

## **Recommendations for Planned Growth and Rural Areas**

Shelby County holds a unique position in the State of Tennessee in regard to the implementation of Public Chapter 1101. With the ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement defining annexation reserve areas for each municipality, Shelby County has a sound basis for determining its Growth Plan.

Shelby County is an urban county. County government has a history of providing urban services to its unincorporated area much as municipalities provide those services within their borders. Chapter 1101 allows for increased levels of fees and taxes to be charged within planned growth areas, provided that the services that the County delivers are of a higher level than those delivered in rural areas.

### **Planned Growth Areas**

Planned growth areas are to be included in a county's growth plan when the need arises to accommodate major new town development and/or business/industrial parks at a distance of several miles from an existing municipality and at a location to which a municipality could not feasibly extend services. The designation of a planned growth area should be used to satisfy demand which is clear and compelling because of location factors and market conditions.

The intention of the law is that municipal governments extend services to their urban growth areas in anticipation of annexation. Until such time as a municipality is prepared to annex into a planned growth area or the area was developed in a high enough density to incorporate on its own, the County would be required to provide urban services.

This is not the case in Shelby County. Shelby County Government already provides urban services to all of the unincorporated area at virtually the same level.

The County has an aggressive program of road construction and maintenance. It funds the Shelby County school system which in turn builds and operates schools in those areas where the density of development has reached a level where service is mandated. Shelby County provides schools within all suburban municipalities and is a major funding source for the City of Memphis school system. The County acquires, maintains and operates parks and recreation areas throughout the County. It acquires parkland ahead of development and turns the operation of parks over to municipalities when annexation occurs. Fire service in the unincorporated County is generally provided at the same level systemwide.

As a result of this analysis the designation of planned growth areas is not appropriate in Shelby County. The seven municipal governments in Shelby County provide ample capacity to support urban growth within their annexation reserve areas.

In making the recommendation for not designating planned growth areas, extensive analysis and attention was given to east central area of Shelby County, generally known as the Gray's Creek basin. The analysis shows that adopted programs and policies of Shelby County, the City of Memphis, the Town of Collierville and the Metropolitan Planning Organization dictate that this area be set aside for urban growth. The planned extension of Memphis and Collierville sewers to this area will allow for urban densities. The dominance of Priority One major roads in the area, particularly the development of the outer loop roadway and the east-west connecting roads, is the second major factor in opening up this area to urban development.

Analysis of environmental factors shows that the east central area can, and is, supporting expansion of urban development. Building activity and employment centers are drawing new residents much more quickly than other parts of Shelby County.

In addition, the continued trend toward urban level development along the western boundary of Fayette County will place added pressure on this area of the County. (Fayette County has indicated to the Shelby County Coordinating Committee that the area of the County adjacent to Shelby County will be designated as urban growth.)

Therefore, territory within the Gray's Creek basin does not meet the criteria for planned growth or rural designation under Chapter 1101. The development of this area in a manner appropriate to its character should be controlled by the adoption of the Gray's Creek Plan and other land use controls tools such as design controls, an aggressive tree ordinance, intensive billboard regulation and an active program of greenway acquisition by local government.

## **Rural Areas**

The area in the northeast sector of Shelby County shown on Map 1 as "Not Reserved" should be designated as a rural area. It is overwhelmingly rural in character, supporting large farming operations, open space and concentrations of forested areas.

However, some slight adjustments should be made to the boundaries of the areas that were defined as a result of the Memorandum of Agreement. The boundaries should be adjusted to conform to the drainage sub-basins of the Loosahatchie River. This will have minimal impact on the proposed urban growth boundaries of Lakeland and Arlington. It would not affect the annexation reserve agreements.

The second major area that is recommended for designation as a rural area is in the northwest sector of the County. Shelby Forest, which by definition is wholly rural in character, dominates the area. It is the recommendation that all of the area contained within the direct Mississippi River sub-basin north of the Memphis City limits to the Tipton County line, and the most northerly sub-basin of Big Creek be designated as rural.

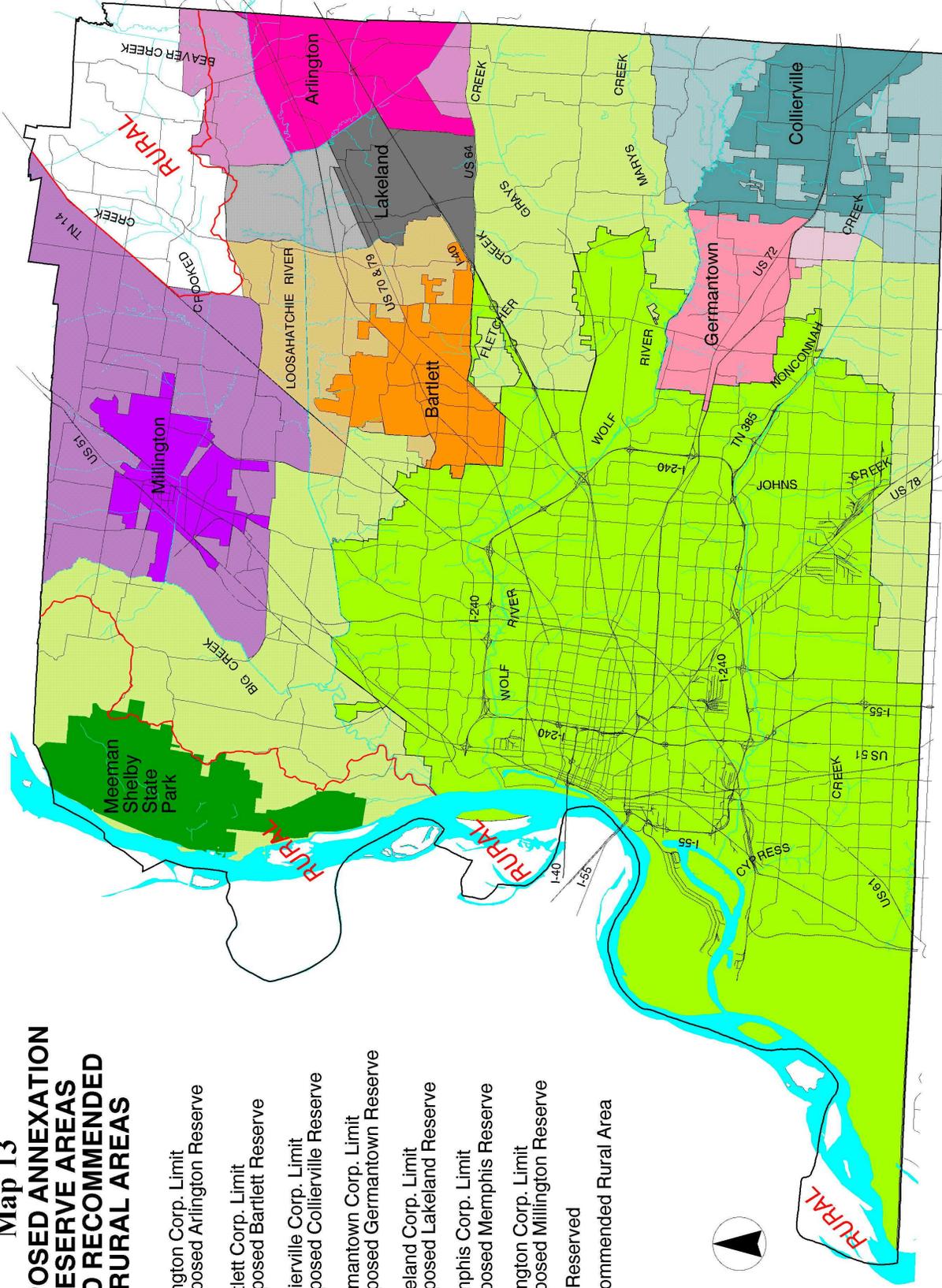
In addition, the islands in the Mississippi River not within Memphis' current City Limits should be set aside as rural areas.

The recommended rural areas will comprise approximately 94 square miles, about 13% of the total land area of Shelby County.

*Rural Areas are shown on Map 13.*

**Map 13**  
**PROPOSED ANNEXATION**  
**RESERVE AREAS**  
**AND RECOMMENDED**  
**RURAL AREAS**

-  Arlington Corp. Limit
-  Proposed Arlington Reserve
-  Bartlett Corp. Limit
-  Proposed Bartlett Reserve
-  Collierville Corp. Limit
-  Proposed Collierville Reserve
-  Germantown Corp. Limit
-  Proposed Germantown Reserve
-  Lakeland Corp. Limit
-  Proposed Lakeland Reserve
-  Memphis Corp. Limit
-  Proposed Memphis Reserve
-  Millington Corp. Limit
-  Proposed Millington Reserve
-  Not Reserved
-  Recommended Rural Area



## Implementation Considerations

The designation of rural areas as a component of the Shelby County Growth Plan is only a first step. The most critical phase lies ahead. Implementation of the Growth Plan and, more importantly, wise management of growth are the keys to ensuring that Shelby County will continue to be an attractive place to live in future years.

Issues that need to be addressed over the next several years include, but are not limited to:

- Resolving extra-territorial jurisdiction issues among all local governments.
- Examining and adopting zoning and subdivision regulations in urban growth areas that are acceptable to both the County and each of the seven municipalities.
- Adopting and implementing a strong tree ordinance for new developments.
- Adopting and implementing a strong billboard ordinance.
- Adopting and implementing a policy to preserve pockets of prime agricultural land and forested land outside of the designated rural areas.
- Actively continuing a program to acquire floodway and floodplain lands to set aside as greenways.
- Examining alternative methods of paying for infrastructure which benefits new development, by adopting such policies as impact fees on a Countywide basis.
- Developing and implementing small area plans that address issues and concerns specific to unincorporated neighborhoods of the County.
- Continuously reviewing and updating policies that affect residents Countywide, such as the Major Road Plan and sewer extension policies, refining them to fit the needs of our residents.

# **Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development**

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