



EAST BATON ROUGE
REDEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY

Northdale Community Improvement Plan

Prepared by:
Phillips-Davis Legacy & BROWN+DANOS landdesign, inc.
February, 2011



EAST BATON ROUGE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Walter Monsour, President & CEO

Mark Goodson, Vice President

Susannah Bing, Project Manager

Harold Briscoe, Project Manager

Vickie Smith, Project Manager

5 CIP METRO COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ulysses 'Bones' Addison - Scotlandville Gateway

Ronnie Edwards - Zion City & Glen Oaks

Denise Marcelle - Choctaw Corridor

Tara Wicker - Northdale

Donna Collins-Lewis - Melrose East

THE TEAM

Phillips-Davis Legacy

BROWN+DANOS landdesign, inc.

Franklin Industries

ECONorthwest

Providence Engineering

Trahan Architects



Executive Summary

Introduction

The Northdale neighborhood, established in 1956, was once a part of a thriving community, nestled between successful commercial and industrial businesses on its north and east sides and popular recreational facilities to its south. However, many of the businesses have since left the area and the recreational facilities have fallen into disrepair. But like several other North Baton Rouge residential areas, Northdale residents are proud of their neighborhood and have great hope for its future. The Northdale Community Improvement Plan, lead by the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (RDA), will guide physical and economic change in Northdale and shape a more prosperous, sustainable, and vital community. It will lead Northdale's efforts in the areas of planning and economic development, and will be a resource for the community to use when considering development proposals, obtaining financing and funding strategies, and prioritizing community needs.

The consultant Team, Phillips-Davis Legacy and BROWN+DANOS landdesign, inc., employed extensive outreach techniques to engage residents and business owners, including surveys, stakeholder interviews, the RDA website, newspaper articles, radio and television news and on-air interviews, meetings with area ministers, a public Visioning Workshop, and a public Alternatives and Implementation Workshop.

The Vision

Northdale is envisioned as a prosperous, sustainable, and vital community that embraces its legacy as a significant African-American commercial and residential area in Baton Rouge, while also emerging as a contemporary center of commerce in North Baton Rouge that physically and economically connects to East Baton Rouge Parish as a whole.

The Northdale community is bordered by the Kansas City Southern Railway to the west, Interstate 110 to the south and east, and Choctaw Drive to the north. Historic commercial and industrial buildings on Choctaw Drive and Scenic Highway once housed thriving local businesses, providing jobs and services to residents of the area. Many of those buildings now sit vacant, serving as a reminder of better times in the neighborhood. Additionally, both Memorial Stadium and Goldsby Field were

designed and built in 1956 to house college, semi-professional, and professional sports teams, but now are used only occasionally by high school and independent teams. The close-knit, residential neighborhood of Northdale is still strong and composed of primarily one story, single-family houses. However, while some long-time residents remain and continue to maintain their family homes, others have moved away, leaving their properties vacant and neglected. The vision is to reinterpret the place and conditions of Northdale's successful past into a contemporary, sustainable community.

The Plan

To realize the Vision for Northdale, extensive improvements to both public facilities and private land throughout the community are required. The proposed Catalyst Project, including both public and private improvements, will jump start revitalization in one focused area. Once the Catalyst Project is well on its way, community-wide improvements are planned to begin, followed by development of regional connections.

Catalyst Projects

The Catalyst Project site is a focused area at the southeastern corner of the Northdale community. It rests between Scenic Highway, I-110, and Bellvale Street and is composed of two "nodes" for catalyst development.

Based on the market demand and public input, the Catalyst Project is planned to include new commercial and mixed-use developments featuring public plazas and new transit shelters. Its highly visible location from the elevated portion of I-110, as well as its proximity to the proposed improvements and expansion of the East Baton Rouge Recreation and Park Commission's (BREC) Memorial Sports Complex will aid in the catalyst project's success.



Catalyst Area



Scenic Highway at Bellville Street Looking South Before



Scenic Highway at Bellville Street Looking South After

Community-Wide Recommendations

The Catalyst Project will provide the initial jump start to improving the Northdale neighborhood. Community-wide recommendations address the remainder of the area.

- » Refine a strategy to resolve adjudicated, blighted, vacant, and abandoned properties. The RDA has already begun acquiring adjudicated properties. Residential properties should be considered for disposition to a new Community Housing Development Organization (CHODO) when it is established. The RDA should lead and facilitate redevelopment of blighted commercial properties outside of the Catalyst Project area as market demands warrant their sustainability as new businesses.
- » Implement a robust and consistent code enforcement program. The RDA should continue to work with the City-Parish to remove blighted and dilapidated buildings, abandoned vehicles, and trash, and to ensure properties are maintained. This is critical to improving the community's image and attracting new residents and businesses.
- » Leverage public financial resources to stimulate private investment. Based on development proposed in the Community Improvement Plan, tax credits, rehabilitation loan programs, and revenue bonds should be leveraged to attract private investment in development projects.
- » Implement/facilitate policies that enhance economic opportunities for residents. To improve economic opportunities for residents in the Northdale area, the City-Parish and the RDA should facilitate citizen involvement and investment in redevelopment and public improvement projects. Locally owned businesses should be provided special consideration to relocate and expand to new development areas. In addition, policies should address residents' life skills development, workforce training, entrepreneurship, and micro-loans.
- » Improve pedestrian circulation through streetscape improvements. Scenic Highway travels through the length of Northdale and does have sidewalks to facilitate pedestrian travel. However, these existing sidewalks are narrow, overgrown with vegetation in many places, and provide no trees for shade. Additionally, the sidewalks are placed directly against the curb of Scenic Highway, placing pedestrians dangerously close to heavy traffic. Enhancements should be made in the form of sidewalk widening, street plantings,

and lighting. Also, similar streetscape improvements are recommended on Choctaw Drive, Madison Avenue, Bay Street, North 17th Street, and Jessamine Avenue in Standard Heights.

- » Connect streets within the neighborhood. The Northdale community street grid is set up differently on the west side of the drainage canal than it is on the east side. On the west, there are very few east-west connections that bring residents through the neighborhood to Scenic Highway. East of the canal, there are numerous east-west streets, but these all end at North 19th Street, essentially creating two separate neighborhoods. While street connections over a drainage canal can be more costly, they should be considered as a way to connect the neighborhood, thus strengthening the residents' sense of community and better connecting the residential neighborhood to the proposed Catalyst Project. Recommended connections are Hemlock Street to North 15th Street and Birch Street to North 15th Street. Properties that could facilitate this connection should be acquired as they become available. In Standard Heights, crosswalks are proposed at Linwood Street, Pimpernel Avenue, and Jessamine Avenue to connect the area north of Choctaw Drive to the area south of Choctaw Drive.



Community-Wide Recommendations

Regional Recommendations

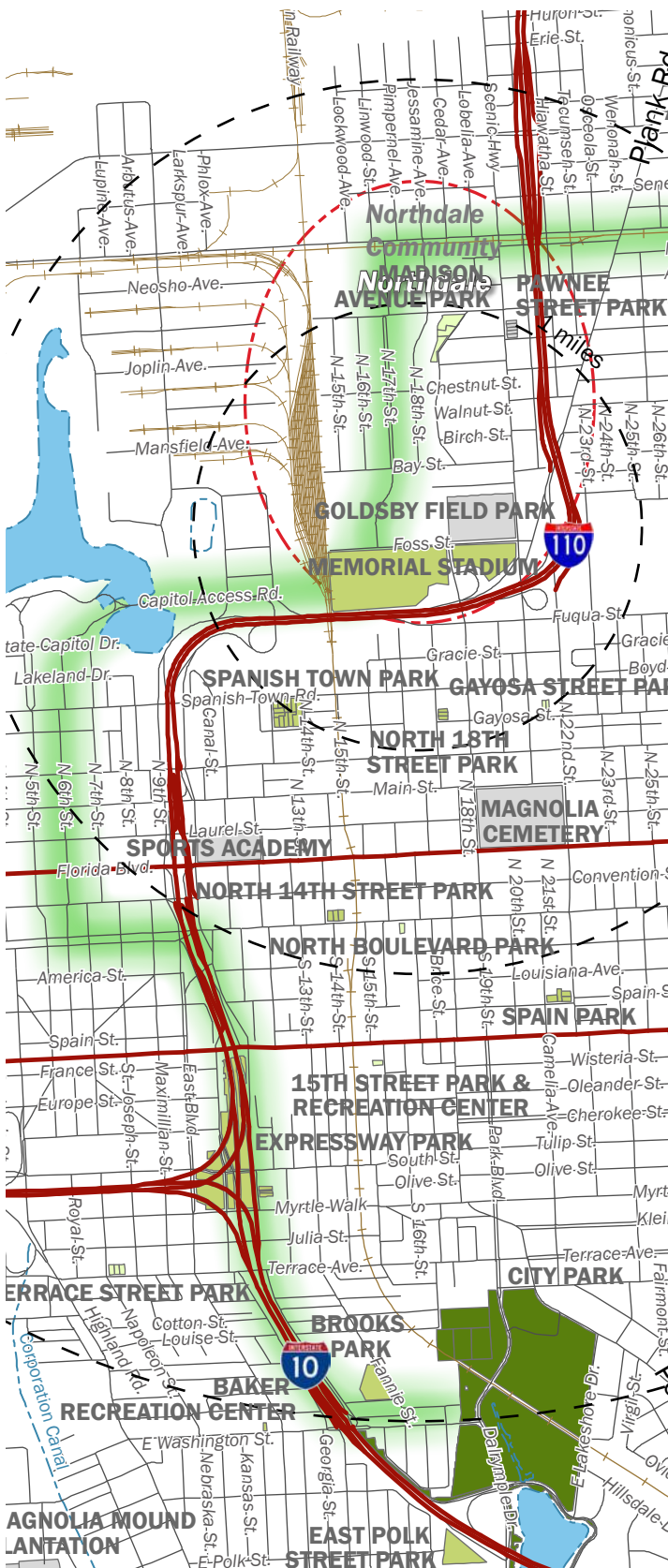
Northdale connections to the rest of the City and Parish must be strengthened and enhanced in order for the proposed community revitalization to be sustainable. Northdale residents have access to several major roadways, connecting them by vehicles both in east-west and north-south directions to the remainder of the Parish. However, these do not all readily access the community but rather by-pass it. For pedestrians, these connections are limited or non-existent, but can be provided. Implementing a naturalized greenway along the banks of the existing drainageway on North 19th Street could facilitate pedestrian and bicycle connections. This neighborhood amenity would provide residents of Northdale a safe and enjoyable connection from Madison Avenue south to BREC's Memorial Stadium and Goldsby Field, which then will connect to the proposed Downtown Greenway.

Implementation

A blanket change of land use and zoning to Planned Unit Development (PUD) is recommended for the entire Northdale Community. This will bring existing non-conforming developments and parcel sizes into compliance and will facilitate redevelopment, particularly on the Catalyst Project site, according to the Community Improvement Plan. It is anticipated that the East Baton Rouge Parish Comprehensive Plan, known as FuturEBR, will establish new land use and development tools that would be more applicable to community-level redevelopment projects. Once they are adopted, the new tools and designations should be considered for the Northdale area.

The Catalyst Project is proposed to be implemented in two phases, starting with new commercial development just east of the intersection of Scenic Highway and Foss Street. Phase two will be just north of Phase One between Scenic Highway and Plank Road, south of Bellvale Street.

Implementation strategies include establishing a CHODO for housing renovation and redevelopment, facilitating the establishment of local retail facilities, and coordinating with the City-Parish and local non-profit organizations to provide workforce training, life skills development, and other needed social programs.



Regional Connections

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
RDA	1
What is a CIP?	1
Northdale Community	2
OUTREACH	5
Stakeholder Interviews	6
Visioning Workshop	7
Alternatives & Implementation Workshops	10
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS	11
Data Collection	11
Analysis	12
<i>Land Use</i>	12
<i>Unified Development Code</i>	14
<i>Transportation & Infrastructure</i>	16
<i>Architectural Survey & Adaptive Reuse</i>	23
<i>Greenspace & Recreation</i>	24
<i>Public Services</i>	27
<i>Safety & Crime</i>	29
<i>Pollution & Brownfields</i>	30
<i>Market Assessment</i>	32
Recommendations	33
<i>Development Prototypes</i>	33
<i>Unified Development Code</i>	37
<i>Catalyst Project</i>	38
<i>Community-Wide Recommendations</i>	50
<i>Regional Connections</i>	52
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	55
Implementation Priorities & Responsibilities	55
Financing Matrix & Funding Strategies	65
Community Capacity Building	65
Redevelopment Partnerships	66
Community Improvement Benchmarks	68

List of Figures

Figure 1	5 CIP Areas	1
Figure 2	Northdale Community	3
Figure 3	Weekly Press Advertisement	5
Figure 4	Northdale Visioning Workshop Results Analysis	9
Figure 5	Northdale Preferred Catalyst Concept	10
Figure 6	Existing Land Use	13
Figure 7	Existing Zoning	15
Figure 8	Average Daily Traffic Count Locations	17
Figure 9	Transit Service	19
Figure 10	Sanitary Sewer Overflows	21
Figure 11	Sewer Rehabilitation Project	22
Figure 12	Architectural Conditions	23
Figure 13	Park Proximity	25
Figure 14	Memorial Sports Complex	26
Figure 15	Community Resources	28
Figure 16	Brownfields & Point Source Pollution	31
Figure 17	Catalyst Area Context Map	38
Figure 18	Program Diagram	40
Figure 19	Catalyst Plan	42
Figure 20	Catalyst Plan Tilt Up Before and After	43
Figure 21	Parking Lot Section	45
Figure 22	Plank Road Frontage Section	45
Figure 23	Scenic Highway Section	45
Figure 24	Northern Node Crosswalk Area	46
Figure 25	Southern Node Crosswalk Area	46
Figure 26	Phase Two Implementation	47
Figure 27	Transit Stop Locations	48
Figure 28	Community-Wide Recommendations	49
Figure 29	DDD Downtown Greenway	52
Figure 30	Regional Connections	53
Figure 31	Phase One Implementation	55
Figure 32	Before and After Implementation of Phase One	56
Figure 33	Phase Two Implementation	57
Figure 34	Before and After Implementation of Phase Two	58
Figure 35	Transit Shelter Concept	59
Figure 36	Neighborhood Signage Concept	59
Figure 37	Implementation Strategies Matrix	61

RDA

In 2007, The Louisiana Legislature formed the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (RDA). According to Act 417, the RDA was created

“to provide for the formation of programs in the East Baton Rouge Parish for the use of private or public funds to eliminate or prevent the development or spread of slum, blighted or distressed areas; to allow the rehabilitation, clearance or redevelopment of slum, blighted and distressed areas; to provide for the expeditious conversion of blighted or underused property into habitable residential dwellings needed to address the influx of displaced persons into the East Baton Rouge Parish.”

The RDA is comprised of all territory within East Baton Rouge Parish including the municipalities of Baker, Baton Rouge, Central, and Zachary.

The RDA is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners, appointed by the Mayor-President, Baton Rouge Area Foundation, and Baton Rouge Area Chamber. The mission of the RDA is to transform the quality of life for all citizens who live, work, and play in East Baton Rouge Parish by returning blighted properties to productive use, fostering redevelopment through facilitating partnerships, and creating a vibrant, globally competitive community while preserving character of place.

The RDA offers several programs to assist business owners and developers with improving their properties and buildings. These programs include gap financing, land banking, rehabilitation of rental housing, small business façade improvement grants, and Community Improvement Plans, information about which can be obtained from the RDA website, www.ebrra.org.

In December of 2009, the RDA's Board of Commissioners selected the Phillips-Davis Legacy and BROWN+DANOS landdesign, inc. Team to prepare 5 Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) for the Scotlandville Gateway, Zion City & Glen Oaks, Choctaw Corridor, Northdale, and Melrose East communities. *See figure 1.* Additional Team members include Franklin Industries, ECONorthwest, Trahan Architects, and Providence Engineering. The 5 Community Improvement Plan areas were identified by the RDA, The Mayor-President, and the Metro Council members representing the 5 neighborhoods. The Community Improvement Areas were selected as priorities of the Metro Council members for revitalization and redevelopment within their larger districts.

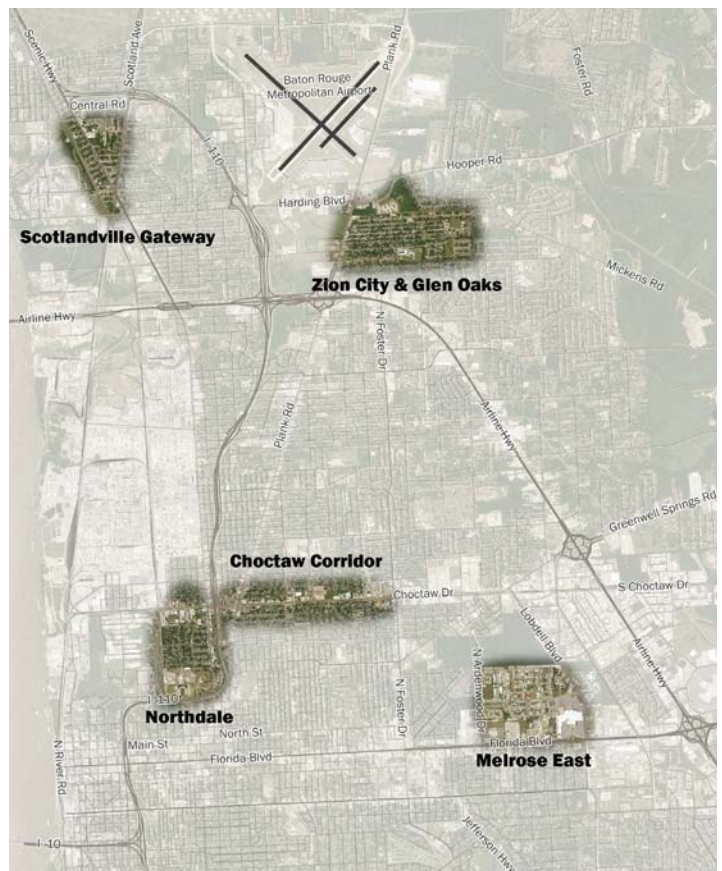


Figure 1: 5 CIP Areas

What is a CIP?

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a revitalization plan that is community-driven and provides action-oriented strategies to affect the physical environment in ways that improve the quality of life for citizens. It builds upon the momentum of other revitalization efforts currently underway and works within and complements existing and forthcoming plans such as the East Baton Rouge Parish Unified Development Code (www.brgov.com), the Louisiana Land Use Toolkit (www.landusetoolkit.com), and the FuturEBR Comprehensive Plan (www.futureebr.com). The Community Improvement Plan for Northdale reflects Smart Growth best practices (www.smartgrowthamerica.org) and is consistent with the Louisiana Speaks Regional Vision (www.louisianaspeaks.org).

To prepare the Community Improvement Plan, extensive analysis of the Northdale area's existing conditions and projected

future growth was conducted. Additionally, public meetings and stakeholder interviews were conducted to gain valuable feedback from the community. The results of this outreach were thoroughly analyzed to ensure the end result represented the desires and aspirations of the community. The resulting CIP presents not only recommendations for physical growth and revitalization of the area, including proposed new developments and improved infrastructure, but also sets forth recommendations for crime prevention, code and policy change recommendations, public service enhancements, and community capacity building. Accompanying each recommendation are implementation strategies outlining responsible parties and financing methods. The Northdale Community Improvement Plan will serve as the complete blueprint for revitalization of the area.

Northdale

Northdale is bordered by Kansas City Southern to the west, Interstate 110 to the east and south, and Chippewa Street to the north including the Standard Heights neighborhood. Established in 1956, Northdale is one of Baton Rouge's older communities. Northdale was once a thriving neighborhood, with Madison Avenue Park set in the middle and Memorial Stadium at the southern edge. Memorial Stadium was a beacon for cultural and recreational activities, with the Southern University Jaguars using the stadium for their football games until the mid 1980s. Near Memorial Stadium is Goldsby Field, which was home to the River Bats, the last professional baseball team to play in Baton Rouge. Along the Northdale community's eastern boundary is Scenic Highway, a once-thriving commercial corridor of local businesses.

According to the 2000 Census:

- » Median household income is \$21,912; average per capita income is \$8,783;
- » 80% of the adult population have not completed high school or GED; 3% have earned a bachelor's degree;
- » Aging housing stock with median year built of 1958;
- » 57% of housing units are owner-occupied and 30% are rental;
- » Basic commercial services and amenities, such as a grocery store, are lacking.

Once a thriving neighborhood with a large presence in the athletic and business communities, Northdale residents are now faced with few neighborhood attractions. Many of the businesses along Scenic Highway have moved away from the area, leaving vacant and declining buildings along its eastern edge. Construction of Interstate 110 served to further disconnect Northdale from the remainder of the Parish, creating both a

physical and visual barrier. While the neighborhood is still home to both Memorial Stadium and Goldsby Field, use of these facilities by college, semi-professional, or professional teams has ceased and the facilities have begun to decline. Recently, however, BREC announced plans to revitalize the fields, creating a new and improved sports complex for the Parish. The northern portion of Northdale includes the neighborhood of Standard Heights. This is the last remaining portion of the neighborhood since Exxon Mobil, once Standard Oil, bought out properties in the neighborhood to create a greenbelt/buffer between residential areas and their thriving industrial complex.

The Northdale community is less known than many of the other older residential areas of North Baton Rouge, primarily because the general public passes by it on an elevated interstate highway and it is tucked into a constrained space. Northdale residents boast about the tight-knit community and the connection and sense of pride everyone feels being from this part of the City. The Northdale Community Improvement Plan will guide physical and economic change in Northdale and shape a more prosperous, sustainable, and vital community. It will lead Northdale's efforts in the areas of planning and economic development, and will be a resource for the community to use when considering development proposals, obtaining financing and funding strategies, and prioritizing community needs. *See figure 2.*



Figure 2: Northdale Community



HELP CREATE YOUR COMMUNITY'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

Choctaw Corridor

Alternatives & Implementation Workshop
 Saturday, August 7
 9:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.
 Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center
 4000 Gus Young Ave.

Northdale

Alternatives & Implementation Workshop
 Saturday, August 14
 9:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.
 Louisiana Workforce Commission
 22nd Street at Fuqua Street

**Refreshments will be provided.
 Everyone is invited!**

The East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority and its consultant team are working to create Community Improvement Plans for five districts within East Baton Rouge Parish, including Choctaw Corridor, Melrose East, Northdale, Scotlandville Gateway, and Zion City & Glen Oaks. These **revitalization plans** are **community-driven** and provide **action-oriented** strategies to **improve the quality** of life for citizens in the targeted communities while building upon the momentum of other revitalization efforts currently underway.

Also, don't miss the upcoming Melrose East Workshop...

Melrose East

Alternatives & Implementation Workshop
 Saturday, October 2
 BREC Headquarters
 6201 Florida Boulevard

**www.ebrra.org
 1-877-311-5862**

5 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Figure 3: Weekly Press Advertisement

The Phillips-Davis and Brown+Danos Team employed extensive outreach methods within the 5 CIP areas in order to gain a strong insight into how the citizens would like to see their communities improved and enhanced. Successful visioning and implementation of the Northdale Community Improvement Plan must involve residents, business owners, stakeholders, and members of the City-Parish working in unison. Channels used to inform the public of the CIP and its workshops included inter-community promotion, media promotion and relations, e-promotion, direct canvassing, and indirect canvassing. Specific methods of gathering public input for the CIP included stakeholder interviews, a Visioning Workshop, and an Alternatives and Implementation Workshop.

Inter-community promotion within Northdale consisted primarily of stakeholder interviews. Community stakeholders are critical in building confidence and trust in any community project, and they are great sources of historical and working knowledge of the communities in which they live and serve. Continual communication with these stakeholders throughout the project played a key role in the success of the community workshops.

Media promotion and relations consisted of earned media and paid media. Earned media included Press Releases and Public Service Announcements, live radio interviews, and a morning television show guest appearance. Press Releases and Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were released to News, TV, and Radio before and leading up to the Northdale Visioning and Alternatives and Implementation Workshops. Earned media included WAFB TV, WBRZ TV, Fox 44, WVLA TV, The Advocate, The Weekly Press, and all local radio stations, including those broadcast by Citadel, Guarantee, and Clear Channel Communications. One week prior to the kickoff of workshops for the 5 CIPs project, a live radio interview was conducted by Walter Monsour, President & CEO of the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority. During the week of May 17th, Karen Phillips of the Team made a one-time appearance on WBRZ's Tune In morning show. Additionally, on July 23rd, Susannah Bing, Project Manager for the RDA, conducted a live television interview. She also made a presentation on Councilwoman Ronnie Edwards' District 5 broadcast, which aired on Metro 21. Paid Media included newsprint advertisements in The Advocate and The Weekly Press newspapers one week prior to each of the Northdale workshops. *See figure 3.*

E-Promotion for the Northdale outreach campaign consisted of a project website and e-blast announcements. The 5 CIPs website, http://www.ebrra.org/community_improvement_plans/index.php, managed by the Team, includes a place to sign up to receive email updates on the project. E-blast announcements were sent via the RDA with their logo attached. A save the date/spread the word e-blast was sent 3-4 weeks prior to the workshops and a reminder e-blast was sent 3-4 days prior.

Direct and indirect canvassing are effective ways to create a buzz within an area over an upcoming event or project. Direct canvassing strategies for Northdale were yard signs, a toll-free number, roadside banners, and fliers. Approximately 30 yard signs bearing the RDA logo and reading “Learn about your Community’s Improvement Plan,” followed by the website and a toll-free number, were set up for the length of the project. A toll-free number, 1 (877) 311-5862, was set up specifically for the project, offering details on upcoming workshops through a pre-recorded message. The message was changed and updated as the project progressed. At high-traffic areas, large roadside banners were displayed before each workshop to draw attention to the particular workshop dates. These included a permanent project logo and catch-phrase as well as workshop titles, locations, and dates. Lastly, door hangers were placed on residences, and fliers were posted in high-traffic areas such as the post office, gas stations, banks, grocery stores, community centers, and other businesses, with permission granted. Fliers placed in student backpacks of most of the schools within the Northdale project area along with church bulletins and announcements served as indirect canvassing. *See the Outreach Strategy report in the Appendix.*

Finally, a key component of the Outreach Strategy is the 5 CIP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). For advisement and clarification on specific technical matters, the Team was in communication with the TAC members throughout the planning process. Communications were through emails, phone calls, and meetings and resulted in general methods and recommendations to plan the unified development of the five communities. Specific examples included neighborhood appropriate housing ideas, cost estimates of public works, and proposed zoning changes. The TAC is composed of a representative from each of the following agencies and interest groups:

- » City-Parish Department of Public Works: Jim Ferguson, Special Projects Engineer
- » City-Parish Office of Community Development: Charles P. “Chip” Boyles, II, Urban Development Director
- » Baton Rouge Fire Department: Robert Combs or Curt Monte, Fire Public Information Officer (or Asst.)
- » City-Parish Planning Commission: Lael Holton, FUTUREBR Comp Plan Advanced Planning Manager

- » Baton Rouge Police Department: Lieutenant Todd Lee
- » Louisiana Livable Communities Council, AARP Louisiana: Nancy McPherson, State Director
- » Human Development & Services, East Baton Rouge Parish: Larry St. Amant, Director, then Paula Merrick-Roddy
- » Capital Area Transit System (CATS): Kiran Vemuri, Planning Manager
- » An Alternative Housing Developer: Christine E. Nichols

Stakeholder Interviews

“There is enough goodness in this community to be salvaged. The neighborhood is not too far gone.” -Excerpt from Northdale stakeholder interview

Stakeholder interviews in Northdale were held four weeks before community workshops began in order to collect necessary human data on the project, and to subsequently encourage word of mouth communication within the respective communities, building awareness and anticipation. Stakeholders were asked to encourage their friends and colleagues to participate in the upcoming workshops.

Team members and staff of the RDA conducted 10 stakeholder interviews throughout the months of April and May 2010.

Members of the Team interviewed individuals and representatives from both public and private entities, including City-Parish government, businesses, faith-based organizations, community organizations, and local residents of the Northdale community. Stakeholder interviews were conducted as open-ended discussions, allowing the stakeholder to speak freely about their community and the positive or negative areas that they would like to see replicated or improved upon; however, a uniform briefing and list of questions were followed to ensure needed information was captured. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes, with some running longer and some shorter.

The process of choosing participants for the stakeholder interviews was a joint effort of the RDA, the Mayor-President, and the Team. Beginning the interview, each stakeholder was briefed on the status of the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, its mission, and current endeavor to develop the 5 CIPs for underserved areas in North Baton Rouge. Each stakeholder was also presented a map of the project area and a project schedule.

The following summarizes the results of the 10 Northdale stakeholder interviews.

When asked what they most value in the Northdale community, stakeholders mentioned the central location, positive people, community strength, Memorial Stadium, and The Community

School for Apprenticeship Learning.

The following were some of the places mentioned as having value, or serving as landmarks, in the Northdale community.

- » Pete Goldsby Field, 1502 Foss Street
- » Memorial Stadium, 1702 Foss Street
- » Community School for Apprenticeship Learning, 1555 Madison Avenue

When asked what most troubled them about Northdale, stakeholders responded with poor housing conditions, crime, lack of pedestrian and bicycle paths, and the outside perception of Northdale.

Examples of other concerns mentioned by stakeholders include:

- » Pit Bull breeder in Northdale
- » Lack of communication/business relationships between tenants and landlords
- » Open ditches in the area that allow for large amounts of rodents, etc.

Stakeholders were asked what planners should take into account when discussing improvements to Northdale. Their responses included employing a holistic approach, beautifying Scenic Highway with bike paths, sidewalks, etc., collaborating with businesses in the community so they can contribute to improvements within Northdale, housing revitalization and development, and upgrading Memorial Stadium.

Stakeholders were asked what they would like to see when they think about the long-term future of Northdale. Responses included improved safety measures, blight elimination, sustainable businesses, and an increase in home ownership.

Stakeholders were asked what challenges to economic development they see and experience in Northdale, as well as their aspirations for economic development. Challenges the stakeholders discussed were the reputation as a crime-prone area, unsafe infrastructure, and the lack of business owners who have interest in the area.

Aspirations mentioned were a decrease in crime in order for business owners to feel more comfortable with starting a business in the area, that business owners will realize that the Northdale area is a prime location for business, that area businesses employ area residents, and that there be availability for residents to pay bills and take care of other needs within Northdale instead of having to travel long distances.

Stakeholders were asked to identify the top two safety concerns they have for the Northdale area. The two major themes heard were crime and the chemical plants. The range of crime and

lack of respect the young have for others in the community was mentioned, as well as emissions from the Honeywell plant possibly affecting women's pregnancies and children in the area.

Lastly, stakeholders were asked what their hopes and concerns are for the Community Improvement Plan for Northdale. Their responses included hopes that the businesses surrounding the residential core be revitalized and offer services and employment to residents, and that the area becomes recognized by the city and not forgotten about, as they feel everyone overlooks the area.

Stakeholders interviewed were:

Patricia Smith, Louisiana Representative District 67
Public Official

Tara Wicker, EBR Metro Council District 10
Public Official

Bill Palmer, BREC Superintendent
Recreation

Brenda Jackson, Northdale Civic Association
Community

John Smith, Northdale Civic Association
Community

Dr. Leola Robinson
Community

Dujan Johnson, Community School for Apprenticeship Learning
Education

Reverend James Snowden, First Alpine Baptist Church
Ministerial

W. T. Winnfield
Education

Jay Augustine
Education

As previously mentioned, community stakeholders are critical in building confidence and trust in any community project. They are the producers from within the community. The Northdale stakeholder interviews gathered implicit narratives that will be woven into the future of their community. They have helped to inform the Northdale Community Improvement Plan and provided insight for how to orchestrate a meaningful future.

Visioning Workshop

A Visioning Workshop for Northdale was conducted on May 20, 2010 in order to gain public input for development of the Vision for the Community Improvement Plan. During the workshop, attendees were asked to work in groups and participate in two mapping exercises intended to capture their perception of and vision for their neighborhood.

For the first Visioning Workshop exercise, participants were given a map of the area and were asked to identify and describe assets and challenges to the neighborhood using blue and red stickers, respectively. Once the assets and challenges were identified, they were asked to prioritize those into the top three of each for presentation to the room. The eight groups, randomly assigned, identified many of the same assets and challenges. Among these prioritized assets were the parks, churches, school, Civic Association, close knit community, the central location of the community, and access to I-110. The challenges presented to the group included drainage and infrastructure problems, lack of sidewalks, adjudicated property, vacant and blighted property, lack of lighting, and lack of a police presence.

The second exercise was intended to determine the preferred location and types of catalyst development residents of Northdale want to see in their neighborhood. Groups were given new area maps and a series of color coded chips, each depicting a different program or land use that could be contained within a catalyst project. The facilities represented in the chips included healthcare, community centers, commercial, housing, and day care. The tables of participants were asked to place the chips where they would like to see new or revitalized development and then give a specific explanation of the intended use. Facilitators encouraged groups to cluster uses together in an area in order to create a substantial, highly visible improvement and to comply with smart growth principles of mixed-use and walkability.

Analysis of input at the visioning workshop indicated an overwhelming lack of small businesses offering the following: dining, shopping, and entertainment, as well as the need for rehabilitation of existing housing and businesses. Many of the residents identified two primary areas for catalytic development: Scenic Highway from Choctaw Drive to Chestnut Street, and the vacant area between Scenic Highway and North 22nd Street, south of Bellvale Street. There appear to be many buildings suitable for adaptive reuse as well as some vacant property in both areas. Residents also expressed the severe need to have much of the existing housing revitalized and the empty lots within the residential section of the neighborhood redeveloped. *See figure 4.*

The full Northdale Visioning Workshop report is in the Appendix of this document.



Resident presenting at Visioning Workshop



Residents working at Visioning Workshop

Visioning Workshop Input Results

Northdale

During the Northdale area Visioning Workshop, residents and stakeholders identified both assets and challenges, as well as areas of potential development. Assets identified include the Madison Avenue Park, Goldsby Field Park, and BREC Memorial Stadium. CSAT Charter School was also identified as an asset, however some attendees also noted that it was a challenge because residents from the area cannot enroll their children to the school.

Other challenges include unsightly views near the rail road and DOTD Maintenance Yard, drainage issues throughout the neighborhood, and high crime near Goldsby Field Park. The area on Chestnut Street between North 18th and North 19th Streets was strongly identified as an opportunity for new housing. Additionally, many attendees indicated that a community center would be desirable on Scenic Highway in the Pawnee Street Park area. While many residents indicated the need to revitalize the existing businesses along Scenic Highway, opportunities for new commercial development were identified at the corner of Scenic Highway and Cherry Street, as well as at the corner of Scenic Highway and Foss Street.

Legend

- Roads
- Railroads
- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Parcels
- Buildings
- Bus Stops
- CATS Routes

Community Input

Proposed Development

- Commercial
- Community Center
- Day Care
- Healthcare
- Housing
- Office
- Public Service

Community Input

Assets & Challenges

- Asset
- Challenge

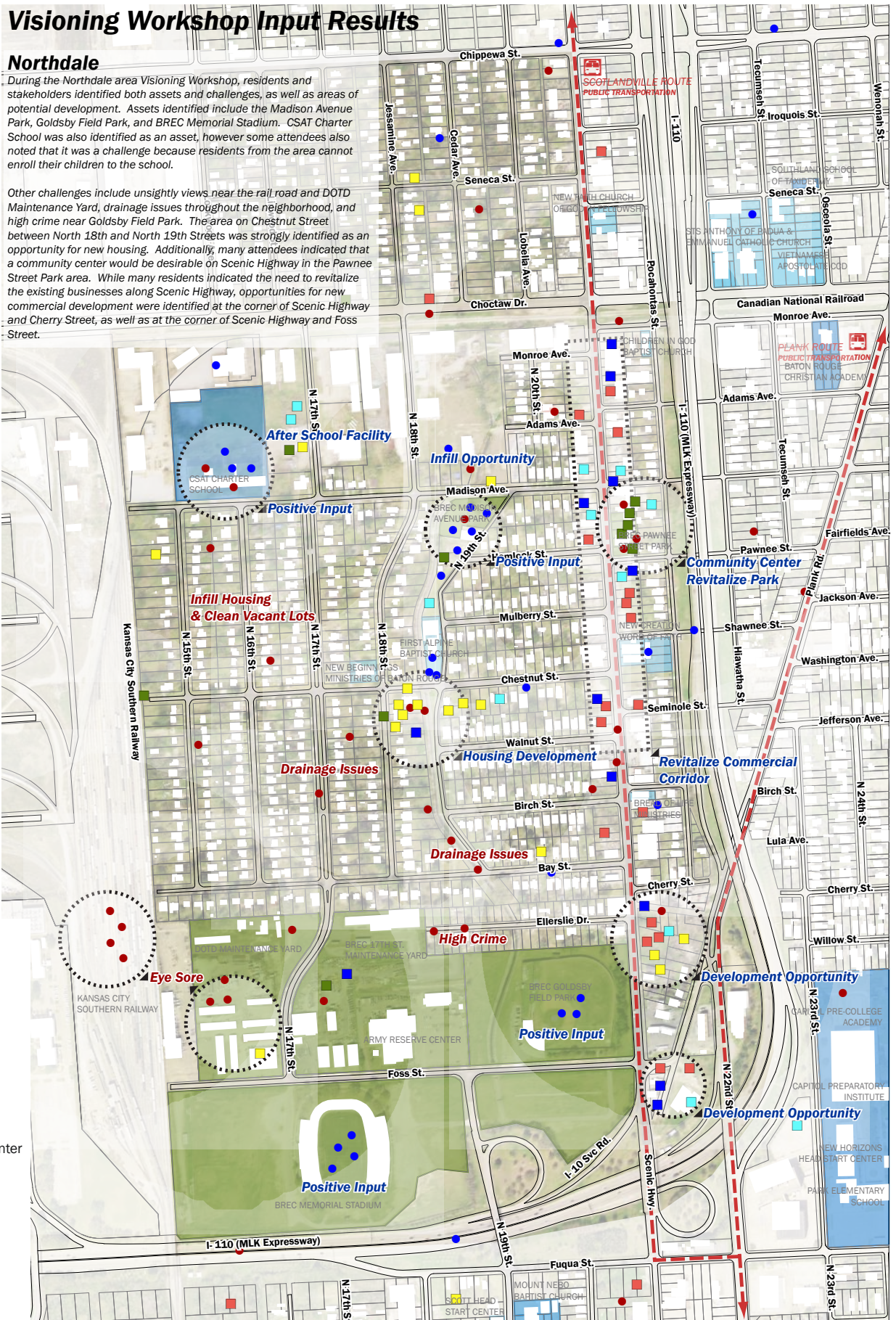


Figure 4: Northdale Visioning Workshop Results Analysis

Alternatives & Implementation Workshop

Following the Visioning Workshop for Northdale, the Team conducted a thorough analysis of the community input and area market assessments. From this analysis a target area for future catalyst development was identified and two concepts for the area were developed. On August 14, 2010, an Alternatives and Implementation Workshop for the Northdale community was conducted in order to present and receive resident feedback on those catalyst area concepts. Attendees were given digital voting devices and asked to vote on the general concepts as well as individual components within each. Their votes were immediately displayed on the screen, which provided input to the Team for “on-the-fly” revisions to the preferred concept. After voting was completed, respondents took a brief break to visit participants of the Resource Fair while the Team made adjustments to the concepts. The Resource Fair featured non-profit and public service organizations from around the Parish.

Once attendees of the Northdale Alternatives & Implementations Workshop reconvened at the tables, they were shown diagrammatic maps illustrating community and regional opportunities. The community opportunities map featured amenities such as crosswalks, street beautification opportunities, a greenway, and a nature park, while the regional opportunities

map focused on pedestrian and vehicular connections between the neighborhood and the rest of the city. Residents were again asked to use their digital voting devices to give feedback on those options. Finally, the preferred concepts illustrating their earlier input were revealed. *See figure 5.*

The preferred design for the catalyst site located between Scenic Highway and North 22nd Street continued to be refined by the Team following the workshop. The final concept is based off of the information received from both the Visioning and Alternatives & Implementation Workshops, as well as market assessments, technical analysis, input from the RDA, and the Team’s expertise. These concepts will be much further developed in concert with financial analysis and will likely be further modified by developers. Furthermore, the Team will make recommendations for code or policy changes and new funding strategies that may be necessary to provide for the success of the Northdale Community Improvement Plan.



Figure 5: Northdale Preferred Catalyst Concept

Data Collection

The Northdale Community Improvement Plan is based on existing conditions and forecast data in the form of available published reports, studies, and mapping, including census, assessor, employment, tax revenue, housing, adjudicated properties, transit, and crime data, as well as land use, building footprints, rights-of-way, vacant properties, and the RDA's Property Evaluation Tool (PET). Transportation data was collected, including street surface conditions, available daily traffic data, bus routes, railroad lines, and grade crossing signage and safety equipment. Infrastructure data collected included localized flooding and condition of infrastructure.

Field reconnaissance entailed a variety of efforts. A windshield survey assessment of vacant buildings for adaptive reuse potential was conducted. During this survey, the Team recorded land uses, apparent vacancies, building types, and visibly apparent building conditions. The reconnaissance of vacant land parcels for infill development and assemblage also took place. A subsequent windshield survey was conducted to assess in more detail the individual buildings within the Catalyst Project sites.

The Team conducted numerous site reconnaissance visits during the summer of 2010, photographing and surveying area buildings, vacant lots, blighted properties, community uses, and conditions. GIS analytical tools were used to reveal trends, opportunities, and constraints to economic development and improved quality of life. Data collection in the form of reports, studies, maps, charts, etc., can be found within the body of this document or in the Appendix of this document.



Dead end street at Kansas City Southern Railway



Scenic Highway businesses



Typical Northdale Street

Field Reconnaissance Photos

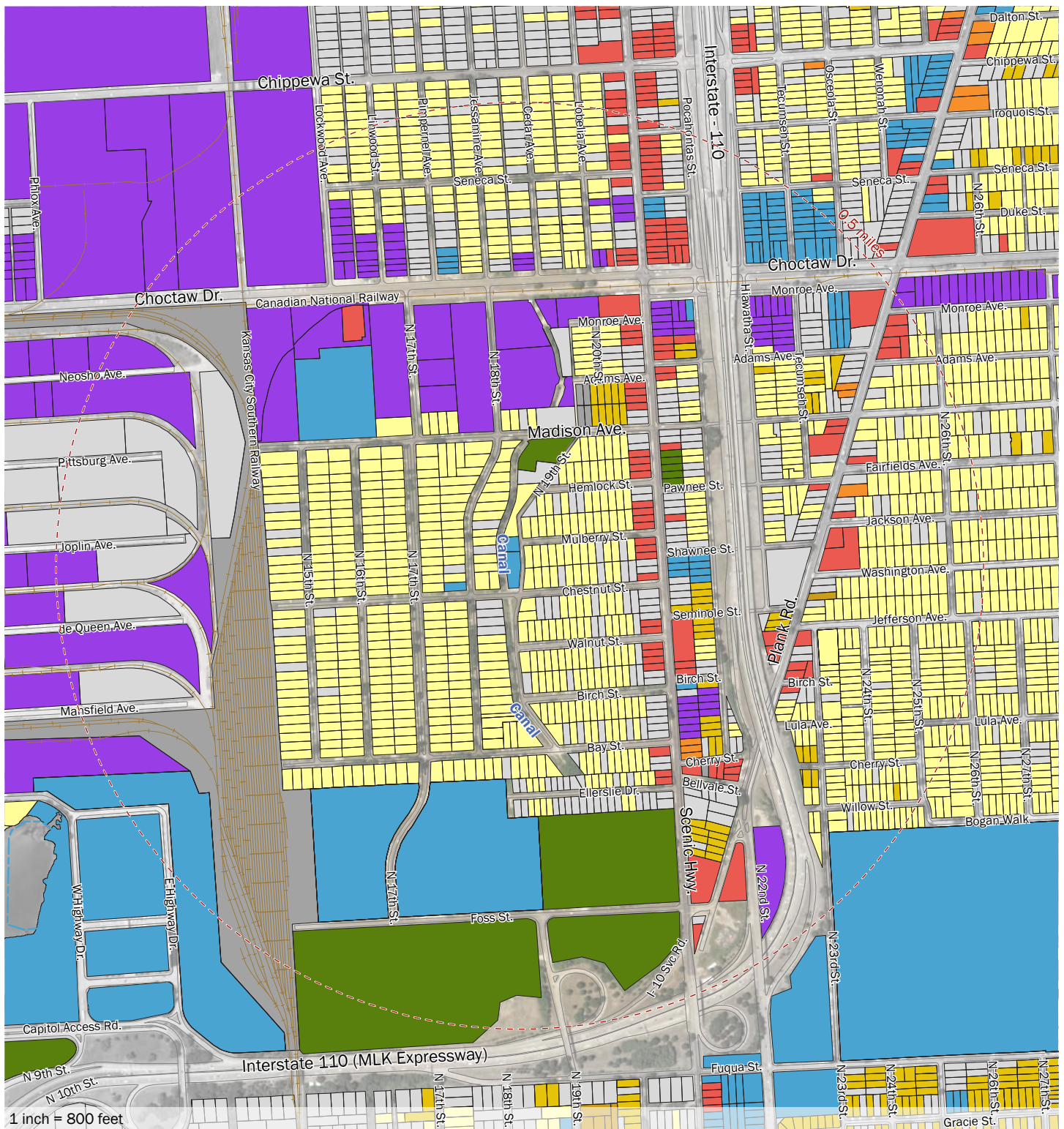
Analysis and Recommendations

Land Use

Existing land uses in Northdale are dominated by single-family residences. Industrial developments are concentrated along the south side of Choctaw Drive. Commercial uses are, and historically were, located along Scenic Highway, though a number of buildings and parcels are currently vacant according to the East Baton Rouge Parish Planning Department GIS database. The southern portion of the community hosts public land owned by the State Department of Transportation and park property owned and managed by BREC, including Memorial Park. *See figure 6.*

The community includes several churches located throughout the center of Northdale and just north of Choctaw Drive. The Community School for Apprenticeship Learning Charter School is located at 1555 Madison Avenue in the northwest part of the neighborhood. Along the west side of Northdale, a railroad yard and the Kansas City Southern rail line form a substantial barrier to Capitol Lake and the amenities in Capitol Park. On the north side of Foss Street, the Army Reserve Center and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) facilities represent major intrusions and a negative visual image for the community. The industrial buildings located along Choctaw Drive north of Madison Avenue are more in character with other land uses in that area. Two small grocery stores, a deli, and two gas stations are the only retail businesses in Northdale. The existing land use patterns mean that retail and other services are not readily available to the residents of these neighborhoods. Sidewalks are lacking along most of the streets, which significantly hinders the walkability of the neighborhood. North 17th Street, a major thoroughfare and north-south connection, has a wide median but no sidewalks. It is currently the subject of the Mayor-President's Green Light Landscape Project which will provide tree plantings within the median between Chestnut Street and Bay Street, but at this time, no further improvements are proposed as part of that project.

The average size of residential parcels in the Northdale area is 50 feet wide by 125 feet deep.



Legend

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| — Roads | Existing Land Use 2010 | Public / Semi-Public |
| — Railroads | Agriculture | Recreation |
| — Streams | Low Density Residential | Vacant |
| — Waterbodies | Medium Density Residential | Trans. / Comm. / Utilities |
| — Parcels | High Density Residential | |
| | Office | |
| | Commercial | |
| | Industrial | |

Source: City Parish Planning Commission - August 2009

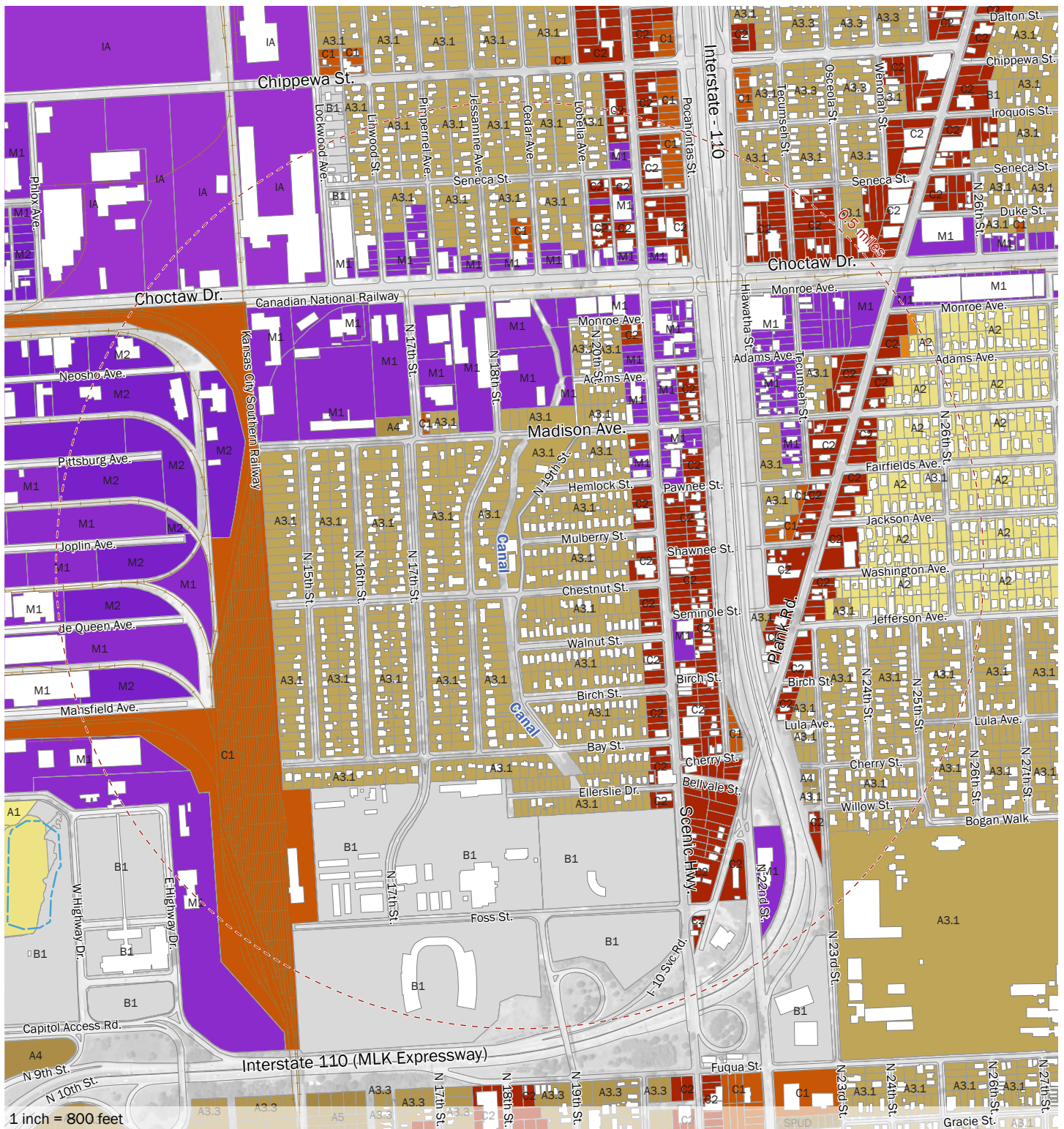
Figure 6: Existing Land Use

Unified Development Code

Existing zoning in Northdale is primarily A3.1 Limited Residential within the core of the community. A combination of C1 Light Commercial, C2 Heavy Commercial, C-AB-2 Commercial Alcoholic Beverage 2, and M1 Light Industrial exists along either side of Scenic Highway from Fuqua Street north to Chippewa Street. Along both sides of Choctaw Drive, zoning is a combination of M1 Light Industrial and M2 Heavy Industrial. At the southern edge of the Northdale community, the BREC and DOTD properties are zoned B1 Transition. *See figure 7.*

The Unified Development Code (UDC) requires that residential lot sizes zoned 3.1 be a minimum of 60 feet wide and 3800 square feet in area. Residential parcels in Northdale are slightly out of compliance with existing zoning requirements, being an average of only 53 feet wide. In order to redevelop vacant parcels, lots would have to be assembled into larger parcels and redeveloped. New zoning must be instituted that allow for these smaller lots to be redeveloped as single-family housing, even if not combined, relieving housing developers of the burden of obtaining variances. Without such changes, housing redevelopment in the Northdale area may not be feasible.

Similarly, some commercial properties on the east side of Scenic Highway could not be redeveloped given minimum lot size, buffer yard, and parking requirements. In this area of Baton Rouge, a higher percentage of the population is dependent on public transit for transportation. The high amount of parking required by the current UDC is unnecessary in these communities, and also increases the cost of development and redevelopment. New UDC regulations must be instituted to address these issues and relieve commercial developers of the burden of obtaining variances. Specific recommendations regarding these suggested changes can be found in the UDC revisions section of this document. Without such changes, development in Northdale may not be feasible.



Legend

CCPC Zoning

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| (A1) Single Family Residential | (C-AB-1) Alcoholic Beverage (Restaurant) |
| (A2) Single Family Residential | (C-AB-2) Alcoholic Beverage (Bar/Lounge) |
| (A2.7) Zero Lot Line Residential | (C2) Heavy Commercial |
| (A3.1) Limited Residential | IA |
| (A3.3) Limited Residential | (M1) Light Industrial |
| (A4) General Residential | (M2) Heavy Industrial |
| (SPUD) Small Planned Unit Development | (B) Off Street Parking |
| (LC1) Light Commercial | (B1) Transition |
| (C1) Light Commercial | |

Source: City Parish Planning Commission - August 2009

Figure 7: Existing Zoning

Transportation & Infrastructure

Roadways

Based on available traffic counts, the roadway and street network in the Northdale community does not appear to be overburdened with traffic, only experiencing short periods of traffic congestion at some intersections during a portion of the peak hour. However, the existing street grid is not very uniform. Most of the streets in this neighborhood do not go all the way from the eastern boundary to the western boundary, with most of the east-west connectors to Scenic Highway stopping at North 19th Street. Only Madison Avenue, Chestnut Street, and Bay Street make the complete east-west connection from Scenic Highway to the Kansas City Southern rail line. On Northdale's western edge there is a large railroad switching yard with multiple tracks situated in a north-south direction. On the south is I-110, which also curves to the north at the southeast corner of this neighborhood and thus forms the area's eastern boundary.

It is difficult to find a primary north-south arterial located within the neighborhood which provides a convenient connection to areas outside of the community. Traffic is forced to use Scenic Highway, a four-lane facility located at the extreme eastern edge of the neighborhood, for uninterrupted north-south travel. Scenic Highway also carries a Baton Rouge Capital Area Transit System (CATS) transit line, as does Plank Road, but only for a very short distance through the neighborhood given its penetration at the extreme southeast corner of the neighborhood. All other north-south streets in the neighborhood have two lanes and do not extend beyond Choctaw Drive to the north and I-110 to the south. North 17th Street connects Choctaw Drive into Northdale, but "dog-legs" to the west and dead-ends at Foss Street, where it then connects to an entrance drive into Memorial Stadium.

Through traffic in an east-west direction must use Choctaw Drive, a four-lane roadway in the northern section of the neighborhood, or Chippewa Street at the neighborhood's extreme northern boundary. Through traffic is possible on Choctaw Drive because the rail line leaving the northern end of the switching yard makes a hard turn to the east and does not cross Choctaw Drive. Inter-neighborhood (local) east-west traffic is handled by Madison Avenue, Chestnut Street, and Bay Street. All other east-west streets in the study neighborhood are two-lane roadways and do not fully connect the eastern and western portions of the neighborhood.

All streets in the study area are asphalt-surfaced.

Traffic counts taken by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) for 2008 (most current available) in close proximity to the Northdale neighborhood are as follows:

- » Scenic Highway at Choctaw Drive
8,003 ADT*
- » Plank Road (LA 67) near Adams Street
10,526 ADT
- » Plank Road (LA 67) near Iroquois Street
9,004 ADT
- » North 22nd Street just south of Plank Road (LA 67):
2,127 ADT
- » Capitol Access Road near West Highway Drive:
4,158 ADT

*ADT = Average Daily Traffic

The traffic counts shown above are bi-directional counts on these arterials. Peak hour volumes are usually 10% to 12% of the ADT with a peak hour split of 60/40 common, i.e., 60% of the peak hour volume in the peak direction. Within the neighborhood, on local streets, traffic volumes are typically a fraction of these ADT volumes. No other traffic volume data were available from DOTD for this study neighborhood. However, given that Choctaw Drive is a four-lane facility and serves as a minor cross-town arterial, traffic volumes on this street are probably in excess of 7,000 ADT. *See figure 8.*

Traffic flow, particularly in an east-west direction in the Northdale neighborhood, is impacted by the Kansas City Southern rail line and the large rail switching yard along the community's western boundary. North-south travel in the neighborhood is also impacted by the Canadian National rail line along Choctaw Drive. The few crossing locations (south to north) that do exist are impacted from time to time by temporary blockages caused by the passage of trains.

Pedestrian access and connectivity throughout the study neighborhood is hampered by the fact that nearly 75% of its streets have no sidewalks. Less than 19% of neighborhood streets have sidewalks on both sides. Solutions to this issue will be discussed in the Implementation Strategies section of this report.

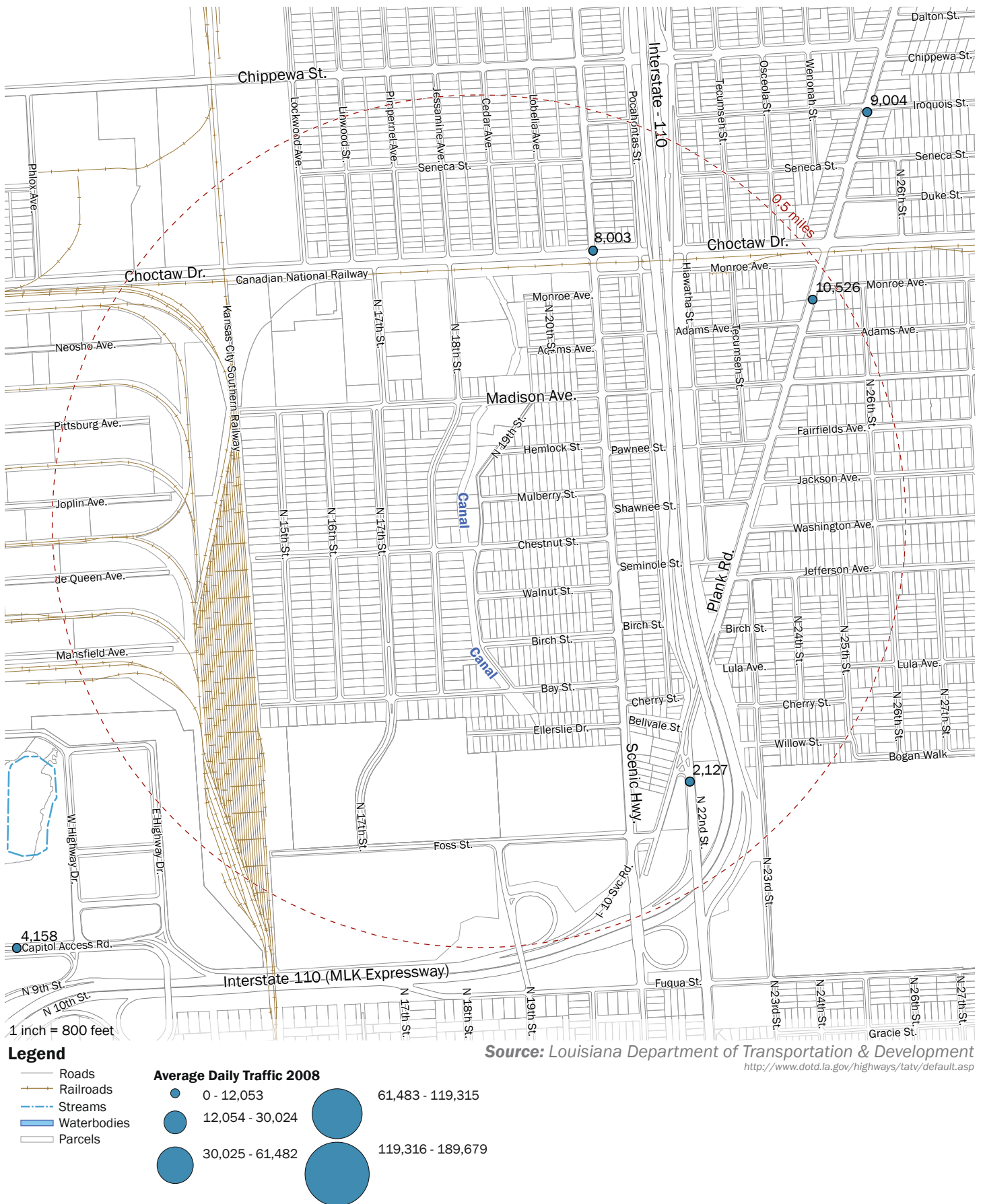


Figure 8: Average Daily Traffic Count Locations

Transit Service

As of August 2010, the Northdale neighborhood is served by two public transit routes operated by the Capital Area Transit System (CATS). These are the Plank route (No. 41) and the Scotlandville route (No. 10). By use of transfers where these routes intersect with others in the system, it is possible to travel by transit to other locations served by the CATS system, although the convenience of traveling in such a manner is greatly diminished. Both of these routes utilize the CATS terminal on Florida Boulevard at North 22nd Street, which is in close proximity to this neighborhood. At the CATS terminal, virtually all transit lines in the system are accessible due to the fact that some system transfers are allowed only at the CATS terminal. Pick up points are marked along all CATS routes, but transit shelters are not in place at all bus stop locations. *See figure 9.*

Plank Road Route

The first run on weekdays departs the CATS terminal on Florida Boulevard and North 22nd Street at 4:45 AM and crosses Choctaw Drive in about five minutes of leaving the terminal. The service operates on 30-minute headways until 3:15 PM. After this time, the service operates on alternating 45- and 30-minute headways through 7:00 PM. After 7:00 PM headways open to 60-minutes through the 9:00 PM run. The last bus departs the terminal at 9:45 PM, returning approximately 45 minutes later.

The Plank Road route operates on Saturdays between the hours of 5:45 AM (first run) and 9:45 PM (last run). Headways vary between 60-minutes from 5:45 AM through 9:45 AM, then close to 30-minutes thereafter through 3:15 PM. After 3:15 PM, headways vary according to run and use of a schedule is strongly advised.

On Sundays, this route operates between the hours of 6:45 AM and 6:45 PM on 60-minute headways.

Scotlandville Route

This route originates at the CATS terminal on Florida Boulevard at North 22nd Street and loops around and passes through the Northdale neighborhood at its southeast corner. The route provides service to the neighborhood seven days a week. Based on the currently published schedule, weekday service begins at 4:45 AM when the first run departs the terminal. Beginning at 5:45 AM, the service operates on 30-minute headways until 6:45 PM when headways open up to one hour. The last run departs the terminal at 9:45 PM.

On Saturday, the same route is followed, but the service operates on one hour headways between 5:45 AM and 9:45 PM, when the last run departs the terminal.

Sunday service is limited to two hour headways between 7:45 AM (first run) and 7:45 PM when the last run leaves the terminal.

On the basis of existing transit service, it would appear that the Northdale study neighborhood is underserved by transit. However, given the relative isolation of this neighborhood and its uneven street grid pattern, this lack of transit service is not surprising.

Passenger Rail Service

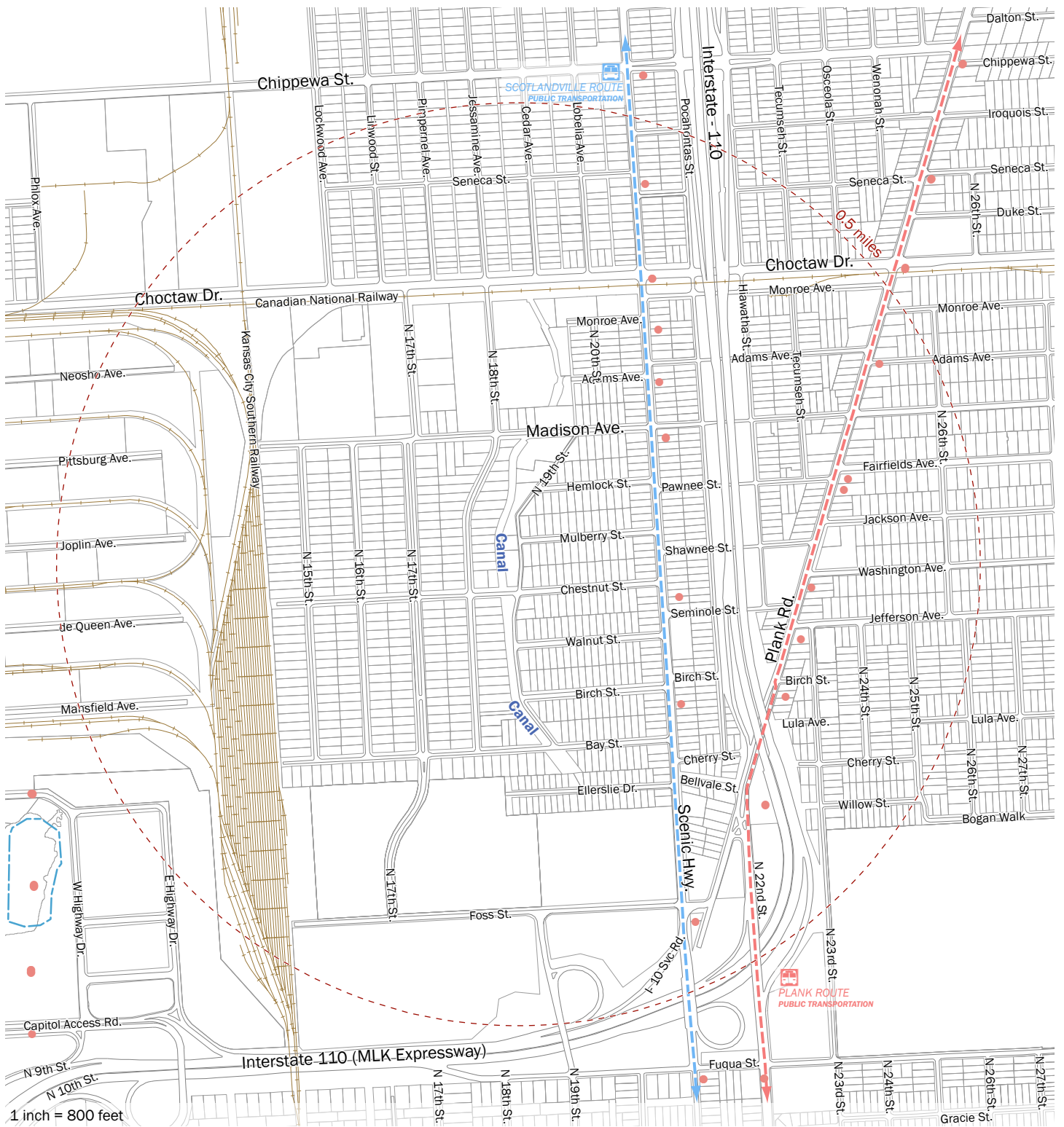
Although the Northdale neighborhood contains the Kansas City Southern Rail Line at its western boundary and the Canadian National Rail Line at its northern boundary, passenger rail service (Amtrak) is not available. The Mayors of Baton Rouge and New Orleans and a coalition of private businesses and non-profits are actively working toward realizing sustainable passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. When this is implemented, a stop in North Baton Rouge or feeder transit to a passenger rail stop should be implemented.

Water

The City of Baton Rouge is served with potable water by the Baton Rouge Water Company, a private utility company which is not affiliated with the City-Parish. This company is also responsible for the water distribution network or infrastructure, which includes the water treatment plant facilities, water towers, and piping. The source of the drinking water for Baton Rouge, including the Northdale community, is the 65 ground water wells completed in various sands of the Southern Hills aquifer system which underlies the City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish. The water distribution network is backed up by auxiliary diesel pumps, generators, and elevated water storage tanks which help to prevent wide spread service outages if electrical power fails. The system's treatment capacity is rated at 102 millions of gallons per day (MGD) with peak demand at 55 MGD. The average daily demand on the system is 43 MGD. Water service available in the Northdale community is adequate and of a high quality, as it is throughout the rest of the city.

Storm Water Drainage

For the most part, storm water runoff in the Northdale study community is handled by both storm drains and open roadside ditches. However, a field survey, performed by the Team



Legend

- Roads
- Railroads
- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Parcels
- Bus Stops

Source: City Parish Planning Commission August 2009

Figure 9: Transit Service

discovered that nearly 40% of the streets in this neighborhood are without storm drains or open ditches. This means that runoff flows from the crown of the street to the sides of the roadway and then flows to other areas. Such flow might create localized flooding in these areas during heavy rain storms. The survey also discovered that storm drains are present on more than 31% of the streets in this neighborhood. However, nearly 22% of neighborhood streets have open ditch drainage with a significant percentage having a drainage ditch running on only one side of the street. An open ditch drainage system requires vigilance so that they do not become obstructed with vegetation and debris.

However, the drainage system in this neighborhood is adequate to handle the normal 10-year rainfall events. Although it is generally left to the property owner to maintain the open drainage ditch fronting his property, the larger drainage facilities are maintained by the Department of Public Works. The challenge is to keep these free flowing, with grass cut and free of debris. Periodically, these facilities must be dug out to counter siltation problems and maintain design cross sections. The maintenance of open drainage facilities is a major challenge for most Public Works Departments because they are designed as deep, narrow channels instead of shallower bioswales which also filter pollutants out of stormwater runoff. An inventory of the neighborhood streets and their corresponding drainage types is included in the appendix.

Sanitary Sewer

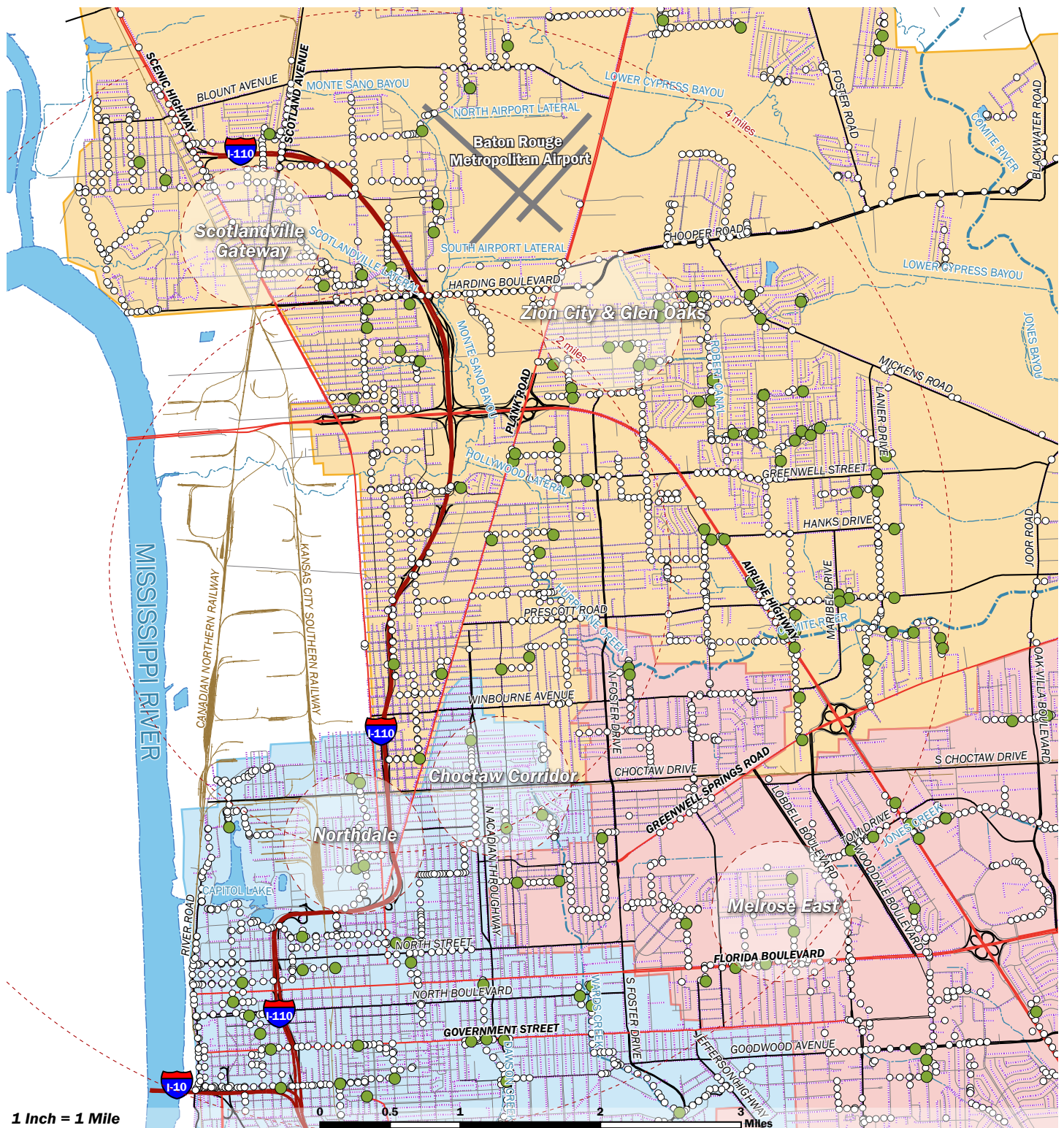
The Northdale neighborhood is served by a community sanitary sewer system and the Central Waste Water Treatment Plant (CWWTP) located near the Mississippi River, just southwest of downtown Baton Rouge and west of Nicholson Drive. This plant also serves the general downtown and central area of the city area. The Central WWTP generally operates within its discharge permit limitations, is expected to operate at about 95% of its capacity when all planned improvement projects are complete.

The collection system in nearly every neighborhood in Baton Rouge is comprised of a network of eight-inch sewers that drain by gravity, or are pumped into, larger capacity sewers which ultimately flow to a main truck line leading to the WWTP. This is the case in the Northdale neighborhood where a large number of gravity mains comprise the collection system. Given the type of development in this neighborhood, which is primarily residential, the collection system in the immediate area should have some excess capacity to accommodate future development within the neighborhood.

The primary deficiency of the sanitary sewer system in the Northdale neighborhood, as it is in many other parts of the city, is the sanitary sewer overflow (SSO). This condition is defined as a discharge of untreated, raw wastewater into local waterways. Discharges can originate at a number of sources in the sanitary sewer system including manholes, cracks, and other defects in sewer lines. Such discharges can occur in wet conditions when the storm water drainage system is infiltrated by sewage discharge. SSOs can also occur in dry conditions and are usually caused by collapsed sewer lines, tree root penetration, and other such impediments that impact the flow in the line, resulting in back-ups and overflows. Both types result in a threat to public health, property damage, and environmental impacts, especially when the untreated discharge reaches waterways. Six SSO events have been recorded in the Northdale neighborhood since early 2003. See *figure 10*.

To address the SSO problem—a condition that is very common in most of the older cities in the U.S.—the City-Parish entered into a Consent Decree with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) in 2001 to begin a “...scheduled program of system improvements to address historical overflows...” that have occurred in the sewer collection system.

Three sewer rehabilitation projects, all part of the Consent Decree, were programmed for the vicinity of the study neighborhood that will directly impact the Northdale community, improving conditions and eliminating the SSO problem that has been identified there. These comprehensive sewer system rehabilitation projects are estimated to cost about \$34.7 M combined. One is the Scenic Highway-Spanish Town Road Sewer Rehabilitation Project which will directly impact all of the study area through physical inspection. The other project—South Boulevard-St. Joseph Street/25th Street-North Acadian Throughway—will provide capacity improvements that will directly benefit the Northdale neighborhood. It will provide a new gravity main from Bay Street and 19th Street to a location south of I-110. The third project is scheduled for completion in November 2011. This is the Capital Lake Drive-Gayosa Street/25th Street-North Acadian Throughway project. It will provide a new force main following Madison Avenue through the study neighborhood. All of these sewer improvement projects will address and help to eliminate previously identified SSO problems in the Northdale neighborhood. See *figure 11*.



Source: CDM Engineering

Figure 10: Sanitary Sewer Overflows



Figure 11: Sewer Rehabilitation Project

Architectural Survey & Adaptive Reuse

In October 2010, a windshield survey was conducted examining the architectural integrity and adaptive reuse capabilities of the buildings within the Northdale catalyst area. The objective of the survey was to better understand the built environment in the catalyst area. Two questions were asked of each structure: “Is it apparently architecturally sound and viable for redevelopment?” and “If so, in what capacity?” To determine how a building should be addressed a rating of A – Poor Condition, B – Fair Condition or C – Good Condition was given to each one. *See figure 12.*

Using input from Workshop participants and analysis by the Team, the Catalyst Project area for Northdale was identified as the area bordered by Scenic Highway, North 22nd Street, Bellvale Street, and I-110. In general, most of the structures within the study area were occupied residential units receiving a rating of either good or fair. Of the four existing commercial buildings, two are currently occupied and in good condition, and two seem to be unoccupied and in disrepair. The full Northdale Adaptive Reuse Survey document can be found in the Appendix of this document.

Legend

- A - Poor Condition
- B - Fair Condition
- C - Good Condition



Figure 12: Architectural Conditions

Green Space & Recreation

In *Planning and Urban Design Standards*, Jan Gehl (1987), the Danish urbanist and architect states, “The proper hierarchy of planning is life, space, and buildings, not buildings, space, life.” Therefore, creating a high-quality living environment and preserving the environmental integrity of the Northdale community lies in the provision of parks, open spaces, trails, and recreational amenities. Recognizing existing and identifying future opportunities for recreation areas in Northdale is important to the goals and strategies of the CIP. Recreation areas are also a source of positive economic benefits. They enhance property values, increase municipal revenue, bring in homebuyers and workers, and attract retirees. *See figure 13.*

BREC’s Imagine Your Parks

In 2004, the East Baton Rouge Parish Recreation and Park Commission (BREC) released a Strategic Plan entitled *Imagine Your Parks*. Its purpose is to “develop consensus with the parish for a preferred future for the park system, recreation programs, and special facilities among the Commissioners, staff, key stakeholders, and citizens-at-large.” The document outlines analysis of BREC’s existing park system and makes recommendations for its improvement and expansion. During its preparation, site visits and reviews of 153 of BREC’s 184 parks were completed in order to review and rate the condition of the facilities. Parks were given a rating of excellent, good, fair, or poor (www.brec.org).

The Northdale community contains two BREC Special Use Facilities, Memorial Stadium/Goldsby Field, and the Pawnee Street Recreation Center as well as one neighborhood park, the Madison Avenue Neighborhood Park. Memorial Stadium/Goldsby Field was reviewed within the Strategic Plan and given a rating of “good.” This rating indicates that the parks’

“design and amenities are strong in appearance but are showing the normal wear and tear expected throughout a park system. Maintenance appears to be regular, the grass is mowed, play area surfacing is kept at an acceptable depth and free of weeds, structures are painted, and major repairs or renovation is at least five to ten years away.”

The second special use facility, Pawnee Street Recreation Center, received a rating of “poor.” This rating means that

“the park and its amenities, as a whole, are at the end of their life cycle. Typically, a park in poor condition is not well maintained. There may be trash on site as well as glass and weeds. The amenities are out of date and in many cases are

unsafe or fail to meet current codes. Frequently, parks in this category appear to have been all but abandoned. These parks need rebuilding following a new master plan as soon as it can be scheduled.”

As of the completion of this report, a master plan has not been scheduled for The Pawnee Street Recreation Center. Lastly, Madison Avenue Neighborhood Park was rated “fair.”

“Fair is a rating indicating that the property itself may very well be attractive but the amenities are in a state of decline. Maintenance is less frequent or at least cannot turn back the clock on normal decline. Play equipment is still safe but may be rusting, bleaching, or covered with mildew; structures such as restroom buildings are in need of repairs such as paint, shingles, or cleaning of graffiti; ball fields are playable but the infields are grass covered, creating a hazard, fencing is warped or rusting, dugouts are undersized or may flood when it rains, and bleachers are not up to code. These parks need major repairs or renovation within three to five years.”

As of the completion of this report, no renovation plans are known for Madison Avenue Neighborhood Park.

Memorial Stadium/Goldsby Field

Memorial Stadium is located at 1702 Foss Street. It seats 21,500 people and is used by local high schools and BREC for football games. On special occasions, it is used for major special events. There are a number of restrooms, a concession area, parking facilities, and two lighted ball diamonds.

Located next to BREC’s Memorial Stadium, Goldsby Field is at the intersection of Scenic Highway and Interstate 110. This facility was constructed to be used by a semi-pro baseball team, the Baton Rouge Red Sticks, in 1956. It is a regulation semi-pro field that is enclosed with an iron fence. There is a covered grandstand that seats 2,000 people. Dugouts for players are located on each side of the field. Lighting is adequate for high school games. Ample parking is available.

Plans are in the early stage to renovate the entire park, add a track, soccer field, basketball courts, parking, and other recreational sports facilities. This plan also proposes to straighten 17th Street at the southern end to create more usable land areas. The proposed improvements to Memorial Stadium and the surrounding area would create a major attraction for the rest of the City, bringing visitors, jobs, and retail spending to Northdale. The timing of implementing the plan is unknown. *See figure 14.*



Source: Baton Rouge Recreation & Park Commission

Legend

- Roads
- Railroads
- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Northdale Area
- BREC Parks**
 - Special Use Park
 - Community Park
 - Neighborhood Park
 - Mini-Park
 - Service Radius 0.25 miles
 - Service Radius 0.50 miles

Figure 13: Park Proximity

Pawnee Street Recreation Center

The Pawnee Street Park and Recreation Center at the intersection of Pawnee Street and Scenic Highway was damaged by fire on December 22, 2008. The fire started in a vacant home next door to the center and spread throughout the recreation facility. The recreation center's indoor gymnasium, classrooms, and meeting spaces were all damaged by the fire and smoke. The need for neighborhood parks in Northdale is even greater now that they are without the Pawnee Street Recreation Center facilities.

Madison Avenue Neighborhood Park

This small neighborhood park is on 0.97 acres located at 1820 Madison Avenue, west of Scenic Highway. It has a playground area, picnic facilities, and a basketball court.

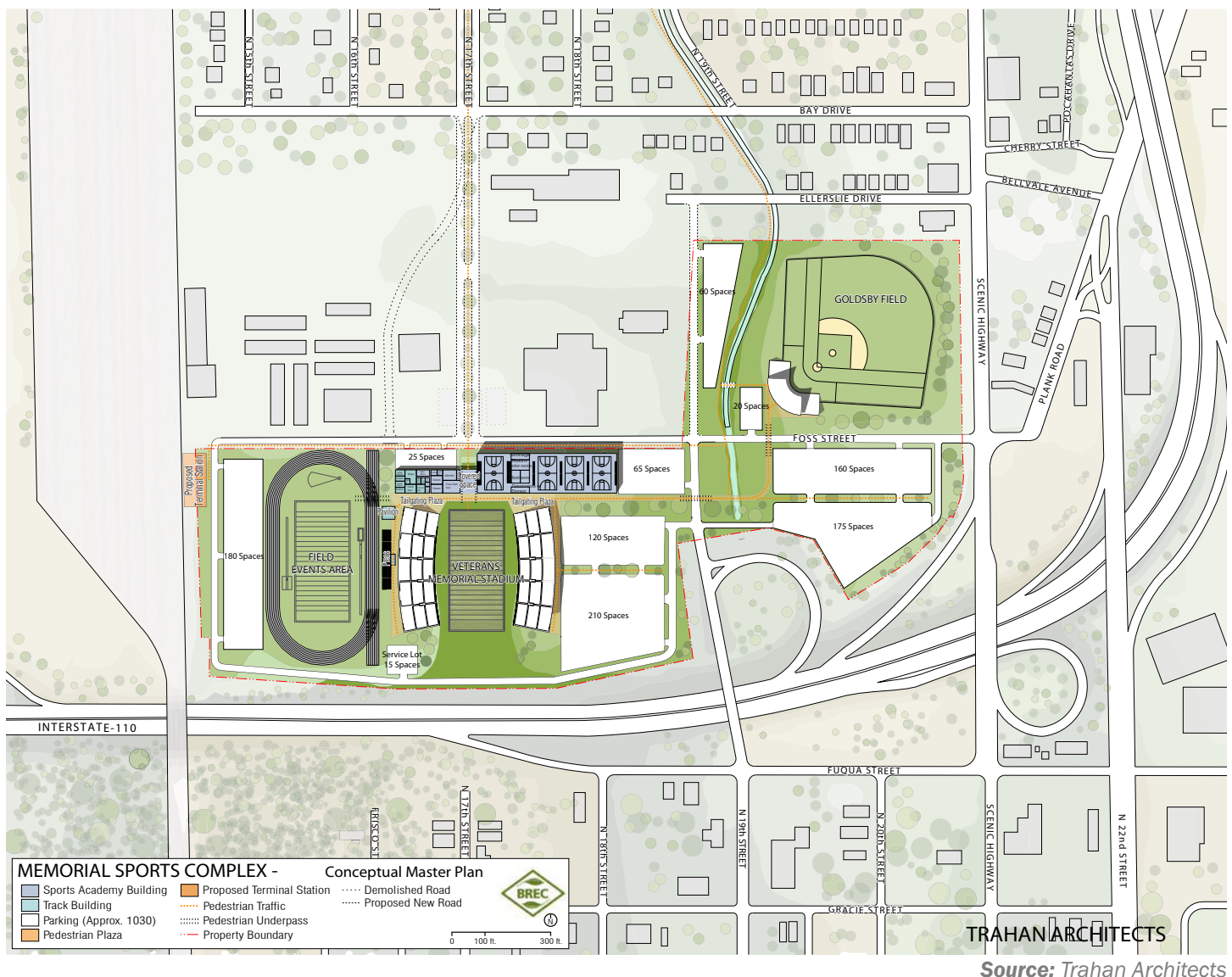


Figure 14: Memorial Sports Complex

Public Services

The Northdale community is close to a moderate number of public services. The Baton Rouge Fire Station #2, which currently sits at the intersection of Osage Street and Pocahontas Street, is relocating farther away from the community. However, Fire Station #1 at 1801 Laurel Street, Fire Station #6 at 3820 Gus Young Avenue, and Fire Station #12 at 555 Government Street are all within a 2 mile radius of the community. The East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office and the Baton Rouge Police Department are also located just within the 2 mile radius of the neighborhood center. Even with the fairly close proximity, residents pointed out known criminal activity at specific locations in the area and still feel that there is a need for more police presence in the community. *See figure 15.*

The River Center Branch library and the Eden Park Branch library are both within approximately three miles of the Northdale community, but major pedestrian barriers such as Interstate 110 and the Kansas City Southern Rail Line switching yard make access for many residents nearly impossible.

The Northdale community is without a sufficient number of easily accessible services such as health clinics, mental health care, and rehabilitation facilities. The nearest hospital is Baton Rouge General Medical Center, which is about two miles from the neighborhood. In this same area, there are also several specialty care facilities including Promise Hospital, which is a long term care facility, Cypress Psychiatric Hospital, and Behavioral Hospital of Baton Rouge, a dependency rehabilitation facility. Closer to the neighborhood, but still outside of the one mile radius, there are also several clinics including the Family Health Center, Louisiana Medical Clinic, and Kid Med South Clinic. The need for these types of facilities being in close proximity to the community was identified by residents during the Northdale Visioning Workshop.

Lastly, Northdale community is near numerous convenience stores, but is deprived of much needed retail services including a grocery store and fresh produce necessary for its citizen's health and wellness. According to the market assessment, there is a substantial opportunity gap for a supermarket and drug stores within a 2-mile and 3-mile radius of Northdale.

While at first glance the community seems to be fairly well served by public services and community resources, a closer examination shows that several of these services are of poor quality and most are located outside of a one mile radius of the community's center. For a community which relies heavily upon pedestrian travel or public transit this is less than ideal.

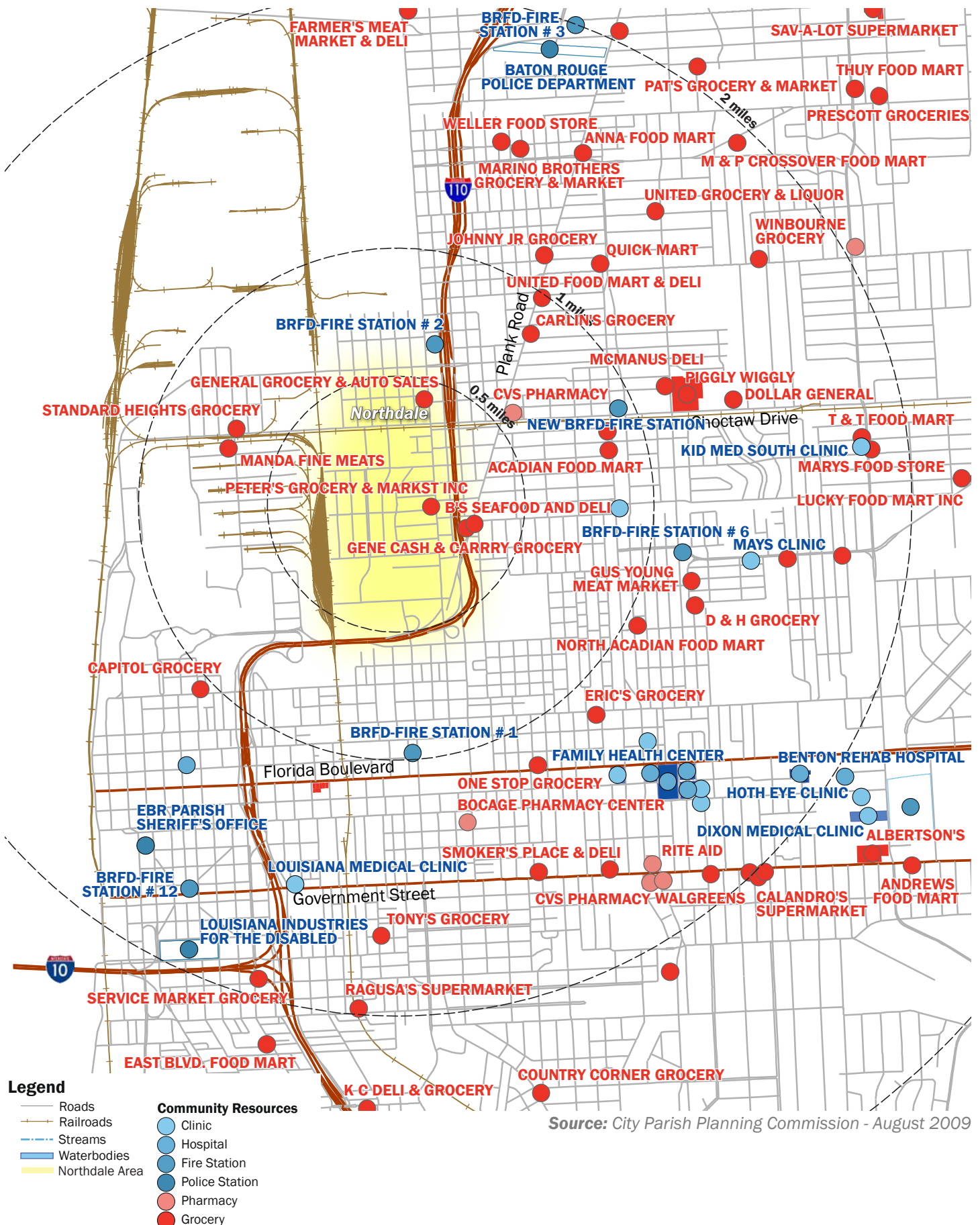


Figure 15: Community Resources

Safety and Crime

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is based on the principle that proper design and effective use of buildings and public spaces in neighborhoods can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime and an improvement in the quality of life for citizens. There are four CPTED design guidelines, found on the CPTED website (http://www.cptedsecurity.com/cpted_design_guidelines.htm), that serve as the basis for audits of safety conditions in communities:

1. Natural Surveillance - “See and be seen” is the overall goal when it comes to CPTED and natural surveillance. A person is less likely to commit a crime if they think someone will see them do it. Lighting and landscape play an important role in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.
2. Natural Access Control – CPTED utilizes walkways, fences, lighting, signage, and landscape to clearly guide people and vehicles to and from the proper entrances. The goal with this CPTED principle is not necessarily to keep intruders out, but to direct the flow of people while decreasing the opportunity for crime.
3. Territorial Reinforcement – Creating or extending a “sphere of influence” by utilizing physical designs such as pavement treatments, landscaping, and signage that enable users of an area to develop a sense of proprietorship over the area is the goal of this CPTED principle. Public areas are clearly distinguished from private ones. Potential trespassers perceive this control and are thereby discouraged.
4. Maintenance – CPTED includes the “Broken Window Theory” which suggests that one “broken window” or nuisance, if allowed to exist, will lead to others and ultimately to the decline of an entire neighborhood. Neglected and poorly maintained properties are breeding grounds for criminal activity.

Recommendations found in this report using CPTED guidelines include but are not limited to streetscape improvements, wider sidewalks, community inspired crosswalks, signage, use of bollards, lighting, landscaping, public space, and overall maintenance.

Police Presence

Crime statistics reported by the Baton Rouge Police Department through June 2010 show that the district in which Northdale is part, District 1, is highest in six out of the nine tracked crime categories including homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, motor theft, and arson. Each police district is then divided into zones, with District 1 having six zones. Northdale is in Zone A and data specific to that zone paint a slightly brighter picture for the neighborhood than that of the District as a whole. Within the district, the Northdale zone is either the lowest or second lowest in all of the nine tracked crime categories: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor theft, arson, and negligent homicide. However, the individual numbers of each occurrence are still higher than would be desirable. Residents feel that there should be a greater police presence and suggested putting a police substation the area.

Point Source Pollution and Brownfields

Point Source Pollution

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), one of the main potential sources of point source pollution for soils and water are the releases from underground storage tanks (USTs). USTs are tanks and any connected underground piping that have at least ten percent of their combined volume underground. USTs contain either petroleum or hazardous substances.

In September 2008, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LADEQ) provided the Baton Rouge Planning Commission (CPPC) with a UST dataset for East Baton Rouge Parish (EBRP). The dataset contains information for 4,104 USTs that have been installed at 1,182 sites within EBRP.

In addition to this recent data, historical research about underground storage tanks in EBRP area was performed using Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1885-1949. Created originally for the fire insurance industry for risk assessment purposes, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Sanborn Maps) contain detailed information on such building features as size, shape, construction type, use, and street address. In general, the Sanborn Maps are available for the historic or central business districts of a city. Sanborn Maps are extremely useful in identifying former or abandoned underground storage tanks and aboveground chemical storage areas.

Business Point Source Pollution

The North America Classification System (NAICS) code was used to identify businesses that could be potential sources of point source pollution in EBRP.

Brownfields

The term “brownfield site” means real property that is cited as having a presence, potential presence, or perceived presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. These contaminants may result in a complication for the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of that property. In 2009-2010, the EBR Planning Commission (CPPC) conducted an inventory of existing brownfield sites for the parish. This database contains information about the property name, owner, address, previous uses, current use, known hazards, potential hazards, and planned phase of cleanup. *See figure 16.*

Northdale Summary

Inventory from all three sources of data were merged to create a database of underground storage tanks within the parish. These locations were grouped by micro-watershed to identify the relative impact to the local water system. There are 34 NAICS locations, 7 historic Sanborn USTs, and 24 LDEQ USTs cited within the Northdale area watershed. This indicates a moderate impairment to the local ground water and soil health. A detailed survey of all UST locations should be conducted for identification of any tanks that may be leaking. Special concern should be taken for any tanks located within close proximity to the concrete drainage way along 19th Street.

There is one identified brownfield site within the Northdale community just north of the BREC's Goldsby Field Park. The vacant metal fabrication building located at 1415 Scenic Highway has no current plans for cleanup. While no known or potential hazards are indicated within the CPPC database, it is still recommended that a survey of the soil profile and ground water be tested for this site.

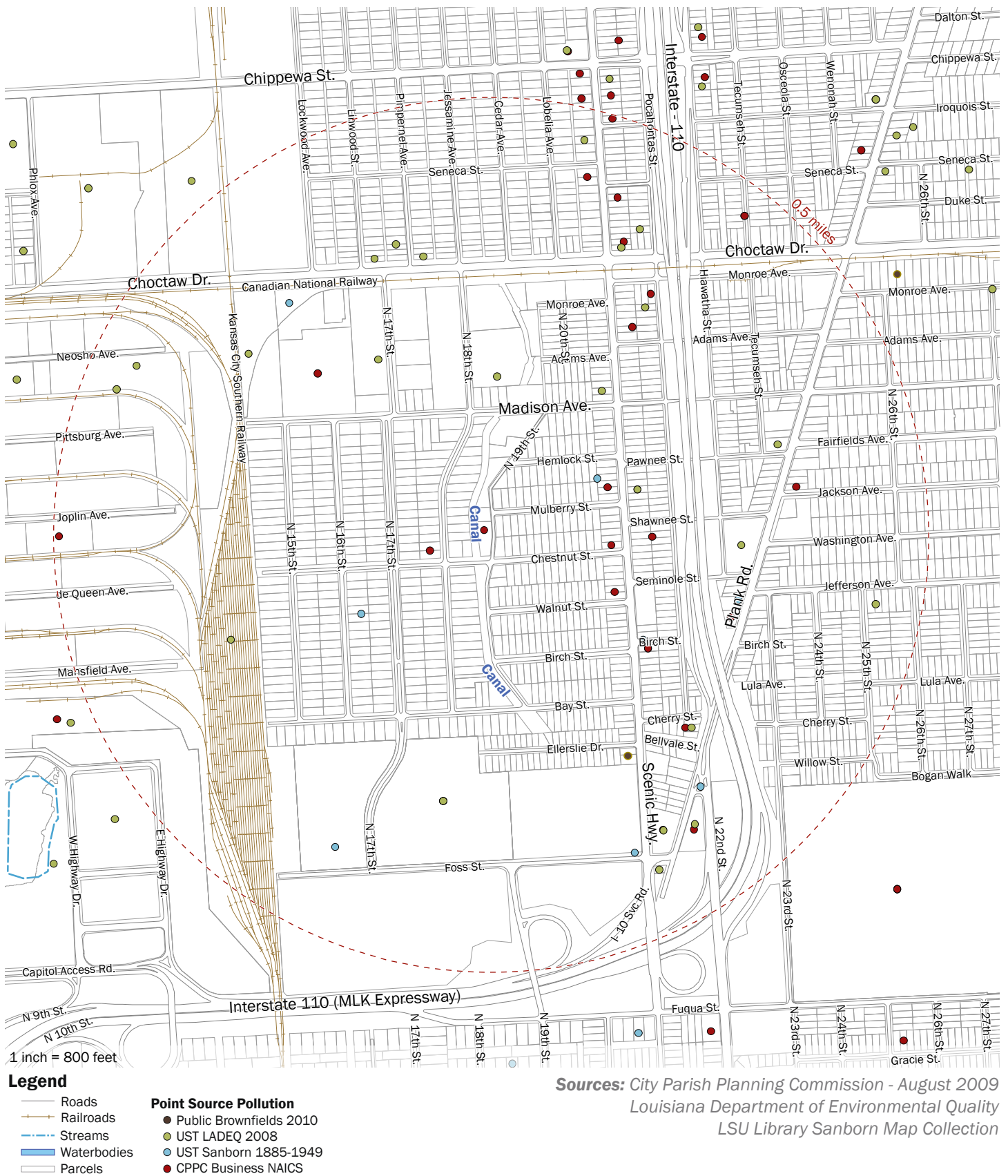


Figure 16: Brownfields & Point Source Pollution

Market Assessment

The Northdale Community is supported by an interstate and a network of highways, working railroads, and City-Parish roads. Northdale is located just north of downtown Baton Rouge and adjacent to a BREC sports complex and should be poised to generate visitor-based spending in the area, yet this does not occur. The once thriving commerce along Scenic Highway has diminished and the population is declining.

Members of the Team have prepared financial development pro formas and recommendations for redevelopment financing and implementation which will be addressed in the implementations section of this report. The market assessment provides an overview of the market and considers the factors that affect redevelopment in the Northdale area specifically and can be found in the Appendix of this document.

Framework

An overview of market factors can help a community prepare for future growth and change. It can assess whether public policies about land use, public facilities, financial incentives, and economic development are compatible with market forces. A market overview can help identify the degree to which likely demand for development matches the underlying ability of the area to provide built space at expected prices to meet that demand.

The analysis focuses on market factors that affect the potential development of residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Within Northdale, many factors can influence the future supply and demand for development. Key among them are 1) growth (or decline) in population and employment in the downtown, the city, the surrounding area, and selected neighborhoods, 2) the demographic make-up of expected growth, 3) characteristics of employment, 4) location and access to transportation and amenities, (5) availability and affordability of residential units and commercial services, and 6) land use regulations that determine how and where growth will occur.

Factors That Affect Redevelopment

The commercial and residential market within Northdale must be understood in the context of the City of Baton Rouge, the Parish, and the larger region. Key demographic and market trends that affect redevelopment in Northdale are population growth, employees by industry, racial composition, educational attainment, age, income, location and access, commercial services, housing, land ownership and parcel size, zoning, and financial incentives.

The slow population growth in the City and the Parish suggest that declining populations in North Baton Rouge neighborhoods such as Northdale may continue if there are not significant changes to policy and economic conditions. This trend is evident throughout the entire Parish.

Northdale, composed mostly of an African American population, has a lower labor force participation rate than the Parish, a lower high school graduate rate than the Parish, and a per capita income 47% of the Parish average.

The location of Northdale has several advantages, including its proximity to downtown, employment centers, Louisiana State University, Southern University, Baton Rouge Community College, medical facilities such as Baton Rouge General Medical Center, and the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport. The convenient access to I-110 provides direct routes to these and other commercial services.

Within the Northdale community, data collected suggests that there may be modest demand for commercial services including grocery stores, pharmacies, clothing stores, and restaurants. There also is a demand for a range of sizes of family clothing stores.

The housing market shows that in 2009, Northdale had a high proportion of single-family detached units. A lower percentage of residents lived in larger apartment complexes than Parish-wide. Northdale has a higher percentage of three, four, and five person households. There could be potential demand for new housing units over the next fifteen years, yet there are a variety of factors that could affect this outcome. The relatively high percentage of vacant and adjudicated properties could affect demand for new housing units, especially if a significant number of existing vacant homes become inhabited or are rehabilitated.

Northdale contains multiple vacant and/or adjudicated properties. Land ownership patterns can be a challenge to redevelopment when existing parcels are small and owned by many different owners. Any mid to large scale development will require assembly of smaller parcels into one larger site. When these parcels are owned by a variety of people who may or may not be willing to sell, land assembly can be an impediment.

City-Parish policy can play a significant role in the revitalization of an area. Regulations do not necessarily have to be a barrier to redevelopment; they can place restrictions on development while helping to ensure that new development achieves the community's goals. Zoning can play a key role in the redevelopment potential of an area. Northdale contains a mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial zones.

Similar to zoning, financial incentives offered by the City-Parish and the RDA can play a significant role in revitalization. Incentives can be put in place to encourage the kinds of development a community wants. In many cases, such development requires public financial support due to market constraints or other factors that limit the feasibility of revitalization projects. Appendix A of the Market Assessment Report includes a full description of the various financial resources that may be available.

Recommendations

Using input from the Northdale Visioning Workshop and analysis of the area's existing conditions, the Team identified strategic sites in the neighborhood to house momentum generating developments incorporating both vertical and horizontal mixed-uses and providing for a walkable, more sustainable community. A series of building prototypes were developed to incorporate advanced, contemporary design of sustainable architecture that responds to community needs and inspires community redevelopment. The development prototypes illustrate various building types and development estimates based upon average figures. They were based on both the architectural design of existing community developments and on setback and building envelope standards set forth in the Louisiana Land Use Toolkit, which is also being used in development of the East Baton Rouge Parish Comprehensive Planning efforts currently underway.

In addition to architectural recommendations, infrastructure and streetscape improvements are included in the plan. Streetscape improvements will serve to not only beautify the area, but also make it more pedestrian friendly, reduce urban heat island effects, combat drainage issues, and improve safety. While the Catalyst Project will serve as the jump start to redevelopment, community-wide and regional improvements are also recommended to improve the Northdale area. The recommendations will serve to revitalize the entire area and connect Northdale to the rest of the City, creating a more cohesive urban fabric throughout the Parish, and making travel by bus, car, and foot more direct.

Development Prototypes

- » Detached Commercial
- » Attached Commercial
- » Mixed-Use Residential

Development prototypes are found on the following pages.

Notes:

Illustrated numbers are taken from averages of each development type within the proposed catalyst area and do not represent actual available properties.

Total Project Costs figures include site acquisition, hard and soft construction costs, and 3% for sustainability.

Sources:

Building Construction Costs: local builders, brokers, developers in EBR, July 2010

Prototype Information: BROWN+DANOS, 2010

Land Estimates: local developers, July 2010

Detached Commercial

Building Summary

Lot Area (sf)	17,000 sf
Lot Area (acres)	0.39 acre
Height	1 story
Usable FAR	0.34
Residential units/acre	NA
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	5,000

Financial Summary

Average unit sale price	\$ NA
Average cost/sf	\$ NA
Average Unit Rent/month	\$ NA
Average rent (sf/month)	\$ NA
Retail Rent (sf/year)	\$ 13
Office rent (sf/year)	\$ NA
Estimated Land Value/sf	\$ 6
Estimated Land Value	\$ 100,000
Total Project Costs	\$ 675,000

Parking and Open Space Summary

Residential parking/unit	NA
Retail parking/ksf	2
Office Parking/ksf	NA
Total Parking Spaces	10
Open Space (%)	40

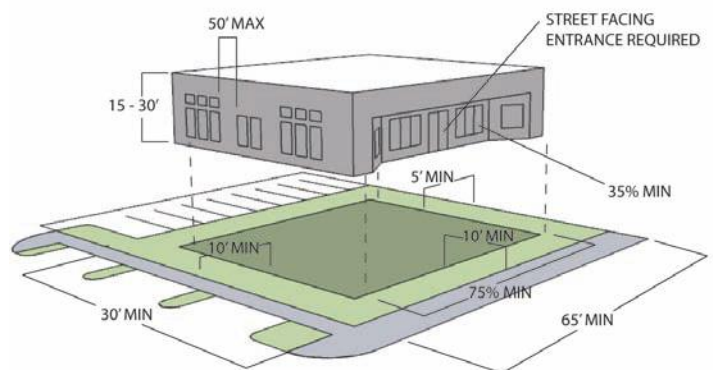
Construction Costs

Parking Construction	
Surface/space	\$ 3,000
Structured/space	\$ NA
Tuck-Under/space	\$ NA

Building Construction*	
Residential/sf	\$ NA
Retail/sf	\$ 80
Office/sf	\$ NA



Example of Detached Commercial



Recommended Prototype Diagram illustrating setbacks, facade requirements, and site coverage limitations.

Adapted From Louisiana Land Use Toolkit

Attached Commercial

Building Summary

Lot Area (sf)	51,000 sf
Lot Area (acres)	1.2 acre
Height	1 story
Usable FAR	0.21
Residential units/acre	NA
Avg. Unit Size (sf)	3,500
Avg. Number of Units	3
Total Building Size (sf)	10,500

Financial Summary

Average unit sale price	\$ NA
Average cost/sf	\$ NA
Average Unit Rent/month	\$ NA
Average rent (sf/month)	\$ NA
Retail Rent (sf/year)	\$ 13
Office rent (sf/year)	\$ NA
Estimated Land Value/sf	\$ 6
Estimated Land Value	\$ 310,000
Total Project Costs	\$ 1,600,000

Parking and Open Space Summary

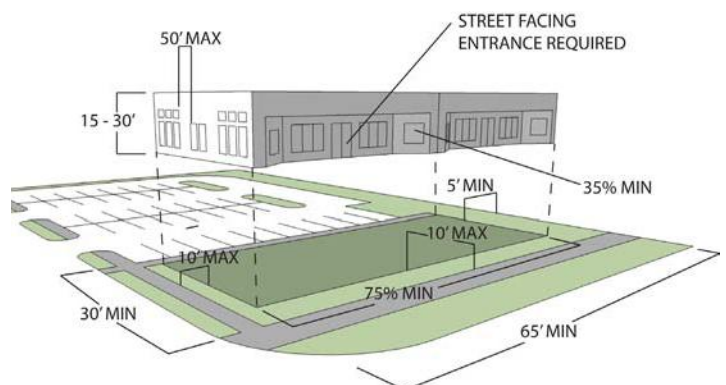
Residential parking/unit	NA
Retail parking/ksf	5
Office Parking/ksf	NA
Total Parking Spaces	31
Open Space (%)	15

Construction Costs

Parking Construction	
Surface/space	\$ 3,000
Structured/space	\$ NA
Tuck-Under/space	\$ NA
Building Construction*	
Residential/sf	\$ NA
Retail/sf	\$ 80
Office/sf	\$ NA



Example of Attached Commercial



Recommended Prototype Diagram illustrating setbacks, facade requirements, and site coverage limitations.

Adapted From Louisiana Land Use Toolkit

Mixed-Use Residential

Building Summary

Lot Area (sf)	18,500 sf
Lot Area (acres)	0.40 acre
Height	2 stories
Usable FAR	0.74
Residential units	7
Avg. Res. Unit Size (sf)	700
Avg. Retail Unit Size (sf)	2500
Total Ground Floor (sf)	5000

Financial Summary

Average unit sale price	\$ NA
Average cost/sf	\$ NA
Average Unit Rent/month	\$ 700
Average rent (sf/month)	\$ 1
Retail Rent (sf/year)	\$ 13
Office rent (sf/year)	\$ NA
Estimated Land Value/sf	\$ 6
Estimated Land Value	\$ 111,000
Total Project Costs	\$ 1,600,000

Parking and Open Space Summary

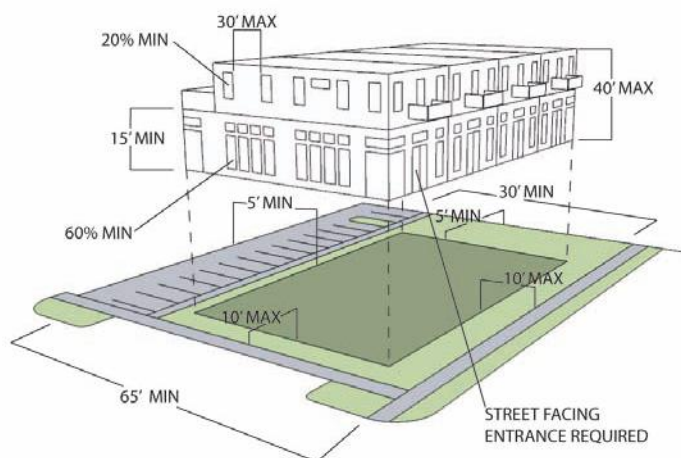
Residential parking/unit	2
Retail parking/ksf	2
Office Parking/ksf	0
Total Parking Spaces	25
Open Space (%)	20

Construction Costs

Parking Construction	
Surface/space	\$ 3,000
Structured/space	\$ 0
Tuck-Under/space	\$ 0
Building Construction*	
Residential/sf	\$ 135
Retail/sf	\$ 80
Office/sf	\$ NA



Example of Mixed-Use



Recommended Prototype Diagram illustrating setbacks, facade requirements, and site coverage limitations.

Adapted From Louisiana Land Use Toolkit

Unified Development Code

Due to the non-conforming parcel sizes, revisions to the zoning are required to make redevelopment of both commercial and residential parcels in Northdale feasible. The FuturEBR comprehensive planning effort currently underway is addressing UDC modifications. In the meantime, based on the Northdale Community Improvement Plan, we recommend a blanket change of land use and zoning for the entire community to Planned Unit Development (PUD).

This plan would become the PUD Concept Plan when the RDA applies for PUD zoning, and as such, would set forth the land uses, maximum densities, circulation, urban design, and landscape improvements to be followed as phases of the PUD Concept Plan are implemented.

The PUD designation would eliminate the issue of non-conforming uses and parcel sizes, allowing redevelopment to more readily occur. It would offer great development flexibility and also precludes the need for individual developers to go through the unpredictable and expensive rezoning and plan review process. Because the planning concept for the area would be approved during the PUD rezoning process, only the specific development plans would need to be approved as phases are developed.

Acquiring the PUD designation would require preparation and submittal of a PUD application to the City-Parish Planning Commission. In instances with multiple land owners over a large area, a minimum of 51% of the land owners would need to provide written approval of the proposed land use and zoning change. The PUD application would utilize the Northdale CIP plan as the PUD Concept Plan. It would need to be submitted six weeks prior to the Planning Commission meeting. If approved, it would go before the Metro Council three weeks later. Following PUD rezoning, a development plan for each phase of the CIP PUD would need to be submitted for review and approval by the Planning Staff. No further approval by the Planning Commission or Metro Council would be required unless a phase deviates from the Concept Plan by more than 10%. The PUD land use and zoning designations would stay in effect with the property as long as the initial phase begins construction within three years. The blanket rezoning to PUD should be accomplished through a joint effort of the RDA and the Metro Councilperson.

To ensure the urban design intent of the Northdale Community Improvement Plan is implemented throughout each development phase of the approved PUD Concept Plan, it is recommended that a design stipulation be part of the PUD

submittal. Specifically, the PUD Concept Plan would require all implementation phases comply with the RDA's CIP Design Guidelines, to be subsequently prepared, and undergo design review under these guidelines by City-Parish Planning staff. The CIP Design Guidelines would include standards for both public and private developments including elements such as lighting levels, signage types and sizes, streetscape design, and construction materials as well as building envelopes, curb cuts, building fenestration, landscaping, and parking lot design.

Along Ellerslie Drive, where substantial infill housing is needed, the RDA should facilitate the combining of lots through its Land Banking program. A campaign to inform the residents of the area and the local home builders should be undertaken to provide information on this particular application of the Land Banking program to encourage housing rehabilitation and new construction.

Commercial parcels would also benefit from PUD rezoning of the entire target area, providing flexibility for redevelopment of urban infill sites and for adaptive reuse of older buildings, particularly with regard to providing reduced parking compared to that required by existing zoning.

The Comprehensive Plan for East Baton Rouge Parish, FuturEBR, is currently being developed. It is anticipated that when this Plan is released, in the spring of 2011, new land use tools will be proposed. It may be that these FuturEBR recommendations would better serve the desired goals of the Northdale CIP and should be considered at that time.

Catalyst Project

Site

The area identified as the Catalyst Project within Northdale is bound on the west by Scenic Highway and on the east by North 22nd Street and Plank Road. I-110 creates its southern border and its northern border is Bellvale Street. *See figure 17.*

The northern node of the Catalyst Project is bound by Scenic Highway on the west, Bellvale Street on the north, and Plank Road on the east.

The southern node of the Catalyst Project is located south of Foss Street bound by Scenic Highway on the west, north 22nd Street on the east, and I-110 on the south.



Figure 17: Catalyst Area Context Map

Program

Community input indicated a desire for attached commercial, detached commercial, and mixed-use development in the Catalyst Project, accompanied by outdoor plazas and seating with vegetation buffering the communication tower just south of Bellvale Street. The market assessment for the neighborhood also showed a gap in commercial services such as restaurants, grocery stores, family clothing stores, and pharmacies. *See figure 18.*

To build the area's economy, the Catalyst Project seeks to build on the high visibility and traffic of the two nodes encompassing I-110, Plank Road, and Scenic Highway. This site presents the most appropriate location for substantial commercial development. Substantial development here will generate jobs, activity, and revenue in the area, thus having a major beneficial impact on the Northdale community.

First, intense efforts are recommended to work with existing businesses to improve their facilities with façade upgrades. At the same time, vacant and underutilized parcels along Scenic Highway should be slated for acquisition and the development of mixed-use (new construction of commercial space with housing on the second floor) and parking. Furthermore, it is recommended that the RDA begin discussions with DOTD about the acquisition of right-of-way at the southern end of Plank Road. The unused, overgrown dead end southern portion of Plank Road is proposed to be absorbed into the Catalyst Project and will also be a component of this discussion.

It is also recommended that the RDA begin discussions with the Army Reserve to discuss the possibility of relocating its facilities to another, more appropriate location in the long term. The Army facility, located at 1735 Foss Street, is well-kept along the street frontage, however the rear portion of the property has become a storage area used for excess Federal equipment. The current use of the property is inconsistent with the character of the single-family residential neighborhood and recreation facilities that dominate Northdale. Once revitalized, this property could then be put back into commerce. Additionally, the DOTD property along the south end of North 17th Street is characterized by broken and rusted equipment, scattered supplies, and trailers. These should be disposed of, parking areas should be cleaned or resurfaced, and buildings should be refurbished or removed. As soon as feasible, this facility should be relocated away from this major recreational facility so closely tied to the residential neighborhood. This property, along with the Army Reserves property, could be assembled into a large redevelopment opportunity strategically located near the proposed Memorial Sports Complex, Downtown

Baton Rouge, the State Capitol and Capitol Park, Historic Spanish Town, and Mid City, with visibility and access along I-110, Scenic Highway, and Plank Road.

Building on this momentum, the vacant single-family residential parcels would be developed and adjudicated parcels should be acquired by the RDA for infill redevelopment. The vacant homes in Northdale would either be acquired or the RDA would work with the owners to renovate and occupy them.

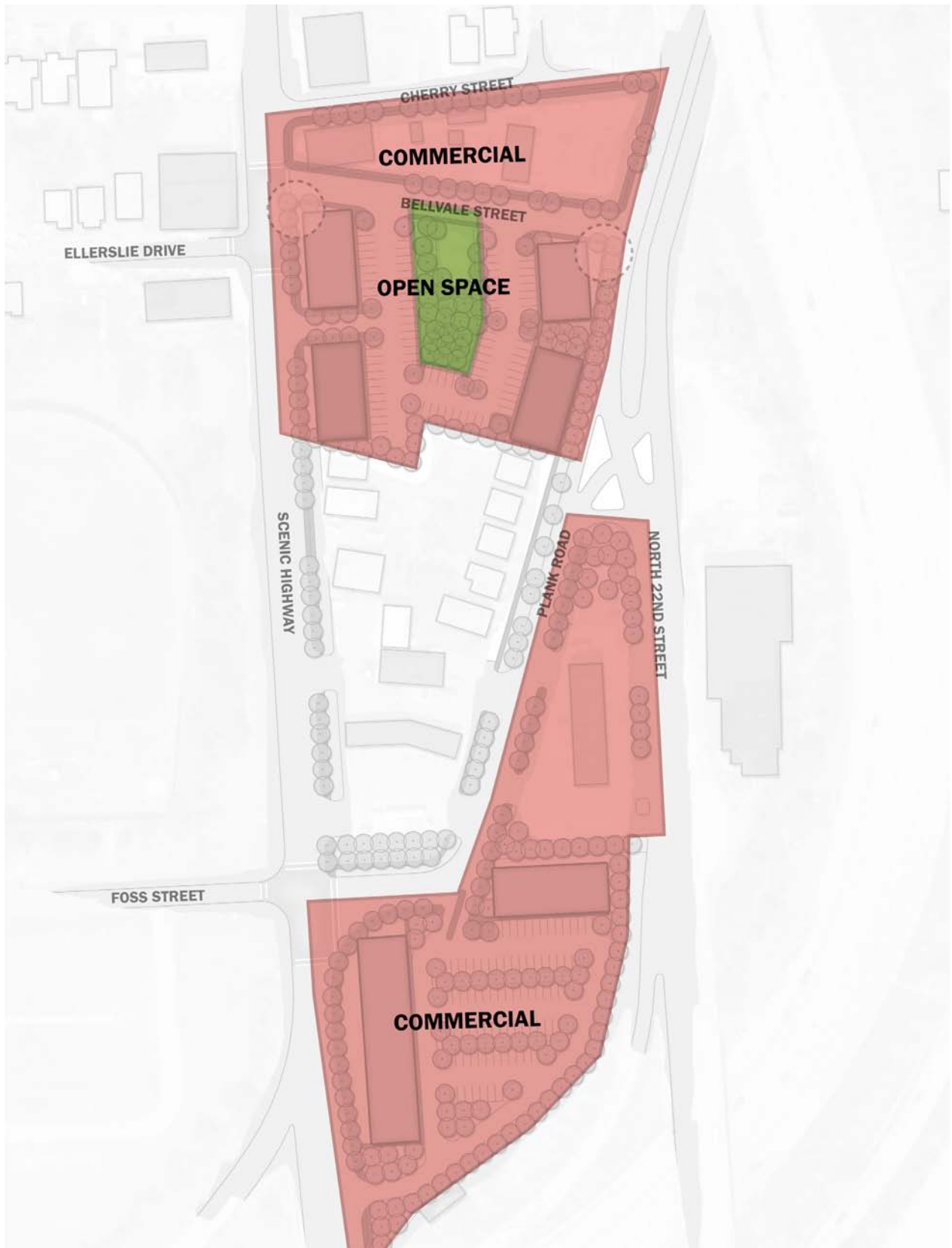


Figure 18: Catalyst Area Program Diagram



Figure 19: Catalyst Plan



Figure 20: Catalyst Plan Tilt Up Before and After

Catalyst Project

For the northern node of the plan, care was taken to protect the residential quality of the area while providing commercial and mixed-use opportunities to its residents. The plan places neighborhood-scale commercial buildings along Bellvale Street, providing retail opportunities for residents as well as people from outside the neighborhood who may be using Bellvale Street as a connection between Plank Road and Scenic Highway. South of the commercial buildings on Bellvale Street the plan calls for two 5,000 square foot mixed-use buildings. To reinforce the neighborhood feel throughout, two outdoor plazas with seating are proposed in the middle of the Catalyst Project area.

The southern node of the plan developed for Northdale will be anchored by new commercial development along Scenic Highway and Foss Street. Within the proposed Catalyst Project are several attached commercial opportunities with access from Plank Road as well as Scenic Highway. The commercial buildings will be highly visible from I-110 and the parking will be located behind the structures. *See figures 19 and 20.*

Graphic representations are included showing urban design elements proposed for the Catalyst Projects. *See figures 21-23.*

Transportation & Infrastructure

Roadways

The roadway and street network in the immediate vicinity of the Northdale Catalyst Project will experience some additional traffic when the proposed Catalyst Project is fully developed. However, the two major thoroughfares that bracket the area, Scenic Highway and Plank Road/North 22nd Street, have excess capacity and should easily absorb any increase in traffic generated by the catalyst. Since the Northdale Catalyst Project proposes to add more than 25,000 SF of commercial space, a traffic impact study should be undertaken to determine the correct intersection geometry and signalization needs (if any) including phasing, timing, etc. to maintain an acceptable level of service at the development's primary and secondary intersections and minimize any adverse traffic impacts in the adjacent study community.

Internal vehicular circulation on the Catalyst Project has been minimized due to the size of the proposed development and existing businesses currently on the site. The fact that the Catalyst Project is bracketed by two major roadways makes it very accessible not only to the larger Northdale neighborhood, but to other areas of the City as well.

Pedestrian Access

Pedestrian access to the Northdale Catalyst Project from the neighborhood immediately to its west will be challenging. This is due to not only the lack of sidewalks in general, but also the need to cross Scenic Highway. The suggested placement of crosswalks and other pedestrian-oriented features must be accompanied by other improvements designed to ensure pedestrian safety and enhance the pedestrian experience to and from the Catalyst Project. *See figures 24 and 25.* These recommendations include:

- » ADA compliance in the location of pedestrian-actuated crosswalk signal buttons
- » Inclusion of ADA compliant wheelchair ramps and ramp locations
- » Inclusion of crosswalk signage of a design and placement in accordance with Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards
- » Sidewalk improvements constructed to a minimum 5' width, wider where permitted by existing right-of-way

The overall design of the Catalyst Project promotes pedestrian access and neighborhood connectivity, two very desirable features. To reinforce neighborhood identity and articulate entrance into the area, community-inspired designs for all crosswalks are recommended. Colorful designs created by Northdale artists would be installed in the roadway with bricks or colored concrete, or painted by community members themselves using low VOC epoxy paint made for such applications.

Transit Service

The proposed Northdale Catalyst Project is directly served by two CATS transit lines (Scotlandville and Plank Road routes). *See figure 27.* From these two lines that are currently provided, it is possible to transfer to several other transit routes in the CATS system and access the terminal at Florida Boulevard and North 22nd Street. Connectivity between the two routes is provided for in the vicinity of Bellvale Street. At this location transit shelters are provided on both Scenic Highway and Plank Road. With attractive, well-shaded sidewalks and useful street furniture, the short walk from one side to the other along Bellvale Street could be very tolerable for transit users.

Another transit shelter will be placed at the south node of the Catalyst Project at Scenic Highway and Foss Street to facilitate users of both the proposed Memorial Sports Complex as well as the Catalyst Project.

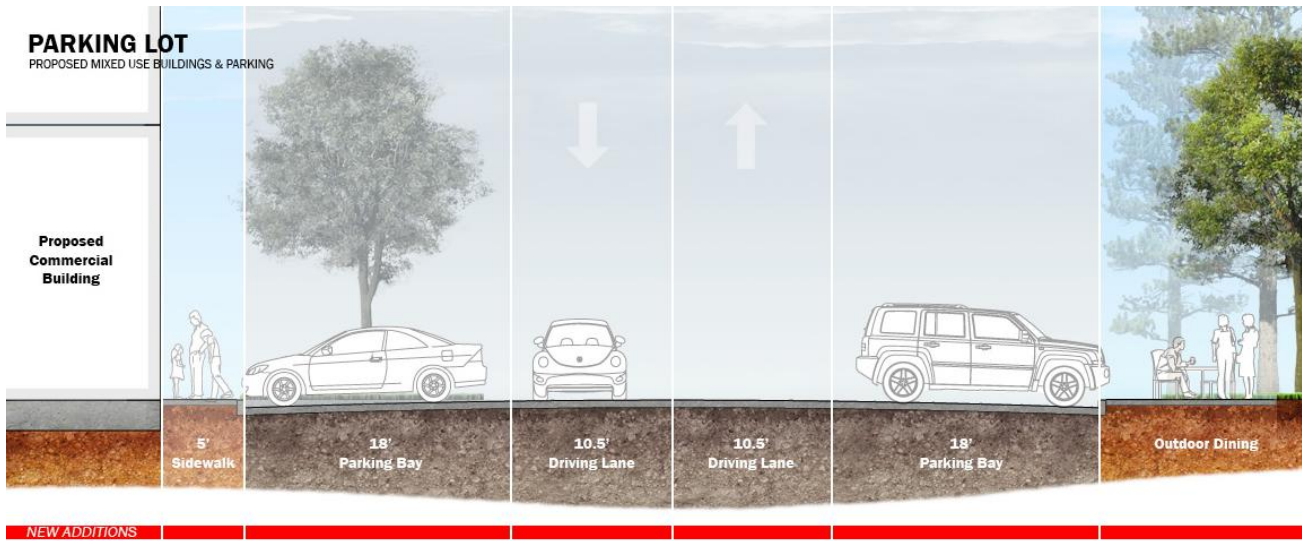


Figure 21

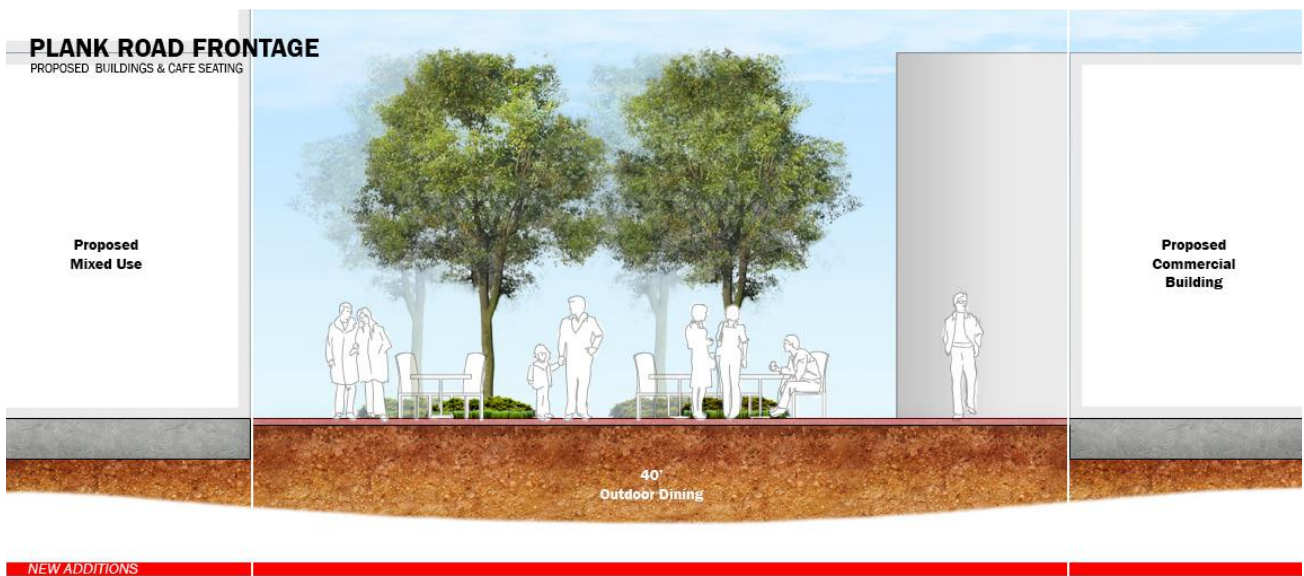


Figure 22

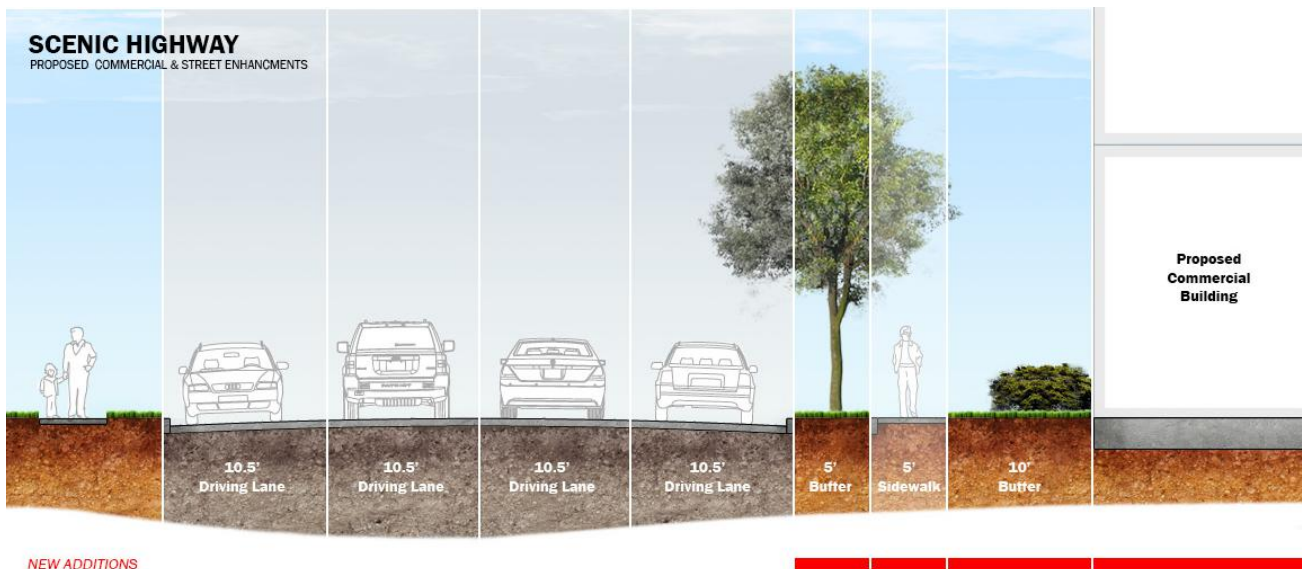
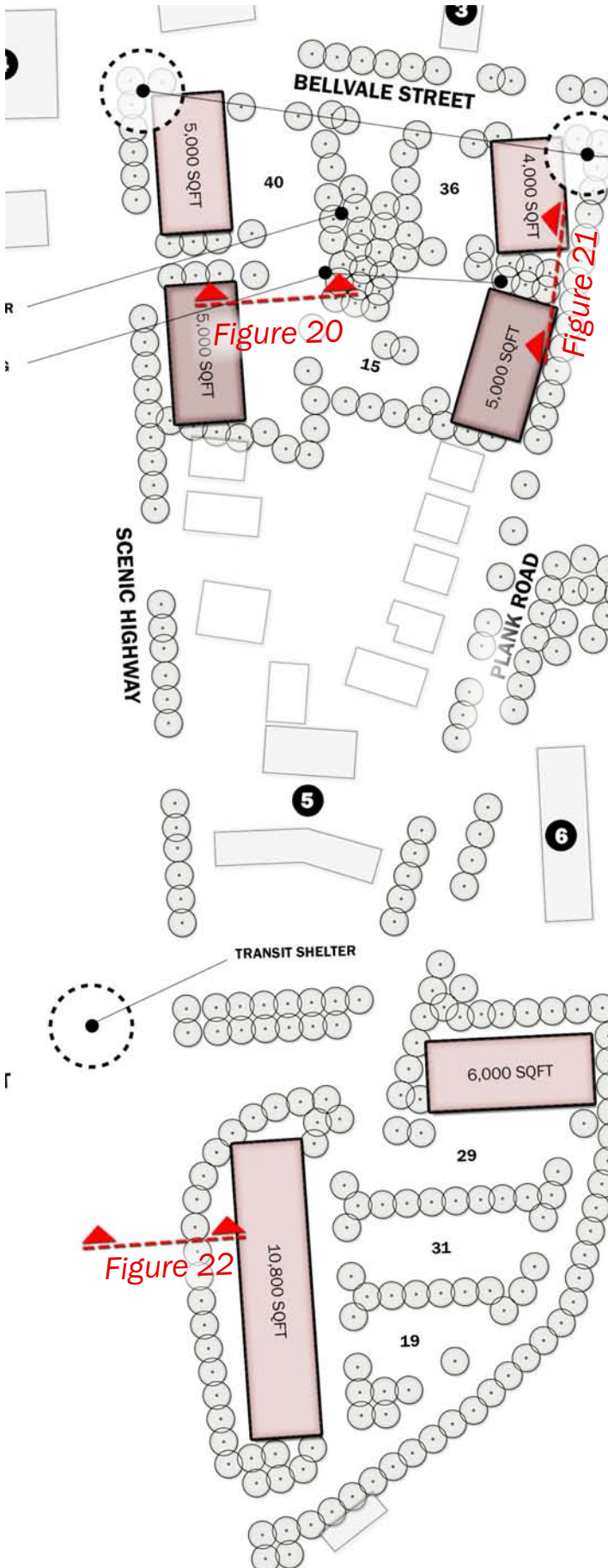


Figure 23



Figures 24: Northern Node Crosswalk Area



Figures 25: Southern Node Crosswalk Area

Key Map for Figures 20 - 22

Infrastructure

Water service in the Northdale community is adequate and of a high quality, as it is throughout the rest of the city. The current water system has a great deal of excess treatment capacity. The development of the proposed Northdale Catalyst Project will in no way adversely impact the water utility by placing undue burdens on system capacity.

Stormwater Drainage

In general, storm water drainage in the Northdale Catalyst Project area will be handled by an underground drainage infrastructure instead of open ditches. Since some of this Catalyst Project area is already developed (two gasoline station-convenience stores), storm water runoff is being adequately handled with the existing infrastructure. As the site develops, care will need to be exercised to design the storm water runoff system(s) in accordance with applicable drainage codes.

Sanitary Sewer

Regarding sanitary sewer service, the City-Parish is currently engaged in a massive sewer system comprehensive rehabilitation program according to the terms of the Consent Decree it signed along with the EPA and LDEQ in 2001. There are currently three projects planned in the Northdale community that when completed will greatly benefit this community as well as the Catalyst Project.

An assessment of the existing sewer treatment system using hydraulic modeling produced an expected peak hour flow at the Central WWTP of 62 MGD following program completion. This facility's current peak hour design capacity is 65 MGD. This plant, therefore, has adequate treatment capacity and enough additional capacity to handle a certain amount of future growth. The additional demand to be directly generated by the catalyst development will have no noticeable impact on the Central WWTP. At some point in the future, particularly when the Catalyst Project reaches full build out and performs as hoped, generating infill development in the larger Northdale neighborhood, the flow into the Central WWTP could approach the plant's capacity.

Financial Analysis

In an effort to determine the feasibility of the Catalyst Projects, financial pro formas investigating several different financing options for each development type were performed and are included in the appendix of this document. The following is an example of a financial analysis based on the development types included in Phase Two. Phase Two of the Northdale Catalyst Project, the southern node, is located between Scenic Highway, North 22nd Street, Foss Street, and Interstate 110. The anchoring component of Phase Two as well as the Catalyst Project as a whole will be a large format retail store or attached commercial building of approximately 11,000 square feet. Assuming construction costs of \$80 per square foot, the building would cost approximately \$980,000. Adding the additional costs of acquisition, parking lot construction, and soft costs, the total investment would be approximately \$1.6 million. *See figure 26.*

Additionally in Northdale Phase Two, there will be a smaller commercial building, totaling 6,000 square feet, to the northeast of the proposed large format commercial. Assuming a new construction cost per square foot of \$80 (hard costs only) the building would total just under \$500,000. Adding to that, the construction costs for 15 parking spaces and the purchase of the land, as well as soft costs, the investment would total roughly \$826,000. Estimates for Phase One, the northern node, can be found in the Appendix.

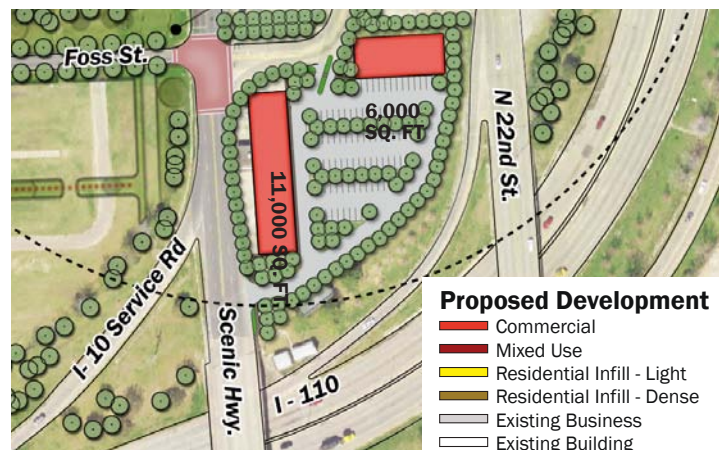


Figure 26: Phase Two Implementation

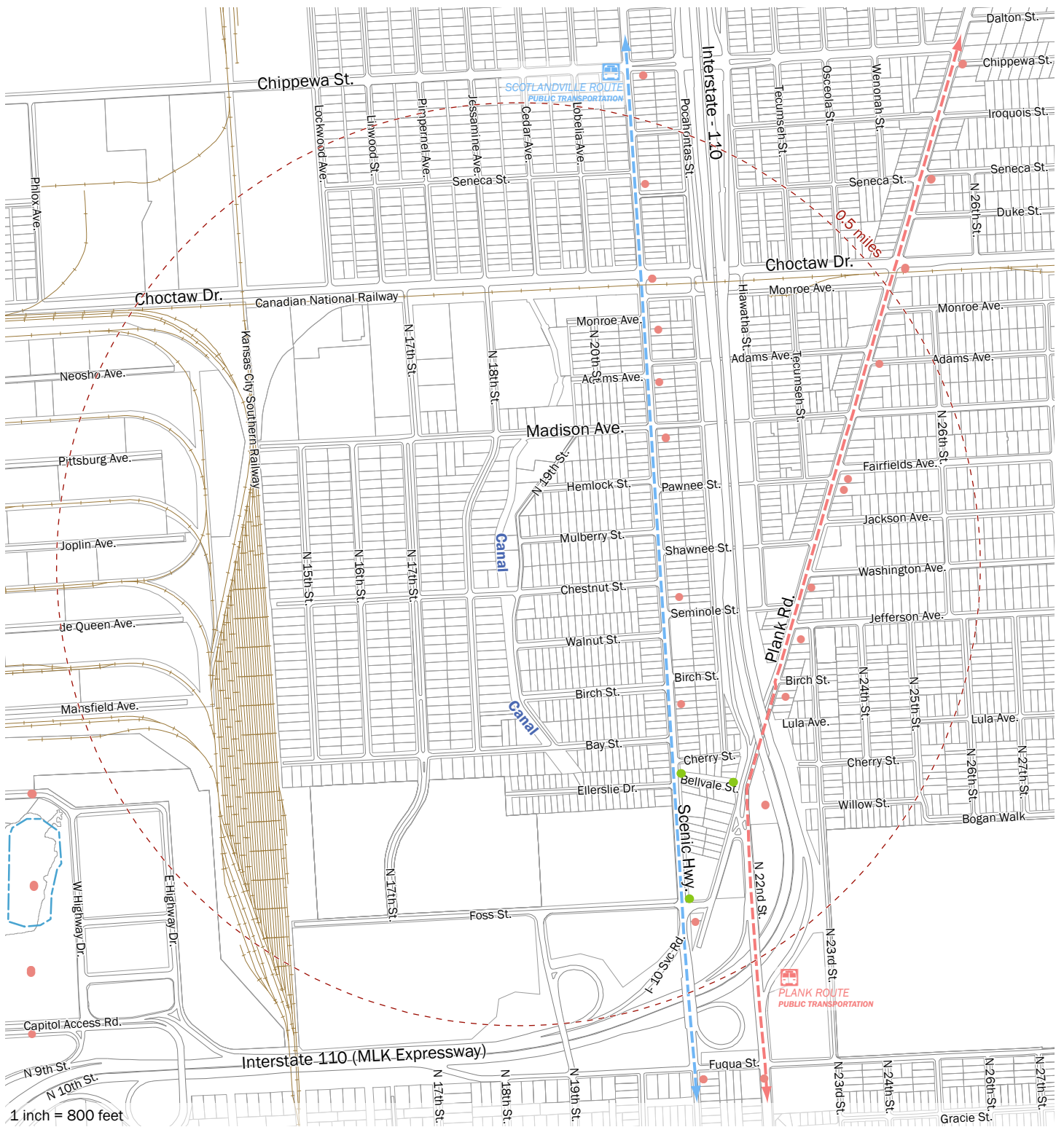


Figure 27: Transit Stop Locations

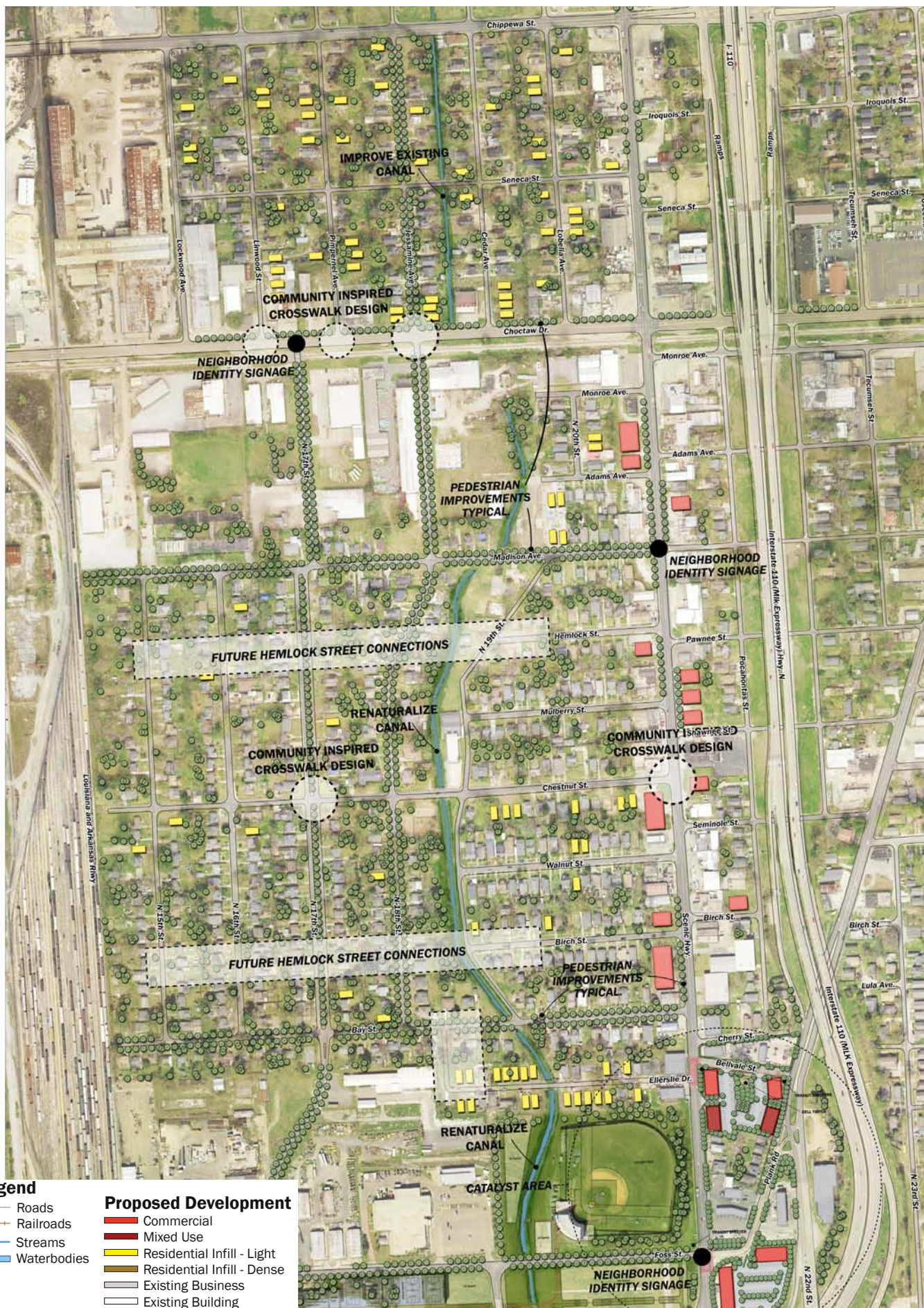


Figure 28: Community-Wide Recommendations

Community-Wide Recommendations

The Northdale Catalyst Project establishes the spark needed to begin the revitalization effort in the area and provides the framework for a prosperous, sustainable, and smart future. It will be a resource for the RDA and City-Parish to use when considering development proposals, providing financing and funding strategies, and prioritizing community needs. It will help expand the Northdale community's economic role while also protecting and enhancing its rich cultural and ecological resources. However, to achieve true revitalization of Northdale, we must look beyond the Catalyst Project boundaries to the community as a whole. The following recommendations set forth the steps required to most effectively revitalize and rebuild the community. The successful implementation is dependent on the effective partnership among the public sector, the community, and private investment. Additionally, innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship are to be encouraged, nurtured, and supported. This fuels initiative, builds wealth, and leads to a more diversified and self-sustaining economic base for the community at large. See figure 28.

Refine a strategy to resolve adjudicated, blighted, vacant, and abandoned properties.

There are a number of adjudicated, abandoned, unmaintained, and otherwise vacant properties in Northdale that currently contribute to a sense of blight. The RDA has already begun acquiring adjudicated properties in the area, and should strategically assemble other lots for redevelopment in accordance with the CIP.

Implement a robust and consistent code enforcement program.

Preliminary analysis, interviews, and workshop feedback suggest that Northdale needs additional code enforcement for buildings and parcels that are in dilapidated or unsafe condition. This will help turn around the image of the area for both existing residents and future investors. The City has recently implemented a code enforcement court and boosted the number of inspectors.

Leverage public financial resources to stimulate private investment.

A number of financial resources are available, not only through the RDA, but also through the City-Parish, the State, and federal programs. These resources such as tax credits, rehabilitation loan programs, and revenue bonds can be leveraged to attract private investment in development projects that earn reasonable returns for private investors and provide projects that will enhance and benefit the community.

Implement/facilitate policies that enhance economic opportunity for residents.

To improve economic opportunities for residents in the Northdale area, the City-Parish and the RDA should facilitate involvement and investment by area citizens in redevelopment and public improvement projects. Locally owned businesses should be provided special consideration to relocate and expand to new development areas. In addition, policies should address resident's life skills development, workforce training, entrepreneurship, and micro-loans.

Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation through streetscape improvements .

Scenic Highway travels through the length of Northdale and does have sidewalks to facilitate pedestrian travel, but bicycle paths are lacking. These existing sidewalks are narrow, overgrown with vegetation in many places, and provide no trees for shade. Additionally, the sidewalks are placed directly against the curb of Scenic Highway, placing pedestrians dangerously close to heavy traffic. Enhancements should be made in the form of bike paths, sidewalk widening, tree plantings, and lighting. Stormwater management elements along the streets will be designed to mitigate localized flooding throughout the community. Also, similar streetscape improvements are recommended on Choctaw Drive, Madison Avenue, Bay Street, and North 17th Street.

Other recommendations include working with Baton Rouge Green to implement the North 17th Street Tree Planting Project. Further partnerships with Baton Rouge Green could include initiating a tree planting program on other major arteries and encouraging the railroads to allow planting of right-of-way banks with wildflowers, groundcovers, or other low maintenance vegetation to beautify the right-of-way that impacts the area.

Community inspired crosswalks like those proposed as part of the Catalyst Project are recommended at the intersection of Chestnut Street and Scenic Highway, as well as the intersection of Chestnut Street and North 17th Street. In order to connect the Standard Heights area to the rest of the community, we recommend crosswalks from Pimpernel Avenue and Linwood Street southward to North 17th Street and at Jessamine Avenue connecting to North 18th Street.

Connect streets within the neighborhood.

As mentioned previously, there are very few east-west streets that fully connect the Northdale neighborhood from 15th Street to Scenic Highway. To provide better accessibility to neighborhood residents and better align with Complete Streets policies,

facilitating these street connections is necessary. Complete Streets policies encourage street connectivity and aim to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses, and automobiles.

Recommended connections are Hemlock Street to North 15th Street and Birch Street to North 15th Street. Properties that could facilitate this connection should be acquired as they become available.

It is recommended that the connection of Ellerslie Drive to Bay Street be created as soon as possible. This is the only true dead-end street in the neighborhood and fosters a feeling of isolation and danger. There are currently sufficient vacant and/or adjudicated properties at the northwest end of Ellerslie Drive to accommodate this connection.

Strengthen Neighborhood Identity

In order to make Northdale more visible to visitors and strengthen the sense of neighborhood identity of its residents, community signage is recommended and should be placed at the following key intersections; Plank Road at Foss Street, Choctaw Drive at North 17th Street, and Scenic Highway at Foss Street.

Regional Connections

Blight in the Northdale neighborhood is the manifestation of economic distress in a community that is neither essentially connected to other parts of the City nor adequately linked to the mainstream economy. To address conditions in Northdale, this plan seeks to connect the target area to environmental, economic, and societal systems beyond the community. See figure 30.

Northdale residents have access to several major roadways, connecting them by vehicles both in an east-west and north-south direction to the remainder of the Parish. However, for pedestrians, these connections are limited or non-existent, but can be provided. There is a man-made, concrete lined drainageway that runs parallel to North 19th Street. Implementing a naturalized greenway along the banks of this drainageway that features walking and biking paths would provide residents of Northdale a safe and enjoyable connection from Madison Avenue down to BREC's Memorial Stadium and Goldsby Field, which then would connect to the proposed Downtown Greenway.

The proposed Downtown Greenway, figure 29, will link seven BREC parks: Memorial Stadium, Goldsby Field, Spanish Town Park, 7th Street, Expressway Park, Brooks Park, and City Community Park. It will form the backbone of an urban trail system, reconnecting disjointed communities and creating a more livable environment. The Downtown Greenway

hopes to spark a new surge in private investment and have a significant impact on the redevelopment of the area including the Northdale community. As proposed in the RDA's Choctaw Corridor Community Improvement Plan, walking and biking improvements to 17th Street would connect to Choctaw Drive, which is proposed to eventually connect via pedestrian and bicycle paths to Howell Park on the northeast and Webb Memorial Park and Golf Course on the southeast.



Source Provided by the Downtown Development District

Figure 29: DDD Downtown Greenway

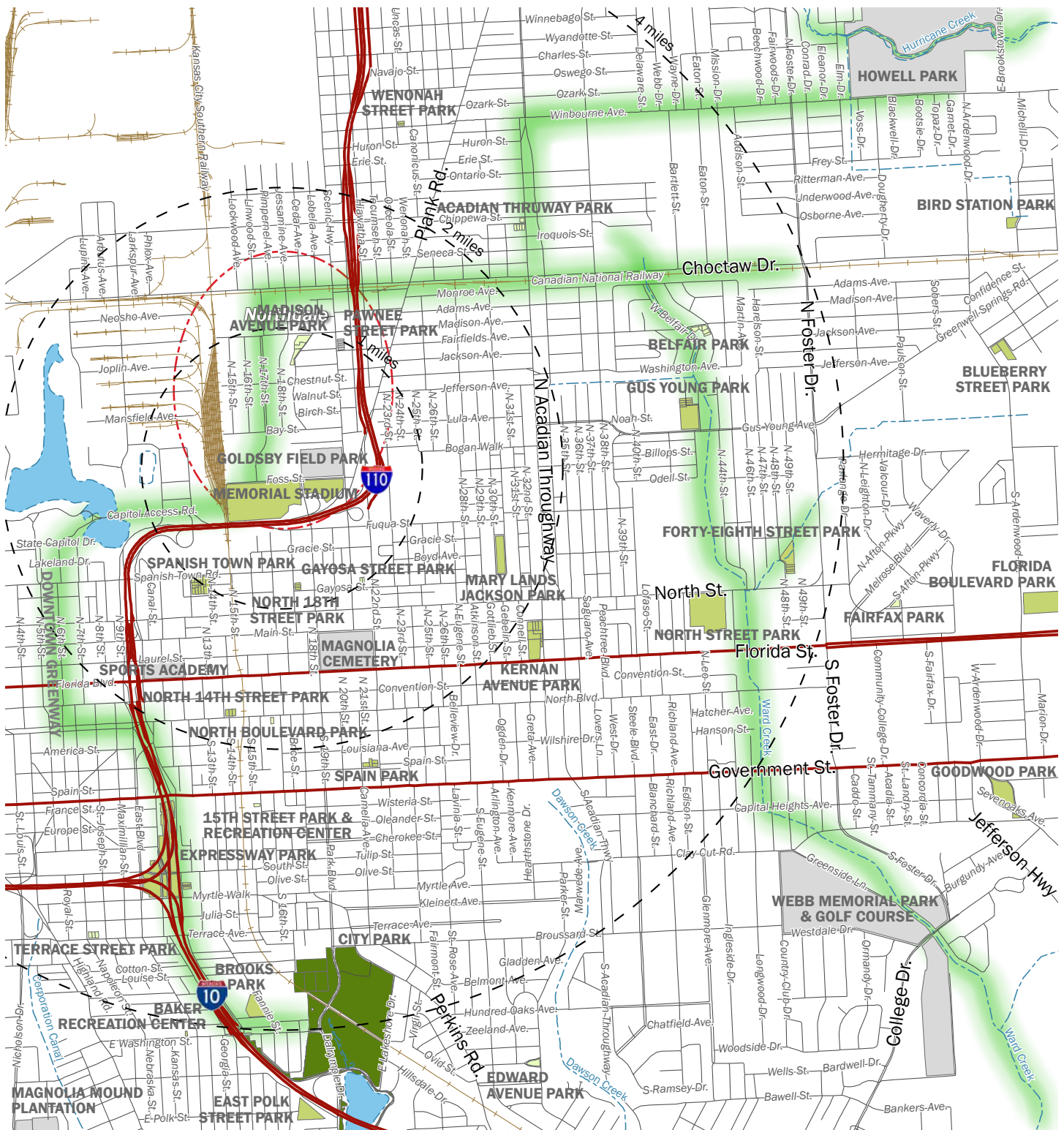


Figure 30: Regional Connections

CIP | Implementation Strategies

Implementation Priorities & Responsibilities

Initial steps prior to implementation of real estate development efforts, as in most projects, should improve the market for investment in Northdale. Small, highly visible efforts like community clean-up, streetscape improvements, and efforts to establish an identity for this community will promote community pride and make the area more attractive to potential businesses and residents. Meeting with and providing information to the existing businesses in the area on the CIP and RDA programs will encourage them to make improvements to their properties, particularly since they impact the character of the residential neighborhoods. Coordinating CIP implementation with public agencies can secure upgrades to the conditions of Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) and Army Reserve Unit properties within the CIP target area.

The first step in rebuilding the Northdale community should be addressing the vacant and derelict residential sites. Primarily made up of single-family homes, this area needs housing rehabilitation to stabilize the community and address many of the concerns expressed by residents in the workshops. The RDA should work with the City-Parish Office of Community Development (OCD) to establish programs that assist low income property owners in restoring their properties and seeking developers to redevelop or construct new houses on vacant properties. The success of this effort is dependent upon the RDA's role in providing adjudicated properties and/or negotiating with owners to swap or sell vacant land to achieve a critical mass of land to facilitate housing development.

The implementation of the Northdale CIP will greatly benefit from the proposed BREC renovation and expansion of the Memorial Sports Complex in the southern end of the target area. This massive public sector investment will bring visibility to an area that is isolated from the surrounding Parish by an industrial corridor to its west, by Choctaw Drive on the north, and by the Interstate Highway to the south and east. With RDA collaboration, the residential and business community will be linked to the expanded park with employment and business opportunities as well as recreational services as illustrated in the Community Wide Recommendations. A key result of the extensive upgrades to the facility will be better accessibility to the area. Maintaining the lines of communication between the community and BREC as the planning evolves to actual development is a key function of the CIP implementation process.

The site selected for the Catalyst Project between Plank Road and Scenic Highway is adjacent to Memorial Stadium. The proposed commercial development at this location will be visible from the Interstate, thereby aiding in its success, but the anticipated increase in citywide use of the expanded recreation facility will also be a major factor in its viability. The phasing of development for the catalyst should be coordinated with the BREC schedule, though timing for the Memorial Sports Complex improvements is unknown. Northdale currently contains very few businesses that provide retail services and is in need of neighborhood retail. In order to attract investment by developers and retail tenants, an increase in active use of the area afforded by the BREC plans is necessary. Discussions about right of way acquisition at the southern end of Plank Road between DOTD and the RDA will also have to be coordinated.

Implementation Phase One

Phase One of the Northdale Catalyst Project will be the northern node just south of Bellvale Street and between Plank Road and Scenic Highway. It will feature two commercial buildings as well as two mixed-use buildings. *See figures 31 and 32.* This combination provides a transition between the existing commercial businesses on the north side of Bellvale Street and the single-family homes to its south. Within this northern node of the Catalyst Project a communications tower currently exists. The plan calls for a vegetative buffer to be placed around this property, making it less obtrusive when viewed from the new development. Additionally, two areas within the development have been set aside for open space or café seating to be used by residents of the mixed-use buildings or the businesses surrounding it. A community inspired crosswalk is proposed at this Catalyst Project node, at the intersection of Bellvale Street and Ellerslie Drive with Scenic Highway, providing a safer entrance to the Catalyst Project from the Northdale neighborhood. Transit shelters would be placed at both this intersection as well as the Bellvale Street and Plank Road intersection.

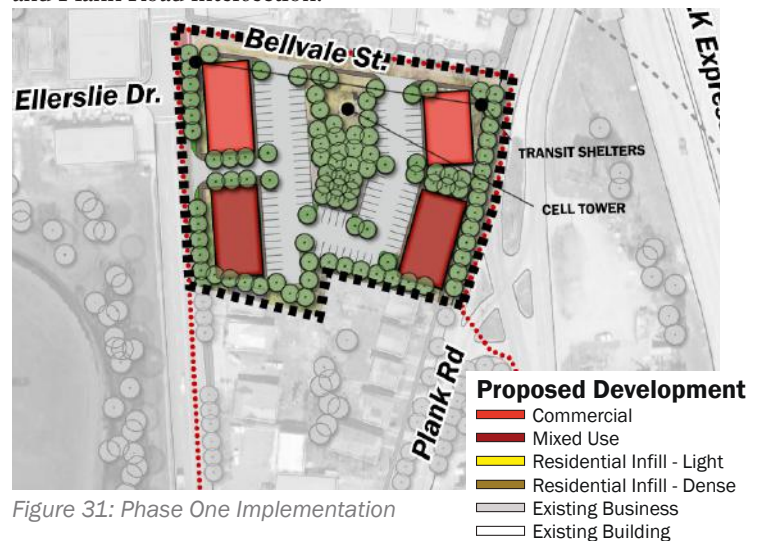


Figure 31: Phase One Implementation



Figure 32: Before and After Implementation of Phase One

Implementation Phase Two

The second phase of the catalyst will focus on the southern end of the site just east of the intersection of Scenic Highway and Foss Street. With a combined area of nearly 17,000 square feet, these two commercial buildings will provide retail space for tenants that serve both BREC users and residents of the Northdale neighborhood. This location is directly adjacent to ramp access for Interstate 110 and therefore could also attract motorists from this busy roadway. With this new construction, special attention should be given to existing retail businesses just north of the Catalyst Project site. They should improve their façades and upgrade the character of their operations, especially knowing that other businesses will be entering the market they serve. Additionally, the RDA would work with the DOTD to acquire right-of-way at the southern end of Plank Road and to improve the streetscape by consolidating and defining the curb cuts along Scenic Highway and improving sidewalks and installing crosswalks for pedestrians coming to this new commercial area. *See figures 33 and 34.*

Additional graphic representations of recommended urban design elements are found on the following pages in addition to the Implementation Strategies Matrix, which discusses responsible parties and time frames for implementation. *See figures 35 and 36.*

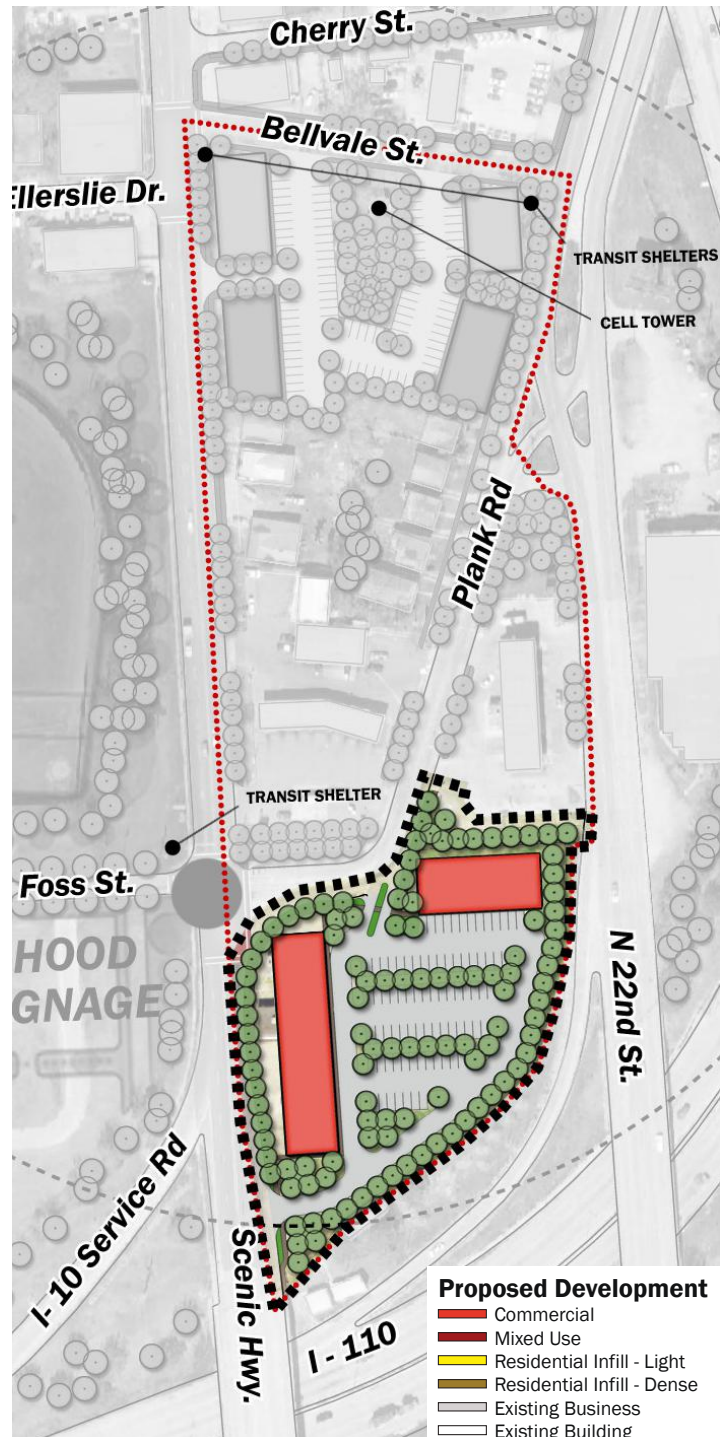


Figure 33: Phase Two Implementation



Figure 34: Before and After Implementation of Phase One

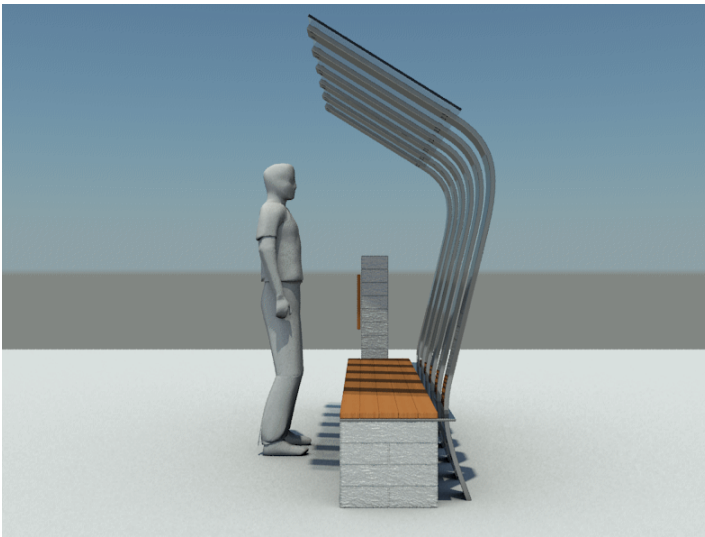


Figure 35: Transit Shelter Concept

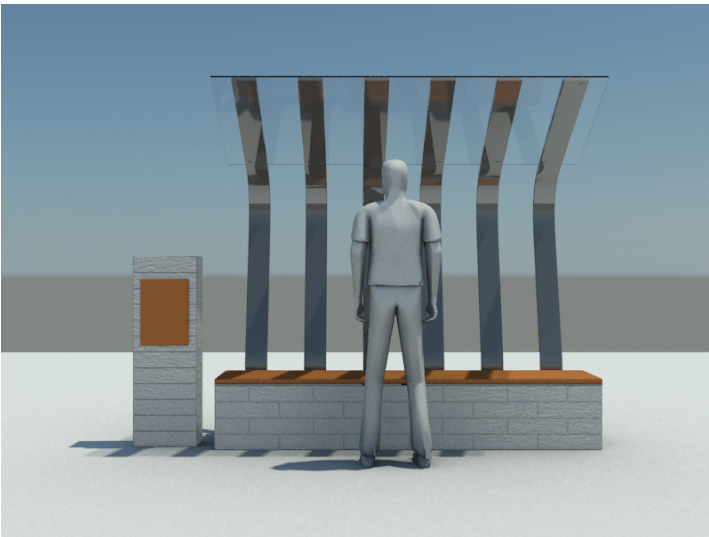
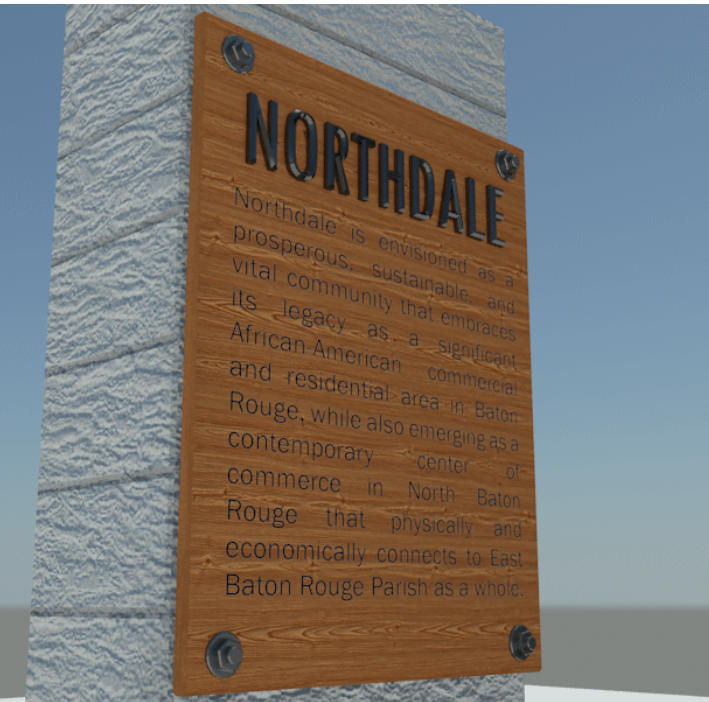


Figure 36: Neighborhood Signage Concept



CIP | IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES MATRIX KEY CODE

Color



Burgundy

Description

Catalyst



Grey

Transportation & Infrastructure



Blue

Outreach & Community Involvement



Tan

Code of Ordinances



Green

Recreation



Orange

Rehabilitation & Infill

Abbreviation

RDA

East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority

OCD

Office of Community Development

DPW

Department of Public Works

CPPC

City Parish Planning Commission

BREC

East Baton Rouge Recreation & Park Commission

DOTD

Department of Transportation & Development

CATS

Capital Area Transit System

BRHA

Baton Rouge Housing Authority

DDD

Downtown Development District

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY: NORTHDALE

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>RESPONSIBLE ENTITY</u>	<u>NOTES</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
4th Q 2011					
OUTREACH		Host community meeting to review plan/timetable	RDA	Manage expectations of community and clearly define roles	64
TRANSPORTATION		Identify and implement community inspired crosswalks	RDA/DPW	Establish identity for neighborhoods and improve safety on major thoroughfare	43
OUTREACH		Coordinate capacity building proposal in CIP area with existing system	RDA/OCD	Implement plan to involve community in CIP process	63
CODE		Land Use and Zoning change to Planned Unit Development	RDA	RDA submits PUD application to CPPC	37
RECREATION		Meet with BREC on progress of Memorial Sports Complex redevelopment	RDA/BREC	Refine timetable and coordinate with CIP implementation	24
TRANSPORTATION		Plan & Implement community identity signage	RDA/DPW	Work with community leaders to design signage on Madison/Scenic, Foss/Plank, and Choctaw/N. 17th	50
CATALYST		Coordinate discussions with DOTD pertaining to Plank Road right of way	RDA/DOTD	Begin communications with DOTD to acquire right of way at southern point of Plank Road	41
1st Q 2012					
CATALYST		Meet with property owners in southern node of target area	RDA	Provide info on development proposal and RDA tools	53
CATALYST		Presentations to potential tenants for neighborhood retail services	RDA	Phase One Catalyst - Encourage relocation of existing or establishment of new local businesses	53
OUTREACH		Select/assign Project Manager for tasks in community coordination	RDA	Project Manager to oversee process of engaging community	63
INFRASTRUCTURE		Coordinate Scenic Highway and Plank Road streetscape improvements	RDA/DPW	Meet to discuss vision for streetscape improvements on Plank Road and Scenic Highway	49
OUTREACH		Host community meeting to review plan/timetable	RDA	Manage expectations of community and clearly define roles	63
CODE		Land Use and Zoning change to Planned Unit Development	CPPC/RDA	CPPC staff submits proposed changes to City Parish Planning Commission and Metro Council	37
TRANSPORTATION		Plan for transit stops/shelters at Plank Road	CATS/RDA	Consider community inspired designs	46
REHAB HOUSING		Market rental rehabilitation program and low-income assistance	RDA/OCD	Meet with owners to inform of available programs	49
2nd Q 2012					
CODE		Land Use and Zoning change to Planned Unit Development	CPPC/RDA	CPPC and MC approve PUD designation	37
OUTREACH		Schedule community clean up event	RDA/DPW	Organize churches, residents and business in work day as signal of change	63
INFILL HOUSING		Plan new infill housing on vacant lots	RDA/OCD	Identify vacant areas that allow for economy of scale (Ellerslie Drive); preserve / rehabilitate historic houses	49
INFILL HOUSING		Identify developers/builders for housing construction	RDA/OCD	Establish eligibility and requirements; market to small and minority companies; host bid preparations	49
OUTREACH		Host business development workshop	RDA	Work with existing businesses to improve operations	63
OUTREACH		Work with Police Department on Community Security	RDA/Police	Institute Neighborhood Watch & targeted crime reduction using mobile police stations	63
REHAB HOUSING		Begin rehabilitation of housing	RDA/OCD	Start with blocks closest to School and Catalyst Project then work inward	49
RECREATION		Plan for link to Greenway & renaturalization of drainage channel	BREC/DPW/RDA	Connect to Downtown Greenway via pedestrian and bicycle paths and improve stormwater management	51
INFRASTRUCTURE		Groundbreaking for Scenic Highway and Plank Road streetscape improvements	DPW/RDA	Improvements to include sidewalks, lighting, and tree plantings	49
TRANSPORTATION		Plan for extension of Ellerslie Drive up to Bay Street connecting to 18th Street	DPW/RDA	Improve circulation and connectivity - time before Memorial Sports Complex completion	49
3rd Q 2012					
OUTREACH		Establish workshops for job readiness/literacy	RDA	Work with experienced workforce development entity; include literacy, work readiness, and financial	63
CATALYST		Issue request for proposals for developer for Phase One	RDA	Retail and mixed-use south of Bellvale Street	53
INFILL HOUSING		Issue request for proposals for developers of infill housing	RDA/OCD	Utilize qualified local contractors and sub contractors when possible	49
CATALYST		Plan business mix for Phase One	RDA	Seek local businesses or regional companies to locate for neighborhood services	53
OUTREACH		Organize financial literacy and homeownership training	RDA	Utilize existing experienced providers	63
RECREATION		Update community on progress and timetable for Memorial Sports Complex	BREC	Incorporate feedback; outline jobs and contract opportunities	24
TRANSPORTATION		Groundbreaking for transit stops/shelters at Plank Road	CATS/RDA	Community branding opportunity	46
CATALYST		Select developer for Phase One	RDA	Retail and mixed-use south of Bellvale Street	53
TRANSPORTATION		Groundbreaking for extension of Ellerslie Drive	DPW/RDA	Timing to support Catalyst Project and Memorial Sports Complex	49
4th Q 2012					
INFILL HOUSING		Select developer for first infill homes	RDA/OCD	Start in vacant lots nearest to Catalyst Project and work inward toward railway	49
INFRASTRUCTURE		Ribbon cutting for streetscape improvements on Plank Road and Scenic Highway	DPW/RDA	Improved sidewalks, lighting, and plantings to Memorial Sports Complex and Catalyst Project	49
OUTREACH		Target business improvement assistance on Scenic Highway and Plank Road	RDA	Improve operations to create more jobs and attract more businesses	63
CATALYST		Issue request for proposals for Phase Two	RDA	Retail business for triangle at Plank Road and Foss Street	55



REHAB	Continue rehabilitation and expand use of rental rehabilitation program	RDA/OCD	Recruit property owners	49
CATALYST	Finalize acquisition of right-of-way at southern point of Plank Road	RDA/DOTD	Acquire right-of-way at southern point of Plank Road for Phase Two development	41

1st Q 2013

CATALYST	Ground breaking for Phase One	RDA	Provide NMTC financing for employment agreement	53
INFILL HOUSING	Issue request for proposals for Phase Two of infill	RDA/OCD	Continue within neighborhood then move to north of Choctaw Drive into Standard Heights	49
RECREATION	Ground breaking for greenway link	DPW/RDA/BREC	Renaturalization of drainage canal - bike and pedestrian paths and lighting	51
TRANSPORTATION	Plan for transit stops/shelters at Scenic Highway	CATS	Consider community inspired designs presented in CIP report	46
CATALYST	Select developer for Phase Two	RDA	Retail business for triangle at Plank Road and Foss Street	55
OUTREACH	Meet with industrial businesses	RDA	Market programs to improve appearance and business expansion and/or relocation, particularly along	63
RECREATION	Plan for bike path and landscaping along railroad track on Choctaw Drive	DPW/RDA	Work with railroad to improve right-of-way; extend from Choctaw Corridor CIP	49
INFRASTRUCTURE	Plan for streetscape improvements on Choctaw Drive	DPW/RDA	Begin at North 17th Street moving east. Improvements include sidewalk repair, lighting, tree planting	49
TRANSPORTATION	Groundbreaking for transit stops/shelters at Plank Road	CATS/RDA	Community branding opportunity	46

2nd Q 2013

OUTREACH	Schedule community clean up event	RDA/DPW	Organize churches, residents, and businesses in work day as signal of change	63
INFRASTRUCTURE	Ribbon cutting for Plank Road & Scenic Highway streetscape improvements	DPW/RDA	Establish Northdale Community identity with banners, sidewalks, plantings, etc.	49
TRANSPORTATION	Groundbreaking transit stops/shelters at Scenic Highway	RDA/CATS	Community branding opportunity	46
INFILL HOUSING	Ribbon Cutting for first infill properties	RDA/OCD	Rentals and homeowners who completed training	49
RECREATION	Anticipated groundbreaking for Memorial Park Complex redevelopment	BREC	Involve community - Actual timetable uncertain	24

3rd Q 2013

OUTREACH	Host new business/business expansion workshop	RDA	Include operations and financial management training	63
INFILL HOUSING	Groundbreaking for new homes	RDA/OCD	Phase Two north of Choctaw Drive in Standard Heights	49
OUTREACH	Market vacant commercial properties on Scenic Highway, Plank Road, & Choctaw Drive	RDA	Create concepts for adaptive re-use as mixed use, commercial, and live/work spaces	63
INFRASTRUCTURE	Plan streetscape improvements within residential areas	DPW/RDA	Address drainage issues, enrich median planting on North 17th Street and add sidewalks leading to school	49
TRANSPORTATION	Ribbon Cutting for extension of Eilerslie Drive	DPW/RDA	Timing to support Catalyst Project and Memorial Sports Complex	49

4th Q 2013

CATALYST	Groundbreaking for Phase Two	RDA	Retail business for triangle at Plank Road and Foss Street	55
CATALYST	Ribbon cutting for Phase One	RDA	Retail and mixed-use south of Bellvale Street	53
RECREATION	Groundbreaking for bike path and landscaping along railroad right-of-way	RDA/BREC/DPW	Extend from Choctaw Corridor CIP	49
INFRASTRUCTURE	Groundbreaking for streetscape improvements on Choctaw Drive	DPW/RDA	Sidewalk repair, improved lighting, tree planting	49

1st Q 2014

RECREATION	Ribbon cutting for greenway link	RDA/BREC	Celebration of bike and pedestrian access to downtown	51
TRANSPORTATION	Ribbon cutting for transit stops/shelters at Plank Road	CATS/RDA	Community branding opportunity	46
OUTREACH	Establish workshops for job readiness/literacy	RDA	Work with experienced providers to include job readiness, literacy, skills, financial management	63

2nd Q 2014

OUTREACH	Groundbreaking for adaptive reuse of vacant commercial on Scenic Highway	RDA	Additional commercial development with NMTC and façade improvement programs	63
OUTREACH	Schedule community clean up event	RDA	Organize churches, residents and businesses: focus on area north of Choctaw Drive	63
INFILL HOUSING	Investigate potential mixed-use or multi-family opportunities within neighborhood	RDA	Locate near Choctaw Drive or Scenic Highway to provide additional housing options for potential new	49
INFRASTRUCTURE	Groundbreaking for streetscape improvements in residential areas	DPW/RDA	Address drainage issues and pedestrian amenities	49

3rd Q 2014

CATALYST	Ribbon cutting for Phase Two	RDA	Holiday grand opening and community celebration	55
----------	------------------------------	-----	-------------------------------------------------	----

4th Q 2014

RECREATION	Ribbon cutting for bike path along rail right-of-way on Choctaw Drive	RDA/BREC/DPW		49
INFRASTRUCTURE	Ribbon cutting for streetscape improvements on Choctaw Drive	DPW/RDA	Sidewalk repair, improved lighting, consolidating curb cuts	49



1st Q 2015					
OUTREACH	Ribbon cutting for adaptive reuse of vacant commercial on Scenic Highway	RDA	Additional commercial development with NMTC and façade improvement programs		63
2nd Q 2015					
INFRASTRUCTURE	Ribbon cutting for streetscape improvements in residential areas	DPW/RDA			49
OUTREACH	Schedule community clean up event	RDA	Organize churches, residents and businesses		63

Financing Matrix & Funding Strategies

To ensure successful implementation of the Northdale Community Improvement Plan, attractive development tools must be established. The Team has identified specific financing methods and techniques for the 5 CIP areas. These financing opportunities are available for the private and public sector and include Tax Increment Financing (TIFs), tax credits, federal and state loan and grant programs, revenue bond programs, foundation funding, and state incentive programs. The full financing matrix identifying the authorizing entities can be found in the Appendix of this document. A list of financing opportunities from the matrix is provided below:

- » Gap Finance - Affordable Housing (RDA): Provides permanent mortgage funds at below-market interest rates for acquisition and development of property with a target area
- » Gap Finance - Commercial (RDA): Provides permanent mortgage funds for commercial developments within a targeted area
- » Rehabilitation of rental properties (RDA): Provides forgivable financing for repair and rehab of residential rental property to be offered at affordable rental rates.
- » Land Bank Program (RDA): Acquires vacant, abandoned, tax delinquent, and underutilized property, clears the title, and markets the property for redevelopment
- » Small Business Facade Improvement Grant (RDA): Reimbursable, matching grant program as an incentive to building owners and small businesses to improve facades within target areas
- » Tax Increment Financing (TIF) (RDA): Mechanism that captures future tax benefits of real estate projects to pay for present cost of improvements
- » Low Income Energy Assistance Program (Louisiana Housing Finance Agency - LHFA) : Helps pay energy bills for eligible low-income households
- » Weatherization Assistance Program (LHFA): Helps pay for weatherization improvements to owner occupied homes and single- and multi-unit rentals
- » Multifamily Revenue Bond Finance Program (LHFA): Issues bonds to provide financing to developers to acquire, construct, and rehab affordable housing
- » Tax-Exempt Revenue Bonds (LHFA): Issues bonds to provide funding to public housing authorities for construction and rehab of public housing developments
- » Housing Rehabilitation Grant Program (Office of Community Development - OCD): Provides grants for homeowners who live in their homes, anywhere in the Parish
- » Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program (OCD): Provides low interest mortgage loans for substandard housing
- » Rental Housing Rehabilitation Loans (OCD): Provides mortgage loans to rental properties with up to \$1,000 in repairs
- » Weatherization Program (OCD): Repairs and upgrades plumbing, electrical, painting, and foundation based on need
- » Section 108 Loan Guarantee (OCD): Financing for economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities rehab, construction or installation for the benefit of low- to moderate-income persons
- » New Markets Tax Credits (Community Development Financial Institutions Fund - CDFI): Allows taxpayers to receive a credit against federal income taxes for or making equity investments in designated Community Development Entities. The RDA currently manages the East Baton Rouge Community Development Entity, which received a \$60 million allocation in December 2009
- » Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits (National Park Service): Allows a 20% tax credit for certified rehabilitation projects on income producing historic buildings
- » Louisiana Historic Preservation Tax Credits (Department of Culture Recreation and Tourism): Provides a 25% state tax credit to historic commercial and residential property for rehabilitation over \$20,000
- » Low Income Housing Tax Credits (Housing and Urban Development - HUD): Provides tax credits for acquisition, rehab, and new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households
- » HUD 221 (d) (4) loan program (for-profit): Provides financing guarantee for up to 90% of development project costs for new construction or rehab of privately owned multi-family housing
- » HUD 221 (d) (3) loan program (non-profit): Similar to 221 (d) (4), non-profit entity may received up to 100% financing
- » HUD 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly: Provides interest-free capital advances to nonprofit sponsors to finance housing development for low-income seniors
- » EB5 Investor Green Cards (Department of Homeland Security): Green cards for foreign nationals who invest money in economic development projects in the US
- » Non-profit 63-20 and 501c3 Bonds: Allows public agencies and non-profit corporations to issue tax- exempt debt to finance the cost of a facility for a tax-exempt purpose

Community Capacity Building

The target area of Northdale is dominated by industrial businesses, public sector facilities, and residents who are vocal but have limited skills and access to community building activities that were previously attempted in other parts of the City. There has been no strong ongoing alliance or institution that has consistently advocated on behalf of the needs of the neighborhood. Churches in the neighborhood were identified as assets, and several operate social service delivery programs. Though no large congregations were apparent in

the Northdale community, those churches present in the area are good vehicles for communicating with residents and those interested in improvements in this community. In addition, faith-based institutions and other civic groups in the adjacent neighborhoods should not be overlooked in the outreach process, particularly as opportunities for new affordable housing and business opportunities arise. Effective implementation of the CIP depends on sustaining a level of engagement with residents that can build trust in the potential direct benefits of the project. The presentation of the plan and opportunities for community involvement must be a component of the initial rollout of the Northdale CIP, with a clear message that manages the expectations of the community.

Community engagement on a regular basis should be put in place, with regular meetings to update the community on CIP implementation.

To handle this ongoing engagement, an RDA Project Manager should be assigned to Northdale that also manages the outreach and implementation and given the following responsibilities:

- » Setting up meetings for presentation on the implementation progress
- » Contacting owners about new code enforcement and assisting with upgrades of properties
- » Informing occupants about relocation alternatives and the availability of affordable housing
- » Encouraging businesses to utilize the small business façade improvement grant and assistance of services to improve operations
- » Identifying local businesses that can qualify for contracts in implementation of projects
- » Organizing community engagement activities like clean up campaigns and block celebrations
- » Monitoring municipal service delivery and advocating for community needs

This Project Manager would also assist with the real estate development projects such as infill single-family housing, multi-family or senior housing projects, redevelopment or reuse of existing commercial, and new commercial development with the following:

- » Facilitate local and/or small business integration into projects
- » Ensure accuracy of property ownerships and begin discussions with owners about investments and participation in development
- » Gather information on projected jobs and qualifications required for neighborhood residents to obtain employment in project
- » Coordinate the provision of work readiness, literacy, and skill training for jobs
- » Identify potential neighborhood partners and/or developers to undertake residential rehabilitation and new housing

construction projects

- » Gather information on local construction companies and suppliers and assist with business services to qualify for contracts with RDA projects

Many of these services can be provided in partnership with other experienced entities, but should be coordinated by the RDA, working with the public sector, to maximize their effectiveness.

Redevelopment Partnerships

As noted in the Implementation Strategies, the effectiveness of the CIP will depend on the partnership of the public sector, the community, and private sector. Below is a summary of the partners who should be involved.

For Profit

Existing businesses

The few remaining businesses in Northdale are small, primarily African-American owned businesses. Their participation and involvement in CIP implementation are the first step in rebuilding the economic base of the area. Intensive outreach is needed to ensure that local businesses benefit from the change.

Developers

Commercial and housing developers should be recruited to work with the RDA and the community on the redevelopment of Northdale. At the completion of the CIP, informational sessions should be held with a variety of groups to identify the appropriate, capable, and qualified companies to effectively undertake the projects. Because of the small size of the phases and the character of the area, community connected groups like 100 Black Men, The Black Chamber of Commerce, and the Masons, in addition to real estate trade associations and the Louisiana Builders Association, should be contacted in order to invite their members. These sessions should outline the phasing, scope of work, and timetable for development and clearly define the selection criteria and required qualifications of bidders. Additionally, these groups could be asked to organize and facilitate workshops that assist existing community based companies in preparing to upgrade operations to insure that they meet qualification standards to be competitive in the process.

New Retail Businesses

Though developers are ultimately responsible for obtaining retail tenants for the commercial spaces they create, the area requires

that proactive marketing to appropriate retail stores begin before CIP implementation commences. The RDA, working with local real estate brokers, should research and inform national, regional, and local chain or franchise retailers, as well as small local businesses operating successfully in other areas, of the opportunities that will be available. Restaurants, grocery stores, clothing stores, and sporting goods stores are examples of small businesses or franchises that could be attracted to the Catalyst Project area with incentives and local investors. The RDA is in the process of creating a Gap Finance-Commercial program that would fulfill the need for a small loan program for businesses who have feasible plans to relocate or start up an appropriate business in the Catalyst Project area. This fund would cover build-out and a computer linked inventory and financial system. There are also below market rate loan funds available through the City-Parish. Awareness programs on the availability of these funds should be offered.

Kansas City Southern Railway

The railroad company owns a substantial portion of the land in Northdale, which is developed as a rail yard. The RDA should work with the railroad company to work toward consolidating the tracks as much as possible and to keep the area clean and safe, particularly as the Northdale community is regenerated and Memorial Park is expanded, bringing more people to the area. This land should be considered prime real estate in Baton Rouge, not only because of its location close to downtown and the State Capitol, but also because of its excellent access to the rest of the City and Parish.

Non-Profit

Churches

Faith institutions in economically distressed and minority areas are often the only large entity owned and controlled by the residents. In this community churches maintain members who were former residents and have moved to other areas. These congregations could be a source for not only business customers and future occupants of housing, but also potential developers, construction firms, business operators or franchisers, suppliers, and employees. Existing community or social services like childcare should be encouraged and assisted in preparation and expansion as response to development in Northdale.

Habitat for Humanity of Baton Rouge

The RDA has developed a relationship with Habitat for Humanity of Baton Rouge and worked with them in other neighborhoods. This relationship should continue to be enhanced to further expand their impact on infill housing areas in Northdale and to connect their purchases to community outreach of the RDA.

DOTD

The RDA should work closely with the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) to coordinate first the clean up, then relocation of DOTD's maintenance facilities that occupy a substantial portion of the Northdale community area. As discussed, this is prime real estate that should be in commerce, generating tax revenue for the City-Parish as well as jobs and services for the community.

Army Reserve

Similarly, the RDA should work closely with the Army Reserve to coordinate the eventual relocation of the Army Reserve facilities that occupy a portion of the Northdale community area. A land swap with City-Parish property may be possible.

BREC

As BREC further plans and designs the expansion and renovation of Memorial Park, the RDA should work closely with them to ensure the park becomes more connected and more integral to the Northdale community. This effort should include encouraging BREC, which has won accolades for its recreation programming, to develop custom programs focused on the needs and interests of Northdale residents, particularly children.

Downtown Development District

Lastly, as the DDD further plans and designs the Downtown Greenway, the RDA should work closely with them to ensure the greenway's significant impact on the redevelopment of the Northdale community.

Community Improvement Benchmarks

In an effort to track the success of the Northdale Community Improvement Plan, the Team recommends a series of benchmarks. These benchmarks will be tracked at various intervals and will illustrate the degree of success of not only the physical revitalization of the neighborhood, but also economic improvements achieved by the recommendations. For the benchmarking program to be a viable method of measurement, each of the recommended reports needs to be recorded immediately, providing a baseline by which to compare future data.

Building Permits

Within East Baton Rouge Parish, all new structures, general remodeling, structural remodeling, construction additions to existing structures, and detached accessory structures require a building permit. These permits are required for both residential and commercial construction. Tracking the number and type of permits issued in Northdale and the surrounding area, with assistance from the Permit and Inspection Division of the Department of Public Works, will serve as a gauge of how much physical development is occurring within the community. The Department of Public Works should provide this information on a quarterly basis.

Certificate of Occupancy

While tracking the number of applied for building permits will help to determine new growth, it alone will not be enough to gauge the success of physical development. Often times, speculative investors construct new buildings, but are unable to attract the necessary tenants. Tracking the number of issued certificates of occupancy will show not only newly occupied businesses, but also whether or not those buildings are owner occupied, illustrating the number of locally owned buildings. Working with the Department of Public Works, this information should be compiled on a quarterly basis.

Property & Sales Tax Revenue

When improvements are made to property in East Baton Rouge Parish, field inspectors for the EBR Parish Assessor's Office make an inspection of the improvements and adjust the tax rolls to reflect them. Therefore, an increase in property tax in the Northdale area would indicate new physical changes in the community. The East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office

generates all tax bills from computer data furnished by the Assessor's Office in November of each year and should provide an annual comparison report to the RDA.

The Revenue Division of the City of Baton Rouge Finance Department prepares a sales & use tax report monthly for the City-Parish. This report should be used to show changes in collected sales tax for the Northdale area, indicating an increase in spending for the area.

Crime Levels

The Baton Rouge Police Department tracks daily the locations of certain types of crimes and reports official statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting program overseen by the FBI. District 1 is the precinct that oversees the Northdale area and can serve as an invaluable asset in order to track the locations, types, and number of occurrences of crimes within the area. The data should be analyzed on a monthly basis to determine if crimes are being generally reduced, indicating success of the recommended improvements. Clustered locations of crimes over time would indicate areas that need additional CPTED and policing improvements.

Blight & Code Enforcement

Blight was consistently identified as a major challenge within the Northdale community through stakeholder interviews, workshops, and other meetings. The RDA's focus on the Catalyst Project area could bring back neighborhood retail and eventually large industry to the Northdale area. Outreach to the existing business owners in Northdale regarding the façade improvement grants program could create an immediate change in the character of the area. Improving the perception of this area will also help create a stronger link between the community and the remainder of East Baton Rouge Parish. An increase in the number of applied for and issued grants would indicate that business owners are becoming more invested in the neighborhood.

The Baton Rouge Code of Ordinances already has policies in place regarding maintenance of private property. Overgrown lots, excess garbage, dangerous and dilapidated structures, and inoperable vehicles are all prohibited within the code and penalties are in place, however these are rarely enforced. Streamlined reporting and more timely enforcement will be necessary to abate these issues. With the visible improvements within Northdale, residents and merchants will be more engaged in the continuation of the character change, and should be encouraged to report code violations to the City-Parish and track

enforcement actions. The city would then be able to generate semi-annual reports to the RDA that will indicate the level to which blight in the private realm of Northdale is being eradicated.

These benchmarks, when monitored over the short- and long-term, will reveal changes in economic conditions and quality of life in the Northdale community. Analysis of changes and trends will reveal actions and improvements that have proven most effective, as well as those which need modifications or redirection.