



ENVISION

# MONTGOMERY 2040

ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 2022





Envision Montgomery 2040 (Envision) articulates a shared vision for the community to be realized through a variety of strategic recommendations. Adopted in 2020, this plan represents the city's first comprehensive plan in more than 50 years. It includes short- and long-term actions (specific projects, policies, and programs) organized around six essential community themes emerging from the process.

Two years after its adoption, the city has initiated or completed several major recommendations that will have a lasting impact on the community. This report summarizes these initiatives and the overall progress of implementing the comprehensive plan.

## VISION STATEMENT

*Montgomery ...*

*A proud community with a wealth of opportunities realized through strategic investments, inclusion and trust resulting in greater prosperity and well-being for all.*

## THEMES



Building & Maintaining our...  
**GREAT PLACES**

*Strong, attractive and vibrant places reflect the diversity of our community and reveal a city that is proud and beautiful.*



Investing in our...  
**CONNECTIONS**

*A smart and efficient mobility network that is based around multiple modes of transportation, supports strong inter-city and regional connections, and provides equitable access to opportunities.*



Supporting our...  
**PEOPLE**

*A stable foundation for human growth, education and development with the neighborhood as the building block of the community.*



Progressing toward our...  
**SHARED PROSPERITY**

*An expanding and diverse local economy that increases opportunities for residents by investing in education, leveraging its military partnerships, and pursuing innovative industries that spur investment and small enterprise.*



Capitalizing on our cultural...  
**ASSETS AND AMENITIES**

*A place that embraces and protects its special history, while investing in new amenities that keep Montgomery unique, lively, and fun.*



Supporting our...  
**FOUNDATION**

*Future-focused investments maintain infrastructure - including the natural environment and resources - and support continued growth, reinvestment, and progress.*

# PROGRESS THIS YEAR

Envision Montgomery 2040 is a collection of recommendations. Many initiatives are focused on providing the foundation for long-term success. The following initiatives are summarized in this report.

## INITIATIVES

### Downtown Action Plan

Supporting the city's history, celebrating community culture, and enhancing the "heart" of Montgomery.

### Montgomery Whitewater (new)

Activating modern recreation and entertainment options for the greater community.

### Downtown Wayfinding and Gateway

Celebrating the city's unique experiences, destinations, and attractions.

### Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations Rewrite

Enabling development opportunities that elevate the city's built and natural environments.

### Commercial Property Inventory

Evaluating potential for revitalizing and redeveloping Montgomery's commercial centers.

### Southern Boulevard Action Plan (new)

Defining a pathway for enhancement at one of Montgomery's primary gateways.

### Montgomery Inland Port (new)

Expanding pathways for economic and personal success.

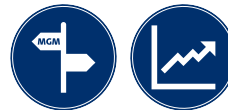
### Centennial Hill Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (new)

Investing in one of Montgomery's historic neighborhoods.

### Shared Micro-Mobility Initiative

Offering multi-modal transit options to the community.

## SUPPORTED THEMES





# DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN

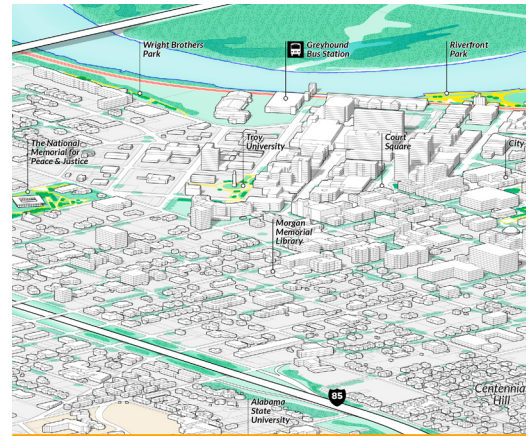
The action plan was initiated and completed in 2022. Identified in Envision, this effort reflects on past investments to define new opportunities for enhancing Downtown. While the 2007 plan focused on physical development, this plan provides guidance on offering economic incentives, promoting cultural amenities, and supporting neighborhood needs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Several priority actions emerged for the district that will establish a stronger Downtown, including:

- ★ Create a Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) and Citywide Tourism Improvement District (TID);
- ★ Finish the existing trail along Maxwell Boulevard;
- ★ Support local and small business growth;
- ★ Connect Whitewater to the Cypress Preserve; and,
- ★ Bring more residents Downtown.

READ MORE ONLINE



Source: Downtown Action Plan, Interface Studio

# MONTGOMERY WHITEWATER

This project was initiated in 2022 and is anticipated to open in summer 2023. Whitewater provides a significant tourism destination for the city and revitalizes an important corridor, Maxwell Boulevard. This project balances many themes of Envision from activating the Alabama River to providing new economic opportunities for the city, generating more investment in Montgomery.

## DESIGN FEATURES

The venue includes many different features on the 120-acre site, focused on outdoor activities. Located between Downtown and Maxwell Air Force Base, this location served as the ideal location for enhancing the city's recreation and tourism opportunities. The main facility includes:

- ★ Rafting and kayaking course;
- ★ Full service restaurant;
- ★ Rock climbing area;
- ★ Walking and biking trails; and,
- ★ Rope courses.

The site is complemented by providing direct access to the Alabama River with kayak launches and facilities for the public along with commercial development on Maxwell Boulevard.



Source: Montgomery Whitewater

## DOWNTOWN WAYFINDING AND GATEWAY

The initiative began in spring 2022 with the intent of celebrating the many historic, cultural, and civic sites Downtown. Starting with an inventory of destinations, this project will include a strategy for different types of wayfinding needs and begin installing a cohesive brand across the district.

### COMMUNITY ASSETS

Downtown has a vibrant collection of historic, cultural, and civic sites throughout the district. Ensuring that everyone, whether a resident, worker, or visitor knows about these destinations is important to building a greater sense of community. The wayfinding plan has met with stakeholders to better understand the attractions and pathways people use to experience Downtown. From the Selma March Trail to the Capital Complex to other Downtown Destinations, these essential connections will serve as the foundation for locating wayfinding signage and gateways that highlight all the amenities available.



Source: Downtown Wayfinding Pathways

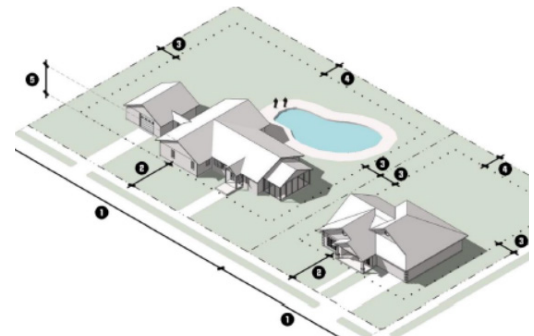
## ZONING CODE AND SUBDIVISION REGULATION REWRITE

The process began in May 2022 with a significant undertaking to update the city's land use ordinances and policies. The last major update was in 1985, leaving many regulations as outdated and unable to achieve the vision for Montgomery. The two-year process will provide the necessary regulations that bring continued growth and strategic revitalization to the community.

### CODE ASSESSMENT TAKEAWAYS

An initial assessment of the current code, published in November, identifies several major takeaways that will guide the rewrite including:

- ★ Create user friendly regulations;
- ★ Implement objectives from Envision;
- ★ Update zone districts and regulations; and,
- ★ Modernize development standards.



Source: Clarion Associates (example graphic illustrations)

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# COMMERCIAL PROPERTY INVENTORY

The property inventory was initiated and completed in 2022. With many commercial corridors, it was important to understand the conditions and opportunities for future investment. This inventory provides an essential foundation for the city and economic partners to attract businesses that can revitalize areas and enhance the local economy.

## INVENTORY OVERVIEW

The inventory helps address declining areas by analyzing topics such as:

- ★ Occupancy status (vacant vs. occupied);
- ★ Availability (for lease, for sale);
- ★ Size (square footage); and,
- ★ Structural information (damages, recent repairs, and renovations).

This inventory also went a step further by revealing the market potential for office, retail, and industrial properties. This effort outlines the specific businesses Montgomery can support in its local economy.

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Vacant Hotel Building

# SOUTHERN BOULEVARD ACTION PLAN

This plan was initiated and completed in 2022, focusing on revitalizing and enhancing the intersection of I-65 and Southern Boulevard. This intersection is a major gateway with the potential to become a vibrant destination through specific strategies and investment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The city and Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce understand the importance of this gateway and how the condition has declined over the years. While activity has been limited, this effort identifies several major actions for attracting investment:

- ★ Strategic acquisition of properties to address blight, consolidate land, and support redevelopment options; and,
- ★ Aligning incentives, marketing, and opportunities to attract industrial users such as those complementing the Montgomery Inland Port.

Identifying these strategies is an important first step for major entities to begin investing in the corridor and addressing blighted properties.

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Streetscape improvements along Southern Boulevard

# MONTGOMERY INLAND PORT

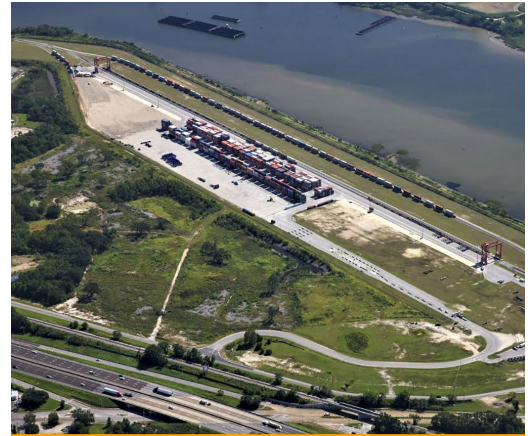
The Alabama Port Authority announced their intent to invest \$68 million to establish the Montgomery Inland Port. Working with several partners, the port creates a unique economic opportunity that will generate jobs and revenue for the community. While a timeline is not yet established, this project will lead to many future investments across Montgomery.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

In early 2022, the Alabama Port Authority purchased 270 acres near the intersection of I-65, I-85, and the CSX railroad. This inter-modal terminal will serve as a connection point between the Port of Mobile and the vast regional distribution network. Manufacturing, retail, distribution, and agribusiness sectors are just a few that will benefit from this project. Other community benefits include:

- ★ Potential to generate more than 2,600 jobs in the area;
- ★ Projected revenues of more than \$340 million for private businesses; and,
- ★ Anticipated state and local tax revenues of more than \$14 million.

The port project represents an essential economic development opportunity that aligns with the goals of Envision.



Source: Inland Container Facility, *The Waterways Journal*

# CENTENNIAL HILL CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE

This revitalization effort was initiated in 2021 and completed in summer 2022. The resident-led transformation plan provided the steps for redeveloping distressed and neglected areas of Centennial Hill. This will serve as a guide for attracting public and assisted housing that enhances the historic community.

## BACKGROUND

Centennial Hill is a historic neighborhood adjacent to Downtown that was once a vibrant and prosperous community. With the construction of I-85, the neighborhood was separated from other parts of Montgomery and has experienced several decades of disinvestment. This led to the neighborhood having a high poverty rate, home vacancy, and limited food access. However, this didn't have to be Centennial Hill's future.

Wanting to revitalize this neighborhood, the City and several community partners joined together to seek a Choice Neighborhoods Grant. That grant led to the development of this plan which helps support long-term residents, attract housing investment, and enhance the overall character of the neighborhood. With implementation, the City has now taken an initial \$400,000 investment to improve safety and character features on Union Street that provide a gateway to the neighborhood.



Source: Centennial Hill CNI



## SHARED MICRO-MOBILITY INITIATIVE

Beginning in fall 2022, a partnership with rideshare companies is intended to launch in early 2023. This effort will provide micro transit (scooter) options at key destinations across the City, complementing the shared bicycle program already underway, improving transportation for the community.

### PARTNER PROGRAM - BIRD

The City has been working with a partner to launch an initial phase of e-scooters throughout the City. Bird is one micro-mobility provider with established partnerships in many cities, providing the community access to transit options. The plan, developed through this partnership, will include a launch of 250 e-scooters at key locations throughout the City, mainly focused at key destinations. This will increase to 500 e-scooters at full rollout.

Understanding challenges facing other communities, Montgomery took a proactive approach in where e-scooters can be stored. Through this partnership, specific locations have been identified in Downtown and the City for storing e-scooters when not in use. These appropriately named “nests” ensure that these transit options protect the character of the community and prevent any potential safety concerns.



Source: Bird

## GROWING ECONOMIC INVESTMENTS

Announcements like the Montgomery Inland Port and investments throughout the City have attracted additional economic development opportunities. Several other projects have been publicized that show the success of Montgomery’s initiatives, leading to further investment in the community.

### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Montgomery is experiencing the initial benefits of Envision through the initiation and completion of major initiatives. These large-scale projects provide a foundation for additional investments that elevate the community. Some investments come from essential industries with a history in Montgomery while others represent new opportunities for the City. Six projects were announced that further enhance Montgomery’s economic profile and provide new job opportunities for the community, which include:

- ★ Manna Beverages and Ventures - \$600 million (285 new jobs);
- ★ Diageo Americas Supply - \$410 million (76 new jobs);
- ★ Mobis North America Electrified Powertrain - \$200 million (400 new jobs);
- ★ Amazon - \$100 million (500 new jobs);
- ★ Hyundai Transys - \$87 million (360 new jobs); and,
- ★ FedEx Ground - \$50 million (40 new jobs).



Source: City of Montgomery

# LOOKING AHEAD

Within the first years of implementation, Montgomery has seen several successful outcomes. While some initiatives continue moving forward, others will begin that bring the community one step closer to achieving its vision. The city should celebrate these accomplishments while considering what new opportunities are available in 2023. A few initiatives have already been identified.

## **SOUTHERN BOULEVARD REVITALIZATION**

Building on the initial Southern Boulevard Action Plan, the corridor is a significant thoroughfare with redevelopment potential. A second phase of work will continue the work to assess and define redevelopment opportunities for Southern Boulevard. This process would extend from Davenport Drive to Vaughn Road. Integrating efforts from other initiatives, the process will further prepare the corridor for investment that creates a more vibrant and prosperous city.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

Montgomery has a vast network of parks, recreational areas, and natural open spaces with different long-term needs. As a key recommendation of the Great Places section of Envision, a strategy is needed to ensure the City can maintain its park assets and invest in future areas. The City sees the significance of this effort and has allocated \$250,000 to fund an effort which will assess and outline potential growth for the parks system. This initiative is intended to begin in mid-2023 with opportunities for the public to get involved in the process.

## **DOWNTOWN INVESTMENT**

Through the combined effort of the City, Chamber of Commerce, and key stakeholders, major investments can be made downtown. The action plan provides the initiatives that can enhance the district and establish new policies and organizations to ensure its continued success. The city has the opportunity to lead many efforts that result in improvement projects throughout the district.



For questions about this document,  
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