

Action Workbooks

A Summary of research done by the Steering Committee

One City, One Vision
Community-driven Strategic Plan
Anniston, Alabama

April 30, 2014

**ONECITY
ONEVISION**

Arts and Culture

AC 1.1 Develop a community cultural calendar

The community produces many cultural programs and activities and there is a need for a comprehensive community calendar to provide residents and visitors with information about future activities.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

There needs to be an effective community calendar for the city. This would provide a way that residents and visitors can learn about available future activities.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

Our county-wide Chamber of Commerce, the city government, and various local media (Anniston Star, WDNG, etc.) have event calendars.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

There are several problems with keeping the existing calendars updated, public awareness, and adequate submission. No existing calendar is considered the authority on events. Other than a couple of the media websites, the others are low traffic sites. Also, the city's businesses and organization websites are also low traffic sites. Combined they have respectable traffic. Recommend that one entity (City, Chamber, or a media outlet) be approached to assume central responsibility and that their calendar be made available in an iframe or other methods which may be easily shared on other websites in the city and county.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Either the city, the Chamber, and capable media outlets should be approached to see who would be willing to host a calendar for the city. If iframe technology is used to create a sharable calendar, if necessary, buyersUSA Consulting can provide advice on setting up that capability. All local website owners should be encouraged to include the calendar on that site. The central hosting entity must agree to moderate the calendar and provide public access to the information (for other websites).

AC 1.2 Create more youth art activities

The youth of Anniston could benefit from increased art activities, including visual arts, drama, crafts and music.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

Create art activities for children in the city. This should include visual arts, drama, crafts, and music. Instruction could also be provided to adults.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

Although the Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA, and our schools have an interest in providing similar services, the Cheaha Creative Arts organization is already specifically intending to and active in providing this capability. They effectively partner with other organizations in the area.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

CCA is relatively unknown and underfunded. They are very effective within their current resources.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The CCA and its board should be the lead agency for this action.

AC 1.3 Create a community arts center

The city would benefit from a strong physical setting to showcase and host cultural activities. This could include classes, workshops, exhibits, and a small multifunctional theatre/concert hall.

Downtown would be a desirable location for a community arts center.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

A Community Arts Center would provide a comprehensive location for many cultural activities.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

There are currently numerous organizations in the county that contribute to the arts. These include Knox Concert, our two museums, Music at McClellan, and CCA, which are assets to our city. The Longleaf Arts Council attempts to provide a county-wide umbrella for these efforts. No one is currently working on a specific Cultural Arts Center.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

This effort is not being pursued. Although the structure for cooperation exists, due to underfunding inadequate resources exist for an effective effort.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Focus should be on coordinating efforts involving agencies that have a specific city-wide orientation (in cooperation with regional efforts.) CCA, CAST, and Knox Concert should coordinate their efforts. Coordination must include the local independent film organization. The city Parks and Recreation Department should also play a major role.

AC 1.4 Develop a program to leverage existing arts and cultural organizations

Formal coordination of existing organizations could leverage limited communication, promotion and programming resources. The program could include creation of an Anniston Arts Council.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

Coordinate efforts of the arts and cultural organizations. The city would be better served by a city-oriented organization and/or cooperation that would include entities such as our Parks and Recreation, Music at McClellan, CCA, Knox Concert, CAST, Yellowhammer Filmmakers, local art-oriented businesses, and local independent artists. Local agencies that benefit from arts and culture (such as Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, etc) should also be involved.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

There is currently no city-wide effort to coordinate arts and cultural activities. There should be a meeting of the entities mentioned above. The city should designate a lead agency or organizer who would be responsible for coordinating these setting up an organization.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

Currently we have entities in the city who are involved in arts and culture. Although formally there is a county-level council, that effort should be accessed as to whether it adequately serves the city's needs or if a city-level organization needs to be created.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The city should initially request that one local entity be the lead agency to coordinate the creation of a city-wide arts and culture council or a specific commission should be designated by the City Council.

AC 1.5 Create new arts and cultural events

The city currently hosts numerous arts and cultural activities, including those conducted by CAST, Knox Concert, Music at McClellan, Cheaha Creative Arts, Anniston's Got Talent, Dancing with Our Stars, and others. The community could benefit from additional events that enrich and celebrate the community. Examples include placement of outside art on loan from national museums and foundations in the downtown venue.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

The city currently hosts numerous arts and cultural activities. These include those made conducted by CAST, Knox Concert, Music at McClellan, and CCA. New events include Anniston's Got Talent, Dancing with Our Stars, and hosting the Army Band concerts. Yellowhammer Filmmakers are beginning to regularly shoot and screen independent films in the city as well as plan an international film festival, which would be primarily hosted by the city.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

There is currently no coordinated effort to plan and conduct new arts and cultural events.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

Several organizations are currently planning and conducting events. As they compete for many of the same limited resources, their viability will be restricted unless they attract out of town audiences or receive grants.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

There should be a arts and cultural commission or council set up specifically for the city. This entity would have as its mandate the responsibility of planning, marketing, and supporting such events. The current county-wide efforts have had limited ability to attract tourism dollars and do not a specific goal of promoting Anniston's economic development.

AC 1.6 Create a downtown arts district

Downtown provides an attractive setting for creative activity. The city should develop a program to encourage and incentivize local and out of town artists to live and work in downtown in an arts district or cluster. The new community arts center could serve as a key programmatic anchor.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

City Image

CI 1.1 Develop and launch a coordinated marketing campaign for Anniston

A professionally conceived and coordinated marketing effort is needed. The campaign would be aimed at promoting community assets as well as counteracting and rehabilitating negative publicity from recent years. It would also include preparation of a branding strategy with new graphic identity for the city.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

A professionally conceived and coordinated marketing effort aimed at counteracting and rehabilitating negative publicity from recent years is needed. The roll-out of the One City, One Vision Strategic Plan provides an ideal vehicle for launching a multi-media / web campaign to promote a more positive community image and begin a new public narrative for Anniston. Good things are happening and progress is being made, but a coordinated campaign can ensure good news is heard beyond our city limits.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

Spirit of Anniston, Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

There is currently no coordinated plan for marketing Anniston and improving the city's image. Current efforts and resources are inadequate. The new city administration may add key personnel with responsibility for public information and economic development activities, but not currently in place.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Local marketing professionals engaged by City; designated personnel on City staff (i.e., public information officer, etc.). Campaign should be coordinated with and supported by local economic development groups such as Chamber, Spirit of Anniston, etc. and new nonprofit group to be formed as part of implementation of the strategic plan.

CI 1.2 Create a coordinated program to significantly reduce the number of vacant and dilapidated buildings

An intense effort is needed—a “war on blight”—to dramatically reduce the number of vacant, neglected, and dilapidated buildings, beginning with Anniston’s most visible commercial and residential neighborhoods.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

Wage an organized “war on blight” to dramatically reduce the number of vacant, neglected, and dilapidated buildings, beginning with Anniston’s most visible commercial and residential neighborhoods. This action will require strengthening the city’s code enforcement efforts through employment of additional code enforcement personnel and appropriate code revision, as well as development efforts aimed at rehabbing and repurposing existing structures where feasible.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

Code enforcement efforts: the City currently has one code enforcement officer. Development efforts to repurpose / attract tenants for existing structures: city officials and local economic development groups play a role, but there is currently no cohesive, methodical effort to rehab and/or attract desirable tenants for Anniston’s vacant structures.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

Code enforcement: additional code enforcement personnel is a critical need. Development efforts: efforts are sporadic / inadequate.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Re code enforcement efforts and code revisions: city management and code enforcement officers. Re efforts to repurpose and attract desirable tenants for existing structures: city management; elected city officials; new nonprofit group formed as part of strategic plan implementation and / or new downtown / neighborhood authority or task force.

CI 1.3 Create a task force to enhance the physical appearance of the community

The task force would educate, encourage, and assist neighborhoods in the formation of effective neighborhood associations, crime watch groups, and similar community improvement ventures. This task force would coordinate with Beautification Task Force and new neighborhood associations. An emphasis would be placed on improving curb appeal, cleanliness, neighborhood safety and engagement programs, like city-wide clean-up days. Encouragement of business(s) to adopt Downtown and Quintard blocks.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

Appoint a task force charged with educating, encouraging, and assisting neighborhoods in the formation of effective neighborhood associations, crime watch groups, and similar community improvement ventures. Incorporate and model strategies of successful local efforts (such as Rocky Hollow) as well as proven strategies implemented in comparable cities and communities. Work with the City and other local organizations to incentivize neighborhood efforts. Examples of possible incentives: awards for beautification or “best neighborhood” competitions; recognition at council meetings; City assistance with green space development for “winning” neighborhoods; a period of free neighborhood trash collection as reward for successful effort; city-wide clean-up dates; or “adopt-a-neighborhood” clean-up efforts by civic groups.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

Anniston Police Department re: formation of neighborhood crime watch groups.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

There is currently no coordinated city-wide effort to organize neighborhood associations and neighborhood improvement efforts.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

New neighborhood task force, with support from City management, APD, and other City officials / departments.

CI 1.4 Recognize and award business and homeowners who enhance their properties

The maintenance and appearance of individual properties has an impact on the appearance, pride and reputation of the community. A program that recognizes and awards property owners for their positive efforts should be established.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

Community Services

CS 1.1 Create a "Youth Alliance"

Diverse summer youth programs exist but they are limited in numbers, scope, and ages served. Accessibility (due to transportation and cost) is also limited. A unified and coordinated plan is needed to identify and serve currently under served youth populations.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description:

Diverse summer youth programs exist but they are limited in numbers, scope, & ages served as well as accessibility (due to transportation and cost). There is not a unified and coordinated plan in place to identify and serve currently unserved populations. It is also difficult to readily identify summer programs in Anniston because of the absence of an integrated network system.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

The Anniston Housing Authority, YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Anniston Parks and Recreation, Cheaha Creative Arts, Renovation Ministries, Legacy Club, Legacy Men's Club, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Runner's Club, Anniston City Schools, First United Methodist Church of Anniston, Anniston's City Council in cooperation with the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club in cooperation with the YMCA, Grace Episcopal Church, and First Presbyterian Church of Anniston are working independently to provide summer programs.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

There are many groups working to provide summer programs but the coordination required to identify unmet needs, pool resources, and create needed programs is lacking. Neither adequate funding to expand nor an internet site for accessing all summer programs collectively is available.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Funding agencies such as United Way, Anniston's Community Foundation, City of Anniston

CS 1.2 Establish a "Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness"

A clear, seamless, sustainable, and comprehensive service delivery process is needed to simplify access to services and housing, track system outcomes to inform and enhance decision-making, promote on-going interagency communication, and improve overall system efficiency.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description:

The Mayor's task force will develop an effective and coordinated entry system for the homeless with a clear, seamless, sustainable, and comprehensive service delivery process that simplifies access to services and housing, tracks system outcomes to inform and enhance decision-making, promotes on-going interagency communication, and improves over-all system efficiency. Integration of all services,

such as housing, employment, and mental health is congruent with the federal emphasis on local communities creating systems coordination and the federal government's plan to end homelessness by 2020.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

Multi-service centers but not shelters

Family Services Center-Information and Referral, emergency assistance, educational support
Interfaith Ministries-Access to showers, toiletries, snacks, computers, mailing address;
emergency services, dental referrals, prescription assistance, Christmas Clearinghouse, Jobs for
Life, literacy training

The Right Place-Housing assistance

Red Cross-Disaster services

Community Enabler-Food, clothes, household items

All Saints Center of Concern-Food, clothing, household items, prescription assistance, medical
and dental help, transportation, Thanksgiving assistance

Soup bowl-Weekday lunches

Shelter Settings

Salvation Army-drug rehabilitation for men, shelters for women and children, men; charges
fee; Christmas Clearinghouse

Esther House of Praise-23rd East 7th St; services for abused women, shelter referrals for
homeless women, counseling, life coaching; Barbara Clark

House is a Home Transition Shelter-1922 Walnut Avenue

Independent Reading Shelter-5529 Ashwood Dr; Janice Lee; Shelter for homeless-no visitors

Servants of Jesus Shelter-3113 McCoy Ave; Seth Murphy; charges fee + food stamps

A Way Out Program-services for women leaving foster care or department of justice

Second Chance-shelter for abused women and children

Cain Creek Apts/Meadowbrook Apts-Calhoun/Cleburne Mental Health Board; charges fee

Grace Place-Shelter for abused women and children

Other with or without housing

Hobson City Health Services-multiple services including housing for people with HIV

Center of Hope-Substance Abuse treatment/shelter for men/women, breakfast in the park

Point in Time Coalition-homeless count

Homeless Coalition of Northeast AL-variety of services at pre-set times/places; based in
Gadsden, AL

Calhoun Cleburne Mental Health Center-counseling, group meetings, substance abuse services,
housing

Unified Resource Center, LLC-15th Street Baptist Church property

City of Anniston:

Anniston Housing Authority-low rent housing

Department of Justice-safety

Parks and Recreation-parks and restrooms during operating times

Anniston Transit-local transportation

Foundations

AmeriCorps VISTA-volunteers through Public Education Foundation of Anniston

State of AL:

Department of Human Resources-foster care, abuse referrals
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services-job placement
Alabama Department of Public Health-health services
Legal Services Alabama-legal aid for low income
Community Action Association of Alabama-Resource development, coordination of efforts,
technical assistance and training to eliminate poverty

Miscellaneous

Jacksonville State University-social work services and studies; point in time surveys; Dr. Mary Newton
Area Physicians-medical assistance
United Way-211
Quality of Life-Health Care
Bonnie Burks-Street Ministry offering water, food, prayer; 205-639-4797

Churches:

Islamic Health Center- Health Clinic
First Methodist Church-showers, Christmas assistance, Jobs for Life assistance, classroom space
Friendship Calvary Church-misc
Grace Episcopal Church-Beans, rice, canned foods, peanut butter ministries
Renovation Ministries-youth assistance
St. Michaels' Health Center-Health services
Church of the Cross Meals of Mercy-lunches on Mondays; Christmas food boxes; Ken Ballard
Eagle Wings Ministry-lunches on Sundays; Pastor Bear
St. Mary's Baptist Church-sack lunches on Saturdays
Smith Metropolitan AME Zion Church-clothing, food, Way Out Program for Women
Other churches-various forms of emergency/other assistance

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

Many benevolent agencies and organizations offer diverse forms of assistance in scattered locations. Despite the assistance currently provided, weaknesses are still apparent with regard to: consistent and coordinated case management; 24 hour access to public restroom facilities/showers; comprehensive and coordinated mental health care; accessibility to medication dispensaries; availability of 24 hour no cost shelter; job preparation and placement; substance abuse treatment; financial and anger management counseling; across the board use of Charity Tracker or Homeless Management Information System; lack of regulation/oversight of some shelters; absence of the designation of a homeless advocate or lead agent; inadequate public transportation; inaccurate homeless counts as some shelters do not participate; over-all lack of coordination of services; absence of a current data resource directory with qualifying guidelines and directions for obtaining help; inconsistent quality of care; centralized intake. Resources do not appear to be adequate to develop the comprehensive services that are needed.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The City of Anniston through the Mayor's office with assistance from Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants, Homeless Veterans Outreach Initiative, the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) System, Client Assistance Program (CAP), Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI), Protection and Advocacy for Individual Rights

(PAIR), Calhoun-Cleburne Mental Health Board, Northeast Alabama Homeless Coalition, state agencies, area churches, area service providers.

CS 1.3 Develop a partnership between the City of Anniston and the Anniston Police Department with Hobson City's Dannon Project_

Transitioning from jail to successful living can be a formidable task in the absence of supportive services, case management, and appropriate referrals. The Dannon Project is the "Point of Contact" within a community to provide these forms of assistance so that at risk populations can find employment, access to housing, health supports, mentors, counseling, stability, and improved behavior patterns.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description:

Transitioning from jail to successful living on the outside can be a formidable task for individuals in the absence of supportive services, case management, and appropriate referrals. The Dannon Project is the "Point of Contact" within a community to provide these forms of assistance so that at risk populations can find employment, access to housing, health supports, mentors, counseling, stability, and improved behavior patterns.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

A satellite office of the Dannon Project in Birmingham has been established in Hobson City. A partnership has been established with Interfaith Ministries.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

The satellite office in Hobson City is in its infancy and the new director is just now getting her feet on the ground to establish partnerships with local law enforcement and area agencies. Information about the project is currently being printed. Resources are limited.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Anniston's City Council members should make it their business to find out about this project; request to appoint one or more members to its Board of Directors; and request that the Anniston Police Department consider forming a partnership with the Dannon Project upon sufficient study.

CS 1.4 Evaluate the feasibility for improved collaboration among non-profits and community groups

The community has many effective organizations, but resources and operations could be enhanced with additional collaboration. An evaluation should be undertaken of opportunities for non-profits and community groups to communicate, partner and align according to missions—perhaps through the establishment of umbrella councils—in order to enhance grant opportunities and delivery of services.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

Learning

L 1.1 Create a mentoring program

Exposure to positive role models and job opportunities can have a powerful impact on young people. School and business leaders should create a mentoring program for the youth of Anniston. This program could be integrated with an Adopt-a-School Initiative.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

L 1.2 Create a program to increase parental involvement

Research and intuition support that increased parental involvement in education produce better outcomes for students. A coordinated effort should be undertaken to support parents and their participation in school and at home activities with their children.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

L 1.3 Evaluate curriculum

Curriculum is a course and type of study or list of courses and is at the core of the education mission. It outlines the skills, performances, attitudes, and values pupils are expected to learn from schooling. The schools should evaluate the current curriculum to ensure it is meeting the needs of students and the community. This should include innovative ideas like creating magnet school(s) at elementary and secondary levels. For instance, a medical magnet could be created for 7th-12th grades leveraging Anniston's abundant medical assets at local hospitals and nursing schools.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: (short narrative explanation)

Curriculum can be defined as a course and type of study or list of courses, but the following Wikipedia's definitions are utilized to best capture a common understanding of the term, curriculum, and how it is important to the city of Anniston and surrounding areas. In formal education, a curriculum is the planned interaction of pupils with instructional content, materials, resources, and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives. It is the learning which is planned and guided by the school system. A curriculum spans several grades, and a classroom is assigned sections of the curriculum. Most importantly it outlines the skills, performances, attitudes, and values pupils are expected to learn from schooling. It includes statements of desired pupil outcomes, descriptions of materials, and the planned sequence that will be used to help pupils attain the outcomes.

The subtopics of curriculum are: Career Technical Training; General Curriculum; special programs such as arts, music, special education, continuing education, and after school programs; life skills; early childhood development; and others. The Career Technical Program and General Curriculum are addressed under this action. A curriculum is provided after a topic or teaching discipline is identified and implemented in the school system.

As a point of clarification and information for those who are not familiar to the new words and definitions mostly driven by new technologies, higher paying skill levels, and a changing culture; the Career Technical Programs are one of our most important means of increasing Anniston School System's future growth and effectiveness. Using the term, vocational training, was known to many during the sixties and seventies. Many of these folks who learned to weld, machine, fabricate, nurse, cut hair, or work on plumbing, cars, and heating systems are drawing good pensions, having their own businesses, or still making great wages. Think about the last bill you paid to have your car fixed, piping repaired, or furnace replaced. These important skills of yesterday are just as important today, and due to the higher sophistication of today's technologies; more college level knowledge is added to the manual skill levels of yesterday. The opportunity could not be better than now to include career technical programs with general academic requirements. These career technical training degrees are a natural progression for earning a Two Year Associate Degree with as much opportunity (in many areas-more) for high salaries and also an option for continuing to earn a Four Year Degree. Parents and students need to be aware of all opportunities available to them- not just a four year college degree that may not be in the areas that are hiring or paying good salaries.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

The curriculum for the K-12 schools in Alabama are regulated and enforced by the state and utilized by the state school systems. They are based on meeting state guidelines. The new technologies and skills based training are causing curriculum to be updated and modified to meet the work force skills and changing dynamics. These skill based technologies are being taught by K-12 systems, two, and four year colleges, so curriculum are available and have already been approved by the state governing boards. A system is in place for changing or adding to the curriculum. Anniston schools may not have a person responsible for curriculum, so if this is the case; it needs to be addressed. If the state does not fund this responsibility, possibly local support is an option. A person responsible for curriculum could also coordinate system-wide professional development for its teachers and include national certification to increase the system's teacher credential strength and promote the positive image of a faculty highly qualified to teach students.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

The major requirements for effective curriculum are that they will meet the needs of current and future industry, business, and public needs. In the past Anniston High School has had diverse and state approved technical training courses. The state's Business and Industry Certification policy is applied to technical training. Those already in place for Career Technical Programs, business and industry are participating with the school to insure current competencies and meaningful course contents. The state requires that schools have representatives be part of the review and approval process to insure applicability, adherence, methods/tools/equipment/materials are being used to teach these

curriculum. New courses would follow the state's policy and be addressed by having industry and business representatives be part of the school systems review and implementation process.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The Anniston School Board and its leadership will need to insure the curriculum remain effective and are changed, deleted, or added in accordance with existing standards. In addition, a review of the curriculum's effectiveness is conducted based on outcome standards and positive recognition by qualified individuals in the course discipline fields. Teacher professional development and state and national certifications have been shown to improve the effectiveness of teaching; therefore, Anniston School Board and the administrative leadership need to reinforce professional development in its budgets and strategies.

L 1.4 Create a facility utilization plan

The school system's leadership and board have acknowledged that the system has too many schools for the number of pupils enrolled. Efforts will continue to reduce costs and become more efficient in the utilization of school facilities.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: (short narrative explanation)

The school system's leadership and board have acknowledged that the system has too many schools for the number of pupils enrolled. They have been actively seeking a solution to reduce their costs and become more efficient in the utilization of their facilities. The city of Anniston had discussed the possibility of purchasing the Middle School Property for retail development, but recently has not acted on this proposal. The school board is reviewing the options for reducing facility costs based on their student numbers. A second component of the comments about this subject included the subject of updating technology use in the facilities.

Who is currently working on these two efforts- (1) facilities consolidation and (2) updated technology and how?

The school board and the leadership are working on the facilities consolidation now, as they have been addressing this issue in the past. With a new superintendent being hired, his review and inputs will certainly be needed before a plan is approved and funding is procured. The second effort of updating technologies in the classrooms is being funded and implemented. Per the Anniston Star newspaper article on 2/9/14, "the Stewart Family Foundation, the city of Anniston and the Anniston Board of Education recently provided approximately \$ 125,000 each to install state-of-the-art educational tools in every classroom in the city school system. The money, more than \$ 300,000 total, was funneled through the Public Education Foundation of Anniston, an organization formed in 1993 to provide academic support to city students".

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

A new superintendent has been hired and will take the leadership role along with the school board to

resolve the consolidation issues. The upgrading of the technologies within the schools should not be affected by the consolidation.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The Anniston School Board and its leadership will have to be responsible for implementing this action, if they are to be efficient and effective in their use of the facility monies.

L 1.5 Create a pro-active communications plan

A topic very important to the community is the school system's image, how the community's city residents and citizens perceive it, and what the media and communications say about the local school system. The schools should be more deliberate in sharing and promoting the efforts of the children, teachers, administrators, parents and board.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: (short narrative explanation)

A topic very important to the community is the school system's image, how the community's city residents and citizens perceive it, and what the media and communications say about the local school system. Image, media, and perception are related and can be viewed from many different perspectives. We must agree that media (news coverage) is to be respected for reporting the facts in unbiased methods and without skewed representations, so media must be left to do their jobs without being expected to report only the ""good news. This sensitive topic and actions discussed below can be reported and interpreted in more than one way. The manner our community and surrounding areas view the school system is critical to our city's interim sustainability and its long term growth. If the perception is negative, families with new or existing children will not want to live within a school system that will not be effective in educating their children. The real estate values and their agents depend on new sales created by new folks moving into and staying in the area. Businesses, industry, and public sector employers are attracted by a good school system and a local educated work force.

Perception and reality are created and reinforced by the components of community, media and image. Community are the active players and activists; media reports the data and is the common communicator; image is the picture and results that the citizens, students, and parents believe is true. These three ingredients are included in this very important topic, and corrective actions must address all of them as equally and forcefully, as when this perception started 30 years ago. One can review the past articles, talk with older residents, and find that the concerns back then are the same ones as we hear today- Academics, Achievement, Student Discipline, Parental Support, Local Support, Etc. It is time to fix this topic. The perception comments included:

- 1)local media is a problem,
- 2)community perception is wrong and misleading,
- 3)the morale and pride in the schools are poor,
- 4)and kids do not feel supported.

The compelling argument is that perception is reality- especially if it stays the same since the 80's and the same folks and media are the second and third generation of Anniston residents and students who have been and are in the system. Media can be a huge problem or it can be a major factor in removing the problem.

As we have all read or heard on the news and editorials, media does not always just report the news (data). They can in fact make the news in the manner, attitude, and authorship conveyed by their reports. Community are the human persons who all have different backgrounds, social and economic differences, and individual objectives. A young parent views the school system differently than a retired person. A couple making \$200,000 a year can afford private school, a low and median income couple do not have these choices and have to depend on the public school systems.

Another topic that remains a factor in a school system's importance is home value- real estate value, property taxes, and "location, location". People make their livings buying and selling real estate. People make investments and rent property based on real estate values. Families buy and sell property based on what they can gain or lose on the property they own. The school system's strength or weakness has a profound effect on real estate values. Is this not a classic example of perception being reinforced by actual values people are willing to pay to be in a school system that does not require them to pay for private schools.

A third area that has an effect on the perception is the political environment and the political leaders who make, create news, and provide funding. These are local, county, state, and federal folks. We hear statistics about how funding is needed for lunch subsidies, while hearing about schools that have high percentages of these subsidies being synonymous with ineffective outcomes or having parents who cannot adequately take care of their children. We must stop connecting these "dots" and look at the whole picture and address each of these topics as separate issues that need solutions. Being poor or not being a good parent does not create a poor or weak school system- lets get back to facts and data. Lets look at the positive side of Anniston's school system and create a base line to start from. Then we can address strengths, weaknesses, and actions to improve and continuously improve. With the correct and accurate media coverage, community support, and a positive image; the perception will be more accurate and factual based. We must stop trying to make this so complicated. Follow the successful educational school systems and leaders by using the same teaching disciplines, techniques, use the same tools and facilities, implement the same technologies and life skill programs, use the same educated, trained, and certified teachers, and do "due diligence" to make sure all is correct and being followed up.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

We know that the city's Board of Education has been wrestling with the perception, performance, dropout rate, and truancy issues for years. They have utilized a strategic planning process as has the Anniston City Council. The "One City One Vision" community driven strategic plan is definitely addressing this effort. Also included in this effort are most functional levels within the city, city school system, teachers, and student advisory teams, and the PTO/PTA organizations. A partnership has been growing between the school system and Jacksonville State University and Gadsden State Community College. A recent, major movement within the state government is a push to fund dual enrollment

classes for high school students entering into the technical skills areas to earn degrees that will promote good jobs and employment in high paying jobs at industries and businesses. If done right, this will allow students to earn 2 year degrees in skill areas desperately needed to entice industries to expand, stay, and come into the state; as a skilled workforce is critical to Alabama's continued economic recovery and growth.

Locally we know that there are employees in the system and other agencies whose job duties involve parent involvement specialties. There are non-profits such as PEFA, ACEF, and West Anniston that all have some areas of their effort to include parent involvement. The YMCA has after school programs and learning opportunities for students whose parent(s) or guardian can not be at home for their children after school.

Asking individuals if they are positive or negative about our city school system is not a measure of effectiveness, as these are opinions. This real measure must be based on facts- what is the success of the system's product and what are the last four to five senior class graduates doing. A measure could also be reviewed comparing Anniston's graduation rates to other systems. The school system is active in utilizing grants, constructively critiquing itself, including students in their studies, communicating with and following the guidelines of the State Department of Education, and having almost a million dollars in scholarship funds for student advancements. Coordinating all these positive efforts may be the first area to add to the perception and image action.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

The Anniston School Board of Education has this effort in their strategic planning process. The city council is well aware of the needs to improve the image and stop the loss of students in the system. This perception issue has been with us for over 30 years, so there is a consensus that this negative image has to be addressed, corrected, and aimed in the positive direction- we do not have another 2 generations of graduates to learn under this negative image.

Parents will not be willing to participate in a new venture without proven positive results. They will demand some sort of fail-safe system that provides quality education, life skills, special programs in the arts music, and athletics; plus academic and life skill positive results. Graduation results need to reflect former student successes in achieving technical skills, academic degrees, and well-paying jobs.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Since this issue has not been resolved for so many years and during the leadership of many city councils, board of directors, parent/teacher organizations, and state politicians; another approach and leadership method will need to be utilized. Doing the same thing by the same folks year after year will not get different results. It will take a new approach and new action plans. Another component of this type of action is to have a guarantee to offer those parents who are reluctant to put their children into an environment for changing the results and perceptions of the media's impact on the community.

The steps that must occur at a minimum are:

- 1) identify a responsible individual- external of the school system, able to work with the school's leadership, can communicate with city leadership, community organizations (civic, non-profits, charities), other K-12 and colleges, and local businesses and industries,
- 2) provide resources,

- 3) formulate an action plan and strategy'
- 4) activate and include in this initiative the technical skills/dual enrollment options between the high school and JSU and Gadsden State Community College,
- 5) partner with local businesses, public sectors, and industry to provide afternoon technical job skills attainment for those in the technical dual enrollment program,
- 6) utilize inputs from those parents the school is targeting,
- 7) obtain support from the public, private, political, and news media,
- 8) document and disseminate applicable data that addresses issues which parents/guardians would have for success of educational outcomes for their children,
- 9) initiate a time table for enrollment, document the new students whose parents have agreed to participate, and do follow up to insure outcomes are positive and make adjustments,
- 10) include a pledge to provide additional educational support for those who feel program is not working for them- including option of free summer school to correct any weaknesses,
- 11) keep a media blitz constantly active and accurate- correcting weaknesses as they occur,
- 12) follow up each month to stay current and do a bi-yearly "state of the program" communication.

Suggested implementation time frame:

This action needs immediate initiation and resources and commitments. The short term organizational efforts and action plans time table will need to be completed well before the end of this school year (by May 30, 2014) to allow for action steps to be communicated to parents and citizens to make plans for the summer and next year's educational calendar. The program steps have to be initiated and implemented for the start of the next year, 2014, school year. Cultures and attitudes of individuals, organizations, and entities take a long time to change. It is not possible to erase all the past perceptions by starting with a new slate of folks, environments, emotions, or attitudes, but it takes time to change these strong traits. The commitment and effort will take five years before real meaningful and accurate results are substantiated and fully accepted by the public, citizens, parents, businesses, surrounding school systems, private schools, State Board of Education, and politicians. Delaying the start only delays the end.

Within the Learning issues there were 5 other topics. These are:

Administration/Leadership- The School Board and City Council was newly elected last year and has not had a lengthy time period to solve all the issues that are of concern. Also a new superintendent has just been hired, and he will need to become acquainted with these issues and have some reaction time. There may not be much that can be documented on this topic at this time, but much of the discussions in the other topics do include much relationship to Administration and Leadership.

Parental Involvement- This topic is very important to the success of the school system- any school system. There are studies and history on how parents and guardians are key to a child's education, personality, emotions, confidence, mental state, and on and on. The professionals will all relate that parental involvement is the key to solving other problems of learning. It is not an easy fix and will require much more effort and time, than this study may be able to include within its short term actions. It is recommended that this topic remain a major issue and be addressed by professionals who can coordinate the many groups, individuals, state, and federal agencies. Locally we can address this area and will need more resources and inputs, and funding to rigorously pursue the solutions.

Teacher Evaluations- Within the school system, teachers are key to the system's success in educating its students and sustaining a positive learning environment. The quality, accountability, dedication, and stability are all included in the review processes and evaluations by supervisors and principals and superintendents. The state has communication and procedures aligned with the school systems. The teachers' involvements in this Learning topic are critical to its success, and they will have to be included in most if not all phases of this project.

Funding Dependence, the lack of funding and the transparency of funding can be easily discussed at a later date, as this is a topic that is dynamic and dependent on student enrollments, local involvements, grants, gifts, and federal and state involvements. Maybe a numbers person can best answer this one.

Performance Standards- These are fairly strict and controlled by local, state, and federal guides. The comments about dropout rate, truancy, evaluations of teachers, and higher standards may all be included in the actions and topical areas discussed above; as they are all linked and dependent on success of the school system.

L 1.6 Create partnerships with higher education institutions

Anniston has the benefit of close proximity to higher educational institutions which should be leveraged to improve student outcomes. As an example, a partnership between Gadsden State Community College and Anniston City School System could offer qualified students unlimited access to dual enrollment and career tech opportunities.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

L 1.7 Investigate creating a “Friends of Anniston Schools”

The school system could benefit from an outside organization acting as an advocate and critical “friend.” This could be a completely new entity or one of the several foundations that already help the schools could be expanded to serve this role.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

L 1.8 Establish a city-wide, quality After School Program

Young children could benefit from organized programming. A quality After School Program— weekdays, weekends and summer vacation months—could include academic tutorial, mentoring, life skills training, recreation, arts/culture and an “Anniston Reads” programs. Youth development providers such as PARD, Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA to be a part of planning and program. Volunteers from the Greek system, business community, education foundations, AmeriCorps and

others to be solicited.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

L 1.9 Create a city-wide, quality Pre-K program

Critical learning development takes place at an early age. To foster improved long-term achievement, a city-wide Pre-K program should be created.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

L 1.10 Create an Adult Education Workforce Development Center

Industry location and expansion decisions are heavily influenced by availability of a capable workforce. Economic competitiveness and individual prosperity could be enhanced by the creation of an Adult Education/Workforce Development Center to capture former high school students and dislocated workers.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

Place

PL 1.1 Update the zoning regulations

The city could benefit from updated land management tools to create a stronger physical environment. The current zoning rules are inadequate and need to be reviewed and updated based on a conceptual development framework.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

The current zoning rules for the City of Anniston need review and updating. The City of Anniston needs a comprehensive plan for land use in the future. Residents need a process to communicate desires in zoning planning decisions. A City Zoning Stakeholder Committee should be created to address the need for citizen involvement. This Committee would be appointed by the City Manager, and comprised of 5-9 members. Official composition of members to be determined. Suggestions include: at least one member from each of the city's voting districts; representatives from downtown Anniston, McClellan, hospitals, large industry; homeowners, renters, and landlords; etc. All committee members to be confirmed by the City Council. The committee would work with the consultant to update current zoning, create the future land use map, provide guidance for implementation, and serve as the conduit for community engagement in zoning decisions.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

Brian Johnson, City Manager, Bruce Downey, City Attorney, Toby Bennington, City Planner, and the Anniston City Planning Commission. They are working to hire a consultant who will create a zoning update and a future land use map for the City of Anniston.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

The individuals and groups currently working on the issue are effective and have all the resources they need except resident involvement.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Brian Johnson, City Manager

PL 1.2 Prepare a plan to identify and protect historic properties

The city has significant historic assets and more proactive efforts are needed to care for these places that are unique to Anniston. The plan should determine the process for identifying and selecting properties as well as recommendations for securing funding resources.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description:

A moratorium on demolition needs to be declared. A Historic Stakeholder Committee of independent volunteers should be appointed by the City Manager and confirmed by the City Council for the purpose of identification and preservation of historic properties within the city limits. A Registry for Protection of designated historic properties needs to be created by the Historic Stakeholder Committee and voted upon by the City Council. A plan needs to be developed by the Historic Stakeholder Committee, code enforcement officers and the zoning commission in unison that identifies which properties are to be protected and maintained. This plan should include a procedure by which properties are identified and selected. A plan for the development of funding resources should be established.

Who is working on this effort and how?

The Anniston Historic Preservation Commission, the Anniston Historic Committee, the Anniston City Council and David Schneider have worked toward identifying these properties. "An ordinance establishing a historic preservation commission in the city of Anniston, Alabama; to provide for the designation of historic district and properties; to provide, for the issuance of certificates of appropriateness; to provide for an appeals procedure; and for other purposes relating to the preservation of historical properties and districts" was adopted by the City Council of Anniston Alabama April, 24, 1991. The City Planning Department was provided a map, Historic Resource Map of the City of Anniston, by Schneider Historic Preservation, LLC. There may be additional properties that need to be identified and designated. Progress has stopped on this initiative.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

Further work on this priority will require a task force to provide adequate man power and procure funding.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Brian Johnson, the City Manager

PL 1.3 Enhance Process for Handling Vacant Lots

The community has an abundance of vacant property. A coordinated and creative process for managing these lots should be developed. This could improve property maintenance requirements and enforcement as well as creating community gardens and "mow to own" efforts.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description (short narrative explanation):

One priority identified was to clean up vacant lots. One suggested action is to put community gardens

on vacant lots. While community gardens may work in a limited number of areas, there needs to be code/legislative action taken to enhance the process of keeping lots cleaned.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

The City of Anniston has a nuisance abatement program which requires City of Anniston Council approval and a bidding process. This can take up to 60 days for the entire process to clean one vacant lot. The abatement or notice of violation action must go before the Council two times; once to declare the property a nuisance and once to get the abatement approved. Of course, property owners must be notified as well. Once the council approves the action, bids must be taken. Some properties are cleaned by the city employees but that cannot be done for all properties so outside contractors are asked to bid. The City tries to get reimbursement for the costs however that happens only in about 10-20% of the cases.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

More resources are needed (people & money). There needs to be State Legislature changing the City of Anniston's class from seven to six. Seven is the designation for cities with 25 thousand or more residents and is based on the 1970 census with no provisions for updating to a newer census. The class seven requires council approval while class six (less than 25 thousand residents) does not require council approval. The process of vacant lot cleanup would be much shorter without having to secure the Council approvals in two separate meetings. Therefore, state legislature needs to change to allow the City to become a class 6 which is the correct classification for the current number of residents and would require no council action.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

State Representative Barbara Boyd or Senator Del Marsh would need to lead this effort by getting the state legislation changed to update the classes according to a current census.

PL 1.4 Create a downtown strategic plan

Downtown Anniston is the physical heart of the community. It should be "everybody's neighborhood." In order to better manage this asset, the community, including government, civic groups and businesses should join the Spirit of Anniston to create a plan to improve the economics, physical condition, promotion and management of downtown. This plan could help advance the creation of mixed-use neighborhoods Downtown and re-energize the farmers market.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

PL 1.5 Build new parks and trail amenities

The city could benefit from additional investment in parks and trails. Funding and planning should help create the following: creation of multi-functional park in West Anniston to tie into Chief Ladiga Trail; completion of the Civil Rights Trail in 2014; completion of Coldwater Mountain and Chief Ladiga bike trails; completion of the McClellan amphitheater; completion of additional bike recreation component for neighborhood parks; and, in general enhance neighborhood recreational opportunities for youth and seniors.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

PL 1.6 Create conceptual plan for West Anniston

Planning is good stewardship and West Anniston could benefit from a clear, logical and effective plan to improve the area. An effort has been initiated and its implementation should be supported.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

PL 1.7 Develop more mixed income housing

The city could benefit from additional housing choices. City and other local stakeholders should partner with Anniston Housing Authority to develop mixed income housing.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

PL 1.8 Create a community garden program

Community gardens can be effective in creating stronger neighborhood ties, providing a source of fresh food and better use of underutilized land. The city—working with community stakeholders—should create a program to encourage creation of community gardens.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

Prosperity

PR 1.1 Complete the Veteran's Parkway

Complete development and paving the road that connects 10th Street (Henry Road) to Highway 21. This parkway will connect Interstate 20 to Alabama 21 and U.S. 431 North of downtown Anniston by a route through Fort McClellan.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

Complete development and paving the road that connects 10th Street (Henry Road) to Highway 21. This parkway will connect Interstate 20 to Alabama 21 and U.S. 431 North of downtown Anniston by a route through McClellan.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) is currently working on this project. Alabama Governor, Robert Bentley, approved to proceed with the project on November 7, 2013. The contractor performing the work is McCartney Construction of Gadsden.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

We were waiting on the funding from the State to be approved. Now that it is approved, work should begin shortly.

PR 1.2 Develop a retirement community at Ft. McClellan

Develop and promote a retirement and assisted living community on the old Fort McClellan. This would increase the taxes generated from this community and lead to additional housing developments in addition to industrial park expansion.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

Develop and promote a retirement and assisted living community on the old Fort McClellan. This would increase the taxes generated from this community and lead to additional housing developments along with industrial park expansion.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

The McClellan Development Authority (MDA) of Fort McClellan is working on this project and has started this project. The community should be functional by September 2014. Mr. Robin Scott was helpful in giving me this update.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

The MDA seems to have this project well underway. The assisted living facility is being renovated and is set to open in July 2014. Financial help is being solicited to help initiate the independent living community. HUD is being contacted for help. The projected opening of the independent living community is September 2014.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The MDA seems to have this action well in hand. Information was gathered from Mr. Robin Scott.

PR 1.3 Hire an economic development staff member

The city could benefit from an experienced professional whose singular focus is improving economic opportunity for Anniston. This would include developing stronger ties with existing industrial/manufacturing concerns. The city should hire an economic development specialist.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description: [short narrative explanation]

One of the top 5 priority actions from the Summit was the need to hire a director of economic development for the city. It is important for the growth of Anniston that a vibrant experienced person be placed in this position. And it is imperative that this person establish a good, workable relationship with the Department of Economic Development in Montgomery, expounding on the positive qualities of Anniston. With the right person, training and jobs have unlimited potential.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

A bill is being introduced in the State Legislature to allow the city manager to hire a Director of Economic Development without going through Civil Service. Unfortunately, this is the process that has to be taken since we do not have home rule.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The city manager will be responsible for filling this position once the go ahead is given from Montgomery.

PR 1.4 Create a "One Stop Shop" at City Hall

Quality customer service is a priority for the city. The city should create a One Stop Shop for new and expanding businesses to meet their various needs in an efficient manner.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

PR 1.5 Install city broadband service

Internet and high-speed data transfer is essential to many businesses. To better serve existing businesses and attract new investment, city wide broadband should be installed.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

PR 1.6 Create a minority-owned business support program

The community has a variety of talented members of the community that may not be best positioned to be competitive. The city should support minority and disadvantaged businesses through programs, service and incubator opportunities.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

PR 1.7 Encourage “pop up stores” and other business innovation

Many business opportunities can be launched with little investment in “brick and mortar.” Pop up stores can provide low-risk ventures in a unique venue and help animate sidewalks and or underutilized space.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

Safety

S 1.1 Establish nuisance abatement boards

An approach is needed to hear complaints of public nuisance involving a number of illegal activities such as drug use and prostitution on store property or property that represents a major crime problem.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description:

Establish nuisance abatement boards to hear complaints of a public nuisance involving a number of illegal activities such as drug use and prostitution on store property or property that represents a major crime problem.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

It's not effective due to the police department being short on staff and not having enough officers. Also not effective due to codes and criminal ordinances being inadequate. See attachment of Florida Senate Nuisance Abatement information.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

The Anniston Police Department by enforcing the current laws.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Anniston Police Department and Anniston City Council

S 1.2 Create a program where police are visible in neighborhoods

Increased visibility of police officers—on foot, day and night—in neighborhoods could deter crime and increase a general sense of well-being for residents. A program should be created that puts more “boots on the ground” and, in general increases pro-active policing.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description:

Create a program where Police officers walk through different communities during the day and night, so they can be visible throughout the community and deter crime.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

Anniston Police Department through community policing programs.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

It's not effective due to the police department being short on staff and not having enough officers to do community policing programs.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

Anniston Police Department

S 1.3 Create a program that utilizes neighborhood Community Centers during non-school hours as youth programming hubs

A coordinated effort for youth programming could benefit young people in Anniston. The Community Centers can easily serve as hub for increased youth programming.

Additional Resources and Information

Action Description:

The Community Centers can easily serve as hub for increased youth programming.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

City Parks and Recreation, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

Several groups are working on programs during non-school hours but they are not working together and they are not reaching the kids that live in the high risk areas that need the programs.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

City Parks and Recreation, Churches, Boys and Girls Club, Schools, Anniston Housing Authority

S 1.4 Increase entry-level pay for police officers

Recruiting and retaining high-quality police officers is a challenge for the city. Increasing entry-level pay would help recruiting and retaining officers and in the long run create operational efficiencies by reducing the turnover rates.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

S 1.5 Increase the size of the police force

The city could benefit from additional police officers. The city should work to increase the police force.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

S 1.6 Leverage federal assets in crime prevention and law enforcement

There are significant federal assets in the region that could be leveraged for the improved safety of Anniston community. An inventory and assessment of these assets should be undertaken to determine the opportunities to benefit.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided.

Transportation

T 1.1 Install more signs to direct people to Anniston and local attractions

Additional, attractive and clear signs along the interstate (I-20) and major roadways such as US 431/AL 21, and the new Veterans Memorial Parkway could help visitors and residents find area attractions and services.

Additional Resources and Information

Short Narrative Description:

Signs along the interstate (I-20) and major roadways such as US 431/AL 21, and the new Veterans Memorial Parkway will help visitors and residents find area attractions and services.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

The City of Anniston, City Street Division, requests signage on state roads. If approved and justified, ALDOT will install the signage.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

The City of Anniston and ALDOT work together to install signage and appear to have adequate resources.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The City of Anniston should review the list below and determine which signs are most appropriate and necessary. The group has identified the following suggested signs along area roads for the listed attractions and services.

I-20:

Coldwater Mountain Bike Trail @ exit 179 (east-bound & west-bound)
Hospital @ exit 179 (east-bound)
Berman Museum of World History @exits 179 & 185
Alabama Viet Nam Memorial Wall/Centennial Memorial Park @ exit 185
Airport at exit 185 (west-bound) - sign, but no directional arrow
Correct signs from "Ft. McClellan" to "McClellan"

US 431/AL 21:

Anniston City Meeting Center
Anniston Performing Arts Center
Anniston High School/ Anniston High School Lott-Mosby Memorial Stadium
Anniston Museum of Natural History & Berman Museum of World History
Anniston Police Department/Justin Solluhub Justice Center
Calhoun County Courthouse

Calhoun County Administration Building
Calhoun County Department of Human Resources
Cane Creek Golf Course
Church of St. Michael & All Angels
Civil Rights Heritage Trail
Visitor's Bureau/ Information Center (north-bound)
Remove Bus Station sign @ US 431/AL 21 & 8th Street
Move 'Sheriff Department' Sign to 10th Street
Correct signs from "Ft. McClellan" to "McClellan"

AL 202:

Coldwater Mountain Bike Trail (east bound & west bound @ Coldwater Pump Road)
Coldwater Mountain Trailhead & Kiwanis Pavilion & Pump Track (when complete)

Henry Road:

Sign for I-20 - at intersection of Henry Rd (east)/ Veterans Memorial Parkway
Hospital - at intersection of Henry Rd/Veterans Memorial Parkway (north)

Golden Springs Road:

Sign for I-20 at or near intersection of Golden Springs Rd/Greenbrier-Deer Rd
Hospital -near Anniston City Limit sign (north-bound)

T 1.2 Create/Expand transportation system for the elderly

Improvements are needed that would benefit the existing bus patrons as well as expand ridership in the general population, including the elderly. Ideally, the bus system would be convenient and affordable, and attractive to many members of the population as a transportation alternative.

Additional Resources and Information

Short Narrative Description:

The Area wide Community Transport System (ACTS) is the community bus system that is a service provided by the City of Anniston, City of Oxford, and the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC). There is currently somewhat limited community knowledge and use of this system. There are four fixed routes (North, South, East and West); three that serve Anniston and one that serves the Oxford area. Each route circles once an hour, and runs weekdays 7am-6pm and Sat 10am-5pm. All routes intersect at the Multimodal Station/Amtrak Station on 4th Street. Fees are \$1, with reduced fares for Military (\$0.75), Disabled, Students, Children, and Elderly (\$0.50). Curb-to-curb demand-response service is provided for disabled persons not able to utilize the regular transit service.

- The existing bus routes should be expanded to provide more frequent service (twice per hour and in reverse directions) along the existing routes.

- The route map and schedule should be more broadly advertised and distributed. In addition to posting in each bus shelter, it should be posted at additional locations around town, the web address and other information should be advertised in the newspaper, and pamphlets distributed to area businesses and providers of services to the elderly and infirm (YMCA, etc.).
- Expansion of the routes should also be considered to allow for use of the bus system as a routine alternate mode of transportation.

These improvements would benefit the existing bus patrons, other potential elderly passengers, and could expand ridership in the general population, increasing revenue. Ideally, the bus system would be convenient and affordable, and attractive to many members of the population as a transportation alternative.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

The Transit Authority Board of the EARPDC is responsible for administering the bus routes, shelters, signage, and pamphlets. They were contacted for information during this review, but have not yet begun to implement the actions discussed as this would need to be approved by the Anniston City Council and potentially coordinated with the city of Oxford.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

Resources to expand the bus system appear to be limited. While this is a highly desirable service for the community it is not currently self-supporting through fares, and expansions will incur additional costs.

EARPDC staff indicates that the fixed-route costs approximately \$60/hr. to operate. Therefore, to add an additional 'reverse route' circling in the opposite direction of the current route, for four peak hours each day, 5 days per week, on the three Anniston routes, would cost an additional \$180,720.

[$\$60/\text{hr.} * 4 \text{ hrs. /day} * 251 \text{ operating weekdays/yr.} * 3 \text{ routes} = \$180,720$]

Of this amount, half would be paid by the city and half would be matched through federal funding, therefore costing the City of Anniston \$90,360/yr. To double the frequency of the routes during all 11 hours of each operating weekday would cost almost \$500,000 with approximately \$250,000 apportioned to the City of Anniston.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The Transit Authority Board, working with the cities of Anniston and Oxford and EARPDC should evaluate the desirability and feasibility of additional frequency along existing routes, providing additional advertisement of the routes and schedules, and the possibility of expanding the geographical reach of the routes to serve a greater population of residents and tourists as a regular transportation resource.

T 1.3 Improve bus shelters/infrastructure

Anniston has eight passenger shelters along the existing bus routes. Additional bus shelters would add to the transit service in a positive way, sheltering patrons and drawing attention to the route locations.

Additional Resources and Information

Short Narrative Description:

Anniston has 8 passenger shelters along the existing bus routes. Additional bus shelters would add to the transit service in a positive way, sheltering patrons and drawing attention to the route locations. Route maps should be added to all new and existing shelters. As shelters are replaced, the design should be reviewed to ensure they are suitable for both winter and summer months. Shelters could also serve as a way to get information out in the community and/or advertisements to generate revenue.

Bicycle racks for locking bicycles should be located at new shelters and near existing bus stops to allow passengers to secure their bicycles if they wish to ride to and from the bus stops. All fixed-route buses have Sports Rack bicycle carriers (although Para-transit buses do not).

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

The Transit Authority Board of the EARPDC is responsible for administering the bus routes and shelters.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

The Transit Authority Board has requested funding assistance for three additional shelters this fiscal year. The specific locations of these and additional shelters need to be identified.

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The Transit Authority Board and City of Anniston should work together to add bus shelters, bicycle locking racks, and Sports Rack bicycle carriers to all buses.

T 1.4 Expand transit into surrounding areas for jobs

There are four fixed routes (North, South, East and West); three that serve Anniston and one that serves the Oxford area. The community could benefit if these routes are expanded to surrounding areas, specifically Jacksonville and Oxford.

Additional Resources and Information

Short Narrative Description:

There are four fixed routes (North, South, East and West); three that serve Anniston and one that serves the Oxford area. Each route circles once an hour, and runs weekdays 7am-6pm and Sat 10am-5pm. *[It should be noted that the fixed-route bus system is more expansive in both area and hours of operation*

than some of the participants at the One City One Vision Summit realized. A bus link between areas of Anniston and Oxford does exist. Increasing the frequency of buses as noted in Action 2 would allow more easily for residents of both areas to commute to work and/or classes at GSCC- Ayers Campus or McClellan.]

The JSU Gamecock Express serves students in the Jacksonville area. There is currently no link between the JSU and ACTS bus systems that would allow students or workers to commute between Jacksonville and Anniston/Oxford.

Carpooling and vanpooling could also accommodate commuters between Anniston, Oxford, Jacksonville, and areas towards Birmingham. Community participation in a service such as Commute Smart (<http://www.commutessmart.org/birmingham/>) could help organize commutes for a smaller group of residents than may justify an additional bus route.

East West corridors which are closed due to former manufacturing sites should be reviewed to determine if roads can be opened through them - linking disconnected same name streets for ease of access and navigation in the neighborhoods. The Rocky Hollow neighborhood could be linked to the Eastern Bypass and to give those residents access to future jobs on McClellan.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

There has been no recent work on this effort.

Members of this committee contacted JSU (Joe Whitmore, Director of Business for Institutional Support Services) who indicated a willingness to consider a possible “link” between Anniston transit and the Gamecock Express at some point along AL-21 to be determined.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

N/A

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The Transit Advisory Board should contact JSU to explore options for linking the two transit systems.

T 1.5 Create and enhance safe access routes and signage for bicyclists and pedestrians

Dedicated bike lanes, sidewalks, and multi-use trails provide safe access to and from nearby recreational facilities to residents and tourists, and to alternate transportation (bus and train) at the multimodal center. The city and related agencies should increase effort to develop sidewalks and crosswalks, multi-use (non-motorized) trails, dedicated bike lanes and bike routes that link recreational and residential areas with the bus routes, the Central Business District, and the multimodal transportation center.

Additional Resources and Information

Short Narrative Description:

Wherever possible, the city and related agencies should develop sidewalks and crosswalks, multi-use (non-motorized) trails, dedicated bike lanes and bike routes that link recreational and residential areas with the bus routes, the Central Business District, and the multimodal transportation center.

Dedicated bike lanes, sidewalks, and multi-use trails will provide safe access to and from nearby recreational facilities to residents and tourists, and to alternate transportation (bus and train) at the multimodal center. Where dedicated bike lanes are not feasible, wide outside lanes and 'Bike Route' or 'Share the Road' signs or street markings can enhance safety and awareness of cyclists. Extension of the Chief Ladiga Trail into and through the city of Anniston can expand its use from primarily recreational to transportation/commuting. Consider a bike-sharing program such as Alta Bicycle Share (www.altabicyclshare.com) to be implemented through the city/region, similar to that in Chattanooga (www.bikechattanooga.com, 30 bike stations, 300 bikes).

People of all socioeconomic backgrounds can benefit from alternate means of transportation available through walking and biking, particularly when safe routes are developed and marked with signage. These benefits include convenience and improved health, reduced pollution and parking issues, enhanced sense of community, and more opportunity for local small business patronage.

Who is currently working on this effort and how?

The City of Anniston approved a 10-year bicycle and pedestrian plan in September 2013 (The Anniston Star, 9/11/2013). This includes several phases, including initial shared-use roadways, bike racks, connections to Coldwater Mountain via bike lanes on Hwy 202 and Noble Street, and expansion of the Chief Ladiga Trail.

East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC) adopted the 'Calhoun Area 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan' on May 17, 2012. This plan highlights multiple bicycle and pedestrian projects in Anniston, as well as throughout the county in Sections 4.2 and 4.3. The projects that are in Anniston include Bicycle Projects 1-4, 6, and 10-14, and Pedestrian Projects 1, 3-7, 11, 14 and 21. (<http://www.earpdc.org/uploadedFiles/Scanned2012BikePedPlanUpdate.pdf>).

The Northeast Alabama Bicycle Association (NEABA) is a local non-profit organization that includes in its mission statement the promotion of cycling as a viable means of transportation. NEABA sponsors cycling-related activities that benefit and support the Chief Ladiga Trail. NEABA, along with International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), is involved in the development and maintenance of the Coldwater Mountain Bike Trails.

If there are groups and/or individuals working on this effort, how effective are they? Do they appear to have adequate resources?

There are multiple groups working on this effort. The various groups should communicate and work together to coordinate and enhance opportunities. NEABA/IMBA is currently focused on Coldwater

Mountain trail development, and the City of Anniston can take advantage of their work by providing access through bike lanes on Hwy 202, and Noble Street to 4th Street. The City should also continue to work on expanding the Chief Ladiga Trail from the multi-modal center to Mike Tucker Park, as well as connections to neighborhoods and other facilities along the way.

The city should also be aware of enhancing pedestrian safety and access opportunities through analysis of *sidewalks and pedestrian crossings* when new roads are developed or existing roads repaved. Wide shoulders should be maintained, particularly on more rural roads, and wherever possible to enhance the safety of cyclists sharing the roadways. Bicycle and Pedestrian projects identified in the EARPDC Bike-Ped plan should be given priority.

Additional financial resources are required to implement these efforts. State and federal funding may be available for some projects. (See EARPDC Bike-Ped Plan, Section 4 and Appendix F.)

Who should be responsible for implementing this action?

The City of Anniston should take the lead in improving sidewalks and crosswalks, adding dedicated bike lanes and shared –use roadways, and extending the Chief Ladiga Trail within the city boundaries. The City should also study a bike share program (see www.bikechattanooga.com and www.altabicycleshare.com) for implementation in the city/region. This could work well with the extension of the Ladiga Trail into Anniston and through the communities of Weaver and/or Jacksonville. These bicycles are typically utilized for short commuter trips and could also be used for recreational trail usage.

T 1.6 Prepare a comprehensive strategy to leverage the presence of Amtrak in Anniston

Amtrak is an underutilized asset in the community. More could be done to attract tourists. In addition, the station could anchor redevelopment and be a hub for a range transportation choices, including bus, taxi, van, and bicycle.

Additional Resources and Information

None provided