

# **Frayser Futures**

## **A Comprehensive Plan for Growth and Development**

**for**

**The Frayser Community Association**

**and**

**Frayser Community Development Corporation**

### **Assistance Provided By:**

- **The Memphis and Shelby County Division of  
Planning & Development  
Comprehensive Planning Section  
Office of Planning & Development**
- **Memphis Division of Housing &Community  
Development**
- **Graduate Program in City & Regional Planning  
The University of Memphis**

**Spring 2003**

# Frayser Futures

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## **Frayser Vision**

**Frayser in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will continue its traditions and values while becoming a premier destination community and first choice for living, learning, working, shopping, and recreation.**

## **Frayser Values**

- Maintaining friendliness while achieving diversity in race, income, and education.
- Supporting hard working, skilled people while educating future generations.
- Embracing a rural atmosphere while achieving dynamic urban systems.
- Preserving links to the past while building for the future.
- Strengthening organizations while expanding individual responsibility.
- Building home ownership while restoring rental opportunities.
- Linking to the region while building on economic assets.

## PREFACE

Frayser Futures is a plan for the improvement of living conditions in the Frayser area of Memphis, Tennessee. This plan is the result of a yearlong study involving citizens of the Frayser community, their organizations, departments of Memphis city government, and the University of Memphis.

The process leading to the completion of this plan began in August 2001 when the Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD) requested that the Graduate Program in City and Regional Planning at the University of Memphis work with the Memphis/Shelby Division of Planning and Development (DPD) in preparing a comprehensive plan for Frayser.

The need for a comprehensive plan grew out of a high priority commitment by the City of Memphis to help revitalize several older Memphis communities as part of its “Neighborhood Partnership Program”. Frayser is one of the targeted communities that will receive special attention over the next several years.

Frayser has a long and rich history as a distinct community within the Memphis urban area. Its future potential will be shaped in part by its history but to a greater extent by the leadership within two key organizations – the Frayser Community Association (FCA) and the Frayser Community Development Corporation (FCDC).

These non-profit organizations have important roles in mobilizing public and private resources for improvements in Frayser’s physical, social and economic environments. These organizations can work in partnership together, with other non-profit organizations, and the City of Memphis and Shelby County governments to implement programs for community betterment.

The **Frayser Vision** and **Frayser Values** were written after meetings with community leaders and a general community meeting early in the planning process. The vision and values form the base upon which specific plan recommendations were formulated. These recommendations should be considered as a starting point for continuous study and action.

# I. INTRODUCTION

## **Purpose and Scope**

This purpose of this plan is to provide a guide for those citizen leaders and public officials who allocate resources for improving the Frayser community.

The plan contains analyses of recent conditions and trends about Frayser's population and the public/private facilities that support the population.

Recommendations presented herein contain actions for making Frayser a better place to live. Many of the recommendations involve further study prior to implementation and specific responsibilities are identified.

Following this Introduction, Chapter II presents a series of maps which depict regional views of conditions in Frayser. The regional views show Shelby County and the location of important regional features, which establish Frayser's links to the larger economic region.

Chapter III presents community views, which provide an internal view of Frayser. This view establishes the current pattern of development within Frayser as a basis for understanding future development potential.

Chapter III also contains the findings and recommendations with regard to community systems such as environment, land use, transportation, and community facilities. This chapter presents an overview picture of Frayser's urban form and concludes with a concept plan as a guiding framework for future development.

Chapters IV and V present more in depth analyses and recommendations for the future. Chapter IV covers special community-wide subjects – housing, economic development and enhancement. Chapter V presents three neighborhood plans, which are identified as opportunity areas.

Chapter VI presents recommendations for both capital projects and land use regulation. The chapter concludes with recommendations for action by community organizations.

## **Background**

Frayser's development and the public policies directed toward Frayser during the 20<sup>th</sup> century have established the background or context from which this plan has been prepared. Frayser's history as a community and the planning studies prepared prior to 2002 provide the starting point for the recommendations of this plan.

**History.** Frayser was first settled in the 1820s when farmland was purchased from individuals who had been awarded land grants by the State of North Carolina prior to the

creation of Tennessee. The name Frayser comes from Dr. J.W. Frayser, a Memphis physician, whose summer home was close to a train stop that came to be known as “Frayser Station”.

A train went through Frayser to Covington along the route of today’s Illinois Central passenger line by the 1870s. In 1870 a general store opened on Randolph Road off North Second Street. In 1877 a post office was established close to Frayser Station. Access from Memphis to Frayser in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century was via the train or a plank toll road and ferry when the road was under water (Hindman’s Ferry Road).

Italian farmers began arriving in the 1880s and joined with earlier settlers to expand truck and dairy farming in the area.

In 1892 Shelby County built a hospital for vagrants on Hindman’s Ferry Road, the site of the county morgue and potter’s field. The hospital was called the “Pest House”.

The first urban type subdivision was platted in the 1890s by a Birmingham real estate company and named Rugby Hills Estates. Several streets were graded with the main arterial in the middle of the development later named Overton Crossing. The company built a private water and sewer system, and with a powerhouse built in 1910, created a railroad line across the Wolf River – the Memphis to Rugby Electric Company.

After selling 600 of the 900 platted lots, the Rugby Estates Co. went into receivership in 1914 with only five houses having been constructed. Shelby County purchased the rail bridge, took up the tracks and built a road, which later was named Watkins.

At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Frayser had a manufacturing operation at the corner of Frayser-Raleigh and Hindman Ferry Roads that supplied bricks for the Memphis market. The Standard Brick Co. employed about 50 people many of whom lived in tenant houses next to the brick kiln.

A bridge across the Wolf River extending Second Street was built in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and in the 1920s a bridge extending Thomas Street (U.S. Highway 51) northward was constructed. In 1935 the Second Street bridge washed away and was not replaced until 1976.

With three Wolf River crossing points in the 1920s and early 1930s (Second Street, Thomas and Watkins) Frayser developed slowly. In 1926 the Catholic Church built the Church of the Madonna and in 1929 Our Lady of Sorrows was dedicated. The Church of Madonna was converted to a monastery in 1932.

The second urban type subdivision, named Jefferson Park, was platted in 1929 with 255 lots west of Thomas Street at the corner of Benjestown Road (Harvester St.) and Second Street. A second subdivision with 24 lots was created in 1939 called Shirley Park. Additions to Shirley Park were made in 1947 (59 lots), 1949 (88 lots) and 1950 (70 lots). These and other subdivisions, Frayser Terrace (1947), Orchard Crest (1950) and Angelo Aviotti (1952), form



the early nucleus of West Frayser and the urbanization of the Frayser Planning District in the 1950s and 1960s.

By 1940 Frayser had two commercial centers. One at the intersection of Whitney and Thomas serving West Frayser and the other serving Rugby Hills at the top of the hill at Overton Crossing and Clifton.

In 1942 International Harvester announced plans to construct a manufacturing plant on 260 acres west of Benjestown Road and on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River floodplain. The plant opened in 1948 with 1,600 employees and by 1950 had three shifts per day with 2,690 workers.

During the 1950s and 1960s Frayser experienced its greatest growth. In addition to the Harvester plant, businesses south of the Wolf River, such as Firestone, created demand for home building in Frayser. By the early 1970s International Harvester's workforce reached its peak at 3,250 employees.

The population of Frayser grew from 2,450 in 1940 to 16,000 in 1953. With this growth, the demand for public schools increased. The Frayser Elementary School had been built in the 1930s but no high school existed until Frayser High School was built in 1949. In 1952 West Frayser School (Westside) opened. The Westside Junior and Senior High Schools were added in 1959.

The growth of Frayser in the early 1950s attracted additional commercial development. The second Holiday Inn in the world opened on Thomas St., and in 1955 the Belz Corporation opened Northgate Shopping Center on Thomas north of Whitney. This shopping center was one of three suburban-type community shopping centers built in the Memphis area during this period (the other two were Poplar Plaza and Southgate). These centers featured early shopping alternatives to downtown Memphis and were the forerunners to the enclosed regional shopping malls that developed in the 1960s.

Between 1953 and 1960 Frayser's population increased from 16,000 to 29,776, an 86% growth rate. During the 1960s Frayser grew almost 50% to 44,440 in 1970. The 1980 population was 47,299, which is the peak population recorded by the U.S. Census.

The City of Memphis annexed most of Frayser in 1958 after debates lasting almost 10 years. In the early years, many residents favored incorporation but as the 1950s unfolded, a majority of residents felt the fire and police services, garbage collection, sewers, parks and schools provided by Memphis would be superior.

During the same year that Frayser became a part of Memphis, a work stoppage by the United Auto Workers shut the Harvester Plant for 13 weeks. The strike was one of several over the years. A six-month strike in 1979-1980 dealt a final blow to Harvester's sagging sales and profits. In 1980 Harvester's Frayser plant lost 640 jobs and in 1982 another 850 jobs were eliminated. The Harvester plant permanently closed in 1985.

Over the past two decades, 1980-2000, Frayser has experienced a transition from its white, blue-collar character created in the 1950s and 1960s. Today Frayser is considered an old suburb with many of the so-called 'inner-city' problems of low income, retail decline, deteriorated housing and sagging education achievements. Yet Frayser has many strong attributes and potential for revitalization.

During the spring of 2000 Memphis Heritage, Inc. prepared a cultural resources survey of more than 600 houses in the neighborhood east and north of the old International Harvester plant. Based on age, condition and historic significance, the survey concluded that the Shirley Park area of Frayser was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition the Memphis Landmarks Commission and other local historians have identified significant historic places in Frayser:

Rugby Hills Estates  
Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church  
Church of Madonna/Monastery St. Clair  
Point Church Cemetery  
Bethlehem Cemetery  
Potters Field (Frayser Park)

Other sites that have historic significance or provide cultural recreation experiences are also located throughout Frayser; and these should be identified, marked and used to promote the renaissance of Frayser.

**Previous Plans.** Frayser has been a part of comprehensive planning for Memphis and Shelby County since the publication of the *Memphis City Plan* prepared by Harland Bartholomew in 1922. A map from the 1922 plan shows the Frayser area with the notable feature of Rugby Estates next to the "Pest House".

Comprehensive plans for Memphis were prepared in 1940, 1953, 1969 and 1981 with varying recommendations for the development of Frayser. The 1969 plan was published in several volumes with the most important volume being the transportation plan, which contained recommendations for major roads. These proposed roads, with slight modifications, still remain on the most recent transportation plan prepared in 2001.

In 1977 a plan for Frayser was published entitled "Frayser Planning District Study". This plan was to provide guidance in decisions related to land use and the allocation of public resources and to complement the 1969 comprehensive plan for Memphis.

The "land development concept" for the 1977 plan identified two employment centers (Harvester area and the industrial area east of Firestone Park); one regional commercial center (Northgate area); and five smaller commercial centers (Watkins/Thomas, Frayser Blvd/Overton Crossing, Rangeline/Frayser Blvd, Watkins/I-240, and Hollywood/I-240). This plan also identified a greenbelt along the Wolf, Mississippi and Loosahatchie Rivers and the addition of seven new neighborhood parks, with upgrades to existing parks.

In the 1990s an update of the Memphis and Shelby County comprehensive plan was prepared, which became known as the “Community Compact”. Although never adopted, this plan contains strong recommendations for controlling sprawl and revitalizing older parts of the urban area.

The “Shelby County Growth Plan” was adopted in 1999 as mandated by the Tennessee General Assembly. This plan specifies urban growth boundaries for all municipalities in Shelby County until the year 2020. Of significance to Frayser and other Memphis communities is the lack of controls on continued sprawl, which will continue the loss of investment in older Memphis neighborhoods.

Two planning efforts in 2000 created renewed emphasis on stimulating investment in Frayser.

The Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development (HCD) published a document entitled “Neighborhood Partnership Program”, which named Frayser one of several areas to receive special treatment for revitalization.

In addition the Memphis and Shelby County Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) targeted Frayser as a “special project area” for the creation of incentives to attract business development.

Finally, in 2002 Memphis published the “Memphis Strategic Plan”, which contains goals and policies for improving the competitive position of Memphis older neighborhoods.

All previous plans were reviewed as part of the preparation of this document, and where appropriate, the earlier recommendations have been incorporated herein.

<b>Table 1</b>						
<b>Population Change, 1958 - 2000</b>						
Census Tract	1958	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
99	6,561	6,784	8,735	8,394	8,070	8,151
100	3,089	4,784	6,617	7,318	6,906	7,785
101*	9,291	11,051	14,133	14,863	13,791	14,148
102*	4,689	5,482	12,824	14,163	13,919	13,811
103	NA	1,675	2,131	2,561	2,248	2,055
Total Frayser	NA	29,776	44,440	47,299	44,934	45,950
Shelby County	NA	627,019	722,111	777,113	826,330	897,472

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing

\*Includes 101.1/101.2 and 102.1/102.2 created for 1980 Census.

Census Data is not available for Frayser in 1950. Four census tracts (99-102) were created for a special census in 1958. 103 was not created until after the 1960 census and 1960 estimates are shown here

<b>Table 1a</b>					
<b>Population Change, By Census Tract 1980-2000</b>					
			% Change		% Change
Census Tract	1980	1990	80-90	2000	90-00
99	8,394	8,070	-3.86	8,151	1.0%
100	7,318	6,906	-5.63	7,785	12.7%
101.1	8,255	7,590	-8.06	7,874	3.7%
101.2	6,608	6,201	-6.16	6,274	1.2%
102.1	6,122	6,247	2.04	6,270	0.4%
102.2	8,041	7,672	-4.59	7,541	-1.7%
103	2,561	2,248	-12.22	2,055	-8.6%
Frayser Planning District	47,299	44,934	-5.0%	45,950	2.3%
Shelby County	777,113	826,330	6.3%	897,472	8.6%

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing

<b>Table 2</b>					
<b>Households</b>					
			% Change		% Change
Census Tract	1980	1990	80-90	2000	90-00
99	3,136	3,066	-2.2%	3,014	-1.7%
100	2,340	2,368	1.2%	2,539	7.2%
101.1	2,993	2,788	-6.8%	2,723	-2.3%
101.2	2,383	2,289	-3.9%	2,184	-4.6%
102.1	1,973	2,045	3.6%	2,013	-1.6%
102.2	2,684	2,637	-1.8%	2,622	-0.6%
103	587	576	-1.9%	593	3.0%
Frayser Planning District	16,096	15,769	-2.0%	15,688	-0.5%
Shelby County	269,186	303,571	12.8%	338,366	11.5%

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing

## **Description of Study Area**

**Location and Boundaries.** Frayser lies six miles north of downtown Memphis. Its boundaries include the Wolf River on the south, the Mississippi River on the west, the Loosahatchie on the north, and the ICRR tracks on the east. Frayser is one of 20 Planning Districts established throughout Shelby County for planning future growth and development. Map 1 shows Frayser and the other 19 Planning Districts.

Although the Frayser Planning District consists of 23 square miles, much of the territory is located in flood plain areas of the Mississippi, Wolf and Loosahatchie Rivers. The developed portion of Frayser is evidenced by the parcel and street map shown here on Map 2.

**Population Trends.** Frayser contains seven Census Tracts as shown on Map 3. These Census Tracts are used to show the changing distribution and character of the population in the community over the past several decades.

Table 1, “Population Change”, contains the population counts for Frayser between 1958 and 2000. This table shows the four census tracts that existed at the time of the special census in 1958, plus a fifth census tract (103) added in 1964.

As shown in Table 1 Frayser grew continuously through the 1980 census, but there was a drastic slowing of growth in the 1970s. Census tract 99 actually lost population during that decade, and since it was the first area heavily settled in the late 1940s and 1950s, probably lost children who left home for college or to start their own families.

All of Frayser’s census tracts lost population between 1980 and 1990, but most rebounded between 1990 and 2000.

Table 1a shows the seven census tracts created and used for the 1980 and subsequent censuses. This table and those that follow provide a profile of changing demographics in Frayser over the past two decades, 1980 – 2000.

The decline in Frayser’s population between 1980 and 1990 was fairly evenly spread over all census tracts with the exception of 102.1, which registered a modest gain.

Two census tracts gained households in the 1980s (100 and 102.1) with the others having slight losses (see Table 2).

The overall population increase in Frayser between 1990 and 2000, as shown in Table 1a, was caused by a mix of changing household sizes (Table 3) and number of households (as shown in Table 2, 100 and 103 had more households, and the others had fewer households).

<b>Table 3</b>			
<b>Average Household Size</b>			
Census Tract	1980	1990	2000
99			2.70
100			3.07
101.1		2.70	2.86
101.2			2.87
102.1	3.10		3.11
102.2			2.82
103		3.90	3.47
Frayser Planning District	NA	NA	NA
Shelby County			2.60

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing

<b>Table 4</b>							
<b>Race of the Population</b>							
<b>White Population</b>							
	1980	%	1990	%	2000	%	
Census Tract 99	6,658	79.3	5,602	69.4	3,666	45.0	
100	5,610	76.6	3,752	54.3	1,405	18.0	
101.1	6,475	78.4	3,980	52.4	1,661	21.1	
101.2	4,849	73.4	3,466	55.9	1,614	25.7	
102.1	4,845	79.1	2,763	44.2	943	15.0	
102.2	5,863	72.9	3,818	49.8	1,868	24.8	
103	336	13.1	131	5.8	68	3.3	
Frayser Total	34,636	73.2	23,512	52.3	11,225	24.4	

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing

<b>Table 5</b>			
<b>Median Age</b>			
	1980	1990	2000
Census Tract 99	27.3	30.0	28.0
100	27.5	31.0	29.2
101.1	27.2	29.5	25.1
101.2	27.0	29.6	26.1
102.1	25.9	28.1	28.5
102.2	28.4	32.3	31.9
103	18.9	23.5	23.1
Frayser Planning District	NA	NA	NA
Shelby County	27.9	31.2	32.9

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing

Frayser had 1,349 fewer people (Table 1a) and 409 fewer households (Table 2) in 2000 than in 1980. This 20-year trend with declines in the 1980s and gains in the 1990s points to an almost level demand for public and private goods and services. However, the changing

characteristics of the population and households provide a better understanding of citizen needs entering the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The racial profile in Frayser changed dramatically over the past 20 years. In 1980 Frayser's population was about 73% white (almost 80% in three census tracts – 99, 101.1, 102.1); and at the time of the 2000 census Frayser's white population was only around 24% (see Table 4). Census tract 99 (West Frayser) experienced the least transition and in 2000, 45% of the population was white.

The transition to a non-white majority has affected population and housing characteristics.

Often if the racial mix of an area stays unchanged over a period of 20 years, the population would grow older as children leave home and the resident population ages in place. However, with the transition in Frayser, the population actually got younger between 1990 and 2000 after aging between 1980 and 1990, as shown in Table 5.

Between 1990 and 2000 the median age in all of Frayser's census tracts declined with the exception of 102.1, which stayed about the same.

By comparing household size (Table 3) and median age (Table 5) for each census tract, the reasons for the median age change between 1990 and 2000 become evident. Since census tracts 99, 100 and 101.1 had increased household sizes with drops in median age, the new population groups had more children per household. The other census tracts had shrinking household sizes and lower median ages, which suggests younger couples moving to these areas. Census tract 102.1 stayed about the same, with slightly smaller households and a slight increase in the median age.

The number of housing units in Frayser changed slightly over the 1980 – 2000 period as shown in Table 6. In 1980 there were 16,709 units and in 2000 there were 17,000 units, an increase of almost 300 units.

Home ownership is one factor in gauging community stability. In Frayser the number of owner occupied units stayed fairly level over the 20 years between 1980 and 2000, as shown in Table 7. In 1980 10,578 units were owner occupied and in 2000 10,087 units were owner occupied. In 2000 slightly over 60% of the housing units were owner occupied, which is a drop from 63% home ownership in 1980.

The number of rental units dropped slightly, but vacant units showed a significant increase going from 605 in 1980 to 1,312 in 2000. The increase in vacant units was probably caused by vacant multi-family complexes like Watkins Manor and Hawkins Mills Apartments.

The census tract with an increase in home ownership was 100. The other six census tracts had slight drops in homeowners in each of the two decades. This is a trend that will create problems if it continues over the next two decades.

<b>Table 6</b>					
<b>Housing Units</b>					
			% Change		% Change
Census Tract	1980	1990	80-90	2000	90-00
99	3,318	3,337	0.6%	3,347	0.3%
100	2,398	2,477	3.3%	2,685	8.4%
101.1	3,115	3,018	-3.1%	2,981	-1.2%
101.2	2,493	2,490	-0.1%	2,450	-1.6%
102.1	2,029	2,163	6.6%	2,123	-1.8%
102.2	2,749	2,762	0.5%	2,770	0.3%
103	607	618	1.8%	644	4.2%
Frayser Planning District	16,709	16,865	0.9%	17,000	0.8%
Shelby County	286,381	327,796	14.5%	362,954	10.7%

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing

<b>Table 7</b>									
<b>Occupancy and Tenure of Housing</b>									
	1980			1990			2000		
Census Tract	Owner	Renter	Vacant	Owner	Renter	Vacant	Owner	Renter	Vacant
99	1,836	1,300	179	1,794	1,272	271	1,694	1,320	333
100	1,823	517	57	1,815	553	109	1,993	546	146
101.1	1,706	1,287	120	1,535	1,253	230	1,510	1,213	258
101.2	1,369	1,014	110	1,292	997	201	1,234	950	266
102.1	1,472	501	56	1,452	593	118	1,418	595	110
102.2	1,988	696	63	1,943	694	125	1,904	718	148
103	384	203	20	370	206	42	334	259	51
Frayser Planning District	10,578	5,518	605	10,201	5,568	1,096	10,087	5,601	1,312
Shelby County	158,171	111,015	16,988	180,490	123,081	24,225	213,360	125,006	24,588

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing

<b>Table 8</b>						
<b>Median Household Income</b>						
Census Tract	1980	% of County	1990	% of County	2000	% of County
99	13,463	88	19,535	72	25,395	64.0
100	20,451	134	26,454	98	33,047	84.0
101.1	14,503	95	18,871	70	24,891	63.0
101.2	14,397	94	21,019	78	23,054	58.0
102.1	18,822	123	23,425	86	30,220	76.0
102.2	17,813	117	29,780	110	30,869	80.0
103	10,036	66	15,645	58	22,865	58.0
Shelby County	15,289		27,132		39,593	

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing



Another indicator of community well-being is the relative income of the population. Table 8 shows the median household income, 1980 – 2000 for each census tract in comparison to Shelby County.

As shown in Table 8 the median household income for Frayser declined relative to Shelby County during both of the past two decades. In 1980 three of Frayser's census tracts had median household incomes above the median for the County, and the others were at or above 90% of the county with the exception of the northern census tract – 103. By 2000 all Frayser census tracts had median household incomes that had fallen well behind the median for the County. Census tracts 100, 102.1 and 102.2 went from above 100% to 84%, 76% and 80% respectively. The others had fallen steeply as well.

The relative drops in income and the decline in home ownership indicates that Frayser is becoming less stable with loss of investment from owner occupants.

## II. REGIONAL VIEWS OF FRAYSER

### **Regional Systems**

Frayser's future is tied to the larger systems of the Memphis and Shelby County region. Frayser cannot grow and prosper unless there is good connection to Shelby County's region serving facilities. Likewise, Frayser should also be the location of regional facilities that will attract visitors and provide residents with close by facilities.

**Transportation.** Frayser is served by a good network of existing or planned transportation facilities as shown on Map 4. Several facilities offer opportunities to enhance growth – the River Port at Fullen Dock, the Dewitt Spain Airport, the Transit Center, the Loosahatchie Parkway, and various major road extensions to and from Frayser.

Unfortunately the planned outer loop formed by Paul Barrett Parkway (northern Shelby County), Route 385 (eastern Shelby County), and Route 304 (north Mississippi) will pull population growth away from Memphis into surrounding counties and further compete with Frayser for investment dollars.

**Parks.** Currently Frayser does not have any regional parks as shown on Map 5, although Davy Crockett golf course does offer potential to be developed as a regional park.

**Hospitals, Schools, Shopping Centers.** These regional facilities provide a community with two important attributes. First, they provide a high concentration of employment and second they are magnets for visitors, which produces additional investment in the community. Map 6 shows regional facilities in Memphis and Shelby County.

Frayser is the location of only one facility that has region serving potential – the Gill campus of Southwest Community College. This facility can be expanded to serve a large portion of Memphis and northwest Shelby County with a full associates degree plus courses for majors at the bachelors degree level.

**Environment.** Memphis and Shelby County have several sites that contain chemicals potentially harmful to the environment. These sites have been identified by the national government as “superfund” sites because the clean up problem is so severe that massive federal subsidies will be necessary to completely eliminate danger. Fortunately, Frayser does not have any “superfund” sites, although there are clusters both to the north and south of the community as shown on Map 7.

**Growth Boundary and Sewers.** The City of Memphis has established two important policies to direct future growth. The first policy is the sewer extension program, which has identified future service areas for 10 and 15 years as shown on Map 8. These sewer service areas anticipate urban growth north of Frayser, east central and southeast Shelby County. These three areas contain Memphis’ annexation reserve areas also known as the urban growth boundary. Expansion of the Memphis urban area into these unincorporated territories will, along with major roads, continue to pull population away from Frayser and result in a smaller market for Frayser home sellers, developers, and retail merchants.

## Regional Connections

Frayser is served by an abundance of regional transportation, park/recreation, health, education, shopping and employment centers located outside Frayser. These facilities do not provide a magnet for attracting investment and population in Frayser. Further, Frayser suffers from the outward migration of Memphis population to east Shelby County as well as Tipton, Fayette and Desoto Counties aided in part by the construction of regional facilities.

Frayser has the potential to build its own region serving facilities in recreation and education.

- Seek expansion of Davy Crockett property to form Regional Park serving northern Shelby County.
- Seek expansion of offerings by Southwest Tennessee Community College with distance learning opportunities through the University of Memphis.

<b>Table 9</b>					
<b>Frayser Parks</b>					
<b>Facility/Service</b>	<b>Buildings</b>	<b>Acres in Site</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Needs / Expansion Plan</b>
<b>Parks</b>					
Davy Crockett Golf		290.5	18 Hole Golf Course	Frayser District	Create regional park connected to Loosahatchie greenbelt
Trezevant Park	no building	4	undeveloped		Develop as neighborhood park
Litty Park	no building	21	undeveloped		
Rodney Baber	no building	77.22	Softball, Baseball	Frayser District	Add playground equipment, picnic areas and fitness trail
Albertson	no building	10	Ballfield, playground	Neighborhood	Renovate facilities
Vieh Park	no building	28.54	undeveloped		Evaluate as part of new housing development
Grandview Park	no building	13.5	Ballfield, Playground	Neighborhood	
Frayser Park	see Ed Rice Community Center	40.54	Trail, Playground, Baseball, Picnic, Tennis, Pool	Frayser District	Renovate facilities, improve access
Westside Park	no building	9.99	Playground, Ballfield	Neighborhood	Renovate facilities
Kline Park					
Pershing Park	no building	16	undeveloped		Develop as neighborhood park
Frayser High School Park	no building	1.8	undeveloped		
Firestone Park	no building	317	Softball, Football	Frayser District	Improve passive recreation area with picnic, playground and walking trail. Renovate ballfields and restroom facilities. Connect to greenbelt and Davy Crockett.
Shivler Park	no building	10	Ballfield, Picnic, Playground	Neighborhood	Renovate facilities
Georgian Hills Park	no building	19.7	Playground, Trail, Ballfield	Neighborhood	
Pickett Park	see North Frayser Community Center	11.58	undeveloped		Develop as neighborhood park

### III. Community Views of Frayser

#### Current Urban Form

**Roads.** Frayser has a well-defined street system. However, several major roads do not connect to the surrounding region, and narrow roads without sidewalks present safety problems. Map 9 shows the major road system of Frayser with proposed improvements adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in its most recent plan for 2023.

**Public Transportation.** As shown on Map 10, Frayser is currently served by three MATA bus routes (Routes 10, 11, and 62). These routes are evenly spaced and provide adequate connection to the downtown Memphis hub and to employment centers throughout Shelby County.

MATA has proposed a “Transit Center” close to the intersection of Frayser Blvd. and Overton Crossing, which is at the approximate geographic center of Frayser. This transit center would provide a Frayser hub for better connecting Frayser residents with the larger region.

MATA has also identified the ICRR/U.S. 51 corridor as one of three potential light rail commuter rail lines in Shelby County. This LRT line would connect downtown Memphis with Millington and provide another public transit connector for Frayser residents.

The bicycle routes shown on Map 10 are preliminary and are being studied in 2003. The Mississippi River Trail is already marked as a bike route and should be developed as part of Memphis’ riverfront improvement plan.

**Community Facilities.** The public and quasi-public facilities are abundant as shown on Map 11.

**(Parks).** There is a good distribution of parkland with a need for improvements as recommended by Memphis Park Division’s “Facilities Master Plan”. The two community centers are well placed but lack adequate community office and meeting space and need repairs and upgrades to several features. Table 9 lists the parks in Frayser, identifies size and facilities, and presents improvements needed.

Currently, there are six parks that are undeveloped, and three should be developed as neighborhood parks. One of the undeveloped sites, Vieh Park, should be studied for possible development as a site for middle income housing. The developed neighborhood parks should be upgraded with new facilities and features as identified in Table 9.

The three larger parks, Davy Crockett, Firestone, and Rodney Baber should be connected by a greenbelt and upgraded. (see Table 9). Davy Crockett should be expanded into a regional park.

Map 11a shows another view of park facilities and includes a site for a privately developed Botanic Garden and Environmental Sanctuary. The Garden/Sanctuary also helps tie together the greenbelt system. This is an additional regional attraction for Frayser and it should be vigorously supported.

**Table 10  
School Facilities**

<b>Facility/Service</b>	<b>Building Sq. Ft./ Student Capacity</b>	<b>Acres in Site</b>	<b># Service Units</b>	<b>Service Staff</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Pop. Served (Main Building Over Capacity)</b>	<b>Needs / Expansion Plan</b>
<b>Elementary Schools</b>							New Elementary School planned for 2003
Brookemeade (K-6)	5,2991 / 560	9.18 + 11.58 (park)	28 teaching stations (11)	37 teachers/ 17 support	see map	763 (203)	\$1.4 million capital maintenance need
Corning (K-6)	4,7114 / 380	10.2 + 10 (park)	20 teaching stations (3)	24 teachers/ 9 support	see map	417 (37)	\$0.7 million capital maintenance need
Denver (K-6)	4,7093 / 500	22.38 + 10 (park)	26 teaching stations (2)	29 teachers/ 11 support	see map	429 (0)	\$1.1 million capital maintenance need
Frayser (K-6)	4,2797 / 500	54.01 (shared) + 1.8 (park)	26 teaching stations (4)	31 teachers/ 12 support	see map	616 (116)	\$0.6 million capital maintenance need
Georgian Hills (K-6)	4,4786 / 500	17.34 (shared) + 19.7 (park)	25 teaching stations (2)	27 teachers/ 11 support	see map	481 (0)	\$0.8 million capital maintenance need
Grandview Heights (K-6)	59,042 / 750	10.41 + 13.5 (park)	32 teaching stations (2)	39 teachers/ 20 support	see map	800 (50)	\$0.3 million capital maintenance need
Hawkins Mill (K-6)	67,350 / 710	14.05	36 teaching stations (5)	41 teachers/ 20 support	see map	734 ( 24)	\$0.7 million capital maintenance need
Westside (K-6)	49,474 / 550	12.09 (shared) + 9.99 (park)	28 teaching stations (2)	30 teachers/ 14 support	see map	746 (196)	NA
Whitney (K-6)	63,979 / 580	12.43 + 10 (park)	30 teaching stations (5)	37 teachers/ 15 support	see map	516 (0)	\$0.5 million capital maintenance need
Delano Optional (K-6)	34,000 / 300	16.53	17 teaching stations (0)	19 teachers/ 9 support	NA	330 (30)	\$0.8 million capital maintenance need
<b>Jr. Hi./High Schools</b>							
Georgian Hills (7-9)	87,069 / 625	17.34 (shared) + 19.7 (park)	28 teaching stations (2)	30 teachers/ 7 support	see map	622 (0)	\$2.1 million capital maintenance need
Frayser (7-12)	189,648 / 1,375	54.01 (shared) + 1.8 (park)	60 teaching stations (0)	50 teachers/ 7 support	see map	1,172 (0)	\$3.3 million capital maintenance need
Trezevant (7-12)	296,765 / 1,550	24.95	67 teaching stations (0)	60 teachers/ 7 support	see map	1,362 (0)	\$2.4 million capital maintenance need
Westside (7-12)	133,852 / 775	12.09 (shared) + 9.99 (park)	36 teaching stations (0)	28 teachers/ 7 support	see map	682 (0)	NA
Trezevant Vo-Tech	62,456 / ?	10.85	20 teaching stations	28 teachers/ 7 support	NA	?	\$1.1 million capital maintenance need

**(Fire Stations).** There are three fire stations in the Frayser District (Stations 26, 27, and 31). Stations 46, 06, 28, and 15 are responsive to Frayser, but are located outside of the district. The staffing, equipment, and location of fire stations are adequate to serve the needs of Frayser.

**(Schools).** The Frayser community is served by Memphis City schools. There are over 9,300 students attending 15 public schools as shown in Table 10. The schools are well distributed throughout community with various physical problems and space issues.

There are nine regular elementary schools and one optional elementary school. The optional school is Delano Elementary, which is a technology focused school. Its students are from all over the city of Memphis, admitted on a competitive basis. Delano uses the New American School model. Of the 10 elementary schools, seven are operating over their capacity, and a new elementary school in the Sky Lake area, scheduled to open in 2003, should relieve some of the overcrowding.

Frayser has three schools that serve grades 7 – 12. One school, Georgian Hills, serves grades 7 – 9 only. None of these schools operates over capacity at the present time

Trezevant Career and Technology Center is a “vo-tech” school that was named the MEA/Horace Mann Memphis City Schools High School of the year in 2001. Trezevant Vo-Tech students are high school students who have been expelled from other schools. The school focuses on changing problem behavior and giving them technical skills. The school is also open to adults at least 17 years of age who wish to get their GED or to learn a vocation. Trezevant Vo-Tech offers courses in Auto Mechanics, Collision Repair, Computer Repair, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Diesel Mechanics, Fashion and Fabrics, HVAC and Refrigeration, Industrial Co-op, IMS/Business Technology, Metals Technology and Residential Construction. The school is affiliated with Business Professionals of America and Family, Career and Community Leader of America.

As shown on Table 10 the Frayser public schools have capital maintenance needs with an estimated cost of approximately \$15.8 million to correct deficiencies.

Memphis public schools have an “Adopt-a-School” program, which allows private, quasi-public and faith-based organizations to donate funds to the school of their choice. Sponsors in Frayser have included Wendy’s, Chik-Filla, Kroger, The RiverKings, Kiwanis, COGIC, and The Church on the River.

The Tennessee’s Department of Education recommended that ALMOST ALL of Frayser’s schools be put “on Notice” as of September 20, 2001 – the only ones not on the list are Grandview Heights Elementary, Westside Elementary, Delano Optional and Trezevant Vo-Tech (Tennessee Anytime web page, 2001). According to the web site, the “schools placed on Notice have one year to improve before being placed on probation. After two years on probation, schools could face State takeover” (2001). 64 of the state’s 98 on Notice schools were in the Memphis school system.

**(Adult Education)**. The Gill Center Branch of Southwest Tennessee Community College is located at 3833 Mountain Terrace Street. The building contains 22,262 square feet with an 11,430 square foot gym. There are 14 classrooms, 1 computer lab and 1 biology lab. The facility is served by 6 full time faculty and 24 part time faculty.

The University of Memphis is currently working with Southwest Community College on a partnership agreement to share facilities and to refer students for remedial and development courses. The University is also gearing up to provide writing centers, mathematics tutorials, science supplemental education and computer assistance in refreshing knowledge for students. The Gill Center could play an important role in the University/Community college partnership in serving the education needs of the Frayser Community

**(Library)**. The Frayser Branch of Memphis/Shelby Public Library System is located at 3712 Argonne. This branch has computers to access information online, with one computer dedicated to accessing the Gale Group database (for literature searching). The branch offers the largest selection of Christian Fiction and Auto Repair Manuals in the Memphis public library system. They also have movies, books on tape and home schooling materials.

The Frayser Library is small with 6,400 square feet of space holding about 30,604 circulating items with a staff of 8.5. The Frayser Library is 16<sup>th</sup> in size of the 22 branches in the system, 11<sup>th</sup> in circulation, 7<sup>th</sup> in user counts, and 2<sup>nd</sup> in program attendance. The most recent data shows that the Frayser Library has almost 167,000 annual users. The Frayser branch is not centrally located to serve the Frayser community. There is a clear need for the construction of a larger library to serve the Frayser population.

**Private Land Use**. Frayser is predominantly a single-family residential community as shown on Map 12.

There are a few conflicts between commercial/industrial and residential areas but generally the land use pattern is conducive to a good quality of life. While the commercial areas are well spaced, strip commercial development extends beyond well-defined nodes.

Vacant or marginal commercial and industrial sites do not hurt the land use pattern of Frayser, but their presence indicates a loss of investment and job opportunities and their appearance signals decline and neglect.

The multifamily apartments and duplex concentrations are appropriately located, although several are visually unattractive especially the vacant units, and these units detract from the overall appeal of several neighborhoods.



**Vacant Land By Zoning.** Vacant land offers opportunities for infill development that will create population growth and help attract businesses to reverse economic declines suffered in the past two decades. Map 13 shows the vacant land in Frayser and identifies the current zoning categories.

In most cases the zoning would allow an appropriate use of the vacant land. However, several areas have zoning categories that could create incompatible land use patterns and lead to further decline.

As shown on the map the land zoned Agricultural is logical given the location in the flood plain of the three rivers surrounding Frayser. However, several flood plain areas are zoned for either Multi-family or Heavy Industry, and actual development would destroy a natural asset.

Two areas are inappropriately zoned Heavy Industry in the east central portion of Frayser at the entry to Frayser from Raleigh. Both areas are adjacent to residential areas.

**Overview of Current Conditions.** The rolling hills and wooded areas create positive rural atmosphere for Frayser. The floodplains of Loosahatchie, Wolf and Mississippi Rivers provide natural boundaries and scenic beauty for the community; and, several vistas along bluffs overlooking floodplain provide for unparalleled views of the surrounding areas. These attributes provide Frayser with very good potential over the next several decades.

As shown on Map 14, Frayser has well defined commercial nodes at intersections of major roads. These roads provide connection to the broader region and create several opportunities for attractive gateways in and out of Frayser. However, several roads have dead ends or restricted flows to other areas and thus reduce the potential for commerce and revitalization of declining areas.

Also shown on Map 14, there are a set of place based strengths and weaknesses, which can be targets for preservation and improvement ( i.e. Rodney Baber Park, Ed Rice Community) and elimination (dumpsites, abandoned housing).

## **Framework Plan**

The Framework Plan, as shown on Map 15, presents a view of Frayser's major shaping elements. These features will shape and guide future development in Frayser.

**Environment and Land Use.** The current development pattern of Frayser should be retained and strengthened with select infill on vacant land. Rezoning should be used to eliminate potential development problems throughout Frayser. In particular, new zoning should be created for vacant land where existing zoning would allow the following: a) commercial development not a part of existing commercial node; b) heavy industrial next to an established residential area; and c) industrial and residential development in flood plain.

**Pathways.** Frayser’s road system will require adjustments to improve safety and connect internal development with the broader region. Major roads should be extended and connected to regional road system to provide better access to the community, and narrow, winding roads should be upgraded with curbs and sidewalks for improved neighborhood safety. The key improvements include upgrading the capacity and safety to the following:

1. Overton Crossing (Watkins to Clifton).
2. Hawkins Mill (Overton Crossing to Rangeline).
3. Rangeline (St Elmo to Hawkins Mill).

Extension of roads to connect to surrounding districts include:

1. McLean from James to Clifton to link Frayser with mid-town Memphis.
2. St. Elmo eastward across the Illinois Central Rail Road tracks to link to Raleigh.
3. Frayser Blvd, Overton Crossing, and Rangeline to connect with new Loosahatchie Parkway.

Finally, the community should actively pursue the construction of the Loosahatchie Parkway as part of the I-69 route.

**Commercial Nodes.** Frayser’s commercial areas should be strengthened without extending their compact character. Zoning outside of existing commercial areas should be restricted. Market studies should establish business potential, and both financial incentives and physical improvements should be offered to attract new businesses to existing commercial nodes.

**Gateways.** Frayser’s roads and road improvements provide evenly spaced entryways to visitors and residents alike. These points of entry should be visually appealing and provide a clear orientation for finding shopping, living, and recreation opportunities in the Frayser Community. Gateway enhancement should include landscaping and signage to establish a feeling of welcome and comfort for any traveler.

Gateway improvements should be made at points of entry to Frayser on Second Street, North Thomas (U.S. 51), Watkins, McLean and Hollywood along the southern boundary. Gateway improvements should be made at Watkins/North Thomas on the west and at Frayser Blvd./ICRR on the east. Later, with extensions of major roads (Frayser Blvd., Overton Crossing, Rangeline, and St. Elmo), carefully designed gateways should be established.

**Greenbelt.** The floodplains of the three rivers surrounding Frayser should be permanently preserved to conserve the beauty of these natural areas, to provide for flood control, and along select paths, to offer recreational opportunities. The greenbelt should connect Rodney Baber Park on the south to the new Botanic Garden to Firestone Park on the west to Davy

Crocket Park on the north with points of public access established at appropriate intervals. Trails for pedestrians and bicyclists should be constructed over the entire length of the greenbelt with the aim of creating both short and long distance running, cycling, and walking opportunities. Key bluff top vistas should be identified and public overlooks should be established as part of the pedestrian, bicycle and greenbelt system.

**Opportunity Areas.** Frayser’s neighborhoods have many strong features with scattered problems of neglect and disinvestment. All neighborhoods should receive attention from the City of Memphis and neighborhood leaders to insure safety, beauty and comfortable living.

Three areas, however, offer opportunities for attracting increased investment that will spin off to other areas. Each area is unique and presents different potentials for improvement. Each is the subject of more detailed discussion in Chapter V of this plan.

The first area is at the northeast corner of Frayser and is known as Rangeline. This area consists of single-family homes that are located west of the Davy Crocket golf course. The vacant Hawkins Mill public housing project, which will be completely redeveloped by the City of Memphis, is located in the area. Two important public facilities serve the area, in addition to the golf course – the Hawkins Mill Elementary School and the North Frayser Community Center operated by the Parks Department.

The second area is West Frayser, which contains several historic neighborhoods established with the growth of the International Harvester factory. This area also contains the U.S. Highway 51 (North Thomas) corridor and the potential I-69 corridor along the Loosahatchie Parkway. This area offers potential for increased employment concentrations at the old Harvester site, the Fullen Dock complex, the new Fire and Police training facilities at Firestone Park, and the industrial area along old Millington Road.

The final opportunity area is the historic Rugby Park area. This is one of the most scenic areas in Memphis, and its historic road system and vacant land offer a rare opportunity to establish new middle-income housing development. The extension of McLean Blvd. from James to Clifton will provide a new gateway into Frayser and open up land for development while enhancing existing commercial areas.

## IV. SPECIAL STUDIES

### Housing

The most important asset of a community is the choice of affordable housing for its citizens. Affordable housing should be available in a wide range of prices for both owners and renters. A community with a limited value range, particularly at the lower cost range, is likely to be unsustainable, since there would be limited choice and thus limited market when households migrate.

Tables 11 and 12 show housing trends in Frayser between 1980 and 2000.

**Current Conditions and Trends.** The total number of housing units in Frayser increased only slightly after 1980. At the 2000 census, there were 17,000 housing units in the Frayser planning district, an increase of 291 units, 1980-2000. In 2000, 15,688 of the 17,000 units were occupied giving Frayser an occupancy rate of 92%. Of the remaining vacant housing units, 565 were for rent and 279 were for sale.

The area with the greatest increase in the number of housing units is in Census Tract 100, located south of Hawkins Mill Road and north of St. Elmo, between Rangeline and the Illinois Central Railroad. The median value of housing in this area is \$48,200.

<b>Table 11 Frayser Housing Units</b>						
Census			% Change		% Change	
Tract	1980	1990	80-90	2000	90-00	
99	3,318	3,337	1%	3,347	0%	
100	2,398	2,477	3%	2,685	8%	
101.1	3,115	3,018	-3%	2,981	-1%	
101.2	2,493	2,490	0%	2,450	-2%	
102.1	2,029	2,163	7%	2,123	-2%	
102.2	2,749	2,762	0%	2,770	0%	
103	607	618	2%	644	4%	
	16,709	16,865	1%	17,000	1%	

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing

Table 12 Housing Vacancy Rates		1980		1990		2000	
Census	Housing	Vacancy	Housing	Vacancy	Housing	Vacancy	
Tract	Units	Rate	Units	Rate	Units	Rate	
99	3,315	2%	3,337	8%	3,347	10%	
100	2,397	4%	2,477	4%	2,685	5%	
101.1	3,113	4%	3,018	8%	2,981	9%	
101.2	2,493	3%	2,490	8%	2,450	11%	
102.1	2,029	2%	2,163	5%	2,123	5%	
102.2	2,747	3%	2,762	5%	2,770	5%	
103	607	5%	618	7%	644	8%	

Source: U. S. Census of Population and Housing

**Problem Properties.** While the Frayser housing stock consists primarily of solid, relatively affordable, structurally sound homes; pockets of housing exist throughout the district that will require considerable repair or redevelopment. Apartment complexes such as Hawkins Mill and Watkins Manor as well as both clustered and sporadically located single-family units are in need of significant rehabilitation or redevelopment.

Some of the most dilapidated housing conditions in Frayser exist in census tract 103, north of Hawkins Mill Road. The housing units in this area are similar in their need for considerable repair. These units are 92% occupied and the median value of homes in this area is \$29,000. Several residential units exhibit chipped paint or damaged siding, deteriorating fencing, structural damage to door and window frames, and the need for other environmentally based repairs. The per capita income for this tract was \$4,292, making these residents eligible for various programs through the City of Memphis.

The Hawkins Mill Apartment Complex, the only public housing units in Frayser, consists of 79 units constructed in 1972. The Hawkins Mill Complex is being gradually vacated for the purposes of redeveloping the entire complex. When the vacations are complete, the units will be demolished and rebuilt.



In the late 1980s, Watkins Manor Apartments were closed and 165 Section 8 households relocated due to foreclosure by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The foreclosure was a result of substandard conditions in the complex. Recent renovations have resulted in reopening Watkins Manor.



Other Multi-family apartments near the northwest corner of Frayser Boulevard and Overton Crossing are in significant need of renovation or demolition and redevelopment. The pictures here depict the appearance of these units.

The picture below is an example of the housing being constructed in December 2001. These small red brick, single-family units are representative of the attractive, apparently well built homes in this area.



**Opportunities for Growth.** Opportunities for growth exist in three major categories – rehabilitation, redevelopment, and new housing infill.

Rehabilitation is defined as the upgrading of a building or home previously in a deteriorating, substandard condition. Residential improvement or rehabilitation has the potential to make a significant impact in the quality of housing in Frayser. The need for these improvements is great and exists on a broad scale. Tools for achieving these improvements include low-interest rehabilitation loans to community groups and property owners. The residential units of census tract 103 would benefit substantially from these types of loans and other rehabilitation programs.

Redevelopment would consist of the demolition of existing structures and subsequent new construction. The Hawkins Mill Complex reflects one such opportunity in Frayser. According to Robert Lipscomb, executive director of the Memphis Housing Authority, local residents convinced city officials that redevelopment was a better option than renovation. The redevelopment of Hawkins Mill will cost approximately \$7 million.

Infill housing is the development of new housing on scattered vacant sites in a well-developed area. Current infill housing development is taking place in the Rangeline neighborhood area. Other neighborhoods containing vacant lots are scattered throughout Frayser. If quality well-built homes are constructed on these vacant lots, neighborhoods

could benefit both aesthetically and financially, through increased property values. Specific areas in which infill housing would be effective include the Rugby Hills, and Brookmeade areas, which contain a large number of vacant residential lots.

**Programs for Development.** There are a variety of housing programs and organizations with capacity to greatly improve the housing situation in Frayser.

The **Frayser Community Development Corporation (FCDC)** is the lead non-profit developer for the Frayser Planning District. The FCDC has received funding from the City of Memphis and from the Memphis Community Development Partnership (MCDP) to create a staff and to build its capacity for development. FCDC has developed strategic goals and a work plan to position itself as an effective vehicle for producing affordable housing. One of its key tasks during 2003 is the preparation of a 5-year plan that targets specific housing projects in Frayser.

**Other non-profit organizations** such as New Day Cooperatives Inc., United Housing Inc., and Neighborhood Housing Opportunities, operate on a citywide basis and have a presence in Frayser. United Housing, Inc. (UHI) offers a variety of programs that support the revitalization of neighborhoods through development, education and affordable lending. The HOPE Plus loan program administers down payment assistance loans to low-moderate income individuals.

United Housing Inc. has requested a \$1.8 million loan from the City of Memphis to develop an affordable housing rehabilitation continuum. UHI's NeighborWorks Full-cycle Lending is a program by which UHI provides homeownership assistance through a process of building partnerships, pre-purchase education, flexible mortgages, providing technical assistance, and post-purchase counseling. By incorporating multiple levels of community stakeholders and a comprehensive approach, UHI has addressed some of the barriers faced by prospective low-income homeowners.

One of the more unique ownership assistance programs has been initiated by Neighborhood Housing Opportunities, which is the owner of River Bend Apartments. In addition to homeownership education, NHO has started a program by which a portion of the rent paid by River Bend tenants is applied toward a down payment for purchase of a home.

The **City of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development** uses Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds established under the Housing Act of 1974 to create affordable housing. Grants and loans can be used for both the physical development of housing in Frayser as well as to initiate community based social programs, including those designed to provide education and counseling on home ownership issues.

As part of its 2002-2004 consolidated plan, the City of Memphis is offering low & moderate income housing assistance to community groups as well as individuals for both rental and homeowner assistance.



The City of Memphis administers federal HOME funds, which are designed to fund a wide range of activities that involve the construction, purchase or rehabilitation of rental housing and homeownership.

Two of the most successful programs offered by the City of Memphis are the down payment assistance program and the homeowners' housing rehabilitation program.

The City of Memphis and Shelby County in an effort to offset disinvestments and decline in inner city neighborhoods have adopted a Balanced Growth Plan, which provides incentives to increase investment in older neighborhoods. One provision of this program is the Middle-Income Housing Program. Under this program, the City will provide or improve infrastructure in order to entice private builders to build middle-income housing in target areas. Middle-income housing includes homes valued between \$90,000 and \$170,000.

The **Tennessee Housing Development Agency** is a statewide agency that provides low interest loans for first time homebuyers. In addition THDA provides a limited number of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to provide funds for leveraging development of affordable housing.

**Recommendations.** The preparation of a 5-year Plan by the Frayser Community Development Corporation offers a real opportunity to establish a comprehensive, coordinated, and continuous approach to improving housing conditions in Frayser. The Plan should have strategies and specific projects that produce housing for low, moderate, and middle income households.

The Frayser CDC should establish close working relationships with the City of Memphis, United Housing, Neighborhood Housing Opportunities, THDA, and other developers to establish a complementary and targeted approach to housing problems.

The various finance assistance programs should be blended to create a complete package for the range of housing needed in Frayser – owner, renter, rehabilitation, redevelopment, and infill. There should be a balance among income groups and geography to avoid a concentration of low-income units.

The HCD and THDA should have key staff people who regularly visit Frayser and hold “open house” meetings to explain their programs to potential home buyers and home renovators. The FCDC should monitor results and help target assistance.

The Frayser CDC should establish an on-going relationship with United Housing and Neighborhood Housing Opportunities to target areas for maximum impact in select neighborhoods.

The City of Memphis should work with United Housing in selecting vacant land for its Middle Income Housing Program. The combination of Vieh Park and the United Housing property on James Road east of Rugby should be targeted for a planned development.

MHA should review its Section 8 vouchers in Frayser and establish a target number of units at scattered locations in concert with the 5-Year Plan of the Frayser CDC.

With assistance from the Frayser CDC, each neighborhood should conduct a lot by lot survey of housing conditions to create a beginning database of structural and environmental problems. Neighborhood residents teamed with student interns can be trained to conduct the surveys.

The results of the survey will become the beginning of an on-going monitoring program and will support the 5-Year Plan for (a) annual paint-up, fix-up, clean-up campaigns, (b) targeted housing code enforcement, and (c) FCDC development projects, which include City of Memphis, State of Tennessee, and other non-profit/profit developers.

### **Economic Development**

Economic development aims to create new and expanded businesses in communities where disinvestments has caused decline in commerce, which results in marginal, at-risk businesses, and abandoned buildings.

Successful economic development requires a concerted effort and partnership among government, non-profit organizations, and private business entities. Frayser is a community needing comprehensive economic development policies that will stimulate a renewal of commerce.

After economic expansion in the three (3) decades following World War II, Frayser began a long and gradual decline. First, that decline was started by the Interstate highway system that captured traffic from the commercial corridor formed by U.S. Highway 51. Next the construction of regional shopping malls in Raleigh hastened the decline, especially for community shopping centers like Northgate.

A further erosion of retail activity in Frayser occurred in the mid-1980s with the closing of the International Harvester and Firestone manufacturing plants. The loss of these larger employers and the lack of replacement jobs took customers away from Frayser businesses.

In the late 1980s and 1990s the “big-box” retailers like Walmart, K-Mart, Target, and Home Depot among others, continued the erosion of commerce in Frayser. K-Mart did locate in Frayser for a period of time along with the Treasury Department Store, but both of these discount retailers suffered at the national level, and their Frayser stores were closed. The former K-Mart and Treasury buildings remain vacant today.

<b>Table 13</b>							
<b>Frayser Marketing Analysis</b>							
	<b>Retail Sales</b>	<b>Inflation Adjustment</b>	<b>Assumed Capture</b>	<b>Sales per</b>	<b>Sq. Ft.</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b># Supportable</b>
<b>Retail Category</b>	<b>Potential</b>	<b>Rate 1.086503</b>	<b>Rate of 30%</b>	<b>Sq. Ft.*</b>	<b>Sales Space</b>	<b>GLA*</b>	<b>Stores</b>
Retail Nurseries & Garden Supply Stores	\$459,424.00	\$499,165.55	\$149,749.67	NA	NA	NA	NA
Department Stores (Excl. Leased Depts.)	\$26,001,037.00	\$28,250,204.70	\$8,475,061.41	\$158.41	53,501	28,875	1.85
Variety & Discount General Mdse. Stores	\$5,526,960.00	\$6,005,058.62	\$1,801,517.59	\$106.99	16,838	80,477	0.21
Meat & Seafood Markets	\$433,900.00	\$471,433.65	\$141,430.10	\$279.84	505	2,460	0.21
Retail Bakeries	\$282,853.00	\$307,320.63	\$92,196.19	\$218.68	422	1,606	0.26
Men's & Boys Apparel	\$599,214.00	\$651,047.81	\$195,314.34	\$248.64	786	3,116	0.25
Women's Clothing & Specialty	\$3,329,841.00	\$3,617,882.24	\$1,085,364.67	\$178.17	6,092	2,725	2.24
Family Clothing Stores	\$3,011,779.00	\$3,272,306.92	\$981,692.08	\$192.73	5,094	6,900	0.74
Shoe Stores	\$2,488,350.00	\$2,703,599.74	\$811,079.92	\$176.20	4,603	3,432	1.34
Furniture Stores	\$4,404,710.00	\$4,785,730.63	\$1,435,719.19	\$192.00	7,478	4,860	1.54
Homefurnishing Stores	\$2,590,444.00	\$2,814,525.18	\$844,357.55	\$149.66	5,642	4,200	1.34
Electronics	\$1,856,544.00	\$2,017,140.63	\$605,142.19	\$203.72	2,970	2,250	1.32
Liquor Stores	\$954,449.00	\$1,037,011.70	\$311,103.51	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sporting Goods	\$925,130.00	\$1,005,156.52	\$301,546.96	\$159.72	1,888	5,133	0.37
Book Stores	\$1,156,937.00	\$1,257,015.52	\$377,104.66	\$179.13	2,105	5,612	0.38
Jewelry Stores	\$1,814,266.00	\$1,971,205.45	\$591,361.64	\$361.22	1,637	1,355	1.21
Hobby, Toy & Game Shops	\$976,178.00	\$1,060,620.33	\$318,186.10	\$102.66	3,099	2,400	1.29
Sewing, Needlework & Piecegoods	\$484,947.00	\$526,896.37	\$158,068.91	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: "Memphis Retail Potential Study," REDC, The University of Memphis, 1999.

\*"Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers," Urban Land Institute, 2001.

The future of commerce in Frayser will depend on a number of factors:

- (a.) New housing construction for owner-occupied middle income households
- (b.) Regional attractions like parks and educational facilities
- (c.) Public subsidy of new and expanded business activity
- (d.) Improved road system that increases traveler markets
- (e.) Workforce readiness programs for current Frayser residents

The following is an assessment of current retail potential in Frayser.

**Retail Potential.** There are 10 distinct shopping districts in Frayser. Most of these contain a mix of businesses that are responsive to localized neighborhood markets. Two of the shopping districts are located adjacent to Interstate 40 and have potential for traveler-oriented businesses (Watkins/I-40 and Hollywood/I-40). (See maps 19 and 20).

The original “community” shopping center, Northgate, (Map 21) was developed in the 1950s to serve the growing Frayser area along with the traffic entering Memphis from the north. This shopping center lost its retail position with the creation of new shopping areas in east Frayser, the aforementioned regional mall in Raleigh, and the shift of traffic to the interstate. Today, Northgate is largely vacant, but serves a fairly good neighborhood function. Consideration should be given to adaptive redevelopment for housing with a downsizing of retail space.

The remaining seven shopping centers (maps 22-28) are well spaced and are capturing neighborhood markets with grocery stores, inexpensive general merchandise businesses, automotive related businesses, and fast food restaurants.

Although Frayser has had a decline in retail activity over the past two decades, there is potential for growth in the future.

A study prepared by the Regional Economic Development Center at The University of Memphis identifies the potential for retail trade.

As shown in Table 13, there are retail gaps in Frayser for several business sectors. This means that given the incomes and buying power of Frayser residents, there is a market for new or expanded businesses in the categories shown.

**Resources Available.** There are a variety of tools and resources available to help stimulate economic development in Frayser.

**(Local Organizations).** Existing organizations have been given the power to assist Frayser’s economic development efforts:

- Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) – Created by state legislation, the CRA has prepared a work program that targets Frayser for special planning and business incentives. The CRA, working with the Frayser CDC, has the power to condemn land for public purposes and make land available for redevelopment. The CRA can issue bonds to finance redevelopment and establish “tax increment financing” (TIF) districts to repay the bonds.

- Industrial Development Board (IDB) – The Memphis and Shelby County IDB can grant tax freezes for a period of years on property subject to job creating new development. The IDB can also issue low-interest industrial development bonds and have the new business pay back the bonds in the form of “rent” on the new development. (The Health, Educational, and Housing Facility Board can offer the same incentives on certain types of development.)

**(Federal Incentives).** Several census tracts in Frayser have been designated for special incentives by the federal government:

- HUB Zones – Under this program businesses located in certain census tracts can receive bonus points under the federal government’s procurement program. This means that companies located in HUB zones are given an advantage when bidding on purchases made by federal government agencies. Census tract 102.3 in north Frayser is a designated HUB zone. This includes property adjacent to U.S. Highway 51 and Old Millington Road that has industrial development potential.
- New Market Tax Credits – This program allows a local organization such as the Frayser CDC to apply for designation as a Community Development Entity (CDE). Once certified, the Frayser CDC can attract equity investors who will receive tax credits (up to 39% of the investment) when funds are invested in a business located in qualified census tracts. Frayser has five (5) census tracts that qualify – 99, 101.1, 101.2, 102.1, and 103. These areas contain commercial and industrial sites that have the potential for this program.

**(Coordinated Response).** Perhaps the best resource for Frayser’s economic development will be the ability to coordinate complementary responses. The Frayser CDC is posed to accomplish the following:

- Organization – Investigation should be made to determine the efficacy of a “Business Improvement District” in all or part of Frayser. A BID is set up as a business association in which members assess themselves fees for public improvements.
- Design Enhancement – Improving the appearance of commercial areas with signage, landscaping, façade renovations, pedestrian friendly upgrades, and traffic calming can drastically enhance market potential.
- Economic Restructuring – Expanded market studies should identify specific businesses that will keep Frayser residents “shopping at home” plus attract new customers, particularly at key highway locations. The market study should not only update buying power and

business gaps, but should also focus on resident shopping habits and desires. The study should also look at business to business expenditures to determine if money now leaving Frayser can be retained.

- Promotion – A coordinated promotion plan among Frayser businesses and the Frayser CDC should be prepared. The plan should include specific business recruitment strategies based on the expanded market study; and an overall advertising campaign for attracting customers for Frayser’s businesses should be designed and implemented.

**The K-Mart Building.** Special attention should be given to the vacant K-Mart building adjacent to the intersection of Overton Crossing and Frayser Boulevard. This building with its central location to 45,000 Frayser residents offers a tremendous opportunity for achieving multiple needs outlined in this comprehensive plan.

In 2002, a study was prepared by the Special Projects Studio, Graduate Program in City & Regional Planning at The University of Memphis. The studio class determined that the K-Mart building contains 86,010 square feet with structural columns on 30-foot centers. The total building height is 22 feet with drop ceilings at 14 feet. This site contains 7.52 acres with 448 parking spaces and is zoned as a Planned Unit Development (PUD), allowing a retail department store with no free standing signage.

The size of the building, its open architecture, its location, and ample amount of parking are features that allow the potential for subdividing the building space for multiple tenants.

A review of the Frayser needs and market potential suggest the following uses of the K-Mart building:

- Family style restaurant with meeting rooms.
- New branch library.
- Government offices including the mayor’s citizen service center, mini-precinct and code enforcement among other satellite government services.
- Civic organizations including Frayser Community Association, Frayser Community Development Corporation, and others.
- Community Resource Center for residents to use for workforce development and to house the Frayser Design Center, which will produce detailed plans for housing developments, commercial revitalization, and community enhancement projects.

The family restaurant and expanded library have been identified as significant needs in Frayser. These entities can serve as anchors for the retail businesses to be identified.

The combination of government agencies and civic organizations will provide a critical mass of public service outreach that will create the one thing Frayser has lacked from its beginning –  
A Community Civic Center.

There is strong promise that a vacant, plain building can be transformed into a beautiful center of community service and gathering. The building's façade can be outfitted with windows and entrances that will be a symbol of Frayser's resurgence as a vibrant community.

To this end, a task force of potential users should be created by the Frayser Community Development Corporation and the City of Memphis. The task force should be supplied with expertise to explore alternatives and prepare a plan to establish:

1. A public-private organization to acquire and redevelop the building;
2. building designs that respond to user needs and market potentials;
3. financing arrangements; and,
4. management arrangements.

The task force should report its findings to the FCDC and City of Memphis with specific steps and an implementation schedule.

### **Community Enhancement**

This special study is intended to provide a framework for the physical enhancement of public spaces in Frayser. The purpose of the community enhancement is:

- To create a unified, harmonious and high-quality visual environment, thereby identifying Frayser as a special place with a unique identity.
- To promote "public pride" in the community.
- To establish a stronger sense of place.
- To support neighborhood and commercial revitalization.

**Current Conditions.** Frayser neighborhood housing is of a traditional style popular in postwar America. Deciduous trees pleasantly shade most neighborhood streets, although age, storms have taken their toll in recent years. In some locations there is a lack of curbs, gutters, and sidewalks, and problems with litter, poor street maintenance, and improperly designed dead-end streets.



Auto repair and equipment storage yards are a major problem in Frayser. The adjoining picture shows a business just behind the Alta Vista neighborhood welcome sign. This business at the neighborhood entrance is detracting and should be cleaned up or screened with help of trees and bushes.

The picture below shows the multi-family housing complex opposite the Westside High School. To avoid

multiple entries and increase safety, the complex has a barbwire fence, but unfortunately barbwire is a very unsightly way of protecting the complex.

Storing cars on vacant lots is a very common scene in Frayser making many of the vacant spaces junkyards that become dumping sites.

Commercial areas are often cluttered with competing signs and unsightly overhead wires. The commercial areas, while fairly compact, lack clear identity and pedestrian-automobile conflicts are evident.



At the points that major arteries enter Frayser, there is a lack of identity and beauty for welcoming visitors and residents.





Many of the unsightly features throughout Frayser can be addressed by code enforcement or volunteer assistance to property owners in cleaning up their property. The following sections provide concepts for enhancing commercial nodes, gateways, and corridors.



**Commercial Design.** Commercial centers often lack a clear definition of space for pedestrians and automobiles. Curb cuts are misplaced and traffic flow is impeded by conflicts between cars moving through an area and cars entering and exiting parking lots. There is a lack of connection and comfort between individual commercial parcels.

Map 16 presents ideas for enhancing commercial centers. The main theme is to enhance commercial areas as comfortable destinations for shoppers. The creation of traffic islands, increased curb and controlled access points, and landscaping provide a softening to these centers and provide a unifying identity currently missing for commercial strips.

**Community and Neighborhood Gateway Enhancement.** When a major pathway crosses the edge of a district, a gateway is created. Gateways provide a positive or a negative image for the larger area. Improvement of Frayser gateways should be considered at the following locations:



- Thomas/Watkins
- Thomas at Stage/ I-240 exit
- Overton Crossing/ Watkins at I-240
- McLean/Stage
- Hollywood/I-240 exit
- North Second/ Whitney
- Frayser Blvd./ Hollywood
- Stage/ Hollywood

Examples of gateway enhancement are depicted on Map 17. These examples show how welcome signs, tree plantings, and flowers can define community and neighborhood entrances and add beauty to improve public reactions to the entire Frayser area.

**Corridor Design.** The recommendations outlined for corridor enhancement are shown on Map 18, which shows the location and design character of special corridors. Additional detailed design will be needed on a project-by-project basis to deal with more technical aspects of the project, more coordination with utilities, city/county/state agencies and adjacent property owners. Two special corridors are shown – McLean Approach and Memorial Drive (U.S. Highway 51, James to Watkins).

McLean would be extended to meet Overton Crossing at Whitney forming a gateway between I-40 and James. This extension would decrease the traffic flow through the Rugby neighborhood and provide a new corridor extending into the center of Frayser. The McLean approach would be landscaped with a row of trees and the streetlights would have welcome signs with characteristics similar to the gateway welcome signs.

A tree trail beginning at the Vietnam Memorial, which was started and not completed, can add significant enhancement to Frayser's gateway at Highway 51 and Watkins. The tree trail would extend to James Road, built along Thomas. One memorial at James and Highway 51 intersection can create a new gateway to west Frayser. The second, just north of Frayser and Highway 51 intersection, can establish a focal point and landmark for west Frayser neighborhoods and commercial areas.

## **V. OPPORTUNITY AREA STUDIES**

### **Rugby Hills**

Rugby Hills neighborhood is a modest residential community in south Frayser. Overton Crossing Street runs through the middle of the neighborhood, curving through lots with large trees and houses set back on hills on either side of the road. The neighborhood is bounded by Watkins Street to the west, vacant land to the east, Whitney Avenue to the north, and James Road to the south. There are two small commercial areas to the north and south of the residential area, at Overton Crossing and Watkins/James and at Overton Crossing and Clifton. The east side along Watkins has some multi-family apartments, but the majority are single-family dwellings.

Map 29, "Land use", shows a larger opportunity area east of Rugby Hills that includes large vacant parcels north of James road and a newer neighborhood close to Rangeline/Hollywood.

**Current Conditions and Trends.** According to 2000 census data, there are 1,920 residents in 731 households in Rugby Hills. Approximately 55 of the 731 (about 7%) are vacant houses. A windshield survey found mostly fair housing conditions, with several homes in need of minor repair. The houses are primarily wood-frame or sided. The neighborhood has a definite “rural” character, due to overgrown vacant lots and the lack of sidewalks or gutters. The biggest environmental concern is the abundance of parked cars in a majority of yards.

Commercial areas are in fair to poor condition, with the pavement in the parking areas in bad condition. All electrical lines in Frayser are above-ground. This, added to the lack of signage and other design controls, makes views cluttered and unattractive in the commercial areas.

The Rugby Hills neighborhood has suffered from a distinct lack of attention over the years. It has the potential to become a very attractive area, with close-knit street patterning and an abundance of shade trees, but it is currently overgrown and shabby.

Overton Crossing above the Rugby neighborhood is a straight, wide, 4-lane street, but it becomes a curving two-lane street that bisects the neighborhood and destroys its continuity. The street is used by motorists exiting I-40 and going into central Frayser. Despite the posted speed limit of 35 mph, the width of the road allows a fast traffic flow which is disruptive to the unity of the neighborhood. Improvements to the Rugby portion of Overton Crossing are necessary to straighten portions of the street and cover open drainage ditches. However, this road segment should remain a neighborhood collector street. Traffic calming and alternate routes for central Frayser traffic are needed.

Up until the late 1990s, the City of Memphis had intended to connect McLean Street to Overton Crossing. This would route traffic away from the residential portion of Rugby and give Frayser another entrance via McLean, a very scenic way to approach the community.

Map 30 shows the areas where attention should be focused in any future development projects. These areas present opportunities for strengthening the entire south side of Frayser and creating growth potential, greatly benefiting the entire community.

First, the two commercial areas should be altered by community enhancing projects to include landscaping, gateway signage, and improvements to the commercial areas to create an inviting appearance. New businesses oriented to interstate travel should be recruited for the Watkins/I-40 area.

Second, the Rugby neighborhood should be targeted for housing rehabilitation and infill with complementary style housing.

Finally, the vacant land between Rugby and Mountain Terrace should be planned as a single unit. There are approximately six large parcels and nine smaller parcels which are vacant. These should be combined under single development control.

**Concept Plan.** The future development pattern of the Rugby Hills Opportunity Area is shown on Map 31.

The main features of this concept include: new and improved major and minor streets; extension of the Rugby neighborhood eastward; creation of a new neighborhood in the large vacant land area with a new neighborhood park; and upgrading of the commercial nodes. A portion of the Frayser greenbelt and trail system is shown on both sides of Rodney Baber Park, which would be an access point for the trail system.

The new street system would provide the framework for development. The extension of McLean Boulevard would form the boundary for Rugby and the proposed new neighborhood. The new neighborhood would have interior collector streets (minor paths) that would be created by an eastward extension of Portland to Mountain Terrace and a southward extension of Wingate to James Road.

The new neighborhood park would provide a central gathering place for the entire opportunity area.

The new neighborhood should be developed under the City of Memphis' Middle Income Housing Program and should be implemented under a partnership between non-profit and for-profit developers. This offers one of the best opportunities for Frayser to achieve significant prosperous growth over the next ten years.

## **Rangeline**

The Rangeline Opportunity Area is located in the northwest corner of the Frayser Planning District. It is bounded on the east by the Illinois Central Railroad, on the west by Overton Crossing, on the south by St. Elmo Street and on the north by an expansive tract of heavily wooded land. The Rangeline neighborhood has an abundance of trees and woodlands that help define its boundaries and the character of the neighborhood.

**Current Conditions.** The study area is predominantly single family residential with the exception of three apartment complexes and two small commercial lots along the western boundary of the area. The commercial land uses are both small convenience store/deli establishments and are in relatively good shape.

Hawkins Mill Elementary School is centrally located at the corner of Mountain Terrace and Hawkins Mill Road. The land use for the area is shown on Map 32.

The Davy Crockett Golf Course along the eastern edge of the area is a valuable resource and has the potential to become a regional park serving the northern parts of Memphis and Shelby County. The vacant parcel of land at the northeast corner of Rangeline and St. Elmo offers the possibility of park expansion and to create regional type facilities.

There are several other large parcels of vacant land which have the potential for future development.

**Problems and Opportunities.** The housing stock in the Rangeline neighborhood consists primarily of solid, relatively affordable, structurally sound homes. Increases in the number of housing units in Frayser over the past ten years are partially attributable to new, attractive single family homes built in the area east of Mountain Terrace. However, some of the poorest housing conditions in Frayser exist in Census Tract 103, north of Hawkins Mill Road. Many of these residential homes are in considerable need of repair.

The Hawkins Mill Apartment Complex, owned by the City of Memphis, is one of the highest priorities in addressing housing problems in Frayser. The duplexes are gradually being vacated for the purposes of redeveloping the entire complex.

A majority of the residential units located north of Hawkins Mill Road in Ridgegrove are similar in their need of significant repairs. Many residential units exhibit chipped paint or damaged siding, deteriorating fencing, structural damage to door and window frames, and the need for other environmentally based repairs. Sidewalks are noticeably absent in the area, especially along Rangeline Road. Overhead utility lines hang low and litter can be seen in several locations.

Additional areas that need attention are the other apartment complexes, Beacon Manor Apartments and Rosewood Apartments. Beacon Manor could use improvements to its playground equipment, improvements in the condition of its parking and driveways, and improvements in the exterior appearance of their units as well. Comparable conditions exist in the Rosewood complex.

Pedestrian travel, primarily student-oriented, can be hazardous in parts of the Rangeline neighborhood. Specific problem areas exist along Hawkins Mill near the elementary school and in the residential area north of Hawkins Mill.

As mentioned earlier, there are several large undeveloped tracts of wooded land located in this area. While these wooded expanses provide an aesthetic quality or character, they also pose a security risk, and have been the site of mischievous and criminal acts in the past.

A fenced walkway exists connecting two dead-end streets directly south of the Hawkins Mill Elementary School. This walkway allows students from the west to travel to and from school in a secure fashion.

A large L-shaped lot owned by HBC Enterprises, Inc. is located to the south and to the west of the elementary school. This land could be developed to provide more efficient and safer pedestrian travel. This could be accomplished in a way that would retain a significant number of trees and also provide the Rangeline neighborhood with a park or recreational facility that would also serve area youth. Development of walking trails with informative plaques and interactive stops could provide both environmental education and recreational

services. The Hawkins Mill Elementary School and its students could maintain the walking trails.

The Davy Crockett Golf Course is another area of opportunity. Mentorship programs designed to introduce the game of golf to inner city youth have succeeded in other areas and could potentially do so here. The Chi-Chi Rodriguez Youth Foundation has established a program by which at-risk youth are able to learn the game and other valuable life skills. In order to be accepted into this particular program, the children must meet two or more of the following requirements: (1) abused; (2) from a single parent home; (3) on some sort of government assistance; (4) have poor grades; (5) be socially withdrawn; (6) have had minor scrapes with law enforcement. Emphasis is placed on tutoring, life management, social skills, personal grooming, business skills, consumer education, reading enhancement, retail, art, landscaping, and golf. Similar programs initiated across the country have been successful and such a facility could be incorporated into the vacant land just south of the golf course.

The Rangeline Opportunity Area will be served by an enhancement of its visual appearance in these problem areas. Enforcement of city codes regulating the upkeep and maintenance of personal property should be enforced in the area, particularly north of Hawkins Mill Road. Redevelopment of Hawkins Mills Apartments will dramatically increase the aesthetic value of the neighborhood. Consideration should be given to creating a single family development at the Hawkins Mill site with street configuration blending with street improvements to be made on Hawkins Mill and Rangeline roads.

**Concept Plan.** The future development for Rangeline is shown on Map 33.

Housing infill proposals are shown for several vacant parcels that are surrounded by existing single family residential areas. Existing streets can be used to serve these developments.

The Hawkins Mill and Ridgegrove neighborhoods should be treated as a unit for revitalization and redevelopment.

The vacant land between Ridgegrove and Overton Crossing (north of Hawkins Mill) should be treated as a planned residential development with floodplain areas used to start the northern leg of Frayser's greenbelt and trail system. New zoning will be required to guide this development.

A link to the greenbelt trail southward to Hawkins Mill Elementary School can help enhance the new residential development and provide connection to a proposed environmental education park adjacent to the school.

The parcels of land at the intersection of St. Elmo and Rangeline should receive attention for potential new development. The northwest corner should be a mixed use development with residences extending residential areas and a small commercial site to serve the surrounding neighborhood.

The northeast corner of St.Elmo and Rangeline should be designed as an extension of Davy Crockett Park to create a regional park facility that also serves area residents.

Street improvements are critical to the success of the area. Hawkins Mill improvements currently being made by the City of Memphis should be extended to Overton Crossing.

Rangeline, from St. Elmo northward, should be widened and extended to join the new Loosahatchie Parkway. The extension should go along the western edge of the golf course property and a new entry road into the Ridgegrove community should be created as part of the Hawkins Mill housing project.

St. Elmo should be extended across the rail line to eliminate traffic from the residential area at the southeast corner of the golf course. This extension can open up access to Raleigh and potential new development east of the rail line. Consideration should be given to placing a portion of the Davy Crockett golf course east of the rail line to enhance development potential and to open up more land in the current golf course for the new Rangeline Road and regional park development.

### **The Westside Community (West Frayser)**

The Westside area contains many of the oldest developments in Frayser, dating to the 1940s when the Harvester manufacturing plant was built. The area of West Frayser is defined by Census Tract 99 and is bounded by the Mississippi, Loosahatchie, and Wolf Rivers to the west, north, and south, and by the Illinois Central passenger rail line (ICRR) to the east.

**Current Conditions.** West Frayser is a clearly defined area with historic neighborhoods and the commercial corridor along U.S. Highway 51 (Thomas Street). Map 35 shows the land uses in West Frayser.

Two distinct areas contain industrial development. The first and most well known is the sprawling old Harvester Plant along the southwestern bluff that overlooks the Mississippi River floodplain. This plant has been mostly vacant for twenty years with storage space recently created in the main assembly buildings and another building purchased by Fullen Dock. West of the Harvester Plant and lying below the bluff line is the slackwater harbor of the Fullen Dock Company. A larger area around the harbor and along the proposed I-69 (Loosahatchie Parkway) has been designed as a planned industrial park.

The second industrial area is between U.S. Highway 51 and the Illinois Central Rail Road tracks at the northwest portion of Frayser. This location contains several industries lining Old Millington Road. This area is self-contained with some room for additional industries, which could be attracted by incentives offered by the national government's HUB Zone Procurement Program and New Markets Tax Credit.

At this northern end of West Frayser and west of U.S. 51 is the large Firestone Park, which contains athletic fields and a small recreation area. The northern portion of the park contains

the large and newly developed fire and police academies with various administrative and training buildings. The fire and police academies have the potential for attracting trainees from the Mid-South region and thus provides potential for retail development to serve these visitors as well as the normal Memphis and Shelby County public safety trainees.

The commercial corridor in West Frayser begins at James Road and ends at Watkins on both sides of U.S. Highway 51. The commercial areas are fairly well defined and there is not a continuous strip of retail establishments as observed along Summer Avenue or South Third Street. This provides a clear focus for any revitalization efforts.

Two commercial concentrations exist. The first is dominated by the Northgate Shopping Center that is at the northeast corner of U.S. 51 and Second Street/Whitney. This 1950s retail center was built next to the second oldest shopping area in Frayser that extends north and south along U.S. 51 from the Second Street/Whitney intersection.

West Frayser has three clearly defined residential areas. The first is the historic Harvest Hills/Hammond area built north and east of the Harvester plant. Several subdivisions in this area have been judged eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

To the north of the Harvester residential area, at the end of Frayser Boulevard is the Westside K-12 school complex, which serves the Harvester area and the second large residential area of Patricia Heights.

The third residential area is adjacent to U.S. 51 just north of Northgate Shopping Center. Generally this residential area and the others are well maintained and stable with some scattered housing problems..

Preservation, maintenance and spot rehabilitation are necessary for this area to be sustainable in the future. Active code enforcement to prevent decline is necessary. The attraction of businesses and industry are high priorities for continued viability of West Frayser.

Several pockets of unsightly properties are located in the area along U.S. 51, south of Watkins and west of the Illinois Central passenger rail tracks. The large vacant lot at the southeast corner of U.S. 51 and Watkins is often overgrown and the intersection at the Vietnam Memorial does not invite visitors into Frayser. Several businesses south of this intersection are unsightly. The residential area east of U.S. 51 next to the railroad tracks has a few problem properties that should receive attention.

**Plan Concept.** The West Frayser development concept builds on the planned major road extensions as shown on Map 36. The proposed I-69 freeway (Loosahatchie Parkway or Great River Road) would frame the area on the west with intersections with Second Street, Frayser Boulevard, and North Watkins.

The existing industrial areas would be strengthened with the provision of economic development incentives and land acquisitions as necessary.



The Westside School complex would be enhanced to provide a strong community identity for the three neighborhoods.

The two commercial areas, Northgate and Watkins/U.S. 51, would receive special design and marketing attention that would plot appropriate new business activity and possible new uses at Northgate to include residential.

The U.S. Highway 51 corridor between James and North Watkins would be designated Memorial Drive with a tree trail and street light banners proclaiming a Frayser theme. Two additional foreign war memorials would be created to extend the theme of the Vietnam Memorial, which could be expanded as part of the northwestern gateway to Frayser.

One of the new memorials would be a part of the gateway project at James and U.S. 51. This gateway would also serve as the entrance to a new botanic garden being developed beginning at the southeast corner of James/U.S. 51.

The second new memorial would create a landmark, visitors center in the triangle created by U.S. 51, Millington Road, and Joel Avenue. This memorial could provide a place for providing promotional materials about Frayser with information about commercial, industrial, and housing opportunities in the area.

## **VI. ORGANIZING FOR ACTION**

### **Capital Projects**

Policies to construct public facilities are included in long-range plans produced by various agencies of local government.

The central planning agency is a joint agency of Memphis and Shelby County – Division of Planning and Development. Various City of Memphis agencies produce plans for their respective responsibilities (parks, schools, sewers). Transit facilities, roads, pedestrian ways and bike paths are proposed by Memphis and made a part of the long range transportation plan for the metropolitan area.

The Health Department and Library System are joint agencies of Memphis and Shelby County and each produces long-range plans.

The long-range plans are the basis for the City of Memphis Capital Improvements Program (CIP), a six year schedule of projects that is updated each year. The actual appropriation of funds to complete a project is contained in the Capital Budget, which is adopted along with the Operating Budget each year by the Memphis City Council. [Note: Shelby County has the same scheduling and budgeting process, which may include projects for Frayser such as a library or health facility.]

The following projects are included in this plan:

**Capital Projects – Scheduled.** Capital projects scheduled as part of the Capital Improvement Program are as follows:

1. New elementary school in Sky Lake area (complete)
2. Hawkins Mill Road improvements (underway)
3. Overton Crossing, North Watkins to Clifton (underway)
4. Fire and Police Academy (underway)
5. Ed Rice Center Pool (2003)
6. New playground, North Frayser Community Center (2004)
7. Davy Crockett Clubhouse Design (2006)

**Capital Projects – Previous Plans.** Previous plans have recommended the following capital projects in Frayser:

1. Bus transfer station to serve as local bus routes in Frayser.
2. Capital maintenance for thirteen Frayser public schools.
3. Park development and renovation for public parks (three new developments and six upgrades).
4. Hawkins Mill Public Housing redevelopment.
5. Major road projects including – Loosahatchie Parkway, Frayser Boulevard west extension, Overton Crossing north extension, Rangeline north extension, and St. Elmo east extension.

**Capital Projects – Recommended.** Projects recommended by this plan include the following:

1. Additional Co-Act Mini-Precincts (2).
2. Civic Center and Library
3. Extension of McLean Boulevard
4. Gateway Projects (6)
5. Regional park, Davy Crockett
6. Memorial Highway and Memorials
7. Greenbelt and Trail System

These projects should have detailed site designs and cost estimates prepared for inclusion in the city and county's capital improvements program. The Frayser Community Association and Frayser Community Development Corporation should begin prioritizing these projects for presentation to Frayser's legislative representatives.

### **Land Use Controls**

The regulation of land use in Frayser is accomplished through the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations of Memphis and Shelby County. The Zoning Ordinance includes the Sign Control Ordinance, which is a separate document.

The processing of zoning and subdivision requests and the enforcement of zoning is handled by the Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development (DPD). The staff of DPD reviews requests for rezoning and subdivision of land and presents recommendations to the Land Use Control Board, the citizen board that advises the Memphis City Council. The Memphis City Council makes final decisions on the regulation of land use.

The decisions to regulate land are guided by plans prepared for Memphis, its planning districts and neighborhoods. The goals and proposals made in this Comprehensive Plan for Frayser should guide zoning and subdivision decisions in the future.

Several areas have current zoning designations that are not fully compatible with the vision of this plan and the following recommendations are made:

- Rezone the property west of the Ridgegrove neighborhood to a residential use for land outside the proposed greenbelt. Land in the greenbelt would be zoned Agricultural or if possible “Greenbelt”.
- Rezone two large parcels at the northwest corner of Frayser Boulevard and the Illinois Central Railroad (east boundary of Frayser) from Industrial to Residential.

In the future, additional multi-family and commercial zoning should be limited. Frayser has enough land available at good locations in both of these categories. Additional zoning would negatively impact the existing development.

### **Community Organization**

The absolute most important project for Frayser leaders is the creation of an organizational structure for coordinating development of all services and facilities to stimulate growth and prosperity.

Frayser has a critical opportunity to organize its citizens into an effective force for improvement and prosperity. The ability to create a strong “grass roots” organizational structure will signal to the entire Memphis metropolitan area that Frayser is a leader in neighborhood betterment. This will lead to a safer community and a community that will attract new investments in homes, businesses, and public facilities. Frayser has an opportunity to become a model community.

The key organizations for coordinating development are the Frayser Community Association (FCA) and its subsidiary, the Frayser Community Development Corporation (FCDC). These two entities should be the catalyst around which committees, neighborhood groups, task forces, and other public and private organizations operate to obtain the necessary resources for Frayser’s future.

**Frayser Community Association (FCA).** This non-profit corporation is the umbrella for coordinating Frayser development. Membership is open to any adult resident of the Frayser community (the Frayser Planning District).

FCA holds an annual meeting of its members to elect officers, elect Executive Committee members, and elect the Board of Directors of the Frayser Community Development Corporation (FCDC).

The Executive Committee, with 11 members, consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, four (4) members drawn from Frayser’s quadrants, and three (3) at-large members.

The bylaws of FCA designates nine standing committees: Beautification, Education/Schools, Faith Based Organizations, Frayser Community Court Liaison, Historical, Membership, Nominating, Parks and Recreation, and Public and Community Relations.

**FCA Roles and Responsibilities.** Frayser’s Community Association is the central, coordinating organization in Frayser. The roles include: developing commercial and residential property through its Community Development Corporation (discussed later in this narrative); organizing neighborhood associations/neighborhood watch; working to improve public facilities; working to improve community safety; sponsoring community enhancement projects; promoting the Frayser community; and preparing comprehensive and neighborhood plans.

**(organizing neighborhoods).** The ultimate effectiveness of the FCA will depend on its ability to foster the creation of neighborhood associations and nurture leadership development within each neighborhood. FCA’s **membership committee** should lead this effort.

Each neighborhood association should have a formal leadership structure that creates and maintains a strong “neighborhood watch” program.

The neighborhood watch program should establish a network of block captains who regularly report suspicious activities and property neglect. This network should be tied to the **Frayser Community Court Committee** for reporting possible property code violation and other criminal activity.

**(public facilities).** Two standing committees exist to improve public facilities – **Education/Schools Committee** and **Parks and Recreation Committee**. Both committees have important roles in working with Memphis School Board and the Memphis Parks Division to insure that necessary upgrades are made to existing and proposed facilities.

The Education/Schools Committee should also work with Shelby County’s Head Start program and day care centers to foster improved early childhood development in preparation for K-12 achievements.

The Parks and Recreation Committee should work with various youth mentoring programs to coordinate activities with programs at community centers and park recreation facilities.

**(community safety).** Although not identified in its Bylaws, a **Crime and Safety Committee** has been created by the Frayser community Development Corporation. This committee should work to strengthen “community policing” organized through the Co-Act units such as Todd’s Creek. Frayser needs at least two additional Co-Act units and this committee should work toward their creation.

The **Faith Based Organizations** Committee should work to strengthen the Memphis Ten Point Coalition that has been created in Frayser to save high-risk youth from gang violence, chronic employment, drug use, and teen pregnancy.

**(community enhancement).** A Variety of projects to improve the visual image of Frayser have been proposed or are underway. The **Beautification Committee** should play a pivotal

role in supporting the Exchange Club's Vietnam Memorial Garden and the Memorial Garden at Frayser Park.

In the addition, the Beautification Committee should work with the Memphis City Beautiful Commission and the Urban Art Commission in creating attractive gateways into Frayser and its neighborhoods. The Memorial Drive project on U.S. Highway 51 from the James Road gateway to the Vietnam Memorial gateway at Watkins should be a high priority effort.

The **Historical Committee** should assist in community enhancement by identifying places, events, and people with historical significance and working with the Beautification Committee to design appropriate monuments and preservation activities.

**(promoting Frayser).** The **Public and Community Relations Committee** should continue the growth and expansion of the Frayser Fall Festival and support other community events which showcase Frayser's value throughout the year. This committee should work to expand publication of the *Frayser Flyer* to four (4) times per year.

**(comprehensive planning).** A new committee should be created to update and refine the comprehensive plan for Frayser. The committee should work to create development proposals for neighborhoods, commercial centers, and industrial areas. The committee should work with the Memphis Housing Authority and the Metropolitan Planning Organization in refining housing and transportation priorities for Frayser.

A Frayser Design Center should be created to provide an incubator for producing design concepts and detailed plans for housing, retail, and other commercial/industrial development.

Interns supplied by city planning, architecture, engineering, and real estate programs at area colleges and universities should team with professional volunteers provided by the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Architecture, the Society of Civil Engineers, and the Developer's Council of the Home Builders Association. This group of students and professionals should work with the Frayser Community Development Corporation in producing plans for vacant land and revitalization of existing buildings and sites.

**Neighborhood Associations.** Frayser should have a seamless web of neighborhood associations that provide the eyes and ears for community improvement.

At present there are six (6) established neighborhood associations identified on Map 37. It is proposed that three (3) of these associations expand their boundaries and that four (4) new associations be created as shown on Map 37. Patricia Heights, Hammond Hills/Harvester Hills and Skylake Associations would expand as shown. Todd's Creek, Georgian Hills, Denver, and Grandview neighborhood associations would be created.

**Frayser Community Development Corporation.** The FCDC is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization committed to housing and commercial development in Frayser.

FCDC has an 18 person Board of Directors elected by the membership of the Frayser Community Association at its annual meeting.

The Board of Directors elects officers, which include President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

There are three (3) committees exclusive to the FCDC – Housing Committee, Commercial Committee, and Financial Committee. Two (2) committees are joint with the FCA – Beautification Committee and Crime and Safety Committee.

The FCDC is a non profit property developer which can receive gifts of property and cash from private donors, grants from government, and loans from public or private sources. Such resources are used to develop property for improving real estate trends in Frayser.

The Frayser Community Development Corporation’s “2003 Work Plan” is built around six (6) objectives:

1. Seek diversified funding
2. Strengthen the organization capacity
3. Reduce the number of substandard residential properties
4. Create more attractive commercial areas to meet Frayser’s needs
5. Increase community safety
6. Strong representation of Frayser’s interest in public planning processes

Specific actions to reach those objectives have been articulated and are being implemented.

With anticipated success, the staff of the FCDC should and will expand to provide the necessary capacity to execute development projects. This staff should also provide support and direction for the standing committees of the Frayser Community Association to avoid possible duplication and conflicts.