

# Smarter Growth: City Revitalization

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personal vision statements:

*“I see the core areas of Shreveport preserved, repurposed, revitalized and valued.”*

## Chapter Summary

This chapter of the master plan builds on the discussion and recommendations in Chapter 6. The focus here is on a strategic approach to Shreveport's biggest development challenge: transforming disinvestment and blight into new successful mixed-income neighborhoods inside the loop. Discussion focuses on adding new tools, reorganizing and institutionalizing revitalization efforts, and taking a more strategic approach.

Strategies and actions include:

- Pursue a comprehensive and coordinated system to eliminate blight, assemble land and create new neighborhoods in disinvested areas, including a comprehensive property information database.
- Establish a Shreveport Redevelopment Authority with professional staff, on the model of the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, to take charge of blight elimination and redevelopment activities.
- Focus redevelopment activities strategically in locations that build on existing assets and provide critical mass, such as the medical district neighborhoods, and target coordinated housing, infrastructure, transportation, park, and service investments to create a successful mixed income neighborhood.
- Give priority to an integrated revitalization program for the medical district encompassing the LSU Health and Willis-Knighton areas as a mixed-income, mixed-use neighborhood and employment hub and as an example of planning and public-private investment to create critical mass for revitalization success.
- Use a neighborhood level planning approach and design character appropriate to older areas in housing redevelopment programs for neighborhoods such as Allendale and Cedar Grove.

GOALS	POLICIES FOR DECISION MAKERS
<i>A comprehensive, coordinated program to eliminate blight.</i>	Ensure that all relevant decision makers, including the judicial system and residents, are included in coordinated efforts.
<i>Redevelopment leadership and organization with adequate staff and funding.</i>	Support creation of a professional Shreveport Redevelopment Authority.
<i>Strategic and comprehensive redevelopment with critical mass that creates neighborhoods, not projects.</i>	Make revitalization investments to leverage nearby employment centers and strong neighborhoods.
	Support revitalization programs based on neighborhood plans for comprehensive and connected development.
	Promote mixed-income neighborhood development.
<i>High capacity community-based redevelopment organizations.</i>	Promote collaboration and capacity building among nonprofits.
<i>A turn-around in city image.</i>	Improve the image of Shreveport’s core neighborhoods.

## Findings

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- Revitalization neighborhoods combine many challenges, such as vacancy, blight, inadequate or poorly maintained infrastructure, crime and perception of crime, and uncompetitive housing stock.
- More than 1200 acres of adjudicated properties are located inside the loop and there are additional vacant and blighted properties. The adjudication process leaves many properties in limbo for many years.
- The Shreveport Redevelopment Agency is no longer active.
- Funding for revitalization initiatives has been limited.
- Most local nonprofit community development organizations lack the resources and staff expertise to produce significant amounts of new or rehabilitated housing.

## Challenges

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- Creating an agency with strong redevelopment and real estate development expertise and funding
- Focusing revitalization efforts to create critical mass and leverage private investment
- Land assembly to gain sufficient site control to make a visible difference
- Obtaining financing for larger projects
- Coordinating social service and workforce development supports and services with physical revitalization
- Developing nonprofit organizations' revitalization capacity



## A. Current Conditions

### SMARTER GROWTH THROUGH REVITALIZATION OF THE CITY CORE

Throughout the public process in the preparation of this master plan, participants have strongly supported revitalizing Shreveport's inner core neighborhoods—the places “inside the loop” where vacancy, blight and disinvestment have spread. It is these neighborhoods that have been emptying out during the last 30 years as residential development moved towards the edges of the city and into the parish.

Revitalization of blighted neighborhoods has been a constant in Shreveport's planning efforts dating back to the first master plan in 1957. Revitalization neighborhoods are of two general types: historically African-American neighborhoods whose condition was always affected by relatively low levels of both public and private investment, and inner-core neighborhoods that were historically white with good-quality housing stock and infrastructure.

Many of the revitalization neighborhoods—plagued by poor infrastructure, substandard housing stock, public health problems, and very limited public amenities—that reappear time after time in the city's planning documents are the historically African-American areas of the city. In the 1950s, these neighborhoods were described as overcrowded. At that time, many were located just outside the city limits and not yet annexed into the city. Streets were unpaved, water and sewer infrastructure nonexistent, and the housing stock often in poor condition. Unlike the 19th-century shotgun houses of New Orleans, with their attractive architectural details, many of the shotguns and bungalows in these neighborhoods were simple boxes, often poorly maintained by absentee landlords. North of the city, the Cooper Road area (now MLK) was a semirural village.

Over the years, as annexation took place, basic infrastructure was built, streets were paved and lights installed, and other limited improvements made, but as planner Arch Winter said in 1978, “most of the problems of those areas are still with us.”<sup>1</sup> By 2010, most of these revitalization

neighborhoods were no longer overpopulated, but instead were marked by vacant lots and boarded up houses. Demolition programs created the vacant lots as part of neighborhood improvement plans, but the number of new housing units created in those neighborhoods was insufficient to counter an increasing reputation for poverty, blight, and crime. Many families who could afford to choose where to live decided to move to other neighborhoods, in search of better housing and more security, often farther away from the city center.

The Martin Luther King neighborhood has followed a somewhat different trajectory than many of the other historically African-American neighborhoods. The presence of Southern University and the availability of inexpensive land sparked creation of some middle-class subdivisions, and more recently, apartment developments. However, the MLK area has some of the same infrastructure problems and housing blight as the inner-core neighborhoods.

For different reasons, historically white inner-core neighborhoods, such as Highland, also experienced some disinvestment. The post-World War II move from the city center to more suburban locations was more attractive to some families than maintaining or restoring the often high-quality historic building stock in Highland and similar neighborhoods. Some of these neighborhoods experienced waves of disinvestment when the Shreveport economy was in trouble, only to attract interest again when conditions improved and historic areas became appealing once more.

After Shreveport's population effectively stopped growing in the mid-1980s and the inner city experienced a crime wave, the problem of revitalization and redevelopment became even more difficult to solve. Demand for housing was weak in general, market-rate builders focused on the periphery of the city, and many families lacked confidence in the public school system. Although the economy and the school system have improved and crime rates have significantly diminished, a vicious circle of low demand and low public and private investment has continued to make revitalization and redevelopment particularly difficult in inner-city Shreveport. The limited growth in the overall number of households, plenty of inexpensive land on

<sup>1</sup> Public Hearing, Planning Commission—1978 Master Plan Update, August 15, 1978.

which to build new housing in other neighborhoods, the small number of units created by subsidized revitalization projects, continuing blight, and lingering perceptions of crime operate as substantial barriers to change. This means that the economic development and job creation strategies in this master plan are very much linked to the potential for greater success in neighborhood revitalization.

The fundamentals of neighborhood revitalization have been very effectively summarized by Alan Mallach, research director of the National Housing Institute:<sup>2</sup>

*Housing policies... should be designed to help restore the city's competitive position in its region and foster a more diverse economic mix in the city's neighborhoods. This can only be achieved where housing investments are more than discrete projects, but are part of a larger long-term strategic framework driven by market-building strategies. To that end, each housing investment or activity should be designed to achieve one or more of four fundamental policy goals:*

- *Build neighborhoods, not just houses*
- *Foster a more diverse economic mix in the city and its neighborhoods*
- *Make sure the community's present residents benefit from change*
- *Leverage housing investment to help rebuild the city's economy.*

**CHALLENGES**

Shreveport's revitalization neighborhoods are plagued with multiple challenges:

- Vacancy and blight
- Inadequate and/or poorly maintained infrastructure
- Crime and perception of crime
- High proportion of rental housing
- Lack of services and amenities
- Uncompetitive housing stock

<sup>2</sup> Alan Mallach, *Building a Better Urban Future: New Directions for Housing Policies in Weak Market Cities*, joint publication of Community Development Partnerships Network, The Enterprise Foundation, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and National Housing Institute, June 2005, p. 3. [www.nhi.org](http://www.nhi.org).

However, some of these neighborhoods—which are not “neighborhoods of choice”—have assets. For example, despite evidence of residential and commercial blight, the medical/InterTech district has almost as much employment as downtown. Cedar Grove East is close to Line Avenue and its services. A number of neighborhoods have vacant land for parks.

**Vacancy and blight**

Vacancy and blight in the revitalization neighborhoods is not only due to the high number of adjudicated properties in these areas. Many properties have absentee owners, multiple owners, owners with unknown addresses, and cloudy title. There are many blocks displaying the “empty teeth” of vacant lots and entire blocks of buildings have been removed in some cases. In fact, Ledbetter Heights and Allendale, neighborhoods closest to the city center, contain areas that are almost rural in character because of the high number of overgrown vacant lots.

**FIGURE 11.1 ADJUDICATED PROPERTIES INSIDE THE LOOP**

TOTAL	PERCENT OF ADJUDICATED PROPERTIES	ACRES
4,439	62%	1,243

Since 2007, Operation T.B.O.N.E. (Taking Back Our Neighborhoods Every Day) has teamed community policing officers with property-standards inspectors. In some cases it has focused on specific neighborhoods with targeted code enforcement, clean-up and blight removal. Demolition of blighted structures has accelerated under this program. From 2000 to 2009, a total of 1,983 demolition orders were issued, and approximately 207 unit demolished annually on average.

**Inadequate or poorly maintained infrastructure**

In many revitalization neighborhoods, infrastructure has never been adequate—street maintenance, sidewalks, drainage and street lights can be lacking. In other cases, infrastructure has not been well-maintained. As the number of households decline in these neighborhoods, the lack of maintenance becomes a vicious cycle as limited City resources are not applied in declining areas because there are fewer people living there.

**Crime and perception of crime**

Neighborhoods that appear neglected can attract crime because they look like nobody cares what happens in them. Revitalization neighborhoods sometime appear insecure because of the presence of boarded-up houses, even though they actually may have relatively low crime because there are few inhabitants. Community policing programs have assigned officers and community liaisons to neighborhoods and as of 2010, crime overall in Shreveport is at a 33-year low. In any case, revitalization neighborhoods at a minimum must overcome the perception that they are dangerous. Often, long-time residents of a community will retain assumptions about neighborhoods long after conditions have changed for the better. New residents in a

city are sometimes more willing to move to revitalization neighborhoods because they do not carry these outdated assumptions.

**Transient population and neighborhood stability**

Homeowners tend to contribute to stable neighborhoods because they have a financial and emotional investment in neighborhood conditions. Neighborhoods where a high proportion of landlords (often as owners of smaller multifamily buildings or single-family rentals) provide only minimum maintenance can undermine neighborhood stability.

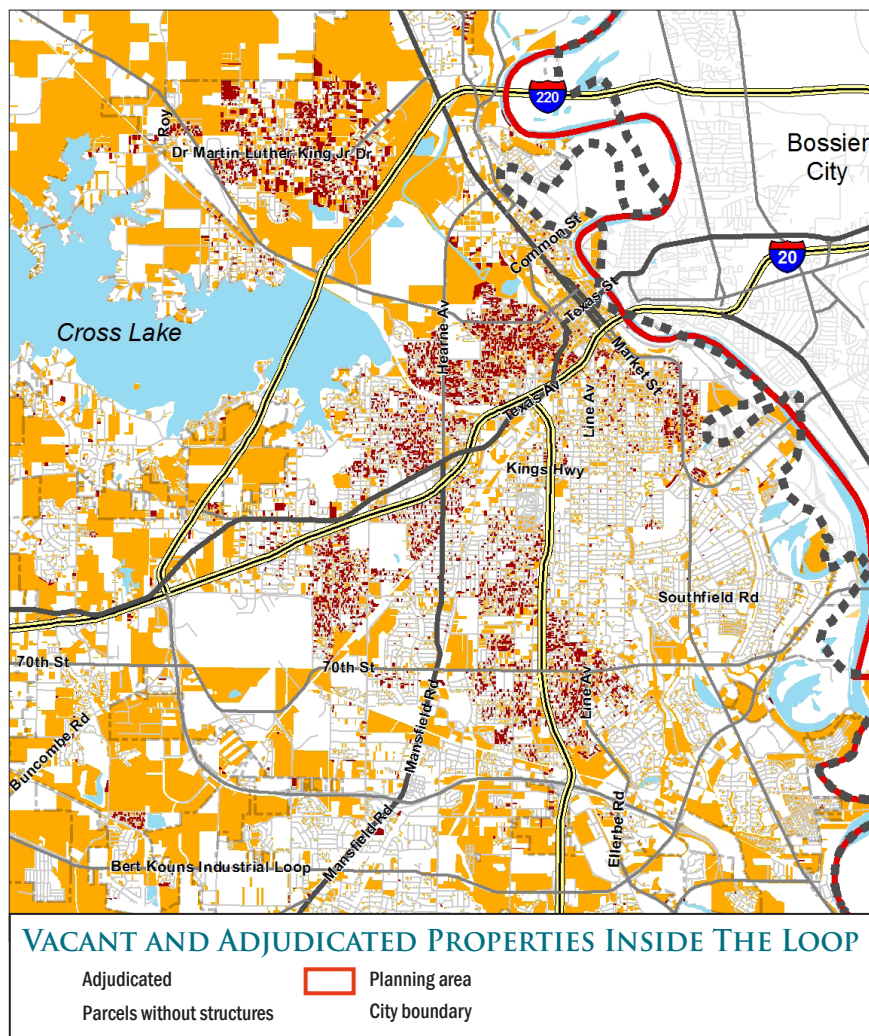
**Lack of services and amenities**

With declining numbers of households, revitalization neighborhoods do not attract neighborhood-serving retail and services. However, they often have parks and other amenities from an earlier era when there was more population, and SporTran continues to provide public transportation services in revitalization neighborhoods.

**Uncompetitive housing stock**

In many revitalization neighborhoods, much of the existing housing stock is in fair to poor condition. Beyond the issue of condition, however, is the fact that in most, if not all of these neighborhoods, a substantial portion of the housing stock is not competitive with newer housing and housing elsewhere in the city in terms of unit size and amenities.

MAP 11.1 VACANT AND ADJUDICATED PROPERTIES INSIDE THE LOOP



Source: NCLOG 2009



## REVITALIZATION AND REDEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN SHREVEPORT

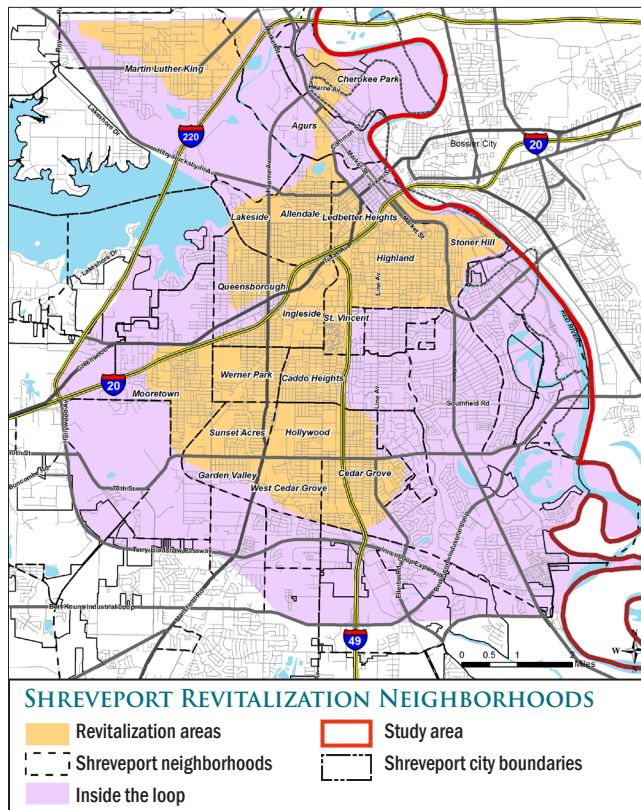
Since the 1990s, the City has launched several initiatives to eliminate blight in the Shreveport's disinvested neighborhoods and to begin redevelopment and revitalization. Despite some improvements, these programs have had only limited impact for several reasons:

- Inadequate implementation and follow-through
- Lack of a comprehensive and strategic approach
- Limited capacity
- Inadequate resources

In 1997, the City commissioned a report that documented the need for revitalization in seven inner-core neighborhoods and provided a redevelopment plan: *The Shreveport Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies Report*, prepared by J-Quad Planning Group and published in 2000. The neighborhoods were Lakeside, Allendale, Ledbetter Heights, Stoner Hill, Queensborough, Ingleside, and Mooretown. This report met the requirements of the state Parish Redevelopment Law (RS 33:4625) and constituted the redevelopment plan for the Shreveport Redevelopment Agency (SRA) that had been created in 1980 with the City Council as the SRA Board. An addendum to the report produced in 2005 added two more redevelopment neighborhoods, MLK and Cedar Grove, making nine in all. For each neighborhood, the *Revitalization Strategies Report* included a survey of housing conditions, a community profile, and a neighborhood classification system that indicated the conditions and direction of change in each neighborhood. The report provided comprehensive information on revitalization strategies and tools, as well as specific recommendations for each neighborhood. Despite the fact that information about some specific structures and subareas in neighborhoods may be out of date, this remains a thorough and comprehensive resource on revitalization strategies.

The City's 2009-2013 *HUD Consolidated Plan* foresees authorization under the revitalization report of an additional three neighborhoods, with another seven slated for future inclusion. These ten neighborhoods—currently not covered by the revitalization report—are Caddo

MAP 11.2 SHREVEPORT REVITALIZATION NEIGHBORHOODS



Source: NLCOG, Goody Clancy 2009

Heights, Cherokee Park, Greenwood Acres, Highland, Hollywood, Reisor, Solo Hood, Sunset Acres, Waterside, and Werner Park. These further designations would yield 19 revitalization, or “target” neighborhoods in all. The revitalization neighborhoods correspond to areas where adjudicated properties are concentrated, all of which fall within CDBG-eligible census tracts. (See Map 11.3.)

The *Revitalization Strategies Report* pointed out the need for capacity building among existing nonprofit housing organizations but also recommended creation of a single nonprofit agency to implement and champion revitalization activities. This entity would coordinate activities; assemble land; function as a vehicle for innovative financing and land banking; redevelop and market properties; and provide information to the public. No such implementing entity has been created as yet.

The *Revitalization Strategies Report* also emphasized four fundamental principles of revitalization, none of which has been adequately implemented.

- A comprehensive approach integrating physical, social, economic, and human issues.** A comprehensive approach to neighborhood redevelopment has never been established in a systematic way. One attempt on the nonprofit side is the partnership in Allendale between Community Renewal International and the Fuller Housing Center, in which Community Renewal has focused on community organization and the Fuller Center has assisted in construction of 42 houses as of mid-2010, with plans for 20 more, a park, and a small grocery.

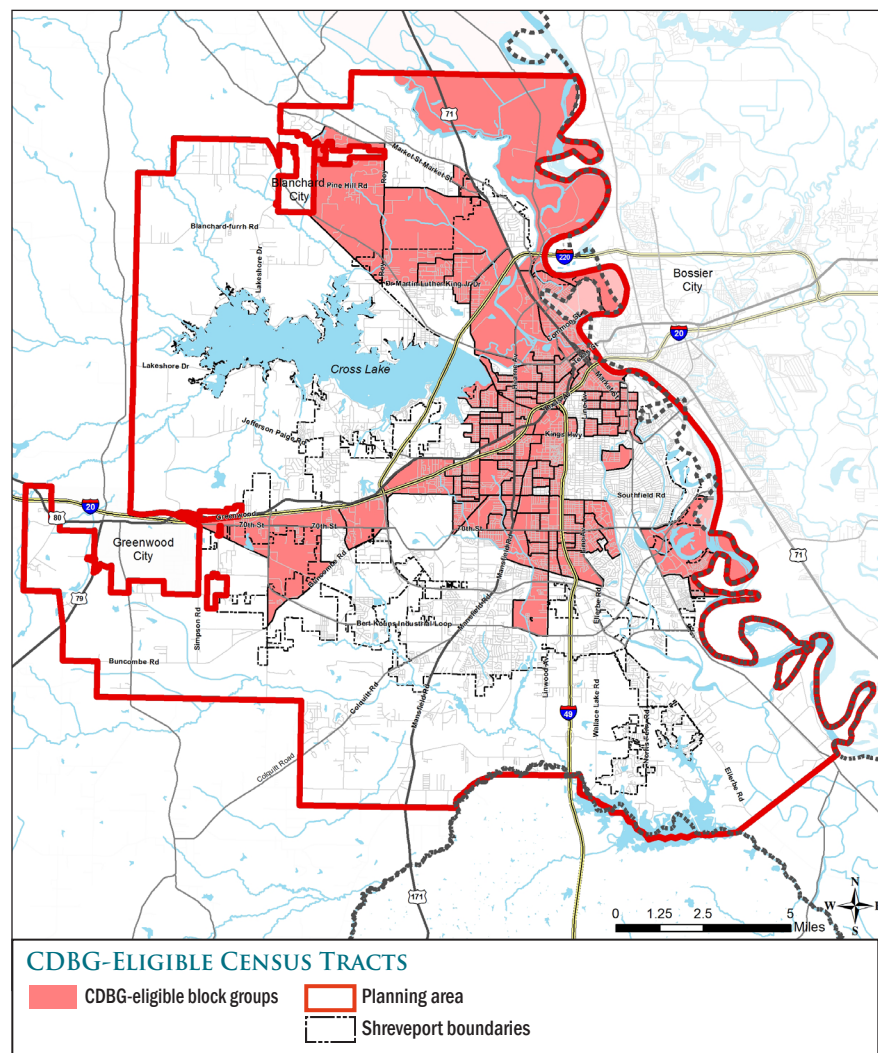
neighborhood in Shreveport is covered by one of these teams. Residents report that under this system, the City has become more responsive to code-enforcement issues.

Nonetheless, policy guidance has tended to revert to a system of spreading inadequate resources thinly across many areas, rather than making strategic decisions about where to invest efforts and funding to maximum effect.

- Improved service delivery, regulatory enforcement and policy guidance from government.** Better organization of code enforcement efforts has had some effect, but, as noted in Chapter 6, residents report that violators are not sufficiently sanctioned if they appeal to City Council or end up in the court system. The City initiated two programs to coordinate code enforcement and blight elimination, first in 2004, with an ordinance to create multi-agency “blight elimination teams” that would recommend to the City Council areas to be designated as “community improvement areas,” coordinate focused blight elimination efforts reporting to the mayor’s office, and make regular reports to the mayor and council on progress. This program on paper followed best practices for coordination and unified leadership, but it does not appear to have been implemented. A few years later, Operation T.B.O.N.E. was launched to link Property Standards Teams with Police Department liaisons to work with neighborhood associations. Every

- Enhanced resources, including partnerships between government, business, and community, and building of community institutions with capacity to take a role in neighborhood improvement.**

MAP 11.3 CDBG-ELIGIBLE CENSUS TRACTS



Source: NLCOG, 2009

Inadequate resources and insufficient capacity continue to be serious problems. While demolition has eliminated some of the worst blight, redevelopment has been very slow. Acting as the redevelopment agency, the City Council before 2006 took some adjudicated properties by eminent domain and sold or donated them to nonprofit groups. Many small community development organizations have been formed, but they have created relatively few new housing units.

To fill the vacuum, the Community Development Department has taken on the role of planning and developing new ownership housing projects for income-eligible households in the target revitalization areas by combining federal entitlement funds, other state or federal funding sources, and some private funding. Because of the department's mission, expertise and resources, the projects so far have been housing subdivisions without the coordinated planning and service supports that would result from a comprehensive revitalization program. Other than paying for demolition and providing part of the funding for infrastructure improvements needed for redevelopment projects, the City has made no significant investments in funding for redevelopment.

Still quite new, but promising, is the emergence in 2007 of the Strategic Action Council's Northwest Louisiana Community Development Fund I, created to be a \$40 million "double bottom line" fund to invest in low- and moderate-income areas of a ten-parish service area. The fund's first investment is the mixed-income Riverscape development in Stoner Hill, in partnership with a for-profit developer, Vintage Realty Company, and a faith-based nonprofit, Trinity One Community Development Corporation, as well as the Northwest Louisiana Local Investors Group, which comprises over \$2.250 million in funding commitments from local institutions, companies and individuals.

- **Targeting of resources by making "tough decisions" on priorities and timelines, where to invest, and how to attract additional resources.**

It is worth citing the Revitalization Strategies Report in more detail on this principle:

*"Resource targeting presents a tremendous opportunity to comprehensively diminish the rapidly spreading blight and neighborhood deterioration, negatively affecting numerous neighborhoods throughout the City of Shreveport. The distribution of decline is widespread and in many instances highly concentrated in specific sectors of the city, such as the designated target areas. A resource targeting program approach focuses on bringing about neighborhood revitalization by targeting city resources and encouraging neighborhood partnerships between residents and the City, financial institutions, educational institutions, and other organizations with direct interest in the well being of the community. The resource targeting program should be focused, holistic, and comprehensively administered. Under the current system of spreading the revitalization resources among numerous projects across the city, the program impact of investing those resources offers little by way of visual change to the neighborhoods. The current system often addresses issues individually, leaving other conditions remaining that should have been addressed at the same time in order to protect the programmatic resources being invested."*<sup>3</sup>

There are a number of reasons that revitalization programs have not yet had a strong impact on Shreveport's disinvested neighborhoods. Many redevelopment efforts in the past, both by the City and by nonprofit organizations, have consisted of projects with a small number of units located somewhat opportunistically where the City happened to own property that could be contributed to the project. The locations have usually been within some of the most disinvested neighborhoods and the funding sources have tended to emphasize the production of below-market-rate housing, which makes it harder to attract additional private development. Infrastructure improvements are provided as necessary to make these housing developments viable, but the developments typically are not otherwise part of a more comprehensive redevelopment plan that includes commercial development, public spaces, social

<sup>3</sup> *Shreveport Strategic Neighborhood Revitalization Report* (2000), p.13.



services, and jobs. In many cases, the new development has been sited and designed to create an enclave separated from the neighborhood, rather than to knit the neighborhood together. Although these projects provide welcome new housing for the families who buy or rent them, they have a small impact on the overall problem of blight and vacancy.

Even assuming that redevelopment of adjudicated properties were the only goal, the mathematics of small-scale redevelopment remain daunting. Inside the loop, over 4,000 properties covering some 1,200 acres are adjudicated. At a relatively low density of 5 housing units per acre, redevelopment of 1,200 acres would result in 6,000 housing units. To achieve this number of units in 20 years through affordable housing programs would require average production of 300 new housing units a year—which is close to the annual average of net new housing units of all types produced in the city during the period 2000–2009.

Of course, adjudicated properties are simply the symptoms of broader disinvestment seen in the numerous poorly-maintained buildings and the vacant lots and buildings that are not adjudicated in these areas. Current policies focus on 19 identified “target areas” where the majority of adjudicated properties are located. One of the questions that needs to be asked is whether all of these 19 target areas should, in fact, be redeveloped. In some cases, the reason some of these neighborhoods have slowly been abandoned as people exercised more choice may be that they are not very good places to live. Given the choice, most people prefer not to live next to heavy industry or locations with heavy trucking, where there is air pollution, in a location subject to repeated flooding, or in a fragment of a neighborhood left over after highway construction. (Examples include houses close to the Calumet refinery or near the industrial park in the Hollywood Avenue area.) In neighborhoods of this type, many of the housing units are rentals and often the remaining owner-occupants are elderly and do not want to leave. But when they pass on, these neighborhoods will not naturally become neighborhoods of choice. Given the large amount of land in Shreveport relative to population—even assuming that the household growth rates and distribution goals of this plan are met in 2030—there is no reason to make public investments in areas that will have a greater struggle to attract

self-sustaining private investment. Some of these areas may be more appropriate in the long term for other uses. These can be difficult choices, as all residential areas have a history, but a long-term approach of transformation, while providing better housing and neighborhood conditions elsewhere, will be more beneficial for the city.

## REDEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

### The Shreveport Redevelopment Agency

In 1980, Ordinance No. 338 created the Shreveport Redevelopment Agency (SRA) “to assume and exercise all of the powers and functions of a redevelopment agency” under the Parish Redevelopment Law (La. RS 33:4625). The members of the City Council became the governing board of the agency, which has no professional staff with knowledge and experience in real estate and development. In practice, the SRA has been used to acquire properties through expropriation (eminent domain) within a redevelopment area for sale or transfer to nonprofit housing developers. Between 2001 and 2007, approximately 119 lots were expropriated and transferred to nonprofit housing development organizations. Some of these organizations have not been successful in creating new housing on the lots they received.

State constitutional amendments approved by voters in late 2006 severely constrained the ability of governments to transfer properties acquired through eminent domain to private parties, which affected the SRA program. The SRA has not been active in recent years and its budget for 2010 was \$148,800.

Under state law, a redevelopment agency has powers within the redevelopment area to:

- carry out redevelopment projects and related activities
- make and execute contracts
- make public improvements
- acquire land and improvements and demolish structures
- carry out relocation of displaced persons
- borrow money
- make plans for the redevelopment area, including relocation of streets and utilities
- sue and be sued.

### **The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Downtown Shreveport Development Corporation (DSDC)**

The DDA, with the DSDC, acts as a redevelopment authority within the designated DDA boundaries. Consult Chapter 10 for more information on their powers, funding sources and activities within the DDA boundaries.

### **Community Development Department**

The Community Development Department commissioned the *Shreveport Comprehensive Revitalization Strategies Plan* as well as neighborhood plans for Allendale and Ledbetter Heights, and it administers the City’s federal entitlement funding in eligible census tracts and to income-eligible households, as described in Chapter 6. The department has completed one first-time-homebuyer redevelopment project in the MLK neighborhood, Shepard Place, and is completing a second one, Concordia Place, in Stoner Hill. As noted earlier, these homebuyer developments are funded from multiple public and private sources, require infrastructure improvements, and provide below-market-rate housing to a mix of low- and moderate-income households. Depending on the requirements of the funding source, the incomes can range as high as 120% of area median income. The Community Development Department’s long-term goal is to create redevelopment projects in the remaining 17 target areas where adjudicated properties are concentrated.

### **Shreveport Housing Authority**

The Shreveport Housing Authority has broad powers to develop and manage housing, including mixed-income and mixed-use development. The housing authority has also set up a nonprofit subsidiary that can help further the SHA’s mission through access to funding sources, as a nonprofit, that are not available to the Housing Authority. The SHA is pursuing a redevelopment plan for the demolished Jackson Heights public housing project on Milam Street in Allendale. As noted in Chapter 6, the initial plan is to rebuild that development with approximately 150 units in a mixture of cottages and townhouses, as well as a mix of incomes (up to 80% of AMI). Approximately 20% of the units would be for elderly households. The broader focus is to develop market-rate housing and neighborhood-serving

retail, possibly in mixed-use buildings. The expected minimum investment is \$25 million.

### **Nonprofit sector development capacity and production**

In many cities, community-based nonprofit organizations play a critical role in developing affordable housing and, increasingly, overall neighborhood development. There are a number of community development groups in Shreveport, including some that have produced or hope to produce affordable housing. Most are very small, do not have professional development expertise or access to significant funding, and have produced few new or rehabilitated housing units. Some may provide other services, such as homebuyer training, while others are inactive or engaged in small-scale service projects. These limited results are a testament to the fact that nonprofit housing development is hard—in fact, many would argue it is more difficult than for-profit development. Typically, nonprofit developers depend on multiple layers of financing, often with different requirements, have precarious operational funding, and work within significant constraints. In a setting like Shreveport, where resources for revitalization and affordable housing development have been limited to begin with, it is not surprising that having many small community development organization has not produced consistent development results.

## **B. Community Issues and Concerns**

### **Public opinion survey**

A public opinion survey conducted at the beginning of the planning process for this master plan revealed:

- 81% of respondents ranked improving quality of life as “very important” to the future of the Shreveport area
- 67% said it was “very important” and 23% said it was “somewhat important” to the planning area’s future to have quality housing for all income groups
- 48% said it was “very important” and 34% said it was “somewhat important” for the future of the area to revitalize central city neighborhoods



- 84% of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that areas with vacant buildings or land should be redeveloped
- 79% felt that development should be promoted downtown and in central areas with vacant housing or land
- 24% of respondents said they felt their neighborhood conditions were “getting worse”
- 75% of respondent “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the government should promote development with incentives and public investments when needed.

### **Visioning forum for the 2030 master plan and “speak out” neighborhood vision meetings**

City revitalization issues were a common topic of discussion at these meetings. Much discussion focused on the importance of community, family and connected neighborhoods; community renewal and pride; and a housing policy and programs for affordable housing. Key highlights include:

- self-sustaining neighborhoods that are age-, race- and income-integrated, with local food, recreation, educational outreach, neighborhood retail, and economic opportunities
- neighborhoods with easy access to work and commerce areas
- exceptional schools in every neighborhood
- neighborhoods that are well cared for, safe, and that generate pride
- improved enforcement of laws and regulations in the neighborhoods
- incentives to eliminate blight
- basic infrastructure improvements—water, sewer, electric.

### **Neighborhood and district meetings**

The major concerns that surfaced in district and neighborhood level meetings included:

- Focus on revitalizing older neighborhoods in need, not new development.
- Increase housing choice and provide more quality, affordable housing.

- Reuse adjudicated property for housing or as open space.
- Provide incentives for redevelopment of residential and commercial properties in the core.
- Tear down homes and businesses that are beyond repair and create green spaces.
- Revitalize old shopping center areas.
- Create usable green space from drainage infrastructure areas.
- Create walking and biking trails downtown and to connect with other neighborhoods.

### **City revitalization in the vision and principles**

The vision describes “Underutilized properties throughout the city [that] have been restored to community use with housing, shops, offices, or parks and other public spaces. Downtown and our diverse neighborhoods offer attractive and affordable choices for young singles and couples, families with children, empty-nesters, and retirees.”

Many master plan principles directly support city revitalization:

- > Connected people and places
- > Fairness and opportunity for everyone
- > Strengthened assets and enhanced possibilities
- > A green and healthy community
- > High standards of quality in development and design
- > Communication, transparency and community participation

## **C. Strategic Approaches to Redevelopment**

### **REDEVELOPMENT AND LAND ASSEMBLY TOOLS <sup>4</sup>**

The nature of disinvestment is such that many inner-core neighborhoods have a patchwork of vacant or blighted properties interspersed with well-maintained housing.

<sup>4</sup> Descriptions of some of these issues and tools is indebted to David A. Marcello, *Housing Redevelopment Strategies in the Wake of Katrina and Anti-Constitutional Amendments: Mapping a Path Through the Landscape of Disaster*, Tulane University School of Law Public Law and Legal Theory Research Paper Series, Research Paper NO. 07-17, Fall 2007. <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1124960>

Redeveloping small lots on a case-by-case basis is expensive and makes it more difficult to have a significant impact. It is much more effective and efficient to redevelop by assembling a number of parcels, creating a master site plan for the entire area, and then building. However, land assembly can be complicated and time consuming, particularly because of laws peculiar to Louisiana.

- **Expropriation.** The City of Shreveport, acting through the Shreveport Redevelopment Agency, formerly used expropriation (eminent-domain takings) to gain control over blighted property, which it then sold or transferred to nonprofit organizations for redevelopment. The use of expropriation for this purpose became virtually impossible after amendments to the state constitution in 2006 in response to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Kelo v. City of New London*. Although expropriation to protect public health and safety continues to be legal, the permissible disposition of expropriated property has been significantly narrowed. Expropriation for a public purpose, such as roads or parks, that the city plans to keep for at least 30 years, remains possible. However, if the city wants to transfer or sell an expropriated property held for less than 30 years, it must first offer it to the owner, heirs or successors at current market value, and if they do not purchase the property, it must go to public auction. The constitutional amendments make the SRA's program of expropriation for housing development impossible. However, expropriation powers could still be used to help create a permanent, publicly-owned open-space network.

- **Tax sales and use of adjudicated properties.** Tax-delinquent properties bought at public auction are transferred directly from the original owner to the buyer, without a public entity taking title at any time. However, in Louisiana, the property can still be redeemed within three years if the original owner pays the taxes. As a result, the buyer is not likely to invest in rehabilitation or redevelopment until the three year redemption period has passed. If the property fails to find a buyer at a public auction it becomes an "adjudicated property." A parish or city—or both—

acquires a tax interest in the property and is responsible for selling it, but it does not take legal possession of the property unless it is desired for a long-term public purpose. These properties are still subject to a three-year redemption process from the date the adjudication is recorded. A property can be adjudicated both to a Parish and a City if both jurisdictions are owed unpaid taxes.

The burdens on potential purchasers can be significant. Caddo Parish and the City of Shreveport require the three-year redemption period to pass before a prospective purchaser can apply to buy the property, which must be legally abandoned. The Parish or City must declare it surplus property (i.e., they do not want to take control of it for a public purpose) and send notifications to owners. The potential purchaser must pay for a title report and an appraisal report and make a bid. If the offer to purchase is approved by the Parish Commission or the City Council, the amount then becomes the minimum at a public auction. The prospective purchaser gets the deed and title to the property only if his bid is the highest at the auction.

The City of Shreveport has ordinances allowing donation of the City's interest in adjudicated abandoned and blighted residential properties to a nonprofit organization that agrees to renovate and maintain the property until it transfers the property to an owner. In addition, adjacent property owners who maintain a vacant lot in adjudication can apply to buy the lot for \$1 after the three-year redemption period is over. The parish or city can take physical possession of an adjudicated property, but that requires an ordinance. More legal steps are required to take possession of the properties for the purposes of redevelopment by the city.

The complications of Louisiana's tax sale process guarantee that properties can sit abandoned and deteriorating for years, with negative impacts on the security, property values, and appearance of the surrounding neighborhood. Moreover, many blighted properties have cloudy titles, making notification of owners and transfer of clear title extremely problematic. In addition, publicity around

Haynesville Shale mineral rights has created new interest by absentee heirs in paying back taxes to retain ownership, in some cases while still failing to effectively maintain or redevelop the property.

The Caddo Parish sheriff in 2010 began online auctions for adjudicated property. While this change may broaden the market for these properties, that can be a mixed blessing. Cities such as Baltimore have found that out-of-state speculators who buy properties sight unseen and hold them can be barriers to effective land assembly and redevelopment.

- **Code enforcement liens and auctions.** An alternative to the convoluted adjudication process is the code-enforcement lien auction. Code enforcement auctions do not require redemption periods, allow for administrative procedures, can transfer property to third parties without giving the original property owner the right of first refusal, and transfer clear title. The City of Shreveport already has the authority to use an administrative hearing procedure to assess fines for violation of health, housing and environmental codes, file liens against the property, and take the property to auction. This authority has not been used much in Louisiana, perhaps because local leaders feel it may not give property owners enough time to cure their violations. The large number of blighted properties and the cost to the City of enforcement and property maintenance, however, argue for this expeditious approach.

Code-enforcement liens and auctions could also act as a deterrent to real estate investors who buy adjudicated properties, do nothing to bring them up to code, rent them out and eventually walk away from them when they are no longer rentable. These are slum landlords that have made an industry out of blight.

- **Special legislation for redevelopment authorities.** Other Louisiana municipalities and urbanized parishes have taken advantage of streamlined legal mechanisms available for redevelopment authorities to acquire blighted and tax-adjudicated properties, clear title, and

return the property as neighborhood assets. These other jurisdictions include:

- New Orleans (2004)
- Opelousas (2007)
- East Baton Rouge (2007, amended '08 and '09)
- Jefferson Parish (including several unincorporated municipalities) (2007)
- North Lafayette (2008)
- New Iberia (2009)
- Lake Charles North (2009)

Given the nature of the tax adjudication process, the experience of the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority is that it is exceedingly difficult for the City of Shreveport or any purchaser of these properties to gain marketable and insurable title to these properties.

The adoption of special local legislation could give the Shreveport Redevelopment Authority, like that of East Baton Rouge, the ability to acquire and quickly clear title to tax-sale and adjudicated properties. Following the East Baton Rouge model, the SRA would be required to follow detailed procedures to authorize the filing of notices in the property records, perform full title examinations, file a single petition covering a number of properties, and appear at court hearings on the petition. In the absence of objections or redemptions, an order from district court would be able to be entered within approximately 120 days, vesting clear title in the SRA, which would then be able to land bank or redevelop the property.

- **Land Banks.** Land banks are entities that secure control to tax-delinquent, vacant, and abandoned properties; assume ownership and clear the title; rehabilitate or demolish blighted structures and clean up the sites; and finally, transfer title to homeowners or responsible developers. Land banks do not function to take the place of private markets but to act where the private market is no longer functioning well and work to create the conditions and raise values sufficiently for private investment to re-enter the neighborhood.

- **Community Land Trusts.** Community land trusts (CLT) are membership-based nonprofits that provide housing that is affordable because the owner has title to the building and not to the land. A CLT retains ownership of land and leases it to the homeowner. The ground lease can be renewed and inherited, but a CLT needs to give permission for subletting and major capital improvements, and regulates mortgaging and maintenance. In many cases, the housing remains affordable in perpetuity because, on resale, it must be sold at a price affordable to a low- or moderate-income household, though this is not a requirement. CLTs also hold title to community open space and facilities. Some CLTs act as developers while others focus only on assembling and leasing land and assuring permanent affordability of housing on the land. The cities of Chicago and Irvine, CA, and Sarasota County, FL, have recently adopted the CLT model as a way to manage or create owner-occupied affordable housing.<sup>5</sup>

### STRATEGIC CHOICES: IDENTIFYING AND CREATING “OPPORTUNITY NEIGHBORHOODS”

Following the four principles for housing policy laid out by Alan Mallach—as part of a broader approach to strengthen the competitive position of the city to benefit all its residents—Shreveport needs to make some strategic choices about what to do first. The four principles are:

- Build neighborhoods, not just houses.
- Foster a more diverse economic mix in the city and its neighborhoods.
- Make sure the community’s present residents benefit from change.
- Leverage housing investment to help rebuild the city’s economy.

In creating and implementing a revitalization strategy, the City needs to identify the areas where public actions and investments are most likely to produce the most benefits in terms of the four principles. Making these “Opportunity Neighborhoods” a priority will create

successes visible to the entire metropolitan area and encourage further redevelopment.

The current revitalization policy in Shreveport of planting a redevelopment project in target areas containing the most adjudicated and vacant properties in each of 19 neighborhoods tacitly spreads resources throughout all disinvested areas without evaluating which are more likely to create market-driven successes for the city as whole. These proposed redevelopment projects would be planned and financed through the Community Development Department, though a variety of nonprofit developers would be invited to build houses and neighborhood amenities. Given the fact that resources are always constrained, it is important to ask several questions about this policy direction:

- Especially while population growth remains modest, should all of the 19 target areas be redeveloped as residential areas? As noted earlier, in some areas, disinvestment may be a function of the fact that these areas have many disadvantages as places to live. The number of homeowners has declined, rentals have increased, and younger families who can afford to buy are choosing other locations. Many are “environmental justice” areas where hazardous or polluting land uses were located in low-income or minority neighborhoods in the past. An appropriate and equitable approach must be found to provide a decent quality of life in these neighborhoods, maintaining infrastructure and services to support the households that continue to live there. However, significant investments in these less-competitive neighborhoods would not have as strong a benefit for the city as a whole. “Opportunity Neighborhoods” should be neighborhoods with a high likelihood of success
- The Department of Community Development has taken on redevelopment activities for the City, seeking multiple sources of financing, overseeing site development and construction, and marketing assisted housing units to income-eligible households. Because of the department’s mission and restrictions on its funding, and like most community development agencies, it has focused limited resources narrowly on housing creation. The two projects it has built so far under this policy direction, Shepard Place and Concordia Place, were conceived on the model

<sup>5</sup> John Emmeus Davis, *Shared Equity Homeownership*, (Montclair, NJ: National Housing Institute, 2006), p. 20-22. [www.nhi.org](http://www.nhi.org).

of small, suburban gated subdivisions that function as enclaves within surrounding neighborhoods rather than comprehensive neighborhood-wide revitalization.

More recent discussions with the MPC and the master plan team have focused on taking a broader neighborhood planning approach for future projects, including using design prototypes that fit more harmoniously into the gridded urban fabric of older neighborhoods. When funding sources permit, the department has pursued an income mix in the new developments that includes households up to 120% of area median income. The department's role and the limits on its resources, however, make it difficult for it to play the broader leadership role needed. Like Baton Rouge and numerous other cities around the country, Shreveport needs a redevelopment authority with professional staff to take on the challenge of comprehensive neighborhood and economic revitalization. The Community Development Department would continue to be an important partner but would not have full responsibility for redevelopment activities.

### **Linking neighborhoods with strategic opportunities**

In order to make progress over the next twenty years in achieving the Shreveport-Caddo vision of revitalized neighborhoods, strategic choices have to be made so that redevelopment and revitalization programs and investments create successful models that advance the overall competitiveness of the city. These investments have a critical role to play not only in providing higher-quality housing for current residents of these neighborhoods, but in creating neighborhoods strong enough to attract private housing investment. The goal is to create successful mixed-income, racially diverse communities with a variety of housing choices in these "Opportunity Neighborhoods." Further revitalization efforts can then be modeled on these successes.

### **Opportunity neighborhoods: Shreveport's "Twin Stars" and their planets**

The first Opportunity Neighborhoods need to demonstrate success, so they should be chosen with an eye to areas with the most assets and with the potential for spreading and connecting to one another and to stable areas of the city. In Shreveport, the central part of the city contains two major

employment areas that together concentrate about 20% of citywide jobs: downtown and the medical district that encompasses LSU Health and the Willis-Knighton medical campus. (The I-49 barrier divides the Christus Schumpert medical area from the Kings Highway/Greenwood Road medical area, and it should be incorporated in revitalization efforts over time.) These job centers are huge assets for neighborhood revitalization. Chapter 10 made the case for developing downtown as a neighborhood through a combination of adaptive reuse of existing buildings, creation of new housing in the downtown core, and creation of new neighborhoods, first in Cross Bayou and eventually in Ledbetter Heights. A subsequent section of the current chapter includes a conceptual plan for comprehensive revitalization of the Ingleside-Queensborough medical district neighborhoods. Downtown and the medical district have the potential to become major mixed-use and mixed-income districts, connected to one another along a revitalized Texas Avenue, and with enhanced public transportation connections.

These two major mixed-use opportunity areas, the medical district and downtown, can serve as the twin stars of a solar system of Opportunity Neighborhoods linked to Shreveport's major centers. Investments should be made in these other Opportunity Neighborhoods based on proximity to the "twin stars" (in order to benefit from their success), on proximity to other stable areas, and to build on other investments and assets. Thus, one potential Opportunity Neighborhood would be Allendale, west of downtown and north of the medical district. Significant neighborhood-scale investments are underway and in the planning stages in Allendale.

A somewhat different case is Cedar Grove East. Located between I-49 and stable and affluent neighborhoods, establishment of a mixed-income neighborhood with diverse housing types (including assisted housing), attractive design, green spaces, walkable neighborhoods, and strong management of rental properties can attract private development and investment. Appropriately-scaled multifamily developments on Line Avenue could make a transition to cottage-scale developments away from the main artery. In both Allendale and Cedar Grove East, redevelopment must be based on a comprehensive plan for neighborhood revitalization that includes residents who are



there now and plans for redeveloped housing that could attract new residents.

### Recruit residents for Opportunity

#### Neighborhoods in environmental justice areas

Resident of areas that are not designated as priority Opportunity Neighborhoods should be actively recruited to move to redeveloped neighborhoods. Until Shreveport's

population and household numbers start to grow significantly, successful new development will have the effect, at least partially, of vacating another part of the city. Vacating that residential land would be a benefit and if properly carried out, the relocated households would move to much better housing in better environments. The industrial areas would also benefit because of the elimination of conflicts with residential uses.

## Revitalization with Cottage Neighborhoods



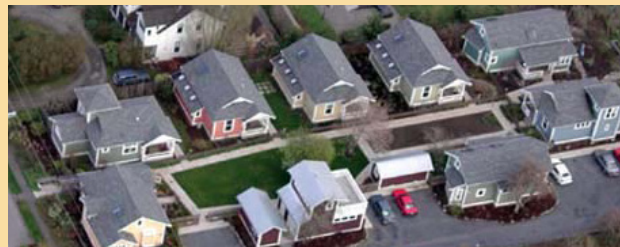
The "cottage neighborhood"—a new development model that emerged in Washington state and is becoming more common around the country—provides an excellent model for revitalization in Shreveport's older neighborhoods.

Cottage neighborhoods are infill developments that fit into the existing rectangular blocks of the historic street grid rather than forcing suburban-style cul-de-sacs into the older pattern. The housing is a cottage style that is also harmonious in scale and style with Shreveport's older neighborhoods of all income levels. The units are modest in size, typically no larger than 1,200 sf, and can be particularly suitable for singles, couples, retirees, and single-parent households. They are built at densities similar to garden apartments while retaining the atmosphere of a single-family neighborhood. Characteristics of cottage developments:

- Developments are built in **clusters of 4-12 units** on existing blocks.

- **Integrated design** provides shared functional open space, off-street parking, external and internal site access, and consistent landscaping.
- The units may be separately platted or developed as condominiums.
- A **transition from public to private space**—from the street through a low gate to a common open space to a small yard for each unit surrounded by a low fence or hedge—gives each residence a defined private space.
- Active spaces in the house look out on the common area, providing **"eyes on the street."**
- Houses are **sited to promote privacy** by matching the side of a house with more windows to the more closed side of the neighboring house.
- Individual units are marked by **variety in design**, color, materials, and other aspects to provide visual interest, while retaining a general cottage character (elements such as porches, dormers, bay windows, visible trim, etc.).
- Off-street parking for the development is screened and located away from the street

Sources and for more information: [www.rosschapin.com](http://www.rosschapin.com) and [www.cottagecompany.com](http://www.cottagecompany.com)



Source: Ross Chapin Architects

## Neighborhoods In Bloom: Richmond, Virginia

After a long history of scattering funds across a large number of high-poverty neighborhoods and seeing few positive results, the City of Richmond decided in 1999 to target its resources to a few carefully chosen neighborhoods. The resources included the bulk of the City's federal entitlement funds (CDBG and HOME) as well as significant amounts of capital-improvement dollars and other resources (e.g., aggressive code enforcement and accelerated vacant- and abandoned-property disposition). This initiative—Neighborhoods in Bloom—focused significant resources on seven neighborhoods with the goal of achieving a critical mass of public investment needed to stimulate self-sustaining, private-market activity there. LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), through local community development corporations, aligned its grants and loans with those of the city.

The program focused on improving existing owner-occupied units, rehabilitating blighted properties, and constructing new housing to create mixed-income homeownership opportunities. After five years, a detailed study, funded by the Federal Reserve Bank and using both quantitative and qualitative methods, showed that the targeted strategy worked. House prices in the NiB communities grew 10 percent faster over the project period than the city average. The investments also had a spillover effect on nearby areas, which similarly benefited from higher-than-average house price appreciation. The study also quantified the benefits of the strategy and found that the increase in property taxes in these neighborhoods, if projected over a 20-year period, would cover the city's \$15 million investment.

For more information, see [www.scribd.com/doc/1401230/US-Federal-Reserve-nib-research](http://www.scribd.com/doc/1401230/US-Federal-Reserve-nib-research).

- **Make it possible to “come home to the old neighborhood.”** There is a window of opportunity in the next ten to twenty years to bring people who have a choice of housing back to the Opportunity Neighborhoods where they still have relatives and where they may have grown up. Many well-maintained homes remain scattered throughout Shreveport's older neighborhoods that are typically owned by older, empty-nester couples, widows or widowers. In many cases, their grown-up children have jobs and incomes that allow them to choose where to live. Today, they do not choose to live in the same neighborhoods where they grew up because those neighborhoods do not offer the choice of newer or significantly updated housing and they may have concerns about infrastructure, services, safety, and schools. However, realtors and bankers say that many of these younger homebuyers indicate that they would love to live closer to family and in their old neighborhoods if they could find the right housing product and the right environment. A strategic focus on creating critical mass in several key parts of Shreveport's inner core can transform neighborhoods so these younger families can come home.

## REVITALIZATION IN THE HEART OF THE CITY: CREATING A MIXED-INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD IN SHREVEPORT'S MEDICAL DISTRICT

### Major mixed-use and mixed-income revitalization district

The Ingleside and Queensborough neighborhoods in the heart of Shreveport surround the most important employment center in the city outside of downtown: the medical district. This area encompasses the LSU Health Sciences Center and medical school, the Willis-Knighton Hospital campus, Shriner's Hospital, the Biomedical Research Institute and Foundation, associated medical businesses, and a variety of small employers. The part of this area between I-49 and I-20 has been called “Intertech Science Park” after a land use master plan sponsored in the early 2000s by the Biomedical Research Foundation. This area has more advantages for a comprehensive community and economic development revitalization strategy than any other part of the city outside of downtown:

- **Partnerships with the hospitals and the medical school.** Hospitals and similar institutions have been the mainstays of revitalization programs in cities

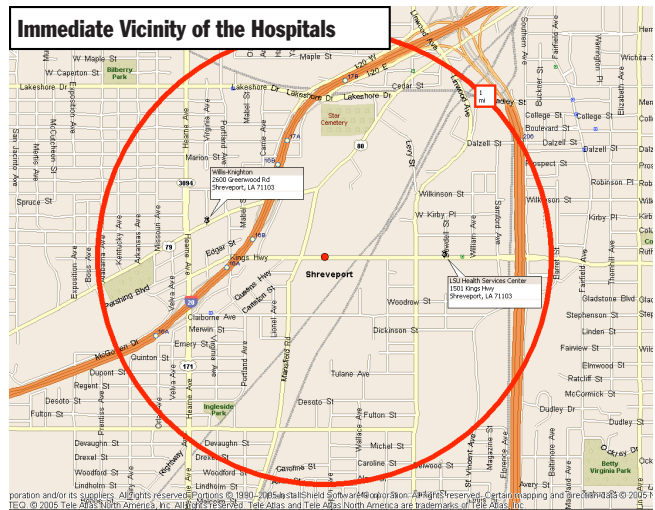
such as Baltimore, Cincinnati, and Dayton. Willis-Knighton and LSU Health have permanent investments in the neighborhood and want it to be successful. A comprehensive revitalization program will provide the context, the encouragement, and the strategic direction for improvements they may wish to make.

- **Public land.** A significant amount of land is owned by public entities, including LSU, the LSU Foundation, the Biomedical Research Foundation, and city government, creating opportunities for land swaps and development flexibility. A professional Shreveport Redevelopment Authority could facilitate land assembly. In addition, Willis-Knighton owns a significant amount of land around its hospital campus.
- **A built-in market for new mixed-income housing.** In addition to hospital employees, who represent a wide range of income levels, medical school students, allied health students and medical residents spend the majority of their time at the medical facilities. Attractive new housing that allows employees and students to walk to work combined with revitalization of existing housing will find a ready market.
- **Brownfields remediation.** The City has been very successful in obtaining grant funding for brownfields remediation and can do so for remaining former industrial properties in this area.

**Market evaluation**

All revitalization programs need to be based on a clear understanding of the housing market for specific areas, not just for the city as a whole. What follows below is a basic market evaluation of the medical district area. A full market study would also provide guidance on the number and types (rental, ownership, apartments, lofts, townhouses, single-family homes, and so on) of housing units that are most appropriate for the particular area of interest.

**Employment.** The Willis-Knighton/LSU Health area contains the headquarters of two of the largest employers in Louisiana. Overall, the area contains approximately 12,000 jobs—almost as many as downtown Shreveport. Every day, 5,300 people go to work at the LSU Health



Source: Claritas, Inc., W-ZHA

Services Center: approximately 2,700 employees in LSU’s University Hospital (475 beds) and approximately 2,000 employees related to the schools of Medicine, Graduate Studies and Allied Health Professions. Some 800 medical students, approximately 410 residents, 90 fellows and 80 postdoctoral fellows are located at LSU Health. Several thousand employees and doctors work at the Willis-Knighton campus.

**Households and household types.** The immediate vicinity of the hospitals holds approximately 2,300 households. While hospital employment has been increasing, the number of households in the neighborhood has declined. Most residents in the immediate vicinity of the hospitals are renters, African-American, poorer than the city median, and live in one- or two-person households. One-third of households have children at home, while about a quarter are single-person households. Over a third (37%) of the households are headed by women and over half these households have children at home. Approximately, 80 percent of the residential stock is single-family detached units; there has been little new development in the area (two-thirds of residences were built before 1960), and there are no Class A apartment buildings.

Approximately 70 percent of commuters to this employment center travel over 15 minutes to get to work each day.



FIGURE 11.2 POPULATION &amp; HOUSEHOLD TRENDS WITHIN 1 MILE OF THE CENTER OF THE MEDICAL DISTRICT

	1990	2000	2008	AVERAGE ANNUAL CHANGE	
				1990-2000	2000-2008
Population	8,664	8,075	7,407	-0.7%	-0.9%
Households	2,624	2,487	2,256	-0.5%	-1.0%

Source: Claritas, Inc.; W-ZHA

FIGURE 11.3 ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE AND PRESENCE OF CHILDREN WITHIN 1 MILE OF THE CENTER OF THE MEDICAL DISTRICT

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	HOUSEHOLDS (% OF TOTAL)
Single male householder	272 (12%)
Single female householder	320 (14%)
Married couple	587 (26%)
> with own children	253 (11%)
> without own children	335 (15%)
Male householder	142 (6%)
> with own children	56 (2%)
> without own children	86 (4%)
Female householder	829 (37%)
> with own children	482 (21%)
> without own children	346 (15%)
Nonfamily: male householder	64 (3%)
Nonfamily: female householder	42 (2%)

Source: Claritas, Inc.; W-ZHA

**Economic framework.** With approximately 25,000 employees, the health care industry accounts for 15 percent of all jobs in the Shreveport-Bossier Metropolitan Area in 2010. Moody's Economy.com projects that employment in health care through 2020 will grow more than employment in any other industry, accounting for approximately 3 out of 10 new jobs in the metropolitan area. That translates to an additional 5,800 jobs, a 23 percent increase, over the next decade—an average annual growth rate of 2.0 percent. Based on recent trends, households in the Shreveport-Bossier Metropolitan Area are projected to grow at a rate of only 0.7 percent per year. At this rate, there will be 5,000 new households in the metropolitan area by 2020—fewer than the new jobs in the healthcare industry. Household growth in Shreveport is projected to be even lower, at 0.1 percent per year. If the employment and household projections

FIGURE 11.4 HOUSING BY TYPE IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA OF THE MEDICAL DISTRICT

1 unit, attached	4.3%
1 unit, detached	79.8%
2 units	5.7%
3 to 19 units	9.0%
20 to 49 units	1.1%
50 or more units	1.75%

Source: Claritas, Inc.; W-ZHA

FIGURE 11.5 HOUSEHOLD SIZE IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA OF THE MEDICAL DISTRICT

SIZE OF HOUSEHOLD	SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS
1-person household	26.25%
2-person household	25.93%
3-person household	16.61%
4-person household	12.84%
5-person household	8.48%
6-person household	4.93%
7-person household	4.95%

Source: Claritas, Inc.; W-ZHA

FIGURE 11.6 RACE IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA OF THE MEDICAL DISTRICT

Caucasian/White	11.0%
Black/African American	86.8%
Other	2.3%

Source: Claritas, Inc.; W-ZHA

FIGURE 11.7 COMMUTE TO WORK IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA OF THE MEDICAL DISTRICT

Less than 15 minutes	30.9%
15–29 minutes	45.8%
30–44 minutes	15.7%
45–59 minutes	2.2%
> 60 minutes	5.4%

Source: Claritas, Inc.; W-ZHA

hold true, most of the new hospital employees will be living outside of the metropolitan area.

**The opportunity.** There appears to be a classic “spatial mismatch” between jobs and the labor force in this area of Shreveport. If the goal is to attract and retain skilled labor, a lack of quality housing near Willis-Knighton and LSU Health Services Center is a competitive disadvantage.

Both institutions have an enormous fixed investment in this part of Shreveport. It is imperative that this area be an appealing location to attract staff and customers. New housing development and renovation of existing housing in this area has the potential to benefit employee recruitment and retention, neighborhood revitalization, and positive community relations

A recent study, *Quantifying the Value Proposition of Employer-Assisted Housing: A Case Study of Aurora Health Care* by Lynn Ross, concluded that housing close to the hospital in the study resulted in better-performing employees and lower turnover rates.<sup>6</sup> In Dayton, Ohio, the Good Samaritan Hospital is part of a collaborative, public-private effort to develop new and rehabilitated homes in the neighborhood around the hospital. The hospital also provides homebuyer assistance to employees who want to move into the neighborhood and contributes to supporting a community social worker and other services.<sup>7</sup>

Institutional presence, projected job growth, available under-utilized land, and a strategic location makes this area a prime spot for mixed-income housing development. There is essentially no new housing available to existing hospital employees and households interested in relocating to this area. Using conservative job and population projections and capture rates, the planning team considers

<sup>6</sup> This case study examines the employer-assisted housing program instituted by Aurora Health Care in Milwaukee, WI. The Aurora Employee Homeownership Program began in 1993 and was initially created as a “walk to work” program. The goal of the original program was to support homeownership in the neighborhoods surrounding the hospital. The program now supports employees who want to purchase an existing or new house anywhere in the city of Milwaukee.  
<sup>7</sup> See [www.goodsamaritan.org](http://www.goodsamaritan.org) and [www.phoenixprojectdayton.org/housing.html](http://www.phoenixprojectdayton.org/housing.html).

FIGURE 11.8 AURORA EMPLOYEE TURNOVER, 2004–2007

	ALL AURORA EMPLOYEES	METRO EMPLOYEES	EMPLOYER-ASSISTED HOUSING PARTICIPANTS
2004	n/a	13.4%	7.2%
2005	n/a	11.0%	5.3%
2006	n/a	12.1%	3.9%
2007	11.8%	12.6%	4.8%

Source: Claritas, Inc.; W-ZHA

FIGURE 11.9 HOUSING POTENTIAL WITHIN 1 MILE OF THE MEDICAL DISTRICT

	EXISTING HOUSEHOLDS	LOW CAPTURE % + UNITS	HIGH CAPTURE % + UNITS
LSUHSC employees	4,646	1.0% (50)	2% (90)
LSUHSC students	575	10% (60)	15% (90)
Willis-Knighton systemwide employment	5,700	1.0% (60)	2% (110)
Shreveport MSA existing households	154,461	0.08% (130)	0.07% (110)
<b>Total units</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>400</b>

Source: Claritas, Inc.; W-ZHA

there to be potential for 300 to 400 new housing units in this area over the next 10 years.

A mix of housing products and price points are required to fully capture the potential of the Willis-Knighton/LSUHSC Area. The primary markets are nurses, students, young singles, and couples. The housing products to be considered are lofts, mid-rise apartments, rowhouses, and small cottages. Better housing opportunities can be offered through property renovation as well as by new construction.

**Conceptual Plan: Heart of the City Medical District Neighborhood**

A comprehensive revitalization plan requires a high degree of coordination, collaboration and organization from the beginning. It is essential to make sure that all the major interests are involved and that long-term partnerships are forged. The Heart of the City Opportunity Neighborhood’s approximate boundaries would be: I-49 to the east; Lakeshore Drive to the north; Exposition Avenue to the west in the area north of I-20 and Hearne Avenue to the west south of I-20; Midway to the south in the area south of I-20. City departments, a new redevelopment authority, LSU Health, Willis-Knighton, and community representatives would be the core of the revitalization partnership. LSU Health and the City have already begun discussions about potential improvements for Kings Highway. A planning process that involves all the partners, neighborhood residents and businesses will bring to the surface issues and

FIGURE 11.10 HEART OF THE CITY: MEDICAL DISTRICT REVITALIZATION AREA



**HEART OF THE CITY: MEDICAL DISTRICT REVITALIZATION AREA**

- |   |   |                       |  |
|---|---|-----------------------|--|
| LSU Health Sciences Center district, with supportive uses and housing | Willis-Knighton Medical District and nonresidential supportive uses                         | Mixed uses            | Landscaped boulevard with natural drainage |
| Townhouse/apartment mixed-income neighborhood                         | Scattered-site residential redevelopment with focused social and workforce support services | Office/light industry | Bicycle routes—lanes and paths             |
|   | Stormwater Park—designed to mitigate flooding in the revitalization area                    |                       | Heart of the City Revitalization Area      |
|   | Other existing park/open space  |                       |  |



problems that need to be resolved and create a common understanding and expectation of the revitalization process and plan. The planning process must include a good market analysis and market strategy. Implementation will involve multiple public and private actions, including:

- application of new zoning or other regulatory changes
- establishment of financing options, potentially including a tax-increment financing district
- establishment of incentives for private investment
- funding and implementation of public investments in infrastructure and the public realm
- possible land swaps or relocations
- marketing of the neighborhood.

This Opportunity Neighborhood would use a combination of public and private strategies to create a vital, sustainable and thriving city neighborhood around one of the most important job centers and economic assets in Shreveport. The goals of this initiative would be to:

- Connect the LSU Health district with the Willis-Knighton Medical Center district by an aesthetically, functionally, and environmentally improved Kings Highway.
- Eliminate flooding and remediate brownfields to allow new development.
- Improve transportation alternatives and parking.
- Create mixed-use development to serve employees, patients, visitors, and residents.
- Create new mixed-income housing opportunities to serve employees, students, and residents.
- Focus social service and community policing supports in the neighborhoods.

**Public and private funding will be needed to achieve neighborhood revitalization goals**

- **Development of mixed-use buildings (including parking lined with other uses) on Kings Highway between I-49 and I-20 after public improvements to the road and streetscape.** The mixed-use buildings would have ground-floor retail and services. Rental housing targeted to medical students and residents or medical offices could occupy the upper floors.

- Development of **new housing around Willis-Knighton**, with a mixture of ownership and rental units and a mixture of household incomes, to encourage additional private development interest in the surrounding Queensborough neighborhood.
- **Employer-assisted housing programs** supported by Willis-Knighton and LSU, in partnership with the City, targeted to hospital employees for housing (condos, townhouses, single family new and rehabilitated houses) in the medical district.
- The City, ideally through a new redevelopment authority, can **create a neighborhood rehabilitation fund**—using federal entitlement funds, bank community reinvestment program funds, and other source—to focus on infill, scattered-site redevelopment, and rehabilitation of adjudicated properties, in addition to expansion of existing owner-occupant rehabilitation programs and the creation of zero- or low-interest loan programs for landlords who make a commitment to affordable rents over a certain period of time. Small-cottage neighborhood developments can be replicated in disinvested blocks.
- **Focused social service support programs and community policing in existing neighborhoods through partnerships** with groups such as Community Renewal, which has a Friendship House in Queensborough, and with other social service providers, to create focused social service supports in the medical district neighborhoods.

**Infrastructure and the public realm: public funding**

- A stormwater park on existing public land north of Kings Highway to help resolve flooding problems in the area and provide an exciting new “Central Park.”
- Improvements to Kings Highway, including street trees and landscaped innovative natural drainage swales; a safer and more comfortable pedestrian environment; and a bicycle route linking LSUHSC and the Willis-Knighton/Queensborough area—eventually to extend further east and west and connect to a bike route on Texas Avenue to downtown.
- Grants to remediate brownfields on formerly industrial land.

### Subdistrict planning initiatives

The Intertech Master Plan prepared a few years ago for the Biomedical Research Foundation needs to be updated in light of changing needs and circumstances. Medical districts need careful planning, or they become unsightly and dysfunctional mazes of parking lots, pavement and buildings. The entire area surrounding LSU Health in the eastern part of this Opportunity Neighborhood needs a detailed planning process that takes into account future

medical needs, opportunities resulting from drainage improvements, a transportation and circulation plan, a parking management program that includes structured parking to free up land for other uses, and associated medical uses—and then situates the medical uses within an attractive urban design framework for a mixed-use neighborhood. Similarly, the underutilized nonresidential areas between the railroads and I-20 also need updated planning.

## Virginia Avenue: Housing



2030



2010

*LEFT: Virginia Avenue north of Willis-Knighton Medical Center today. ABOVE: Land along Virginia Avenue and environs around the Willis-Knighton Medical Center could become new ownership and rental housing for hospital employees, medical students, and others.*



## Kings Highway: Connections and Streetscape



*LEFT: Kings Highway looking east at the Linwood Avenue intersection. ABOVE: In the same view, a separated bikeway connects LSU Health with Willis-Knighton and other parts of the city. Next to the bikeway a vegetated swale is designed to capture and hold stormwater, part of a districtwide system of natural systems based drainage, including a stormwater park on Kings Highway between Mansfield Road and I-20. At the northeast corner of the intersection, across from the hospital, a new mixed-use building incorporates ground-floor retail, upper-story offices or apartments, and an interior parking garage.*



## Kings Highway: Mixed-Use Development



2030



2010

*LEFT: The southern edge of Kings Highway across Linwood from the hospital is occupied by single-story, strip development with multiple curb cuts. ABOVE: Mixed-use development could transform this intersection, incorporating a boulevard-style turning lane for right turns onto Linwood, street trees, pedestrian-friendly businesses and crossings.*

## D. Strategies and Actions to Achieve the Goals

### Goal 1

*A comprehensive, coordinated program to eliminate blight*

#### Policy:

- *Ensure that all relevant decision makers, including the judicial system and residents, are included in coordinated efforts.*

The simplest way to remove blight is for government to purchase properties, wipe out any liens, and then sell or donate the properties for redevelopment by new owners. The scale of the problem in Shreveport makes that a prohibitively expensive solution. A combination of strategies, with a strong emphasis on code enforcement, must be pursued. Promoting voluntary compliance by property owners with few resources needs attention, as does the question of mineral lease rights.

Successful best practices for blight elimination identified by the National Vacant Properties Campaign combine comprehensive code-enforcement tools and strategies with neighborhood rebuilding through rehabilitation and redevelopment.<sup>8</sup>

These practices include:

- Access to a sufficient variety of strategies and regulatory, civil and criminal tools to promote and enforce compliance.
- Identification of the right remedy for the circumstances of each property and each neighborhood. A one-size-fits-all approach will not be successful.
- Unified or closely coordinated management of code enforcement activities.

<sup>8</sup> [www.vacantproperties.org](http://www.vacantproperties.org)

## STRATEGIES

### A. Assign a very high priority to a comprehensive, coordinated program to eliminate blight and vacancy.

#### Actions

1. **Improve code enforcement activities**  
See strategies and actions in Chapter 6.
2. **Create a comprehensive city property information database that includes information on blighted and vacant properties as well as other data.**  
A comprehensive property database linked to GIS is a basic planning and community development tool. The property database maintained by the parish assessor should be upgraded to include information such as zoning, size and value of land and improvements separately, land use category, owner-occupied or rental tenure, occupancy, blight conditions, and historic character. This can be an incremental project with data entered as code enforcement and redevelopment actions occur and by implementing a program to complete a certain percentage of the database every year, after which it can be maintained. Much of this information should eventually be made available to the public in a data warehouse on the City's website.
3. **Establish a Rental Housing Ordinance.**  
(See Chapter 6.)
4. **Lead a campaign with other Louisiana cities to amend the tax lien and adjudication system on the model of Michigan or other states.**  
The Louisiana process for tax-delinquent properties has an unusually long redemption period and results in properties' staying in limbo far longer than in other states. This is a problem for all Louisiana cities, making many of them centers of persistent blight. Work to amend



Louisiana law to allow immediate foreclosure on liens after the City records them; to make tax sale and adjudication a judicial process; and to allow the City to place redevelopment covenants on properties sold at tax sales.

**5. Expedite procedures for site control of blighted and vacant properties through code enforcement lien foreclosure and Redevelopment Authority action.**

Establish a code enforcement lien foreclosure process. To streamline the process in priority redevelopment areas, liens can be waived and/or low reserve prices established for code enforcement auctions in order to expedite the transfer of properties in violation with clear title to new owners.

**B. Pursue land assembly to create larger, contiguous parcels for community amenities or efficient redevelopment, and to facilitate targeted, block-by-block redevelopment.**

Land assembly to create larger developable parcels and clusters of individual scattered lots creates the opportunity for economies of scale in redevelopment and where appropriate, land suitable for parks or other community amenities, multifamily housing, and commercial uses. It is necessary to coordinate a variety of strategies and tools in order to accelerate land disposition and redevelopment. The Redevelopment Authority could work to assemble parcels strategically for redevelopment areas based on areas of strength.

**Actions**

1. Continue the \$1 lot next door program that offers vacant properties to abutting property owners after one year of maintenance.
2. Continue to use expropriation of adjudicated properties as needed to acquire land for permanent open space and gateway purposes.

**3. Explore the potential of using the property tax system as a way to incentivize development in order to move long-vacant and blighted properties into the market.**

A split-rate (two-rate) property tax structure is revenue-neutral but taxes land at a higher rate than the improvements on land and could motivate owners of vacant properties to make improvements or sell to a private or public entity for redevelopment. It is structured to function as an incentive for infill development and to build and maintain improvements. A number of Pennsylvania jurisdictions have two-rate site value tax systems, and Pittsburgh's revitalization since 1980 has been partially attributed to its two-rate system. The benefits of a split-rate system (also called a land-valuation tax) also include capture of the value that public investments in infrastructure and facilities bring to nearby land.<sup>9</sup>

Surcharges on vacant or blighted property may promote sales or development. Washington, D.C., doubled the tax rate on unoccupied residential buildings and vacant lots in March 2009, and then replaced this initiative in September 2009 with a more targeted higher tax rate to apply only to blighted properties. There was some evidence that the tax rate had spurred redevelopment of buildings that had been vacant for many years.

Limited-period property tax abatements (for five years, for example) could be combined with surcharges or offered independently in designated areas as an incentive to promote redevelopment of blighted properties.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on land-valuation tax systems see Jeffrey P. Cohen and Cletus C. Coughlin, "An Introduction to Two-Rate Taxation of Land and Buildings," *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review*, 87(3), June 2005, pp. 359-74 at [www.research.stlouisfed.org/publications/review/05/05/CohenCoughlin.pdf](http://www.research.stlouisfed.org/publications/review/05/05/CohenCoughlin.pdf); [www.urbantools.org](http://www.urbantools.org); and [www.lincolnhinst.edu](http://www.lincolnhinst.edu).

## Goal 2

### *Redevelopment leadership and organization with professional staff and adequate funding*

#### **Policy:**

- **Support creation of a professional Shreveport Redevelopment Authority**

#### **STRATEGIES**

##### **A. Establish a professional Redevelopment Authority to take charge of redevelopment activities.**

#### **Actions**

- 1. Revise the current redevelopment authority ordinance and create a new ordinance (and state legislation if needed) modeled on the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority.**  
Ensure coordination among the MPC, the Community Development Department, other agencies and the redevelopment authority so that there is no duplication of planning and other functions.
- 2. Establish a land bank facility within the redevelopment authority.**  
Adjudicated properties can be transferred to the new Shreveport Redevelopment Authority, which will then take on the task of clearing title and making the properties available for redevelopment. Other city owned or public land in Opportunity Neighborhoods and priority revitalization areas can also be transferred to the SRA for redevelopment.
- 3. Capitalize the redevelopment authority with a dedicated source of funding.**  
The East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority has been partially capitalized by transfers from that parish's Mortgage Authority in addition to federal and state funds from grant programs. A similar source of funding is available in Shreve-

port. The assets of the Shreveport Mortgage Authority, which is no longer active, could be used to fund the new Shreveport Redevelopment Authority. The Mortgage Authority, which makes no new mortgages and is winding down its activities, has both funds and a revenue stream from mortgages that are continuing to be paid.

- 4. Put the Shreveport Redevelopment Authority in charge of redevelopment of residential and nonresidential projects outside of downtown.**  
The SRA should be put in charge of revitalization in the already identified redevelopment areas. Additional areas could become part of the SRA portfolio of activities after completion of comprehensive revitalization plans. The SRA will collaborate with other agencies, nonprofit developers, for profit developers, community organizations and others in fulfilling its duties.
- 5. Collaborate with the housing authority to develop potential mixed-income redevelopment opportunities through HOPE VI or other financing opportunities.**  
The housing authority is planning a large investment in Allendale to create a new mixed-income neighborhood on and around the demolished Jackson Heights housing site, which will ultimately include a range of housing types and household income levels, as well as some neighborhood-serving retail. This type of comprehensive neighborhood redevelopment program will introduce the HOPE VI model of public and assisted housing incorporated into the broader neighborhood to the Shreveport area. A good example of this approach is the redevelopment program for the former Lafitte public housing development in New Orleans; it includes single- and two-family houses, small multifamily buildings, elderly housing, ownership and rental housing, private and community open space and nearby connections to a new greenway.



The former Lafitte public housing in New Orleans is being transformed into a neighborhood of diverse housing and households.

Source: [www.providencecommunityhousing.org/1834LafitteDiagrams\\_080109.pdf](http://www.providencecommunityhousing.org/1834LafitteDiagrams_080109.pdf)

## Goal 3

*Strategic and comprehensive redevelopment with critical mass that creates neighborhoods, not projects.*

### Policy:

- *Make revitalization investments that can leverage nearby employment centers and strong neighborhoods.*
- *Support revitalization programs based on neighborhood plans for comprehensive and connected development.*
- *Promote mixed-income neighborhood development.*

### STRATEGIES

#### A. Focus redevelopment efforts in locations that build on existing assets and provide critical mass.

Redevelopment projects should seek locations that can benefit from existing assets such as:

- A large employment center, such as a hospital
- Nearby healthy neighborhoods or commercial districts
- A successful school
- A well-maintained and well-used park

The purpose would be to build on and expand areas of strength.

Three areas with activities already in process are suitable for a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to create critical mass: the Ingleside-Queensborough medical district; Cedar Grove East between Line Avenue and I-49; and Allendale.



Source: NLCOG 2009



## Actions

1. **Create a comprehensive community and economic development initiative in the medical district located in the Ingleside and Queensborough neighborhoods.**
2. **Create a diverse neighborhood of new housing and neighborhood retail in Cedar Grove East.**
3. **Connect and support existing and planned initiatives in Allendale to create a housing neighborhood plan.**

Two revitalization initiatives are underway in Allendale, the Shreveport Housing Authority (SHA) neighborhood development program and the Fuller Center for Housing/Community Renewal initiative and the Community Development Department is in the early phases of a third, which they call Heritage Place.

All of these efforts should be coordinated along with infrastructure, market, park, and recreation initiatives in a comprehensive approach.

4. **Work with realtors, bankers and first time homebuyer trainers to recruit residents for redeveloped housing in inner-core neighborhoods.**
5. **Recruit residents for redeveloped housing in environmental justice areas—parts of the city that are environmentally hazardous for residents.**

Until Shreveport's population and household numbers start to grow significantly, successful new development will have the effect, at least partially, of vacating another part of the city. However, parts of the city can be characterized as environmental justice areas—low- and moderate-income areas that suffer from trucking and industrial impacts, air pollution, or flooding. Examples include houses near the Calumet refinery or adjacent to the industrial park in the Hollywood Avenue area. Vacating that residential

land would be a benefit and if properly carried out, the relocated households would move to much better housing in better environments. The industrial areas would also benefit because of elimination of conflicts with residential uses.

One way to approach this issue is to identify the most affected areas and target them to recruit residents for new housing in revitalized inner core areas. A process of this type would have to be carried out with great sensitivity and would require case management for the families and households involved. If the housing to be relocated is an investment property, negotiations with a property owner should not result in eviction of tenants until new housing is available. Because housing authorities have experience in managing and preparing tenants for changes in housing, collaboration with the housing authority in creating a new neighborhood with residents from other neighborhoods would be helpful.

6. **Place redevelopment covenants, design and performance standards, and any special use or other appropriate restrictions on vacant or blighted properties sold or transferred by government entities for redevelopment.** Government's purpose in selling or transferring vacant or blighted properties back to the private sector is to see those properties redeveloped to make positive contributions to neighborhoods or commercial areas. It is therefore important that buyers of these properties meet certain criteria and be required to show progress towards redevelopment within a certain period, such as two years, and that good design standards be part of the sales agreement. Bidders on property being sold or transferred should be required to demonstrate good stewardship of currently owned properties—no history of noncompliance with property standards or codes, no outstanding violations, no outstanding liens, taxes or other obligations. Criteria for gaining title should include demonstration of financial capacity

and adherence to design guidelines. Reversion clauses in the agreements should require that redevelopment must occur within a defined period or the property returns to City or Redevelopment Authority ownership.

## **B. Provide incentives for private investment and homeownership.**

### **Actions**

- 1. Expand and target Community Development Department homeownership programs and rehabilitation programs for both ownership and rental housing.**

Community Development's homeownership programs are available to income-eligible buyers regardless of the neighborhood where they wish to buy. As Opportunity Neighborhoods are created, the Department should target a portion of its homeownership and rehabilitation programs to these areas, as an incentive for more people to move to these neighborhoods.

Similarly, a program of low-interest rehabilitation loans for owners of single family or small multifamily rental properties could be targeted to Opportunity Neighborhoods, with the requirement that the landowner must keep rents affordable to income-eligible households over a defined period of years. This would require the Community Development Department to work with the landlords on a simple system of regular reporting and monitoring to make sure that the requirements are met.

- 2. Provide limited tax rebates or low interest loans for rehabilitation of existing housing in Opportunity Neighborhoods and other revitalization areas.**

Once a comprehensive revitalization plan is being implemented, it is important to establish targeted incentives to encourage homeowners and private

investors to go into the neighborhood and begin rehabilitating or building infill housing themselves. Incentives can include tax abatements, credits, or rebates; matching loan funds for homeowners to purchase and renovate houses, with complete forgiveness of the loan if the homeowner lives in the house for seven years; loans and tax abatements for developers who build new cottage, townhouse, loft or apartment developments that meet criteria and design objectives in the comprehensive revitalization plan.

## **Goal 4**

***High capacity community-based redevelopment organizations.***

### **Policy:**

- Promote collaboration and capacity building among nonprofits.***

### **STRATEGIES**

- A. Develop a network of community development organizations of various sizes and functions that work together and can support several high-capacity groups.**

### **Actions**

- 1. Seek assistance from national organizations to work with local nonprofits to create a network of community development corporations with different objectives to contribute on an ongoing basis to revitalization activities within the loop.** For a city of its size, Shreveport has a large number of organizations that call themselves community development corporations (CDCs). However, the majority of these organizations have not been able to grow their capacity in order to do housing or economic development projects. There can be room for a variety of organizations that serve communities in different ways. The Community Development Department or a nonprofit convening organization such as the Shreveport-Bossier



The City of Cleveland developed this pattern book of ideas for creating different elements of a green network using vacant lands.

Foundation could seek assistance from a national community development leader such as LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) or The Enterprise Foundation to help Shreveport in developing a community development network that can support two or three CDCs with the capacity and professional expertise to produce a significant amount of housing, as well as other community development organizations focused on other types of community service.

**2. Establish land trusts as vehicles for land banking and interim uses while appropriate redevelopment options are identified, and for preserving housing affordability.**

Neighborhood-based community land trusts could be established as vehicles for holding and maintaining vacant properties that are not likely to be redeveloped quickly for neighborhood open space networks and natural drainage networks, community gardens and orchards, as well as affordable housing, where new housing is appropriate.

## Goal 5

### *A turn-around in city image*

**Policy:**

- **Improve the image of Shreveport's core neighborhoods.**

## STRATEGY

### **A. Market the city and its neighborhoods as good places to live.**

#### *Action*

**1. Develop an image and a marketing program for Shreveport targeted to city and regional residents as well as visitors.**

The Shreveport-Bossier marketing campaign is currently focused on attracting tourists and visitors. Shreveport in general, and the urban core in particular, needs a marketing campaign that focuses on its assets, and, when a redevelopment program for Opportunity Neighborhoods gets underway, its quality of life. Among other things, a campaign is needed to dispel what appear to be exaggerated ideas about crime that are based on old history and on media practices that focus public attention on even minor wrongdoing. The campaign has to be a multi-faceted and long term effort linked to initiatives that advertise and market Shreveport's uniqueness in the region.

Baltimore's *LiveBaltimore* campaign provides an example. The campaign was run by marketing professionals who promoted the city as a place to live and the incentives available to become a resident through a wide variety of activities, including:

- A website with information on neighborhoods and homebuyer incentives
- Targeted marketing of neighborhoods
- Working with major employers to create incentives to live in the city
- Homebuyer fairs and house tours
- Working with real estate agents, title insurance companies and others in the real estate business to be part of the marketing efforts.

## E. Getting Started

Early actions that are not costly will provide a foundation for more ambitious activities

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Create a comprehensive property information database through incremental improvements	MPC working with Assessor and city departments
Establish a Shreveport Redevelopment Authority on the model of the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority and capitalize it with Mortgage Authority funds	Mayor and City Council; state legislative delegation
Create a committee for the medical district to prepare for a comprehensive redevelopment plan	Mayor; MPC; LSU Health; Willis Knighton; other stakeholders
Establish an initial planning framework for Allendale and Cedar Grove East	MPC; Community Development; Housing Authority; nonprofits