



DOWNTOWN HEFLIN

HEFLIN, ALABAMA

2017 MARKET STUDY AND STRATEGIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





HEFLIN ON DISPLAY

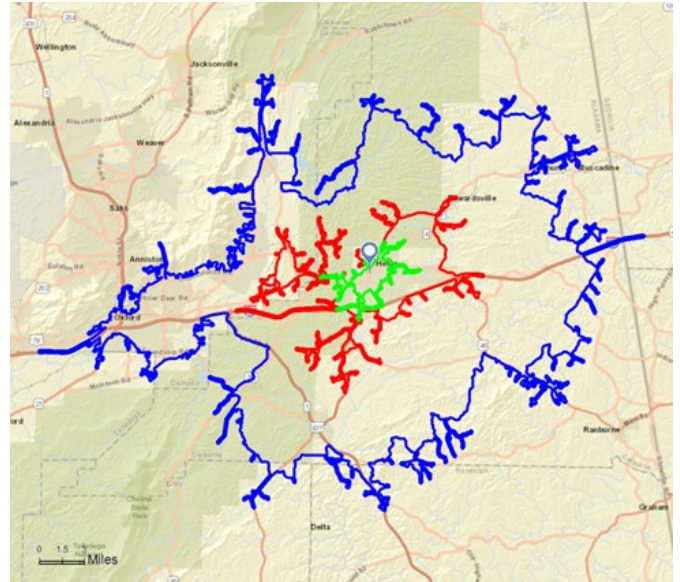
Known for its historic character and Hallmark-worthy atmosphere, Downtown Heflin has been the proud seat of Cleburne County since 1882 and still boasts some of the original buildings from the time of its incorporation. The City is home to beloved community events such as Holidays on Ross, the 4th of July Bicycle and Wagon Parade, the St. Pawtrick’s Day Pet Parade, and the World’s Largest Spirit Stick. This bastion of Southern charm proudly displays its strong community character and culture through its sense of unity and pride evidenced in the downtown area.

Nestled in the forests of East Alabama, the City of Heflin is a central hub for the region’s great outdoors. Only minutes away from Mt. Cheaha, the highest point in Alabama, Downtown Heflin is also located within a short drive to the cool, pristine waters of the Tallapoosa River and the famous Pinhoti Trail. The beloved trail at the southern end of the Appalachian mountain chain draws hikers and enthusiasts from all over the world.

With a strong ear to the past and a keen eye to the future, Heflin continues to move in an upward direction. A strong volunteer network of citizens and business-owners work hand-in-hand with city officials and its employees to make Heflin “A Great Place to Call Home” for both current and future residents and businesses. The spirit of Downtown Heflin emanates what towns across America commonly hope to reignite – a simple love and pride for community. Heflin is proud to be one of the newest Main Street Alabama towns.



Main Street Alabama commissioned this study to promote an in-depth understanding of local and regional market conditions and trends impacting Downtown Heflin’s economic performance and opportunities for the future. Information and direction gained throughout the study process provides a sound basis for local decision-making processes and strategies aimed at further enhancing Downtown Heflin.



Downtown Heflin Drive Time Market

Fast Facts

Population	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2010 Census	1,961	3,689	25,996
2016 Estimate	1,992	3,755	25,967
2021 Projection	2,013	3,796	25,883
Change 2016—2021	1.1%	1.1%	-0.3%
Day Population—2016	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
Total Daytime Population	2,563	4,225	35,105
Workers	1,244	1,779	19,461
Residents	1,319	2,446	15,644
2016 Daytime Change	28.7%	12.5%	35.2%
Households	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2010 Census	837	1,477	10,597
2016 Estimate	859	1,517	10,517
2021 Projection	873	1,542	10,461
Change 2016—2021	1.6%	1.6%	-0.5%
Median HH Income	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2016 Estimate	\$30,115	\$32,609	\$43,892
2021 Projection	\$31,229	\$34,144	\$47,017
Change 2016—2021	3.7%	4.7%	7.1%

Source: Esri



DOWNTOWN MARKETING

Consumer media preferences and rankings demonstrate the exceptionally strong and growing influence of the Internet and social media applications, and the still strong presence and influence of Newspaper, as prime sources for local area news and information.

The Internet is a particularly valuable resource because it provides the potential for businesses to expand their trade area well beyond local or regional geographies. Businesses with collectible, specialty, and custom merchandise lines, in particular, can use the Internet, and sites such as Amazon, eBay and Etsy, to market to the entire United States or even globally. Even traditional retailers and businesses carrying staple products are reaping benefits as, more and more, consumers use the Internet to shop and compare products and services, and then use it – in much the same way previous generations of consumers used the Yellow Pages – as a resource to find a local outlet or vendor where they can make their purchase.

Downtown Heflin’s promotion and collaborative marketing efforts should continue to leverage the strong partnership with the local newspaper, and also consider how the Internet and various social media applications might be most effectively used to communicate with consumers and to further downtown promotional goals.

A Downtown Heflin branding system should be developed and consistently deployed across a variety of medium—including Internet-based sites and applications—to enhance awareness and to create business connections to the brand.

Question | Consumer Survey

Of the following, which two (2) media and information sources do you most rely on for Heflin area news and information?

Top Consumer Survey Responses

Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	86.9%
Newspaper	30.1%
Internet Website(s)	22.5%
Email or News Feeds	10.9%

Source: 2017 Downtown Heflin Consumer Survey.

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Consumer survey results show interest in downtown housing options and could lend support for downtown area housing development initiatives, including the rehabilitation of existing housing and the development of new downtown area housing.

Q: Would you consider living in Downtown Heflin?

Responses

Yes	19.9%
Maybe	22.9%

Those indicating they would consider living in the downtown expressed interest in a variety of housing styles and price points and in both owner- and renter-occupied units.

Q: What kind of housing in Downtown Heflin would you look for or consider?

Responses

Townhouse	59.8%
Loft	39.6%
Apartment	24.3%
Condo	19.5%
Senior Housing	19.5%

Source: 2017 Downtown Heflin Consumer Survey.

The best prospects for downtown housing might be directed toward the development of units that are quite different from the current inventory of housing options available in the broader community – including styles that take advantage of the unique dimensions, layouts and materials found in the upper levels of downtown commercial buildings to create distinguishable living and live/work spaces; and higher-density mixed-use development and loft units at potential redevelopment sites in the downtown district and immediate surrounding area.





BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Retail Targets

Market research findings provide direction for various retail business types and merchandise lines that could be prime candidates for expansion and recruitment in Downtown Heflin. The implementation of business improvement and development strategies is part of a comprehensive, long-term enhancement program that emphasizes business retention efforts and a series of initiatives that will make Downtown Heflin an even more attractive place to do business and invest.

Retail expansion and recruitment targets capitalize and expand upon the downtown's retail sector strengths and traffic generated by existing businesses. Examples of business types and merchandise lines showing potential for expansion and recruitment in Downtown Heflin include:

- ▶ **Food Services and Drinking Places**
 - Restaurants and Other Eating Places
 - Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)
- ▶ **Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores**
- ▶ **Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books and Music**
 - Sporting Goods/Hobby (Arts & Crafts)
- ▶ **Miscellaneous Store Retailers**
 - Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores
 - Used Merchandise Stores
 - Other Miscellaneous (Specialty) Store Retailers

Downtown Office and Service Uses

Office, service, government and civic uses in Downtown Heflin already play an important role in generating traffic to support the district's economy and sense of vitality. Predictably, office and service uses will continue to be important to the downtown area in the future. These uses should continue to be encouraged to locate in the downtown area and, where appropriate and applicable, Heflin Main Street and community development partners should work to locate these uses in buildings, spaces and redevelopment sites that are conducive to creating and maintaining a strong sense of retail vibrancy throughout the downtown area.

TRENDS AND PRIORITIES

Sentiments regarding recent trends in Downtown Heflin, overall, appear positive, especially among the consumer survey group.

Q: Which of the following best describes recent trends in Downtown Heflin:

Consumers (C) and Businesses (B) Percent		
Recent Trends	(C)	(B)
Improving or making progress	49.0%	42.2%
Steady of holding its own	35.9%	40.0%
Declining or losing ground	15.1%	17.8%

Source: 2017 Downtown Heflin Consumer and Business Surveys.

Positive takes on recent trends could provide additional momentum for new, ongoing and escalated downtown initiatives. Consumer and business survey participants' views and rankings relative to potential downtown enhancement efforts are highly consistent, with both groups placing the highest average rating and priority on business expansion and recruitment efforts—including possible efforts to create incentives for new and expanding businesses in the downtown area, followed by efforts to stage additional festivals and special events in the downtown, and to restore and preserve the downtown's historic character.

Q: On a scale from 1 (Low) to 5 (High), what level of priority would you place on possible downtown enhancement efforts to:

Consumers (C) and Businesses (B) Average Rating and (Rank)		
Enhancement Efforts	(C)	(B)
Create incentives for new and expanding downtown businesses	4.46 (1)	4.35 (1)
Stage additional festivals and special events in the downtown area	4.22 (2)	4.07 (2)
Restore and preserve the downtown's historic character	3.97 (3)	4.05 (3)
Improve the downtown's streets, sidewalks, lighting, furnishings, green spaces, trails, etc.	3.65 (4)	4.02 (4)

Source: 2017 Downtown Heflin Consumer and Business Surveys.



Heflin Main Street

850 Ross Street
Heflin, Alabama, AL 36264

📞 (256) 926-8546

✉ tmaloney@cityofheflin.org

🌐 www.cityofheflin.org