



WEST FAIRVIEW AVENUE PLAN

March 2010

WEST FAIRVIEW AVENUE PLAN

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Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood

and Hundreds of Montgomery Citizens



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process 1

Introduction

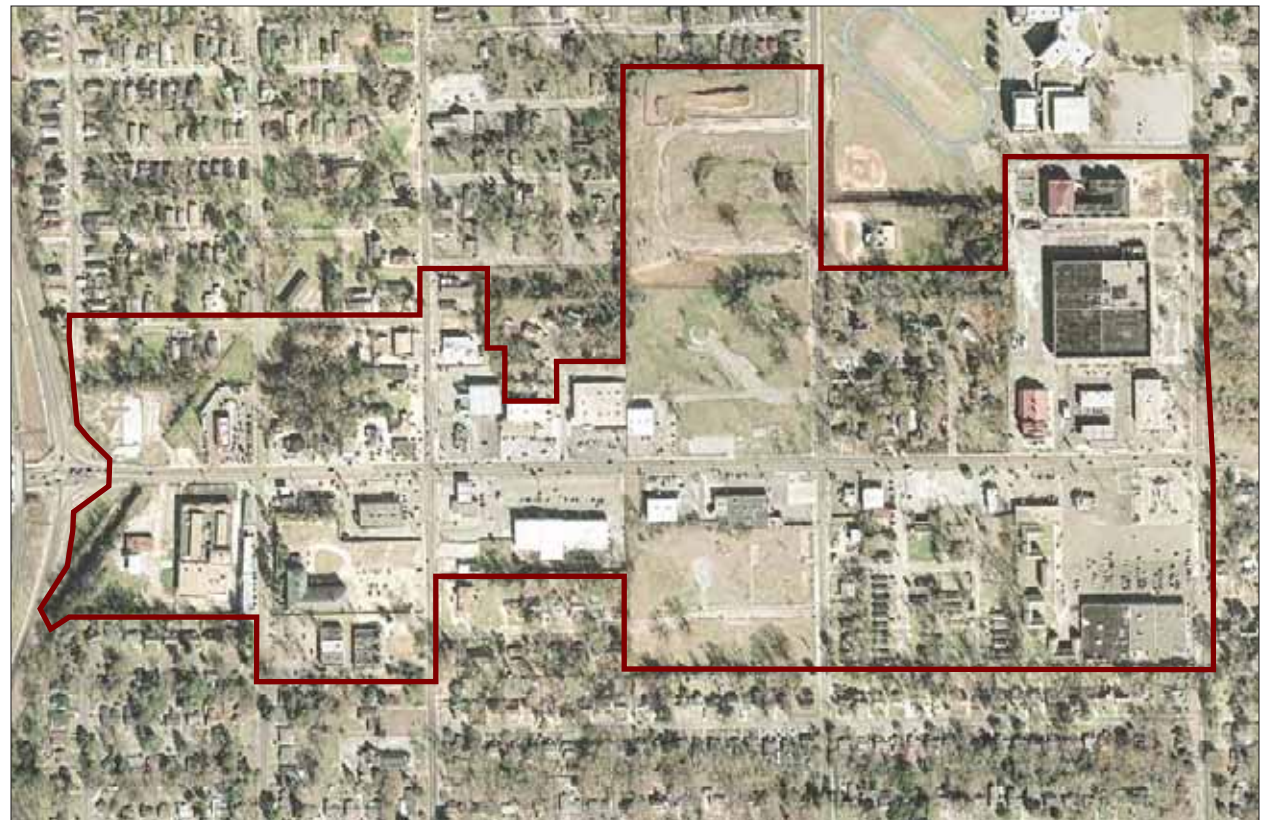
The West Montgomery Initiative is a collaborative effort sponsored by the City of Montgomery, Montgomery County and the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce. The goal of the effort is to stabilize, revitalize and reinvigorate the West Montgomery Community and its neighborhoods both residentially and economically. Principal objectives include community cleanup and infrastructure restoration, consistent and effective code enforcement, crime reduction, housing restoration and redevelopment, support for community organizations, neighborhood revitalization, economic development and job creation. The initiative is structured as a collaborative effort of local government, the business community, neighborhood institutions and organizations, and the general public working to achieve a safer, pedestrian-friendly, more economically sustainable West Fairview Avenue.

The West Fairview Avenue Charrette, held February 1-5, 2010, is part of the West Montgomery Initiative. Although West Fairview extends from Narrow Lane Road by Huntington College in the east to the Selma-Mobile Highway in the west, the charrette focused on the commercial corridor from Interstate 65 to Court Street and concentrated on the physical design of the corridor. The City teamed with Dover, Kohl & Partners and Urban Advisors for the charrette.

The Dover-Kohl team conducted an open planning process to gather maximum public input. Participants helped to create the West Fairview Avenue Plan through an intensive design event called a charrette. Over the course of five days, the community and the team of design professionals worked to create the plan. Over 200 interested residents and stakeholders participated in the planning process, including property owners, neighbors, business people, elected officials, appointed officials, City staff, and community leaders.



study area within the City



study area along West Fairview Avenue



THE CHARRETTE

Prior to the charrette, Dover-Kohl gathered base information and studied the existing physical and economic conditions of the area. This included reviewing previous plans and studies, examining existing City ordinances and land development regulations, and analyzing the physical, social, and economic characteristics the area.

Site Tour

To further understand the planning area and surrounding context, the team toured the area on the morning of February 1, 2010. The Dover-Kohl team was joined by members of the City's planning department and local architecture, planning, and landscape architecture firms which have been working in the West Montgomery area. The tour was guided by Jeff Downes, the Deputy Mayor, who described previous and current initiatives in the area. The tour enhanced the team's understanding of current issues, concerns, and redevelopment prospects along the corridor and throughout the surrounding neighborhoods including the design of Lanier Place, preliminary studies for Genetta Creek, the community garden at the intersection of Emerson and Broughton Streets, the mural project at E. D. Nixon Elementary School, and multiple efforts to promote infill housing. Team members walked, photographed, and noted building form, building placement, street design, and street connections on base maps of the existing conditions along West Fairview Avenue.



Kick-Off Presentation & Hands-on Design Session

On Monday, February 1, 2010 a Kick-off Presentation and Hands-on Design Session officially began the charrette. Over 150 residents, City leaders, elected officials, and local stakeholders gathered at the New Life Baptist Church on Rosa Park Boulevard for an evening presentation and table sessions. Following an opening prayer by Pastor Thomas, an introduction was provided by Kenneth J. Groves, Director of Planning who emphasized the importance of citizen involvement throughout the process to ensure the creation of a plan truly representative of community ideals. Jason King, charrette leader from Dover, Kohl & Partners, then outlined the challenge for participants during the charrette week and provided background information on traditional town building, national development trends and Smart Growth and New Urban design principles.

At the end of the kick-off presentation the audience was asked questions using keypad polling about how they used and travelled the corridor. The majority of the attendants said that they shopped the corridor regularly but rarely walked the corridor.

Working in small groups of approximately eight people per table, participants gathered around 16 tables to draw and share their varied ideas for the future of West Fairview Avenue. Each table was equipped with a base map of West Fairview Avenue, markers, scale bars and a table facilitator from the Dover-Kohl team, City planning department, or one of the local design firms. Citizens drew on the base maps to illustrate how they might like to see West Fairview Avenue evolve over time and described the uses, open spaces, building design, landscaping, street design, transportation, parking, and services they hoped to one day see.

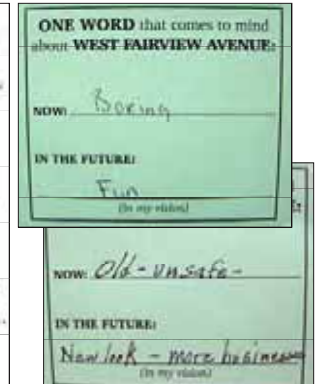
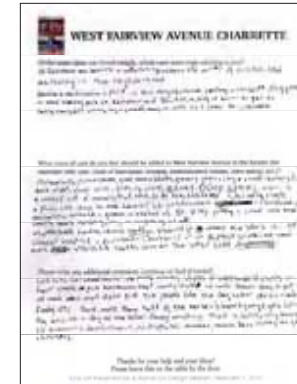


At the end of the session, a spokesperson from each table presented their table's map and ideas to the entire assembly. Of the many ideas that emerged from the exercises, some of the most widely shared ideas included:

- Restore security & safety
- Create a walkable main street (*sidewalks, street trees*)
- Beautify the area (*move poles, paint & patch existing buildings*)
- Reduce traffic, 2-way Court Street, add connections
- Create a gateway to West Fairview Avenue
- Increase small parks & bike routes
- Add a wide range of uses and services
- Concentrate on achieving a few short-term successes to build community support for larger goals

In addition to the table maps and group presentations, participants were also asked to fill out an exit survey and “one word” cards as an additional way to express their ideas, hopes and vision for the corridor.

The evening ended with a brief session of questions and answers for the City and design team, and Pastor Thomas closed the evening with a prayer.



Sample table maps

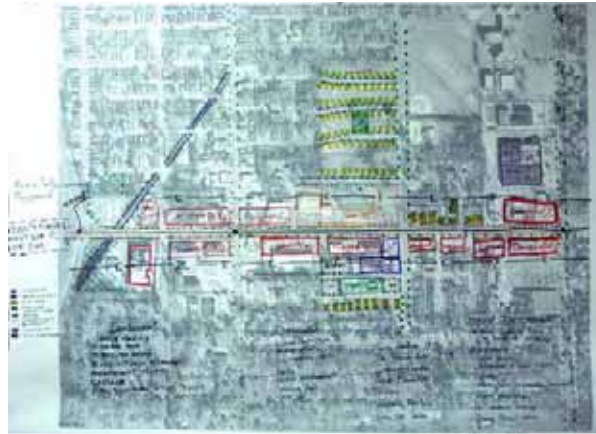


Open Design Studio

From Tuesday, February 2 through Thursday, February 4 the design team continued to work with the community in an open design studio at the New Life Baptist Church. Residents and local leaders were encouraged to stop by the studio throughout the week to check the status of the plan, provide further input, and to make sure the design team was on the right track. The convenient location of the studio within the study area, as well as the immense community interest, led over 80 people to participate throughout the week. The table drawings and plans were placed around the room for continual review. While community members visited the studio, the design team continued to analyze the information gathered from the community to formulate the concepts for the plan.

Throughout the week the design team was joined by volunteers from local design firms such as Barge, Waggoner, Sumner & Cannon, Inc., 2WR | Holmes Wilkins Architects Inc., and Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood, Inc. These firms lent their expertise in landscape architecture, transportation planning, and local knowledge to the project. City staff, including many members of the planning department, were on hand throughout the week to greet and talk to visiting residents as well as to assist the Dover-Kohl team merge the various aspects of the plan together into a cohesive plan.

Starting Tuesday morning, the team began synthesizing the many ideas heard from the community at the hands-on design session into a single cohesive synthesis plan. The synthesis plan included physical design elements, such as adding sidewalks and moving buildings up to the street, as well as placing desired uses along the corridor such as a police station and movie theatre. The planners and designers created lists, diagrams, drawings, and plans, working to combine and refine the ideas provided by the community.



Synthesis Plan



Day 1 Plan



Working in Montgomery allowed the design team ready access to the study area and the community throughout the week. The planners observed day-to-day traffic patterns, public uses, and other details of everyday life along West Fairview Avenue.

Ed Starkie, principal of Urban Advisors, LTD. joined the team on Tuesday and for the rest of the week to analyze the economics and practicality of the plan. Ed examined the potential market for development on West Fairview Avenue and researched potential funding sources for implementation.

Victor Dover, principal of Dover, Kohl & Partners joined the team on Tuesday and Wednesday in order to attend technical meetings and weigh in on the technical aspects of the plan as they developed. An informal evening “pin-up” of the plan was led by Victor on Tuesday evening. Plans, renderings, and initial concepts developed during the day were pinned-up to the walls and discussed. Technical aspects such as economics, land ownership, and first steps were discussed. Members of the public listened in and added their comments and observations of the plan as it was developing at this early stage to include their input as the plan was refined.

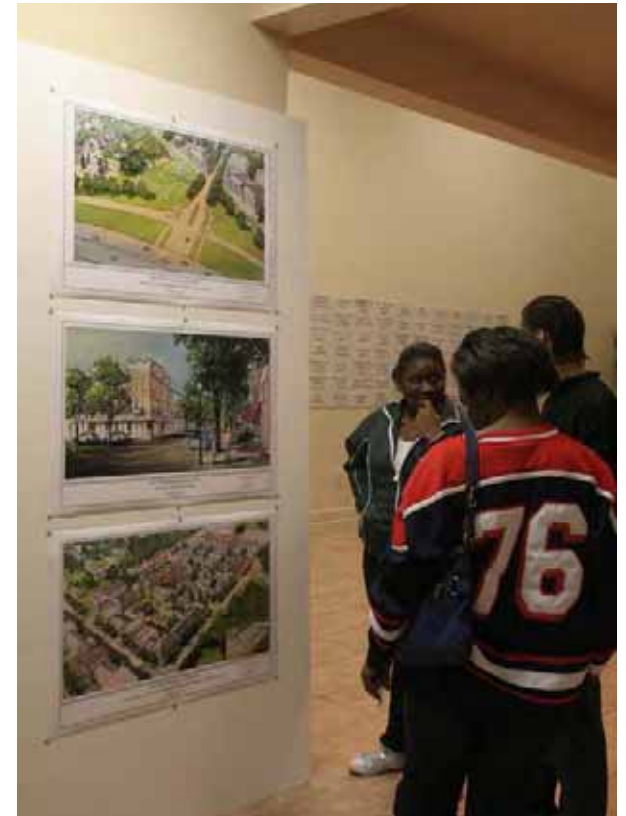
In addition to the public design studio, members of the design team met with elected officials, City departments, and local residents in scheduled technical meetings open to the public. Scheduled technical meetings included meetings with the Mayor, elected representatives, business and property owners, residents, Alabama Department of Transportation, City departments (fire, police, housing, transportation), state transportation officials, and local ministers. During the meetings the team answered design questions and discussed the draft plan to gain input and ensure that the ideas being developed were balanced by many viewpoints.



Work-in-Progress Presentation

The charrette week ended with an evening “Work-in-Progress” presentation on Friday, February 5 at the New Life Baptist Church. Over 100 citizens gathered at the church for the presentation. After introductions by the Deputy Mayor, Jeff Downes, and Director of Planning, Kenneth J. Groves, Jason King began the presentation with a summary of the week’s events. Jason walked through the concepts gathered from the public at the Hands-on design session and throughout the week and pointed out concepts found within the plan which came directly from the local residents. The plan was discussed in a series of phases. Change will not happen overnight, but progress can be expected one step at a time. Renderings illustrated how the corridor could redevelop over time. Following the presentation of the plan, Ed Starkie presented a timeline for implementation and identified current and potential funding sources the City has either secured or is investigating.

At the end of the presentation, attendees were surveyed using keypad polling to assess if the design team had properly translated their ideas into the vision for West Fairview Avenue. Survey results showed that 86% of the audience believed the plan was on the right track and 10% believed the plan was maybe on the right track. Following the survey, participants discussed the plan with the team during a question and answer period.





economics 2

The economic situation for the repair of the West Fairview Avenue corridor is currently one of limited resources. The population is in decline in the surrounding neighborhoods and has been for some time. The national economic situation has resulted in problems in financing for new construction, and financing for new business and business expansion. The impact for West Fairview Avenue is the same as elsewhere -- only projects with guarantees or assistance are likely to get funded. For these reasons, it is critical to sequence the use of limited resources wisely: first to preserve what works, second to repair what could work better, third to replace what doesn't work, and finally to build new.

The challenges that the design team learned of from interviews and observation fall into three categories: perception; the quality of the public realm; and the challenge of addressing local decline. The perception of West Fairview Avenue corridor is less than positive -- the public infrastructure is in need of repair, buildings are in need of repair, and businesses have bars on their front shop windows, and in one case slightly off the corridor, chain link fencing with razor wire. The issue of local decline is the result of young people leaving and a population aging in place. Nevertheless, interviews indicate that local residents are committed to their neighborhood and believe it can be vital again if there is a partnership with the City to work on the issues.

To prevent further decline and to preserve the character of the neighborhood it is necessary to address the fact that the corridor currently is a pass-through and not primarily a destination for residents and visitors. This can be changed with a plan that sets the stage for a memorable place by making walkable connections, adding quality housing nearby to support retail and service, increasing safety with a greater police presence,

insisting on quality in infrastructure and in the built environment, additional work on the gateway to the area from the interstate including construction of the proposed Genetta Creek Park, and thus changing local and regional perceptions of this area. In short, West Fairview Avenue needs to become a destination not a drive through.

REPAIR THE STREET

West Fairview Avenue evolved from a rural highway and is now unsuited to an urban setting with different requirements. A priority in rebuilding perceptions of the area is to create a great street that offers pedestrian amenities, attractive shopfront locations, and a sense of enclosure and safety.

The current design of West Fairview Avenue appears to be a modified rural arterial designed for moving automobile traffic through the corridor. It is not designed to address more urban patterns of use and development and is not oriented to comfortable pedestrian use inasmuch as it lacks a buffer between pedestrians and high-speed traffic.¹

Past work by Urban Advisors indicates that the type of street and its design speed tend to determine the scale and quality of uses along it. Retail operates on differing models of market capture depending on the street and location type. Traffic on an arterial typically moves at rates of speed around 40 miles

¹ According to a research paper ("The Conversion of Four-Lane Undivided Urban Roadways to Three-Lane Facilities" by Thomas M. Welch, Director, Office of Transportation Safety Engineering Division, Iowa Department of Transportation) presented to the Transportation Research Board, two lane to four lane conversions result in increased traffic volume, increased speeding and increased average speed, which result in a 14 percent increase in accidents, an 88 percent increase in injuries, and paradoxically, an increase in travel delays. The converse, an increase in safety and pedestrian comfort from reducing a four lane to a two lane right of way seems a justifiable conclusion.



per hour or greater. At that speed, a car is moving at 59 feet per second. A three second time to see a sign, make a decision to stop, and then turn will take the car forward by 176 feet. Businesses wishing to take advantage of this speed of pass-by traffic will thus use large signage, recognizable from a distance, and tend to have long frontages. There is also a commercial advantage in a large setback that allows a long sight line and longer time of observation to make the decision to turn.

In contrast, typical small shops in a traditional format set close to the street will have 25 to 30 foot width that, at 40 mph, will be passed in approximately half of a second. This explains anchored strip centers: smaller shops are allied with a larger anchor that acts as an attractor so that the small shops gain business from those who stop for the larger use. Such centers are usually 200 or more feet in frontage length, with prominent signage, and thus allow reasonable time for seeing and stopping.

In order to have both kinds of shops, local serving and those that rely on traffic volume, a different street section with different building placement is



required. Walkable places have a building to height ratio and a relationship to the street that differs from rural or suburban standards. The figure at right is from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) 2006 publication “Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities.” It indicates correct building placement, and street form for a sense of safety and enclosure.

The proposed plan reduces West Fairview Avenue from four lanes to three lanes and adds sidewalks and on-street parking, and changes building placement to address the street. Over time, as new buildings fill in the space along the corridor, the plan will create the kind of pedestrian environment envisioned in the ITE manual illustration.

Because of its structure, the street repair planned for West Fairview Avenue will allow for large businesses that rely on drive-by traffic, but will also help small businesses by increasing pedestrian traffic and lowering automobile speeds without lowering automobile throughput. The improvements will change perceptions, and thereby allow increased intensity of use. That in turn will create higher values, attract more visitors, and result in more revenue for local businesses.

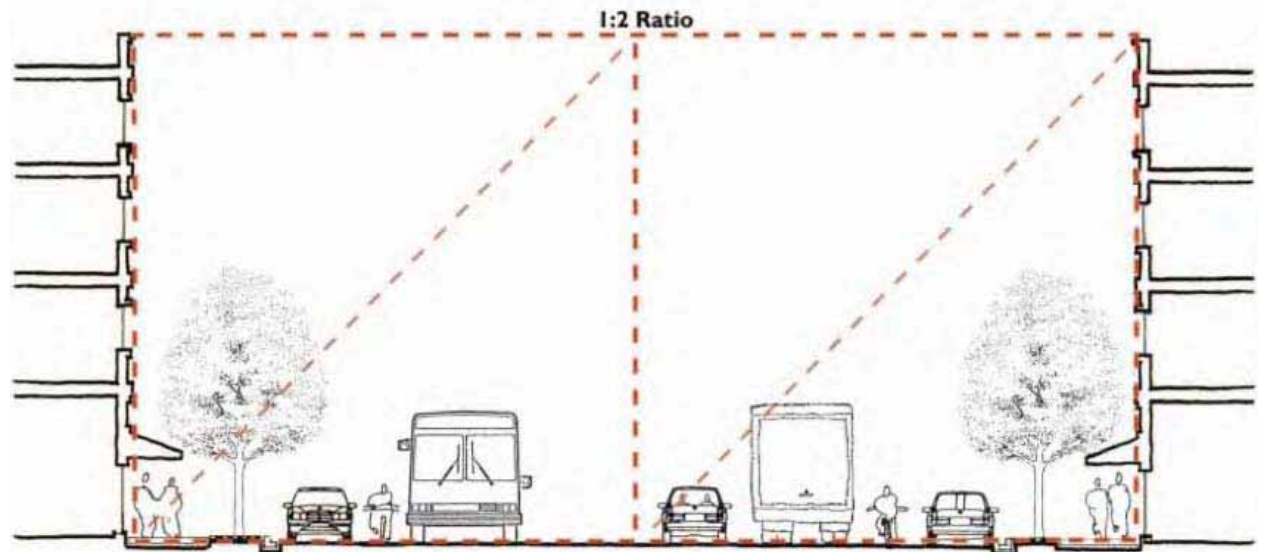
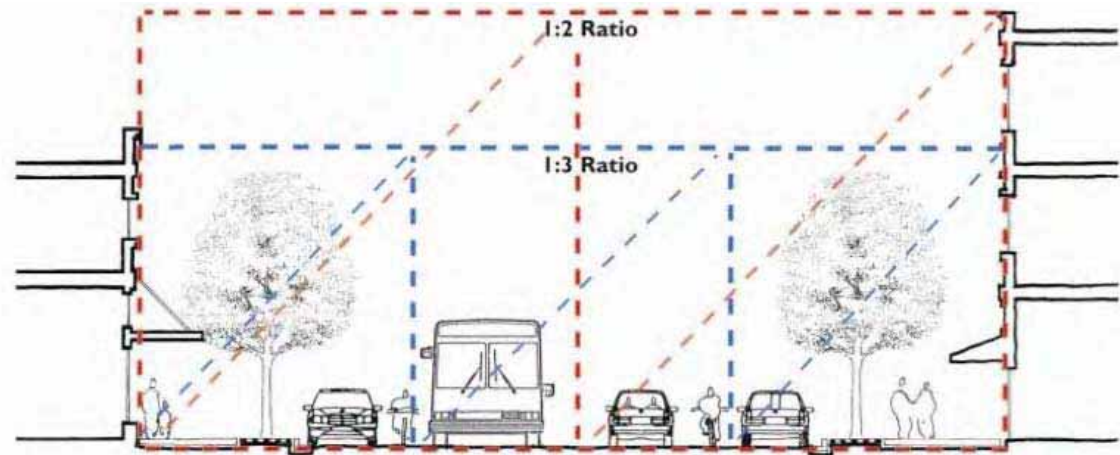


Illustration of height to width ratios that create a scale on thoroughfares that is comfortable to people and encourage walking (human scale). Human scale ratios fall between 1:3 and 1:2 as measured from the building fronts.

Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers publication “Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities” 2006.



CHANGE LOCAL PERCEPTION

To change local perceptions of West Fairview:

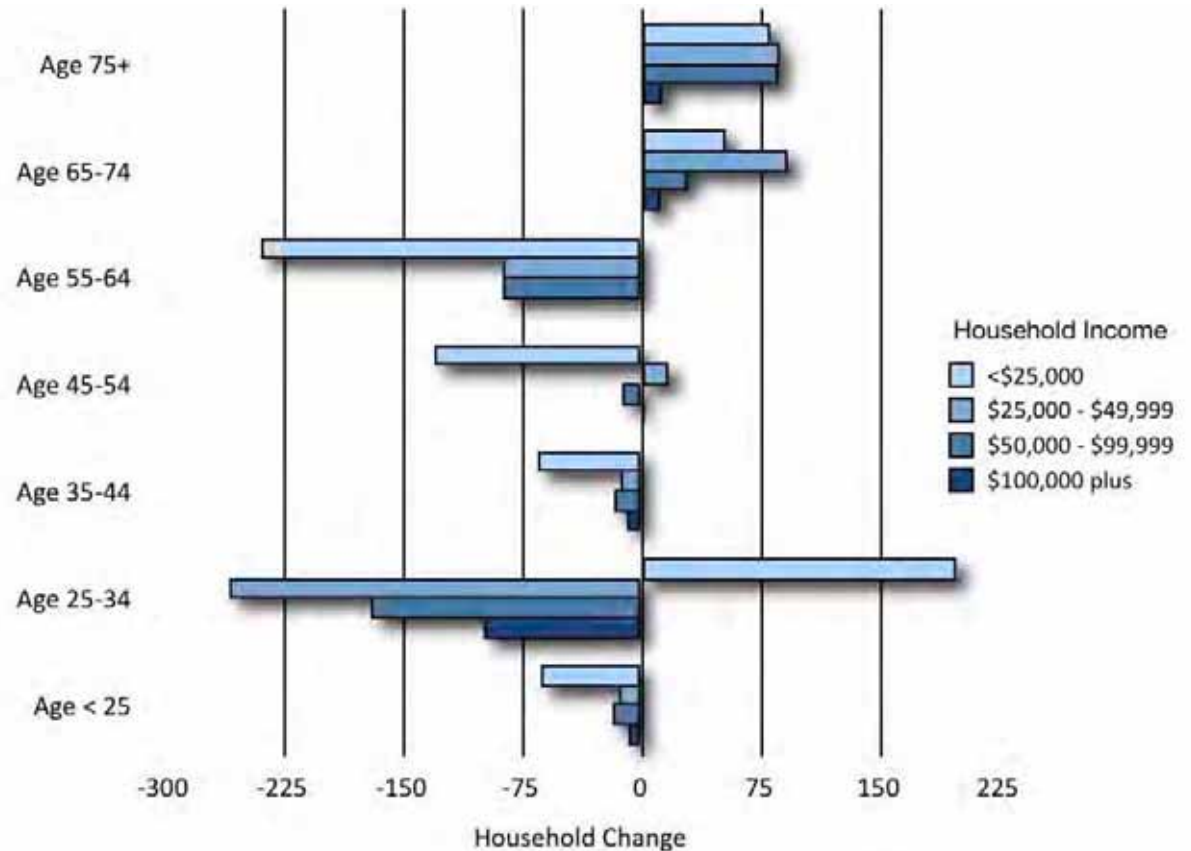
- Fix the street – do one good 600 to 1,200 foot section as a pilot project
- Develop the entry "gateway" from I-65
- Assist businesses to renovate facades
- Reduce congestion by creating connections
- Infill along the street to fill gaps
- Increase police presence
- Remove bars from windows, and chain link fences after security is addressed



POPULATION DECLINE

Addressing Neighborhood Population Decline

The chart at right shows that within a five minute drive of the West Fairview Avenue corridor, the only age groups increasing in the area are households that are 65 years and older aging in place. The young people and families that should be forming households or taking up residence are moving elsewhere. The community is not serving the needs of residents sufficiently to hold them in the neighborhood.



Household Change by Age and Income 2009-2014 within a 5-minute drive time of West Fairview Avenue.



PROPERTY VALUE

Property values in the area surrounding the study area are relatively low in comparison to other areas of the city. Many properties are at or below a dollar per square foot of assessed value, including both land and improvements. Given the low values, those in the area who wish to renovate properties or build new properties will have difficulty achieving financing because the comparable properties are lower in value than the cost of renovation. This is a self-reinforcing situation in which poor properties are unable to be renovated and continue to exert downward pressure on pricing and valuation, thus reducing the value of good properties over time.

Given the above, the life cycle of housing is not serving the community. New opportunities need to be created that will keep residents here and attract new residents. There are two ways to address this issue: infill housing, and a traditional format called courtyard housing.

Infill Housing

One potential solution for housing in the neighborhood is infill housing on under-used land. Currently such projects will require alternate financing to overcome the issue of valuation, but there is already a plan by a local non-profit group to install infill housing similar to the units shown in the illustration to the right.

Infill as shown in the illustration does several things: it reinforces the value of existing assets, and it reinforces the sense of community. New infill will raise valuations and over time allow financing for renovation and new units. Filling in the gaps in the neighborhood brings more safety by having more eyes on the street and more people who are likely to be engaged with the appearance, quality and safety of the neighborhood.



Value per Square Foot in the West Fairview Area

Source: City of Montgomery Geographic Information System



Existing



Proposed

Infill Housing Illustration

Source: City of Montgomery Planning Department



Courtyard Housing

Another way to assist the neighborhood is with courtyard housing: affordable, well-designed units on large lots that offer a diversity of models collected together around a common garden area.

After Hurricane Katrina, a number of architects collaborated on the production of traditional housing that would be affordable and that would offer a diversity of size and cost to assist with housing needs for those whose homes were lost. This collaboration resulted in a series of plans that are now sold for \$700 per unit. In addition, Lowes has collaborated with the designers and offers a complete package of materials for construction of these units. A single phone call is all that is necessary to order the complete materials package and no estimating of quantities is necessary.

As an example, we chose sample plans for 2 bedroom to 3 bedroom houses, ranging in size from 480 square feet to 1,185 square feet, and propose that seven units of varying size could be placed on a 20,000 square foot lot. For the current economy a catalyst project will need to be done with a partnership between a non-profit builder and the City because of valuation trends in the area and to enable the greatest affordability.

There are a number of advantages of this kind of project:

- Re-uses undervalued properties
- Preserves neighborhood values
- Improves neighborhood property values and meets community needs
- The designs correspond to housing types that are familiar and fit the neighborhood



480 SF Unit



675 SF Unit



612 SF Unit



888 SF Unit



1,080 SF Unit



1,185 SF Unit

Source: <http://www.cusatocottages.com>



Another major advantage is the unit cost for a prototype project. For a non-profit, assisted project costs can be held to a minimum. For such a project, land cost is very low, there is no cost for developer profit that would be necessary for market-rate financing, and if administered by the non-profit, no brokerage costs and minimal closing costs. The result is estimated in the Subsidized Courtyard Housing table. The pricing of such a project at a level that matches local incomes means that it would serve community need without producing gentrification. Other advantages include:

- Bite size projects are easier to fund than large developments
- Plans and kits exist now
- Matches single family neighborhood
- Density replaces apartments
- Maintenance reserve included in payment

Funding & Organization

The necessary funding and organization for accomplishing a first project is already in process at the City and neighborhood level. The following initiatives and sources have been identified:

- Montgomery has down-payment assistance that would apply to this project
- Montgomery is buying derelict parcels and vacant land and may be able to offer that land at a minimal cost
- A local Community Development Corporation is being formed for housing
- This housing is eligible for federal funding
- There is a federal program to assist first-time homebuyers

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unit Square Feet | 480 | 612 | 675 | 888 | 1,080 | 1,185 |
| Beds/Bath | 2/1 | 2/1 | 2/1 | 2/1 | 3/2 | 3/2 |
| Est. Unit Cost | \$64,000 | \$75,000 | \$80,000 | \$97,000 | \$112,000 | \$121,000 |
| Est. Annual Cost* | \$5,000 | \$5,900 | \$6,400 | \$7,800 | \$9,100 | \$9,900 |
| Income Required | \$16,800 | \$18,000 | \$18,200 | \$22,400 | \$26,100 | \$28,200 |

*Annual cost includes taxes, insurance and a maintenance reserve, but does not include utilities.

Subsidized Courtyard Housing

Further initiatives for public-private partnership can help the neighborhood:

- Change appraisal statistics with pilot infill projects
- Allow down payment assistance for infill
- Provide design/project assistance for land owners
- Enable new market tax credits for project builders
- Assistance to obtain HUD loan guarantees



Courtyard Housing



the plan 3

EXISTING CONDITIONS

West Fairview Avenue's commercial properties from Interstate 65 to Court Street were built within the past 50 years under conventional zoning regulations, and as such, they are set back far from the street with large asphalt parking lots in front. New buildings, such as the Farmer's Market, CVS, and McDonalds were also designed to be exclusively auto-oriented and fail to encourage pedestrians or create the kind of Main Street environment the community desires.

West Fairview Avenue is currently four lanes wide but the numerous curb cuts cause traffic in the left hand lane in both directions to back up as drivers wait to turn left, causing traffic congestion. From the road the view is dominated by power poles and lines and large expanses of parking lots.

The pedestrian realm along West Fairview Avenue is substandard, hindering comfortable pedestrian movement and impeding pedestrian connections between residential and commercial areas. Sidewalks are narrow, discontinuous, or nonexistent and pedestrians often have no protection from sun, rain and speeding traffic. Furthermore, West Fairview Avenue is fronted by parking lots and interrupted by numerous curb cuts, making the pedestrian experience unpleasant and dangerous.

A circle of ¼ mile radius has been superimposed over the aerial image of the West Fairview Avenue. As a general rule, most people are willing to walk a distance of approximately ¼ mile (1320 feet, or approximately 5 minutes) before turning back or opting to drive or ride a bike rather than walk. The ¼ mile radius has become a benchmark for creating neighborhoods that are inherently walkable. West Fairview Avenue is large enough to accommodate two neighborhood centers.

West Fairview Avenue is surrounded by residential neighborhoods with medium to small homes that provide a consistent and loyal clientele to the businesses along the corridor. East of Court Street the character of West Fairview Avenue dramatically changes from the auto-oriented strip shopping centers to a slower residential street with stately homes.



Aerial of existing conditions



View looking east on West Fairview Avenue



Vacant National Linen Service building



Genetta Ditch



Farmer's Market



SITE ANALYSIS

Topography Analysis

An analysis of the existing topography reveals that the corridor slopes from east to west, from Court Street to the Interstate. West Fairview Avenue also resides along a ridge with the topography falling off on both sides of the road, occasionally resulting in parking lots or buildings being located at elevations below the road.



Current Zoning

The Property adjacent to West Fairview Avenue, is zoned as B-2 (Business Area – Individual Stores) with the block adjacent to Court Street zoned as B-4 (Business Area – Local Shopping). The existing zoning code requires that a high percentage of this commercial property be dedicated to off-street parking, landscaping, and generous setbacks, leaving a limited amount of space for retail and office development, and creating disconnected, automobile-oriented commercial properties.

The properties that are located one parcel or one block off of West Fairview Avenue are generally zoned R-60-d (Residential – Duplex) with pockets of B-3 (Business Area – Highway Commercial), O-1 (Office District), INST (Institutional Area) at Sidney Lanier High School and PGH-40 (Residential – Patio-Garden Home) at Lanier Place.



History

West Montgomery has a rich history, many of its neighborhood residents were prominent in the Civil Rights movement and participated in the Selma-to-Montgomery Voting Rights March of 1965.

As seen in the Sanborn fire insurance map, West Fairview Avenue very much resembled its current form in 1953. Three large tracts off of Goode Street that are open and vacant today once contained post WWII apartment buildings. The right-of-way for Genetta ditch is also shown in the map. Buildings along West Fairview Avenue were primarily residential homes and apartments.

West Fairview Avenue was planned as a suburban collector street with few sidewalks and residential homes fronting rural yards. This form worked well for West Fairview Avenue when it was first built and used primarily for residential purposes (as it still used today east of Court Street). However, in time the character of West Fairview Avenue changed to an auto-oriented strip of commercial uses. West Fairview Avenue became the economic main street of the community without becoming a "Main Street" – a place with wide sidewalks and multi-story buildings with attractive shopfronts where people can shop and socialize with neighbors.



1953 Sanborn Map



Intersection of West Fairview Avenue & Prado Street



Intersection of West Fairview Avenue & Goode Street



Intersection of West Fairview Avenue & Court Street



BIG IDEAS

At the table group presentations at the Hands-on Session, each of the table groups presented their plans to the rest of the assembly and consistent themes emerged. The following "Big Ideas" were identified by the public to guide development and streetscape improvements along West Fairview Avenue. Although specific details may change as the plan is implemented, the "Big Ideas" should remain intact and incorporated into the overall West Fairview Avenue Master Plan.

Big Ideas

Restore Security & Safety

Create a Walkable Main Street

Beautify the Area

Reduce Traffic by Adding Street Connections and Convert Court Street to a Two-way Road

Create a Gateway to West Fairview Avenue

Increase Small Parks & Bike Routes

Plan Short-range Successes to Build Confidence

Add a Wide Range of Uses and Services

Restore Security & Safety

One of the key goals of the West Montgomery Initiative is to restore security and safety to the area, in turn creating a more stable economic and social environment. Steps such as the installation of a Shot Spotter gunfire detection system have begun to reduce some of the violence in the area, but residents recognise the effect that a police sub-station in the immediate area would have on the community and the perception of the area by outsiders. The proximity of West Fairview Avenue to Interstate 65 and its central location to the rest of Montgomery also makes this an ideal location for either a new police substation or precinct.

Create a Walkable Main Street

According to keypad polling results, 88% of those who attended the Hands-on Session and live in the surrounding community either sometimes or often shop along West Fairview Avenue, however, 71% of those people never walk. West Fairview Avenue is surrounded by neighborhoods, but because the avenue developed as a series of auto-oriented strip centers, pedestrian infrastructure like sidewalks and street trees were never constructed. The existing design of West Fairview Avenue does not feature a comfortable pedestrian environment. The thoroughfare lacks key elements for walkability, such as continuous sidewalks, appropriate street trees, and pedestrian-oriented destinations, thus limiting the vibrancy of the area. Adding sidewalks and street trees to West Fairview Avenue will begin to create the walkable main street residents desire. In addition to the streetscape improvements, future development along the corridor should reflect the multi-modal main street residents would like to see by building buildings closer to the street, closer to other buildings, and by reserving parking in mid-block locations.

Beautify the Area

The dominant visual image looking down West Fairview Avenue is power poles and lines at the perimeter of large parking lots. Residents also expressed concern at the decayed state of some of the buildings. The removal of the power lines as a prominent image will give visual relief to the street. In addition, funding from the City may be secured by business and property owners in order to paint and patch existing buildings. This will remove the visual clutter from the Avenue and show that businesses and property owners are investing in the area and care about the upkeep of the Avenue.

Reduce Traffic by Adding Street Connections and Convert Court Street to a Two-way Street

Traffic on West Fairview Avenue between Interstate 65 and Court Street is more congested than traffic east of Court Street. The higher level of car trips along this segment of West Fairview Avenue is in large part due to local car trips taken to local businesses. The network of streets found in the surrounding neighborhoods and other areas of Montgomery do not extend around West Fairview Avenue. Many streets do not connect through and fail to create alternate ways for local residents to get to the businesses they frequent. As a result, all traffic must travel on the main road. West Fairview Avenue also does not have any turn lanes, so as cars wait to turn left, they "stack up" and block the movement of the cars behind them. By adding additional street connections, traffic on West Fairview Avenue is likely to be reduced.

Court Street to the south of West Fairview Avenue is a two-way street, but to the north it is one-way, heading away from the Downtown. This both inhibits residents from traveling to the downtown via Court Street and limits their ability to travel



to the Holt Street Memorial Baptist Church and Sidney Lanier High School from West Fairview Avenue. Prior to the construction of the interstate, several streets running north/south were turned into one-way pairs heading toward and away from Downtown. This was done to better move traffic to and from the Downtown at the beginning and end of each day. With the construction of the interstate, this alternate route now allow quick access to the City center. As noted in the *Downtown Montgomery Plan*, Court Street and its sister pair, Perry Street, should be reconverted to two-way streets.

Create a Gateway to West Fairview Avenue

Gateways help add identity to a place. As one of the entrance ways into the City and historic neighborhoods that helped make Montgomery the birthplace of the civil rights movement, West Fairview Avenue should be one of the "gateways" into the City.

Increase Small Parks & Bike Routes

Although the City of Montgomery has many parks, the only parks near West Fairview Avenue are the fields of surrounding schools. In recent years, the neighborhoods surrounding West Fairview Avenue have begun to create small community gardens on vacant lots, like at the intersection of Emerson and Broughton Streets, yet the community needs a larger more formal place to gather, casually meet neighbors and hold community events. A centrally located community green was suggested by many participants in the public process.

The streets in West Montgomery and along West Fairview Avenue need to become more bike friendly with designated bike routes along the corridor and throughout the City.

Plan Short-range Successes to Build Confidence

The residents of West Montgomery encouraged the City to plan some immediate, visible, plan implementation successes that would create confidence in the larger vision. Increased confidence would lead to increased investment by the community. The design team was told that previous plans for the corridor had little result and so an implementation strategy for the plan with notable, short-term successes is recommended.

Add a Wide Range of Uses and Services

During the charrette, the residents of West Montgomery proposed that West Fairview Avenue be transformed into a vibrant, mixed-use center. They proposed that the redesign of the avenue include a variety of cafes, restaurants, offices, residences, shops and public gathering spaces.

Successful neighborhood centers are best achieved through compact, mixed uses. Ground-floor retail and services ensure that the street front is active and pedestrian-oriented. A strong residential presence can be achieved with apartments above shops, low-scale apartment buildings, and townhouses. Office space similarly can be accommodated in the upper floors of retail buildings. Finally, civic uses such as churches, community centers, and parks and plazas can be integrated along West Fairview Avenue and can become focal points for community events. By introducing residential, office, and civic space along West Fairview Avenue, the area remains lively and bustling with activity throughout all parts of the day. Furthermore, a strong residential population will support local businesses and help to ensure their success.

The community presented many potential uses they would like to see added to West Fairview Avenue throughout the charrette week. Examples of the many uses suggested are:

Retail

- Fitness Center / Gym
- Medical Offices
- New Grocery Stores
- Banks
- General Merchandise
- Internet Cafes
- Jazz Bar
- Fine Dining

Civic

- Police Station/Substation
- Job Training Center
- Community Gardens
- Adult Education
- Historic Markers
- Trolley
- Homeless Shelter
- Bus Shelters

Entertainment

- Movie Theatre
- Splash Park
- Bowling Alley
- Community Center
- Arcade
- Multi-Cultural Center



ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

The Illustrative Plan depicts the proposed streets, buildings, alleys, parking locations, and open spaces of a full future build-out of West Fairview Avenue. The plan proposes a cohesive pedestrian environment along West Fairview Avenue which would be

created by bringing buildings up to the street, adding continuous sidewalks and reconnecting the street grid to create an interconnected network of walkable streets. Understanding that complete change will not happen overnight, the plan is

designed to be implemented one piece at a time, as opportunities arise. Although some plan details may change over time to meet physical, regulatory, or market constraints, the main concepts contained in the illustrative plan should be adhered to.

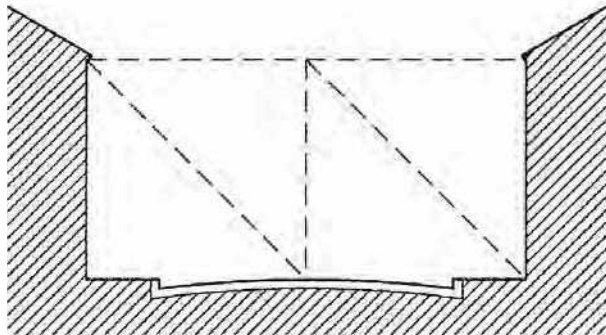


PROPOSED STREET SECTION

West Fairview Avenue typically has a 60' right-of-way with two lanes in each direction. The auto-oriented businesses front the street with parking lots and numerous curb cuts. These curb cuts make left turns common along West Fairview Avenue holding up traffic in the left travel lane as turning cars wait for traffic in the other direction to clear. Sidewalks are narrow, broken or non-existent and the edge of the road is lined with utility poles and hanging wires.

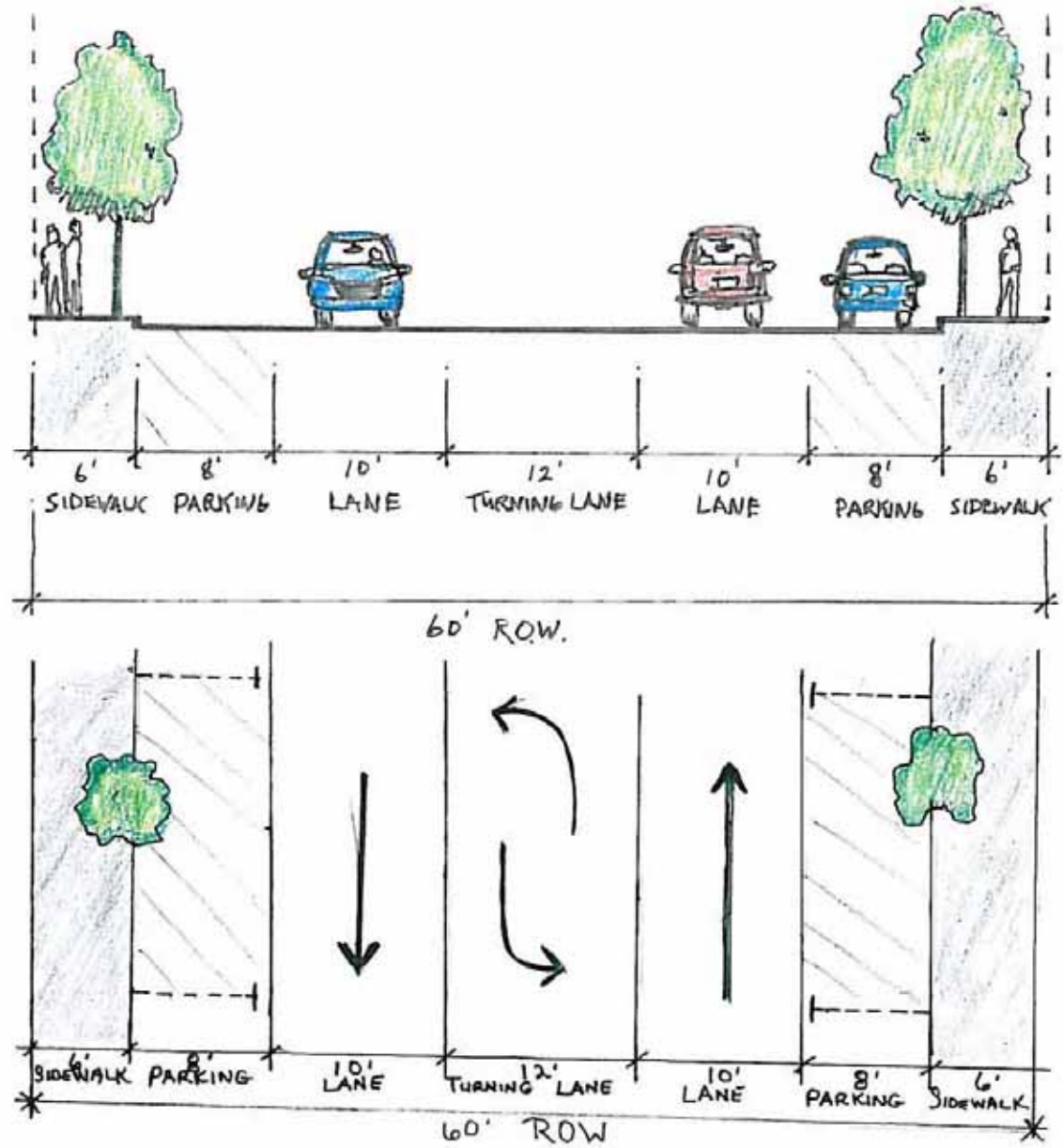
The proposed street section fits within the existing right-of-way so that no additional right-of-way is required. One 10' lane in each direction will carry traffic and the two left hand lanes will be condensed into a single 12' wide left turn lane. On-street parallel parking will be added in each direction along with 6' sidewalks. The utility poles and wires will be relocated to a mid-block location down the alley and street trees will be planted in tree wells in their place.

As buildings redevelop into multi-story buildings that front the street they will ideally transform the streetscape into an outdoor room with a 1:2 ratio of building height to street width. The tighter the ratio of building height to street width the greater ones' sense of enclosure in an outdoor room, and the greater the sense of place.



1:2 ratio of building height to street width

Source: Architectural Graphic Standards by the American Institute of Architects



STREET CONNECTIVITY

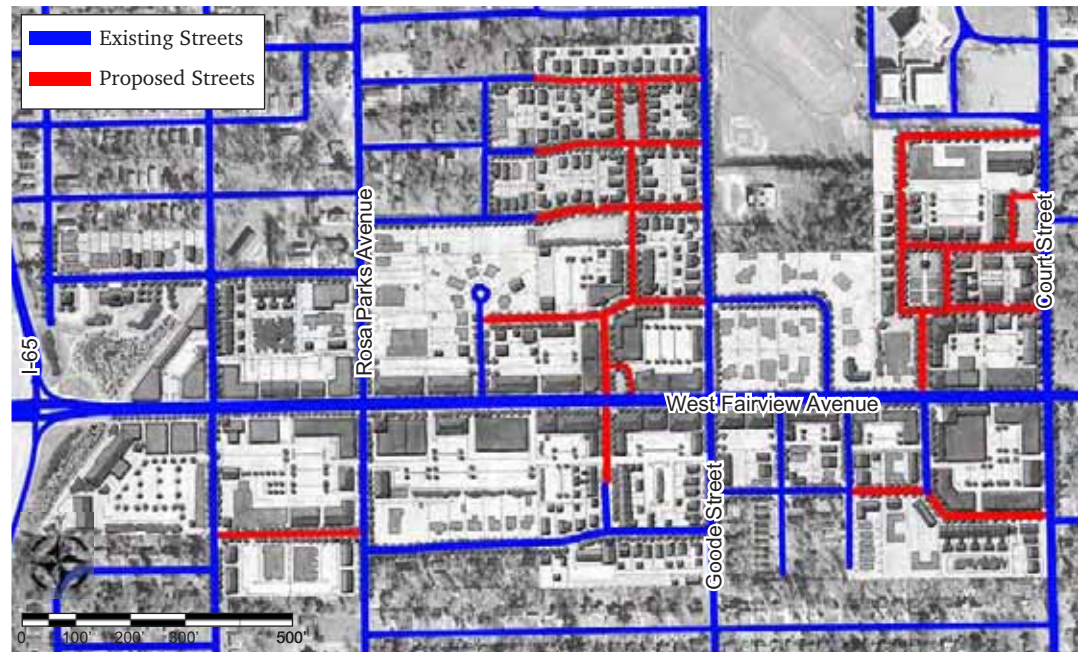
Existing Streets

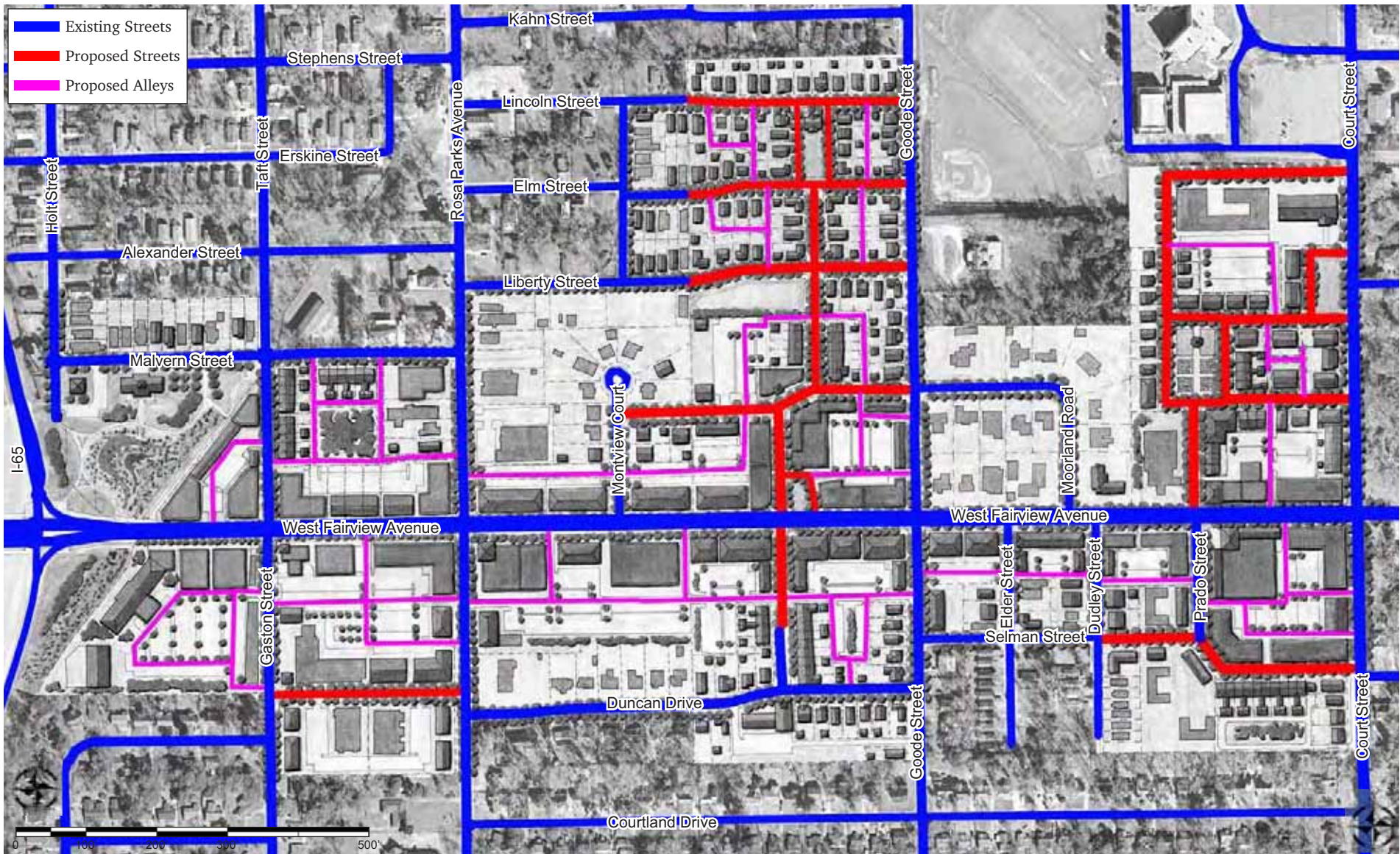
The diagram on the right shows the network of existing streets that connect West Fairview Avenue with the surrounding area. The street network within the surrounding neighborhoods consists of a grid of streets creating many alternative routes throughout the neighborhoods. However, this grid of streets breaks down as it approaches West Fairview Avenue, eliminating any parallel routes along the corridor. This lack of street network causes more congestion along West Fairview Avenue because even relatively short local trips must be made on the main road instead of along alternate routes.



Proposed Street Network

The plan for West Fairview Avenue provides an interconnected network of walkable streets. The connections create parallel routes to West Fairview Avenue on both the north and south sides of the corridor. By providing multiple routes within the neighborhoods, and multiple connections to surrounding streets, traffic can be distributed more efficiently. Proposed connections to the surrounding area, including connections through Lanier Place from existing streets to Goode Street, will provide additional connectivity and benefit the West Montgomery community. Providing a network of interconnected streets prevents a single intersection from becoming overly congested. The interconnected network provides alternative routes in case of a road closure or increased traffic. The network also creates the option of taking a different way for its own sake, to see a new area, whether driving, biking, or walking.





Alley Network

In addition to the street network, the proposed system of alleys will provide additional connectivity for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Alleys

provide rear access to homes and businesses, which reduces curb cuts along streets, providing space for on-street parking and enhancing the pedestrian

experience. In addition, the system of alleys serve as a secondary means of pedestrian circulation along the corridor.



GREEN NETWORK

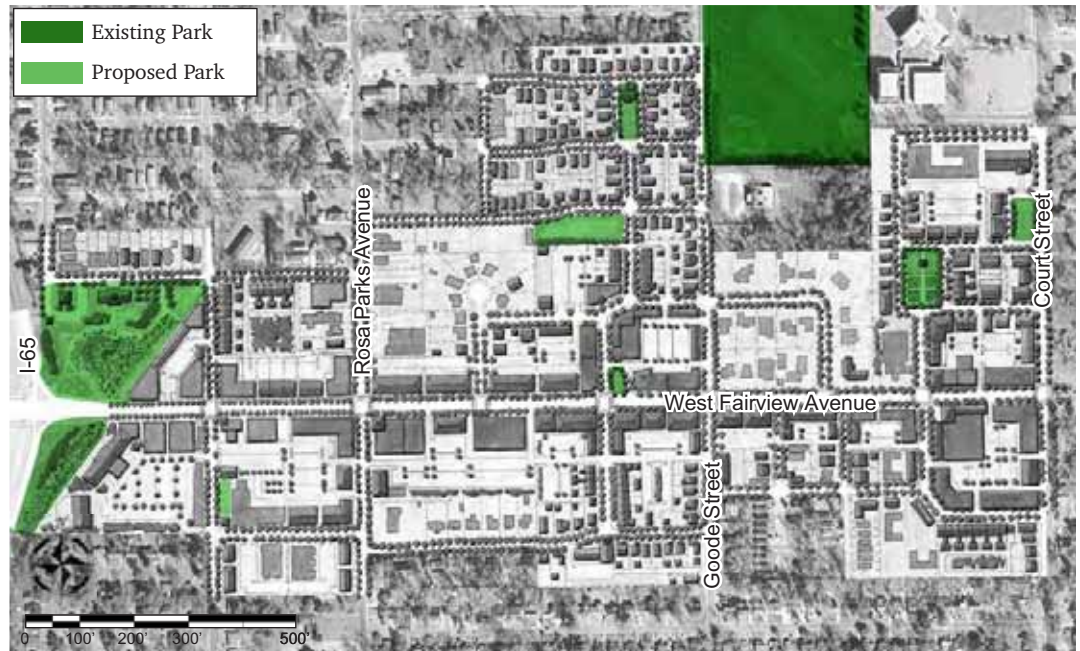
Existing Parks

Currently the only parks in proximity to West Fairview Avenue are the school grounds around Sidney Lanier High School, Bellingrath Park (just to the south of the area shown in this diagram) and George Washington Carver Senior High School fields (just to the west of the area shown in the diagram). All three facilities contain ball fields and a location for formal games, but no real place for community events to be held or to casually meet neighbors.



Proposed Parks & Greens

This diagram illustrates the network of neighborhood parks, greens and open spaces that together compose a green network. The green network will provide neighborhood access to the parks, trails and open spaces around West Fairview Avenue. Civic spaces within the urbanized area, such as neighborhood greens, parks and community gardens will provide opportunities for both formal and informal gathering, and may also serve stormwater retention purposes.





Proposed Transect Map

The proposed development along West Fairview Avenue is not permissible under Montgomery's typical Euclidian zoning, however, it is permissible under Montgomery's SmartCode. Montgomery

adopted the SmartCode in 2007 making it mandatory for the downtown and optional for other areas throughout the City. In order to encourage the development proposed by the community, transect

zones should be adopted for the parcels adjacent to West Fairview Avenue and the properties included in the illustrative master plan.



CHANGE OVER TIME

The transformation of West Fairview Avenue from a residential street to an auto-oriented corridor with strip shopping centers happened over the course of many years. It may take just as long to transform the auto-oriented corridor into a pedestrian-friendly multi-modal community center as illustrated in the full build out of the illustrative master plan. Change will come incrementally with each project building upon previous efforts to create the final vision of West Fairview Avenue. The follow sequence details a possible sequence of projects to build confidence that the vision can be achieved and become a reality therefore spurring more projects and private investment along the corridor.

Phase 1 (1 to 3 year time frame)

Phase 1 includes the short-term public projects that can help build confidence in the plan. Initial improvements may include the completion of the street network and the first homes at Lanier Place, the creation of Genetta Creek Park including a new civic structure to be used for community events and educational purposes, streetscape improvements that include the relocation of power poles and lines off of West Fairview Avenue, the construction of sidewalks, new street trees and the re-configuration of the lanes along the corridor. Additionally, businesses can improve their look by painting and fixing facades.

Phase 2 (4 to 10 year time frame)

Phase 2 involves the improvement of currently vacant or underutilized land. This includes the completion of Lanier Place, the development of the Monday property (the large tract at the north corner of Goode Street and West Fairview Avenue), the vacant land along Duncan Drive, and the redevelopment of the National Linen Service and Sears buildings. These improvements will bookend the ends of the study area as well as provide a coherent center at the Monday Property location that could include a Police Station, central community green, new commercial frontages built to the street edge, and new residential units.



Phase 3 (10 years and beyond)

As the success of the first two phases of development along West Fairview Avenue is established, older buildings along the corridor will reach the end of their use in their current configuration. One parcel at a time older buildings along the corridor will redevelop as Main Street types with buildings up to the street, and parking at the interior of blocks. This phase of development will strengthen the pedestrian environment and allow it to span the length of West Fairview Avenue from the Court Street to Interstate 65 and beyond.



Phase 4

The last parcels to redevelop are the ones that are highly functioning in their current format like the drugstores and drive-through restaurants. A pedestrian-friendly multi-modal environment will encourage, in time, a new format from these stores in accord with the Main Street vision of West Fairview Avenue.



SPECIAL PLACES

A New Gateway to Montgomery



| | |
|--|-------------------|
| | Proposed Building |
| | Existing Building |
| | Park Space |
| | Street Trees |

A picnic pavilion for the community

Parking for the park is located off of Malvern and Holt Street.

A new civic building within Genetta Creek Park can provide a place for educational lessons or a museum dedicated the history of the area.

Genetta Creek Park daylights Genetta Ditch and restores the ecology of the area by recreating the natural wetland system of the area while cleaning stormwater runoff.

The restored creek will extend across West Fairview Avenue and under Interstate 65 to George Washington Carver High School where the restored ecology can be used as a teaching resource.

A hotel will draw people from outside the area to West Fairview Avenue where they will dine and shop while in the Montgomery area.

A regional chain restaurant could be developed in conjunction with the hotel increasing the outside draw of West Fairview Avenue and increasing the tax base.

Empty lots are in-filled with new homes along Malvern Street to front Genetta Park.

New buildings containing restaurants and new apartment units would front onto Genetta Creek Park. This would increase the safety of the park by creating natural surveillance throughout all hours of the day.

New crosswalks, sidewalks, and street trees create a pedestrian realm along West Fairview Avenue and make crossing the corridor safe for pedestrians.

The narrow existing buildings along Gaston Avenue act as liner buildings concealing the hotel parking lot.

The National Linen Service Building could be renovated as a community center or other business or the site may be redeveloped.



Aerial view looking east from Interstate 65 over Genetta Creek Park and down West Fairview Avenue

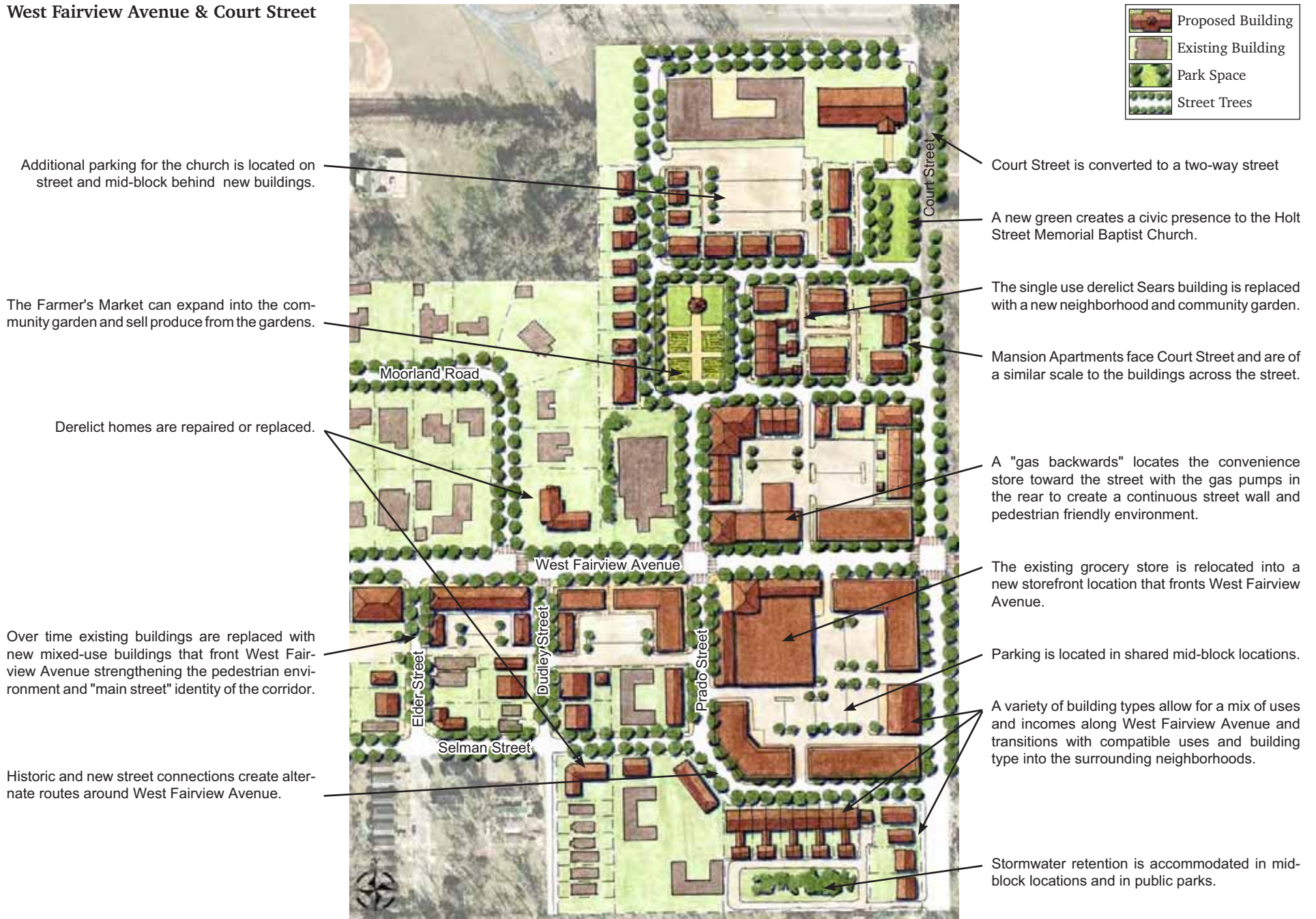
A new Gateway to Montgomery and West Fairview Avenue is envisioned. A formal entry to the City is formed with buildings lined up as a single street wall across West Fairview Avenue on the east side of the creek. The gateway buildings face the creek

and park and provide views looking toward the restored natural features. This view provides a natural surveillance of the park, keeping it safe. The Genetta Creek Park also has two essential design elements: a high-quality natural environment of

wetlands and stream beds and a high-quality man-made environment of small public buildings with scenic vistas, naturalistic landscaping and winding paths which connect the neighborhood to the north to West Fairview Avenue.



West Fairview Avenue & Court Street



A Mix of Building Types

A range of building types is shown in the plan for West Fairview Avenue and those types are based on precedents from Montgomery's own wide variety of types shown below.



Mixed-Use Building



Live/Work Building



Townhomes



Duplexes



Quad-plexes



Mansion Apartments



Small House



Medium House



Large House and Accessory Dwelling Unit



Sears Building Lot

Existing Conditions

Many people in Montgomery remember travelling long distances to shop at Sears when it first opened. Yet, the existing Sears building is literally a shell of it's former self. After over 40 years of neglect it is a blight on West Fairview Avenue. When this large single use building went dark, the entire area became disinvested. In more recent years the Sears parking lot along West Fairview Avenue has been in-filled with a Rite Aid, gas station, and the Farmer's Market. Although these new uses bring activity to the area, they are still dominated by the empty building and crumbling parking lot behind it.

In addition, the Holt Street Memorial Baptist Church is currently under construction and expanding. The church plans to build a new Sanctuary but needs more room for parking for church events.



Phase 1

Phase 1 illustrates the single use Sears building being replaced with a diverse neighborhood of affordable and market rate live/work buildings, mansion apartments, townhomes, single family homes, a park and a community garden. By replacing the large single-use building with many smaller primarily residential buildings activity is brought back to the area and the area's future is not determined by the fate of any one building or franchise.

A new public green on Court Street can give the church a renewed civic presence in the community. Additional parking for the church is accommodated by allowing on-street parking and in mid-block lot located next to the church.

A large community garden is located next to the Farmer's Market. This will give the community a communal place to grow vegetables and potentially teach children about where their food comes from. Space within the green can also be used to expand the Farmer's Market or hold special events.





Sears Building Lot Transformed

The transformation of the Sears building lot and West Fairview Avenue is completed as auto-oriented commercial development along the street is replaced with mixed-use buildings fronting the West Fairview Avenue. This urban form of development transforms West Fairview Avenue into a main street. Court

Street has been converted to a two-way street and West Fairview Avenue has wide sidewalks, on-street parking and street trees.

The area would be characterized by ample sidewalk widths, shade and shelter provided for pedestrians, attractive building facades with doors and windows

facing the street, buildings repositioned close to the street, on-street parking, parking hidden at the interior of blocks, and adequate, but not excessive roadway widths. No single element by itself can create a memorable destination but these design elements working in concert will make West Fairview Avenue a notable center of the city.



West Fairview Avenue

Lincoln, Elm, and Liberty Streets are connected to Goode Street through Lanier Place.

Power and utility poles are relocated to a mid-block location to allow street trees to grow.

New crosswalks, sidewalks, and street trees create a pedestrian realm along West Fairview Avenue and make crossing the corridor safe for pedestrians.

West Fairview Avenue is reconfigured to include on-street parking, wide sidewalks, street trees, and a continuous left turn lane.

Buildings are brought up to the street edge creating an outdoor room along West Fairview Avenue. This enclosure of space creates a sense of place and is comfortable for the pedestrian and bicyclists.

Parking and stormwater retention are located in mid-block locations.



| | |
|--|-------------------|
| | Proposed Building |
| | Existing Building |
| | Park Space |
| | Street Trees |

Lanier Place will create new affordable and market rate housing for the West Montgomery area. The additional homes will help to create the critical mass necessary to sustain the businesses along West Fairview Avenue and reinforce the neighborhood fabric.

A central green can be used by the community to casually meet neighbors, gather, and recreate.

A new north-south connection is added from West Fairview Avenue to Lincoln Street. Increasing the connectivity of the area.

A stormwater retention pond can be used as a play field when it is dry.

A small grocery or convenience store may be located just off of West Fairview Avenue.

A Police Station brings an element of safety to the area. The location along West Fairview Avenue provides easy access to the highway and the rest of the City.

A green located on West Fairview Avenue midway between the Interstate and Court Street creates a central focal point and gathering space along the corridor.

Townhomes and single family homes fill in the vacant land around Duncan Drive.



Proposed Conditions

On-street parking, sidewalks wide enough to have outdoor dining, street trees and street-oriented buildings transform West Fairview Avenue into a pedestrian friendly main street that makes shopping and dining in the area attractive to visitors and local residents alike. Awnings cover the sidewalk and help protect pedestrians from the weather.

Architecture should resemble building types and forms already found in Montgomery. Demand the best for West Fairview Avenue. The architecture should incorporate Montgomery's tradition, history and values.



Existing Conditions



The City Beautiful Movement

During the West Fairview Avenue charrette the history of American planning and architecture became a topic of discussion with City staff and local residents. The City Beautiful movement became a source of inspiration in conversation during the charrette. The City of Montgomery continues in the City Beautiful tradition.

One hundred years ago, a cultural movement swept across the United States, galvanizing leaders in politics and the arts with the power of an idea. That movement was the City Beautiful movement, and its animating idea was that Americans deserved to live in better towns and cities. The most impressive thing about the City Beautiful movement was how much it accomplished, and what a rich legacy it left for future generations. The political and cultural leaders of that time not only dreamed great dreams, but they preformed great deeds...

...Returning from their schooling in Paris and Rome, the American architects of one hundred years ago boldly declared that the United States should have cities worthy of our new status as a great power in the world. They were taken seriously. The 19th century was a great age for Architecture in America. The profession was respected. A hundred years ago architects enjoyed the greatest esteem as both artists and technicians. So, when they spoke, people listened. And when they acted, when they undertook heroic deeds of place-making and building, people looked on with wonder and admiration.

And this is what happened in America in the

1890s. Our cultural leaders agreed that we had to create cities and towns worthy of a great nation. This project was carried forward in the spirit of a great patriotic movement. It started with a show: the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, at which the great architects and civic designers of that day – Daniel Burnham, Charles Mckim, Stanford White and many others demonstrated how wonderful public places could be created by using the vocabulary of neoclassical architecture and the grammar of French formal civic design – how to arrange the beautiful buildings to define space in a way that is humanly rewarding.

Before long, the movement became a competitive craze across the nation. Towns and cities tried to out-do one another in fabulous buildings and public places. Every town had to have its new neoclassical courthouse, and perhaps even a civic square to go with it. Every town built a magnificent new library. The great college campuses were laid out. Every new bank, post office, and firehouse was endowed with a richly expressive, dignified facade. It was an exuberant, confident era. Many of our most beloved public places and public buildings owe their own existence to the city beautiful movement: the San Francisco Civic Center, the great museums of the Washington DC Mall, the Copley Square Library in Boston, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The list is very long and it includes innumerable less famous town halls, courthouses, schools, theaters, and squares.

– James Howard Kunstler's address to the Florida Chapter of the AIA, 1988.



Next Steps

Continue Community Building Activities Through the Churches, Schools, and Weed & Seed Programs

Stay Loyal to Area Businesses

Keep the Plan Moving

(Attend meetings, get a copy of the plan, get the word out)

Partner for Change

(City, State, landowners, businesses, empower community spokespersons)

Stay Positive

GETTING THERE – COMMUNITY GOALS IN A YEAR

- a. Adopt the West Fairview Avenue Plan.
- b. Adopt the SmartCode Transect Map for West Fairview Avenue.
- c. Establish the creation of a West Fairview Avenue TIF District
- d. Identify Funding to Build One "Good Block"
- e. Plan One Courtyard Project
- f. Identify More Courtyard Locations
- g. Begin West Fairview Avenue Right-of-Way Design
- h. Organize Facade Program to Upgrade Existing Building Frontages
- i. Complete Phase 1 of Lanier Place
- j. Begin Residential Infill
- k. Begin Construction of Genetta Creek Park
- l. Site the Police Substation/Precinct

GETTING THERE – COMMUNITY GOALS IN FIVE YEARS

- a. Complete the Police Substation/Precinct
- b. Start to Build One "Good Block" of Infrastructure
- c. Complete Genetta Creek Park
- d. Move Utility Poles Off of West Fairview Avenue
- e. Begin Commercial Infill Development

GETTING THERE – COMMUNITY GOALS IN TEN YEARS

- a. Redevelop the Sears Block
- b. Secure Development Adjacent to Interstate 65
- c. Complete Streetscape Improvements

GETTING THERE – COMMUNITY GOALS IN OUR LIFETIME

- a. Establish Trolley Line from Trenholm Tech to Huntingdon College

