not just for recreation) as part of an overall multi-modal transportation infrastructure.

MATERIALS

Pre-Storm Conditions

Aside from a small-scale Habitat for Humanity ReStore, there does not seem to be a culture of architectural/building material salvage and reuse in Tuscaloosa. Though lumber is regionally prevalent, much of it is exported. Sandstone and North Alabama Stone are regionally available. Refer to the section on Waste regarding recycling opportunities in Tuscaloosa.

Post Storm Conditions

Aside from increased emphasis on recycling services, there do not appear to be any substantial difference in local/regional material options. Opportunities to create new products or support sustainable development of existing resources may be available, but not much conversation about this was put forth.

FOOD

Pre-Storm Conditions

There appears to be a growing interest in locally produced food in the Tuscaloosa area. Two farmer's markets were in place prior to the storm, and continue to run throughout the spring, summer and fall: Tuscaloosa Farmer's Market and the Canterbury Homegrown Alabama Market. There is also a growing interest in community gardens / urban agriculture. The PARA Garden Plots and the Druid City Garden Project are two opportunities for citizens to grow their own produce.

At least one restaurant downtown (Epiphany) features local and regional ingredients. These initiatives are important to a sustainable community plan because of the dire health statistics associated with the state of Alabama. In 2011, Alabama was ranked second in a U.S. obesity ranking by CalorieLab with 33 percent of Alabamans shown as being obese and 70 percent as either overweight or obese. In the past several years, Alabama has consistently

scored high on these rankings, which suggests that healthy lifestyles and healthy diets could go a long way in transforming this community.

Post Storm Conditions

Construction of an 18,000-square-foot farmer's market and community center was approved in February but the April 27 tornado pushed back the completion date to January. The \$3 million project will also house the Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports Commission. The building is along the city's Riverwalk. It will serve as a community center when the farmer's market isn't operating.

WATER

Pre-Storm Conditions

Supply. Lake Tuscaloosa was constructed in response to the rising population of Tuscaloosa, which began to consume more water than its two current reservoirs, Harris Lake and Lake Nicol, could provide. Harris Lake now only handles industrial water and Lake Nicol is used as a backup source.

Treatment. Currently, Lake Tuscaloosa's water is treated for human consumption as well as providing some industrial raw water. There are two primary water treatment plants in Tuscaloosa: the Ed Love Water Treatment Plant and the Jerry Plott Water Treatment Plant. The Ed Love plant consistently meets state and federal regulations for water quality, receiving numerous awards over the years.

Consumption. One of the City's most valuable assets is its abundant supply of good quality water. The City believes that numerous businesses and industries have located to Tuscaloosa because of it. According to the U.S. Geological Survey data from 2000, Alabama is ranked 10th (highest) of the 50 states in terms of water withdrawals per capita (2,245gpd/person), 11th (highest) in terms of public supply withdrawals and 18th (highest) in terms of domestic water withdrawals. This suggests that there is room for improvement in terms of water

conservation.

Quality. The Black Warrior River drains portions of seventeen counties in Alabama. Near Tuscaloosa, the river flows out of the rocky Cumberland Plateau and enters the sandy East Gulf Coastal Plain, forming the border of Greene and Hale counties in the Black Belt. In 2011 the Black Warrior became one of America's Most Endangered Rivers. For many years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has allowed the majority of the Black Warrior River watershed's approximately 95 active coal mines to operate under a general permit known as Nationwide Permit (NWP) 21. NWP 21 does not take local wetland and stream conditions into account, study the possible impacts of the mines or provide for public input. This situation contrasts with the process in other Appalachian states where the Corps last year suspended the use of NWP 21 to require more careful consideration of a mine's impacts on water resources and the environment.

Stormwater. There have been minimal efforts to use stormwater runoff, collect rainwater for use via rain barrels and/or cisterns. There do not appear to be any programs related to disconnecting residential or commercial downspouts from the municipal stormwater system. Flooding in some areas has prompted awareness surrounding stormwater management. The prevalent approach to stormwater is to convey it away using pipes as opposed to point-source solutions such as rain gardens, bio-swales, etc.

Post Storm Conditions

The April storm did not significantly alter the pre-storm water conditions in Tuscaloosa. It did, however, open up opportunities to specifically address flooding problems and to consider a comprehensive approach to water conservation, water quality and stormwater management.

PUBLIC PARKS

Pre-Storm Conditions

The public parks in Tuscaloosa are owned and operated by the Tuscaloosa County Parks and Recreation Authority (PARA). Their website identifies the different types of public parks and facilities that exist in the county and city: www.tcpa.org. Based on recent community conversations, the current parks are more passive in nature.

Post Storm Conditions

While some parks sustained damage in the tornado, multiple park centers have hosted recovery operations. Rosedale Park and the Lion's Club Building were destroyed, and Jaycee Park and Harmon Park were damaged. The Hughes Center and Shelby Park have been partially reserved as FEMA registration sites. The McAbee Center is partially reserved for Tuscaloosa's Volunteer Credentialing Center. All other parks are open.

BUILDING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Pre-Storm Conditions

Historic. There is some photographic documentation available that illustrates examples of early Tuscaloosan architecture. An examination of this material may offer insight into architectural design that better reflects the climate within which it is designed and built. There are two organizations that focus on the architectural heritage of Tuscaloosa. The City of Tuscaloosa Historic Preservation Commission was created in 2004 to assure that Tuscaloosa's historic resources are maintained in a manner appropriate to the city's heritage. Part of their mission is to assure alignment with the Historic Preservation Commission Design Guidelines. The Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society is dedicated to preserving the area's heritage and has two dozen Historic Districts and Properties in Tuscaloosa, three of which sustained severe damage in the April 2011 tornado (Downs, Glendale Gardens, and Hillcrest).

Green. From the perspective of sustainable design and construction initiatives, there is not a local U.S. Green Building Council chapter in Tuscaloosa. The state of Alabama has five branches of their chapter: Birmingham, Central Alabama, North Alabama, Gulf Coast and Auburn University (www.usgbcfal.org). As of this writing, there is one LEED-certified building in Tuscaloosa, a LEED Gold Core & Shell project along the riverfront (2200 Jack Warner Parkway). There are five other projects registered for LEED, but not yet certified, three of which are associated with the federal government. This does not include LEED for Homes projects or any that are registered with the USGBC as Confidential.

Post Storm Conditions

The Building Design Subcommittee of the Tuscaloosa Forward Core Work Group asked, "What was the architecture of Tuscaloosa before we had air-conditioning?" Similarly, "What would our town look like if we focused on pedestrian and bike flow, more than on vehicular traffic flow?" Though we acknowledge that air-conditioning and automobiles are here to stay, examining architecture and urban planning before them can often provide valuable insight into a sustainable future. Regarding green initiatives, there is intent to work with U.S. Green Building Council at the national level to initiate a student chapter at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. General and technical education on sustainable practices for professionals, students and general citizenry is lacking, but there is a renewed interest in creating more opportunities for learning for all life stages.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

The devastating winds of the April 2011 storm had a significant impact on many existing public facilities and the City's overall infrastructure. The damaged or destroyed public buildings included a fire station, police precinct, environmental services building, two schools, public housing, and the emergency operations facility. Damaged or destroyed public infrastructure included the City's water distribution system, numerous traffic signals, communications facilities, overhead utility services, and power substations.

STORMWATER DRAINAGE

Pre-Storm Conditions

The impacted area includes a number of sub-basins of the Black Warrior River drainage basin. As with most urban drainage areas, the drainage systems include open natural ditches, concrete lined ditches, closed storm sewer systems, creeks, and even a lake. Certain low lying areas within the affected area are prone to flooding. Many of these are currently mapped as part of the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). There are likely a number of drainage structures that do not adequately convey certain design year rainfall events. There are a number of commercial and residential structures located within FEMA designated floodways that may be affecting floodway capacity or were either incorrectly mapped or modified without proper approvals. A number of open ditches, especially along the railways, appear to have erosion problems.

Post-Storm Conditions

Many of the open ditches, creeks, and Forest Lake were filled with vegetative and other debris after the tornados on April 27th. Due to the potential for clogged pipes and reduced ditch capacities, the City issued an emergency contract to have debris removed from all public ditches and streams. With extensive clearing and demolition in the impacted area, there are now many large open, barren areas susceptible to erosion and subsequent downstream filling of pipes and streams. Efforts have been made and will need to continue

to plant the cleared areas and reestablish vegetation until reconstruction efforts begin. The City is considering a hydrologic study of at least parts of the affected area to evaluate the currently mapped floodplain and floodway designated areas on current FEMA mapping. It is believed that since the original studies were performed, there have been many changes in the characteristics of the basin and the floodplain cross sections that have resulted in different flood elevations and locations.

WATER & SEWER

Pre-Storm Conditions

Almost all of the affected property in the corporate limits of Tuscaloosa is served by City water and sewer collection service. While there is a wide range of ages and conditions, a majority of the services in the affected areas were constructed 40 to 60 years ago. The City continually maintains both the water distribution and sewer collections systems and both were fully operational before the storm.

Post-Storm Conditions

Immediately after the tornado, the City experienced a significant drop in water tank levels in the Alberta area. It was determined that the drop was a result of a significant number of water main and service breaks throughout the area due primarily to uprooted trees. Lack of backup power to the City's water booster pump stations may have also limited their ability to get the tanks refilled as quickly as needed. Through the efforts of numerous City workers across departments, the leaks were identified and water service shut off as needed to prevent total loss of water pressure to the area. While the system is currently stable, further evaluation may be needed to determine what if any other relocation or replacement of existing mains and services is needed. Sanitary sewer service to the area was not critically affected.

STREETS & HIGHWAYS

Pre-Storm Conditions

The City is served by a combination of local, state, and federal designated streets and highways. Almost exclusively, the roadways are designed for vehicular use. The current roadway widths, lane widths, number of lanes, turn lanes, and signalized intersections are variable depending upon traffic volumes and location. The City does have an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) in place along the major corridors.

Post-Storm Conditions

Obtaining access to the devastated areas immediately after the storm was critical and required extensive clearing of trees, building structures, and other debris from the roadways. It is evident that minor damage occurred to roadway surfaces during this process.

A number of roadways of different classifications and under different jurisdictions were affected. The federal routes within the affected areas include Interstate 59/20, US Highway No. 82, and US Highway No. 11. State routes affected by the storm included SR 215 (University Boulevard) and SR 216. Numerous City Streets and roadways were within the damaged areas as well as Crescent Ridge Road (County Road No. 45).

Other than minor maintenance issues that need to be addressed due to storm clearing operations, many transportation problems existed before the storm that still remain. These include but are not limited to a need for reduced drives and better access management along the principle roadway corridors; additional right and left turn lanes at certain intersections; and improved north – south vehicular movements along McFarland Boulevard and east and west of McFarland Boulevard. Generally, better accommodations can be made within the affected area to provide access to eventual connections to the interstate highway system, Jack Warner Parkway, and the future Tuscaloosa East Bypass.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

Pre-Storm Conditions

There are no bicycle facilities located within the area of storm damage. There are very few bicycle routes within the City other than on the campus of the University of Alabama, on a two block area of 21st Avenue downtown, and within certain park areas. The City does have a long range bicycle plan that has been developed in coordination with the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Post-Storm Conditions

Due to the lack of dedicated bicycle facilities in Tuscaloosa, none were affected as a result of the storm. In addition to improvements to enhance vehicular access, consideration and priority can be given for dedicated bicycle lanes, signage, and dual use lane designations on current roadways.

SIDEWALKS & PATHS

Pre-Storm Conditions

Sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities are located throughout the community. Most of the principle roadways within the affected areas have sidewalks on both sides of the road. However, many of the residential neighborhoods within the affected area do not have sidewalks. A major initiative by the City in recent years has developed a shared use path along the Black Warrior River called the River Walk. The City has been successful in acquiring federal funding through the Alabama Department of Transportation for development of the River Walk and other sidewalk projects throughout the City including the impacted area.

Post-Storm Conditions

The existing sidewalks located throughout the damaged area were not necessarily affected by the storm, but have received damage as a result of the heavy equipment used during demolition and clearing activities. These will need to be repaired and replaced as properties are redeveloped.

OVERHEAD UTILITIES

Pre-Storm Conditions

Overhead utilities lines are prevalent within the City and the impacted area. These include overhead line services for power (Alabama Power Company), Cable Television (Comcast), and communications (AT&T and City of Tuscaloosa Fiber). The supporting pole structures vary in material from wood, metal, and concrete poles, with many providing support for street and area lighting fixtures.

Post-Storm Conditions

The overhead utilities were basically destroyed throughout the affected area. Efforts were made immediately after the storm to replace the system of power, communications, and cable lines and poles to restore service at least to the customers that could still make use of them. In most instances, restored lines and poles are intended to be permanent, except in isolated temporary service situations.

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Topic Name	<i>One Transformative Project</i>
Idea Title	<i>Alabama's flagship sustainable city - Tuscaloosa (Idea A1)</i>
Idea Description	Bike friendly (bike lanes, bike racks), heavy on public transit, public recycling bins, curbside recycling and compost, pedestrian friendly (wide sidewalks, bridges over railroads), green roofs, solar panels, reusing runoff water for city landscapes, reducing styrofoam use, community gardens that will donate to the local food bank, village centers with businesses that encourage walking (cafes, post offices, libraries). A truly sustainable model city that will promote both the health of its economy and citizens. I really want Tuscaloosa to shine.
Idea Author	chau t
Number of Seconds	21
Number of Comments	9
Idea Title	<i>Economic Corridor Following the Path (Idea A2)</i>
Idea Description	Create an economic corridor that follows the entire tornado path from Rosedale all the way to Alberta. We wouldn't alter any traffic patterns through the city, but instead draw an economic zone that includes landowners that want to participate. That's the big part, is that no one would be forced into this. But, at the same time, only properties affected by the tornado would be allowed in so as to give them an advantage in reconstruction. W/in the corridor, new development would be limited footprint businesses. Limitations would be decided by the organization explained below. These businesses would be corner store/restaurant/cafe type developments, no big box or big retailers. The corridor would be governed by itself, but would receive support, guidance, and specialized advice from the city and UA. In addition to the special development corridor, a string of parts and community squares/plazas. Or, the city's greenway idea would be the connecting factor. What I like about using the greenway is that it allows the corridor to be completely walkable and accessible. The greenway path would be less than half a mile's walk from about 1/3 of the city's population. This allows most everyone to simply get to the greenway and walk to anywhere along the corridor. BUT, this whole idea centers around residents being invested in this. By restricting inclusion in the corridor to only affected property owners we can factor out the giant, fat cat developers. Why do I think this is transformative? It would speed up and improve reconstruction, and provide jobs to lower income folks that live in its vicinity. It is centered around the resident, not the dollar. It encourages a new kind of pedestrian centered accessibility and business method. Not to mention the health benefits of walking to your job, dinner, or store. Again, only properties would be included by residents who want to participate. The resident chooses, not the city.
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	12
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Prioritizing Single Family Dwelling Neighborhoods in Town (Idea A3)</i>
Idea Description	We are simply seeing too many family type neighborhoods disappearing to the suburbs, leaving the city to college kids, or single folks or couples in small condos or apartments or garden homes. Eliminate all family neighborhoods, and inner city problems will only increase. The large student population taking over parts of the city do not have long term vested interest in our city, other than just wanting fun bars and restaurants. They come here for 4 years and leave. Please folks ... lets keep R1 zoning places as they are now ... and encourage more of them instead of less. Our inner city really depends on it.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	12
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Plan for Reduction of Automobile Traffic on Major Routes (Idea A4)</i>
Idea Description	In the rebuilding process, try to incorporate changes that reduce traffic on major roads such as 15th Street and McFarland Blvd. This could be achieved through reducing dependence on automobiles with enhanced mass transit, bicycle paths, and extensive sidewalk systems. In addition, alternative routes could be introduced into the road systems that provide alternatives to the major arteries. Besides making the community more livable and pleasant, changes such as these would reduce pollution and our dependence on gasoline.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	<i>Three Principles for Rebuilding (Idea A5)</i>
Idea Description	I'm proposing three principles that I've seen weaving through the ideas on this site. Adherence to them won't be easy but they are important for ensuring a successful rebuilding of our city. Reinvestment in Damaged Areas It's hard to imagine how the damaged areas will again be places that people want to be. We have to give people reasons to be there, especially those who lived there before the storm. This means shared spaces. It's not just the city that has to reinvest in shared spaces; we have to provide reasons for residents to reinvest in these areas. Community gardens, parks, beautification, and *improving* schools are things that will ameliorate the long wait until these areas are healed. Connectivity To heal as a city, Tuscaloosa has to reconnect itself to itself. Our plan has to take this disaster as an opportunity to connect neighborhoods like Alberta and Rosedale to the rest of town. Lost home, car and job is a difficult hole to climb out of. Public transportation would reinvest in those areas as good places to live and provide its residents a way to get to work. A costly solution, in the end far less costly than the poverty many of our residents will be stuck in for years to come otherwise. We should also draw people to these areas from the rest of the city: create a dog park, a skate park, or a farmers market. We Can't Afford Not to Spend – Tax Property In May, our mayor said that it is vital that we turn this disaster into an opportunity. To rebuild what we had isn't only impossible it's irresponsible. While this means holding those who rebuild to the highest standards, it also means aiding them, especially residential owners to meet those standards. We have to reach deep into our own pockets. Petition the state to tax property to rebuild above and beyond the federal and state aid we're already receiving. Real estate here is taxed at the lowest rates in the nation. As a homeowner, I'm happy to contribute a heavier share while we rebuild.
Idea Author	Will Nolan
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	5

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Idea Title	<i>Every school a magnet school (Idea A7)</i>
Idea Description	Consider changing the school zoning for EVERY school to be a magnet school. If necessary, there would have to be limitations placed on this (EVERYONE can't go to University Place, after all), but I think it is really more workable than you might think at first glance. You would have all the schools competing for students and trying to improve just to keep their jobs. People who wanted to keep in neighborhood schools probably could...People who thought their children would do better in other schools could request the other schools. It would certainly cut the legs out of the unspoken racism of houses being zoned in "good" or "bad" school zones. It also might reduce the white flight that segregation started and the Tuscaloosa High School/Druid High School court order added to. Why this is the time for this? Let's rebuild our WHOLE city, not just the tornado damaged parts. I can't think of anything more transformative than a change in school zoning.
Idea Author	Sharon P
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Neighborhood Rebirth (Idea A6)</i>
Idea Description	I cannot speak for everyone but most people, I know, who live in the damaged neighborhoods just want to rebuild and their neighbors to return. They like where they live and are not interested in ideas for the perfect city. People all across Tuscaloosa and beyond want to make changes to someone else's private property or neighborhood. KEEP OUT! I am sorry, I know you mean well, but unless you live in any of the devastated neighborhoods you may not understand the impact this forum and your comments are having on grieving property owners. It should not be up to the city or anyone in this forum, including myself, to decide what should be done to someone's private property. Do we need big time local developers, who seem to control the city council, reshape this city to the benefit of their own pockets? Who is looking out for the interest of the neighborhoods damaged in this city? Some neighborhoods such as Cedar Crest, to my knowledge, have not been visited or even contacted by their city council representative since the tornado? Why? Volumes have been spoken about his commitment to Cedar Crest without a single word from him. If anyone wants to help the struggling neighborhoods or businesses support their right to exist. Property zoning in damaged neighborhoods where people are struggling to rebuild should remain unchanged. Any new homes should reflect the surrounding homes in price, size and appearance. Keep investors from subdividing lots for multiple homes or combining now vacant lots to build apartment buildings between houses. This tragedy should not be turned in to a land grab. Any growing city is always changing. Changes can be good. Like others I look forward to viewing the city's final plan. It is important to also remember who will be affected by any suggestions being made. I believe we should protect the property owner's rights in our devastated neighborhoods. Our neighborhoods and their people are what make Tuscaloosa great!
Idea Author	Ripper
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	<i>Multi-functional attraction center (Idea A8)</i>
Idea Description	This may seem inadequate to some, but has someone considered developing a multi-functional attraction facility in the Tuscaloosa area? What I'm talking about is creating something simple for the town. I envision something that Huntsville has with "Southern Adventures" but obviously more modern and shall we say "hip." Build a mini-golf/"putt-putt" course with a central building. In this main building is a cafe/fast food establishment and can host to a separate bowling alley with maybe 15 lanes or so. Also on the site, a small go-kart track. I know this idea may seem childish, but I was discussing this with various friends and colleagues of mine that wonder why there isn't something like this in the area? Not only would college students enjoy it, but high school students and elementary students as well? During the summer, church and school groups would flock to such a place. If something like this already exists in town, point me in the direction, otherwise this needs to be built.
Idea Author	Thor S
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>The Final Proposal Will Be Split (Idea A10)</i>
Idea Description	I hope the final proposal will be at least split into a minimum of two parts. A) - The immediate need to get people and businesses back on their feet, and working again. B) - Long range goals for the city. Sure they need to work together somewhat ... but lets not kick people while they are down. Lets put a heavy emphasis on "A" for now. Its the compassionate thing to do. Really ... it is.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	<i>Get "tidey" for the Tide (Idea A11)</i>
Idea Description	Enlist the help of home supply stores and others to deliver "sod" to the devastated neighborhoods about a week before the first big home game. Partner with the university to send out volunteers to help lay the sod. Currently lots of folks have areas in their yard that are just dirt. In the current weather, this either creates blowing dust or mud. The necessary job of tearing down damaged houses just creates more dust. In the short term, greenery makes people feel better, contains the dust, and helps restore the land. It just looks better. Plus- I'm really tired of vacuuming!
Idea Author	Mary Paige Mize
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	5

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Idea Title	<i>Green Thinking Is The Life For Me! (Idea A9)</i>
Idea Description	I am not in favor of altering our current building codes. I post this only as a suggestion. I wish to challenge Tuscaloosa city planners and our local home builders to create new affordable energy efficiency standards. From the greatest of tragedies comes an opportunity to change the way the entire city of Tuscaloosa uses energy. Tuscaloosa can become a green building model for the entire state. I challenge Tuscaloosa to showcase cutting edge, passive solar, gray water, energy saving home designs. To do this I recommend building a model home in one of the devastated neighborhoods. Companies willing to sponsor such construction would receive free publicity and use this home to promote their products, business and green living. Perhaps a property owner in one of the damaged neighborhoods could be chosen by lottery or through an essay contest. Or the finished home could be built then raffled with proceeds going toward charity. Prior to the home being occupied it could be used as a model to showcase the newest green footprint or passive solar building designs, materials and appliances. Knowledgeable vendors staffing the home could fully explain their products to those touring the model and how these ideas could be incorporated into their own home design plans. This home should also be a challenge to Tuscaloosa builders. Local home builders must be challenged to find new and better ways to construct homes or nothing will ever change. Today's challenge is to design and build a zero energy foot print home. Not possible? We have only to look toward Europe to discover what can be done. Every item in the house should be the lowest of the low in water and energy consumption. This should not be just another house but a super insulated zero energy foot print home for our future. It does not matter if this exact home would be affordable to all. The idea is everyone could incorporate concepts learned from this home into their own present or future designs.
Idea Author	Ripper
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>build a MIXED USE project (Idea A14)</i>
Idea Description	Use the project to "demonstrate" the methods and materials that can be achieved with the "new draft plan" Show tangible examples of what "can be" People buy what they can see. It is hard to visualize something you can not touch or feel. Show the costs associated,show the "curb appeal", see the potential!!
Idea Author	glenn k
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Improve 10th Avenue (Idea A15)</i>
Idea Description	Since 10th Avenue is a major gateway to the city of Tuscaloosa and The University of Alabama, this is the ideal opportunity to improve it. Think of the way Bryant Drive, Alberta City, and West End were upgraded and do something along those lines.
Idea Author	bic
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>A more "Metro" look but Economically friendly and Entertaining (Idea A12)</i>
Idea Description	Downtown-I know Downtown wasn't affected by the twister but I personally am fascinated by the tall and picturesque buildings that make up the skyline of Cities like New York,Tokyo,and Toronto.I personally think adding more taller and modern-looking buildings in the Downtown area would make T-Town's Skyline look more Modern and bigger. (Bigger cities have higher populations for a reason)Plus how about at least 1 Condominium Complex near the heart of downtown.Bring more attention to downtown. 15th Street and surrounding areas- Tuscaloosa needs more entertainment. How about a Dog Park? An arcade? Aquarium? An Ice Rink? A City Zoo? Places for mini-golf,a skateboard park? Anything we DON'T have. 15th Street should be the "Main Street" of Tuscaloosa. Full of LIFE. Entertainment,shopping,restaurants,HOTELS,Fruit Stands,Bus Stops (or a light rail system),delis,cake shops,pharmacies,Bars,GYMS,a club,maybe a fish market,Barbershops,salons,the WORKS!This brings business and Revenue. Pedestrian and Bike-friendly Sidewalks alined with beautiful Trees and flowers.A unique look when it comes to light poles,stop signs and the such.Also more trashcans to help discourage littering. Making the city look good. All while being as environmentally friendly as possible. Neighborhoods- Build mixed-income neighborhoods with affordable housing for all residents.Not just condos or apartments for students.That way we can avoid categorizing by calling a certain area "That rich neighborhood" or "that poor neighborhood" in the future. Use imagination and creativity.Put Garden Homes next to Town Houses? Or Mansions next to mobile homes? haha.Think long-term. Have playgrounds put in the middle of the area? Economy: Think "Sustainability".Support the growth of Small Business. Discourage Economic Despotism. Stay away from greedy Fat Cats and the such. Also support Family-owned businesses. Think of an economy "by the people,for the people". DO NOT do anything that will put us in debt (video).
Idea Author	Jordan J
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	2

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Idea Title	<i>Reap what you Sow - Urban and Suburban Gardens for the Needy (Idea A13)</i>
Idea Description	No entitlement - Effort required. Either by you, your family or a volunteer working as your proxy. It has been my observation as a home healthcare nurse that in almost every home of welfare recipients or disabled persons, there is extended family capable of performing physical labor. I wonder how many food stamp recipients our city would have, if there was a mandate on the federal level - requiring volunteerism from those who have no physical disability in exchange for "Food Stamps"? These gardens could be initially created, tilled and planted by volunteers or clubs who donate use of their (or the City's/County's land) their time, use of their equipment, seed/plants and their expertise. Then ongoing care and nurturing and harvesting of the "farms" could be performed by those who receive the food from the farm. --- Sounds idealistic, I know, but with a concrete plan from the onset it would work. Many organic gardens in urban areas work on the same principles, although they are not focused on those in need. Establishing criteria to qualify for receiving food from the project and recording hours contributed to the project by the participants or volunteers who work as a proxy for a participant - would maintain a checks&balance system. Food harvested each week would be divided equally among those recipients who "worked"- with a scheduled pick up time and place, and any unclaimed produce could then be donated to local soup kitchens or food banks (or delivered to disabled recipients by volunteers). Fenced gardens, with a core group of volunteers would be essential.
Idea Author	R. Dawn S
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Don't cut down healthy trees on private property (Idea A16)</i>
Idea Description	It is such pointless destruction when healthy trees are cut down on private property (by the Army Corps) when right of way clearance wasn't given AND an arborist had already said the trees would survive. Ironically, this happened in my back yard when I was off volunteering. Since the view from my deck was the only place for blocks that one could pretend that 4/27 never happened it sickens me. My workplace was destroyed; my front yard and 100+ year old trees are gone; my house damaged but fixed; now my back yard is being taken away from me.
Idea Author	MLS
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Landscaping, aesthetics, and convention and visitors location (Idea A17)</i>
Idea Description	The city should put a major emphasis on the landscaping and aesthetic look of the new Tuscaloosa. This is a relatively inexpensive thing that can really help the city look a lot better. Look at how UA focused on this the past couple of years and look at the difference it has made. Trees, flowers, shrubbery, mulch, decorative street signs/light, sidewalks, etc would greatly improve the look of the city. There needs to something in place that holds businesses accountable for the appearance of their business (fines, etc). Also, what about a location for the convention and visitors bureau somewhere along 15th and McFarland? This would be great in heart of the city and very accessible for visitors to our city.
Idea Author	Brett S
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Building Standards/ Roads and Drainage (Idea A18)</i>
Idea Description	I would like to see a building design standard that would ban complete metal buildings on heavy traveled roads(ie University Blvd) or next to a neighborhood; and for all roads in the neighborhoods effected by the storm to have curbs and proper drainage. I still have a big piece of AutoZone in my backyard (2 miles from original location)and if another storm were to come through it would probably help eliminate storm fatalaties by having a strong brick or concrete structure to protect customers in case of another storm. Also I would like to see better designs that would rid the box store design. I think all buildings should at least have an appearance other than a big box. Like Steamboat Springs Colorado, their McDonalds has an arc roof. And please keep the billboards down. Its finally nice to drive down McFarland and see the sky and the scenery, well whats left anyway. As for curbs and drainage, our creek is completely full of trees and debris from the storm, is there anyone going to help clean this up? Today there are very few trees in our area, which before the storm was full of red oaks and water oaks, to help slow down some of the rain fall run offs. With the trees absense, we are in desperate need of curbs to control the drainage. Please help!!! 208 32nd Avenue East
Idea Author	Gary Haynes
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	2

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Idea Title	<i>Bikeshare (Idea A19)</i>
Idea Description	Many larger cities are starting bikeshare programs. In these programs there are central locations all over town that have "banks" of bikes that you can rent for a period of time and return them to another "kiosk" across town after you've used it. It's a cheap way to move people across town. Coupled with the proposed greenway system, we could see many benefits: 1) This could legitimately cut down on traffic by putting a substantial number of motorists on bikes. 2) Health: Putting more people on bikes helps improve our quality of life, lower obesity rates, decrease heart problems, improve lung health, less stress via traffic means lower blood pressure, etc... Too many health benefits to name. 3) Air quality: Just think of how many cars we'd be taking off the road. 4) Runoff: It's really astonishing to think about how much auto runoff runs into our streams, rivers, and lakes. If you want to see what I'm talking about, the next time it rains, look at a puddle next to the road and look at the multi-colored film on top. 5) Economy: Removing people from traffic increases accessibility by making it easier to access our businesses. Less traffic = less stress = more economic activity. 6) Walkability: Removing those cars from roads increases the ability of pedestrians to cross busy streets, increases pedestrian safety, and makes walking/biking more appealing. As far as paying for it all... We all know Regions Financial's big thing is these bikes, so why not see if we can get them to donate a number of them. Can you say great advertisement? Not only does it get people on bikes, but helps an Alabama based bank grow it's market, and increase instate jobs. They could also help with financing, and their "storm recovery" efforts would make them more appealing to those looking for a new bank! Anyone have any other ideas on how this could benefit the city? Feel free to comment!
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>THE PLAN (Idea A20)</i>
Idea Description	you can read and/or download plan on www.tuscaloosaforward.com
Idea Author	Nancy G
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Cannot download plan (Idea A21)</i>
Idea Description	<i>I cannot download the plan off the site. Please fix it so everyone and not just those with the super fancy computers can see the plan from our homes.</i>
Idea Author	AnneOK
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	3

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Topic Name	<i>Vision</i>
Idea Title	<i>Fit City (Idea B1)</i>
Idea Description	I think an emphasis on parks, recreation, walkable communities and bike paths have the potential to transform the community in a way that promotes activity and fitness. Make this a community that not only watches sports, but actively participates and reaps the benefits of better health. It can also become an economic tool if we build on events like the triathlon. Build the right recreational infrastructure and we can have more events that draw people in for boating, rowing, biking, etc.
Idea Author	LuellaJ
Number of Seconds	43
Number of Comments	12
Idea Title	<i>Plan smart and make Tuscaloosa beautiful and Unique. (Idea B2)</i>
Idea Description	Tuscaloosa is interesting because of the university. Many people have attended school here and still travel back with their families to enjoy the city and campus. Even though the population is just slightly above 90,000 Tuscaloosa is still considered a home to many more. We should treat it with respect when planning because of the history that is in the city and for those that love Tuscaloosa. Most of us probably want Tuscaloosa to be something that is great and makes us all proud, but we don't need to do so at the expense of others. A lot of people were affected by the tornado and we need to make sure that we look after the needs of those individuals when planning. It's easy to do this or that, but first we need to look at helping those that were hurt by the storm. One of the things that I have always loved about Tuscaloosa is that it has a small town feel, but big enough to support many stores, activities, and lifestyles. In other words, I get a small town feel with bigger city amenities. I think that we can work to further enhance that feeling. Landscaping and simply making the city aesthetically pleasing can go a long way to providing an old/new south charm to the city. Planning very smart and detailed economically can further improve the economy. Personally, I don't want to see Tuscaloosa try to grow into a major city, but we can easily make this city great for those that call it home. Also, I have mentioned ideas on this in another post, but find a way to bridge the separation between the campus and the city. Tuscaloosa has done a tremendous job of that along University and Bryant Dr., but more needs to be done when you cross the railroad tracks. Take some of the great pedestrian paths that have been implemented on campus and extend them to Midtown Village and the mall. Give students a reason to leave campus without always having to drive. In short, without taking away from those affected we can make Tuscaloosa a southern charm.
Idea Author	JBellison
Number of Seconds	26
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>Identity (Idea B3)</i>
Idea Description	Create frontdoor(s) to the city. What is the first thing we want visitors to see/do in Tuscaloosa? First impression do we give to visitors, economic development targets, etc.
Idea Author	Ken G
Number of Seconds	25
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>Creative and long term thinking is needed (Idea B4)</i>
Idea Description	Don't just think outside the box, but get rid of the box. Look at what makes the best commercial/residential combination areas in other cities and found how to create those unique developments in Tuscaloosa. Keep in mind how to improve transportation, sidewalks, education, use of parks to encourage outdoor recreation, and reduce crime.
Idea Author	DG
Number of Seconds	23
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Become the "Smartest" City in Alabama (Idea B5)</i>
Idea Description	What is a 'Smart City'? A Smart City Strategically leverags technology to increase overall effectiveness and efficiency. The goal is to acheive: 1) Smart economy 2) Smart mobility 3) Smart environment 4) Smart people 5) Smart living 6) Smart governance. IBM Smart Cities Challenge is giving away \$50 million grants to 100 cities: http://smartercitieschallenge.org/ More info on Smart Cities: http://cityforward.org/ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intelligent_city http://www.smartplanet.com/blog/business-brains/anatomy-of-a-smart-city/11895 http://smartercities.nrdc.org/
Idea Author	Paris Vega
Number of Seconds	18
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>The University of Alabama "Look" (Idea B6)</i>
Idea Description	U of A has set a high aesthetic standard for our city from landscaping to signage. The River Walk mirrors that "look". Hopefully, that kind attention to beauty will be now enforced along 15th Street, McFarland, and into Alberta City. Rather than mimicking Lurleen Wallace in Northport, these venues in the University area can serve as templates for the future "look" of Tuscaloosa.
Idea Author	visbob
Number of Seconds	13
Number of Comments	6

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Idea Title	<i>A New Beginning (Idea B7)</i>
Idea Description	have an opportunity to start from scratch. We should really try and rebuild in a fashion that allows the city to move forward and turn into something better than it was before. More pedestrian friendly. More transit opportunities. More park space. More creative planning so that development compliments what was lost instead of takes advantage of what it replaces.
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	12
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>SUPPORT OF TRAP NEUTER RELEASE (TNR) (Idea B8)</i>
Idea Description	Adopting a policy of Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR) in areas where extensive numbers of feral cats are an issue. Studies have proven that trap-neuter-release is the single most successful method of stabilizing and maintaining healthy feral cat colonies with the least possible cost to local governments and residents, while providing the best life for the animals themselves. Spaying/neutering homeless cats: Stabilizes the population at manageable levels. Helps eliminate annoying behaviors associated with mating, including reducing and eventually eliminating large numbers of feral, helpless kittens. Is humane to the animals and fosters compassion in the neighborhoods. Is more effective and less costly than repeated attempts at extermination: costs for repeatedly trapping and killing feral colonies are far higher than promoting stable, non-breeding colonies in the same location. Vacated areas are soon filled by other cats, who start the breeding process over again. Over time, an overall reduction in the feral population is accomplished, in a far more humane manner.
Idea Author	Linda D
Number of Seconds	12
Number of Comments	11
Idea Title	<i>CITY WIDE WIFI (Idea B12)</i>
Idea Description	I know the council has talked about it, but now is the best time to try to implement it!!
Idea Author	DC
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Handicap Awareness (Idea B9)</i>
Idea Description	All businesses and public buidings that are being rebuilt should install handicap type toilets. That is the toilets that are higher than the ones that are so low to the floor. I don't know if they are required now. But I have been in businesses that do have the handicap handrails but the toilets are so low to the floor that it is difficult for me. I have total knee replacement in both knees. So I would like to see that a requirement for businesses & public buildings that are being rebuilt if it is not already.
Idea Author	Peggy
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Race that follows the tornado path starting (Idea B10)</i>
Idea Description	One way to celebrate the survival of our citizens and the progress of our community would be to have a 5k or 10k race that follows the path of the tornado. This would be healthy for our our community, bringing a way to have unity, exercise and remembrance of April 27th. Private groups (churches, civic organizations, musicians, etc) could encourage runners along the path.
Idea Author	Tonya H
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Plan for Controlling Energy Costs (Idea B11)</i>
Idea Description	In all planning, consider how we can reduce our reliance on gasoline and/or automobiles. Escalating gas prices have a huge impact on consumer behavior.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Alberta representation? (Idea B13)</i>
Idea Description	Important question: why is there a Forest Lake representative on the 50 person task force, but no direct Alberta representative? Given that everyone is discussing plans for Alberta (where I live), how will our voices be heard? Is anyone really interested in what the residents who will actually be affected think?
Idea Author	Line1
Number of Seconds	9
Number of Comments	4

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Idea Title	<i>community services (Idea B14)</i>
Idea Description	Consider bringing community services together in a "one stop" location. TES, Easter Seals, Red Cross,United Way, etc that serve those in need together would be more convient to those needing service and would foster cooperation among agencies.
Idea Author	Ken G
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Adopt Complete Streets Policies (Idea B15)</i>
Idea Description	Planning, designing, implementing, operating, and maintaining roadways to reasonably address the safety and accessibility needs of users of all ages and abilities - motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, transient users and vehicles, and commercial and emergency vehicles - in a manner that is sensitive to the quality of life, economic wellbeing, and environmental health in a community.
Idea Author	Anna P
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	1

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Idea Title	<i>A Tragic Opportunity - An Innovative City (Idea B16)</i>
Idea Description	We need to address the following issues: connectivity (I'll explain later), economic development, and education. By connectivity I'm talking about a plan that focuses on the downtown, but not at the expense of outlying areas. I'm talking about strategically connecting affected areas such as Alberta, Forest Lake, etc... to flow toward the downtown making a big loop if you will. This can be achieved best through a combination of walking/biking paths, targeted public transportation and better road-traffic flow. Zoning and efforts to build "mixed use City Centers" along the way will best help achieve this goal. Each area should have its own focus - not to compete with other areas but to enhance and add value to Tuscaloosa--especially in the downtown area so that we can attract new businesses based on value and quality of life. (We can't attract higher value business downtown right now because commercial rents there are too low for developers to look at this! It's cheaper just to keep sprawling out to the county - letting the downtown die!) For education, we should place an additional emphasis on the schools serving the most affected areas and integrate community programs and even business incubators to these schools. Better education can only help Tuscaloosa attract new industry and better jobs, and why should we export our "brains" to Birmingham, Atlanta, and beyond? Economic Development can better be achieved through a city-wide emphasis on innovation. Programs based on a new & better rebuilt Tuscaloosa can include technology incubators that focus on combining the areas natural resources (including agriculture - green farming, renewable energy, etc...) with national trends, all the while seeking to take advantage of linking these efforts more closely to the University and area business leaders and investors. (I recently organized an event with the inventor of the I-pod, Jon Rubinstein to address these same issues. Though focused outside the US - these are our issues)
Idea Author	Robin R.
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Memorials (Idea B17)</i>
Idea Description	No specific suggestions here just yet, and it may have been covered elsewhere, but I would like the city officials,planners and even university folks (artists etc) to think and work hard regarding a memorial for victims, properly integrated into the overall vision. Done rightly these things can be both powerful and beautiful. But they are also easy to forget or to do wrongly.
Idea Author	JDM
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Natural Approach (Idea B21)</i>
Idea Description	I read the article in Tuscaloosa News a few days ago about the process that is in effect to clean-up and restore the hurricane creek area. I felt overwhelmed with emotion!! That's the key to protecting our city and environments around us! Let's take the "natural" approach. Although, I understand that there is a need for the big machines in some cases. I mean, it was mother nature's wrath that damaged the city; let Tuscaloosa move forward to a more "natural" city. Let's help people feel comfortable and relaxed as they walk through the renovated areas of town. Personally, I understand that the businesses and housing should be at the forefront of being replaced, but also I think green areas should be incorporated. And there are so many beautiful (before storm) areas that could use some TLC and made to look phenomenal; i.e. forest lake, holt-peterson cut-off road only to name a few. I like to think, deep down in the pit of my heart, maybe this storm was a blessing in disguise for this city. Although, the loss of life still hurts my heart so badly.
Idea Author	Aubrey_Cagle
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Comprehensively Engage The University Into The City (Idea B18)</i>
Idea Description	What I mean by this is to extend all sidewalks, bike paths, etc... into the city. I'm sure we've all noticed how the University's pedestrian networks simply end at the campus borders. That needs to change. The city did well with improving pedestrian accessibility at the 15th/Hackberry intersection. Think of it as a tree: As the University grows, it issues roots that grow into the surrounding communities. - These roots are things like sidewalks, greenways, parks, roads, and even bus routes. - Like a tree, as the trunk (the University) expands, the roots extent further and further into the city and engages more and more parts of the city. - As for the foliage and fruit in this metaphor, it's the economic success. Success in land owners in affected areas being able to more easily redevelop/rebuild. If we allow the University to interconnect with the city, it becomes more livable, more economically vibrant, more successful, etc... Plus, it truly allows the land owners in affected areas to have greater flexibility in what they decide to do with their land. With more interest in the land surrounding the University, they have more options. Along with allowing the University to extent its "roots," the city should comprehensively adopt SmartCode in order to give the affected land owners EVEN MORE flexible, and EVEN MORE options when it comes to rebuilding and recovering. ADDITIONALLY, we should form a solid partnership with the University and the schools. Having students, professors, and researchers regularly going into schools. Working with kids, teaching kids, and simply letting them know that there's life and education beyond high school is a way to ensure that they'll have a better life later. We have a fine opportunity now to really get the city, schools, and university working together to not only rebuild the city physically, but intellectually.
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Think Big! (Idea B19)</i>
Idea Description	I really would like people to think beyond their own neighborhoods and beyond their own experiences. What happens in the recovery areas will affect everyone. Questions to be asked are what are the needs of this community and what would you like to see changed...forever.
Idea Author	Nancy L
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	5

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Idea Title	<i>Respect for the past (Idea B20)</i>
Idea Description	The future of Tuscaloosa has the potential for and the certainty of change. Those of us who remember the Tuscaloosa of 50 years ago want to be assured that progress does not push out familiar names and faces in favor of 'new', 'green', 'sustainable'. Those who have made T-town what it is by their hard work and presence over the years need to be honored, not pushed out by too stringent building codes. Let's make sure there is room for grace.
Idea Author	Priscilla M
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>More flowers and curb appeal on street corners (Idea B22)</i>
Idea Description	Possibly having hanging flower plants on the street coners on the strip and on campus to bring more life and color to campus and off campus, Repaving and painting of roads around the campus. fixing broken sidewalks and connecting sidewalks to promote bike/ walk use from campus to off campus.
Idea Author	caroline
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Greenbelt With Multiuse Trail (Idea B23)</i>
Idea Description	The proposed greenbelt, shown on the meeting maps, basically follows the storm route. If, as I've been told, it is too low for building on, it would be a great opportunity for a multiuse trail from SW Tuscaloosa to the NE of the city. It might be possible to establish a stream/"water garden" there as well, if it is a true "drain". Anything we can do to reduce rain water run off will be a plus. Green areas absorb so much more water than paved areas and would help in prevent overloading storm sewers.
Idea Author	Alec W
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>INCREASED RESOURCES FOR PET/ ANIMAL WELFARE PROGRAMS (Idea B24)</i>
Idea Description	I would love to see pursuit of more resources/funding for our city's animal shelter. While our existing staff does an excellent job, I believe a community such as ours could greatly benefit from a larger, enhanced shelter, with a greater emphasis put on spaying and neutering and increased animal adoptions and placements to other communities where they are wanted, rather than euthanizing so many beautiful loving creatures. A society is judged by how it treats its most vulnerable" ...which Mahatma Gandhi said included animals*. Moving towards a more progressive community as a whole absolutely includes remembering to care for our citizens and all of God's gentle creatures.
Idea Author	Linda D
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>A student's perspective (Idea B25)</i>
Idea Description	I'm from Birmingham and currently a sophomore at the University so living in Ttown and reading most ideas, I agree with most and would like to give input as a student. 1.) I definitely agree with the whole need for bike paths and sidewalks that could link the university to places like Midtown and McFarland because it's a hassle and unnecessary having to drive about a minute away to Midtown or downtown, when a lot of students would gladly ride their bikes. SO many students would enjoy this great weather and be willing to exercise with a nice bike ride. I know SO many people who would be willing and wanting to actually ride their bikes or jog somewhere other than just to class. Students would benefit from bike paths and would be encouraged to exercise and get out more. 2.) I would like to see more unique restaurants instead of fast food. It would be nice to eat somewhere with some diversity with new or more well known restaurants in ttown. The addition of some restaurants around Midtown and 15th with great bars would really appeal to students because it seems like every sit down place has the same type of atmosphere. 3.) More visual appeal. Someone suggested a "welcome to Tuscaloosa" type sign entering off the highways and I agree. Also, I HATE auburn but the sidewalks, flowers and overall landscape is pretty nice and that kind of landscape would make Tuscaloosa more appealing. Many students want diversity and would like to see clubs or better up-kept bars built. Bars on the strip are great but could really be renovated or rebuilt. If there's new shops, I hope they're built like midtown/downtown because they look really nice and appealing rather than being one level and spaced out. Also it would be nice 2 see some cool built multi-level hangout spots with a cool atmosphere to dance (like a club)-just types of places I would like 2 c :) Hopefully there will be something like this -> http://www.disco-designer.com/images/Nightclub-Lighting-Design.jpg
Idea Author	Rolltide
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	2

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Idea Title	<i>Eco friendly or green (Idea B26)</i>
Idea Description	As buildings are rebuilt, reuse, recycle, and require them to be energy efficient. Make use of solar and alternative energy. It might cost more up front, but be cost effective in the future. We have a chance to be a front runner for the US in this area like the town in Missouri that totally rebuilt green. Anything that is progressive in conserving energy could be used. The sky is the limit!! We have a chance to show the world our beautiful city.
Idea Author	Leann
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Counseling Support for Storm Victims (Idea B27)</i>
Idea Description	As the rebuilding process continues, it is important that victims who may be struggling continue to have access to some type of affordable counseling support.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Why not kill two birds with one stone? (Idea B28)</i>
Idea Description	Maybe it's the engineer in me, but I don't see the sense in not taking the time and rebuilding damaged and destroyed structures to the updated codes. This to me is not a bad thing. We have people in our community and on this forum who declare we should rebuild first and worry about code later. With regard to them, I ask this: what do you think the chances are that when the time would come (be in a few week or few years) for these rebuilt houses and businesses to be updated to code, these concerned citizens would bemoan the unfairness of forcing people who already spent all their money rebuilding the houses and business to spend even more money on upgrades to meet code (codes obviously concocted by a cabal consisting of Robert Witt, Stan Pate and Walt Maddox with the aim of turning Tuscaloosa into giant UA-themed resort and theme park)? My guess is "very high". Brushing aside the hypothetical, it just makes sense to double down the money being spent to clean up and rebuild the devastated neighborhoods and commercial zones into something better than what was already there.
Idea Author	nonameface
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	<i>Unity (Idea B29)</i>
Idea Description	I think it would be really cool to start an "Annual ____ (something)" in honor of the heroes, community and remembrance of April 27. Something like a triathlon, race, biking event, carnival, concert, community picnic or something that would unite the community and get a lot of the students involved because as a student I know they would be excited and willing to get involved. It's a great opportunity to raise awareness, continue fundraising and support, get everyone active and unite the community every year while having everyone involved.
Idea Author	Rolltide
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Your Not Getting The Word Out (Idea B30)</i>
Idea Description	I'm having concerns about how the word is getting out about Tuscaloosa Forward. You need some people out beating the pavement. Many have never been or may not yet be back on line. As a resident of Alberta we didn't get our telephone or internet service back until last Thursday June 23rd. It was only about a week or so before that that our television service came back. Many people just aren't getting the word of what is going on due to lack of ways to communicate. Most didn't get the newspaper although some have temporarily while the was no television or internet. Alberta doesn't have a neighborhood association to get the word out. I realize that Arcadia does but they have never been very welcoming when it comes to residents outside the boarder of their area. I think we are missing a huge opportunity to get people involved. There needs to be a way to have direct contact with residents.
Idea Author	LibD
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	11
Idea Title	<i>Ideas for rebuilding (Idea B31)</i>
Idea Description	Put in a Bed Bath and Beyond where Big Lots used to be. Would like to see Hobby Lobby back. We need a JimNicks bbq, kohl's, World Trade Market..
Idea Author	Kristi H
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>Tuscaloosa News' coverage of Tuscaloosa Forward (Idea B58)</i>
Idea Description	It is certainly better than nothing that ideas are being selected and presented in editorials. I wish the News would have done a better job in covering the Town Hall though. Short of that a supplement to the paper with a wider selection of ideas from Mindmixer would be useful.
Idea Author	John E
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	3

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Idea Title	<i>Future is Now (Idea B32)</i>
Idea Description	Areas like Alberta and Rosedale can be rebuilt with updated and secured housing. The housing can be futuristic with energy saving avenues, such as solar panes, heat resistant materials, adequate insulation, and secure building structures. While we are rebuilding Tuscaloosa, I hope we consider the needs of children to have improved education; award winning after-school programs. I also think that appearance is important, so let us take pride in all of our communities, whether low income or not. It takes all of us working together to make Tuscaloosa a "good" place to live.
Idea Author	bmjht
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Restaurants (Idea B33)</i>
Idea Description	We should bring some new restaurants to Tuscaloosa. A few suggestions: TGIFridays, Whataburger, P.F. Chang's, In-n-Out Burger, Maggiano's Little Italy, El Pollo Loco, Joe's Crab Shack, Taco Cabana, J. Alexander's, Pizza Inn, Ruth's Chris Steak House
Idea Author	Denton A
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	11
Idea Title	<i>Remember Rebuilding (Idea B34)</i>
Idea Description	I know we're all about trying to improve Tuscaloosa. I don't doubt that EVERYONE in this city wants to make it a better place. BUT, we have to remember what this website is here for. RECOVERY. Let's try and keep our topics and discussions geared towards those that are about recovery and rebuilding. I'm proud of all of you for coming out and announcing your opinions and suggestions, but I'm starting to notice that a lot of them are more about general improvements and not about recovery. Let's keep up the momentum and energy and try to think our best about rebuilding, recovery, and helping those who were effected get back on their feet. PS: Please stop posting your ideas in ALL CAPS in the titles.
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Share This Web Site (Idea B35)</i>
Idea Description	Share this web site with all your friends. We need more participation and creative topics. It started off fast and furious here with lots of great ideas, but now we are getting very repetitive with multiple threads offering the same ideas. Its as if few read the threads first to see if the topic is already covered. Time for new blood with new ideas. The more the better. :)
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Who is this mysterious "WE" I keep hearing about? (Idea B36)</i>
Idea Description	Who is this mysterious "WE" I keep hearing about, when we hear politicians talk about WE WILL REBUILD TUSCALOOSA? I see the city and FEMA and others helping to clear debris ... but when it comes to rebuilding a home ... I see the owner, his insurance agent, and a contractor hired to rebuild. What has the CITY got to do with it? Do we really think the city is going to be building homes for individuals? Nope ... not gonna happen. Will we soon see eminent domain become a new hot topic? Or is the City about to place so many restrictions with new building zoning ordinances ... that lower income folks will be forced out (can't afford it) ... so that they will be forced to sell out to fat cat developers who are at present, salivating at all the land they see? Please folks ... keep a close eye on all this and attend any and all meetings. The folks who have lost all need our voices behind theirs!
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>What would you have as a memorial? (Idea B37)</i>
Idea Description	If there were a green space/walking path along the entire length of the tornado's path through Tuscaloosa, what kind of things would you like to see along the way? Notice I said "IF" Let's dream :)
Idea Author	Alison
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Promote Healthy Lifestyles (Idea B38)</i>
Idea Description	There are many great suggestions already on availability of sidewalks, bicycle-friendly streets, and affordable healthy food choices. Along with these enabling factors for the community, it would be great to periodically offer free health education classes to the general public that explain how lifestyle changes can impact health. The classes would need to be publicized, and offered in an attractive central location that everyone is comfortable with. Also, including more of this type of health education in the schools, along with more aerobic exercise in PE (REQUIRED PLEASE), and healthier school cafeteria offerings would help guide the younger set in the right direction.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	1

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Idea Title	<i>Its Starting ... The Small Folks Need Our Help NOW!!!! (Idea B39)</i>
Idea Description	See this thread linked below. Small LOCAL merchants being pushed out. Developers would rather bring in big box store chains or condos. And so would the City. Higher tax base: http://townhall.tuscaloosaforward.com/economic-development-common-ideas/local-merchants
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Smart Weather Billboards (Idea B40)</i>
Idea Description	Tuscaloosa has several digital billboards that could potentially be used to post weather alerts or regional radar. This might be a good way to bring attention to a tornado warning, particularly if there is an extreme emergency as on 4/27. They could potentially list public shelters that are nearby.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Where is the Balance? (Idea B43)</i>
Idea Description	We still have homeless folks living on cots in shelters and temp housing. Yet we also want to take time to develop a long range plan for Tuscaloosa. I fully understand that part. But how much are we asking of these victims? As we put them on hold, and ask them to wait ... while policy makers living all comfy and cozy ... ponder the future of "the little people"? Haven't these people suffered enough? Must "opportunists" of all types take advantage of them now? My heart goes out to all the victims. Lets see how fast we can help them get their lives back in order ... THEN ... we can deal with the future of Tuscaloosa. JMHOS
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Three Principles for Rebuilding (Idea B41)</i>
Idea Description	I'm proposing three principles that I've seen weaving through the ideas on this site. Adherence to them won't be easy but I think they are important for ensuring a successful rebuilding of our city. Reinvestment in Damaged Areas It's hard to imagine how the damaged areas will again be places that people want to be. We have to give people reasons to be there, especially those who lived there before the storm. This means shared spaces. It's not just the city that has to reinvest in shared spaces; we have to provide reasons for residents to reinvest in these areas. Community gardens, parks, beautification, and *improving* schools are things that will ameliorate the long wait until these areas are healed. Connectivity To heal as a city, Tuscaloosa has to reconnect itself to itself. Our plan has to take this disaster as an opportunity to connect neighborhoods like Alberta and Rosedale to the rest of town. Lost home, car and job is a difficult hole to climb out of. Public transportation would reinvest in those areas as good places to live and provide its residents a way to get to work. A costly solution, in the end far less costly than the poverty many of our residents will be stuck in for years to come otherwise. We should also draw people to these areas from the rest of the city: create a dog park, a skate park, or a farmers market. We Can't Afford Not to Spend – Tax Property In May, our mayor said that it is vital that we turn this disaster into an opportunity. To rebuild what we had isn't only impossible it's irresponsible. While this means holding those who rebuild to the highest standards, it also means aiding them, especially residential owners to meet those standards. We have to reach deep into our own pockets. Petition the state to tax property to rebuild above and beyond the federal and state aid we already receive. Real estate here is taxed at the lowest rates in the nation. As a homeowner, I'm happy to contribute a heavier share while we rebuild.
Idea Author	Will Nolan
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>This Web Site (Idea B42)</i>
Idea Description	In the end will we either see another midtown .. or condos where much of Cedar Crest was? Time will tell. I sure hope the people win, and the developers lose on this one.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	11
Idea Title	<i>Petition to Repeal New State Immigration Law (Idea B44)</i>
Idea Description	The Bill recently signed into law by Dr. Dr. Bentley will adversely impact the rebuilding immensely. Construction costs will skyrocket due to the coming labor shortage. A similar law passed in Georgia has Georgia farmers poised to lose millions of dollars in unharvested, rotting crops. The law needs to be repealed now. The exodus of skilled and unskilled labor has already begun in anticipation of the Sept. 1 effective date of the toughest anti-immigrant law in the nation.
Idea Author	BrittonT
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	1

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Idea Title	Zoning Board Meeting - PLEASE Attend (Idea B45)
Idea Description	From their Press Release: ***** The public hearing of the Tuscaloosa Zoning Board of Adjustment will be held in the Council Chamber of City Hall at 2201 University Boulevard at 5:00 p.m., on Monday, the 11th day of July, 2011. There will be a pre-meeting in the Narashino Room thirty (30) minutes before the meeting begins. Any person so desiring may appear at the above said time and place in support of or opposition to these petitions. The following petitions have been docketed: http://www.ci.tuscaloosa.al.us/DocumentView.aspx?DID=2547 ZBA-41-11: Teresa Curry of T.Y. Lin International petitions for a special exception from the off-street parking requirements, variances from the landscaping requirements, and variances from the sign ordinance to allow for the reconstruction and expansion of the McDonald's restaurant at 517 15th Street East. Zoned BN. (Council District 2) CONTINUED FROM LAST HEARING. And others See url above .
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	Intramurals for Citizens (Fit City) (Idea B46)
Idea Description	PARA could manage adult "intramurals" like the ones that take place for students at the University of Alabama. Sports could include tennis, basketball, baseball, softball, and flag football.
Idea Author	Phil Grant
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	Local Photos (Idea B47)
Idea Description	For the outrageous price I'm sure was paid to get this 'template' driven web site ... you would think we could get local Tuscaloosa area photos instead of the stock photos from other cities. If the webmaster would email me, I'll send him a link to a few that would work. :)
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	Who is ... "Tuscaloosa Forward" ? Lets Buy Local (Idea B48)
Idea Description	This is a template driven web site that looks exactly like the mindmixer sites in numerous other cities. They simply change the name and resell it. A local T'Town developer could have built it for pennies on the dollar most likely. So many new web sites for city agencies popping up ... and most wind up being out of town web designers. What ever happened to "Buy Local"? At any rate ... I can't find anything on this site saying who bought the site ... (Chamber, City Hall, who?). And how much did they pay for this? Was it put out for bid? I know several local companies would have jumped at the chance if they had know about it.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	Civic Center (Idea B49)
Idea Description	We've spent the past 10 years or more hearing public officials and The Chamber saying we desperately needed a convention center, and that the near singular issue holding it up ... was Sunday liquor sales. Now after all these years it gets passed ... and its been eerily quiet ever since. I haven't seen one word online or in the newspaper about anyone being all excited to be able to move forward with the convention center idea. So has the whole idea been tabled? Does the organization that was formerly called Tuscaloosa Convention and Visitors Bureau (TCVB) still promote and seek out conventions for Tuscaloosa? Is it still feasible? The parking lot area at the top of River Hill on University Blvd., was always touted as a great location. Still in the works? Anyone know whats up with this?
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	Barn Raising Time (Idea B50)
Idea Description	Whatever the vision is, it needs to happen quickly. Much of the debris has been removed and many cleared lots now are appearing ... ready for building to begin. Those who are homeless or lost their business should be able to start building back today. Lets get to building for those who have lost so much. They don't need us to hold them up by sitting around pondering ideas, and having endless committee meetings. Its time for a good old fashioned barn raising type mentality here. People pitched in to remove trees from houses and do a few repairs. Now its barn raising time. Lets see some walls going up. And quickly. :)
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	Tonights Meeting at Bryant Conference Center (Idea B51)
Idea Description	Oooops. I had the wrong date on my calendar. Its NEXT Thursday, the 30th. See comment below for details.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	2

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Idea Title	<i>Thursday Night's Meeting - Bryant Conf Center (Idea B52)</i>
Idea Description	6-8:30pm. Will someone please give us the format? There may be hundreds (thousand or more?) to show up. Who will determine who can speak? How many can speak in this 2 hour meeting? Lets hear some details so we know how to prepare. :)
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Meeting update (Idea B54)</i>
Idea Description	Ok so I know there was a meeting held recently and I'm a student but live in Birmingham but I was just wondering what was discussed and was wondering if I could get an update on what was talked about most, most mentioned idea, if progress was made, etc...?? If there's a website or something that has more information I'd appreciate it, thanks.
Idea Author	Rolltide
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>No Power Poles and Lines ... A Bad Omen? (Idea B53)</i>
Idea Description	My neighborhood was hit by the April 15th tornado, and all power poles and lines were down. Alabama Power did NOT wait until debris was cleared. They installed new poles and ran lines over the debris within a couple days so we could have power to get back in our homes and start making repairs. My neighborhood was ALSO hit by the April 27th tornado, and all power poles and lines were down AGAIN. Alabama Power again did NOT wait until debris was cleared. They installed new poles and ran lines over the debris starting that very night so we could have power to get back in our homes and start making repairs. As you drive by Cedar Crest and Forest Lake ... the total absence of power lines makes one wonder. Obviously the city leaders realized within hours they might NOT want these people to rebuild as is ... so they ordered the moratorium and told Alabama Power to stand down and ignore the area. Many homes might already be built back and people could be getting back to their normal lives, if this moratorium had not happened and utilities were restored quickly. They use the excuse that they need to clear debris first ... but that didn't happen elsewhere in other neighborhoods. Within hours of the destruction people were salivating at the possibilities of using all this private land for 'their' desires. And formulated plans to keep the undesirables from moving back in. After all ... if these homes are turned into condos and shopping centers, the power lines will be installed differently. Someone already knows the plans at Alabama Power I'd bet. The poor always lose. :(
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i><--- The Leaderboard (Idea B55)</i>
Idea Description	Funny to watch it go back and forth. There is no explanation on this site as to how someone can LOSE points. I lost 40 points since yesterday, and have seen others fluctuate down as well. Are non-popular threads getting deleted? Points being deducted for some reason? Surely someone with the consulting firm that threw up this web site is watching all these threads and has some type of 'moderation' ability. Yet we never hear them speak here. It would be nice to get some feedback here from them.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Rebuild vs Dig Up and Build Different (Idea B56)</i>
Idea Description	I think some may be confusing the two. Rebuild ... is what the people whose homes or businesses destroyed by the storms do. Their private property was damaged or destroyed, so they hire a contractor and rebuild. At a glance it looks like maybe 50% or much more of the ideas presented on this web site have NOTHING to do with these private property owners 'rebuilding'. What many of them are suggesting have more to do with what the CITY could do with ITS' property at some point in the future. Like adding a bike or pedestrian lane here or there. Good ideas for the next time a road is constructed or one is ready to widen or when its going to be dug up anyway to install new storm drains. Take that opportunity to add the bike lane. A good idea. Lets make a list of those so they will be ready at that time. But again ... has nothing to do with the current need to 'rebuild' homes and businesses. The roads are all still there. They don't need rebuilding. Lets just add the homes and small business locations back in.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Holt/Rosedale ... Part of Tuscaloosa Forward .. or Not? (Idea B57)</i>
Idea Description	Whole sections of Rosedale and Holt are also wiped clean but I'm having trouble finding a single idea on this web site for any of those areas. A few are mentioned for Alberta, but not many. Everyone seems to be salivating at the idea of grabbing the Cedar Crest and Forest Lake properties away from folks and making some utopian community there ... but why doesn't anyone want the same for Holt or Rosedale? Nobody want to live there? Hmmm? (Of course I'm happy about this to a degree. At least SOME private property owners do not have to worry about their land being grabbed away.)
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	3

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Topic Name	<i>Housing and Neighborhoods</i>
Idea Title	<i>Go slow with apartments (Idea C1)</i>
Idea Description	A lot of the housing which was destroyed was occupied by students. The temptation may be to fill the empty space up with apartments, with the notion that a lot more students will be able to live in the same area. I think a lot more thought should be given to the future character of neighborhoods like Forest Lake and Cedar Crest. There are arguably getting to be too many large apartment complexes in town now, and if some imagination was used, ghettoizing the students might be avoided to some extent as well.
Idea Author	Julie E
Number of Seconds	29
Number of Comments	10
Idea Title	<i>Preserve and improve existing neighborhoods (Idea C2)</i>
Idea Description	Some neighborhoods were destroyed and yet houses still stand and will be repaired. We cannot let existing homeowners lose equity in their homes by mixing in horrific random 2 story apartment buildings between single family homes such as has been done in Meador Drive.
Idea Author	jj
Number of Seconds	21
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Think BIG. Plan for growth. (Idea C3)</i>
Idea Description	I would love to see the homes and areas that are rebuilt to retain their individuality AND add even more character. So many older houses were destroyed - well built, beautiful homes - and it is truly sad for the homeowners and for other residents of the city. It breaks my heart to see houses that I've loved (from the outside) all my life to be destroyed or so badly damaged that they will not look the same once they are repaired. I would love for those homes to be rebuilt in a way that honors the history of the city AND the people who lost so much on 4/27. I would also like to see changes that reflect how proud we are of our city in areas like 15th St., 10th Ave., University Blvd. and surrounding areas - such as sidewalks, bike lanes, landscaping, covered benches at bus stops, ELEVATED pedestrian sidewalks over busy intersections. Vintage, old-style Tuscaloosa charm and structure (a la Queen City and such places) with modern conveniences. I truly hope that Forest Lake remains the neighborhood that it always has been and I hope that students/renters and homeowners/permanent residents can continue to coexist. That is part of the charm of the area! :) I would HATE to see apartments to take over that area, but if it's within the neighborhood association covenants, a couple of row houses (all brick!) on rental property lots could be lovely with the proper construction, landscaping, etc. I hope that with so much that needs to be done, that now is the time to construct restaurants and businesses in that area that are convenient to pedestrians. Since the UA campus is becoming more pedestrian oriented, many students are not just biking/walking on campus - they're going everywhere! Alberta City is a character in itself and I think it should remain interesting. I would love to see row houses and town homes in the rental areas. Plants trees, build neighborhood gazebos and green spaces, neighborhood watches. Rebuild the firestation as a state of the art facility.
Idea Author	JO
Number of Seconds	21
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Mixed-income housing (Idea C4)</i>
Idea Description	Instead of rebuilding "low-income housing," build "mixed-income housing." Doing so could help encourage socialization among people of varied socio-economic levels and help to prevent isolation, desperation, and crime that tend to fester in low-income neighborhoods. People in mid to upper socio-economic brackets could benefit by mitigation of the "keeping-up-with-the-Jones" effect. They could also learn better to appreciate the variety and creativity that different people offer. The visual and material look to the dwellings would be similar and the living spaces would differ only by square footage. The community would include common spaces for recreation, leisure, and artistic expression and would reside in walking and/or biking proximity to retail amenities.
Idea Author	Ken M
Number of Seconds	17
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Make Forest Lake a neighborhood for families. (Idea C5)</i>
Idea Description	Forest Lake, where my wife and I have lived for the last 6 years, is the perfect neighborhood for young families and middle class folks. The houses are mostly small and modest, there's a great school in the middle, and there are churches of different denominations throughout the neighborhood. The accessibility to the major corridor of 15th St. means that the neighborhood is positioned perfectly for easy access to other parts of the city. The problem is that investors started buying houses here about 15-20 years ago to turn into rental units. Initially, it was parents of students who bought when home prices were low. After their kids finished school many of them became absentee landlords, realizing that all they had to do was pay the modest property tax and receive a check every month from a renter. Not only does this absenteeism mean that the houses frequently fall into disrepair, but the influx of college students significantly changed the character of the neighborhood. Houses that would be perfect starter homes for a young couple or a family with one or two kids are now leased to three or four unrelated students (who have no need to be close to a school). Despite zoning laws, there is virtually nothing that has been done in the past in terms of enforcement. It's hard to prove, onerous on the owner-occupied residents like myself, and makes for distrust between neighbors. It's understandable that students want to live in houses (it's what I wanted when I was a student!) but I think the city has to make a distinction between student neighborhoods and neighborhoods dominated by owner-occupied units. The middle class families of Tuscaloosa are the economic engines of the city and safe neighborhoods promote prosperity and community engagement. The fragmentation of a neighborhood like Forest Lake should be seen as a regressive and problematic trend and should be counteracted by stronger zoning restrictions in the future.
Idea Author	Andy Grace
Number of Seconds	17
Number of Comments	5

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Idea Title	<i>Neighborhood Safety zones (Idea C6)</i>
Idea Description	Most houses in Tuscaloosa do not have basements. FEMA can provide funding for neighborhood shelters so what can we do to encourage neighborhoods to build these for the future?
Idea Author	Nancy L
Number of Seconds	14
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Rebuild Alberta Elem. School (Idea C8)</i>
Idea Description	Having a new school will stimulate growth. Also, Alberta has a history of having an elem. school there (approx 60 years).
Idea Author	MLS
Number of Seconds	13
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Sweat Equity (Idea C7)</i>
Idea Description	I like the idea of using sweat equity to help home owners who may have been underinsured or otherwise not have adequate resources to build back the way they would like. Greensburg, KS used a similar approach. Neighbors banded together and rebuilt 8 or 10 houses at a time. The framing, concrete, plumbing, electric, etc. were contracted out. Homeowners had to put in 20 hours of sweat equity per week and no one in the group moved in until all of the houses were complete. This approach helped to bridge the gap between the insurance check home owners received and the cost of rebuilding. It also had the benefit of building a sense of community and ownership in the final product.
Idea Author	LuellaJ
Number of Seconds	14
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>Low Income Housing (Idea C9)</i>
Idea Description	In New Orleans after Katrina there was a serious problem redeveloping lower income neighborhoods. Residents were either uninsured or underinsured. According to a planner who worked there, the typical insurance settlement in the Lower Ninth Ward was approximately \$40k less than it would cost to rebuild. Additionally, FEMA settlements often don't cover all these expenses and, because they're given almost immediately after a storm, much of the FEMA money is spent replacing vehicles, staying in hotels, and addressing immediate needs. So what to do? In New Orleans, residents worked with a handful of nonprofit organizations to leverage private funds and grant money to help rebuild certain areas of the city. These areas focused on visionary sustainable design ideas that created structures more efficient and more resilient than what was there before. This kind of investment in these lower income neighborhoods makes for a greater sense of pride in the area and actually helps to promote a safer more community-based neighborhood. We could use a similar vision here in Tuscaloosa. A friend of mine who is an architect out of town suggested the following: "The best way to rally support from the community and potential clients, counterbalance the arguments by developers that sustainability isn't affordable, convince folks to stay in town, and show the planning committee that sustainable, low-income housing is possible on a realistic timeline is to build a demonstration model. Hold a competition for a two-bedroom home using locally sourced materials. It should be energy-efficient, respectful of the local vernacular, and incorporate a tornado shelter or "safe room", and cost no more than about \$50,000. Have the competition for a month, 45 days, no more than sixty." CONTINUED IN THE COMMENTS...
Idea Author	Andy Grace
Number of Seconds	13
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>Be Considerate ... (Idea C10)</i>
Idea Description	Be considerate of those who have lost their homes, as you come up with all these grand ideas of how they should rebuild. The vast majority are low to middle class folks who do NOT have any money to invest in rebuilding, except for what their insurance company will give them. Insurance pays to build back ... not to upgrade. Lets fill this forum with ideas of how the city can rebuild the land it already owns. But geez folks ... have a heart and don't make these people who are down, feel worse because they can't afford all these ideas you keep throwing at them. Let them rebuild in peace and get back to normal.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Housing for New Young Faculty (Idea C11)</i>
Idea Description	In all the talk about off-campus housing for students, let's not forget about the housing needs of young faculty members who want to live near the campus. Part of the draw for faculty to come to T-Town is good housing!
Idea Author	Nancy L
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	3

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Idea Title	<i>Take zoning seriously (Idea C12)</i>
Idea Description	I propose that strict zoning regulations be enforced for whatever plan Tuscaloosa ultimately comes up with. In my 25 years living here, I've seen so many developers petition and be granted zoning changes (usually from single family to commercial or apartments) unless the neighborhoods organize to fight it. The burden is always on the neighborhood to show why it shouldn't be rezoned. Sometimes it makes sense to rezone, but that should be the developer's job to prove. This is also why I am very happy some serious thought is going into these plans for rebuilding.
Idea Author	Doobie
Number of Seconds	9
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Arborist (Idea C13)</i>
Idea Description	The city should consider hiring a staff arborist. Tree planning and selection will be a big part of the recovery and influences the quality of life for years to come.
Idea Author	Ken G
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	<i>Rebuilding of Alberta City and Cedar Crest (Idea C14)</i>
Idea Description	Those in charge of looking at designs for rebuilding of Alberta City and the Cedar Crest and Rosedale area should take a look at the Highpoint Community in West Seattle, Washington. This was once a run-down crime ridden area, and is now a lovely residential area of housing for varied socio-economic groups. There is a combination of duplex, townhouse, condo and detached single family housing, including section 8. It has won many awards, been cited on TV and magazines as a model for urban redevelopment and green design. This housing incorporates green design, energy efficiency, harmonious yet varying structural designs with excellent color selections. It looks like an urban village, and it is centered around a large park. There is a community center for the residents, also. It is very diverse, with people of all races and religions living harmoniously together. Check out this link: http://www.thehighpoint.com/extreme_makeover.php Click through the various areas on the site to see the different types of housing--appropriate for lower and medium income people, as well as student housing. It is extremely attractive. How do I know about it?--I have lived there for 2 years while working for the government, and now I am moving back to Tuscaloosa next month.
Idea Author	Linda C
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>homes--universal design (Idea C15)</i>
Idea Description	Can we investigate building by universal design principles? This makes life easier for everyone, but especially elderly or disabled and it usually does not cost much more.
Idea Author	Starr Hudson
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Use Rebuilt Schools As Models Of Excellence (Idea C16)</i>
Idea Description	Schools can be the cornerstones of neighborhoods. The city has lost 2 elementary schools and a middle school. Any plans for replacing the schools should not just look at the facilities, but involve some creative thinking about curriculum/programming. The city soon will have a new superintendent. The fresh face and new perspective, combined with community input, could create a new vision of our schools that will, in turn, create a greater sense of community ownership in the schools. We can start implementing that new vision and philosophy with the schools that we'll be creating from scratch. When Alberta moved to the Magnet School after the tornado, there was talk of the possibility of increased collaboration between the two. Maybe Alberta could come back with a greater emphasis on project-based learning, or community-sponsored enrichment programs like the ones the Magnet School has created. Maybe we could have a "lab" school with a special relationship with UA or Stillman. Or another magnet school with an emphasis on STEM programs. The key will be getting input and buy-in from the communities to ensure highly successful schools in the re-built neighborhoods.
Idea Author	LuellaJ
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Affordable Housing for New Professionals (Idea C17)</i>
Idea Description	We would like to see a neighborhood in the city, near the downtown, the University, the shops, etc. where new professionals that move to Tuscaloosa can buy or rent modern, beautiful neighborhood houses. Professionals DO come to Tuscaloosa to live and work who are NOT students and they have a very limited housing choice. There are plenty of apartments and rentals for students, but for working couples of any age, the only housing options are expensive large homes out of the heart of the city, or very old apartment homes behind Wal-mart. It is these working professionals that will bring new growth and livelihood to the city and develop a COMMUNITY.
Idea Author	Michele H
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	1

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Idea Title	<i>Let's get folks back in their homes. (Idea C18)</i>
Idea Description	If we want new parks, new green space, etc..etc.. that is fine. But let's not slow down things when it concerns folks getting back in their homes. New Codes, New Ideas. Great! But as a homeowner in the effected area let me go ahead and say insurance will not pay for code upgrades (even if you have code upgrade insurance) for codes on the books after 4/27. What was on the books on 4/27 is what they will pay for. So let's be careful and not punish the homeowner thinking we are doing a good thing. Let's lift this moratorium on new construction where it concerns housing.
Idea Author	David Mize
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	13
Idea Title	<i>Housing for students (Idea C20)</i>
Idea Description	Heard a lot of talk last night at the task force meeting that students are not desirable neighbors in certain areas of Tuscaloosa which disheartens me. Rather than trying to figure out how to keep them out our neighborhoods, why not get them more involved with the neighborhood - this will require some creative conversations!
Idea Author	Nancy L
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>Build more domes! (Idea C19)</i>
Idea Description	A dome is the most natural wind cheating structure you can build above ground, not to ignore being more energy efficient by half compared to rectilinear(box) homes. I've collected photos over 38 years of domes surviving hurricanes and tornadoes when surrounding structures were rubble. The same kinds of rubble you see driving through our town now. Examples? "Domes in Disasters" seen at newagedomeconstruction.com. Historically they were bought in kits from magazines and owner built, while those owners were "on their own" to finish them properly. A professionally built dome is not only beautiful but functional while extensions and decks blend them into neighborhoods with other traditional houses. The radial framing is many times stronger than conventional. JDA's dome office on Hargrove rd E is rated for 225 mph winds. The first dome we built in this area was indeed struck by this tornado as it passed through Brookwood and is more visible now that the trees surrounding it bounced off and are gone. The re roofer however, could have taken a few lessons. This is truly a safer way to build!
Idea Author	John J
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	12
Idea Title	<i>Rebuilding of Alberta City and Cedar Crest Part II (Idea C21)</i>
Idea Description	I think what is being lost here in the discussion of the rebuilding of the parts of the city where people of limited means lost their homes is the fact that homeowners can have their insurance supplemented by government grant/incentive programs intended to assist communities to build green. This can be written into a master disaster rebuilding plan and supported by a combination of government grants/disaster relief, etc., with no additional cost to the individual homeowners--effectively each homeowner gets a government grant to assist in their rebuilding if they build green and energy efficient--over and above their insurance. It would take some planning and an agreement of homeowners to go with the project as a whole, or they could agree to sell their land and rebuild in another location. It would take an agreement of everyone and perhaps "town hall" meetings of homeowners to discuss. This is a rare opportunity to totally rebuild a community for the benefit of all who live there. The payoff--more healthy homes with much lower energy costs.
Idea Author	Linda C
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Residential Freedom (Idea C23)</i>
Idea Description	Someone said ... "How do we rebuild housing that is comfortable, affordable, durable, and energy efficient?" By educating residents who have lost their homes as to options. But NOT by forcing people who have lost everything ... to have to build back in ways their insurance will not pay for. Sure, many homes will have to be brought up to existing Codes. But lets make it easy for people to rebuild. NOT kick them while they are down.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Type of Trees to Plant (Idea C25)</i>
Idea Description	I worked in recovery all over the city, and did door-to-door needs assessment for the city in the Downs and Glendale Gardens. Practically the only trees still standing were magnolias. Low center of gravity, good root structure. That might be a good bet for future plantings. We might be rechristened the Magnolia City instead of Druid City, with all the positive implications of strength and 'steeliness'!
Idea Author	Kathy O
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	8

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Idea Title	<i>Cedar Crest (Idea C22)</i>
Idea Description	For many who may not be aware there were two sections of Cedar Crest. Sadly the older section mostly student rentals was almost totally destroyed and has now been cleared. Located on the other side of Edward Hilliard Blvd (6th Avenue) is the newer section of Cedar Crest established sometime in the late or early 60's. I am concerned for the long time residences of Cedar Crest who settled into and raised their families here. Centrally located Cedar Crest can be marketed among realtors as an ideal location for permanent residents such as hospital or University of Alabama professors and employees. Many retired and older residences live in this quite community. Sadly over the years many homes were sold to investors who have no interest in maintaining the appearance of their homes, yards or the community. The carefully maintained shrubbery of the original home owners was often cut down to reduce lawn care expenses. Many of the homes were over crowded with occupants forcing them to park in the yards or on the street. The city has let the rental property companies rule the city. Rental companies should not be allowed to destroy a neighborhood. I am asking for our elected officials and the citizens of this city to stand up for all communities especially Cedar Crest and say enough is enough. Rental properties and their yards should be maintained as if the home owner lived in them. Overnight parking should not be allowed on city streets or in the front yard. Landlords should not be allowed to rent a three bedroom home to five or six individuals when there is only ample parking for two or three vehicles. In many cities the law limiting the number of unrelated individuals living in a single home is enforced. Landlords and the city must be held accountable.
Idea Author	Ripper
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Affordable upgrades (Idea C24)</i>
Idea Description	With so many roofs needing repair, it is a unique opportunity for a significant percentage of the population to improve and contribute to energy conservation and efficiency. Reflective roofing materials (metal, etc.), insulation (radiant barriers, blown foam and cellulose, etc.), proper ventilation, and solar technology are techniques, materials, and ideas that are available now. For at least the past 40 years, politicians (particularly those who have run for national offices) have made this part of their platforms with promises of available grant money, low-interest loans, and tax incentives. When I called the Tuscaloosa Office of Planning and Development Services about this matter yesterday, I was told that no one there knew about any of these opportunities currently. One person in the department mentioned a vague recollection about this availability for low-income people in the past. Presently, this state has many people in mid-income brackets that cannot afford to upgrade their roofing situations in this manner past what their insurance is covering. It would be terrific if everyone who wanted to move toward a more economical, sustainable way of life could do so by replacing their blue tarps—and the damage under them—with the technologies mentioned above. Just imagine the savings that could result by helping so many people at once. Does anyone know where people interested in this might find help?
Idea Author	Ken M
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>University Faculty Housing (Idea C26)</i>
Idea Description	The University of Alabama should build townhomes/condos that could be leased by faculty, particularly junior. The development should be close to campus, within walking or bicycling distance. Reasons: low faculty salaries, increasing price of housing close to campus, recruitment and retention of faculty, fewer cars.
Idea Author	SoDa
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Balance Elm Street with Main Street (Idea C27)</i>
Idea Description	In any discussion of housing and neighborhoods one topic that needs to be in the background is business. If we want vibrant neighborhoods, we need businesses located nearby to serve the needs of residents. I'd like to see the City use its power to implement the Forest Lake Comprehensive Plan (see forestlakeneighborhood.com Updates and Links) by making it feasible for small businesses to consolidate their small lots into larger parcels so that they can meet the new zoning requirements. Realistically, only the City can make this happen and now would be the perfect opportunity.
Idea Author	Christine Forest Lake
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>List of reputable builders for homeowners & businesses (Idea C28)</i>
Idea Description	There are a lot of builders out there who have been struggling the last few years due to the economy. Others have gone out of business altogether. Some are not trustworthy and will take advantage of people. We need some way to have a list available to customers of reputable builders and maybe some free info classes to people to educate them about what to expect when rebuilding (reading a contract, questions to ask a builder, when to seek legal help, etc)
Idea Author	Tonya H
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	2

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Idea Title	<i>Archaeology (Idea C29)</i>
Idea Description	This is an ideal time to take stock of the archaeological treasures of the area; to map them, to choose what to make visible, and to create green spaces for people to examine sites, to enjoy interactive information sources, and to just relax and enjoy conversations and the treasures and about the weather or the Tide.
Idea Author	bornintuscaloosa
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Invite the Rural Studio to offer ideas (Idea C30)</i>
Idea Description	We could invite the Rural Studio to offer ideas for different kinds of buildings that we need, from small, inexpensive houses to community centers. If you google Rural Studio, you can find a set of wonderful images of the buildings that they have created.
Idea Author	Catherine D
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Neighborhood Watch program (Idea C31)</i>
Idea Description	Our neighborhood (Cedar Crest) used to have a neighborhood watch program many years ago. I think neighborhoods should implement this or similar programs to watch out for each other and the properties in the neighborhood in case of emergencies, when residents are away from their homes on vacation, or in cases of disasters to know who/how many are in each home. I'm planning on putting together a directory in our neighborhood as we had 25+ years ago consisting of names of household members, phone #s, email addresses, etc. This is a GREAT way to get to know your neighbors & to make our community a stronger place with very little effort or expense. Just a matter of organization & getting the word out!
Idea Author	TFCOOKY
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Village Centers (Idea C32)</i>
Idea Description	The town hall meeting the other day mentioned setting up Village centers - in my mind areas of mixed use, cafes, restaurants, surrounded by neighborhoods of rentals and owners. I imagine these centers to include libraries, post offices, grocery stores, a community center, a community garden, recycling center, a neighborhood weekly farmer's market, and even an annual street fair where vendors from around the area come in, streets are closed down, music and performers come in, and the neighborhood in general gets together and enjoys the day. In Seattle each neighborhood had such a street fair and it always marked the coming of Spring and gave you something to do any given weekend. It'd be great if these could also be sustainable "meccas", LEED buildings, living roof buildings, with solar panels and various educational tidbits for the public.
Idea Author	chau t
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Alberta representation? (Idea C33)</i>
Idea Description	Important question: why is there a Forest Lake representative on the 50 person task force, but no direct Alberta representative? Given that everyone is discussing plans for Alberta (where I live), how will our voices be heard? Is anyone really interested in what the residents who will actually be affected think?
Idea Author	Line1
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>New housing (Idea C34)</i>
Idea Description	I would love to see new types of housing like town homes and villages like the ones in the picture of this "Housing and Neighborhoods" page. I've been reading that apparently residents don't like a lot of the new apartment complexes being built so I think this would be a great idea for a different kind of student housing that looks appealing and is pleasing for the residents. As a student, I would be interested in living in one of those homes and neighborhoods and it's a great opportunity to create "greener" homes. They could build the neighborhoods similar to the retreat and make it more college oriented so the kids living there will live a similar lifestyle and help minimize the divide of how college kids live and how residents by helping to distinguish student's homes from resident's. Just a thought. Anyway, I've always liked how these looked and I know students would love the new look :)
Idea Author	Rolltide
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	3

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Idea Title	<i>Housing (Idea C35)</i>
Idea Description	Do not punish the low income by putting them in sub-standard housing. I have seen Tuscaloosa change from World War II years and progress has been made. There is still room for improvement and we have a good chance now to make changes. Give these people something they can have pride in and give them enough ground with it to grow some vegetables and flowers. You might be surprised at how much good can come from being able to sprout a seed or grow a tomato. It is therapy and is better than a bottle of pills.
Idea Author	Sybil P
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Safe Rooms (Idea C36)</i>
Idea Description	How many homes, apartment complexes and businesses in Tuscaloosa have safe rooms? As a child of the cold war I remember many government buildings and some private businesses with basements displaying "Fall Out" shelter signs on their buildings. These were safe places to hide from an attack which never came. The old Sears store on fifteen street had such a sign. Perhaps city officials and engineers could identify and promote several central locations which would be structurally sound during a tornado. Tuscaloosa residences, especially those living in multiple floor buildings should not live in fear. New apartment and condominium construction should also take seriously the lives of their residence by including a central basement safe room. The city should also work with existing apartment complex owners to insure there is a safety plan in place to protect the residence. Any new home construction without a basement should also include a safe room. This will add about \$5000 to any home construction. A small cost compared to life. Those unable to afford the additional cost could request an exemption or help from FEMA.
Idea Author	Ripper
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Make Home Rehabilitation Loans more obtainable for home buyers. (Idea C37)</i>
Idea Description	My wife and I are first time home buyers, and we have tried to find a home that needs work, as both of our families are in contracting. Most banks have made loans very difficult to obtain for financing renovation and purchase of a home. Capstone Bank offered the best deal that we could find, but it was still a stretch for us as the down payment and interest rate are high. The HUD 203K loan is a no go, as banks won't allow it without ridiculous amounts of red tape to be wrapped around it, making it too expensive for both the home buyer and contractor. It would be great if the city would implement a plan for families to receive affordable loans to have damaged homes renovated. This would bring families back into communities like Forest Lake and even Alberta. I know I would love to bring life back to some of these homes in these communities, but I don't have gross amounts of cash to buy property with and finance renovation. The people who have cash are renters, and they're not particularly interested in getting these houses into the hands of home buyers like myself. They want the homes to have tenants in them bringing them money. I'm not against people making money, but many of us don't want our communities to become low income rental property. Jordan
Idea Author	Jordan W
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>The Highlands (Idea C38)</i>
Idea Description	Everyone keeps harping on changing Cedar Crest and Forest Lake. The Highlands lost 90% of their trees and many homes were damaged severely. Why no talk of rebuilding the Highlands, and maybe putting a new public park there? Its a great central location. Or ... thru eminent domain, the land could be purchased and a new Amtrak station built there. Its already adjacent to the tracks, and nearby the University. Great location. Bottom line why are the poorest neighborhoods being singled out for all this redesign? How many upper scale neighborhoods are willing to follow suit with their own ideas? Why must the poor always have to shoulder the burden of change for all else to enjoy? Its a sad situation we have here. :(
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>Building regulations (Idea C39)</i>
Idea Description	I think building regulations have to be modified insofar as an adequate tornado shelter has to be available in every building, like e.g. a basement, a room with concrete walls or a prefabricated shelter. The structure of buildings here is too light for a region affected by tornados every saison.
Idea Author	Coryanne G
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>Home structure and landscaping (Idea C40)</i>
Idea Description	Every house should have a small room or closet reinforced with concrete block and rebar to provide a safe room. It should be made a requirement that all residential lots have a minimum of two hardwood trees. We lost a tremendous number of mature trees during the tornado. In order for the air to be cleaned, oxygen be produced, and the atmosphere be cooled, we must start replacing the trees.
Idea Author	Jean H
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	4

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Idea Title	<i>Community Storm Shelters, Letters of Intent (Idea C41)</i>
Idea Description	Per Tuscaloosa News....Colbert County EMA says that Sunday is the deadline for letters of intent to be submitted to receive money for construction of community shelters. Did Tuscaloosa submit a letter/letters of intent? How many Shelters? and What areas will have a storm shelter? Please keep us informed...If there are plans for community storm shelters, we would like to see the design and be a part of the plan. Look forward to a quick response. Thank you! And remember that there are people in the rural and city areas.. who may not be able to make it in to the Tuscaloosa metro area's larger buildings such as UA campus.(What a traffic nightmare that would be!) I know it will take a long time to build the shelters but we should think of our children and their future....and they could be designed for a variety of uses. Also, not everyone can afford to build one for their house, trailer, apartment or condo.
Idea Author	Moey
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Coverage in Tuscaloosa News of Town Hall Lacking (Idea C42)</i>
Idea Description	It was gratifying to see so many people attending the Town Hall. But after reading the coverage of the event in the News I wondered if I had been at the same meeting. One of the things that was hardly mentioned in the article was the frequent call by participants that affordable housing be available to replace the housing that was destroyed by the tornadoes.
Idea Author	John E
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Wait for a Free Toilet? (Idea C43)</i>
Idea Description	I read somewhere in this blog that in other disaster areas, a few MONTHS AFTER the damage, a company offered free toilets to those who were rebuilding. And so this person suggests that people who are living in shelters or temp housing should wait a few months before rebuilding ... just in case ... they might get some freebies. I guess it would go like this: "Hey Honey ... do you and the kids mind living in this shelter a few more months so we can get a free toilet valued at a hundred bucks or so?" Get real people. Is anyone really putting themselves in the shoes of the homeless and their children when they start to write here? If a company wants to donate something ... they should do it NOW ... and not wait until most of the homes are built so they can make the offer, get the free publicity and TV coverage ... and then not have to donate as much. Some of these scenarios are getting a bit sad indeed. .
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>How Many Have Fled? (Idea C45)</i>
Idea Description	Does the city have any stats yet on how many low income folks who lost their homes and possessions ... have taken the insurance check and bought a home elsewhere ... instead of waiting for the moratorium to end? Some folks just can't wait that long. I guess if we keep having meetings and drag all this out ... the problem will be solved. It was an interesting editorial in the paper today about some folks around here who dare to ask ... "Who do we want to move back?" Its appalling that anyone should be so arrogant to think they should control who can, and can't move back to their home place. The person on the Task Force who made that statement should resign. http://forum.tuscaloosaneews.com/viewtopic.php?f=4&t=8754 .
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Adopt the Neighborhood Conservation Code (Idea C34)</i>
Idea Description	The Neighborhood Conservation Code is published by the Center for Applied Transect Studies as a part of their SmartCode http://www.transect.org/codes.html , and I think it might be exactly what we're needing right now. From what I have seen, there is a strong consensus developing around the need to rebuild Tuscaloosa as a livable, healthy, well-connected, well-built, sustainable city. There is also an urgent need to move as quickly as possible toward those goals. As we know, doing it right and doing it fast aren't especially compatible notions. Adoption of a modified form of the Neighborhood Conservation Code could help bridge that gap. We can get something both good and relatively fast, without having to re-invent the wheel. Not only does it already embody the kind of form-based code we've been groping toward in our meetings, but it is already written in a form that we could quickly modify and adopt. In fact, as you will see in the document, it is designed precisely for that process: modification to suit local conditions and then rapid adoption. All the code documents on the CATS website are freeware. I encourage you to download them see what you think.
Idea Author	Jon M
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	1

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Topic Name	Land Use and Urban Design
Idea Title	<i>Bike Lanes! (Idea D1)</i>
Idea Description	Please include bike lanes on major street thoroughfares. Also have a bike path network that connects users to common destinations
Idea Author	chau t
Number of Seconds	39
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Bicycle and Walking Friendly Tuscaloosa -- PLEASE!!! (Idea D2)</i>
Idea Description	I have lived here for almost 5 years, and I am hopeful to see a more bicycle/walking friendly city. I would love to have the ability to ride my bike all over the city including over the bridge on McFarland Blvd, but this is not possible. I can't walk along McFarland Blvd from my church to the closest fast food establishment without walking on the street and endangering my life. Think about it. With obesity being one of the major killers in our society, why then do we not encourage cycling and walking for our citizens? I do not understand it. I respectfully ask for your consideration in this area. Thank you.
Idea Author	Lorraine S
Number of Seconds	34
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Dog Park (Idea D3)</i>
Idea Description	Tuscaloosa needs a good fenced in park for dogs. Most major cities have them.
Idea Author	Kathy W
Number of Seconds	30
Number of Comments	13
Idea Title	<i>Keep affordable housing (Idea D4)</i>
Idea Description	Many of the residences lost due to the tornado were for low income renters. We need to be sure to provide similarly affordable housing. This is not to say that the quality of the housing could not be better and built to safer codes.
Idea Author	John E
Number of Seconds	27
Number of Comments	18
Idea Title	<i>40% Green space (Idea D5)</i>
Idea Description	I know there are cities that have 40% green space requirements for every business that has a parking lot. So if Wood Square were rebuilt wouldn't it be nice if the asphalt were limited and green spaces were provided? McFarland Mall could use the same redo.
Idea Author	Nancy L
Number of Seconds	27
Number of Comments	11
Idea Title	<i>Urban villages (Idea D6)</i>
Idea Description	Disciplines within urban sustainability include architectural and community planning, with an eye toward enhancing sustainable transportation choices. These choices may include promotion of pedestrian modes of transportation over other modes. Village clusters, which are also known as town centers or urban villages, may achieve preference with urban planners over suburban communities. This planning strategy clusters housing, transportation hubs, commercial enterprises and social and medical services within walking distance. http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-urban-sustainability.htm
Idea Author	William C
Number of Seconds	27
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>Pedestrian paths (Idea D7)</i>
Idea Description	We need a lot more sidewalks. This is a dangerous city to be a pedestrian, especially near McFarland Boulevard.
Idea Author	Emily B
Number of Seconds	24
Number of Comments	6

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Idea Title	<i>Sidewalks (Idea D8)</i>
Idea Description	We need sidewalks in Tuscaloosa -- especially along streets such as Hargrove Road, McFarland Boulevard, and 15th Street -- so people can walk if they want to, without walking in the streets. There should be sidewalks on main roads and in neighborhoods to encourage and welcome people to walk all through the city!
Idea Author	JLF
Number of Seconds	22
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>Automobile-centric development is so old school. :) (Idea D9)</i>
Idea Description	Tuscaloosa needs to throw out the decades old Euclidian zoning regulations in favor of a unified land development code that encourages mixed-use, compact, PEDESTRIAN-oriented development in appropriate areas. There should be significant incentives to developers and builders who opt for this type of development. These incentives could include permit fee reductions, extension of utilities at low or no cost, public cost-sharing of infrastructure/roads/sidewalk construction, etc. In return, the developers will help the city implement the favored changes in the land use code. It is a win-win and who doesn't like to win?
Idea Author	MO
Number of Seconds	21
Number of Comments	9
Idea Title	<i>Architecture (Idea D10)</i>
Idea Description	The University has demonstrated what architectural vision and continuity can do for a community's progress and cohesiveness. Each new building on campus enhances existing buildings and grounds by following a certain style and structural concept. As a consequence, when new buildings are completed, they fit seamlessly into the environment in a manner that makes it seem as if the structures had been there always. At the same time, modern planning such as underground utilities has served to enhance the beauty of the architecture and provide a safer, more pleasant environment. Alberta City, and all of the other affected areas, could capitalize on this idea.
Idea Author	Ken M
Number of Seconds	20
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>bicycle lanes (Idea D11)</i>
Idea Description	I commute to work on a bicycle and would like to be able to avoid traveling on busy streets. I would like to see bicycle lanes on all city streets.
Idea Author	Marvin J
Number of Seconds	19
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Artist and Writers Colony (Idea D13)</i>
Idea Description	Create an artist colony to attract artists, writers and artisans. Rent living and working areas to them at low cost. Their presence could generate positive externalities which spread into the community. Some cities have had great success invigorating the local culture by doing this. Attract a diversity of artists, writers, musicians to our city.
Idea Author	ewis
Number of Seconds	16
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>Take the time and be detailed... (Idea D12)</i>
Idea Description	This is an opportunity for the city to move in the right direction. I have a few ideas, but I will keep them short and maybe expound upon them later. 1. Streetscapes. Take this time to enhance the McFarland and 15th Street intersection. The city has done a tremendous job in other areas (Bryant Drive) and should do the same here. This is easily the most traveled intersection in the city and it should be given a new look. Landscape the corners of the intersection and add trees to give it a shaded feel. This intersection is important because it leads right into the University and the main part of the city and it should be landscaped much better. Also, along 15th Street and McFarland we should plant young trees in the median that will mature and provide a gorgeous shaded drive into the main part of the city. 2. Regulate businesses in the area. The trashy signs could be regulated to ensure that every business complies with the same rules. Many cities now only allow for signs to be a certain height in certain areas and we could do the same. It provides a much cleaner look. Also, attempt as much as we can to stay consistent. That is in regards to building and landscape standards. It would look much better in that area if architecture and landscaping remained consistent and clean. 3. Pedestrian friendly. Instead of having a university that seems separated from parts of the city, bring them together. Allow students and residents to enjoy the same pedestrian walkways. The campus is obviously gorgeous and has a ton of walkways, but once you crossed the railroad tracks you lost all of that. The city should work to combine them all. Just because you walk off of the campus doesn't mean you should lose the feel. 4. Get rid of the concrete jungles that took over 15th Street and McFarland. The entire area was an eye-sore filled with concrete parking lots and no landscaping. We need more greenery and less concrete.
Idea Author	JBellison
Number of Seconds	17
Number of Comments	4

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Idea Title	<i>Alberta City/Holt Community Park (Idea D15)</i>
Idea Description	Build a community park in T-town like this fantastic park in Athens GA. http://www.southeastclarkepark.org/ A park like this has something for kids of all ages, and for adults who still like to play. The park in Athens has 126 acres and three sections: active recreation, a natural area, and passive recreation. It has one of the best skateparks in all of Georgia, and is the largest community-built playground in the state offering the only free, public dog agility course and a number of programs for youth and adults, including soccer, tennis, and softball. The creation of a park space like this in Tuscaloosa is long overdue! It would become a major destination for Tuscaloosans and tourists alike (witness the amount of families at The Verner Playground on any given day) we need a public community park Let's build one together!
Idea Author	heidi b
Number of Seconds	15
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Trees and Utilities (Idea D16)</i>
Idea Description	Please plant lots of trees. Please bury all utility lines. Burying utility lines will: 1) look better; 2) make it possible for trees to grow without being mauled by the Alabama Power/Asplundh crews; 3) make the utility services transmitted by such lines safe from future violent storms; and 4) obviate the danger associated with downed power lines in the event of another violent storm. The cost benefit here seems clear, in terms of the cost to bury lines versus the benefit to public safety, municipal aesthetics, forestall future utility outages, and mitigate the fiscal outlay to maintain and repair utility lines and easements.
Idea Author	lux s
Number of Seconds	15
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>University Boulevard - Tuscaloosa's "Main Street" (Idea D14)</i>
Idea Description	I have a vision of a newly re-designed University Blvd. It would have old-fashioned trolley cars running down the median, similar to the cable cars in San Francisco or the St. Charles Ave. street cars in New Orleans. The line would run from Capital Square (a short walk from the new amphitheater) through downtown, the UA campus, DCH, Alberta City and Cottdale ending at a large parking facility where the future Eastern Bypass will cross. Along the route mixed use buildings would have retail at street level with residential or offices above. Parking decks would be in the back, accessed via the side streets. A block off the boulevard, single family homes would sit on quiet, tree lined streets with sidewalks allowing an easy stroll to shopping. The look and feel would be Main Street USA, with wide sidewalks lined with trees, underground utilities and special lanes and lots of street parking for bicycles and low-powered vehicles (such as segways or small scooters). Balconies overlooking the street (aka French Quarter-style) would allow people to sit and watch the people go by. In Alberta City art galleries, coffee shops along with big stores would line the streets, but all with the same uniform 19th-century look. It would be a haven for small businesses. Students could live in Alberta City or even Cottdale and ride the street cars to classes at UA. Football fans from Birmingham or Huntsville could park in Cottdale and ride the street car to Bryant-Denny, stopping at restaurants and shops in Alberta City along the way. Residents all along the route could easily ride to events at the downtown amphitheater or Bama Theater or downtown nightlife. Tuscaloosa is already a progressive city. Now there exists the opportunity to turn tragedy into triumph by rebuilding an even better Tuscaloosa. A city that, by the time it turns 200 in nine years, will be used as an example of how all American cities should be.
Idea Author	Edmond C
Number of Seconds	15
Number of Comments	10
Idea Title	<i>Destination (Idea D17)</i>
Idea Description	Due to its geographical location, Alberta City has the opportunity to become a destination of its own. People gravitate to artistic and cultural venues by living near them and spending their money there. Street front art, theatre, and music studios and galleries would blend well with residential and commercial entities (some of which could reside within the same structures). Green spaces (including recreational and pausing areas) and bicycle and jogging lanes extending west to the University and north to the river could make Alberta City a truly magnificent "gateway" into or exit out of Tuscaloosa.
Idea Author	Ken M
Number of Seconds	14
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>bicycle and pedestrian friendly Tuscaloosa (Idea D20)</i>
Idea Description	Any new designs need to include considerations which will make Tuscaloosa more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. This includes adopting concepts such as "Complete Streets", greenways, and an on-going plan for building and maintaining bike lanes and other "connectivity" enhancements, as well as education for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers about various "rules of the road".
Idea Author	wherz33
Number of Seconds	14
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>No More Game Day Condos (Idea D19)</i>
Idea Description	No More Game Day Condos Please!!! How many million dollar condos are still unsold? Please condos for 800,000 to a million in Tuscaloosa is ridiculous. Keep affordable housing near campus.
Idea Author	Daniel S
Number of Seconds	14
Number of Comments	5

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Idea Title	<i>Sustainable Growth Incentives (Idea D18)</i>
Idea Description	Incentivize Re-Building that Complies with a Sustainable Neighborhood Development Standard Establishing an incentive based program for new development will encourage sustainable construction without forcing landowners and developers to comply with specific regulations that could limit growth and delay recovery. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development Rating System (LEED-ND) is the most widely recognized standard for sustainable neighborhood planning, and was developed through years of collaboration between leaders in urban planning, architecture, engineering, real estate, and government. Owners that want to rebuild without considering sustainable development standards would not be penalized; however, those that meet requirements of the LEED-ND rating system would receive tax credits or other incentives. The LEED-ND rating is based on a points system. The more points a development gets the higher the ratings (ratings are: Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum). The incentives could be designed so that incentives increase with higher ratings. The LEED-ND points are based on three primary categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Location and Linkage – encourages development that efficiently uses infrastructure, limits construction on environmentally sensitive areas (wetlands, floodplains, and agricultural land), addresses housing affordability and access to employment, and reduces automobile dependency. • Neighborhood Pattern and Design – encourages walkable and transit oriented development, mixed-use development, mixed-income development, landscaped streets, and reduced parking. • Green Infrastructure and Buildings – encourages construction of infrastructure and buildings that address energy efficiency, water efficiency, and stormwater management. More information on LEED-ND: www.usgbc.org/LEED Citizen's Guide to LEED-ND: http://www.nrdc.org/cities/smartgrowth/files/citizens_guide_LEED-ND.pdf
Idea Author	rian
Number of Seconds	14
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>ban useless unsightly tall signs along the interstate (Idea D23)</i>
Idea Description	We should remove the tall signs that interstate-side business put up. Does anybody actually see those signs from the interstate and decide to stop here. Most people go by billboards and those blue signs. Maybe we could have more put up so business could advertise there and then get rid of the tall signs.
Idea Author	nonameface
Number of Seconds	12
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, etc. (Idea D21)</i>
Idea Description	I think this would be a great opportunity to enhance the landscaping and aesthetic look of the area that was most greatly impacted and also the existing surrounding area (in front of University Mall/Midtown Village down to the interstate). Trees and shrubs, flowers, sidewalks, decorative lighting etc along the medians of 15th and McFarland. I would say give it a similar look to what Tuscaloosa is doing to the Downtown/UA area. It could GREATLY enhance the whole overall look of the city. Also, I would put something in place that made the businesses keep up a certain standard of landscaping/overall appearance of their business like other cities have (Hoover, Mtn. Brook, etc all have something similar to this). In other words try to prevent some of what the businesses had become on 15th Street before the tornado.
Idea Author	Brett S
Number of Seconds	13
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Crescent Ridge Road (Idea D22)</i>
Idea Description	I have probably driven down Crescent Ridge Road a million times and hundreds since the storm. The foliage and houses blocked the view before the storm, but driving thru there now it seems like you can see forever. My idea isn't as much of an idea as it is a challenge. I would like to somehow keep this view. I can imagine a clear, cool Autumn day and how pretty that would be with the leaves changing. I'm not sure how it can be done, but there is a spot right at the peak of the road and it feels like you can see to Birmingham. I would like to see a park there with an unobstructed view. About the park, I would like to see it honor the heroes of April 27th. I envision plaques with names of the fireman, police, and rescue operations. Also, all the rescue operations that came from out of state. The national guard units. The power companies from out of state. There are countless names that would otherwise go unnoticed. I like the idea of a continuous flame or light that would stand to honor the heart of these people. I would also love include personal stories of heroism throughout the storm and the days after around this flame or light. I like the idea of having the park center around this memorial. I think this website is a great idea and appreciate everything that is being done.
Idea Author	Matt C
Number of Seconds	12
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Parking (Idea D24)</i>
Idea Description	Let's make the building facades, landscaping, pedestrian areas, etc the focal point along our roadways, instead of grayfields of way too large parking lots. Move parking behind buildings. Also, we need maximum parking requirements, instead of minimum parking requirements. Let's face it, parking lots in the major shopping areas are only full during the holiday shopping season. Why impose regulations that address one month out of the year rather than regulations that accurately reflect the true parking needs of the developments?
Idea Author	MO
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	4

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Idea Title	<i>10th Ave Corridor Needs Change (Idea D25)</i>
Idea Description	10th ave(from I -359) is clearly a gateway to the UA campus and a major transportation artery. Should we encourage business development or mixed use,rather than rebuild the Rosedale housing project.Rosedale fronting on this street is problematic. The residents cannot walk to school or shopping, therefore is there a better location closer to schools and shopping etc? Is this corridor good for business or something else? I would like to see this gateway aesthetically improved.
Idea Author	rummy
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>Central Park/Memorial (Idea D26)</i>
Idea Description	Create a park central to the areas affected, constructing a memorial to all of those who lost their lives. The park could be the core of a string of parks and/or memorials that would be placed along the path of of the tornado, each with a different monument or marker.
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	15
Idea Title	<i>Alberta-Hope VI Program (Idea D27)</i>
Idea Description	I believe Alberta is a great site for another Hope 6 Program Mckenzie Court is very good looking I feel like Alberta has more to offer as a potential site because of the amount of land devasted, and the connectivity to grocery stores, shops, its walking distance to retail and strip malls
Idea Author	Matt F
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	12
Idea Title	<i>A multi-use Velodrome (Idea D28)</i>
Idea Description	A velodrome is an arena for track cycling. Open to USA Cycling Championships, Collegiate Competitions, safety courses, Youth and Adult classes, etc. Additional venues would include an infield for multiple activities, such as a skateboard park, basketball, wheelchair sprint track, BMX course... all geared to helping build a stronger and healthier community especially in its fight against chronic disease such as diabetes and obesity.
Idea Author	Thomas S
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Transform the old golf course by the VA into a botanical gardens (Idea D29)</i>
Idea Description	Develop the vacated UA golf course grounds into a world class botanical gardens. In time it might develop into a tourist destination, in addition to the obvious educational, aesthetic and educational benefits. Perhaps involve the Biology Dept. at UA ? The UA Arboretum is already adjacent to this land.
Idea Author	ewis
Number of Seconds	9
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Need for newer hotel (Idea D30)</i>
Idea Description	would really work to bring in a nicer hotel chain. I am not talking about a Ritz Carlton but something like a Hyatt Place, Hilton, etc. The area around 15th and McFarland greatly needs more hotel rooms in this part of town. Most of the hotels are off of 69, Skyland, or towards the interstate. With the amount of people we have coming in from out of town for UA athletic events, concerts at the Tuscaloos ampitheatre, etc there is a need for more hotel rooms closer to the UA campus and in the heart of the city.
Idea Author	Brett S
Number of Seconds	9
Number of Comments	14
Idea Title	<i>Uniform Look (Idea D31)</i>
Idea Description	Work to regulate businesses in the 15th Street/McFarland area. Regulate them so that they are building in a more uniform manner that fits with the look of Tuscaloosa. A LOT of places do this and it could happen here. If we encourage brick to be used to fit with the Tuscaloosa look, then we do that. Have the signs for the businesses be no more than eight feet tall. Force each business to incorporate some sort of landscape plan.
Idea Author	JBellison
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	6

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Idea Title	<i>Asthetically pleasing streetscapes (Idea D32)</i>
Idea Description	I propose we incorporate decorative concrete in our streetscapes as the City of Auburn has done. A multitude of patterns and colors are available and along with trees and shrubs at key areas we can have an attractive and welcoming environment instead of the generic and plain. Local Ready Mix firms and contractors are available and experienced in these projects.
Idea Author	Emory G
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Downtown (Idea D33)</i>
Idea Description	It seems that downtown Tuscaloosa has buildings with vacancies. I think downtown could benefit greatly in having businesses to fulfill those vacant spaces. A pharmacy or ice-cream parlor would attract families, and friends to enjoy the down-town area and it's beauty. Putting and encouraging businesses to start up or relocate to this area adds variety, culture, and economic stimulus.
Idea Author	Kaitlyn B
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Non-Uniform Look (Idea D34)</i>
Idea Description	Please do not let folks set rules demanding one architectural style for an entire street. Diversity should be the name of the game. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing places from different decades co-mingling along 15th street. I absolutely hate seeing places where all strip malls and conveniences stores look exactly the same. Nothing iconic is made without imagination. Places such as H&W Drug (with it's arched covered front walkway) and Moon Winx (what an awesome sign!) could not be built with the type of strict rules popular in some places in effect. A bunch of square brick buildings all landscaped the same is not beautifying, its boring and smacks of forced conformity.
Idea Author	oldcapri
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Model Village - Forest Lake (Idea D37)</i>
Idea Description	The proposed plan calls for "model villages" in different parts of town. In the Forest Lake Specific Plan that was approved by the city in 2005 the area east of the lake, south of 15th, west of 5th Avenue East, and north of Lakeview (20th Street East) was designated for possible redevelopment as "Neighborhood Mixed Use" (just south of 15th) and "Mixed Residential" (continuing to the south). Such a redevelopment would be entirely consistent with the model village concept, allowing for mixed neighborhood commercial along 15th and then mixed residential to the south. This area was devastated on 4-27 and several blocks have been leveled. I am well aware that the first barrier to such a redevelopment is the fact that there are numerous owners of this property. Accumulating the property would be difficult and would I think require that the city take a role. Any such development would require that the property owners be fairly and reasonably compensated. I DO NOT think that the use of eminent domain in this area would be the right thing to do. Perhaps incentives for the property owners could be offered (option or right of first refusal of residential structures in the new development?). This would be a difficult idea to carry off. Nonetheless, it would be beneficial to the commercial development along 15th, to the neighborhood, and to the city as a whole. One final thought - I would like for the mixed residential to include small, reasonably priced town homes where older citizens could downsize for retirement in this convenient, family friendly area (roughly like the town homes at Pine Valley).
Idea Author	George Harris
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>Community Business Lead Planning (Idea D35)</i>
Idea Description	I saw a topic about 40% greenspace, which I think is a good idea, but I wanted to expand on the thought. We all know Tuscaloosa is an auto-centric community. Most of us want to try and reduce our reliance on our cars, but we can't just quit them cold turkey. Simply limiting parking and increasing greenspace won't fix the problem. My idea is that the city creates a community organization that is lead by community businesses. Everyone from the mom and pop stores to the McDonald's. Things they could work together on: - Shared parking: If we have businesses rebuilding in a planned and coordinated way, they could share new parking lots and reduce the amount of space that is taken up by unused asphalt. We would also increase greenspace. - Urban communities: This is an easy one. Businesses want to be close together. Why? Sometimes they compliment eachother. Auto parts stores and oil changes. Restaurants and groceries (sometimes people wanna get groceries while they're out that night and save a bit of gas). Simply coordinate where we build can increase the sustainability of new development and will make an over better community for those that wish to live near these areas. - Drainage: This is something that is usually undervalued. There are these things called "Bioswales." These features clean water, reduce runoff, and are visually pleasing. This improves both appearance, and health in our area. If we have businesses working together and coordinating their development, we can easily change the way even rainwater uses these areas. These are just a few things they could work on. But, I think that the business community as a whole could really be a driving force in reviving the community. The best part is that having people working together both respects and honors those who lost property and their lives. We need to make good use of space and do the best we can with what nature has dealt us.
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	3

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Idea Title	<i>Ice Skating Complex (Idea D36)</i>
Idea Description	Consider adding a public ice skating complex. Ice skating is available in Decatur, Huntsville, Montgomery, and Pelham--why not Tuscaloosa? Yes, it is hot in Tuscaloosa, and ice skating would be a great alternative on a hot day. In addition to providing a new recreational alternative to the permanent community and The University of Alabama, an ice skating complex would provide a venue for youth and adult hockey leagues as well as figure skating. With the increase in the prevalence of obesity in both the child and adult population, a new type of exercise facility in the local community would tend to encourage a needed increase in physical activity levels.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Proper mix of business, green space, and residential (Idea D38)</i>
Idea Description	There is the Greensboro Rd area, 15th St. area, University Blvd area, and the Crescent Ridge road area that received commercial and residential damage. Tuscaloosa needs to look at city parks that have a softball/baseball field, soccer/football (mini), basketball courts, an open area, and a pavilion at each of these four affected areas. Create a great streetscape along these four main roads for commercial use, and follow-up behind the commercial area with a variety of residential housing. Avoid having a multitude of apartments and garden homes that limit play areas for children.
Idea Author	DG
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>drainage (Idea D39)</i>
Idea Description	Spend time studying areas of past drainage problems. Consider not allowing rebuilding flood prone areas. Consider drainage in intrasturcture planning
Idea Author	Ken G
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Useful Tid-bit Ideas for the Future Tuscaloosa City Pt. 1 (Idea D40)</i>
Idea Description	Here's just some little tid-bit ideas (without clear details) about what we should take in mind when planning and building T-Town: Better Transportation routes for bikers and pedestrians that also encourages alternative forms of transport (A light rail system?)(This could be useful during Football Season). Encourage agriculture/Farming that understands and reaches the minds of the younger generations (Teens,children,etc.)Encourage the growth of small businesses. Make sure new commercial buildings,light poles,stop signs,etc. have a unique look. Build more entertainment centers like an arcade,or an ice skating rink (Or maybe an aquarium?)for the younger citizens. What do you think about these? More to come....
Idea Author	Jordan J
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>CPTED, an design system who's time has come (Idea D41)</i>
Idea Description	Crime prevention through environmental design has been around for many years and when people hear the phrase they think.."Ah Police". Actually the police are the last ones involved in the process, the system is know as "Designing out Crime" in europe and it takes several things into account, how the building or building are designed, how the sidewalks are designed, how the parking lots and green spaces are designed. CPTED takes a holistic approach to design and works to build or develop in such a way as to make the "normal" or legitmate user comfortable and feel safe in the surroundings but at the same time makes the "abnormal" user or as we say around here the "bad guy" feel vulnerable and uncomfortable. All of this is accomplished WITHOUT putting razor wire everywhere. The CPTED practice is very aesthetically pleasing and it works.
Idea Author	Mr K
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>15th Street/McFarland Area Parking Lot Examples (Idea D42)</i>
Idea Description	We've all touched on the asphalt parking lots that line one of the busiest shopping areas in town and most of us have talked about adding more landscaping. I am a huge proponent of landscaping in general, but also landscaping the parking lots. Other than the campus, the 15th Street and McFarland area is one of the busiest areas of the city for locals and visitors. It would be nice if we could make this area beautiful with just simple landscaping. The university has done a good job of landscaping the area where some of the parking lots are located, west lot in particular and we could even use them as an example. Below I linked a few photographs of well-landscaped parking lots that we could go by... http://www.co.rockbridge.va.us/departments/planning/designandconstructionmanual_files/image054.jpg http://www.ag.auburn.edu/hort/landscape/images/parkinglot.JPG http://pleasantvalleyland.com/images/photo_comm_page2.jpg
Idea Author	JBellison
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Public Skatepark (Idea D43)</i>
Idea Description	There's more important things to get done first, but this is something Tuscaloosa has needed for a long time.
Idea Author	qfwfq
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	4

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Idea Title	<i>Monnish Park could be moved to adjacent to the lake at Forest La (Idea D44)</i>
Idea Description	Could Monnish Park be sold for commercial use or to expand the Central High campus or both and the funds utilized to purchase park property around Forest Lake? I believe the park's utilization would increase five to ten fold if relocated to the shores of Forest Lake. It is centrally located, the topography is excellent for picnic and restaurants are nearby.
Idea Author	rummy
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	19
Idea Title	<i>Billboard pollutin (Idea D45)</i>
Idea Description	only the size, but also the proliferation of billboards needs to be strictly regulated by city ordinance...and not only along the interstate. Both 15th Street and McFarland Blvd. are (were) shamefully unsightly because of outsized signs, and their intersection was completely hideous. I suspect the electronic billboard there is also distracting to drivers.
Idea Author	Louise C
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Multi-use community centers / performance spaces (Idea D46)</i>
Idea Description	Would be great to incorporate multi-use community centers into the recovery of the impacted neighborhoods to create safe and well-designed spaces for a variety of activities -- everything from "town hall" community meetings to after-school programs (tutoring, arts education, mentorship, counseling, etc.), exhibitions (art and otherwise) and live performances (theatre, music, film, etc.). Surely this is "pie-in-the-sky," to be dealt with after immediate needs are taken care of (housing and food for those in need) but if these spaces were well-designed and easily accessible, they could become important gathering spaces for neighborhoods to express and define themselves. Another possible extension to this, piggybacking on the "arts colony" idea posted here, is to have a small apartment attached to the center for a rotating residency by an artist/caretaker, who could help maintain and manage the space and offer educational programming in exchange for free live/work space for a period of time.
Idea Author	Andrew_D
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Bicycle Friendly Streets (Idea D47)</i>
Idea Description	I am president of the Druid City Bicycle Club and an avid cyclist and runner. Cycling adds so much to a community, including fostering a more healthy and active environment. There is no better example of this than the positive national press we have received from hosting the NCAA and USAT Triathlon championships here the last 4 years. Tuscaloosa has much to offer, and creating a positive and healthy environment must be part of this FORWARD moving process. Traveling around the country, I have been fortunate to visit several communities that value cycling and other alternatives to motorized traffic. Both Portland, Oregon and Boulder, Colorado have outstanding plans for making their communities more healthy by making bicycle paths and lanes an essential part of all city planning. Here is a link to the process Boulder employed. I hope you will LISTEN to what other forward thinking communities have done and implement that in Tuscaloosa. We will all benefit from that. Thank you. http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10331&Itemid=2973
Idea Author	Bruce H
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Replacement of Trees (Idea D48)</i>
Idea Description	With so many large, beautiful trees now gone in the heavily damaged areas, can we put forth an initiative to plant hardy, fast growing trees in the areas?
Idea Author	tyow
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Place Parking Lots In Back Or To The Side Of Commercial Property (Idea D49)</i>
Idea Description	I hadn't really thought much about this until I heard it mentioned at the town hall meeting, but it really is ugly to have large parking lots in front of commercial properties. The suggestion was that parking could be situated in back or to the side, but that the vast wasteland of blacktop doesn't need to be the predominant feature as one drives down 15th Street or McFarland.
Idea Author	LuellaJ
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	4

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Idea Title	<i>Small Local Merchants are in danger of losing their property (Idea D50)</i>
Idea Description	The landscaping ordinances of the Tuscaloosa Municipal Code Chapter 24-265 states "A continuous perimeter planting strip, exclusive of access driveways and other approved penetrations, with a minimum width of ten (10) feet measured from the edge of the parking area is required." My lot is 150 x 70. By planting a 10-foot perimeter, I lose parking. And when you lose parking, the square footage of the structure (mine was 1344 square feet) has to be in proportion to the number of parking spaces. So, unless a property owner owns an entire block, or close to it, the current landscaping requirements squeeze out the little guys. Our small parcel has been in my family since 1979. We were destroyed. I am only one of many small business property owners who are faced with the growing possibility of being forced out to sell our land for pennies on the dollar. I have heard suggestions regarding shared parking. I don't think my neighbors would be so willing to share their vast parking with me. But if we could change the landscaping requirements to flow according to the city block and not have to line the perimeter of the parcels, the small merchants would have a better chance of having adequate parking while still maintaining a flowing landscape. This supports the idea I have heard so often regarding village-type shopping.
Idea Author	concernedcitizen
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>River Walk (Chattanooga/San Antonio) (Idea D51)</i>
Idea Description	We have a fantastic river here but nothing that really makes use of it other than a very small park and some walking trails. I'd love a river walk type of community with shops, restaurants, performances similar to Chattanooga and Sana Antonio. We now have the amphitheater down there for larger performances, and some apartments being built for living space, let's keep growing that area!
Idea Author	mmmark
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Area density (Idea D52)</i>
Idea Description	Please consider the amount of traffic funneled to each area. Limit the number of businesses along main traffic corridors, ie. 15th St and McFarland Blvd. so that the traffic can be spread out more evenly. Also, please utilize the street lights more effectively to keep traffic moving, especially through heavy use corridors. Drive throughs are convenient but waste an astronomical amount of gasoline and create air pollution. People will still visit businesses even if they have to go inside the building. Please consider limiting the number of businesses with drive-in windows.
Idea Author	Jean H
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Improving scene (Idea D53)</i>
Idea Description	Just want to touch up on some ideas people have already discussed. 1.) I agree with burying all utility lines. It looks so trashy and so many nice cities don't have them and it's keeping our city from looking "clean". Many cities who don't have them look very nice and for this reason. 2.) I agree with the billboard thing-to many and it clutters up the streets and obstructs views. 3.) Someone mentioned earlier that Tuscaloosa should have a nice "Welcome to Tuscaloosa" type sign you would see right when exiting off the highway and that would be nice especially for visitors 4.) I feel we have plenty of parks but a lot of the space can be utilized better. I agree with the whole Memorial being dedicated to the heroes and storm victims and I think there is plenty of room already in the park along McFarland. I think that place is better because it's the most visible, especially to visitors, in my opinion 5.) I COMPLETELY agree with the need for sidewalks/safer ways for pedestrians as I'm a student and know a lot of students would love to bike in great weather to restaurants and shopping areas as opposed to driving literally 30 seconds away to Midtown or 15th. 6.) A REALLY important thing for me personally as a student and also speaking for other students, is the need for SOME sort of attractions/interesting places to go. I know we go to UA but we still utilize every area and place around Tuscaloosa as much as the community and therefore I know MANY of the students would benefit from places like some of the suggestions I've read like building a skate rink, arcade, mini-golf, skate park, an aquarium, batting cages or go-kart place or some things like that. Personally, I would love to see a nightclub built for students and really cool multi-level bars/restaurants that could attract a lot of the music scene 7.) Someone stated trees and flowers in the medians of streets and I agree. I think we need to enhance the scenery and establish more identity with UA
Idea Author	Rolltide
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Warrior River Ferry (Idea D54)</i>
Idea Description	What about a ferry of some type across the Warrior? It could ferry from a parking lot somewhere on the north side to the new Park at Manderson Landing, that includes plans for a pedestrian bridge for UA. The area could also easily provide access to existing UA and Tuscaloosa transit systems. It could benefit commuters from north of the river, as well as enhance various events held by the University. While this is not located within the damaged areas of town, it could help reduce automobile traffic and benefit all areas of Tuscaloosa in that way.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	2

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Idea Title	<i>People Have Rights (Idea D55)</i>
Idea Description	Someone said here ... "This blueprint guides zoning decisions and defines where and how rebuilding should occur. Are there areas that should rebuild differently than how they were before?" Ask the people that live there. Its there land. Its their home where they raised their kids and now the grandkids play in the same back yard. Please remember ... "Its not HOUSING ... they are HOMES". Lets help these neighborhoods get back to normal as quickly as possible, without the worry that their HOMES will be taken away, or zoned away. Let the people stay.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Green Parking...literally (Idea D56)</i>
Idea Description	Check out stabiligrd.com. They offer permanent grass parking, among other things. Sounds interesting. I'm not sure of the cost, but a little looking into may reveal the practicality of this.
Idea Author	Will Smith
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Encore Tuscaloosa (Idea D57)</i>
Idea Description	There will be plenty of room in the new ENCORE TUSCALOOSA development (the old McFarland Mall) in the works for new big box stores all are clamoring for. No need AT ALL ... for any existing storm damaged residential areas to be rezoned commercial. Lets make it VERY difficult for any developers to come in and try to take our neighborhoods ... pave them over ... and replace homes with shopping centers. Keep an eye out for zoning board meetings and attend them. Those single family dwelling neighborhoods destroyed by the storms should STAY residential. .
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>15th Street (Idea D58)</i>
Idea Description	In my vision, 15th Street should look like a smaller version of the Champs D'Elysees ,a prestigious avenue in Paris, France, with sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bordered by a lot of trees, small shops, cinemas, theatres, restaurants and cafes. Coming from the West End, an "Arc de Tornado" or "Arc de 27th April" should be built as a reminder of the horrible tornado and mark the entrance to that area.
Idea Author	Evelyn N
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>Acquire land on the McFarland Blvd ROW for future expansion (Idea D61)</i>
Idea Description	There are too many business and homes that scoot right up to McFarland Blvd. The city needs to acquire property along the road as it can. There are so many businesses closed and lots abandoned on McFarland south of Hargrove Rd that can city can snatch up now. It's better to be proactive rather than reactive on this because some day McFarland WILL have to be expanded (see my idea to make it a controlled-access road in the Infrastructure section). We don't want delays from having to deal with eminent domain proceedings then.
Idea Author	nonameface
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths & parks/community centers (Idea D59)</i>
Idea Description	It would be beneficial to the future of our community to have more areas for people to get outside and walk, bicycle, picnic and play. Alabama ranks #3 in obesity and has been in the top 5 for many years. The health of our neighbors is not as good as it could be. I work as a healthcare provider and see the far-reaching effects that poor health and economic struggles place on the outcomes of people who are faced with illness. Many are stuck in situations that do not allow for proper recovery or for family time and play time with friends. Many indicators of contentment amongst people stem from having a place to relax and enjoy your neighbors, having a picnic with you family, walking your dog, reading a book in a park, listening to birds, pitching a frisbee, football, etc. Four generations of our family grew up in the Rosedale area on 27 1/2th & 28th streets with one of my cousins living in the housing project (Rosedale Courts). Rosedale had houses down streets that looked like allies. Only one car could fit down the street at any one time. There was nowhere to walk or ride a bicycle. Nowhere to pass a football. Rosedale courts was surrounded also by these narrow streets and a super busy 10th avenue to cross by foot if you wanted to walk to the store and buy a peice of candy or a drink. It would be beneficial to rebuild Rosedale Courts (I understand that this was already planned before the tornado)and the surrounding areas with a nice park and bicycle/walking trails. These kids need a place to go after school (some sort of community center). They need basketball courts and a soccer/football field. What about a small library inside that community center so the children will have a place to read. Along the bicycle/walking path, there could be some of those distress buttons like UA has to call 911 in case someone needs help. Intramural sports would be great. Kids need a chance to succeed and be encouraged- not inside watching TV or playing video games and eating.
Idea Author	Tonya H
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	1

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Idea Title	<i>create a turn around near or on campus for drivers (Idea D60)</i>
Idea Description	So many times you see drivers make U turns, we could create a turn around with benches and flowers
Idea Author	caroline
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Grocery store in Forest Lake (Idea D62)</i>
Idea Description	We need a centrally located Publix or nice grocery store. I dislike Bruno's so I drive to Northport to the grocery.
Idea Author	jj
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>Library (Idea D63)</i>
Idea Description	What about moving or making another library closer to affected areas?Now is a good time to move it with the condos and such going up.
Idea Author	DC
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Land use and urban design (Idea D64)</i>
Idea Description	I want to see Tuscaloosa made "green" again. I moved from Forest Lake in 2007 and when I close my eyes to go to sleep, I see blue tarps and barren ground which is true for so much of Tuscaloosa. I am a Master Gardener and have been since 1992 and years before that. I don't want us to rush and plant the wrong thing in the wrong place but I hope to help educate home owners about how and when to do. We have several very good professional here in Tuscaloosa to give advice and help and don't forget our Extension Office. Several people have voiced that they want us to do some Memorial Gardens. How better could we honor the memory of those lost in the storm than to create beautiful and soothing plantings in our town.
Idea Author	Sybil P
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Polling - a better way than just this website (Idea D65)</i>
Idea Description	While this website is useful, it's certainly very limited in its footprint and impact. We could easily and quickly gain a clear picture of what the city and its residents view as the most important issues - and what residents view as the solutions to those issues, by conducting a mobile poll to all the cell phones in Tuscaloosa County. I'm proud to say that I work with a company that has conducted such services around the world (in conjunction with the US State Dept, the World Bank, the UN, etc...) It's quick, easy, and all inclusive - I definitely encourage everyone to take a took, (plus such polls are a TON cheaper and quicker than alternatives)... http://www.mobileaccord.com/geopoll/
Idea Author	Robin R.
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Forest Lake As Memorial Park (Idea D66)</i>
Idea Description	Turn Forest Lake into a city or community park . . . use the area from the streets that form a perimeter around the lake to the lake shore for a passive park with trails, gardens, quiet spots, etc. The lake itself could accommodate a pier or small island gardens accessible by foot bridges. Some will probably want a "memorial" to those who lost their lives on the 27th; if it is to be considered – this would be a lovely spot. This could help create a stronger and more desirable neighborhood in the Forest Lake area and could serve as a focal point for the entire rebuilding effort. I know this would involve acquisition of property from those who probably intend to rebuild; however, I think this is an idea the community could rally behind.
Idea Author	Larry Taylor
Number of Seconds	0
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Community Gardens? (Idea D54)</i>
Idea Description	A way to reuse some rain water, allow those who don't have yards to garden, build community by supplying a place where people get together and garden, improve healthy food options. I'm thinking a network of smaller gardens and not a full on farm. In Seattle each neighborhood has their own "P-Patch". They are public spaces and much of the produce is donated to homeless shelters. Given our growing season, we could make a pretty big dent! Example in Seattle: http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/ppatch/ Grant options: http://communitygarden.org/learn/resources/funding-opportunities.php
Idea Author	chau t
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	1

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Topic Name	Infrastructure
Idea Title	More bicycle friendly streets (Idea E1)
Idea Description	In a city like Florence, Italy, where air pollution from automobiles is bad, the fact that so many people use bicycles there is a saving grace. We need to raise awareness of bicycle safety by appropriate signage and create more lanes for bicycles to use. The National Complete Streets Coalition, http://www.completestreets.org/ , has helped communities like Dubuque, Iowa, establish complete street policies where streets are designed for everyone that uses them.
Idea Author	John E
Number of Seconds	42
Number of Comments	15
Idea Title	Citywide Greenbelt (Idea E2)
Idea Description	A citywide Greenbelt that connects all the way from Alberta City to downtown would be an important part of creating a more connected, livable, and healthy city. A Greenbelt is basically a long linear park that links green spaces, parks, neighborhoods, and commercial areas by pedestrian and bike paths. Some of the land affected by the storm lies within the flood plain and will not be able to be built back. The city will acquire this land and, along with a handful of right-of-way acquisitions, could combine these parcels to form the backbone of a Greenbelt. The Greenbelt should naturally be connected to the Riverwalk, creating pedestrian and bike corridors throughout the city. By connecting potential active and passive parks to neighborhoods and commercial areas, the Greenbelt would be a prime recreational tool as well as an economic development engine for the city. The challenges to this plan will be convincing business owners and residents of the value of a Greenbelt. This kind of progressive and pedestrian/bike friendly initiative is somewhat hard to sell to a city designed around the automobile. Also, finding creative ways to cross the major and heavily trafficked arteries of our city (McFarland and 15th St. especially) will be a challenge. But, the longterm benefits of this kind of comprehensive plan far outweigh the challenges. Decreased automotive traffic, a greener and more healthy city, and quiet urban trails connecting work and home would benefit everyone.
Idea Author	Andy Grace
Number of Seconds	33
Number of Comments	17
Idea Title	Bikes and pedestrian path (Idea E3)
Idea Description	In a town of so many students, bike and pedestrian paths should be a must. Particularly the destroyed areas on 15th Street had businesses that often served students and this is not a long distance from campus. With 15th Street's busy traffic even a pedestrian overpass or two would be great. This would make it safe to walk or bike from campus to places like Mid Town, maybe even University Mall.
Idea Author	Nita H
Number of Seconds	30
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	Underground Utilities (Idea E4)
Idea Description	I want our electric, phone, and other cable delivered utilities moved underground and the poles replaced by trees and landscaping. I know that it is less expensive and much more time efficient to put up poles and string cables between them--especially when that is what is already in place. However, when the next big wind, severe thunderstorm, tornado, and/or hurricane comes, many of these above ground cables will, again, be knocked down. Also, placing these services underground and replacing the poles with trees will make the landscape much more visually appealing as well as reducing pollution.
Idea Author	Jonathan N
Number of Seconds	30
Number of Comments	9
Idea Title	Public Transit (Idea E5)
Idea Description	Our current public transit is bordering on terrible. Hardly anyone knows about it, nobody knows how to use it, and the hours are restrictive of its full potential. I think a 24hr bus system, along with a bigger emphasis on educating the general public about it, would benefit a lot of communities.
Idea Author	Emily B
Number of Seconds	13
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	Hackberry RR underpass (Idea E6)
Idea Description	Hackberry Lane is quite possibly the busiest street in the U.S.A. with a railroad crossing. Consider construction of an underpass (w/sidewalks)to keep the high volume of traffic flowing.
Idea Author	ewis
Number of Seconds	13
Number of Comments	6

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Idea Title	<i>Sharrows...how they work for motorists & cyclists (Idea E7)</i>
Idea Description	Sharrows" are not only easy and relatively inexpensive, they help both motorists and cyclists share the road. Motorists know they can expect to see bicycles on the road. Cyclists can easily see safe placement on the road.
Idea Author	Pixie H
Number of Seconds	13
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Public Transportation (Idea E8)</i>
Idea Description	I agree that a clean, efficient, and usable mass transportation system would be of extraordinary value to Tuscaloosa. Rather than widening University Boulevard for more cars, I would like to see a light rail system installed from Five Points in Holt to downtown Tuscaloosa--possibly a similar modification to 15th Street, and a north/south line as well. In order to be successful, such a system would have to run much more frequently than the current bus system. Given the extreme dominance of the car culture in Tuscaloosa, leaders will have to have significant patience while a culture for mass transportation is built. Undoubtedly such a system will run at a deficit for a long time. In order to build users, a long term education campaign as to the benefits of this transportation would need to be mounted and sustained. Of course a partnership between the city and university would be essential to the success of such a venture. Also, a master plan to encourage out-of-town drivers to park their vehicles at the perimeter of the city and use the light rail would need to be developed. I can imagine that such a system would be of immense value during football weekends as well as events put on and/or promoted by the city.
Idea Author	Jonathan N
Number of Seconds	12
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	<i>Using water run-off effectively (Idea E9)</i>
Idea Description	I loved how Greensburg, KS used water run-off to drench the planting beds in the city. The beds were recessed, not raised, to get maximum usage of the water. Love this creative thinking!
Idea Author	Nancy L
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Eliminate the number of curb cuts on major arterials (Idea E10)</i>
Idea Description	There are far too many curb cuts on our major arterial roadways. Take 15th Street as an example. It is not necessary for every business to have an individual driveway from the road into their parking lot. Use shared drives, frontage lanes, etc. This will have an added benefit of making the roadways safer for all - pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles.
Idea Author	MO
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>Real Mass Transit (Idea E11)</i>
Idea Description	It's time that the city embrace the idea of a real mass transit system. It's time that Alabama has a truly effective system. Systems in Birmingham don't work well and the one that Tuscaloosa has isn't as effective as it should be. - Rapid Bus Transit. Similar to light rail except you have buses moving along "tracks" instead of trains. Plus you have the potential to turn the bus lanes into rail lines in the future. - Light rail. This is expensive but it can be very effective. Connecting campus to popular places in town like downtown and University Mall could improve traffic and economic activity. - An extensive bus system. It's effective. A simple, easy to understand, bus system that covers the city and allows people to traverse the city w/o the stress of traffic. Mass transit isn't an outlandish, evil or stupid as many people seem to believe it is. It improves economic activity and transports people safely and effectively. Also, constructing a modern mass transit system puts us ahead of other cities when it comes to future economic growth and prosperity. Many cities the size of Tuscaloosa don't have adequate mass transit system. Creating a quality system in Tuscaloosa would be just another way to show to businesses, industries, and future students/residents that we want them to come to our city and contribute intellectually and monetarily. Instead of expanding congested roads we should look at what actually causes the problem. Our problem is having too many people traveling through narrow corridors, and we need to create a method that transports these people through the corridors in an efficient fashion. It helps solve traffic problems and facilitates economic growth in tornado affected areas. PS: I strongly encourage you to watch the video of a proposal in Birmingham. Bus Rapid Transit is cheaper than light rail, but it's infrastructure can be a precursor for light rail, and is more appropriate for a city our size
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Move train routes away from main traffic areas (Idea E12)</i>
Idea Description	Parts of the city come to a stop when trains go by (or stand still) on Hackberry Lane. There has got to be a better way to make this work so people do not get stuck every day waiting for a train to pass. Overpass? Underpass? New route??
Idea Author	JLF
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	3

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Idea Title	<i>Redesign Traffic Through Alberta (Idea E13)</i>
Idea Description	Traffic on University Blvd through Alberta City can get very congested due to the many traffic lights. The problem is that between Kicker Road and Crescent Ridge Road, the streets coming in from the north and those from the south do not match up. This creates two intersections less than a block apart, each with its own traffic light, instead of one. There are at least 5 of these situations. University Blvd in Alberta has twice the number of traffic intersection that it should. With the slate wiped clean so to speak, this might be an opportunity to straighten out some of these roads and reduce the number of intersections. This would improve the traffic flow along Univeristy Blvd. That would be essential with some of the other ideas I have read concerning redevelopment in Alberta City. I'm sure that many people, like my wife, avoid Alberta City just because this traffic light congestion drives them crazy.
Idea Author	Rick W
Number of Seconds	9
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Bike Pedestrian Lane (Idea E20)</i>
Idea Description	Bicycle/Pedestrian lanes are badly needed in Tuscaloosa. This needs to be wide enough for both and clearly marked. It should not be one lane for both. You don't want the cyclist doing 15 mph heading for the family walking with the baby in the stroller and the dog wandering around on a long leash.
Idea Author	camille s
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Make McFarland completely access controlled (Idea E14)</i>
Idea Description	Turn it in something similar to Memorial Parkway in Huntsville. It is completely access-controlled with exits at major intersections. Minor intersections and businesses are accessed by access roads that are built on both sides of the main road. There is just enough space in the right-of-way to create a four lane controlled-access highway (with only a jersey barrier as the median) with two-lane access roads on each side. The road does not have to be elevated except when going over major intersections. Some right of way acquisition may be required, but look at the number of closed business and abandoned lots alongside McFarland, it wouldn't be that hard to acquire enough along the entire path from University to the junction with old US Hwy 82.
Idea Author	nonameface
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	24
Idea Title	<i>Sunday Tus. News article re: expert on biking and walking paths (Idea E15)</i>
Idea Description	In the Tuscaloosa News on Thursday, June 30, page 3D (Note: This is a correction since my original post stated Sunday newspaper) there was an article about a retired gentleman, Dan Burden, who has become an internationally recognized authority on designing walkable communities for healthier communities and people. He does not own a car and walks everywhere. The article says he has served as a consultant for many cities large and smaller because of recent national interest in improving the rates of walking and biking for the MANY benefits they provide. The accompanying photo shows him walking along major arteries of a city, with a large stick (with chalk attached?), marking off where lanes should be established or widened. Even in car-dependent S. California (LA County), he has spent a few day this year with city planners who are "walking the talk along side him." I'm wondering if, given the devastating tornado we experienced, he'd be willing to offer his services free of charge to our city planners? Wouldn't hurt to ask.
Idea Author	Ginny R
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Eastern bypass now! (Idea E16)</i>
Idea Description	Now is the time to finish the Eastern bypass. The State is moving in the right direction by purchasing the land needed before people begin to rebuild. I know of one land owner in the Hurricane Creek area that is in negotiations to sell. This will be a huge economic advantage for Tuscaloosa. The one mile of the bypass that exist has seen tremendous development and added much tax revenue to Tuscaloosa. This project will greatly benefit Tuscaloosa for many years to come.
Idea Author	FoEB
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Amtrak (Idea E17)</i>
Idea Description	Speaking of train routes, what happened to all the talk a few years ago of moving the Amtrak train station more central? There was talk one time of building it between the Coliseum and 15th Street.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	10

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Idea Title	<i>Outdoor Lighting & Signs (Idea E18)</i>
Idea Description	We should follow Flagstaff, AZ example and begin reducing the amount of light pollution we create as a city, county and state. Urban growth has severely curtailed the practical use of the observatory on campus, yet it is one of the few observatories on the eastern coast.
Idea Author	Gary D
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Improve McFarland - a Grade D highway (Idea E19)</i>
Idea Description	15th and McFarland is one of the most populated intersections in Tuscaloosa. A right turning lane from shortly after 13th street to 15th street going East on McFarland would increase the efficiency of that intersection. The roadway drainage systems could use an update as well.
Idea Author	Elaina J
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>buses (Idea E20)</i>
Idea Description	everyone seems to be focusing on bike lanes and i have not heard anyone mention the need for a drastically updated mass transit system. this is the perfect time to incorporate a system that actually works and can be in conjunction with bike lanes.
Idea Author	eric t
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Walking mall without a huge parking lot in front of it (Idea E21)</i>
Idea Description	Would there be a way to have an outdoor mall, similar to Midtown Village that would not have streets and parking jammed up to the store doors? We don't HAVE to be able to park at the front door of an area in order to patronize it. AT Midtown Village there is a very nice courtyard area but it is surrounded by a street and parking places. It would be easy and more pleasant to park in a parking location (maybe behind the shopping area) and walk from store to store shopping and maybe stop to eat an ice cream or drink coffee while sitting on a park bench in the courtyard area. We need shade trees (evergreen ones like oaks and madnolias need little care and provide shade year round). Exercise will help all of us and the mall could be handicapped-accessible for those in scooters, wheelchairs, etc.
Idea Author	Tonya H
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>The Eastern Bypass (Idea E22)</i>
Idea Description	Fast tracking the Eastern Bypass would sure help much of the congestion in town. Looks like part of this may be occurring as the State is making offers to property owners in the right of way in the Holt area from what I've heard(?) Since the State was going to have to work clearing a path over Hurricane Creek anyway ... maybe they could get involved now in helping the Friends of Hurricane Creek clearing the debris in and alongside the creek from the tornado. A win-win. :)
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Street Lighting (Idea E23)</i>
Idea Description	Some of our city's major roadways lack street lights. An example is Veteran's Memorial Parkway, and in particular its' intersection with Loop Road. That intersection is less than ideal to begin with, in terms of safety and design, and on top of that there are no lights. How come ?
Idea Author	ewis
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Easier Airport Access (Idea E24)</i>
Idea Description	Some type of affordable and well publicized airport shuttle service would be very beneficial to the citizens of this area. It would also enhance economic development in the area. Many businesses consider airport access when selecting locations. What about a joint venture between Tuscaloosa and the University? UA already organizes this type of shuttle for students at the end of terms.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	2

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Idea Title	<i>Protect the city's necessary equipment with better designs. (Idea E25)</i>
Idea Description	We know how much of our city's equipment was destroyed in the twister. How much of that was avoidable if they were better protected from these kinds of storms? It goes back to shape. Metal buildings with steel frames and sheets of siding look like leaves blowing in the wind during a tornado. The mechanical attachment to the foundation is the only thing keeping them down. The flat walls act like sails and actually catch the wind rather than divert it. Let's start thinking more about the SHAPE of these structures. Round is better! Domes are better! Our nations early warning radar sites, built in the most inhospitable climates in the world were under domes. They are used extensively in other "tornado alley" states for storm shelters for essential equipment as well as protecting people. FEMA has paid for quite a few of these community storm shelters including a recent \$750,000 grant for 2 near a Ohio mobile home community! Wouldn't it make sense to have them available around OUR city for those without other protection, especially those who can't afford to retrofit their homes with safe rooms or for mobile home dwellers? A series of dome shelters in the 40-60' diameter range are very inexpensive to build without partitions required to achieve their strength. You can put quite a few people in one for a short period of time.
Idea Author	John J
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>15 th street is too busy (Idea E26)</i>
Idea Description	any way to divert traffic from 15 th street to university blv or bear bryant str? maybe walk ways or bike lanes?
Idea Author	lydia stefanescu
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Signage for Bridges (Idea E27)</i>
Idea Description	There seems to be recurring confusion whenever road directions are given to drivers involving crossing the Black Warrior River owing to a widespread lack of knowing what the names of the bridges are. This is particularly acute regarding Hugh Thomas and Woolsey Finnell bridges. Other cities with bridges do not seem to have this problem. This can be easily solved with better (larger, for example) signage at the bridges. Look how large the Rice Mine Road exit sign is on McFarland and compare that to any of the signs which announce the bridges themselves.
Idea Author	ewis
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Build for the Future: Build Fiber to the Home (Idea E28)</i>
Idea Description	Electricity and telephone lines were critical infrastructure initiatives of past generations. Fiber Internet connections will be the critical infrastructure for this generation. Bringing a robust fiber network to Tuscaloosa will keep our citizenry connected and encourage technology companies to setup in our city. If we are serious about thinking big and encouraging economic development during this process then it is important that we incorporate this component into our city's infrastructure build out. It is important to note that experts from the FTTH Council believe that fiber-to-the-home is the only technology with enough bandwidth to handle projected consumer demands during the next decade. Learn more general information about Fiber to the Home here: http://communication.howstuffworks.com/fiber-optic-communications/fiber-to-the-home.htm Here is a guide book on how Fiber to the home has been implemented successfully in different communities: http://www.pti.org/index.php/ptiee1/more/406/ Finally, please know that this isn't something limited only to Silicon Valley as Chattanooga has already launched a municipal fiber-to-the-home initiative and is currently reaping the economic benefits.
Idea Author	Joshua S
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	2

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Topic Name	Sustainability
Idea Title	An Urban Farm (Idea F1)
Idea Description	In some of the damaged areas that lie in the floodplain, where houses and business will not be able to rebuild, the city could create a robust urban farm to support educational opportunities about nutrition, sustainability, agriculture and science. Most kids - and many adults - don't know anything about where their food comes from, and this disconnect encourages poor eating habits and an unhealthy relationship to food. An urban farm that focuses on a site of agricultural production in the city coupled with a robust educational component for our city schools would be an important and highly visible commitment to sustainability and health living. Using the model of Jones Valley Urban Farm in Birmingham (www.jvuf.org), the urban farm would be a space of community collaboration that celebrates the seasons and supports a connection between people and food. Like JVUF, our farm could provide produce to local restaurants and sell at farmers markets throughout the city - not only supporting the local economy, but encouraging residents to eat locally and seasonally. In the wake of the storm, the city has a tremendous opportunity to embrace a sustainable and forward looking vision for Tuscaloosa. An urban farm could be a centerpiece of this plan. There is already a nonprofit in town - the Druid City Garden Project - that built and maintained a huge school garden at University Place. The goals of the DCGP are to expand to larger and more community based garden plots throughout the city. This could be the best opportunity for us to embrace this relatively simple and inexpensive idea that would benefit all of Tuscaloosa.
Idea Author	Andy Grace
Number of Seconds	45
Number of Comments	10
Idea Title	Recycling bins in public spaces (Idea F2)
Idea Description	Everywhere there is a public trash can there should be a place to recycle plastic bottles and aluminum cans at the very least.
Idea Author	chau t
Number of Seconds	32
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	Build with gas prices in mind. (Idea F3)
Idea Description	Gas prices are high and they are likely to keep getting higher. When thinking about the future, we should rebuild in a way that supports alternative modes of transportation. Denser, mixed use development would allow more people to walk to work or use transit. Streets should be built with bike lanes to encourage bicycle transportation
Idea Author	Zach
Number of Seconds	21
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	Recycling Development (Idea F4)
Idea Description	Developing a more comprehensive recycling program, and possibly one that can process glass, aluminum, and styrofoam (polystyrene) could increase the number of individuals recycling, and lead to more jobs in the Tuscaloosa area.
Idea Author	E Thomas
Number of Seconds	15
Number of Comments	9
Idea Title	Glass Recycling (Idea F5)
Idea Description	There is only one glass recycling container at Tuscaloosa, at Target. I think the city and the university should also offer glass recycling containers. As a project for a university class I created the facebook page "Tuscaloosa Goes Green: http://www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!/pages/Tuscaloosa-Goes-Green/207464299291374 where you find more information, questions, concerns and thoughts about recycling in Tuscaloosa.
Idea Author	Coryanne G
Number of Seconds	14
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	Composting program (Idea F6)
Idea Description	Take the year-round supply of yard clippings, tree trimmings, kitchen waste and compost them! Bigger cities even give out composting bins for citizens to use along with recycling bins. Seattle has a great program for this. The compost is then used in the city parks, and even sold to the public! This reduces what is put into the landfill (which we have to pay for), and ends up with a usable, sell-able product. The program would even employ additional city employees! Here's an article about Seattle's program: http://www.seattlepi.com/default/article/Do-you-know-what-goes-in-a-yard-waste-bin-1242028.php
Idea Author	chau t
Number of Seconds	12
Number of Comments	7

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Idea Title	<i>Interim recycling drop offs (Idea F8)</i>
Idea Description	As curbside recycling is suspended, I think Tuscaloosa needs more recycling drop offs. Large neighborhoods could have one as well as all supermarket/grocery parking lots. The more drop offs are available the more people would recycle probably...
Idea Author	Coryanne G
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Utilize the sun (Idea F9)</i>
Idea Description	Please consider requiring the use of solar panels or rooftop landscaping on businesses. Along with this, have large parking lots retrofitted with hardwood trees at the current codes. Isn't there another product besides blacktop that could be used in parking areas? I have read about products that let the rain water through. This would help the ground and the sewer drains during heavy down pours.
Idea Author	Jean H
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	9
Idea Title	<i>Cooling the City with more Gardens and Parks (Idea F7)</i>
Idea Description	If one was to take some of the public buildings in town that currently have flat roofs, and build a rooftop garden or park filled with native flora, it would add a much needed public space downtown. Studies have also shown that rooftop gardens in urban districts lead to cooling the area, and if we use all native flora, it would help support the local environment by maintaining species from the area. See this article and video for reference: http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.110-a668a http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxqdPOUoJ90
Idea Author	E Thomas
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>solar panels (Idea F10)</i>
Idea Description	When Tuscaloosa rebuilds, there is no reason not to transition to newer energy. Not to say take business away from Alabama Power, but solar power uses the natural energy from the sun and can power an entire house or neighborhood. And we have plenty of tall building downtown where noone would even see them. The only situation where I see solar panels as not being a benefit is when you have to cut down trees to put them up. People need to be environmentally conscious when they rebuild.
Idea Author	lfdecker
Number of Seconds	11
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Affordable sustainability (Idea F11)</i>
Idea Description	With so many roofs needing repair, it is a unique opportunity for a significant percentage of the population to improve and contribute to energy conservation and efficiency. Reflective roofing materials (metal, etc.), insulation (radiant barriers, blown foam and cellulose, etc.), proper ventilation, and solar technology are techniques, materials, and ideas that are available now. For at least the past 40 years, politicians (particularly those who have run for national offices) have made this part of their platforms with promises of available grant money, low-interest loans, and tax incentives. When I called the Tuscaloosa Office of Planning and Development Services about this matter yesterday, I was told that no one there knew about any of these opportunities currently. One person in the department mentioned a vague recollection about this availability for low-income people in the past. Presently, this state has many people in mid-income brackets that cannot afford to upgrade their roofing situations in this manner past what their insurance is covering. It would be terrific if everyone who wanted to move toward a more economical, sustainable way of life could do so by replacing their blue tarps—and the damage under them—with the technologies mentioned above. Just imagine the savings that could result by helping so many people at once. Does anyone know where people interested in this might find help?
Idea Author	Ken M
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	9
Idea Title	<i>Invest. (Idea F12)</i>
Idea Description	Educate. Integrate new development of sustainable ideas with the University, students and the citizens of the community. Build a future of educated individuals that understand the process of sustainable practices by involving them within conversations (ie. Providing classes, internships, tours, general information). The idea is not to just build back, but to get individuals as part of the whole to invest into what is rebuilt not only in this section of town but as a whole within the area.
Idea Author	AKent_EA
Number of Seconds	9
Number of Comments	1

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Idea Title	<i>LEED Certification (Idea F13)</i>
Idea Description	New public construction should be LEED compliant and private construction should be effectively incentivized to promote LEED compliance in accordance with the US Green Building Council guidelines. For more information on how Greensburg, Kansas rebuilt after an EF5 tornado devastated the town see: http://www.dwell.com/articles/q-and-a-founder-of-greensburg-greentown.html
Idea Author	BrittonT
Number of Seconds	9
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Disaster Mitigation Techniques (Idea F14)</i>
Idea Description	Provide the community with tools and techniques to minimize future disaster impacts.
Idea Author	goodplanning
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Sustainability Clearinghouse (Idea F15)</i>
Idea Description	Since many people do not know what kinds of "green" building options are out there, let's establish a sustainability clearinghouse with information on these kinds of options. Put it somewhere in close proximity with the planning department to make it convenient. As people make their building plans, make it ease for them to learn about newer building techniques and potential benefits. Not every approach will be right for every situation, but there are many that will be cost-effective or for which the costs can be recouped in relatively short order from reduced energy costs or maintenance costs.
Idea Author	LuellaJ
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Install some electric charging stations for electric cars. (Idea F16)</i>
Idea Description	Several cities already have created parking lots with charging stations. I don't know that we have a huge contingent of fully electric, versus hybrid, cars in Tuscaloosa, but perhaps installing some infrastructure that would permit that type of planning would be wise. What if on game days there were some charging stations in University Mall, or at some locations on campus. You could charge to reserve them and recharge your electric vehicle while at the game. Or commuters could recharge their car while at work IF the stations were in a proximity to where they worked. The stations could recoup some of the installation price by the rate they charge, presumably. I just encourage planners to consider the possibility of this option to see if it is feasible. One benefit in Tuscaloosa during hot months is that the roof provides cover to keep the car cooler. Also, charging stations could be added to parking decks. Maybe developers who plan new apartments should include at least the pathway to extend electricity to some parking spaces. Wouldn't have to install until the demand was certain; just prevent the cost from being substantial if the concept was feasible in the near term. Here is one example: http://www.tomsguide.com/us/Solar-Charging-Station-Electric-Vehicles,news-11585.html
Idea Author	pronoah
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Install an intelligent waste collection system (Idea F19)</i>
Idea Description	Install an intelligent waste collection system that combines solar-powered trash compaction, efficient recycling solutions, and network management software and services into a powerful approach that enables municipalities, universities and other institutional customers to reduce the operating costs associated with collection by up to 80%. The only product like this that I've found is BigBelly Solar's solar trash compactor/recycling units. More info about them here: http://bigbellysolar.com/overview/
Idea Author	Paris Vega
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Install rain barrels (Idea F18)</i>
Idea Description	Rain barrels should be installed on commercial and private buildings to harvest rainwater. This water, which is just running off the surface anyway, could be captured for watering landscapes and gardens, among other uses.
Idea Author	Anne W
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	2

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Idea Title	<i>Make Carpools Cool and Easy (Idea F17)</i>
Idea Description	As our city rebuilds and grows in the next few years, many more people will commute to campus and other areas, adding to traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours. We can address this issue by building new roads and expanding existing roads. A more enlightened approach might be to expand mass transportation. But these solutions are enormously expensive and take years to implement. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a technology that could cut traffic in half, would cost nothing to implement, and is available tomorrow morning? To make it even more attractive, this technology will reduce global warming (less pollution), ease the energy crisis (better use of gasoline), and make a shortage of parking spaces a thing of the past. Commuters could even make new friends in their neighborhoods and arrive at their workplace free of the stress from driving every day. Of course, the title of this proposal gives away the identity of this low technology solution to traffic congestion and a host of other societal problems. Carpooling. Why don't more people do this already? Many people cite conflicting schedules, the need for flexibility, and often simply being too shy or not knowing who to ask. The simple solution is to create a social networking internet site, specifically to help commuters find compatible carpool partners. Such a program also needs heavy promotion and incentives provided by the city. Neither The University of Alabama nor the City of Tuscaloosa has a current program to promote carpooling other than a low key effort to tie into Birmingham's "Commute Smart". This is being done all over the world so there are many program to model. Now is the time!
Idea Author	Doobie
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Creative Solar Panel Usage (Idea F20)</i>
Idea Description	You may think that this is a redundant post, but I'd like to talk about exact places where solar panels could be helpful, not obscene, not a nuisance, and actual fit in. - Billboards: If you've been to Panama City Beach lately, I'm sure you've noticed how about 95% of the billboards in the area have solar panels on top of them. Billboards, especially digital ones, soak up A LOT of energy. The height of them make them GREAT locations for the panels, as they would get the best sun exposure, above the rise of trees. - Traffic Lights: Of course, energy could be stored in batteries, and if it were a cloudy or stormy day, the lights could easily switch to the power grid. - Street lights: The city is already doing a fantastic job with replacing old outdated street lights with new LED solar powered ones. We need to continue this, especially along 15th St. Not only do they provide better lighting, that lighting makes it safer for pedestrians and drivers. - Overpasses: Now, this is a bit risky, cause you could risk pedestrians walking by and vandalizing them. However, these panels could easily provide electricity for lighting underneath overpasses (increasing safety as far as sketch people that hang out under them). Overpasses have an advantage for solar power because Tuscaloosa is a North/South oriented city, so streets cut through vegetation, giving solar panels prime sun exposure. There are numerous other locations that we could place panels so that they don't interfere with our day to day life. If we can do it and not be bothered by them, why not?
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>USE CONCRETE AND STEEL MATERIALS (Idea F22)</i>
Idea Description	Incorporate steel and concrete into the rebuilding. Existing, proven materials and methods provide for economical, fast rebuilding times, flexibility in design, with wind certifications to minimize future liabilities. insurance savings@ 50%, energy costs@ 50-60% less, wind certificate rating @250MPH. Fire proof as well. Construction times are reduced by 60%, get people settled fast. 2,000-3,000 sq/ft home ready to move in @60days. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hf75PbZmA78
Idea Author	glenn k
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Embrace SmartCode (Idea F21)</i>
Idea Description	ordinances regulate WHAT and WHERE you can build. SmartCode regulates the FORM of development and how it looks. This means you could potentially have a 2+ floor building with a business on the first w/ lofts above, w/o having to have special/specific/complicated zoning changes. With SmartCode, any business or industry can build anywhere it wants, as long as it conforms. Technically, even an oil refinery could develop in the middle of a neighborhood, BUT because SmartCode regulates how a building looks and interacts with it's part of town, it would be impossible for an oil refinery to develop. There are different kinds of SmartCode. Usually, it is set up so that different parts of town are under different SmartCode regulations. Downtown allows for more dense development, the area immediately outside of downtown is slightly less dense, but still dense. And so on... SmartCode allows the city to develop in a sustainable fashion while not putting pressure on developers and residents to build under such rigid zoning. Tuscaloosa has begun to enact SmartCodes in places like downtown, but I think that they should enact it all over town. The sooner we enact it, the better the city will develop, and it will be healthier growth. Best of all it doesn't zone property owners out of the process. Itt allows a land owner to redevelop, rebuild, or whatever in the best way that they see fit. Things change over time. New roads are built and expanded. Residents move to different parts of town. So one part of town may have been prime real estate
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	3

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Idea Title	<i>Litter Traps in Lakes, Rivers, and Streams (Idea F23)</i>
Idea Description	Many cities around the world have built or installed litter traps in their rivers, lakes, and stream in order to capture litter that makes its way through storm water systems. Whenever someone throws a cup on the ground, lets a grocery bag fly away in the wind, or leaves their McDonald's trash in the park some of it winds up in our water systems. Not only do these water systems provide habitats for animals, but they also provide our drinking water, and a great deal of fun and recreation. Trash pollutes our environment, and puts a damper on our fun at the lake. Litter Traps catch rubbish as they enter our large bodies of water. Melbourne, Australia has them install on the Yarra, and I'm sure many US cities have them as well. They can't be too expensive. Not only do they catch the trash, but they make it obvious how much we're simply throwing into our environment. By people seeing these traps filled with trash, they'll be less likely to throw their trash on the street in the future. VIDEO: The video is an example of just one kind of litter trap, in the UK. There are many kinds, so we have flexibility. The tornado path crosses many storm drains, Forest Lake, and a few ditches. Since we have to go through and rebuild, clean, and repair, why not go ahead and install some traps? It would be cheaper in the long run, and you'll also be creating a more healthy and beautiful environment. Not to mention how much this could help reconstruction.
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Doing well while doing good - sustainable timber (Idea F24)</i>
Idea Description	It is possible for businesses to make money and still do good for the environment. With all of the talk about sustainable building, I think it is important to remember that timber production is a major economic driver in West Alabama, all of Alabama really, providing over 900,000 jobs in our state. There are many timber companies who are using sustainable practices to manage their forests and have obtained the SFI and/or FSC certifications. Unfortunately, LEED only offers ONE (1) insignificant point for the use of wood from a sustainable source, while giving more points for the use of higher carbon footprint materials like concrete. Let's make sure we support the use of timber to help our local businesses by ensuring that sustainable timber is given ample credit in whatever building rating system is proposed.
Idea Author	MO
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Allow automatic payment and e-bills for City water bill (Idea F24)</i>
Idea Description	Last I checked, automatic payment and e-billing is not an option here in Tuscaloosa. Every month I get a paper bill but end up paying it online - wouldn't it be smarter to go the way of most all companies (and utilities) to not only set up automatic monthly payments but also email bills instead of spending money to print and mail out bills?? Reduce paper waste, and ensure regular collection of city funds!!
Idea Author	chau t
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	2

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Topic Name	<i>Economic Development</i>
Idea Title	<i>bring in new retailers catering to younger generation:ikea,h&m (Idea G1)</i>
Idea Description	closest ikea and H&M are in atlanta...none in alabama! upscale food stores like wholefoods or trader joe will be great. if you want to make a poll among the student population you will find out more ...
Idea Author	lydia stefanescu
Number of Seconds	18
Number of Comments	20
Idea Title	<i>Public Amenities to Attract Creative Workers (Idea G2)</i>
Idea Description	Invest in public amenities - such as nice streetscapes with trees, wide sidewalks, and benches, parks, trails, etc. Creative workers are looking for these things, and it will make them more likely to stay in Tuscaloosa and set up shop. And, even if it doesn't work to produce jobs, you still have a nice place for people to live!
Idea Author	Zach
Number of Seconds	16
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Supporting Small Businesses (Idea G3)</i>
Idea Description	There are some businesses in town that were destroyed by the storm and want to rebuild. How can we help them get back on their feet in the rebuilding process - maybe incentives for going green and following LEED construction standards? They should also be rewarded if they already had green space on their property!
Idea Author	Nancy L
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Encourage Retailers Who Offer Affordable Healthy Food Choices (Idea G4)</i>
Idea Description	The Center for Disease Control has a number of recommended strategies for controlling the obesity epidemic. Increased availability of affordable healthy food and beverages tops the list, along with encouraging physical activity. It would be a great idea to attract retailers who make affordable healthy food choices more available. It could be a good practice to reward existing food retailers for adding affordable healthy food choices to their menus. There may be significant grant funding available for planning and implementing initiatives to reduce the obesity problem.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Attract "upscale" businesses (Idea G7)</i>
Idea Description	Midtown has proven that the trend towards high quality retail stores and restaurants can work here. Attract and recruit those kinds of businesses that Tuscaloosa does not currently have (Earth Fare, Red Robin, etc) and encourage them to locate along the damaged commercial corridors of 15th Street and especially University Blvd. in Alberta. While we're at it, how about a Taco Casa store in Alberta? Or an 'Alberta Diner'? This area has been shamefully neglected by most of our city and business leaders for decades. Does the City have the vision or the will to revitalize this historic area at last? Or are they content to allow continued decline?
Idea Author	ewis
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	12
Idea Title	<i>Do research into what businesses can make it in Tuscaloosa. (Idea G5)</i>
Idea Description	We need to look at the city as a whole before we set out on a trail to bring in new businesses. Many people lost jobs and we need to get jobs back into the city first. Bring back the old jobs and more solid sustainable jobs for the future. We also need to look at the demographics of the city as a whole. What can and can't make it in a city our size. The fact that we are a college town is a unique feature and I think we should look to other college towns of similar size for guidance on how to move forward. Some of this goes past the point of tornado damaged areas, but once we get jobs back in those areas and businesses up and running we can further look to the future. Towns like Boulder (University of Colorado), Norman (University of Oklahoma), and even Ann Arbor (University of Michigan) have similar populations and are considered some of the best small college towns in America. While the demographics of Tuscaloosa are different than each of those we still can look to those cities for ideas on future growth. Right now it's hard to say that we need to bring in a ton of new businesses when Midtown Village isn't even at full capacity, but we have to look to it in the future. Bring in businesses that will work in our city, while also bringing back those that were here before the tornado. A thorough planning can help to figure what can and will work in Tuscaloosa with a very young population, as well as a population that is gradually growing. We need to look at the rate of growth and plan ahead for it. Remember to support the past and those businesses but thoroughly plan for the future of the city.
Idea Author	JBellison
Number of Seconds	9
Number of Comments	2

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Idea Title	<i>LIMIT Title Loan places to the area (Idea G6)</i>
Idea Description	15th Street before the storm was covered up with cash advance places. These need to be limited in the newer built area. These places tend to take advantage of underprivileged people and this should not be supported. It also tends to bring the look of an area down which can effect bringing other home buyers and retailers in to the rebuilt areas.
Idea Author	Brett S
Number of Seconds	9
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>Technology jobs (Idea G8)</i>
Idea Description	We have industry-leading talent graduating from our university and colleges. But our students graduate and leave the city because of the lack of technology jobs. We need to focus on retaining that talent being produced in Tuscaloosa.
Idea Author	B Bonds
Number of Seconds	8
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Building Community Business (Idea G9)</i>
Idea Description	Develop a small business incubator to encourage emerging local small business growth. This should be the integration point between the commercial and residential areas to encourage develop while forming new relationships with the community from which these businesses originate.
Idea Author	AKent_EA
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Build A Research Park (Idea G10)</i>
Idea Description	Research parks are sustainable, attractive, and strong economic engines. Some of the most successful cities in the country base their economies on research. We have a major university, all we need to do is dedicate a large amount of land, provide the necessary infrastructure, and build a relationship between it and the University. If we were some how able to place this near the path of the tornado, it would make it so much easier for those that were affected to recover. Also, research institutions do valuable research into things like weather. So, a good idea might be to encourage weather research related firms to come to the city and set up shop. It would make Tuscaloosa increasingly storm ready and save lives in the process. PS: The video is of the Research Triangle Park in Raleigh-Durham, NC. It's the largest research park in the country. Huntsville's research park is the second largest in the country.
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Business incubator (Idea G11)</i>
Idea Description	I have seen these in other cities and someone brought it up today sounds like some that we could use here in Tuscaloosa.
Idea Author	Nancy G
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Improve Tuscaloosa's bikeability! (Idea G12)</i>
Idea Description	Tuscaloosa only has 2 dedicated "bike" shops. For a town of 100,000 people - that is LOW! I just Googled a few other small towns of our size and searched for their bike shops - all had 6-8 shops at least (Memphis, TN, Sacramento, CA, Roanoke, VA, Ventura, CA). Making Tuscaloosa more bikeable would demand more bike shops, employing people to own those bike shops, service those bikes, sell those bikes. Bike shops also can be a place to gather, which would nurture coffee shops and cafes to cluster around that single bike shop - it's a domino effect!
Idea Author	chau t
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Have an art/local business night once a month (Idea G13)</i>
Idea Description	Tuscaloosa should host an "art walk" once a month where local stores and artists display/ sell/ promote local art and businesses with food/music/drinks
Idea Author	caroline
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Provide incentives (Idea G14)</i>
Idea Description	Now more than ever Tuscaloosa must provide incentives to lure businesses here. It is ridiculous for Tuscaloosa to be so progressive in some areas and a university town and yet we have none of the businesses that are in Birmingham. Why must we continue to give Jefferson county our tax dollars?
Idea Author	jj
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	2

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Idea Title	<i>We need to provide reconstruction jobs for people who lived here (Idea G15)</i>
Idea Description	In New Orleans workers were imported from all over the world to help rebuild after Katrina. There were cases in which non-US residents were kept in a virtual slavery. Many people who'd lived in New Orleans couldn't find reconstruction jobs. We need to build a workforce for rebuilding made largely from those who lived here before the tornadoes struck. They should work in jobs that have guaranteed minimum wages and work place safety measures, as the law requires. How better to promote economic development?
Idea Author	John E
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	<i>Don't forget the other 50% (The poor people) if we want progress (Idea G16)</i>
Idea Description	If Tuscaloosa can sustain the University Mall and Mid-Town Village with just 90,000 residents and students, it does so mostly based on the incomes of just 50% of the population (middle and upper). So, any rebuilding plan that looks towards the future has to address what we can do to improve the livelihoods (and purchasing power) of the other 50% of the area residents. Of course, programs that focus on education are indispensable to this, as a better educated work force can attract higher paying jobs. Furthermore, we have to recognize that education is much more than just "school" it's about community building. So, we have to tie educational programs into awareness programs such as the urban gardens that have been proposed, after school programs at parks and recreations, arts programs, etc.. (Of course, we will have to have better public transportation and improve connectivity and flow among the Tuscaloosa Communities so that children can get to critical after school programs). We also need to ensure that these ideas discussed on this website are made available to the residents in those poorest areas that were affected by the storms-- who do not have access to Internet -- so we can get them involved in the rebuilding dialogue. But, if we look to these issues, we will not only re-build Tuscaloosa as a better city for our residents, we will make it an attractive place for outside investors and business and we will be taking important steps to ensure that we have a sustainable economic future!
Idea Author	Robin R.
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>revamp McFarland Mall (Idea G17)</i>
Idea Description	McFarland Mall has been let go over the past few years. I mean, with Midtown Village and University Mall, it was destined to happen, but theres no reason that it can't be revamped. Today there was an article saying Mr. Pate wants to upgrade it to an outdoor mall style complex and I say we all get 100% behind him. Heres a link to the article: http://www.tuscaloosaneews.com/article/20110626/NEWS/110629759/1007?Title=Tuscaloosa-s-McFarland-Mall-could-have-new-tenants-new-look
Idea Author	lfdecker
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>Apple Store (Idea G20)</i>
Idea Description	So, I know theres the core across the river, and a mini-one in the supply store on campus, but why can't we have an apple flagship store. Apple would definitely get plenty of business (between gamedays, concerts, and other events held in the city). But, it would also draw people from all over the state to our region. Why should we have to drive to Hoover to get a full-fledged apple store? If not apple, Tuscaloosa needs to attract some high end retailer. We need some store that will draw people to Tuscaloosa when its not a gameday or concert day or other event.
Idea Author	lfdecker
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>Local Merchants (Idea G18)</i>
Idea Description	There are many small local businesses that were destroyed. My business, The Boulevard Salon, was one of these. We own a tiny parcel of land, yet we had a successful business and attracted an up-scale clientele. However, owners such as myself are dealing with threats of takeover by larger property owners because lots of us cannot find a way to comply with the new landscaping requirements and still have adequate parking and profitable square footage. I was told my John McConnell that Krispy Kreme and McDonald's have not been able to meet compliance as of yet. We want to rebuild in a modern and beautiful landscape, but the physics of it is making it impossible. That property has been in my family since 1979. We were destroyed. We want to be a part of the new landscape. We have the resources to build a beautiful salon within the building codes, but the new landscaping ordinances are killing us. How can we include our local small business property owners in this landscape?
Idea Author	concernedcitizen
Number of Seconds	5
Number of Comments	12

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Idea Title	<i>Take advantage of the 5,000 people who move to Tuscaloosa YEARLY (Idea G19)</i>
Idea Description	Over 5,000 freshmen enroll at UA every fall, a majority from outside of Tuscaloosa County and good number from outside of Alabama. These are potential permanent residents of Tuscaloosa. The city must do more to make Tuscaloosa an attractive place for young urban professionals, other than Alabama football. That means affordable starter housing in the core of the city near places of business and nightlife and not in the wild environs of Moundville or Coker. Mayor Maddox has done a splendid job of doing this by focusing development downtown, where most yuppies want to live, after tiring of living in the suburbs all their lives with their parents.
Idea Author	nonameface
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	<i>Big City Attractions and Businesses (Idea G21)</i>
Idea Description	These ideas are for the entire county. We are the second largest county in the state, larger than Jefferson and the former capital. Huntsville has NASA, Jefferson has the McWayne Center, BJCC, Zoo, and Alabama Adventure. I believe we should take advantage of the amount of land and build an aquarium, water park, zoo, theme park, or some completely unique and fun attraction. We have one the best engineering schools in the country right in the heart of town. We should use these graduates to come up with something we can call are own and bring more people to our great city. We also need more shopping centers like Midtown, but with completely different stores and restaurants. I see no reason why we can't have these things. Build better and more affordable living communities and you will attract more businesses. I believe we should use the entire county and unite the county. Use those transit ideas that were given. We can be the best city in the country.
Idea Author	Arie K
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	<i>East Campus Escape (Idea G23)</i>
Idea Description	For years, Alberta has become a feared area for students of the University of Alabama at night. Alabama Alumni use the area as an alternate exit from Tuscaloosa during football season. This area needs more chain fast food and sit-down restaurants. This would provide jobs for those who choose to remain in the area, and serve students on campus and living in The Retreat.
Idea Author	Phil Grant
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	<i>A True "Taste of Tuscaloosa" (Idea G22)</i>
Idea Description	In years past, Bama Blast was followed by Taste of Tuscaloosa, where local vendors gave away food and coupons to encourage students to seek dining options off-campus. While Tuscaloosa is known for many things, it is not necessarily known for its food. Other than Dreamland and City Cafe, we have no "must eat" restaurant. We need to encourage entrepreneurial cooks and chefs in Alabama and perhaps nationally to open restaurants on 15th and on the Strip. The University is sitting on 2 empty leasing offices and what used to be Lai Lai. It's about time it gets developed. Someone on another post suggested a "Alberta Cafe."
Idea Author	Phil Grant
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>Low cost business spaces needed (Idea G24)</i>
Idea Description	Some of the businesses that were located along 15th street or in Alberta likely chose their locations in part because the buildings were older and rent or cost of ownership was low. Is there a way to help identify vacant, low-cost space and assist building owners in relocating while at the same time being mindful of wise zoning or area planning? I also wonder if community development funds are available or could be used to relocate displaced businesses to vacant downtown spaces as suggested by Luella.
Idea Author	pronoah
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>A Real Technology Center (Idea G25)</i>
Idea Description	As we re-build Tuscaloosa we have to devote much attention to what will sustain the community economically over the future. We have a lot of technology and big firms in the area for a town this small. However, a joint effort spear headed by the city, County, Chamber of Commerce, and the University to unite these forces is really not visible. Community leaders should look to uniting the largest area industries: Mercedes, Phipper, Drummond, the University, etc.. and into building out a true technology center right in the heart of town. This center, first of all, needs to be available to all area residents, especially middle school and high school students. It needs to be outfitted with the next generation of tech tools and an active mentor community to foster ideas and guidance to students. It can also be used to re-train community residents to learn new skills for tomorrow, with commitments from area businesses to hire individuals who complete training programs in new fields. What can we expect from such a center? We can expect quite a bit of entrepreneurship and innovation - two cornerstones of a sustainable economic future for the city.
Idea Author	Robin R.
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	1

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Idea Title	<i>expand University Mall and (Idea G26)</i>
Idea Description	And or upgrade so when the new business come it does not end up like McFarland Mall is. Keep the essence of the Mall. I like going inside. Not like Midtown where it is open. Feels like they do not want you there unless you are shopping. Any other open malls has things going on outside. Not ours.
Idea Author	DC
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	15
Idea Title	<i>Alberta Alleyway Entertainment District (Idea G27)</i>
Idea Description	Create an alleyway entertainment district in Alberta called "Tornado Alley." This could be done by either converting existing structures into a part of the alleyway, or constructing entirely new buildings. An alleyway entertainment district is basically the space between the backs of more urban buildings. It's completely pedestrian oriented, no cars. Of course, many of the buildings that would have fit this mold were destroyed, so we'd have to get creative. Not only would this encourage reconstruction in Alberta, but it would also create hundreds of jobs for surrounding residents. Having it along University Blvd, or near it, would allow current residents to still live there without being priced out of the market. This alleyway could be used for simple shopping, cafes, eateries, restaurants, or any of a thousand different uses. Even art centers and studios. Maybe even a museum dedicated to the tornado? What do y'all think? Where could it be built? What establishments would be appropriate to make it their home? PS: This video is of Printers Alley in Nashville. Great music and food spots.
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	<i>NO Red Light Cameras (Idea G28)</i>
Idea Description	Red light cameras should not be put up in Tuscaloosa. They are a waste of money in a time when we need to be conserving as much of our resources as possible for relief. Studies have found that the cameras are largely ineffective and cause more accidents: http://www.motorists.org/red-light-cameras/objections Longer yellow lights are much more effective than cameras/tickets, and cost much less, leading to some cities to ban red light cameras: http://www.kmov.com/news/local/Jefferson-County-bans-red-light-cameras-and-looks-for-safety-alternatives-121220954.html Municipalities across the U.S. are taking down red light cameras. http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/43521646/ns/us_news-life/ The last thing Tuscaloosa needs now is an extra economic burden, especially one that causes more traffic accidents and loses money for the city. Please stop the talk about red light cameras now.
Idea Author	B Bonds
Number of Seconds	1
Number of Comments	1

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Topic Name	Streamline Processes
Idea Title	Rebuilding Information Packet (Idea H1)
Idea Description	ebuilding Packet that informs the general public about what they will need to proceed forward in Reconstruction of their property. The information could include guidelines, who to contact, and informed steps to take so that to answer as many questions as possible early in the process.
Idea Author	bdaniels_EA
Number of Seconds	13
Number of Comments	8
Idea Title	Phone line (Idea H2)
Idea Description	Set up a hotline that is staffed by people who are knowledgeable in the realm of building permits, requirements, etc. Sort of a piggy back off of the current "311: One call to City hall" system. I'm sure they have been asked questions relevant to this topic already. Plus, the city needs to put in place a website with a FAQs format regarding the processes and requirements. Heck, you might even consider having people online with chat capability to answer questions through that medium. You know, similar to customer service reps for insurance companies, etc.
Idea Author	bamastudent
Number of Seconds	7
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	Land Use Plan (Idea H3)
Idea Description	This city should have a land use plan that creates a clear vision of the form of the city and encourages developers to invest and carry out the vision.
Idea Author	Zach
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	2
Idea Title	Building Code/Zoning Flexibility (Idea H4)
Idea Description	I don't intend to imply that we should make buildings unsafe, in favor of rebuilding quickly. However, I believe that the city should do things like: - Extend deadlines - Expedite rezoning requests - Possibly form a committee for the expressed purpose of removing red tape and speeding through paperwork and other things that could get recovery caught up in bureaucracy. Any other ideas on how the city could ease or speed up regulations and their requirements?
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	From Financing to C of O (Idea H5)
Idea Description	I think there's a need for a one stop shop that provides answers to residents and businesses on how to get their project done from A to Z. A being Financing the project (FEMA, SBA, and Insurance resources), and Z being securing the Certificate of Occupancy.
Idea Author	Nolan M
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	3
Idea Title	Debris Removal on Private Property (Idea H6)
Idea Description	It sounds like the city has tried hard to communicate with property owners whose homes were damaged or destroyed about getting the debris removed but many still seem unaware of their options or unwilling to sign a document allowing the government to take over the clean up. Can we speed up the process of debris removal by getting a court order to enter property where an owner has made no move to remove the debris? This is a public health issue. See this recent Tuscaloosa News article about the issue: http://www.tuscaloosaneews.com/article/20110617/news/110619744?p=1&tc=pg
Idea Author	Jane
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	1
Idea Title	Debris Removal (Idea H7)
Idea Description	I agree with someone's statement about debris removal on private property. I would vote for a "court order". Progress is being shown by the amount of cleanup that has been done and the cleanup has to happen at some point in time. There is a house on the corner of Forest Lake Drive and 15th St. and the property is probably owned now by someone who lives out of town. I think the tree is still on the house and nothing has been cleaned up. Wood Square is another area that it does not appear anything has been moved. Pate Corner is another area that nothing has been done.If the majority of the citizens have to abide by the rules, why do a few get exempt?
Idea Author	Sybil P
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	2

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Topic Name	<i>Partnerships and Collaboration</i>
Idea Title	<i>Use The University (Idea I1)</i>
Idea Description	I think it would be beneficial to the community as well as the University, if city officials would get University students involved in the rebuilding effort. The University boasts an engineering school that can be instrumental in the construction and mechanical aspects of the rebuilding process. Criminal Justice students can aid the police departments in creating new, more efficient crime prevention strategies. There are many other ways that the University and city can collaborate, but I think the two above mentioned outlets are the most feasible. The city will get inexpensive, valuable labor as well as the chance to allow "the next generation" to help mold Tuscaloosa, while the students are gaining invaluable experience that will enhance their career paths. It's a win-win.
Idea Author	bamastudent
Number of Seconds	14
Number of Comments	10
Idea Title	<i>Give the Money to the Needy ... NOW! (Idea I2)</i>
Idea Description	So many 'funds for the victims' raising money ... yet I've seen no reports of how its being spent. And whats up with that Chamber Fund that someone was quoted in the News as saying they would wait until they had \$1.6 million before starting to use it? We have people living in shelters and temp housing. Get that money OUT OF THE BANK ... and start using it! Shame on any organization that is stockpiling cash when the need is so great. No need for 'board meetings over lunch or dinner' that drag this out for months. People buying concert tickets, t-shirts or just donating cash EXPECT it to be used here and NOW. Not to be saved away until the Chamber or other orgs can have some fancy dinner where they give out checks in front of News Photographers. Donations of money should be like the donations of goods to TES have been. Most items fly out the door almost as fast as they come in. Many times same day. All these FUNDS ... should be emptied out at least weekly. It belongs to the victims afterall.
Idea Author	Bama P
Number of Seconds	13
Number of Comments	7
Idea Title	<i>Recycle Organic Debris Back To Neighborhoods for Soil Enrichment (Idea I3)</i>
Idea Description	We have had great collaboration in REMOVING debris and segregating the organic material. Now we need to address how that much needed organic material (in the form of mulch or compost) will get back to the tornado and cleanup-scarred land that has lost much of its topsoil (due to demolition and cleanup activities) that will be needed to sustain the growth of new trees and shrubs. A collaboration of commercial, non-profit, and government organizations could focus on the full cycle from cleanup to returning organic nutrients to the soil where it is needed. This would start with thinking about source material (storm debris from trees and brush, dredgings from Forest Lake, grass clippings collected by lawn services and nurseries, and other organic waste) to a special composting/mulching location(s) dedicated to tornado victims, etc.) The logistics of getting this material back where it is needed should be addressed. Perhaps garden clubs, lawn services, the nurseries, the conservationists who are already thinking about tree replanting, the city debris removal department could collaborate on the logistics of creating/storing/returning compost or mulch to sites where it is needed. The need for organic material and replanting will be huge if we want to see green in our neighborhoods again. This recovery will happen more quickly with collaboration if the storm victim re-building pioneers have an easy and economical way to restore the topsoil on their properties. Help make the scar on our city green again!
Idea Author	Neil D
Number of Seconds	10
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Where is the County? (Idea I4)</i>
Idea Description	We need input from Tuscaloosa County officials. They are quite obviously absent from the planning process, but many of the decisions made will impact county development or at least should impact county development trends. If there is a County Planner, we need them on board, along with other County officials.
Idea Author	MO
Number of Seconds	9
Number of Comments	6
Idea Title	<i>Financial Advice Clinic for Those Affected by Tornado (Idea I5)</i>
Idea Description	As citizens rebuild homes and businesses destroyed by the tornado, financial questions will, no doubt, arise. There may be tax ramifications from insurance proceeds or other transactions related to the business or residential rebuilding process. In addition, businesses may need help in planning for business continuation in the event of another disaster. A free financial/tax advice service as it relates to the rebuilding process might be very beneficial. The University of Alabama School of Law already provides free legal services for storm victims in conjunction with the Alabama and Tuscaloosa County Bar Association's Volunteer Program. Some similar offering from the University's Business School, the AICPA, and local/state CPA organizations might be a big benefit.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	6
Number of Comments	1

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Idea Title	<i>Collaborative Group to Reduce Levels of Obesity in the Community (Idea 16)</i>
Idea Description	A collaborative group composed of the College of Community Health Sciences, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, City and County School Systems, FOCUS, and other interested groups could provide guidance on how to increase availability of affordable healthy food choices and exercise opportunities for the community, as part of the rebuilding process. There could be grant funding available for such an initiative.
Idea Author	JSM
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Support our Leaders (Idea 17)</i>
Idea Description	I'm seeing a lot of posts on here that are becoming very pessimistic of the city government. Here's a question: Who worked tirelessly for us, 24/7, after the tornado? Our leaders in the city and state government. I know it can be easy to immediately assume that the government isn't going to be there in the form that they should be, but you can't let that pessimism take control of you. All that will do is alienate our leaders and kill motivation. We need to keep supporting our leaders. There is a lot that they can do in forms other than handing out cash. - Reform building codes so that it's easier for those affected to recover. - Extend deadlines (like taxes, construction approval, etc...) - Make regulations that put the owner of affected properties at the forefront of redevelopment. - Continue to be there for us. - Fix and recover damaged/destroyed city property so that rebuilding becomes easier and it makes it just a little less stressful to drive by shredded power lines everyday. Trust me people, they're working. They're not going to come out and eminent domain the crap out of the city. What would they do? Build the largest park on earth? They're not going to come around and inform you that you're required to sell your property to Stan Pate. What good would it do if they did? Wouldn't they find themselves voted out of office at the next election? Lastly, the citizens of the community weren't the only people affected by the storms. City and state leaders also lost property, friends, and loved ones. Becoming pessimistic about the ability of our leaders to help us get back on our feet does us no good. Keeping motivated, supporting, and voicing our opinions does the good stuff! Let's do more of it!
Idea Author	Steven D
Number of Seconds	4
Number of Comments	4
Idea Title	<i>Alberta? (Idea 18)</i>
Idea Description	Yes, partnerships - but how about including a direct representative for Alberta on the planning committee? Forest Lake has a representative, why is there not an Alberta representative? How many people on that 50 person task force actually live in Alberta?
Idea Author	Line1
Number of Seconds	3
Number of Comments	5
Idea Title	<i>Reap what you Sow - Urban and Suburban gardens for the needy (Idea 19)</i>
Idea Description	No entitlement - Effort required. Either by you, your family or a volunteer working as your proxy. It has been my observation as a home healthcare nurse that in almost every home of welfare recipients or disabled persons, there is extended family capable of performing physical labor. I wonder how many food stamp recipients our city would have, if there was a mandate on the federal level - requiring volunteerism from those who have no physical disability in exchange for "Food Stamps"? These gardens could be initially created, tilled and planted by volunteers or clubs who donate use of their (or the City's/County's land) their time, use of their equipment, seed/plants and their expertise. Then ongoing care and nurturing and harvesting of the "farms" could be performed by those who receive the food from the farm. --- Sounds idealistic, I know, but with a concrete plan from the onset it would work. Many organic gardens in urban areas work on the same principles, although they are not focused on those in need. Establishing criteria to qualify for receiving food from the project and recording hours contributed to the project by the participants or volunteers who work as a proxy for a participant - would maintain a checks&balance system. Food harvested each week would be divided equally among those recipients who "worked" - with a scheduled pick up time and place, and any unclaimed produce could then be donated to local soup kitchens or food banks (or delivered to disabled recipients by volunteers). Fenced gardens, with a core group of volunteers would be essential.
Idea Author	R. Dawn S
Number of Seconds	2
Number of Comments	1





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A STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN TO RENEW AND REBUILD