

Montgomery, AL

Downtown Master Plan



The Illustrative Master Plan was created during the charrette. The plan synthesizes community ideas and depicts the idealized build-out for Downtown. The Illustrative Master Plan identifies key opportunity parcels for infill development.



Overlooking the banks of the Alabama River, historic Downtown Montgomery is poised for rediscovery. The same features which drew the region's early settlers provide a backdrop for a downtown poised for regeneration. Montgomery, the capital city of Alabama, regards itself as the birthplace of the Confederacy as well as the birthplace of the modern Civil Rights movement. The city is rich in history, and much of Montgomery's historic architecture and street design have been preserved.

During recent years, rapid growth has occurred in the area surrounding Downtown Montgomery. The City seeks to attract more of this growth into Downtown to provide an exciting and vibrant place for residents, visitors, and businesses. Recently completed projects such as Riverwalk Stadium, home of the Montgomery Biscuits, and the amphitheatre at Riverfront Park have positioned the Downtown for a successful revitalization. Other projects are also underway which will add to this momentum and increase Downtown's appeal for visitors and residents alike.

Community involvement was an essential component in creating a workable vision and plan for Downtown Montgomery. The visualizations, plans, and recommendations found in the Downtown Plan are the result of extensive public input from Montgomery residents, business owners, and community leaders. Over 850 community members participated in the September 2006 charrette.

Planning Prescriptions

Preserve, Restore, & Reuse Historic Buildings & Addresses

The preservation of historic buildings and signature public spaces is essential to the revitalization and rebirth of Downtown. The urban fabric of Downtown is the heart of this important southern city and the many buildings that tell its story must be preserved. Historic architecture should not only be preserved but also, restored, and re-occupied. While it is of great importance to save and restore historic structures, it is important to add to the built environment in a way that makes Downtown more complete. Where the historic fabric has been eroded for parking lots or vacant lots, these areas need to be reclaimed. New buildings should be of a similar scale and proportion as existing ones and should be placed on lots with a similar building to street relationship as neighboring historic structures.



Historic buildings on Commerce Street



Many façades along Dexter Avenue are in need of repair.



Dexter Avenue with restored façades, as illustrated in the *Downtown Montgomery Ready for Rebirth* by Holmes and Holmes Architects 1985



Proposed

Foster an Improved Environment for Private Investment and Development

The Downtown Plan is a blueprint to guide infill development and redevelopment. Understanding that Downtown is made up of a variety of land owners, the plan is intended to assist the city with coordinating both public and private development efforts Downtown. The success of creating a vibrant downtown is dependent on partnerships between local government and private developers. The City of Montgomery has taken the initial step in providing increased certainty by adopting the SmartCode as part of the City's zoning ordinance.



Existing

Dexter Avenue is the most important street in Alabama. The Downtown Plan proposes to re-establish a vibrant street scene and to reclaim the lost space along the corridor. Proper urban street trees should be planted and blank walls of parking garages should be wrapped with habitable space.

Expand Downtown's Green and Civic Spaces

During the charrette process, community members expressed the desire for a "greener" Downtown. As a result, the Downtown Plan places importance on balancing infill development and redevelopment with restoring and protecting open space. Small, urban parks should be included in Downtown neighborhoods. Such parks should be distributed throughout Downtown neighborhoods so that green spaces are more accessible for people who live and/or work Downtown. Neighborhood parks should be connected with walking / biking trails, connecting green spaces with the larger riverfront park. Streets should be reclaimed as walkable places and a street tree campaign should be started.

Mix Land Uses, Building Types and Housing Options

Downtown Montgomery contains a diverse mix of businesses, residences, and workplaces. Downtown's mix is vital to the continued revitalization and redevelopment. A variety of uses within a neighborhood creates the ability to live, work, shop and have daily needs and services within walking distance. As we look to the future of Montgomery, it is important to encourage and provide more opportunities for people to live Downtown. Increasing the residential population in the vicinity of local businesses and civic uses will help to stimulate these activities.

Promote a Better Balance of Transportation Options and Designs

More choice and balance in transportation options are needed for Downtown. While the culture of driving will continue, balance must be restored so that not everything is dependent on long, single-occupant automobile trips. Walking, biking, or using transit should be added to the mix of options to get from one place to another Downtown and beyond.



Today – The current conditions of the Mobile Street and Grady Street intersection.



Step 3 – A neighborhood green is formed and Infill development occurs adjacent to the new park.



The warehouses on South Court Street should continue to be renovated providing storefronts and housing for what could become a thriving Arts District.



Bell Street should be redeveloped with a mix of street-oriented buildings, forming a memorable entrance into Downtown.

“The Downtown is the heart of the City . . . everybody has a vested interest in developing Downtown.”

– Mayor Bobby Bright

Downtown Plan

Location: Montgomery, Alabama

Project Area: 730 acres

Client: City of Montgomery

Charrette Team: Victor Dover
Joseph Kohl
Margaret Flippen
James Dougherty
Dan Banks
Andrew Georgiadis
Andrew Zitofsky
Jason King
Justin Falango

Consultants: UrbanAdvisors
urban economists

Zimmerman/Volk Assoc.
housing analysts

Hall Planning & Engineering
transportation planning

UrbanAdvantage
computer visualizations

Status:

The draft Downtown Montgomery Plan report was submitted to the city in November 2006. In addition to the report, the city is often reviewing the proposed SmartCode Transect Map for Downtown. Construction on the Court Square Plaza is currently underway and is scheduled to be completed in 2007. Court Square Plaza may be the first new plaza of its kind on a major U.S. city street in over fifty years.

Implementation

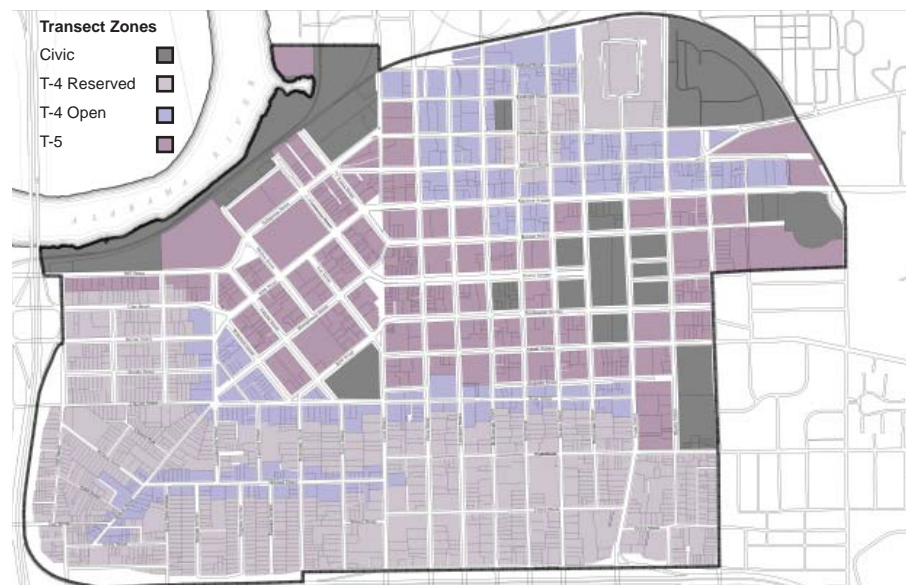
The Downtown Plan includes recommendations for both near term and long term projects. The plan is results oriented and features a detailed implementation strategy to help achieve the community's vision set forth in the Downtown Plan. One of the most important strategies for implementation is revising the land development regulations for Downtown. The existing land development regulations that apply to properties Downtown limit opportunities for redevelopment and new development. Setbacks, building placement, and parking make appropriate development Downtown difficult, further diminishing the existing urban fabric.



Court Square is reconstructed as an urban plaza

The City of Montgomery has taken the initial step in providing increased certainty by adopting the SmartCode as part of the City's zoning ordinance. The SmartCode is a form-based code that strongly addresses the physical form of building and development. The code is based on the transect and works to ensure that a community offers a full diversity of building types, thoroughfare types, and civic space types, and that each has appropriate characteristics for its location.

The application of the SmartCode and Transect Map would allow further development and redevelopment of Downtown to occur in a cohesive and proper manner.



Proposed Transect Map for Downtown Montgomery