



SELMA NOW

OUR PRESENT. OUR FUTURE.

Strategic Action Plan



May 2025

Acknowledgements

Special Thanks

Citizens of Selma

Community Organizations*

Alabama Power
AmeriCorps
Arts Revive
ATAP CDC
Browns Chapel AME
Chamber of Commerce
Dallas County Emergency Management Agency
Delta Regional Authority
HOPE Credit Union
Lighting Selma
Melville Charitable Trust
NAACP, Selma-Dallas County Branch
Office of Representative Terri Sewell
Selma Redevelopment Authority
Spire Energy

Recovery Partners*

City Collective
Delta Design Build
FEMA
Front Porch Initiative
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

Elected Officials

James Perkins, Jr, Mayor

Warren "Billy" Young, Council President
Troy Harvill, Ward 1
Christie Thomas, Ward 2
Clay Carmichael, Ward 3
Lesia James, Ward 4
Samuel Randolph, Ward 5
Atkin Jemison, Ward 6
Jannie Thomas, Ward 7
Michael Johnson, Ward 8

Consultants

Planning NEXT
Innovative Emergency Management
Ninigret Partners
Goodwyn Mills Cawood
College Town Consulting

*At least one member of these organizations participated in a one-on-one interview, a community event, or a project-related meeting.



Sidewalk outside Selma Dallas County Public Library

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Each action within the Citywide Strategy chapter contains these elements:

- Focus Area
- Description
- Need
- Partners
- Sub-Actions
- Funding
- Time Frame

Appendices

- A. Needs Assessment
- B. Public Input Summaries
- C. Funding Opportunities

This Long-Term Recovery Plan is for the people of Selma and Dallas County. It reflects a collective commitment to rebuild, strengthen, and ensure a brighter future for the residents of the City and County. The path ahead will require collaboration, unity, and a shared vision among all members of the community, particularly elected officials, whose alignment on priorities is essential to achieving sustainable progress.

By establishing a clear framework for recovery and future development, this plan provides the tools and guidance necessary to make thoughtful, informed decisions that honor the community's past while building a resilient and prosperous future.

PLAN OVERVIEW

Selma Now outlines key actions the city can take to recover from the January 2023 tornadoes, address long-standing challenges, and build a better city for future generations.

What This Plan Does

This plan does not start from scratch. Instead, it activates projects and policies that have already been studied, designed, and approved—but haven’t yet been put into action. These include rebuilding old sewer lines, making streets safer for walking and biking, and updating zoning rules to support reinvestment.

By combining these “ready to go” ideas into one clear guide, the city can move quickly on top priorities without spending years on new studies. This saves time, focuses limited resources, and shows visible progress that builds public trust and momentum.

$$\text{Risk} = \frac{\text{Expected Annual Loss} \times \text{Social Vulnerability}}{\text{Community Resilience}}$$

Reducing Risks and Building Resilience

Selma faces two distinct types of risk: sudden, acute shocks—such as the devastating tornadoes of January 2023—and ongoing, chronic stressors like persistent poverty, aging infrastructure, and limited access to essential services. Acute shocks strike quickly and cause immediate, visible damage, while chronic stressors steadily weaken the community over time, undermining its ability to prepare for, withstand, and recover from future crises.

This plan is designed to reduce Selma’s overall vulnerability by strengthening the people, places, and systems that form the foundation of the community. It addresses both types of risks by enhancing resilience and decreasing social vulnerability—factors that influence how severely a community is impacted by crises.

To guide this effort, the plan uses tools like FEMA’s Community Resilience Challenges Index (CRCI), which identifies areas most at risk. Dallas County ranks in the 95th percentile nationally for resilience challenges, underscoring the urgent need for targeted, proactive action.

Risk Index Factors (Dallas County)

FEMA’s Community Resilience Challenges Index (CRCI)

Risk Index is **Relatively Low**



Expected Annual Loss is **Relatively Low**



Social Vulnerability is **Very High**



Community Resilience is **Relatively Moderate**



More detail on the risks faced by Selma and Dallas County, including an explanation of these factors, can be found in Chapter 1. Selma Today.

Plan Structure

The plan is organized into two main parts:

- **Citywide Strategies** – Actions that apply across the city.
- **Place-Based Strategies** – Actions tailored to specific neighborhoods and areas.

Citywide Strategies

These strategies guide citywide recovery and resilience.

Strategy 1. Position downtown as an economic driver.

Support Downtown as a strong center of jobs and activity. Focus on keeping local dollars in the community and overcoming limits on how the city can raise and use public funds.

Strategy 2. Rebuild the neighborhoods.

Help property owners repair homes and deal with barriers to revitalizing Selma's historic and core neighborhoods. Use tools to support stable, healthy places to live.

Strategy 3. Proactively build for the future.

Plan smarter to reduce future risks and improve long-term outcomes. Build resilient infrastructure, design sustainably, and strengthen policies that prepare Selma for tomorrow's challenges. Use every tool available to create a safer, more stable future.

Place-Based Strategies

These actions focus on key parts of the city and connect planning to real places.

Strategy 1. Create a more vibrant Downtown and riverfront.

Encourage infill development that brings new housing, jobs, and public spaces—while protecting Selma's historic character and riverfront access.

Strategy 2. Revitalize existing neighborhoods.

Attract investment to neighborhoods that need new life. This includes fixing old houses, repurposing vacant lots, and adding more housing options.

Strategy 3. Enhance major corridors and gateways.

Improve how major roads and entry points look and feel. Make them safer for drivers, walkers, and bikers, and leave a strong first impression.

Strategy 4. Support employment centers.

Strengthen areas with existing or potential job growth—especially in places with schools, manufacturing, or health centers.

Why This Matters

A strong plan helps the city make smart choices about how to grow, where to invest, and how to work with partners. It also improves Selma's chances of getting state and federal funding by showing clear priorities and a unified vision.

Selma's recovery and resilience depend on acting now. By building on past work, focusing on proven solutions, and building overall resilience, this plan sets a clear path forward.



View of Edmund Petus Bridge from The St. James Hotel

1. SELMA TODAY

Selma, a city steeped in history and national significance, serves as a cultural and economic hub for Dallas County. With a current population of approximately 17,000 people, Selma has faced a steady population decline over the years, a trend accelerated by the devastating January 2023 tornado. This population loss has created significant challenges for economic sustainability and long-term recovery. Nearly half the county's residents live in Selma, underscoring its centrality to the region's identity and recovery.

Shocks and Stressors

Acute shocks are sudden, extreme events that pose an immediate threat to a community, such as the January 2023 tornadoes. These disasters cause widespread destruction, displacing families, damaging homes and businesses, and straining emergency services. Rapid response efforts are crucial to providing relief, restoring essential services, and ensuring community safety.

In contrast, chronic stressors—such as persistent poverty, aging infrastructure, and limited access to resources—that have long affected Selma, gradually weaken the community's ability to withstand crises. When disasters strike, these ongoing challenges amplify the impact, making recovery even more difficult.

This plan aims to strengthen community resilience to address both immediate recovery and long-term stability.

Chapter Organization

- Community Snapshot
- Assessing Risk
- Social Vulnerability
- Areas of Need
- Tornado Impacts
- Key Findings



The Needs Assessment in Appendix A provides further detail on topics in this chapter.

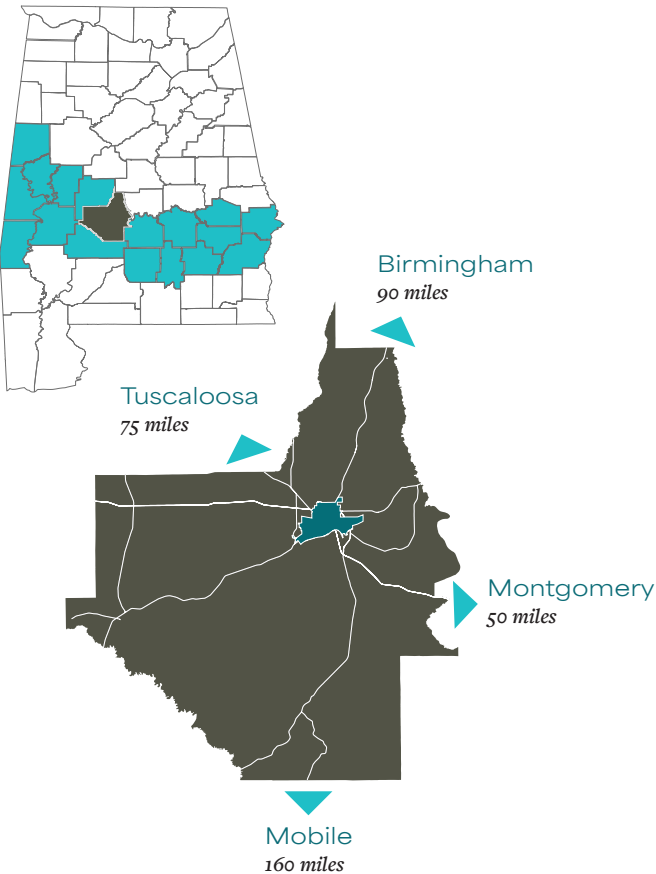
Community Snapshot

This “snapshot” of Selma and Dallas County includes vital statistics to help take stock of today and benchmark the future progress of the community. Appendix A includes a more robust look at the conditions and trends in Selma and Dallas County.

Regional Context

Selma is a historic city located in the heart of the state’s Black Belt region, approximately 50 miles west of Montgomery, the state capital. Connected by U.S. Highway 80, Selma plays a significant role in linking central Alabama with the western part of the state. It is also within driving distance of other key cities, including Birmingham to the northeast, Tuscaloosa to the northwest, and Mobile to the south.

Today, the city is best known for its pivotal role in the Civil Rights Movement, attracting visitors from around the world to landmarks such as the Edmund Pettus Bridge and the National Voting Rights Museum.



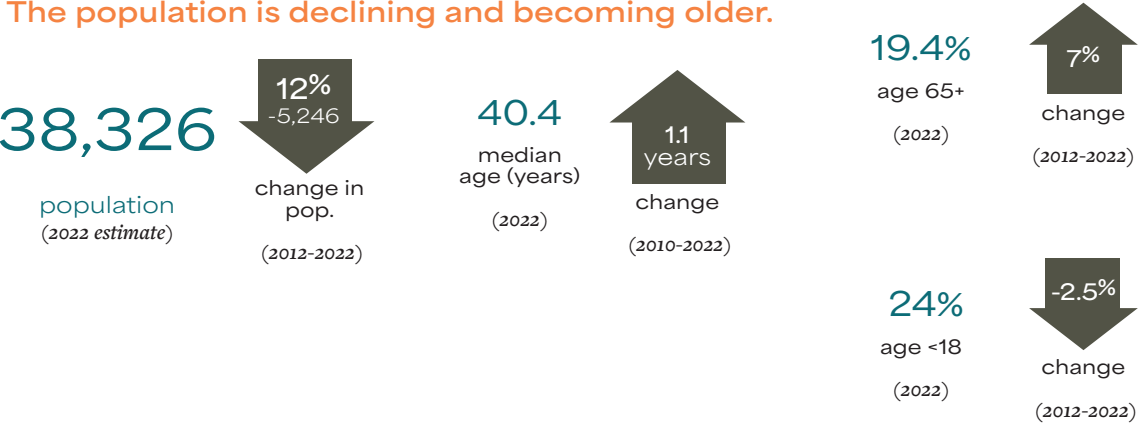
Dallas County At-a-Glance

US Census Bureau

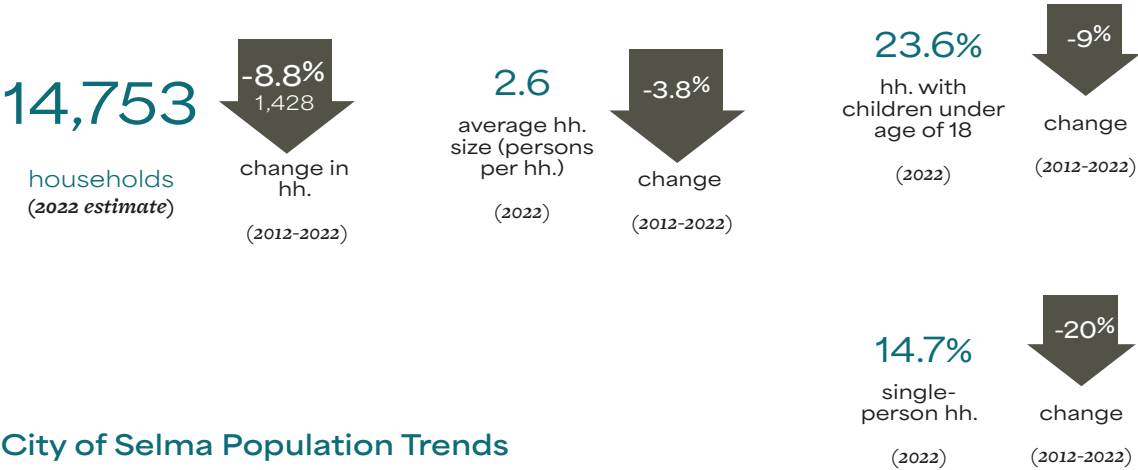
\$37,180 median household income (2022) \$59,609 Alabama	\$91,600 median value of owner-occupied housing (2022) \$179,400 Alabama	4.4% unemployment rate (July 2024) 2.9% Alabama	
61.4% residents are homeowners (2022) 69.7% Alabama	15.7% pop. over age 25 with a Bachelor's degree (2022) 27.2% Alabama	27% persons living below the poverty line (2022) 15.7% Alabama	Dallas is one of 17 counties within the Black Belt. Nine out of the 10 poorest counties in Alabama are in this region.

Dallas County Population Trends

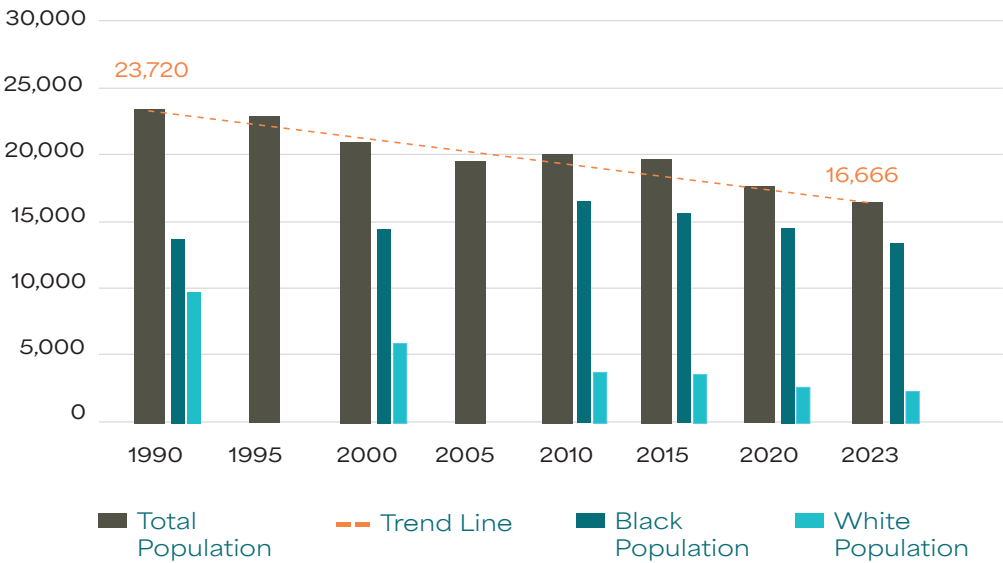
The population is declining and becoming older.



The number of households is declining and they are getting smaller.



City of Selma Population Trends



Selma is the largest city and the county seat of Dallas County.

Assessing Risk

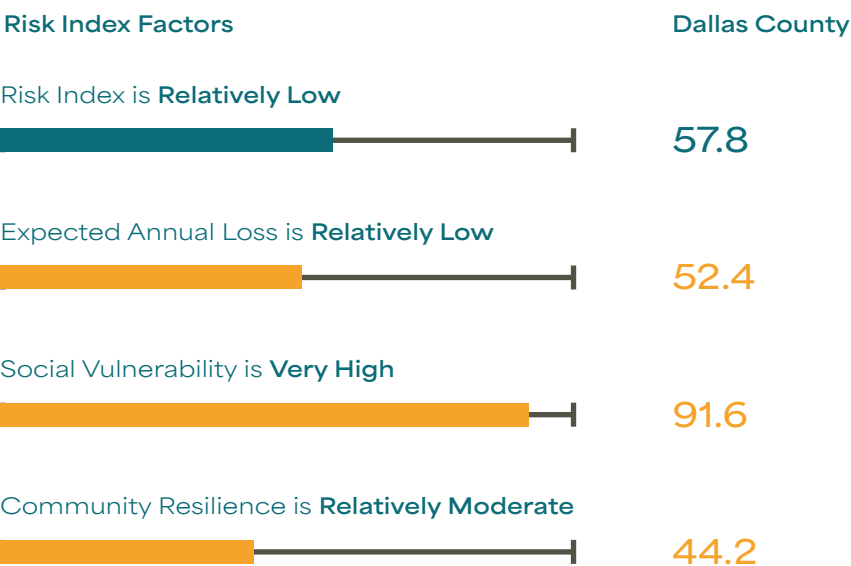
Risk is the potential for negative consequences from a shock or a stressor. It brings together the likelihood of a natural hazard; the exposure and vulnerability of people, assets, or ecosystems to that hazard; and the negative impacts from the hazard into a single measure.

Community Resilience Challenges Index

FEMA's Community Resilience Challenges Index (CRCI) and its associated indicators provide valuable insights into risk to improve planning, mitigation, response, and recovery efforts. This information is publicly available for communities, regional governments, and other stakeholders to identify and address potential barriers to resilience more effectively.

Understanding Risk

The composite Risk Index percentile measures the relative risk of a community based on 18 natural hazards, by comparing its composite Risk Index value with other communities at the same level. Dallas County, AL, ranks in the 95th percentile on the Community Resilience Challenges Index (CRCI), indicating some of the highest potential challenges to resilience nationwide. Based on the risk index formula (below), the county's risk is driven by high social vulnerability despite relatively low expected loss due to natural hazards.



$$\text{Risk} = \frac{\text{Expected Annual Loss} \times \text{Social Vulnerability}}{\text{Community Resilience}}$$

The risk equation includes three components: a natural hazards component (Expected Annual Loss), a consequence enhancing component (Social Vulnerability), and a consequence reduction component (Community Resilience).

Expected Annual Loss (EAL)

EAL represents the average economic loss in dollars resulting from natural hazards each year. It is calculated by hazard type and quantifies loss for relevant consequence types: buildings, people, and agriculture. In Dallas County, expected loss each year due to all natural hazards is **Relatively Low** when compared to the rest of the country. For example, Mobile County, which has a far greater threat of hurricane, heat wave, and lightning, has a relatively high score of 98.8.

Area	Rate	Expected Annual Loss
Building	\$1 per \$2.30K of building value	\$3,021,829.05
Population	1 per 178.33K people	\$2,493,947.81
Agriculture	\$1 per \$245.37 of agriculture value	\$299,126.73
Composite		\$5,814,903.59

Social Vulnerability

Social Vulnerability is broadly defined as the susceptibility of social groups to the adverse impacts of natural hazards, including disproportionate death, injury, loss, or disruption of livelihood. This indicator considers the social, economic, demographic, and housing characteristics of a community that influence its ability to prepare for, respond to, cope with, recover from, and adapt to environmental hazards. People in Dallas County have a **Very High** susceptibility to the adverse impacts of natural hazards when compared to the rest of the U.S.

See p. 10 for a map of social vulnerability in Selma.

Community Resilience

Community resilience is the ability of a community to prepare for anticipated natural hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions. A Community Resilience score represents the relative level of resilience compared to other communities. Community Resilience data are supported by the Baseline Resilience Indicators for Communities (BRIC) index. The BRIC index considers six broad categories of community disaster resilience (social, economic, community capital, institutional, infrastructural, and environmental) at the county level. Used as an initial baseline for resilience to natural hazards, BRIC compares places to one another, to determine the specific drivers of resilience. Communities in Dallas County, AL have a **Relatively Moderate** ability to prepare for anticipated natural hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions when compared to the rest of the U.S.

Social Vulnerability

Social vulnerability scores guide preparation for, and recovery from, disasters, and prevent or mitigate adverse effects among socially vulnerable populations. Selma faces acute social vulnerability, with many residents experiencing compound challenges that make recovery from disasters particularly difficult.

Mapping Social Vulnerability

The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), a tool designed to assess community-level stressors, ranks Dallas County in the top quarter in Alabama. Key factors include high poverty levels, low access to transportation, and a large proportion of elderly and single-parent households, which create significant barriers to resilience.

The city's socioeconomic conditions reflect systemic inequities that have persisted for decades. Many residents lack access to affordable healthcare, live in substandard housing, and struggle with the financial burden of housing costs. Over 50% of renter households are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on rent. These conditions hinder residents' ability to recover from events like the 2023 tornado and other natural disasters.

SVI Themes

Socioeconomic Status

- Below 150% Poverty
- Unemployed
- Housing Cost Burden
- No High School Diploma
- No Health Insurance

Racial & Ethnic Minority Status

- Hispanic or Latino
- Black & African American
- American Indian & Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander
- Two or More Races
- Other Races

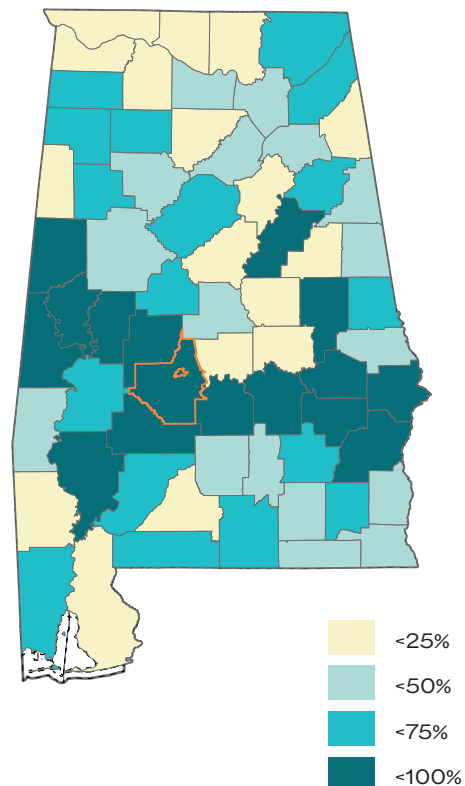
Household Characteristics

- Aged 65 & Older
- Aged 17 & Younger
- Civilian with a Disability
- Single-Parent Households
- English Language Proficiency

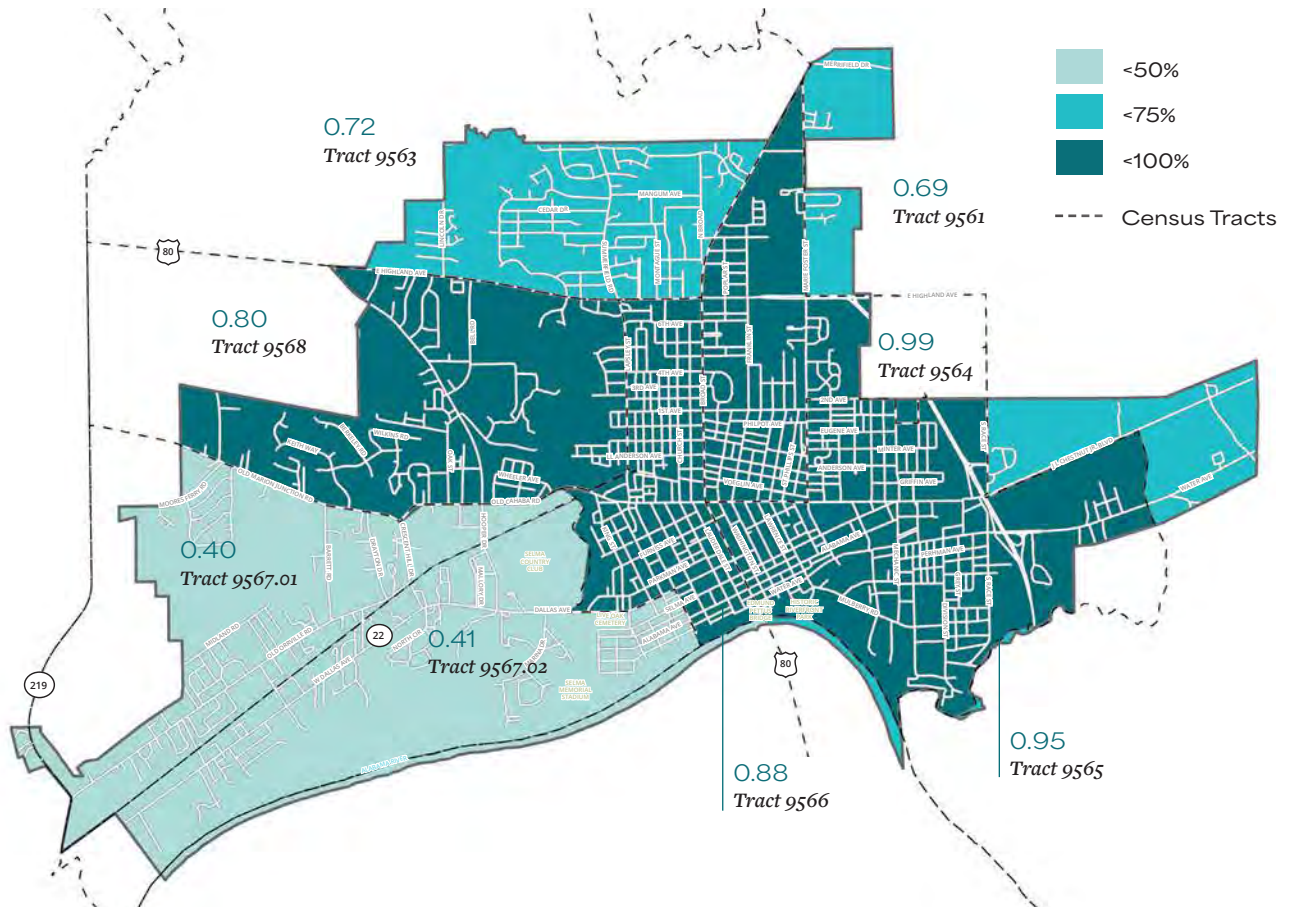
Housing Types & Transportation

- Multi-Unit Structures
- Mobile Homes
- Crowding
- No Vehicle
- Group Quarters

Composite SVI Score by County



Social Vulnerability by Census Tract



This map illustrates the composite of the social vulnerability scores across four themes at the census tract level. Darker shades of blue indicate higher social vulnerability. The percentile ranking represents the proportion of tracts that are equal to or lower than that tract in terms of social vulnerability. For example, ranking of 0.85 signifies that 85% of tracts in the nation are less vulnerable. Selma includes a tract within the top quartile across all themes.

The SVI Index map directly informs the Conceptual Development Strategy on p. 68.

The four SVI themes include:

- Socioeconomic Status
- Household Characteristics
- Racial & Ethnic Minority Status
- Housing Types & Transportation

Areas of Need

Areas of need were assessed through quantitative analysis, qualitative input from the community, and review of numerous past plans. The findings summarized below directly inform the recommended programs and policies in this chapter and elsewhere in the Plan.

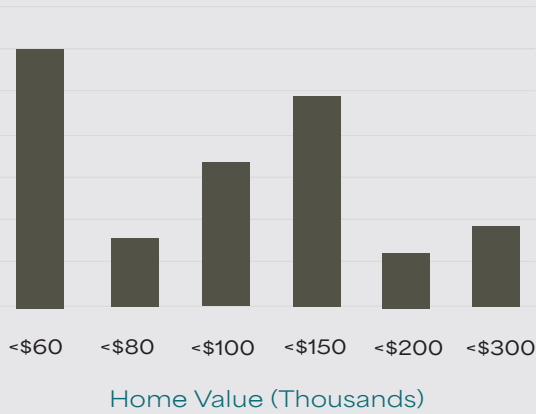
Housing

Housing in Selma is characterized by aging building stock, declining condition, and affordability challenges. Most of Selma’s homes are over 50 years old, with nearly 43% built between 1940 and 1969. With limited new construction, the city’s housing supply has not kept pace with modern standards, leaving many structures in poor condition. Across the city, the median housing condition rating is 58 on a scale of 0 to 100, reflecting the overall deterioration of the City’s housing stock. While Selma’s Housing Affordability Index (HAI) suggests that homes are relatively affordable, systemic barriers such as low income, limited financing options, and high cost burden make homeownership and stable housing inaccessible for many residents. Federally subsidized units, which account for 39% of all rental housing, offer critical support but are insufficient to meet the current demand.

Economic Development

Selma’s economy has historically relied on manufacturing, educational services, and healthcare, which together employ the majority of the city’s workforce. However, economic stagnation and a lack of industry diversification have hindered growth. From 2021 to 2022, employment in Selma declined by 3.7%, reflecting broader challenges in attracting and retaining jobs. The city’s unemployment rate remains significantly higher than the state average, with limited opportunities for upward mobility. Moreover, the city’s reliance on consumer-based revenue, such as sales taxes, makes its fiscal health vulnerable to economic downturns and shifts in spending patterns. This is exacerbated by the fact that the largest income group in Selma earns less than \$15,000 annually.

Distribution of Home Values



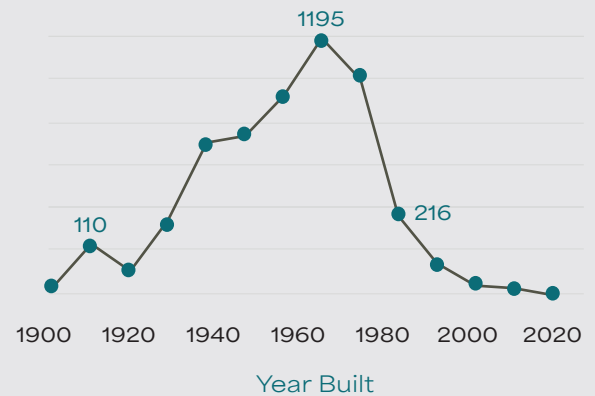
2023 Households by income (Compared to Dallas County)

Income	Selma	Difference
<\$15,000	25.1%	+4.9%
<\$25,000	18.7%	+1.6%
<\$35,000	13.4%	+0.9%
>\$50,000	12.2%	+0.1%
<\$75,000	12.7%	-3.0%
<100,000	6.7%	-1.0%
>\$150,000	7.7%	-2.4%
<\$200,000	2.7%	0
\$200,000+	0.8%	-0.4%

Infrastructure

Selma's aging infrastructure is a critical barrier to recovery and growth. The city's storm drainage systems, many of which are over 100 years old, frequently fail during heavy rainfall, contributing to flooding and property damage. Storm sewers are located under major roadways, making repairs costly and logistically challenging. These deficiencies were highlighted during the January 2023 tornado, which overwhelmed existing systems and compounded damage to homes and businesses. Transportation infrastructure also requires significant investment. Many neighborhoods lack sidewalks or have streets in disrepair, limiting mobility and access to services. The quality of infrastructure is strongly influenced by the level of development activity in a city. New construction projects, urban planning initiatives, and investments in public works directly affects the condition, efficiency, and sustainability of infrastructure.

Number of Buildings By Decade Built



Land Use

Selma's land use patterns reveal a city struggling with high vacancy rates and underutilized properties. Population decline has resulted in a surplus of unsafe or substandard housing, with vacant or uninhabitable structures accounting for 10% of all properties. The downtown core suffers from significant underutilization. Many buildings are either partially occupied or completely vacant, limiting the area's potential as a vibrant commercial and cultural center.

Selma's land use challenges are further compounded by environmental factors, such as the city's location in a flood zone. Approximately 30% of Selma lies in high-risk flood areas, limiting the usability of land and requiring significant investment in resilient infrastructure. These factors, combined with low real estate values, make attracting development difficult.

Housing Supply and Population (Indexed)



Tornado Impacts

In January 2023, an EF2 tornado hit Selma and Dallas County, worsening the shortage of safe, stable, and affordable homes. With sustained population decline, many properties had already fallen into disrepair, and title issues further challenged the ability to repair the widespread damage.

Prior to the tornado, issues associated with the age and quality of housing were exacerbated by a crumbling infrastructure that included deteriorated streets and antiquated sewer and drainage systems that caused significant flood damage. These structural 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, many residents of Selma were forced to move to neighboring cities in Alabama or relocate to other states. Others were forced to live with relatives to meet their basic needs for shelter.

Years of economic decline have contributed to low median household incomes and high unemployment resulting in nearly impoverished conditions in Selma, especially among its predominantly Black/African American low income residents.

Post-Disaster FEMA Claims



\$612,172

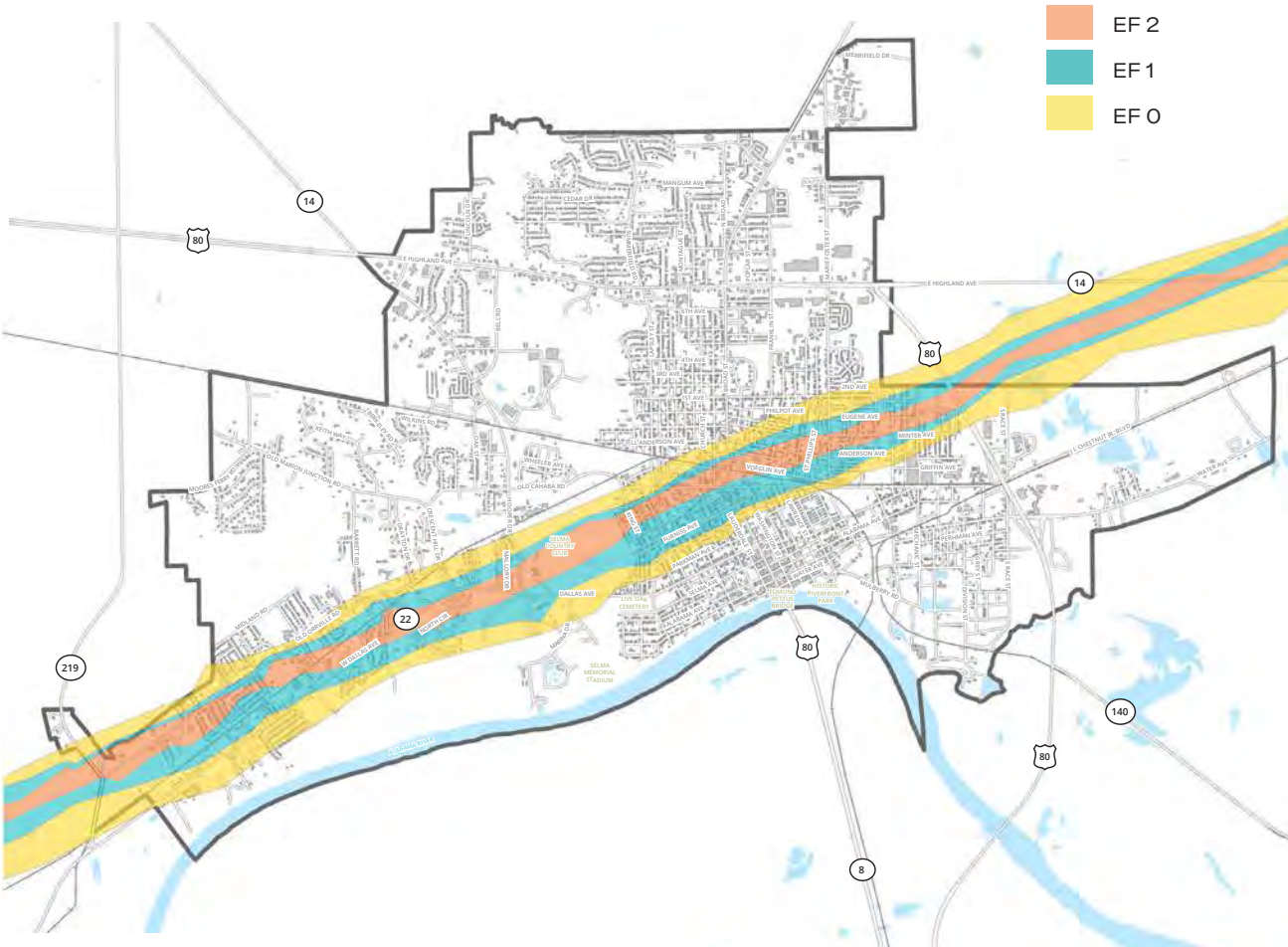
FEMA Verified Loss of
Renter-Occupied Homes

\$5,736,783

FEMA Verified Loss of
Owner-Occupied Homes

The state of Alabama was struck by severe storms that brought damaging straight-line winds and spawned tornadoes on January 12, 2023. On January 15, 2023, President Biden declared a major disaster.

January 2023 Tornado Path



Metric	Selma Tornado
Rating	EF-2
Estimated Maximum Wind	130 mph
Maximum Path Width	950 yards
Approximate Start	1 NE Orville
Approximate End	2 SE Burnsville
Damage Path Length	23.22 miles
Damage Path Width	955 yards

According to the National Weather Service, strong to severe thunderstorms impacted Central Alabama during the morning and afternoon hours of Thursday, January 12, 2023. Several supercell thunderstorms spawned multiple tornadoes which caused significant damage in many areas, including Selma.

Key Findings

The City of Selma and Dallas County have great potential, but also face unique and deep rooted challenges. Through the initial research and analysis of previous reports and studies, a series of critical findings emerged.

- 1. Selma was the fastest shrinking Alabama city in 2023.** From July 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023, Selma lost 341 residents, bringing its official population estimate to 16,666. The 2% decline is the largest drop among Alabama cities with more than 10,000 residents in a single year. This trend reflects the compounded effects of economic stagnation, disaster displacement, and lack of job opportunities. The shrinking population reduces the city's tax base, putting further strain on public services.
- 2. Clearing titles has slowed recovery.** Many vacant properties have been passed between generations of families without the involvement of local probate courts or a formal estate strategy. The inability to clear titles on inherited properties has stalled recovery efforts, particularly for families attempting to rebuild or reinvest in their land. Without clear ownership, residents face barriers to accessing critical financial tools like loans, grants, and mortgages. This not only prevents property improvement and rebuilding after disasters but also perpetuates cycles of poverty by denying heirs the ability to generate wealth through use or resale of inherited property. This legal ambiguity has left many homes and parcels vacant, adding to blight and reducing neighborhood stability.
- 3. Key utility systems are underperforming.** Many of the city's storm drainage system components are over 100 years old and have begun to deteriorate due to natural degradation, especially in and around the oldest parts of the city. Most of the pipes in the northern and western portions of the city were installed between World War II and the mid-70's. These pipes were typically clay and constructed in short lengths. Many of the storm sewer mains servicing the city are buried beneath main roadways and intersections, making maintenance extremely difficult and expensive.
- 4. Selma has an acute demand for housing that is affordable.** The January 2023 tornadoes destroyed approximately 39% of Selma's existing housing stock, a loss of 1,300 homes in a single day. Of the 2,658 parcels within the path of the tornado, 1485 were either vacant (746 parcels) or had uninhabitable structures (739 parcels). Only 6.1% of housing units in Selma were built since 2000 and the rate of building for all structure types has steadily declined since 1960. Many of the affected properties were already in poor condition, and the loss has left thousands of residents displaced, compounding a long-standing housing crisis.

- 5. Building values are low.** Low appraisal value, long-term holding landowners, and deteriorating building conditions have contributed to a stagnant downtown. Gaps in available resources for development are directly tied to real estate values, making it difficult to induce development that will be profitable. As a result, recent grant monies have been the driver behind both private and city-managed redevelopment efforts. Without higher valuations, the city struggles to incentivize private investment, hindering revitalization efforts and perpetuating economic inequality.
- 6. Selma is dependent on consumer-based spending.** Overall City tax revenue has kept pace with inflation. However, sales taxes are the prime driver of revenue in Alabama, which means growing the revenue base is critical for Selma's ability to invest in itself. This reliance on sales tax revenue limits the city's ability to generate sustainable income for investments in infrastructure, education, and social programs, and creates financial vulnerability during economic downturns, disproportionately affecting low income residents who are most dependent on public services.
- 7. Selma's median household income is significantly lower than the state.** The median household income in Selma is \$31,084, approximately half of the state median of \$59,674. Low income wage-earning residents are often unable to qualify for needed financing to maintain, upgrade, or rebuild their homes. This leaves aging properties to deteriorate further, forcing low income families into increasingly unsafe living conditions. The disparity also means fewer opportunities for residents to build wealth.
- 8. Households are aging.** The share of households headed by someone 65 years or older increased almost 5% between 2017 and 2022. The aging population has unique challenges, including limited mobility, higher healthcare needs, and fixed incomes. As household sizes shrink and the number of families with children declines, services that rely on younger, working-age populations to sustain economic and social programs are often strained.



2. DEVELOPING THE PLAN

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 2023 tornadoes, and sets a foundational direction for land use, economic development, housing, and infrastructure. The planning process was both intuitive and informed, shaped by input from the community, quantitative research, and the expertise of the Planning Team. The Selma Now process lasted approximately 12 months.

Long-Term Recovery

A long-term recovery plan is a strategic guide that provides direction following a disaster in a community. It takes a holistic, long-term view of critical needs and coordinates the mobilization of resources at the federal, state, and community levels. The plan acts as a guidebook for decision-makers and, while not legally binding, is intended to provide actionable steps to build a more resilient Selma and Dallas County.

Post-Disaster Planning Goals

- Respond to disaster impacts while planning holistically.
- Increase regional resiliency.
- Build prosperity through recovery focused equity.
- Promote intergovernmental collaboration.
- Ground the work in functional, technical, and financial capacity of the community.

Chapter Organization

- A Comprehensive Approach
- Building on Recent Efforts
- Planning Process



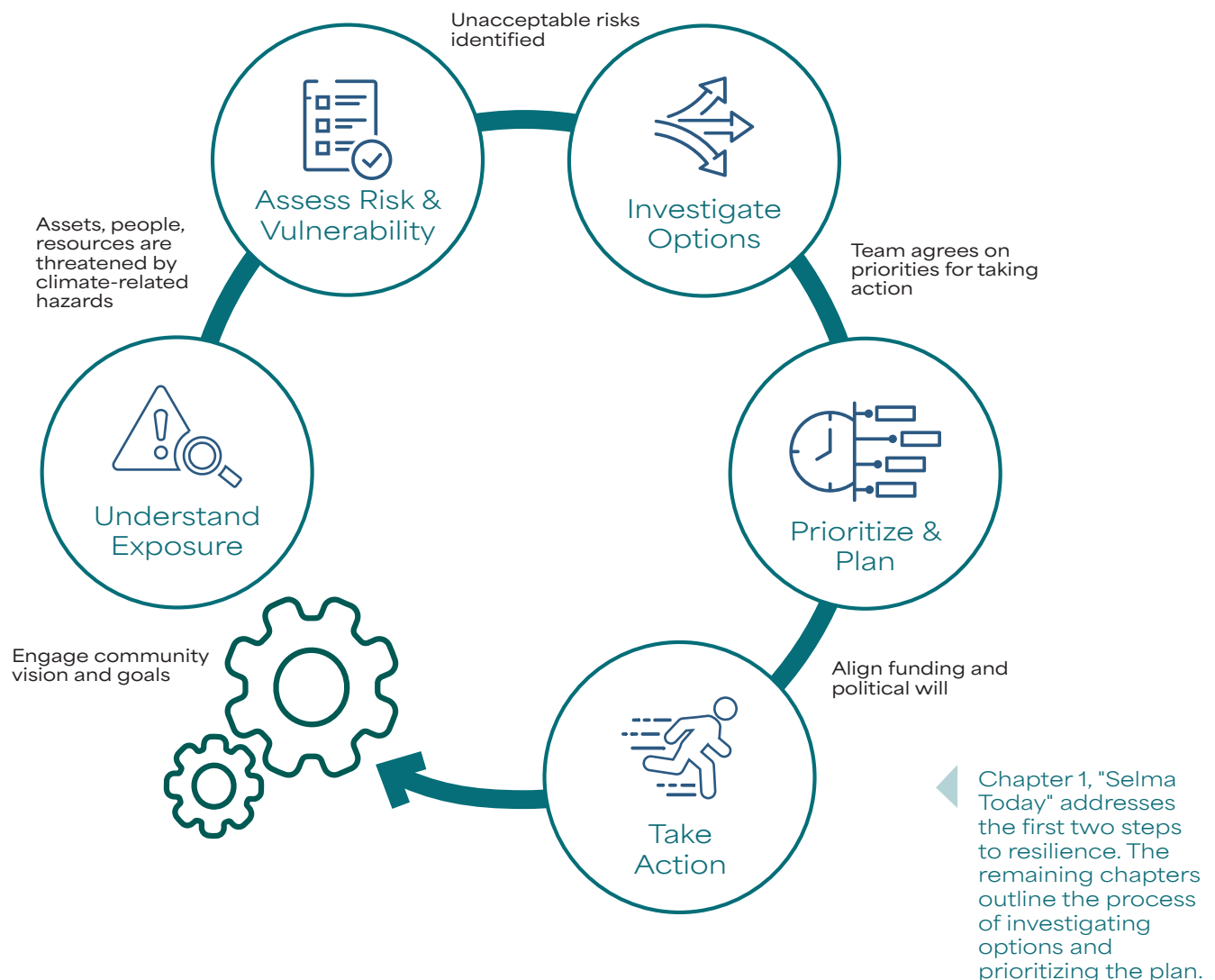
The Engagement Summary in Appendix B provides further detail on the Selma Now process.

A Comprehensive Approach

The effect of an acute shock, such as a severe weather event, can be intensified by chronic stressors, including aging infrastructure and economic hardship. This plan assesses the risks faced by Selma and identifies opportunities to address them in an integrated way. Investing in resilience this way provides multiple benefits at once, including reducing costs, boosting the local economy, and enhancing the health and well-being of the community.

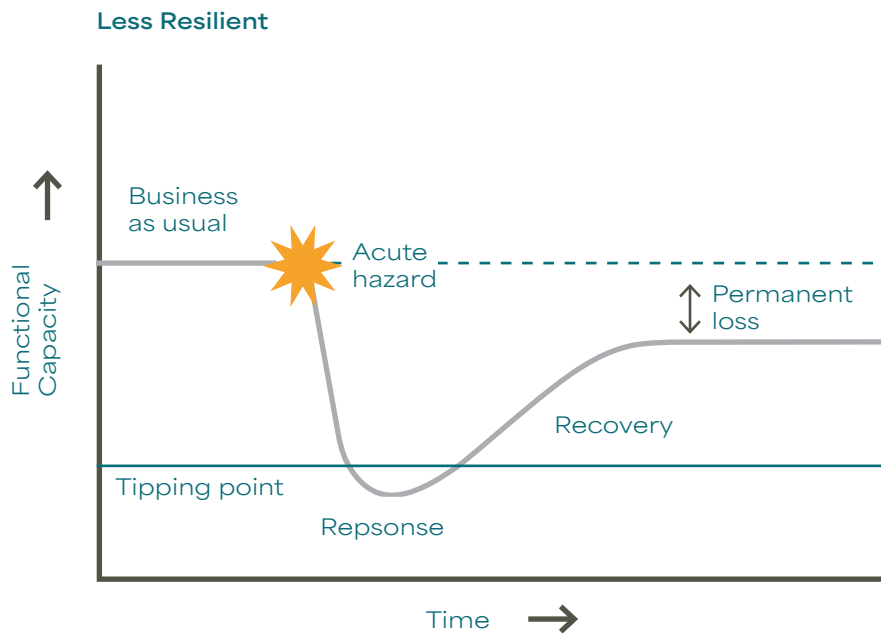
Steps to Resilience

Diagram adapted from the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit.

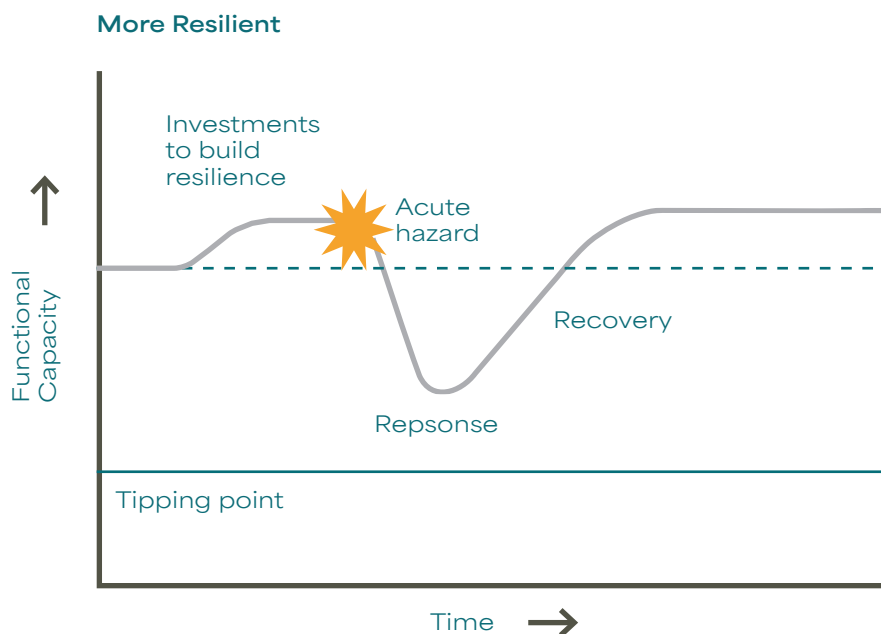


Regional Resiliency

Increasing regional resiliency means improving conditions so that the system can accommodate future disruptions. The diagrams below illustrate the importance of proactively improving resiliency.



A community asset or service operates at a steady state (business as usual) until an acute hazard occurs. If the level of service drops below a tipping point, the system does not recover completely.



Actions are taken to improve overall conditions prior to an acute hazard. This proactive effort increases quality of life or system performance. From this higher baseline, the same acute hazard still requires a period of recovery, but no irreversible damage occurs.

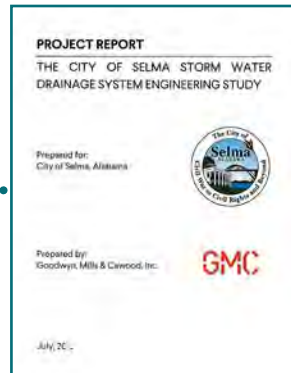
Building on Recent Efforts

The work to develop a long-term recovery strategy for Selma builds on planning efforts in the wake of the January 2023 tornadoes, and before. These efforts have improved the data and understanding of the current and future risks Selma may face and supported the initial development of policies, plans, and projects.

Selma Now brings these and other existing and ongoing efforts under a comprehensive report to help prioritize investments based on sound analysis and the community's goals for the future.



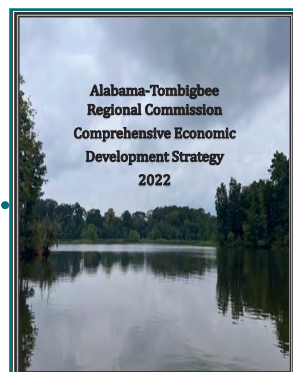
Selma's Path to a Thriving Digital Economy (2019)



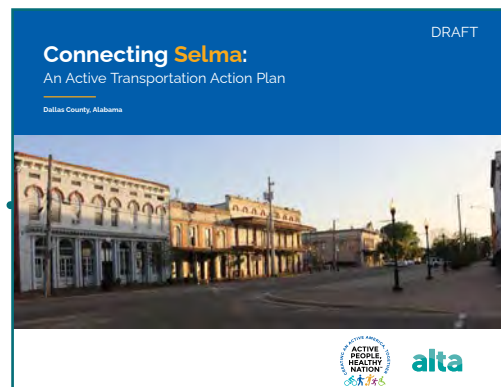
The City of Selma Storm Water Drainage System Engineering Study (2019)



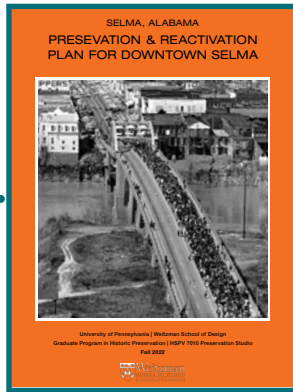
Reimagining Selma, Alabama (2020)



A-TRC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2022)



Connecting Selma: An Active Transportation Plan (2022)



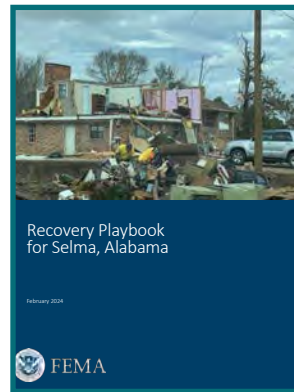
Preservation & Reactivation Plan for Downtown Selma (2022)



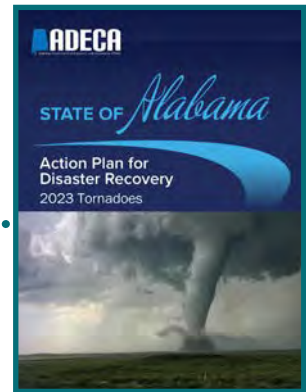
Dallas County Broadband Profile (2023)



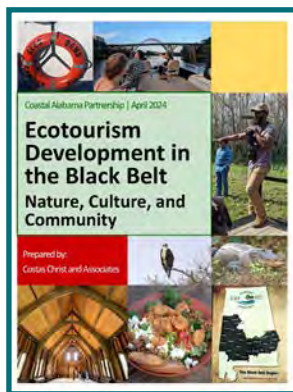
March On, A Vision for Selma (2024)



Recovery Playbook for Selma, Alabama (2024)



State of Alabama Action Plan for Disaster Recovery (2023)



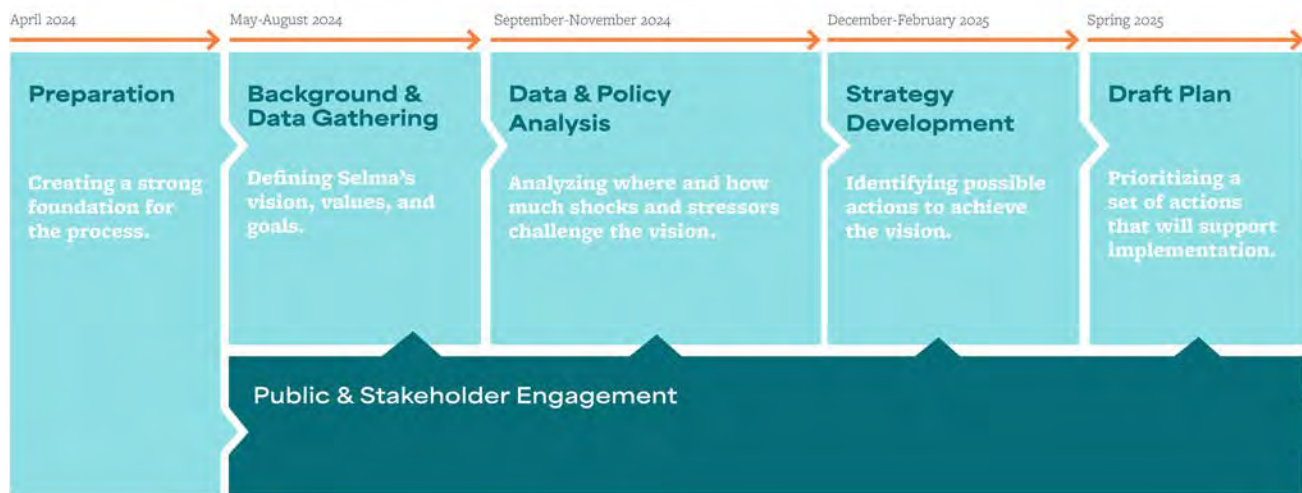
Ecotourism Development in the Black Belt (2024)



Downtown Selma Innovation District & Placemaking Plan (2024)

Planning Process

The City of Selma, supported by a team of local and national experts in planning, economics, infrastructure, and recovery funding led a 12-month planning process to develop this Strategy. The process aimed to be rigorous in applying the best-available data to guide decision making; inclusive and collaborative in consulting the knowledge and perspectives of local organizations and residents; and equitable in addressing the disproportionate risks and vulnerabilities faced by marginalized and frontline communities.



Preparation

The preparation phase of the long-term recovery plan established a strong foundation for informed decision-making. A structured preparation process included a kick-off meeting, communications and outreach planning, and branding efforts to ensure transparency and public involvement.

Technical Analysis

Background & Data Gathering

This component established the foundation for the planning process through comprehensive data collection and analysis. Existing community engagement data was reviewed to assess prior input and priorities. A significant effort was put in to create an accurate and complete base map of the city. Additional information was found through public databases or converted to GIS layers from static sources. Existing land use was determined using County Assessor's data and a virtual "windshield" survey via Google Earth.

Data & Policy Analysis

This component focused on evaluating and refining zoning and policy frameworks to support the recovery plan's vision and objectives. The Team reviewed the existing zoning ordinance for inconsistencies, incorporating best practices and user-friendly modifications. A list of necessary code changes was developed, including annotated recommendations to enhance clarity, usability, and alignment with the plan. Character Types were prepared to reflect both existing and desired building patterns, integrating historic and contemporary elements. The Team also analyzed potential policies to support economic growth. Mixed-use zoning and design policies were evaluated to encourage high-quality development and placemaking strategies. Additionally, a housing needs assessment was conducted, identifying policies, funding sources, and programmatic options tailored to Selma, Dallas County, and Alabama. Finally, infrastructure needs were analyzed, focusing on improvements in transportation, utilities, and broadband, with coordination among relevant agencies. These efforts ensured that zoning and policy frameworks effectively supported long-term growth and redevelopment.

Strategy Development

This component involved assessing baseline conditions, trends, and technical factors to inform the recovery plan. The Team identified alternative public and private funding opportunities, leveraging expertise in federal funding streams to ensure compliance and maximize available resources. Strategies were developed to foster collaboration between property owners, tenants, nonprofits, and for-profit entities, aligning interests and minimizing conflicts. Strategies were advanced, focusing on partnerships, funding mechanisms, and priority projects. Neighborhood revitalization strategies were designed to improve infrastructure, housing, and public amenities, ensuring alignment with capital improvement plans. Lastly, infrastructure improvement strategies were established to address barriers to construction, revitalization, and redevelopment, integrating them with

broader recruitment and incentive initiatives to drive sustainable growth.

Draft Plan

The Team defined statements of need, organized data into a shared database, and developed action steps for plan implementation. Funding priorities were aligned with state and federal opportunities. The Team drafted and finalized a visually engaging, comprehensive plan document, inclusive of community feedback, which included broad engagement through this process, data from previous planning efforts, individual interviews, and information shared by partners working on similar topics, creating a strong foundation of community needs and goals.

Public & Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement Kick-off

The Team organized a kick-off meeting with Staff and other City leaders. The meeting helped identify high-level objectives related to critical issues such as increasing regional resiliency and promoting intergovernmental communication. The meeting also helped define the areas of focus for the analysis, understand how the process should interface with federal, state, regional, and local emergency management agencies; housing entities; economic development agencies; and non-profit charitable organizations involved with recovery efforts.

Community Organization Meetings

In addition to input from the general public, focused meetings and interviews were conducted with stakeholders to better understand their needs, goals, and concerns. The represented groups included:

- Alabama Power
- Arts Revive
- Dallas County Emergency Management Agency
- Delta Regional Authority
- HOPE Credit Union
- Selma Redevelopment Authority
- Spire Energy

Elected Official Engagement

Council was kept updated as the process progressed through periodic presentations from the planning team. Some elected officials also participated in the kick-off meeting that set the tone for the process.

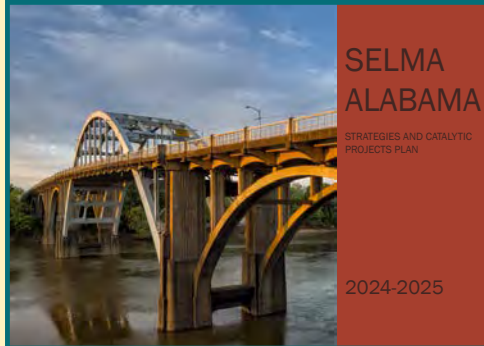
Public Involvement

Engagement in the Selma Now process was focused, meaningful, and designed to have a low barrier to participation. Rather than broad visioning exercises, the engagement strategies built on engagement from previous efforts to reach residents through existing networks and leverage the strength of community. The Team designed and facilitated three rounds of community engagement; one at the outset of the planning process, one while the draft plan was being developed, and one towards the end of the process to help prioritize the actions.



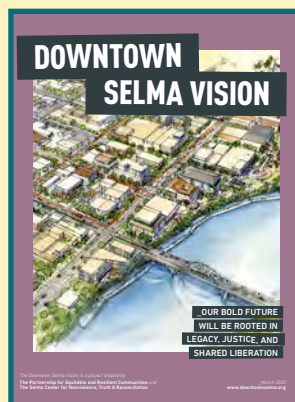
Project business cards were provided to City staff for public distribution at the outset of the project.

Concurrent Planning Work



Strategies and Catalytic Projects Plan

A diverse group of nonprofit organizations in Selma, Alabama, is driving grassroots revitalization efforts. As part of a community survey conducted by Delta Design Build Workshop, these organizations shared insights into their missions, activities, and challenges—contributions that directly informed the development of this plan. Their input highlights a vibrant but fragmented ecosystem of local action, offering a foundation for more aligned, collaborative, and impactful future development.



Downtown Vision

This plan builds upon and complements the extensive engagement undertaken for the Selma Now Vision Plan, which involved over 4,000 residents and community leaders. That parallel process, rooted in neighborhood-based outreach and local leadership, identified shared priorities such as housing, economic opportunity, and a vibrant downtown. These community-driven insights were actively considered and incorporated into this plan's recommendations—ensuring alignment with citywide goals and reinforcing a unified, locally defined vision for Selma's future.

Round 1: Community Conversations

The first round of engagement introduced the public to the recovery planning process through community-based activities designed to test vision, values, and goals, gather feedback on key themes, and inform land use strategies. A "Meeting-in-a-Box" approach empowered local leaders to host small-group discussions, supplemented by online engagement via the Selma Now website. A training session in September 2024 equipped participants to facilitate conversations within their communities. Activities included reviewing and refining vision statements and mapping important places for preservation or development.

Round 2: Affirming the Vision

The second round of engagement for Selma's Long-Term Recovery Plan was structured to gather targeted community input on both citywide and place-based strategies. Participants were asked to review a series of proposed strategies, rate their level of agreement, and pinpoint specific locations for implementation. The engagement included structured survey questions and open-ended feedback opportunities to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives. Key themes that emerged included downtown revitalization, neighborhood redevelopment, infrastructure improvements, economic growth, and historic preservation.

Round 3: Prioritizing the Effort

The final round of engagement invited everyone interested in Selma and Dallas County's future to review the draft plan and offer feedback. Eight public meetings were held at venues across the city—including the Performing Arts Center, City Hall, Edgewood Elementary, Wallace Community College, Selma City Schools, and Sophie P. Kingston Elementary—with sessions in the morning, afternoon, and evening to maximize accessibility.

Each session presented an overview of the plan, including a presentation of key community data on population trends, housing needs, and economic challenges. Attendees then reviewed the citywide and place-based strategies—and provided feedback by discussing the summary of actions, writing comments in binders, sharing thoughts verbally, or submitting additional input via QR code.





3. CITYWIDE STRATEGIES

Economic opportunity is at the core of a community’s prosperity—and sustaining it depends as much on strong institutions and sound finances as on physical assets. Selma’s ability to attract and retain talent, diversify employment, and grow as a visitor destination is tied not only to the city’s built character—its housing, infrastructure, and amenities—but also to its commitment to good governance, fiscal stability, and the creation of durable implementation mechanisms.

Overview

This plan does not start from scratch—it activates projects and policies that have already been studied, designed, and recommended but until now have not been implemented. By packaging these ready to go ideas into a coordinated implementation guide, the city can move quickly on its highest priorities—rebuilding aging sewer lines, making streets safe for walking and biking, and updating zoning rules to encourage reinvestment—without spending years on new studies or debates. This approach is both efficient and effective: it leverages past technical work, focuses limited resources on proven strategies, and delivers visible improvements that build public confidence and momentum for the next set of projects.

This chapter highlights how Selma can become more economically competitive by securing the financial foundations to invest strategically and weather future shocks and establishing the processes and partnerships needed to carry initiatives from planning through execution.

Chapter Organization

- Focus Areas
- Strategies & Actions Matrix
- How to Read the Action Agenda
- Strategies & Actions Detail



Appendix C provides a reference table of funding opportunities included in this chapter.

Focus Areas

The focus areas below serve as the overarching priorities that guide the plan’s direction and represent intended outcomes expressed in simple terms.



Land Use

Selma will create, protect, and reclaim spaces for people through transparent, community-driven planning processes and policies.



Housing

Selma will create affordable and just neighborhoods that provide functional and sustaining spaces that afford or build opportunities for generating reparative generational wealth.



Infrastructure

Selma will build infrastructure that improves connectivity and the availability and reliability of necessary services for all communities.



Economic Development

Selma will build a strong and resilient economy that provides diverse opportunities and produces value that is equitably accessible.

Focus Areas

Intended outcomes expressed in simple terms.

Strategies

Approaches that serve to organize actions. (See p.30)

Actions

A project, policy, or program. (See p. 30)

Strategies & Actions

The following projects, policies, and programs support the focus areas and form the basis of this chapter:



Land Use



Housing



Infrastructure



Economic
Development

Strategy 1. Position Downtown as an economic driver.

1.A	Establish a Cooperative District.		✓	✓
1.B	Encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment in strategic locations.		✓	✓
1.C	Leverage existing tourism.			✓

Strategy 2. Rebuild the neighborhoods.

2.A	Adopt a comprehensive policy for neglected properties.		✓	✓
2.B	Create flexibility in the protection of historic properties.		✓	✓
2.C	Increase the capacity of the Selma Land Bank.	✓	✓	
2.D	Increase support for heirs' property owners.		✓	

Strategy 3. Proactively build for the future.

3.A	Adopt the latest building code.		✓	✓
3.B	Modernize the development regulations.	✓	✓	✓
3.C	Adopt a Capital Improvements Plan.	✓		✓

How to Read the Action Agenda

The actions within this chapter follow a consistent format (shown on p. 32), and include the following elements:

Focus Area

Each action is tagged in the top right corner to indicate which focus areas are directly advanced by the recommended projects, policies, or programs within that action.

Description

The introductory paragraph explains the action in more detail. This section offers an overview of the recommendation, outlining its purpose and intended outcomes.

Need

This section explains why the recommended action is necessary, identifying the specific problem, gap, or opportunity it addresses in Selma.

Sub-Actions

Actions are broken into specific steps for achieving the recommended action. Sub-actions detail the policies, projects, and programs that will drive progress. This section provides actionable strategies to execute the recommendation effectively.

Partners

Each action identifies potential public, private, nonprofit, and other collaborators that can play a role in advancing the action. The listed partners serve as a recommended starting point. Engaging a broad range of community organizations and residents will be essential for success.

Funding

This section identifies potential funding sources. A detailed breakdown of the identified funding sources is included as an Appendix C.

Time Frame

Each action includes a timeline for implementation, categorized as immediate, short-term, medium-term, or long-term. This section sets expectations for when significant progress or completion is anticipated.

- **Immediate (within 1 year)**
Actions that build early momentum and lay the groundwork for future efforts; typically high-impact and foundational.
- **Short-Term (1-3 years)**
Quick wins that maintain progress and energy; generally low-complexity efforts that can move forward with minimal lead time.
- **Medium-Term (3-5 years)**
Efforts that require moderate planning and coordination; often interdependent with other initiatives and part of a phased approach.
- **Long-Term (5+ years)**
Ambitious, system-level efforts requiring sustained commitment, significant resources, or policy change over time.

Action 1.B. Encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment in strategic locations.

Description

In the aftermath of a major disruption—whether caused by natural disaster, economic downturn, or other systemic shocks—communities face a choice: rebuild exactly what was there before, or seize the moment to create more resilient, vibrant, and fiscally sustainable places. Strategic rehabilitation and redevelopment serve as the cornerstone of long-term recovery, guiding scarce resources toward areas where investment yields the greatest return on both social and economic fronts. By focusing development in the downtown core, Selma can accelerate recovery, restore community confidence, and lay the groundwork for sustained prosperity.

Need

Downtown Selma represents the city's most strategic opportunity for focused redevelopment that maximizes the impact of public and private investment. By concentrating efforts in this historic core—where infrastructure already exists—Selma can reduce public service costs and stimulate visible, catalytic projects that build momentum for broader revitalization. Investing downtown not only honors Selma's cultural heritage but also enables cost-effective infill and redevelopment on underutilized sites.

Sub-Actions

1.B.1 Focus development energy downtown. The city should resist pressure to pursue numerous small opportunities simultaneously and instead be strategic in allocating resources like infrastructure investments, incentives, and other programs where they will have the biggest impact. Revitalization is an incremental process that often starts by creating visible examples of successful projects. Demonstrating success is particularly important when promoting new development types, regulatory tools, city programs, or funding mechanisms.

1.B.2 Partner to create a catalytic redevelopment project. In some locations, it may be necessary to the "prove the market" by leading the development of a catalytic project. The city or county could form a public-private partnership to aid in redevelopment.

- Outline incentives, such as expedited review, financial tools, and property acquisition if a city-owned site.
- Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit and evaluate redevelopment concepts.
- Review and select proposals that best demonstrate regional impact and feasibility.
- Establish a formal agreement between the city and private partner defining roles, responsibilities, and expectations for project support.

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Selma Redevelopment Authority
- Building Inspector
- Opportunity Alabama

Funding:

- HUD CDBG
- CDBG-DR
- FEMA BRIC
- US EDA EAA Grants

Time Frame:

- Immediate

See pp. 41-44 for potential projects.

STRATEGY 1. POSITION DOWNTOWN AS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER.

The actions within this strategy focus on fostering community resilience through economic development. They are built on an assessment of the local economic landscape, including existing limitations of local authority to collect and use public revenue to address known challenges. The actions focus on solutions to maximize the capture, retention, and circulation of local wealth.

Action 1.A. Establish a Cooperative District.

Description

A Cooperative District is a legal entity formed under Alabama state law by two or more governmental bodies or agencies (often municipalities or counties) that work together to finance, develop, and manage shared projects. Cooperative Districts can issue bonds, levy taxes, or secure financing through state or federal funding programs. They are typically created for large-scale projects that benefit multiple jurisdictions or serve a regional purpose, such as infrastructure projects or shared public facilities. The district itself owns each project and can generate revenue through lease agreements, fees, or other activities associated with the project.

Need

Selma faces persistent economic and infrastructure issues that impede growth and development. With low property values, limited business activity, and a declining population, the city's tax base is insufficient to support critical public services and economic initiatives. Approximately 33% of Selma's residents live below the poverty line, and the unemployment rate is considerably higher than both state and national averages, highlighting a lack of job opportunities and economic mobility. These challenges are further exacerbated by aging infrastructure and a lack of coordinated resources needed for revitalization.

Sustained investment in physical infrastructure is essential for positioning downtown Selma as an economic driver. However, the City of Selma lacks the tax base necessary to support significant public infrastructure improvements alone. Collaborative efforts involving city government, nonprofits, and other institutions are currently in progress, yet funding remains a major challenge.

A Cooperative District presents a transformative solution by facilitating collaborative efforts to pool resources for strategic investment in infrastructure, economic development, and community revitalization. Such districts have demonstrated success in attracting businesses, fostering public-private partnerships, and creating sustainable funding mechanisms for essential projects.

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Selma Redevelopment Authority
- Dallas County

Time Frame:

- Immediate

Sub-Actions

1.A.1 Establish the district. Follow the process outlined in the Alabama Cooperative District Act to form the legal entity.

See p.36 for a flow chart of actions to establish the district.

- File an application with at least three individuals representing local government bodies or public corporations.
- Secure resolutions from the City of Selma and Dallas County confirming that the district is “wise, expedient, and necessary.”
- Submit the certificate of incorporation to the county probate judge to formally establish the district. Clearly define the district's purpose and geographic boundaries.

1.A.2 Focus on funding infrastructure. Use the cooperative district's ability to issue bonds to generate funding for large-scale infrastructure improvements that Selma urgently needs. Prioritize projects such as:

Connecting Selma: An Active Transportation Action Plan outlines a number of short- and long-term projects that could be implemented using these funds.

- **Streetscape Improvements:** Enhance the appearance and functionality of downtown streets, including sidewalk repairs, lighting, and pedestrian-friendly elements.
- **Water/Sewer Upgrades:** Modernize utilities to meet current and future demands, addressing health and environmental concerns.

See p.35 for specific projects.

1.A.3 Strengthen partnerships. Engage with local nonprofits, educational institutions, and private organizations to form a diverse coalition of stakeholders.

- The Selma Redevelopment Authority is actively pursuing Main Street Alabama Designation. At its core, Main Street is an economic development tool that enhances the tax base of a community, fosters entrepreneurship, builds community capacity, and creates partnerships among key groups in a community.
- ArtsRevive is a membership-based, non-profit organization that exists to enhance community development in Selma-Dallas County, Alabama. ArtsRevive believes that the arts offer an entry to economic and community redevelopment and can spur creative place-making in Selma and Dallas County. When community members, governmental leaders, artists and designers work together it increases the vibrancy and diversity in a place.

1.A.4 Plan for long-term growth. Design a governance structure that includes clear roles and responsibilities for the district board to ensure effective oversight and accountability.

- Define the number of directors, election procedures, and voting rights among participating entities.
- Develop sustainable funding mechanisms, such as usage fees or property assessments, to maintain and expand district services over time.
- Establish clear guidelines for the potential dissolution of the district, including how assets and responsibilities will be distributed among the members.



EXAMPLE

Montevallo Development Cooperative District (MDCD) is a unique partnership between the City of Montevallo, Shelby County and University of Montevallo. The MDCD was created in 2012 under the Capital Improvement Cooperative Districts Section of the Alabama Code.

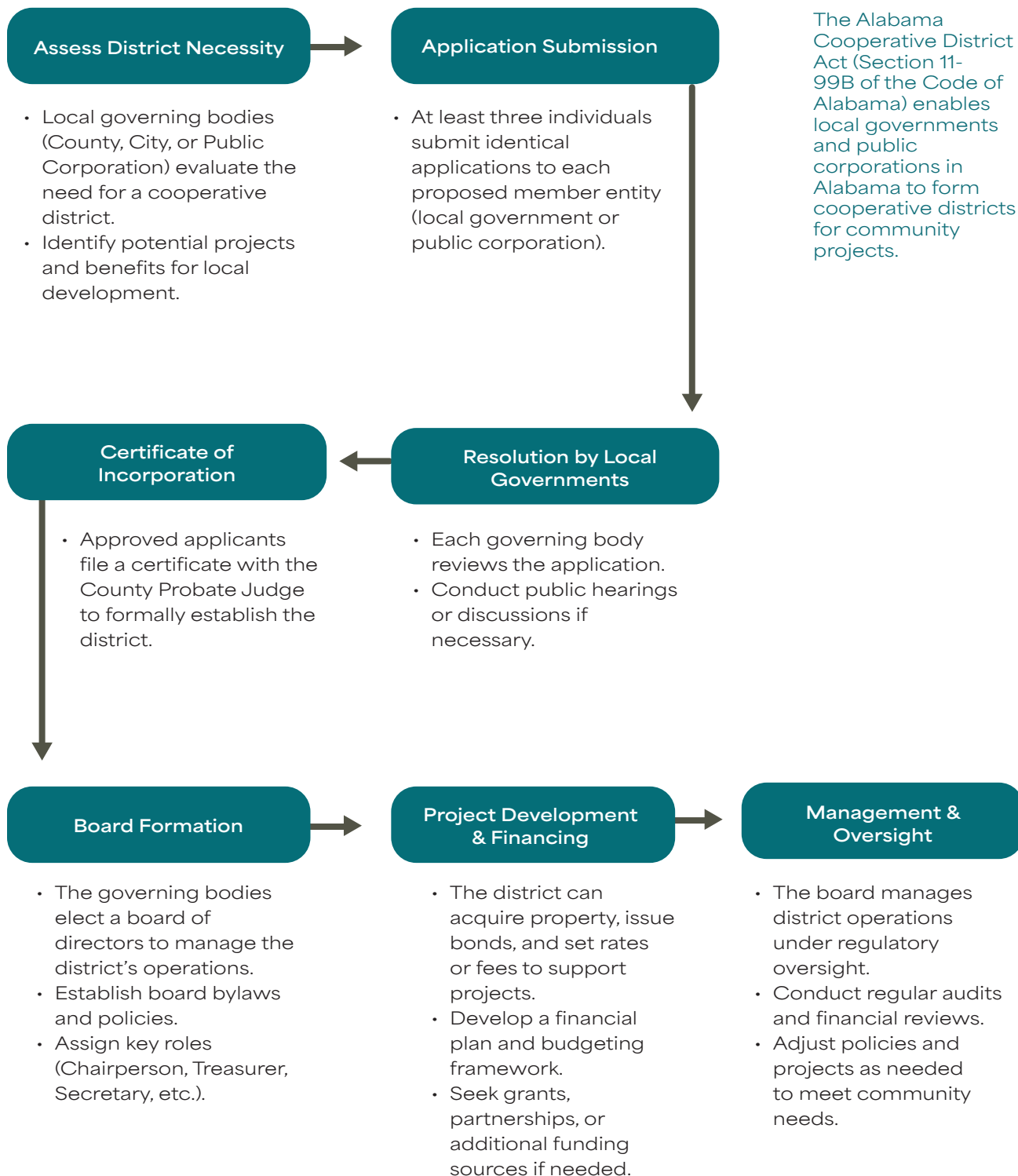
The purpose of the District is to promote economic development, tourism, education, recreation, the arts, historic preservation, livability and healthy and active lifestyles in Montevallo. The district is to facilitate capital improvements by acquisition, construction, and installation throughout the City.

A three-member board governs the MDCD with each board member serving a four-year term and each board member able to serve multiple terms if reappointed by their respective entities.

The MDCD is funded in a variety of ways. Each of the three entities individually or in combination may provide funding for projects. The MDCD's only continual source of funding comes from an appropriation of 90% of the City of Montevallo's 1% sales tax. MDCD has invested over \$11 million in the City of Montevallo since its creation, with over \$6 million coming from the City and the remainder approximately evenly split between the University and Shelby County.

Montevallo and the MDCD are touted as an effective model for such districts by Main Street Alabama, Alabama Communities of Excellence, and other economic development organizations. MDCD serves as an example of cooperation among public entities to leverage resources and maximize tax dollars for all citizens.

Steps to Establish a Cooperative District

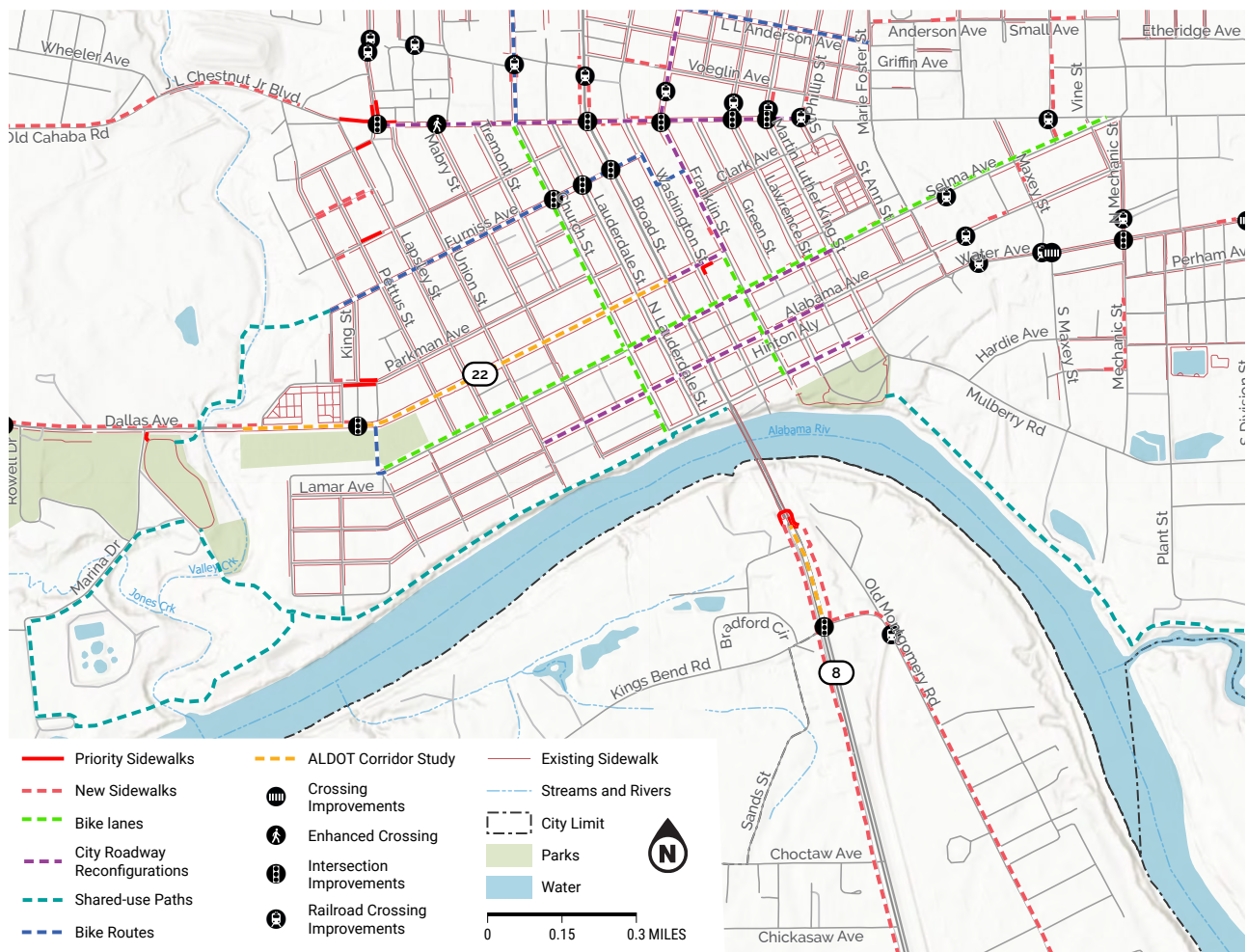


POTENTIAL PROJECTS

CONNECTING SELMA: AN ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ACTION PLAN

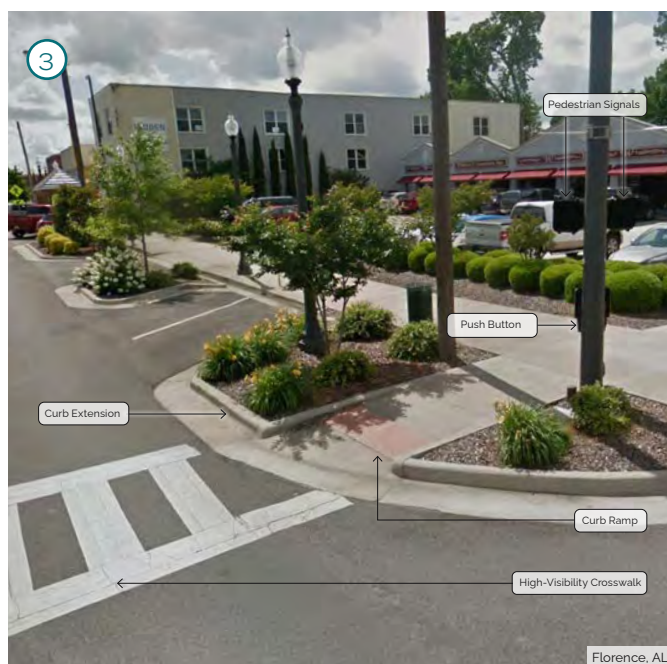
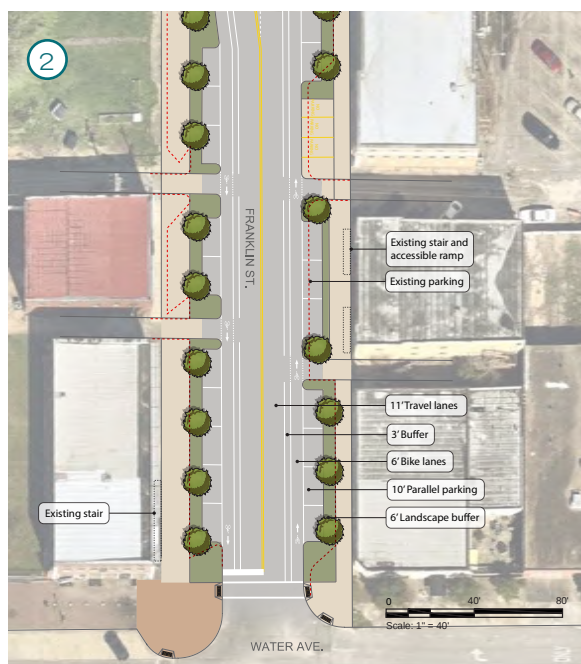
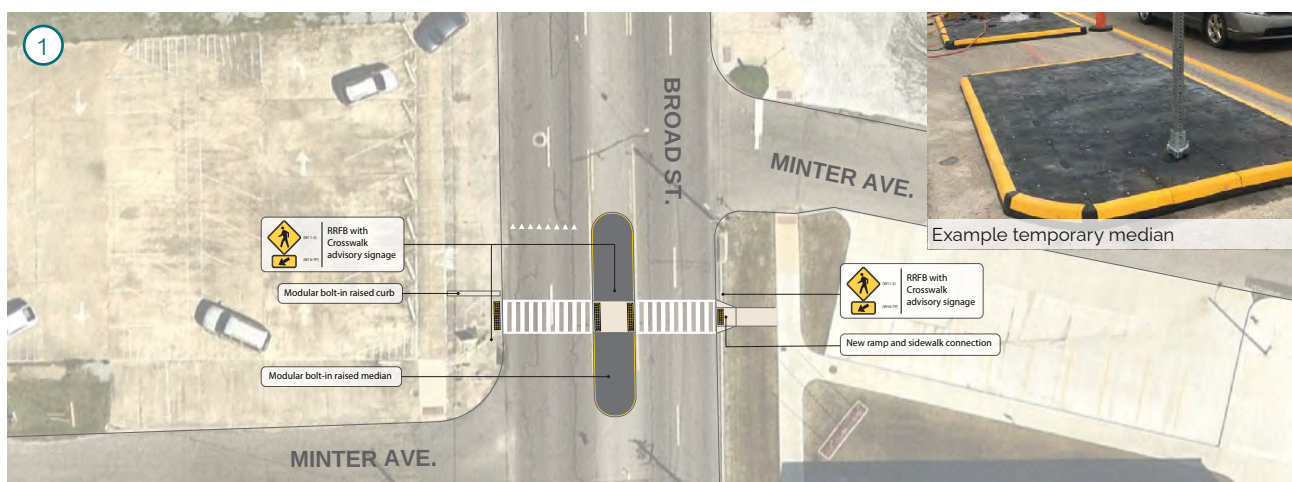
“Connecting Selma: An Active Transportation Action Plan” presents a data-driven roadmap for making Selma, Alabama, safer and more inviting for people walking and bicycling. Developed in spring 2022 by ALProHealth with CDC support, the plan analyzes local health and equity indicators, maps existing sidewalk, bike, and rail-crossing conditions, and incorporates resident and stakeholder input. It then recommends both near-term, low-cost pilot treatments (like high-visibility crosswalks, modular medians, and rapid-response flashing beacons) and longer-term infrastructure and policy changes (such as ADA-compliant curb ramps, continuous sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and updated zoning requirements). Together, these strategies aim to improve public health, support downtown revitalization, and ensure equitable access to safe active-transportation options across Selma.

Long-Term Project Recommendations (Downtown Area)



Short-Term (Temporary) Recommendations

Treatment	Location Example	Estimated Cost
① RRFB + painted median + signage	Mid-block on US-80/Broad St at Edmundite Missions	\$40,000
② Franklin St demo reconfiguration	Franklin St between Water & Alabama St	\$52-91 K
③ High-visibility crosswalks + bulbouts	Key driveways (e.g. Marie Foster St at Walmart)	\$1,800 each



Action 1.B. Encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment in strategic locations.

Description

In the aftermath of a major disruption—whether caused by natural disaster, economic downturn, or other systemic shocks—communities face a choice: rebuild exactly what was there before, or seize the moment to create more resilient, vibrant, and fiscally sustainable places. Strategic rehabilitation and redevelopment serve as the cornerstone of long-term recovery, guiding scarce resources toward areas where investment yields the greatest return on both social and economic fronts. By focusing development in the downtown core, Selma can accelerate recovery, restore community confidence, and lay the groundwork for sustained prosperity.

Need

Downtown Selma represents the city's most strategic opportunity for focused redevelopment that maximizes the impact of public and private investment. By concentrating efforts in this historic core—where infrastructure already exists—Selma can reduce public service costs and stimulate visible, catalytic projects that build momentum for broader revitalization. Investing downtown not only honors Selma's cultural heritage but also enables cost-effective infill and redevelopment on underutilized sites.

Sub-Actions

1.B.1 Focus development energy downtown. The city should resist pressure to pursue numerous small opportunities simultaneously and instead be strategic in allocating resources like infrastructure investments, incentives, and other programs where they will have the biggest impact. Revitalization is an incremental process that often starts by creating visible examples of successful projects. Demonstrating success is particularly important when promoting new development types, regulatory tools, city programs, or funding mechanisms.

1.B.2 Partner to create a catalytic redevelopment project. In some locations, it may be necessary to the "prove the market" by leading the development of a catalytic project. The city or county could form a public-private partnership to aid in redevelopment.

- Outline incentives, such as expedited review, financial tools, and property acquisition if a city-owned site.
- Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit and evaluate redevelopment concepts.
- Review and select proposals that best demonstrate regional impact and feasibility.
- Establish a formal agreement between the city and private partner defining roles, responsibilities, and expectations for project support.

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Selma Redevelopment Authority
- Building Inspector
- Opportunity Alabama

Funding:

- HUD CDBG
- CDBG-DR
- FEMA BRIC
- US EDA EAA Grants

Time Frame:

- Immediate

See pp. 41-44 for potential projects.

1.B.3 Market development opportunities within designated Opportunity Zones.

Opportunity Zones are census tracts classified as “low-income” but contain prime investment potential due to the presence of either a downtown, neighborhood, major institution, or regional interstate access. The initiative encourages redevelopment, blight abatement, or substantial growth within these census tracts by providing access to capital funding and tax incentives for high-impact projects. To leverage this initiative, the city should:

- Continue to work with developers to make them aware of Opportunity Zones.
- Collaborate with an entity such as the Chamber of Commerce to design and market an investment prospectus to showcase the distinctive advantages of investing in an Opportunity Zone.
- Continue to consult with organizations like Opportunity Alabama (OPAL), which is a non-profit offering assistance to investors, partners, and communities on strategic marketing and project identification specific to Alabama’s opportunity zones.

1.B.4 Revise the regulations to encourage and support redevelopment.

Time-consuming, uncertain, and negotiated development review processes can frustrate and dampen developer/investor interest. Regulations should make redevelopment in desired locations the preferred and easier form of development. New regulations need to make sure redevelopment “fits into” either the existing context or the planned context/character for the area, and that the procedural path to the desired type of redevelopment is streamlined, making it procedurally easier to occur. The following changes should be considered in the rewritten Zoning Ordinance to better support and encourage redevelopment at desired locations:

- Streamline development review procedures downtown;
- Include contextual compatibility standards to stimulate redevelopment by minimizing nonconformities; and
- Add a simplified adjustment procedure to allow quicker approval of minor adjustments to dimensional and certain development and design standards to allow for more flexibility, especially for redevelopment sites.

1.B.5 Encourage development in areas served by existing or planned infrastructure.

Prioritize areas that have already been developed before considering locations for new publicly funded infrastructure. Promote efficient use of land and infrastructure by supporting redevelopment and infill on underutilized sites by exploring zoning and other regulatory tools that could make these sites attractive to future development.

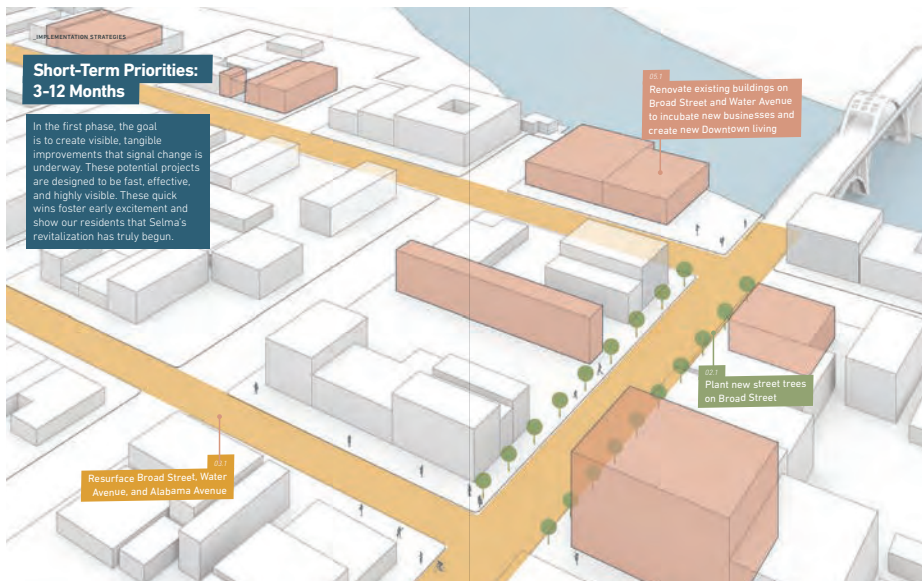
POTENTIAL PROJECTS

DOWNTOWN SELMA VISION

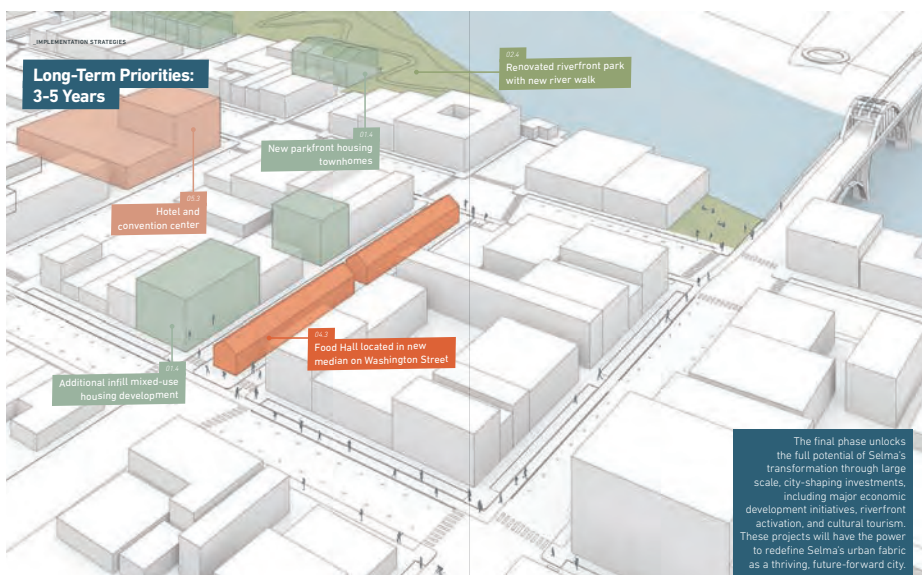
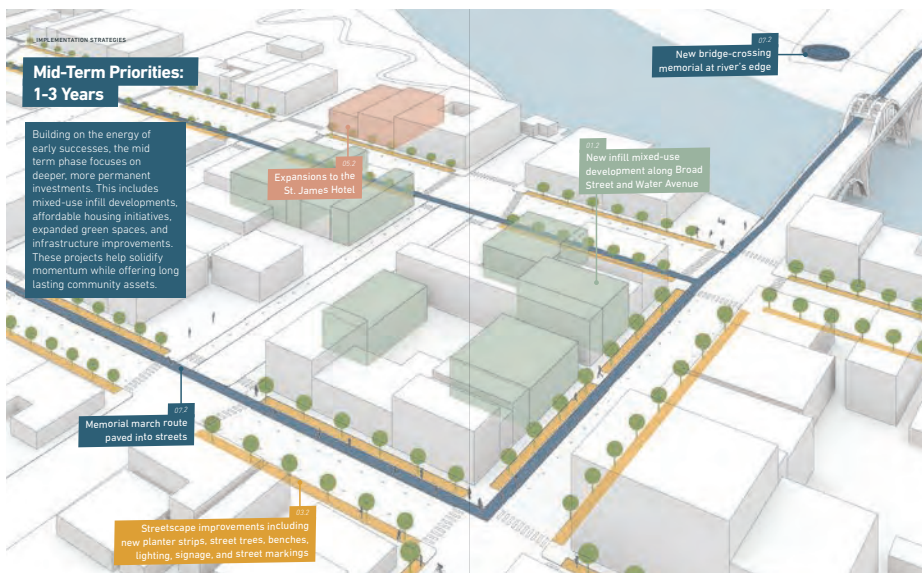
The Downtown Selma Vision is a community-driven roadmap for revitalizing Selma’s historic core into a vibrant, equitable small city rooted in legacy, justice, and shared liberation . Guided by over 4,000 resident voices and shaped in partnership with the Partnership for Equitable and Resilient Communities and the Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth & Reconciliation, it translates Selma’s civil-rights heritage into eight actionable goals—from affordable housing and public safety to cultural tourism and justice-centered institutions—that will transform downtown through phased, fundable strategies.



Revitalizing Downtown Selma starts with a strategic focus area—a concentrated zone where targeted investment will create immediate, visible change and build momentum for longterm transformation.



The plan proposes a step-by-step process, unfolding across three key phases that build upon one another.



Action 1.C. Leverage existing tourism.

Description

The Edmund Pettus Bridge, along with Selma's significant role in the Civil Rights Movement, presents a unique opportunity to enhance tourism in the area. Currently, many visitors come to walk across the bridge but leave shortly after. To capture this energy, it's essential to promote additional sites, such as historic churches, districts, and cemeteries, while developing services near these attractions. Expanding the focus of tourism beyond just civil rights to include other unique historical aspects of Selma will create a more enriching experience for visitors and help sustain the local economy.

Need

To grow the tax base, there are three primary strategies: selling more taxable items, increasing the tax rate, and selling more expensive items. Tourism plays a particularly significant role by bringing in visitors who purchase goods and services like food, entertainment, and accommodations, many of which are taxable. This influx of spending generates additional revenue without requiring increases in the resident population or tax rates. Tourism also stimulates local businesses to expand or diversify their offerings, further boosting taxable sales. Additionally, the same population can be motivated to spend more through rising disposable incomes and the creation of new spending opportunities, all of which tend to be interrelated.

As home to iconic civil rights landmarks and rich historical sites, Selma draws visitors from around the world. However, with targeted redevelopment and support, Selma can more fully capture this tourism potential by creating enhanced visitor experiences, expanding services, and developing amenities that encourage longer stays and greater local spending. Selma has the opportunity to transform its tourism industry into a sustainable economic engine that creates jobs, increases city revenues, and celebrates its unique cultural heritage.

Sub-Actions

1.C.1 Develop a tourism strategy focused on the experience of visiting Selma. Tourism can easily be viewed as attractions, events, and amenities. However, an important element of tourism is also experiential. Positive experiences, particularly along corridors and at gateways, can lead to strong “word of mouth” marketing. The dimensions of experience vary but common elements include:

- Perception of safety
- Cleanliness
- Ease of wayfinding and navigation
- Vacancy, abandonment, or state of repair
- Activity opportunities

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Selma-Dallas County Historical Preservation Society
- National Voting Rights Museum & Institute
- Selma Interpretive Center

Funding:

- HUD CDBG-DR (Economic Revitalization/Public Services)
- HUD PIH Choice Neighborhood Program (Planning and Implementation)
- NPS African American Civil Rights Grant Opportunity
- NPS Underrepresented Communities Grant Program
- Alabama Historical Commission SHPO Education Trust Fund Grant (ETF)

Time Frame:

- Immediate

1.C.2 Evaluate opportunities to enhance the existing Civil Rights Trail. The city should expand upon the existing Civil Rights Trail to create an informational or legacy trail that outlines Selma's historic milestones. These improvements could include historical markers that highlight significant locations for the Black community:

- **Highlight Pre-Civil Rights Black Excellence:** Recognize businesses, churches, and schools that were pillars of the Black community before the Civil Rights Movement.
- **Recognize Black-Owned Businesses:** Feature locations where Black entrepreneurs thrived, such as the Good Samaritan Hospital, one of the few Black-run medical institutions in Alabama at the time.
- **Tell Stories of Local Activists:** Beyond Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis, amplify the voices of local leaders like Amelia Boynton Robinson, who helped organize the Selma voting rights movement.

1.C.3 Capitalize on existing events. Civil Rights-related commemorations could be expanded into larger festivals or multi-day events, potentially drawing visitors from across the country, as demonstrated by the success of Jubilee. Such events could combine history, culture, local cuisine, and music to create a dynamic atmosphere.

1.C.4 Position Selma as the ecotourism gateway of the Black Belt region. Build on the recommendations in Ecotourism Development in the Black Belt: Nature, Culture, and Community (Coastal Alabama Partnership, April 2024) by positioning Selma as a central hub for ecotourism experiences in the region. Develop and promote ecotourism by expanding trails, river tours, and outdoor recreation infrastructure along the Alabama River. Invest in guide training, marina improvements, and equipment rentals to boost local economic opportunities. Collaborate with regional partners to connect Selma with nearby attractions like Old Cahawba and Roland Cooper State Park.



EXAMPLE

In the wake of a pandemic-caused, yearlong pause in tourism, the Montgomery Chamber's destination marketing team accelerated its efforts to invite the world to, "come to Montgomery. The journey starts here." The new campaign, aptly named The Journey Starts Here, is assuring visitors they get the most out of their MGM experience in several key ways:

- Relocating the Visitor Center to a focal point downtown.
- Offering friendly, live guides in the form of "street ambassadors" to engage visitors.
- Using colorful, approachable and easily identifiable icons and signage to point people to the landmarks.
- Creating and strategically placing QR codes that draw visitors through digital storytelling platforms and social media.
- Designing subject-specific trails, both physically and digital paths to lead visitors to what they're most interested in.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS

PRESEVATION & REACTIVATION PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN SELMA University of Pennsylvania | Weitzman School of Design

The Preservation & Reactivation Plan for Downtown Selma (Fall 2022) was a semester-long studio project by the University of Pennsylvania Weitzman School of Design’s Historic Preservation graduate program, exploring how to harness Selma’s extraordinary Civil Rights and Civil War heritage to spark economic revitalization in its 22-block downtown core. Through three phases—comprehensive research on history, physical evolution, and stakeholder perspectives; analysis of significance, character-defining elements, and SWOT; and targeted interventions—the plan weaves preservation strategies with redevelopment projects to repair both the built fabric and governance structures, strengthening downtown Selma as a vibrant, heritage-driven economic center.

Interpretive Panels

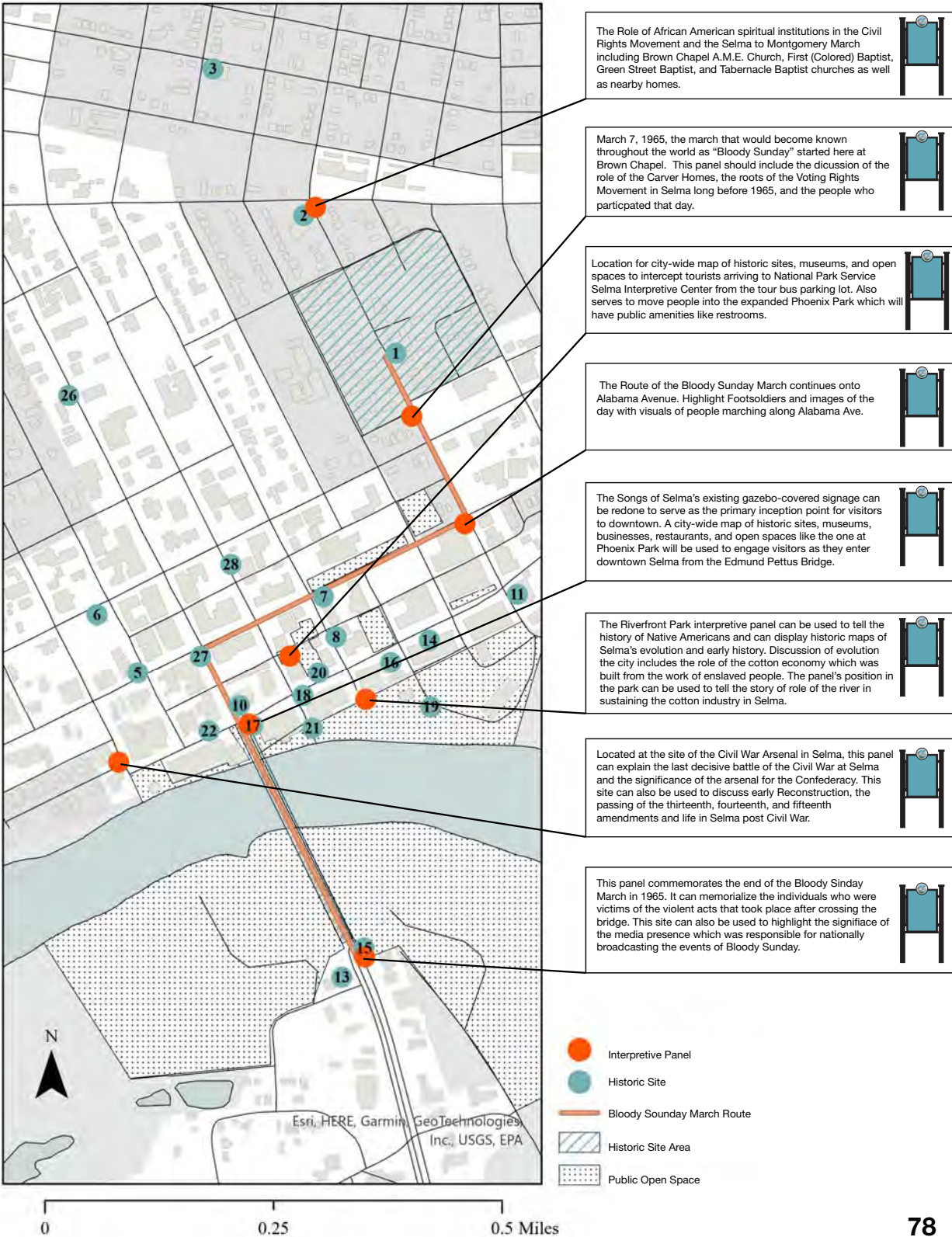


Wayfinding Signage



In addition to the signage proposed in this plan, The Downtown Selma Vision proposes memorializing the 1965 march routes through a powerful, immersive public monument that transforms Selma’s streets into living history.

Envisioning Local Interpretive Panels



STRATEGY 2. REBUILD THE NEIGHBORHOODS.

The actions in this section focus on rebuilding the existing neighborhoods by addressing the fiscal, physical, and regulatory barriers that have destabilized the historic and core neighborhoods of the city. They are built on the assessment of challenges faced by property owners that contribute to broader neighborhood conditions. These actions focus on tools the city can use to aid property owners in overcoming these challenges to build stronger, more resilient neighborhoods.

Action 2.A. Adopt a comprehensive policy for neglected properties.

Description

The creation and implementation of a unified policy framework to address neglected, vacant, or abandoned properties can help to streamline enforcement, incentivize rehabilitation, and support responsible ownership through clear standards, penalties for noncompliance, and programs that facilitate reuse or redevelopment. The policy should align code enforcement, housing, planning, and legal tools to proactively manage blight and strengthen neighborhood revitalization.

Need

Selma is grappling with a growing number of neglected and abandoned properties, which pose significant challenges to public safety, economic growth, and community well-being. These dilapidated structures often create health hazards and diminish the quality of life for residents. Additionally, neglected properties depress surrounding property values, discourage private investment, and place a financial burden on municipal resources for maintenance and code enforcement. Despite these challenges, Selma currently lacks a comprehensive policy to address the demolition of neglected properties. A formalized demolition policy would enable the city to systematically remove hazardous structures, repurpose vacant lots for community use, and foster neighborhood revitalization.

Sub-Actions

2.A.1 Develop and maintain a comprehensive vacant property inventory. Maintain an updated inventory of vacant properties to monitor the extent and distribution of vacancies across Selma. Utilize the inventory as a tool to identify patterns of vacancy and identify neighborhoods most impacted by sustained population loss. This inventory can support data-driven decisions to prioritize neighborhoods for interventions, such as nuisance abatement strategies and quiet title actions, to return vacant properties to productive use.

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Building Inspector

Funding:

- CBDG
- HOME
- FEMA Hazard and Mitigation Grant Program

Time Frame:

- Short-Term

- Build a database with fields: address, vacancy duration, owner contact, condition.
- Update monthly via code-enforcement and utility-usage data.
- Generate heat maps to show vacancy clusters.

2.A.2 Establish criteria and review process for demolition. Develop clear, detailed criteria for identifying properties eligible for demolition, including factors like structural safety, vacancy duration, code violations, and public health risks (such as mold or pest infestations). Draft a simple scoring table that weights each factor. Implement a transparent review process that provides property owners with notice and remediation options before proceeding with demolition. Focus on demolishing properties that pose significant safety hazards or negatively affect the neighborhood's quality of life.

2.A.3 Strengthen property maintenance enforcement practices.

Property maintenance is an essential part of neighborhood stabilization and revitalization efforts. Property maintenance code enforcement should address threats to safety and livability from property maintenance issues. The city's zoning enforcement program should:

- **Focus enforcement efforts.** Prioritize enforcement and nuisance efforts on the “worst-of-the-worst” – conditions that are a threat to safety or further disinvestment.
- **Utilize a cooperative compliance model.** Under a cooperative compliance model, city code enforcement officers would provide guidance to property owners on how to properly address problems and comply with codes. The officer may also help the property owner find resources for fixing the violations by providing written materials, offering classes, or identifying sources of low-interest loans or grant funding.
- **Consider placing liens on properties with chronic violations.** Municipalities in Alabama can place liens on properties with chronic code violations, such as unsafe buildings, substandard housing, and neglected properties, to ensure compliance and recover abatement costs. If a property owner fails to address a violation after notice, the municipality may cite the property, abate the nuisance, and file a lien with the county probate office.

2.A.4 Adopt housing rehabilitation codes. Ensure property owners seeking approval for minor renovations do not have to make comprehensive changes to bring older homes or apartment buildings into full compliance. This can be costly enough to derail all planned improvements, causing existing buildings to fall farther into disrepair. Rehabilitation codes should align code requirements with the scale of the proposed project, prioritizing those improvements strictly needed to improve safety while making the rehabilitation of existing buildings more feasible.

Action 2.B. Create flexibility in the protection of historic properties.

Description

Preservation regulations that require review of projects affecting historic properties help to preserve what makes the properties historically significant and give local citizens a voice in project planning. However, review can be approached flexibly, consistently, and expeditiously, taking into considerations for recovery, such as the economic and technical feasibility of each project.

Need

Selma's rich cultural heritage, particularly its Civil Rights landmarks, is integral to both its identity and economic future. However, many historic buildings have suffered extensive damage and neglect, necessitating a preservation strategy that balances historical integrity with practical rebuilding needs. A flexible approach is essential to restoring key structures while ensuring modern safety, accessibility, and energy efficiency standards.

Preserving historic properties often requires overcoming financial and policy obstacles, as balancing environmental sustainability with historic integrity can present conflicting standards. However, addressing these challenges is crucial to safeguarding Selma's legacy and supporting sustainable development that ensures these landmarks remain active contributors to the community's future. Preservation has a number of benefits to the community:

- **Reduce Risk to Natural Hazard(s)** – Systematic vulnerability assessments and reversible, minimally invasive measures—like discreet structural reinforcement and flood barriers—shield historic structures from future damage, lowering restoration costs and helping these landmarks remain in continuous use.
- **Maintain Historic Character** – Applying the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation ensures "like-for-like" repairs and compatible new work that preserve Selma's unique architectural and cultural identity—fueling civic pride and cultural tourism.
- **Feasibility and Affordability** – Early life-cycle cost analysis, strategic phasing, and the targeted use of grants and tax incentives make restoration efforts financially realistic, enabling projects to advance in manageable stages as resources become available.

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Selma-Dallas County Historical Preservation Society
- Building Inspector
- Selma Redevelopment Authority

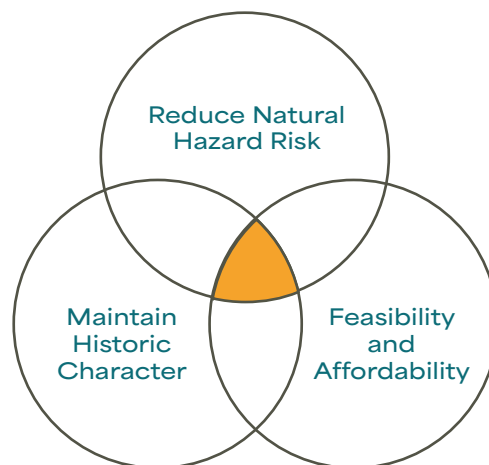
Funding:

- HUD CDBG-DR
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Grants
- HUD Pro Housing Grant
- NPS Historic Preservation Fund-African American Civil Rights - AACRN Preservation

Time Frame:

- Medium-Term

Resilience to Natural Hazards



Source: National Parks Service

Sub-Actions

2.B.1 Adopt recent ACHP Guidance on climate change resiliency.

Incorporate the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) guidance on climate change resiliency into planning and preservation practices. Evaluate the vulnerabilities of historic properties to climate-related risks such as flooding and extreme weather events. Provide training and resources for city staff, preservation professionals, and property owners to implement climate-resilient practices in line with ACHP recommendations.

2.B.2 Pursue a Programmatic Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Collaborate with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to develop a programmatic agreement that streamlines compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Define a clear framework for routine preservation projects, such as minor repairs, upgrades, or climate adaptations, to expedite approval processes while maintaining compliance.

- Identify classes of activities with minimal impacts on historic properties that could be exempt from individual reviews, reducing project delays and administrative burdens.
- Engage SHPO early in planning processes to ensure efficient coordination and minimize potential conflicts during implementation.

2.B.3 Work with the Historic Preservation Commission to recalibrate requirements.

Partner with the city's Historic Preservation Commission to reassess and modernize preservation requirements, ensuring they balance historical integrity with contemporary needs.

- Review design guidelines and preservation standards to incorporate flexibility for climate adaptation and recovery measures without compromising the historic character.
- Simplify the approval process for routine maintenance or necessary upgrades, such as energy-efficient windows or solar panel installations, in historic districts.
- Proactively seek out input from property owners, developers, and residents on barriers they face in meeting preservation requirements.
- Periodically update the requirements to reflect advancements in building practices and evolving community priorities, such as affordability and accessibility.

Program alternatives can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Section 106 reviews and streamline routine interactions while focusing effort on the more complex projects or historic properties most important to communities. They can also help interpret and raise awareness about important historic properties and strengthen the state, tribal, and local partnerships critical to their care.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS

PRESEVATION & REACTIVATION PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN SELMA University of Pennsylvania | Weitzman School of Design

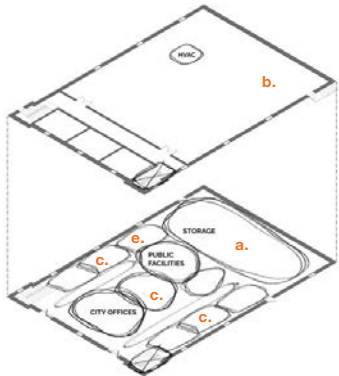
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Adaptive Reuse of the George D. Wilson Selma Community Center

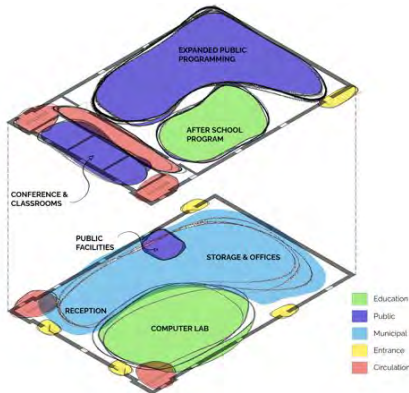


The Selma Community Center at 16 Franklin Street was built in 1938 with Works Project Administration Funds by a Black architect and builder named George D. Wilson.

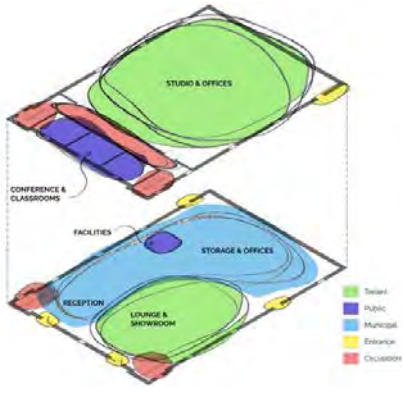
Phase 1 Repair and Occupy



Phase 2 Engage Potential Tenants



Phase 3 Expand Public Programming



Restoration and Adaptive Reuse of the Edistone Hotel, Warehouse, and Public Open Space



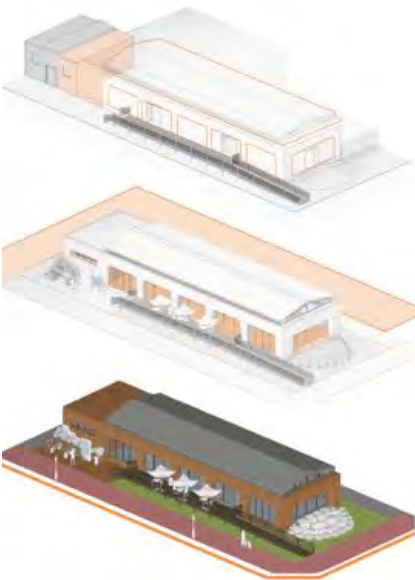
The Edistone hotel building was built in 1855 and it is one of the oldest historic buildings in Water Avenue Historic District.



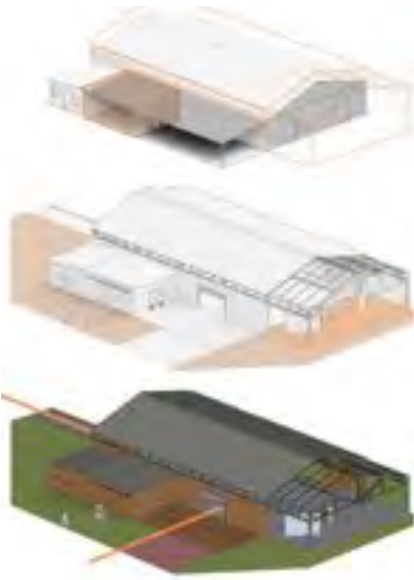
Edistone Renovation



Side Building Renovation



Warehouse Renovation



Action 2.C. Increase the capacity of the Selma Land Bank.

Description

The Selma Land Bank Authority was established to address the city's challenges with dilapidated and tax-delinquent properties, with the goal of clearing blight, stabilizing property values, and stimulating economic development. The land bank is tasked with inventorying tax-delinquent properties, resolving title issues that hinder property transfers, and facilitating redevelopment by preparing properties for resale to developers or individuals committed to revitalizing the area. This initiative became particularly urgent following the January 12, 2023, tornadoes.

Need

The Selma Land Bank was approved in July 2023 to address blight by acquiring properties that have been severely neglected or destroyed and abandoned. Increasing their capacity can help further address the level of blight the city has faced both historically and specifically after the January 2023 Tornado Disaster where 39% of the existing housing stock was lost. With the necessary support and management, the Selma Land Bank has the potential revitalize neighborhoods, attract investment, and improve the city's overall appeal.

Sub-Actions

2.C.1 Increase staffing and expertise. Build the land bank's internal capacity by hiring specialized staff. Recruit professionals with expertise in urban planning, historic preservation, property law, and real estate development, to improve the quality and scope of land bank operations. Offer ongoing training programs for staff and partners on best practices in land banking, property management, and community engagement.

2.C.2 Develop a Strategic Plan. Create a comprehensive strategic plan to guide land bank operations and prioritize redevelopment efforts. Focus efforts on areas with the greatest need, such as neighborhoods impacted by the January 2023 tornado or those containing historically significant properties. Align land bank activities with broader community development goals, incorporating historic preservation, affordable housing, and disaster resilience into redevelopment strategies.

2.C.3 Streamline the acquisition and disposition processes. Improve the efficiency of acquiring, managing, and disposing of properties to expedite redevelopment and community revitalization. Collaborate with nonprofit organizations and private developers to build a pipeline for property acquisition and redevelopment. Standardize procedures for selling or leasing properties to ensure transparency and equitable outcomes for community stakeholders.

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Selma Land Bank

Funding:

- HUD CDBG/CDBG-DR
- HUD PIH Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant
- HUD Pro Housing Grant
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Grants
- USDA Technical Assistance & Training Grant

Time Frame:

- Medium-Term

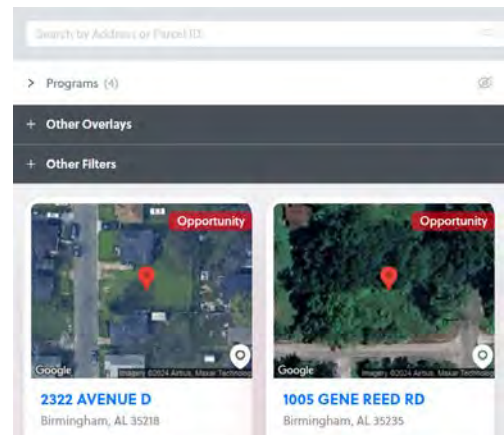
- Map every step of acquisition, management, and disposition; pinpoint bottlenecks; build clear checklists and timelines; and publish them online.
- Maintain a shared database of available properties, statuses, and goals; assign a liaison to keep it current and coordinate viewings or RFQs.
- Form a quarterly working group with nonprofits and developers to match properties to capacity and community needs.

2.C.4 Create sustainable revenue models.

Establish revenue-generating programs to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the land bank. Develop strategies for selling or leasing rehabilitated properties to generate income while maintaining affordability and community benefit.

- Partner with developers and nonprofit organizations to create mixed-income housing or other revenue-positive projects.
- Explore opportunities for adaptive reuse of historic properties, such as converting them into community centers, co-working spaces, or rental housing.

2.C.5 Utilize technology and data. Invest in technology to improve decision-making and operational efficiency. Implement GIS mapping tools to identify, assess, and prioritize vacant, damaged, and historically significant properties for acquisition or redevelopment. Develop a centralized digital database to track property status, project progress, and funding sources, enabling better coordination and reporting. Use data analytics to monitor neighborhood trends and evaluate the impact of land bank initiatives on community revitalization efforts.



EXAMPLE

Since its incorporation in 2013, the Birmingham Land Bank has developed a suite of complementary programs to address blighted and vacant properties. The city grants the bank authority to condemn blighted or vacant properties that have been tax-delinquent for at least five years. A map on the land bank website allows neighbors to see eligible properties.

The land bank administers three programs: the Side Lot program, the Adopt-a-Lot program, and the Catalytic Development Project program.

Through the Side Lot program, a neighbor can take care of an adjacent vacant neglected lot on behalf of the land bank. Through the Adopt-a-Lot program, a neighbor, another city citizen, a faith based organization, or a nonprofit organization can gain use of any vacant overgrown lot in a neighborhood. In both programs, after two years of care the neighbor can petition to take over the deed from the land bank, adding to the neighbor's lot instead of sitting in disrepair.

As of 2025, the Land Bank has:

- 53+ Active Lease Agreements
- 214+ In Quiet Title Process
- 42+ Acquisition Properties
- 733+ Titles Cleared

Action 2.D. Increase support for heirs' property owners.

Description

Heirs' property is a type of property where the ownership has been transferred through inheritance to several family members without a present or clear will. Since the original owner either had no will or had an unclear will, the original owner's name remains on the title while the inheritors become "tenants in common" or basically owners of interest in the property. This ownership of interest in the property restrains what they can do with the property since none of the "tenants in common" have their names on the title. Establishing an heir's property law clinic to assist "tenants in common" with becoming name-on-title owners secures true property ownership for those individuals, reducing existing barriers to property improvements and the risk of being taken advantage of by individuals who want to acquire the property.

Need

Heirs' property typically occurs when there is no probate process after the death of a real property owner. Without this legal process, land records do not reflect the next generation of owners of these properties. Heirs' properties face significant barriers to participating in vital government programs from USDA, HUD, and FEMA after a disaster, leaving families without essential support. The inability to repair, sell, mortgage, or lease these properties without unanimous agreement among heirs, puts families at risk of losing their homes and neglecting necessary repairs. Additionally, the lengthy process of clearing titles—averaging 2-3 years—exacerbates these challenges, highlighting an urgent need for streamlined solutions that empower families to manage their inherited properties effectively. According to the USDA, there is an estimated \$28 billion worth of heirs' property in the Black Belt region of Alabama.

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Alabama Lawyers Association

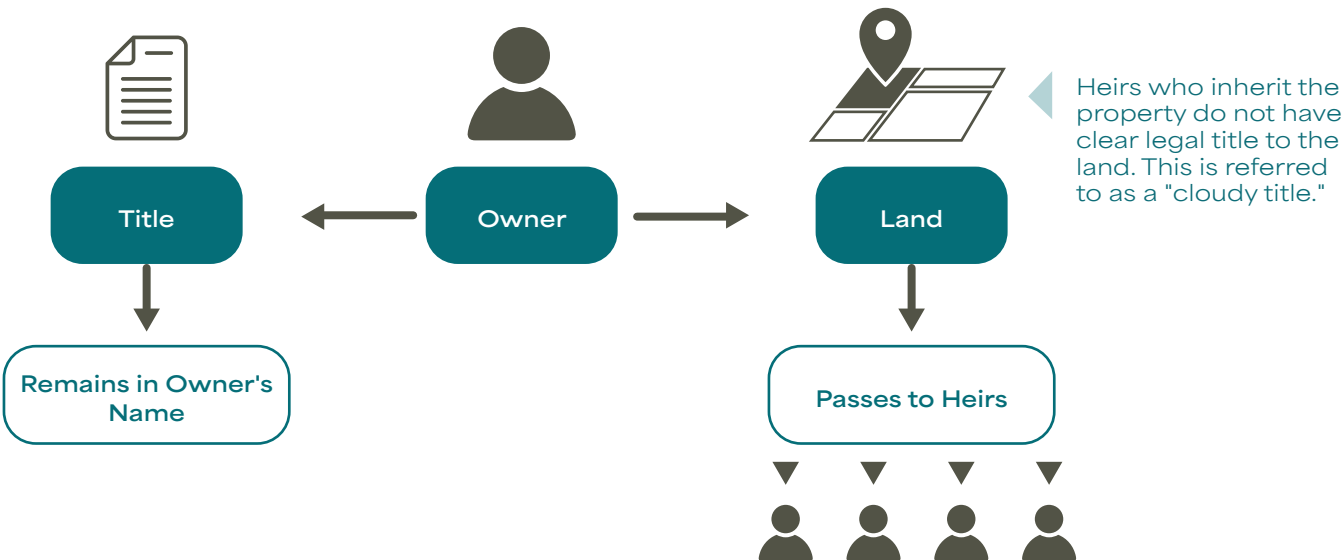
Funding:

- CBDG
- USDA Technical Assistance & Training Grant

Time Frame:

- Long-Term

Heirs' Property Explained



Sub-Actions

2.D.1 Implement a property tax relief program for heirs' property owners. These programs can help to prevent displacement due to unpaid taxes by offering exemptions, payment plans, or deferred tax options.

- Partner with the tax assessor's office to identify properties likely to be heirs' properties using tax records, inheritance data, and property histories.
- Develop eligibility criteria for tax relief specifically tailored to heirs' property owners, including options for exemptions, deferred payments, or income-based payment plans.
- Establish a streamlined application process, including online and in-person options, with simplified documentation requirements.
- Conduct outreach and education through community organizations, direct mail, and public workshops to ensure property owners understand and can access the program.

2.D.2 Create an Heirs' Property Assistance Office.

The office would provide legal, financial, and mediation support for families seeking to resolve ownership disputes. This office could serve as a one-stop resource, helping heirs establish clear title, negotiate ownership agreements, and access funding.

- Establish partnerships with legal aid organizations, bar associations, and nonprofit housing groups to extend capacity and services.
- Develop service offerings such as title searches, probate navigation, mediation for family disputes, and financial counseling.
- Design an intake system that makes it easy for families to access services via walk-ins, referrals, and a dedicated website and hotline.
- Promote the office through trusted community channels, churches, and neighborhood associations to reach affected families.

EXAMPLE

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, thousands of New Orleans families were unable to access rebuilding funds due to unclear property titles—many inherited informally over generations. In response, the City of New Orleans partnered with legal aid organizations to help residents resolve heirs' property issues and reclaim ownership of family land.

Led by the Office of Community Development, the city supports free legal clinics and successions assistance through Southeast Louisiana Legal Services, Louisiana Appleseed, and The Pro Bono Project. These services are integrated into housing rehab and disaster recovery programs, ensuring residents can access funds even when title is unresolved.

As of 2025, the program has:

- 1,000+ Families Assisted
- 700+ Titles Cleared
- 300+ Residents Reconnected with Disaster Recovery Funds
- Helped Influence Statewide Adoption of the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act

STRATEGY 3. PROACTIVELY BUILD FOR THE FUTURE.

The actions in this section take a long-term approach to promote smarter and more sustainable practices that will not only help Selma recover but improve outcomes and resiliency in future disasters.

Action 3.A. Adopt the latest building code.

Description

The international residential code was created to serve as a complete and comprehensive code regulating the construction of single and multifamily dwellings. Construction materials and methods have changed significantly in the past decades and the new standards and practices should be incorporated to ensure safe, reliable, and worthy housing construction. The State of Alabama adopted the 2021 International Building Code as the State Building Code on July 1, 2022.

Need

As severe storms and tornados are projected to continue to become progressively more frequent and intense, setting out hazard-resistant building codes can reduce the losses experienced when they occur. On average, every dollar spent on mitigation through building codes present during construction saves \$11 in disaster recovery costs. The agency estimates a \$132 billion reduction in property losses based on forecasted consistent growth associated with use of modern building codes from 2000-2024. However, 65% of counties, cities, and towns across the U.S. still have not adopted modern building codes.

Updated, hazard-resistant building codes increase access to future grant and funding possibilities. FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant boost applicant (the state or territory) scores when the sub applicant (a sub-jurisdiction of the larger state or territory) has current building codes in place, directly increasing an applicant's chance of receiving the grant. As part of the BRIC grant's Capability and Capacity-Building Activities, building code activities like code adoption, implementation, or enhancement can be funded.

Sub-Actions

3.A.1 Review local needs. Consult with the local ICC chapter, Code Officials Association of Alabama, to understand which specific I-Codes are most suitable. Assess whether Alabama's adopted codes, especially those used for state-owned or funded projects, could be applied.

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Building Inspector

Funding:

- FEMA HMGP
- Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding for building energy codes
- Section 40511 of the IIJA NOFO for Resilient and Efficient Codes Implementation (RECI)

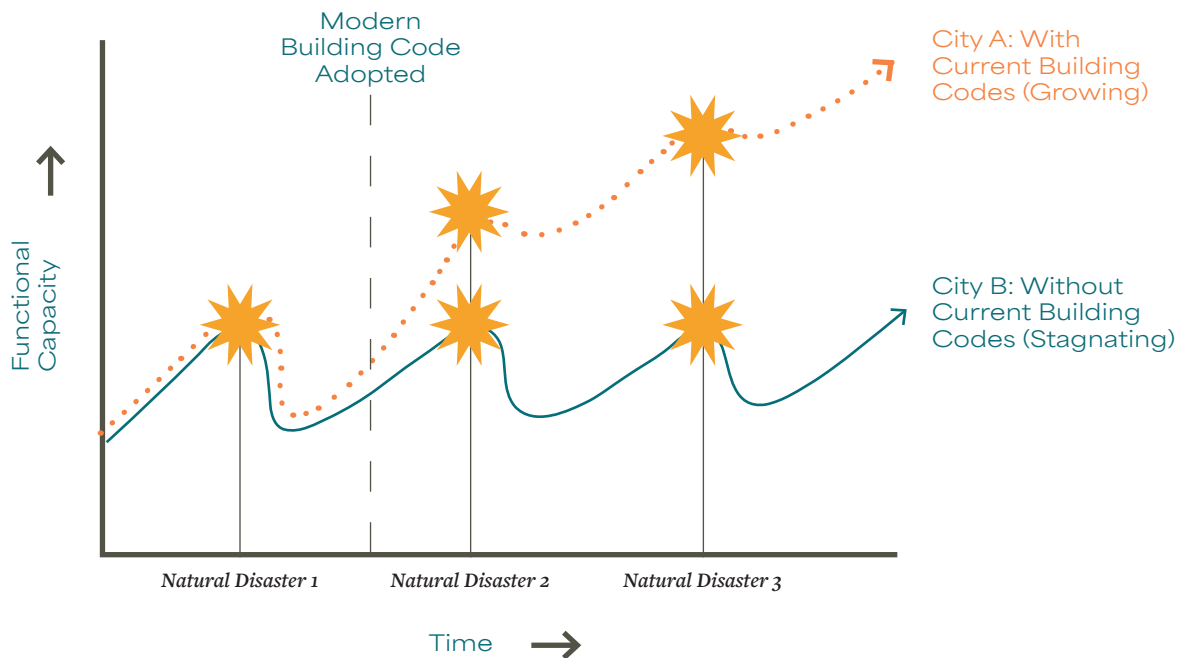
Time Frame:

- Short-Term



The FEMA Building Codes Adoption Playbook is intended for officials interested in increasing community resilience and reducing loss from natural hazards by adopting the latest editions of model building codes.

Sustained Loss Avoidance with Modern Codes



3.A.2 Review and identify relevant I-Codes.

Evaluate the three main International Codes (I-Codes) from the International Code Council (ICC):

- International Building Code (IBC): Adopt provisions that apply to new construction, ensuring that new buildings meet up-to-date safety and environmental standards.
- International Residential Code (IRC): Prioritize hazard-resistant provisions for single-family homes, duplexes, and townhouses to mitigate risks from natural hazards such as flooding, hurricanes, and earthquakes.
- International Existing Building Code (IEBC): Apply provisions to existing buildings undergoing repairs, alterations, or changes in use, focusing on retrofitting structures to improve resilience.

3.A.3 Adopt and implement the code. Ensure that builders, contractors, and local authorities are aware of and adhere to the new standards, while providing guidance and resources to facilitate compliance. Regular training for building inspectors and other professionals should be part of the ongoing implementation process.



EXAMPLE

Charleston County, SC pioneered the adoption of modern building codes. Following the development of disaster preparedness and recovery plans, in 2018, the county adopted modern building codes that required roof tiedowns, window protection, and higher "freeboard." The state of South Carolina followed the county's lead in adopting state-wide modern building standards (ICC 2015). The estimated savings in avoided property damage over 20 years is \$1.9 billion.

Action 3.B. Modernize the development regulations.

Description

Development regulations play a crucial role in shaping communities. Updating Selma's development regulations is vital for realizing the long-term goals outlined in this plan. Important aspects of this update include creating codes that are predictable, clear, and user-friendly; restructuring and modernizing the zoning districts; and revising development standards to enhance mobility and connectivity, improve structure and form, and incorporate "green building" practices.

Need

Updating Selma's development regulations and zoning code is a crucial step toward supporting the City's growth while ensuring that new developments reflect the community's core values and strategic objectives. An updated zoning code was drafted in 2018, but never adopted, leaving the City with an amended code that dates back to the 1950's. The recent draft provides a solid foundation for this action.

Sub-Actions

3.B.1 Create predictable, understandable, and user-friendly codes.

City codes are the primary means of implementing the land use recommendations illustrated on the Future Land Use and Character Map. An update to the city's Zoning Ordinance should:

- Make the structure logical and intuitive.
- Improve the document format and incorporate graphics, illustrations, and charts.
- Make the language clear and precise.
- Modernize and refine the definitions.
- Clearly outline the review procedures.
- Incorporate a procedures manual that defines approval authority.

3.B.2 Restructure and modernize the zoning districts. Zoning districts and allowable uses are fundamental components of a zoning ordinance. They establish the general development character of different geographical areas in the community, along with what uses may be developed in different locations. The zoning districts should be restructured to implement the Future Character Types element of this plan, incorporate best practices, and make the code more user-friendly. The update should also clearly defined "by-right" standards for development.

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Building Inspector
- Code Enforcement

Funding:

- HUD CDBG-DR
- GSA Technology Modernization Fund (TMF)
- HUD Comprehensive Grant Program (CGP)
- US Economic Development Assistance (EDA) Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA)

Time Frame:

- Short-Term

3.B.3 Modernize the development standards. The Zoning Ordinance should set standards for development form and quality. Some standards apply universally to all development sites, other standards apply to specific uses, and some standards apply uniquely to specific areas of the city. The following types of development standards should be considered in revisions to the Zoning Ordinance:

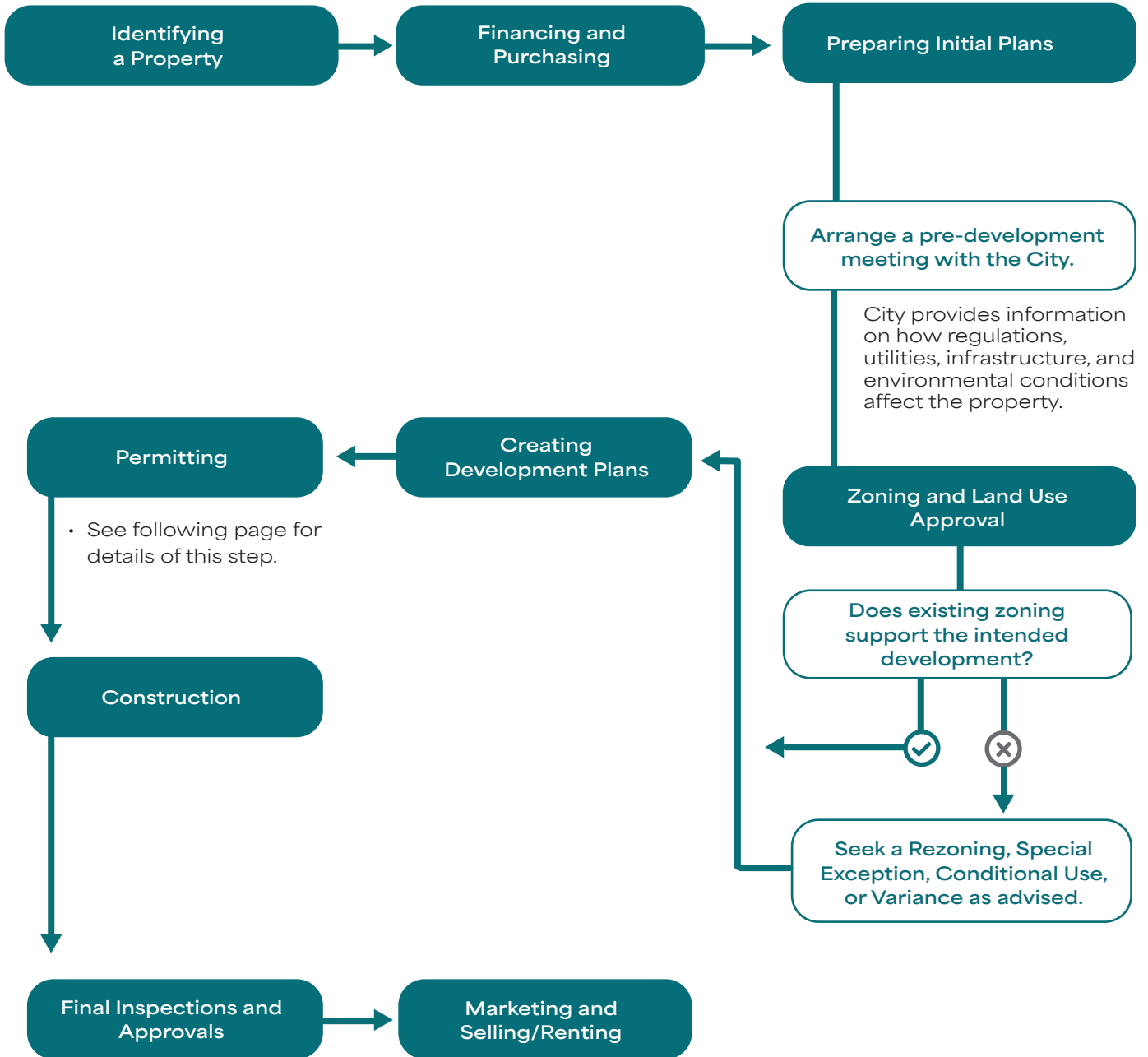
- **Add mobility and connectivity standards.** Establish requirements for providing multimodal (pedestrian, vehicle, and bicycle) access and circulation where appropriate, sidewalks in new development and redevelopment areas, and connectivity between developments.
- **Modernize the off-street parking, loading, and bicycle standards.** Revise minimum parking standards, parking exemptions, parking locations, bicycle parking requirements and related regulations.
- **Adopt landscaping and buffer standards.** Create a landscaping standards section that improves development quality, strengthens planting standards, and clarifies requirements.
- **Adopt form and design standards for multi-family, commercial, and mixed-use development.** Provide standards that reflect high-quality architecture through regulations pertaining to building articulation, materials, roofline, building transitions, and storage areas, among others.

3.B.4 Launch an initiative to improve awareness of and predictability of the regulatory process. An unpredictable regulatory process can deter developers from submitting proposals. Ensuring the greatest degree of predictability and transparency possible can help address this issue. This may be accomplished through changes to the land use process and through programs that work directly to improve communication with developers. This initiative could include:

- **Applicant Training.** Develop a program to provide free training sessions on new programs, updated policies and procedures, and process changes. Topics could include the basics of permitting, how to work with the zoning code, relevant code changes, and updates on planning efforts that may lead to changes.
- **Concierge Service.** A concierge service helps developers navigate the city's development process for new construction or renovations. This provides a clear and efficient roadmap for projects from the initial development to the approval and permitting stages. The primary aim is to enhance efficiency by proactively addressing potential challenges throughout the process.
- **Procedures Manual.** Ensure service information and guides to common processes are publicly available in simple and accessible formats.

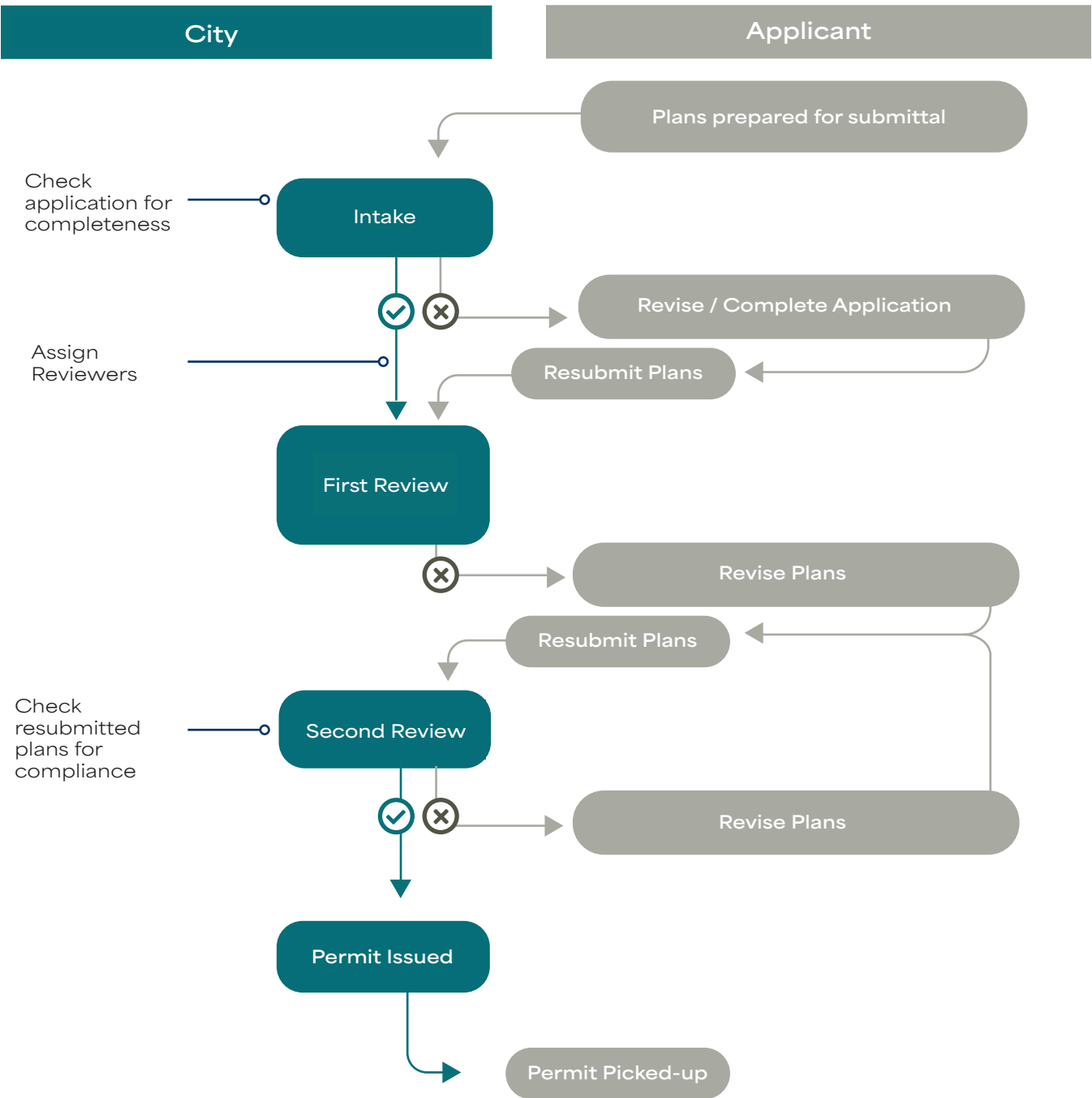
Typical Development Process

Land development in Alabama involves multiple steps that can be complex and difficult to navigate, especially with varying regulations across jurisdictions. A more consistent and transparent process attracts developers by providing clarity and certainty. The following flowchart outlines the typical development process, serving as a reference for Selma to refine its approach and improve efficiency.



Typical Permitting Timeline

The permitting process is a key step in development, though city reviewers control only a portion of the overall timeline. The actual review time varies based on the complexity, quality, and completeness of each application. The following flowchart outlines a typical permitting timeline.



Action 3.C. Establish and regularly update a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Description

A CIP is a fundamental management document that outlines projected capital needs, priorities, funding estimates and sources, and time frames for completion. Typical projects included in the CIP are related to (but not limited to) streets, traffic management, pedestrian and bike paths, parks, recreation, City facilities, drainage, etc. A CIP will typically include clearly defined project categories. The CIP may be established for a period of three to ten years and is typically updated annually.

Need

Selma currently lacks a CIP to effectively prioritize and manage infrastructure projects and investments. A well-developed CIP will provide a clear roadmap for addressing the city's most pressing needs, from road repairs to facility upgrades, while ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently. By proactively planning for long-term infrastructure needs, Selma can improve its ability to secure funding, attract investment, and maintain and enhance public assets.

Sub-Actions

3.C.1 Inventory and assess existing assets. Conduct a thorough process of mapping and assessing current infrastructure and facilities to identify deficiencies, maintenance needs, and opportunities for upgrades. Use data-driven approaches, such as condition ratings and life-cycle cost analysis, to prioritize investments. Incorporate vulnerability metrics to ensure infrastructure improvements address natural hazards.

3.C.2 Define priorities for Capital Investments. Identify the community's short- and long-term infrastructure needs based on the strategic goals outlined in this plan and through concurrent planning efforts. Engage stakeholders to prioritize projects such as road improvements, water and sewer upgrades, and public facilities.

3.C.3 Establish and regularly update a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). A multi-year Capital Improvements Plan should be adopted and maintained. The CIP is a fundamental management document that outlines projected capital needs, priorities, funding estimates and sources, and time-frames for completion. Typical projects included in the CIP are related to (but not limited to) streets, traffic management, pedestrian and bike paths, parks, recreation, City facilities, drainage, etc. A CIP will typically include clearly defined project categories. The CIP may be established for a period of three to ten years and is typically updated annually.

Focus Areas:



Partners:

- Public Works

Funding:

- HUD CDBG
- HUD NOFOs
- DOT Grants (Transportation)
- EPA Grants (Water and Wastewater Infrastructure)

Time Frame:

- Short-Term

The CIP would contain projects to be undertaken over many years and is typically funded on an annual basis. Criteria should be established for evaluating projects to be included in the CIP and when they should be funded. Criteria could include:

- **Infrastructure need** – The current condition of the infrastructure, improvement cost versus the cost of inaction.
- **Project viability** – The degree of understanding about the project, existing planning, or potential risk involved.
- **Community benefit** – Benefits to the greater city, both direct and indirect (how many benefit and how).



EXAMPLE

Since 2016, the City of Mobile has funded a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to address critical infrastructure needs, support community priorities, and reflect the vision described in the Map for Mobile. The CIP is one of the primary methods for implementing the City's long-range plans through physical projects.

The City of Mobile's CIP Program was funded with the renewal of the one-cent sales tax in 2015. With this, the city positioned itself to begin addressing an estimated \$250 million in maintenance needs by defining a capital program for the next three years. At the time, capital expenditures were not making a dent in the backlog.

The renewal provided a \$21 million per year jump start for much needed infrastructure improvements. That funding, combined with

other funding sources to repair, replace, and rebuild infrastructure across Mobile provided a total of \$110 million for improvements.

Projects were based on input from Citizens, Professional Staff, and Elected Officials to ensure investments aligned with Community needs, and prioritized based on project viability, infrastructure criticality, community benefit, and strategic alignment with the Map for Mobile.

The 2016-2018 CIP provided a strong foundation for a robust, long range capital program. In 2019, with the renewal of the one-cent sales tax, an additional \$4 Million was allocated to begin making progress on City Facilities improvements. This brought the CIP program to \$25 million to be renewed annually for the next five years. This funding, along with several large State and Federal grant awards, including the RESTORE Act, has helped the city make progress on multiple long-envisioned, transformative projects.



4. PLACE-BASED STRATEGIES

Managing the physical environment, both built and natural, is a critical aspect of the Plan. This chapter provides guidance for Selma's physical development, infrastructure improvement, and management of natural resources. The future land use component in this chapter serves as the foundation for the city's zoning regulations. This component also substantially influences the Plan's other topics, specifically infrastructure, housing, and economic development.

A Placed-Based Approach

This plan takes a place-based approach to shaping the future development of Selma. There are a number of advantages to this enhanced approach, including the following:

- It describes an overall intent for each area of the city, which helps staff, elected officials, developers/builders, and the public understand whether a particular development fits the spirit of the plan;
- It sets clear expectations about the physical characteristics of development in an easy-to-understand format;
- It indicates the key infrastructure (such as sidewalks and landscaping) that would be beneficial or expected in a particular area; and
- It establishes a foundation for zoning code updates and other regulations, especially form-based standards.

Chapter Organization

- Development Strategy
- Future Character Map
- How to Read this Chapter
- Character Types
- Priority Areas

Development Strategy

The development strategy map depicts concepts and general locations where future development is encouraged. This diagram portrays a high-level view of anticipated development concepts detailed in the Plan. The boundaries of these concept areas are intended to be general.

INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT



Create a more vibrant Downtown and riverfront. Encourage infill and redevelopment within the Downtown area that supports live, work, play opportunities. Development should reinforce the area's unique historic character, and leverage proximity to the riverfront, and surrounding neighborhoods.



Enhance major corridors. Improve the appearance of public and private development and safety for all users along primary corridors to promote a positive impression of the city.



Enhance gateway locations. Prioritizing investment in gateway locations to create a welcoming entry point for residents and visitors.



Support institutional, industrial, and employment centers.

Encourage growth within areas that support or could support significant concentrations of non-retail employment including institutional, office, and industrial users.



Revitalize neighborhoods. Focus public and private investment in traditional neighborhoods that may be experiencing decline. Development should support better utilization of vacant land, improved neighborhood viability, and diversification of the city's housing options. Revitalization may involve reinvestment in existing housing, where feasible, infill, and redevelopment that allows the neighborhood to evolve.

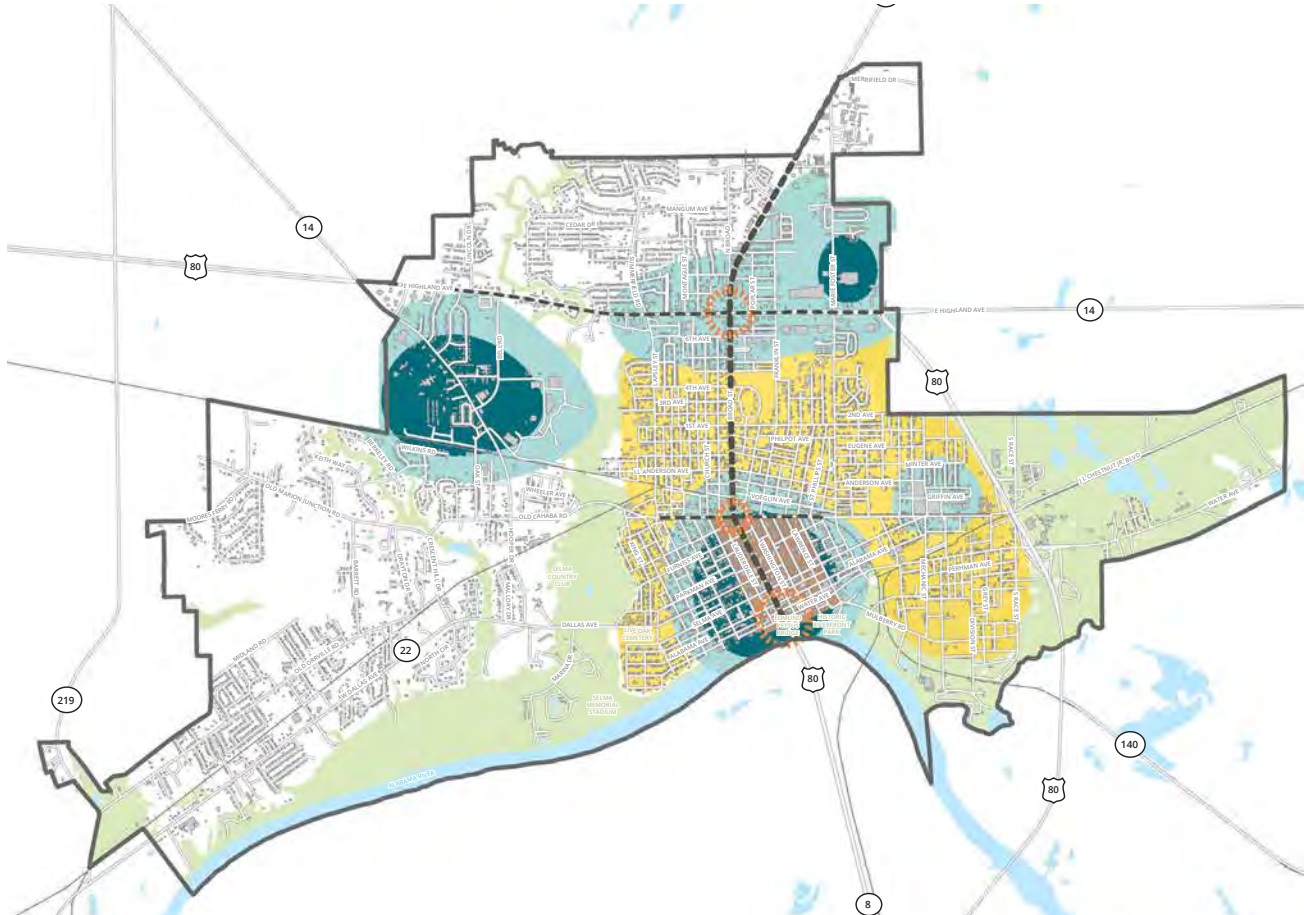
LIMITED GROWTH AND CONSERVATION AREAS



Conserve open space on potentially sensitive land.

Conserve land with potentially significant environmental or development constraints. Conservation may include preservation as open space or reasonable mitigation of development impacts.

Conceptual Development Strategy



- Downtown
- Employment Centers
- Major Corridors
- Gateway Locations
- Neighborhoods
- Potentially Sensitive Land
- City Limits

Developing the Strategy

As part of the planning process, community members helped create a map by marking places they wanted to protect, grow, or change in Selma.

- Protect areas were mostly downtown and in nearby neighborhoods.
- Grow areas were mainly downtown and along the riverfront.
- Change areas were spread across the city, with some clusters in areas affected by disasters.

By combining all the feedback, the map revealed patterns that helped shape the city's land use priorities and the overall development strategy in the plan. See Appendix B for the composite map of locations.

Future Character Map

The Future Character Map expresses in more specific terms, the intent for how Selma should use its land resources in the future. For the entire city, this map identifies a preferred future character type. Each type describes attributes of urban form and function including the size and type of buildings and their relationship to the street, the surrounding street and block pattern, parking and access, and land uses. Each of the character types listed below is defined in the pages that follow.

Mixed Use Areas

-  Downtown
-  Riverfront
-  Mixed-Use Commercial

Residential Areas

-  Historic District
-  Neighborhood 1
-  Neighborhood 2

Institutional Areas

-  Campus

Employment Areas

-  Flex Employment
-  Industrial

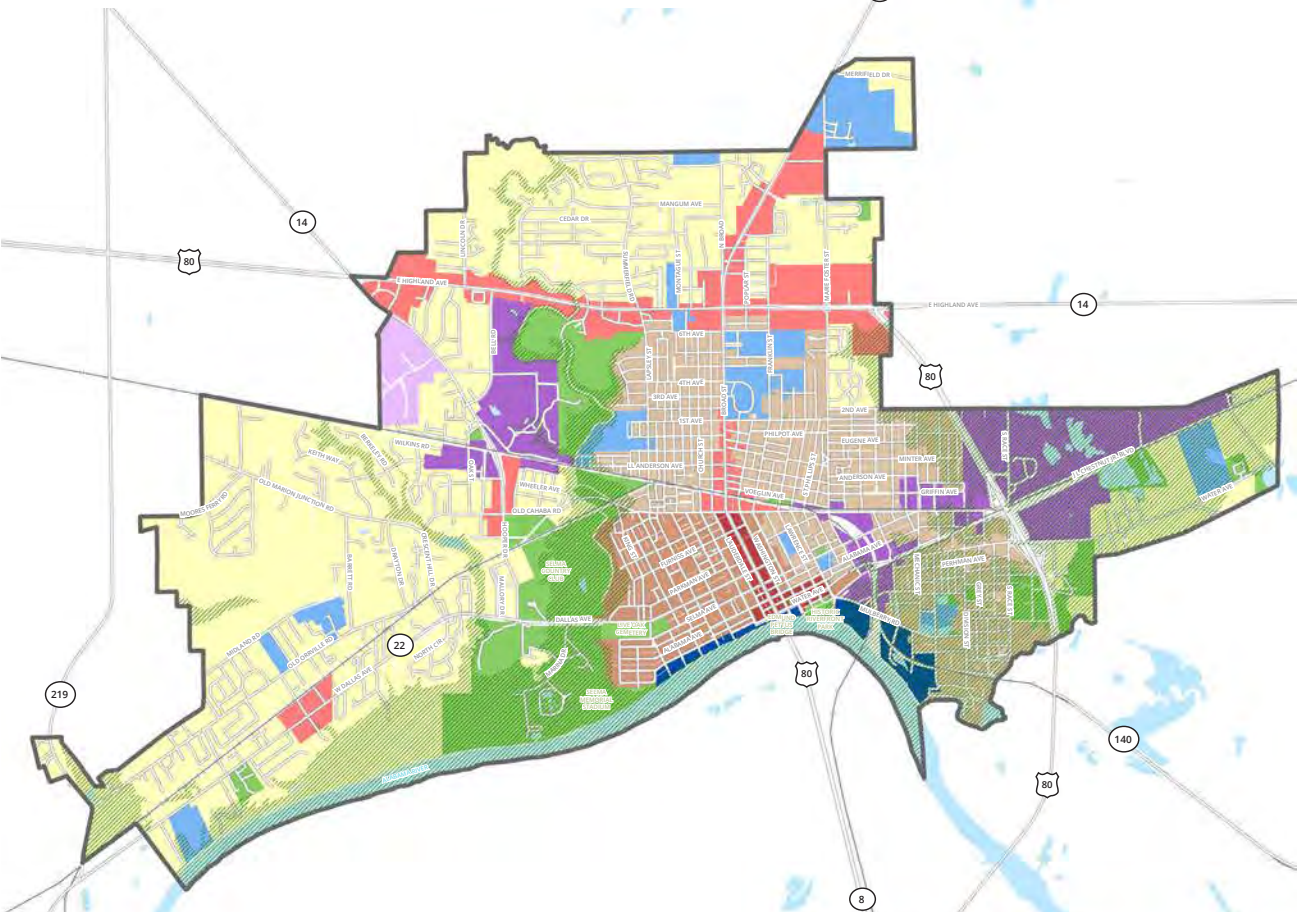
Conservation Areas

-  Parks and Open Space
-  Environmentally Sensitive Development

The Future Land Use and Character Map is a tool for the city to guide decisions about future land use and development over time. This component of the Plan is not a mandate for development and is not legally binding but describes the City's expectations for future development. It is implemented over time through the city's zoning regulations and various public and private development decisions. It will serve as the basis for potential future zoning updates.

(see p. 93 for more distinction between the Plan and zoning).

Future Character Map



- Downtown
- Riverfront
- Mixed-Use Commercial
- Historic District
- Neighborhood 1
- Neighborhood 2
- Flex Employment
- Industrial
- Campus
- Parks and Open Space
- Environmentally Sensitive Development
- City Limits

How to Read a Character Type

The Future Character Types within this chapter follow a consistent format (shown on p. 72), and include the following elements:

Description

Identifies the name of the character type as it appears on the Future Character Map.

Intent

Explains the overarching vision and role of the character type within the broader community framework. This includes key planning principles, goals for land use and design, and priorities such as walkability, housing choice, economic development, environmental stewardship, or community identity. It helps guide decision-making and communicate the long-term purpose of the area.

Building Blocks

Describes the foundational elements that shape the physical form of development, such as building height, massing, setbacks, lot dimensions, and site layout. These provide a general sense of the intended scale and spatial character. While illustrative and conceptual in nature, they complement the more detailed, enforceable standards found in the Zoning Ordinance, which may vary based on the specific zoning district applied.

Example Pattern

A simplified, plan-view diagram illustrating a prototypical layout of blocks, lots, streets, and open spaces found in the character type. It demonstrates typical relationships between buildings and the public realm, giving a clear spatial understanding of how the area may look when developed or redeveloped according to the intended vision.

Example Character

A collection of illustrative images that visually express the desired atmosphere, architectural character, streetscape quality, and sense of place. These images are aspirational and serve as a tool to align expectations around aesthetics and experiential qualities.

Primary and Secondary Uses

Outlines the range of land uses that are appropriate or encouraged within the character type. Primary uses reflect the dominant functions—such as residential, commercial, or industrial—while secondary uses support the primary uses, often adding to the area's vitality, diversity, and resilience (e.g., civic spaces, accessory retail, or neighborhood services). These are generally aligned with use categories in the Zoning Ordinance and help set expectations for future development.

Character Tile

A detailed, birds-eye diagram that shows how design strategies are applied to achieve the intended character. Each tile is drawn to the same scale to allow for side-by-side comparisons across different character types, making differences in density, building footprint, street pattern, and open space readily apparent. The tile conveys how all physical components—buildings, streets, landscape—work together to create a cohesive place.

DOWNTOWN CORE

The Downtown Core is the historic and civic heart of the city. Development includes new and adaptively reused historic buildings that support a mix of employment, commercial, entertainment, civic, and residential uses in single-use and vertically mixed-use buildings. Buildings frame attractive, pedestrian-scale streets.

INTENT

- Promote infill development on vacant lots.
- Support multi-family residential development
- Reduce/consolidate surface parking (encourage shared parking).
- Retain historic character through adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Improve connections and transitions to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Employ standards for quality architectural design.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Height Range	2-5 stories, minimum (generally at least 25 feet).
Building Form	Variety of types from freestanding buildings to attached buildings. Civic buildings may have varying building form and placement from surroundings.
Building Setback	0 to 10 feet (generally consistent within a block). Greater setbacks for civic or institutional uses are appropriate.
Building Materials	Brick, plaster, siding (vinyl and wood), stone, stucco; metal or shingle roofing; awnings
Streets	Gridded street pattern with short, walkable block lengths (no more than 400 feet). 8 to 12-foot-wide sidewalks; crosswalks; traffic calming measures, and other streetscape amenities.
Parking	Shared surface parking located behind buildings; structured parking; on-street parking. Allow space for pick-up/to-go orders.
Open Space	Plazas, pocket parks, formal parks. Public realm (space between buildings and streets) acts as open space.

EXAMPLE PATTERN



EXAMPLE CHARACTER



PRIMARY USES

- Vertical mixed-use
- Office
- Commercial
- Civic/Institutional
- Hotel
- Multi-family residential

SECONDARY USES

- Parks and open space

DOWNTOWN CORE

The Downtown Core is the historic and civic heart of the city. Development includes new and adaptively reused historic buildings that support a mix of employment, commercial, entertainment, civic, and residential uses in single-use and vertically mixed-use buildings. Buildings frame attractive, pedestrian-scale streets.

INTENT

- Promote infill development on vacant lots.
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- Reduce/consolidate surface parking (encourage shared parking).
- Retain historic character through adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Improve connections and transitions to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Employ standards for quality architectural design.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Height Range	2-5 stories, minimum (generally at least 25 feet).
Building Form	Variety of types from freestanding buildings to attached buildings. Civic buildings may have varying building form and placement from surroundings.
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Building Materials	Brick, plaster, siding (vinyl and wood), stone, stucco; metal or shingle roofing; awnings
Streets	Gridded street pattern with short, walkable block lengths (no more than 400 feet). 8 to 12-foot-wide sidewalks; crosswalks; traffic calming measures, and other streetscape amenities.
Parking	Shared surface parking located behind buildings; structured parking; on-street parking. Allow space for pick-up/to-go orders.
Open Space	Plazas, pocket parks, formal parks. Public realm (space between buildings and streets) acts as open space.

EXAMPLE PATTERN



EXAMPLE CHARACTER



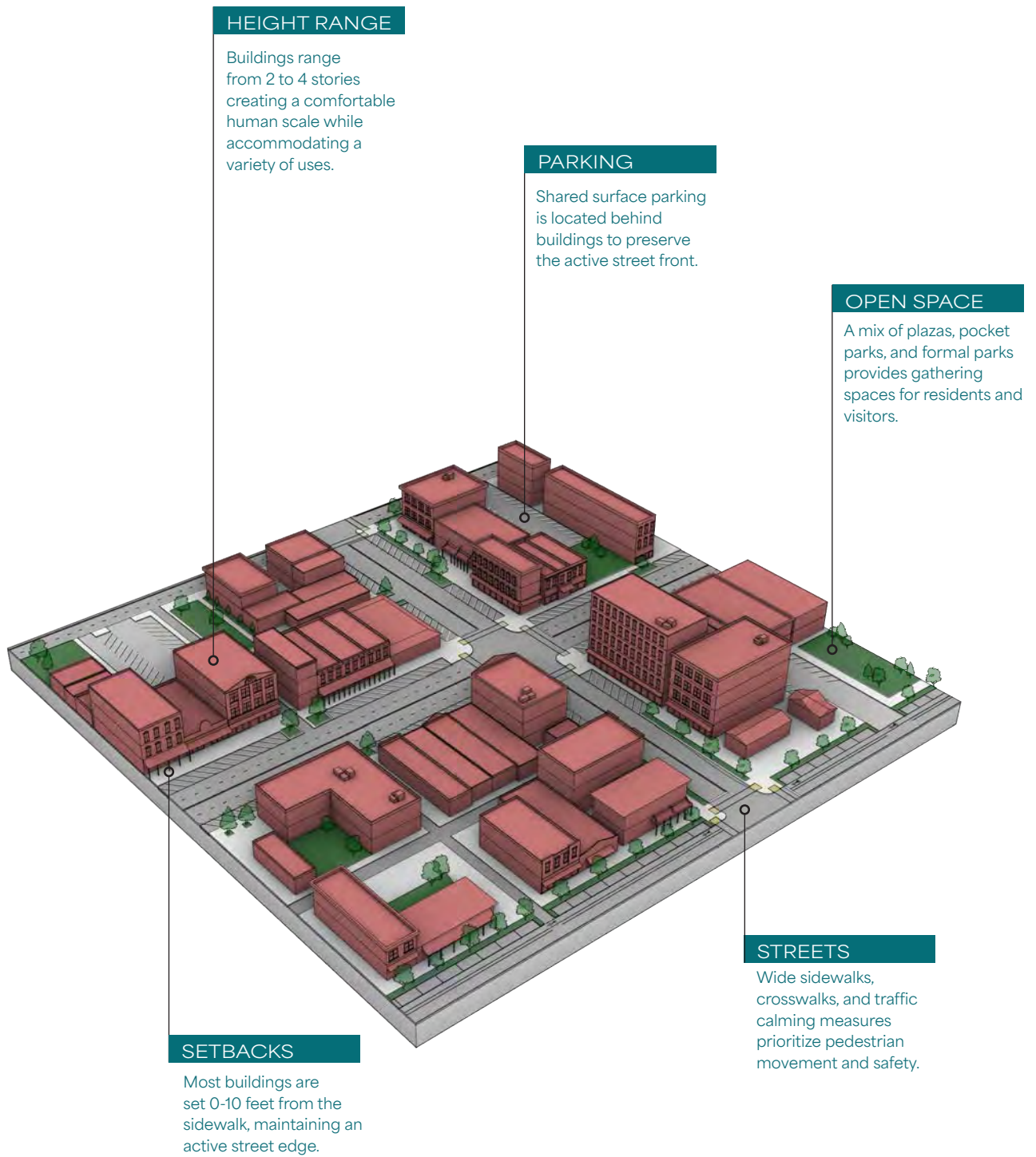
PRIMARY USES

- Vertical mixed-use
- Office
- Commercial
- Civic/Institutional
- Hotel
- Multi-family residential

SECONDARY USES

- Parks and open space

CHARACTER TYPE TILE



Scale: Tile above represents approximately .06 sq. miles

RIVERFRONT

Riverfront Development is an area appropriate for a range of high-quality development along the Alabama River which preserves and protects the unique natural, scenic and historic resource of the riverfront. Development may include residential, commercial, office, an integrated mix of uses, as well as civic and recreational areas.

INTENT

- Encourage conservation of potentially sensitive environmental features along the riverfront.
- Support integrated mixed-use developments and buildings where there is a critical mass and pedestrian activity.
- Encourage high quality architecture and materials for highly visible sites.
- Integrate public open space and recreational areas into developments.
- Integrate public open space features and connectivity to the trail network.

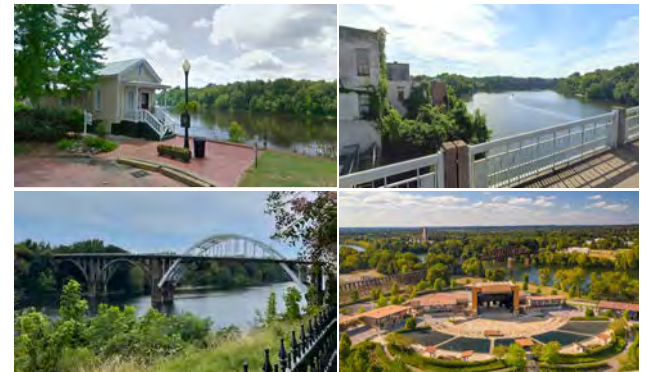
BUILDING BLOCKS

Height Range	1-3 stories, minimum (generally at least 15 feet). Heights should be cognizant of opportunities for and protection of river views.
Building Form	Variety of types from freestanding buildings to attached buildings.
Building Setback	Wide variety of building setbacks. New buildings that are directly along the river should have at least 20 feet between any structure and the top of bank.
Building Materials	Brick, plaster, siding (vinyl and wood), stone, stucco; metal or shingle roofing; awnings
Streets	Small, grid-like blocks with a streetscape designed to encourage pedestrian activity.
Parking	Shared parking areas located behind buildings. On-street parking.
Open Space	Green space is preserved along the river bank. Formal parks, pocket parks, plazas, "green infrastructure," public realm acts as open space.

EXAMPLE PATTERN



EXAMPLE CHARACTER



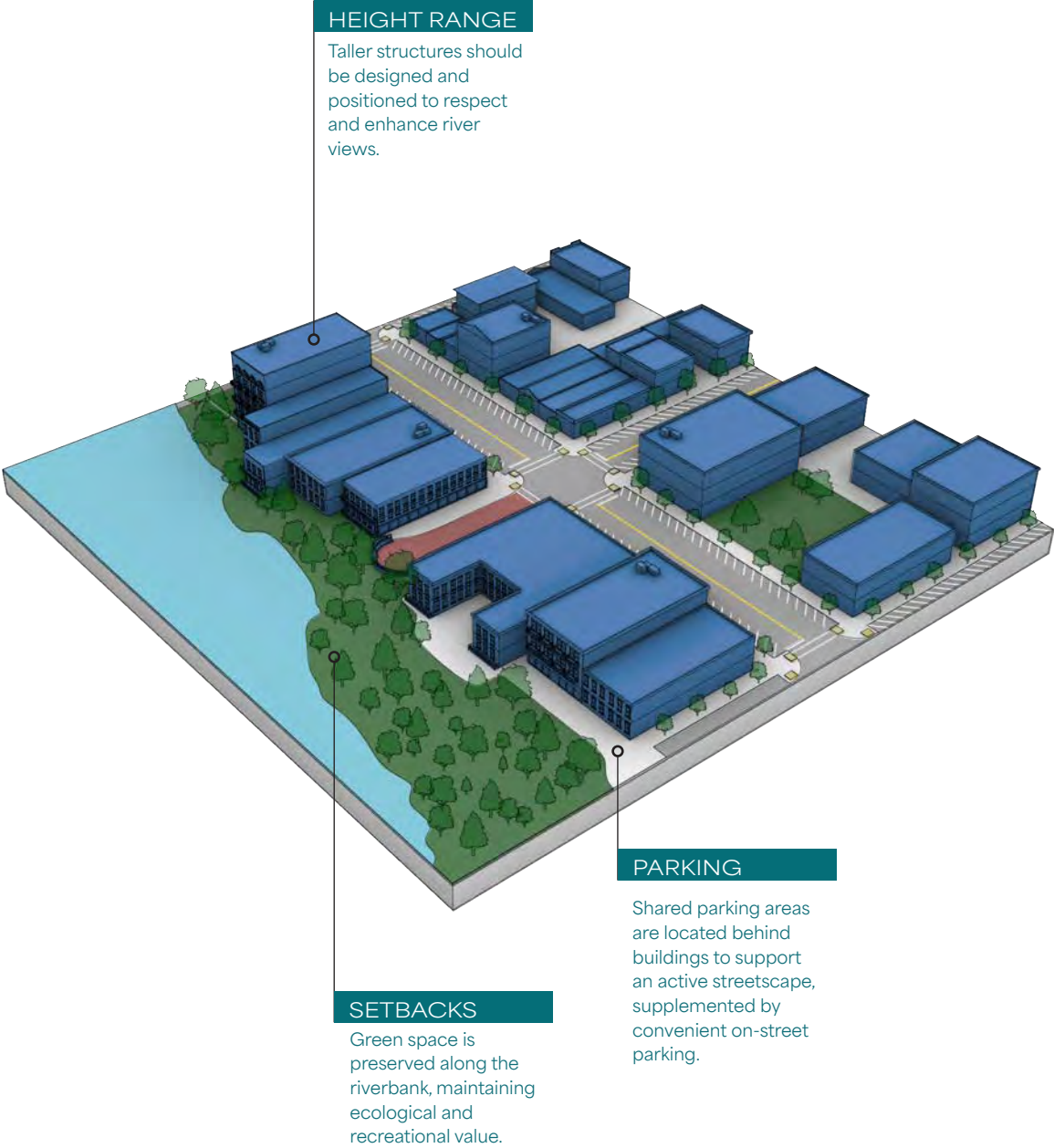
PRIMARY USES

- Vertical mixed-use
- Office
- Commercial
- Civic/Institutional
- Hotel
- Multi-family residential

SECONDARY USES

- Parks and open space

CHARACTER TYPE TILE



Scale: Tile above represents approximately .06 sq. miles

MIXED COMMERCIAL

Commercial development which includes a wide range of retail, offices, and services in a generally car-oriented pattern. This type of development tends to serve the larger community, is typically located along major corridors or intersections, and may include regional destinations, such as shopping malls and car dealerships.

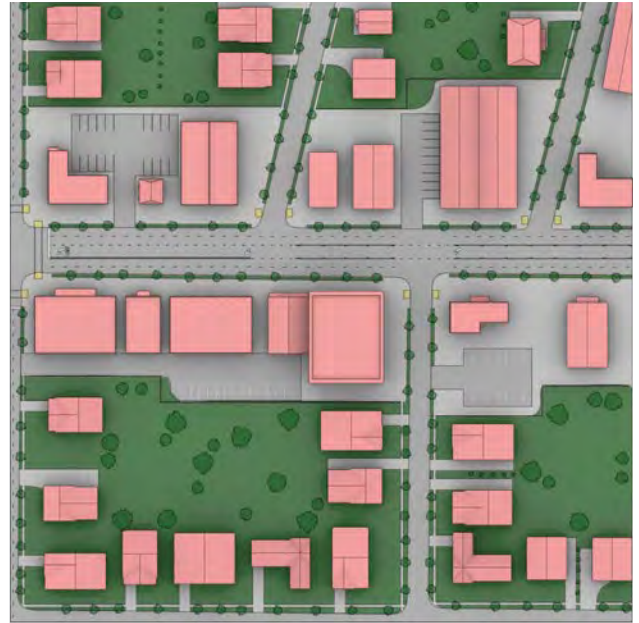
INTENT

- Accommodate a wide range of commercial uses.
- Concentrate future commercial development at major intersections.
- Encourage new buildings to be located near the primary street with parking areas consolidated between buildings in a configuration that can be shared by multiple tenants or uses.
- Provide connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and transit service locations.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Height Range	1-3 stories, minimum (generally at least 20 feet).
Building Form	Usually freestanding buildings with a variety of form and placement.
Building Setback	Varies.
Building Materials	Brick, plaster, siding (vinyl and wood), stone, stucco; metal or shingle roofing; awnings
Streets	Blocks may be longer and have fewer street connections than downtown commercial areas.
Parking	Shared parking is provided as feasible, particularly in shopping areas. Street parking available in some areas.
Open Space	Limited green spaces; medians, landscaped setbacks, and privately owned green space.

EXAMPLE PATTERN



EXAMPLE CHARACTER



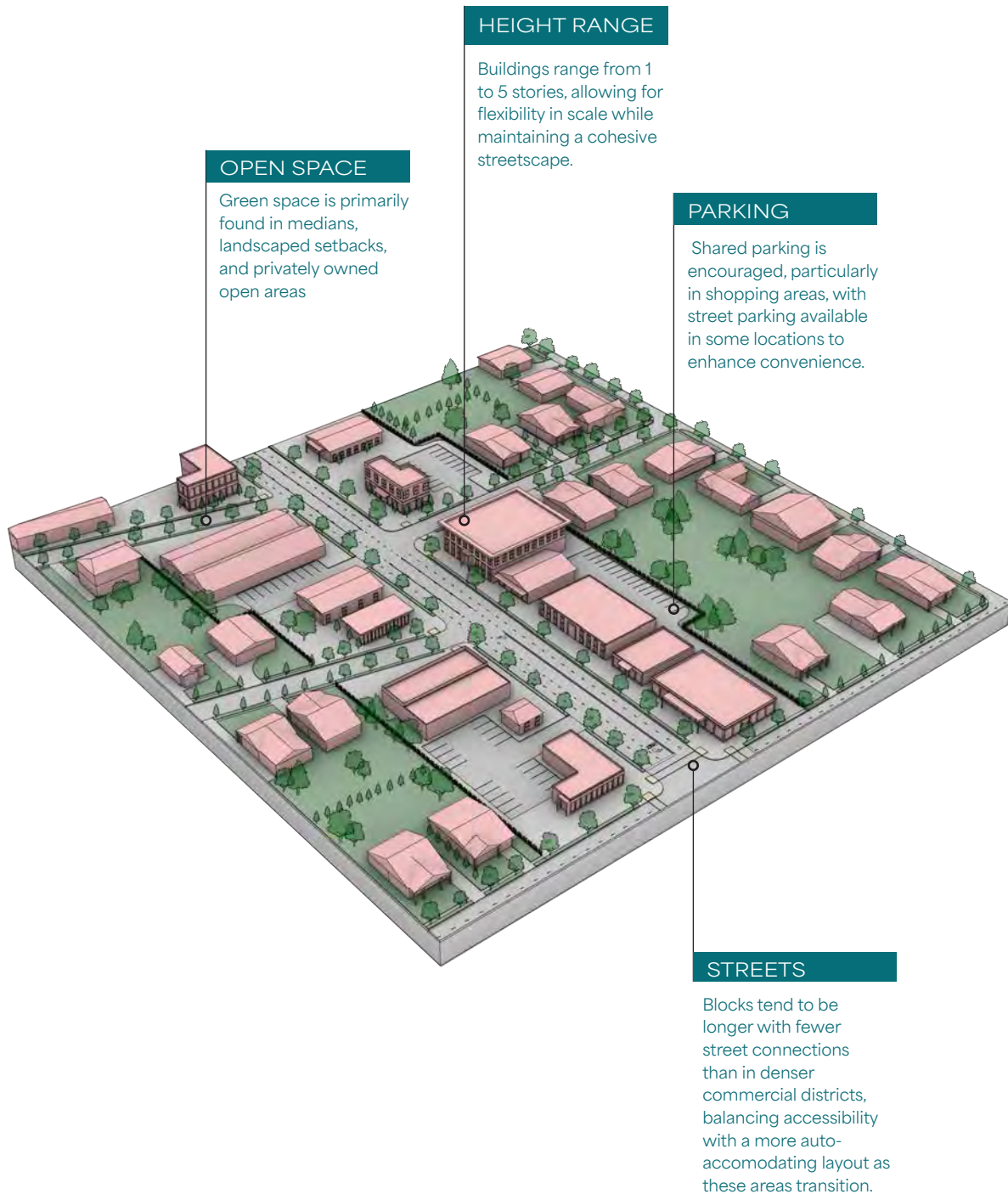
PRIMARY USES

- Commercial
- Office
- Vertical mixed-use

SECONDARY USES

- Civic/Institutional
- Parks and open space

CHARACTER TYPE TILE



Scale: Tile above represents approximately .06 sq. miles

HISTORIC DISTRICT

This character type includes all four designated historic districts within Selma, not covered by other types. As a natural extension of the downtown areas, this designation supports a high-quality mixed-use setting with opportunities for residential, employment, neighborhood-scale commercial, and institutional development at a historic scale.

INTENT

- Continue historic preservation efforts to maintain the existing character within local historic districts.
- Support adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development.
- Improve connections between Downtown and historic neighborhoods.
- Improve and provide public realm features such as signs, sidewalks, landscaping, and street trees.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Height Range	1-3 stories, minimum (generally at least 15 feet).
Building Form	Free-standing or attached to adjacent buildings. Variety of building styles.
Building Setback	Generally 0-25 feet on the front and back sides of lot, possibly closer. Typically 5-10 feet on other sides of lot.
Building Materials	Materials consistent with development of the 19th and early 20th centuries like brick, stone, cedar and other hard wood siding. Roofing is usually shingles or metal.
Streets	Blocks are small and walkable. Streets generally form a grid system within the neighborhoods; alleys are common.
Parking	On-street and private off-street, generally located behind buildings. Occasional private parking lots for businesses off street or alley.
Open Space	Common private green space through residential yards. Non-residential land uses may have open spaces like playgrounds and gardens.

EXAMPLE PATTERN



EXAMPLE CHARACTER



PRIMARY USES

- Residential (all types)
- Neighborhood-scale office or commercial

SECONDARY USES

- Civic/Institutional
- Parks and open space

CHARACTER TYPE TILE



Scale: Tile above represents approximately .06 sq. miles

NEIGHBORHOOD 1

These areas are appropriate for a mix of compact housing ranging from small-lot single family, to townhomes and small multi-family buildings. Traditional neighborhoods have a walkable block pattern with integrated neighborhood amenities such as parks and schools. Small office, commercial, and civic uses may also exist in these areas along major thoroughfares.

INTENT

- Encourage neighborhood-scale commercial development located within neighborhoods.
- Allow residential infill that fits-in with neighboring homes (building scale, placement, etc.).
- Support more intense residential infill and redevelopment adjacent to commercial or mixed use areas.
- Encourage shared open space amenities and pedestrian connectivity.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Height Range	1-3 stories, minimum (generally at least 15 feet).
Building Form	Variety of building types and sizes.
Building Setback	Generally 10-20 feet on the front and back sides of lot, possibly closer. Typically 5-10 feet on other sides of lot.
Building Materials	Common housing materials like brick, vinyl / wood siding, and stucco. Roofing is usually shingles or metal.
Streets	Blocks are small and walkable. Streets generally form a grid system within the neighborhood; alleys are common.
Parking	On-street and private off-street.
Open Space	Preserved passive open space, neighborhood / community parks, pocket parks, private yards, connections to school yards.

EXAMPLE PATTERN



EXAMPLE CHARACTER



PRIMARY USES

- Small-scale multi-family residential
- Single family residential
- Attached residential (townhomes, duplexes)

SECONDARY USES

- Civic/Institutional
- Neighborhood-scale office or commercial
- Parks and open space

CHARACTER TYPE TILE



OPEN SPACE

A variety of green spaces, including community and neighborhood parks, pocket parks, and private yards, provide recreational opportunities.

SETBACKS

Front and rear setbacks typically range from 10 to 25 feet, with side setbacks generally between 5 and 10 feet, though some buildings may be placed closer together to enhance walkability.

BUILDING FORM

A mix of building types and sizes creates architectural diversity and accommodates different residential and community needs.

Scale: Tile above represents approximately .06 sq. miles

NEIGHBORHOOD 2

Compared to Neighborhood 1 areas, these neighborhoods have a more uniform housing pattern with larger average lots and longer blocks, that are more car-oriented. These neighborhoods may include areas of small-lot, attached or multifamily dwellings that have a single family scale. They also may feature parks and schools within the neighborhood and may be connected to commercial areas.

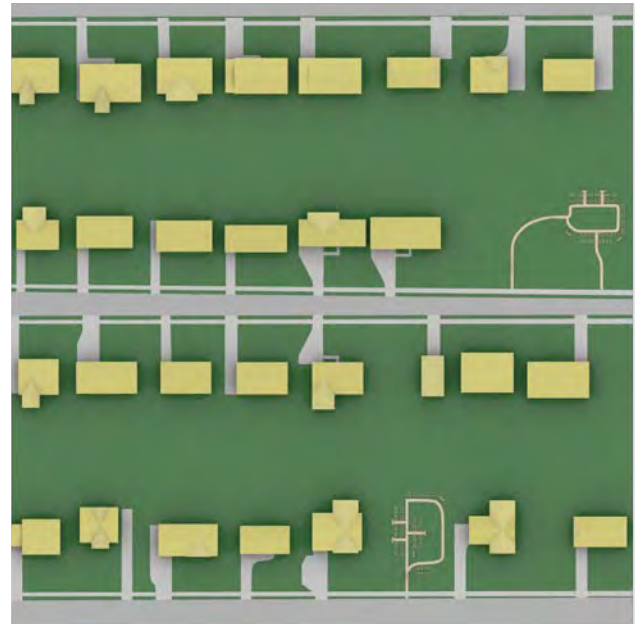
INTENT

- Allow residential infill that fits-in with neighboring homes (building scale, placement, etc.).
- Support neighborhood-scale commercial uses located at the edges of a neighborhood.
- Encourage shared open space features within the neighborhood.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Height Range	1-2.5 stories, minimum (generally up to 35 feet).
Building Form	Variety of building types and sizes clustered and grouped but linked by a connected street network.
Building Setback	Generally 10-20 feet, consistent with the block.
Building Materials	Common housing materials like brick, vinyl siding, wood siding, and stucco. Roofing is usually shingles or metal.
Streets	Blocks are small and walkable. Streets form an irregular grid system within the neighborhood; may include alleys.
Parking	On-street and private off-street; may include front-loaded or alley-loaded garages.
Open Space	Preserved passive open space, neighborhood parks, pocket parks, private yards.

EXAMPLE PATTERN



EXAMPLE CHARACTER



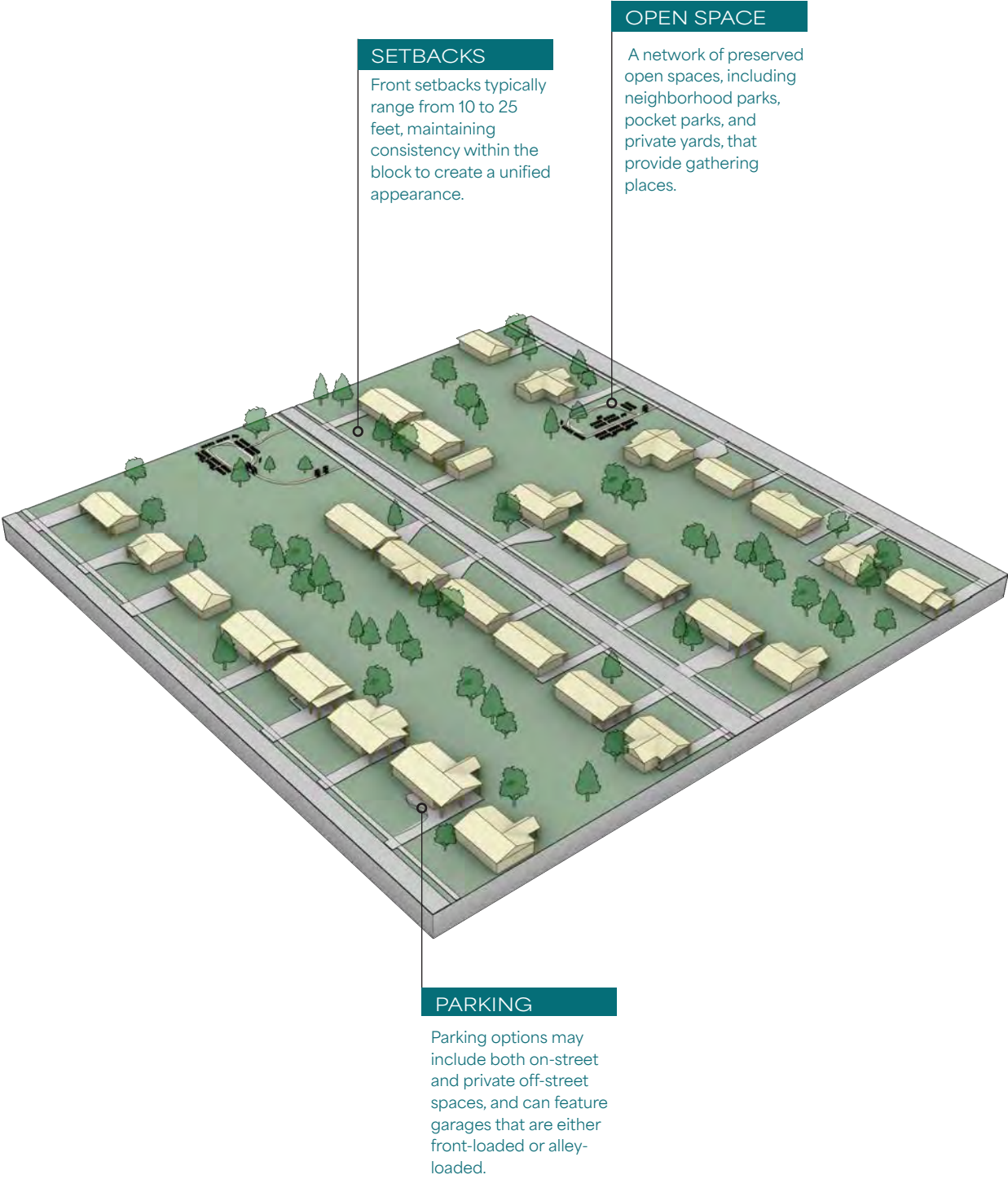
PRIMARY USES

- Single family residential
- Two-family residential
- Attached residential (townhomes)

SECONDARY USES

- Small multi-family residential
- Civic/Institutional
- Commercial
- Parks and open space

CHARACTER TYPE TILE



Scale: Tile above represents approximately .06 sq. miles

FLEX EMPLOYMENT

Flex Employment areas accommodate an array of modern, low-impact industrial uses that include assembly, processing, warehousing, as well as flexible office/industrial space suitable for new technologies or research and development activities. These areas include light industrial and medical facilities.

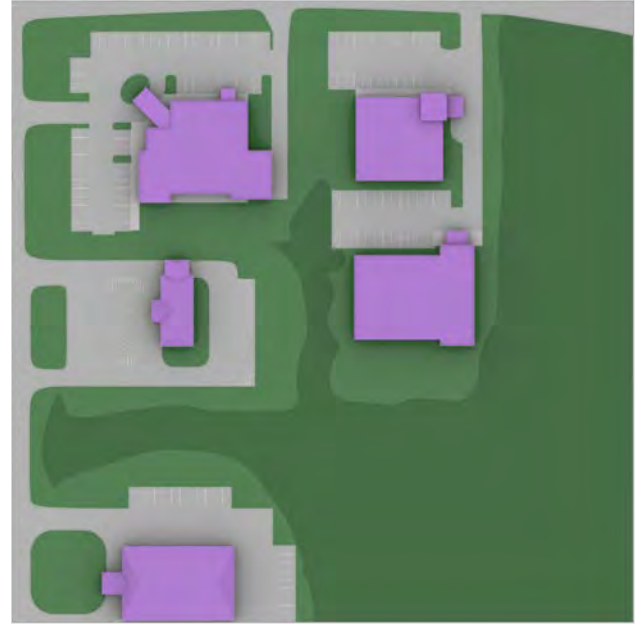
INTENT

- Provide flexible space to support a variety of low-impact industrial activities.
- Encourage the transition of existing industrial uses near residential areas to lower intensity use that are less likely to create negative neighborhood impacts.
- Provide buffering through landscaping and building placement where flex employment sites are adjacent to residential areas.
- Encourage the use of higher-quality building materials and landscaping for highly-visible sites.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Height Range	1-4 stories, minimum (generally at least 20 feet).
Building Form	Large to very large footprint structures offering flexible space to accommodate various users.
Building Setback	Varies; should be consistent with the surrounding context.
Building Materials	Mostly brick and stone structures. Some stucco or plaster, but uncommon. Metal or shingle roofing.
Streets	Varies; street design should reflect the surrounding context.
Parking	Off-street surface lots, shared where possible.
Open Space	Passive preserved land and landscaped setback areas, generally private.

EXAMPLE PATTERN



EXAMPLE CHARACTER



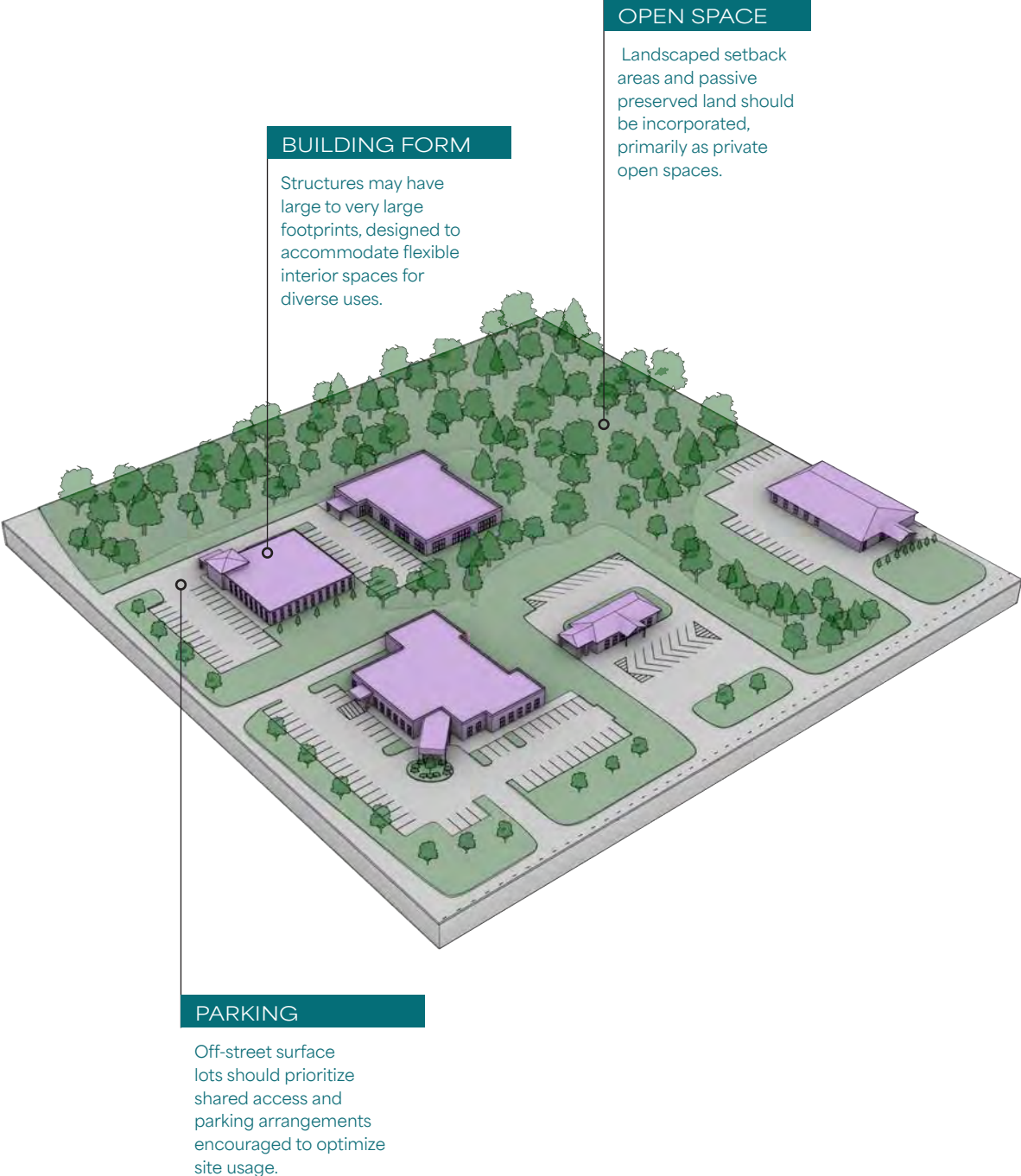
PRIMARY USES

- Light Industrial
- Warehousing/ Distribution
- Commercial
- Office

SECONDARY USES

- Civic/Institutional
- Parks and open space

CHARACTER TYPE TILE



Scale: Tile above represents approximately .06 sq. miles

INDUSTRIAL

This designation applies to large or intense industrial operations including factories and plants. Multiple large footprint buildings are supported by outdoor assembly, storage, and loading areas. Major utilities are also included in this designation.

INTENT

- Support heavy industrial activities away from neighborhoods and other commercial or mixed use areas.
- Utilize natural or man-made buffers (railway, water, forest) to separate industry from other uses.
- Encourage "green infrastructure" and site design practices that reduce environmental impacts.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Height Range	Typically 1-2 stories but varies significantly by use.
Building Form	Large freestanding buildings, sites may occupy one city block or more.
Building Setback	Varies depending on industrial activity.
Building Materials	Mostly brick or metal siding structures. Roofing is usually metal.
Streets	Blocks are long and have few street connections.
Parking	Off street surface lots; may include accommodation for large trucks.
Open Space	Limited green spaces; passive preserved land and landscaped setback areas, generally private.

EXAMPLE PATTERN



EXAMPLE CHARACTER



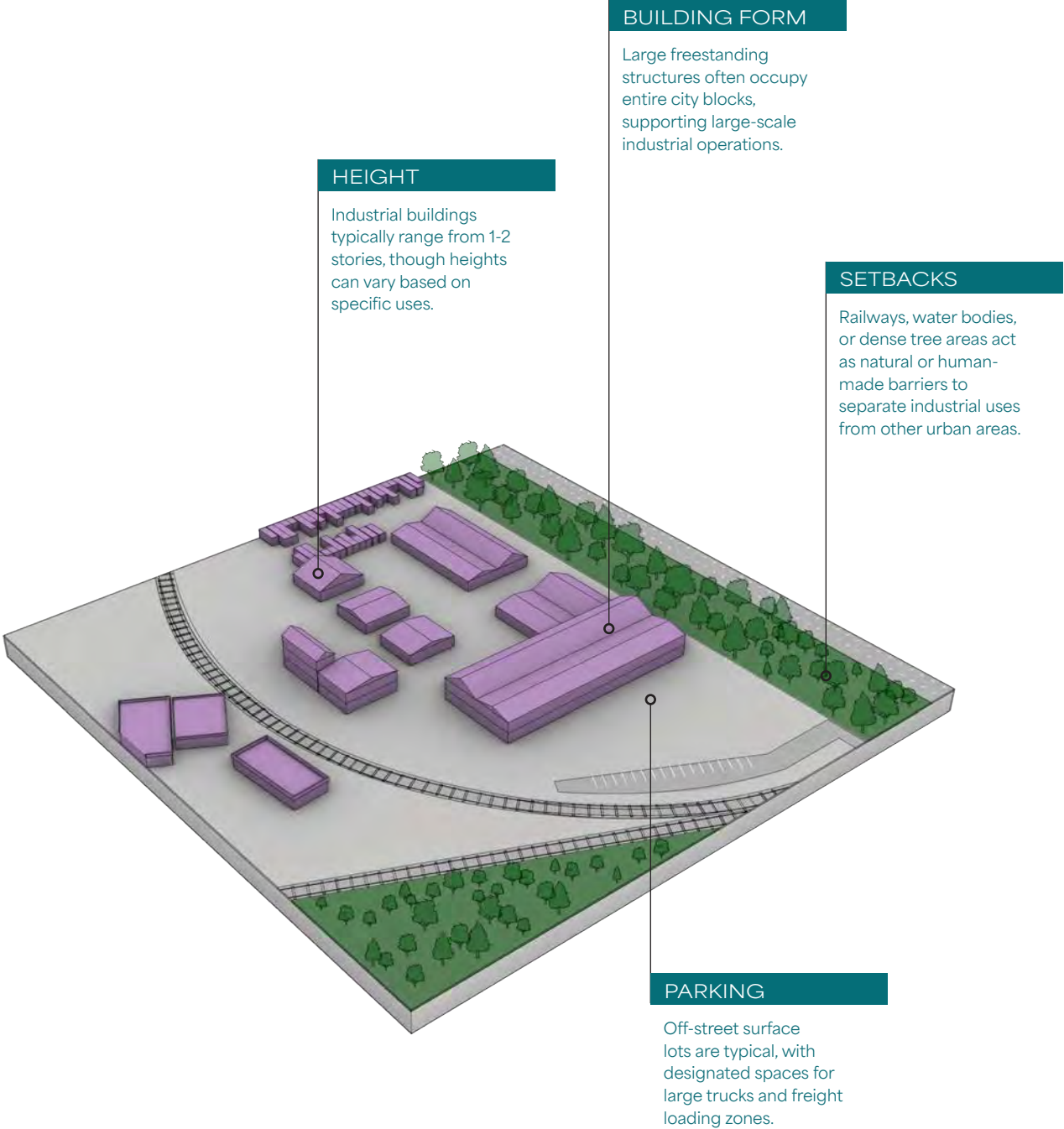
PRIMARY USES

- Heavy Industrial/ Manufacturing
- Warehousing/ Distribution

SECONDARY USES

- Office
- Commercial
- Passive open space

CHARACTER TYPE TILE



Scale: Tile above represents approximately .06 sq. miles

CAMPUS

This Campus classification applies to academic campuses in the community including Selma University and Wallace Community College Selma. It consists of university buildings, campus housing, green spaces, recreation areas, and athletic facilities.

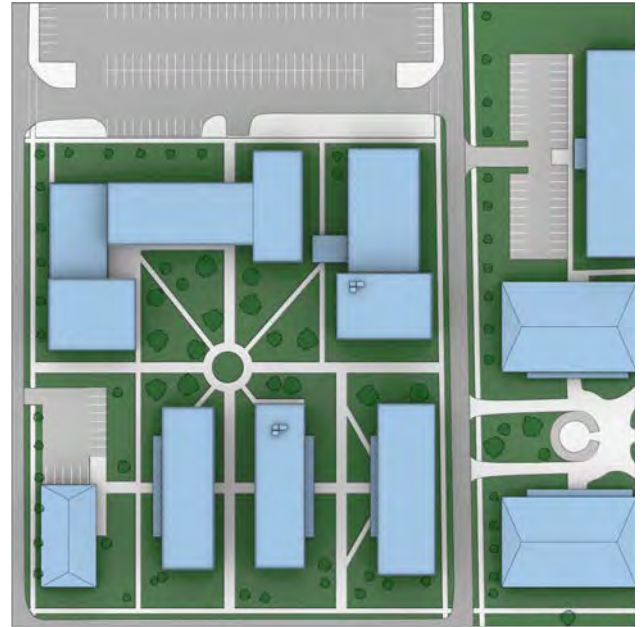
INTENT

- Support campus development based on the needs of the site user.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Height Range	Varies per institutional plans.
Building Form	Key campus buildings are strategically placed on major and minor axes, creating vistas terminated by significant architectural elements.
Building Setback	Varies.
Building Materials	All materials common, especially brick and stone. Roofing can be metal or shingles.
Streets	Curvilinear street pattern with long blocks on the district's edges with a walkable central area.
Parking	Surface lots, structured parking and on-street; may be restricted.
Open Space	Formal parks, athletic fields, common areas, pocket parks.

EXAMPLE PATTERN



EXAMPLE CHARACTER



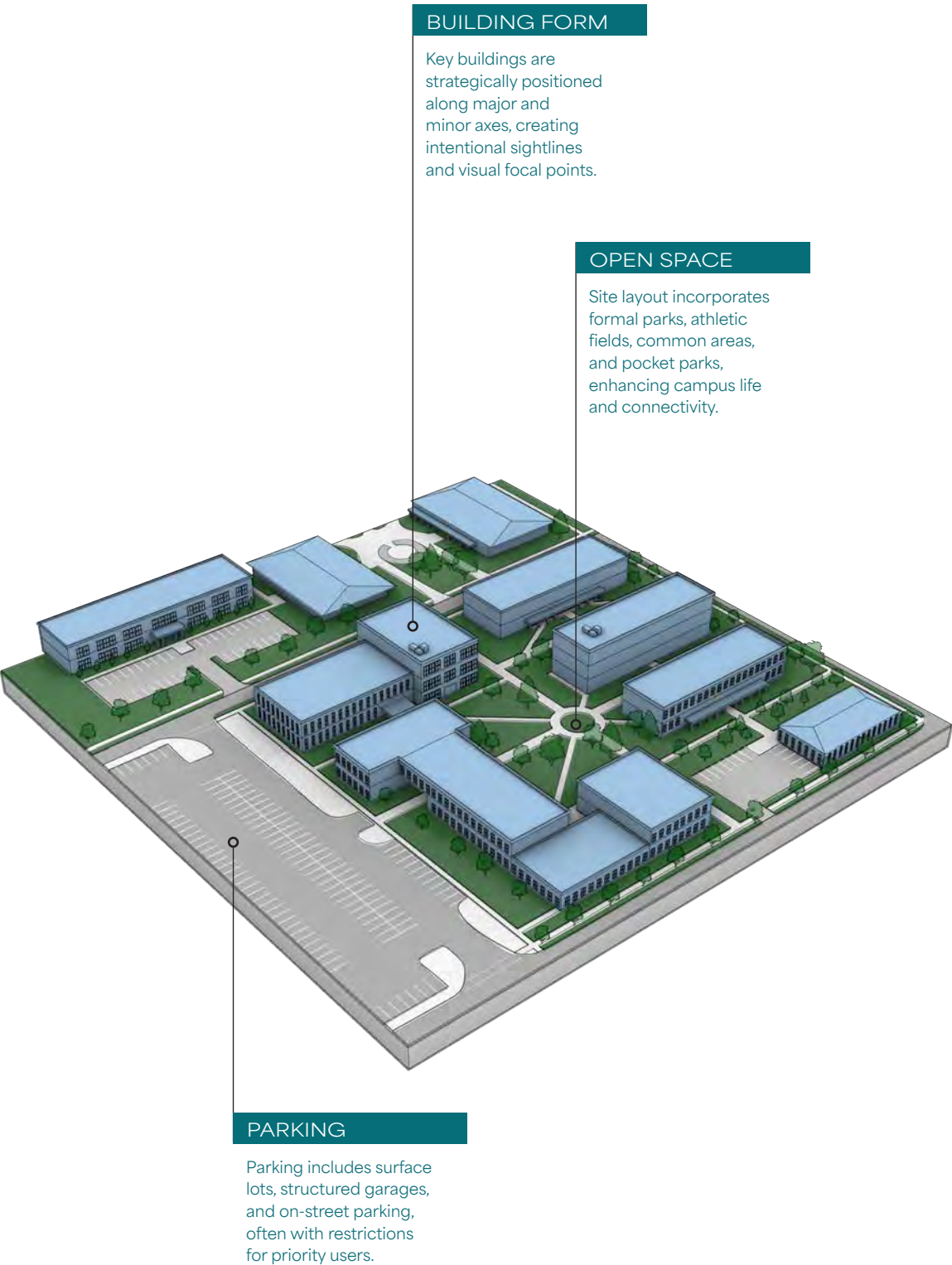
PRIMARY USES

- Civic / Institutional

SECONDARY USES

- Office
- Commercial
- Hotel
- Multi-family residential
- Parks and open space

CHARACTER TYPE TILE



Scale: Tile above represents approximately .06 sq. miles

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The Open Space and Recreation designation includes city and county parks, areas of preserved land, as well as private golf courses and cemeteries which function as open space.

INTENT

- Preserve existing green space.
- Protect and enhance natural scenic areas.
- Provide access to recreational opportunities and support active lifestyles.
- Support opportunities for historic and artistic features and interpretation.

EXAMPLE CHARACTER



ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

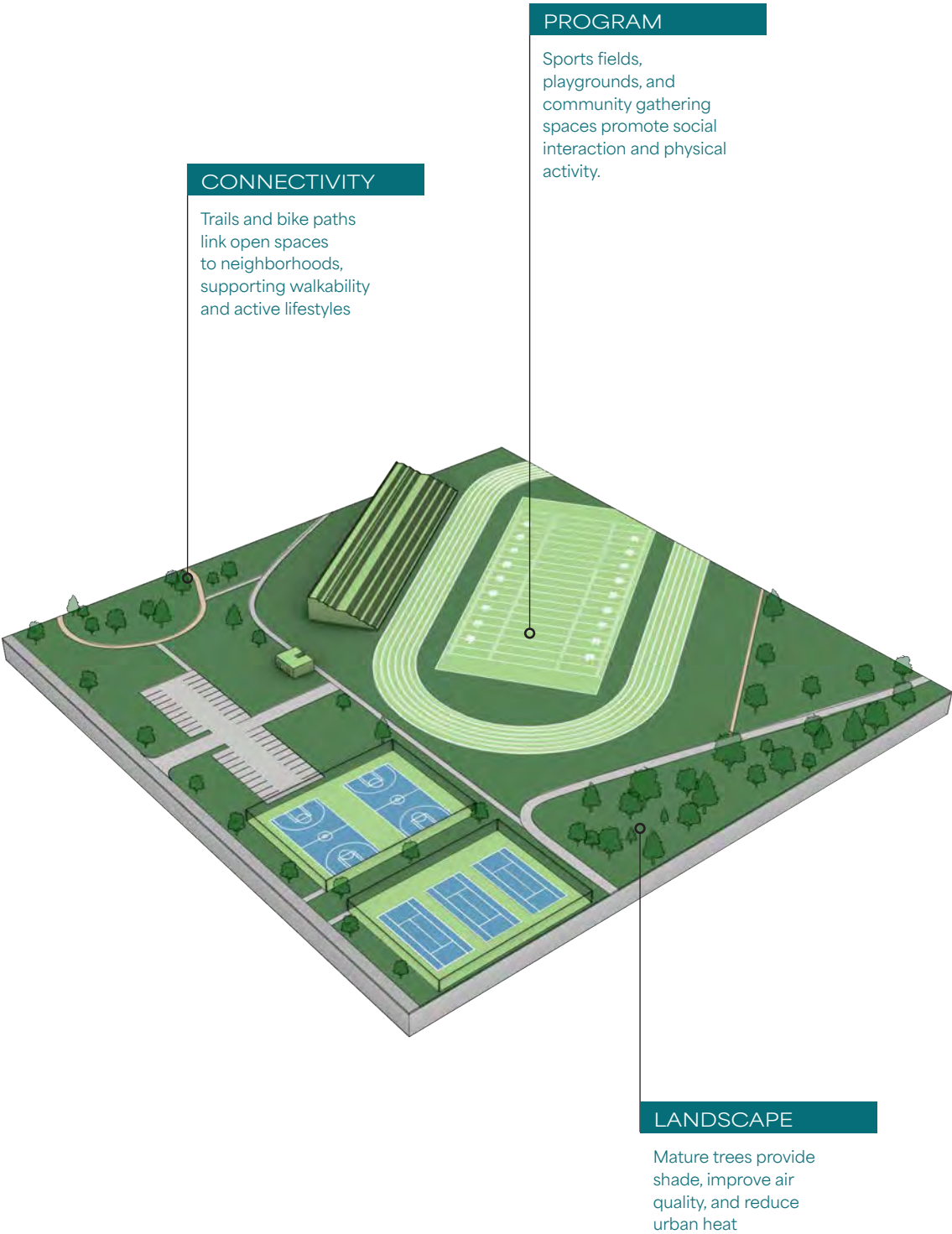
Environmentally Sensitive Development identifies undeveloped land that may exhibit potential for flooding or have other significant development limitations due to physical or environmental conditions. In some cases, these lands also serve as buffers to separate areas that may have the potential to become conflicting land uses.

The Future Land Use and Character Map identifies these areas partially based upon data on environmental constraints that may not correspond precisely with conditions on the ground. When considering rezoning requests or other development proposals, some areas classified as Environmentally Sensitive Development may be determined not to contain anticipated development limitations, or that existing limitations can reasonably be mitigated. In such cases, the future preferred land use should be based on the underlying designations, contextual considerations, and the other relevant policies.

INTENT

- Conserve environmentally sensitive land.
- Buffer incompatible land uses with open space.
- Develop a connected open space network through the city for recreation.
- Open space buffers adjacent to industrial development should be maintained at a width based on the type of industry and its potential to create compatibility problems.

CHARACTER TYPE TILE



Scale: Tile above represents approximately .06 sq. miles

Relationship to Zoning

The Future Land Use and Character Map depicts appropriate future development patterns throughout the city and its planning jurisdiction, which reinforces existing patterns in some areas and supports changes to land use or development patterns in other areas. This element of the Plan is implemented through the city's Zoning Ordinance. Zoning is a legal tool that regulates land use, including types of structures that may be built, how they are to be built, where they are to be built, and how they may be used. Each property in the city is assigned to a zoning district. There may be more than one appropriate zoning category for a particular future land use category. For example, there is one "industrial" future land use category, but there may be two or three industrial zoning districts to account for various intensities, activities, and contexts.

The land use vision is implemented over time through many distinct public and private development decisions. For example, property owners seeking to redevelop or change the use of their property often have to seek rezoning. Rezoning decisions are evaluated with respect to how they conform to the Plan's Future Land Use Map. Effectively implementing this land use vision will require updating the city's Zoning Ordinance and its zoning map to reflect the desired outcomes.

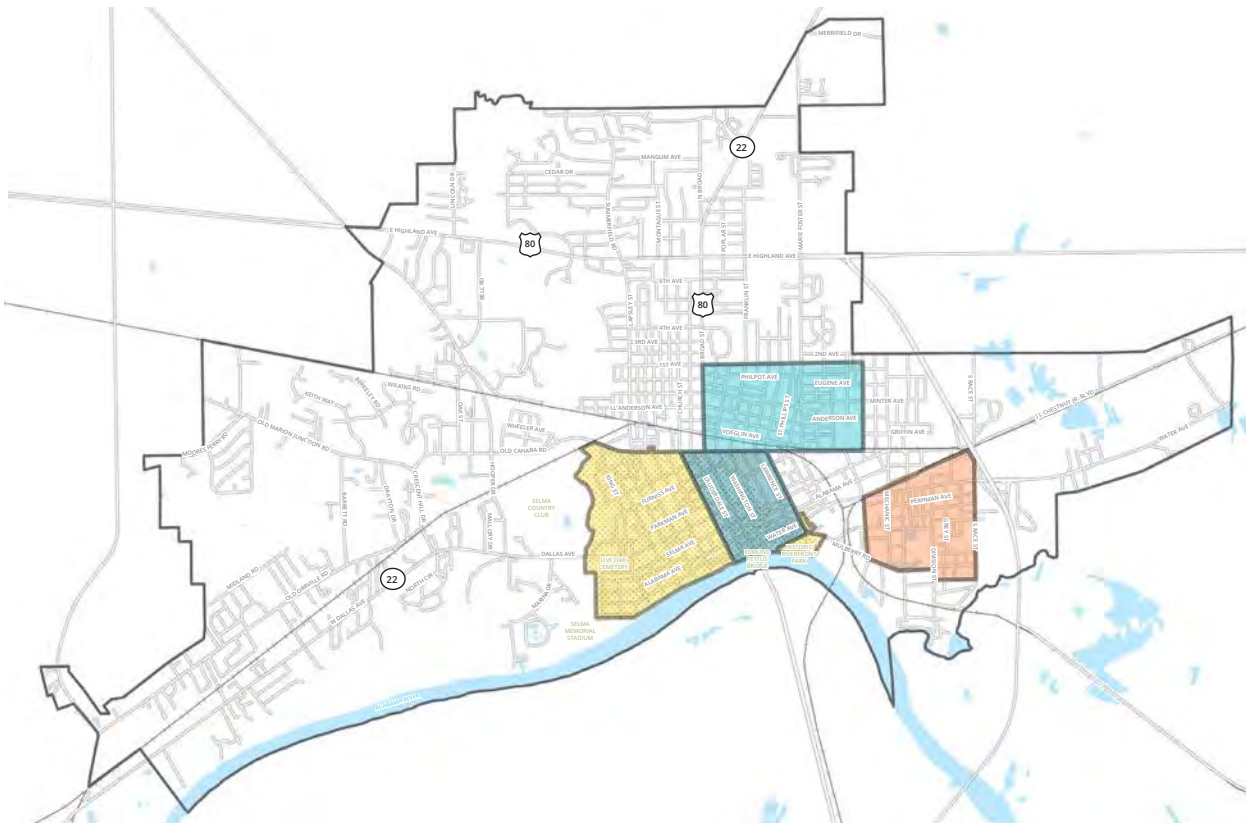
The table below distinguishes between the role of the plan and the zoning ordinance. Each detailed character type lists primary and secondary zoning districts that are appropriate to implement that character type.

Plan (Future Land Use Map)	Zoning Ordinance (Zoning Map)
• Describes a range of intended future land uses and development characteristics that are appropriate in an area.	• Defines land uses and development characteristics allowed on a piece of land today.
• Identifies the appropriate zoning districts that may be appropriate depending on location, property size, and other factors.	• Identifies one zoning district assigned to each property, including specific rules for allowed uses and development characteristics.
• Not legally binding, but zoning changes should be “in accordance with” the Plan.	• A legal document: departure from zoning requires a legislative process.

PRIORITY AREAS

This section identifies key areas for strategic investment. Analyzing the historical significance, physical character, and unique amenities of these areas provides a foundation for developing strategies that promote investment, revitalization, and redevelopment. The recommendations for each area are intended to foster sustainable development while preserving the identity and history of these key areas.

Map. Priority Areas



Areas

The Priority Areas section builds upon the Future Land Use and Character to provide greater detail on the intent and opportunities at specific locations throughout the city. This section is organized into four areas:

	Downtown		Historic Neighborhoods
	East Selma		Disaster Area #1

DOWNTOWN

This area includes Selma's civic and urban core. It is an area where continued redevelopment is expected. The following recommendations seek to maximize that opportunity to shape a district with high quality development, while providing opportunities for a variety of residential, commercial, and mixed-use development.

Area Intent:

- Create a high quality setting for residents and visitors.
- Encourage higher quality development in terms of architecture, materials, landscaping, and lighting.
- Support mixed-use development that is designed for and marketed to people and businesses at a variety of income levels.
- Manage development intensity primarily through building form standards.

D.1 Define the Downtown/Riverfront District. Downtown is generally considered to be the area from Church Street to Martin Luther King Street, and Water Avenue to J.L. Chestnut Jr Boulevard. This area should contain distinct base zoning districts with more measurable design standards to create certainty in the development review process. Additionally, the development process in the District should be streamlined to improve what is now a complicated, uncertain, and sometimes overlapping process.

D.2 Ensure that the zoning code encourages interim (temporary) uses. Low-cost activation of a space with food trucks, farmer's markets, or similar activities can be a precursor to redevelopment. They offer low-cost and low-risk ways to respond quickly to changing conditions and demands, allow for experimentation, and often lead to permanent investment.

D.3 Focus redevelopment to create concentrated nodes. In challenging market environments it is critical not to spread resources too thin. By focusing resources and energy it will be easier to create catalytic development projects. Broad Street and Water Avenue are well-positioned to support retail, multi-family housing, and work places. However the section of Broad Street between Water Avenue and J.L. Chestnut Jr Boulevard cannot currently support consistent retail for the entire length of the corridor. Intersections with current or

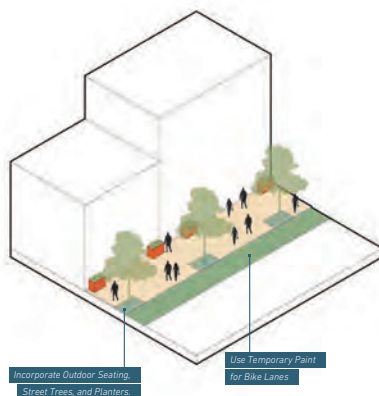
potential active uses, such as at Water Avenue and Dallas Avenue, should grow into focused nodes. Between these nodes, other active ground floor uses with residential above, can fill in the more passive segments of the street.

D.4 Enhance the Broad Street Corridor, from Water Avenue to JL Chestnut Jr Boulevard. As the main north-south corridor through Selma, Broad Street serves as the front-door to much of the area and has opportunities to be enhanced. These improvements could involve enhanced pedestrian facilities, landscaping, and gathering areas with seating, lighting, and historical markers.

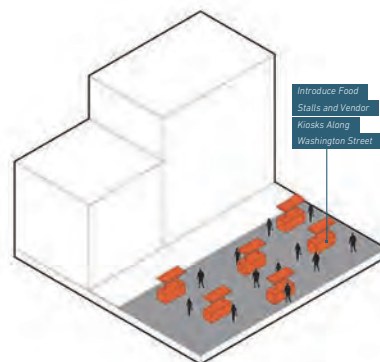
D.5 Maintain an inventory of buildings within the Downtown/Riverfront District. Vacant property inventories track the extent of vacancy and can help manage vacant properties until they are returned to productive use. These inventories are particularly useful in areas with weaker markets that have experienced sustained population loss, such as Selma. This data could be used to analyze the extent to which vacant properties are concentrated in particular areas or under certain ownership to inform strategic decisions on enforcement actions.

Quick Wins: Selma Downtown Vision

Small-scale, temporary projects—such as planters, seating, and pop-up plazas—demonstrate how simple enhancements can activate our public spaces and create a more welcoming, pedestrian-friendly downtown.



A temporary marketplace allows local food vendors to test concepts, build customer bases, and showcase the potential for a permanent food hall as a hub of culture and entrepreneurship in downtown Selma.



HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

This area includes the four designated historic districts within Selma: Old Town Historic District, Water Avenue Historic District, Riverview Historic District, and Icehouse Historic District. These districts preserve the history and culture of Selma and its residents. Continued preservation and redevelopment are expected in this area.

Area Intent:

- Protect and preserve the character of locally designated historic districts.
- Encourage high quality development, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse in terms of architecture, materials, landscaping and lighting.
- Manage development intensity primarily through building form standards, ensuring consistency in scale.
- Promote sustainability and resilience in future developments, redevelopments, and renovations.

HN.1 Consider resiliency in the protection of historic properties.

Identify and assess all feasible adaptation treatment options based on their ability to address identified risks to the structure. For each treatment option, evaluate the impacts of any potential alterations to the historic property's character-defining spaces, features, and materials, and its site and environment. Always select an adaptive treatment that minimizes the impacts to the historic character and appearance of an individual property as much as possible while making the property as resilient as possible.

HN.2 Better integrate historic requirements into the overall development review process.

Require all applicants submit a simple form with building permit plans to certify the plans are consistent with their Historic Review approval. Ensure Code Enforcement officials are trained to confirm compliance and maintain open lines of communication throughout the development process.

HN.3 Maintain a prioritized projects list.

When a partnership or funding opportunity arises, having a list of priority sites can be highly beneficial. This list should include funding-worthy initiatives that align with strategic priorities, such as reducing potential damage to historic buildings, reinvesting in local infrastructure, or promoting sustainable practices.

- Share the list with partners and potential partners.
- Create a one-page story about the project.
- Offer tours of the project to elected officials and potential investors.
- Build regional awareness.

HN.4 Create an accurate and comprehensive plan for historical and cultural sites. Selma's civil rights past is a history that demands a preservation approach that centers Black voices. This plan would restore Black-led narratives, centering historic sites as spaces of education, empowerment, and community pride while promoting tourism and economic growth rooted in truth and justice.

DISASTER AREA #1

This area was among the most heavily impacted by the January 2023 tornado disaster. Many homes and businesses experienced severe damage or total loss. Rebuilding and revitalizing this neighborhood are the primary focuses of this area. Significant efforts to clean up the area and increase the housing stock are expected.

Area Intent:

- Encourage infill residential development on existing vacant parcels.
- Support renovation of neglected properties where practical and demolition and clearing of vacant and severely blighted properties to limit further neighborhood deterioration.
- Repair, replace, and enhance any infrastructure (pipes, sewer, roads, sidewalks, etc.) damaged by the tornado or general wear.
- Promote sustainability and resilience in future developments, redevelopments, and renovations.

DA.1 Develop a comprehensive vacant property inventory. Vacant property inventories track the extent of vacancy and can help manage vacant properties until they are returned to productive use. These inventories are particularly useful in areas with weaker housing markets that have experienced sustained population loss, such as Mobile. The City's current Nuisance Abatement program could be used to analyze the extent to which vacant properties are concentrated in particular neighborhoods and inform strategic decisions on Quiet Title Actions.

DA.2 Reduce barriers to new infill residential development. An update to the regulatory requirements should clearly define housing types, including duplexes, triplexes, accessory dwellings, and cottage clusters, and where they are permitted. The City could consider several approaches to regulation of these new housing types, including:

- Allowing development of these housing types "by-right" in appropriate residential districts.
- Setting smaller minimum lot sizes where appropriate for housing type and zoning district.
- Increasing allowable densities in some districts, or changing the way density is measured (units per acre vs. floor area).

DA.3 Develop a residential pattern book. A neighborhood pattern book is one approach to ensuring new housing fits in with the local character of Selma. Documenting appropriate patterns can help guide the process of designing and building consistent with the traditions of a neighborhood. A similar approach was taken to support rebuilding in Gulf Coast towns following several damaging hurricanes. A residential pattern book could be used in conjunction with pre-approved plans.

DA.4 Establish Pre-Approved Plans. Consider offering an option to expedite the review and approval for new home construction through a certified plan process. All designs would be pre-approved by the City for building code compliance to offer more predictability and some cost savings in the permit review process.

EAST SELMA

This area has a significant amount of potentially developable land that can be efficiently served by infrastructure. Lower land values and good access to regional employment centers create an opportunity for more workforce housing, but the area is largely within the floodplain, requiring a strategic approach to development.

Area Intent:

- Encourage new residential, commercial, and industrial development to revitalize neighborhoods.
- Mitigate possible flood hazards through both new construction and retrofit projects.
- Support renovation of neglected properties where practical and demolition and clearing of vacant and severely blighted properties to limit further neighborhood deterioration.
- Promote sustainability and resilience in future developments, redevelopments, and renovations.

ES.1 Mitigate the impact of hazardous conditions for existing housing in the floodplain. East Selma includes a several areas where existing structures have been built in the floodplain. These areas are prone to damage during a flooding event. Land use policies and programs should be considered to encourage the mitigation of hazards for these areas to protect people and property. Implementing green infrastructure within the floodplain helps manage stormwater, reduce flooding risks, and create sustainable, resilient urban landscapes that benefit both the environment and the community.

ES.2 Acquire former industrial land within flood-prone areas to preserve as open space. Some former industrial sites, particularly along the Alabama River, should not be redeveloped with intensive uses. The city should seek opportunities to acquire such land for open space, natural resource preservation, greenways, or parks. Where portions of former industrial sites could be redeveloped for other uses, the city could provide a density bonus or other incentive to designate a significant portion of the site as open space.

- ES.3 Explore buy-out opportunities or land acquisition along the Alabama River.** Developing public space or connecting parcels along the river can promote more recreational use all the waterway and promote floodplain health.
- ES.4 Establish policies and programs to encourage the establishment of Low Impact Development (LID) green infrastructure practices.** LID practices reduce stormwater runoff and improve water quality in creeks and streams. Improvements may include rain gardens, pervious pavement, improved stream buffer protection, invasive species removal, and additional planting of native trees.
- ES.5 Establish a policy for urban agriculture on city parks and other city-owned lands.** Urban agriculture in Selma's parks and publicly owned lands offers an opportunity to promote community engagement, food security, and environmental sustainability. By integrating community gardens or edible landscapes into public spaces, residents can access fresh, locally grown produce while fostering a sense of stewardship for their environment.



5. IMPLEMENTATION

Selma Now is a strategic action plan focused on long-term recovery. Implementation of this plan will be driven largely by the City, but everyone has a role to play. Many of the actions in this plan rely on partners: from philanthropic and nonprofit organizations to partners in the state and federal government. This chapter includes guidance on managing and using the Plan, and a summary of its actions that assigns anticipated timing and responsibilities to each.

Guiding Implementation

The matrix of actions and sub-actions contained in this chapter summarizes the full suite of initiatives, highlighting key implementers, partners, projected timeframes, and relative costs.

Barriers to implementation often include limited funding, staffing, or time. While Selma Now does not add hours to the day or dollars to the budget, it attempts to outline a path to securing adequate resources for the proposed actions. This includes evaluating current spending to maximize efficiency, coordinating across departments and external partners to access state and federal funding opportunities, and fostering collaborations that enhance governmental capacity. These investments require time but offer significant long-term benefits.

Chapter Organization

- How to Use the Plan
- Implementation Actions
- Plan Management
- Summary of Actions
- Actions Timeline
- First Steps for Implementation
- Decision Making Framework

◀ Federal funding remains uncertain due to evolving government policies, shifting budget priorities, and ongoing political debates. Changes in Congressional appropriations, regulatory adjustments, and economic conditions may impact funding availability for many existing programs.

How to Use the Plan

The Plan is intended to be used on a daily basis as public and private decisions are made concerning development, redevelopment, capital improvements, economic incentives and other matters affecting the long-term recovery of Selma. Many actions in the Plan will require the coordinated efforts of individuals and organizations representing the public, private, and civic sectors of the community. The following is a summary of how decisions and processes should align with the goals and actions.

Annual Work Programs and Budgets

To ensure accountability in funding the long-term recovery plan, it is essential to align the plan's strategies with the City's annual budget. This alignment involves setting clear priorities and milestones to monitor progress, strategically allocating resources to high-priority projects, and conducting regular reviews of both the budget and the recovery plan. Annual review allows for adjustments based on changing conditions, ensuring that the city's financial resources are effectively aligned with its recovery goals. The transparency of this process provides opportunities for external oversight and adds an additional layer of public accountability. Individual departments, administrators, boards, and commissions should be aware of the Plan's recommendations when preparing their annual work programs and budgets.

Development Approvals

Administrative and legislative approvals of development proposals should be a central means of implementing the Plan. Decisions by the Staff, the Planning Commission, and City Council should reference relevant recommendations and policies. The zoning code should be updated in response to regulatory strategies presented in the Plan.

Capital Improvement Plan

The City should prepare a formal capital improvement plan (CIP) that is consistent with the Plan's recommendations.

Economic Incentives

All economic incentive programs should be reviewed to ensure consistency with the recommendations of the Plan.

Private Development Decisions

Property owners and developers should consider the goals and strategies of the Plan in their land planning and investment decisions. Public decision-makers will be using the Plan as a guide in their development deliberations such as zoning matters and infrastructure requests. Property owners and developers should be cognizant of the plan's recommendations.

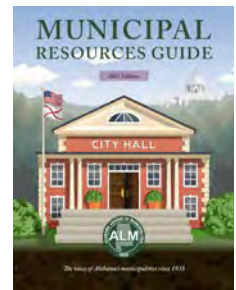
Internal Organizational Decisions

Roles and responsibilities, including legal authority should be clearly outlined at the organization level. The City should maintain an accurate organizational chart and coordinate standard operating procedures.

Implementation Actions

Outlined below are actions to support implementation of the Strategic Action Plan.

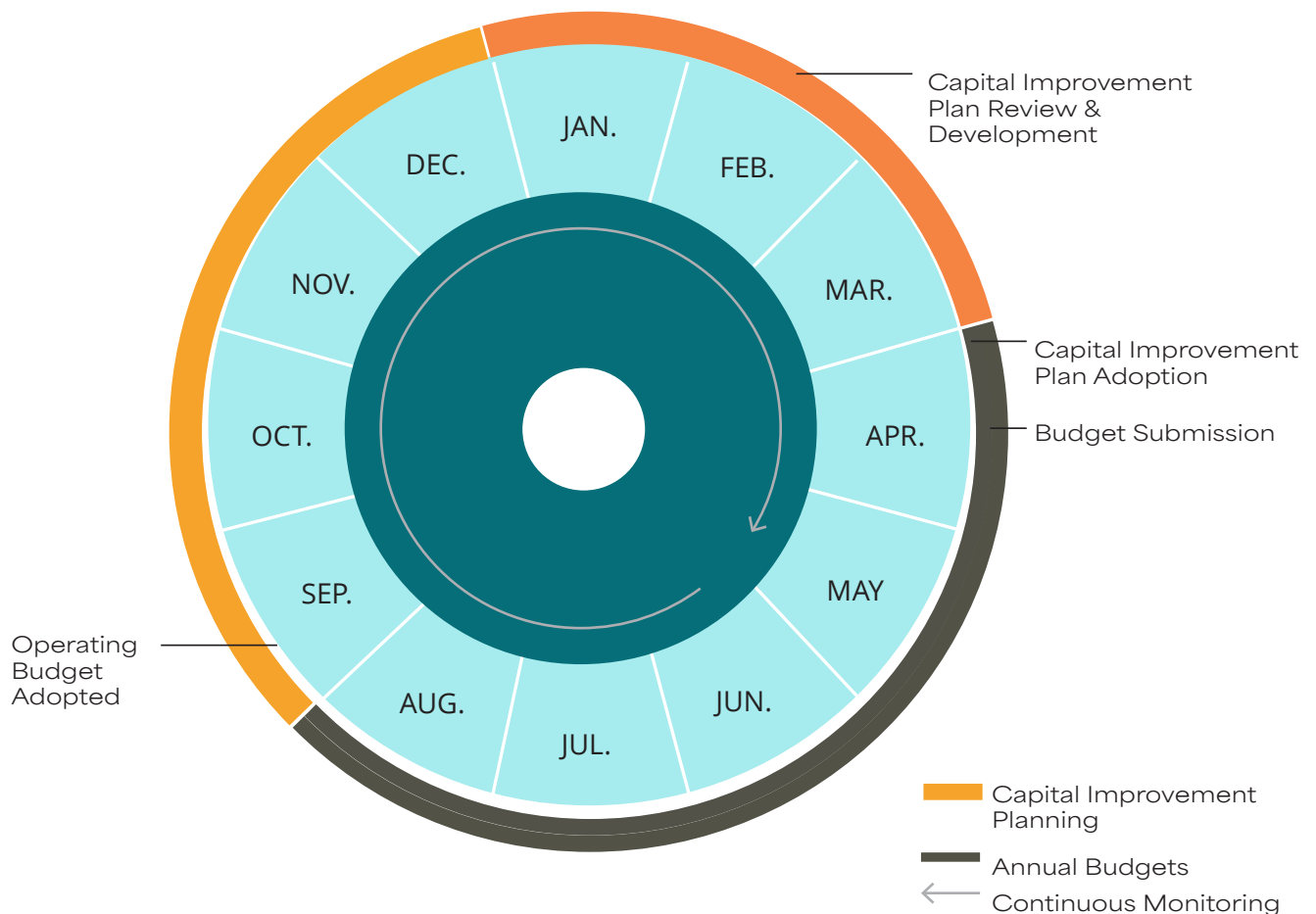
- I.1 Engage non-governmental partners to assist with implementation.** Engage various civic organizations, neighborhood groups, institutions, and businesses, including those identified in the Citywide Strategies chapter to assist with implementing key strategies in the Plan.
- I.2 Provide copies of the Plan throughout the community and online.** The Plan should be made available at multiple locations such as libraries, community centers, at City Hall, and on the City's website.
- I.3 Provide ongoing staff training and professional development opportunities.** City staff should be supported in obtaining training to more effectively undertake the Plan's recommendations. Staff, City Council members, and other elected officials should conduct visits to other communities to observe examples first-hand.
- I.4 Develop a formal training program for elected officials.** Training should focus on land use law, meeting procedures, organizational dynamics, and how to implement the Plan.
- I.5 Update regulations and establish new regulatory tools.** Development regulations including zoning, building codes, and related ordinances should be updated to reflect the Plan's recommendations.
- I.6 Utilize resources made available through the Alabama League of Municipalities.** The Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM) is a nonpartisan membership association of over 450 incorporated cities and towns. Since 1935, the League has worked to strengthen municipal government through advocacy, training and the advancement of effective local leadership. As the recognized voice of Alabama's cities and towns, ALM's member municipalities, including Selma, benefit from a variety of member programs, services, and activities that are impossible to accomplish alone.



Alabama provides dozens of resources for local governments across several state agencies. As part of the mission to support their members, the League created this one stop guide to navigating these resources. It provides an overview of valuable resources including program description, matching requirements, contact information and deadlines.

Plan Management

The Plan should be integrated into annual city processes, regularly tracked for progress, assessed for effectiveness, and updated appropriately. The diagram below illustrates how the Plan could be integrated into the city's annual processes.



Capacity Needs

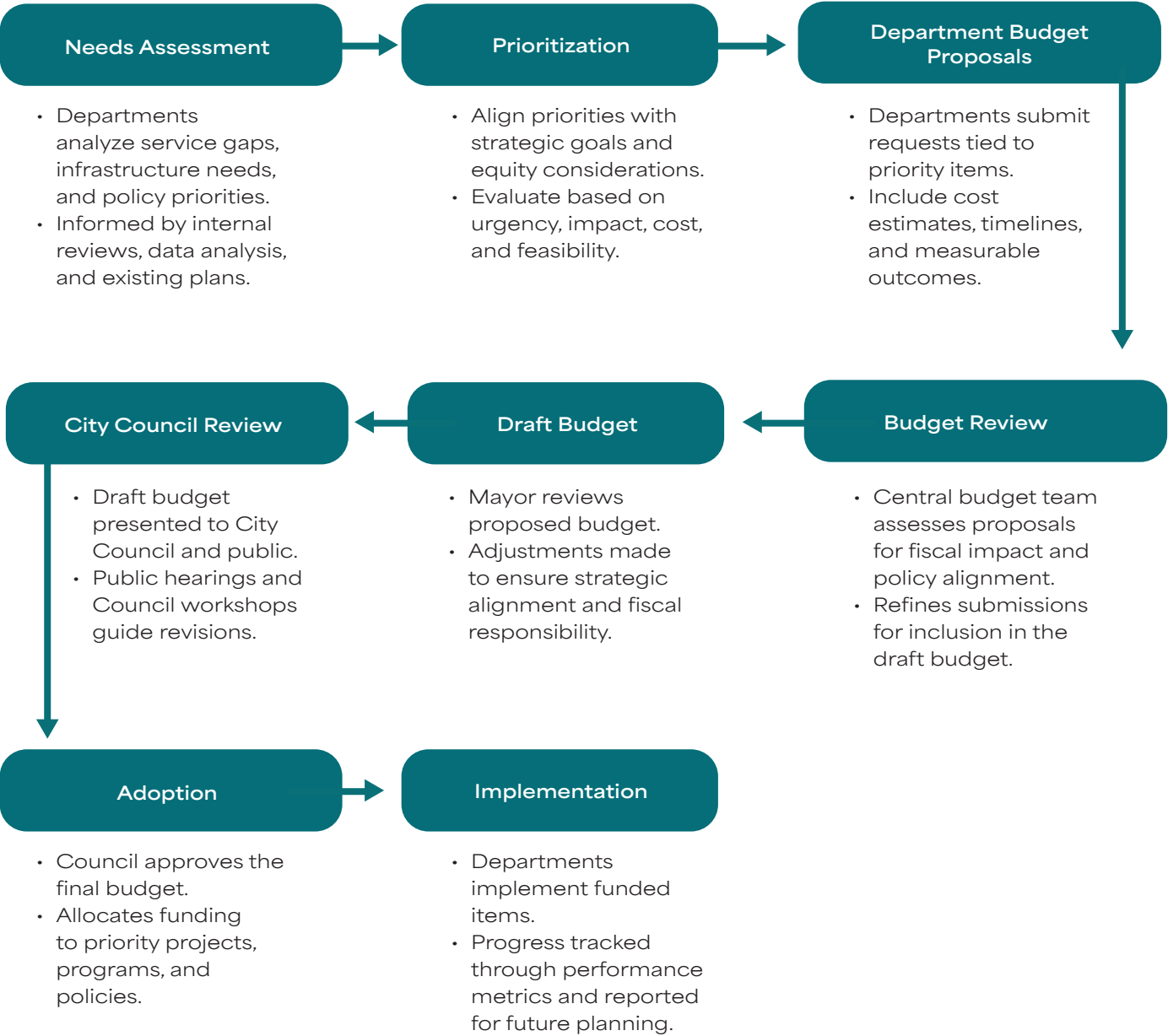
Successful implementation of this plan requires aligning the right people with the right roles. Clear accountability, defined responsibilities, and strategic coordination are essential to maintaining momentum. Additionally, a dedicated champion is needed to oversee progress and keep stakeholders engaged. This leadership role can help navigate challenges, track milestones, and ensure that actions remain aligned with the overall vision and goals.

Monitoring

The Plan should be monitored on a regular basis for implementation effectiveness and relevancy. A formal review of Plan's accomplishments and relevancy should occur annually.

Annual Budget Process

The implementation of this plan relies heavily on its integration into the annual budget process. This process ensures that priorities are translated into concrete, funded actions. Embedding the action plan into the budget cycle also promotes accountability, allowing for regular monitoring, public input, and measurable outcomes that demonstrate how resources are being used to serve the community.



Summary of Actions

The following table summarizes the Plan's actions. The table is organized by strategy and indicates the plan goals that each action advances. It also notes priority, responsibility, funding sources, and timeframe for completion.

Action Category

- R Regulations** (Actions that could be implemented through the zoning code or other update to city ordinances)
- P Program** (Programs or initiatives that may require some ongoing city support or participation)
- O Policy** (Direction used on an ongoing basis to guide city decisions)

Timeframe

- Immediate** (Less than a year)
- Short-Term** (1-3 years)
- Medium-Term** (3-5 years)
- Long-Term** (more than 5 years)

Goals

-  Land Use
-  Housing
-  Infrastructure
-  Economic Development

Action	Sub-actions	Goals	Partners	Timeframe
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Strategy 1. Position Downtown as an economic driver.

1.A Establish a Cooperative District.

P

- 1.A.1** Establish the district.
- 1.A.2** Focus on funding infrastructure.
- 1.A.3** Strengthen partnerships.
- 1.A.4** Plan for long-term growth.



Selma Redevelopment Authority
Dallas County

Immediate

1.b Encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment in strategic locations.

O

- 1.B.1** Focus development energy downtown.
- 1.B.2** Partner to create a catalytic redevelopment project.
- 1.B.3** Market development opportunities within designated Opportunity Zones.
- 1.B.4** Revise the regulations to encourage and support redevelopment.
- 1.B.5** Encourage development in areas served by existing or planned infrastructure.



Chamber of Commerce
Selma Redevelopment Authority
Building Inspector
Opportunity Alabama

Immediate

1.C Leverage existing tourism.

P

- 1.C.1** Develop a tourism strategy focused on the experience of visiting Selma.
- 1.C.2** Evaluate opportunities to enhance the existing Civil Rights Trail.
- 1.C.3** Capitalize on existing events.
- 1.C.4** Position Selma as the ecotourism gateway of the Black Belt region.



Selma-Dallas County Historical Preservation Society
National Voting Rights Museum & Institute
Selma Interpretive Center

Immediate

Strategy 2. Rebuild the neighborhoods.

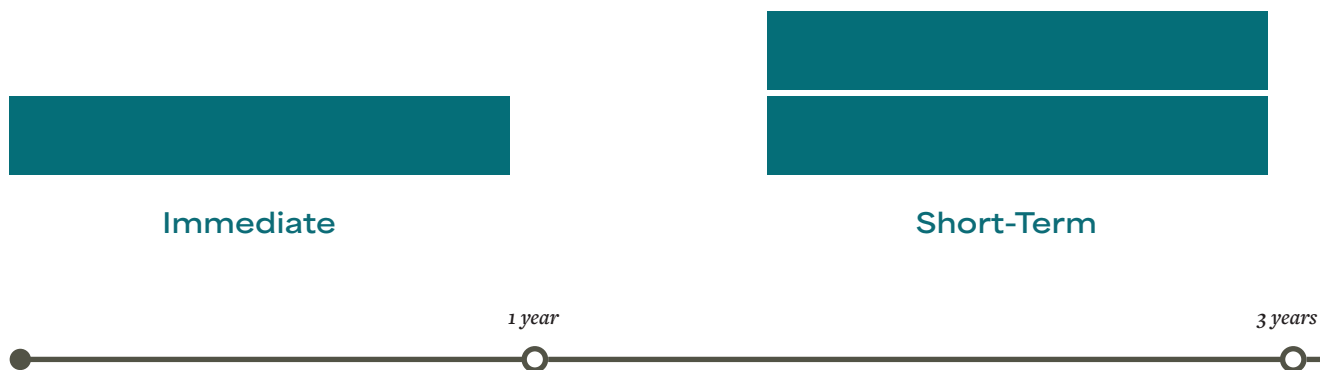
2.A Adopt a comprehensive policy for neglected properties. O	2.A.1	Develop and maintain a comprehensive vacant property inventory.		Building Inspector	Short-Term
	2.A.2	Establish criteria and review process for demolition.			
	2.A.3	Strengthen property maintenance enforcement practices.			
	2.A.4	Adopt housing rehabilitation codes.			
2.B Create flexibility in the protection of historic properties. P	2.B.1	Adopt recent ACHP Guidance on climate change resiliency.		Selma-Dallas County Historical Preservation Society	Medium-Term
	2.B.2	Pursue a Programmatic Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).		Building Inspector	
	2.B.3	Work with the Historic Preservation Commission to recalibrate requirements.		Selma Redvelopment Authority	
2.C Increase the capacity of the Selma Land Bank. P	2.C.1	Increase staffing and expertise.		Selma Land Bank	Medium-Term
	2.C.2	Develop a Strategic Plan.			
	2.C.3	Streamline the acquisition and disposition processes.			
	2.C.4	Create sustainable revenue models.			
	2.C.5	Utilize technology and data.			
2.D Increase support for heirs' property owners. P	2.D.1	Implement a property tax relief program for heirs' property owners.		Alabama Lawyers Association	Long-Term
	2.D.2	Create an Heirs' Property Assistance Office.			

Strategy 3. Proactively build for the future.

3.A Adopt the latest building code. R	3.A.1	Review local needs.		Building Inspector	Short-Term
	3.A.2	Review and identify relevant I-Codes.			
	3.A.3	Adopt and implement the code.			
3.B Modernize the development regulations. R	3.B.1	Create predictable, understandable, and user-friendly codes.		Building Inspector Code Enforcement	Short-Term
	3.B.2	Restructure and modernize the zoning districts.			
	3.B.3	Modernize the development standards.			
	3.B.4	Launch an initiative to improve awareness of and predictability of the regulatory process.			
3.C Adopt a Capital Improvements Plan. P	3.C.1	Inventory and assess existing assets.		Public Works	Short-Term
	3.C.2	Define priorities for Capital Investments.			
	3.C.3	Establish and regularly update a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).			

Action Timeline

This graphic illustrates the phased implementation of strategies. Actions are organized by their expected timeframe, reflecting the sequence in which foundational, programmatic, and transformational efforts will unfold.



Start Strong

Immediate actions focus on early wins—visible improvements, quick-start programs, and partnerships that signal change is happening. These lay the groundwork for trust and public buy-in.

Actions in this time frame include:

- **1.A** Establish a Cooperative District
- **1.B** Encourage rehabilitation & redevelopment in strategic locations
- **1.C** Leverage existing tourism

Strengthen the Foundation

Short-term actions bring in the rules, tools, and plans that create consistency and predictability. Updated building codes, zoning changes, and basic policies make it easier to invest in Selma and move forward with confidence.

Actions in this time frame include:

- **2.A** Policy for neglected properties
- **3.A** Adopt the latest building code
- **3.B** Modernize development regulations
- **3.C** Adopt Capital Improvements Plan



Medium-Term



Long-Term

5 years



Build Capacity

Medium-term actions focus on growing the City's ability to manage change. This includes building stronger institutions, modernizing outdated systems, and creating lasting support for property reuse and preservation.

Actions in this time frame include:

- [2.B](#) Flexibility for historic property protection
- [2.D](#) Increase capacity of Selma Land Bank

Transform Systems

Long-term actions take on deeper issues—like generational property barriers and systemic disinvestment. These efforts aim to unlock new opportunities for residents and ensure that Selma's transformation reaches every neighborhood.

Actions in this time frame include:

- [2.C](#) Support for heirs' property owners

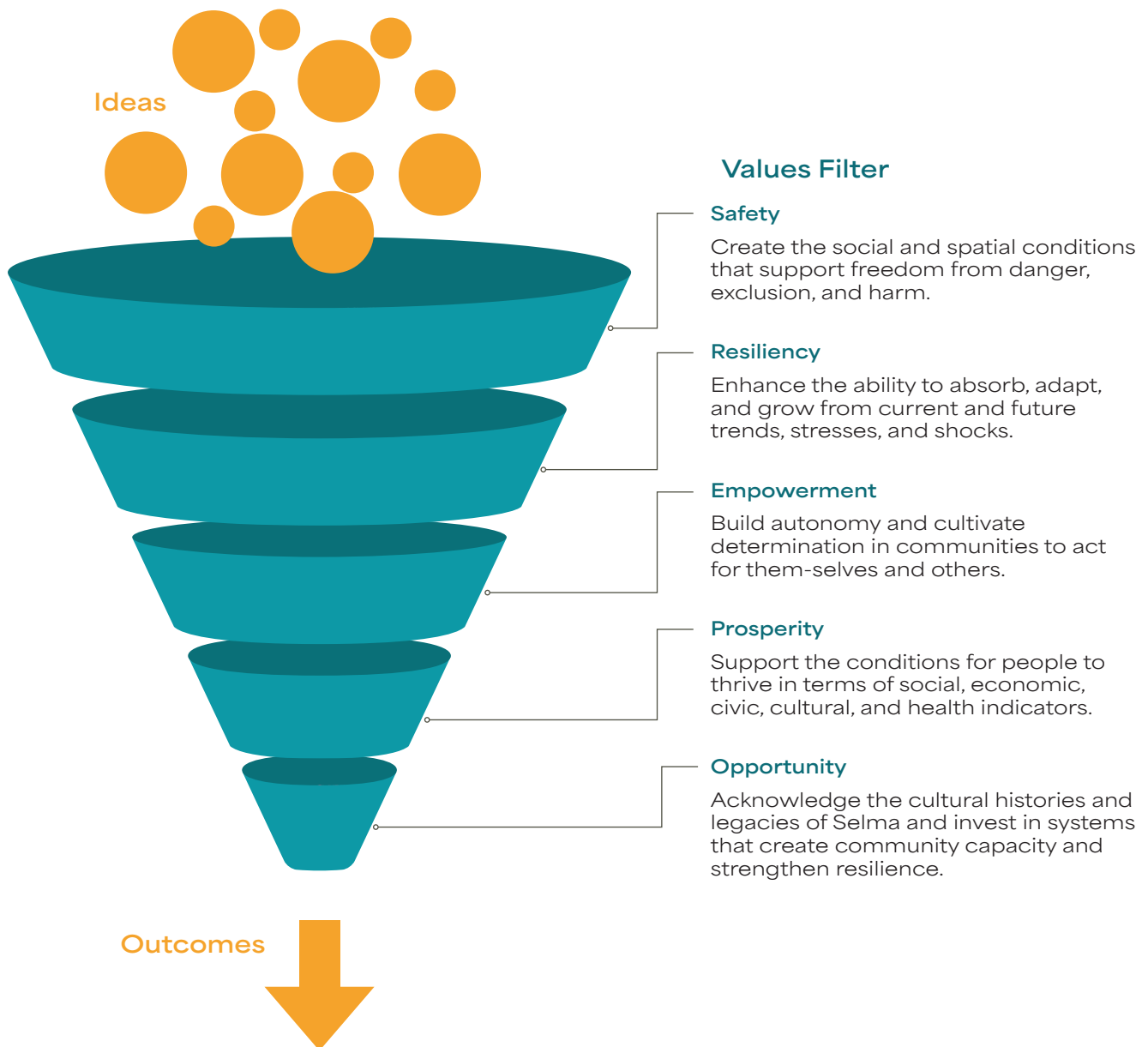
First Steps for Implementation

The Selma Now Plan will move from vision to reality through a set of coordinated, actionable steps that demonstrate visible progress, reinforce community confidence, and build long-term momentum. These first steps are:

- 1 Launch an implementation leadership team.** Establish an Implementation Leadership Team to champion the Plan and guide early actions. Identify lead, support, and advisory roles for each implementation strategy and action item. Clarifying responsibilities ensures transparency and reinforces collaborative ownership.
- 2 Define near-term priority actions.** Focus on 3 priority actions that are highly visible, achievable within 12–24 months, and build trust in the implementation process. These actions might include short-term infrastructure improvements, interim uses, or pilot programs.
- 3 Develop an implementation work plan.** Create a detailed internal work plan that outlines timelines, milestones, responsible parties, funding needs, and communications strategy.
- 4 Clarify internal processes, procedures, and authority.**
 - **Process Maps:** Publish simple flowcharts showing who initiates each task, which department reviews it, who signs off, and where stakeholders can provide input.
 - **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** Create brief SOPs that list required forms, filing deadlines, appeal windows, and escalation paths. Post these online and at City Hall so residents and staff know exactly what to expect.
 - **Authority Matrices:** For each workflow, include an authority matrix that names the job titles (not just departments) empowered to make final decisions.
- 5 Align funding and investment strategies.** The work plan should be built into the City’s regular budget process to be considered alongside other priorities for funding each year. The Leadership Team’s role is to:
 - Define program budgets for the coming fiscal year – break each project with line item cost estimates.
 - Work with department heads and other City leaders to include those line items in the draft annual budget and Capital Improvements Plan.
 - Advocate at budget hearings to secure the requested funding and any local match needed to unlock external grants.
 - Identify recurring revenue sources (e.g., dedicated fees, permit surcharges) to sustain ongoing maintenance.

Decision Making Framework

The values below comprise a filter for decision-making on projects, policies, and programs. Each value reflects what the community cares about most and should be used as a check to ensure future actions align with Selma's long-term vision. When evaluating new ideas or initiatives, ask: Does this reflect our values? Does it move us closer to the kind of future we want to create together?



Glossary of Terms

Below is an alphabetical list of technical terms and their definitions, relevant to the Selma Now Strategic Action Plan. Some of the terms included below have been customized to their usage within this plan.

Accessory dwelling unit: A residential dwelling unit, but not a mobile home, located on the same lot as a single-family dwelling unit, either within the same building as the single-family dwelling unit or in a detached building.

Adaptive Reuse: A specific variety of redevelopment that makes use of existing building stock for the purposes of contemporary living (Planetizen).

Affordable housing: Housing that has a sale price or rental amount that is within the means of a household that may occupy middle-, moderate-, or low-income housing. In the case of dwelling units for sale, housing that is affordable means housing in which mortgage, amortization, taxes, insurance, and condominium or association fees, if any, constitute no more than 28% of such gross annual household income for a household of the size which may occupy the unit in question. In the case of dwelling units for rent, housing that is affordable means housing for which the rent and utilities constitute no more than 30% of such gross annual income for a household of the size that may occupy the unit in question.

Aging in place: The ability of a person to continue to live in their residence as they age. Aging in place may require adapting physical space or services to meet the needs of older adults.

Appraisal: A valuation of property by the estimate of an authorized person used for tax and financing purposes.

Blight: Unsightly or rundown conditions, typically associated with urban settings. Areas characterized by blight are often designated for redevelopment.

Block length: That distance as measured along rear property lines between intersecting streets.

Broadband: High-speed Internet access allows users to access the Internet and Internet-related services at significantly higher speeds than those available through "dial-up" services (FCC).

Building code: The various codes of the city that regulate construction and require building permits, electrical permits, mechanical permits, plumbing permits, and other permits to do work pertaining to building and building regulation.

Building footprint: The area of a lot or site included within the surrounding exterior walls of a building or portion of a building, exclusive of courtyards. In the absence of surrounding exterior walls, the building footprint shall be the area under the horizontal projection of the roof.

Building frontage: The horizontal linear dimension designated as the primary facade of that portion of a building occupied by a single use or occupancy.

Building permit: A document signed by the director of the Planning & Development department or their authorized representative as a condition precedent to the commencement of a use or the erection, construction, reconstruction, restoration, alteration, conversion, or installation of a building, which acknowledges that such use or building complies with the provisions of the municipal zoning ordinance or an authorized variance therefrom.

Census block: A “statistical area, bounded by visible features such as roads, streams, and railroad tracks, and by nonvisible boundaries such as property lines, city, township, school district, [and] county limits” as defined by the US Census Bureau. Census blocks are the smallest geographic unit used for tabulating census data.

Census tract: A small, relatively permanent statistical subdivision of a county in a metropolitan area or a selected nonmetropolitan county, delineated by a local committee of census data users for the purpose of presenting decennial census data. Census tract boundaries normally follow visible features but may follow governmental unit boundaries and other non-visible features in some instances. They always nest within counties.

Character: Special physical characteristics of a structure or area that set it apart from its surroundings and contribute to its individuality.

Commercial: The growing, processing, or manufacturing of products or the provision of services for consideration and profit.

Commercial district: Neighborhood, community, highway/tourist, and service commercial zoning designations or their equivalent specific plan zoning designation.

Community character: The image of a community or area as defined by such factors as its built environment, natural features and open space elements, type of housing, architectural style, infrastructure, and the type and quality of public facilities and services.

Community Development Block Grant: A grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on a formula basis for entitlement communities, and by the State Department of Housing and Community Development for non-entitled jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.

Corridor: A broad geographical band that follows a general directional flow connecting major sources of trips that may contain a number of streets, highways, and transit route alignments.

Cost burdened: A household is considered cost-burdened if they spend 30% or more of their gross monthly income on housing. Cost-burdened households have difficulty affording other necessities due to the large percentage of income spent on housing.

Density: The number of dwelling units permitted per net acre of land.

Disaster Displacement: Situations where people are obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of a disaster or in order to avoid the impact of an immediate and foreseeable natural hazard, including the adverse impacts of climate change, or a disaster triggered by human-made factors, such as large-scale industrial accidents (UNDRR).

Easement: A grant by a property owner to the use of land by the public, a corporation, or persons for specific purposes as the construction of utilities, drainage ways, and roadways.

Equitable Development: An approach for meeting the needs of underserved communities through policies and programs that reduce disparities while fostering places that are healthy and vibrant (US EPA).

Family household: A group of two or more people living together in a housing unit who are related by birth, marriage, adoption, etc.

Floodplain: The land area susceptible to inundation by water as a result of the flood.

Floodway: The channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height.

Form-based zoning: Allows market demand to determine the mix of uses within the constraints of building type set by the community. The community establishes zones of building type and allows building owners to determine the uses. The look and layout of a street is carefully controlled to reflect neighborhood scale, parking standards, and pedestrian accessibility, but building owners and occupants are allowed maximum flexibility to determine how the buildings will be used.

Gateway(s): A point along a roadway at which a motorist or pedestrian gains a sense of having entered the city or a particular part of the city. This impression can be imparted through such things as signs, monuments, landscaping, a change in development character, or natural features (APD).

Gentrification: “The process of repairing and rebuilding homes and businesses in a deteriorating area (such as an urban neighborhood) accompanied by an influx of middle-class or affluent people and that often results in the displacement of earlier, usually poorer residents”.

Geographic information system (GIS): A method of storing geographic information on computers. Geographic information can be obtained from a variety of sources, including topographical maps, soil maps, aerial and satellite photographs, and remote sensing technology.

Household: A person or group of people living together in one housing unit.

Housing unit: A house, apartment, mobile home, group of rooms or single room, which are intended as separate living quarters.

Infill development: The process of developing vacant or under-used parcels within existing urban areas that are already largely developed.

Infrastructure: The basic facilities and structures that function as part of a broader system to enable services like transportation and utilities for a community, i.e. roads, paths, sewers, electrical lines, etc.

Land use: The development that has occurred on the land, the development that is proposed by a developer on the land, or the use that is permitted or permissible on the land under an adopted comprehensive plan, relevant land development regulations, or a land development code.

Lot: A parcel of land occupied or intended for occupancy, including one main building, together with any accessory buildings, open spaces, and parking spaces.

Missing middle: Coined by Daniel Parolek, “missing middle” describes “a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban living.” These housing types, such as duplexes and townhomes, are generally more affordable than single-family homes and less densely populated than large, multi-unit apartment buildings.

Moratorium: A temporary halting or severe restriction on specified development activities. Local government stops reviewing new building permits for a specific time period. This tool gives local officials time to catch up or change policies in times of heavy development pressure. Future permits are evaluated with clear criteria.

Multifamily Housing: A type of housing where multiple separate units are contained within one or more buildings in a complex. These units can be next to each other or stacked on top of each other. Multifamily housing includes duplexes, townhomes, apartment complexes, and condominiums.

Nonfamily household: Households that consist of people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals.

Parcel: Any legally described piece of land designated by the owner or developer as land to be used or developed as a unit, or that has been developed as a unit.

Poverty level: Also known as the poverty threshold, the poverty level is determined yearly by the US Census Bureau. Poverty levels represent the household income below which families of a given size are considered impoverished.

Public-private partnership (PPP): A collaboration between a government and a private company to achieve a shared goal or purpose. PPPs typically enable financing and project efficiency that would not be achievable had the parties worked independently.

Redevelopment: Development that occurs by improving existing structures or by building where previous structures have been demolished.

Resilience: According to FEMA, “the ability to prepare for threats and hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from adverse conditions and disruptions.”

Single Family Housing: A single-family home is a house intended for one family to live in at a time. In most cases, this phrase is used to refer specifically to single-family detached homes—meaning freestanding structures on their own pieces of property and not attached to homes owned by other individuals.

Stakeholder: One who is involved in or affected by a course of action.

Sustainability: A condition under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support the needs of present and future generations.

Transit: Passenger services provided by public, private, or nonprofit entities such as the following surface transit modes: commuter rail, rail rapid transit, light rail transit, light guideway transit, express bus, and local fixed route bus.

Vacant land: Lands or buildings that are not actively used for any purpose.

Zoning: The division of a city or county by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas. Also, a program that implements policies of the general plan.