

E N V I S I O N 2020



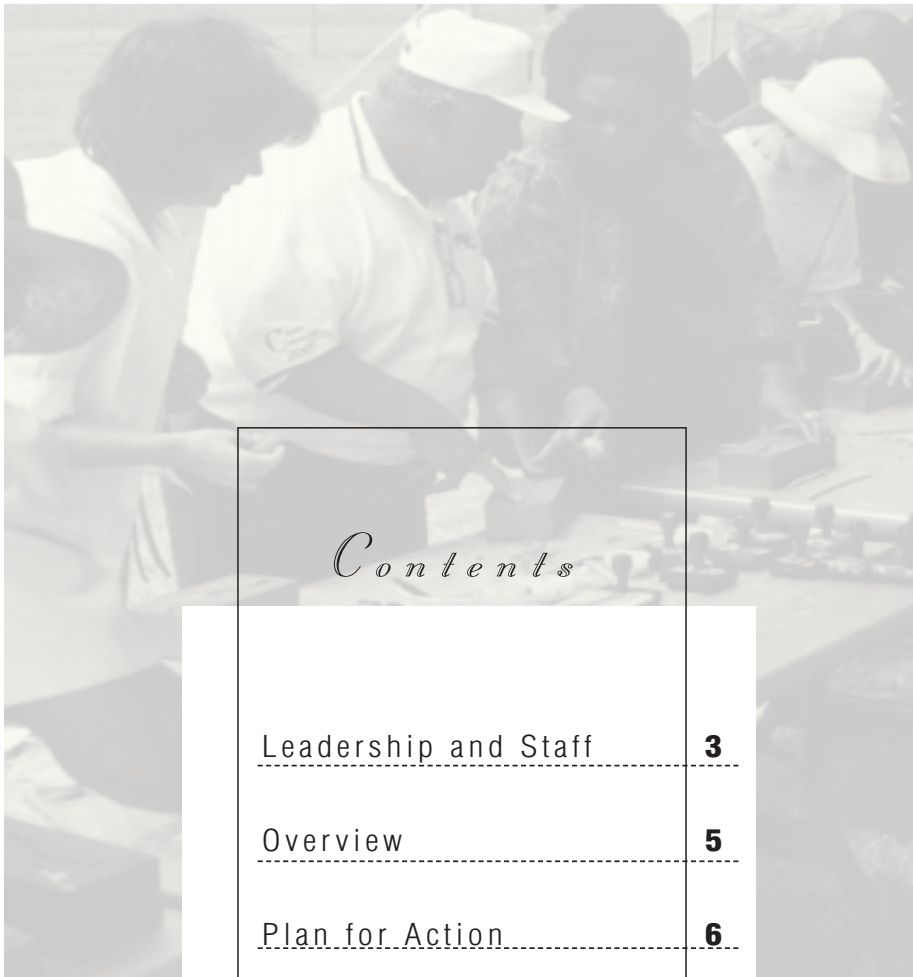
The

River Region

Sharing

One Future

ENVISION
Montgomery 2020



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A U T A U G A



E L M O R E



L O W N D E S



M A C O N



M O N T G O M E R Y

Envision 2020 at a glance:

- 1,757 participants in 15 idea-gathering meetings
- 4,464 ideas gathered
- 400 participants in five goal-writing meetings
- 27 goals
- 134 strategies
- 1,167 participants in Vision Fairs
- 175 trained volunteer facilitators
- 353 meeting and event volunteers

M E S S A G E F R O M T H E C H A I R S

Envision Montgomery 2020 is a community-driven strategic planning effort involving citizens and leaders of Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes, Macon and Montgomery counties - the River Region. Its purpose is to develop shared goals encompassing all aspects of the region's future and to see that those goals are implemented.

From the record number of participants from across the five-county River Region it is clear that citizens of all counties, ages, races and walks of life want the same things for their lives—safe communities where citizens, businesses and governments work together to insure excellent public schools, stable jobs that provide fulfilling work and a livable income, a variety of accessible recreational opportunities in a clean attractive environment, accessible services such as healthcare, transportation and shopping and opportunities to become involved actively in creating a better today and tomorrow.

If you share the desire to make the River Region of central Alabama a better place for yourselves, your children and grandchildren, we invite you to join the hundreds of others in shaping our future growth by becoming a Vision Partner by completing the form on the back page.

Undertakings of this magnitude do not occur in a vacuum, and we want to recognize and thank the governmental entities that joined with the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce, Central Alabama Community Foundation, Alabama Power Foundation and committed individuals to provide the financial support for the visioning process. The governmental entities that provided funding are: The City of Montgomery, Montgomery County, Lowndes County, Macon County and the City of Prattville. We all know that money alone will not get the job done and human hands, hearts, minds and spirits are the reason for Envision's success thus far. Hundreds of volunteers from across the five counties gave freely of their talent, as well as thousands of hours of their time, and for that everyone within the scope of the Envision plan is indebted.

We want to especially thank the *Montgomery Advertiser* for publishing and distributing this Vision document. By helping us to communicate the Vision, the *Montgomery Advertiser* is making an extremely valuable contribution to the visioning process and to the successful implementation of the plan.

We hope that you will read this document and determine where you want to become involved as a Vision Partner. We look forward to working with you as we implement Envision Montgomery 2020 together.

Sincerely,

George Goodwyn | Tommie Miller
Laurie Weil | Yvette Smiley-Smith

Vision Partners
Invitation for Your Involvement

{What is a Vision?}

Envision Montgomery 2020

is a **community-driven**
strategic planning effort
involving **citizens** and
leaders of

Autauga,
Elmore,
Lowndes,

Macon and
Montgomery

counties — the River
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aspects of the

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and to see that those
goals are implemented.



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BACKGROUND

In December 1999, four friends gathered for lunch to discuss the future of Montgomery and the rest is history...

Those four soon invited others to join the conversation, which shortly included the mayor and an Initiating Committee of 32 Montgomerians. It was clear that there was strong commitment to thinking collectively about a shared future for all residents of the area.

Research began on what communities around the country had done to create and implement long-range plans. Eight members of the committee made a fact-finding trip to Mobile to meet the leaders of that community's long-range planning process, Envision Mobile-Baldwin, and to observe the second year of public reporting on implementation of the plan. That trip was both educational and energizing.

In May 2000, 400 local leaders from every walk of life attended a breakfast at the Montgomery Civic Center during which the Envision Mobile-Baldwin leadership team, Mobile's Mayor Mike Dow, Commissioner Sam Jones and business leader John Davis, were the keynote speakers. A survey filled out on site by the breakfast participants indicated overwhelmingly that they were ready and willing to undertake a long-range planning process for Montgomery.

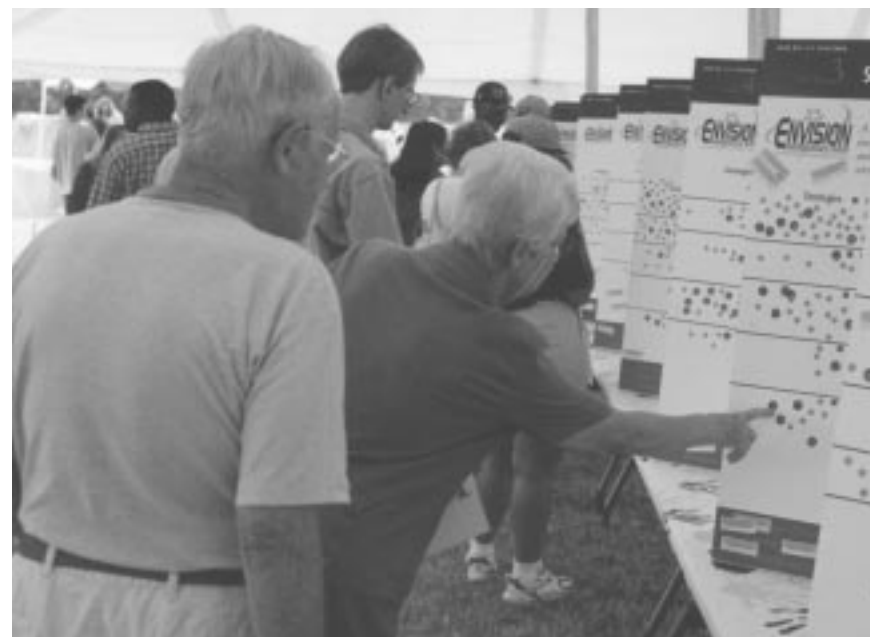
Research for a consultant for the process revealed Gianni Longo of American Communities Partnership in New York. Mr. Longo, who conducted the first public visioning-based long-range planning process in the United States in Chattanooga in 1984, presented his methods in Montgomery in July 2000 to the Initiating Committee. He was the unanimous choice for the job.

It was clear from meetings with all three of the consultant candidates and from Alabama's growing focus on attracting national and international businesses that a regional plan, rather than one focused only on Montgomery County, made more sense

for long-term effectiveness. The Initiating Committee decided to invite Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes and Macon counties to join the process, and a representative committee of citizens selected the name, Envision Montgomery 2020 – The River Region Sharing One Future. The Initiating Committee was then expanded to 96 members to include representatives from throughout the five-county region. An executive director was hired and an office opened on Oct. 1, 2000.

THE PROCESS

The Envision 2020 visioning process began the evening of Jan. 30, 2001, with a meeting of 250 high-school students from all parts of the five-county region. It continued with 14 additional public meetings throughout the region between February 5 and March 6. A total of 1,757 residents participated in this first round of meetings



generating more than 4,000 ideas about the future of the region.

Volunteers organized these ideas into 27 topics. The 400 citizens who participated in the five goal-writing meetings during April developed 27 goals and 134 strategies, which for the first time spelled out a shared agenda for the future of the region.

On May 18 and 19, more than 800 residents participated in the Vision Fair in Montgomery, an event designed to present, in a celebratory fashion, all the vision's goals and strategies and to ask participants to express their priorities and sign-up to serve on implementation task forces. The Vision Fair went on the road in June to Prattville, Wetumpka, Hayneville, and Tuskegee and attracted 300 additional residents.

Following the Vision Fair, Envision 2020 convened 90 experts from throughout the region to review and further focus the results of the Vision Fair and to recommend short-term implementation steps. That process, known as the Environmental Scan, took place July 24 and 25 at Alabama State University.

*In December
1999, four friends
gathered for lunch
and the rest
is history...*

The Vision: An Overview

The 3,000 residents who participated in Envision Montgomery 2020 have given the River Region a clear and bold plan for action for the future. The vision spells out priorities for development over the next 20 years with suggestions that are comprehensive, inclusive

What can we do to make our region the best that it can be in the coming years?

and regional in scope. Envision participants were able to set aside local issues and to focus on regional solutions. In doing so, they accepted the notion that all parts of the region are important to the well being of

the whole. Five major topic areas have emerged from the vision.

They are:

How We Learn Together - Relates to goals on education curriculum and instruction; facilities; financing; and mentoring and training.

How We Grow Together - Relates to goals on planning and zoning; historic preservation; physical design and preservation; downtowns and riverfronts; neighborhoods; roads and mass transportation.

How We Live Together - Relates to goals on human relations and diversity; youth and seniors; family and housing issues; crime, drugs and public safety; and health, wellness and health care delivery.

How We Work Together - Relates to goals on job creation, labor force, and minority and small business; taxes; structure of government and regional cooperation; and citizen involvement and leadership.

How We Play Together - Relates to goals on culture and the arts; events, sports and programs; recreational facilities; tourism; greenbelts, parks and the environment; and clean air and water, and recycling.

Within those topic areas, six major priority areas stand out as the cornerstones of the plan for action. Based on the Vision Fair voting, they are, in this order:

- 1. Enhancing revenues in order to provide adequate spending for education and other public services;**
- 2. Restoring, revitalizing and redeveloping the region's downtowns with vibrant shopping, recreation and living opportunities; and making the river a natural link with the entire region;**
- 3. Creating a safe, drug-free, low crime environment for all residents;**
- 4. Providing a wide variety of cultural, recreational, entertainment and sports opportunities throughout the region;**
- 5. Raising per-pupil expenditure for K-12 public schools to the national average;**
- 6. Developing and promoting the region's dynamic history, culture, and multi-faceted heritage as a tourist destination.**

These priority areas represent just a few of the goals and strategies recommended by vision participants. An additional 20 goals with related strategies create a composite snapshot of expectations and desires that deal with all aspects of the region's life.

Envision is legitimized by the extensive and diverse participation by residents from all parts of the region and from all walks of life. A scientific exit survey conducted by Alabama State University indicated that, of the 1,757 residents who participated in 14 idea gathering meetings in February of 2001, 65 percent came from Montgomery County, 9 percent from Macon, 8 percent from Autauga, 7 percent from Elmore, and 6 percent from Lowndes. These numbers are consistent with the population distribution in the region. Fifty-eight percent of the participants were female and 39 percent were male. Caucasians made up 58 percent of the participants, with 35 percent being African American and 3 percent from other ethnic groups. All age groups were represented, from older children and teens to retirees. The diversity of the vision participants and their remarkable number indicate that the plan for action is built on a solid foundation of regional agreement.

CONCLUSION

In one year, Envision Montgomery 2020 has produced a credible and legitimate vision. Its goals and strategies are goals and strategies shared by the entire region. The next phase is to see that the goals and strategies set forth by the region's residents are implemented. This is a complex task. Issues are difficult to tackle and much participation, time and effort are required. To be successful, implementation must capitalize on the strong climate for regional cooperation that the goals and the broad regional involvement suggest. In turning residents' aspirations into action, implementation

must maximize economic and organizational resources and summon the support of public and private sectors.

Implementation starts in the fall of 2001 with the formation of task forces. The climate is favorable, as demonstrated by residents' extensive participation and



by the support lent to the vision by key elected officials and businesses of the River Region. Now citizens, elected officials, private sector leaders, special interest groups, philanthropic institutions and not-for-profit organizations must work together to turn the vision into reality.

Envision 2020: A Plan for Action

The action plan is organized according to the vision's five topic areas.

HOW WE LEARN TOGETHER

1. Education: Curriculum and Instruction

Our Goal:

A region that emphasizes the importance of quality education, offers programs and opportunities for students of all ages and abilities, provides sufficient financial support, sets the highest curriculum standards and hires teachers and administrators who are trained, motivated and qualified in their subject. Its safe neighborhood schools have earned the trust and support of the community and teachers' and students' performance achievement is celebrated.

Recommended Strategy:

Work with boards of education to develop quality standards for recruitment, selection and evaluation of teachers and administrators by forming a panel that is knowledgeable about research-based criteria in order to develop standards for teachers and administrators to receive continuing professional development and education, including summer programs and mentoring, and to provide them with opportunities to observe and learn from the best practices throughout the country.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Identify and convene a task force, to include local education agencies, teachers, representatives from teacher education colleges and universities, professional teacher development experts and other relevant agencies to develop a plan for the implementation of a comprehensive induction program that will implement the strategy.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Stable, quality, top-notch, highly confident administrators and teachers, benefiting students initially; communities will reap rewards over time.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Form a panel of educators and lay persons to help implement a curriculum for every grade level that is based on national standards, meets the needs of quality education of all cities in the region and expands learning levels in each subject and grade level.
- Develop a program for the region that will achieve a 100 percent literacy rate by 2020.
- Provide developmentally appropriate preschools for the five-county area.

2. Education: Financing

Our Goal:

A region committed to raising per-pupil expenditure for K-12 public schools to the national average by providing stable and equitable local and state funding in order to ensure excellence in teaching and learning.

Recommended Strategy:

Convene state and county government representatives to work together to develop new sources or improve existing sources of funding for education.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Convene the stakeholders and have them buy into the goal and strategies.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Better funded and higher quality education for students, better facilities, smaller class sizes, more support programs, more varied curriculum, better prepared workforce, benefiting everyone.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Develop a stable source of funding for youth education and activities.
- Establish equitable and adequate funding of education by government, business and citizens of the region to develop a prepared work force.
- Initiate a regional organization of elected officials to communicate and to work together to improve the quality of life.
- Conduct a public campaign through the media to clarify the inequities in the current tax system.
- Establish a statewide property tax for education, over and above the Education Trust Fund funding.
- Request that boards of education in the region petition their county commissioners to hold a referendum asking citizens to vote for an increase in property tax for schools.

3. Education: Facilities

Our Goal:

A region that creates neighborhood schools, improves and modernizes existing schools and provides a safe and secure learning environment

Recommended Strategy:

Build long-range community and government commitment to provide adequate and responsible funding.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Develop specific steps for recruitment of team members who are capable of communicating the need; and develop the specific steps for how they will "sell" the need for additional funding to the public.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Increased funding for educational facilities will allow us to bring facilities up to acceptable standards and will enhance the learning environment, benefiting students and staff, and then the entire community.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Develop a master plan for school facilities based on a complete assessment of existing facilities and population trends, ensuring that

school sites are adequate in size and easily accessible.

- Enhance the learning environment and demonstrate community pride and support for schools through renovation of existing schools and construction of new schools where required.

4. Education: Linking Business with Education through Mentoring and Tutoring

Our Goal:

A region that encourages and provides consistent, dynamic, relevant and accountable mentoring and tutoring programs (with businesses in partnerships with schools) for an optimum lifelong learning and employment environment for all citizens.

Recommended Strategy:

Using Montgomery's Partners in Education program as an example to create a task force made up of a diverse coalition from each area of government as well as university and community leaders, evaluate effective local programs in order to duplicate successful model programs throughout the region.



Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Identify participants for the task force and have them meet with all "service providers" (i.e. Partners In Education, School to Career, etc.) in order to share concrete programs, opportunities and needs.

Return Expected for Our Region:

It will help in recruiting trained and committed mentors and tutors; a better prepared work force will aid in recruiting business to the region, which will have more support for education through increased tax revenues and it will increase the level of trust and cooperation among the five counties, benefiting the entire region, especially students.

Other Strategies to Implement Our Goal:

- Develop an effective plan of implementation by making use of existing programs (i.e. faith-based organizations and retirement organizations), encouraging participation through chambers of commerce or other local business organizations, and encouraging businesses to allow their employees to participate by volunteering five hours per month or encouraging involvement in whatever ways their specific community needs.
- Recruit and train volunteer tutors and mentors and provide structure and support for community-based tutoring and mentoring programs through Partners in Education programs.

HOW WE LIVE TOGETHER

1. Human Relations and Diversity

Our Goal:

A community of involved people, who in the spirit of unity are proud and confident of their diversity and committed to the success of each and the excellence of all.

Recommended Strategy:

Establish a human relations commission to improve race relations and communications at city and county levels, and wherever there is a need for it.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Make a proposal to the elected officials recommending that they oversee implementation of a Human Relations Commission in each city/county of the five-county River Region.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Effective system for communication on diversity issues, benefiting everyone

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Establish an organized and effective system (such as Interchange groups) for communication on diversity issues.
- Establish a community leadership academy to help identify road-blocks that divide people culturally, socially and economically and to prepare candidates for positions in government and schools.
- Include "Teaching Tolerance" materials in the public school curriculum, along with information on conflict resolution, and create multi-racial and cross-cultural events in schools, churches and businesses to promote mutual respect and understanding.
- Develop programs and incentives to end white flight from integrated neighborhoods, schools, businesses and organizations.

2. Health/Wellness/ Healthcare Delivery

Our Goal:

A region that values and invests in the health and wellness of every urban and rural citizen, knowing that affordable, accessible, comprehensive, state-of-the-art health care facilities and service are available.

Recommended Strategy:

Establish a consortium of healthcare providers, government agencies and citizens to assess met and unmet healthcare needs of the five-county region, to identify available resources and to develop immediate and long-range plans.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Establish a steering committee to plan the first meeting of the task force (i.e. invite members, set the agenda, etc.)

Return Expected for Our Region:

Because prevention is less costly than treatment, healthcare costs in the region will decrease, thus freeing our limited dollars for use in other ways, benefiting all citizens of the five-county region (youth,

seniors, adults), healthcare providers, and government entities. Through the wise use of resources, healthier schoolchildren will become successful, taxpaying, productive work force/adults and will be more beneficial to their communities.

3. Family and Shelter; Housing

Our Goal:

A region with involved families and individuals in safe and supportive communities where all have adequate, affordable and accessible housing.

Recommended Strategies:

A. Young Family Support

Provide all new parents with access to child development and parenting education information.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Create a task force to conduct a conference for agencies to share information

Return Expected for Our Region: Reduction of public assistance needs; safer environment for children; prevention of child abuse and neglect; reduced births to teens; greater parental involvement in schools; raised quality of child care; improved quality of life, benefiting children, young parents,—especially teen parents, all communities, children with special needs.

Another Strategy to Accomplish Our Goal:

Ensure access to quality childcare through public/private partnerships.

B. Housing

Establish a regional task force to inventory the housing supply, conditions and needs within 12 months and set targets for meeting those needs.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Create the task force and access census information in order to start the inventory.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Overall improvement of housing status; increase in quality of life; neighborhood stability; economic growth; family stability leading to improvement in educational success in children; better self-esteem, reduction in crime, improved health, benefiting low-income families; regional tax base (converts vacant lots into taxpayer homes); business (stable neighborhood, better employees); communities through improved public health and overall quality of life.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Provide support and incentives for the rehabilitation of existing houses and neighborhoods.
- Support and fight for the passage of good legislation to ensure adequate, affordable and accessible housing.

4. Youth

Our Goal:

A region that provides an improved and increased number of safe and supervised youth activities, programs and services through organizations and facilities that empower and nurture youth and that encourage the development of positive values and self esteem - particularly after school and on weekends.

Recommended Strategy:

Create a partnership to develop a regional approach to share planning, ideas, knowledge, best practices and resources for youth activities and programs.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Form the initial task force to more thoroughly identify what services are available currently and who is providing them.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Enhanced current programs expanded to fill in the gaps to provide a safety net for all youth, benefiting youth, adults, parents, agencies, business and the community

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Develop a stable source of funding for youth education and activities.
- Create youth leadership forums for children from mid-elementary school on up.
- Community leaders should develop a comprehensive public campaign to encourage adults to volunteer their time and resources in specific programs for youth development.

5. Crime, Drugs and Public Safety

Our Goal:

A region that provides a safe, drug-free, low crime environment for all residents, with schools and religious institutions serving as a catalyst, with improved police recruiting, training and performance, with increased county fire protection (enhanced by the use of technology), and with increased public and traffic safety.

Recommended Strategy:

Form an advisory panel composed of a good cross section of regional citizens (church, business, etc.) to meet on a regular basis with elected and civic leaders to offer advice on the needs of the community, and in turn, the leaders can get the assistance of the citizens on issues of importance.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Work with the chambers of commerce to organize an initial meeting and take the initiative to bring in government, civic and religious leaders. Leadership organizations, such as Leadership Montgomery, can play an important role in selecting civic leaders for the first meeting.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Better line of communication between citizens and their civic and

government officials concerning important issues, benefiting the entire region with a substantially improved quality of life.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Form a coalition of religious institutions and community organizations to coordinate and implement a program for neighborhood centers that have family programs (drug awareness, public safety, day care, etc.)
- Increase revenues to provide better pay, retirement benefits, better working conditions, in order to recruit and retain more qualified police officers; part of the training should focus on diversity and human relations skills.
- Increase drug and alcohol treatment programs for indigent youth and adults in the region.
- Provide a better communications system among police agencies in the region.

6. Seniors

Our Goal:

A region that assures a good quality of life for its seniors by incorporating a continuum of care that is socially, medically and psychologically supportive, with safe housing, necessary services and economic support.

Recommended Strategy:

Establish comprehensive senior centers for recreation, medical needs, human services, and distribution of information on what services are available, who coordinates them and for whom they are available.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Schedule and host the first coordinating council meeting.

Return Expected for Our Region:

A better quality of life for seniors, their families, communities, governments

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Build on existing agencies that serve the aging by providing a continuum of care for the elderly in each area of this goal.
- Provide community supported transportation

HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

1. Economic Development

Our Goal:

A prosperous region committed to improving the quality of life for all citizens through the creation and strengthening of local businesses and through the recruitment and retention of more and larger responsible businesses that bring diverse, good-paying employment opportunities.

Recommended Strategy:

Create a regional economic development authority to plan and strate-

gize for industrial recruitment, commercial/retail development and tourism attraction in the five-county region.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Facilitate the formation of an economic development authority truly representative of the five-county region.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Continued growth, prosperity and an improved quality of life for the region, benefiting every citizen, businesses and visitors.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Encourage local governments of the region to provide for strong infrastructure to support the region's quality of life standards and to attract quality business and industrial opportunities.
- Create an atmosphere that will bring business into the community through tax incentives for industrial development.
- Coordinate economic development efforts to support the tourism/attractions industry.
- Seek legislative action to promote clean industry in the region

2. Jobs; Labor Force; Minority and Small Business

Our Goal:

A region that provides support for quality economic development, job opportunities and training.

Recommended Strategy:

Form a citizen task force in each county/council district (with a central board of representatives) under the umbrella of local government, and with the local chambers of commerce as lead agencies, to support the goal politically, financially and educationally and to obtain adequate funding.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Fund the strategy and identify representatives from all areas to serve on the task force. Find a model program to present to the group, such as in Hampton Roads, Va. Develop a "rollout" strategy for the task force to build community consensus and determine the stakeholders.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Collaboration; balance/opportunity; economic growth; enhanced diversity image, benefiting citizens of the entire region, especially youth and students.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Instill public school students with effective basic skills in reading, math, science and critical reasoning and obtain adequate funding for schools.
- Provide an educational course for entrepreneurs on small business development, record keeping and personnel and personal management in order to accelerate investments for small businesses in the region and to obtain adequate funding.

3. Taxes

Our Goal:

Revise the current tax structures to develop an equitable, non-regressive way to enhance revenues in order to provide adequate spending for education and other public services by increasing property taxes and decreasing sales taxes.

Recommended Strategy:

Reform taxes by increasing property taxes and lowering sales tax on food and medicine to attain funding for education. Consider raising property taxes on the local levels if are unable to win the state effort. Note: Grocery tax cannot be removed currently at the county level. The Alabama Legislature is the only governmental body that can remove it at this time.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Create a task force to research the costs and benefits of different options, to conduct polling/focus groups to see what "sells" and to revise the strategy, to take the message to the people in small group settings, to bring public officials from both political parties on board strategically in a bipartisan way and to conduct a public information campaign through the media.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Better quality of life through better public education, an educated work force to bring higher-paying jobs; lower crime rates; better healthcare, benefiting everyone in the five-county region.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Convene state and county government representatives to work together and develop new or improve existing sources of funding for education.
- Conduct a public information campaign through the media to clarify the inequities in the current tax system.

4. Structure of Government/ Regional Cooperation

Our Goal:

A region where local governments work in mutual respect and cooperation to maximize their services, their images, their communities and economic development opportunities, and minimize costs while improving the quality of life for all through better communication and planning

Recommended Strategy:

Strengthen the River Region concept with the chambers of commerce and economic development agencies in Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery counties, and broaden this regional approach to include the chambers of commerce and economic development agencies in Macon and Lowndes counties.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Contact mayors, council members, and county commissioners of each jurisdiction in the region. Contact the League of Municipalities

and the County Commission Association to help facilitate and possibly host these meetings. Assist in encouraging this expanded development; bring together the chambers of commerce and economic development agencies.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Inter-government communication and cooperation, benefiting all the citizens in the five-county region.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Initiate a regional organization of elected officials in Autauga, Elmore, Lowndes, Macon and Montgomery counties to foster regional government cooperation and planning with each community's representatives working toward agreed upon goals to improve the quality of life for all citizens.
- Convene a roundtable discussion twice a year between the chambers of commerce, economic development agencies and governmental officials from the five-county region.

5. Citizen Involvement/Government Leadership

Our Goal:

A region with a system of governance that promotes citizen input and that is structured to respond to citizen issues.



Recommended Strategy:

County and city governments should foster development of neighborhood associations, employing community development techniques to train and organize citizens to participate effectively to be able to bring forth the needs of their communities in regard to issues about which all citizens have voiced concern. Develop bylaws for the associations that will successfully work region-wide. Review on a regular basis the strategies of the neighborhood organizations and the policies or procedures implemented as a result of each organization's participation.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Convene governmental bodies to begin the commission process to work with Envision 2020 to identify key influencers in the region in order to create a commission, complete with by-laws, to address the composition of the commission, length of service, duties and powers. Duties will include: a) provide copies of government rules/policies to a wide variety of citizen groups/neighborhood associa-

tions; also have the community conduct a "citizen review" of the region's policies and plans that effect provision of services; b) provide recommendations from citizens/neighborhood organizations to appropriate governing bodies and be advocates for citizen's recommendation; c) cooperatively assist/enhance public health/social service agencies target more effectively their communications to citizens who can benefit from the services and programs offered by each agency.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Greater citizen participation; greater support of local and regional government, benefiting citizens, elected officials, government and social service agencies, businesses and non-profit organizations.

Another Strategy to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Improve communication between the government and citizens regarding activities and policies of the government by appointing a commission that includes community representatives comprised of individuals in all media by 2002.

HOW WE GROW TOGETHER

1. Planning and Zoning

Our Goal:

A region with an exceptional library system, extensive green areas and a major convention center, achieved through the implementation of effective planning controls and strict but creative zoning ordinances at the local level that provide for organized and orderly growth and that encourage developers and owners in adaptive reuse of existing facilities, demolition of abandoned structures and creation of more and better shopping venues.

Recommended Strategy:

Establish a nonprofit entity in each city in the region to accept donations of vacant properties for the purpose of adaptive reuse of those properties.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Investigate what other communities are doing, establish a model program and sell it to the region's officials.

Return Expected for Our Region:

The elimination of non-productive and unsightly properties and an increase in tax revenue, benefiting the entire region.

Another Strategy to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Appoint a "Renew the Region" planning team of two elected representatives from each county and ordinary citizens from the five-county area to implement the goal; hire a professional land use consultant. Establish county level planning commissions empowered to adopt ordinances for orderly growth and to direct, control and promote development.

2. Downtowns and Riverfronts

Our Goal:

A region that contains restored, revitalized and redeveloped down-

towns with vibrant shopping, recreation and living opportunities, where the river, made accessible and protected, is a natural link with the entire region.

Recommended Strategy:

Build a development catalyst and create downtown riverfront shopping, dining and entertainment: also develop new residential and urban dwellings while at the same time establishing economic incentives to revitalize downtowns and riverfronts.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Set a date for a city officials' summit. The mayors should get together on a date and ensure that their respective city councils attend. A facilitator should be identified. Stress this strategy at the Elected Officials Roundtable meeting and at the business leaders meeting.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Untold economic growth to increase our tax base; increase in tourism; more entertainment here instead of Birmingham or Atlanta; a great new reputation, benefiting everyone.

Another Strategy to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Enlist the aid of the Main Street Alabama program, the Main Street USA Program and the Voices for Main Street program to provide expertise, advice and fund-raising skills.

3. Neighborhoods

Our Goal:

A region that promotes a sense of community and equality; revitalizes and preserves neighborhoods; promotes neighborhood associations, involvement and pride; encourages beautification, mixed-use and downtown neighborhoods; builds more gathering places (such as parks); and protects neighborhoods with effective ordinances that encourage people to stay.

Recommended Strategy:

Identify neighborhoods that need help and then establish a coordinated plan to bring those neighborhoods up to livable standards by tapping into a lending pool established by area banks committed to innovative development and redevelopment.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Conduct a media campaign focused on neighborhoods to invite citizens to participate in an issues forum at neighborhood association meetings that will address issues important to the communities. Continue to update and fine-tune the task force's strategic plan and promotion of agencies involved in community development.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Neighborhoods will become more active, informed and will improve the living standards, benefiting neighborhood residents and the five counties in the river region and local governments.

Another Strategy to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Teach neighborhood leaders the specific skills they need to advocate in public and private sectors utilizing collaborations to obtain funding from "for-profit" and "not for profit" entities to encourage neighborhood association growth.

4. Historic Preservation, Physical Design, Beautification Our Goal:

A region that provides a beautiful, clean living environment in all neighborhoods with special emphasis on enhancing our traffic corridor; i.e. through landscaping, eliminating billboards, creating underground utilities, adaptive reuse and infill while capitalizing on our rich heritage by restoring historic buildings and sites.

Recommended Strategy:

Establish a group that will develop a regionwide master plan for historic preservation and beautification to include proposals for: a) strengthening the effectiveness of existing regulatory processes, b) working towards a broad, regionwide regulatory body, and c) implementing an incentive program to support beautification and historic preservation.



Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Establish an initial group that will define the project in more detail, identify prospective participants, set a time and place for an initial meeting, issue the invitation, coordinate the meeting and immediate follow up steps, among which will be determining where the project will be housed and how it will be funded.

Return Expected for Our Region:

A more beautiful and attractive environment for the residents of the river region, as well as for visitors and future residents who might be drawn here, benefiting the entire region and our posterity.

5. Mass Transportation and Roads

Our Goal:

A partnership of the five-county region that will develop an afford-

able, efficient and expanded public transportation system, including air service, and that will develop an efficient system of roads that are multi-modal safe, attractive, well-maintained and link together areas in the River Region. Note: This is a merged goal statement - the environmental scan groups recommended making one statement from what originally was two goal statements.

Recommended Strategy:

Set up a five-county regional transportation authority to work with the Montgomery Airport Authority, the local chambers of commerce and our congressional delegation to form a regional planning/transportation organization to strategize, prioritize, secure funding and implement programs.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Set up the task force to develop a written proposal and submit it to: a) MPO b) Regional Planning Commission; c) state legislative representatives. Get information about model programs from other regions. Follow up and monitor progress.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Speaking with one voice for more funding of regional projects; increased economic development; new industry attracted; increased tourism; more transportation choices, benefiting all residents, visitors and tourists in the River Region.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Merge existing mass transit systems into one River Region Transportation Authority to identify and correct barriers to efficient traffic flow and to develop a comprehensive regional mass transportation strategy.
- Build bike lanes onto existing roads to accommodate bicycle traffic, reduce auto emission and improve air quality.

HOW WE PLAY TOGETHER

1. Culture and Arts

Our Goal:

A region that encourages, promotes and supports superior quality arts and cultural activities through education, the availability of ample, diverse and accessible events, quality facilities, youth programs, promotion of individual artists, and outstanding financial support.

Recommended Strategy:

Create a unified arts lobby involving organizations from the five-county region such as the arts councils, arts auxiliaries, arts business councils, business committees for the arts, art departments, artists, chambers of commerce, travel and tourism bureaus and representatives from established arts organizations to study existing arts facilities and programs and to determine the need for additional facilities and programs, including arts education programs.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Solicit nominations from or involvement from area arts leaders (including staff, boards and councils) and arts support groups for

individuals to serve on a task force to form a steering committee to develop a unified arts lobby. "Feed the goose that continues to lay the golden egg!!"

Return Expected for Our Region:

Deeper appreciation, usage, knowledge, participation in and funding of existing regional arts organizations, fostering the creation of facilities and programs where needed in the five-county region. When arts are flowering; people are participating; tremendous benefits: educationally, economically (economic development), and culturally for everyone residing in or visiting the five-county region, raising the tax base and bringing positive recognition from outside the region.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Create, expand and support arts education programs for young people, fostering a greater appreciation of the arts through the training of teachers and through linking education and the regions' arts programs. Expand the Montgomery Partners in Education program to the five-county region.
- Develop a marketing plan to promote existing arts facilities and programs.
- Develop a regional educational and promotional campaign on the need and importance of public and private financial support of the arts.

2. Events, Sports, Programs

Our Goal:

A region that provides a wide variety of cultural, recreational, entertainment and sports opportunities for all ages, all income levels, all ability levels and all areas of interest.

Recommended Strategy:

Build a new centrally located, state-of-the art, multi-functional civic arena and renovate existing facilities that would attract a greater variety of sports and entertainment sought by citizens and visitors to the River Region. Through a dedicated governmental entity, utilize incentives to create private/public partnerships that will bring the project to fruition.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Form a task force to do a presentation to the Montgomery Downtown Riverfront Development Commission asking them to embrace this expanded project.

Return Expected for Our Region:

A facility to host a variety of sports and entertainment will enhance the quality of life in the region. Hosting sporting and entertainment events will generate economic return, benefiting regional citizens and businesses.

Another Strategy to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Governmental officials, citizens and businesses working together should consult with outside advisers who have succeeded elsewhere in raising funds, developing community cohesion, and build-

ing and maintaining the desired types of programs and facilities. Provide tax incentives for private business when appropriate.

3. Recreational Facilities

Our Goal:

A region that has family oriented, multifaceted cultural and recreational programs and facilities that offer affordable, wholesome events and activities for all.

Recommended Strategy:

Conduct a feasibility study to determine the types and locations of facilities needed; estimate the cost of providing the land, building the facilities and developing the programs; determine the government/private funding needs and sources.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Form task force to determine what we have and what we need.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Increased likelihood of obtaining funds and funding, as well as support from the community, benefiting the people in the five-county region.

Other strategies to implement our goal:

- Seek federal grants to specifically address funding for cultural, recreational and economic programs.
- Recruit private organizations such as Boy Scouts, churches, YMCAs and others to build, operate and maintain recreational facilities.
- Seek involvement from for-profit businesses and non-profit organizations to build and operate facilities.

4. Tourism

Our Goal:

A region that continually develops and promotes its dynamic history, culture, and multi-faceted heritage as a tourist destination.

Recommended Strategy:

Create a regional tourism board and/or independent convention and visitors' bureau to coordinate the promotion of events, attractions, and other tourism opportunities, in addition to assisting in the development of a master plan for new and historic, cultural, recreational, and ecological attractions.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Montgomery Convention and Visitors Bureau and Envision host a meeting for all regional tourism partners.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Improved communication, coordination; better promotion of attractions; economic impact increase due to tourism growth; tax revenue increases; consolidation of resources, benefiting the region as a whole, due to increased revenue and a better quality of life through

more attractions and an improved hospitality industry, as well as businesses and local governments.

Another Strategy to Implement Our Goal:

- Encourage the City of Montgomery to renovate and expand the Civic Center as a convention center to encourage growth, tourism and new business.

5. Greenbelts, Parks, Environment

Our Goal:

A region that preserves its natural resources and has interconnecting hiking and biking trails both in the city and county, more sidewalks, and numerous, diverse, well-maintained, accessible parks and green public areas.

Recommended Strategy:

Develop a regional inventory of natural resources and manmade features, to serve as the basis for the regional master plan for an efficient, multi-modal transportation system and for the development of codes for environmental preservation, urban forestry and beautification.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Bring together stakeholders to begin the process of developing the strategy. Engage trail/advocacy organizations. Hire a grant writer to get money to begin education program.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Improved quality of life: improved physical fitness, pleasant environment to live in, ease of business recruiting, reduction of accidents, independence for children in a safe environment and a positive economic impact, benefiting the entire community, businesses and individuals.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Establish a regional consortium to attract regional funding and to develop a detailed regional master plan of proposed and existing parks, trails, recreational spaces, green spaces, nature centers and trails along the Alabama River.
- Encourage city and county governments to establish a tree commission and to plant flowers and trees at expressway exit ramps.
- Encourage neighborhood associations to work with city and county departments to beautify and clean-up their areas and to work with city street departments to increase sidewalks.

6. Clean Air and Water, Recycling

Our Goal:

A region that creates and maintains the cleanliness of its communities and environment, including the quality of its waters, air, waste management and recycling efforts.

Recommended Strategy:

Create a permanent public relations campaign, planned by community groups and involving all media, to instill in all citizens the

importance of a clean environment with pure, quality air, water and land.

Recommended Action to Begin Implementing the Strategy:

Engage the elected officials of the region to endorse this plan. Have the city councils, mayors and county commissions of the region formalize and endorse a compact to promote these environmental initiatives.

Return Expected for Our Region:

Better plan for economic development; a cleaner, more environmentally friendly region, benefiting our children and their children.

Other Strategies to Accomplish Our Goal:

- Establish mandatory region-wide curbside recycling programs, which will be overseen by individual cities and that include education and incentives to reduce landfill waste.
- Establish auto and truck emissions standards and require all licensed vehicles to be tested.
- Develop an anti-litter and illegal dumping policy with vigorous enforcement.

V I S I O N P A R T N E R S

Invitation for Your Involvement

You have an opportunity to participate in creating the future of the five-county region and to make the Vision reality! You and your organization can become involved in implementation by volunteering for one of the 26 Task Forces and by endorsing the Vision.

Fax or e-mail the form below by October 22, 2001:

Envision Montgomery 2020 E-mail - lynn@envisionmontgomery2020.org
 600 South Court St, Suite 311 Web site - envision2020.org
 Montgomery, AL 36104 Fax - 334-240-6869
 Phone - 334-269-0224

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Phone (W) _____ (H) _____

Name of your business _____

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Preferred Mailing Address _____

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Your e-mail _____ Fax _____

I want to work with this Task Force: _____

Check here if your organization would like to have a speaker.

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