



**Mid-City Neighborhood  
Planning District 4  
Rebuilding Plan**



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**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 8 geographically specific neighborhoods: Tremé / 6th Ward, 7th Ward, Fairgrounds / Desaix, St. Bernard, Faubourg St. John, Mid-City, Gert Town and Tulane Gravier.

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 Mid-City Neighborhood who participated in this planning process and without whose participation this plan would not be possible.

Special thanks to the Mid-City Neighborhood Organization and the following Committees and community members who sit on each of the Committees:

**Education Committee**  
 Michael Homan (chair), Amy Lafont, Doug Joubert, Mary Jane Parker, Jennifer Molina, Dee Hurtt, Jeannette Thompson, Elizabeth Kennedy, Jo Ann LoRusso, Diane Nowik, Shawn Anglim, Mary Joe Decareaux, Nancy Ortiz-Surun, and Jackie Tinguey.

**Housing Committee**  
 Frank Cole (chair), Joe Porter, Jeff Keller, Martin Handley, Mary Schumann, Eric Price, Greg Hymel, Mark Folse and Colleen Gannon.

**Governance Committee**  
 Bart Everson (chair), Wendy Laker, Billy Wright, Virginia Blanque, Tammy Hathaway, Pattye Brignac, and Eva Alito have volunteered to serve as liaisons to the City Council, review the MCNO bylaws and work on the plan for local control.

**Green Space Committee**  
 Dee Hurtt, Virginia Blanque, Mary Jane Parker, Kathleen Porter, Joan Arnold, Mary Gubala, and Charles Belonge.

**Zoning Committee**  
 Amelia Henderson, Mary Schumann, Betty Cole, Jake Springfield, Cheryl Wagner, and Val Dansereau.

**Economic Development Committee**  
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**Transportation Committee**  
 Dawn Falgout (chair), Bob Rivard, Billy Wirght, and Tracy Hamlin

**Healthcare Committee**  
 Diane Handley, Marcelle Rousseau, Al Arnold, Mary Gubala, and Charles Belonge.

**Security and Crime Prevention Committee**  
 Joe Porter, Romney Richard, Paul Stark, Mary Gubala and Charles Belonge.

**City Services Committee**  
 Billy Wright, Jake Springfield, Mary Gubala, and Eva Alito.

**Hearts and Lives Committee**  
 Virginia Blanque (chair), Joe Porter, Kathleen Porter, Tammy Hathaway, Susan Finch, Bart Everson, Mary Gubala, and Doug Joubert

**City of New Orleans**

C. Ray Nagin, Mayor

**New Orleans City Council:**

Oliver M. Thomas, President  
 Arnie Fielkow, Vice-President  
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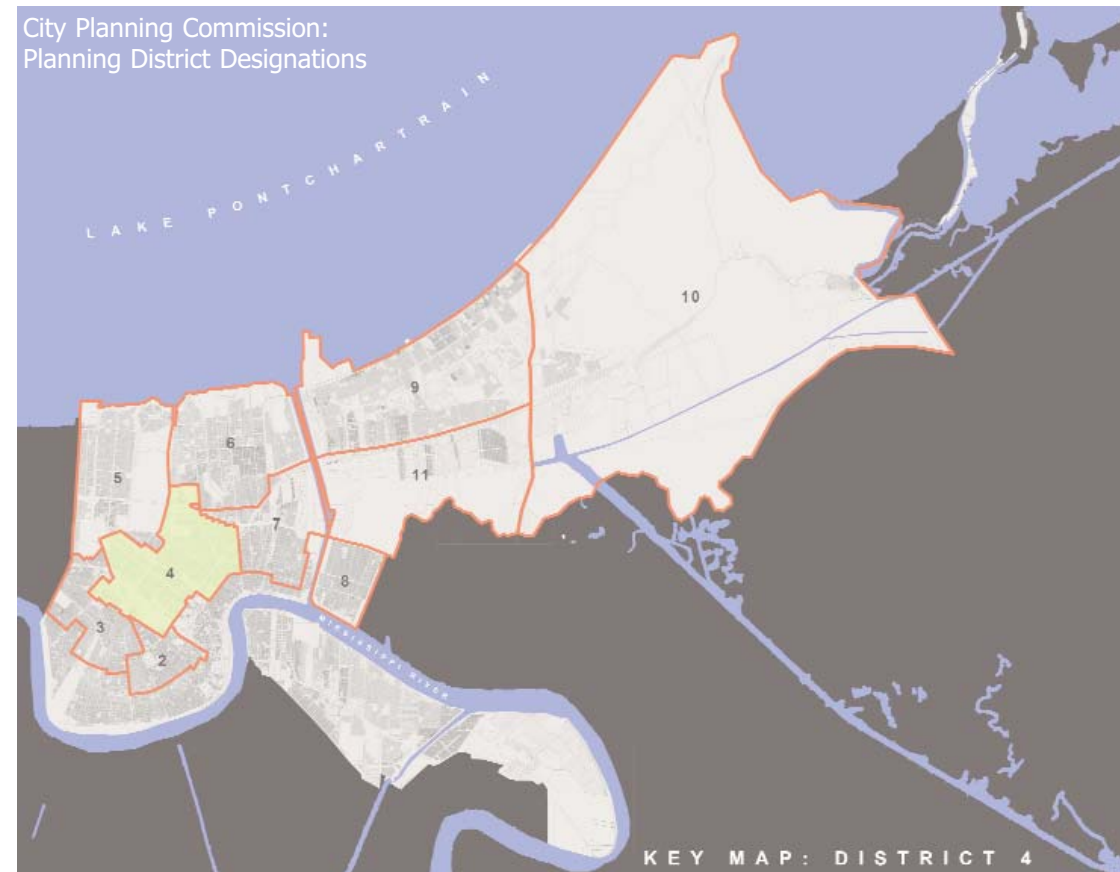
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 Lonnie Hewitt, AIA

**Neighborhood Planner**

Clifton James & Associates  
 Clifton James, AIA



**Images Cover:**

- A: Proposed Lafitte Corridor Redevelopment**
- B-C: Typical residential architecture in Mid-City**

## A. Mid-City Neighborhood

### Location and History

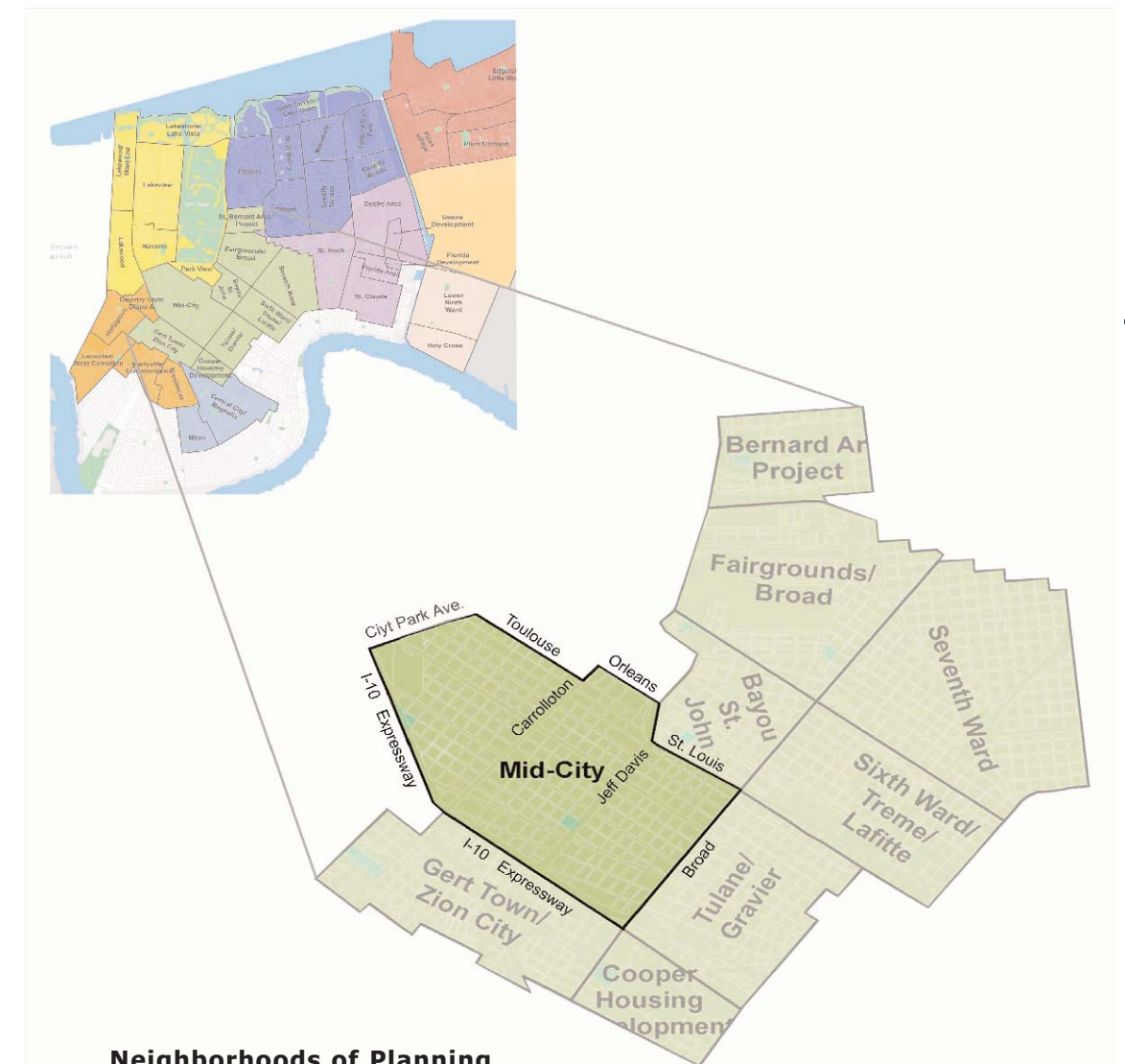
Mid-City, so named due to its location midway between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, is a large, diverse neighborhood. The neighborhood is bounded by Toulouse, City Park Avenue, the Pontchartrain Expressway and Broad Street. The principal streets in the Mid-City neighborhood include Canal Street, Jefferson Davis Parkway, Broad Street, Tulane Avenue and Carrollton Avenue. Key secondary streets are St. Louis, Bienville, and Banks. Neighboring communities are Gert Town (SW), Tulane/Gravier (NE), Bayou St. John (N) and the Cooper Housing Development (E).

Mid-City was referred to as "Back of Town" until the second half of the 19th Century. The neighborhood's position to attract development improved dramatically with the development of the Broad and Bienville pumping station in the 1890's and development started to occur in the early twentieth century in a significant way. The development of the streetcar along the broad Canal Street neutral ground and the build-out of the neighborhoods further strengthened the neighborhood. By the early 1960's, the streetcar was replaced by buses and many large, stately homes were subdivided into multiple units or demolished to make way for apartments. It was not until 30 years later, in 2004, that streetcar service along Canal Street was restored. The restoration of the

service was clearly benefiting the neighborhood's revitalization in a variety of ways prior to Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. The neighborhood was experiencing a burgeoning revival and return of single-family homes that were subdivided 40 or 50 years earlier.

Although they are not directly within the official city boundaries of the neighborhood, Mid-City is also partially defined by large recreation and tourist attractions that surround and enhance the neighborhood: the 1,500 plus acre City Park and Fairgrounds to the north, the Greenwood and Cypress Grove Cemeteries to the northwest, and Bayou St. John to the northeast.

The Mid-City neighborhood is home to one of the largest historic districts of the City, and is so designated by the National Register of Historic Districts although the neighborhood does not enjoy the more regulated local historic district status. Based upon surveys conducted by the City prior to Katrina, the mix of historic homes included a predominance of Shotguns (55.3%) and Creole cottages (15%), among many others. Bungalows (31.4%), Colonial and Queen Anne Revivals (17.6%) and Italianate (15.7%) are the most common architectural styles in the neighborhood

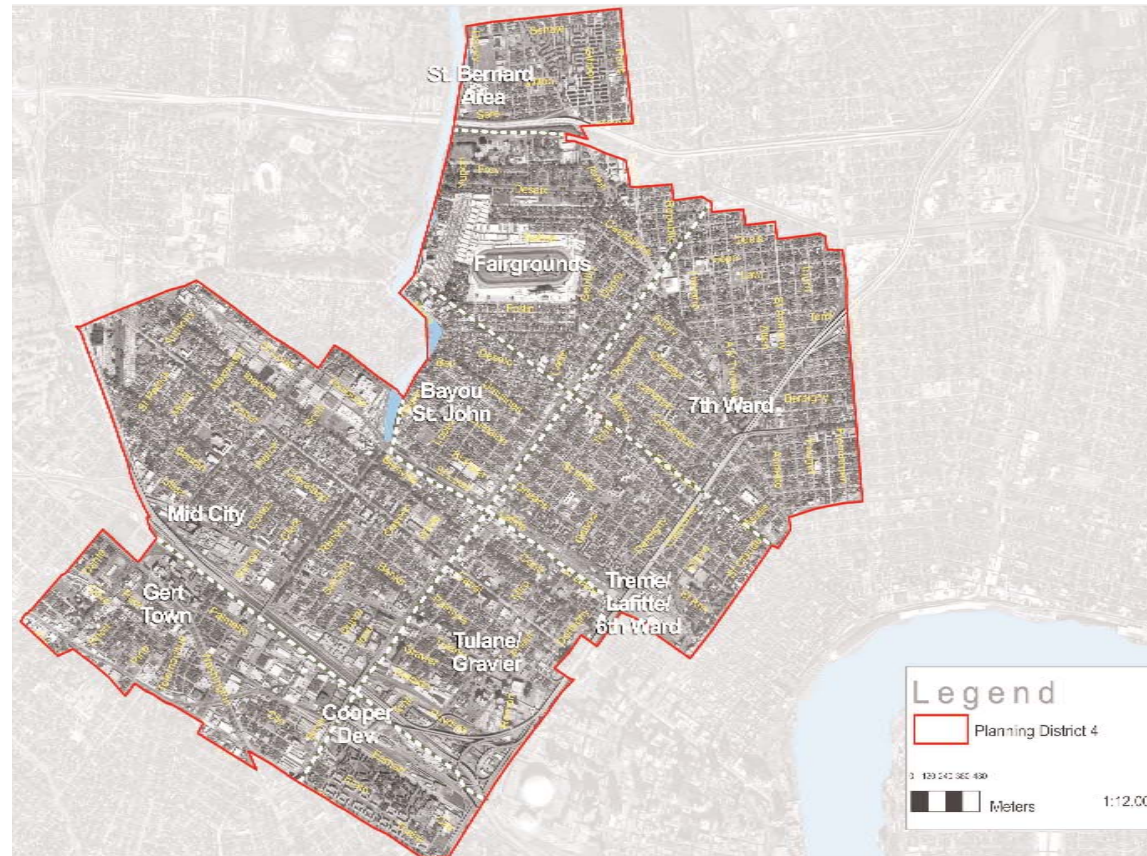


Neighborhoods of Planning District Four



Images Right to Left:

- A: Bottinelli Place
- B: 4334 Canal Street
- C: St. Anthony of Padua School
- D: Apartment Building on Canal Street



### Recovery Vision and Goals

The Mid-City Neighborhood Rebuilding Plan provides a vision and framework of physical improvements for this unique residential neighborhood.

### Vision

Mid-City is a unique and historic New Orleans neighborhood that was severely flooded due to levee breaks on August 29th, 2005. As Mid-City recovers from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the community envisions a neighborhood where people of all races and economic backgrounds can find and enjoy a high quality of life together and find opportunities for meaningful employment and home ownership. The community will be rebuilt upon the same urban framework that existed prior to Hurricane Katrina.

### Neighborhood Recovery Goals

There are a variety of neighborhood recovery goals for Mid-City. These include:

- A safe neighborhood that allows for walking and biking with plentiful green space;
- Mixed-use buildings, with appropriate, locally-owned businesses interspersed

intelligently with private residences and a higher percentage of owner-occupied homes;

- That the historic character of the neighborhood be preserved while expanding modern amenities;
- That the recovery of Mid-City be just, humane and democratically controlled by the people of Mid-City; and
- That an effort be made to relocate displaced homeowners from more heavily damaged areas such as New Orleans East, the Ninth Ward and St. Bernard Parish to Mid-City.

Image below:  
Aerial view of Mid-City area looking towards the west.





### Planning Process and Neighborhood Participation

The Mid-City neighborhood has an active neighborhood association, the Mid-City Neighborhood Organization. This group had promulgated a neighborhood-based policy statement and revitalization vision prior to the involvement of the consultants. This included addressing housing issues and a variety of other concerns. This earlier effort is the foundation for this recovery plan.

Over a period of four months, the neighborhood association dutifully met every Monday evening at Grace Episcopal Church at 3700 Canal Street, to develop the Recovery Plan. The consultants participated, along with community members, in more than four of these meetings. In July of 2006, a committee structure was established which provided the focus for the recovery planning effort. The committees that were established played a central role in providing context and content for this document. The committees and community members who sit on each of these committees are as follows:

- **Education Committee:** Michael Homan (chair), Amy Lafont, Doug Joubert, Mary Jane Parker, Jennifer Molina, Dee Hurtt, Jeannette Thompson, Elizabeth Kennedy, Jo Ann LoRusso, Diane Nowik, Shawn Anglim, Mary Joe Decareaux, Nancy Ortiz-Surun, and Jackie Tinguey.

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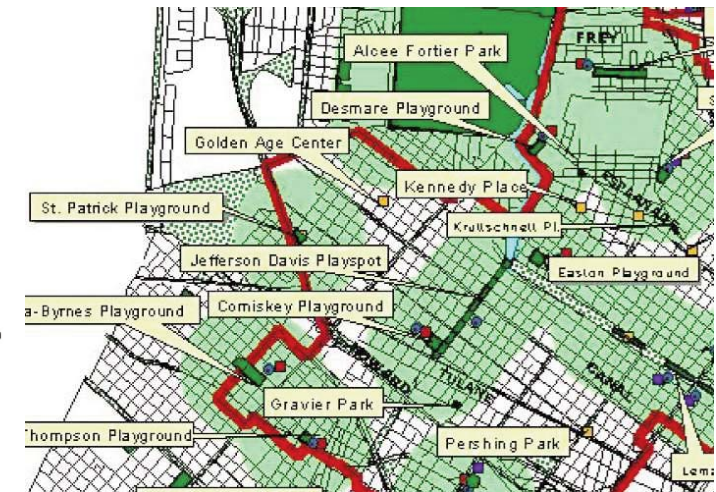
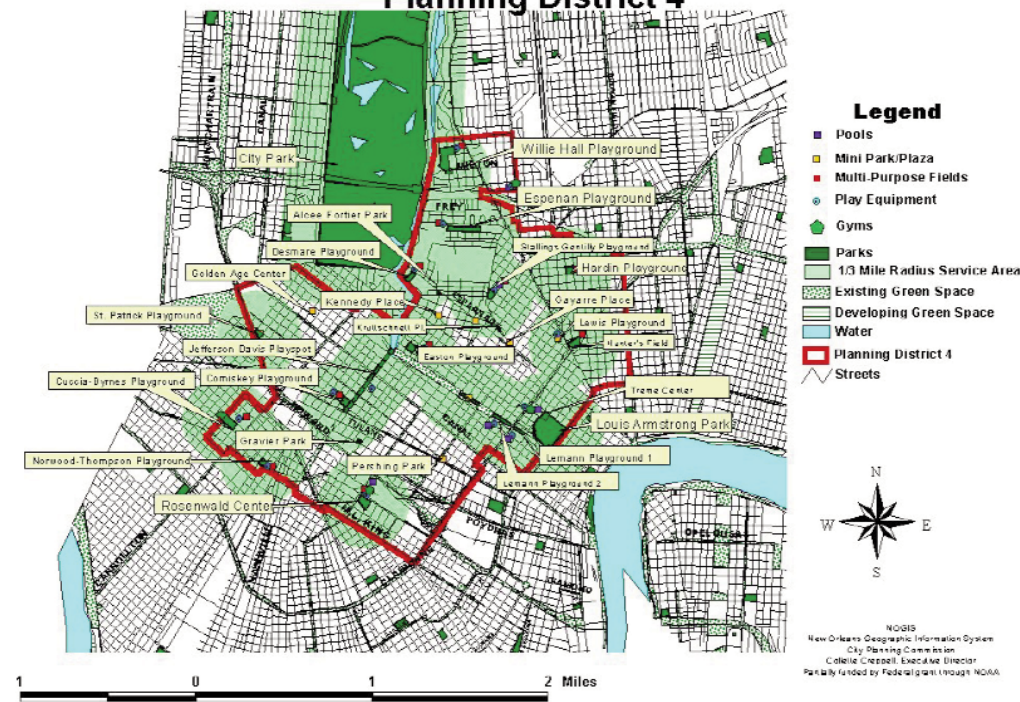
- **Hearts and Lives Committee:** Virginia Blanque (chair), Joe Porter, Kathleen Porter, Tammy Hathaway, Susan Finch, Bart Everson, Mary Gubala, and Doug Joubert

Beyond the Monday night meetings, there were three public meetings held in the neighborhood on June 10th 2006, July 8th, 2006 and August 5th, 2006 to discuss opportunities and challenges, various plan scenarios, and the preferred plan. Additionally, one-on-one and smaller group meetings were held virtually every day and night of the week as the plan was being developed. This plan is the result of countless hours of work and effort by the community and its consultants.

Images from left to right:

A - C: General District-wide Community Meetings

**Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Service Area  
Planning District 4**



**Planning Efforts Pre-Katrina**

Planning efforts pre-Hurricane Katrina addressed both district-wide and neighborhood specific issues. Planning efforts included the City of New Orleans' 1999 Land Use Plan, the New Century New Orleans Parks Master Plan of 2002 and the Transportation Master Plan of 2004.

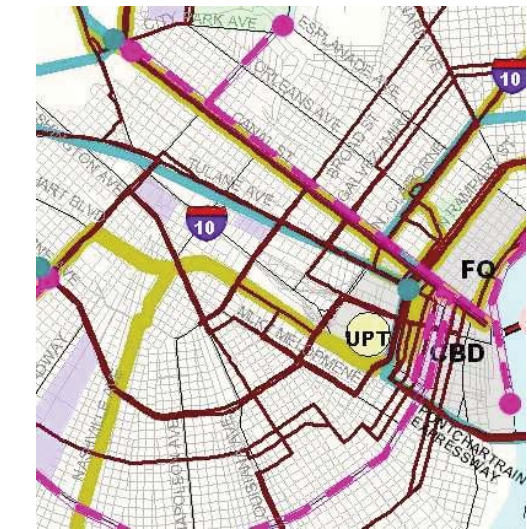
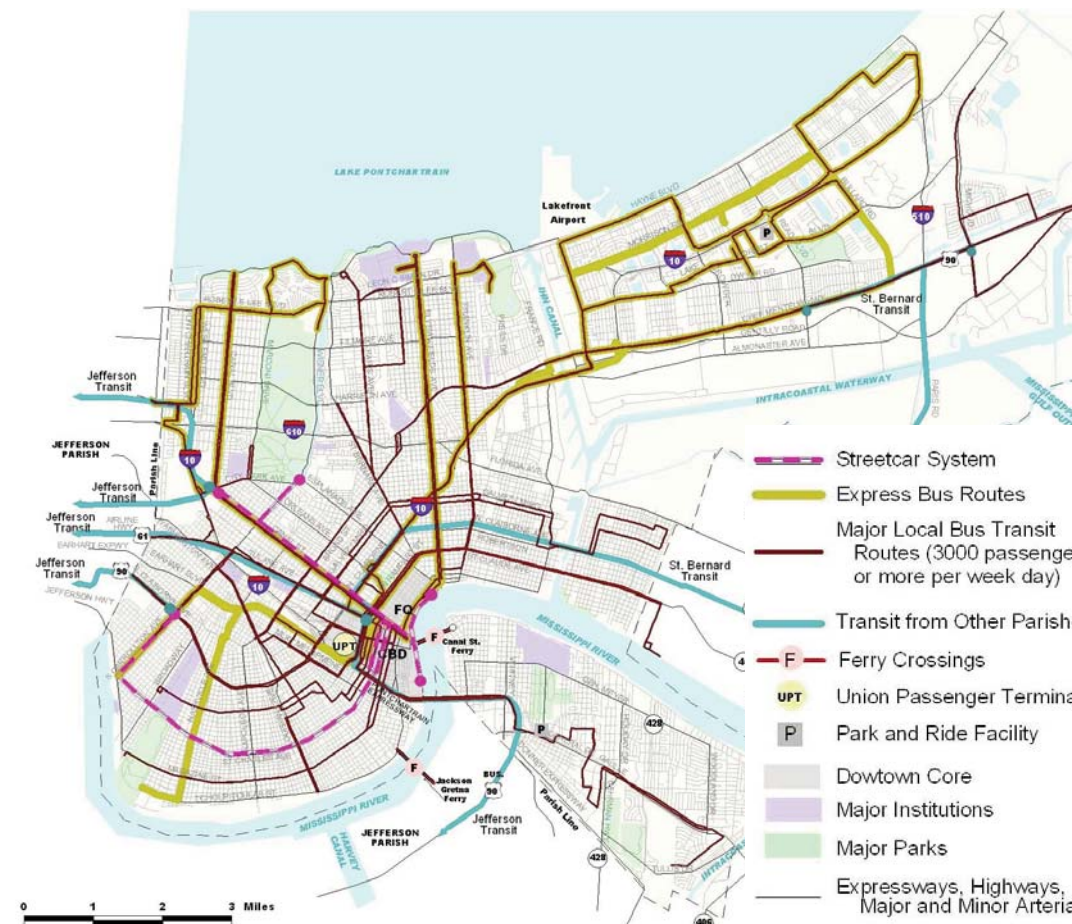
A number of specific key issues came out of the prior planning efforts that are relevant to Mid-City. These include:

- Consolidation and concentration of retail activities;
- Preservation of the residential character of the District;
- Placing emphasis on single or two-family home development with no further development of multi-family housing;
- Manicured open space should be developed on vacant sites;
- Redevelopment of all pivotal commercial parcels should occur;
- Conversion of industrial to residential should be encouraged along the Lafitte Rail Corridor;
- Specific neighborhood and sector plans should be developed; and
- An emphasis should be placed on improving the overall appearance of the area.

The **Parks Master Plan of 2002** identified improving maintenance of existing parks and park equipment as a top priority for the City of New Orleans, as well as within Planning District 4 areas where a deficiency of children's play areas existed.

The **New Century New Orleans Transportation Master Plan of 2004** indicated that bike paths within the neighborhoods of District 4 and connections to other parts of the city were needed through the removal of auto lanes and added bike lanes. It identified specific intersections where pedestrian/bicycle safety is an issue.

These plans provided a wide spectrum of public involvement for residents while addressing district-wide issues, opportunities, and neighborhood concerns. As part of this planning process these previous efforts were evaluated with the intention of providing a neighborhood plan that reflects the continuous city planning process that preceded the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.



Images from top to bottom:

Maps from:  
**City of New Orleans Parks Master Plan of 2002 and Transportation Plan of 2004**

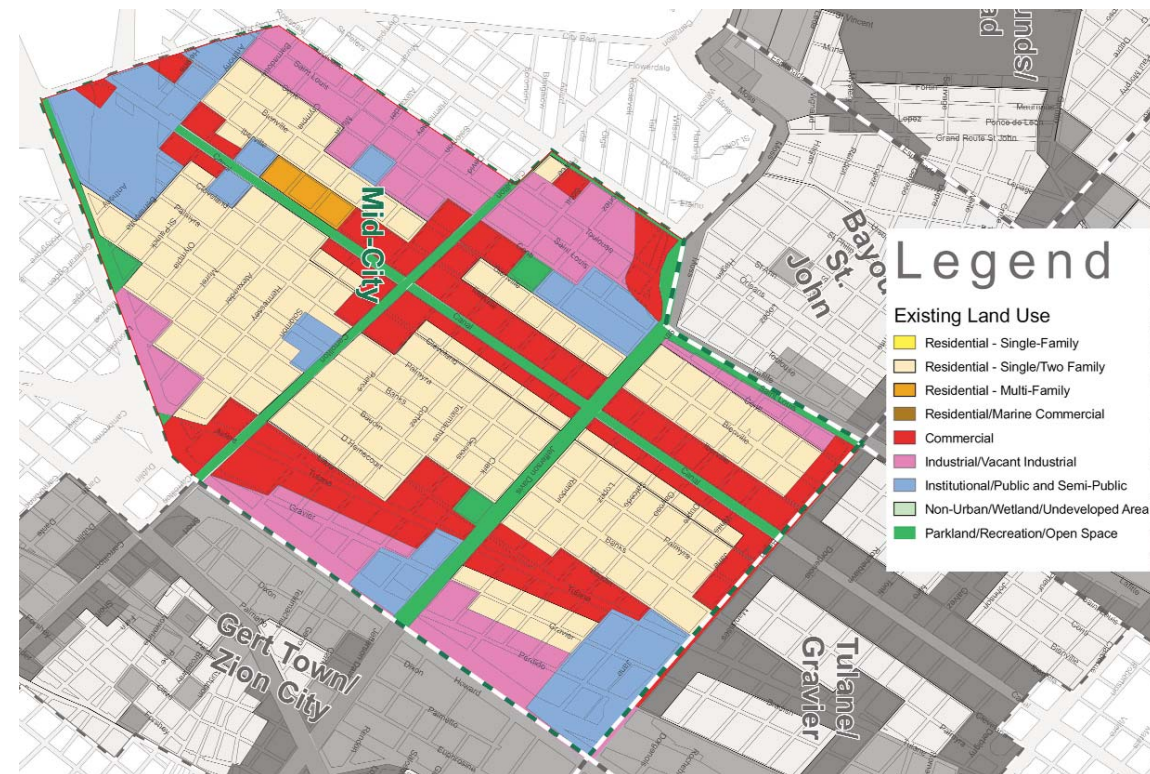


## B. Pre-Hurricane Katrina Neighborhood Existing Conditions

### Land Use and Zoning Elements

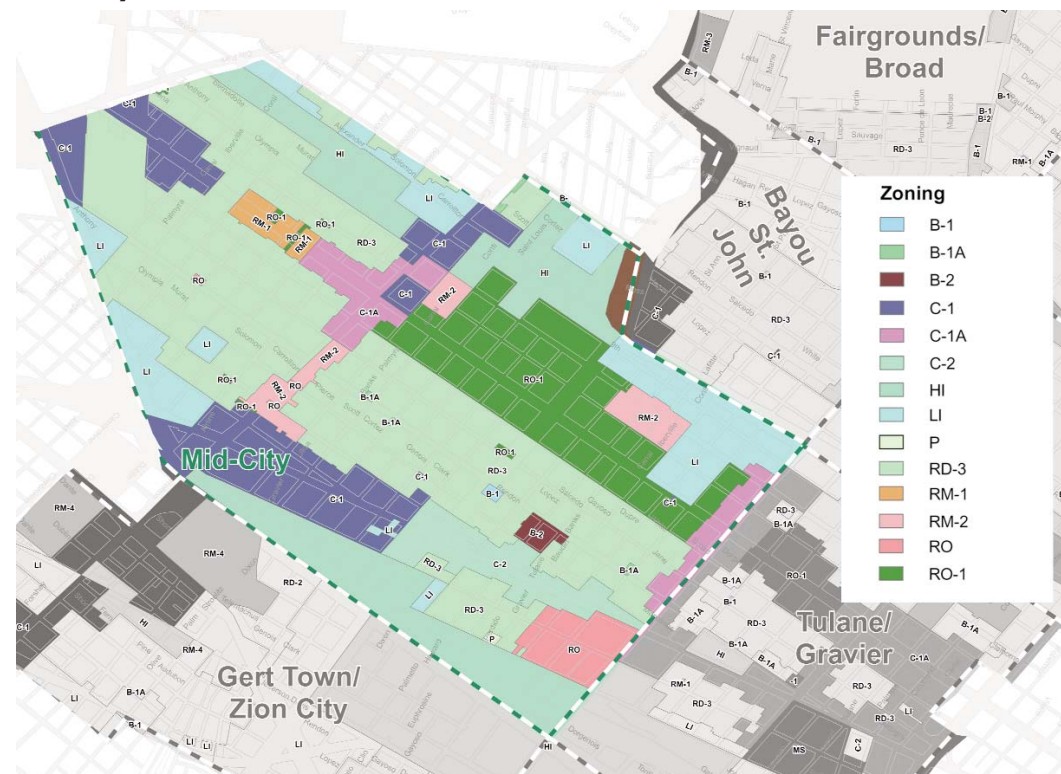
As is the case in many older inner-city neighborhoods that are well located and where there is inherent value, Mid-City has an opportunity to redevelop in a way that protects the eclectic range of uses in the neighborhood, but also takes advantage of current and future market conditions to refocus redevelopment around a variety of land uses that enhance the character of the neighborhood. The predominant land use within Mid-City is single and two-family residential development with a significant amount of multi-family, industrial, commercial and institutional uses. When discounting open space, residential development comprises more than 55% of total land in the Mid-City. Commercial uses account for 21% and Industrial an additional 13%.

The Mid-City neighborhood includes multiple zoning classifications with commercial zoning categories focused along the Tulane and Canal Avenue corridors and industrial categories between Bienville and the Lafitte Rail Corridor.



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

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



### Pre-Katrina Demographic Profile

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, according to Census 2000 data, the population of Mid-City was 19,909. However, 6,078 of the "residents" of the neighborhood were incarcerated in the Orleans Parish Prison (OPP). Therefore, for the purposes of this plan, the population of the neighborhood was more accurately around 13,800 at the time of the storm, albeit there had been a steady decline in neighborhood population over the preceding two decades. Census 2000 identified 5,827 households in Mid-City with an average household size of slightly more than two persons per household.

Of the 13,800 residents who lived in the area, only 9,380 were in family households where multiple members of the household were related by birth or marriage.

Despite the fact that the Mid-City neighborhood is largely a historic area, and has some of the grandest streets and homes in the City, there are consistent indications of persistent poverty and social distress in the neighborhood. Over 72% of the occupied units in the neighborhood were rental households (as compared to 54% citywide and 32% statewide). Of households with children, 47% of children lived without one parent present (compared to 29% statewide and 23% nationwide). Average household income





for the area was 73% of the City's, 70% of the State's and 56% of the nation's. Almost 33% of the residents of Mid-City were living in poverty, compared to less than 20% for the State and 13% for the nation. Also troubling was the fact that more than 40% of children under the age of 5 who lived in the neighborhood prior to Katrina were in poverty compared to less than half that number that for the nation's population as a whole.



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In terms of racial makeup the neighborhood generally mirrored that of the City as a whole with almost two-thirds of the population African American and one-third White. The key distinction in relation to ethnicity is the fact that 10% of the population was of Hispanic origin as compared to 3% for the City as a whole.

Overall, despite its strong locational attributes and access, charming historic character, and mature vegetation, the neighborhood was among the poorest in the City prior to Hurricane Katrina and housed a large number of low and moderate income renters. Yet, despite these challenges and largely due to the strong location of Mid-City and the fact that the neighborhood was not as severely flooded as other communities closer to Lake Pontchartrain, Mid-City is in fact rebounding on a slow but steady path.

Tenure (2000 Census)	Mid-City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Owner Occupied	27.90%	46.50%	67.90%	66.20%
Renter Occupied	72.10%	53.50%	32.10%	33.80%

Racial & Ethnic Diversity (2000 Census)	Mid-City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Black/African American	64.30%	66.00%	32.20%	12.10%
White	23.20%	26.60%	62.60%	69.20%
Other	1.60%	2.70%	1.80%	4.60%
Two race categories	0.90%	1.00%	0.90%	1.60%
Hispanic (any race)	10.00%	3.10%	2.40%	12.50%

Average Household Income (2000 Census)	Mid-City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Average Household Income (1999)	\$ 31,442	\$ 43,176	\$ 44,833	\$ 56,644

Population in Poverty (2000 Census)	Mid-City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Percent of Population In Poverty	32.10%	27.90%	19.60%	12.40%
Percent of Children Under 5 in Poverty	40.80%	43.00%	29.00%	18.10%
Percent of Population Over 65 in Poverty	25.10%	19.30%	16.70%	9.90%

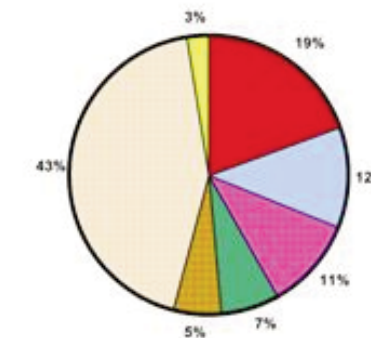
Vehicles Available (2000 Census)	Mid-City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
No vehicle available	36.10%	27.30%	11.90%	10.30%

Type of Transportation (2000 Census)	Mid-City	Orleans Parish	Louisiana	United States
Use of public transportation to work	20.00%	13.00%	2.20%	4.60%

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

**Planning District 4**

Land Use	Acreage
Commercial	855.35
Industrial/Vacant Industrial	524.15
Institutional/Public and Semi-Public	464.32
Parkland/Recreation/Open Space	303.65
Residential - Multi-Family	241.26
Residential - Single/Two Family	1,910.87
Residential - Single Family	115.90
<b>TOTAL ACREAGE</b>	<b>4,415.50</b>



**Mobility and Transportation**

Based upon figures collected by Census 2000 under 30% of residents of Mid-City 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 is the case in many neighborhoods with a high percentage of low income residents, over one-third of residents have no vehicle compared to 27% of residents citywide and 11.9% of residents in the State. The Canal Street streetcar, the only streetcar in the City that is back in operation since Katrina, is an important part of the neighborhood's transportation network and further supports focused investment in the community.

Images from left to right:

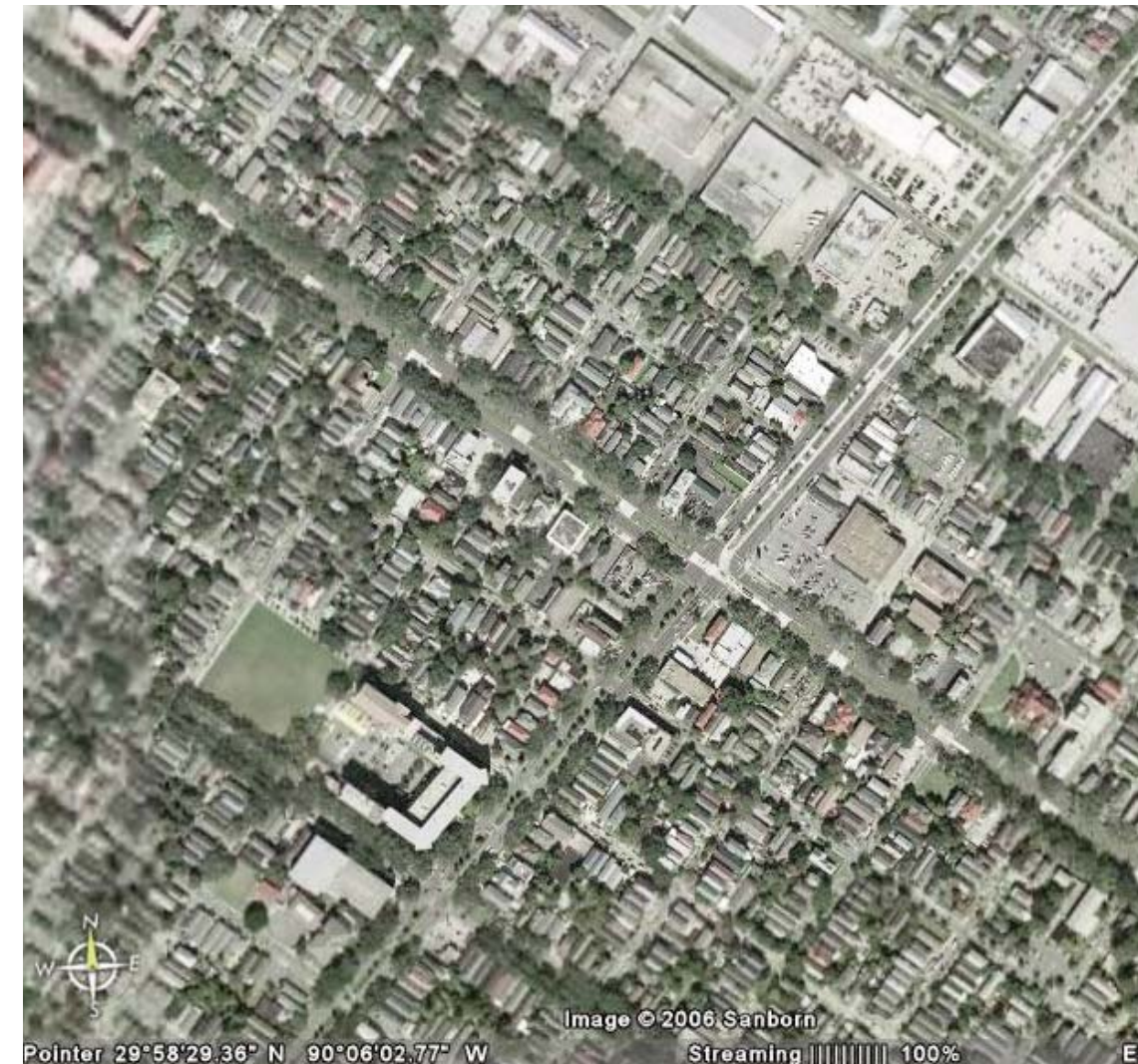
- A: Bienville Looking South**
- B: Lindy Boggs Building**
- C: Post Office**
- D: Sav-A-Center**
- E: Criminal Court Building**



### Recreation and Open Space

Mid-City is fortunate to have a significant amount of green space both within and immediately surrounding the community, although there are no public gardens, pocket-parks or community plazas/public gathering places in the neighborhood. With this in mind, it is clear that the plentiful green space will help define future opportunities for redeveloping key areas, nodes, and corridors within Mid-City. Principal green areas that help define the area include:

- **City Park** – While not officially within the Mid-City neighborhood by the definition of the City Planning Department's 1999 Master Plan, the 1,500 plus acre City Park is central to defining the community's northeastern edge, particularly given the fact that the southern areas of the Park are the most utilized from an activity perspective. The health and maintenance of City Park is critical to the long term value and opportunity for growth in Mid-City.
- **Comiskey Playground** – Comiskey Park is a 2.35-acre park that is located on Jeff Davis Parkway and Baudin Street. The park has a basketball court, playground equipment, and a baseball diamond.
- **St. Patrick's Playground** – This park is a small 1.8-acre triangular park



located at St. Patrick and Baudin Streets and has both a baseball diamond and football field.

- **Jefferson Davis Parkway Neutral Ground** - The Neutral Ground along Jefferson Davis Parkway is among the widest and most beautiful in the City. It allows the street to serve as the grand east-west boulevard of the neighborhood complementing the intersecting Canal Street. The neutral ground is generally passive with a number of monuments and walking paths, but also has children's play areas in some locations.

- **Bayou St. John** – Bayou St. John bounds the eastern edge of Jefferson Davis Parkway, and while not entirely within the neighborhood boundaries based upon the City Planning Commission's definitions is an important passive recreation anchor for the neighborhood.

- **Orleans Avenue Neutral Ground** – Just as with the Jefferson Davis Neutral Ground, the Orleans Avenue Neutral Ground provides another key greenspace which helps to delineate the neighborhood's northeast border.

- **Greenwood and Cypress Grove Cemeteries** - These historic cemeteries are important to defining the neighborhoods northwestern boundaries. They serve as key tourist attractions as well as the terminus of the Canal Streetcar line.

Images from left to right:

- A: St. Patrick's Playing Fields
- B: Cominsky Park
- C: Jeff Davis Neutral Ground
- D: Bayou St. John at Jeff Davis terminus



### Roadway Hierarchy and Jurisdiction

Mid-City is defined by a road network that includes almost every type of roadway classification.

The neighborhood is bounded on the west by the Pontchartrain Expressway and to the south by U.S. 90 (Broad Street).

Other important major arterials that bisect the neighborhood include Carrollton Avenue, a major commercial street that runs from St. Charles Avenue at the river to Esplanade Avenue at City Park, and Jeff Davis Parkway, one of the widest boulevards in New Orleans.

The most important streets running along a northeast/southwest vector are Canal Street and Tulane Avenue. These streets are key commercial corridors in the neighborhood and Canal has one of the few fixed rail transit lines in the City. Future plans, which are strongly supported by the neighborhood residents, call for the eventual connection of the Carrollton and Canal Streetcar lines, thus completing the loop through downtown New Orleans.

The Mid-City neighborhood also has two rail lines that define neighborhood boundaries and are important elements to the plan. On one end, the rail line which runs along the Pontchartrain Expressway and currently serves Amtrak is proposed to

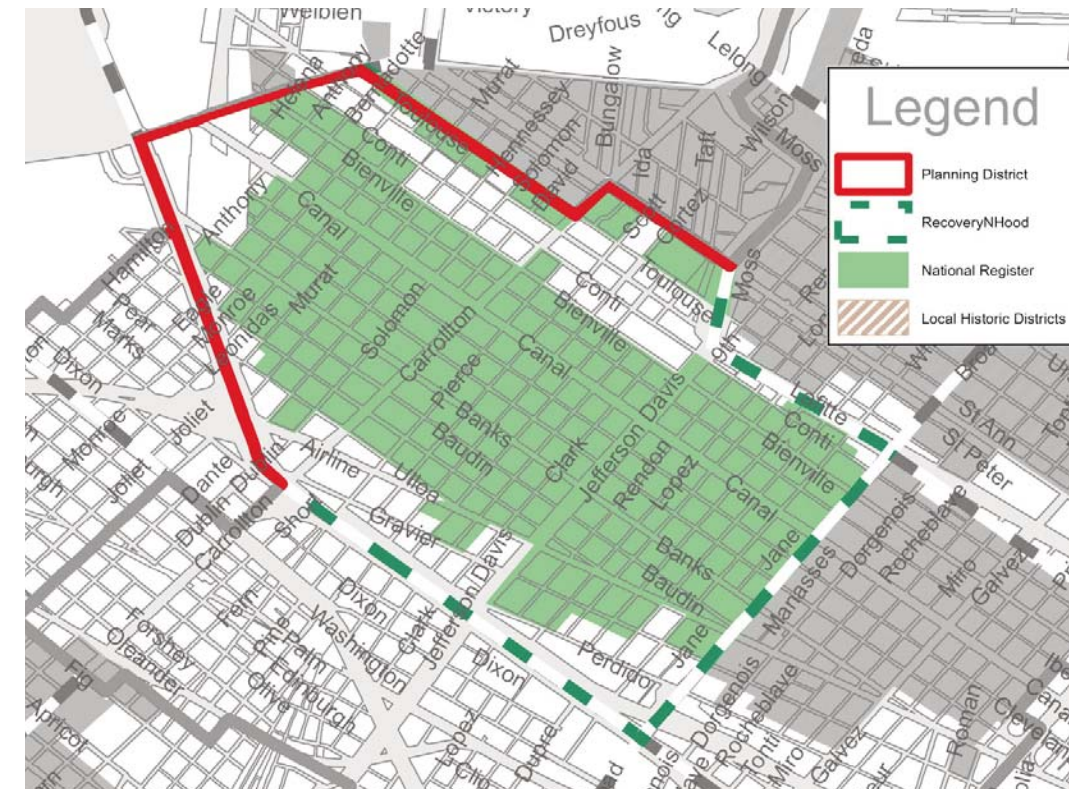
be the central line utilized for future light rail access that would serve the CBD and the Mid-City neighborhood. On the other end of the neighborhood is the Lafitte Rail Corridor (currently utilized approximately once a week for the delivery of bricks) which is proposed to be converted to a linear park through a "rails to trails" redevelopment effort.

In summary, the neighborhood has the benefit of being one of the most accessible in the City without being dissected by a major Interstate as is the case with Treme or the Historic 7th Ward. The neighborhood's street pattern is conducive to vibrant residential and commercial development.

Images from left to right:

- A: Cominsky Park - Playground Area
- B: Jeff Davis Parkway - Bike Path





## Housing, Architecture and Historic Preservation

### Housing

As previously noted, approximately three-fourths of the residents of Mid-City are renters, as compared to 54% citywide.

Rents of these homes, 63% of which were built before 1949, generally did not support the cost of regular upkeep, particularly given the nature of ownership of housing in the neighborhood. Many homes were owned by absentee landlords who may have purchased the scattered site units with the intention of maximizing profits by putting as little investment in the properties as possible, or obtained the home through inheritance but lived in another neighborhood or outside the City.

Largely due to the poor condition of homes in the area, there were a high number of blighted properties in Mid-City prior to the storm. In Census 2000, in excess of 13% of the units in the neighborhood were vacant, more than double the city's overall vacancy rate.

### Architecture

Despite the condition of the housing stock in Mid-City, the area has tremendous architectural character. Based upon a survey by the HDLC, the following

construction types/building stocks are represented: Shotguns (55.3%; i.e., single, double, camelback, and two story shotguns); Creole cottages (15%); Raised basements (9.1%); Eclectic (7.7%); Commercial/ Institutional (7.5%); and Sidehalls (4.5%). With regard to architectural "styles", the most common styles are Bungalows (31.4%), Colonial and Queen Anne Revivals (17.6%), Italianate (15.7%), Eastlake (5.8%), 20th Century Eclectic (2.6%), and Greek Revival (2.3%). The remaining 18.5% of the structures were described as No Style, Other, or Non-Contributing elements.

### Historic Preservation

It is difficult to overstate the role that historic preservation will play in the future health and benefit of the Mid-City neighborhood.

The majority of the Mid-City neighborhood is a National Historic District, and has a wide range of housing typologies from the early 20th Century. The neighborhood's Jeff Davis Parkway, Canal Street, and Orleans Avenue are among the most impressive and important streets in this nationally important historic city. Banks and Bienville are highly desirable residential streets that run practically to the CBD; and if the condition of the historic housing stock on these streets were to be significantly improved, the momentum of revitalizing these streets would clearly have

a catalytic impact on the secondary streets in the neighborhood. Jesuit, Easton High School, and Thurgood Marshall are all historic anchors in the neighborhood, and the Cemeteries and proximate Fairgrounds and City Park all provide nearby tourist attractions central to the City's long history.

One of the key concerns of the Mid-City neighborhood at this point is the fact that the National Historic District designation does not provide the level of control required to preserve the broad historic character of the neighborhood, particularly given the post-Katrina pressures on quick low-cost rehabilitation solutions.

Therefore, the neighborhood is urging the establishment of a Mid-City Local Historic District with a Local Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU) that would review and approve all proposed demolition or new reconstruction projects within the historic district of the neighborhood.

The Mid-City community wants the distinctive architectural characteristics of their neighborhood to be encouraged, maintained, and enforced during the current (and any future) rebuilding and rehabilitation efforts.

The Housing Committee of Mid-City endorses and recommends to the Zoning Committee enforcement of the Carrollton

Overlay, and development of a similar Canal Street Overlay, to preserve the character of the neighborhood.

The Canal Street Overlay would be modeled after other Carrollton Overlay which is a design regulatory tool that prescribes how new and renovated structures are to be placed on the site. Structures should be placed on the sites in a manner consistent with the established historical urban pattern. In addition, buildings are to be located near the sidewalk, maintaining a pedestrian friendly environment and urban scale. This will, in effect, allow Mid-City to protect its architectural character and reinforce its historical status.

**Above:**

**Mid-City Neighborhood  
Historic District - National Register**

**Images from Left to Right:**

**A-C: Photos of exemplary residential  
architecture found in Mid-City**





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### C. Hurricane Katrina Neighborhood Impacts

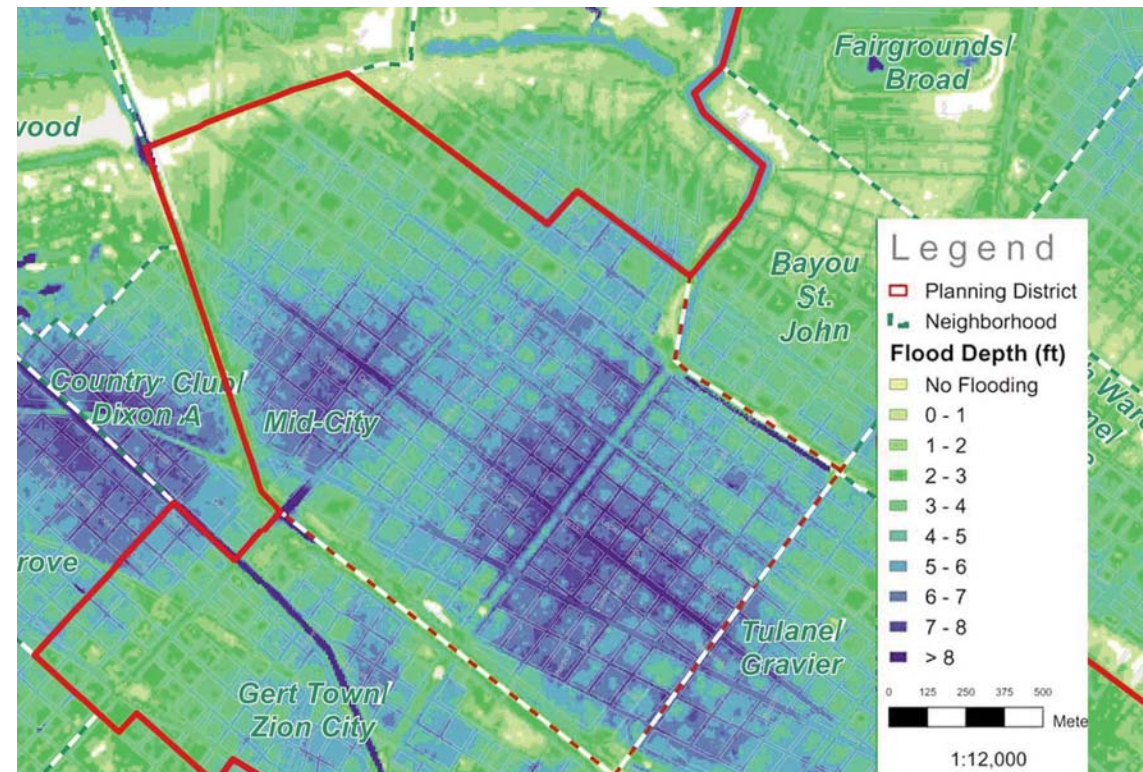
#### Extent of Flooding

The Mid-City neighborhood had the most extensive flooding of all of the neighborhoods in Planning District 4. Flooding exceeded 5 feet in approximately 60 percent of the neighborhood. Since the neighborhood has a range of elevations, certain areas experienced limited flooding. While flood depths were more significant in adjoining Planning District 5 (Lakeview), the flooding in Mid-City was the most extensive in the central part of the city, with the possible exception of Broadmoor.

#### Residential Properties Damage Assessment

While Mid-City has a significant number of homes that experienced limited damage from Katrina flooding either due to the fact that the homes were raised or they were located in higher ground areas of the neighborhood, there are substantial pockets throughout the neighborhood where homes sustained damage in excess of 40% an, in many cases, 50%.

Combined with the high concentration of lower and moderate income rental housing under small landlord ownership in the Mid-City neighborhood, the high concentration of seriously damaged properties raises significant concern with regard to the ability and inclination of non-occupied property owners to restore their units



Mid-City Neighborhood Flood Damage Map showing inundated areas of the neighborhood (above). Source: City of New Orleans - April 2006

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



without some underlying write-down, funding support, or long-term rental. Without a focused rental revitalization program many of these properties will fail to meet the economic threshold for quality reinvestment.

#### Commercial Properties Damage Assessment

While commercial properties in Mid-City were heavily impacted by the storm, and the vast majority of retail establishments continue to be closed, there appears to be a steady, albeit slow, trend towards reinvestment and revitalization. Specific observations with regard to key commercial nodes of activity include the following:

- **Tulane Corridor (Broad to Carrollton)** - Driven by the reopening of the Prison and Courthouse complex, the Tulane corridor in the neighborhood has experienced a slow return of businesses. Activity in the area not driven by these two municipal anchors has yet to return for the most part. While there is a certain amount of activity around the Carrollton/Tulane intersection with the reopened auto parts store, reopened paint store, Rock-and-Bowl, and the Fontainebleau Hotel/Mini-storage center, it is limited in nature and certainly this area presents significant opportunity for redevelopment.
- **Carrollton Corridor** - The Carrollton corridor has seen a slow but steady return of



commercial activity, particularly at the Canal/Carrollton intersection.

- **Canal Corridor** – Canal commercial activity is a mix of professional office and retail in key intersections. A steady return of doctors, accountants, and lawyers to the area appears to be underway, although it is clearly not to the extent that would indicate that a full recovery of the commercial aspects of the corridor is imminent. Additionally, the RTA continues to operate out of a series of trailers in the parking lot of the RTA bus and streetcar shed, and given the broad staff cuts at the agency, the return of use of the RTA headquarters to full service appears to be several years away.

- **Industrial Corridors** – Industrial activity in the neighborhood, particularly along and proximate to the Lafitte Corridor rail spur, appears to be largely restored to the extent they were in use prior to Katrina (many of which were not). These buildings, most of which are constructed of metal or brick/concrete, have been put back into service.

- **Lindy Boggs Hospital Complex and American Can Area** – The Lindy Boggs Hospital complex, a key employer in the area, remains closed and no plans for reopening have been announced. The American Can complex, including all of the apartments and approximately half of the commercial activity on and surrounding the property, is largely operational.

- **Banks and Bienville** – Small neighborhood retail and restaurant activity



**Above:**  
**Mid-City Street Survey showing the condition of the streets in the neighborhood.**  
**RED - Poor Condition**  
**GREEN - Fair/Good Condition**

along Banks and Bienville has partially been restored, however key intersection retail, such as that found at the intersection of Broad and Bienville, has been slow to return.

### 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 87% of the Mid-City neighborhood.

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

### Street Condition

Damage to streets was quite extensive from Hurricane Katrina. Based upon a block-by-block, street-by-street assessment we estimate that 68,600 linear feet of street need to be replaced. While Canal Street, Jeff Davis Parkway, and Tulane Avenue are in good or



adequate condition, Carrollton is only partially in acceptable condition (where it runs from Canal to City Park) and partially in very poor condition (from Canal to the Expressway), much of the rest of the neighborhood's streets are in deplorable shape. Banks and Bienville, St. Louis, and the many secondary streets that run parallel to Jeff Davis and perpendicular to Canal are strewn with potholes that make whole lanes, if not whole streets, impassable or unusable.

#### Street Signage and Way-Finding

Street signs and way-finding signs sustained heavy losses 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 Mid-City 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 Mid-City. 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 has been difficult to obtain federal funding to address.

All of the parks in the neighborhood including Comiskey Playground and St. Patrick's Playground require wholesale renewal and there are no operating funds to appropriately program these facilities. The neutral grounds of Jeff Davis and Orleans have largely been cleaned and restored.

The poor condition of City Park, while not in the neighborhood's official boundaries, continues to negatively impact Mid-City's recreation options.

#### Community and Other Major Public Facilities

There are a broad range of public and community facilities located in Mid-City. Schools account for a significant number of these facilities and are central elements to defining the neighborhood. Almost all of these facilities were damaged to some extent as a result of the storm; however, the list below provides an indication of the facility and their current operating status.

- Jesuit High School - open and operating
- Warren Easton High School-open
- Thurgood Marshall- closed
- St. Anthony School-open
- A.D Crossman Elementary School - closed / plans for reopening undetermined
- Fisk-Howard Elementary School - closed - plans for reopening undetermined
- Israel Augustine Middle School - status undetermined
- John Dibert Elementary School – open, Recovery District School

Other major community facilities in the neighborhood include the Lindy Boggs Medical Complex which remains closed. No information is currently available on the status for reopening or conversion to some other use.

Public facilities in the area include the municipal courthouse, which is currently operating and the Orleans Parish Prison Complex which, while operating, has a significantly reduced number of inmates compared to prior to the storm.

Nearby community and public facilities that impact the neighborhood's future include Delgado Community College which reopened in January 2006 with limited capacity. Eight of the City Park Campus' twenty-five buildings are now accommodating returning students. Flooding and wind from the hurricane damaged approximately 70% of the facilities on the campus. Additionally, Xavier University is nearby and anchors one of the four corners of the I-10/Carrollton intersection.

Images from left to right:

- A: Dibert Elementary School
- B: Xavier University
- C: Jesuit High School on S. Carrollton
- D: Warren Easton High School





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## D. Neighborhood Rebuilding Scenarios

The proposed recovery plan will conform to the existing neighborhood urban structure. 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 with limited intervention as it relates to zoning and other land use changes. These 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 residential/commercial use along the Lafitte rails-to-trails corridor). The neighborhood has established the following specific goals for the recovery of the neighborhood, no matter what the rebuilding strategy.

**1. 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.

**2. Focus on both for-sale and rental housing redevelopment and reconstruction and the implementation of key policies** detailed later in this document that will assist in ensuring that the housing stock of the neighborhood is restored in a sensitive fashion (particularly as it relates to the historic character) and the condition of the housing stock and stability of

neighborhoods is improved to a housing level above that which existed prior to Katrina;

**3. Ensure the redevelopment of recreation and other community facilities**, providing returning and new families to have the necessary services and amenities. This includes creation of pocket parks and children playgrounds, restoration of destroyed parks to include the activities previously identified by the community, and the reconstruction of City Park. Additionally, critical community services such as fire protection, must be addressed immediately to ensure the safety of the community during reconstruction.

**4. Mid-City's economic diversity is an integral part of its recovery.** The community will continue to support and foster this historic and unique mix of residential, commercial, and industrial zones. Additionally, the community is committed that any redevelopment scenario ensure:

*o A re-developed Tulane Avenue corridor. With its central location, numerous under-utilized properties, and potential to accommodate various sized projects, a Tulane Avenue commerce center can act as an economic incubator for the city.*

*o Mid-City's commercial redevelopment (especially throughout the*

*Carrollton Avenue commercial corridor) will be focused on walkability, street-side storefronts, and neighborhood-friendly businesses such as small bookstores, early childhood development centers, and service-oriented shops (cleaners, tailor, fitness studios, restaurants).*

*o The Canal streetcar line and Carrollton Avenue spur provide Mid-City with a direct connection to the tourist and conventioner dollar. Therefore, Mid-City must capitalize on this by promoting the development and marketing of cultural attractions (e.g., music venues, art galleries, an independent movie theater, historic tours). Additionally, the neighborhood promoters must be focused on attracting recreation-based business to the area, such as bicycle and/or canoe rental.*

*o The community will ensure a symbiotic relationship between residents' needs and concerns and the needs and concerns of neighborhood businesses.*

*o Mid-City must encourage the recovery of the small business community in any way possible.*

*o By keeping neighbors and small businesses involved and informed, the Mid-City community should foster both large and small-scale commercial redevelopment, with a vision towards retaining and preserving the historic charm*

*of the Mid-City neighborhood and improving the quality of life.*

*o Transit oriented development- a regional concept, will be supported to bring together intermodal mixed use with the increase of density and the development of a destination project, "Midtown New Orleans" at the intersection of Carrollton, the I-10 and Tulane Avenue.*

**5. As it relates to parks and recreation**, City Park is a wonderful amenity, but it is no substitute for smaller parks intermixed throughout residential areas. Research indicates people do not use green space further away than a three-minute walk. Open, public green space is needed within a three-minute walk of any home in Mid-City. This requires that green space distributed at intervals of approximately 1,500 feet. More than half of Mid-City can achieve this through the creation of a linear park on the Lafitte Corridor and through enhancement of the Jeff Davis neutral ground. Key areas in need of green space are the area near Broad and above Canal and the Carrollton corridor on the Uptown side of Canal. Community centers are needed within larger parks. Specifically, as it relates to any rebuilding scenario, the community is seeking:

*o The Rails-to-Trails Project along the Lafitte Corridor, along with any other green space the project will provide.*



- o At least four small community planting gardens throughout Mid-City.

- o A dog park in Mid City.

- o The development of St. Patrick's Park, along with a multi-use complex, such as the Joe Brown Complex in New Orleans East.

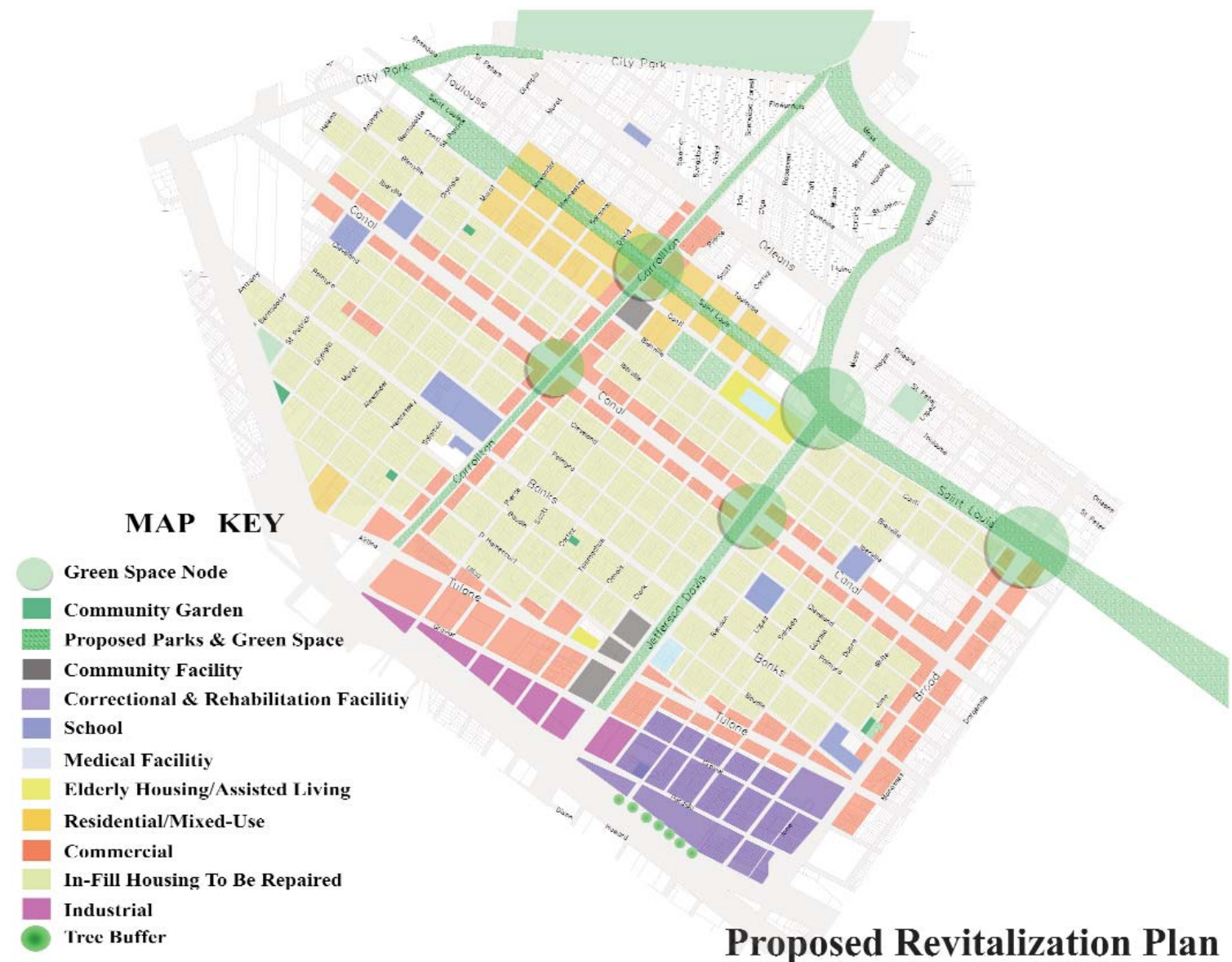
- o Development of the warehouse area adjacent to the linear park (rails-to-trails) with mixed use opportunities including, multi-family housing, retail facilities, art studios and exhibit space, way-finding devices to community historic structures, plazas, seats, landscaping and lighting.

- o The revitalization of Comisky Park and the YWCA as a playground, community center, and indoor sports complex. The Comisky location would give a visible field with nearby open parking along the Jeff Davis corridor in which all children could participate;

- o Funding the City Park improvements that support the master plan developed prior to the storm.

- o That the Bayou St. John area across from the post office be more user friendly, with added benches, more trees, shrubbery, etc., to become a destination area for people to come and enjoy.

- o That more trees be planted, especially flowering trees that are native to the area. Residents would also like to have an arborist to care for the many trees on the city property that have been neglected. Also related to this would be beautification, especially along Jeff Davis and Orleans Avenue, the areas of the large neutral grounds that could be beautified by



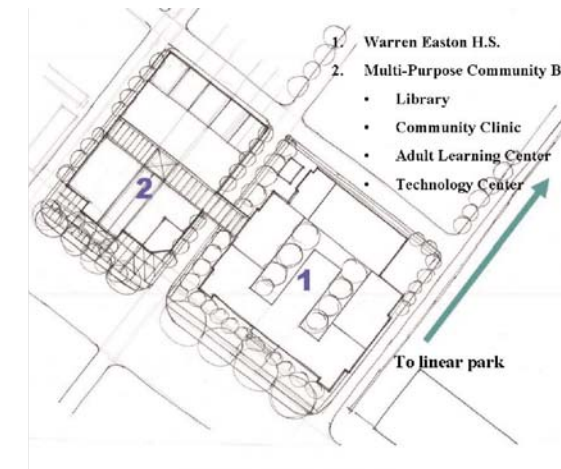
### E. Neighborhood Recovery Plan

The following details the neighborhood recovery plan broken down by key projects and stages of implementation. The plan's elements fall into one of two general categories: 1) Capital projects for which there is a direct investment associated with the project and 2) policies, which call for changes in regulations or enforcement. Additionally, both capital projects and policies may have recurring operating costs associated with them; these are noted within the context of the recovery plan.

It is important to note that what is highlighted herein principally ties to the prioritization matrix included as part of this report. However, the Mid-City Neighborhood Organization has been developing a recovery plan and policy statement beginning a few months after Hurricane Katrina, and this plan/statement will continue to form the basis of how the neighborhood's residents monitor, evaluate, and participate in the revitalization of their community. Additionally, it is expected that the neighborhood organization's plan will continue to be the living document guiding redevelopment and reconstruction in the Mid-City area over the next several years. The Organization's plan can be found at:

[http://thinknola.com/wiki/Mid-City\\_Recovery\\_Plan](http://thinknola.com/wiki/Mid-City_Recovery_Plan)

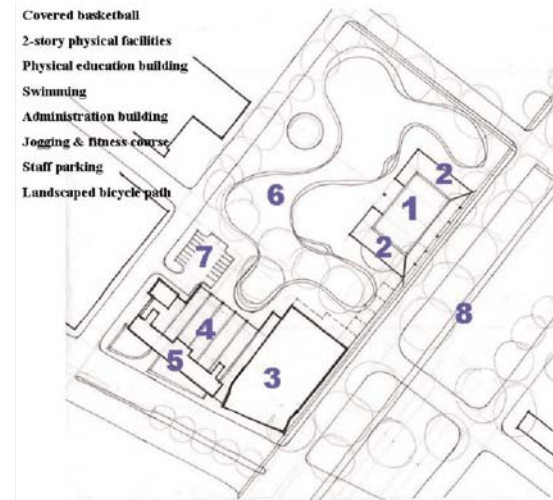
and is updated on a regular basis.



**LEFT:**  
**Aerial and Site Plan of Proposed New Public Library adjacent to Warren Easton High School**



**LEFT:**  
Aerial view and Site Plan for Proposed Renovation of YMCA and Cominsky Park as revitalized Playground, Community Center and Indoor Sports Center

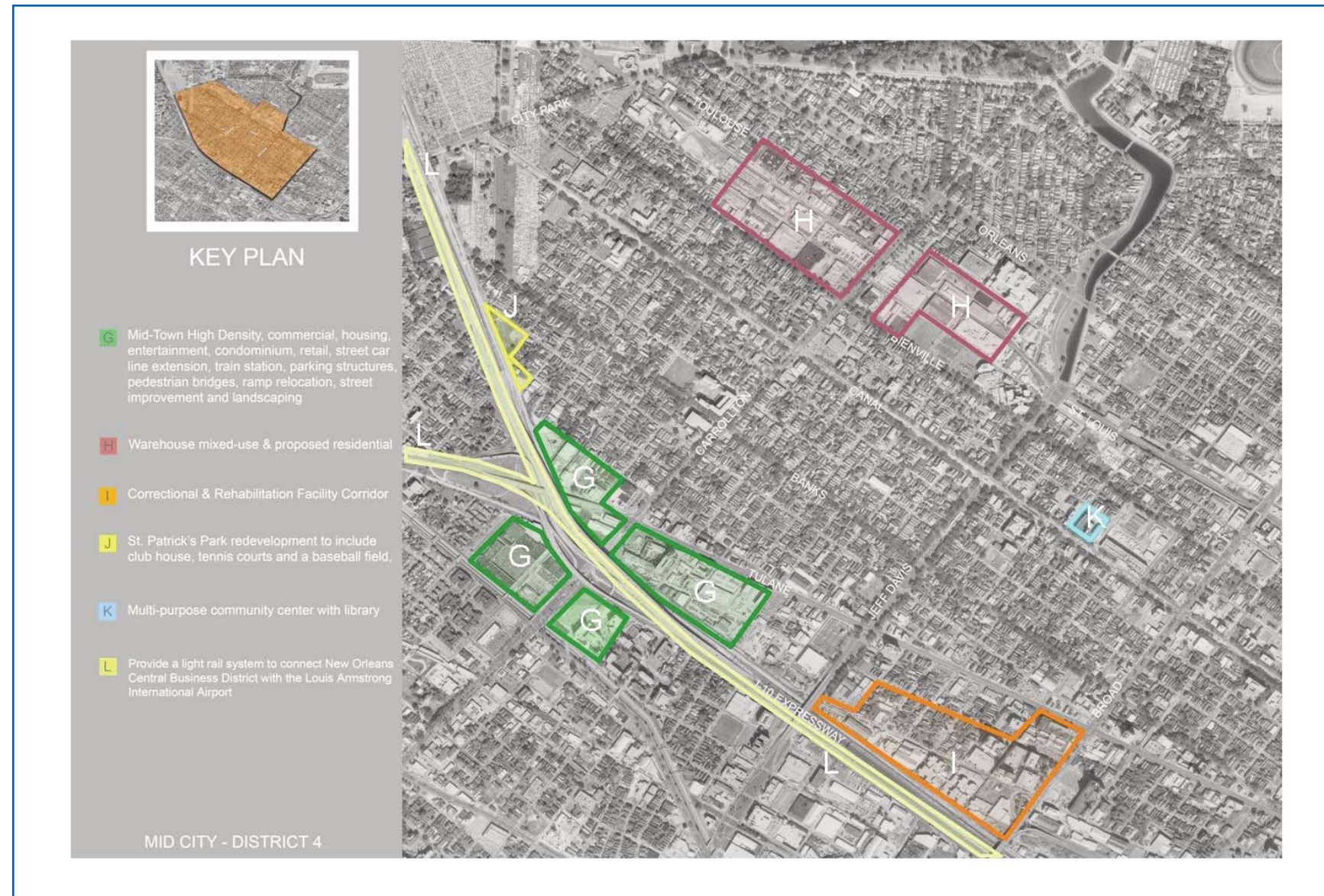


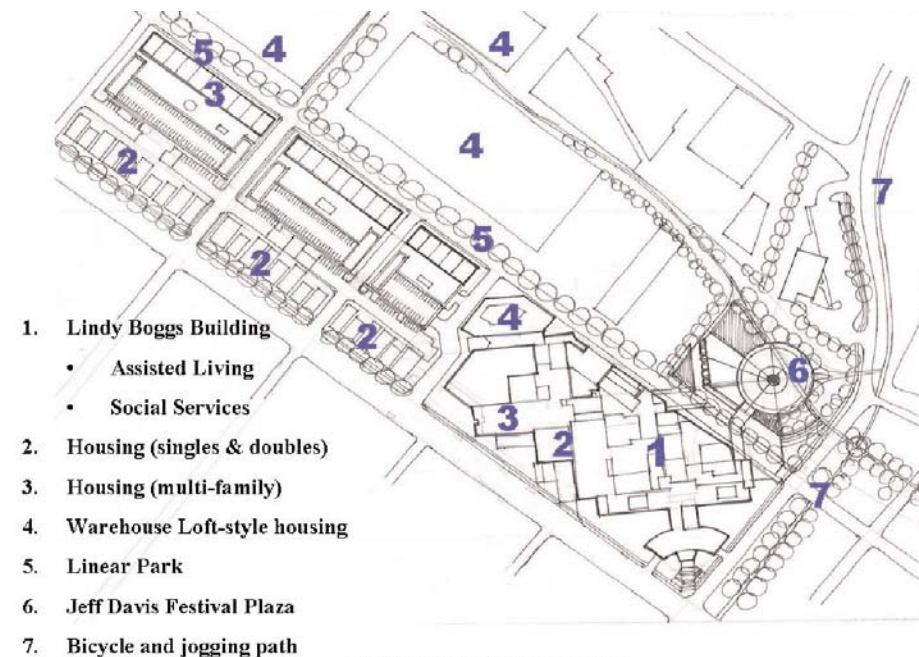
### CRITICAL EARLY ACTION RECOVERY INITIATIVES AND OBJECTIVES

The following are recovery projects that the neighborhood's residents consider critical to Mid-City's revitalization.

**Repair, Restore and Improve all Underground Utilities** – The City's water system continues to require repair despite significant progress in recent months. It is important that the Federal government and State entities ensure that the Sewage & Water Board has the necessary resources to quickly repair systems and the Sewage & Water Board develop a rational plan for addressing the leaks and breaks in the system so that above ground improvements can begin.

**Repair Streets, Sidewalks, Traffic Signals/Signs, Street Lights, and Replace Missing Drain, Manhole, Catch Basins and Water Meter Covers** - There are approximately 68,500 linear feet of street and sidewalks that need to be replaced in Mid-City. While many streetlights have already been repaired, the introduction of more attractive pedestrian-scale lighting is preferred in areas where reasonable. All drain, manhole, catch basis and water meter covers also require replacement.





**Add Trees and Benches to the Area of Bayou St. John Near the Post Office –**

Improving the quality of the green spaces is important to the revitalization of the neighborhood and, therefore, the neighborhood is seeking the addition of trees and benches along Bayou St. John near the Post Office. These added amenities will enhance the attractiveness and passive park-like nature of the area.

**New Public Library –** The neighborhood is seeking the development of a new public library to be located adjacent to Warren Easton High School on the Physician’s Hospital Site. The neighborhood recently received funding to support the build-out and operation of a temporary library in the area and is now seeking additional funding so the library can find a permanent home in the neighborhood.

**Study Development of a Mid-City Community Health Clinic, Senior Housing and Medical Care Complex at Lindy Boggs Site or Site Nearby –** The neighborhood believes the rapid restoration of the Lindy Boggs complex to commerce is an important element to the neighborhood’s revitalization. While it is unclear what the current owners intend to do with the property at this point, it is important to study reuse of the property for non-hospital



uses, looking at a broad range of opportunities to re-use the site for a mix of health care and residential use.

**Restore Public Schools in Neighborhood -** Emphasis should be placed upon restoring John Dibert Elementary, Thurgood Marshall Middle School, and Warren Easton High School. As the schools are reconstructed, the opportunity should afford the recovery school district the chance to create facilities of excellence with the mix of academic facilities found in newly built schools across the nation.

**Clean-Up, Rapid Restoration of City and Other Services –** One of the key elements that will restore a sense of normalcy in the neighborhood is the basic clean-up of the neighborhood and the restoration of day-to-day municipal services. This includes once-a-week removal of debris and hazardous substances, restoration of twice a week garbage removal, and the reintroduction of door-to-door postal service.

**Aggressively Protect Mid-City’s Historic and Architectural Character to Protect and Improve Quality of Life –** As has been noted throughout this plan, the degree and extent to which the Mid-City neighborhood recovers and improves is dependent upon its protection of the historic and architectural character of the



neighborhood. This includes designation of the area as a Local Historic District, which vests the neighborhood with the level of regulatory protection and oversight it deserves.

**Focus on Rehabilitation of Damaged and Blighted Housing and Commercial Structures –** The neighborhood cannot recover without a viable housing stock to accommodate displaced residents and attract new residents into the neighborhood. This can only be accomplished by addressing the large number of damaged and blighted homes in the neighborhood. While the neighborhood supports the Road Home initiatives at is relates to both homeowner and rental housing, the neighborhood believes there needs to be a richer range of housing programs to address the blighting conditions that both existed before the storm and which were exacerbated by Katrina. The neighborhood supports the Lot Next Door program, elderly housing initiative, and the reinvestment of second generation funds from the sale of homes or properties in higher income areas into areas such as Mid-City. These programs are more fully described below. An aggressive effort to support business development and the restoration of commercial properties need to be a focus of any revitalization effort as well.

**Urge City Council to Adopt the**

Images ABOVE:

**Aerial, Site Plan and Illustrative Perspective for proposed Lafitte Corridor Rail Right-of-Way into Linear Park and Trail system.**

**Recommendations of the Planning Commission’s Land Use Plan and the Development of a Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance –** Healthy development in the neighborhood will be defined by maintaining strong controls over development and this can only occur through the imposition of a thoughtful land use plan and zoning code.

**NEEDED AND MID TERM INITIATIVES AND OBJECTIVES**

**Turn Lafitte / Bienville Corridor Rail Right-of-Way into Linear Park and Trail System –** In order to better tie the community through pedestrian access and bike to other areas of the City and to create a linear park or trail which can become the centerpiece for further development of a older industrial area of the neighborhood, the neighborhood is seeking the development of the Lafitte rail line into a pedestrian/bike trail that extends from the Municipal Auditorium to the cemeteries on Canal Boulevard. The redevelopment of this rail line into a pedestrian and bike trail creates the impetus for additional residential and commercial development in what is now principally an industrial corridor.

**Redesign St. Patrick’s Park to include Field and Multi-Use Recreation Complex –** The St. Patrick’s Park should be redesigned to serve both outdoor and





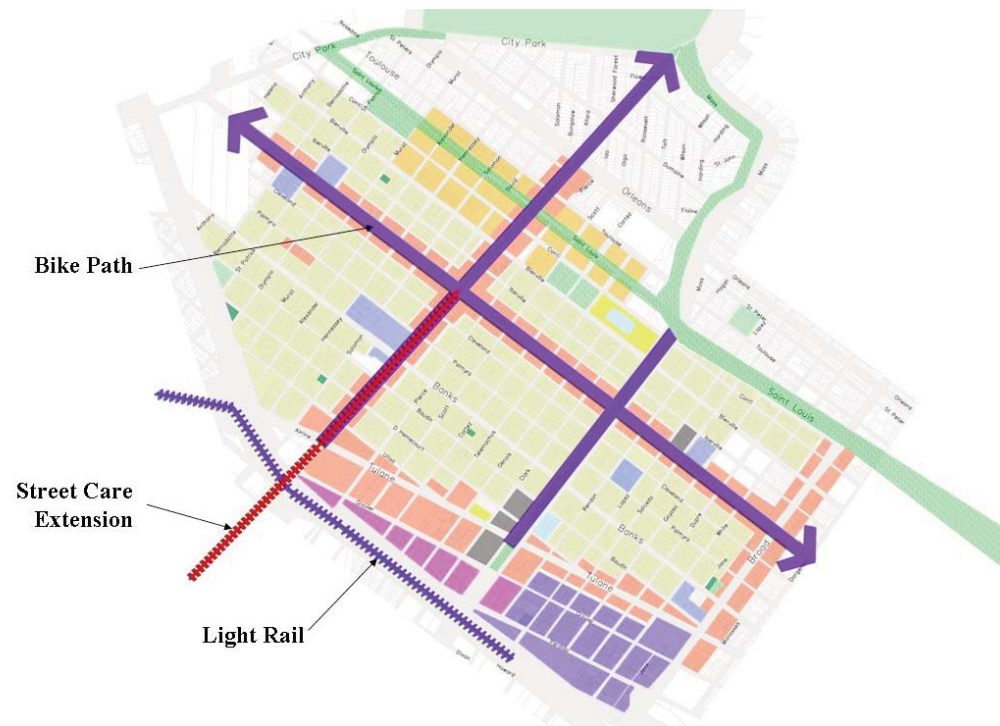
indoor recreation needs. However, the indoor complex will not be as extensive as the community center proposed for Cominsky Park.

**Enhance Jeff Davis Parkway and Orleans Avenue Neutral Grounds with Additional Trees and Public Gardens** – The neutral grounds of grand boulevards can be significantly enhanced through the planting of trees and public gardens which will allow these public spaces to rival some of the grandest streets in the nation.

**Develop Mid-City Dog Park and Add Four Small Community Gardens** – There is strong interest among Mid-City residents for the development of a dog park and four small community gardens within the neighborhood. These most likely can be developed in areas which will be cleared of large numbers of blighted structures although the gardens must be scattered throughout the neighborhood to serve the largest number of residents.

**Fund Youth Outreach, Vocational Training, Crime Prevention Techniques and a Judicial Liaison Program to Ensure Neighborhood Safety** – It is important that a holistic strategy be undertaken to address crime in the neighborhood and that the strategy be implemented at the neighborhood level.

The following are recovery projects that



**Bike Path – Street Car Line Extension – Light Rail**



**Images LEFT:**  
**Proposed light rail development along the Pontchartrain Expressway**

the neighborhood's residents consider critical to Mid-City's revitalization.

Avenue, Canal Street, Tulane Avenue, Broad Street, and the Conti Street Corridor.

**DESIRED AND LONG TERM INITIATIVES AND OBJECTIVES**

**Renovate YMCA and Cominsky Park as Revitalized Playground, Community Center and Indoor Sports Center** – The plan identifies Cominsky Park as being a centerpiece recreation and community center for the Mid-City neighborhood. This community and recreation center developed in conjunction with the YMCA is envisioned as a state-of-the-art facility with indoor tracks, pools, basketball courts, fitness center, and meeting and intergenerational elements that serve the needs of both the youth and elderly of the community.

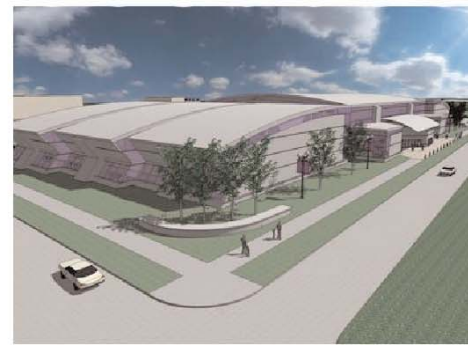
**Build Community Centers on or Nearby Public School Campuses** – In order to encourage interaction between students, teachers and community members, any development of community centers in the area should be co-located with school facilities.

**Encourage Development of Light Rail Along the Pontchartrain Expressway which connects the Central Business District to the Louis Armstrong International Airport** – The development of a light rail system connecting the airport to the CBD is considered to be of significant benefit to the residents and businesses in the neighborhood.

**Study Redevelopment Options for Commercial Corridors in Neighborhood** – The restoration of commercial services was consistently identified as a key element of the neighborhoods recovery although determining the scope of public involvement in ensuring that this redevelopment occurs in a way which is consistent with broader community renewal goes beyond the scope of this plan. Therefore, the plan calls for further study of the commercial opportunity and investment required to encourage commercial development along Carrollton

**Study Construction of Internal Flood Protection Levees** – While the restoration of the flood protection system for the City is currently underway, the residents of the neighborhood believe that it is critical to look at a layered system of defense with regard to hazard mitigation and flood protection and therefore encourages the study of a secondary internal flood protection system that would protect Mid-City and adjoining neighborhoods in the event of a break in the existing levee and broader City/regional flood protection network.

ALTERNATE PROPOSAL FOR MIXED-USE  
INDOOR SPORTS COMPLEX  
AT THE FORMER ALBERTSON'S SITE  
AND MAIN LIBRARY SITE



NEIGHBORHOOD REBUILDING PLAN

GILFON B. JAMES AND ASSOCIATES

NEW ORLEANS, LA

A Collaboration with the citizens of Mid-City

**Images TOP:**  
**Proposal for Mixed-Use Sports Complex at Former Albertson's Site and Main Library Site**

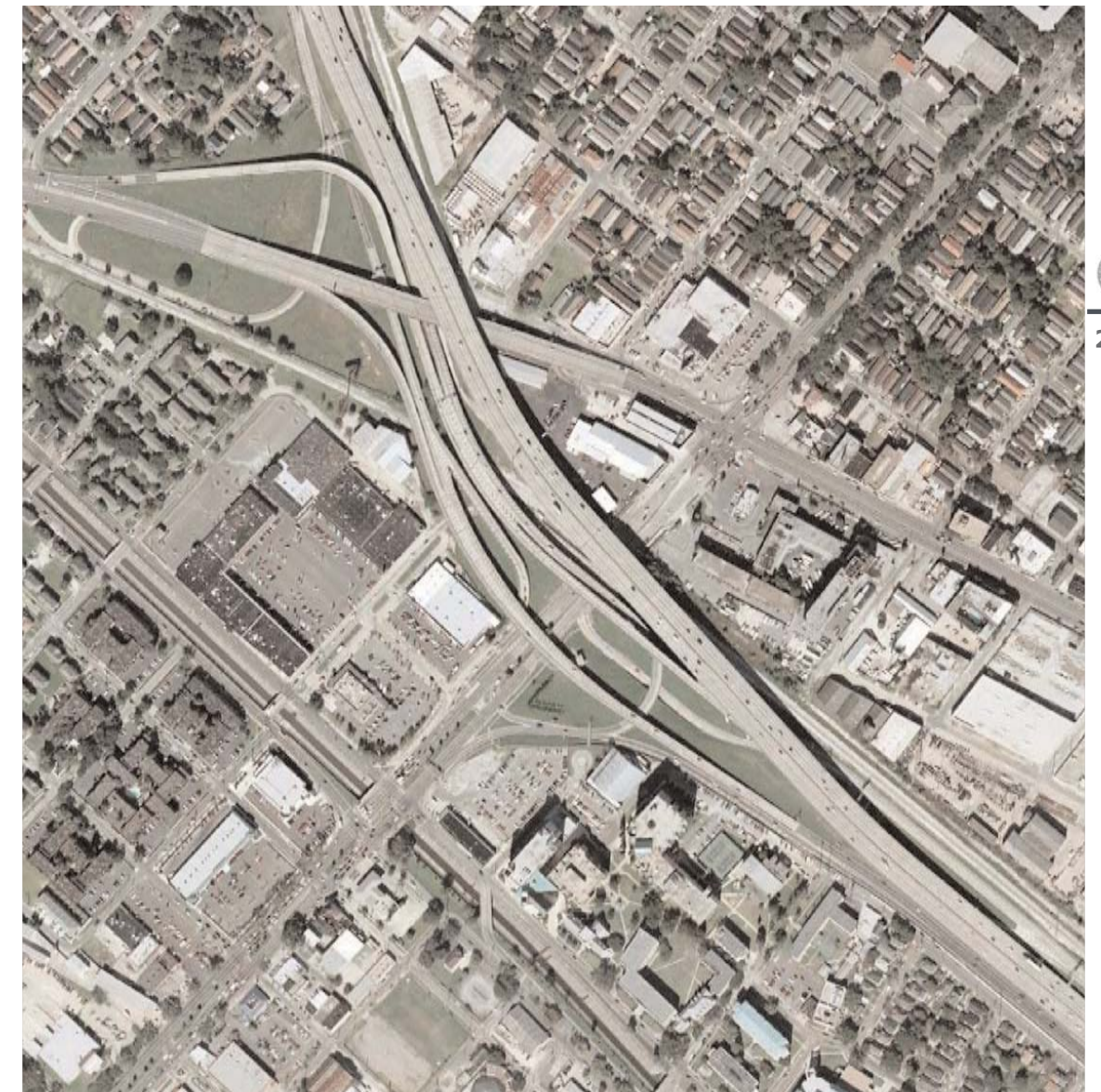
**Images Top - Right to Left:**  
**Proposed Mid-Town / Xavier Redevelopment at Carrollton**  
**A: Land Use - First Level**  
**B: Land Use & Circulation System - Second Level**  
**C: Overall Land Use Plan - Roof Level**



**Study and Encourage Development of "Midtown New Orleans"** – Broad scale redevelopment, including the identification of funding strategies, should be studied for the four corners where the I-10 meets Carrollton and Tulane Avenues. This is one of the most important intersections in the City and has the potential to become a key gateway into the City from the west, can help stem the leakage of retail sales into Jefferson Parish if large parcels are created in the area to support larger scale retailers, and is currently in a state of serious disrepair where the acquisition of a large number of parcels becomes possible.

**Extend Existing Transportation Options and Maintain Neighborhood Walkability** – A concerted effort should be made to extend the various transportation options in the area through the extension of streetcar lines and by adding pedestrian and bike paths wherever feasible.

**Endorse Full Funding of City Park** – City Park is one of the City's gems that helps make Mid-City the strong community it is. The health of City Park is directly tied to the health of Mid-City and the neighborhood strongly endorses extra effort being placed on identifying public funding which will help restore as well as operate this important neighborhood anchor.





### NEIGHBORHOODS REBUILDING 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 a summary of the policies that are relevant to Mid-City are highlighted.

### HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

There are a number of general and specific housing development and policy considerations within the historic neighborhoods of New Orleans that received significant damage in Hurricane Katrina. The challenges of rebuilding are particularly severe in those historic neighborhoods where a significant number of low and moderate income households resided prior to the storm.

The City of New Orleans, prior to Hurricane Katrina, generally made \$25,000 soft second mortgages available through the HOME program to write down the cost of acquisition for eligible families in Community Development neighborhoods throughout the City. However, even before the storm, this amount was generally not enough to cover the gap in funding that was required to rehabilitate units that were historic structures and required

special consideration. Typically construction costs related to historic buildings is as much as 30 percent above non-historic new construction, and while the City made exceptions and increased the maximum funding available in some cases due to historic considerations, given the limited funds available, the increase in funding for historic homes meant that fewer units would be rehabilitated overall.

Today, rapid escalation in construction costs in the post-Katrina period has further eroded the degree to which the \$25,000 fills gaps in funding for new construction, let alone more costly historic rehabilitation. There is a need for expanded historic and blighted housing gap funding in order to ensure the long term health and character of these unique neighborhoods.

Assuming that the gap for new home construction (maintaining affordability for low and moderate income families) now stands at \$30,000, the amount required for the restoration of a historic home could be in excess of \$50,000 (covering the additional cost of not only that portion addressed by the \$30,000 in new construction, but a widened gap associated with the entire unit reconstruction).

While gap financing of \$50,000 per unit or \$5.0 million for every 100 units of blighted units of historic housing is quite





significant, it is difficult to see how the historic fabric of many low and moderate income neighborhoods will be maintained without the provision of this funding. Otherwise, the character of many neighborhoods will be placed at risk by displacement of the neighborhood's low and moderate income residents or the further erosion of a neighborhood's historic character.

Currently, no gap funding program is addressing this challenge, and without additional use of CDBG funds to fill these gaps, the historic and community fabric of many of the historic moderate income neighborhoods of New Orleans remains threatened. Changes in the Road Home and other gap funding efforts should take into account the historic nature of the neighborhood and make enhanced funding available, which will allow the neighborhoods to retain their historic character while concurrently continuing to serve moderate and low income households.

**LOT NEXT DOOR**

The principal thrust of redevelopment programs and policies that encourage the 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 that 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 ROAD HOME TIE-IN**

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) that sustained substantial damage and which will require the demolition and reconstruction of many homes.

Historically, the challenges of dealing with contractors, permit inspectors, lenders, etc. have proven particularly difficult for elderly households after they have experienced similar trauma. Additionally, there are a substantial number of areas of the City 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, 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, 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, is needed. 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 come up repeatedly in neighborhood meetings is how properties that end up in public ownership either through the adjudication 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 ensure 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 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 follow to low-income areas than could otherwise have been 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.



## F. Implementation and Funding Strategies

### Funding Matrix

The connection between the Neighborhoods Rebuilding Plan and potential funding sources is graphically represented by the Implementation Priority Matrix. The costs estimates are provided on an order-of-magnitude basis. As such, variations as to the scope of the project could result in variations in the final cost of construction.

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 experience inside and outside New Orleans.

#### 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  
 NMTTC: 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 MID-CITY 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/NMTC	BID	SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT	FHWA/FTA	LDOT	PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS	ORLEANS LEVEE BOARD	OTHER GOVERNMENT & NGOs	CAPITAL FUNDING NEED/GAP
<b>Early Action Plan</b>																				
<b>Capital Projects</b>																				
Restore and improve underground utilities	1																			TBD
Repair streets, sidewalks, traffic signals/signs, street lights, and replace missing drain, manhole, catch basin and water meter covers	1																			\$102,988,500
Add trees and benches to the area by Bayou St. John near the post office	1																			\$1,500,000
New Public Library	1																			\$4,500,000
Study the Development of a Mid-City Community Care Health Clinic and a Senior Housing & Medical Care Complex at Lindy Boggs site or site nearby (study cost only)	1																			\$150,000
<b>Subtotal: Capital Projects</b>																				<b>\$109,138,500</b>
<b>Recurring Operations</b>																				
Remove debris and hazardous substances once a week in every neighborhood	1																			
Restore and improve postal and city services	1																			
<b>Housing Initiatives and Other Policies</b>																				
Aggressively protect Mid-City's historic and architectural character and protect and improve its quality of life	1																			
Urge City Council to adopt the City of New Orleans Planning Commission Land Use Plan	1																			
<b>Mid Term Plan</b>																				
<b>Capital Projects</b>																				
Turn former Norfolk-Southern railroad right-of-way into a public linear park extending from Basin Street at the Municipal Auditorium to the cemeteries on Canal Boulevard (Rails to Trails)	2																			\$6,732,000
Redesign St. Patrick's Park at S. St. Patrick and Baudin St, to include both a field and multi-use recreation complex	2																			\$500,000
Enhance the Jefferson Davis Parkway and Orleans Avenue neutral grounds with additional trees and public flower gardens	2																			\$270,000
Create Mid-City dog park	2																			\$500,000
Add four small community gardens in Mid-City	2																			\$10,000
Revitalize elementary public school in Mid-City, with sufficient capacity for the returning population (John Dibert)	2																			In progress
Revitalize middle public school in Mid-City, with sufficient capacity for the returning population (Thurgood Marshall)	2																			\$22,000,000
Revitalize high school in Mid-City, with sufficient capacity for the returning population (Warren Easton High School)	2																			In progress
<b>Subtotal: Capital Projects</b>																				<b>\$30,012,000</b>
<b>Recurring Operations</b>																				
School Operations	2																			
Fund youth outreach, vocational training, classic crime prevention techniques, and a judicial liaison program to ensure neighborhood safety	2																			
<b>Long Term Plan</b>																				
<b>Capital Projects</b>																				
Renovate the YMCA and Comisky Park to become a revitalized playground, community center & indoor sports complex	3																			\$8,000,000
Study Commercial Redevelopment of Carrollton Ave. from Tulane Ave. to City Park Avenue, Canal St. from the Cemeteries to Claiborne Ave., Tulane Avenue from Carrollton Avenue to Claiborne Ave., Broad St. from Tulane Ave. to Bayou Road, and the Conti Street Corridor (study cost only)	3																			\$150,000
Build community centers on public school campuses or nearby to encourage interaction between students and teachers and others in the community	3																			\$4,800,000
Provide a light rail system along Tulane Avenue to connect the New Orleans Central Business District with the Louis Armstrong International Airport	3																			TBD
Study construction of internal flood protection levees	3																			TBD
Study gap funding amount, encourage and assist as necessary Development of Midtown high density, commercial, housing, entertainment, condominiums, retail, Xavier University development with train station and hotel elements (study cost only)	3																			See Hollygrove
<b>Subtotal: Capital Projects</b>																				<b>\$12,950,000</b>
<b>Recurring Operations</b>																				
Community Center Operations	3																			
Light Rail Operations	3																			
<b>Housing Initiatives and Other Policies</b>																				
Rehabilitate damaged & blighted housing structures	3																			
Extend and improve existing transportation options and maintain the walkable nature of the neighborhood	3																			
Endorse full funding for City Park from public revenues	3																			
<b>CAPITAL PROJECTS TOTAL</b>																				<b>\$152,100,500</b>





No single source of funding or financial plan will be capable of dealing with the capital improvement needs for total redevelopment and reconstruction of all the neighborhood projects and needs. However, the funding matrix included in this report shows 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 specific further studies to determine the actual cost to governmental entities for certain public/private initiatives (for which we have noted the 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., 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.