



## 2. History, Context, and Planning

The following section outlines the history of Maxwell Airforce Base (AFB) and Gunter Annex, as well as the context the military installations are operating. This section also discusses recent planning initiatives and studies regarding the AFB that are relevant to the Envision Montgomery 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

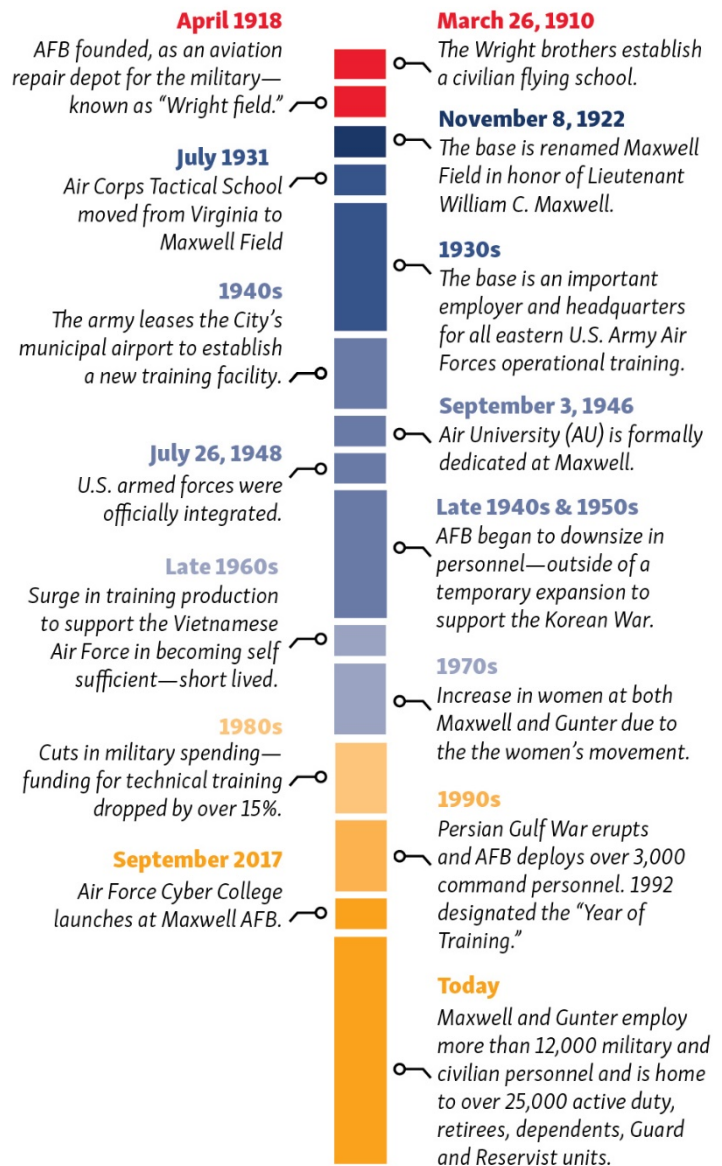
### HISTORY

In 1910, the Wright brothers established a civilian flying school in Montgomery on land that is now home to Maxwell Airforce Base (AFB). This school was only open for a short period of time, but its presence set the stage for the decision to locate Maxwell AFB in Montgomery. Since its founding in 1918, Maxwell AFB has continually evolved.

In World War I, Maxwell served as an Army Air Service repair depot. In the 1920s, it was an aerial operations field, and then home of Air Corps Tactical School in the 1930s. During World War II, Maxwell was the headquarters for all Air Forces' operational training in the eastern United States. After World War II, Maxwell became the home of Air University (AU), the Air Force's educational center for non-commissioned and commissioned officer personnel. AU is still the primary mission of the AFB today. Gunter Annex—established in the early 1940s—supports AU and ensures that airmen are ready to deploy worldwide.

In 2017, the Air Force Cyber College was launched to serve the U.S. Department of Defense and to combat international and regional threats to cyber security and to create a safer, more secure Internet. Today Maxwell continues as the home of AU and the Cyber College and employs more than 12,000 military and civilian personnel. Maxwell AFB also serves as an important FEMA partner and is a hurricane evacuation center.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 12.1: Maxwell Airforce Base and Gunter Annex Timeline



<sup>1</sup> Jerome A. Ennels, Wesley Phillips Newton, Auburn University, *Maxwell Air Force Base and Gunter History*, (2014), <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1337>.

## OPERATIONS & CONTEXT

Maxwell AFB, Gunter Annex and Dannelly Field are all located in Montgomery County. Gunter Annex is roughly five miles east of Maxwell, and together the two bases cover over 2,600 acres in the City of Montgomery (4,100 acres total in the county). Dannelly Field is located on U.S. 80 approximately 15 miles from Gunter Annex.

**Maxwell AFB:** As part of the national military picture, Maxwell AFB is known for Air University (AU)—an intellectual and leadership center of the Air Force. AU supports education in air and space power for the U.S. armed forces, federal government civilians and many international organizations. AU is a subordinate organization of the Air Education Training Command (AETC) which is the primary training organization of the entire U.S. Air Force. The Air Force unit assigned to AU and the host wing for Maxwell-Gunter is the 42nd Air Base Wing (ABW). Maxwell AFB is bordered by the Alabama River to the north/northeast and Birmingham Highway (U.S. 31), commercial/ industrial uses, and residential properties to the south. On the west, the AFB is bordered by commercial and industrial properties and off-base landfills. In recent years there have been efforts to increase recreational and open spaces with recreational attributes in areas north/northeast of the base between the Alabama River and Gunter Annex.

**Gunter Annex:** Gunter Annex, originally known as Gunter Field, is a subordinate installation of Maxwell and under the administration of the 42nd ABW. Gunter Annex is home to the Air Force Program Executive Office-Business and Enterprise Systems. Gunter Annex consists of 378 acres. The land use surrounding Gunter Annex includes residential communities, recreational areas and open space and the Alabama River. To the north, Gunter Annex is bounded by U.S. 231, to the east by Gunter Industrial Park, to the south by residential and commercial properties, and to the west by property owned by the State Department of Corrections and a tributary to Three Mile Branch Creek.<sup>2</sup>

**Dannelly Field:** Gunter Annex was once the location for commercial air services; however, due to congestion in the 1940s, the City purchased land to serve as a new commercial air site in 1946—Dannelly Field. Dannelly Field, also known as Montgomery Regional Airport, is now a joint civil-military public airport and home to the 187th Fighter Wing of the Alabama Air National Guard. Montgomery Regional Airport has 127 flights every month with over 10 airline carriers flying approximately 14 flights per week.

See Map 12.1 for a geographic context map.

## PLANNING & STUDIES

Maxwell AFB has had several planning efforts conducted, including the Montgomery – Maxwell AFB Joint Land Use Study (2018), Montgomery – Maxwell AFB Joint Land Use Implementation Plan (2019, in-progress), Maxwell AFB Installation Development Plan (2014), and Maxwell AFB Campus Master Plan (year unknown).

**Montgomery – Maxwell AFB Joint Land Use Study:** Sustainment of the mission at Maxwell AFB is an overarching goal of the City of Montgomery. To reflect this commitment, the city conducted a planning process to identify compatible land uses and growth management guidelines within jurisdictions adjacent to the active military installations. The Montgomery – Maxwell AFB Joint Land Use Study was completed in 2018 and was the result of a collaborative process between the City, Maxwell AFB, partner jurisdictions,

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Factsheet *Maxwell Air Force Base and Gunter Annex*, (2018), 1.

businesses, industry and other stakeholders. The Joint Land Use Study defined a strategic plan to reduce or eliminate any compatibility issues that may impact both the mission of the AFB and the overall community.<sup>3</sup>

**Montgomery – Maxwell AFB Joint Land Use Implementation Plan:** This plan includes strategies for implementing the JLUS and integrating its recommendations into other city planning documents including the Envision Montgomery 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the city’s zoning code. The Implementation Plan includes recommendations for the comprehensive plan and a draft zoning amendment and article modifications covering topics from the JLUS—designed to be integrated into the existing code.

**Maxwell AFB Installation Development Plan:** This plan—developed in 2014—established the AFB’s future direction, goals, and vision for the next 15 years. The plan helped the AFB synchronize individual missions to move forward in a successful way. It also generated awareness about installation projects and initiatives and helped produce ideas for new ones.

**Maxwell AFB Campus Master Plan:** The campus master plan was created by Kerns Land Planning & Design. It is a comprehensive design and planning study with goals of strengthening and reinforcing the campus feel by relocating parking to the periphery, enhancing pedestrian circulation/connections and further articulating campus spaces.

### 3. Economic Impact

*The following section discusses the economic impacts of Maxwell Airforce Base (AFB) and Gunter Annex, as well as relevant trends and recent news for the AFB.*

In a sales tax state like Alabama, it is essential for the government to inject money into the community, so that businesses can generate work as a result of that injection; and they can benefit monetarily. The incomes generated by these businesses are then, in return, spent within the local economy. This is referred to as the multiplier effect—meaning if Montgomery spends more on projects, this generates more jobs. With these additional jobs, there is potential that local workers will enjoy higher wages and spend more money in the City—returning those initial funds back to the local economy.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

Maxwell AFB and Gunter Annex positively impact the local and regional economy and contribute significantly as a result of the multiplier effect. The military presence contributes an estimated \$2.6 billion to the local economy annually and has added over 38,000 citizens to the city’s population.<sup>4</sup> The AFB is the largest employer in the Montgomery Metropolitan Area and employs over 12,000 people. It provides approximately \$1.2 billion annually through indirect jobs created by the base and generates an additional annual value of nearly \$270 million within the community.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Matrix Design Group, *City of Montgomery Comprehensive Plan Military Compatibility Element*, (2018), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Jennifer Stewart Kornegay, *Onward & Upward*, (2017), <https://www.montgomerychamber.com/blog/montgomery-business-journal-3603/post/onward-upward-10281>

<sup>5</sup> Matrix, *City of*, (2018), 13.

## NATIONAL TRENDS

Because of its proximity to Maxwell AFB, the City of Montgomery's development decisions have the potential to impact these economically important military installations through land use conflicts. These conflicts can have negative impacts on economic development, community safety, and sustainment of the AFB's mission. Nationwide, incompatible development has been a factor in limiting training operations and realigning missions. In extreme cases, incompatibilities can result in the ultimate closure of a military installation.<sup>6</sup>

When the U.S. Federal Government recognizes a need to increase efficiency by realigning or closing a military base, it can have a devastating effect on the host community. Jobs are lost and the local economy is impacted by the loss of personnel spending money in the area. Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is run by a BRAC Commission—consisting of a nine-member panel appointed by the President—who can add bases to the realignment and closure list recommended to the President. This list is then approved or disapproved by Congress.

Over the past 25 years, there have been 5 rounds of major BRAC within the U.S. The last, biggest and most costly round happened between 2005-2011 and impacted more than 800 locations throughout the country. Officials predict more BRAC rounds are going to be needed because the military has excess infrastructure and implementing BRAC will save money.

In June of 2010, President Obama determined the Air Force and all federal agencies would work towards utilizing facilities more efficiently, disposing of unneeded property, reducing energy and water consumption, and decreasing operating costs. The Air Force was then charged with only maintaining facilities that were necessary to conduct mission requirements. To ensure results, the Air Force implemented a "20/20 by 2020" initiative to reduce property and associated costs by 20 percent by the year 2020.<sup>7</sup>

In response, Maxwell leadership started investigating ways to utilize space efficiently, either by consolidating existing organizations, repurposing space to outside entities or demolishing unusable facilities. Such repurposing directly ties into ongoing land-swap negotiations—swapping a municipally owned site with a privately-owned site—between the base and the city as well as Maxwell's cost-reduction goal to reduce 20 percent of the installation's square footage by the year 2020. Structures planned for demolition include: a closed theater building, old military family housing, two dormitories and the closed Falcon's Nest at Gunter which was previously a lounge and dining facility.<sup>8</sup>

Today, Pentagon financial audits show that the overall military has excess infrastructure across all branches, and there have been numerous inconsistencies found between what buildings bases said they had and what existed. This is not meant to fuel justification for base closures but does bolster what Department of Defense leaders have been asking for—close and consolidate bases. In May 2018, the U.S. House passed the National Defense Authorization Act which calls for a study to see how the physical infrastructure meets current needs. This study is due February 2020 and if it remains a part of the Act, no BRAC will occur until it is complete.

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<sup>6</sup> Matrix, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Maxwell Air Force Base Montgomery County, Alabama, *Environmental Assessment Proposed Demolition and Consolidation*, (2013), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Burylo, *Development Plan Focuses Leadership on Base's Future*, (2014), <https://www.maxwell.af.mil/News/Display/Article/704476/development-plan-focuses-leadership-on-bases-future/>.

Another round of BRAC has been pushed since the Pentagon’s acknowledgement of excess infrastructure but there are no plans for 2019.<sup>9</sup>

## RECENT NEWS

Despite news of consolidation, more recent news for Maxwell AFB and associated installations represent an exciting future for Montgomery. Montgomery received news that they would be receiving F-35 jets and Air University launched the Cyber College. The arrival of the F-35 jets will spur years of construction and both the jets and the new college will raise the city’s profile in both the Air Force and the tech sector.

**F-35:** In December 2017, Montgomery was selected to receive the new F-35 Lightning II jet—multiple aircrafts that feature the latest stealth, combat and reconnaissance technology. The 187th Fighter Wing of the Alabama Air National Guard, located at Dannelly Field, was one of five sites in the U.S. considered for the F-35 mission—a prestigious honor. The project will include \$3 billion in investment and the addition of 1,000 jobs in the coming years.<sup>10</sup> The jets arrival in 2023 will come with a surge of \$70 million in upfront investment that local and state contractors can bid on. Overall the F-35 mission will equate to a \$24 million-a-year long-term increase in the unit’s direct economic impact on the city.<sup>11</sup>

**The Cyber College:** The Cyber College, established in 2017, is intended to move the Air Force from the industrial age to the information age and equip students with operational knowledge and strategic insights to fight potential cyber-attacks. The Cyber College is also studying topics related to use of technology in cities. Montgomery officials and Chamber leaders are pushing for smart city vehicles, optimized trash collection and more. Because of the Cyber College, the city can take advantage of relationships the school has formed with major tech players like AT&T, HP, Microsoft and Verizon; and the college is contributing to the city’s goal of being known as a “tech-hub”.<sup>12</sup>

## 4. Physical Development

*The following section summarizes the physical interactions between the Maxwell Airforce Base (AFB) and Gunter Annex with the City of Montgomery.*

### LAND USE INTERACTIONS

It is important that the City of Montgomery and Maxwell AFB grow symbiotically, meaning they move forward in a way that benefits both parties. Although interaction between the city and Maxwell AFB is very positive, the activities or actions of one entity can inadvertently impact the other and result in conflict. As the community develops in response to growth and market demands, land use decisions can push urban development closer to military installations and operational areas—potentially resulting in land use and other compatibility issues. Compatibility issues can negatively impact community safety, economic development, and sustainment of military activities and readiness. The community can also be negatively

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Military Base Realignment and Closures*, (2018), [https://www.gao.gov/key\\_issues/realigning\\_closing\\_military\\_bases/issue\\_summary#t=0](https://www.gao.gov/key_issues/realigning_closing_military_bases/issue_summary#t=0).

<sup>10</sup> Montgomery Chamber, *Guard & Reserve*, (2018), <https://www.montgomerychamber.com/guard-reserve>.

<sup>11</sup> Kym Klass, *It's ours! F-35 Lightning lands in Montgomery*, (2017), <https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/local/f35/2017/12/21/its-ours-f-35-lands-montgomery-decision/747285001/>.

<sup>12</sup> Montgomery Chamber, *Initiatives & Strategies*, (2018), <https://www.montgomerychamber.com/initiatives/strategies>.

impacted by the military activities themselves through factors such as noise, limits to renewable energy infrastructure, and the use of city services (i.e. roads, housing and schools).<sup>13</sup> Example nuisances that should be prevented and considered when planning for symbiotic growth are outlined below. These potential nuisances of the military installation on the community and vice versa, have been addressed in the Montgomery – Maxwell AFB Joint Land Use Study. See Map 12.2 for the geographic areas where specific JLUS recommendations are to be applied, referred to as Military Compatibility Areas (MCAs).

#### **POTENTIAL NUISANCES**

- Environmental impacts
- Noise and vibration from overhead flights
- Air emissions
- Contamination of soil and groundwater
- Risk of an aircraft accident
- Hazards and incompatibilities created by development or activities near the AFB, such as obstructions to airspace and frequency interference; location of noise sensitive uses in high noise zones; or wildlife attractants that that bring wildlife into areas that can prove hazardous to aircraft operations

## **5. Human Considerations**

*The following section summarizes the impacts that Maxwell Airforce Base (AFB) and Gunter Annex have on Montgomery's population and the community's needs.*

#### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

Maxwell AFB hosts approximately 2,500 individuals. The 3.3 square mile base is home to both the headquarters for AU and the Federal Prison Camp Montgomery. About 20,000 students get trained at the various schools of the AU every year. It is estimated that more than 12,000 active-duty, reserve, civilian, and contractor personnel work and live on the AFB. The base has 41 temporary lodging buildings with about 2,300 rooms. There are also several services that are accessible on the base including a medical center and the Maxwell AFB Elementary/ Middle school that has over 350 students.

Demographically, the individuals living in the Maxwell AFB school district differ from the city. For example, the median age is 30.6 years, which is younger than the city (36 years) and 93 percent of individuals have a high school degree or higher (compared to 86 percent at the city level). The median household income is also over double that of the city (\$91k versus \$43k). Further, 2.1 percent of residents are living below the poverty line (compared to 23.4 percent in the city). Like other military bases, 100 percent of the 307 households are renter occupied. Fifty percent of AFB residents moved within the year, versus 22 percent among city residents.<sup>14</sup>

#### **EMERGING ISSUES**

Individuals stationed on the AFB share a similar concern as other residents throughout the city—the public school system. Most recently, news reports shared that many of the Air Force members with families are moving to the base without their families due to their concern of the underperformance of Montgomery

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<sup>13</sup> Matrix, 3.

<sup>14</sup> U.S. American Community Survey, *Maxwell Air Force Base School District Data*, (2017).

public schools. For the 2016-2017 school year, academic achievement indicators for Montgomery public schools were based on ACT Aspire scores, a standardized test the State Board of Education decided to do away with in 2018. Public schools had 27 percent of students proficient in reading, 28 percent proficient in math and 23 percent proficient in science, scores that are lagging compared to the state averages in reading (39 percent), math (44 percent), and science (35 percent).<sup>15</sup>

In 2017, more than 56 percent of airmen in Air War College came to Montgomery without their families. Schools were the number one reason given in surveys. The state of education has also impacted Air University's (AU) ability to find highly qualified faculty members—which runs the risk of Maxwell not staying competitive with other military universities.<sup>16</sup>

Military personnel in Montgomery are typically there temporarily, not giving them a lot of time to get to know the community and its assets that make it a desirable place to live. Because of this, it is extremely important for Montgomery to do the basics well (e.g. improved public schools) in order to retain talent that is attracted to the area because of the AFB. The city could capture these individuals and attract others to the areas if they are able to impress those that are currently there.

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew J. Yawn, *Statewide School Report Card Gives MPS a D Grade*, (2018), <https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/education/2018/02/01/statewide-school-report-card-gives-mps-d-grade/1086986001/>.

<sup>16</sup> Krista Johnson, *Military families live apart because of under-performing schools, Maxwell general says*, (2018), <https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/education/2018/08/21/bad-schools-hurt-maxwell-air-force-base-general-montgomery-alabama-schools-families-live-apart/1053656002/>.