

Frequently Asked Questions

Below is a collection of questions and answers that provide information on the Selma Now purpose, process, and expected outcomes. More information will be posted throughout the process at SelmaNow.com.



What is Selma Now?

Selma Now is a long-term recovery plan for the City of Selma and Dallas County. The plan directly addresses the impacts of the January 12th, 2023 tornadoes, and sets a foundational direction for land use, economic development, housing, and infrastructure.

What is a long-term recovery plan?

A long-term recovery plan is a strategic guide that provides direction following a disaster in a community, shaped by their goals and values. It takes a holistic, long-term view of critical needs and coordinates the mobilization of resources at the federal, state, and community levels. It is a broad, recovery-focused plan that will set forth a long-term vision for a more resilient community. The long-term recovery plan acts as a guidebook for decision-makers and, while not legally binding, will provide actionable steps to reimagine Selma and Dallas County.

Why is this process needed?

In January 2023, an EF2 tornado hit Selma and Dallas County. What had been a persisted housing challenge became an acute crisis when more than 1,300 homes were lost in a single day. Prior to the tornado, housing challenges were exacerbated by outdated infrastructure that included deteriorated streets and antiquated sewer and drainage systems that caused significant flood damage. These infrastructure issues, depressed new construction, and dilapidated, vacant, and uninhabitable properties left low-income residents at a loss for affordable housing.

Following the storm on January 12, 2023, residents of Selma were forced to move to neighboring cities in Alabama, relocate to other states, or live with relatives to meet their basic needs for shelter. Years of economic neglect have contributed to low median household incomes and high unemployment resulting in impoverished conditions in Selma, especially among its predominantly Black/African American residents. While Selma and its residents have experienced marginalization, divestiture, and other civil rights challenges in the past, the city is determined and more focused than ever to improve the conditions of its residents in the present and the future.

How long will the process take?

This process will take about 12 months to complete, starting in May 2024, with completion in Spring of 2025.

Who is involved?

The process will involve input from:

Public. Widespread public involvement is vital to the success of Selma Now. Various in-person meetings will be held, and online tools will offer more ways for citizens to give input throughout the process. The first public events will be held in August 2024.

Stakeholders. Various stakeholder groups will be convened to inform specific aspects of the plan. These groups include educators, utility providers, non-profits, and business owners, among others.

City officials. Selma City Officials will monitor the progress of Selma Now and the resulting vision and goals, recognizing that success should be independent of the city's elected leadership.

Staff. City of Selma staff will support and help to coordinate the work of all other groups with local knowledge and expertise.

Consultants. Planning NEXT will facilitate the process and provide best-in-class regional expertise alongside strong recovery planning knowledge and state-of-the-art technical planning expertise provided by GMC. Ninigret Partners will provide expertise on economic recovery, housing, and neighborhoods with recovery financing expertise from IEM. College Town Consulting will support public engagement and outreach.

How does this effort relate to other initiatives in Selma?

Through the research and analysis done at the outset of the long-term recovery process, the planning team leveraged existing plans, studies, and reports. These plans provided an opportunity to identify important findings from previous work and identify gaps or emergent opportunities. The team is coordinating this work with other recovery partners to incorporate short-term successes into the long-term plan.

Will the community be able to participate?

Yes! This is an open and inclusive process. There will be two series of public input opportunities held during the planning process, which will include both in-person and online engagement opportunities. Anyone who cares about the future of Selma will be able to participate and contribute their ideas and insight.

Do I need to be an expert to contribute ideas?

You are an expert if you live or work in the City of Selma. Who knows the community better than someone who lives or works here?

Where can I learn more?

Visit SelmaNow.com to learn more about the planning process and see how you can get involved.