



**Gert Town Neighborhood
Planning District 4
Rebuilding Plan**



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Cover Images from left to right:

A +C: Illustrations of Proposed Town Center for Gert Town neighborhood
B: Cuccia Byrnes Playground

Introduction

Approximately 100 days after Hurricane Katrina struck, Motion M-05-592 was unanimously passed by the City Council of New Orleans. This motion ensured that community-based, neighborhood-by-neighborhood planning would be central to decisions associated with the recovery of the most devastated areas of New Orleans. The City Council was adamant that the people most impacted by the storm would play a central role in defining the future of their communities. Overall, 47 of the 73 neighborhoods delineated by the City's Planning Commission have had plans prepared as part of this process.

The City Council charged a team of consultants overseen by Lambert Advisory & SHEDO with assisting neighborhoods flooded by Hurricane Katrina in developing revitalization plans that are thoughtful and can be implemented, for incorporation into a citywide recovery and improvement plan to be submitted to the State of Louisiana and federal funding agencies. This document is one of forty-two (42) neighborhood plans that meet that mandate.

Planning District 4, the subject of the following report, includes 9 geographically specific neighborhoods: Tremé / 6th Ward, 7th Ward, Fairgrounds / Desair, St. Bernard, Fauborg St. John, Mid-City, and Gert Town.

Basic assumptions also formed the basis for the Planning District 4 Recovery Plan:

- 1) That a flood protection system will be designed to withstand future catastrophic loss from a 1 in 100 year storm and that this is a commitment by the Federal Government;
- 2) That stringent building codes will be implemented to further limit wind damage;
- 3) That the basic urban structure of the city is sound and that rebuilding will respect this structure;
- 4) That there is an organized, coherent and operable Hurricane Evacuation Program.

Acknowledgements

With grateful appreciation the planning team would like to thank all the residents of District 4 and the Gert Town Neighborhood who participated in this planning process and without whose participation this plan would not be possible.

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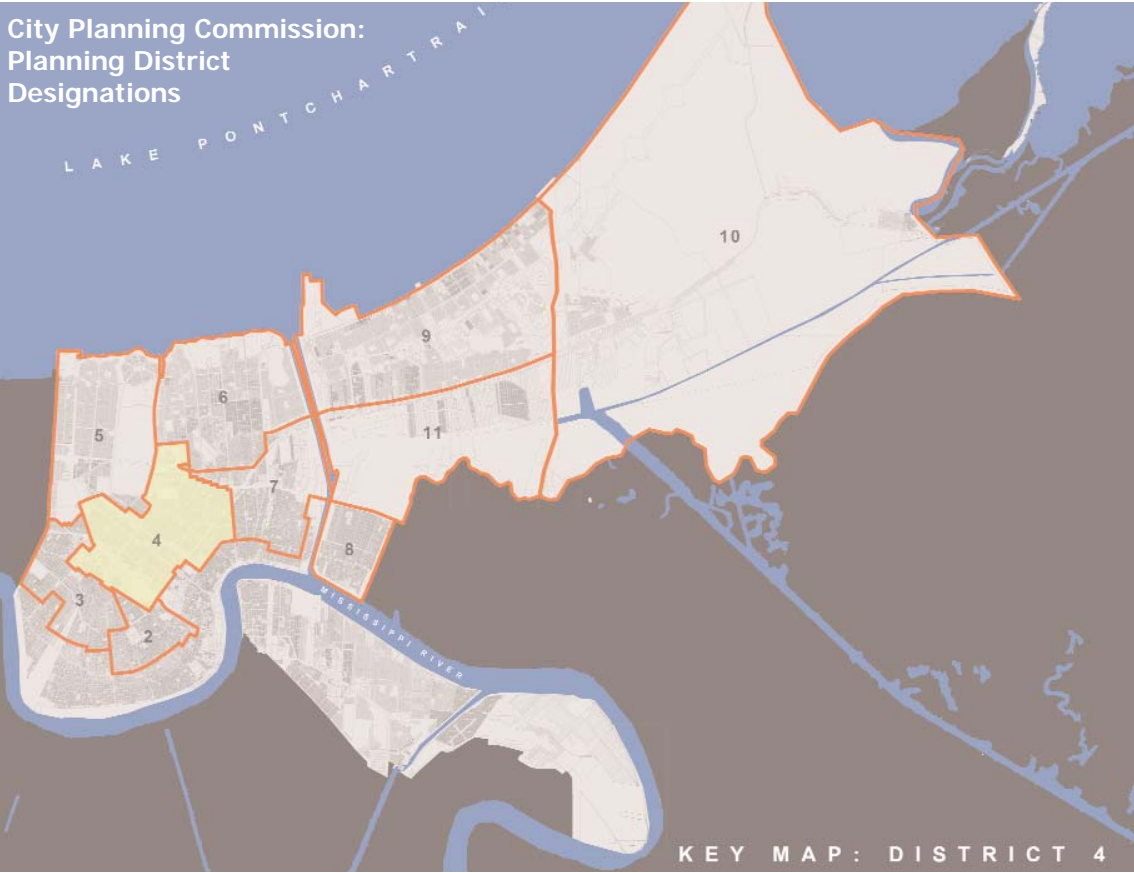
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A. Gert Town Neighborhood

Location and Geographic Boundaries

Gert Town is located in the geographic center of the City of New Orleans. The neighborhood is bounded by I-10 on the north, Earhart Boulevard on the south, Jefferson Davis Parkway on the east, Cambonne Avenue on the west. The Gert Town neighborhood is directly adjacent to Central City, Broadmoor and Marlyville/Fountainebleu on the south, and Hollygrove to the west.

Gert Town dates its origin back to the early 19th Century where the present area of the neighborhood was the McCarty Plantation. By 1833 the plantation was sold to the New Orleans Canal and Banking Company. Subsequently many of the major rail lines that served New Orleans passed through this area. In the late 19th century the area was urbanized and developed as a neighborhood.

The Gert Town neighborhood figures prominently in the musical history and folklore of New Orleans. This is a neighborhood where many African American musicians moved in the early 1900s; and where important “cutting contests”, or informal musical matches, were held at Johnson and Lincoln parks.

The importance of Gert Town in the cultural life of New Orleans is also represented by being the birth place of numerous New Orleans musical greats such as Allen Toussaint, as well as having the Gert Town Golden Star Hunters and Mardi Gras Indians, an important notable Mardi Gras Indian Tribe.

The population of Gert Town reached its peak in the late 1940's where it was approximately 8,700 residents. The population has since declined to approximately 4,800 persons as of the 2000 Census.

Gert Town is the home of New Orleans Xavier University. Located on Carrollton Avenue at the edge of I-10 Xavier University is both a city and a neighborhood landmark. Xavier University is important because of its prominence as the only historically Black and Catholic University in the United States and one of the universities with the most African American students earning degrees in the natural and physical sciences.

Among the City of New Orleans landmarks is Xavier's gothic administrative building that was built by St. Katherine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament when the university moved to the corner of Palmetto and Pine Streets in 1933. At times, and as with many universities, there have been "town-gown" tensions between the University and the neighborhoods which surround them. It is intended that elements of this plan better define the land use relationship between the University and Gert Town.

Reflecting its history as a center of business activity, Gert Town has a substantial amount of industrial / commercial uses which frame the northern edges of the neighborhood. Prior to Hurricane Katrina the Gert Town neighborhood was a mix of residences in close proximity to industrial uses, and this has at times created dangerous and unhealthy conditions for residents of the area.

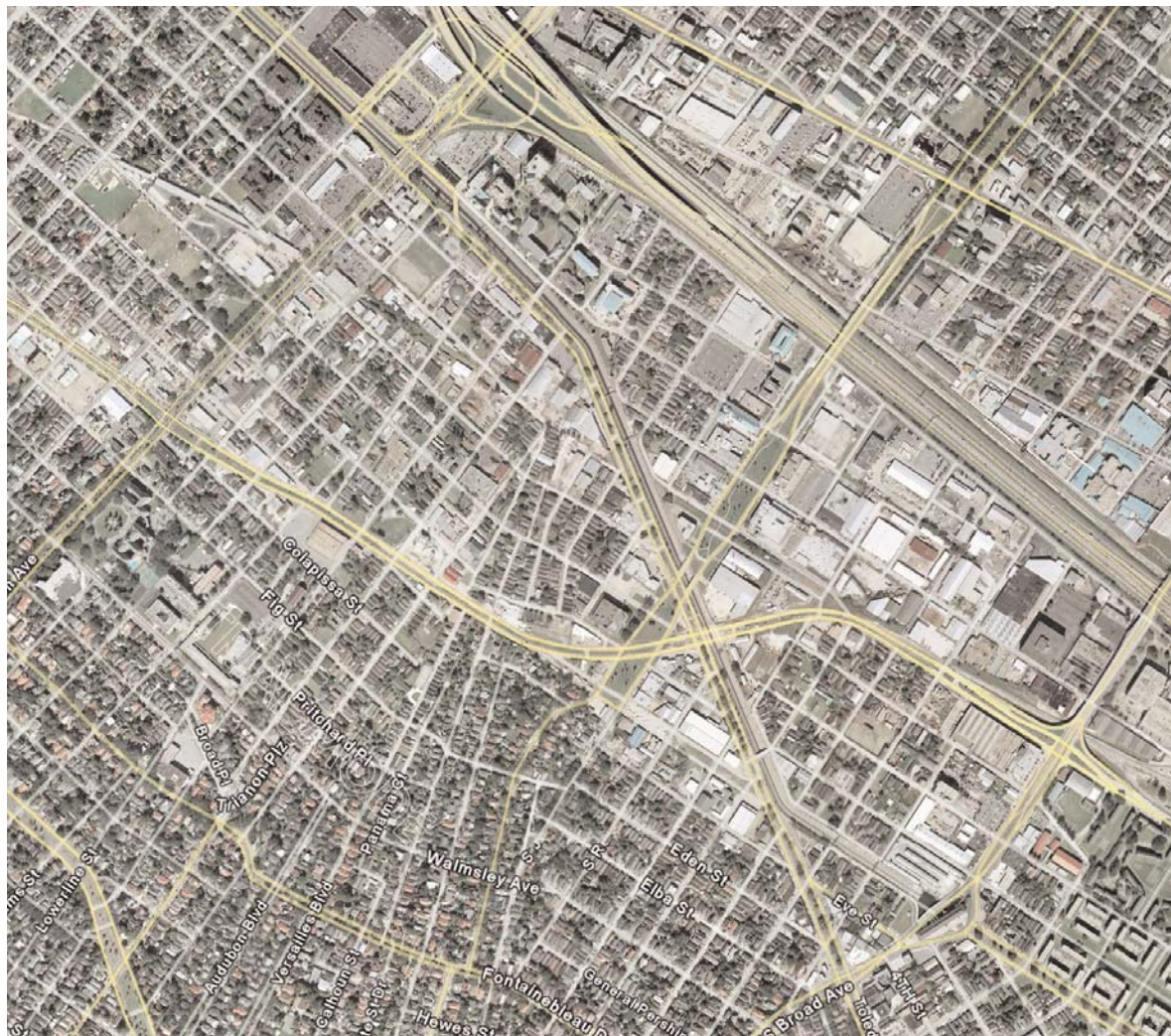


Images from left to right:

A: Gert Town houses along neighborhood street

B: Blue Plate Building

C: Canal along Washington



Above: Aerial Map of Gert Town Neighborhood

The Hayward-Thompson site is now undergoing major remediation for hazards that long impacted the livability and property values in Gert Town.

Recovery Vision and Goals

Vision
The vision for the future of Gert Town as expressed by the residents reflects a community that will become more diverse, culturally, racially and economically and one that will exploit its assets in music, local cuisine and constructions trade personnel.

Neighborhood Recovery Goals

- **Capitalize on Neighborhood Location Attributes** - Its central geographic location in the City of New Orleans, easy access to all parts of the city through the major streets that form its boundaries, its proximity to major regional transportation routes, the location of institutions of higher learning, and surrounding stable residential neighborhoods make it a desirable place in which to live.
- **Recover and Expand Housing Stock** - Develop new housing including market rate small scale multi-family housing units that will invite residents from outside the area to relocate in the village of Gert Town
- **Expand and Build Upon Successful Neighborhood Institutions** – Develop new

and mutually beneficial relationship with Xavier University to capitalize on the university’s stability and economic development potential

- **Relocate Non-compatible Industrial Uses** – Actively promote the relocation of industrial uses that create nuisances and pollution for the residential community so as to create a better living environment.
- **Provide Economic Development Opportunities and Jobs** – Through the attraction of compatible light industrial uses that will enhance the neighborhood and complement its life style.
- **Promote Home Ownership** – Through neighborhood targeted housing programs that will reclaim vacant land and dilapidated buildings for residential use.
- **Create Attractive Open Spaces and Community Image** – Provide an internal open space system that will enhance the residential attractiveness of the neighborhood and provide a visual and symbolic focus for the community.

Images from left to right:
A: Mary Church Terrel Elementary School
B: View north along Carrollton
C: Gert Town Pool Center
D: Existing commercial building



Planning Process and Neighborhood Participation

The planning process was neighborhood driven. The consultant team carried out a three step planning approach that involved: 1) Analysis of Existing Conditions where base maps were prepared, data on the conditions of the neighborhood was gathered, informal interviews with community leaders and residents were carried out, previous planning reports and efforts were researched and other tasks were carried out in order to develop an understanding of the community; 2) Definition of Issues and Opportunities, Plan Options; 3) Neighborhood Plan and proposed funding sources and matrix , the development of the plan and the identification of proposed projects and needs.

The neighborhood outreach program carried out with the consultant team consisted of the following neighborhood meetings:

- Saturday, May 20, 2006, First Joint Gert Town/Mid City Introductory Meeting – Presentation of the consultant team, time line for the project, overview of conditions and general discussion of project goals and objectives.
- Saturday, June 3, 2006, Second Neighborhood Meeting - An initial public meeting with neighborhood leaders and

residents to present the consultant's understanding of the issues affecting the neighborhood and opportunities for neighborhood recovery. All meetings were held at the Audubon Senior Center, 3425 Audubon Court.

- Saturday, June 17, 2006, Third Neighborhood Meeting - A Third neighborhood meeting to review the plan for Gert Town that was approved in 2005 "with reservations", and present post-Katrina projects identified for Gert Town and gather neighborhood comments, input and acceptance of the proposed projects.
- Saturday, July 1, 2006, Fourth Neighborhood Meeting - Gert Town community meeting and committee reports/working session.
- Saturday, July 15, 2006, Fifth Neighborhood Meeting - Gert Town community meeting and committee reports/working session.
- Saturday, July 29, 2006, Sixth Neighborhood Meeting - Presentation of the concept plan for Gert Town and approval of the plan by the neighborhood
- Saturday, August 12, 2006 Seventh Neighborhood Meeting - Presentation of revised concept plan
- Saturday, August 26, 2006, Eighth Neighborhood Meeting - To present the list

of projects and proposed funding matrix for Gert Town recovery plan. The final plan included the perspectives of the Gert Town neighborhood.

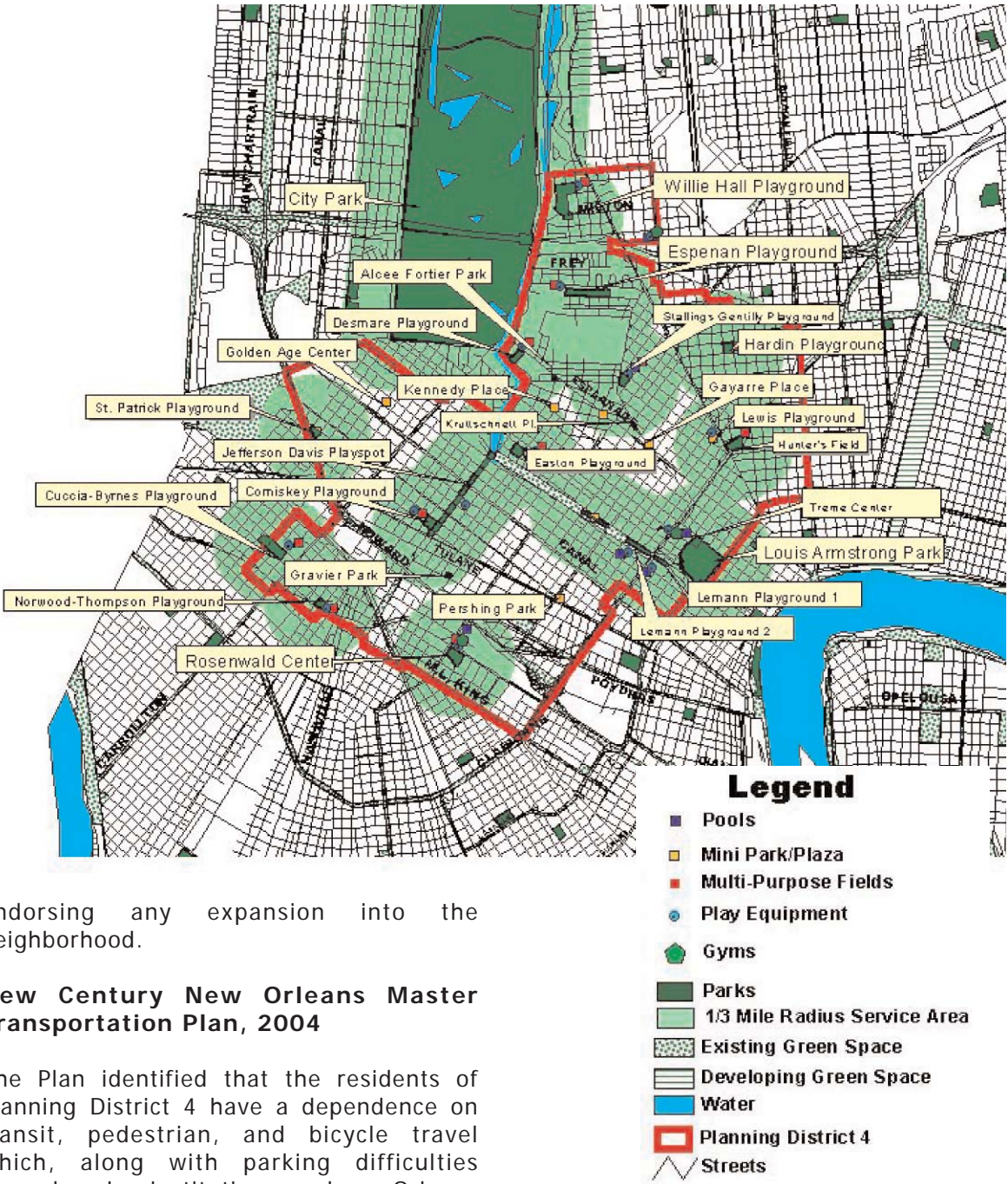
- September 23, 2006 Citywide Neighborhood Meeting - City-Wide all "Flooded Neighborhoods" presentation of all the projects that compose the City of New Orleans Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan. At this meeting the final list of projects for the Gert Town neighborhood was presented.
- September 30, 2006 - Xavier University President Presentation of University Master Plan ideas and endorsement of the synthesis of the Gert Town Neighborhood Plan for coordination for a better overall community/Xavier's Master Plan.

Planning Efforts Pre-Katrina

Images from left to right:

A-D: General District-wide community meetings





A number of planning efforts and one neighborhood specific study were carried out for District 4 and Gert Town prior to the storm. These city-wide planning studies and neighborhood plan were:

The New Century New Orleans Master Plan, Parks, Recreation and Open Space, 2002, City Planning Commission

activity centers for senior citizens, additional green space, landscaping provided along all major roadways and landscape buffers between industrial and residential uses.

New Orleans Land Use Plan of 1999, City Planning Commission

The Land Use Plan identified numerous land use issues in Planning District 4. It defined the Gert Town/Zion City area as having a large concentration of blighted properties and, that although the area has benefited from redevelopment efforts of various non-profit groups, full rehabilitation of the neighborhood is stunted by heavy industrial users, newer general commercial areas, poor street conditions, and the presence of several corner stores and bars with alcoholic beverage permits that create a negative ambience in the area.

Within Gert Town neighborhood and along the Earhart Boulevard corridor there are a variety of uses including a lumber mill, cement plant, and various auto mechanics shops, as well as vacant land. It identifies the Gert Town chemical factory at Earhart and Pine Street as a site that must be remediated before it can be put back into use. Listed suggestions for its use following clean-up are residential, cemetery, or a daycare center.

The Land Use Plan proposes along Earhart Boulevard to re-establish trees, proposes

light commercial uses as appropriate and proposes to require businesses to landscape their sites.

The Plan also addresses Hayward-Thompson Chemical Plant located at 7300 Earhart Boulevard. The vacant plant has been listed as a Brownsfield site needing remediation and the neighborhood has received funding from former plant operators to revitalize the community. However, at the time of the Plan there were not yet plans for redevelopment of the plant's site.

The 1999 Land Use Plan recommends this site as a green space, but recognizes that redevelopment will be limited by toxicity levels after remediation and must win the approval of neighborhood residents.

The 1999 Land Use Plan proposes only a limited area for future industrial location, the Earhart Corridor. The Plan recommends downgrading heavy industry uses to non-polluting light industry in the area bounded by Earhart, I-10, Claiborne and Lopez; this recommendation would provide a convenient job source for area residents.

The 1999 Land Use Plan proposes expansion of Xavier University to infill areas of the neighborhood where currently vacant or underutilized warehouses. The Plan recognized that the residential neighbors of Gert Town desire a detailed review of a Master Plan from the university before

endorsing any expansion into the neighborhood.

New Century New Orleans Master Transportation Plan, 2004

The Plan identified that the residents of Planning District 4 have a dependence on transit, pedestrian, and bicycle travel which, along with parking difficulties around major institutions such as Orleans Parish Criminal Complex, Xavier University, Jesuit High School, and New Orleans Medical Complex are at the heart of its transportation issues.

A number of transportation issues were identified at public meetings held by the City Planning Commission for the Transportation Plan, as well as through the development of the Land Use Plan, Economic Development Plan, and the Regional Planning Commission's Year 2025

Images from left to right:
A: Gilbert Stadium
B: Harrell Park

Images at top:
The New Century New Orleans Master Plan: Parks, Recreation & Open Space -



Images Top:

New Century New Orleans Master
Transportation Plan, 2004

Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The issues pertinent to the Gert Town neighborhood were:

- Parking problems for residents around Xavier University;
- Roadway Level of Service where there is a need for the Earhart Expressway and Boulevard to be a viable alternative to I-10
- ; • Installing left-hand turn lanes from Earhart Boulevard onto Carrollton Avenue;
- The review and improvement of all railroad crossings in the district; identification of the intersection at Washington and S. Carrollton where pedestrian/bicycle safety is an issues;

- Road Maintenance with the reconstruction of Earhart Boulevard between S. Dupre St. (Near Broad St.) and the Jefferson Parish line;
- The inclusion of transit and the proposal for a light rail line from the Airport to downtown to include a station at the N. Carrollton/Tulane Avenues intersection (Xavier University) with multi-modal facilities;
- Functional & roadway level of service through the Improvement of signage and promoting the use of Earhart Expressway as an alternative route to Jefferson Parish; and

- Completion of all phases of the Earhart Boulevard project in New Orleans.

The Gert Town Strategic Revitalization Plan, 2004, prepared by the Urban Technical Assistance Center (UTA) at Columbia University.

A plan which the residents accepted as a reference base for the development of the Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan recovery process identified issues that existed in the neighborhood pre-Hurricane Katrina and served to place in context the challenges for the reconstruction of Gert Town.

This plan identified as major issues for the revitalization of Gert Town three major neighborhood roadblocks:

- Its isolation: the commercial uses along Washington Avenue that have generated super-blocks that interrupt the street and block; the canal which offers only one vehicular bridge (Pine Street) and two pedestrian-only overpasses; Earhart Boulevard that interrupts the north south connections between the court district and its counterpart south of Earhart;
- Inconsistencies: including toxic industrial uses inappropriately embedded in the residential zone (Tree Medics, cement plant, as examples); residential amenities dispersed throughout the neighborhood causing a lack of sense of community; use of the court streets for both vehicular

circulation and on-street parking and their width of 15 feet which makes this use inappropriate;

- Discontinuities: A wedge of industrial uses, East of Carrollton cuts of the northernmost housing from the bulk of the residential zone; the residential fabric is not uniform; the residential fabric is interrupted by large tracts of vacant land and parking lots; No discernible boundary exists to the residential fabric at Earhart, the boulevard appears as a ragged edge.

The plan proposed a series of development strategies and priorities. As priorities it proposed that a new land use pattern must have the following properties:

- Limit commercial encroachment on the residential zone by strengthening its core;
- Encourage mixed use development, particularly institutional uses along Pine Street;
- Transform environmental liabilities into community amenities;
- Make Earhart Boulevard a commercial/institutional buffer zone for residential Gert Town.



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B. Pre-Hurricane Katrina Neighborhood Existing Conditions

Land Use and Zoning

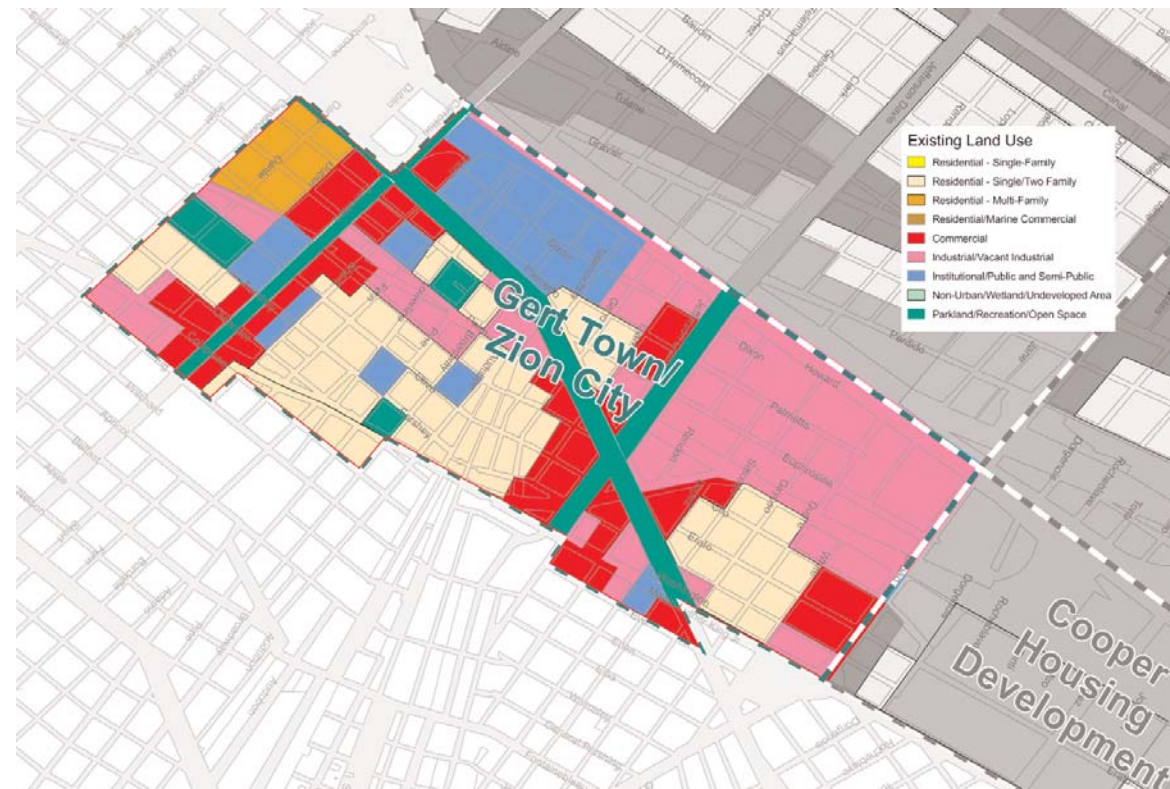
The Gert Town Strategic Revitalization Plan of 2004 identified the following land use patterns and inconsistencies as previously presented: Superblocks interrupt the street/block grid where Washington Avenue has commercial/industrial and there is only one vehicular bridge that crosses over the canal to Xavier.

The Plan identified inconsistencies of land use with playground adjacent to the cement plant, toxic sites embedded in the residential zone and very narrow streets in the neighborhood. Among the land use discontinuities identified by the plan are: wedge of industrial uses, East of Carrollton cuts off the northernmost residential blocks from the rest of the residential areas; many tracts of vacant land; irregular blocks with narrow streets and shallow lots.

Pre-Katrina Demographic Profile

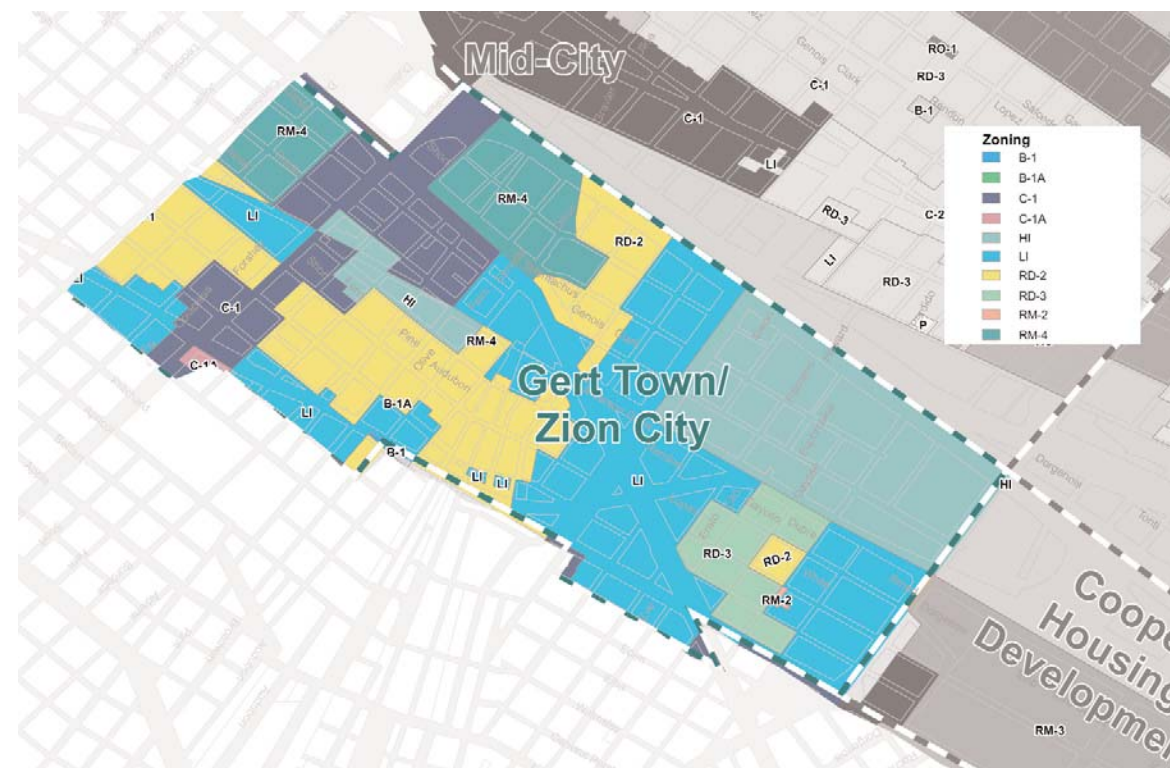
Prior to Hurricane Katrina, and based upon Census 2000 data, the population of Gert Town was 4,748 of which 1,071 were housed in Xavier University dormitories. The permanent population of 3,677 in Gert Town lived in 1,541 households with an average household size of over 2.3 residents per household.

Despite the neighborhood's excellent



Gert Town Neighborhood Present Land-Use Map (Above)
Source: City of New Orleans - 1999 Land Use Plan

Gert Town Neighborhood Present Zoning Map (Below)
Source: City of New Orleans - 1999 Land Use Plan



location and adjacency to some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in New Orleans, there are consistent indications of persistent poverty and social distress in Gert Town. Almost 76% of the occupied units in the neighborhood were rental households in 2000 (as compared to 54% citywide and 32% statewide). Of households with children, approximately 50% of children lived without one parent present (compared to 29% statewide and 23% nationwide).

Average household income for the area was just over half of the City's, 50% of the State's and 40% of the nation's. Almost 50% of the residents of Gert Town were living in poverty, compared to fewer than 20% for the State and less than 13% for the nation. Most troubling was the fact that more than two-thirds of children under the age of five in the neighborhood lived in poverty compared to 18% for the nation.

In terms of racial makeup, the neighborhood was 95% African American.

Overall, despite its strong locational attributes and access, the neighborhood was among the poorest in the City prior to Hurricane Katrina and largely housed low and moderate income renters.

Image Top left:

A: Existing Cement Plant



Mobility and Transportation

Based upon figures collected by Census 2000 approximately 24% of residents of Gert Town utilized the bus or alternative means of transportation to get to work or school. This is a significantly higher percentage than for the City, State or Nation a whole.

As with many neighborhoods with a high percentage of low income residents, almost 43% of residents do not have a vehicle which compares to 27% of residents citywide and 12% of residents in the State.

Tenure (2000 Census)	Gert Town	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Owner Occupied	24.20%	46.50%	67.90%	66.20%
Renter Occupied	75.80%	53.50%	32.10%	33.80%

Racial & Ethnic Diversity (2000 Census)	Gert Town	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Black/African American	94.50%	66.00%	32.20%	12.10%
White	2.90%	26.60%	62.60%	69.20%
Other	0.70%	2.70%	1.80%	4.60%
Two race categories	0.60%	1.00%	0.90%	1.60%
Hispanic (any race)	1.30%	3.10%	2.40%	12.50%

Average Household Income (2000 Census)	Gert Town	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Average Household Income (1999)	\$ 22,685	\$ 43,176	\$ 44,833	\$ 56,644

Population in Poverty (2000 Census)	Gert Town	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Percent of Population In Poverty	48.60%	27.90%	19.60%	12.40%
Percent of Children Under 5 in Poverty	65.60%	43.00%	29.00%	18.10%
Percent of Population Over 65 in Poverty	35.90%	19.30%	16.70%	9.90%

Vehicles Available (2000 Census)	Gert Town	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
No vehicle available	42.90%	27.30%	11.90%	10.30%

Type of Transportation (2000 Census)	Gert Town	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Use of public transportation to work	24.20%	13.00%	2.20%	4.60%

Images from left to right:
A: Existing Cement Plant
B-C: Mix of residential and industrial warehouse uses
D: Trailer Park

Source: U.S. Census 2000; the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center at <http://gnocdc.org/orleans/>



Recreation and Open Space

There are a number of recreational facilities and parks serving Gert Town. Among these are:

- **Cuccia Byrnes Playground** – Located on 8300 Forshey Street, the park has a land area of 3.06 acres, is supervised and features a baseball diamond, basketball courts, football field, and playground equipment. It is one of the most heavily used playgrounds in the city, has an active booster club and was reported in need of constant maintenance in the New Century New Orleans Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan prepared by the City Planning Commission in 2000.
- **Gert Town Pool Center** – With a land area of one acre this active park features a pool for the residents of the area and the City of New Orleans. This park is under the jurisdiction of the New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD).
- **Norwood Thompson Playground** – Located on Earhart Boulevard and Forshey Avenue the park has a land area of 1.2 acres and features a baseball diamond, basketball court, paved sports area, playground equipment and is supervised.



1: Cuccia Brynes Playground
2: Norwood Thompson Playground

The New Orleans Land Use Plan of 1999 did not identify any recreational deficiencies in Gert Town although the residents of the community have expressed a need for a community center to better serve the needs of children and older adults in Gert Town.

Images from left to right:

- A: Cuccia Byrnes Playground
B: Gert Town Pool Center
C: Harrell Park
D: Cuccia Brynes Playing Fields





Gert Town Community Facilities Map Above)
Source: City of New Orleans 1999 Land Use Plan

Housing, Architecture and Historic Preservation

Housing

Due to the low income and rental nature of the neighborhood housing was in a deteriorated state in much of the neighborhood before Hurricane Katrina. The storm exacerbated the condition of housing in Gert Town to a greater extent than some neighborhoods that experienced more significant levels of flooding. Housing issues that existed before the Hurricane included substantial adjudicated and blighted properties.

Architecture and Historic Preservation

Only a small section of Gert Town, on the south side of the intersection of Earhart Boulevard and Carrollton has historic designation. There are a substantial number of commercial structures of recent construction and little architectural value that line the major thoroughfares of the neighborhood along Earhart Boulevard, Washington Avenue and Carrollton Avenue. While many of the buildings of Gert Town were constructed over 50 years ago, they are all privately owned.

The principal historic structures and significant architecture are found in the Xavier University Campus or are commercial buildings such as the Blue

Plate Manufacturing Factory which is an Art Deco buildings. This is one of the few large Art Deco buildings found in the City of New Orleans. Xavier University has some excellent examples of Gothic Revival Architecture.

Community Facilities

Mary Church Terrel Elementary School An elementary K through 8 school located at 3411 Broadway it is the only school within the neighborhood. The school closed because of Hurricane Katrina damage; however, the building was in poor condition before the storm. The building was designed with an open plan concept; a design feature that reportedly did not work well for this community. Presently the school is closed and not scheduled to reopen. There is a desire in the neighborhood to build a new elementary K through 8 school on the site.

Xavier University - Located within the Gert Town neighborhood, Xavier University is the only historically Black Catholic University in the country and ranks as one of the top schools in the nation in the number of African American students earning undergraduate degrees in the natural and physical sciences. Other minority accomplishments of Xavier University include being the number one in pharmacy degrees awarded to African Americans, and number one in placing African Americans in medical schools.

Images from left to right:

- A: Mary Church Terrel Elementary School
- B: Mandeville Detiege Memorial Health Center
- C: Burton Memorial on Carrollton
- D: Baptist Church





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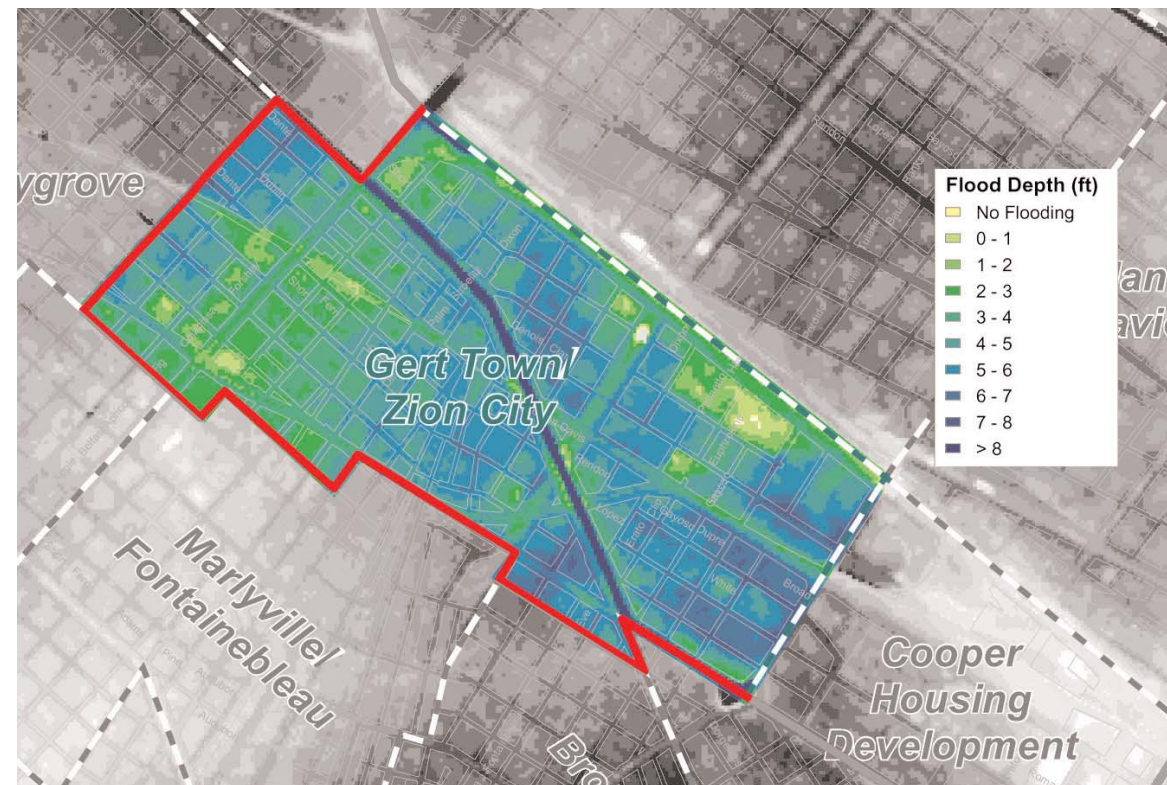
C. Hurricane Katrina Neighborhood Impacts

Extent of Flooding

The Flood Depth map to the right graphically depicts the depth of flood waters throughout District Four. The highest flood depth exceeded 9 feet while in some areas there was little flooding. The areas of Gert Town closest to Jefferson Davis Parkway had some of the highest flooding in the area with between 5 to 6 feet of water. Most of the neighborhood was flooded with between 2 to 4 feet of water.

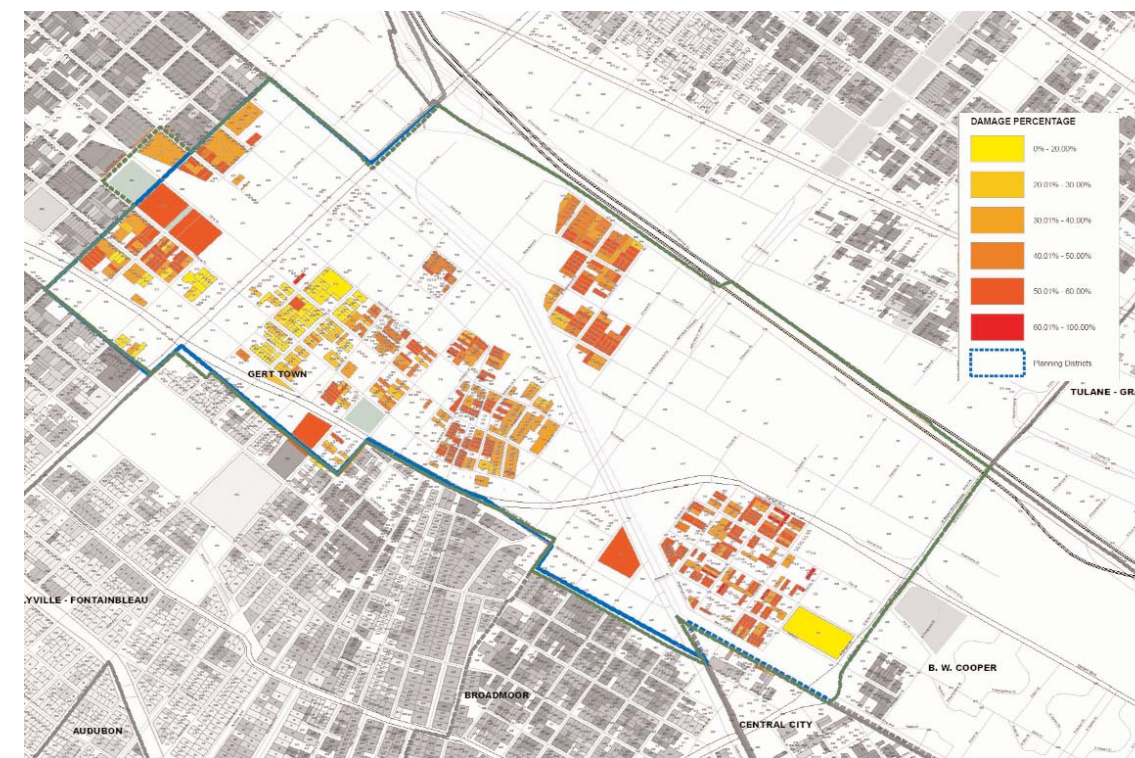
Residential Properties Damage Assessment

According to the Damage Assessment Data received from the City of New Orleans in April of 2006, properties within Gert Town while totally flooded were categorized mostly with damage under 50 %. A number of residential units, approximately 60 buildings suffered damage over 50% as indicated in the map. These residential structures are located throughout the neighborhood and coincide with the residential areas where the most Adjudicated and Abandoned Properties are located. Nearly all the other housing units within the neighborhood were identified as having less than 50% damage as per the City of New Orleans assessment. However it is important to note that a substantial number of structures within Gert Town were in poor condition prior to the storm.



Gert Town Neighborhood Flood Depth Map showing inundated areas of the neighborhood (above). *Source: City of New Orleans - April 2006*

Gert Town Neighborhood Damage Assessment Map showing the extent of the damage to neighborhood structures (below). *Source: City of New Orleans - April 2006*



Commercial Properties Damage Assessment

The majority of commercial uses and structures within Gert Town suffered flood damage.

Infrastructure Damage Assessment

The infrastructure damage assessment carried out was limited to drive-by evaluations of street conditions conducted by the Neighborhood Planning Consultant. No underground utilities were assessed; however the consultant and neighborhood groups were able to determine that BellSouth has been working to install fiber optic lines in the area. One planning challenge has been the fact that fiber optic lines require aboveground connection box installations which are considered by the neighborhood to be visually intrusive in exposed areas. Cable television as of the date of this plan has been restored to a majority of Gert Town.

Information based upon visual inspection included specific conditions as follows: missing street signs damaged street lights, sidewalks and pedestrian circulation, etc.

Street Conditions

Damage to streets was quite extensive from Hurricane Katrina. Based upon a block-by-block, street-by-street



assessment it has been estimated that 21,300 linear feet of street need to be replaced.

Street Signage and Way-Finding

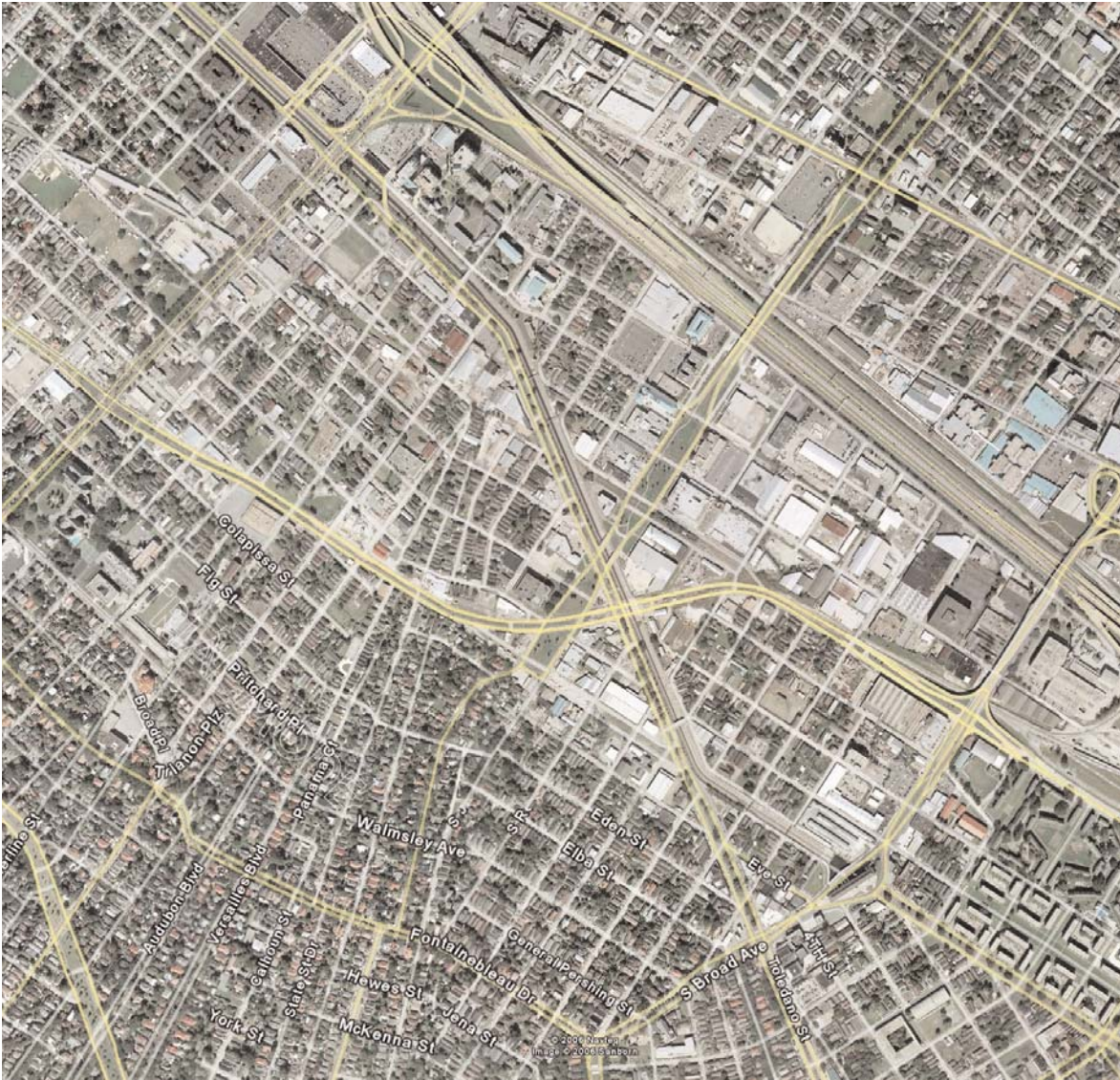
Street signs and way-finding signs sustained heavy loss in the neighborhood; however, the City continues to restore signs on a reasonably steady schedule.

Street Lights

Individual installations sustained damage from wind, flooding, etc. Repairs have been made incrementally.

Sidewalks/Pedestrian Circulation Damage Assessment

There are broad areas of sidewalks within Gert Town that were damaged as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The majority of these sidewalks were either broken by overturned trees or the weight of debris removal equipment.



Parks and Open Space Damage Assessment

Hurricane Katrina had a tremendous impact on the parks of Gert Town. Parks are particularly at risk, given that FEMA allocates virtually no funding for the recovery of green space and trees, and the removal of destroyed canopy have even been difficult to obtain federal funding to address.

All of the parks in the neighborhood including Norwood Thompson Playground, Cuccia-Byrnes Playground, and the swim center were damaged by the flood waters and will require wholesale renewal. Additionally, no operating funds now exist to appropriately program these facilities. The neutral grounds of Carrollton Avenue require improvement and upgrade.

Community Facilities

The only elementary school in the neighborhood Mary Church Terrel Elementary School, a K through 8 was totally flooded and closed because of Hurricane Katrina damage. The building was in substantially bad condition before Hurricane Katrina and it is not anticipated to open. However, there is a strong desire in the community have a public school rebuilt in the neighborhood. Both the community center and health clinic were damaged in the storm and are now closed and the community has indicated that it would like to see these facilities potentially relocated to the new town center when developed.

Images from left to right:

A-D: Existing conditions of structures and streets within Gert Town Post-Katrina

D. Neighborhood
Rebuilding Scenarios

Neighborhood Rebuilding
Scenarios & Re-Population

The proposed recovery plan will conform to the existing neighborhood urban structure with certain changes to address required street pattern modifications. The recovery plan is predicated upon the fact that residents, investors, and businesses can flourish and property values can be enhanced based upon the existing street grid and pattern of development although there will have to be significant change in land use classification to insure that inappropriate mixing of residential and industrial uses does not continue.

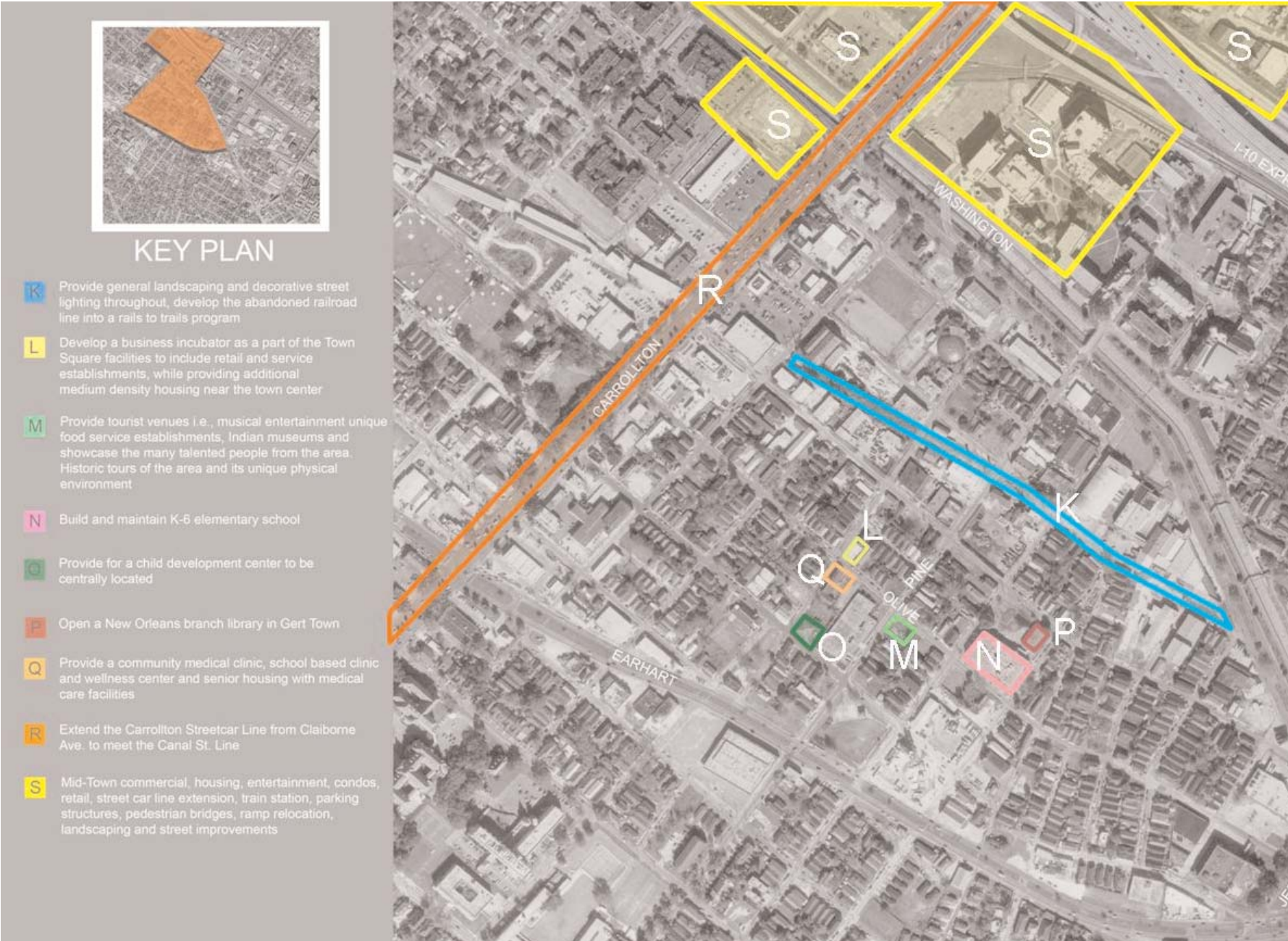
Specific changes will be focused on allowing for more intense development at key nodes (Carrollton and I-10) or change of use in key corridors (from industrial to mixed institutional/commercial use along Earhart and Washington). Additionally, the neighborhood has established certain specific goals for the recovery of the neighborhood no matter what the rebuilding strategy.

- **Restoration of ordinary public services** such as twice weekly trash removal and U.S. Postal service to the door/porch are considered very important benchmarks to signify a return to normalcy in the neighborhood;

- **Focus on both for-sale and rental housing redevelopment and**



At right: Projects Map of the Gert Town
Neighborhood



reconstruction and the implementation of key policies detailed later in this document that will assist in insuring that the housing stock of the neighborhood is restored in an sensitive fashion (particularly as it relates to the historic character) and the condition of the housing stock and stability of neighborhoods in improved to a level beyond that which existed prior to Katrina;

- **Insure the redevelopment of recreation and other community facilities** allowing returning and new families to have the necessary services and amenities that support continued population growth in the area. This include creation of pocket parks to serve the neighborhood and address identified deficiencies, the inclusion of children playgrounds to serve the needs of the neighborhoods' children and young parents, restoration of destroyed parks to include the activities previously identified by the community.

Additionally, critical community facilities, such as fire protection, community centers, and health clinics must be addressed immediately to insure the safety of the community during reconstruction.

At left: Projects Map of the Gert Town Neighborhood (cont'd)

E. Neighborhood Recovery Plan

Various factors will play a major role in the recovery of Gert Town including:

- 1) the pre-existing conditions prior to Hurricane Katrina;
- 2) increasing the attractiveness of the area as a residential community and
- 3) addressing pre-existing land use compatibility issues.

One of the poorest communities long before the storm, centrally located, surrounding it are important institutions and stable communities including Xavier University, the Marlyville-Fountainbleau neighborhood and the Carrollton and Earhart corridors.

However, the neighborhood high concentration of poverty and the troubled housing stock has substantial hurdles to overcome with regard to revitalizing and recovery since Hurricane Katrina and indeed these hurdles existed at lower thresholds prior to the disaster created in the neighborhood by storm. More specific recommendations include the following:

LAND USE AND ZONING

New Developments And Time Constraints –
Evaluate the inclusion of potential moratoriums on major sites that would give the residents a chance to come to a consensus on what they want for their



neighborhood. The community will also create a mechanism for the residents to have local involvement in zoning opportunities and/or threats.

Limit Heavy Industrial Uses -
The community is concerned that industrial factories and plants have abused and polluted their neighborhoods. Residents are critical of new industry that could potentially be a polluting, environmentally unfriendly, hazardous to the community and the residents who live there. The 1999 Land Use Plan expressed a need to limit these uses and provide for the inclusion of light industrial only.

Define Sector for Higher Intensity Apartment Complexes -
The community would like to include higher density apartment complexes, new office buildings and commercial buildings that are higher than two to three stories within the perimeter of Gert Town. Larger structures on the main transportation corridors may be acceptable depending on their use and design.

However, the community expressed a need to be involved in the design process for these higher density proposed designs. Big box stores and other buildings should be allowed within the neighborhood as long as Gert Town remains a small, personal, residential neighborhood with buildings that reflect that scale.



Increase Neighborhood Commercial –
During the neighborhood meetings process the residents expressed a need to have within the neighborhood a grocery store with fresh produce and the other commercial offerings, the inclusion of a community garden and limiting the presence of liquor stores and bars near the neighborhood to decrease loitering. Present zoning within Gert Town allows the inclusion of neighborhood commercial. Market forces will address the availability of these commercial facilities once the population of the neighborhood increases through the process of reconstruction. Limiting the number of liquor establishments will have to be a process coordinated with local authorities.

TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC TRANSIT

Extension of The Street Car On Carrollton Avenue -
The streetcar line could be potentially extended all the way along Carrollton, continuing from Claiborne and connecting with the Canal Street line. Another

alternative would be to extend the line to turn down Earhart to the CBD.

2003 Five Point Plan to improve transportation to New Orleans -
The community wants to support this grass roots effort to develop a plan that is economically sustainable for the communities and that is: ecologically sustainable; community oriented; multi-functional in use; affordable; efficient; safe; and democratically controlled. The plan also includes bike racks for parking bikes at different locations such as schools, playgrounds, and other locations throughout the city. Bus stops, transfer locations with shelters, seating, and maps need to be provided and improved upon as well.

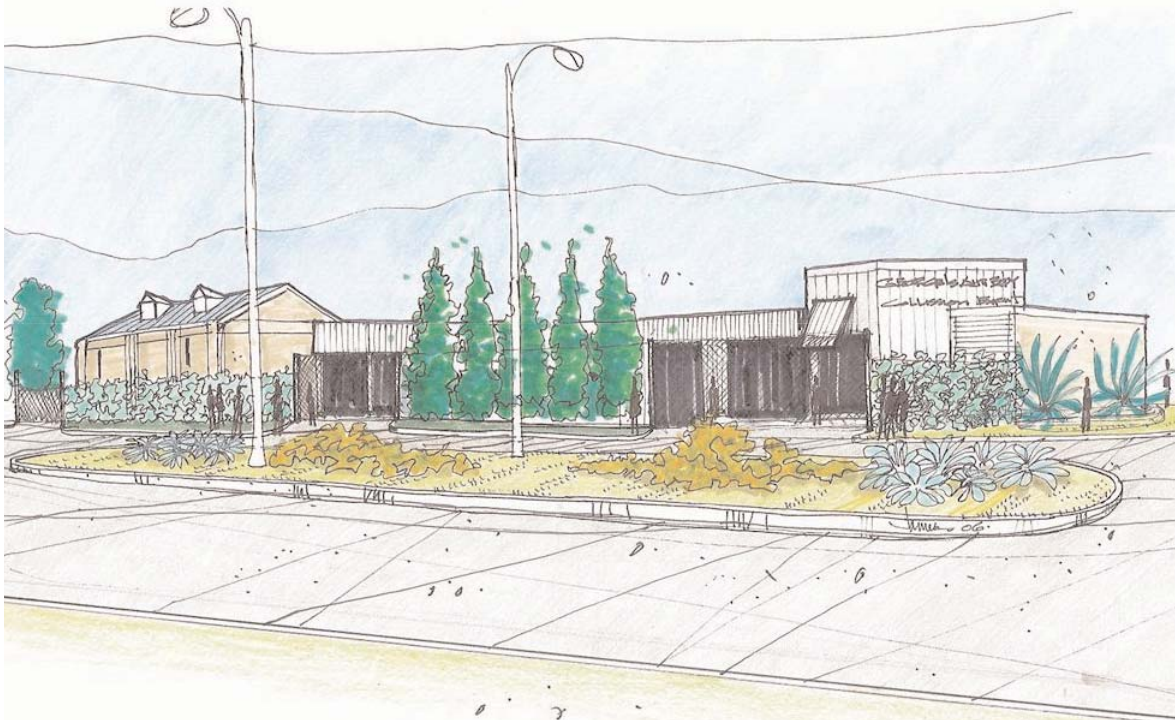
Rails-to-Trails -
The Rails-to-Trails bike path which converts the former rails on the Lafitte Corridor to a bike path needs to be completed. This bike path could be tied in to the Jeff Davis Bike path and connected to Erato street/ Olive into Gert Town... Bike lanes need to be designated on the existing major streets.

Images from left to right:

A: Existing conditions along Earhart

Renderings:
Gert Town Gateway Entrance
Proposed landscape Beautification along Earhart





Images from left to right:
A: Proposed Gert Town Gateway Entrance
B-C: Existing main entryway roadway conditions

Pedestrian Crossing Improvements - Carrollton and Earhart are both extremely pedestrian unfriendly. Crossings need to be created that are both aesthetically appealing and much safer. Solutions could include pedestrian bridges, more crossing lights, and greater accessibility. Possible improved crossings include:

- Intersection of Carrollton and Washington;
- Post Office that crosses Carrollton;
- Carrollton and Earhart at all four crossings;
- Area across from Thompson-Hayward facility; and
- Jeff Davis and Earhart.

PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Having access to a variety of recreational facilities is important to the people of Gert Town. The playground is located next to a cement factory on Earhart which is an unhealthy environment for both children and adults. There needs to be recreational facilities for all age groups in the

neighborhood. Perhaps these facilities could be part of an Educational/Community Center Complex and be used by all. Sports facilities such as a gymnasium, ball field, swimming pool, exercise and weight rooms, playgrounds, and running track could all be used by the school and members of the community including pre-school aged children, adults, and seniors. Arts facilities that include visual arts and crafts, music, and performing arts such as dance and theater could all be used in the same way. These facilities plus a possible cultural museum could all be used for after-school programs in the daily curriculum of the neighborhood school, by summer camps and by the community via programs, classes and continued learning.

Entertainment facilities could include a gymnasium that converts into an auditorium for larger events, a stage that could accommodate small productions and/or the creation of a Town Square that includes an outdoor stage.





Cement Industrial Building Site Re-Use (Park Space)

The cement plant will be removed and be replaced by a community amenity. The proposal is to consider the creation of a place for the use of both the youth and the elderly. It will combine sports activities with educational activities, job training and spaces for incubating businesses. The center will enhance and complement the existing adjacent Norwood Thompson playground. Together, they will form a clear edge to the residential neighborhood.

Pine Street Streetscape Improvements

there is a need to develop city-owned vacant lots in the High Court block, facing Pine Street Institutional expansion in collaboration with Xavier University to upgrade the Pine Street streetscape to give the street the scale and quality of a public space, with appropriate landscaping, tree planting and street furniture as needed.

Town Square

This concept places a town square and possible internal shopping area on Olive Street. This square could be a centralized outdoor area where Gert Town could host events such as street festivals and concerts. This is a venue where the community could present its identity to other communities and be a host to its own unique events. Gert Town has a rich

musical and cultural heritage on which to build.

Increase Landscape Requirements of City Code

There is a need to improve the visual aesthetics and requirements to improve the neighborhood (residential, commercial, and industrial developments). Code requirements should be increased for required landscape for new construction of commercial or industrial buildings; commercial parking should be hidden when possible with shrubs or fencing; limit billboards or prohibit them altogether; require set backs for new construction and parking.

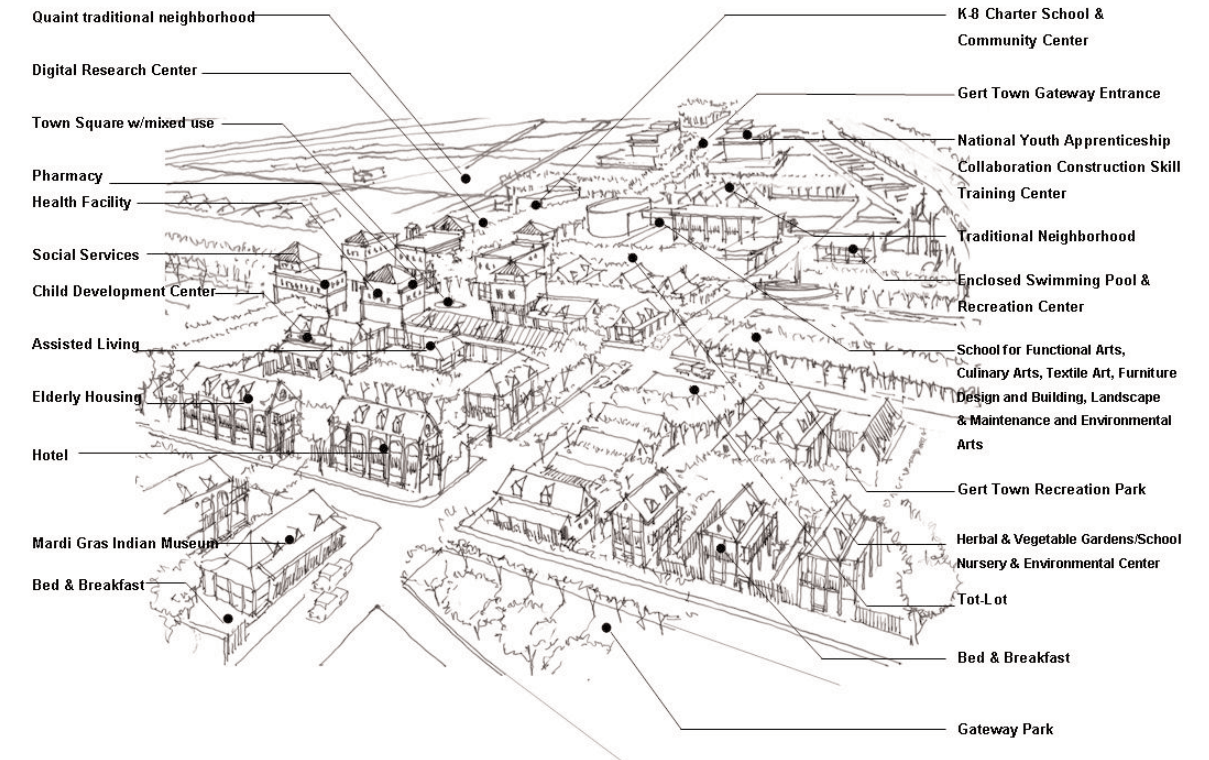
HOUSING, ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

PLAN PROPOSED HOUSING INITIATIVES

A number of housing initiatives are proposed as part of the Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan and are presented in the overall policy element of the plan and issued under separate cover. Below is a summary of these policies:

LOT NEXT DOOR

The principal thrust of redevelopment programs and policies that encourage the



Images from top to bottom:

Illustrations of Proposed Town Center for Gert Town neighborhood



speedy redevelopment of neighborhoods, must match various government powers and financing tools to the local housing and real estate market conditions. A key question will be how to most effectively encourage the redevelopment of homes and residential lots that fall into public ownership.

The “Lot Next Door” program is one of a series of proposed housing policies which have been developed as part of the Neighborhoods rebuilding plan and takes direct aim at some particular market hurdles that slow the redevelopment of many of these properties.

In its simplest form the Lot Next Door program will offer homeowners who are committed to redeveloping their homes the ability to purchase publicly owned adjoining properties prior to these properties being offered to any other buyers.

This option would be provided should the property end up in public ownership either through the adjudication process or through the sale of the property to a public entity through the Road Home or other public acquisition program.

ELDERLY MODERATE INCOME CONDOMINIUM SET-ASIDE

It has become quite apparent through the neighborhood planning process, that senior households which have some of the strongest ties to the community and have expressed some of the strongest voices for rebuilding and returning to the City, also face some of the most significant challenges in redeveloping or rebuilding their homes.

First, there are many areas of the City that had a high concentration of elderly homeowners (Lower Ninth, Pontchartrain Park, and Lakeview) which sustained substantial damage and will require the demolition and reconstruction of many homes.

Historically, dealing with contractors, permit inspectors, lenders, etc. has proved particularly difficult for many elderly households after they have experienced similar trauma.

Additionally, there are a substantial number of areas of the City, including Lakeview and areas of Gentilly, where rebuilding homes



with damage in excess of 50 percent will require the total reconstruction at three feet above grade or the Base Flood Elevations (BFE), whichever is greater. Many of these homes will have to be raised close to one story making them a difficult housing product type for people with physical frailties.

Elderly homeowners are clearly a special group with specific needs, and currently, there are no programs targeted to this subgroup of homeowners.

A targeted elderly homeowner program is needed which will allow elderly households to tie their Road Home grant to senior specific elevator multi-story condominium projects to be developed throughout the City. There has been wide support for dedicated multi-family senior housing product in many parts of the City, but particularly in areas where younger homeowners have aging parents living nearby.

In some cases, there may be a need to increase the grant amount or provide a low interest loan to the household if there is a gap between the value of the buyout (and insurance proceeds) and the market value price of the condominium unit.

USE OF SECOND GENERATION FUNDS AND EXPANSION OF HOME PURCHASER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



One of the principal issues that has arisen repeatedly in neighborhood meetings is that of how properties that end up in public ownership, either through the adjudicated or buy back process are going to be resold in the marketplace.

While the Lot Next Door program provides one method for recycling lots in the market, there are going to be numerous lots that are not acquired by next door neighbors that are going to have to be sold to third party purchasers.

Assuming that there are few new regulations associated with developing housing (i.e. some requirement that certain units must be homeownership vs. rental) it is likely that the value placed on many properties for sale will determine how quickly that property will be rebuilt for housing.

Additionally, and realistically, there are a variety of neighborhoods throughout the City, where reducing the cost of a lot or unit to essentially zero will not be enough to insure the redevelopment of the property.

These are generally those neighborhoods prior to Hurricane Katrina where land values were quite low and homes were not built unless there was significant targeted public assistance related to construction. Given the different market factors influencing the redevelopment of housing

Images from left to right:
Palm & Audobon Street Housing Redevelopment



in different neighborhoods, there are a variety of strategies that will have to be employed with regard to the sale of lots acquired through the acquisition program on the open market. These strategies include the following.

- Recycle second generation proceeds from higher income neighborhood property sales to properties in neighborhoods where values are lower. This will ensure that more housing redevelopment dollars will flow to low-income areas than could otherwise be imagined prior to Katrina.
- Sell adjacent lots and blocks of lots in public ownership to experienced for-profit and not-for-profit developers when not purchased through the Lot Next Door program. .
- Re-sell properties at fair market value and reduce price of lots only when very specific policy objectives are being met,

such as providing for mixed-income housing in a neighborhood.

ARCHITECTURE

With the exception of certain buildings on the Xavier University campus and the Blue Plate Building, there presently are few buildings with architectural significance within Gert Town. The plan proposes an architecture that is appropriate to the nature of the street grid pattern and building styles in New Orleans. The drawings illustrate potential architectural options for Gert Town.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

There are no historic districts within the core of Gert Town, however the neighborhood fabric should be preserved and the inclusion of new construction



should address these issues. The proposed architectural styles for new construction as indicated in the drawings should draw from the traditional New Orleans architectural vocabulary.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Through the neighborhood meeting process a number of community facilities were identified as needed by the Gert Town residents these included a Community child care center, community center, a new adequately designed K-8 elementary school, vocational school, and health care facility. The description of this projects are as follows:

• **Community Center:**

The neighborhood expressed a need to include a community center. This community center could function either as an independent stand alone facility or form part of a larger community facilities complex, such as being co-located with a new elementary school in the area.

- **Mary Church Terrell School New School K-8 Elementary School - (Public or Charter)** that could have a multi-functional use as a community center. Envisioned is an educational complex that houses classrooms, a library, and includes both recreational and arts facilities. The people of the community need a Lifelong Learning Center and meeting rooms, which could all function



within the school. Linking the arts and the recreational facilities physically with the school would mean that there could be extensive after-school and enrichment programs available to the students so that they are able to discover talents and interests in the early years.

- **A Digital Resource Center or Computer Technology Center** could be put in the place of the concrete plant. This center could be a jointly located state-of-the-art facility clustered in with the K-8 School/Recreation-Arts/Community Center complex creating a complete learning environment. Additional the school could have a Digital Resource Center to teach computer science.

Healthcare

The residents of Gert Town have lived in the shadow of harmful industry and toxic abandoned industrial sites for a very long time. With the remediation of the Thompson-Hayward site, this community has a chance for renewal and to live in an environment that is conducive to good health.

The concrete plant on Earhart needs to be removed. Both of the sites should become available in a way that best benefits the community.

The residents need to have local control as to what the sites are used for and prevent

Images from right to left:
A: Fern Street redevelopment





subsequent zoning for a similar development that is not in the best interest of the neighborhood.

The residents are requesting that they have proper infrastructure including lighting, street design, pedestrian friendly crosswalks, and a healthy neighborhood. Any soil remediation that needs to be done after the hazardous areas are tested for contaminants should be done in a timely manner.

Healthcare for the people of Gert Town is of utmost importance. A health clinic such as a Community Care Clinic is needed to service the neighborhood. Right now the nearest hospital is Tulane University Hospital. Many New Orleans schools are beginning to have school-based clinics and perhaps that could be a solution for Gert Town. The idea of an educational/community center complex could possibly be a centralized location for housing a clinic. This could also evolve into a social services center.

Neighborhood Watch Program

The neighborhood has expressed a need to organize a Public Safety Advisory Committee, identify block captains, establish relationship with NOPD, neighbors, and COPS while recruiting active volunteers and create a police community office. These are tasks that should be kept on-going as the neighborhood recovers.

OTHER PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECTS

Critical and Early Action projects identified by the neighborhood residents and the consultant team and as indicated in the Funding Matrix include the following in addition to those noted above:

- **Repair of Underground Utilities** – The repair of the utilities to serve the neighborhood are one of the most pressing neighborhood needs.
- **Repair Street Infrastructure and Signalization** - There are over 21,300 linear feed of streets, lighting, street signs, and sidewalks to be repaired in the neighborhood.
- **Rails to Trails** – Develop the abandoned railroad line into a rails to trails program to provide a neighborhood amenity and create additional open space and value.

In the mid-term the neighborhood recovery proposes these additional projects :

- **Child Development Center** – A child development center should be developed to be centrally located in the town center within the neighborhood

- **Senior Housing Project and Initiatives** – Provide senior housing opportunities within the neighborhood.

- **Earhart Urban Corridor Designation** – Overlay district to enhance landscape requirements and standards, signage standards, with the intent to significantly improve the overall design quality of the identified corridor.

Additional long term capital projects identified include:

- **Pocket Parks and Community Gardens** – As the reconstruction process moves forward sites where no reconstruction is planned could be turned into pocket parks for the neighborhood or community gardens.
- **Extension of Carrollton Streetcar** The extension of the street car from Claiborne to Canal Street on Carrollton Avenue.

- **Study of Gap-Funding Requirements** - Develop project specific studies for the private investment projects including retail development identified in the plan to define gap funding requirement needed to makes these projects attractive to private development interests.

Images from left to right:

A-D: Existing structures and street conditions in Gert Town

F. Implementation and Funding Strategies

Funding Matrix

The connection between the Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan and potential funding sources is graphically represented here by the Implementation Priority Matrix. The costs analyses are provided on an order-of-magnitude basis as to the scope and magnitude of the proposed project and the investment required to construct it. In the process of cost analyses, consultations were carried out with the City of New Orleans Public Works department to identify general cost guidelines typically used for the calculation of street improvements and reconstruction; Other sources of cost identification included the Means Cost Data and our team’s professional expertise in and outside New Orleans.

Each project item has been rated by order of importance by residents of Milan. Those projects are then paired with potential revenue sources. Items that require study before funding are identified as such. Likewise, certain capital projects require a continuous funding stream after the initial outlay. These costs are listed as recurring expenses.

No single source of funding or financial plan will be capable of dealing with the capital improvements needs for total redevelopment and reconstruction of all the neighborhood projects and needs. However, the funding matrix included in

this report show different funding sources that could be made available for specific projects and it should be expected that layering of multiple sources of funding will be required in most cases. The ability to obtain these funds will rest with the City of New Orleans and neighborhood groups and advisory committees.

Each matrix matches proposed projects with potential funding sources identified through the planning process and while not exhaustive in its scope, it serves as a guide to where funds could originate. Substantial financial commitments by federal and state entities are a vital ingredient in the recovery effort and will provide the necessary economic infrastructure to attract the private investment required to create stable and vibrant communities.

Each funding matrix, based upon consultation with neighborhood residents through the community meeting process, also ranked projects based upon priority of need with regard to recovery: “Early Action/Critical;” “Mid-Term/Needed;” and “Long Term/Desired.” This ranking provides a general guide as to what communities believe are the most important priorities with regard to revitalization and redevelopment.

Finally, there are a variety of items or initiatives listed on the funding matrix where a capital cost can not be attached or

determined without further study, but the community believed needed to be a central part of the plan. These include:

- Undertaking further studies to determine the actual cost to governmental entities for certain public/private initiatives (for which we have noted the general estimated cost of the study);
- Housing initiatives for which there may be dollars already allocated through the Road Home, LIHTC, private funding sources, or other sources but where the additional gap in funding is impossible to determine at this point;
- Other policies, including land use and zoning regulations, which the community believed to be in the short and long term interest of the community; and,
- Recurring operations (i.e.,6 expanded police patrols, library operations, park operations, etc.) that either tie to certain capital improvements or are important to the health of the community through the expansion of existing services.

Acronyms
FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency
CDBG: Community Development Block Grant
HUD: U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
USACE: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CIP: Capital Improvement Plan
LRA: Louisiana Recovery Authority
SWB: Sewage & Water Board
LHFA: Louisiana Housing Finance Agency
HANO: Housing Authority of the City of New Orleans
HOME: HUD Low Income Housing Program
EDA: Economic Development Administration
TIF: Tax Increment Financing
NMTC: New Market Tax Credits
BID: Business Improvement District
FHWA: Federal Highway Administration
FTA: Federal Transit Administration
LDOT: Louisiana Department of Transportation
NGO: Non-Government Organizations



NEIGHBORHOODS REBUILDING PLAN GERT TOWN IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITY MATRIX																				
PROJECTS & PHASE		POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE(S)																		
		CRITICAL (1) NEEDED (2) DESIRED (3)	FEMA	CDBG/LRA	OTHER HUD	USACE	CITY CIP	SWB	LHFA	HANO	HOME	EDA	TIF/GO BONDS/IMTC	BID	SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT	FHWA/FTA	LDOT	PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS	ORLEANS LEVEE BOARD	OTHER GOVERNMENT & NGO'S
Early Action Plan																				
Capital Projects																				
Repair underground utilities including water lines, damaged sewerage lines	1	•	•																	TBD
Repair infrastructure including streets, sidewalks, traffic signals/signs, street lights, phone service, replace missing drain, manhole, catch basin and water meter covers.	1	•	•			•														\$34,200,000
Develop the abandoned railroad line into a rails to trails program	1		•			•							•		•	•		•		\$2,000,000
Develop K-6 elementary school	1	•	•													•		•		\$8,500,000
Restore Community Health Center and clinic and relocate school based clinic and wellness center to multi-purpose facility	1	•	•													•		•		\$1,300,000
Restore and revitalize community center and recreation facility with administration/function rooms and splash plaza	1	•	•													•		•		\$1,600,000
Subtotal: Capital Projects																				\$47,600,000
Recurring Operations																				
Remove debris and hazardous substances, collapsed structures and downed trees	1																			
Restore utilities	1																			
School Operations	1																			
Health Clinics Operations	1																			
Community Center Operations	1																			
Restore/Improve postal and other city services	1																			
Housing Initiatives and Other Policies																				
Rehabilitate housing stock including providing worker Training Housing by the rehabilitation of 8 houses (16 units) on S. Clark St.	1																			
Mid Term Plan																				
Capital Projects																				
Install electric service underground	2		•			•														TBD
Develop a centrally located child development center	2		•	•		•										•		•		\$1,800,000
Subtotal: Capital Projects																				\$1,800,000
Recurring Operations																				
Child development center operations	2																			
Housing Initiatives and Other Policies																				
Senior housing with medical care facilities operations	2																			
Designate Earhart as an Urban Corridor	2																			
Provide major renovation and raising of structures around Audubon Court and Audubon St.	2																			
Combine youth outreach, vocational training, classic crime prevention techniques, and a judicial liaison program to ensure neighborhood safety	2																			
Long Term Plan																				
Capital Projects																				
Provide pocket parks, tot lots for young children, and community gardens throughout community,	3		•			•										•		•		\$450,000
Provide landscape enhancement along Earhart Blvd., Washington Ave. and Carrollton Ave.	3		•			•														\$1,000,000
Extend the Carrollton Streetcar Line from Claiborne Ave. to meet the Canal St. Line	3		•			•							•	•				•		See Hollygrove
Study gap funding requirement, encourage and assist as necessary development of Mid-Town High Density, commercial, parking structures, pedestrian bridges, ramp relocation, landscaping and street improvements (study cost only)	3		•							•	•	•	•							See Hollygrove
Subtotal: Capital Projects																				\$1,450,000
Housing Initiatives and Other Policies																				
Recover housing stock to bring people home by rehabilitating damaged & blighted structures	3																			
Change zoning and develop focused development programs to allow housing along Pine and in the vicinity of Fern, Burdette, Lowerline and Forchey to be developed as mixed multifamily, townhouses, condominiums, small apartment units, bed and breakfast, hotels/guest houses, assisted living facilities, as well as independent living apartments.	3																			
CAPITAL PROJECTS TOTAL																				\$50,850,000

