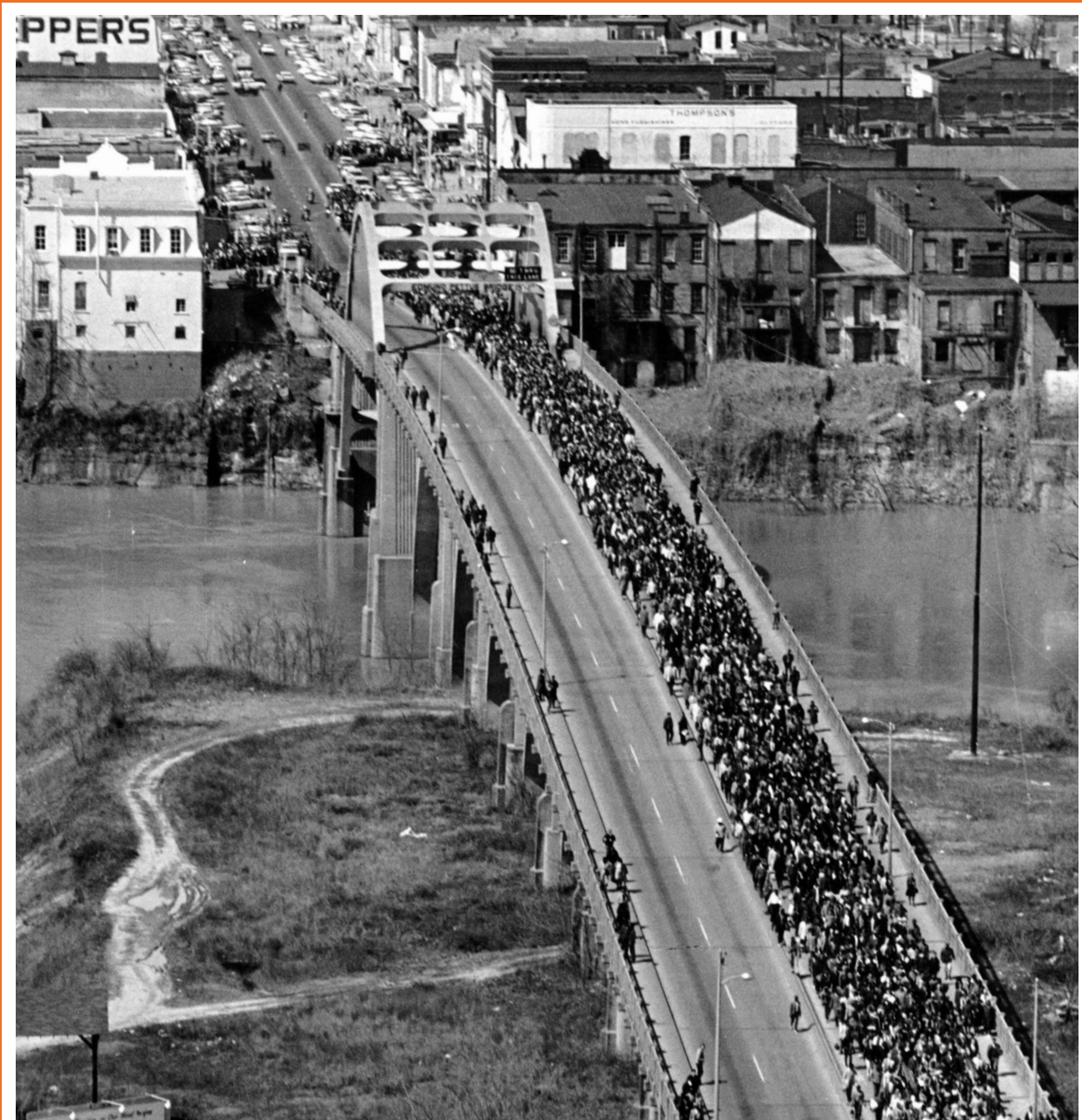


SELMA, ALABAMA
PRESEVATION & REACTIVATION
PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN SELMA



University of Pennsylvania | Weitzman School of Design
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation | HSPV 7010 Preservation Studio
Fall 2022



Studio team members in Selma with
NPS Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail Superintendent,
Dr. Joy Kinard, October 2022.

AUTHORS

This report is the final product of a semester-long studio during the Fall Semester of 2022 within the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at the University of Pennsylvania (Weitzman School of Design). The research and contents of this report were developed by the following students and faculty:

Calvin Nguyen, MSHP '23
Cyrus Yerxa, MSHP '23
Faye Messner, MSHP '23
Haoyi Shang, MSHP '23
Miles (Chengjun) Wu, MSHP '23
Scott Gerlica, MSHP '23

Professor Randall Mason
rfmason@design.upenn.edu

All images and graphics were created by the authors of this report unless otherwise stated.

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CONTACT

Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
115 Meyerson Hall
210 South 34th Street
Philadelphia PA 19104-6311
215.898.3169
pennhsppv@design.upenn.edu

Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
RESEARCH	
Introduction	3
History of Selma	7
Physical Evolution	13
Contexts	27
Stakeholder Perspectives	35
ANALYSIS	
Values	39
Statement of Significance	43
Character-Defining Elements	45
SWOT Analysis	49
Comparables	51
RESPONSE	
Preservation Philosophy & Approach	59
Preservation Strategies	60
Individual Projects	61
CONCLUSION	121
Appendices	125

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2022, a Weitzman School of Design Historic Preservation studio team explored how historic preservation could be leveraged to support economic development in Selma, Alabama. The result is this preservation and reactivation plan - focused on repair in every sense of the word, and connecting Selma's deeply significant heritage to its economic future. A city known worldwide for its role in the Civil Rights Movement, Selma has had little economic investment or prosperity since. For this project, the studio team's specific study area was a roughly twenty-two block core along the northern bank of the Alabama River, synonymous with downtown Selma. As the city's historic commercial center, and retaining much of its late nineteenth century architectural and urban fabric, downtown Selma served as an appropriate focal point for our efforts.

The studio focused on how historic preservation could be used as a way to aid economic revitalization in downtown Selma. This project was built on two purposes: (1) to preserve, commemorate, and holistically interpret Selma's tangible and intangible heritage in its own right, and (2) to configure these preservation efforts to support economic growth and opportunities for the city and its residents, particularly through developing a tourism economy.

Because our overarching goal focused not only on preserving historic resources, but how that work serves as an economic revitalization tool, our team needed to understand Selma holistically. In the first phase of our work (5 weeks), the studio team researched Selma's history and physical evolution as well as the present social, economic, and political contexts. This first phase also included fieldwork in Selma, where we assessed the physical conditions of downtown's built environment, visited heritage sites, and met with various stakeholders. Based on this research the studio team concluded that while a great deal of significant historic buildings and landscapes remain, fragmented governance structures, historic disadvantages, and discrimination hamper downtown's revitalization, even if individual successes occur.

The second phase (5 weeks) assessed and analyzed the findings of the first phase, to form the base of a preservation plan for downtown. This work included creating a statement of significance for downtown Selma, assessing the values of downtown, identifying its character defining elements, and researching comparable downtowns and cities. Our team also enumerated its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats - all in an effort to better un-

derstand downtown Selma's current conditions, needs, assets, and future possibilities. Each of these points of analysis centered on the weight of Selma's historical significance.

The third and final phase (5 weeks) explored six specific interventions in downtown Selma's governance structure and physical environment, informed by the findings and analysis of the previous two phases. While each of these individual projects focuses on a different aspect of downtown Selma, the six interventions together address historic preservation and economic revitalization in the area more holistically. These projects have a broader range than typical preservation tactics because they play to multiple factors - its historic and cultural significance, existing and possible historic interpretation, capacity for economic development, governance and policy structures, and community needs.

Given the relatively limited time frame of our semester-long studio project, our findings and project proposals are positioned to be potential launching pads for the future of downtown Selma, rather than an exhaustive and comprehensive plan for the area. They capture our assessment and response to the current conditions of Selma to realize economic revitalization through the lens of historic preservation. We hope that our studio work assists in downtown Selma's revival as community organizing, outside interest and investment, and financial opportunities continue to grow.

The following plan reports on the research, analysis, and proposed interventions of our six-student studio team on downtown Selma. The report is organized according to our three phases of work. The Research section summarizes our understanding of Selma's history, physical evolution, current socioeconomic and political contexts, physical conditions, and stakeholder perspectives. The Analysis section reflects our understanding of downtown Selma's significance, values, character defining elements, along with its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Included in this section is a discussion of several comparables for Selma and lessons from these other cases. The Response section includes our overall preservation philosophy, general strategies considered, and six intervention projects - each one created by a different team member. The report ends with an overall Conclusion and appendices, which convey additional research and information throughout our studio work that was not captured in the main body of the report.

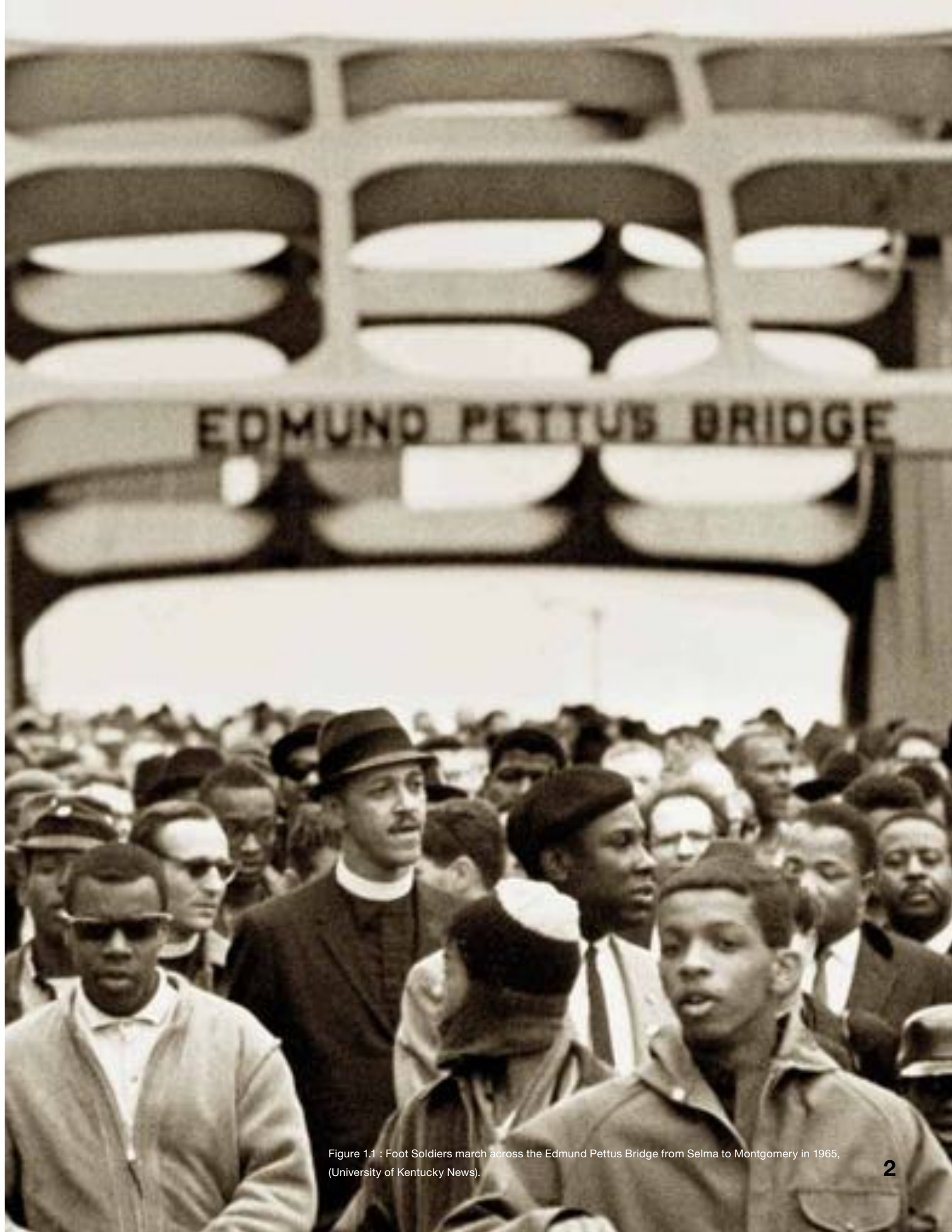


Figure 1.1 : Foot Soldiers march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge from Selma to Montgomery in 1965, (University of Kentucky News).

RESEARCH

Introduction

In the initial process of research, the team studied Selma's history, physical conditions, evolution, contexts, and stakeholder perspectives. Each of these research areas require their own methods and information mediums, yet need to be integrated to form a strong foundation for analysis and intervention.

- History is a synthesis of sources pertinent to the study area dating to Selma's 1820 founding.
- Evolution interprets the physical conditions of downtown Selma throughout its history offering explanations of downtown's current state by showing change over time through historic maps and images.
- Physical condition analyzes the physical state of the built environment today through visual assessment.
- Contexts filters through a broad category that includes the current social, economic, and political climates as expressed through legislation, journalism, and social media.
- Stakeholder perspectives engages local officials, leaders, and residents to gain an understanding of important institutional, financial, and personal relationships. As a network, they reveal much about each other and about potential mechanisms for change in downtown Selma.

The study area was initially defined as downtown Selma, including the blocks bounded to the south by Water Avenue, north by Dallas Avenue, west by Church Street and east by Franklin Street. The research centered on the study area, though strayed to include important assets outside of downtown, including numerous Black Churches central to Selma's significance as well as sites associated with ongoing preservation efforts like the Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium (the Consortium).

On a site visit from 5-9 October 2022, the studio team interviewed numerous stakeholders, took photos for documentation, visited heritage sites, and conducted a rapid assessment survey of over 200 buildings for occupancy and condition. The information gathered on our site visit coupled with numerous secondary sources including government plans, National Register of Historic Places documentation, and National Park Service reports formed the body of information on which the team based this research section.



Figure 2.1 : Downtown Selma, (study area highlighted, Google Earth.)

Selma Today

Selma is at first glance a typical southern town and the seat of Dallas County, in the Black Belt region of south central Alabama. The city is located on the banks of the Alabama River, the former site of its major industry - cotton. Selma was an important place during the Civil War, when the Confederate forces were defeated at the 1865 Battle of Selma.

From Civil War, to Reconstruction, to Jim Crow, to Civil Rights, Selma has played a pivotal role in the shaping of the history of the United States. Now, the city is best known to people around the world as the setting for Voting Rights marches from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. This history is what differentiates Selma from any other small, southern town.

Evident to the evolution of Selma's development and decline, its downtown area retains much of its physical material to support and tell a diverse story of Selma.

The Downtown defined within this report focuses on the area centered on Broad Street and Water Avenue, contained within the boundary outlined on the map below. This area spans two of the four National Register historic districts: Old Town Historic District and Water Avenue Historic District.

Within this research area of downtown Selma, we have chosen to pay special attention to Water Avenue and Broad Street, the historic commercial axes of downtown. Along these two streets, most structures retain historic integrity and are in good condition. We chose this study area because the properties within

it comprise the historic, economic, and civic core of downtown Selma.

Beyond the architectural resources, this downtown area also bore witness to the events of the Civil Rights movement. In particular, the Selma to Montgomery march followed Water Avenue, Alabama Avenue, and Broad Street. Additionally, significant Civil Rights sites are located in the downtown area including the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the Sullivan Building, the Dallas County Courthouse, and the National Park Service Selma Interpretive center.

Certain historic sites are located outside downtown but contribute greatly to civic life and tourist activity in Selma. Therefore, we also looked beyond our study area to accurately capture Selma's historic, cultural, and social values, and to better represent its network of public, historic, and natural resources.

Today in Selma we can visit Civil Rights sites like Brown Chapel, Tabernacle Baptist Church, the Edmund Pettus Bridge, and the trails of the historic marches. Existing businesses in downtown Selma anchor the remnants of what was the main street commercial district. Today that main street represents a place of opportunity for reflection and revitalization.

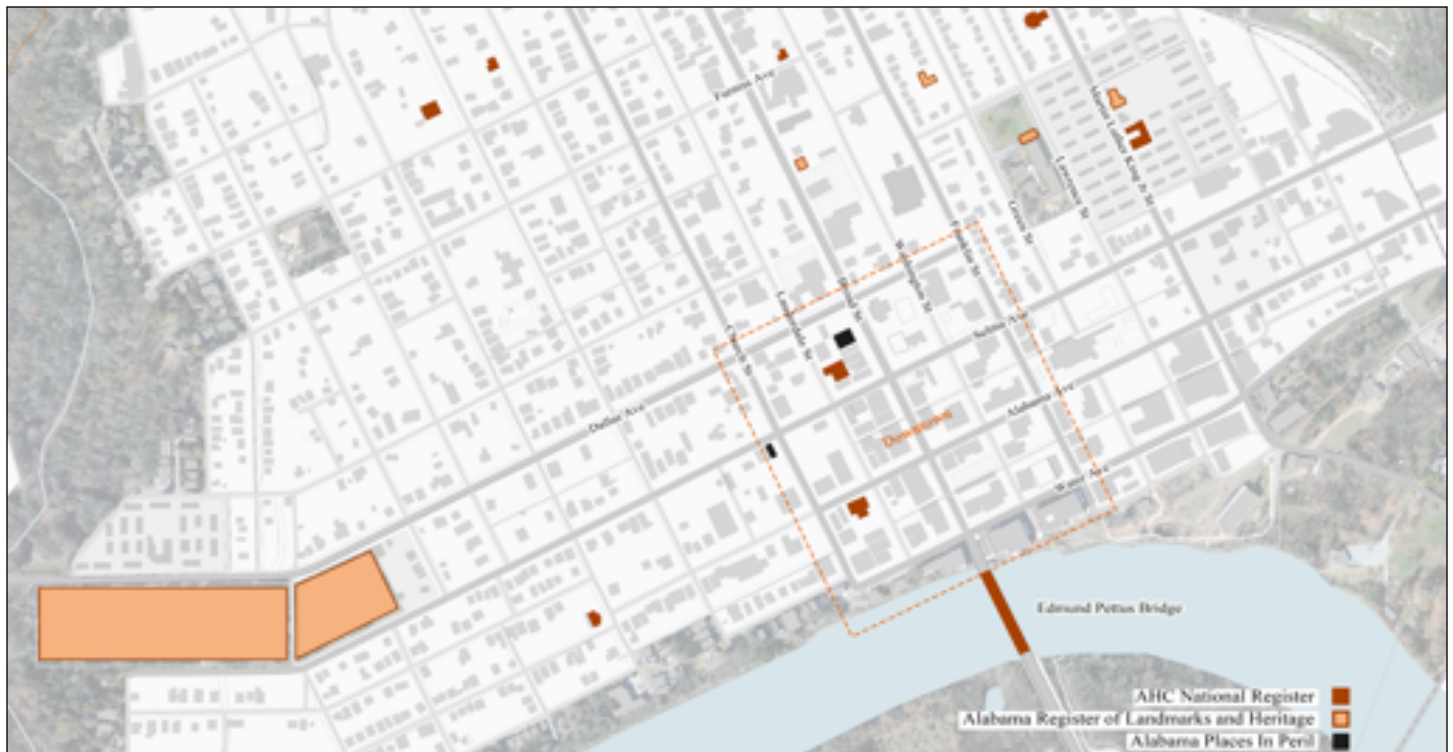


Figure 2.2 : Selma, Alabama Downtown Area and Historic Resources



Figure 2.3: Detail of Figure 2.3, including the downtown study area, highlighted historic resources, and march routes.

A Concise History of Selma

Overview

A critically acclaimed, major Hollywood film; the Selma To Montgomery National Historic Trail; the star-studded Annual Jubilee - through these and other cultural events, most Americans recognize Selma, Alabama, as the setting for the historic “Bloody Sunday” civil rights march in 1965. Others may also know Selma for the Battle of Selma in 1865, one of the last decisive Union victories over the Confederacy. Indeed, Selma’s motto is “Civil War to Civil Rights and Beyond.”

Selma has had a long, complex history since its founding in 1820. Selma’s history envelops many dark themes in the American South’s past: enslavement, lynchings, white-on-black violence and terror, and economic and political disenfranchisement. On the other hand, Selma also has a history of perseverance, courage, triumph, and placemaking of its Black residents - long before national attention ascended on the city during the Civil Rights Movement.

When speaking to the residents of Selma, many expressed frustration that the tourists or outsiders do not understand the complete history of Selma. Much happened during the hundred years between the battle and the marches from 1865 to 1965 - and beyond. One must look at the whole history of Selma to understand it as a place. These events did not simply occur in Selma by happenstance. This history section of the report aims to answer one question: why Selma?

1820 - 1860: King Cotton

Selma was first incorporated in 1820. William R. King, a North Carolina planter and future Vice President of the United States, initially planned the city in 1819 after catching “Alabama Fever.” As American settlers expanded westward at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they discovered the belt of nutrient-rich, black soil in central Alabama, known as the Black Belt.¹ The soil was perfect for a particularly demanding and lucrative crop: cotton. After the invention of the cotton gin vastly improved cotton processing, and the European market for its growing industrialized textile industry exploded, cotton became the United States’ largest export during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Cotton was king in the South and in Selma. It brought so much wealth to plantation owners and the country that the crop dominated U.S. financial markets and diplomacy. Selma’s position on the banks of the Alabama River in the heart of the Black Belt made it the second-largest cotton market in Alabama.²

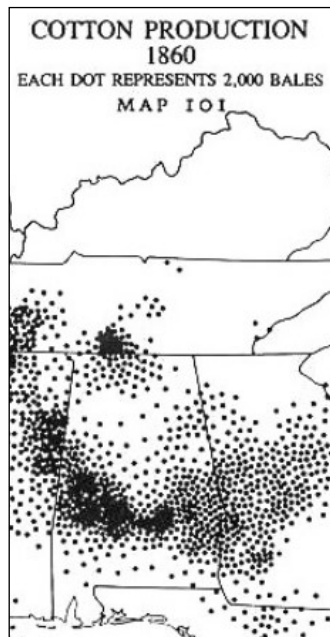


Figure 2.4 : (left) Bloody Sunday March, 1965. (Associated Press)

Figure 2.5 : (middle) Cotton Production in Alabama’s Black Belt, 1860 (Encyclopedia Alabama)

Figure 2.6 : (right) Satellite view of the Black belt. (NASA)

Selma's cotton wealth was accumulated from the labor of enslaved Black people, who picked, processed, packed, and hauled the cotton. Strict quotas for each enslaved worker and harsh punishments if unmet made conditions for enslaved people on cotton plantations notoriously bad.³ As the cotton boom progressed, slavers trafficked enslaved people to the Black Belt en masse, and this movement of people is reflected in the region's Black majority today. Indeed, Selma had been a majority-Black place for almost its entire history. In 1860, when American cotton made up seventy-five percent of the world's cotton, the 2,880 enslaved people in Selma made up fifty-eight percent of the city's population. Comparatively, enslaved people made up forty-five percent of Alabama's population.⁴

1861-1865: Civil War

With the existing infrastructure to support its cotton market, like railroads and riverfront wharves, warehouses, and a commercial downtown, Selma became the second-largest wartime manufacturing hub for the Confederacy during the Civil War. Foundries and the arsenal west of Downtown Selma produced guns, bullets, and iron; the shipyard on the Alabama River produced or outfitted warships; and an embankment was built around the city to protect the essential Confederate war industry. Consequently, Selma became a target for Union forces. In what would be one of the final blows to the Confederacy, Union forces attacked and defeated Confederate defenses led by General Nathan Bedford Forrest on April 2, 1865. The Confederacy surrendered at Appomattox Court House the following week. Despite the surrender, the Union Army spent the following weeks destroying the industrial complexes and burning nearly the entire downtown. The Union defeat of Forrest, a southern hero-figure, and subsequent occupation has contributed to the "Lost Cause" narrative within Selma - a pseudo historical myth that the South's cause in the war was just and righteous against northern aggression rather than the defense of Slavery.⁵

1865-1877: Reconstruction

Congress passed the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution following the Civil War, freeing enslaved Black people and legally granting them U.S. citizenship, equal protection, and voting rights (for males). After a year of violence and civil rights violations against Black "freedmen," the progressive Republican Congress expanded military occupation of the defeated southern states to protect Civil Rights and attempt to fundamentally transform the society of the Slave South. Despite further alienating southern whites, Reconstruction brought significant progress for Black Selmians. The federal government's new Freedmen's Bureau provided protection for Black people to

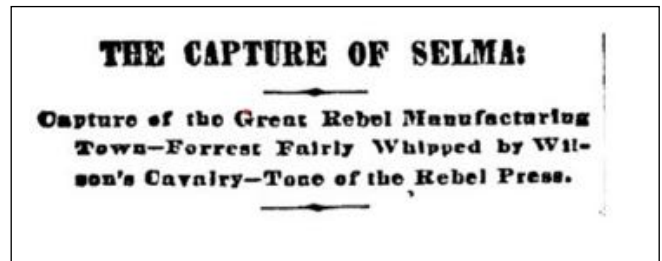


Figure 2.7 : *New York Times* headline, April 20, 1865. (Source: NYT Archives)



Figure 2.8 : Benjamin S. Turner. (Alabama Dept. of Archives and History)

exercise their new rights; however, this protection was limited, and the Bureau reported frequent white-on-black violence.⁶

The most progress resulted from the endeavors of Black Selmians themselves - creating their own cemeteries, schools, and churches. Churches like Brown Chapel A.M.E. and First Colored Baptist became the enduring centers of the Black community. A small black middle class emerged, making their own space in eastern downtown Selma. Furthermore, the Black majority wielded substantial political power. Sixteen Black men were elected to the U.S. Congress across the South, including Benjamin S. Turner from Selma, the first Black Alabama U.S. Congressman. Black Selmians had built a place for themselves within both society and the built environment.

1877-1901: White “Redemption,” Black Endeavor

Due to conservative Democratic pressure and a compromise to elect Republican Rutherford B. Hayes as President, the federal government withdrew its Reconstruction commitments from the South in 1877. Selma had become the Dallas County seat in 1866, and the racist city and county police filled the vacuum left at the end of Reconstruction. Black people were politically and economically disenfranchised without the federal government’s protection. During this time, white southerners attempted to “redeem” the South to its pre-war status. The cotton industry rebounded with the work of Black sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and field workers, which constituted a new form of enslavement. Additionally, white Selmians intimidated and maintained white supremacy with violence. Examples included the lynching Willy Webb and Daniel Edwards in front of the Dallas County Courthouse in 1892 and 1893, respectively. By 1901, there were no Black people in Congress. Despite the terror and disenfranchisement, Black people continued to develop their community in Selma. For example, Selma University was founded in 1878, making Selma a regional center for black education and professionals.⁷

1901-1935: Jim Crow

In 1901, Alabama ratified a new constitution that institutionalized black disenfranchisement and segregation. Prejudiced and arbitrary voting rights laws were enacted against Black voters, Black and white students were segregated by law, and miscegenation became illegal. Registered Black voters in Alabama dropped from 181,471 in 1900 to 3,654 in 1901. The state also limited local self-government and the ability to levy local taxes, which affected Black communities more than white.⁸ Along with maintaining white supremacy through the legal structures of Jim Crow, police sanctioned vigilantism continued to repress Black people in Selma and throughout the Black Belt. In 1935, a white mob murdered Joe Spinner Johnson in Dallas County for attempting to organize black labor, continuing the trend of preventing black people from improving their working conditions. Many provisions of the 1901 Alabama state constitution remain in force today.⁹

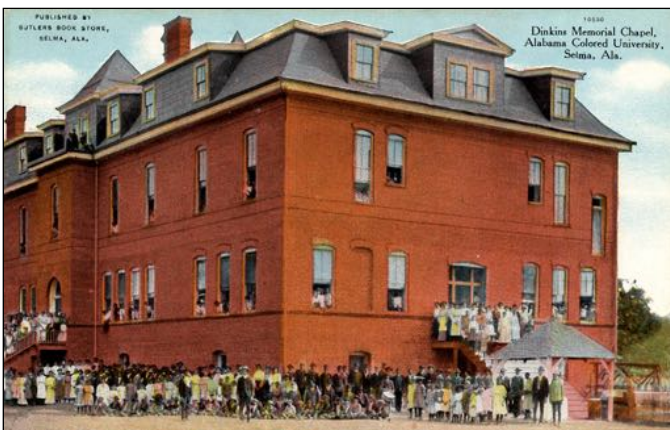


Figure 2.9 : Cotton worker in Selma, 1910: (AL Dept. of Archives).

Figure 2.10 : Six Generations (Selma, AL) ca. 1893 (Library of Congress)

Figure 2.11: Dinkins Hall, Selma University: (Selma University).

1936-1962: Black Galvanization

By the 1930s, Black locals had laid the foundations of a Black Civil Rights Movement in Selma. In 1936, Charles Adams, along with Samuel and Amelia Boynton, revived the Dallas County Voters League, which became one of the most prominent Black voting rights organizations in the state. From 1947 to 1954, Black churches began constructing adjoining community meeting places, which proved to be vital for organizing protests and marches. Local Black activists held the first public demonstration in Selma against the Fikes case ruling at the Dallas County Courthouse in 1954. (Under dubious police questioning and incarceration tactics, the State Court convicted William Fikes of raping two white women and sentenced him to Death. The U.S. Supreme Court eventually refused to uphold the ruling, but the case pushed activists into the streets for the first time.)

After the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling, Black parents petitioned the city to desegregate schools. Despite the court mandate, the effort was unsuccessful. In 1959, J.L. Chestnut became the first Black lawyer to practice in Selma, adding a legal infrastructure for the Civil Rights Movement. During this time, eight local Black civil rights leaders, known as the Courageous 8, laid the groundwork for the more famous protests to come.¹⁰

In response, white people began to organize their own pro-segregation and white supremacist groups, like the White Citizens Council and the Selma Chapter of the KKK, to uphold segregation by any means possible, including economic pressure, blacklisting, boycotting, and violence against black people who attempted to register to vote or resisted segregation. In 1961, Dallas County elected Jim Clark as County Sheriff. He was backed by the segregation extremist Governor George Wallace. Clark deputized any interested white citizen, creating a “posse” that met any demonstration with violence.¹¹

1962 - 1965: National Attention

Most of the national Black Civil Rights groups considered Selma a lost cause due to the historically unified white response against civil rights progress, yet the growing resistance and civil rights movement in Selma convinced the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to open an office in 1962 to work with local leaders and youth. Black leaders organized the first “mass meeting” at Tabernacle Baptist Church in 1963. In the next three years, public protests and demonstrations became frequent, and got the attention of national Civil Rights leaders. These mass meetings of locals in Churches would be pivotal in organizing voter registration drives and demonstrations. In the fall of 1963, Selma began attracting national media attention with these frequent demonstrations. After much correspondence and urging from local Selma leaders, particularly Amelia Boynton, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. arrived in Selma for the first time in late 1964.¹²



Figure 2.12 : White Citizens Council Ad, (*Selma Times Journal*, June 3, 1963)

March 1965: The Marches and National Attention

In February 1965, Jimmie Lee Jackson was shot and killed by a State Trooper during a Civil Rights demonstration in nearby Marion, Alabama.¹³ The killing led John Lewis, James Bevel, Amelia Boynton, and other civil rights leaders to organize a march to Montgomery. The march began at Brown Chapel amid the Carver Homes public housing on Sunday, March 7. Governor Wallace forbade the March, and County and State police stopped the marchers after crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The marchers, known today as Foot Soldiers, were brutally attacked by police.

Two days later, Dr. King arrived in Selma and organized a second march. Joined by Black and white ministers from across the nation, members of several labor unions, and two members of Congress, the marchers purposely stopped when met by police at the Edmund Pettus Bridge and turned around. Following the "Turnaround March," a white minister from Boston, James Reeb, was murdered by a group of white Selmians in Downtown Selma.

As a direct result of Bloody Sunday, President Johnson delivered his "We Shall Overcome" speech to Congress and the American people on March 10, calling for a voting rights bill. Then, after a judge approved a third march, 25,000 demonstrators successfully marched from Selma to Montgomery from March 17 to March 25. Following this March, another white Marcher, Viola Liuzzo, was murdered.

The first march, or "Bloody Sunday," instantly became national and international breaking news, Americans could immediately see the brutality on their TVs, resulting in national outcry, civil disobedience, and growing support for the Black Civil Rights Movement. Selma remained the top national story for weeks due to the following two marches and murders, and in August of 1965, Congress passed the National Voting Rights Act.¹⁴



Figure 2.13 : Bloody Sunday March. (CBS News)

Figure 2.14 : "Turnaround March", (The Huffington Post)

Figure 2.15 : Young marchers arriving in Montgomery, (James Barker)

Figure 2.16 : (left) The New York Times headline after Bloody Sunday *New York Times* headline, March 9, 1965 (NYT Archives)

1965 - And Beyond

Despite Selma's tremendous influence on national voting rights, civil rights progress and full representation in the life and livelihood of the city were slow. Selma fell into economic decline due to the closure of the nearby Craig Air Force Base, commercial and social welfare disinvestments, a drastic drop in population, and white flight. These legacies, with roots in the 19th Century persist.

Today, though, hundreds of thousands of people come to Selma to honor its place in American history, visiting the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Brown Chapel, or National Park Service interpretive Center.

Understood as discrete places and events, these episodes of Selma's history may be remarkable, but fail to convey the whole story and deep meaning of the place. Only through understanding the full story of Selma, though, we understand why the Marches happened in Selma. We realize that the entire city contributes to Selma's monumental historical status and social value. The continuities between the early 19th Century, the early 21st Century and all generations between are striking.



Figure 2.17 : Amelia Boynton crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the Fiftieth Anniversary Jubilee (The White House , President Barack Obama Archives).

Physical Evolution

The built environment in the study area today reflects Selma's economic and social history. Downtown Selma retains a high percentage of its late 19th Century structures. A modified 1887 perspective map of Selma (Figure 2.18) highlights the buildings that still stand in 2022. Water Avenue, running East to West along the Alabama River, was the core of the slave and cotton economy in Dallas County. It was a manufacturing and transportation hub where train lines and steamboats converged, and people and goods were sold. The image, then, tells a story about the continuities of the built fabric that has been maintained since the fading of the cotton industry in the early 20th century.

The construction of Selma began around 1814, at the end of the Creek War, when President Andrew Jackson signed a treaty with the Creek Nation that opened up 14 million acres in central Alabama to American settlement.¹⁵ The Treaty paved the way for the incorporation of towns and counties like Selma, Dallas County. Downstream in Cahawba, AL, at the confluence of the Alabama and Cahawba Rivers, early state leaders saw the potential for a city there to rival some "of the largest inland towns in the country" in agricultural production and shipping. However, these ambitions were never realized because seasonal flooding and political will moved the state capital to Tuscaloosa in 1826. Selma, 13 miles to the northeast of Cahawba, sat on higher ground, and its land was just as fertile. It would quickly surpass Cahawba to become central Alabama's agricultural, shipping, and military hub in the early years of the state and became the seat of Dallas County.¹⁶

When the Civil War started, Confederate troops built a fortifying embankment around Selma during the Civil War because the city was an important manufacturing outpost. Cannons and other munitions were cast and finished at Selma, then shipped on rail lines or by steamboat to Atlanta, Mobile, and other destinations. The Selma Foundry also produced Steamers – iron plated

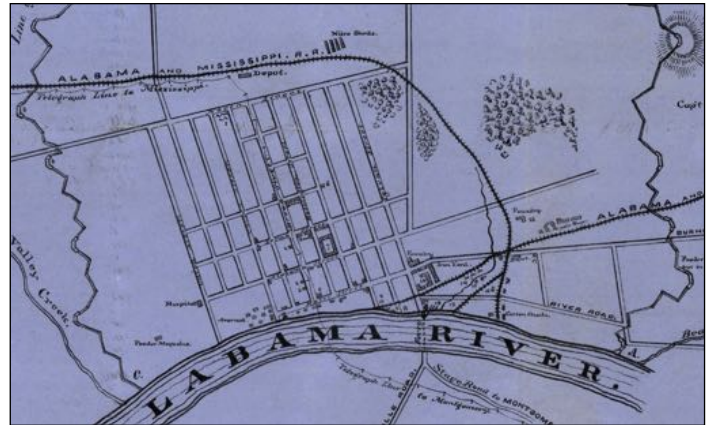


Figure 2.19 : 1864 Map of Selma (Ruger, Edward. Selma, Al'a., and vicinity. Chattanooga, Feb, 1864.)

battle ships. At this point in 1864, train lines, were a critical complement to river transport. Selma train lines in the 1860s included the Alabama and Tennessee Railroad and the Alabama and Mississippi Railroad. These train lines are key to Selma's speedy recovery after being leveled in April 1865 in one of the final battles of the Civil War.

Sanborn maps from the last 20 years of the 19th Century show that Selma had once again become a central node in the prosperous cotton economy. Cotton processing facilities made up most of Water Avenue businesses, and many were state of the art facilities. The remainder of downtown was made up of supporting institutions like butchers, clothiers, livery stables, and saddleries.¹⁷ Like today, churches for white congregations are clustered in the downtown core (Figure 2.20).

While the city and infrastructure of Selma continued to profit from exploitation of Black labor during Reconstruction,

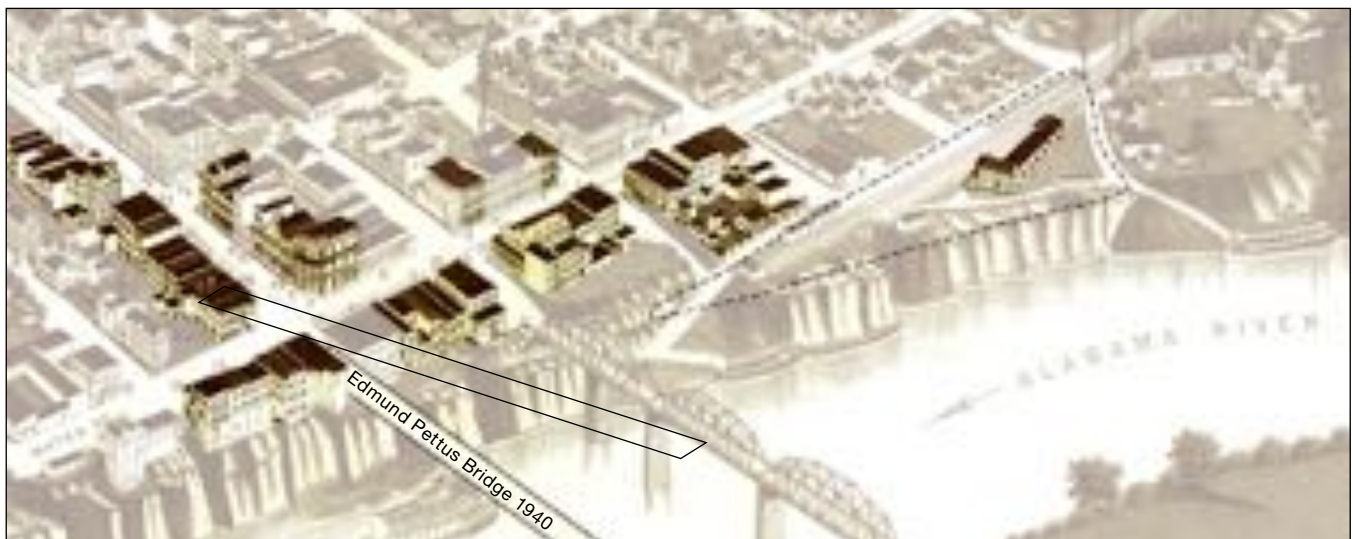


Figure 2.18 : 1887 Perspective Map, Modified to Highlight Extant Buildings 2022 (Milwaukee, Henry Wellge & Co., Library of Congress, 1887).

African Americans leveraged a very brief window of opportunity immediately following the Civil War to establish their own institutions. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Black Selmians built places of community, faith, and business concentrated in the eastern and northern parts of the city. Black communities claimed their space outside of Selma's downtown core which was built for and by white Selmians. Though largely outside the study area, these buildings play a central role as assets to Selma's cultural significance (Figure 2.21).

Following Reconstruction, life in the Jim Crow South codified segregation, and Black Selmians continued to build up their communities, leading to the formation of racial enclaves within the city, which persist today. These neighborhoods have pronounced differences in architectural character that reflect the history of racism and disenfranchisement throughout Selma's history.

For buildings in the downtown core, there seems to be a clear trajectory— they were built to accommodate growth and industry at the turn of the 19th century, were sustained through years of segregation, and then converted to a variety of uses, or left underutilized after white flight in the 1960s. Since 2000 there has been scattered and isolated investment throughout downtown Selma.



Figure 2.20 : Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Selma, Dallas County, Alabama. (Sanborn Map Company, Oct, 1884. Modified to show cotton facilities in blue and white churches in black.)



Figure 2.21 : Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Selma, Dallas County, Alabama. (Sanborn Map Company, Oct, 1884, Map sections stitched together by author)

Evolution of Urban Texture

Selma’s urban texture in 2022 compared to 1887 reveals a pattern of residential expansion in areas around the downtown core as well as industrial expansion to the east. Downtown maintains its historic use as the commercial and civic core of Selma and this use extended along Broad Street to the north throughout the 20th century. Black Selmians established neighborhoods and commercial centers in north and east Selma while southern and western residential areas were dominated by White communities. Throughout this period of expansion, Broad Street acted as a physical boundary between White and Black Selma both historically and at present.

Despite this expansion, the downtown area retains most of its original features and urban pattern. Selma’s street grid and relationship to the Alabama riverfront remain mostly unchanged since the late 19th century. The most significant change to Broad Street and Water Avenue, the core axes of downtown, is the introduction of larger footprint buildings that correspond to the development of industry in the city. Coupled with this industrial expansion, disinvestment in the city since the 1960s and the deterioration of many of the 19th century commercial buildings left gaps in the formerly dense commercial core of Selma. In the 135 year period between 1887 and 2022, buildings have been lost, creating more open spaces Downtown that are now used for parking or public green space.

Like all cities, Selma has evolved and changed. Despite this change, Downtown Selma retains its historic urban texture and most of the architectural features that were built in the 19th century. The continuity of these original features and continued use as a public commercial hub contribute to Selma’s historical integrity and significance.

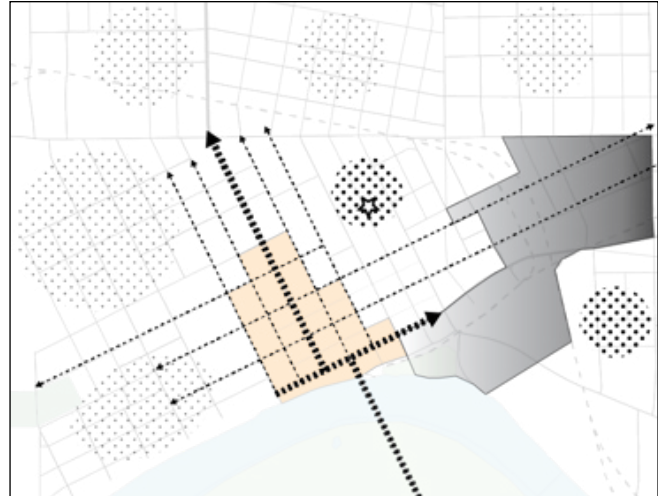


Figure 2.22 : Social geography of Downtown Selma in 1887

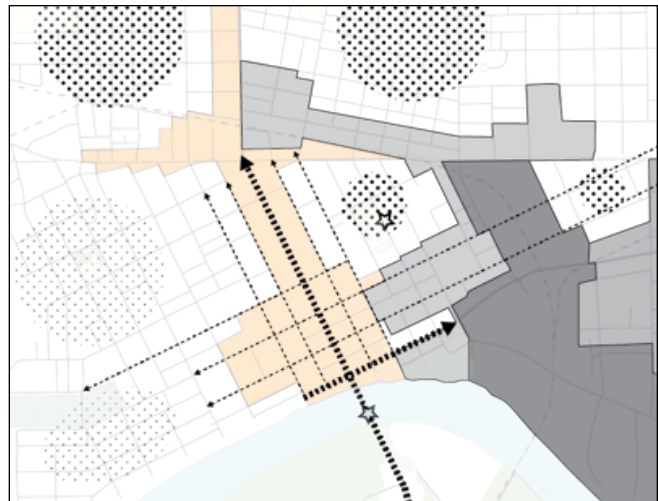


Figure 2.23 : Social geography of Downtown Selma in 2022

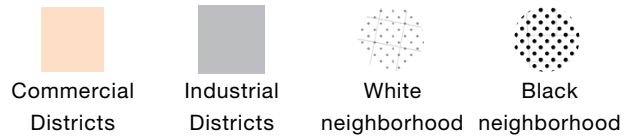


Figure 2.24 : Urban Texture and Pattern of Downtown Selma in 1887



Figure 2.25 : Urban Texture and Pattern of Downtown Selma in 2022.

Waterfront Area Evolution and Public Open Spaces

Due to the demolition and reconstruction of the Alabama River bridge (now the Edmund Pettus Bridge), some commercial buildings along the riverfront were partly demolished, though most of them still exist and retain their historic integrity. The open space along the riverfront has been changed through industrialization in the 19th century and subsequent deindustrialization decades later. However, some access points and openings are unchanged. The Riverfront Park located along the Alabama River and connected to downtown Selma was once part of the industrial core of the city. As a green space it has been developed for industry, then demolished, and later landscaped as the city evolved. Today, Riverfront Park hosts tourists and locals and offers picturesque views of the Alabama River and the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Although walkways and playgrounds have been built, the open spaces and buildings in the park are not used to their fullest potential. However, concerts and other activities at the rehabilitated and re-purposed amphitheater bring new uses and visitors.



Figure 2.26 : Current Condition of Riverfront Park, 2022.

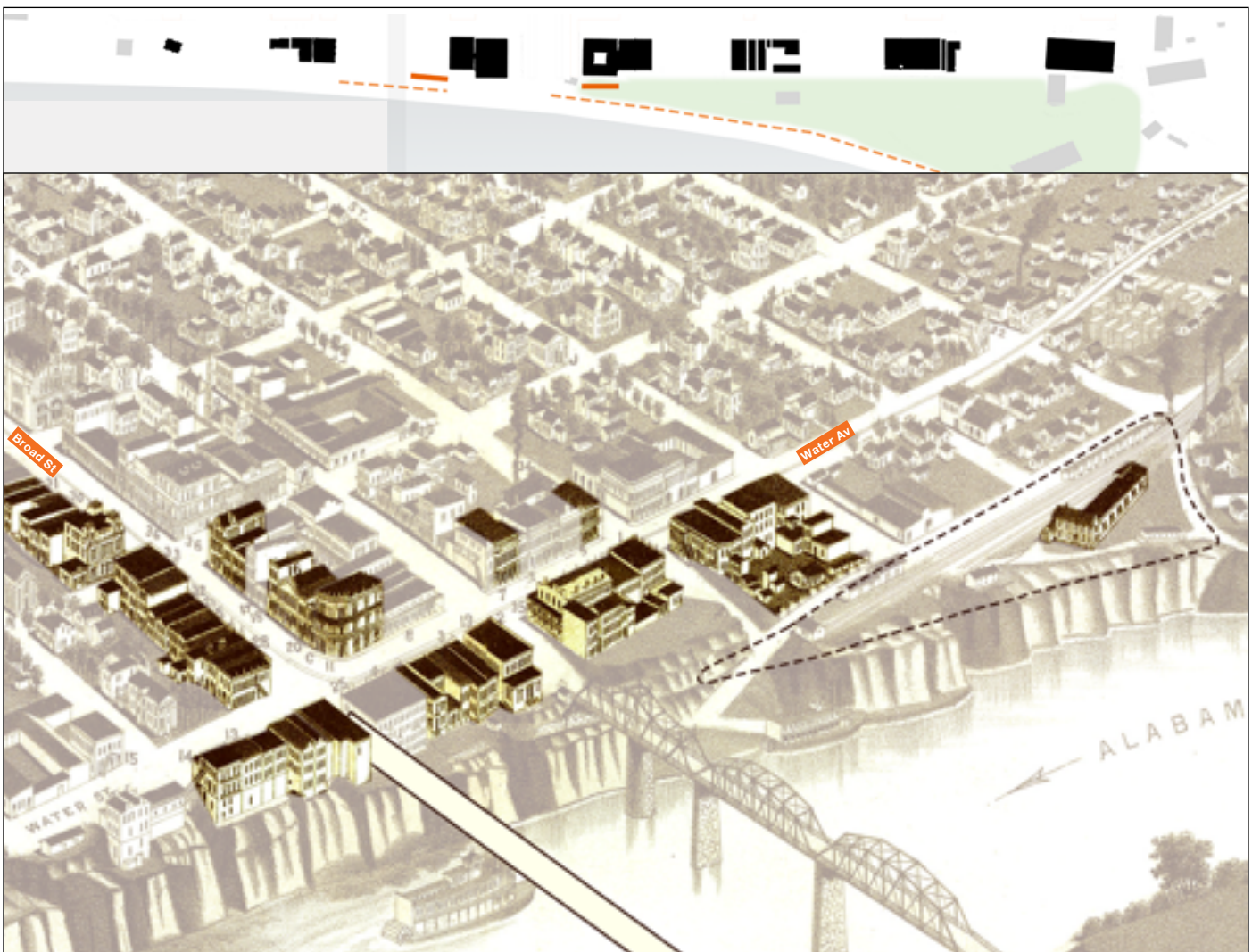


Figure 2.27 : Existing Buildings in Waterfront Area in Downtown, Comparing to 1887, (Milwaukee, Henry Wellge & Co., Library of Congress, 1887).

Historic Districts

Selma has four National Register Historic Districts, which include: The Water Avenue Historic District (designated in 1972), Old Town Historic District (designated in 1978), Riverview Historic District (designated in 1990), and Ice House Historic District (designated in 1990).

The Water Avenue Historic District consists of five of the six blocks fronting Water Avenue between Franklin and Lauderdale Streets. The block between Washington and Broad on the north side of Water Avenue has been omitted from the district.

Water Avenue is one of the few surviving antebellum riverfront streets in the Lower South which has retained its waterfront character corresponding to the period when it developed between the late 1830s and the end of the 19th century. Of the 14 blocks that face onto the street, 5 are of superior quality, retaining much of their original design and features. All 21 buildings are now used as either commercial establishments, offices, or are vacant. The architectural style is mostly a variation of the Italianate style applied to 19th century commercial buildings. All are brick or stone construction varying in height from one to three stories and several have one or two story iron verandas that project out over the sidewalk.

Old Town Historic District includes roughly 59 blocks. It contains the major residential area dating back to the 19th Century Selma as well as portions of the early commercial and public sections of the town.

Within the Old Town district, only two existing store buildings are said to have survived the disastrous fire that occurred April 2, 1865, when Selma fell to the Union troops. Therefore the remaining existing commercial structures are from the late-19th century and early 20th century. Of the 117 structures in this section of the district, 70% appear to have been built before 1910. The majority are two-story brick, vaguely Italianate in architectural style, and typical of the time period in many communities of this region. Ground floor facades have undergone “modern” alterations. Some alterations to storefronts in this area have disrupted the continuity of massing along the street.

Some historic commercial buildings in the Old Town Historic District have been left underutilized after the introduction of big box shopping centers outside of Downtown shifted Selma’s center for commercial activity to the northern parts of the city. Although many are vacant, the collection of buildings is sufficiently cohesive in similarity of height, scale,

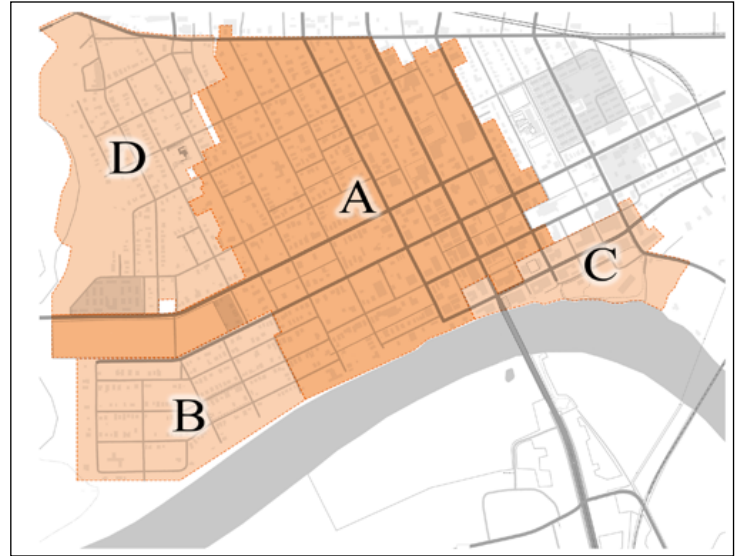


Figure 2.29 : Selma National Register Historic Districts

proportions, materials, textures, rhythm, and silhouettes that convey a strong sense of history and place tied to images of a small Southern town in the late-19th century. In the Old Town blocks, some rehabilitation of historic buildings has occurred in the last decade, returning a number of the 19th Century structures to their original forms.

Churches occupy prominent spaces in the non-residential portion of the Old Town District. Four late-19th Century churches, including St. Paul’s Episcopal Church (210 Lauderdale Street), built in 1875 by Richard and R. M. Upjohn (NRHP 3/25/75) and a fine 1908 Neo-Classical Carnegie Library (912 Selma Street), now occupied by the Selma Chamber of Commerce, surpass the commercial structures in their size, cost, architectural quality and associative values.



Figure 2.30 : West Side of Broad Street



Figure 2.28 : South Side of Water Avenue



Figure 2.31 : Registered Historic Sites in Selma

Registered Historic Sites

The National Register and Alabama Register Heritage Sites in Selma (shown as orange in the diagram) are mostly located in the Old Town Historic District with some Black heritage sites located outside the districts.

AHC National Register Heritage Site

Sturdivant Hall (OT Historic District)
 Morgan John Tyler House (OT Historic District)
 Old Dallas County Courthouse (OT Historic District)
 Plattenburg Wesley House (OT Historic District)
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church (OT Historic District)
 Federal Building (OT Historic District)
 Edmund Pettus Bridge (OT Historic District)
 First Baptist Church
 Brown Chapel AME Church

Alabama Register Heritage Site

Fuller Home (OT Historic District)
 Clinton Chapel AME Zion
 Clark Elementary School
 George Washington Carver Homes

Chart: Registered Heritage Sites in Selma.

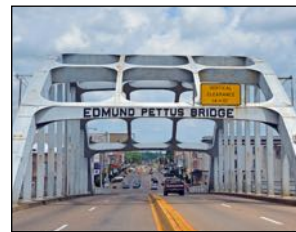


Figure 2.32: Edmund Pettus Bridge



2.35 : Brown Chapel AME Church



Figure 2.33 : Sturdivant Hall



Figure 2.36: Former Dallas County Courthouse, Vaughan-Smitherman Museum, 2009

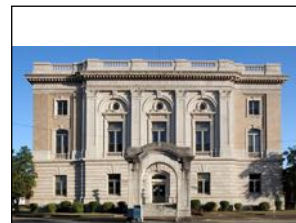


Figure 2.34 : Federal Building



Figure 2.37: St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Based on the existing group of designated heritage sites, there is a lack of designed sites associated with Black history in Selma. Although there are more than four National and Alabama registered heritage sites (including Brown Chapel AME Church, First Baptist Church, Clark Elementary School, and buildings located within the George Washington Carver Homes Projects) located in the northeastern side of the downtown area, there are no designated sites along Water Avenue, the Riverfront, or within the Ice House Historic District that are associated with African-American history in Downtown Selma. There is also no plan for systematically designating a historic district in Selma's historically Black neighborhood in the northeastern part of town, which witnessed the evolution of the Black community and the Civil Rights Movement.

Physical Conditions

Downtown Building Types & Material

The existing commercial structures in the downtown area are of late-19th Century and 20th Century construction. The majority of the buildings lining the streets of Downtown Selma are two-story brick structures and vaguely Italianate in style, which is typical of the period.

All the buildings can be categorized into four typical building types: attached commercial buildings with storefronts, some with cast-iron verandas and some without, large scale industrial warehouses, and detached or semi-detached commercial or government buildings. Most of the attached commercial structures with porches are located along Broad Street and Water Avenue, while the warehouse style buildings are located at the eastern end and southern ends of Water Avenue.

The building's facades share common features, such as structural brick/stone, painted brick, stucco decoration, cast-iron framed wooden porches, and metal roofs.



Figure 2.39 : Downtown Building Materials



Figure 2.38 : Downtown Building Types

Downtown Building Style and Features

In downtown Selma, the dominant building style is Italianate, with features and details that are characteristic of the South. In general, many structures along Broad Street and Water Avenue have typical elements of the Italianate style including facades with bracketed cornices, dentilation, and quoining. Most buildings have tall, narrow windows with detailed crowns, lintels, with rectangular and arched shaped openings. Regional characteristics like cast-iron details, shutters, and verandas are indicative of the Italianate style in this Southern context. Other details like neon and hanging signage indicate the area's commercial character.

Although most of Selma's existing historic building stock dates back to the late 19th century and are Italianate style, there are also examples of 20th Century architecture in Art Deco and Mid-Century Modern styles. Along Broad Street, the Kress Building, now known as Queen City Market, has Art Deco elements like geometric masonry cladding, colorful reliefs, gilding, and an emphasis on verticality.

Mid-Century modern buildings like the PNC Bank on Broad Street and the Masonic Lodge on Water Avenue speak to the last period of prosperity and development in Selma during the Civil Rights Movement. These structures are simple with metal, stone, and linear brick clad facades, and metal windows. They are distinctive among the other 19th-Century Italianate buildings.

Buildings in Downtown Selma mostly retain a high level of historic integrity. In terms of scale, materiality, and urban layout, the existing buildings in Selma have been mostly unchanged since the late 19th Century (see Figures 2.38 and 2.39). Historic materials, details, and stylistic elements remain for many buildings downtown, contributing to the historic, main street aesthetic and feel.



Figure 2.40 : Downtown Buildings (Left) Kress Building, (Right) Masonic Temple

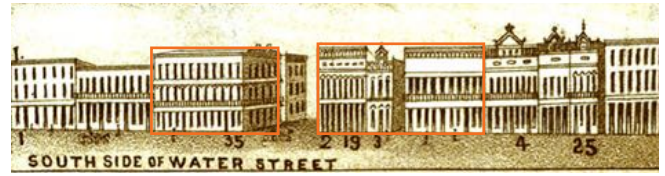


Figure 2.41 : Water Avenue Existing Buildings, Comparing 1887 with 2022

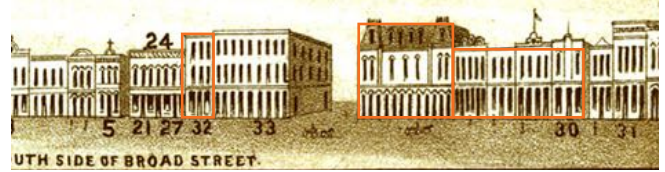


Figure 2.42 : Broad Street Existing Buildings, Comparing 1887 with 2022



Figure 2.43 : Water Avenue Italianate Features



Figure 2.44 : Broad Street Italianate Features



Figure 2.45 : Signs of Local Business on Broad Street

Infrastructure Conditions

According to historic images and maps, the roads in the downtown area have kept their original scale. Comparing Broad Street and Water Avenue in 1910 and in 2022, the most significant changes are the addition of parking and the removal of the streetcar. The spaces on the sidewalks, like the porches and trees, have remained mostly unchanged since 1910.

Road material, scale, and features differ in downtown Selma. As a state road, Broad street is the widest with 45 feet across and diagonal parking spaces lining both sides. The sidewalks have coverage from the porches to provide shading and have brick and concrete surface paving. Water Avenue is a state road scale street with 35 feet across, parking along both sides, partly shaded sidewalks with porches, and brick paving. For Dallas, Selma, and Alabama streets, both sidewalks have planted shading and most government buildings are located on those streets. As for Church, Lauderdale, Washington, and Franklin streets, there is no shading, by trees or porches.



Figure 2.44 : Road Conditions between 2022 and 1910.



Figure 2.46 : Road Condition in Downtown



Figure 2.47 : Waterfront Public Space Condition

Building Conditions Survey

During the trip to Selma, the team members conducted a building survey that documented condition, historic integrity, and first-floor usage within the downtown area covering 216 buildings. Data was collected using an ArcGIS survey that was used to create a database.

Data from this survey revealed that downtown buildings have high historic integrity and that condition varies from fair to excellent. The main challenges for Selma's building stock downtown is occupancy. Currently, more than half of the building's first floors are occupied, with 34.3% of the first floors used as commercial spaces. Other buildings downtown have government, medical or institutional uses. Vacancy and condition typically have an inverse relationship, as vacancy goes down, condition goes up - and vice versa. Because vacancy levels in Selma are high, it can be expected that some buildings are in fair or poor condition.

The diagram below demonstrates the relationship between occupancy and continuous building facades in Downtown Selma. Since most commercial buildings are located on Broad Street, there is a concentration of continuous occupancy along that commercial corridor, especially in northwest downtown where most government buildings are located. Water Avenue has a significant area of consecutive building facades; however it has low occupancy, and most buildings are abandoned.

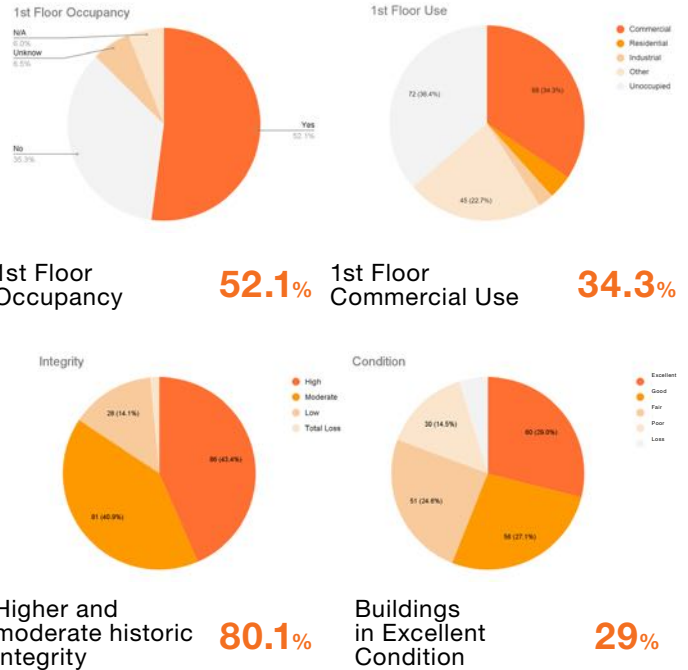


Figure 2.48 : Diagram showing continuous building facades without interruption from empty lots and occupancy.

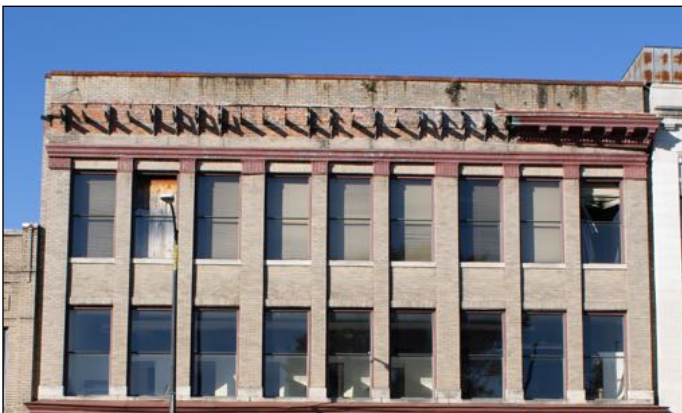
Downtown Building Condition



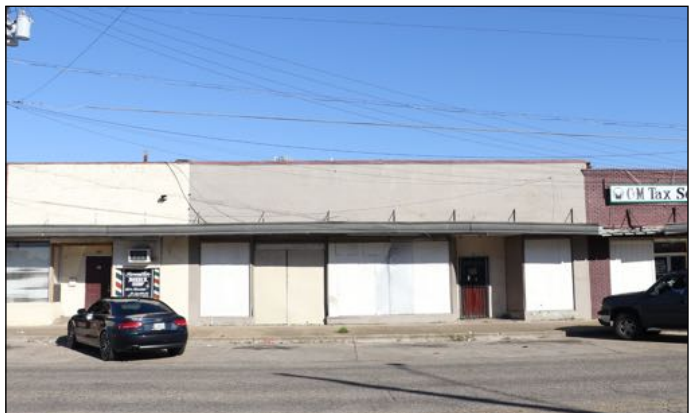
Vacant Lot



Deterioration



Partial Loss of Facade Detail



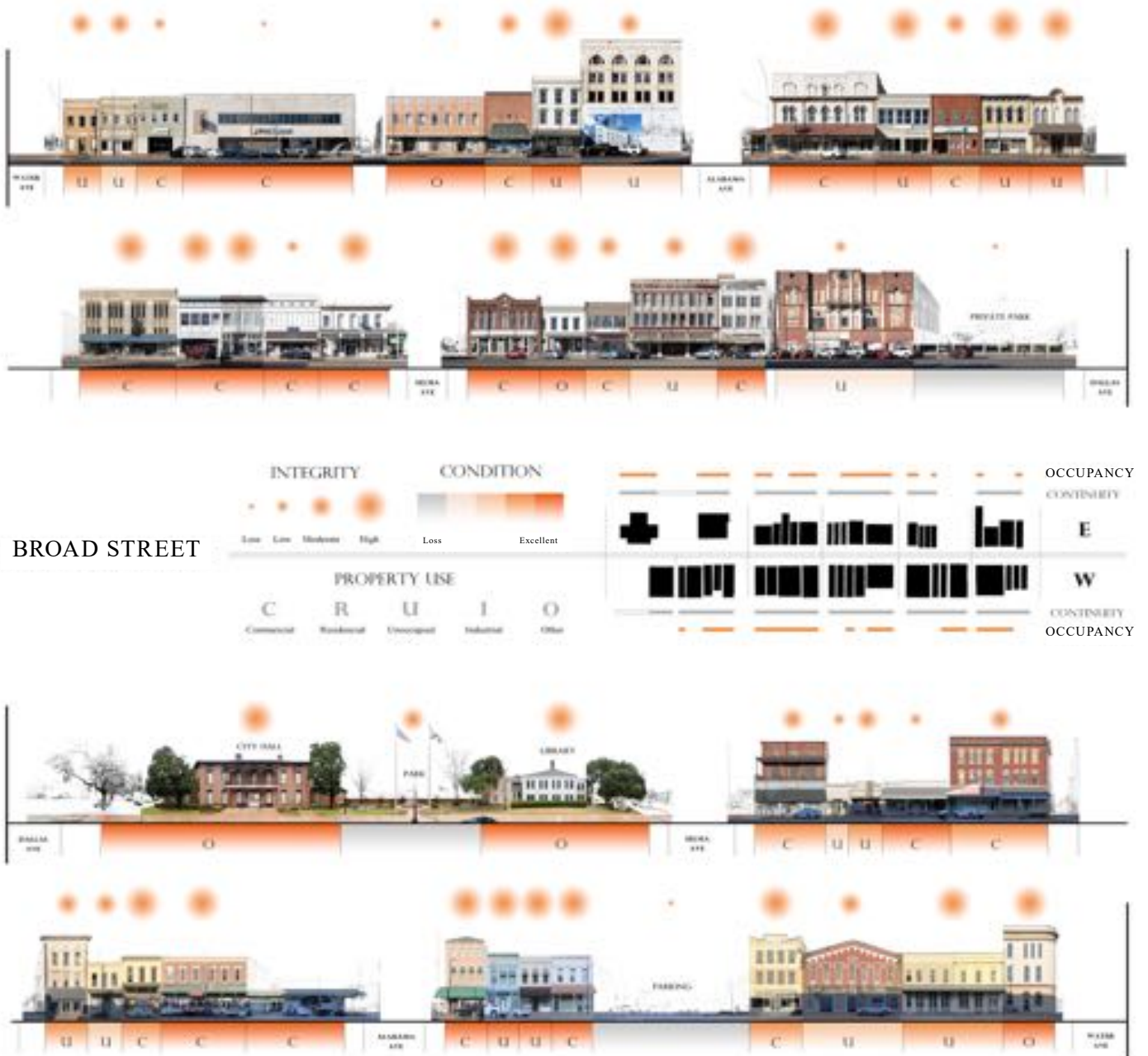
Main Street Facade Conditions

As part of the survey, the team photographed each facade in the study area and created a main street facade condition study and analysis of integrity. The team analyzed properties' integrity based on its ability to convey its historical significance. The integrity of the facades was categorized as - loss, low, moderate, and high. The condition was categorized as Poor, Fair, Good, and Excellent. Buildings in Poor condition refer to structures that have several missing elements like windows, roofing, and/or exposure of the interior to weather. Fair condition refers to buildings that have one missing element like boarded up windows and little sign of maintenance. Good condition refers to buildings that have minimal missing elements and that are partially maintained, for example, upstairs is boarded up but downstairs is usable. Excellent condition refers to buildings that are well maintained with no missing elements and are able to be fully occupied.

The facades of Broad Street have high historic integrity in general and are in good condition. Empty lots serve as the public outdoor parking lots. The facades along Water Avenue have mostly a high level of integrity and most are in good condition.



Figure 2.49 : Building Survey Area, 2022





WATER AVENUE



INTEGRITY				CONDITION		
Low	Low	Medium	High	Loss	Excellent	
						OCCUPANCY
						CONTRAST
						N
						S
						CONTRAST
						OCCUPANCY
C	R	U	I	O		PROPERTY USE
Commercial	Residential	Unimproved	Industrial	Office		

Contexts

For this report, the study of Selma's contexts takes into account demographics and economic conditions, government policies and agencies, and non-profits and other stakeholders, to understand how the city functions today and who is involved in that work. As a sub-section of the Research phase, understanding Selma's contexts, history, evolution, and physical conditions have helped the studio team understand the city's complexity. Through this study, we understand that the legacies of Selma's history are evident in the city's contexts today.

The team's goal in studying contexts in Selma today is to understand existing conditions in the city and to put that knowledge to use as we envision specific interventions using historic preservation tools. Based on this research, the team made these overarching conclusions about Selma's contexts:

- The current socio-economic status and urban conditions of Selma reflect the history of racism and disenfranchisement in the city.
- Politics, government at every level, and fragmentation between groups present challenges for addressing the socio-economic conditions and getting things done in Selma.
- There are many ongoing initiatives that are opening up possibilities for Selma.

Governance Affecting Selma: National, State, and Local Level Representation and Politics

When discussing politics and representation affecting Selma, it is critical to consider the history of racism and disenfranchisement of Black Alabamians since the inception of this country. Even as recently as the 2020 presidential election, clear lines are drawn within the state in terms of voter adherence to political parties which reflect the history of voter suppression and disenfranchisement in the state. The Black Belt region, which includes Dallas County and the cities of Selma and Montgomery has a majority Democrat voters. In addition to the Black Belt Region, Jefferson County which contains Birmingham, joins the Black Belt region to make up the critical mass of liberal voters in the state.¹⁸ Alabama is represented largely by republican representatives within the federal government. Senators Richard Shelby and Tommy Tuberville represent Alabama and the conservative majority within the state.

In the House of Representatives, Terri Sewell, a Democrat, and African American woman from Selma, gives a voice to the region, one that has historically been ignored and disenfranchised. Representing the 7th District in Alabama, Congresswoman Sewell keeps her roots in Selma relevant in her work. She is a champion of Civil Rights history and serves as a major source of access to funding and support for her 7th District, and for Selma in particular.¹⁹ Representation within the state legislature mimics the patterns present in Alabama's representation at the federal level.

As a whole, the states bicameral legislature has a significant republican majority in both the Alabama State Senate and House of Representatives. The administration of Governor Kay Ivey reflects general trend relating to conservative leadership statewide. Again, throughout the Black Belt and districts within it, there was increased representation from Democrats. The November 2022 election changed the party make-up within the state senate for Dallas County and Selma. Preceding November 8, 2022, Senator Malika Sanders-Fortier represented the 23rd Senate District and Representative Prince Chestnut representing the 67th Congressional District had direct ties to Selma and the Black Belt. Since November 8, 2022 Sanders seat has been taken by Republican Mike Kirkland while Prince Chestnut retained his seat.

There are some nuances to Alabama State Politics that affect Selma and the Black Belt region, especially in terms of funding and home rule. First, the existing Constitution for the state of Alabama which was adopted in 1901, affirmed white supremacy and codified it at the state level. This constitution is still in place today and is the longest constitution in the world, with 977 amendments.²⁰ The Alabama State Constitution centralizes power at the state level, giving local governments little autonomy over their own issues. In other words, these principles within the constitution mean no home rule for most counties in the state, including Dallas County. Because there is no home rule for Dallas County and many others in the state, local governments must seek amendment to the state constitution to enact policies affecting their municipalities, hence the nearly one thousand amendments.

Second, cities with populations less than 50,000 must compete for state-level funding, which is not guaranteed. Small cities like Selma must apply for funding in hopes of receiving funds for projects overseen by the municipal government. The schedule for applying for and receiving those dollars makes it so that if funding is granted, it can only be accessed every other year. Sometimes, if applications aren't filed in time or errors are made in the applications, funding opportunities can be missed altogether. The lack of reliable funding is a major challenge for the City of Selma.

At the Local level, the city is governed by Mayor James Perkins Jr. and the Selma City Council. Selma's City Council is made up of representatives from the city's 8 Wards and is led by the council President, Warren Young. As the legislative body of the municipal government, the Council establishes policies and ordinances and sets taxes, among other duties. Council members Clay Carmichael and Michael Johnson represent Wards 3 and 8 respectively, which contain our downtown study area.

City departments overseen by the mayor oversee the city's operation. These groups include the Planning and Development Department, Historical Development Commission, Code Enforcement and many others.



Figure 2.50 : Downtown Selma and the Edmund Pettus Bridge (Source: Toronto Star)

Recent Plans and Community Perspectives

The Selma Planning Department is currently drafting its comprehensive city plan for 2030, and part of the process includes surveying community members. The community survey documents a Selma community that is worried about declining living conditions in the city, and wants reinvestment in downtown and social services. When asked about the overall quality of life in Selma, nearly half responded that it's getting worse, with about a quarter saying it's gotten better and another quarter saying it's stayed the same.

The survey also pointed to the neighborhood differences within Selma. A question about safety indicated that a higher sense of safety is felt in the more affluent and white areas, and a lower sense of safety is felt in the lower income and more black areas. Overall though, the responses "safe" and "very safe" were rare across the city.

When asked about what downtown improvements they'd like to see, the community pointed to improving the street scape, safety, amenities, and activities in downtown. However, there was no one answer that stuck out from the rest; "all of the above" was the second most popular answer in a similar question about physical improvements, which hints toward a general desire for investment in downtown maintenance and infrastructure.

Government Organizations and City Departments

Within the local government, there are departments that directly affect work being done in the downtown area. These departments within the city government structure are overseen by Mayor James Perkins Jr., including the Planning and Development Department, the Building Inspector's Office, the Public Buildings Department, and Code enforcement. Each of these departments affects both the publicly and privately owned structures and places that make up the built environment in Selma. In addition to these city government departments, other boards and commissions impact the historic built environment of Selma including the Historical Development Commission and the Selma Redevelopment Authority.

Non-profit organizations play a major role in downtown Selma and in the city as a whole. All of the organizations included in this report have missions that affect the economic, cultural and built environment of Selma. Harnessing the commonalities between the missions of these organizations and promoting collaboration between these groups would only enhance the possibilities for Selma.

Selma Planning and Development Department

All development originates with the Planning and Development department that is overseen by the Mayor's Office. This office develops plans and programs that "result in livable neighborhoods, thriving businesses, enhanced economic development opportunities, and a booming tourism industry."²¹ Led by Danielle Wooten, this department engages local organizations, developers, and businesses and handles all of the city's comprehensive planning. The goal of this department is to "impact the quality of life of all the citizens of Selma through identifying and supporting economic development ventures, promoting sustainable neighborhoods, facilitating an environment that supports life learning opportunities, and ensuring the availability of open space for recreational, cultural, and family activities."²²

Selma Redevelopment Authority (SRA)

The Redevelopment Authority is a public entity that works to enhance community and retail development for the downtown corridor. They secure grants and other methods for encouraging growth in the downtown area. One of their most significant projects, the historic rehabilitation of the St. James Hotel is one example of the SRA's important accomplishments relating to downtown revitalization and preservation in Selma. Through collaboration with other funding partners, the SRA can exercise even more influence on the downtown built environment.

Historical Development Commission

The Historical Development Commission was enabled by City Council to "establish a uniform procedure for use in providing for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of places, districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, landscape features, and works of art having a special historical, cultural, or aesthetic interest or value."²³ The Historical Development Commission also approves applications for work to historic designated buildings through issuing Certificates of Appropriateness, and recommends individual landmarks and districts to city council for local designation. At the time of this report, there is no staff member serving the Historical Development Commission.



Figure 2.51 : Street facade of Brown Chapel AME Church.

Demographics

Since the civil rights era there have been massive waves of white flight contributing to an overall decline in Selma’s population. In 1970, the overall population was 27,379, with a roughly equal share between Black and white residents; in 2020, the population makeup has significantly decreased — down to a total of 17,971 residents that is 83% Black and 14% white. While the white population has decreased over fivefold (from 13,731 in 1970 to 2,593 in 2020), the Black population has stayed about the same (from 13,606 in 1970 to 14,806 in 2020). The population data plotted in this line graph reflects the available information on race and population from the U.S. Census, which only offered racial breakdowns starting in 1970 according to our research. Furthermore, distributions of wealth correlate with race: 40% of Selma’s Black population is under the poverty line, compared to 10% of the white population. Census tracts with a higher proportion of white people have higher median household incomes, concentrated in west Selma — the historically white part of town populated with antebellum mansions.²⁴

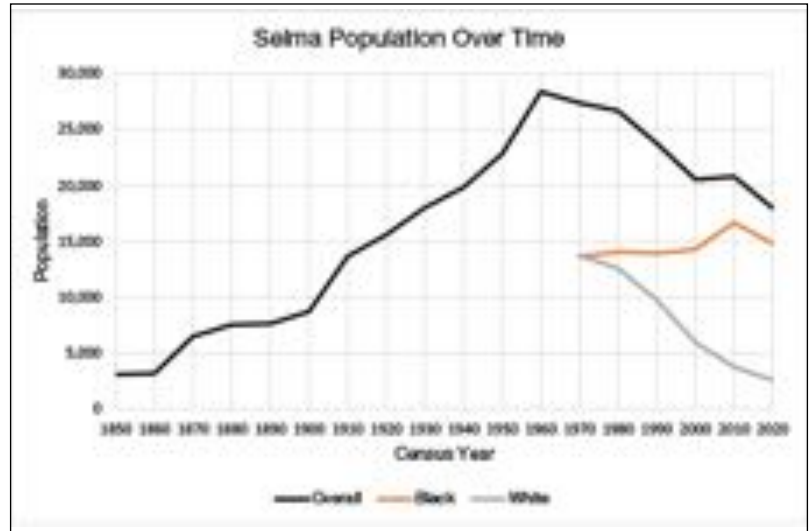


Figure 2.52 : Graph of Selma's Population, 1850-2020

2020 Census Data	Selma	Alabama	United States
Population	17,762	4.89m	327m
Poverty Rate	36.2%	16%	12.8%
Median Household Income	\$26,581	\$52,035	\$64,994
Median Property Value	\$90,500	\$149,600	\$229,800
Employed Population	5,907 (33.3%)	2.02m (41.3%)	148m (45.3%)
Percent Black Population	83.3%	26.4%	12.2%
Percent White (non-Hispanic) Population	14.4%	65.2%	60.1%
Percent Other Population	2.3%	8.4%	27.7%

Local Economy

Selma's economy heavily relies on jobs created by the four industrial parks in Dallas County. Manufacturing is the leading industry in the city, providing almost double the amount of jobs as the next biggest industry (1,374 in manufacturing versus 724 in educational services). The Selma Economic Development Authority has been a primary driver in attracting manufacturing companies, and Selma's high schools and community colleges offer vocational programs that are marketed to these prospective job creators.²⁶

Heritage tourism is an economic opportunity that has been capitalized on in nearby cities like Montgomery but not as much in Selma. The majority of tourist activity consists of tour buses driving into Selma, stopping briefly at civil rights sites, and then leaving Selma; little money or time is spent in Selma apart from these brief stops. At the same time, Selma's infrastructure isn't well equipped to attract or take advantage of longer tourist stays, with limited hotel space apart from the newly restored St. James Hotel and some recently refurbished Airbnb units, which still is not adequate for supporting a more robust tourism infrastructure. In addition, vacant buildings, and stores and restaurants closing by 4pm with irregular hours make the experience of an extended stay in downtown difficult for tourists.

The one event that brings in a mass of visitors is the annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee, which commemorates Bloody Sunday and the Voting Rights Act. This multi-day event brings a lot of, media attention, and political presence, but does little to contribute to the sustainable economic development of Selma. Because of its national fame, Selma has become an ideal backdrop to celebrate civil rights, but has otherwise been left without much investment or attention for its present community.

In Downtown Selma, there is little pedestrian activity on the streets from tourists or residents. A few people can be seen throughout the day taking photos of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, or visiting the NPS Selma Interpretive Center. There are few viable tourist-facing businesses with only one or two open restaurants and only a few retail locations. For the most part, upper floors of downtown buildings are vacant. The historic character and availability of space in such an important place in American history presents a huge opportunity for economic growth in Selma.



Figure 2.53 : The 57th annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee.²⁵



Figure 2.54 : A Tour Bus stopping at the NPS Interpretive Center.



Figure 2.55 : Promotional infographic by the Selma & Dallas County Economic Development Authority.²⁷

Government Affiliated Organizations, NGOs, Developers, and other Key Players

Selma has numerous organizations and partnerships related to economic revitalization, historic interpretation, and community building. They range from local to regional and national in scale, with varying degrees of involvement with Selma. In general, the local, regional, and national organizations that have worked in or could work with Selma can be broken down into four categories, typified by their contribution: (1) funders, (2) capacity builders, (3) community organizers and (4) developers.

While there are many organizations affiliated and involved to some degree in Selma, there is little coordination or cooperation among these various parties. Additionally, capacity builders -- organizations that come into Selma to provide workshops and advice -- provide opportunities for dialogue that help promote collaboration and conversation amongst various major players in Selma.

Some notable organizations operating within Selma are ArtsRevive, Brown Chapel AME Church Preservation Society, Selma Center for Nonviolence, Invictus Realty Group, the National Park Service. The organizations detailed in this section are only a few of the incredible groups working in Selma. These highlighted organizations are ones that the team was able to engage with throughout this studio process.



Figure 2.56 : Exterior of Arts Revive's building, an adaptive reuse project.

ArtsRevive

Arts Revive is a successful community organization in Selma. It is a non-profit organization that supports the arts community in Selma, but is also focused on community and economic development. They've received multiple grants to develop several buildings on the west end of Water Avenue and have turned them into gallery space, artist workspace, event venue space, and meeting space. The organization also has influence all throughout Selma with its murals, "Fill in the Blank" project, and other public art.



Figure 2.57 : Selma's NPS Interpretive Center.

National Park Service

The NPS opened its interpretive Center at 2 Broad Street in 2014, one of three interpretive centers along the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail (the other two in Lowndes County and Montgomery), and now has plans to expand the center. While the expansion hopes to better interpret local history and serve as an event space, the park service has been fairly insular in its planning process, without much coordination with other local or regional organizations.



Figure 2.58 : The Adler Furniture building, slated for adaptive reuse.

Invictus & Samjen Realty

Both Samjen Realty and Invictus Realty are outside developers that have taken interest in Selma's vacant properties in the past few years, with a total of four ongoing projects that include office space, a coffee shop, rooftop bar, African Art Museum, and boutique hotel. These mixed-use development take advantage of Alabama's Opportunity Zones Program (by ADECA), which provide federal tax incentives for developers as well as the Federal Historic Tax Credit that provides a tax incentive for rehabilitating historic properties designated on the National Register or within a National Register historic district that encompass most of downtown Selma.



Figure 2.59 : Ongoing renovations at Brown Chapel AME Church.

Brown Chapel Preservation Society

The Brown Chapel AME Church Preservation Society is a separate entity from the historic church where the Selma to Montgomery march started, and has raised millions of dollars for the preservation of the church building from National Park Service grants. The organization and the church itself represent a preservation success in Selma, indicative of the amount of money that can be leveraged to support the city on account of its historic significance.



Figure 2.60 : Logo for AAACRHSC

Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium

The Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium was formed in 2017 and is a collaboration among 20 Civil Rights heritage sites in Alabama. The Consortium is a nonprofit organization that helps Civil Rights Heritage Sites secure support to build capacity and ensure their sustainability. The preservation of these sites is a collaborative effort between community stakeholders, volunteers and the Consortium. The Consortium's programs are five-fold: increase visibility, professional development, documentation, access to resources, and education and outreach. Brown Chapel AME Church, First (Colored) Baptist Church, the Sullivan and Richie Jean Sherrod Museum, and the Historic Tabernacle Baptist Church are all consortium sites located in Selma.

Major Actors

Funders

- Blackbelt Community Foundation
- Blackbelt Benefit Group
- Alabama State Council on the Arts
- Delta Regional Authority
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- AL Department of Economic and Community Affairs
- Education Foundation of America
- National Park Foundation
- Conservation Fund

Capacity Builders

- DesignAlabama
- Blackbelt Community Foundation
- Alabama State Tourism Department
- Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium
- Selma & Dallas County Chamber of Commerce
- Selma Redevelopment Authority
- Opportunity Alabama
- Main Street Alabama
- Black Heritage Council

Community Organizers

- ArtsRevive
- Blackbelt Benefit Group
- Selma Center for Nonviolence
- Foot Soldiers' Park
- Selma Historic Preservation Society
- Brown Chapel Preservation Society

Developers

- Hilton
- Invictus Development Group
- Samjen Realty Group
- National Park Service
- ArtsRevive

Stakeholder Perspectives

To better understand the political, social and economic environment of downtown Selma, we identified and interviewed stakeholders who have direct or indirect connections and impacts on Selma. Through hours of conversations and discussions, we were able to get a glimpse of the complicated reality Selma is facing right now.

We created this power map (Figure 2.60) to help us better understand the relationships between different stakeholders in Selma. The circles in orange indicate the people we have talked to.

We organized stakeholders we contacted into three categories: the public, non-profit, and private sectors:

Public:

- Mayor of Selma : James Perkins Jr.
- Planning and Development Department
Director: Danielle Wooten
Assistant Director: Henry Thompson
- Selma Redevelopment Authority
Board Chair: Martha Lockett
Community Advocate: Susan Youngblood
- National Park Service
Superintendent: Joy Kinard

Non-profit:

- Chamber of Commerce Executive Director: Sheryl Z. Smedley
- ArtsRevive Former Executive Director: Martha Lockett
- Selma-Dallas County Historic Preservation Society Board Member: Sarah Aghedo
- Old Cahaba Park Archaeologist and site director: Linda Derry
- Brown Chapel Foundation Project Director/Fundraising & Grant Chair Juanda Maxwell
- Brown Chapel Pastor Leodis Strong
- Auburn University Associate Professor: Keith S. Hébert
- Main Street Alabama President/State Coordinator: Mary Helmer Wirth
- African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium Joyce O'Neil and Priscilla Hancode Cooper

Private:

- Developers
Invest In Selma :Jim and BT from Tampa, FL
Queen City Market Developer: Mandy Henry
InVictus Development, LLC
- Business Owners
Owner of Cougar Oil: Rex Jones
McCray Home Repair and Improvements
Cotton House Shirt Store



Key Takeaways on Governance and Stakeholders:

- Many stakeholders emphasize the complexity and conflict in Selma's history. Until this day, different interpretations of Selma's past still exist bluntly in its physical environment. How to present and tell a full Selma story is a question many people ask.
- Many stakeholders point out the lack of support and resources from the local government. Some believe that the local government fails to provide basic maintenance and code enforcement, which had led to the deterioration of downtown.
- Selma faces a serious brain drain issue, a challenge that also presents an opportunity for bringing new ideas and energy downtown. Some types of programs need to be set up to attract more young people to come to Selma.
- Many property owners of these downtown buildings do not have motivation to "do anything" to their buildings due to perceptions of high renovation cost, a weak market for real estate, struggles with COA review process, lack of economic opportunities or preservation-related incentives in downtown.
- Many stakeholders ask for more cohesiveness in the development and planning process in downtown. An overarching organization is needed to bring people together and encourage more communication among different stakeholders.
- Because of its importance in civil rights history, Selma has more than 100,000 visitors coming in every year. However, Selma lacks the necessary tourism infrastructure to capture the economic benefits generated by tourism.
- All the stakeholders acknowledge that Selma has great potential. Many buildings with historic, social, and architectural significance are underutilized or vacant in downtown, which can be redeveloped for future use.



Figure 2.61 : Stakeholder Power Map

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The second phase of this report constitutes the “Analysis Phase” – values, significance, character-defining elements (CDEs), strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, and comparables research. The first three are rooted in a widely agreed upon philosophy of preservation. Within that philosophy, values are attributed to a place by people over time and can be categorized in a variety of ways. Significance is “the sum of the qualities or values that a place has,” while the Statement of Significance “highlight[s] the aspects of significance that are most important.” CDEs are “the tangible and intangible attributes that embody each aspect of cultural significance” – without them, a place would lose part of its significance. The studio encountered a host of common issues while observing and interpreting these aspects of Selma, including navigating preconceived notions and the challenge of incorporating a diverse array of knowledge and perspectives into our values set.²⁸

SWOT and comparables analysis come from the world of strategic management. As methods they are intended to integrate the team's understanding of the project through research and interviews to provide insights on best practice for situational preservation.

RESEARCH DOCUMENTATION PHASE

4 a. SIGNIFICANCE
b. CDES
c. VALUES

5 SWOT ANALYSIS

6 COMPARABLES



Figure 3.1 : Looking South down Broad Street towards the Edmund Pettus Bridge

Values

“Through the processes of investigating the place and assessing each of these values, we can clearly describe why a place is important. This is the first step towards ensuring that our decisions and actions do not diminish its significance.”

-Australia ICOMOS

After visiting, talking to the residents, and studying the history, and researching the varied contexts of preservation, we analyzed values of Selma on a city-wide scale as best as we could as outsiders and professionals in training. Assessing heritage values means understanding a place's qualities and elements that make up its significance. We used the definitions of values outlined in the Burra Charter as a starting point, and added to or adapted those definitions to fit within the context of Selma.²⁹

Historic Value



Figure 3.2 : C. 1910, (Alabama Dept. of Archives and History Postcard Collection)

Sub-Values:

- Enslavement
- Cotton Economy
- Civil War
- Battle of Selma
- Reconstruction
- Jim Crow, Lynching, and Discrimination
- Black Community Building
- Civil Rights Activism
- Bloody Sunday
- National Attention

A place has historic value if it has influenced, or has been influenced by, a historic movement or activity, person or group of people, or is the site of an important historic event. Some events or associations may be so important that the place retains significance regardless of such change or absence of evidence, specifically, in Selma's case, the civil rights movement and the Marches. The team concluded that for the most part, whatever happens to the materiality of Selma in the future, besides the bridge, the city will retain its significant historical association.

Selma's history demonstrates an ebb and flow of justice and civil rights. Black Selmians had zero rights or power preceding the Civil War because of enslavement that fueled the cotton economy and the accumulation of wealth for white southerners. The limited advancement of human rights during reconstruction marked a slight shift toward equality.

Following failed reconstruction, however, the codification of racism through Jim Crow, and acts of terror including lynching and white-on-black violence, black Americans were robbed of their rights once again. Selma's history of civil rights activism marks an important moment when black Americans fought to secure their rights in the United States. Selma's complex history in its entirety led up to the moment when black Selmians organized to march for civil rights in March of 1965. The reaction against that movement culminated in the violence that occurred on Bloody Sunday. The events of Bloody Sunday and the national attention they gained led to the Passing of the Voting Rights Act and securing voting rights for all in the United States.

Aesthetic Value



Figure 3.3 : View of the Alabama River.

Sub-Values:

- Historic Architecture
- Urban Composition
- Varied House Styles and Types
- Edmund Pettus Bridge
- Black Churches
- Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church
- Alabama Riverfront
- Presence in Media/Art

Aesthetic value refers to the sensory and perceptual experience of a place—that is, how we respond to visual and non-visual aspects such as sounds, smells, and other factors having a strong impact on human thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. Expressions of aesthetics are culturally influenced. Aesthetic value can inspire other works of art based on the symbolic nature and historical significance of the place.

The Edmund Pettus Bridge, a focal point in the city, is an iconic image and historical experience of the Civil Rights movement. Additionally, the integrity and stylistic variety of the historic black churches in Selma continue to serve as physical reminders of the emergence of the Civil Rights movement in Selma.

Downtown Selma has high integrity of various architectural styles from the period of significance. The presence of these structures within the historic urban infrastructure contributes to Selma's significance, especially in the maintained spatial relationships of the historic structures. This urban composition also responds to the picturesque, natural feature that is the Alabama River, a defining characteristic of the evolution of the city.

Outside of the downtown area, a variety of house styles and types that retain integrity reflect the history of economic, social, and racial inequality in Selma. Aspects of these elements that make up the physical fabric of Selma have been represented in media and art of various forms and the historic structures within the city have inspired these works.

Use Value

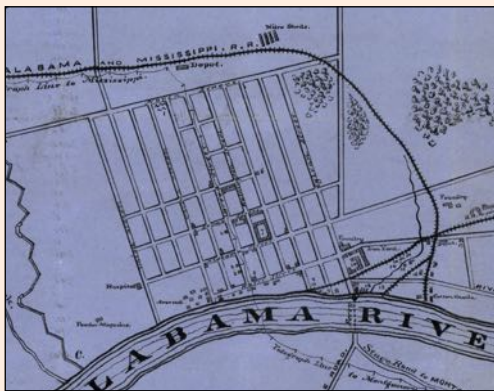


Figure 3.4 : Selma, Al'a., and vicinity. (Ruger, Edward.)

Sub-Values:

- Historic Downtown Commercial Core
- Urban Grid and Infrastructure
- Legacy Local Businesses
- Government (Dallas County Seat)

Use Value refers to the place having kept its original use throughout time or having been adapted to current use without impacting integrity or historical associations.

The downtown commercial core of the City of Selma is a place where both historically and presently, all Selmians have come to participate in commercial and civic activity. This activity continues to exist within the same urban grid and infrastructure which was developed preceding the Civil War.

The evolution of the historic commercial center of the city developed preceding the Civil War represents the growth of the regional center. While few remain, the legacy businesses in the downtown commercial core represent the continuity of local business ownership and commercial function. Serving as Dallas County Seat is significant to the history of Selma, and changing social values towards politics, society, and identity throughout this history have been represented in local government.

Social Value



Figure 3.5 : The Stonewall Inn, 1969 -(Larry Morris/The New York Times)

Sub-Values:

- Voting Rights
- Civil Rights Inspiration
- NHL and NR Districts, National Significance
- Lost Cause Narrative

Social value refers to the associations that a place has for a particular community or cultural group and the social or cultural meanings that it holds for them. The place has symbolic meanings to people that are developed from long time use and association.

Selma symbolizes voting rights and American Democracy. As a place, it embodies the significance of voting rights in this country to Americans of all backgrounds. In the same way, the legacy of the Black Civil Rights movement in Selma inspired activism for civil rights in other communities including women's equality and LGBTQ rights.

Through National Register and National Historic Landmark Designation, Selma's significance is recognized at the national scale. This significance attracts people from all over the world to visit Selma and experience its history. Tourism in Selma reflects this social value, and the importance that it holds for people everywhere.

Some communities' associations with the confederate defeat at the Battle of Selma contribute to the Lost Cause Myth, a philosophical foundation for racial violence and white supremacy. Though we recognize this aspect of Selma's social value to certain groups it is not something we will be including as a part of our recommendations or future response.

Spiritual Value



Figure 3.6 : Green Street Baptist Church, October 2022.

These historical events and movements demonstrate Selma's Historic Value:

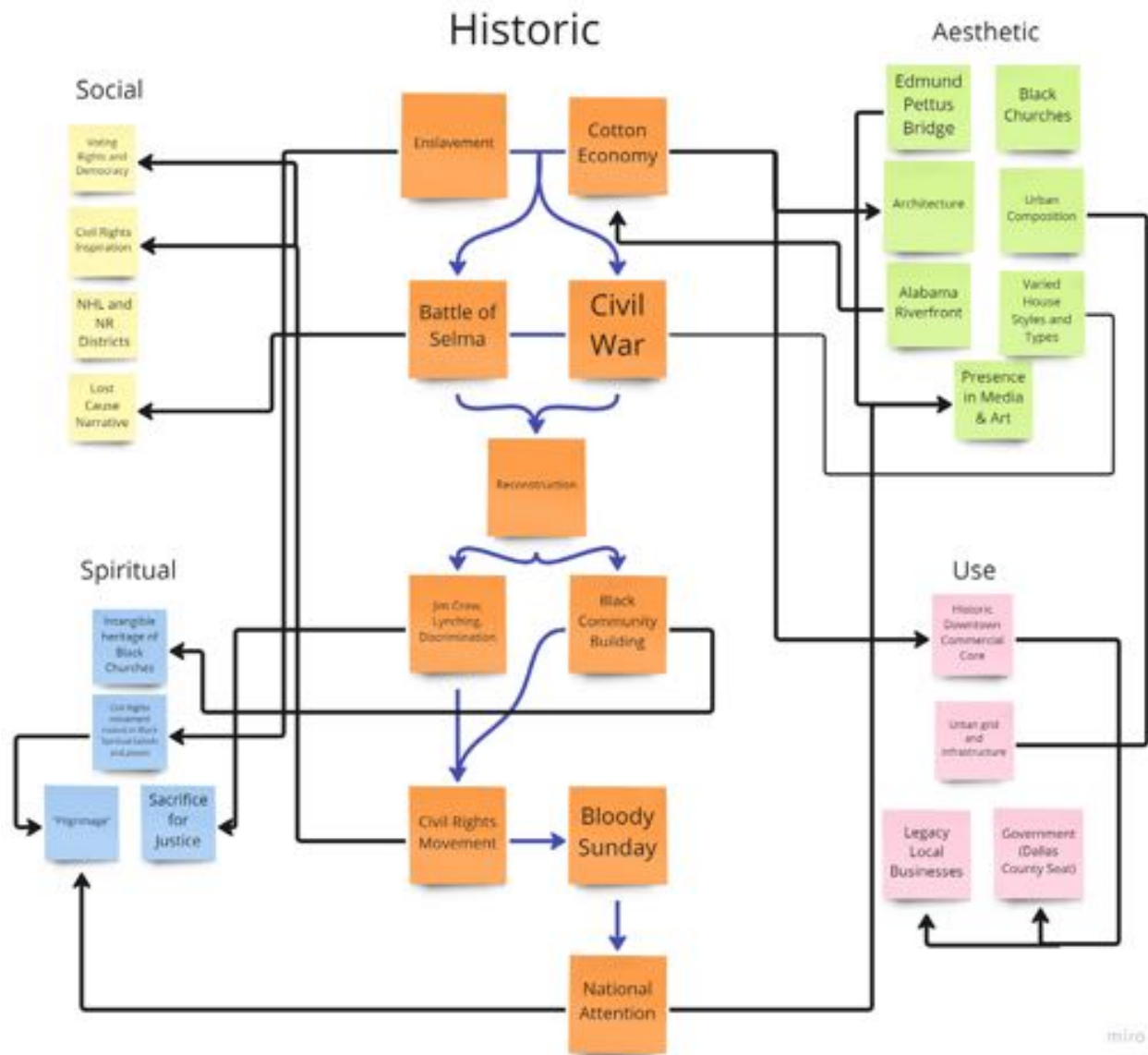
- Enslavement
- Cotton Economy
- Civil War
- Battle of Selma
- Reconstruction
- Jim Crow, Lynching, and Discrimination
- Black Community Building
- Civil Rights Activism
- Bloody Sunday
- National Attention

Spiritual value refers to the intangible values and meanings embodied in or evoked by a place through its religious associations, its importance to the spiritual identity of a community, or its ability to strengthen the fundamental connections between humanity and justice. These intangible values are reflected in extant aesthetics, strong emotional responses, and cultural practices of a community that may inspire a strong and/or spontaneous emotional or metaphysical response in people, expanding their understanding of their place, purpose, and obligations in the world.

Selma holds religious value, like the intangible heritage of black churches, worship and community gathering, in these churches and the roots of the Civil Rights Movement in Black spiritualism in Selma and across the South. The intangible heritage of black churches includes both the spiritual practices and community-building efforts that have contributed to the formation of identity in these communities since their inception. In many ways, this spirituality was born out of a response to the trauma in Selma's history including enslavement, lynching, and Jim Crow. The ideals, practices, and movements established in Black churches provided the foundation for the civil rights movement and also provided a space for people to discover not only a divine connection, but also a shared human experience. Those associations with a higher power and shared human experience brought people to make sacrifices for justice. Throughout Selma's history, people have sacrificed their lives, bodies, and well-being for a the greater good. Learning about these sacrifices continues to inspire strong emotional responses today.

There's also a feeling when in Selma that something momentous happened there. When crossing the bridge, talking to the foot soldiers, or looking at photos in the interpretative center, there is a deep metaphysical feeling of Selma's association with humanity and justice. In many ways, that feeling makes a visit to Selma feel like a necessary pilgrimage to people.

The Values Diagram



The next step in the analysis of Selma's values was to understand how they relate to one another. As the lines were drawn to construct this diagram, it became more and more apparent that historic values and its sub-values were central to the relationships between all other values. This idea re-affirms that Selma's significance is deeply rooted in its history. From the central historic value, lines connect with sub-values in other categories. The historical sub-value of the Civil Rights Movement, for example, connects to the Social sub-values of Voting Rights and Democracy and Civil Rights Inspiration. This connection relates the significance of Selma's history to the ways that society values Selma today. Similarly, the historical sub-values of the Civil War, Enslavement, and Cotton Economy connect to aesthetic sub-values like Architecture and Urban Composition. These connections not only convey the significance of Selma's antebellum history but also reveal how that history has impacted physical space. Those physical manifestations of the Civil War and industry fueled by enslavement remain today, contributing to the historical integrity of downtown Selma. Exploring the connections between these values and sub-values helps to paint the full picture of Selma's significance, not only for its Civil Rights history, but for all of the historical moments and legacies that preceded March, 1965 and the ones that followed.

Statement of Significance

Selma is a place of cultural and historical significance not only to its residents that continue to build community and exemplify resilience – but also to the rest of the country and world. For many Selma is home, but for people everywhere Selma represents democracy, civil rights, patriotism, and the power of protest. The social values and cultural associations that Selma holds for people of different backgrounds, religions, and nationalities stem from its centuries-long history, encompassing the Civil War, Civil Rights, and beyond. Powerful images from these historical moments are evident throughout the city and especially downtown. Water Avenue is one of few remaining Antebellum riverfront streets and it retains a high level of historical integrity, evoking feelings of connection to the past as one cruises along the paths of the Alabama River and underneath the cast iron verandas lining the sidewalks. This feeling connects people today to important moments in Selma’s development as a center of cotton production fueled by the enslavement of Black Americans. At the western end of Water Avenue, the site of the former Confederate arsenal reminds visitors of Selma’s central role during the Civil War, not only for manufacturing weapons and warships but as the place of one of the last decisive Union victories on April 2, 1865, before the Confederate surrender at Appomattox.

The downtown was established during Selma’s early development as a cotton market, and it currently retains integrity of location, feeling, urban layout, and several buildings from this period. Union forces burned much of the downtown area after the Battle of Selma, and the main business corridor on Broad Street was rebuilt during the period of post-war cotton industry revitalization. The late-nineteenth-century commercial buildings that primarily front Broad Street and surrounding downtown streets reflect this second generation of development. Downtown Selma was then and now, the cultural, commercial, and civic center of the city and Dallas County. The historical integrity of downtown Selma’s Italianate commercial buildings, Riverfront Park, and urban texture connect the Selma of today to its early development and prominence in Civil War history.

After the Civil War, Reconstruction-era policies sought to grant equal protection and voting rights for Black Americans following emancipation. During this period, Black Selmians voted, organized, ran for election, were elected to office, and exercised their civil rights. However, legacies of racism, white supremacy, violence, and disenfranchisement emerged in Selma and throughout the South as Jim Crow vigilantism and segregation replaced short-lived progress during Reconstruction. It is during this period that Black Selmians built communities, schools, and churches that are still active and retain their architectural character, leaving a mark that is still visible on the physical fabric of the city. The buildings that still line downtown Selma’s streets bore witness to lynchings and acts of intimidation against Black people during the early 20th century. Despite the violence against them and the stripping of their political agency, Black Selmians built centers of spirituality and community that would become the foundation for the Civil Rights Movement. Brown Chapel A.M.E Church, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Green Street Baptist Church, Selma University, and the homes of activists like Amelia Boynton were places of Black community organizing in an otherwise segregated city. These places still exist today in their original locations that reinforce the social, economic, and physical separation between White and Black Selma that is still apparent today.

On March 7, 1965, a group of about six hundred nonviolent activists and civil rights leaders gathered at Selma's Brown Chapel AME Church to demonstrate against voter suppression and other racist policies by marching from Selma to Montgomery. After crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the marchers were violently attacked by state and county police. Photographs and descriptions of the event immediately made national headlines, and Americans immediately saw news footage of the brutality on their televisions. Known as "Bloody Sunday," the march inspired two following marches, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The routes of those Marches are commemorated today by the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. Following the marches and the outrage of the nation, President Johnson gave his "We Shall Overcome" speech and proposed the Voting Rights Act to Congress and the American people. The events at Selma in 1965 directly contributed to the passage of the Voting Rights Act later that year and catalyzed the Civil Rights Movement. Downtown largely remains materially the same as it was during the 1965 protests, evident in the numerous photographs and footage taken during the three marches. Many of the historic buildings that line Broad Street, Water Avenue, and Alabama Avenue along the route of the march still stand, creating a visual experience of walking along the existing march routes that is incredibly similar to what the foot soldiers themselves saw. The continuity of the physical environment that was built in the late 19th century, standing in the 1960s, and preserved today contributes to Selma's historical integrity. This integrity and the feeling of experiencing this town and acknowledging its history conjures up powerful images and emotions when acknowledging the significance of this place from the Civil War to Civil Rights.

Beyond these major historical events, Selma has been through a period of economic decline due to a number of factors including white flight and population decline, a lack of investment from private and public entities, brain drain, and continued racial and socioeconomic disenfranchisement of the poor and people of color. However, Selma's historical, aesthetic, social, use, and spiritual values demonstrate the city's historical significance – generated over a century of prosperity, decline, justice, inequity, struggle, and triumph from the 1865 Battle of Selma to the 1965 Voting Rights Marches.

To understand its significance and the meaning of all of these historical events that are connected to one another, the studio team unpacked the idea that, "it had to be Selma." Bloody Sunday and the Voting Rights legislation that passed as a result of the Voting Rights Marches and activism happened in Selma because of its one-hundred-year history dating back to the Battle of Selma, with Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Black endeavor, segregation, and protest in between. Selma's significance does not stem only from its status as the world stage of the Civil Rights Movement, but because of the accumulated events that occurred between 1865 and 1965. Thus, it is the entirety of Selma's history and the enduring presence of the urban development, architecture, natural landscapes and especially community that give the city its significance. Selma is a place and story that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Character-Defining Elements

Character-defining elements or CDE's are the features of a historic place that reflect its design, workmanship, setting, and association, therefore conveying its visual distinctiveness and historical significance. Identifying CDE's in the planning process connects values to actions, informing how significant places are treated. Maintaining character-defining elements when intervening in historic environments ensures that values and significance are preserved.

Downtown Use

This character defining element (CDE) category is meant to articulate the community uses that have been historically represented in downtown Selma and are still present today. Downtown's uses stand in contrast to its immediate surroundings (residential) and the city's other commercial center in north Selma, which is characterized by national big-box retailers and restaurant chains. Selma's downtown retains its commercial character; despite significant storefront vacancies, our study area is still a region of Selma in which commercial activity is concentrated. More than characterized by its historic use as a commercial and industrial center – of which the specific uses have changed dramatically since downtown was densely occupied by the middle of the nineteenth century – downtown also represents the active presence of Selma's community today. This continued community investment in downtown is an important feature in characterizing downtown Selma, and its "small town" sensibility.

Commercial Use: This continues the historic use of the downtown as a commercial center. While there are vacancies, there are still several operating restaurants, drug stores, bars, and a movie theater downtown that through their operations preserve the commercial character of the area.

Arts & Entertainment: While arts and entertainment don't continue a historic use of the downtown, it captures an indispensable element of downtown Selma: the presence and investment of Selma locals in the area.

For example, the "Fill in the Blank" art project takes vacant buildings and uses them as a canvas for public art, a community effort to "beautify" downtown. There are murals, an art gallery, and live performances on Avenue. These uses show the fingerprints of the community on downtown and the importance of the downtown as a social and cultural center.

Community Oriented Businesses: This character defining element addresses how the downtown serves the local community. There are institutions like dry cleaners, barbershops, and beauty stores that wouldn't be there if downtown Selma was completely touristified and they meet the community's everyday needs.



Figure 3.7 : Downtowner Restaurant in Selma, Alabama



Figure 3.8 : Mural at Hinton Alley



Figure 3.9 : Selma Beauty Supply on Alabama Ave

Historic Events / Spiritual Practice

This category, similar to Downtown Use, is meant to capture CDEs that aren't character-defining primarily through physical integrity or presence, but either (1) use materiality as a medium through which to communicate its significance or (2) is wholly intangible, instead processual or narrative-based. This category focuses on the historic events and spiritual practices themselves as CDEs and less so how they manifest in physical space, though physical manifestations are important ways to communicate historic events and spiritual practice in Selma. This category pays special attention to events and spiritual practice in the city that primarily define its nationally-recognized legacy.

Black Churches: Black churches – specifically Black congregations, before dedicated church buildings were erected – have contributed and continue to contribute significantly to the local culture of Selma, as well as acting as cultural and spiritual institutions that hold national importance in trends of Black Christianity and the Civil Rights Movement. While none of the physical buildings exist within our study area, it's difficult to talk about the national significance of Selma without acknowledging the importance of these Black churches.

Selma to Montgomery Marches: The Selma to Montgomery Marches represent the Civil Rights Movement, both nationally and in Selma. The heritage of the three marches – Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, and the Selma to Montgomery March – are now represented in various elements, from the Edmund Pettus Bridge (a physical site), the annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee (a commemorative event), and the NPS's Selma to Montgomery national historic trail (a national designation).

Historic Markers: Interpretive markers also provide a way to navigate the heritage of downtown Selma, where its physicality fails to communicate significance. More of a proxy for the heritage in downtown Selma, these historic markers serve important junctions in the downtown landscape to engage with its historic events and heritage, both as existing markers and opportunities to better represent and tell the histories of Selma.



Figure 3.10 : Vice President Kamala Harris marches on the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday. (AP Photo/Brynn Anderson)



Figure 3.11 : Edmund Pettus Bridge



Figure 3.12 : Signage outside the St. James Hotel

Character-Defining Elements

Urban Layout

Selma's urban layout demonstrates the city's historical significance at an urban scale. The physical relationship between the different historic districts all within the historic urban grid are significant in their own right. Together, these districts also represent Selma's historical significance as the city developed since the 19th century.

Urban texture: The downtown area largely retains its original features and gridded pattern. Although some buildings are demolished in this area, the blocks and buildings on Broad and Water streets keep their original scale.

Commercial District: By comparing the urban texture in 1887 and 2022, maps show a pattern of expansion in the northern and western residential areas and the eastern industrial area while the downtown commercial area retains its historic layout, even as it extended along Broad street to the north. Downtown Selma's character and layout are protected today by their designation on the National Register of Historic Places.

Waterfront: Due to the demolition of the first bridge that spanned the Alabama River and the construction of the Edmund Pettus Bridge that connects to Broad Street, buildings and landscapes along the waterfront were altered. However, many early 19th-Century buildings still exist. The open space along the riverfront stays in its original location, and the access and openings are unchanged.

Open Spaces: The waterfront open space's use has changed throughout Selma's history but its position along the Alabama River has been maintained. Its original purpose as a place of industrial and commercial activity in the mid-late 19th century evolved into a natural space for recreation. As some structures in the downtown area have been demolished, the lots where they stood are now used as open spaces within the urban street grid.



Figure 3.13 : Urban Texture and Pattern of Downtown Selma in 2022

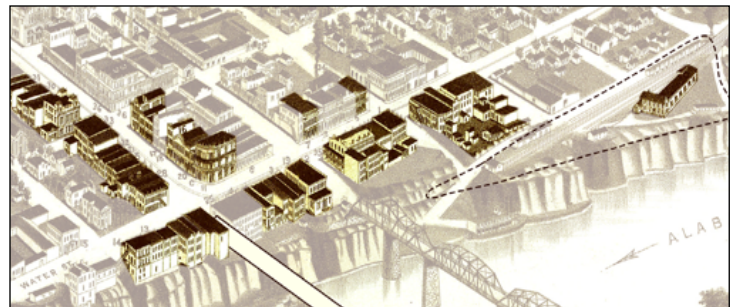


Figure 3.14 : Downtown Commercial District, comparing to 1887.



Figure 3.15 : Waterfront Public Space Condition



Figure 3.16 : Waterfront Open Space Condition

Building Features

This category, similar to Urban Layout, is meant to capture CDEs on the building scale to support the historic integrity of Selma.

Building Function: In downtown Selma, historic buildings are designated on the National Register of Historic Places in two historic districts, the Water Avenue Historic District and Old Town Historic District. According to the National Register document, Water Avenue is one of the few surviving antebellum riverfront streets in the Lower South which has retained its waterfront character. Almost all buildings were built for commercial and industrial use. Architectural styles are varied but all are distinctly 19th-century commercial buildings. The Old Town Historic District contains the major residential area of 19th Century Selma as well as portions of 16 blocks of the early commercial and public sections of the town all of which are located in our research area. The existing commercial structures are of late-19th Century and turn-of-the-century vintage.

Main Street Facade: The facades along Water Avenue and Broad Street maintain their historic features and scale, and are mostly continuous along the street. These elements contribute to the main street, commercial, small-town feel.

Style & Material: The buildings in downtown Selma have original characteristics of Italianate style commercial buildings, industrial buildings, and other types. The features include brick or stone construction, a variety of heights from one to three stories, and one or two-story iron verandas that project out over the sidewalk. Materials cladding the facades of brick, painted brick, and stucco contribute to the buildings' historic integrity. Other elements of the Italianate style in this southern context like the cast iron porches, shutters, and doorways along the sidewalk are distinctive of the Italianate style in the South.

Porch: The historic cast-iron frame porches/verandas still exist. The porches represent elements of 19th century style commercial structures in the South. The detailed metal work and shade provided by the porches demonstrate downtown Selma's period of development in the late 19th century.

Signs: The building signs demonstrate the continuity of the commercial character of Selma. Original signage from the 20th century hasn't changed over time.



Figure 3.17: Existing Buildings on Water Avenue, comparing 1887 with 2022

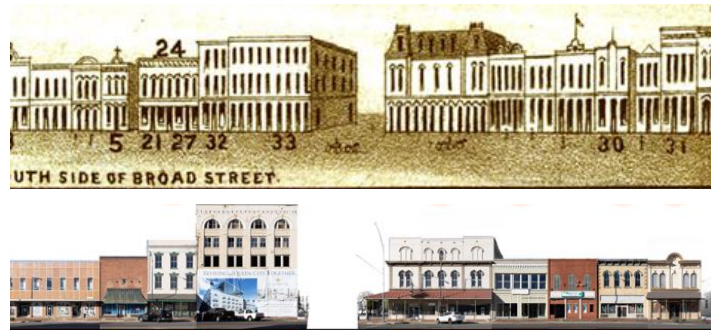


Figure 3.18 : Existing Buildings on Broad Street, comparing 1887 with 2022.



Figure 3.19: Main street Commercial Building.



Figure 3.20: Porches of Downtown Building



Figure 3.21: Signs of Local Business on Broad Street

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a tool used to assess the internal and external factors that can impact a project currently and in the future. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. A SWOT analysis aims to help an organization or individual identify the internal and external factors that may affect their ability to achieve their goals or objectives. Furthermore, strengths and weaknesses represent current conditions; opportunities and threats are future-facing conditions. A SWOT analysis can evaluate various topics, including a company's business model, marketing strategy, operations, and financial performance. By identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Selma, a SWOT analysis can help inform decision-making, identify potential challenges and opportunities, and develop strategies to overcome those challenges and take advantage of future opportunities.

After researching Selma, conducting fieldwork, and talking to various stakeholders, the team performed a SWOT analysis of Downtown Selma and created an extensive list of conditions under each factor. In order to provide another layer of analysis to the SWOT exercise, the team placed each condition into categories that roughly correspond to our values: historic/interpretation, aesthetic/physical, economic, social, and political. Themes and trends stand out from this analysis, which both confirmed the initial conceptions of Selma from research and guided the subsequent preserva-

tion goals and strategies outlined in the final phase.

Most of Downtown Selma's strengths are related to its history and how the history is reflected in the physical fabric. Conversely, the weaknesses are dominated by economic, social, and political issues. While our final recommendations will recognize and respond to these weaknesses, many of the issues are ingrained results of Selma's long, complicated history - such as centuries of systematic racism, white flight, brain drain, and fractured state and local government - that are outside the scope of this project.

We found the most future opportunities in economic development and improving the interpretation of Selma's history. Selma has the unique advantage of already drawing hundreds of thousands of tourists to the NPS Interpretive Center and Civil Rights sites; however, most of the tourists currently do not stay, eat, or spend money in Selma. Selma must seize this tourism opportunity, which can create jobs, fund local businesses, and bring money into the local economy. We similarly found considerable economic threats, and these points relate to the threat of further building deterioration due to a lack of capital, population decline, and lack of local government funding to enforce code or historic preservation ordinance violations.



Figure 3.22 : SWOT Analysis

S

- Civil Rights Heritage
- Architectural Fabric
- Historical Significance
- Active Investment

W

- Lack Of Cooperation
- Centuries Of Systematic Racism
- Absentee Ownership
- Lack of Tourism Infrastructure

O

- Main Street Program
- Open Space
- Tourism Infrastructure
- Historic Interpretation

T

- Population Decline
- Racial Segregation
- Extractive Wealth
- Building Deterioration

In the next step of the SWOT analysis, each team member cast four votes for the most critical factors in each category, and the tallied votes resulted in the top strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities. The group then assessed how the factors related to each other. Selma's civil rights heritage and greater historical significance is its primary strength, but this is a complex history with many awful associations, like centuries of systematic racism and segregation that informally continues today. Nevertheless, there is an opportunity to create an improved, holistic interpretation of this history.

Selma maintains much of its architectural fabric and integrity. However, many of the buildings are vacant and underutilized due to a declining population trend since the 1970s and absentee owners who have no incentive to spend money on costly historic rehabilitations. Therefore, there needs to be more tourism infrastructure, like restaurants, hotels, and shops, for the thousands of people who come to Selma to go and spend money.

As there is still good historic fabric, there is increasing investment into Downtown Selma. There has to be a balance, though, between outside investment and investment from within the community that builds wealth in Selma. One of the most significant threats is the lack of cooperation between the state, mayor, city council, historical commission, and other stakeholders. A model like the Main Street Program that ties preservation with development and business could independently work to create partnerships, raise funds, and manage the revitalization of Downtown Selma. Additionally, improved public open space will benefit both locals' and tourists' experience of Downtown Selma.

Comparables

Comparables research led us to consider more actively what conditions are pertinent to Selma’s current circumstances and its ongoing evolution: demographics, population size, income level, and the presence or investment of institutions interested in constituent’s well-being. Selma’s majority black (83%) population is an indicator and driver of its evolution. In 1965 at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, Selma’s population was a near even split between white and Black residents. Widespread disinvestment is associated with the departure of white residents and more general trends toward urbanization over the second half of the 20th century. Selma’s contexts informed our comparables research process so that we could provide the most useful comparisons possible.

The comparables presented in this report of a few of many we researched in this process. This research was based on a matrix of criteria that included places that had similar demographics, history, institutional involvement (like with the National Park Service), or geography. From that initial study, we selected areas for comparison – local business support, clarity of historical interpretation, physical preservation incentives, and trust building among community leaders – that were reinforced by our SWOT analysis as relevant mechanisms for change. Natchez, MS, two historic districts in Birmingham, and Wheeling, WV are our case studies.



Figure 3.23 : (top) Birmingham’s Historic 4th Avenue Business District, (bottom left, Forks of the Road Monument, Natchez, MS, Historic Clock, Wheeling, WV.

Birmingham’s Historic 4th Avenue Business District

COMPARISON

Comparable	Selma, AL	4th Avenue
Civil Rights History	Yes	Yes
NPS Presence	National Historic Trail & Interpretive Center	Civil Rights National Monument
Demographics	83% Black	75% Black
Population	17, 625	~15,000
Median Household Income	\$26,581	\$22,364

Main Takeaways:

- Provide capital
- Build partnerships
- Support existing businesses



Birmingham is a couple of hours north of Selma. In 1980, a 501c3 non-profit called Urban Impact formed to revitalize a historically black business district on 4th Avenue. The organization worked to designate the area to the National Register of Historic Places as the Historic 4th Avenue Business District in 1982. The National Register designation helped the organization empower locals, in part by working with Black merchants to purchase the buildings they rented from absentee landlords. Over the last four decades, the Urban Impact has developed methods for recruiting and sustaining local businesses.

In 2006, the Civil Rights Historic District, which intersects with parts of the 4th Ave. District, was added to recognize sites like the AG Gaston Motel and the Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame.

Like Selma, 4th Avenue grapples with the question of how to “leverage the assets of the area’s civil rights history to promote community and economic development.” In response, Urban Impact (UI) offers three funding arrangements to area entrepreneurs as part of a plan to ensure that tourism dollars stay in the community. One option for businesses just starting out is a revolving loan fund fed into by past recipients and third-party sponsors. Applicants are underwritten by UI and reviewed by a committee of business leaders from the district, after which they receive financial and technical support. 4th Avenue Forward is a brand-new loan program that focuses on established, Black-owned, brick & mortar businesses on 4th Avenue. Applicants can apply for loans that cover things like design/construction and IT support.

It took the 4th Avenue District years to build the relationships and capital for their programming to work. In Selma, there is currently no comparable support. Selma’s priority should be to unite and support existing businesses like the Coffee Shoppe, the Downtowner Restaurant, and events space The Anchor.

Figure 3.24 : 4th Avenue and Urban Impact Inc. Logos

Comparables

Natchez, Mississippi - Historical Interpretation

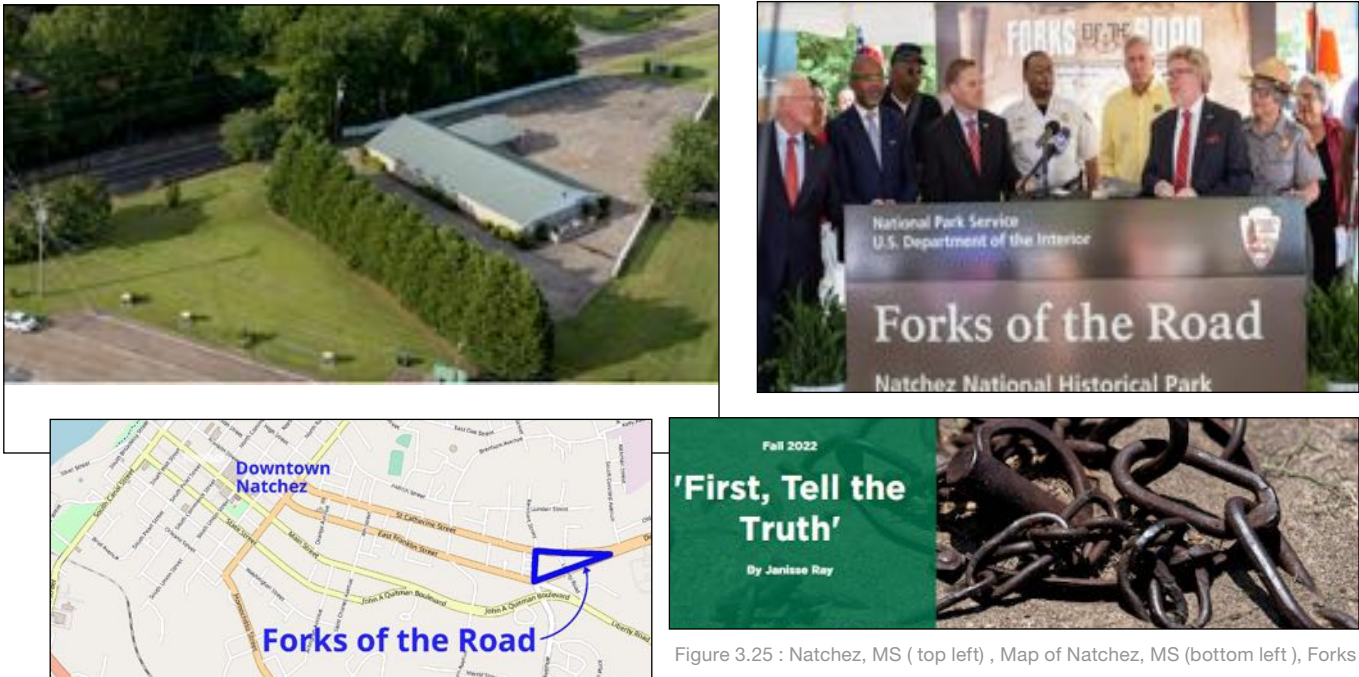


Figure 3.25 : Natchez, MS (top left) , Map of Natchez, MS (bottom left) , Forks of the Road National Historical Park (top and bottom right)

COMPARISON

Comparable	Selma, AL	Natchez, MS
Population	17,625	14,000
Majority Black	83.40%	63%
%30+ pop. reduction since 1960s peak	Yes	Yes
History of Enslavement	Yes	Yes
NPS Presence	Interpretive Center/ Historic Trail	Nat'l Historical Park

Main Takeaways:

- Forefront difficult history
- Local-outsider trust, collaboration

Natchez, Mississippi is like Selma in many ways. It is similarly sized, and its majority Black residents live at a similar income level. It experiences the same post-1960 burden of white flight and disinvestment and shares a painful history of enslavement. Recently, the city has embraced an opportunity to tell the story of Forks of the Road, a large antebellum market for the trafficking of enslaved people which took place on 18 acres just east of downtown Natchez and the Mississippi River.

Natchez, like Selma, wrestles with how to interpret its important and often dichotomous history and how to present that interpretation to the nation and the world. The city is home to 13 National Historic Landmarks, the Natchez National Historical Park, and a stretch of the Natchez Trace Parkway, a well-traveled tourist route. For decades the city and the National Parks Service have focused interpretation on the architectural significance of its former plantations. The local Friends of the Forks of the Road Society, identifying an aversion to difficult history and acting on a need for truth-telling, advocated for years to increase visibility of the site within the City's and the Park's official narrative. In June of 2021, the City transferred three acres of Forks of the Road to the Parks Service as an addition to the Historical Park with an intent to acknowledge the travesties of slavery.

In Selma, the National Historic Trail, currently being added to with ongoing scholarship, and the NPS Selma Interpretive Center, with its planned expansion, is poised to forge similarly beneficial partnerships to continue telling significant and difficult stories.



Figure 3.26: The Melrose Estate, a mid-19th century Greek-Revival Mansion built on a cotton plantation supported by the labor of enslaved people, Natchez National Historical Park. (The New York Times)

Comparables

Wheeling, West Virginia -- Physical Preservation Incentives & Trust Building



Figure 3.27 : The city of Wheeling

COMPARISON

Comparable	Selma, AL	Wheeling, WV
Civil Rights History	Yes	No
NPS Presence	National Historic Trail (Interpretive Center)	National Heritage Area
Demographics	83% Black	91.1% White
Population	17, 625	26,568
Median Household Income	\$26,581	\$41,911

Main Takeaways:

- Technical Assistance and Design Service
- Direct Preservation Incentives
- Community Building through Fundraising and Grants

Wheeling is a small town located in the northern panhandle of West Virginia. Lying along the Ohio River, Wheeling has a population less than 30,000 with a \$ 41,000 median household income. The majority of the residents in Wheeling are white. As the first state capital of West Virginia, Wheeling is designated by National Park Service as a National Heritage Area to celebrate “the birthplace of West Virginia and an early industrial hub along the Ohio River”.³⁰

Similar to Selma, Wheeling is a small town with a strong presence of National Park Service. But Wheeling has very different demographics and median household income compared to Selma.

But besides the differences, the reason Wheeling is presented here as a comparable is because it has one of the most successful Main Street programs in America. Wheeling Heritage, Wheeling’s Main



Figure 3. 28 : Wheeling Heritage Logo

Street program and the management organization of the National Heritage Area, is one of three winners of the 2019 Great American Main Street Award. It cleverly combines the Main Street America program model with its National Heritage Area resources. Sixty percent of Wheeling Heritage’s funding comes from NPS due to this National Heritage Area designation.³¹ It is also worth noting that 30% of its funding comes from programming related investing income.³²

One of Wheeling Heritage’s missions is to protect the city’s historic resources by supporting the preservation of historic buildings. It provides technical assistance to educate and help property owners to secure federal

tax credits, SHPO grants, and local grants. It also offers free design advice to downtown businesses.³³ In addition, Wheeling Heritage provides historic preservation grants as a direct cash incentive to the property owners. Funded by NPS Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant, Wheeling Historic Revitalization Program funds preservation projects of historic buildings including architectural services and physical preservation. This program focuses on two types of development: commercial downtown development projects that foster economic development, job creation and tourist attraction and catalytic urban neighborhood redevelopment projects that address blighted properties and create a multiplier effect in the neighborhood to encourage more investment. These awards can range from \$15,000 to \$100,000.³⁴

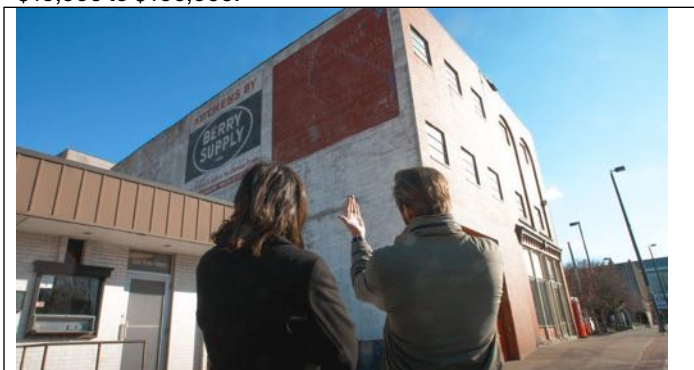


Figure 3.29 : Design Services Offered by Wheeling Heritage

Given the high vacancy rate of Selma's downtown (48%) and lack of motivation from property owners to restore their buildings, offering free technical assistance, design service and direct preservation incentives can effectively encourage property owners and developers to invest in the built environment and bring more economic vitality to downtown.

Another area Wheeling Heritage focuses on is community fundraising and trust building. Show of Hands is its annual community-supported crowd-funding event. At this event, community members are presented with four projects pitched by small business owners. Community members then cast their vote for the project they want to help fund. The project with the most votes receives all of the money raised by the entrance fee (\$5/ person) and other donations.³⁵ Besides the cash benefit, it is also a great opportunity for the local business owners to promote their businesses and have name recognition among the community. Since its creation in 2014, Show of Hands has awarded over \$100,000 to 28 projects and small businesses.³⁶

In addition to building relationships with business owners and community members, Wheeling Heritage also aims to build partnership with other stakeholders through its Partnership Grant.



Figure 3.30 : Show of Hands hosted by Wheeling Heritage

Any local individual, community group, or organization in Wheeling wanting to start a revitalization project can apply to this grant. The revitalization project needs to involve either historic preservation, community development, arts and culture, or small business development. Although the maximum amount of this grant is only \$1000, many organizations including the city's Arts and Cultural Commission, Downtown Bike Share and local churches have applied this grant and made a real impact in the community. In 2022, Wheeling Heritage has awarded \$22,400 partnership grants to 29 organizations.



Figure 3.31 : Past Recipient of the Partnership Grant: St. John the Divine Greek Orthodox Church, Grecian Festival

Through these projects, Wheeling Heritage has effectively built healthy relationships with its local community and other organizations. The community is able to see how their money has been used, which business they have supported, and what impact they can bring to the city.

One of the realities in Selma is the high level of fragmentation among different stakeholders. Building community ownership and trust among different entities through fundraising events and partnership grants can help build more cohesiveness and encourage collaboration.

RESPONSE

Introduction

In her book *Mainstreet*, Mindy Thompson Fullilove discusses the box/circle/line. On any mainstreet in any city (she visited over a hundred in several years) the box represents the shops and restaurants, the buildings, the “center of the action”; the line is the avenue that people walk or drive along to access the box, well traveled and therefore a benefactor of the box; and the circle is the network of people and places that sustain and compliment the box – the residences, the churches and hospitals, the schools and factories.³⁷ Today, Selma’s box, the one that people go to, lives somewhere up near the freeway, well north of the Selma we are talking about. The stories that explain this shift from the historic core, our study area, are varied. Some are American – construction of the interstate system, the rise of suburbia and outlet malls, boxstores and fastfood. Some are Southern – white flight, disinvestment, discriminatory practices against Black land- and business-ownership. Others are more local, and many of those stories are submerged. Downtown, with plywood on shop windows, long vacant storefronts, and ruinous former monuments, keeps visible score of the trauma left behind by these stories. And, for Selma, no matter how central that trauma was to the success of the nation, healing from it takes focused, long-term work. Our collective efforts work within this context to find small steps toward healing for Selma, as part of a process that started well before us and will continue long after. To return to Fullilove’s symbology, we aim to redirect attention toward the historic core, the old abandoned box/circle/line – somewhat modified to capture the city’s most important assets today – with six recommendations that span

our field of preservation: administrative and personnel programming, public open-space networking, cultural heritage tourism, building restoration, adaptive reuse, and funding opportunities.

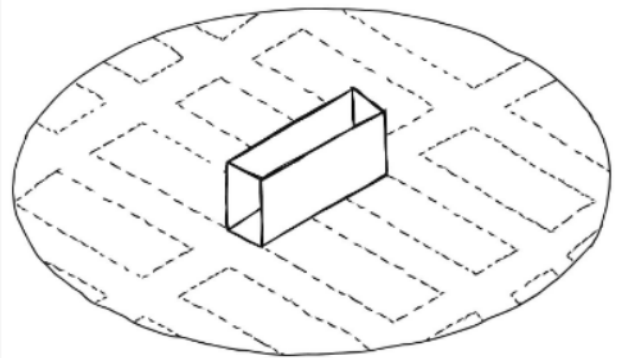


Figure 4.1 : Fullilove’s “box/circle/line” as expressed in Mainstreet.

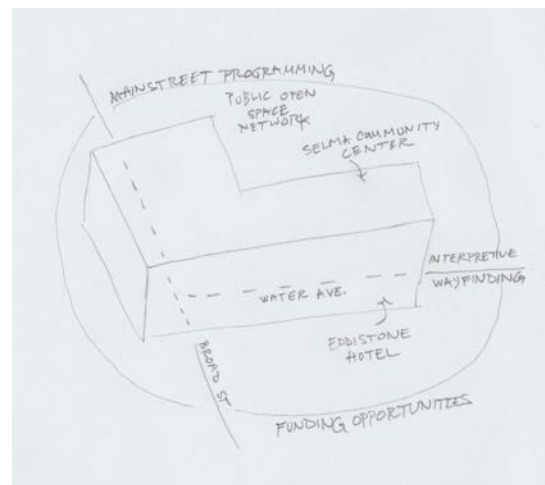


Figure 4.2 : Authors’ proposed box/circle/line.



Preservation Philosophy & Approach

Advance the reactivation of downtown Selma while recognizing the city's heritage and reckoning with the history and legacy of racial and economic injustice. Our vision for Selma's future includes the implementation of sustainable and equitable economic development, adaptive reuse, and the expansion of historic interpretation. This will be accomplished through multi-level collaboration in order to increase the capacity of preservation efforts. The preservation strategies should protect the character and function of the built environment and feeling of downtown Selma while serving Selma's residents and tourists alike.



Figure 4.4 : South of Water Avenue

Preservation Strategies

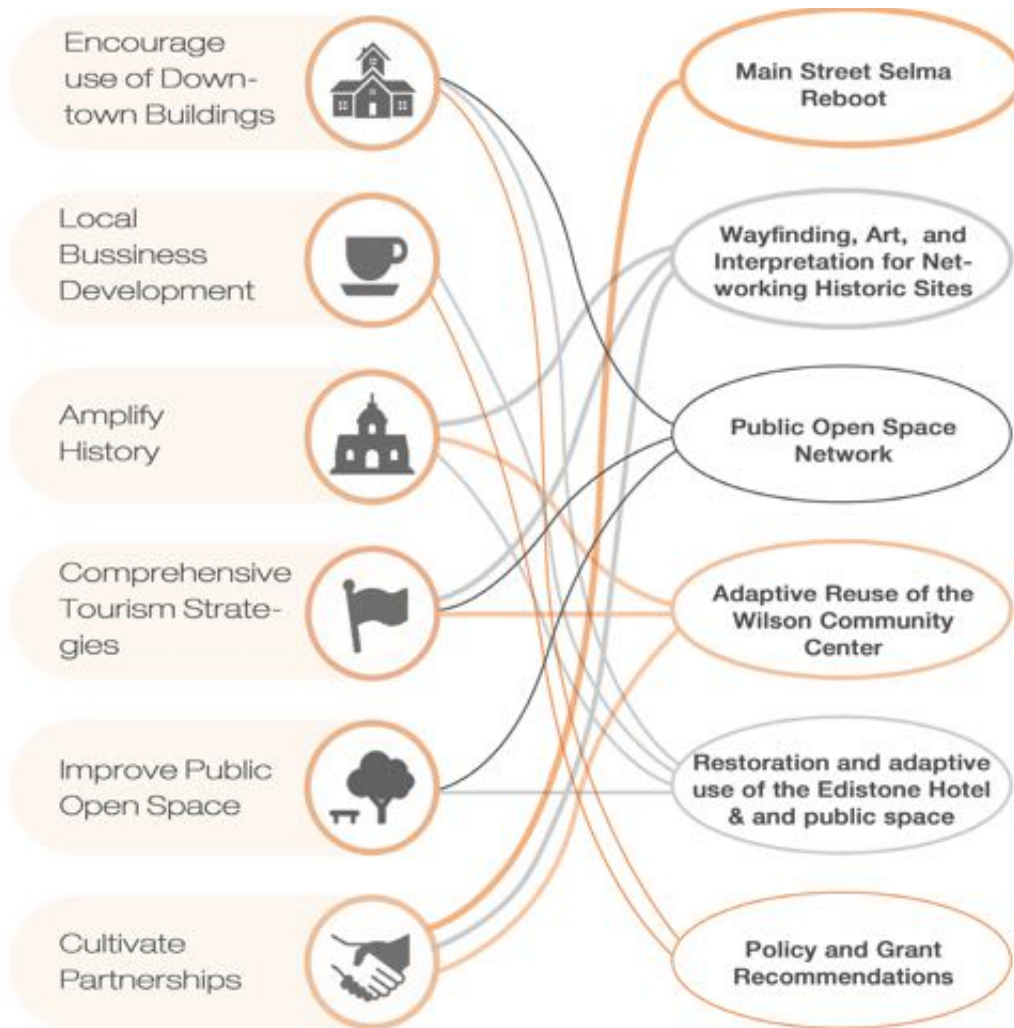
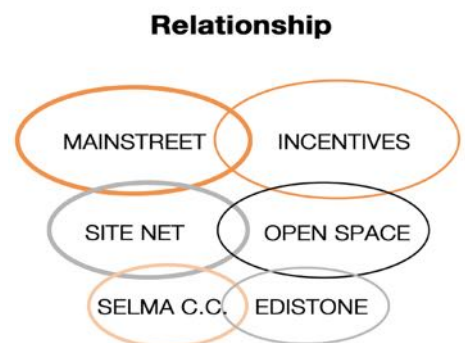


Figure 4.5 : Relationship between Preservation Strategies and Individual Projects

The team developed six actionable strategies to support the preservation philosophy that are; 1) encourage the use of downtown buildings, 2) promote local business development, 3) amplify history, 4) envision a comprehensive tourism strategy, 5) improve public open spaces, and 6) cultivate partnerships. Based on these strategies, each team member developed an individual project that is rooted in the preservation philosophy and that is directly connected to one or more of the preservation strategies. The preservation strategies and individual projects share different connections between them creating a web that not only connects the projects to the strategies, but also connects the projects to one another.

Looking more closely, our individual projects can be seen as three pairs, as shown on the right. Main Street Selma Reboot and Policy and Grant Recommendations projects focus on the largest scale, proposing interventions for the city in general. Wayfinding, Art, and Interpretation for Networking Historic Sites and Public Open Space Network projects narrow down to the spatial layout, physical environment, and historic context of Selma. Two adaptive reuse projects -- the Wilson Community Center and Edistone Hotel propose a preservation design approach on specific building.



Main Street Selma Reboot

Haoyi Shang

Project Purpose

Focusing on cultivating partnership specifically, this project aims to explore the possibility of restarting Main Street Selma. Using case studies from other successful Main Street programs in Alabama, this project hopes to convey what the Main Street program can bring and how Selma can benefit from it. This project also proposes several necessary next steps and a phasing plan to reboot the Main Street program in Selma.



What is the Main Street Program?

Main Street America is a comprehensive community-based approach to revitalizing downtown. It is a network of more than 1,000 urban and rural neighborhoods and communities. Since its establishment in 1980, Main Street America has successfully attracted more than \$95 billion in investments and created more than 700,000 jobs and 160,000 new businesses.³⁸

As a branch of Main Street America, Main Street Alabama has 37 main Street programs in its network. It believes that a vital downtown core “reflects community prosperity and pride, represents a significant portion of the community’s tax base, offers convenience and service, reduces sprawl by concentrating retail in one area, thus using community resources wisely, protects property values in surrounding residential neighborhoods, becomes a prominent employment center”.³⁹

To achieve this, Main Street America proposes a four-point approach: promotion, organization, economic vitality, and design.

Here are some examples of how Main Street programs in Alabama adopted this four-point approach:

- **Organization:** Main Street Wetumpka includes local business owners, former city officials, and experts in finances and related fields on its board of directors, which helps to build organizational capacity to carry out different programs and foster partnerships among different stakeholders.⁴⁰
- **Economic Vitality:** Opelika Main Street created the Downtown Resource Center as a retail incubator and meeting space. It also partners with the city to establish the Bill Roberts Facade Enhancement Program, which provides up to \$7,000 matching grants for downtown exterior facade improvements. Its Small Business Assistance Program provides professional development programs to small business owners. They can schedule free consultations with Auburn University’s Small Business Development Center. Opelika Main Street has successfully attracted 29 new businesses and created 98 new job opportunities.⁴¹



Figure 4.6 : Queen City Kale on Water Avenue, taken by Miles Wu



Figure 4.7 : Case Studies of Main Street programs in Alabama (Main Street Alabama)

- **Design:** Main Street Wetumpka designed a pocket park along the Coosa River to optimize and revitalize an underutilized area of the city and attract more interest and investment downtown.⁴²
- **Promotion:** Under the Oaks is a musical festival hosted by Headland Main Street at the center square of its main street district. Happening every month from April to September, this festival includes free musical performances, food vendors, and a car show. Sponsored by twelve local businesses, this festival has gained huge popularity among community members. Since its establishment in 2019, Headland Main Street has attracted 12 new businesses and created 35 new job opportunities.⁴³

How can Downtown Selma Benefit from a Main Street Program?

Downtown Selma has always been the economic and social center of Selma. Although some of its functions have disappeared due to its deterioration, the existing resources including retail shopping, restaurants, hotels, and museums are still concentrated downtown. A Main Street program can help to activate the downtown and promote equitable economic development by networking the existing resources and preserving locally owned businesses.

Selma has great potential for tourism, but does not have enough tourist infrastructure like shops, restaurants, hotels, or programming to capture this revenue. According to data from National Park Service, the tourism industry in Alabama has continued to grow over the past ten years.⁴⁴ Civil rights sites in other parts of the South such as Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas and the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) sites in Montgomery gain national attention and help to increase tourism

spending in those regions.⁴⁵ Since its opening in April 2018, EJI sites have drawn more than 650,000 visitors and Montgomery has seen a 15.5% increase in travel spending.⁴⁶ In Selma, a Main Street Program can help create more incentives and assistance for existing and new businesses, programming, and service to better utilize its tourist resources.

Downtown Selma has suffered from a 48% vacancy rate according to the team's observations. Many buildings with great architectural features and historic significance have been abandoned. Selma can use a Main Street program to create more preservation incentives or even build capital to restore these buildings and create a more attractive downtown for both tourists and locals.

Lastly, a Main Street program can provide a great organizational structure that encourages people to work together, which can help to ease some tension and build partnerships among different stakeholders in Selma.



Figure 4.8 : The Legacy Museum as Part of EJI Sites in Montgomery (EJI)

What did we learn from the past?

Main Street Selma was active from 2014 to 2019. Some of its past projects include organizing movie nights for senior citizens at Walton Theater in Selma, installing the statue of Jeffrey the Ghost downtown, and promoting local businesses. However, it fell apart in 2019 mainly due to the departure of the executive director, limited resources and support from the local government, and the lack of understanding of how a Main Street program works among stakeholders in Selma. Currently, Main Street Selma remains a network member in Main Street Alabama but there is no clear cooperation or leadership to lead the program.

NEXT STEPS

The next step to restart a Main Street program is to adopt the organization approach--one part of the Main Street four-point approach, focusing on forging partnerships among different stakeholders, building community trust through engagement, and creating strong leadership. This section proposes some necessary next steps to reboot the Main Street program.

1. Identify Stakeholders

The first step is to identify different stakeholders in Selma and position them in the first power map (Figure 4.9) shown on next page based on their interests in a Main Street program and how much power (such as resources and funding) they have. The second power map (Figure 4.10) can be used to identify the strength and weakness of each stakeholder: what resources they can bring, and which area of expertise they have. Since many entities including local, state, national, private, and non-profit organizations have expressed interest or already made investments in Selma, it is important to recognize whose support is critical for a Main Street program and what type of partnership can be built as the program grows.

For example, the National Park Service has many funding opportunities and resources, but its interest in a Main Street program might be relatively low. Therefore, it may not be necessary to secure support from NPS in the beginning. But because of its expertise in historic resources and its potential funding opportunities, some types of partnership can be built as the Main Street program develops.

The potential stakeholders include:

- The Selma and Dallas County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Information
- Selma Redevelopment Authority
- Selma-Dallas County Historic Preservation Society
- ArtsRevive
- City Council
- Mayor
- Main Street Alabama

2. Advocacy

This step is crucial to building partnerships among stakeholders, and this process can be led by anyone from the local

community or by any of the stakeholders. Based on the analysis of stakeholders' interests in the first step, the advocacy process should show each stakeholder what Main Street can bring to them and how they can benefit from it.

Some other advocacy steps include:

- Encourage stakeholders and elected officials to attend educational workshops or programs including Main Street Alabama training sessions and webinars, and Main Street America Conference
- Gain support from the community. For example, host Town Hall meetings with downtown business owners, chamber members, city officials, and community members
- Organize field trips to see operations of successful main streets
- Connect with outside organizations including Main Street Alabama

3. Secure Funding

Funding has always been an issue for any Main Street program. The seed funding for a Main Street program usually comes from the local government. As the program grows, part of its funding can also come from corporate sponsors, foundation donations, fundraising events, or membership programs. Therefore, it is important to secure support from the local government, business owners, and the community from the very beginning.

4. Strong Leadership

After securing the funding, a Main Street program needs to hire a good executive director to take the lead.

Here are some examples from other Main Street programs in Alabama:

- Ken Ward is the executive director of Opelika Main Street. He is a Montgomery native and a graduate of Auburn University with Bachelor's degrees in Journalism and Political Science and a Master's in Public Administration degree.
- Tere Richardson is the executive director of Athens Main Street. She is a native of Limestone County, worked in the corporate world for 10 years in project management consulting with clients including Honeywell, Maytag, and Lenscrafters, served on local boards, planned events, and coordinated volunteers for Cincinnati Historical Society, the St. Louis Zoo, and numerous schools.

Based on their backgrounds and experience, the ideal candidate for Main Street Selma should meet some of the following criteria:

- A native of Selma or Dallas County
- Passionate about community development
- Prior experience in project management, consulting, or related corporate experience
- Prior experience in local affairs

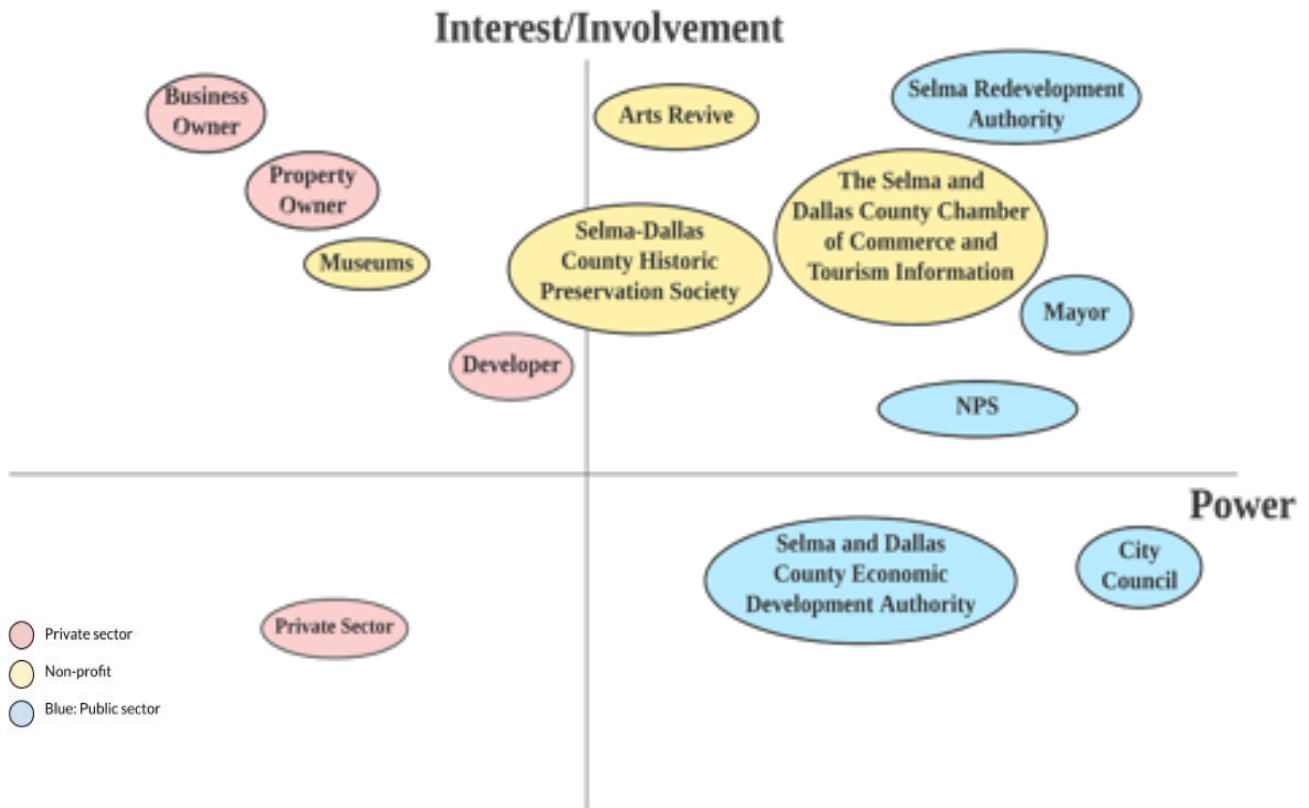


Figure 4.9 : Power Map with Stakeholders' Interests in a Main Street Program

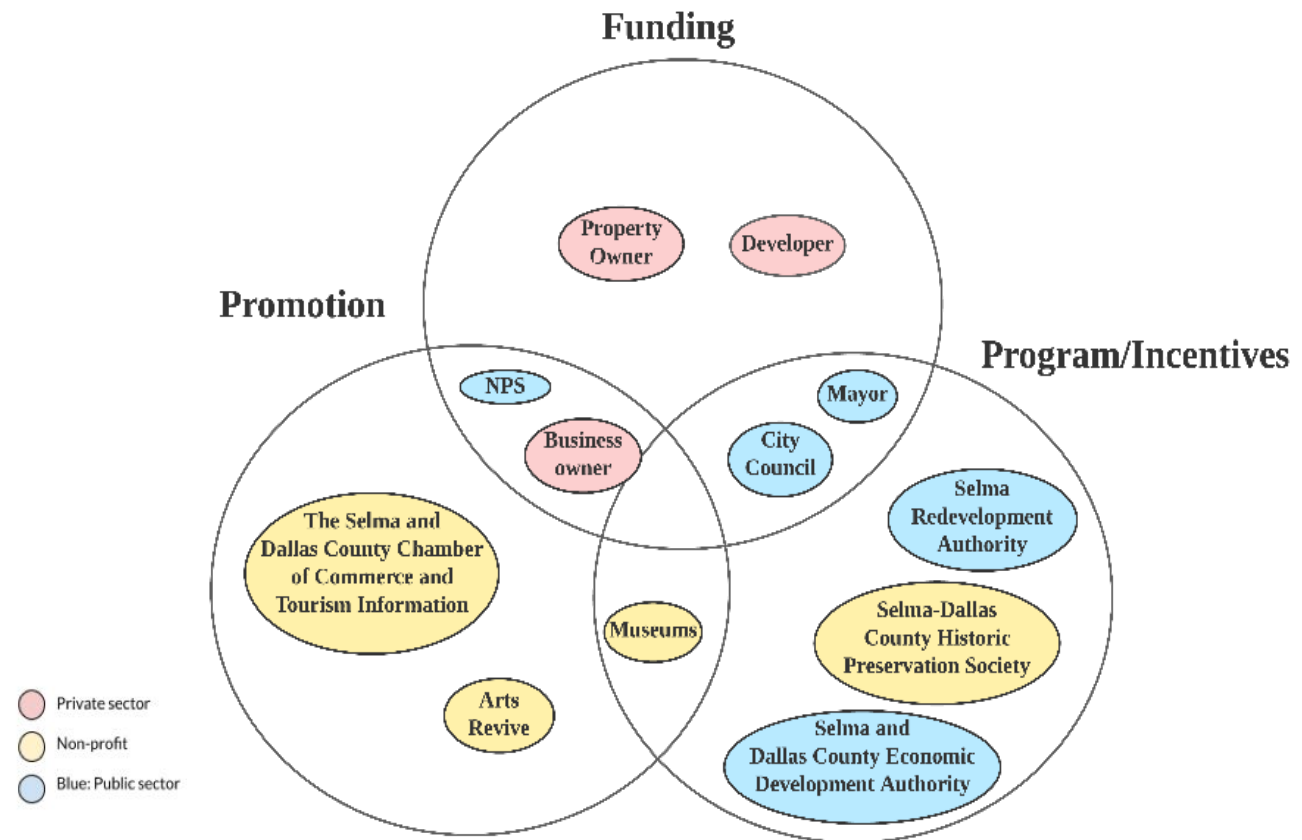


Figure 4.9 : Power Map with Stakeholders' Resources and Expertise

5. Stable Organizational Structure

Once the stakeholders reach a consensus that a Main Street program is needed in Selma, a standard Main Street program organizational structure can be formed to incorporate different interests in the community. This structure includes a board of directors, four committees (organization, promotion, design and economic vitality), and an executive director in between to oversee the daily operation of the Main Street Organization. Key stakeholders should have a seat on the board of directors and also be present on the committee with the purpose that best suited to benefit from their expertise.

6. Incremental Change Ideas

As the Main Street program starts to take shape, it is important to achieve some highly visible “victories” as a way to signal changes for the community and continue to strengthen partnerships among different stakeholders.

Some ideas include:

- Put up banners that tell Selma’s history along Broad Street using donations from a community fundraising event
- Monthly farmers’ market with music performances sponsored by International Paper Co. along Water Avenue
- Design and paint a mural with ArtsRevie and community participation on Broad Street
- Build a website to profile available downtown buildings to attract future investment

7. Phasing plan

Lastly, a phasing plan is proposed here for the future development of the Main Street program, as shown in Figure 4.11.

Year 1 should focus on building a good foundation for the Main Street program through forging partnerships, advocacy, finding a stable funding source, hiring an executive director, and applying to Aspiring Tier Program in Main Street Alabama.

By year 3, the Main Street program should establish a stable organizational structure, build a credible presence in the community, achieve some visible “victories”, and become an official Main Street program.

By year 5, the Main Street program should be able to respond to immediate concerns and demands in the community, develop programs and incentives to encourage small businesses and facade improvement, and raise the capital for major building rehabilitations.



Figure 4.10 : Phasing Plan

Wayfinding, Art, and Interpretation for Networking Historic Sites

Faye Messner

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide the City of Selma with a plan, comparables, and implementation strategies for an interpretation, public art, and wayfinding program for networking historic sites. The objectives of this project include four main parts. This project will provide a scope of work, outline the creation of a task force and its responsibilities, offer an analysis of comparables, and map a prototype of the proposed signage and art installations to be used for planning.



Background and Significance:

Proposing a network of historic sites addresses three of our strategies rooted in our preservation philosophy. Networking historic sites speaks directly to our strategy centered on creating a comprehensive tourism scheme for downtown. This project is not only meant to promote tourism, but it also offers ways to connect tourists and residents to Selma's history and bring activity back downtown.

Next, this project serves as a way to amplify history. By marketing sites and using physical places to connect people with historic narratives, this plan for networking historic sites intends to expand historical interpretation in downtown Selma. Finally, the project seeks to identify ways that planning a network of historic sites can cultivate multi-level partnerships. Selmians of all backgrounds are passionate about their history, and it should be left up to them to decide how it is told. This proposal for a historic site network is only a suggestion that should be considered and improved by the people of Selma coming together to make decisions that are best for them.

Tourists already come to Selma to experience its rich history, but they often neglect to move deeper into downtown Selma, beyond the Edmund Pettus Bridge to experience the wealth of historic sites, museums, and open spaces that exist, especially in downtown Selma.

Besides these historical sites, however, there is a general lack of infrastructure to support activity downtown, whether it be spaces for dining, lodging, rest, or entertainment. Development projects downtown which will support greater activity in the area for residents and tourists alike are in progress. Organizations like the Brown Chapel A.M.E. Preservation Society, ArtsRevive, and the Selma Redevelopment Authority are demonstrating the ways that great community-building and economy-stimulating projects get done. Building off of the successful projects already being done in the city, promoting downtown Selma as a place to visit and stay is an important element for not only amplifying Selma's history but also for sustaining these development projects and promoting local businesses.

Selma's historic sites serve as the anchor points of this network, but the ultimate goal is to better engage residents and visitors with all of the available activities in downtown Selma. By increasing visitors' awareness of historic sites, their proximity to one another, and promoting walkability and interaction with sites, Selma can leverage its historic assets to promote the revitalization of downtown.



Figure 4.11 : Downtown Selma



Figure 4.12 : Downtown Selma -Broad Street, Photo by: Randall Mason

Goals

A successful network of historic sites in Selma should achieve three main goals:

1. Engage visitors and residents, making them more aware of Selma's history and offerings and excited to spend time downtown. This engagement should encourage people to visit Selma's historic sites, beyond the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the National Park Service Interpretive Center, and Brown Chapel, which are currently the anchors of tourist activity in Selma today.
2. Inform all people in Selma of the city's complex history, both preceding the Civil War, to Civil Rights, and beyond.
3. Utilize the urban grid to provide navigation throughout the city that promotes walking and engagement with more of Selma's interesting places whether they are historic sites, museums, parks, or local businesses throughout the city.

Objectives

The objectives of this project aim to address the original purpose which is to provide the City of Selma with a plan, comparables, and implementation strategies for an interpretation, public art, and wayfinding program for networking historic sites to get people moving through downtown again.

The objectives are presented in four main parts throughout the project:

1. Provide a Scope of Work
2. Outline the creation of a task force and its responsibilities
3. Analyze comparables
4. Map a prototype of the network to inform planning

What do experts say about designing wayfinding, interpretation, and public art?

Wayfinding design, interpretation planning, and public art commissioning and creating are distinct professional fields built up by the research and the practice of experts. Understanding professional and academic conversations within these fields helped to build up the base of knowledge used to prepare this report. From these conversations, some key points of wisdom emerged. These nine key points can be used as guiding principles for Selma's planning efforts.

1. Architecture, vistas, and landscapes can be used for wayfinding, especially recognizable landmarks like the Edmund Pettus Bridge, and Brown Chapel, or open spaces like Riverfront Park.
2. A pedestrian-oriented information systems like signage should be positioned at the pedestrian eye level and at key decision-making points.⁴⁷
3. Wayfinding and interpretative signage design should be inclusive and accessible to people of all abilities.
4. Ensuring that key locations have a strong sense of place makes the intention for engagement with that place explicitly clear and more inviting. People want to feel welcome.⁴⁸
5. Walkability facilitated by wayfinding has long-term benefits like increased investment and tourism spending.⁴⁹
6. "No public art can succeed in enhancing the social meaning of a place without a solid base of historical research and community support."⁵⁰ – Dolores Hayden
7. No city is too small to benefit from wayfinding.⁵¹
8. "Wayfinding is also about striking just the right balance between intuitive navigation and individual discovery."⁵² – Emily Badger, Sue Labouvie
9. "Process matters as much as outcome."⁵³ – Monument Lab

Part 1: Provide a Scope of Work

The scope of work can be used to state expectations, hire potential designers, secure funding, and inform stakeholders. It will also outline the project and will be useful throughout the implementation process from the early stages of designing the project, to installation.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Downtown Selma is a place with nationally significant history, intact architectural character, a small-town feel, a passionate and resilient community of residents, and visitors from around the world. There are possibilities for downtown Selma to become the central destination for civic and commercial activity that it was historically, but it doesn't yet meet its full potential. For residents, downtown Selma doesn't meet their needs because the services there aren't sufficient, whether it's a place to eat, meet with friends, or shop. For the same reasons, downtown can't serve the thousands of visitors coming to Selma each year, despite the incredible wealth of historic sites and museums. While this project doesn't explicitly focus on bringing the needed services back downtown, it aims to network Selma's existing and future assets like historic sites, hotels, and restaurants. This project seeks to advise one way to get people moving through downtown again by making them aware of its historic places. Promoting a network of historic sites, open spaces, and museums will help breathe new life into downtown Selma. Through wayfinding, expanded historical interpretation, and marketing of this network, downtown Selma can become the type of destination that people want to visit and stay.

DELIVERABLES:

- Stakeholder Engagement Report
- Summarizing research on stakeholder needs and record of community engagement meetings
- Traffic and Pedestrian Observation Reports
- Regulations Analysis (USDOT, potential COA by historical commission, etc.)
- Design for wayfinding to be finalized by the Task Force
- Design for Interpretive Panels to be finalized by the Task Force
- A Message Schedule for both types of signs
- A location plan both for wayfinding and interpretive panels
- Estimate of Costs (Bid for work)
- Phased implementation including detailed plans for the three phases
- A schedule of work and delivery of final reports and design

OBJECTIVES

Research:

- Observe traffic and pedestrian patterns throughout Selma paying special attention to tour buses and tourist activity (3-4 times throughout the calendar year, including March, 7 Jubilee).
- Interview stakeholders including but not limited to residents of nearby neighborhoods, business owners, and property owners downtown. Stakeholder engagement should also be conducted with various downtown non-profit organizations and museums. These interviews and commentary sessions should be well-advertised and accessible to all Selmians.
- Study history to best inform the information on and locations of interpretive panels. (See Research and Documentation: History)

Design:

- Create visually interesting wayfinding signs that direct residents and visitors throughout Selma to its historic sites, open spaces, and other downtown amenities.
- Deliver engaging and attractive interpretive panels utilizing photographs, maps, and text to promote interpretation at key locations in Selma's downtown area.
- Plan the positions for these interpretive panels and wayfinding signs considering their potential interaction with existing historic sites and future public art.

Costs:

- Provide examples of past work to help inform budgeting and costs.
- Estimate costs for design, implementation, and annual maintenance.

Implementation:

- Plan for phased implementation, corresponding with the City's capacity to execute, fund, and maintain the project. Implementation should be planned for 6 months, 2 years, and 5 years.

Part 2: Create a Task Force

The purpose of the task force is to promote partnerships among Selma's government, NGO, and private sector members within the downtown community. In addition, the task force will allow members of the downtown and greater community to implement their vision for Selma's historic site network and bring invaluable knowledge of their city to the design process. The task force's role in the planning, execution, and maintenance of this project will be central to its success.

The first element of creating a task force for the network of historic sites is considering its composition. The composition of the task force should be representative of downtown organizations, business owners, property owners, residents, and members of city-government-affiliated organizations. If possible, a representative of the National Park Service should be included in the composition of this task force, given the connection between the network of historic sites with the Selma Interpretive Center and the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. This task force, which will be administered and organized by the City of Selma, should make the opportunity of participating in this project known to all potential participants and the public.

Suggested organizations from which members can be invited to join the task force include but are not limited to:

Government Affiliated Organizations

- Selma Redevelopment Authority
- National Park Service
- City of Selma Historic Development Commission
- Alabama Department of Tourism

NGOs

- Selma-Dallas County Historic Preservation Society
- Selma Chamber of Commerce
- Selma Center for Non-Violence, Truth, and Reconciliation
- Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church Preservation Society
- ArtsRevive
- Future Main Street Organization
- Alabama African American Civil Rights Sites Consortium

Private Sector

- Invictus
- Invest in Selma
- Queen City Market/ Five and Dime (Mandy Henry and AC Reeves)

Once representation within the task force is finalized, the group can appoint a chairperson to act as the point of contact, who is available to stakeholders, hired designers, or other contractors.⁵⁴ The task force should also outline goals, organize a set schedule for meetings, and begin the planning process by reviewing and editing the scope of work, researching funding, and publishing an RFP that local designers can respond to.

A note on stakeholder engagement:

In addition to the designer's stakeholder report, the task force should also engage in these conversations with stakeholders and present opportunities for the public to participate in meetings. The vision for the project should be shared and opined upon by the public throughout the design process.

Getting Into the Design Process:

The hiring of a designer is an exciting part of the planning process. According to Todd Mayfield, Principal and Group Creative Director for Avia Design Group, there are two steps in hiring a designer. First, put out an RFQ (Request for Qualifications) ahead of an RFP to "pre-qualify respondents." Second, the task force can consider the qualifications of the respondents and select a designer that demonstrates experience in wayfinding and/or interpretive panel design and understands fabrication processes and government regulations like USDOT guidelines.⁵⁵ Design firms do not always offer both wayfinding design and interpretation design services. Depending on the availability of design firms and responses to the RFQ, it may be the case that two separate designers are hired for wayfinding and interpretation.

Once the designer or designers is/are selected, a series of design options should be produced. These designs begin with concepts and evolve into a final product. The designer should present the task force with a few concepts which can be refined and tailored to meet the task force's and the public's vision for wayfinding that fits into Selma's brand. The designer will also act as the liaison between the fabricator and the task force.

Paying for It:

The cost of creating signage, hiring designers, and maintaining it all will be informed throughout the design process, based on the designer’s vision, funding options for the project, and the cost of production and materials. There are a few examples of recent projects that can be used to get a rough estimate of the cost per sign.⁵⁶

Sign Type	Cost Estimate
Wayfinding	\$1,600-\$3,000
Interpretive Panel	\$1,000-\$4,500

There are many potential funding options for this type of project. Grants for community building, research, and early phases of project testing are available. An overview of funding options for projects in Selma is included in a subsequent section of this report. Specific funding opportunities for the early stages of project implementation will be discussed in the implementation section. The objectives of this project aim to address the original purpose which is to provide the City of Selma with a plan, comparables, and implementation strategies for an interpretation, public art, and wayfinding program for networking historic sites to get people moving through downtown again.

Phased Implementation:

A project like this requires a significant investment of funds and human capacity and should be implemented in phases that are realistic and accessible. Phases that start with the first six months can progress into two and five years to include the final installation of interpretive and wayfinding signage as well as public art centerpieces and plans for maintenance.

A schedule, based on the phases of implementation should be decided upon by the task force. Outlining a schedule will help to keep expectations clear, especially for the design and production teams. Outlining the timeline for research phases will depend on the design firm’s location and may require several visits to Selma throughout different times of the year to best inform the full extent of activity downtown during busy and slow seasons. Scheduling the design phase can be informed by the designer once the task force decides on the number of signs and sign types. The designer’s knowledge of manufacturing will also inform the schedule for delivering the product. In this case, the designer is the expert in executing projects of this nature and should be deferred to when outlining the schedule.

Phase 1: Six Months

Taking time to establish the task force’s members and leaders, putting forth goals for the historic site network, and presenting opportunities for community involvement should be the priority at this stage. Once the task force takes these first steps, it can consider a low-cost option to experiment with wayfinding downtown like, Walk[Your City]. This “guerilla wayfinding” approach gets the community involved and puts the power of envisioning this network in their hands. Walk[Your City]’s projects in multiple cities around the country have been funded by the Knight Foundation since 2015. The project, which was started in Raleigh, North Carolina in 2012 promotes community participation in bringing awareness to their town’s amenities and promotes healthy habits by encouraging walking. Walk[Your City] founder, Matt Tomasulo originated this idea as a way to promote a “re-envisioning of a community’s geography, and to give residents the power to create change quickly, easily, and cheaply.”⁵⁷ An approach to “guerilla wayfinding” modeled after Walk[Your City] presents an opportunity for an easy, affordable, community-led, and straightforward way to experiment with wayfinding and understand what could work best for Selma in a more permanent way. Generating excitement in the community during the early stages of this wayfinding and interpretive sign planning project can also help future, more permanent stages of the project get off the ground.

Phase 2: Two Years

After phase one and measuring the reception and success of experimental programs, the task force can move forward with a more permanent intervention. At this stage, the task force should review the scope of work, and create an RFQ to begin engaging with designers. The plans for the wayfinding and interpretive panels should be comprehensive, but scalable so that their installation can be phased based on budget and capacity. Following the steps outlined in the design process section, the task force and stakeholders can decide on prioritization. Whether to start first with wayfinding or interpretive panels alone, or a small-scale installation of both types of signage in a limited area are both logical options for this first phase.

Phase 3: Five Years

The years following phase two can be used to expand the network, adding wayfinding and interpretive panels as needed, based on original plans. In addition, public art projects that may require additional funding, planning, design, and installation can be commissioned. Connections with artists through organizations like ArtsRevive should be consulted for public art projects. Separate RFPs can be issued for specific public art projects sponsored by the city or non-profits. Private property owners commissioning public art projects should also consult the task force. The task force should remain active and involved throughout these phases, with a reduced role as needed so that future additions to the network can be reviewed.

Part 3: Analyze Comparables

Successful wayfinding and interpretive signage networks have been employed throughout the country to amplify history and promote increased navigability and participation in downtowns in cities large and small. Comparable wayfinding, interpretation, site networking, and public art campaigns in several cities have been highlighted in this report to be used as examples of what is possible in Selma. These examples are only a few of the many possibilities from which Selma can seek inspiration.

Historic Site Networks:

Cultural Tourism D.C., Heritage Trails Washington D.C.

Cultural Tourism D.C. has created heritage trails throughout the city that highlight different aspects of the city's and nation's history. These sites are networked with routes, interpretive panels along those routes, and online sources that provide supplemental information and additional historical narrative. This is a comprehensive model that can be used as inspiration for Selma's large-scale and long-term planning.



Figure 4.13 : Washington, D.C. Downtown Heritage Trail

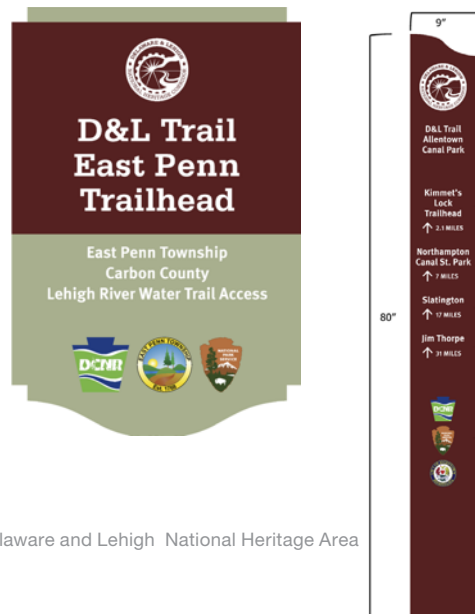


Figure 4.14 : Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Area Signage

Interpretive Panels:

Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Area Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania

The variety of interpretive panels, wayfinding schemes, and directional signage options outlined in the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Area document Visually Speaking can serve as examples for interpretive signage and wayfinding from which Selma can model its network. Not only is the design successful, but the comprehensive schedule of different types of signs with examples and strong visuals is a great standard to set for the organization of Selma's planning. The clarity of the Visually Speaking initiative speaks to the quality and experience of the designer, but also the thoughtfulness of the planning process. Maintaining a schedule of designs, prices, content suggestions, and graphic languages is an aspect of the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Area's signage campaign that should be replicated in Selma.

Wayfinding

Walk!Philadelphia
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Walk!Philadelphia is an award-winning campaign for wayfinding that uses color coding and districting to promote walkability and exploration throughout the city. The content of the wayfinding signs is often centered on historical sites and cultural institutions but serves to encourage the exploration of many different types of city amenities. These wayfinding signs effectively blend three visual cues. First, directional signage with simple arrows and destinations offers a simple way to orient oneself in the city. Next, the round map panels offer a view of the map of downtown and are placed throughout the city which allows people to situate themselves within Philadelphia’s grid. The third visual aspect of Walk!Philadelphia’s design is color coding, which connects the circular map signs with the directional signs where directions to specific locations correspond with the colors of the districts on the map. Employing these visual organization methods provides a consistent and intuitive wayfinding system that is successful in all parts of the city.



Figure 4.15 : Walk!Philadelphia Wayfinding



Figure 4.16 : Mothers of Gynecology Monument ,(Kyle Sampson)



Figure 4.17 : Footprints, (City of Montgomery)

Public Art and Monuments:

Combined with interpretive panels and wayfinding set within this network, public art can add dimension to the experience of downtown. Selma already uses murals and monuments for placemaking. Often, art can tell stories, generate emotion, and promote healing better than any sign or walking tour could alone. The use of art brings powerful meaning to places and Selma’s mural program can serve as the foundation for future public artworks. A few examples that can serve as inspiration for different mediums of public art in Selma include the Mothers of Gynecology Monument in Montgomery, Alabama and the footprints in the crosswalk located in front of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church approaching the Alabama State Capitol. These two examples represent only two of the numerous ways that art can be used to commemorate and honor Selma’s history and culture. The Mothers of Gynecology Monument located within a park offers an interesting example of how to engage with difficult history in public open spaces. The footprints exemplify the ways that understated images set within the sidewalk can commemorate the Voting Rights marches.

Part 4: Mapping a Prototype

The maps and conceptual images serve to visualize the possibilities for interpretive panels and wayfinding within the context of Selma's historic sites, the route of the historic bloody Sunday march, and public open space. These introductions, combined with the existing historic sites, museums, open spaces, local businesses, and ongoing redevelopment projects will help to amplify the telling of Selma's history and promote the revitalization of downtown.

These maps of suggested locations for wayfinding, interpretation, and art come from a historian and preservationist's perspective and are centered on the history and experience of downtown Selma. The goal of these proposed installations is to work with the existing landmarks as wayfinding themselves while adding to the network of historic sites where opportunity was observed.

Selma is small, and most of the sites are located within this half-mile circle from the corner of Water Avenue, right off the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Visitors can walk just $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile and experience the majority of the points represented on this map. Making the proximity of these sites known to visitors is one of the desired outcomes these future interventions can achieve.



11. Old Depot Museum



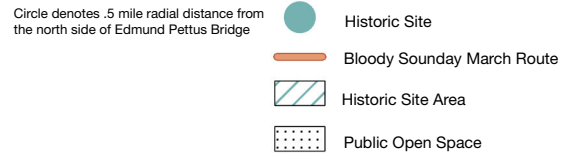
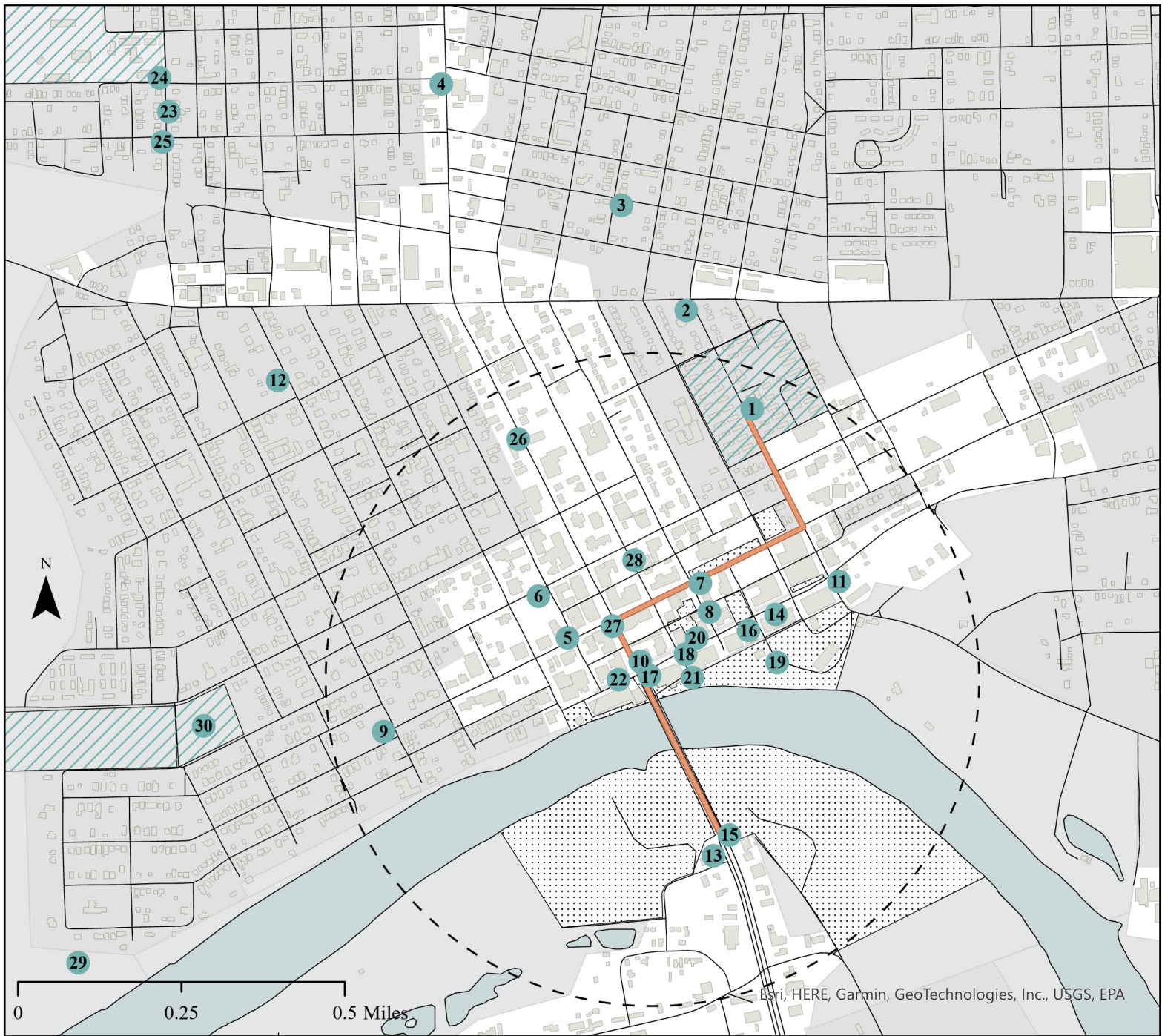
16. Edystone Hotel



12. Sturdivant Hall



17. Songs of Selma Park



Historic Sites, Museums, and Open Spaces in Selma, Alabama

- | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church and the George Washington Carver Homes | 11. Old Depot Museum | 21. The Bridgetender's House |
| 2. First (Colored) Baptist Church | 12. Sturdivant Hall | 22. The Harmony Club |
| 3. Green Street Baptist Church | 13. National Voting Rights Museum and Institute | 23. Jackson Home and Museum |
| 4. Tabernacle Baptist Church | 14. Ancient Africa, Enslavement, and Civil War Museum | 24. Selma University |
| 5. Dallas County Court House | 15. Selma Voting Rights Monument and Park | 25. Boynton House |
| 6. Chamber of Commerce and site of AESA Women's Suffrage Meeting | 16. Edystone Hotel | 26. Temple Mishkan Israel |
| 7. Cecil B. Jackson Public Safety Building | 17. Songs of Selma Park | 27. Tepper's Department Store |
| 8. George C. Wilson Community Center | 18. St. James Hotel | 28. James Reeb Memorial Plaque |
| 9. Vaughan-Smitherman Museum | 19. Riverfront Park | 29. Battle of Selma |
| 10. NPS Selma Interpretive Center | 20. Phoenix Park | 30. Live Oak Cemetary |



Figure 4.19 : A mock up interpretive panel located on Water Avenue.

Envisioning and Locating Interpretive Panels

This map locates potential interpretive panels that are meant to augment the historical experience of downtown, keeping in mind Selma's historic sites and open spaces. The panels are positioned to encourage deeper engagement with sites like Arsenal Place, Riverfront Park, and the start of the Bloody Sunday route. Despite Selma's wealth of historic sites, these panels can be used to add to Selma's historical narrative where historic fabric may no longer exist.



The Role of African American spiritual institutions in the Civil Rights Movement and the Selma to Montgomery March including Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church, First (Colored) Baptist, Green Street Baptist, and Tabernacle Baptist churches as well as nearby homes.

March 7, 1965, the march that would become known throughout the world as "Bloody Sunday" started here at Brown Chapel. This panel should include the discussion of the role of the Carver Homes, the roots of the Voting Rights Movement in Selma long before 1965, and the people who participated that day.

Location for city-wide map of historic sites, museums, and open spaces to intercept tourists arriving to National Park Service Selma Interpretive Center from the tour bus parking lot. Also serves to move people into the expanded Phoenix Park which will have public amenities like restrooms.

The Route of the Bloody Sunday March continues onto Alabama Avenue. Highlight Footsoldiers and images of the day with visuals of people marching along Alabama Ave.

The Songs of Selma's existing gazebo-covered signage can be redone to serve as the primary inception point for visitors to downtown. A city-wide map of historic sites, museums, businesses, restaurants, and open spaces like the one at Phoenix Park will be used to engage visitors as they enter downtown Selma from the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

The Riverfront Park interpretive panel can be used to tell the history of Native Americans and can display historic maps of Selma's evolution and early history. Discussion of evolution the city includes the role of the cotton economy which was built from the work of enslaved people. The panel's position in the park can be used to tell the story of role of the river in sustaining the cotton industry in Selma.

Located at the site of the Civil War Arsenal in Selma, this panel can explain the last decisive battle of the Civil War at Selma and the significance of the arsenal for the Confederacy. This site can also be used to discuss early Reconstruction, the passing of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments and life in Selma post Civil War.

This panel commemorates the end of the Bloody Sunday March in 1965. It can memorialize the individuals who were victims of the violent acts that took place after crossing the bridge. This site can also be used to highlight the significance of the media presence which was responsible for nationally broadcasting the events of Bloody Sunday.

- Interpretive Panel
- Historic Site
- Bloody Sunday March Route
- Historic Site Area
- Public Open Space

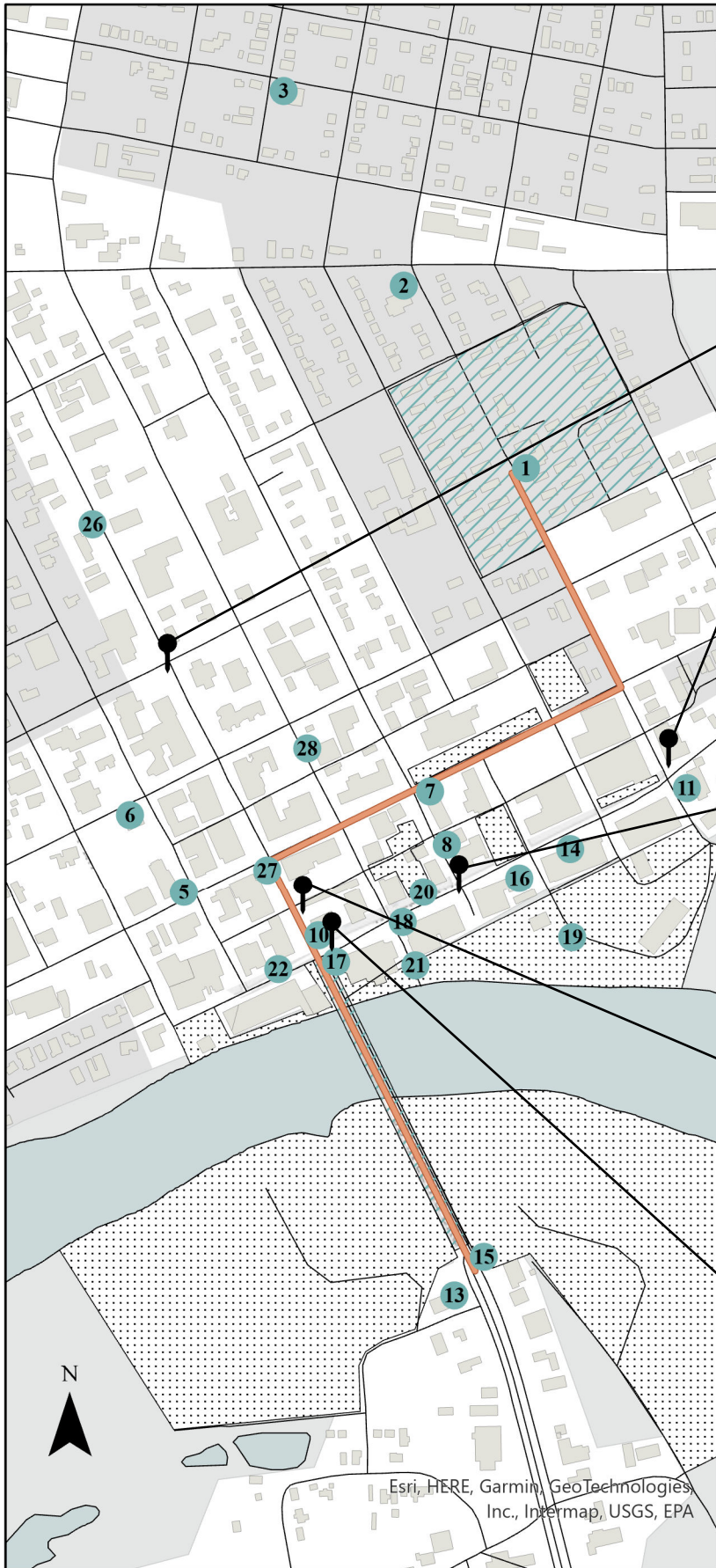
0 0.25 0.5 Miles



Figure 4.19 : A mock up interpretive panel located on Water Avenue.

Envisioning and Locating Wayfinding Signage

Locating wayfinding signage throughout the city will help visitors and residents become better oriented with downtown. These proposed wayfinding locations are meant to direct people to historic sites, museums, and open spaces downtown. They also direct walkers and potentially, drivers to sites outside of downtown like the Jackson House, Selma University, and Live Oak Cemetery.








Wayfinding directs south to: Water Avenue, Riverfront Park, Edmund Pettus Bridge, the National Park Service Selma Interpretive Center, Selma Voting Rights Monument, and The Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail.

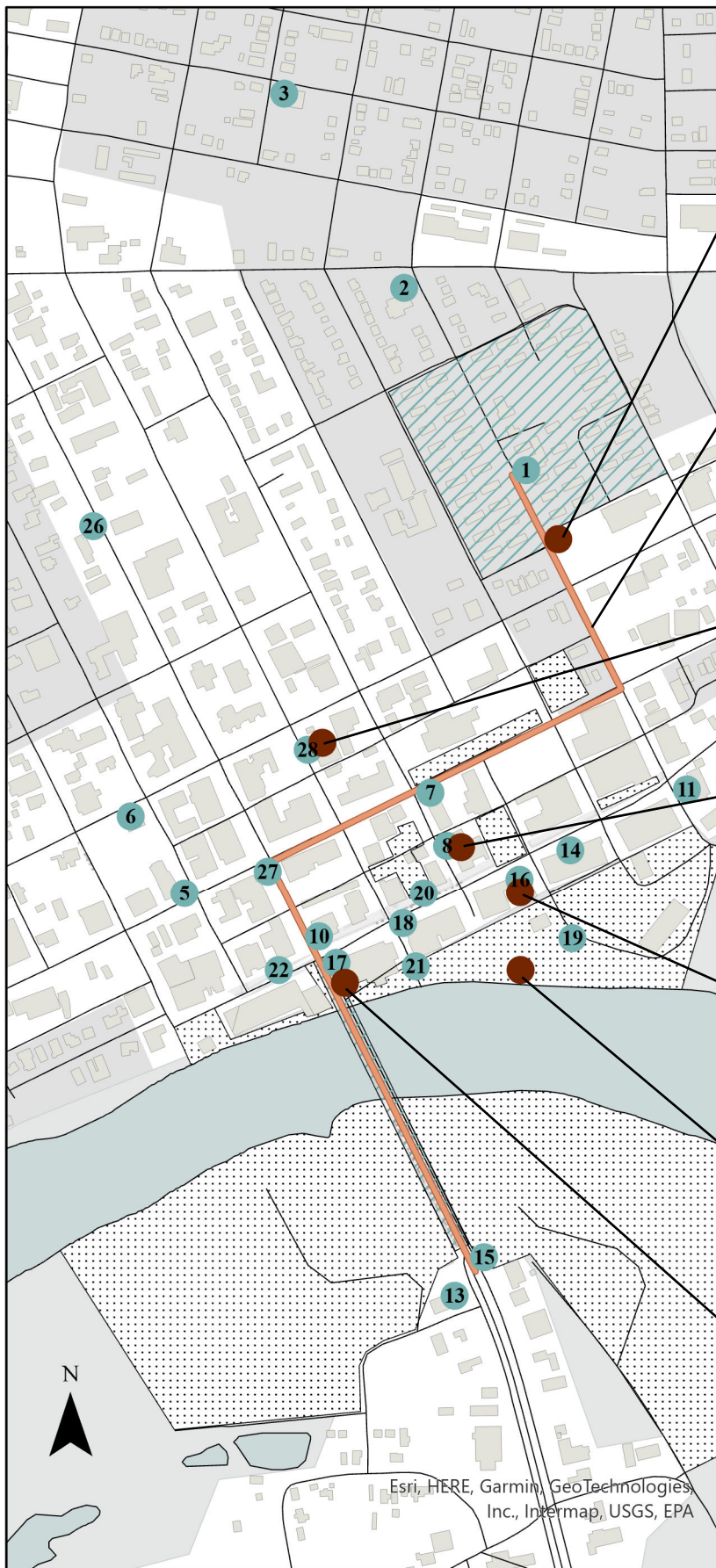
Wayfinding directs north to: Brown Chapel and the G.W. Carver Homes, First (Colored) Baptist, and Green Street Baptist. Wayfinding directs west to: Phoenix Park, Riverfront Park, National Park Service Selma Interpretive Center, Edmund Pettus Bridge, and Songs of Selma Park (information).

Wayfinding directs east to: Edystone Hotel, Old Depot Museum, Ancient African, Enslavement and Civil War Museum, and Riverfront Park. Wayfinding Directs north to: Wilson Community Center (restrooms), future open space.

Wayfinding directs north to: City Hall/Library, Tabernacle Baptist, Selma University, Boynton and Johnson Houses. Wayfinding directs west to: Arsenal Place, Live Oak Cemetary, Civil War Battlefield, Vaughan-SmithermanMuseum , Sturdivant Hall. Wayfinding Directs East to Brown Chapel, Phoenix Park.

Located at Songs of Selma Park and coupled with a larger interpretive panel and a complete map, wayfinding directs to all sites.

-  Wayfinding Sign
-  Historic Site
-  Bloody Souday March Route
-  Historic Site Area
-  Public Open Space



The site of Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church and the George Washington Carver Homes already uses monuments to Dr. Martin Luther King to commemorate the Brown Chapel and King's role in the Civil Rights Movement.

Currently, the route of the Bloody Sunday march is not marked. To commemorate this march on the streets of downtown Selma, graphic elements set within the concrete like lyrics to songs sung by marchers would create a subtle but powerful experience of the historic path through Selma.

A sign commemorates the site of the murder of James Reeb, a pastor from Boston who came to Selma to march with other civil rights activists. A mural exists at the site as well, but is in poor condition. Adding art as a memorial to Reeb or improving the mural at this site could help tell the story of people from all over the country who came to march in 1965.

Renovation of the George C. Wilson Community Center may include the addition of public art, using music to highlight the mid-20th century performances by artists like Duke Ellington and Andy Kirk at the center's auditorium. re

Art that memorializes enslaved people is a part of the adaptive re-use design of the Edistone Hotel, a former site for the trading of enslaved people in the early 19th century. African arts will be present in the public plaza which faces the Riverfront Park and will be open to the public.

In addition to the proposed improvements to Riverfront Park, interactive sculptural pieces would offer space for play and placemaking at the park along the picturesque Alabama River.

Along with the proposed interpretive signage and wayfinding at the Songs of Selma Park, art which honors the Footsoldiers of the March 7, 1965 march would be positioned nicely with views of the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

- Public Art
- Historic Site
- Bloody Sunday March Route
- Historic Site Area
- Public Open Space

Esri, HERE, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc., Intermap, USGS, EPA



Figure 4.20 : A Mural in Progress, (Alabama News Network, 2022)

Making Space for Public Art

Selma has already put the power of public art to use and it can be found in the forms of murals and monuments throughout the city. Art is a powerful way to engage people, especially when connected with other interpretation.

In Conclusion

These introductions, combined with the existing historic sites, museums, open spaces, local businesses, and ongoing re-development projects will help to amplify the telling of Selma's history and promote the revitalization of downtown.

The work that is already being done in downtown Selma inspired this project. The vision for this network of historic sites is to tell more of Selma's history and to build upon the placemaking and community-building work that is being done already, all while respecting Selma's significance to the nation and the world. Networking Selma's incredible assets can encourage people to want to learn more about Selma, something that would be beneficial to all. That feeling of connectedness to justice and humanity that one feels in Selma is something that can inspire people of all backgrounds and help bring people together. Using Selma's historic sites with some simple interventions through wayfinding, art, and interpretation can boost that feeling and help to spread Selma's message.

“While a single, preserved historic place may trigger potent memories, networks of such places begin to reconstruct social memory on an urban scale.”

- Dolores Hayden, The Power of Place

Public Open Space Network

Calvin Nguyen

Project Purpose

The overarching purpose of establishing a public open space (POS) network is to create a more attractive environment for residents and visitors alike. The POS network is meant to work in two ways:

- (1) as a network: with the goal to facilitate an accessible and spatially connected downtown Selma, and
- (2) as a place: with the goal to create desired leisure spaces for downtown patrons and nearby residents.



Cultivate Partnerships



Encourage use of Downtown Buildings



Local Business Development



Amplify History



More Public Open Space



Comprehensive Tourism Strategies

The POS network should increase downtown pedestrian traffic and business patronage, serve as usable public parks for nearby residents -- particularly for east Selma residents, who are disproportionately Black and lower income, and currently have little adequate public open space -- and include multiple stakeholders as both active users and decision-makers in future alterations. Proper maintenance is also crucial to a successful POS network; these changes in POS must be continually maintained to stay effective in addressing their purposes. Finally, the POS network should complement and support historic resources and interpretation -- as a setting for contemplation, rest, and healing.

Considered Properties

1. Historic Riverfront Park (Owner: City of Selma)
2. Song of Selma Park (Owner: City of Selma)
3. Freemason's Building / 902 Water Ave (Owner: Selma Lodge #925 F A & M)
4. Southwest Riverbank (Owner: Rose Sanders; North Star Beloved Community)
5. Southwest Riverfront (Owner: CH & P Properties LLC)
6. Phoenix Park / 1207-1211 Water Ave (Owner: City of Selma)
7. Old Depot Motors Lot (Owner: Hoggle Williams Danny & Sylvia)
8. 19 Franklin St (Owner: various private owners)
9. 118 Washington Ave (Owner: Elaine & Percy Martin)
10. USPS Parking Lot (Owner: City of Selma)
11. Spiller Furniture Parking Lot (Owner: Spiller LLC)
12. 1501 Alabama Ave (Owner: Cadillac GMC)



Current Conditions

Presently, public open space in downtown Selma is not well frequented, relatively isolated, and not well maintained. In downtown itself, there is little pedestrian traffic, and many empty lots with no clear or present use (many adorned with a “For Sale” sign) are interspersed throughout downtown.

At the same time, downtown Selma is situated along the Alabama Riverfront and has an immense Civil Rights history, including the Selma to Montgomery March trail, Edmund Pettus Bridge, and Brown Chapel AME Church. Additionally, there are moments of individual and community placemaking in downtown Selma, including live music outside a restaurant and public art installations.

The proposed POS network is meant to address both the weaknesses of current POS in downtown Selma while taking into account the opportunities and strengths present in downtown Selma’s public spaces.

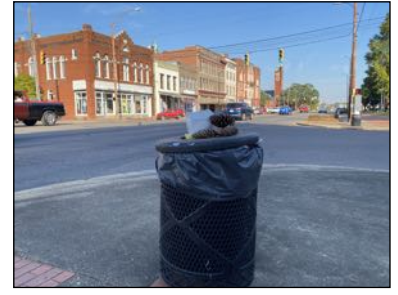
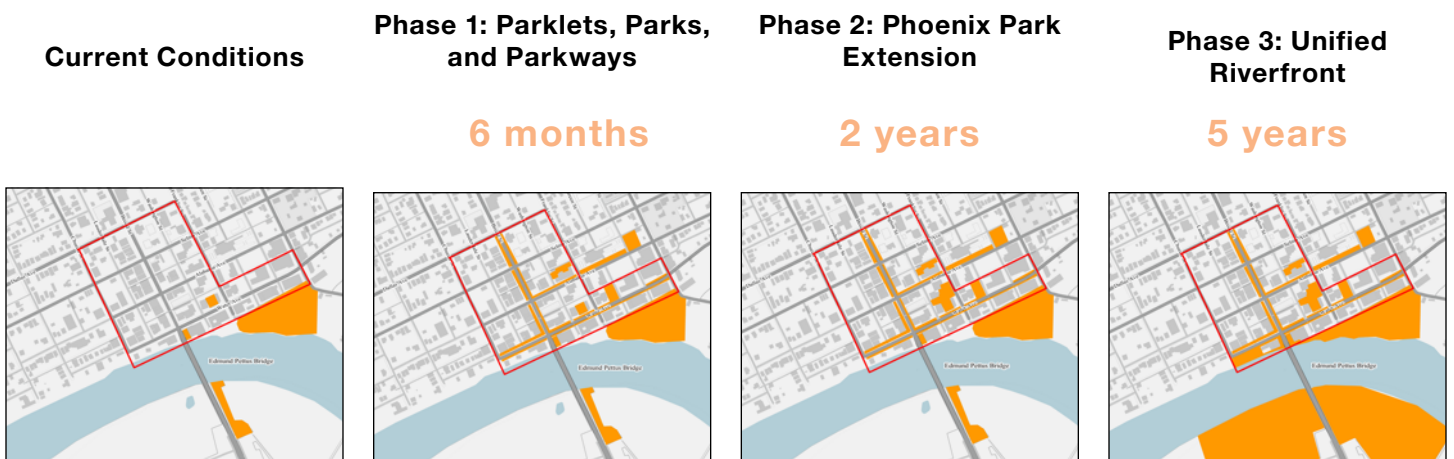


Figure 4.22 : Open Space and Placemaking in Downton Selma

Project Phasing

The proposed POS Network is divided into three phases to meet three different timeframes. Each of these phases is meant to build off the previous, with consideration to potential surrounding developments and financial capabilities within each stage, as indicated by Selma’s current conditions. The maps below plot the usable and activated public open space at each phase in orange, with our studio’s study area outlined in red.



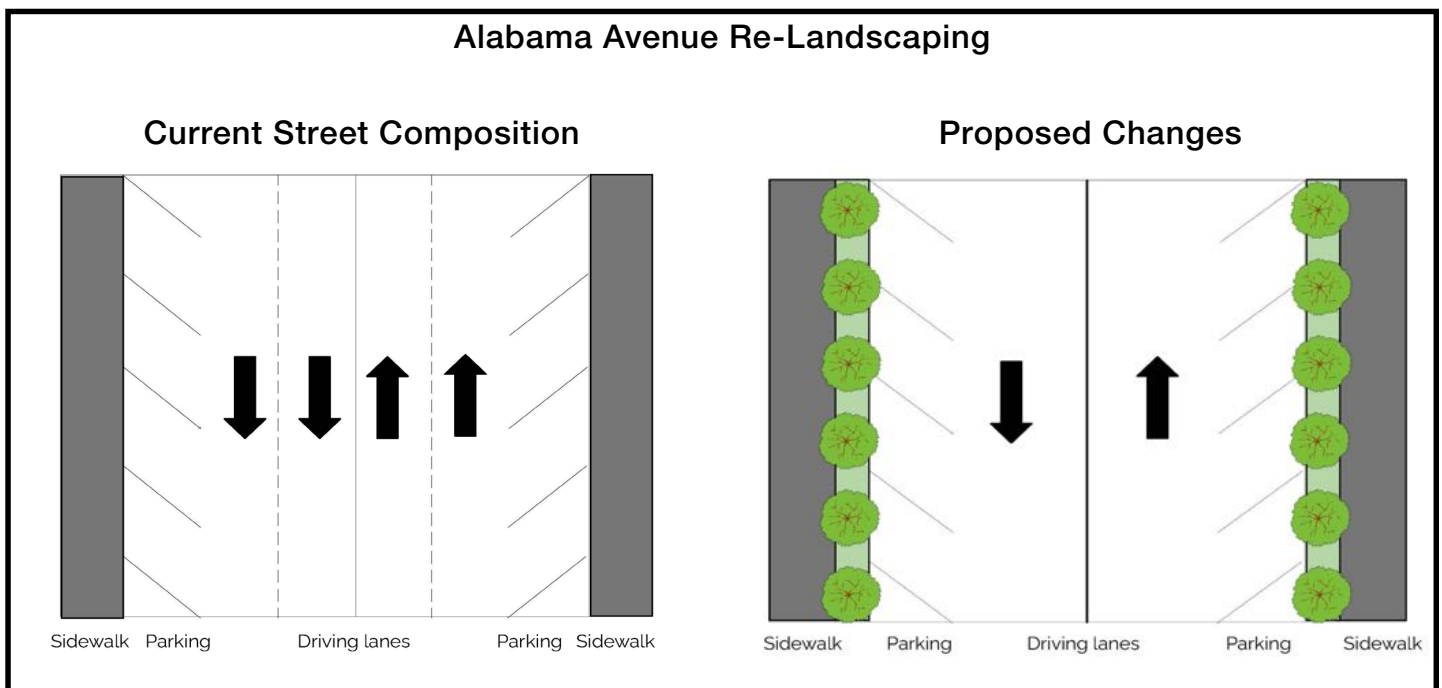
Phase 1: Parklets, Parks, and Parkways (6 months)

In this initial phase, properties identified as part of the POS network north of Water Avenue will be maintained or converted into parklets and parks; additionally, Water Avenue, Broad Street, and the north side of Alabama Avenue will be re-landscaped to serve as parkways to connect and facilitate this POS system. These spaces are meant to increase the public open space in the downtown in order to provide attractive backdrops to downtown businesses, support to pedestrian traffic downtown, while also serving as neighborhood parks for East Selma residents. Moreover, the re-landscaped streets to provide public open space follow the Selma to Montgomery march trails from Brown Chapel AME Church to the Edmund Pettus Bridge (Bloody Sunday, Turnaround Tuesday, and the Selma to Montgomery March), providing space for public history installations, commemoration, and rest along these historic streets.

Interventions include: re-landscaping public sidewalks; adding and maintaining consistent lighting, shade, trash cans, and seating; local rentable park equipment (additional seating, barbecue pits, etc.) program; partnership with ArtsRevive for creative placemaking projects; partnership with local businesses for use of POS equipment and sidewalk space.



**Phase 1: Parklets, Parks, and Parkways
(6months)**



Phase 2: Phoenix Park Extension (2 years)

This phase is the capstone for the POS network north of Water Avenue. Building on the relatively frequent use of Phoenix Park for community events, the greensward will be extended throughout the open space of that block. The goal of this specific project is to support the existing use of Phoenix Park as a community event space, while also programming it to be used as a resting spot for downtown patrons and orienting space for tourists – specifically for those coming via tour buses, which in the future will park at a lot west of the proposed area.

Interventions include: pedestrianization of Hinton Alley between Washington and Franklin; large scale steps along Adler Furniture building for informal seating and landscape variation; orienting signage of downtown Selma; restrooms; additional lighting, shade, trash cans, and seating; additional mural paintings on building exterior.



**Phase 2: Phoenix Park Extension
(2 years)**



Figure 4.23 : Current (left) and proposed (right) of Phoenix Park and block, with views from Water Ave (top) and Washington Street (bottom).

Phase 3: Unified Riverfront (5 years)

The unified riverfront project will deal with properties south of Water Avenue and on either sides of the Alabama River. The unified riverfront is divided into two main projects: the first will build on existing discontinuous open space and potential open space along the northern bank of the Alabama River, spanning from Church Street to Martin Luther King St, unifying them into one large riverfront open space. This project will serve as the primary public open space in downtown Selma, and serve as the venue for large community events. At the same time, it will become second commercial corridor for businesses and institutions on Water Ave, in hopes to increase traffic there as well. The second project within this phase will adopt the space on the southern bank of the river for nature recreational use, increasing the activities offered at Selma and providing infrastructure to connect either side of the Alabama River.

Interventions include: creating unified walkway along Selma riverfront; add retaining wall to prevent floods and support new POS; activate area south of Alabama River for walking trails; add consistent lighting, seating, shade, and trash cans; improve access to riverfront via Water Avenue; add a boat dock for river access on both sides of the river; increase community event programming in Riverfront Park.



**Phase 3: Unified Riverfront
(5 years)**

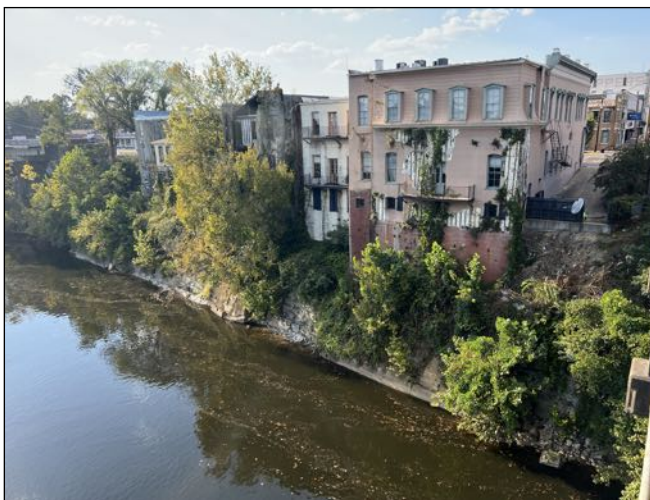


Figure 4.24 : Existing conditions of riverfront west of the Edmund Pettus Bridge



Figure 4.25 : Existing conditions of riverfront beneath bridge in Songs of Selma Park

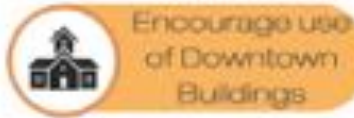
Adaptive Reuse of the George D. Wilson Selma Community Center

Cyrus Yerxa

Adaptive reuse may be a misnomer for this proposal, which culminates in recommendations for a return to the Selma Community Center’s original use: serving the community with multi-functional public facilities. The proposal begins with a rationale and brief site history before offering recommendations for use in three phases and identifying character-defining features that should remain through any building alterations.



Cultivate Partnerships



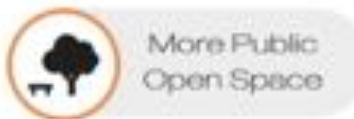
Encourage use of Downtown Buildings



Local Business Development



Amplify History



More Public Open Space



Comprehensive Tourism Strategies

Background and Goals

The Selma Community Center at 16 Franklin Street was built in 1938 with Works Project Administration Funds by a Black architect and builder named George D. Wilson in response to the lack of public facilities available to Black Dallas County residents in a whites-only downtown. The significance of the original design intent is easy to understate. As the seat of a rural county, Selma was the center for business and shopping. When people, including Dallas County’s many Black farmers, traveled to Selma from their country homes, being excluded from bathrooms was a serious issue. Growing out from this core service over the next several decades, the Community Center became the center of Black culture in Dallas County.

The original plans have not been located for review. A 1978 renovation added interior partitions to the first-floor plan. Today it is unoccupied and mainly used as storage for the previous occupants, the Selma Police Department. The goals of the intervention are to

- Reuse one of the unoccupied city owned properties [map]
- Engage a tenant who can become a financial partner and building steward while working to interpret the building history
- Provide public facilities per the original building program
- Share the story of a community monument

Rationale

The building is city-owned. It poses a “small-win” opportunity for the municipality in the form of a well-managed building that officials can point to as an anchor to larger reactivation efforts. When residents trust the city and believe in its efficacy, new opportunities open up.

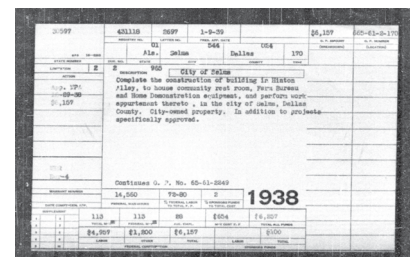
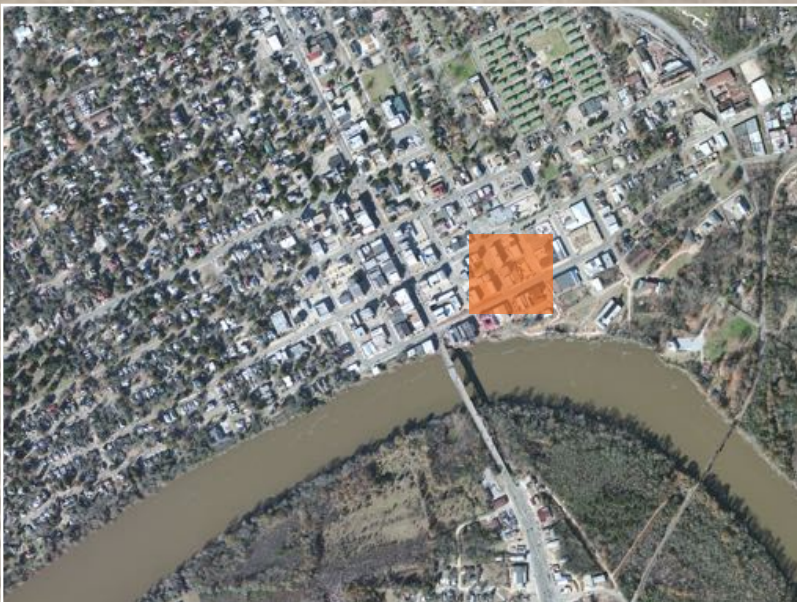


Figure 4.26 1938 Works Project Administration project application reference card.

Figure 4.27 : The George D. Wilson Selma Community Center at 16 Franklin Street, Selma, AL. Photo Credit: Randy Mason.





The timing is good. The Planning Department has applied for a National Parks Service grant, thereby expressing their commitment to seeing the building interpreted and reused. They should narrow their focus to this project until material progress is underway.

The Center was purpose built for Black Selmians by a Black architect. Amplifying these attributes alone, in a downtown full of white architecture, is not a solution to centuries of racism. Telling this story, though, expands collective memory about who civic architecture was for and how it was achieved in pre-King Alabama. With the right interpretation, the building becomes a celebration of Black joy and success that fills a gap in the city's visible history between the Civil War and Bloody Sunday.

The Community Center is also near the center of our



Figure 4.28 : Faye Messner's heritage tourism map. Community Center at black box.



Figure 4.29 : Data: Dallas County Tax Assessor. Map and figures

proposed “box/line/circle,” which favors the east side, the riverfront, and the stretch of the National Historic Trail from Brown Chapel AME to the Edmund Pettus Bridge [see Faye Messner’s tourism map, page 76]. Its location is important to its interpretation and its ability to contribute to adjacent projects like the The Anchor at 15 Franklin Street, a recently opened events space, and the soon to open African American history museum at the corner of Water and Broad Street. It is a contributing structure to the Ice House Historic District and the Civil Rights Multiple Property Listing, each on the National Register of Historic Places. Its refined 1930s façade provides a clear character defining element that appeals to a broader historic preservation audience. Finally, its manipulable floor plan and history of adaptation lend itself to serving a variety of needs for the City.

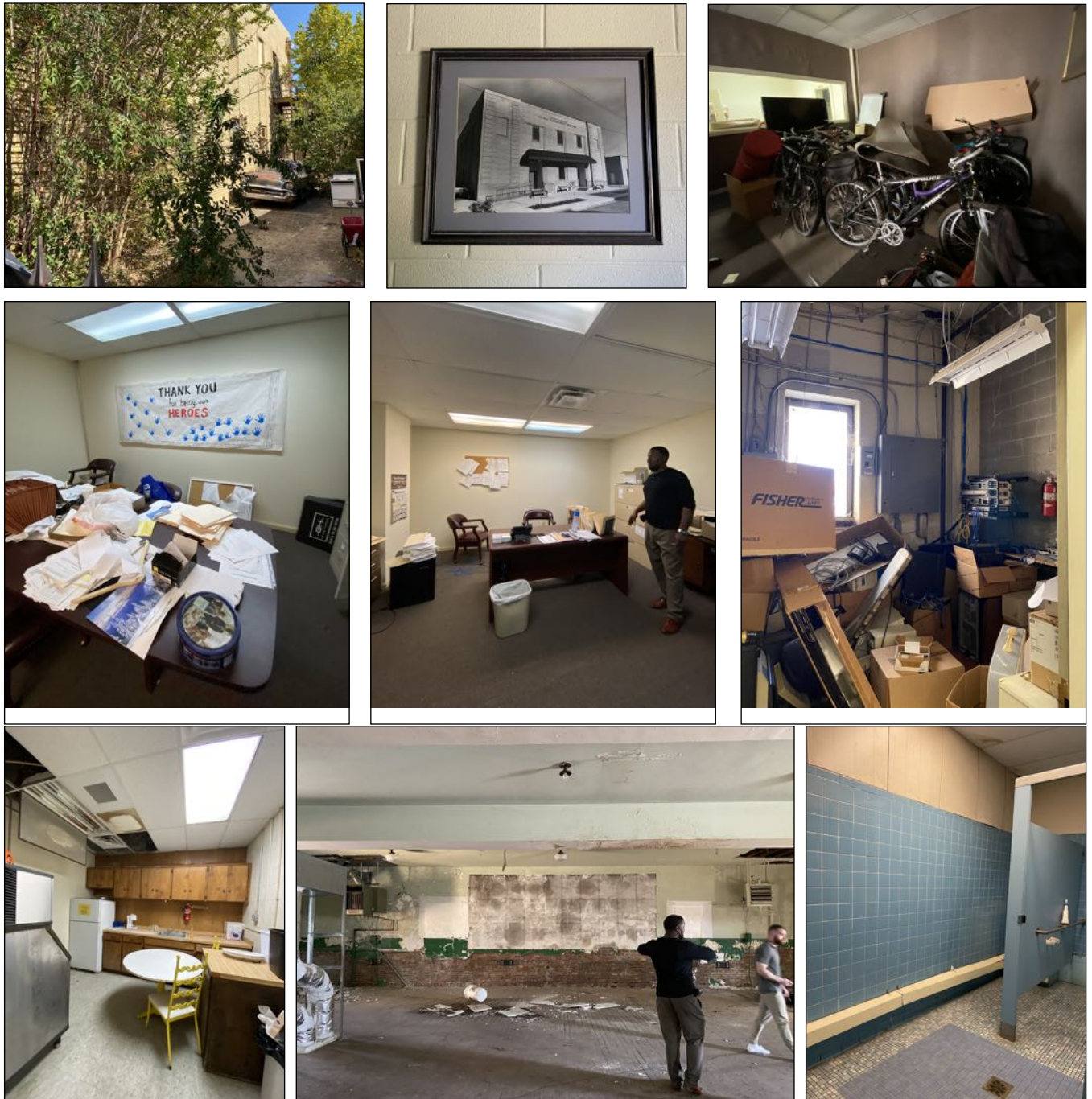


Figure 4.30 : October 2022 interior photos of the Community Center.

Recommendations

The following recommendations situate the Selma Community Center as an instrument to Selma’s larger reactivation efforts and as an intrinsically valuable heritage asset. The Community Center started in 1938 with modest goals but grew into the “pride of South Central Alabama.”⁵⁸ The diversity of uses, made possible by a manipulable floorplan, foreshadow the building’s potential for any adaptive reuse project. The parameters to design are owner objectives and financial parameters, not space parameters.

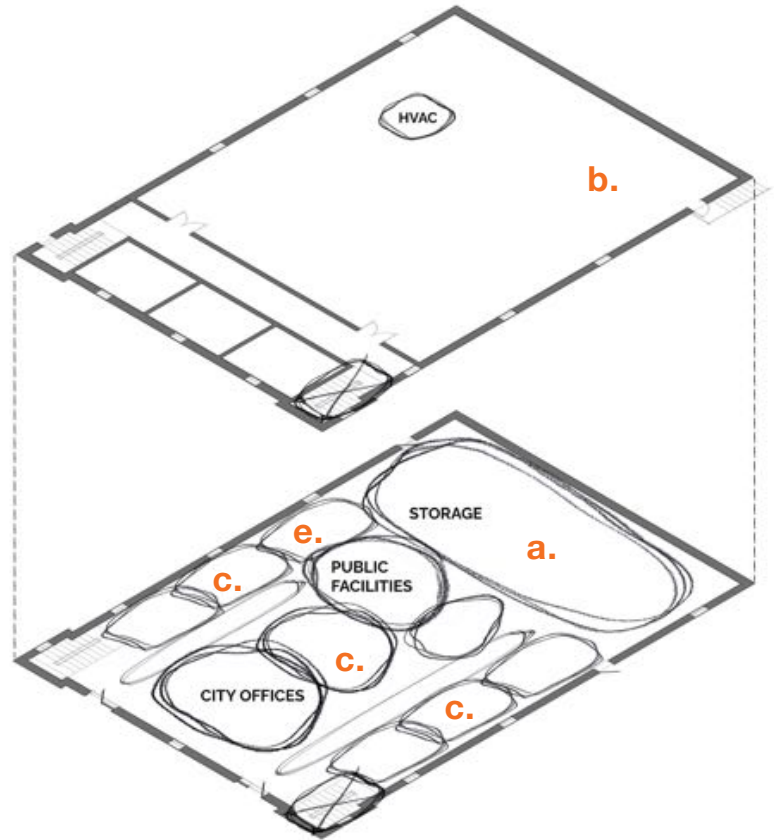
Several reuse schemes will work. A clear-eyed interpretation of its original design and history of use demands some portion

remain publicly accessible. Given the current use as city storage, some percentage of the program should also remain municipal. As is evident in the building’s history, “public” and “municipal” can splinter into various events and activities; in the long-term, some or all of the auditorium should be made accessible or reserve-able to the public. In the meantime, the City should pursue a tenant they can trust as financial partners and building stewards. The City needs a revenue-neutral or positive plan in the short term. Phases are offered more to group recommendations than to suggest a timeline.

Phase I: Repair and Occupy

Phase I recommends that the City re-occupy the building to establish the maximum footprint needed for its own use while organizing storage, addressing physical and technical issues, and envisioning a space plan for Phase II tenants.

- a. Clean and organize for new storage plan
- b. Repair roof and second story damage
- c. Remove non-structural, non-historic partitions to suit new first floor plan
- d. Repair and repaint awning
- e. Open bathrooms to public



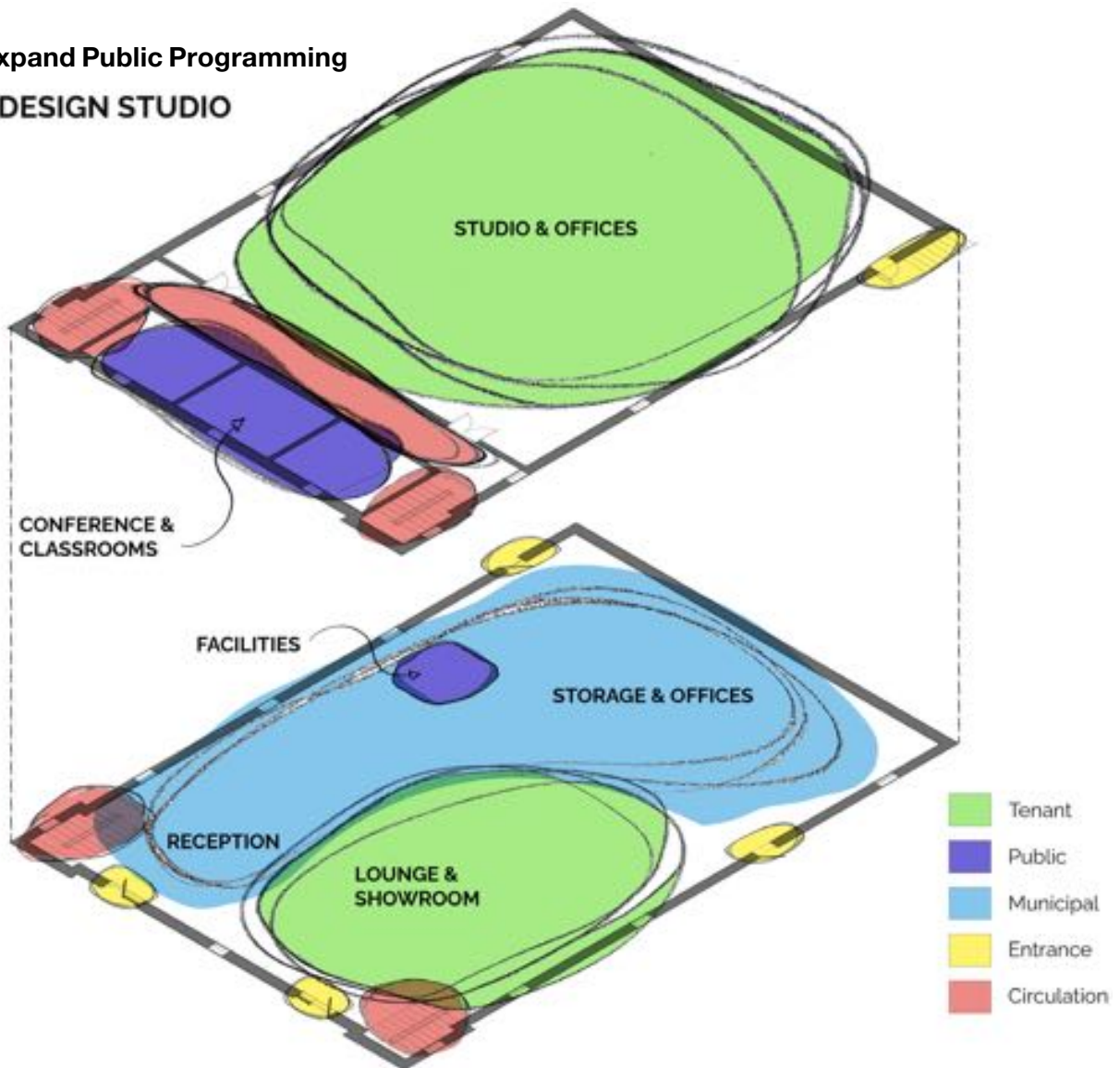
Phase II: Engage Potential Tenants

Phase II begins a conversation between the City and potential tenants which includes envisioning and constructing a second floor space (and first floor lobby within the South side entrance) that works for both parties and the site's historic interpretation (see Tolerance for Change, below). The university architecture studio for instance, could help realize a vision for the space and, as more transient tenants, could vacate if and when public demand for the space grows. Potential clients include:

- University satellite
- Co-working space
- International Paper
- Bush Hog, Inc
- Insurance Agency
- Urgent care clinic
- Law offices

Phase III: Expand Public Programming

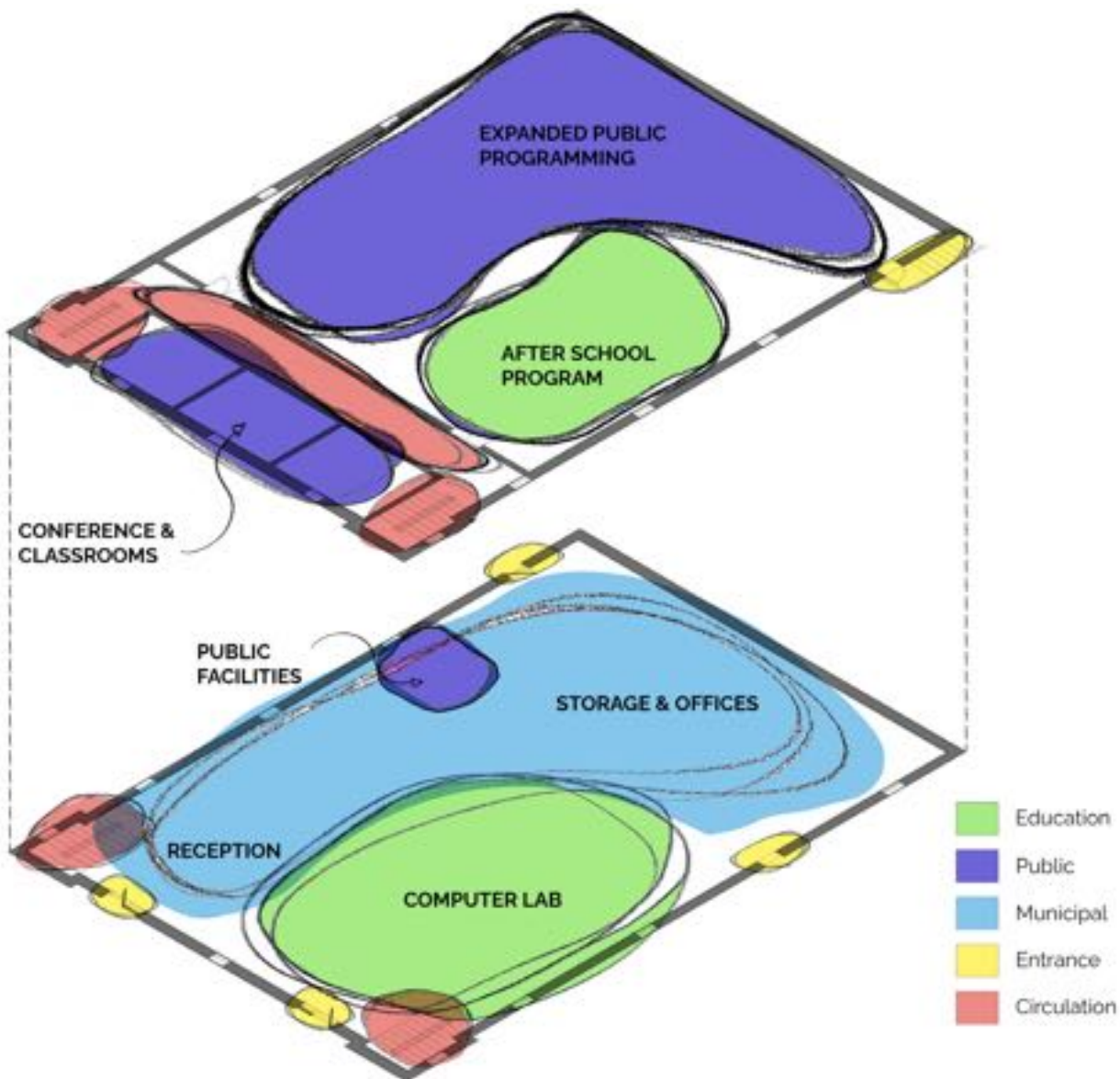
DESIGN STUDIO



Phase III anticipates the effect of a clear interpretation of the building history and a commitment to reusing the building as a Community Center with augmented public programming and a reduced tenant footprint.

- **Increase accessibility via elevators at current rear exterior stairs**
- **Engage public schools, local non-profits with space needs**
- **Host regional artists, musicians in a reimagined auditorium space**

The Selma Community Center was designed and used like a room of requirement – its large open spaces were readily adapted to serve a variety of needs. These recommendations are a continuation of that philosophy. Edit the non-historic, non-structural interior additions to the building to serve current needs and its historic purpose.



Tolerance for Change

Tolerance for change highlights the importance of the site's character-defining features. It is based on presumed originality, contribution to the Modernist aesthetic, and the original and proposed uses.

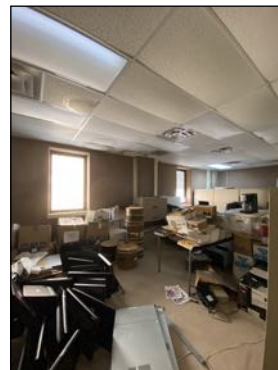
Low

- Exterior
 - Awning
 - Parapet coping
 - Mounted letters
 - Facade
 - Dual entrances – public and private
- Interior
 - Open floor plan upstairs
 - Dual double doors with transoms
 - Exit to rear stairs (or elevator per Phase III)



High

- Exterior
 - Fencing at side yard to Sparkles and Hinton Alley
 - Windows (installed 1978)
 - Landscaping
- Interior
 - 1978 partitions
 - Drop ceilings



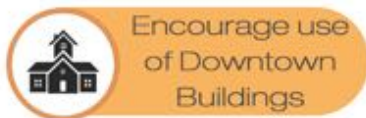
Funding Possibilities

- National Park Service Civil Rights Grant (up to \$750,000)
- Getty Foundation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund Conserving Black Modernism (\$150,000)

Restoration and Adaptive Reuse of the Edistone Hotel, Warehouse, and Public Open Space

Miles Wu

The goal of this individual project is to envision the adaptive reuse and restoration of the Edistone Hotel building, surrounding buildings and public spaces. This reuse will be accomplished by updating the building for commercial and public use including local businesses, a cultural center, a restaurant, and a historic enslavement museum. A phased development plan has been suggested as guidance for future restoration and investment in the downtown building.



This individual project covers the restoration and adaptive reuse of Edistone building, the courtyard, the warehouse across the street in the park, and the public open spaces in between referred to in this report as the campus. The Edistone hotel and campus are located on the south side of Water Avenue facing the Riverfront Park.

To put the strategies into practice, this individual project has four development proposals as a response: restore the historic features of the old buildings to amplify history; adaptively reuse the current historic buildings, create affordable commercial rental spaces for local business to develop; update the open spaces with flexible functions to create more open space and encourage more public activities. This project creates a multi-functional public block for locals and tourists to encourage more extended the lengths of time spent in Selma. It serves as a transition site for Faye's network of historic sites and connects to Calvin's public open space green belt.



Figure 4.31 : Proposed Building Reuse Rendering

History and Physical Conditions

The Edistone hotel building was built in 1855 and it is one of the oldest historic buildings in Water Avenue Historic District, having witnessed Selma's history of enslavement, the civil war, reconstruction and civil rights. The basement of the hotel building was used for the trading of enslaved people according to narratives we heard from locals during our trip to Selma. During the Reconstruction period, the Edistone building served as the site of the Freedmen's Bureau Office providing relief and opportunities for formerly enslaved Black Americans to become self-sufficient.

The complex history of this former hotel makes it unique in Selma and in the U.S. as one of the few remaining antebellum waterfront hotels. This history makes the Edistone Hotel and Campus an important place for telling the comprehensive history of Selma. The opportunities for interpreting these historical moments at this site are plentiful and have been incorporated into this design proposal.

Although the project site has strong historic integrity, the buildings and open spaces are not in good condition. The open spaces between the buildings and the riverfront park lack public facilities and the road is under maintained. The warehouse's roof has deteriorated, and windows and doors are missing. The courtyard is occupied by rubbish. On all of the facades, the brick has disintegrated and has bio-growth. In addition, the cornice and roof have deteriorated.

In order to carry out the recommendations for this proposal, more comprehensive condition and structural assessments are required. Ongoing studies of the property can help inform the design proposals made in for this report.

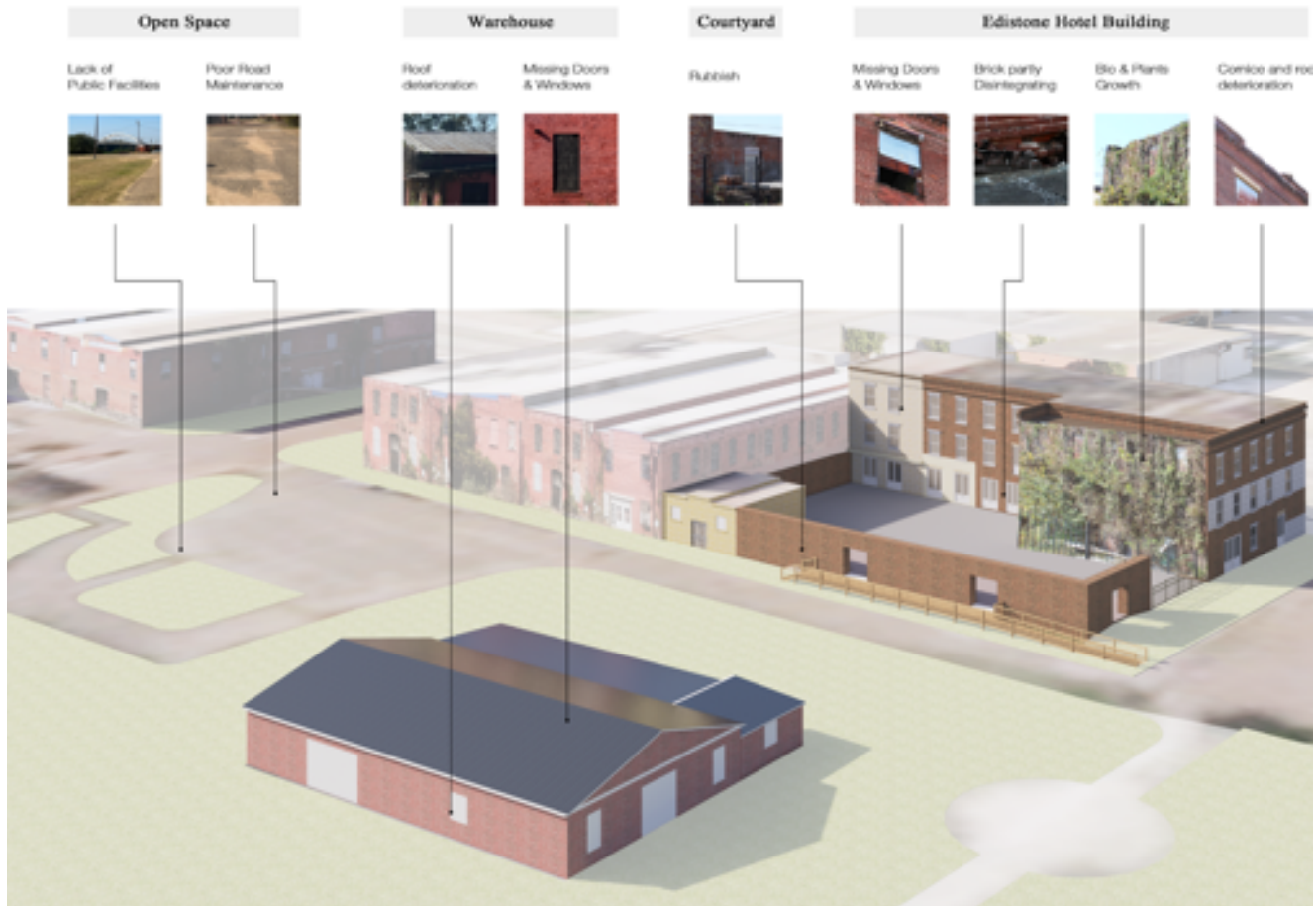


Figure 4.32 : Site Building Condition Pathology

Restoration and Adaptive Reuse Strategies

Create Public Spaces for Community and Tourism



Restoration and Adaptive Reuse of Buildings



Catalyze the Reactivation of Water Avenue and Public Open Space



Phased Development Plan

6 months



- restore the Edystone buildings 1st floor for commercial use.
- renovate warehouse building.
- improve road conditions.
- create pop up bar/restaurant
- add Public facilities.

2 years



- restore the Edystone buildings upper floors for public use.
- restore the building facade
- build historical museum.
- build fixed bar/ restaurant.

5 years



- catalyze Water Avenue neighborhood reactivation
- Support the surrounding business connect the green open space belt.

Restoration and Adaptive Reuse Strategies

Based on the preservation strategies, the restoration and adaptive reuse strategies for the campus open space encompass: the creation of public spaces for community gathering and tourism activities; the restoration of historic buildings to revitalize the historic integrity and to engage more people downtown; the redevelopment of Water Avenue and public open space.

A phased development plan is suggested for the buildings that has 3 phases to complete the revitalization process: 6 months, 2 years, and 5 years of development plans.

The phased development plan will create an affordable way to renew the site and will help better manage the investment and groups involved. With the success of the previous phased development, funds like the rent of the commercial spaces can be brought back in to fund the later physical renovation process.

Current condition of the sites



Renovated sites in 5 years



Edistone Renovation Strategies

6 months



- restore the cornice, facade and roof.



- add porch for historic integrity.



- restore 1st floor for commercial use.



2 years



- restore upper floors for cultural public use.



- build historical museum



- clean courtyard



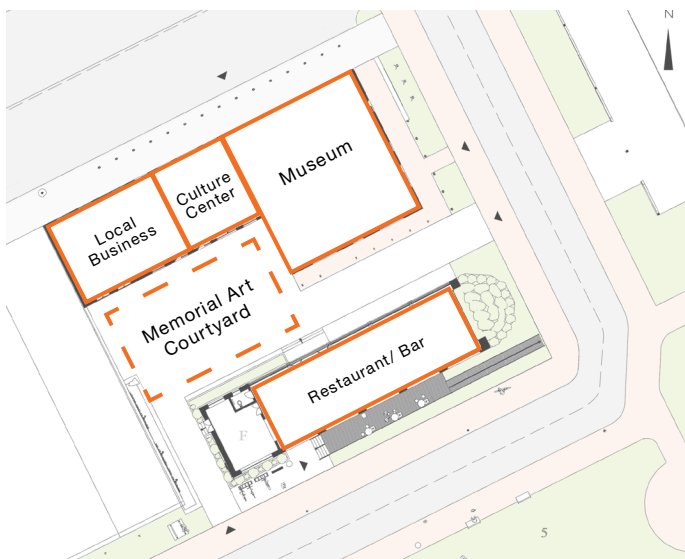
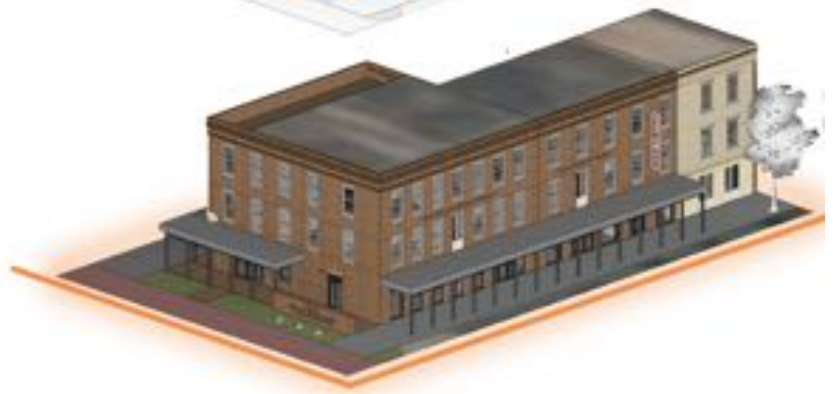
5 years



- catalyze Water Avenue



- connect the green open space.



Memorial Function Network

The museum at the first floor and basement, the cultural center, and the memorial art courtyard will strongly connect with each other to tell the story of enslavement.

Restoration and Adaptive reuse of Edistone Hotel Building

The Edistone hotel building is proposed to be turned into a multi-functional public building in which an memorial museum, a cultural center, a bar/ restaurant, and a memorial art courtyard are added. It will help us promote the comprehensive understanding of the historical significance of Selma, and it will also attract more locals and tourists to the waterfront area by providing multiple activities.

6 months: restoring the building's facade; adding commercial use on the first floor; adding a porch for historic integrity and also for safety during the facade restoration; cleaning the courtyard to open a space for the memorial art exhibition.

2 years: restoring upper floors for cultural public use; opening historic enslavement museum on the first floor and basement with the basement serving as historic evidence.

5 years: Catalyzing development and economic revitalization surrounding neighborhood.

Current Condition



Renovation Proposal

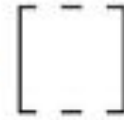




Partially remove the wall to enlarge space



Add facilities & stairs to ensure safety

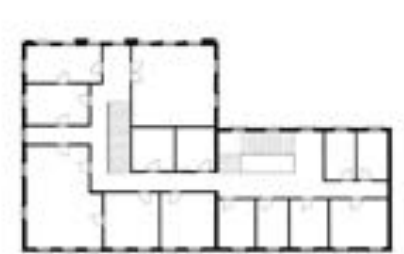
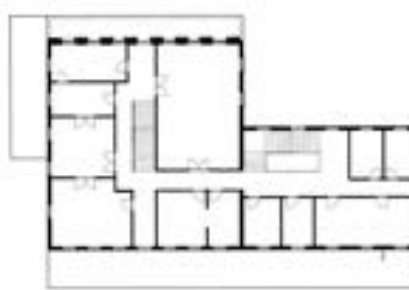
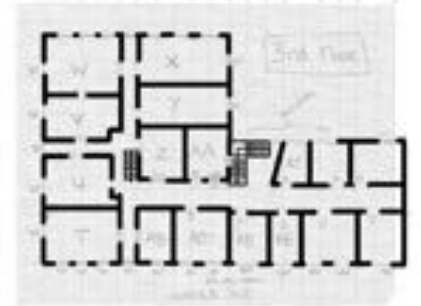
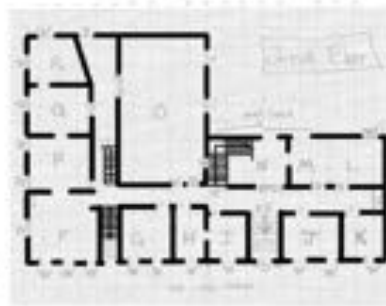


Add openings to improve natural lighting.

First Floor *Grand Floor*

Second Floor

Third Floor



Restoration and Adaptive reuse of Edystone Hotel Building

Based on the existing floor plan, changes to the interior reflect potential new uses with enlarged room spaces, and facilities like stairs, an elevator, and bathrooms. The courtyard will be turned into a memorial art exhibition and gathering space.

Memorial Art Courtyard



Current condition of side building



Renovated into a side entrance to courtyard



Current Condition



Renovation Proposal



Side Building Strategies

6 months



- build a new steel frame shell to create space
- add openings on the side wall, build kitchen
- demolish the back to open a side entrance

2 years

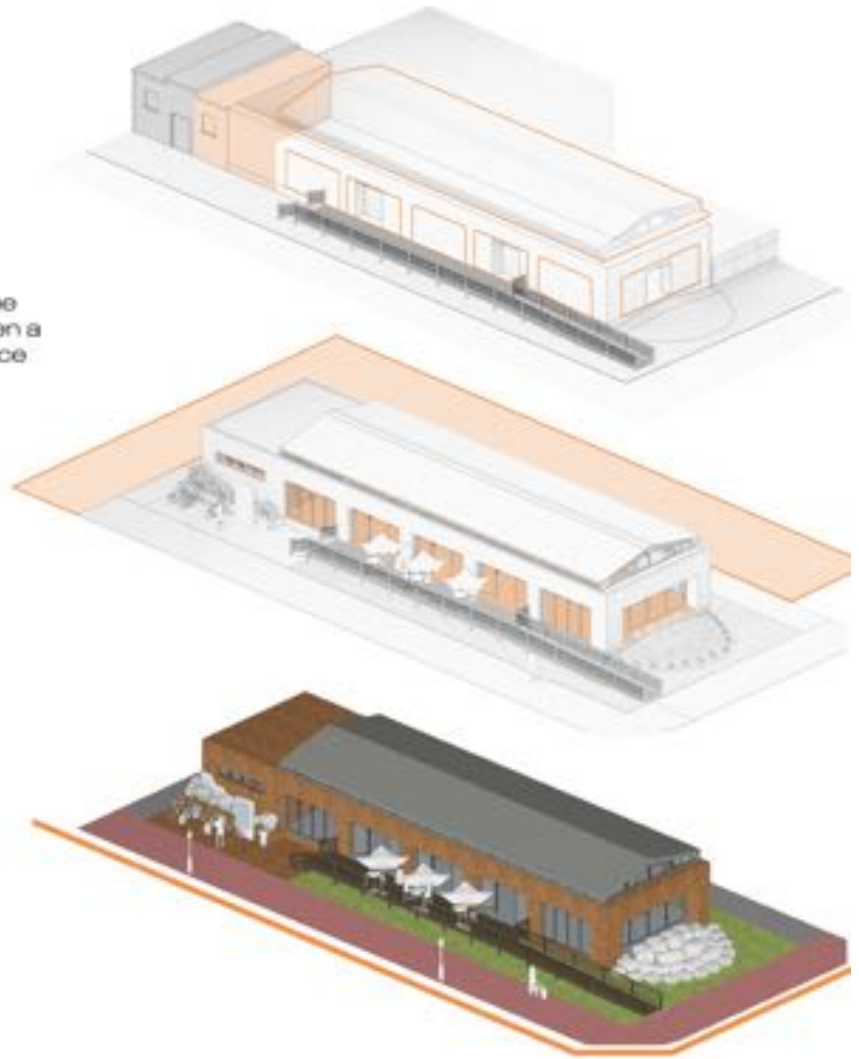


- pop up bar/ restaurant switch to fixed
- create a memorial historic art courtyard

5 years



- catalyze Water Avenue
- connect the green open space



Restoration and Adaptive reuse of Side Building

The side building is proposed for adaptive reuse as a restaurant/ bar site. At the very beginning of the reuse process, the site will provide space for holding the local pop up bar/ restaurant for activities on weekends. When the number of visitors starts to increase, the site can switch into a fixed bar/ restaurant.

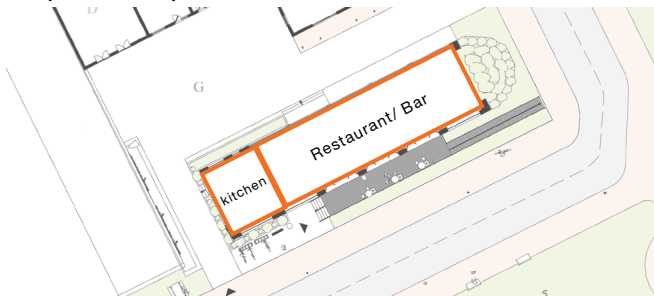
6 months: add a metal shell, add a kitchen, add openings, and create a side entrance to the courtyard from the Riverfront Park.

2 years: convert the pop-up restaurant to a fixed kitchen/bar.

Current condition of side building



Adaptive reuse plan



Renovated side entrance



Current Condition



Renovation Proposal



Warehouse Strategies

6 months



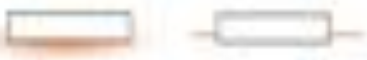
- build a new steel frame shell
- add openings, build restrooms
- demolish the old roof and joists, open the wood wall

2 years

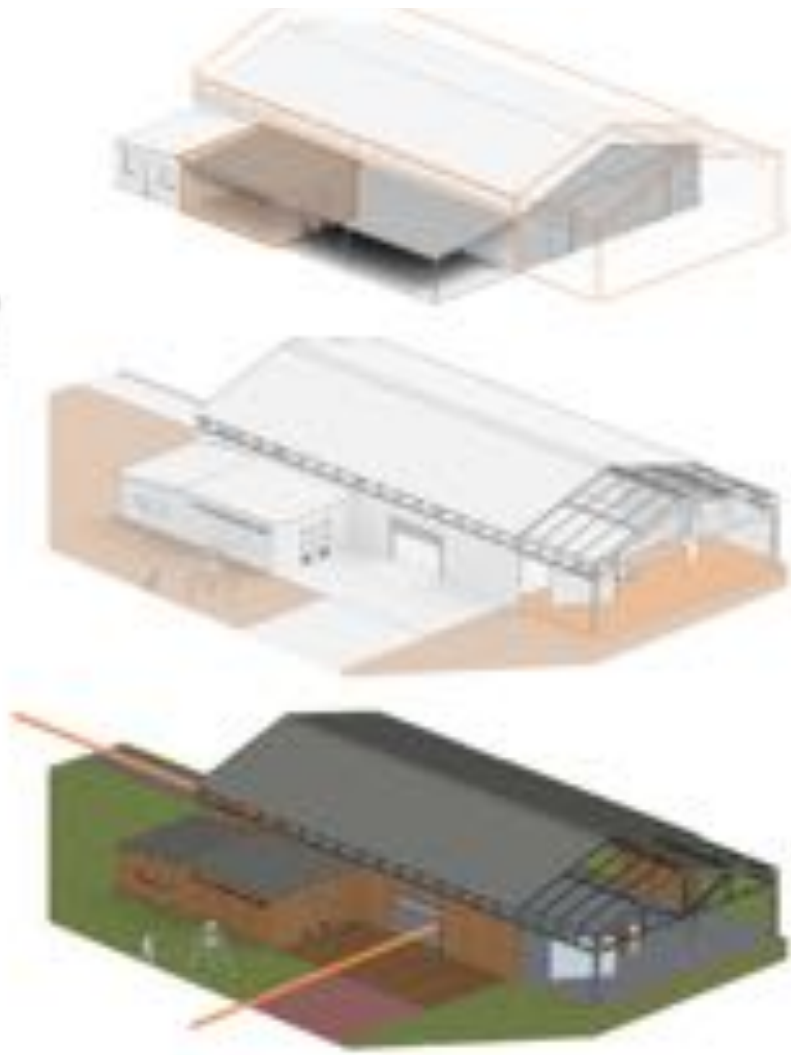


- create public stage
- create a flexible playground for multipurpose use

5 years



- connect to Water Avenue neighborhood
- connect the green open space



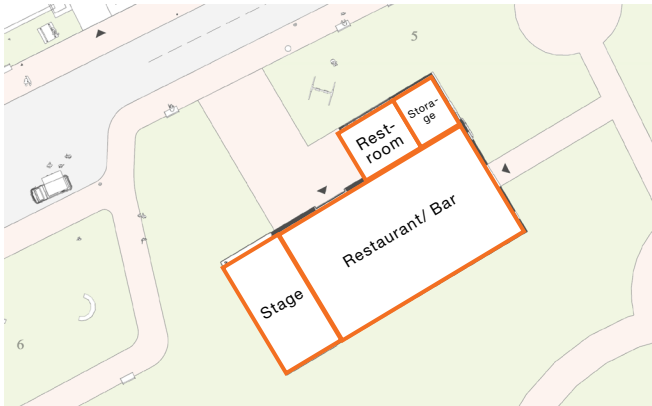
Restoration and Adaptive reuse of warehouse

The warehouse is currently owned by the city and was planned to be reused as a public bathroom. In order to make the best use of its space and location, the building is proposed as a multi functional site for live shows and meetings. A new metal shell will replace the deteriorated roof to enlarge the interior space. Also, a stage, a public bathroom, and a storage room will be added.

6 months: add steel frame shell to renovated the space.

2 years: Hold multiple themed activities.

Adaptive reuse plan



Current Condition



Renovation proposal



Interior meeting space and stage proposal



Current Condition



Renovation Proposal



Side Building Strategies

6 months

- improve road conditions, add sidewalks using brick



- add public facilities for crowded areas to safety



- create flexible open spaces for different seasonal events

2 years



- catalyze Water Avenue neighborhood



- connect the green open spaces



Restoration and Adaptive

Reuse of Open Spaces

The street located between the Edystone Hotel building and the Riverfront Park used to be a car-accessible road. In the renovation proposal, the surface material of the road will be restored into bricks to unify it with the historic style. More public facilities like benches, awnings, and picnic tables will be added to provide spaces for visitors to stay and relax. _____+The open space will be managed as a flexible space that can be extended to host the seasonal crowds that comes to Selma.

6 months: Improve the road condition; add sidewalks; add public facilities for the crowds to stay; create a flexible open field for seasonal events.

Public infrastructure proposal



Adaptive reuse proposal



Current Condition



Renovation Proposal



Getting It Done: Economic Incentives, Capital, and Funding Opportunities on the Local Level

Scott Gerlica

This individual project aims to recommend lists of policy incentives and funding options the local Selma government can implement and use to assist in revitalizing Downtown Selma. If comprehensively applied, this intervention can achieve all of our strategies but is directly relevant to the following strategies:

- Develop Local Business
- Encourage use of downtown buildings



Cultivate Partnerships



Encourage use of Downtown Buildings



Local Business Development



Amplify History



More Public Open Space



Comprehensive Tourism Strategies

The idea for this individual project arose after our conversation with Selma's Mayor and Planning & Development Department. They understood the importance of preserving Selma's heritage but were rightfully very concerned about funding. Selma currently does not have any incentives for preservation or development. This intervention will prove that incentives and funding options are available at different costs, levels, and timelines for historic preservation.

Downtown Selma was the historic center of economic, social, and civic life in Selma, and it continues to serve that purpose today – on a smaller scale. Today, due to the NPS Interpretative Center and the Edmund Pettus Bridge, downtown Selma is the central place for heritage tourists to visit in Selma. Through population decline, local market and industry stagnation, newer national corporate development north of J.L. Chestnut Jr. Blvd, and centuries of economic discrimination against Black Selmians (who comprise over 80% of the Selma population), many businesses have closed or moved out of Downtown Selma. This has left almost half the buildings vacant or underutilized from absentee owners who have no incentive to invest in their properties. Tourists have limited options for retail, restaurants, and hospitality near sites of interest, so they do not stay for an extended time or spend money in Selma. More importantly, Downtown Selma cannot serve its historical purpose to the locals as effectively as it once had.

The goal is to revitalize Downtown Selma through community investment, new local businesses, and improving occupancy rates to serve Selma's locals better and create a welcoming environment for tourists to visit, stay, and spend money through preserving Downtown's historic fabric. The strategies and policies that incentivize rehabilitation are helpful for places like Selma, where rent and commercial real estate values are low. Often, the high costs of historic rehabilitation projects that follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which the Selma Historic Commission uses when issuing Certificates of Appropriateness for historic property work, exceed the value of the finished property. It would not make financial sense to undertake the project. When owners or developers add incentives to their capital stack, the projects become more feasible.

Along with improving the experience and preserving the tangible and intangible heritage of Downtown, incentives and funding for Downtown Development will create jobs, bring money into the local economy, increase the number of local businesses.



Figure 4.33 : Selma YMCA Building

Incentives

This study recognizes the obstacles Selma's local government currently faces when considering the following incentives. First, local government funding is limited, so direct grants or project funding is not immediately feasible. Next, there is a lack of human resources to accomplish the extra work needed to implement the policies. For example, historic preservation staff will be necessary to process the applications, determine eligibility, and track the development project. Selma's historic preservation staff position is currently vacant (as of December 2022). Furthermore, violations of Selma's historic preservation ordinance's deferred maintenance and demolition by neglect have not been enforced. However, Selma has advantages over comparable cities. Selma has an existing historic preservation infrastructure. The city is a Certified Local Government, which gives it access to the Federal Historic Preservation Fund and technical assistance from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Selma has four established National and Locally Registered Historic Districts comprising hundreds of properties

that can be eligible for incentives. Additionally, Selma has established business incubation organizations, like the Chamber of Commerce and Arsenal Place Accelerator, along with Selma University and George Wallace Community College, which have business programs. These programs can be incorporated into the development and implementation of these incentives. Finally, Selma has name recognition. Everyone is rooting for Selma, and many non-profit organizations would be more than willing to help fund its economic revitalization efforts.

After considering these conditions, this individual project proposes twelve incentive recommendations for the City of Selma. The incentives are divided into three groups: tax relief, financing, and programs. The required funding, amount of human resource labor, and timeline have been characterized for each incentive.



Tax Incentives:

Incentive	Cost	Labor	Timeline
Tax Abatement	Low	Low	1-2 Years
Tax Freeze	Low	Low	1-2 Years
Tax Deferral	Low	Low	1-2 Years
Sales Tax Relief	Low	Medium	1-2 Years

Financing:

Incentive	Cost	Labor	Timeline
Revolving Fund	Medium	Medium	2-3 Years
Low Interest Loans	Medium	Medium	4-6 Years
Direct Grants	High	Medium	4-6 Years
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	Low	High	7-10 Years

Programs:

Incentive	Cost	Labor	Timeline
Rehab Project Streamlining	Low	Medium	1-2 Years
Mortgage Guarantees	Medium	Medium	2-3 Years
Artist Relocation Program	Medium	High	2-3 Years
City-Owned Property Transfer	Low	High	3-5 Years

Tax Incentives

The federal government and most states provide income tax incentives for qualified rehabilitations on income-producing registered properties; however, local municipalities can also enact similar incentives on taxes they levy: property and sales tax.

Tax Abatements

Tax abatements are the most flexible property tax incentive options. Typically over five to ten years after an approved rehabilitation on a commercial historic property is completed, the property's assessable tax rate can be abated by a certain percentage. For example, Dallas County assesses the market value at 20% to determine property taxes. If the assessment percentage (20) was abated by 50% to 10, the tax payer would pay half their normal taxes. This is a low-cost incentive to implement. If the property doubles in value, as was the case with the recently rehabbed Queen City Market, property tax collection would remain the same, and sales tax will increase from the new business.

Tax Freeze

Tax freeze implementation is similar to tax abatements, but the property's assessed value will freeze at the lower pre-rehabilitation value instead of decreasing the tax rate. Property tax collection will remain the same for the determined freeze timeline, and developers are rewarded for investing money into Downtown Selma. Tax freezes and tax abatements can be combined, applying a tax-free for several years followed by a tax abatement period.

Tax Deferral

This incentive defers the increased taxes resulting from a qualified rehabilitation on a property for a set number of years or until the sale of the property. After that, the city collects the deferred taxes. Essentially, this is like a no-interest loan from the city to the property owner.

Sales Tax Relief

Cities can also reduce the sales tax charged for expenses relating to the rehabilitation project, like construction materials. More so, all projects within the designated downtown boundary could be exempt from materials sales tax. Along with financially incentivizing development projects, this would also incentivize contractors to buy materials from Selma businesses. More work within the city would be required to process the qualified purchase.

Financing

The City of Selma recognizes the value of preserving its historic built environment, and direct funding of projects is one of the most powerful preservation incentives. However, these incentives have the greatest start-up costs. While considering the need for more capital available to the city and workers to manage the funds properly, these recommendations fall further down the timeline, especially when the positive effects of simpler, less costly incentives appear.

Revolving Fund

Revolving funds are a helpful preservation tool for city governments that want to support historic preservation but may not have the resources to fund rehabilitation projects directly. The city would establish and give money from it to historic property redevelopers at little or no interest. The money can fund any part of the project, like acquisition, rehabilitation, or site work. Once the project is completed, and the property is sold or leased, the proceeds are then returned to the fund, where they can be used to support the acquisition and rehabilitation of additional properties. Revolving funds have become a popular and sustainable preservation tool. In fact, the Selma-Dallas County Historic Preservation Society has initiated a feasibility study for a revolving fund in Selma, providing an excellent partnership opportunity for the city.

Low-Interest Loans

Instead of a revolving fund, the city could use low-interest, more traditional loans with a set term to fund historic preservation projects. The city can administer the loan in two ways. The city could lend the money directly to the property owner or developer. The city could also partner with a local bank or credit union. The city may provide some of the funding for the loan, and the lending institution may provide the rest. These loans may be provided at a lower interest rate than normal ones and have more flexible repayment terms. Interest plays a significant role in the developer's expected rate of return, and a low-interest rate could ensure the feasibility of projects Downtown.

Direct Grants

Governments provide grants to support public benefit projects like historic preservation and economic development. Grants can be used for various purposes. For example, Madison, Indiana, received \$350,000 from the NPS to establish three grants that would undoubtedly apply to Selma: a rehabilitation grant for specific projects, a dilapidated building grant for structural and utility work, and a dangerous buildings grant for the demolition of buildings deemed unsafe to the public. Other examples of common local grants are for facade improvements along historic business districts, like Downtown Selma, and technical assistance from preservation professionals or architects.

Tax Increment Financing

Cities have used tax increment financing (TIFs) to subsidize redevelopment since the 1950s. The city could make our designated Downtown Selma project area a TIF district and identify a base property tax value for the district. As Downtown property values rise due to new, incentivized development, the difference between the base value and the new value is the "tax increment," which is used to fund public infrastructure and improvement projects in the area. The money can fund various projects, like city-owned building rehabilitation, wayfinding, or public park improvement.

Programs

Besides providing financing and tax incentives, the city can develop programs to further the revitalization and preservation of Downtown Selma through business development and encourage the use of buildings. The programs below represent a range of programs, from improving city processes to building partnerships to a more innovative solution.

Rehab Project Streamlining

Historic rehabilitation projects can take significant time before construction starts, eating into budgets and timelines. As the Old Town and Water Avenue districts entirely cover Downtown Selma, every potential project must adhere to the Secretary's Standards and receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historical Commission. Once the project gets the go-ahead from the Commission, the city can streamline the permitting process. Rehabilitation projects within Downtown Selma's boundaries could have their fees waived and take priority over commercial development projects.

Mortgage Guarantees

The city can respond to credit shortages of small developers and rising interest rates by guaranteeing mortgages for certain types of rehabilitation projects, particularly ones on very significant buildings or buildings in very poor condition. This could reduce the risk to the owner, lower the interest rate, and help secure further construction financing. While this program would ideally not cost the city much money, the city's ability to guarantee mortgages may take several years.

Artist Relocation Program

The artist relocation program recommendation aims to prove that historic preservation can be achieved through nontraditional, innovative approaches. Paducah, Kentucky, created the model of the artist relocation program in 2000. Paducah is very similar to Selma: around the same size, a declining population since the 1970s, a historic downtown - and even a Civil War battle involving Nathan Bedford Forrest. Paducah attracted artists with cheap homes and studio spaces, and in return, the artist had to prove they could have a viable business. The program brought national attention to the city, and \$30 million in private investments flowed into the city from a \$2 million initial investment from the city. A program like this could be feasible in Selma, which has plenty of vacant Downtown second-floor spaces for studios and a growing arts scene.

City-owned Property Transfer Process

The City of Selma owns thirty-one properties in Downtown Selma, and many are vacant and in poor condition. For example, according to the Selma Historical Commission's January 22, 2022, meeting minutes, the city proposed demolishing 8 Green Street (featured in the Edistone project) due to its deteriorating condition from years of neglect. The city should create a practical process to transfer the vacant or under-used historic buildings under its ownership. The city could offer these buildings for a nominal fee to people interested and demonstrate the ability to redevelop the properties. The city could partner with business incubators, like Arsenal Place, to offer the buildings to local entrepreneurs. In the end, Selma will save money by transferring the buildings; however, the government transfer process can be complicated, and will require significant bandwidth from city workers.

Funding and Grant Opportunities

The City of Selma has recently applied for grants. In early 2022, the city used the T-Mobile hometown grant for a plan for Riverfront Park improvements. The city also received a grant from the National Park Service to rehabilitate the Wilson Community Center. However, many grants are available to help achieve Downtown Selma’s successful revitalization. The following list is by no means exhaustive, and the project only considers state, federal, and non-profit grants. Instead, this portion of the project aims to demonstrate that grants to preserve the heritage of Downtown Selma are not limited to plans or brick-and-mortar projects. Grants are also available to hire staff, improve interpretation, or revitalize downtowns.

State:

The Alabama Historical Commission has \$2.3 million in available grants, primarily for physical preservation projects. The Alabama Council on the Arts has several grants available for art creation, design and construction of cultural facilities, and project grants, which include festivals, workshops, and arts ex-

Selma also qualifies for Community Development Block Grants, which are distributed by HUD. Selma is too small of a city to receive grants directly, though, so the city must receive the grants from the state. A competitive fund for as much as \$350,000 is available for neighborhood and downtown revitalization. There is also a Community Engagement fund for recreation and community centers, like the Wilson Center.

Federal:

The National Park Service distributes various historic preservation grants. The Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program provides funds for revitalizing historic downtowns, and could be used to create a local grant pool or revolving fund for the local government. The National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Funds can be used for the development of a public park network in Downtown Selma. The History of Equal Rights or the African American Civil Rights Grants can be used for interpretation and educational resources, like improving the network of significant sites around Downtown.

Additionally, the National Endowment of the Arts has grants available for public humanities projects, sustaining cultural heritage, and community resilience.

It is recommended that Selma work with a small, local financial institution to establish it as a Community Development Financial Institution, which provide fair lending to under resourced communities and small businesses. CDFI also have access to specific federal programs, like the new market tax credit.

Non-Profit:

Flexible grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation can fund both rehabilitation projects or to hire staff or get a Selma Mainstreet restarted.

The Educational Foundation of America aims to advance change through grants supporting sustainability, equity, and justice. For the past 3 years, they have funded the operating cost of the Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium

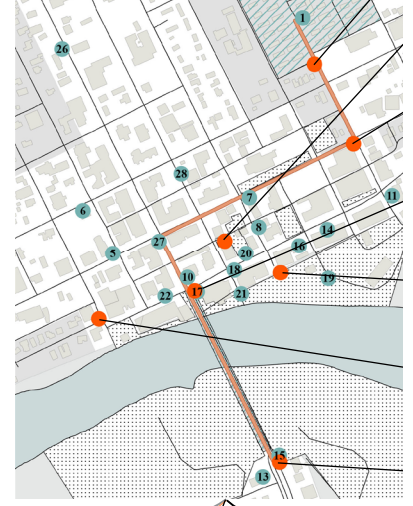
Opportunity Alabama connects investors to small businesses in Alabama Opportunity Zones, like Selma.

State	Federal	Non-Profit
Alabama Historical Commission Council on the Arts Community Development Block Grants	NPS Grants CDFI Programs National Endowment for the Humanities	National Trust for Historic Preservation The Educational Foundation of America Opportunity Alabama
Community Enhancement and Planning Preservation Projects Art	Preservation Projects Economic Development Public Parks and Recreation Pre-Preservation Studies Interpretation and Educational Resources	Planning and Hiring Staff Preservation Projects Educational Projects Operating Expenses Tourism



Main Street Selma Reboot

Focusing on cultivating partnership specifically, this project aims to explore the possibility of restarting Main Street Selma. Using case studies from other successful Main Street programs in Alabama, this project hopes to convey what the Main Street program can bring and how Selma can benefit from it. This project also proposes several necessary next steps and a phasing plan to reboot the Main Street program in Selma.



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Economic Incentives, Capital, and Funding Opportunities on the Local Level

The goal of the individual project is the adaptive reuse and restoration of the Edistone Hotel building, surrounding buildings and public spaces, which updating the building into adaptive commercial and public use which including local business, culture center, restaurant, and historic enslavement museum. It set a phased development plan as guidance for future restoration and investment of the downtown building.



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Economic / Policy / Organization

Interpretation

Project Connections

Wayfinding, Art, and Interpretation for Networking Historic Sites

The purpose of this project is to provide the City of Selma with a plan, comparables, and implementation strategies for an interpretation, public art, and wayfinding program for networking historic sites. This project will provide a scope of work, outline the creation of a task force and its responsibilities, offer an analysis of comparables, and map a prototype of the proposed signage and art installations to be used for planning.

Public Open Space Network

The overarching purpose of establishing a public open space (POS) network is to create a more attractive environment for residents and visitors alike. The POS network is meant to work in two ways: (1) as a network: with the goal to facilitate an accessible and spatially connected downtown Selma, and (2) as a place: with the goal to create desired leisure spaces for downtown patrons and nearby residents.

Wayfinding / Placemaking



Adaptive Reuse of the George D. Wilson Selma Community Center

Adaptive reuse may be a misnomer for this proposal, which culminates in recommendations for a return to the Selma Community Center's original use: serving the community with multi-functional public facilities. The proposal begins with a rationale and brief site history before offering recommendations for use in three phases and identifying character-defining features that should remain through any building alterations.



Restoration and adaptive reuse of the Edystone Hotel & Warehouse & and public space

The goal of this individual project is the adaptive reuse and restoration of the Edystone Hotel building, surrounding buildings and public spaces. This reuse will be accomplished by updating the building into adaptive commercial and public use including local businesses, a cultural center, a restaurant, and a historic enslavement museum. A phased development plan has been suggested as guidance for future restoration and investment in the downtown building.

Open Space / Building

CONCLUSION

Preservation of historic resources should take into account the wants and needs of the present local community; our studio work aims to address both. We believe that Selma's importance in American civil rights history – and its own longer local history that is indicative of many other Black Belt communities, one of racial violence and oppression, but also resilience, triumph, community, and joy – should strive for increased and more connected representations in downtown Selma to better communicate its significance and value. At the same, Selma's immense historic and cultural value also provides an opportunity to support and sustain economic revitalization in the downtown.

Our proposed interventions expand on six possible windows to revitalization through planning and preservation tactics which we believe address the needs of downtown Selma. In particular, they hope to preserve Selma's past and envision its future at different scales and perspectives: from downtown management (Main Street Reboot) and financial capacity (Economic Incentives, Capital, and Funding Opportunities) to downtown circulation and connectivity (Wayfinding, Art, and Interpretation for Networking Historic Sites and Public Open Space Network) to rehabilitating historic buildings to meet the needs of modern day Selma (Wilson Community Center and Edistone Hotel). Nevertheless, all six projects uplift Selma's historic resources and reactivate its downtown economy for the benefit of all residents – seeing both goals as beneficial to the other. They represent managerial infrastructure and physical interventions that, when in concert with one another, form stepping stones to sustained vitality in downtown Selma.

While our studio work was concentrated in the fifteen weeks of the Fall 2022 semester, the information, ideas, and next steps presented offer a launching pad for the short and long term futures of downtown Selma. Amidst downtown Selma's current conditions of multiple vacant buildings and limited funding & organizational capacity, there are also enormous opportunities that can lead to a more attractive downtown for residents and visitors alike, one that honors its history and serves as a bustling commercial corridor. We hope our report may service Selma's extraordinary history and people, past and present, towards realizing a more vibrant and equitable downtown.



Figure 5.1 : Looking Northeast from the Edmund Pettus Bridge to the St. James Hotel and Alabama Riverfront.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Maps of two routes with stops at every proposed interpretive panel.

Appendix B: Property Ownership sourced from Dallas County Tax Assessor Data

Appendix C: Maps of Downtown Businesses, Development Projects, and Museums

Additional digital appendices containing data, analysis, and additional images are available upon request.

Appendix A:
Maps of two routes with stops at every proposed interpretive panel.



Connectivity: What does it look like to experience all 8 interpretive panels?





Route 1:

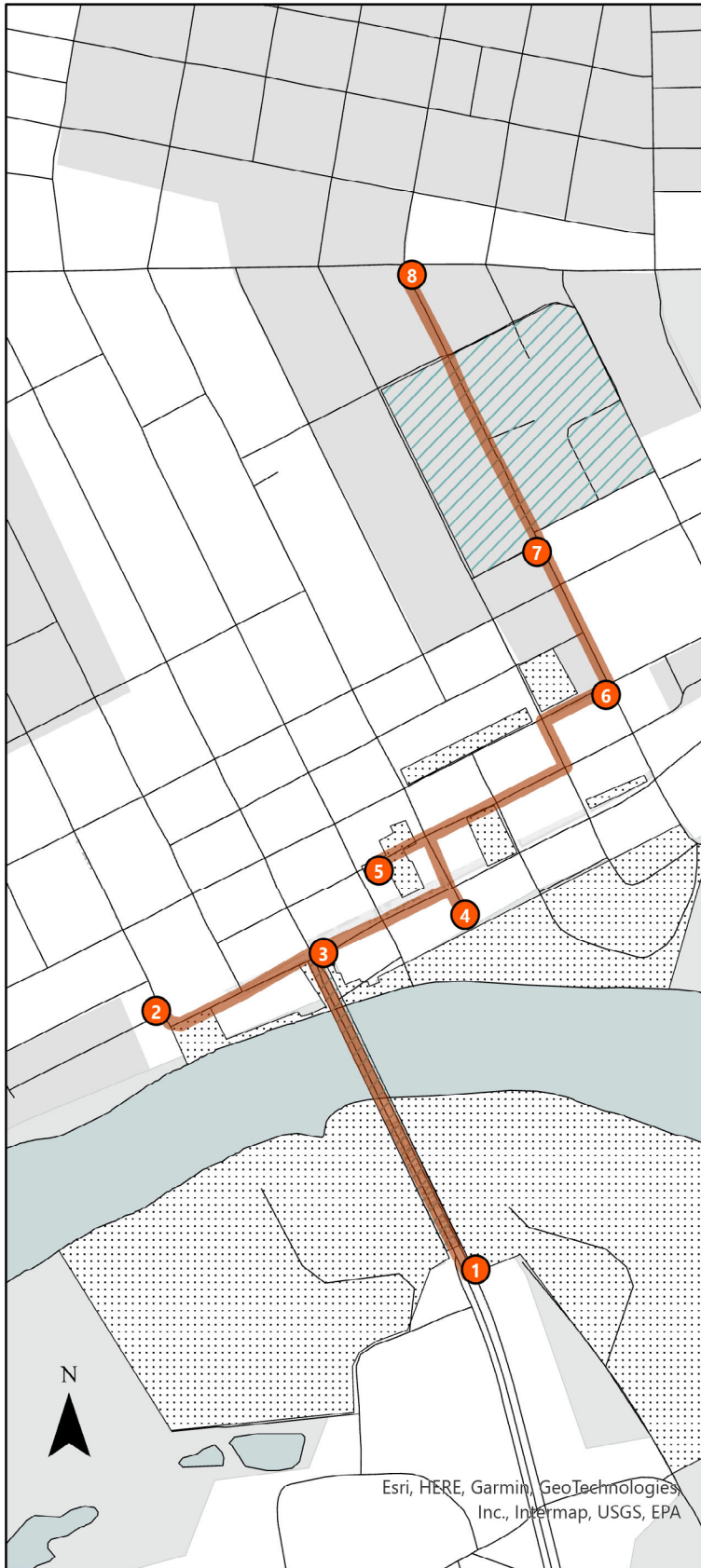
This map shows the most efficient way to move through the city, starting at Songs of Selma park (1) and moving through the city in the most efficient way.

Total Walk Time (Point 1 to Point 8): 35 Minutes

Total Distance: 1.8 Miles

With the help of wayfinding, it is possible to experience all of the proposed interpretive panels in the city. Factoring in time for reading and exploring throughout the walk as well as an additional 15 minutes to allow walkers to return to Songs of Selma Park, a walker can experience all of the panels within 1.5 hours.

-  Interpretive Panel/Stop
-  Route 1
-  Historic Site Area
-  Public Open Space



Connectivity: What does it look like to experience all 8 interpretive panels?





Route 2:

This map shows the most efficient way to move through the city, starting at the Selma Civil Rights Memorial Park panel, (1) and moving through the city in the most efficient way.

Total Walk Time (Point 1 to Point 8): 30 Minutes

Total Distance: 1.5 Miles

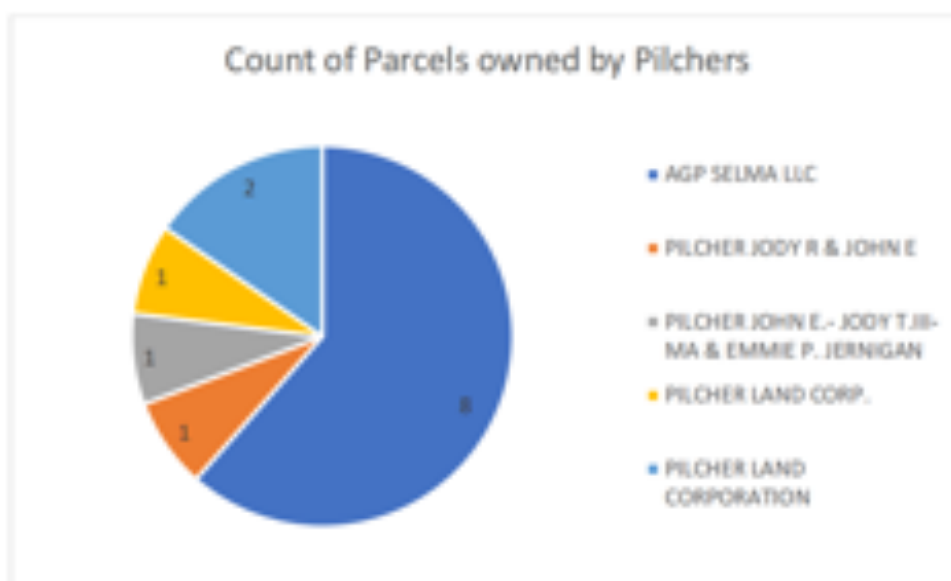
This route begins at a different starting point, on the south side of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. With shorter time and distance, this is the most efficient route starting at a logical point for visitors traveling northeast on highway 80. This route does, however, require more time for walkers to return to point one from point eight, likely around 20 minutes. However, because of the efficiency of the route, it can probably be traveled and enjoyed in 1.5 hours, similar to route 1.

-  Interpretive Panel/Stop
-  Route 2
-  Historic Site Area
-  Public Open Space

Appendix B: Property Ownership Sourced from Dallas County Tax Assessor Data

Ownership in Selma, Alabama

According to Dallas County Tax Collector data, some 120 property owners own roughly 225 individual parcels in the downtown area of Selma, Alabama east of Church Street, south of Dallas Street, west of Franklin Street, and north of the Alabama River. High visibility projects in the downtown area include 25 Broad Street and the old YMCA building. 25 Broad Street is a corner building. Its first floor is wrapped in a large poster advertising planned development of “eco-friendly lofts, business co-work space, rooftop bar and restaurant, retail shops,” by Mosa Architects, however locals claim not to have seen any activity in years. The owners, Fulford International Inc., have a mailing address at 609 Tremont Street, just northwest of the study area. Fulford also owns a three-story building at 1006 Alabama Avenue – currently unoccupied and formerly a furniture and appliances store – and 1010-1012 Water Street, a restaurant called Queen City Kale with hours from 7:00 to late night Wednesday-Sunday. The old YMCA building at 217 Broad is owned by the Selma-Dallas County Historic Preservation Society, who purchased it in 2012 and performed triage stabilization on the structure. The Society has tentative plans to develop the space for apartments.



AGP Selma LLC is a trucking company and owns seven properties scattered throughout downtown. AGP is connected to a John E. Pilcher. The Pilcher name is listed as the owner of four more properties in the downtown area, one being, Pilcher Land Corporation. Together, AGP and the Pilchers own 11 properties including 5 Broad Street Properties. [map this – gotta join vacancy data]



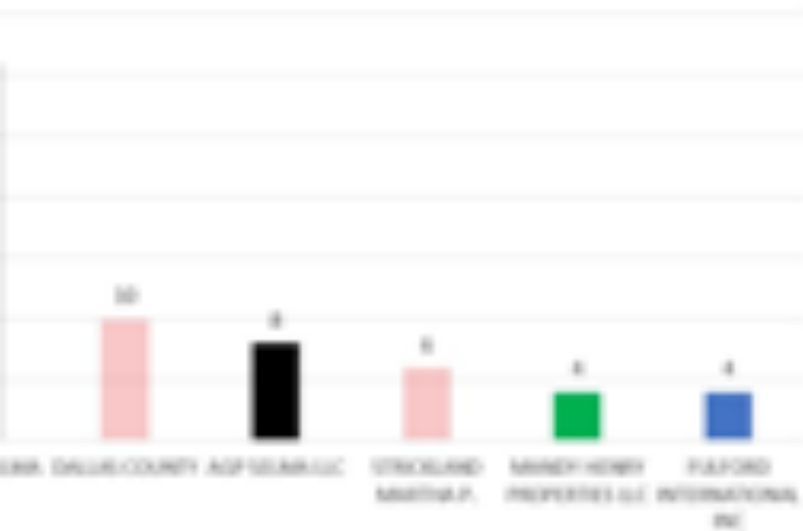
Property Owners

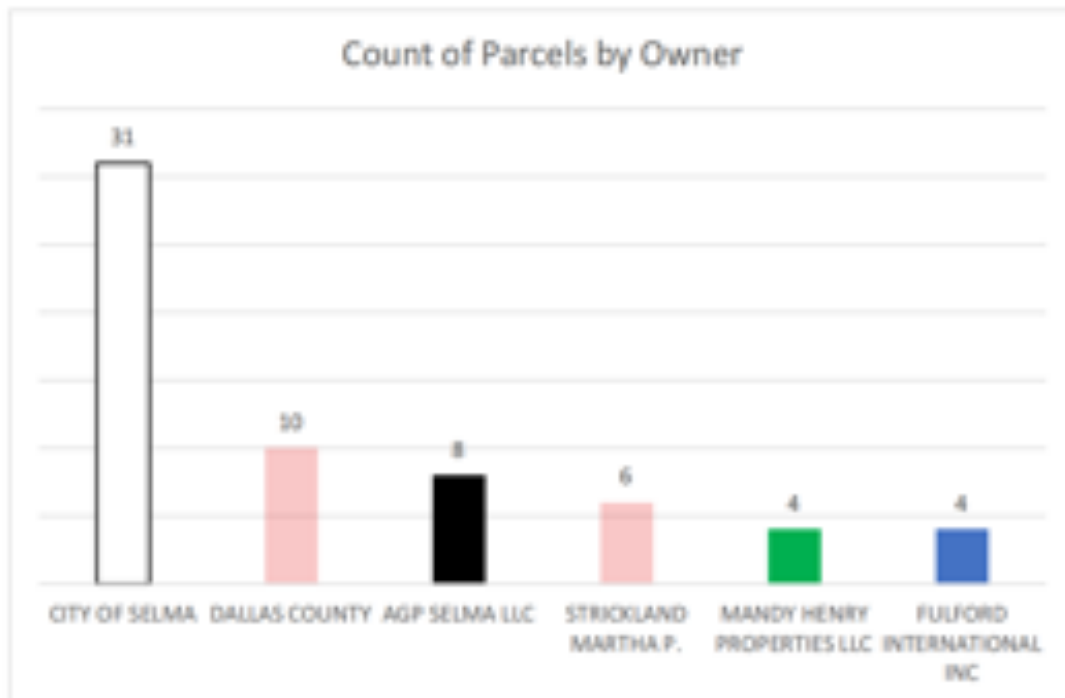
- DT_CENTROID
- CITY OF SELMA
 - MANDY HENRY PROPERTIES LLC
 - PILCHER
 - FULFORD INTERNATIONAL INC





Count of Parcels by Owner





The owner with the most properties is the City of Selma, with 31 properties distributed more or less evenly throughout the area. The City Hall complex at 222 Broad Street bordered by Broad, Dallas, Washington, and Alabama streets makes up 3-4 properties. The City owns 9 properties on Water Street and 8 on Broad Street. On 6 December 2022, the National Parks Service acquired 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 Broad Street and 1119 Water Avenue for expansion of the Selma Interpretive Center, currently occupying 2 Broad Street, which the NPS had been leasing from the City.



Second to the City is Dallas County, with 9 downtown properties. While the US General Services Administration owns the Dallas County Tax Collector's building at Alabama and Lauderdale, the 9 DalCo properties are mainly agency offices: Selma and Dallas County Economic Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Dallas County Courthouse, and adjacent parking lots.

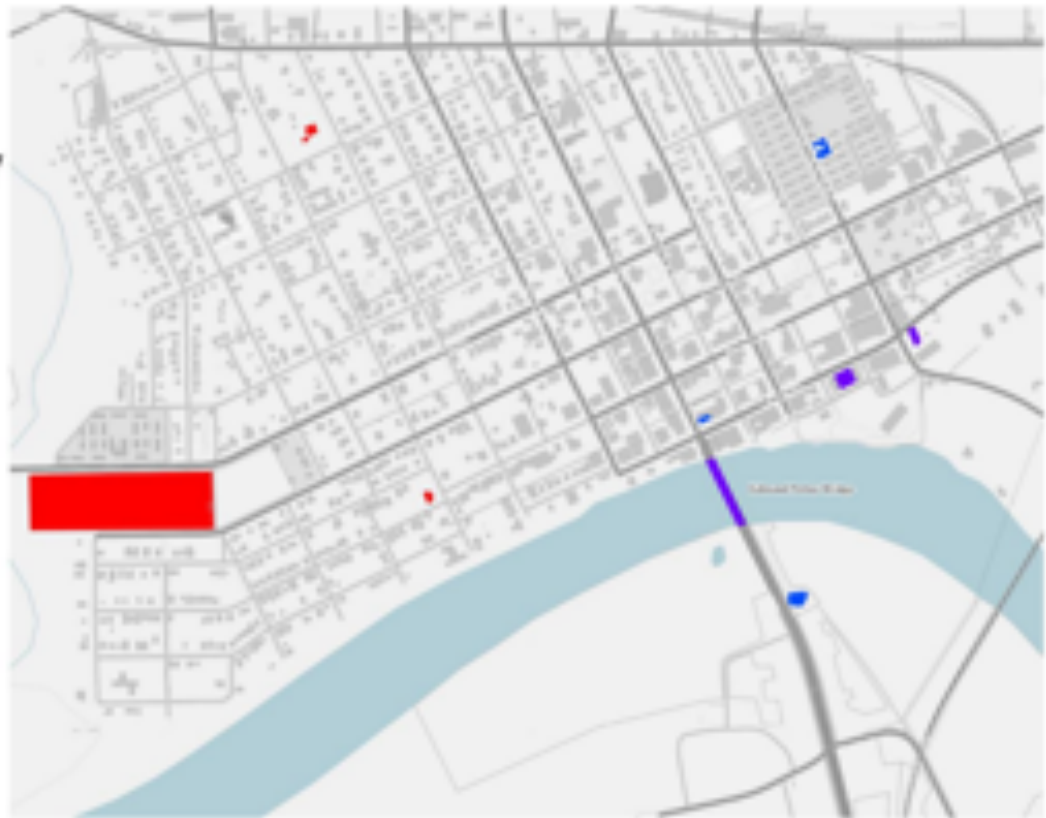
The Selma Baptist Church of Christ owns five properties in the area, also scattered, but mostly associated with Church activities like a daycare and gathering spaces. Marth P. Strickland owns five properties – 2 adjacent on Washington Street and 3 nearly adjacent on Water Ave, the latter making up Arts Revive spaces.



Museums & Public History Institutions

Legend

- Antebellum History
- Civil Rights History
- Both



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