

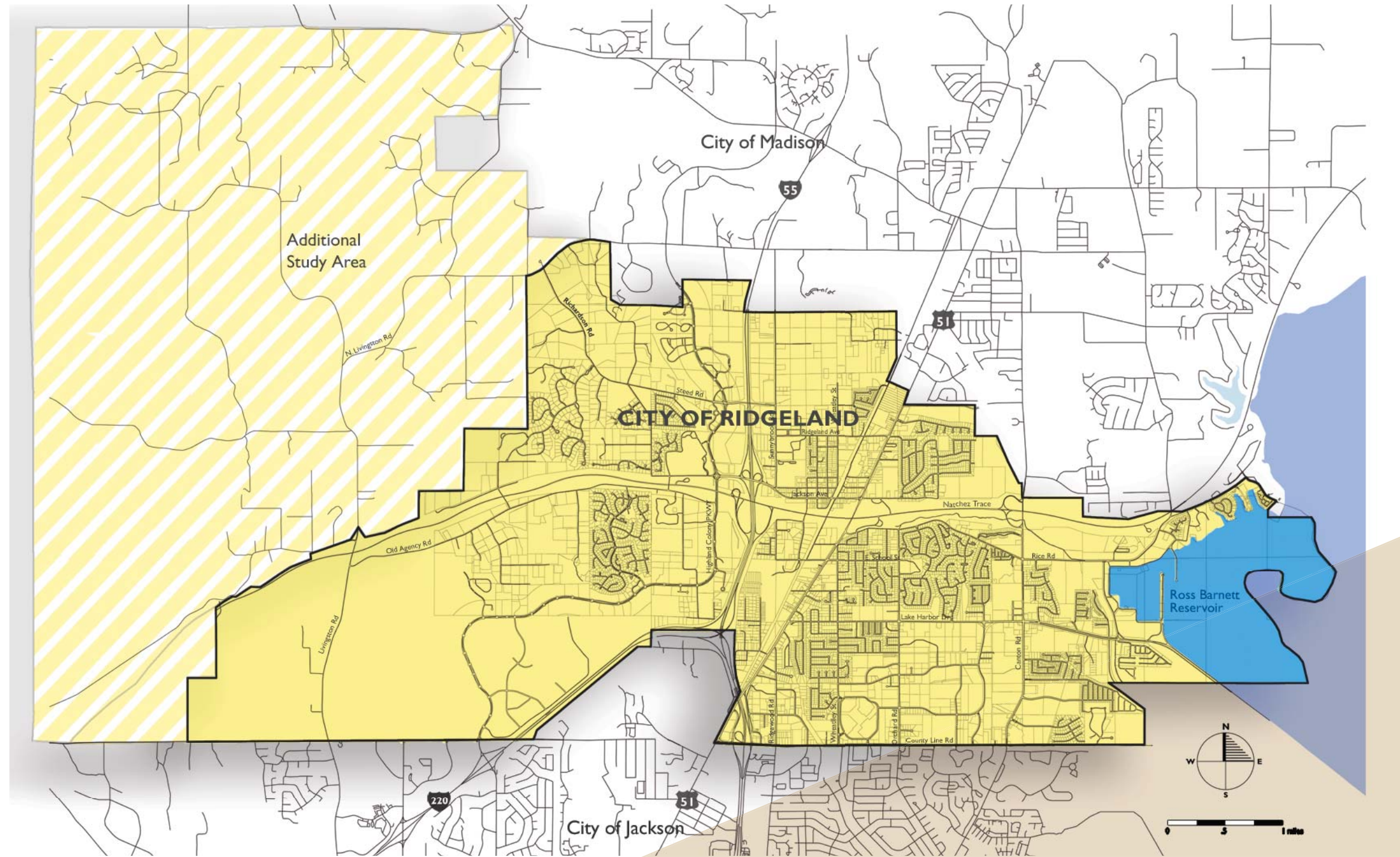


PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Ridgeland has come a long way from its origins as a sleepy settlement at the intersection of the railroad and the Natchez Trace. In its early years, Ridgeland was little more than a staging platform for agricultural products and raw materials that would be transported to Mississippi’s Capitol City and to the more distant cities of New Orleans and Memphis. It is doubtful that the early settlers imagined that Jackson would swell in size to one day share a boundary with its little neighbor to the north. A less determined community might have eventually succumbed to the pressure and been engulfed by Jackson.

Fortunately, due to strong and confident leadership, Ridgeland established itself as an important participant in the economic life of the region on its own terms and has become a refuge of well-tended neighborhoods, quality schools, robust shopping areas and thriving small businesses. Taking full advantage of the access afforded by the Interstate Highways, the proximity of the growing market of Jackson, and an abundance of developable land, Ridgeland has grown to a city of over 20,000 with a bright future.

However, the growth and prosperity enjoyed by



Ridgeland has not come without challenges. Through its success, Ridgeland has attracted the attention of residents and businesses that want to escape the hectic pace of Jackson while continuing to enjoy its assets. The continuing growth of Jackson, its suburbs to the east and second-tier suburbs to the north, along with the associated sprawl and traffic pose a threat to Ridgeland’s quality of life. Never known to shrink from a challenge, the community convened to chart a positive course into the future.



“LIVING RIGHT IN RIDGELAND”

In August of 2006, the City of Ridgeland initiated work on the Ridgeland Area Master Plan (RAMP). The project area includes all areas within the city limits and a large area to the west designated as the Additional Study Area. The intent of the plan is threefold:

To engage Ridgeland residents in an asset-based planning process that will identify opportunities to further strengthen the quality of life.

To provide a tool that enables City leaders to adopt a





COMMUNITY MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

Simply stated, the master planning process involves performing an assessment of existing conditions in the community, which are then compared against the community’s expressed vision and goals for the future of their city. The juxtaposition of these two elements then leads to the identification of opportunities for accomplishing community goals. It is a very user-intensive process wherein the planner serves as a conduit through which community goals are transformed into concrete and achievable projects, programs and policies.

A fundamental assumption imbedded within the process is the commitment of the local community or user group to participate in the planning process. In essence, the master plan process requires that a partnership of trust and honesty be established between the planners and the community.

Participants generally fall into one of three important categories:

1. The citizenry or members of the community.
2. The project “owner” or community leadership, typically an elected Mayor and Council.

3. The professional consulting entity or planner.

Each entity has a vital role to play, and actions by one partner are often required so that the other may proceed to subsequent steps in the process.



The Master Planning Process proceeds through five phases. Although distinct, the phases occasionally overlap. These phases are:

Phase I - Needs Assessment



The first phase requires the acknowledgement of the need to develop a plan and a commitment to the time and resources needed to formulate it. During this phase, the owner and its chosen planner have an opportunity to assess the existing data available, to begin framing critical issues of concern, and to establish the management structure which will be employed to support the process. The end product is a well-defined scope of work and resource allocation.

Phase II - Inventory and Goals

In this phase, the existing conditions are inventoried, mapped and assessed to establish a starting point. In essence, the planners construct a portrait of the community as it exists today so that realistic decisions can be made about the future. The assessment provides an evaluation of the existing conditions when compared to other successful communities, best planning practices, regional influences, and future trends. Visioning and Goal setting requires meaningful community participation. Community ideas are gathered at open community meetings, interviews, and via an interactive web site established for this purpose. Of vital importance, the identified vision and goals will



be used to guide the direction and emphasis of the rest of the master planning process.

Phase III - Analysis, Synthesis, and Preliminary Plan

In this phase, the vision and goals are combined with the assessment of existing conditions to identify opportunities, problem areas, and issues that need to be addressed in the master plan. This leads to summary mapping and delineation of alternative futures for the community. When community consensus is achieved, a draft master plan is mapped for review.



Phase IV - Implementation Strategies and Final Plan

In the end, a plan is only as good as its execution. This phase is focused upon identifying strategies for implementing plan recommendations. Areas of focus that are broadly applicable to community needs are identified. Design schematics and graphics are developed to illustrate desired outcomes, attract funding opportunities and inspire community investment. Recommended design