GOVERNMENT STREET MASTER ACTION PLAN • PHASE ONE
GoMap!

GOVERNMENT STREET MASTER ACTION PLAN • PHASE ONE
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

submitted to
Mid City Redevelopment Alliance
Mid City Merchants Association

prepared by
The Office of Community Design and Development
Louisiana State University • College of Art and Design

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There is Magic to great streets. We are attracted to the best of them not because we have to go there but because we want to be there. The best are as joyful as they are utilitarian. They are entertaining and they are open to all. They permit anonymity at the same time as individual recognition. They are symbols of a community and of its history; they represent a public memory. They are places for escape and for romance, places to act and to dream. On a great street we are allowed to dream; to remember things that may never have happened and look forward to things that, maybe, never will.

Vince Aloi B. Jacob's' Great Street
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Portrait</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Vision</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual Design Framework</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keystones For Development</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Scale</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Scale</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block Scale</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Scale Recommendations</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Scale Recommendations</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block Scale Recommendations</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Study Area</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Forward</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about OCDD</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Government Street Master Action Plan: Phase One**
This study would not have been possible without the generous support of:

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Mid City Merchants Association

Rep. Michael Jackson, Governor's Office of Urban Affairs & Development

Baton Rouge Area Foundation

Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development

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Mid City Redevelopment Alliance
Through my work in the community economic development field, I have witnessed first hand the day-to-day struggles of the destitute, and the hard work necessary to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps to improve their plight. I have also witnessed those that are blessed from birth, and continually miss the opportunity to use their seat at the table to effectively make changes for themselves and their fellowman. It is for these reasons, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance continues to exist and produce work like The Government Street Master Action Plan - GoMap! Phase I.

Despite Baton Rouge's positive growth curve over the last decade, portions of Government Street have continued to show signs of deterioration and neglect. However, during this same period on other portions of Government Street there have been new businessmen and women who have seized the opportunity to service a market, which has been traditionally underserved. In addition, there are individual merchants who have never left the community, and have quietly offered quality products coupled with great service over the past decades and continue to flourish.

These are the groups that make the work of Mid City Redevelopment Alliance necessary, challenging, and rewarding. A critical element of MCRA's mission is to discover underserved markets, bring the data to light, and subsequently get private and public sources to respond in a positive manner.

The Government Street Master Action Plan - GoMap! is the outcome of a process to identify, inventory, and prescribe alterations to the current conditions that primarily exist on Government Street between I-110 and Jefferson Highway. This 2.8-mile section of Government Street serves the core of Baton Rouge and is the most diverse and eclectic shopping corridor in the City. Government Street has, and continues to provide services to a diverse market. GoMAP! will serve as the basis for decisions, which will augment the character and economy of this vital corridor.

For the past twelve months, the GoMap! process has taken the staff of MCRA, into the majority of schools, shops and restaurants along the corridor to collect the necessary data to produce Phase I of this study. I applaud and salute the countless number of residents, merchants and community advocates who voiced their concerns and opinions in order to make this document as inclusive as possible. I would also like to personally thank the Office of Community Design and Development Directors, Frank M. Bosworth and Marsha R. Gudleback, and the LSU students working under their supervision for going the extra mile. I would also like to thank Rep. Michael Jackson for his leadership in acquiring needed funds from the Governor's Office of Urban Affairs to underwrite a portion of this study.

Lastly, if it were not for MCRA's Urban Planner, Jeremy Hendricks, we would not enjoy the level of knowledge and understanding that we do today about this wonderful and electric street. I hope you find GoMAP! enlightening and worthy of consideration in making future decisions about the Government Street corridor that runs through the heart of Baton Rouge.

Perry J. Franklin, Executive Director
Mid City Redevelopment Alliance
Mid City was carved out of a forested oak grove, and the abundance of old oak trees that line the streets reflect its rich history. Government Street is an old road where residents drove their wagons into the woods to gather moss to sell to the mattress factory on Dufroc and Main Street. Government at Park was the location of the old Magnolia Racetrack with its enormous grandstand, and Government Street was one of the main thoroughfares to the old Baton Rouge airport at what is now Independence Park. Throughout the years many fine retailers have had Government Street addresses. Three of Baton Rouge’s finest high schools are located on or near Government Street in Mid City, and Baton Rouge Community College in Mid City is one of the fastest growing community colleges in the nation.

Mid City Merchants Association was incorporated in 1993 under the guidance of Baton Rouge General Hospital and Mid City Redevelopment Alliance after more than a year of meetings by interested business owners who wanted positive things to happen in Mid City. The focus of MCMA, a non-profit organization, has been to help with beautification projects, to help preserve the historic nature of the area, and to address issues facing business owners in Mid City. Over the past eleven years, Mid City Merchants Association has planted over 100 crepe myrtle trees in the area, has adopted and landscaped 7 traffic medians which MCMA still maintains monthly, has handed out seed packets to our customers to plant in their yards, and has been a positive presence in Baton Rouge. The semi-annual art hops have become huge events, and Baton Rougeans are flocking to Mid City to shop and dine because they know that this area is a culturally rich part of the city. Mid City is an area of town that celebrates diversity. It is a combination of old north Baton Rouge and south Baton Rouge. The Government Street corridor encompasses both blue-collar and white-collar neighborhoods and businesses, and is home to many neighborhood associations. Mid City is not a gated community - it is all-inclusive, and this diversity is one of Mid City’s many strengths.

A few years ago Mid City Merchants Association formed a core committee to brainstorm ways to make Government Street a better reflection of what it has been over the years – a hub of everyday activity. This core group started the ball rolling to get us to this point. Many thanks to the original committee members: Dee Dee Culotta, Chair, Liz Walker, Brenda Payne, Ed Fetzer, Ginger Ford, Keli Culotta, Tad Speegle, Jeremy Hendricks, and Mary Ann Caffery for giving up each Wednesday morning for a year to meet at the Westmoreland Piccadilly to try to address concerns about how to make Government Street better aesthetically. Some weeks went well, other weeks there was the frustration at the magnitude of how to get anything accomplished was evident. MCMA had three well-attended community meetings during this process. MCMA also thanks Rep. Michael Jackson for granting the seed money for the LSU Office of Community Design and Development to study Government Street and make recommendations. Working with the LSU team of professors and students was exciting because new ideas were being presented and different questions were being asked. Our concerns for improving Government Street were being addressed through a team that had no preconceived ideas, but looked at the street with fresh eyes and a calculated, almost scientific approach to gathering information and drawing conclusions. The team took us seriously, and for this we are grateful.

Mary Ann Caffery
Mid City Merchants Association
OVERVIEW
Phase One of the Government Street Master Action Plan (GoMap) is the start of an urban design process to define the character of the Government Street Corridor through place making. This process is complex, and extends beyond the independent design of infrastructure, individual buildings, and landscapes. The success of the process requires participants to understand that design ideas, which create real change, are those that integrate infrastructure, buildings, landscapes, open space, and the transportation network to develop a comprehensive vision for creating clarity, order, and beauty. This study for the Government Street Corridor is guided by community stakeholder participation and defines keystones, recommendations, and subsequent action plans that will maintain momentum, demonstrate positive change, and provide a foundation for preparing design guidelines in Phase Two. The process centers on the public realm, the network of streets, sidewalks, plazas, and parks that form the spaces which people share. The character of these public spaces is derived from the arrangement of elements and details contained within and surrounding them and provides common ground at the heart of the community.

Because urban streets are the most pervasive of public spaces, changes to them have broad and significant impacts. To ensure active streets and enhanced economic activity, a successful design must balance the needs of pedestrians, bicycles, public transport, and motor vehicles. The resultant environment must be safe and provide a venue where people, commercial and retail activity, access and parking, and through traffic reside cooperatively.

Reinventing Government Street as a viable economic corridor will require a concerted and long-term commitment by stakeholders. It has an aging infrastructure, an economic base in transition, and many buildings needing restoration and renovation. Signs and utilities create a confusing visual environment; parking and other private use of the public realm interfere with pedestrian traffic and compromises safety. This, combined with a four-lane road and aggressive drivers, results in a dysfunctional public space in need of significant improvement. With the State of Louisiana DOTD in control of Government Street improvements, and City-Parish government in control of most of the surrounding street network, implementing

We begin with the notion that Government Street creates a corridor that is in search of an identity. Over time it has become unsafe for pedestrians, has relinquished its urban identity to the automobile, which resulted in attempts at place making more suitable to the suburbs. The fundamental challenge for GoMap is to reclaim and redefine the public realm in a manner that encourages place making by bringing back the balance among pedestrians, commercial enterprises, and motor vehicles.
significant and innovative infrastructure changes will take time, and require cooperation, innovative design solutions and entrepreneurial funding strategies.

View, looking north, of the block between Baton Rouge Magnet High School and Bedford Street in the Pilot Study Area

**STRUCTURE**

GoMap! Phase One was a collaborative effort guided by Mid City Redevelopment Alliance (MCRA). The Office of Community Design and Development (OCDD) was responsible for the technical component of the project and facilitated the efforts of a team of LSU College of Art and Design students working on the project. The OCDD worked closely with MCRA, Mid City Merchant’s Association (MCMA), and the GoMap! Advisory and Steering Committees to insure that this report is grounded in ideas and suggestions that emerged from the stakeholders during the course of the project. Project work began in May 2003 with the establishment of the GoMap! Advisory and Steering Committee. During the late spring and early summer the OCDD completed data collection and analysis, and prepared the final design study and recommendations. The project concluded in January 2004 with a four-day exhibit of the work followed by a series of meetings with project stakeholders. This document reflects the work completed during the project period.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of GoMap! is to develop a Master Action Plan that guides improvement of the physical attributes in the study area and enhance economic development. The current project work represents Phase One of a three-phase effort. Phase one articulates a vision for the corridor, describes the scope of the challenge to bring the vision to fruition, and suggests a strategy for action. Subsequent phases will prepare detailed design guidelines and processes for implementation.
CONTENT
GoMap! Phase One consists of an inventory, analysis and interpretation of existing conditions, and the development of a conceptual design framework for the project. Using the conceptual design framework as the foundation for design, the OCDD developed a “corridor portrait,” a vision for an active and sustainable urban corridor. The portrait guides the development of implementation strategies for corridor redevelopment. It focuses on interventions that improve the experience of “place” along the corridor from Interstate 110 to Jefferson Highway. To illustrate how these strategies might be implemented, a pilot study area anchored by Baton Rouge Magnet High School was selected for preliminary design. The design keystones and recommendations in the pilot study area will be utilized in subsequent phases for preparing design guidelines for the corridor.

CONNECTION TO MID CITY REDEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE INITIATIVES
GoMap! Phase One is an outgrowth of the multiple successful initiatives completed by MCRA since its inception. MCRA has a 48 square mile service area, consisting of approximately 1000 city blocks, defined by Chocow Avenue on the north, I-10 on the south, Foster Drive on the east and I-110 on the west. MCRA is best known for their efforts in promoting affordable housing and is firmly grounded in the community it serves. The majority of its funding is provided by Baton Rouge General Hospital, the most significant institution in Mid City. The hospital’s long-term commitment to MCRA is evidence of their strong commitment to the community they serve. GoMap! is a logical extension of their housing and planning efforts, and is the first major project undertaken outside their focus area, providing a mechanism for interconnecting their efforts in the east and west service area. With the positive impact of Baton Rouge Community College at the east end of the Corridor and the recent development of the “Design District” at the west end, there is a palpable energy along the Corridor. Collaborating with the City-Parish to develop a new intersection design at Acadian, the Acadian corridor landscaping project, and the Mid City Community signage effort is evidence of MCRA’s work along the Government Street Corridor. In addition, MCRA is a partner with OCDD’s HUD Community Future’s project whose first phase is adjacent to the Pilot study area of the project.
GoMAP! PROCESS DIAGRAM

The diagram below illustrates the process for advancing the GoMAP! project. It consists of three interdependent phases beginning with establishing a baseline of existing conditions through implementation. The Conceptual Design Framework, or project backbone, articulates a flexible, yet structured approach to thinking about the corridor at varying scales. It is essential for a coherent revitalization effort that acknowledges the role of Government Street in the urban context, as well as, the diverse identities found along the street in the blocks, small commercial areas and neighborhoods.
CORRIDOR PORTRAIT

The Corridor Portrait is a snapshot of "place" captured at a particular moment in time. It is a crucial design tool that creates a baseline for making informed decisions. Assembling a Corridor Portrait is essential to the success of any project that attempts to explore the role and impact of change to the physical environment. It is colored by the historical and physical context in which the place is grounded and includes traditional inventory data, visual surveys, community input. The following maps, drawings, and photographs represent a sample of the repository of physical conditions that lead to the District Identity Map on pg. 21.

GoMAP STUDY AREA

The GoMAP study area is a 2.78 mile-long section of Government Street between Interstate I-110 and Jefferson Highway, and for the purposes of this study, includes only the properties with frontage on Government Street. The study area comprises approximately 60% of Government Street which extends from River Road on the west end to Lobdell Boulevard and the extension along Independence Boulevard ending at E. Airport Avenue on the east end.

Aerial view of the Government Street Corridor Study Area from I-110 to Jefferson Highway
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION
The Government Street corridor, like many other urban corridors, is a place that has no clearly discernible identity that differentiates it from other similar corridors in the city. It has been transformed by the automobile and demographic trends, and as a product of urban expansion has elements of the traditional patterns associated with urban neighborhoods overlaid with aging attempts at suburban responses to development in order to compete with development south and east of the city center. As the city grew, the places once at the outskirts were embraced by new residential and commercial development that continued the pattern of suburban development along the corridor. The dichotomy of urban and suburban is evident the length of the corridor beginning with the Frosty Drive-In and McDonald's inserted among urban residential and commercial structures. Here Government Street once clearly defined the southern edge of the Downtown core, the north side of the street populated with traditional urban structures anchored at the River by the Centrplex complex and the south side, anchored by a hotel and casino complex on the site of rail oriented rehabilitated warehouses, then changing abruptly to residential buildings many of which have been converted to professional offices. Although outside the study area, the character of the corridor begins here.

The character of the Government Street Corridor is primarily derived from patterns of use, and elements of the streetscape and residential and commercial buildings, storefronts, and landscape that form its edges and enclose it. This enclosure, and the intersecting streets and roads forming the connections to other parts of the city, form the public realm. It is our personal and collective interpretations of the public realm that informs us of the character of place at all scales of the Corridor.
Sequence of aerial photographs indicating physical change along Government Street Corridor and environs between 1952 and 2003
One of the growth centers defined by the City of Baton Rouge Capitol Region Planning Commission's Horizon Plan is at the intersection of Acadian Thruway and Government Street and is less than one mile from an adjacent growth center at Baton Rouge General Hospital.

**CONTEXT OF THE CITY**

The following figure ground map places Government Street in the context of the City. It is aligned on an east-west axis from the Mississippi River to E. Airport Avenue, and is the southernmost east-west route to downtown. The 2.78 mile-long study area from I-110 to Jefferson Highway is highlighted below. It is traversed by four significant north-south routes, Interstate I-110, Acadian Thruway, Foster Drive and Lobdell Boulevard, and is the northern terminus of Jefferson Highway. It directly connects downtown Baton Rouge with Independence Park, and is populated by residential, commercial and mixed-use areas.
RESEARCH
Data collection was completed between May 15 and August 1, 2003 and was used to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) database consisting of the following categories: traffic flow, one way and two way streets, stop lights, stop signs, type of intersections, enterprise zones, sidewalk width, context, parish map, existing land uses, Horizon Plan land uses, zoning, vacant buildings and property, population density, construction materials, architectural style, parking, bus routes, business names and building use. The database was used to generate maps of the study area, create an inventory of the study area's physical attributes, and form the baseline for analysis of the corridor and development of the corridor design framework.

Figure-Ground map of the Government Street Corridor from I-110 to Jefferson Highway.
Corridor Portrait

Existing Zoning

Existing Land Use

Horizon Plan Land Use

Capitol Region Planning Commission Zoning and Land Use Maps reproduced here for informational purposes only.
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

At the start of the project, community advisory and strategic planning groups were formed. During the project period, the groups participated in five meetings to assist the project team in developing an accurate snapshot of existing conditions, issues, and preferences about the redevelopment of the Government Street corridor, their concerns, and their vision for its future. In addition to the meetings with these groups, the project team facilitated two open sessions to gather information and feedback from other stakeholders.

Assess and Liabilities Workshop, GoMAP! Steering Committee
Steering Committee Priorities for Government Street

SAFE
address community perception, provide accessibility, improved infrastructure, enforcement

DESTINATION
places to go, things to do

CULTURAL
build on existing assets

Corridor Portrait

Steering Committee Assets and Liabilities Workshop

Assets and Liabilities Workshop, GMAP Steering Committee
Community Design Charrette held at Baton Rouge Magnet High School
Gathering information and ideas about areas of concern and community vision for the future of Government Street
FOCUS GROUP COMMUNITY MEETING

Participant suggestions for improving the Pilot Study Area (Baton Rouge Magnet High School and environs):

- Define edges, cultural landmarks, historic fabric, and central location.
- Increase the number of neighborhood oriented businesses and destination businesses.
- Allow for a more pedestrian oriented access (ADA). Improve and increase the number of crossways at lights. Also allow for a more bike friendly area.
- Improve landscape features, preserve the five oaks.
- Improve parking and vehicular circulation around Baton Rouge High School.
- Eliminate vacant buildings to create a pocket park, or to be used for parking.
- Allow for right and left turns on Eugene at Government.
- Insert bookstore, deli, and/or coffee shops in the area to create activity nodes and capture the Baton Rouge High student market.
- Improve and maintain alleys to serve for parking access. Purchase lots behind the businesses to be used for parking.
- Create exciting/uniform signage, improve traffic signage and reduce the utility poles. Locate safety and accent lighting.
ANALYSIS

Building on the research data, additional field observations were completed to document a visual inventory of the corridor and a subsequent a District Identity map. The maps that follow, illustrate the findings. At the conclusion of this work it appeared that the Corridor had six distinct Districts.
Annotated District Identity Map of the six emerging Districts in the Corridor
Annotated District Identity Map of the six emerging Districts in the Corridor.
VISION STATEMENT
The following Vision Statement for the Government Street Corridor was created by the GoMAP! Steering Committee during a facilitated workshop to establish goals for the project early in the process. The Action Ideas that follow were identified as the primary tasks to accomplish in achieving the Vision.

A revitalized Government Street Corridor will balance the needs of pedestrians and vehicles, have a common identity from I-110 to Jefferson Street that unites multiple districts - each with a distinctive sense of place - through street, pedestrian zone, and landscape infrastructure improvements. Activity nodes for shopping, entertainment and cultural activities will emerge creating a vibrant "after 5" environment. A public transit line will connect the corridor with downtown, supporting commercial, retail, and cultural activity through easy and convenient access. Existing businesses will have improved their properties and new mixed-use and multi-family residential development will activate the corridor, invigorate commercial and retail activity making the corridor a safe and enjoyable place to live and visit.

ACTION IDEAS

1. Establish common identity from I-110 to Jefferson Highway
2. Enhance distinctive districts within corridor
3. Improve visual clarity and aesthetic qualities
4. Create a safe, pedestrian friendly environment
5. Improve infrastructure
6. Encourage mixed-use and residential development
7. Create well defined shopping, entertainment, and cultural activity nodes
CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FRAMEWORK
The Conceptual Design Framework is the overarching structure for achieving the corridor vision. Unlike traditional planning studies, this approach begins with a framework that emerges directly from the context of place along the corridor and does not presume to subscribe to generic design principles that have been imported to guide future development. Instead, this study strives to communicate an approach to positive development that is dependent on an acceptance of the framework that allows for manageable and immediate action to maintain momentum which is critical to the success of any study. It disassembles generic design principles, allows for transformation informed by place, and buries them within the context of the study and its layers of scale. The Conceptual Design Framework forms the basis for development of Keystones and Recommendations, initial strategies for implementation, and the subsequent Design Guidelines to be prepared during Phase Two.

The Government Street Corridor Conceptual Design Framework as illustrated below, defines three structural layers that coexist in the Corridor. They are:

1) Corridor Scale consisting of the infrastructure of the Corridor, the scale of the structures along the corridor and in the surrounding neighborhoods, and the larger context of the city.

2) District Scale consisting of the distinct areas of the Corridor that are defined by natural, physical and socio-cultural occurrences which, collectively, create the character of the Corridor.

3) Block Scale consisting of individual and groups of buildings, and open space that describe the most immediate physical environments humans occupy which, collectively, create the character of a District.

Diagram of the Conceptual Design Framework
The Conceptual Design Framework's three scales of inquiry for the Government Street Corridor are as follows:

**Corridor Scale: Identity/Consistency**
Create an identity for the Street by developing consistency along corridor through common infrastructure improvements.

**District Scale: Diversity/Consistency**
Nurture diversity among districts, and encourage consistency within districts.

**Block Scale: Independence/Consistency**
Encourage freedom of expression for improvements within districts while strengthening district identity.
P PRECEPTS

In the process of identifying descriptive strategies for corridor development, three essential ideas emerged and formed the Precepts that provide the requisite foundation for revitalization, development and successful interventions along the Corridor. The Precepts are intended to be universally accepted principles.

1. Any intervention must support the Conceptual Design Framework.
2. Any intervention must be consistent with the Corridor Vision.
3. Private use of the public realm must support community place-making.

KEYSTONES

Keystones are descriptive strategies that collectively inform the revitalization and development of the Government Street Corridor. The Keystones emerge from the Conceptual Design Framework, are tailored to address the specific contextual issues and concerns found at each scale, and when overlaid with the Framework, provide direction for achieving the Corridor Vision. The Keystones form an overarching structure that guides the future preparation of Design Guidelines at the Corridor and District Scale and encourages strengthening District Identity at the Block Scale.

Corridor Scale: Identity/Consistency
Create an identity for the Street by developing consistency along corridor through common infrastructure improvements.

District Scale: Diversity/Consistency
Nurture diversity among districts, and encourage consistency within districts.

Block Scale: Independence/Consistency
Encourage freedom of expression for improvements within districts while strengthening District Identity.
Each set of Keystones is specific to its scale encouraging development that reinforces and is compatible with existing, localized conditions. The intent is to promote development at the block, district and corridor scales that is compatible with existing corridor assets, symbiotic with other development, and promotes redevelopment consistent with the corridor vision.

In subsequent phases of the GoMap! project these Keystones will be used to develop Corridor and District-specific Design Guidelines that are the product of stakeholder input. Ultimately, the effectiveness of future Design Guidelines is a function of collective acceptance and the ability to carry out their implementation.
CORRIDOR SCALE KEYSNSES

Objectives: Identity / Consistency
Create identity by developing consistency along corridor

The role of the Corridor is two-fold; to reinstate its position as a prominent constituent in the fabric of the city and to provide a consistent structure for development within each of its six distinctive Districts.

C1 STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT STREET IN THE PUBLIC LIFE OF THE CITY AND DOVETAIL NEW INITIATIVES WITH ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

C2 DEVELOP CONSISTENT PATTERNS OF ELEMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE CORRIDOR.

C3 SUPPORT THE DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY OF THE SIX ESTABLISHED DISTRICTS ALONG THE CORRIDOR.

C4 ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE THAT SUPPORTS INDIVIDUAL DISTRICT IDENTITY.

C5 MAXIMIZE PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE CORRIDOR.

C6 IMPROVE VISUAL CLARITY ALONG THE CORRIDOR.

C7 PROMOTE A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEDESTRIANS AND VEHICLES.

C8 IMPROVE SAFETY ALONG THE CORRIDOR.
DISTRICT SCALE KEystONES

Objectives: Diversity / Consistency
Diversity among Districts, Consistency within Districts.

The role of the District is to encourage the development of a unique identity through unique application of the urban strategies for the district infrastructure, and augment development at the block scale.

D1 ACKNOWLEDGE A COLLABORATIVE ALLIANCE AMONG DISTRICTS THAT PROMOTES CORRIDOR IDENTITY WITHIN THE FABRIC OF THE CITY.

D2 CULTIVATE A DISTINCT DISTRICT IDENTITY THAT BUILDS ON EXISTING CHARACTER OF PLACE AND HAS CLEARLY DEFINED BOUNDARIES.

D3 STIMULATE A COMPLEMENTARY PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE LIFE OF THE DISTRICT AND ITS ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS.

D4 EXPAND THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC LIFE ALONG THE DISTRICT.

D5 ADOPT THE CONSISTENT STRUCTURE OF THE CORRIDOR AS A BACKDROP FOR DEVELOPING VISUAL CLARITY WITHIN THE DISTRICT.

D6 STRENGTHEN SPATIAL DEFINITION AND CREATE GREATER EMPHASIS ALONG THE STREET EDGE.

D7 ESTABLISH STRONG CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PLACES.

D8 DEVELOP A COMMON STRATEGY FOR PARKING THAT BALANCES REDUCED VISIBILITY AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY.

D9 IMPROVE SAFETY WITHIN THE DISTRICT.
BLOCK SCALE KEYSRONES

Objectives: Independence / Consistency
Support freedom of expression through District Action Plans

Block Scale development targets local conditions and requires the greatest participation and consensus of property owners and other stakeholders.

B1 ENCOURAGE DESIGN INTERVENTIONS THAT SUPPORT DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES.

B2 ENCOURAGE DESIGN INTERVENTIONS THAT SUPPORT A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT.

B3 REINFORCE THE STREET EDGE.

B4 ENCOURAGE DESIGN INTERVENTIONS THAT BUILD ON EXISTING ASSETS AND THE IDENTITY OF THE DISTRICT.

B5 ENFORCE A COMMON PARKING STRATEGY TO BE DEVELOPED IN THE DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES.

B6 IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM.

GOHAPI PRECEPTS

1 Any intervention must support the Conceptual Design Framework.
2 Any intervention must be consistent with the Corridor Vision.
3 Private use of the public realm must support community place-making.
Corridor Scale recommendations are those which should be implemented for the length of the corridor. They create the background against which district and block recommendations are implemented. Some corridor scale recommendations are independent; however, the success of creating a great street will be the result of an integrated approach to making improvements. Corridor scale recommendations are among the most difficult to implement because their primary focus is structural. Improving infrastructure is often a lengthy process because of the number of agencies involved and the funding required to complete the improvements. The situation for the Government Street corridor is further complicated because the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Management (LADOTD) controls all road improvements within the corridor and the City has responsibility for most of the intersecting streets. The challenge will be to develop collaborative strategies that will keep the project moving.
**CR1**

**Strengthen the Role of Government Street in the Public Life of the City and Dovetail New Initiatives with Adjacent Development Efforts.**

- *Implement overlay districts to support and enhance future development.*

  Implement overlay districts to control corridor development and permit the implementation of a tax district. One overlay district should include the length of the corridor in order to create design standards to control infrastructure, streetscape improvements, signs, parking, etc. A tax district will permit developing funds for making improvements. The overlay district must permit each corridor district to independently develop design standards to address architectural and other issues germane to their district.

- *Construct "gateways" to Government Street on the east side of I-110 and west of Jefferson Street.*

  Gateways should be distinctive elements that identify the entrance to the corridor from either end. There are many approaches to creating gateways such as a distinctive signage, significant landscape elements, or a change in sidewalk and pavement surfaces.

**CR2**

**Develop Consistent Patterns of Elements and Improvements Along the Corridor.**

- *Whenever possible parking should be behind buildings, and at the intersections of cross streets.*

  Parking and vehicular access are among the most difficult issues to resolve. Convenient parking for customers is necessary for sustaining commercial enterprises. For most businesses on Government Street this is achieved by using individual parking areas between or in front of buildings. This results in an undesirable visual pattern of Government Street frontage dominated by vehicles. This results in partially obscured storefronts and multiple curb cuts for access to parking lots and pull-in parking areas. Sidewalks interrupted by multiple access drives, and their close proximity to the street create an undesirable, uncomfortable, and unsafe pedestrian experience.
environment. In order to redevelop Government Street as a pedestrian oriented corridor, access drives crossing the pedestrian zone must be minimized and designed for pedestrian safety, and parking areas between the pedestrian zone and the front of buildings must be eliminated except on blocks that have developed a street. Utilizing the right of way at intersecting streets can maximize public parking.

**CR3**

**SUPPORT THE DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY OF THE SIX DISTRICTS ALONG THE CORRIDOR.**

- Provide opportunities to enhance the public realm through infrastructure improvements.

One of the most serious deterrents to a pedestrian friendly environment along Government Street is the overwhelming number of curb cuts and "pull-in" parking areas that cross, and frequently block, the sidewalk. Where buildings are set back from the right of way, the resultant space should be an extension of the public realm and be utilized for outdoor retailing, dining, courtyards, plazas etc., to physically and visually connect the buildings to the street.

**CR4**

**ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE THAT SUPPORTS INDIVIDUAL DISTRICT IDENTITY.**

- Activate the corridor with transit stop development.

Government Street is an important corridor for accessing the downtown area. Developing a dedicated transit route with terminuses at Jefferson Street and the downtown museum/shopping district provide access to diverse retail activities and strengthens activity along the corridor and downtown shopping district. Designated transit stops in each GoMAPi district, augmented with development of mixed use high density residential/commercial/retail nodes, will generate activity, provide customers for “after 5:00” shopping and entertainment, and energize the public realm.
**Corridor Scale Recommendations**

- Promote storefront development that responds to pedestrian traffic and becomes a primary component of the overall streetscape.

  Storefronts should maximize their visual impact through the display of merchandise, pedestrian scale elements, and visible pedestrian activity.

**CR5 MAXIMIZE PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE CORRIDOR.**

- Promote commercial development that is continuous to develop a strong street edge and create an unified streetscape.

  Infrastructure improvements are costly and the use of the property adjacent to Government Street should be utilized for income-producing commercial activity rather than parking.

**CR6 IMPROVE VISUAL CLARITY ALONG THE CORRIDOR.**

- Achieve visual clarity by eliminating clutter, establishing distinct boundaries, creating enclosure, establishing a perceived street edge, and incorporating common streetscape elements.

  - Establish gateways to Government Street at east and west ends of corridor.
  - Eliminate billboards and develop signage at a scale appropriate for a pedestrian oriented street.
  - Encourage infill to maximize commercial frontage on Government Street.
Reduce the number of utility poles by replacing wood poles with steel poles, increasing spacing between poles, and consolidating on one side of the street where practical.

Provide common elements of the same design for vehicular corridor lighting, traffic signals, utility poles, and street signage.

Develop a primary landscaping strategy for the length of corridor. Design standards for landscaping must be sufficiently flexible to permit identity enhancements within districts.

Install new street lighting, pedestrian lighting, traffic signals, utility poles, and street signage designed specifically for the Corridor. Design guidelines for pedestrian lighting must be sufficiently flexible to permit different light designs among Districts.

PROMOTE A SYMBOITIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEDESTRIANS AND VEHICLES.

If feasible, convert the Corridor to three lanes.

Creating a pedestrian-friendly environment along the corridor is essential to achieve the project vision. In its current configuration and use the street does not function well as an arterial. Conversely it cannot serve as a neighborhood collector and shopping street because the speed of traffic, narrow pedestrian zone, and aggressive driving during peak travel periods create an unsafe pedestrian environment. Currently, a four-lane road without left turn lanes, traffic is frequently stopped due to the frequency of left turn possibilities. A successful strategy employed in other American cities has been the conversion of four lane roads to three lanes - two through lanes and a center turning lane. This strategy slows traffic, provides increased protection to pedestrians and provides the opportunity for a bike lane in each direction. The sectional illustrations to the right illustrate the existing condition and a rendition of the three-lane configuration.
corridor scale recommendations

⇒ Develop a pedestrian safety zone between the street edge and sidewalk consisting of a continuous area not less than five feet in width that separates the vehicular corridor from the pedestrian corridor with a continuous curb at the street edge.

This zone should contain trees, other landscape material, utility poles, and other streetscape elements such as bus shelters, trash containers and benches.

⇒ Provide an accessible walking surface five-foot wide, minimum, continuous and smooth free of obstructions.

Each district, based on corridor design standards, may determine the materials, color, and texture of the walking surface.

⇒ Create crosswalks of contrasting color and texture to the road surface.

In cases where pedestrian safety is of heightened concern, such as walking routes to schools, raised intersections should be utilized. In some districts it may be appropriate to designate portions of connecting streets as pedestrian zones. Placement of traffic signals should enhance the pedestrian experience, and may require installation of pedestrian activated signals in areas where important pedestrian crossings are not at intersections.

⇒ Create a comfortable pedestrian zone for improved walkability and safety.

The pedestrian zone of the road right of way begins at the edge of the road and terminates at the adjacent property line or building front. In this zone the pedestrian should feel safe and the motorist must yield to the pedestrian.

⇒ All mid-block curb cuts should be minimized and all “pull-in” parking should be eliminated.

Pedestrian zones should be redeveloped to include a safety zone between the street edge and sidewalk.
CR8 **IMPROVE SAFETY ALONG THE CORRIDOR.**

- **Encourage a safe pedestrian environment through new crosswalk design.**
  It is extremely difficult to cross Government Street; this discourages pedestrian shopping and multi-generational use of the public realm. Clearly defined pedestrian zones along connecting streets, dedicated pedestrian places (plazas, courtyards, etc.) and crosswalks will encourage participation in the activities of Government Street.

- **Maintain a five-foot wide (minimum) continuous and smooth walking surface within the pedestrian zone, free of obstructions; the material, color, and texture of the walking surface will be determined by each District. The walking surface and transitions must conform with ADA standards.**

- **Create crosswalks of contrasting color and texture to the road surface for a safer pedestrian environment.** In cases where pedestrian safety is a primary concern such as walking routes to schools, raised intersections should be considered. In some areas it may be appropriate to designate portions of connecting streets as pedestrian zones.

- **Develop a safety zone not less than five feet in width between the street edge and sidewalk (pedestrian zone), terminating with a continuous curb.**

- **Improve vehicular and pedestrian safety by revising road design.** Investigate the implementation of the four to three lane conversion discussed previously.
DISTRICT SCALE
Objectives: Diversity / Consistency
Diversity among Districts, Consistency within Districts

District recommendations are those that should be implemented along the district. They support individual District identity and encourage change undertaken at the block scale.

2001 aerial photograph of the Government Street Corridor study area indicating the proposed Districts

GoHAPI! PRECEPTS
1. Any intervention must support the Conceptual Design Framework.
2. Any intervention must be consistent with the Corridor Vision.
3. Private use of the public realm must support community place-making.
**District Scale Recommendations**

**DR1** Support a **Collaborative Alliance** among districts that promotes corridor identity within the fabric of the city.

**DR2** Cultivate a distinct district **Identity** that builds on existing character of place and has clearly defined boundaries.

- Provide gateway signage and iconic elements integrated with the streetscape, to give identity and provide a sense of arrival and departure at District boundaries.

- Identify existing assets that support distinctive identity of the District.

**DR3** Stimulate a **Complementary Partnership** between the life of the District and its adjacent neighborhoods.

**DR4** Expand the quality of **Public Life** throughout the district.

- Where storefronts are set back from the front property line, the intervening space should connect to, and become an extension of the pedestrian zone.

- Develop a central public space to serve each District.

Each district should develop a common public space such as a plaza or park where district-wide events can take place. This public space provides a physical location to recall the District within the context of the corridor.
**DR5** Adopt the consistent physical improvements of the corridor as a backdrop for developing **visual clarity** within the district.

- Develop signs that are mounted on the face of the buildings and are easily read by pedestrians and motorists.

- Install streetscape elements of the same design for pedestrian lighting, banner supports, benches, trash receptacles, wayfinding and information signage, tree grates, public art, banners, and other elements that are consistent throughout the District.

For example, Districts may have different styles of pedestrian lighting or different street trees; however, their placement and scale should conform to the overall Design Guidelines and recommendations for the Corridor.

**DR6** Strengthen **spatial definition** and create greater emphasis along the street edge.

- Encourage all new development and renovation to ensure buildings of sufficient height to augment a sense of enclosure. (Generally, this is achieved with a height to width ratio that is not less than 1:2.5)

  Storefronts should consist of an opaque bulkhead, display windows, awning, canopy or marquee, and flush sign panel.

- New development and renovation projects should have primary facades and entrances facing Government Street that are visually open to the street and create a strong connection between the pedestrian zone and retail/commercial establishment.

  Whenever possible, provide access to service bays, service drives and parking from side streets and alleys.
**DR7** ESTABLISH STRONG CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PLACES.

- Strengthen the pedestrian zone and retail/commercial establishments by opening them visually to the street. Encourage all new development and renovation to devote 50% of the total ground floor façade area facing Government Street and 25% the total ground floor façade area facing side for windows or fixed glazing.

- Where storefronts are set back from the pedestrian zone, encourage development of the intervening space to connect to and become an extension of the pedestrian zone.

**DR8** DEVELOP A COMMON STRATEGY FOR PARKING THAT BALANCES REDUCED VISIBILITY AND CONVENIENCE.

- Encourage the development of shared parking areas that are convenient and have clear pedestrian links to the District. Limit the use of Government Street frontage for parking, and develop parking areas at rear of building lots.

**DR9** IMPROVE SAFETY WITHIN THE DISTRICT.

- Encourage merchants and owners of all buildings facing Government Street, and/or intersecting streets, to eliminate the use of exposed security grillage and employ other methods of building protection to create a welcoming environment.

Where security grillage is absolutely necessary, install inside windows and fixed glazing to minimize its appearance from the street.
The following District-specific actions emerge from the findings in the corridor portrait and community input. Each recommendation falls under the umbrella of a District Keystones and are noted here as a means to begin the Action Plan.

**DISTRICT ONE**
I-110 overpass to 19th Street

Objectives: Diversity / Consistency
Diversity among Districts, Consistency within Districts

1. Create a gateway to the district at the I-110 overpass.

2. Increase residential density through infill and create opportunities for the development of affordable housing.

3. Celebrate the presence of the historic Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired by increasing its visibility from the street and presence in the neighborhood.

4. Develop both sides of the street to create a sense of enclosure and continuous street edge. Develop a strong neighborhood commercial district by building upon existing businesses.

5. Augment the Warehouse/Arts area with high-density mixed-use development building on the character of the existing buildings with a focus on lofts and galleries.

6. Examine the possibility of a linear park along the railroad right of way to provide a bike and pedestrian link to City Park and the historic Perkins Road shopping district.

7. Examine opportunities for high-density residential development along the interstate corridor to rebuild the urban fabric that was destroyed when the interstate was constructed.
D2 Actions

1. Reinforce the residential scale of the district and promote walkability by improving sidewalks and enhancing the safety zone. Limit future development to small-scale business and encourage conversion of houses fronting on Government Street to professional offices.

2. Support the development of a residential scale commercial center at the intersection of Park Boulevard, building on the existing energy created by Circa 1867.

3. Reinforce the pedestrian connection between Government Street and Dufrcq Elementary School by improving the pedestrian zone along 19th Street.

4. Strengthen the neighborhood between Government Street and North Boulevard by encouraging mixed-income residential infill housing development.

5. Allow the district to become a transitional zone to strengthen connections between the neighborhoods north and south of Government Street.
DISTRICT THREE
St. Rose Street to the east side of Acadian Thruway

Objectives: Diversity / Consistency
Diversity among Districts, Consistency within Districts

D3 Actions

1. Maintain the existing commercial enterprises and encourage development of new small-scale businesses. Density of business will create a gateway to the District in contrast to the residential character of District 2.

2. Develop a District identity node at the Glenmore Street intersection.

3. Develop strong landscape buffers and limit curb cuts at parking areas in front of buildings which to shield the view of parked cars from the street.

4. Create a pedestrian connection between the high schools and support retail that attract students.

5. Redevelop Westmoreland Shopping Center as a District within a District, creating high density commercial retail, and parking.

6. Encourage renovation of existing buildings and development of infill buildings. Maintain the scale of the existing buildings in the district.

7. Infill local blocks to offset and contrast to the new development at Westmoreland Shopping Center.

8. Encourage a strong relationship between the street and adjacent neighborhoods through additional services, better walkability, public transportation, and bike paths.

9. Increase awareness of Catholic High School in the District and build on opportunities for a high school / education node.

The portion of District Three from St. Rose to Bedford Street is the designated Pilot Study Area.
D4 Actions

1. Maintain and encourage development of small scale commercial.

2. Improve parking areas fronting on Government Street with landscape elements to define edge and shield parking from street.

3. Connect the Bernard Terrace School to District activities.

4. Acquire vacant lot(s) along the street to develop as the District identity node.

5. Redevelop and infill, maintaining the scale of existing buildings.

6. Redesign traffic flow/pattern at Post Office.

7. Renaturalize creek (drainage canal) for pedestrian use.
DISTRICT FIVE
Drainage canal to the intersection of Government Street and Jefferson Highway

Objectives: Diversity / Consistency
Diversity among Districts, Consistency within Districts

D5 Actions

1. Improve street network parallel to Government St. connecting secondary streets.

2. Screen and maintain street edge.

3. Implement retail, commercial, and residential development connecting to BRCC. Increase density to 3 du/acre.

4. Acquire property and design a prominent public space as the District identity node in conjunction with future development.

5. Encourage development to strengthen entertainment/restaurant area and enhance the existing natural features to create a gateway at the east end of the District.

6. Connect Baton Rouge Community College to District activities.
**District Scale Recommendations**

**District Six**
Intersection of Government Street and Jefferson Highway

Objectives: Diversity / Consistency
Diversity among Districts, Consistency within Districts.

**D6 Actions**

1. Develop corner to link the Jefferson Hwy, shopping area to Government Street and to activate the east end of the District.
2. Develop public transportation center as part of a newly designed District identity node.
3. Strengthen the pedestrian connection to the existing park.
4. Make a soft connection at the east end of the District where Government Street transitions to residential.
The recommendations for the Block scale differ in character from those at the Corridor and District Scale. They consist primarily of actions and implementation strategies to improve individual properties in a manner consistent with District and Corridor Keystones. Block Scale development requires the greatest participation and consensus of property owners and other stakeholders, provide the most immediate visual change, and augment recommendations undertaken at the District scale and.

**BR1** ENCOURAGE DESIGN INTERVENTIONS THAT SUPPORT DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES.

**BR2** ENCOURAGE DESIGN INTERVENTIONS THAT SUPPORT A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT.

⇒ Encourage all buildings facing Government Street and/or intersecting streets to install security grillage inside windows and fixed glazing to minimize its appearance from the street.

**BR3** REINFORCE THE STREET EDGE.

⇒ Encourage new buildings to conform to the traditional setbacks of adjacent buildings.
**Block Scale Recommendations**

**BR4** Encourage design interventions that build on ** existing assets** and district identity.
- Develop storefronts consistent with the character of adjacent buildings that conform to Design Guidelines enforced at the District and Corridor scale. New and renovated storefronts would typically consist of an opaque bulkhead, display windows; awning, canopy or marquee, and flush sign panels. All buildings should have a clearly defined base, middle and top.

**BR5** Enforce the common **parking strategy** developed in the District Design Guidelines.
- Link private drives and parking areas at rear of the buildings and provide pedestrian access to Government Street.

**BR6** Improve the quality of the **public realm**.
- Landscape parking areas to improve appearance, provide shade, reduce heat gain and storm water runoff.
- Where buildings are set back from the front property line, **develop the intervening space as an extension of the public realm** to be utilized for outdoor retailing, dining, etc.
PILOT STUDY AREA
This part of the report is focused on the section of the corridor chosen as the pilot study area. The recommended actions are illustrated through drawings and photographs. Because this study area was selected for demonstrating the application of the Keystones outlined in the report, the plan and other illustrations are intended to demonstrate as many of the potential site and building interventions as possible.

2001 aerial photograph of the Pilot Study Area with Baton Rouge Magnet High School anchoring the center of the study area.
The pilot area was selected by the GoMAP Advisory Board, based on a recommendation from the project design team. It includes the area of the corridor between the east end of District Two at Saint Rose Street to Bedford Avenue, encompassing approximately two-thirds of District Three. The area of the corridor between Bedford Avenue and the east end of District Three is not included; however, the recommendation for this portion of the District is to develop high-density, mixed-use, residential and commercial space that will support commercial redevelopment in the District.

The boundaries of the Pilot Study Area were based on the following factors:
1. Baton Rouge Magnet High School is a significant and well-known landmark, and, as can be seen in the historic aerial photographs on pg. 56, is the only major public building that has played a significant role in the community over time.
2. The high schools (combined enrollment of approximately 3,000), existing adjacent neighborhoods, and proposed development will provide sufficient population for development of a significant public transportation hub.
3. There is a critical mass of small businesses with engaged, local ownership.
4. The area contains tracts of land suitable for mixed-use high-density residential and commercial buildings.
5. The area is suitable for illustrating a range of redevelopment interventions.
6. There is enough existing “fabric” to express the character of place, and it exemplifies a variety of site and building conditions.
7. The area is centrally located in the corridor, creating the greatest visual awareness for actual improvements.
8. There is sufficient land in public ownership to develop a significant common space that becomes the District identity node.

Unlike the Keystones that form a framework for implementation, the block scale recommendations are actual improvements. The block is the place where ideas are implemented and strategies are tested.
Recommendations are site specific and require architectural and engineering services to implement. The success of the final product is influenced by attitudes of individual property owners toward collaboration, the physical facts of the place where the actions are to be taken, and the quality of the detailed design. For this reason it was necessary to select a specific area to illustrate the application of the Keystones in a Pilot Study Area where redevelopment could begin and consensus achieved among stakeholders.

The four aerial photographs below include all of District Three, the east end of District Two, and the west end of District Four. Note that Baton Rouge High School is the most prominent landmark, retaining its contextual identity for fifty years. See photo at right showing the entry facade of Baton Rouge High School in the early 1960s.

The physical characteristics of the commercial area adjacent to the school, and contained within the pilot study area, have remained remarkably stable since 1952. The 1974 aerial photograph shows the development of Catholic High School and Westmoreland Plaza. Both are significant components of any redevelopment effort.
The Steering Committee and Advisory Board participated in two facilitated working sessions. The initial session was an assets and liabilities workshop that consisted of an examination of the corridor based on positive and negative attributes of place. Redevelopment and general enhancement of the environment in the pilot study area emerged as important to the success of the project. It is located in the center of the corridor, and easily identified because of its proximity to Baton Rouge Magnet High School, Catholic High School and Westmoreland Plaza. Successful implementation of redevelopment efforts will be highly visible and a model for the remainder of the corridor.

**Focus Group IDEAS:**
- Define edges, cultural landmarks, historic fabric, and central location.
- Increase the number of neighborhood oriented businesses and destination businesses.
- Allow for greater pedestrian oriented access (ADA). Improve and increase the number of crossways at lights. Also allow for a more bike friendly area.
- Improve landscape features and preserve the five live oaks.
- Improve parking and vehicular circulation around Baton Rouge Magnet High School.
- Eliminate vacant buildings to create pocket parks, or to be used for parking.
- Allow for right and left turns on Eugene at Government.
- Encourage a bookstore, deli, and/or coffee shop in the area to create activity nodes and capture the high school student market.
- Improve and maintain alleys to serve for parking access. Purchase lots behind the businesses to be used for parking.
- Create exciting/uniform signage, improve traffic signage and reduce the utility poles. Locate safety and accent lighting.
The initial character map for Government Street identified five visual characteristics for the area that includes the Pilot Study Area. However, the character of the pilot area is relatively uniform (see area E). This map was refined to identify the boundaries for District 3. See District Identity Map on pg. 59.
District 3

Corridor Scale
More traffic signals
Transition from residential to commercial
North-South connector: Acadian Thruway

District Scale
Mix of residential and commercial
Link between high schools
Smaller residential and commercial gives way to large scale commercial
Some rear parking for small commercial
Alley system in place will enable further development of rear parking

Block Scale
Many curb breaks in each block
Many blocks have space for backsides plg.
Curb breaks contribute to slowing of traffic and congestion
Blocks with larger buildings use front side parking, many times with unlimited curb breaks

Identity Map for District 3
CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN FOR THE PILOT STUDY AREA

The Conceptual Master Plan for the Pilot Study Area is intended to illustrate examples of potential improvements based on the Keystones for Development which are outlined below. The improvements shown on the Conceptual Master Plan are applicable in other districts.

DISTRICT SCALE KEYSTONES

- Develop a District Identity that is unique and has clearly defined boundaries
- Develop a District Identity that is unique and has clearly defined boundaries
- Develop a central public space to serve each District
- Augment Corridor Scale infrastructure improvements by developing visual clarity at the District Scale
- Create greater focus on the street in each District
- Create spatial definition along the street edge of each District
- Strengthen the connection between people and places along the street of each District
- Develop a common strategy for parking along the District
- Encourage design interventions that support greater safety along the District

BLOCK SCALE KEystONES

- Encourage design interventions that support the District Design Guidelines
- Encourage design interventions that support a welcoming environment
- Reinforce the street edge
- Encourage design interventions that build on existing assets and District Identity
- Enforce the common parking strategy developed in the District Design Guidelines
- Improve the quality of the public realm

GOHAP! PRECEPTS

1. Any intervention must support the Conceptual Design Framework.
2. Any intervention must be consistent with the Corridor Vision.
3. Private use of the public realm must support community place-making.
The following Conceptual Master Plan for the Pilot Study Area illustrates the application of Corridor and District Keystones for development using thirty-three site-specific examples. Each example is numbered on the Conceptual Master Plan, followed by three enlarged sections of the plan with descriptions keyed to the numbers on the plan.
1. Convert Government Street to three traffic lanes with bicycle lanes.

2. Create a front courtyard using the setback area currently used for parking.

3. Create a large outdoor sales court in the setback area currently used for parking.

4. Use rear yard with visibility from side street to create an outdoor cafe where the building is not set back from the property line.

5. Utilize rear yard for building service adjacent to parking and access drive.

6. Provide access to rear parking area utilizing undeveloped property.

7. Develop joint use agreement among property owners to create rear-parking area connected to side streets.

8. Utilize undeveloped portion of side street right-of-way to create additional parking at each end of block.

9. Reduce the visual impact of building sidewalks without openings by softening the appearance through landscape plantings.

10. Limit the length of curb cuts and develop a landscape buffer to define the street edge, provide visual interest, and shield vehicular use area from pedestrian zone.

11. Renovate facades to maintain scale of existing buildings and create storefronts open to the pedestrian zone to create visual interest and display merchandise.

12. Develop joint use agreement among property owners to connect existing rear parking areas with an access drive connecting side streets.

13. Redesign parking lots that front on Government Street with minimum length curb cuts and dense landscape buffers to visually separate pedestrians and vehicles, and maintain the street edge.

14. Construct raised pedestrian crosswalks where curb cuts are necessary to provide access directly from Government Street and vehicles traverse the pedestrian zone.
15. Construct a clearly defined pedestrian zone at the surface elevation of the street adjacent to the public plaza containing the primary public transportation stop in the District where pedestrians stand near vehicular zones.

16. Construct a public open space utilizing the existing street and traffic island adjacent to Boudreaux's.

17. Develop public open space as a focus for the district. Include a major design element such as a clock, fountain, street vending area, etc. to create a strong visual identity within and outside of the District, and serve as the primary public transportation stop within the District.

18. Reconfigure the intersection at Government Street to slow traffic, reduce risk of injury to pedestrians, and improve traffic safety.

19. Construct clearly defined crosswalks at the surface elevation of the street at intersections along pedestrian travel routes.

20. Construct a dense landscape edge adjacent to the vehicular zone to increase pedestrian comfort, and visually create a strong street edge. Although this applies generally to the entire corridor, it is extremely important in areas where the property adjacent to the street is devoted to parking, and the buildings are set back from the street. This strategy should also be employed where street frontage is intended primarily for vehicular traffic such as service stations and drive-through restaurants.

21. Develop joint use agreement among property owners to share parking and improve vehicular access from existing alley.

22. Utilize right of way and private property to create pull-in parking where buildings are set back from side property lines, and the right of way is sufficiently wide.

23. Implement parallel parking along street edge in adjacent neighborhoods to calm traffic and provide a barrier for the pedestrian zone.

24. Eliminate front parking area and utilize the area as an entrance courtyard.

25. Eliminate front parking area and utilize the area for building expansion to bring the building to the street edge, and create new storefront exposure on the street.
26. Provide a pedestrian activated signal and develop crosswalks to create a safe connection to businesses on both sides of Government Street.

27. Develop joint use agreement among property owners to create a common parking area at the rear of the buildings.

28. Develop pedestrian walkway from the rear parking area within the existing space between buildings to provide access to Government Street and activate courtyard in front of buildings.

29. Develop joint use agreement among property owners to create a common parking area at the rear of the buildings.

30. Eliminate all parking between buildings and Government Street to create courtyards for merchandising, dining, and other uses to extend the public realm to the building entrances. Renovate facades to open storefronts to the pedestrian zone, maintain the scale and historic character of the existing buildings.

31. Eliminate parking on side street and provide continuous sidewalk from Government Street to the adjacent neighborhood.

32. Redevelop existing shopping center to create a small mixed-use commercial and residential block that brings the buildings to the street edge to create a continuous street wall from Acadian to Baton Rouge Magnet High School by connecting the existing buildings.

33. Redevelop existing commercial property with parking in rear and the building without front set back.
The following illustrations provide examples of how the aesthetic quality of the District is transformed through the application of the Keystones for Development.

**Illustration 1 - Clock Plaza in the Proposed District 3 Identity Node**

This is a view of the proposed clock plaza looking northwest showing the public open space adjacent to Boudreaux's that resulted from reconfiguration of the Eugene - Government Street intersection. The reclaimed public land will serve as a visual and physical focus for the District, serve as the primary public transportation stop in the District, and provide hard surface and landscaped areas for pedestrians. A broad, clearly defined pedestrian zone is provided adjacent to the clock plaza to calm traffic and indicate to drivers that they are entering a pedestrian zone. (Refer to Conceptual Master Plan #15-19)
Illustration 2 - Potential Additions and Alterations to the Washateria Building

View of potential building addition, looking south, illustrating the use of set back areas previously used for parking. (Refer to Conceptual Master Plan #25)

This illustration shows a strategy for utilizing front set back area currently used for pull-in parking to increase floor area of the building. This approach permits a significant redesign of a building façade without major alterations to the existing building structure. Note that by extending the addition to wrap the corner the severity of the exposed side wall of the building is reduced.
Illustration 3 - Potential frontyard development at the SE corner of Arlington

View of proposed courtyard looking south, illustrating the use of the front set back area previously used for parking. (Refer to Conceptual Master Plan #24)

This illustration shows a strategy for utilizing front set back to enhance the public realm and provide an inviting pedestrian outdoor space. This space is currently used for pull-in parking.
Illustration 4 - Shoe Wizard and FM Courtyard

View of west end of block adjacent to Baton Rouge Magnet High School looking northwest, illustrating façade renovation and use of a shared courtyard to open storefronts to the pedestrian zone and maintain the scale and historic character of the existing buildings. (Refer to Conceptual Master Plan #26-30)

This illustration shows a strategy for improving the quality of the pedestrian experience. Site area currently devoted to pull-in parking is used to augment the pedestrian zone and create opportunities for dining or outdoor merchandise display. Building facades are improved using canopies and awnings, expanded storefront glass and bulkheads, and a common palette for building colors. Infrastructure improvements include new sidewalks and expanded safety zone with street trees, and decorative street and pedestrian lighting. The scale of the buildings was retained and enhanced to create a comfortable neighborhood environment.
Illustration 5- Showing block from the Bedford Street Intersection

View of the NW corner of Bedford Street looking northwest, illustrating façade renovation on both Government and Bedford Streets. Street trees and pedestrian lighting are used to strengthen the street edge and provide a safety buffer for pedestrians. Renovated storefronts are open to the pedestrian zone and maintain the scale and historic character of the existing buildings. (Refer to Conceptual Master Plan #26-31)

As shown in the previous illustration, this rendition of the entire block shows a strategy for improving the quality of the pedestrian experience.
Illustration 6 - Showing hypothetical development on Ogden Park Shopping Center Site

Rendition of the block currently occupied by the Ogden Park Shopping Center showing the potential of the site for development of a commercial and residential mixed-use project. Buildings are brought to the front property lines and set back to form a courtyard to expand the public realm. Shops have a strong visual and physical connection to the street, and the upper floor is utilized for multi-family housing. A similar, larger development is recommended for Westmoreland Plaza forming a strong visual corridor, with development on the north and south side of Government Street from Acadian to St. Rose Street. (Refer to Conceptual Master Plan #33)

This illustration is looking northwest at the block east of Bedford Street currently occupied by the Ogden Park Shopping Center. The buildings shown in the previous illustration are in the background. This rendition illustrates a strategy for increasing residential and commercial density while maintaining the character and scale of the existing adjacent buildings. Building to the street frontage improves the sense of enclosure and creates a continuous street edge that is visually interesting for pedestrians and motorists.
ACTION PLANS

Phase Two of the Government Street Master Action Plan involves developing Action Plans for each of the six Districts in the corridor, and ultimately for each Block. The Action Plan is a means to structure corridor, district and block scale development that is consistent with the GoMAP Vision, Corridor Conceptual Design Framework, and supports community place-making at all scales. This report provides a foundation for initiating this process through the recommendations for structuring Action Plans at each development scale along the Corridor. The challenge will be ensuring appropriate and comprehensive representation for all stakeholders in the decision-making process, and rewarding constituents as Government Street regenerates.

GETTING STARTED WITH ACTION PLANS

Corridor Scale: Identity/Consistency
Create an identity for the Street by developing consistency along corridor through common infrastructure improvements.

The planning team for the corridor was established during Phase One; however, representation from each District is necessary to craft an Action Plan.

District Scale: Diversity/Consistency
Nurture diversity among districts, and encourage consistency within districts.

The key to a successful Action Plan process will be forming active planning groups in each district to develop a vision for the district and set priorities for actions that support the vision. It is important to keep in mind that successful commercial development relies on people. Include planning efforts that encourage the development of new housing and mixed-use commercial residential development for a spectrum of income levels at higher densities. Each planning team appoints a District Captain who is responsible for coordination among District stakeholders and joins the Corridor planning team as the District representative in the decision-making at the corridor scale.
**Block Scale: Independence/Consistency**

Encourage freedom of expression for improvements within districts while strengthening district identity.

Block scale Action Plans support the District Action Plans, providing detailed directions for redevelopment, and involve property owners and owners of commercial enterprises working together to implement the GoMAP! Keystones as illustrated in the Phase One Pilot Study Area.

**MOVING THE PROCESS FORWARD**

Immediately when searching for the best or most important physical street arrangements in an urban setting, one must contend with the frequent assumption that what is being asserted is that physical design, either alone or primarily, makes the street the great or fine place that it is, and with the reality that such an assertion can hardly be proved. Indeed, some will argue that the physical design of the street, or of almost anything in the urban environment, has little to do with its goodness, and that social and economic characteristics are the crucial variables — *From Alan B. Jacobs’ Great Streets*

There is little doubt that the process of completing this study has generated considerable community interest and stakeholders have surfaced who are willing to consider innovative, as well as time-tested ideas, as part of an overall strategy to reinvigorate Government Street. The process is already underway. Since the project began in the summer of 2003, stores have been renovated and there is a general sense that there is considerable community support for the redevelopment of Government Street. Already, participants are taking ownership of the process and visible changes is evident along the corridor. The Arts/Warehouse neighborhood in District 1 is growing rapidly and significant improvements are underway in the Pilot Study Area. Businesses are being improved along the entire corridor; however, significant improvement along the corridor will require sustained involvement of the stakeholders, strong and determined leadership, and financial resources.

We begin with the notion that Government Street creates a corridor that is in search of an identity. Over time it has become unsafe for pedestrians, has relinquished its urban identity to the automobile, which resulted in attempts at place-making more suitable to the suburbs. The fundamental challenge for GoMAP! is to reclaim and redefine the public realm in a manner that encourages place-making by bringing back the balance among pedestrians, commercial enterprises, and motor vehicles.
next steps

CORRIDOR AND DISTRICT SCALE
Changes at the Corridor and District scales will require the most time to plan and implement and it is critical to the long-term success of the project to develop the resources to undertake infrastructure improvements. The following are recommended next steps.

- Complete a traffic engineering study to determine the feasibility of converting Government Street to three vehicular and two bicycle lanes. Gaining stakeholder consensus on this issue will be difficult, however it is fundamental to the development of a pedestrian oriented corridor. As a component of the study, examine the options and opportunities for public transportation. Transit stops provide excellent development opportunities and support both new residential and commercial projects.

- Begin discussions with LADOTD concerning the resurfacing and marking of the Corridor. This is tied to the engineering report and should be undertaken concurrently.

- Discussions concerning the jurisdiction of the Street must be started. It is important to eliminate as many bureaucratic layers as possible.

- Assist in the development of stakeholder groups to represent each district, and form a corridor development group to oversee project implementation.

- Begin discussions with City and Parish officials concerning the creation of a zoning overlay and special taxing district. Like downtown, tax revenue will keep the project moving.

- Develop funds for professional services to create and adopt design standards that apply to common elements in the Corridor.

- Develop funds for professional services to complete a detailed design master plan for the pilot study area including site engineering. The stakeholders in this area appear to be willing to work together and need to develop a short and long term development plan.

- Develop a team of design professionals to assist individual property owners design improvements consistent with the Corridor, District and Block recommendations.

- A final recommendation: develop funding for a significant public project to illustrate commitment to GoMAP. Specifically, the design team recommends seeking grant funding for a national design competition to design the “clock plaza” in the pilot study area.
Community Stakeholder's Vision Statement for the Government Street Corridor:

A revitalized Government Street Corridor will balance the needs of pedestrians and vehicles, have a common identity from I-110 to Jefferson Street that unites multiple districts - each with a distinctive sense of place - through street, pedestrian zone, and landscape infrastructure improvements. Activity nodes for shopping, entertainment and cultural activities will emerge creating a vibrant "after 5" environment. A public transit line will connect the corridor with downtown, supporting commercial, retail, and cultural activity through easy and convenient access. Existing businesses will have improved their properties and new mixed-use and multi-family residential development will activate the corridor, invigorate commercial and retail activity making the corridor a safe and enjoyable place to live and visit.
Office of Community Design and Development
The College of Art and Design's Community Outreach Arm and Best Practices Teaching Laboratory

The Office of Community Design and Development was established in 1999 and is the primary community outreach arm and best practices teaching laboratory for the College of Art and Design, whose mission is to facilitate improvement in the quality of the physical environment through student, faculty, and professional engagement in research, planning, design and education. At the core of this mission is inculcating an understanding of a civil society in students, and an awareness of the significant professional responsibility a design professional accepts when working in the public realm.

The primary goals of the Office of Community Design and Development are to:

- Integrate teaching, learning and professional practice.
- Integrate professional practice and teaching and learning activities to expose students to an environment focused on best practices in the professions.
- Support the College of Art and Design teaching and learning activities by providing students an opportunity to become involved in professional practice while in school.
- Provide students an opportunity to engage in community outreach activities by providing technical support and consultation to non-profit and governmental entities.
- Help students develop a moral compass for their professional life and understand the importance of ethical behavior and civic responsibility in their personal lives.
- Improve student preparation for entry-level professional positions.
- Provide internship and employment opportunities for students and faculty funded through grants and sponsored research.

The OCDD is under the direction of Frank M. Bosworth, Ph.D. and Marsha R. Cuddeback, AIA, and funded primarily through grants and sponsored research. In addition, the OCDD supports numerous non-funded projects by working in conjunction with design studios and independently with students. This has contributed to the office’s significant growth in five years and confirmed the extensive need for technical assistance across the State. Awareness of the office among communities in Louisiana is expanding rapidly as the positive impact of its work becomes known through example, word of mouth, and the press. The Office is considered a national leader in the renewed emphasis on civic engagement at colleges and universities, and its success in inculcating a sense of community responsibility among students will ultimately lead to an improved quality of life for communities touched by the College’s graduates.