



# CREATING A WALKABLE, VIBRANT DOWNTOWN GRETNA



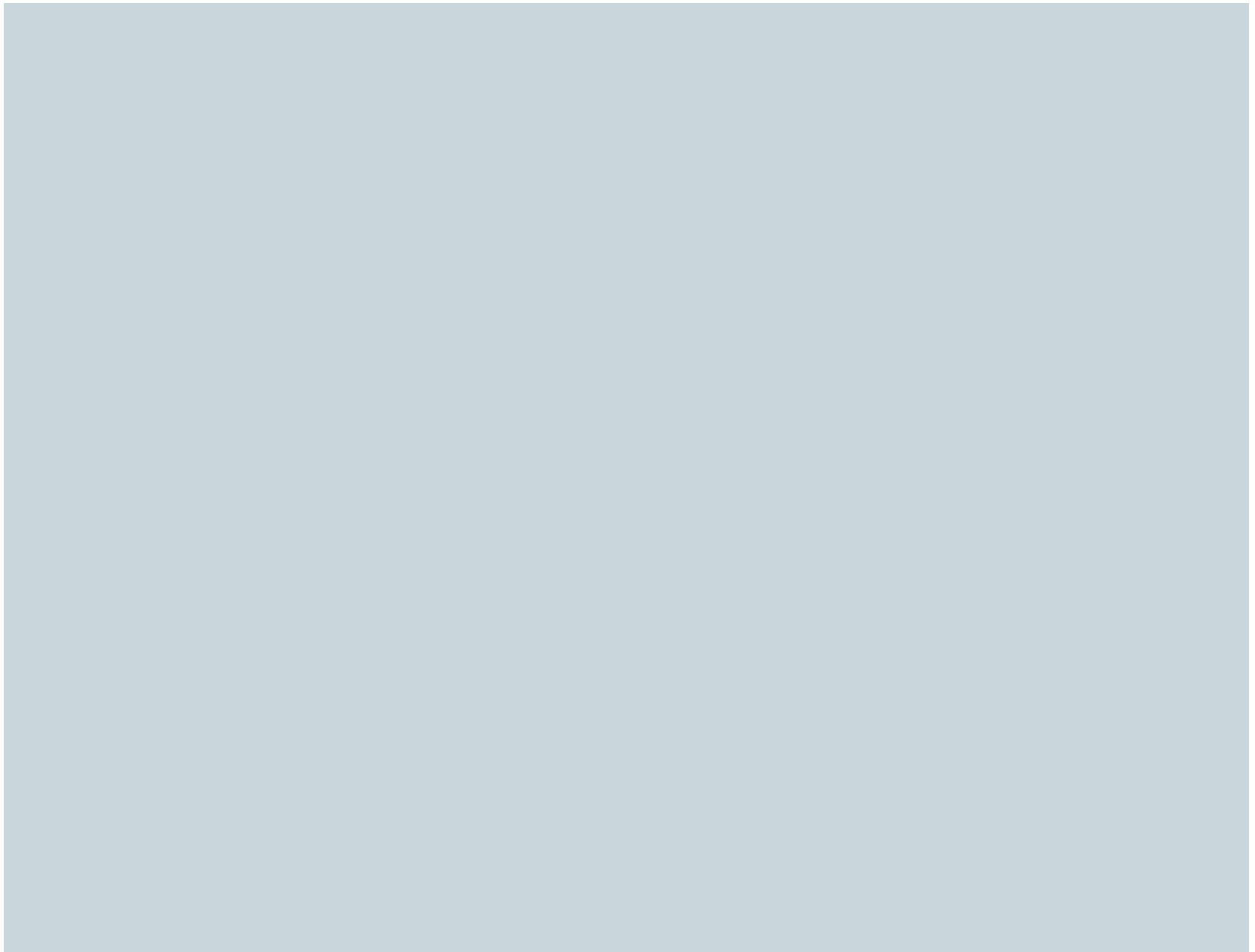
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# PROJECT & PLACEMAKING OVERVIEW

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Gretna was settled in the early 19th Century as a port and railroad outpost for its much larger neighbor across the Mississippi River: New Orleans. The City's downtown historic core has experienced a renaissance in recent years, with new restaurants, events, and the expansion of a weekend farmers' market. However, more could be done to fully capitalize on Gretna's assets - among them its riverfront, the plaza adjacent to City Hall, and its small scale streets - in order to attract people downtown and to boost economic development. A core strategy to accomplishing these goals is Gretna's commitment to revitalizing its historic downtown area through traditional neighborhood design and transportation principles, including improving walkability in the city.

As a part of this Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities project, Project for Public Spaces worked to organize a 1.5 day site visit, in September 2015. Specific goals for the visit included:

***Working with stakeholders and the public** to identify strategies to make the City of Gretna, particularly its downtown, more welcoming for walking and bicycling as a means of improving the city's livability, economic vitality, and desirability*

***Training City of Gretna staff and citizens on how to evaluate streets and public places** in order generate ideas for making them safer, more welcoming, and more lively*

***Identifying specific strategies for Huey P. Long Avenue** as a potential demonstration project downtown*

The site visit included:

*A **training** for City staff and other stakeholders on September 23rd about principles and techniques to foster greater walkability and activity in downtown Gretna*

*A **public workshop** on September 23rd that included developing ideas to improve several sites along Huey P. Long Avenue in downtown Gretna*

*A **action planning** on September 24th to discuss future opportunities and steps to realize ideas generated through the site visit*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities workshop in Gretna a success, including:

Mayor Belinda C. Constant

### ***Gretna City Council***

Councilman Milton Crosby, District 1  
Councilman Joe Marino, District 2  
Councilman Mark Miller, District 3  
Councilman Jackie Berthelot, District 4  
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# WHAT IS PLACEMAKING?

What is it that attracts and bonds people to communities? What sets some communities apart and makes them feel like special places where people want to visit and spend time? We believe that Placemaking is a key driver in both of these areas.

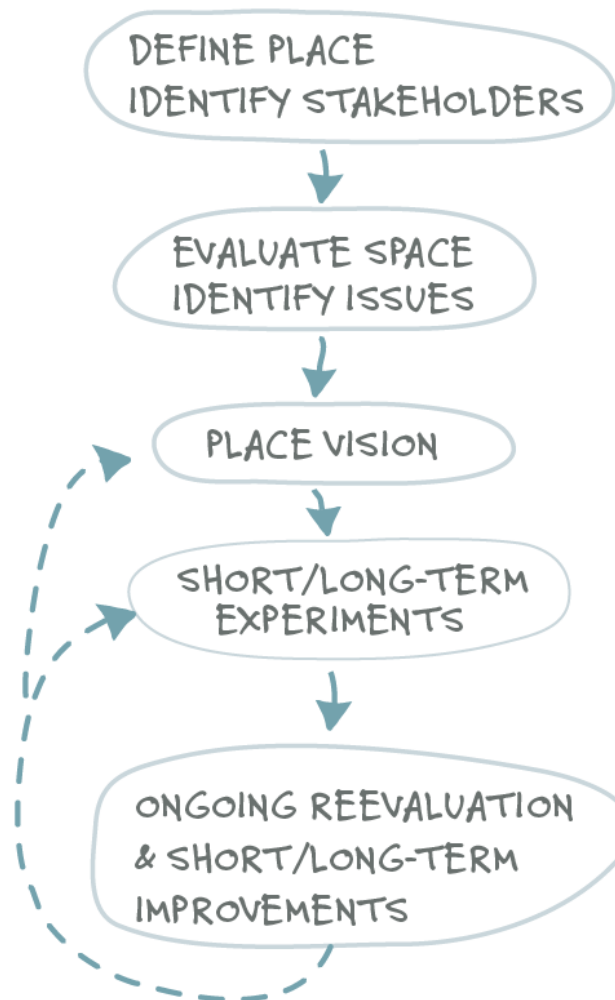
As both an overarching idea and a hands on approach for improving a neighborhood, city, or region, Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces - among them, streets, plazas, parks, and markets - as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, Placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.

With community-based participation at its center, the City of Gretna can capitalize on its local assets, inspiration, and potential, to create quality public spaces that contribute to the community's health, happiness, and well being.

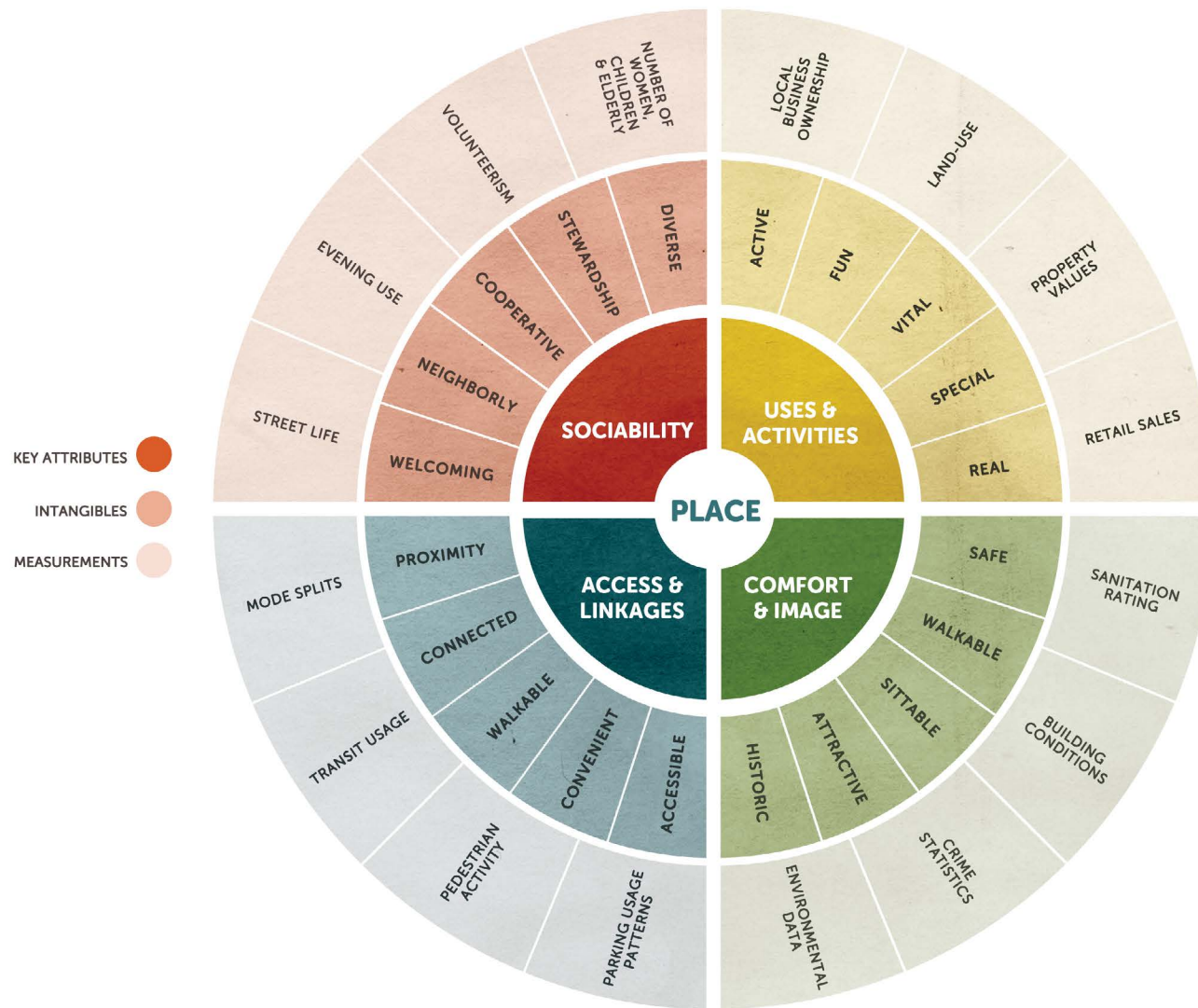
As exemplified during our site visit, Placemaking is centered around observing, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work, and play in a particular space in order to understand their needs and aspirations for that site and for their community as a whole. With this knowledge, we can create a common vision for that place. The vision can evolve into an implementation strategy, beginning with small-scale “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” improvements that bring immediate benefits both to the spaces themselves and the people who use them.

Based on our work, we have developed the Place diagram, which is a useful tool in helping communities frame and discuss the issues that are important to them. The diagram outlines the major attributes of well-functioning places, along with the intangible qualities that people use to positively describe them, and the elements that can be used to measure their success. These attributes are Sociability, Uses & Activities, Access & Linkage, and Comfort & Image. Combining this diagram with a presentation of images that compare existing conditions to examples of improvements in similar situations helps to generate shared vision and crystallize ideas for improvement.

## PLACE DRIVEN/COMMUNITY APPROACH



# THE PLACE DIAGRAM





# ATTRIBUTES OF GREAT PLACES

Great public spaces are those places where celebrations are held, social and economic exchanges occur, friends run into each other, and cultures mix. They are the “front porches” of our public institutions – libraries, field houses, schools – where we interact with each other and government. When these spaces work well, they serve as the stage for our public lives.

In our 40 years studying what makes a good public place, PPS has found that four key attributes typically characterize a good public space:

## *Comfort and Image*

Whether a space is comfortable and presents itself well – has a good image – is key to its success. Comfort includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and the availability of places to sit. We believe that the importance of giving people the choice to sit where they want is generally underestimated

## *Access and Linkage*

You can judge the accessibility of a place by its connections to its surroundings, both visual and physical. A successful public space is easy to get to and get through; it is visible both from a distance and up close. The edges of a space are important as well: for instance, a row of shops along a street is more interesting and generally safer to walk by than a blank wall or empty lot. Accessible spaces have a high parking turnover and, ideally, are convenient to public transit.

## *Uses and Activities*

Activities are the basic building blocks of a place. Having something to do gives people a reason to come to a place – and return. When there is nothing to do, a space will be empty and that generally means that something is wrong.

## *Sociability*

This is a difficult quality for a place to achieve, but once attained it becomes an unmistakable feature. When people see friends, meet and greet their neighbors, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers, they tend to feel a stronger sense of place or attachment to their community – and to the place that fosters these types of social activities.

## THE BENEFITS OF GREAT PLACES



# THE BENEFITS OF GREAT PLACES

Placemaking is often the most effective way of helping communities rise above isolated issues to forge a more compelling, integrated vision. Focusing on creating great places is perhaps the best way to create great communities.

*Places nurture and define community identity* through greater community organization, a better sense of dedication and volunteerism, perpetuation of integrity and values, and a common vision.

*Places benefit cities economically* by encouraging small-scale entrepreneurship, local ownership, more desirable jobs, greater talent retention, higher real estate values, and greater tax revenue.

*Places promote a greater sense of comfort* because they are visually pleasing, generally stimulating, environmentally friendly, and promote a sense of belonging.

*Places promote health* by encouraging increased physical activity, access to fresh food, greater security and social inclusion as well as enhanced environmental factors.

*Places create improved accessibility* by being more walkable, safer for pedestrians, compatible with public transit, less reliant on cars and parking, more efficient in terms of time and money, and offering better connections between uses.

*Places foster frequent and meaningful contact between people* through improved sociability, cultural exposure and interaction, exchange and preservation of information, and reduction of race and class barriers.



# STREETS AS PLACES

Like few other places, streets can be - and were for thousands of years - a public stage where community life unfolds. From town parades and trick-or-treating, to markets and public gatherings, they're where we celebrate and come together with our neighbors. They're where we bump into friends, and one of the few places where we routinely encounter people who are different from ourselves. They're where people have gathered to protest injustice for centuries. Streets are critical public spaces that can lend richness to the social, civic, and economic fabric of our communities.

Of course, an important function of streets is also to facilitate travel from one place to another. But many of the streets in our communities - especially those in our downtowns, Main Streets, and residential

areas - can be so much more than just a conduit for traffic. Streets as Places is about helping people begin to see streets in their entirety: not just their function in transporting people and goods, but the vital role they play in animating the social and economic life of communities.

*Streets as Places is about helping people begin to see streets in their entirety: not just their function in transporting people and goods, but the vital role they play in animating the social and economic life of communities.*

Streets typically represent the largest area of public space a community has - about a fourth of an average city's total land area and over 70 percent of city-owned public open space. We also spend tremendous amounts of money to build and maintain our street and highway networks - \$155 billion a year between federal, state, and local sources

of funding. Shouldn't we be getting the most we can from these investments?

Designing streets that function as great places is more than just a "nice" thing to do. As

Peter Kageyama, founder of the Creative Cities Summit, has said: “No longer is it sufficient to build places that are merely functional and safe. Our placemaking aspirations must be as high and as grand as our economic goals because they are bound together.” In an age when people are more mobile than ever, and cities and businesses compete to attract talent, great streets are essential to boosting economic development and tourism.

Great cities need many great streets that connect people to key destinations and places. That’s the idea behind the Power of 10 concept that PPS developed, where streets become part of a network that links a city’s best assets and places together, making them easily accessible. At a local scale, which could encompass several blocks in a distinct neighborhood, Streets as Places have 10 or more important destinations, while each of those individual places then has a multitude of things to do. The Power of 10 speaks to the importance of layering multiple activities and uses together – opportunities to sit and relax, to eat, to socialize, to recreate, to shop, and so on – to create dynamic streets that attract many people and encourage them to spend

time there.

Walkability and active transportation are an important part of creating a great street and a vibrant community. When a street can be easily accessed by walking, biking, and transit, it attracts a wider variety of people to it than if it is only within reach of those with a car. And when a street is designed to be amenable to everyone, including those with special needs – like wheelchair or stroller accessibility, for example – it becomes a place that welcomes vulnerable populations in our communities. Streets that function as places prioritize the pedestrian. People lingering and walking along a street make it a more vital and vibrant place in a way that greater numbers of cars do not.

*By the numbers:* Studies have found that walkable, bike-friendly, human-scale urban form pays dividends to a city from incentives, tourism, real estate values and “spending” in local businesses. (PlanIt Calgary, 2009; Foot Traffic Ahead, George Washington University School of Business, 2014; NYCDOT 2012; CEOs for Cities, 2009; Brookings Institution 2011 & 2012; and countless others).





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

# SITE VISIT OVERVIEW

## STAKEHOLDER & STAFF TRAINING

On Wednesday, September 23rd, City staff and stakeholders met together for a day of training on Placemaking and how to foster walkable, bikeable, safe streets. Participants engaged in several group exercises, including asset and opportunity mapping for Gretna, as well as developing typologies for the city's streets. Street typologies help to articulate a vision and design metrics for different streets, depending on their context and goals.

## COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

PPS, in partnership with the City of Gretna, organized a public workshop the evening of Wednesday, September 23rd. After hearing a presentation about key attributes of what makes a great public place, meeting participants divided into groups to evaluate four sites in downtown Gretna along Huey P. Long Avenue using the Street Audit form (see Appendix for a copy). During this exercise, participants rank the strengths and weaknesses of a site under four attribute areas (Uses + Activities, Comfort + Image, Sociability, Access + Linkages), then brainstorm short

and long term improvements for the place with their group.

## ACTION PLANNING

On September 24th, the group of stakeholders and City staff from the previous day's training reconvened to discuss themes and identified opportunities that had been raised during the site visit. The group then discussed specific short and long term action steps needed to realize identified goals of making downtown Gretna more vibrant, active, and walkable.

*"I'd like the neighborhood to have a strong sense of community, where people know and greet each other, local business and enterprises thrive with the support of people and government, and opportunities for all to be involved in decisions that affect us all."*

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ABLE TO  
DO MORE OF IN DOWNTOWN GRETNA?

*Shop*

*Eat*

*Do fun activities*

*Ride a bike or walk from other areas*

*Watch movies*

*Walk on pedestrian streets during the  
weekend*

*Watch live music*

*Attend festivals*

*"Reminiscent of old Gretna - where  
people meet, eat, shop..."*

WHAT WORDS WOULD YOU LIKE TO  
USE TO DESCRIBE DOWNTOWN GRETNA  
IN 10 YEARS?

*Alive*

*A destination*

*Sustainable*

*Vibrant*

*Pedestrian friendly*

*Green*

*Family and dog friendly*

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## WHAT WE HEARD

A desire for downtown to *foster greater community building, sociability, and unplanned encounters*

A need to better *connect downtown destinations together* and to create *a more cohesive visual identity for downtown Gretna*

A need to create *more diverse, active destinations downtown* - including better capitalizing on the riverfront and the Jefferson Memorial as Gretna's 'town square' and providing options for families and children

Concerns about *making the city safer and more welcoming for walking (and bicycling)*, especially for those with strollers, wheelchairs, or physical limitations

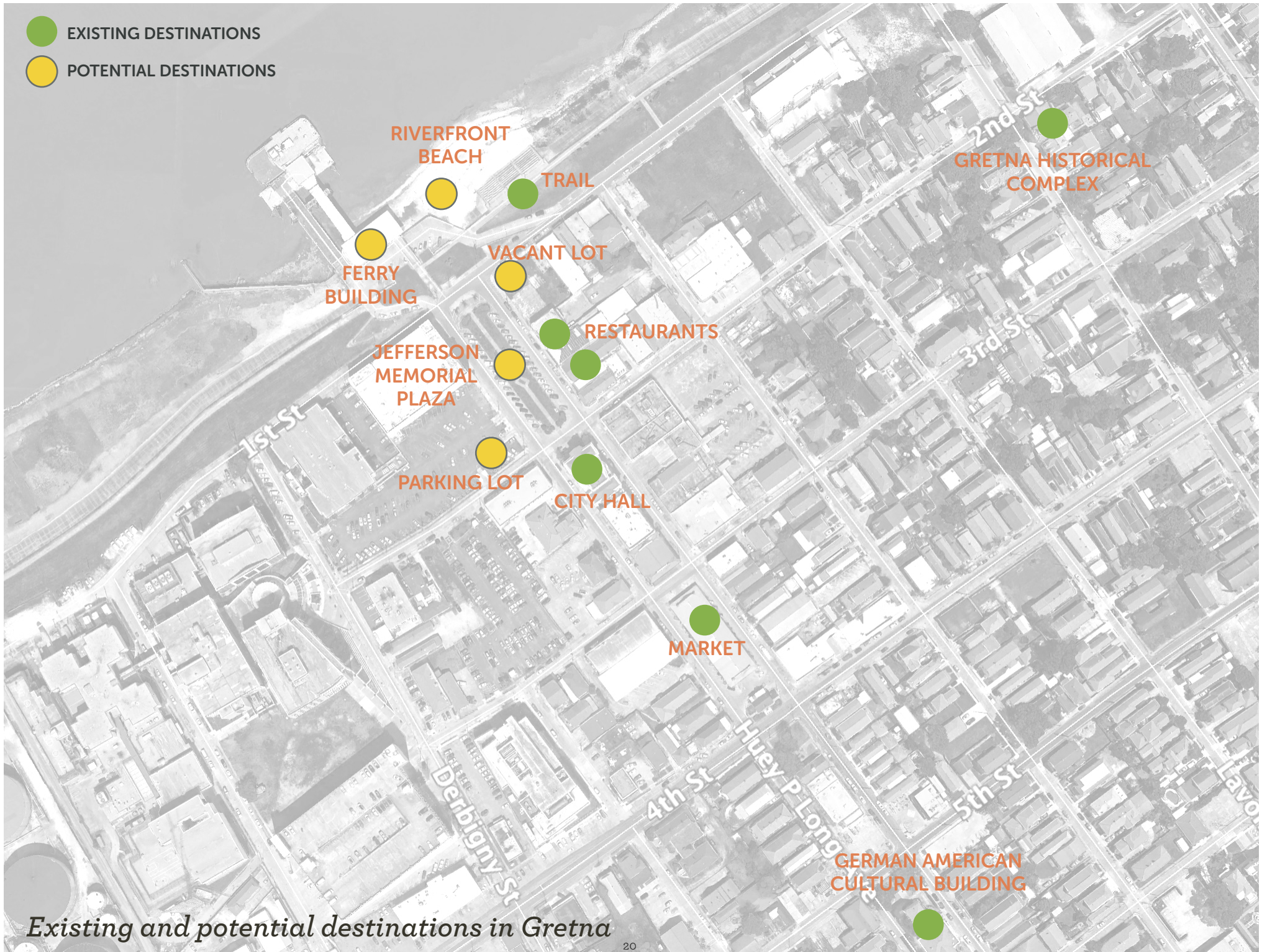






# VISION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- EXISTING DESTINATIONS
- POTENTIAL DESTINATIONS



*Existing and potential destinations in Gretna*

# POWER OF 10+

## *Use the ‘Power of 10’ to create a more vibrant, active downtown*

The Power of 10+ is a concept PPS developed to evaluate and facilitate Placemaking at multiple community scales. Cities succeed or fail at the human scale – the place scale – and this scale is often overlooked. The Power of 10+ shows how paying attention to the human experience when building a city’s destinations and districts can have immediate and widespread impacts.

The idea behind this simple concept is that places thrive when people have a range of reasons (10+) to be present. These might include a place to sit, playgrounds to enjoy, art to touch, music to hear, food to eat, history to experience, and people to meet. Ideally, some of these activities will be unique to that particular place, reflecting the culture and history of the surrounding community. When a place is designed to attract diverse people of different ages and backgrounds, it becomes a vibrant spot.

Similarly, at the city scale, a vibrant area - a downtown, for example - needs a critical mass (10+) of destinations and places in order to function well for locals and tourists alike. Having multiple destinations within a relatively small area attracts diverse sets of people, creates life on the streets, encourages walking, and creates the kind of ‘buzz’ that makes a neighborhood or downtown. Destinations do not need to be grand places like a museum or cultural center; in some contexts, they can be as simple as a treasured

local coffee shop, or a small plaza that supports many different kinds of activities.

To become a more walkable and vibrant downtown, Gretna needs more destinations that attract the diverse people who live in and visit the city - places that encourage people to treat downtown as a destination unto itself where people could spend several hours, or even most of a day. There are several great opportunities the city has to create additional attractive public places downtown, most of which could be started without large capital investments, such as activating the city’s riverfront and the Jefferson Memorial plaza area. The creation of such new destinations would help to strengthen the city’s existing downtown destinations, such as the Mississippi River Trail, the weekend farmers’ market, and the Historical Museum complex, among others.

In addition, some of Gretna’s existing destinations could use a ‘Power of 10’ analysis to evaluate opportunities to create a more dynamic place that fosters multiple activities.

The Power of 10 shows that by starting efforts at the smallest scale you can accomplish big things. The concept also provides the community with something tangible to strive for and helps them visualize what it takes to make each of their places great.



## POWER OF 10+



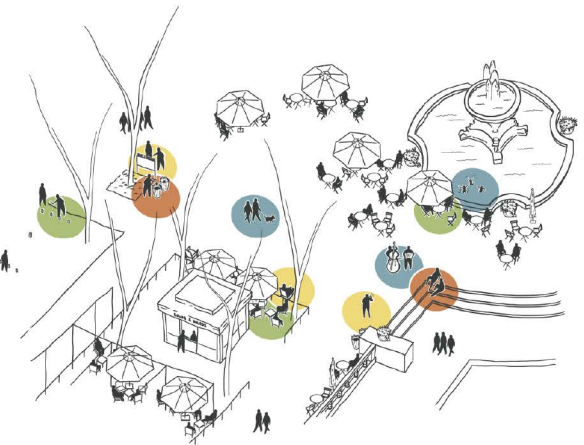
### City/Region

10+ MAJOR DESTINATIONS



### Destination

10+ PLACES IN EACH



### Place

10+ THINGS TO DO,  
LAYERED TO CREATE SYNERGY



# STREETS AS PLACES

*Create Streets as Places downtown  
to encourage walking and activity*

Streets as Places is about Placemaking on one of the most important public spaces each community has – our streets. With community-based participation at its center, an effective Streets as Places process capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, and results in streets that contribute to people’s health, happiness, and well being. These six principles focus on ways to attract people to a street and to tap into its community-building potential. These guidelines closely parallel PPS’s “What Makes a Great Place” diagram, which we have adapted to fit the context of streets.

*“If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you  
get cars and traffic. If you plan for people  
and places, you get people and places.”*

*– Fred Kent, Project for Public Spaces*

## 1. GREAT ACTIVITIES & DESTINATIONS

People need to have a reason to be, and stay, in a particular place. The more activities and options a street offers, the more it attracts diverse groups of people – which is essential for creating a place that feels vibrant and dynamic. But it's not enough to just have a great set of restaurants and shops and businesses that operate behind closed doors. Great streets have an “inside-outside” quality where indoor activity spills onto the street – whether that's through sidewalk displays of merchandise, outdoor cafés, or special events or programming that take place in the right-of-way. Christopher Alexander, in his seminal book *A Pattern Language*, explains the importance of how a building interacts with the street: “The building with a lively building edge is connected, part of the social fabric, part of the town, part of the lives of all people who live and move around it...If the edge fails, then the space never becomes lively.”

### *Recommendations for Gretna*

*Activate the Jefferson Memorial plaza area with seating, programming, public art*

*Create outdoor dining adjacent to the restaurants on Huey P. Long Avenue by extending the sidewalks*

*Encourage local businesses and institutions to ‘activate’ their sidewalk frontage with retail displays, outdoor dining, seating, and small scale signage*

*Evaluate temporary uses for the vacant lot on the corner of Huey P. Long Avenue and 1st Street - such as projecting movies, large scale art, a creative children's play structure, and /or seating and tables*

*Use the farmers' market structure for additional programming and events, such as adding seating/tables at the market itself, and/or using the spaces for activities such as a rollerskating night, family friendly dance parties, etc. Consider improvements to the space to make it more attractive for events and programming, such as nicer pavement material or concrete stamping/stencils, improved lighting and sound equipment, etc.*

## 2. ACCESSIBLE

Great streets are true meeting grounds of local society – where people of different ages, ethnicities, and income levels intersect and interact. To make that happen, not only does a street need to have diverse destinations and activities, but it also needs to be easily accessible to all.

When a street can be easily accessed by walking, biking, and transit, it attracts a wider variety of people to it than if it is only within reach of those with a car. And when a street is designed to be amenable to everyone, including those with special needs – like wheelchair or stroller accessibility, for example – it becomes a place that welcomes and prioritizes vulnerable populations.

Streets that function as places prioritize the pedestrian. People lingering and walking along a street make it a more vital and vibrant place in a way that greater numbers of cars do not. At the network level, pedestrian-friendly streets often have shorter block lengths, which Jane Jacobs and others have found to facilitate more encounters and interactions among people. Frequent intersections also create better access and egress points to the street, which helps facilitate the additional mixing of people who are coming from other streets.

In addition, since vehicle speed is the number one factor contributing to the higher likelihood of deaths and serious injuries in car crashes, slow streets are not only a way to foster places that are more comfortable for people, they are also a way to make places safer. Because so many crashes occur at intersections, ensuring safe crossings is critical, too.

### *Recommendations for Gretna*

***Improve pedestrian access across 1st Street to the riverfront levee.*** Consider additional signage and traffic calming techniques – such as speed bumps, curb bump outs at intersections, etc. – to slow vehicle speeds along this street

***Ensure that street corners downtown have ADA-friendly crosswalks and curb cuts***

***Conduct walking audits on downtown streets to identify locations for improvement, including where sidewalks are in disrepair***

***Consider bulb-outs at corners to narrow pedestrian crossing distances and slow vehicle speeds***

***Create a ‘bike boulevard’ that connects to the riverfront trail that has a protected bike lane to facilitate safe, easy bicycling access***

### 3. INVITING & RICH IN DETAIL

Great streets are the result of thousands of tiny details that involve the design of their buildings, landscaping, sidewalk features, and street layout itself. A walk on a beautiful street feels like strolling; a walk on a terrible street feels like trudging.

People are inherently attracted to places that offer rich detail and interesting features, among them the ability to peer into buildings' activities. Street studies of pedestrians in Copenhagen found that activity levels were much greater in front of open building facades than those with closed off facades, like a blank wall.

As Victor Dover, one of the authors of *Street Design: The Secret to Great Cities and Towns*, has said: "Great streets feel like a public, outdoor room." Buildings help shape the edges of a street's room, but architectural details, art, landscaping, signage, and of course, people, among other things, make a street feel interesting and captivate the eye.

#### *Recommendations for Gretna*

*Create a landscaped edge or attractive fence along the surface parking lot on Huey P. Long Avenue across from the Jefferson Memorial, and consider future shallow development along its perimeter to create a more active edge along the street.*

*Encourage (or mandate, through policy) businesses and institutions to have a certain percentage of window glazing and create window displays*

*Prohibit setbacks along downtown streets for commercial and institutional buildings*

*For blank walls of buildings that lack windows (such as the one on Huey P. Long between 2nd and 3rd Streets), consider the addition of murals, public art, and/or a faux facade*

*Add pedestrian-scaled lighting, which could include lamp posts and string lights in some locations, to create a more welcoming environment at night*

## 4. INTERACTIVE & SOCIAL

What may differentiate Placemaking from other urban planning and design movements is its emphasis on spaces that facilitate interaction between people. Streets, more so than any other public space, have the potential to spark limitless interaction – planned and unplanned, long and short, between people of all ages and backgrounds. It's what builds a sense of community and place attachment. As Jane Jacobs said, 'The trust of a city street is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts. It grows out of people stopping by the bar for a beer, getting advice from the grocer and giving advice to the newsstand man...'

There are many ways a street can spark interaction between people, from amenities like public art, water features, and seating options, to entertainment like street performers or programming, to interesting shop and window displays.

In these places, people respond and interact in their own ways by listening to music, engaging a public sculpture, or reading historic signage that helps them understand the significance of a particular place.

### *Recommendations for Gretna*

*Consider locations for large scale, interactive public art downtown on the levee and in the Jefferson Memorial plaza*

*Add more opportunities for creative play downtown - board games, beach games (volleyball)), children's play structures, etc.*

*Create a programming schedule for the Jefferson Memorial Plaza - such a music once a week, children's arts and crafts, an outdoor yoga class, etc.*

*'The trust of a city street is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts. It grows out of people stopping by the bar for a beer, getting advice from the grocer and giving advice to the newsstand man...'*

*- Jane Jacobs*

## 5. UNIQUE

The best streets in the world do not look or feel like any other street; they have an identity of their own and unique features, whether it's a winding lane in Little Italy or a grand boulevard like the Champs-Élysées. Gretna is fortunate to have many of the ingredients to create unique streets - historic architecture and small scale streets, among them. Planner and author Victor Dover talks about the importance of “memorable streets,” where your experience there makes a lasting imprint. Architect Ben Hamilton-Baillie agrees that great streets often have “an unexpected feature or quality to them.”

Streets have a tremendous capacity to communicate to us a place's history, culture, values, and assets. Fundamentally, it's up to local communities to figure out what story they want their streets to tell. There are a multitude of ways to showcase a community's identity, history, or local assets, whether through building design, public art, landscaping, pavement materials and design, wayfinding or other signage, programming or special events, and the showcasing of local institutions, people, and businesses on the street.

### *Recommendations for Gretna*

*Create a wayfinding system for downtown Gretna at key destinations to help encourage people to visit multiple places in the same visit.*

*Develop a ‘branding identity’ for Gretna’s downtown, which can be communicated through the use of banners, a consistent color palette, unique street pavement or crosswalk materials, landscaping, etc.*

*Similarly, create an identity for the Gretna riverfront by naming the area and developing a series of activities and programs that take place there*

*Make Huey P. Long an inviting ‘gateway’ into downtown - with signage on the highway service road and improvements along the corridor, as detailed later in the report*

***Fundamentally, it's up to local communities to figure out what story they want their streets to tell.***



## 6. FLEXIBLE

The needs of the neighborhoods adjacent to our streets can change over time, and often even over the course of a week. A downtown street may be flooded with cars during the week, but home to more pedestrians than vehicles on the weekends. Similarly, great streets need to work year round, even in challenging weather conditions. For most streets in our communities, however, the layout and use of our streets remains static. We're often not getting the best use out of our streets.

Streets have enormous capacity to be flexible spaces that can meet multiple community goals, especially when they are designed with that purpose in mind. Lacking adequate civic space for special events, some communities have started to create flexible streets that can more easily be used for markets, shows, Play Streets, and local celebrations – often signified by special concrete paving or stamping on the street, as well as streetscape amenities and signage. Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper methods and materials can help to maximize a street's flexibility, making it easier to facilitate short term or regularly scheduled changes on a street.

### *Recommendations for Gretna*

*Consider making Huey P. Long Avenue around the Jefferson Memorial a 'shared space' street that prioritizes pedestrians over cars, which would help to create a flexible space for outdoor dining and special events, as well as slow car traffic in the area. Shared space streets are often curbless and utilize special materials to demarcate them, such as stamped concrete or cobblestones.*

*Move the parking from around the Jefferson Memorial, either permanently or temporarily in the evenings, in order to allow space for outdoor dining and other activities*

*..great streets need to  
work year round, even  
in challenging weather  
conditions*

# STREET TYPOLOGIES

*Create a Street Typology for Gretna to articulate a vision for each of the city's streets*

Street typologies are a way of categorizing roads based on the function that they serve – or could serve – in a community. A city like Gretna has multiple needs from its streets and transportation network, including long-distance travel between towns and places, local trips for running errands or getting children to school, and recreation through activities like walking and bicycling, among other goals. A street typology system helps to articulate the vision for a street, including its main functions, activities, and users, which then informs how the street should be designed, operated, and managed. The typology for a particular street is determined through evaluation of its context, in collaboration with the community of people that uses – or would like to use – it.

Street typology systems augment the traditional functional classification system and associated design standards for roads defined by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). This system categorizes roads based largely on how they relate to the movement of motor

vehicles, creating a hierarchy that ranges from streets designed primarily for travel mobility (arterials) to those that are primarily designed to provide access to local uses (local or residential streets). Street typologies further define streets by relating them not only to motor vehicles, but to other modes and users, as well as to their primary goals, functions, and activities that the street should be designed to support. It also helps to ensure that a consistent approach is used when corridors are evaluated to determine which modes of travel may warrant accommodation.

*A street typology system helps to articulate the vision for a street, including its main functions, activities, and users, which then informs how the street should be designed, operated, and managed.*

## BENEFITS OF ESTABLISHING STREET TYPOLOGIES

Establishing street and transportation corridor types helps to focus on the broader goals and functions that streets and transportation corridors serve in a community or region. These typologies can serve to:

- ▶ **Ensure that there are streets and complete circulation networks designed to accommodate different modes and users.** The “street typologies” system includes a prioritization for multiple modes, so that some types are designed to prioritize motor vehicle traffic, while others prioritize pedestrians, bicyclists or public transportation. Not every corridor needs to accommodate every mode. However, a network of streets and corridors should be provided to ensure that people who may be using different modes of travel are able to reach their destinations. Street typologies can help eliminate the conflict that often occurs when decisions are made on a street by street basis
- ▶ **Engage the community and stakeholders in the vision for a street.** “Street typologies” are designed in order to assist stakeholders in setting a vision for the function of a transportation corridor beyond the motor vehicle and vehicular throughput-focused performance measures that traditionally have been used in transportation planning. This makes it easier for local citizens and other non-transportation professionals to engage in a conversation about the outcomes they would like to see for the streets in their community. Street types start with the vision for a roadway and its surrounding uses, and then transportation professionals play an important role in figuring out how the design, operation, and management of the transportation corridor can best support that vision.
- ▶ **Ensure that a transportation corridor is adding value to a community.** Design and function plays a key role in whether people want to live, work, or shop along or nearby a transportation corridor. Categorizing transportation corridors by type accommodates the variation in community land uses and mobility needs to attract people to the area.

# STREET TYPOLOGIES FOR GREтна

The stakeholder and staff training on September 23rd included a street typologies exercise, where small groups of the training participants developed a series of ‘street types’ for Gretna.

The groups developed the following typologies for Gretna, which could be further refined;

## COMMERCIAL STREET

(Example: 5th Street)

*A street that supports shopping and commercial activity.*

## DESTINATION/MAIN STREET

(Example: Huey P. Long Avenue)

*A street that is the heart of the community and the frequent location of events and activity.*

## GATEWAY STREET

(Example: Huey P. Long Avenue)

*An important entryway corridor into the city that creates a visual first impression of Gretna.*

## ACCESS STREET

(Example: 1st Street)

*A street that is vital for through traffic and freight movement, but where safe access for non-motorists is also critical.*

## NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

(Example: Willow Drive)

*A primarily residential street where pedestrian safety and slow vehicle speeds are prioritized.*

## BIKE BOULEVARD STREET

(To be determined)

*Bicycle boulevards are streets with low motorized traffic volumes and speeds, designated and designed to give bicycle travel priority..*

## SHARED SPACE STREET

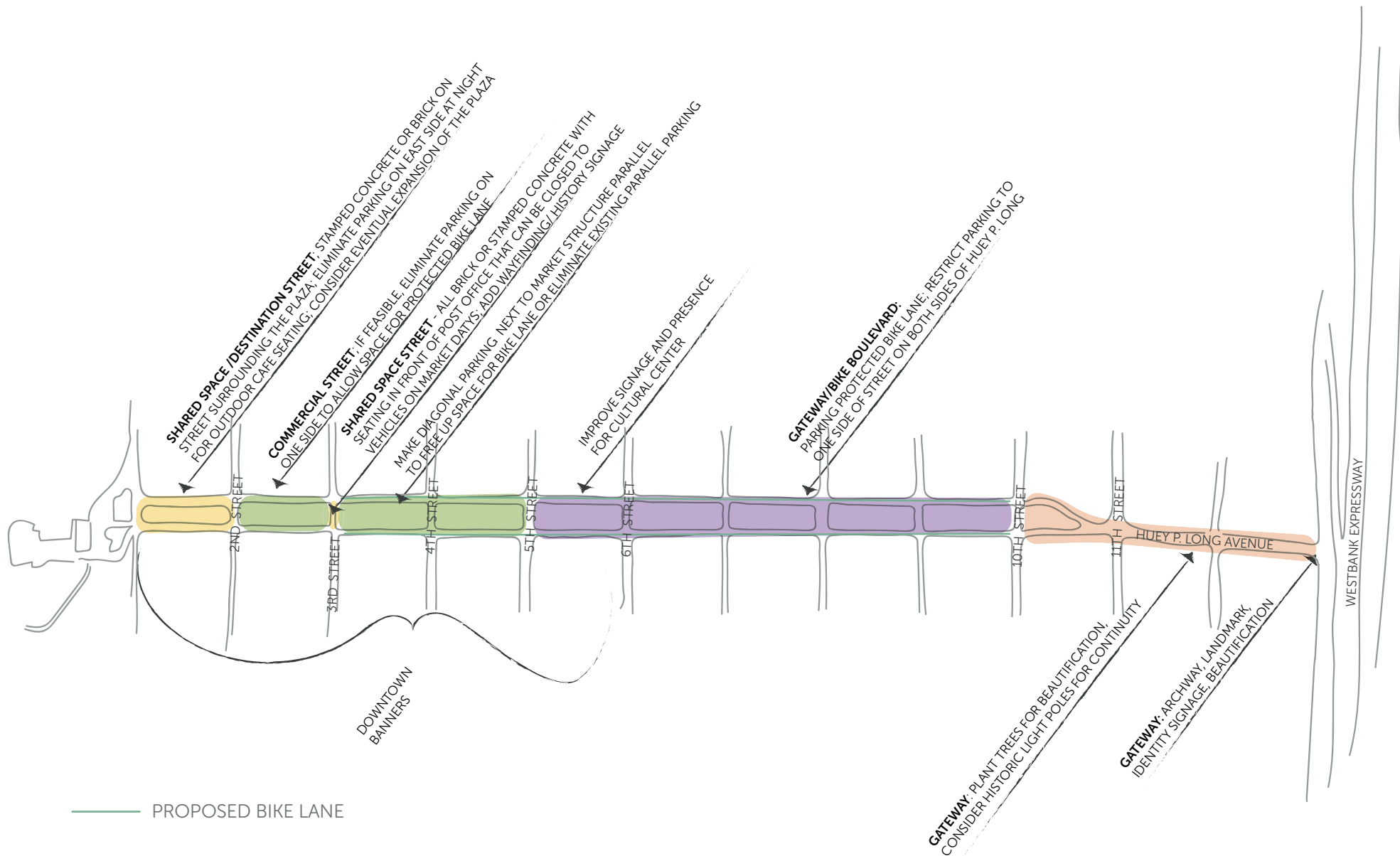
(Example: Huey P. Long Avenue around the Jefferson Memorial plaza)

*A street in which pedestrians have access to the full right-of-way, but where cars traveling at slow speeds are permitted. Curbing is often removed and signage minimized to blur the lines between sidewalks and motorized travel way. The philosophy is that absence of all of those features forces all users of the space – from pedestrians to drivers – to negotiate passage through the space via eye contact and person-to-person negotiation.*

## SHARED USE PATH

(Example: Mississippi River trail)

*A path that supports use by people walking, running, and bicycling.*



Example of Potential Street Typologies For Huey P. Long Avenue

# STREET TYPOLOGIES - EXAMPLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Implementing Agency: North Carolina Department of Transportation

Street Typology Names: *Avenue, Main Street, Boulevard, Parkway, Rural Road, Local/Subdivision Street*

## Summary:

NCDOT's Complete Streets Planning and Design Guidelines, published in July 2012 as part of the State's Complete Streets policy implementation process, include a chapter that defines several Complete Street types for the state's roads (Chapter 4, Planning and Design Elements). The six street types are each defined in terms of their main function, the priority modes, typical design features (i.e. sidewalks, bike lanes, transit stops), and other issues such as vehicle speeds and volumes, parking, and land use features (i.e. setbacks). Sample cross-sections illustrate the key elements of each of the typologies in urban/suburban contexts, and also in rural contexts. The cross-sections provide some recommendations for how to allocate the road right-of-way space to: sidewalks, a landscaping buffer (called the 'green zone'), parking/transit, vehicles, and bicycles.

## AVENUE

May function as an arterial, collector, or in a rural setting as a local route, but generally at low to moderate speeds.

*An urban street serving a range of traffic levels within and between various area types.*

*Characterized by wide sidewalks (scaled to the surrounding land uses) and on-street bicycle facilities.*

*May have on-street parking.*

*Transit stops, shelters, and other amenities are located along the street, preferably within the right of way.*

## MAIN STREET

May function as an arterial, collector, or local street. May function as a collector serving as a primary thoroughfare for traffic circulation in a limited area. May function as a local destination street for an outlying business district.

*Designed to carry vehicles at low speeds (under 30 mph).*

*A destination street for a city or town, serving as a center of civic, social, and commercial activity.*

*Serves substantial pedestrian traffic as well as transit and bicycles.*

*Includes wide sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian facilities due to the emphasis on pedestrian travel.*

*Bicycle lanes are allowed, but typically not necessary on these streets due to lower speeds and volumes, and the desire to keep pedestrian crossing distances to a minimum.*



## BOULEVARD

Most often functions as an arterial designed to carry vehicles at moderate speeds.

*Thoroughfare characterized by multiple lanes and includes a street median.*

*Wide sidewalks with appropriate planting strips and on-street bicycle lanes are necessary to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists due to higher speeds and higher traffic volumes for motor vehicles.*

*Building setbacks will typically be deeper than on avenues.*

*Transit stops and shelters may be located within the right of way, requiring connections to sidewalks.*

*On-street parking is not required. It is allowed where appropriate, but rare due to the nature of the street. If provided, parking should typically be placed on a separate, parallel frontage street separated with a side median.*

## PARKWAY

Most often functions as an arterial designed with control of access to carry vehicles at moderate to high speeds.

*Urban or rural thoroughfare often characterized by landscaping or natural vegetation along roadsides and medians.*

*Land uses are set back from the street and are typically not oriented toward the parkway.*

*Pedestrian and bicycle traffic usually provided for on separate multi-use paths ideally located adjacent to the facility.*

*Convenient access to off-street transit stations, stops, and park-and-ride lots.*

*Tractor trailer and semitrailer truck traffic is frequently present.*

## RURAL ROAD

May function as an arterial, collector or local route, but with a range of speeds.

*A road outside of cities and towns serving a range of traffic levels in a country setting.*

*Wide paved shoulders can be used to provide bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.*

*Multi-use paths separated from the roadway may also be an appropriate treatment for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.*

*Accommodates bus facilities, including turnouts as appropriate. Public transit stops and shelters should be clearly marked and placed within the right of way.*

# "LIGHTER, QUICKER, CHEAPER"

*Use 'Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper' strategies to jumpstart change downtown*

"Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" (LQC) describes low to moderate cost, short term strategies to transform public spaces, including streets. LQC techniques can range from events and programming, to the addition of amenities or art in a space, to light development (kiosks, small scale structures), to the reconfiguration of street space with paint and non-permanent materials.

One of the greatest advantages of LQC is the ability to create and test a project immediately and with direct community involvement. Initial LQC projects are often temporary—relatively inexpensive alterations to a public space that take place while more long-range projects grind through a longer term development pipeline. Bringing multiple and wide-ranging benefits to communities, the early implementation of LQC projects can help:

- ▶ *Bring life and amenities to previously lifeless public spaces*
- ▶ *Break down resistance to change, while empowering vulnerable or overlooked communities who may have lost faith even in the possibility of change*

- ▶ *Generate the interest of potential investors, both public and private*
- ▶ *Inform best practices for later planning efforts*
- ▶ *Encourage community buy-in (by demonstrating, for example, how a new street design would impact traffic flows not only for cars, but also for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit)*
- ▶ *Bring together diverse stakeholders in generating solutions and a collective vision*
- ▶ *Foster a community's sense of pride in, and ownership of, their public spaces*

Although a Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper approach is not for every situation (it may not be the right solution, for example, for large infrastructural projects like building a bridge—though that would surely be interesting!), it can be a creative, locally-powered alternative to the kind of capital-heavy and top-down planning processes that so often yield end results that are completely detached from the needs and desires of the communities they are meant to serve.

The public workshop that PPS convened with the City of Gretna on September 24th focused on LQC ideas for several key sites

along Huey P. Long Avenue, including:

Site 1 - The Riverfront area and levee along the Mississippi River

Site 2 - The Jefferson Memorial plaza area, and its adjacent streets

Site 3 - Huey P. Long Avenue between 2nd and 3rd Streets

Site 4- The farmers' market site on Huey P. Long Avenue

Huey P. Long Avenue was chosen as the focus street for this workshop due to its prominence as a gateway into Gretna and the presence of many important destinations along it, including the farmers' market, City Hall, downtown restaurants, and the Jefferson Memorial plaza. There are other opportunities for LQC improvements in downtown Gretna, as well, which could be explored in future workshops and/or through pop-up outreach methods.

The next section showcases several examples of LQC projects that PPS has worked on that have relevance for the city of Gretna.



Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Examples







Storytime at Burnside Park

## BURNSIDE PARK *Providence, RI*

### Models for Gretna:

*Public engagement process to create new activities and vision*

*Family friendly programming and amenities*

*Starting with very small, low cost techniques*

Every Thursday in the summer, at about 9am, the Downtown Providence Park Conservancy (DPPC) crew gathers and prepares for the long day ahead—nine non-stop hours of family programming in Burnside Park. On one edge of the park, The O’Crepe food truck is already open for business as Jennifer Smith and her team of interns and volunteers unlock the doors of the Imagination Center and start

moving colorful equipment out into the park. Folding tables, stools, and art supplies head to one area for Art in the Park, as jumbo beanbags, colorful benches, and a sound system head to another for Storytime. Book carts filled with the work of local authors and illustrators roll out onto the Imagination Center deck to create an outdoor reading room.

By 11am this small urban park has been transformed into a crowded and bustling place—families with children watch a local storyteller perform, while other kids build Lego towers or climb onto the park’s boat sculpture. As artists Phillipe Jejeune and Ricky Katowicz are busy setting up for Art in the Park, passersby simply take in the scene as they wait for the lunchtime food trucks to

roll up.

A few years ago Burnside Park was facing problems similar to many downtown parks—the space was dominated by a small number of unemployed adults, and there was little reason for other residents or visitors to want to spend time there. The park was well maintained, but locals mostly walked through it on their way somewhere else. There wasn’t much incentive to stay.

In 2008, local civic leaders decided to take a closer look at a group of public spaces in downtown Providence. These included Burnside Park, the Bank of America Center, Biltmore Park, and Kennedy Plaza, a large hardscape plaza primarily used as a transit hub forRIPTA buses. Beginning with a series of public workshops facilitated by PPS, they began to develop a long-term vision to knit these disconnected spaces together and to fill them with a diverse range of uses and activities. They also created a new identity for the entire district, and they began by giving it a new name: Greater Kennedy Plaza.

As further design work and fundraising for Greater Kennedy Plaza got underway, local partners were eager to apply PPS’s “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” approach right away in order to test and refine some of the ideas in the plan. Immediately, The Greater Kennedy Plaza Coalition (including representatives from the city, RIPTA, and Cornish Associates) launched an ambitious and diverse



programming schedule, including a relocated farmer's market, a new craft market, regular performances, and special events. The group also hired their first full-time staff person, program manager Deb Dormody.

The next step in DPPC's "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" approach was launching a suite of family programs. Partnering with local parenting blog KIDOinfo, DPPC organized a weekly outdoor Storytime program for families in Burnside Park. The following year they added Art in the Park and a mobile playground. Although these might seem like programs that are suited only for children, DPPC's Jennifer Smith was intent on creating activities that would appeal to a wide range of users: "We wanted to have high artistic quality and something that would work on a level that parents can appreciate and something that would be fun," she explains. "There is always something that is engaging parents at a deeper level and that kids can have fun with. One of my favorite things is seeing the parents play. You see the parents start to play with their children and start to play with each other. Adults who don't even have children start to play."

The mobile playground began with just one hundred dollars spent at a local store called Benny's. "This was a 'Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper' thing before I even knew what 'Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper' was," Smith recalls. "We put out hula hoops and balls and tennis rackets and an inflatable



Books of local authors are a part of the outdoor reading room

bowling thing and people started playing with it. People started teaching each other how to hula hoop, [and] it created a sense of community amongst people that might never have otherwise talked." Indeed, fostering a sense of community has been a primary goal in all of DPPC's Placemaking work in Greater Kennedy Plaza. Some residents have engaged through the public workshop process, others through contributing time and resources to support programming, and many others by simply participating in programs.

In 2011, an even broader coalition of local partners won a prestigious NEA "Our Town" grant to expand Placemaking efforts in Greater Kennedy Plaza. The funding helped support further development of both

the short and long-term visions by a multi-disciplinary team led by local architecture firm Union Studio, along with PPS, Birchwood Design Group, and VHB. The team worked on a wide range of issues from programming and management plans to an extensive redesign of the existing multi-modal transit hub with RIPTA. As the plan developed, they continued to collect input from the local community through a series of presentations and workshops.

The "Our Town" grant also supported multiple programs and special events that helped DPPC and their partners further demonstrate Greater Kennedy Plaza's potential to become a more vibrant, activity-filled place. These efforts culminated in a

massive public event, the FirstWorks Festival, which showcased local and international performers. Lynne McCormack, Director of Providence's Department of Art, Culture, and Tourism, credits the event as a key moment in the solidification of community and political support for further investment in Greater Kennedy Plaza.

Despite all of this success, there were still many challenges for a group with a small staff and an even smaller budget. In 2013, Burnside Park was selected as a pilot project for the Southwest Airlines Heart of the Community Program. The program provides direct grants plus technical assistance from PPS to local groups to support the activation of public spaces in their communities. After being chosen, DPPC was able to take everything they had learned over several years of "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" efforts and work with PPS to develop a set of improvements and amenities that would take the park to the next level.

After considering several options, it became clear that creating a home base for DPPC in the park was the best strategy. A small building with a deck could help support programming in a variety of ways. It could be used to store play materials and equipment, it could provide shelter and work space for smaller activities, house an open air reading room, display artwork, and become a landmark for activity in the park. The spaces around it could be used for new movable seating and to

define play areas. Eventually the place could support a small food vendor as well.

On August 20th, 2013, Providence Mayor Angel Taveras and Megan Lee of Southwest Airlines officially opened the Imagination Center in Burnside Park. Since opening, the Imagination Center has had a catalytic impact on both Burnside Park and Greater Kennedy Plaza as a whole. While other elements of the long-term vision are still years away, the launch of the Imagination Center has been a key milestone for DPPC. "It's a critical element to the health of the entire downtown," says Wood. "It's an indication that the city, that the public-private partnership, that the community, is investing in the space for kids and for families. It's an indication that this is succeeding. It builds confidence."

The Imagination Center has also helped solve a variety of practical challenges that DPPC was facing in the space. "It is like a fulfillment of a dream for me because it's increased so much the capacity of what we have been able to do," says Smith. "We used to be able to do a one or two-hour program and that was all that we could manage. And that was maybe once a week or twice a week. Now we are able to house all of our playthings: the Imagination Playground blocks, our library (...) we're able to put art appropriate tables and chairs out [that work well for art projects]. So we can do things every single day in the park because we have a place from which to do it, we have a home inside the park. And it

really is a home to a lot of people. There are families that come here every single day that we are open."

Jennifer Smith sees the impact of the Placemaking process most clearly in the ways that Providence residents have made Burnside Park "a space of their own." Locals have become less like "audience members" and more like co-creators. People come to DPPC's programs, but they also use the park for impromptu meetings, as the starting point for group bike rides, and as a venue for artistic and political expression. Smith sees her neighbors integrating the park into their everyday lives, as a place to connect with family and friends, and to deepen their sense of community. "I remember the first day that I saw a family here for the morning programming," she recalls. "Then they met the spouse who was working downtown, then they had lunch together, and then they came back for a beer after work and played. It was a really wonderful moment to see."





Lunchtime food trucks and Imagination Playground blocks invite adults and children to the park





Locals stay and enjoy the new amenities under some much needed shade

## TRAVIS PARK *San Antonio, TX*

### Models for Gretna:

*Amenities and programming designed to encourage lingering and interaction*

*Plaza activation*

One of the oldest municipal parks in the country, Travis Park had the opportunity to become a great urban destination that is historic, dynamic and contemporary at the same time. Travis Park had long been known by many as a place to pass through quickly and “avoid eye contact,” not a place where you would want to stay and linger.

In early 2013, Project for Public Spaces

(PPS) began collaborating with the City of San Antonio’s Center City Development Office (CCDO), downtown San Antonio residents, area stakeholders and the community at large to create a vision, a concept and an action plan for the revitalization of historic Travis Park.

The goal of this Placemaking initiative was to envision and transform this underutilized public space into a multi-functional urban park where people of all ages and cultures can socialize, relax, play, learn, and participate in community activities—in short, the park was to become a significant destination and a vital asset for downtown San Antonio. PPS used its expertise in park design, programming and management to help CCDO build a strong

and committed constituency around shared and exciting vision for Travis Park. Southwest Airlines’s assistance encouraged the CCDO to move forward with their plans for the park. After months of work, Travis Park celebrated its grand reopening on March 31st, 2014.

Along with new umbrellas and tables and chairs, a kiosk houses books and games for people to check out, while a giant chess board provides hours of entertainment for park visitors.

In addition to facilitating everyday use, the CCDO has planned events and activities throughout the year to establish and sustain Travis Park as the vibrant heart of the community. Food trucks and ongoing programming, such as movies and fitness activities, will attract locals and visitors alike. The City of San Antonio sees these efforts in Travis Park as an important step forward in their larger agenda to use Placemaking to bring new life to the downtown, strengthen connections between people, and spark social, economic and environmental benefits.

Southwest Airlines and PPS worked with the City of San Antonio’s Center City Development & Operations Department to activate historic Travis Park, located in the heart of downtown San Antonio. Based on feedback received during a series of public Placemaking workshops, Travis Park will now attract local residents and employees through new physical amenities, including games, umbrellas, movable tables and chairs, and



ongoing public programming, such as fitness classes, historic tours, live music, free movies and game tournaments.

These Placemaking efforts have sparked a number of additional improvement projects to enhance the park experience at Travis Park and supported the City of San Antonio's broader efforts to strengthen its downtown.



Lunchtime food trucks and a wide selection of games, books, and crafts found at the kiosk draw many visitors





Locals and visitors lounge, relax and play on the temporary beach

## PARIS PLAGE *Paris, France*

### Models for Gretna:

#### *Beach seating*

#### *Creative play structures and equipment for children and adults*

#### *Riverfront activation*

Inaugurated in 2002 by Mayor Bertrand Delanoë in an effort to reclaim the riverfront from the automobile, the Paris Plages project (Paris Beaches) is a temporary transformation of the Georges Pompidou Expressway along the right bank of the Seine. The 2-mile stretch from the Notre Dame Cathedral is closed to traffic for four weeks each summer,

when it transforms into a series of beaches, complete with sand, palm trees, umbrellas, and a range of recreational activities such as swimming pools suspended over the Seine, kayak stations, or free evening concerts. Run by the office of the Mayor of Paris, this urban beach getaway had over four million visitors during its first year, leading it to become an annual fixture, open to the public from 9am to midnight each day. The success of the project inspired numerous imitations in other cities throughout the world, including Detroit and Tokyo.

The Paris Plages are very popular amongst city dwellers, both young and old. The wide range of activities available on the short stretch of “beach” brings friends and families outdoors together every summer to

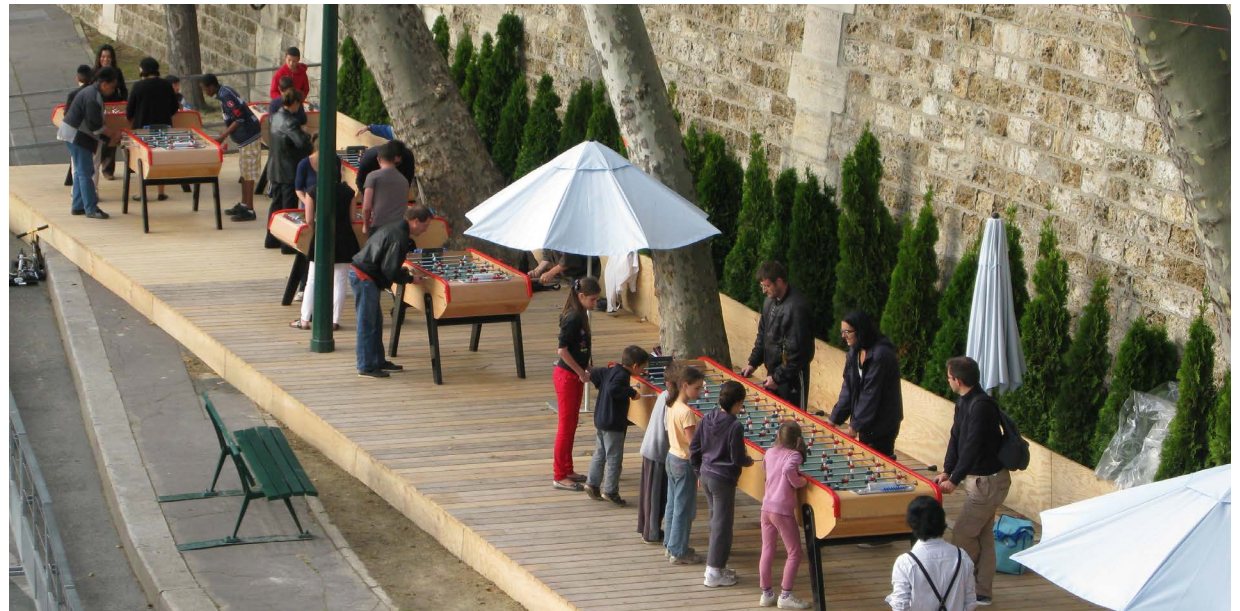
play sports like volleyball and soccer. Others who prefer to relax in the shade can do so under umbrellas and palm trees set up in the sand (or grass), or at pop-up cafes. Though it can get crowded during summer weekends, the Paris Plages can be an entertaining and relaxing respite from city life, and it represents an important step forward in the reimagining of Parisian public spaces. Since their opening year, the beaches (les plages) have expanded to several other locations in the city, which has energized local efforts to balance the street space in Paris between motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

In front of the Hotel de Ville, school kids used a sand court for a spontaneous soccer game. Later in the afternoon people used the same court for volleyball. Nearby was a miniature golf course and a patio with several of those ubiquitous blue deck chairs and umbrellas. Along the Seine, the promenade and beach had more games for both adults and children: a trio of bocce courts, a climbing wall (transformed from an existing wall), a “wild” children’s play area, several cabanas, and outdoor cafes directly on the river, open until 8pm.. A series of musical events on different days and evenings added to the attraction.

While this event is on a larger scale than would be appropriate for Gretna, several of the amenities and strategies used in this project



could be a great addition to the riverfront and beach area in Gretna, including lounge seating, wooden deck platforms (suitable for seating, climbing, picnicking, performances), game equipment (volleyball, bocce, miniature golf), and children's play structures (including water play/misting stations).



Temporary game equipment, structures and comfortable seating provide users with plenty of reasons to enjoy the promenade



- 1 - RIVERFRONT
- 2 - JEFFERSON MEMORIAL PLAZA AND STREETS
- 3 - 2ND TO 3RD STREETS
- 4 - FARMERS MARKET AND STREETS





# RECOMMENDATIONS

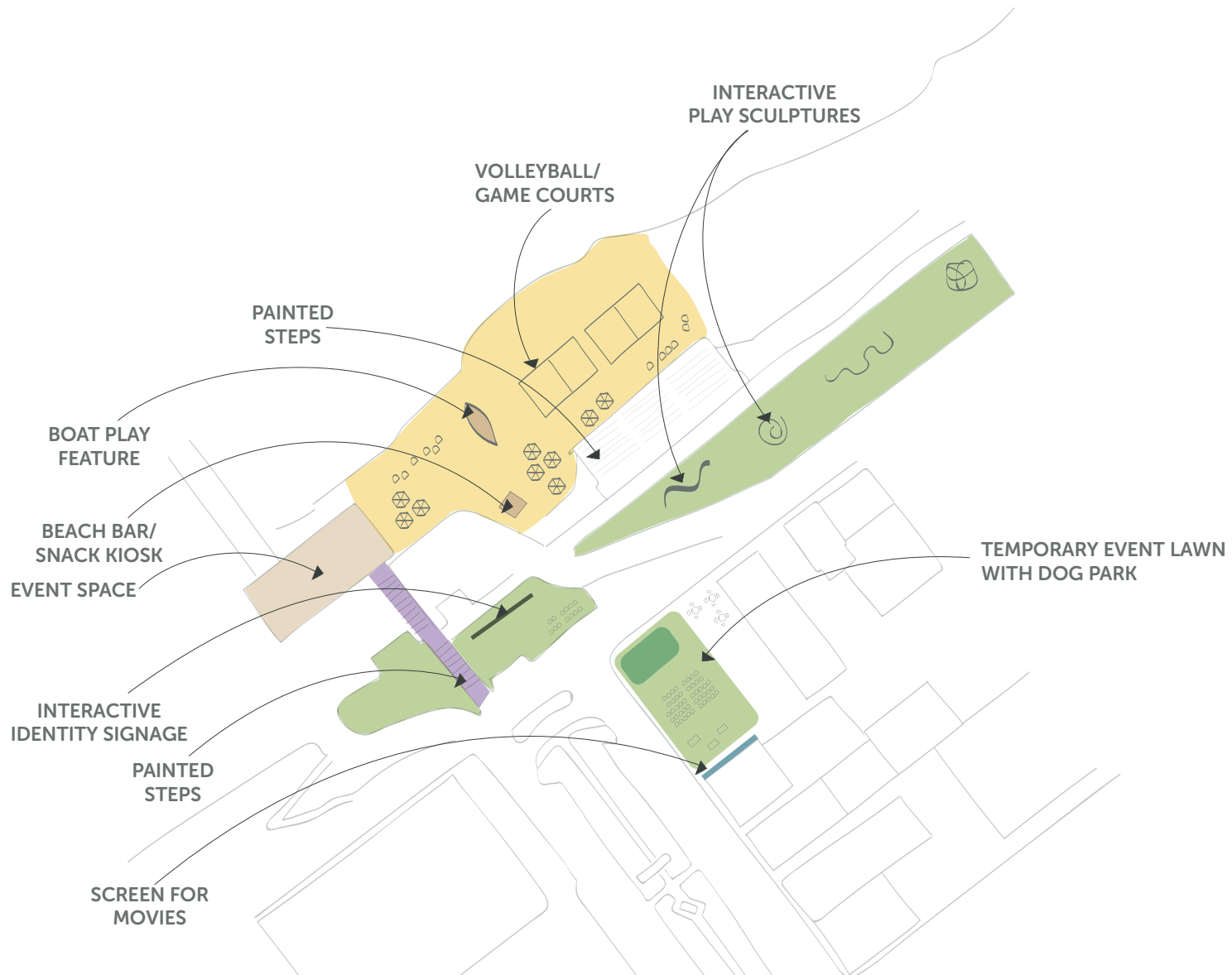
The following are Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper ideas - along with some longer term implementation recommendations - for the four sites evaluated by participants in the public workshop on September 23rd.



*Riverfront and surrounding area*



# 1 - RIVERFRONT AND LEVEE ALONG MISSISSIPPI RIVER



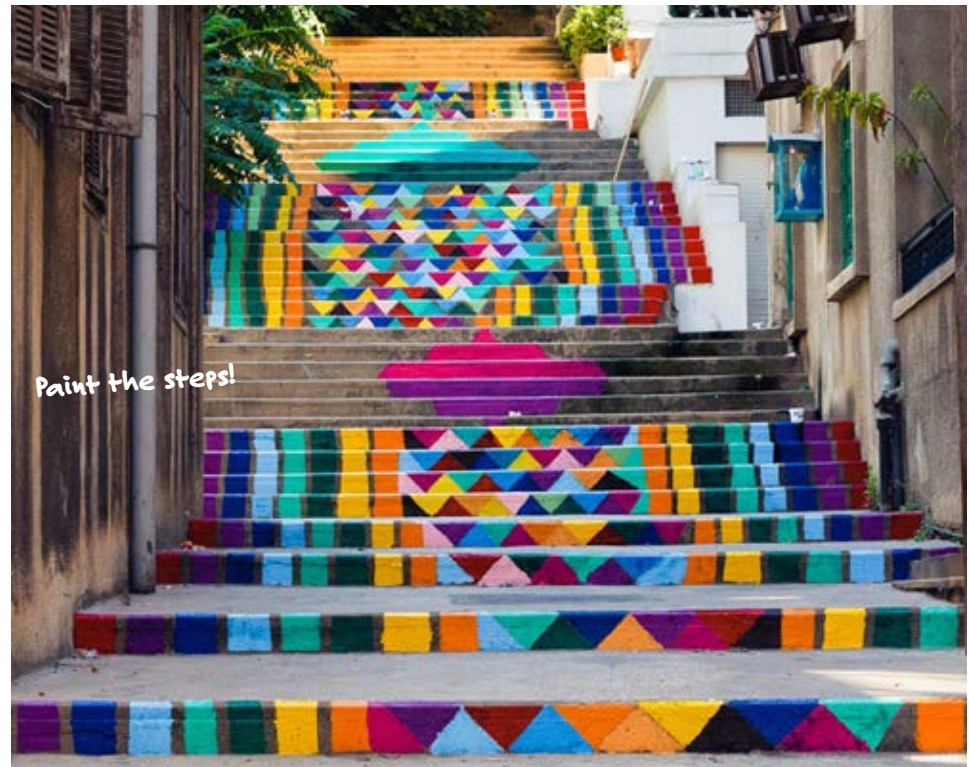
Proposed Concept Diagram

## SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Brand the riverfront – give it a name, signage, and market activities there*
2. *Add signage and wayfinding for the bike trail*
3. *Add food & beverage options – water, ice cream, coffee*
4. *Provide shade - shade structure, shade sail, umbrellas*
5. *Draw people from downtown to the riverfront - paint the staircase to the ferry building, add flags, mural, large scale public art, etc.*
6. *Pressure wash the concrete retaining wall and consider painting or stenciling*
7. *Add comfortable seating - loungers, hammocks, etc.*
8. *Provide a play structure on the beach (ex. wooden boat)*
9. *Set up volleyball or other game equipment on the beach*
10. *Improve pedestrian crossings to the riverfront, including adding a stop sign at Huey P. Long and 1st*

## LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

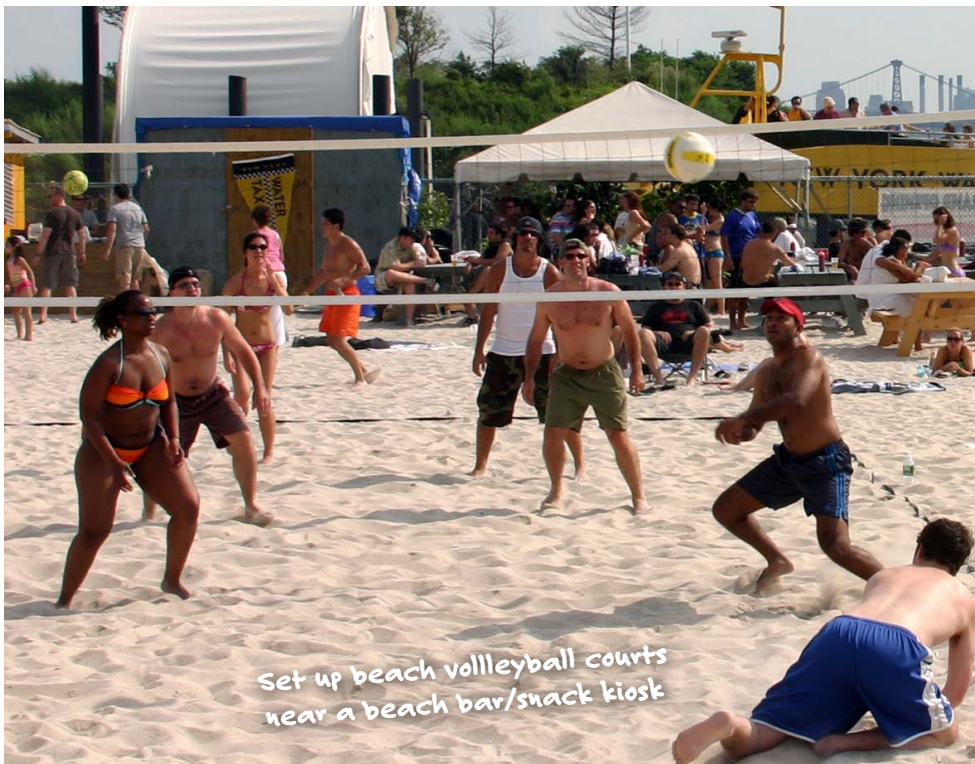
11. *Improve accessibility up to the levee*
12. *Provide a water fountain feature*
13. *Turn the ferry building into an event space, restaurant, and/or marketing*
14. *Program music and performances on the levee*
15. *Create a dog park in the area*
16. *Hold a weekend flea market in or around the ferry building*







Provide identity signage on the levee that also doubles as public art



Set up beach volleyball courts near a beach bar/snack kiosk



Provide opportunities for play such as a climbable wooden boat at the beach

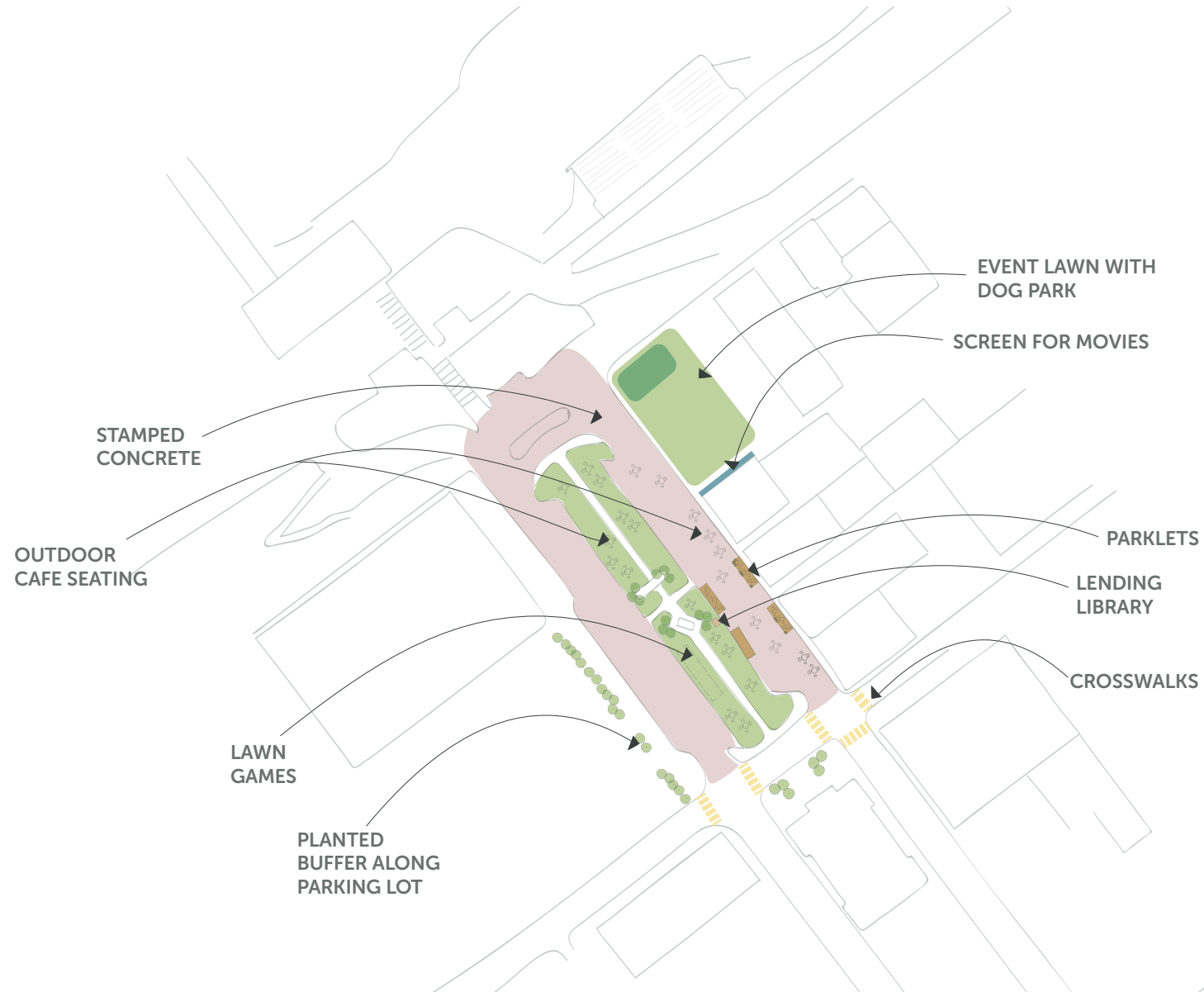
Inspiration images





*Jefferson Memorial Plaza and surrounding area*

## 2 - THE JEFFERSON MEMORIAL PLAZA AND STREETS



0 50'

Proposed Concept Diagram



## SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

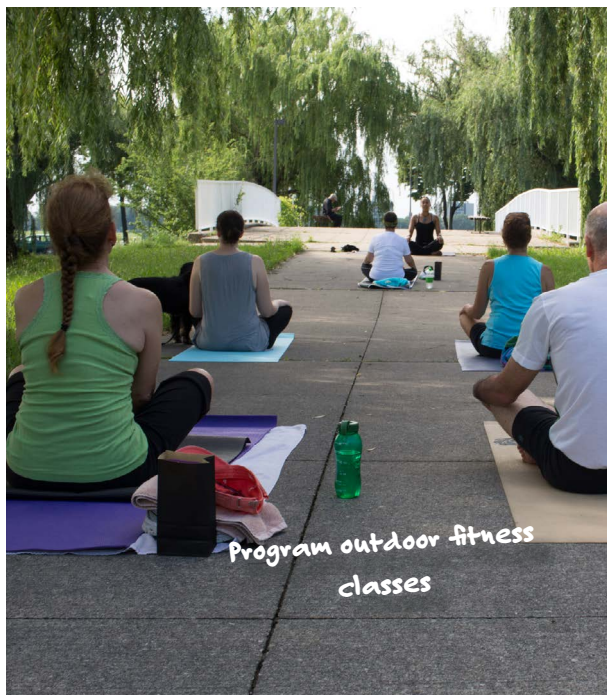
1. *Provide tables and chairs with umbrellas*
2. *Move angled parking around the Memorial to the parking lot across the street in the evenings to allow for outdoor café seating in the plaza and/or street*
3. *Provide a greater variety of seating*
4. *Add play structures for children*
5. *Provide games – board games, lawn games, chess, etc.*
6. *String lights from the arch*
7. *Add public art*
8. *Host a night market*
9. *Add a coffee stand*
10. *Provide activities for kids in the plaza*
11. *Uplight the buildings around the plaza*

## LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

12. *Widen the sidewalks adjacent to the restaurants on Huey P. Long and add pedestrian lighting, seating, and plantings*
13. *Make Huey P. Long around the Memorial a ‘shared space’ street with stamped concrete or pavers*
14. *Add more trees and foliage*
15. *Consider permanently moving parking from around the Memorial*
16. *Activate vacant buildings*
17. *Lower the curbs*









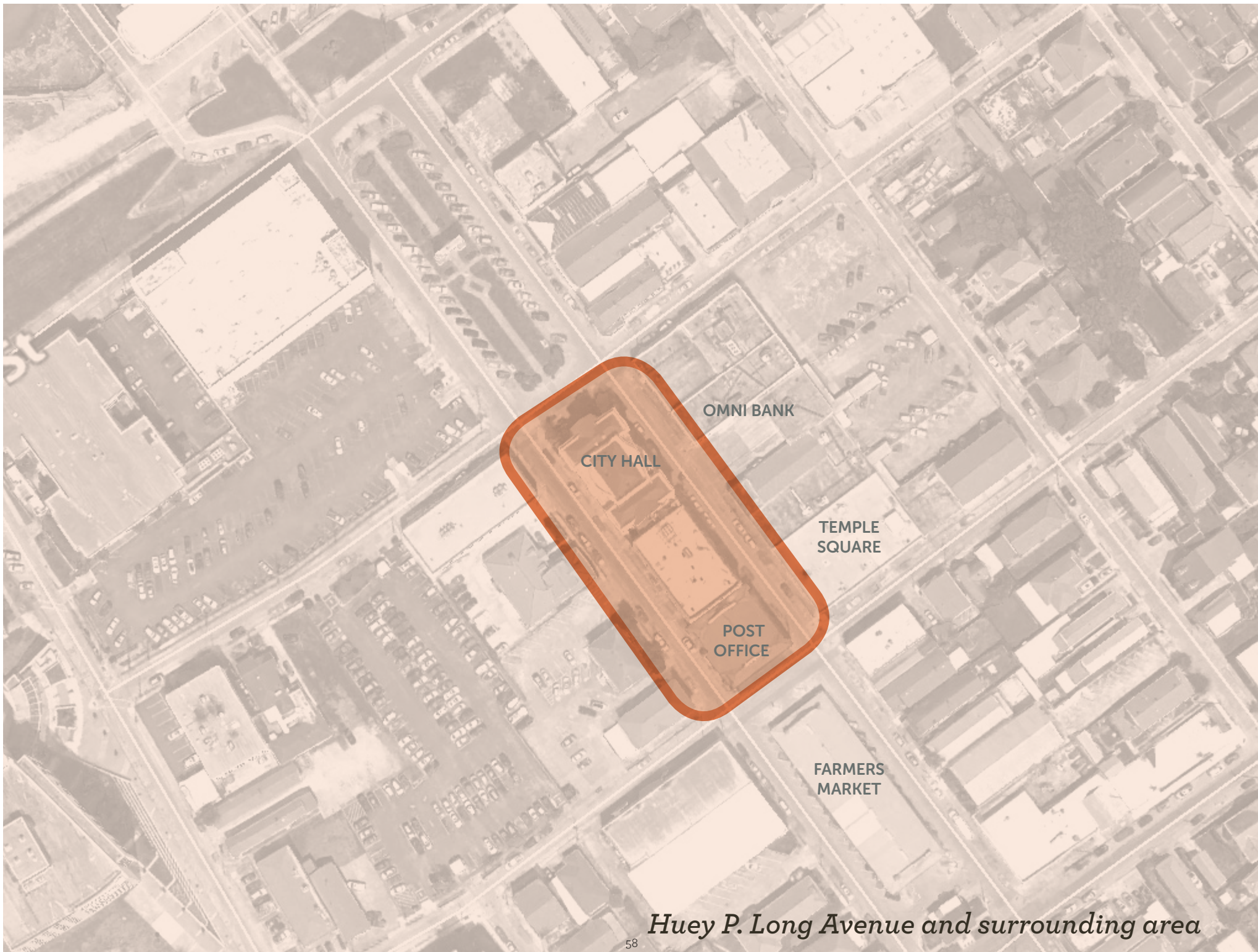


*Jefferson Memorial Plaza and surrounding area, existing*



*Rendering for improvements to Jefferson Memorial Plaza  
and surrounding area*





*Huey P. Long Avenue and surrounding area*

## 3 - HUEY P. LONG AVENUE, BETWEEN 2ND & 3RD

### SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Repair damaged parts of the sidewalk*
2. *Add pedestrian-scaled lighting*
3. *Provide opportunities for residents or local businesses to sponsor improvements, maintain plantings*
4. *Add hanging flower baskets to light poles*
5. *Add ADA curb cuts and bump-outs to shorten pedestrian crossing distances*
6. *Paint crosswalks and consider raised crosswalks*
7. *Close 2nd Street in front of City Hall on the weekends*
8. *Paint City Hall*
9. *Add a bike rack or bike parking*

### LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

10. *Encourage more development to add people to the area*





Continuous hanging  
planters and identity  
banners help to create  
a unique historic  
downtown feel



Large planters next  
to benches create  
comfortable seating  
opportunities







Inspiration images

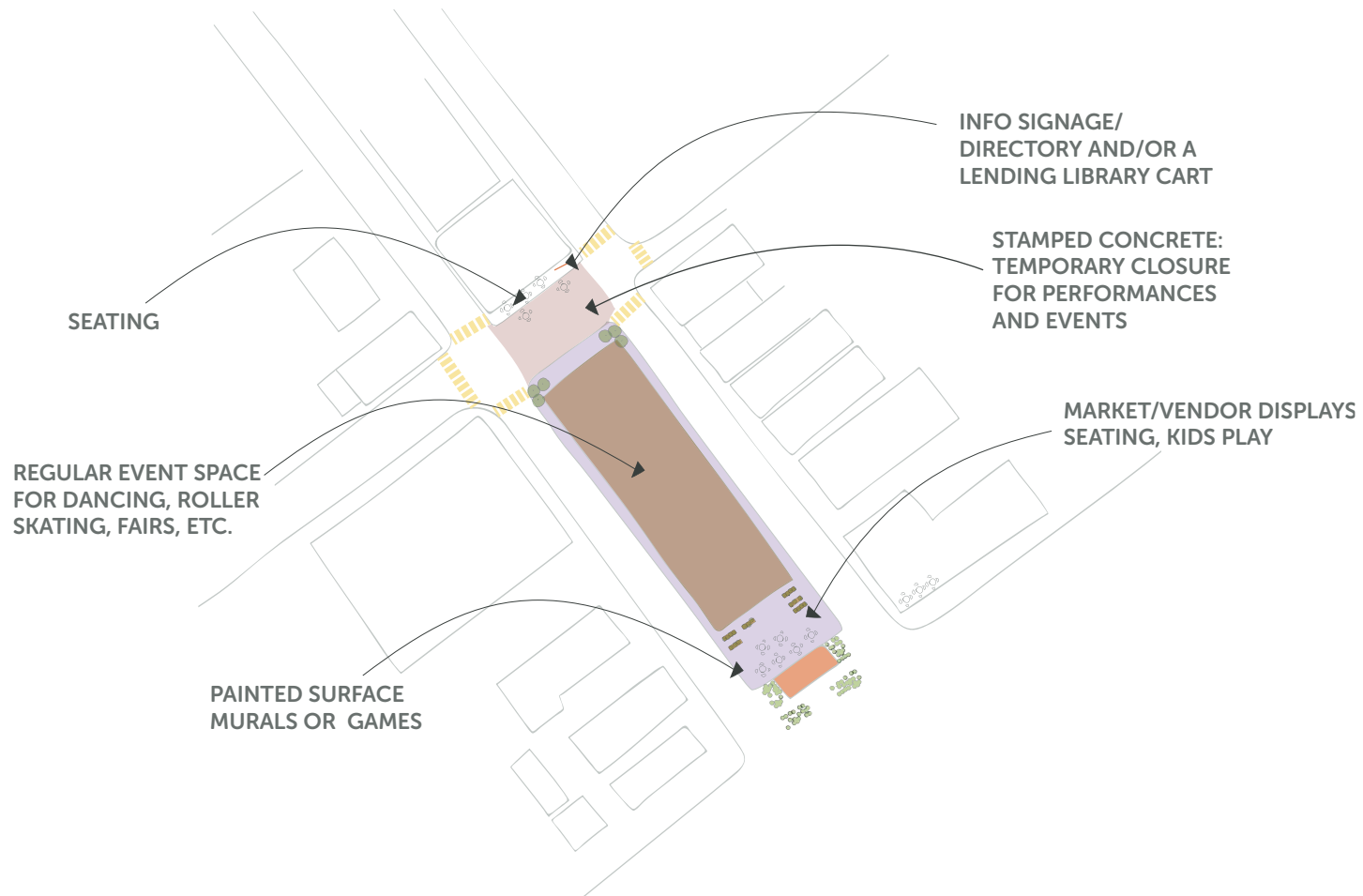




*Farmers Market and surrounding area*



## 4 - FARMERS MARKET AND STREETS



Proposed Concept Diagram

## SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Add greenery and trees to the adjacent streets*
2. *Provide permanent benches and seating in the area*
3. *Add banners to the market structure*
4. *Improve the surface - brick, stamped concrete, etc.*
5. *Add curb bump outs to Huey P. Long Avenue to shorten crossing distances and calm traffic*
6. *Make crosswalks ADA-compliant*
7. *Activate the front of the post office - add seating, landscaping, potentially a Little Free Library or public art*
8. *Use the market space for more programming and events in the evenings and on the weekends*
9. *Add wayfinding and a city map with local destinations*
10. *Create and mount plaques about the history of local buildings*



## LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

11. *Encourage residential uses on 2nd floors above commercial*
12. *Renovate the market space to make it more welcoming for events, including with an improved pavement surface, ventilation, renovated electrical, brick columns, and an option to enclose the space*
13. *Improve the lighting at the market and on adjacent streets*







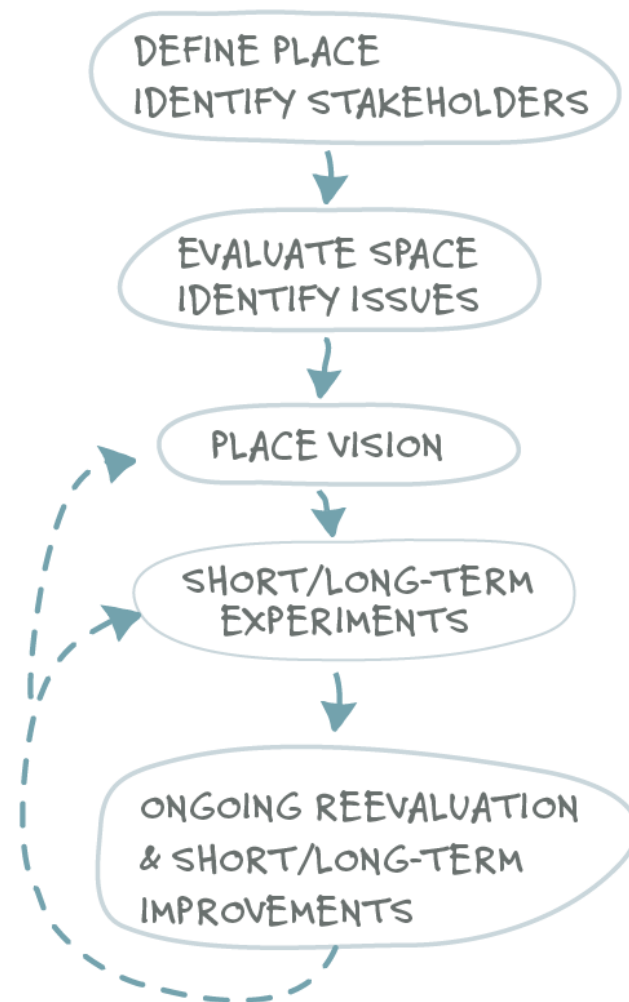
Inspiration images



# ON-GOING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

As Gretna moves forward with its work to further revitalize and activate its downtown, there are several techniques the City and its partners can use to engage local residents and stakeholders. Placemaking is more than just good urban design; great public places are the result of a collaborative community process. It is centered around observing, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work, and play in a particular space in order to understand their needs and aspirations for that space and for their community as a whole. With this knowledge, we can come together to create a common vision for that place. The vision can evolve quickly into an implementation strategy, beginning with small-scale Lighter Quicker Cheaper improvements that bring immediate benefits both to the spaces themselves and the people who use them, then building towards longer term, more permanent changes to a place.

Supplementing traditional public meetings with other engagement techniques that ‘go to where the people are’ is important to reaching a diverse cross-section of local residents and stakeholders. It is often difficult for families to attend evening meetings; therefore, taking the Placemaking exercises or surveys to them, at schools, churches, events or public spaces, can yield significant results.





## POP-UP WORKSHOP STATIONS

These stations usually include images that display potential new activities and amenities or improvements for a site, which people can vote for with sticky dots or nominate their own ideas. These are usually conducted on site, but they are most effective at events, markets or festivals that attract a diverse cross-section of the community. They can also be set up at schools or libraries where families will likely be. Gretna could use such boards to get feedback on ideas for Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper improvements for the riverfront area, the Jefferson Memorial plaza, and/or the farmers' market site.



## INTERCEPT SURVEY

This is a brief survey that asks people on the street or in a public space what they would like to improve at a site. The surveyor can gather demographic information from the respondent, as well as information about what they do currently (e.g. where they work, shop or dine) and what additional uses, events, amenities, traffic improvements, or shops and eateries they would like to see. Such surveys can be a useful way of generating some initial ideas for a pop-up workshop station, or in gathering details about challenges or opportunities in an area.



## A PLACEMAKING EVENT

A special event — such as a market or fair, a sidewalk sale, or a concert or dance performance — can be held to demonstrate how a particular space can be activated in a new way, and the people who attend can be asked for additional ideas. Sometimes a street or a portion of a street is temporarily closed to vehicles (e.g. Better Block) to demonstrate how it can be activated with an event and the public can actively participate in activities (e.g. painting a mural, planting flowers, etc.) to improve the space. This could be appropriate for a weekend festival on the riverfront and levee area, and/or the Jefferson Memorial plaza, which could include closing that section of Huey P. Long Avenue to cars to allow for outdoor dining and other activities.





# APPENDIX

# PLACEMAKING SOURCES OF FUNDING

## ARTPLACE AMERICA

Program: National Grants Program

Innovation: Bringing together funders to link arts and culture with community planning

ArtPlace America (ArtPlace) is a ten-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that works to position arts and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development in order to help strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities. In practice, this means having arts and culture represented alongside sectors like housing and transportation – with each sector recognized as part of any healthy community; as requiring planning and investment from its community; and as having a responsibility to contribute to its community’s overall future.

## LEVITT PAVILIONS

Program: Levitt AMP Music Series

Innovation: Building community with performing arts

Levitt is passionate about reinvigorating America’s public spaces through creative placemaking and creating opportunities for everyone to experience the performing arts. They believe the world needs more third places, guiding their community-driven efforts. By sponsoring dozens of concerts in 16 communities around the country, they use music to create gathering spots and bring people together. Levitt Pavilions offers grants, resources and support to build and sustain signature Levitt music venues and to present the Levitt AMP series.

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

Program: Placemaking Micro-Grants

Innovation: Small grants through local REALTOR® associations.

NAR’s Placemaking Initiative encourages REALTOR® associations and their members, to engage in Placemaking in their communities. The Placemaking Micro-Grant is available to REALTOR® associations to help them plan, organize, implement and maintain Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper Placemaking activities in their communities. REALTORS® are uniquely positioned to help communities build better public spaces, with their vested interest in making sure people can purchase homes in areas with a strong sense of place.



## IOBY

Program: Online fundraising platform

Innovation: Crowd-resourcing for community projects

ioby helps neighbors grow and implement great ideas one block at a time. Their crowd-resourcing platform connects leaders with funding and support to make our neighborhoods safer, greener, more livable and more fun. ioby believes that it should be easy to make meaningful change “in our backyards” — the positive opposite of NIMBY. ioby’s platform gives everyone the ability to organize all kinds of capital—cash, social networks, in-kind donations, volunteer time, advocacy—from within the neighborhood to make the neighborhood a better place to live.

## NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Program: Our Town

Innovation: Grants encouraging arts organizations to engage in a placemaking process

The Our Town grant program supports creative placemaking projects that help to transform communities into lively, beautiful, and resilient places with the arts at their core. This funding supports local efforts to enhance quality of life and opportunity for existing residents, increase creative activity, and create a distinct sense of place. Our Town offers support for projects in two areas, arts engagement, cultural planning, and design projects along with projects that build knowledge about creative placemaking.

# PLACE GAME FORM

## WHAT MAKES A GREAT PLACE?



Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a nonprofit planning, design and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities. Our pioneering Placemaking approach helps citizens transform their public spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation and serve common needs.

PPS was founded in 1975 to expand on the work of William (Holly) Whyte, author of *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. We have since completed projects in more than 3000 communities in 43 countries and all 50 U.S. states and are the premier center for best practices, information and resources on Placemaking. More than 600 people worldwide are members of our Placemaking Leadership Council.

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419 Lafayette St, 7th Fl, New York, NY, 10003 212.620.5660 @PPS\_Placemaking [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)

# STREETS AS PLACES AUDIT

*A Tool for Initiating the Placemaking Process*



September 2015  
Gretna, LA



SITE # \_\_\_\_\_ GROUP # \_\_\_\_\_

## A EVALUATE THE STREET

*Stop at your designated street and complete part A of the evaluation. Put yourself in the shoes of someone who lives or works in the community and evaluate this site's performance.*

ACCESS, LINKAGES & INFORMATION	POOR		GOOD	
Pedestrians can easily walk to and through the area.	1	2	3	4
Pedestrian access is safe and convenient.				
Sidewalks connect to adjacent areas and are continuous.	1	2	3	4
Crosswalks are well-marked.	1	2	3	4
Crossing times are adequate.	1	2	3	4
Crossing distances are minimal.	1	2	3	4
Taking transit is easy (Skip if not applicable).				
Stops and stations are easy to find.	1	2	3	4
Stops and stations are easy to access by foot.	1	2	3	4
Maps and schedules are readily available.	1	2	3	4
Bicycling is easy.				
Routes are safe and convenient.	1	2	3	4
Routes are well-marked.	1	2	3	4
Storage/parking is adequate.	1	2	3	4
There is adequate directional signage, maps and location information.	1	2	3	4

Comments/Notes:

## C INTERVIEW

*Ask one or two people on the street what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. If a particular issue from the ratings has emerged, ask them their opinion about it.*

*Their Answer:*



## B IDENTIFY THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THIS PLACE

List below, by category, the opportunities that exist on this street. Add others not mentioned. Include both short-term, low-cost opportunities and long-term changes.

1. What do you like best about this street as a whole?
2. List five things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot:
3. What changes to this place would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?
4. What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.

COMFORT & IMAGE	POOR		GOOD	
From a distance, the street/area projects a positive image.	1	2	3	4
Automobiles do not detract from the pedestrian or bicycling experience:				
Speed of turning vehicles at corners feels safe.	1	2	3	4
Pedestrians at crossings are easily visible to cars and buses.	1	2	3	4
The proximity and speed of vehicles are not intimidating.	1	2	3	4
The street width is in scale with adjacent buildings or spaces.	1	2	3	4
There is adequate room for bicyclists.	1	2	3	4
Sidewalks are wide enough for:				
The number of pedestrians.	1	2	3	4
Uses like sidewalk cafes (Skip if not applicable)	1	2	3	4
Informal gatherings.	1	2	3	4
There are places to sit and congregate, both in sun and shade.	1	2	3	4
The area is well managed:				
It is in a state of good repair.	1	2	3	4
It is neat and clean.	1	2	3	4
It feels safe.	1	2	3	4
It is well-lit.	1	2	3	4
Amenities are well located and attractive.	1	2	3	4
The place is not dominated by groups or individuals that threaten others.	1	2	3	4
The street has unique and memorable features.	1	2	3	4

USES & ACTIVITIES	POOR		GOOD	
The place is busy with people.	1	2	3	4
There are several choices of things to do.	1	2	3	4
The uses of adjacent buildings/spaces are easily visible and inviting for pedestrians.	1	2	3	4
There is a variety of land uses and activities on the street.	1	2	3	4
The ground floors of adjacent buildings are active and welcoming.	1	2	3	4
Spaces for a range of activities are provided, including:				
Shopping	1	2	3	4
Dining	1	2	3	4
Playing/Recreation	1	2	3	4
Resting/Relaxation	1	2	3	4
Community events and exhibits	1	2	3	4
The amenities and features of the street support adjacent uses. (i.e. benches/seating outside of coffeeshops or cafes)	1	2	3	4

Comments/Notes:

SOCIABILITY	POOR		GOOD	
There is evidence of volunteerism and stewardship of the place.	1	2	3	4
There is evidence of informal gatherings and people in groups.	1	2	3	4
Strangers make eye contact; people smile and display affection.	1	2	3	4
There is a mix of ages, sexes and ethnic groups that generally reflects the community at large.	1	2	3	4
There are features of the street that reflect local culture or pride.	1	2	3	4

Comments/Notes:

# SUPPORTING PLACEMAKING THROUGH GOVERNMENT

Placemaking often starts in a neighborhood or along a street through small, incremental projects that bring people together and that make concrete improvements to the place: such as transforming a vacant lot into a community garden, creating a parklet or a place to sit in front of a local coffee shop, or organizing a weekend farmers' market. But change at the very local level – the 'place scale' – is even more powerful and effective if it is supported by policies, programs, and funding from the agencies and organizations that have jurisdiction over the public realm.

Unfortunately, few governments in the world were set up to facilitate the creation of great public places and streets. Multiple agencies – departments of transportation, recreation, commerce, and planning, along with utilities and others – each have their own set of missions, rules, and restrictions for their 'pieces' of the public realm. Navigating the bureaucracy of local government to accomplish even the smallest of projects, such

as a business putting out a bench in front of its building, or a resident starting a Little Free Library on the sidewalk in front of her home, can present enormous challenges.

Reforming the City's policies, codes, and programs to support local placemaking is not an easy task, since there are so many agencies and areas that impact people's experience of the public realm.

*...change at the very local level  
– the 'place scale' – is even more  
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and funding from the agencies  
and organizations that have  
jurisdiction over the public  
realm.*



## ZONING & BUILDING CODES

Zoning and building codes are like the DNA of a city's public realm, with wide sweeping impacts on how a city's streets and public spaces develop. There is a plethora of resources on using zoning codes to promote smart growth, which are worth examining. Some of the policies that make the biggest difference in creating a comfortable, welcoming, and attractive experience for people walking in a city include:

**Ground level uses** – Are active ground floor uses encouraged or required along key commercial corridors?

**Transparency/design of ground floor** – Is a certain amount of window glazing required along key commercial corridors or in downtowns to promote transparency into buildings?

**Signage** – Is pedestrian scale signage required? Is a variety of signage – perpendicular to a building, sandwich displays, etc. – allowed?

**Awnings + Overhangs** – Are awnings, canopies, and overhangs allowed to be built at minimal cost, in order to provide shade and rain cover?

**Design guidelines/requirements** – Are there design guidelines or requirements in important areas to ensure consistent and attractive design practices?

**Automotive-gear design and uses** – Is automotive-gear design (drive-throughs, parking in front of the building, many curb cuts) banned along key commercial corridors?

**Parking** – Is surface parking minimized in key commercial and downtown areas? Do parking policies encourage turnover in such areas? Are parking minimums banned for developments in areas with other transportation options?

**Setbacks/zero lot lines** – Is development required with minimal setbacks in commercial and downtown areas?

**Historic preservation districts/guidelines** – Are there policies, incentives, or guidelines in place to preserve the character and history of important historic districts and corridors?

**Farmers' markets** – Are farmers' markets permitted in most zones?

For more information on supportive zoning and building policies, see:

Getting to Smart Growth, 100 Policies for Implementation  
Getting to Smart Growth II: 100 More Policies for Implementation

Source: EPA Office of Sustainable Communities  
<http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/getting-smart-growth-100-policies-implementation>

Smart Growth Implementation Toolkit

Source: Smart Growth America  
<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/zoningaudit.pdf>  
<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/policyaudit.pdf>

From the Ground Up: Land Use Policies to Protect and Promote Farmers' Markets

Source: ChangeLab Solutions  
[http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/From\\_the\\_Ground\\_Up-Farmers\\_Markets\\_FINAL\\_20130415.pdf](http://www.changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/From_the_Ground_Up-Farmers_Markets_FINAL_20130415.pdf)

## PERMITTING PROCESSES

By making it easy and affordable for citizens, businesses, and institutions to improve and activate the public realm, a city can multiply its effectiveness and invest its citizens in the future of their communities at the same time. Cities should make its public realm permitting processes easily navigable for citizens, including by consolidating information online, using clear language and maps/graphics whenever possible, translating regulations into relevant non-English languages, allowing people to apply online for permits, and proactively promoting such permitting processes. Some of the permitting processes to examine include:

**Outdoor cafes** – *How easy is it for a coffee shop or restaurant to have an outdoor café on an adjacent sidewalk? What are the permitting costs? Where are such cafes allowed? What are the requirements and limitations?*

**Street performances** – *Can citizens perform unamplified by-right (without a permit) in certain areas? What are the permitting costs, area and time restrictions? Can permits be obtained online?*

**Street vending and food trucks** – *Is vending of food and goods allowed on sidewalks and by truck? What are the permitting costs and requirements? What locations are banned? Are there permits readily available?*

**Block parties, special events, parades** – *What are the permitting costs and requirements? How far in advance must one apply, and is an online permit available? What is the signature requirement for block parties or special events? Are there certain streets where such events are not allowed?*

**Outdoor retail displays** – *Are outdoor retail displays allowed by right or by permit? What are the limitations?*

**Revocable consent** – *Called different names in different cities, this permit allows citizens to apply to place objects in the public right of way on a semi-permanent or permanent basis, including planters, benches, awnings, and Little Free Libraries. What are the permitting costs and requirements? Are smaller citizen improvements like a bench or a potted plant addressed in the permit application and its tiered fee structure? What kind of plans/drawings need to be submitted?*

**Pavement painting** – *Is there a permit that allows citizens to petition to pavement of an intersection, a crosswalk, or another part of the*

*right-of-way? What are the permitting costs and permissions required?*

For more information, see:

Streets of Dreams

Source: Institute for Justice

<http://ij.org/report/streets-of-dreams>

## PARK & PLAZA REGULATIONS

Parks, plazas, and other public spaces in a city can be subject to restrictions that curtail their ability to appeal to a broad public audience and to be active throughout different times of the week. Some of the parks and public space policies to examine include:

**Concessions** – *Can food and drinks be sold and/or consumed in the space? Are alcoholic beverages allowed anywhere in the space? Are food trucks allowed in or adjacent to the space?*

**Event permitting** – *What are the costs and requirements to host a special event in the space? Are there limitations on who can apply to hold a special event in the space? Are certain small events allowed by right without a permit?*

**Amenities** – *What amenities and materials are permitted in the space, either on a permanent or short term basis, including different types of seating, play materials, a stage, sound equipment, etc.?*

**Markets** – *Are markets permitted to be held in the space?*

## STREET DESIGN GUIDELINES & POLICIES

The policies and rules that govern how a street looks and functions play perhaps the largest role in a person's experience of a city. Cities should tailor their policies and street design standards to prioritize pedestrians and other slow-moving modes of transport downtown, along key commercial corridors, and bordering important public spaces, as well as consider ways that street can act as social and public places themselves. Some of the transportation and street design policies to examine include:

**Requirements for sidewalks** – *Are sidewalks required in new developments? Is there a plan to build out sidewalks in important areas of the city where it does not exist currently, and/or to improve damaged sidewalks?*

**Sidewalk widths** – *Are there guidelines for wider sidewalks downtown and along key commercial corridors to allow for activities like outdoor cafes?*

**Vehicle lane widths** – *Are narrow vehicle lanes (10-11 feet) permitted or required downtown*

*and in other areas that walking and bicycling is desired?*

**Speed limits and design speeds for streets** – *Are speed limits low (25 mph or less) on downtown streets and in other areas that walking and bicycling is desired? Are the streets designed for these low speeds?*

**Rightsizing/Road diets** – *Is there a policy that allows for the examination of whether a street is meeting the needs of current and potential users and potential retrofitting?*

**Complete Streets Policy** – *Is there a policy that requires the consideration of all modes of transportation in the planning, design, operation, and maintenance of a street?*

For more information, see:

Streets as Places  
Source: Project for Public Spaces  
<http://www.pps.org/streets>

Rightsizing Streets Guide  
Source: Project for Public Spaces  
<http://www.pps.org/rightsizing>

Complete Streets Implementation  
Source: National Complete Streets Coalition  
<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/implementation>



## Other policies to consider

***Pedestrian and bike plans*** – Does the city have a pedestrian and bike plan? Is that plan being implemented? Are there performance measures or a timeline associated with it?

***Vacant property policies*** – Are there policies and programs in place to encourage the activation of vacant properties in the short term, as well as the long term?

***Shared use policies*** – Are there policies and programs in place to encourage the broader use of facilities such as school yards, schools, and religious institution parking during non-used days and hours?

***Wayfinding*** – Is there a system and infrastructure to help people navigate in the city to key destinations, particularly by walking, bicycling, and transit?

***Transit stop requirements*** – Is there a requirement for the provision of a shelter, seating, and clear map and schedule information at transit stops?

For more information, see:

*Restoring Properties, Rebuilding Communities: Transforming Vacant Properties in Today's America*

Source: Center for Community Progress

<http://www.communityprogress.net/restoring-properties--rebuilding-communities--transforming-vacant-properties-in-today--039-s-america--pages-405.php>

*Placemaking in Legacy Cities*

Source: Center for Community Progress

[http://action.communityprogress.net/p/salsa/web/common/public/signup?signup\\_page\\_KEY=7615](http://action.communityprogress.net/p/salsa/web/common/public/signup?signup_page_KEY=7615)

*Shared Use*

Source: ChangeLab Solutions

<http://www.changelabsolutions.org/shared-use>

## SPECIAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Sometimes special programs are needed to encourage placemaking in a city, or to allow for the unconventional use of public space. Such programs include:

**Street Plaza Programs** (Examples: New York City, Los Angeles) – These programs allow non-profits, Business Improvement Districts, and others to sponsor street plazas, which are created by converting underutilized pavement right-of-way space into areas for sitting, recreation, and/or performance.

**Parklet Programs** (Examples: San Francisco) – Parklets are mini-public spaces created through the conversion of former parking space, which are typically sponsored by an adjacent business or institution.

**Play Streets** (Examples: Chicago) – Play Streets allow for the regular closure of a street to vehicles in order to create a safe place for children to play; they are typically sponsored by schools or community groups, and include promotion, programming, and mobile equipment.

**Adopt-an-Esplanade** (Examples: Los Angeles) – Such programs allow a business, institution, or community group to ‘adopt’ a street median,

esplanade, or neutral ground, providing for its care, improvement, and in some cases, activation.

**Community gardens and Adopt-a-Lot** (Examples: Baltimore) – These programs vary more widely in different cities, but generally allow citizens to start community gardens or other public improvements in city-owned vacant lots.

**City Bench Program** (Example: New York City) – This program allows citizens to request places for the installation of a bench, with places like transit stops, commercial zones, and senior centers receiving top priority.

**Green Streets program** (Example: Philadelphia, Seattle) – Green Streets programs use a variety of green stormwater infrastructure strategies – like planting tree trenches, planters, and bumpouts – to absorb rain runoff and reduce the amount that the local sewer system needs to process. Such programs help beautify the street and add shade, in addition to improving water quality.

**Public Art** (Example: New York City, Philadelphia) – Many cities have art programs that provide for art in public indoor and outdoor spaces, but some governments have developed broader methods to bring art to the masses. Philadelphia and other cities have mural programs to encourage the painting of blank

building walls; New York City’s Department of Transportation has Barrier Beautification and Art Display Case programs.

**Funding for Community Placemaking** (Los Angeles) – [The Great Streets Challenge Grant](#) program is a partnership between the Los Angeles Mayor’s Office and ioby.org, a crowd-resourcing platform for citizen-led, neighbor-funded projects. The grants award a total of up to \$200,000 to community groups with innovative ideas for improvements along the initial 15 streets of [Los Angeles’ Great Streets Initiative](#).