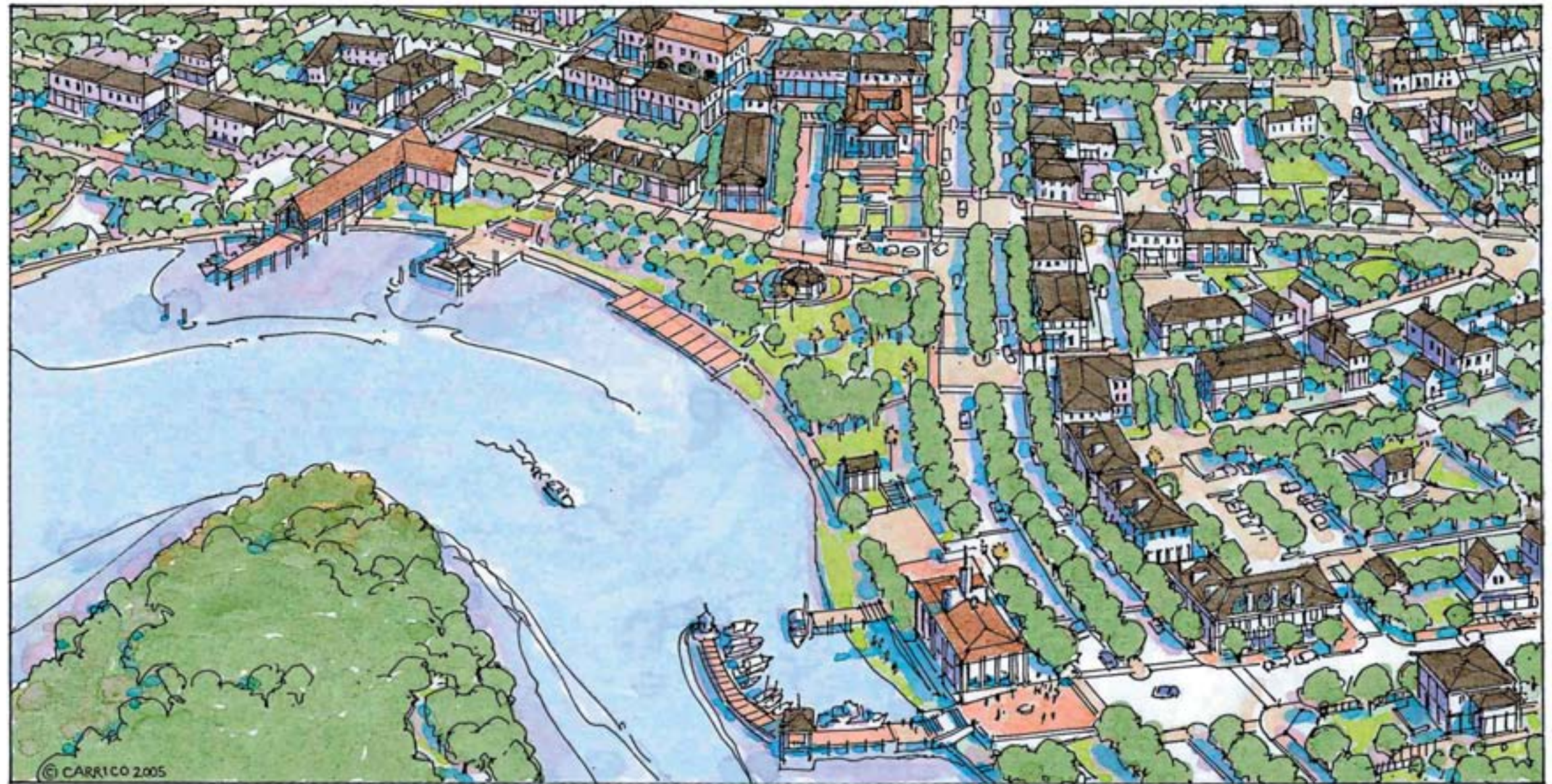




MOSS POINT REBUILDING & RENEWAL

A Report from the Mississippi Renewal Forum





*“Out of this terrible tragedy, beyond all imagination,
comes our opportunity, and I beg you not to let
Mississippi miss it. All of us are responsible.
I’m determined we will not fail to
seize this opportunity.”*

–Governor Haley Barbour in a speech
before a special session of the state legislature,
September 27, 2005.



INTRODUCTION

A BRIGHT FUTURE

Great things are ready to happen in Moss Point. As city leaders advance through the post Katrina stages of recovery, rebuilding, and renewal, a new sense of urgency, perspective, and opportunity is evident.

The city, county and state officials we met and worked with during the Mississippi Renewal Forum painted a very compelling picture of a city on the mend, ready to leverage its strongest assets, tackle its toughest problems, and emerge from Katrina's wake a more livable, beautiful, just, and sustainable community.

THE CHARRETTE

Moss Point was among the 11 coastal community's targeted for consideration during the Mississippi Renewal Forum held in Biloxi, Mississippi October 12-17, 2005. During the event, sponsored jointly by the Governors Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal and the Congress for New Urbanism, professionals from across the country joined with local architects, planners, and public officials to craft proposals for the physical reconstruction for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Following the highly successful charrette model, the event was or-

ganized around an ambitious schedule of meetings, tours, design sessions, and presentations.

For the Moss Point team, the charrette started with a guided tour of the city, a careful review of existing plans and studies, and analyses of the city's development history, natural systems and land form, and regional context. Following Mayor Xavier Bishop's charge to "raise the bar and be creative," the team crafted proposals for rebuilding and renewal at 3 scales—the scale of the city, the scale of the neighborhood, and the scale of blocks and buildings.

A NEW GUIDE FOR THE CITY

The ideas advanced in the plan set forth the logical next steps in the city's efforts to capitalize on the riverfront, revitalize downtown, stabilize neighborhoods, and attract sustainable forms of development and investment. As provided in the report, officials are encouraged to focus resources and attention in the following ways:

- kick-start downtown's regeneration by leveraging potential funding for the reconstruction or replacement of critical infrastructure, including City Hall;

- create a new village center and neighborhood in Escatawpa as part of a region-wide effort to provide transitional (1-3 year) housing for displaced families and individuals;
- seeking support for neighborhood stabilization and new housing initiatives in Kreole providing elderly housing, work force affordable housing, and in- or near-neighborhood sites for relocation out of flood prone areas; and
- engage in efforts to make the city a destination for eco- and heritage-tourism and investment in clean industries, brownfield remediation and development, green building, and wetland/floodplain conservation and restoration.

Formulated, debated, and refined during our time on the coast, the physical, policy, and capital investment proposals presented in this report are offered for consideration by the citizens of Moss Point as they plan for the city's post-Katrina future.



City officials and the team members at work during the charrette.



CONTEXT

PLACE IN THE REGION

Moss Point is located along the eastern end of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, approximately 38 miles west of Mobile and 100 miles east of New Orleans. The City enjoys excellent regional road and rail access—Interstate 10 and Highway 90 connect it to neighboring communities and employment centers—as well as miles of frontage along the Escatawpa and Pascagoula Rivers. These fundamental assets—the rivers, roads, and rail lines—have fueled the city's economic engines for the past century and will continue to exert powerful influences far into the future.

SETTLEMENT & EARLY DEVELOPMENT

From the areas' early settlement and development through the growth, slow decline, and recent closure of the International Paper plant, the fortunes of Moss Point have paralleled those of Southern Mississippi's timber industry.

In the mid-to-late 1800s, Moss Point was bustling with activity. Photographs from the turn of the last century show rafts of raw timber staged for delivery to saw mills, schooners and steam ships hauling lumber and goods to and from warehouses and wharves, and the first and somewhat provisional incarnation of Main Street. By the

1920s, Moss Point was a well-established community offering a full complement of public and commercial services and a range of housing for its residents—from grand Victorians along the widest streets to rows of modest cottages housing the city's rapidly expanding work force.

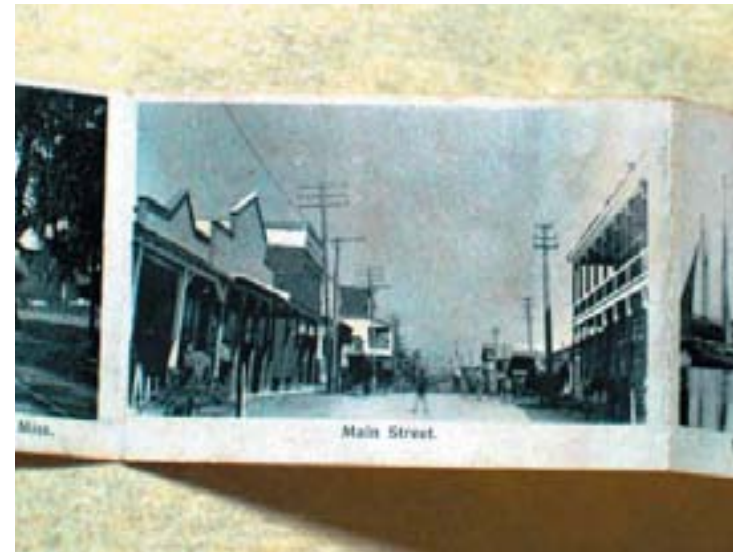
From the early center on Main Street and the River, the city grew south along Griffin and Main Streets towards Pascagoula, east along Grierson (old Highway 90) toward the settlement of Kreole, and eventually north of the Escatawpa River along Highway 613. Streets, trolleys, steamships and eventually I-10 provided ready access to markets, jobs, and amenities along the Gulf Coast.



Detail of a painting showing activity on Moss Point's waterfront during the early 1900s. Painting on display at the public library



CONTEXT | CITY HISTORY

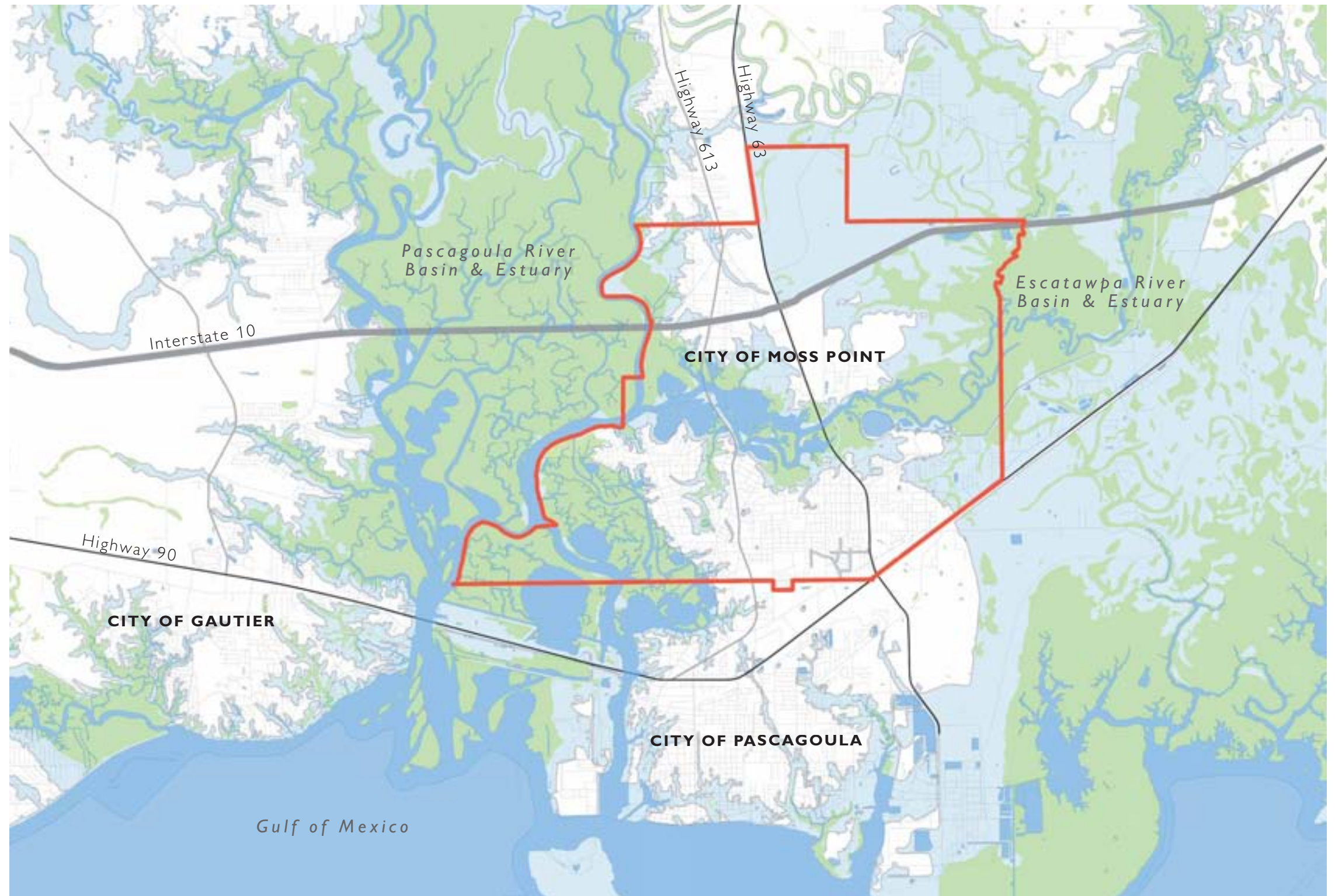


Moss Point businessman Donnie Lamey's cache of historic photographs was a wonderful resource for the team.



CONTEXT | PLACE IN THE REGION

- Open Water
- Wetlands
- 100 Year Flood Areas (Existing)



Location at the Confluence. Leveraging Moss Point's most basic assets—its location at the confluence of the Escatawpa and Pascagoula Rivers and its access to regional employment centers, markets, and amenities via rail and roads—is fundamental to the plan's realization.



CONTEXT | POST KATRINA





CITY & REGION

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

- Ensure Moss Point's interests are fully represented in regional dialogue regarding federal assistance, economic development, transportation, and the conservation of natural and cultural resources.
- Offer more housing choices by allowing a wider range of types in places with distinct locational advantages—high ground and ready access to service amenities, and public parks, squares, and recreation resources.
- In light of FEMA's proposed redefinition of flood zones, reevaluate the potential for industrial development on the International Paper site. As the study is underway, suspend plans for the widening of Grierson.
- Through the formal adoption of a customized version of the Smart Code and follow-on neighborhood plans, promote development that defines neighborhoods as the essential building block of the city. Design for interconnected and properly-scaled streets, central public parks and squares, a wider range of housing types, and neighborhood services and elementary schools within easy walking distance of residents.
- Establish plans and policies that promote the concentration of retail and commercial development downtown, in the Escatawpa Village Center, and in neighborhood centers throughout the city and limit low density, auto-oriented development along the City's primary travel corridors, including Main Street and Routes 613 and 63.
- Initiate discussions with Pascagoula, Jackson County and state and federal officials regarding the development of a interconnected network of surface trails, water trails, greenways, and nature preserves.
- Seek federal assistance in the remediation of brown-field sites and establish environmental protection measures to protect water quality and neighborhood livability. Include in this effort the evaluation of standards for the installation and maintenance of septic systems.
- Continue and expand efforts to position Moss Point as a gateway to the region's environmental and cultural resources through eco- and cultural tourism and "green" industrial development.
- Pursue recognition through state and federal heritage area, outdoor recreation, preservation, and environmental programs and initiatives.
- Recruit businesses that offer models of effective environmental stewardship.



CITY & REGION

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS

-  Watertrail & Launch Sites
-  Water Shuttle
-  Hiking/Interpretive Trail
-  Streetcar/Trolley Route & Stops

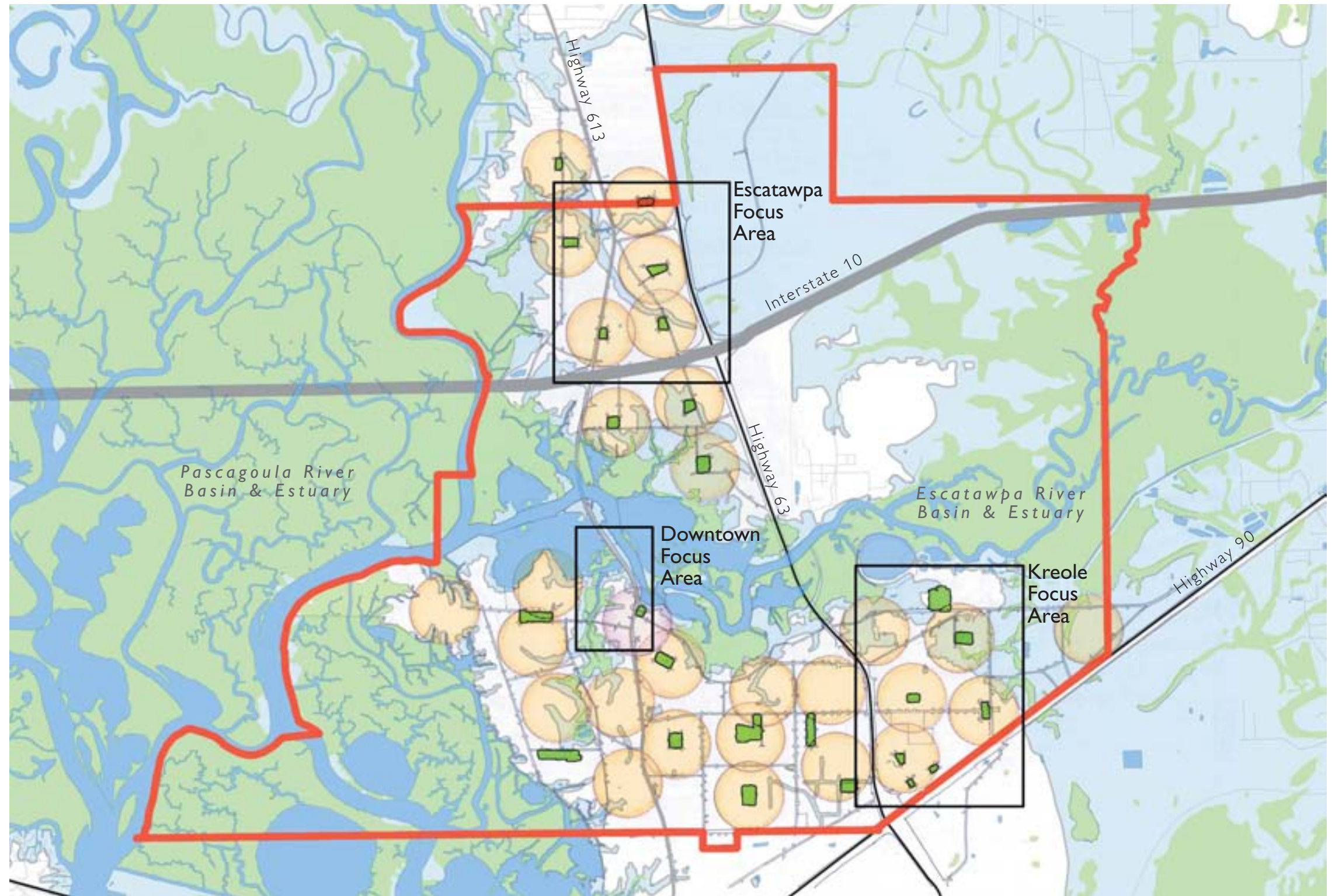




CITY & REGION

NEIGHBORHOODS & FOCUS AREAS

-  Neighborhoods
Pedestrian Sheds & Central Greens
-  Open Water
-  Wetlands
-  100 Year Flood Areas (Existing)





DOWNTOWN REGENERATION

VISION

Re-establish downtown as a lively, beautiful, walkable precinct with shops and restaurants, a wider range of housing opportunities; new civic buildings above flood proposed flood elevation; and new public spaces for community events and activities. Create a critical mass of activity by favoring downtown locations for eco- and heritage tourism and educational facilities.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

Immediate

- Seek assistance for the construction of a new City Hall, Fire Station, Police Station, and recreation center consistent with the recommendation of the plan.
- Petition MDOT for the de-designation of Main Street (Route 613) as a state road, and once de-designated, prepare detailed designs for narrowing, establish building restriction lines for new development, and install a stop light, pavement markings, and a pedestrian crossing signal at the intersection of Main Street and Post Office Drive.
- Adopt a customized version of the Smart Code to guide new development.

- Adopt city policy and amend the Waterfront Master Plan to establish downtown as the favored location for retail and restaurants, arts and entertainment uses; and public investments to support the construction or operation of culture, heritage, and eco tourism related activities.
- Seek designation as a “Main Street Community” and funding for a Main Street manager to oversee promotions, events, marketing, design, and economic development activities.

Short Term Actions

- Construct new City Hall on central block outside limits of advisory velocity zones.
- Construct new public square on Main Street lined by 3-4 story buildings with shop fronts below residential and office space.
- Adopt customized Smart Code encouraging new mixed use, urban development.
- To slow traffic and reduce crossing distances on Main Street, narrow travel and parking lanes, widen

- sidewalks, define crosswalks, install traffic signals, and reestablish historic alignment.
- Realign Denny street to capture additional space for the riverfront park and seek funding for the extension of the river walk eastward to the marina and beyond.
- Seek private developer interest in the construction and operation of a new marina and bait stand/cafe.
- Develop new 3-4 story residential buildings along Denny Street with shops, restaurants, and sidewalk cafes overlooking the river. (Units in buildings could be marketed to empty-nesters and active retirees)
- Reserve site and seek funding/sponsorship for new educational facility and canoe/kayak launch on riverfront at Morris Avenue.
- Construct a new Police Station, Fire Station, and Recreation Center.
- Extend river walk to connect with planned Marina.
- Adopt downtown plan with associated Smart Code encouraging new mixed use, urban development.



DOWNTOWN | HISTORY



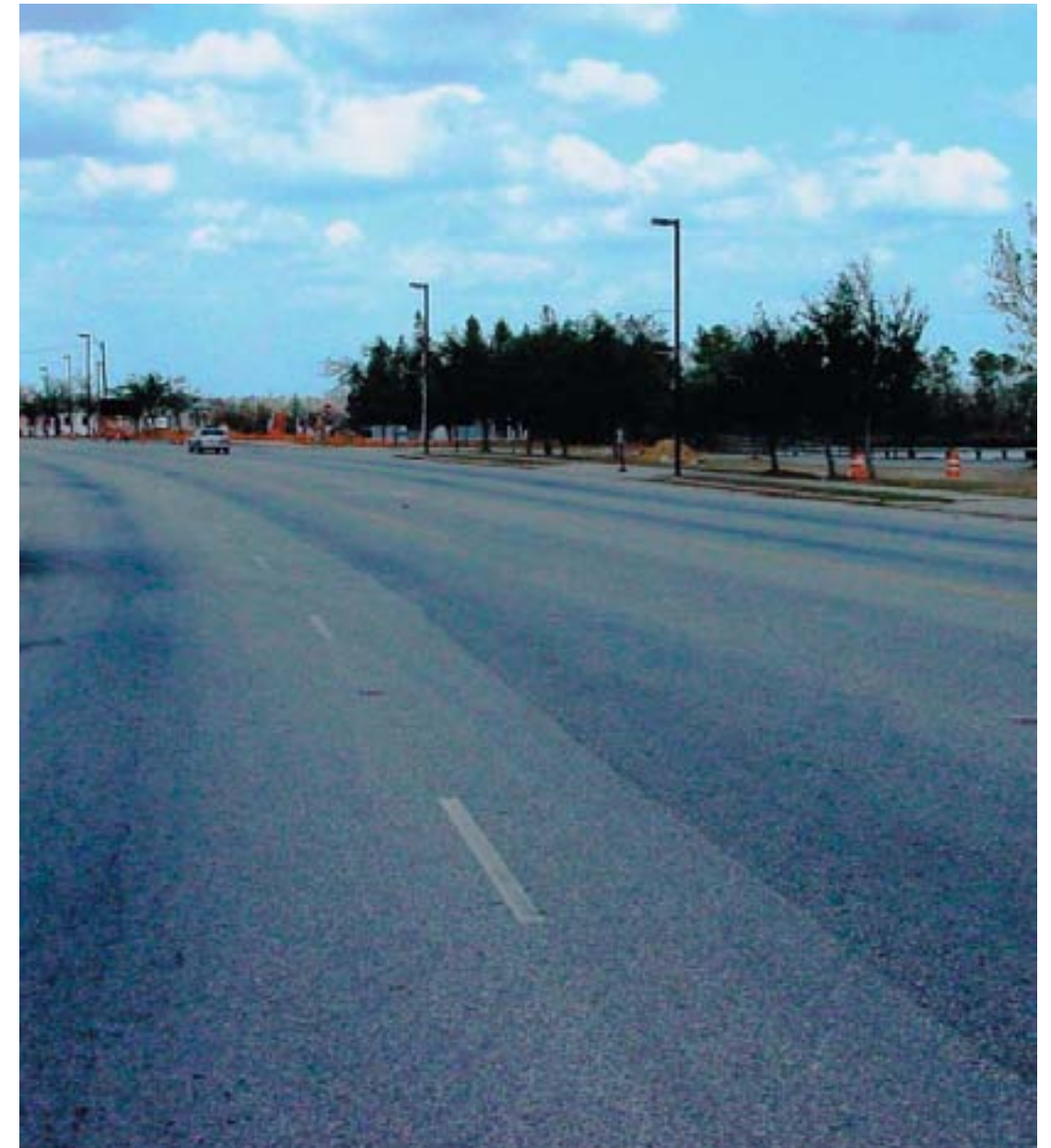
Images showing Main Street's early evolution from a provisional camp supporting the mills to a compact, walkable, and memorable center of community life





DOWNTOWN | HISTORY

The widening of Highway 613 has had a devastating impact on downtown. The doubling of the curb-to-curb dimension from 40' to 80', removal of traffic lights and pedestrian crossings, and demolition of buildings along the east side of the street has made it virtually impossible to attract activity and investment back to the street.





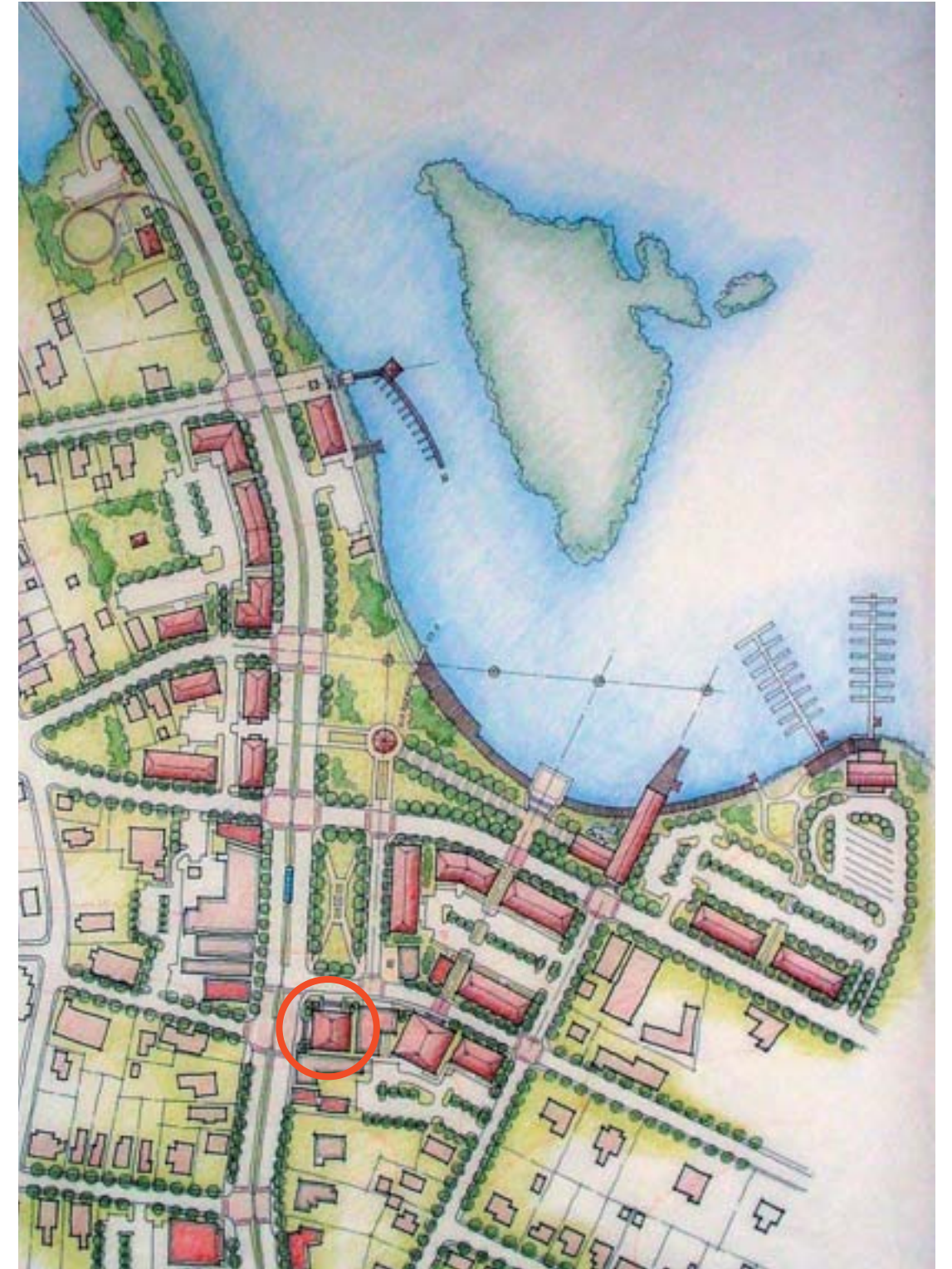
DOWNTOWN | POST KATRINA





DOWNTOWN | STUDIES

The team's early studies for downtown explored alternative sites for City Hall (red circles), options for a new town square and the expansion of river front park and alternative street and block configurations.





DOWNTOWN | PLAN DIAGRAMS



Water & Flood Zones. This diagram shows existing open water (darker blue) and the limits of 100-year flood areas (lighter blue) as indicated on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Most of downtown, including the proposed site for a new City Hall (red circle) falls beyond the existing limits as well as above 14' elevation.



Parks, Squares & Preserves. Plans call for the creation of a new town square at the intersection of Main Street and Denny (red circle) and the realignment of Denny to capture additional space for the waterfront park.



Neighborhood Restructuring. Plan interventions are concentrated on the city-owned block east of Main Street and the sites fronting Main Street north of Post Office Street.



DOWNTOWN | ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

- A new marina and bait stand mark the northern gateway to downtown.
- New housing and shops overlook Main Street and the river. Parking is provided in convenient mid-block locations.
- Denny Street is realigned to capture additional space for the riverfront park.
- Main Street is narrowed, and redesigned with on-street parking, a median reservation to allow for future streetcar, signals at cross streets, cross walks, street lights, and benches.
- An environmental/cultural education facility anchors the east end of riverfront park.
- New housing with shops and cafes on the ground floor overlook the park.
- Public access to the river extends east around the marina to a new park.
- A new City Hall on the city-owned block faces onto a new town square.
- A new police station and fire station (with drive through bays for trucks) are located on McGinnis Avenue.





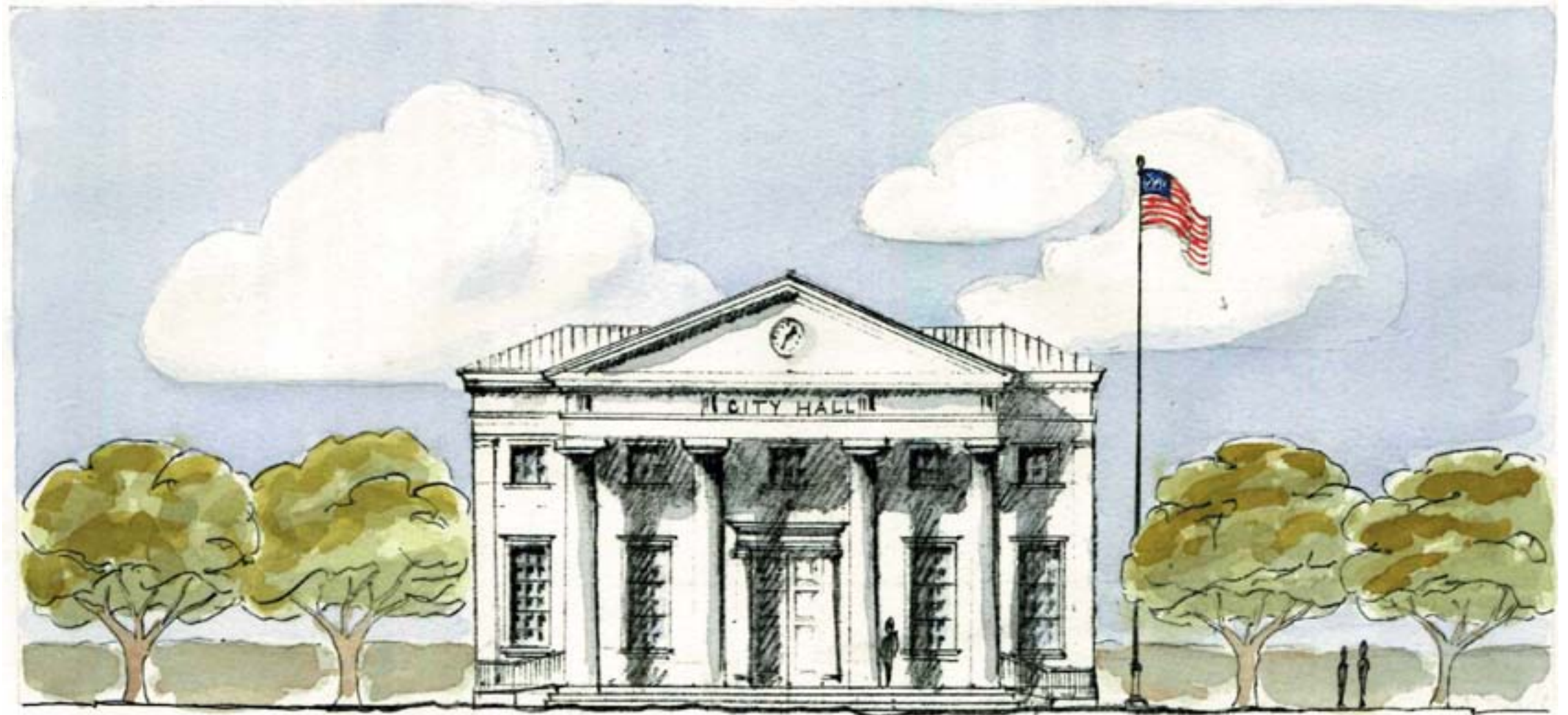
DOWNTOWN | AERIAL VIEW OVERLOOKING THE WATERFRONT



DOWNTOWN | CIVIC BUILDINGS

Design for a New City Hall

Christine G. H. Franck
October 17, 2005



PROPOSED MOSS POINT CITY HALL
3/32" = 1' 0"
CHRISTINE G. H. FRANCK; OCTOBER 17, 2005



DOWNTOWN | CIVIC BUILDINGS

Design for a New Police Station

Christine G. H. Franck
October 17, 2005



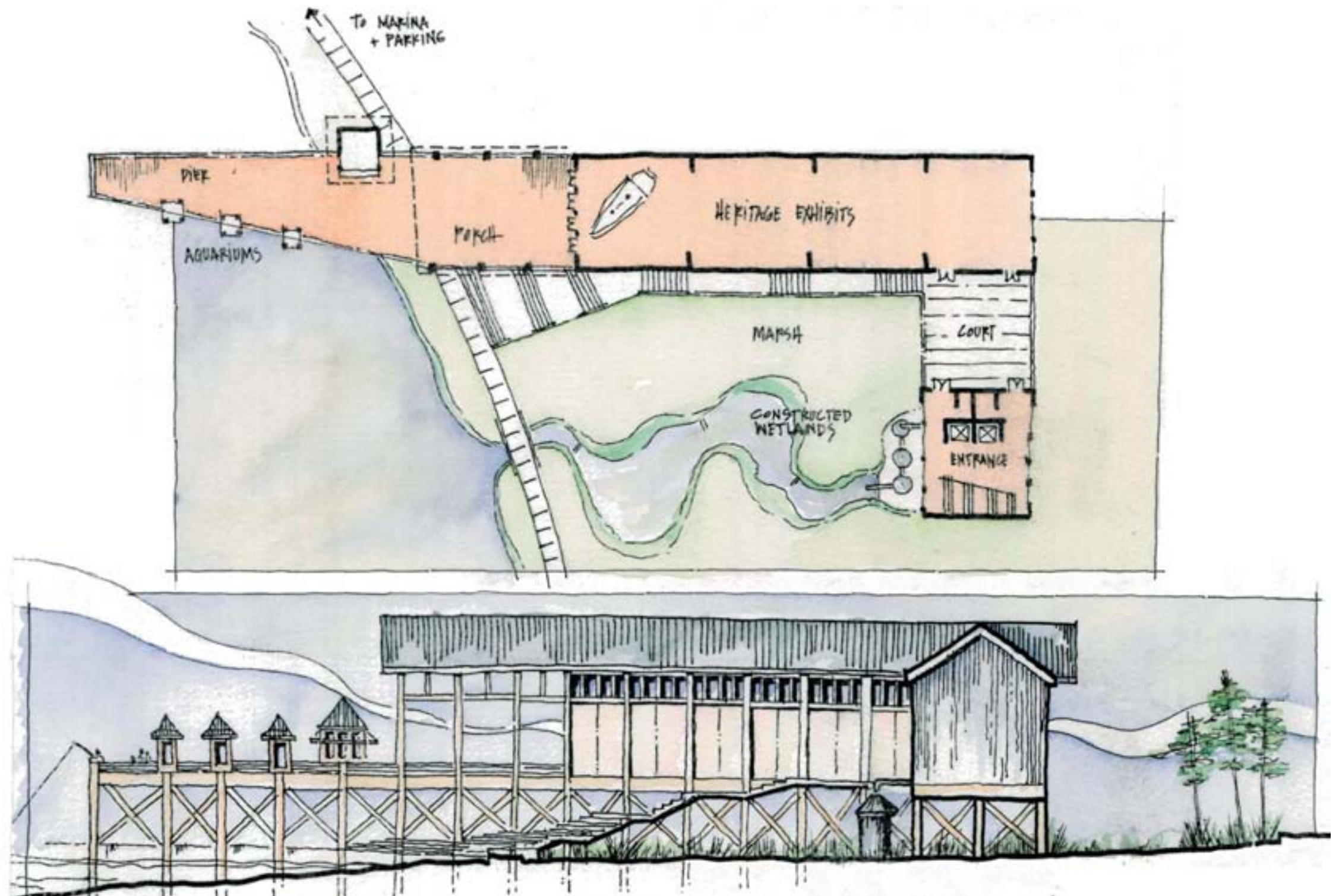
PROPOSED MOSS POINT POLICE STATION
3/32 = 1" - 0"
CHRISTINE G. H. FRANCK; OCTOBER 17, 2005



DOWNTOWN | CIVIC BUILDINGS

Design for a Riverfront Environmental Education Facility

Allison H. Anderson, AIA





KREOLE NEIGHBORHOOD

VISION

Ensure the Kreole neighborhood survives and thrives through the initiation of a comprehensive renewal program. Central to the effort should be the development of new housing on underutilized sites to increase affordability and opportunities for home ownership, aging-in-place (retirement housing), and movement out of areas prone to flooding.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

Immediate Actions

- Initiate dialogue with FEMA, the Governors Commission, and residents of flood prone areas regarding relocation options and opportunities.
- Survey neighborhood for presence of historic properties and seek assistance in completing a cultural and

social history exploring Kreole's founding and early development.

Short Term Actions

- On vacant land fronting Martin Luther King Drive, construct a new village green lined with a neighborhood market and low-scale housing for the elderly, young families, and empty nesters.
- Develop a new walking trail along Mill Avenue connecting the new town green with the International Paper site and trails leading to the riverfront. Seek assistance from state and national organizations such as the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.
- Simplify and improve public approval processes through the adoption of a customized Smart Code.

- Construct a modest community building at the end of Martin Luther King Drive on Kreole Avenue to serve as a publicly-accessible place for the interpretation and celebration of local history and a gateway to reconstructed and restored floodplains and wetland systems,
- Preserve historic housing in place where flooding is unlikely or through relocation to sites in and around the Village Center.
- Develop park and trail system in floodplains to provide recreational opportunities and connect neighborhood to the river.



KREOLE | POST-KATRINA





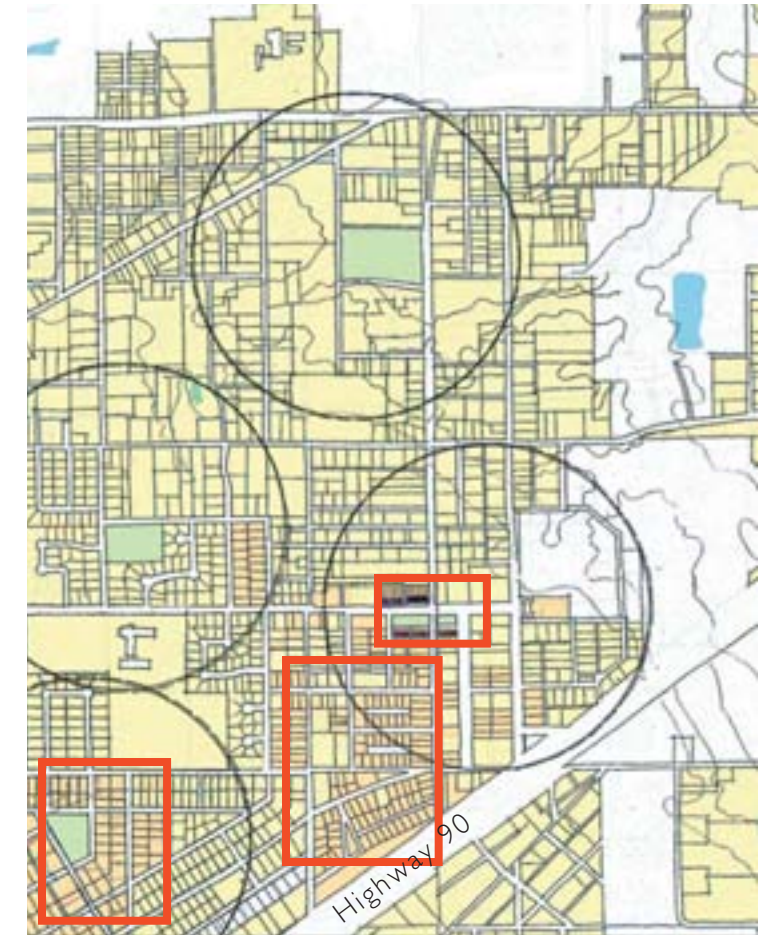
KREOLE | PLAN DIAGRAMS



Water & Flood Zones. Large areas of Kreole are within the limits of 100-year flood areas (lighter blue) as indicated on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. These areas were heavily damaged during Katrina and have flooded intermittently during major rain for the past several decades.



Parks, Squares & Preserves. Plans call for the creation of a modest village green at the intersection of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Mill Street (large red circle), a site for a civic building on Kreole (small red circle), the creation of a greenway and trail along the railroad tracks on Mill (red line), a series of new neighborhood parks and squares, and the creation of a natural preserve in areas most prone to flooding.



Neighborhood Restructuring. To broaden housing options in the neighborhood and provide opportunities for relocation outside flood prone areas, the plan includes new townhouse lots surrounding the village green and new cottage lots along existing proposed neighborhood streets.



KREOLE | ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

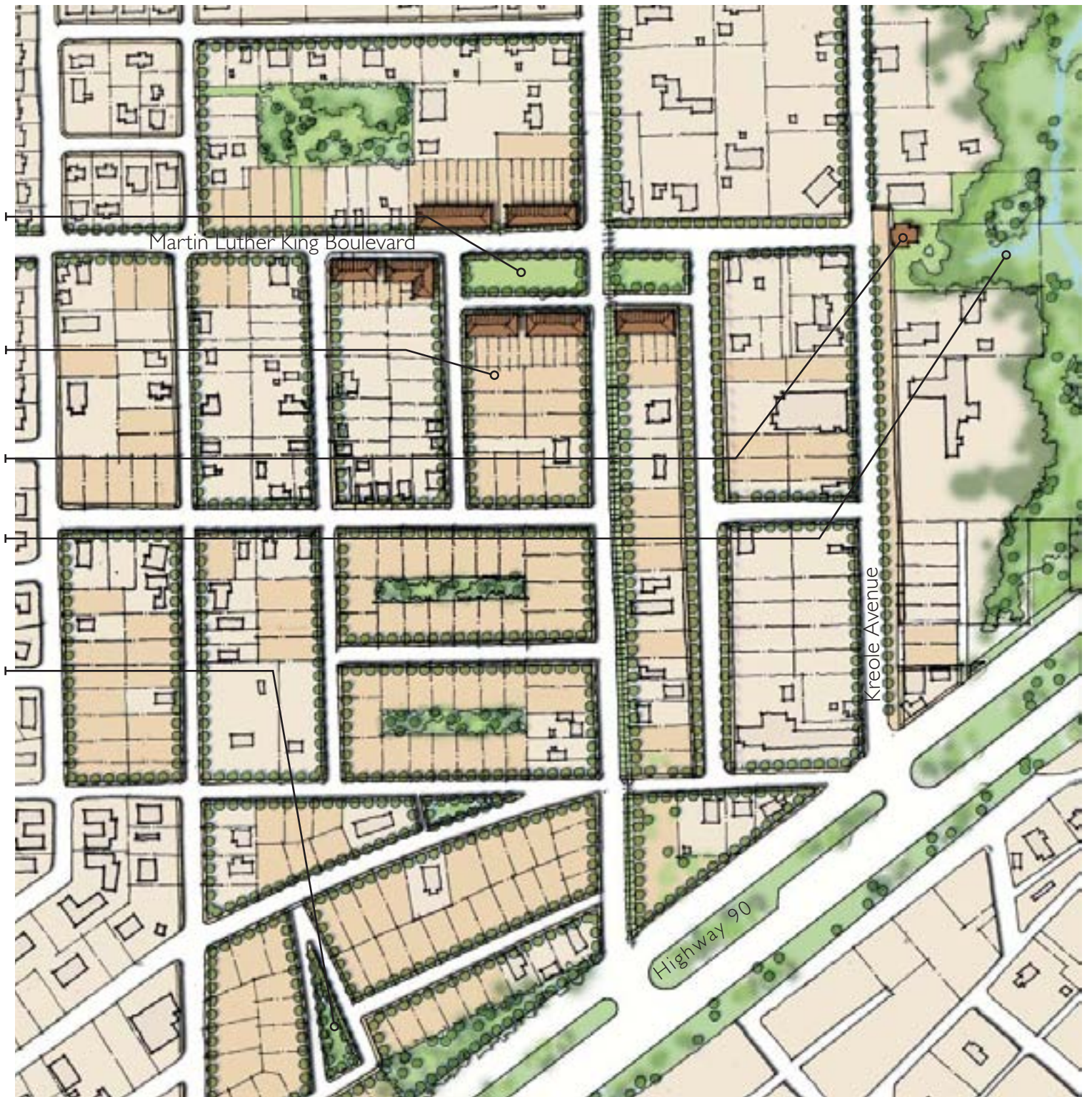
The new village green on Martin Luther King Boulevard—framed by townhouses, a small cafe or market, and elderly housing—provides a place for informal socializing, neighborhood events, and community celebrations.

New cottages along existing and proposed streets serve as receiving sites for individuals and families opting to move out of flood prone areas.

A new civic building serves as a meeting place for the community and a gateway to Kreole Park & Preserve

As relocations occur, properties in flood prone areas become part of the Kreole Park and Preserve, a primarily natural area with restored wetlands, hiking and biking trails, and space for recreation facilities.

A new neighborhood, centered on a triangular park, serves as another receiving site for those moving out of flood prone areas.





KREOLE | VIEW OF VILLAGE SQUARE LOOKING EAST ALONG ON MARTIN LUTHER KING BOULEVARD



ESCATAWPA VILLAGE

VISION

Provide a framework for sustainable neighborhood development and renewal in Escatawpa north of I-10. Support the development of a new village on high ground north of I-10 on the west side of Route 63 designed to include a limited service hotel, restaurants, neighborhood shops, elderly housing, townhouses, and cottages.

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

Immediate

- Work with FEMA and the Governor's Commission to prepare and finalize plans for the development of a new neighborhood that serves both as an alterna-

tive to sprawling development north of the Escatawpa River and provides in its initial years sites for the location of transitional housing for displaced families and individuals.

Short Term

- Establish new neighborhood parks and squares as centerpieces for existing neighborhoods and guide new and infill development.
- Simplify and improve public approval processes through the adoption of a customized Smart Code.
- Designate a industrial/commercial special district east of the airport on Saracina Road; reserve land for

high-employment generating uses requiring large floor plate buildings, and ready rail and highway access; and work with county and regional economic development officials to market sites for industrial/commercial development with low or no negative environmental impacts.

- Carefully define limits of preserve and reserve areas and strictly limit new development in flood prone areas.



ESCATAWPA | PLAN DIAGRAMS



Water & Flood Zones. The proposed location for Escatawpa Village (red circle) is one of the few remaining areas in the City with large, contiguous undeveloped properties outside existing and proposed flood zones.



Parks, Squares & Preserves. Plans call for a new village green as the centerpiece of the village with preserved areas along streams, wetlands, and Highway 63. New neighborhood parks and squares are recommended as amenities in existing and developing neighborhoods surrounding the village.



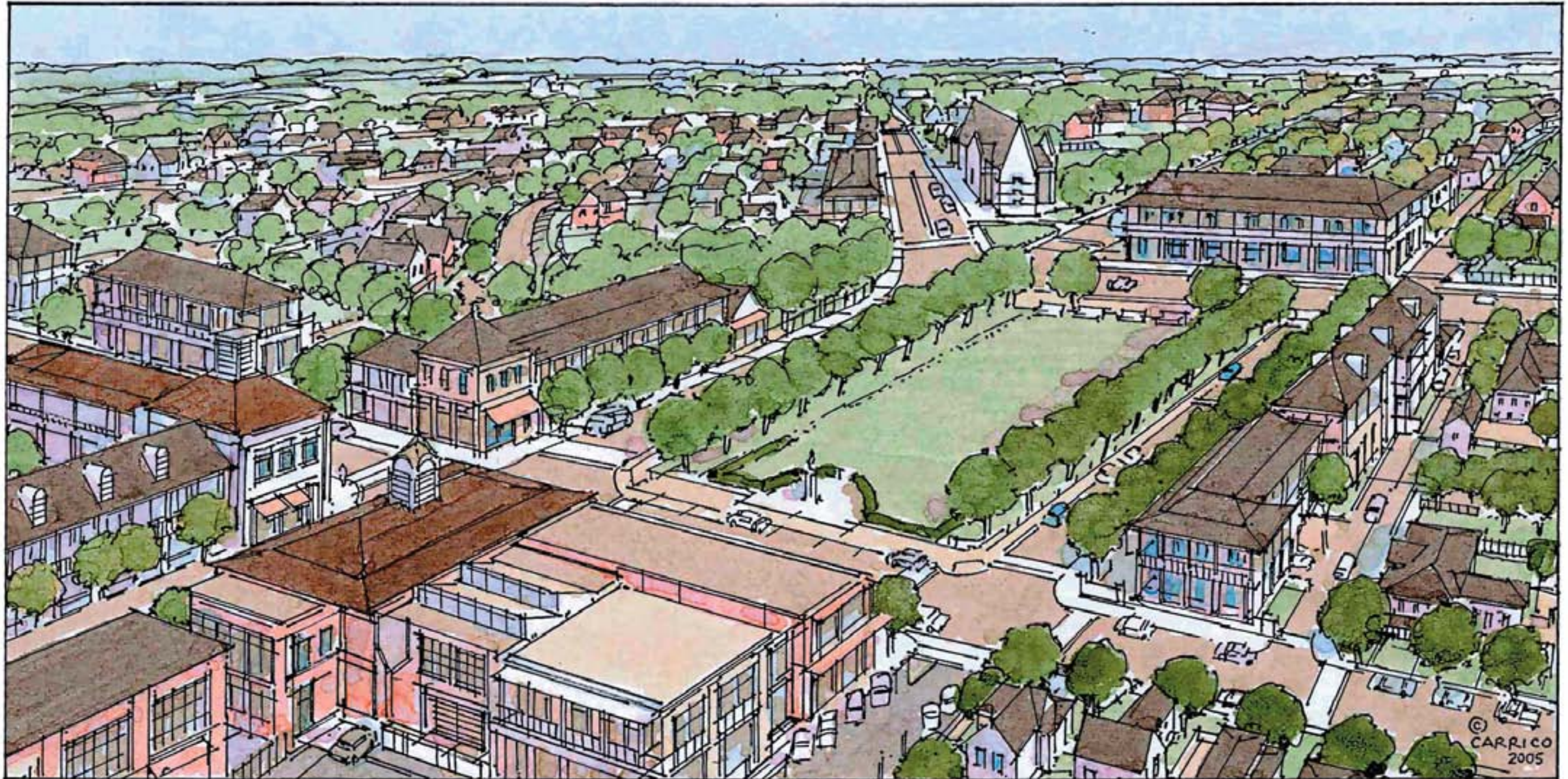
Neighborhood Restructuring. Plans call for the creation of Escatawpa Village along a new road (red line) linking Highways 613 and 63. Infill lots and neighborhood public spaces are proposed for underdeveloped lands in the vicinity of the village.



ESCATAWPA | ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

- At the entry to the village are a row of small shops providing neighborhood-scaled retail and professional services. Parking for the shops is located mid-block and screened from public view.
- A village green framed by townhouses and elderly housing provides a place for informal socializing and neighborhood events and activities.
- A site in the heart of the village is reserved for a new civic or religious building.
- A new irregular grid of neighborhood streets provides internal access and links to the existing but incomplete network of neighborhood streets.
- Flood prone areas at the neighborhood's edge provide corridors for wildlife movement, natural drainage, flood control, and transitions between existing and new neighborhoods.





ESCATAWPA VILLAGE | AERIAL VIEW OF VILLAGE GREEN



SMART CODE

IMPLEMENTING THE SMART CODE

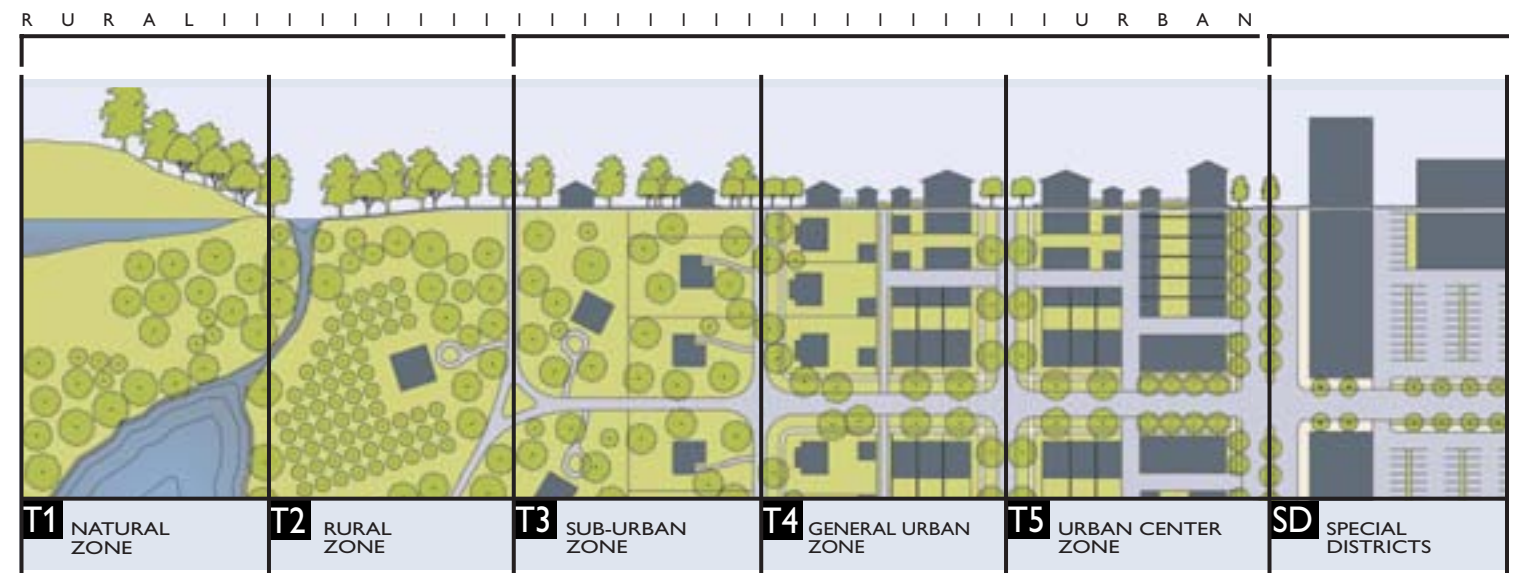
The Smart Code, the zoning system recommended for initial application downtown, Escatawpa, and Kreole, uses the rural-to-urban Transect rather than conventional zoning which is based on land use. The Transect Zones defined for Moss Point are similar to the land use zones in conventional codes, except that in addition to the usual building use, density, height, and setback requirements, other elements are integrated, including the ways private lots and buildings define and frame public street and spaces. Specific elements are determined by their location on the Transect scale.

A description of Transect Zones as they apply to Moss Point is provided below. Proposed zones for the three focus areas are provided on the following page.

TRANSECT ZONE DESCRIPTIONS

T1 NATURAL ZONE consists of lands approximating or reverting to a wilderness condition, including lands unsuitable for settlement due to topography, hydrology, and soil conditions. In Moss Point these areas include wetlands and undeveloped flood plains.

T2 RURAL ZONE consists of open and sparsely settled lands. These include woodlands and lands adjacent to floodplains and wetlands.



T3 SUB-URBAN ZONE consists of low density suburban residential areas. Planting is naturalistic and setbacks relatively deep. Blocks may be large and the roads irregular to accommodate natural conditions.

T4 GENERAL URBAN ZONE consists of a mixed-use urban fabric with a wide range of building types: including single, sideyard, rowhouses, and small, mixed use commercial buildings. Setbacks and landscaping are variable. Streets define medium-sized blocks.

T5 URBAN CENTER consists of higher density mixed-use buildings accommodating retail, office, rowhouses,

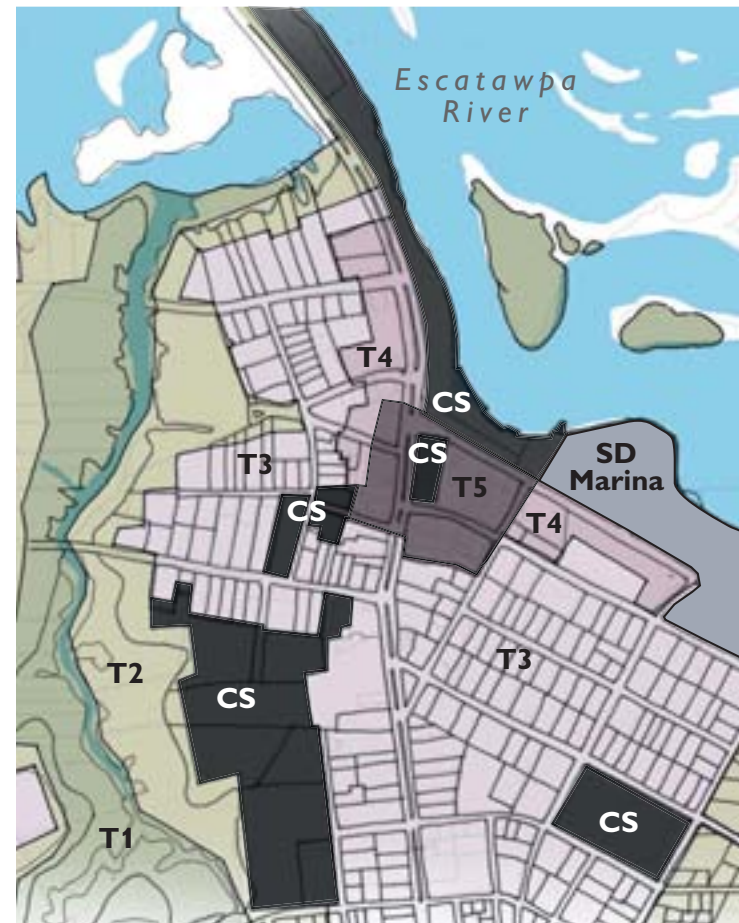
and apartments. It has a tight network of streets with sidewalks, steady street tree planting, and buildings set close to the street.

SPECIALIZED DISTRICTS consist of areas with buildings that by their function, disposition, or configuration cannot conform to one of the Transect Zones. In Moss Point Specialized Districts have been established for the three areas: the marina site downtown, the airport/technology district in Escatawpa, and the International Paper Site in Kreole.

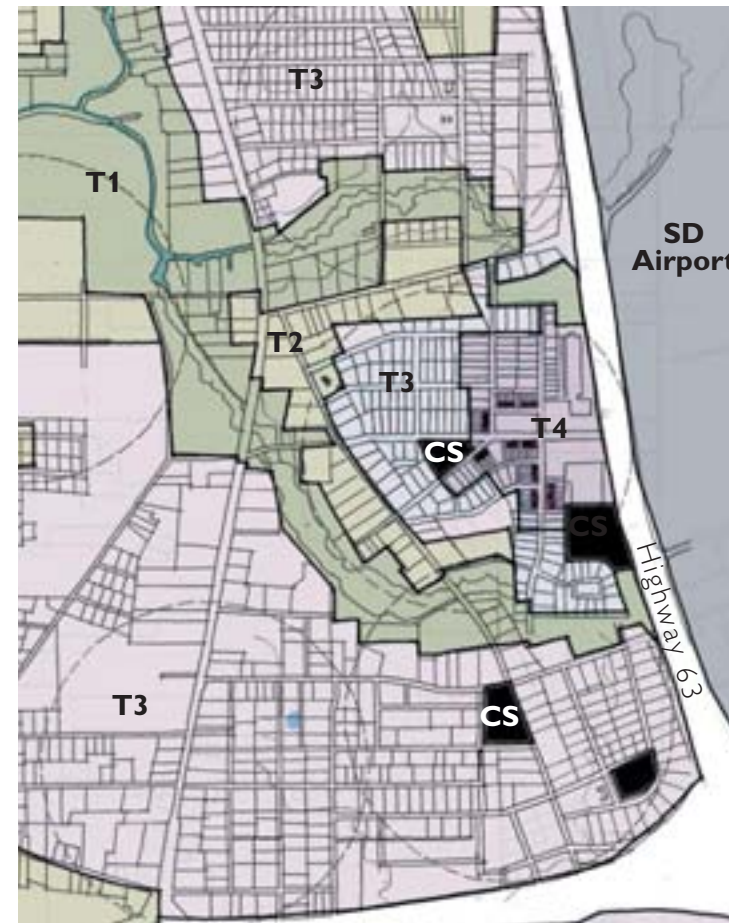
CIVIC SPACES are sites used or reserved for public or institutional use.



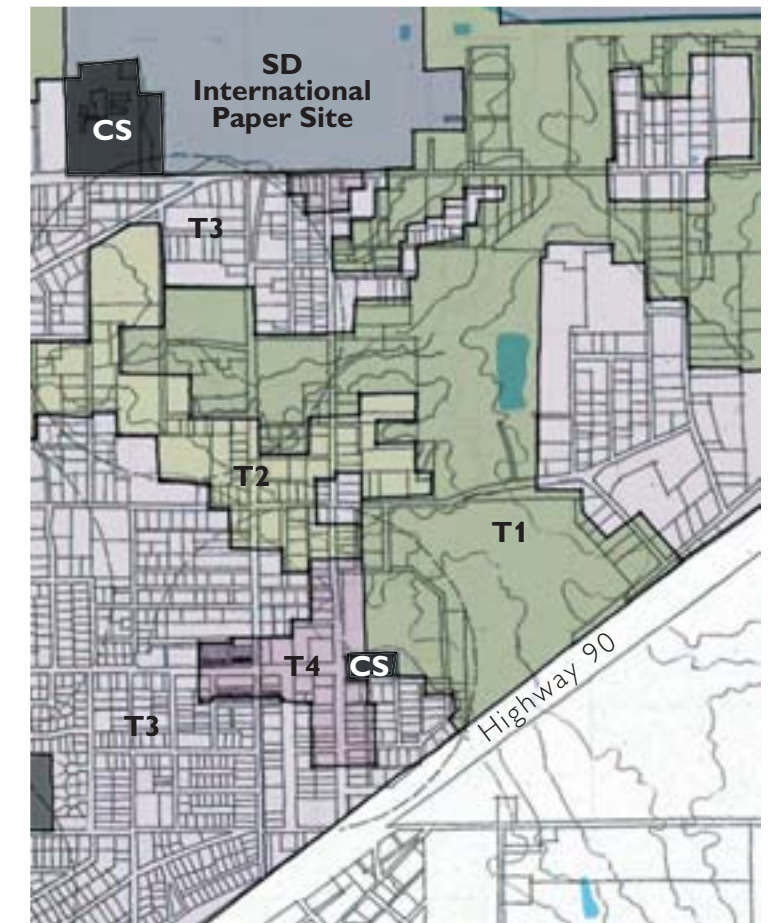
SMART CODE | TRANSECT ZONES



Downtown




Escatawpa



Kreole

TRANSECT ZONES

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
|  T1 Preserve/Natural |  T3 Sub-Urban |  T5 Urban Center |  CS Civic Space |
|  T2 Reserve/Rural |  T4 Urban General |  SD Special District | |



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The People of Moss Point & Jackson County

The team wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the hard work and commitment brought to the effort by the officials and residents of the City of Moss Point and Jackson County. Mayor Xavier Bishop was a true inspiration to the team, and Alderman James Smith, Thomas Hightower, and Aniece Liddel challenged us to do our best, most thoughtful work.

The Charrette Team

The HOK Planning Group
Steven Schukraft
Dhaval Barbhaya
Todd Meyer

Judson & Partners
Clyde Judson

Also sharing their good advice and assistance during our week in Biloxi were Craig Denson of the Governor’s Commission and Michel St Pierre of Bechtel.

Additional thanks go to David Carrico for his wonderful illustrations and Colin Greene, Zachary Christeson, Abbey Roberson, and Juana Gregory for their assistance preparing the report.

We would also like to credit the exceptional work of architecture team members Christine G. H. Franck and Allison Anderson. Christine’s design for a new City Hall and Police Station and Allison’s proposal for a new environmental education center were welcome additions to the project.

And we can’t forget to thank Moss Point’s own Donnie Lamie, who welcomed us unannounced into his busy office and let us rummage through his impressive collection of historic photographs.

Charrette Organizers

The energy, skills, and passion of the charrette organizers should not go unrecognized. For the opportunity to work on this amazing project, we thank Governor Haley Barbour, Governor’s Commission chairman Jim

Barkesdale, Congress for New Urbanism President John Norquist, and charrette leader Andres Duany of Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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