

Master Action Plan 2005

Mid City, Baton Rouge

Compiled: January, 2006



Master Action Plan 2005

Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, Inc.
Baton Rouge, LA

Mission Statement of the Master Action Plan (MAP 2005)

The mission of the MAP 2005 is to act as an organizational road guide for the redevelopment of the built environment through the decade (2006-2010), in which it is projected that much change will occur in the urban areas of Baton Rouge, particularly in Mid City. Being large in scale, the area under review in the MAP has been broken down into districts that exhibit coherent characteristics, to be developed benefitting each individual area's essence, within the larger framework of the physical and social context.

Overall Vision for the Area

To further redevelop the Target Zone for its current residents, merchants and visitors so that it might serve as a viable investment option for the Baton Rouge Community, partly through strategies outlined herein.

Mission Statement of the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance



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Foreword

Mid City Redevelopment Alliance (MCRA) was founded by the General Health System in the fall of 1991, based on an extensive Master Planning process which was the blueprint for the organization's first fifteen years of work. This revised Master Action Plan(MAP 2005) is the organization's second generation plan and builds on the success forged from the original document. The Alliance is a fervent believer in prudent and purposeful planning prior to implementing a program, project, or initiative.

This plan maintains the organization's primary 67-block targeted neighborhood and has extended its reaches to an additional 122 blocks which is now defined as the Target Zone. This zone extends from Foster Drive on the east, to I-110 on the west. This new 189-block Target Zone is further broken down into districts which provide greater insight and analysis as you will discover in the succeeding pages.

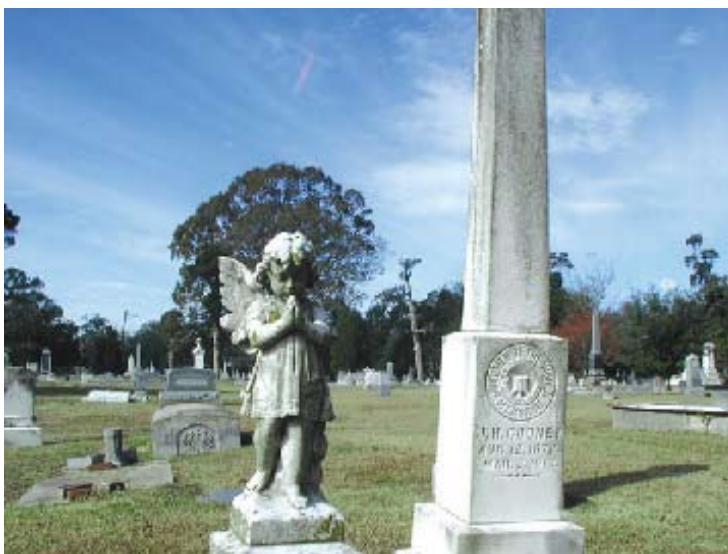
I thank you for taking the time to learn how we plan to address the needs and opportunities which exist in the heart of Baton Rouge. I would like to thank my entire staff, all of our volunteers, board members, sponsors, the Baton Rouge General Hospital, our neighbors and merchants for giving the Alliance the honor of shepherding such an exciting process. Lastly, I would like to thank our recently departed Urban Planner Jeremy Hendricks who was the chief architect of this plan. He gave MCRA four wonderfully productive years, and this document will be implemented in his honor of which the fruits of this plan will stand as a reminder of his dedication to the ultimate redevelopment of Mid City.

It is my hope and desire that you will embrace this plan as we collectively embark upon a new level of revitalization and redevelopment for our beloved Mid City community. This community is currently at it's tipping point, it is now time to rebuild it for future generations—and that requires everyone's participation, including yours!

Perry J. Franklin, Executive Director



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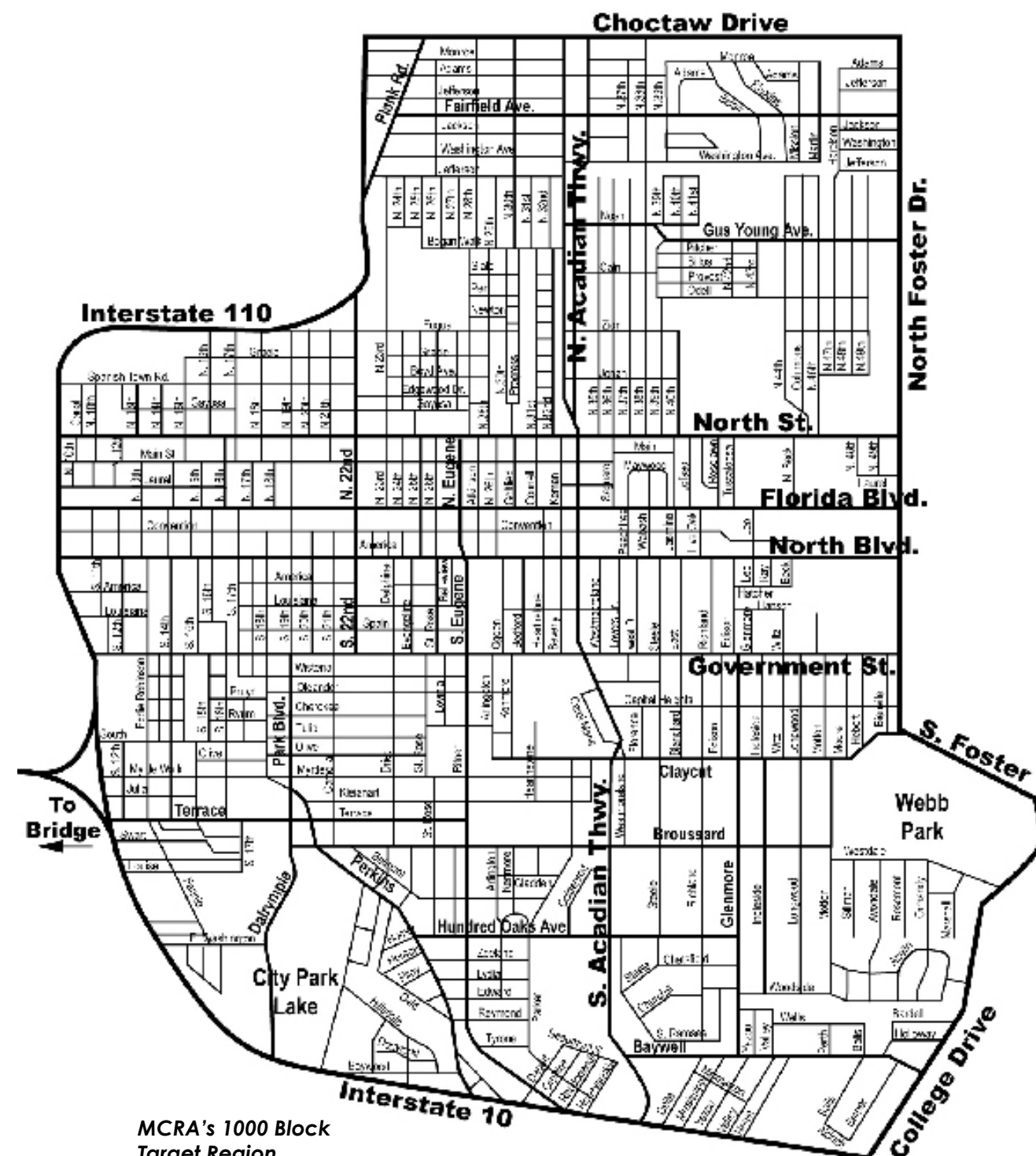
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



After decades of disinvestment from Baton Rouge's urban core by the broader community, in the late 1980's General Health System found itself at a strategic planning crossroads that tested the resolve and commitment of all involved: should it follow where so many had gone before to pursue opportunities on the outskirts of the urban environment, or stay and recommit itself to investing in the future of the area? It was a decision not taken lightly and one which ultimately worked out in the best interests of everybody.

As it turned out, the largest and oldest health-care system in the parish decided to take a holistic approach to the care of its clients within the community. The leadership of the General Health System decided that the process of care and "well-being" extended beyond the premises of the hospital and should seek to include the broader environment from which many of its clients came. A unique approach was thus chartered in the sense that it was believed that to achieve the organization's goals of well-being, efforts of "wellness" had to resonate at the neighborhood level, starting effectively at the individual, home level. Because of this perspective, it was decided that an official strategy should be formulated to focus on neighborhood issues in an effort to promote community wellness and stability. Consequently, the next step was to create an organization that could effectively implement and promote such strategies--that organization came to be known as Mid City Redevelopment Alliance (MCRA).

With the inception of MCRA in 1991, a Master Action Plan was created with the help of consultants to help guide the organization's development. Having developed and implemented programs over the past decade, many of the goals and objectives outlined in the original plan have been successfully met, and because of the success of the original document, a strategic plan that outlines the next phase of revitalization – the Master Action Plan (MAP 2005) – seeks to build upon the strong foundations established in the same concise and purposeful manner.

HOW TO INTERPRET MAP 2005

MAP is literally a road map for the organiza-

tion, as it looks five-to-ten years into the future. The document provides comprehensive ideas and suggestions targeted towards a vision for the area (as opposed to geographically independent projects initiated in the area that pull in different directions, and do not contribute to a greater goal). The latter leads to inefficient organizational and community strategies, which tend to waste valuable resources that could be gained through economies of scale, community synergies and time management.

Also, the MAP 2005 is not an "end all" document; rather, it reveals potential solutions to observations, that when tackled in concert with each other, allow for the above mentioned economics of scale and synergies to occur with a vision in mind; however, as with all creative processes, after the research and analysis has been done, more than one solution can be generated, allowing for a multitude of perspectives to be entertained. Herein lies the flexibility of the MAP; to be approached as a tool to stimulate ideas and activity—with actual projects being fleshed out in detail by stakeholders, consultants and professionals of all stripes—towards a common vision.

VISION

To expand on the vision concept: the overarching idea for the area under consideration is to redevelop it, ideally creating density through mixed use development schemes that at all times are sensitive to the historic nature of the urban environment. Principles of this type of redevelopment are currently promoted under the rubric of Smart Growth, and while each community is unique unto itself, there are general ideas common to recreating desirable urban spaces for all. More information about Smart Growth is outlined in the document on page 24.

Terms to be familiar with in the document:

Target Neighborhood – the area outlined in 1992 in the original Master Action Plan defining the geographically focused goals and objectives of the organization. The area's borders are North Street to the north, 22nd Street to the west, North Boulevard to the south, and Bernado Street to the east. (See enclosed diagram)



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Mid City Region (1000-block area) – the area bounded by Choctaw to the north, I-10 to the south, I-110 to the west and Foster Drive and College Drive to the east that defines the broader area commonly known as Mid City.

Target Zone – Noticing some of the activity occurring along the spine of Florida Boulevard in and around the Mid City region, like I) investment in the Bon Carre' project; II) the Baton Rouge Community College expansion; III) the Baton Rouge General Hospital strategic plan and re-capitalization in the area; and IV) the potential redevelopment of Renaissance Park; the need to “zoom out” of the Target Neighborhood and incorporate the larger area of the Target Zone into a formalized goal is seen, at this point in time, as imperative. The initiatives that have surfaced – many outside of the Target Neighborhood – are opportunities that warrant serious consideration in the development of the Mid City area, and taking this into account is a natural evolution in the redevelopment process of an area. The proposed Target Zone would encompass the Target Neighborhood, with the east boundary being reflected by Foster Drive, the west by I-110, and the north and south boundaries by North Street and North Boulevard respectively, with an enlarged Target Zone adjacent to the downtown. (See enclosed diagram)

The MAP 2005 is the synergy of ideas, needs and desires of the Mid City community garnered in many public forums – be they in town meetings, neighborhood association meetings and/or public presentations– and from personal hours spent in interaction with residents, local public officials and civic leaders. A number of opportunities were purposefully designed to obtain information specific to the master planning process that took place throughout 2002-2005: a town meeting on the Grounds of Sacred Heart Church in July 2002, the Mid City Annual Neighborhood Festival in September and the distribution of questionnaires at events and selected moments throughout the years. Needless to say, much valuable information was obtained and used to influence the construction of this document.

MAP 2005 is to be interpreted as a “snap shot” of the Mid City community as to how it could look at a specific point in time. It is a vision created to inspire public involvement and creativity, guide overall development while showing at once what could be if a wish list of development opportunities were granted to make the vision a reality. This is not to say that this “vision” is the only one possible. Healthy variations of development possibilities will certainly arise from an involved community, which is not only welcomed, but integral, to the success of achieving the vision.

The level at which the Plan is synthesized tends to be macroscopic at the local level, with planning principles taking into account long-range goals over a period of approximately 10 years. The planning process undertaken looks at existing and historical relationships of the urban fabric, and where possible, tends to strengthen those relationships while incorporating variables of land-use, area-programming, vehicular access, etc., into the decision-making process.

Boring down to the microscopic level involves the analysis of existing structures, lot sizes, uses of existing structures, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, etc. At this level, individual projects are initiated and implemented, with various professionals involved to bring the project to fruition.

COMPONENTS OF MAP 2005

The components of the MAP 2005 consist of i) Existing Conditions (demographics, history, zoning, etc.), ii) Proposed Districts, iii) Comprehensive Layers – a section of the Plan dealing with those projects or programs that span or overlap district boundaries. Examples of “Comprehensive Layers” are Mass Transportation, the Land Development Program, The Home Ownership Center, Mid City Historical Cemeteries Coalition and the Government Street corridor master plan.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing conditions in this document outline the analysis and research of the area needed for the decision making process. The categories under the

title of research include the history of the area, demographics, land analysis, zoning and Smart Growth principles.

DISTRICT PROPOSALS –

Districts are sub-planning areas that in some form or fashion engender a unique, cohesive identity that can be more easily managed in terms of planning and development. In the case of MAP 2005, the identification of districts represent the initiation of a process where needs, strengths and weaknesses can be more easily identified and managed in these areas,

Similar to the Target Neighborhood concept that was created to focus development within a certain area of Mid City. Characteristics that are commonly used to create these districts are the scale of the area, zoning, land use, architectural aesthetics, landscaping elements, formal boundaries, etc. The proposed districts in MAP 2005 are Spanish Town Extension, Beauregard Town Extension (Lorente-Young Town), Central Business District Extension, Warehouse District, Target Neighborhood, Mid City Medical District, Foster Drive Extension. A few observations are listed below for each district that provides some working knowledge of the areas concerned.

I) SPANISH TOWN EXTENSION

Observation:

Some of the largest undeveloped tracts of land in the urban center are nestled in the elbow of I-110, on its south side across from the State Capitol. Almost everyone engaged in discussions about the opportunities for the area agree that it could, and should, be a spectacular urban development – consisting of a majority residential development – resonating the hopes and dreams of the community in terms of services and quality of life.

Strengths:

- There is much undeveloped/vacant land available that if affordably purchased could be used to substantially improve the character of the area
- Adjacent to downtown with its great strides in redevelopment
- Presence of public and social institutions to support area: Nicholson Elementary, Louisi-

ana Municipal Association, the State Capital, neighborhood churches

- Relative “dramatic” natural topography
- There are identified partners that can work to make a large-scale residential development possible

Weaknesses:

- Much undeveloped/vacant/adjudicated land that creates an image of dereliction and neglect
- Negative perception as a crime-ridden area; stigma of the “inner city” still at play
- Few or no retail services available
- Vacant commercial structures add to negative image of area

Potential projects

- Large-scale residential development (multi- and single-family) with appropriate partners (Priority: 1-A)
- Annual FIXUP! program to improve aesthetics of existing housing stock
- Possibility of developing a “true” mixed-income, mixed-use community
- Commercial infill
- Public park with lake for recreational use

II) BEAUREGARD TOWN EXTENSION (LORENTE-YOUNG TOWN)

Observation:

The area maintains a residential scale and many of its original structures. However, as each year passes, the housing stock dwindles through salvage efforts, the city’s “take down” program – aimed at safety and security in the neighborhoods – and incidents of fire. More and more vacant land is popping up because of these actions, causing the erosion of the “charm” of the neighborhood.

Strengths:

- The residential character of the neighborhood, for the most part, is still intact.
- Stable blocks of residential fabric anchor the community
- Strong religious institutions present – for example, Shiloh Baptist Church
- Has many vacant properties available for development



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- Adjacent to downtown
- North Boulevard expansion will create new image/opportunities

Weaknesses:

- Abandoned properties, vacant and adjudicated lots cast a sense of deterioration of the area
- Area boxed in by I-110, Government Street, Railroad and North Boulevard
- Close to the noise generated by the interstate traffic

Potential Projects:

- Scattered site residential development (Priority 1-A)
- New commercial developments on North Boulevard with expansion
- Creation of civic association
- Street beautification initiatives

III) CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT EXTENSION

Observation:

The CBD area is a likely extension of downtown's Central Business District (CBD), located between two residential districts to its north and south, and the railroad to the east. It consists of a diverse range of building types, from larger warehouses to smaller residential units. A large amount of the houses in this area are in bad condition. The City-Parish has a large presence in the area, as well as a large number of non-profit organizations.

The old Dillards/Maison Blanche property also falls within this district, and MCRA has put forth a lot of effort to get this site back into commerce. The property, vacant for the past three years, sits on approximately 12-acres of land and consists of roughly 400,000 square feet of commercial space. The vacant buildings and surrounding surface parking presents a magnificent opportunity for the surrounding neighborhoods and community. Contextually, the site could afford to host an array of services and/or amenities that could cater to the community, aligning such development notions with Planned Urban Development (PUD) concepts. Foreseeably, the Town Center could comprise of such uses as residential, retail, commercial, workforce development, transportation, education and entertainment.

Strengths:

- Many vacant lots in the area present an opportunity for development
- Adjacent to downtown
- The presence of public and social institutions anchor the area, such as the City-Parish Health Unit, Department of Public Works, area non-profits, City Parish Planning Commission, etc.
- Easy access to the interstate

Weaknesses:

- Most of the housing stock is in poor condition
- Crime seems to be a constant variable
- Noise and closeness of the interstate could be a limiting factor
- Loitering and homelessness

Potential Projects:

- Scattered site development (Priority 2-C)
- Streetscape initiative for Florida Boulevard
- Create vision to reuse Dillard's property in a meaningful way for the community
- Façade improvement program for existing businesses
- Create business incentive package
- Create a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district

IV) WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

Observation:

The area encompassing the Warehouse District is comprised mostly of commercially zoned property that contains some of Baton Rouge's few remaining warehouse structures. Many of these structures are still in use, and there seems to have developed somewhat of a commercial arts/crafts image easily translated into a promotional concept called the design district. There are many parcels of property that could be developed in the area, and, foreseeably, this could be a thriving artist/artisan community. The interest in live/work space is such that some of the older buildings in the area could be rehabbed as studio space, along with apartment space. New construction could lend itself to such principles of urban living.

Strengths:

- Several commercial properties available for

development

- Unique area in the city that has a "warehouse" feel
- There already exists a 'kernel' of artists and artisans in the area
- Home of the Masonic Temple, an icon in the community with a history that can be used as a draw-card for the area.
- Dormant BREC Park in the vicinity

Weaknesses:

- Large tracts of vacant land projecting a negative image for the area
- Close to the railway line

Potential Projects:

- Development of live/work studies
- Develop marketing plan to attract new retailers, showrooms and manufacturers

V) TARGET NEIGHBORHOOD

Observation:

The Target Neighborhood is an area that was identified with the creation of the first Master Action Plan in 1992. The rationale used in identifying the neighborhood was based on the fact that the Baton Rouge General Hospital served, and continues to serve, as an anchor in the area, and as such, should be used as a means to leverage economic development, whether it be in attracting medically related businesses to the immediate vicinity, or relying on its positive image to promote residential development. Picking up trash, fixing the exterior of houses and providing incentives for neighborhood improvement in a defined, focused area around the hospital was seen as the prudent course to take to initiate redevelopment.

Strengths:

- Much groundwork has been laid by MCRA to prepare the area for the next level of redevelopment projects
- Situated in the shadows of the Baton Rouge General Hospital, an anchor of the area
- Has a model, infill residential development project known as Park Hills
- Vacant property available for commercial and/or residential development

Weaknesses:

- Vacant land in the area that is unattractive
- Vacant residential and commercial structures project negative image
- Absentee landlords and poorly maintained rental properties

Potential Projects:

- Multi-family residential development
- Project to acquire problem rental properties, rehab and resell
- Create a property management department to offer services to problem landlords

VI) MEDICAL DISTRICT

Observation:

One of the first districts outlined by the organization is the Mid City Medical District to focus development initiatives in a specific area. The area was identified because of the presence of the BR General Hospital, the vacant properties adjacent to the hospital, conducive land-use and zoning properties, great vehicular access and existing infrastructure.

The Medical District is a key element of MCRA's original Master Action Plan and envisions the development of a district for professional, medical, and associated fields to serve the largest employer target neighborhood.

Strengths:

- Infrastructure already existing
- Ease of vehicular access
- Unused land available for development
- Economic boost to area would be substantial
- In the heart of the City-Parish

Weaknesses:

- Dependent on direction of political winds at federal and state levels
- Potential Projects:
 - Wellness Clinics
 - Physician Offices
 - Insurance agencies
 - Pharmaceutical Companies
 - Medical Supplies
 - Support Services
 - Research and Development Facilities



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

VII) FOSTER DRIVE EXTENSION

Observation:

The area indicated around Foster Drive changes in scale from the adjacent Target Area to reveal more commercially zoned properties and larger lot sizes. The businesses located in the area are diverse, consisting of auto dealers, furniture makers, mechanical-repair shops, etc. There are some vacant properties in the vicinity presenting their own set of challenges, but at the same time presenting opportunities for the area. The area should be marketed as a commercial destination, with financial incentives available for those who would like to invest in the area.

Strengths:

- The commercial area is in the heart of the city
- It is traversed by two of the busiest streets in the City-Parish
- Infrastructure already in place
- Good traffic volumes

Weaknesses:

- Has had problems attracting new commercial tenants
- Image needs enhancement
- Potential Projects:
- Streetscape improvement plan
- Signage standards
- Façade improvements

COMPREHENSIVE LAYERS

A Layer is associated with a particular project or program that transcends any one district (the following 3 projects are not associated with any one district). The MAP 2005 will have several Layers that add to the complexity of the document. Interestingly, the more layers are added to the document, the more real life is mimicked; however, for purposes of economic redevelopment and for want of not being too pedantic, a relatively few layers have been identified, mainly those pertinent to the organization's vision and goals. Following are a few of the important Layers that is included in the MAP 2003: The Home Ownership Center, the Land Development Program and the Government Street Master Plan.

A) THE HOME OWNERSHIP CENTER

Observation:

The Home Ownership Center is a community resource that provides comprehensive education and counseling services for people interested in owning their own homes. Designed primarily for low-to-moderate income families, the HOC is a "one stop shop" that provides homebuyer services free of charge. The HOC offers a full array of services including counseling and consumer education, homebuyer readiness training and a 15-hour first time homebuyer educational seminar.

Strengths:

- The HOC's course is recognized as the best in Baton Rouge. The HOC is the only provider of these services that has a contract with the City-Parish of East Baton Rouge
- Established non-profit partners
- Established relationships with funding sources
- Self-sufficient
- Uncultivated opportunities outside of EBRP

Weaknesses:

- Dependency on large underwriters (City-Parish and Fannie Mae Foundation) Potential Projects
- Contracts outside of EBRP
- Expanded product lines

B) THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Observation:

In older parts of communities, opportunities pass them by, simply because the property is not easily attainable. It's easier for a developer to purchase a farm and sell off what they don't need, versus, going through the pain staking process of researching ownerships, making multiple offers and assembling the required real estate. Parcels have also been transferred multiple times in the Mid City community, thus, increasing the likelihood of title problems. These factors simply do not exist in many rural and suburban transactions. These factors, combined with other forces, subsequently push new growth to the outer rings of the Parish and even out of the Parish.

Strengths:

- A "land bank" would attract new investment into community
- Organization's efforts would result in greater physical impact

- Could ultimately serve as a revenue generator for MCRA

Weaknesses:

- The term "land bank" carries negative connotations
- Requires great sums of resources to fund
- Would require other sources of capital to service initial debt

Potential Projects:

- Pilot process and if successful, create program

C) GOVERNMENT STREET MASTER PLAN

Observation:

Government Street is a major east-west corridor linking many of Baton Rouge's historically prominent neighborhoods. Not only is it one of the most heavily trafficked local streets in the city offering high visibility to proprietors, but its historical nature also offers the community's residents a potential urban "destination" with many unique retail opportunities and experiences.

As of late, businesses, some long-standing icons of the community, have been leaving the area, and the visual appearance of the corridor has become an issue of concern, specifically in the area of ground and building maintenance, dilapidation of old signs and vacant buildings. To this end, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance assisted in convening different community groups to discuss possible solutions to these issues. After exhaustive discussions, it was decided that the best way to proceed was to have a Master Plan of Government Street commissioned that would provide designs to visually enhance the area, as well as recommended strategies to undertake to fulfill the Plan's objectives. At the moment, MCRA is in the wait-and-see stage of a grant application process to obtain funding to commission the actual creation of a Master Plan

Strengths:

- Good traffic counts
- High concentration of locally owned stores
- Many arts-related businesses
- Many icons of the community present: Baton Rouge High, Calandro's, Heroman's, etc.

Weaknesses:

- Vacant commercial structures
- Derelict commercial signage
- Properties not maintained
- Crime and negative perception of it

Potential Projects:

- Commission master plan
- Work with property owners, proprietors and residents to affect change

D) MID CITY HISTORICAL CEMETERIES COALITION

Observation:

Five cemeteries exist in the Mid City area that can be traced to some of the city's earliest beginnings. The cemeteries, although much weathered, have withstood the sands of time for approximately two centuries while withholding many of their secrets for eventual retrieval. The time is hastily approaching to retrieve the information harbored in these historic sites as many edifices honoring those passed on are themselves succumbing to time.

The cemeteries should be appreciated and used for what they are: historic resources for the community. No other resources like it exists in the community, and varied and multiple stories can be told regarding the city and its evolution. Effectively, more can currently be done to take advantage of the historic cemeteries to tell the story of Baton Rouge and its residents, past and present.

Strengths:

- Historic resource
- Five within close proximity to each other
- Authoritative structures in existence for each
- Potential to make it an attraction, a destination

Weaknesses:

- Cemeteries under-utilized and -appreciated as resources
- Negative stigma attached to cemeteries by

many in the community

- Cemeteries situated in under-developed area with perception of high crime

Potential Projects:

- Strengthen and develop Mid City Historical Cemeteries Coalition





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- Various research projects
- Maintain and establish partnerships to meet goals of this organization

E) MASS TRANSPORTATION

Observation:

A growing number of residents in the city are using the bus system, while a wider spectrum in the community are realizing that it is advantageous to have transportation choices available to a city that is steadily growing, especially since thousands more were added to the city's population post Hurricane Katrina. Also, since many of those using mass transportation live in the Mid City census tracts, mass transportation—and particularly bus services—is of growing importance to the Baton Rouge community.

Strengths:

- Less reliance on the car leads to less traffic congestion in the city (quality of life issue)
- Demand for many residents in Mid City area who rely on it to go to work

F) BIKE ROUTES

Observation

Bicycle transportation is another option forwarded under the concept of Smart Growth. In encouraging a range of transportation options for communities, the paradigm of the car as the predominant

PRIORITIES:

The prioritization of projects in the MAP 2003 update – as overseen by the Board of Directors of Mid City Redevelopment Alliance – is a key element in the success of redevelopment efforts in the area and is based on an understanding of MCRA's work in the 1000-block region, specifically the work of the organization in its first ten years of operation in the Target Neighborhood, and an understanding of the opportunities that surface to encourage economic

development in the immediate vicinity of the Target Neighborhood. The evaluation of a project's prioritization level is based on i) the need for the project in the area (district), ii) the resources available to move the project along, and iii) "traction" – or eminent traction – discernable to bring the project to fruition, be it man-power, community activism, political will-power, partnerships, etc. Each district can be addressed based on the availability and magnitude of the aforementioned items and as such targeted goals and objectives can be orchestrated to complement or offset identified characteristics.

Priority Levels –

The Priority Levels established for MAP 2005 are broken down into two parts. The first part, as indicated numerically, consists of the proposed timeline within which the project should be actively engaged. The second part, shown alphabetically, identifies the level of resources – political and community support, funding, research, etc. – that are, or are *not*, available to the project, and as such, indicates a certain amount of work that needs to take place prior to full engagement of the project. Put together, as in a "Priority: 1-B," the designation will serve to establish a "priority status" for any particular project in the Target Zone.

It cannot be stressed enough that the highest of priority levels can exist in various districts throughout the Target Zone without diminishing the organization's ability to be effective in historically targeted areas, or necessarily "spreading the organization too thin." High priority levels can and should still be maintained where the organization has laid its most solid foundations in the past, only now the same initiatives can be applied to other districts while "next-rung" development initiatives are formulated for those areas initially identified as target areas for redevelopment. When "ripe" opportunities do arise in the Target Zone, advantage of the situation should be taken as projects of this nature are few and far

between.

Having a master plan in place for the area assists in guiding redevelopment efforts toward a common vision, and in such a context, allows for the flexibility of acting on initiatives deemed important to the redevelopment of the Target Zone by MCRA and its Board of Directors.

Timeline

1— Immediate consideration—to be acted upon within a year of a ten year plan.

2 – Consideration for this localized project should be within two to five years of MAP 2005. Issues should be kept at the forefront of operations to align potential resources and partnerships with the project.

3 – Level 3 priorities should be viewed within a longer time of five to ten years. To explain, these projects should be identified for purposes of planning and implementation where any investment could be leveraged to obtain the maximum outcome. To elaborate, a listing of potential lots where future, planned live/work spaces might be suitably identified, yet not primed for such development, might be an example a long-range priority. Many other considerations would have to fall in place before these projects gain momentum.

Resources

A – Identifies a need in the community, resources, partners, and a "conducive" political climate. Full engagement to move the project forward should occur.

B – Identifies a need in the community, and the availability of some of the items mentioned above, but lacking key ingredients to move forward. Minimum amount of work is needed to initiate project.

C – Identifies a need in the community but no visible support forthcoming – the "climate" for this project is not right at this point in time. The project will require excessive time to initiate in the short term, however, it needs to be on the books as an element of the "vision" for the area.

Example: Spanish Town Extension

The Dillard's-owned property has been vacant for approximately two years, and in the recent past, MCRA has worked diligently to provide the community with access to the decision-making process associated with the rehabilitation of the property, as well as soliciting the expertise of the best consultants in the nation to determine its highest and best use.

Unable to align certain variables in the equation to initiate the rehabilitation of the Dillard's-owned property, MCRA is passively engaged with the project at this time. Realizing that it is an important component in the community in terms of its size and potential, the organization maintains a poised posture for active engagement in the event that rehabilitation activities re-surface. Subjectively, therefore, the status for this project, ratified by the board of directors, could be "**Priority: 2-B.**" ■



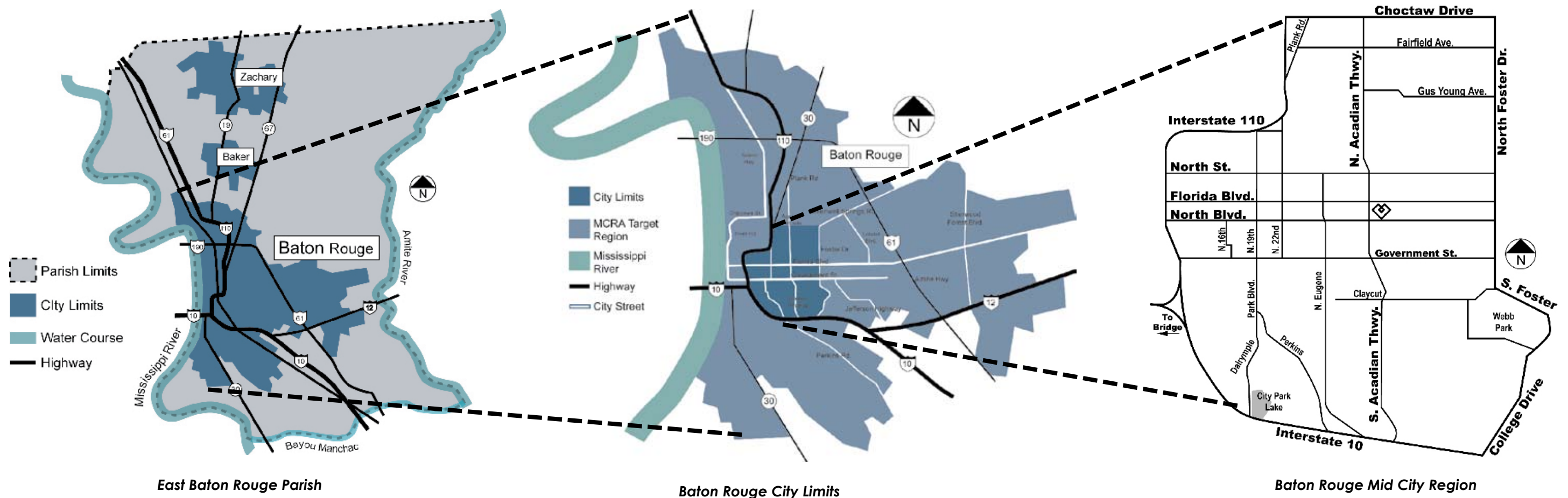
Master Action Plan

Section I

Research & Analysis

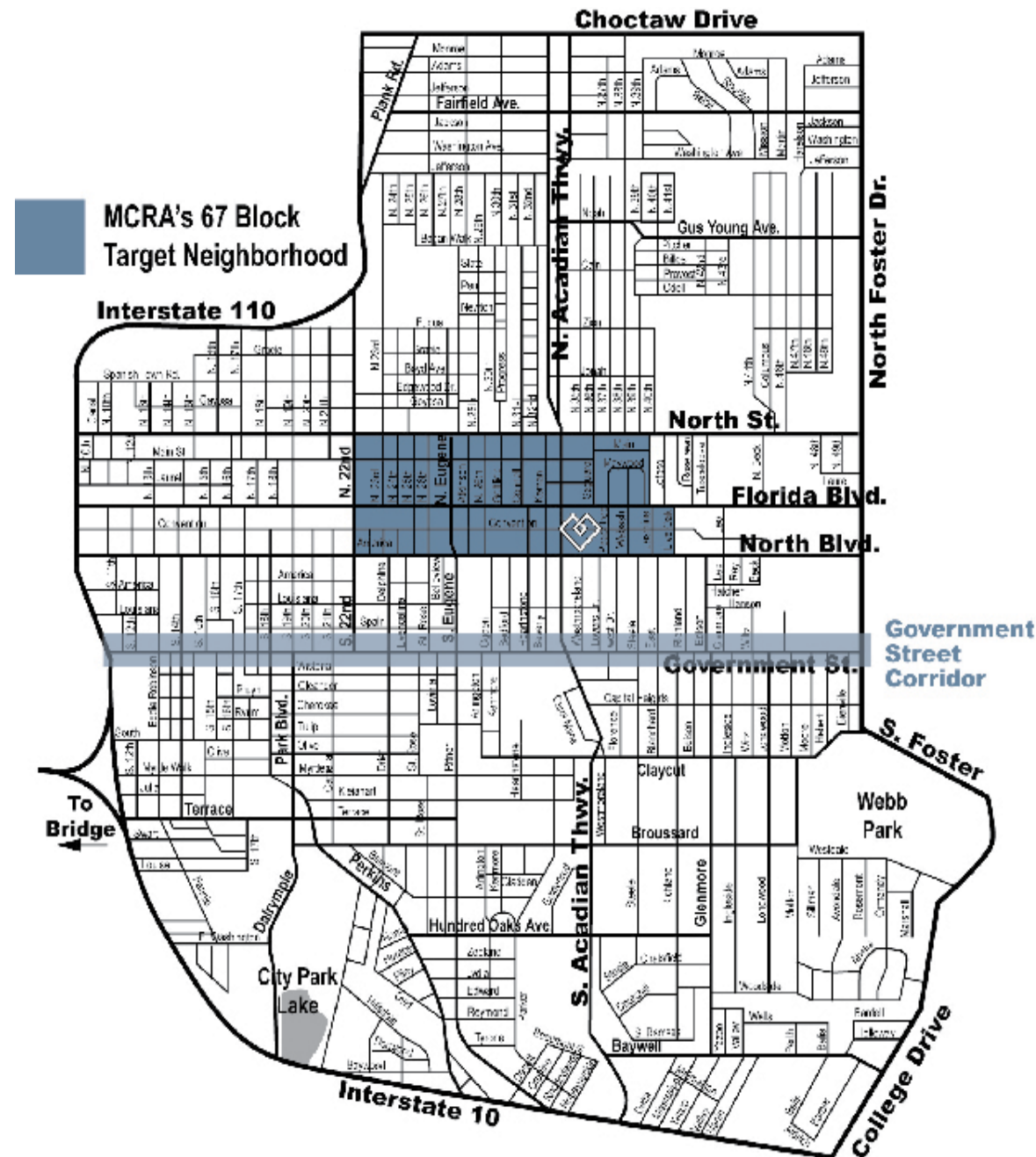


SITE LOCATION



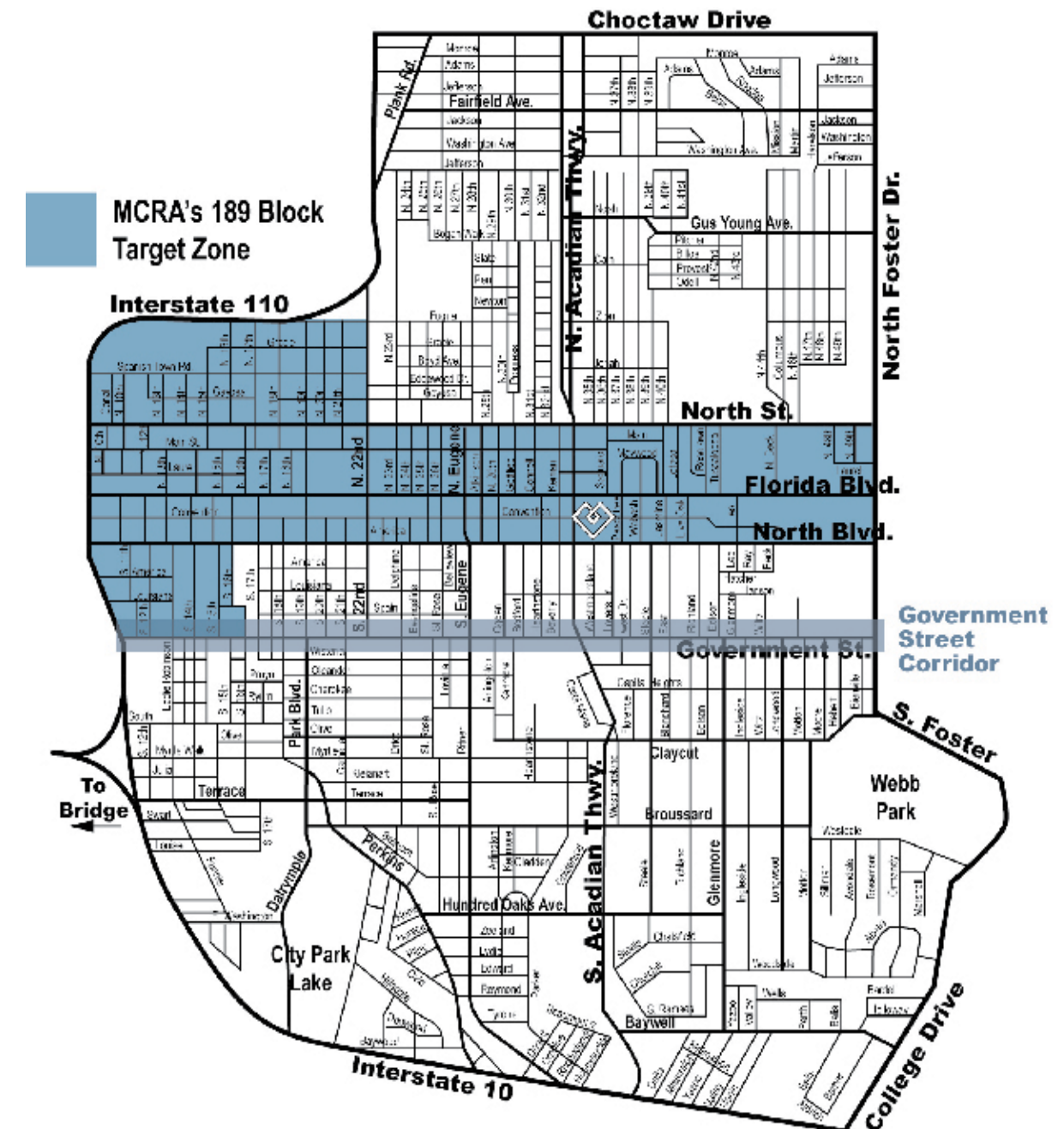


SITE LOCATION



Target Neighborhood

The Target Neighborhood, situated in the center of the Mid City Region, was first outlined with the creation of the MCRA organization. Immediately surrounding the Baton Rouge General Hospital, the Neighborhood is where MCRA first concentrated its efforts of residential repairs and painting, and home construction.

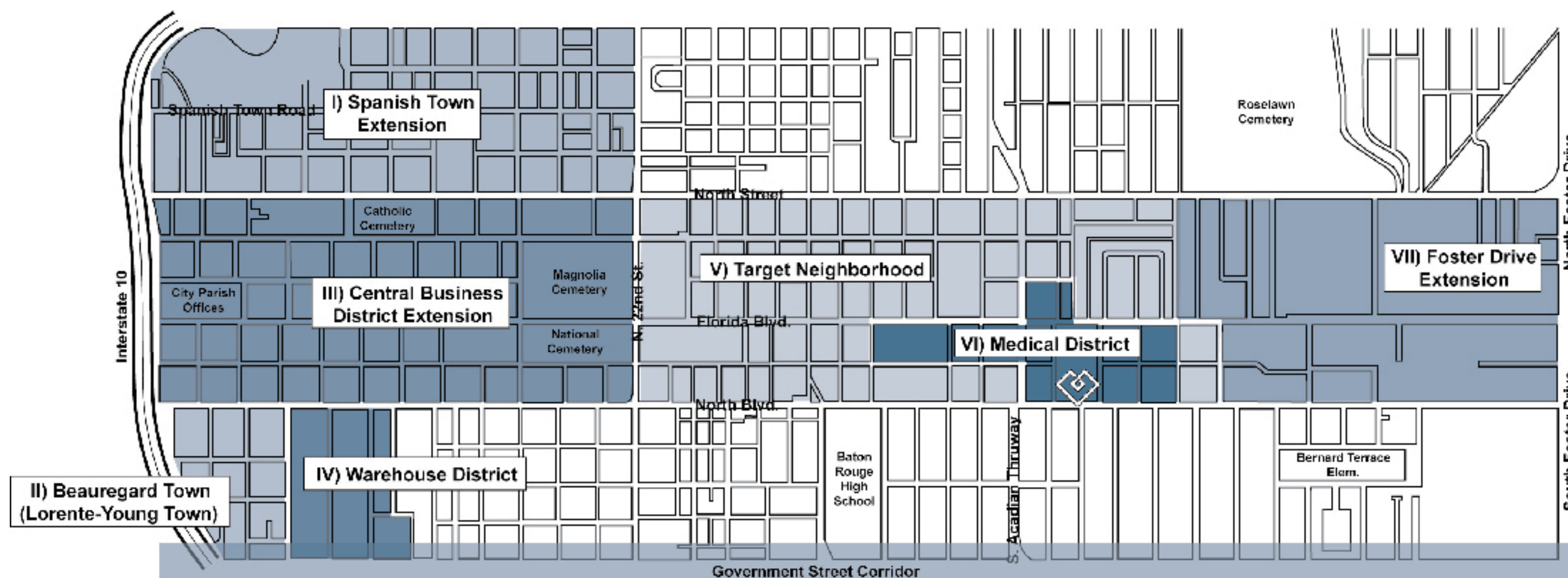


The Target Zone

The Target Zone is an area reflecting much of the current investment activity in Mid City. The Target Zone encompasses the Target Neighborhood, and forms the basis of the Master Action Plan 2005.



TARGET ZONE-DISTRICTS





LAND USE ANALYSIS



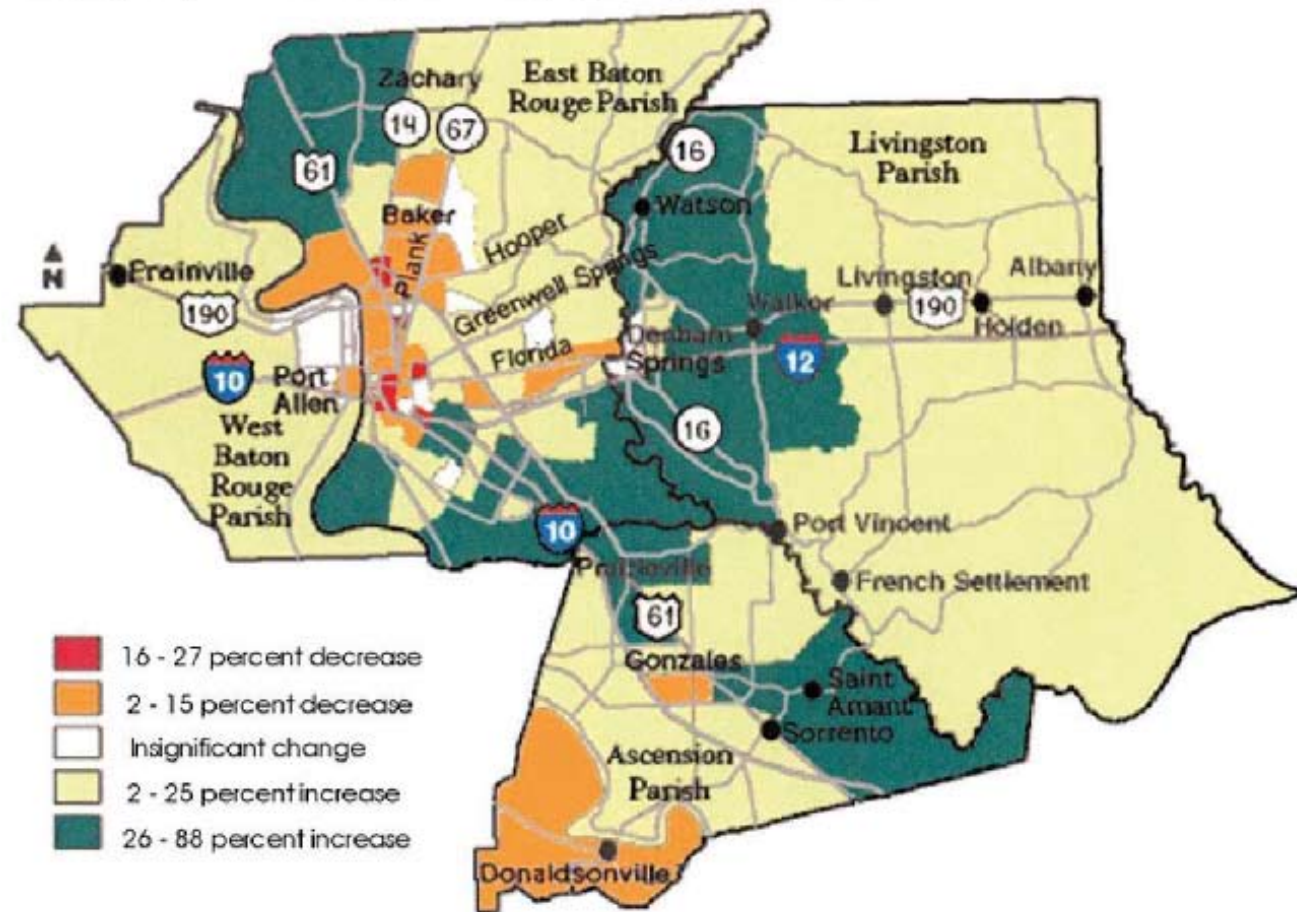
Land Use Diagram courtesy of City-Parish Planning Commission



MID CITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Change in population 1990-2000

The 1999 and 2000 censuses show the population in the four parish area is growing quickest in the northwest and in the south and eastern suburbs including parts of Livingston and Ascension Parishes. The population is dropping the quickest in inner city Baton Rouge up through parts of Baker.



Source: US Census 2000, Advocate

POPULATION TRENDS OF EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH

The 2000 census data for East Baton Rouge Parish revealed significant changes over the past decade. Overall, the population in East Baton Rouge Parish grew by an excess of 30,000, due, in no small measure to the good local and national economic climate of the nineties. In fact, in the late nineties, East Baton Rouge continued to be the fastest growing MSA in the state, ahead of such dynamic centers as Shreveport and New Orleans.

Even though Baton Rouge saw remarkable population growth through the decade, another amazing trend has been the movement of East Baton Rouge Parish residents from the center of the parish to suburban areas, even neighboring parishes. According to Baton Rouge's largest newspaper, *The Advocate*, "The 1990 and 2000 census shows the population in the four parish area is growing quickest in the northwest and in the south and eastern suburbs, including parts of Livingston and Ascension parishes. The population is dropping the quickest in inner-city Baton Rouge up through parts of Baker." The table below will provide insight into some of the demographic changes that have taken place in the parish for the decade 1990-2000.

Generally, an out migration of residents to Livingston Parish to the east and Ascension Parish to the south caused a marked drop in populations in the central part of East Baton Rouge Parish. According to *The Advocate*, as much as a 27% drop could be seen in East Baton Rouge, while some areas outside of the parish, fed by the out migration trend, increased in population by as much as 88%. ■

Subject	1990	2000
Total Population	380,105	412,82
Sex		
Male	182,318	197,683
Female	197,787	215,169
Age		
18 Yrs and Younger	104,581	126,721
19-64 Yrs.	240,639	245,199
65 Yrs.	34,885	40,932
Race		
White	240,614	231,886
Black (African American)	132,328	165,526
American Indian	615	850

Data taken from U.S. Census 2000



MID CITY DEMOGRAPHICS

INFORMATION FOR MID CITY CENSUS TRACTS

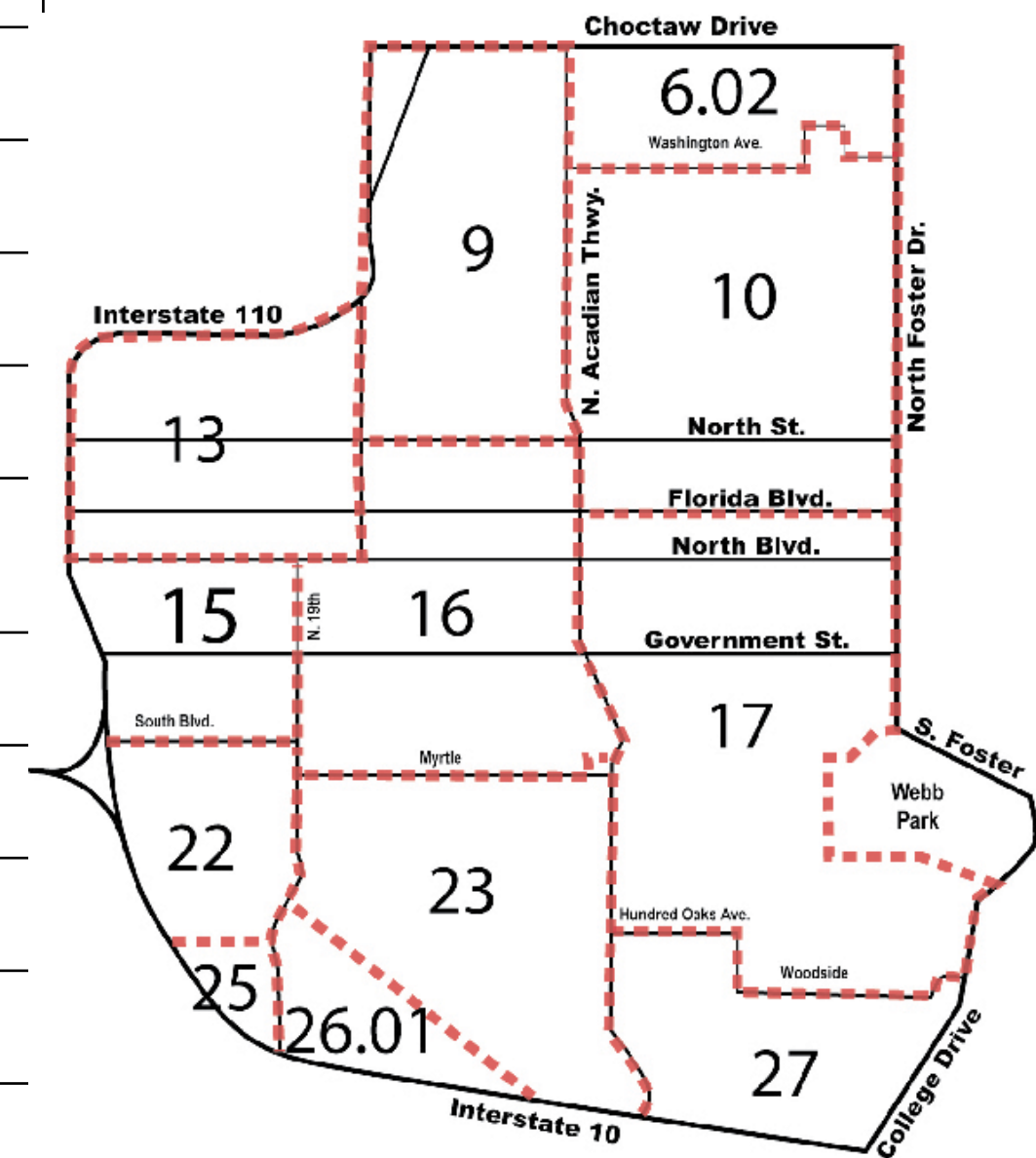
The area called Mid City encompasses twelve census tracts in the heart of the city. The census tracts are 6.02, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 25, 26.01, 27 and many of them spill outside of the Mid City boundaries. Those boundaries are Choctaw to the north, I-110 to the west, Foster to the east and I-10 to the south.

The Census tracts that are shown are demographically diverse with a wide range of socio-economic groups purposefully represented in the Mid City area. ■

	E. Baton Rouge Parish 2000	Mid City 1990	Mid City 2000
\$200,000-\$29,999	6,442	191	504
\$300,000 or More	3,853	97	419
Median (\$)	98,800	49,508	73,300

	E. Baton Rouge Parish 2000	Mid City 1990	Mid City 2000
I) General Population			
Total Population	412,852	43,662	39,761
Male	197,683	20,252	18,742
Female	215,169	23,410	10,880
Under 18 Yrs	126,721	11,565	10,880
19-64 Yrs	245,199	25,442	23,725
65 Yrs and Over	40,932	6,883	9,262
II) Households			

* Data for this group is from the previous year's collected household data(1998 and 1999 respectively)



Census Tracts for the Mid City Target Region



HISTORY OF AREA

The idea of a Baton Rouge “Mid City” is a relatively recent development, and as such, the history of Mid City cannot be viewed in isolation from the history of the city of Baton Rouge.

To elaborate, it was not till the rampant development of subdivisions away from the urban grid towards the eastern City-Parish limits, that the notion of a “downtown” came into being. Such development, spurred on by the return of thousands after World War II, shaped Baton Rouge’s—and indeed the nation’s—landscape, in what has come to be known as urban “sprawl” along with the conceptual evolution of the inner “core” and the suburban “periphery.” The core, historically home to governmental-, religious- and cultural institutions, establishes itself as the common domain of a community—welcoming all regardless of class, creed, race or sex. In the case of Baton Rouge, one finds not only the presence of local government in the core, but also the seat of state government, with such representative edifices as the Old State Capitol and the Old Governor’s Mansion present to remind one of a colorful political history. Other cultural and religious institutions to be found in the downtown are St. Joseph’s Church, St. James Church, the old train station, etc. that historically symbolized the aspirations of the community.

To continue, the development of the interstate system in the 1960’s further facilitated growth away from the core, ensuring the proliferation of suburban subdivisions, creating a marked distinction in the landscape between the traditional layout of the city, and later less geometrical subdivisions. Around this time, the concept of a downtown entered the vocabulary of the citizenry, as families increasingly residing outside of the downtown accessed it to nurture a variety of necessities for daily existence, from cultural events to retail transactions, from governmental dealings to legislative business.

By the mid 20th-century, some of the earliest subdivisions outside of the core urban-layout were Roseland Terrace and Kleinart Terrace. These neighborhoods were considered outlying areas, and in a complimentary fashion, businesses sprang up between these outlying areas and the core. Some of the business names that might be familiar to Baton Rougeans are Goudchaux’s,

Robinson Brothers, Griffon’s Drug Store, Dr. Ford’s Pet Clinic and yes, Mid City Ford. After the initial tracts were laid out that loosely favored the original urban grid and the interstate system was built, the climate was ripe for mass residential consumption, and the race was on to build further and further from the core.

It has to be qualified that a combination of many variables came together to facilitate “sprawl” and the creation of a “Mid City.” To reiterate, a few were i) the interstate system that induced development alongside these regional highways, ii) in the case of Baton Rouge, the construction of the I-110 through the fabric of the urban core created a man-made boundary, separating the urban core into an east and a west, or a legislatively-created downtown and an adjacent area later known as Mid City, iii) reference to a business known as Mid City Ford, and iv) the creation of a non-profit organization devoted to the redevelopment of the area.

The following information will sketch historical developments and events that served to fashion the area now known as Mid City.

The European Explorers

By the early 1680’s French explorers had already delved into the southern territory of the Northern Americas known for its waterways and cypresses, by way of the gulf that brewed gigantic storms and rewarded those who eked a living from it. In fact, the French forged inland so far as to claim the territory of present-day Louisiana under their king, King Louis XIV.

It must have been quite a sight: extraordinary stands of oaks, cypresses, sweet gum, etc.; water bodies teeming with a diverse assortment of fish and various species of birds; not to mention a fertile soil that nurtured crops under a sub-tropical sun.

The first documented discovery of Baton Rouge took place by the French explorers Iberville, Bienville, and Penicant in 1699 and named their location of disembarkment for the large, painted red posts used to mark the border between two Native American tribes: the *Bayougoulas* and *Houmas*. However, it was not until 1723 that the earliest documentation was found using

the French translation “Baton Rouge” in an official capacity.

The 1760’s were turbulent times for Baton Rouge as the Settlement changed hands twice within a period of two years. In 1762 the French King handed over the colony to the Spanish King in exchange for help in the French & Indian War. In 1763 though, Great Britain gained control of all French and Spanish territory east of the Mississippi River while all the territory to the west of the Mississippi, and the Isle of Orleans, fell under control of the Spanish King.

The territory remained under British control until 1779 when Spain declared war on Britain, and the Spanish governor led a successful attack on Baton Rouge to gain power. By 1800, Napoleon, through his conquests abroad, obtained New Orleans and West Louisiana for France thereby expanding his colonial territory in the Americas significantly.

Louisiana Purchase

Because of internal pressures at home, Napoleon agreed to sell all French territories on the mainland to the United States government in 1803. On an auspicious day, April 29th 1803, the U.S. envoy agreed to pay a total of \$15 million to France for a large swath of land west of the Mississippi. About \$3,750,000 of this sum covered claims of U.S. citizens against France that the U.S. government agreed to discharge. The treaty, dated April 30th 1803, was signed several days later.

The U.S. Senate ratified the treaty in October of the same year, and the U.S. flag was raised over New Orleans on December 20th 1803. The Louisiana Purchase – extending from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains, and from the Gulf of Mexico to British North America – ostensibly doubled the national domain, increasing it c. 828,000 square miles (c. 2,144,500 square km). The final boundaries of the territory were not settled for many years since the 1803 treaty did not set the limits of the region. On April 30th 1812, the Louisiana territory officially became a State of the Federal Government.

The City of Baton Rouge

Baton Rouge was incorporated in January 1817, five years after Louisiana achieved statehood. At such

time, the city limits extended from the Mississippi River in the west, to 22nd Street to the east. Garcia’s Bayou – now known as Capitol Lakes – hemmed in the northern extents of the city, while South Boulevard served as the town’s southern extremity. Although 22nd Street was made the eastern boundary, actual settlement did not extend beyond 5th Street for many years, where the only signs of settlement to be seen beyond 5th Street were a couple of plantations and two roads: one to Clinton going off in a north-easterly direction, and one to Port Hudson. (see diagram)

In 1846 Baton Rouge was made the capital of Louisiana, and the following year a cornerstone of the “neo-gothic” State Capitol was laid along the banks of the Mississippi River. In 1847 as well, outside of town, the Magnolia Race Track opened amid fan-fare at the present corner of Government Street and Park Boulevard. A year later, in 1848, the first public schools opened its doors to the city’s inhabitants, and in 1850 John R. Dufrocq became the first mayor of Baton.

1860’s

The 1850’s were a relatively quiet time in a place the first French explorers called “Red Stick,” but the 60’s proved to be quite the opposite. This decade would play host to the Civil War that would indelibly change the political-, and to a slower degree, the economic landscape of the region. With New Orleans falling to Admiral Farragut, and a big battle having been fought in Baton Rouge, the year 1862 proved to be extremely tumultuous.

In April of this year, State government decided to pack up and move to Opelousas for a brief period, before eventually moving to Shreveport for the remainder of the civil war. Sometime in May, the federal government took control of Baton Rouge before the large civil war battle which was fought in August, that ultimately saw 383 federated soldiers and 456 confederate soldiers take their last breath. This event was a devastating moment in the life of Baton Rouge as over 100 buildings were burned to the ground, including almost all the property north of North Street from the river.

Post Civil War

After the Civil War, the federal government desig-



HISTORY OF AREA



Civil War Battlefield Map of Baton Rouge
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/maps/louisiana/civilwar/batonrouge1862.jpg>

nated New Orleans as the capital of Louisiana. Another significant change to occur at this time was the general migration of freed slaves from the rural areas into the cities due to the drafting of the Emancipation Proclamation, with the result that Baton Rouge's black population eventually becomes a majority.

As part of the rebuilding efforts of the city in 1868, a local committee extended North Boulevard 1.5 miles east from the river, creating for the most part, new residential development along the boulevard.

1870's

During this decade, in 1870 in fact, the Louisiana State University was established around the residential area of Spanish Town, while in 1879 the State authorized the formation of Southern University. And, bucking social norms in 1871, the only two public primary schools in Baton Rouge were integrated.

1880's

By the 1880's, the total population of Baton Rouge was 7,197, with the black population comprising 59% of that figure. Most of the residential development that occurred at the time, took place between the Mississippi River and 5th Street, and Capitol Lake and South Boulevard. In 1883, the New Orleans Mississippi Valley Railroad provided rail service between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, with later additions to the line connecting to Vicksburg and Memphis.

1890's

While the railway companies were blazing their way across the continental US, and on the local level, Florida Street was a shell road (so ordered by the US Government so that funeral processions would not get stuck in mud), Baton Rouge in 1890 was still "plodding along" with its mule-drawn streetcar system. The streetcar ran from Dufrocq School on 19th Street, down Main Street to 3rd, over 3rd Street to North Boulevard, up North Boulevard to St. Ferdinand, down St. Ferdinand to Government Street and up Government Street back to Dufrocq School. The company of Baton Rouge St. Ry operated the mule-drawn streetcar, however in 1892, Baton Rouge St. Ry & Improvements Co. purchased Baton Rouge St. Ry and modified the route. One year later the route was electrified and more changes were made.

Another development worth mentioning in this decade was the fact that Robert A. Hart was elected mayor of Baton Rouge in 1898 and issued \$200,000 worth of bonds for local projects. Revenues paid for a new city hall, the Convention Street School and paving for Third, Main and North Streets. Also, as a precursor to subdivision growth, a landowner, Mr. Favrot, sold a number of 10-acre lots around the Old Fairgrounds at Florida Blvd. and Airline Hwy. The lots cost \$340 apiece.

1900's

Evidence of Baton Rouge's growth can be witnessed through a train wreck on the Yazoo & Mississippi River Valley Railroad injured many. This inauspicious event allowed for the creation of the first multi-treatment facility in the city, and a gentleman by the name of Dr. T.P. Singletary treated the victims in the Sanitarium, a building on the corner of Florida and Church (now 4th) Streets. The makeshift facility continued to serve the needs of the community as it grew, itself moving to larger and larger buildings as it expanded. The organizational structure running the healthcare facility would eventually name itself the Baton Rouge General Hospital, which to this day exists under the umbrella of its parent company, the "General Health System" corporation.

Baton Rouge saw its first car in 1902, while towards the end of the decade the parish property assessment of taxable property was \$8,204,810. In 1941, 35 years later, the parish property assessment of taxable property would amount to the significant figure of \$124,845,138. The city was a prosperous one in the region, having secured the notable company of Standard Oil in its fold. Refining of oil and the processing of petrochemicals would be a boon for Baton Rouge and the State for many years to come. In 1908, Anthony Cazedessus bought the Old Fair Grounds to turn into residential development that became known as the subdivisions of Roseland Terrace and Garden District. In the same year, the first airplane landed in Baton Rouge at the racetrack that was at the corner of Government Street and Park Boulevard. The pilot, Mr. Purvis, crashed into the fence, was hospitalized, and died. In 1909, the Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company established a suburban line down Government Street, with a station at the corner of 14th and Government Streets. It cost



HISTORY OF AREA

\$.05 to ride all day and the route encompassed Government Street to Park Boulevard, north along Dufrocq (S. 19th) Street, west along Main Street to town.

1910's

Zadok Realty Company staked out a well-known subdivision in 1911 called "Terrace." The first home to be built in the neighborhood was at 2015 Oleander, and the family named their son Terrace—Terrace Verbois—after the subdivision. In 1912, the state approved the first high school for black students in East Baton Rouge Parish, situated on Perkins Road. McKinley High built in 1926-27 on East Boulevard however, shortly succeeded this institution. A fire station that is still in use today, was constructed on the corner of Laurel Street and Dufrocq Street in 1913, and an East Boulevard Line of electric streetcars is commissioned with the route being Lafayette Street to Florida, 13th Street to North Boulevard, and East Boulevard to the old ball park at Howard St.

The nineteen-teens were witness to population and economic growth in Baton Rouge, and as such, 1915 saw the beginning of the proliferation of suburb development. Roseland Terrace, Ogden Park, Kleinart Terrace, and Goodwood were all pegged east of old city limits. Although the Garden District exhibited an outlay reminiscent of earlier subdivision layouts, Kleinart Terrace and Ogden Park revealed larger lot configurations, along with slightly wider streets.

A new 600V power plant was built on Government Street between 15th and 16th Streets in 1916 by the Baton Rouge Electric Co., where before, it had been situated at the corner of St. Joseph and North Boulevard. Car barns for electric streetcars at this time were located on Government Street between S. 12th and Eddie Robinson Drive. February of 1916 witnessed the greatest building growth of the city to date. Twenty-four buildings went up between City Hall and Boyd Avenue, as well as Reddy Street School, the predecessor of Scott Street School. In 1917, Emmanuel Baptist Church was started at the northeast corner of Victory Park, which later moved to 1900 North Boulevard, while the First Church of Christ started in house at Wisteria and Camelia Lanes of that same year.

1920's

The city limits in 1920 were North Street, 22nd Street down to Government Street where the boundary took a jog east to St. Rose, and Reddy Street (which later became known as Terrace Street) as the southern boundary. Some subdivisions outside of the city limits at this time were: "Monte Vista", "Delphine Place", "Duchain Place", Edgewood Lawn, Progress Park, Eden Park, Roselawn Cemetery, Bernard Terrace, Capital Heights and Wilson Place. 1924 saw the East Boulevard Line of electric streetcars rerouted: the 13th Street track was removed and the line was turned from Florida Street to 11th Street to reach North Boulevard. Two blocks of track on North Boulevard between 13th and 11th were also removed.

In an amazing spurt of industry activity for carbonated drinks, the latter part of the 20's and 30's saw a number of bottling companies open: BR Bottling Works at 1317 North Boulevard; Lime Cola Bottling Works (1924), Orange Crush Bottling Works (1927) and Capital Bottling Company (1930) all at 1643 North Blvd.; 1951 Main Street housed Nehi Bottling Company (1929); 704 N. 14th Street housed Dr. Pepper Bottling Co. (1937-38); 1380 Government was home to World Bottling Co. (1937-38).

In 1925-1926, LSU relocated south to its present location, and the Baton Rouge General located to a new address on the 900-block of Government Street. On November 9, 1928, Keener Memorial Methodist erected their temporary structure on the corner of Government Street and South 22nd.

Some churches that were built or started in the area were First Church of Christ built at Park Boulevard & Wisteria Lane in 1926; Monte Sano Baptist Church at Mason Avenue in 1927, and in 1928 a Bill passes the federal House allowing Baton Rouge to have perpetual easement on part of the National Cemetery grounds for extension of N. 22nd (Fryoux) from Florida to Convention. In this year also, four new traffic lights are proposed: East Boulevard and Government, Dufrocq and Main; North and Jackson and St. Ferdinand and Government Streets.

1930's

The first airmail arrived in Baton Rouge at the airport at Lobdell and Jefferson Highway in 1932. Shortly afterwards, the airport relocated to Lobdell and Government Street. In 1934, Cotton's Holsum Baking Company opens on N. 19th Street, while in 1936 the public transportation system undergoes a major change shifting from streetcars to buses. DeFrances Marble and Tile begins operation on the southwest corner of Florida Street and Acadian Thruway in 1937. Also, this decade sees more chemical industries come to Baton Rouge like Solvay Process, Consolidated Chemicals and Ethyl Corporation.

1940's

1940 witnesses the beginning of construction of the Mississippi River Bridge, with Harding Field built across town as a fighter base to protect military-industrial plants. After WWII Harding became East Baton Rouge commercial air facility (Ryan Airport) serving private planes only.

During the War as well, the State Highway Department opened N. 34th Street (North/South) to facilitate access to the chemical plants, and this road later becomes Acadian Thruway. WWII is economically good for Baton Rouge, which becomes known as "Boomtown, USA." On December 8, 1941 (day after Pearl Har-



Aerial of Baton Rouge, 1939
www.cic.lsu.edu/aerialbr.htm



HISTORY OF AREA

bor), Gov. Sam H. Jones announces that Standard Oil would spend \$17 million on plant expansion. Within one year of the investment, Baton Rouge produces 76% of the nation's aviation fuel. Also, a new chemical products division of Standard Oil began to make rubber for the first time since the Japanese had seized the Dutch East Indies Company prior to the beginning of the war. In the same year, the Junior Matrons, later called the Matrons Club is established, as well the Baranco-Clark branch of the YMCA—the first black branch of the Y.

Grace Baptist Church is constructed on Richland Avenue in 1942, while Grace Baptist moves to 6175 Scenic Highway and First Church of Nazarene opens at N.18th and Chestnut Streets in 1949. The early years saw the Chamber of Commerce propose to widen Florida Street and towards the middle of the decade, in 1946 to be exact, the Baton Rouge General breaks ground on Florida Boulevard and Acadian Thruway.

A major step in the way the local government governs itself takes place in 1947: the City and Parish of East Baton Rouge consolidate themselves to form a master plan of government. The city limits extend east out to Airline Highway, Carter, Jefferson Thruway.

Our Lady Of the Lake hospital celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1948 in a location on Main Street and generally, in the post-war years, the city experiences a boom of car-buying and suburbanization.

1950's

Continuing the theme of churches, Emmanuel Baptist Church builds a building designed by A. Hays Town at 1900 North Boulevard in 1950. The church is next to their educational building already at the corner of North Boulevard and N. 19th. Also, the Baton Rouge General Hospital makes the move to its new location on the highest land in East Baton Rouge Parish, and, while the North Baton Rouge line still has plenty of business in 1951, an article cites a "decline in bus transportation due to the sale of additional cars and the development of neighborhood shopping centers." It is in this decade too, that the interstate system is conceptualized and developed mainly as a rational for military movement and deployment.

The year 1953 brought about an important event

in the city, and indeed, in the country. Because of the local segregation laws, in particular the bus laws, a bus boycott was organized, led by Rev. T.J. Jemison of Mt. Zion Baptist Church. At the height of the boycott, 90% of black passengers refused to ride the bus system causing a \$1600/day loss to the system. Related meetings drew crowds of 2,500-3,000 people with traffic to and from the meetings tying up the city. The last meeting, held at Memorial Stadium, drew 8,000 people to discuss the compromise drawn up by the city. The compromise was that whites could sit in front of buses while blacks could sit in the back. Anyone could sit in a designated middle section and if all seats in a section were full then people could sit in opposite race sections. Everyone did not accept the compromise, however it was agreed that the boycott should be terminated with some of the new concessions taking effect. Not long after the concessions, the bus drivers went on strike because some black riders refused to sit in the back of buses, and they were not happy with having to enforce the new rules. The boycott ended June 25th, 1953 and the following year the landmark case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, ruled against certain forms of legalized segregation that overshadowed the event made by the Baton Rouge boycott. In 1955 the Montgomery boycott was modeled after the Baton Rouge one that had occurred a couple of years earlier.

1960's

Public transportation was extended in 1960 to serve the new retail mall on Florida Boulevard called Bon Marche. A bus line servicing Bon Marche/Broadmoor was inaugurated in the city while in 1962, the YMCA expanded to S. Foster Drive as evidence of major growth of subdivisions towards the periphery of the parish. Along with this push away from the urban area, the I-110, which connects I-10 to downtown and industry to the north, starts being constructed in 1961 and gets totally completed in 1984.

At this point in time, the concept and word "downtown" is firmly entrenched in the vocabulary of the citizenry. Families of means pursued opportunities along the interstate corridors seeking "estates" for the common man while business looks to follow the residential trend in the suburbs with outlet malls.

1970's

Evidence of the demographic change in the city can be seen in the Census Data of 1970. Family income reveals that on average household income was equal-to-or-more-than \$15,000 in the outskirts only of the urban area. The data showed that Beauregard Town had less than \$5000 for household income, while around downtown and in the rural areas along the river, and further out, the household income was between \$5000-\$8000. The density appeared highest by the university lakes, north of Florida Boulevard between Plank and Airline, between Greenwell Springs and Florida, between Airline and Acadian, between Old Hammond and Airline and south of Nicholson yet north of Brightside.

1980's

With the interstate system firmly in place, the urban areas of Baton Rouge suffered a tremendous out-migration of economically mobile families to the outer lying areas of the parish. The flight did not abate in the eighties, but a strong recognition that a weak city center presented a weak city grew to a loud outcry. For one thing, in 1987, the state legislature passed a bill to create an organization with the sole purpose to reinvigorate the downtown. The organization was to be known as the Downtown Development District, and was a precursor to similar organizations in the city with the mission to reinvest in the urban areas of the city. Similarly, the Baton Rouge General Hospital created the non-profit Mid City Redevelopment Alliance in 1991 to redevelop the area east of the I-110. This was after much analysis and strategic planning in deciding how to formulate a community-oriented, sustainable strategy. Neighborhoods like the Garden District, Ogden Park, Capital Heights, etc. had fallen into neglect and disrepair for much of the sixties and seventies, but things started turning around in the mid-to-late eighties with the awakening of the community's "historical" sense and pride of heritage. Many people began to rehabilitate the original structures of the neighborhoods, and tackle the issues of vandalism and crime where it existed.

1990's

With a strategy to invest in Mid City by expanding its facilities, and in the surrounding community by expand-

ing homeownership initiatives, Baton Rouge General Hospital created a non-profit that served as a catalyst for economic and community development. Looking to historical precedent, the name Mid City Redevelopment Alliance was chosen (after the name Mid City Motors) and the organization's first shingle was hung on Acadian Thruway. Programs were established to repair and paint existing homes in the community, to teach homeownership seminars and to assist in developing community based civic organizations, all the while to positively market and promote the area for development.

The migration of residents to the periphery of the parish, and indeed to neighboring parishes, continued unabated in the nineties. However, a positive population growth-rate was witnessed in downtown, namely in the neighborhoods of Beauregard Town and Spanish Town, for the first time in many decades. Notably, a new master plan for the downtown area – Plan Baton Rouge – was instrumental in visualizing and codifying redevelopment objectives in the late 90's, created by nationally renowned planners. The planners obtained much public input to forge ahead with a seminal document for the area – Plan Baton Rouge – and one that is attempting to be replicated in other parts of the city.

Due to a neglected housing stock in the inner city and rampant sprawl, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance embarked upon an initiative in 1996 to build single-family housing in the area. The initiative was the first new residential development to occur in Mid City in forty years and laid the groundwork for other community development organizations to build affordable houses in their respective areas, as well as ensured that financial assistance from local sources like the city were efficiently available to incentivise the homeownership process.

At the time, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance also pushed other initiatives to help with efforts of community development. For example, assisting to create neighborhood and business associations was seen as integral to the redevelopment process of the area, while annual events to market the area were seen as instrumental as well.

One of Baton Rouge's landmarks, Goudchaux's



HISTORY OF

department store, sold out to Mercantile, who in turn sold the store to Dillards, during the decade. As Dillards moved away from stand-alone stores to mall-anchor stores, the building that had served as the impetus for many of the community's memories for almost four decades, and that was once noted by Ripley's "Believe It or Not" as the longest department store in the world, was shuttered in 1996.

2000

With a greater awareness of the issues and the potential opportunities for Mid City, the Baton Rouge community's interest in redeveloping the area intensified markedly over two decades. The interest in old buildings, particularly warehouse space, sparked an initial investment interest from the private sector a few blocks from the downtown. Particularly along 14th Street, between Government and North Boulevard, furniture retailers seized opportunities to transform formerly, sometimes long unused, commercial space into vibrant retail opportunities. Similarly, new efforts by stakeholders to reinvigorate Government Street got underway and ended with a community-oriented vision and master plan document created by Louisiana State University's Office of Community Design & Development.

Individual commercial and residential investment continues to occur in Mid City, where before such investment was sporadic at best. Capital Park CDC developed a 24-housing subdivision on a former apartment-complex site on 22nd Street very close to the State's Department of Labor. Older commercial buildings are coming on line, some with the help of public incentives to clean up environmental concerns. Here, a particular business that comes to mind is on the site of the old Griffon's Drug Store, that along with the adjacent, old gas station is being used as a compound of specialty retail stores called Circa 1857.

Talk of large-scale residential development on the eastern side of the I-110 is more pronounced than ever before. With some of the largest tracts of undeveloped land in the inner city, this area is prime for development catering to downtown's resurgence as a 24hr city, and to the site of the old Goudchaux's store – renamed Renaissance Park – currently home to hundreds of Federal

Emergency Management Aid workers in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

At the dawn of the 2nd millennium, Mid City, Baton Rouge is poised to enter into a dynamic, regenerative period of its existence. It is central – not only in geography – but also in how Baton Rouge sees itself moving forward during the first half of the 21st century. Issues of quality of life, education, transportation, etc. resound heavily in the area. It is for this reason that Mid City should market itself aptly, plan strategically, yet think boldly.

General Characteristics

Mid City, bounded by the I-110 on the west, College and N. Foster on the east, Choctaw to the north and I-10 to the south, is socially and economically diverse. From large commercial holdings along Florida Boulevard to neighborhood mom-and-pop retail operations, from the turn-of-the-century, row-lined houses visible in the Eden Park community to the larger residences of the Garden District, from N.19th Baptist Church to Capitol Park, the area called Mid City is a reflection of the Baton Rouge community.

In trying to understand Mid City from this vantage point, it is easily recognized that Mid City has many weaknesses, but also, in diametrically opposed fashion, great strengths that could be taken advantage of in efforts of redevelopment.

One can point to vacant tracts of land, cleared of historically significant, architectural artifacts because of neighborhood, social and economic reasons. Similarly, in certain areas, boarded up buildings attest to decades old lack of investment confidence, both commercially and residentially, for reasons ranging from the rapid expansion of the suburbs and strip malls, to those related to issues of race and social status. The list goes on.

On the flip side of the coin, the positives, if given a chance to surface, engender those aspects that have made Baton Rouge, and other like-cities (Memphis,

Austin, Mobile) attractive second-tier metropolitan areas. We can point to such positives as the existing urban blueprint that can serve as guidance for future development; existing infrastructure; a confluence of diversity in a given area that has historically meant a flourishing of ideas; and historically significant architecture, places and landmarks.

With the addition of the Louisiana & Arkansas Railroad, and later, the interstate (I-10 and I-110) onto the Baton Rouge landscape, subsequent development tended to factor these main corridors of transportation into development-orientation initiatives. This historical record can be clearly viewed at the south end of the Mid City area where roads either run parallel or perpendicular to the railroad track or interstate, where lots are much larger than those in the inner city and blocks tend to be amorphous.

Projecting the above two-dimensional description into a three dimensional perspective, one can start to talk about the 'scale' of an environment. Consequently, except where major traffic arteries reflect the ascended priority of the automobile into the Mid City landscape (where there are now more than two traffic lanes for an artery), the width of the roads and relationship of the first residences to it, can be regarded as 'to a human scale.' Qualities of this scale are witnessed in Bernard Terrace, Eden Park, Ogden Park, etc.

We cannot talk about positives also in an area without mentioning 'community anchors' – long-term, committed community investors and partners, providing that all-important investor confidence. In the case of the Mid City region, a few spring to mind: Baton Rouge High School, Calandro's Supermarket, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, etc. The largest anchor though, in terms of employment and operations, has always been the Baton Rouge General Hospital and all of its health care subsidiaries. Besides providing excellent health care to the Baton Rouge community for more than 100 years, the Baton Rouge General remains Mid City's largest employer with a family of over 2000 health care professionals. ■



HORIZON PLAN

East Baton Rouge City-Parish has been credited with having one of the most visionary documents in the country to help guide growth and development within the parish. Starting in 1987, the EBR Metropolitan Council voted to initiate a process that would eventually crystallize into a comprehensive strategy for the physical development of the city: the Horizon Plan.

According to the City Parish Planning Commission's website, the Horizon Plan "is the 20-year 'Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan' for the City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge. The plan acts as a 'blueprint for the future' by serving as a guide for officials making decisions about land use and development within the City Parish. The Horizon Plan's primary emphasis is to identify major issues that will influence future growth, to decide the actions necessary to address these issues, and to propose specific strategies that will help the City Parish target its resources in the most efficient manner."

Also, according to the information provided, "The Horizon Plan is not a static document. During the 20-year time frame of the Plan, the City Parish will undergo numerous demographic, economic and social changes, many of which cannot be foreseen during the initial plan development process. Circumstances will change and new issues will require modifications to the Plan. These changes will impact the Goals, Objectives and Policies that serve as the framework for the Horizon Plan."

Some of the tasks assumed by the City Parish Planning Commission are oversight of the "Horizon Plan" and the Growth Center Community Planning Process. For our purposes here, the Growth Center Community Planning Process is more applicable to our ends, chronologically, than the 2010 Land Use Plan, and is therefore discussed in a bit more detail.

To explain, Growth Centers are divided into Regional- and Community Growth Centers. They are areas that contain concentrated activity such as retail, residential diversity, office space, public facilities and cultural and recreation facilities integrated with transportation choices such as pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular modes. The Growth Center initiative was started in 1998 to discuss issues related to aesthetics of land use development at a neighborhood level. In advocating community involvement in the planning processes of city-parish government, the Planning Commission holds

public meetings every five years to obtain input about how neighborhood stakeholders would like to see their property used and tied into the public systems. Such discussions can revolve around bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities; landscape improvements; park facilities; and, urban design guidelines for future development.

Land Use and Zoning

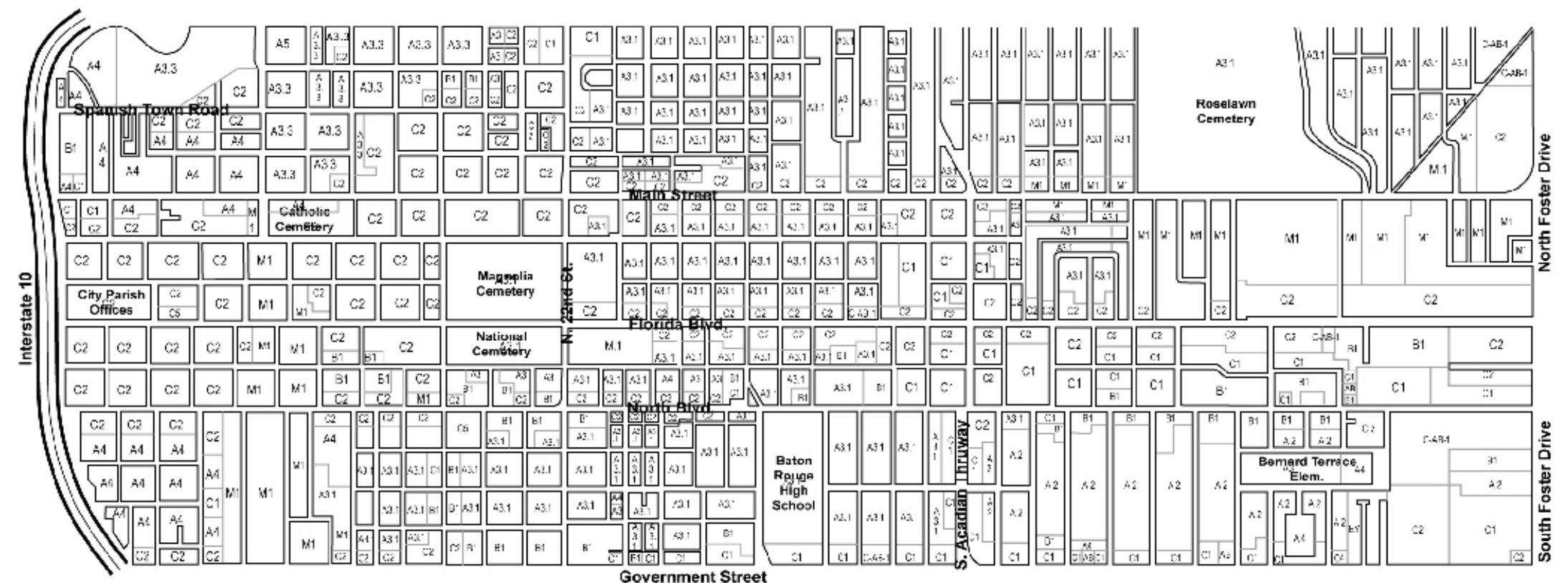
In this document one will find references, essentially diagrammatical of existing Land Use and Zoning that provide a backdrop for any initiatives proposed in the area. The initiatives can be as bold as a planned unit development (PUD), or one that seeks to maintain a vacant piece of property as vacant "recreation." Zoning and Building codes—part of the comprehensive

development ordinance and regulations, fall under the document domain of the Unified Development Code (UDC) while Land Use designations, as alluded to before, form the contents of the Horizon Plan.

Not all proposals suggested in this document align with existing zoning and land use designations, and while there is a process to accommodate for such divergence, many current proposals run askew of the Horizon Plan and the Unified Development Code. Where this occurs, waivers, variations or exceptions have to be sought from designated authorities like the Board of Adjustment, City-Parish Planning Commission, or the Metropolitan Council. A project to more adequately align local regulations with existing urban conditions is suggested in the Comprehensive Section of this docu-

ment titled "Smart Growth Task Force."

For more information about the Horizon Plan and local regulations please visit the City-Parish Planning Commission website at brgov.com/dept/planning/ ■



Zoning of MCRA Target Zone



SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

The Smart Growth ethic is a result of decades-long development practices across the United States, resulting in consequences—whether intended or unintended—deemed as increasingly environmentally harmful and socially unproductive. Although these practices have arguably been economically successful over the decades, a growing amount of issues impacting daily life have contributed to a shift in paradigm about the built environment. Increasingly, the constant outward development of cities away from the center is seen as unsustainable to local government budgets, as well as detrimental to the social situation of the city as it pertains to crime and poverty, evident in larger numbers in its lower-income census tracts. Many issues are covered under the rubric of Smart Growth, and in an attempt to encapsulate the concept, a broad explanation is that current development practices are unsustainable and affect quality of life issues in an increasingly negative fashion, calling for a new perspective of physical development based on maximizing and leveraging existing resources and infrastructure, most notably occurring towards the urban center. In this regard, many local governments have approached the subject by outlining policy statements, documents of intent and strategies of implementation. Some have been more aggressive than others, but the general recognition is such that other viable options for development have to be forthcoming to ease the diverse detrimental pressures being placed on rapidly expanding towns and cities. These detrimental pressures relate to “...the economic costs of abandoning infrastructure in the city, only to rebuild it further out.” They relate to “...the social costs of the mismatch between new employment locations in the suburbs and the available work-force in the city.” And, they now relate to “...the wisdom of abandoning “brownfields” in older communities, eating up the open space and prime agricultural lands at the suburban fringe, and polluting the air of an entire region by driving farther to get places.” (<http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/overview.asp>).

The issues covered by the concept of Smart Growth include the environment, economics, health, community quality of life issues, transportation, design and last but not least, housing. For more information on the range of these issues, please see Smart Growth Online at <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/default.asp>.

The principles advocated by Smart Growth proponents and as gleaned from the respective website, deal with

- mixed land uses;
- a wider range of housing options;
- walkable neighborhoods; more compact building design;
- fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;
- preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and sensitive environmental areas;
- strengthen and direct development towards existing communities;
- provide a variety of transportation choices;
- make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective; and encourage community and stakeholder collaboration

Similarly, the East Baton Rouge City-Parish Planning Commission (CPPC) has also broached this topic at a local level. Within its Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan: The Horizon Plan, CPPC outlines several tools that encourage Smart Growth initiatives. These are:

- Planned Unit Development (PUD) whereby an entire community could be masterplanned with only one process required for obtaining zoning and subdivision approvals.
- Greenlink System whereby natural areas are preserved, aesthetic values of property maintained, with less reliance on the automobile.
- Cluster Subdivisions that allow for a denser layout configuration while maintaining the same amount of lots and effectively reducing infrastructure costs.
- Infill Development that maximizes the use of existing infrastructure by developing on vacant, sub-standard or under-utilized land. Neighborhoods, usually those with unique character and a strong sense of place, tend to fit into this category.
- Wetlands Program that provides flood protection, food and habitat management, shoreline erosion control, water quality control and programs for recreation, education and research.
- Brownfields Redevelopment whereby the

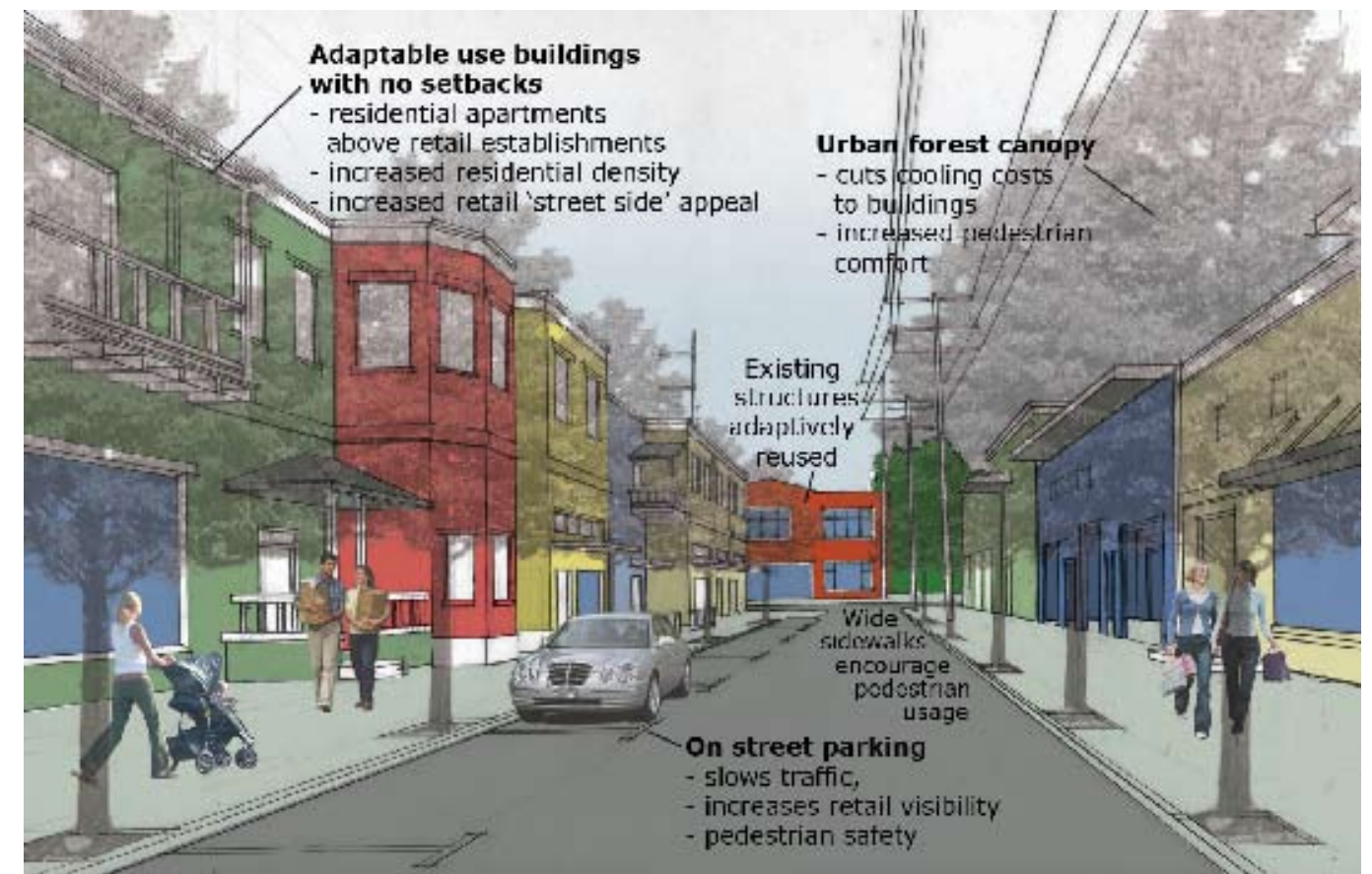
recycling of properties in the urban environment are encouraged and promoted.

The following is excerpted directly from the Smart Growth website and pertains to selected principles formerly outlined. The principles most relative to Mid City and the MAP are discussed in more detail and where possible, graphically illustrated for visual understanding. To view the full list of principles and related content please see:

<http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/default.asp?res=800>

STRENGTHEN AND DIRECT DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS EXISTING COMMUNITIES

Smart growth directs development towards existing communities already served by infrastructure, seeking to utilize the resources that existing neighborhoods offer, and conserve open space and irreplaceable natural resources on the urban fringe. Development in existing neighborhoods also represents an approach to growth that can be more cost-effective, and improves the quality of life for its residents. By encouraging development in existing neighborhoods, communities benefit from a stronger tax base, closer proximity of a range of jobs and services, increased efficiency of already





SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

developed land and infrastructure, reduced development pressure in edge areas thereby preserving more open space, and, in some cases, strengthening rural communities.

The ease of greenfield development remains an obstacle to encouraging more development in existing neighborhoods. Development on the fringe remains attractive to developers for its ease of access and construction, lower land costs, and potential for developers to assemble larger parcels. Typical zoning requirements in fringe areas are often easier to comply with, as there are often few existing building types that new construction must complement, and a relative absence of residents who may object to the inconvenience or disruption caused by new construction.

Nevertheless, developers and communities are recognizing the opportunities presented by infill development, as suggested not only by demographic shifts, but also in response to a growing awareness of the fiscal, environmental, and social costs of development focused disproportionately on the urban fringe. Journals that track real estate trends routinely cite the investment appeal of the “24-hour city” for empty nesters, young professionals, and others, and developers are beginning to respond. A 2001 report by Urban Land Institute on urban infill housing states that, in 1999, the increase in housing permit activity in cities relative to average annual figures from the preceding decade exceeded that of the suburbs, indicating that infill development is possible and profitable.

WALKABLE COMMUNITIES

Walkable communities are desirable places to live, work, learn, worship and play, and therefore a key component of smart growth. Their desirability comes from two factors. First, walkable communities locate within an easy and safe walk goods (such as housing,

offices, and retail) and services (such as transportation, schools, libraries) that a community resident or employee needs on a regular basis. Second, by definition, walkable communities make pedestrian activity possible, thus expanding transportation options, and creating a streetscape that better serves a range of users — pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and automobiles. To foster walkability, communities must mix land uses and build compactly, and ensure safe and inviting pedestrian corridors.

Walkable communities are nothing new. Outside of the last half-century communities worldwide have created neighborhoods, communities, towns and cities premised on pedestrian access. Within the last fifty years public and private actions often present created obstacles to walkable communities. Conventional land use regulation often prohibits the mixing of land uses, thus lengthening trips and making walking a less viable alternative to other forms of travel. This regulatory bias against mixed-use development is reinforced by private financing policies that view mixed-use development as riskier than single-use development. Many communities — particularly those that are dispersed and largely auto-dependent — employ street and development design practices that reduce pedestrian activity.

MIX LAND USES

Smart growth supports the integration of mixed land uses into communities as a critical component of achieving better places to live. By putting uses in close proximity to one another, alternatives to driving, such as walking or biking, once again become viable. Mixed land uses also provides a more diverse and sizable population and commercial base for supporting viable public transit. It can enhance the vitality and perceived security of an area by increasing the number and attitude of people on the street. It helps streets, public spaces and pedestrian-oriented retail again become places where people meet, attracting pedestrians back onto the street and helping to revitalize commu-

nity life.

Mixed land uses can convey substantial fiscal and economic benefits. Commercial uses in close proximity to residential areas are often reflected in higher property values, and therefore help raise local tax receipts. Businesses recognize the benefits associated with areas able to attract more people, as there is increased economic activity when there are more people in an area to shop. In today’s service economy, communities find that by mixing land uses, they make their neighborhoods attractive to workers who increasingly balance quality of life criteria with salary to determine where they will settle. Smart growth provides a means for communities to alter the planning context which currently renders mixed land uses illegal in most of the country.

CREATE A RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS AND CHOICES

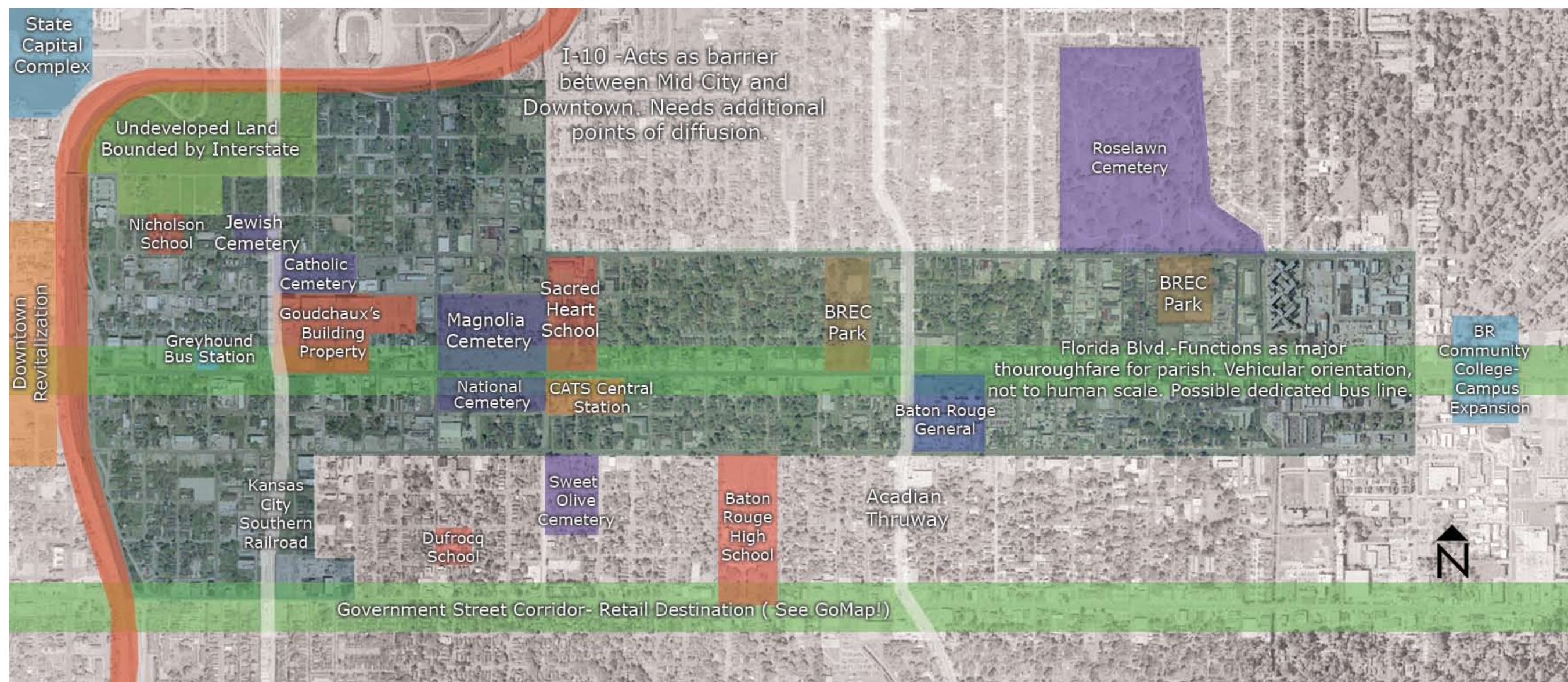
Providing quality housing for people of all income levels is an integral component in any smart growth strategy. Housing is a critical part of the way communities grow, as it constitutes a significant share of new construction and development. More importantly, however, it is also a key factor in determining households’ access to transportation, commuting patterns, access to services and education, and consumption of energy and other natural resources. By using smart growth approaches to create a wider range of housing choices, communities can mitigate the environmental costs of auto-dependent development, use their infrastructure resources more efficiently, ensure a better jobs-housing balance, and generate a strong foundation of support for neighborhood transit stops, commercial centers, and other services.

No single type of housing can serve the varied needs of today’s diverse households. Smart growth represents an opportunity for local communities to increase housing choice not only by modifying

their land use patterns on newly-developed land, but also by increasing housing supply in existing neighborhoods and on land served by existing infrastructure. Integrating single- and multi-family structures in new housing developments can support a more diverse population and allow more equitable distribution of households of all income levels across the region. The addition of units — through attached housing, accessory units, or conversion to multi-family dwellings — to existing neighborhoods creates opportunities for communities to slowly increase density without radically changing the landscape. New housing construction can be an economic stimulus for existing commercial centers that are currently vibrant during the work day, but suffer from a lack of foot traffic and consumers in evenings or weekends. Most importantly, providing a range of housing choices allow all households to find their niche in a smart growth community — whether it is a garden apartment, a rowhouse, or a traditional suburban home — and accommodate growth at the same time. ■



SITE ANALYSIS





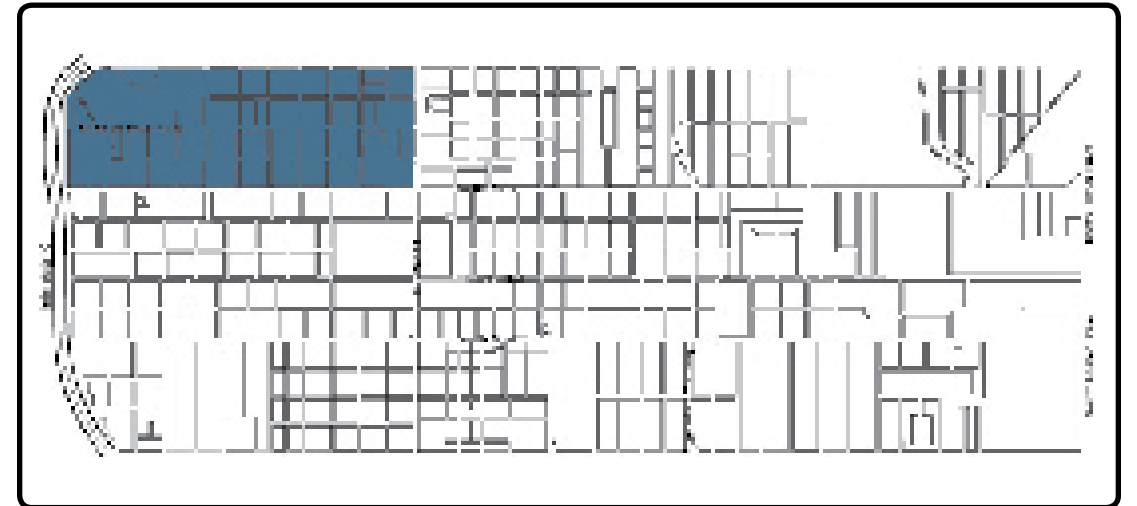
Master Action Plan

Section II

Design Development



Spanish Town Extension





SPANISH TOWN EXTENSION





SPANISH TOWN EXTENSION

VISION FOR SPANISH TOWN EXTENSION

"To plan and create a largely market-rate residential neighborhood, yet mixed-use and mixed income in nature, based on traditional urban principles that reflect the current housing needs of the parish, the redevelopment initiatives in downtown and current and future use of Renaissance Park (old Goudchaux's)."

Intruding onto the Baton Rouge landscape, the I-110 divided the residential fabric of the urban center between east and west. The neighborhoods on either side of the interstate, including those of Spanish Town and Beauregard Town in downtown Baton Rouge, were formerly seamlessly integrated. For decades, abandonment of the area occurred on both sides of the interstate indiscriminately. In 1989, initiatives were put in place to develop the area west of the I-110 by creating the Downtown Development District, an economic development agency charged with the mission to revitalize the downtown. Over the past few years, a remarkable turnaround has occurred in the downtown, especially in its historic neighborhoods where more and more property owners are becoming tenants and abandoned and vacant properties have been put back into use.

A fact that should not be overlooked is that with the consolidation of State government occurring in the downtown, when all is said and done, approximately two thousand more state employees will be commuting to the city center on a daily basis. It would be fair to assume that if residential opportunities, whether rental or home ownership, were made available in the immediate vicinity of the state offices – as in the areas along the east side of the interstate – then such opportunities would appeal to a small percentage of those commuting state employees who would like to live closer to work to avoid the rush hour traffic. Also, efforts are currently underway by other community organizations to improve the area by increasing home ownership and by undertaking initiatives to keep the area litter-free and security conscious. With this in mind, steps to develop the district should include assessing the historical nature of the area as well as its natural features.

STE – I

Project Name: Residential Development

Observation: There is much vacant property along Spanish Town Road east of I-110 with the potential to be developed into mixed-income, mixed-use housing, as an extension of revitalization efforts currently underway in the downtown.

Discussion: Some of the largest undeveloped tracts of land in the urban center are nestled in the elbow of the I-110 across from the State Capitol, on the interstate's south side, adjacent to the Louisiana Municipal Association building. Almost everyone engaged in a discussion about the opportunities for the area agree that it could, and should, be a spectacular urban development, resonating the hopes and dreams of a well-served community.

To undertake such a venture would require the assemblage of many partners that could help to shape a vision, and subsequently strive to make it a reality. Some of those partners would include Community Development Corporations working in the area, the Office of Community Development, Habitat for Humanity, community leaders, civic associations, Fannie Mae, LIHC, Department of Public Works, for-profit developers, lenders, etc. Mid City Redevelopment Alliance would be the most likely entity to take the lead with the initiative, as there is a certain familiarity with the area and its residents, and capacity to spearhead the development, both logistically and expertise-wise.

Recommendation: *Phase I* – Assemble the likely partners for a residential development in the area and begin exploring the amount of vacant lots available for development. Formulate a draft proforma for the project to determine its financial scope and feasibility. Identify partners, as well as potential consultants who will play a role in moving the initiative forward. Also, and more specifically, identify those players who will form part of the corporation to undertake the development. It will be important to determine if the development is going to be rental or owner-occupied, or a combination of both. Financial incentives are available through the mortgage-finance authorities, and enough time should be dedicated to apply for such incentives. *Phase II* – Establish LLC and contract with architects,

landscape architects or planners to plan and "layout" the actual development. Determine the ratio of different-sized housing units and develop various cost-efficient designs. Contract with for-profit builders.

Responsibility: MCRA, with a coalition of vested partners.

Priority: A-1

STE – II

Project Name: Vacant Property

Observation: The vacant property in the area, that is, land that has no structures on it or is not adjudicated, is some of the largest undeveloped tracts of real estate in the inner city. The opportunity to assemble these tracts for a unique residential development is becoming increasingly viable.

Discussion: The discussion of vacant property goes hand-in-hand with STE – I, Residential Development, where naturally, the first step in the development process would be obtain the land to develop on.

Recommendation: The first step in this process



Before and after view of possible development along Spanish Town Road





SPANISH TOWN EXTENSION

would be to do title research on all the vacant properties in the area. This can either be accomplished by a designated entity or MCRA. Having assembled all the groups as discussed in STE – I, and if the project proves feasible within a desirable working framework, the delegation should proceed to purchase the identified properties for development.

Responsibility: MCRA

Priority: A-1

STE – III

Project Name: Adjudicated Property (This is a “comprehensive layer” dealt with in more detail in Section III – see Land Development Program).

Observation: For the area in reference, to create the largest impact possible, all adjudicated property, as well as existing vacant land, should be acquired to undertake a residential development of major proportions. The need to acquire the majority of the unused land – vacant and adjudicated – for development is integral to the project's success and the overall impact to the surrounding neighborhood.

Discussion: For the area in reference, to create the largest impact possible, all adjudicated property, as well as existing vacant land, should be acquired to undertake a residential development of major proportions. The need to acquire the majority of the unused land – vacant and adjudicated – for development is integral to the area's success.

Recommendation: Work with the East Baton Rouge City-Parish, EBRP Tax Assessor and others to obtain all the adjudicated property in the area for residential development.

Responsibility: MCRA, EBR City-Parish, ABRP Tax Assessor.

Priority: C-2

STE – IV

Project Name: 3-Way Stop

Observation: The pedestrian crossing at Spanish Town Road and 10th Street could be made safer for pedestrians trying to access the downtown area by introducing a 3-way stop street.

Discussion: With destination places like the State Capital, the Mississippi River, cultural entertainment venues, etc. in the downtown, a safe and attractive pedestrian link should be considered from Spanish Town Extension to the neighborhood of Spanish Town in the downtown. By slowing traffic down on 10th Street with a 3-way stop, more foot-traffic, creating greater community interaction and heightened security awareness, will be encouraged.

Recommendation: Install stop signs on 10th Street at Spanish Town Road with additional cross walks. Similarly, cross walks, as well as pedestrian, light-signals, should be implemented on 9th Street at Spanish Town Road so as to make crossing the intersection here safer.

Responsibility: MCRA

Priority: C-2

STE – V

Project Name: The Spanish Town Park

Observation: The existing drainage canal that is connected to the State's Capital Lake could be viewed as a unique opportunity in the development of a Park. Instead of just a functional, non-appealing device that to create an attractive, multi-use, civic amenity, with the involvement of the East Baton Rouge Recreation Commission (BREC), to serve the needs of not only the immediate neighborhood, but also the Baton Rouge community in general.

Discussion: The area in question is topographically low and forms a catch-basin conduit for area, rainwater runoff that flows into the State's Capital Lake, that itself overflows into the Mississippi River. Undergoing a process similar to that which created the LSU lakes, an amenity could be created that would include recreational facilities like a boat launch, canoe rentals,

pedestrian and cycling trails, restaurants, micro-brewery, etc.

The East Baton Rouge Parish Recreation Commission (BREC) is the agency that will most likely oversee the development of, and administer, the Spanish Town Park. Noting that a BREC park already exists on the opposite side of Spanish Town Road on land whose highest and best use is geared towards residential development, the suggestion would be to swap out sites when the property on the north side of the street becomes available. This strategy is making optimum use of the

natural features of the site, as well as maximizing its development potential with an eye on orchestrating well-regarded urban design principles.

Not referring to the scale of things, but considering what San Antonio has done with its Riverwalk, there is a reference to which one can point to demonstrate how a purely functional entity was transformed into a community asset and destination. Such a feature is now the centerpiece of the community and has created an identity for the city that fosters local, regional and national tourism.



Schematic Plan of Spanish Town Road Extension



SPANISH TOWN EXTENSION

Recommendation: After acquisition of the property for the park by the coalition (LLC), it should be swapped in negotiation with BREC to further the development ideals for the area. The park design should be guided by input from existing members in the community, and the best examples of park design in the nation. The process should to inform such guidance should occur at the earliest possible stage.

Responsibility: MCRA, BREC, State of Louisiana

Priority: B-2

STE — VI

Project Name: Bicycle Path (This is a “comprehensive layer” dealt with in more detail in Section III – see Bicycle Path Development)

Observation: As with any model, planned urban development, bicycle and pedestrian circulation should play as an important role in the existence of the neighborhood, as vehicular circulation does. There are many examples of how bicycle circulation has been incorporated into planned neighborhoods, and such research should be helpful in achieving the desired results of the area.

Discussion: The development of the bicycle path should be sensitive to the bicycle routes established by the Alliance for Responsible Transportation. Also, with the completion of the State’s Capital Park Plan that allows for walking tours, points of orientation and nodes of destination, there will be opportunities to connect to this “destination place” from the Spanish Town Park whether it be physically, visually or programmatically.

Recommendation: Incorporate bicycle circulation into the design scheme of the residential and park development, within a broader context of the site.

Responsibility: MCRA, ART, CRPC and DPW

Priority: B-2

STE – VII

Project Name: *Landscape Architecture/Tree Plan*

Observation: New residential development in the Spanish Town Extension area – if based on urban principals (versus suburban principals) – will require easily, walkable circulation-routes linked to public spaces.

Discussion: In laying out walking paths, public spaces, planting designs, etc. as part of the overall scheme for the neighborhood, equal attention to the pedestrian as to the motor vehicle is an important factor in developing the landscape architecture/tree plan. Taking pedestrian traffic into account in meaningful ways will encourage the design of a neighborhood more related to the human scale. Also, the inclusion of an overall landscape design for the neighborhood will identify it positively within the larger community.

Recommendation: In working with the various partners to develop the area, a landscape plan should be a component of development undertaken by someone in the profession.

Responsibility: Property developers, landscape architect, BREC, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance

Priority: B-2

STE – VIII

Project Name: *Traffic and Parking*

Observation: Main Street and North Street are separate two-lane, one-way streets with traffic traveling east and west respectively. The width of each street in general is such that it allows cars to drive above the speed limit, causing a potential hazard to school children and residents area.

Discussion: Investigate ways to calm traffic along Main and North Streets, either through scaling down of lanes along each corridor or implementing devices like pedestrian cross walks or speed bumps. Scaling down of the corridor might involve allowing cars to park on either side of the streets, or, having a parking lane with an associated bicycle lane make up the corridor.

Recommendation: In planning for infill development or the creation of an overlay district, an initiative to calm traffic along these two streets should be included in the plans.

Responsibility: MCRA, DPW, property owners and residents of the area

Priority: C-2

STE -- IX

Project Name: Overlay District

Observation: Infill development is often hindered by existing local ordinances that are not sensitive to the historic layout of the urban environment.

Discussion: Assemble stakeholders of the area to develop an overlay district for the Spanish Town, CBD, Buearegard Town and Design District areas whereby a unique set of codes are formulated in an effort to streamline regulatory processes for the area.

Recommendation: Assemble property owners, residents and business owners of the area to oversee the

creation of an overlay district.

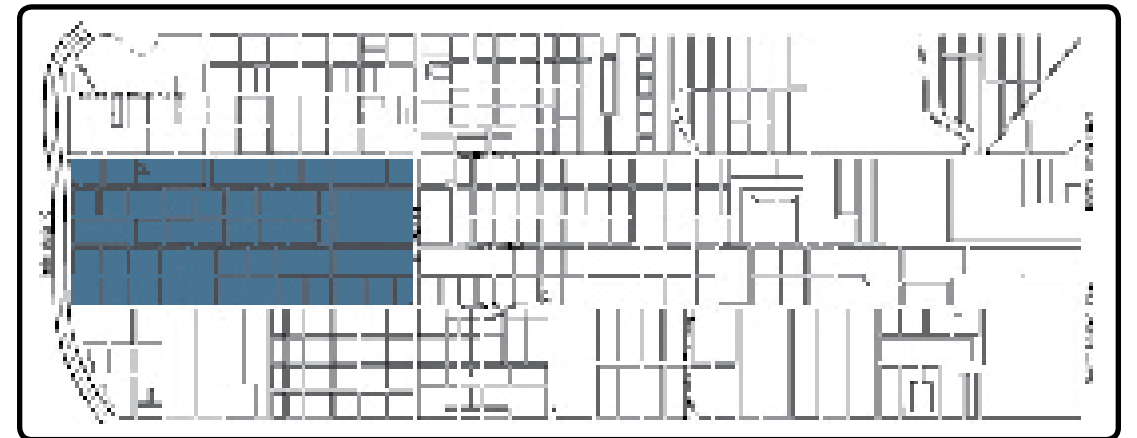
Responsibility: MCRA, Planning Commission

Priority: B-3 ■



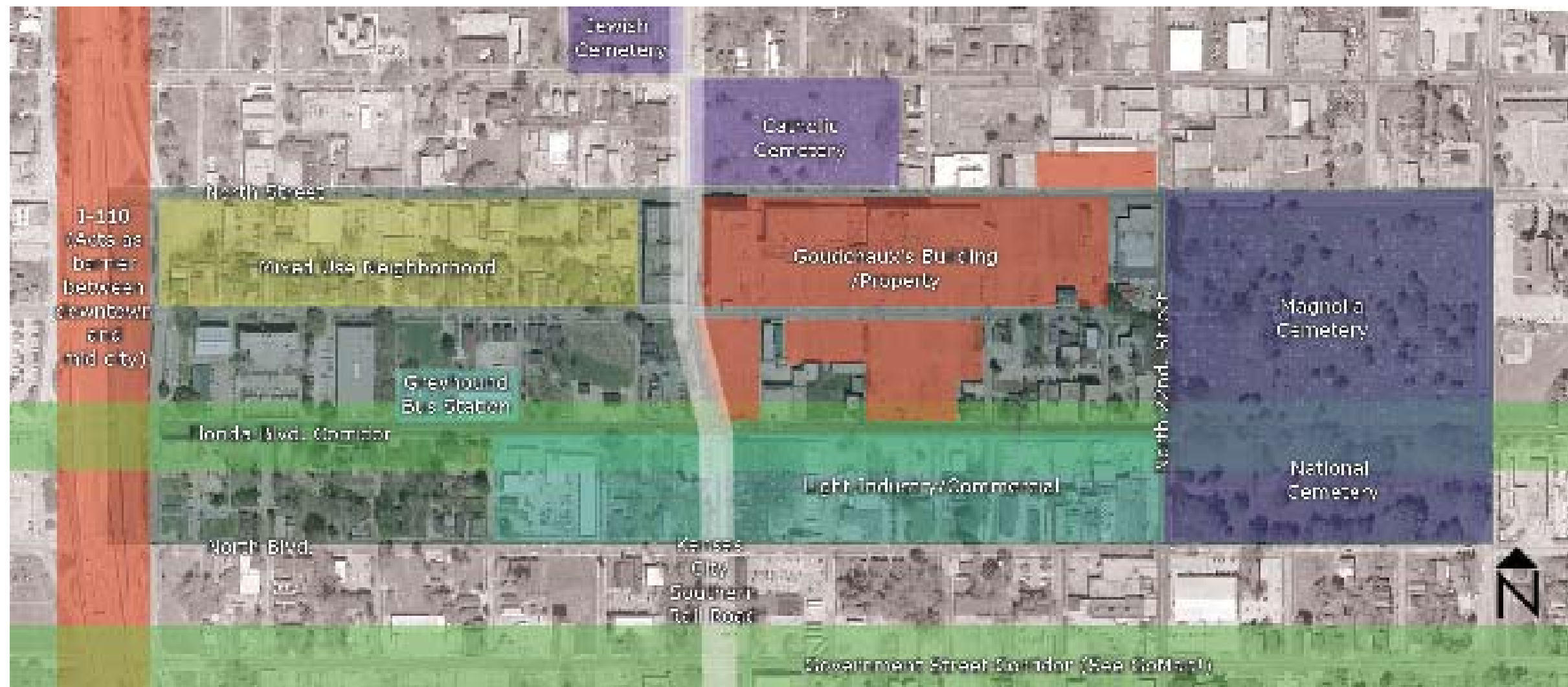


CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT





CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT





CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

VISION FOR CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

"To create a mixed-use neighborhood based on traditional urban principles that reflect the current housing needs of the parish, the redevelopment initiatives in downtown with Renaissance Park (old Goudchaux's) as a commercial anchor."

The commercial area is a likely extension of the downtown's Central Business District (CBD), located between two residential districts to its north and south, and the railroad to the east. The large surface parking underneath the interstate forms a "disconnect" between the downtown and Mid City that ideally should be bridged.

The area is one of many commercial buildings that change, if not the scale, then the nature of the district as compared to the residential districts to the immediate north and south. The city has a large presence in the area with some of the Department of Public Works' operations nestled in the red-brick building of the old Baton Rouge Junior High School, and the East Baton Rouge Parish Health Unit adjacent to it. The city's Planning and Zoning Offices and the city's HR Division are already calling this zone "home". Other characteristics of the built environment reflect larger warehouse-type facilities, isolated pockets or rows of residential structures, and light commercial activities associated with non-profit service- or socially oriented agencies. Some private businesses also make this area their home.

CBD – I

Project Name: Improve Existing Housing Stock

Observation: There remains a very old, sizeable housing stock in the area, along with larger commercial structures that add an eclectic air to the part of the city on the east side of the I-110.

Discussion: Even though there are residents that have lived in this area for decades and have invested in their homes, many structures have degraded through lack of care and outright abandonment. Adjacent areas to the north and south of the CBD Extension have a lot of residential development potential, and where possible, the CBD Extension should tie into these areas

through planned sidewalks, landscaping and methods of crossing the street safely through the use of stop signs.

Recommendation: Investigate the possibility of doing more FIXUP! projects in the neighborhood. Also, compile a list of potential structures from the area that MCRA could rehabilitate in an effort to improve the housing stock.

Responsibility: MCRA

Priority: B-2

CBD – II

Project Name: Improve Marketability of the Area for Small Businesses

Observation: Compared to downtown, real estate prices are relatively inexpensive. In addition, many properties are zoned commercial as representative of the historical layout of this part of the city.

Discussion: Because of these positives associated with the CBD Extension, marketing initiatives for commercial and retail investment should be increased to spur development. Furthermore, the recently created Enterprise Zone as well as the close proximity to Downtown Baton Rouge are aspects of the area that have to be marketed as incentives to developers.

Recommendation: Compile information about vacant lots, vacant and abandoned structures and a plan for development. Once completed, promote this information as a large development scheme whereby developers could obtain the largest economies of scale possible, while providing the biggest impact of positive change to the area.

Responsibility: MCRA

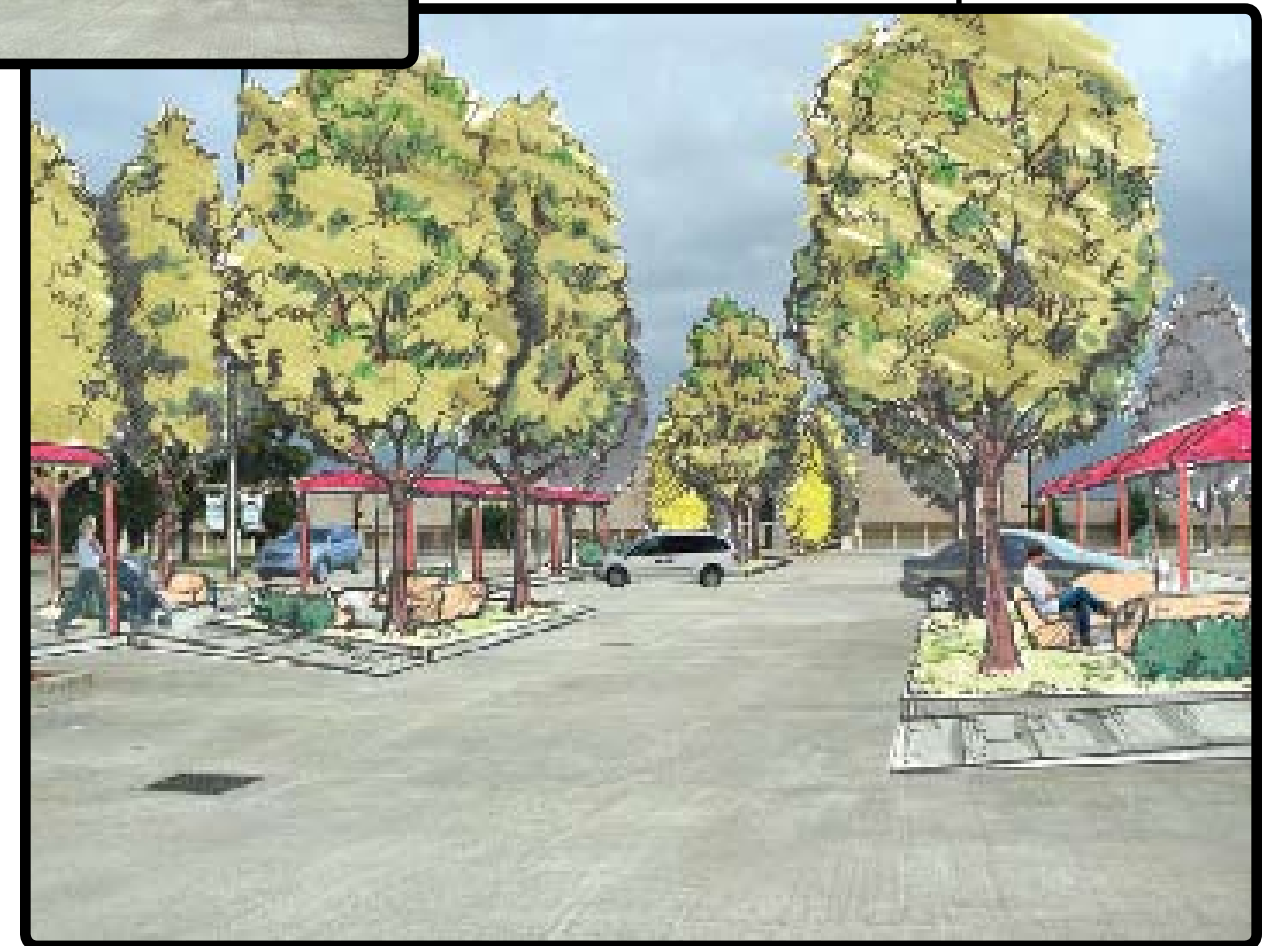
Priority: B-1

CBD – III

Project Name: Connection with Downtown



A possible configuration of the Goudchaux's building parking lot





CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

Observation: Downtown is home to many amenities that add to the quality of life of a community. From entertainment to cultural venues, from health-oriented organizations to public spaces, the downtown area supports an array of activities consistent with large urban areas. As Baton Rouge's current downtown area grows and garners great reinvestment, future plans should include this zone for the future investment possibilities.

Discussion: Encourage stronger connections of the urban fabric under Interstate 110 by ensuring safe sidewalks, welcoming landscaping and generally more pedestrian friendly devices to encourage ease of mobility from Mid City to downtown.

Recommendation: When planning infill development projects or the overlay district initiative, the "Connections to Downtown" project should be included in the plans.

Responsibility: MCRA, Downtown Development District, DPW, Plan Baton Rouge, Mayor Office, District 10 City Councilman

Priority: B-3

CBD – IV

Project Name: Adjudicated Property (This is a "comprehensive layer" dealt with in more detail in Section III – see Land Development Program).

Observation: For the area in reference, to create the largest impact possible, all adjudicated property, as well as existing vacant land, should be acquired to undertake a residential development of major proportions. The need to acquire the majority of the unused land – vacant and adjudicated – for development is integral to the area's success.

Discussion: Working with partners on a parish-wide initiative, the adjudicated property issue is one that requires a lot of political will. Because this issue touches on the basic precepts to own land via the Constitution, various levels of Government have to assist in making



Schematic Plan of Central Business District



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

adjudicated land more readily available for development.

Recommendation: Work with the Mayor's Office of East Baton Rouge City-Parish, EBRP Tax Assessor, and others, to make more infill development available to the public.

Responsibility: MCRA, East Baton Rouge City-Parish, East Baton Rouge Parish Tax Assessor.

Priority: C-2

CBD – V

Project Name: Overlay District

Observation: Infill development is often hindered by existing local ordinances that are not sensitive to the historic layout of the urban environment.

Discussion: Assemble stakeholders of the area to develop an overlay district for the Spanish Town, CBD, Beauregard Town and Design District areas whereby a unique set of codes are formulated in an effort to streamline regulatory processes for the area.

Recommendation: Assemble property owners, residents and business owners of the area to oversee the creation of an overlay district.

Responsibility: MCRA, Planning Commission

Priority: B-3

CBD – VIII

Project Name: St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery & The Jewish Cemetery (see Mid City Historical Cemeteries Coalition under Comprehensive Layers chapter)

Observation: The CBD is home to two of the five historical cemeteries in the area, and is under-utilized as a resource to the community.

Discussion: see Comprehensive Layer chapter

Recommendation: see Comprehensive Layer chapter

Responsibility: Mid City Historical Cemeteries Coalition

Priority: A-1 ■





Beaugard Town Extension

(LORENTE-YOUNG TOWN)





BEAUREGARD TOWN EXTENSION (LORENTE-YOUNG TOWN)



VISION FOR BEAUREGARD TOWN EXTENSION

"To create more infill, residential opportunities in the neighborhood reflecting its historical nature, while also reflecting the current housing needs of the parish, the redevelopment initiatives in downtown and current and future use of Renaissance Park (old Goudchaux's)."

Similar to its identified counterpart to the north, the residential area around the Beauregard Town neighborhood was subjected to the same historical forces and changes wrought by the introduction of the interstate system. The area, as identified, maintains a residential scale and many of its original structures. However, as each year passes, the housing stock dwindles through salvage efforts, the city's "take down" program – aimed at safety and security in the neighborhoods – and fire. More and more vacant land is popping up because of these actions, causing the erosion of the "charm" of the neighborhood.

Once again, it would be wise to tap into the positive energies that are occurring in downtown Baton Rouge, in this case, especially around the Beauregard Town neighborhood. One of the easiest and productive ways to achieve this is to identify with the area located in the downtown. Tangible connections have to occur between east and west for the most.

More recently, the city's Department of Public Works commissioned a traffic study to determine vehicular patterns to and from the downtown. With many projects underway in the downtown that are bound to attract more visitors, the study suggested that North Boulevard be widened to four lanes, and a bridge be constructed over the railway line to maintain a constant traffic flow along the corridor.

According to the Department of Public Works, the expansion will incorporate the same type of landscaping elements found along North Boulevard making it aesthetically appealing. Also, it was explained that the widening of the Boulevard would occur along a sliver of the total depth of the city's property, on either side of the street. The unused property from this project could be included in comprehensive planning strategies for the immediate vicinity.

BT – I

Project Name: North Boulevard Expansion and Overpass (See also "Warehouse District")

Observation: The widening of North Boulevard on the east side of the I-110 will move traffic through the area quicker, yet at the same time increase the amount of cars moving along this corridor. The overpass will also increase the amount of unused public space underneath the overpass.

Discussion: With the increased rate of traffic through the area, the challenge will be to maintain the scale of the expansion to reflect the urban scale of its surroundings. The surroundings in this case reflect the zero-lot-lines frontage of the area, with sidewalks and narrower streets that make for increased pedestrian safety.

Recommendation: Work with the City Parish's Department of Public Works on a landscaping plan that is sensitive to the history of the area, and that ties into the residential fabric.

Responsibility: DPW, Baton Rouge Green, MCRA, residents

Priority: B-2

BT – II

Project Name: Adjudicated Property
(This is a "comprehensive layer" dovetailing with the Land Development Program – see Section III)

Observation: There are vacant and adjudicated lots in the Beauregard Town extension area, whose residential fabric is, for the most part, still strongly intact, and that if acquired (or controlled) would planned and implemented, will be . The neighborhood has the ability to re-invigorate itself by developing single-family housing on the vacant properties, many of them adjudicated.

Discussion: The adjudicated properties in Beauregard Town extension, as in all areas of the city, at the



BEAUREGARD TOWN EXTENSION (LORENTE-YOUNG TOWN)

moment present a liability to the immediate community and its residents, as well as to the city-parish. Not only do these properties almost always present an appearance of "blight" that diminishes the attractiveness of the area, but vagrancy, criminal activities and fire hazards often associated with them do not necessarily court mainstream investors or developers. Additionally, the city-parish loses out on real estate taxes the longer the properties are listed on the adjudicated rolls.

Recommendation: Work with appropriate groups to put the adjudicated properties back into commerce by working with the East Baton Rouge Parish, City of Baton Rouge to clean up any legal issues related to title or insurance.

As with the vacant, privately owned properties in the area, together, these properties could be assembled by non-profit and private-developer partnerships, creating scattered-site housing developments in efforts of urban infill.

Responsibility: MCRA

Priority: C-2

BT – III

Project Name: Vacant Property
(This is a "comprehensive layer" dealt with in more detail in Section III – see Land Development Program)

Observation: The potential exists to acquire property in Beaugard Town Extension, under the Land Development Program, to be made available for development purposes.

Discussion: Vacant properties in this community should be developed to strengthen its residential fabric. With the surge in residential activity in the downtown, the neighborhood on the east side of I-110 is a prime area for those looking for reasonably priced urban-development opportunities.

Recommendation: Under the auspices of the Land Development Program (LDP), prioritize land accumulation/control by districts targeted for such initiatives.

When Beaugard Town Extension becomes slated for LDP activity, work with the neighborhood residents, Shiloh Baptist Church, the Prince Hall Masons and other stakeholders in the community to positively enhance the neighborhood.

Responsibility: MCRA, EBR City Parish, BRAF

Priority: C-2

BT – IV

Project Name: Grocery Store/Retail

Observation: The building at the corner of Convention and America St. has, in a previous life, been used as a retail space. This two-story structure is a shoe-in for retail operation again with apartments occupying the second floors.

Discussion: The unused building is reminiscent of small convenient stores found in more urbanized areas across the country. It has the great neighborhood scale and appeal that could be a focal point of the surrounding neighborhood. Historically, such a focal point of the community has been associated with a public gathering space that offers respite and a source for identity.

Typically, such spaces – plazas, pocket parks, gardens – were adjacent, opposite or within visual access to the central activity of the community. In the case of Beaugard Town Extension, surrounded by busy thoroughfares landlocking the neighborhood, it would be prudent to reinforce, the existing residential fabric by initiating these projects as a strategy to further strengthen the community.

Recommendation: Investigate ownership and encourage development of the property by providing a vision for the community (MAP 2005), as well as targeted financial incentives to facilitate any development initiatives.

Responsibility: MCRA

Priority: C-2

historic layout of the urban environment.

Discussion: Assemble stakeholders of the area to develop an overlay district for the Spanish Town, CBD, Beaugard Town and Design District areas whereby a unique set of codes are formulated in an effort to streamline regulatory processes for the area.

BTE - VI

Project Name: Overlay District

Observation: Infill development is often hindered by existing local ordinances that are not sensitive to the



A before and after view of proposed development on the corner of 12th and America Streets





BEAUREGARD TOWN EXTENSION (LORENTE-YOUNG TOWN)

Recommendation: Assemble property owners, residents and business owners of the area to oversee the creation of an overlay district.

Responsibility: MCRA, Planning Commission

Priority: B-3 ■



Schematic Plan of Beauregard Town Extension





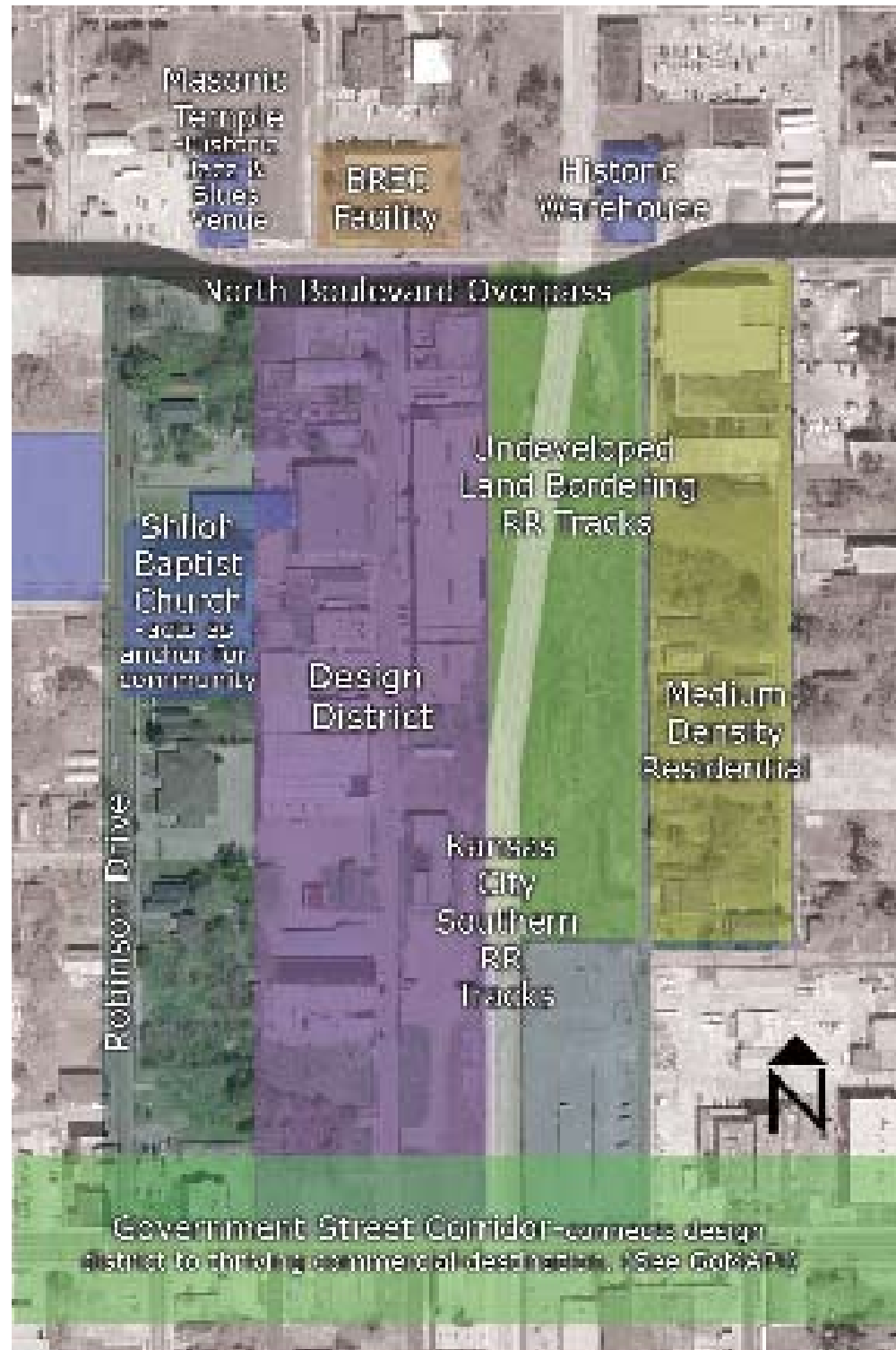
Warehouse District

(DESIGN DISTRICT)





WAREHOUSE DISTRICT



VISION FOR WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

"To create a mixed-use, live-work environment reflective of some of the initiatives currently underway with the Government Street Master Action Plan and existing marketing strategies of the Design District."

The area encompassing the Warehouse District is comprised mostly of commercial-zoned property that contains some of Baton Rouge's few remaining warehouse structures. Many of these structures are still in use, and a commercial antique/arts/crafts image has developed on the backs of such business such as Habitat Imports, Warehouse 212 and Christian Street Market's "La Bodega."

There are many parcels of property that could be developed in the area, and, foreseeably, this could be a thriving mixed-use community, dotted with artisan and retail. The interest in using the older buildings for commercial interests is overwhelming while new construction on vacant parcels could lend itself to such principles of urban living.

Many commercially oriented activities should be entertained in conjunction with residential.

WD - I

Project Name: North Boulevard Expansion

Observation: The Department of Public Works is widening North Boulevard by two lanes from the I-110 to 22nd Street.

Discussion: In expanding North Boulevard from two to four lanes, while creating an overpass over the railway line that runs between 14th and 15th Streets. Not only will many more cars traverse this area making it more visible to the general community (and thus more marketable), but because of the unused land created under the overpass, the potential would be to program it for something that adds to the activity, commerce or vibrancy of the area. If left unprogrammed, the land under the overpass becomes a "no-mans" land, creating the perception that the area is abandoned and unsafe.

Recommendation : Study the overpass area around Perkins Road and the railway line in Baton Rouge, as a successful solution to dealing with overpasses in resi-

dential communities. Investigate the legal mechanisms that allow the private sector to use the area under this overpass, as well as study the spatial layout of the buildings and parking areas adjacent to it. Once a program has been identified (residential, retail, light commercial, recreation, or a combination of either), use the research as the foundation to try and enter into an agreement with the City-Parish to use the land under the overpass accordingly.

Responsibility: MCRA, Office of Community Development and Design, DPW

Priority: B-2

WD--II

Project Name: Entergy Building

Observation: The red-brick building owned by Entergy on the corner of 15th and Government Street is an historic building, also something of an icon in the Baton Rouge community.

Discussion: Because of its location and historic nature, the Entergy building has the potential to act as a landmark and focal point of the Mid City Warehouse/Design District. With the drafting of the GoMAP! recommendations can be made that any future renovations, improvements or additions follow the strategies and guidelines set forth in the document. The purpose of following these guidelines is to support "place making" as defined in the GoMAP! document.

Recommendation: Meet with Entergy representatives, explaining the GoMAP! process and its goals. Any type of real-estate improvement on the property can be done with an eye towards the overall vision of the GoMAP!

Responsibility: Entergy, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, merchants in Mid City Design District

Priority: B-1

WD - III

Project Name: "Mid City Design District" Designa-



WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

tion

Observation: The outlined area is home to three large furniture/antique stores, a wholesale distribution outlet, a mechanical shop, with more artisans and retailers along Government Street. The type of existing building space and the amount of vacant land available make it ripe to promote the area as a unique shopping district.

Discussion: The potential is there to attract more retail and commercial to the area by playing up its virtues as a central, historic location, unique to the city-parish and region as a shopping experience.

Recommendation: To facilitate the process of marketing a unique antique/furniture-shopping destination in Mid City, the area should be designated with a "brand" name and a logo that is easily recognized by all. It is also necessary that these efforts be complemented by improvements to the physical realm, namely to the infrastructure and landscape of the public domain (streets, sidewalks, drainage, etc.), as well as to private property interfacing with the public (building facades, gardens, signage, etc.).

Responsibility: Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, related merchants in the Mid City Design District, DPW

Priority: B-1

WD — IV

Project Name: 15th Street Mixed Development

Observation: The property on 15th Street, between Government Street and North Boulevard, is half a block of vacant, prime real estate contiguous in nature, close to downtown Baton Rouge and situated in the Mid City Design District.

Discussion: Although adjacent to the railway line, it has the potential that once developed as a comprehensive project, could change the face of the community in one broad stroke. The presence of the railway line should not detract from the possibilities of residential and/or commercial development, as issues concerning rail traffic through neighborhoods are

accepted and dealt with in countless, similar situations across the nation.

Recommendation: Work with the private sector to develop this property to complement the Mid City Design District vision. A mixture of retail, commercial and residential activity would not be a foreign idea to include in any future development on the property.

Responsibility: Mid City Redevelopment Alliance

Priority: B-2

DD — IV

Project Name: BREC Park

Observation: The BREC Park facility on the North side of the street is currently boarded up and for all intents and purposes, not in use. BREC has kept the building painted and the grounds well maintained.

Discussion: Lately, more and more interest has been expressed in the area around the I-110 and North Street as an extension of downtown residential property in the area. The residences around the North Boulevard expansion project.

Recommendation: Re-open the facility as a "center-piece" for the community once more residential development starts to take place. The park should cater to retail and commercial foot traffic when the properties along North Boulevard have been developed i.e. have tables for outdoor-seating and dining, be easily accessible and designed with safety in mind.

Responsibility: BREC, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance.

Priority: A-2 ■



A before and after view of proposed development along 14th Street





WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

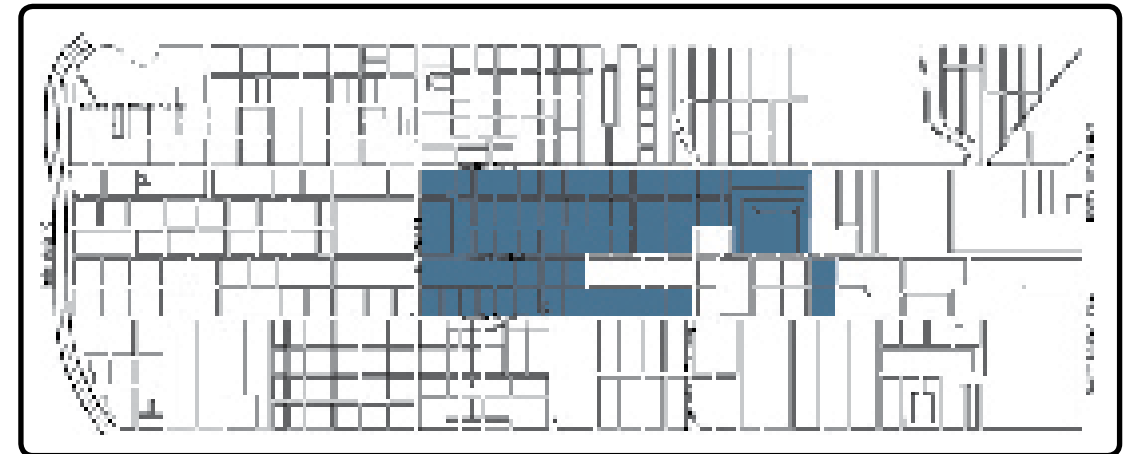


Schematic Plan of Warehouse District





Target Neighborhood





TARGET NEIGHBORHOOD

VISION FOR TARGET NEIGHBORHOOD

"To create more infill, residential and retail opportunities in the area, while reflecting the current housing needs of the parish, current and future use of Renaissance Park (old Goudchaux's) and potential development of the proposed Medical District."

The Target Neighborhood was identified with the creation of the first Master Action Plan in 1992. The rationale used in identifying the neighborhood was based on the fact that the Baton Rouge General Hospital served, and continues to serve, as an anchor in the area, and as such, should be used as a means to leverage economic development, whether it be in attracting medically related businesses to the immediate vicinity, or relying on its positive image to promote residential development. Picking up trash, fixing the exterior of houses and providing incentives for neighborhood improvement in a defined, focused area around the hospital was seen as the prudent course to take to initiate redevelopment.

Of the five main goals presented in the initial Master Action Plan, four of those have been achieved with success. The five goals that were identified were: I) to produce an infill housing development II) to create an educational program geared towards first time homeownership III) to improve the visual character of the neighborhood by repairing and painting elderly peoples houses in the area IV) to promote the construction of a BREC facility in the Target Neighborhood V) to develop a Medical District around the Baton Rouge General Hospital consisting of related medical and commercial services, and linked health programs. As stated before, much success has been achieved with the first four goals mentioned above, however the final goal, not for lack of effort, has not gained enough traction to take hold and blossom. The variables involved with realizing such a project are extremely diverse and randomly weighted, and requires much groundwork to develop.

Although much has been accomplished in the Target Neighborhood, there are more development opportunities that should be taken advantage of. For example, there is ample opportunity for commercial and residential development with many vacant lots





TARGET NEIGHBORHOOD

available as a seed for more physical growth. Commercially zoned land in the heart of the city with existing infrastructure is readily available, as well residentially zoned tracts that could, if done in sizeable measures, change the character of the area.

TN – I

Project Name: Residential Development

Observation: The Park Hills project has shown what positive outcomes can be achieved when a certain critical mass of infill development has taken place in a defined area. With this in mind, the Target Neighborhood is fertile ground for more such focused residential initiatives that could radically alter the character of the neighborhood.

Discussion: As economic development strategies are unfolded within a community, evaluation measures should be undertaken to determine the effect of past and existing initiatives on the area. If the initiatives incepted to produce a desired result have proven to be successful, efforts should be made to maintain its positive attributes and consequently build on the foundation that has been, in this case, painstakingly established. Simply put, the efforts of economic revitalization and redevelopment should advance to the next level to take advantage of all the preceding work.

In the case of the Target Neighborhood and its residents, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance has established many relationships that have proven to be vital with regards to neighborhood development and stability, and general economic development strategies. Also, the base-level programs established to deal with such basic-community needs as trash removal and exterior repairs to homes have been successful. The “lowest hanging fruit” concerning these initiatives, so to speak, have been plucked, and the time for evaluation and added directives for the Target Neighborhood is evident.

Out of this evaluation comes the idea for a large-scale residential development, in the same vein as Park Hills that drastically changes the character of the neighborhood. In fact, with the BREC Park in the center

of the area, a large residential development – multi-family or single-family, scattered site or contiguous development – will be extremely desirable to compliment the existing features of the area.

Recommendation: Work with other area-CDC’s, the Office of Community Development and financial institutions to structure development possibilities, from acquiring the land to marketing and selling the finished houses.

Responsibility: MCRA, OCD, Hope CDC, LISC, Capital Park CDC

Priority: A-1

TN – II

Project Name: Florida Boulevard

Observation: Florida Boulevard is a major east-west vehicular artery connecting the Florida Parishes to the Mississippi River and historical Baton Rouge. The Boulevard not only traverses the parish in an east-west direction, but is also one of two major east-west corridors – the other being Government Street — that historically engender a subconscious zone creating a barrier separating the city parish along racial lines. The opportunity is therefore inherently available for Florida Boulevard to play a vital role in linking divergent parts of the city parish together, both physically – by creating a mass transportation system that will be utilized by all on a daily basis – and socially – by creating a “vehicle” (literally and figuratively) for interaction in the community.

Discussion: Any mass transportation project takes a long time to develop and implement; in some cases it might be decades. Because the gestation and birthing process of such an undertaking of scale is that time-exhaustive, it is that much more prudent to proactively work towards a desired outcome immediately.

The Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC), the planning and development agency for the Metropolitan Statistical Area, has outlined a plan of action for developing a major mass transportation system for the next generation. Essentially, the system will be light

rail with other technical advances that are to occur between now and construction of the system. In the interim – five- to ten year period – the Commission is planning to improve on the delivery of its services by creating more efficient travel patterns and infrastructure.

Recommendation:

Responsibility: MCRA, CATS, CRPC, CPPC, DPW

Priority: C-2

TN – III

Project Name: Vacant Property
(This is a “comprehensive layer” dealt with in more detail in Section III – see Land Development Program)

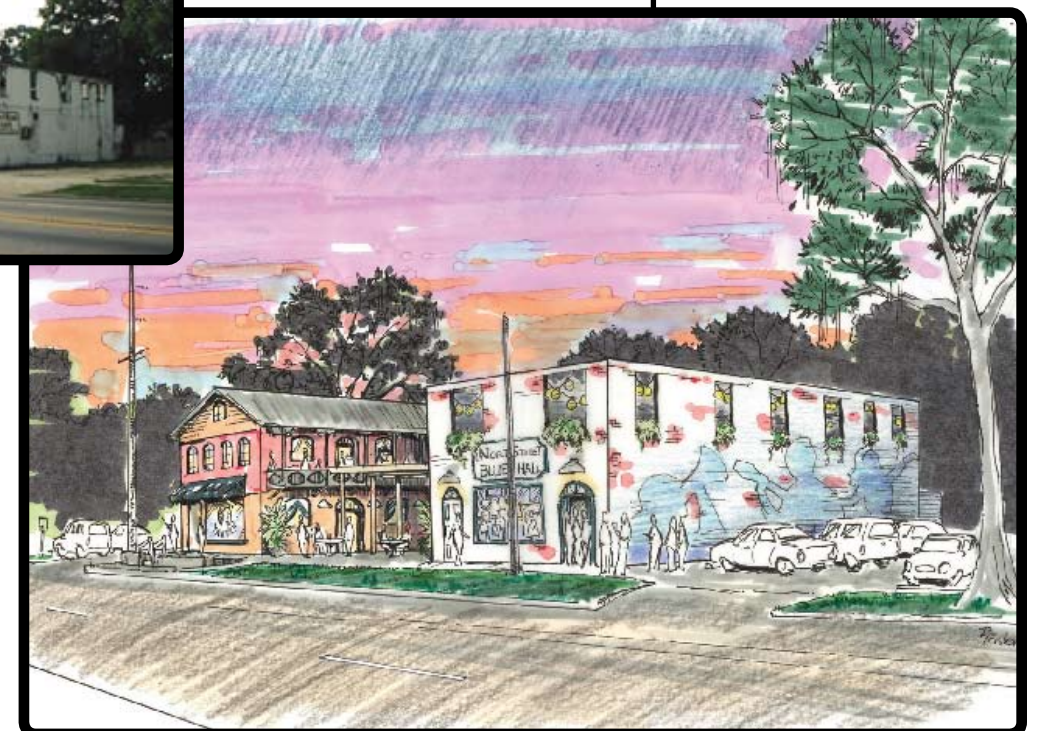
Observation: The potential exists to acquire property in Beauregard Town Extension, under the Land Development Program, to be made available for development purposes.

Discussion: Vacant properties in this community should be developed to strengthen its residential fabric. With the surge in residential activity in the downtown, the neighborhood on the east side of I-110 is a prime area for those looking for reasonably priced urban-development opportunities.

Recommendation: Under the auspices of the Land Development Program (LDP), prioritize land accumulation/control by districts targeted for such initiatives. When Beauregard Town Extension becomes slated for



Adaptive Reuse of abandoned building on North Street





TARGET NEIGHBORHOOD

LDP activity, work with the neighborhood residents, Shiloh Baptist Church, the Prince Hall Masons and other stakeholders in the community to positively enhance the neighborhood.

Responsibility: MCRA, EBR City Parish, BRAF

Priority: A-2

TN – IV

Project Name: Adjudicated Property
(This is a “comprehensive layer” dovetailing with the Land Development Program. See Section III.)

Observation: There are vacant and adjudicated lots in the Beauregard Town extension area, whose residential fabric is, for the most part, still strongly intact, and that if acquired (or controlled) would planned and implemented, will be . The neighborhood has the ability to re-invigorate itself by developing single-family housing on the vacant properties, many of them adjudicated.

Discussion: The adjudicated properties in Beauregard Town extension, as in all areas of the city, at the moment present a liability to the immediate community and its residents, as well as to the city-parish. Not only do these properties almost always present an appearance of “blight” that diminishes the attractiveness of the area, but vagrancy, criminal activities and fire hazards often associated with them do not necessarily court mainstream investors or developers. Additionally, the city-parish loses out on real estate taxes the longer the properties are listed on the adjudicated rolls.

Recommendation: Work with appropriate groups to put the adjudicated properties back into commerce by working with the East Baton Rouge Parish, City of Baton Rouge to clean up any legal issues related to title or insurance.

As with the vacant, privately owned properties in the area, together, these properties could be assembled by non-profit and private-developer partnerships, creating scattered-site housing developments in efforts

of urban infill.

Responsibility: MCRA

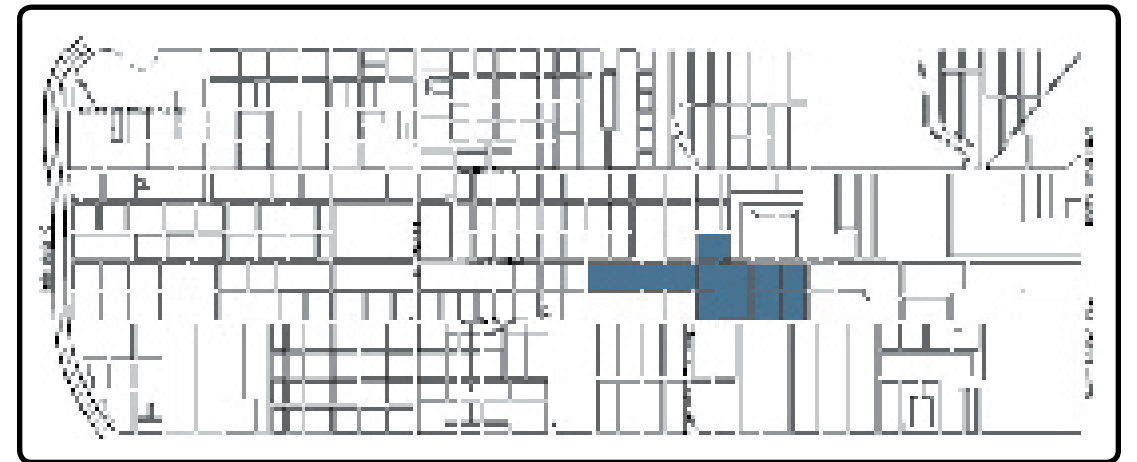
Priority: A-2 ■



Schematic Plan of BREC Park acting as connection between Target Neighborhood and Medical District



Medical District





MEDICAL DISTRICT

VISION FOR MEDICAL DISTRICT

"To create a medical district comprised of a partnership between the Baton Rouge General Hospital and the Department of Health and Hospitals in development of a first-class research, teaching and health facility."

The Baton Rouge General Hospital (BRG) is the largest employer in the area, and the most visible symbol of stability. The General has been in the community at its current location since 1947 and has throughout the years invested countless resources in expansion initiatives and in surrounding economic development.

The hospital continues to provide a valuable service to clients from surrounding communities as well as from neighboring parishes. Within the past few years, this health care organization has added new lines of medical care to the Mid City campus, continuing a bold strategy of investing in the heart of Baton Rouge.

With all of the components that make BRG a positive symbol in the community, it is easy to see why this institution could be used as leverage in support of surrounding, complementary development. More specifically, development should build upon an already successful asset that is a health care facility, by determining the needs and desires of the community and the General at large. This approach will serve to reinforce the idea of a 'medical district' as well, further addressing the issue of economic development for the area.

MD - I

Project Name: Vacant Property Title Identification

Observation: Over the past few decades, at the intersection of two of the busiest streets in Baton Rouge – Florida Boulevard and Acadian Thruway – much vacant land has cropped up as buildings in the immediate vicinity have been torn



MEDICAL DISTRICT

down, and yet other business have moved from buildings to be left vacated. Knowing who owns the many parcels of land in the vicinity is a step that could significantly reduce predevelopment costs for potential developers interested in multi-property acquisition for a project.

Discussion: Having approximately 6-8 acres of property available around the BRG for development is an opportunity that should be explored, especially as to how it might relate to a project that is medically inclined. Not only is there excellent access to the site by way of major, city thoroughfares but other infrastructure elements contained in the urban grid, like drainage and existing sidewalks are present that serve to reduce development costs.

In trying to present an attractive package

for development, MCRA should eliminate to the greatest extent possible a potential hurdle not faced by developers building on green space: that of combining multiple properties together for a single development. Not only is title research for each individual parcel time-consuming but also it can be very costly when extensive legal services are provided – and especially if these costs are considered a deal-breaker.

Recommendation: MCRA should obtain and continuously update the latest title information for use by developers interested in developing the property. Such information could be obtained through accessing the tax assessor's records and/or hiring an attorney to obtain the information.

Responsibility: MCRA

Priority: C-2

MD – II

Project Name: Financial Incentives for Property Acquisition & Development

Observation: A significant hurdle exists in urban areas in trying to acquire property for development purposes that does not occur in outlying area of the city: the legal cost to research and acquire smaller, multiple properties for a large development.

Discussion: To smooth over predevelopment processes, and even entice developers to the table, MCRA should obtain grant resources that could reduce, if not eliminate, legal fees associated with property acquisition in the medical district

area.

Another potential incentive that could be explored for a large development could be Tax Increment Financing (TIF) where future taxes for a limited time are discounted back to the present to aid in the upfront, financing process.

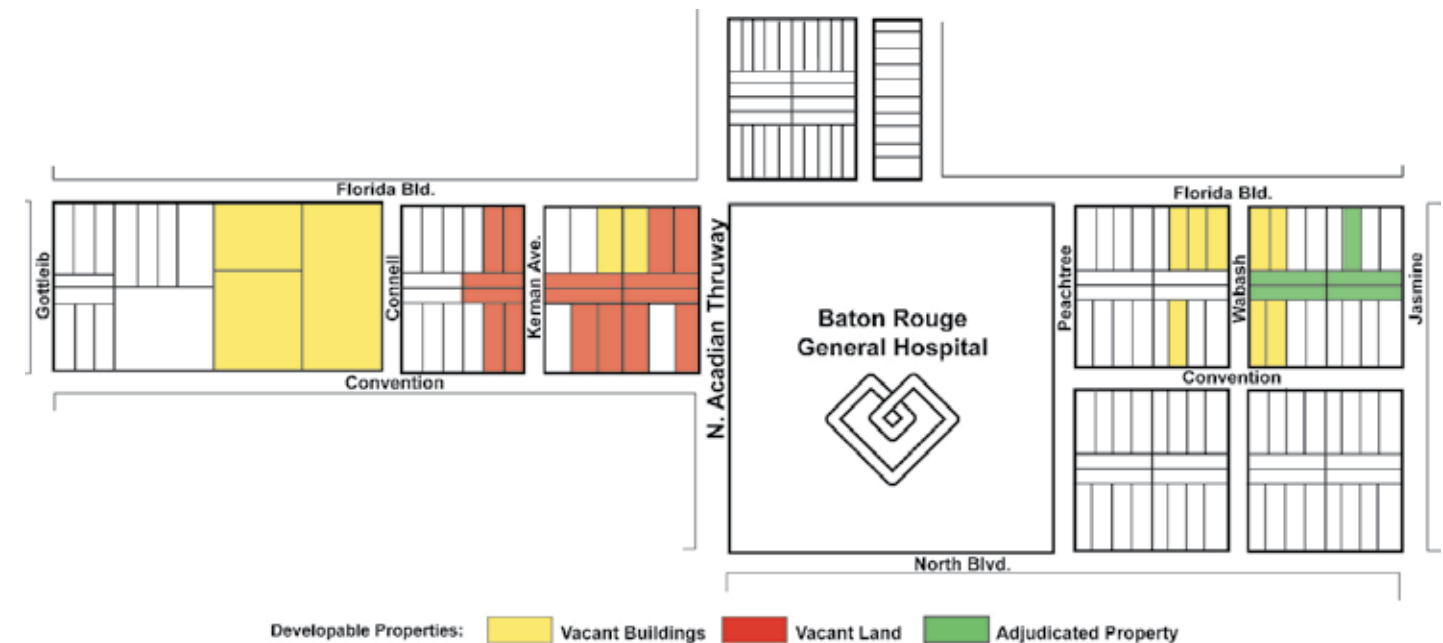
Recommendation: MCRA should explore grant opportunities that could be used to entice development in the area identified as the medical district. The funds could be used to reduce or negate the legal fees associated with title research and multiple closing costs related to property acquisition.

Also, MCRA can offer to take the lead in applying for Tax Increment Financing.

Responsibility: MCRA



A before and after view of the proposed Medical District development





MEDICAL DISTRICT

Priority: B-1

MD – III

Project Name: Baton Rouge General/LSU
Medical Sciences: Trauma Center

Observation: The state's charity system continues to face intense scrutiny as the medical reimbursement industry continues to evolve. Also, Baton Rouge does not have a level-one trauma center, instead relying on the New Orleans trauma facilities in emergency cases.

Discussion: As the charity system relates to Baton Rouge, a lack of facility investment and maintenance at the main health care facility, Earl K. Long, has caused an inordinate amount of patient redirection to private, health care facilities. As the training ground for LSU's medical interns, the problem of declining patient visits to Earl K. Long has in the recent past brought up the issue of the hospital's ability to maintain its levels of medical instruction, ultimately needed to maintain its accreditation as a teaching facility.

Successful models have been created throughout the country whereby medical comprise research facilities, coupled with patient care and teaching programs. Such medical centers include MD Anderson and Johns Hopkins, two well regarded institutions that draw patients from a world wide audience.

Utilizing the resources of the public and private sector, the aforementioned models could form the backdrop for discussions about a teaching, research and patient care facility on the identified properties.

Recommendation: MCRA should obtain the latest title information for use by developers interested in developing the property. Such information could be obtained through accessing the tax assessor's records and/or hiring an attorney to obtain the information.



Schematic Plan of the Medical District





Foster Drive Extension





FOSTER DRIVE EXTENSION



VISION FOSTER DRIVE EXTENSION

"To redevelop the district, largely as a commercial/light industrial area, with residential interspersed in live/work situations or pockets of single family residential."

The area identified as the Foster Drive Extension starts to display a looser grid than the other areas identified in the MAP 2003. Larger commercial and light, industrial lots make their presence felt along Foster, as can be witnessed by larger scale developments that start to exhibit a decidedly more suburban feel. Signs of frequent strip mall development off an enlarged boulevard add to this feel, as well as on specific streets, residential and commercial lots are interspersed in clumps amongst each other, providing for a hard-to-define area in terms of scale and a future vision for the area.

Wanting to achieve more density and/or use more of the unused resources in the area, like vacant land and buildings, it is fair to say that an increase in residential development, along with light commercial development is a goal chartered for the entire master planning area. The Foster Drive Extension area is no exception to this idea, where existing vacant structures could potentially be reused for commercial and residential, thereby strengthening the fabric of the community.

FDE – I

Project Name: Improve Existing Housing Stock

Observation: There remains a very old, sizeable housing stock in the area, along with larger commercial structures that add an eclectic air to the part of the city on the east side of the I-110.

Discussion: Even though there are residents that have lived in this area for decades and have invested in their homes, many structures have degraded through lack of care and outright abandonment. Adjacent areas to the north and south of the CBD Extension have a lot of residential development potential, and where possible, the CBD Extension should tie into these areas through planned sidewalks, landscaping and methods of crossing the street safely through the use of stop signs.



FOSTER DRIVE EXTENSION

Recommendation: Investigate the possibility of doing more FIXUP! projects in the neighborhood. Also, compile a list of potential structures from the area that MCRA could rehabilitate in an effort to improve the housing stock.

Responsibility: MCRA

Priority: C-2

FDE – II

Project Name: Improve Marketability of the Area for Small Businesses

Observation: Compared to downtown, real estate prices are relatively inexpensive. To boot, many properties are zoned commercial as representative of the historical layout of this part of the city.

Discussion: Because of these positives associated with the CBD Extension, marketing initiatives for commercial and retail investment should be increased to spur development. Furthermore, the recently created Enterprise Zone as well as the close proximity to Downtown Baton Rouge are aspects of the area that have to be marketed as incentives to developers.

Recommendation: Compile information about vacant lots, vacant and abandoned structures and a plan for development. Once completed, promote this information as a large development scheme whereby developers could obtain the largest economies of scale possible, while providing the biggest impact of positive change to the area.

Responsibility: MCRA

Priority: C-3

FDE – III

Project Name: Adjudicated Property (This is a “comprehensive layer” dovetailing with the Land Development Program – see Section III)

Observation: There are vacant and adjudicated

lots in the Foster Drive extension area, that if acquired (or controlled) could be part of a larger plan for the redevelopment of the area.

Discussion: The adjudicated properties in Foster Drive Extension—as in all areas of the city—at the moment present a liability to the immediate community and its residents, as well as to the city-parish. Not only do these properties almost always present an appearance of “blight” that diminishes the attractiveness of the area, but vagrancy, criminal activities and fire hazards often associated with them do not necessarily court mainstream investors or developers. Additionally, the city-parish loses out on real estate taxes the longer the properties are listed on the adjudicated rolls.

Recommendation: Work with appropriate groups to put the adjudicated properties back into commerce by working with the East Baton Rouge Parish, City of Baton Rouge to clean up any legal issues related to title or insurance.

As with the vacant, privately owned properties in the area, together, these properties could be assembled by non-profit and private-developer partnerships, creating scattered-site housing developments in efforts of urban infill.

Responsibility: MCRA, EBR City-Parish, ABRP Tax Assessor.

Priority: C-2

FDE – IV

Project Name: Vacant Property (This is a “comprehensive layer” dealt with in more detail in Section III – see Land Development Program)

Observation: The potential exists to acquire property in Beauregard Town Extension, under the Land Development Program, to be made available for development purposes.

Discussion: Vacant properties in this community should be developed to strengthen its residential fabric. With the surge in residential activity in the downtown,

the neighborhood on the east side of I-110 is a prime area for those looking for reasonably priced urban-development opportunities.

Recommendation: Under the auspices of the Land Development Program (LDP), prioritize land accumulation/control by districts targeted for such initiatives. When Beauregard Town Extension becomes slated for LDP activity, work with the neighborhood residents, Shiloh Baptist Church, the Prince Hall Masons and other stakeholders in the community to positively enhance the neighborhood.

Responsibility: MCRA, EBR City Parish, BRAF

Priority: B-3

FDE – V

Project Name: Security/Neighborhood Watch

Observation: Foster Drive Extension, being a zoning mixture of residential with light commercial and industrial, does not have the critical mass to sustain a round-



A before and after view of possible development patterns in the target neighborhood





FOSTER DRIVE EXTENSION

the-clock neighborhood organization advocating for a crime-free area.

Discussion: This area, north of Florida Boulevard, has seen waves of criminal activity over the years ranging from drug distribution, prostitution, theft and homicide. Through this ebb of activity, some stalwart stakeholders have continued to survive, and indeed thrive in the area. These stakeholders have continuously expressed that they would like to stay involved in neighborhood issues and seek to stabilize the area.

Recommendation: Meet with stakeholders to establish a neighborhood watch/civic association to work to enhance the community.

Responsibility: MCRA, stakeholders

Priority: C-3

CBD – VII

Project Name: Warehouse Rehabilitation

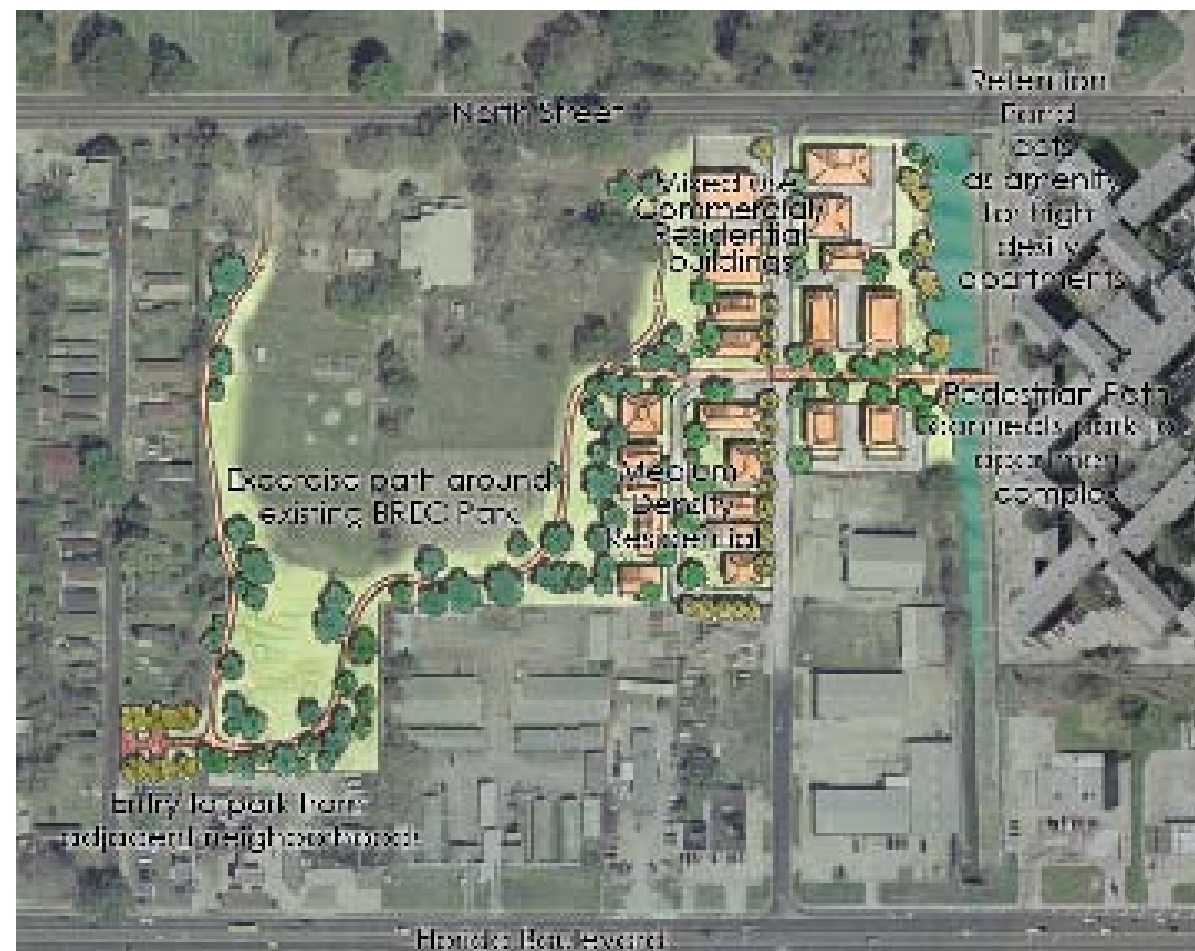
Observation: A large amount of property is zoned commercial in the FDE area. As exhibited in the developable land diagram, the possibility exists to initiate infill development, reinvest in the area and/or adaptively reuse some of the existing structures.

Discussion: The area is predominantly zoned commercial, with pockets of residential. It is beneficial to have as much residential in the area to have stakeholders that will seek to stabilize the neighborhood through crime prevention techniques, fixing up structures and maintaining the exterior of lots. Increasingly, commercial structures are being used for residential purposes in the urban environment, creatively bringing older buildings back into commerce. Efforts should be made to promote this initiative to attempt to obtain a healthy dose of residential units in the area.

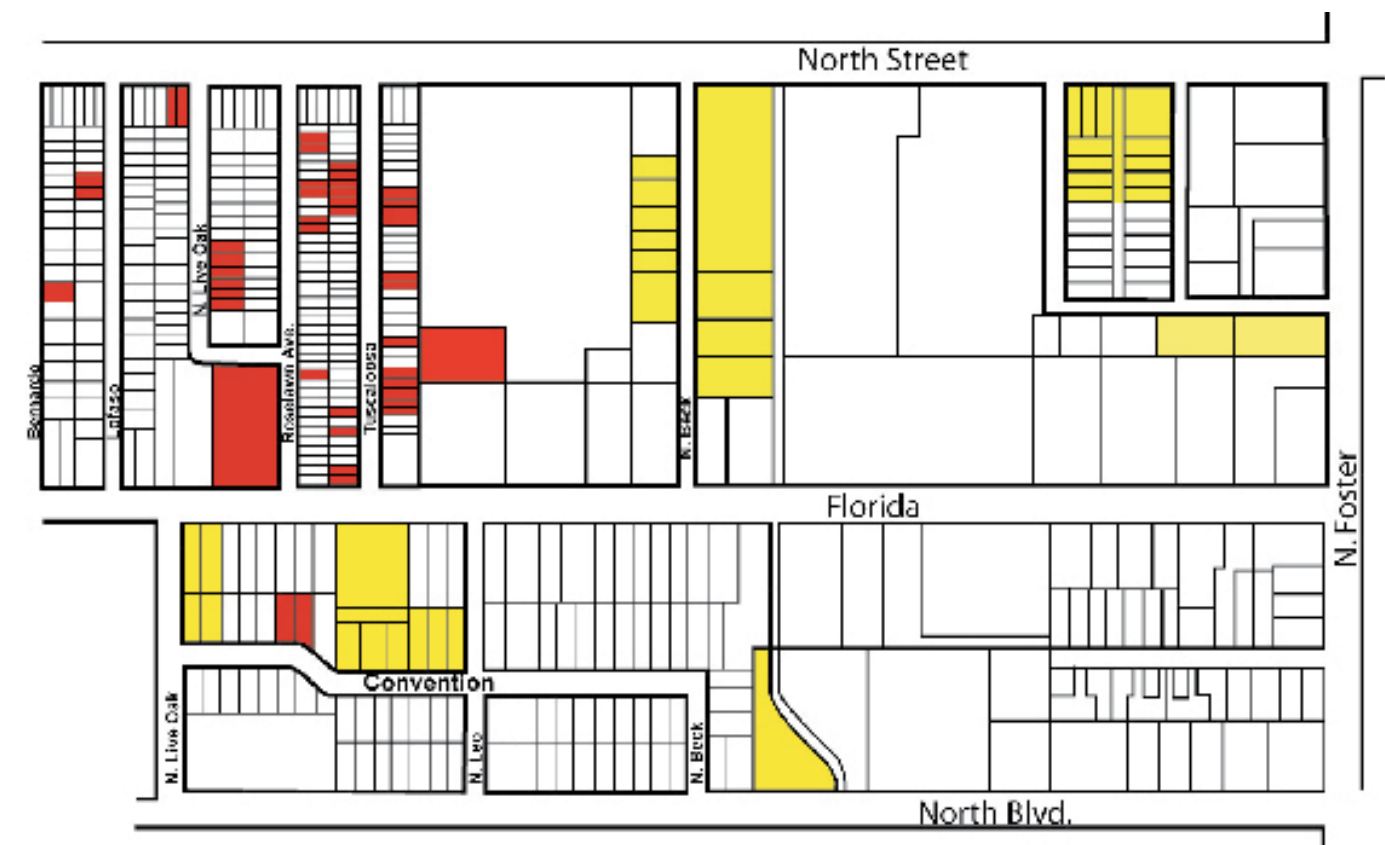
Recommendation: Do property and title research for the area and market accordingly.

Responsibility: MCRA

Priority: C-3 ■



Schematic Plan of Foster Drive Extension



Developable Properties:

■ Vacant Buildings ■ Vacant Land ■ Adjudicated Property



Master Action Plan

Section III

Comprehensive Layers



THE HOMEOWNERSHIP CENTER



A Program of Mid City Redevelopment Alliance

The Homeownership Center (HOC) is a program of Mid City Redevelopment Alliance. The Center is a resource that provides free comprehensive homebuyer education, as well as pre- and post-purchase financial counseling to low- to moderate income households for East Baton Rouge City Parish. The wide ranging services are a result of dynamic partnerships with the City Parish government of East Baton Rouge, local lenders, real estate professionals, and others with a vested interest in increasing homeownership opportunities throughout the community.

Seen as a direct initiative to support the organization's mission to retain the current residents of the area while simultaneously revitalizing it, the HOC has through various means encouraged residents in Mid City to take advantage of its comprehensive services, and successively attempt to attain the American Dream of homeownership, particularly within the Mid City area. From hosting the annual events of Mid City on Parade and the Neighborhood Festival; to providing new housing opportunities by developing single-family residential units in the area; to marketing the area to it's current residents through the mail and local media outlets; to offering incentives to help repair and paint the exterior of properties, the Alliance has sought to demystify and remove the hurdles associated with the homeownership process.

HOMEOWNERSHIP AND THE MAP

Homeownership is the largest creator of wealth within the nation, and has been at the center of creating the largest middle-class in the history of the world. Integral to the revitalization of Mid City (and other urban areas of the city) is the development of a host of residential options. Noticeably, residential development as outlined in this document is the basis for mixed use development involving--where possible--retail, commercial and/or light industrial. In this regard, not only is the HOC an important mechanism in creating social change by influencing financial habits that often lead to wealth-creation, but an instrument of physical change for the built environment. The HOC therefore, dovetails extremely well with the goals of MAP.

THE READINESS PROGRAM

This program provides services to those families regardless of their immediate readiness to purchase a home. Because some clients require extensive counseling to address the myriad credit and debt issues that might have accrued over the years, the HOC provides one-on-one budget and credit counseling to those not ready to purchase a home. Clients work with Readiness Coordinators whose sole purpose is to prepare the clients for the 15-hour homebuyer training seminar, and ultimately purchasing a home.

THE HOMEBUYER TRAINING PROGRAM

Clients who are mortgage ready at the time of application, and who complete the Readiness Program, are enrolled in the Homebuyer Training Program. Taught by professionals in a variety of

fields, the monthly seminars are 15 hours long and cover the following:

- Session 1: The Foundation of Homeownership/Budgeting Basics/Credit Basics
- Session 2: Fair Housing/The Real Estate Process
- Session 3: Homebuyer Assistance Programs/The Mortgage Loan Process
- Session 4: Home Inspection/Home Maintenance
- Session 5: The Appraisal Process/ Insurance/The Closing Process

All Homebuyer Training Programs are held at convenient location throughout the Parish. Numerous financial institutions, the City Parish and others offer incentives for first time homebuyers to attend the course and purchase a home.

POST-PURCHASE PROGRAM

In addition to the Homebuyer Training and Homebuyer Readiness Programs, the HOC serves as a resource for families that have already acquired a home. Many new homeowners underestimate the responsibilities involved with owning a home, or may lack basic skills to complete minor repairs to the home. In this instance, counselors work closely with homeowners to manage finances, while part of the training seminars teach basic do-it-yourself repairs in the home-setting.

HOMEBUYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Offered through the East Baton Rouge City Parish Office of Community Development (OCD), the Homebuyers Assistance Program (HAP) allows qualified homebuyers to receive financial assistance in the form of a second mortgage, having had to first qualify for a first mortgage through a

private lender such as a bank, savings and loan, or mortgage company.

Certain eligibility requirements have to be met when applying for HAP, many required through the conventional home buying process. A couple that stand out in order to receive the assistance however, are the requirements that all applicants have to purchase a home within the Target Area of the Parish, and complete the homebuying training seminars.

GENERAL HEALTH SYSTEM EMPLOYER ASSISTED HOUSING PROGRAM (EAHP)

The GHS EAHP is an initiative designed to encourage home ownership in the Mid City region of Baton Rouge by making an unsecured, forgivable loan of \$5,000 available to qualified GHS employees who wish to purchase a home in the heart of Baton Rouge. The loans are for down payment and closing cost assistance only. As long as the borrower remains employed by GHS, the loan balance is reduced by 1/5 every year for five years until the recipient owes nothing.

EAST BATON ROUGE MORTGAGE FINANCE AUTHORITY BOND PROGRAM

The Bond Program takes the form of a forgivable grant to the tune of 4% of the purchase price of the house. Offered at a low interest rate, the funds are accesses through partner financial institutions.



LAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

LAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The many adjudicated properties in East Baton Parish represent opportunities for the low- to moderate-income housing industry in the form of inexpensive, developable land, as well as to the City-Parish in the form of income generated through the collection of property taxes. If the properties are brought back into commerce in this regard, a win-win situation goes into effect and the overall improvement of the surrounding community is generally evidenced.

As mentioned before, there are many lots on the adjudicated rolls that represent a substantial amount of loss, both to the immediate community and simultaneously, to the local City Parish government. Many of the adjudicated properties, being vacant or with abandoned structures on them, cast an overall image of disinvestment and blight of the area. The homeless many times, or neighborhood residents themselves, use the vacant houses as hang-out locations, and as a majority of the abandoned structures are representative of the old timber-frame, "shotgun-type" housing stock, the potential for fire is ever present. Also, drug activity is and has been be a related problem creating security issues for the community and its residents. Metaphorically, the problem is circular in nature, affecting all involved in a domino-like fashion that comes full circle to effect more damage on the original point of take-off. The opposite trend of improving the area should take place if the cycle is broken and a significant project is implemented in the area; this could mean something as fundamental as completing a single- or multi-family residential development.

In further explaining the program, the idea that hundreds of vacant lots around the Mid City area could potentially become sources of pride, hope and revenue for the City Parish if put back online is extremely appealing. To venture down the path to achieve these desired goals, parcels need to be assembled in order to make them attractive to developers, builders and potential homeowners. In older parts of communities, opportunities pass by simply because the property is not easily attainable on the open market for development purposes. It's easier

for a developer to purchase farmland and sell off what they need versus, going through the painstaking process of researching ownerships, making multiple offers and assembling the needed real estate. Parcels have also been sold and purchased multiple times, thus increasing the likelihood of title issues. These factors simply don't exist in rural or suburban areas, thus pushing new growth to those areas.

By creating a "land bank" called the Land Development Program, MCRA would in effect remove many of the typical dilemmas that push new growth to the outer rings of Baton Rouge. Although a land development program will require great effort, resources and participation, it has the ability to transcend the area at a greater rate than traditional methods. In the long term, it can also serve as a source of revenue for the organization.

The properties targeted under this program are those outlined in each District in diagram format called "Potential Developable Properties." Focusing on a given set of properties versus others would be decided by the process of prioritization – first, in terms of the Districts, and then in terms of the actual developments that are to occur within the Districts.

Weaknesses:

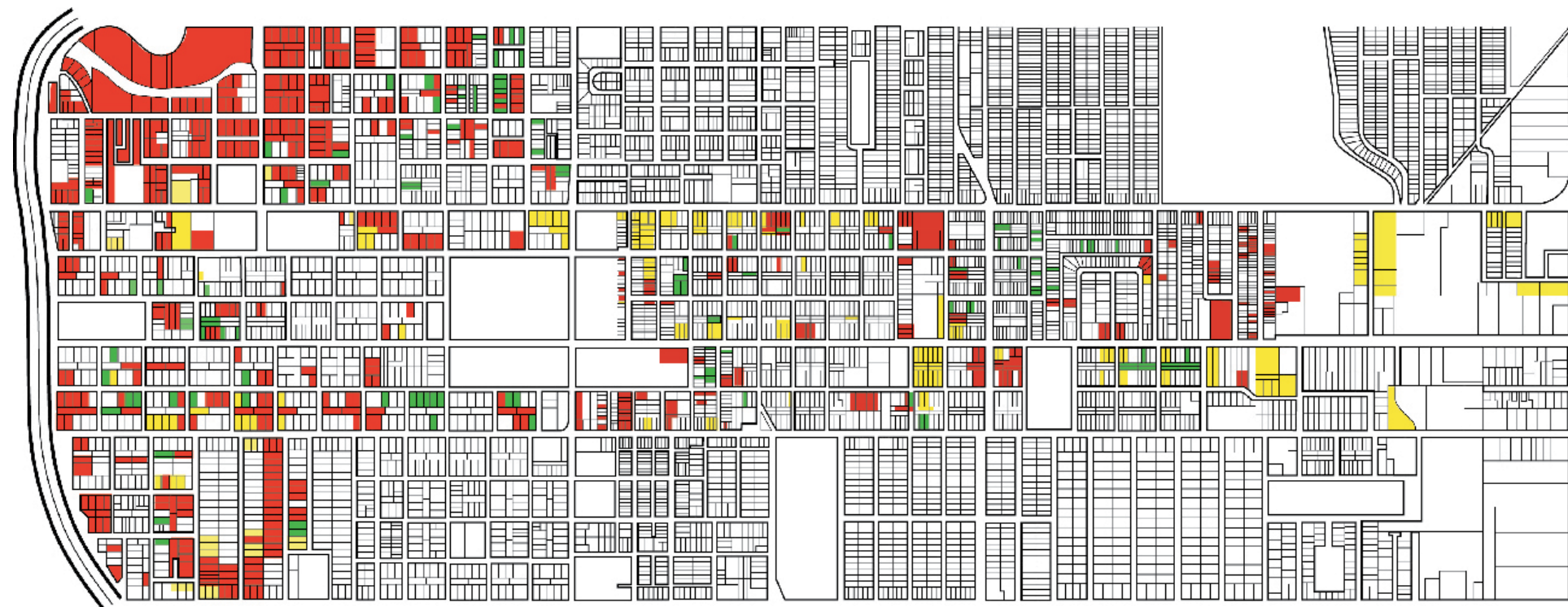
- The term "land bank" carries a negative connotation of control and autocracy. Controls, guidance documents, etc. would have to be created in order to offset any clouds of uncertainty.
- Process to undertake issues of title clearance, purchase and potential "banking" would require significant resources.

Strengths:

- One-stop-shop for potential developers looking at area-infill development projects.
- A guide would be in place to steer any infill development towards a vision for the area via a Master Action Plan. This strategy allows for some form of quality control in the process while minimizing the chance of unnecessary, duplicative efforts.
- If a substantial amount of lots can be harnessed for development purposes, such development will immediately change the character of the neighborhood.

Potential Projects:

- Explore funding sources and methodology to implement for eventual redevelopment of the community. ■



Developable Properties: ■ Vacant Buildings ■ Vacant Land ■ Adjudicated Property



GOVERNMENT STREET CORRIDOR

Government Street is a major east-west corridor linking many of Baton Rouge's historically prominent neighborhoods. Not only is it one of the most heavily trafficked local streets in the city offering high visibility to proprietors, but its historical nature also offers the community's residents a potential urban "destination" with many unique retail opportunities and experiences.

As of late, businesses, some long-standing icons of the community, have been leaving the area, and the visual appearance of the corridor has become an issue of concern, specifically in the arena of ground and building maintenance, dilapidation of old signs and vacant buildings. To this end, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance assisted in convening different community groups to discuss possible solutions to these issues.

After exhaustive discussions, it was decided that the best way to proceed was to have a Master Plan of Government Street commissioned that would provide designs to visually enhance the area, as well as recommend strategies to undertake to fulfill the Plan's objectives. A professional consulting firm who would be able to gather information through a town-meeting process would derive the Master Plan, much akin to the Plan Baton Rouge master planning process commissioned in 1998 for Downtown Baton Rouge. Design recommendations might include plans for landscaping, pocket parks or plazas, hardscape designs (benches, lamp-posts, railings, etc.), pedestrian circulation, etc.

GSC 1

Project:

Creation of a Master Plan

Observation:

A lot of meetings have taken place over the past decade concerning the condition of Government Street. More recently, the invested entities associated with the corridor have been actively engaged in trying to improve the character of the area. Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, the Mid City Merchants Association, area-residents, government officials, proprietors and governmental agencies have come together as never before to change the course of the Government Street corridor.

Discussion:

The desire to formulate a comprehensive "blue-print" for the enhancement of the corridor is well founded. Not only is Government Street major axes on which in excess of 20,000 cars traverse on a daily basis, but is also characterized by an "urban" layout that represents a unique historical perspective of the city. This presents the opportunity to create connected points of interest, depicting an urban "destination." That is to say that the opportunity is there for plans to be made that allow for clients or visitors to park at a central location and walk to various shops and galleries along the corridor. Additionally, it was stated, that the corridor is now home to the most artist/artisans businesses per square mile in the city. These proprietors have maintained, and even grown, their businesses in a part of the city from which many others had departed for "greener pastures." In this light, deriving a Master Plan for the area was seen as integral to the success of comprehensively enhancing Government Street.

It is envisioned that the document will suggest design guidelines for the visual enhancement of the corridor, and make recommendations as to implementable strategies to follow to obtain desired outcomes. To guide and activities to enhance the Government Street corridor. As the organization spearheading the initiative, it will be Mid City Redevelopment Alliance's responsibility to implement many of the initiatives recommended in the master plan through a process of annual prioritization. These strategies will also be distributed to the merchants and civic associations for collateral participation.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that funds be raised to hire a consulting firm to undertake the development of a Master Plan for the enhancement of Government Street. Deriving the actual document will include a process of research and analysis – involving interaction with the community to gather ideas, needs and desires for the area – where after synthesis of the information gathered by the consultants will produce a document outlining observations of the area, design principles and recommendations, and strategies for implementation.

Responsibility:

Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, Mid City Merchants, DOTD, EBR City Parish—DPW, Area Civic Associations, Property Owners, Proprietors

Priority: A-1

Status: Completed

GSC II

Project:

Implementation of GoMAP! (Government Street Master Action Plan)

Observation:

A vision to make Government Street more of a pedestrian-friendly destination has been laid out in the master plan for the corridor. Strategies, and suggestions to implement them, have been outlined in the master plan document.

Discussion:

Because of the many proposals and suggestions contained in the master plan document, a strategy should be formulated to work towards the vision outlined therein. Careful prioritization of goals and objectives of GoMAP! should take place in an environment

of inclusion with all the participants formerly mentioned.

Recommendation:

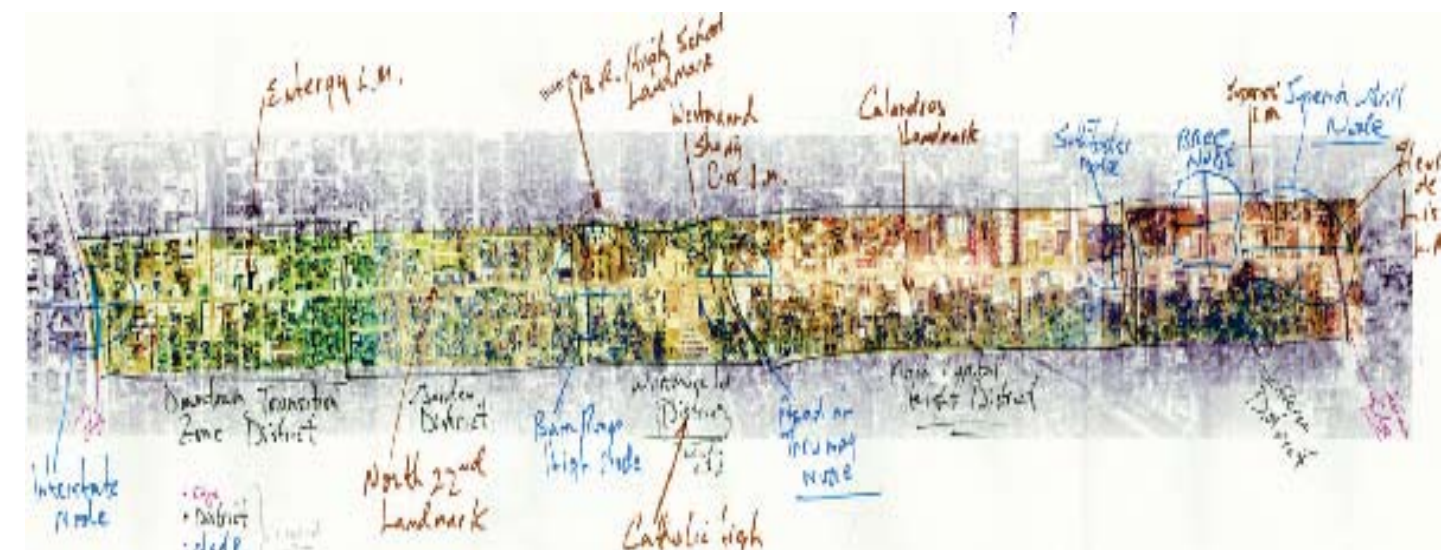
Meet with stakeholders in the area to establish an implementation strategy and timeline of GoMAP! Research funding sources and grant opportunities for specific project proposals in tandem with implementation initiatives.

Responsibility:

Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, Mid City Merchants, DOTD, EBR City Parish—DPW, Area Civic Associations, Property Owners, Proprietors, Council Members

Priority: A-1

Status: Underway ■





MID CITY HISTORICAL CEMETERIES COALITION

The Cemeteries Coalition is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the historic cemeteries of the Greater Baton Rouge area. At the time of this printing, special emphasis is placed on the preservation and restoration of historic cemeteries in the Mid City area of the Baton Rouge community. The cemeteries that have been identified are the Jewish Cemetery, the Catholic Cemetery, Magnolia Historic Cemetery, the National Cemetery, and Sweet Olive Cemetery.

MCHCC-I

Project Name: Develop MCHCC Organization

Observation: The organization, as founded in 2001, seeks to create relationships utilizing existing organizational structures, initiatives and resources to meet the outlined goals. The driving force behind the Coalition in this regard is the partnerships that are formed with the related authoritative structures-- represented by the boards of the cemeteries--and the leverage brought to bear with the coalition.

Discussion: In seeking to preserve and restore the cemeteries of the area, a public appreciation has to be fostered of the architectural and cultural value of these resources as it relates to the community's- and nation's heritage. To achieve this long range vision, a number of goals have been identified:

- Restoration
- Education
- Maintenance
- Security
- Self-sustaining
- Promotion and Marketing
- Master Plan

I) Restoration goals:

To act as a *clearing-house* of information for tomb- and headstone owners, and cemetery operators by way of outlining proper restoration and preservation techniques suitable for historic cemetery structures. The techniques should comply with the Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic preservation.

To the furthest extent possible, document and research tombs, markers and names of those laid to rest in the cemeteries for the historical record.

Education goals:

To educate the surrounding community and visitors to the Mid City cemeteries about the value of the cemeteries as an historical resource.

Partner with institutions of learning to further the goals of the Coalition.

Maintenance goals:

To ensure that the cemeteries under the umbrella of the Coalition are maintained and cleaned for purposes of burial and visitation.

Security goals:

To organize and coordinate for a safe cemetery environment for purposes of burial and visitation.

Self-Sustaining

To organize and coordinate various fundraising events to support the goals of the Coalition.

Promotion and Marketing

To promote and market the historical cemeteries and surrounding area as resources of a common heritage.

Master Plan

To oversee, in time, the process for the design and implementation of a cohesive master plan for the five Mid City cemeteries, viz. Jewish Cemetery, St. Joseph's Cemetery, Magnolia Cemetery, National Cemetery and Sweet Olive Cemetery.

MID CITY HISTORICAL CEMETERIES AND MAP 2005

The Cemeteries are resources that are of a historic nature, and as such, cannot be duplicated in terms of meaning and representation. It is a resource that is authentic and unique, while informing the broader community about sense of place.

In working together, the coalition of cemeteries, under the umbrella of the Cemeteries Coalition, creates a mechanism that can take advantage of these historic places as prominent resources for the community. For example, the above-mentioned cemeteries could

be a destination of sorts for educational, personal or research purposes. By attracting more people to the area interested in history and the uniqueness of the location, the more desirable, and therefore economically viable, it becomes. Thus, in trying to redevelop Mid City, the historical cemeteries add to a list that establishes the area with a strong sense of place, which, in an ever global environment, is becoming more desirable as we speak.

Recommendation: Strengthen existing organizational initiatives of programming and fundraising through partnerships, marketing and promotions and board involvement.

Responsibility: MCHCC Board, MCRA

Priority: A-1 ■





MASS TRANSPORTATION

The East Baton Rouge City-Parish, the Capital Area Transportation System (CATS) and the Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC) are bodies charged with oversight, administration and operation of the city-parish's mass transportation system.

Currently, the bus system serves a great need in the community, especially in the Mid City area, where approximately 5% of 1,6500 residents rely for it on a daily basis as their only means of transportation. By nature, mass transportation is an unwieldy construct that changes only slowly over a lengthy period of time. The expense associated in keeping up with the latest transit technology, let alone infrastructure, demands long-term planning and acumen. Integrating the long-range goals of the City-Parish and CATS with the needs of the community is an important component in the success of a transit system and in the redevelopment of an area.

In one of CRPC's documents outlining a framework for long-range mass-transportation goals, a lengthy list of benefits are provided as to why an efficient transit system should be in place to complement automobile inner-city travel and eventually even serve as the viable, alternative source of transportation. Also, a quote in the same text highlights the thrust of the vision:

"The bottom line is this: investment in public transportation makes dollars, and it makes sense. The benefits to motorists, to businesses, to transit riders and to American society as a whole far outweigh the costs." (Donald H Camph, *Dollars and Sense: The Economic Case for Public Transportation in America*)

MT – I

Project Name: Inter-modal Transfer Center at Renaissance Park

Observation: Long-range planning for an inter-modal, transfer center should take place in light of the growing traffic concerns of the parish. An inter-modal transfer center would imply that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), for example, would be part of a global initiative to invest in the mass transportation system of the parish. Forms of transportation that could be considered for the inter-modal transportation system of the parish. Other forms of transportation that could be considered

part of the inter-modal transfer center could be light rail, rail cars (linking Baton Rouge with New Orleans), trolley car, buses and/or taxicabs in combination.

Discussion: As understood, the Capital Area Transportation System (CATS) requires more space for future expansion needs. The current facility that consists of the terminus, administrative offices and maintenance shop is situated on property that is landlocked in terms of expansion possibilities. The incorporation of a transfer station at the Renaissance Park site is an opportunity that should be fully explored.

Goals for the metropolitan area's mass transportation system include converting to Bus Rapid Transit conveyance, while concurrently planning for light rail and even rail within the next decade. Light rail will not be able to service all constituencies served by BRT, so foreseeably, a system might consist of the combination of the two in place.

Funding for the various phases of could be re-search, analysis and could be obtained from federal, state and local entities.

Recommendation: Work with CRPC, CATS and the City-Parish to research the potential development of an intermodal transfer facility at Renaissance Park on Florida Blvd. by the railway line.

Responsibility: MCRA, CRPC, CATS, East Baton Rouge City-Parish, US Agencies

Priority:

MT – II

Project Name: Florida Boulevard Mass Transportation Upgrade

Observation: Florida Boulevard is one of the important "spokes" directing traffic to and from the cultural, political, entertainment and economic center of the city. Being that it is a major parish artery, the vision for Florida Boulevard should include a dedicated mass-transportation lane that serves

Discussion: Currently, Florida Boulevard is heavily

traversed with morning and afternoon commuters going to- and coming from work. Realistically, This statistic will keep increasing over the years as more people seek to live in neighboring parishes but find employment in the Capital, East Baton Rouge. Proactively, mechanisms have to be considered that lessen the reliance of the Baton Rouge public on the motor vehicle, thereby addressing the issue of long commute times, air quality and perpetual expansion of road networks. Also, since Hurricane Katrina, which saw an influx of residents from New Orleans into the city of Baton Rouge, the notion of mass transportation has taken on an even more important position in public debate. As Florida Boulevard is a central spine in the city's road network, it is a front runner to be tapped as a mass transportation corridor.

Recommendation: Work with CATS, CRPC and DPW to identify mass transportation issues and solutions in the

Mid City area. The Mid City area, and northern neighborhoods, are home to the majority of residents who use mass transportation.

Responsibility: MCRA, CRPC, CPPC

Priority: C-1 ■



A before and after view of the proposed dedicated bus lane along Florida Blvd.





BIKE ROUTES

Historically, bicycle paths have not been a high priority in the planning of transportation systems in the city. Very few signed, designated bicycle paths exist in the city/parish to date, with most area-cyclists being committed to sharing the parish's roads with vehicular traffic. This situation does not embody the safest situation for either motorist or cyclist, or create the most pleasurable cycling experience.

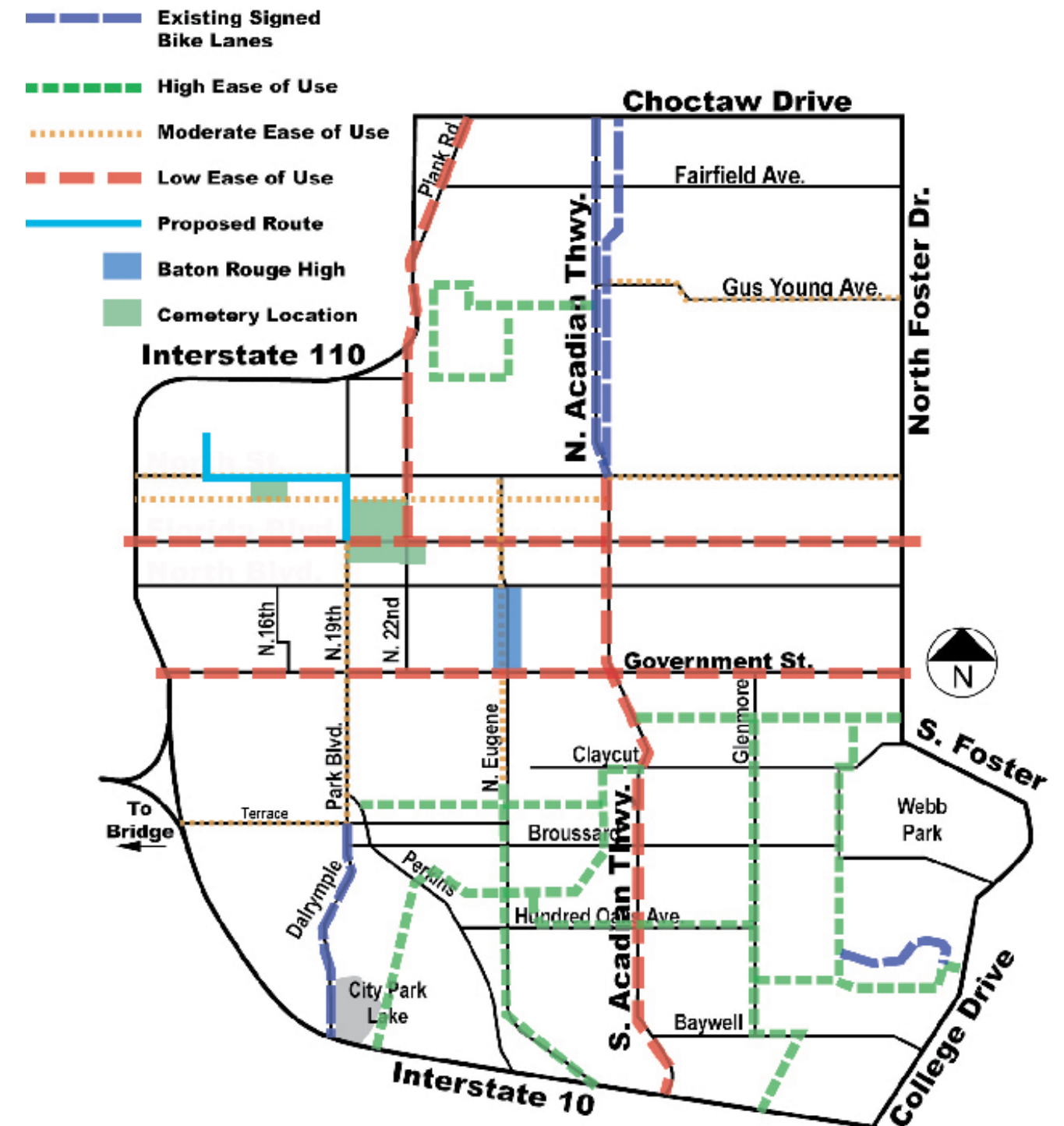
It is generally accepted that bicycle paths contribute to a community's quality of life in a positive way. That is, when inquiring what a city has to offer by way of natural, cultural or civic amenities, bicycle paths are usually listed along with pedestrian paths, community parks, hiking trails, water activities, etc., provided any of these are in existence of course. Having designated bicycle routes provides the community with another outlet to spend discretionary hours in pursuit of social, leisure and/or fitness activities.

Currently, the Capital Region Planning Commission is coordinating the effort to in-

form, demarcate and construct bike routes throughout the city parish. The bike paths outlined on the adjacent map are those obtained from a local organization called the Alliance for Responsible Transportation (ART). ART's mission is the promotion of less reliance on combustion-fuel vehicles, ever-expanding major road systems, and, the promotion of more mass transit initiatives, as well as cycling. Conceivably, with the outlined routes, bike paths should be included in the design of any future road-enhancement project.

The East Baton Rouge Planning Commission has also identified a network of potential bicycle routes that

Aware of more destination locales in the area, a route, other than the ones suggested by ART, is proposed along the path of some of the oldest cemeteries in Baton Rouge. Starting at the National Cemetery, extending north along 19th Street past Historic Magnolia Cemetery to North Street; turning left on North Street to bypass the Catholic and the Jewish Cemeteries, the route offers the cyclist or roller-blader an educa-





Perry J. Franklin, *Executive Director*

Perry began his career at MCRA in 1994 after having worked in real estate for two years. His affinity for community development first brought him to the organization's doorstep to expand the First Time Home buyers program, and since then, has spent more than 10 years with MCRA, six as its director. Having received a Bachelor's Degree in Business, as well as a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Louisiana State University, Perry's overall strategy to effect economic and community development in Mid City has been to develop a climate providing businesses and families a level playing field with the appropriate community-amenities to excel.

In this regard, Perry has preached the Alliance's mission to serve as the catalyst for economic development while retaining its current residents and merchants. This philosophy is the guiding principle of each and every project undertaken by the group. From teaching renters how to become homeowners, to creating urban plans that create a destination community, the work of MCRA continues to fill a void currently not produced in other sectors. This ongoing work is a result of an infinite number of relationships with residents, merchants, public officials and everyone in between. These collaborative efforts are the glue which continue to rebuild Mid City one block at a time. Perry is a strong believer in creating and maintaining strong relationships with those that want to see improvements from within.



Jeremy D. Hendricks, *Urban Planner*

After receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Architecture and a Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture from Louisiana State University, Jeremy started his community development career with the Downtown Development District in Baton Rouge in 1999. In 2001 he joined Mid City Redevelopment Alliance as its urban planner and continued to update the organization's strategic, long-range plan.

According to Jeremy, the process of economic and community development is in continual evolution, and although a long-range vision is essential to sustained and sensitive development, initiatives and projects (flexible enough to integrate with long term goals, yet adaptable to immediate changes) with tangible performance measures should be part of the short-term solution.



Patrick Trisler, *Student Intern/Planner*

Patrick received an Associates Degree in Graphic Design and worked in that field for five years. In 2001 he enrolled as an undergraduate in the School of Landscape Architecture at the Louisiana State University.

Patrick believes in community revitalization through the innovative use or reuse of existing infrastructures, and in determining the highest and best use of space based on the needs of the people within that community.

Mid City Redevelopment Alliance Inc. Staff

Perry J. Franklin	Executive Director
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Alfreda Louis	Homebuyer Readiness Coordinator
Marylin Blache	Administrative Assistant
Jermaine Burkhalter	Delta Service Corps
Wanda Emokpae	Delta Service Corps

The Alliance thanks you for taking interest in it's revised Master Plan and for making positive contributions towards a fully-revitalized community for all of Mid City's residents, merchants and visitors.

