

CITY of DOTHAN



# STRATEGIC PLAN

January -- February 2021

Report to City Leadership  
February 10, 2021

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>STRATEGIC PLAN FUNDAMENTALS FOR THE CITY OF DOTHAN</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>THE STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP SESSION</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Prioritized Directions Through 2023	
Items Temporarily Removed from the Prioritization List	
Initiatives Still in Formative Stages	
Other Topics of Interest and/or Concern	
<b>EXPECTATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS GOING FORWARD</b> .....	<b>15</b>

## Appendices

• Department Input Summaries .....	18
• Individual Elected Leader Topics .....	20
• Partners' Summary Information .....	28
• Strategic Planning Workshop Agenda .....	31

## **INTRODUCTION**

The primary goal of the 2021 Dothan City strategic planning process was to enable the Mayor and Commissioners (“Elected Leaders”, “City Leaders” or “Leaders”) to review, revise, and reaffirm the key components of the current *Strategic Plan* (Mission, Vision 2034 and Goals 2024) and to identify and rank their most important priorities for 2021—2023. Consultant assistance was provided by Barbara Alford of In Sight Solutions, LLC.

Primary components of the 2021 update included:

**Interviews with each of the eleven City Department Heads**--to identify the most critical needs and opportunities, and to gain their perceptions of key successes for 2020. Questions also were posed to help ascertain their use of the current the *Strategic Plan* for intra-departmental planning. (Department input summaries are included in Appendix A.)

**Interviews with each of the six Dothan City Commissioners and with the Mayor**—to identify broad issues and opportunities facing the City and the projects/issues/initiatives that they wanted to be sure were included in workshop discussions. Each also was asked to identify some major City successes in 2020, relevant to the City’s Goals 2024. (Elected Leaders’ individual input is included in Appendices B1-B7.)

**Research into current federal and state disruptors/opportunities that may need consideration as planning progresses.** Links to a published assessment of federal directions impacting cities, and to Alabama Governor Kay Ivey’s State of the State address, were provided in Leaders’ packets. Items were referenced during the workshop.

**Information from five major community partners.** Obtained from recent presentations to the Dothan City Commission, strategic directions from these community partners were summarized for City Leaders, provided in workshop packets, and referenced during the workshop. Partners included: Dothan Regional Airport Authority, Visit Dothan, Dothan City Schools, the Downtown Dothan Redevelopment Authority, and the Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce. (The Partners’ Summary Information is included in Appendix C.)

**A facilitated strategic planning workshop (February 5 and 6, 2021) with Elected Leaders (Dothan’s Commissioners and Mayor) and the City Manager.** Presentations from key staff provided essential background information and specific project detail:

- Key issues from Department CIP work--Assistant City Manager, Randy Morris
- Update on the City’s financial status--Finance Director, Lisa Reeder
- Two critical city-wide personnel issues--Personnel Director, Delvick McKay

Objectives of the strategic planning workshop were as follows:

1. **To provide timely, updated guidance to the City’s *Strategic Plan*—2034.**
2. **To reaffirm the current Mission and long-term future direction (Vision) for Dothan.**
3. **To engage in open dialogue and learn more about major initiatives through 2023.**
4. **To generate project and initiative priorities for City administrative staff.**
5. **To identify the primary evidence of success expected for major priorities.**
6. **To identify key partners with whom the City will work to achieve success.**
7. **To consider future needs for City strategic planning and accountability.**

The *Agenda* for the two-day Strategic Planning Workshop is included in Appendix D.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING FUNDAMENTALS-for the City of Dothan, AL**

The City of Dothan has in place a comprehensive *Strategic Plan* that contains fundamental commitments through the year 2034. Prior to the 2021 planning workshop, City Elected Leaders and the City Manager affirmed that the Mission, Vision, and Goals (listed below) are reflective of Dothan's present characteristics and general directions. During the planning workshop these fundamentals were continually referenced to ensure that decisions arising from this year's strategic planning update were integrally connected to what the City is today (its Mission), and where the City wishes to be in 2034 (its Vision).

### **Dothan's Mission**

**The Mission of the Dothan City Government is to provide  
the *BEST MUNICIPAL SERVICES*,  
in a  
*CUSTOMER FRIENDLY MANNER*,  
and to be  
*FINANCIALLY SOUND*  
while  
*INVESTING IN THE CITY'S FUTURE*,  
and  
*ENGAGING OUR RESIDENTS.***

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### **Dothan Vision 2034**

In 2034

Dothan is:

the ***MOST BEAUTIFUL, LIVABLE CITY*** in Alabama.

Dothan is:

the ***HUB OF THE WIREGRASS REGION***  
with ***CONVENIENT ACCESS AND MOBILITY.***

Dothan has:

a ***VIBRANT 24 HOURS DOWNTOWN***  
the heart of the community  
and a ***STRONG DIVERSE ECONOMY.***

Dothan is:

a ***FAMILY FRIENDLY COMMUNITY***  
with ***EXCEPTIONAL LEISURE AMENITIES FOR ALL,***  
and ***An INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FOR ALL***

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### **Dothan's Goals for 2024**

- ***Maintain a Financially Sound City and a High Performance Team***
- ***Expand the Local Economy***
- ***Plan for Dothan's Future***
- ***Make Dothan a More Livable and Inclusive City***
- ***Improve Mobility***

## **The STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP SESSION**

Following review of input from multiple sources and a full day of presentations and discussions by the City Commission, Mayor, City Manager, and Administrative Staff, twenty-three discrete items were put forward for prioritization in the current budget cycle. Elected Leaders ranked these items relevant to Dothan's Strategic Goals for 2024. A total of seven (7) votes was possible. A lower number of votes does not indicate disinterest on the part of the Elected Leaders to see these projects develop. A lower vote total may be related solely to the anticipated timing of a project (beyond 2023), to the need to phase-in expenditures over time, and/or to the need for more information. The ranking process was intended to provide general direction for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and to the budget planning priorities through year 2023. Moreover, this list of twenty-three priorities does not imply exclusion of any other initiatives that will be essential or desired for Dothan's growth and development.

### **Prioritized Directions Through 2023**

#### **7 Votes**

##### Rip Hewes

Stadium and surrounding area  
Construction  
\$7M over two years

##### Enterprise Resource Planning Solution

Current system no longer being enhanced; vendor phasing-out support  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_—to transition from current systems; over three years  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_/yr maintenance thereafter  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_/yr estimated savings through elimination of other subscriptions

##### Tier 2 to Tier 1 Conversion

\$157,499 per year for 15 years for the Unfunded Actuarial  
Accrued Liability (UAAL)  
\$166,105 for first year conversion difference  
Approximately \$300,000/year for 15 years; with UAAL payment  
dropping off after that  
Decision required by May 8, 2021

##### Honeysuckle Road Phase I

Highway 84 to South Park Avenue; Park and Honeysuckle intersection added  
\$10.5M original estimate to Fortner  
Estimate being revised to reflect changes  
Design to Fortner complete; Right-of-Way acquisition has begun

#### **6 Votes**

##### Water World (general and existing area updates)

Concession stand renovation, front entrance addition, restroom floors,  
locker relocation, Great White and tower repair, wave pool equipment repair,  
employee lounge  
\$1.5M

**6 Votes, continued**

Field Lighting

Northcutt Football, Westgate Softball, Northcutt Baseball,  
Dixie Youth, Tennis Center  
\$2M over three years

Storm Drainage

Phase I analysis and construction  
\$3.5M

Highway 84 West ATRIP

Westbound lane addition from Flowers Chapel Rd. to John D Odom Rd.  
\$5.64M; city cost \$3.64M (\$2.5 budgeted); ALDOT \$2M  
Additional \$1.14M needed from city

Flowers Chapel Widening

Road widening from West Main to Woodburn Drive  
\$2M construction cost  
Design to be done in-house

Girard Drainage Basin

Phase I Construction  
\$1.4M

Emergency Electric Source Station

\$2.5M (including Right-of-Way acquisitions)

**5 Votes**

James Oates Park Turf

Artificial Turf infields and shade structures  
\$3.5M (\$1.75M from city; Visit Dothan partnering)  
Coincides with Visit Dothan's emphasis on Sports Tourism

Highway 84 West ATRIP

Eastbound lane addition from John D. Odom to Flowers Chapel  
John D. Odom Road turn lanes  
\$4.5M; city cost \$2.5M; ALDOT \$2M

**4 Votes**

Competition Track

\$5-\$7M estimate

**3 Votes**

Baywood Lift Station Elimination

\$1M

Beaver Creek Trunk Line Replacement

\$7.8M

**2 Votes**

- Citywide Storm Drainage Assessment
  - Assessment of II, III, IV (for more comprehensive view of city-wide needs)
  - \$1.6M estimate
  - (assessment on phase I already budgeted)
  
- Honeysuckle Road Phase II
  - South Park Avenue completion to Campbellton Highway
  - \$14M original Phase II estimate; will be less, with changes to Phase I

**1 Vote**

- Girard Drainage Basin
  - Phase II Construction
  - \$1.2M
  - Design currently under contract
  
- Underground Conversion of Electrical Connector
  - \$500k/year to convert overhead conductor to underground
  - Some portion reimbursable by AMEA

**0 Votes**

- Red Water Long-range Planning
  - Update of Long-Range Plan citywide
  - 225 miles of cast iron pipes in need of assessment
  - Identification of other specific needs not yet known
  
- Cypress WWTP Upgrade
  - \$10M estimate
  
- Girard Drainage Basin
  - Phase III Construction
  - \$2.25M
  - Design currently under contract

**Fire Station 3 and 10**—Following much discussion, a priority was not assigned during the February 2021 workshop. Elected Leaders requested a DEDICATED WORK SESSION on this issue before determining priority ranking through 2023.

**Items Temporarily Removed from the Prioritization List**

The following projects/initiative were included in the workshop because of their importance to the City per the assessments of individual Elected Leaders and/or department leaders. Each was discussed and was unanimously removed from the prioritization list at this time either because it was already part of the current *Capital Improvement Plan* (and was budgeted or required no additional funding), or it could be best addressed by the City Manager and his team as a management issue.

**Continuing implementation of 84E Study recommendations**---These are ongoing in all departments with regard to business development, regulation/code development, public works, et al. Will tie-in with the results of the hydrology study and with continuing conversations about the future of 84 as a state-owned vs. city-owned roadway.

**Wiregrass Commons Mall**---With on-site retail malls diminishing nationwide, the possibility of City involvement in future use of Wiregrass Mall was discussed. No specific ideas are ready for consideration at this time, but given the high-visibility of this property in a major Dothan intersection, it will be kept on the radar. The possibility of using such a structure for governmental services, or for the needs of local schools, was presented. Commissioners agreed that any specific requests should be based on data. With regard to the needs of Dothan's schools, a new Superintendent must be in place and given time to assess the system's overall needs with regard to facilities, based on projected enrollment and program development. Collaborative strategic planning between Dothan City Schools and Dothan City leadership is desired.

**Pole Attachment Transfer**---This is a strategy to work more efficiently with companies with equipment attached to existing poles in order to get all transfers completed. The possibility of linking this initiative to franchise agreement updates was discussed. There may be future consideration of a dedicated person to focus on this project. There was general agreement that the old poles are eyesores and exist in every district. Commissioners determined this would be an info-item for the City Manager to consider in management planning with his Department Heads.

**Better Use of Troy University Resources**---There was general consensus that there may be expertise/assistance available that is not being put to use for Dothan. Areas mentioned were: 1) research capabilities to collect/analyze/report data that can be of use to City management and leadership in decision making and forecasting; and, 2) partnerships to address critical needs in social services and mental health, et al. Commissioners determined this would be an info-item to the City Manager and Department Heads to increase outreach to the University, as appropriate for projects. Active collaboration with Wallace College is already ongoing and was positively cited during discussions.



**Succession Planning**---Commissioners agreed this is concept worthy of focus, but no specific needs/actions/plans were identified at this time. Personnel Director McKay assured the Leaders that Succession Planning is a continual priority for his department. Programs exist to provide training needed for upward mobility within departments, and the current selection process includes both management and peer-panel input. Specific issues will be brought to the table as these future key replacements are needed in next few years.

**Review of Use of Force Policy**—Commissioners decided that this would be handled as an info item to the City Manager to continue the regular review of the Policy, particularly in light of the changing culture of policing and of governmental/community expectations.

**Closer Collaboration with Dothan Public Schools**---There was unanimous agreement that more collaborative planning, earlier in the decision-making process, is needed between the Dothan City Schools and the City. The method of accomplishment requires balance, as the school system has its own Board, yet requires the fiscal (and other) support of the City elected leadership in order to function effectively. It was agreed that the new superintendent, once selected, should be given time to get acquainted with the system and City. It is hoped that he/she will help foster the collaborative planning culture.

**Ross Clark Circle Improvements**—This work plan is already committed in partnership with the Alabama Department of Transportation. Phase I is completed. Phase II will be completed by December 2021. Bids for Phase III are scheduled to be let in Spring 2022, with construction to follow for 2-3 years. A proposed Phase IV includes signage and lighting. Leaders were informed that ALDOT has tentatively agreed to allow the City to purchase and install the lighting for all three phases (enabling more efficient and timely implementation and supporting the City's desire for lighting consistency on major roadways.) ALDOT will reimburse for materials, and the City Manager will work with Dothan Utilities and other departments, as needed, to allocate labor.

**Traffic Controllers/Intelligent Transportation System**—Approximately half (60 of 135 units) are completed. Completion will require another two years at an estimate of \$500,000/year. The City Manager will incorporate completion into the Public Works Capital Improvement Plan and budgets, as appropriate.

**Cypress WWTP 201 Update**—The estimated cost of assessment of this 20-year-old facility is \$250,000. The City Manager will incorporate this into the Dothan Utilities Continuous Improvement Plan and budgets, as appropriate.

**Water World Lazy River**—This project and the associated parking is estimated at a cost of \$8.2—\$17million dollars. City Leaders want more information on the expected impact, along with greater project details and a more precise cost estimate for consideration in future budget cycles.

**Personnel**---Following up on a dedicated work session for the Dothan City Commission, held December 3, 2020, Personnel Director Delvick McKay reviewed recommendations for personnel transfers and new employees by department. For the items listed, below, funds are already budgeted. As no new allocations were required, the Commission green-lighted the following:

- Move Landscaping to Public Works
- Move Wastewater and FOG to Dothan Utilities
- Create Neighborhood Enhancement Team
- Restructure Inspections Division
- 9 Firefighter Positions
- Restructure Finance (abolish 3 positions; create additional accountant)
- Restructure Personnel (abolish Analyst position; fill Asst. Personnel Director)
- Restructure Leisure Services – create a Program Coordinator position
- Restructure Information Technology – add 1 staffer for the safety center (WPSC) and 1 additional IT security analyst
- Create WPSC Manager position – funded 3 years by Wiregrass Foundation

Additional requests that were outlined by Department Heads for 2022 and 2023 will be brought before the Commission as the projects to which they are attached are proposed for review, allocation, and approval.

### **Initiatives Still in Formative Stages**

The major initiatives listed, below, were discussed in some detail during the workshop session. All three are considered to be important to the future development of the City. However, not enough specificity is known (overall objectives, costs, timelines, potential requests for City involvement, etc...) for these to be considered for action at this time. Elected Leaders expect that these will continue to develop, and they stated their interest in being included in planning conversations. The Elected Leaders were asked to rank the three items in terms of their potential to move the City toward its VISION 2034. All three are highly regarded in this respect, and they are presented here according to ranking by the officials. As with the individual projects, there is no correlation between the ranking of the program and the proximity of City engagement or the potential level of involvement or investment.

**Transformation Through The Arts (TTTA)**—This is a comprehensive downtown revitalization effort to be accomplished through emphasis on arts, culture, and entrepreneurship. TTTA began as a collaboration amongst Dothan’s arts community, City representatives, Visit Dothan, and Wiregrass Foundation. It has expanded to include other organizations and potential private investors. Defined objectives, plans, timelines, and costs are unknown at this time. A long-term, public-private partnership will be necessary. A Charrette scheduled for April 2021 will yield overall plans, and some information on costs and on private investment interests. The specific focus of City involvement will likely be the future of the Dothan Civic Center (all or just the dome portion), as this facility is the centerpiece of the area being considered. The future of the dome and the potential of TTTA were referenced in several interviews leading up to the workshop. (Ranked # 1 by five Leaders; #2 by one leader; #3 by one leader.)

**Wiregrass Pet Adoption and Rescue Center**—A separate 501 c 3 has been created and is developing strategic plans for capital construction and operations and sustainability. Commissioner Kenward serves as an officer on the organization’s Board, and she presented an overview of current status and plans for the next three months. A collaborative effort amongst the new nonprofit Board, Dothan’s shelter officials and police, the Dothan Police Foundation, Dothan legal personnel will be needed to identify mechanisms for generating revenue for the Center’s self-sufficiency long-term. Commissioners are open to ideas about fees that could help support the Center, and to possible further involvement in construction. (Ranked #1 by no Leaders; #2 by six Leaders; #3 by one Leader.)

**Addressing Impoverished Neighborhoods**---This complex “umbrella” initiative includes such items as:

- finding ways to help families convert or divest themselves of properties they can no longer maintain, and doing so in ways that are helpful to those families;
- seeking more affordable housing opportunities, including incentives for City employees to live in quality housing throughout City neighborhoods;
- implementing efforts to enhance the physical appearance and social capacity of Dothan’s neighborhoods in a long-term, sustainable manner;
- increasing the City’s financial investment in disadvantaged neighborhoods;
- creating renters’ ordinances and other regulatory methods to address blighted properties;
- connecting efforts with the Love-Dothan initiative.

Discussion on this topic focused on making the City a partner with the communities to find workable, progressive solutions. The terminology, “*partner not punish*,” was coined by one Commissioner, specifically with regard to code and regulatory development and enforcement. (Ranked #1 by two Leaders; #2 by no Leaders; #3 by five Leaders.)

### **Other Topics of Interest and/or Concern**

The following themes surfaced during interviews with City Leaders and/or Department Heads. While not discussed as specific projects/initiatives ready for consideration and funding at this time, the topics recurred throughout the interviews and the workshop and are worth citing here:

**Mental Health**---This growing challenge is impacting everything from education, to policing, to judicial services, to employee retention, et al.

**Community Safety**---This includes the staging and training for rapid response (police and fire), judicial services and facilities. maximizing potential of Wiregrass Public Safety Center, evidence storage, and safety for animals.

**The Future of Technology**---The need to stay current with IT advancements, data security, advancing fiber optics, and changing needs for personnel expertise.

**Facilities Focus**—The need for long-term planning, decisions on aging facilities.

Data-based Decisions About Services---Placing senior centers in proximate locations, developing services for increasing numbers and diversity of special needs populations.

Continuing Commitment to Upgrade and Maintenance--of existing equipment, vehicles, apparatus (i.e., phone system that will need to be replaced.)

Continuing Commitment to Upgrade and Maintenance—of city infrastructure (i.e., water, sewer, electricity, broadband.)

Continuing Investment in Personnel—succession, training and development, education pathways from area high schools and colleges to Dothan professions,

Community Engagement and Transparency---More communication to build trust; having the community understand what the City does; providing opportunities for input; providing feedback.

## EXPECTATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Also known as “connecting the dots”, strategic planning often includes intentional linkage of projects that are selected to move a City forward with the goals and vision of the organization. Dothan’s Elected Leaders and the City Manager agreed that the Mission, Vision and Goals committed in the current *Strategic Plan* accurately reflect what the City is today (Mission), where it wants to be long-term (Vision 2034). They also agreed that the more near-term benchmarks (Goals through 2024) are appropriate to effect that Vision. For this Strategic Plan update, the prioritization of projects and initiatives for 2021—2023 is most appropriate when considered in terms of the Goals that approximately parallel the same timeframe.

Each of the items considered for prioritization for 2021-2023 is directly related to one or more of the Goal statements. Some will be deeply impactful for only a few goals, while others will more broadly impact several goals. What is important about this linkage is that there is a clear connection between projects/initiatives in which the City invests time, money, and reputation and the Goals it has determined are most critical to its future. Without that connection, something is lacking either with the goal or with the selection of a particular project.

During the February 2021 workshop, the Elected Leaders and the City Manager also engaged in a dialogue to articulate their expectations for “success” for the high-priority projects/initiatives. Their expected outcomes were identified in terms of Dothan’s Vision 2034, and Leaders articulated the specific change/improvement in Dothan that would be an indicator of success in achieving the Vision.

The chart on the following page lists the top four priority areas (those that were selected by all six Commissioners and the Mayor for 2021-23.) The chart links each priority to the 2024 Goal(s) on which it will have direct impact. The chart also defines the indicators of success expected by City Leaders once the project or initiative is achieved. The Leaders also discussed whether these major projects could be accomplished with City of Dothan resources or if the partnership/assistance of other community entities would be needed to reach fulfillment.

**EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS—TOP FOUR PRIORITIES**

**2024 GOALS:** 1) *Financially Sound City*; 2) *Maintain High Performance Team*; 3) *Expand Local Economy*; 4) *Plan for Dothan’s Future*; 5) *More Livable City*; 6) *Improve Mobility*

<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>RELATED TO 2024 GOALS</b>	<b>EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR SUCCESS</b>	<b>PARTNERS</b>
Rip Hewes Stadium	3,4,5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*will increase pride in the community;</li> <li>*will increase satisfaction of area residents;</li> <li>*will improve traffic safety near/around stadium;</li> <li>*will help assure safety of players during emergencies;</li> <li>*will provide more evidence of City’s partnership with and commitment to schools;</li> <li>*will (may) provide a multi-use venue to attract events not now able to choose Dothan;</li> <li>*will aid in neighborhood development/redevelopment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Area schools (public and private)</li> <li>* private sponsors/donors</li> <li>* Visit Dothan</li> <li>* Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>* Residents and businesses in the neighborhood</li> </ul>
Enterprise Resource Planning Solution	2, 4,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*will improve the ease of doing business with the City;</li> <li>*will increase departmental efficiency for both internal operations and for streamlined customer service;</li> <li>*will make City functions current with technology;</li> <li>*will improve data security for City and customers;</li> <li>*will increase transparency of City operations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* City can accomplish w/o major community or governmental partners</li> </ul>
Tier 2-Tier 1 Conversion	2, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*will improve City’s ability to recruit and retain high-quality talent in all depts;</li> <li>*will increase the number of applicants for jobs;</li> <li>*will improve employee morale.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* City can accomplish w/o major community or governmental partners</li> </ul>
Honeysuckle Phase I (Hwy 84—Park)	1,3,4,5,6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*improved road infrastructure will contribute to continuation of Dothan as a hub for jobs, medical services, retail, etc.;</li> <li>*will improve safety at one of the most dangerous intersections in Dothan;</li> <li>*will attract more residential and economic development;</li> <li>*will increase event activity (tourneys, etc...) – increase tax revenue (i.e., lodging);</li> <li>*will expand Dothan’s reputation for hospitality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Residents and businesses directly impacted by roadway</li> <li>* Houston County</li> <li>* Chamber and Grow Dothan</li> </ul>

Note: the number of goals to which an area is predominantly related is not related to its importance. This is only an indication of “connecting the dots” between plan and decisions. An item related deeply to fewer goals is just as likely to be impactful as is an item broadly associated with several goals.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS GOING FORWARD**

Strategic planning processes vary greatly from organization to organization. For several years, Dothan City's leadership has engaged in a comprehensive, detailed planning process that has yielded broad-based direction and specific, related actions. Due to COVID-19, that same process could not be continued in 2020, and it was available only through distance technology in 2021. To revisit and refresh the strategic plan while COVID limitations continue to impact in-person planning, a briefer planning update process was engaged. A Strategic Plan updating process, resulting in this report, was contracted to refresh current plans and make such changes as were needed at this time. However, City Leaders and the City Manager wish to return to a more comprehensive, continuous process. The following expectations were identified for future strategic development of Dothan, AL:

### ***What do Leaders expect to achieve from a strategic planning process?***

- Direction and priorities, ranked by importance, with a focus on the "big picture."

### ***What do Leaders need from the workshop strategic planning session?***

- Commitment to an annual process, at the same time each year, with opportunity to calendar in advance.
- An open-ended discussion that allows time and opportunity for the City's Elected Leaders to gain insight into each other's values and concerns.
- A dialogue-based process, but one that arrives at priorities which the City Manager and Department Heads can use for detailed planning.
- A good balance between vision and planning, so that resulting directions are neither too vague nor too detailed (restrictive).

### ***What do Leaders expect the facilitator to do to help ensure a successful process?***

- Meet with partners in the community and integrate their input into the process.
- Meet with Department Heads and get their input into the hands of Elected Leaders prior to the main planning session.
- Leaders were divided on whether all Department Heads should be present during the primary planning workshop. Availability of in-depth knowledge of some of the more complex projects could be helpful. Conversely, the session would require more workshop days, and the variability of presentation styles could affect decisions. The inclusion of the Assistant City Manager in the workshop, able to provide details on most Department initiatives, was acknowledged as very valuable.
- Provide sufficient "prep" information to Commissioners and the Mayor in advance of the workshop, over a reasonable period of time and in a clear, concise format.

### ***What characteristics do Leaders want in a facilitator?***

- Unbiased and open-minded.
- Familiar with municipal strategic planning; preferably has other municipal clients.
- Able to establish a planning environment that fosters comradery.
- Able to commit to a long-term relationship. Continuity would increase his/her understanding of the City, and foster trust between him/her and City participants.
- Willing to commit to time on-site in Dothan to conduct in-person meetings and facilitate the primary planning workshop.

***In addition...***

Leaders would like to see more collaborative, proactive planning between themselves and the major organizational partners (i.e., Dothan City Schools, Chamber, Visit Dothan, et al.) While acknowledging the difficulties (leadership changes, confidentiality commitments, et al), there was general agreement that more early input into and information from the planning processes of partners would reduce surprise requests, which are sometimes too untimely or costly to grant. The Mayor and City Manager already are taking steps in this direction, and they will continue to look for opportunities to reach-out.

With regard to accountability, Leaders were divided on best methods of being kept informed of planned initiatives and/or unforeseen challenges and opportunities. However, they agreed with the City Manager's suggestion to incorporate a brief update on Strategic Plan major projects into the Administrative updates held in conjunction with Commission Meetings.



# APPENDICES

## **Appendix A Department Input Summaries**

Each Department Head was interviewed individually and asked to identify the most critical areas in need of attention and investment through 2023. Department Capital Improvement Plans and biennium budget plans were already developed and/or in progress. Respondents were asked to provide input in general categories vs. specific projects. Many Department Heads offered suggestions that applied to City operations as a whole or areas of concern to departments in addition to their own.

### **Participants included:**

Finance Department Director, Lisa Reeder  
Fire Department, Chief Larry Williams  
General Services Department, Director Andy Love  
Information Technology Department, Director Jack Mason  
Judicial Department, Judge Rose Gordon  
Leisure Services Department, Director Alison Hall  
Performing Arts Department, Director Marshal Perry  
Planning Department, Director Todd McDonald  
Police Department, Chief Steve Parrish  
Public Works Department, Director Charles Metzger  
Utilities Department, Director Billy Mayes

The combined recommendations for major projects/initiatives most needed by the City through 2023 according to the Department Heads are presented here. They are aggregated by category, with projects/initiatives impacting more than one department listed first.

Need to Transition Tier 2 Employees to Tier 1---Departments already are seeing an impact on recruitment and retention of personnel. The disparity between the two levels also is having a negative effect on employee morale.

Enterprise Resource Planning System—Not only is this necessary to replace an obsolete system, but integration across departments/functions with a new system will bring efficiencies both internally (to departments) and externally (to Dothan City customers). Some savings will be realized through cancellation of old subscriptions. Department Heads see this as an opportunity to improve service and efficiency.

Personnel Plan Considerations---In accordance with the personnel requests presented to the Commission on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, Department Heads see urgency in the requested reassignment and retraining of current personnel, and in requests for new personnel. Details of each department's assessment and request are not repeated in this report.

Phone System Replacement---New phones and parts for existing phones will no longer be available after October 1, 2021.

Continued investment in the annual apparatus/vehicle/equipment replacement plans to fund sustainability of current services provided by all departments before investing in development of new ones.

Succession Planning for Department Heads and a plan for the impending loss of knowledge and experience as many veteran employees retire.

Commitment to continual Information Technology Infrastructure Upgrades---Technology advances daily; threats to data integrity and safety multiply; essential expertise must remain current.

Commitment to fiber optics in the City's development—This applies to investment in technology itself (including increasing the data communication ring from 40 GB to 100 GB) and to the creation of a Fiber Crew dedicated to continual update and maintenance.

Rethinking neighborhood designs—Focus on connecting pedestrians to everything; affordable housing.

Downtown Redevelopment---Tie together the Transformation Through the Arts initiative, with viable solutions for the homeless, the Poplar Head Hydrology Study, and best use of the 84 Plan.

Focus on Fees---The self-sustainability of individual services (i.e., landfill, garbage and trash, performing arts, recreation) should be re-examined in terms of appropriate fees combined with other revenue-generating activities and City allocations.

Actively seek more partnerships—Area organizations that can assist with social service interventions, training and education, counseling, the growing mental health challenge, et al, should be identified and involved with city-wide issues.

Infrastructure projects—Continue to move forward on storm drainage, wastewater collection and treatment, red water abatement; et al.

Roadway/Mobility projects: Highway 84 East and West, Honeysuckle Road, Ross Clark Circle.

Update the city's near-term and long-term Facilities Master Plans—the last update was in 2018 and was not all-inclusive. New plans should include all preventative maintenance, upgrade estimates, and longevity of current structures.

Think of projects such as the Rip Hewes Stadium renovation as an opportunity for neighborhood redevelopment.

Invest monetarily in Love Dothan---Identify and fund interventions that can promote continuation of a neighborhood's improvement after the intensive weekend event is over.

## Dothan Strategic Planning 2021

Recognize, predict, plan for and fund the increasing need for virtual services—This was highlighted by the Judicial Department, with a return to pre-COVID in-person services unlikely, and was reiterated by several Department Heads for their individual areas.

Use 2020 Census data (once received) to predict population growth and diversity, neighborhood shifts, and future essential services. Data can be of use not only to identify population density, but also to create programs for growing numbers of cohorts such as senior citizens, special needs individuals, etc.

Use Facilities Master Plan and Census Data for Citizen Services—What is the best use of the Westgate property (armory), Doug Tew Center, school buildings now vacant, et al?

More assistance to the Departments with regard to branding and marketing. (Note: departments making this suggestion were supportive of citywide initiatives by the Communications Director; they were seeking more collaboration at the department level.)

Updating the Courthouse Facility—For increased safety, efficiency, and modernization.

Design and finalize plans for Fire Stations 3 and 10—There is a strong likelihood that Dothan will lose its ISO #1 rating if these are not built or in process when the City is next inspected. Construction of Station 10 is requested for 2022; Station 3 for 2023.

Improve Evidence Storage—Items needed to be retained are stressing current facilities.

Fund the Cardiac Monitor Replacement (if a grant cannot be secured). Current system can no longer be repaired.

An Employee Health Clinic---Beyond the 2023 timeline, but mentioned as a desired workforce retention/development service.

**Appendix B-1**

**Dothan Strategic Planning—Commissioner Kevin Dorsey**

Employ data-based decision making.

Joint Strategic Planning with Dothan City Schools—formative discussions vs. only periodic updates and requests for funding.

Invest more (attention and money) in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Succession Planning—be proactive about the aging senior level expertise that may be leaving the city in the next few years.

Make better use of resources available from Troy University and Wallace Community College.

Review and update the Use of Force Policy.

Explore partnerships with local social worker resources to address mental health needs in the community.

Buy Wiregrass Commons Mall—consider uses for city functions and for educational purposes.

**Examples of Major Successes 2020:**

- Business openings—ribbon cuttings
- Keeping city services functioning effectively despite the COVID pandemic.
- Leadership skill in getting things done despite national adversity.

**Appendix B-2**

**Dothan Strategic Planning—Commissioner Janasky Fleming**

Continuing emphasis on the development of 84 East.

Fighting poverty in District 2:

- Keeping current 84 East business opportunities and fostering new opportunities of importance for working adults supporting their families.
- Address impoverished neighborhoods.

Determine the future of a competitive track facility in Dothan—what is the expected impact, financial considerations, locations.

Continuing an open dialogue with Dothan City Schools—development of good schools as a cooperative venture between the City and the School System.

Make taxpayers aware of what the City already is doing for the schools; how their tax dollars are being used.

When will it be time to have the “tax” conversation?

**Examples of Major Successes 2020:**

- Development of 84 East—proud that this is evolving into a whole-community focus.
- Continuing operation and viability of businesses downtown (the heart of Dothan), despite the COVID disruption.

**Appendix B-3**

**Dothan Strategic Planning—Commissioner Albert Kirkland**

Importance of Personnel Investments for Future of Dothan:  
Code Enforcement—need for dedicated personnel.

Development of Wiregrass Public Safety Center—particularly staffing.

Utilities Operation Center—personnel to operate.

Firefighters—employ/train/use now and in readiness for new stations.

Technological advancements/investments require personnel.

Include in projections the savings calculations for retraining of personnel for transfers, and positions lost through attrition, etc.

Tier One vs. Tier Two Retirement System—decision required by May 8.

Rip Hewes Renovation and Continuation of Honeysuckle Improvements—funding mechanisms that may apply to both conjointly.

Restructuring of fees for trash collection.

Facilitation of Pole Attachment Transfer—and subsequent removal of old poles. May require work with the Legislature to address legal issues complicating the process.

New Substation Feeder—Pavilion through John D Odom.

**Appendix B-4**

**Dothan Strategic Planning—Commissioner John Ferguson**

New/renovated stadium, most logically at the Rip Hewes site. It is an historical venue, City-owned, with some infrastructure already in place.

- Take a longer view (10-15 years) regarding facility utilization.
- Design/construct for flexibility (i.e., should DCS build its own facility, how could the Rip Hewes stadium be readily modified for other purposes?)
- Can this facility be integrated with other recreational facilities also owned by the City (i.e., Jim Oates Park) to facilitate multi-site use?
- Consider more than just the stadium structure: access roads (traffic flow), lighting (safety), neighborhood beautification.

Honeysuckle Road Improvements. Complete project as designed.

Animal Shelter—City has taken first step with acquisition of the property. Fiscal support strategies for construction and operation currently underway; City’s financial role as yet unknown.

Flowers Chapel Road—double lane extension onto West Main.

The future of the Dothan Civic Center dome/complex. If downtown progress develops to include replacement, issues in addition to finance need to be addressed: alternate venues for tournaments, re-honoring for Coach Opper; et al.

Identify ways in which City leadership can be involved in early planning stages with community partners.

**Examples of Major Successes 2020:**

COVID was an unforeseen disruptor. The City managed to maintain economic vitality despite the pandemic stressors. Credits good planning, good management, and Dothan’s status as a retail and medical hub of the Wiregrass.

Wiregrass Public Training Center---has personal knowledge of Center’s ability to draw regional public safety professionals to Dothan for training. It will continue to play an important role in law enforcement continuing education as parameters change nationwide. Center also has provided name recognition for the City as a unique destination.



**Appendix B-5**

**Dothan City Strategic Planning—Commissioner Beth Kenward**

Animal Shelter/Pet Adoption Center—being developed as a public-private partnership.

- What does that structure look like, legally?
- What roles will the City continue to play—esp. financial support?
- Ordinance for license fee.
- Communication with general public about impact on City quality of life.

Succession Planning for Department Heads.

Discussion/Decisions About Department Restructuring---information to Commission with all costs and all savings incorporated.

Continuation of Storm Water Projects—more comprehensive picture of current status and future plans.

Continuation of Road Improvement Projects—more comprehensive picture of current status and future plans for City-owned and ALDOT projects viewed together.

Updated, Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan.

Collaborative Regional Strategy for the Future of Ft. Rucker—Wiregrass speaking clearly to Washington with a unified voice.

**Examples of Major Successes 2020:**

Love Dothan Campaign—needs to grow and continue.

Water World Improvements.

Use of tax incentives to encourage business ownership/renovation of older corridor-centered Dothan buildings.

**Appendix B-6**

**Dothan Strategic Planning—Commissioner David Crutchfield**

Would like a general overview of the projects already approved and still in-process or not yet begun. What is the status and what are the upcoming costs for approved projects such as: sewer-water system upgrades; Rip Hewes upgrades; more work at WaterWorld; RSA Tier-2 to Tier-1 transition; et al.

Would also like capital and other major project requests to include costs of maintenance and sustainability.

Planning discussions need also to include information about the overall debt condition of the City.

Work with ALDOT to address 231S access from both Hodgesville Rd. and Fortner St. directions; continue working to alleviate beach traffic issues.

Conversation about support for Dothan Public Schools---a true picture of everything the City already is doing and what additional investments are seriously being contemplated (i.e., Rip Hewes); finding ways to make sure the public is informed of the level of City participation.

Wiregrass Public Safety Center transition to City budget for operations after WF support to personnel, marketing, etc... ceases. (Both revenue and cost projections.)

Projects for Honeysuckle improvements and Rip Hewes upgrades---will these be linked together for funding?

Changes in wastewater billing to non-city customers. Deadlines for them to fix their systems continue to expire.

**Examples of Major Successes 2020:**

The importance of success in infrastructure projects past two years:

- Wastewater/Treatment Plant improvements; piping projects, including continuing work on red water issues.
- Road infrastructure improvements...Honeysuckle commitments; roundabouts.
- Maintaining ISO 1 rating.
- Infrastructure isn't "shiny", but these projects and costs are necessary if the City is to be able to contemplate, fund, and implement new ideas that are innovative and inspiring.

That the Community maintained its calm during uneasy times throughout the country.

EMA's continuing work at coordinating across city-county-unit lines for area emergencies such as hurricanes, tornados, etc.

The additional \$5.00 fee for volunteer service support outside of the city limits.

**Appendix B-7**

**Dothan Strategic Planning—Mayor Mark Saliba**

Policy level work on capacity assurance for city sewers.  
Detailed planning for major projects—3 business cycles—with timelines, costs; specifically in IT and Leisure Services, but applies to all Departments.  
Education—Dothan City Public Schools.  
Transformation Through the Arts (and its impact on downtown redevelopment).  
Affordable Housing—tied to the Love Dothan neighborhood initiative.  
Tier 1 vs. Tier 2 decision and commitment.  
Pet Rescue and Adoption Center.  
Rip Hewes (and surrounding property) development -- more than just a stadium renovation; re-envision the total property.  
Track – possibly included in the Rip Hewes project.  
Honeysuckle Road project.  
National Guard Armory property.  
Continuing major thoroughfare improvements—84W; Circle.  
Continuing other road improvements—resurfacing.  
Phases II and III of Water World improvements.  
Continuing work on storm drainage, citywide.  
Continuing work on red water elimination.  
New Enterprise Resource Planning system.

**Examples of Major Successes 2020:**

- \*Release from EPA consent decree
- \*Landfill opening
- \*Salary study completed; implemented
- \*Water World plans Phase I, II, and III outlined; Phase I completed
- \*Continuing road infrastructure improvements (including ALDOT & federal collaborations)
- \*Continued economic development (despite COVID); strong partnership with the Chamber.

## Appendix C--City Strategic Partners Input

Prioritized Dothan City projects/initiatives most closely related to partners' stated strategic directions are noted in red.

### **Dothan Regional Airport**—Director Adam Hartzog

The presentation to the Commission was not focused on future plans, but on appreciation for assistance provided by the City. Mr. Hartzog advised that he and his Board are working now on future plans. He will be providing his Board with his thoughts in Feb-Mar, and will incorporate their input with an estimated completion date end-Mar. He will give the City a general bullet-list prior to the Feb 5 City planning session. He noted that their plans are less focused on growth/development and more on insuring compliance with FAA regulations, and the appropriate utilization of the various sources of revenue---federally qualifying projects vs. general services upgrades.

**TBD—upon receipt of Authority's Strategic Plan**

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### **Visit Dothan**—Executive Director Aaron McCreight

Visit Dothan's focus going forward is on sports. Sports is synonymous with "group tourism" for Dothan. Without a convention center or major attraction (Disney-esque), sports tournaments provide the best potential draw. They have launched the Fuel-Up Campaign. They predict tripling room nights and revenue from 2018 levels in 2021. (No info provided on basis for that projection.) The organization has made major investments in IT-enabled, interactive technology for audience communication and marketing. They have incorporated direct links to specific tournaments and other events, and they are building on the State Games event that was cancelled last year but is rescheduled for this Summer in Dothan. Marketing plans include buying prospect lists, pushing out direct solicitations, linking event-specific hospitality information (room specials, restaurant deals) to each event, monitoring hits/length of time on their site, the bookings related to each push, and they are making strategic adjustments based on that input. They are seeking to provide additional info based on receiver input---i.e., a family interested in ecology would be linked to Landmark Park. They believe they can attract more tournaments (data indicate that already is happening—only 2 weekends spring through Nov when multiple tourneys not already booked.) They also want to capture traffic heading to the beaches---have travelers spend the night in Dothan on Friday, with special deals on rooms/meals/activities, before progressing to the beach on Saturday AM for check-in (as locals generally do.) Visit Dothan is also working on better informing their members and the general public of what events are planned and what visitors will be in Dothan each weekend. They hope this will generate more out-reach opportunities and help ensure that the community is prepared to serve the visitors well. (Note: in the face of declining COVID-related tourism economy, Visit Dothan increased investment in marketing.)

**Rip Hewes Stadium**

**Water World**

**James Oates Park**

**Field Lighting**

**Competition Track**

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**Dothan Downtown Redevelopment Authority**—Executive Director Jamie Bienvenu

Most of the presentation to the Commission related to reduced revenue and declining sponsorship due to COVID. Their organization has restructured, including eliminating their marketing position. The presentation was focused on “little wins” for 2020 vs. proactive plans for the future. Highlights included Candy-cane Lane linked with City Tree Lighting at Christmas; the ongoing partnership with National Mainstreet Association. The Director updated the Commission on façade improvement grants issued (2 distributed to-date). The St. Andrews Market project seems to be moving forward (more privately driven than DDRA driven.) DDRA hosted an event that generated approximately \$27,000 in revenue through the public sale of old items at Porter Hardware. They have launched a newsletter to generate more public engagement.

(Note: in the face of declining COVID-related tourism economy, Visit Dothan decreased investment in marketing.)

**Transformation Through the Arts  
Neighborhood Redevelopment**

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**Dothan City Schools**—Interim Superintendent Dr. Dennis Coe

Dr. Coe has reassessed capital uses for the \$10 million CARES facility money coming from the State. A proposed phase-1 of a multi-phase, costly tech center has been dropped. Funds will be used to update all programs in Dothan Technology Center (facades, internal facilities, equipment, parking, lighting) for \$7 million, and the balance used to renovate the Dothan High convocation center making it more useful for multiple venues (i.e., small basketball tourneys, as well as arts programming) with a 900-seat capacity. Streaming/broadcasting capability also is being considered so that the community can be connected. Renovations also are planned to the high school gym (bleachers are not up to code nor are they ADA compliant). Dr. Coe is planning to respond to parent complaints about the lack of advanced courses at Dothan Preparatory Academy. Advanced coursework is being developed in fine arts and STEM. The system is creating a Virtual School to sustain families who will want to keep their children on remote learning, attract new markets of homeschool children, and be better prepared for future COVID-like disruptions to in-class instruction. The Board has employed a statewide expert to work with teachers on curriculum, etc. The Virtual School will have its own principal and staff, offering both synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Renovations, new DPA courses, and virtual school all will be ready by Fall term 2021. The Board also will be asked to consider an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Salaries are not always competitive with other districts/states and little can be done about that right now. An EAP would be a desired benefit for employees and will help alleviate many of the stressors being faced by teachers and staff in education.

**Rip Hewes Stadium**

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**Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce**—President Matt Parker; Executive Director. Dean Mitchell, and Ann Carr, Executive Director. Of Southeast Alabama Works

The Chamber is focused on partnerships—Dothan City Schools, Association of the U.S. Army, Business Council of Alabama, et al, and on developmental programs (Leadership Dothan, Dothan Area Young Professionals, Youth Leadership Dothan). They expect the local economy to be back to pre-COVID levels soon. City, County, Chamber collaborative work helped small and large businesses during the prior year.

Focus forward: 1. Regionalism (ATRIP for roads like 84W and the Build Grant funding the survey for 52 W) 2. Need for concentrated efforts on hospitality/leisure services; they expect opportunities to partner with Visit Dothan and with City's Leisure Services Dept. 3) continuing work on industrial recruiting Houston, Henry, and Geneva Counties. 4) maintaining watchfulness of state legislative agenda and Governor's orders as these pertain to business and economic development.

Southeast Alabama Works—focused on the new tri-state, 72 county alliance that will expand opportunities for jobs, training, and grants/scholarships across state lines; The Second Chance program with Wallace College will provide short-course essential worker training in welding, basic maintenance for non-felony released prisoners. Their goal is to provide trained workers to businesses and to offer economic opportunities to individuals who may not otherwise be able to sustain their families.

Honeysuckle Road  
Highway 84  
Storm Drainage  
Wastewater Collection/Treatment  
Emergency Electric Source Station

**Appendix D  
City of Dothan Strategic Plan—Workshop Session  
February 5-6, 2021  
Agenda—Day 1**

<b>Friday, 2/5</b>	<b>(Eastgate Park)</b>			
7:45 -- 8:15	Arrival and Breakfast			
8:15 -- 8:45	Welcome Elected Leaders' Project Introductions		Mayor Saliba Commissioners & Mayor	
8:45 -- 9:30	Strategic Planning Work Overview Review—Mission and Vision Review—Community Partners' Agendas Review—Possible "Disruptors" and "Opportunities" Department Leaders' Key Projects		Barbara Alford	
9:30 -- 10:30	City Overview Report City Financial Status Overview		City Manager Kevin Cowper Finance Director Lisa Reeder	
10:30 --10:45	Break			
10:45 -- 11:30	Project Discussions		Mayor, Commissioners, City Manager & Assistant City Manager Randy Morris	
11:30 -- 12:00	Lunch			
12:00 -- 1:30	Project Discussions, Continue		" " " "	
1:30 -- 1:45	Break			
1:45 -- 3:30	Project Discussions, Continue		" " " "	
3:30 -- 3:35	Stretch Break			
3:35 -- 4:25	Personnel Issues Overview		Personnel Director Delvick McKay	
4:25 -- 5:00:	Review/Agreement on Unprioritized Projects List 2021-2023		Mayor and Commissioners	
5:00	Adjourn			

*The group will reconvene tomorrow, Saturday, 2/6, at 8:00 AM in the Civic Center Board Room.*

**City of Dothan Strategic Plan—Workshop Session  
February 5-6, 2021  
Agenda—Day 2**

**Saturday, 2/6 (Civic Center Board Room)**

8:00 -- 8:20	Arrival and Breakfast	
8:20 -- 8:30	Welcome Comments from Commissioners; City Manager	Mayor Saliba
8:30 -- 8:45	Review Summative Projects List 2021-23 Additional Comments	Barbara Alford Mayor, Commissioners, & City Manager
8:45 -- 10:00	Determination of Priorities Preferred Timelines--2021, 2022, 2023	Mayor and Commissioners
10:00 -- 10:15	Break	
10:15 -- 11:15	Discussion and Decisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What Does Success Look Like?</li><li>• What Major Partners Will Be Involved in That Success?</li></ul>	Mayor and Commissioners
11:15 -- 12:00	Group Discussion—City Strategic Planning Process and Accountability/Communication Going Forward	
12:00 -- 12:30	Lunch	
12:30 --	Individual Meetings, As Needed	

*Appreciation to Lisa Matheny for coordination and support.*

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