



# BELL STREET NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Adopted by the Montgomery Planning Commission June 25, 2009

BELL STREET NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Adopted by the City of Montgomery Planning Commission  
June 25, 2009

**Mayor Bobby N. Bright**

**City Council**

- District 1: Councilor Jim Spear
- District 2: Councilor Charles W. Smith
- District 3: Councilor Tracy Larkin
- District 4: Councilor David Burkette
- District 5: Councilor Cornelius "C.C." Calhoun
- District 6: Councilor Willie Cook
- District 7: Councilor Martha Roby
- District 8: Councilor Glen Pruitt, Jr
- District 9: Councilor Charles Jinright

Planning Commission

- Greg Calhoun, Chairman
- Frank Cook, Vice-Chairman
- John Averrett
- Andre Bolding
- Charlene Cook
- Carl Head
- Buddy Hardwich
- Kippy Tate
- Ken Upchurch

**Director, Planning & Development**

Kenneth J. Groves, AICP

**Long-Range Planning**

Lynda H. Wool, AICP  
Kathryn Chamberlain, AICP

**Planning Controls Administrator**

Thomas M. Tyson, Jr.

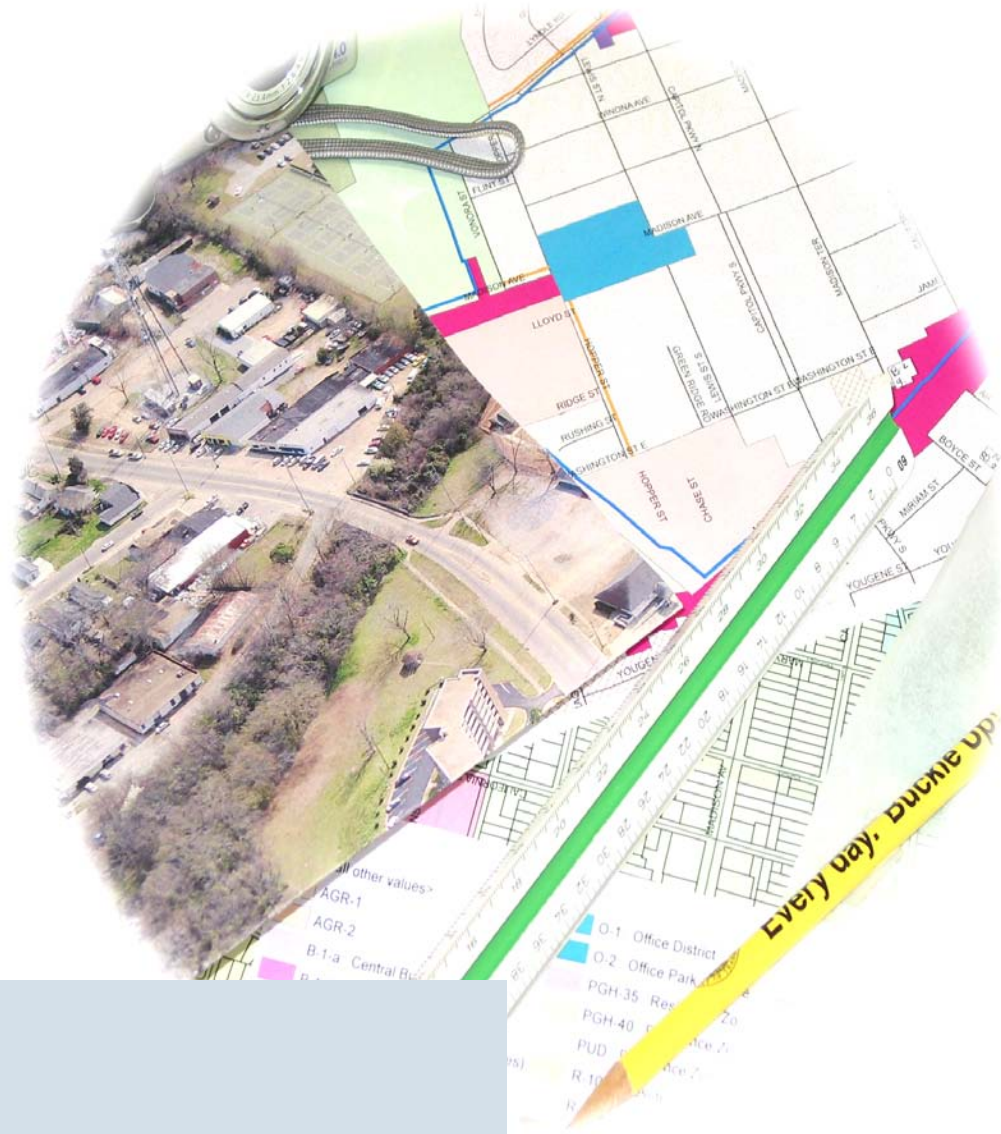
PLANNING PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS  
PREPARED BY  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
CITY OF MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA  
MARCH 2007

1. Ensure that the decisions will not create an arbitrary development pattern (e.g. spot zoning);
2. Ensure an adequate and diverse supply of housing for all income levels within the community;
3. Minimize negative impacts between incompatible land uses (e.g. residential abutting heavy industrial development);
4. Recognize suitable areas for public uses, such as hospitals and schools, that will minimize the impacts to residential areas;
5. Discourage intense commercial uses in or adjacent to residential areas;
6. Ensure neighborhood commercial businesses are designed to minimize adverse effects to the neighborhood;
7. Minimize development in flood plains and/or environmentally sensitive areas;
8. Promote goals which provide additional environmental protection;
9. Consideration of regulations that address safety as it pertains to future development
10. Ensure adequate transition between adjacent land uses and development intensities;
11. Protect and promote the historical and cultural significant areas;
12. Avoid creating undesirable precedents for other properties;
13. Promote stabilization and expansion of the economic base and job creation;
14. Ensure similar treatment for land use decisions on similar properties throughout the City;
15. Balance individual property rights with community interests and goals;
16. Avoid over zoning in areas that could not be supported by the existing or proposed street and utility network;
17. Promote development that serves the needs of a diverse population



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preparing to Plan	5
Introduction	6
Neighborhood Planning Approach	7
History of the Area	11
Existing Conditions Assessment	12
The Neighborhood Plan	26
Implementation	40
Appendix	48
Community Resources	
Link to Landscape Ordinance	
Link to Tree Plan	
Main Street Program Guideliones	



## Preparing to Plan

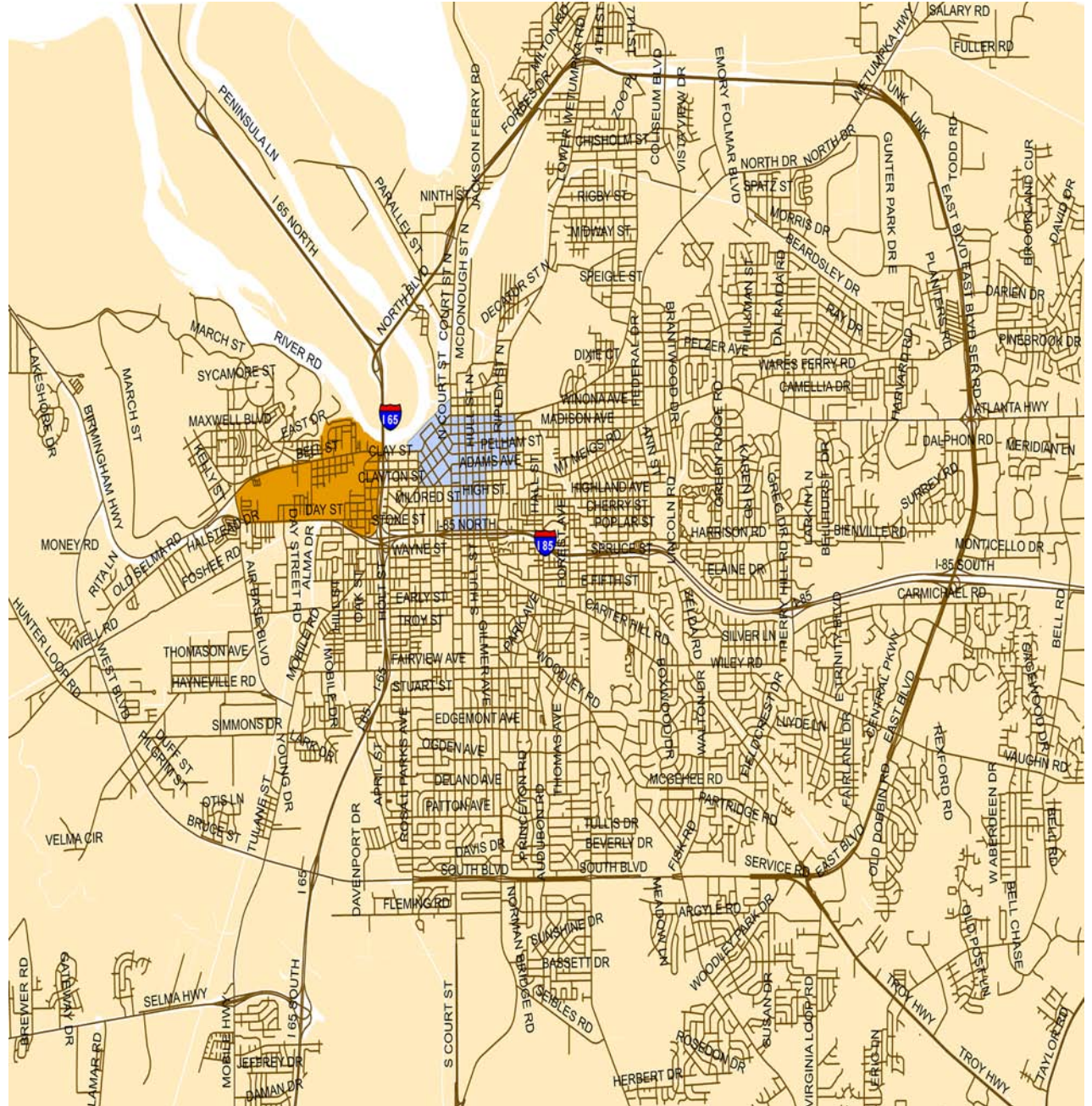
# Introduction

The Bell Street Neighborhood Plan addresses the area colored in gold on the map to the right. The area shaded in blue is the Downtown. The Bell Street Planning Area is adjacent to the west side of Interstate 65 and lies between Bell and Day streets. The river and Maxwell Airforce Base form the northern boundary of this planning area. Bell Street has convenient access to downtown.

The Planning area consists of 950 parcels and covers 603 acres. The 2000 US Census reported a population of 2,507 for the area. Maxwell Air Force Base, located along the northwestern boundary of this neighborhood, is a strong, positive institution in this area.

The Alabama River is part of the northern boundary for this area and offers tremendous potential for future growth and development. The river, once so important to the history and commerce of Montgomery is once more a valuable resource. The City has been expanding the Riverwalk and plans for this walk to end at Powder Magazine Park in this planning area.

Commercial and manufacturing uses have a strong presence in the area. Active railroad tracks offer a challenge for neighbors and planners striving for connectivity.



The Bell Street Neighborhood Planning Area is shaded in gold on the map above. The downtown is shaded in blue.

## Purpose and Objectives of the Plan

The purpose of the Plan is to document and identify strategies to reach the Neighborhood's long-range goals. It is designed to communicate to private and public interest groups the desire of the area's residents and business people to build a stronger neighborhood that protects and develops the numerous interests within the area. The plan addresses the concerns of the residents for rebuilding and increasing community, the need to calm or slow traffic moving through the area, the need for rehabilitation of some of the area housing, and for the redevelopment of the commercial areas. Two key issues for this neighborhood are affordability and redevelopment.

In addition, Bell Street itself has a regional impact and its importance to the area, region, and state must not be ignored. This area has great potential for new industries and employment opportunities.

Development of the plan entailed an interactive neighborhood process that engaged citizens, elected officials, City staff, business representatives and other civic-minded individuals. The process that evolved over a 10 month period consisted of an in-depth collection of data and analysis of the physical and social infrastructure of the neighborhood. The proposed improvements and the implementation priorities were established and approved by the residents in the Bell Street Neighborhood Planning Area.

## The Neighborhood Planning Approach

The Bell Street Neighborhood Plan reflects the ideas and suggestions generated by the residents who participated in the planning process facilitated by the City of Montgomery's Planning staff. Over one hundred people attended the first meeting to share their concerns and desires for the area.

The City staff reviewed existing conditions in the neighborhood and compiled information based on research and extensive data collection in the field. After the data was compiled and entered into the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) it was presented in a series of Neighborhood meetings to all interested residents, land and business owners, and community leaders to solicit their input to determine the assets, liabilities, opportunities, and constraints for this neighborhood.

In addition, visioning sessions were conducted to help determine long range goals. These sessions included discussions on land use, zoning, economic and community development, housing issues, traffic patterns, sidewalk, crime concerns, improving the infrastructure, improving neighborhood identity and image, enhancing community facilities, and preserving the history and heritage of the Neighborhood.

This interactive process led to the development of this document which articulates the Neighborhood Vision and short-term, mid-

range, and long-range goals. Once formulated, the Plan was presented to the neighbors and the community at large to reevaluate and re-examine the implementation steps in light of the goals and objectives. Each proposal was examined with each of the goals and objectives to ensure that activities to implement, and any programs included in the implementation, would indeed address the goals and objectives. Reevaluation at every step would be important to track program effectiveness toward meeting the goals and objectives and necessary changes could be considered as needed.

A crucial element of the Neighborhood planning process was the direct involvement of the residents themselves. Throughout the process they were present and remained active. The cooperation of the community with the public officials and prospective investors is crucial to implement the Plan documented in this report.

The first meeting was held on August 26, 2008, at Central Church on Bell Street. The neighbors, property owners, and interested citizens participated in a Charrette-type exercise using maps and small groups to discuss areas of concern and future desires for the community. Another exercise addressed specific solutions and suggestions for changes in the area.

The second meeting was held on Monday, May 4, 2009, at the Day Street Baptist Church. Over 100 people attended. The Plan was presented and well received by those attending. The majority of the discussion centered on the need to build a strong Neighborhood organization to work in the area.

The neighbors attending the meeting expressed the desire to begin immediately to establish an organization that would work to improve the area. All residents of the entire planning area would be included. The early meetings would focus on organization and recruiting members to deal with local clean-ups, establishing a network to keep each other informed and to begin a Neighborhood Watch with the help of the BONDS and the Police Department.



## Neighborhood Vision

*Neighbors are friendly and work together to support Neighborhood activities*

*Housing stock is rehabilitated where needed and unique architecture is preserved*

*Commercial areas are attractive and promote pedestrian access with sidewalks and crosswalks*

*Crime issues throughout the area are reduced*

*Add more pocket parks and possibly a Neighborhood Garden*

*Neighborhood beautification - a planted median along Bell to create attractive entrance for the neighborhood and Maxwell Air Force Base*

*Children have safe places to play, walk, and ride bicycles*

*Activities and development to make the most of the Riverfront area*

	PEOPLE	PHYSICAL CHARACTER	BUSINESS	PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES
ASSETS	Diverse group of interested people	Good access to downtown and major highways	Good location for accessing highways	Access to River
	Air Force Base contributes much	Proximity to river	Close to large military base	Powder Magazine Park
	Many area residents have lived in the area most of their lives	Diverse mix of land uses	Opportunities for commercial and manufacturing development	Served by Public Transit System
	Neighbors willing to be involved in Planning Process	Active railroads throughout neighborhood	Access to rail transportation	Boys & Girls Club
		Residential areas built on grid pattern	Vacant Buildings available	Magnet School

## Historic Notes. . . . .

The land for much of the Bell Street Planning Area was annexed into the City in 1910. At this time Montgomery was booming. Wilbur Wright had just selected Montgomery as the home for the first flight school for training pilots. The first airfield was located on the spot where Maxwell Air Force runways would be built years later. The first flight out of that early field was a biplane with a thirty-horse power engine that made lots of noise that seriously alarmed all in Montgomery who saw it. But it soon became a routine occurrence.

The flights were just one attraction bringing folks into Montgomery. The Mobile and Ohio Rail Roads ran shuttle trains into Montgomery from Birmingham and Mobile. Other folks came for the long haul attracted by the new, \$2-million cotton mill built in West Boylston that hired more than 800 workers.

The Grand Theatre in downtown Montgomery opened in 1906 and was declared to be better and bigger than any stage in New York. Buildings in the downtown were growing numerous and older ones were undergoing renovation. Montgomery was a city that held its own with any other.

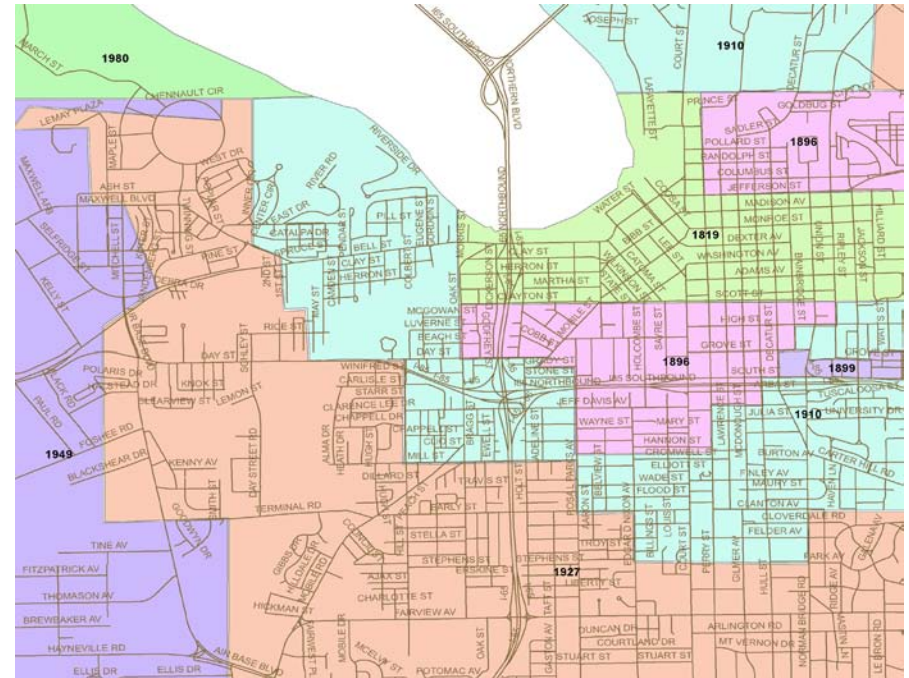
Part of the Bell Street area was part of Cottage Hill before construction of the Interstate and formed part of the residential ring around

the booming downtown. The air field became an aviation repair depot during World War I, then a full-scale airfield, and finally the Air Corps Tactical School. As World War II approached, Maxwell became the Southeast Air Corps Training Center and an auxiliary base was established. Montgomery's first radio station was begun on the base, WSFA got its start in this neighborhood - the letters stood for "South's Finest Airport.."

Buses replaced the streetcars in 1936, and in 1939, the bus fare from Day Street to Cloverdale was five cents and included one transfer. In 2009, buses still provide the only means of public transit in Montgomery.

The Bell Street Planning area has been divided into many sections by other means of transportation. The Interstate Highway system, both I-65 and I-85 are adjacent to the area's boundaries. Numerous railroad tracks also cut through the area on their way to the downtown trainshed and on to north Montgomery industries. There are many industrial uses in the Bell Street Planning area as the result of easy access to sidings and the interstate highways.

The area is home to Maxwell Air Force



Annexation Map: Bell Street Neighborhood in orange and purple - shows annexation of this planning area in 1910 and rest in 1927.

base. The population over the past twenty years has been slowly declining. With the close of the Riverside Heights Public Housing units, the remaining retail stores and most of the commercial properties also folded. Although the urban fabric suggests a traditional grid pattern. The construction of highways and railroad tracks have divided the area into sections and the actual infrastructure is difficult for folks to navigate and communicate within the area.

# Existing Conditions Assessment

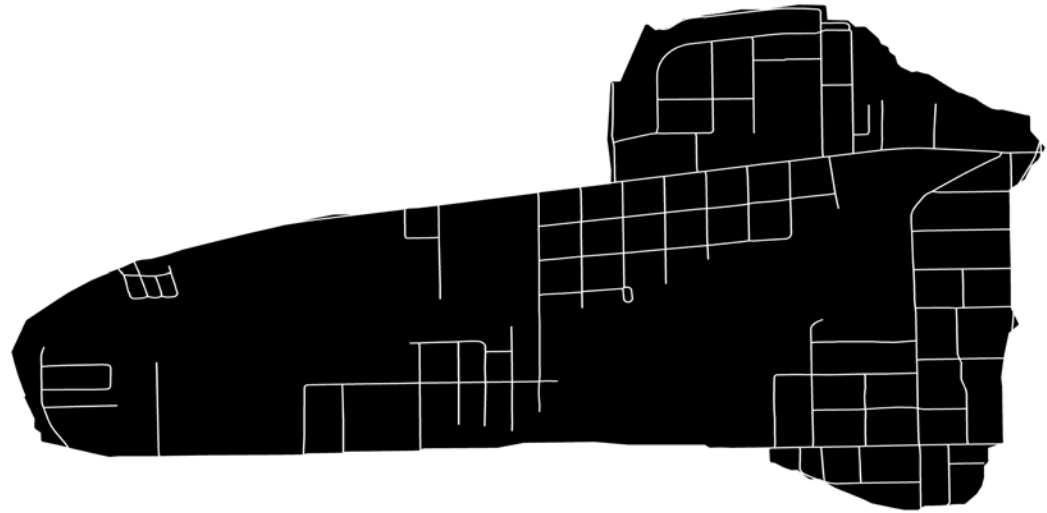
## Physical Characteristics

The Bell Street Neighborhood is definitely a mix of land uses and lot sizes. The northern boundary is the Alabama River which provides attractive scenery and tremendous potential for the surrounding area.

The location of major railroad infrastructure through the center and diagonally cutting up to the river presents some serious complications to connecting the existing residential areas. But the rail infrastructure is very important to the area manufacturing entities and to the City at large. The rail opportunities offer regional and interstate connections for the area.

Maxwell Air Force Base is located along the northwest border of the neighborhood. The base is very attractive and well maintained. It is an active Base and contributes much to the entire City in terms of the diversity it offers to our local community, the valuable business it brings to the area, the volunteer hours spent by Base members in our community and the civilian jobs available on the Base.

There is a strong manufacturing component in this neighborhood. The large parcel



Street Grid Pattern

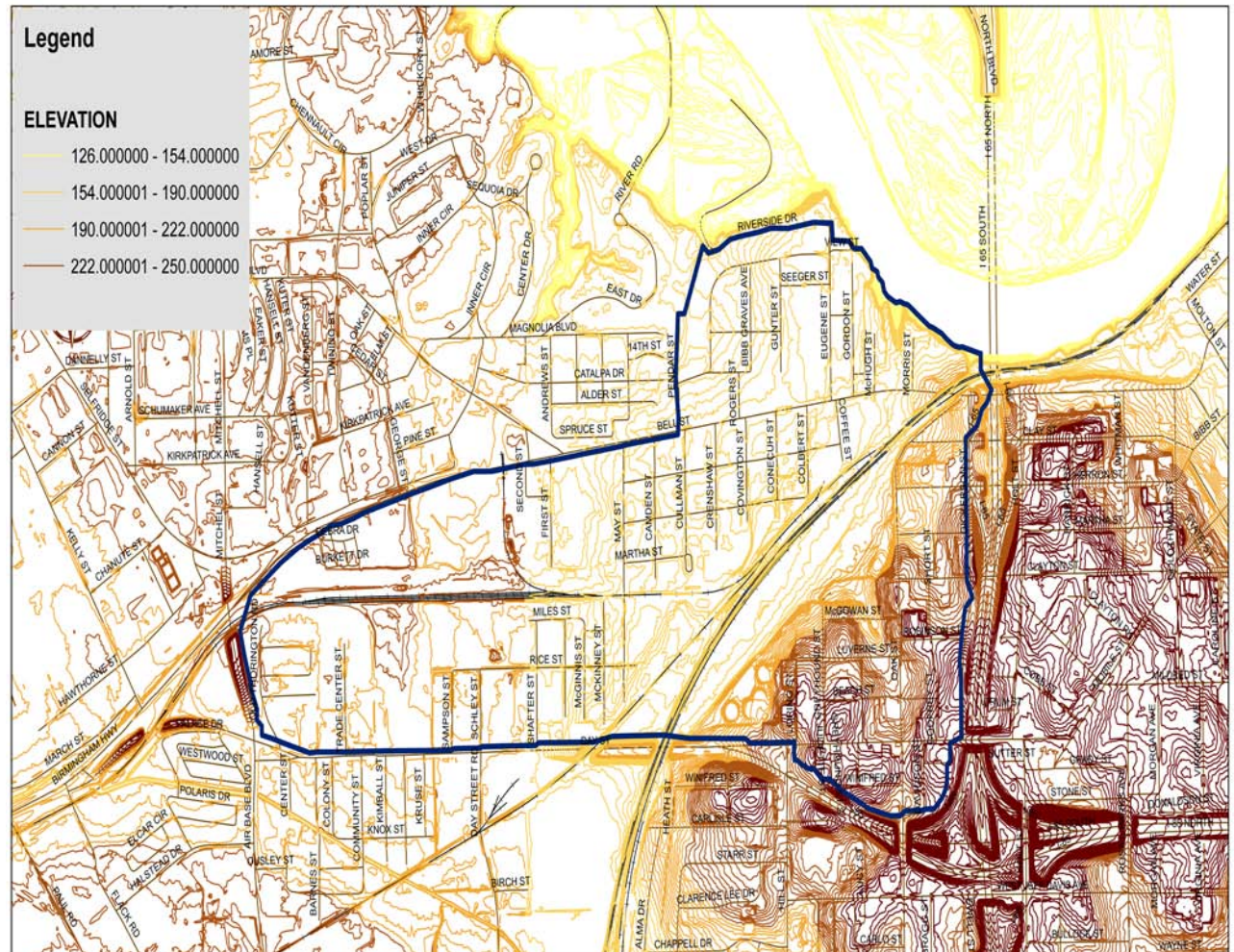
sizes and large mix of styles, and sizes of building creates a definite manufacturing appearance throughout the neighborhood.

Bell Street and its immediate surroundings have a more regional appearance from the large manufacturing presence and numerous sidings while the Day Street area has a more traditional neighborhood character.

# Physiography

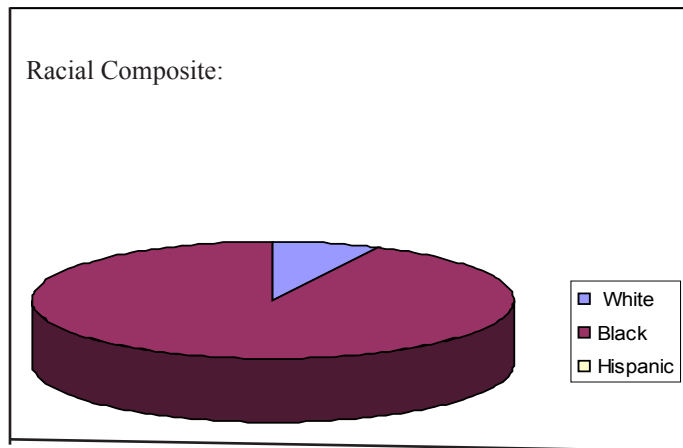
The topographic map on the right illustrates the variety of elevations within the planning area. This map shows relatively flat area from the western boundary to the northeast. The most significant elevation changes occur in about one-third of the area on the eastern side of the planning area and along the river bank. The dark red indicates increasing height elevations as the lines are too close together to be able to interrupt the exact amount of change in elevation on this small map.

The color changes indicate specific feet of elevation as noted in the legend, and the distance between the lines indicate degree of change - the closer the lines, the steeper the incline.

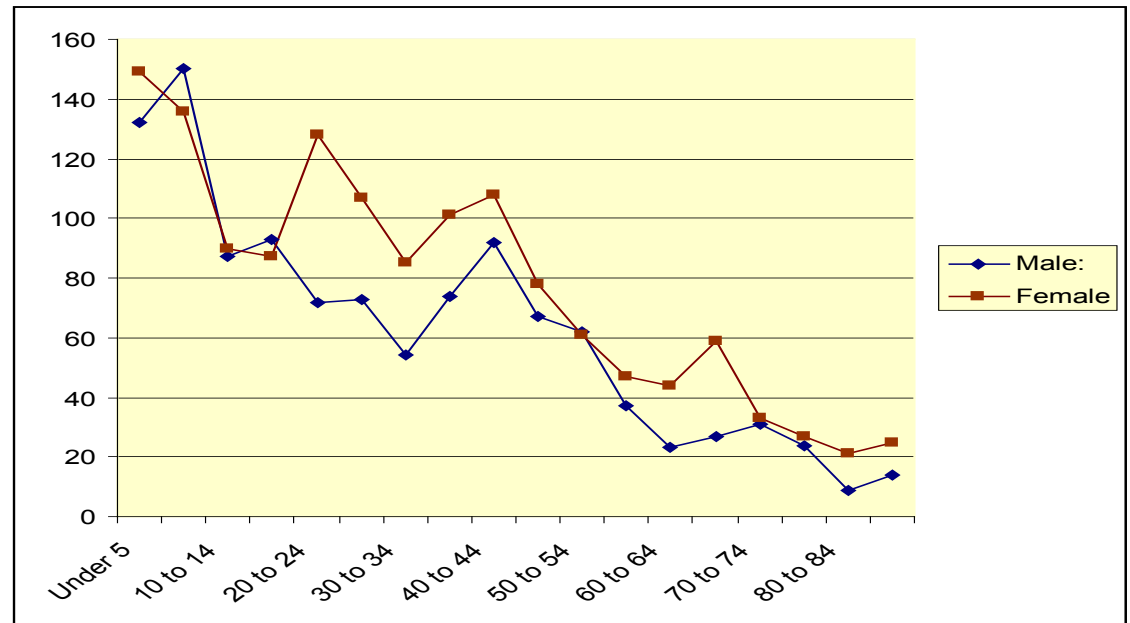


# Demographic Characteristics

Data from the US Census Bureau is used to illustrate population characteristics and changes in the population over time. The Bell Street Neighborhood Planning Area contains Census Tract 10, block group 1 and part of Census Tract 11, Block group 1. The 1990 US Census documented a population of 2338 persons, the 2000 census claimed 2507, an increase of 7%, an additional 169 people in 2000.



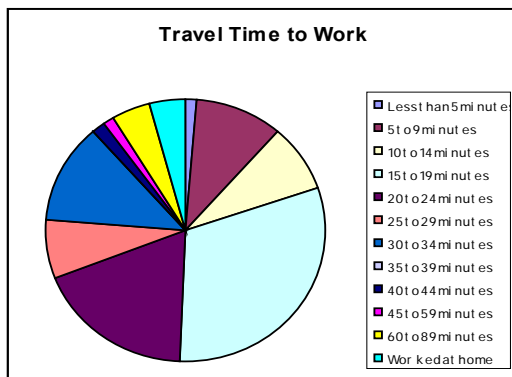
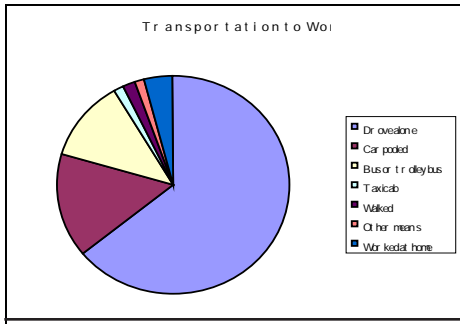
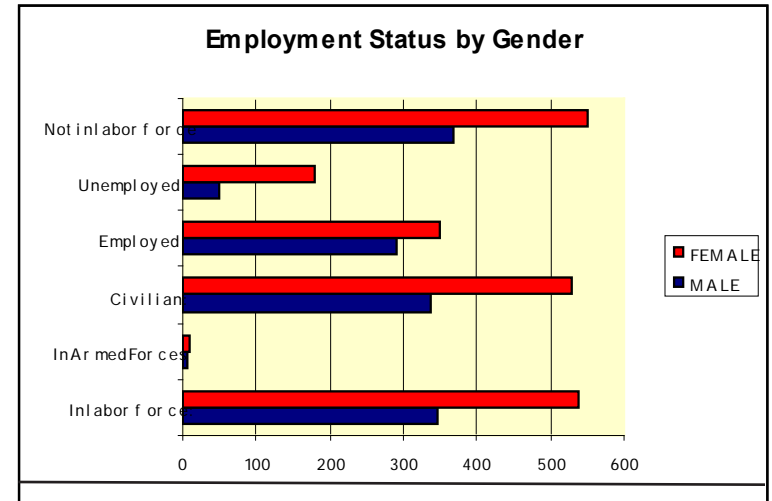
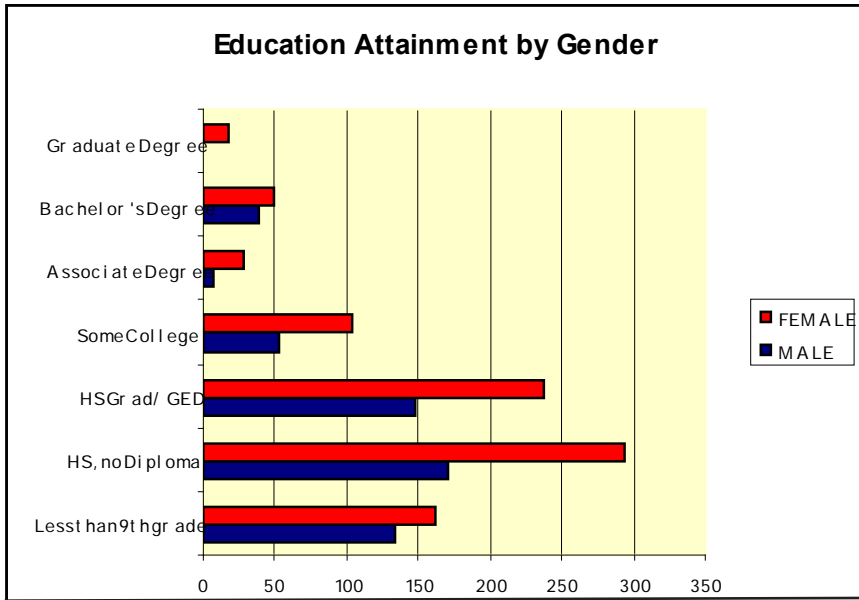
The racial makeup of the neighborhood has not changed. It remains today primarily a mix of black and white neighbors. The pie graph above indicates about 90% Black, and very few Hispanic.



Gender by Age. The graph above illustrates population distribution of males and females by age. This shows that there are more females at almost every age. This also shows that 34.1% of the neighborhood population are children ages 0-17, and 10.8% are 65 and older. This could be also interpreted that 45% of the area population may have some dependence upon adults 21 - 64. The percent of older neighbors is a bit lower than the average seen in our city (11.8%) but the percentage of youths is higher than that of the city (25.7%)

Census data recorded 1,013 households, 599 families, with an average family size of 3.29 people (city-wide average of 3.08) and this is slightly smaller than the family size documented in 1990 ( 3.6 ).

# Education and Employment



This data from the 2000 US Census looks at the education and employment data for the neighborhood residents. The median household income for this area is \$10,218. The educational attainment for persons 25 and older, top left chart, shows that 45% of the population has graduated from High School. This is below the City graduation rate of 83% and the national rate of 84%.

The chart on the top right, Employment Status by Gender, shows that 69.4% of persons 16 and older are in the labor force, this is better than the a national average of 65%. However, the neighborhood had an unemployment rate of 13.9% which is higher than the national rate which is currently 6.1%.

Like most Montgomery residents, the neighborhood residents primarily drive to work. Almost 70% of workers drive alone, 13% ride the bus, and 2% walk. The majority of workers require 15 minutes or more to get to work while only 20% can get to work in less than 15 minutes. Five percent of neighborhoods workers travel between an hour and 90 minutes to get to work.

From this data we can determine that few of the neighbors find employment within the planning area and many residents would benefit from additional education and training.

# Housing

The initial survey by the City Planning Department included determining types of housing units (single family detached units, duplexes, triplexes, and other types of multifamily units) and observing the area housing stock to determine general condition. This observation was limited to visual inspection from the street. No inside inspections were done, only observation of the sides and front visible from the street.

There were five possible classifications for the condition of a structure: (1) indicates structure appeared sound and in good condition; (2) indicates a structure that requires paint or minor repairs; (3) indicates a structure that needs major repairs such as serious roof damage or had significant sagging of normally straight construction lines which might indicate serious foundation or support problems; (4) was given to structures that appeared beyond repair and should be considered for demolition; (5) was given to a structure in the process of some type of renovation or construction.

These are broad, non-binding, non-legal descriptions used to estimate the overall condition of housing in the area. The data is used only to determine a degree of need for housing repairs in the area. The tables on pages 17 and 18 sum-

marize the data from this study.

The Bell Street Planning Area has pockets of residential areas mixed with some commercial uses and a lot of manufacturing uses. Maxwell Air Force Base lies along the northern boundary. Of the total 603 acres in this planning area, about 130 acres are zoned for residential and almost 70 of these acres are vacant lots.

The survey identified 405 housing units within the planning area. The majority, 287, were single family detached homes. Duplexes contained 68 housing units, triplexes provided 3, four-plex and other multifamily units and a trailer park provided 47. The housing is in fair condition with 35% of the housing stock in good shape, 47% in need of minor repairs, 14% in need of major repairs, and 2.7% recommended for demolition.

Two streets that run north from Bell Street, Gordon and Eugene, were named as part of the Powder Magazine Park Historical District in the early 1970s. At that time some of these houses were eligible for a local historic designation. Unfortunately, many of those houses have been torn down or renovated in major ways so that the character of the 1970s historic designation no longer exists. The actual powder magazine itself is located just north in a park owned by the City/County of Montgomery.

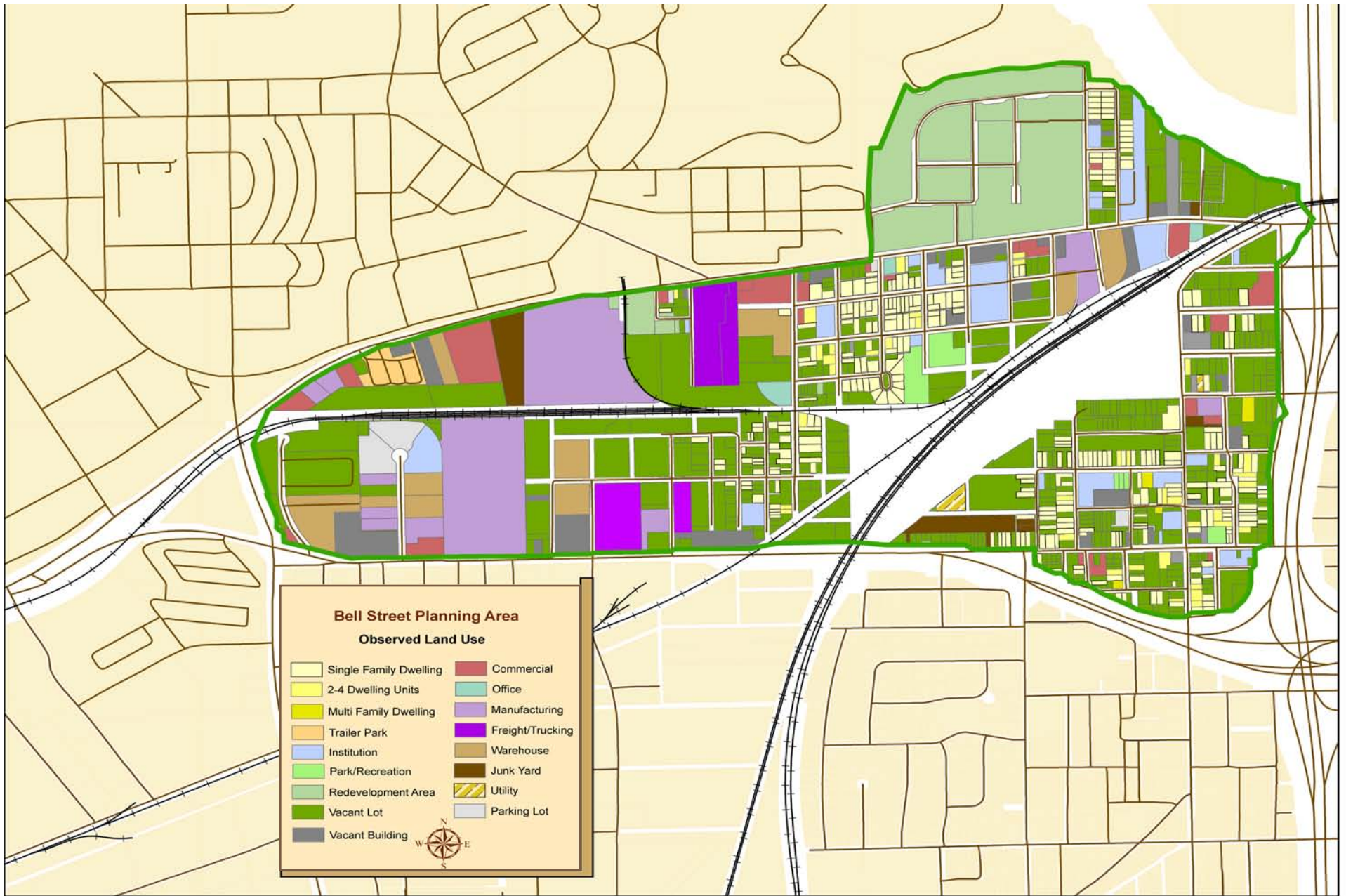




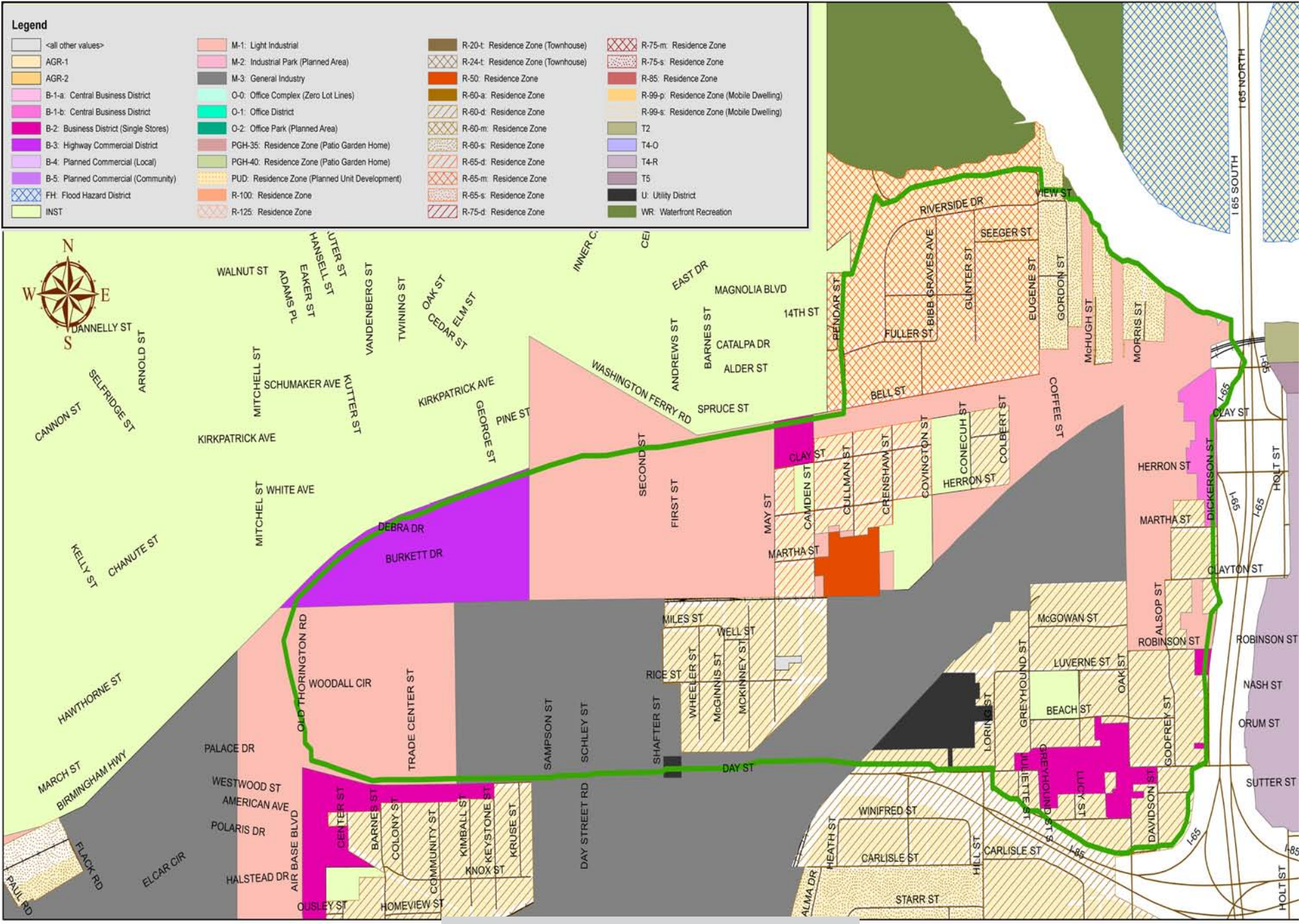
Structural Condition	Single Family	Duplex	Three or More Units	Total Multifamily	Total Units
 <p>1</p>	116 (40.4%)	8 (11.4%)	34 (68%)	42 (35.6%)	158 (35.5%)
 <p>2</p>	122 (42.5%)	48 (68.6%)	11 (22%)	59 (50%)	181 (47.3%)
 <p>3</p>	41 (14.3%)	10 (14.3%)	5 (10%)	15 (12.7%)	56 (14.6%)
 <p>4</p>	8 (2.8%)	2 (2.9%)	0	2 (1.7%)	10 (2.6%)
<b>Total Dwelling Units</b>	<b>287 (100%)</b>	<b>68 (100%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>	<b>118 (100%)</b>	<b>405 (100%)</b>

# Observed Land Use Summary

Observed Land Use	# of Parcels Used	% of Parcels	Acres covered	% of Area
Single Family Residence	287	31%	*70	11.6%
Multi-Family Residence	43	4.6%	*All types residential currently used as residence	
Commercial	26	2.8%	19.5	3.2%
Manufacturing	32	3.5%	89	14.7%
Institutional	23	2.5%	241.6 *includes railroad areas	40.1%
Park/Recreation	6	0.6%	6	1%
Parking	3	0.3%		<1%
Utilities	6	0.6%	6	1%
Vacant Commercial or Manufacturing Building	37	4.0%	18.3	3%
Vacant Land	463	50%	148.6	24.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>100%</b>



Land use noted during the data collection, begun in Summer, 2006.



Existing Zoning

## Commercial and Manufacturing Uses

Both commercial and manufacturing uses are apparent along Bell Street and in the entire western third of this planning area. There are many vacant commercial and manufacturing buildings as well. Of the viable commercial businesses about half are auto sales and services, there are a few general retail stores, two beauty/barber shops, a laundry, a couple restaurants, and a few miscellaneous services.

Manufacturing uses include lumber yards, furniture, roofing, glass, and freight companies. There are also several warehouses and outdoor storage facilities as well as numerous salvage yards. The presence of railroad sidings and the very active rail use in the area help support manufacturing uses.

The number of vacant facilities and the availability of convenient rail transportation offer opportunities for additional manufacturing businesses.

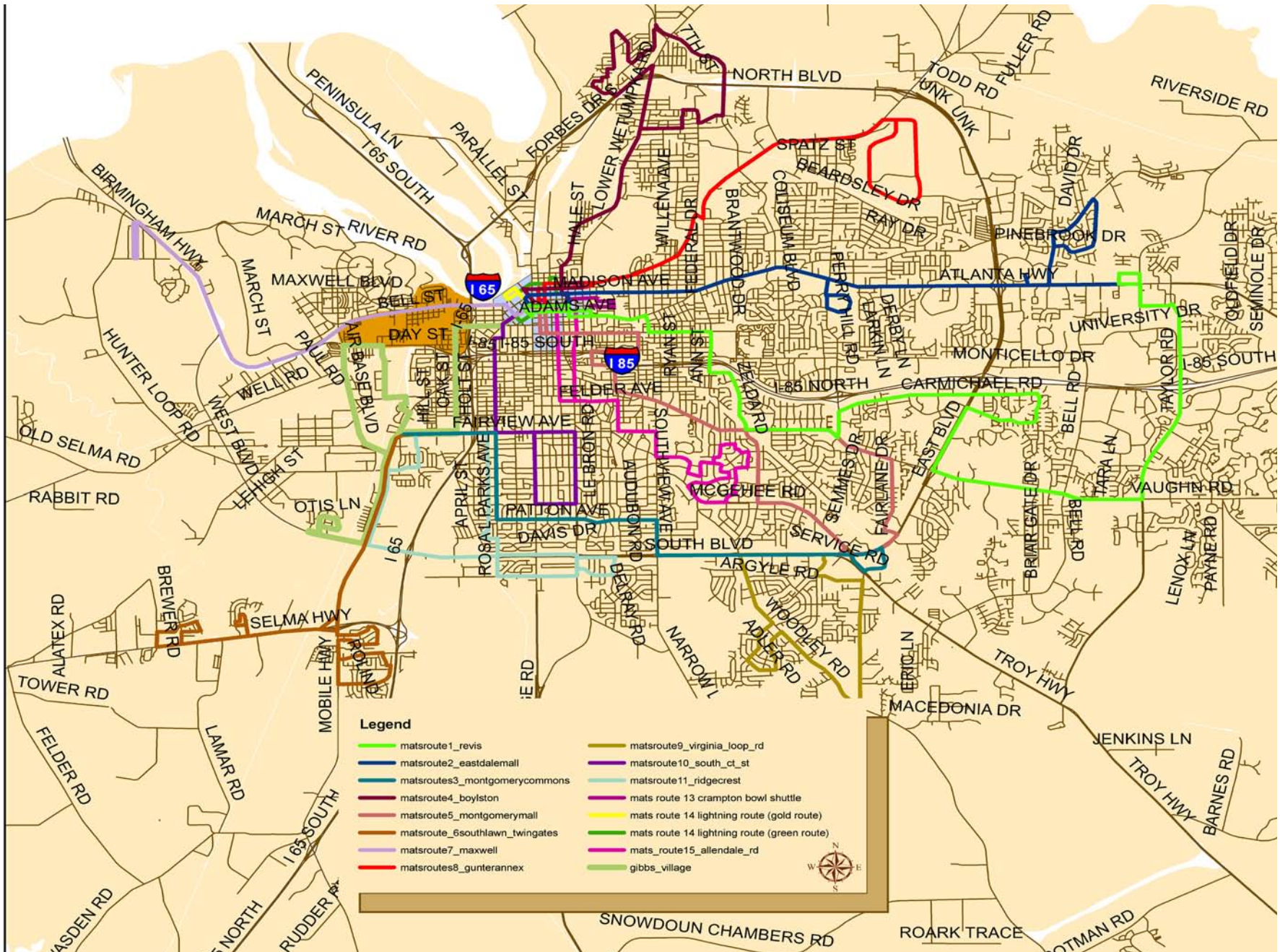
At the public meetings with residents, property owners and interested citizens it was obvious that the area residents would appreciate an increase of job opportunities and retail shops, especially a grocery store. A grocery was high on everyone's list, in fact there had been a grocery in the area for years that had recently closed.





There are 150 acres of vacant land and 24.5 acres with vacant buildings in this area. This indicates opportunity for development and redevelopment. Many of the vacant buildings have great architectural character and their restoration and reuse would help to maintain the historic character of the area.





**Public Transit System:** This map illustrates Montgomery’s bus system. Bell Street Planning Area, shaded in orange, has two bus lines to connect residents to the rest of the City. The transfer station is very near in downtown.

## Existing Public Facilities and Services

The Bell Street Planning Area has several park areas, one on Day Street (pictured just below) a block from Interstate 65 and one at Mac Millan School have play equipment, shady areas, and benches for relaxing.



There is a Boys and Girls Club (bottom left) on Crenshaw south of Herron Street that offers year round programs, after school tutoring, swimming, and many other activities. They have a ballfield across from the club as well as the outdoor swimming pool. Membership is quite affordable at \$5.00 a year.



MacMillan International Academy and Daisey Lawrence are both part of the Montgomery County School system and both offer special programs. Daisey Lawrence houses HIP-PY (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youths). This is a program for 3-5 year olds and their families to help the youngsters get ready for Kindergarten and elementary school. It has won numerous educational awards for the significant help it gives children so that they will be a success in school. It also greatly benefits the family as all family may participate in the program to gain educational skills.

MacMillan is a magnet school for grades 1-5. This program has children from all areas of Montgomery. MacMillan was originally begun in 1903 but two fires in the 1970s destroyed the original building. The current building was completed in 1986 and in 1995, it became the International Academy magnet school.



Powder Magazine Park, on the Alabama River, along the northern boundary of this planning area, is an historic area as well as a great recreation spot for the neighborhood, City and region. There are few amenities at this time, but there are places for picnics and a boat ramp for access to the river. This is definitely an opportunity for expanding outdoor activities and taking advantage of our beautiful river.



Boat launch near Powder Magazine Park



## Utilities

The Bell Street Planning Area is served by Alabama Power, Montgomery Water and Sanitary Sewer, and Alabama Gas Corporation. These are private entities and service must be arranged through the utility provider. Montgomery Water bills for the sewer and garbage pick-up, though the Sanitation Department of the City provides residential garbage collection. The Sanitation Department also provides each residential customer with a rollable trash container. Properties zoned other than residential must contract with private garbage services.

The City of Montgomery Sanitation Department has curb side garbage pick up twice a week, one day a week curb pick up of leaves, branches or other yard refuse, and will pick up, upon a call-in request for special items. In addition, once a week the Sanitation Department places vehicles at area schools to receive any kind of refuse that people will take to the site for disposal. There is also a recycling program that picks up recyclables left in the provided recycling sacks (bright orange) on the curb once a week.

## Public Safety

The City of Montgomery Fire Department serves the city with 16 Class-A Pumpers, 6 ladder trucks, 6 paramedic trucks, 2 Hazardous Materials Teams, and a heavy rescue truck. Additionally, the City maintains a ISO Class 2 rating which assists homeowners in obtaining low fire insurance rates. The fire station at Holt and Mildred is a mile from the neighborhood, and the station off Old Hayneville Road is 1.7 miles away.

The City of Montgomery Police Department provides several services to the City at-large and for the Capitol Heights Planning Area. Eight divisions support these efforts and include: the Administrative Division, the Community-Oriented Policing Division, the Detective Division, the Juvenile Division, the Patrol Division, the Planning and Technology Division, the Special Operations Division, and the Training and Recruitment Division.

The Police Department also sponsors two programs, the “Citizens Police Academy” and the “Volunteers in Police Service” to build trust and respect between the department and citizens. The “Citizens Police Academy” consists of a 10 week series of classes held on Tuesdays from 6 pm to 9 pm. Topics covered include: criminal investigations, patrol operations, communications, crime prevention, and the functions of the courts. After completing the course, partici-

pants have a working knowledge of the City of Montgomery Police Department’s personnel and policies. Another program to assist the Police Department is called “Volunteers in Police Service” (VIPS). This program allows volunteers to work as partners with police personnel to free up officers for higher priority duties. These volunteer duties may include administrative work, neighborhood patrol, school patrol, and special event staffing. Each volunteer uses a distinctive-ly marked patrol vehicle while fulfilling some of these duties.

The Police Department is always willing to work with residents of any neighborhood in order to address any crime or traffic issues and to help neighborhood establish the Neighborhood Watch Program.



# The Neighborhood Plan

# Neighborhood Plan

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of healthy cities and towns. Neighbors know each other and take special pride in their homes and community. In a well designed neighborhood, the residents can walk safely to nearby shopping, schools, and parks. Public facilities serve as points of interest and provide a variety of activities for the area. A broad range of housing options allow a mix of family sizes, ages, incomes, and cultures to live together. Transit service is convenient to the neighborhood to reach jobs and connect the neighborhood to the larger community. Using traditional zoning or SmartCode with New Urbanist theories will allow planners, residents, and property owners to guide future development in the direction residents desire for the area.

It is important to remember that a strong community has multifaceted issues. The following strategies should be considered as working together and not any one specific topic stands alone or is the only issue of importance to a community. The Bell Street Planning area has suffered from disinvestment over the years and is in need of redevelopment. Preserving the historical character of the neighborhood will help to support the property values. The areas where home owners are leaving and the rental property is increasing may be stabilized by redevelopment.

The Bell Street Neighborhood Plan addresses the concerns and desires of the citizens as expressed in a series of community meetings held in various locations within the neighborhood. These concerns and goals were used to develop objectives with strategies for implementation to achieve the community goals. Short, medium, and long range suggestions for the community to work toward are listed at the end of this plan, in the Implementation section. There are suggestions for measuring the outcomes of the various projects in order to evaluate and reassess as necessary. Implementation needs to be evaluated with the stated goals in mind so progress may be tracked, or to rethink strategy if the goals are not being met.

The following outline itemizes important aspects of community life. Some elements are included only to stress the need for continued success with these endeavors. Many communities do not have the organization and committed leadership that is apparent in other areas. This is the first, and one of the most important tasks, for most neighborhoods to develop in order to begin any implementation of goals. The strategies for the Plan are divided into the following six categories:

Community Organization  
Economic Development  
Education and Training  
Housing  
Land Use/Zoning  
Public Safety

## **Community Organization:**

- Develop a community organization
- Cover area with Neighborhood Watch
- Encourage development of community leadership
- Build community goals together and form committees to facilitate implementation
- Establish a Community Garden
- Monitor and evaluate implementation of community goals

## **Economic Development:**

- Redevelop commercial areas
- Use existing vacant manufacturing creatively to attract new activities
- Increase number and diversity of businesses and services in the area
- Marina, fishing pier
- Consider urban agriculture

## **Education and Training**

- Encourage youths to stay in school
- Vo-Tech or appropriate training for people not desiring to attend college
- Job training center
- After school programs for youths

## **Housing**

- Rehabilitation for housing that is not in good condition
- Increase occupancy rates
- Maintain affordable housing

## **Land Use and Zoning**

- Allow mixed-use zoning along Bell for commercial and residential
- Encourage manufacturing uses to maximize railroad service capacity in the area
- Think Regionally in terms of Bell Street development
- Zone to encourage conservation to protect river banks and marina development
- Enforce zoning to clean up areas in the residential parcels that have become junk yards

## **Public Facilities**

- Need to increase park and recreation opportunities
- Moderate to large scale urban agriculture
- Residents report need for sidewalks
- Boat ramp, fishing pier, marina

## **Public Services**

- Help address drug problems
- Crosswalks at Hill and Day Streets
- Traffic calming for Day Street

The neighborhood meeting identified the assets, liabilities, opportunities and constraints that led to the enumeration of the above strategies. Over one hundred people attended the initial meeting and all seemed to be very interested in the area and were positive about the potential for the future.

The presence of Maxwell Air Force Base

lends a strong institution as an anchor for the area. Maxwell is a good neighbor and has much to offer in terms of stability. Maxwell does much for the community in terms of revenue and as a source of volunteers for many worthwhile projects. The Planning staff from Maxwell has also indicated their willingness to be involved in helping with planning for this area.

The City of Montgomery has committed the time and resources that it has to offer to help the neighbors meet their goals. The Planning and Development Department is committed to helping define an action plan for approaching each strategy and helping with implementation. The following section will outline numerous suggestions for implementing each goal. It will be necessary to evaluate the process frequently and measures will be suggested to help with evaluation.

## Community Organization

People are a community's best asset. The strength and sustainability of any community's growth is spearheaded by the people. In order to maintain and support the community, many people will be needed for numerous roles. Historically it has been grassroots movements that have truly made a difference in people's lives and has forced policy change.

The Bell Street area currently has no community organization to unite neighbors behind a common goal or to work on specific projects. This would be one of the first goals for implementation of the Neighborhood Plan.

Montgomery has a community organization called BONDS (Building Our Neighborhoods for Development and Success) whose purpose is to help neighborhoods across Montgomery form organizations to bring the neighbors together for social activities, but also functions to address neighborhood issues that help the neighborhood grow stronger, solve problems and find resources to address issues that can't be taken care of by an individual.

BONDS helps neighborhoods set goals and has training available for a number of opportunities. Their office is in Old Alabama Town, they can be reached at 334-264-6223. They also bring neighborhood leaders from all over the City together to share their experiences and successes so that others can appreciate the variety of things a neighborhood organization offers to each neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Organization helps build a neighborhood identity which promotes pride in the area as well as making neighbors

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

*Margaret Mead*

feel more a part of the area. This can extend to safety as people who know each other will help to look out for each other. When folks feel a part of their area, it really helps to make them truly feel at home.

- Establish and maintain a neighborhood organization. In this Planning Area, since it is so large and has some connectivity issues, it would probably be best to form at least two

organizations: one could be centered along the Bell Street area, west of Oak, and the other could focus on the Day Street area.

- Every effort should be made to encourage neighbors to join and participate and make this a great community team.

- A Neighborhood Watch is a great program to establish. The Montgomery Police Department works with each neighborhood to make this work. This is an important link to crime protection for the area. Signs notifying all that there is a Neighborhood Watch at work in the area is a definite deterrent.

- While building membership and leadership in the community, please remember this is to be a long term organization for the area and it will need many leaders and members through the years to

sustain the neighborhood. So please be inclusive, nurture all members, encourage all neighbors to participate and share the tasks and the fun.

- Build neighborhood identity with the projects, programs and goals selected by the neighbors. Neighbors could design or select a design or logo to represent the area and this could be put on signs to let visitors know

they are entering a special place.

- A Community Garden or Park might be an example of something residents would want to work together to create.
- The Neighborhood Organization would help tremendously with Plan implementation and would act as a monitor for various steps in the process, as well as taking on many responsibilities for accomplishing the actual project.



Fair Park



Florence Park



Kendall Whittier



Lewis Crest



Lewiston Gardens



Riverview



Riverwood



Sunrise Terrace



Swan Lake



Turner Park

Some Neighborhood signs seen in Montgomery:



A wide variety of neighborhood signs:



Brady Heights



# Economic Development

The Bell Street Planning Area has some unique characteristics and opportunities for re-development. Its location next to I-65, I-85, and several active railroad lines makes this area ideal for businesses and manufacturers that require intra- and interstate transportation. But for residents, since this area has only 405 housing units, these major transportation routes help to isolate them from shopping services they desire such as a grocery store. Though Maxwell Air Force Base is also home to many people, they have base stores for many of their needs that most civilians have no access to. Given that most retail shopping and domestic service businesses require about 2,500 roof tops to support them, it may be difficult to recruit a grocery to the area.

## Goals for economic development:

- Redevelop commercial areas. Day Street has some charming commercial buildings that could be rehabed and adapted for a neighborhood-type commercial district. Since Day is connected to the eastern side of I-65, it is relatively easy to attract customers from the Cottage Hill and Hamner Hall neighborhoods.
- Use the existing vacant manufacturing buildings creatively along with the commercial

buildings to develop products and services that compliment each other. Develop the potential of positive externalities that could lead to a thriving business, keeping in mind there are railroad sidings in the area that can be utilized. Recycling industries might be a good suggestion. Not just compacting metal scrap or plastic but actually utilize the scrap for manufacturing things like frames for houses. Recycling is an industry that has great potential and benefits for the future.

- Increasing the number and diversity of businesses and manufacturing in the area. This would help meet residents needs locally, but would also provide numerous employment opportunities for a larger area.

- Utilize the river. This area has one of the few accessible areas to the river. There are a few natural areas that might lend themselves to a marina. It might be possible to place a fishing pier on the river by the boat launch. Anything done near the river, or on the river must be carefully planned with environmental considerations and with the permission of the Army Corps of Engineers. A marina would be a regional attraction.



- This area might lend itself to urban farming. There is much vacant land that could be used for this. There has been a trend across the nation to develop urban farms. This offers employment, source of quality food locally, has potential for numerous other businesses, especially cottage-type businesses for processing the produce. Also may consider hydroponics for year round crops, maximizing space, and diversity of crops.
- Start a co-operative business in conjunction with the farm.

## Hydroponics



Display from Jones Valley Farm in Birmingham, AL





# Education and Training

As noted earlier, the graduation rate for the area is lower than that for the City of Montgomery. Residents might benefit from opportunities for training in order to obtain better paying jobs. Goals for this strategy include:

- Encourage youths to stay in school. Education and training are generally keys to future jobs.
- The area may need after school programs for children in order to help them stay in school, obtain better grades and help to keep youths safe and away from the drugs that neighbors reported as being too readily available in the area.
- Vocational and technical training should be encouraged for incorporation into the public school system as many people do not wish to attend college. These classes are very valuable for obtaining future jobs.
- A job training Center would benefit the entire City and this neighborhood , with the numerous vacant manufacturing buildings, might be a very convenient place to locate such a business.

# Housing

Housing goals focus on improving current stock and creating additional homes in order to encourage more people to live in the area. Increasing the number of residents in the area would also help secure a grocery store and other services that area residents requested. So increasing the area population also helps some of the economic goals.

- Rehab the area houses that need repairs. The City Planning and Development Department (334-241-2997) receives Community Development Block Grants from the federal government (the Department of Housing and Urban Development) and this grant money may be applied to repairing homes. The government sets strict standards as to using this money and currently the City has a waiting list of houses that qualify for this program. In addition, Alabama State also receives federal moneis to rehab homes and their program may be available for grants as well. Interested residents may call ASU program at 334-229-6974)
- Increase occupancy rate and build new houses to increase population. The current residents should be encouraged and helped to maintain their property. A neighborhood Organization can help by scheduling vari-

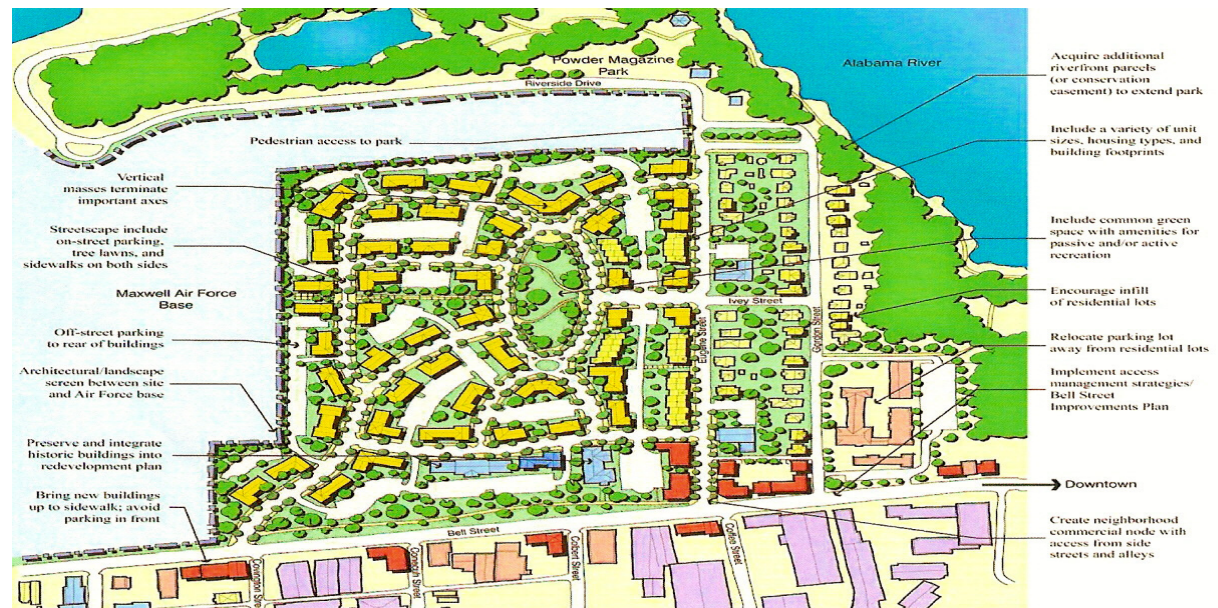


charm and retains historic look of the area

- ous activities and help days for cleaning up areas that require attention. In areas where homes have been torn down, new units that are compatible to local design and attractive should be built.

tant to protect the affordability of housing. There are numerous ways to do this, but a commitment should be made to insure area housing is suitably affordable. One method of attaining this goal is to establish a Community Land Trust. The City of Montgomery is currently studying this increasingly popular tool for providing affordability.

- Neighborhood design below was suggested in 2007 by KPS, consultants from Birmingham, as a possible housing community for the Riverside Heights land on the north side of Bell Street.



# Land Use and Zoning

Land use and zoning concerns how the land should be used to optimize future potential for growth and prosperity of the area. City government determines this and sets the standards in the local Zoning and Sub Division Regulations for a city. Changing zoning allows for new uses of the land. This Plan recommends few changes in the over all land use, but makes the suggestion that mixed use be allowed along Bell and Day Streets so the residential units could be placed on the second floor, above a retail or commercial use on the ground floor.

Zoning changes are first requested through the Planning Commission and then must be approved by City Council. This Plan will not change any zoning, but will suggest that, upon request by a private agent wishing to redevelop part of this planning area, mixed zoning is appropriate. Including these suggestions in the Plan indicates that residents are not opposed to those specific changes. The map on page 37 has the suggested mixed-use parcels colored orange.

- Allow mixed-use (commercial and residential) along Bell Street and in specific blocks of Day Street. This will offer opportunities for people to live closer to stores, or even live above their own store if they so choose. This will increase the over all housing unit density and eventually make it easier to support

more local retail that the neighbors requested during public meetings.

- Encourage manufacturing in areas that will maximize the availability of the existing railroad capacity and proximity of appropriate infrastructure. Few areas have this potential, and it would be smart to use this to its best advantage.
- Bell Street should be part of at least a regional effort for economic development, so zoning and land use strategy should be flexible to respond to plans on a larger scope than a Neighborhood Plan.

- Zoning in this area also must be responsive to the needs of Maxwell Airforce Base. This is an important institution to the entire City and State. As the base may need to grow and change in the future, the area should accommodate as necessary.
- The neighborhood has tremendous potential for a marina. The Alabama River touches this part of Montgomery in a unique way as the river bank is accessible and offers some protective areas that might be considered for a marina. Zoning changes could be considered to facilitate marina development.
- Enforce existing zoning to clean up some junk yards in the area

Urban farming is becoming more common across America - and offers food resources as well as employment and business opportunities for communities.



- The presence of Maxwell Air Field has zoning implications for the surrounding area. The very nature and business of airports create the need for noise, height, and accident clear zones around the perimeter of the runways themselves. These distances are prescribed by the type and size of planes using the runways. Because of possible interference for landing aircraft, buildings in the area must follow specific height restrictions, and because of noise and possibilities for accidents from take-off and landings, the land use of the surrounding area is also strictly regulated.

The map on page 37 indicates the approach, accident, and noise zones that must be observed when developing land in the vicinity of the airfield. The specific heights, land uses and any other specifications should be discussed with the City Land Use Controls Department before attempting plans for redevelopment in this area.



# Maxwell AFB Airport Overlays

## Air Accident and Height Zones

### Maxwell Runway Features

-  Max\_ExtRunwayCtrline
-  Max\_RunwayCtrline
-  Max\_RPZ
-  Max\_Runway

### Air Accident Zones

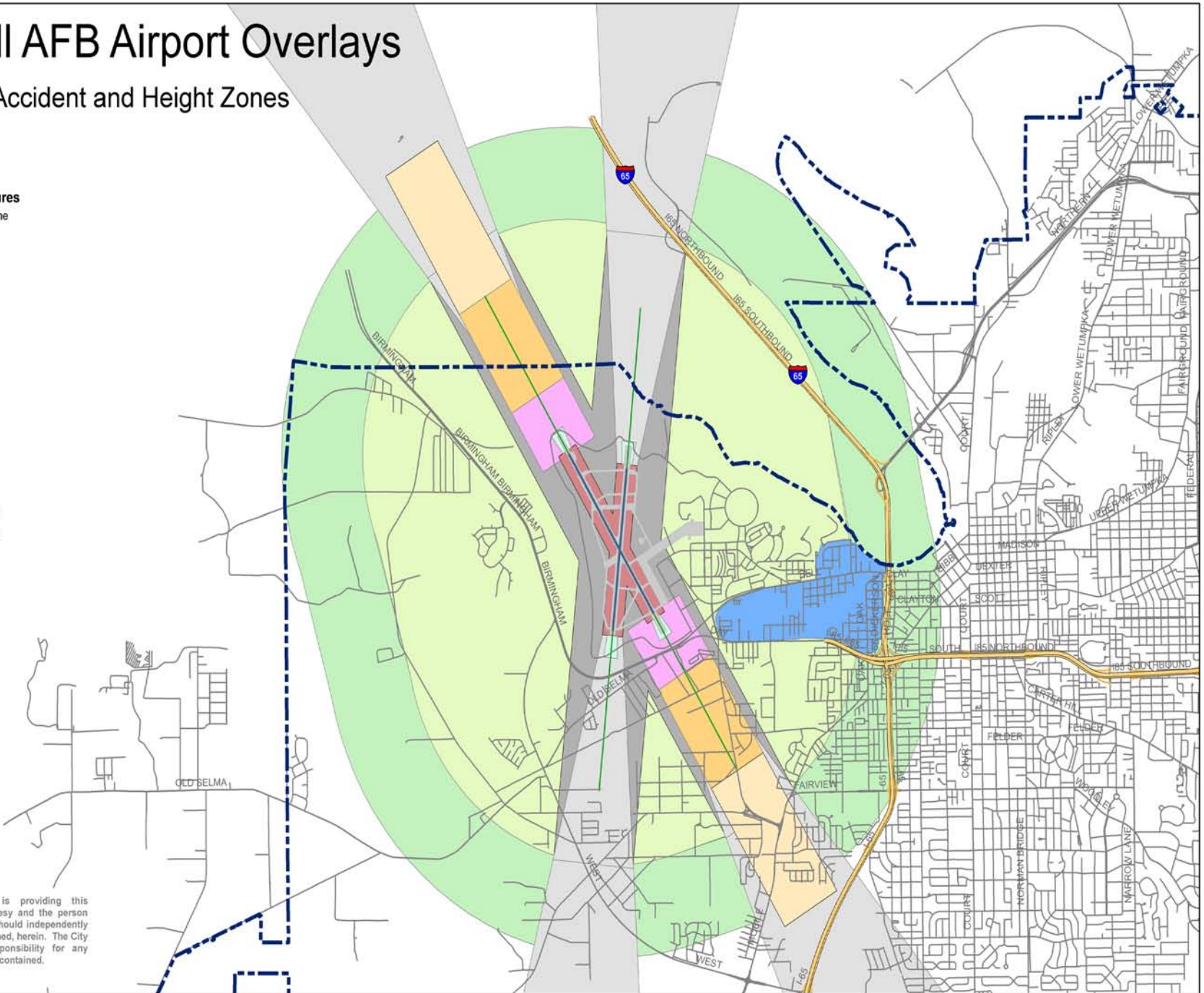
-  PZ
-  CZ
-  APZ I
-  APZ II

### Height Zones

-  Max\_ConicalZone
-  Max\_TransitionalZone
-  Max\_TransitionalZone
-  Max\_ApproachZone
-  Max\_PrimaryZone



The City of Montgomery is providing this information solely as a courtesy and the person requesting such information should independently confirm the information contained, herein. The City assumes no liability or responsibility for any misstatements or inaccuracies contained.



## Public Facilities

- Plan for more recreation areas and small parks. This area has accessibility issues that make it difficult for many residents to get to the small Day Street park, so adding some additional parks would provide needed recreation for area residents.
- Upgrade the Day Street park. This park has a great location but needs some equipment and benches and perhaps a place for picnics.
- Explore feasibility of urban agriculture in this area as both recreation as well as economic development. There is adequate vacant land in the area if residents will support and utilize the garden. The garden should include cisterns to help water the plants through the summer.
- Install sidewalks . Many areas through the neighborhood do not have sidewalks. A plan could be developed to put these in over time to connect the residential areas to stores and places for recreation.
- Place a fishing pier near the boat ramp. Many people in Montgomery would love a fishing pier and there appears to be a convenient bank near the public boat ramp at the end of Riverside Drive for this.



Choptank River Fishing Pier, Maryland

## Public Services, Public Safety

- Explore options to increase connectivity in the area. This planning area is effectively divided into three areas or more by the rail systems in the neighborhood. If there were solutions to putting in roads to connect the separate areas together, it would be an encouragement for commercial businesses to have a successful tenure in the area as well as a help to neighbors as they have needs to travel throughout the neighborhood.
- Change one-way streets crossing I-65 to two-way to facilitate travel from the Bell Street Planning Area to the rest of the City. The Planning Area is significantly cut-off from the surrounding areas of the city by the highways and railroads.
- Install crosswalks for the Day and Hill Street intersection. Children from the neighborhood

have to cross this very busy street in order to get to school. Walking to school should be encouraged for physical health and convenience but this is not possible without a significant cross walk.

- Study Day Street to see if there are traffic calming methods on the section of Day Street that goes through the neighborhood (not the section that comes off of I-85 and travels to the air force base) as the neighbors have reported problems with speeding in the neighborhood.

- Drug addiction and drug related crimes were reported by many people attending the August 2008 planning meeting as major problem in this neighborhood. While city planning has no direct remedy, we do recognize the influence of illegal drugs on communities. There are numerous centers within Montgomery that offer helpful programs. These programs are listed in the indices of this plan. Prevention may be the most promising approach as we go forward but certainly existing cases need all the help and support any individual, family, and community can provide.



# Implementation



# IMPLEMENTATION CHART

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

GOAL	STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Establish and maintain an inclusive Neighborhood Organization	Invite all neighbors to be a part of strengthening their neighborhood	Neighbors, any existing organizations, BONDS, City Staff as needed	Community becomes closer knot; stronger ties to the community	Neighborhood Organization is established and grows in size
Maintain a Neighborhood Watch program	Neighbors look out for each other	Residents working with the Police Department	Neighborhood is safer, residents feel better as they look out for each other	Increase in reporting of crimes, eventual decrease in number of crimes
Build a strong neighborhood identity	Design a sign or logo to represent the unity of the neighbors	Residents, school children, churches, City Staff as needed	Stronger identity builds positive feelings for the area	Variety of positive signs: area becomes cleaner, more inviting, more people move to area, signs, flags, or logos visible in the area for all to see and know there are active, engaged residents
	Plan socials, interesting topics for growth or change, or any meeting that would bring neighbors together	Initial leaders among the residents wishing to start an organization	More neighbors join in making the area stronger	
	Maintain a community garden	Residents, City Staff, other interested volunteers	Benefits from shared jobs, have fresh food and flowers to enjoy and sell	Successful garden is planted, maintained, and enjoyed by residents
	Monitor and evaluate implementation of goals	Residents, City Council Rep, City Staff, land owners	Goals are prioritized and plan is actually implemented by residents	Goals identified in the Plan are being accomplished

# IMPLEMENTATION CHART

## Economic Development

GOAL	STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Retail and services for the area	Use existing infrastructure wisely to develop a plan for manufacturing and commerce; explore New Market tax credits	Public and private partnerships will be needed	Redevelopment of the commercial areas	Presence of new stores and services in the area
Increase diversity of manufacturing and commerce in area	Regional appeal of existing infrastructure is optimal location for numerous enterprises; New Market Tax credits	Public and private partnership will be needed	Fill vacant buildings with viable companies, increased job opportunities, more people move into the neighborhood	Fewer vacant buildings
Utilize the potential of the Alabama River	Use the accessibility of the river in this neighborhood to best advantage for attracting tourists and businesses	Public, private partnerships; Marine Corps of Engineers	Increased opportunities to use the river for business and recreation	Environmentally sensitive development along, and increased use of the river
Creative use of vacant land	Use existing vacant land for an urban farm and possibly a co-op business	Could be a neighborhood business; public, private partnership; City staff as necessary	Vacant land will be put to good use; attractive and productive farm will attract new residents to area;	Farm is constructed and crops planted

# IMPLEMENTATION CHART

## Education and Training

GOAL	STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Raise educational attainment percentages, youths need at least high school degree	Encourage youths to stay in school	Parents, friends and neighbors of area children; County School system,	High School grads and college grads usually have better jobs	County School Board statistics
Keep youths in school; graduate all students	Establish after school tutoring, study, and recreation programs	Parents, school system, Boys and Girls Club, churches, public and private efforts	Youths graduate from school; have healthier activities; find suitable jobs	County School stats; greater participation in various programs by area youths
More training opportunities for area youths	Encourage more access to vocational and technical training	Alabama post-secondary school system; public and private partnerships	Increased opportunities for training for jobs with more than minimum wage	Utilization of training opportunities; over time, area average income will increase
	Establish a Job Training Center in the area	Alabama post-secondary school system; public and private partnership	Establishment of a new business in the area for training - this could serve as an economic development tool as well	Job Training Center up and running

# IMPLEMENTATION CHART

## HOUSING

GOAL	STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Improve the condition of area housing where needed	Use existing programs to secure help as needed (ASU, City, Habitat, and Rebuilding Together, etc)	Individuals, property owners, but City staff can help suggest resources	Housing conditions are improved; neighborhood gets ‘face lift’	Improvement is visible as one goes through the neighborhood; in time this will attract more residents to live in the area
Increase area population; utilize vacant properties	Reestablish the charming quality to the area with clean-ups, home repairs, area beautification	Neighbors, property owners, and by public and private partnerships	More people will move to the area; vacant properties will become occupied	Number of vacant properties will be reduced
Area is a source for affordable housing	Use contextual zoning to guide infill development; establish a Community Land Trust	City Planning staff and Planning Commission	Area remains a place to find homes for variety of incomes	Adoption of appropriate zoning; housing prices remain affordable

# IMPLEMENTATION CHART

## LAND USE AND ZONING

GOALS	STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Increase residential and commercial use of the area	Restore the traditional neighborhood design and function to the existing residential areas	City Planning staff and Planning Commission; support from area residents	Increased stores, shops with residences on second story; residential areas more compact and viable	Mixed-use zoning will be allowed along Bell and Day streets
Maximize the manufacturing potential within this area	Protect manufacturing zoning in the area	City Planning staff and Planning Commission; Comprehensive Plan; support from area residents	Increased manufacturing use of area will provide more jobs and act as a stimulus for area redevelopment	Increase in number of active manufacturing businesses
Bell Street and Western Day Street part of overall regional economic plan	Zoning must be flexible and helpful to encourage appropriate regional economic activities	City Planning staff and Planning Commission; Comprehensive Plan; support from area residents	Increased number of jobs; increased economic stability of the area	Redevelopment and growth of the area's commercial and manufacturing enterprises
Marina along the river in this area and a separate fishing pier	Conservation zoning to help protect the valuable wetland area and maintain bank integrity while allowing this	Responsible zoning ordinance; City Planning and Planning Commission	Marina and fishing pier development will not be delayed by zoning problems	Sensitive development on river
Clean up Planning area	Enforce existing zoning and codes to clean-up unlawful junk yards	Individual reporting of problems; City Housing Codes office	Restore area appearance	Monitor existing problem areas to note progress

# IMPLEMENTATION CHART

## PUBLIC FACILITIES

GOAL	STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
More parks for area	Combine beautification and greenspace for area by planning small parks	Area residents working together; public and private partners	Residential areas have parks for recreation and relaxation	Monitor planning and placement of parks
Add play equipment and picnic tables to Day Street park	Renovate park on Day Street	Area residents; City Parks and Rec Dept; help from City Council	More people enjoy the existing park	Monitor use of park after renovation/ public response
Community garden	Urban agriculture offers individual benefits of fresh food, exercise, and potential for economic growth	Interested neighbors, City staff as resource; possibly a partnership to form business	Individuals could supplement their family's diet with fresh food; farm provides income to farm partners (co-op)	Garden is planted, taken care of, and produces crops
Fishing pier along river	Fishing pier would attract area folks and tourists to the river - natural addition to the Riverwalk	Local support for project;	Tourists, neighbors and all of Montgomery will enjoy the pier	Monitor use of pier

# IMPLEMENTATION CHART

## PUBLIC SAFETY

GOAL	STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOME	MEASUREMENT
Create safe walkable neighborhood	Construct sidewalks where needed	City Maintenance, help from City Council Reps	Better health; opportunity for exercise; neighbors get to know each other better	Notice that people are walking more in the area
Increase ability to travel around in this planning area	Change one-way streets to 2-way	City maintenance and Traffic Engineers	Could ease daily tasks, but could also help stimulate more stores built in the area	Some what subjective, but getting around area is easier, less backtracking
	Study possibility of constructing road links across some of the railroad tracks	Transportation planners, railroad companies, and highway department	Better transportation within the area helps promote growth in the area for business as well as residential	Over time area population increases as do numbers of viable businesses
Safe route to school for area youths	Crosswalk to cross Day Street at Mill	City and County official; traffic engineering department	If children could walk, get exercise, lessen traffic congestion	Monitor number of school children walking to school
	Study Day Street to determine possible traffic calming solutions	Traffic engineering department	Street safer for pedestrian and cyclists	Monitor number of school children walking to school