



## Oktibbeha County Comprehensive Plan 2014

**DRAFT as of 10/07/2014**

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## **PREFACE**

### **PURPOSE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

A Comprehensive Plan is used by cities and counties to establish a future vision for the community, to anticipate future growth and development, and to strategize decisions and resources in response to this growth.

Communities are constantly evolving; economic conditions and consumer development patterns have the means to transform communities, sometimes so fast the communities cannot influence growth in a positive manner. This document, if adopted and put into action, can be a proactive measure that clearly defines where and how the Oktibbeha County community progresses and evolves over time. When major developmental changes are occurring or are proposed, this Comprehensive Plan should assist County officials in a direction they are prepared and excited to move towards. This plan also serves as a guide for updates, improvements, and expansions to community facilities.

### **COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The State of Mississippi Legislature defines minimum requirements for a Comprehensive Plan (Mississippi Code § 17-1-1). Oktibbeha County's Comprehensive Plan addresses each of the following and elaborates further in the chapters to come.

- *Goals and Objectives* are prepared for a long range planning period of 20 to 25 years. They should include but are not limited to matters regarding residential, commercial and industrial development; open space and recreation; street or road improvements; and community facilities.
- The *Land Use Plan*, either in map or policy form, outlines the proposed distribution of land uses for residences, commerce, industry, recreation, and public/quasi-public facilities. Further information should be included to clearly define each proposed land use.

- The *Transportation Plan* should be represented in map form and identify the proposed functional classifications for existing and proposed roadways. This plan should cover the same land area as defined by the *Land Use Plan* and cover the same planning period as the *Goals and Objectives*. Functional classifications for roadways include arterial, collector, and local.
- The *Community Facilities Plan* addresses issues such as the following: housing, schools, public safety, parks and recreation, public buildings and facilities, utilities, and drainage.

## CHAPTER I ~ INTRODUCTION

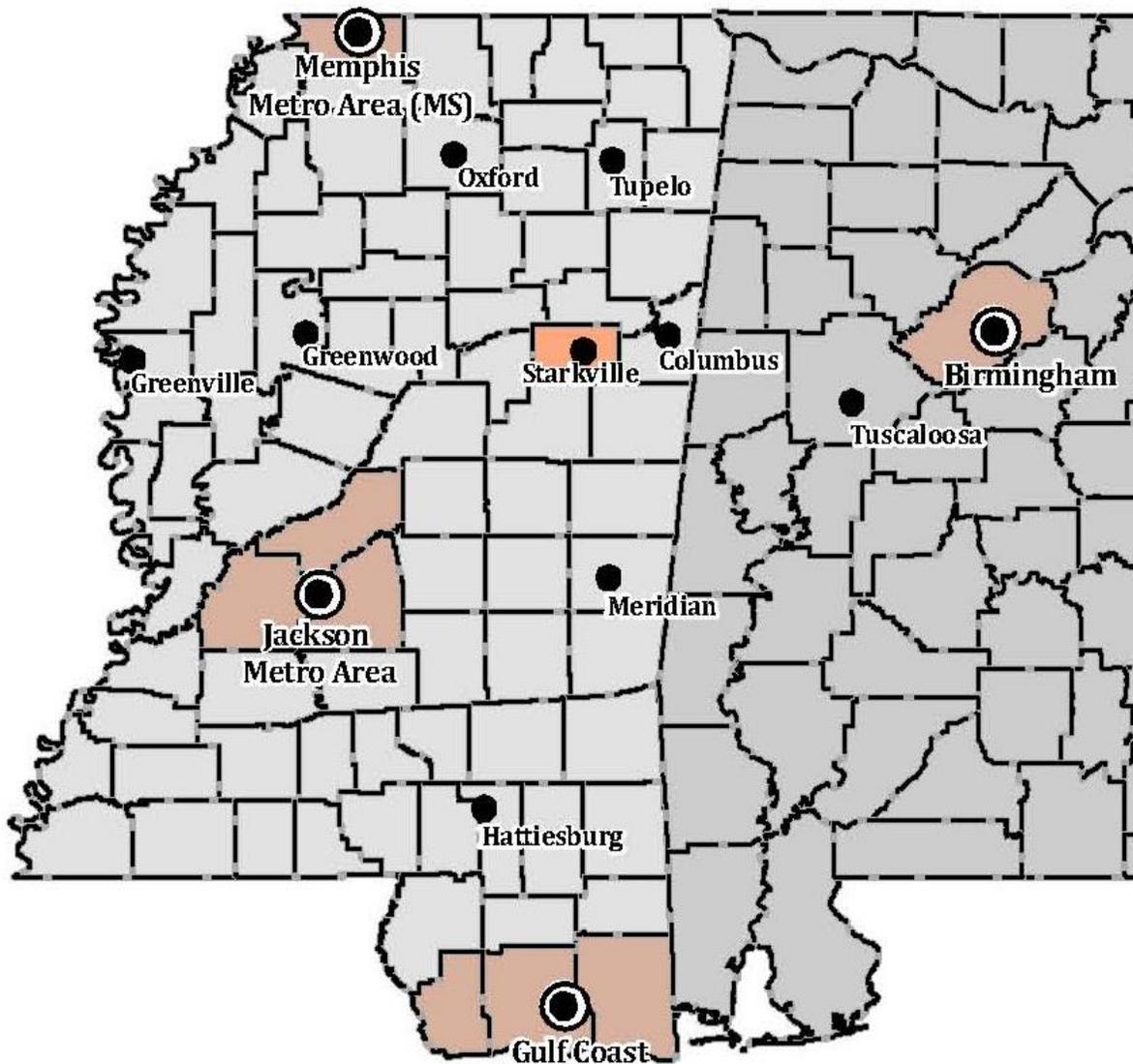
Oktibbeha County has a total population over 47,000 people. The county seat is the City of Starkville, which has almost 24,000 people and accounts for 50% of the total county population. Oktibbeha County and the City of Starkville are thriving communities that have experienced significant growth over the last fifty years.

### LOCATION

Oktibbeha County is located within the east-central portion of Mississippi, near the Alabama Stateline. It is within a few hours driving distance of three major metropolitan areas – Jackson, MS, Memphis, TN, and Birmingham, AL.

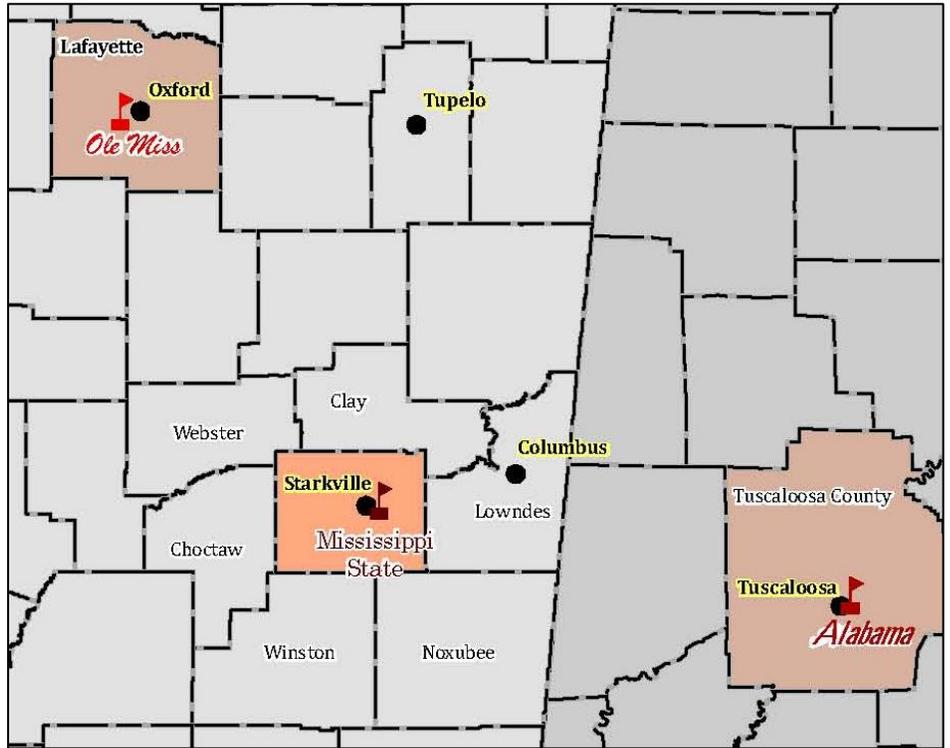
Oktibbeha County is located in the Golden Triangle region of the State and is surrounded primarily by rural counties with the exception of Lowndes County to the East. The Golden Triangle region is comprised of Clay, Lowndes, and Oktibbeha Counties. It received this name from the triangle formed by connecting the cities of West Point, Columbus and Starkville in each of these three counties.

Oktibbeha County, along with neighboring Choctaw, Clay, Noxubee, Webster, and Winston counties, is within the Golden Triangle Planning and Development District of Mississippi (GTPDD). The GTPDD provides a variety of planning and social services to this area.



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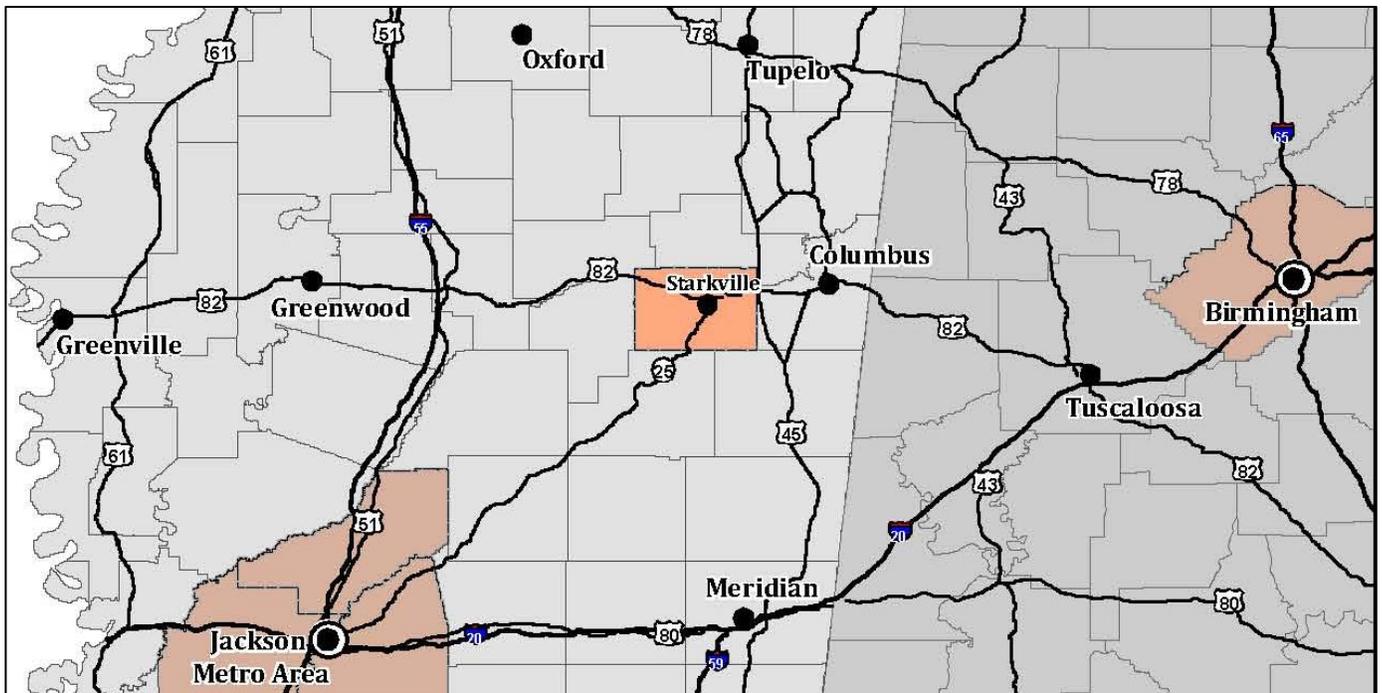
Oktibbeha County is the home to Mississippi State University. It is also within a two hour drive to the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) and the University of Alabama, two rival universities. These universities are mentioned because of the similar influences they have on their home counties. Lafayette County and Tuscaloosa County will be mentioned briefly throughout this chapter for demographic comparison purposes.



**TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS**

United States Highway 82 is a major east/west corridor connecting Mississippi and Alabama. It bisects the northern half of Oktibbeha County and is the main regional transportation network. Road work was completed in recent years making US Highway 82 four-lane from Greenville, MS, to the Alabama Stateline. Mississippi State Highway 25 forms an additional

regional network connecting Starkville, MS, and Oktibbeha County to the Jackson Metro Area. United States Highway 45 is just east of Oktibbeha County and a major north/south connector for the State of Mississippi.

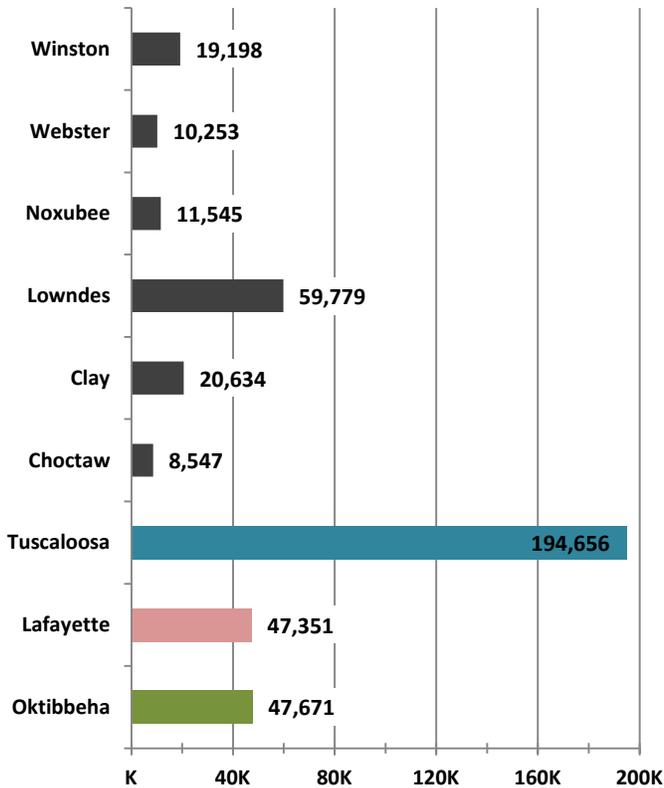


**REGIONAL PROFILE**

Chapter II provides a more detailed analysis of the demographic and economic profile of Oktibbeha County. However, general overall trends are illustrated here to provide a regional comparison and assessment of Oktibbeha County with surrounding conditions. All neighboring counties were used for this analysis as well as Lafayette County, MS, and Tuscaloosa County, AL, due to the location of major state universities.

The following chart illustrates the total population of these selected counties based on the 2010 Decennial Census. Within the immediate vicinity, Oktibbeha is one of the largest counties, second to neighboring Lowndes County. Various analyses within this plan will show many similarities between Oktibbeha and Lafayette County due to the university conditions. Even though Tuscaloosa County, AL, is much larger than any of the other selected counties in Mississippi, various demographic characteristics are still comparable to Oktibbeha County.

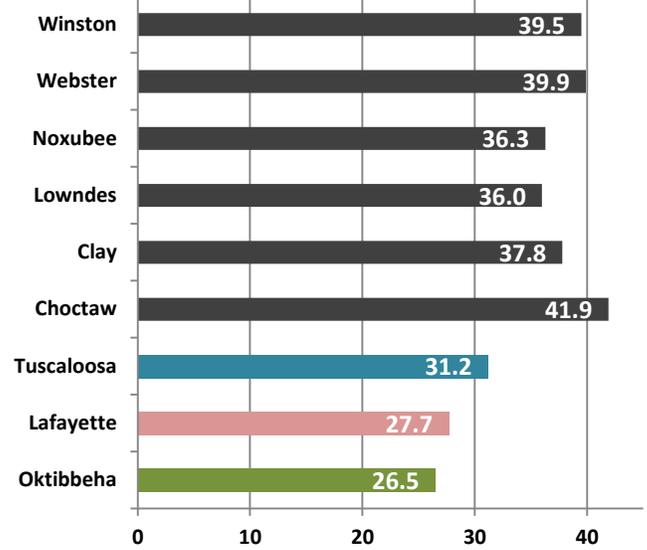
CHART I-1 2010 TOTAL POPULATION COMPARISON



Source: 2010 Decennial Census

Chart I-2 illustrates median age for these selected counties. The three counties with major universities are significantly younger.

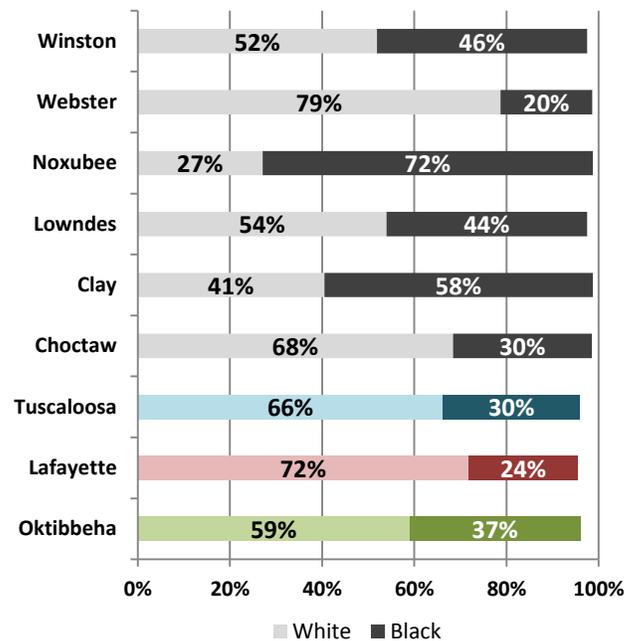
CHART I-2 2010 MEDIAN AGE COMPARISON



Source: 2010 Decennial Census

Within the Chart I-3 comparison for racial composition, the selected counties with major universities tend to have a higher white population. The remaining neighboring counties vary within the racial composition.

CHART I-3 2010 RACIAL COMPOSITION COMPARISON

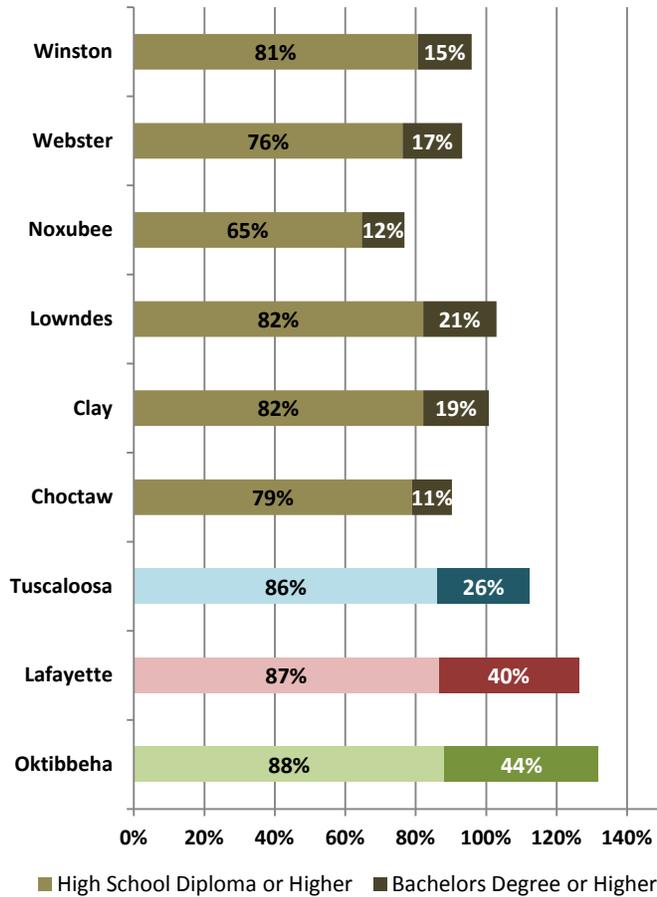


Source: 2010 Decennial Census

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As discussed in more detail within Chapter II, Oktribbeha County's educational attainment statistics are significantly higher than the State averages. Chart I-4 also illustrates that counties with major universities have higher percentages than other neighboring counties.

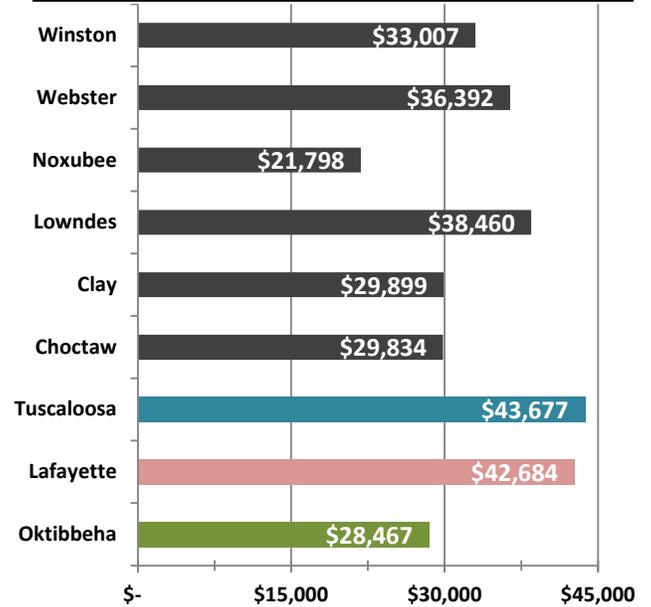
**CHART I-4 2011 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT COMPARISON**



Source: (2007) 2009-2011 American Community Survey Estimates

Oktribbeha County has a median household income \$9,000 less than the State median household income. Chart I-5 further reflects that Oktribbeha County income is less than all surrounding county estimates except for Noxubee County. It is also significantly less than the comparisons to Lafayette and Tuscaloosa County.

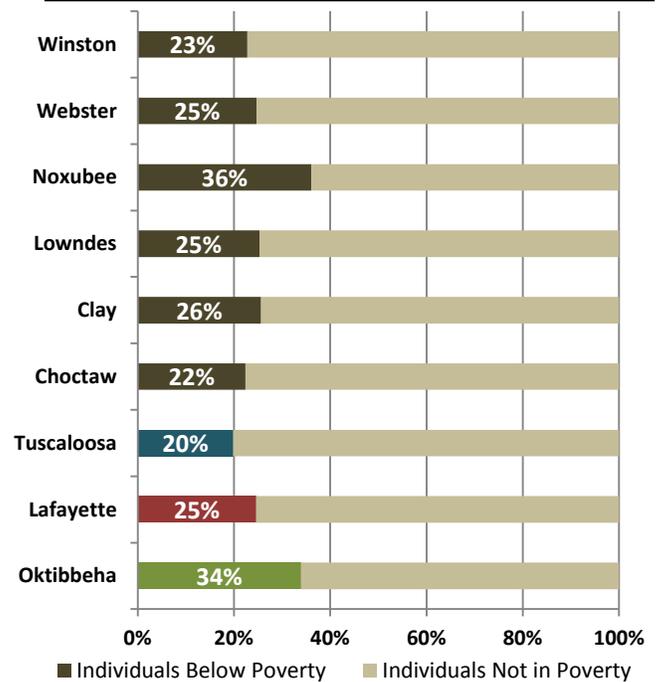
**CHART I-5 2011 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME COMPARISON**



Source: (2007) 2009-2011 American Community Survey Estimates

Oktribbeha County has a high percentage of individuals with an income below the poverty level. It is well above the State average and is one of the highest percentages among the selected neighboring counties as well as Lafayette and Tuscaloosa County.

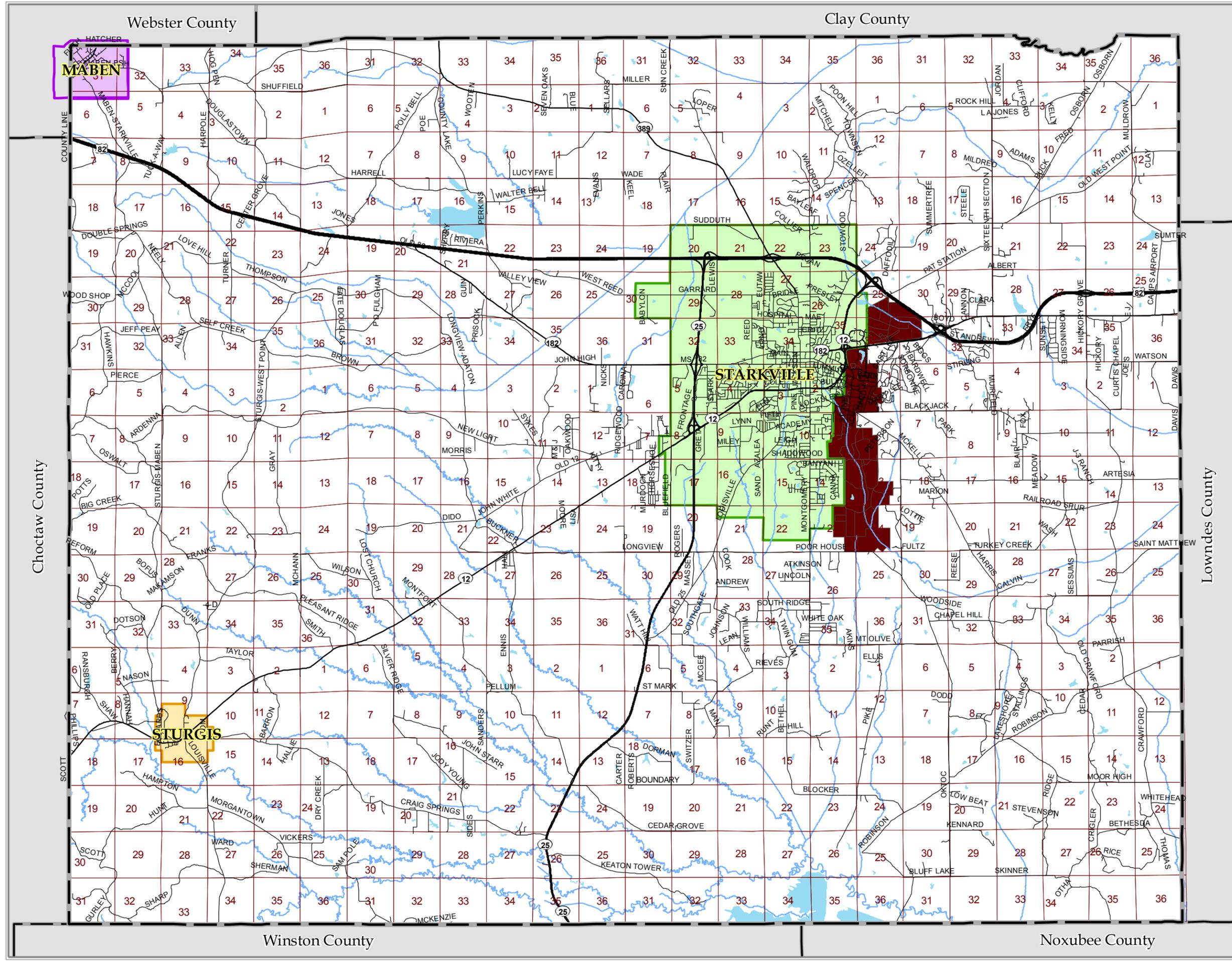
**CHART I-6 2011 INDIVIDUALS BELOW POVERTY COMPARISON**



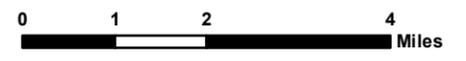
Source: (2007) 2009-2011 American Community Survey Estimates

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Map I.I  
 Base Map



- Legend**
- Sections, Township and Range
  - Maben
  - Starkville
  - Sturgis
  - Mississippi State University
  - Surrounding Counties
  - Oktibbeha County



**Date:** May 29, 2014  
**Source(s):** Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

**Disclaimer:** This map is accurate for planning purposes only.

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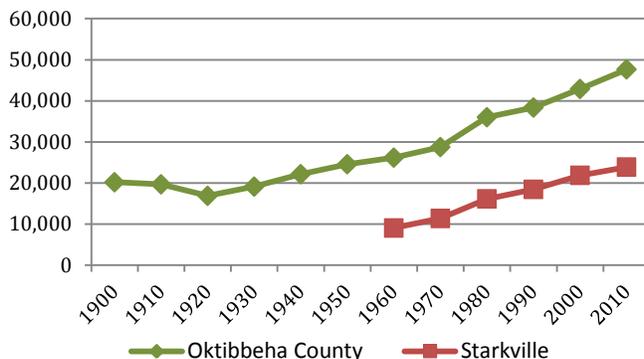
## CHAPTER II ~ OKTIBBEHA COUNTY PROFILE

This chapter compiles information, such as population, race, age, housing, and economics, to establish a community profile of Oktibbeha County. The majority of this information is recorded by the United States Census Bureau every ten years. However, detailed data for the 2010 Census is in the process of being released and additional sources and estimates were used to include the most recent information. Establishing a current community profile is useful in order to understand how the County has evolved over time and how it might continue to evolve into the future.

### POPULATION

Historically, Oktibbeha County has experienced a steady increase in total population with only two decennial Census population decreases since 1900. The decennial decrease between 1910 and 1920 was also consistent for Oktibbeha's neighboring counties as well as for the State of Mississippi.

CHART II-1 OKTIBBEHA COUNTY HISTORIC POPULATION



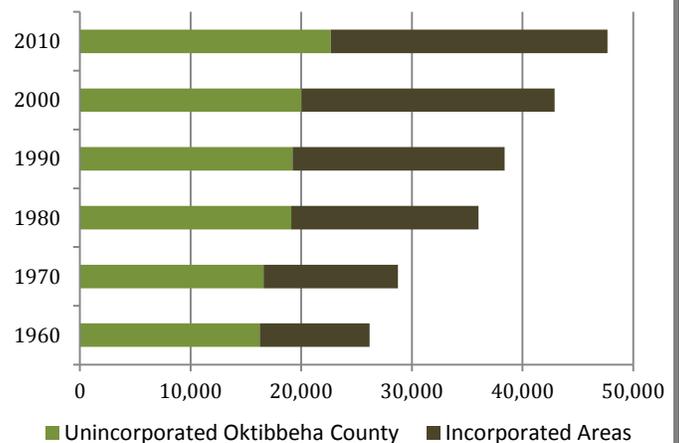
Source: Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990 compiled by Population Division and US Census Bureau

The average growth rate for the past 100 years has been a positive 9% every ten years. The largest population increase was between 1970 and 1980 which marked a 25% increase in population for the County as whole. Population growth was also consistent across the region and the State during this time period. As of the 2010 Census, Oktibbeha County had a total population of 47,671 which is more than double the population recorded in the 1900 Census.

### Population Distribution

Oktibbeha County continues to be represented by more of an urban population than a rural one. In 1960, approximately 62% of the County population resided in the unincorporated areas of the County. Over the past forty years, that distribution has declined to 47% living in unincorporated areas. The increase in urban population is primarily due to the City of Starkville's large growth.

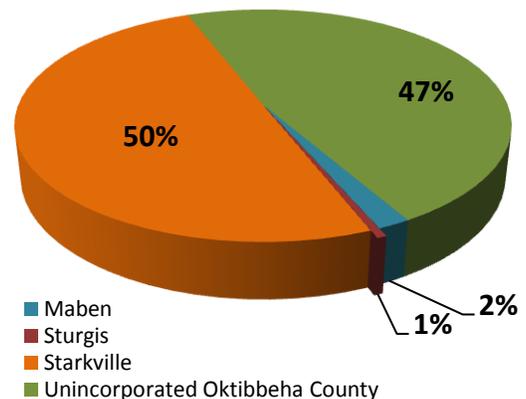
CHART II-2 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION 1970 TO 2010



Source: US Census Bureau and Slaughter & Associates calculations

The City of Starkville has experienced significant growth since 1960, and now represents 50% of the entire County population. Maben and Sturgis have also had significant population increases for their size but still account for less than 5% of the County.

CHART II-3 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION 2010



Source: 2010 Decennial Census and Slaughter & Associates calculations

Population Concentration

Map 2.1 graphically portrays population concentration across the County based on 2010 Census block population and boundaries. As the shading of the Census blocks gets darker in color, more people reside in those Census blocks. Consistent with the City of Starkville comprising half of the County’s population, the concentration of people is also heavily weighted to the city limits of Starkville as well as its nearby surroundings. There is also a slight concentration trend that creates a corridor along Highway 82 and a couple of miles to the north and south of the Highway. Outside of the Starkville influence, this corridor is a secondary influence on population concentration for Oktibbeha County. The southwestern portion of Oktibbeha County is the least concentrated based on Census block population.

Projections

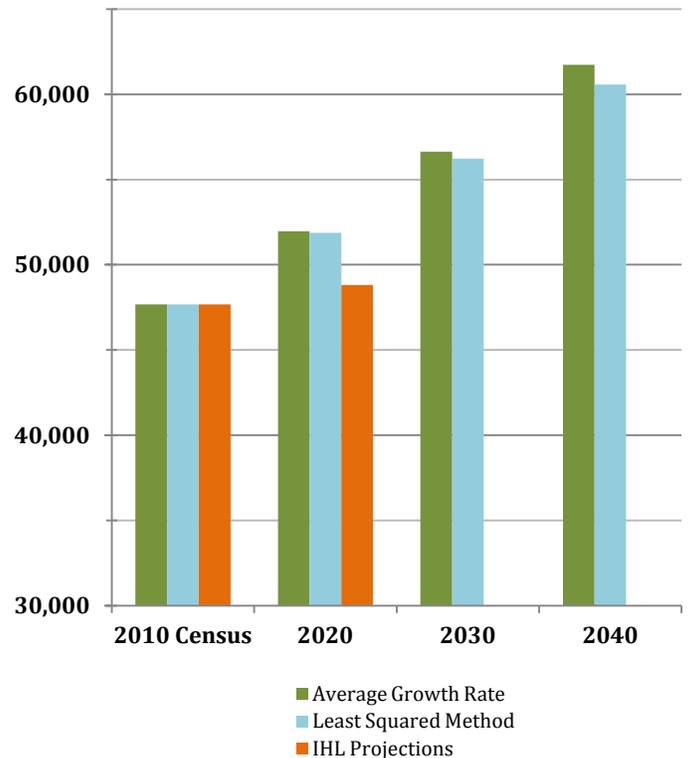
Population projections can be performed various ways through various sources. The Mississippi Institute of Higher Learning (IHL) is a common source for county population projections in the State. IHL updated their projections in 2012 based on the 2010 Census populations; these projections extend into 2025 with modest growth rates of 1% to 2% every five years. IHL projects a total population for Oktibbeha County of 48,806 in 2020 which is an increase of 1,100 people in ten years. When compared to other methods, the IHL calculations are usually the most reserved.

Analyzing historical growth rates gives insight to past trends and can be used to project future growth rates. Over the past 100 years, the County’s population has ranged from slight population losses to increases of 25% in ten year periods. The average growth rate between decennial Census counts since 1910 is 9%. Using this growth rate for ten year increments, Oktibbeha County’s population is projected to be just under 52,000 in 2020, an increase of over 4,000 people. By 2040, the total population is projected to be over 61,000.

Population projections using the least square method are based on a linear trend established over a historic time period. This analysis

considers population trends for the last fifty years since 1960. This computer-generated analysis projects the County population into 2040 with growth rates ranging from 7% to over 8% for ten year increments. Oktibbeha County’s population is projected to be just under 52,000 in 2020 and over 60,000 in 2040, similar increases to the previous method.

CHART II-4 COUNTY POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2010 – 2040



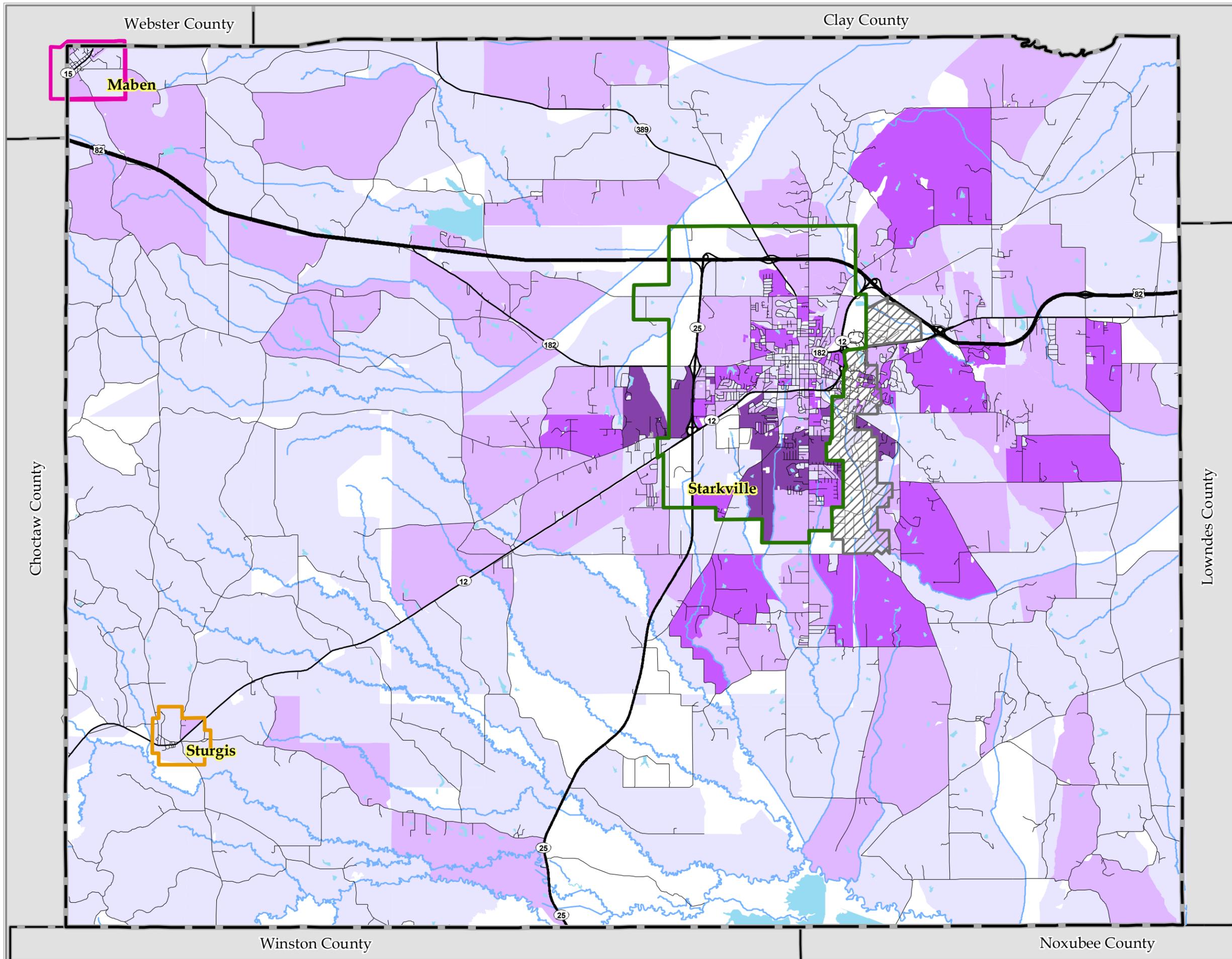
Source: Mississippi Institute of Higher Learning, US Census Bureau, and Slaughter & Associates calculations

**RACIAL COMPOSITION**

Since 1990, Oktibbeha County’s racial composition has remained majority white. All racial categories have continued to grow over the past twenty years. The black population increased by 22% between 1990 and 2000 which dropped the majority white County population from 63% to 59%. Since 2000, the white and black populations both experienced significant growth maintaining the overall racial composition at 59% and 37% respectively. The Asian population and other races also continue to grow at a steady rate but still represent a small portion of Oktibbeha County as a whole.

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Map 2.1  
 2010 Population  
 Concentration

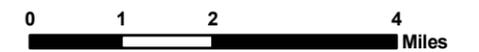


**Legend**

- Maben
- Starkville
- Sturgis
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County

**Population Concentration**

- by Census Block
- Zero Population
  - 1 - 50 people
  - 51 - 150 people
  - 151 - 500 people
  - 501 - 1000 people



Date: May 29, 2014

Source(s): Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

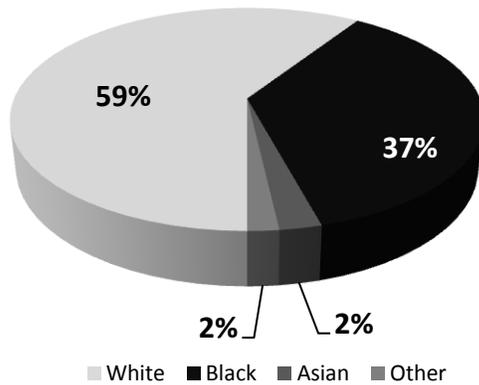
Disclaimer: This map is accurate for planning purposes only.

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Oktibbeha County's racial composition in 2010 is consistent with the overall racial composition for the State of Mississippi with 59% white, 37% black, and 4% all other races.

CHART II-5 RACIAL COMPOSITION 2010



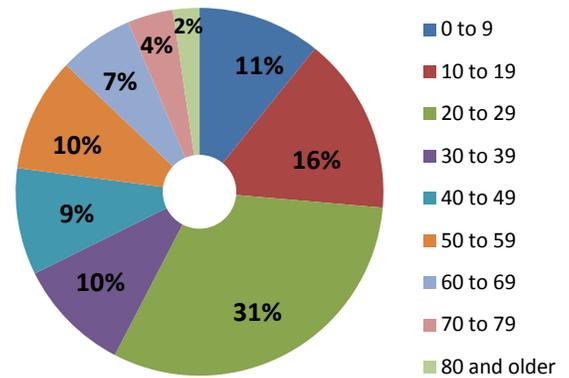
Source: 2010 Decennial Census

**AGE STRUCTURE**

Due to influences from Mississippi State University and colleges in surrounding counties, Oktibbeha County has a significant young population which is consistent with Lafayette County, home to the University of Mississippi. The median age for the State of Mississippi is ten years older than that for Oktibbeha County. In 2010, the County's median age was 26.5 years which is actually an increase from 2000.

The largest age category for the County is 20 to 29 years old which accounts for 31%. The population of Oktibbeha County under 30 years old, including youth as well as college students, accounts for 58% of the total population. The County's age distribution places important demands on primary, secondary, and higher education as well as student housing and other student services. The remaining 42% of the population, 30 years and older, has different needs and places different demands on the County in regards to housing, employment, and other services.

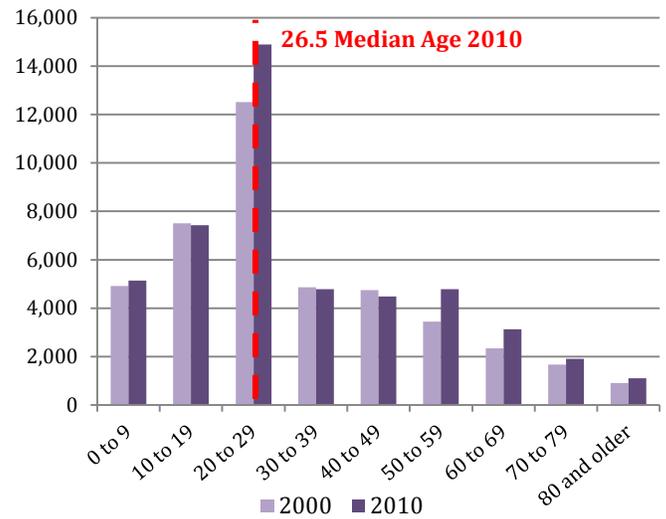
CHART II-6 AGE DISTRIBUTION 2010



Source: 2010 Decennial Census

Since 2000, the age categories 30 to 49 years old have experienced a very slight decline. This decrease could be in part to the natural aging process as well as young adults or families moving out of the County. However, those categories 50 years and older all experienced significant growth since 2000.

CHART II-7 AGE STRUCTURE 2000 - 2010



Source: 2000 and 2010 Decennial Census

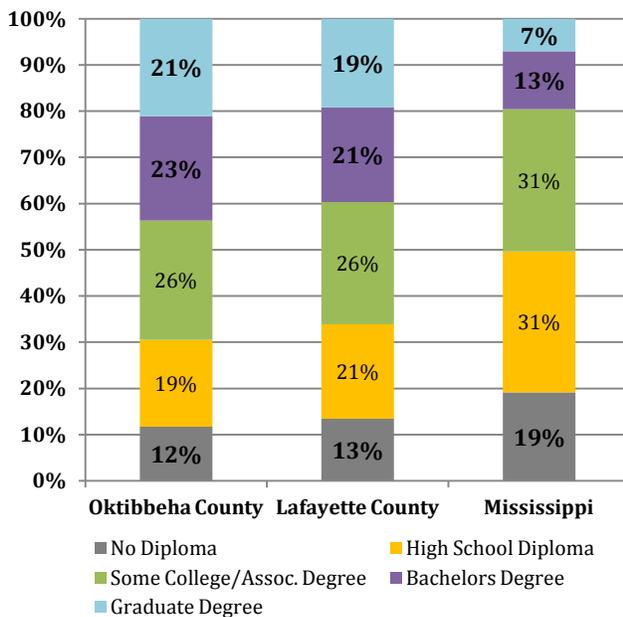
**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

Oktibbeha County is above the State average for educational attainment in regards to the percent of residents with college degrees. Over 40% of Oktibbeha's population (25 years and older) have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher professional degree. The Mississippi state average is only 20%. Oktibbeha County also has lower percentage for those with no high school education or no high school diploma than the

State average; only 12% of Oktibbeha County does not have a high school diploma.

When comparing these statistics for Oktibbeha County in the detailed Chart below, Oktibbeha County appears significantly more advanced than the State average. However, Mississippi State University has a significant impact on each of these statistics. Lafayette County is included for comparison purposes due to the similar characteristics being home to a major state university. Oktibbeha County is more comparable to Lafayette County rather than the State averages for educational attainment, and Oktibbeha still ranks above Lafayette County for percentages with a bachelor's degree or higher professional degree.

CHART II-8 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 2011



Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey Estimates

### HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

As mentioned previously, Oktibbeha County has experienced significant population growth over the years, and housing units in the County are increasing at even faster rates than the population. In the last ten years, Oktibbeha County's population increased by 11% while housing units increased by 21%. Still over 50% of the County's housing units are located in the City of Starkville.

### Households

The higher rate of increasing housing units has caused the average household size to drop from 2.4 (2000) to 2.3 (2010) which is below the State average 2.6 (2010). For Oktibbeha County, this means individual housing units are being occupied by less people. One-person households increased by 35% since 2000 representing almost one-third of all households. Again, this is an expected trend for university communities; Lafayette County has a similar household distribution due to a large student population.

Approximately half of the households are family households and half are non-family. Family households represent 52% of the County, which means residents living within the household are related to one another. Family households have represented more than half of the County in the past. Since 2000, the non-family households have been increasing and now represent 48%. In the last ten years, non-family households have increased by 34% which is also reflected in the drastic increase of one-person households.

### Housing Occupancy

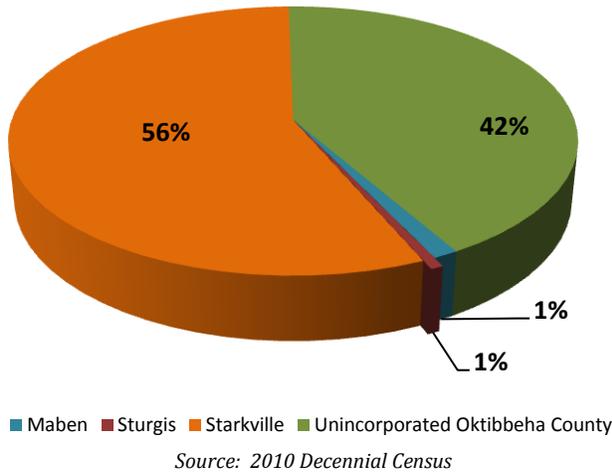
Housing unit vacancy has increased since 2000 and now is at 10%; this was a common trend at the State level also. Many communities have seen a slight increase of vacancy with more units for sale/rent. Some of this can be attributed to the economic conditions across the country. Another trend is the increase in renter-occupied units. Similar to other housing characteristics and statistics discussed in this chapter, the majority of all housing units in Oktibbeha County are renter occupied. Renter-occupied units increased from 44% in 2000 to 51% in 2010.

### Housing Unit Type

Housing unit analysis for Oktibbeha County includes all units in the municipalities as well as the units in the unincorporated portions of the County. Oktibbeha County had just under 21,000 housing units in 2010, and only 42% of those are located outside of the municipalities.

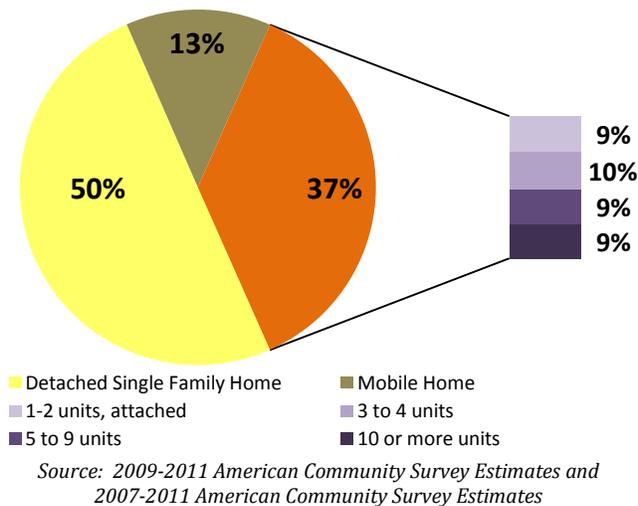
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**CHART II-9 HOUSING UNIT DISTRIBUTION 2010**



Only 50% of all housing units are single family homes which is significantly less than the State average (70%) and less than Lafayette County (61%). Mobile homes or manufactured housing represent 13% of the housing units in Oktibbeha County.

**CHART II-10 HOUSING UNITS**



Multi-family housing represents 37% of all housing units in Oktibbeha County. This is double the average multi-family housing unit percentage for the State of Mississippi and also higher than the comparable percentage for Lafayette County (29%). Multi-family housing in Oktibbeha County is represented equally for the variety of different

multi-unit categories ranging from duplexes to apartment complexes.

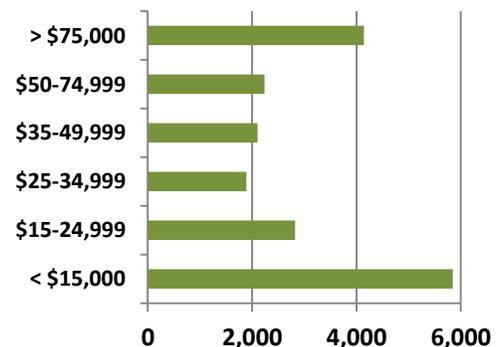
While Oktibbeha County as a whole has a large percentage of multi-family housing units, less than 25% of those units are outside of the municipalities. The City of Starkville itself accounts for 78% of all multi-family units in the County. However, multi-family housing and high density residential development continues to grow on the outskirts of Starkville. In 2000, Starkville accounted for 91% of all multi-family units and unincorporated portions of the County accounted for less than 10%. Just since 2000, the County has seen a rapid growth (almost 250%) in multi-family units outside municipal limits. The burden on the County to sustain this development, to protect residents and to provide public safety services for this high density development still exists.

The 2011 estimates suggest that almost 25% of housing units in Oktibbeha County have been built since 1999 and are within just ten years of age. Approximately 40% of all housing structures have been built since 1990. This again supports the recent growth of housing units in the county. Oktibbeha County is just slightly above the State average (36%) for units built since 1990.

**INCOME CHARACTERISTICS**

Oktibbeha County has a 2011 estimated median household income of \$28,467 which increased by 14% since 2000 but is still less than the State median income (\$37,813). Two-thirds of the households in Oktibbeha County have an income less than \$50,000.

**CHART II-11 HOUSEHOLD INCOME**



Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey Estimates

The per capita income for Oktibbeha County increased by 33% since 2000 to \$19,932 which is slightly above the State average (\$19,889).

#### Housing Cost Burden

A common statistic used to analyze the burden of housing costs is the percentage of income spent on monthly housing costs for mortgages and rent. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development determined that households are cost-burdened if they use more than 30% of their income for housing costs.

The 2011 American Community Survey estimates over one-third of Oktibbeha County households with a mortgage spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs. This burden has increased since the 2000 statistics; less than one-fourth were then estimated to spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

For renter households, 65% are estimated to spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing costs. This is also an increase from 48% in 2000.

#### Poverty

Oktibbeha County is above the State average for families and individuals within an income below the poverty level. The 2011 statistics estimate 20% of families in Oktibbeha County and 34% of all individuals are below poverty level. Averages for the State of Mississippi reflect 18% of families and 22% of individuals have an income below the poverty level. Poverty characteristics in Oktibbeha County have also increased since 2000 when 18% of families and just 28% of all individuals were recorded as having an income below the poverty level, in 2000.

#### **EMPLOYMENT BASE**

Approximately 58% of Oktibbeha County's population (16 years and older) are part of the labor force. Oktibbeha County's labor force had a slight fluctuation and decrease since 2000 (61%) but still is reflective of the State's overall averages. The American Community Survey estimates 13% the labor force population is unemployed. However, more recent data from the

Mississippi Department of Employment Security in February of 2013 reflects a 9.6 % unemployment rate for Oktibbeha County.

The leading employers in Oktibbeha County are primarily institutional or governmental type entities according to Mississippi Development Authority. It is expected that Mississippi State University is the largest employer in the County with approximately 4,500 employees. Starkville Public Schools and the City of Starkville combined are the next largest employer with approximately 1,000 employees. Oktibbeha County Hospital is also within the top three employers within the County. Private industries also support the employment base in Oktibbeha County. Wal-mart, Sitel, Flexsteel Industries, Inc., Southwire Company, and Weavexx are some of the top private employers with 200 to 700 employees.

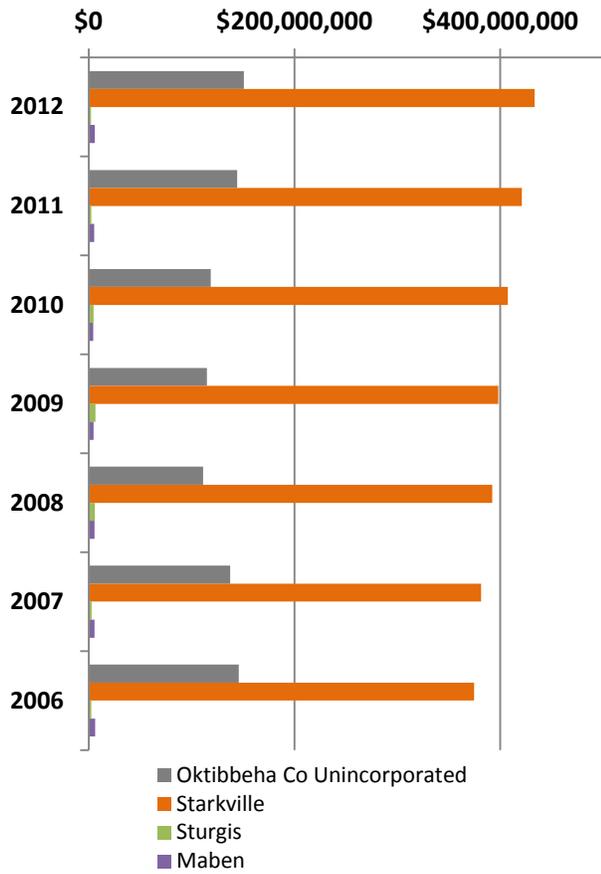
The American Community Survey estimates 40% of those Oktibbeha County residents employed work in the educational, health care, or social assistance fields which is reflective of the County's top employers. Arts, entertainment, recreation, and food service industries account for 12% of those employed. The retail industry (11%) completes the top three for those employed residents of Oktibbeha County.

#### **RETAIL SALES**

The Mississippi State Tax Commission records trends of retail sales and establishments as well as sales tax diversions for cities and counties. The Chart below reflects all retail sales within the County since 2006. The City of Starkville is the most influential in terms of retail establishments and sales for the County. Even through the economic downturn across the Country, Starkville has experienced increasing retail sales since 2006. Maben and Sturgis had fluctuating sales during this time period. The unincorporated portion of the County experienced a slight decrease in sales from 2006 to 2008. As of 2012, the unincorporated portion is at an all time high of retail sales since 2003.

**DRAFT 10/07/2014**

CHART II-12 OKTIBBEHA COUNTY RETAIL SALES



Source: Mississippi State Tax Commission

### **CHAPTER III ~ GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This is an important portion of the Comprehensive Plan in order to identify a variety of future goals for residential, commercial and industrial development; parks and recreation; transportation improvements; and schools and other community facilities. Information within this Chapter was gathered from one-on-one meetings with County Supervisors and County departments as well as from a public meeting including a wide range of community representatives and county residents.

Oktibbeha County is thinking progressively in terms of their future whether they are thinking about land development, population growth, resident amenities, or public safety. County leadership and residents have direct concern for quality of life and how their actions today affect the future of their home and their children's home. Every comment, concern, or goal expressed throughout this process was based on the desire to change today's actions in order to better Oktibbeha County. This Chapter further documents each of these desires in detail.

#### **VISUAL PERCEPTION AND IMAGE**

##### Overall Visual Perception and Image Findings

The visual perception of a community varies depending of the status of resident versus visitor. A visitor's perception greatly influences future trips to and investments in the community. Perception begins not within the heart of a city or center of development or core of activity. It begins before one approaches any of these locations; it can begin on the highways or at the exit ramps.

*Goal 1:* Create and promote a community image unique to and supportive of Oktibbeha County's assets as well as the City of Starkville's and Mississippi State University's assets.

Objective 1a: The University's image and influence has the ability to set the overall perception for the County and City. Work together on consistency and make collaborative efforts for implementation.

Objective 1b: Establish a sense of arrival along the interchanges of the major thoroughfares in the County and the City.

Objective 1c: Work with and provide assistance to the necessary parties to maintain the major thoroughfares in a neat and clean manner.

Objective 1d: Establish an overall County image outside of the concentration core - the City and University.

*Goal 2:* Create and promote a community image unique to and supportive of Oktibbeha County's assets through adoption of proper ordinances and regulations.

Objective 2a: Consider adopting a Zoning Ordinance for urbanizing areas.

Objective 2b: Consider adopting an updated Subdivision Regulations.

Objective 2c: Consider adopting a proper Construction, Building and Fire Codes.

Objective 2d: Consider adopting a Sign Ordinance.

Objective 2e: Consider adopting a Architectural Design Standard.

Objective 2f: Consider adopting a Landscape Ordinance.

Objective 2g: Consider adopting a Unkempt Property Ordinance

#### **TAX REVENUE AND ASSESSED VALUATION**

##### Overall Tax Revenue and Assessed Value Findings

Oktibbeha County like many other Mississippians feel they are overburden by taxes. Taxes are an important revenue source to fund essential services such as roads, schools, fire and police protection and other nonessential governmental functions like parks. It is an important and vital function of local government to explore

alternative funding options before rising taxes. This is especially important in areas of high poverty since many families are struggling to put food on the table.

*Goal 1:* Protect Oktibbeha County's tax revenue.

Objective 1a: Conduct a regular evaluation of historical and current revenue gains and losses before adjusting the millage rate.

Objective 1b: Provide a positive influence on assessed values by promoting and encouraging quality development and by promoting the County as an economic engine.

Objective 1c: Consider and evaluate additional revenue opportunities from comparable counties in Mississippi or surrounding States.

*Goal 2:* Be mindful of the County's high poverty rate by protecting the citizens of Oktibbeha County from unnecessary tax increases.

Objective 2a: Maintain a balance between the County millage rate and resident concerns of high taxes and the County's dependence of tax revenue.

Objective 2b: Evaluate the need for millage rate increases against other forms of county revenue.

## **LAND USE DEVELOPMENT**

### Overall Land Use and Development Findings

Oktibbeha County is a relatively rural county with a large amount of vacant land; however, the City of Starkville directly influences the more urban development at its borders. The outlying areas around Starkville contain the densest residential development for the unincorporated portions of the County and are in need of more regulation and urban services. Commercial and industrial developments in the unincorporated areas of the County are less urban in nature, and the County desires to expand these options and create more economic development.

### Residential Goals

*Goal 1:* Be a community for all people.

Objective 1a: Encourage affordable housing opportunities that will also address the County's high poverty rate and housing cost burden.

Objective 1b: Promote a variety of housing types that will attract a wide range of household incomes.

*Goal 2:* Advocate for quality residential construction and development.

Objective 2a: Evaluate options and alternatives for various development ordinances and codes that standardize construction and also protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Objective 2b: Publicize and endorse development standards as a united administration to ensure the County's best interest is advanced.

Objective 2c: Form cooperative and collaborative relationships with developers to further promote positive growth.

*Goal 3:* Protect residential property values for future growth and assessed values for tax revenue.

Objective 3a: Identify and determine a distribution of land uses that provides different areas for various types of residential development.

*Goal 4:* Maintain the unique quality and characteristics of Clayton Village and promote the future of this growing community.

Objective 4a: Identify future needs and demands for this area to support additional growth.

Objective 4b: Further advance public utility options in this area to accommodate additional development.

### Commercial Goals

*Goal 1:* Encourage quality commercial construction and development.

Objective 1a: Evaluate options and alternatives for various development ordinances and codes that standardize construction and also protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Objective 1b: Publicize and endorse development standards as a united administration to ensure the County's best interest is advanced.

Objective 1c: Form cooperative and collaborative relationships with developers to further promote positive growth.

*Goal 2:* Protect property values for future growth and assessed values for tax revenue.

Objective 2a: Identify and determine a distribution of land uses that provides different areas for various types of development.

Objective 2b: Identify prime commercial areas based on transportation networks and access, public utility availability, and concentration of supporting land uses.

### Industrial Goals

*Goal 1:* Attract various types and sizes of industrial development to locate in Oktibbeha County.

Objective 1a: Work collaboratively with the Golden Triangle Development Link and the Greater Starkville Development Partnership to promote Starkville, Oktibbeha County, and the Golden Triangle Region.

Objective 1b: Continue to support and market Starkville Cornerstone Park for smaller industrial and business opportunities.

Objective 1c: Identify and address any development limitations within Starkville Cornerstone Park.

Objective 1d: Identify large vacant tracks of land with transportation access and public utility availability for industrial opportunities.

Objective 1e: Identify and consider vacant tracks or abandoned industrial land within municipalities that could be targeted for redevelopment.

*Goal 2:* Encourage quality industrial construction and development.

Objective 2a: Evaluate options and alternatives for various development ordinances and codes that standardize construction and also protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Objective 2b: Publicize and endorse development standards as a united administration to ensure the County's best interest is advanced.

Objective 2c: Form cooperative and collaborative relationships with developers to further promote positive growth.

*Goal 3:* Protect property values for future growth and assessed values for tax revenue.

Objective 3a: Identify and determine a distribution of land uses that provides different areas for various types of development.

Objective 3b: Identify prime industrial areas based on transportation networks and access, public utility availability, and concentration of supporting land uses.

Objective 3c: Present Oktibbeha County as an integral part of a regional economic engine.

Objective 3d: Evaluate the impact of tax exemptions for industrial developments versus the positive influence of growth in the County.

## **FLOODING AND HAZARD MITIGATION**

### Overall Flooding and Hazard Mitigation Findings

Only a small portion of Oktibbeha County is affected by the 100 year floodplain as determined by FEMA and these areas are closely contained along creek bottoms. However, County leaders expressed a great deal of flooding concerns along roadways, bridges and creeks. Most of these concerns seem to be related to a large and growing beaver population that affects the adequate drainage of creeks and streams. Other concerns were related to the less than adequate sizing of bridges and culverts. Existing structures may not be large enough to accommodate additional water flow. In addition to flooding, a common concern was protection from severe storms and tornados and the lack of facilities in the County.

*Goal 1:* Protect Oktibbeha County residents from flood hazards along transportation corridors and networks.

Objective 1a: Identify flooding and drainage problems along roadways.

Objective 1b: Work with the County Engineer to determine possible causes for flooding, i.e. locations are within FEMA-defined flood zones, drainage culverts are undersized, road elevation is too low, etc.

Objective 1c: Identify bridges or culverts that are inadequately sized for the water flow.

Objective 1d: Seek state and federal funding opportunities that will help alleviate flooding concerns on roadways and bridges.

*Goal 2:* Protect Oktibbeha County residents from flood hazards due to insufficient creek drainage and creek blockage.

Objective 2a: Identify creeks and developed areas that continually flood.

Objective 2b: Work with the County Engineer to determine possible causes for flooding, i.e. storm debris prevents water flow, beaver damage obstructs stream, etc.

Objective 2c: Continue to work with the Beaver Co-op and determine additional methods to alleviate overpopulation of beavers.

*Goal 3:* Protect Oktibbeha County from flood hazards within FEMA flood zones as defined on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Objective 3a: Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Objective 3b: Publicize, enforce, and advocate for the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance adopted by the County.

Objective 3c: Enforce a minimum finished flood elevation at least one foot above the base flood elevation as determined by the FEMA.

Objective 3d: Form cooperative and collaborative relationships with developers and property owners to further publicize development concerns within flood zones.

Objective 3e: Establish a uniform permitting system to oversee projects before construction begins regardless of the flood zone location.

Objective 3f: Adopt and utilize a countywide hazard mitigation plan.

Objective 3g: Identify potential flood areas that should be preserved as open space.

**Goal 4:** Protect Oktibbeha County from dangerous weather conditions and active tornadoes.

Objective 4a: Identify and implement advanced warning systems or notification options to alert County residents.

Objective 4b: Provide public storm shelter(s) to accommodate residents that do not feel safe in their private residence.

Objective 4c: Identify types of affordable storm shelter(s) and available funding and grant opportunities.

Objective 4d: Identify public sites and locations where storm shelter(s) could be integrated with other County services or functions.

#### **PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

##### Overall Parks, Open Space & Recreation Findings

Oktibbeha County has never had a parks and recreation department under the leadership of the County Supervisors nor provided direct recreational opportunities to residents. There are some opportunities at Oktibbeha County Lake for fishing and picnicking and additional opportunities provided by the Noxubee Wildlife Refuge.

**Goal 1:** Encourage countywide recreational activity.

Objective 1a: Identify sub-communities of Oktibbeha County that would support recreational opportunities.

Objective 1b: Identify recreational needs and interests by Supervisor districts.

Objective 1c: Provide pavilions and/or enclosed buildings that could serve as community gathering places.

Objective 1d: Provide recreational sport facilities that require minimal upkeep and

maintenance in conjunction with other recreational opportunities.

Objective 1e: Support the private development and recreational opportunities within the Oktibbeha County Lake redevelopment proposal.

**Goal 2:** Take advantage of and support recreational opportunities within the Noxubee Wildlife Refuge.

Objective 2a: Maintain a positive and collaborative relationship with the Refuge.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

##### Overall Transportation Findings

Oktibbeha County has recently experienced significant transportation improvements to United States Highway 82 and Mississippi State Highway 25, two important regional thoroughfares. However, there are still some county needs that will impact the regional network and access within Oktibbeha County. Also, Oktibbeha County has a large amount of gravel roads and bridges that will need improvements to address citizen concerns as well as flooding and washing problems. Most of these roadway needs and improvements create right-of-way acquisition needs.

**Goal 1:** Maintain County roads to the highest standard possible to adequately serve residents.

Objective 1a: Eliminate all public gravel roads within Oktibbeha County in ten to twenty years.

Objective 1b: Establish a routine maintenance cycle (ten to twelve years) for all roadway improvements such as resurfacing, striping, etc.

Objective 1c: Work with the Public Works department and the County Engineer to determine road and bridge improvements needed.

Objective 1d: Adopt and implement a road plan outlining road and bridge construction projects and needs over a specified time period.

Objective 1e: Identify and determine road and bridge improvements based on the overall needs of Oktibbeha County and not individual Supervisor districts.

Objective 1f: Establish and adopt current roadway design, subgrade, and paving standards.

*Goal 2:* Encourage and promote quality road and bridge construction.

Objective 2a: Evaluate options and alternatives for roadway design, subgrade, and paving regulations that standardize construction and also protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Objective 2b: Publicize and endorse roadway standards as a united administration to ensure the County's best interest in advance.

Objective 2c: Adopt current roadway design, subgrade, and paving standards.

Objective 2d: Form cooperative and collaborative relationships with developers to further promote quality private construction.

Objective 2e: Build county roads with an adequate subgrade to address soil conditions, vehicle loads, and traffic intensity.

Objective 2f: Ensure developers built new roads to appropriate standards before the County approves the final plat and takes over the maintenance.

*Goal 3:* Alleviate public safety and traffic concerns along existing public roads.

Objective 3a: Identify and realign dangerous intersections.

Objective 3b: Identify flooding and drainage problems along roadways.

Objective 3c: Work with the County Engineer to determine possible causes for flooding, i.e. locations are within FEMA defined flood zones, drainage culverts are undersized, road elevation is too low, etc.

Objective 3d: Identify bridges or culverts that are inadequately sized for the water flow.

Objective 3e: Identify roadways and bridges that are inadequate for fire truck access.

Objective 3f: Seek state and federal funding opportunities that will help to alleviate safety concerns on roadways.

*Goal 4:* Improve existing and establish new transportation network connections based on current and future traffic needs.

Objective 4a: Identify corridors and intersections experiencing consistent traffic congestion.

Objective 4b: Identify insufficient transportation networks which increase fire response times and potential connections to reduce response times.

Objective 4c: Identify transportation corridors which are planned to experience significant traffic increases in the future and determine improvements needed.

Objective 4d: Identify potential corridors for new transportation networks around the City of Starkville and Mississippi State University.

*Goal 5:* Acquire and maintain sufficient public right-of-way on all county roads.

Objective 5a: Identify public roadways with less than the minimum right-of-way established by the County Engineer.

Objective 5b: Publicize and endorse to the public the importance and purpose of public right-of-way for county roadways.

Objective 5c: Work with private property owners on the minimum right-of-way acquisition needed for drainage or roadway improvements or maintenance.

Objective 5d: Acquire minimum right-of-way for county roads when the opportunity presents itself.

*Goal 6:* Encourage alternative modes of transportation throughout the County.

Objective 6a: Determine cycling interests and needs throughout the County.

Objective 6b: Identify corridors where cycling can be safely supported and implemented.

Objective 6c: Identify any rail access and connection concerns or needs for the future.

Objective 6d: Promote the Starkville airport for future business attractions and recreational uses.

### **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

#### Overall Community Facility Findings

Oktibbeha County's most pressing and common concerns were regarding public safety upgrades and public utility opportunities. Public safety concerns included specifics for the Sheriff's department, fire services, emergency management, and health services. The County expressed an overwhelming concern regarding water and sewer opportunities and services within the county and the impact the lack of these services have on development as well as the health and safety of residents.

#### County Administration Goals

*Goal 1:* Continue to provide for residents of Oktibbeha County at the highest service level possible.

Objective 1a: Periodically assess all County administration facilities to determine needed growth or expansion.

Objective 1b: Periodically assess all County administration equipment to determine needed improvements, repairs, or replacements.

#### Public Safety Goals

*Goal 1:* Provide and serve Oktibbeha County with the highest level of public police protection as possible.

Objective 1a: Increase sheriff deputy manpower based on a proportional increase of the County's population.

Objective 1b: Conduct an annual assessment of deputy personnel and equipment within the Sheriff's Department and the need for additional man power and equipment.

Objective 1c: Promote and encourage regular deputy training and certifications.

Objective 1d: Construct a Sheriff Department complex complete with jail facilities, deputy training facilities, shooting ranges, etc.

Objective 1e: Seek state, federal, and private grant mechanisms to help fund various training, equipment, or facility needs.

*Goal 2:* Provide and serve Oktibbeha County with the highest level of fire protection as possible.

Objective 2a: Support and encourage citizen involvement and service through the volunteer fire departments.

Objective 2b: Promote and encourage training and certification for volunteer fire fighters.

Objective 2c: Conduct periodic assessments of vehicles and equipment within the fire departments and the need for upgrades or replacements.

Objective 2d: Improve and expand the four county fire protection districts based on recommendations from the Mississippi State Rating Bureau.

Objective 2e: Encourage the use of sprinkler systems within dense residential developments and commercial developments.

Objective 2f: Evaluate and advocate for various ordinances and codes that promote fire prevention, standardize construction, and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare.

Objective 2g: Endorse and adopt construction standards as a united administration to ensure the County's best interest is advanced.

Objective 2h: Collaborate with developers, engineers and property owners to further publicize the importance of fire codes and available water supply.

Objective 2i: Expand the use and location of dump tanks around the County for additional emergency water supply.

Objective 2j: Encourage and support County and City collaborative measures to provide adequate water supply in dense development areas of the County.

Objective 2k: Continue to identify and improve response times within each fire department.

*Goal 3:* Provide and serve Oktibbeha County with the highest level of emergency management protection as possible.

Objective 3a: Build a new Emergency Operations Center for E-911 and emergency management personnel.

Objective 3b: Provide public storm shelter(s) to accommodate residents that do not feel safe in their private residence.

Objective 3c: Identify and implement advanced warning systems or notification options to alert County residents.

Objective 3d: Identify available funding and grant opportunities for various emergency management services, facilities, and improvements.

Objective 3e: Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.

Objective 3f: Publicize, enforce, and advocate for the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance and minimum finished floor elevations adopted by the County.

Objective 3g: Form cooperative and collaborative relationships with developers and property owners to further publicize development concerns within flood zones.

Objective 3h: Establish a uniform permitting system to oversee projects before construction begins regardless of the flood zone location.

Objective 3i: Adopt and utilize a countywide hazard mitigation plan.

*Goal 4:* Provide and serve Oktibbeha County with the highest level of health services as possible.

Objective 4a: Build a new county health department building to accommodate future needs.

Objective 4b: Promote countywide septic tank and sewer system inspections by the County Health Department.

*Goal 5:* Support and encourage future growth of the Oktibbeha County Humane Society.

Objective 5a: Adopt a county wide licensing program modeled after the City of Starkville's Licensing Program.

Public Works Goals

*Goal 1:* Maintain and construct Oktibbeha County roadways to the highest quality possible.

Objective 1a: Conduct an annual needs assessment of personnel and equipment.

Objective 1b: Establish a routine maintenance cycle for all roadway improvements such as resurfacing, striping, etc.

Objective 1c: Work with the County Engineer and the County Supervisors to determine road and bridge improvements needed.

Objective 1d: Implement a road plan outlining road and bridge construction projects and needs over a specified time period.

Objective 1e: Enforce roadway design, subgrade, and paving standards as adopted by Oktibbeha County.

Public Education Goals

*Goal 1:* Support the Oktibbeha County school system in all ways that best serve the citizens of Oktibbeha County.

Objective 1a: Encourage high performance through State test scores.

Objective 1b: Encourage the variety of and future expansion of the extracurricular activities provided.

Public Utility Goals

*Goal 1:* Serve Oktibbeha County with the highest level of public sewer available in order to sustain and promote future growth and denser developments.

Objective 1a: Research and seek application methods and funding for providing public sewer opportunities and disposal solutions within unincorporated portions of the County.

Objective 1b: Promote countywide septic tank and sewer system inspections by the County Health Department.

Objective 1c: Continue to advance the East Oktibbeha Wastewater District.

Objective 1d: Work with the City of Starkville on sewer treatment for County treatment and address any long term effects on the City's system.

Objective 1e: Consider a regional or countywide treatment system to alleviate undue burden on the City's system.

*Goal 2:* Serve Oktibbeha County with the highest level of public water available in order to sustain and promote future growth and denser developments.

Objective 2a: Encourage collaboration between local governments, water associations, and developers to provide adequate water supply.

Objective 2b: Identify an area around Starkville to promote public water system consolidation and collaboration.

Objective 2c: Work with the City of Starkville on water supply for dense developments in the County and address any long term effects on the City's system.

Public Amenity and Cultural Goals

*Goal 1:* Collaborate with the City of Starkville and provide assistance to community amenities through facilities, funding, or maintenance.

Objective 1a: Continue to support the Heritage Museum through maintenance and funding.

Objective 1b: Continue to support the public library system and facilities within each municipality through maintenance and funding.

## **CHAPTER IV ~ COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Community facilities are locations and services usually provided by a local government but also may be provided by a private enterprise. Some examples of community facilities include public schools, fire stations and fire protection, libraries, parks, cemeteries, water and sewer service, solid waste disposal, ambulance service, police protection, court systems, etc. Providing a brief inventory and analysis of the existing services in Oktibbeha County will be beneficial when planning for the future. This information will also assist in developing goals and objectives for improving the variety and quality of services currently provided and can be used as support for developing a plan for future capital improvements.

### **COUNTY ADMINISTRATION**

Oktibbeha County's governmental and administration services operate out of the County Courthouse (Chancery Clerk and Tax Assessor/Collector) and the County Courthouse Annex (Administrator's Office and Circuit Clerk). The Courthouse Annex was built in 2005 and adequately serves the County's administration needs. However, the County should perform a regular assessment of the capacity and functionality of all administration facilities.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Oktibbeha County expressed a variety of needs and expectations for the County public safety facilities over the next twenty years. Specific discussions included needs, upgrades, and new construction within the Sheriff's Department, Fire Department, Emergency Management Agency and Health Department. Each sub-category of public safety needs is discussed below.

#### *Sheriff's Department*

The Oktibbeha County Sheriff's Department has four divisions: patrol, investigations, narcotics, and detention. The Sheriff's Department operates out of the Oktibbeha County Jail and the Investigations Division Office.

The County Jail was built in 1992 and has a capacity of 90 inmates. Due to current court orders, indictments, and daily intake, the Jail facilities exceed capacity and County needs. Recently, the County has taken other measures and transferred Oktibbeha County inmates to surrounding County Jails. This costs the County money to transfer and board inmates in other facilities. In addition to the lack of boarding space, the Jail facilities offer no place for officer training or additional administration offices. The Sheriff's Department also uses the old jail for trustee inmates and additional administration services. This facility was operational in the 1960s and is also in need of repair and upgrades. Both County Jail facilities (old and new) are located in the middle of downtown Starkville. This location offers limited opportunities for the expansion of current facilities and the additional of new facilities.

The primary facility need for the Sheriff's Department in the immediate and long-term future is a new County Jail complex. Ideally, the new complex would include an adequate amount of inmate boarding space, administration offices as well as investigative and narcotics division offices, classrooms, weight room, track, indoor and outdoor shooting ranges, etc. The Sheriff's Department should conduct annual inmate admissions and length of stay analyses for the current capacity as well as past year's capacity to assist in determining future inmate space and needs. The ideal location of the complex has not been determined; however, due to the variety of demands and needs for this future complex, the downtown location has many limitations. When considering the location of the complex, the impacts of the shooting ranges on neighboring properties should be taken into consideration as well as the transport distance for inmates to the Courthouse. The current administration feels there is realistic and adequate funding available for portions of this complex, especially the shooting training ranges from the National Rifle Association.

Additional options for this new complex would be to combine it with County Fire Department training facilities.

In addition to the main facility needs within the Sheriff's Department, manpower is an immediate need. The Patrol Division currently has seventeen patrol employees and two support staff. The County has four shifts with four deputies per shift. The County is operating at the same level of patrol manpower as it did in the late 1990s. However, service calls have drastically increased and the manpower has not. The Sheriff would like to add at least three new deputies for additional patrol per shift as well as relief officers. The Sheriff's Department should conduct annual assessments of personnel in comparison to population increases or decreases.

The Sheriff's Department recently improved equipment purchasing all new cars and officer vests. Radio equipment upgrades are also needed; the department has the majority of funding needed for these purchases. There are still additional needs such as car cameras, tasers and additional protective gear.

*Fire Department* [See Map 4.1]

Oktibbeha County is served by volunteer fire fighters through seven different fire departments and fourteen fire stations. Maben District 3, Adaton-Self Creek, Bell School House, and East Fire Departments serve the northern half of Oktibbeha County. Sturgis, Central, and Oktoc Fire Departments serve the southern half of the County. The City of Starkville and Mississippi State University have their own fire departments.

The County also has four fire protection districts (overlapping the seven fire departments) that are all rated a Class 8 by the Mississippi State Rating Bureau. Adaton Fire Protection District and East Oktibbeha Fire Protection District serves portions of the northern half of the County, and Central Fire Protection District and District 5 Fire Protection District serves portions of the southern half. Maben and Sturgis are rated separately from the County Fire Departments at a Class 8; the City of Starkville is rated a Class 4.

Ratings are determined by a number of factors such as water supply, run distance from existing stations, and equipment. Areas outside of these protection districts are considered a Class 10.

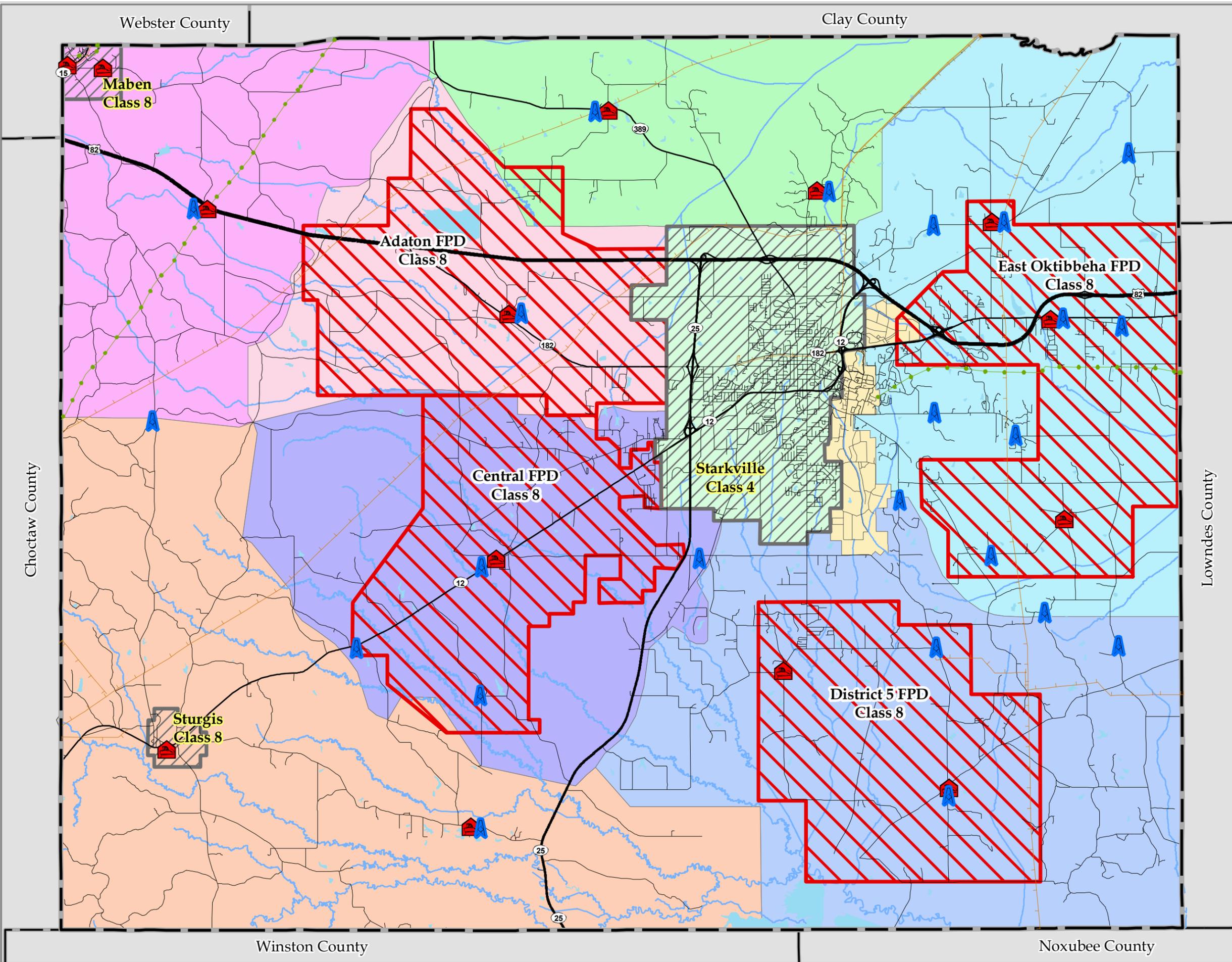
County Fire Departments should conduct a regular assessment of all fire protection equipment and maintain equipment and facilities in a manner that only improves the class rating. Fire trucks and other types of fire equipment may have a specific lifespan for recommended operation. There are proposed plans for expanding the East Oktibbeha County Fire Protection District and the District 5 Fire Protection District. The County should work with the Mississippi State Rating Bureau to determine facility and equipment requirements to maintain and/or improve the current ratings of Class 8 when the Districts are expanded.

Response time is very important to all fire departments. Oktibbeha County is concerned about some response times in certain fire department districts due to inadequate, or lack thereof, roadway connections. Oktibbeha County recently updated the addressing system to an E-911 system with new GPS information. These recent technological advancements have drastically improved fire protection regarding response time and distance and locating properties or structures in danger. However, additional measures should be taken to evaluate transportation connections to better accommodate fire protection and fire response in all fire districts.

Oktibbeha County has such a wide variation of terrain, development intensity, landscape and infrastructure which makes countywide fire protection difficult at times. For example, areas around the City of Starkville and Mississippi State University campus are greatly influenced by dense developments demanding some of the highest levels of fire protection while other areas of the County are primarily rural and sparsely developed. Oktibbeha County has not adopted any building codes or fire codes. The lack of standards and regulations has left many dense residential developments vulnerable and ultimately severely damaged during fire hazards. There is a need for some sort of fire codes and standards for construction throughout the County, particularly in regards to sprinkler systems.

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Map 4.I  
*Fire District  
 Response Areas*



**Legend**

- County Fire Department
- Dump Tank Location
- Electrical Transmission Lines
- Gas Pipelines
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County
- Municipalities
- Fire Protection Districts and Ratings
- County Fire District Response Areas**
- Adaton-Self Creek FD
- Bell School House FD
- Central FD
- East FD
- MSU
- Maben District 3 FD
- Oktoc District 5 FD
- Starkville FD
- Sturgis District 4 FD

**Date:** May 29, 2014  
**Source(s):** Golden Triangle Planning and Development District; Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); Oktibbeha County; US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

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The County lacks water supply for fire protections. There are over twenty private water certificates in the County that reserve the right to provide water service. Some areas have fire hydrants, but the reliability of these functioning properly during an emergency is low to none. One way the County is overcoming this problem is by dump tanks. The County has located 23 dump tanks throughout the area that serve as quick reinforcements for water supply. These dump tanks require little time to refill trucks with water.

The County Fire Departments are proposing to increase the number of locations and the number of dump tanks across the County which will also improve fire protection by increasing available water supply. [See Map 4.1.] Also, the County and private developers should work together to determine alternative solutions for water supply in dense developments such as above ground reservoirs.

#### Emergency Management Agency (EMA)

Oktibbeha County has an emergency management office that coordinates with surrounding counties as well as the State for preparing and carrying out a plan for dealing with man-made and natural disasters. Oktibbeha County's current EMA Office is within the 'old' jail facility in downtown Starkville which is severely inadequate in terms of space needs and operational needs. Oktibbeha County EMA was guaranteed a new EOC (Emergency Operations Center) facility years ago; this need is still present and urgent. Current EMA staff is at thirteen employees along with an abundant amount of equipment; the new facility should accommodate all space needs. Over eight years ago, the County authorized blue prints and construction estimates of this new facility. In 2004, a new EOC was estimated to cost approximately \$500,000.

In addition to direct operational facilities needed, Oktibbeha County has also expressed the need for public storm shelters in the County. Surrounding counties have made this investment in the last five years due to severe storms and damage in the area. The County has identified two types of shelter facilities: hardened facilities and dome

facilities. Surrounding counties invested in the dome facilities which are about half the construction costs as hardened facilities. Funding is available for these types of public storm shelters through FEMA. Oktibbeha County should consider the option of county storm shelters and coordinate with other public entities for possible locations. The County should also investigate other advanced warning systems to be installed in the interim. Additional solutions may come to surface through the ongoing development of the regional Hazard Mitigation Plan being produced for Oktibbeha County.

There is also a major concern for flooding across the County and development within these areas. The Emergency Management Director serves as the administrator for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) which has regulations and guidelines for developing within flood prone areas. Oktibbeha County has identified a major problem with the lack of enforcement of these regulations such as the application of a building permit within flood zones or building at a set finished floor elevation. The County should consider additional measures and options for regulating development in flood areas. One option is to require building permits for all construction so there is no confusion as to who should seek one.

#### Health Department

The Oktibbeha County Health Department may not be under the direct administration of the County government, but the County does provide the building facility and utilities. There is a future need for a new health department facility. Oktibbeha County administration should work with the County Health Department as well as the Mississippi State Department of Health as needed for any expansions or relocations.

An overall concern for Oktibbeha County is the lack of public sewer availability. The State of Mississippi has recently changed the regulations and requirements of regulations on sewer facilities. Oktibbeha County should continue to support regular inspections and maintenance of all private sewer systems or individual septic systems through the County Health Department.

### Humane Society

The Oktibbeha County Humane Society provides an invaluable service to county residents by rescuing, sheltering and promoting the adoption of abandoned animals. Recently an increase in the number of animals being admitted to the facility has caused growth. The county should support the Humane Society efforts wherever possible through financial or other means. The county could partner with the shelter on a county wide licensing program much like the Starkville Licensing program.

The Humane Society operates several programs that help carry out their goals. The Pet PALS program offers a low cost spay and neuter program to help control the pet population. Homeward Bound of Mississippi and Rescue Wagon help relocate adoptable pets from Oktibbeha County to shelters in other states that have a high demand for adoptable dogs and cats. The Humane Society also runs a education program focused on informing the general public. Oktibbeha County Humane Society also runs the City of Starkville Animal Shelter and Dog Licensing programs.

### **PUBLIC WORKS**

Oktibbeha County has made some important proposals within this plan to update and improve their transportation network and quality of the facilities.

In the future, to support the updates and improvements outlined in this plan Oktibbeha County will need to acquire more equipment and training. Currently, the Public Works Department lacks the equipment needed to meet the requirements set forth by the Office of State Aid Road Construction. This is a two prong issue as there is a lack of equipment and a lack of funds to purchase said equipment.

Establishing the exact equipment needed to meet State Aid requirements is of utmost importance. State Aid provides funds for constructing, improving, widening, straightening, surfacing or reconstructing of roads within the State-Aid system. All of the aforementioned elements are

including in the transportation element of this plan. Acquisition of the needed equipment will take several years to accomplish through a Capital Improvements Program-style funds; this would allow the county some time to search for grants and alternative funding mechanisms.

Public Works Department is also in need of a variety of training for its employees. The training needed includes Motor Grader Operator Training, Managing Conflict with Public and Employees Training, Road Surface Management Systems Training, Road Safety Audit Training, Road Safety 365 Training and "Moving the Highway" Safety Training. These needs should be addressed as quickly as possible as they pose safety concerns to both the public and county employees.

A Four Year Road and Bridge Plan was adopted in 2012. The plan covers building, paving, and reclamation projects from 2012 to 2015. This plan is in need of an update and expansion, as it is close to living out its life span. An expansion of this plan will be discussed later on in this section.

Oktibbeha County has recently experienced significant transportation improvements to United States Highway 82 and Mississippi State Highway 25. Oktibbeha County has a large amount of gravel roads and bridges that will need improvements to address citizen concerns as well as flooding and washing problems. Most of these roadway needs and improvements create right-of-way acquisition needs.

In March of 2012, the county adopted a Four Year Road and Bridge Plan. This plan contained the next four years, from 2012 to 2015, building, paving, and reclamation projects being under taken on the county road and bridge system. The basis of this four year plan would be a good start for a plan to pave all county roads that are currently gravel.

However, not all gravel roads in the county would need to be paved. Oktibbeha County has a sizable logging operations taking place and some gravel roads are logging access roads, which would not need paving. The county would need to work in cooperation with the citizens and logging

operators to determine priority and paving needs. The Four Year Road and Bridge Plan would be a strong starting point for developing a plan to pave those roads that need to be with in 10 to 20 years.

Another plan that needs to be developed concurrently with the paving plan is a maintenance cycle. The maintenance cycle plan would cover elements such as stripping, signage, drainage, and resurfacing. Ideally, the maintenance cycle would be on a 10 to 12 year rotation with amendments as needed for new road projects that occur as the county develops.

### **PUBLIC UTILITIES**

While the County is not in the utility business, they can serve as the advocate for certain utility services and promote and encourage extended service. The County is well served by water but severely lacks sewer service.

#### Water Services

Oktibbeha County has 23 different water certificates that cover 284 square miles (60% of the County). These certificated areas are well distributed across the County leaving only small holes in between. See Map 4.2. No large isolated areas exist that lack water service.

The County is well served by these community water associations. However, the number of different entities can pose a problem for future development. Currently, there are development problems for some of the smaller water associations that are not able to handle the development that is proposed within their boundaries. At the same time, these associations are not willing to work together to provide water service across certificate boundaries leaving some proposed developments in a bind.

Not only are some of these water associations only capable of serving a limited size and density of development, but also the community system leads to the creation of hodgepodge water lines and facilities. Each water association may enforce different requirements as far as water line construction, installation, and materials. This can create a problem around the City of Starkville in

regards to any future annexations by the City when acquiring such a variety of water systems.

The City of Starkville and Oktibbeha County should work together to identify areas that could potentially be annexed into the City of Starkville and areas of the County that are developing at a rapid pace. The goal in these areas should be to consolidate the water certificated areas.

This process will likely need to be staged due to the funds that would be required, focusing on locations where the need is more urgent. The first area that would be the top priority for consolidation is the area just East of Starkville and Mississippi State University. See Map 4.2. The first consolidation area covers 14.5 square miles.

The consolidation of water certificated areas would help ensure consistent requirements for water line construction, installation, and materials, in both areas recommended for consolidation. The second area recommended for consolidation covers approximately 90 square miles. This area is under development pressure but is currently not as active as first area.

#### Sewer Services

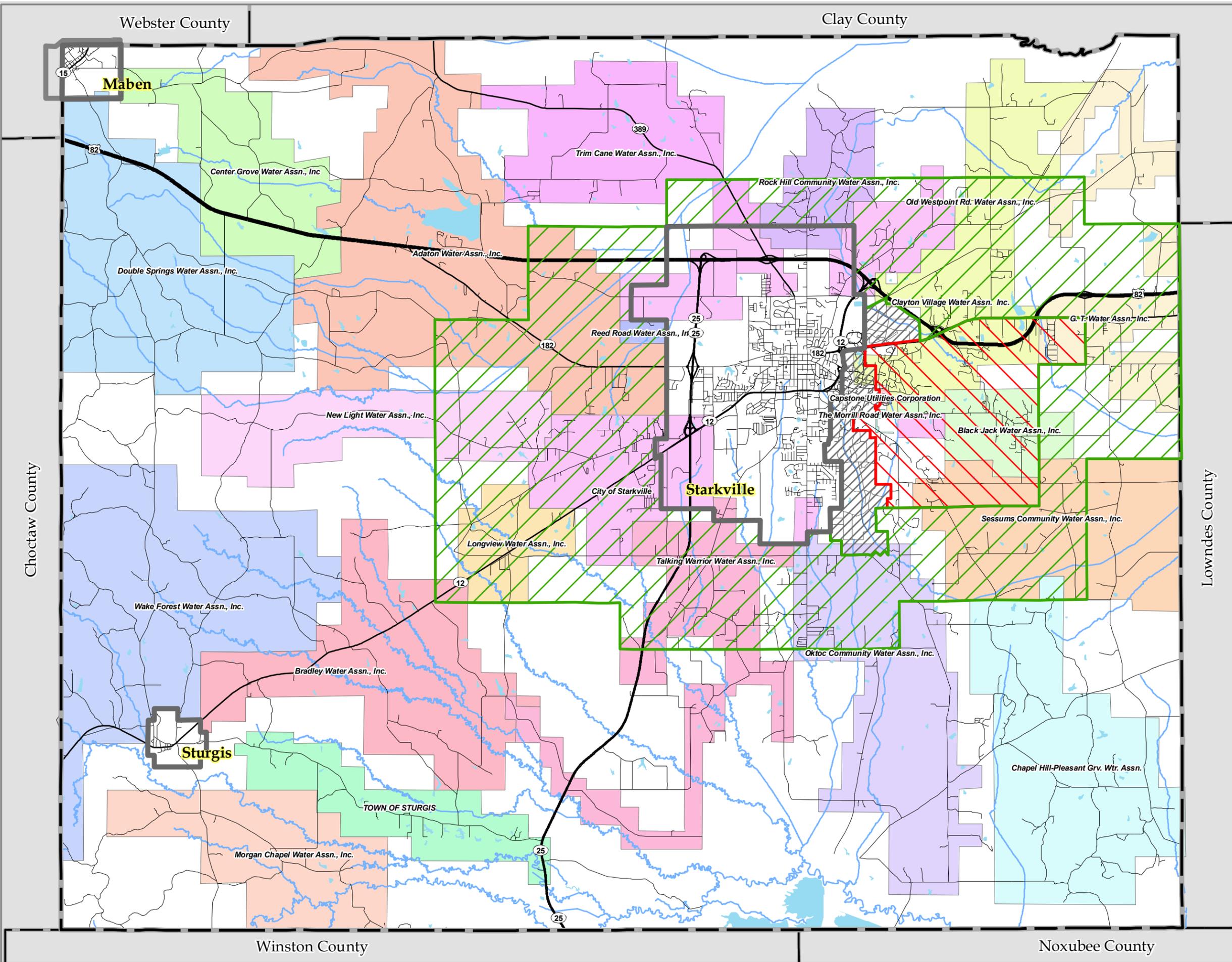
Oktibbeha County has 11 different sewer certificates that cover 5.7 square miles (only 1% of the County). These certificated areas are clustered primarily around the City of Starkville with a few southeast of the City near Bethel and Robinson Roads. See Map 4.3. Sewer service has been identified as one of the major concerns of the County in terms of future service, connections and environmental impacts of the lack of service.

Countywide sewer service is very rare in the State of Mississippi. However, it is an interest of Oktibbeha County. Current development and future development will place a burden on the County and the environment if sewer connections and disposal is not addressed in some fashion.

The State of Mississippi has recently reduced the inspection requirements previously conducted through the County Health Departments for septic tanks and other sewer disposal systems. Inspections of these facilities are crucial so that

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Map 4.2  
*Areas for Possible Consolidation  
of Water Certificated Areas*



**Legend**

- Municipalities
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County

**Consolidation Buffer**

- Area of Highest Priority
- Area of Secondary Priority

**Water Certificated Areas**

- Adaton Water Assn., Inc.
- Black Jack Water Assn., Inc.
- Bradley Water Assn., Inc.
- Capstone Utilities Corporation
- Center Grove Water Assn., Inc.
- Chapel Hill-Pleasant Grv. Wtr. Assn.
- City of Starkville
- Clayton Village Water Assn., Inc.
- Double Springs Water Assn., Inc.
- G. T. Water Assn., Inc.
- Longview Water Assn., Inc.
- Morgan Chapel Water Assn., Inc.
- New Light Water Assn., Inc.
- Oktoc Community Water Assn., Inc.
- Old Westpoint Rd. Water Assn., Inc.
- Reed Road Water Assn., Inc.
- Rock Hill Community Water Assn., Inc.
- Sessums Community Water Assn., Inc.
- TOWN OF STURGIS
- Talking Warrior Water Assn., Inc.
- The Morrill Road Water Assn., Inc.
- Trim Cane Water Assn., Inc.
- Wake Forest Water Assn., Inc.



Date: May 29, 2014

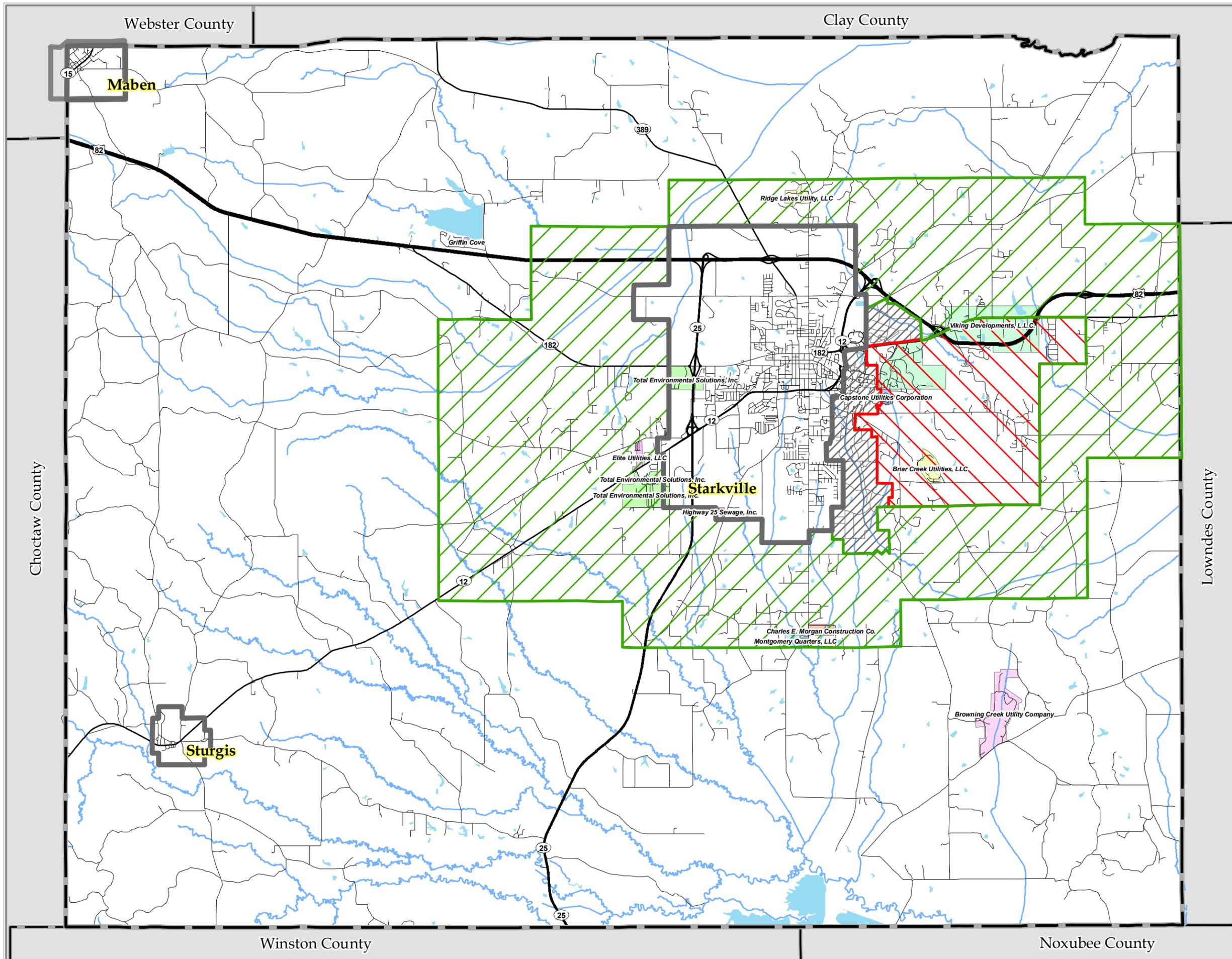
Source(s): Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

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Map 4.3  
*Areas for Possible Consolidation  
of Sewer Certificated Areas*



**Legend**

- Municipalities
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County
- Consolidation Buffer**
- Area of Highest Priority
- Area of Secondary Priority
- Sewer Certificated Areas  
as of March 2013**
- Briar Creek Utilities, LLC
- Browning Creek Utility Company
- Capstone Utilities Corporation
- Charles E. Morgan Construction Co.
- Elite Utilities, LLC
- Griffin Cove
- Highway 25 Sewage, Inc.
- Montgomery Quarters, LLC
- Ridge Lakes Utility, LLC
- Total Environmental Solutions, Inc.
- Viking Developments, L.L.C.



**Date:** May 29, 2014  
**Source(s):** Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

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they function adequately and safely. Counties will be individually responsible for these types of inspections in the future.

Outside of just inspecting sewer system installations, the County needs an overall plan for the future of the City of Starkville's sewer system. If and when individual developments outside the City limits connect to the City, additional strain will be placed on the City's sewer system.

Like in the case of the water system, a development buffer can be applied to the sewer system. The same two buffers would apply with the eastern buffer being of greatest priority. The buffer, when applied to the sewer system, would be an expansion project instead of consolidation. See Map 4.3.

The expansion of the sewer system would require the County to work with the City of Starkville to make improvements to their wastewater treatment facility or to construct a new wastewater treatment facility. It would also ensure consistent requirements for sewer line construction, installation, and materials. Sewer service in the buffer areas would alleviate any possible environment concerns due the use of septic tanks.

#### **EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS [See Map 4.4.]**

The Oktibbeha County School System is divided into two districts, East and West. Both districts have one Elementary School, serving Kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, and one High School, serving 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The school system provides education to approximately 881 students and employs approximately 90 teachers. In 2012, Oktibbeha County School System was put in a conservatorship by the State of Mississippi. Low test scores were the reason for the state takeover of the county school system. The state has discussed/recommended merging Oktibbeha County Schools with Starkville City Schools, thus creating one county wide school system. This merger is scheduled to take place in July of 2015.

The merging of the two school systems will help extend some of Starkville City Schools exceptional extracurricular activities to county students. These opportunities include sport offerings, art offerings, advanced classes, college curriculum, etc. While combining school systems would help provide some expanded activities and course offerings for students it, would not account for infrastructure. The county will still need to evaluate and maintain all school buildings to provide students with a functioning and safe place to learn. The county also needs to evaluate and improve the technology available to students and teachers. This could mean adding more computers, projectors, laboratory equipment and assortment, of other implements dependant on teachers needs. The highest priority for the school district should be to continue to improve the education of students and thus see an increase in testing scores and the graduation rate.

#### **CULTURAL RESOURCES [See Map 4.5.]**

Oktibbeha County has numerous cultural resources for its residents, but there are opportunities to improve. The county has a museum, library system, and park and recreational facilities.

##### Heritage Museum

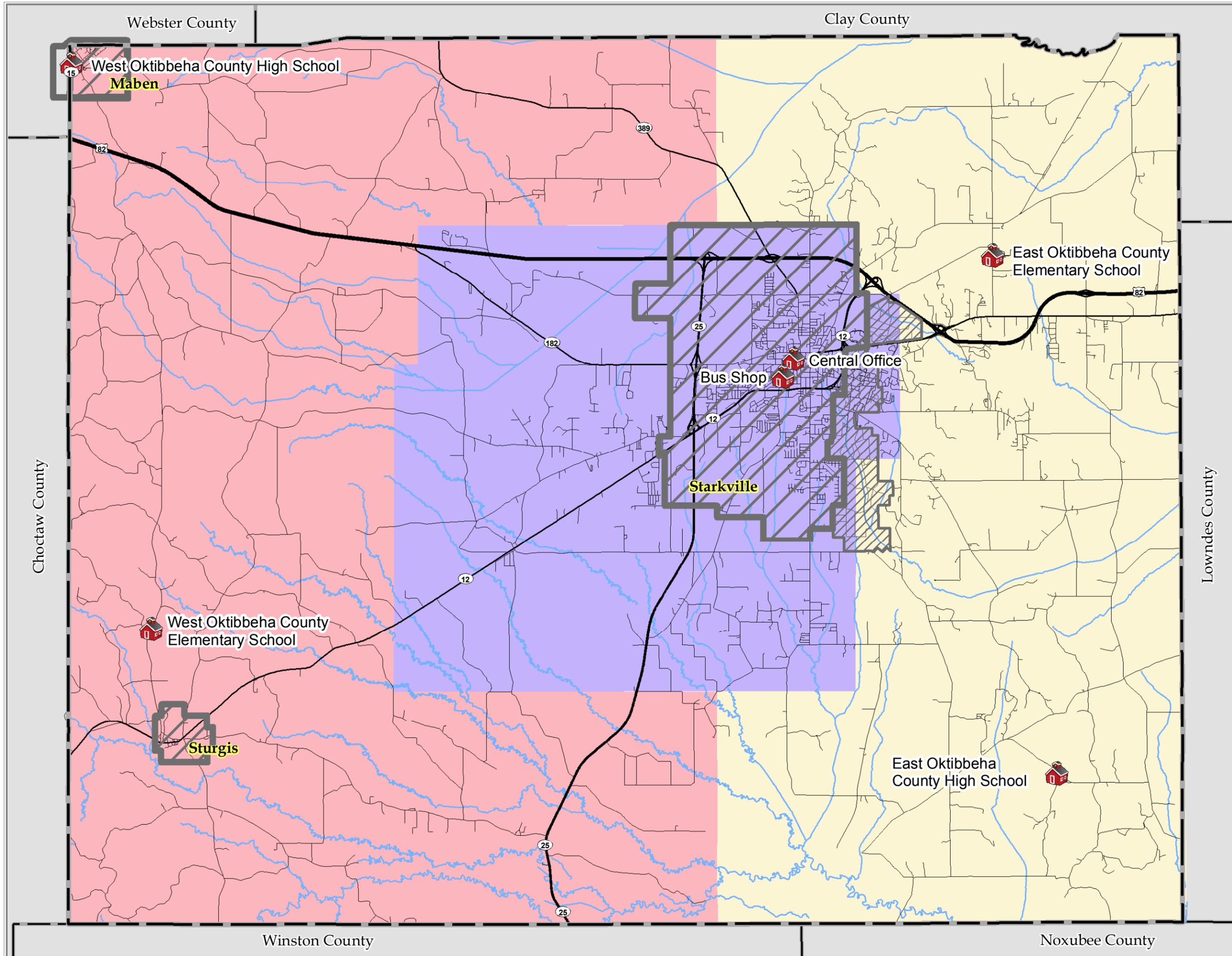
The Oktibbeha County Heritage Museum was established in 1976 to provide the county with a place to view the community's history and culture. The museum is owned by the City of Starkville, and operating funds are provided by the City of Starkville, Oktibbeha County, grants, and donations. The County's funding should continue as the museum acts as a community center and educational opportunity to Oktibbeha County residents. The museum features a permanent collection, featuring cultural and historical items from Oktibbeha County and Starkville. Temporary exhibits are rotated through the museum on a regular basis.

##### Library System

The Starkville-Oktibbeha County Public Library System has three locations -Starkville, Maben, and Sturgis- serving Oktibbeha County. Libraries also supply more than just a place for books to be

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Map 4.4  
*Schools and School Districts*



**Legend**

- School Locations
- Municipalities
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County
- East Oktibbeha School District
- Starkville School District
- West Oktibbeha School District



Date: May 29, 2014

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housed. It is a community center and gathering place that offers services beyond loaning of books. Starkville-Oktibbeha County Public Library System also provides residents with access to art exhibits, community collection displays, programs and cultural events for all ages. In addition libraries also provide access to the internet for those not able to do so at their homes. Efforts should be made to help provide all citizens with more access to public information and to a calendar of activities taking place in Oktibbeha County. The library's central and branch locations must be maintained and enhanced when necessary

#### Parks and Recreational buildings

Oktibbeha County has never had a parks and recreation department under the leadership of the County Supervisors nor provided direct recreational opportunities to residents. There are some current opportunities at Oktibbeha County Lake for fishing and picnicking and additional passive recreational opportunities provided by the Noxubee Wildlife Refuge.

However, the County has expressed a need and desire for improving their recreational opportunities. Oktibbeha County should assess the need and demand for recreational areas and/or community buildings in each Supervisor district. Recreational interest and demand may vary by district, but this will provide some insight as to whether community buildings and pavilions would be used and whether some low maintenance recreational ball fields would be used.

Oktibbeha County should continue to work with public and private entities regarding the proposal and future recreational opportunities at Oktibbeha County Lake. Collaboration in regards to this project will make the future success stronger.

In regards to more passive recreational opportunities and hunting and fishing options, Oktibbeha County should continue to work with Noxubee Wildlife Refuge. Noxubee Wildlife Refuge currently provides fishing opportunities year-round in the Noxubee River and Borrow Pits

and for eight months of the year in the lake and ponds. The Refuge also provides hunting opportunities during set seasons for deer, turkey, squirrel, rabbit, et cetera.

Noxubee Wildlife Refuge also provides numerous passive recreational opportunities for Oktibbeha County residents. The refuge offers seven hiking trails and boardwalks of varying size, observation points for wildlife viewing/photography, and environmental education.

In addition to providing recreation opportunities to residents of Oktibbeha County, Noxubee Wildlife Refuge provides funds via revenue sharing with the county. This provides between \$125,000 to \$150,000 to Oktibbeha County.

#### Industrial Park

Oktibbeha County has three dedicated industrial sites already in place through partnerships with the Golden Triangle Link and the City of Starkville. A fourth industrial site is in the works and swiftly moving toward fruition. The three current industry parks are the Starkville Industrial Park, Cornerstone Industrial Park, and Thad Cochran Research, Technology, and Economic Development Park.

The Starkville Industrial Park, with 70 acres of vacant land, is located beside Bryan Field Municipal Airport. Cornerstone Industrial Park is located just west of Bryan Field. Currently there is 227 acres of available vacant land. Currently one tenant, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, is on the site leaving plenty of developable land available.

Cornerstone is accessible with its transportation needs met by Mississippi Highway 18 and 25 and the Kansas City Southern Railroad. However it does have some limitations with its development. Currently the major issue to overcome is providing enough electricity to the site. Golden Triangle Link is working with 4-County Electric Power Association to provide power to the site. Drainage is another issue facing the Cornerstone site; the land is low and holds water on occasion. The Starkville Industrial Park

and Cornerstone Industrial Park are meant to target industrial and commercial businesses. Thad Cochran Research, Technology, and Economic Development Park is a joint effort between the City of Starkville, Oktibbeha County, and Mississippi State University. There is currently 78 acres of vacant land available. This industrial park is meant to target technology and research businesses.

The fourth industrial site is a partnership between Oktibbeha County, City of Starkville and the Link and is currently in the final stages of acquiring a 360 acre industrial park. The park is located northeast of the intersection of Mississippi Highway 25 and Mississippi Highway 182. The site will provide the city and county industrial space for the next ten to fifteen years, nearly the horizon of this plan. In that time it is expected to provide the city and county with hundreds if not thousands of new low and middle class employment opportunities. The site is expected to provide more than a million square feet of facility space to potential employers. The acquisition, due diligence and road and infrastructure work is expected to cost 10 million dollars to be split between the City of Starkville and Oktibbeha County.

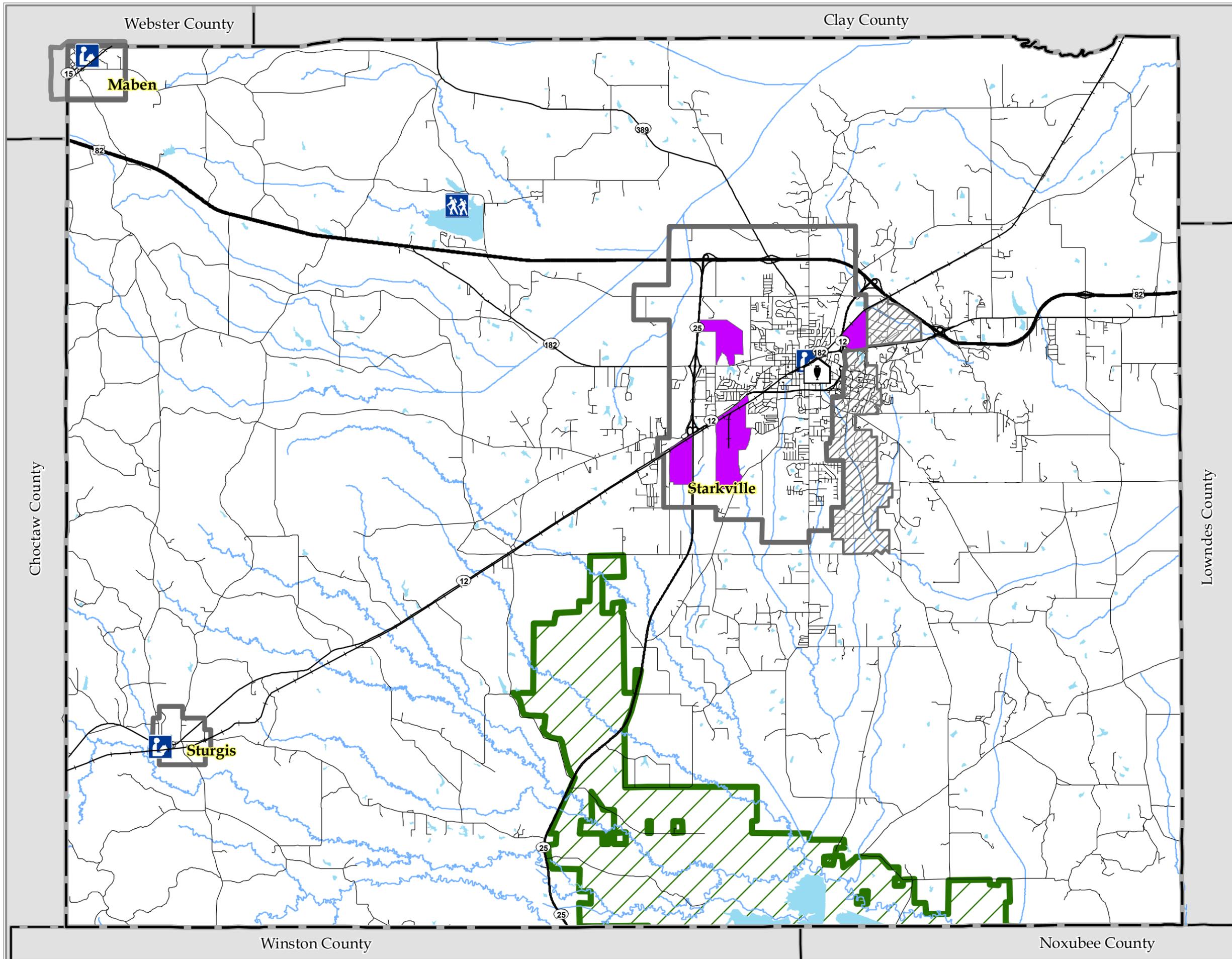
The new industrial park site has already overcome many of the issues that plague the Cornerstone Industrial Park site. Electrical supply to the Cornerstone site has been lacking and currently the site can only receive enough electricity to power residential homes. The new site already receives 12 megawatts of electricity, with the possibility of expanding to 20 megawatts. Although, limitations do exist for electrical supply to a portion of the site. Only about forty percent of the site is provided electricity by Starkville Electric Department who will be able to provide the majority of the 12 megawatts of electricity. The remainder of the site is serviced by the 4-county Electric Association, the same provider of electricity to Cornerstone Industrial Park. The Tennessee Valley Authority is being consulted about increasing electrical output at both sites, although it is believed to be 2017 before the increase would occur at Cornerstone.

Partnering with both the City of Starkville and Golden Triangle Link should be a priority for Oktibbeha County. Working with these agencies to bring new industries to the county will be of benefit to both the city and county.

Oktibbeha County should also identify large vacant tracts of land both in the City of Starkville and in the county. The tracts identified in the city could lead to opportunities for redevelopment and attract industry that may not need or want to locate in one of the industry parks. Large vacant tracts or even several tracts with one owner would be ideal if the creation of a new industrial park is desired. Any new industrial park should be located east of Starkville. This location would put Tupelo, Columbus, and Tuscaloosa within commuting distance. Even with the potential creation of a new industrial park in Oktibbeha County the county should be continually looking for new industrial sites. The newest industrial park is expected to meet the needs of the city and county for ten to fifteen years and the purpose and goals of this plan are to cover a twenty to twenty-five year horizon.

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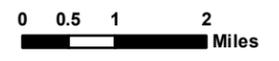
Map 4.5  
*Cultural Resources*



Legend

Cultural Resources

-  Heritage Museum
-  Library Branch
-  County Lake
-  Industrial Parks
-  Municipalities
-  Mississippi State University
-  Surrounding Counties
-  Oktibbeha County
-  Noxubee Wildlife Refuge



*Date:* September 2, 2014  
*Source(s):* Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

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## CHAPTER V ~ LAND USE

The goal of this chapter is to provide an inventory of existing land uses in order to establish locational trends across Oktibbeha County and to further provide a general plan for evolving land uses. The existing land use inventory is parcel-based with the actual source being the E-911 addressing system and land use database (December 2012) provided by Golden Triangle Planning and Development District. This database was further analyzed and categorized into common and comparable land uses and transformed into a visual representation of countywide parcel based land uses. In addition to individual parcel land uses, this chapter also addresses major environmental influences impacting Oktibbeha County on a larger scale. All of this information is used to develop a future land use plan which is discussed in detail at the end of this chapter.

### EXISTING LAND USE [See Map 5.1 and 5.2.]

Oktibbeha County encompasses 462 square miles; 25 square miles of that are within municipalities and 4.7 square miles are within Mississippi State University boundaries. Only the area outside the municipalities and University are considered for analysis. This analysis will look at the percentage of land used. However, these percentages may be slightly overstated because the inventory system is based on tax parcels; parcels were not split to further evaluate if the majority of the parcel was used or vacant.

#### Residential Uses

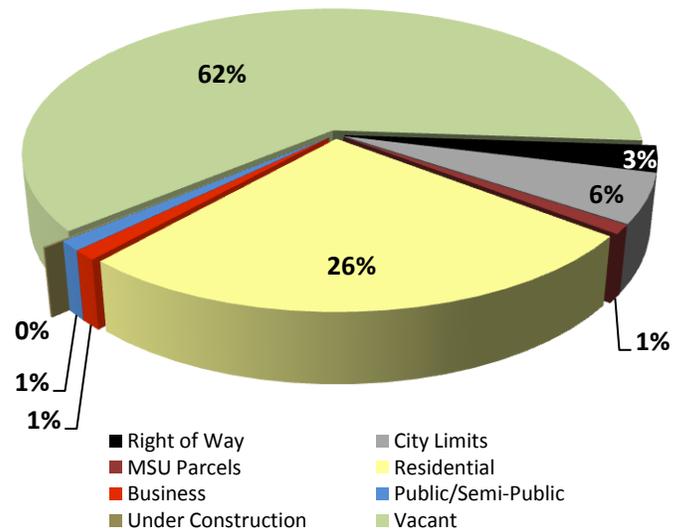
Accounting for 26% of the parcel area, Oktibbeha County's number one land use is residential. Less than one-half a square mile is occupied by multi-family uses so the majority of County residential land is either single family homes or manufactured homes. There is also a small percentage (less than 1%) of parcels used as a secondary home or cabin or hunting camp.

#### Business and Industry Uses

Only 5 square miles (or 1%) of County parcels occupy business, commercial, distribution or industry uses. Based on the land use data provided, there seems to be a concentration of these business type uses in the very northwest

corner of the County south of Highway 82 around Double Springs, Neely and Turner Roads. In the northeast section of the County, Clayton Village also supports a concentration of business uses. Other than that, business uses in the unincorporated portions of the County are dispersed randomly. The Highway 82 corridor has a few rural businesses located on the highway. Highway 12 from Starkville to Sturgis has a few rural businesses located at its intersection with Buckner and Houston Thompson Road. Highway 25 south of Starkville also has very few businesses. The types of rural businesses located in Oktibbeha County range from cabinet making and antique shops to auto repair and body shops to mini storages and convenience stores.

CHART V-1 EXISTING LAND USE DISTRIBUTION



Source: Golden Triangle Planning and Development District and Slaughter & Associates calculations

#### Public and Semi-Public Uses

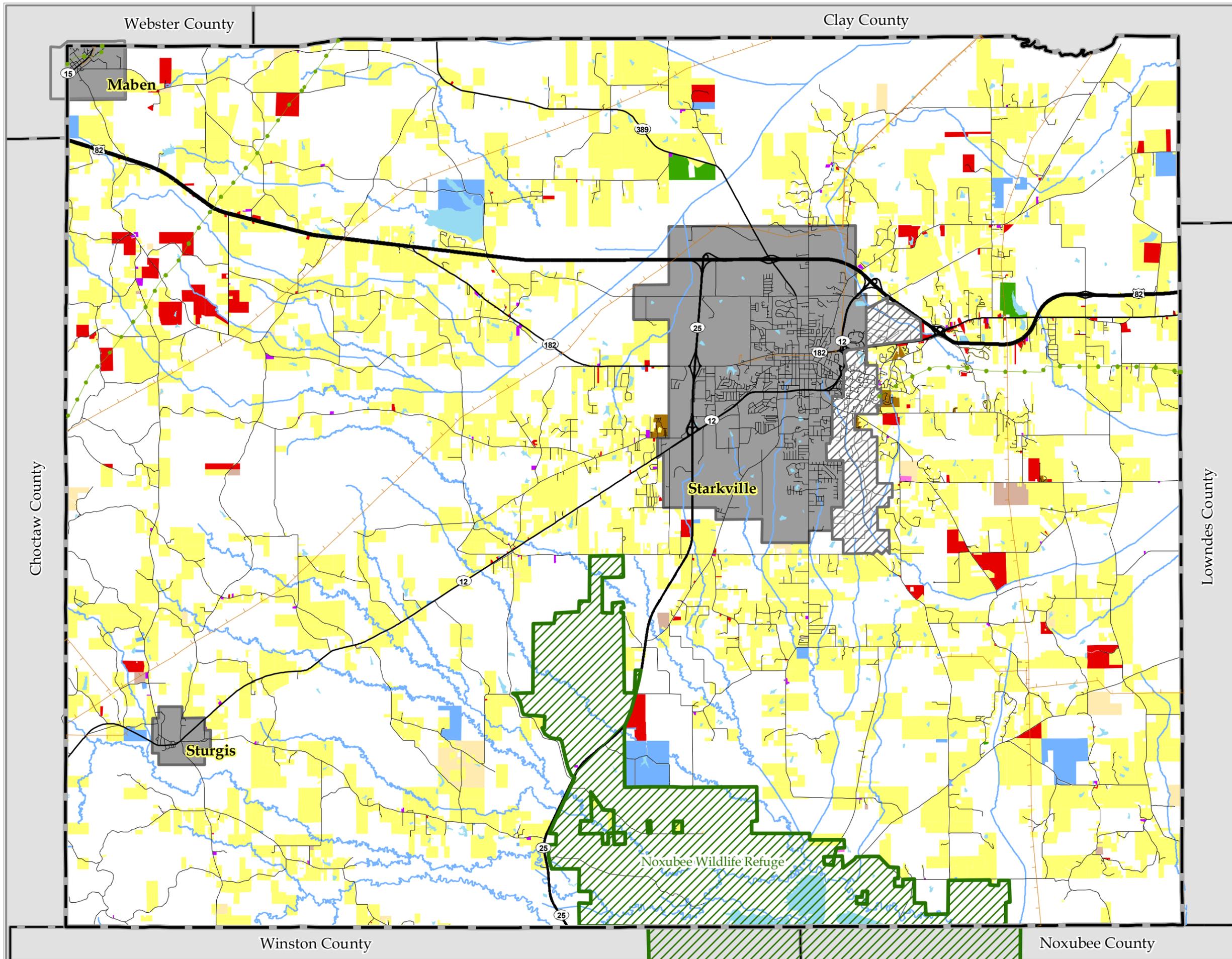
Public or semi-public uses could include government offices, utility towers, wells, community buildings, school facilities, fire departments, churches, cemeteries, recreational facilities, etc. Approximately 5 square miles (only 1%) of the County are classified as these types of uses.

#### Vacant Uses

Over 60% of the parcels in Oktibbeha County are vacant. Approximately 6% of those are protected

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Map 5.I  
*Existing Land Use Map*



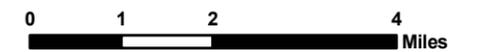
**Legend**

- Electrical Transmission Lines
- Gas Pipelines
- Municipalities
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County
- Noxubee Wildlife Refuge

**Existing Land Use**

**GTPDD 2012**

- Primary Residential
- Seasonal Residential (Cabins/Hunting Camps)
- Multifamily
- Business/Industry
- Construction in Progress
- Church
- Cemetery
- Public/Semi Public and/or Utilities
- Recreation
- Vacant



**Date:** May 29, 2014

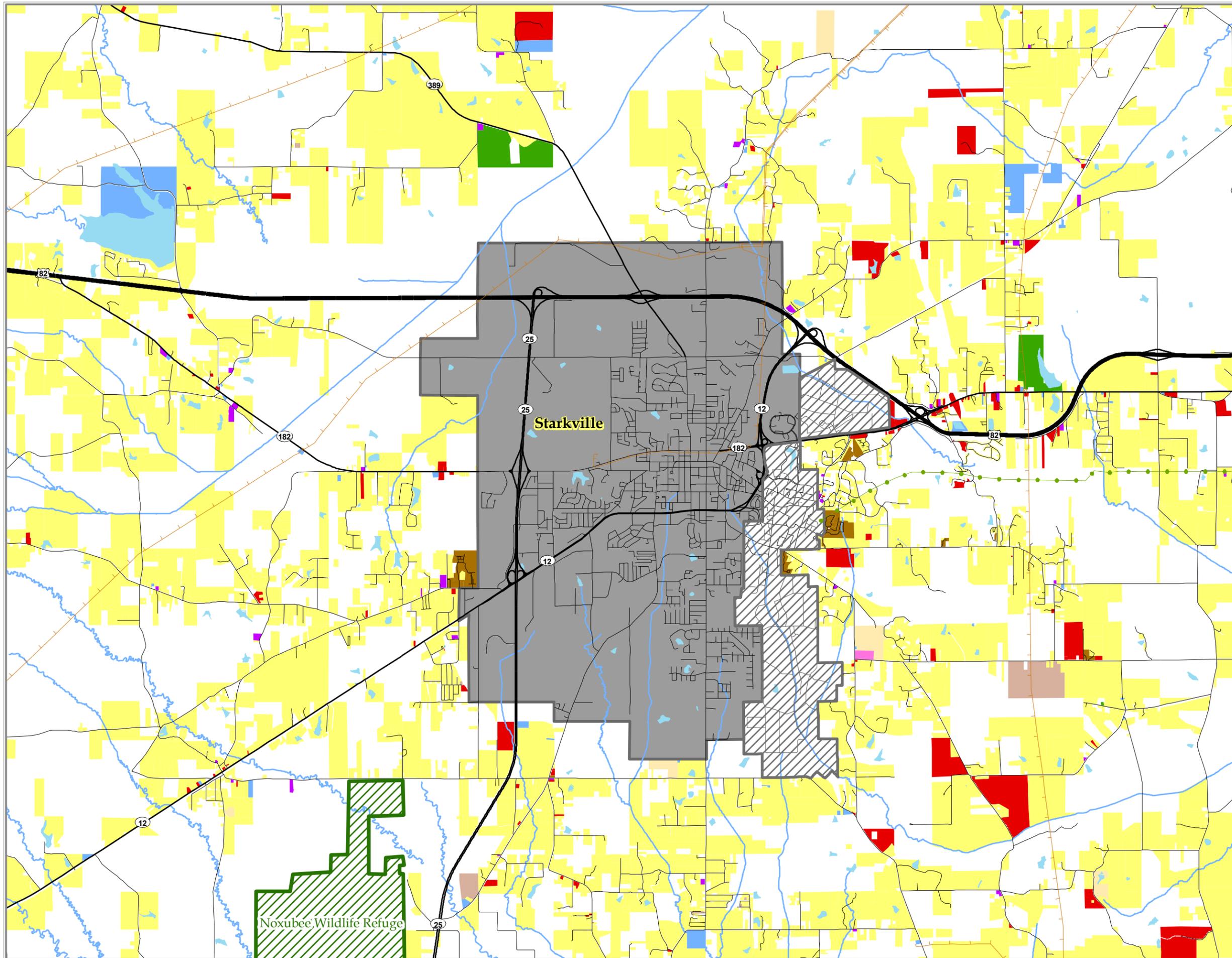
**Source(s):** Golden Triangle Planning and Development District - E-911 Address System Land Use Data as of December 2012; Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

**Disclaimer:** This map is accurate for planning purposes only.

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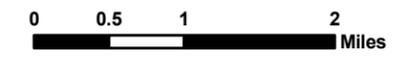
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Map 5.2  
 Existing Land Use Map  
 Starkville Zoom



**Legend**

- Electrical Transmission Lines
  - Gas Pipelines
  - Municipalities
  - ▨ Mississippi State University
  - ▨ Surrounding Counties
  - ▨ Oktibbeha County
  - ▨ Noxubee Wildlife Refuge
- Existing Land Use  
 GTPDD 2012
- Primary Residential
  - Seasonal Residential (Cabins/Hunting Camps)
  - Multifamily
  - Business/Industry
  - Construction in Progress
  - Church
  - Cemetery
  - Public/Semi Public and/or Utilities
  - Recreation
  - Vacant



**Date:** May 29, 2014  
**Source(s):** Golden Triangle Planning and Development District - E-911 Address System Land Use Data as of December 2012; Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.  
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by the National Wildlife Refuge and 15% are constrained by flood zones.

**ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES**

Outside of individual parcel land use, Oktibbeha County has two other attributes that influence land usage in the County. Flooding potential and federally identified flood zones have an impact on the land use distribution of Oktibbeha County. Also, the Noxubee Wildlife Refuge protects a small portion of land in the southern half of Oktibbeha County.

Flood Zones

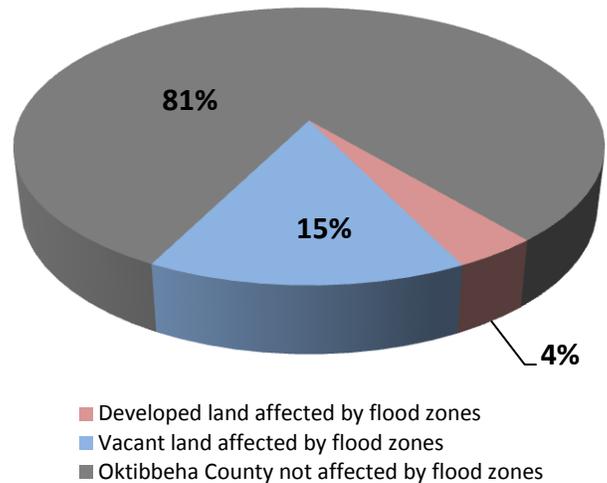
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently released digital flood zones (DFIRM) for the State of Mississippi. Map 5.3 portrays the most current mapping of flood potential areas in Oktibbeha County.

Oktibbeha County is hardly affected by the floodway zone which consists of the stream channel and adjacent areas that actively carry flood downstream.

The 100 year floodplain is the most common flood zone used for analysis purposes as opposed to the 500 year floodplain. The floodplain is defined as any land area susceptible to being inundated by flood waters. The 100 year floodplain area has a 1% chance of flooding in any given year; the 500 year floodplain area has a 0.2% chance of occurring in any given year.

Approximately 19% of Oktibbeha County is within the 100 year floodplain or the floodway. In the northern half of the County, areas along the Trim Cane Creek and Sand Creek are exposed to flooding potential. The largest area with the potential for flooding is in the southern half of the County along the Noxubee River, within the Noxubee Wildlife Refuge and around Bluff Lake. The majority of land affected by the 100 year floodplain and floodway is vacant land. Only 4% of the parcels within these zones are currently developed.

CHART V-2 OKTIBBEHA COUNTY FLOOD ANALYSIS



Source: Slaughter & Associates calculations

Oktibbeha County). Approximately 25 square miles of the Refuge is located in Oktibbeha. The Refuge offers a number of recreational opportunities such as wildlife habitat, hunting, fishing, walking trails, etc. Only one of eight trails are actually located in Oktibbeha County; the Wilderness Trail is located along Oktoc Creek with a four mile loop trail.

Noxubee Wildlife Refuge also harvests timber in certain areas for wildlife and forest management. Some of those timber reservoirs are located in Oktibbeha County. They have a refuge revenue sharing program where Oktibbeha gets a certain percentage of the timber profits.

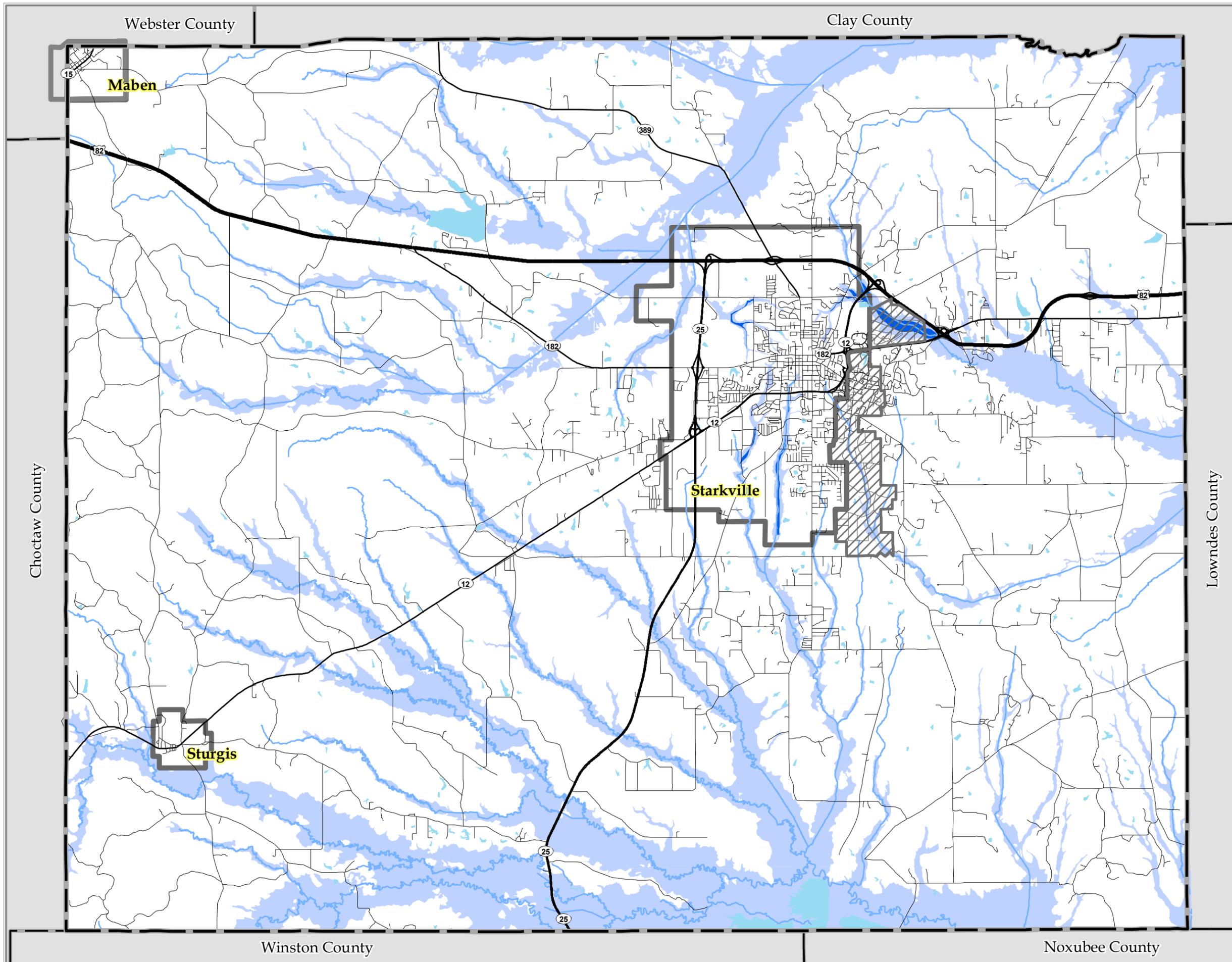
While the Refuge is a recreational and environmental asset for the County, this area also impacts surrounding land use patterns and development along Highway 25 South.

Septic Tank Suitability

Oktibbeha County as a whole primarily consists of soil types where the use of septic tank absorption fields is unfavorable or should be limited (Map 5.4). The soil survey produced NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) rates each soil type based on certain characteristics that are needed for adequate performance of alternative

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Map 5.3  
*Flood Zones*

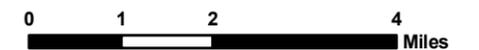


**Legend**

- Municipalities
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County

**Flood Zones**

- Floodway
- 100 Year Floodplain



*Date:* May 29, 2014

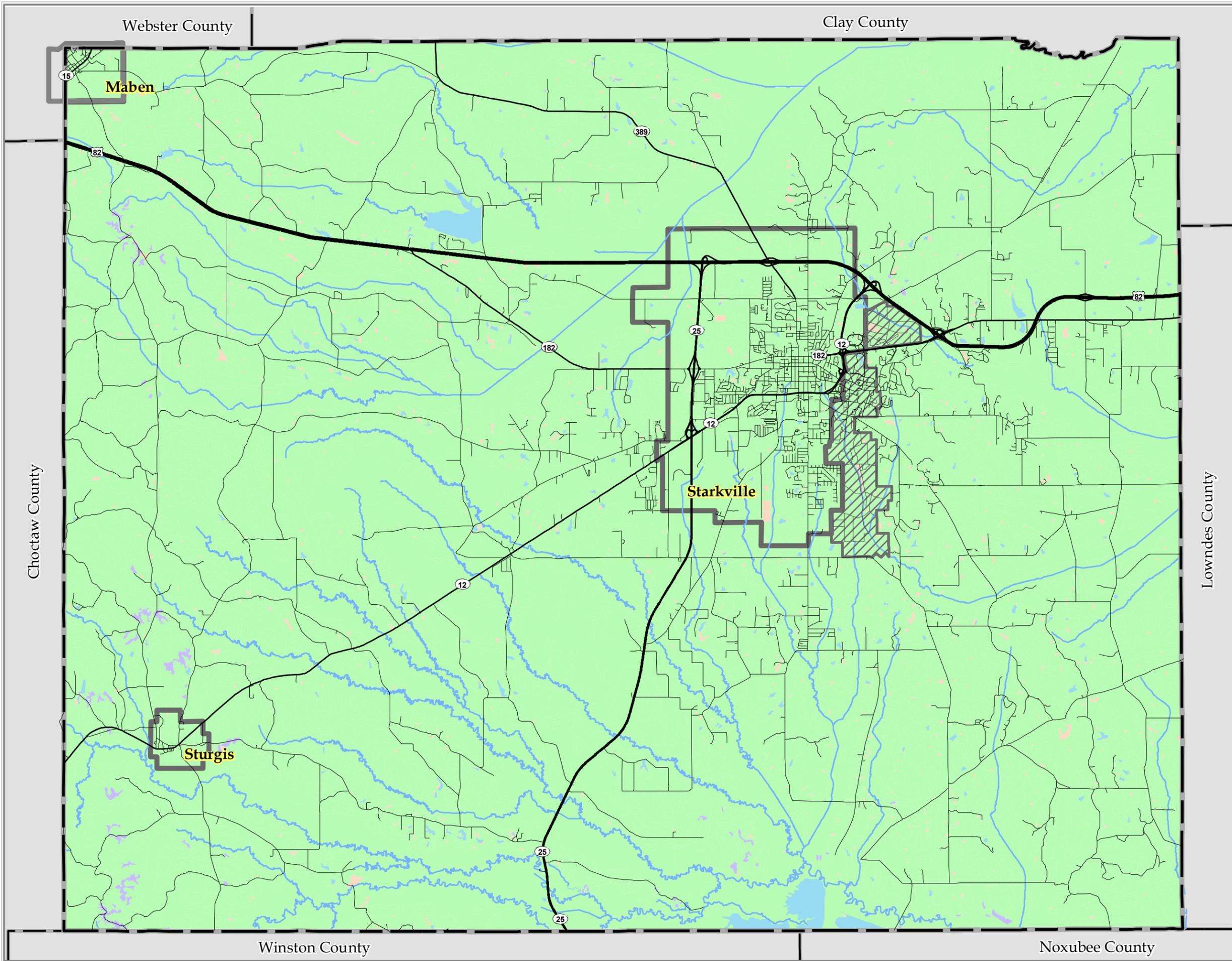
*Source(s):* Federal Emergency Management Agency DFIRM;  
 Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS);  
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Map 5.4  
*Septic Tank Suitability*

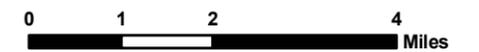


**Legend**

- Municipalities
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County

**Septic Tank Suitability**

- Somewhat limited
- Very limited
- Not rated



Date: May 29, 2014

Source(s): Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey.

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sewage disposal systems. Some limitations may be overcome but can be costly. County Health Departments are typically the entities that inspect and regulate the construction of absorption fields. However, the best way to regulate sewage disposal and to overcome any future constraints is through a centralized sewer system and requiring a connection to municipal sewer service.

#### Severe Slopes

Defining severe slopes can vary depending on the community and location. For Oktibbeha County, severe slopes have been defined as slopes above 15%. This is based on the soil category break down by NRCS. The map does not represent the exact slopes of land but representative soils with qualities that produce specific slope ranges. See Map 5.5.

#### Wetlands [See Map 5.6.]

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service has developed a National Wetlands Inventory mapping system. The Oktibbeha County is not significantly impacted by wetlands. About 80% is considered non-wetlands and about 9% is streams. However, about 11% of the county is documented by the National Wetlands Inventory as forest/shrub wetlands or emergent wetland. Most of the wetlands are located in the southern third of the county. The majority of forest/shrub wetlands and emergent wetland are contained along the banks of the following streams in Oktibbeha County: Noxubee River, Cypress Creek, Biba Willa Creek, Trim Crane Creek, Sand Creek, Big Creek, Chinchahom Creek, Talking Creek, Tobacco Juice Creek, and Long Brook. Forest/shrub wetlands and emergent wetland account for about 11% or 50 square miles of Oktibbeha County.

### **FUTURE LAND USE PLAN**

#### Introduction and Methodology

In order to comply with Mississippi enabling legislation, the future land use plan must designate in map or policy form the proposed general distribution and extent of the proposed land uses. The future land use plan serves two purposes. First, it provides for the general

physical location of expected future development. The second purpose is to create order among the existing land uses.

In preparing a Future Land Use Plan, a necessary and responsible step is that of considering environmentally sensitive areas. Some may see these areas as worthy of some degree of preservation, while other may see them as a constraint to development. Through the use of good design techniques, some of these environmentally constrained areas may be developed while preserving the sensitive areas at the same time. The existing land use chapter talks in detail about specific constraints which assisted in the preparation of this future land use plan.

#### **The current land use plan for Oktibbeha County would allow anything to happen anywhere with little to no regulation at all.**

This section establishes policies that will shape how and where future development occurs. These policies cannot prevent all negative things or incompatible uses from happening, but hopefully, they will introduce some control and guide future decisions. This section, along with the entire Comprehensive Plan, can promote these ideals even further. This Chapter focuses on the ideal location for certain land uses, the ideal mixture of land uses, and the ideal intensity of land uses by translating portions of the previous chapter into map form.

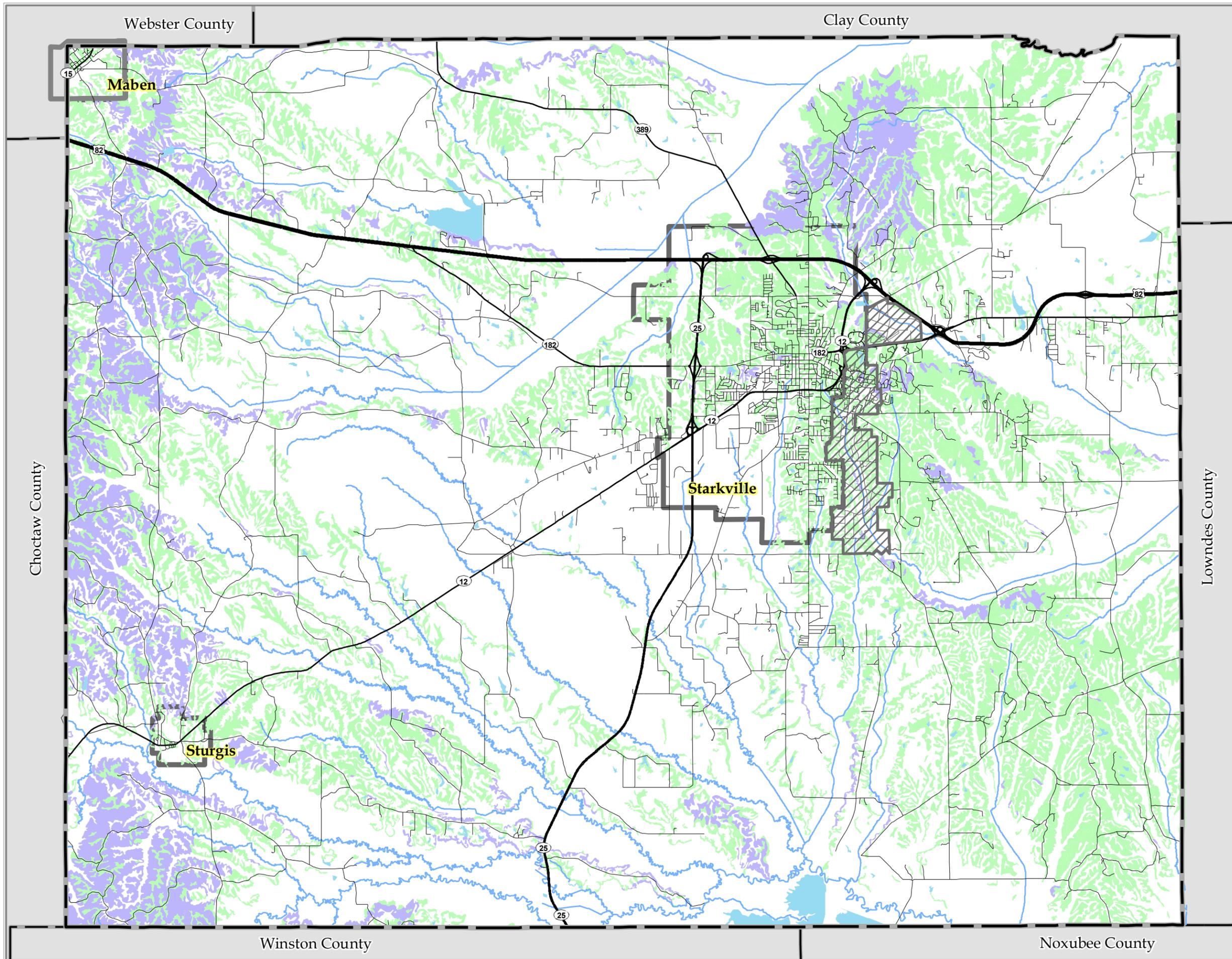
There are some general guiding statements that should be presented regarding some types of future land use no matter where it is located in Oktibbeha County:

- Intense development of any type needs central sewer and an adequate transportation system;
- Building located in rural areas should be built at least 100' from the centerline of a public road;
- All parcels should have at least 50' of frontage on a public road.

Any use or structure that is presently located in an area that would not allow that use on the Future Land Use Map is called a nonconforming use. A nonconforming use or structure would be

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Map 5.5  
*Severe Slopes*

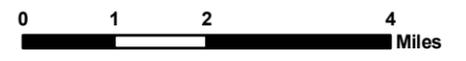


**Legend**

- Municipalities
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County

**Severe Slopes**

- 5 to 15% Slope
- Above 15% Slope

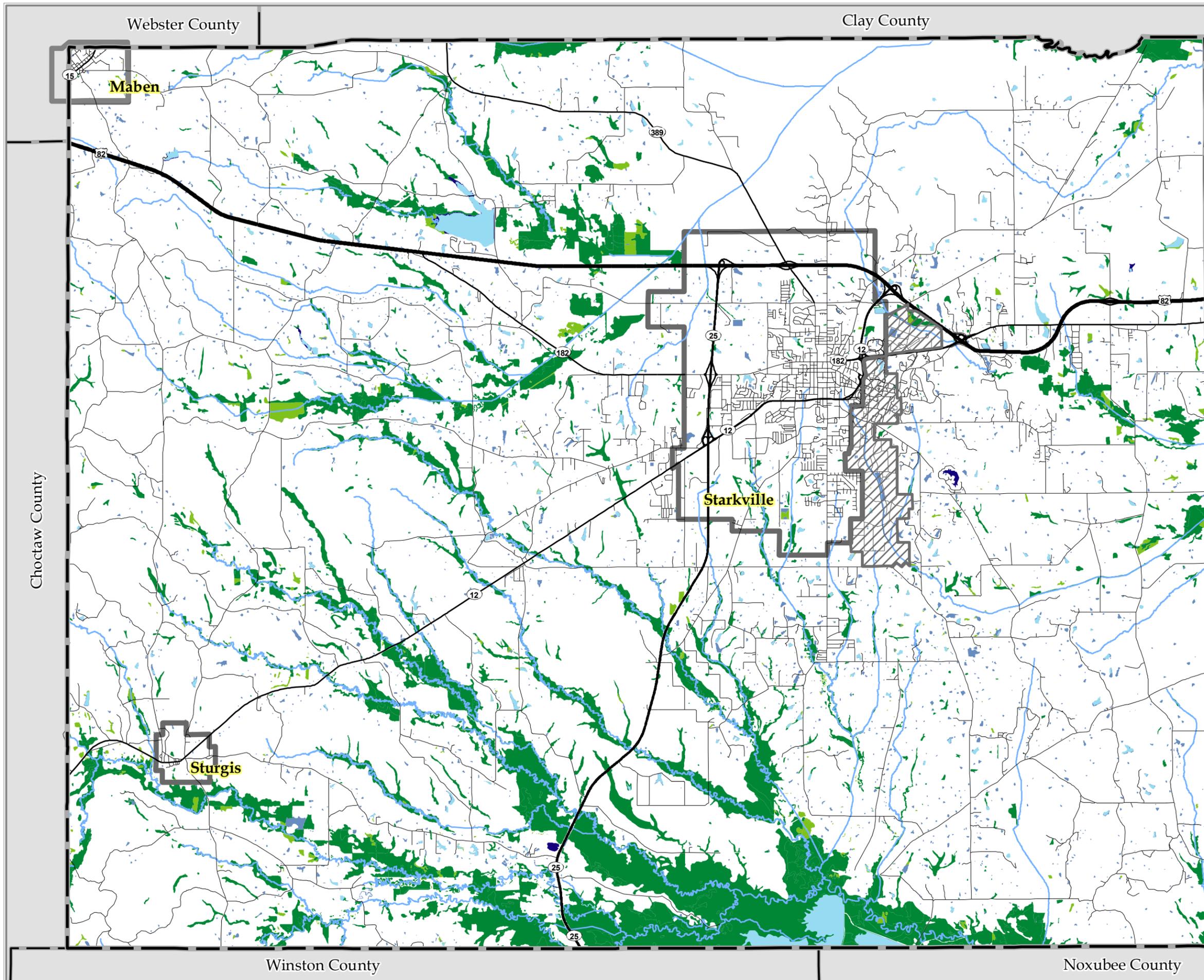


*Date:* May 29, 2014  
*Source(s):* Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey.  
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Map 5.6  
 Wetlands

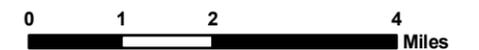


**Legend**

- Municipalities
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County

**Mississippi Wetlands**

- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Lake
- Riverine



*Date:* May 29, 2014

*Source(s):* Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files; US Fish and Wildlife Services National Wetlands Inventory.

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allowed to continue indefinitely as long as its use is not stopped for a period of one year. If it ceases use or operation for more than one year the nonconforming status is lost and the use or structure has to conform to the new requirements. For example, if a residence was located in an area shown on the Future Land Use Map as "General Commercial" the residence would be allowed to continue as a home as long as someone lived there. It could be sold, repaired or expanded just like any other residence. If it was empty for one year or completely destroyed, it should have to be restored as a commercial operation.

Even though Oktibbeha County is still a rural place with lots of agriculture and open space, there are a number of potentially undesirable or "obnoxious neighbor" land uses that need to be addressed by specific policies that define and control these uses. Some of these uses overburden the County resources such as heavy-haul trucking, and other uses inconvenience adjacent neighbors or cause potentially hazardous conditions, such as junkyards, gravel pits, or concrete plants. When activities on one property "spillover" and cause a burden and danger to adjacent property owners, then the government is authorized and required to regulate it. This is not "taking away" property rights, it is requiring accountability for land use activities. For example, defining a Junkyard as a place with 10 or more cars that are inoperable and requiring such places to build a fence and keep the property mowed if there are residences within 500 feet of the junkyard property, or junk cars, is protecting the safety and welfare of the citizens. Oktibbeha County must identify and regulate potentially hazardous land uses.

Future Land Use Categories [See Maps 5.7 and 5.8.]

The Future Land Use Map illustrates different land use categories. These categories are color-coded according to the key the map and as represented by the descriptions below.

The Oktibbeha County Land Use Plan categories future land uses in the following manner:

1. Agricultural/Rural Residential

2. Medium Density Residential
3. High Density Residential
4. Light Commercial
5. General Commercial
6. Industrial
7. Parks and Recreation
8. Public/Semi Public
9. Noxubee Wildlife Refuge

The following is an explanation of the specific meaning of land use colors codes depicted on Maps 5.7 and 5.8 contained in this chapter:

*Agricultural/Rural Residential*

 Maximum density of one single family detached residential unit per acre.

This land use classification depicts areas that are expected to remain rural or agricultural with no significant concentrations of residential, commercial, industrial or other development. These areas of the Land Use Plan are not expected to be served by municipal sewer service within the next 10 to 20 years, and beyond.

*Medium Density Residential*

 Maximum density of five single family detached residential units per acre.

This land use classification allows the development of single family detached dwellings on moderate size lots (at least 8,500 square feet). This category includes the type of single family residence known as patio homes and also townhouses.

*High Density Residential*

 Maximum density of eight dwelling units per acre.

This land use classification allows the development of apartments or condominiums on arterial streets/roads or highways which have the capability of carrying higher traffic volumes generated by these higher density residences.

*Light Commercial*



Restricted Commercial.

These areas should include business and professional offices; personal services such as hair styling shops and photography portrait studios; instructional services such as dance studios; floral shops; and other similar uses that do not generate high vehicular traffic.

*General Commercial*



Enclosed Commercial Activities Only.

These areas should include businesses in which the principal activity is conducted indoors. However, certain land uses that involve some outdoor activities could be permitted in these areas. This land use classification would include shopping centers as well as independent commercial uses.

*Industrial*



All industrial uses, including outdoor.

This classification includes manufacturing and warehousing uses that are conducted indoors or where all or part of the associated activities are conducted outdoors, or where the use requires large volumes of water or generates noise, vibration, etc., detectable off the premises.

*Parks and Recreation*



Parks, Open Space, Recreation Centers, ect.

This land use classification includes all existing and proposed parks, ball fields, bicycle/pedestrian tracks and other similar uses. These are facilities that are critical to the County's general success and quality of life and should generally be permitted in any locale, where the infrastructure (i.e. water & sewer, roads, etc.) are in place to support them.

*Public/Semi Public*



Churches, cemeteries, sub-stations, schools, ect.

This land use classification includes all existing and proposed public/quasi-public uses such as churches, schools, governmental buildings and facilities, cemeteries, etc. These are facilities that are critical to the County's general success and quality of life and should generally be permitted in any locale, where the infrastructure (i.e. water & sewer, roads, etc.) are in place to support them.

*Wildlife Refuge*

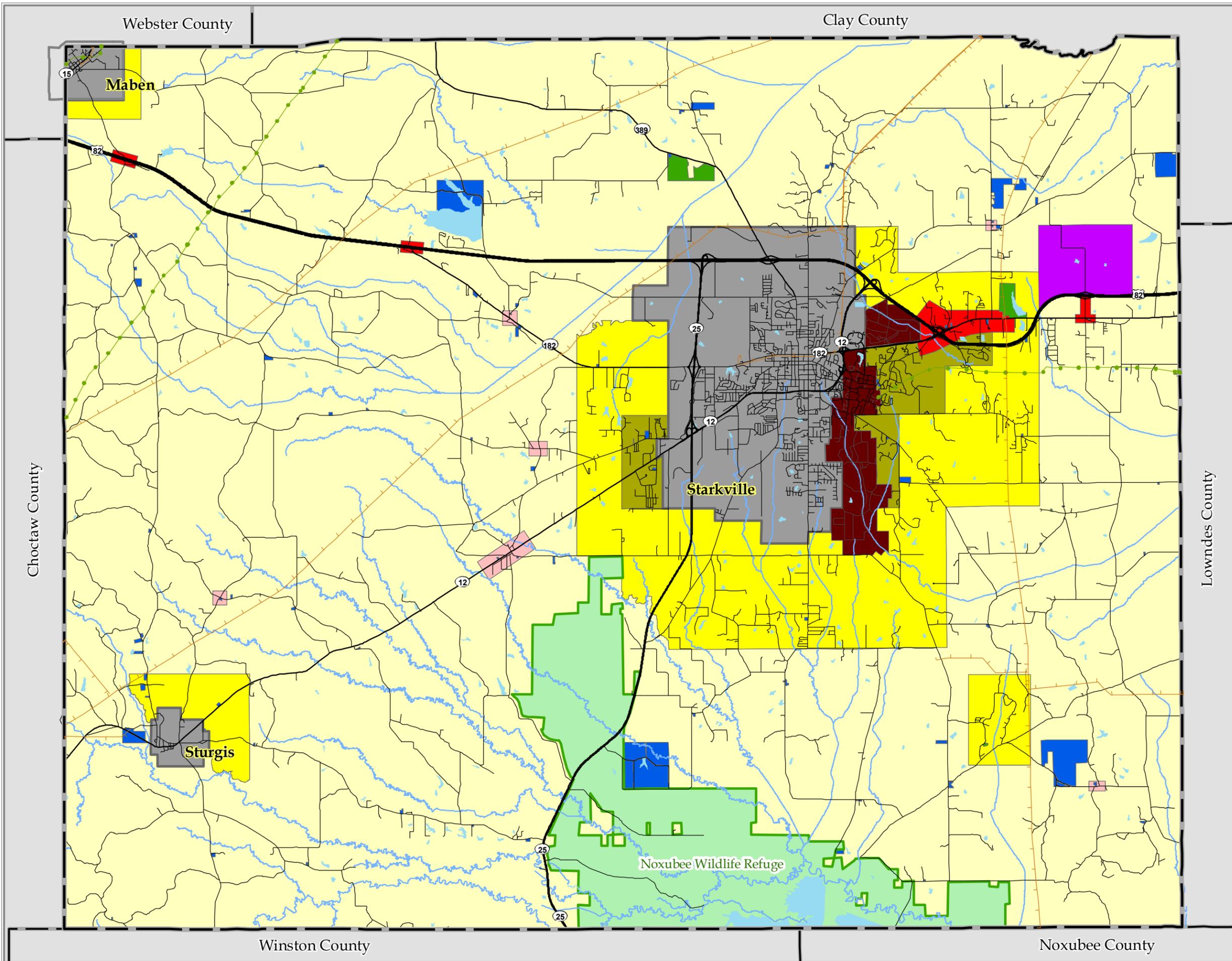


Noxubee Wildlife Refuge

The Noxubee Wildlife Refuge area is shown on the Future Land Use Map and has special development restrictions based on Federal Legislation. This area is owned by the United States Government and operated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The primary function of the Refuge is to help conserve wildlife, fish and plant resources and their habitat. Refuges provide recreation opportunities such as hiking, camping, wildlife photography and many other activities. They also provide forest management via commercial logging but do not provide for any private development. However, the Future Land Use Map will show that a limited number of acres is not part of the Refuge and is classified as Agricultural/Rural Residential land. This is to limit the development of these isolated parcels. These parcels also fall within the Noxubee Wildlife Refuge acquisition boundary thus meaning that the USFWS wishes to make the lands part of the Refuge in the future.

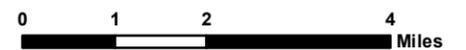
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Map 5.7  
*Future Land Use Map*



**Legend**

- Electrical Transmission Lines
  - Gas Pipelines
  - Surrounding Counties
  - Oktibbeha County
  - Municipalities
  - Mississippi State University
  - Noxubee Wildlife Refuge
- Future Land Use**
- Agricultural/Rural Residential
  - Medium Density Residential
  - High Density Residential
  - Light Commercial
  - General Commercial
  - Industrial
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Public/Semi Public



**Date:** October 7, 2014  
**Source(s):** Golden Triangle Planning and Development District; Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

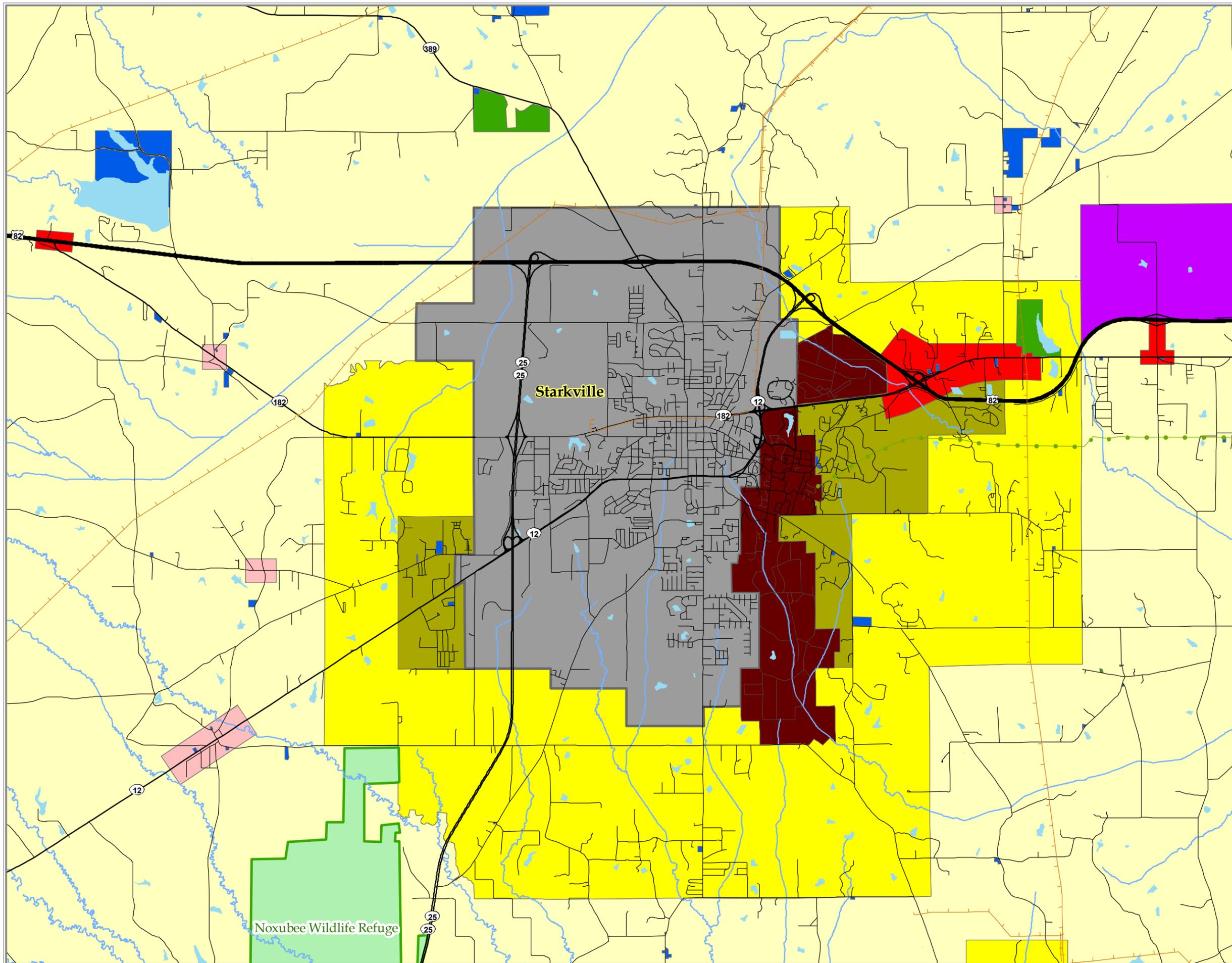
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Map 5.8

*Future Land Use Map*  
*Starkville Zoom*



**Legend**

- Electrical Transmission Lines
- Gas Pipelines
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County
- Municipalities
- Mississippi State University
- Noxubee Wildlife Refuge
- Future Land Use**
- Agricultural/Rural Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Light Commercial
- General Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks and Recreation
- Public/Semi Public



**Date:** October 7, 2014  
**Source(s):** Golden Triangle Planning and Development District;  
 Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS);  
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## CHAPTER VI ~ TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is an important component of the comprehensive planning process because future development, economic growth, and quality of life are all tied to and influenced by the transportation system. Oktibbeha County has two main transportation corridors that divide the county into three parts. U.S. Highway 82 runs east and west through Starkville. Mississippi 25 runs south from its junction with U.S. Highway 82, in Starkville, south to the Oktibbeha-Winston County Line.

### FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION [See Map 6.1.]

According to the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) *Functional Classification Guidelines*, functional classification is a method used to group streets and roadways into categories based on the level of transportation service they provide. The assumption behind functional classification is that any roadway does not carry traffic independently, yet roadways work together to form a network of traffic flow. It is this overall network that helps assign classifications to roadways based on the portion of road used for the network traffic flow.

Transportation planners use three main classifications when determining the level of traffic on rural roadways: arterial, collector, and local. Any of those classifications can have a sub-classification (major and minor) as well depending on the conditions and transportation networks within a city or county. Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) assigns these classifications for rural and urban areas. The roadway classifications in this Plan are based on the MDOT functional classifications for Oktibbeha County.

#### Arterial

Arterials (principal and minor) in rural settings are roadways that serve a higher level of trips and travel density that is characteristic of statewide or countywide travel. Principal arterials typically serve and connect the major activity centers and also accommodate the highest volume of traffic. The principal arterials

in Oktibbeha County are U.S. Highway 82 and the portion of Mississippi Highway 25, south of U.S. Highway 82 to the County Line. U.S. Highway 82 is a major network corridor linking the New Mexico to Georgia's Coast. Mississippi Highway 25 links Jackson, Mississippi, to the Tennessee state line just north of Iuka, Mississippi. Minor arterials work alongside principal arterials to form an intercounty network linking major cities and towns. They also should be spaced at a distance consistent with the population distribution that allows developed areas access to these major transportation corridors. The minor arterials in Oktibbeha County are Mississippi Highway 12 and Mississippi Highway 15. Mississippi Highway 12 links Hollandale to the Alabama state line northeast of Columbus and in Oktibbeha County, it connects Starkville and Sturgis. Mississippi Highway 15 links Biloxi Mississippi; on Mississippi's Gulf Coast to the Tennessee State Line north of Walnut, Mississippi and cuts through the extreme northwestern section of Oktibbeha County in Maben.

#### Collector

Where arterials function as statewide connections, collector roads (major and minor) serve the countywide traffic network. They collect and distribute the network of traffic from local roads to arterials. Oktibbeha County has major and minor collectors identified. Major collectors play a more significant role in the transportation network than do minor collectors. Major collectors in Oktibbeha County include the following highways: Mississippi Highway 182 and Mississippi Highway 389. Other major collector county roads include the Old West Point Road corridor; the Hickory Grove Road and Crawford Road corridor; the Artesia Road corridor; the County Lake Road corridor; the Oktoc Road and Bluff Lake Road corridor; the Longview Road and Poor House Road corridor; the Old Highway 25 corridor; the Maben-Bell Schoolhouse Road corridor; the Maben Starkville Road and Sturgis-Maben Road corridor; the Jeff Peay Road corridor; Big Creek Road corridor; the Craig Spring Road corridor; and the Louisville Road corridor. A possible bypass around Starkville's eastern, southern, and western side will likely be classified as a major collector. The minor

collectors include the Self Creek Road corridor; the Montgomery Street and Mt. Olive Road corridor; the Blackjack Road and Blair Road corridor; the Morgantown Road corridor; and the Belk Road, Moor High Road, and Robinson Road corridor.

#### Local

Local roadways connect and carry traffic from adjacent land uses to roadways of higher classification for dispersal of traffic flow. For Oktibbeha County, these would include all other county roadways with less traffic than the collectors.

#### **ROAD, RIGHT-OF-WAY, & PAVEMENT STANDARDS**

Road right-of-way is a specific designated area on either side of the road pavement that is reserved for drainage, utilities and/or future road work. The required dimensions are directly related to the functional classification of the roadway. The right-of-way area is normally dedicated to the City, County or State depending on the type of roadway. Some local roads in Oktibbeha County, however, were built and are maintained without an actual 'dedicated right-of-way'; instead the government has prescriptive rights to maintain the road, but they do not have title to the land.

Subdivision Regulations is a document that covers all aspects of roadway design and construction including right-of-way standards. Oktibbeha County has not currently adopted a document like this but did adopt a Roadway Design Ordinance in 1993. However, this document is limited in scope but does include provisions for roadway width, drainage, pavement standards, utilities, subdivision access and right-of-way. The Oktibbeha County Roadway Design Ordinance prescribes a minimum right-of-way of no less than 60 feet or another distance prescribed by the County Engineer. Typical right-of-way standards for municipalities within Oktibbeha County and other surrounding jurisdictions include 50 feet for local roads, 60 to 80 feet for collector roads and 80 feet or more for arterials. Federal highways and interstates right-of-way are determined by state and federal highway construction guidelines; therefore, it is not

necessary to specify those right-of-ways in this document. Oktibbeha County should consider adjusting right-of-way standards to those that more closely match those in Starkville, as Starkville may one day annex those areas nearest to its corporate limits.

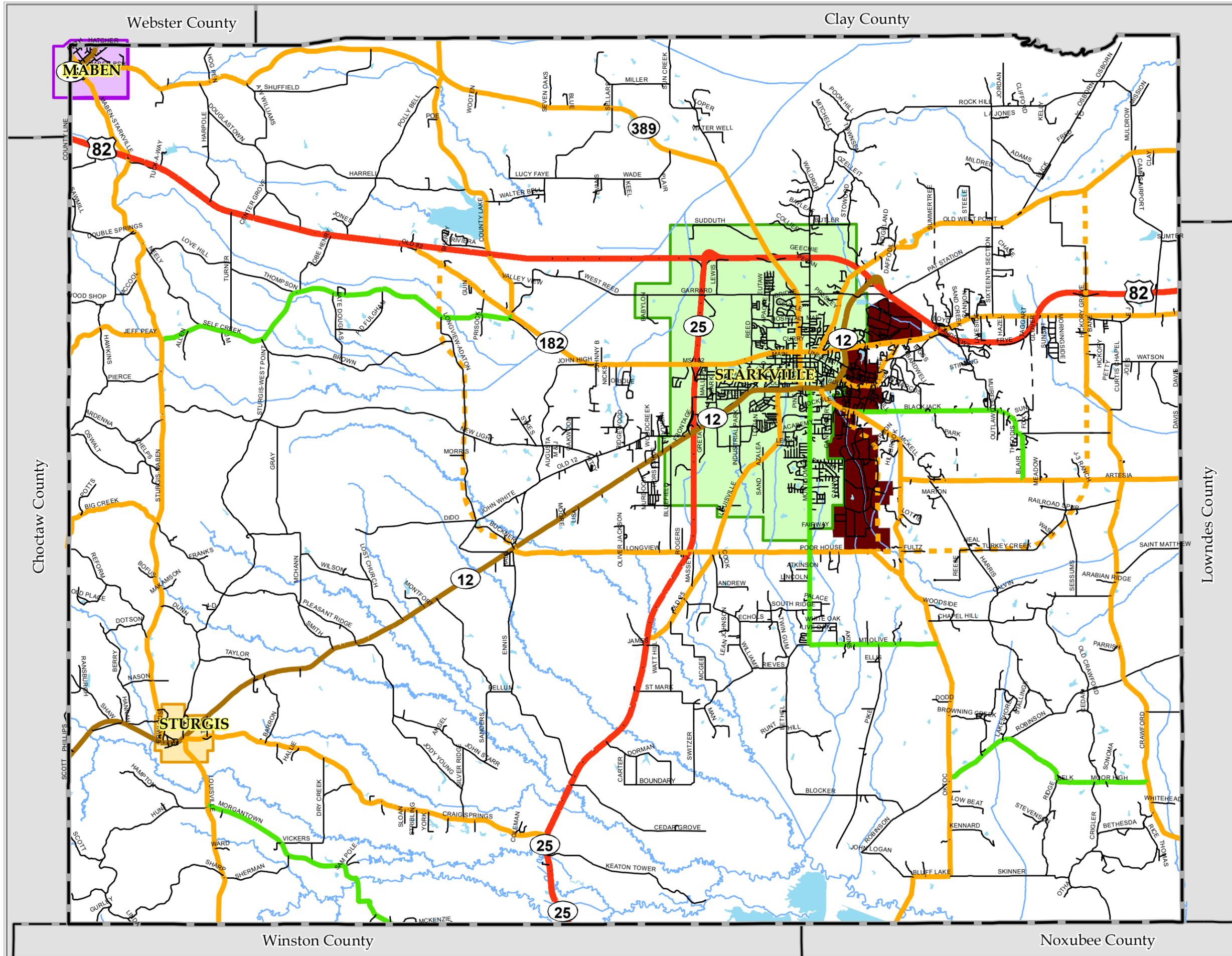
Pavement standards are also important for the safe travel of roadways and are typically included in the Subdivision Regulations. In Oktibbeha County, pavement standards are covered in the Roadway Design Ordinance. The Roadway Design Ordinance requires a minimum of twenty feet of road surface plus five feet of shoulder. A standard for pavement width of local roadways is 10 to 12 feet per lane; the width could be wider depending on the roadway classification. There are some county roads that are still gravel or dirt and do not have an asphalt covering. Main county roads should be paved with a solid material.

Dead end streets are another road design element that should be taken into account as new development occurs. This topic is briefly and subtly covered in the Roadway Design Ordinance, where it requires subdivisions of 5 or more lots to have two exits. Even with this ordinance many dead ends exist in eastern sections of the county. Dead end streets cause connectivity issues, especially for the Fire Departments and in turn cause a public safety issue. The creation of new dead ends should be highly discouraged moving forward no matter the number of lots in a subdivision. When a road with a dead end is unavoidable one of the remedies in Figure VI-1 should be explored. These types of turnaround help fire departments turn their equipment around during a response to an emergency situation. It should also be explored to upgrade existing roads that dead end to one of these turnarounds or continuing the street until it intersects with another street, where appropriate.

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Map 6.I

*Transportation Plan*



**Legend**

**Functional Classification**

- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street
- - - Future Major Collector
- - - Future Local Street
- Maben
- Starkville
- Sturgis
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County



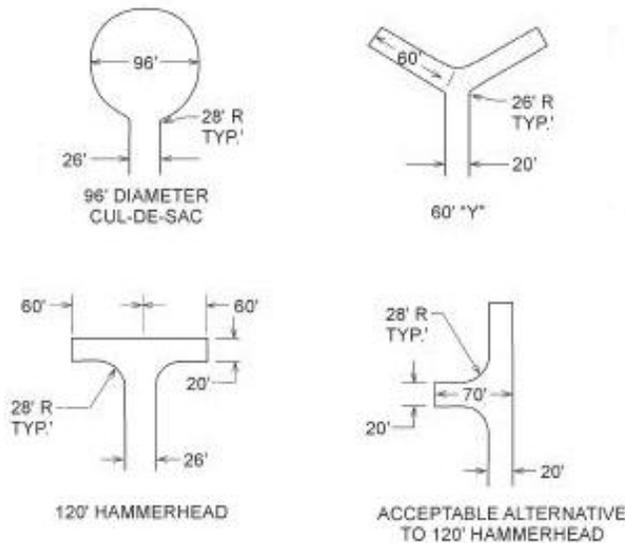
**Date:** May 29, 2014

**Source(s):** Oktibbeha County Engineer; Mississippi Department of Transportation; Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

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Figure VI-1: Fire Apparatus Turnarounds



**TRAFFIC COUNTS**

Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) conducts a series of traffic count surveys in order to produce statewide data for vehicle-miles-traveled. These surveys are conducted yearly but specific survey points in cities or counties may only be updated every three years; MDOT cannot count each traffic survey point every year. MDOT uses the data collected at each survey point to calculate the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT). These are the numbers produced for public use.

Oktibbeha County has a variety of survey locations along the main transportation corridors which are identified in the Transportation Plan (Map 6.2). For this Comprehensive Plan, traffic counts were analyzed yearly from 2003 to 2012. Eight of the nine survey points have data available for the ten year period. Only two of those eight survey points saw a decrease in daily usage; both were located on Mississippi Highway 12. Table VI-1 shows that of the two points only survey point 7 shows a considerable change, with less motorist traveling to and from Sturgis and Starkville. Artesia Road, survey point 6, shows the greatest change in ten years by increasing its traffic volume by 46.2%. This could be due to

increased traffic to Golden Triangle Industrial Park and U.S. Highway 45, in Lowndes County. All four survey points (1, 2, 3 and 4) on U.S. Highway 82 saw an increase in the ten year period analyzed. Three of the four survey points saw at least an 18% increase in traffic volume from 2003 to 2012. Mississippi Highway 25, survey point 8, also experienced a sizable gain of 20% in the ten year period. Oktoc Road, survey point 9, also saw its traffic count increase 27.3%.

Table VI-2 Average Daily Traffic Counts

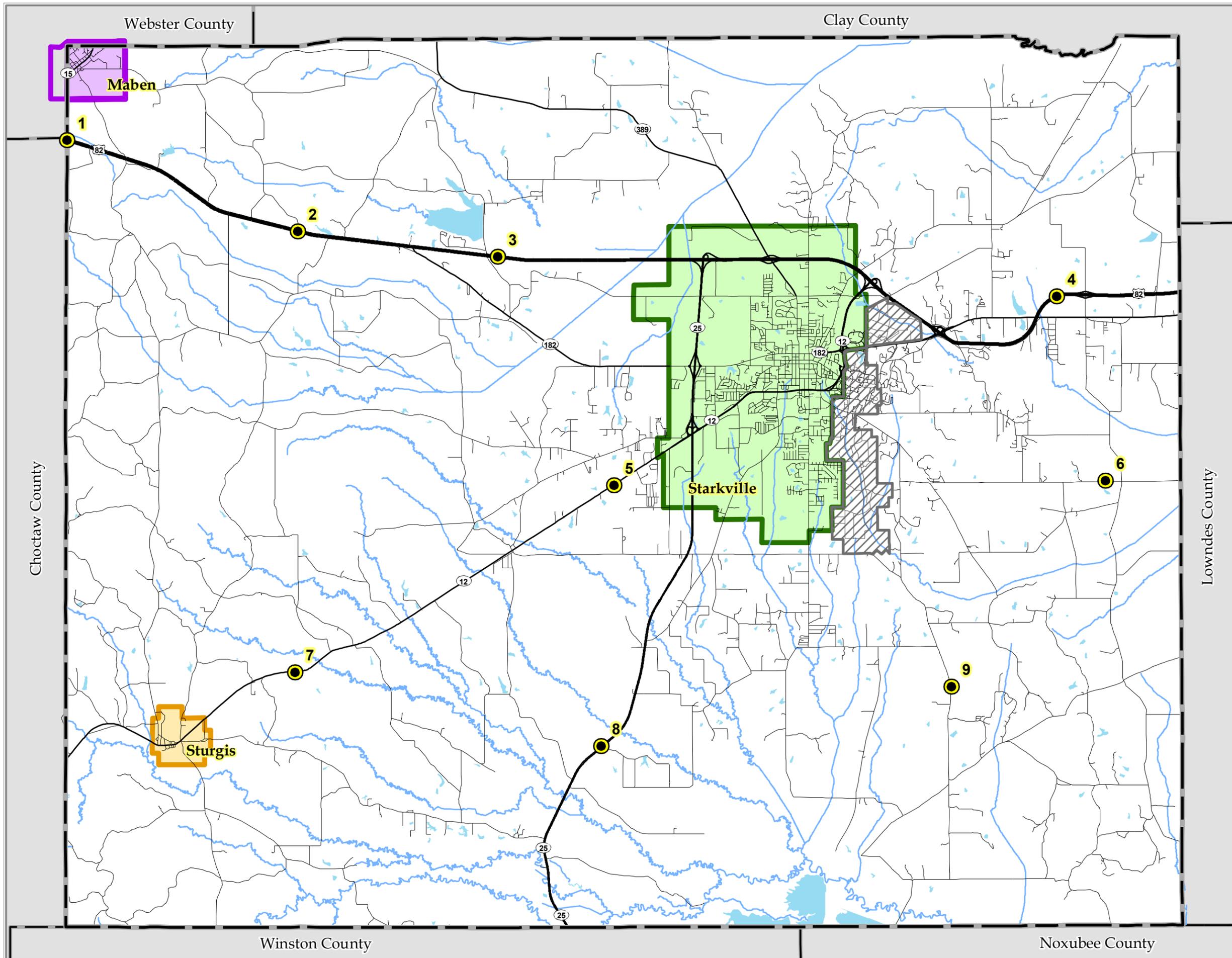
Oktibbeha County									
Average Daily Traffic Count Data									
Map #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2003	5,600	5,700	-	16,000	4,500	1,300	4,500	5,000	1,100
2004	6,500	5,800	-	16,000	5,100	1,400	4,300	5,100	1,700
2005	6,600	5,900	-	13,000	5,200	1,400	4,100	4,800	1,700
2006	6,600	6,700	-	13,000	5,200	1,400	4,100	4,800	1,700
2007	7,100	6,700	-	13,000	5,200	1,700	4,100	4,800	1,600
2008	7,000	7,700	-	16,000	4,500	1,600	3,700	5,600	1,500
2009	6,900	7,000	6,900	16,000	4,500	1,600	3,700	5,600	1,500
2010	6,600	7,200	7,100	16,000	4,500	1,900	3,800	5,700	1,500
2011	6,600	8,500	7,100	19,000	4,400	1,900	3,700	5,900	1,400
2012	6,700	8,000	7,500	19,000	4,400	1,900	3,900	6,000	1,400
# Change	1,100	2,300	NA	3,000	-100	600	-600	1,000	300
% Change	19.6%	40.4%	NA	18.8%	-2.2%	46.2%	-13.3%	20.0%	27.3%

**COMMUTING PATTERNS**

Commuting patterns of Oktibbeha County residents and outside residents related to the work place is another important piece of the transportation system. Eighty-one percent of Oktibbeha County residence work inside the county. Lowndes, Clay, and Webster Counties are the most popular locations for Oktibbeha County residents to work outside the county; 7%, 3.3%, and 1.4% respectively work in those counties. The remaining residents commute most from nearby counties; however some do commute as far as Hancock County, Mississippi, and Shelby County, Tennessee. Oktibbeha County residents have a mean travel time to work of 17.4 minutes; this is considerably lower that the mean travel

2014 Comprehensive Plan  
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Map 6.2  
*Average Daily  
 Traffic Counts*



**Legend**

- Average Daily Traffic Counts
- Maben
- Starkville
- Sturgis
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County



Date: May 29, 2014

Source(s): Mississippi Department of Transportation;  
 Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS);  
 US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

Disclaimer: This map is accurate for planning purposes only.

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time of Mississippi (23.9 minutes) and the United States (24.4 minutes). 80.8% of Oktibbeha County residents drive alone to work while 11.8% carpool, with the remainder taking another form of transportation to work. These rates are comparable to those of the State of Mississippi as a whole, eighty-three percent drives alone while 11.1% carpool.

Those commuting to Oktibbeha County also play a role the transportation system. Most of those workers commuting to Oktibbeha County are coming from neighboring counties. In total approximately 4,600 worker are commuting from outside Oktibbeha County, with approximately 3,700 coming from one of the six adjoining counties.

#### **FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION**

There are several modes of transportation in all communities; they can include air, automobile, public transit, rail, and water. Public transit is available in Oktibbeha County, but its service is limited and focused toward students at Mississippi State University. Water transportation is also available at the nearby Lowndes County Port, located on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. Therefore, this section will focus on air, automobile, and rail transportation as they play a larger role in Oktibbeha County's transportation network.

#### Airports

Oktibbeha County is home to two airports George M. Bryan Airport and Oktibbeha Airport. George M. Bryan Airport is owned by the City of Starkville and located in the southwestern portion of the city near industrial areas. The airport opened for operations in 1934. According to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the 5,550 foot paved runway is in excellent condition, as are the runway markings. As of April 2013, 76% of this airports traffic was local general aviation; 17% of this airports traffic was transient general aviation; and the remaining 7% was military. Oktibbeha Airport is a privately owned airport that is open to the public and located in the Northeast portion of the county. The airport opened for operations in the 1940s. According to the Federal Aviation Administration

(FAA) the airport has two turf runways that are in fair condition, as are the runway markings. As of April 2013, 66% of this airports traffic was local general aviation; 32% of this airports traffic was transient general aviation; and the remaining 2% was military.

#### Automobile Travel

Oktibbeha County's road network is made up of approximately 551.8 miles of roads. The county has 155.1 miles of State Aid Paved roads and 27.2 miles of State Aid Gravel roads. These roads receive state-level funding to help with improvements and repaving. The county is responsible for funding and maintaining another 369.5 miles of road, of which 137 miles is paved and 232.5 miles is gravel. In March of 2012 the County adopted a four year plan to maintain both roadways and bridges. The four year plan spells out yearly road expenditures for paving, building and reclaiming roadways in Oktibbeha County. This is a positive step in maintaining and improving the county road network. This four plan should be updated both annually and as new funds become available for roadway projects. The four plan could also be a template for a plan to pave all county roads within ten to twenty years, as seen on Map 6.3.

Given the level of development that is expected to occur over the next twenty years, significant road construction or widening is necessary to accommodate traffic. Several projects are currently being discussed to help future traffic concerns; they are visible on Map 6.1. As of January 2014, the portion of Longview Road, between Mississippi Highway 12 and 24, is set to be bid out for widening and improving the roadway. This is part of a large project that would create a bypass around the eastern, southern and western edges of Starkville. This bypass will start on the western side of Starkville at an intersection with U.S. Highway 82 and generally will follow Longview-Adaton Road, Buckner Street, Longview Road, Poor House Road, Fultz Road, and Turkey Creek Road, ending at an intersection with Old West Point Road after an intersection with U.S. Highway 82. A widening and improvement project is also being discussed along the Artesia Road corridor; this would

create easy access to U.S. Highway 45 and Golden Triangle Industrial Park, in Lowndes County. Another widening and improvement project is being discussed along for the Old West Point Road corridor. This corridor is expected to see a further increase in traffic with the completion of the Yokohama facility in Clay County, which is expected to open in 2015.

#### Railroad Corridors

The Kansas City Southern and Columbus and Greenville Railway play a role in transportation in Oktibbeha County. The Class I major line is owned by Kansas City Southern running diagonally, southwest to northeast, across the county through Sturgis and Starkville. The Columbus and Greenville Railway is a Class III line that operates between Columbus and Greenville, Mississippi, and passes through extreme northwestern Oktibbeha County, in Maben. No passenger rail service is available in Oktibbeha County; both railroads transport freight exclusively. There are approximately seventeen at-grade railroad crossings in the county, along with numerous private drives that cross roads. All seventeen crossings are equipped with a railroad crossing sign and a stop or yield sign. None have increase safety features such as crossing lights or crossing gates.

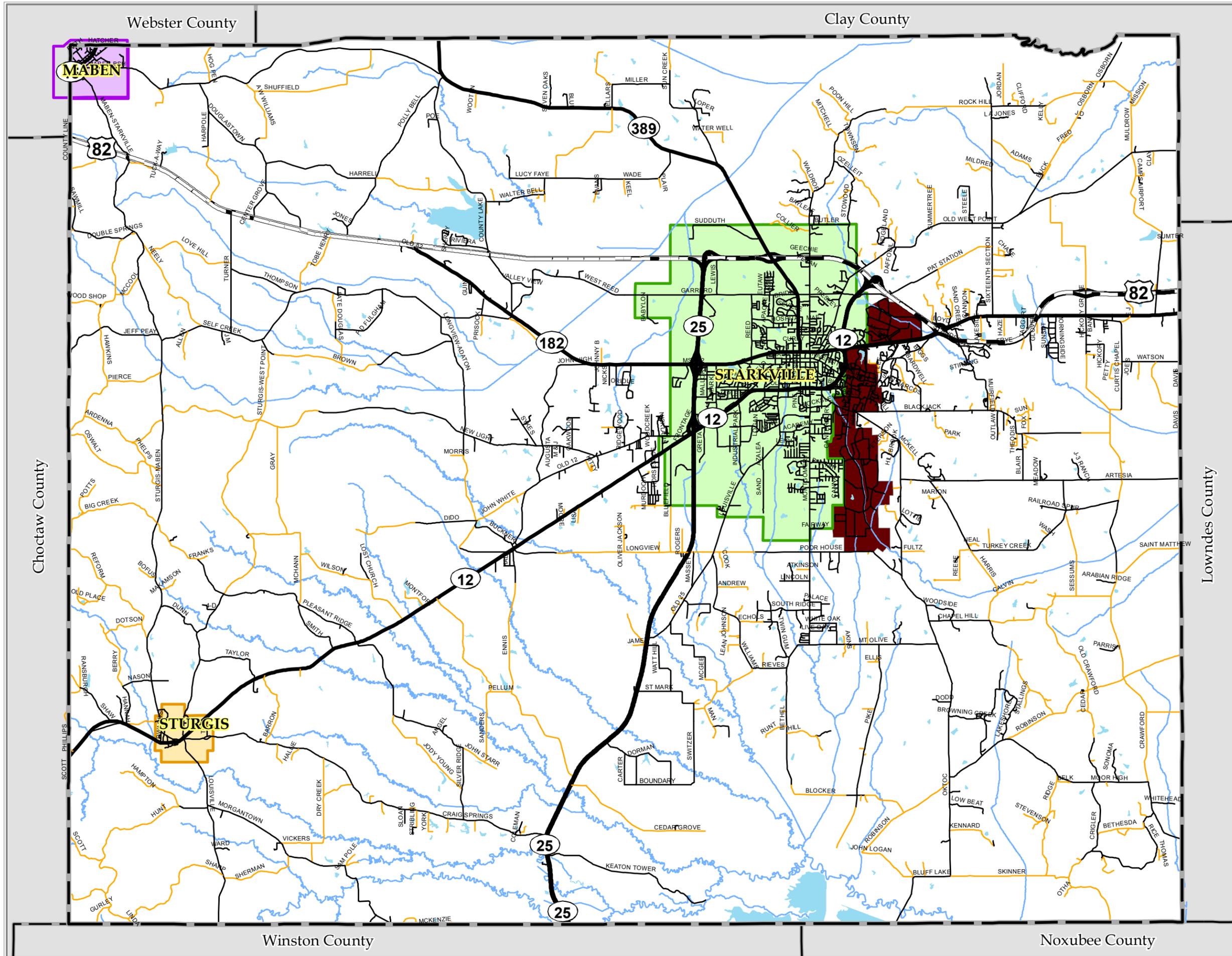
#### **Bridge Crossings**

Bridge crossings are of major concern in Oktibbeha County. According to Mississippi Department of Transportation's (MDOT) Office of State Aid Road Construction of the approximately 150 bridges, forty-five percent of those have a "sufficiency" rating that deems them deficient (Map 6.4). The county only has funds to fix three to four a year; making difficult to catch up. Longview Road is soon to undergo improvements that will eliminate one deficient bridge. If the bypasses on the eastern, southern, and western side of Starkville are completed; this will eliminate several other deficient bridges as well as add a few others. There is a timber bridge on Old West Point Road that is in need of replacement and should be replaced as that road is widened to accommodate increased traffic to the Yokohama facility.

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Map 6.3

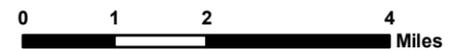
*Dirt Roads*



**Legend**

**Road Type and Pavement**

- Dirt Local Road
- Paved Local Road
- Mississippi Highway
- United States Highway
- Maben
- Starkville
- Sturgis
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County

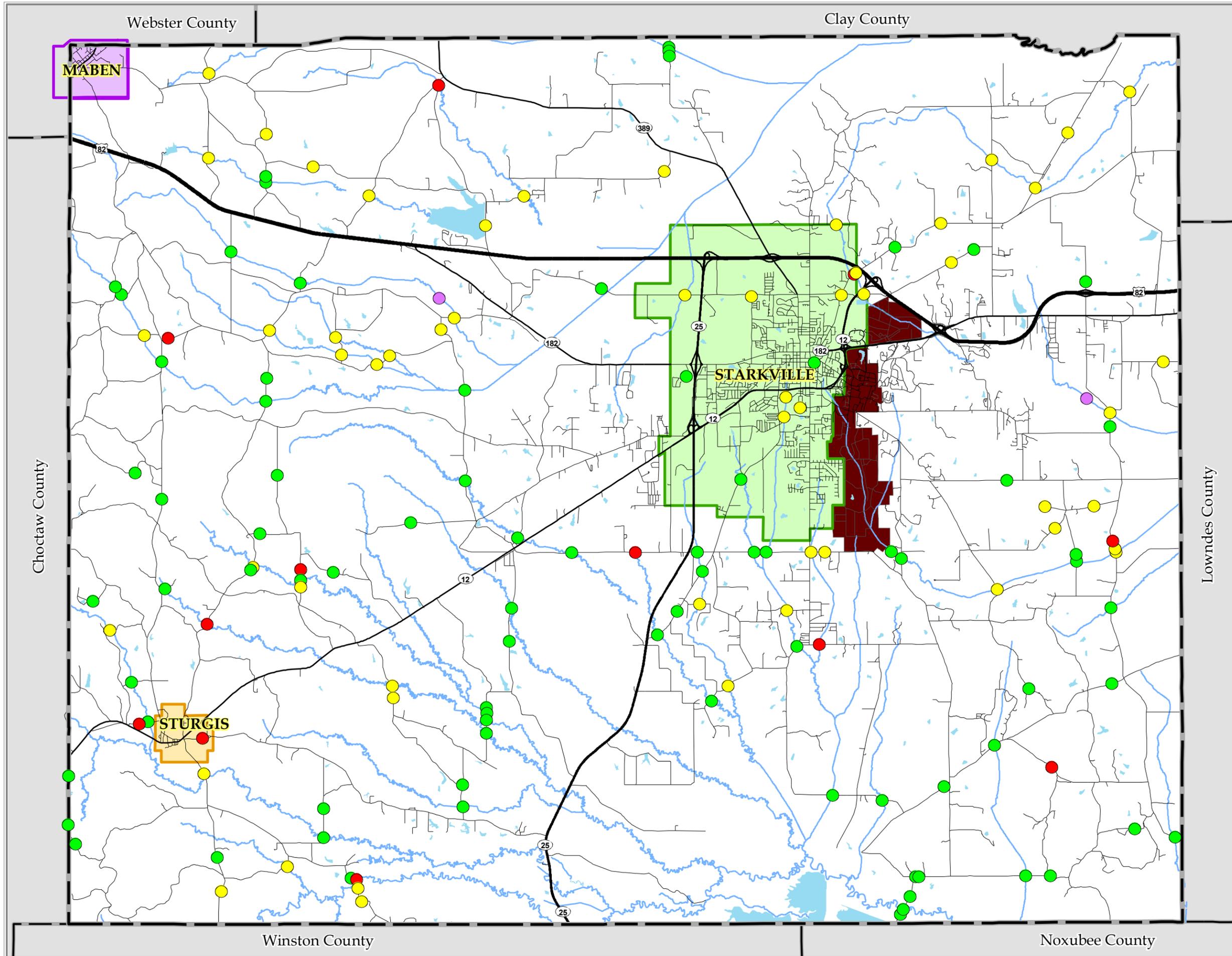


**Date:** May 29, 2014

**Source(s):** Mississippi Department of Transportation; Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files..

**Disclaimer:** This map is accurate for planning purposes only.

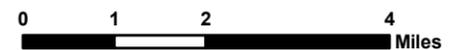
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**Legend**

**Bridge Deficiencies**

- New Bridge need for Future Project
- Sufficiency Rating >80
- Sufficiency Rating 80-50
- Sufficiency Rating <50
- Maben
- Starkville
- Sturgis
- Mississippi State University
- Surrounding Counties
- Oktibbeha County



**Date:** May 29, 2014

**Source(s):** Oktibbeha County Engineer; Mississippi Department of Transportation; Mississippi Automated Resource Information System (MARIS); US Census Bureau TIGER Line Files.

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## **CHAPTER VII ~ IMPLEMENTATION & PLAN MAINTENANCE**

Specific steps have to be taken in order to bring about the goals and strategies described in the earlier chapters. The implementation of the suggested actions makes the Plan happen. There are a number of tools for implementation and several are described below. Over time the Plan assumptions and all of the goals and strategies must be checked to make sure that they are still important and relevant. This is the process for maintaining the Plan.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

#### Annual Budget

Specific goals, actions, or decisions are usually discussed and recommended during the County's annual budget process. This is the time when elected officials determine if the County has the funds and budget to proceed with certain items for implementation. This can vary from funding for specific Plan elements or services to staff or man-power assistance in order to follow through with Plan goals. Incorporating the Comprehensive Plan into the annual budget process can ensure that needs and goals outlined here are at least being reviewed and considered for implementation by elected officials.

#### Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a budgeting tool that outlines proposed public investments or roadway improvements over a specific timeline. A CIP are usually established (and projects costs for various investments) over a five year period. This method or other similar methods are effective ways to plan for major capital investments. It clearly identifies the investment goals of the County and can alleviate monetary stresses if projects are spaced over a certain period of time.

#### Intergovernmental Agreements

Intergovernmental agreements between local government entities can help to spread the burden of certain services by sharing some responsibility to benefit the community as a

whole. This comprehensive plan recommends several opportunities for intergovernmental agreements. An intergovernmental agreement between Starkville and Oktibbeha County extending water and sewer service into the County bordering Starkville would benefit both the city, if the city annexes the areas, and county. The use of this tool can be effective and beneficial for the residents of Oktibbeha County.

#### Zoning Ordinances

Zoning is the regulation of land uses in certain locations; it is intended to guide development into compatible land use patterns. Zoning protects the individual land owners and preserves and establishes the character of a community. The adoption of a Zoning Ordinance in Oktibbeha County is one effective way to put specific elements of this Comprehensive Plan into action.

As it exists now, development in Oktibbeha County is allowed to take place unrestrained. This means that incompatible land uses can build next to one another without regulation by county Government. The Future Land Use Map sets forth some general land use categories but lacks the complexity of a Zoning Code. A Zoning Code would regulate items such as: minimum lot size, setbacks, building heights, locations of manufactured housing, housing density, landscaping and parking. A Zoning Ordinance can be tailored to the County's specific objectives and goals.

#### Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision Regulations control the process for division of land and establish design standards for any improvements made to the divided parcels. These regulations ensure that new property owners of this subdivided land have adequate public services and that the subdividers pay their share of construction cost for these services so the County or existing residents are not burdened with the expense.

Currently Oktibbeha County's Roadway Design Ordinance acts as a de facto Subdivision Regulation. The Roadway Design covers road design, right-of-way, minimum number of access

points for new subdivisions and drainage. These are typically covered in Subdivision Regulations along with the requirement of future street connections and street 'stubs' for new subdivisions, the establishment of right-of-way dimensions for County roadways based on future functional classification, sidewalks (if needed), connections to public utilities, and minimum lot size. If adopted these, regulations can be used to further goals of the Comprehensive Plan such as transportation issues or water and sewer facilities in rural areas.

#### Construction, Building and Fire Codes

Construction, building and fire codes, including electrical, mechanical, plumbing, etc., provide a standard upon which to build safe structures. Adoption of up-to-date versions of the International Building Code and International Property Maintenance Code will greatly assist Oktibbeha County in efforts to ensure safe housing and safe buildings. However, with the adoption of such codes comes the responsibility to make inspections to assure that the codes are being complied with.

#### Sign Ordinance

A sign ordinance helps promote a positive visual perception by reducing and managing the visual signage clutter that can result in a unregulated community. Sign ordinances control the number, size, height, type and placement of signs. The ordinance can also be tailored to control temporary signage, billboards and other signage issues. The overall goal of the ordinance is to help protect the existing character of a community, establish or enhance community identity.

#### Landscaping Ordinance

Landscape Ordinance preserve the visual environment of a community. They help improve the visual perception and image for both residents and visitors. This is especially true in a Oktibbeha County since it attracts many visitors to Mississippi State University sporting events. Landscaping can visually screen undesirable features required in an urbanized landscape, protect privacy of residents and promote the community as one that cares about its appearance. It can also improve the physical

environment of a community through using plants best suited to the climate, improving drainage and enhancing air quality.

#### Unkempt Property Ordinance

An unkempt property ordinance enhances the visual quality of a community by controlling weed height, rubbish, junk and other public safety hazards caused by unsightly conditions on properties. The ordinance sets a community standard for maintenance of real property which enhances property values and ensure that the rights of all businesses and residents to privacy, safety and attractive environment are respected.

#### Architectural Design Standards

Architectural design standards help enhance the aesthetic character of the community and promote a more sustainable community, while protecting property values and preserving heritage. The standards provide the community with information on the quality of architectural design expected without advocating a particular architectural style.

#### Day-to-day Policy Enforcement

For Oktibbeha County many of the Goals and Strategies involve setting or updating policies and then enforcing the policy. This usually involves County staff processing the reports that have been given to, or identified by, the elected officials. Oktibbeha County will need to develop some capacity for day-to-day policy enforcement in order to raise the levels of service.

### **PLAN MAINTENANCE**

#### Amendments

This Plan, along with all of its elements, is intended to be a guide for the long-term development of the County. Market conditions and major investments made by others both have the ability to shift growth patterns and influence land use in ways that was not anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan. In order to deal with these various changes, the County should set up a process for any amendments to this Plan or elements/maps within this Plan. It should also be noted that multiple amendments can unintentionally alter the policies that this Plan

was based on; amendments should be limited and well justified.

*Plan Review and Future Updates*

The Comprehensive Plan should be a dynamic document. Periodic review and update of the Comprehensive Plan is essential in order to accurately reflect the changes within the County. Yearly review is crucial to keep the Plan current of any special topics or influences that will affect the County. Every three to five years is an adequate time for review of major land use changes, but if drastic changes occur in the County, a Plan review and update may be needed sooner than that. During review, the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, or Comprehensive Planning Committee should examine the success in implementing the current before making any changes. After all elements and goals and objectives have been updated as necessary, a draft of the revised Plan must be viewed at a public hearing before being adopted and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

**RECOMMENDED PROJECTS AND ESTIMATED COST**

The following section includes a list of all projects recommended in this plan and an estimate of the cost of those projects. The list is intended to be a quick reference guide to the projects recommended by this plan not as a substitute for the text the preceding Chapters. The cost estimates provided are simply that an estimate of the cost of completion in 2014 and intend to only act as a guide to the project cost. The table that follows includes a list of projects by County Department and the expected cost. If desired this summary list could be used to create the basic framework of a Capital Improvements Program for Oktibbeha County.

<b>County Administration</b>	
Conduct yearly review of County Departments to determine needs for personnel and equipment	Added to department heads normal needs for personnel and equipment duties
<b>Public Safety</b>	
<u>Sheriff's Department</u>	
New Jail/Sheriff's Complex	\$7,000,000 dependant on final design
Training Facility including shooting range and classrooms	Ideally this would be included in a new Jail/Sheriff's complex
3 Additional Deputies	\$90,000+benefits
<u>Fire Department</u>	
Work with Mississippi State Rating Bureau (MSRB) to facility and equipment needed	Cost dependant on MSRB determine facility and equipment needed recommendations
<u>Emergency Management</u>	
New Emergency Operations Center	\$700,000
Provide public storm shelter	\$350 to \$150 a square foot dependant on final design and size of faculty
Identify and implement advanced warning systems	\$800,000
<u>Health Department</u>	
Build a new county health department building	\$700,000
<b>Public Works</b>	
<u>Buildings Department (New Department or Division)</u>	
Adoption of Building Codes	Varies based on need of consultant
Adoption of Fire Codes	Varies based on need of consultant
Adoption of Sprinkler Ordinance	Varies based on need of consultant
Establish building permitting system	Varies base on full vs. part time personnel needs
<u>Transportation</u>	
Continued adoption of a 4-year Road and Bridge Plan	\$2.5 million yearly
Acquire minimum right-of-way	Include projects in 4-year Road Plan
Pave all county roads in 10 to 20 years	Include projects in 4-year Road Plan
Repair substandard bridges	Include projects in 4-year Road Plan
Enforce Roadway Design Ordinance	None; Included in subdivision reviews by County Engineer
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	
<u>Heritage Museum</u>	
Continue to support the Heritage Museum	\$5,000 plus portion of maintenance
<u>Library System</u>	
Continue to support the public library system	\$170,000 plus portion of maintenance
<u>Parks and Recreational buildings</u>	
Form Parks Committee to support recreational opportunities	Cost would be minimal with volunteer committee
Identify recreational interest and needs	None if part of Parks Committee duties unless a study is commissioned