



Redevelopment Master Plan Charrette Book

Gulfport, Mississippi

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NEW URBANISM

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This document was prepared by Robert Alminana and Christopher Ross of HDR|LCA Sargent Town Planning with assistance from the members of the Design Team.



Governor Haley Barbour addressing the Forum



Andrés Duany addressing the Forum



The Team Leaders

This document presents a conceptual strategy for redeveloping many areas of the city of Gulfport, Mississippi. Such a strategy became necessary because of the damage and destruction dealt to the Mississippi coastline by Hurricane Katrina, which came ashore on Monday 29 August 2005 and quickly became the most devastating natural disaster in this country's history. The potential to turn a need into an opportunity came to reality because of the leadership shown by Governor Haley Barbour of Mississippi and a handful of associates. These include, notably, Jim Barksdale, former CEO of Netscape, who leads the Governor's Commission on Mississippi Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal, that ultimately facilitated the mobilization of over two hundred professionals from around the world to participate in a week-long charrette (12-18 October 2005) to help plan for the areas destroyed by the hurricane. The outcome of this charrette and the subsequent weeks includes redevelopment plans for 11 distinct communities along the Mississippi Gulf coast, as well as recommendations for a host of technical, design, economic, environmental and regulatory factors.

This charrette became a reality because of the leadership of Andrés Duany, principal of Duany Plater-Zyberk, architects and town planners from Miami, Florida, who personally oversaw nearly every detail of the preparations for the event. It became a reality because of the organizational leadership of the Congress for the New Urbanism, and its executive director, John Norquist. The costs of this effort were supported by generous funding from the Knight Foundation, but it ultimately came to fruition because of the tens of thousands of hours of time devoted by the hundreds of professionals and volunteers. In addition, thanks to the active and ongoing participation of local and regional political and community leaders, the results of all these efforts stand as viable opportunities to positively change the future of these devastated areas.

The work presented in this report was developed over the course of three weeks. The professionals who developed this work came together as a team for the first time on Wednesday 12 October 2005. Many of the team members had never met before, and with the exception of the four team members from HDR/LCA+Sargent, few had ever worked together. The team included volunteers

from throughout the state of Mississippi, as well as invited professionals from around the country, chosen to work on this project because of their skills, their experience, and their capacity to address the issues most relevant to Gulfport's redevelopment.

The team that worked on the Gulfport plan included architects, landscape architects, planners and urban designers. Over two dozen separate individuals contributed time and effort to this plan. Some were able to devote nearly every waking hour during the six-day charrette to this effort. Others, particularly local members, many of whom were still addressing the immediate impact of Katrina, gave whatever time they could, forsaking family, friends, jobs and, especially, sleep in order to help pull the plan together. This document also includes materials and recommendations that were developed by other teams and made available because of their relevance to Gulfport.

The Gulfport team was honored by the extraordinary participation of Brent Warr, Mayor of Gulfport, and his wife Laura, as well as the City's Director of Urban Development, George Carbo. All three of these individuals spent the greater part of the charrette working directly with the team, often until well after midnight. The Mayor's ability to vividly express his vision for the future of his community was invaluable to the team. His unflagging energy and enthusiasm were contagious and often helped push the team past obstacles or hurdles that might otherwise have been daunting. George Carbo's willingness and ability to handle almost every request for information or support materials dramatically increased both the efficiency and the effectiveness of the team. The City will undoubtedly benefit in the future from the leadership of these two individuals.

The team decided during the course of the initial all-day tour of the city that they would not limit themselves only to those areas that were directly impacted by Katrina. While most low-lying areas within the city, including the entire coastline, were devastated by the combined fury of wind and water, many of the



Gulfport Design Studio



Mayor Brent Warr



*Architect Taylor Guild with George Carbo, Gulfport
Director of Urban Development*

opportunities for positive redevelopment were systemic as well as site-specific. These larger opportunities include enhanced local and regional transportation systems, with increased modal choice, environmental linkages, enhanced wetlands and estuaries, neighborhood integration, and a new approach to planning, zoning and development within the City as a whole.

The manifest potential of Gulfport to successfully redevelop into one of the most physically attractive, economically viable and socially progressive communities in the South was apparent to every team member almost from the outset of the project. Blessed with one of the finest deepwater ports along the coast for hundreds of miles in either direction, the city includes miles of white sand Gulf-front beaches, a wide range of diverse and stable neighborhoods, ready access to regional transportation routes, and the only international airport in Southern Mississippi. Those neighborhoods and districts that weren't completely decimated by the hurricane bore witness to the remarkable variety of historic architecture that still abounds, as well as the vestiges of the original settlement patterns and traditions.

The historic architecture, traditional neighborhoods and underlying city structure became guides in assembling the redevelopment plan. The plan builds upon the obvious economic, locational and historic strengths of the downtown, as well as the eye-opening potentials of the port, immediately to the south. While most Gulf-front buildings were seriously damaged, if not obliterated, the manifest opportunities inherent in these locations and the neighborhoods immediately behind them represent a significant motivation for successful redevelopment.

While both the name and the location of the City focus on the Gulf of Mexico, the team recognized that numerous other water bodies impact the current and potential future form of the community. Bayou Bernard and its tributaries extend well into the fabric of the city and include not only residential neighborhoods but significant areas of industry, much of it related to the water. Other water bodies such as Turkey Creek are particularly important, not only in their role as

critical regional environmental systems but for their social and cultural relevance; the Turkey Creek neighborhood was settled by freedmen in 1866 and the descendents of these original settlers still inhabit this historic community.

The overall goal of this document and the individual efforts it summarizes is to create a theoretical and practical framework for guiding the redevelopment of the city of Gulfport. Key elements of this framework include:

- reestablishing the mixed-use prominence of the downtown;
- optimizing the locational and functional opportunities associated with the Port;
- optimizing the locational opportunities associated with Gulf-front property as well as selected locations away from the water;
- reinforcing and strengthening the character and structure of older neighborhoods throughout the City;
- creating linkages and functional diversity among newer neighborhoods;
- establishing regional transportation diversity;
- reinforcing the underlying regional ecosystems

To help accomplish these goals, this document includes a list of nearly forty strategies and actions. Eight of these are further described as priority items, even though all of the items listed will play a role in the redevelopment of the City. These actions include design ideas, policy recommendations and management suggestions. Many of the recommended actions are quite broad, or have application in multiple locations within the community. Undoubtedly, additional strategies and actions will emerge over time.

Some of the recommended actions are large and complex and will undoubtedly take time to initiate, let alone complete. Others are smaller and more localized and can probably be undertaken in short order. Some actions relate directly to the destruction created by Katrina. Others, are only indirectly related to the impact of the hurricane, but build up on the opportunities for redevelopment that Katrina made necessary.

In order to make this document as usable as possible to as wide an audience as possible, each strategic action, each distinct topic, is treated as a separate element of the document, with each one beginning on its own page. This is done in order to facilitate future additions, amendments and changes to the text; if new ideas or strategies emerge, they can be written up and slipped into this initial document, where appropriate. If, on the other hand, a strategy or recommendation proves to be difficult to implement or simply not in keeping with the overall direction of redevelopment over time, this one element can be excised from the document without harming the overall structure.

Given the compressed time frame within which this document was produced, certain key elements of a redevelopment program were addressed only indirectly. A successful redevelopment effort includes not only the master plan and the strategic initiatives; it also includes an implementation program that rigorously assesses the key issues associated with actually implementing or carrying out the recommended strategies and plans, designs and development actions. Such a program addresses myriad crucial questions: What players need to be involved? Who takes the lead? What are the funding requirements? Where does funding come from? What actions and initiatives must come first and which must come after previous actions? An implementation program carefully assesses existing financial, procedural and programmatic issues and attempts to evaluate the costs and benefits associated with a wide range of approaches to carrying out the intended master plan. It tries to establish a framework that provides both organizational and financial flexibility, while at the same time establishing clear priorities, standards, benchmarks and feedback loops for redevelopment progress. Assuming that the strategies and actions recommended in this document are well received, the next critical step in moving towards an actual redevelopment program will be the creation of an implementation program.

As noted, this document and everything in it represents less than three weeks of work of a group of extraordinarily dedicated professionals and volunteers, both from Mississippi and elsewhere. It is hoped that the presentation begins to capture the energy of the charrette and the dedication of everyone involved, not simply on the Gulfport team, but with the entire event. It is hoped, too, that the document highlights Gulfport's enormous potential for positive redevelopment and leaves the readers with a clear image of what Gulfport can become and some indication of how it can get there.

Introduction - Katrina Destruction Photos



Gulfport Harbor Master's Station



Highway 90



Church in Downtown Gulfport



Old Residential Neighborhood in the West Side



Downtown Gulfport



Gulfport's West Side

Introduction - Community Tour



Touring the West Side



On the Tour Bus Listening to Community Representatives



Touring Gulfport Harbor



In the Turkey Creek Neighborhood



Touring Downtown Gulfport



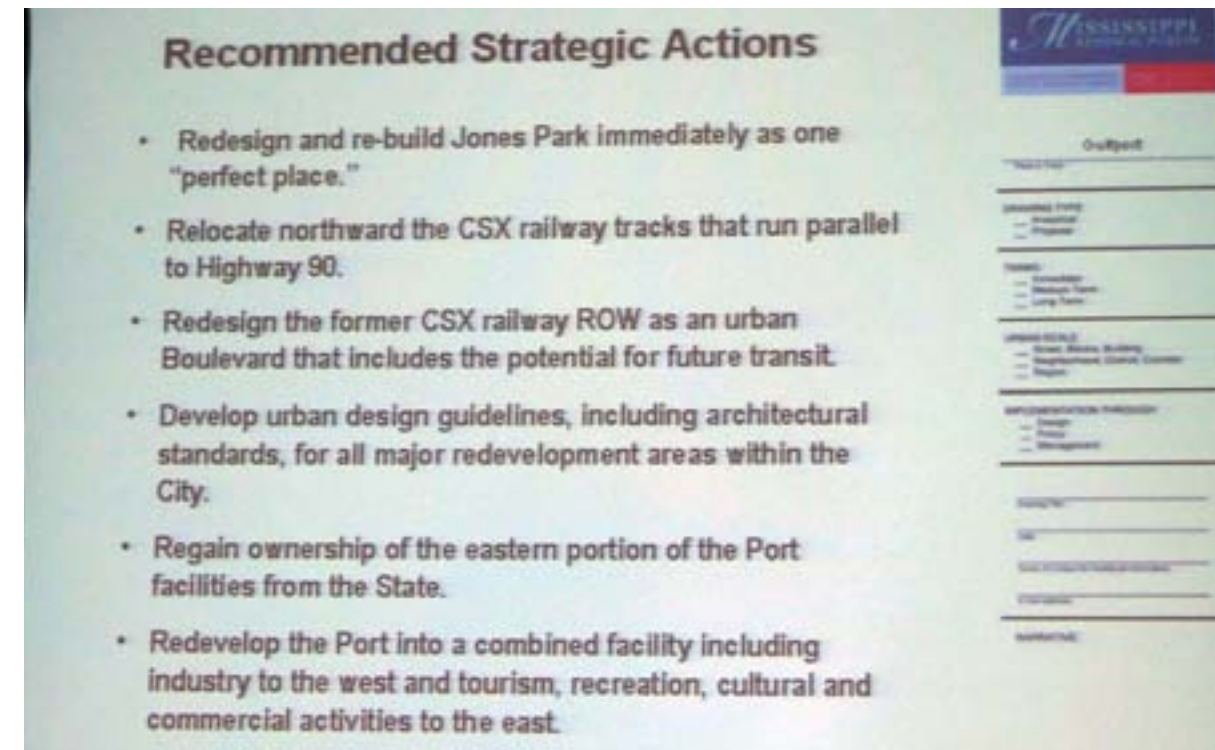
At City Hall after the Tour

Introduction - Studio Pictures



The Charrette Team at Work in the Studio

Introduction - Presentations



Reaching Out to the Community - Public Presentations

Introduction - Local Architecture and Relevant Precedents



Great Southern Hotel, Gulfport - 1900's



Pine Hills Hotel on the Bay, Harrison County



Vinoy Hotel, St. Petersburg, FL



Great Southern Hotel, Gulfport - 1900's



Pine Hills Hotel on the Bay, Harrison County



The Cat Island Lighthouse, Gulfport - 1900's



Hotel Galvez, Galveston, TX



Sivley's Apartments & Cottage, Gulfport - 1920's



Hotel Nacional, Havana, Cuba

The Potential

The City of Gulfport has enormous potential, both to redevelop successfully following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, and to grow into one of the leading cities along the entire Gulf Coast. It is blessed with a deep-water port, one of the few in this part of the country, a historic downtown immediately adjacent to the port, and an international airport, just minutes away from the port.



Port of St. Petersburg, FL



Port of Cannes, France

Other communities with such natural resources as Gulfport include world famous Mediterranean cities such as Cannes, Nice and Monte Carlo, and American ports such as St. Petersburg FL. St. Petersburg, in particular, is able to blend a wide variety of uses, including a general aviation airport, into its port, while also maintaining a one-block wide waterfront park along much of the water's edge.

With respect to the water's edge, Gulfport includes over seven miles of gulf-frontage. Highway 90 (Beach Boulevard) runs along this length and has the potential to become a great urban waterfront drive. Again, references can be found in foreign settings such as *el Malecon* that runs along the coast in Havana Cuba, or in American examples such as Bayshore Boulevard that runs for over 4 miles along the edge of Hillsborough Bay in Tampa FL, terminating at the Downtown.



Casino - Monte Carlo

The charrette for Gulfport included a 12-hour day of touring the entire city, meeting with elected officials, city staff and citizens, and reviewing the key goals of the redevelopment opportunities with the Mayor and Urban Development Director. Throughout the course of this day, three elements were continually reaffirmed. First, there was extensive devastation in many locations; towards the coastline, entire neighborhoods were substantially destroyed. Second, many magnificent historic structures and examples of traditional architecture survived with very little damage. Third, there was a great deal of hope and optimism among the both leaders and the residents of the community. A lot has been destroyed or damaged, but the potential for positive redevelopment is evident to many. It is this potential for positive transformation that informs many of the ideas and proposals included in this document.



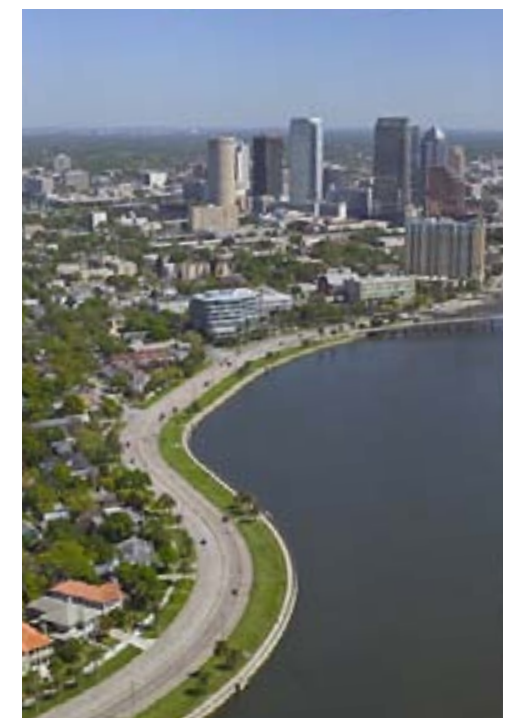
Casino - Monte Carlo



Malecon, Havana, Cuba



Beach Front, Nice, France



Bay Shore Blvd., Tampa, FL

Strategic Actions

With extensive input from elected officials, City staff and community representatives, the Team identified the following strategic actions:

Priority Actions:

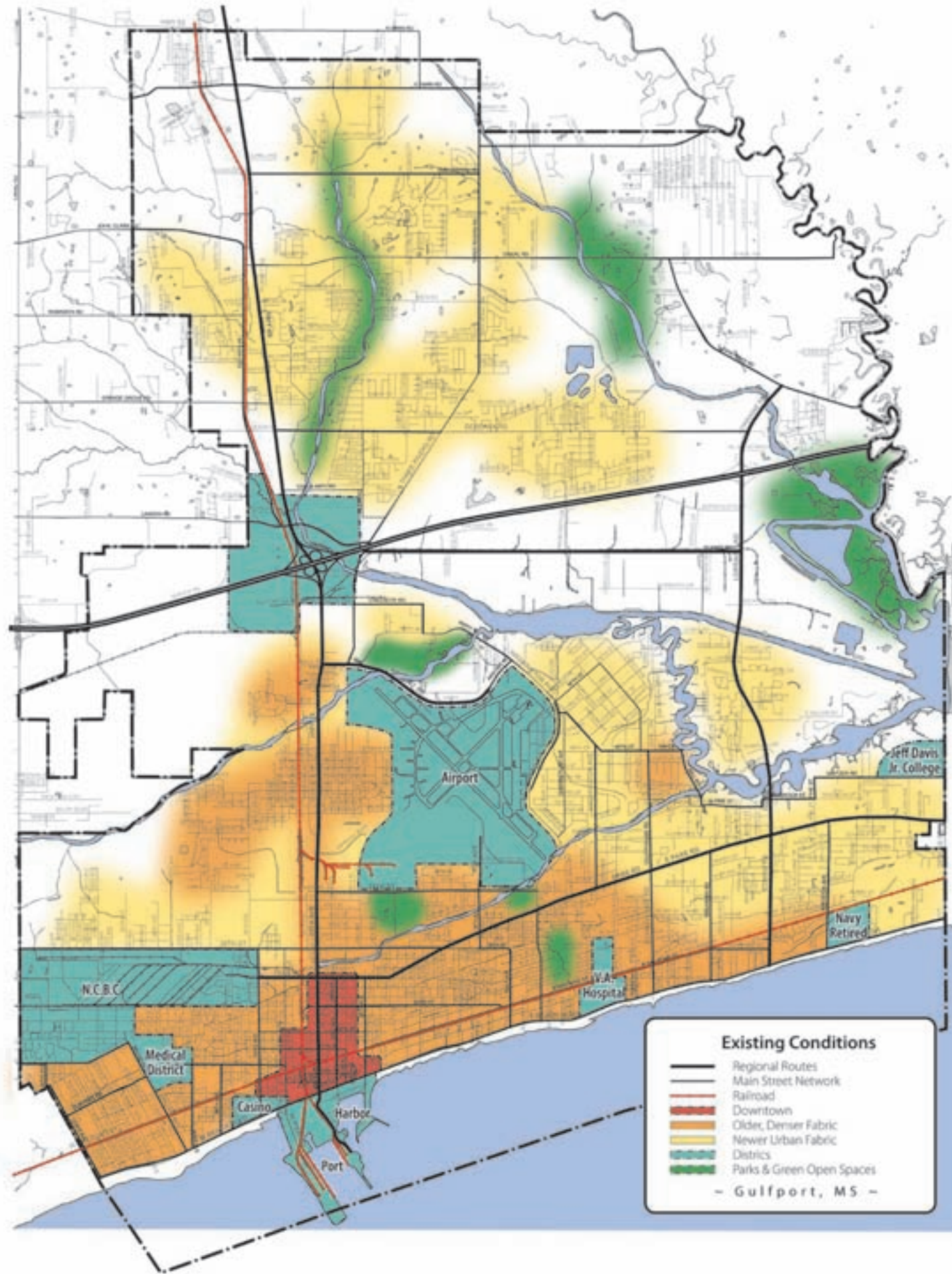
1. Redesign and re-build Jones Park, immediately, as one “perfect place.”
2. Relocate northward the CSX railway tracks that currently run along the ROW parallel to Highway 90.
3. Redesign this former CSX ROW as an urban boulevard that includes the potential for future transit.
4. Develop urban design guidelines, including architectural standards, for all major redevelopment areas within the City.
5. Regain ownership of the eastern portion of the Port facilities from the State.
6. Re-plan and redevelop the Port into a combined facility including industry to the west, and tourism, recreation, cultural and commercial activities to the east.
7. Create a citywide network of parks and accessible open spaces, with greenway connectors throughout the City.

Additional Actions:

- Negotiate with MDOT to insure that Highway 90 remains a four-lane section for its entire length within the City.
- Relocate truck and rail access to and from the Port to a single facility, including a viaduct over Highway 90.
- Reposition Highway 90 as Beach Boulevard.
- Acquire the Veterans Administration facility from the Federal government and re-use and redevelop it as a national medical facility.
- Replace the City’s current zoning code with the Smart Code.
- Create inducements to help relocate suburban retail to the Downtown.

- Help preserve undeveloped land west of the current outlet mall as a nature preserve.
- Reposition Highway 49 as “Broadway” within the Downtown.
- Turn Cowan Road into a boulevard from Beach Boulevard to at least Pass Road.
- Pursue a downtown campus for a university looking to relocate to Gulfport.
- Preserve and enhance the current Baptist College campus along Beach Boulevard.
- Establish pedestrian connections between established neighborhoods.
- Establish small civic/commercial centers within established neighborhoods.
- Design a neighborhood center for the Turkey Creek neighborhood.
- Redevelop the neighborhood center for the Old North Gulfport neighborhood.
- Develop a coherent master plan and redevelopment strategy for the Downtown.
- Develop a CRA and a TIF District within the Downtown.
- Establish a Business Improvement District (BID) within the Downtown.
- Establish a Main Street Program within the Downtown.
- Work with the state to create enabling legislation for the Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs).
- Prepare and implement a landscape master plan for the City.
- Develop a business incubator program for entrepreneurs within the City.
- Determine key locations within the City for the development of live-work units; prepare model unit types for these locations.
- Devise a master plan and redevelopment strategy for Pass Road from Highway 49 to the City line.

Existing Conditions



The existing conditions map of the City begins to indicate the overall development structure for the community. The traditional downtown and the port terminate the primary north-south vehicular axis – Highway 49, which extends from the gulf coast as far north as Memphis, TN, and which is a major corridor for the movement of people and goods to and from the coast.

A major east-west route lies immediately adjacent to the coastline – Highway 90 (Beach Boulevard) runs along the coast, extending eastward to Alabama and westward to Louisiana. Approximately parallel to this roadway is a CSX railway corridor that provides additional passenger and freight movement along the coast. Further north, Interstate 10 links the City of Jacksonville, FL with the city of Los Angeles, CA. There are two major exits within Gulfport – one at the intersection with Cowan Road toward the eastern portion of the City, and a primary one at the intersection with Highway 49, approximately at the center of the community.

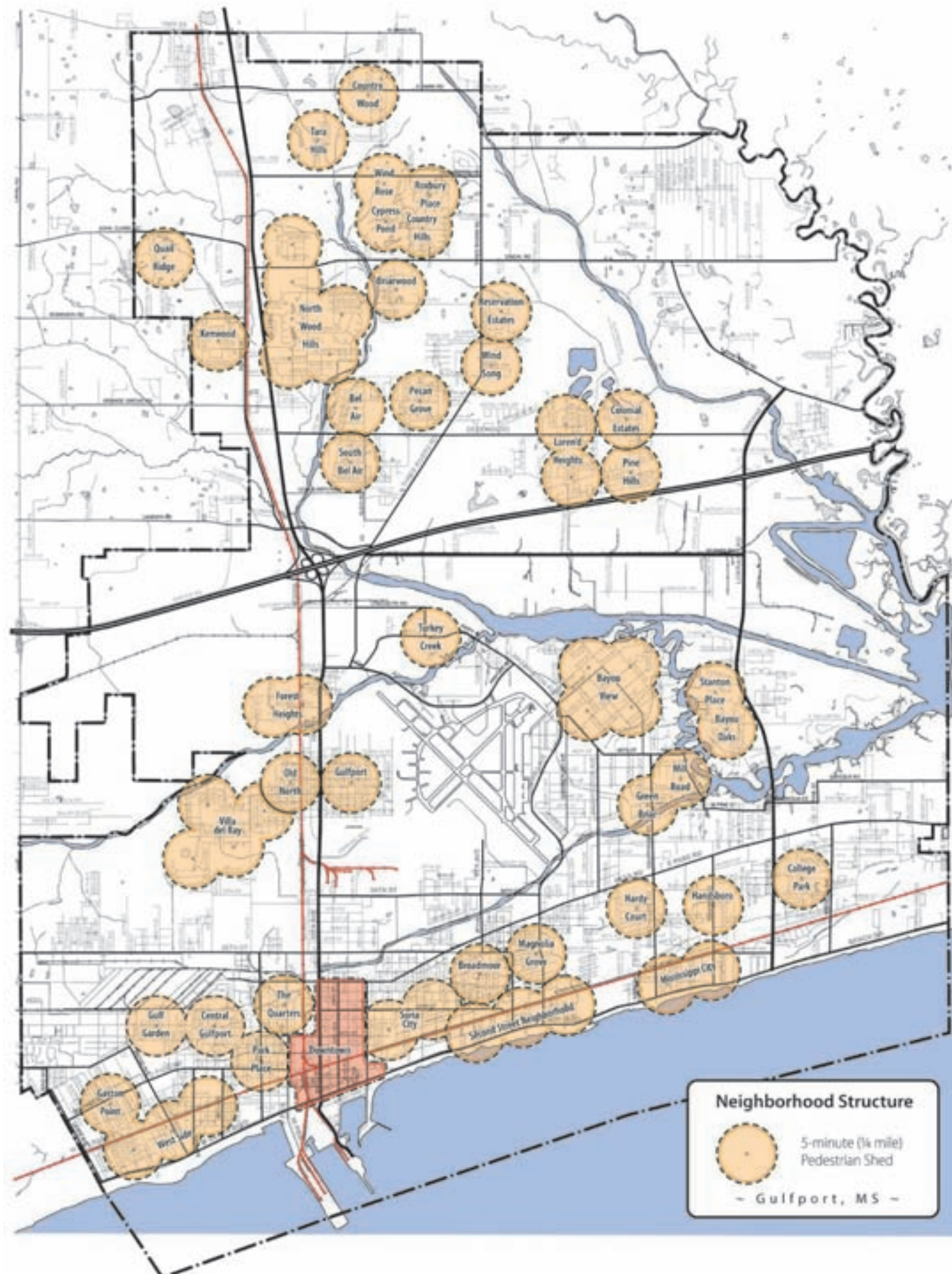
Older development within the community is concentrated south of I-10 and close to the coast line. The area closest to the south side of the highway includes a number of industrial districts as well as environmentally sensitive lands that are associated with the Bayou and Turkey Creek. This older development is representative of pre-war planning, with tight integrated neighborhoods all focused around the Downtown. North of the interstate, post-war development types dominate, with many distinct subdivisions, retail center and office parks. East-west connectivity occurs along three primary routes (Dedaux Rd., O'Neal Rd., Duckworth Rd.) and north-south links are strongly focused around Highway 49.

The Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport occupies a large tract of land north of the downtown, south of I-10 and east of Highway 49. A significant asset to the community, the airport disrupts the fine-grained street pattern typically found to the south, and has spawned additional development that has begun to have potentially negative impacts on both the adjacent environmental systems and the historic neighborhoods immediately to the north and west.

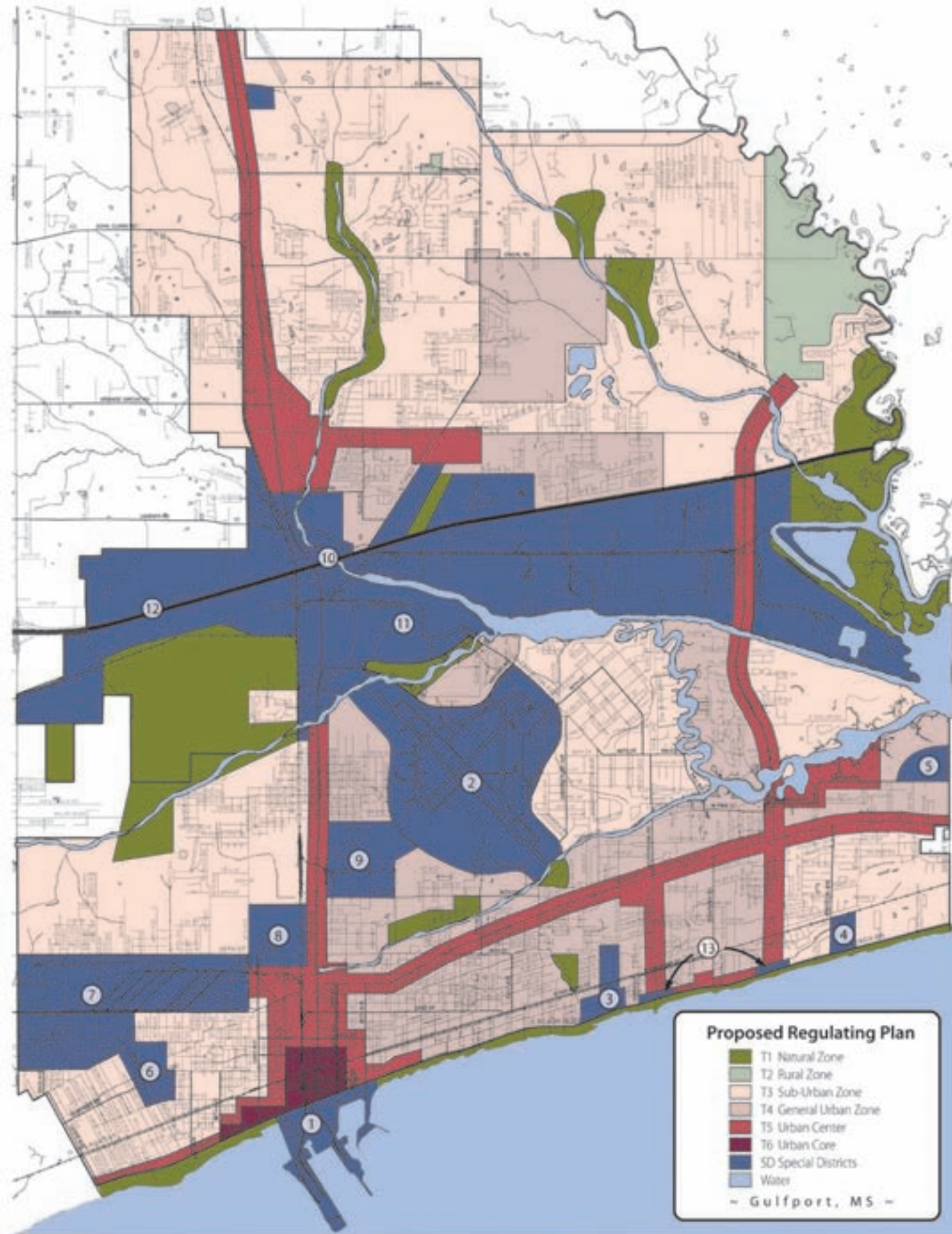
Neighborhood Structure

The fabric of the older community includes many enclaves that are perceived of as distinct neighborhoods. Many of these are linked to one another by primary and secondary streets – in some situations, while the street grid continues almost uninterrupted, discrete areas within the pattern are seen as unique and distinct neighborhoods.

To the south of the airport, parallel to the coast, the fabric of neighborhoods is both dense and continuous. Around the airport, this continuity begins to fade and within the northern reaches of the city, physical connectivity between neighborhoods is less pronounced than in the south.



Proposed Regulating Plan



A necessary precursor to the desired implementation of the Smart Code within the community is the mapping of the existing and proposed future conditions according to the zones defined by the Transect. As this map details, the majority of the city falls into the T3 (sub-urban zone) and T4 (general urban zone) zones. Areas adjacent to the primary vehicular corridors – in particular Highway 49, Pass Road, Cowan Road and Courthouse Road—as well as surrounding the downtown fall into the more intense T5 – Urban Center – zone, with the most urban intensity found in the Downtown and its immediate surroundings, the Urban Core (T6).

There are thirteen Special Districts within the community, ranging from the Port, to the Airport, to the industrial areas along the Bayou and the retail and sport-related zones parallel to I-10. There are also distinct pockets of green within the city map, particularly in those areas deemed environmentally sensitive. Those areas that will never be developed and which can best be maintained in some form of their original state are depicted as T1 – Natural Zone. Other areas, which may be currently undeveloped, but which might at some future point be developed, are depicted as T2 – Rural Zone.

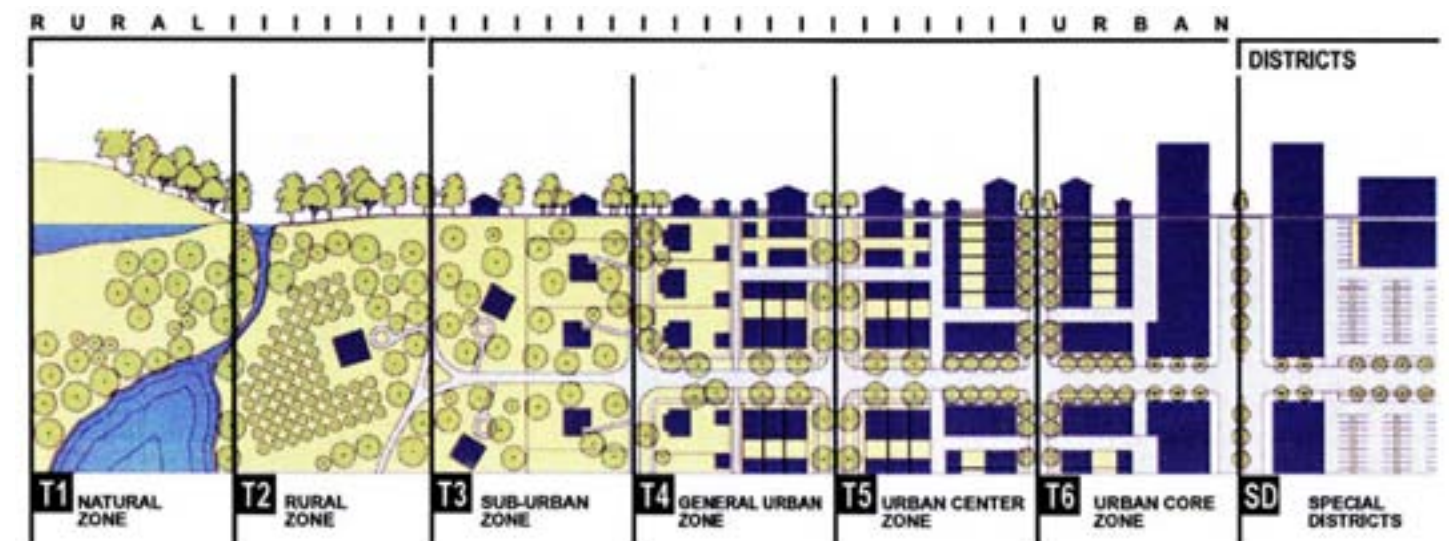
For Gulfport, the proposed T Zones have been defined as follows:

T1 NATURAL

The T1 zone consists of the natural and permanent open space areas within Gulfport that are intended for preservation. These include the sand beach along the Gulf, and specific river, creek, wetland, and forest areas, including the Thornton-Clover Nature Area, Bayou View West, the airport buffer, Turkey Creek Watershed, Biloxi River wetlands, Fritz Creek, and Flat Ranch Creek.

T2 RURAL

The T2 zone consists of areas of Gulfport that are of open “country road” character and sparsely settled. These include the Biloxi River area, and some individual large estate sites. The Turkey Creek Community may be considered for a possible T2 designation as the City’s new code is further detailed, but is currently identified as a Special District.



The Rural-to-Urban Transect

T3 SUB-URBAN

The T3 zone consists of lower density suburban residential areas. South of I-10, these include College Park, and the Taylor Road and Bayou View areas. North of I-10, the T3 zone is applied to the Lyman and Orange Grove areas, and the Lorraine Community. Blocks are typically large, and some roads are of irregular alignment to accommodate natural conditions.

T4 GENERAL URBAN

The T4 zone includes both the older, predominantly residential areas of the City between the Gulf and I-10, and more recently developed areas north of I-10. These areas consist of a primarily residential fabric with some mixture of uses. Although the intensity of development is similar in all T4 areas, differences in neighborhood form and character require that T4 zone be applied in two subzones:

- a. In the southerly areas of Gulfport, T4 reflects traditional neighborhoods with wide variety in lot sizes, ownership patterns, and house sizes, where most buildings are single-story except along the beach, and where blocks are of relatively small size.
- b. North of I-10, T4 is applied to the Three Rivers Road and Loren D Heights areas, where existing walkability can be enhanced, and where opportunities for mixed use development and neighborhood serving commercial along Dedeaux Road can benefit both residents in these T4 areas and residents in nearby T3 areas. Additional areas may be considered for possible T4 designation north of I-10 as the City's code is further detailed.

T5 URBAN CENTER

The T5 zone consists of higher density, mixed-use building types that accommodate retail, offices, rowhouses, and apartments. The T5 zone is applied to two types of areas within the City with similar intensities of development, but with specific differences in development standards. The T5 zone is intended to have building heights of 2 to 5 stories, a tight network of streets with wide sidewalks, steady street tree planting, and buildings set close to the street frontages.

- a. Adjacent to the beach, these areas are intended to accommodate resort development and related services
- b. These areas consist of corridor areas that are intended to become mixed-use and pedestrian oriented, including retail, offices, and services, in mixed-use buildings with residential above.

T6 URBAN CORE

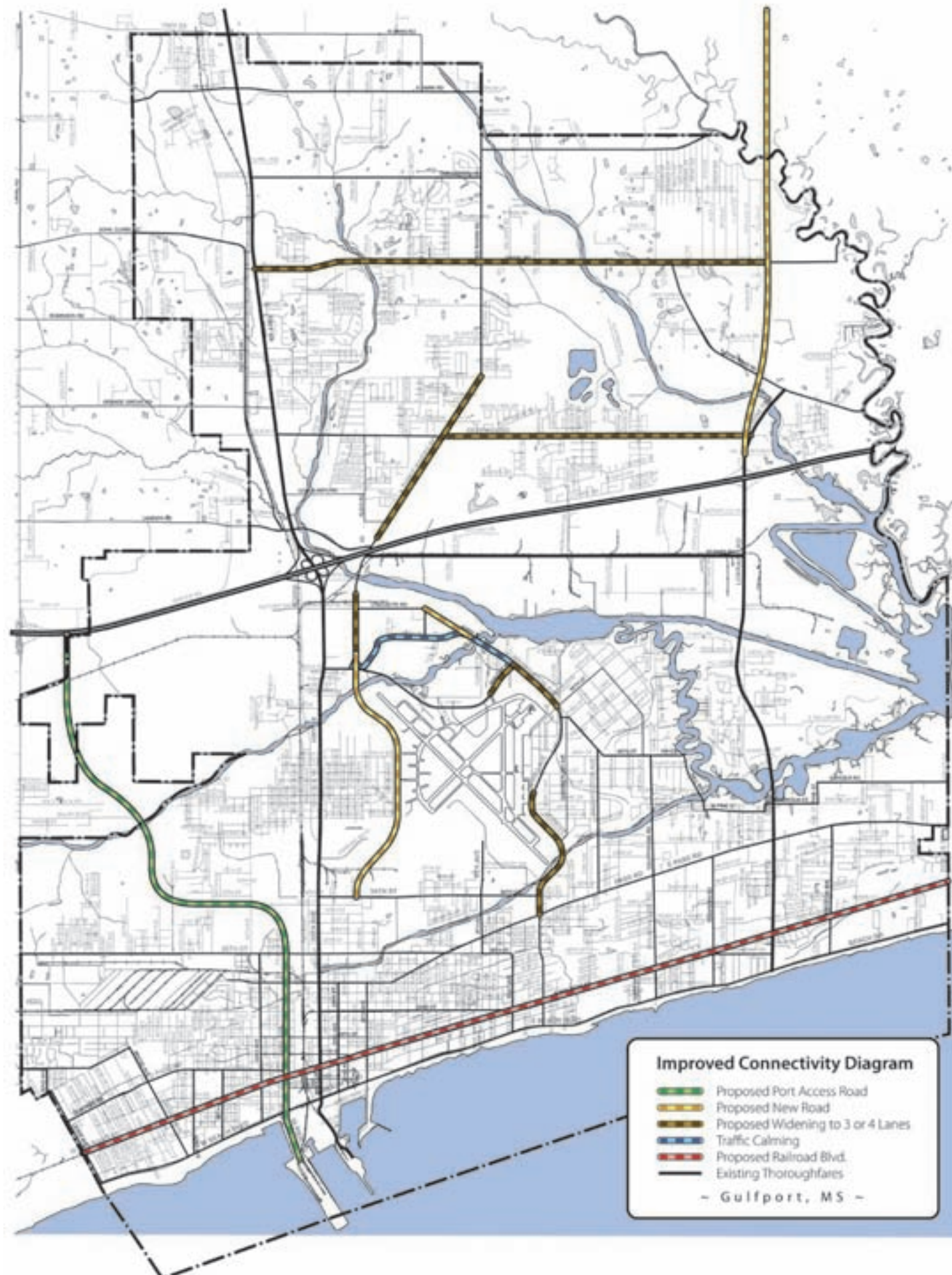
The T6 zone is the Gulfport Downtown, with the highest development intensities in the City. The Downtown is the City's financial and legal center, and the Code is intended to encourage the area to also become richly mixed use, with specialty retail, offices, and residential in mixed use buildings, and a wide variety of quality restaurants. Buildings are generally of large-scale, with mixed-use condominium buildings from 3 to 18 stories, and set close to street frontages. Streetscapes are intended to include wide sidewalks with steady street tree planting. The T6 zone will have a subzone along the portion of 25th Avenue/Highway 49 within the Downtown to limit building heights at the street frontage to a maximum of 4 stories, allowing up to 8 stories to the rear of a recess (stepback) line.

SD SPECIAL DISTRICTS

The SD zone identifies areas of the City where sites with existing specialized uses or unique community character require individualized development standards. The SD zone is applied to the following areas, each of which are intended to have development standards specific to the community's objectives for each.

1. The Gulfport Port
2. The Gulfport Airport
3. The Veterans Administration Hospital (a site intended for reuse, where the community process for identifying the nature of reuse is just underway)
4. The Armed Forces Home (retirement home)
5. Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
6. Memorial Hospital Area (Medical District)
7. The Seabee/Naval Base
8. The Transportation/Industrial District (west of Highway 49, north of Pass Road at 28th Street)
9. Big Box Retail District (southwest of the Airport)
10. Big Box Retail and Recreation District (at Highway 49 and I-10, with recreation uses north of I-10)
11. The Turkey Creek Community
12. The Huber Industries Site (the northernmost SD designation in the City along Hwy 49) and other industrial sites
13. Resort Districts at Courthouse Road and Cowan Road (accommodating high-rise hotel-type condominiums of 5 to 10 stories)

Improved Connectivity



Additional connectivity is needed both to facilitate movement within the city and to provide for several unique situations such as the movement of large quantities of freight to and from the Port in the least disruptive manner. It is also required to improve the local as well as regional south-north movement, which is generally difficult at the moment. This could be achieved by adding new sections of roads (orange lines) and enlarging portions of existing ones (brown lines).

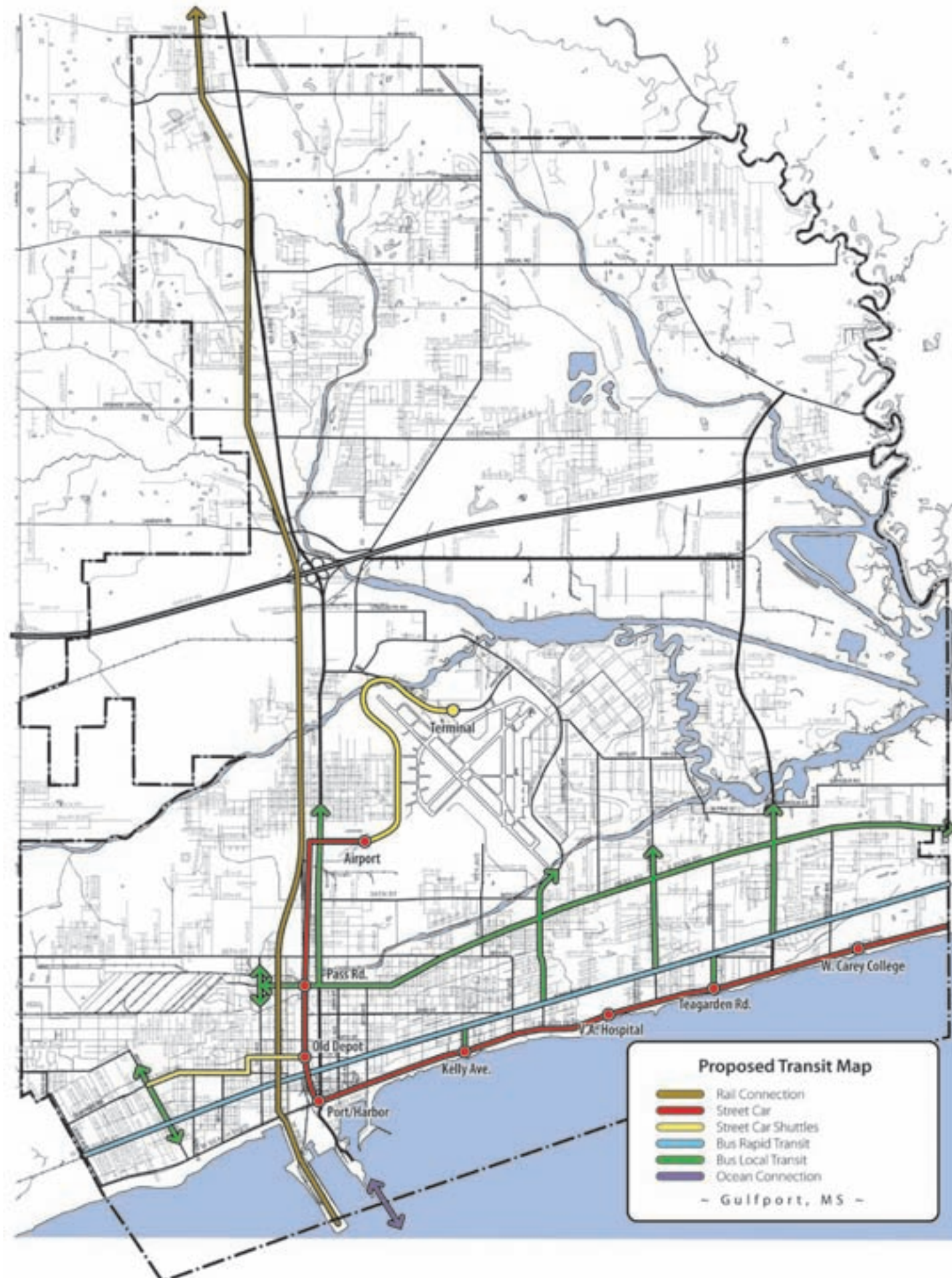
A key tenet of Port redevelopment is that the lands immediately adjacent to the port will no longer be used for the storage of cargo or cargo shipping containers. (Many of these containers broke free during Hurricane Katrina and added to the degree of devastation afflicting neighborhoods close to the Port.) A better location for these uses is north of the port, close to I-10. However, locating these facilities here implies a more efficient system for moving full and empty containers efficiently between the port, the storage facility and the Interstate.

A key proposal of this document is the creation of a combined truck-rail route that would link the Port to the interstate, through these new loading and unloading areas. This is shown on the map as a green line. Its construction has clear implications not only for the areas directly impacted by the proposed route, but also for the port and its immediate environs. Of particular concern is the issue of enabling extensive continuous shipment of goods to and from the port, through the Downtown, without creating extensive disruption to the primary and ancillary operations of either.

A second essential mobility recommendation is the relocation of the existing east-west CSX rail lines further to the north, and the concomitant conversion of this railway right-of-way into a true urban boulevard that links the community to other communities to the east and west. This is depicted on the attached map as the red line.

In the Turkey Creek neighborhood, it is proposed to provide Rippy Road with needed traffic calming devices, and build a bypass road linking Airport Road directly to Creosote Road.

Proposed Transit Map



One of the key elements of a maturing city is the gradual expansion of mobility options for the residents and visitors. The City of Gulfport, which originally included a number of mass transit options, currently has only limited alternatives to the private automobile. Over time, additional options need to be brought back, with concomitant changes to the land development regulations, the zoning maps, and local development practices.

The key elements of the proposed future mobility concept include a regional street car that would run along Beach Boulevard linking to Biloxi to the east and Long Beach to the west. Within Gulfport, the line would extend down Beach Boulevard from the east to the Downtown, where it would turn northwards and run parallel to Highway 49, extending to the airport terminal via a shuttle service. Another shuttle would connect the street car from the Old Depot to the Medical District.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) would run east-west along the redeveloped CSX rail corridor, which would be reconfigured as a true urban boulevard. This boulevard would serve as a super-regional link, uniting Gulfport with coastal communities to both the east and the west.

Local bus routes would run east and west along Pass Road, further linking Gulfport and Biloxi to the east. Additional links would extend south from Pass Road to Beach Boulevard along the primary arterials – Courthouse Road, Cowan Road, and Hewes Ave.

Public Parks & Open Spaces

A key goal of many participants in the design charrette was the creation of a formal system of parks and public open spaces and the public links between them. Currently, the City of Gulfport is underserved with respect to the full amount and variety of public open spaces. At the same time, the City has a wide range of environmental conditions that extend throughout much of the community which could become the initial basis for the desired open-space network. Bayou Bernard and Turkey Creek are two important waterways that wind extensively throughout the community. Brickyard Bayou extends to the southwest parallel to Pass Road. North of I-10, Flat Branch and Fritz Creek extend upwards.

South of I-10 neighborhood parks are more extensive and the proposed Railway Boulevard could serve as a vital link among many of them, if it was designed to incorporate both green space and mobility options for bicyclists and pedestrians.

In some areas of the community, true “green” links will be difficult to establish. In others, there are a range of easements – primarily for utilities – that could, following negotiation with the controlling bodies, be used as links between significant natural features or designed open spaces. In those areas where easements are few, the green space links will need to be incorporated into existing or future vehicular routes which will need to be carefully designed to provide ample accessibility, mobility and security for non-automotive users.

The proposed plan shows the existing parks, the proposed parks, and links between the parks and the communities. The network is a system of loops that make it feasible for a person to bike or walk continuously and end up where they began, on a large or small scale.

The Outside Loop

There will be an outer loop that follows north/south, and east/west arteries to completely connect the city.

Duckworth Road: The northernmost east/west link. It will connect the Fritz Creek trail and the north/south railroad trail.

Railroad Boulevard: The southernmost east/west link will be within the proposed boulevard median. Heavily landscaped, this median will serve as a linear park system.

North South Rail Line: The westernmost north/south link will travel along the current down to the proposed Railroad Boulevard. The trail will be located within the train right of way, and be maintained by the city.

Lorraine Cowan Rd: The easternmost north/south link will parallel Lorraine Cowan Road. A bike and pedestrian path will need to be separated from the road due to the high vehicular traffic. The continuation of this artery will follow Fritz Creek north to Duckworth Rd. A trail such as this should be low maintenance, and also have little impact to the fragile ecosystem along the creek.

North Gulfport

The North Gulfport system will follow Flat Branch, and connect to Three Rivers Road at the Crossroads Mall. The bikeway and walkway will follow Three Rivers and connect to the Goldin Sports Complex. From there, the system will follow Dedeaux Rd, and connect with Latimer Rd and eventually tie into the Fritz Creek Trail. Fritz Creek will connect to the overall system as well as loop the North Gulfport system back with Duckworth Rd. and the Flat Branch.

South of I-10

The area south of I-10 has a large loop consisting of the north/south rail line, the proposed Railroad Boulevard, Lorraine Cowan Rd, and Seaway Rd. These arteries will be major routes that will encourage people to ride bikes or walk in lieu of taking their car.

Turkey Creek, Brickyard Bayou, and the Industrial Seaway. These linear creeks and canals create a series of systems. Turkey Creek Trail will connect to the Industrial Seaway Trail which will connect with Brickyard Bayou. The Bayou dissects this system but in turn, creates two loops. To the east, the Industrial Seaway, and the Bayou form a triangle which encompasses a large preserve area. To the west Airport Road, Hewes Avenue, and Brickyard Bayou makes another network which has connections to existing and proposed parks in Bayou View.

The Beach

The beach is a major recreational destination as well as a pedestrian thoroughfare. Every effort should be made to make it accessible to pedestrians walking to it from North of Beach Blvd. Connections at the Lorraine Cowan and Beach Blvd. intersection, and the 25th Avenue and Beach Blvd. intersection are vital to make the beach and the town correlate.

Parks

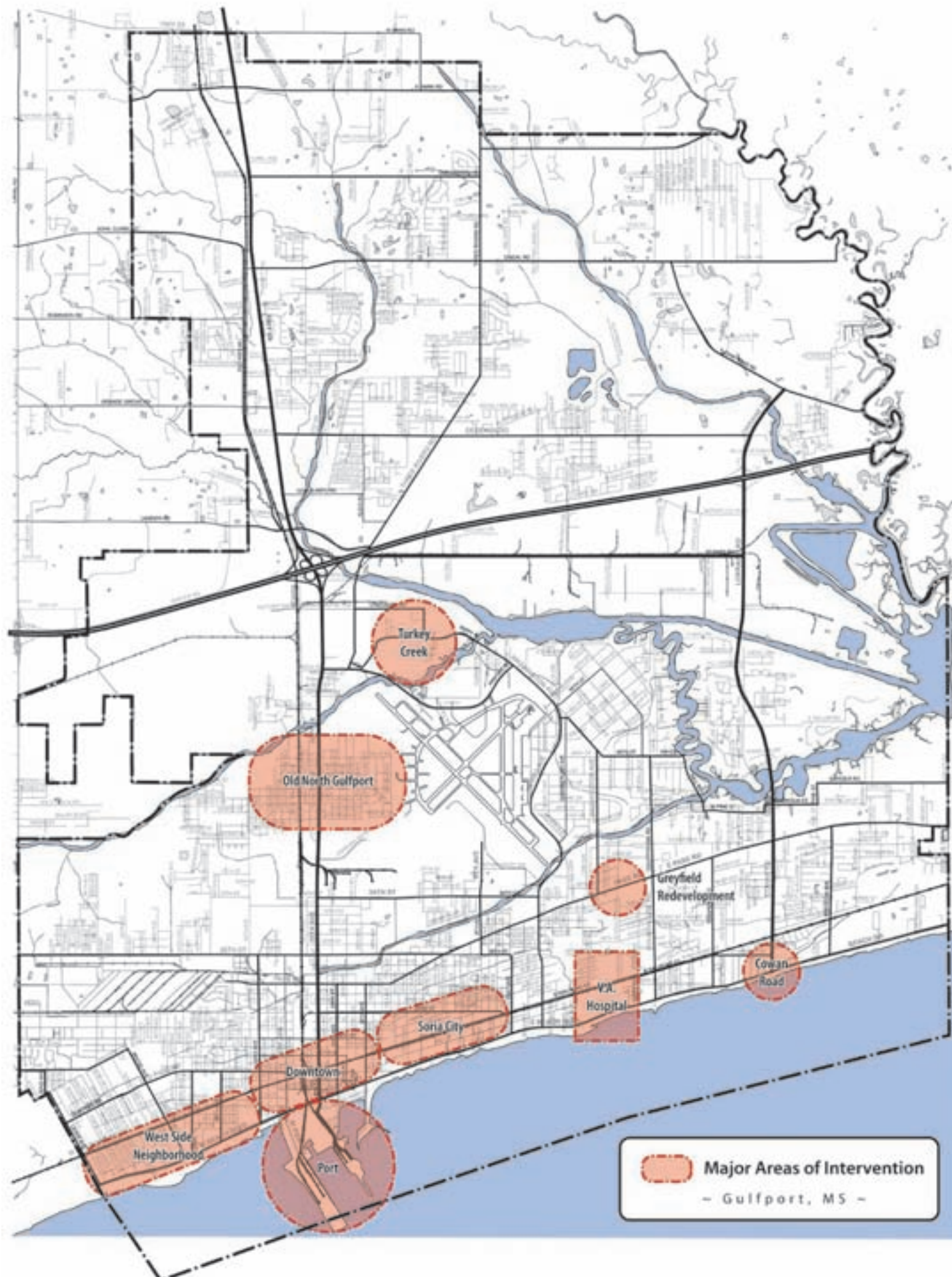
A major component of this network is the public parks. Having attractive areas for children and adults to recreate will encourage the use of this network. Some of the parks that are designated public grounds should be enhanced to provide function for the users. The proposed park locations should be professionally designed to establish precedence in the Gulfport community.



Areas of Intervention

The diagram on this page shows the areas where the team's proposed interventions are located. They are primarily concentrated in the Downtown and Port area, which is the economical and cultural heart of the City and, possibly, of the whole Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Significant redevelopment is also recommended for other neighborhoods along the beach, in both the entire West Side and areas of the East Side such as the VA Hospital site and the beach end of Cowan Road. Historic neighborhoods such as Old North Gulfport, Soria City and Turkey Creek are also earmarked for significant improvements.



The immediate redesign and re-building of Jones Park is suggested as the “Perfect Place” where members of the community can find relief from the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. Jones Park is the little engine that never made it up the hill. It has been over-loved, and underutilized for years. Family reunions, carnivals, overflow parking, and school picnics have abused what should be the “Central Park” of the coast. With no order, or defined public spaces, park goers are overwhelmed by the scale of the facility, and feel no intimacy with the land.

The proposed design for Jones Park defines functional areas that will facilitate multiple uses. By minimizing the amount of impervious surfaces, and managing storm water in an environmentally holistic way, the park will be a model for future development along the coast. The ultimate goal for the space is to create a family friendly park that meshes with surrounding development, while making a visual statement from Beach Boulevard. The following list explains the amenities in and associated with the park.

The Gardens

The gardens in the park will make a strong presentation to tourists and locals alike. They will educate the public on this rich coastal heritage, as well as provide a meeting space for avid gardeners. Designated areas will be maintained by local garden clubs, and competitions for the best garden will be voted on by people passing through the park.

The Veteran’s Memorial

The Veteran’s Memorial will be visible from the road, as well as accessible from the park. Its importance will not be understated in design, so there will be a competition for all of the best design schools in the nation to submit their ideas. The local chapter of the Veteran’s of Foreign Wars will see to it that the monument is updated yearly to honor our fallen heroes.

The Pavilions

Pavilions will play an important role in bringing this large area to a human scale. These outdoor rooms will provide intimate gathering space for birthday parties, family reunions, and community functions. Reservations of these pavilions will be managed by the Gulfport Park Commission.



The Amphitheater

The amphitheater will be a major community attraction. With the harbor as the backdrop for the stage, concert goers will take in a beautiful view while listening to “Jazz in the Park”, watching a play put on by the community theater, or just watching the boats come in.

The Fisherman’s Village

By relocating the Ship Island Ferry Dock to the northeast corner of the harbor, the necessity for harbor related shops presents itself to be consolidated into a village. A bait shop, fish market, deli, and small retail shops will create a harbor haven for tourists and local fisherman and boaters.

The Fountain

The fountain located in the center of the lawn will serve as a memorial to those lost in Hurricanes Katrina and Camille. It will be the focal point from all angles of the lawn. The design shall reflect the resilience of the Mississippi Gulf Coast to overcome not one, but two catastrophic events.

The Kids’ Play Area

There will be a designated location within close proximity to the lawn where playground equipment and interactive fountains will attract children of all ages. Park benches will surround the area providing vantage points for parents.

The Community Lawn

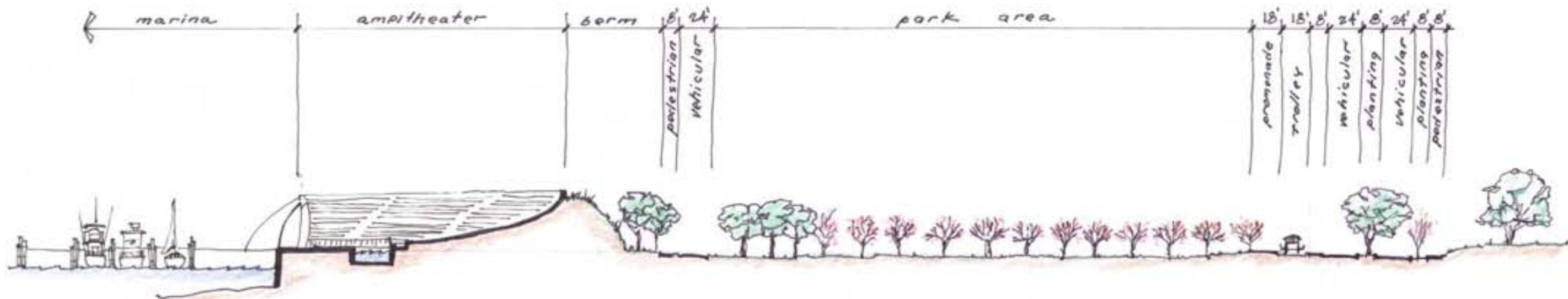
Framing the view of the Gulfport Harbor from Beach Boulevard, the open lawn will provide several functional uses.

- Open Space for free-play: Frisbee, Football, or Picnicking.
- Parade Ground for “Cruisin’ the Coast”: Reinforcing the lawn with a subsurface cell system will create an annual display area for the antique cars that have become a beloved tradition. The nine foot wide concrete walking track around the lawn will serve as a “Parade Loop” for the participants.
- Friday Night Flicks: The lawn will become a “Walk-in” Theater on Friday nights during the summer. Families will bring their blankets and chairs to the lawn to watch family movies on a screen in front of the harbor. Local snow cone vendors, hotdog stands, and popcorn and cotton candy makers will pay a fee to the Parks Commission to enter the park and serve goods to the people to create a fun atmosphere for everyone.

Park Maintenance

Although this is not an amenity, it is imperative that the park be maintained on a consistent basis. A maintenance plan will need to be structured and followed. The design confines lawn areas to eliminate any confusion on what should and shouldn’t be mowed.

Fredrick Law Olmsted, the father of landscape architecture, once said, “Such public grounds are a necessity for civilized urban living.” A new Jones Park is a “necessity” for the New Gulf Coast.



North-South Section through Jones Park



Main Street Looking South Towards the Port - by Knight Martorell

The Vision

The vision for Gulfport's downtown described by Gulfport Mayor Brent Warr, Director of Urban Development George Carbo, various Council Members, other officials and many citizens, portray an economically prominent, historic settlement rich in tradition and culture continually evolving into a bright and enduring jewel along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Gulfport will grow into a walkable, diverse, compact and sustainable environment that protects and enhances its historic buildings, streets, parks, and plazas, nurtures commerce and entrepreneurship, promotes new architecture, art, music, sports, entertainment, and other cultural expressions that fit into the unique place that Gulfport once was, and will again become.

The Planning Goals

The planning goals delineated by the elected officials, City staff, and citizens for the Downtown comprise the following:

1. Save and enhance, where appropriate, historic buildings and others that survived Katrina;
2. Improve the quality and function of pedestrian, bicycle and motor vehicle mobility and access both within and through the City;
3. Restore and enhance the historic fabric or pattern of walkable blocks and streets;
4. Preserve and add appropriate civic art-- worthy monuments, statues, and other expressions of history and culture--in the downtown at the termination of important vistas, at plazas, in parks, and other places;
5. Improve and increase the intensity and diversity of retail as well as commercial uses, especially in the form of mixed use buildings;
6. Increase the intensity and diversity of housing downtown;
7. Provide transit options with local and regional connections in a form that attracts private investment;

8. Preserve and enhance existing parks and add parks and greenways that help form 'green' corridors and decrease impervious surfaces;
9. Transform Highway 90 into a tree-lined boulevard designed for 25 MPH vehicle speed with street car or light rail transit immediately adjacent or in the median;
10. Transform Highway 49, and particularly the 25th Avenue section, into a tree lined boulevard designed for 35 MPH vehicle speed along 49, and 25 MPH on 25th, with street car or light rail transit immediately adjacent or in the median that connects the Port to the Airport and Interstate 10;
11. Improve Pass Road by reducing the four lanes to two travel and one turn lane, and by adding sidewalks and street trees on both sides of the road, or at least one side of the road when the right-of-way is constrained;
12. Enhance the 15th street intersection at Highway 90 with buildings, landscaping and civic art so it functions as the eastern gateway, and provides a smooth and attractive access to downtown;
13. Improve the west Highway 90 entrance to the downtown just before the proposed viaduct bridge over 90 with good architecture and civic art;
14. Relocate the existing CSX rail road to an alignment north of Interstate 10. Transform East and West Railroad Street into a tree-lined high-capacity boulevard with signalized access and speed management designed for 35 MPH with two lanes on either side of the existing tracks. Maintain the tracks section for potential streetcar or light rail transit;
15. Redesign the proposed elevated roadway into a combined elevated rail and roadway that connects the Port to Interstate 10 and the rail yards north of the City. Do it within an alignment that runs from



grade at the Port as a concrete viaduct profile forming a series of arched spatial enclosures underneath for commercial uses (e.g., boat works, machine shop, café) that helps screen the existing casino parking structure crosses over Highway 90 above a pair of arched vehicle underpasses, then continues along the center of the City blocks just west of 30th Street so that buildings may be backed up to east and west sides of the structure to visually screen and acoustically buffer the adjacent streets and buildings.

Revitalizing Downtown

Creating a walkable City to replace existing urban sprawl is the goal. In order for this to happen, we propose revitalizing downtown Gulfport which had a vital city center forty years ago and bringing back its hidden treasures. These treasures are: a close proximity to the beach and harbor, walk ability, a rich historic landscape and infrastructure, friendly, professional people who are always sure to show a warm smile and say "good morning" even if you are a stranger and an amazing view to the harbor and the Mississippi Gulf Coast from the few existing high rise buildings, make our central business district unique to that of other Central Business Districts on the Coast. There is still evidence of these treasures we possess, however, instead of being appreciated and only utilized by few, we have advanced to more convenient period of time where the automobile has taken precedent, and what was a once bustling downtown business and retail industry in the early to mid 1900's, has now become only a place for commerce catered mostly to the professionals. The idea of getting the citizens and tourists of Gulfport to make downtown one of "the" destination spots, even over the booming casino industry, is to offer the people more cultural, family oriented, recreational and pedestrian-friendly events that occur regularly.

Our proposed goal is:

- To control and encourage high rise development in the existing Central Business District with emphasis and consideration of remaining historical buildings;
- To encourage more dense development and multi-use; in consideration of two prominent historical buildings on 25th Avenue,
- To be sensitive to their height by using the height of the original Hancock Bank building as the tallest structure permitted along 25th Avenue. This would require that the T6 portion of the CBD be bisected by an overlay, which would run the full length of 25th Avenue. This overlay would be half a block deep on each side allowing for the taller buildings to begin at mid-block. This would also prevent the canyon effect of driving through the City. The perimeter of the high rise district would be surrounded by the mid-rise T5 zone by a minimum depth of one block providing a transition into the single family dwellings currently surrounding downtown.

Creating Green Spaces

Green Spaces would be created in several areas of the CBD in addition to the major Jones Park development to the south. Vacant city blocks or portions would be developed for lunchtime activities or urban living rooms, or an open air market for farmers, seafood vendors and craftsmen. One area identified for this purpose is the three blocks between the Federal and County courthouses. This would also be connected to

St. John Elementary School providing a much needed playground and recreation space. A second opportunity for this is the right of way of the existing rail line north of the Hancock Bank Building, which will be vacated when rail service is relocated west of 30th Avenue. This area could be a dedicated green space for an unlimited distance to the north creating a series of Park Blocks similar to those found in cities such as Portland, Oregon. This park could run as far north as Pass Road connecting the new university site to the heart of the City.

University Location

Two city blocks were identified as a location for a university at the intersection of Pass Road and 25th Avenue. The southwest blocks are largely undeveloped, located at a major Gulfport intersection, and would be within walking distance of the CBD, residential developments, and the harbor activities.

Arts District

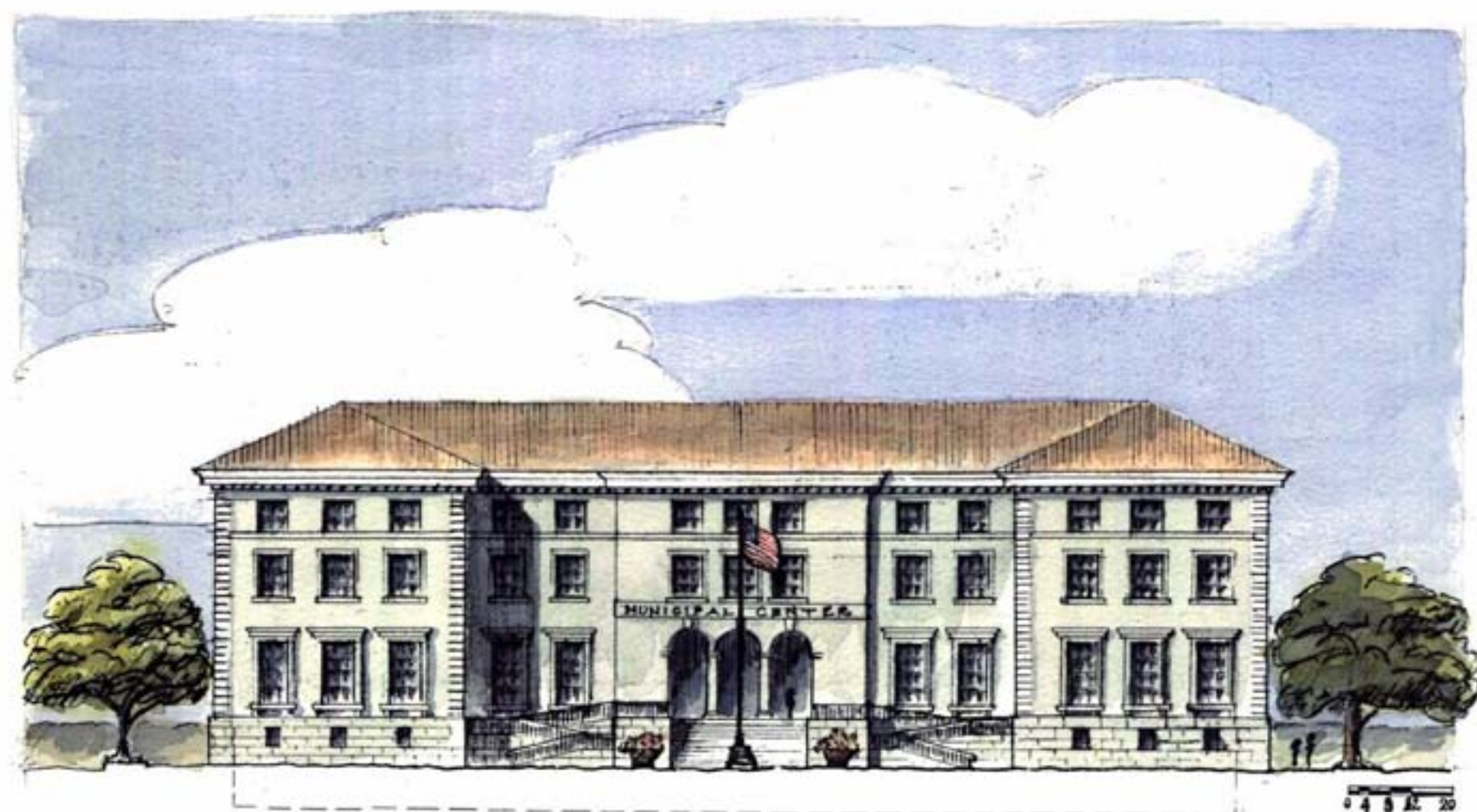
An Arts District was identified connecting the new Harbor Amphitheatre and Aquarium with the very successful existing Arts Under the Dome Program at First United Methodist Church. The development between these two locations would include an existing historical building on 24th Avenue renovated five years ago for the purpose of a maritime museum. This would be an ideal location to relocate the successful Gulfport Little Theatre providing a larger and more accessible performance venue.

Boulevards

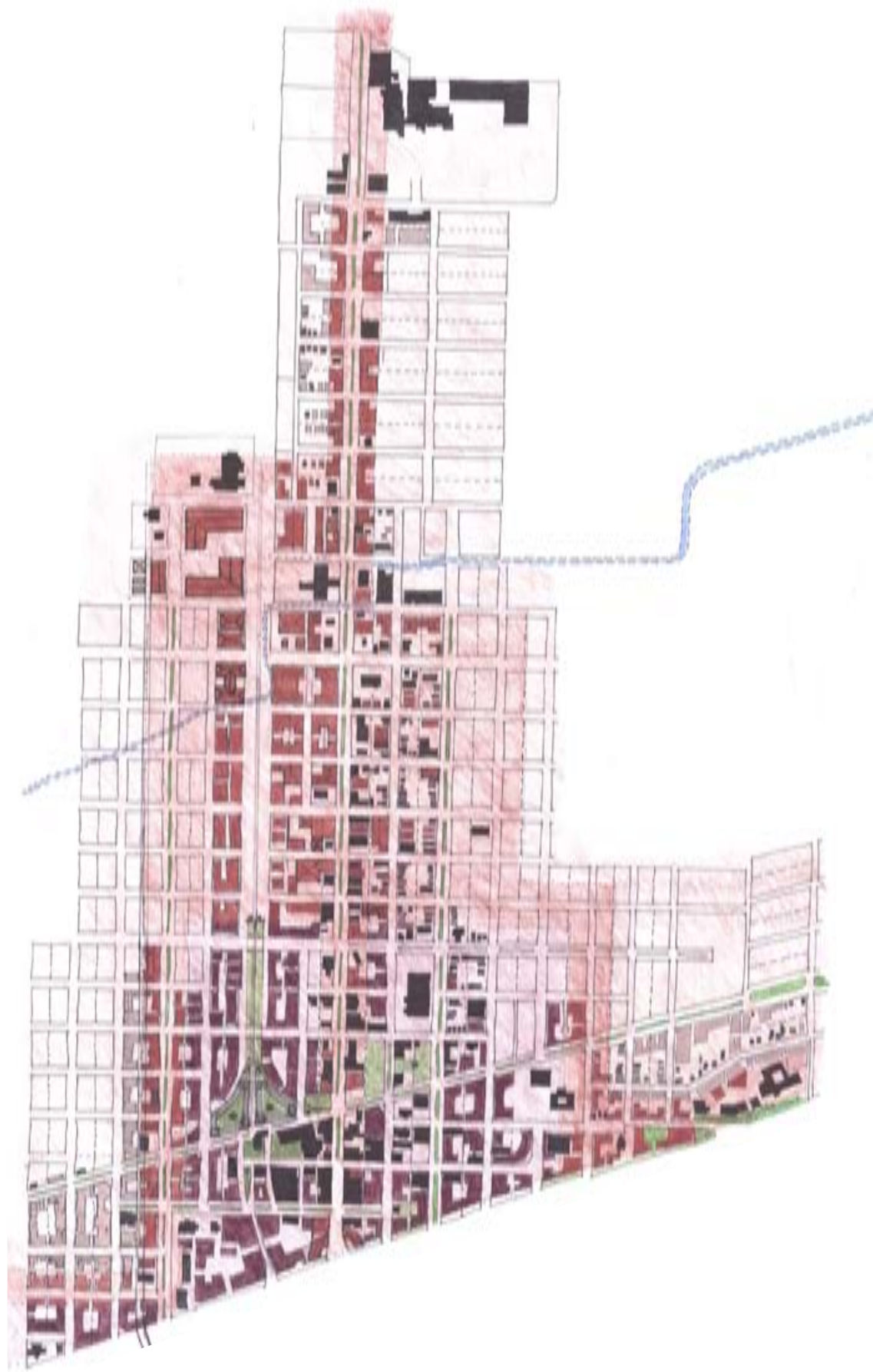
Boulevards are proposed for several major highways and roads: Highway 49 and 90 would no longer be identified as highways, but referenced only as 25th Avenue and Beach Boulevard. Other proposed boulevards are 23rd Avenue, 13th Street, and Railroad Street.

Main Street

25th Avenue is envisioned as the grandest Main Street in the Southern region. If we begin cleaning that street, lining it with beautiful trees, filling up those dilapidated, but beautiful historic buildings with mix-used buildings, creating boulevard style, on-street parking and pedestrian friendly crosswalks, this street would be breath-taking. The gateway into 25th Avenue from the new proposed harbor area offers an excellent opportunity to create the most beautiful gateway into a downtown area.



Proposed Gulfport Municipal Center - by Christine G.H. Franck



Proposed Plan of Extended Downtown Gulfport



Proposed Plan of Downtown Gulfport

Recreating the Urban Fabric of Downtown Gulfport

The Port & the Downtown

The Downtown and the Port of Gulfport are envisioned as the two halves of one strong, vibrant and memorable heart of Gulfport. They reinforce each other, knitting together a fabric that draws on the economic strength generated by the port, the business and cultural intensity of the downtown, the beauty of the beach and the new Jones Park, and all of the amenities and entertainment opportunities associated with the new heart of Gulfport.



The Port of Gulfport



The Vision

The Port of Gulfport is envisioned as an extension of Downtown Gulfport, South of Beach Boulevard, destined to thrive on its specific attributes as well as reinforce and complement the Downtown. In fact together the Port and the Downtown are seen as the engine that will distinguish Gulfport as an important regional and State center.

The Planning Goals

The planning goals outlined by the elected officials, City staff, and citizens for the Port include the following:

- 1) Reconfigure the Port to relocate and consolidate all shipping operations to the West Pier that will be enlarged and enhanced for storm protection, for added capacity, and for better access to the viaduct;
- 2) Reconfigure the Central Pier into a street and block pattern enhanced for storm protection that facilitates mixed use development, hotels and related buildings, with street and subsurface parking, facilities for major cruise ship docking, a ferry dock and other marine activities, along the edges of the Pier;
- 3) Reconfigure the East Pier to be enhanced for storm protection, to improve pedestrian and vehicle access and parking, provide retail uses and a boat launch facility, fishing fleet moorage, fishing and other marine uses.
- 4) Redesign Jones Park to improve access and circulation, add an amphitheater, horticulture gardens, and other passive greens spaces, with provisions for limited retail uses.



Proposed Uses

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ① Boat House | ⑩ 25th Avenue (Highway 49) | ⑲ Fisherman's Village |
| ② Port Viaduct | ⑪ Beach Boulevard | ⑳ Harbor Master |
| ③ Maritime Office Buildings | ⑫ Jones Park | ㉑ Fueling Dock |
| ④ Shipping Activity | ⑬ Amphitheatre | ㉒ Yacht Club |
| ⑤ Fountain | ⑭ Beach | ㉓ Grand Hotel |
| ⑥ Marine Life | ⑮ Beach House and Café | ㉔ Fishing Dock |
| ⑦ Mixed-Use Buildings | ⑯ Restaurants and Shops | ㉕ Open Market |
| ⑧ Library or Museum | ⑰ Ferry Terminal | ㉖ Cruise Ship Terminal |
| ⑨ Gateway to Downtown | ⑱ Boat Launching | ㉗ Docks for Shrimping Boats |

Proposed Features and Uses for the Port

General

- To comply with FEMA regulations, two levels of parking are added everywhere, putting the ground level at +22ft. Alternatively, fill could be added and then one level of parking.
- Main Street acts as the principal space and gateway linking the Downtown and the Port of Gulfport. It bisects the Port, with a civic building (a library or a museum) and Jones Park to the East, and four-story high mixed-use buildings to the west.
- The Aquarium, called Marine Life, is located at the termination of Main Street. It will extend east and west as needed. The left over space on the block can house other activities. The ground floor on the square will be used for retail.
- Most buildings will be ground floor plus 4 floors except where focal points are needed
- Between East Pier and Central Pier, Jones Park is also planned to be raised to an average of +22ft. (See a detailed description of Jones Park in specific section).
- The White Cap restaurant and the Ferry Terminal are both located in the northeastern corner of the harbor.
- The Boat House, located on the northwestern side of the port is a boat repair and maintenance facility, which could also function as a training center.

The East Pier

- At the East Pier, the ground level is to be +22ft at north to descend to original level of +5ft at the boat launching area located on the east side.
- The Ferry to Ship Island is to be located with the White Cap restaurant in the northeast corner of the harbor. The piers must be designed to allow sufficient room for the ferries to maneuver.
- The East pier will be designed as a beautiful tree-lined, pedestrian-friendly boulevard with the harbor to the west and the beach to the east.
- At the end of the boulevard, a “fisherman village” is to be at the highest level of the whole area – for protection, to be seen from all around, and to provide great views. It will have the appearance of a citadel, perched high, with residential above retail.
- The Harbor Master’s Station is to be reconstructed near the fisherman village.
- A fueling dock will be placed south of the Harbor Master’s Station.
- Fishing docks and a beautiful beach will grace the end of the pier.

The West Pier

- The West Pier is dedicated to the Commercial Port and its shipping activity.
- Maritime Office buildings are sited at the entrance to the pier.

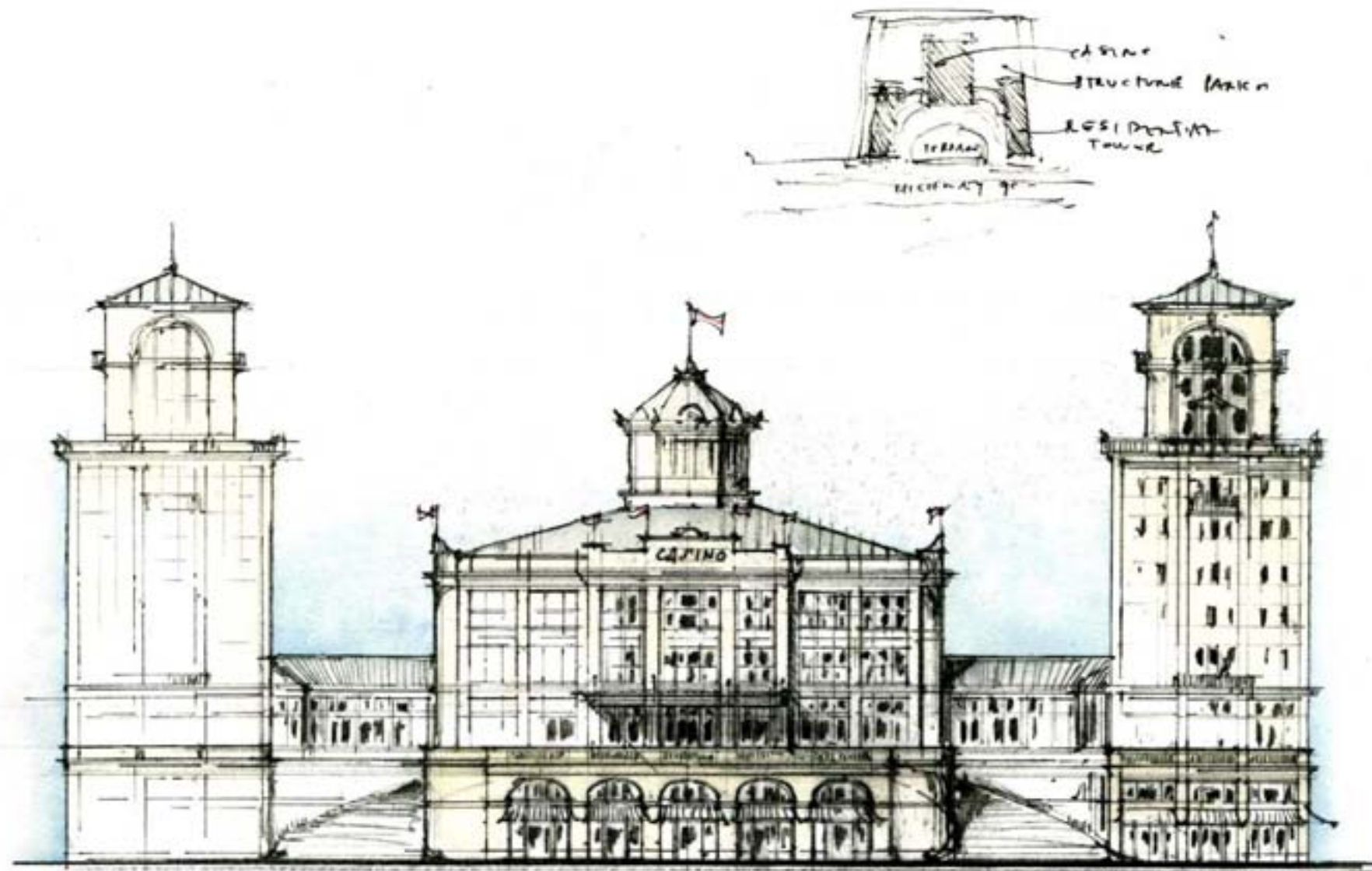
The Central Pier

- Located at the end of the Central Pier, the cruise ship terminal is proposed as an international terminal for five to seven day cruises, 800ft- to 1000ft-long boats, for 1,200 to 3,200 passengers plus crew. Huge trucks must be able to supply these cruise ships.
- A Grand Hotel (with casino) is sited in the middle of the Central Pier, south of the Yacht club.
- A semi-circle shaped open market is proposed south of the Grand Hotel, facing the entrance of the harbor. It will offer easy access and parking will be provided underneath.
- A Shrimping harbor is located south of the open market, at the end of the pier.

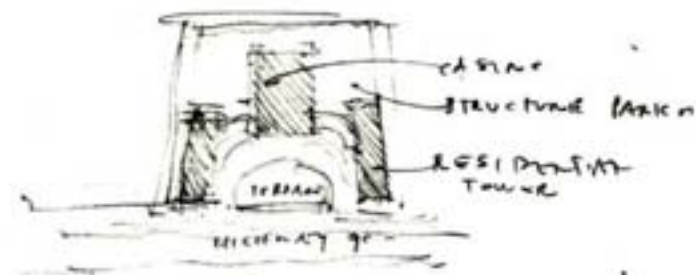




Bird's Eye View Illustrating the Vision for the Port and Downtown of Gulfport - by Knight Martorell



Casino and Residential Towers - by Marianne Cusato



Casino on the water's edge - by Michael Imber



Casino - Grand Hotel - by Michael Imber

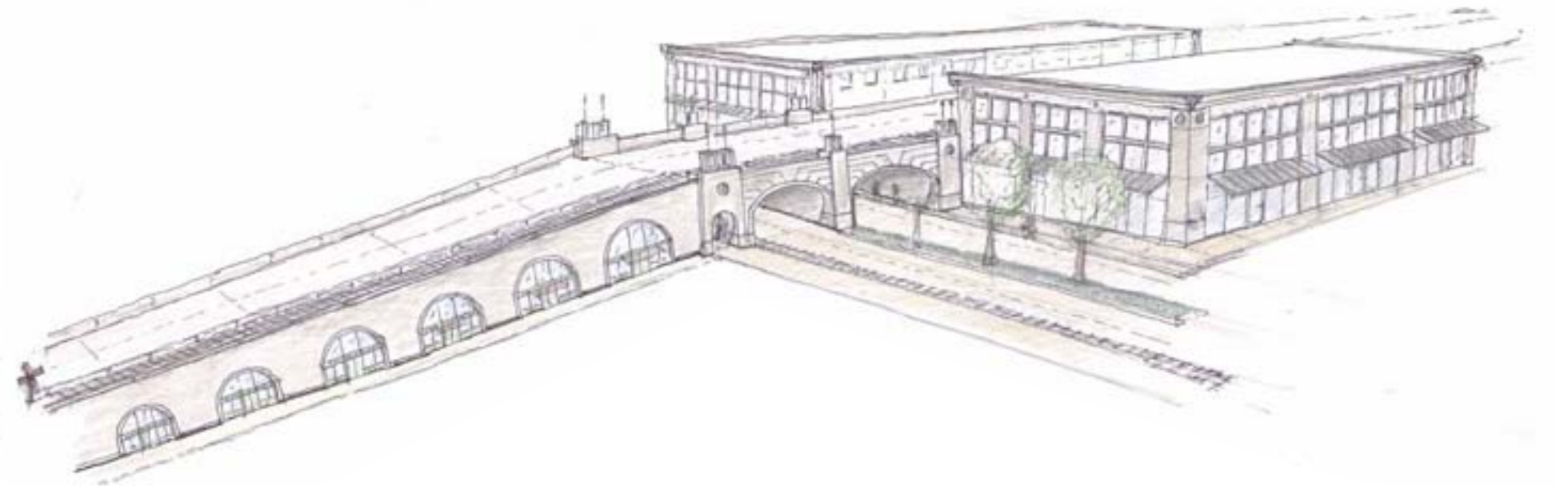
The Port Viaduct

The Port of Gulfport is a major player in the city's local economic system and we propose to enhance and improve its operations. The container transport systems of truck and rail are necessary to daily operations, but are inhibited by the proximity to the intersection of Beach Boulevard and 25th Avenue. This intersection will be the central hub of the proposed revitalization of downtown and we propose removing the truck and rail traffic by means of a viaduct structure, which will tie into the urban fabric of the City. This structure would create usable space below the roadway minimizing the visual impact of the overhead traffic and physical structure. South of Beach Boulevard, the viaduct would be an 1800' long ramp necessary for grade change requirements of th

railway. The space below would be used for markets, restaurants, and retail space, and will be restricted by the new velocity zone requirements. North of Beach Boulevard, the viaduct would be located in the center of the block between 30th and 31st Avenues allowing for mixed use development on each side of the block, an alley at ground level beneath the viaduct, and taller buildings which will completely conceal the structure with the exception of cross streets. Limited access onto the viaduct would allow unimpeded truck and rail traffic to and from the Port.



Viaduct Market - by Michael Imber



The Port Viaduct at Beach Boulevard

The West Side



West Side Neighborhood

These neighborhoods, lying west of the Downtown and between the beach and the CSX Railroad, were hit very hard by Katrina. In most of this area, the first block or two nearest the shore were completely destroyed, leaving only mature trees and building foundations. The next block or two north of this destruction were also badly damaged, by water, wind and debris pushed from the shoreline blocks.

The preliminary flood surface elevation maps for West Beach include new, higher elevations for habitable floors in much of the frontage along Beach Boulevard. The areas so mapped are delineated on the neighborhood diagram to the right by the heavy dashed line. Not coincidentally, the destruction was generally greatest in these new areas mapped by FEMA.



West Side Neighborhood Detail

The preliminary floor elevations allowable under the potential FEMA standards for this area range from 8 to 18 feet above the existing ground elevations, with 11 to 12 feet being the most common elevation dimension. This, in effect, means that if new FEMA maps follow these preliminary indications, the ground floors of buildings within this area could not be used for anything but automobile parking. As much discussed in the Charrette, designing single-family houses with only parking on the ground floor tends to lead to awkward and undesirable house designs.

Also, many of the properties in this area are currently zoned for multifamily housing and/or commercial or mixed-use development, and a considerable amount of interest has been expressed by developers in building housing in these areas at higher densities. Additionally members of the community and residents of the adjoining single family neighborhoods have expressed concern about higher density housing types that contrast sharply in scale and character with the historic building fabric of West End.

Based on these combined factors, it is recommended that new zoning and design standards be developed for the properties within this newly mapped zone, allowing the development of higher density housing and mixed-use buildings, ensuring that the new buildings conform to the new FEMA standards, and ensuring that their size, scale and character are complementary to – not in conflict with – the existing historic neighborhood patterns. The Broad Avenue Streetscape drawing illustrates a spectrum of such buildings, from a five-story building at Beach Boulevard, to four-story buildings to the north (left) of it, to three-story buildings adjoining an existing surviving house. It is expected that many newly constructed houses will be two stories in height, making two- and three-story buildings nearby quite reasonable.

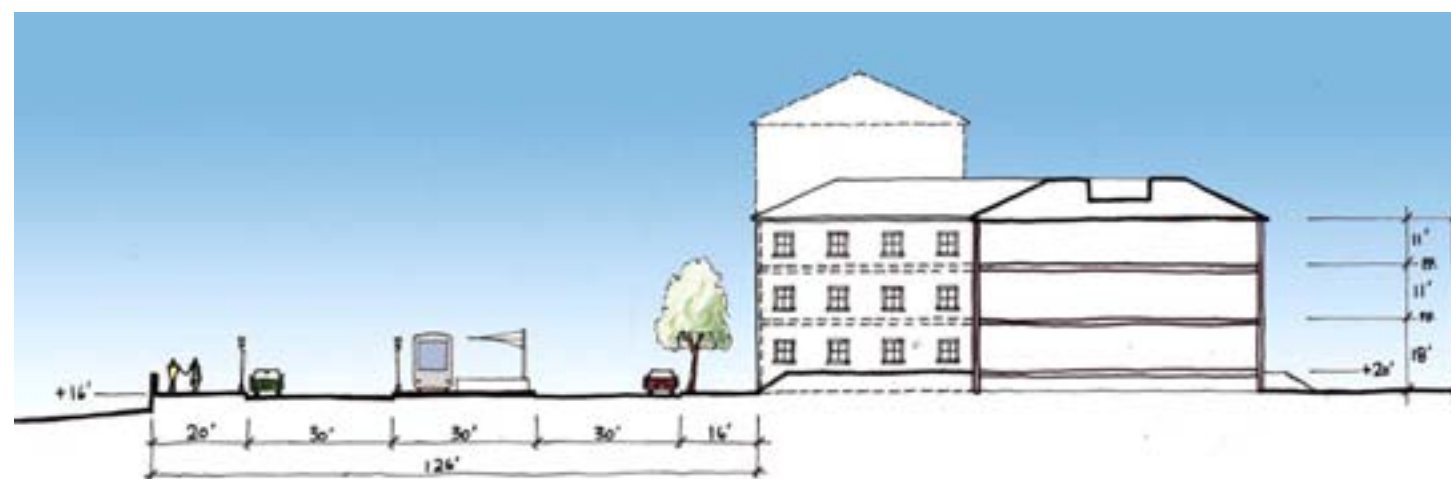
It should be noted that in the area illustrated in the Broad Avenue Streetscape elevation, the ground floors are dedicated to automobile parking, except for the building just south of Central Street, which is shown with ground floor retail spaces. This is assuming the initial FEMA

elevations and standards discussed in the Charrette are adopted. If the elevations are reduced, or if ground floor commercial spaces are exempted from the prohibition of habitable space at that level, we would recommend that many or most of the ground floors shown with small windows be built as ground floor retail or office space, or perhaps even ground floor foyers of residences. While the buildings shown are attractive due to the skill of the designer, the pedestrian safety, comfort and sense of being in a neighborhood would all be negatively impacted if these floors contained only parking.

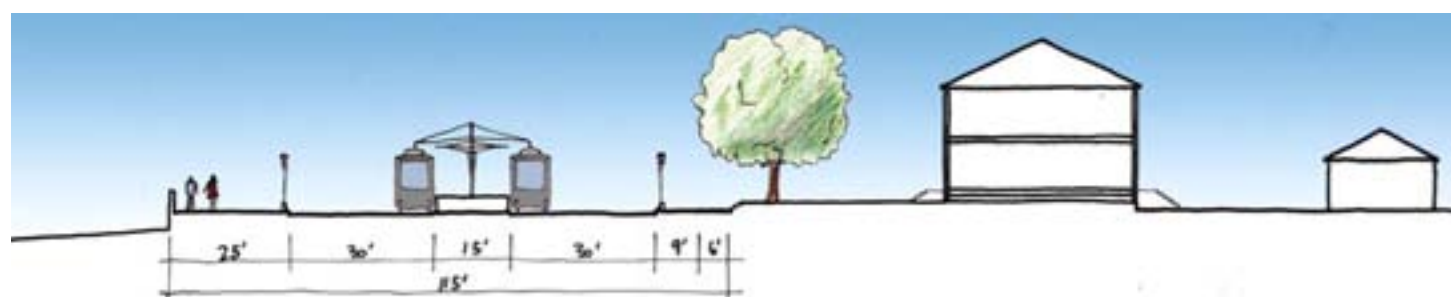
The basic building type that is suggested in these areas is courtyard housing on a podium level, with parking below. This type provides large quantities of parking that is not visible from the street, so that residential densities – and the quality of the residential environment within the courtyards – can be very high. Normally, we depress the parking level below street grade so that the courtyards are only three feet or so above the street. This makes the courtyards feel like an extension of the ground plane, which is a very different and more comfortable arrangement than if they are up on a second floor deck. Or,

if they must be that high above the ground, we provide shallow retail or office or live-work spaces around the perimeter of the parking level and facing the street, “lining” the parking level with uses that activate the street. With the currently proposed FEMA standards, neither of these measures appears possible. We very much hope, and strongly recommend, that as the City weigh its options, one or both of these strategies is explored with FEMA.

When rebuilding begins in the areas of the worst destruction, there is the possibility of reconfiguring not only the buildings but also, to some extent, the streets and parks. In this most damaged area of West Beach, there are several discontinuous street segments parallel to Beach Boulevard, which we recommend connecting. In particular, Finley Street can connect the existing West Side Park to a proposed new small park to the west, providing very high quality addresses for new housing just a short block from the beach.



Section Through Beach Blvd., with Mixed-Use Buildings



Section Through Beach Blvd., with Single Family Homes

The West Side

The transect drawing of Broad Avenue was drawn to indicate the change in elevation from the A zone (on the left) to the seawall at Beach Blvd (on the right). The drawing indicates 3-4 floor condominiums set upon a parking platform that complies to FEMA requirements. The large platforms cover the entire block to one level upon which individual condominium structures are built. The residual space between buildings is accessed by centrally located steps and landscaped to form exterior courtyard spaces. These platforms change height as they respond to the ground elevation and required finish floor above FEMA flood stage, and at points where it meets the A Zone, may accommodate living units or retail and commercial space on the ground level.

The facades of the condominium units draw upon an appropriate vernacular for their scale, but may vary in character and materials. Structures are designated to be higher towards Beach Blvd. and the Gulf, and diminished in scale towards the existing neighborhood, where they become respectful of the scale of the single family housing.



Detail of Broad Avenue



Broad Avenue - North - South Transect

The East Side - V.A. Hospital

The Gulfport Veterans Administration Hospital campus is an approximately 147-acre site to the west of Courthouse Rd. in Gulfport. South to north it spans from the northern right of way of Beach Blvd (Hwy. 90) over the CSX railroad tracks to just south of the EC Elementary School. It was already scheduled to be abandoned by the VA by 2009, and since Hurricane Katrina, the VA has apparently decided to not re-occupy the site except for a possible small temporary mobile hospital unit.

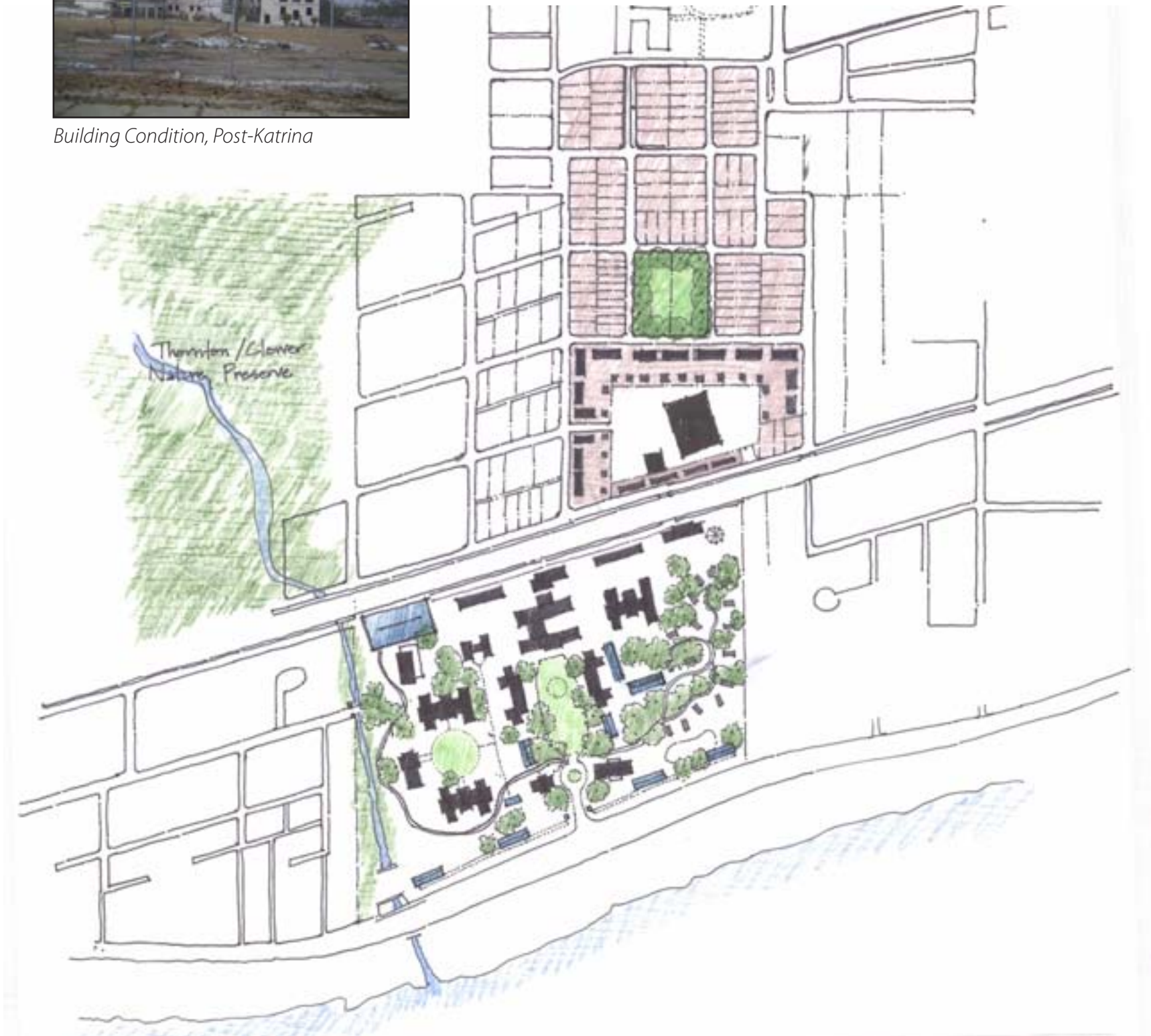
Based on a cursory look around on 14 October 2005, most of the buildings appear to have survived Katrina though many have substantial wind and water damage. The historic chapel lost part of its south wall, the historic guard house is gone. The buildings adjacent to the coast appear to have been washed through, though exterior walls are fairly intact. Much of the Mediterranean detail in the buildings has survived intact and those should be conserved and reused as quickly as possible to avoid their continued degradation.

Several different possible uses have been suggested, all with the intent to keep the historic south campus in the public realm. Some Gulfport citizens have suggested the possibility of the campus continuing as a medical facility with a specific focus of either pediatrics or a clinic facility dedicated to the needs of retirees. Either would require a hard look at whether it is feasible for a medical facility, even a clinic, to lie right on the coast line, under threat of every storm that comes ashore. Others have proposed an educational focus for the facility. The primary goal is to avoid placing the south campus, with its picturesque Mediterranean buildings and impressive stand of live oaks, in the hands of a private developer who might choose to keep the grounds off limits to the general public.

With the primary goal of preserving and enhancing the historic 1917 buildings in mind, we suggest that a service entry road be brought in just to the south of the railroad tracks, on the wide right of way from Hewes Av. to the NW corner of the site. A parking deck can be sited to be accessible from this road, and all trucks could serve the site from it as well.

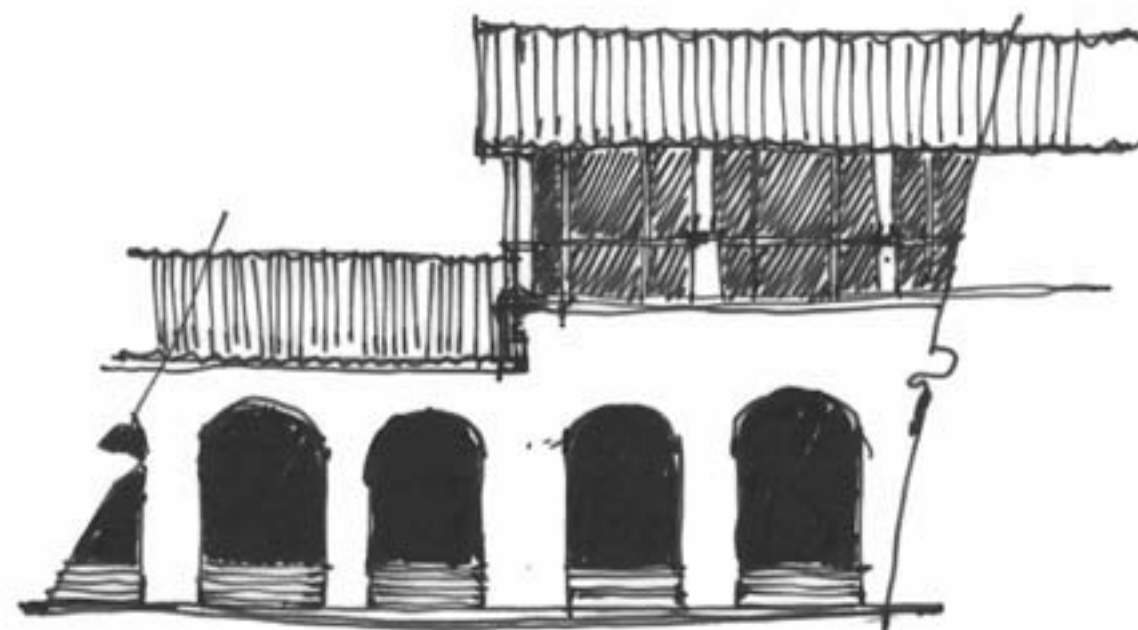
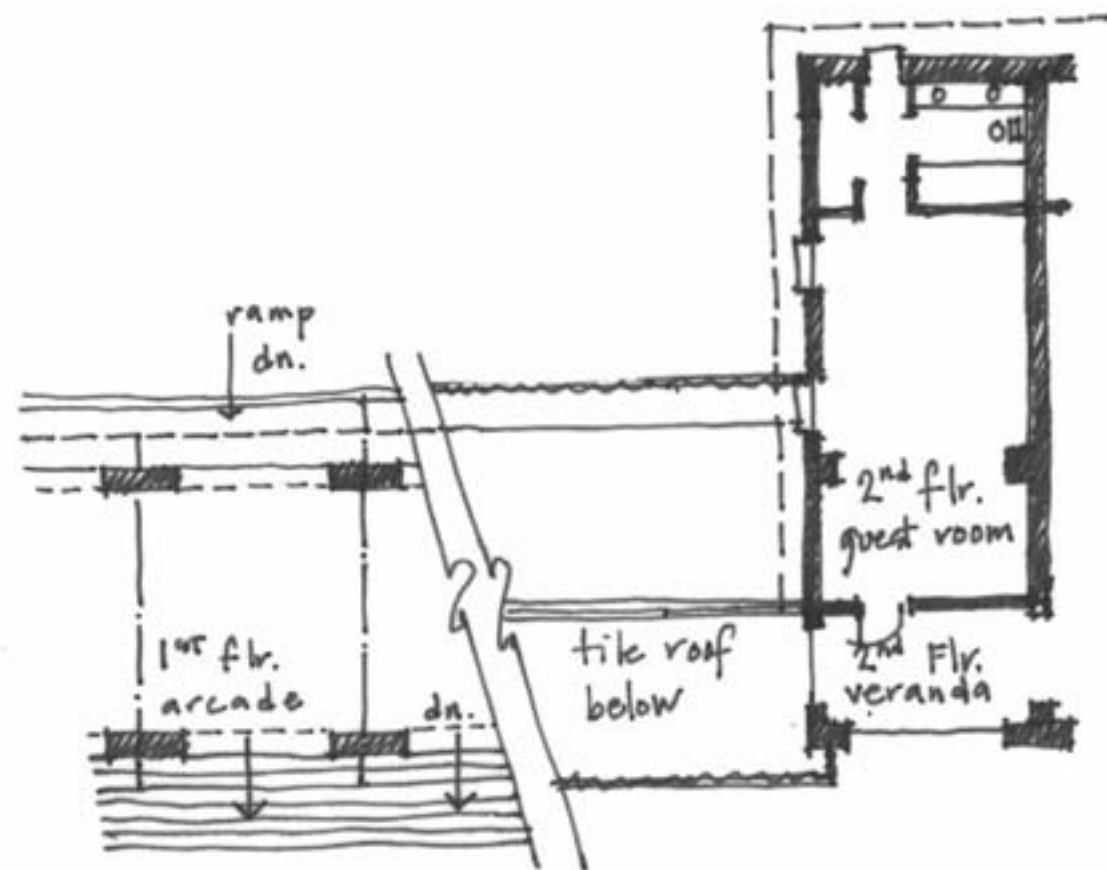


Building Condition, Post-Katrina



Site of Gulfport V.A. Hospital

The East Side: V.A. Hospital



Gulfport V.A. Hospital - Arcade & Guest Room at Beach Blvd.

Additional buildings and features include:

- A minimal number of two-story buildings that enhance the system of exterior quadrangles on the site.
- Very small guest cottages under the live oaks. These would be accessible to cars only on crushed oyster shell or pea gravel lanes reminiscent of the lanes that once led to most houses on the coast.
- A one-story masonry arcade with a tile roof along Beach Blvd. with guestrooms above that feature a screened veranda. These should be carefully placed so they do not appear to block views of the historic buildings. This building should meet the FEMA advisories by raising the second floor above the flood planes.
- The driveway system for the campus should be connected to bike and pedestrian paths through the Clower / Thornton Nature Preserve.
- North of the railroad tracks, the development of the land that was once occupied by the farm that supported the needs of the hospital could be used to leverage the expensive business of restoring the historic campus.
- Surround the existing laundry facility with higher density (up to 3-story high apartment buildings) residential buildings and garage apartment out-buildings in the rear yards. These might be worker housing for the south campus or for casinos and other service sector jobs.
- Reconnect the existing street grid in the area to form new blocks and lots.
- Create a centralized green space as a focus for the new neighborhood and, if needed, as space for an underground retention / detention structure to replace the existing open pond.
- Residences surrounding the green must face the green. The lots facing the green are smaller, possibly even townhouses. Remaining lot sizes should be similar to the surrounding area.

The East Side : Cowan Road, Beach End

Before Katrina, Beach Blvd. in Gulfport was the historical center of the homes of the privileged class. Most of those gracious historic residences are gone, but their legacy remains. At strategic points along Beach Blvd., it would be appropriate to intersperse more urban, neighborhood-oriented commercial development at points within a five-minute walking radius (one-quarter-mile radius) from the surrounding neighborhoods.

The intersection of Hwy. 90 and Cowan Rd. is one such location. It was studied as an example of such nodes, and yet it has some unique characteristics. Cowan Rd. is recommended to be the most densely developed of these nodes, appropriate for the construction of high rise (8-10 story) condominium buildings. It is also unique because it sits only 5 to 10 feet above mean high tide and there is a stream that runs from the east, under Beach Blvd. and finally to the Mississippi Sound. These conditions place parts of the sites within more severe wave velocity zones under the FEMA preliminary Advisories.

Recommended strategies include:

- The approximately-seven-acre wooded site with the open stream on it adjacent to the elevated condominiums to the east of Cowan Rd. should be preserved as a public park and as a strategic buffer between the single family houses to the east of the wooded site and the proposed dense development to the west of the wooded site. The city might acquire this land by allowing a developer to purchase the site and deed it to the city in exchange for transferred development rights (to the land adjacent to the wooded site on the west) or a density bonus in consideration of the acquisition.
- A densely developed zone (T5) has been identified along the beach between Courthouse Rd. and Cowan Rd. Neighborhood commercial uses would be desirable at Courthouse, Teagarden and Cowan. On the western edge of this more developed zone, the VA hospital site has the potential to serve as a buffer similar to the potential park mentioned above.
- Move the existing fire station on Cowan Rd. one lot north to allow an access road to the new park and parking on axis with



Township Dr. When the CSX railroad is removed to the northern parts of the county, the fire station may not have to be rebuilt.

- A route for the buried stream must be maintained through any development. It may be covered by sidewalks or paving if necessary, but no structures may be built on it.
- This area near the terminus of Cowan Rd. is defined as a Special Development District. We propose to develop to T6 densities (see Gulfport Transect chart for details) at east and west corners of Cowan Rd., to transition to T5, and then to T4 densities as you move away from those same corners.

- From Hwy 90 north to the railroad tracks, reduce width and number of lanes on Cowan Rd. using a boulevard arrangement of planted medians, tree strips, pedestrian lighting and sidewalks. North of the railroad track to Pass Rd., the traffic count is only 10,000 vehicles per day. The current configuration of 4 lanes of traffic and a continuous turning lane is excessive and should be downsized to allow for on-street parking, bike lanes and a pedestrian streetscape. North of Pass Rd. the traffic count increases to nearly 25,000 vehicles per day.

The East Side: Redevelopment Study

This site at the intersection of Pass Rd. and Courthouse Rd. was studied as an example of the several underutilized and failed retail shopping centers along the major commercial corridors in Gulfport. The retail consultant who participated in the Charrette, Bob Gibb, accounted for the failure of these by suggesting that proportionally too much land is currently zoned commercial in the city. Our proposal re-allocates part of the existing commercial area to higher-density housing. However, it represents only one of several possibilities for upgrading and redeveloping these areas. Some options include:

- Demolish all of the existing buildings and rebuild some commercial space and some residential buildings;
- Re-skin existing buildings that are judged to be viable retail locations and infill the remainder of the site with residential development;
- Demolish all of the existing buildings and rebuild a variety of housing types, from single family residential (adjacent to existing) to higher density residential and live/work units on commercial arteries. Bob Gibbs actually indicated that a developer can often build a more profitable project without commercial space.



Redevelopment of Shopping Center

The following comments apply to the redevelopment as designed:

- Replace the center 'sea of parking' with a public space that is part hard-scape and part green space. It could include an attractive water feature, casual outdoor dining, a space for scheduled events such as weekend musical performers, etc.
- Angled parking would remain around the perimeter of the public square. Additional parking could remain and be constructed around the rear of the commercial buildings.
- Provide common-sense, workable sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities on the site among the various uses and the perimeter streets. Buildings should front on and engage the adjacent public spaces. Pedestrian access from nearby residences and other commercial areas should be an important consideration.
- Re-skin and/or upgrade viable existing commercial structures. Add out parcel retail buildings only where they could reasonably be expected to be successful, including the southwest corner of Pass Rd.
- Develop live/work structures (2- or 3-story high?) on Courthouse Rd. with office / retail on ground floor and residential uses above.
- Develop new, 2-story high residential buildings on remainder of site. Duplexes or perhaps quadplexes should be built opposite existing single family homes, while townhouses might be appropriate closer to the retail center.
- No dedicated parking for the residential development should be directly accessible to users of the retail center, though the existing vehicular route connecting the two should be maintained and enhanced for pedestrian use.
- The location of this shopping center, near schools, public transportation and housing makes it attractive for redevelopment. The retail and the housing on this site are mutually supportive and dependent on one another.

Historic Neighborhoods



Gulfport has many historic neighborhoods, such as the West Side, Gaston Point, Gulf Garden, Park Place, Central Gulfport, the Quarters, Soria City, Broadmoor, Second Street, Magnolia Grove, Hardy Court, Handsboro, Mississippi City, Old North Gulfport, or Turkey Creek. Many, particularly those near the beach, have been severely, sometimes almost entirely destroyed by Katrina. The priority there is to both rebuild those communities, respecting the traditional patterns of urbanism, and make them even better places than they were, by improving the infrastructure and bringing them to higher safety standards. The images on this page by Michael Imber illustrate how some of these places could be built or rebuilt.



Turkey Creek



The vision for Gulfport's Turkey Creek described by City Council members Ella Holmes-Hines, Gary Hollimon, Libby Roland, and Barbara Nalley, Governor's Commissioner Felicia Dunn-Burkes, and local activist Derek Evans of the Turkey Creek Community Initiative portrays a revitalization of an economically challenged, historic settlement rich in tradition and culture, particularly African-American, located in an environmentally sensitive wetlands or bayou known as the Turkey Creek Watershed Basin. Proximity to the Creek and adjoining low lands has made the area subject to flooding. That risk has been amplified by a corresponding increase in pavement and other impervious surfaces that drain from developments. Narrow, shoulder-less, and winding Rippy Road functions as the primary western access to the busy Gulfport Airport.

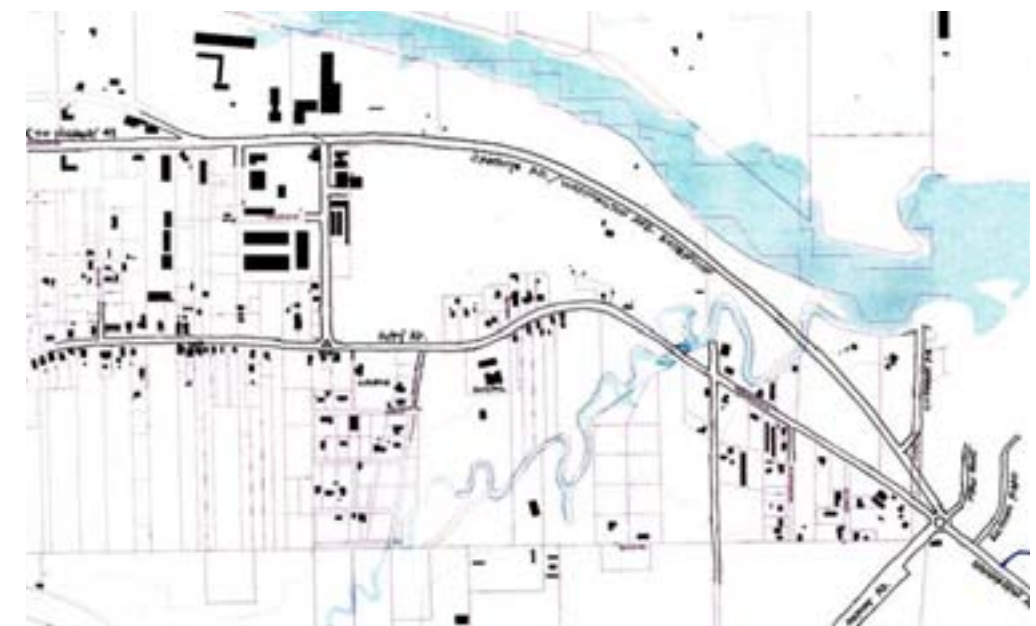
We show a future Turkey Creek remaining at a rural scale, walkable, and diverse community with renovated school, churches, and at least one small market along a traffic-calmed Rippy Road. Creosote Road has been rerouted to the north of Rippy Road just south of the bayou, to connect with Washington Avenue and Airport Way in a roundabout to form a safer, convenient and attractive loop around the Turkey Creek area to serve both airport traffic, and trips from Southeast Gulfport to Highway 49.

The Turkey Creek community will be nestled into an enhanced greenway filled with wildlife and native plants that helps accept, clean, and recharge the watershed that extends far beyond Gulfport's boundaries, and protect the area from excessive flooding. At the intersection of Rippy Road and Creosote Road, one or more new mixed use buildings provide daily conveniences and a civic center for the area, though this could be located east or west of this intersection, as the community determines fit.

The housing stock is improved, and additional housing is provided that fits the simple, beautiful architecture of the area, one of the first settlements in Gulfport. Historical and culturally significant artifacts or icons of places, events, and people are designed and installed at appropriate locations to continue the process of documenting the rich heritage of the Mississippi Coast.



Turkey Creek Center



Proposed Turkey Creek Bypass



Proposal for a small cottage -- by Eric Moser



Proposed House that can expand over time as the family grows and its needs evolve -- by Eric Moser



Proposal for a very small cottage -- by Marianne Cusato



Proposed Mixed-Use Building with Residential Above Retail - by Gary Justiss