



# STATUS REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

JANUARY 10, 2019



# Map for Mobile, the City's comprehensive plan, lays out an exciting vision for Mobile's long-term preservation, revitalization, and growth.

Adopted in November 2015, the plan's principles, goals, and policies aim to strengthen neighborhoods, improve mobility, promote economic development, protect our environment, and create a quality built environment. Less than three years since the plan was adopted, the City has been successful both in implementing dozens of specific recommendations of the plan, but more importantly, in affecting positive change in each of those areas. This report summarizes that progress.

## PLAN ELEMENTS

This report highlights notable progress that supports the goals within each of Map For Mobile's seven plan elements.



**Built Environment**



**Mobility and Connectivity**



**Neighborhoods**



**City Facilities and Services**



**Economic Development**



**Natural Resources**



**Collaboration and Cooperation**

## A LIVING PLAN

When Map for Mobile was adopted, City Planning Commission requested annual progress reports and periodic updates to the action plan. The City's Long Range Planning Division, established in 2016 as recommended by Map for Mobile, has been tracking progress on the action plan.

The Planning Commission adopted the Future Land Use Plan, Future Land Use Map, and Major Street Plan in May 2017, as an appendix to Map for Mobile.

On July 18, 2018 leaders from various City departments met for a half-day work session to discuss the plan's progress. The work session was attended by:

- › Build Mobile
- › Permitting and Inspections
- › Planning and Zoning
- › Communications
- › Real Estate & Asset Management
- › Traffic Engineering
- › Community and Housing Development
- › Parks and Recreation
- › Long Range Planning
- › Purchasing
- › Engineering and Development

## Progress by the numbers

Implementation of Map for Mobile's action plan has been aggressive, both in terms of the number of actions underway and the impact of those actions. This page highlights the scale of that impact.

**\$21**  
MILLION allocated annually by the City to the Capital Improvements Plan.

The program will continue to fund crucial public infrastructure projects, including road resurfacing, sidewalk repairs and installations, parks and recreation improvements, and more.

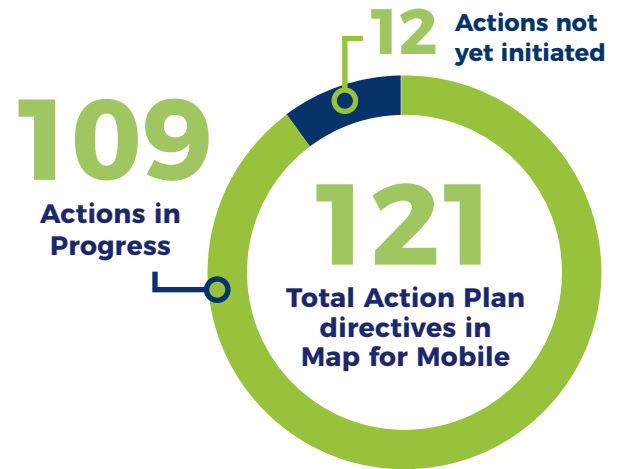
 **3,300** -ft

**Extension to the Three Mile Creek Greenway planned and funded.**

In 2018, The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and RESTORE gave funding for The City of Mobile to extend the existing Three Mile Creek Greenway westward from West Ridge Road to the University of South Alabama Medical Center.

 **50** properties acquired through Neighborhood Renewal Program...

...and are offered for acquisition and redevelopment. The City successfully supported the Alabama legislature in the passage of Alabama Code Section 11-70-1, which permits the City to acquire and quiet title to tax-delinquent, abandoned property.



**\$39**  
MILLION in RESTORE Act Grants awarded to Mobile...

...by the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council. The RESTORE grants will be used to revive waterways, thoroughfares, promote economic development, and revitalize historic neighborhoods throughout the community.

 **87** families have received assistance with the purchase of a home...

... over the past four years. Through the City's down payment assistance program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, eligible families may receive financial support for home ownership.

 **19** community meetings hosted during the summer of 2018.

In June and July, 2018, the City hosted three public forums and sixteen community meetings to obtain input on the City's Parks and Recreation Programs. A Parks and Recreation System Improvement Plan is being drafted to guide facility investment and changes, over the next ten years.



## How has Mobile's Built Environment Improved?

### Development regulations are being overhauled.

As supported through the adoption of the City's new Future Land Use Plan in 2017, progress has continued with the drafting of a new Unified Development Code (UDC) to guide residential, commercial, and industrial development, along with infill and redevelopment. It is expected that the draft regulations will be presented to the Mobile City Planning Commission for consideration by the end of 2018. Representing a hybrid form of zoning code, the regulations will implement strategic policies to enhance the quality of life and vibrancy within the City's major corridors, centers, historic districts, and residential neighborhoods.

### Stormwater impact fee adopted for funding of water quality protection.

To strengthen the City's stormwater program, the City will begin collecting an annual stormwater fee. All fees will be allocated to stormwater management activities to improve the water quality within the City's waterways. The funds will help eliminate and prevent pollution, illicit discharges, improper disposal and spills, and will support stormwater best management practices for new developments and re-development projects.

### City Facilities Assessment identifies strategic infill opportunities.

The City's real estate inventory includes approximately 5.5 million square feet of space, within 367 City-owned buildings. Additionally, the City owns 1,159 land parcels totaling 4,417 acres. To assist the City with developing a comprehensive inventory, description, and conditions assessment of these holdings, a contract was negotiated with a private consulting firm. A summary report from the consultant has identified parcels for potential disposition and subsequent redevelopment, to improve the built environment.

### Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is funding infrastructure projects.

The City is developing its next multi-year plan to help fund and execute large-scale infrastructure projects. Beginning in fiscal year 2019, the five-year view will allow the City to look ahead at other funding opportunities such as the County's Pay-as-You-Go program, RESTORE grants, and other state and federal funds to best leverage CIP dollars.

## ELEMENT GOALS

Map for Mobile identified the following goals for improving the City's built environment.

- › Buildings and sites designed to enhance and contribute to surroundings and neighborhoods
- › Well-designed infill development in strategic locations
- › A built environment that focuses more on people to create more desirable, higher quality-of-life places
- › Protected and preserved historic neighborhoods, buildings and sites
- › More mixed-use with less separation of uses - create more activity in given areas
- › Better suburban development - minimize additional sprawl to maximize growth in existing areas
- › More connections among developed areas and neighborhoods
- › Greater access to jobs and employment centers



The recently approved Meridian at the Port development is expected to bring 700 residents Downtown.



## How has Mobile's Mobility and Connectivity Improved?

### **The Reconnecting Mobile initiative is underway.**

Construction is set to begin on the first phase of the "One Mobile" project funded by the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant award. The first phase will include Beauregard Street from Broad Street to Water Street and Broad Street from Congress Street to Beauregard Street. Once completed, the project will provide safe, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly access, beautify the streetscape, and stimulate economic activity throughout Mobile.

### **Bike share service has launched.**

Following the recent approval by the Mobile City Council, a dock-less bike share enterprise has commenced operation in Mobile. Bike sharing will connect the City's neighborhoods and businesses, and offer mobility options for citizens. The University of South Alabama will also host the LimeBike program within their campus. With over 15,000 students enrolled in classes and more than 5,000 full-time employees, the program will provide greater mobility opportunities within the campus and beyond.

### **The WAVE Transit Bus System is being transformed.**

The City has selected First Transit, Inc., a new management company, to transform the Wave Transit bus system. In 2017, the City issued a Request for Proposals to update the existing transit management contract. After a comprehensive evaluation, the City chose First Transit to replace the current transit management company. The new firm has proposed a plan to improve ridership in Mobile through increased customer satisfaction and smarter routing.

### **Traffic signals have been upgraded.**

To address traffic concerns, signal upgrades have been made at various intersections within the City. These improvements coincide with revisions to the Metropolitan Planning Organization's congestion management guidance of their Destination 2040 plan. The new signalization program will identify and fund signal improvement projects conforming to the new congestion management policies. Within the 2018 Capital Improvement Plan, \$980,000 was allocated to implement traffic signal upgrades.

## ELEMENT GOALS

Map for Mobile identified the following goals for improving the City's Mobility and Connectivity.

- › Decreased traffic congestion, especially on major corridors
- › Accommodations for driving, walking and biking
- › More accessible and utilized transit service
- › Viable transportation alternatives and choices for citizens
- › Transportation infrastructure that is aligned with community character
- › More walkable places with a variety of destinations, services and necessities within close proximity
- › Increased connectivity among neighborhoods and destinations
- › Continued and improved ADA accessibility



Mayor Stimpson tries out LimeBike dockless bikeshare service.



## How have Mobile's Neighborhoods Improved?

### Housing plan supports more housing opportunities.

The City of Mobile Housing Plan is pending completion. Upon release, the plan will provide data and guidance concerning housing options. It is expected that the plan will educate the development community about the City's diverse neighborhood market conditions, in support of data-driven public and private interventions to support housing opportunities across the City of Mobile.

### Home ownership assistance provided.

The City of Mobile has helped 87 families realize their dream of home ownership since Fiscal Year 2014, through the City's Down Payment Assistance Program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Additionally, the City has provided financial assistance to 32 homeowners, for repair of their homes, through the Critical Repair Grant Program. Repairs have included roof, electrical, plumbing, and heating and air conditioning. The program is intended to fight blight, solve potential life threatening issues, and prevent problems for the neighborhood before they happen.

### New tools for empowering neighborhood planning.

The Neighborhood Planning Toolkit was completed in February, 2018, and includes a set of educational resources. It is expected that these instructional documents will be relied upon by neighborhoods to guide establishment of Neighborhood Planning Groups. Additionally, the toolkit will guide the drafting of area plans through a standardized, predictable method, with consistent organization. Phase II of the Neighborhood Planning Toolkit Initiative is poised to commence through the release and utilization of the new toolkit resources.

**Before/After of renovated homes in the Oakleigh neighborhood recently completed as part of the City's neighborhood revitalization effort.**



## ELEMENT GOALS

Map for Mobile identified the following goals for improving the City's neighborhoods.

- › Quality, well-designed housing choices
- › Diverse housing choices throughout the City
- › More residential development located in proximity to jobs and services, especially downtown and major employers
- › Identify public and private resources for community and neighborhood development
- › Targeted revitalization of blighted neighborhoods
- › Reinvestment and strategic redevelopment in existing neighborhoods
- › Better connectivity among neighborhoods and destinations
- › Well-designed, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood centers with a mixture of uses
- › Well-maintained infrastructure and recreational amenities
- › Active and engaged neighborhood organizations
- › Vibrant neighborhoods with a strong and diverse sense of place
- › Protected and enhanced neighborhood character



## How have Mobile's City Facilities and Services Improved?

### Opportunities for redevelopment of the Mobile Civic Center site.

The potential disposition of the Mobile Civic Center for specific redevelopment objectives is being evaluated. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for development of a mixed-use project at the 22-acre site has been drafted and released. The Civic Center operates at a deficit, and a more cost-effective solution for providing cultural performances and community enhancing social activities is desirable. Redevelopment of the site also represents an opportunity for additional residential, restaurant, and retail uses, to increase vibrancy and commerce within Downtown Mobile.

### CSS, online permitting portal has launched.

Build Mobile has introduced a new online system, Citizen Self Service (CSS), to better serve the City's customers with accessing building plans, permits and inspections, while maintaining effective communication with citizens and the development community. Registered users will have the opportunity to view details on construction plans, permits, and inspection schedules, as well as pay invoices and request an inspection for an active permit. The system is accessible 24-7, and promises to improve the customer service experience.



### Parking Management Services Initiative Being Evaluated for Downtown

Coordination with a municipal parking management services provider is underway. This initiative would result in an enhanced level of management for the on-street parking facilities downtown, through a contract with a national firm. Innovative technology applications and upgrades would support this program, facilitating a safe and enjoyable parking experience for Downtown visitors. Multiple payment options would also be provided for existing public parking spaces.

## ELEMENT GOALS

Map for Mobile identified the following goals for improving the City's Facilities and Services.

- › Well-maintained infrastructure and facilities
- › Quality parks and recreation amenities
- › Well-connected, accessible facilities and amenities
- › Enhance public-safety facilities and services
- › Continue to provide high-quality public services while focusing on higher density and compactness which enhances service levels
- › Provide continued services and maintain existing public facilities while planning for new investments to accommodate future growth and demographics changes
- › Provide continued access to a variety of educational opportunities



The City of Mobile is offering a mixed-use redevelopment opportunity at the Civic Center site. The redeveloped parcel would promote an active downtown, serving as a vibrant gateway.



## How has Mobile's Economic Development Improved?

### Youth Empowered for Success (YES) initiative helps youth gain job skills and experience.

During the summer of 2018, one-hundred students accepted summer jobs at City Hall. All participants ranged between the ages of 16 to 24 and included Mobile City residents. The part-time employment focused on job skills training and gaining work experience. The students worked in the Mayor's Office, Information Technology, Mobile Fire-Rescue, Mobile Police Department, Engineering, Architectural Engineering, Motor Pool, Equipment Services, 311, Parks and Recreation, Building and Inspections, Civic Engagement, Community and Neighborhood Development, Supplier Diversity, Municipal Court, the Mobile Museum of Art and the Alabama Contemporary Art Center.



### Amazon's new sortation center creates hundreds of jobs.

The City of Mobile and strategic partners have achieved progress in the area of economic development. During 2018, the ribbon was cut at the new Amazon sortation center. The opening of this facility is expected to create hundreds of new jobs for citizens. Additionally, in late 2017, Airbus announced plans to build a second Final Assembly Line at the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley Field, and SSAB Steel announced plans to move its corporate headquarters to Mobile.



Amazon sortation center opened in 2018.

## ELEMENT GOALS

Map for Mobile identified the following goals for improving the City's Economic Development.

- › Diversify the economic base, particularly in the areas of tourism and technology
- › Retain existing businesses and attract new businesses
- › Expand and develop industries that capitalize on Mobile's rich natural resources and history
- › Increase employment in small businesses
- › Cultivate a robust pool of skilled workers
- › Coordinate long-range planning efforts amongst industry clusters





## How have Mobile's Natural Resources Improved?

### Three Mile Creek Greenway has been enhanced.

The City is installing new amenities along the first completed Three Mile Creek Greenway Trail, including picnic tables, grills, a fitness zone, benches, rest stops, security cameras, drinking fountains, pet stations and trail head signage. Additionally, a kayak launch at Tricentennial Park was recently opened, adjacent to Three Mile Creek, to complement the trail and to provide waterfront access to citizens. Opportunities to expand this facility are continuing. RESTORE Act funding will contribute nearly \$10M towards design/construction to extend the existing Three Mile Creek Greenway westward to the University of South Alabama Medical Center. The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) has also awarded the City of Mobile \$555,092 towards this initiative. The new segment will include approximately 3,300 linear feet from where the initial phase of construction ended on West Ridge Road.



### Abandoned junk vehicles are being removed.

City legislation has recently been approved by the Mobile City Council which will allow the City to begin towing inoperable, abandoned junk vehicles that have been in the same location for at least 30 days. Removal of these junk vehicles will afford greater natural resources protection, and will increase property values, beautify yards and help revitalize the City's neighborhoods.

### Litter is being reduced.

The City of Mobile has implemented efforts to reduce litter from local waterways, consistent the MS4 stormwater permit. A litter trap is in place along Eslava Creek, a tributary to Dog River. Through this device and operation of two litter patrol boats, a total of approximately 470 cubic yards of litter has been captured and removed from the City's waterways during the 2017 reporting period. Additionally, a total of 139 catch basin screens and 67 marine debris interceptor devices are now in place within catch basins along City streets to catch litter.

## ELEMENT GOALS

Map for Mobile identified the following goals for improving Natural Resources.

- › Protection of watersheds and conservation of sensitive habitat areas
- › Strategic utilization of the waterfront as an economic engine while respecting its natural beauty and sensitivity
- › Creation of trails and passive recreation spaces along streams, creeks and other flood prone areas
- › Better connectivity to parks and recreational areas from neighborhoods
- › Accessibility at multiple locations to the rivers and Mobile Bay
- › Development of a waterfront accessible to the public along the western side of Mobile Bay
- › A resilient and sustainable coastal community
- › Improved water quality through better stormwater management



Volunteers construct oyster reefs along Mobile Bay as part of the RESTORE Act grants.



## How has Mobile's Collaboration and Cooperation Improved?

### Parks System Improvement initiative is underway.

During the summer of 2018, the City hosted public forums to gather feedback that will help guide the Parks and Recreation System Improvement Plan. Citizens enjoyed three opportunities to help shape the future of City parks for the next decade. Utilizing an engaging format, the public forums allowed citizens to provide input for the plan, which will help guide decisions for existing parks and community centers. The drafting of the Parks and Recreation System Improvement Plan is ongoing.

### Mobile Airport collaboration supporting various initiatives.

The Mobile Airport Authority has released a feasibility study addressing the potential for moving the commercial passenger airport services from Bates Field to the Mobile Aeroplex at Brookley Field. The City Administration supports collaborative planning efforts for the potential relocation of the airport. Establishing passenger services at the Aeroplex compliments other strategic initiatives focusing on investment and revitalization within Downtown Mobile.

### Resiliency and water quality improved through Perch Creek area collaboration.

The Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council has awarded the City of Mobile and MAWSS \$3.5 million for the Perch Creek Area Sanitary Sewer Trunk Line to support the Perch Creek Nature Trail and Preserve. The project will reduce sanitary sewer overflows and improve water quality in the Perch Creek area. Additionally, the Perch Creek bridge at Dauphin Island Parkway will be elevated to improve hydrologic flow and navigable access to the Dog River Scenic Blueway and Birding Trail. The Dog River Scenic Blueway is a project of Dog River Clearwater Revival, the National Parks Service and the Alabama Scenic River Trail.

This project was made possible through a strong collaboration with the Peninsula of Mobile, Dog River Clearwater Revival, the City of Mobile, the Alabama Department of Transportation, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, The Nature Conservancy, MAWSS, Alabama Department of Environmental Management, the Alabama Coastal Foundation, Mobile United, Pelican Coast Conservancy and the Martin Luther King Jr. Redevelopment Authority.

## ELEMENT GOALS

Map for Mobile identified the following goals for improving Collaboration and Cooperation.

- › Encourage and foster public-private partnerships
- › Greater access to educational opportunities of all types for all ages
- › A healthy and safe community
- › Greater resiliency to natural and man-made disasters
- › High-quality water, sewer and energy services
- › Well-maintained arts, cultural and attraction amenities



Dog River Scenic Blueway

## Future priorities and Action Plan updates

Mobile should be proud of its progress, but the City must continue to look to the future. Map for Mobile is a long range plan, and as many of its specific recommendations have been achieved or are underway, there is a need to consider new action items and future priorities.

### Priorities

Leaders from various City departments identified strategic priorities for implementation over the next few years. These priorities include:

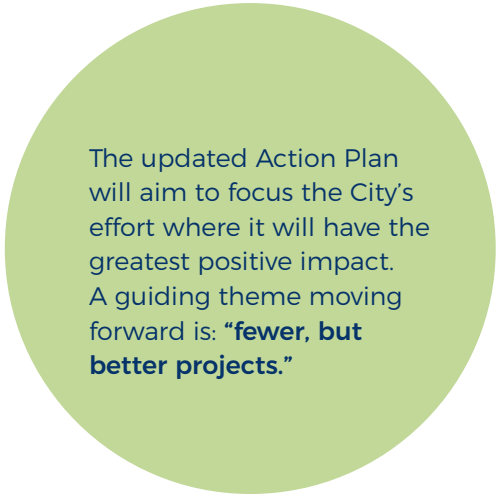
- › Adopting the Unified Development Code and investing in staff training on its implementation
- › Continuing to focus on neighborhood improvements and reinvestment
- › Initiating planned improvements to the greenway network
- › Strengthening collaborative relationships with organizations and entities outside of City government
- › New grant-funded street improvement projects to include pedestrian-friendly streetscape design elements.
- › Integrating various initiatives into funding decisions in the Capital Improvements Plan
- › Improving communication to the community about City initiatives including education
- › Ensuring that priority initiatives remain championed by City leaders

### Potential New Action Items

Before the end of 2018, the Map for Mobile Action Plan appendix will be updated to remove actions that have been completed or are no longer relevant, and add a limited number of new actions. Additionally, to improve future tracking and reporting on progress, the Action Plan will be reorganized and presented in a more intuitive format.

#### Potential new actions include:

- › Establish an outreach clearinghouse to provide meaningful opportunities for community involvement with clear messages.
- › Establish and maintain regular coordination with city schools regarding facilities planning, development activity and infrastructure investments.
- › Participate in collaborative efforts to pursue relocating commercial passenger airport services
- › Establish and maintain regular coordination with the University of South Alabama regarding physical planning and strategic partnership opportunities
- › Participate in collaborative efforts to promote creation of a regional Amtrak route with a terminal in Mobile
- › Strengthen coordination with the Port of Mobile
- › Develop street design guidelines that align with Map for Mobile and the Major Street Plan



The updated Action Plan will aim to focus the City's effort where it will have the greatest positive impact. A guiding theme moving forward is: **"fewer, but better projects."**



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