

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Chicago, with a white grid overlay. The map is semi-transparent, showing buildings, streets, and green spaces. Several areas are highlighted with semi-transparent colored overlays: a large yellow/orange area in the upper left, and several green areas scattered throughout, including a large one in the upper right and another in the lower right. The text 'SECTION 7' is in large, bold, black letters, and 'COMMUNITY DESIGN' is in smaller, bold, green letters below it.

SECTION 7

COMMUNITY DESIGN

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COMMUNITY DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

The City of Gretna's neighborhoods are all of unique character, each providing opportunities and challenges for guiding development over the next 20 years. The Community Design Element describes and analyzes the urban fabric and built environment of the City of Gretna as well as the specific characteristics of each neighborhood. It identifies opportunities to enhance the City's attractiveness, functionality, and physical cohesion, while preserving neighborhood character and small town feel.

HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT

Early maps from the mid-19th century show the Westbank communities of Gretna and McDonoghville, as well as Algiers, connected by the Algiers and Gretna Railroad as seen in *Figure 7.1: Historic Maps of Gretna*. The "Official Map of the City of Gretna, Louisiana" from 1914, the year after Gretna's incorporation, is exhibited at Gretna City Hall. The map shows subdivision of land at that time. As shown on *Figure 7.2: Historic Subdivisions of Gretna*, land was subdivided into residential lots from the City limits to Richard Street, reaching south to 15th Street. The land between Gretna-Mechanickham and McDonoghville was at that time in agricultural use. An aerial photograph from 1952, *Figure 7.3: Gretna Aerial 1952*, shows the development of parts of Brooklyn Pastures to today's Old Garden Park neighborhood, closing the gap between the two settlements and connecting the two street grids along Stumpf Boulevard. The City further expanded to the south into today's Jonestown neighborhood and the former Leed's Division east of McDonoghville was partly subdivided for residential development.

The opening of the Mississippi River Bridge in 1958 and the construction of the Westbank Expressway changed the urban fabric of Gretna. The Expressway cut through mainly residential parts of the City, eliminating the 1400 block of Gretna and disconnecting the southern neighborhood of Jonestown from the rest of the City. The new thoroughfare quickly transformed into a commercial corridor and residential development along the street disappeared. The triangle between the Expressway, Madison Street, and Stumpf Boulevard was developed with large scale, automobile oriented commercial uses.

Around the same time, quick and convenient access to New Orleans provided by the new bridge triggered population growth and expansion of the community with more suburban-style development in the southern portions of the City. As seen on the aerial image from 1967, *Figure 7.4: Gretna Aerial 1967*, the New Garden Park subdivision, Rose Park, and Bellevue neighborhoods were already built out at that time. Commercial uses expanded to Belle Chasse Highway and the Timberlane neighborhood was subdivided into large residential lots with winding cul-de-sac streets that surround the gated community's private golf course. The luxurious subdivision was popular and development occurred quickly. In 1967, about a quarter of the lots contained structures, and the aerial of 1976 (*Figure 7.5: Gretna Aerial 1976*) shows structures on approximately half of the lots in Timberlane. In Downtown Gretna, the site of today's institutional cluster between Weyer Street, 4th Street, and city limits, was largely cleared of small-scale development and replaced with large parking lots that reflect the automobile-dependent character of the era. The Downtown area began to be revitalized in the early 2000s.

ACCESS & CITY GATEWAYS

The City of Gretna is located on the Westbank of the Mississippi River and is part of the New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner Metropolitan Statistical Area. Adjacent communities are Harvey to the west, Terrytown to the east, and New Orleans-Algiers to the north.

Gretna is embedded in the larger urbanized area of Greater New Orleans, and the urban fabric of the City has grown together with development of neighboring communities over several decades. In order to foster community identity and present Gretna to visitors and by passers as the unique place it is, the City's access points should be identified and highlighted. Gretna has seven major and a few minor access points, as mapped on *Figure 7.6: Gretna Access Points*.

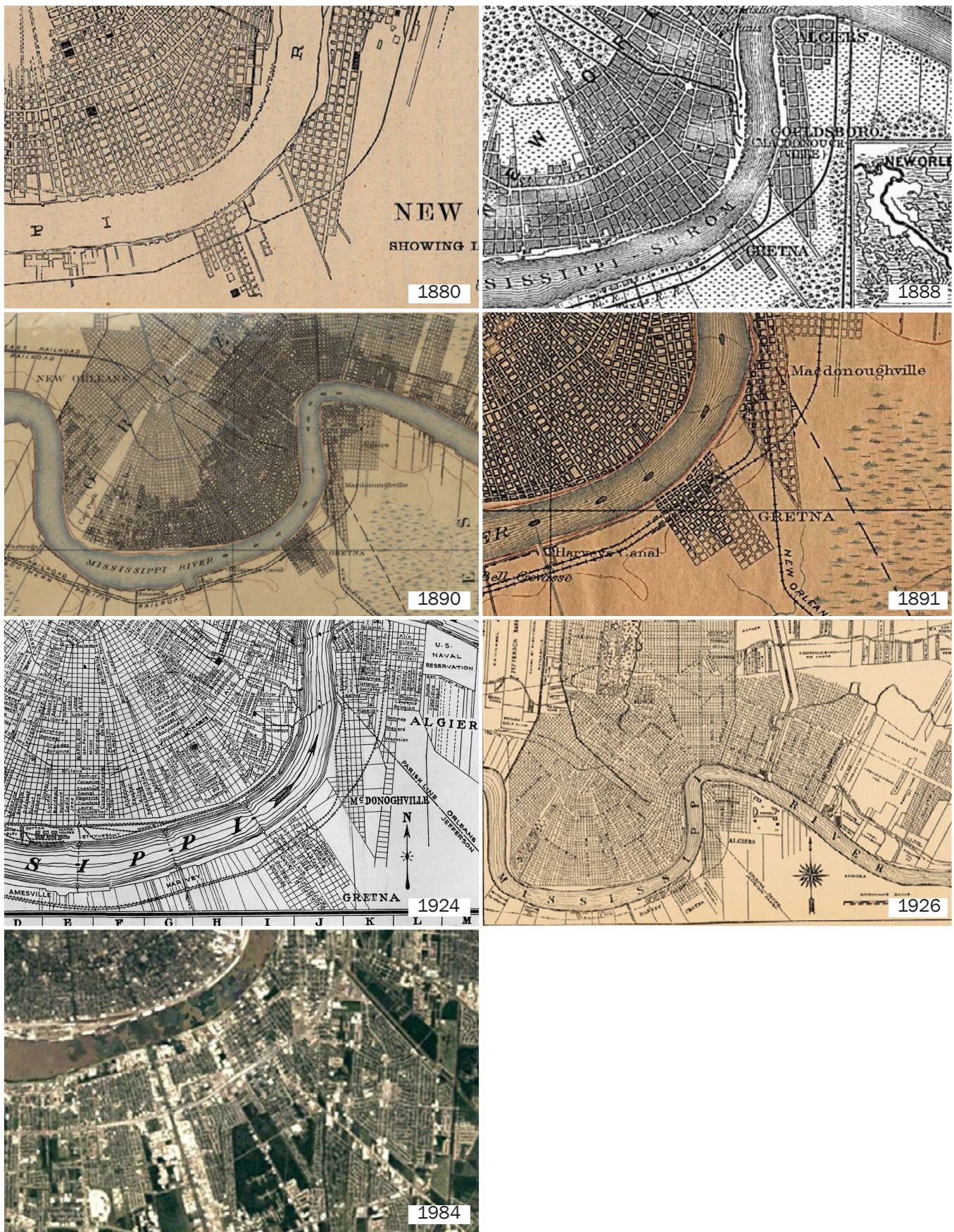


Figure 7.1: Historic Maps of Gretna



Figure 7.2: Historic Subdivisions of Gretna

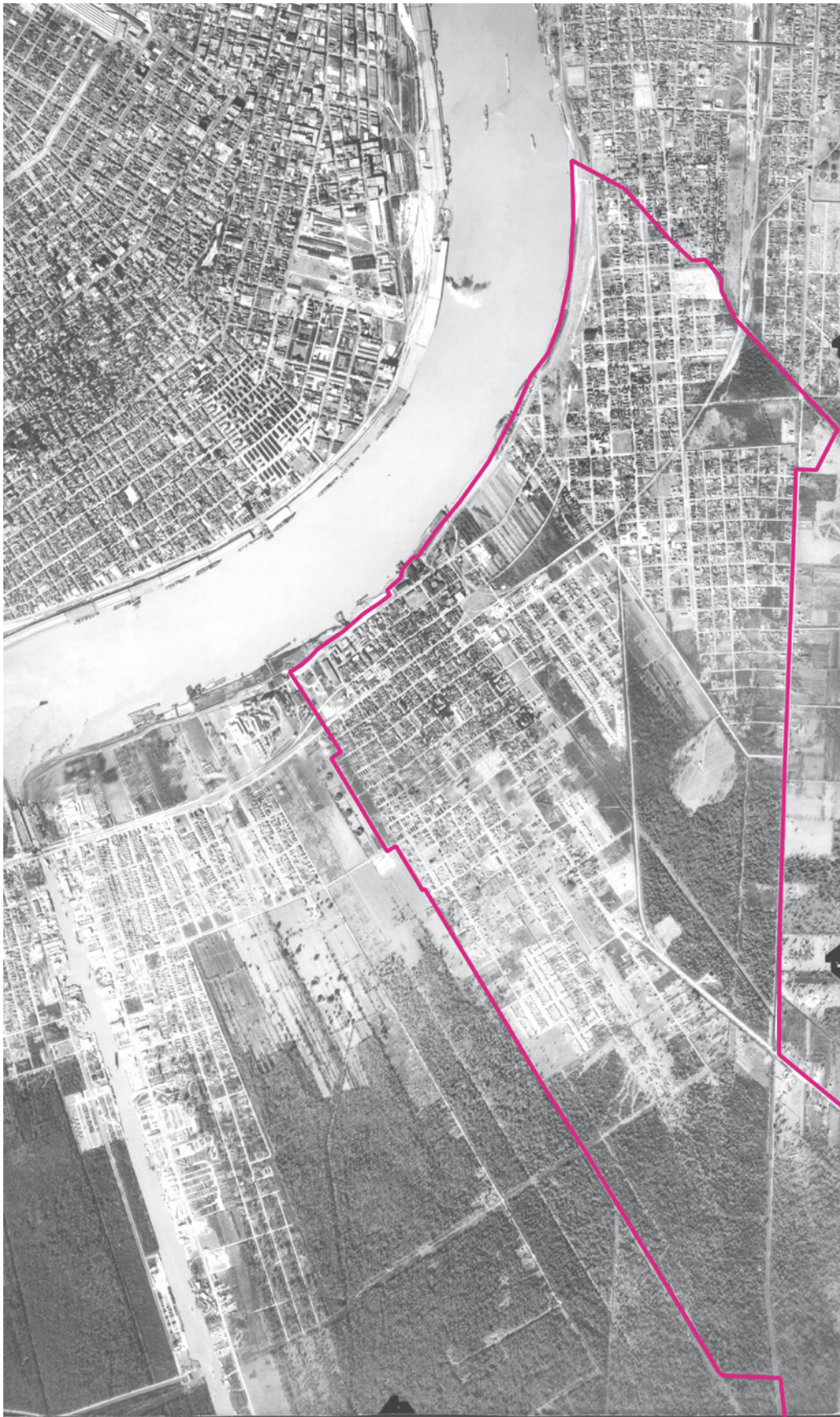


Figure 7.3: Gretna, 1952

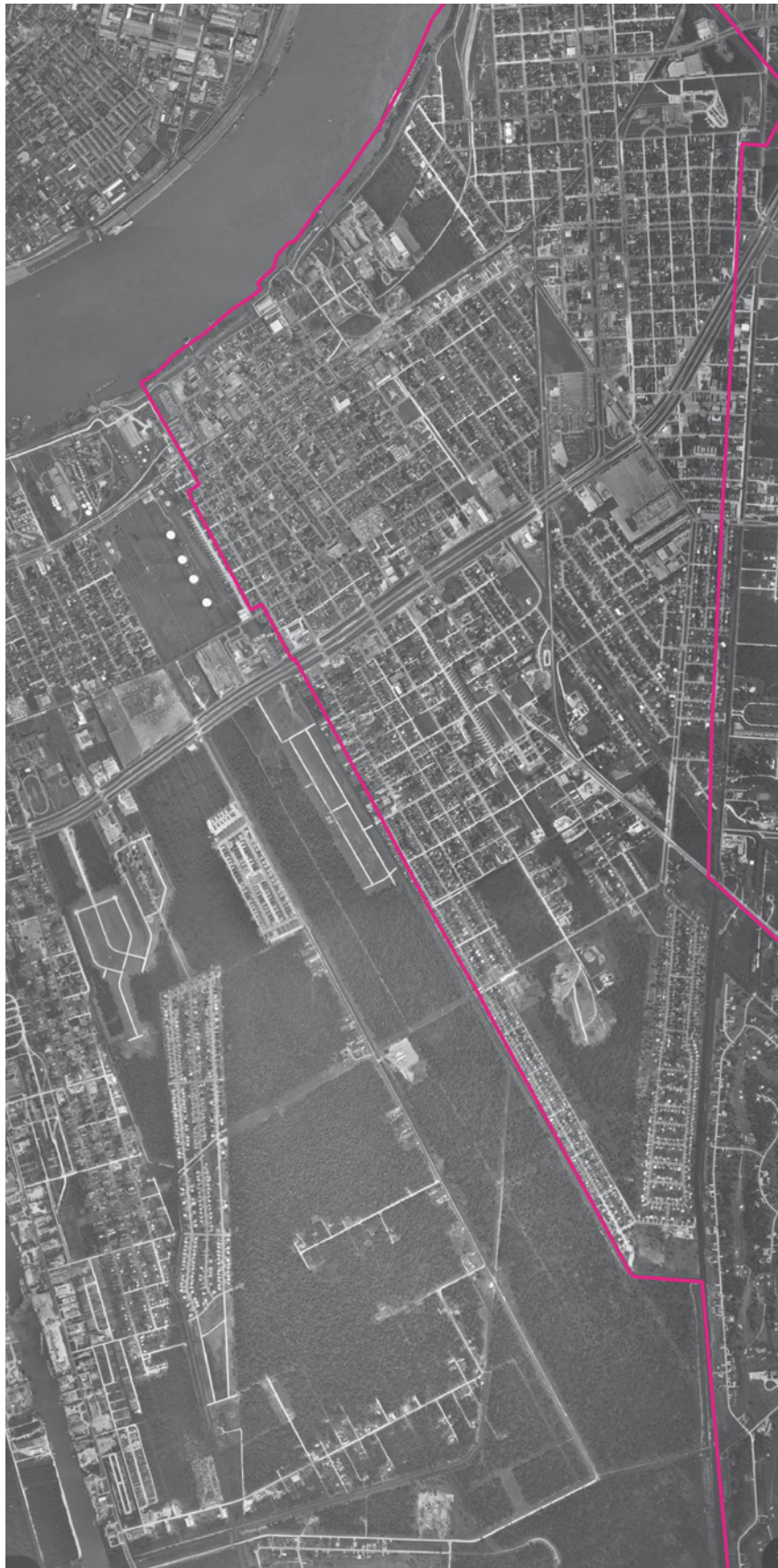


Figure 7.4: Gretna, 1967



Figure 7.5: Gretna, 1976

1. MAJOR GATEWAYS

Gretna's major access points are located along the Westbank Expressway, at Belle Chasse Highway, at Stumpf Boulevard, and at Gretna Boulevard. The Westbank Expressway features a total of four access points, including the two exits from the Expressway overpass (Exits 7 and 8) and the two ground level gateways. Expressway overpass gateways are limited to motorized traffic, connecting to the east bank of the Mississippi River, and to communities west of Gretna. The ground level gateways are located at Westbank Expressway and Whitney Boulevard to the east (connecting to Terrytown), and Hero Drive to the west (connecting to Harvey). Generally, the north side of the overpass is kept in very neat condition, featuring a vegetated neutral ground with medium sized trees. The south side of the Expressway also has a neutral ground with some vegetation, but the condition of the vegetation is inferior to that of the north side and could be improved. None of the four Westbank Expressway gateways currently have a city marker or any other entry feature to indicate the entrance of Gretna. As the majority of motorized traffic enters into Gretna through one of those four access points, the City should utilize this opportunity to present Gretna as the historic city and livable community it is. This recommendation also applies to the access point on Belle Chasse Highway. City gateways on Gretna Boulevard and Stumpf Boulevard feature city markers within landscaped areas of the neutral ground.

2. MINOR GATEWAYS

Minor access points are located on 4th Street and 11th Street to the west, Burmaster Street to the east, and Franklin Avenue to the north. None of these entries have a city marker or welcoming feature. The access points that lead into historic districts of the City, Franklin and 4th Streets, should have gateways to better represent Gretna's cultural heritage. When entering the City from Franklin Street, the urban fabric of Gretna is interconnected with Algiers as the two historic communities have grown together in a generally walkable and bikeable development pattern. The City should take advantage of this and encourage biking and walking by adding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure along Franklin Avenue. Further, this gateway could show McDonoghville as a historic community by adding signage representing the historic route between the river communities of Algiers, McDonoghville, and Gretna-Mechanickham. This also applies to the bicycle access points along the Mississippi River Trail and the ferry landing. Additionally, the City of Gretna is seeking to

reestablish the ferry connection to New Orleans in the upcoming decade, which will boost the ferry landing as a major access point for tourists and visitors from New Orleans. Those access points for alternative modes of transportation should be featured to provide information about the City's offerings and present the cultural assets of the community.

3. MAJOR GATEWAYS PLANNED

The City is slated to make the intersection of Huey P. Long Avenue at the ground level of the Westbank Expressway a major gateway leading into Downtown Gretna. The City should also make the intersection of the 4th Street Extension at Burmaster Street a gateway for people entering the McDonoghville neighborhood. Both of these intersections will be main points of entry into nationally recognized historic areas of Gretna and should be promoted as such. The intersections should be improved with signage and planting, as is similarly done at other gateways in the City.

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS & CONNECTIONS

Figure 7.7: Barriers and Connections shows limitations to Gretna's neighborhood connectivity. The construction of the Westbank Expressway in 1960 divided Gretna's urban fabric into the historic neighborhoods in the north and the suburban neighborhoods to the south. In addition to the Expressway surface canals, rail lines, the major thoroughfares of Stumpf Boulevard and Belle Chasse Highway, large-scale industrial and commercial developments act as barriers. Barriers are specifically problematic between Old Garden Park and McDonoghville, which are connected solely via 5th and Kepler Streets. The 4th Street Extension, currently under construction, will lessen the traffic burden on 5th Street. Further the City of Gretna is planning street improvements along the 5th Street corridor, which will further advance the interconnectivity between the two neighborhoods. Other barriers can be found along the City's western limits.

During the comprehensive planning process, the community strongly expressed the need to improve interconnectivity between north and south Gretna. Passing under the Westbank Expressway by foot or bicycle is perceived as unsafe and unpleasant by most of the residents. To preserve and improve upon Gretna's urban fabric and promote bikeability and walkability, a redesign of existing connection points and an attractive

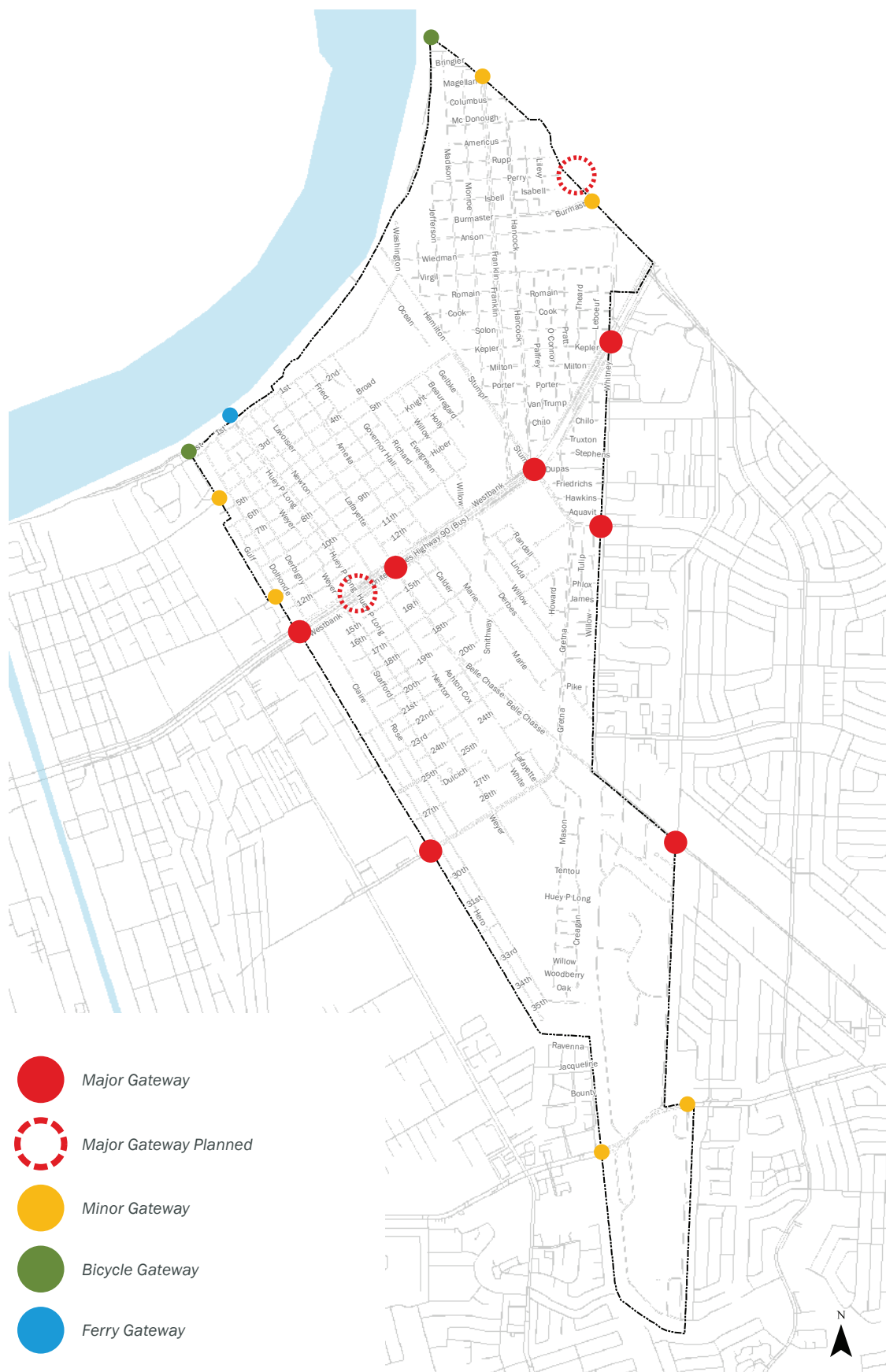
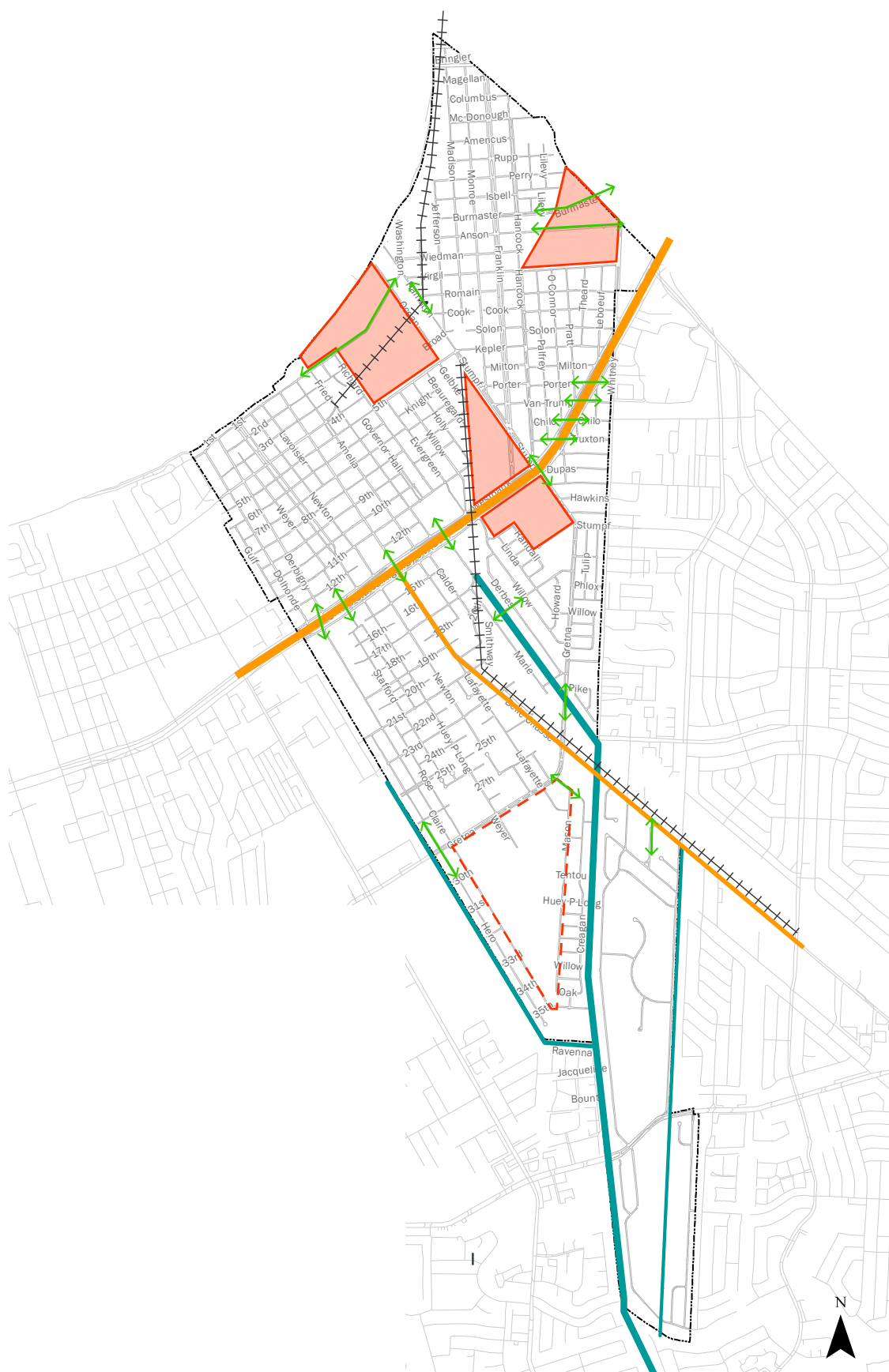


Figure 7.6: Gretna Access Points



utilization of the space underneath the bridge should be a primary focus of the City's planning efforts over the next 20 years. Possible improvements to the space would be the addition of vegetation and the construction of a skate park.

Safety should be improved by adding state-of-the-art pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The Stumpf Boulevard and Belle Chasse Highway corridors are also commonly perceived as unsafe for bicycling and walking. The improvement of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along those thoroughfares should be a goal of future planning efforts and should be combined with the implementation of street trees for shade and green infrastructure for stormwater management.

DESIGN STANDARDS

Development standards for all new development and substantial rehabilitation are defined in the City's zoning regulations. Effective regulations delineate required minimum lot sizes, minimum setbacks, and maximum building height. Additionally, a few regulations refer to other structural elements, including the height of fences. However, the effective design standards are generally minimal and lack regulations that define

building materials, standards for encroachments, build-to-lines, planting requirements, the design of vehicular use areas, or the location of parking. A new zoning code for the City should provide a set of design standards for each zone that ensure attractive, sound, and functional development that meets the City's sustainability and resilience goals in the long term and fosters neighborhood character. More on zoning can be found in [Element 2: Land Use](#).

The City's designated Historic Districts of Gretna-Mechanickham and McDonoghville are regulated by the City's historic preservation regulations and subject to the design review of the Historic District Commission (HDC). More information on the Historic District Regulations can be found in [Element 10: Historic Preservation](#). The HDC's purpose is to ensure architectural integrity of the District. The review is limited to the exterior of structures and does not include the design of vehicular use areas or planting and edge treatments. The City, however, sees a need to regulate these aspects, not only in historic areas, but also throughout the entire City. The new zoning regulations should thus include design standards for parking, fencing, and buffering, as well as requirements for street trees, planting on property, and stormwater management.



Figure 7.8: Schematic Design of Improvements under the Westbank Expressway

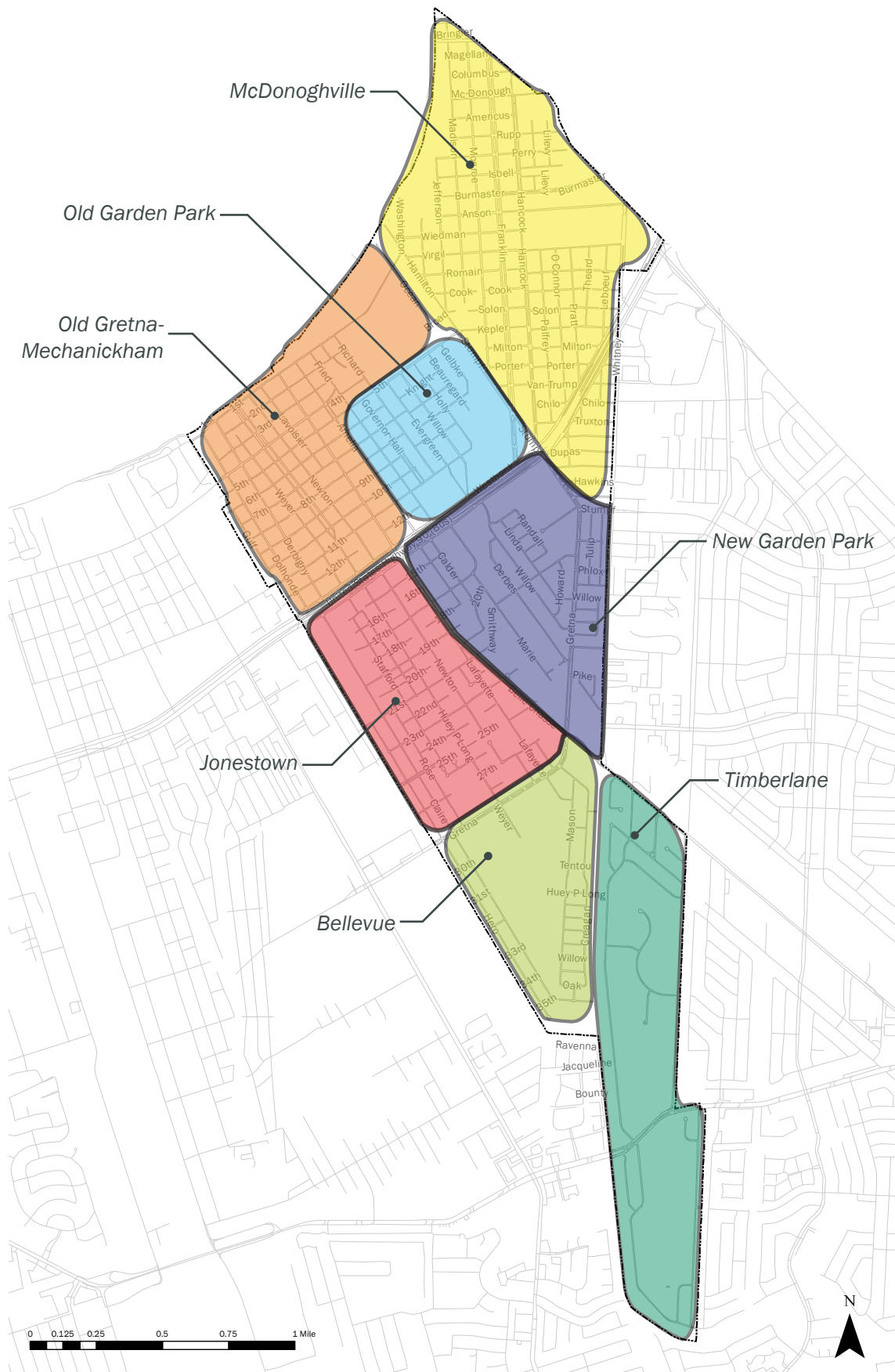


Figure 7.9: Gretna Neighborhoods

Design overlay zones should be drafted to ensure a cohesive neighborhood design in areas targeted for revitalization. Regulations should account for the need to incentivize infill, and thus specifically provide accommodations to the needs of prospective development. At the same time, it is important to not lose sight of community design principles and long-term quality of the neighborhoods.

GRETNA NEIGHBORHOODS

Gretna is roughly divided into seven major areas that form cohesive neighborhoods due to their physical attributes and history of development. See *Figure 7.9: Gretna Neighborhoods*.

The neighborhoods differ in layout, lot and block sizes, housing types, age of housing stock, accessibility, and land uses. As previously discussed, neighborhoods north of the Westbank Expressway include Gretna's historic districts where a large segment of the housing stock is older than 50 years. For more on age of housing stock see *Element 4: Housing*. The area features a typical development pattern of historic settlements such as main street corridors, a commercial core, and moderately dense residential development in between. The Riverfront is lined with industrial uses, focused on shipping and warehousing. South of the Westbank Expressway, development is predominantly residential, with the exception of the major commercial corridors Belle Chasse Highway, Stumpf Boulevard, and Gretna Boulevard. The housing stock in this area is mostly newer than that north of the Expressway. Lots are medium to large in size.

1. MCDONOGHVILLE

McDonoghville was founded by eccentric plantation owner and philanthropist John McDonogh in 1815. He subdivided plantation land into residential lots and land for farming, to free people of color, indentured servants, and other working-class families. The blocks were aligned with the eastern limits of the irregularly shaped property, which have a north/south orientation as shown in *Figure 7.10: McDonoghville Neighborhood*. Blocks are all square in shape with an average length of 325 feet, which is an ideal size and layout for a walkability and bikeability. The majority of lots on most blocks are oriented to the streets in a north/south direction, leaving one interior lot facing north and one facing south. As illustrated in *Figure 7.10*, all blocks in the historic part of McDonoghville were subdivided following the same pattern, with lots featuring a lot frontage of approximately

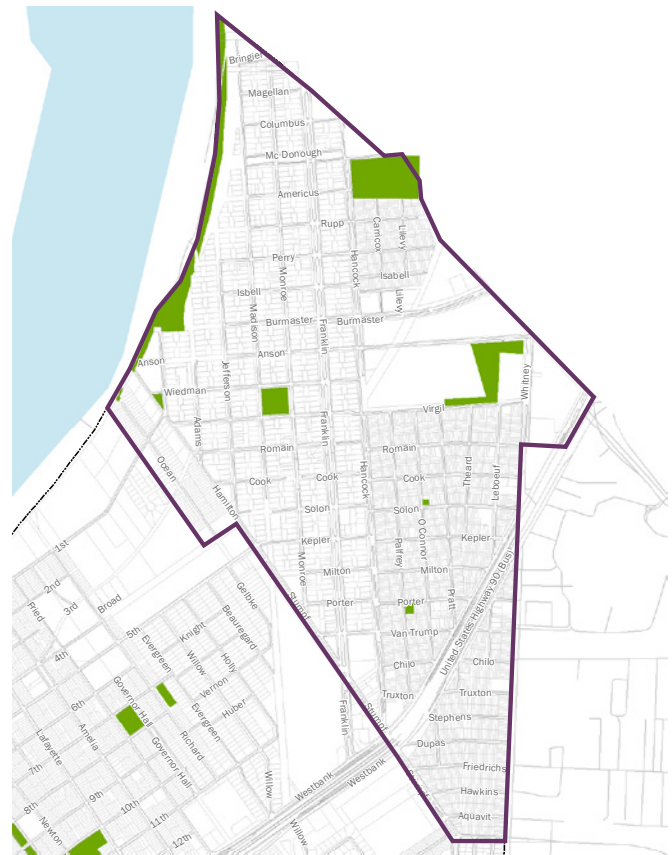


Figure 7.10: McDonoghville Neighborhood

65 feet. The depth of lots is typically 130 feet, with the two center lots having a depth of 165 feet. With typical lot sizes of either 8,450 or 10,725 square feet, lot sizes in McDonoghville are larger than those in Gretna-Mechanickham, reflecting the more rural character of the initial settlement. McDonoghville has a large share of housing stock older than 50 years, including a number of structures with historic value. Most structures were built before Gretna's current zoning regulations were in effect and development shows a slightly irregular pattern. Building setbacks range from zero to 35 feet with most residential structures setback between 10 and 25 feet. Current zoning regulations require a minimum 20-foot setback in R-1 and R-2 zones, which are the designations currently in place for McDonoghville's residential properties. A maximum height of 35 feet may not be exceeded. The northeastern portion of the neighborhood between the Mississippi River, Ocean Street, the 4th Street Extension, and Hancock Street was designated a local Historic District in 2005 and contains Creole Cottages, early shotgun houses, and a few grander center all cottage style residences. All new development and substantial rehabilitation in the Historic District is subject to the design review of Gretna's HDC.



Figure 7.11: 4th Street Extension

The neighborhood has a comprehensive pedestrian network with sidewalks typically being four feet wide. Many of the neighborhood's residential streets feature mature street trees that include Pines, Oaks, Cypress, and Crepe Myrtles. Franklin Avenue, the neighborhood's main street, is lined with mature Live Oaks.

McDonoghville has Gretna's second largest share of vacant lots and parts of the neighborhood show blighted and neglected structures, especially on the fringe in proximity to major commercial corridors. To combat blight and neglect the City's immediate revitalization efforts should focus on McDonoghville. From a design perspective the City should invest in infrastructure projects that specifically target the improvement of the neighborhood's walk- and bikeability. Further, a Complete Streets ordinance that includes requirements for street trees and green infrastructure could have a very positive, long-term effect on McDonoghville, as explained in [Element 5: Transportation](#). New zoning regulations need to include effective buffer regulations for commercial uses in order to avoid negative effects on adjacent residential uses.

The extension of 4th Street, from Richard Street along the former Texas and Pacific Railroad, to Burmaster Street is in the implementation phase as of this writing. This

major infrastructure project to improve the connectivity between Old Gretna and McDonoghville will inevitably impact the character of McDonoghville. The route of the Extension intersects four predominantly residentially developed blocks, as shown in [Figure 7.11: 4th Street Extension](#). Existing structures on those blocks are oriented to the McDonoghville historic street grid and thus face either north or south. These lots will have diagonal backyards that front the new extension of 4th Street. The new corridor will inevitably attract commercial uses. Considerations for future land use and development standards should aim to transition the Corridor from residential backyards to a functioning and attractive mixed-use corridor that buffers the street from existing residential properties. To facilitate this transition and ensure orderly and attractive development compatible with the neighborhood's residential character, the City should develop a vision for the design of 4th Street in order to guide land use regulations and development standards. Focus should be on the orientation of structures and regulation of their design and function in order to foster quality development that brings value to the neighborhood.

The extension of 4th Street will lead to a notable reduction of through traffic on 5th Street, which currently is the major connection between Old Gretna and McDonoghville. It will further allow the City to swap the current State Highway designation from 5th Street to 4th Street. This change will result in the City of Gretna having jurisdiction over 5th Street, and LA DOTD highway roadway design and lighting requirements will no longer be effective. Those regulatory changes lead to an opportunity to redesign 5th Street to enable the development of a vibrant mixed-use corridor with "Main Street" character, that can serve as a primary connection and gateway between historic Downtown Gretna and its surrounding communities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and local traffic. The City of Gretna worked with the Greater New Orleans Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to conduct a Stage 0 Feasibility Study of the redesign of 5th Street in 2015.

The study provides three options for streetscape improvements for a 0.6 mile portion of the 5th Street Corridor from Richard Street to Franklin Avenue. The Study suggests improvements and regulations regarding traffic speed calming, ADA compliance, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, planting and stormwater management, development design standards, and lighting and signage. More on the 5th Street Corridor can be found in [Element 5: Transportation](#). This study has the support of the RPC and the LA DOTD and will be moving forward in 2021.

Other than 4th and 5th Streets in McDonoughville, Franklin Avenue is another major thoroughfare that could be improved to make it a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly roadway. Currently, Franklin Avenue is a two-lane, state owned roadway with parallel parking on both sides. This corridor is mostly commercial, with limited light industrial and institutional uses. Franklin Avenue could be greatly improved by reducing the travel lanes along the corridor from two to one, installing a buffered bicycle lane, and introducing stormwater management facilities to reduce localized flooding and enhance pedestrian safety.

These interventions, along with the improvements to 5th Street and the 4th Street extension, would create a network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the historic area of Gretna. See [Figure 7.12](#) for the proposed roadway reconfiguration of Franklin Avenue.

Figure 7.12A - Franklin Blvd.: Existing Conditions

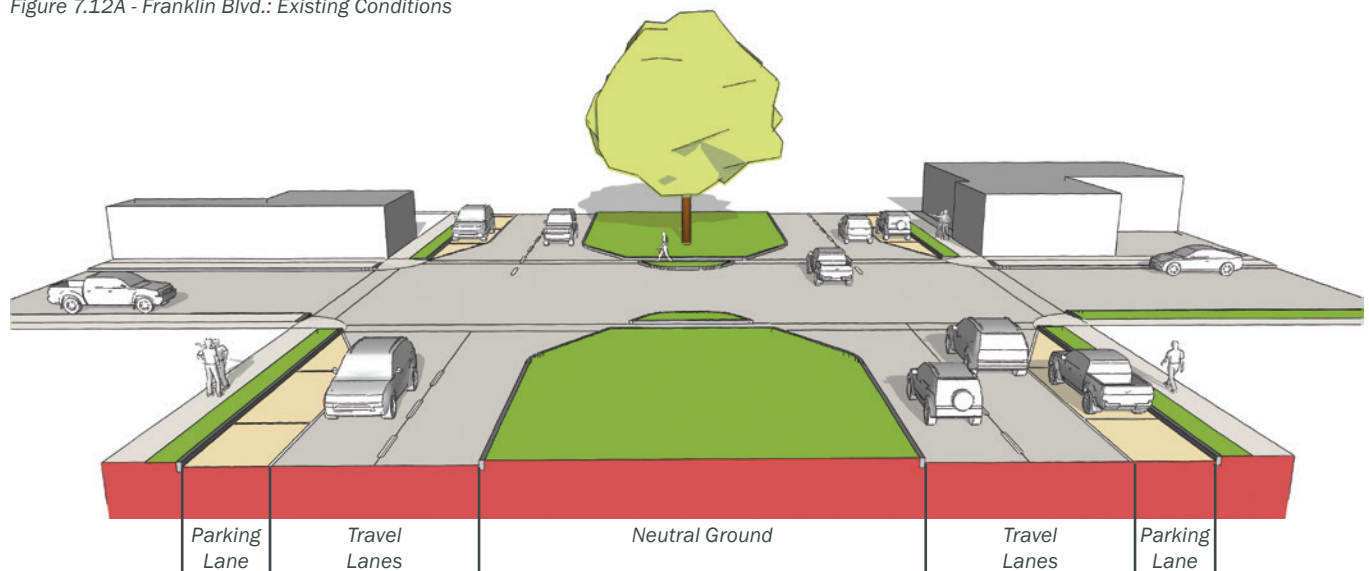
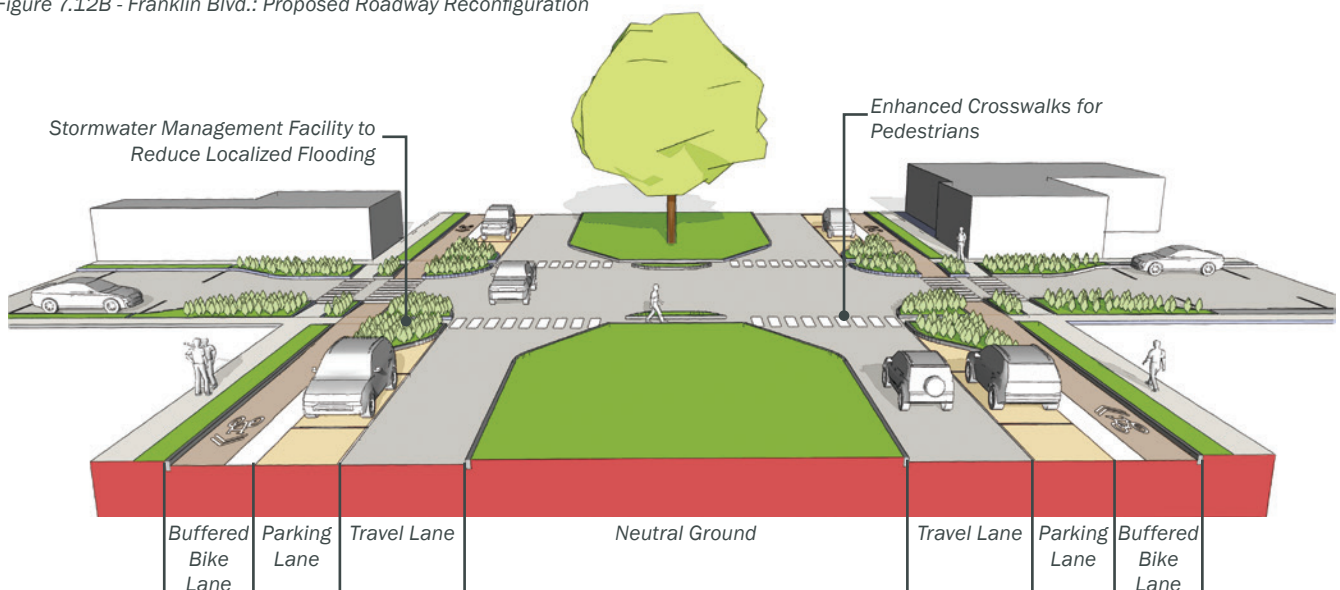


Figure 7.12B - Franklin Blvd.: Proposed Roadway Reconfiguration



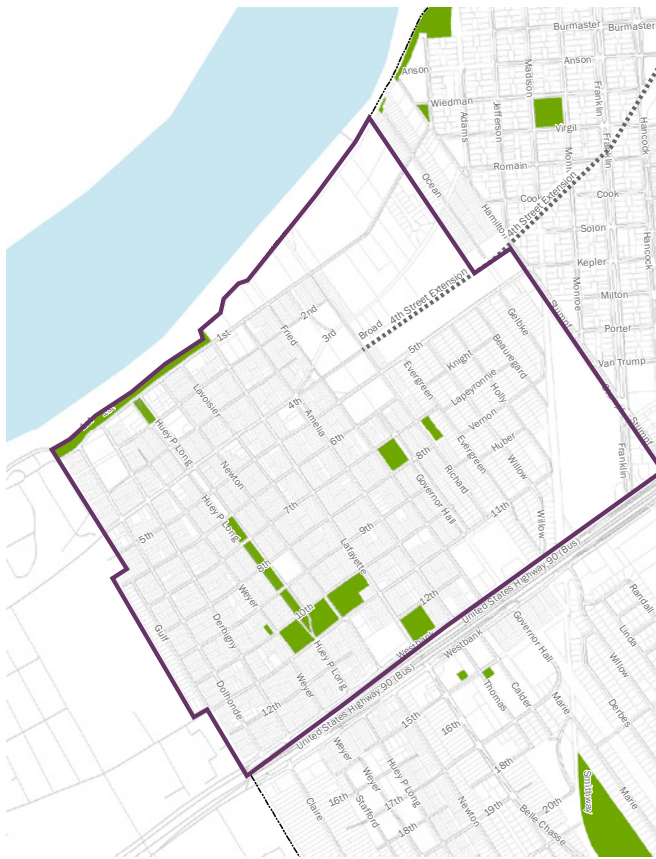


Figure 7.13: Old Gretna-Mechanickham & Old Garden Park

2. OLD GRETNA-MECHANICKHAM & OLD GARDEN PARK

A. Old Gretna-Mechanickham

Old Gretna-Mechanickham was designed by Nicholas Noel Destrehan for German settlers and established in 1836. Two years later in 1838, the St. Mary's Market Steam Ferry Company established the stretch of land immediately down river from Old Gretna-Mechanickham as Gretna. The blocks of Old Gretna-Mechanickham are oriented perpendicular to the Mississippi River. The street grid is fairly regular, with named streets running perpendicular to the River towards the southeast, and numbered streets running parallel to the Mississippi River.

A typical block in Old Gretna-Mechanickham measures 250 by 300 feet. Lots of the original subdivision are generally oriented along the named streets. With a typical frontage of 30 feet and a depth of 125 feet, most of Old Gretna's lots are only 3,750 square feet, reflecting the denser and more urbanized character of the settlement. However, development has not always occurred as the subdivision layout intended. The small size of the lots and the orientation to the main streets

has resulted in a significant number of non-conforming structures that are built across lot lines, either facing the numbered side streets, or simply exceeding the size of the original lot. Currently, all residential zones of Old Gretna-Mechanickham are zoned either R-1 or R-2, a designation that requires a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet, which exceeds the typical existing lot size by 25 percent; therefore the majority of lots are non-conforming. New subdivision and zoning regulations should take existing lot sizes and structures into account when setting minimum standards. Subdivision regulations should encourage the resubdivision of lots where structures are crossing lot lines to match actual structure orientation and size, and, if needed, allow substandard lots if a lot line complication can be resolved by the process.

Development in Old Gretna-Mechanickham contains predominantly single story structures with a large share of historic development built before 1935. Architectural styles include shotgun houses in Greek Revival, Italianate, Eastlake, and Colonial Revival style, as well as bungalows and creole cottages. Development is of semi-urban density with setbacks of zero to ten feet. Huey P. Long Avenue is Old Gretna-Mechanickham's major corridor, creating a central axis through the neighborhood and terminating in Downtown Gretna at the City's ferry terminal. While the southeastern portion of the neighborhood is primarily residential, the blocks surrounding the northwestern portion of the Huey P. Long corridor form Gretna's Downtown area.

The major part of this District is of historic character and features small scale commercial, office, and institutional facilities. The northwestern portion of Downtown is Gretna's institutional center, and was redesigned in the early 2000s with large scale office buildings, as well as extensive parking lots, which dominate the visual impression of the area. The City of Gretna Downtown Development Plan (Downtown 2020) states that Gretna currently provides an over-supply on parking spaces in the downtown area, with parking occupancy of less than 50 percent. The Plan further concludes, that a share of the parking lots could be targeted for small-scale commercial development and that streetscape improvements would further enhance the walk- and bikeability of the neighborhood. Redevelopment of parking areas could be designed as liner buildings along the large parking lots that are scaled to accommodate small-scale commercial uses which benefit from accessibility from both sides and are pedestrian oriented. The addition of street plantings and green infrastructure facilities along streets and on parking lots, as suggested in the Downtown 2020 Plan, would further contribute to enhance walkability and the

visual appeal of the historic Downtown area, decrease the urban heat island effect, improve drainage, and improve water and air quality.

B. Old Garden Park

Old Garden Park was subdivided after Old Gretna-Mechanickham. The subdivision of this community, formerly known as Brooklyn Pastures, partially mended the divided urban fabric between McDonoghville and Gretna. Lot sizes are larger than those in Old Gretna-Mechanickham, with a typical lot size of approximately 6,500 square feet. Block lengths vary slightly between 300 and 380 feet with a typical width of 270 feet. There are some exceptions with the most southern blocks, which measure 570 by 270 feet. All lots are oriented towards the streets that are perpendicular to the River. Most structures have the 20-foot setback as required by the zoning code. The neighborhood is of residential character with predominantly single-family detached structures.

The residential development in Old Garden Park is divided by railroad tracks from the commercial development of Stumpf Boulevard and the Westbank Expressway. These two major corridors have large-scale commercial development, including the Westside Shopping Center North. The development targets motorized traffic and features vast parking lots without pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure. The bicycle and pedestrian safety of this area should therefore be improved. Further, the addition of stormwater management in the parking lots should be considered in order to reduce runoff and localized flooding caused by large, impervious surfaces. Liner buildings, edge treatments, and the addition of trees, as shown in [Figures 7.14 and 7.15](#) could also improve the character and functionality of the area.

Old Gretna-Mechanickham and Old Garden Park both have a comprehensive network of four-foot sidewalks lining all streets. Block sizes and the street grid provide optimal interconnectivity and support pedestrian and bicycle use.



Figure 7.14: Infill Development along Stumpf Boulevard



Figure 7.15: Infill Development along Stumpf Boulevard



Figure 7.16: Jonestown & Bellevue Neighborhoods

3. JONESTOWN & BELLEVUE NEIGHBORHOODS

Development south of the Westbank Expressway is predominantly suburban residential. Jonestown is bound by the Westbank Expressway to the north, the Hero Canal to the west, Gretna Boulevard to the south, and the Gov. Hall Canal to the east. The orientation of the street grid is generally aligned with that of Old Gretna-Mechanickham but is longer in parts of the neighborhood and is interrupted in a number of locations, decreasing walkability. In particular, the northern portion of Claire Avenue has very little interconnectivity and south of 25th Street there are cul-de-sacs and dead end streets that interrupt connectivity and decrease walkability and bikeability. According to US Census data from 2010, Jonestown is home to a large percentage of Gretna's low-income households, who critically need bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.

The largest share of development in Jonestown consists of single-family detached structures. Large-scale commercial uses line Belle Chasse Highway, and a number of multi-family developments and trailer parks are scattered throughout the neighborhood. Residential lot sizes vary widely, between 3,600 and 18,000 square feet, with a median lot size of 5,300 square feet. Setbacks vary as well, with most structures set back between 15

and 20 feet. Jonestown has the highest number of vacant lots of all of Gretna's neighborhoods, with the majority of vacancies clustered around Huey P. Long Avenue, the neighborhood's central axis. Zoning along this corridor allows for commercial development and a number of automobile-related uses and warehouses have settled there. While those uses are permitted in Gretna's current zoning regulations under the commercial designation, they are more accurately described as light industrial and thus are not compatible with the surrounding residential uses. This land use conflict might be one factor that has led to vacancies and underutilization in Jonestown.

Future land use regulations should ensure that only land uses which are compatible with existing residential uses should be permitted and sufficient buffers should be enforced. As Gretna is mostly built out, the clusters of vacant lots in Jonestown should be utilized as a resource for accommodating current and future housing needs of the community. The City should target revitalization efforts to the southern portion of Huey P. Long Avenue by improving the streetscape with wider sidewalks, street trees, and bicycle infrastructure. Additionally, new residential development should be incentivized to feature a range of housing choices along this corridor. Improvements of walk-and bikeability at the Westbank Expressway will result in better accessibility of the neighborhood with alternative modes of transportation to and from the downtown area.

Bellevue is a triangularly shaped neighborhood located south of Gretna Boulevard and bordered by Hero Canal to the west and the Whitney Canal to the east. Gretna City Park forms the core of the neighborhood, which is strictly single-family detached residential development and is arranged along two streets that are parallel to the limits of the Park. The neighborhood is built out and very popular among its residents, who consider it a safe and family-oriented place to live. Typical lots are 5,000 square feet in size. Blocks are long, measuring approximately 630 by 240 feet. Setbacks are fairly regular, measuring 20 feet. Rose Park is part of Bellevue and is located on the east side of the Park. It features a street layout very similar in character to that of Bellevue, except that lot sizes are slightly larger with typical lots of 6,250 square feet. Blocks measure 450 by 250 by feet in the southern portion of the neighborhood. In the northern half blocks are 300 by 740 feet. Generally the neighborhood is isolated and block sizes decrease walkability. To improve interconnectivity, a connecting multi-use trail through the park should be considered. Both neighborhoods feature a comprehensive network of sidewalks with a typical width of four feet.



Figure 7.17: New Garden Park Neighborhood

4. NEW GARDEN PARK

New Garden Park is a suburban style residential neighborhood, featuring detached single family homes on lots that are typically 6,500 square feet in size. Although 20-foot minimum setbacks are required in New Garden Park, many structures feature a wider front yard with a setback between 20 and 30 feet. Most residences are spacious, single-story ranch style houses. The neighborhood is isolated from the surrounding neighborhoods by the Whitney Canal to the west and large-scale commercial development to the north. New Garden Park also has a limited connected street grid. Block sizes vary, but include superblocks, featuring an approximate length of 1,300 feet on Willow Drive and 1,700 feet on Derbes Drive. Even though the neighborhood features a comprehensive network of sidewalks, it is not seen as walkable due to the lack of interconnectivity, its isolated location, and the exclusively residential uses. While the neighborhood is located adjacent to Mel Ott Park, the Park is not easily accessible. Planning efforts for this area should target better connectivity to Mel Ott Park. Further, the design of the commercial development along Stumpf Boulevard could be improved to provide adequate buffers to residential uses, and better accommodate non-motorized modes of transportation.



Figure 7.18: Timberlane Neighborhood

5. TIMBERLANE

Timberlane is Gretna's newest neighborhood, annexed in 2009. The golf course community, which was subdivided in the late 1960s, is bound by Belle Chasse Highway to the north, the Verret Canal to the west, the Weyerauch Canal to the east, and Bayou Fatma to the south. The gated neighborhood features winding roads arranged around the 135-acre Timberlane Country Club with luxurious single family detached residences on large lots, typically about 12,000 square feet in size. Community covenants and restrictions apply to all properties in Timberlane Estates and development is subject to review by the Architectural Control Committee. Covenants further regulate minimum lot size, minimum dwelling size, and setback requirements. Any kind of commercial or business use of property is strictly prohibited. The entry gates, the winding layout of streets, and the lack of sidewalks make the neighborhood an automobile-focused development and, based on accessibility, walking and biking cannot be considered an efficient mode of transportation for its residents, aside from cutting through the golf course.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Gretna's built environment provides an advantageous starting point upon which to improve, by creating an urban fabric that reflects Smart Growth principles, as advocated by leading urban planners and the American Planning Association (<http://smartgrowth.org>). The principles of Smart Growth include:

- *Mixing land uses*
- *Designing buildings that are compact and appropriate to their surroundings*
- *Providing a range of housing options*
- *Creating walkable neighborhoods*
- *Fostering communities with a strong sense of place*
- *Persevering open space*
- *Strengthening development towards existing communities, reducing sprawl*
- *Making development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective*
- *Encouraging community collaboration in development decisions*

Gretna features historically grown neighborhoods, including Old Gretna-Mechanickham, Old Garden Park, and McDonoghville, which show a desired mixed-use development pattern and walkable and bikeable street grids. The City should aim to maintain this development character and target existing underutilized mixed-use

areas, such as those present in parts of McDonoghville, for revitalization. Furthermore, the redevelopment of 4th and 5th Streets provides an opportunity to establish development that follows Smart Growth principles, including the improvement of walkability and bikeability, the provision of a range of housing choices, urban infill and efficient use of existing infrastructure, and strengthening of the area's sense of place.

Neighborhoods located south of the Westbank Expressway are generally suburban in character and currently feature a strict separation of land uses. The City should consider establishing mixed-use corridors there, which will enhance walkability and bikeability, and generally improve the neighborhood's quality of life. The establishment of such additional mixed-use areas would also increase the range of housing choices and provide smaller, more affordable and environmentally friendlier options. Corridors suited for such a transition are Huey P. Long Avenue and Gretna Boulevard near City Park. As these corridors develop, sensitive design solutions should be considered in order to insure adjacent land uses complement each other, such as providing appropriate buffer spaces near vehicular use areas.

Further, neighborhood interconnectivity is an issue in Gretna's southern neighborhoods, as they are isolated by infrastructure features, including canals, major thoroughfares, and railroad lines. Improvement of neighborhood interconnectivity was frequently requested by Gretna's residents during the comprehensive planning process. The most pressing request was to improve the crossing under the Westbank Expressway. Additionally, New Garden Park would benefit from better connectivity to Mel Ott Park, and Bellevue could improve accessibility by adding trails through City Park. The addition of greenways and multiuse trails, as discussed in *Element 8: Parks and Recreation*, would further contribute to reaching this goal.



Figure 7.19: Additional Paths To and Through City Park; Rendering Courtesy of Tulane Regional Urban Design Center

GOALS

Goal 1: Strengthen the character of Gretna's neighborhoods.

Objective 1.1:

Create and adopt development design standards for the City of Gretna that identify and preserve the specific and desired character of each neighborhood.

Objective 1.2:

Develop and adopt planting and buffer requirements that ensure functional and attractive solutions for incompatible, adjacent land uses and along parking lots exceeding eight spaces.

Objective 1.3:

Improve drainage, appearance, and microclimate on commercial parking lots and vehicular use areas.

Objective 1.4:

Preserve and promote urban form specific to each neighborhood.

Goal 2: Revitalize underutilized areas of the City and combat signs of blight and neglect.

Objective 2.1:

Develop and adopt land use regulations that prohibit storage and automobile related uses without proper buffers adjacent to residential uses or zones.

Objective 2.2:

Target revitalization efforts to the Jonestown, Bellevue, and McDonoghville neighborhoods.

Objective 2.3:

Encourage commercial infill on a neighborhood scale, along existing neighborhood commercial and mixed-use corridors.

Objective 2.4:

Incentivize residential infill in Jonestown along Huey P. Long Avenue to support neighborhood revitalization and provide housing choices for the local workforce.

Goal 3: Improve connectivity between neighborhoods to provide a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly environment.

Objective 3.1:

Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections across major barriers including the Westbank Expressway, Stumpf Boulevard, and Belle Chasse Highway.

Objective 3.2:

Add pedestrian and bicycle connections over canals where possible.

Objective 3.3:

Implement the bicycle infrastructure network proposed in the Jefferson Parish Bicycle Master Plan.

Objective 3.4:

Add a multi-use trail through City Park to improve interconnectivity of the Bellevue–Rose Park neighborhood, as described in the Tulane Regional Urban Design Center concepts for City Park, Element 8: Parks & Recreation.

Objective 3.5:

Advance ongoing efforts for the revitalization of 5th Street.

Goal 4: Enable a context sensitive transition process for properties affected by the 4th Street Extension corridor from residential backyards to an attractive and functional urban corridor that guarantees compatibility with surrounding existing residential uses.

Objective 4.1:

Develop a vision for the design and land use of the future corridor and adopt land use regulations and development standards that reflect this vision.

Objective 4.2:

Ensure meaningful citizen participation in decision-making processes regarding land use regulations and design for the corridor.

Goal 5: Improve Gretna's gateways to strengthen the City's sense of arrival and place for residents and visitors.

Objective 5.1:

Add City markers on major gateways that currently do not have any and at Westbank Expressway exit ramps.

Objective 5.2:

Mark city limits along the Mississippi River Trail and utilize this entrance to present the City as a bicycle and pedestrian friendly place with a rich cultural heritage.

Objective 5.3:

Improve the Gretna ferry terminal and surrounding area to create a sense of arrival and utilize the opportunity to present the City to visitors.

Objective 5.4:

Create an architectural gateway at Huey P. Long and the Westbank Expressway for Downtown and Old Gretna.

Goal 6: Develop parking design standards for Gretna that reflect the sustainability and resiliency goals of the City.

Objective 6.1:

Establish standards for edge treatments of vehicular use areas.

Objective 6.2:

Work with property owners to address design deficits of Downtown Gretna's parking lots. Add trees, edge treatments, and green infrastructure to improve the visual impression, decrease the urban heat island effect, and improve drainage and water- and air quality. Construct liner buildings along the parking lot edges to buffer vehicular use areas, provide attractive commercial space, and improve downtown walkability.

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