



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Downtown Mobile
Credit: Mobile Bay Convention and Visitors Bureau

MESSAGE FROM MAYOR SANDY STIMPSON

OCTOBER 2015

We cast a vision for creating One Mobile by becoming the safest, most business and family-friendly City in America by 2020. That vision led to primary goals and initiatives in my Administration that focus on financial stewardship, increased effectiveness in all areas of City operations and improving the quality of life for citizens.

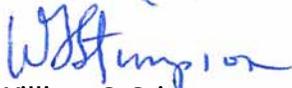
In addition to the vision set forth for 2020, we embarked this year on a citywide comprehensive planning process that has not been undertaken for decades. Citizen involvement was the top priority for this plan, and we have developed a framework – a Map for Mobile – that can be used to guide decisions and changes for both the near term and far beyond.

Map for Mobile outlines goals and policies we believe will guide our future planning efforts and the pages in this report outline the methods and approaches the City will follow in 2016 and beyond to implement zoning, land use, code and ordinance changes and capital improvement priorities. Map for Mobile sets up the framework for future decision making and represents months of outreach and citizen input to engage broad perspectives.

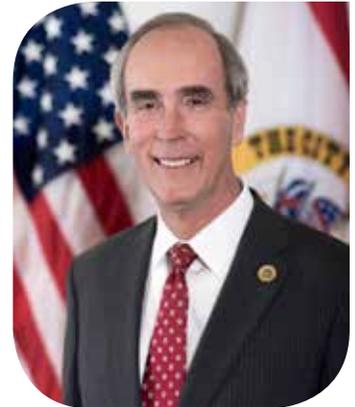
Cities rely on leadership to help foster growth and be catalysts for collaboration and cooperation. I assure you that Mobile’s entire City leadership is dedicated to improving the quality of life for our citizens and investing in needed changes and improvements. We will be working together to implement this plan and use it as a “living document” with action plans developed and reviewed on an annual basis.

My sincere thanks to all those who participated in development of Map for Mobile! We appreciate the contributions of everyone involved in the success of Mobile – it is indeed a great time for our City!

With sincere regards,



William S. Stimpson
Mayor of Mobile



**CYCLE OF
POSITIVE
CHANGE**

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The City initiated the planning process for Map for Mobile with the goal of shaping a citywide vision for the community and using it as a guide for future development. The city conducted a robust publicity and outreach campaign to ensure that participation in the process was a choice for as many citizens as possible.

Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee of City officials; representatives from housing, education and economic development authorities; and members from other governmental agencies is formed to steer Map for Mobile in the right direction and provide oversight and feedback.

Focus on the Future Workshop

At the Focus on the Future Workshop more than 400 citizens identify strong and weak places in the City and contribute their best ideas for Mobile's future. An additional 200 submit ideas online.



2015

Feb.

Mar.

Mar. 30

Project Website

MapforMobile.org launches to spread awareness. Throughout the planning process, the website provides a platform for citizens unable to attend workshops.



May 18-20

Jul. 16

Designing the Future Workshop

More than 300 citizens provide input on draft principles, review ongoing work and identify ways to improve various parts of the City. The City also live-streams the workshop's last evening presentation, allowing citizens to stay engaged online.

Outreach Committee

Non-profit organizations, faith-based communities and neighborhood and community leaders on the Outreach Committee play a vital role in engaging stakeholders and the general public in the process, ensuring widespread and diverse participation.



Open House

400 citizens review the progress on Map for Mobile and provide feedback and input on the draft plan.



WHAT WE LEARNED

First and foremost, Map for Mobile is about people.

PUBLIC INPUT

The overarching mission of Map for Mobile is to recommend strategies that improve places for people. The best way to create policies that improve people’s lives is to listen to their ideas. We asked citizens to provide their best ideas for Mobile, many of which have been incorporated into Map for Mobile. Some of our ideas are broad and far-reaching, like “attract more retirees.” Others are basic but necessary, like “safe streets for walking.” Still others

are for specific projects that would improve quality of life like “Three Mile Creek bike trail.” Our best ideas for Mobile cover a wide range of possibilities and opportunities for our City and reflect our belief in Mobile’s potential. Themes that were repeated throughout the input process include:

- › Physical design as a priority
- › Cleaner, greener neighborhoods
- › More walkability
- › Improve transportation flow
- › Preserve our history

EXISTING PLANS

To reinforce the City’s extensive planning efforts in the recent past while moving forward with a vision for the City’s future, Map for Mobile references previous City plans and their recommendations.

Map for Mobile does not replace or ignore the investment the City has already made in recent plans. Many of these plans provide excellent initiatives and detailed projects, and Map for Mobile simply reinforces these initiatives and encourages updating them as necessary. Some initiatives have been completed, such as a form-based code for Downtown. Many others are underway and are supported by Map for Mobile. For example, guidelines in Map for Mobile for Complete Streets have already been included in existing street plans.



PRINCIPLES

Now and into the future, seven Principle Statements outline our foundational values.

We believe in...

1 Strong neighborhoods with:

- › Unique identity and sense of place
- › A mix of housing types that provide for residents' diverse needs
- › Community amenities within walkable distances

2 Functional roadway corridors with:

- › An attractive and welcoming public realm
- › Safe accommodations for people and vehicles
- › A variety of thriving businesses that support a robust economy

3 Strategic infill and redevelopment with:

- › A mix of uses that serve the needs of the community
- › A focus on vacant properties and blighted areas
- › Concentrated activity that creates vibrancy

4 A connected community with:

- › Ease of mobility for pedestrians, automobiles, and bicyclists
- › Safe and appealing transportation options
- › Access to businesses, parks and open spaces, cultural amenities, and other destinations

5 High quality design of the built environment with:

- › An attractive and distinctive streetscape and public realm
- › Maintenance of existing private property to minimize degradation and blight
- › New private property development that is distinguishing yet in keeping with City and neighborhood character

6 A strong downtown with:

- › A greater intensity of uses and activities
- › Pedestrian-friendly streets and interesting restaurants and entertainment options
- › Accommodations for tourists as well as those who live and work in Mobile

7 Greater opportunities to enjoy natural and recreational assets with:

- › Quality parks and open spaces
- › Appropriate and inviting development at key waterfront and riverfront locations
- › Proximity and connections to residential and commercial areas

THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The development framework map delineates areas of the City according to the predominant form of development found in a specific area, or the “Development Area.” The development framework maps and development areas matrix describe the form that development should take. Together they act similar to a traditional future land-use map by laying a foundation for future zoning changes and land-use decisions.

The development areas are classified as corridors, centers, neighborhoods and areas and follow a continuum from urban to traditional to suburban to almost rural. Through images and text descriptions, the development framework portrays the preferred character of the centers, corridors and development areas, illustrating what these places should look like in the future.

URBAN CORRIDOR	WATERFRONT
TRADITIONAL CORRIDOR	DOWNTOWN
TRADITIONAL CENTER	TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD
SUBURBAN CORRIDOR	SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD
SUBURBAN CENTER	INDUSTRIAL
EDGE CORRIDOR	INSTITUTIONAL



This street design concept at Martin Luther King Avenue at Hamilton Street shows how low-cost, incremental improvements can transform a downtown area into a mixed-use street that accommodates all users and all modes of transportation.



PLAN ELEMENTS

For a series of planning topics, Map for Mobile presents goals and policies upon which future planning, regulations and decisions can be built.

Everyone wants Mobile to succeed, lead and grow. The city is on the cusp of a new era – one with expanded opportunities for economic development and accelerated growth. While Mobile faces a bright future, it also faces a number of challenges such as limited mobility, sprawling conditions, and declining neighborhoods.

Mobile's biggest challenges are also its biggest opportunities. If Mobile can affect positive change in these areas, the quality of life for its citizens will improve and the city will thrive. Map for Mobile is a framework plan that provides direction and guidance to improve the City and prepare it for the growth on the horizon.



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment consists of the human-made spaces in which citizens live, work and play on a day-to-day basis. It encompasses public and private buildings, parks, transportation systems, streets, sidewalks, etc.

GOALS

- › 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



MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Mobility and connectivity are more than just transportation. These terms encompass all forms of getting from one place to another, including walking, biking, driving, taking transit and even water transport. Building on Mobile's already strong commitment to Complete Streets, the plan proposes a new street type system for the City.

GOALS

- › 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



NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods are what people call home. A collection of unique, diverse and characterful places, Mobile's neighborhoods are more than just housing. They are havens, playgrounds and places citizens love.

GOALS

- › 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



CITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

City facilities and services are vital to the smooth operation of any city. Public services keep Mobile functioning: police, fire, public works, licensing, permitting, and stormwater management. City facilities – parks, libraries, and community and recreation centers – make Mobile not just functional, but a great place to live.

GOALS

- › Well-maintained infrastructure and facilities
- › Quality parks and recreation amenities
- › Well-connected, accessible facilities and amenities
- › Enhanced 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
- › Continued access to a variety of educational opportunities



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mobile is the regional hub for business, industry and trade and is home to the 12th largest U.S. port. The City and region have seen nearly \$8.5 billion in capital investments and 15,361 new jobs in the past decade.

GOALS

- › 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 among industry clusters



NATURAL RESOURCES

Mobile's natural resources are unparalleled in the state and the region. The City of Mobile sits at the southern terminus of the second largest intact river delta in the country and in the midst of the Mobile Bay Watershed, which encompasses four states, draining 43,662 square miles.

GOALS

- › 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



COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION

Collaboration and Cooperation refer to the partnerships and alliances that work together, leveraging knowledge and resources, for the betterment of the Mobile area.

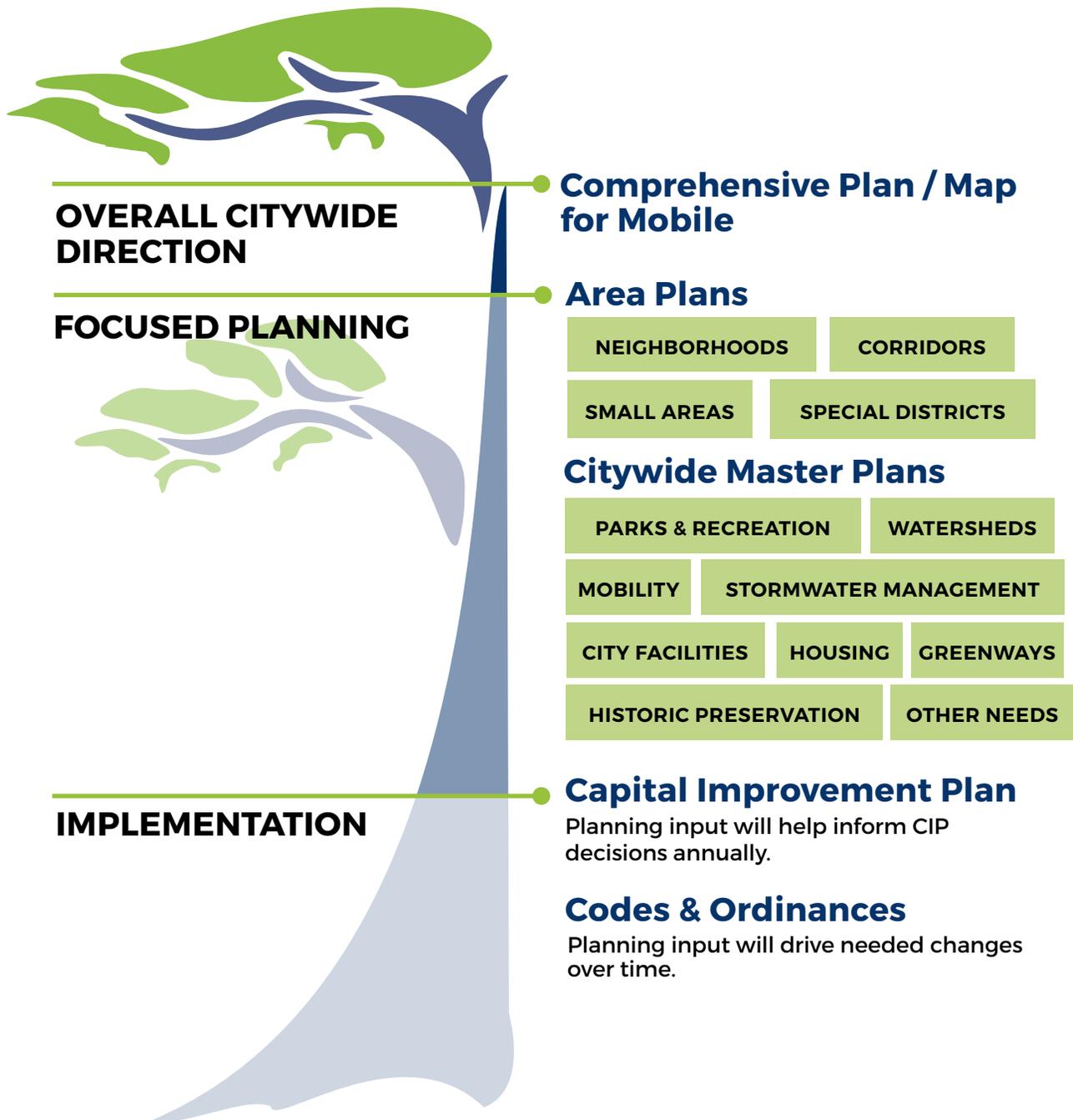
GOALS

- › 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



THE PLANNING CONTEXT

Map for Mobile is a statement of the city’s overall vision and policy direction. It will be implemented through various specific actions plans and regulations. The city’s many existing and future plans fit into a clear hierarchy as shown below.



IMPLEMENTATION

Map for Mobile is meant to be a long-range plan, with recommendations that will be fully realized over many years, even decades. It sets the stage for Mobile’s growth and development, serving as a guide and touchstone for the future, and based firmly in the principles and goals.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

The City’s Finance Department has developed a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan to foster long-term thinking and investing. Specific action items, reviewed and updated annually, will inform the City’s Capital Improvement Planning. This linkage from planning to budgeting keeps the City focused on budgeting for priorities while maintaining strong financial stewardship of resources.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING TEAM

The primary responsibility for implementing Map for Mobile lies with the City’s Long-Range Planning Team, who will ensure that City officials and staff are knowledgeable about Map for Mobile and its goals, policies and action items. This team will ensure that planning efforts are carried to fruition and will aid neighborhoods and other groups that want to create plans to better their communities.

ANNUAL PLAN UPDATES

The Long-Range Planning Team will work with City Departments to update Map for Mobile annually, with policies and action items accomplished as implementation progresses. A Long-Range Planning Committee, led by the City’s Long-Range Planner and consisting of department heads and key staff, should meet regularly in planning roundtables to review progress made on implementation.

LAND-USE REGULATION REFORM

As one of the first steps of implementing the plans’ vision and principles, Map for Mobile recommends initiating reform of land-use regulations as a first-year action item. This process will not be a quick one, nor should it be.

Goals for Land-Use Regulation Reform:

- › Broad community buy-in and input in the process
- › Simple to understand for property and business owners
- › Straightforward to administer



ROLES OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

The entire community has a role in helping to realize the vision in Map for Mobile. Here's what you can do to help implement the plan.

Stay Involved

(everyone should...)

Let your local representatives know that you support Map for Mobile.

Get involved in future planning efforts.

Stay informed on what is being done to implement Map for Mobile.

INDIVIDUALS

- › Attend public meetings where decisions are being made to help ensure City officials are making decisions based on policies in Map for Mobile.

BUSINESSES

- › Join the local merchants association, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Mobile Alliance or other economic development organizations to stay abreast of current events.
- › Donate services, goods, money or time to planning efforts or projects as they are implemented.

NON-PROFITS

- › Continue to work as an advocate for your cause, and volunteer your services and time to projects that align with that and other causes.

Stick to the Plan

(The City should...)

CITY OFFICIALS

- › Familiarize yourself with Map for Mobile. Understand its implications and consult it when making decisions.
- › Allocate funding for projects based on determined priority and community needs.
- › Implement the policies set forth in the Plan.
- › Continue to engage citizens when implementing Map for Mobile to ensure that you are on the right path.
- › Support the community's future planning efforts with financing.

CITY STAFF

- › Familiarize yourself with Map for Mobile.
- › Budget for and allocate funding and resources to recommended projects.
- › Educate the public and City officials on the Plan and its implications. Implement the policies set forth in the Plan.
- › Support future planning efforts by aiding communities and neighborhoods with expertise, time and services.

GRATITUDE TO CITY LEADERSHIP AND KEY FUNDERS

Mayor Sandy Stimpson
Colby Cooper, Chief of Staff

Mobile Planning Commission Members:

- › James (Jay) F. Watkins, Chairman
- › Carlos Gant, Vice Chair
- › Jennifer Denson (Supernumerary), Secretary
- › Nick Amberger (Administrative Official)
- › Councilman Joel Daves
- › Thomas Doyle
- › Sujin Kim
- › Shirley Sessions
- › John Vallas
- › Don Hembree (Planning Jurisdiction)
- › Libba Latham (Planning Jurisdiction)
- › Allan Cameron (Supernumerary)

Mobile City Council Members:

- › Gina Gregory - Council President, District 7
- › Fredrick Richardson, Jr. - Council Vice President, District 1
- › Levon C. Manzie - Council Member, District 2
- › C.J. Small - Council Member, District 3
- › John C. Williams - Council Member, District 4
- › Joel Daves - Council Member, District 5
- › Bess Rich - Council Member, District 6

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- › Community Foundation of South Alabama
- › J.L. Bedsole Foundation

Full acknowledgements to all contributors and Outreach and Advisory Committee members available at MapForMobile.org

Map for Mobile was created in partnership with:





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