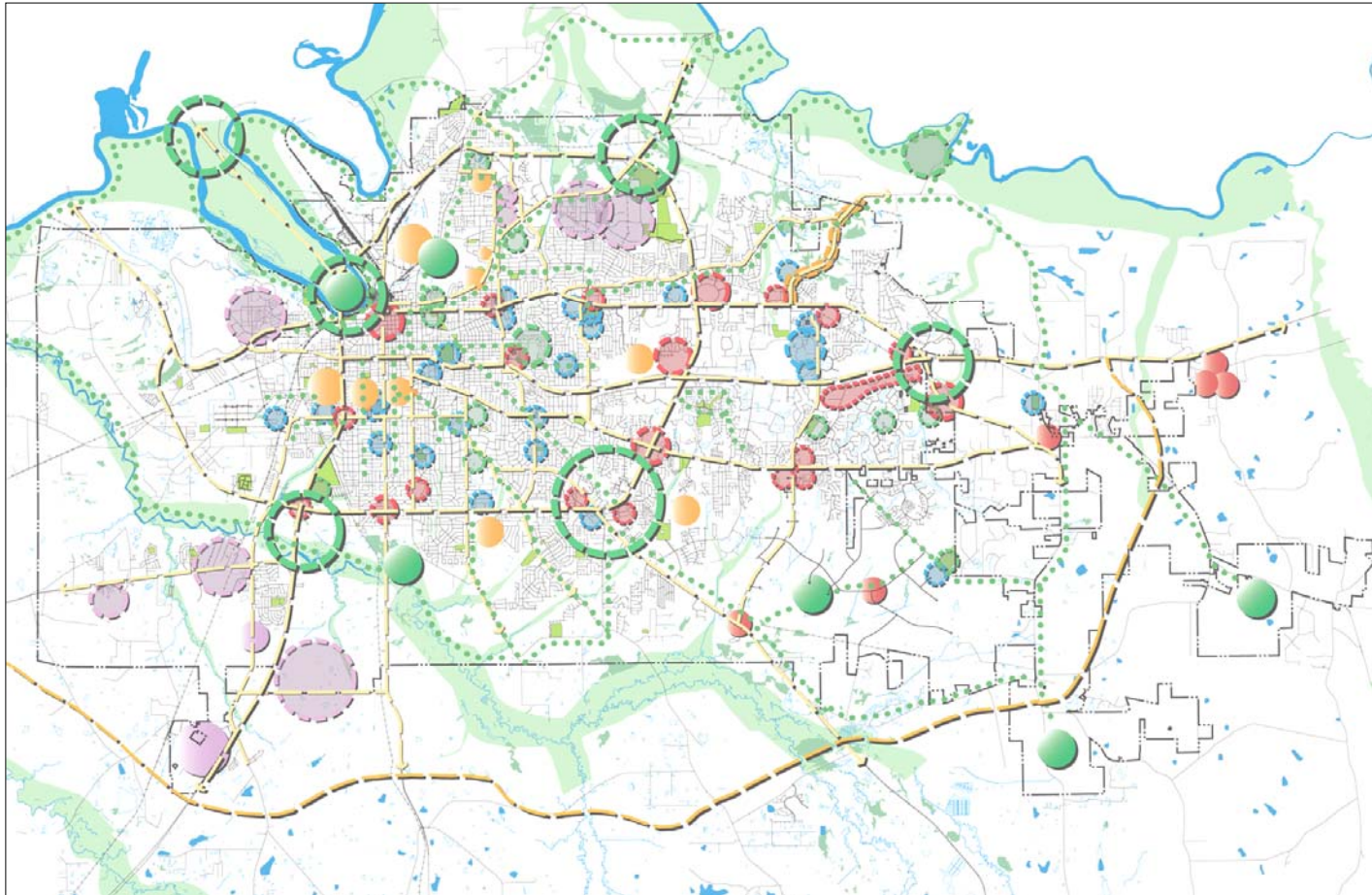


MONTGOMERY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT





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MONTGOMERY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Adopted by the
Planning Commission of the

City of Montgomery, Alabama

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DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCES IN THE MONTGOMERY MARKET

Anton Nelessen is a nationally recognized expert in conducting *Visual Preference Surveys*, in which he asks groups of people to express their like (or dislike) for typical views of development in their cities. Dr. Nelessen visited Montgomery in early 2005, and conducted such a survey among a cross-section of about 150 city and county residents attending a workshop on growth and development patterns for the city and its planning area.

Based on the preferences of the participants in this survey, development and redevelopment in Montgomery should strive for the following characteristics:

- *The basic increments of Montgomery's commercial development will be activity centers and corridors that incorporate working places, including those that integrate or interconnect, in varying degrees, work and dwelling.*
- *The basic increments of Montgomery's residential development will be diverse, compact and walkable neighborhoods, activity centers and corridors.*
- *Montgomery will accommodate a range of dwelling types and sizes, suitable for younger and older persons, single households and families.*
- *Each neighborhood will have a central gathering place, and neighborhood planning, design and size will allow most residents to walk from home to that place.*
- *There will be shops in reasonable proximity to most neighborhoods to satisfy ordinary daily household needs.*
- *Development will conserve sensitive landscapes as part of a permanent citywide open space system.*
- *Building frontages in activity centers will collectively support pedestrian streetscapes while masking most parking lots.*
- *The scale, massing, height and design of different types of buildings in large activity centers will harmonious to allow them to be located in close proximity to one another.*
- *A grid pattern of streets will disperse traffic by interconnecting adjacent neighborhoods and activity centers.*
- *Streets will be complete—that is, they will be planned, designed and built to enhance an overall city environment that will be equitable to pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles.*



FOREWORD

The choice for Montgomery is not one of growth versus no growth. The city has made itself into an attractive and desirable place that continues to draw to it more people and private investment every year. Unless the public investment and commitment that has created Alabama's capital city could somehow be reversed, growth will continue. The choice, then, is one of how development should be channeled in a manner compatible with the vision the people of Montgomery have set for themselves and their community. That is the role of the city's ongoing comprehensive planning process.

Montgomery City government and a large number of its citizens sponsored and participated in a regional strategic visioning process beginning in October 2000 and continuing through May 2001, coordinated by Envision 2020. That process was helpful in setting a general agenda to guide investment. The process has continued with preparation and publication of this document to provide the underlying structure for the Comprehensive Plan.

The Strategic Development Concept presented in this document illustrates an overall strategy for how Montgomery intends to shape itself over time. In anticipation of the forthcoming Land Use Plan, the city has prepared this concept as a general guide to coordinating decisions regarding land use, development, zoning and capital improvements. Throughout the planning process, Montgomery aims to inform public and private decisions that will help bring about the desired future state of the city. Consequently,

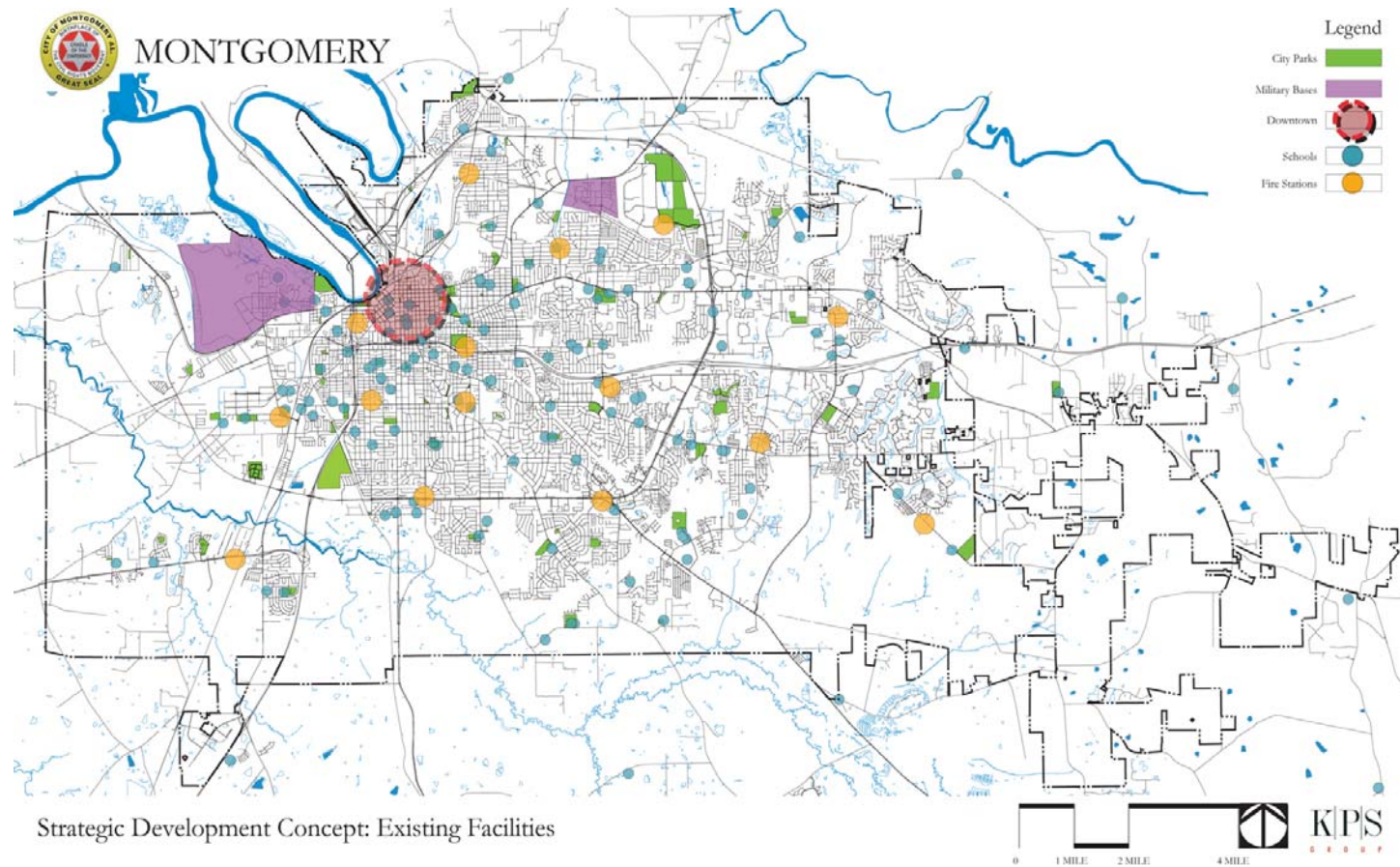
this document is intended to provide residents, property owners, merchants, builders and developers with a preliminary, yet reasonable expectation of the city's future.

This citywide concept provides a systematic basis for thinking about the city's future. The future development pattern of the city has been organized with appropriate recognition given to the city's green infrastructure, its street and utility infrastructure and major existing uses of land. Nevertheless, designation of activity centers and implied uses of land indicated in this document should not be interpreted to propose, approve, deny nor preclude any particular action in the absence of full consideration of all city policies, principles, standards or regulations. As always, site considerations relating to topography, geology, soils or hydrology will be of major importance when locating new activity centers or neighborhoods and when planning and designing their uses and density. These realities, plus attitudes toward development on the part of public officials, other agencies, area residents, property owners and developers will play a large part in determining appropriate development location and design. Similarly, the presence of adequate streets as well as schools, parks and other community facilities, including water and sewer systems, should be assured before making any significant development proposals or decisions.

It should also be noted that locations of any future schools, parks, community facilities and institutions shown or described in this

document are not meant to be precise. Rather, symbols indicating such centers should be considered as “placeholders” until more specific planning may be carried out to determine detailed needs and locations for each. As such, each may be likened to a ball in a more or less enclosed court, in which the players, within defined limits, agree to move the ball around until the game is concluded.

In most cases, the “ball” will come to rest only when either a public agency has determined to invest in a facility or a private development project triggers the need and means for its acquisition and construction, development plans have been approved, property negotiations and construction plans have been prepared and financed, as appropriate.



I. INTRODUCTION

The Montgomery Strategic Development Concept is a combination of vision, maps, development policies and design guidelines. It provides a framework for public and private decisions intended to positively affect the growth, development and redevelopment of Montgomery. This concept is a precursor of the city's forthcoming Land Use Plan. It is an illustration of the community's vision for its own future—a long-term vision that may not be achievable in the lifetime of many of those participating in its preparation, or even of the next generation. Nevertheless, the concept looks ahead, organizes the issues to be addressed in the Land Use Plan, focuses on a desired physical form of the city, and strives to shape the detailed planning that will guide development of public and private properties within Montgomery's planning area.

The city's strategic concept is long-range, general, and focused mostly on physical development. It attempts to:

- *Ensure that as development occurs, the city's most significant natural features will be preserved or enhanced.*
- *Suggest and illustrate patterns for land use and development that strive for a sustainable community with a diversified tax base.*
- *Coordinate land use recommendations with those for public infrastructure investments.*

- *Provide a general guide to development decisions that may lead to making and revising regulations regarding type, intensity and timing of development.*

The Montgomery City Council, Planning Commission and city staff intend to use this document as a basis for continuing updating of the Montgomery Comprehensive Plan and to:

- *Engage citizens, property owners and investors in a continuing conversation as to the most appropriate form and direction for development and conservation of the city's resources.*
- *Illustrate reasonable development and conservation expectations, and provide some assurance and security regarding development investment decisions.*
- *Review and evaluate public and private proposals for development and investment—to test the fit with Montgomery.*
- *Identify and advise regarding priorities for infrastructure improvements—roads, greenways, parks, schools and other public facilities.*

This concept provides general, long-range guidance to assist public officials and private citizens as they consider investments that may have lasting implications for the community. Like every part of the Comprehensive Plan, the concept should be continuously discussed, evaluated, monitored and renewed as changes occur in physical, social, political and market conditions.

The strategic concept builds on the city’s physical setting, and upon the strength of its many neighborhoods. Creating and



Historic fountain on Dexter Avenue, Downtown Montgomery

seizing upon opportunities community-wide begins with the city core—Downtown Montgomery—and outward from there to deal with the overall image and character of the city. Commerce, industry and institutions are directed toward locations that are and will be accessible to the community and its trade area, and accessible also to existing and planned utilities

and services, as appropriate. The strategy accounts for the need to improve and protect the capacity of the city’s streets and continue to build networks that provide options for getting from place to place. Attention is also focused on the city’s critical infrastructure, including water, sanitary sewer and drainage systems, civic and educational institutions and recreation facilities, and public safety facilities and services.

Identifying and locating a variety of major existing and future activity centers that will support—and will be supported by—Montgomery’s neighborhoods will enhance the city’s physical organization. These major activity centers—commercial, industrial, civic, institutional and recreational—are intended to serve as magnets for population and development to support downtown and the city’s residential neighborhoods in ways that

will positively affect the quality of life, the natural environment and the local and regional transportation networks.

Major visions of the development concept include:

- *There will be an overall, global strategy to guide planning and design for development and conservation of Montgomery.*
- *Montgomery will be a legible city—its edges and districts will be clear and visitors will be readily able to find their destinations. The gateways to the city will be well defined and its main corridors will reflect an appropriate image.*
- *Downtown will be the acknowledged city center and home to some of its best business addresses as well as the civic heart of the community.*
- *Neighborhoods across the city will provide a sense of place and focus for residential life. They will display a high degree of interaction and communication among and between residents and their elected officials.*
- *Development and conservation planning and design will be managed using an overall system of regulation and public investment in accord with a current Comprehensive Plan.*
- *The city's commercial development will be organized mostly into activity centers located adjacent to intersections of arterials and collector streets, and along corridors planned and designed for such uses.*
- *Access to all of the city's arterial and collector streets will be managed carefully in accord with an overall management plan and system to conserve their traffic capacity and protect public safety.*
- *Industrial development will be directed mostly toward existing industrial parks and toward redevelopment of sites used previously for industrial purposes.*
- *Residential development will be encouraged on vacant property and redevelopment sites within the city's planned highway system in a manner that capitalizes on existing and planned utilities and service capacity while conserving and protecting the city's green infrastructure.*
- *The city's pedestrian network will be expanded through construction of sidewalks to provide access between neighborhoods and nearby shopping opportunities and a greenway and trail system to interconnect neighborhoods with the city's major park and recreation facilities.*
- *Montgomery's "green infrastructure," consisting of its park and recreation system, in combination with its lakes, ponds, streams and floodplains, augmented by major portions of its tree cover, will be conserved and respected by the city's development management system.*
- *The city's park and recreation system, including passive and active parks and outdoor recreation facilities, will be enlarged, expanded and focused on the needs of neighborhoods to meet the needs of the city's growing population.*

To provide the structure for the city's Comprehensive Plan, this Strategic Development Concept illustrates the overall physical structure of the city, and how its various parts should function and relate to one another. The functional organization of the city has been carefully considered, along with key locations throughout Montgomery that may be considered for major investment, reinvestment and redevelopment.

MAJOR POLICY THEMES

Montgomery has organized its vision into a unified concept for development. City officials intend to use this concept as an outline and guide as they continue planning for growth, development and conservation.

The maps illustrating this concept depict a general arrangement of development and open space, recognizing the ways in which land is presently used and the essential character of the city's green infrastructure. However, and more importantly, the maps present the essential *functions* of the city—where they are now and where they should be located in the future, and which areas warrant nurturing and reinvestment to return them to the standard of quality expected by Montgomery's citizens. The Strategic Development Concept also illustrates how various activity centers should be planned and designed in relation to the city's *neighborhoods*—where people live and where they should have the opportunity to come together away from work and commerce to form a strong community with one another.

The city's Strategic Development Concept is organized into five major policy themes for those neighborhoods and the community at large—these themes are explored throughout this document.

I. Protect Montgomery's Green Infrastructure

Montgomery intends to protect, preserve and enhance important and fragile ecosystems within developed portions of the city. The city will strive to use its natural and open lands for parks and for passive and active recreation, and for agricultural land.

II. Protect and Reinvest in the Community

Montgomery intends to reinvest in Downtown, its neighborhoods and its employment centers, public transit systems, and the portions of its commercial arterial corridors that are not up to the standards of the community.



Nighttime view of Dexter Avenue, Downtown Montgomery

III. Build a City of Neighborhoods Supported by Activity Centers

Montgomery intends to grow by replicating its best characteristics in selected locations around the city. Montgomery envisions population growth organized into neighborhoods that focus upon and complement the city's green infrastructure and that reflect the original human scale and pedestrian orientation of the community. Generally, this means that Montgomery intends to:

- *Support, maintain and enhance Downtown Montgomery as the heart of the city.*
- *Organize residential development into well-defined neighborhoods.*

- *Disperse civic, educational, recreational, employment and commercial functions in strategic locations around the city.*
- *Focus regional-scale commerce into concentrated, highly accessible activity centers served by interstate highways and arterial streets.*
- *Focus industry, office uses and commercial support services into activity centers served by arterial and collector streets.*

IV. Expand Transportation and Accessibility Opportunities

Montgomery intends to reduce the dominance of the automobile in development decisions and reduce the impacts of cars on the environment by encouraging development that will improve accessibility options for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Montgomery will place greater emphasis on improving its pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and its public transportation.

V. Maintain and Enhance Community Character

Montgomery intends to conserve its special qualities, including its historic buildings, areas, streets and neighborhoods, its pedestrian scale, and the best of its parks and recreation areas. Maintaining and enhancing the beauty and physical qualities of the city is an overarching consideration, incorporated in all parts of the city's Strategic Development Concept.

These policy themes outline the general framework of the Montgomery Strategic Development Concept. Various types of commercial, industrial, civic, institutional and recreational activity centers serve as magnets for activity and development.

These, in turn, support the city core and residential neighborhoods of Montgomery in ways that will positively affect environmental quality and the transportation network.

The maps that accompany the next chapter portray how these policy themes will affect the pattern of development on the land across the city. The various activity centers and corridors are indicated by type and location, and also their interrelations with each other and with the city's neighborhoods and institutions. These and the linkages and connections between them are critical to integrating the city's land use, transportation, community facilities and major infrastructure. Building on this structure, Montgomery intends to continue to grow and develop as a community where public life is encouraged and quality urban design is maintained.



Monument at Riverwalk Park



Amphitheater at Riverwalk Park

II. MAJOR COMPONENTS

The Strategic Development Concept recognizes the value of the city's underlying natural resource base, its history and traditional community values. The concept will guide development by balancing growth and the conservation of important natural resources. The city's activity centers concentrate a diversity of functions at appropriate locations, structured by overall citywide open space and accessibility systems. Land uses that are located, planned and designed to be compatible with this system of critical environmental resources will be supported and encouraged to provide opportunities for creativity, efficiency, stability, image and diversity.

Planned overall development patterns and focus areas for investment and reinvestment are presented on the Strategic Development Concept maps. There are several major components incorporated into those maps, all supported by and coordinated with the city's green infrastructure and plans for the city's transportation system and other infrastructure. The *activity centers* and *revitalization focus areas* are nodes and corridors of activity and investment that should be organized and planned and designed in such a way that they positively affect urban form, environmental quality and the transportation network. The *neighborhoods* that surround and support these centers and corridors are intended to provide a balance between development and conservation. That balance of population growth and consumption of land should be structured by and compatible with the city's *green infrastructure* of critical environmental resources.

Montgomery desires that population concentrations strategically focused upon commercial centers, interspersed with green corridors and interconnected by a variety of accessibility options will require less automobile travel, provide better transit opportunities for the future, and decrease adverse environmental effects. Development should be planned, sited and designed to be compatible with the city's green infrastructure, as a first step in providing for development creativity, efficiency, stability, image, diversity and control.

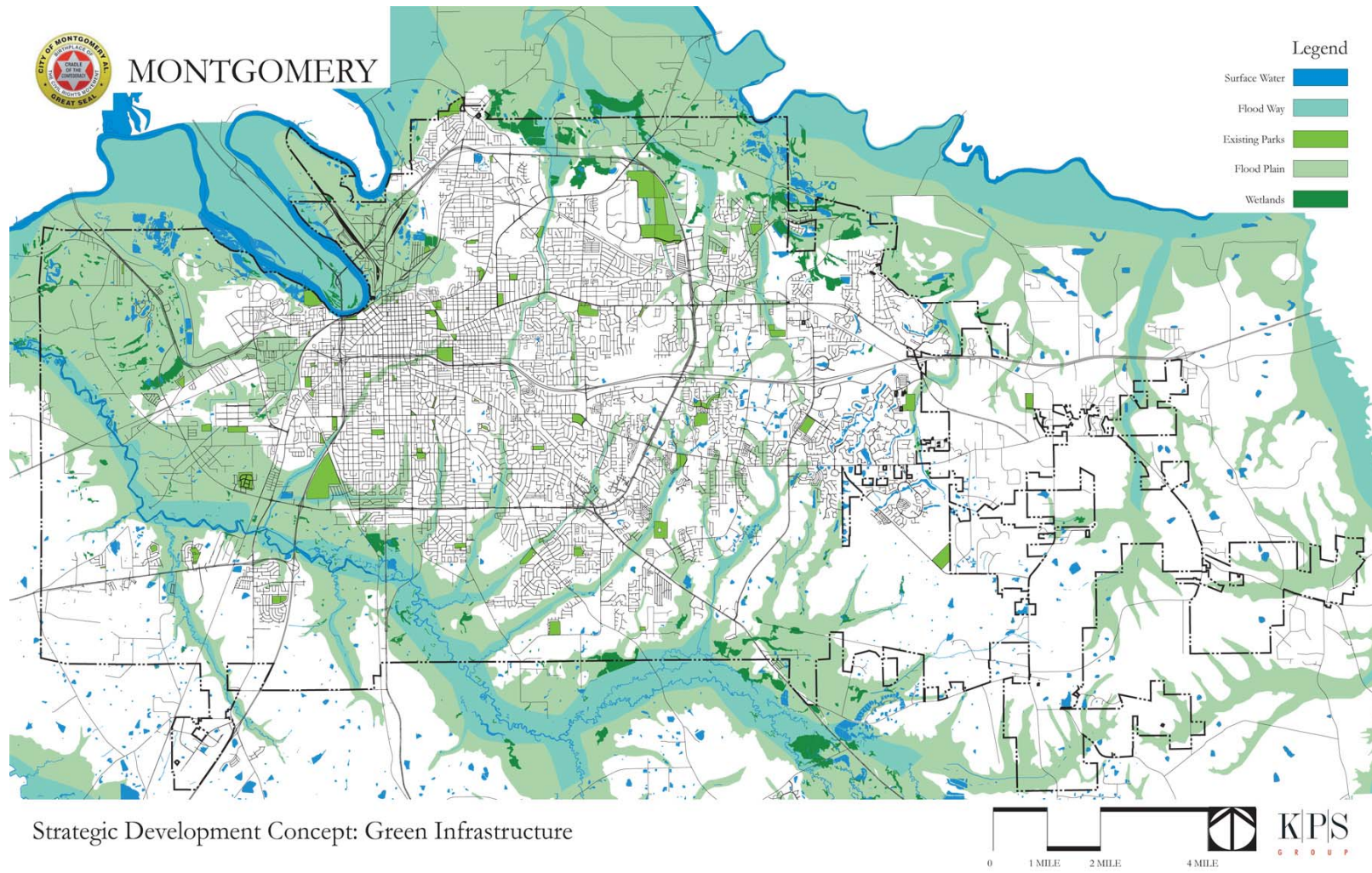
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Montgomery area enjoys a wealth of natural resources critical to human well being, whether the particular resource affects the economy, overall quality of life or the health and safety of residents. These resources vary throughout the community, but they have one thing in common: as they are diminished or depleted, Montgomery suffers.

Natural resources have limits, and development decisions affect far more than the property owner and the immediate neighborhood. The type and intensity of development ultimately affect the surroundings. Some land uses are inherently incompatible with others, and many development decisions, once made, are practically irreversible. Depending upon the approach to development, the land itself can present varying ranges of opportunities and hazards. For example, steep slopes may provide

good views, but they may also be difficult to build on. In combination with erodible soils, steep slopes can be hazardous. Once floodplains are built upon, little can be done to eliminate the flooding without flooding another area. Once cut, forests may

take generations to grow. Prime agricultural soils paved over are taken out of production forever. Extinct species cannot be replaced.



Strategic Development Concept: Green Infrastructure

For these reasons, Montgomery public officials and citizens take seriously the quality of the natural environment. As a part of the planning process they have reviewed carefully the mutual impacts of development and natural resources on one another, for purposes of protection, production, health and safety, and parks and recreation. They have also considered how these natural resource opportunities collectively form a green infrastructure of open space and natural resource areas that may provide a framework or structuring system within which to organize, locate and interconnect urban development.

Components of Montgomery's Green Infrastructure

The Montgomery Development Concept recognizes the idea that a green infrastructure is critical to the quality of life for the community. It is an integral part of balanced community conservation and development. The first step in mapping these green infrastructure components was to identify resources, sites and areas that may be critical to the community—the environmental conditions associated with water, slopes and public and semi-public parks and open space.

The city's green infrastructure is not and will not be simply the land and water areas left over when all the development and building is done. Montgomery's open spaces—many of which may appear to be its "undeveloped" lands—include resources that are important to the community's character and well being. The pattern illustrated on the green infrastructure map depicts these resources and places.

Some of the so-called "undeveloped" areas of Montgomery contain resources and open spaces that may appropriately be set aside for reasons of health and safety, managed production of farm and forest, parks and recreation, and protection or preservation. As noted above, these together should provide a framework or structure for development throughout the community.

Associated with the city's water resources is the pattern of floodways and floodplains. Floodplains are the areas adjacent to streams that are intermittently flooded (those mapped are so-called "100-year floodplains" or areas with a 1% chance of flooding in any given year). Encroachment on floodplains reduces flood-carrying capacity, increases the flood heights of streams and increases flood hazards. The floodway is the stream channel and adjacent portions of the floodplain that must be kept free from encroachment to allow the 100-year flood to be carried without substantial increases in flood heights.

Steep slopes are not common in Montgomery, and they do not preclude development. However, the impact of slope upon the safety and cost of construction increases with steepness and soil erodibility, and should raise caution flags to property owners and city officials as they consider proposals for development.

Montgomery has several major parks and recreation areas, which are indicated on the map. Many of these incorporate or are adjacent to some of Montgomery's most important water resources. Others include small but significant areas of steep slope.

Another public realm component of the city’s green infrastructure occurs within its streetscapes, specifically the street trees and other landscaping occurring along sidewalks and within the medians of thoroughfare rights-of-way. The Montgomery Street Tree Master Plan serves as a guide to preservation and enhancement of that part of the city’s tree canopy found in its major corridors, thoroughfares, and neighborhoods. The detailed principles and strategies of the Street Tree Master Plan provide an important supplement to the Green Infrastructure Policies following.

Citywide Green Infrastructure Policies

Conserve green infrastructure and landscape form

The natural and rural landscape within and surrounding Montgomery is one of the city’s greatest assets. Montgomery hosts rather diverse landscape features, especially at its edges. These include wooded hillsides, pastures, rural roads, farmsteads and fencerows. Development should be planned and arranged within the landscape, allowing for scenic views. Streambeds, wooded stream-banks, and flood plains are linear elements of the landscape that should be conserved.

Organize development around open spaces and civic uses

The city’s most important and scenic locations should be reserved for public open space. These places and their interconnections should be identified as part of a larger open space network. Once key areas are selected, appropriate public uses should be determined—such as greenways or community parks. These should be linked together as an open space system and development should be planned and designed so that their edges are accessible to the public and that buildings look into these areas rather than back up to them.



Aerial view of Oak Park

Green Infrastructure Policies

◆ ◆ ◆

Conserve green infrastructure and landscape form

Organize development around open spaces and civic uses

◆ ◆ ◆

ACTIVITY CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

Significant nodes or concentrations of people, activity and development are designated in this concept as *activity centers and corridors*. Some of these are new, though most are existing places—and some of those are in need of reinvestment. Each should be located, planned and designed to relate to and support urban form, environmental quality, adjacent residential neighborhoods and the transportation network in a positive way. Activity centers and corridors come in a variety of types and sizes, but the most successful examples of each type contains many, if not all, of the following characteristics:

- Anchor or focus of activity: *The center or corridor contains some activity or function for which it is primarily and integrally known in the region, community or neighborhood.*
- Compact, densely developed core: *There is a relatively high density of development of the types essential to the character of the place, with greater density toward the center and less toward the edges and easily accessible by public transit.*
- Well-defined edge: *It is clear where the center or corridor begins and ends without having to resort to walls or signs.*
- Positive sense of place: *The average person has a good feeling about the overall character of the place—its overall image and its relation to the surrounding environment, feelings of safety, and a sense of arrival and departure.*
- Internal vehicular circulation: *Once having arrived by vehicle, a motorist may, without undue effort or extraordinary wayfinding abilities, visit most any other location on the same side of the major street, without having to re-enter that street in a vehicle.*

- Pedestrian accessibility: *The place is readily accessible by pedestrians from surrounding areas without exertion of undue effort or extraordinary traffic-dodging abilities.*
- Pedestrian oriented (overall): *The place demonstrates, by evidence of pedestrian density throughout, that its plan and design has succeeded in giving pedestrians priority over motorists and automobiles.*
- Vehicular accessibility: *The place is readily accessible by motor vehicle to any licensed driver without having to evidence extraordinary driving skills.*
- Visual coherence: *Most people sense that things fit together in the center or along the corridor—signage, landscaping, the way the parking supports getting to one’s destination, the way most of the buildings seem to fit together.*

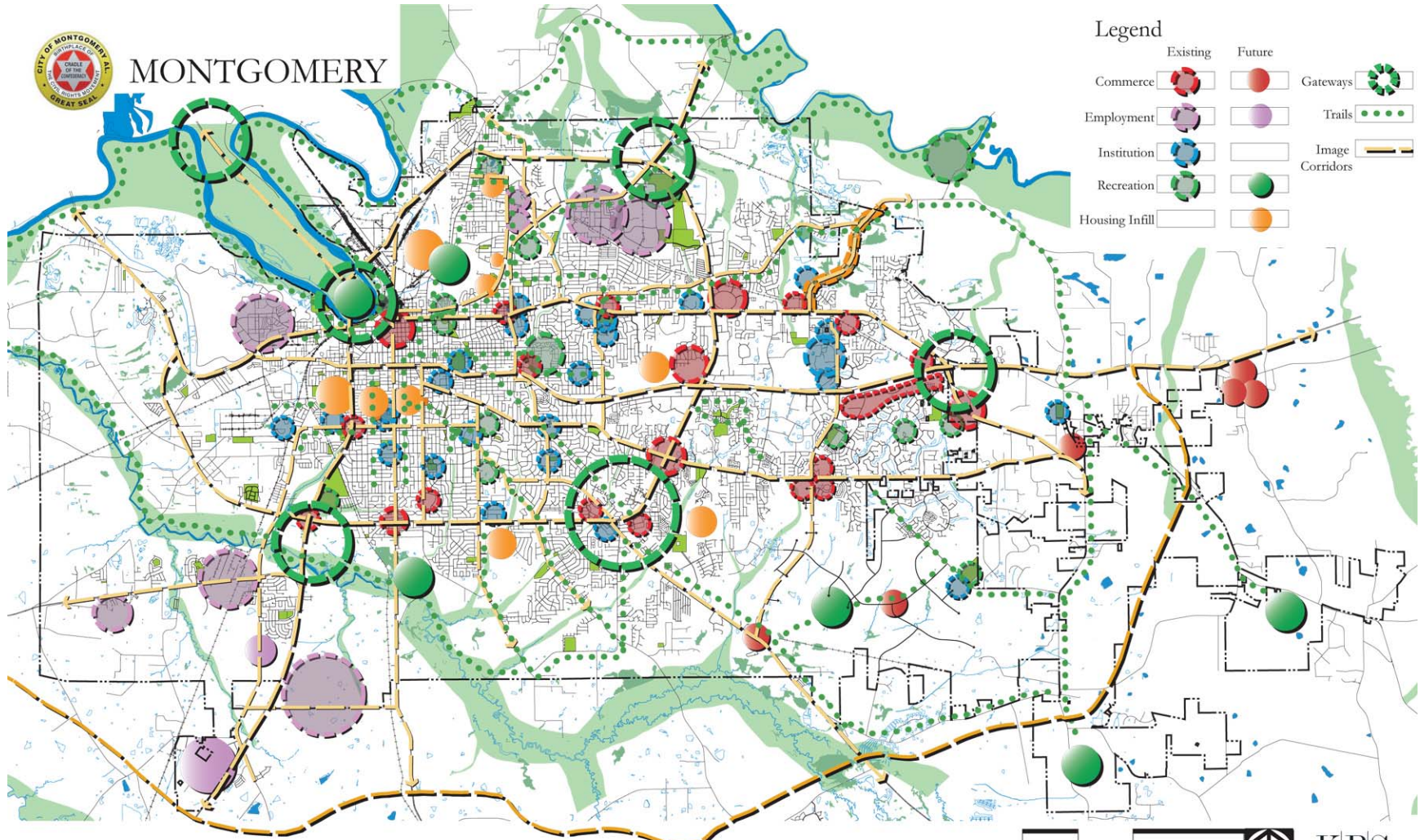
There are several types of activity centers, corridors and focus areas included in this concept, all of which are intended to relate to and support Montgomery’s quality of life—especially that of its neighborhoods. These places come in various types; each should be developed in accord with principles appropriate to its location, size and type.

Activity Center and Corridor Types

Community Commercial Centers
Regional Commercial Centers
Commercial and Image Corridors
Gateway Focus Areas
Revitalization Focus Areas
Specialty Mixed-Use Centers
Employment Support Centers
Institutional Centers



MONTGOMERY



Legend

	Existing	Future	
Commerce			Gateways
Employment			Trails
Institution			Image Corridors
Recreation			
Housing Infill			

Strategic Development Concept: Activity Centers and Corridors



Citywide Activity Center and Corridor Policies

General policies toward Montgomery’s major centers and corridors of activity are outlined below. These are followed by details for each center and corridor type.

Preserve and enhance the city’s open space system

All activity centers and corridors should be carefully planned, organized and placed appropriately within the city’s green infrastructure. They should be strategically placed away from the most valuable or threatened natural resources. The natural environment should continue to be valued as an important ingredient of all development projects. Activity centers and corridors should be designed to conserve and utilize natural systems to assist in filtering stormwater drainage.

Design centers and corridors in context

Each center and corridor should have an appropriate scale and mix of uses defined by its type and the population it serves—regional, citywide or neighborhood. Activity centers and corridors should be integrated carefully into the community, with appropriate connections and transitions made to adjacent uses. Streets and service drives should be located and designed appropriate to the user. Vehicular access should be designed to allow for user connections between neighborhoods and adjacent activity centers and corridors. Public transit stations and stops should be identified and accounted for.

Create discernable, compact activity centers and corridors

Each activity center and corridor should have a sense of identity and place, distinguishable from one to the next—perhaps by including a unique feature or activity. Centers and corridors should be compact and densely developed. Their edges should be well defined. These places, at any scale, should look and feel as if they have been designed, or at least considered, as a whole and set appropriately apart from the surroundings. Continuity of such design elements as building setbacks, height, scale, materials, landscaping and signage should be evident. Differences should not be abrupt and overwhelming, but rather interesting and diverse.

Maximize accessibility in activity centers and corridors

Design can greatly influence one’s decision to walk or ride rather than drive. Appropriate linkages between residential and nonresidential uses should be provided. Pedestrians and vehicles should be separated from one another insofar as practicable, with the length of pedestrian crossings of parking areas kept to a minimum. Human scale of activity centers and corridors should be created through building mass, form, scale and detail. Provisions for public transportation should be carefully considered, and well integrated into the site. Building location, setbacks and orientation should enhance pedestrian comfort.

Activity Center and Corridor Policies



Preserve and enhance the citywide open space system

Design centers and corridors in context

Create discernable, compact activity centers and corridors

Maximize accessibility in activity centers and corridors



Community Commercial Centers

These are relatively small, primarily single-use shopping areas. Predominantly auto-oriented at present, these centers and their surroundings should support pedestrian activity and allow for greater pedestrian access.

Community Commercial Center

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Retail commercial
- Office or service commercial
- Hospitality:
 - Restaurant
 - Accommodation
- Residential:
 - Adjacent (horizontal)
 - Diverse type and ownership
- Minor Institutional/Civic
- Recreational

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Compact, densely core
- Intensive mixed use
- Pedestrian oriented (overall)
- Pedestrian accessibility
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Stores serving the community
- Required building line
- Parking in the rear or side
- Street trees
- Density decreases to edges

These commercial areas were typically developed at street intersections with large areas devoted to parking. While these centers are currently oriented to the customer traveling by automobile, pedestrian activity is appropriate and should be a part of any reinvestment plans. Infill development should be placed at the street edge to screen the parking lots and provide human scale for pedestrians.

Typical uses would include a grocery store, supporting retail and service commercial, office, restaurant and institutional uses. Residential uses should be located nearby and easily accessible to these centers, which in turn should present a positive image to adjacent neighborhoods.

- *Retail uses should be placed at street level and office uses should be placed in upper stories where appropriate.*

- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger composition of the area within which it is located.*
- *Adjacent buildings should relate in scale, height and configuration.*
- *For human scale, larger buildings should be broken down into separate volumes, horizontally and vertically.*
- *Building heights should not exceed four stories. Buildings should be close to the street, with off-street parking located behind and/or beside buildings.*
- *At intersections, the main building should be placed at or close to the corner. Parking, loading or service should not be located at an intersection.*
- *To maximize the street frontage of buildings and minimize the street frontage of parking lots, buildings should be sited so that the long side fronts the street.*
- *Pedestrian circulation should be an integral part of the initial site layout. The site should be organized so that the buildings frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation, and so that pedestrians may walk along building fronts rather than along or across parking lots and driveways.*
- *Streets should be designed with street trees in a manner appropriate to their function. Commercial streets should have trees, which complement the face of the buildings and shade the sidewalk. Residential streets should provide for an appropriate canopy, which shades both street and sidewalk, and serves as a visual buffer between the street and the home.*

Regional Commercial Centers

These are large centers, typically dominated by big-box stores and regional retail and service uses. They generate considerable traffic, and so primary vehicular access should be directed to local collector streets that intersect the arterial road network. Direct access to and from arterial roadways should be limited to promote a safe street network and preserve street capacity. Public transit should be carefully integrated into the overall system.

Regional commercial centers serve both citywide and regional markets, and should present a positive image to the visitor and resident alike. While these centers rely primarily on customers arriving by car, pedestrian access and activity should be designed for and encouraged. Typical uses include major retail businesses, grocery and other “big box” stores and support retail and services businesses, including gas and service stations, restaurants and car dealerships. These uses should be organized into centers having a clear focal point rather than extended along the city’s arterial corridors.

- *There should be buildings close to the street, with off-street parking behind and/or beside buildings.*
- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger physical composition of the area within which it is located.*
- *Adjacent buildings should relate in scale, height and configuration.*
- *For human scale, larger buildings should be broken down into separate volumes, both horizontally and vertically, at a scale appropriate to the location and context.*

- *Public transit and pedestrian circulation should be integral to the site. Buildings should frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation, so that pedestrians may walk along building fronts rather than along or across parking lots and driveways.*
- *Parking lots should be planned and designed with primary private vehicle access and circulation traffic located toward the outside edge rather than the edge closest to the buildings.*
- *An appropriate transition should be made between the center and adjacent residential neighborhoods.*



The Shoppes at EastChase in east Montgomery

Regional Commercial Centers

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Retail commercial:
- Largest shopping centers
- Wide variety of goods
- Serve regional trade area
- Service commercial:
 - Regional services
 - Auto services and dealerships
- Hospitality:
 - Restaurant
 - Accommodation
- Residential adjacent
- Institutional/Civic
- Recreational

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Compact, dense core
- Intensive mixed use
- Civic space(s)
- Pedestrian oriented (overall)
- Pedestrian accessible
- Integrated public transit
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edge

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Density decreases to edges

Commercial and Image Corridors

Major streets are the channels through which people learn of the city and access most of its activity centers and neighborhoods. Consequently, they convey a lasting impression to all who use them. They should be safe, comfortable, shaded, calm, connected and interesting. These corridors form a major part of the city's image and should be protected and preserved as scarce assets—and upgraded to meet the community's standards. By taking appropriate care with development along these corridors, Montgomery can further assure its marketability and prosperity.

Commercial and Image Corridors

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Retail commercial
- Office or service commercial
- Hospitality:
 - Restaurant
 - Accommodation
- Residential:
 - Adjacent (horizontal)
 - Diversity of type and ownership

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Pedestrian accessible
- Public transit accessible
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Density decreases to edges

To help visitors feel welcome and find their way around easily, the city intends to systematically improve these corridors—especially at city gateways and major decision points along them. It is intended there be new standards set for heights and setbacks of new buildings—and for installation and/or maintenance of sidewalks, corridor street and parking lot lighting and appropriate trees on both public and private property so that primary routes through the city will be clearly identified, both day and night.

The primary purpose of the arterial street system is to move traffic efficiently. Safety and access to property are also important, including

bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. While retail and other uses should address the street, the commercial corridor should be easily accessible to adjacent residential areas. Each major roadway corridor through Montgomery should reflect the particular characteristics of its setting. Most, if not all, of the city's image corridors should be served by public transportation. Development planning and design along major corridors should incorporate the following strategies to assure a positive image for the city:

- *Commercial development should be developed in a manner to enhance the corridor and relate to adjacent neighborhoods.*
- *Attractive, well-located signage, lighting and landscaping should be used to differentiate corridors from intersecting local streets.*
- *There should be a cohesive and coordinated land use pattern for each of the city's major corridors that accommodates and supports a variety of transit options.*
- *Commercial uses should be concentrated at major intersections where they may capitalize on visibility and access.*
- *Most parking should be located away from the edges of corridors to preserve or enhance their landscape qualities. Buildings should face and be close to the street, with off-street parking behind and/or beside buildings.*
- *Buildings should be designed to maximize street frontage of buildings and minimize street frontage of parking lots. Parking lots adjacent to streets should not be wider than half of the frontage of the associated building(s).*

- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger physical composition of the area. Adjacent buildings should be similar in scale, height and configuration.*
- *Pedestrian circulation should be an integral part of the corridor. Buildings should frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation along the street and building fronts rather than across parking lots and driveways.*

Gateway Focus Areas

Montgomery has major entries from most every direction, augmented by a beltway or ring road surrounding much of the city. Gateways are a major part of the city’s image and should be protected and preserved as scarce assets—and upgraded to welcome visitors and also meet the standards of Montgomery’s citizens and property owners. By taking appropriate care with development and reinvestment at these locations, Montgomery can further assure its marketability and prosperity by attracting visitors, residents and investors.

A positive community identity is strengthened by attractive gateways, which help establish strong edges, foster pride, and lend a sense of arrival. The city’s major streets are gateways to its activity centers and neighborhoods, and consequently convey a lasting image to residents, business and industry, and visitors. They should be safe, comfortable, shaded, calm, connected and interesting. This is not simply a matter of aesthetics; the city’s economy is inextricably linked to its physical character, and its image must continually be enhanced to remain competitive.

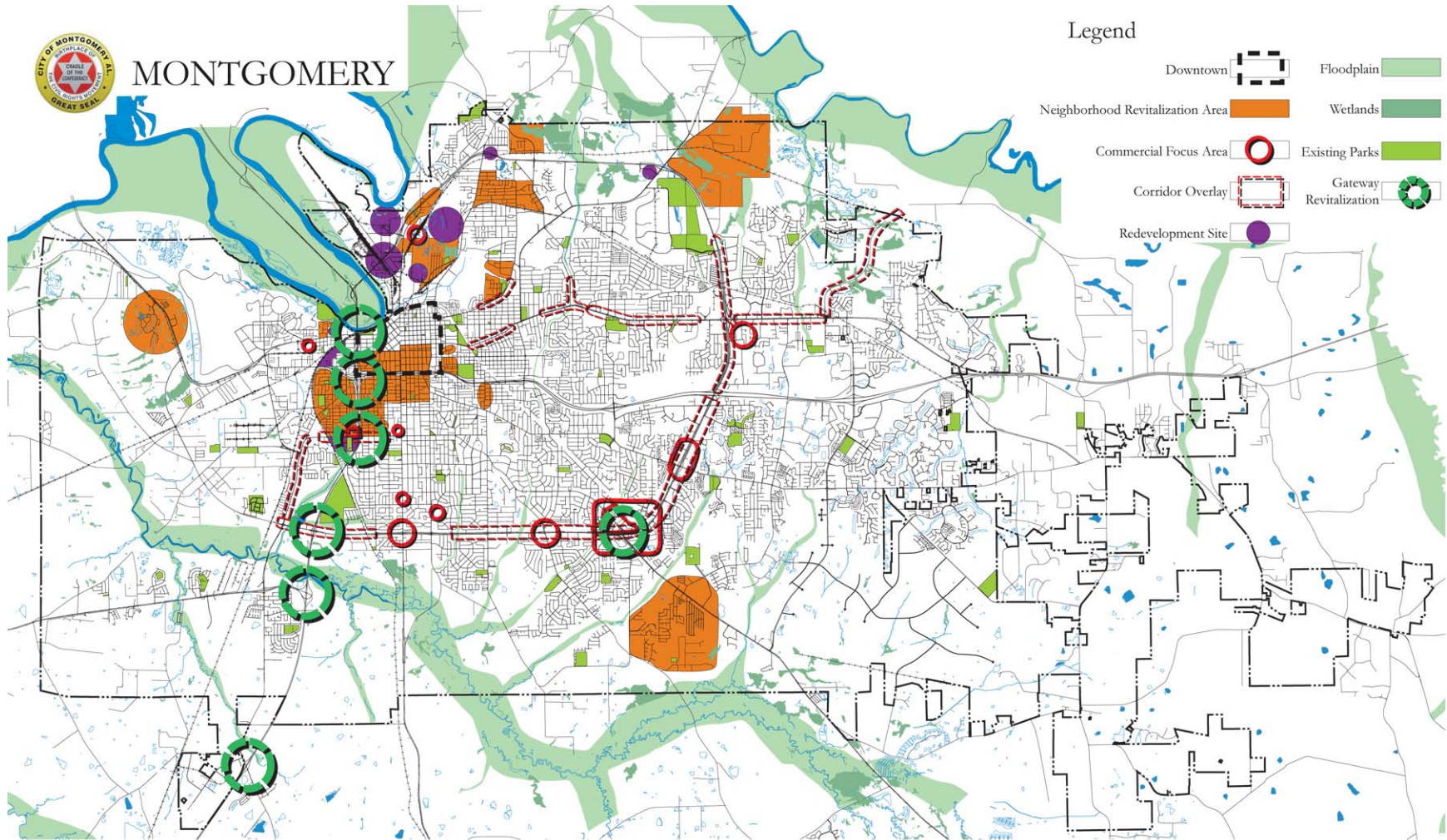
Each gateway to Montgomery, and to its neighborhoods and activity centers, should reflect the particular characteristics of its setting and provide a welcoming introduction. Development planning and design surrounding gateways should incorporate the following strategies to assure that Montgomery offers positive, welcoming and easily recognizable transitions from outside to inside the city:

- *Commercial development that enhances the gateway function should be promoted and maintained.*
- *There should be lighting and tree plantings at major gateways to welcome travelers and enhance the gateway’s commercial potential.*
- *There should be attractive and well-located signage, lighting and landscaping that differentiates each gateway appropriately from other parts of the corridor it introduces.*
- *The concept of "place" with strong, well-designed development that is visible from the road corridor should be reinforced.*
- *There should be a cohesive and coordinated land use pattern for each gateway. A sense of enclosure may be enhanced through the use of build-to lines rather than setbacks.*

<p>Gateway Focus Areas</p> <p><i>Typical Appropriate Uses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail commercial • Service commercial • Hospitality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restaurant Accommodation <p><i>General Development Principles</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive sense of place • Visual coherence • Internal vehicular circulation • Well-defined edges <p><i>General Design Guidelines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street trees • Highly accessible parking • Density decreases to edges
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MONTGOMERY



Legend

- Downtown
- Neighborhood Revitalization Area
- Commercial Focus Area
- Corridor Overlay
- Redevelopment Site
- Floodplain
- Wetlands
- Existing Parks
- Gateway Revitalization

Strategic Development Concept: Revitalization Focus Areas and Corridors



Revitalization Focus Areas

Each of these areas is unique, but all require the use of a “can-do” attitude toward infill and redevelopment on the part of public officials and private investors alike. These focus areas include “brownfields,” which are former industrial sites with perceived environmental issues) and also “grayfields,” which are developed



Aerial view of Montgomery Mall

sites seeking an appropriate mix of new owners, uses and concepts for development. Others may simply be local neighborhoods with a number of vacant lots or buildings that need a creative approach to filling with new structures or new residents. Some will

need subsidies in the form of infrastructure investment or gap financing, while others may require property assembly and rehabilitation through cooperation and assistance of multiple public agencies. The relationship between the revitalization focus area and provisions for public transportation should be considered carefully.

- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger composition of the area within which it is located.*
- *Adjacent buildings should relate in scale, height and configuration.*

- *For human scale, larger buildings should be broken down into separate volumes, horizontally and vertically.*
- *Building heights should not exceed four stories. Buildings should be close to the street, with off-street parking located behind and/or beside buildings.*
- *At street intersections, the main building should be placed at or near the corner. Parking, loading or service should not be located at an intersection.*
- *To maximize the street frontage of buildings and minimize the street frontage of parking lots, buildings should be sited so that the long side fronts the street.*
- *Pedestrian circulation should be an integral part of the area and site layout so buildings frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation, and pedestrians may walk along building fronts rather than along or across parking lots and driveways.*
- *Streets should be designed with sidewalks and street trees in a manner appropriate to their function. Trees should complement the face of the buildings and shade the sidewalks.*

Revitalization Focus Areas

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Retail commercial
- Office or service commercial
- Restaurant
- Residential:
 - Adjacent (horizontal)
 - Diversity of type and ownership

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Pedestrian accessible
- Public transit accessible
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Parking to sides or rear
- Density decreases to edges

Specialty Mixed Use Centers

These are relatively small, mixed-use areas, each with a specialty—often entertainment. Each should account for and respond appropriately to its surroundings, support pedestrian activity and allow for maximum pedestrian access. These commercial areas typically have strong edges and may have a historic focus. They should be highly accessible. Parking should be on-street and to the sides and edges—never in front of—the buildings, which should be set up to the back of sidewalks. Infill development should be placed at the street edge to screen the parking lots and provide human scale for pedestrians.

Specialty Mixed Use Centers

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Small retail / office / service
- Hospitality / entertainment
- Residential: adjacent and upstairs
- Small civic / open space(s)
- Recreational nearby

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Intensive mixed use
- Pedestrian oriented overall
- Pedestrian and bicycle accessible
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Required building lines
- Street trees
- Parking mostly to the side or rear

- Each building should be designed to form part of a larger composition of the area within which it is located.
- Adjacent buildings should relate in scale, height and configuration.



Historic commercial center in Old Cloverdale

- For human scale, larger buildings should be broken down into separate volumes, horizontally and vertically.
- Building heights should not exceed three stories. Buildings should be close to the street, with off-street parking located behind and/or beside buildings.
- At street intersections, the main building should be placed at or near the corner. Parking, loading or service should not be located at an intersection.
- To maximize the street frontage of buildings and minimize the street frontage of parking lots, buildings should be sited so that the long side fronts the street.
- Pedestrian circulation should be an integral part of the area and site layout so buildings frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation, and pedestrians may walk along building fronts rather than along or across parking lots and driveways.
- Streets should be designed with sidewalks and street trees in a manner appropriate to their function. Trees should complement the face of the buildings and shade the sidewalks.

Employment Support Centers

These are large employment centers, dominated by office, technology, light industrial and other job-generating land uses but containing relatively few retail and service uses except those concentrated near major gateways and at other strategic locations.

Each of these employment centers should convey the image of Montgomery as an accessible, desirable community in which to live, work and invest. Imparting a strong sense of community to these centers especially for those who work or live near them should strengthen this image. It is also important to maintain physical accessibility between these areas and the rest of the city, including by means of bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation. Most, if not all, of these centers should be served by public transportation.

- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger physical composition of the center and of the area in which it is located.*
- *Adjacent buildings should relate in scale, height and configuration.*
- *Street intersections are important, and deserve taller structures. Parking, loading or service functions should not be located at an intersection.*
- *To maximize the street frontage of buildings and minimize the street frontage of parking lots and curb cuts, buildings should be sited so that the long side fronts the street.*
- *Streets should be designed with street trees in a manner appropriate to their function.*

- *Buildings should face the street, with off-street parking located behind and/or beside buildings.*
- *Public transportation and pedestrian circulation should be integral to the site. Buildings should frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation, so that pedestrians may walk along building fronts rather than along or across parking lots and driveways.*
- *An appropriate transition should be made between the industrial support center and adjacent residential neighborhoods.*



The Crescent Center office building in Executive Park

Employment Support Centers

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Light industrial
- Warehouse and distribution
- Wholesale commercial
- Retail commercial—limited
- Support office and services

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Compact, dense core
- Pedestrian accessible
- Public transit accessible
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Landscape buffers at edges

Institutional Support Centers

These are large institutional centers, dominated by major government, educational, medical and civic uses but containing relatively few other uses except those that may be accessory to the primary uses.

Each of these centers should convey the image of Montgomery as an accessible, desirable community in which to live, work and invest. This image should be strengthened by a strong sense of community relationship, especially for those people who work or live near them. It is also important to maintain physical

accessibility between these areas and the rest of the city, including by means of bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation. Larger centers should be served by public transportation.

- *Each building should be designed to form part of a larger physical composition of the center and of the area in which it is located.*
- *Adjacent buildings should relate in scale, height and configuration.*
- *For human scale, larger buildings should be broken down into separate volumes, horizontally and vertically.*
- *An appropriate transition should be made between the center and adjacent residential neighborhoods.*

- *At street intersections, the main building should be placed at or near the corner. Parking, loading or service should not be located at an intersection.*
- *Street intersections are important, and deserve taller structures.*
- *To maximize the street frontage of buildings and minimize the street frontage of parking lots, buildings should be sited so that the long side fronts the street.*
- *Streets should be designed with street trees in a manner appropriate to their function. Institutional support center streets should have trees that complement the adjacent buildings and shade the sidewalks.*
- *Off-street parking should be placed behind and/or beside buildings.*
- *Public transit and pedestrian circulation should be integral to the center. Buildings should frame and reinforce pedestrian circulation, so that pedestrians may walk along building fronts rather than along or across parking lots and driveways.*
- *Parking lots should be planned and designed with primary private vehicle access and circulation traffic located toward the outside edge rather than the edge closest to the buildings.*



Historic Huntingdon College in Old Cloverdale

Institutional Support Centers

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Governmental buildings
- High Schools
- Colleges
- Civic Centers
- Support services

General Development Principles

- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Compact, dense core
- Pedestrian accessible
- Public transit accessible
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Landscape buffers at edges

Major Recreation Centers

Large recreation centers are mostly open space but often contain significant structures. They are often somewhat isolated from neighborhoods due to the need for large spaces. Their relative isolation often renders them inaccessible except by automobile, so access and parking are critical.

It is especially important for the city's major recreation centers to help convey an image of Montgomery as an accessible, desirable community in which to live, work and invest. This image should be strengthened by imparting a strong sense of community to these centers especially for those who live near them. It is also important to maintain physical accessibility between these areas and the rest of the city, including by means of bicycle and pedestrian access and circulation. Most, if not all, of these major centers should be served by public transportation.

- *A citywide park or recreation center should be designed to form part of a larger physical composition of the area in which it is located.*
- *Adjacent buildings and structures should relate in scale, height and configuration.*
- *For human scale, larger structures should be broken down into separate volumes, horizontally and vertically as appropriate.*
- *Streets should be designed with street trees in a manner appropriate to their function. Trees should complement adjacent buildings and shade the sidewalks.*



Riverwalk Stadium in Downtown Montgomery



Edward Thompson Park in southeast Montgomery

- *Parking lots should be planned and designed with primary private vehicle access and circulation traffic located toward the outside edge rather than the edge closest to the buildings or sports fields.*
- *Pedestrian circulation should be an integral part of the center. Pedestrians should not be forced to walk through parking lots and across driveways and traffic to reach their destinations.*
- *An appropriate transition should be made between the park or recreation center and adjacent residential neighborhoods.*

Major Recreation Centers

Typical Appropriate Uses

- Parks
- Swimming Pools
- Recreation Centers
- Sports Fields

General Development Principles

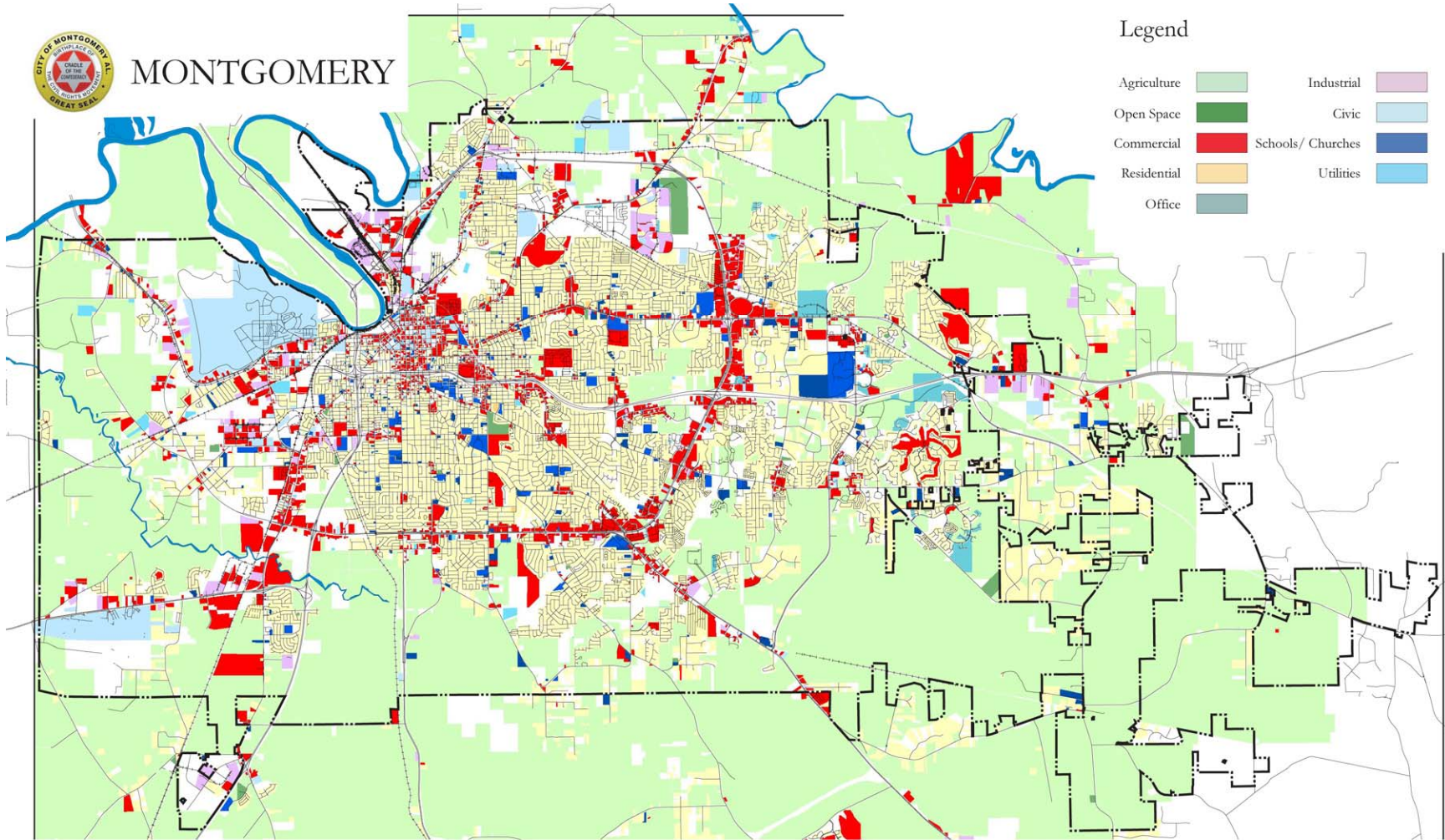
- Positive sense of place
- Visual coherence
- Pedestrian accessible
- Public transit accessible
- Internal vehicular circulation
- Intense center of activity
- Well-defined edges

General Design Guidelines

- Street trees
- Overall landscape concept
- Transition to adjacent housing



MONTGOMERY



Strategic Development Concept: Existing Land Use



NEIGHBORHOODS

Residents citywide have identified Montgomery’s traditional neighborhoods as a valued asset. Neighborhoods, together with citywide open space and transportation systems, and the various specialty districts and centers, form the city. Several types of corridors interconnect neighborhoods—they include streets, greenways and streams. Among the city’s neighborhoods, a range of housing types and price levels bring together a diversity of people into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to the community. Montgomery’s residential areas are shown the Existing Land Use map.

Good neighborhoods place an emphasis on community, livability, appearance, diversity, transportation opportunities, convenience and safety for all residents. To achieve this, the most successful neighborhoods generally exhibit characteristics that are largely missing from most conventional subdivisions as they have been developed over the past few decades. The following contains several principles intended to guide planning and design for all Montgomery neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Policies

Preserve and enhance the citywide open space system

Neighborhoods should be carefully planned and organized to fit appropriately within the natural environment. Neighborhoods should be sited sensitively in relation to or strategically placed away from the most valuable or threatened natural resources. Conservation subdivision techniques, in which a neighborhood is designed to conserve its natural systems and thereby require less

capital investment for earthwork, clearing and drainage, can add to a healthy, appealing community. Such techniques may be used to maintain allowed gross densities without negatively affecting the natural environment, which should be an important ingredient of every neighborhood.

Design each neighborhood appropriate to its context

The scale and density of a neighborhood should reflect its location in the community. More dense development should be focused toward commercial centers and corridors, if nearby. Less-intense neighborhoods should be the rule away from such focus areas.

Create a focus appropriate to the needs of the neighborhood

The location, scale and type of residential uses and open space should fit the neighborhood in a manner appropriate to the surroundings. A neighborhood focal point of a type and size appropriate to the needs of residents should be included to add a



Neighborhood park in Old Cloverdale

sense of place to the neighborhood—for example, a park or usable community open space. The focal point should be pedestrian oriented and provide easy vehicular and pedestrian access.

Design neighborhoods with walkable, interconnected streets

Neighborhood design should accommodate the access needs of motorists while providing a convenient and safe environment for pedestrians. Sidewalks should provide the framework for the pedestrian system insofar as possible. The pedestrian network can be greatly improved with trails within greenways or other open space systems. Creating interconnected neighborhood streets provides alternate routes, which will help to diffuse automobile traffic, thus lowering traffic volumes on many city streets.

Reserve places for public open space and civic buildings

There should be places for neighbors to venture out into the public realm without their vehicles and places for children to play safely, for these are staple items of all neighborhoods. Open spaces add to the value of the property and help to create a more livable community. Each neighborhood should have one special gathering place, such as a neighborhood green, near its center.

Design streets to suit neighborhood scale and character

Neighborhood streets should feature driving surfaces of appropriate width, ample sidewalks, street trees and front porches. Neighborhood streets should be “calm,” an environment wherein drivers realize that driving fast or aggressively is inappropriate. Sidewalk investment is modest in comparison to long-term value. When neighborhoods include street trees, sidewalks and front porches, they become a more welcoming place for residents and visitors, and add significant value to the whole community.

Residential street with historic tree canopy

Neighborhood Policies



Preserve and enhance the citywide open space system

Design each neighborhood appropriate to its context

Create a focus appropriate to the needs of the neighborhood

Design neighborhoods with walkable, interconnected streets

Reserve places for public open space and civic buildings

Design streets to suit neighborhood scale and character



CITYWIDE ACCESS AND MOBILITY

Montgomery's streets serve two essential purposes: access to adjacent property and mobility between destinations. Streets that attempt to serve both functions equally are those that tend to fail to live up to expectations. The challenge is to provide a street network and a public transit system that together serves and supports planned development patterns, balances access and mobility, moves vehicles and people efficiently, and lends a sense of community to the city's neighborhoods. To no one's surprise, local traffic is expected to increase significantly due to continued development and increases in both traffic and vehicle trips typically driven per household.

The transportation corridors shown on the next page are the major channels along which people and goods move from place to place. These corridors include not only the streets in which motor vehicles, including public transit systems, may travel, but also the sidewalks, bicycle lanes, multi-purpose trails and greenways that should accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.



Montgomery Area Transit System (MATS)
downtown trolley

Citywide Mobility Policies

Mobility is in part a function of providing options for movement through the city, and that requires interconnection of most streets. Gaps in the existing local street network require individuals to increase

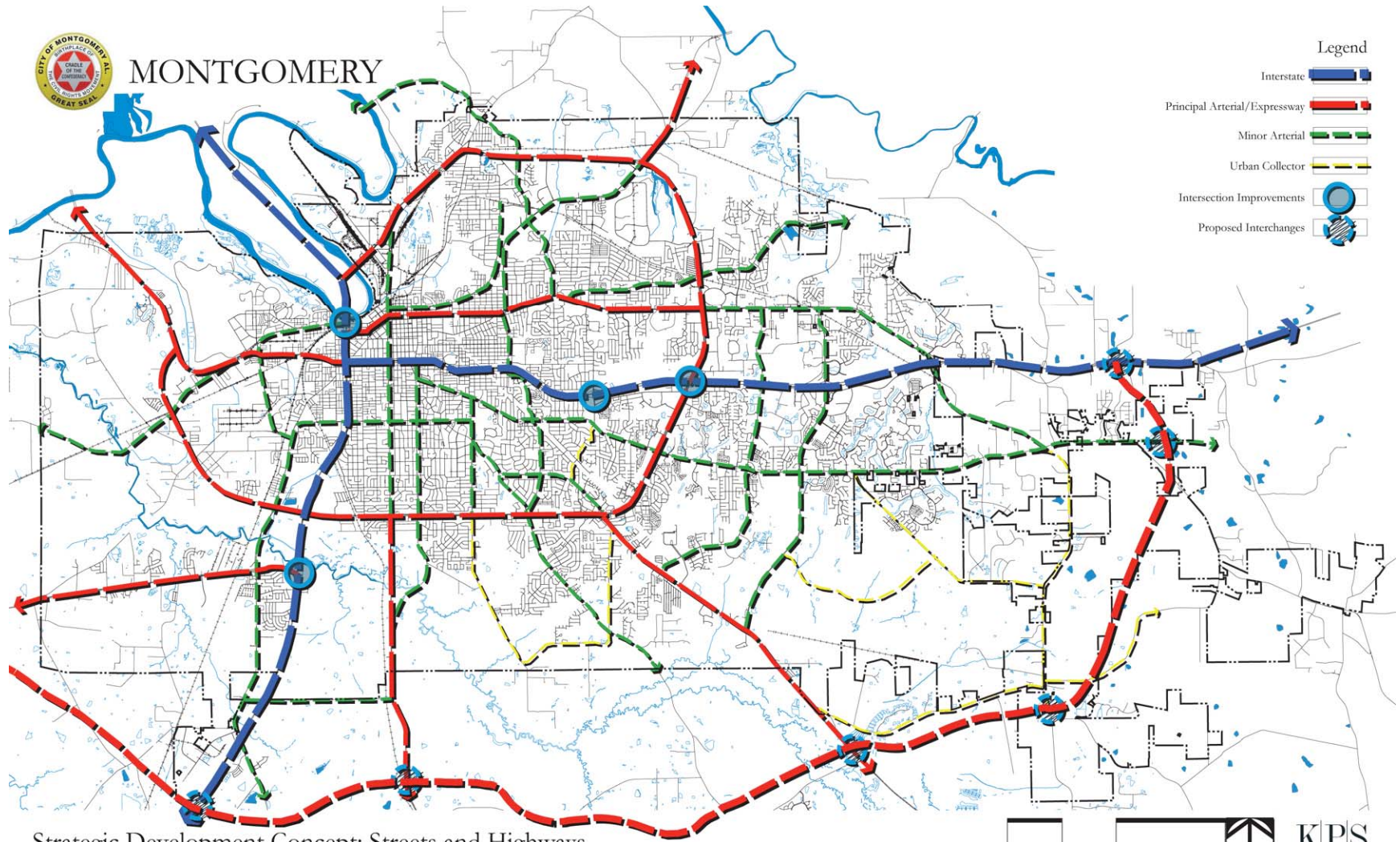
the length of their trip and drive through congested areas as they move even short distances through the community.

An appropriately interconnected street network is one in which every street connects to at least two other streets. Thus, cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets should only be used in areas where environmental constraints impede connections to other streets. Moreover, internal vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle connections should be required within both existing and new development areas and between adjacent land uses. Developers should be required to plan for and effectively address the need for internal connections (roads, pathways, open space, etc.) between adjacent land uses, including residential subdivisions and commercial developments, to provide both primary and secondary means of emergency access. Mobility planning and design should incorporate the following strategies for planning, designing, constructing and retrofitting streets citywide:

- *Maintain an aesthetically pleasing street network that helps frame and define the community while meeting the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.*
- *Landscape the edges and medians of major corridors to frame development and create a more positive image for the entire city by adding color, shade and visual interest.*
- *Consolidate existing driveways along arterials and collectors and require access for new development from side streets.*
- *Treat residential streets as both public ways and neighborhood amenities.*



MONTGOMERY



- Legend
- Interstate
 - Principal Arterial/Expressway
 - Minor Arterial
 - Urban Collector
 - Intersection Improvements
 - Proposed Interchanges

Strategic Development Concept: Streets and Highways



- *Seek landscaped medians and appropriate access management along key arterials and collectors for purposes of roadway safety and capacity.*
- *Prepare a citywide street network plan that allows direct connections to local destinations without diverting extra traffic onto the arterial and highway system, to include policies for new subdivisions and a program to retrofit the existing system as needed.*
- *Require street system connections between new and existing developments to promote an interconnected roadway system and discourage over-use of cul-de-sacs.*
- *Upgrade existing streets and building new streets, as “complete streets,” fully capable of accommodating all appropriate forms of transportation appropriate to street type, users and location.*
- *Require streets be planted with street trees appropriate to their function and the Montgomery Street Tree Master Plan.*



Photo-simulation of improvements to Dexter Avenue from Downtown Master Plan

Citywide Accessibility Policies

An essential way to maintain safe and reliable access and street capacity is to manage access to side streets and driveways to and from the parcels that line arterials and major collectors.

Approached properly, an access management program can enhance property values while safeguarding past and future public investments in the infrastructure. Accessibility and access management planning and design should incorporate the following strategies for retrofitting and constructing arterial and major collector streets:

- *Implement an Access Management Plan and Program for all of the city’s major corridors in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Transportation.*
- *Separate conflict points – distance between major intersections and driveways should be regulated. As a general rule, driveways should not be located within the area of influence of intersections.*

Access and Mobility Policies



Maintain a positive image for the city through the design of its streets

Carefully manage access to private property along major thoroughfares

Ensure street connectivity within and between existing and new developments

Design neighborhoods with walkable, interconnected streets

Design streets to suit neighborhood scale and character



- *Restrict turning movements at unsignalized driveways and intersections – the use of full directional unsignalized streets and driveways should be limited. Full movement intersections should serve multiple developments through joint use driveways or cross access easements.*
- *Establish design standards – design standards that address access spacing, the length of turn lanes and tapers and driveway dimensions should be developed for application throughout the city on arterials and major collectors.*
- *Traffic signal spacing – signals should only be installed when appropriate studies indicate their spacing and interconnection can be accomplished without significant impacts on corridor capacity.*
- *Turn lanes – left and right turn lanes should be required for major access points to activity centers.*
- *Shared driveways/inter-parcel access – joint use driveways should be required to reduce the proliferation of driveways and to preserve the capacity of the corridor.*
- *Pedestrian/bicycle planning – specific needs of pedestrian and bicyclist movements should be addressed. Traffic signals should be designed and timed to accommodate pedestrians in areas of significant activity.*



Traffic on East Boulevard near Interstate 85

III. THE CONCEPT IN ACTION

The Montgomery Strategic Development Concept presents a long-range view of city development that will be carried out through a series of actions as the city moves toward full revision of its Comprehensive Plan. For now the Strategic Development Concept serves as an interim, long-range framework for fitting together everything that relates to citywide growth and development, and especially the physical elements of the city. Consequently, putting the concept into action will likely involve at least some of most everything city government does, which must be organized and coordinated carefully.

This strategic concept, as a part of the city's plans, is to be implemented through a combination of direct public and private investment, and through public decisions by the City Council, Planning Commission and other boards and commissions. Recommendations contained in the Strategic Development Concept will be translated into action through revision and continued administration and enforcement of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, through the annual budgeting and capital improvement programming processes, through empowerment of community and neighborhood organizations and volunteers, and through public and private decisions regarding annexation.

Montgomery is a municipal corporation, formed under powers granted by the State of Alabama. The city has for many years used its grant of the police power to adopt and enforce growth and development regulations. The city has used its power to tax to plan for and implement a budgeting system that includes capital investments for infrastructure facilities and services that it uses to help shape growth and development. Montgomery has used the power of eminent domain (the power to force sale of private property for valid public use) sparingly to enable various public infrastructure investments and redevelopment actions in support of public policy and plans. All of these tools will continue to be coordinated and used together to help shape Montgomery in accord with this Strategic Development Concept.

It should be noted that designation of activity centers and corridors in this document should not be interpreted to propose, approve, deny or preclude any particular development action without full consideration of all city policies, principles or regulations. In particular, all considerations relating to site and context will be of major importance when locating any development activity or determining appropriate uses and density. These realities, plus other policies of public officials and agencies, will play a large part in determining appropriate development location and design. Similarly, the presence of adequate public infrastructure should be assured before making or proposing any significant development proposals or decisions.

DEVELOPMENT REGULATION

Several of the key elements of the city’s development management system—such as the zoning ordinance and map, subdivision regulations, sign regulations and landscape regulations, among others—are based in the police power. Together, the elements of this system address land use, site planning, the size and location of buildings and other structures, aesthetics and signage. Each of these regulations is framed to account for various aspects of the so-called “valid public purposes” of the municipality (protection and promotion of the public health, safety and welfare) and the appropriate enabling authority in each case. Each must also respect the principles of due process of law, non-discrimination in their application, profitable use of land, freedom of speech, and the special concerns associated with balancing individual costs against anticipated public benefits.

Zoning Ordinance and Map

Montgomery has adopted and enforces a zoning ordinance to regulate development within districts as shown on the city’s zoning map. This is one regulatory tool among several that may be used to implement the vision, goals, policies and recommendations of the city’s Comprehensive Plan:

- *By directly prescribing permitted land uses and densities, and*
- *By mitigating impacts of adjacent land uses through prescribed joining and/or separation of land uses and development densities.*

The Strategic Development Concept and its several sets of maps, policies and criteria should not be confused with the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map. The Strategic Development Concept is a guide to public and private investment in land development and infrastructure. In contrast, the zoning ordinance is a regulatory tool used by the city to influence and direct development of the community in ways that reflect the direction and desired form called for in the strategic concept. The following table highlights these differences:

<u>Strategic Development Concept</u>	<u>Zoning Ordinance and Map</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides general policy guidance • Describes conditions desired in the long term – not necessarily existing or recommended use(s) • Includes recommendations that involve other agencies and groups • Intentionally flexible to allow responses to changing conditions • General development categories • General development locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides specific regulations • Describes what is and what is not currently allowed today • Deals with development issues under city control • Fairly rigid, requires formal amendment to change • Zoning districts • Parcel-specific designations

In addition, planned developments, requiring preparation and approval of overall master plans and similar modifications, are encouraged to allow innovative approaches to development, in recognition of the fact that livability—and good design—cannot be legislated, but can be encouraged and enabled.

As a part of development management system, Montgomery intends to revise the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to reflect and incorporate the land development policy outlined in this document as appropriate.

Subdivision Regulations

Montgomery intends to revise the Subdivision Regulations to reflect and incorporate the land development policy of this document as appropriate.

Additional Development Review Criteria

In addition to general changes necessary to put the concepts of this document into practice, development criteria specified for each of the various types of activity centers and for new and revitalizing neighborhoods—plus some general principles to protect the city’s water resources—likely will be added to the development management system during amendment of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations.

Plan Review Guidelines for Commercial Development

As just one example regarding activity centers, the Planning Commission, using policies of the Strategic Development Concept as an overall guide, would likely prepare and use a checklist such as the following during the development review process for any *commercial* activity center requiring a master development plan or site plan approval:

- *Building façades should provide visual interest and avoid uniform styles.*

- *A building’s ground floor facing a collector or arterial street should contain a minimum of 50% unobscured windows, doors or display areas.*
- *Buildings should be oriented toward pedestrians, with emphasis on directing people toward the public street system.*
- *Sidewalks should be installed as needed for pedestrian mobility and safety appropriate to the location.*
- *All streets should be designed to promote traffic movement conducive to pedestrian safety and to provide direct routes between nearby destinations.*
- *Parking lots should be designed to provide through pedestrian paths, clearly identifiable by changes in material or elevation.*
- *Street trees should be planted as specified by the city, and slopes should be planted, in accord with an overall landscape plan, to maximize slope stability yet optimize investments of maintenance time and labor.*
- *Surface parking lots should include landscaping in accord with the city’s landscape ordinance, with plant materials distributed in accord with an overall plan approved by the Planning Commission.*
- *Surface parking lots containing 50 or more spaces should be divided into smaller areas separated by a building or a group of buildings or by landscaped areas at least 10 feet wide.*
- *Activity center and corridor development should full consider the potential for public transit service.*

Plan Review Guidelines for Residential Development

As another example of converting the policies of the Strategic Development Concept into an overall guide to development practice in Montgomery, the Planning Commission would prepare and use a checklist such as the following during the development review process for any *residential* development requiring a master development plan or site plan approval to encourage development and revitalization of viable neighborhoods:

- *The neighborhood should be planned, organized and designed in relation to the city's green infrastructure and appropriate to its context—to reflect its location in the community.*
- *Neighborhoods should be designed to conserve natural systems and thereby require less capital investment for earthwork, clearing and drainage.*
- *Neighborhood development density should decrease with increasing distance from activity centers and corridors.*
- *Outdoor places other than or in addition to private yards should be provided so that children may have the opportunity to play safely away from their own homes.*
- *At least 15% of the total residential development should be dedicated to accessible, usable, pedestrian-sensitive open space that includes appropriate focal points.*
- *Each neighborhood should have at least one special gathering place, such as a neighborhood green or other usable community open space, near its center.*
- *Neighborhood gathering spaces should be pedestrian oriented and have easy vehicular and pedestrian access from all parts of the neighborhood.*
- *The neighborhood should be designed and built with walkable, interconnected streets.*
- *Neighborhoods should accommodate access needs of motorists while providing a convenient, safe environment for pedestrians.*
- *Sidewalks should be installed along all street frontages as needed for pedestrian mobility and safety appropriate to the location.*
- *Blocks longer than 500 feet should provide pedestrian cut-through paths to adjacent streets.*
- *Pedestrian-scale light fixtures—generally no greater in height than twelve feet—should be provided along all areas to be used by pedestrians.*
- *Street trees should be planted as specified by the city, and slopes should be planted, in accord with an overall landscape plan to maximize slope stability yet optimize investments of maintenance time and labor.*
- *Neighborhood pedestrian accessibility should be enhanced through use of cul-de-sac linkages to adjacent streets, as well as trails within greenways or other open space systems.*
- *Interconnected neighborhood streets should be provided to assure alternate routes to every destination to diffuse automobile traffic and assure emergency accessibility.*
- *Neighborhood street environments should feature relatively narrow driving surfaces, ample sidewalks, street trees and front porches.*
- *Neighborhood streets should be planned and designed to provide a “calm” environment where drivers realize that driving fast or aggressively is inappropriate.*

Plan Review Guidelines for Water Resource Protection

As a final example in this series, the Planning Commission, using the approach of the Strategic Development Concept as an overall guide to protecting the city's water resources, would prepare and use a checklist such as the following during the development review process for all development projects requiring a master development plan or site plan approval:

- *Favor citywide low gross density / focused medium net density conservation subdivision development to gain useful open space, recreation opportunity and watershed protection.*
- *Design and build residential streets at the minimum width necessary for their use.*
- *Minimize the use of cul-de-sacs and set their minimum required radius to accommodate emergency and maintenance vehicles. Encourage use of landscape islands in cul-de-sacs to address stormwater issues in new developments.*
- *Allow use of vegetated open channels in the right-of-way of selected streets serving low-density development to convey and treat stormwater runoff.*
- *Keep impervious parking area to that actually required for the intended use to help make shared parking solutions attractive.*
- *Reduce overall imperviousness of parking lots by permitting pervious materials in spillover parking areas.*
- *Require property owner association management of community open space.*
- *Require use of naturally vegetated buffers, including floodplains, steep slopes and wetlands, along streams.*
- *Limit clearing and grading of woodland and native vegetation to the minimum amount needed for building areas, access and fire protection.*
- *Plan, design and manage community open space, street rights-of-way, parking lot islands, and other landscaped areas to promote maintenance of natural vegetation.*
- *Maintain all "blue line" streams (as shown on USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles) at least at their current lengths.*
- *Prohibit new stormwater discharge of unmanaged stormwater into wetlands, aquifers and other critical water bodies.*



Low-density residential street with vegetated open channel

PLAN ELEMENTS AND SPECIFIC PLANS

This Strategic Development Concept, as a major part of the city's Comprehensive Plan, will be refined and detailed from time to time through preparation and adoption of Plan Elements and Specific Plans. The Plan Element prepared in tandem with this document is the city's Master Street Plan. Most likely, the next element to be completed will be the Land Use Plan.

Montgomery's highest-profile Specific Plan is the recently completed Downtown Master Plan. It is one of what likely will be several special area studies and plans based on the market, physical conditions or level of interest on the part of local citizens or the Planning Commission. Through such extension of the planning process, city officials and staff, residents, property owners and developers may come together, accompanied by representatives of the city at large, as appropriate, to plan in more detail for the creative development, redevelopment, or simply enhancement of key locations around the city.



View of riverfront and Downtown Montgomery

In any case, the need for the Specific Plan detailing and refinement process will continue to emerge naturally from the desire to keep the city's Comprehensive Plan current and to guide orderly development and revitalization of the city.

For example, Specific Plans may be helpful to consideration of planning for, designing, enabling and appropriately regulating the orderly development of various gateways to the city, major activity centers and reinvestment focus areas, and the city's several image corridors. A Specific Plan would also be appropriate for proper consideration of potential redevelopment areas in accord with Alabama law. Upgrading of various neighborhoods and their interconnection with nearby activity centers, short of redevelopment, could also be appropriate subjects for a Specific Plan process.

The following several pages present illustrations of ways in which the Strategic Development Concept may be applied through more detailed physical planning and design for specific areas within the community. The first three examples represent infill and redevelopment strategies for improving existing development areas, including a commercial focus area and corridor (Atlanta Highway), a neighborhood and gateway revitalization area (Bell Street/Riverside Heights), and a commercial focus area that also involves corridor and gateway enhancement elements (Montgomery Mall). In each, the variety of existing conditions and opportunities are evaluated and a strategy for physical improvement is then described and illustrated. Each of these areas, as interest arises, may be further studied through Specific Plans.

Focus Areas Summary

The recommendations for each of these focus areas reinforce the elements desired for development and redevelopment of the physical environment of the city, as documented in the 2005 *Visual Preference Survey* and further described in this concept. Throughout the three focus area examinations, several recurring issues were resolved by making physical changes – through a combination of public and private improvements – intended to achieve several of the major themes of the development concept:

- *concentration of commercial development into activity centers*
- *well-defined, attractive gateways and corridors*
- *mixed use activity centers with diverse yet harmonious buildings*
- *shops in proximity to neighborhoods to satisfy daily needs*
- *walkable neighborhoods with a sense of place*
- *residential infill and redevelopment*
- *pedestrian interconnectivity*
- *creation of a citywide open space network*
- *diversity in housing suitable for different households*
- *access management*
- *complete streets lined with pedestrian-friendly developments*
- *interconnected street network*

Different design solutions, equally in accord with the policies of the Strategic Development Concept, will likely be found through preparation of Specific Plans that may be developed in the future for these areas.



Montgomery Mall

This enclosed mall, an early example of a wave of retail development that would sweep America, was built in the 1960s. It served as the primary shopping destination for the city and the surrounding metro area for almost two decades. However, as population growth moved eastward, so did the City's shopping focus – another major enclosed mall, Eastdale Mall, opened in 1977.

In the late 1980s Montgomery Mall underwent a major expansion and renovation. The re-investment sustained the Mall for several more years. But with little new investment in housing in the west/central parts of the city surrounding the Mall, commercial investment continued the eastward shift. Retail and service developments emerged along Vaughn Road and Taylor Road. In 2002, the Shoppes at Eastchase, a major outdoor retail center, developed on Taylor Road near Interstate 85. During this period, many of Montgomery Mall's remaining businesses, both large and small, began to relocate.

Retailing trends shifted dramatically about the same time, and this is one of many such declining retail centers in need of a major adjustment. The Montgomery Mall property may be considered a "grayfield," a major redevelopment opportunity in central Montgomery. Located at the intersection of two major highways, it is served by substantial

infrastructure. Some 54 of its 58 acres are under control of two major owners, which would ease property consolidation needed for full redevelopment.

Grayfields, as defined by a 2001 Pricewaterhouse Coopers study, have an 84% or lower occupancy rate; 64% or less of the gross leasable area of comparable malls; are, on average, 32 years old and architecturally obsolete; and are located in economically declining areas, often inner cities or first-ring suburbs with housing priced below surrounding markets and generally low to moderate income households.

According to that 2001 study, 140 of 2,076 regional malls (about 7%) in the United States were considered grayfields, and that an additional 12% of regional malls would likely decline to grayfield status in the five years following the study

Recent national experience has shown that a long-term approach to redevelopment of grayfield sites such as Montgomery Mall has begun to emerge over the last decade to tackle this significant and widespread problem. It shows that, unless the underlying causes that contributed to the decline of the area and these properties are recognized and addressed, further re-investment will likely

bring about only a short-term revival of Montgomery Mall.

A common obstacle to appropriate redevelopment of grayfield sites is resistance to changing long-held expectations for how such a site can or should be used. It is difficult for investors to accept that a mall may have lost its reason for being, and that the property can simply no longer be successful serving the same function, despite the fact that the community has changed all around the site. In response, a new purpose and new identity must be envisioned—one that recognizes and deals with the profound shifts that have occurred in the marketplace, one that fits with the overall strategy presented in this document.

Redevelopment Concept

Montgomery Mall, together with neighboring Governor's Square Shopping Center, is reconceived in this illustration as a mixed-use redevelopment site in accord with the intents of the City's recently adopted SmartCode. Uses are organized on the site to better blend site functions with surrounding conditions. Within the core of the site, new multi-storied buildings containing retail, service, office, and residential uses surround a new civic square. On-site housing creates an immediate customer base and day and night time activity. New housing, including townhouses,

stacked flats, and apartment buildings, also flanks the eastern frontage of Governor's Drive, which is redesigned as a landscaped boulevard to integrate the two neighboring sites. Buildings along the site's southern edge, including renovated outparcel developments, house retail, service, and office uses. Parking areas are distributed throughout the site, typically behind or to the side of buildings.

Furthering this concept, the combined site is redeveloped around a new pedestrian and transit-friendly circulation system and a central square. Internal streets feature sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian lighting fixtures, and on-street parking. Sidewalks around the square are wide enough to accommodate outdoor dining and are shaded by trees and colorful awnings. Transit riders can purchase passes and pay fares at the transit station. Modified access points and service roads along East South Boulevard improve the flow of through traffic and provide logical points of access coordinated with those on the highway's southern frontage. With a fresh approach, compatible with the strategic concept, redevelopment of the mall sites and beautification of East South Boulevard and McGehee Road could provide a dramatically new and attractive gateway to Montgomery from Troy Highway.

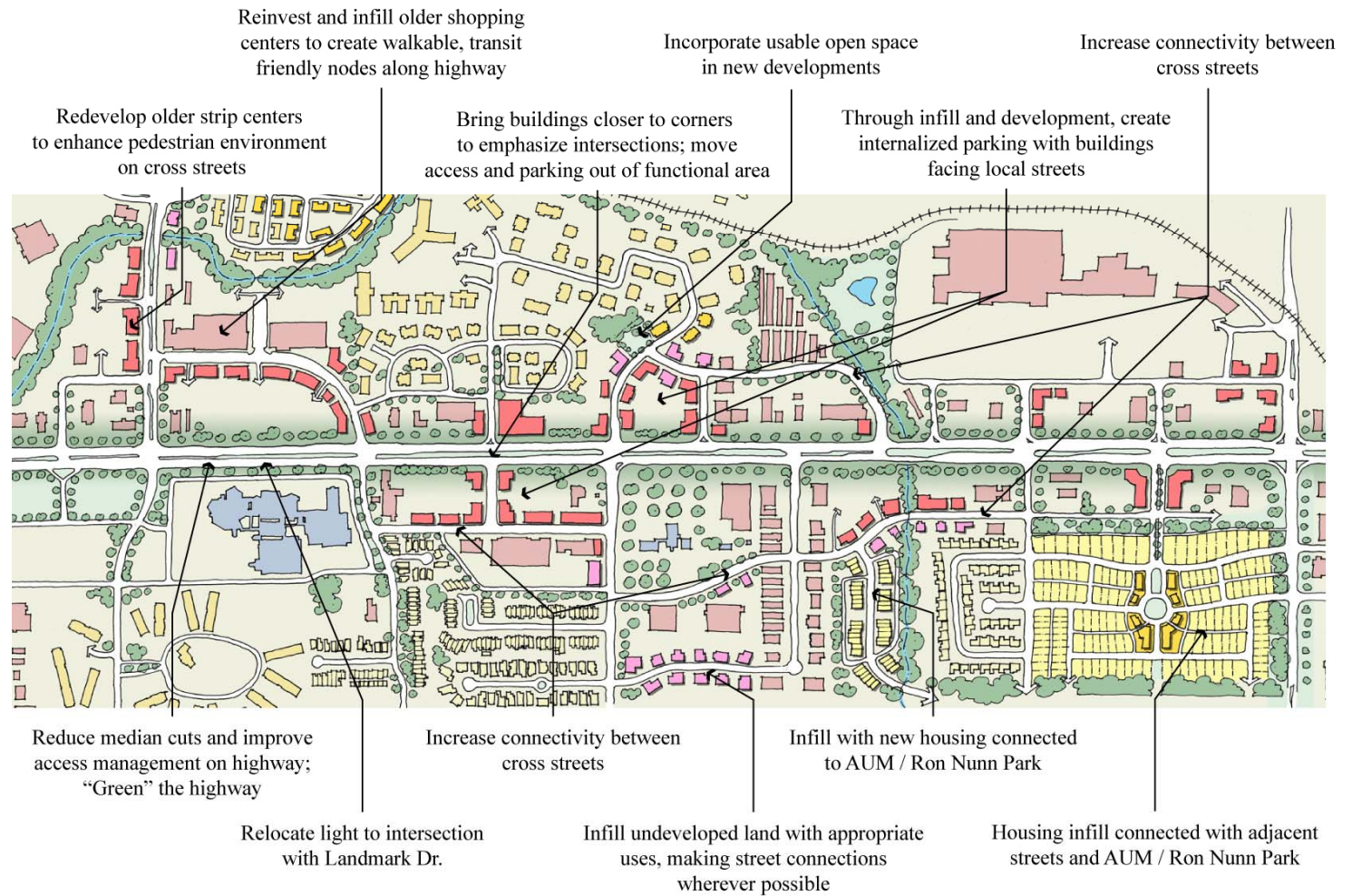
Atlanta Highway Corridor

This corridor is a linear aggregation of strip centers, outparcels, subdivisions, and apartment complexes, most of which began to develop rapidly in the 1970s. However, as metro growth has continued eastward, new developments have emerged further east while older businesses have fallen prey to disinvestment and loss of customers to newer stores down the road.

As they are in many of the older areas of Montgomery, strip centers along this corridor are becoming increasingly vacant, even as individual buildings fronting the highway are experiencing turnover in uses. The types of businesses occupying existing buildings are unable to draw a customer base that can sustain the aging commercial property. The significant residential population

surrounding the corridor could be better served in order to sustain business activity. However, the present development pattern along the highway has created a barrier between business areas and potential customers in nearby neighborhoods.

Adding to their isolation from the adjacent market, there is inadequate access management and a lack of connectivity and accessibility between destinations and among the land uses along the corridor. To travel from one business to another or from a nearby residential area



generally requires driving out onto the highway. The pattern of allowing access to each individual property directly from the highway has resulted in a loss of capacity along a road that varies from six lanes to more than eight lanes. Few vehicular or pedestrian connections are provided from one business to the next or to surrounding neighborhoods. A lack of street connections between cross streets further contributes to unnecessary travel on the highway for local trips. Successful reinvestment is dependent upon overcoming all of these barriers.

Corridor Improvements

Improved access management and increased local street connectivity and accessibility are critical to physically and economically improving this and similar corridors. In this illustration, infill development is recommended that would fit the improved circulation system and connect to surrounding land uses. A fundamental component of this concept is to physically restructure non-residential development to better attract, serve, and be identified with surrounding neighborhoods. This requires redesign of the circulation system to ensure that neighbors and visitors can walk, drive, or bicycle from one location along the corridor to another with as little travel on the highway itself as possible.

Furthering this concept, traffic signals, median cuts, and driveways are modified to better support the intended use of the highway for through traffic, while access to abutting properties is provided through smaller-scale streets and cross-access drives. This not only preserves the capacity on the highway, thereby minimizing congestion, it also allows the highway to be beautified by recapturing the median and frontages for landscaping. Existing cross streets are connected with new streets or by extension of existing streets, which are retrofitted to include sidewalks. The drainage way that flows eastward from Eastdale Mall is converted into a landscaped multi-modal path. The path serves as an important connector for pedestrians and bicyclists while also creating a landscaped seam between the neighborhoods and non-residential areas. Pedestrian connections are also made between future residential infill developments and Ron Nunn Park to the southeast.

By introducing street connections between cross streets, more appropriately scaled blocks may be created with many businesses facing a local street rather than the highway. As shown, retail and service uses tend to be located at intersections, especially at corners along the highway; while support commercial, such as office uses, are at mid-block or where they provide an appropriate transition between residential uses and more

intensive businesses. On-street parking is provided on new streets and is retrofitted into existing streets where possible. On individual properties, parking is generally located behind or to the side of the buildings so that vehicular access to parking does not interfere with through traffic, thereby avoiding an environment between buildings and sidewalks that is inhospitable to pedestrians.



Bell Street / Riverside Heights

The Riverside Heights area of Bell Street has convenient access to Maxwell Air Force Base, Interstate 65, Downtown Montgomery, and Powder Magazine Park along the Alabama River. The Air Force purchased a significant portion of the original public housing property. The remaining site contains over 20 acres. The approach to reinvestment illustrated here incorporates several urban planning and design strategies emphasized in the SmartCode and recommendations of the *Bell Street Improvement Plan* drafted in 2006.

Redevelopment Concept

The Riverside Heights area represents an opportunity for the City to apply the SmartCode in a public-private venture to redevelop the site and create a new mixed-income neighborhood following the HUD Hope VI model, which has been successfully used in Birmingham, Alabama.

In this illustration, a mix of land uses, housing types, and incomes are accommodated. Non-residential uses are positioned close to Bell Street, creating a natural transition and buffer between residential uses and the major road. Historic buildings are also retained to serve as community facilities to support the new

residential development. Mixed-use buildings at the intersection of Eugene Street and Bell Street house retail and service uses and may also include upper-story offices or dwellings.

Furthering this concept, the overall site is oriented around a central open space and a curvilinear street grid. From the community green, two streets extend southward and are terminated by two historic buildings that have been adaptively reused. In keeping with the intent of the city's *Bell Street Improvement Plan*, only one entrance to the site is maintained on Bell Street. There are three access points from existing Eugene Street, one of which acts as an extension of Ivey Street. Most buildings are two and three stories. Townhouses are located along Eugene Street to transition between existing single-family housing and the denser on-site housing. A virtually solid architectural and landscaped screen buffers the development from the neighboring military base.

In accord with the intents of the SmartCode and the neighborhood development principles of the Strategic Development Concept, each building is placed to frame and enliven the streetscape. Taller buildings or building masses are placed at street corners to create dynamic vistas accenting the beginning and end of each block, much like bookends. Roof types accentuate or minimize building heights depending on location.

Each street includes on-street parking, a planting strip (or *tree lawn*) and street trees, pedestrian-scaled lighting, below-ground utilities, and a sidewalk at least five feet in width. Parking lots are at mid-block and are kept small, by distributing them throughout the site and by counting on-street parking toward the needed spaces.

Eugene Street is retrofitted with sidewalks for access to Powder Magazine Park. Housing rehabilitation and sensitive infill are encouraged on nearby Eugene and Gordon Streets. The City would seek acquisition of vacant and underutilized riverfront land and extend Powder Magazine Park to the railroad tracks that cross under I-65. Parking for existing non-residential uses along Eugene Street and Gordon Streets would be relocated away from adjacent single-family homes and/or improved and landscaped.

Commercial and light industrial development uses line the southern frontage of Bell Street. Many of these properties are accessible by alleys and were developed without parking in front. However, over time, new investments have not followed this historic precedent. As reinvestment occurs, the City would extend the use of these concepts by requiring that new buildings be built close to the street with a generous sidewalk provided and with parking access from existing alleys or to the sides of buildings.

Local Developments and Proposals

There are plan proposals, developments and redevelopments occurring in Montgomery today that reflect many of the principles of the Strategic Development Concept.

The Downtown Master Plan recommended continued study and focused revitalization efforts for several downtown neighborhoods. In particular, the Downtown Master Plan included a special investigation of the Trenholm Court housing project, in which the site is proposed to be redeveloped as a mixed use, mixed income neighborhood, similar to the recommendations for Riverside Heights in this document.



Trenholm Court redevelopment proposed in Downtown Master Plan

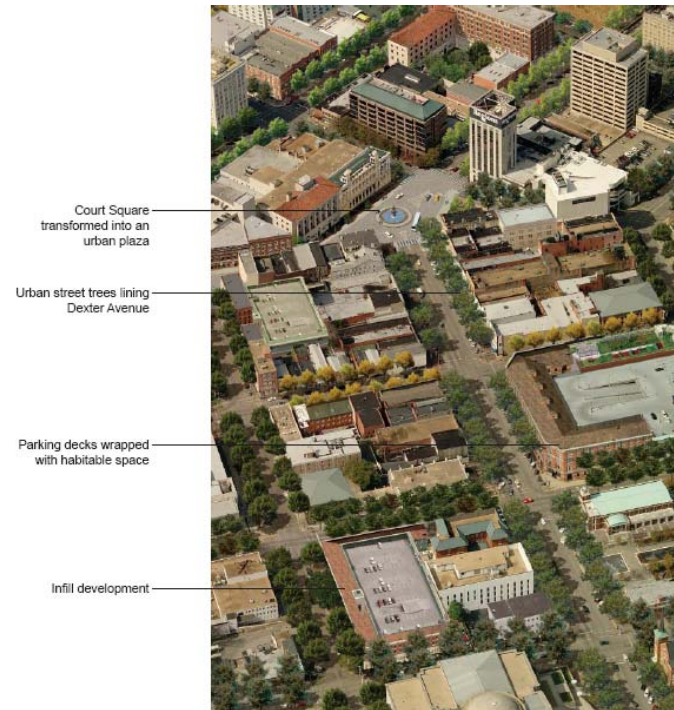
Infill and redevelopment in Downtown and Midtown Montgomery are gaining momentum through catalyst projects being carried out by the public and private sectors:

- *The Riverwalk Stadium and Park represent a major investment by the city in its downtown in an effort to attract private sector reinvestment, generate tourism, and spur greater day and night activity.*
- *Downtown Montgomery is now starting to benefit from private reinvestments in historic buildings, which are being renovated and adaptively re-used for mixed uses and lofts.*
- *The new Renaissance Montgomery Hotel and Spa will provide lodging support to the Convention Center and downtown tourism.*
- *Atlantic and Pacific Lofts is an award-winning mixed-use project in Old Cloverdale by the City Loft Corporation. The redevelopment includes lofts, retail, and cottages.*

There is a renewed interest in Montgomery in place making. Strategic public improvements that transform and enhance the urban environment are an important tool for the city to capture the imaginations of private investors and to uncover the financial potential in infill and redevelopment throughout the city:

- *Recently completed projects include Court Square Plaza. The Dexter Avenue streetscape project described in the Downtown Master Plan will extend the sense of revival started with the Plaza improvements and likely attract additional private investment.*

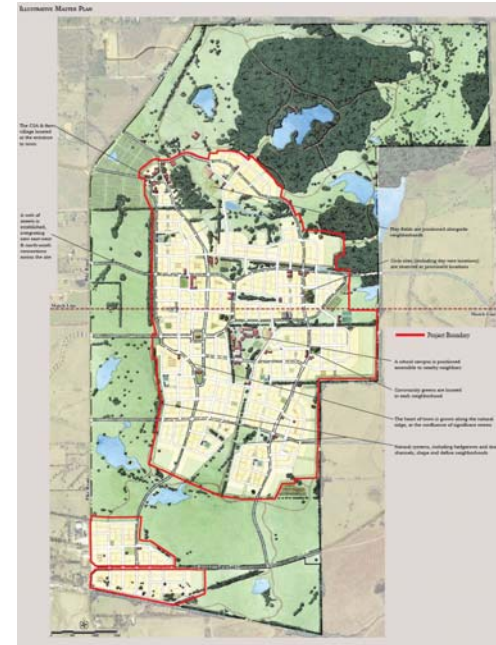
- *Other place making improvements recommended in the Downtown Plan, such as the Five Points Demonstration Project, reveal untapped redevelopment opportunities that take advantage of place making and urban design concepts such as mixed use buildings and pedestrian friendly streets and public spaces.*
- *Streetscape projects, civic space improvements and other place making efforts will be beneficial in generating private interest in redevelopment in the reinvestment focus areas and corridors described in the Strategic Development Concept.*



Dexter Avenue improvements proposed in Downtown Master Plan

Several greenfield developments planned or under construction in Montgomery reflect the development patterns recommended in this strategic concept:

- *Hudson, a 2100-acre residential development by Urban Villages, is being planned between Thorington and Wallahatchie Roads. The project will blend traditional town planning elements and sustainable living concepts, including an on-site farm, use of alternative energy and bio-fuels, and community involvement and education components.*
- *Hampstead, a 400-acre traditional neighborhood development by the Colonial Company, is being developed on Taylor Road in east Montgomery. The development will feature an interconnected, pedestrian-friendly street network; neighborhoods oriented around civic buildings and gathering spaces; and a variety of housing types, including townhouses, cottages, and live-work units.*



Above: Hudson Illustrative Plan
Below: Hampstead Illustrative Plan

By setting development policies and review procedures in accord with this Strategic Development Concept; investing in further planning for special areas of the community; exercising urban renewal powers where appropriate; embarking on public-private partnerships; and making strategic public improvements; the city will be able to extend the positive impacts of these early projects, investments, and development interests that signal a renaissance in the growth of Montgomery.



ANNEXATION

Montgomery is well positioned to accommodate new employment centers, residential growth and the commerce it generates. Generally speaking, more households bring more dollars to be spent in the community. However, residential growth by itself comes at a cost to the city's services and facilities. Residential land uses, by themselves, are usually a drain on municipal finances, for it typically costs more to provide services to a household than it typically pays in *ad valorem* taxes. In contrast, owners of farm, forest and open lands within municipalities typically pay more in local tax revenues than it costs local government to provide services to their properties. However, the critical tax for Alabama municipalities is retail sales tax, which shoulders the majority of municipal finances. Therefore, new residential growth should be balanced with commercial and industrial growth and preservation of farm and open space areas until such time as those areas may be added to Montgomery in accord with the city's Strategic Development Concept.

Annexation Criteria

As the city considers annexation of new areas, the ability to protect the city and its fiscal base, people and resources, as well as assure the continuing ability to provide services, will be prime considerations. In general, annexation decisions should take into account at least the following questions and criteria, in addition to all elements of the Strategic Development Concept, when considering the appropriateness of any particular annexation.

- Efficiency of providing services—*will the annexation result in demand on public facilities and services that may exceed the capacity of such facilities and services, or will annexation cause or eliminate awkward and irregular boundaries that cause difficulty or inefficiencies in supplying utilities and services? These conditions should be avoided or at least minimized.*
- Fiscal soundness—*will annexation of the property significantly add to the revenue base of the city? Comprehensive annexations that “pay their way” by including commercial areas whose taxation may help to cover the cost of necessary support services should have priority.*
- Image compatibility/enhancement—*is the property to be annexed consistent with Montgomery standards, character and image as outlined in the Strategic Development Concept, or might annexation allow for the elimination of existing or potential land uses and improvements considered a blighting or deteriorating influence, or perhaps prevent untimely or inappropriate development of property?*



Montgomery riverfront

IV. CONCLUSION

This is a long-range concept, and change occurs piecemeal, but in a more or less continuous manner. Neighborhoods, institutions, schools, parks and commercial and industrial centers are not developed overnight. Hence, the city's Comprehensive Plan—and its Strategic Development Concept—does not propose or provide “quick fix” solutions, nor should it be viewed simply as an economic development platform. Rather, the approach proposed herein—and in every element of the Comprehensive Plan—is intended to strengthen, revitalize and optimize all aspects of life in Montgomery over the long term. As such, this concept, like all parts of the Comprehensive Plan, must be able to shape, and to respond to, changing conditions.

Putting this Strategic Development Concept into practice citywide will take time and goodwill. Montgomery must continue to strive to get the public interested and involved in refining and implementing a community vision. City government must also continue to gather other agencies, public and private, onto the same team in support of implantation of this development concept.

The city must continue to prioritize and make capital investments. Public officials must be willing to provide selected incentives to encourage others to take the lead in development activities that would further implementation of the policies outlined in this document. Further, city officials must help shape the action of others with effective regulation. And finally, public officials must

strive to use every power they have under the law, in concert with every public investment they make, to support implementation of their plans for the improvement of the quality of life in Montgomery.

To be effective, this Strategic Development Concept—indeed, all parts of the Montgomery Comprehensive Plan—must be updated and amended on a regular basis. All of the city's plans should evolve and grow in response to changes in public values and to market and physical conditions. Only through use, evaluation, detailing, reconsideration and amendment can the city's plans fully serve Montgomery's citizens, and only then can they use it fully and creatively as they seek achievement of a comprehensive vision for the community.

NOTES
