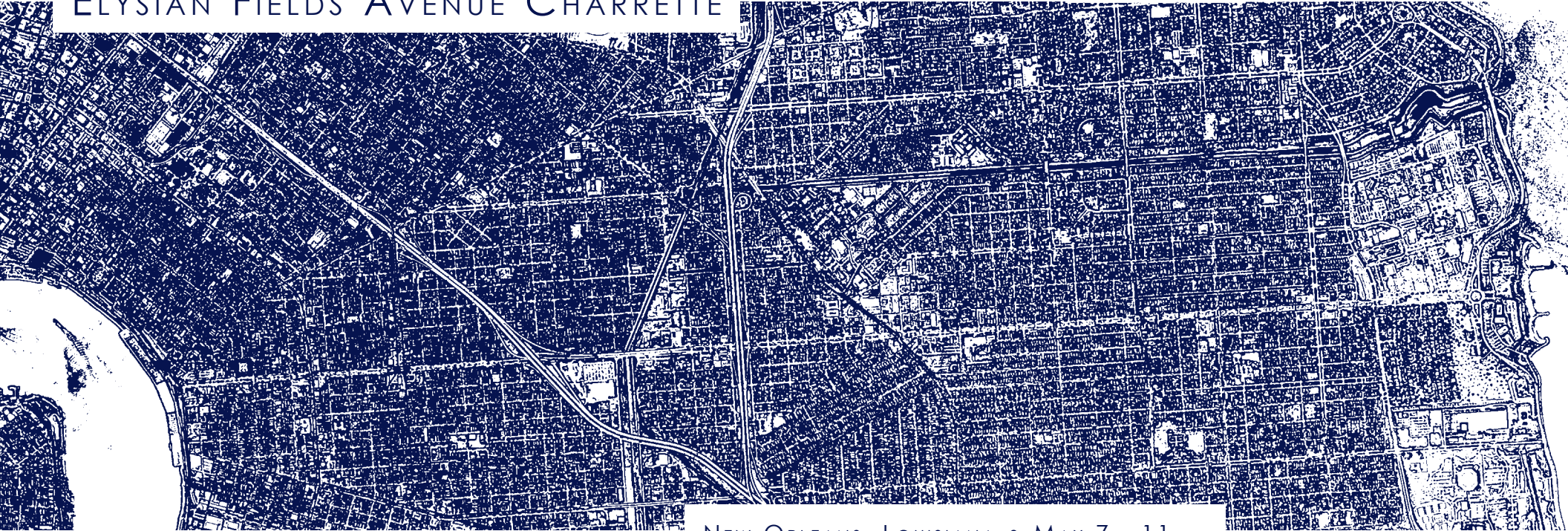


ELYSIAN FIELDS AVENUE CHARRETTE



NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA • MAY 7 - 11

AIA Communities by Design 
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INTRODUCTION

THE DESIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

With nearly 300 state and local chapters and over 80,000 members, the American Institute of Architects serves as the voice of the architecture profession and the resource for its members in service to society. The AIA has a 44-year history of public service work. Through the Center for Communities by Design, the AIA has engaged over 500 professionals from more than 30 disciplines, ultimately providing millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 180 communities across the country, and engaging thousands of participants in community-driven planning processes. Its projects have led to some of the most recognizable places in America, such as the Embarcadero in San Francisco, the Pearl District in Portland, and the Santa Fe Railyard. In 2010, the AIA received the 'Organization of the Year' Award from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), recognizing its program impact on communities and contributions to the field.



- **Regional and Urban Design Assistance Teams (R/UDAT):** Created in 1967, the AIA's R/UDAT program pioneered the modern charrette process by combining multi-disciplinary teams in dynamic, multi-day grassroots processes to produce community visions, action plans and recommendations.
- **Sustainable Design Assessment Teams (SDAT):** In 2005, in response to growing interest and concern about local sustainability planning, the AIA launched a companion program to the R/UDAT that allowed the AIA to make a major institutional investment in public service work to assist communities in developing policy frameworks and long term sustainability plans. During the first 6 years of the SDAT program, the Center for Communities by Design has worked with over 50 towns, cities and regions.



The Center's Design Assistance Team programs operate with three guiding principles:

- **Multi-disciplinary Expertise.** Each project is designed as a customized approach to community assistance that incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community. As a result, each design assistance team includes a multi-disciplinary focus and a systems approach to assessment and recommendations, incorporating and examining cross-cutting topics and relationships between issues. In order to accomplish this task, the Center forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.
- **Enhanced Objectivity.** The goal of the design assistance team program is to provide communities with a framework for action. Consequently, each project team is constructed with the goal of bringing an objective perspective to the community that is outside of the normal politics of public discussion. Team members are deliberately selected from geographic regions outside of the host community, and national AIA teams are typically representative of a wide range of community settings. Team members all agree to serve pro bono, and do not engage in business development activity in association with their service. They do not serve a particular client. The team's role is to provide an independent analysis and unencumbered technical advice that serves the public interest.
- **Public Participation.** The AIA has a four-decade tradition of designing community-driven processes that incorporate substantial public input through a multi-faceted format that includes public workshops, small group sessions, stakeholder interviews, formal meetings and presentations. This approach allows the national team to build on the substantial local expertise already present and available within the community and leverage the best existing knowledge available in formulating its recommendations.

THE ELYSIAN FIELDS AVENUE CHARRETTE

The American Institute of Architects has had an ongoing relationship with the city of New Orleans in the post-Katrina era. Beginning in 2005 with a post-disaster summit, AIA's Center for Communities by Design organized design assistance team projects for several consecutive years in response to requests from city agencies and organizations. AIA-New Orleans has also played a leading role in organizing local charrette projects, including a 'Blueprint for America' project in 2006.



In May 2011, the American Institute of Architects held its annual convention, "Regional Design Revolution: Ecology Matters," in New Orleans, Louisiana. In keeping with its public service tradition, the Elysian Fields Avenue project provided an opportunity for the AIA's Center for Communities by Design to make a contribution to public work on a critical area in the host city. The project

was funded through the Center for Communities by Design, and the professional team members served in a volunteer capacity on behalf of the AIA and the host community. The June event represented the culmination of a five-month planning effort.

The Elysian Fields Avenue project was conceived in January 2011, in collaboration with a host of local project partners and stakeholders. After reviewing a range of potential projects, the Elysian Fields Avenue corridor was selected as the best opportunity where a multi-disciplinary team could make an original and timely contribution to planning efforts in the city and avoid redundancy with past efforts. The corridor was found to represent a place of strategic importance to the city's future, as well as an area that has escaped a comprehensive study in the post-Katrina planning efforts. An initial team assessment found that the right conditions are present for future success along this corridor, and the project has been organized to assess both current conditions as well as future potential.

After selecting a project team leader, an initial visit was conducted in January 2011 to meet with key project partners and stakeholders, formalize the project scope, and conduct an initial assessment of the corridor. Based on this assessment, a multi-disciplinary team was recruited with specific expertise in the key issues present in corridor. In preparation for the May event, a database of existing plans was established and reviewed by team members and multiple conference calls

were scheduled to discuss the project scope and approach, reach out to partnering organizations, and plan logistics for the process.



The public charrette process took place from May 8-11, 2011. The team applied a multi-faceted approach to its study, including the following elements:

- A comprehensive tour of the corridor, led by local partners, including a tour by vehicle and as pedestrians.
- A series of key stakeholder interviews, small group meetings, and focus groups.
- A workshop with students at Brother Martin High School.
- A public workshop involving approximately residents and stakeholders from the Elysian Fields Avenue Corridor.
- A two-day design studio with local professionals, planners, and partner organizations.

The team members worked closely with local officials, community leaders, technical experts, and citizens to study the community and its concerns. The team's final report provides a narrative account and summary of recommendations presented to the community on Wednesday, May 11, 2011.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Elysian Fields Avenue Charrette is intended to provide some insight into best practices for turning this unique corridor into a unifying place for the entire city of New Orleans. This historic avenue is a defining feature of the city and the only straight line that allows citizens to connect the two major environmental and economic drivers for the city, Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River. Nearly two hundred years ago, this corridor served as a primary entry into the city. Today that entry has become a dead end.

Elysian Fields is perhaps the best remaining record of the city's development and the best current barometer of issues facing the entire region. While it clearly exhibits schizophrenic physical identities, it has the makings of a special place. It's no ordinary street. It can claim a context in the physical, historical, and cultural spheres that are significant to identity and place, both within New Orleans and beyond, and they frame a multi-faceted identity that has richness and splendor.

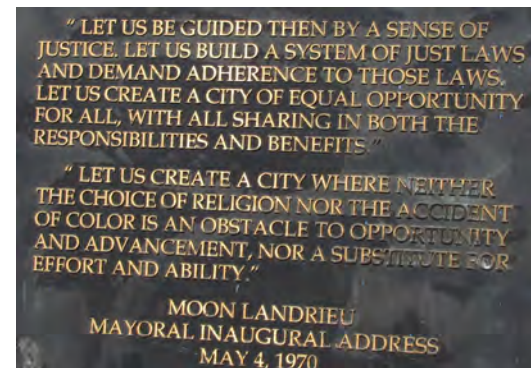
The key issues identified during the charrette include the desire to:

1. Maximize potential for creativity.
2. Reinforce the corridor at a people scale.
3. Develop a better balance among all systems.
4. Improve vitality of the neighborhoods as well as the corridor.
5. Confirm whether there are sufficient numbers to support what the community wants.
6. Reduce blight so it is no longer the dominant problem.
7. Encourage development at nodes that bring the highest tax base but still fit the character of the corridor.

After multiple meetings with a variety of stakeholders and review of the many planning exercises and products that have been produced for New Orleans, the team developed a set of short and long term recommendations for the corridor. They fall into several categories: economic vitality; celebrating neighborhoods; human-environmental interaction; pedestrian and transportation connectivity and civic re-engagement. Each is explained in more detail in the report, but the highlights include:

- Focus on strengthening existing commercial nodes, particularly at the termini of Elysian Fields.
- Provide a united front in the approach to economic development.
- Implement an annual neighborhood fair.
- Develop a demonstration project to rehabilitate properties along the corridor.
- Develop workforce housing on specific parcels.
- Develop matching fund programs for neighborhoods and homeowners.
- Implement a shared approach for using and maintaining the neutral ground.
- Encourage adjacent institutions to manage rainwater on-site.
- Develop a wayfinding system and create pedestrian loops.
- Improve the intersection at Gentilly Boulevard and Elysian Fields for cars and pedestrians.
- Lay the groundwork for possible streetcar expansion.
- Focus on activities that neighborhoods can do on their own.

Finally, it's important to realize that this will be a long term evolution. Elysian Fields Avenue is more than just a street, it is the key to revitalizing an entire swath of the city and to reconnecting the citizens of New Orleans with their environment, their culture, and their place in 21st century America.

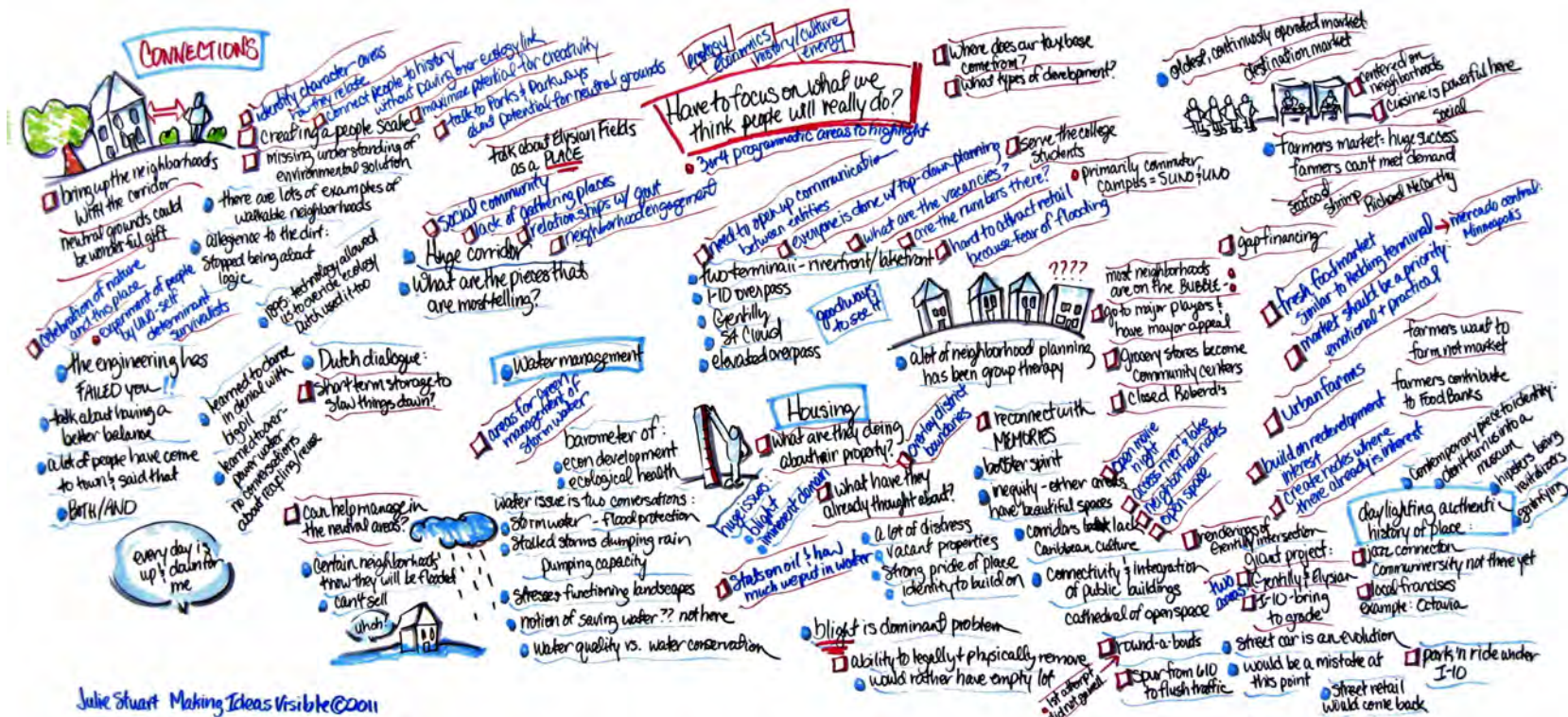


**BROTHER MARTIN
HIGH SCHOOL'S
VISION FOR ELYSIAN
FIELDS AVENUE**

American Institute for Architects



Julie Stuart Making Ideas Visible ©2001



OBSERVATIONS FROM BROTHER MARTIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

"To make Elysian Fields Avenue nicer I suggest to clean the sidewalks and neutral grounds..."- Stephen Bonnaffons

"Planning the future of New Orleans is as important as preserving its historical past."- Nathan Estess

"Coconut Beach draws lots of people of all ages and would be a great asset to the lakefront area if it has to move."- Michael Giovingo

"...if it weren't for the Mississippi River, Louisiana would not have all the different styles of cultures & ethnicities that they do today."- Shaid Stewart

"...more people should know about the history of Elysian Fields."- Roderic Teamer, Jr.

"I noticed that the Marigny was in much better shape than the rest of Elysian Fields due to the fact that Marigny is a historic district."- Jack Gravolet

"I wish the public art water markers would be more pronounced so that more people could hear about them..."- Nicholas Tanner

"The lakefront has had a great influence in my life."- Rory Luke

"In order to appreciate our surroundings and where we are going, it is important to know and understand their origins."- Harrison Schluter





Images: Allen Eskew, FAIA



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Successful communities are the product of collective acts by their citizens. This project was made possible through partnerships with key civic institutions, organizations, partners and residents. In particular, the Center for Communities by Design would like to extend its gratitude to the following organizations and individuals for making significant contributions to the project's success:

The team would like to thank the City of New Orleans for its partnership in this project. Council-Member Cynthia Hedge-Morrell was generous with her time when the team met with her in January, and offered support and guidance to our initial thinking about the project. The team would like to offer a special thanks to Bill Gilchrist, Lucas Diaz, and Leslie Alley for their time and efforts during the process. The dialogue was frank and open, and the team was impressed with the New Orleans' leadership and direction, and the individual contributions that staff are making on a daily basis to shape the city's future.

The team would also like to thank David Welch of the Gentilly Civic Improvement Association for his enthusiasm for this project and his assistance doing community outreach work. The team would like to recognize J. Samuel Cook at Neighborhood Housing Services for his time and guidance in the planning stages of this project. The team would like to acknowledge Ann Daigle at the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment for her time and efforts.

The team would like to acknowledge the contributions of its partners at Tulane University, and give special thanks to Richard Campanella. No document better prepared the team with a solid grounding in the history and development of Elysian Fields Avenue than Richard Campanella's "Elysian Fields Avenue: Barometer of Urban Growth" from *Geographies of New Orleans: Urban Fabrics Before the Storm*. Richard was gracious enough to lead tours of the corridor during the team's initial visit to the city in January, as well as the full team's thorough tour of the corridor during the charrette event.

The team would also like to thank the University of New Orleans, in particular the efforts of Billy Fields, Jane Brooks, and Ben Shirtcliff, as well as the UNO students who participated in the team's workshop and studio sessions. Their input and guidance was an important part of the team's process.

The team would like to thank Dillard University for its important partnership role in this project, and extend its gratitude to Nick Harris, Executive Director of Dillard's Community Development Corporation, for his time and efforts with the team in

both January and May. The University generously lent the team its state-of-the-art auditorium space to host the final community presentation.

The team would like to thank David Waggoner, FAIA, for his time and contributions to the team's thinking about a host of issues. The team would also like to thank Angela O'Byrne, AIA, for her advice and contributions to the planning process.

The team would like to extend special gratitude to Brother Martin High School. Thomas Mavor, Vice Principal for Academics, was a critical partner to the project and was generous in offering the team meeting space, and more importantly, involving students directly in the planning process with the team. Geography students from Brother Martin spent the semester studying the corridor, and participated in a workshop with the team. The team was impressed by the geography students' work on the corridor, and would like to acknowledge Brother Martin's educational leadership in expanding learning beyond the classroom and into the community.

The team would like to thank the firm of Eskew, Dumez & Ripple for serving as a leading local partner on this project. The firm hosted the team's design studio and provided assistance in numerous areas regarding outreach, planning, and implementation of the charrette event. We would especially like to thank Nicole Marshall and Cristina Ungureanu, who were an integral part of our team.

Finally, we would like to recognize Allen Eskew, FAIA, for his extraordinary contributions to this process. It was Allen's vision for this project that led the Center for Communities by Design to pursue it, and he played a leading role in every phase of the process. Allen is a credit to the architectural profession and a civic asset to the City of New Orleans, and we are grateful for his vision, leadership, and passion for Elysian Fields Avenue.





LAYERS OF ELYSIAN FIELDS



LAYERS OF ELYSIAN FIELDS

Elysian Fields Avenue is a landscape of layers—a diverse strata of history and ecology that tell a story of the place through time. Architectural structures and altered ecologies create a cultural landscape that serves as a barometer of urban growth. This human history overlays an ecological transect that is representative of the elevations in the city as a whole and the micro-environments that relate to those elevations. When cut in sections, these layers represent one of the most complete histories of place seen in the city of New Orleans. However, within the strata is a documentation of the core dysfunctional relationship humans have had with the environment.

With roots as deep as the trees that grow along this corridor, the community has come to terms with the fact that their ability to care about and address city-wide crises are undermined by the failures of their immediate environment along Elysian Fields. It is this immediate environment that the community most directly interacts with and must most deeply understand. It is the experience had at this intimate place level or human scale that solutions have largely ignored. A broader understanding of the corridor and communities that live along it is based in engaging people in their place and challenging them to take responsibility for and help shape the public spaces beyond their front door. The community needs its people to take action as “placemakers.” Placemaking is a simple, common sense process through which people are empowered to take action and work together to improve and shape their own future and foster stewardship for the places they most value. Along this highly valued corridor, action has tended to oscillate from one seemingly abstract idea to another, enabling a highly passive role for individual citizens without a set of clearly stated and agreed upon principles to follow. These principles must be extracted from within the dense layers that give Elysian Fields its sense of place—at the interface of human history and ecology—to most successfully guide the community to a brighter future. An initial take on these principles is illustrated in the graphic on the following page.

As this community finds itself between historic layers and ecological realities they are advised to create a set of design principles that will guide a series of incremental improvements that can be taken on at the personal and community scale. The community is encouraged to create its own place; to love its history, its bayou, its river, its lake, to see it and touch it and take care of it. While focusing on exact physical and economic solutions, a consistent set of design principles that the community can take ownership of will help the community co-create far-reaching change that starts in a vision for their own community.



THE LAYERS OF

ELYSIAN FIELDS AVE.

HISTORY



1900s



2000s



1820s



1960s



1850s



FUTURE

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- Provide access to water based amenities on the river and lake.
- Utilize water to have a positive impact.
- Provide linkages along the corridor
- Capitalize on the economic opportunities provided by open spaces.
- Make physical connections to community history.
- Take advantage of the proximity to the Mississippi River, a national treasure.
- Maximize the potential for recreation on neutral grounds.
- Re-Know and celebrate the local ecology.
- Foster connections between people and the place.

ECOLOGY



CULTURAL SUMMARY

Introduction

Elysian Fields Avenue is a five-mile strategic corridor that is crossed by several important highways and avenues, including Interstate 610, Interstate 10, U.S. Highway 90, Gentilly Boulevard, and North Claiborne Avenue. Part of its route serves as Highway 46, and another piece as Highway 3021. North of Gentilly Boulevard, it is a four lane avenue, and south of Gentilly it is six lanes wide. Elysian Fields Avenue has a powerful antecedent: Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris, one of the world's great streets. However, it bears little resemblance to its French counterpart. Its name would indicate a place of grandeur. In Greek mythology, Elysian Fields refers to the idyllic final resting places of the souls of the heroic and the virtuous. In the cultural life of the city, Elysian Fields Avenue is notable as the fictional setting for Tennessee Williams' play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Ironically, Elysian Fields Avenue has been host to a rail line, but never a streetcar.

The Importance of Elysian Fields

In *Geographies of New Orleans*, Richard Campanella captures Elysian Fields Avenue's unique position in the city's urban landscape: "Only one avenue in all of New Orleans connects the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain with a single, straight, north-south line: Elysian Fields Avenue." Elysian Fields Avenue holds a powerful place in the history of the city's development, as it was the first point upon which the city of New Orleans reached the lakefront and it became the axis on which the city developed throughout the area. During the 19th century, it served as the site of the Pontchartrain Railroad, the gateway to the city for visitors from the North. For more than one hundred years, the railroad continued to operate, and was known locally as Smoky Mary due to the belching of its locomotive's smokestack. The Avenue was where travelers first experienced New Orleans, including visiting dignitaries, foreign presidents and a number of notable figures. The corridor has experienced several distinct periods of development and evolution, and is a quintessential street in the city's history. These qualities have led Campanella to summarize its importance as exceptional: "As a microcosm and barometer of two centuries of urban growth, Elysian Fields Avenue stands alone."

The Avenue has been subject to many dramatic changes during its lifespan, including the significant impacts of Hurricane Katrina. The 5-mile corridor is home to the entire range of elevations present in the city. Its more modern, low-lying developments were impacted dramatically by the storm and as a result the corridor is once again undergoing a new phase in its evolution. Elysian Fields Avenue has not received as much attention as the city's more famous boulevards, St. Charles Avenue and Canal

Street. While St. Charles is a defining street in the romantic symbolism of the New Orleans, complete with mansions and a street car, and lined with grand oaks, Elysian Fields simply does not offer the same aesthetic. In many ways, it represents a huge opportunity waiting to be rediscovered. As one local architect surmised, "it hasn't been reframed as a boulevard in over 35 years."

Blight, economic disinvestment, ecological obstacles, and reduced civic engagement have contributed to the problems along Elysian Fields. As a result, for some time there has been significant neglect and often a sense of hopelessness. However, there are little things happening all along the corridor that give a glimmer of hope. In Marigny, new businesses and expected riverfront improvements have focused attention on what can be done in walkable historic districts. Anticipation of a streetcar line for St. Claude Avenue, and the possibility of restoring sections of Claiborne Avenue at I-10 have given residents a sense of hope for increased economic development around major transportation improvements. In Gentilly, the Civic Improvement Association has brought together local residents to have a stronger voice, and Dillard University's Community Development Corporation's (CDC) efforts to renew the area are sparking some significant improvements and bringing renewed vigor.

Certainly there are neighborhoods that continue to strengthen their revitalization efforts or bring a stronger voice to the community, but perhaps the best possibilities for Elysian Fields Avenue are those that turn it into a model for the future of New Orleans. It has the potential to:

- Create a better balance with the region's ecological and environmental systems.
- Become a model of cross-neighborhood and cross-agency collaboration.
- Enhance the cultural experience for New Orleanians and visitors.
- Serve as an entrepreneurial training ground for the region.

In terms of creating a better ecological and environmental balance, Elysian Fields exhibits the full topographical range for the city. Consequently the corridor provides excellent opportunities to better manage rainwater and to encourage interaction with the large bodies of water at either end. A better environmental balance implies pedestrian activities in existing and future green spaces. Making better utilization of those spaces for all citizens is key to improving the overall health of New Orleans. And, environmental balance also implies more efficient transportation development and better building practices for new and existing buildings. Even a reminder of the environment sits in the neutral ground, the public art piece "Watermarks," a series

of steel and glass poles marking the height of the 2005 flood at 12 locations.

For collaboration, Elysian Fields can become the unifying place where distinct neighborhoods on either side can connect and work together for the betterment of the entire community. Children can play and learn in the neutral ground, and residents can rely on businesses and institutions on either side. Various agencies (both governmental and non-profit) should have better communication so that all parties are aware and comfortable with what is being planned and implemented for the corridor.

Culture is New Orleans' most important asset. And not just its historic culture, like the old Pontchartrain Beach amusement park or the Colored Waifs Home. Both of these offer potential for re-creating some historic cultural activity, or restoration of cultural facilities. The Home, also known as the Milne School for Boys was home to Louis Armstrong, and is cited as the site where he learned to play the cornet. The corridor not only exhibits historic ethnic culture, but is home to popular culture as well. The alternative rock group REM based a song "West of The Fields" on the corridor, repeating the line, "long gone, long gone, long gone" and "dreams of Elysian". The Avenue is also home to the 2008 work of famous British street artist



Banksy. Completed on the third anniversary of Katrina, the series was done as a memorial to the storm and its aftermath. According to one account, each Banksy reportedly "increased the value of the building it adorned by \$75,000 – \$200,000." Banksy's global reputation and mainstream appeal recently skyrocketed when his 2010 documentary, *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, was nominated for an Academy Award. The entire litany of cultural experiences along the corridor should be explored and celebrated, pulling signs of those cultural elements from within the neighborhoods to the neutral ground.

Finally, Elysian Fields can serve as an entrepreneurial training ground for the entire region. The New Orleans Center for Creative Arts is a regional, pre-professional arts training center that offers secondary school-age children intensive instruction in dance, media arts, music, theatre arts, visual arts, and creative writing. Local universities provide opportunities for students to learn directly from their surrounding environments, and the Avenue can be a living laboratory for implementing experimental or classic business models being explored by nearby

institutions or agencies. Cheap rents and lots of available space also offer a chance for up and coming artists, craftspeople or other business owners to set up shop or expand their endeavors.





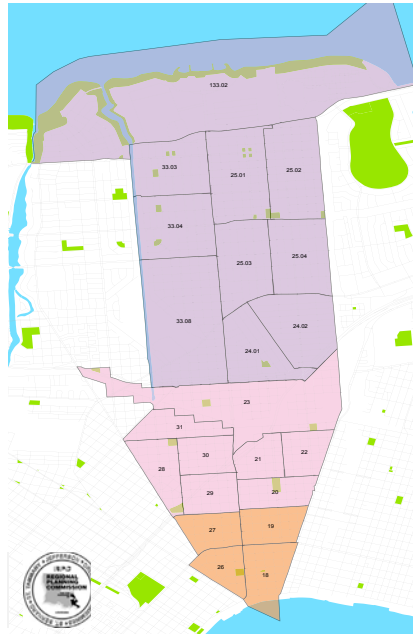
ECONOMIC & NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY



ECONOMIC VITALITY

Economic conditions along the corridor are relatively strong. Data indicate that the residential base can support more retail and will continue to grow over the next twenty years. The economic vitality of the corridor depends largely on the ability of the City and community to address corridor issues related to flooding and water management that businesses see as an unacceptable risk to locating along Elysian Fields Ave., and the ability of the City and community to work together and pose a united front when attracting and recruiting businesses to the area.

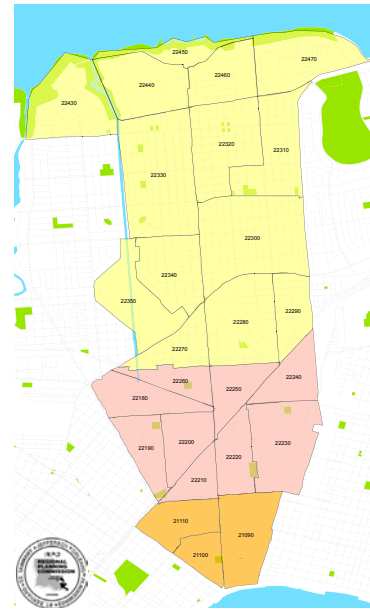
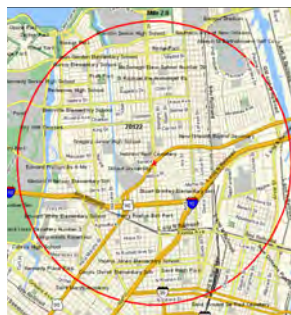
Residents indicate that the corridor is lacking basic retail services including grocery stores, eating and drinking places, movie theaters, and other amenities that make communities livable. Before Katrina, there were three mid-sized grocery stores, none of which have returned post-Katrina. The following section examines the potential for the trade area to support a new grocery store, other retail uses along the corridor, and non-retail job generating uses along the corridor.



Study Area and Trade Area Definitions

The Market Analysis defines the Study Area to include the following Orleans County census tracts: 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.01, 24.02, 25.01, 25.02, 25.03, 25.04, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33.03, 33.04, 33.08, and 133.02. As the first map shows, it corresponds to the area bounded by London Bayou and St. Bernard Avenue up-river; Lake Pontchartrain; the Mississippi River; and Peoples Avenue, Almonaster Avenue, and Franklin Avenue down-river.

Because retail uses draw from a larger area than just the streets immediately adjacent to the corridor, the analysis uses a larger area to define the leakage analysis and retail trade potential. As the second map shows, the retail trade area is centered on the Gentilly Blvd. and Elysian Fields Ave. intersection, extending in a two-mile radius.



Finally, because the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) projects the corridor's population and housing using TAZs, the analysis uses the TAZs that best correspond to the aforementioned census tracts to project population and employment within the Study Area. The third map shows the TAZs included in the study area.

Population and Household Trends

As the Population and Housing Trend Table shows, there are approximately 54,400 residents and 11,300 households in the Study Area. Although there are several vacant lots along the corridor, the area has an overall vacancy rate that is on par with the rest of the City.

As the Income Distribution Table shows, the study area's median 2011 household incomes (\$32,325) were lower than the City's (\$36,220). The Study Area's income distribution was similar to the City's but had a higher concentration of households with incomes above \$35,000, and lower concentrations of households with incomes below \$24,999 and above.

Population and Household Trends, 2010

Indicator	FQ/Marigny (a)	I-10 Area (b)	Gentilly/Lakefront (c)	Study Area (d)	City of New Orleans
Population	8,179	17,753	28,444	54,376	484,674
Households	3,750	6,571	11,316	21,637	188,251
Housing Units	4,506	7,802	12,261	24,569	215,091
Vacant Units	17%	16%	8%	12%	12%
Occupied Units	83%	84%	92%	88%	88%

Notes:

- (a) The French Quarter/Marigny area includes the following census tracts: 18, 19, 26, and 27.
- (b) The I-10 area includes the following census tracts: 20, 21, 22, 23, 28, 29, 30, and 31.
- (c) The Gentilly/Lakefront area includes the following census tracts: 24.01, 24.02, 25.01, 25.02, 25.03, 25.04, 33.03, 33.04, 33.08, and 133.02.
- (d) The Study Area includes all census tracts in the Marigny, I-10, and Gentilly/Lakefront areas.

Income Distribution, 2011

Income Distribution	Study Area (a)	City of New Orleans
Income Less than \$15,000	26%	31%
Income \$15,000 - \$24,999	15%	16%
Income \$25,000 - \$34,999	13%	14%
Income \$35,000 - \$49,999	16%	14%
Income \$50,000 - \$74,999	15%	13%
Income \$75,000 - \$99,999	7%	6%
Income \$100,000 or more	9%	8%
Total	100%	100%
Median Income	\$32,325	\$36,220

Sources: Claritas; BAE, 2011.

Retail Leakage Analysis

Retail leakage analyses determine whether a trade area can support additional retail uses, or whether they're over-served. Claritas, a third-party data provider, provides retail leakage data showing the trade area's total household expenditures on retail goods and services (demand), the current trade area's retail sales (supply), and the difference (retail potential). A retail leakage indicates that trade area residents spend more in the retail sector than the area supplies, while an injection indicates that consumers come from outside of the trade area to purchase goods. The Retail Leakage Table shows retail (leakages)/injections for the Trade Area's major retail sectors. As the table shows, there is an overall leakage of \$238 million of retail dollars flowing out of the community.

In many cases, an area may be underserved (have a leakage of dollars) in a sector such as auto dealerships, where the data show that residents travel outside of the trade area to shop; however, auto retail uses may be undesirable for other reasons along the corridor (e.g., doesn't fit the character of the area). A retail leakage analysis can be used to determine where there is potential for additional retail, but other factors (e.g., residents' desires, etc.) should dictate the types of businesses targeted for attraction. Residents indicated that they are primarily interested in attracting grocery, restaurant, and neighborhood amenities.

Retail (Leakage)/Injection Analysis, 2010

Retail Sector	Demand (a)	Supply (b)	(Leakage)/Injection
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	\$71,372,423	\$10,609,137	(\$60,763,286)
Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	\$11,851,610	\$2,309,869	(\$9,541,741)
Electronics and Appliance Stores	\$13,108,902	\$4,027,147	(\$9,081,755)
Building Material, Garden, and Equipment Stores	\$55,568,268	\$60,917,699	\$5,349,431
Food and Beverage Stores	\$85,915,791	\$40,622,818	(\$45,292,973)
Health and Personal Care Stores	\$45,172,034	\$29,263,619	(\$15,908,415)
Gasoline Stations	\$51,015,119	\$21,908,316	(\$29,106,803)
Clothing and Clothing Accessory Stores	\$30,304,072	\$9,270,044	(\$21,034,028)
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores	\$11,002,920	\$3,315,762	(\$7,687,158)
General Merchandise	\$87,630,674	\$64,943,305	(\$22,687,369)
Department Stores	\$42,857,860	\$1,394,233	(\$41,463,627)
Other General Merchandise Stores (c)	\$44,772,814	\$63,549,072	\$18,776,258
Food Service and Drinking Places	\$54,275,672	\$32,623,805	(\$21,651,867)
Full Service Restaurants (d)	\$24,231,479	\$20,987,787	(\$3,243,692)
Non-store Retailers	\$44,776,945	\$55,538,054	\$10,761,109
Miscellaneous Retailers (e)	\$14,494,847	\$3,101,863	(\$11,392,984)
Total Retail Sales, Including Eating and Drinking Places	\$576,489,278	\$338,451,437	(\$238,037,841)

Notes:

- (a) 2010 consumer expenditures within 2 miles of the Gentilly Blvd. and Elysian Fields Ave.
- (b) 2010 retail sales within 2 miles of the Gentilly Blvd. and Elysian Fields Ave.
- (c) Represents drug stores. Included in General Merchandise category.
- (d) Included in Food Service and Drinking Places category.
- (e) Includes florists, office supplies, used merchandise, etc.

Sources: Claritas; BAE, 2011.

Before Katrina there were multiple grocery stores along the corridor and in the trade area. Post-Katrina two stores remain in the trade area – Rouses at Leon C. Simon Dr. and Franklin, and Winn-Dixie on Chef Menteur Highway. In 2010, approximately \$45.3 million of potential grocery store expenditures were spent outside of the trade area at grocery stores other than Rouses and Winn-Dixie. Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers indicates that neighborhood grocery stores generate approximately \$475 per square foot. A neighborhood 20,000 square foot grocery store would only need to capture 21 percent of the leakage to meet the national average sales per square foot.

The area is also somewhat underserved for food and drinking places. According to Claritas, the area leaks \$21.7 million in restaurant and bar dollars outside of the trade area, \$3.2 million of which are attributable to full service restaurants. The average national restaurant generates \$350 per square foot. The data suggest that the trade area can support another 9,000 square feet of full service restaurant space, or approximately two more restaurants. Using infill in strategic locations can create a more vibrant community that will be able to support these desirable uses.

Non-Retail Job-Generating Land Use Demand

In addition to retail, there is some potential for other job-generating land uses. According to the Louisiana Workforce Commission, between 2008 and 2018 the region will experience large gains in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Health and Social Assistance; and Accommodation and Food Service sectors. The employment projections table shows regional employment projections between 2008 and 2018.

The City and community can work together to target ancillary and/or support uses that would fit well with existing vacant space. The Marigny area has office users, vacant office spaces available, and is located in an up-and-coming area. In addition, the City and community could market the proximity to Dillard, UNO, and SUNO to attract office users that would benefit from access to the Universities and their students.

Regional Labor Market Area Employment, 2008 - 2013 (a)

Industry	2008	2013	Difference	Percent Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	1,053	936	(117)	-11%
Mining	8,611	6,712	(1,899)	-22%
Utilities	2,283	1,988	(295)	-13%
Construction	32,967	29,220	(3,747)	-11%
Manufacturing	38,965	35,617	(3,348)	-9%
Wholesale Trade	23,908	24,540	632	3%
Retail Trade	60,968	60,405	(563)	-1%
Transportation and Warehousing	26,187	25,165	(1,022)	-4%
Information	8,881	8,823	(58)	-1%
Finance and Insurance	17,513	17,662	149	1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	8,409	8,301	(108)	-1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	28,482	33,524	5,042	18%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	7,935	8,035	100	1%
Administrative and Waste Services	32,247	29,399	(2,848)	-9%
Educational Services	41,009	45,424	4,415	11%
Health and Social Assistance	61,587	72,974	11,387	18%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	12,071	12,243	172	1%
Accommodation and Food Services	56,289	64,095	7,806	14%
Other Workers, Except Public Administration	13,701	14,452	751	5%
Self-Employed Workers	39,721	38,843	(878)	-2%
Government	37,014	38,749	1,735	5%
Total (b)	560,206	577,386	17,180	3%

Notes:

- (a) The regional Labor Market Area includes Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and St. Tammany parishes.
 (b) Includes workers left out for confidentiality reasons and unpaid family workers.

Sources: Louisiana Workforce Commission; BAE, 2011.

Study Area Population and Employment Projections

In order to determine how much job-generating space the corridor can capture, the analysis utilizes the RPC's population and employment projections. The RPC projects that between 2010 and 2030, both population and employment will increase along the corridor. Using the 2010 Census population count and the RPC's projected growth rates, the analysis projects population to increase 13 percent throughout the Study Area, with the area gaining approximately 7,000 new residents. The largest share of growth should occur in the I-10 area. According to the State of Louisiana Office of Information Technology, Division of Administration data, Orleans Parish population will increase much less significantly over the same period (three percent).

In addition, both retail and non-retail uses will increase their employment along the corridor between 2010 and 2030. Areas like Marigny that have office space available, as well as areas in close proximity to the Universities will be in a good position to capture some of the non-retail uses, while areas like Gentilly Avenue that is primarily retail oriented, could be able to capture new retail uses. The Population and Housing Projections Table shows area projections through 2030.

Population and Employment Projections, 2010 - 2030

Indicator	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population (a)					
FQ/Marigny (b)	8,179	8,554	8,674	8,757	8,839
I-10 Area (c)	17,753	19,049	19,512	19,997	20,420
Gentilly/Lakefront (d)	<u>28,444</u>	<u>30,907</u>	<u>31,345</u>	<u>31,785</u>	<u>32,173</u>
Study Area (e)	54,376	58,461	59,482	60,483	61,372
Employment (a)					
Retail Jobs:					
FQ/Marigny (b)	253	294	335	376	417
I-10 Area (c)	375	433	491	549	607
Gentilly/Lakefront (d)	<u>228</u>	<u>261</u>	<u>294</u>	<u>327</u>	<u>360</u>
Study Area (e)	856	988	1,120	1,252	1,384
Non-Retail Jobs:					
FQ/Marigny (b)	2,172	2,585	2,998	3,411	3,823
I-10 Area (c)	1,717	2,040	2,363	2,686	3,007
Gentilly/Lakefront (d)	<u>6,288</u>	<u>7,478</u>	<u>8,669</u>	<u>9,860</u>	<u>11,047</u>
Study Area (e)	10,177	12,103	14,030	15,957	17,877

Notes:

- (a) Based on TAZ districts.
 (b) The French Quarter/Marigny area includes the following TAZs: 21090, 21100, and 21110.
 (c) The I-10 area includes the following TAZs: 22180, 22190, 22200, 22210, 22220, 22230, 22240, 22250, and 22260.
 (d) The Gentilly/Lakefront area includes the following TAZs: 22270, 22280, 22290, 22230, 22310, 22320, 22330, 22340, 22350, 22430, 22440, 22450, 22460, and 22470.
 (e) The Study Area includes all TAZs in the FQ/Marigny, I-10, and Gentilly/Lakefront areas.

Sources: New Orleans Regional Planning Commission; BAE, 2011.



Recommendations

The analysis shows a moderately strong market potential within the Study Area. While there are challenges to overcome, such as reducing crime and/or the perception of crime, and convincing new businesses to locate along a corridor likely to re-flood, the area has pent up demand for retail space, and long-term projected growth in both the commercial and residential markets. The following recommendations will help the Study Area reach its market potential:

SHORT TERM STRATEGIES

- Focus on strengthening existing commercial nodes. Focusing on the commercial nodes at both the lake and river termini would anchor development along the corridor.
- Increase communication between community members and City staff to show potential developers and commercial tenants that these two entities are united in their approach to economic development.
- Use existing incentive programs like the Fresh Food Retailer Initiative low-interest and forgivable loan program to attract a new grocery and NORA Commercial Corridor Revitalization Initiative to attract new businesses to the corridor.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

- Bring I-10 down to grade to bring additional traffic to the corridor to support and attract more desirable retail uses.
- Allow for town-homes, flats, and loft residential uses at key commercial nodes and near Universities to facilitate a vibrant community that can support more desirable retail uses and restaurants, encourage walkability, and move the corridor towards supporting alternative transportation options.

Use tools like tax increment financing (TIF) to keep local tax dollars working for the local community. While this program often requires oversight, it can be one of the most useful tools for funding infrastructure improvements and catalyst projects that attract new development. A targeted capital improvement plan can also achieve some of these goals.

CELEBRATING THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF ELYSIAN FIELDS AVENUE

As is true of New Orleans as a whole, the Elysian Fields Avenue Corridor is a community of families. Three in five households are family households. It is also, for the most part, a community of homeowners; more than half of households own their homes. The exception is Marigny, where more than two-thirds of units are renter occupied.

Twenty-six percent of residents are under 18; the comparable citywide figure is 27 percent. Three out of five persons are working age; this is comparable to the citywide proportion of working age persons. Elderly persons are represented in substantial numbers; they comprise 14 percent of the population, compared to 12 percent citywide.

Each neighborhood in the Elysian Fields Avenue Corridor is a separate and distinct place. These neighborhoods range from Marigny, which is emerging as a destination of choice for the avant garde, to the historic Seventh Ward, to the suburban-style neighborhoods of Gentilly/Lakefront. Together, these neighborhoods contain approximately 11 percent of the city's population.

There is a range of architectural styles. The predominant style in Marigny is French Colonial; in the middle section of the corridor, the predominant style is "Victorian shotgun," and in the Gentilly/Lakefront section, the predominant style is Spanish Colonial Revival, with a scattering of arts and crafts bungalows. These styles contribute to the distinctiveness of each section of the study area.



The characteristic land use is single family. Housing units are fairly close together in the mid- and southern sections of the community, with a transition to post-World War II suburban densities on the approach to Lake Pontchartrain. Residents in attendance at a public meeting held on June 9, 2011 expressed a strong preference for retaining the single family character of the community, because they view homeownership as having a stabilizing effect. Meeting attendees also expressed a desire for housing nearby the University of New Orleans.

Retail/commercial properties occur primarily at the intersections of major

transportation arteries and small scale shopping centers occur within the interior of the corridor. These uses occur with the greatest frequency south of Interstate Highway 610 (IH-610). A concentration of neighborhood commercial uses occurs between Benefit and Florida and near Claiborne Avenue. Restaurants, lending institutions, and service stations are examples of retail/commercial properties in the study area. In addition, there are several small business parks dispersed throughout. Lowe's, a big box retailer, has a significant presence on the east side of Elysian Fields Corridor and north of Interstate Highway 10 (IH-10). It is the largest general commercial use in the study area.

There were some neighborhood-serving retail/commercial uses lost as a result of the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Some, but not all of these uses have returned. Residents, university students, and others decry the loss of these uses; they now have to travel outside of the community with more frequency to obtain desired services.

The area proximate to the two freeways (IH-10 and IH 610), where there are warehouses, a dump, and other non-residential uses, is viewed by residents and persons who work in the Elysian Fields Avenue Corridor as derelict; one person described it as the "underbelly" of the community.

There is fairly good parks and open space coverage. Neutral grounds adjacent to the Elysian Fields Avenue Corridor, Claiborne Avenue, IH-10, Florida Avenue, and St. Roch Avenue are an important open space resource, as is Washington Square Park, and the land adjacent to Lake Pontchartrain. The Jewish Cemetery near the intersection of Gentilly and Elysian Fields is not dedicated open space, but it has an open space effect.

As is true of retail/commercial uses, institutional land uses were also lost as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Uses that were lost include a grammar school and a place of worship. A substantial number of educational uses remain, however. These include Dillard University, the University of New Orleans, and Brother Martin High School.



In addition, there are several places of worship, along with nonprofit organizations. These institutions represent an important resource. They are a source of information, volunteerism, and support.

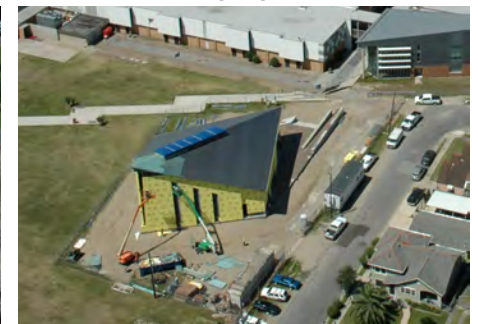
Vacant structures and vacant land parcels are interspersed throughout the corridor, and are perceived by residents as contributing to the image of the area as being unsafe and declining. However, during the period between March 2008 and September 2010, the number of these properties was reduced by nearly one-fourth and residents acknowledge this progress. Table A illustrates this trend, by neighborhood.

Table A
Blighted Residential Addresses or Empty Lots
March 2008 and September 2010 Comparison

Neighborhood	"No-Stat" Blighted Residential Addresses or Empty Lots as of March 2008	"No-Stat" Blighted Residential Addresses or Empty Lots as of September 2010	% Change
Marigny	181	181	0
Milneburg	1,481	922	38
Seventh Ward	2,528	2,222	12
St. Anthony	1,213	917	24
St. Claude	2,003	1,548	23
St. Roch	2,259	1,870	17
Dillard	955	546	43
Gentilly Terrace	1,189	765	36
Totals	11,809	8,971	24

Source: Greater New Orleans Data Center, November 2010

Land uses are regulated by a municipal zoning code. Residents and other stakeholders have stated that numerous variances to the existing code have been approved over time. A new zoning code that designates an overlay district for the Elysian Fields Avenue Corridor is close to completion. Features of these overlay districts are an onsite landscaping requirement, street trees, and reduced signage restrictions.



A number of housing and redevelopment organizations address area community-building issues, as do Community Development Corporations. Prominent among these are: New Orleans Redevelopment Authority, which administers the well-known Lot Next Door and Road Home programs that address the elimination of housing blight; Neighborhood Housing Services; the Louisiana Land Trust; the City of New Orleans Housing and Community Development Division; and the City of New Orleans Code Enforcement Department. There is also a blossoming Community Development Corporation (CDC) movement exemplified by the Dillard University CDC. CDC's are not-for-profit organizations that can be an effective mechanism for addressing housing, community development, commercial revitalization, and other issues related to community-building.

Moreover, residents and other individuals with a stake in the Elysian Fields Avenue Corridor point to the many individuals and institutions that have re-invested in the area. Homeowners, educational institutions, places of worship, and retail/commercial establishments are among these. Residents also cited nonprofit organizations, such as Beacon for Hope, as having played a key role in rebuilding the community.

In sum, residents exhibit a great deal of pride of place, coupled with a strong sense of neighborhood identity. Nevertheless, they assert that the study area could be further enhanced by efforts to transform it into more of a live/play environment, with additional neighborhood convenience retail, event spaces, and housing.

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Join together to organize and present neighborhood fairs/crime prevention forums in the neighborhoods adjoining the Elysian Fields Avenue Corridor.

Involve homeowners associations, nonprofits, business establishments and places of worship, with support from the City of New Orleans Office of Neighborhood Engagement. The fair could feature games, health screenings and immunizations, presentations on neighborhood crime prevention techniques, information booths or tables staffed by governmental and nongovernmental organizations, refreshments, clowns and other entertainment, balloon artists and the like. Successful fairs of this type have been held in Houston, Texas, Seattle Washington, and Memphis, Tennessee. They promote community cohesion, disseminate useful information, facilitate access to immunization and screening services, and they are fun.

2. Convene a working group of relevant parties to conduct a review existing housing initiatives.

Although much progress has been made toward addressing vacant properties, residents would like to see the pace accelerated. The complexity of this issue is well understood, as are the possible ramifications of potential remedies. However, the blight caused by vacant properties is of such significance that new approaches may be warranted. These include the use of eminent domain to acquire vacant properties that are suitable for public uses (such as storm water management and urban gardens), the aggressive use of tax foreclosures, and the adoption of statutory remedies focused on the property title issues that plague communities where substantial numbers do not execute a will transferring property ownership. The title issue is critical because the absence of clear title makes it difficult, if not impossible, to eliminate blight by implementing such initiatives as infill housing programs and urban homesteading.

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy has addressed approaches to dealing with the problem of vacant and abandoned property in an article that appears at http://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/1057_Vacant-and-Abandoned-Property.

3. Identify lots that are suitable for housing.

Housing opportunity sites near the University of New Orleans can be targeted for housing that is built in partnership with the university and private developers; opportunity sites near busy intersections can be targeted for town homes that are context-sensitive; and the numerous opportunity sites that exist in the form of individual parcels can be targeted for infill housing. Some of these sites are likely to be suitable for multi-family residential development, so in light of the negative view of this type of housing, a multi-faceted campaign to address the basis for this issue is needed.

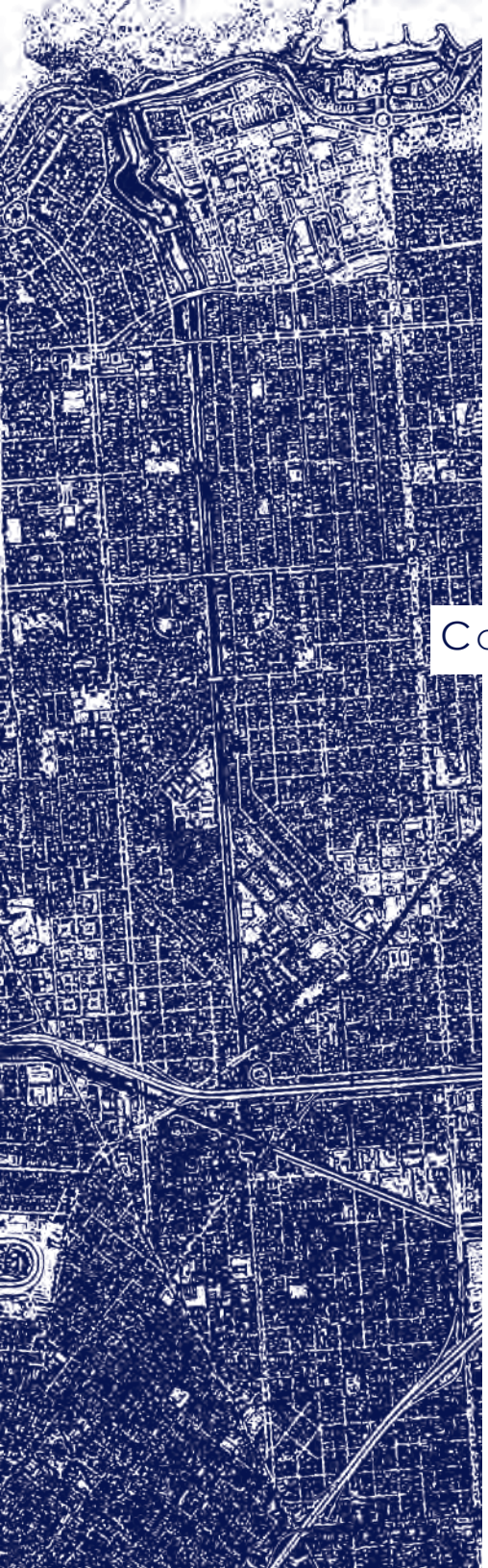
LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Institutionalize a neighborhood planning process.

Assign each neighborhood in the city a planner liaison with responsibility for facilitating two-way communication of ongoing planning issues to neighborhoods and making the City of New Orleans aware of planning issues of importance to neighborhoods. In addition, these planners would be responsible for updating their respective neighborhood plans and would work closely with the Office of Neighborhood Engagement. A number of cities use the planner/liaison model, including Madison, Wisconsin. (See <http://www.cityofmadison.com/neighborhoods/planningprogram.htm>)

2. Increase community involvement in the regulation of land uses.

Elysian Fields Avenue Corridor residents believe that the frequency with which zoning variances have been granted in the past has diminished the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Going forward, the Planning Commission can alleviate this problem by involving citizens in the regulation of land uses. The eminent adoption of a new zoning code presents a fresh opportunity to begin such a process. Neighborhood planners and zoning staff can illuminate zoning policies and practices for residents and other property owners. They can also keep these individuals abreast of zoning actions that affect the neighborhoods of the Elysian Fields Avenue Corridor. Models for proceeding in this fashion exist in Fairfax County, Virginia and Phoenix, Arizona, where zoning staff train citizens in recognizing property code and zoning violations, assist them in conducting neighborhood property inspections, and inform them of proposed zoning actions. (See <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hr/specspdf/5355s22.pdf> and <http://phoenix.gov/PLANNING/arcspd.pdf>).



CONNECTIVITY

IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION CONNECTIVITY

The transportation history of Elysian Fields Avenue dates back to the colonial era. It serves a prominent role in the history of rail in Louisiana and the US as the location of the first railroad west of the Appalachians and first rail system in the nation to be completed in 1831. As the only corridor extending from Lake Pontchartrain to the Mississippi River, the avenue has always served as a critical connection. The avenue intersects with three state highways including Interstate 610, an auxiliary route to Interstate 10 constructed in 1971, Claiborne Avenue (Interstate 10) constructed in 1965, as well as Gentilly Boulevard (US 90).

Today the corridor is predominantly auto-oriented. Rail has been completely eliminated save a few small reminders like the mile marker near Claiborne Avenue. Extending from the river to Gentilly Boulevard, the avenue is six travel lanes wide. Beyond Gentilly the avenue drops to four travel lanes. The historic connection to the corridor has almost disappeared and the time is ripe for recreating and re-connecting this iconic transportation corridor to support the surrounding neighborhoods revitalizing after hurricane Katrina.

What is the Vision for Transportation on the Corridor?

In New Orleans as everywhere, transportation is linked to all aspects of life. Our natural environment, economic vitality, health and social well being depend on transportation systems that are efficient, clean and equitable. A sustainable transportation system is one that:

- Allows basic access for all
- Offers a variety of transportation options
- Limits waste and uses energy efficiently



During our meetings with community leaders, neighbors, students, and others, we heard several themes or goals for the avenue emerge including:

- Better travel options with more connections
- Connect to street car
- Improved transit
- Park and Ride under 610
- Kiosks
- Improved landscaping and lighting
- Better maintenance of the roads
- Preserve the character of the neighborhoods
- Address maintenance needs
- Slower vehicle speeds to support safer and more walkable areas

Striking a Balance Between Regional Mobility & Neighborhood Connections

A primary question that the City of New Orleans must address related to Elysian Fields Avenue is, 'Will this corridor be for cars or for people?' Elysian Fields presents a challenge to the City and the neighborhoods to balance the regional need for freeways and automobile traffic with the neighborhood need for a vibrant pedestrian environment.

The posted speed for vehicles traveling on the Avenue is 35 miles per hour. However vehicle operating speeds are higher, especially during off peak times of the day. Current research shows an estimated 95 percent survival rate for pedestrians struck by a vehicles traveling at 20 miles per hour or less. This compares with fatality rates of 40, 80, and nearly



100 percent for striking speeds of 30, 40, and 50 miles per hour or more, respectively. Reductions in vehicle travel speeds on Elysian Fields may be a cost effective way to reduce traffic related fatalities as several intersections including Claiborne Ave. are risk locations for pedestrians and bicyclists. Reductions in speed can be achieved through road redesigns, including road diets, curb extensions, and roundabouts. Comprehensive neighborhood-based speed reduction programs, which combine public information and education, enforcement, along with roadway engineering, have the best outcomes.

Better Travel Options With More Connections

Elysian Fields Avenue can support the kind of vibrant and livable downtown that neighbors want and need that will serve residents, commuters, and visitors alike. This section identifies steps to help achieve the people's vision for the avenue.

FIXING IT FIRST – ADDRESSING THE UNMET MAINTENANCE NEEDS



The Unified New Orleans Plan identifies 22% of roads in the area of Elysian Fields as failing or in poor condition in terms of their regular maintenance. This is substantially higher than other areas of the City.

Failure to address these unmet maintenance needs may contribute to the challenges with infill and attracting new commercial and retail development.

INCREASING TRANSIT SERVICE

Studies show that people are generally willing to walk about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ miles to transit and other destinations and wait about 30 seconds before attempting to cross the roadway. To increase safety and convenience of pedestrians, establish a block size of 600 feet or less in downtown, increase mid-block crossings on longer blocks, and consider providing a leading pedestrian interval (3 seconds before the green light) and/



or curb extensions at longer crossings. Prioritize the high safety risk intersections of Claiborne and Gentilly and consider pedestrian lighting, medians and other low cost/high impact improvements at these locations in the near term. Additionally, in the short term install kiosks with maps, transit schedules and other community information along the avenue. In the longer term, establish pedestrian zones that are either car free or give clear priority to pedestrian travel.

IMPROVING CONDITIONS FOR BIKING AND WALKING

The weather conditions and the public attitude toward biking and being active in the outdoors create an ideal circumstance in New Orleans for establishment of a more comprehensive bicycle network. A bicycle transportation system or a network of bicycle facilities that serve people bicycling to work, school and shopping may include:



- A connected system of on-street bike lanes
- Separated paths through high traffic or high risk areas
- Bike stations at or near primary commuter destinations and modal centers
- Businesses that support bicyclists
- Bike lockers and bike racks throughout the city (may be required in development standards)
- Informational kiosks, maps, and on-line tools to help cyclists find destinations, local bike shops, etc.
- A public service campaign aimed at bicycle commuters as well as motor vehicle drivers.



Examples of Bicycle Boulevards in other US Cities with Similar Challenges.

New Orleans has provided bike lanes and paths on a number of corridors throughout the City. For Elysian Fields, with its 150 feet of right of way and low traffic volumes, a relatively cheap and easily implemented first step towards better bicyclist accommodation would be to pilot test a bicycle boulevard. During the public discussions for this project, we heard that many people want to see bicycle facilities and feel that the avenue is too wide now. The peak hour traffic volumes are in the range of 4,500 vehicles per hour which only necessitates two thru travel lanes with intersection improvements leaving the additional lane for a bicycle boulevard and possibly street car connections in the future.

The Two Most Important Connections

In order to create stronger connections that will support the kind of livable neighborhoods and economic growth that the community is looking for, it will be necessary to address two primary areas.

CLAIBORNE AVENUE

During our study of Elysian Fields, it became clear that there were two primary locations that, if improved, would have a significant impact on the continuity and operation of the corridor. These improvements would also help support revitalization efforts in the area. The first is the intersection of Elysian Fields and Claiborne Avenue (I-10). Claiborne Avenue is aging and will need to either be replaced soon or re-designed. This presents the City and the neighborhood with an opportunity to re-create this corridor. One possible option is to remove the elevated structure and bring the corridor to grade. This approach has been successful



for other communities like San Francisco in helping to create a more balanced transportation system, improving safety for all, and stimulating economic growth. Octavian Boulevard in San Francisco provides an example of a circumstance similar to Elysian Fields. In this case, the Central Freeway was constructed in 1959 and sustained severe damage in the earthquake of 1989. This presented the community with the opportunity to recreate their transportation system. In 2006, the Central Freeway was removed and Octavian Boulevard was redesigned to be a real boulevard that has improved the economic vitality and significantly increased the quality of life in the area.



Octavia Boulevard, San Francisco: Before



Octavia Boulevard, San Francisco: After

GENTILLY ROAD

The second opportunity for improving connectivity and continuity on the corridor is by improving the intersection of Gentilly and Elysian Fields. This is an important commercial node and could be highlighted as well as made more efficient through the installation of a roundabout treatment.



Roundabouts are found in other parts of New Orleans. There is also a roundabout at the lake end of Elysian Fields.

WHY CONSIDER ROUNDABOUTS?

Speeds in modern roundabouts are slower than at intersections where motorists often accelerate through the intersection. Therefore, collisions that may occur at roundabouts are usually at lower speeds, and at less-dangerous angles (such as sideswipe). This means less severe injuries. The Transportation Research Record reports, based on 23 intersections studied throughout the country, converting traffic signals to roundabouts reduced injury crashes by 80 percent, and reduced all crashes by 40 percent.



Traditional traffic signals usually stop two or more directions of traffic at one time. In roundabouts, all directions of traffic are continually and safely flowing. The Institute for Highway Safety studies reports significantly-improved traffic flow when traditional intersections are converted to roundabouts. A study conducted in Nevada, Kansas and Maryland found that traffic delays were reduced by up to 30 percent using roundabouts.

Because roundabouts have no electrical costs and lower maintenance costs, operational savings from roundabouts have been estimated at an average of \$5,000 per year. In addition, the service life of a roundabout is approximately 25 years, versus approximately 10-20 years of service life for traffic signals.



Additionally, roundabouts eliminate the idling and associated air quality impacts that are unavoidable at intersections. In one study, replacing traffic signals and signs

with roundabouts reduced carbon monoxide emissions by 32 percent, nitrous oxide emissions by 34 percent, carbon dioxide emissions by 37 percent and hydrocarbon emissions by 42 percent. Roundabouts also improve the visual continuity of the corridor by continuing vegetation and providing an opportunity for including art or signage.

PARKING AS A CONGESTION STRATEGY

Parking management is another approach to addressing challenges with parking supply and relieving congestion that does not involve constructing additional expensive parking lots or garages. Consider removal of parking minimum requirements, even if only in selected parking control zones. Also, by offering developers and existing



businesses and institutions the opportunity to mitigate parking demand by investing in car sharing and bike sharing programs, offering employee or resident transit passes, and implementing parking fees in select areas, parking can be a significant aid in helping to reduce traffic congestion.

WHAT ABOUT A STREET CAR?



Street cars, with their direct and continual service along a corridor, are suitable for some areas with lower density housing. However, in order to be successful and sustainable these lines require higher levels of commercial, retail, institutional and other non-residential densities. Elysian Fields may support a street car line at some point in the future. The avenue currently has the traffic volumes to support two through travel lanes, but has three lanes in each direction. This leaves additional space to accommodate a street car as well as a bicycle lane.

The Importance of Roads That “Fit In” With the Neighborhood

Transportation projects are now being designed using a process that better engages neighborhoods commonly called Context Sensitive Solutions or Complete Streets. This approach weights transportation needs, community values and environmental goals on equal footing in determining a final project design. Fundamental to this new approach to transportation project development is transportation planners and engineers working with the neighborhoods from project inception through project delivery.

One tool that can help the City provide more information and visuals about what type of arterial is within a neighborhood (e.g., parkway, boulevard, or avenue), is ‘typing’ the thoroughfares within the area. Thoroughfare type is established based on the surrounding context and governs the selection of thoroughfare design criteria and configuration. Typing streets and thoroughfares will improve safety and ensure accommodation of the appropriate mix of modes for each context.

The chart on the following page provides an example of how cities can incorporate the concepts of context sensitive design into current road and street standards. In addition to amending road and street standards, the City could require clear and concise purpose and need statements that are also consistent with the overarching neighborhoods goals prior to a project being included in a transportation plan.

Establishing Sustainable Transportation Indicators of Success

Quantifiable neighborhood-specific targets and performance measures derived from safety, environmental, and health objectives are needed. These measures will help the neighborhoods to anticipate environmental or social impacts of transportation-related decisions rather than trying to react to them after they have occurred.

Several examples of quantifiable performance measurement tools commonly used for transportation systems and projects include the following:

Total Person Travel Capacity vs. Motor Vehicle Level of Service.

- Measuring all the person trip making capacity of all elements of the transportation system including roads, trains, buses, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, etc.. can produce more flexibility for infill development and create a vibrant and sustainable downtown. See City of Redmond, WA example: <http://www.redmond.gov/connectingredmond/resources/concurrency.asp>

Connectivity Indexes supporting both housing and non-residential infill.

- Average trip length – the distance neighborhood residents travel normalized by population or area (e.g., per capita or TAZ). This can serve as a land use mix indicator as well as a transportation connectivity indicator.
- Intersection or crosswalk density - the number of intersections within a defined area (e.g., square mile, TAZ, other).
- The number of roadway links divided by the number of intersections or nodes – higher index means travelers have more route choice.




Goals for reducing Carbon Dioxide and Air Toxins.

- Single-family home with 2 cars generates 12-14 metric tons
- A household in denser urban housing with 1 car generates 6-8 metric tons
- A household in denser urban housing with no car generates 3-5 metric tons (Source: Climate Trust Portland, OR)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Measures

- Fatal and serious crashes in the neighborhood

By using these methods, neighborhoods can begin to prioritize projects which will create greater connectivity, reduce traffic conflicts, and help move toward a more sustainable and equitable transportation system.

URBAN THOROUGHFARE TYPES	FUNCTION	MAX. NUMBER OF LANES	TARGET POSTED SPEED	INTERSECTION SPACING	TRANSIT SERVICE EMPHASIS	MEDIAN	CURB PARK- ING	PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES	BICYCLE FACILITIES
Boulevard 	Principle or Minor Arterial	4-6	35	1/4 to 1/2 mile	Express with some Local	Required	Provisional	Sidewalk	No- Separated Trails and Limited Crossings
Avenue 	Minor Arterial or Collector	4	23-35	1/8 to 1/4 mile	Local	Optional	Yes	Sidewalk	Yes- Boulevard or On Street
Street 	Collector	2	25	300 feet to 1/8 mile	Local	Optional	Yes	Sidewalk	Yes- On street or Boulevard

URBAN CORRIDOR

From the early settlement of New Orleans, Elysian Fields Avenue initial development was the result of its relationship to water: first it's relationship to the Mississippi River and later to Lake Ponchartrain. The initial agricultural needs of the plantations firmly established the avenue's relationship to the river. Then the industrial and transportation needs of a lumber mill and the movement of freight supporting New Orleans growth resulted in the eventual connection of Elysian Fields Avenue to Lake Ponchartrain.



A strong urban corridor was created through the straight geometric alignment resulting from design requirements of both the canal and railroad. As a result, the river and the lake became both destination and arrival points to the community. The physical result was the urban form of a boulevard with two very distinguishable termini. This became the influential framework to align future cross streets,

neighborhood fabric and locate commercial destinations thereby attracting the full breadth of land uses and urban infill from residential, industrial, and recreational. As stated in Richard Campanula's *Geographies of New Orleans*:

"The rail-road, commencing at the levee, runs for the first half mile through the center of a broad street, with low detached houses on either side. A mile from the levee we had left the city and all dwellings behind us [near the North Claiborne intersection], and were flying through the fenceless, uninhabited marshes, where nothing meets the eye but dwarf trees, rank, luxuriant undergrowth, tall, coarse grass, and vines, twisting and winding their long, serpentine folds around the trunks of the trees like huge, loathsome water snakes. By the watch, we passed a mile-stone every three minutes and a half; and in less than nineteen minutes, arrived at the lake. Here quite a village [Milneburg, on Elysian Fields between Robert E. Lee and Leon C. Simon avenues] of handsome, white-painted hotels, cafés, dwellings, store-houses, and bathing rooms, burst at once upon our view; running past them, we gradually lessened our speed, and finally came to a full stop on the pier...The pier [near present day UNO], constructed of piles and firmly planked over, was lined with sloops and schooners, which were taking in and discharging cargo, giving quite a bustling, business-like air to this infant port. Boys, ragged Negroes, and gentlemen amateurs, were fishing in great numbers farther out in the lake; others were engaged

in the delicate amusement of cray-fishing, while on the right the water was alive with bathers..."

Both termini fulfilled a variety of needs; a place to do commerce, a place to live and a place to play. However the simple yet powerful street alignment and both termini have been compromised over the years. There has been industrial infill along the river, shoreline enhancements and flood control improvements incorporated that has made access and enjoyment of recreational uses a challenge. Even though there are wonderful institutional uses to the north the current access is not very inviting and complicated.

The restoration of access, both visually and physically at the terminus will reintroduce the importance of Elysian Fields Corridor. The results will create better awareness, reintroduce greater recreational use which in turn will add economic value.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Short term

- Master plan and identify the most appropriate location for new structures with the intent of protecting visual and physical access.
- Plan integration of the light house and an interpretive facility.
- Strategically connect recreational trails.
- Reintroduce recreational programs that were historically a favorite public destination.

Long Term

- Modify and rethink the geometry of the levees.
- Consider incorporating strategically located gates and break water islands.



IDENTITY + BRANDING

“Elysian Fields Avenue never enjoyed the fame of New Orleans’ grand avenues, the likes of St. Charles, Esplanade, Napoleon, or Carrollton. It was borne of a railroad track- running grimy trains and not courtly street cars.”- *Geographies of New Orleans*

The physical appearance, design quality and programming of a neighborhood corridor is an opportunity to externally communicate a community’s identity and general well being. This unique north-south corridor tells of New Orleans history, serves as the front door to several institutions, and provides access to many neighborhoods. It has the potential of being the address of unique public destinations, specialty retail destinations and neighborhood commercial nodes for both local residents and tourists, as well serving the City of New Orleans as a whole.

Maintenance of the physical appearance of the corridor, thoughtful plant selection of the avenue streetscape, and creative usage of the “neutral ground” will dramatically reinforce the Elysian Fields Avenue identity and all associated with it. Identity and way finding signage would create a stronger sense of image and civic pride. A comprehensive signage program would increase awareness of the corridor and the individual neighborhoods while also promoting dialogue and cooperation among adjacent neighboring associations.

Important elements of neighborhoods include their amenities, special institutions and unique public destinations. These need to include the parks, schools, institutions, markets and unique cultural and environmental sites.

Some of the neighborhood assets to help identify or highlight are:

- Parks
- Trails
- Community Garden
- Schools
- Primary schools
- Brother Martin
- Dillard University
- University of New Orleans
- Neighborhood Associations
- Public Destinations
- Library

- St. Roch Market
- Bodies of water

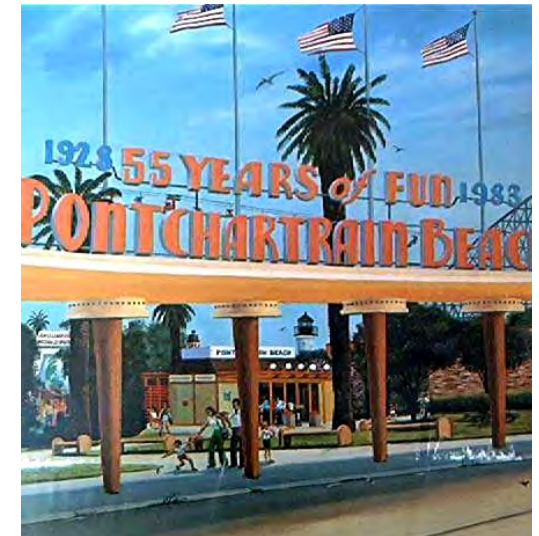
RECOMMENDATIONS:

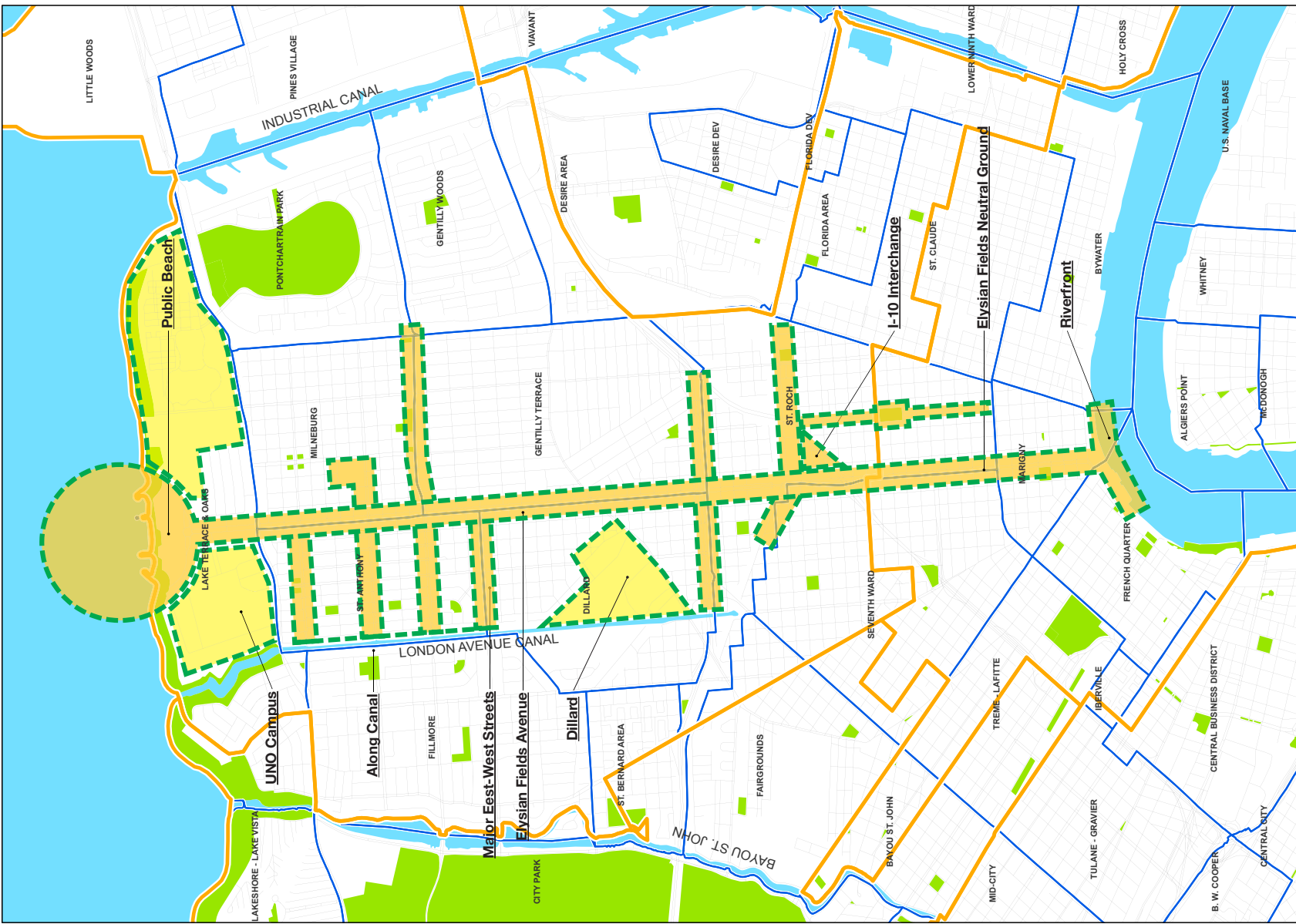
Short term

- Develop identity/wayfinding signage.
- Develop a comprehensive planting master plan.
- Develop a comprehensive maintenance plan.

Long term

- Develop a public arts program.
- Develop an aggressive marketing plan.





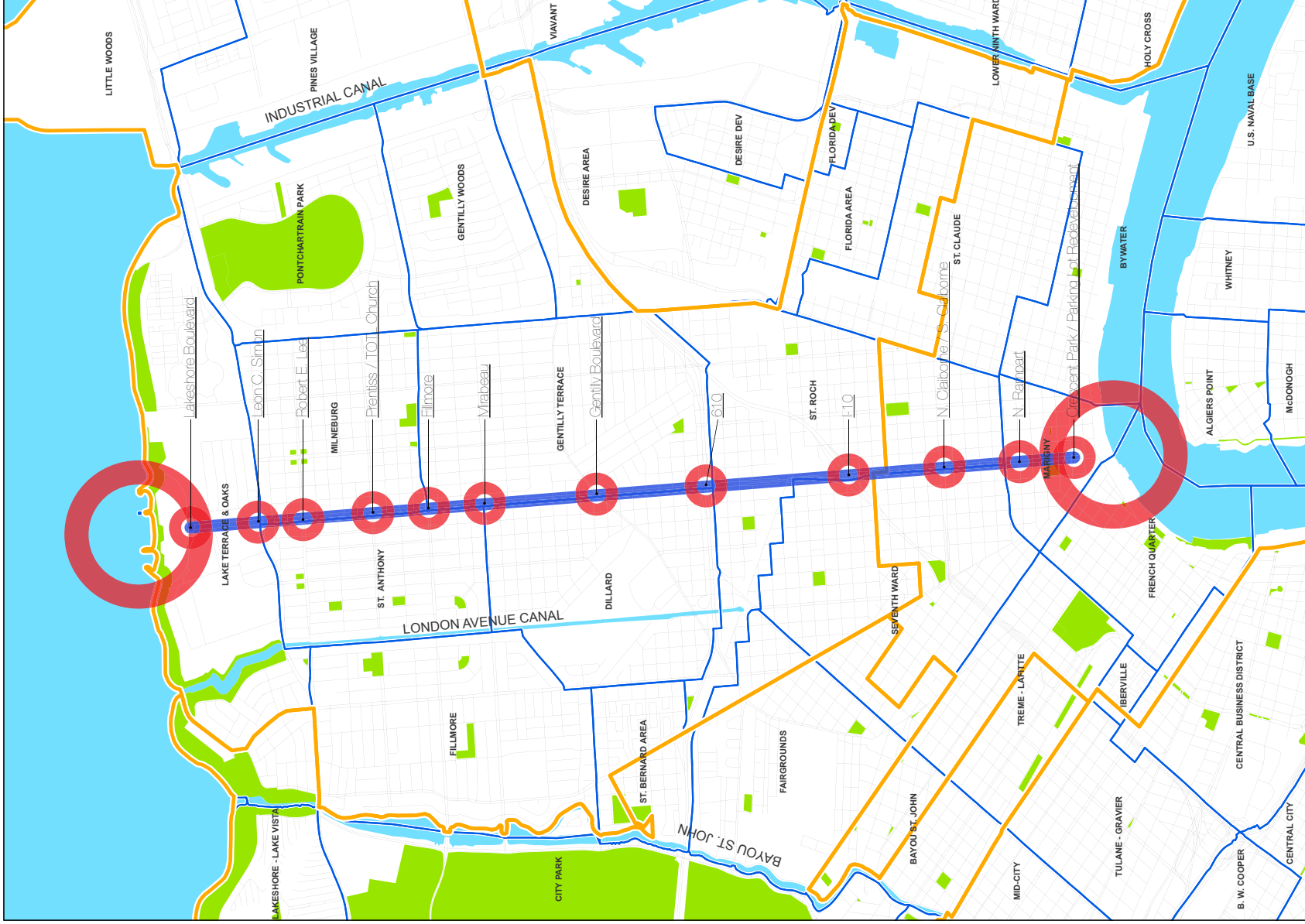
Environmental Opportunities

Data: Eskew+Dumez+Ripple / Regional Planning Commission

Eskew+Dumez+Ripple

ARCHITECTURE
ENVIRONMENTAL
URBAN DESIGN





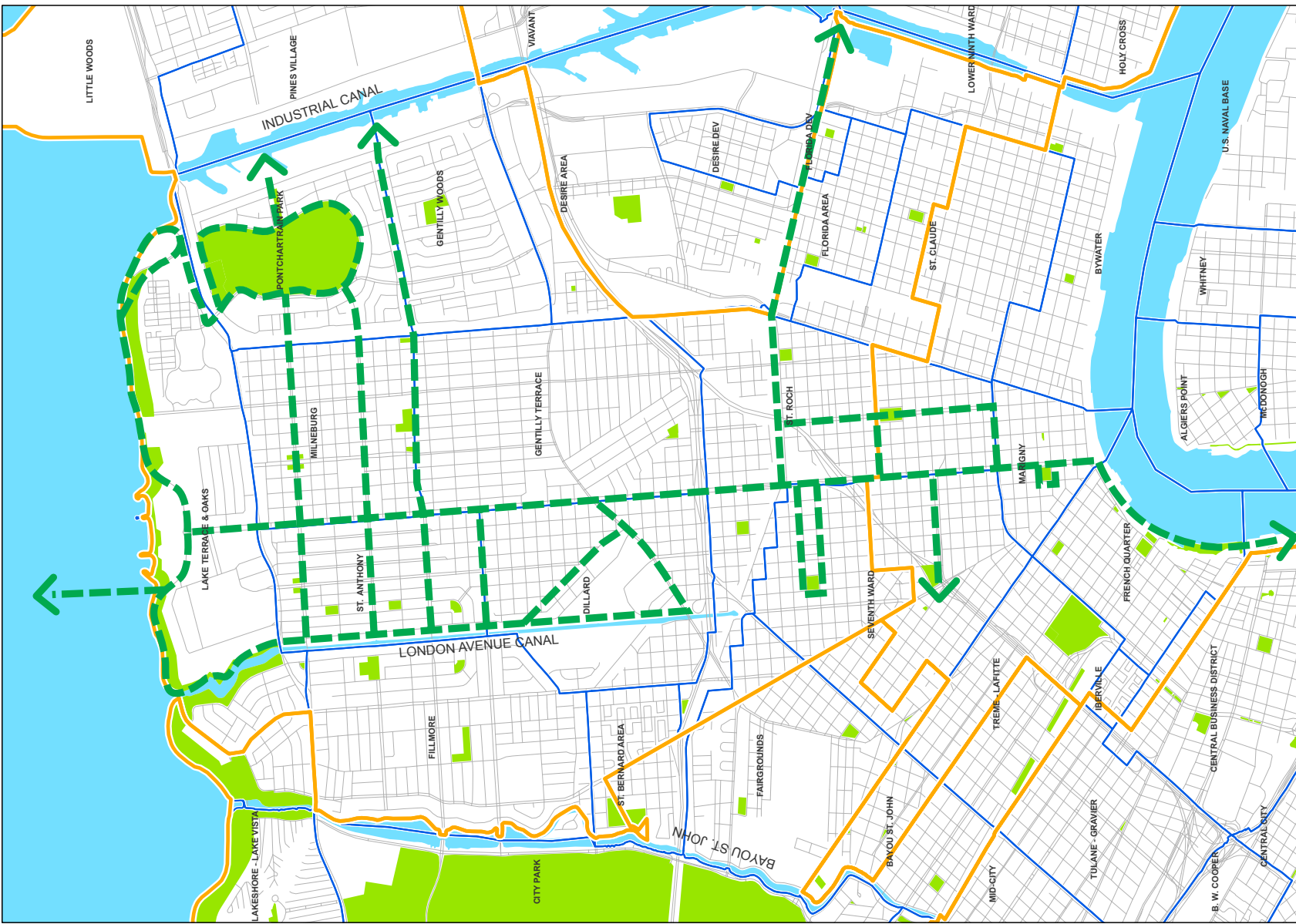
Elysian Fields Avenue Terminus & 12 Nodes

Data: Eskew+Dumez+Ripple / Regional Planning Commission

Eskew+Dumez+Ripple

ARCHITECTURE
ENVIRONMENTAL
URBAN DESIGN





Pedestrian / Bicycle Opportunities

Data: Eskew+Dumez+Ripple / Regional Planning Commission

Eskew+Dumez+Ripple

ARCHITECTURE
ENVIRONMENTALISTS
URBAN DESIGN



COMPREHENSIVE WALKING/BIKING NETWORK

With the increase in awareness of individual health coupled with an aging population, the walkability and ride ability of a neighborhood is key to its desirability and stability. Ensuring the strategic incorporation of shared bike routes onto neighborhood streets; creating dedicated multi-recreational trail systems incorporated into neutral ground areas; and taking advantage of open space associated with flood control structures and levees will all contribute to the livability of the neighborhood. Another key aspect of a successful trail program is the ability to create a system of loops and strategic links to public destinations.

The neutral ground of Elysian Fields and the major east- west streets are the primary structure for this neighborhood trail system:

- Elysian Field Avenue
- St. Anthony
- Fillmore



This is followed by the desire to provide access along water courses, parks, playgrounds, schools, library and institutions. As the neighborhoods commercial fabric is repaired trails and sidewalks should be a priority for neighborhood access.

- UNO
- Dillard
- Brother Martin
- St. Rock Market

This provides an opportunity to reconnect and link with the Mississippi Riverwalk and trails along the Terrace and Oaks Lakeshore. It also is worth investigating the feasibility of creating trail opportunities along levee and canal corridors, including:

- Lakeshore + Beach
- Riverwalk
- London Canal
- Industrial Canal
- Historic sites

The trails should utilize public art to integrate historic interpretive elements, re-introduce historic mile markers, create environmental interpretive elements, and creatively provide educational elements explaining the delicate relationship between man and water.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Short term

- Lobby for and pursue “Complete Streets” grants.
- Develop school bicycle programs
- Develop a ride to work program

Long term

- Develop corridor tourist bike touring program
- Develop integrated trail and environmental corridor plan



RECONNECT WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

Through the evolution of development of the Elysian Fields Corridor there has been the constant challenge of understanding how to best coexist with nature. The development of an urban settlement on the corridor is no exception to this challenge. The city, like many other colonial cities, established development patterns and techniques which quite often reflected the human need to control the environment in order to provide shelter and implement short term goals of establishing initial community infrastructure.

These patterns continue as urban development creates new momentum and we become less sensitive to our environment and the ecological context of our location. Early development patterns were considerably lower in impact and demonstrated effective simple responses, using common sense with less reliance on technological solutions.

Rethinking the Elysian Fields Corridor presents the opportunity to creatively demonstrate a better understanding of the environmental context and introduce Best Management Practices (BMP's), thereby elevating the awareness of our environment.

The following suggestions capitalize on the public realm and explore leveraging these properties to incorporate BMPS:



- Neutral Ground
- Streetscapes
- Schools and Institutions
- Vacant Property
- Community Gardens

While we have identified several principles related to environmental goals for the Elysian Fields corridor, one principal particularly resonates with residents, community organizations, commercial and institutional organizations, and government: re-knowing and celebrating the local ecology in an effort to illustrate a positive

experience with water. Partnerships between these stakeholders are paramount to the successful design, implementation, maintenance, and monitoring of green infrastructure recommendations. Along the Elysian Fields corridor, Parks and Parkways could care for the plants on ground surface; Public Works could maintain the piping network below the surface; and community-based organizations could take ownership of surface aesthetics, including litter control.

The challenge is to optimize the human-environment interactions during dry weather and thunderstorms. The typical thunderstorm of 6 inches in 24 hours for the land area adjacent to the Elysian Fields corridor would require a 150 foot wide trench in the right of way, from curb to curb, which is 28 feet deep. Therefore, multiple levels of green infrastructure interventions are important to achieving a positive experience with water.



Image 1: Waterwork, Courtesy of Charles Loomis and Chariss McAfee Architects and North Street Design. Image 2: Frankford Creek, Courtesy of Philadelphia Water Department. Image 3: Shanghai, China, Courtesy of Greenworks, Inc.

Complementary nodes of green infrastructure are recommended. Under-utilized public spaces, like that under I-610, may not be ideal for public access but provide ample opportunity for management of rainwater from the interstate and adjacent neighborhoods. The following illustrations of conditions before and after green infrastructure implementation indicate the aesthetic power of green space.

“Bayou gardens” created on repurposed vacant land could be dedicated to manage thunderstorm flooding and remove pollution from residential parcel runoff. The soil and root system filter water and permit the retention and absorption of pollution. Use of native plant species reduces maintenance needs.



Large scale interventions, like green roofs and cisterns (essentially storage tanks), are more feasible for large, institutional and commercial rooftops and buildings. Elysian Field applications are most likely at UNO, Dillard, Lowes and Brother Martin. Green roofs manage rainwater, provide added insulation, and reduce energy demand. Small scale interventions, like bioswales and rain barrels, manage a very small portion of the rainwater that falls on the residential rooftop, and therefore are less feasible to manage the thunderstorm flooding that occurs in New Orleans. Managing thunderstorms in the public realm should be the first intervention, with small scale interventions acting as support measures.



Chicago City Hall green roof, Courtesy of Roofscapes

Green Infrastructure Toolbox



RECOMMENDATIONS:

Short Term

- Hold hands-on community workshops that educate people on small scale green infrastructure.
- Quantify triple bottom line benefits of green infrastructure implementation along Elysian Fields.
- Establish, prioritize, and implement green infrastructure pilot projects.

Long term

- Design and construct Elysian Fields Bioswale system.
- Design a process to monitor success of green infrastructure program.
- Update green infrastructure program as necessary to meet local and federal goals.

RECONNECT AND REDEVELOP PUBLIC DESTINATIONS

The Elysian Fields Corridor has a collection of public destinations that over time have played a significant role in serving the community. Specific intersections have played key roles throughout the corridor’s development. The individual intersections function as neighborhood entries, neighborhood retail destinations, public service buildings and larger regional service retail.

Two of the more influential intersections are Gentilly Boulevard and Claiborne Ave. Gentilly Boulevard provides a major redevelopment opportunity to serve the region and the local population. N. Claiborne/S.Claiborne provide a corridor that has retained local ownership and recently seen an emergence of boutique retail, galleries and restaurants.



St. Roch Market, 1976



St. Roch Market, 1980's

One of the most outstanding symbols serving the community fresh produce and fish is the St. Roch Market. It has been a historic anchor and provider to the neighborhoods since 1875. The market was rehabilitated in 1935 as part of WPA efforts in New Orleans, which installed new plumbing, refrigerator units, and glass displays. In 1945 it was leased to a private owner and continued to be an integral part of the surrounding communities. It is currently a focus of discussion and is on the Mayor's list of 100 projects to be implemented. The St. Roch Market is an anchor in the neighborhood, both in its location and its social and economic roles.

Other popular retail destinations are Brother Martin's Snowball Shop providing a New Orleans favorite tradition. The furniture stores (Doerr, Royal, and Imperial Furniture) continue to draw regional trade and function as anchors. A final example of the quality retail representing the corridor is the American Aquatic Garden Center. This retailer is viewed as a regional resource as well as a local amenity.

As the neighborhood is attracting new residents there is evidence of emerging businesses with offerings that are starting to respond to a younger generation. The Institutions (UNO, Brother Martin and Dillard University)

continue to provide attractive destinations with services and outreach opportunities. Their physical grounds are a special addition to the corridor and should attempt to integrate themselves as a resource and integral part of the environmental fabric of the community.

Although often taken for granted, the Parks and Open Space system starting with Washington Square (starting with a collection of local playing fields and ending to the north at Lake Terrace and Pontchartrain) provide a corridor-wide collection of amenities. Their distribution and different character offer tremendous variety. The most important improvement that could be made is to insure that they are connected by walkable streets and the bicycle routing.

The last consideration when thinking of creating a substantial Aquatic Garden Center improvement is to make the access and programming to both the riverwalk and the lakefront a priority.

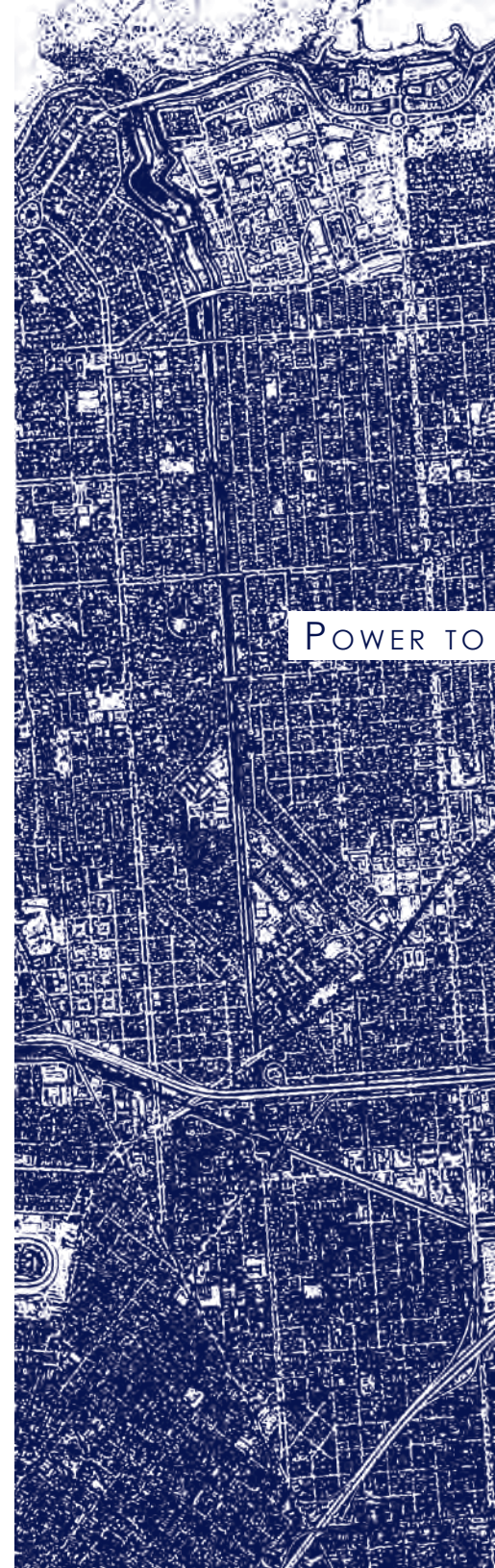
RECOMMENDATIONS:

Short term

- Make St. Roch Market a priority redevelopment project.
- Coordinate park and trail programming.
- Connect environmental projects with open space improvements.
- Develop design character guidelines for retail redevelopment.
- Create performance and retail cluster criteria for the recruitment of desirable retail uses.

Long term

- Create operational and promotional programs for corridor retail
- Create strong partnerships between business opportunities and the existing institutions
- Integrate open space and ecological enhancements through a series of partnerships between Parks and Parkways, Neighborhood Associations, and Institutions.



POWER TO THE PEOPLE

POWER TO THE PEOPLE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Build on Community's Strengths

The key to building a stronger community and a more vibrant neighborhood is to help people realize the power that they already have. Unfortunately, activists as well as agencies everywhere tend to focus on neighborhoods as places with needs. There is too little recognition of the underutilized resources that are abundant in every neighborhood. These resources could empower the community to act on their own without being dependent on outside decision makers, whether those are bureaucrats or grant makers. The community's strengths are also the key to developing genuine partnerships with government and other agencies because the community is coming to the table as an equal, bringing their own resources and not just a list of needs.

The following types of resources can be found in all neighborhoods. They could be mobilized to revitalize the social communities and the physical neighborhoods throughout the Elysian Fields Corridor:

Gifts of Individuals

Every individual in every neighborhood has valuable gifts to contribute to the community – gifts of the head (their knowledge) – gifts of the heart (their passions) – and gifts of the hands (their skills). Yet, too many communities only value the gifts of a few individuals – those with knowledge of land use, passion for public safety, and skills in public speaking and grant writing. Those gifts are certainly important to community work, but they are not sufficient. Strong communities also need people who are knowledgeable about community history, passionate about social justice, and skilled as artists, gardeners, construction workers, listeners and connectors just to name a very few examples. Communities need to find ways to utilize that gifts of everyone, especially that growing portion of the population that is labeled not by their strengths but by what they are missing – homeless, poor, non-English speaking, at risk youth, old person, disabled, etc. When we focus on people's deficiencies, they become clients in a service system. When we focus on their gifts, they become citizens of our community. Everyone does have needs but many of those needs (especially the needs for friends and purpose) are best addressed by mobilizing everyone's gifts in support of one another. Think, for example, how those "old people in that low income housing complex" could contribute to our understanding of the history of the Elysian Corridor.

Community Associations

There are scores of democratic, open membership associations in every neighborhood. Yet, too often, we think that the neighborhood association is the only player. We get discouraged that more people don't join our organization. Valuing everyone's strengths is one way to increase membership, but we also need to acknowledge that most people will never join. They are too busy with their own associations based on service, culture, faith, schools, business, age, addictions, and recreation, hobbies, and other interests. All of these organizations have a stake in the neighborhood. So, if we want to gain broad and inclusive community engagement, we need to recognize that most people are already organized, map the key networks in our neighborhoods, meet with their leaders to cultivate relationships and discover what they care about, and develop alliances across as many associations as possible.

Built and Natural Environment

The Elysian Field Corridor is blessed with incredible assets. The value of the historic treasures, including the railway marker and examples of so many housing styles (including the oldest house in New Orleans), could be greatly enhanced through signage and other interpretation. The Corridor is also New Orleans' only link between the river and the lake, another asset that could be so much more valuable if access to both bodies of water could be improved. Some of the greatest potential, however, might be with many of the properties that currently appear to be problems. Underpasses could become homes for public art or recreation as they have in Seattle. Abandoned buildings could be reused as cultural centers or a community-run coffee house such as the Carrot in Edmonton. Vacant lots could be developed as community gardens, rain gardens, pocket parks and off-leash dog areas. Graffiti-covered walls could be canvases for murals.



Fremont Troll in Seattle, WA



Columbia City mural in Seattle, WA



Colonnade Park Under Freeway in Seattle, WA

Local Economy

The Elysian Fields Corridor has an economy, but it is a leaky bucket with much of the money escaping the neighborhood. A community-based approach would build the economy around the neighborhood's strengths. In Seattle, a boarded-up Columbia

City business district was totally revitalized by community volunteers who organized a successful farmers market on the parking lot of an abandoned supermarket, who created a cycle shop by training at-risk youth how to repair donated bicycles, who developed a cooperative art gallery, and who painted murals of fake businesses on boarded-up facades in order to entice real businesses to locate there.



Bikeworks - Seattle, WA



Mercado Central Before



Mercado Central After

In Minneapolis, members of a Catholic Church utilized their craft, cooking and business skills to develop the Mercado Central, a cooperative business incubator in a formerly abandoned Sears building.

Many communities have developed their own currency or are using the internet to barter for one another's services outside of the formal economy; in Calgary, for example, young people help seniors maintain their yards, teach them computer skills, and give them rides to the market and doctors appointments in exchange for seniors providing them with good meals, babysitting, or training for a trade.

Local Agencies

Agencies differ from associations in that they are top-down and operate with staff and budgets rather than depend-

ing primarily on volunteers. Yet, every agency also has underutilized resources to the extent that their resources aren't needed for their mission. A typical school, for example, only operates about 15% of the time; imagine how those classrooms, computer center, cafeteria, gymnasium, stage, and grounds could be programmed by the community. Or, think about how Dillard University could utilize its business

school, purchasing capacity, and other assets to support retail in its Gentilly neighborhood.

Organize Block Clubs

Common concerns cited in the public meeting were the need to build a stronger sense of community, to create more representative neighborhood associations, to prevent crime, and to prepare for emergencies – whether it is a hurricane or the more frequent flooding from heavy rains. Organizing block clubs could be the



Seattle's Greenwood Community Garden

best way to address all of these priorities and so much more. The closer an organization is to where people live, the more likely they are to get engaged. And, the block is the best place to organize people to watch out for one another's safety. The safest blocks, however, would involve their residents in a wide range of activities in order to build strong relationships. These activities might include supporting latch key kids

and housebound seniors, throwing block parties, creating a community garden or pocket park on a vacant lot, planting street trees, maintaining common areas, installing a public bench or picnic table in someone's yard, showing movies on the side of someone's house, painting a mural in an intersection, bartering for skills, sharing tools, or buying in bulk. Block clubs could also provide broad-based input to neighborhood associations or public officials, creating building blocks for a truly participatory democracy.



Public spaces on private property in Tugo, Taiwan



Public spaces on private property in Tugo, Taiwan

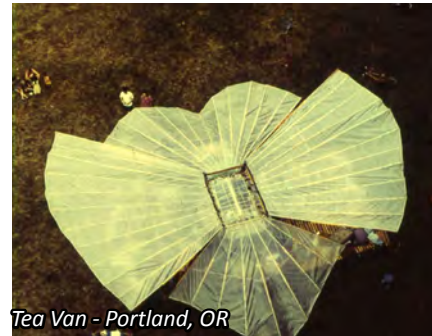


Ladybug mural intersection in Seattle's Wallingford neighborhood

Here are some examples of how blocks are organized in other cities:

- In the Clinton neighborhood of Garland, Texas, neighbors work together on weekends to renovate their houses. Collectively, the neighbors have all the necessary skills – a carpenter, plumber, electrician, concrete finisher, stone mason, etc. Elderly or disabled neighbors who aren't able to help with construction contribute in other ways such as preparing lunches for the work parties.
- In Savannah, the city's Grants for Blocks Program provided up to \$500 for projects initiated by neighbors (Henry Moore, Leading By Stepping Back, Asset-Based Community Development Institute).
- In Airdrie, Alberta, the city furnishes free block party kits in order to encourage neighbors to use their street as a place to get better acquainted by sharing food, games, music and other fun activities.
- Neighbors throughout the United States celebrate National Night Out Against Crime with block parties on the first Tuesday of August. In Seattle, more than 1,000 blocks participate.
- In Redmond, Washington, the city produced short videos on policy issues as a basis for discussion at the block level and grassroots input to elected officials.
- In Lawrence, Massachusetts, the local community development corporation trains facilitators for Neighbor Circles, a program through which 8 to 10 families meet 3 times over the course of a month for dinner in a neighbor's house. They get to know one another and discuss whether there are issues or activities that they would like to cooperate on. If so, they continue to get together on a regular basis. In this way, Lawrence Community Works has built a membership of nearly 4,000 residents. The organization has developed affordable rental and homeownership opportunities; created parks, playgrounds, and community gardens; provides economic development training; and supports Movement City, a program that involves 200 young people every week in exploring their potential through design, technology, and the performing arts.
- In Portland, Oregon and Edmonton, Alberta, a specially outfitted van serves tea to the neighbors as they discuss projects for making their block a better place.

- Every Block a Village has been recruiting and training Citizen Leaders in Chicago's Austin neighborhood since 1995. Today, more than 100 blocks are actively involved in the network. Neighbors share their skills and knowledge in person, and via the internet, with an emphasis on supporting local youth. Citizen Leaders from each block meet together monthly to tackle economic, social and health issues confronting the neighborhood as a whole.



Tea Van - Portland, OR



Tea Van - Portland, OR

Recommendations for City Government

Move Towards a Place-Based Organization

Every government, like every other agency, is organized along functional lines. That is a good way to manage a city's technical expertise, funding and operations, but it makes it very difficult for communities to work with their government. There is no way that neighborhoods can partner with a government working out of multiple silos separated by functions just as there is no way that the city can partner with its communities when they are divided by factions. If the City of New Orleans is going to create effective partnerships with its communities, it must be organized the way its people are organized - by neighborhood. This will require government to be aligned horizontally as well as vertically.

The Mayor's new Office of Neighborhood Engagement seems to be a step in the right direction. Ideally, its five neighborhood liaisons will serve as overt double agents, working for both communities and government and helping them to partner with one another more effectively. They will need to become intimately familiar with all of the departments in the city and with all of the key networks (not just the neighborhood associations) in the neighborhoods to which they are assigned. To the extent that the associations are not already working in alliance with one another, it would be great if the liaisons could help bring them together around the same table so that they can build relationships, share information and resources, and work collaboratively on common issues and projects. More importantly, it will be helpful if the liaisons can assist departments to work as an interdisciplinary team

at the neighborhood level so that they can implement more holistic and innovative solutions that respect the unique physical character of the neighborhood and culture of the people.

Establish a Neighborhood Matching Fund

There are so many people who want to contribute to their communities but who are meeting-averse. A fantastic way of involving these people, of tapping the community's underutilized resources, and of creating positive community-government partnerships is to establish a Neighborhood Matching Fund program. Through this program, the city provides cash for community-initiated projects when matched by an equal contribution of cash, volunteer labor, and/or donated goods and services. Any group of neighbors is eligible to apply; there's no need to have non-profit status or even to be incorporated. The city only funds one-time projects; no money can be used for operating expenses because the goal is to build capacity rather than dependence. All of the funding recommendations are made by neighborhood leaders. Half of the funding criteria are standard grant writing criteria such as need, feasibility, and cost effectiveness but the other half are all about participation – self-help, diversity of individuals and organizations participating, etc. Seattle developed the first Neighborhood Matching Fund program in 1989. Over the past 22 years, the City's \$50 million investment has leveraged \$70 million worth of community resources including tens of thousands of volunteers, many of whom have become involved in their neighborhood and with their government for the first time. More than 4000 projects have been completed, contributing greatly to the unique character and enhancing the livability of every neighborhood in the city. Community groups have used the program to build new playgrounds at most city parks and public schools; create new parks; reforest open space; plant street trees; develop

community gardens; restore streams and wetlands; create murals, banners and sculpture; install kiosks; equip community centers; renovate facilities; build traffic circles; pilot community school programs; document community histories; develop neighborhood plans; organize new groups; and much, much more. Seattle's program has been replicated by cities throughout the United States and around the world. Many cities operate very successful programs with as little as \$25,000 a year in funding.

A relatively small city investment provides an incentive for communities to do more for themselves. The other key is to develop systems to address issues such as safety, liability, and maintenance at the front end so that groups can focus on their projects rather than have to deal with the red tape that typically stifles community initiatives in cities lacking such a program. (More details on this program, including funding guidelines, can be found in Jim Diers' book, *Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way*, University of Washington Press.)

MOVING TOWARDS GOVERNMENT-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Government's Shift	Community's Shift
Recognize that neighborhoods aren't just places with needs but communities of people with underutilized resources.	Move beyond blaming government to taking a share of the responsibility.
Move beyond customer service and citizen participation to community empowerment.	Think and act as citizens rather than as taxpayers.
Never do for communities what they can do for themselves.	Never wait for government to do what could better be done by the community.
Stop focusing on self-proclaimed leaders and start providing communities with leadership training as well as assistance with outreach and networking.	Make it worth government's while to partner with the community by making it a priority to build broad and inclusive participation.
The community can't partner with a government divided by functions, so develop a more holistic, neighborhood-based approach.	Government can't partner with a community divided by factions, so work collaboratively within the neighborhood and with other neighborhoods.
Recognize that community members have valuable expertise.	Recognize that government staff have valuable expertise.
Make information accessible to the community and provide educational opportunities.	Keep government informed and coach staff on working effectively with the community.
Appreciate the unique character of different neighborhoods and cultures.	Keep the big picture in mind.
Delegate as many decisions as possible to the community.	Recognize government's role in setting policy and meeting the needs of the community as a whole.
Recognize and thank community members who are effective partners.	Recognize and thank government officials and staff who are effective partners.



Salmon Playground in Carkeek Park

CHARRETTE TEAM



J. Todd Scott, AIA (Seattle, Washington)

Charrette Team Leader

Todd is a licensed architect who specializes in historic preservation and downtown revitalization. His preservation experience includes stints with Oklahoma City, as historic preservation officer, and with King County, Washington, where he currently provides assistance for historic properties in that county and sixteen suburban and rural communities. He recently completed the intensive level survey of 175 historic barns on the Enumclaw Plateau and 200 historic residential and commercial properties in Kent, both in King County.

He has been involved in the rehabilitation of hundreds of structures in dozens of small downtowns as the state architect for Oklahoma Main Street and for DesignWorks, an arts-based design charrette program. Todd also served as community development director and assistant city manager for the city of Astoria, Oregon. He has presented at numerous state, regional, and national conferences on topics ranging from sustainability in design to mounting grass roots campaigns for endangered structures.

Todd has served on the boards of various non-profit agencies including heritage organizations, community development corporations, urban renewal authorities, and architectural foundations.



Sherry Rudnak, MA, LEED AP (Los Angeles, CA)

Market Analysis

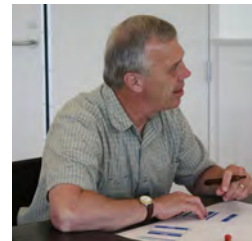
Sherry specializes in economic analysis, cost-benefit studies, and real estate market and financial feasibility studies. She supports BAE's new Los Angeles office for all BAE services, and also serves as the company-wide expert in economic impact studies and green building analyses.

Sherry is BAE's expert for utilizing IMPLAN to estimate the economic multiplier effects of proposed projects. Her economic impact work includes assessing the impacts of a proposed \$1B downtown revitalization plan in Columbia, MD. She also analyzed the statewide economic benefits for the State of CO's new waste collection policy aimed at increasing the recycling rate to 75 percent. Sherry also leads BAE's

on-call work with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) to assess costs to small and large businesses on air and climate change rules.

Sherry's real estate market and financial work includes supporting the Downtown Los Angeles Economic Development Strategy for CRA/LA, analyzing the feasibility of affordable housing and mixed-income projects for the Barrio Logan neighborhood in San Diego. She also analyzed the feasibility of modifying Sacramento's inclusionary housing policy to incentivize additional for-sale affordable units in a variety of different residential project typologies, and she served as an on-call financial analyst for the U.S. Coast Guard to guide real estate investment decisions.

Prior to joining BAE, Sherry held positions in economic research with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta and the Georgia State University Economic Forecasting Center. She received an M.A. in Economics from California State University, Sacramento, and a B.A. in Economics from Georgia State University. She earned her designation as a U.S. Green Building Council LEED Accredited Professional in 2007. Sherry and her husband reside in Los Angeles.



Jim Diers (Seattle, Washington)

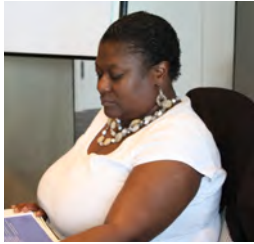
Neighborhoods

Jim Diers has a passion for getting people engaged with their communities and in the decisions that affect their lives. Since moving to Seattle in 1976, he put that passion to work for a direct-action neighborhood association, a community development corporation, a community foundation, and the nation's largest health care cooperative. He was appointed the first director of Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods in 1988 where he served under three mayors over the next 14 years.

Currently, Jim teaches courses in community organizing and development at the University of Washington and serves on the faculty of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute. He travels internationally to deliver speeches, present workshops, and provide technical assistance to community associations, non-profit organizations, and government.

Jim received a BA and an honorary doctorate from Grinnell College. His work in the Department of Neighborhoods was recognized with an Innovations Award from the Kennedy School of Government, a Full Inclusion Award from the American Association on Developmental Disabilities, and the Public Employee of the Year Award from the

Municipal League of King County. Jim's book, *Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way*, is available in both English and Chinese editions.



Laureen Boles (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

Green Infrastructure

Laureen M. Boles is a civil engineer and environmental planner at the City of Philadelphia, where she specializes in sustainable community development. Her projects include the implementation of green infrastructure, growth of green jobs, use of renewable energy, climate

change adaptation, advancement of environmental justice, and transit-oriented development. As a member of the Environmental Justice Leadership Forum on Climate Change and the Greater Philadelphia Green Economy Task Force, she presented Philadelphia's green economy success stories at the Executive Offices of the White House.

Ms. Boles is also a board member of the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority, and the Pennsylvania Governor's Climate Change Advisory Committee. Laureen earned a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Howard University and a M. S. in Environmental Planning from the University of Pennsylvania. She also teaches neighborhood planning at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design.



Ed Freer, ASLA (Madison, Wisconsin)

Urban Design

Over the course of his 30-year professional career, Ed Freer has built a significant and award-winning portfolio in urban design, downtown and waterfront redevelopment, and community-based planning. Currently a Senior Urban Designer for JJR, he has also worked for HNTB, Seracuse Lawler + Partners, and The Architect Collaborative (TAC).

Ed is highly accomplished at facilitating a consensus vision and broad community support for urban design and redevelopment initiatives.

He has worked throughout the United States, with project work including: McBride Point, Madison, WI Capitol West, Madison, WI State Street Strategic Plan, Madison, WI University Research Park, Madison, WI Mashpee Commons, Mashpee, MA Lakefront Master Plan and Lakeshore State Park, Milwaukee, WI Beerline Redevelopment Plan, Milwaukee, WI Central Wharf Redevelopment, Boston, MA

Echo Bay Redevelopment, New Rochelle, NY Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, Paducah, KY Marine District Redevelopment Plan, Seabrook, TX Riverfront and Downtown Urban Design Plan, Sanford, FL Waterfront District Plan, Cleveland, OH Detroit RiverWalk, Detroit, MI

Ed has served as a resource member to many civic task forces and professional panels and as a member of national design juries. He has been an urban design resource for the Mayors Institute on City Design, an Urban Waterfront Planner for the ULI – Advisory Panel for San Pedro, CA, and an AIA RUDAT Panelist for Newport, VT. He currently serves as an Advisory Board Member for the Waterfront Center in Washington, DC.



Roberta F. Burroughs, FAICP (Houston, Texas)

Housing/Neighborhood Planning

Roberta Burroughs was born in Houston Texas and attended local public schools prior to entering Hampton University in 1967 to major in Sociology. She holds a master's degree in regional planning from Cornell University, with a concentration in policy planning and regional analysis.

The focus of Roberta's career as an urban planner has been planning leadership, community building, planning advocacy, and nurturance of new planners. In her leadership role, Roberta has brought a number of urban planning initiatives to Houston. As Assistant Director for Redevelopment in the Houston Department of Planning and Development, she was in a position to act upon her desire to bring Houston into the vanguard of urban revitalization efforts. For example, her familiarity with the work of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) in other cities prompted Roberta to convince their national leadership of the City of Houston's support for their entry into Houston. LISC has since invested \$20 million in distressed Houston neighborhoods.

Moreover, Roberta made it possible for Neighborhood Housing Services to operate in Houston, by arranging Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for Houston Neighborhood Housing Services (HNHS). HNHS rehabilitated substandard housing in under-served neighborhoods, which are thriving. Roberta eliminated a major obstacle to Habitat for Humanity-Houston's viability by arranging CDBG funding for infrastructure improvements for Habit's first local development. She subsequently served on Habitat's site selection committee and participated in capacity-building activities with their board of directors. Houston Habitat has since

built 800 affordable homes in Houston and served more than 27,000 people.

In the infancy of Houston's Community Development Corporation movement, Roberta again provided critical local government support. She arranged CDBG funding for CDC's, making it possible for these organizations to gain a foothold. Thanks to Roberta's early support, this movement has thrived; 85 CDC's build affordable and senior housing in Houston's under-served neighborhoods.

As a consultant, Roberta is well known for the Greater Third Ward Community Plan, which was supported by funds raised by leaders of the Greater Third Ward community in Houston. This plan has provided strong guidance for the individuals and organizations that are responsible for the renaissance of this historic neighborhood. Many of the plan's recommendations have been implemented, including the creation of a tax increment reinvestment financing zone that has (1) revitalized a major commercial artery, (2) stimulated the development of two new residential towers and scores of new town homes, and (3) revitalized the Scott Street Corridor which services two public universities, a high school, a public housing site, and surrounding neighborhoods. Also, the Greater Third Ward Community Plan led to the construction of new units of senior housing in the oldest, most-neglected section of the neighborhood, the completion of a hike and bike trail that connects Texas Southern University to neighborhood attractions, and the construction of pedestrian enhancements at gateway intersections.

A major community-building initiative in which Roberta was recently involved is the METRO Solutions light rail transit initiative, which represents one of the Houston region's most progressive urban planning initiatives. Roberta wrote the land use and socioeconomic sections of environmental reports for four of the five light rail transit lines that are planned. When completed, these lines will transport thousands of people to employment centers, community centers, and health care and serve as a model for similar low-density communities that are contemplating rail transit.

Mid-decade, Roberta was at the forefront of HUD's ground-breaking efforts to revitalize distressed public housing sites. Prior to HUD requiring that case management be incorporated into Community and Supportive Services (CSS) plans for HOPE VI sites, Roberta included a provision for case management services in CSS plans for five sites. HUD eventually required that all CSS plans include case management, greatly improving outcomes for HOPE VI beneficiaries.

Roberta was principal author of a paper that is a component of a web-based guidance for preparers of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) environmental documents. The Data Gathering Issue Paper reflects a comprehensive approach

informed by Roberta's community planning experience; it presents data sources and approaches of which preparers might not ordinarily be aware. Caltrans' web-based guidance received the 2008 Environmental Excellence Award from the National Association of Environmental Professionals, as well as a 2007 FHWA Environmental Excellence Award.

Roberta is a passionate advocate for planning. Her advocacy efforts include supporting and taking part in a RUDAT that addressed housing policies for Houston. Too, she was a founding member of Advocates for Housing, a local organization that focused its efforts on identifying measures to increase the local supply of affordable housing and she has served on City-sponsored committees examining transit-oriented development and neighborhood planning guidelines.



Paula Reeves, AICP (Seattle, Washington)

Transportation

Paula Reeves has been developing transportation projects for the State, cities, counties and transit agencies for 18 years. She currently manages the Community Design Assistance Branch at Washington State Department of Transportation and serves on the Board of Directors for the American Planning Association Washington Chapter. In both these roles she provides a range of transportation planning and engineering services to cities, counties and transit agencies including: expert advice regarding transportation and livable communities, pedestrian and bicycle facility design expertise, safe routes to schools, scenic byways and transportation planning support relative to Washington's Growth Management Act. She has a broad transportation background that includes urban design, engineering, environmental experience and is a practicing mediator in Thurston County. She serves on the National Transportation Research Board's Pedestrian Committee and American Institute of Certified Planners' Community Planning Committee. She earned her master's degree with engineering and law school course work in urban and regional planning from the University of Florida.



Julie Stuart, Making Ideas Visible (Atlanta, Georgia)
Graphic Recorder

Throughout her career, Julie Stuart has drawn on both words and images to communicate ideas. With experience in journalism, public relations, environmental politics, political campaigns, and as a professional artist and teacher, her interest in organizational change, strategy, advocacy and creativity has led her to visual facilitation where she combines skills as a deep listener and strategist who can easily synthesize, visualize and organize emerging ideas. Julie has a degree in political science from Purdue University and a Masters in Fine Art from Georgia State University. As a visual facilitator, she conceptually guides and maps conversations by clearly synthesizing and visualizing the wisdom in the room through deep listening for key concepts and themes. The people and organizations Julie works with are able to see emerging ideas woven into a story, allowing for navigation and common decisions about the way forward. This process has proven to be a useful tool for guiding groups as they undergo organizational change processes including strategic planning, visioning and branding. Julie's work has been featured in the Harvard Business Review and the Frankfurter Allgemeine (der FAZ).



Ian Scott, LEED AP (Boulder, Colorado)
Placemaking

Ian's professional experience as a Landscape Architect and Planner has ranged from urban design to eco-tourism planning and large scale land planning and resource management. Recently, he has worked on projects at Grand Canyon National Park, Yellowstone National Park, the Statue of Liberty, Mt. Hood National Forest, and numerous communities throughout the United States. Ian has also just finished developing the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Guidelines for a Quality Built Environment. BLM manages a quarter billion acres of public lands—an eighth of the total surface area of the United States. As increasing numbers of Americans visit these lands, this landmark document is helping shape their experience and increase stewardship of these important landscapes. Ian has lead the creation of this resource to help those who design, build, or maintain the built environment ensure that our nation's public lands are attractive, functional, and sustainable.

Additionally, Ian is Art Director for Belt Collins West in Boulder, Colorado, and

manages the communication design department. With an educational background in anthropology, art, and landscape architecture, and through research of landscape perception and representation, Ian has developed a unique approach to communication design. He continuously explores and develops our collective design vocabulary—combining creative site design with a passion for communicating cultural and ecological stories. He works with this innovative team of artists and designers to create heritage tourism plans, interpretive plans, environmental graphics, structures and exhibits, graphic designs, interactive media, animations, visualizations and digital stories that inspire conservation and foster the connection between people and place. He works closely with clients and communities to develop designs and experiences that clearly and artfully communicate their message. Ian is a skilled designer, graphic artist, illustrator and digital animator, and is a LEED Accredited Professional.



Sara Fiore, LEED AP (Washington, DC)
Graphic Design

Sara Fiore is currently a landscape designer at OCULUS, a landscape architecture studio located in Washington, DC. Her experience includes small and large scale residential projects, city plazas, neighborhood parks, and urban streetscapes. Sara approaches her projects with an interest in construction detailing, materials, and context. As LEED Accredited Professional and team member for a Sustainable Sites Initiative pilot project, she strives to create sustainable, yet functional and aesthetic landscapes. Additionally, Sara enjoys graphic art and design and uses these skills to create publications for print. Sara holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Boston College and a Master's degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Georgia.

AIA STAFF:



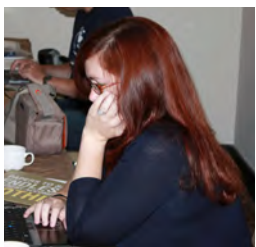
Joel Mills

Director, Center for Communities by Design

Joel Mills serves as Director of the American Institute for Architects' Center for Communities by Design. The Center is a leading provider of pro bono technical assistance and participatory planning for community sustainability. Through its design assistance programs, the Center has worked in 55 communities across 32 states since 2005. In 2010, the Center was named Organization of the Year by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for its impact on communities and contributions to the field.

Joel's career in civic health and governance spans over 17 years, and includes community-based technical assistance, process design, facilitation and training across a number of fields. During the 1990s, Mr. Mills spent several years supporting international democratization initiatives by providing technical assistance to parliaments, political parties, local governments, civic and international organizations. His scope of work included constitutional design and governing systems, voter and civic education, election monitoring and administration, political party training and campaign strategy, collaborative governance, human rights and civil society capacity building. His work has been featured on ABC World News Tonight, Nightline, CNN, The Next American City, Smart City Radio, The National Civic Review, Ecostructure Magazine, The Washington Post, and dozens of other media sources.

In December 2010, he was elected to the Board of Directors for the IAP2-USA. He is also a member of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), the American Planning Association, the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), and the Mid-Atlantic Facilitators Network.



Erin Simmons

Director, Design Assistance

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA

components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. To date, Erin has served as staff lead on over 20 design assistance teams. Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as senior historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.

LOCAL PARTNER ESKEW+DUMEZ+RIPPLE:



R. Allen Eskew, FAIA

Director, Eskew+Dumez+Ripple

Allen Eskew has been involved in urban design, downtown development and waterfront revitalization efforts in Louisiana for over 30 years. As an Architect and Planner he spent four years directing the 1984 Louisiana World's Fair Exposition design. Working with regulatory agencies provided an early understanding of the interactions of key planning issues and the regulatory complexities facing the redevelopment of downtown riverfront property. Allen also led a large multi-disciplinary team for both Phases I and II of the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas and Woldenberg Park on the New Orleans Riverfront. Additionally, he has spearheaded master planning efforts for Tulane's Riversphere Campus on the Henderson Wharf properties, an academic complex dedicated to river research.

Following Hurricane Katrina, Allen was heavily involved with a number of the recovery planning efforts including the Bring New Orleans Back (BNOB) committee and the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP). After more than a year of planning, Allen is now leading a distinguished team of international and local expertise in the implementation of Phase I of "Reinventing the Crescent," the New Orleans Riverfront Development Plan.



Cristina Ungureanu

Urban Designer/Planner, Eskew+Dumez+Ripple

Cristina Ungureanu embarked upon a career in physical planning after studying international development and unpacking the relationship among design, ecologies and economies. Her studies at MIT focused on large scales, the condition of horizontality, efficiently bundling intrastructures, and transdisciplinary responses to urban dress. She has practiced as a transit and complete streets planner, and continues to be dedicated to advancing non-motorized transportation options for urban citizens.



Nicole Marshall, LEED Green Associate

*Business Development Manager,
Eskew+Dumez+Ripple*

Nicole Marshall joined Eskew+Dumez+Ripple in the Summer of 2007 upon graduation from Louisiana State University. While at the University she worked as a Research Assistant to the Dean of the College of Mass Communication. Additionally, she held internships with The Shaw Group, a Fortune 500 company as well as the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas.

Her primary responsibilities at EDR revolve around new client development as well as company-wide oversight of current client and past client care. Ms. Marshall has also been involved in the development and commissioning of many of EDR's most recent projects. Her work has been utilized in the kick off and project definition stages, including some recent local projects, such as the Reinventing the Crescent Riverfront Development, assistance in the preparation for the Prospect .1 biennial, as well as with the kick off of the redevelopment of the Lafitte Housing Project and the new VA Hospital.

Since joining the Eskew+Dumez+Ripple studio, Cristina has quickly enhanced the scalar capabilities of the firm, bringing with her a wealth of knowledge in site planning, projective mapping, and ecological urbanism. She is currently focusing on the design of a universally accessible landscaped park, as well as plaza designs for the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center and mapping shrinking city form in preparation for a dialogue between New Orleans and Detroit.