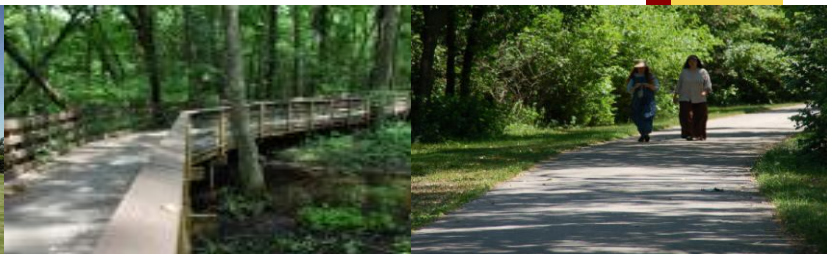




BEAUMONT NORTH END COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION VISION



Final Report

**PLAN 663: APPLIED PLANNING
Spring 2008
Texas A&M University**

Contents

Introduction	3
Parks & Environment	
Introduction	4
Parks and Recreation	
Floodplain	
Redevelopment Proposals	8
Proposal 1: Park Corridor	
Proposal 2: Gateway District	
Proposal 3: Neches Hike & Bike Trail	
Implementation Strategies	21
Gateway District Plan	
Neches River Hike & Park Corridor	
Flood Plain Overlay District	
Citizen Empowerment	34
Introduction	34
Citizen Empowerment Objectives	35
Objective 1: Citizen Council	
Objective 2: Neighborhood Social Groups	
Objective 3: City Funding	
Objective 4: Marketing and Promotions	
Objective 5: Code Enforcement	
Objective 6: Neighborhood Watch	
Implementation Strategies	40
Next Steps	46
Resources	47
Citizens on Patrol (COP)	
Citizen Police Academy	
North End Neighborhood Association	
Citizen Empowerment Programs	49

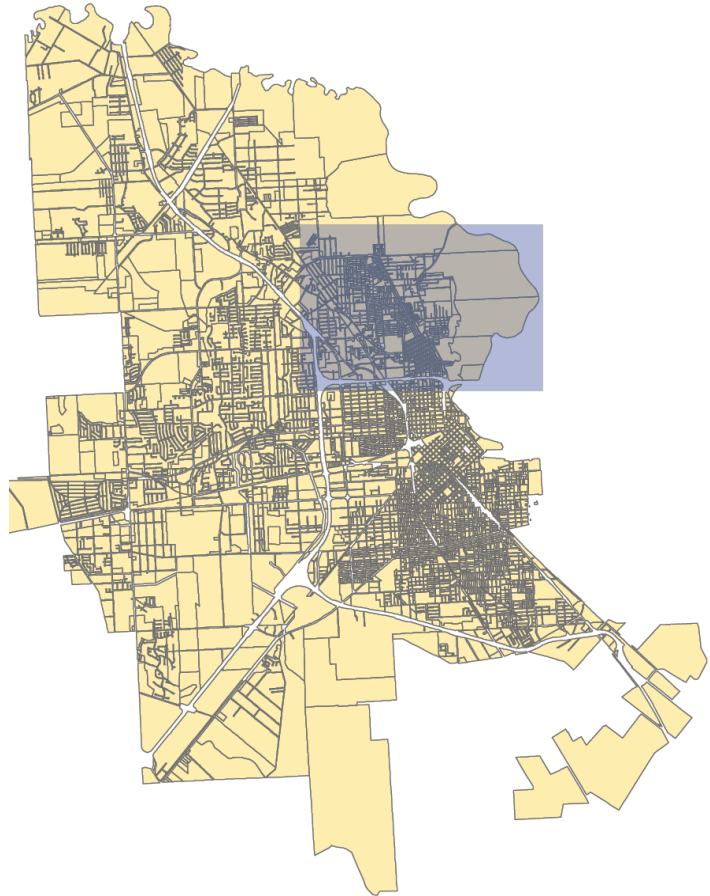
Neighborhood Crime Strategies	51
Nature of Crime	
Treatment of Public Spaces	
Conclusion	60
Economic Development	61
Introduction	61
Redevelopment Proposals	61
Proposal 1: Delaware Street Redevelopment Corridor	
Proposal 2: North End Towne Center	
Proposal 3: Magnolia Corridor Redevelopment Plan	
Proposal 4: Zaharias Park Redevelopment	
Implementation Strategies	92
1: Delaware Street Redevelopment Corridor	
2: North End Towne Center	
3: Magnolia Corridor Redevelopment Plan	
4: Zaharias Park Redevelopment	

Introduction

This Revitalization Plan for the North End neighborhood has been prepared to promote the unique characteristics and highlight the vitality of the neighborhood to the City, and thereby create opportunities for reinvestment. The strong history of the neighborhood, ideal location to recreational activities and downtown, and ideal balance of younger and older generations of residents, make this neighborhood worthy of interest.

The overall **VISION** is to create a safe, healthy, walkable and livable neighborhood and provide economic stability for its residents. Various strategies have been formulated to achieve this vision. This section of the report describes the policies that need to be adopted to create a safer environment, as well as various design strategies for the parks and other open space. It complements the proposals for economic development and resident empowerment discussed elsewhere in this report.

The formulated strategies have been classified into short term and long term to ease implementation. A more detailed plan needs to be devised for each of the proposals, through consultations with the various stakeholders.



Map: Study Area Context

Parks & Environment

Introduction

The most noticeable positive characteristics of the neighborhood include parks, a large number of trees, while some negative points are dilapidated housing conditions and the lack of businesses. Although there is a large potential for redevelopment, realizing it will require the complete utilization of existing resources through partnerships between the City, the Beaumont Housing Authority, and community organizations.

Parks and Recreation

For any neighborhood, parks and recreational areas act as refreshing ‘breathing’ space. These places are not only important for the individual’s physical and mental well-being, but also serve as very important elements for building up positive social capital in the neighborhood. A well maintained and used park system not only beautifies the residential development and provides leisure opportunities, but it also has the potential to promote business development. For the neighborhood under study, the population under the age of 14 is 24 percent (US Census 2000). This is the age group which reaps maximum benefits from the services of parks and schools.

There are three major parks present in the neighborhood, along with several other tot-lots and open spaces. Based on the type and size of the parks present in the neighborhood, they include several ‘Mini Parks’, ‘Neighborhood Parks’ and one ‘Community Park’.

Map: Location of Major Parks

1. Babe Zaharias Park
2. Magnolia Park
3. Pine Street Park
4. Collier's Ferry Park



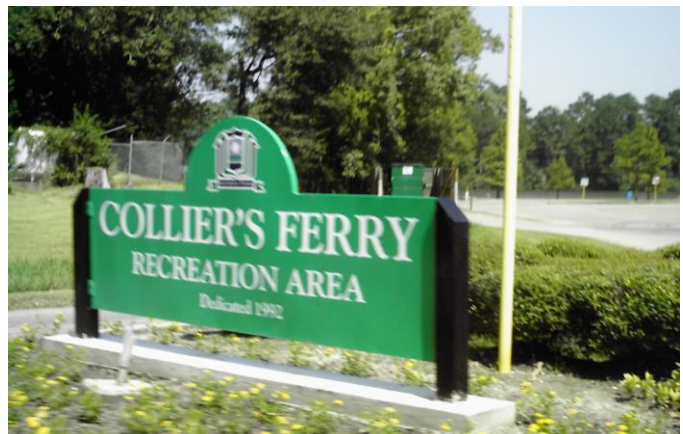
The North End has four major parks that have different themes associated with them, include substantial amounts of beautiful space that work well within the neighborhood, and also connect visitors through the avenues between them. Magnolia Park is located in the central part of the neighborhood on the west side of Magnolia Ave. It is known for the recreational activity that occurs on the outdoor basketball courts at night, the swimming pool in the summer, the play center for children during the day, and several other activities associated with the Pruitt Center. Babe Zaharias Park is located in the southern part of neighborhood and is known for soccer games that take place on its open fields. Pine Street Park is located adjacent to Martin Elementary school; both the park and the school lie in the flood plain. Collier's Ferry Park is located northeast of these areas off of Pine Street. It is near the Neches River and the country club. Boating, canoeing and fishing are the major activities along the Neches.



Magnolia Park

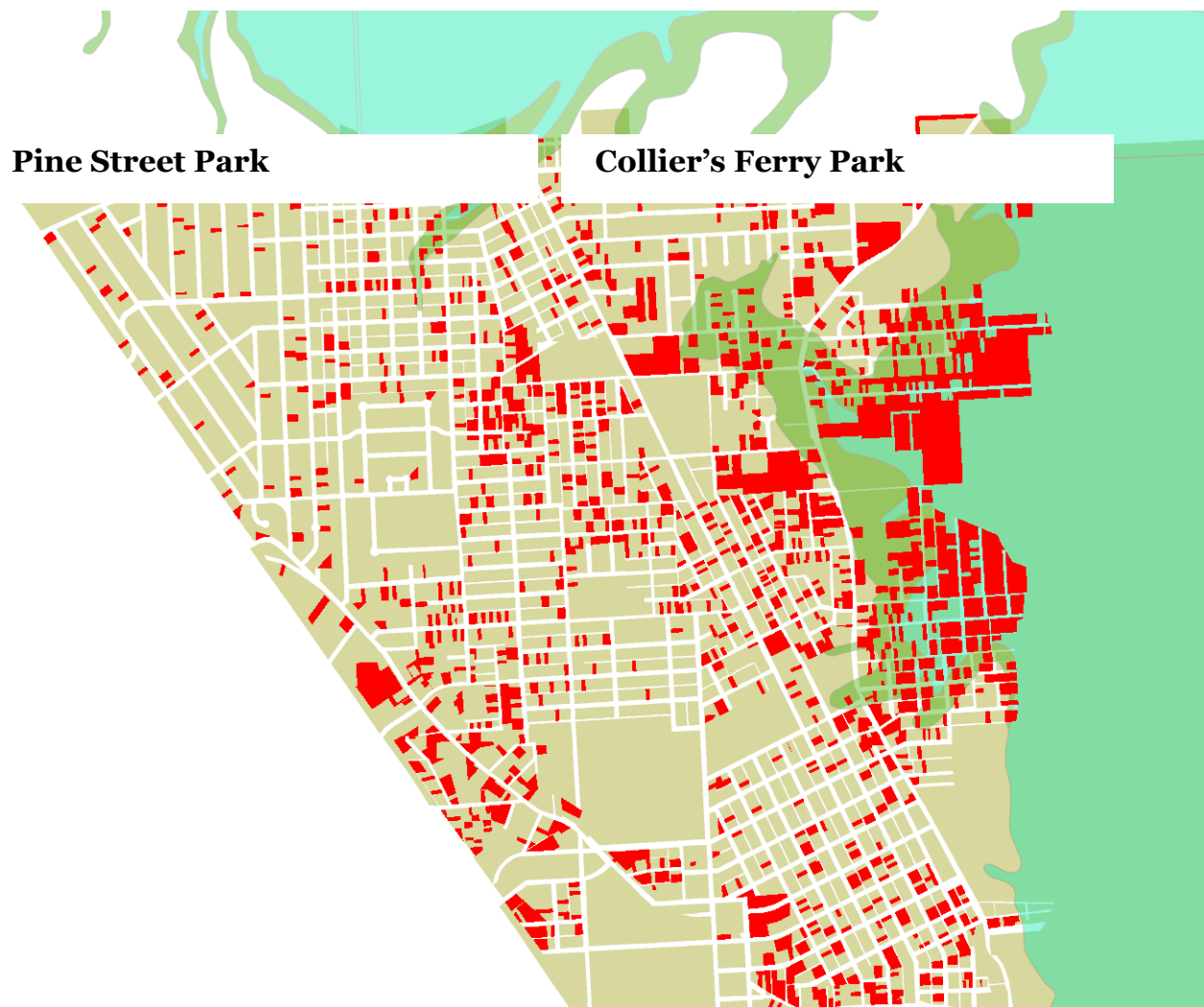


Babe Zaharias Park



All Images: Nitin Warriar

Map: Flood Plain & Vacant Parcels (Red- Vacant Residential Parcels; Green- Floodplain)



Flood Plain

Based on the 100 year and 500 year floodplain maps, more than 90% of the land to the east of Pine Street is prone to floods which may create hazardous conditions. There are developments, mostly single family houses, stretching about 3,000 feet east of

Pine Street towards the Neches River. The lives and properties of the residents in such locations are very vulnerable. In addition, these developments also block the natural

rainwater absorption ability during flooding seasons. A floodplain is a great sponge which soaks up enormous amounts of water, returns the majority of it to the underlying water table, and then slowly releases the rest over a period of days and weeks. Due to streets, rooftops, and other paved areas, water runoff is increased when it rains. The North End neighborhood is still recovering from hurricanes Rita and Katrina, and vulnerable to additional natural disasters. Development in the floodplain will make flood damage even worse in the future.

Redevelopment Proposals

In order to revitalize the deteriorating areas of the neighborhood and create a safer environment, various strategies have been considered, several of which are discussed in this plan. The proposed plan envisages connectivity between the different parks and open spaces, thereby creating a corridor primarily for pedestrians and cyclists. The different components of this plan are:

1. Park Corridor
2. Gateway District
3. Hike and Bike: Neches ‘Trail to Downtown’

These proposals are primarily meant to limit the developments in the floodplain and enhance its scenic value through preservation efforts. Enhancing the image of the existing parks and providing better accessibility and connectivity will increase the vitality of the surrounding areas and thereby convert the open spaces into activity nodes. The details of each of the proposals have been described in the following section.

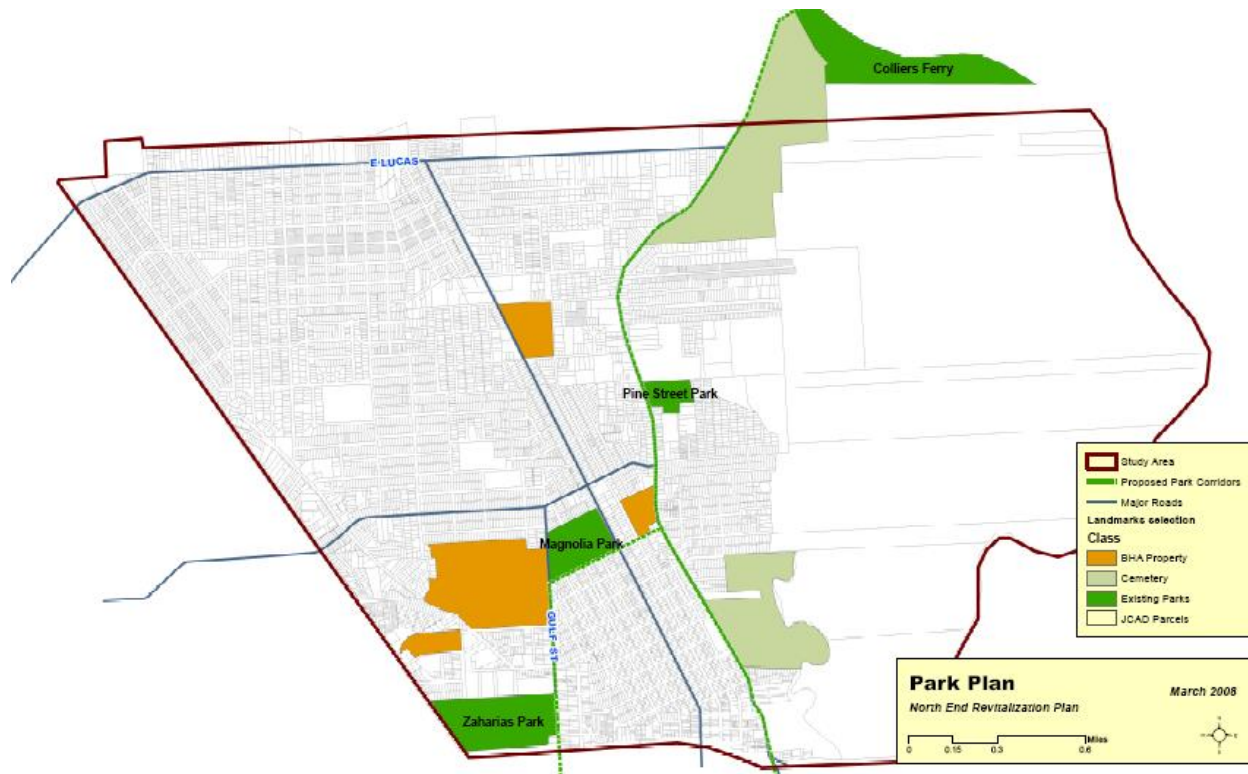
Proposal 1: Park Corridor

Bounded by the Neches River on the east, Interstate I-10 on the south, Lucas Street on the north, and the railroad on the west, the North End is bestowed with 3 parks: Magnolia Park, Pine Street Park, and Zaharias Park. Collier's Ferry Recreation Area sits north of Lucas Street adjacent to Forest Lawn Cemetery on Pine Street. Although these parks and recreation areas are such a valuable asset for the neighborhood, this gift was buried and underutilized by the lack of appealing features, facilities and connectivity between them. The Corridor Plan is meant to connect those parks and recreation areas as one consistent park system within the neighborhood, and add good design elements in order to make them better serve the residents within the neighborhood and people from the other parts of the city. For the purpose explained above, a Park Corridor Plan is proposed to link all three parks into one recreation area, which is comprised of three segments. The first segment extends along Pine Street from the northeast of the neighborhood to Interstate 10. The second segment starts from Pine Street at Weiss Ave south of Magnolia Park, and extends along Weiss Ave to Gulf Street. The final segment lies along Gulf Street from Weiss Ave, which is east of Zaharias Park, to I-10. A multi-use path is proposed on the east side of Pine Street, which will accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, roller-skaters, etc, and will also serve as a boundary for the developments west of Pine Street.



Images: Proposed multi-use path in Park Corridor Plan

Figure: Proposed multi-use trail connecting Major Parks



Existing Conditions:

A. Street Characteristics

Three streets are involved in the Park Corridor, as discussed in the previous section: Pine Street, Weiss Avenue, and Gulf Street.

- Pine Street – Categorized as a collector with a right-of-way (ROW) width of 22.5' with two-lane traffic (one lane in each direction). On the east side of Pine Street, connected sidewalk exists south of Martin Elementary. The pavement conditions on this street are moderate with storm water drainage treatment.
- Weiss Avenue – Local Street with the ROW of 36. It has two lane traffic and a parking lane on both sides of the street. Conditions are observed as moderate pavement with connected sidewalk on the west side and disconnected sidewalk on east side of the street.

- Gulf Street – Collector Street with approximately 30' in width. Moderate pavement conditions are observed. Sidewalks are partly connected and partly disconnected on the east side of the street.

B. Structures & Land Uses

The corridor lies in a residential area, with mostly single family houses on both sides. The east side of Pine Street has a cemetery and one elementary school, while Wiess Avenue lies with Magnolia Park on its northwest side and single family houses on the southeast side. Beaumont Housing Authority land and Zaharias Park both lie on the west side of Gulf Street.

Strategies:

Pine Street Option 1

This option shows a right-of-way of 80 feet in the figure below. A 10 foot multi-use path lies on the east side of the drive lanes with a buffer of 30 feet in between. The buffer is formed by berms, with trees planted and a swale in the middle, which stores and drains storm water. A 5 foot median and 15 foot setback from the buildings are on the west side of Pine Street.

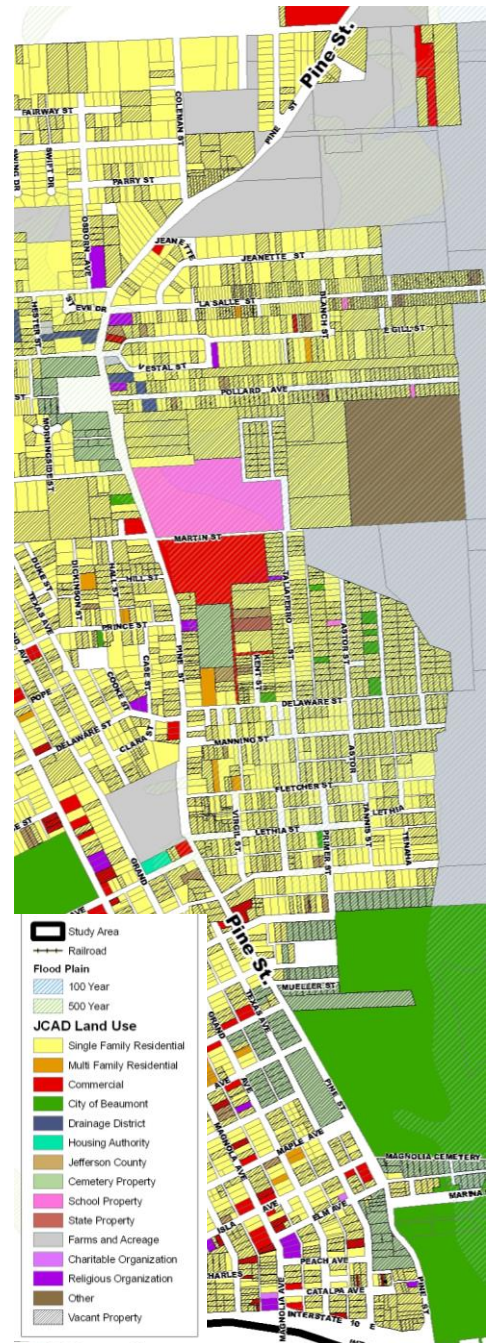
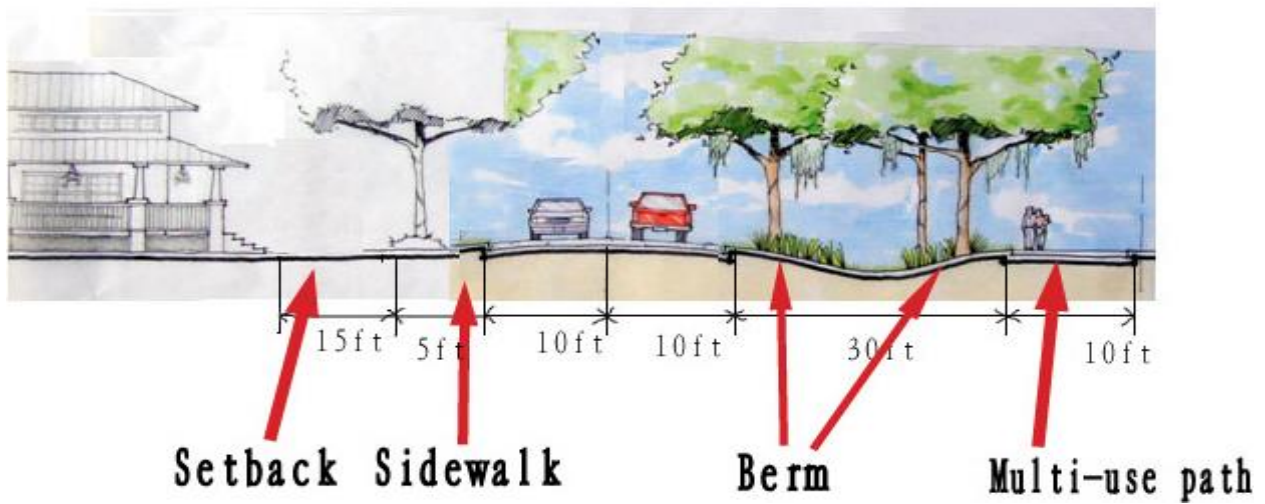


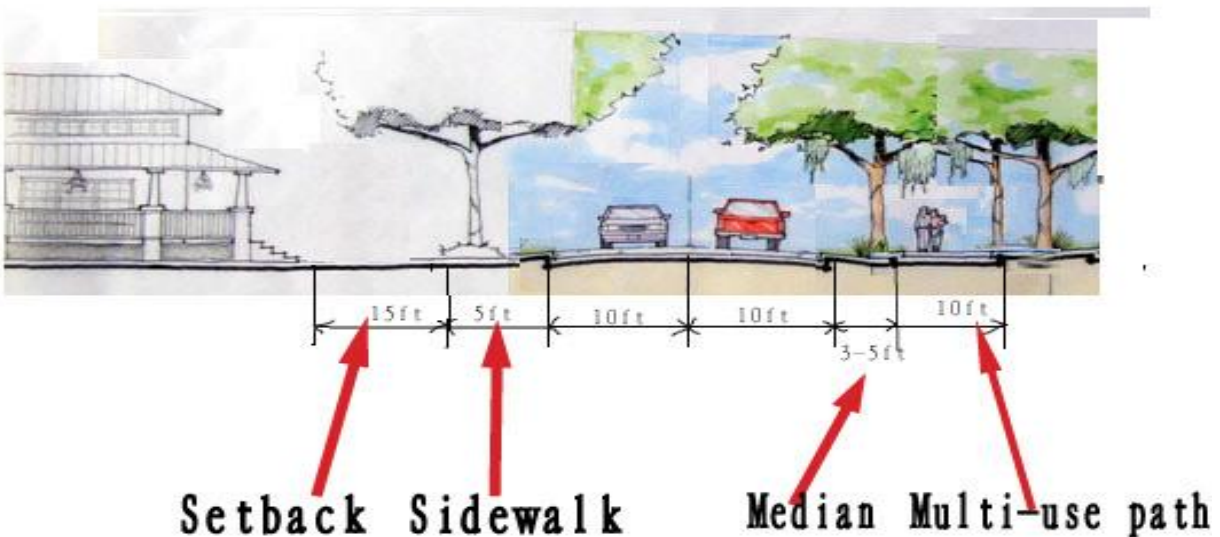
Figure: Option 1 Proposed Street Section



Pine Street Option2

The following shows a right-of-way of 55 foot, as seen in the figure below. In contrast to Option 1 which has a berm and swale as the buffer between the multi-use path and the drive lanes, a median with trees and a walking path is proposed. Similar to Option 1 above, there is a 5 foot median and 15 foot setback from the buildings on the west side of Pine Street.

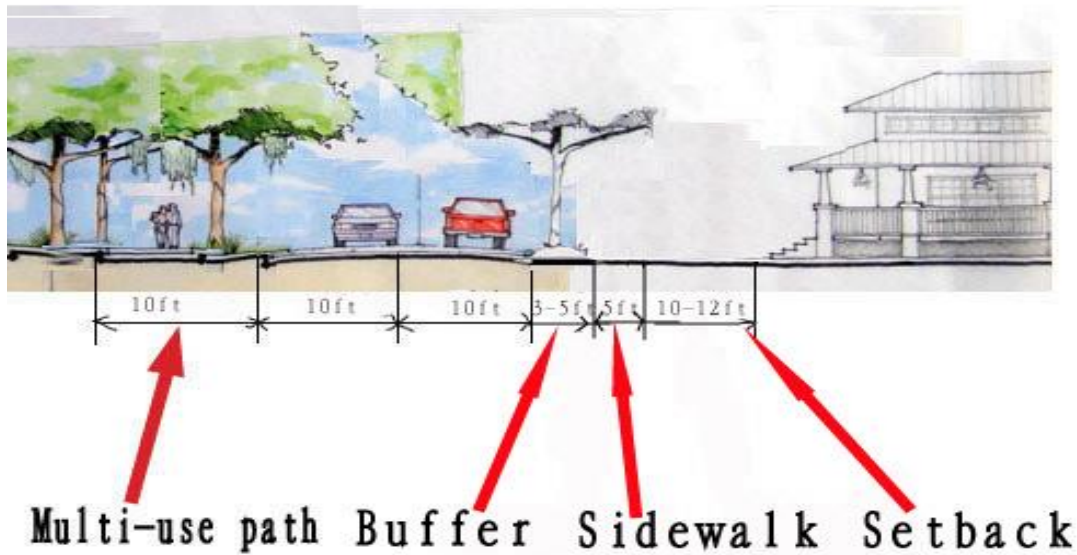
Figure: Option 2 Proposed Street Section



Weiss Avenue and Gulf Street

For this section of the corridor, the ROW is 48-52 foot span with a multi-use path on the west side and houses on the east side of the streets. There would be a 3-5 foot median buffer between the multi-use path and the drive lanes. A 5 foot sidewalk lies between the houses and the street. The setbacks for the homes are also 15 foot.

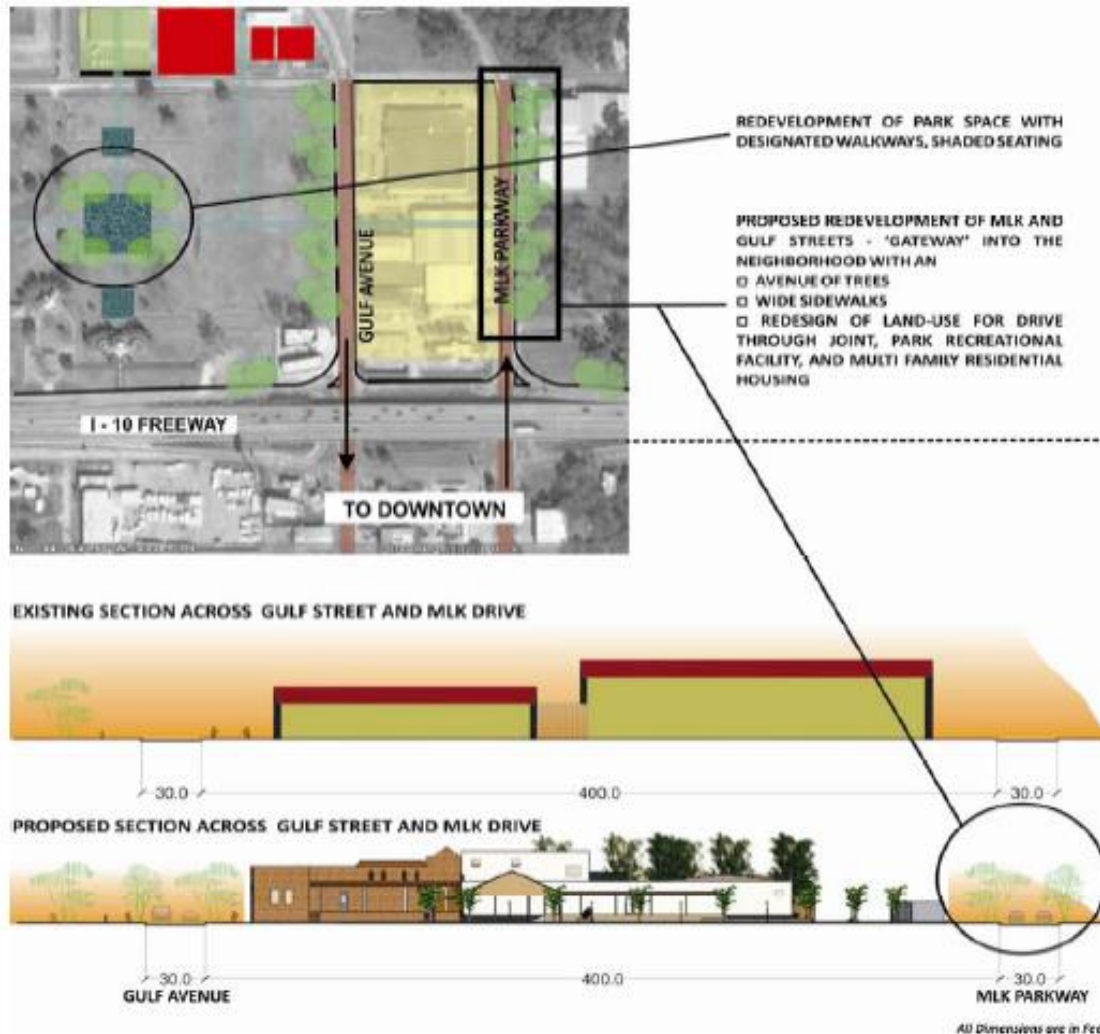
Figure: Proposed Street Section



Proposal 2: Gateway District

The North End neighborhood appears to lack a prominent landmark despite the number of potential locations, one such being Zaharias Park. Hence, the Gateway District proposal targets revitalization of the park and its surroundings for recreational activities, thereby creating the feel of an ‘entrance’ into the neighborhood. Gulf Avenue and MLK Parkway (entry and exit), the neighborhood below the IH-10 Freeway, connect the neighborhood and the downtown center, and would serve as an ideal gateway. As the area is devoid of any major landmark, the Gateway District proposal, adjoined to Zaharias Park could serve as a potential landmark.

Figure: Gateway District Proposal: Redevelopment of MLK Drive and Gulf Street



Existing Conditions:

Zaharias Park is in the southernmost portion of the North End, which is owned and maintained by the City of Beaumont. Currently there are thirteen soccer fields, an Air Force jet on display, a museum, and a jogging trail. The park has a lot of open space and is located adjacent to Beaumont Independent School District (BISD) property, comprising the high school sports stadium. In reference to the City of Beaumont, Zaharias Park is in a prime location because it is north of downtown and directly off the access road from I-10 at Martin Luther King Boulevard. Zaharias Park has many great attributes, such as 30 acres of open space, which also has the potential to become a

popular urban park and anchor for the City. Currently its activities mainly include youth soccer and various sports tournaments. In light of the park's open layout, the prospective of having citywide events held to promote cultural and economic development is major possibility. The purpose of the Zaharias Park Redevelopment is to increase cultural and economic development in the North End area of Beaumont.

Strategies:

The Zaharias Museum, provided with a small parking area, is located off I-10 in the middle of the park. The proposed site will retain this museum as well as a majority of the soccer fields. A visual buffer, created with an avenue of trees, would be provided to shield the park from the highway and the gas station at the corner of Gulf and I-10. An asphalt sidewalk network currently meanders around and throughout the park, with a majority placed in good locations. However, a few of the paths may need to be moved in the center of the park. The central portion of the park, just north of the museum, is an excellent location for a community center. An inexpensive amphitheatre would add a social focal point to Zaharias Park (Refer to Figure on next page). The mostly outdoor entertainment venue could provide a main attraction for musical, theatrical, and political events in Beaumont.

Figure: Proposed Master Plan

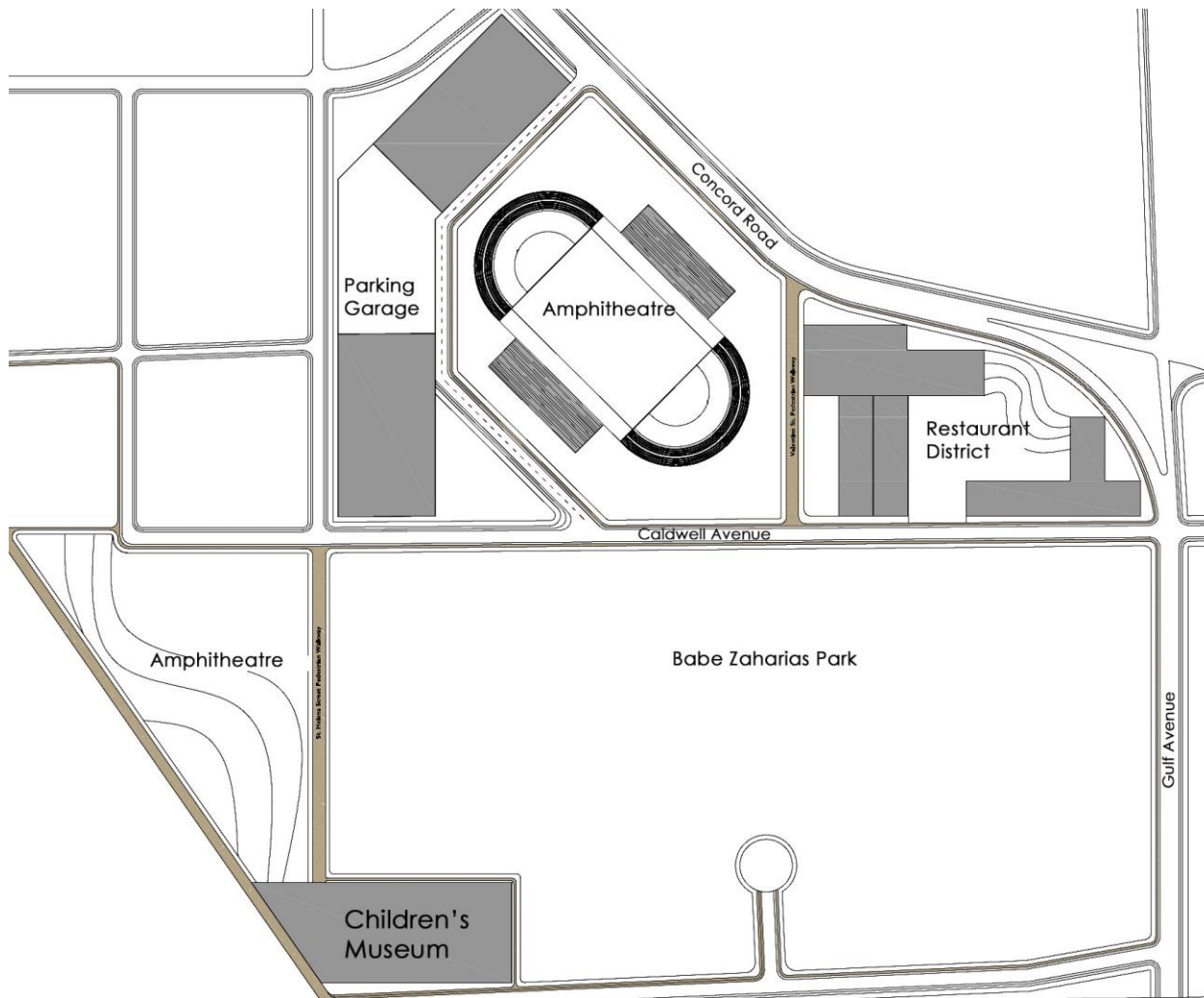
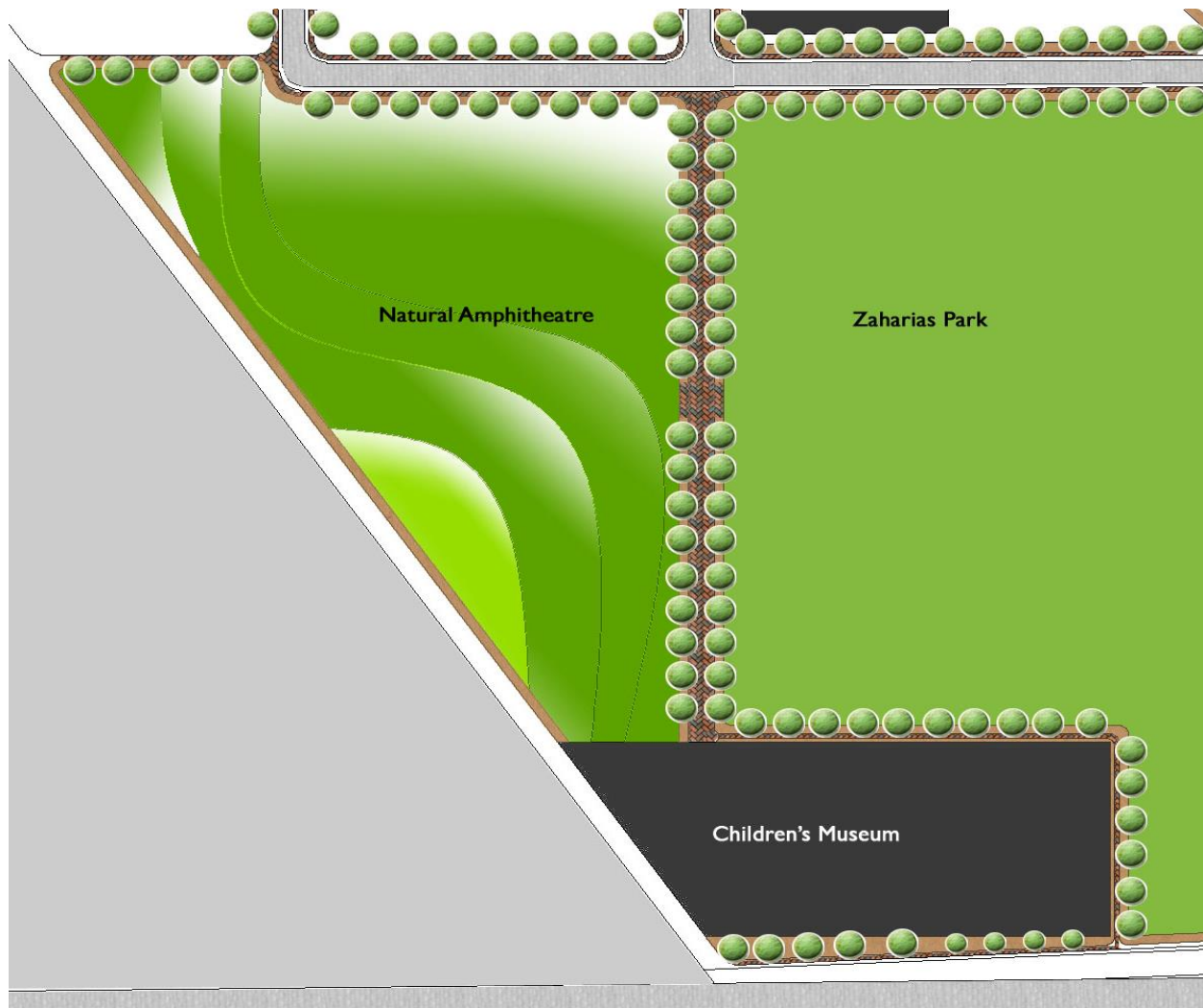
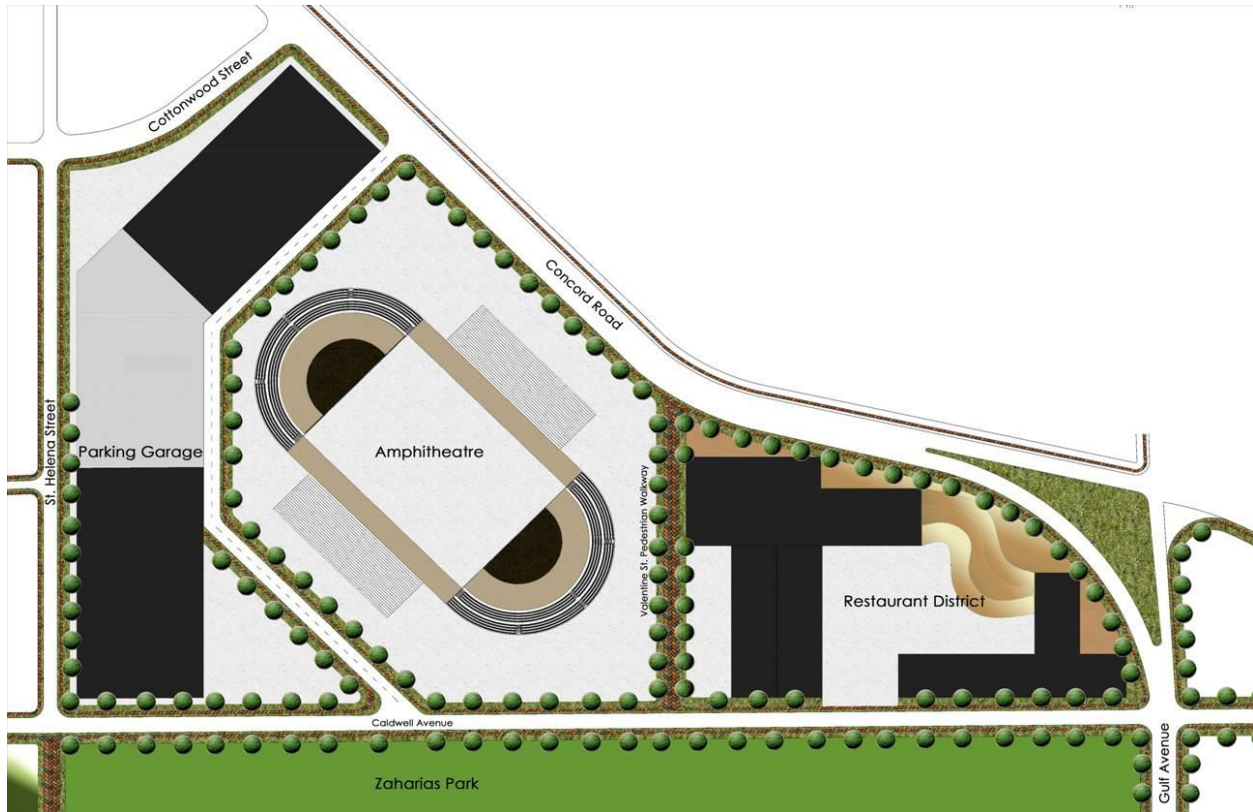


Figure: Gateway District Proposal: Redevelopment of Zaharias Park

The BISD stadium currently north of the park may not be in use by 2010, according to the school district's bond proposal information found on their website. A new athletic complex is to be built in Beaumont in the future which would make the current stadium obsolete. A redesign of the existing stadium for multi-use activities will serve as an extension of Zaharias Park, stretching to Concord Avenue, and will greatly enhance the aesthetics of the Concord and Gulf Street corridors (see figure below). Extending the park system in the area will enhance the attractiveness and usefulness of this park. Also, creating a more multi-use park will attract neighborhood and city residents to the area, further encouraging redevelopment in the North End.

Figure: Gateway District Proposal: Redevelopment of Existing Stadium

Proposal 3: Neches Hike and Bike Trail

Existing Conditions:

The Neches River runs to the east of the North End neighborhood and borders the city limits. It is a waterway feature with abundant potential for recreational activities. The water feature, because of its connectivity to downtown can be utilized for revitalization at the edge of the district by creating trails and paths for educational and recreational purposes which tie with various organizations and public entities.

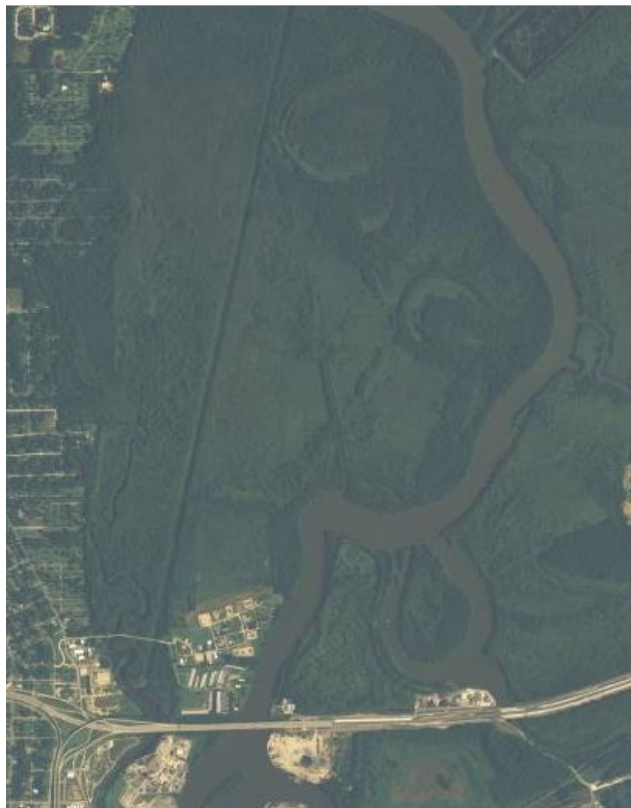
Strategies:

This idea is a unique feature of our plan and it is a concept that could provide great benefits to community. Some of the benefits include improved community health;

decreased hazard risk to citizens by keeping wetlands and natural buffers in place, without sacrificing use of the beautiful Neches River; preservation of the area's natural assets; enjoyment of the river without compromising ecological quality; economic development and community development in recreational industries; and greater connectivity between current downtown developments and all areas of the city. This system would be implemented in phases and would be accomplished over many years.

Short-term improvements and laying of the foundation for a system will help to ensure that the Neches River trails are an attraction for all of Texas to envy. Use of natural capital and economic gains can be environmentally friendly, if done properly, and the lengthy, untamed, unspoiled stretches of the Neches River, from the North End to Downtown, hold great potential. Multi-entry points along the system would allow for easy access to the trails and parks pathways. The team recommends that environmentally friendly building materials and construction be used when implementing this trail system – especially in sensitive areas.

Figure: Neches River Area



This can be done by including techniques employed by the US National Park system and those developed by companies such as Invisible Structures. Small shops at major entry locations could provide revenue and development, or recreational based industries at the local level. These might include tackle & bait shop; boating/ canoeing rentals; snacks & supplies stores. Other amenities along the trail system could include: restroom facilities, picnic tables and launches for entry/ exit of small water craft. The trail system would begin at the park near the country club and golf course

and work its way downstream, ending at Riverfront Park, in downtown Beaumont, when the final stages are complete. The first stage would be a nature trail system located in a large parcel of land to the south of the Collier's Ferry recreational Area, which is located north of Interstate 10 Bridge and along the west bank of the Neches River.

Figure: Pine Street Park Corridor and Neches Trail Proposal



Implementation Strategies

Gateway District Plan

1) Initiative/ Program

The Gateway District initiative is to provide a district which can continue the downtown image into the North End, as well as provide recreational activity within the neighborhood. The Gateway District has three major components: a Children's Museum and Zaharias Park improvements; stadium adaptive re-use with a parking structure; and a Restaurant District.

2) Probable Stakeholders

The City of Beaumont; the Beaumont Independent School District; the Beaumont Housing Authority; local residents; and businesses.

3) System Components/ Implementation:

a) Children's Museum and Zaharias Park Improvements

- i) Conversion of St. Helena Street into a pedestrian walkway/ boulevard leading to the Children's Museum
- ii) Remove surface parking on the parcel to the west of St. Helena and convert that into a natural amphitheatre which can be used for activities by the Children's Museum.
- iii) Sidewalk improvements along the park.

b) Stadium adaptive re-use into an Amphitheatre

- i) The stadium north of Zaharias Park can be converted to form two amphitheatres and an open space for music shows or a yearly Beaumont Music Festival.
- ii) The adjacent space currently used for surface parking will accommodate a three-story parking structure. This parking structure will not only accommodate parking needs of those visiting the museum, Zaharias Park, and the amphitheatre, but will also act as a buffer between the stadium and the residences to the west.

c) Restaurant District

- i) Conversion of Valentine Street (joining Caldwell Ave. on the south and Concord Rd. on the north) into a pedestrian walkway. The parcel to the east

of Valentine will be dedicated for commercial activity such as restaurants, and be known as the Restaurant District.

4) Funding Sources

a) National Endowment for Arts (Grants for Museums)

i) Access to Artistic Excellence¹:

This organization is particularly interested in projects that extend the arts to underserved populations -- those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.

- Conservation.
- Documentation.
- Provenance research.
- Collections management.
- Permanent collection catalogues.
- Reinstallation of collections.
- Public programs such as lectures, symposia, and community outreach.

ii) Challenge America: Reaching Every Community Fast-Track Review Grants²:

They support primarily small and mid-sized organizations for projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations -- those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.

Distinct projects that take place over limited periods of time and involve limited geographic areas.

Grants available only for:

- An arts event that will feature one or more guest artists. The project (such as a festival, exhibit, recital, reading, performance, screening, broadcast, and lecture) must include the participation of guest artist(s). Artistic staff or resident artists of an applicant organization do not qualify as guest artists.

¹ <http://www.arts.gov/grants/apply/GAP09/MuseumsAAE.html>

² <http://www.arts.gov/grants/apply/GAP09/Challenge.html>

- Professionally directed public art projects such as murals, sculptures, or environmental art that are developed through community engagement.
- Civic design activities that involve the renovation, restoration, or adaptive reuse of cultural facilities or spaces. Projects may include architectural studies, design competitions, charrettes (design workshops), or feasibility plans. Funding is not available for actual renovation or construction costs.
- The unified promotion of community-wide arts activities and resources to enhance cultural tourism or activities in cultural districts.
- Fast-Track Review Grants: Extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations; Are limited to the specific types of projects outlined below; Are for \$10,000 each; receive an expedited application review. Organizations are notified whether they have been recommended for a grant approximately six months after they apply; projects may start shortly thereafter.

iii) Learning in the Arts for Children and Youth:

This organization provides funding for projects that help children and youth acquire knowledge and understanding of skills in the arts.

Projects must include:

- Experience: Students and their teachers will have the chance to experience exemplary works of art -- in live form where possible.
- Study: Through the guidance of teachers, teaching artists, and cultural organizations, students will study works of art in order to understand the cultural and social context from which they come, and to appreciate the technical and/or aesthetic qualities of each work. Where appropriate, study will include the acquisition of skills relevant to practicing the art form.
- Performance: Informed by their experience and study, students will create artwork. In the case of literature, the primary creative activities will be writing and/or recitation.
- Assessment: Students will be assessed according to national or state arts education standards. Where appropriate, projects will employ multiple forms of assessment including pre- and post-testing.

Two Areas³:

(1) School-Based

(2) Community-Based

Neches River Hike & Park Corridor

1) Initiative/ Program:

A trail system can provide significant linkages between downtown centers, community destinations and residential areas. It functions not only as a transportation route but also a recreational and health resource. Multi-use trail systems have been increasingly used in many states and serve as recreational amenities to accommodate a wide range of users such as equestrians, bicyclists, walkers, joggers, strollers, skaters, wheelchairs, hikers, wildlife viewers, etc. Two alternative multi-use trail systems are proposed for North End neighborhood revitalization. One or the combination of the two can be applied according to stakeholder's interests, capital availability, etc.

a) Multi-use Park Trail/Park Corridor

The Multi-use Park Trail along Pine Street is aimed to: link the existing parks and recreation area; to serve as a development boundary for floodplain protection; to enhance public health and fitness; to stabilize and increase property value; and to promote economic development. A variety of users should have easy access to the trail including joggers, bicyclists, walkers, nature enthusiasts, people with strollers, and horseback riders. The same interventions have been proposed for the Park Corridor Connectivity.

b) "Trail to 'Town" Neches Nature Trails System

The Neches Nature Trails system would begin at the Collier's Ferry Park near the country club and golf course and work its way downstream, ending at Riverfront Park in downtown Beaumont. The motivation is to benefit the whole community by improving community health; decreasing hazard risk to citizens by keeping wetlands and natural buffers in place without sacrificing the use of the beautiful Neches River; preserving the area's natural assets; promoting economic development and

³ <http://www.arts.gov/grants/apply/GAP09/LITA.html>

community in recreational industries; and enhancing the connectivity between current downtown developments and all areas of the city.

2) Probable Stakeholders:

Probable stakeholders who should be involved in the planning and design process include adjacent property owners, the City, the State, the Beaumont Housing Authority, the Beaumont Transit Agency, businesses, environmental groups, and communities. Adjacent property owners should be included early to help identify concerns and issues, as well as to develop potential solutions for effective implementation.

3) System Components:

Proper planning and design, along with educational programs and some enforcement are key elements for the trail systems to successfully accommodate different trail users.

a) Pine Street Park Corridor

- i) Redevelopment of Pine Street – Improvements need to be made to Pine Street roadway condition, street lights, ditches, etc.
- ii) Multi-use trail – The multi-use trail should be constructed to the east of Pine Street.
- iii) Supplementary Services – Supplementary services for trail users such as water fountains, restrooms, trailhead pavilions, picnic areas, etc. Bus & Ride programs can be adopted by Beaumont Transit Agency to provide rides at interim points on the trail. Bicyclists, pedestrians, and other trail users who choose to explore only a portion of the trail, would benefit from this service taking them back to their original destination.
- iv) Housing and other development opportunities – The multi-use trail can provide close-to-home, accessible recreation with health benefits, non-polluting transportation routes, and more, which serves as a great amenity to adjacent housing. The Beaumont Housing Authority could use techniques such as joint ventures or public-private partnerships to develop quality housing adjacent to the trail (but not in the flood plain). Other partnership development opportunities which could exist, for instance, are small retail shops with outdoor seating, a post office, bicycle (rental) shops, etc.

v) Educational programs – Local bicycle shops and/or mountain bike clubs can be included along the trail which provides brochures about safety, etiquette, and environmentally-sound riding techniques. Other approaches include trailhead pavilions with educational programs either partnered with BISD or other environmental groups, informational signs, and/ or garden shops. All of these could be part of the corridor to accommodate and to educate the trail users.

b) *Neches River Trail*

i) Multi-modal trail

ii) Supplementary amenities – Water fountains, restroom facilities, picnic tables and launches for entry/ exit of small water craft.

iii) Business opportunities – Small shops at major entry locations could provide revenue and development or recreational based industries at the local level. These might include tackle & bait shops; boating/ canoeing rentals; snacks & supplies stores.

iv) Educational programs – Educational programs can be partnered with BISD and other environmental groups.

4) Implementation Strategies:

a) *Capital Improvement Project* – The trail system can be promoted as a Capital Improvement Project for the City to implement with allocated funds from different sources. The cost of developing the trail system had been envisaged to be one million dollars in 2003 and was promoted as a component under the CIP Parks System Projects. The present proposal seeks to promote the Neches Trail Project as a CIP to create benefits for the City of Beaumont, and identifies alternative revenue sources.

b) *Joint Developments and Public-Private Partnerships* – Initiatives of joint ventures between the Beaumont Transit Agency, businesses, or other potential developers, and the Beaumont Housing Authority, as well as partnerships between the City and the Beaumont Housing Authority, can be applied for developments and programs along the trail system.

c) *Tax Increment Financing* – TIFs could be used to collect funds from potential users to finance the trail project either for a medium- or long-term. The authority

of creating a TIF is granted by the State to the City. Detailed information about TIFs will be described in the Economic Development Section of this report, as it can also play a major role in revitalizing these open areas that form the core of the neighborhood.

5) Funding Sources:

a) ***Texas Parks & Wildlife Department funds:***

▪ Recreational Trails Grant Program⁴

The program utilizes federal funds to build trails in local communities for hikers, cyclists, horseback riders, off-road motor vehicles, and nature enthusiasts. Funds can be used for constructing new recreational trails, improving or maintaining existing trails, making trails accessible to people with disabilities, developing or improving trail-heads or trail-side facilities and acquiring trail corridors. The program is a cost reimbursement program requiring a 20% minimum match.

Eligibility: City and county governments, state agencies, river authorities, water districts, MUDs, school districts, federal land managers and private organizations.

Funding range: Individual grants can range from \$2,400 to \$100,000.

▪ Outdoor Recreation Grant Program⁵

This program seeks to acquire and/or develop parkland or to renovate existing public recreation areas. Examples of projects include building picnic, camping and rest facilities, constructing fishing piers, and park expansion. Requirement: 50% matching grant funds. Projects must be completed within three years of approval.

Eligibility: Cities, counties, MUDs, and other special districts.

Funding range: Maximum award is \$500,000.

▪ Small Community Grant Program⁶

This program seeks to meet the recreation needs of small Texas communities with a population of 20,000 or less. Funds must be used to acquire or develop parkland. Eligible projects include ball fields, boating, fishing, and hunting facilities, picnic facilities, playgrounds, swimming pools, trails, camping facilities,

⁴ <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/trpa/#trail>

⁵ <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/trpa/#outdoor>

⁶ <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/trpa/#outdoor>

beautification, restoration, gardens, sports courts and support facilities. There is a 50% matching grant requirement.

Eligibility: Municipalities, counties, and other government entities.

Funding range: Maximum award is \$50,000.

- Community Outdoor Outreach Program (CO-OP) Grants⁷

The CO-OP grant helps to introduce under-served populations to the **services, programs, and sites** of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. This is not a land acquisition or construction grant; this is only for programs.

Eligibility: non-profit organizations, schools, municipalities, counties, cities, and other tax-exempt groups.

Funding range: Minimum grant requests are \$5,000 and maximum grant requests are \$30,000 (grant ceiling may increase contingent upon funding increase to the CO-OP grant program). This grant program may change from one funding cycle to two funding cycles with an additional special call (one-time only) opportunity.

- Boating Access Grants⁸

This grant program provides 75% matching grant funds for the construction of public boat ramp facilities throughout Texas. Local government sponsors must make an application, provide the land, provide access to the proposed boat ramp, supply 25% of the development costs, and accept operation and maintenance responsibilities for a minimum 25-year period. These funds are allocated annually through the federal Sport Fish Restoration Act.

Eligibility: local government sponsors

- Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants⁹

TPWD administers the Texas apportionments of LWCF through the Texas Recreation Park Account.

Eligibility: TPWD may consider the application for LWCF funding if the applicant is applying for an Indoor Grant, Outdoor Grant, or Small Community Grant. Applicant does not need to submit a separate application.

b) ***BISD bonds***¹⁰

⁷ <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/trpa/#coop>

⁸ <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/trpa/#boatramp>

⁹ <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/trpa/#lwcf>

Beaumont Independent School District bond program is accepting a wide variety of proposals to enhance the school facilities within the district. Proposals aimed at improving students' safety could be potential proposals to facilitate partnership between the developers, the City, and the BISD.

c) ***TxDOT's "Safe Routes to School" Program (SRTS)***¹¹

Safe Routes to School programs create practical projects to make school routes safer for children to walk and bicycle, such as sidewalks, crosswalks and bicycle facilities. Community leaders, parents and schools also use educational programs to help children travel safely to and from school.

Partnership: Local government, school district, and other political bodies.

d) ***Texas Commission on Environmental Quality funding sources:***

- Water Quality Management Planning (Section 604b) Grants Program¹²

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is responsible for administering provisions of the constitution and laws of the State of Texas to promote judicious use and maximum conservation and protection of the quality of State waters. To assist the state in these efforts, Section 604(b) of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), as amended, authorizes funding for water quality management planning activities.

Eligibility: Ark-Tex Council of Governments, Central Texas Council of Governments, Coastal Bend Council of Governments, Houston-Galveston Area Council, Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council, North Central Texas Council of Governments, South East Texas Regional Planning Commission.

e) ***Federal Emergency and Management Agency grants***¹³:

- Hazard-Related Grants and Assistance Programs
- Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation (EHP) Program
- Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funding

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency funding is also available for certain trails. ISTEA emphasizes a need for long-term planning on the local, metropolitan, and state level. Long-term trails plans should be included in

¹⁰ <http://www.beaumont.k12.tx.us/binfo.htm>

¹¹ http://www.dot.state.tx.us/services/traffic_operations/safe_routes_to_school/default.htm

¹² http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/nav/funding/federal_grants.html#water_qual

¹³ <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/government.shtm#2>

comprehensive plans and Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP). VDOT should include significant trails in appropriate state bicycle, pedestrian, and transportation plans. Regional cooperation should be emphasized to be sure trail systems connect and cross jurisdictional boundaries where appropriate.

6) Possible Revenue Streams from each proposal

- a) *Multi-use park trail/Park Corridor* – Revenue sources generated by the multi-use park trail system include bus fare-box revenue, signage fees, connection fees, donations from some educational programs, taxes from housing, small convenient stores, bicycle (rental) shops, desensitization clinics of horses, etc.
- b) *Neches River Trail* – Businesses along the Neches River Trail could generate some revenue. Those include small shops, retail stores, facility rental shops, etc. Donations can be encouraged by educational program as well.

Flood Plain Overlay District

1) Initiative/Program

Rezoning of property within the 100 year floodplain, so that it falls within a Floodplain Overlay District, is one of major three steps proposed to redirect development within the floodplain adjacent to the North End. As was stated in public meetings, and as is well documented throughout this area's history, flooding is a constant threat to the property and residents residing along the Neches River. Development of structures within a floodplain leads to a predisposition to hazardous events. The weather in southeast Texas only serves to increase this threat of flooding and weather related disasters. As in the example below, the expressed purpose of the floodplain district in Beaumont is protection of the public's "health, safety, and general welfare, to protect human life and property from the hazards of periodic flooding, to preserve the natural flood control characteristics, and the flood storage capacity of the flood plain." To ensure that property owners would not suffer a taking, we proposed alternatives and incentives be offered as motivation for a safer and healthier Neches River. These would include: 1) Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), 2) a Buy-Out program, and 3) the purchase and dedication of Conservation Areas. The utilization of these three joint ventures will help in the

process where the vacant land in the immediate area adjacent to the Neches River needs to be acquired and managed in a more ecologically sensitive manner – thus reducing loss of life, livelihood, and property.

2) Probable Stakeholders

The City of Beaumont, the Beaumont Housing Authority, the Beaumont Independent School District, Beaumont Transit, local residents, local and citywide companies, and Cemeteries within the Floodplain.

3) System Components/ Implementation Strategies:

a. Floodplain District Ordinance

- Use model ordinances from cities in similar situations.
- Include some permitted uses.
- Allow for (temporary) non-conforming uses & provide assistance to bring these into compliance.

b. Transfer of Development Rights

- TDR program using other vacant properties in the North End.
- Work with local development strategies to allow owners to “upgrade” properties if possible (allow owners of to transfer rights to a more valuable piece of property).

c. Buy-out program

- Work with federal granting programs and non-profits to secure needed resources to buy-out willing property owners.
- Use successful buy-out programs as a model for establishing a guide on how the program will work, who will manage it, and where funding will come from.
- Create a “Heritage Program” to encourage businesses and local residents to take ownership of the project (See example: Houston-Galveston Coastal Heritage Program).

4) Funding Sources:

- a. FEMA's Flood Mitigation Assistance program (FMA), the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program, and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). (Federal funding for home buyout usually requires local matching funds of at least 25 %).

- b. FEMA recognizes the direct financial benefit to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) from buying repetitive flood loss houses; they continue to be a major funding partner with the District to continue the buyout efforts in Harris County. Under the newly organized federal Pre-Disaster Mitigation program, the District is applying for additional FEMA funds to offer owners of qualifying flood prone homes the opportunity to move to higher ground.
- c. Private and Public entities for land conservation, including but not limited to: the Nature Conservancy, Texas Land Conservancy, and the Trust for Public Land.

d. *Flood Insurance*

Objective: To enable persons to purchase insurance against physical damage to or loss of buildings and/or contents therein caused by floods, mudslide, or flood-related erosion, thereby reducing federal disaster assistance payments, and to promote wise floodplain management practices in the Nation's flood-prone and mudflow-prone areas.

Eligibility: Any State of political subdivision with authority to adopt floodplain management practice. Beneficiaries may include: residents, business, and property owners in applicant community, in which like States can insure municipal structures.

e. *Flood Plain Management Services (FPMS)*

Objective: To promote appropriate recognition of flood hazards in land and water use planning and development through the provision of flood and flood plain related data, technical services, and guidance. Available information identifies area subject to flooding and flood losses from streams, lakes, and oceans, and describes flood hazard at proposed building sites. It can be used as a basis for planning flood plain use, for flood emergency preparedness planning, for hurricane evacuation and preparedness planning, for assistance in developing flood plain regulations, for setting elevations for flood proofing, and implementing flood proofing measures, and for indicating areas to be acquired for open space. Services are available to states and local governments without charge, but within annual funding limitations on request.

Eligibility: States, political subdivisions of States, other nonfederal public organizations and the public.

f. *Hurricane Program*

Objectives: To significantly reduce the loss of life, property, economic disruption, and disaster assistance costs resulting from hurricanes.

Eligibility: Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida.

g. *National Flood Insurance Program*

Objectives: Provides federally-backed flood insurance to those who generally were not able to obtain it from private-sector companies, and to promote sound floodplain management practices in flood prone areas.

h. *Physical Disaster Loans and Economic Injury Disaster Loans*

Objectives: Disaster loans to non-farm, private sector owners of disaster damaged property for uninsured losses. Loans can be increased by up to 20% for mitigation purposes.

Sponsoring Organization: Small Business Administration (SBA) National Headquarters Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance: (202)205-6734

i. *Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program*

Objectives: This program provides funding for mitigation activities before disasters strikes. In recent years it has provided assistance for mitigation planning.

Eligibility: State, local, and tribal government.

Sponsoring Organization: The Department of Homeland Security Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate.

5) Possible Revenue Streams

- a. Reduced expenses to clean up from flooding events and associated natural disasters. (\$1 in mitigation and preparedness equals a savings of \$4 in clean up!)
- b. Increases in tax revenue (more long term)
- c. Conservation areas or preservation areas may increase revenues gleaned from naturalistic endeavors, such as bird watching, hiking and wildlife observation.

In addition to the funding sources identified (Grants from various organizations – state level and private), perpetual funds may be raised by way of city subdivision regulations.

Citizen Empowerment

Introduction

Building on the vision to give the North End a significant face lift, certain goals and objectives must be identified to establish what improvements need to be made in the neighborhood, and what the community must do to get there. To ensure the viability of the community, it is important to consider the needs and concerns of current and future residents. The first step in establishing a vision is to get the citizens involved in the process is Citizen Empowerment.



Citizen Empowerment is a tool that is heavily overlooked in this neighborhood. It is the idea that citizens have the right to come together and stand up for what they believe in. In this case, the North End residents do not voice their opinions collectively. Making a clear stand on the issues in their neighborhood is important for the problem-solving process, for it creates a bond among residents of the neighborhood to the city officials. Citizen Empowerment bridges the communication gap, finds innovative solutions to challenges, and develops respect from others by their actions.

In order to get this done, citizens have to make the effort to identify the opportunities and weaknesses of their neighborhood. Who else knows what works in the neighborhood better than its residents? The residents should first meet in order to list their strengths and weaknesses. These findings need to be shared with other members in the neighborhood once they are confirmed. After this happens, the planning process can be a lot of fun. Citizens get to use creative planning skills to develop actions to improve their neighborhood. Every organization in the neighborhood (including active social groups, faith-based organizations, and the Beaumont Housing Authority, among others) needs to be involved. In order to generate a successful citizen empowerment plan, the challenge will not only come from how to make the HOPE VI

project successful, but also how to define the functions for all parties involved. Organizing this will be the hardest thing to achieve. It will take concerned leaders to achieve success.

Objectives

The primary goal for the Citizen Empowerment Objectives recommended below is to increase social capital of the North End Residents. Various strategies have been considered and evaluated, which help to not only empower the residents, but involve all associations, organizations, and government entities, who have invested in the North End community. The various components of this plan are:

1. Citizen Council
2. Neighborhood Social Groups
3. City Funding
4. Marketing and Promotions
5. Code Enforcement
6. Neighborhood Watch

Objective 1: Citizen Council

Establish an elected Citizen Council to facilitate communication between residents in the neighborhood and to city officials

The first, and possibly most important objective for the future of the neighborhood, will be the creation of the Citizen Council. The Council should comprise of progressive leaders who are passionate about improving their neighborhood. The main objective of this Council will be to voice the opinions from the neighborhood to the right officials in an effort to address problems in the best way possible. The Council should also take the time to ask city officials any questions they would like answered. This would be a good time for the Council members to receive feedback on certain issues that need to be addressed by city officials. The Council will also use this time to make themselves aware of upcoming events, special topics and plan implementation strategies. This effort to communicate will be a positive way to increase citizen's social capacity, which is a key element in improving the condition of the

neighborhood. This effort will create a bond between the city and the neighborhood, reducing the communication barriers.

Objective 2: Neighborhood Social Groups

Reestablish the social groups in this neighborhood

An emphasis on reestablishing social groups that were once active in this neighborhood is vital to the prosperity of the neighborhood. The first social groups that should be considered for reestablishment are the neighborhood associations, due to the numerous housing issues that need to be addressed. Another group of community organizations that needs to be reestablished is the faith-based organizations that once worked together to plan events. Discussions with neighborhood residents have shown that these organizations once carried this neighborhood. Many kids felt comfortable going to these organizations to receive counseling and other services. In addition, many parents were grateful for the help they received from these organizations. There are numerous other social groups that have not been mentioned, but should be considered for reestablishment as they provide help for people in times of need.

Objective 3: City Funding

The city should aid in finding funding for additional programs created in this neighborhood

The Citizen Council could help to create additional programs in order to improve their neighborhood; the history of programs created in this neighborhood in the past all appeared to fail due to a lack of funding. The proposed Council will need help in locating funding, as it can be a difficult task for a new body of authority in the neighborhood. This is a partnership that will be both healthy for the neighborhood and for the City.

Objective 4: Marketing and Promotions

Interaction with the city is needed to improve connections throughout the neighborhood and to downtown

Marketing and promotion of this neighborhood are vital to the rebuilding process. Citizens need to be in charge of improvements because they have a vision for how the neighborhood should be. The Fairgrounds brought tradition and heritage, as well as a huge influx of people. Residents of the North End looked forward to this event because it linked people from all over the city of Beaumont and neighboring towns to their neighborhood. When the Fairgrounds left the area and relocated to the west side of Beaumont, feelings of loss were endured, as this was an important venue to give the neighborhood visibility. Many residents have said the loss of the Fairgrounds has made the area feel deserted and given residents nothing to do, making the area feel dangerous. There was once lots of movement in and out of this neighborhood, which helped keep social interaction at a high and crime at a low. In order to bring back the networking between citizens in Beaumont and the North End, there needs to be a plan that attracts people to this neighborhood again. Once again these groups will need help to both market and promote the neighborhood. The lack of experience in how to initiate activities will make this a hard task to achieve alone. The citizens will need interaction and assistance from the city of Beaumont to carry this through.

Objective 5: Code Enforcement

Create a process whereby code enforcement issues can be heard and addressed by neighborhood leaders

Code enforcement is important in improving and maintaining a safe, healthy and aesthetically appealing environment. Currently in the North End, there are activities that are taking place that need to be more strictly enforced and/or prohibited. The rationale behind creating these ordinances and for advocating for more active code enforcement is due to the existing conditions within the area. The removal of dilapidated and unsafe housing will remove unsightly blights on the neighborhood, in addition to removing areas where illegal activities such as prostitution and drugs can occur. The removal of these houses will also allow for development of the lots to more easily occur, probably at a cheaper cost to the land owner. Junk and nuisance vehicles are prevalent within the North End. Instituting an ordinance requiring that the vehicles

are kept under cover and out of sight it will improve the character of the neighborhood, in addition to removing eyesores. With the prevalence of these types of vehicles in the area, an ordinance of this sort is appropriate.

To reduce the likelihood of hazardous waste (oil, coolant, transmission fluid etc.) from being absorbed directly into the soil, vehicles should be prohibited from parking on lawns and dirt lots. From site visits, it is very common for vehicles to be parked on lawns and unimproved surfaces. This includes vehicles that are able to be operated as well as junked and nuisance vehicles. Junk and nuisance vehicles are addressed previously. An ordinance of this sort will ensure that future development in the area will have improved surfaces, in addition to preventing the continued use of lawns as parking areas.

In addition to these concerns, there are several related issues within the neighborhood, including issues regarding illegal trash dumping, weeds and yard maintenance. To help improve and maintain a safe, healthy and aesthetically pleasing environment, local community members can help facilitate code enforcement issues. By creating a process by which code enforcement issues can be facilitated through neighborhood leaders, the issues within the neighborhood can be more thoroughly addressed. This is due in large part to the stake each neighborhood leader has in creating a pleasant environment for themselves as well their neighbors.

Objective 6: Neighborhood Watch

Reintroduce the Neighborhood Watch program to all residents in the North End

Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program that stresses education and common sense. It teaches citizens how to help themselves by identifying and reporting suspicious activity in their neighborhoods. In addition, it provides citizens with the opportunity to make their neighborhoods safer and improve the quality of life. Neighborhood Watch groups typically focus on observation and awareness as a means of preventing crime. They employ strategies that range from promoting social interaction and "watching out for each other", to active patrols by groups of citizens.

Some problems associated with crime and the fear of crime can be tackled through the presence of a full-time, recognizable ‘warden’. The warden would have the capacity to take preventive action against crime and disorder and provide general assistance to residents. The scheme is based on the concept that focuses on local solutions. That is, schemes tailored to meet the specific needs of the areas in which they operate and involve all relevant agencies and local residents. The proposed concept would operate in partnership with other local agencies and would combine security, housing and environmental goals.

The objective of establishing a ‘Neighborhood Warden’ team would be concentrated on the following three issues:

- **Crime prevention:** Reducing the criminal activities and restricting other anti social elements from operating in the neighborhood.
- **Environmental improvements:** Improving and maintaining the public places along with assisting in repairs and enhancing appearance of private property.
- **Community development:** Involving local residents and encouraging social activities within the neighborhood which would help in developing positive social capital.

The task of appointing individuals as ‘wardens’ or ‘caretakers’ would be accomplished through various agencies such as the local housing authority, security firms, housing associations and other multi agency partnerships. These ‘wardens’ or ‘caretakers’ can be on a voluntarily or paid basis in order to achieve the objective and goals mentioned above. The neighborhood wardens would serve a variety of functions, such as security patrols, environmental improvements, improving the appearance of private and public places, removing litter and graffiti, improving landscapes and tree planting, helping the local residents by responding to crime and tackling anti-social activities. The services of these neighborhood wardens would not be solely restricted to the area surrounding the proposed public housing, but to the entire north end neighborhood. This would cover both private residences and rental housing, in addition to various commercial establishments.

Citizen involvement is essential in combating crime, as employing a police officer on every corner is simply not feasible. Though the wardens would not have any special

powers, the mere presence of uniformed patrol within the neighborhood would help in reducing the fear of crime. The wardens would be responsible for conveying minor incidences and passing on information to the police in form of daily reports. The activities of the wardens would compliment the services provided by the police, and could save time by handling minor incidences on their own. Additionally, by providing a local force that is working for the neighborhood confidence and trust in the system can be increased as informal social control can play a role in countering existing problems. Neighborhood watch programs go by variety of names, but all of them inherently operate on the same principles. They generally follow the approaches of “opportunity reduction” or “social problems”. The goal of each of these approaches is to bring community members together on a common platform. The “opportunity reduction” works on the principle of implementing techniques to reduce crime in the neighborhood. While the “social problems” approach is based on the fact that the neighborhood can only prosper if it has a rich social capital. The main idea is to counter drug problems, target the youth, and promote athletic activities and other social events that bring people together. Encouraging positive activities in the neighborhood can help deter young people from getting involved in anti social activities and provide opportunities to increase their skills and overall self image.

Implementation Strategies

Citizen empowerment is a great tool to create a sense of belonging in this neighborhood. How to achieve this is the next question we will face. Organizational efforts are a must here and will be discussed thoroughly. With the help of all, citizen empowerment can be the most powerful benefit for living in this neighborhood. The policies discussed below are here to ensure that the strategies will find a way to be implemented in the future.

Citizen Council

Citizen Council Members should be elected by the residents in the North End neighborhood, should receive specific duties to fulfill while they are in office and should bridge the communication gap between the city and the residents of the North End.

Citizen Council members should be very motivated individuals who want to make a difference in this neighborhood. They need to be outstanding leaders and have the ability to address concerns in a healthy manner. These individuals are to be voted in by the residents to serve as their communication between the City and the residents of the North End. Guidelines for the Citizen Council should be decided on by the residents. Voting, candidates, and the details of how to achieve this are left to the rightful residents of this area to decide. These members need to attend every city council meeting so they are informed of what is going on within the city. Within these meetings, they should establish how to vote against an idea in these meetings, how often they meet, and what is required from each member, before this council is developed. This will limit the amount of problems associated with this creation. There should be a total of six regions that every Citizen Council member will serve, divided by boundaries that are defined by the public. Their specific duties will be decided on where they are serving as well. Within in the area they are serving, they will act as a chair to the active groups in this area to find out their needs and wants, as well as receive information on what events will be taking place for the month. They should then report their findings at the Citizen Council Meetings. They will also be given a special topic to address for the whole neighborhood. Examples include education, environment, parks, and schools. The Citizen Council members are who to see if you want information about the neighborhood because they are knowledgeable about what is going on in the city. These individuals are to bridge the communication gap between the residents of the neighborhood and the city.

Neighborhood Social Groups

With the establishment of the Citizen Council, they need to take on the task of helping redevelop the active social groups in this neighborhood by holding meetings until their goals and objectives are established.

In addition to the possibility of the lack of funding, these groups could have unclear goals that leave them unable to finish tasks. Monthly meetings should be held to redefine goals and objectives for each group until they are clear to everyone at the meeting. This is one of the first things that need to be established. The Citizen Council members can then meet with the groups to write their group goals and action plan. A database should be made with the name of each group, their goals and objectives, as well as their action plan for the Citizen Council to have on hand. The Citizen Council can use this if someone were to call them looking for a group to join. This organization method is an important way to influence citizen empowerment. Clear goals and plans from the group members and the attendees will be a way for residents to decide if they are interested in certain groups. Through this organization method, Citizen Council members will be clear on what the groups need and want from them.

City Funding

The city needs to consult the active groups and the Citizen Council in this neighborhood on how to successfully plan one social event every month of the year in the North End.

Any active group in the North End that wants to be involved in promotions should be involved in finding an event for every month of the year the North End can put on. Every group can decide how involved they want to be. For example, the gardening group might want to hold a plant selling event for January, but not be involved with cleaning up the neighborhood in July. Because of this, every active group in the neighborhood should meet with the Citizen Council to decide on what events will be used for every month. The groups will discuss the event and vote for or against it until the events are organized for the entire year. There is no limit for the number of events one group can participate in, and every group will be encouraged to attend all if they can. Certain events may need more marketing to be a success. This is where the Citizen Council could use input on how to do so. The Citizen Council will be allowed to meet with the City Council members to discuss their ideas, while the city provides consultation on the how's and why's. Residents have complained that there is nothing to do in their neighborhood since the Fairgrounds venue left. This is why active groups should promote activities that can appeal to everyone in the neighborhood, including

seniors, children and people who are in between the two age groups. This is also a great way to increase citizen empowerment through the planning of these events and finding people to participate. Positive feelings will be created through this, knowing that you are giving back to your neighborhood. An example for the month of April could be a “replant” where various groups come together to plant trees and flowers at the proposed gateway entrance. The plants could be donated from local nurseries, they could be grown by people in the neighborhood, or monies from each group could be donated to buy plants for this event. All of these details will be decided by the active group who’s in charge of it, with consultation from the city.

Marketing and Promotions

The City of Beaumont and the Citizens Council should interact to hold one large venue in conjunction with the downtown district, in order to restore social ties between residents in this neighborhood and the residents in Beaumont.

Since the neighborhood residents have expressed isolation, promoting a venue with downtown is a must to promote circulation. In order to achieve this goal, there has to be interaction between the city and the Citizen Council. The goal will be to use a branding theme for this neighborhood and make it a hit for years to come. Specific social groups within the North End (decided by the citizens and the Citizen Council) can brainstorm ideas and come to an agreement with the city on what theme it will be. The event will then be planned for every year around the same date to replace the Fairground event. An example of an event could be a “heritage day” with activities such as quilt-making, kettle corn, an antique show and the like that starts downtown and ends at the Pruitt Center with a barbeque and live band. It could serve as an event for many to enjoy from throughout the city. Linking this event to downtown will aim to attract a new variety of people to the neighborhood.

Code Enforcement

The Citizen Council, with input and guidance from North End residents, should document and report violations, and push for additional code enforcement manpower to assist in enforcement.

There are three key objectives that should be met by these additional ordinances and manpower, these include:

- To reduce and stop the illegal trash dumping within the North End
- To enlist residents in the enforcement of ordinances
- To reduce hazardous waste due to vehicles parked and stored on lawns

To accomplish this task, the Citizen Council should be proactive in pushing for additional code enforcement. To help with implementation, there are short term and long term policies that should be put in place.

Policies:

- *Short Term* – The Citizen Council should push for the City to hire additional code enforcement officers so that patrol areas are not too expansive.
- *Short Term* – Citizen Empowerment in the form of neighborhood organizations is the best way to encourage assistance both in location of dumping and identification of dumping culprits.
- *Long Term* – The Citizen Council should introduce an ordinance to require vehicles to park on a paved or improved surface. This ordinance will require that all vehicles in front and side yards be parked on paved surfaces, and not on the lawn. It will apply to residential zoning districts, including single-family houses. In addition existing unimproved driveways and parking areas will be required to improve to current standards if:
 - The driveway or parking is expanded.
 - The size of the home is expanded by more than 25%.
 - More than 60% of the home's value is destroyed.
 - A supplemental provision to this ordinance will be the removal of abandoned, nuisance or junked vehicles from streets and private property.
 - Abandoned vehicles would be defined as those left on a public highway for more than a week.
 - A nuisance vehicle would be one determined to be a breeding ground for mosquitoes, rats or other pests and a source of danger to children.

- A junked vehicle would be one that does not display a current license plate and is partially damaged or wrecked, cannot be driven or is more than five years old and appears to be worth less than \$100. A junked vehicle would be allowed on private property if kept under cover and is not visible from the street.

The Citizen Council should hear code enforcement issues and facilitate them through a process that provides assistance when needed and forwards complaints on to the City when compliance has not been met.

With complaints being made about various code enforcement issues, including trash dumping, efforts need to be made by neighborhood leaders to ensure that compliance of city codes are being met. By utilizing the Citizen Council, neighborhood leaders can hear complaints and offer assistance to help bring issues up to code. This helps those citizens that may not be able to physically, financially or for any other specified reason maintain or keep up their property. For the neighbors that refuse assistance and for those complaints that fail to be addressed, the Citizen Council can forward the complaints on to the City of Beaumont to proceed with fines.

Neighborhood Watch

The neighborhood watch program shall be for the people and by the people. Hence all the decisions of its operation, methodology, and maintenance shall be taken up by the residents of the neighborhood themselves. A unique solution pertaining to the local area needs to be developed by the residents themselves. General guidelines for maintaining an effective neighborhood watch program can be generalized as follows.

- Identify community leaders who will involve neighborhood residents
- Identify and prioritize residents problems
- Build a partnership between law enforcement and the residents.
- Assess neighborhood needs jointly by residents, law enforcement agencies, and the watch program volunteers.

- Select and train an active body of volunteers to be led by organized and motivated leaders.
- Develop meaningful projects that are goal oriented so that progress can be assessed, appreciated and rewarded.

Next Steps

After the Citizen Council is established, the timeline for the next steps need to be addressed. The first step will be the creation of the Citizen Council. Within one month, the Citizen Council needs to settle with their special topic in mind, along with the mission to find out what the residents want. To accomplish this, the Citizen Council can send out a survey to each residence, provide a question and answer session at local churches or even provide handouts at local stores. Documentation of the residents “wants” is the most important aspect of this exercise.

The members of the council will need to sit down with each other and establish goals for the neighborhood, on both a monthly and yearly basis. The surveys need to be thoroughly examined and the use of a ranking system should be in place in order to place priorities on the various issues. This task should be completed within two months. The next step for the Citizen Council is to work on the neighborhood. This is where the Council will organize the various items they will be dealing with. The Council will first brainstorm on what they think the calendar of events should be, along with a description. When the new active social groups are formed, a vote should take place to determine what events they would like to see for the 12-month period. Sign-ups will be held to determine which groups will participate. These groups will be vital in the final decision-making process. After this occurs, consultation between these groups and the Citizen Council will take place. When this is completed, the Council can move on to discuss all of their ideas with the city. The goal to complete these tasks is within six months.

Lastly, the Citizen Council should be ready to discuss with the city what they need. The Citizen Council has already established their goals for each month and for the full year, they have found the needs of the residents and have helped the active groups set goals, they have come up with their calendar of events for the every month of the year, and

now they are willing to share their findings with the city. They have allowed themselves a total of nine months to get this all together. The next step is to discuss how to achieve these events, and when they are ready they will be discussing how to promote the large venue that happens every year.

Resources

There are many resources which are available to the City of Beaumont and to the residents of the North End neighborhood that can help attain the goals stated earlier. There are a few current and past programs which have been operated by the Beaumont Police Department that can be used to develop the neighborhood watch programs.

Citizen on Patrol (COP)

The Beaumont police department explains the Citizen On Patrol (COP) scheme in detail on its website. “In early 1995, the Beaumont Police Department, along with several Beaumont neighborhood associations, initiated a program called Citizens On Patrol (C.O.P.). The program consists of volunteers from established Beaumont neighborhood associations who donate their time to patrol their neighborhood while driving their own vehicles or vehicles provided by their organization. The object of the program is to provide more eyes and ears on the streets observing and reporting crime and/or suspicious activity. Program guidelines prohibit participants from actions that would place them in a confrontational situation. Each vehicle is equipped with a cellular telephone in which to call in incidents requiring police attention. Corporate sponsors and private individuals underwrite the program to help pay for cellular phones, magnetic signs for participants' vehicles, miscellaneous equipment and distinctive clothing,” (www.beaumontpd.com/cop.asp). The program provides sufficient training to all the volunteers at its own expense and is adjusted around the schedule of the volunteers.

Citizen Police Academy

There is another program which is offered by the city's Police Department which is called 'Citizen Police Academy'. This program is a joint effort between the Beaumont Police Department, the Pt. Arthur Police Department, the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department and the Lamar Institute of Technology. Under this program the volunteers are given training regarding various law enforcement aspects. The curriculum generally spans for 13 weeks with two sessions per week.



Citizen Police Academy at the Beaumont Police Department

This can be an excellent opportunity to train volunteers for the neighborhood watch program as the courses are free of charge. The added advantage of taking this course is that the volunteers would then be eligible to join the 'Tri-Agency Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association'. This agency provides additional opportunities for training, networking and community service through the organization.

North End Neighborhood Association

There already exist a number of neighborhood associations in the city of Beaumont. One that was formed, but is not currently active is the North End Neighborhood Association. The association does not currently meet, but there are resources which are available through which the association can be reactivated. C.O.P officers can be contacted to help in that regard as they are willing to provide resources, training and other means to help reactivate and rejuvenate the association. Programs like neighbor-



hood associations and neighborhood watch are very effective as revitalizing tools, but they generally take time to produce tangible results as success is not obtained overnight.

Patience, planning and enthusiasm are required to create effective neighborhood watch programs.

Citizen Empowerment Programs

In order to make the neighborhood self reliant and to bring back power in the hands of the residents of the neighborhood, financial initiatives must be explored and implemented. Numerous programs exist for the North End to gain access to funds from the local level to the Federal level. Various financial avenues can be driven to fund the scope of ideas presented. The marginalized, low-income population of the North End can achieve success with financial education and awareness.

Citizen Empowerment cannot take place without defining three overarching goals. The first goal is to increase neighborhood literacy rates. The second goal is to encourage faith-based and community initiatives. Finally, the third goal is to offer local financial funding opportunities for the people in the North End to use at their disposal under the guidance of the suggested Citizen's Council.

- **Literacy**

- The first objective is to increase literacy rates by initializing more reading instruction and curriculum activities in the North End. Implementation will involve contacting Lamar University and the National Institute for Literacy (<http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/adulthood.html>, 2008).
- Purpose- The purpose of the adolescent and adult reading program is to increase the literacy rate of the North End neighborhood residents. The first step is to identify programs capable of succeeding in the area that will achieve positive outcomes. All aspects of life require the ability to not only read, but to comprehend and retain what is studied. Responsible roles such as paying bills, fixing a car, and following cooking instructions all require the ability to read. Ultimately, it is the goal of the program to ready the population of the North End for post-secondary education and gainful employment at an early age.
- How the Funds May Be Used- America's Literacy Directory (<http://www.literacydirectory.org/>) may be accessed for volunteer

directories that will enter the community and begin a literacy program. Most importantly, community empowerment is strengthened by connecting employers, learners, and social service providers through this program. In this case, grants are available for literacy studies, but the North End would greatly benefit from practical applications.

- **Faith-based activities**

- The next objective is to encourage more Faith-based community activities by having continuous events at the Pruitt Center that coincide with various religious holidays during the year. Federal funding is available for this option if residents wish to explore this scenario more in the future. Here, implementation is achieved through discretionary and mandatory grants that are made available for funding communities in need (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fbci/>, 2008).

- **Funding Alternatives**

- The third objective seeks to catalyze local and more immediate funding alternatives. There are programs that will enable the North End population to gather financial resources to empower themselves on a local basis. These include: Oil & Gas Sustainable Community Development Funds (<http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/commdev.nsf/Content/AboutUs>), and Community Outreach and Assistance Partnership Agreements (http://www.raconline.org/funding/funding_details.php?funding_id=551), which are also available to the public.

Neighborhood Crime Strategies

Of all the images which depict the North End, the most negative image is in relation to safety, fear, and crime. There is a perceived high crime rate in the neighborhood which affects the residents, not only socially, but even economically (as seen through the reluctance of businesses to establish in the area). One effective and quick solution could be re-designing some areas in the neighborhood in a way that reduces the opportunities to commit crimes. This could be attained by analyzing the nature of the crimes and physical characteristics of the place; then providing design or other practical solutions could minimize the occurrence of crime.

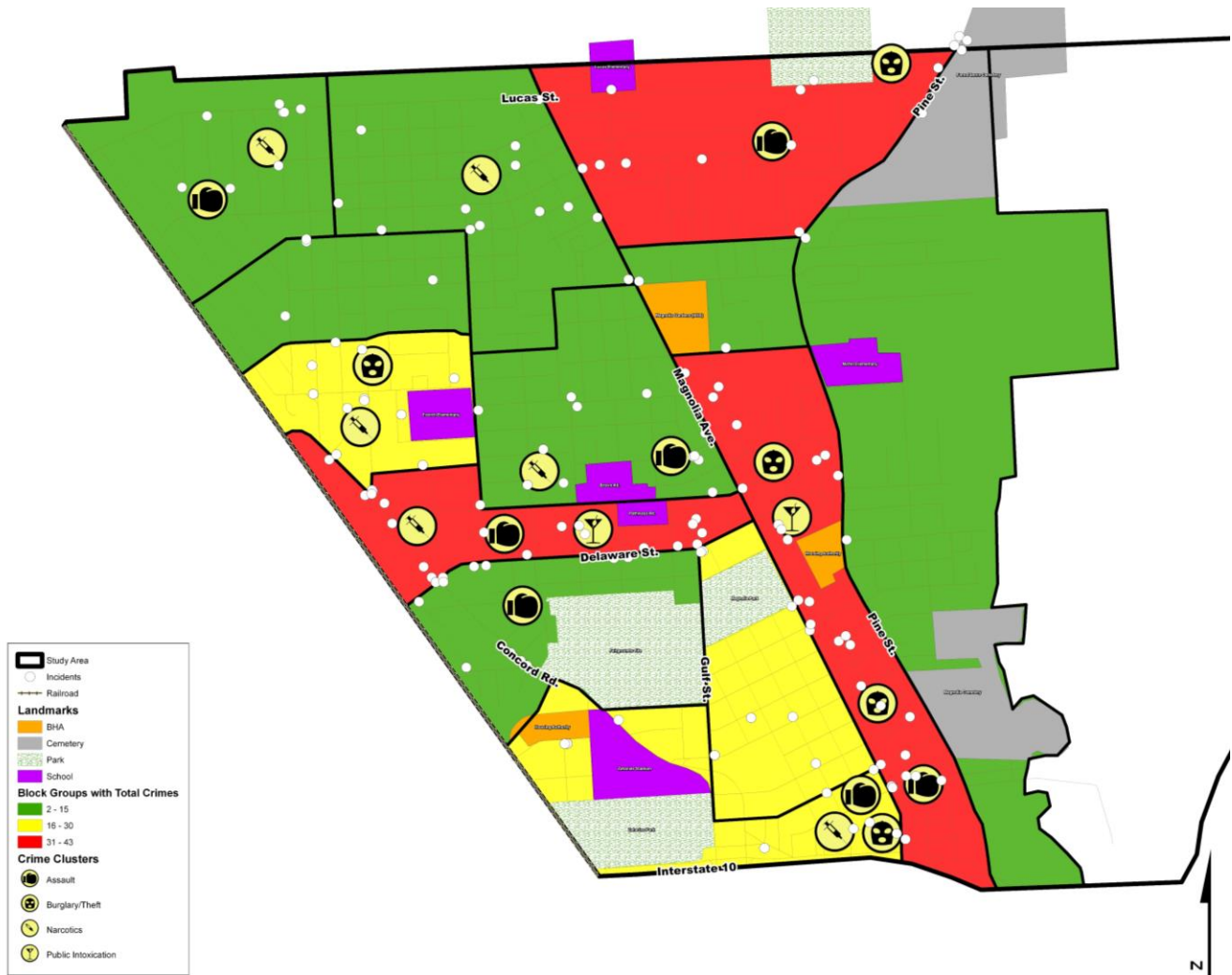
Crime, and the fear of crime, are major challenges to the livability of our communities. More often than not, the physical environment creates an opportunity for crime which dictates our feelings about the fear of crime. Every crime generally has an involvement of three elements: a perpetrator, a victim, and an opportunity. Removal of even one from the picture would drastically reduce the total amount of crime occurrence.

Nature of Crime

Crimes which are mainly found in the neighborhood can be broadly classified under the following categories:

1. Assault
2. Burglary/ Theft
3. Narcotics related
4. Public Intoxication

Figure: Beaumont Crime Statistics for June, August, and October, 2007



Informal/ Formal Paths

Assaults generally occur at the locations where the victim is at rest, or maintains an unguarded slow pedestrian movement. Areas where there is no street vigilance, that is, places which lack “eyes on the street,” are potential crime spots. Seeing and being seen in the neighborhood is an essential ingredient in preventing crimes of opportunity. Areas where the victim has no escape routes also act as potential crime spots for assault to occur.

Location: Intersection of Delaware and Cleveland Street

Reasons for Concern:

The intersection of the two streets is marked by the presence of a large parking lot for the Region 5 Education Service Center. Such large parking lots are often targeted by criminals to attack people. The under-utilized nature of the parking lot makes it very easy to assault a victim who is in isolation from the rest of the community.

Recommendation:

The probable solution could be reducing the area of the parking lot, and bringing the parking area close to the street. If such a solution is not possible, due to the parking requirement, specific restricted entry and exit points should be created. With a specified boundary or low fence, the property would give a sense of enclosed space, and hence would act in pacifying the fear of crime at the same time. Additionally, the parking space should be well lit to make it more secure.

Location: Near the Intersection of Delaware and Magnolia Avenue; Gill Street



Reasons for Concern:

This site and a few others across the neighborhood face a problem where the pedestrians use paths which are informal in nature and which might come under the

category of ‘cut-throughs.’ These informal paths, which lack proper walking facilities and other street lighting amenities, act as potential nodes for crimes such as assault. A walker on these paths could be an easy target as the escape routes are limited and there is dense vegetation, making surveillance of these areas impossible.

Recommendation:

The presence of informal paths signifies a need for a connection between the two adjoining streets which in the present case scenario is absent. Spaces which are trespassed, or have informal walking routes in between houses, can be converted into formal walkable paths. Proper street lighting should be provided so that area becomes more user-friendly, especially at night.

Images: Formal Paths



Pocket Parks/ Community Gardens

Drug and alcohol misuse are key drivers of crime. The call is not just to reduce the harm caused to the health of those using drugs and alcohol in harmful ways, but to reduce harm caused to the community as a result of associated crime, disorder, and anti-social behavior.

The crime data suggests that problems of narcotics are observed more around the places which are isolated and are in very bad physical condition; likewise, abandoned and neglected properties are often linked with the problems of crime in the neighborhood. These places act as havens for anti-social people to operate their illegal businesses.

Locations: Intersection of Isle Ave., Cable Ave. and Magnolia; Intersection of Delaware and Concord Street

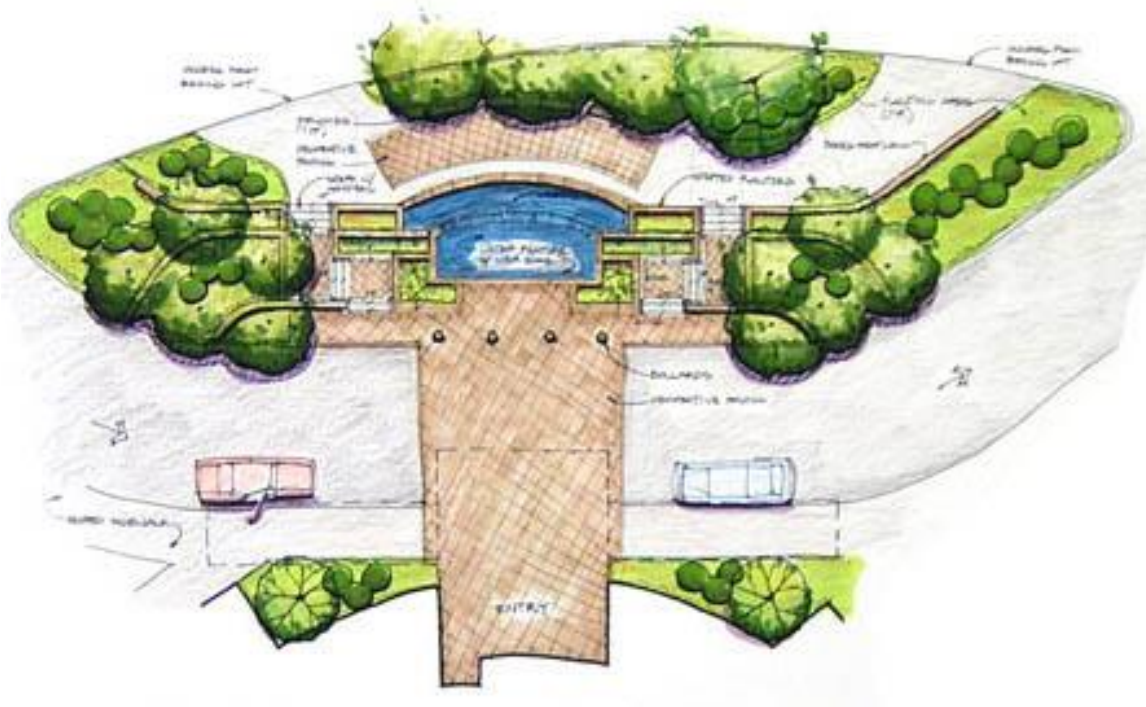
**Reasons for Concern:**

The presence of a junk yard with heavy vegetation in the back might provide a safe area for drug dealers and other anti-social elements to hide and do business. Also the area has very low residential density, which makes it more isolated than other areas of the neighborhood. This results in incidences of assaults.

Recommendations:

Vigilance by the police and neighborhood watch groups is needed over the activity of the junk yards. If these spaces are not in use, the City might even consider demolishing the structure using the code enforcement tool. The City should work to create spaces for public use out of the vacant plots, so that the areas do not remain completely isolated and underutilized. These abandoned places can act as sites which can be developed into places which can act as public activity nodes; a few illustrations highlight the possible uses for these lots.

- Pocket Parks- These lots, once acquired, can be developed into pocket parks, which are open spaces owned and managed by local residents in the neighborhood. Culturally, pocket parks reinforce a positive link between local authorities and communities. Socially, they assist with the regeneration of rundown areas (www.pocketparks.com).

Images: Pocket Parks



- Community Gardens- A second use of abandoned properties could be in the form of ‘Community Gardens.’ Community gardens transform empty lots into green, living spaces. They are collaborative projects created by members of the community; residents share in both the maintenance and rewards of the garden. “There are an estimated 10,000 community gardens within the U.S. The simple act of planting a garden can create positive environmental, economical, and social impacts on a neighborhood. These gardens foster cultural understanding and an awareness of the environment around us” (www.midspring.com). Community gardening improves people’s quality of life by providing a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulating social interaction, encouraging self-reliance, beautifying neighborhoods, producing nutritious food, reducing family food budgets, conserving resources, and creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education (www.communitygarden.org).

Images: Community gardens





Treatment of Public Spaces

Design can be used as a tool to aid crime prevention by incorporating features into potential targets that make criminal activity less appealing to the criminal. Public spaces and other potential spaces, once treated with appropriate design, can change the ambiance of the place in a manner which no longer appeals to the anti-social elements. Some of the elements which need to be developed and treated are as follows:

- **Neighborhood Gateways and Entries-** These serve as the first impressions of a neighborhood. The images conveyed through these design elements affect the way residents feel about the place in which they live and the way visitors perceive the level of pride and ownership within the neighborhood.
- **Bus Stops and Public Nodes-** Bus stops are the places where people come and meet, albeit for a limited duration, and thus have a potential to be developed as nodes. In the present scenario, the North End neighborhood has bus stops all around, but hardly any have proper waiting facilities. The mere existence of a sign stop makes the bus stop a very undesirable place for a person to wait for the bus. Absence of any formal structure makes the existing bus stop a highly prone area for crimes in the night. Hence building proper bus stops is necessary around the neighborhood. Not only can bus stops act as potential nodes, but they can

serve as information kiosks and emergency phone centers. These facilities, all combined, could make the area “perceivably” more safe, and hence would also help in achieving increased ridership. Additionally, advertising around bus stops could generate revenue for the Transit Authority to put towards maintenance of the proposed bus stops.

Design Principles for Crime Reduction and Community Safety

The following are design guidelines which should be considered while redeveloping the neighborhood:

- Maximize the number of people through a mix of uses and activities
- Deter criminal activity through smart building design
- Define boundaries for all public and private spaces
- Maximize surveillance opportunities for observation of criminal activity, such as lighting and other security measures
- Design footpaths and bikeways to maximize their use and prevent opportunities for concealment
- Plant landscaping to deter access through private property

Building Design

Natural surveillance should be maximized when deciding on the provision and position of windows; consider a balance is still necessary between the extent of surveillance and the loss of privacy. Design elements, like that of street furniture, fencing, roof extensions, etc., might help in providing unlawful entry to the building.

Defensible Public and Private Space

To protect spaces from criminal activity and vandalism, spaces should be assigned boundaries, ownership, and responsibility. Creating clearly defined boundaries would help reduce criminal activities. Physical barriers (buildings, lines, walls, fences, gates) should be incorporated at public and private spaces to prevent unhindered access and easy escape routes. In places where providing physical barriers is not possible, alternate design solutions shall be implemented; for instance, changing

the paving material, or narrowing the entrance, can suggest a change in the boundary line or ownership.

Natural Surveillance

By utilizing natural observation by occupants of the neighborhood, pedestrians, and passing cyclists and motorists, it is possible to create an environment within the criminal feels uncomfortable and exposed. This is the key principle of the Neighborhood Watch schemes that rely on the potential for surveillance and reporting to deter crime. The greater the levels of public use of spaces and footpaths, the greater the level of surveillance achieved. Good lighting schemes can extend the effectiveness of natural observation beyond daylight hours=

Conclusion

In summary, empowering the citizenry is a task that must be initiated and pursued by the people in the North End. All of the policies, objectives, and goals created here are only visions of what might be when people come together for a common cause. The root causes of this demographics' place within the city of Beaumont have been addressed with literacy programs and mentorship programs for children, adolescents, and adults together.

North End citizens may also find comfort in participating in the Citizens Police Academy, thereby serving as their own watchdogs. Even further, the creation of a Citizens' Council will advance leadership and raise a voice to the rest of Beaumont about the neighborhood's needs. Together, all of the aforementioned goals, objectives, and policies should offer a new beginning for the people of the North End.

Economic Development

Introduction

The primary objective of this section is to make recommendations which position the North-End to compete for economic development opportunities in the region by providing sustainable commercial development. Additionally, it is important to also provide employment opportunities for the poor and upwardly mobile, and strengthen the transportation infrastructure to support the effective, efficient and safe movement of people to and from main work centers in the region. In order to attract future development, ample opportunities in the neighborhood must be created to balance out the growth mostly occurring in the downtown and west end of the city. Accessibility to and from the neighborhood, via transit hubs, will create better access to shopping, commercial, and residential areas. The rebirth of the area will decrease the number of vacant and abandoned properties, economically revitalizing a community with potential for multiple developments.

Redevelopment Proposals

In order to revitalize the deteriorating areas of the neighborhood and create a safer environment, various strategies have been considered, several of which are discussed in this plan.

1. Delaware Street Redevelopment Corridor
2. North End Towne Center
3. Magnolia Corridor Redevelopment Plan
4. Zaharias Park Redevelopment

Proposal 1: Delaware Street Redevelopment Corridor

Objectives:

- To create coordinated land uses and development within the neighborhood so that they are mutually beneficial and coherent.
- To facilitate the economic growth in the neighborhood and create nodes for future development of the neighborhood.
- To provide job training facility to the young in the neighborhood so that they can fall in the mainstream of the community.
- To provide connections to the job markets within the neighborhood and those outside the neighborhood.

Rationale:

Zacharias Park:

The entire neighborhood has a lot of un-coordinated land uses. For example; the Zacharias Park though important to the people is inefficient use of land due to its current zoning. The land itself could be used for commercial activity rather than just be a park. This will generate revenue for the city and the Park can be relocated to other more suitable places within the neighborhood. The commercial activity in the Zacharias Park does not depend on the condition of the North End hence this project could be launched even before other redevelopment projects are commenced. This Commercial district will be dependent on the freeway traffic and hence could be the immediate project in the neighborhood. The relocation of Zacharias Park closer to the neighborhood would improve the use of the park. In the relocation and rezoning process we would displace about thirty three families. These families could be accommodated in the vacant lots spread throughout the neighborhood. With the plan to increase density and rebuild housing there is enough opportunity for these displaced people to relocate within the same neighborhood.

Delaware Street Redevelopment:

The neighborhood does not have a town center or a core. Hence there is a need to have one major commercial street in the neighborhood. The area along the Delaware Street should be rezoned as commercial as it will form a nice commercial spine of the neighborhood. This spine is central and has bus service and will give the entire neighborhood a financial boost. A town center for the neighborhood can be created at the intersection of Delaware and Magnolia. This town center would be so close to the proposed Pine Street trail that people could come to the downtown and generate business. (Refer to detailed rational in the implementation strategy for Delaware Street Redevelopment.)

Library Relocation and Other Commercial nodes:

The local library is located outside of the neighborhood. The relocation of the library to the core of the neighborhood will provide neighborhood residents with greater access to this valuable educational resource, and will aid in the education of kids attending the schools in the neighborhoods. The library will also benefit from all the additional patrons who can access the library without waiting for the bus.

There is also a need for small commercial nodes in the neighborhood apart from the major Delaware Street commercial areas discussed before. These will function as small business commercial nodes. They will also increase the walkability of the neighborhood. One of the proposed commercial nodes is at the intersection of Fillmore Street and Steelton Street and the other one at Magnolia Street and Gill Street

Policies

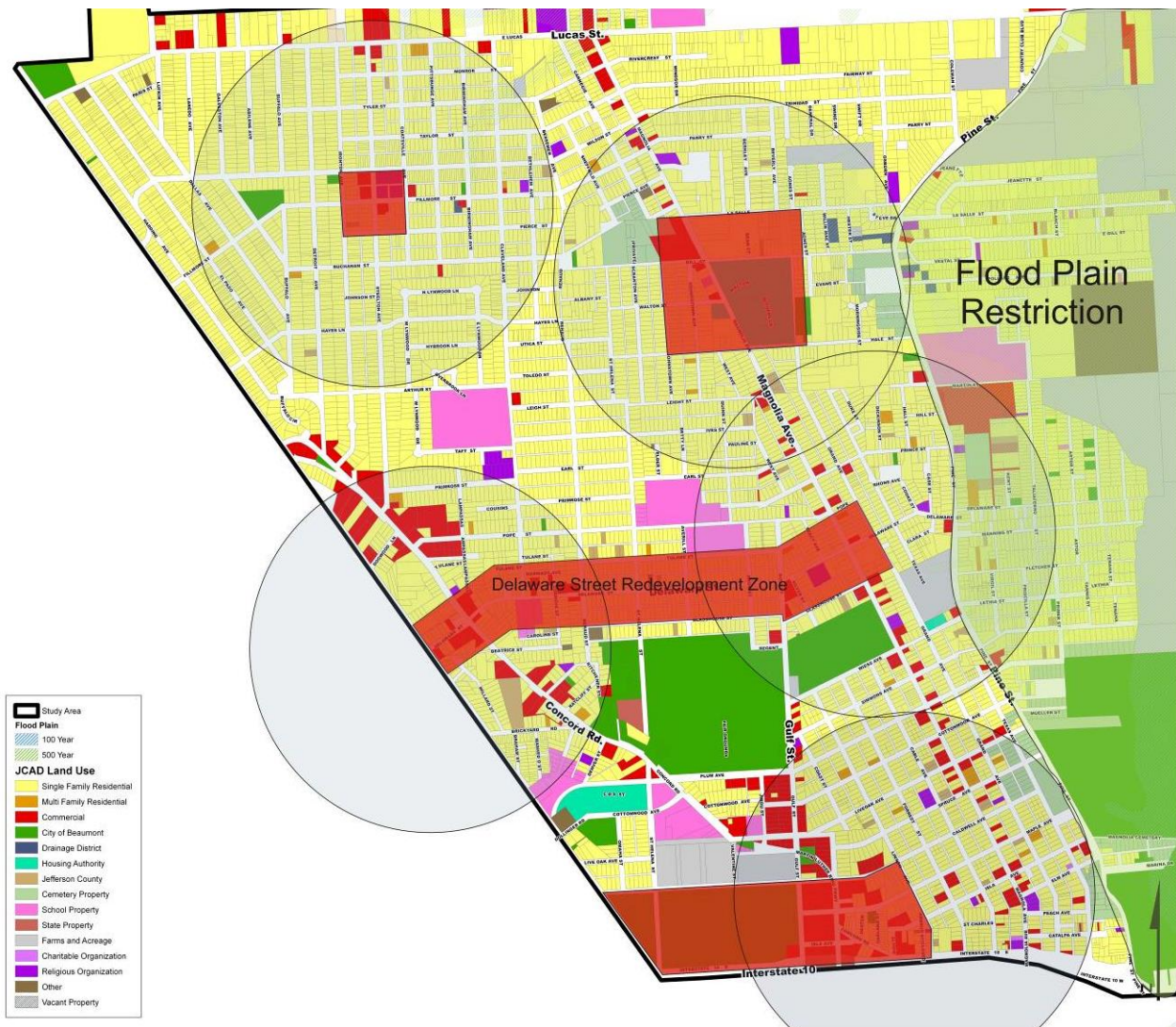
- Long Term- Rezone the area close to Delaware Street to commercial or mixed use or a planned unit development. The creation of a Tax Increment Financing District can also incentivize the development of commercial activity in that area. (Refer implementation strategy detail for Delaware Street Development.)

- Long Term- Relocate Zacharias Park to other location and rezone that tract of land to commercial. Zacharias Park can be relocated either to the redevelopment node or to the flood plain conservation area.
- The community outreach program would provide the displaced people with assistance or give them some incentives. The displacement of people should not be very bad as there are enough vacant properties in the neighborhood to accommodate the displaced people.
- Long Term- Create a commercial node at the intersection of Fillmore Street and Steelton Avenue. This could be done by either rezoning the area or by land banking initiated by a CDC. This commercial node would provide the immediate vicinity with daily services. Another node needs to be created at the intersection of Gill Street and Magnolia Avenue so that no part in the neighborhood is further than a small walk.
- Short Term; The Public Library needs to be relocated. The current location for the Library is not beneficial to either the library or to the community. Hence to relocate the Library to a better location well connected with bus service would be appropriate. The Library could be relocated in the commercial node proposed at the intersection of Fillmore Street and Steelton Avenue or at the intersection of Gill Street and Magnolia Avenue.

The Plan:

The improvements made to the Delaware Street shall from now on be referred as the *Delaware Street Redevelopment Corridor*. This redevelopment will not only generate business in the neighborhood but provide a much needed urban core for the neighborhood. The proposal is to develop the Delaware corridor as a business corridor, to be either exclusively commercial or mixed use depending on the public opinion. The entire street shall become the core of the neighborhood and serve as the soul of the neighborhood. This core shall have various businesses and commercial activities that provide much needed services to the residents. For mixed use, the core shall have a small percentage of residential units.

Image: Delaware Development Plan



The North End neighborhood has a lot of commercially zoned land which is either occupied by residences or is vacant with no structure. This causes the spread of an incoherent development commercial center and it does not give a “town feel”. A smaller area needs to be assigned with commercial zoning which would unify the neighborhood rather than divide.

Magnolia Street is zoned commercial, but is over-zoned and splits the neighborhood into East and West sections. However, we are suggesting there is one probable location. Delaware Street in the North End District of Beaumont is one of the major spines that are equidistant from all parts of the neighborhood. A redevelopment effort here would lead to the economic development of the entire neighborhood. Delaware Street connects to a major thoroughfare; Magnolia Street. No other street in the neighborhood has the same set of characteristics as Delaware Street. We are proposing the conversion of Delaware Street from residential to either a mixed use, or commercial land use. This change will have a positive effect on the entire neighborhood.

Delaware Street is approximately at the center of the neighborhood. It does not divide the neighborhood into two parts, as Magnolia Street does. Delaware Street is also smaller in length as compared to Magnolia Street. This will allow for restricting the over-zoning of a commercial district. Small but dense commercial with a “town feel” would be the character of this new urban core for the neighborhood. Since the street is central, reaching it should be relatively easy. The Delaware Street is also wide enough to support the new development that we are proposing and the infrastructure also looks good on the street.

Image: Delaware Street 1



Image: Delaware Street 2



Delaware Street is one block away from the fair grounds (as it was previously known) where the new HOPE VI development is being built. This will benefit both the new residential development and the development of new businesses. The residential units of Hope VI will benefit from the shopping opportunity a block away and the businesses shall benefit, in return, on account of the increase in the population in its immediate surrounding.

Another major factor of selecting Delaware Street is that it is primarily vacant lots and existing housing is dilapidated. The lots have an abundance of manufactured housing units and many of them still have the blue tarps on their roofs post Hurricane Rita. This will allow the CDC or the Land Banking facility to acquire the land easily. The cost of land is also less, implying that the base value for the start of the TIF district shall also be much less.

There is a capital improvement plan to connect Delaware to I10 which would attract even more people to the neighborhood and in turn will benefit the businesses. Once the streets are connected, this will have a greater potential for the neighborhood to stabilize and bounce back to life.

Image: Delaware Street 3



Proposal 2: North End Towne Center



Objective:

The North End area of Beaumont is unique in its character and its diversity. The strengths in the neighborhood stem from the citizens that reside in the community, and are what make the North End a desirable place to live. However the North End also has some difficulties: lack of access to basic services and proximity to employment to name a few at the top the list.

Past and present zoning in the North End has seen a level of retail/commercial that is too much for the population in its market area. As a result, services are spread out, and are not able to be self sustaining in the community. Because of this disconnect within the community, businesses fail and residents look outward for basic services that should be contained within the neighborhood. Also, in retail planning there is a shift that is occurring from the previous “strip” development to one this is focused on retail nodes.

The North End Town Centre is a proposed mixed use center that encompasses retail and residential uses in close proximity to each other in order to increase economic prosperity and neighborhood benefit. It is located near the junction of three major

streets and just north of the Pruitt Center and Magnolia Park. It is also located in the center of three major Beaumont Housing Authority (BHA) sites.

The purpose of this “Towne Centre” is to stimulate economic development, encourage higher density housing and create a greater quality of life for residents in the North End. Although the area is small compared to the rest of the North End, the hope is that this example of good development in the center of the community will spread out over time through the whole area.

Rationale:

Existing Conditions

This area of the North End has strengths, but it also has many weaknesses. The pre-existing condition of the structures, streets, sidewalks, and transit give an image of what needs to be done and how to accomplish the goals for the neighborhood.

Building Stock

The District has a wide variety of uses including both commercial and residential. Some of these are in good condition, and some are in poor condition. The commercial land uses are spread out around The District currently, and the residential single family land uses dominate the area in numbers. Both Magnolia and Gulf Street have a number of commercial properties, but their specific use and condition differ dramatically. As can be seen in the following figures, the commercial properties along Magnolia and Gulf are quite different, with varying degrees of building condition.

BEAUMONT NORTH END REVITALIZATION

Image: Magnolia Avenue Parcels- NAICS Code Descriptions

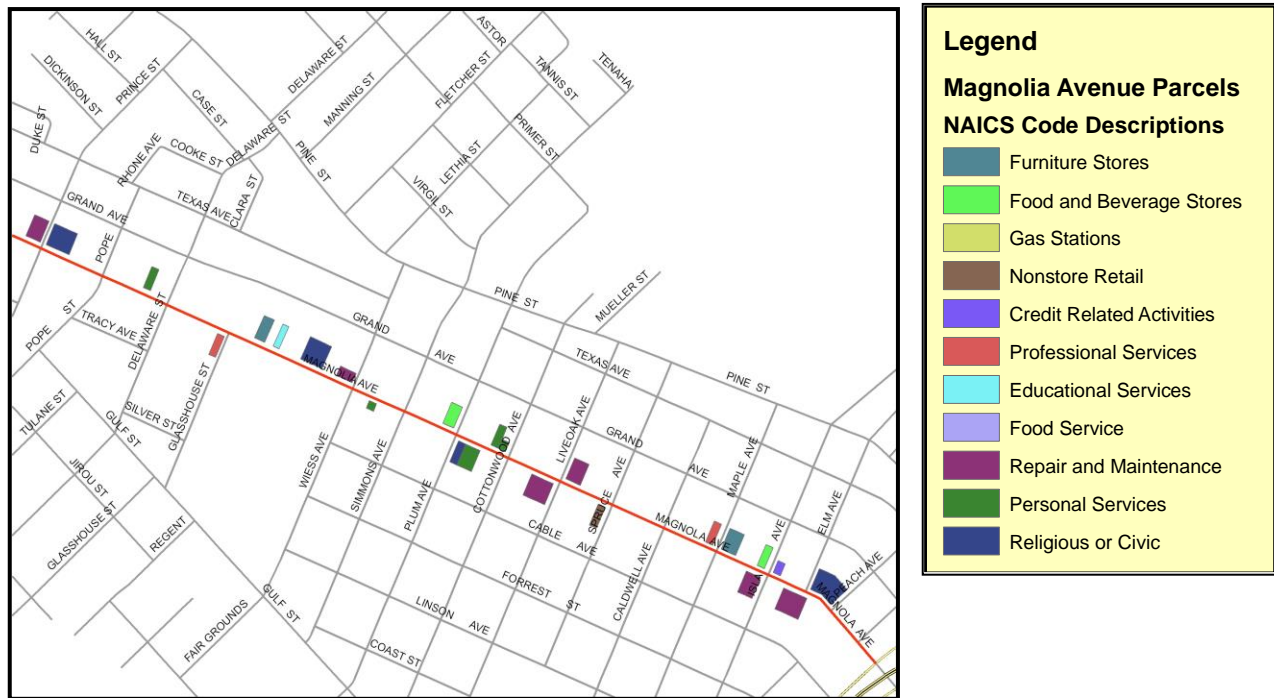
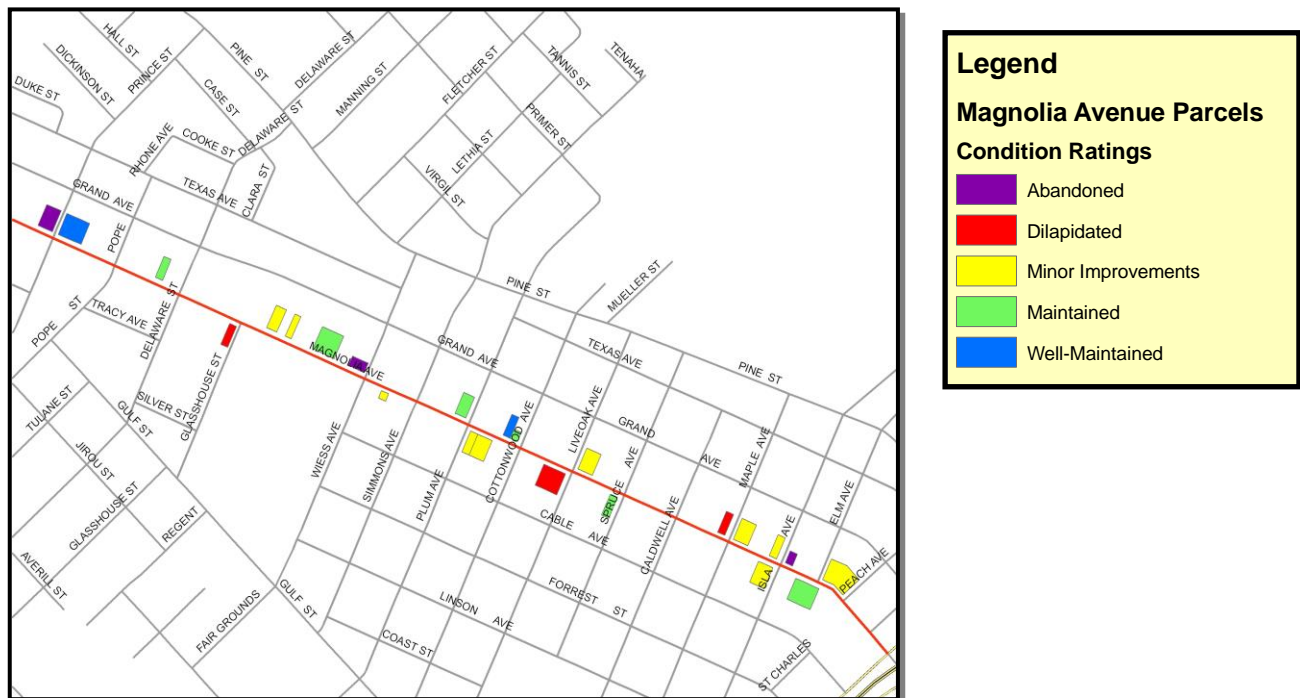


Image: Magnolia Avenue Parcels- Condition Ratings



Roads

In The District, three major roads intersect to create an excellent location for an activity center for commercial and retail development. These streets are Magnolia, Delaware and Gulf. There are also a number of residential streets in The District that connect the homes to these arterials. However the main focus is on those major streets such as Magnolia and Gulf.

- Magnolia Avenue – The road has a right-of-way (ROW) width of 40' with four-lane traffic (two lanes in each direction). The pavement conditions on this street are moderate with asphalt as the material used.
- Delaware Street – The ROW for this road is 30' with two lane traffic and a parking lane on the south side of the street. This street is made of concrete that is in excellent condition.
- Gulf Street – This road is approximately 20-30' in width with poor pavement conditions

Sidewalks

Due to the fact that there is a tremendous amount of pedestrian traffic in the North End, the issue of sidewalks is important. Children walk to school, the elderly go for afternoon walks, and the residents often walk to the store to pick up goods. In the North End this is a common occurrence, but the infrastructure is not built in a way to support this type of travel.

In The District there are three types of sidewalk conditions: connected, disconnected, and no sidewalks. Connected sidewalks are ones that have a continuous concrete without any gaps or overgrown grass. Disconnected sidewalks will be in poor condition with numerous gaps and over grown grass. And finally, having no sidewalks is self-explanatory.

Image: ‘Disconnected’ and ‘No Sidewalks’ conditions



Image: ‘Connected’ Sidewalk conditions



Transit

Currently Beaumont Metropolitan Transit (BMT) has two routes that serve within The District boundaries: the “Pine” route and “Magnolia” route. Both of these routes connect to the Dannenbaum Station, located downtown. From that central transfer location, they can connect to any other route in the city. BMT operates quite efficiently in the North End, with 30 minute headways; the Magnolia route the highest ridership in the city. The next section will describe some of the minor changes that can occur to help BMT operate even more efficiently in The District and the North End.

The Plan:

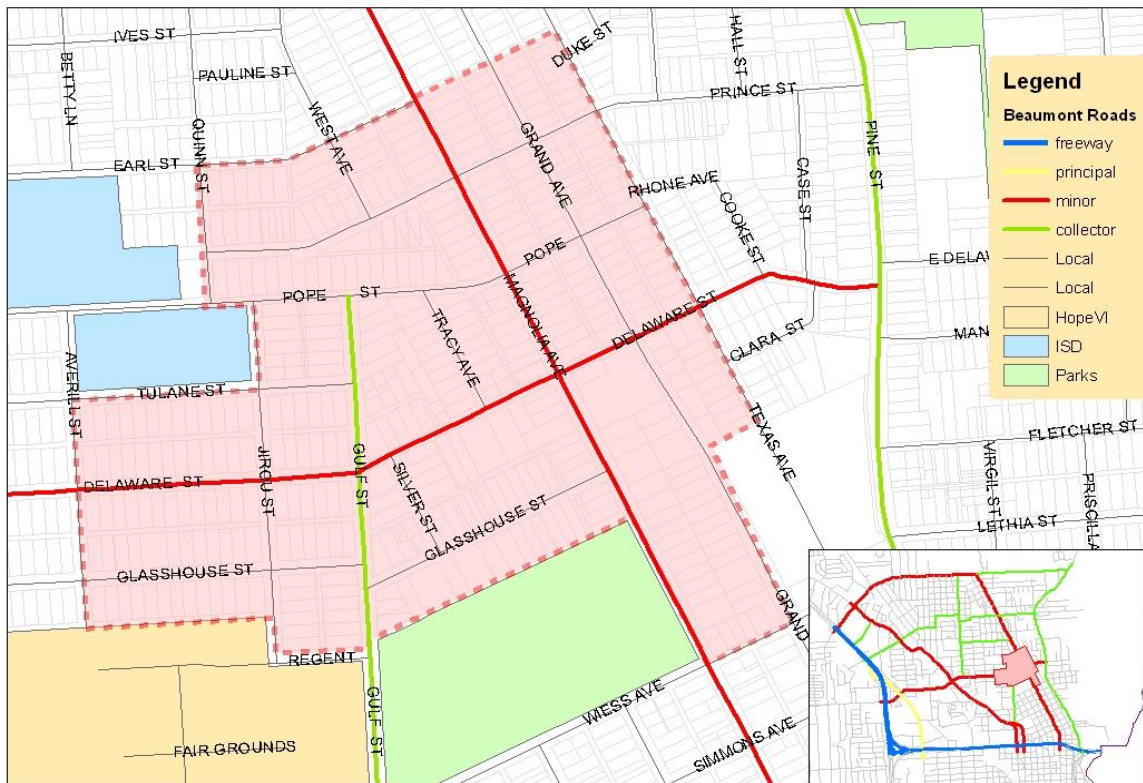
Site Location

The Towne Centre is located where Delaware, Gulf and Magnolia intersect. It is a retail/residential district that is approximately 100 acres. This area is also in close proximity to Magnolia Park and the Pruitt Center as well as the new Beaumont Housing Authority HOPE VI project. This area is an excellent location for spurring economic development due to its central locality, access to major thoroughfares, and proximity to current and future BHA sites. It is in a location that is within walking distance for most of the community, especially the new Hope VI development.

Land Use Map

Current land use in the neighborhood is very haphazard; on one street there may be a single-family home adjacent to a junk yard or tire shop. Also what is apparent in the community is the lack of consistency between different uses. Services in the area are also quite spread out and separate from each other. In other words, many of the basic services are found in the community, but spread out over the whole community so there is no central retail focus as you would find in a traditional-style development. Also, what is apparent in this location is the sheer number of vacant properties that exists. The composition of land use in this location is seen in the following map.

Image- Land Use Map

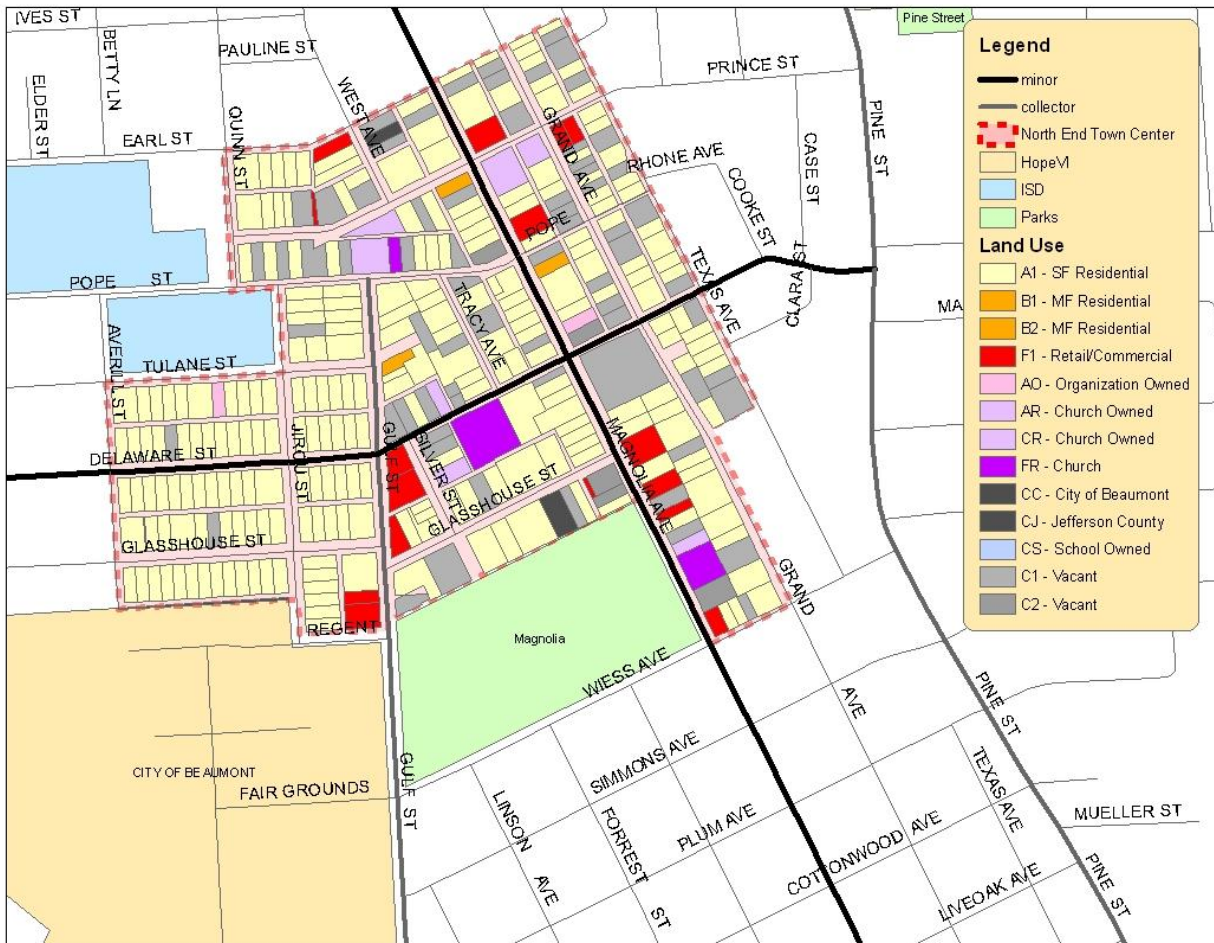


Zoning

The following map shows the new zoning in the neighborhood and what uses are permitted where. This creates the opportunity for land uses to change to their new designation, however property that had previously had different zoning designation are “grandfathered” unless they decide to improve or expand the current structure.

The current zoning in the North End shows a large proportion of commercial along Magnolia and Lucas. However the type of urban design that this land use would create can be detrimental to the development and welfare of the North End. The type of development that this style of zoning enables is what is found in the following figure.

Image- Existing Zoning Map



Proposal 3: Magnolia Corridor Redevelopment Plan

Objectives

To achieve the Economic Development goals, Magnolia Avenue is chosen as the focus of study for the neighborhood, beginning with the first phase. Following are primary reasons for developing Magnolia Avenue:

1. It is the major thoroughfare cutting through the neighborhood, has excellent connectivity, and a well defined gridded street network. Additionally, it is the major thoroughfare connecting the neighborhood to the west end of the city. This assures that any development along the Magnolia Avenue will have good accessibility within the neighborhood. The following uses have a higher probability of attracting the patrons if they are located on the Magnolia Avenue:
 - Transit Centers
 - Shopping Areas
 - Public Parks
 - Civic Buildings
2. There are multiple properties along the Magnolia Avenue which are abandoned and vacant, making it ideal to concentrate development there.
3. There are many existing activity centers along Magnolia Avenue attracting people from various parts of neighborhood; this is an encouraging factor from the business point of view.

The Plan

The following proposed commercial nodes are located at the intersection of Gill & Magnolia Avenue, and at the intersection of Delaware and Magnolia Avenue. These two locations were chosen for the Magnolia Corridor Redevelopment Plan based on the following objectives above.

Image: Gill Street at Magnolia Ave.



 **Mixed Use**

 **Commercial**

Image: Delaware Street at Magnolia Ave.



Image: Visualization of the Commercial Node at Gill Street/Magnolia Avenue



Image: Focus Area Plan

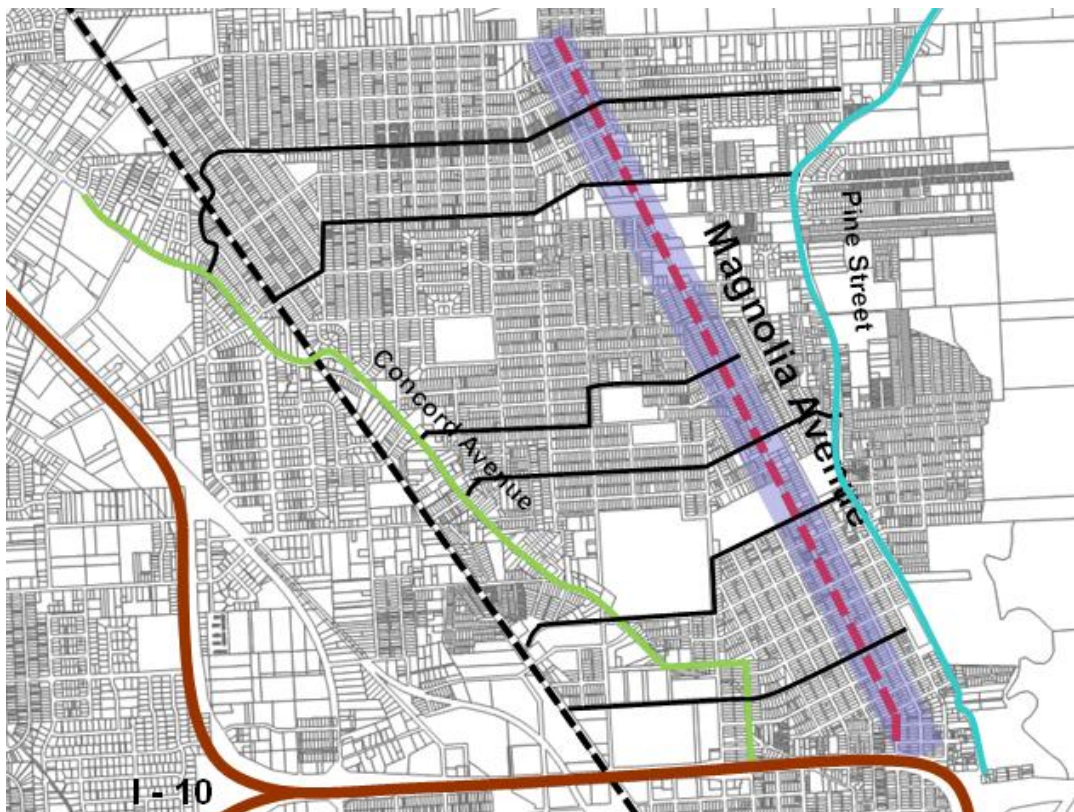
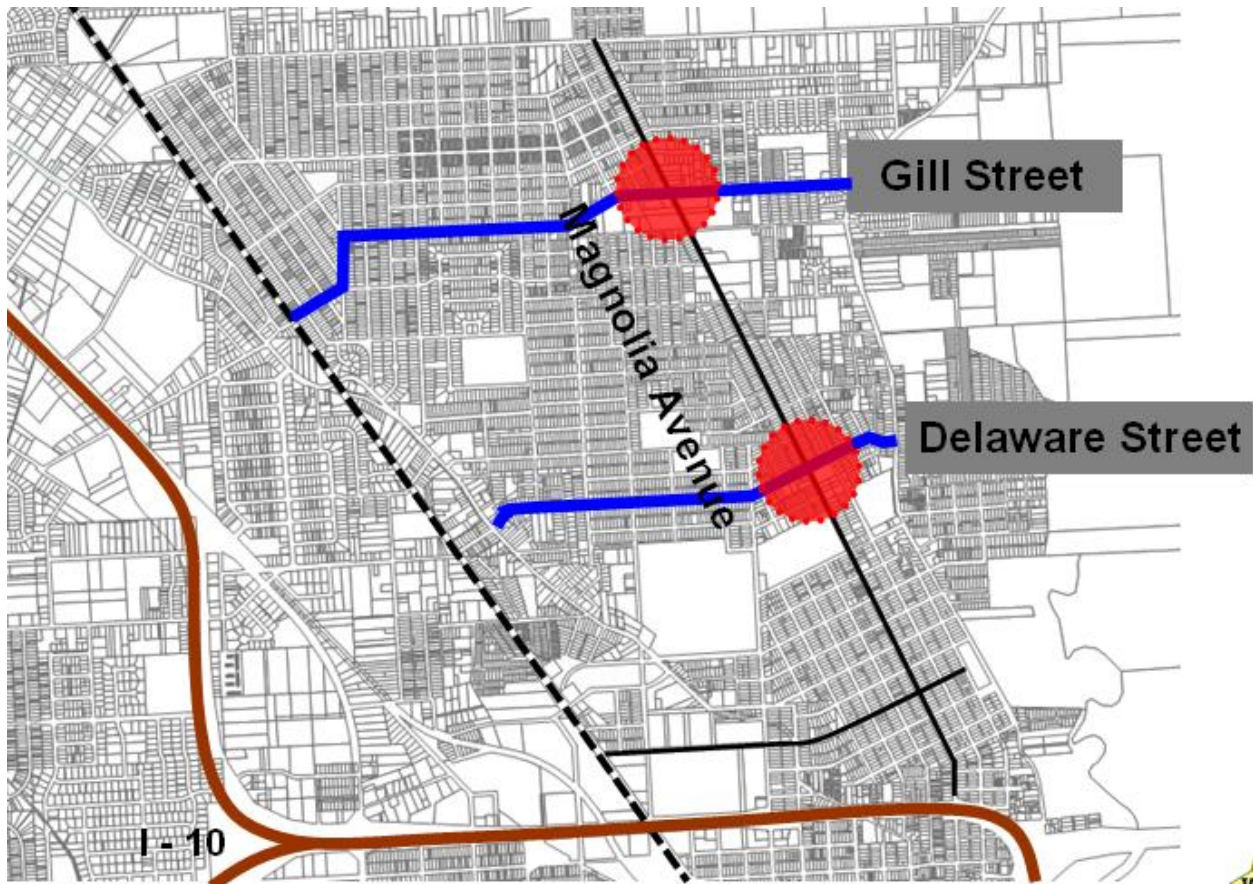


Image: Proposed Transit/Commercial Nodes



Designing with a Form Based Code (*Source: Farr Associates*)

1. Mixed Use (Commercial/Office)

The following are a list of design recommendations for which a form-based code would apply.

- **Street Frontage**
 - Would be on primary streets, with a minimum of 90% of the storefront build-to zone must be occupied by building
 - The intersection of the front and side build – to-zone must be occupied by building.

- The front and side building facades must be constructed within a build-to zone, located from the property line 5' into the site. An 8' easement should be provided for the pedestrian/bike paths.
- Eaves and upper floor bays, balconies & awnings are permitted to extend over the front property line to within 5' of the curb, maintaining a minimum of 8' height clearance along public sidewalk.
- **Buildable Area**
 - Buildings may cover a maximum of 70% of the site.
 - Areas located between the building and the front or side property lines must be landscaped or paved for pedestrians
 - No interior side yard setback is required other than the 10' wide easement provided for rear parking access.
- **Rear Yard Setback**
 - The parking should be located at the rear so an adequate setback is required to accommodate the parking demand.
- **Off-Street Parking**
 - Surface parking lots are permitted in the rear of the lot, fully screened from the front property line by building.
 - Structured parking is not allowed.
- **Driveways & Access**
 - If no alley exists, one driveway can be shared with two adjacent developments. The easements for the access should be shared by the both the developments.
- **Screening & Landscaping**
 - Parking facilities adjacent to the right-of-way shall be screened with a combination of landscaping and ornamental metal fencing. This will only occur on the secondary streets.
 - Surface parking lots must be landscaped with a minimum of 1 shade tree per 10 parking spaces; minimum 1 tree
- **Building Height**
 - Building height is measured in stories
 - Building shall be minimum of 2 stories
 - Floor to floor height of the stories should follow the local design regulations

- **Cap Type Height**
 - Pitched roofs may not be less than 6:12(rise: run); and approximately 12:12 pitch is preferred
- **Uses**
 - Other than residential no other uses are permitted
- **Building Entrance**
 - The building entrance must be on the primary street
- **Allowable Base Types**
 - Porch or stoop should be provided for the entrances on the primary streets
- **Allowable Cap Types**
 - Parapet or pitched roofs are allowable cap types, screening the roof and roof appurtenance beyond.
- **Façade Proportions**
 - The façade shall be vertically divided into segments no larger than 10'
 - Upper floor windows must be vertically oriented.
 - Horizontal expression lines should define the base and cap, especially on buildings over 2 floors.

Image: A visualization of the mixed use type proposed

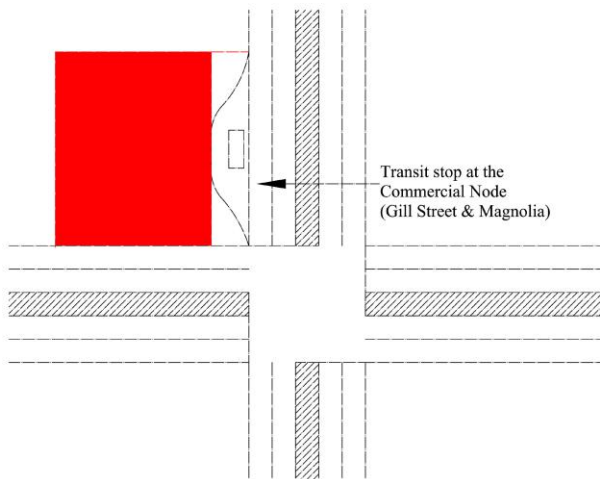


Transit Stops/Commercial Nodes

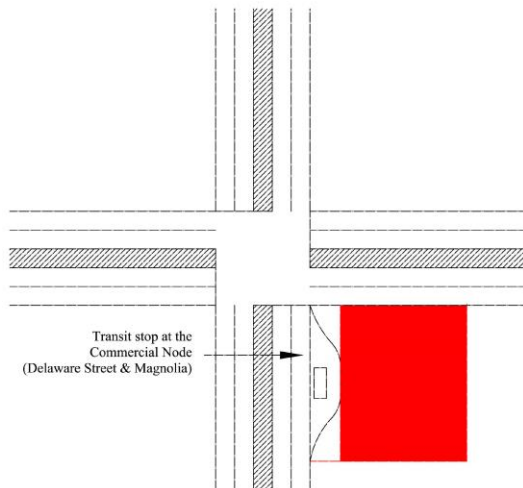
Two major transit stops are created at the commercial nodes (Gill Street and Magnolia Intersection, Delaware and Magnolia Intersection). These transit stops are formed with an initiative of public private partnerships involving the Beaumont Transit Authority and the commercial space owners. This will benefit not only the public by providing a quality transit service but also for the business because of the increased accessibility to these commercial spaces.

Image: Transit Stop Locations at the Two Commercial Nodes Proposed

Gill Street and Magnolia Ave.

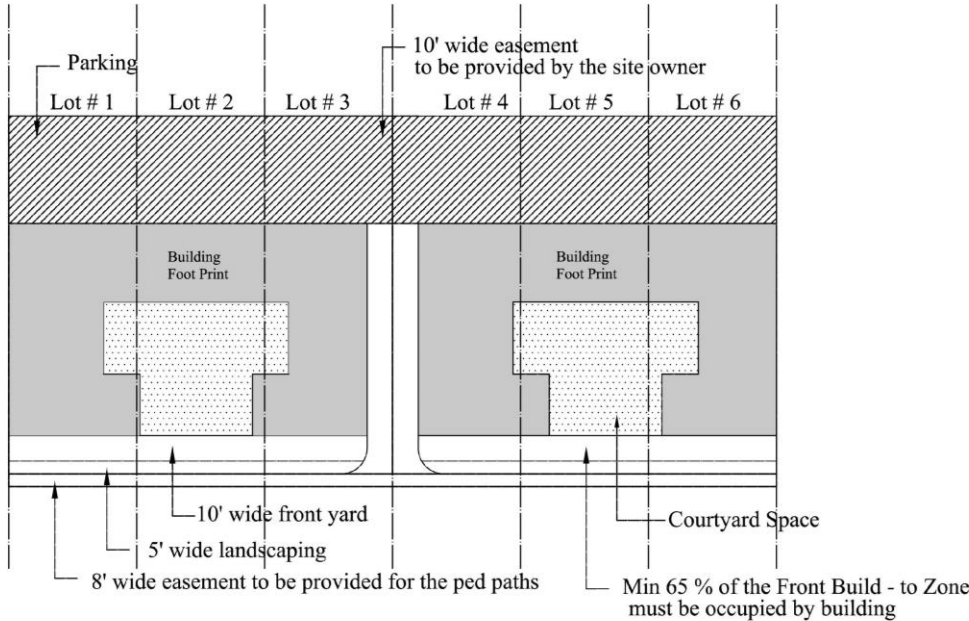


Delaware St. and Magnolia Ave.



2. Courtyard Homes

Image: Proposed plan for Courtyard Homes



- **Street Frontage**

- On Primary streets, a minimum of 65% of the front build to zone must be occupied by building; maximum of 35% of the front build –to-zone may be occupied by courtyard.
- The intersection of the front and side build –to-zone must be occupied by building.
- Front and side building facades must be constructed within a build-to zone, located from the property line 10' into the site.
- Eaves and upper floor bays, balconies & awnings are permitted to extend over the front property line to within 5' of the curb, maintaining a minimum of 8' height clearance along public sidewalk.

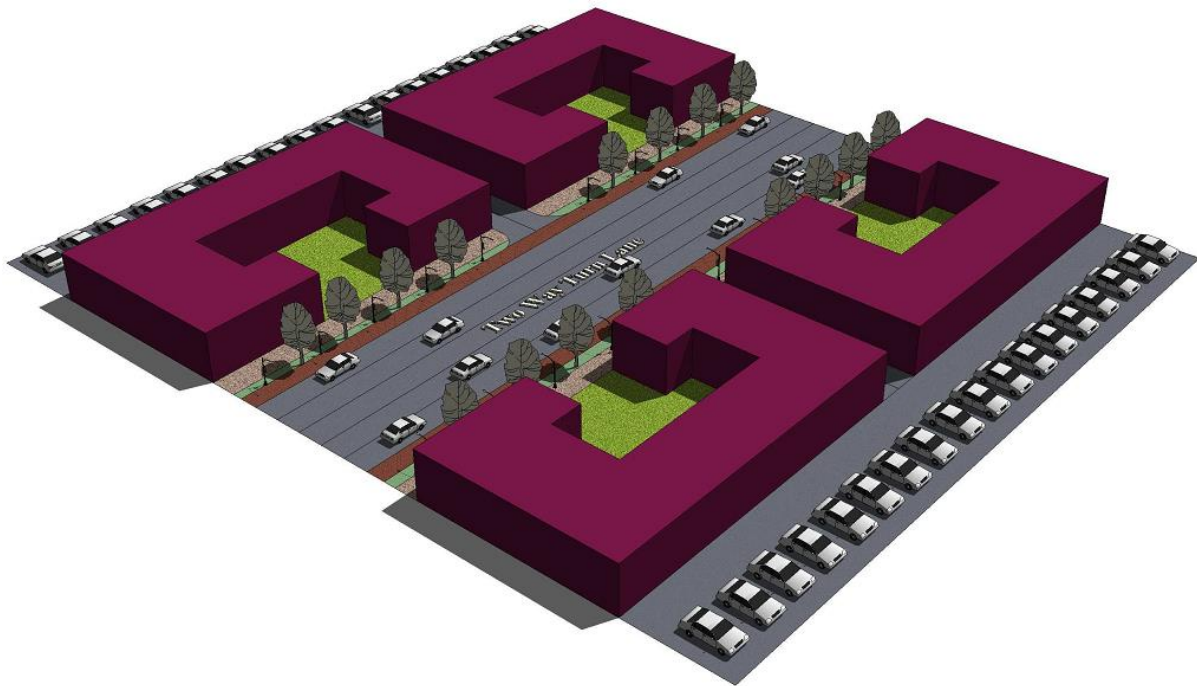
- **Buildable Area**

- Buildings may cover a maximum of 70% of the site.

- Areas located between the building and the front or side property lines must be landscaped or paved for pedestrians; parking may not occupy the courtyard.
- **Rear Yard Setback**
 - The parking should be located at the rear so adequate setback is required to accommodate the parking demand.
- **Off-Street Parking**
 - Surface parking lots are permitted in the rear of the lot, fully screened from the front property line by building.
 - Structured parking is not allowed.
- **Driveways & Access**
 - If no alley exists, one driveway can be shared with two adjacent developments. The easements for the access should be shared by the both the developments.
- **Screening & Landscaping**
 - Parking facilities adjacent to the right-of-way shall be screened with a combination of landscaping and ornamental metal fencing. This will only occur on the secondary streets.
 - Surface parking lots must be landscaped with a minimum of 1 shade tree per 10 parking spaces; minimum 1 tree
- **Building Height**
 - Building height is measured in stories
 - Building shall be minimum of 2 stories
 - Floor to floor height of the stories should follow the local design regulations
- **Cap Type Height**
 - Parapets must be a minimum of 2' in height.
 - Pitched roofs may not be less than 6:12(rise: run); and approximately 12:12 pitch is preferred
- **Uses**
 - Other than residential no other uses are permitted
- **Transparency**

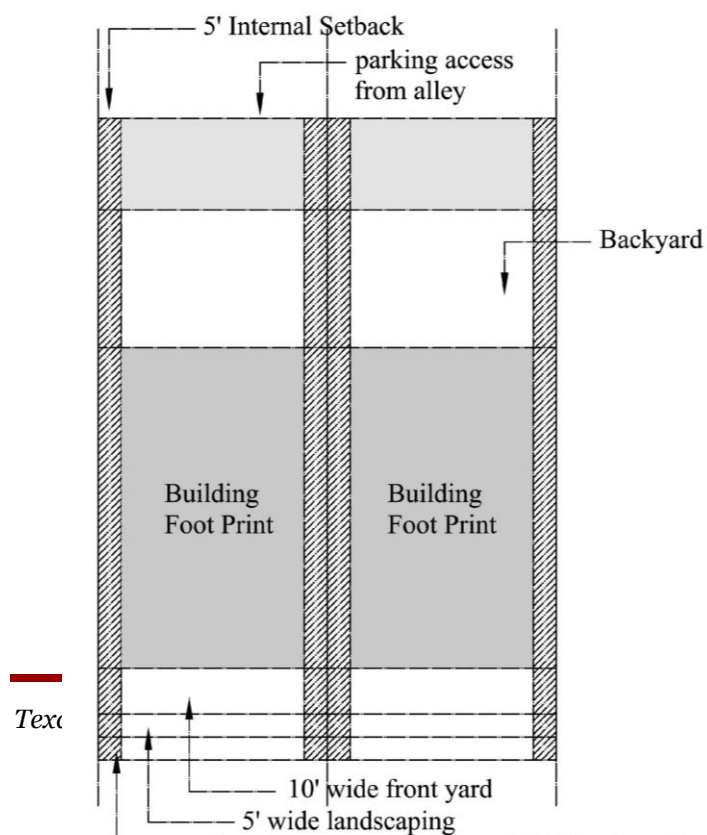
- With a porch or stoop base, a minimum of 20% of the entire front, side corner, and courtyard façade must be comprised of transparent non-reflective windows.
- **Building Entrance**
 - The building entrance must be on the primary street
 - Provide minimum one entrance for every 120' of building frontage.
- **Allowable Base Types**
 - Porch or stoop should be provided for the entrances on the primary streets
- **Allowable Cap Types**
 - Parapet or pitched roofs are allowable cap types, screening the roof and roof appurtenance beyond.
- **Façade Proportions**
 - The façade shall be vertically divided into segments no larger than 25'
 - Upper floor windows must be vertically oriented.
 - Horizontal expression lines should define the base and cap, especially on buildings over 2 floors.

Image: A visualization of the courtyard home type proposed



3. Single-Family Housing

Image: Proposed plan for Single- Family Homes



- **Street Frontage**

- On Primary streets, a minimum of 90% of the front build to zone must be occupied by building
- The intersection of the front and side build – to-zone must be occupied by building.
- Front and side building facades must be constructed within a build-to zone, located from the property line 10' into the site.
- Eaves and upper floor bays, balconies & awnings are permitted to extend over the front property line to within 5' of the curb, maintaining a minimum of 8' height clearance along public sidewalk.

- **Buildable Area**

- Buildings may cover a maximum of 70% of the site.
- Areas located between the building and the front or side property lines must be landscaped or paved for pedestrians; parking may not occupy the courtyard.
- Interior Side Yard Setback
- No interior side yard setback is required other than the 10' wide easement provided for rear parking access.

- **Rear Yard Setback**

- The parking should be located at the rear so adequate setback is required to accommodate the parking demand.

- **Off-Street Parking**

- Surface parking lots are permitted in the rear of the lot, fully screened from the front property line by building.
- Structured parking is not allowed.

- **Driveways & Access**
 - If no alley exists, one driveway can be shared with two adjacent developments. The easements for the access should be shared by the both the developments.
- **Screening & Landscaping**
 - Parking facilities adjacent to the right-of-way shall be screened with a combination of landscaping and ornamental metal fencing. This will only occur on the secondary streets.
 - Surface parking lots must be landscaped with a minimum of 1 shade tree per 10 parking spaces; minimum 1 tree.
- **Building Height**
 - Building height is measured in stories
 - Building shall be minimum of 2 stories
 - Floor to floor height of the stories should follow the local design regulations
- **Cap Type Height**
 - Pitched roofs may not be less than 6:12(rise: run); and approximately 12:12 pitch is preferred
- **Uses**
 - Other than residential no other uses are permitted
- **Building Entrance**
 - The building entrance must be on the primary street
- **Allowable Base Types**
 - Porch or stoop should be provided for the entrances on the primary streets
- **Allowable Cap Types**
 - Parapet or pitched roofs are allowable cap types, screening the roof and roof appurtenance beyond.
- **Façade Proportions**
 - The façade shall be vertically divided into segments no larger than 10'
 - Upper floor windows must be vertically oriented.
 - Horizontal expression lines should define the base and cap, especially on buildings over 2 floors.

Image: A visualization of the single family residential use type proposed



Proposal 4: Zacharias Park Redevelopment

Objective

One of the alternatives for economic development in North End is the remodeling of Zacharias's park, while conserving the existing monument and developing the area around it as a commercial district. The Zacharias Park can be relocated either to a proposed redevelopment node or to the flood plain conservation area.

Rationale

The entire neighborhood has many uncoordinated land uses. Due to its location near the interstate, there is a high potential and benefit to developing the underutilized park space for commercial activity. This will generate revenue for the city through an empowerment district, additionally generating funds for the neighborhood.

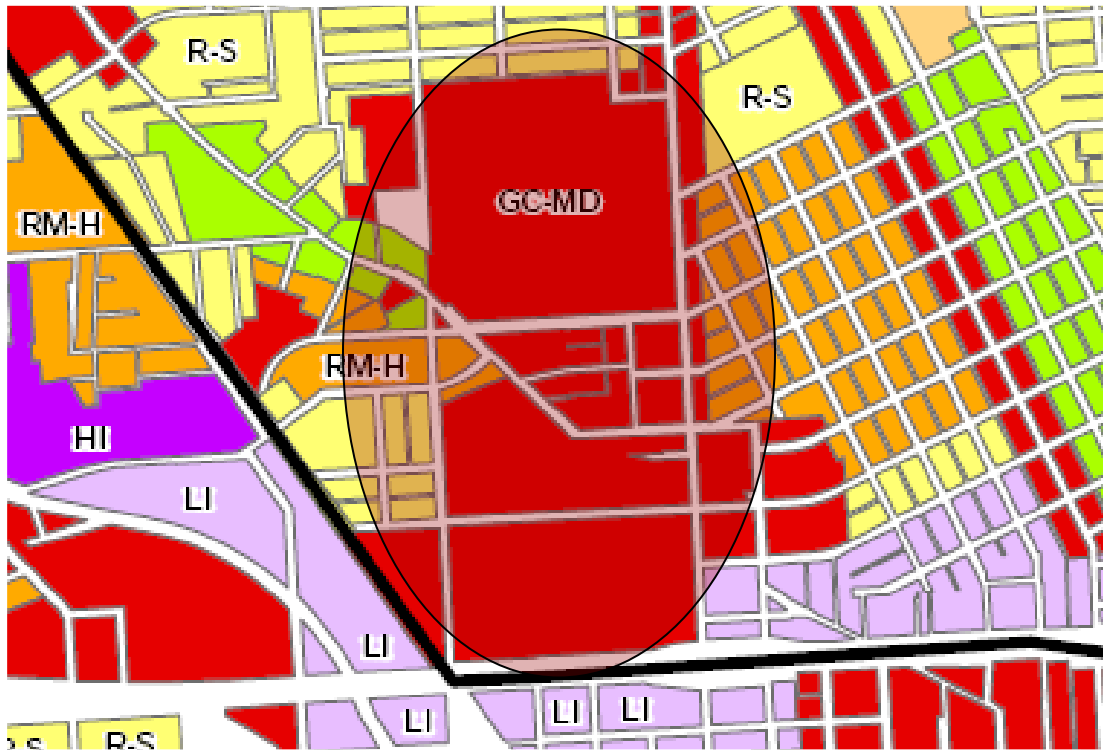
The park can be relocated to other more suitable places within the neighborhood. The relocation of Zacharias Park closer to the neighborhood would improve the use of the park. In the relocation and rezoning process we would displace about thirty three families which can be accommodated in the housing projects that are being proposed.

The Plan

The area will be called Zaharias Commercial District. The proposed area is approximately 150 acres, and lies in the southern portion of the neighborhood, north of I-10 including the fairgrounds, Zaharias Park, and vacant lots. The current zoning for most of the proposed area is commercial, and most of the area is city owned.

The proposed development should be light commercial, with retail activities transferring the area into a vibrant commercial center that can serve as gateway to the North End. The area is to be designed as neighborhood scale commercial center. Some of the design guidelines proposed for the parcel are:

Image: Current Zoning and Proposed Redevelopment Area



The area will be called Zaharias Commercial District. The proposed area is approximately 150 acres, and lies in the southern portion of the neighborhood, north of I-10 including the fairgrounds, Zaharias Park, and vacant lots. The current zoning for most of the proposed area is commercial, and most of the area is city owned.

The proposed development is Light commercial, retail activities transferring the area into vibrant commercial centre that can serve as Gateway to the North End. The area is to be designed as neighborhood scale commercial centre. Some of the design guidelines proposed for the parcel are:

- The site design, building design including orientation, layout, circulation, parking, landscaping and various other features along with transportation should be designed with an integrated theme which ties the entire development and provide harmonious transition from the surrounding land uses.
- The quality of the pedestrian environment should be considered as a central defining aspect of the site layout and design theme.
- Transit facilities should be another area of focus along with the safe and efficient vehicular circulation.
- The area is intended to serve as a gateway to the whole neighborhood and also to integrate the community with rest of the city especially downtown. Therefore, several design elements are should provide complimentary theme.

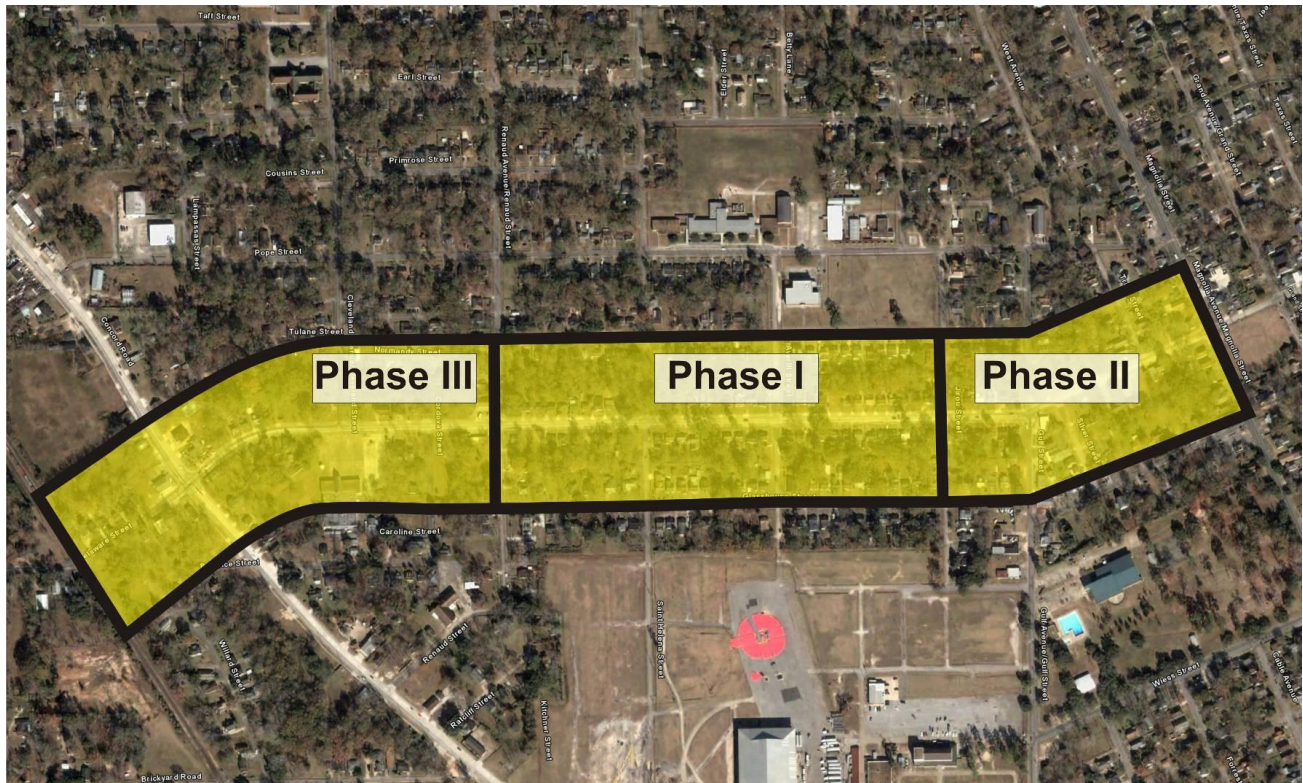
Implementation Strategies

1: Delaware Street Redevelopment Corridor

To redevelop Delaware Street the following implementation schedule has to be followed:

1. Divide the Delaware Street Redevelopment Corridor into phases, considering the following (refer to image below).

Image: Proposed Phased Redevelopment along Delaware Street



2. Initiate the rezoning process for Phase 1, to be accomplished by the Community Development Department.
3. Begin the public hearing process, so as to be clear what type of zoning is possible and palatable to the community. The community has a lot of say in this process and the rezoning could either be Commercial, Mixed Use, or a Planned Unit Development. (Refer to the Rezoning Section in this report)
4. Implement rezoning and begin the interim waiting period. This waiting period has to be awarded for the legally non-conforming uses to either relocate themselves, or to change to the new proposed land-use. This period could vary from a few years, up to a decade; nonetheless, the Community Development Department could accelerate the process by giving incentives and relocation assistance. Considering the fact that there are vacant lots on Delaware this process should be relatively easy and less time consuming.

Legally Non-Conforming Uses and Amortization:

As cities grow, there is often the need to rezone various sections as need be. However when such change is made, what happens to the existing land uses that were legally permitted at the time, but are now in noncompliance? Usually when there is rezoning, the City actually allows the existing land uses to continue but with restrictions. The city cannot force the existing land use to stop all of a sudden. It has to be fair to the existing land use too. Hence when there is rezoning the existing land use is allowed as legally non-conforming land-use. The restrictions that are placed on these land-uses are as follows.

- The legally non-conforming uses are allowed till a stipulated time limit after which the owner of the non conforming land use has to be in conformance with the new zoning or can sell it to other who can make it conforming. Usually there is enough time for this to be done and the rule of thumb is that adequate time is granted to recapture the full life of the structure.
- The legally non-conforming use is grandfathered and is permitted as long as the owner is alive or doesn't sell or make structural changes to the property. This is usually done because it gives the owner of the non-conforming use a chance to use the property as he intended to use it when it was first purchased. The moment he decides to sell the property then the next owner has to make sure that he is in conformance with the new zoning.
- With non conforming uses there are severe restrictions placed on the owner so as not to allow him to make serious repairs so that such legally non conforming uses could be easily made conforming. The following are the typical restrictions placed on a legally non conforming use.
 - Physical Expansion: This restriction does not allow the owner of the legally non conforming use to expand the structure.
 - Repair or alteration: This restriction does not allow the owner of legally non conforming use to do major repair to the property.

Legally non-conforming uses are usually grandfathered as it is very difficult to amortize the property at the end of the time frame set. The city may not have enough funds to hold on to these lands if amortized and hence allowing the property its full life is the path of least resistance.

5. The Community Development Department should submit to Jefferson County its intent to form a Tax Incremental Financing Zone for the Delaware Redevelopment Corridor.

Tax Increment Financing:

A Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) helps the city attract new development in areas where there is blight and the Local Government does not have enough money up front to do the additional infrastructure developments and give incentives for the private developer to come to a risky market. The funds generated in a TIF district are used only in the same area and hence the redevelopment process happens very fast.

Commercial activity usually shies away for neighborhoods that have blight and where the banks usually consider as high risk lending areas. However if the local government can give them some incentives for taking that risk, most of businesses will come back or relocate to the newly formed TIF Districts. With new businesses there is an increase in the job market and thus it provides jobs in areas where there was little or no employment opportunity (TIF Districts, Accessed April 2008).

How TIF Districts work:

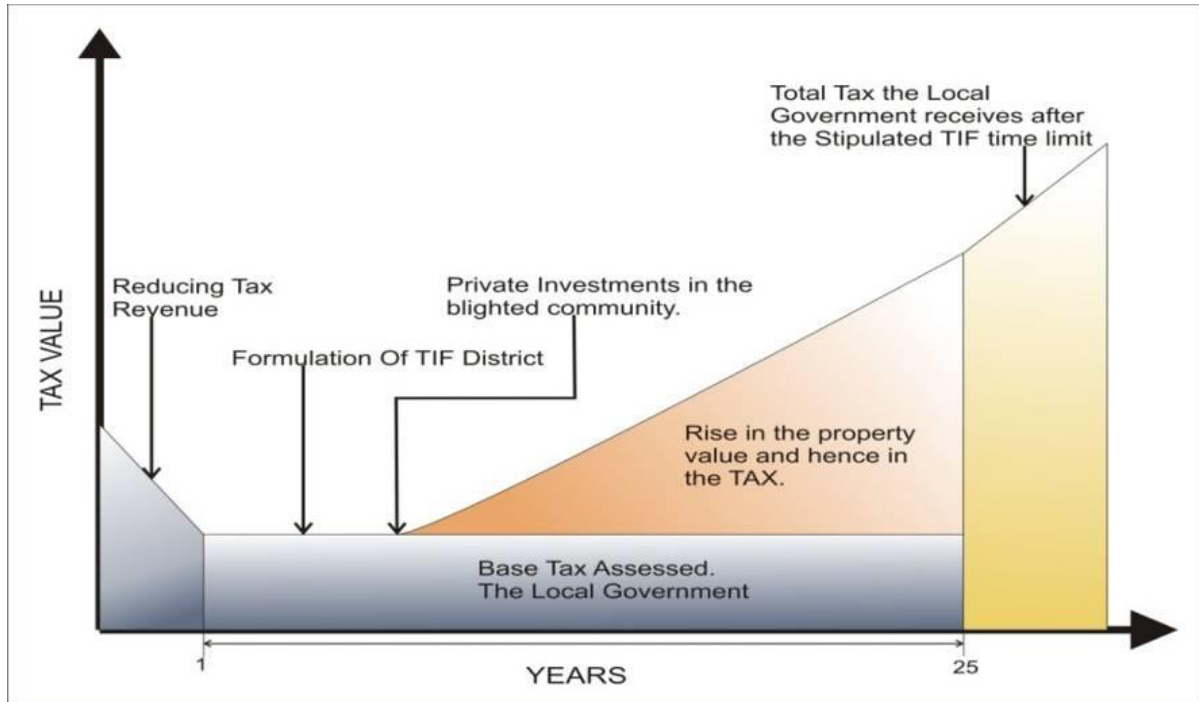
TIF Districts are based on the principle that with new development there will be a rise in the property values and thus the property taxes. Before formation of a TIF District, a Base Tax Value is assessed. This the amount of revenue the local government already receives for the district before the TIF was formed. After the TIF district is formed the local government sells bonds to private investors with an assurance that the money will be refunded at the end of the tenure with agreed interest.

Now that the local government has money upfront they can use it for the redevelopment project. These funds could be used for infrastructure

developments or to give as incentives for private business to come to the district. Once these developments are done then the property values starts to rise. The TIF district captures this rise in revenue generated by the district to use it for further development. Hence in a way the development pays for itself. The TIF District keeps paying the local government the base tax value and hence the local government is not burdened with redevelopment process.

When the redevelopment in the district is completed and sufficient business activity is generated then the incremental tax that is generated is used to repay the bond money that was invested by the private inventor. If the TIF District works it is a win-win situation; however, if it does not work the local government may have to be bailed out and pay the private investor the promised sum of money. This could be devastating for small local governments. It should be noted that on one hand TIF Districts have immense potential to redevelop blight, but on the other hand it can really force the local government into serious debt.

Image: Process of Tax Increment Financing



Formation of TIF District:

TIF District actually needs very careful formation process. It requires lot of negotiations with the public as well as the investors and various stake holders. It is not easy to form a TIF District even though there is an effort to streamline the process. Generally the following steps have to be performed to form a TIF District.

- The local government identifies a blighted area and determines if there is no other way investment or development would come to this area without help from the city.
- An extensive study is made and after the public hearing the TIF district is enacted.
- The County Clerk certifies the study and approves the base value for the community. He performs other legislative duties such as identifying the time of the TIF District and the amount due to private investor.
- The local government uses these funds to provide for additional infrastructure and the incentives that are made available for private developers.

- TIF Districts are usually time limited. They range up to approximately two decades and at the end of the stipulated time limit, all investors need to be repaid.
 - At the end of the TIF District time limit all the new tax generated due to the rise in the property value go to the appropriate taxing entities. TIF Districts are assessed the same as property in the surrounding neighborhood; however, it is only the rise in the tax that is captured and used in the same location. Hence a TIF District would be a very powerful tool if targeted development is needed.
6. Assess the base value for Phase 1 of the project and give incentives to businesses to relocate to this new location. Incentives in the form of tax abatements, reduction in license fees and speedy processing could help.
 7. Once Phase 1 reaches maturity the Community Development Department should apply for rezoning for the remaining two Phases.
 8. Application for rezoning of the next two phases could be based on the success and response of the businesses and local community. Dividing the project into phases also helps in judging the reaction of the market forces to a TIF district.
 9. Again, the same procedure should be followed for the legally non conforming uses to relocate themselves.
 10. The Community Development Department can now give incentives to big businesses due to TIF funding in the neighborhood. With the migration of businesses to the neighborhood, we are also improving job opportunities for the community.
 11. With all the three phases in operation the city can now repay the bond money that investors had put in to the district.

Probable Shortcomings and Checks:

There are many checks built into this project. If the project does not go in the direction the Community Development Department had envisaged they can curtail their losses. Phase 2 and 3 are entirely dependent on how well the TIF goes for the Phase 1 of the project. If Phase 1 does not go well, then the city shall have to bear losses only for

Phase 1 and can save from additional spending on rezoning and assistance in Phase 2 & 3.

The base value that has to be assessed for the creation of a TIF district would be low, and hence any development is sure to raise the property taxes and thus would not be a total loss for the City.

The Community Development Department can also postpone the development of phases depending on the market conditions. If there is recession in the market then there is a chance that the development of a TIF district shall not work as planned and thus can be postponed.

2: North End Towne Center

The commercial zone is located where Gulf, Magnolia and Delaware all meet. It is placed in a location that best maximizes its proximity to the Beaumont Housing Authority and Magnolia Park including the Pruitt Center. In order for economic activities to succeed in the North End, a number of steps need to be accomplished.

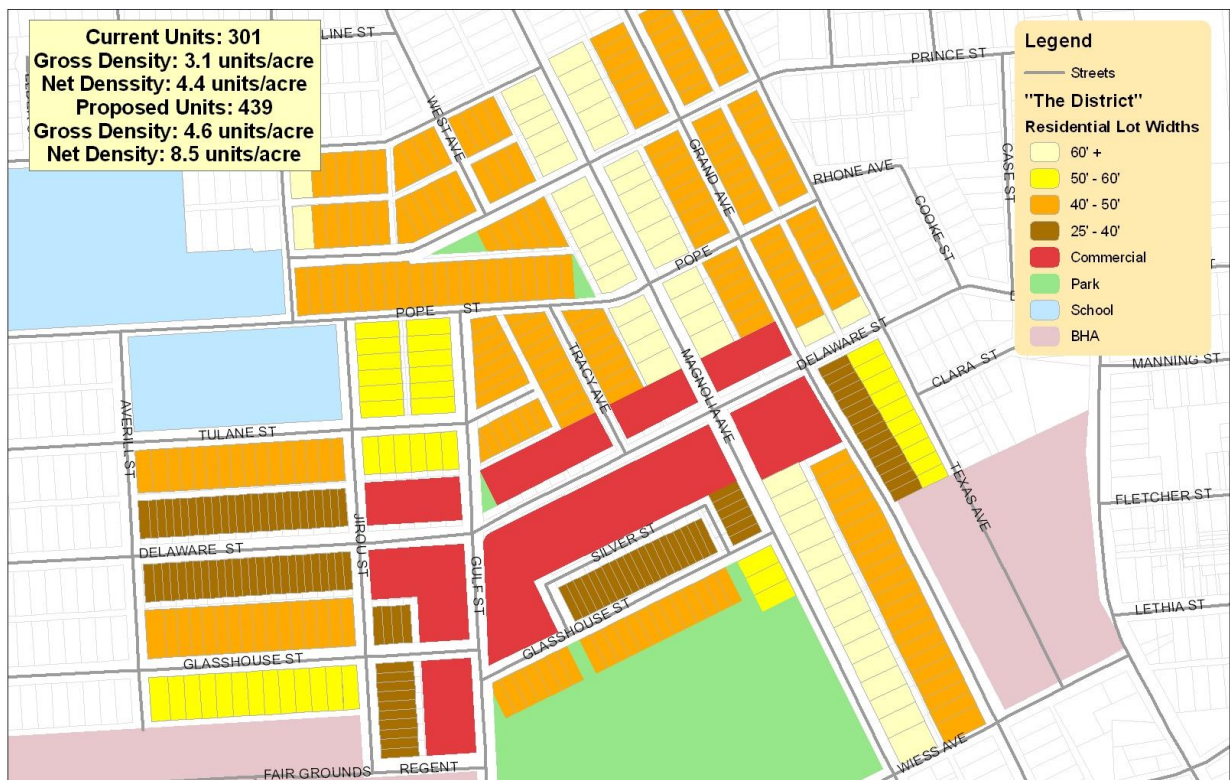
The first step is for the City of Beaumont Planning Department to change the zoning in the North End to reflect current uses and promote commercial activity in nodes instead of in linear commercial zoning. Currently in the North End, most commercial zoned activity is located linearly along Magnolia and is greatly over-zoned.

When land is zoned for too much of one particular use, the actual value decreases similar to the laws of supply and demand. As a result, in the North End too much land is available for commercial use and therefore the demand is not as high. This is just one factor that can change the quality of economic development in this community.

The second step is to allow for subdivisions and infill development to occur. Many of the lots, parcels and properties in the neighborhood are large with widths of 40' - 50'. These large lots often have narrow homes on them with great potential to subdivide into more parcels. By allowing for infill development, increased density will occur in this district and allow for greater walkability, greater transit ridership and greater access to commercial/retail activity.

Another method of allowing this area to have flexible zoning and different lot sizes is by introducing a Planned Unit Development (PUD) district in this location. PUDs are used when trying to allow for flexibility in implementing different zoning types. As can be seen in the following figure, different lot sizes and different zoning types are integrated into one central activity center to mix-incomes, mix-uses and mix densities. This gives a great environment for people to live and enjoy their community.

Image: Proposed Development



3: Magnolia Corridor Redevelopment Plan

Corridor Overlay Implementation Strategies

Commercial Activity Nodes/ Transit \Hubs

The neighborhood doesn't have any major commercial centers and most of the existing smaller commercial areas are scattered through the neighborhood. So the neighborhood is in need of bigger commercial areas in a greater accessible area. Since Magnolia Avenue has greater street connectivity and accessibility, two commercial activity nodes should be created along the Magnolia Avenue at the intersections of Delaware/Magnolia and Gill Street/Magnolia. These will serve as neighborhood level retail and shopping centers which make the neighborhood self-reliant in terms of the residents shopping needs. Usually, the parcels (which come under the regulations of the zoning overlay districts) would be part of these activity nodes; under certain circumstances parcels which are outside of the overlay districts are considered and appropriate regulations are mentioned for those. The location of the nodes is chosen based on their accessibility to the neighborhood and availability of the land. The locations of the transit centers are linked to the commercial nodes thus encouraging a transit oriented development.

Form based code to regulate the development along the corridor

Form based code is a method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Form-based codes create a predictable public realm primarily by controlling physical form, with a lesser focus on land use, through city or county regulations. Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes, presented in both diagrams and words, are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale of development, rather than only distinctions in land-use types. A Form-based code is a tool where the quality of development outcomes is dependent on the quality and objectives of the community plan that a code implements.

Regulating Plan

A plan or map of the regulated area designates the locations where different building form standards apply, based on clear community intentions regarding the physical character of the area.

Design Regulations:

Specifications for the elements within the public realm

- Sidewalks
- Travel lanes
- On-street parking

Specifications for the buildings to regulate the development along the corridor

- Building Setbacks
- Building Entrance Locations
- Building Frontage
- Building Heights
- Building Use Regulations
- Parking Locations
- Site Coverage
- Lot Configurations and Sizes

4. Zaharias Park Redevelopment

There are a myriad of implementation tools available to achieve the desired vision. However, the tools should fit the context and should be efficient and realistic. Analyzing the current background of the North End following implementation tool are proposed.

- Public Private Partnership
- Public Improvement District

Public Private Partnership

Public Private Partnership (P3) is described as joint venture between public agencies as cities, municipalities and one or more private sector companies. Public resources are limited and also there is growing interest of private sector in several

development and improvement projects. Therefore, Public private partnership is proving to be a successful implementation tool for planning and development.

P3s can be in several forms. In some cases, the public sector may provide funds as tax revenue for investment with an agreement with private sectors. In other capital projects, investment is made by private sector in agreement with public sector to provide agreed services.

In the North End, especially for development and improvement of this area, P3s can be very helpful. By nature, public or private sector will be interested in an area where there is potential increase in revenue. The area we are proposing has a lot of potential if developed as commercial centre. Most of the portion is already zoned commercial. There are several such activities already being conceived in fairground area by Beaumont Housing authority.

Actors that can be involved in Public Private Partnership

The first step to initiate public private partnership is to identify the potential actors that can be involved in the process.

The *Potential Public sector* can be City of Beaumont, CDC. The public sectors can initiate P3s in several ways. For example, the city can designate Special district in the area which can invite private investment. One such example that can be considered is formation of a Community Development Programs or authority in which primary funding comes from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the community itself can work for the improvement and development of the area. There are a number of potential *Private Sector* actors, including several small and big businesses; several big companies as Eastman Chemical; Motiva Refinery, and Exxon Mobile, which have planned to expand their businesses in the Beaumont area.

Special Districts

For the economic development the area, the use of a special district seems viable. The City will consider the use of special districts to promote new development and redevelopment where it can be demonstrated that an increase in tax base can reasonably

be expected and the overall quality of life for people who live and work in the City can be improved. Special districts such as Public improvement district (PID), allowed by Texas State Legislation, can be considered.

Public Improvement Districts (PIDs)

Public improvement districts (PIDs) are special assessment areas created at the request of the property owners in the district. These owners pay a supplemental assessment with their taxes, which the PID uses for services above and beyond existing City services. The assessment allows each PID to have its own work program, which may consist of eligible activities such as marketing the area, providing additional security, landscaping and lighting, street cleaning, and cultural/recreational improvements.

The main idea behind creating PIDs is to make certain improvements to their infrastructures in order to help economic growth within an area. They are authorized through legislation and established through a petition process in a specific geographic area. They receive funding from added assessment and implement services through a nonprofit organization, government organization or public nonprofit organization.

The Public Improvement District Assessment Act allows any city to levy and collect special assessments on property that is within the city or within the city's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The statute authorizing the creation of PIDs is found in Chapter 372 of the Local Government Code.

Property owners in the PID pay special property assessments into a fund administered by the City in conjunction with an advisory body. A City Council approved service plan is established for a period of five years and can be renewed for five-year periods thereafter. Creation of a PID requires a submission of a petition to the City Secretary, signed by owners of at least 50% of the appraised value of taxable real property, and at least 50% of the number of property owners in the proposed district, or Owners of at least 50% of the land area. Apart from these, other documents to be submitted are listed below:

1. a legal description (with maps) of the proposed boundaries of the district;
2. a detailed service plan that covers a period of at least five (5) years, defining the annual debt and projected improvement costs

3. an assessment plan that states the method of assessment and specifics included and excluded classes of property; and
4. A public hearing held after notice period of 15 days.

These are generally initiated by property and business owners who revitalize urban commercial areas for the purpose of protecting or increasing the returns on their investments. It can be used for improvement of variety of public facilities such as street, sidewalk, drainage, mass transit, park, recreation, landscaping etc. It can be used in our neighborhood to develop the rezoned commercial nodes and strips.

Image: A vision for the North End utilizing PID funding.

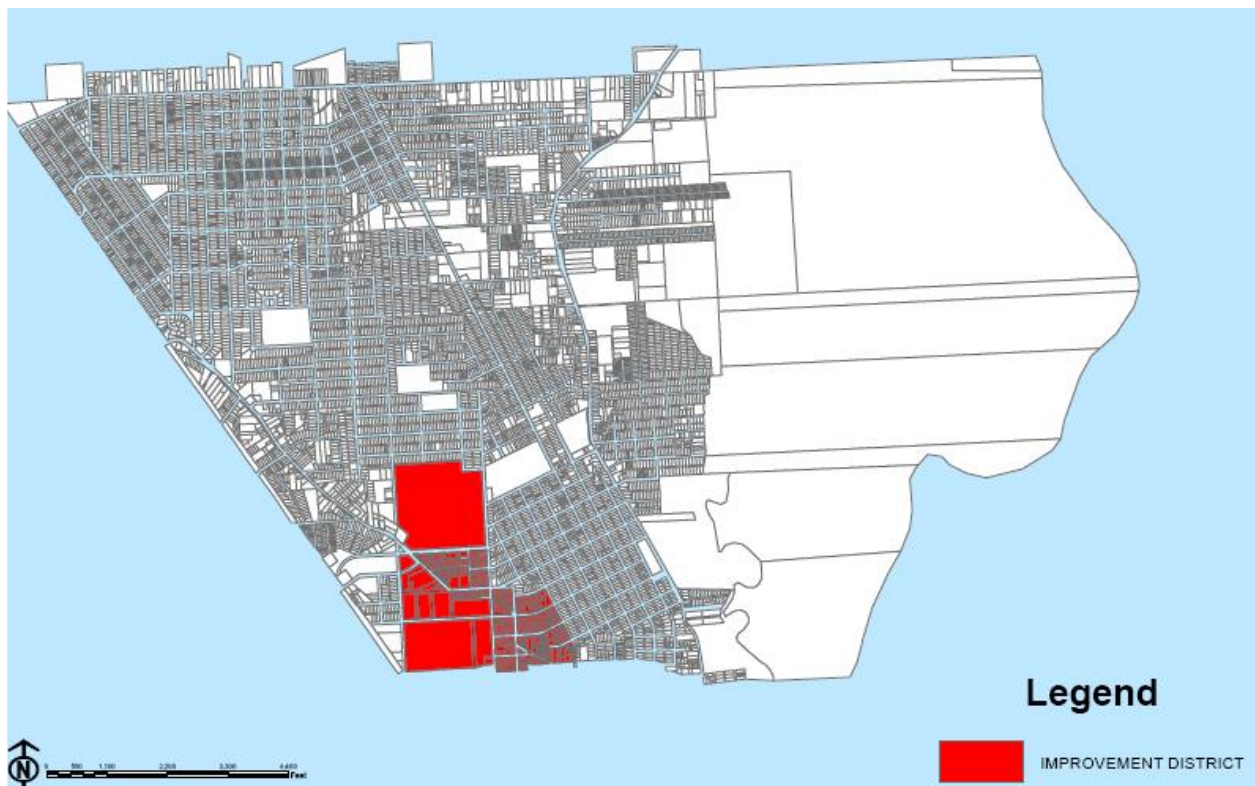


Implementation process of special district in North End of Beaumont

Purpose: The first step will be to establish the purpose of the district. The purpose will be to promote new development and redevelopment in the area by doing improvements in physical infrastructure as sidewalks, landscaping, cleaning up, beautification; establishment of suitable businesses; business promotion by different business activities, events, marketing and advertising and to facilitate public and private collaboration.

Administration: There should be separate advisory board which can make recommendation to the City Council on the expenditure of revenues derived and to operate programs and activities which are consistent with the purposes set forth of the district.

Establishment of Improvement Area/district and description of the area: Second step will be the establishment of district. As the most of the land proposed for the district is city owned, there won't be much problem in collection the petition.



Service plan: The service plan is required for the implementation of PID. The plan should identify the proposed improvements, the cost of construction, and the cost of maintenance. It also identifies how the project is to be financed and the cost to each of the property owners who will benefit from the proposed improvement.

System of assessments or charges imposed: The charges for Zaharias's commercial district's improvement will be based on assessed property value. Both such collected funds should be kept in separate account with clear definition of source and interest.

Uses of revenues: The revenues derived from the Zaharias's commercial district assessments can only be used for improvements and activities to be provided in the area. Some of the purposed activities for which it can be used are General business promotions; Business Activities; Promotion of events; Advertising to promote area businesses ;Landscaping ; Clean-up activities; Physical improvements.

Apart from these tools several other tools can be explored to facilitate the development and improvement of the "Zaharias's Commercial district". Concept as land trading can be proved to be helpful. The property owners which will be relocated from the floodplain can be motivated by providing some business opportunity in the Zaharias's Commercial district. This will provide motivation to those property owners as well as helps to establish goodwill.

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