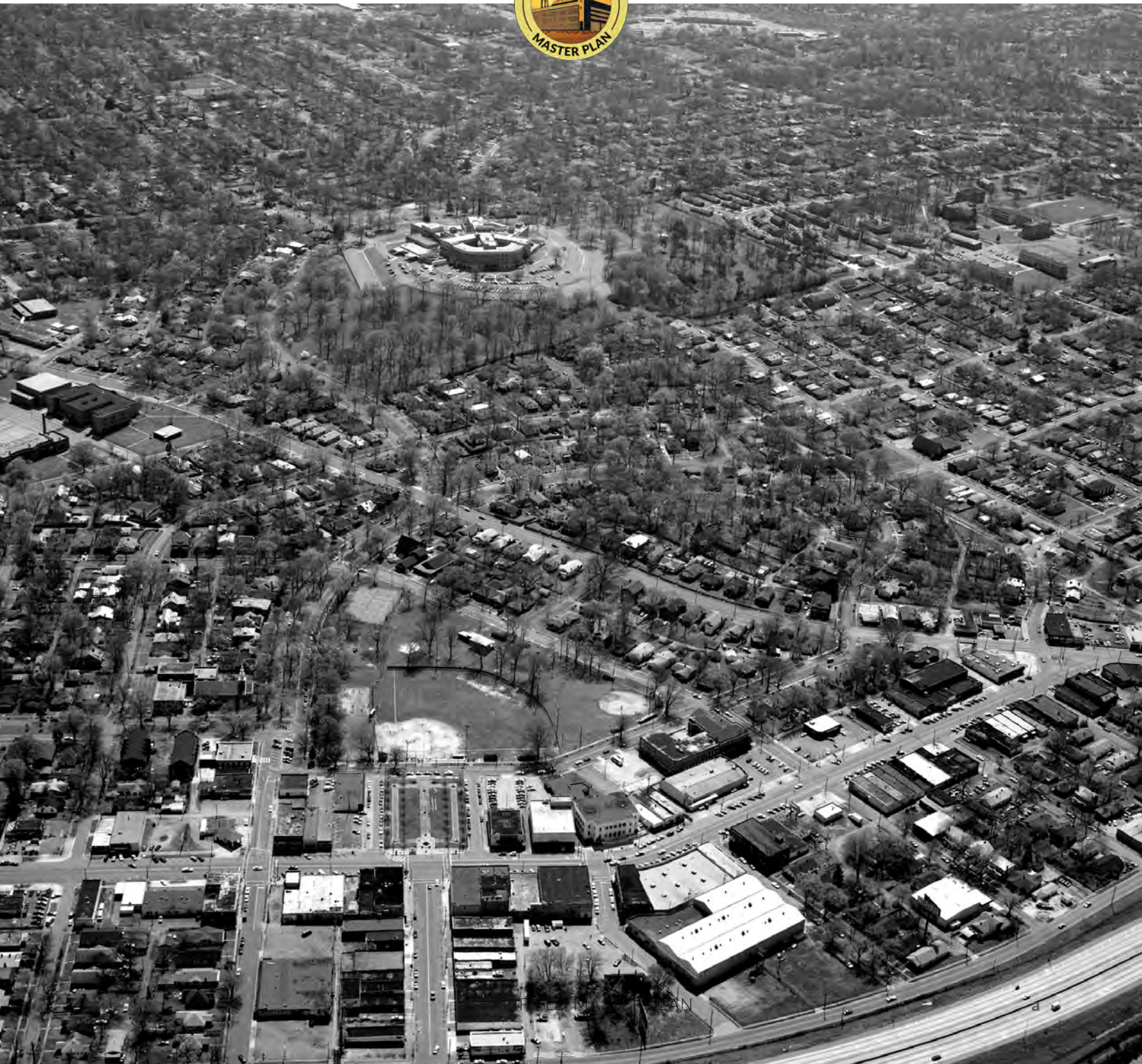


FAIRFIELD 2035

A DEDICATED, THRIVING COMMUNITY

ADOPTED • MARCH 09, 2022







The contents of this master plan reflect the City of Fairfield's community values. The plan serves as a guide to interpreting citizen values into future land use decisions, capital investments, and public policies. As such, the recommendations within this master plan are not legally binding upon the City of Fairfield.

This project is supported by funding from the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham (RPCGB), the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Building Communities Program, and the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham (CFGB). The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Birmingham MPO or the RPCGB or the CFGB. For more information on this program, please visit www.rpcgb.org or call (205) 251-8139.

This plan was prepared as a cooperative effort of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT), MPO and RPCGB as a requirement of Title 23 USC 134 and the current federal transportation bill. The contents of the plan do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the USDOT.

The City of Fairfield and its people thank the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Building Communities Program, the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the Alabama Department of Transportation for making this plan possible.

Front Cover: Fairfield aerial 1968, Library of Congress, photographer Jet Lowe.

Front end sheet: Hillside Drive 1968, Library of Congress, photographer Jet Lowe.

Back end sheet: Fairfield High School, 2021, photographer Steve Mouzon.

Back cover: City of Fairfield and surrounding context, March 6, 2021, Google Earth Pro.

RESOLUTION 2022-06

CITY OF FAIRFIELD PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE FAIRFIELD MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, according to the Section 11-52-8 of the Code of Alabama, it shall be the function and duty of the City of Fairfield Planning and Zoning Commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of Fairfield, Alabama, and;

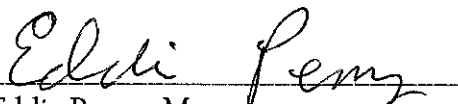
WHEREAS, the City of Fairfield Planning and Zoning Commission has made careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of the land use, housing, infrastructure, design, environment and economic development of Fairfield, Alabama, and;

WHEREAS, the City of Fairfield Planning and Zoning Commission has reviewed the Master Plan and finds it to best promote the health, safety, prosperity and general welfare of the citizens of Fairfield, Alabama, and;

WHEREAS, all requirements of the laws of the State of Alabama with regard to preparation, public review and notification of said "*Fairfield 203: Fairfield Master Plan*" have been met.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Fairfield, Alabama, that the planning document entitled "*Fairfield 2035: Fairfield Master Plan*" and all official maps pertaining thereto are hereby adopted the 9th day of March 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be transmitted to the Fairfield City Council and recommended for adoption.


Eddie Penny, Mayor

ATTEST:


Mary Roberson, City Manager/Clerk

ENDORSEMENT

The Fairfield City Council endorsed *Fairfield 2035: Fairfield Master Plan* on the 21st day of March, 2022.

PREFACE



Fairfield is a community with great assets, especially its people, but also great challenges. This master plan is the result of extensive community dialogue about how to connect the existing assets in new ways to bring about the economic development that is much needed at this time for the combined college town and former industrial town to reinvent itself into what's next. This reinvention prioritizes safety of the citizens as well as environmental stewardship to nurture and support the historic main street, local parks, schools, and Miles College. The wealth of these assets can and should be leveraged to unlock potential funding sources and collaboration.

At this critical time where national support for dismantling systemic racism is at a high point, grants, loans, and community-building tools can help with

adaptive reuse and redevelopment of Fairfield's historic buildings with a strong focus on incubation and acceleration of Black-owned business. As a regionally important community whose population is over 90% African American, with Miles College, an influential Historically Black College and University (HBCU), supporting local Black-owned businesses is essential.

Fairfield is a former steel town designed under the City Beautiful movement. A shrinking population over the decades created safety challenges as homes and buildings were vacated. This plan sets policies to demolish unstable buildings, abate those with good structure, and infill and redevelop using a series of incremental development ideas to both reinvigorate the local economy and build private equity.

A ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

This master plan allows Fairfield residents the opportunity to help shape the future of their community, their neighborhood, and their home. A master plan that defines what exists, what is desired, and how to achieve it.

At heart, this is a redevelopment plan. Fairfield is a historic city with well-established neighborhoods, civic areas, and commercial districts. But many of those areas are hurting from decades of disinvestment. How can they be given new life and, with that, new opportunities for the people of Fairfield?

That is what this master plan lays out.

To get there, the process began with a Community Assessment, see [Demographic Data on page 122](#), to better understand Fairfield today: the built and natural character, the demographic and economic

conditions, the resources and infrastructure, and the history and culture that binds the community together.

With the orientation of the Community Assessment, the process began with getting to know how the basic facts of Fairfield play out in the daily lives of residents in order to envision the future. Through a series of community interviews and public involvement opportunities, the planning team came to understand Fairfield as its residents see it. So they could map out a future built around that in the pages of this plan. That future is presented in the form of a community vision and the implementation strategies that can help make it real. Community participation helped frame this plan and continues to be so vital to a successful implementation of these ideas through the life of the master plan.



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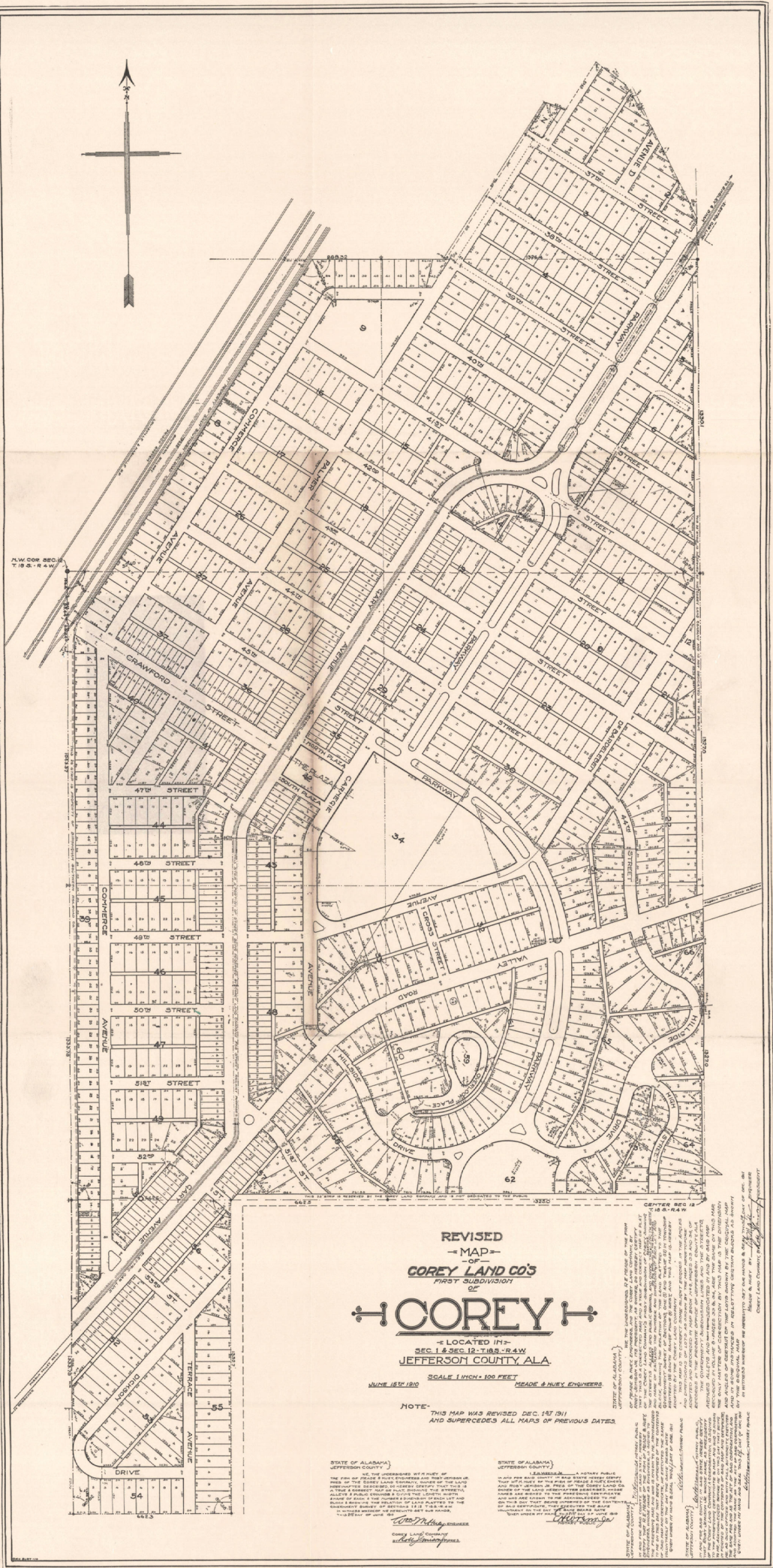
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OFFICIAL MAP OF THE COREY LAND COMPANY
 (REVISED)
 BIRMINGHAM, ALA.
 JEMISON REAL ESTATE & INSURANCE COMPANY, GENERAL AGENTS
 211 NORTH TWENTIETH STREET, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA



REVISED
 - MAP -
 OF
COREY LAND CO'S
 FIRST SUBDIVISION
 OF
COREY
 - LOCATED IN -
 SEC. 1 & 2, 12-T188-R-4W
 JEFFERSON COUNTY, ALA.
 SCALE 1 INCH = 100 FEET
 MADE 12-15-1910
 ENGINEERS
 GEORGE & HUEY ENGINEERS

NOTE:
 THIS MAP WAS REVISED DEC. 15, 1911
 AND SUPERCEDES ALL MAPS OF PREVIOUS DATES.

STATE OF ALABAMA)
 JEFFERSON COUNTY)
 I, GEORGE H. HUEY, a Notary Public
 in and for the County of Jefferson,
 State of Alabama, do hereby certify
 that the above and foregoing is a
 true and correct copy of the
 original map filed in my office
 on the 15th day of December, 1911,
 and that the same conforms to
 the requirements of the Act
 approved March 10, 1901, and
 amended March 15, 1903, and
 March 15, 1905, and March 15,
 1907, and March 15, 1909,
 relating to the recording of
 maps.

WITNESSED my hand and the seal
 of my office this 15th day of
 December, 1911.

George H. Huey
 Notary Public

Corey Land Company
 J. W. Jemison

1

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT FAIRFIELD

Fairfield's motto is "an old city moving in a new direction." This encompasses so much of the charm, sense of community, and challenges of Fairfield today. The city was founded in the early 1900's and the plan was inspired by the City Beautiful movement with parks, avenues, and beautiful homes. But with the decline of the local steel industry and the resulting loss of jobs, businesses, and population, Fairfield struggles with economic challenges, vacant and declining buildings, and issues with safety. However, it is also blessed with a clear sense of community, residents who are committed to the city, and a strong center of faith. Fairfield residents love their city and are committed to contributing to its renewal.

The City of Fairfield is located on the western boundary of Birmingham, Alabama. Fairfield is home to Miles College, founded in 1898, before the city was established in 1910 and incorporated in 1919. The campus is embedded within the historic neighborhood fabric of the city and is one of two Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the region. Miles College and the Miles College Community Development Corporation are central to the city's assets, and active partners in this plan.

Many of the market dynamics that attracted Miles College, Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company, and U.S. Steel to Fairfield in the early 1900's are still at play today, including access to regional transportation and a short commute to the downtowns of Birmingham, Bessemer, and Hoover. However, Fairfield has faced a declining population like many other small Alabama cities, along with the accompanying loss of retail and tax base. Now is an opportune time to develop a master plan to focus on neighborhood stabilization, downtown redevelopment, industry partnerships, and Miles College collaboration.

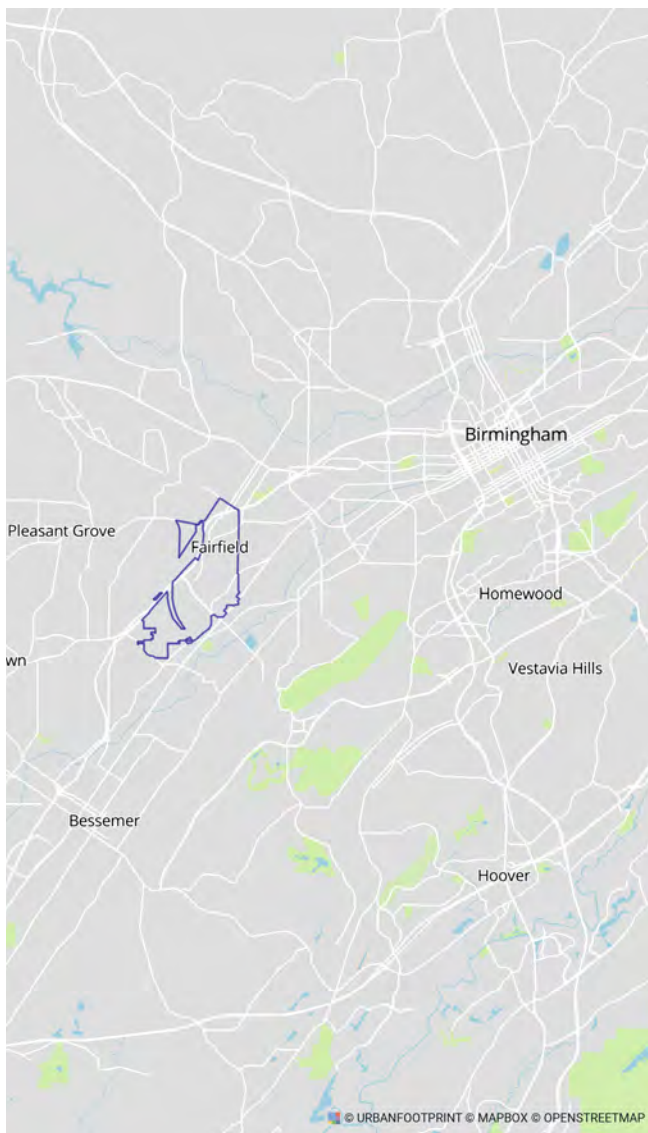


Image 1.1 Fairfield context map

THE VISION

The Fairfield Master Plan is the result of direction from residents of the Community, from the Planning Commission, and from the City Manager, Mayor, and City Council. In August, September, and October 2021, the collective affirmed the vision of the city. While Fairfield, like many small cities across Alabama and the United States, is suffering from a declining population and retracting economy, the residents have faith and vision for the Fairfield of the future.

The vision isn't focused on the current challenges, but sees a future that can only be seen by those who love a place. G.K. Chesterton once said, "Men did not love Rome because she was great. She was great because they had loved her." The residents of Fairfield love this place and see a hopeful future that can be achieved through the entire community working together.

The collective local vision of the community is:

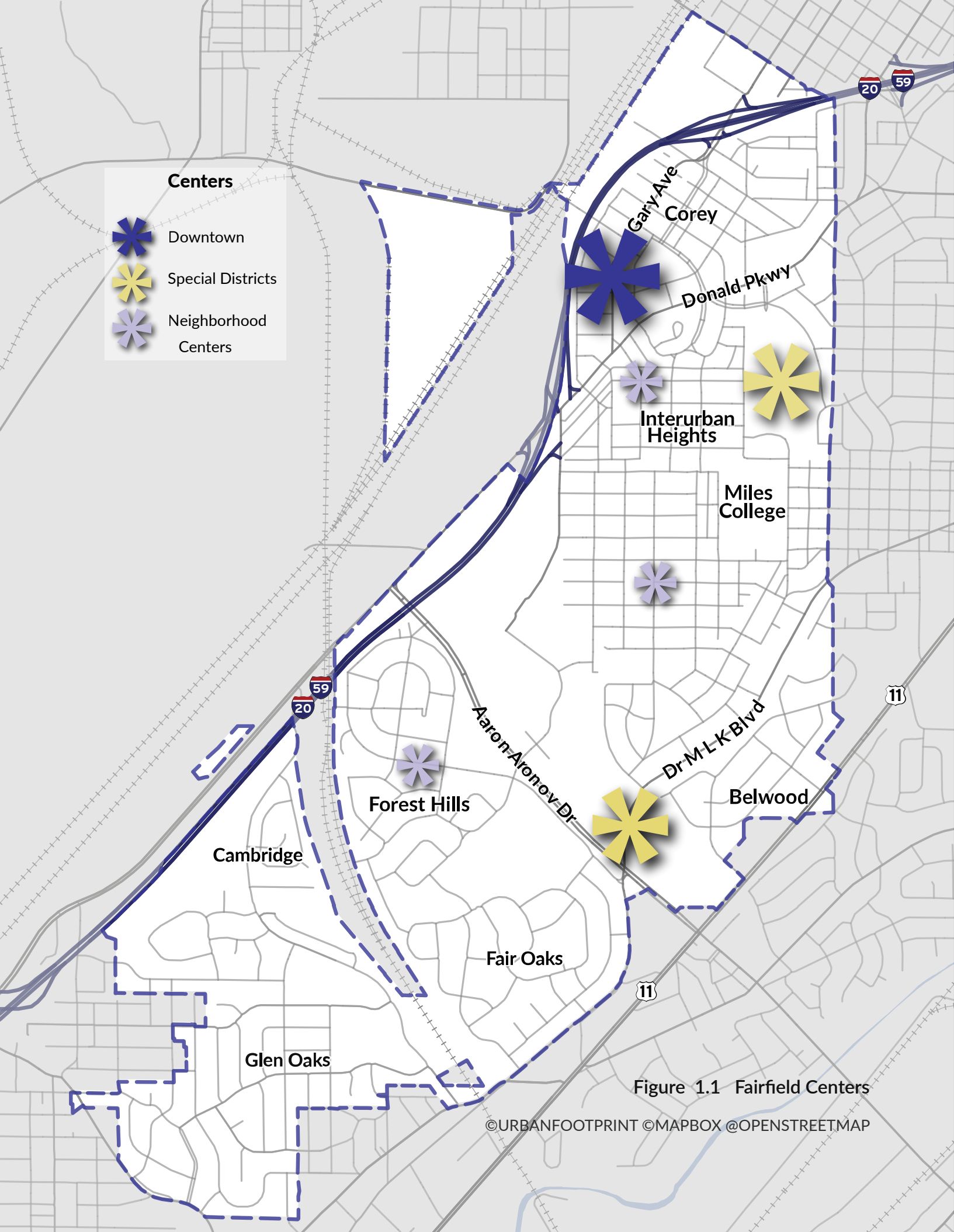
“FAIRFIELD IS A SAFE, VIBRANT, HEALTHY COMMUNITY DISTINGUISHED BY THE DIVERSE OPPORTUNITIES IT OFFERS TO ALL WHO LIVE, WORK, STUDY, AND VISIT HERE.”

THE PLAN

The Fairfield Master Plan defines the city's vision for growth and redevelopment. The plan is not a law or a zoning ordinance but serves as policy to guide community decision-making regarding land use, development, growth management and capital improvements. This framework guides public and private decisions that will affect reinvestment in existing neighborhoods, strengthen local businesses, attract new investment, and increase safety.

A master plan guides public investment decisions to determine what types of transportation system investments are needed, what changes are needed to recruit more businesses and jobs, what housing needs exist, and what is needed for the safety and welfare of the citizens. The plan is also a guide for zoning decisions, which in turn guides development permits in the city. The plan is based on the citizens' vision of how they want their city to grow in the future – it is a long-term vision typically covering 5 to 15 years. In addition to citizen input, this document is data-driven, informed by the most recent updates of demographic and market data for the city.

The plan leverages and strengthens the existing walkable neighborhood centers as well as the more auto-oriented special districts, [Figure 1.1 Fairfield Centers](#). That is because compact development helps create convenient neighborhood centers, with neighborhood commercial or mixed-use areas within a five-minute walking radius of homes. This type of proximity helps deliver the types of livability and neighborliness envisioned by the community because it increases the potential for walking and bicycling and will put more homes close to commercial areas, parks and schools. It also increases affordability and reduces greenhouse gas emissions since residents may be able to reduce their vehicular needs, helping deliver on the community interest in a cleaner and healthier environment.



Centers




-  Downtown
-  Special Districts
-  Neighborhood Centers

Figure 1.1 Fairfield Centers

Motivators

- 1 Neighborhood Stabilization
- 2 Miles College village
- 3 Downtown pop-ups
- 4 Downtown infill

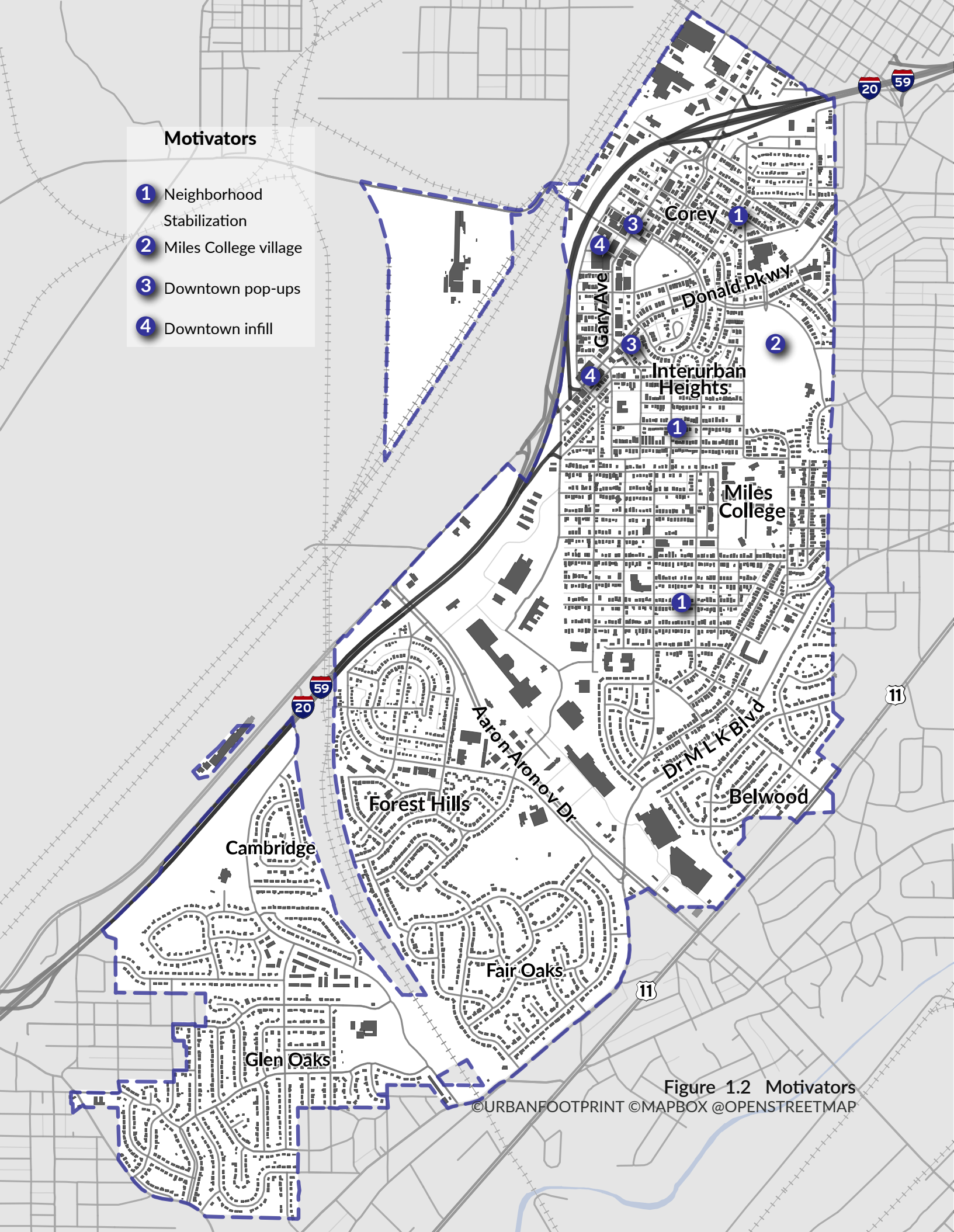


Figure 1.2 Motivators

©URBANFOOTPRINT ©MAPBOX @OPENSTREETMAP

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The Fairfield Master Plan vision is implemented through goals that establish policy and priorities for the city, along with actions to realize the goals.

GOALS

Goals are the methods to achieve the community's vision, organized by topics relating to the built, natural, social, and economic environment of the city. Goals state the plan's intent as clearly as possible, so residents, staff, elected officials, funders, and investors all know what the community is working to accomplish. Each goal is highlighted in blue throughout the plan.

Central goals of the Fairfield Master Plan are to revitalize downtown, stabilize the city's neighborhoods, increase safety, and improve the economy. Many of the goals are subsets of these central goals:

- Capitalize on proximity to Miles College, downtown Birmingham, Bessemer, Hoover, and Interstate 20/59.
- Be a safe and healthy community.
- Expand the tax base to grow the city's municipal services.

ACTIONS

Actions are specific steps, partnerships, and tools to implement the goals. Actions may include efforts already underway as well as new ideas for the city to pursue. They are also time sensitive. Some may be achieved within the next year and others will be mid-term or long-term actions. Actions are highlighted in yellow throughout the plan.

MOTIVATORS

Throughout the planning process capital projects and policies were identified for their potential to enhance Fairfield's economic vitality, connect existing assets, and incentivize new development opportunities.

These projects are motivators because of their ability to have a direct, significant and positive economic impact on the City of Fairfield (e.g. through job creation, improved access and transportation, additional housing opportunities, blight reduction, and enhanced quality-of life) and because they have the potential to leverage investment both in their immediate project area and in surrounding areas with spin-off projects that can add long-term value to the tax base.

The projects fit into time horizons, with some being possible within the first year, some taking over three years, and some being ongoing policies. Motivators are highlighted in green and assigned to short, medium and long-term timing targets.

METHODS

A number of tools and methods are provided throughout the plan that may be helpful in implementation. These include funding sources, best practices, and simple guides for various actions or strategies. They are identified with the lavender title bar.

IMPLEMENTATION

Every action of the Fairfield Master Plan appears in the Implementation Matrix, showing who is responsible for what and by when. The matrix is divided into actions targeted for completion within one, five, and ten to fifteen years. The development of the plan is a collaborative effort, and **successful implementation will require the full community working with the city and college.**

Housing Era

- Pre-1950
- Post-1950
- Public Housing

