



Jefferson EDGE 2020 Strategic Implementation Plan: **FAT CITY REDEVELOPMENT**

Prepared by JEDCO , Planning Works & 180° Design

JEDCO
Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission

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Jefferson EDGE 2020: Fat City Redevelopment – Executive Summary

For years the Fat City neighborhood has been the subject of numerous studies and reports to set the stage for revitalization. For just as many years, Fat City has stubbornly frustrated these attempts. There are many reasons why Fat City has been stuck in a state of inertia, but what is certain and what is singularly important is that there is a newfound energy that is being directed toward the goal of lasting revitalization.

The challenges that Jefferson Parish as a whole is facing have been magnified since Hurricane Katrina, and there is widespread recognition that both the current condition and the future potential of Fat City cannot be overlooked. Given its location in the commercial heart of Jefferson Parish and its proximity to some of the Parish's most appealing neighborhoods, Fat City can and should be much more than what it currently is.

Fat City: A Future Vision

Based on outreach to residents, business owners, stakeholders and community leaders, there is remarkable consensus on a future vision for Fat City. The common elements of the vision include:

- A vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood with a stable residential base
- A pedestrian-oriented core, centered on 18th Street
- More family-friendly retail, restaurant, and service uses that both serve the neighborhood and attract visitors from throughout the region
- Compatible transitions between the mixed-use core, residential areas, and heavy commercial areas at the periphery.

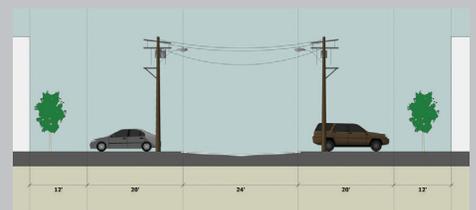
Fat City Today: Current Conditions

While the Fat City of today is not derelict, there is a general consensus that it falls far short of its potential. There is also consensus about its many aesthetic deficiencies. There is no single reason for Fat City's present, lackluster condition, as it faces a plethora of challenges. The sheer number and variety of issues that the neighborhood must confront is the likeliest reason why previous attempts at revitalization have stalled. This plan has attempted to exhaustively document all of these issues and the comprehensive suite of solutions that must be implemented to spur lasting revitalization.

The major problems that Fat City faces are the following:

- **Drainage.** Fat City presently suffers from inadequate stormwater drainage infrastructure.
- **Building Orientation/Streetscape.** Setbacks, building orientation, front yard parking, and insufficient landscaping all detract from the aesthetic and pedestrian environment of the neighborhood.
- **Parking.** Insufficient off-street parking limits redevelopment opportunities.
- **Walkability.** Fat City has poorly maintained, insufficient sidewalks and a pedestrian realm that is neither comfortable nor attractive.
- **East/West Access.** 18th Street is the only east/west street in Fat City. There is little connectivity for either pedestrians or vehicles within the neighborhood.
- **Zoning.** The zoning categories are too broad in the uses they allow; at the same time, they are not prescriptive enough in the realm of aesthetic and pedestrian quality. They do not encourage an attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian environment.
- **Land Uses.** Certain permitted uses, such as adult entertainment and heavy commercial uses in certain locations, are inconsistent with the future vision for the area.

Typical Existing Streetscape



Proposed Streetscape



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- **Housing Mix.** The predominant housing type in Fat City (two story apartments and condos) has insufficient parking. To attract additional investment to the area, more compelling housing types must be offered.
- **Fragmented Property Ownership.** The diffuse nature of property ownership in the area makes large-scale redevelopment difficult.
- **Security.** Security remains a concern of residents and businesses.
- **Aesthetics.** The aesthetic quality of both the public realm and the private realm is a major problem. Building design, property maintenance, exposed dumpsters, overhead utilities, maintenance, and landscaping are all major aesthetic deficiencies.
- **Funding.** Improvements to the public and private realm will require significant funding.

Improvements Underway

In recent years, the Parish has witnessed newfound energy, ambition, and inter-agency cooperation to address problems in Fat City. These efforts include:

- Increased regulatory enforcement of nuisance uses
- Adoption of interim zoning regulations
- New code requirements governing signage, dumpsters, and other aspects of a property's appearance
- Strengthened code enforcement
- Establishment of a tax increment financing (TIF) district to support improvements in Fat City
- Imminent improvements to the paving, drainage, and utilities along 18th Street

Fat City Redevelopment Action Items

There are a number of actions that the plan identifies that are necessary to revitalize Fat City. Because of the range of issues that Fat City faces, an equally broad array of action items is needed to mitigate problems, enforce higher development standards, attract new investment, and improve the physical infrastructure. The action items can be divided into the following categories

1. **Regulatory changes.** Specific recommendations include adopting new zoning districts and a new zoning map for Fat City and amortizing adult uses and non-conforming signage.
2. **Parking.** Specific recommendations include establishing parking mitigation requirements, establishing a parking management entity, and implementing a parking capital improvement plan to meet the demand for off-street parking.
3. **Infrastructure.** Specific recommendations include developing capital plans and desired streetscape improvements and developing a funding mechanism for relocating utilities underground.
4. **Public Services/Infrastructure.** Specific recommendations include devising alternatives to front yard dumpsters, establishing a Business Development District (BDD) and neighborhood association, pursuing collaborative crime prevention initiatives, and continuing to conduct code sweeps.
5. **Financing/Incentives.** Specific recommendations include hiring a grants coordinator and public private liaison and developing a landscape assistance and façade assistance program.

Conclusion

Recent efforts to crack down on code violations and establish a higher standard for the public and private realm in Fat City have set the stage for more comprehensive action. This plan provides a sufficiently ambitious, sufficiently comprehensive road map for the future of Fat City. The implementation of this plan will accomplish what previous efforts have not been able to: the wholesale revitalization of Fat City.

A full version of this report is available on the internet at www.jedco.org

Sample Streetscape Enhancements Edenborn



The addition of street trees, wider sidewalks, decorative lighting improves the existing streetscape without reducing available on-street parking.

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Chapter 1: Plan Overview

The plan for the redevelopment of Fat City was undertaken as part of JEDCO's *Jefferson EDGE 2020* process. Fat City was identified at the outset of this ambitious, comprehensive quality of life initiative as a critical ingredient in ensuring the continued prosperity of Jefferson Parish. This plan represents the seventh of eight subject-specific quality of life plans that are being completed under the *Jefferson EDGE 2020* initiative. This plan will also be formally incorporated into Jefferson Parish's Comprehensive Plan, *Envision Jefferson 2020*. For this reason, the format of this document is slightly different than the format of the other seven implementation plans that comprise the *Jefferson EDGE 2020*.

The Fat City neighborhood is a sub-area of the Metairie CBD that has significant redevelopment opportunity. Fat City (see Map 1) generally includes the area bounded by West Esplanade Avenue on the north, Severn Road on the east, Veterans Boulevard on the south, and the parcels fronting on Division Street on the west. While the land east of Severn is not included in the Fat City area, some of the recommendations address both sides of Severn. This area includes a mix of uses that do not fully capitalize on the area's proximity to the Lakeside Shopping Center, one of the region's largest retail malls. This plan outlines the area's constraints and establishes a strategy to overcome these constraints and help the area become a long term asset to Jefferson Parish.

1.1 Purpose

This Strategic Plan is intended to establish a template for a dynamic planning process for the Fat City Area, a process that coordinates public and private sector initiatives required to achieve the vision and objectives established in this Plan.

1.2 Process

This Plan is the latest in a long series of efforts to promote the redevelopment of Fat City. Each of the previous efforts has lacked support from key stakeholders with the exception of the Metairie CBD Plan, which was adopted shortly before Hurricane Katrina. This effort refines the recommendations of the Metairie CBD Plan and identifies a detailed strategy to draw on the support of Parish government, the business community and the people who live, work and own property within Fat City.

This Plan was prepared in response to efforts by the Jefferson Business Council and JEDCO to capitalize on the locational advantages of Fat City and remove the blighting influences that could lead the area to long-term decline. The Jefferson Parish Council redirected planning funds to this effort. Jefferson Parish staff conducted detailed land use surveys and directed a team of consultants to conduct a parking study and prepare the strategic plan. The vision, objectives and directives of this plan reflect input from the Fat City Committee and input from property owners, residents and business owners in a series of workshops held throughout 2008 and early 2009.

The consultant team facilitated a series of four committee workshops throughout the spring, summer and autumn of 2008 to establish a shared vision for the future of Fat City, identify obstacles that must be overcome to achieve that vision and establish priorities for action. Additionally, the consultant team facilitated two focus group discussions with stakeholders from the area and conducted an open house upon completion of the plan to forge consensus for the public and private actions described in this plan.

1.3 Vision

There is remarkable consensus for an overall vision of what Fat City should become. The common elements of this vision include:

- A vibrant mixed-use neighborhood with a stable residential base;
- A pedestrian-oriented core, centered on 18th Street;
- A more family-friendly mix of retail, restaurant and service uses that serves the neighborhood and attracts visitors from throughout the region; and
- Compatible transitions between the mixed use core, the intensive, auto-oriented commercial development along the north and south ends of the area and the residential areas.

1.4 Plan Directives

The directives identified in Chapter 5 of this plan are specific tasks that should be pursued by the Parish in coordination with the private sector (e.g., the business community, property owners and residents). The directives are not intended to be an exclusive list of initiatives; they are intended to establish an initial work program that should be updated on an annual basis to reflect achievements, available public and private resources, changing needs and emerging opportunities. The directives are summarized in the Action Plan in Chapter 6 of this plan.

1.5 Plan Success

The above vision will not happen overnight or even over the course of a few years. The success of this plan will rely on the long-term commitment and determination of many. The Jefferson Parish Council and Administration will need to continue to support efforts to upgrade infrastructure, enforce codes, facilitate private investment and guide Fat City property owners. JEDCO, the Jefferson Business Council and other business entities will need to encourage the state and Parish governments, as well as business owners to invest in public and private improvements. Finally, property owners, residents and business owners will need to stay informed, stay focused on setting priorities for action to improve the area and work together to resolve the funding and logistical challenges that lie ahead.

Chapter 2: Context for Strategic Plan

2.1 Planning Context

Fat City is subject to regional trends, as well as the unique conditions of its location and past development. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Jefferson Parish’s regional market has shrunk, due to the significant loss of population in Orleans Parish. Regionally, the loss of residents and jobs to St. Tammany Parish, Baton Rouge and beyond will reduce local retail demand and funding capacity. In Fat City, the risks of economic decline are exacerbated by the lack of parking, adequate drainage, livable streets and a compatible mix of land uses.

To attract private investment needed to fund essential public goods and services, Jefferson Parish must become more competitive on several fronts. It must establish and maintain an environment that attracts businesses and it must attract residents with sufficient incomes to support those businesses. Mobility, livable streets, public safety, desirable neighborhoods and adequate infrastructure are essential conditions to achieve these ends.

On September 17, 2003, Jefferson Parish adopted the area plan for the Metairie CBD as part of its Comprehensive Plan. The Metairie CBD Land Use and Transportation Plan recommended actions to address many of the challenges identified in Chapter 3 of this strategic plan for the Fat City Area. While Jefferson Parish has implemented many of the area plan recommendations, it has become increasingly clear that a strong public/private partnership is needed to focus public investment and stimulate desired private investment required to transform the Fat City area from a neighborhood on the edge of blight to a thriving mixed use neighborhood that will be a long-term asset to the community.

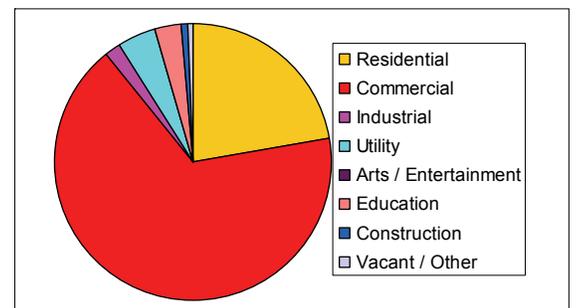
This strategic plan establishes a coordinated work program to achieve this goal and the other objectives established in this plan.

2.2 Land Use and Development Patterns

Jefferson Parish planners conducted a detailed land use survey in the spring of 2008 which revealed the following mix of uses, which are illustrated in Map 2. While there clearly is a diverse mix of uses in the area, the uses are neither compatible, nor mutually supportive. Exhibit 1 shows that the area is predominantly commercial or residential. The residential development consists almost exclusively of two story multi-family structures. The commercial development includes a wide variety of uses, including restaurants, night clubs, drive-through banking, convenience retail,

Exhibit 1: Existing Land Use Mix

LBCS Function	Description	Acres
1000	Residential	47.91
2000	Commercial	144.16
3000	Industrial	4.57
4000	Utility	9.25
5000	Arts / Entertainment	0.16
6000	Education	6.75
7000	Construction	1.42
9000	Vacant / Other	1.36



specialty retail, an auto dealership, auto repair shops, climate-controlled storage buildings and other light and heavy commercial uses. While residences are concentrated north of 18th Street, this area has numerous heavy commercial uses that are not typically allowed in residential areas. East of Division Street and south of 18th Street, there is a mix of heavy commercial land uses. These patterns are reflected somewhat by the existing zoning shown in Map 3.

2.3 Mobility

While it is easy to get to Fat City due to its proximity to the Causeway and abutting arterial roads on its north and south sides, it is difficult to move within the area. As noted in the Metairie CBD plan, east/west movements within Fat City are limited to 18th Street. Because Veterans on the south and West Esplanade on the north are divided arterials, they function as one way roads that provide limited assistance when traveling through the area. Because of the lack of parking, the area's limited streets are often congested during peak hours as drivers wait to access an available parking space. The lack of east/west connections also is a problem for pedestrians, with residents reporting that students trying to reach Grace King High School regularly vault fences and walls rather than walking around the long blocks.

Pedestrians trying to move through the area face a variety of hazards, including discontinuous sidewalks, poor conditions of existing sidewalks, mechanical equipment and utility poles blocking sidewalks, and the fact that pedestrians are often sandwiched between traffic on the street and the rear bumpers of cars that use the area's head-in parking spaces.



Lack of sidewalks, head-in parking, poor sidewalk conditions and other obstacles deter walking in Fat City.

2.4 Parking

The Fat City Parking Study performed by GCR & Associates for JEDCO and Jefferson Parish in the summer of 2008 indicates that the area bounded by West Esplanade Avenue, North Causeway Boulevard, Veterans Boulevard and Division Street has a deficit of 9,160 parking spaces. Within the portion of Fat City located between Severn and Division Streets, there is a net deficit of 3,253 parking spaces. It should be noted that this parking deficit was calculated by first quantifying the existing supply of off-street parking. The present supply of parking spaces was then compared to the total number of parking spaces that would be required under present zoning regulations given the present mixture of uses and building types in Fat City. As shown in the Map 4, the parking deficit is scattered throughout the area.

More specifically, existing deficiencies within Fat City include:

- Many of the properties in 18th Street corridor have adequate parking, though there are a few sites with significant deficiencies. Parking deficiencies for restaurants and other pedestrian-supportive retail uses in this corridor can more readily be remedied through off-site parking.
- The residential development north of the 18th Street corridor is likely to experience on-going parking challenges to compensate for the net shortage of 466 parking spaces between Division and Severn. These deficiencies are exacerbated by deficiencies for nearby businesses. When combined with commercial deficits, there are deficiencies of:
 - 709 spaces along the North Arnoult residential corridor;
 - 961 spaces along the Edenborn residential corridor;
 - 412 spaces along the Hessmer residential corridor; and
 - 599 spaces along the east side of the Division residential corridor.
- Commercial parking deficiencies south of 18th Street are widespread, though differences in peak hours for parking demands presently allow some of the deficiencies to be addressed by adjacent properties.

The parking directives included in Chapter 5 of this plan are based on the analysis of existing deficiencies and the following assumptions:

- Greater allowable densities will allow the redevelopment of existing residential properties with on-site parking structures that are adequate to accommodate needed parking.
- Existing businesses and future commercial development projects in the 18th Street corridor may gain some on-site parking potential based on reduced front and side setbacks. Significant redevelopment will depend on the availability of supplemental off-site parking.

- Existing businesses in the southern half of Fat City will be better able to accommodate increased on-site parking needs for redevelopment due to the larger parcel sizes, particularly on parcels closer to Veterans Boulevard.
- Desired landscape and streetscape improvements must be coordinated with redevelopment efforts and the development of additional parking. Residents and business owners will be understandably resistant to improvements that reduce parking for sites that currently have deficiencies.

2.5 Infrastructure

2.5.1 Drainage/Stormwater Management

Very high impervious coverage, limited elevations and inadequate underground stormwater conveyances have left Fat City prone to flooding in many areas. Improvements proposed in the current 18th Street project will increase stormwater detention capacity, but will not be adequate to convey runoff from the design storm to the West Esplanade canal until culverts are enlarged along Edenborn from 18th Street to the canal.

2.5.2 Streets

Current building designs, which locate parking and dumpsters in front yards, mean that the streets in Fat City are inadequate to accommodate complete streets with two lanes of traffic, on-street parking, a landscape strip, sidewalks and utility poles. Exhibits 2 and 3 compare a typical existing cross section with the cross-section proposed in the Metairie CBD plan. The top drawing illustrates how head-in parking currently uses some of the available right-of-way. The proposed streetscape should be refined to reflect available right-of-way widths throughout Fat City and to provide on-street parking where available. To achieve the desired cross-section, buildings should be shifted closer to the street over time, which would eliminate conflicts created by front yard parking, result in more efficient use of lots and create a more pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

Exhibit 2: Typical Existing Streetscape

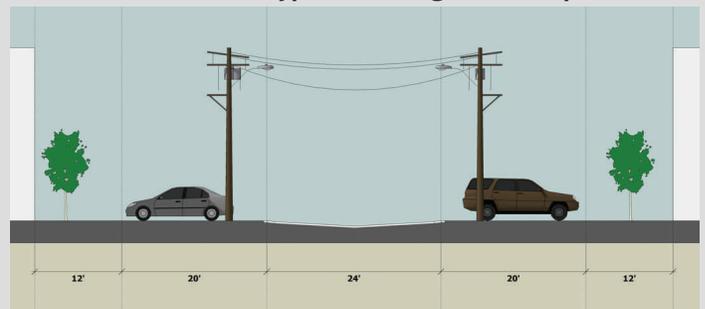


Exhibit 3: Proposed Streetscape



2.5.3 Utilities

Existing power and telecommunications lines are above ground, creating conflicts for space within the right-of-way and visual clutter. Exhibit 4 illustrates the visual benefit of moving these lines underground. The costs of converting to underground utilities will be high. Engineers estimated that the cost for converting to underground utilities for the 18th Street streetscape would exceed \$1 million. In addition to the public cost, there would be private costs for reconfiguring building connections.

Exhibit 4: Visual Benefit of Underground Utilities



Removal of power lines dramatically reduces visual clutter.

Chapter 3: Summary of Challenges

While Fat City is an area with distinct locational advantages, significant challenges inhibit private reinvestment and redevelopment in the area. Most of these challenges involve some combination of economic, infrastructure, design and funding components. The following list identifies the most important challenges in no particular order.

Drainage – Fat City requires significant investment to resolve drainage deficiencies resulting from inadequate piping to convey stormwater out of the area. While the Parish is making the initial investment to improve drainage along 18th Street, more investment will be needed to convey the water north to the open channel along West Esplanade Avenue or south to Veterans Boulevard.

Building Orientation/Streetscape – Fat City’s building orientation limits streetscape opportunities. Front setbacks, current building orientations and small lots necessitate head-in parking, which reduces the potential for safe sidewalks and landscaping. Wider rights-of-way may be needed in some areas to accommodate complete streets that address traffic, parking, utilities, drainage, streetscape and sidewalks. Additionally, current building orientations force most property owners to locate dumpsters within front yards, making them dominant streetscape features – aromatic welcome mats.

Parking – The parking study shows a deficiency of 3,253 parking spaces in the portion of Fat City located between Severn and Division Streets. Existing parking deficiencies, when combined with fragmented property ownership, limited land availability and high property values, inhibit redevelopment for the following reasons:

- Existing uses cannot be intensified or redeveloped at similar intensities and accommodate required on-site parking due to lack of space.
- Limited vacant property is too expensive to secure off-site surface parking.
- Fragmented ownership patterns inhibit large scale redevelopment projects with greater flexibility to address parking needs on-site.

Walkability – In addition to obstacles created by head-in parking and the lack of east-west connectivity, Fat City’s poorly maintained, intermittent sidewalks and the obstacles within them make it difficult to walk in the area. To capitalize on a mix of uses, the Parish will need to establish more walkable streets. More walkable streets are essential to support businesses and residents given parking limitations and the inability of the street system to support high volumes of automotive traffic. Pedestrian access is particularly important given the location of Grace King School at the northwest corner of the area. Currently, some students climb over walls and fences to avoid walking around the long blocks.

East/West Access – 18th Street is the only east/west access between West Esplanade Avenue and Veterans Boulevard, heavily travelled divided arterials that provide one-way movements to the north and south of Fat City. As identified in the Metairie CBD Plan, additional east/west access is needed to connect North Arnoult Road to Division Street for cars and pedestrians.

Zoning – The current zoning is inconsistent with the objective to create a sustainable mixed-use center in Fat City. In addition to the above-mentioned setback requirements that increase pressure for front-yard parking, the applicable zoning is both too broad and too constraining for desired uses. Existing zoning is not designed to accommodate mixed uses. Furthermore, the applicable commercial zoning allows too broad a range of uses to promote pedestrian-oriented development.

Land Uses – There are a number of uses that are inconsistent with the vision for Fat City, including auto-oriented uses, adult uses and heavy commercial/light industrial uses in the pedestrian-oriented core. In addition to using zoning to preclude the establishment of inappropriate uses, the Parish should establish incentives for conversion to uses that support plan objectives. These incentives include zoning provisions that allow for more intensive development and parking mitigation, and public improvements (e.g., parking, street, drainage, sidewalks) that entice private investment in redevelopment projects.

Housing Mix – Housing in Fat City is limited to two story apartments and condominiums. Most of the units were developed with only one parking space per unit, which limits the market that can be served and results in significant parking deficiencies. To encourage private investment, the area will need a better mix of commercial uses and residential development with adequate parking to attract the residences required to support those uses.

Fragmented Property Ownership – While several property owners have extensive holdings in Fat City, ownership patterns are highly fragmented. Small lots and fragmented holdings increase the difficulty of creating mixed use developments that are of sufficient size to accommodate on-site parking and a sustainable mix of uses. Furthermore, as the number of parcels and property owners increase, the potential for incompatibility with neighboring uses increases.

Security – Fat City has benefitted from increased security resulting from the location of a Sheriff's office in the area, but security remains a concern with residents. Increased security should address problems related with a few of the drinking establishments, vandalism and illicit drug trade.

Aesthetics – The combination of building design, property maintenance, exposed dumpsters, overhead utilities, street maintenance and insufficient landscaping detract from Fat City’s appearance. Improved landscaping, property maintenance and street/utility repairs could have a short term impact with minimal investment. Recent code enforcement efforts on the part of the Parish have already started yielding positive results. Parish investment in the 18th Street Corridor should improve the appearance of that corridor even though Entergy plans to improve overhead utilities rather than relocating them underground. Requirements for screening of dumpsters or the potential switch from dumpsters to nightly collections would also have a positive effect. Improvements to or replacement of existing buildings will require ongoing private investment in accordance with more stringent design and materials standards.

Funding – Improvements to the public (streets, drainage, utilities) and private (buildings, parking and landscaping) realms will require significant funding. The combination of general revenue funds, utility funds and income from the newly formed Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district will help with many of the public improvements. Private funding will depend on creating confidence within the private sector that the Parish is committed to working together to resolve the above issues.

Chapter 4: Improvements Underway

There has been a longstanding awareness in Jefferson Parish of the pressing need to beautify, improve, and comprehensively redevelop the Fat City area. There have been many studies and initiatives through the years to address the myriad problems that Fat City faces, but success has been limited. Recently, however, the Parish has seen newfound energy, ambition, and interagency cooperation in support of meaningful, lasting redevelopment in Fat City. Unquestionably, the most important initiative underway is the completion of this implementation plan—an ambitious, yet realistic roadmap outlining the regulatory changes, public investments, and other measures that must be undertaken to effectuate lasting change in the area. Over the past two years, a number of other actions have been pursued by the Parish Government that have demonstrated the renewed commitment to an improved Fat City and that have resulted in meaningful interim improvements in the appearance and quality of life of the area.

Some of the principal actions that are underway or have been initiated in recent years are as follows:

- There has been increased regulatory scrutiny of nuisance uses in the area. A number of criminal incidents connected to a particular nightclub in Fat City resulted in the closure of the bar in 2007.
- Pending the completion of entirely new zoning regulations specific to Fat City, a number of interim zoning regulations were passed in 2008 governing signage, parking, and a number of other development characteristics. These regulatory changes will help to preserve and improve the aesthetic quality of the area while a more comprehensive suite of regulations is being crafted.
- A number of new provisions were adopted into the Parish Code of Ordinances governing the appearance and maintenance of properties. One of the most significant of these is a new provision that all dumpsters must be screened by fencing on all four sides (Section 16-4 of the Parish Code of Ordinances). Previously, many dumpsters were plainly visible to the street and created an extremely unsightly “front door” to many residential and commercial properties.
- Code enforcement efforts have been strengthened under the direction of the Jefferson Parish Department of Inspection and Code Enforcement. A number of code “sweeps” have been conducted in Fat City, resulting in the issuance and subsequent resolution of numerous violations.
- A Tax Increment Financing District was established in 2008 to dedicate a portion of sales tax revenue to improvements in the Fat City area. This action created a funding source that is unique to Fat City and that will be dedicated exclusively to public improvements in the area.

- Comprehensive paving, drainage, and utility upgrades will soon be underway along 18th Street, a principal east-west connector and the location of many of Fat City's most prominent businesses. This project will include badly needed sub-surface drainage and sewage improvements, a total repaving of the street surface, and the replacement of above ground wooden utility poles with more permanent metal poles.

Chapter 5: Strategic Plan

To build upon the initiatives that are already underway, Jefferson Parish must adopt a truly comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of Fat City. This includes more stringent regulatory controls, major public investments to beautify the public realm and address the chronic parking shortage, and financing and administrative mechanisms to ensure implementation. This section outlines the full range of improvements that are needed to revitalize the area.

5.1 Mixed Use Zoning Districts

This Plan recommends the establishment of three mixed use zoning districts for Fat City. These new zoning districts must include appropriate land uses for each district, design criteria for buildings, sites and the public realm, an efficient approval process, and regulatory guidance that encourages development consistent with the future vision for Fat City.

5.1.1 Land Use

Existing zoning includes too broad a range of uses for the pedestrian core and does not adequately address the transitions between uses in the area. The draft Pedestrian Core District limits automobile-oriented uses (such as drive-through uses, contractors' shops, and industrial uses) and allows pedestrian-supportive uses (such as retail, entertainment, mixed-use buildings and restaurants). A Residential Mixed-Use District that would apply to the area north of the 18th Street corridor allows uses that would be compatible with the existing residential development. A broader Commercial Mixed-Use District to the south of the 18th Street corridor would retain most of the land use flexibility that is allowed today. Each of these proposed districts has distinct design requirements that are described in the following paragraphs.

5.1.2 Landscaping

Limited right-of-way and heavy reliance on head-in parking to mitigate parking deficiencies limits landscaping opportunities. Yet, as seen in the two Fat City streetscapes in Exhibit 5, landscaping is one of the most effective visual enhancements. In addition to improving the appearance of the area, street trees could provide much needed shade and promote pedestrian traffic. Landscaping standards should be more stringent within the Pedestrian Core and Residential Mixed Use Districts.

Exhibit 5: Visual Benefits of Street Trees



Street trees soften the built environment and provide valuable shade.

5.1.3 Parking Flexibility

Existing residential projects have parking deficiencies that will not be easy to resolve without redevelopment. The parking standards for the districts recognize the importance of on-site parking for residents, but provide greater flexibility for off-site parking. More specifically, for each of the districts, on-site parking is required for residential units in each district except the Pedestrian Core. Accessible handicapped spaces are required in each district. Parking for non-residential uses may be provided on-site, off-site or through payment of parking mitigation fees.

5.1.4 Building Design

Many of the current buildings in Fat City foster the image of the area as an industrial park rather than a vibrant mixed-use district. While many of the existing buildings will remain as is for the foreseeable future, the proposed district regulations establish building design standards that will change the current image. Most significantly, they will eliminate blank walls. Additionally, they will encourage, or in the case of the Pedestrian Core district, require greater building heights.

Throughout the Pedestrian Core district, building façade standards preclude the creation of blank walls that produce sterile streets. Street walls should include entries and abundant display windows. Walls on upper floors should have fewer windows, which should be vertically aligned with shop bays on the ground floor and horizontally aligned with windows on adjacent buildings. Building material limitations in each district should apply in public areas, including street fronts, side streets and parking areas.

5.1.5 Minimum/Maximum Building Setbacks

Each of the draft districts establishes front build-to lines or maximum setbacks to bring building facades to the street and create a better sense of enclosure along the streets, which promotes pedestrian activity. Additionally, bringing buildings forward will improve opportunities for parking behind structures and eliminate head-in parking that interferes with pedestrian use of sidewalks.

5.1.6 Non-Conformities

The change in the above design standards will create non-conforming uses and building configurations that will be allowed to continue to exist pursuant to existing non-conforming use standards. These standards should be modified within Fat City to facilitate changes that comply with planned outcomes. Specifically:

- The definition of non-conforming use should be broadened to include non-conforming situations such as parking and building violations. The current definition states that “Improvements existing at time of passage of this chapter not meeting required parking and loading regulations, height regulations, and area regulations for the district in which they are situated shall not be considered as non-conforming use.”

- Provisions allowing for expansion of non-conforming structures should be limited to ensure that the result of the expansion project would be to bring the building into greater compliance with district requirements.
- Adult uses should be eliminated or greatly curtailed to foster a more family-friendly environment. The Parish should evaluate the amortization of existing adult uses to address nuisance uses.

Additionally, the Parish should increase its scrutiny of changes in use to ensure that new uses do not exacerbate existing parking deficiencies. New and expanded uses that increase parking demands over existing uses should be required to provide on-site parking or to mitigate demands through any of the techniques described in Section 5.3 of this plan.

5.2 Public Infrastructure and Service Improvements

5.2.1 Streetscape

Streets through Fat City function more as service alleys than complete streets. The prevalence of head-in parking, dumpsters on the street, non-existent or rollover curbs, and mechanical equipment, combined with the dearth of sidewalks and landscaping, creates an inhospitable environment for pedestrians and drivers. Streetscapes should establish clearly separated realms for vehicles, parking and pedestrians. Exhibits 6 and 7 show two examples of modified streetscapes that would accomplish these objectives. Existing development and parking limitations will interfere with the immediate establishment of complete streets, but the Parish should ensure that as redevelopment takes place, each street includes the following features:

- Two travel lanes to accommodate two way traffic;
- Clearly defined on-street parking, with bulbed-out curbs at intersections and interspersed landscape islands;
- Stand up curbs to define and limit auto access to lots;
- Six foot wide sidewalks designed to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and
- Accommodations for underground utilities.

The Parish is in the process of finalizing plans for the 18th Street corridor improvements. This project illustrates the difficulties in changing from service-based roads to complete streets. Heavy reliance on open access between the street and on-site parking areas in the front of the buildings means that the initial design will have more curb cuts than desired. Furthermore, while Entergy has agreed to replace existing wooden poles with more durable metal poles, there is inadequate funding to move electrical and telecommunications lines underground.

5.2.2 Drainage

The proposed improvements in the 18th Street corridor will include culverts that will act as a temporary retention basin until an outfall is extended north to the canal in the median of West Esplanade. While these interim improvements will not eliminate the potential for flooding, they should significantly reduce flooding for most storms. Drainage has been cited as one of the most significant ongoing challenges for many of the property and business owners in Fat City. The extension of the outfall from 18th Street along Edenborn Street should be considered a high priority for capital improvements to the area.

5.2.3 Connectivity

Other than 18th Street, there is no convenient way for pedestrians or motorists to travel east or west within Fat City’s boundaries. As redevelopment occurs, the Parish should seek safe and convenient connections between the north-south streets in Fat City. As shown in

Map 5, the connections proposed in the Metairie CBD plan are relatively continuous; this pattern would be more effective for moving traffic through Fat City. Establishment of these or similar connections would dramatically improve circulation throughout Fat City for drivers and pedestrians.

5.2.4 Electricity & Telecommunications

While the overhead lines throughout Fat City are an eyesore, they will remain part of the landscape until a funding source is established to begin moving lines underground. The effort to bury utility lines will require that future development and redevelopment efforts in

Exhibit 6: Sample Streetscape Enhancements 18th and Edenborn



The addition of street trees, wider sidewalks, decorative lighting, combined with the removal of free-standing signs improves the existing streetscape without reducing available on-street parking

Fat City be designed to accommodate conversion of service. The locations and designs of service panels will need to be adjusted to facilitate the provision of underground service. Furthermore, connections from the main line will need to be designed to avoid cluttering front yards with service boxes.

5.2.5 Solid Waste Management

Small lot sizes, the lack of alleys or rear service areas and front building setbacks have resulted in the proliferation of dumpsters along the street frontage. Elsewhere in the Parish, screening is being used to hide dumpsters. However, even screening will not change the fact that the inevitable odors and pests associated with dumpsters serve as poor welcome mats for area businesses. To minimize this problem, the Parish should evaluate alternative garbage collection services for businesses, such as those used in the French Quarter, where receptacles are placed by the curb after business hours each day and collected before business begins the next day. While more costly, this will significantly improve the ambiance and free space for needed parking and streetscape enhancements.

5.3 Parking Strategies

5.3.1 Flexible Parking Standards

The free market for limited parking spaces has illustrated the benefits of flexible parking standards, but cannot be relied upon to support greater business vitality in Fat City. To address the parking deficiencies, the Parish will need to develop a better understanding of its options to increase the parking supply and manage existing

Exhibit 7: Sample Streetscape Enhancements Edenborn



The addition of street trees, wider sidewalks, decorative lighting improves the existing streetscape without reducing available on-street parking.

and future parking so that it is used efficiently. The shortage of parking in Fat City has been partially absorbed through an unofficial shared parking policy – uses that have differing peak parking demand hours supplement other uses’ parking deficiencies. Existing deficiencies will be exacerbated by either additional development of vacant or underused properties, or changes of use that increase parking demands. Parking standards should be flexible enough to capitalize on shared parking facilities, but flexible standards require better management of demands than current regulations provide. More specifically, the Parish should:

- Review changes of use and require additional parking for uses that increase parking demands.
- Improve the monitoring of additions or building modifications that increase parking demands.
- Allow for shared parking between separate uses and properties, subject to executed agreements documenting the availability of adequate parking capacity to meet demands.
- Establish a parking mitigation fee to allow business or property owners to contribute to a fund that will be dedicated to the provision of parking. Note that issues of access and charges for the use of spaces supplied through mitigation fees would need to be resolved. For example, would parking spaces be public, reserved for businesses contributing fees or discounted to fee payers’ clients?

5.3.2 Public Parking

The Parish should monitor and pursue opportunities to establish public parking lots or structures serving the Pedestrian Core district. Public parking serving existing residential and commercial areas in the other districts should be considered a lower priority. Initially, the Parish should evaluate the potential parking sites shown in Map 6 because these sites are either vacant or subject to code enforcement actions. As redevelopment occurs, additional sites should be considered. When planning for public parking, the Parish should ensure that it retains as much on-street parking as possible. As head-in parking spaces are eliminated, on-street parking will be easier to accommodate.

5.3.3 Funding Supplemental Parking

Funding for supplemental parking may come from a variety of sources, including the general fund, Tax Increment Financing, a parking utility, or private contributions (e.g. mitigation fees, parking clubs and other contributions). The Parish should evaluate the full range of options to resolve parking deficiencies, pedestrian safety issues and potential blight resulting from current parking problems.

General Fund and Council District Funds. These discretionary funds can be used for any public purpose, including the planning and provision of additional parking spaces. Given the competition for these limited funds, they are most likely to be available to help fund parking studies or to provide matching funds for other sources.

Tax Increment Financing. The TIF district, formed in December, 2008, will provide increased sales tax revenues to Fat City from the new Macy’s in the Lakeside Shopping Center. The availability of these funds will be tied to the success in attracting increased retail trade to the area. However, these funds may be used for a wide variety of projects benefitting the TIF district, including the funding of all activities associated with increasing the supply of public parking.

Parking Utility. A parking utility would treat public parking as any other public service. Relying on user fees and mitigation fees, it could be used to support revenue bonds that would fund parking space development. A properly structured parking utility may have greater flexibility to condemn property needed to resolve some of the existing parking problems. This would help overcome statutory limits on the condemnation of private property for economic purposes.

Private Contributions. The flexible parking standards allow for off-site mitigation of parking requirements. These may be addressed through a variety of public and private options, including:

- **Parking mitigation fees** could be charged to developments and changes of use that increase parking demand, but lack the space to accommodate the parking on-site. Such fees must be proportionate to the increased demands and retained in a separate fund that is only used for the provision of parking that would meet that demand.
- **Parking mitigation agreements** are contracts between affected parties that reserve parking spaces on one public or private parcel for use of the owner or operator of a business on another parcel.
- **Parking clubs** are an extension of the concept of parking mitigation agreements. These private organizations pool available parking and establish agreements governing the sharing of those spaces. Parking clubs are generally more effective in using existing parking more efficiently than increasing the number of available spaces.

5.3.4 Parking Management

Efficient use of parking will be critical to the success of any parking initiative within Fat City. Coordination of public and private efforts can increase effective parking supplies more cost effectively than construction of new parking. Parking management relies on developing good information about available parking, effectively conveying that information to users and providing convenient connections between available parking and the businesses that are served by that parking.

5.4 Public Safety Initiatives

5.4.1 Code Enforcement

Jefferson Parish initiated code enforcement sweeps through Fat City in 2008. Those efforts were welcomed by compliant property owners and have been generally successful. Following adoption of this strategic plan, the Parish should conduct periodic sweeps in conjunction with a campaign to inform property owners about new opportunities and responsibilities resulting from the plan.

5.4.2 Neighborhood Association

Residents and business owners have a vested interest in the quality of life in Fat City, but seldom have the knowledge or resources to address common problems on an individual basis. Formation of a neighborhood association would promote discussion of and help resolve Fat City's ongoing challenges. In addition, an association could foster a stronger sense of community and the confidence to make long term investments in the area.

5.4.3 Law Enforcement Coordination

Property owners have lauded the Parish's establishment of a Sheriff's department substation in Fat City. While this has reduced response times, crime remains a concern for residents and business owners. To supplement public actions, the Parish should coordinate with the proposed neighborhood association Fat City to improve the effectiveness of public and private actions in reducing vandalism and other crimes.

5.5 Funding Initiatives

5.5.1 Tax Increment Financing

The Parish recently created a tax increment financing district for Fat City. This will allow the Parish to direct increased tax revenues to public improvements within the district and provide an avenue to secure additional state funding.

5.5.2 Parking Fund

The Parish should establish a parking fund to develop additional parking spaces within Fat City. The fund could secure revenues through parking mitigation fees, parking user fees and other sources. Parking mitigation fees are payments made for the provision of off-site parking by developers who are unable to provide adequate on-site parking. The Parish also should evaluate the creation of a parking utility to plan for and manage parking within the 18th Street Corridor.

5.5.3 Business Development District

Public funding can address some of the public infrastructure and service needs for Fat City, but private sector participation will be essential for the area to achieve its potential. Business and property owners who deal with local challenges on a day-to-day basis are in the best position to identify and prioritize needs for action. A business development district would provide a forum to set priorities, fund private endeavors and convey needs for public investment to the Parish. These actions may include:

- **Education** – to promote private investment, business and property owners must be confident that investments are being made by the public and private sectors. A business association could keep local business and property owners informed.
- **Problem Solving** – as a forum for assembling concerns and ideas, a business association can work with the Parish to identify public service needs (including code enforcement), prioritize infrastructure investments, and identify regulatory needs and challenges.
- **Area Promotion** – an association can orchestrate special events and coordinated business promotions that will entice local and regional residents to patronize Fat City.

5.5.4 Grants Coordination

Competition for public and private grants is high. To compete for grants, the Parish should coordinate with the private sector to designate a grants coordinator for Fat City. This individual could work for the Parish or business development district, and could potentially serve as a liaison between business owners, residents and the Parish and coordinate efforts to update the action plan described below.

Chapter 6: Summary Matrix of Action Items

The following action plan is intended to be a dynamic tool to coordinate public and private actions within Fat City. The initial action plan is focused on short term actions to implement this plan. Subsequent revisions, which should occur on an annual basis, should document public and private commitments to continually improve the vitality and desirability of living and doing business in Fat City.

The following actions are broken into five categories: regulatory measures, incentives, public services/administration, parking, and infrastructure.

Action ID#	Implementation Action	Responsible Local Agencies/ Actors	Benchmarks	Local Resources/ Funding	Timeline
REGULATORY					
FC1	Adopt new zoning districts that provide unique site development standards for different areas of Fat City	Jefferson Parish Planning Department, Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulation of new zoning districts Adoption of revisions by Parish Council 	Staff time, supported by the General Fund	Complete new zoning regulations and adopt into law in 2009-2010
FC2	Apply new zoning districts to specific properties in Fat City	Jefferson Parish Planning Department, Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of proposed zoning map changes Adoption of revised map by Parish Council 	Staff time, supported by the General Fund	Complete zoning map amendments and adopt into law in 2009-2010
FC3	Develop a strategy to amortize the number of adult uses in Fat City	Jefferson Parish Planning Department, Parish Attorney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulation of an ordinance to establish an amortization schedule for adult uses Adoption of the ordinance by Parish Council 	Staff time, supported by the General Fund	Draft ordinance and adopt into law in 2009
FC4	Develop a strategy to amortize signs that are outdated, poorly maintained, and not in conformance with new regulations	Jefferson Parish Planning Department, Parish Attorney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulation of an ordinance to establish an amortization schedule for signage Adoption of the ordinance by Parish Council 	Staff time, supported by the General Fund	Draft ordinance and adopt into law in 2009-2010
PARKING					
FC5	Establish parking mitigation requirements, including off-site and shared parking provisions, and establish a parking fund	Jefferson Parish Planning Department, Parish Attorney's Office, Parish Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modification of zoning ordinance to provide parking mitigation requirements Adoption of ordinance to establish a parking fund and administrative policies 	Staff time, supported by the General Fund	Adopt parking mitigation requirements by year-end 2009; adopt ordinance for parking fund in 2009; implement parking fund in 2010
FC6	Designate a parking management entity to set priorities for the development and management of off-street parking	Proposed Business Development District (BDD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of Business Development District Establishment of parking management entity 	Staff time, supported by BDD funds	Establish BDD and parking management entity in 2009-2010

Action ID#	Implementation Action	Responsible Local Agencies/ Actors	Benchmarks	Local Resources/Funding	Timeline
PARKING (cont'd)					
FC7	Establish and implement a parking capital improvement plan to meet off-street parking demands	Proposed Business Development District (BDD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of plan • Identification of funding sources • Construction of off-street facility/facilities 	Staff time, supported by BDD funds; capital costs contingent upon plan recommendations	Complete capital plan and financing strategy in 2010. Initiate construction of parking facility in 2010 - 2011
INFRASTRUCTURE					
FC8	Develop a capital plan for the expenditure of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenues	Jefferson Parish Planning Department, Proposed BDD, Parish Attorney, Parish Council, Finance Department, Department of Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of a plan that establishes short and long-range priorities for TIF-funded capital projects 	Contingent upon total annual revenues from Fat City TIF	Complete draft capital plan in 2009-2010
FC9	Prepare streetscape schematics to outline desired cross-sections for each street segment in Fat City	Jefferson Parish Planning Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of detailed streetscape schematics (should include Severn Avenue) 	Staff time, supported by the General Fund	Complete final streetscape schematics in 2009-2010
FC10	Develop and implement capital plan for street, drainage, and streetscape improvements	Jefferson Parish Planning Department, Proposed BDD, Parish Attorney, Parish Council, Finance Department, Department of Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of a plan that establishes short and long-range priorities for capital funding • Identification of potential funding streams • Initiation of capital projects 	Contingent upon determination of aggregate capital needs and project timetables. Funding to be provided from Council District funds, TIF funds and external grants	Initiate plan in 2009; finalize plan and identify funding sources in 2010; Initiate capital projects in 2010-2011
FC11	Develop a strategy and funding mechanism to relocate utilities underground	Parish Administration, Parish Council, Public Works, utility companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of cost estimates and high priority locations for relocating above ground utilities • Completion of a funding strategy 	Staff time, supported by the General Fund	Initiate strategy in 2010; identify funding sources in 2010-2011; initiate capital improvements in 2011-2012
Public Services/Administration					
FC12	Evaluate waste management alternatives to dumpsters along the street	Parish Attorney, Parish Council, Parish Administration and Finance Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to waste management companies and property owners with dumpsters • Development of alternate strategy • Adoption of cooperative endeavor agreements and/or Parish ordinances 	Staff time, supported by the General Fund	Complete strategy in 2009; implement alternative strategy in 2009 - 2010
FC13	Establish a Fat City Business Development District (BDD) to coordinate public and private investments in the area	Parish Council, Administration, and Property Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation and adoption of an ordinance to establish the Fat City BDD and a recurring funding source 	Approximately \$200,000 - \$300,000 annually, supported by the General Fund	Form BDD in 2009-2010

Action ID#	Implementation Action	Responsible Local Agencies/ Actors	Benchmarks	Local Resources/Funding	Timeline
PUBLIC SERVICES/ADMINISTRATION (cont'd)					
FC14	Facilitate the establishment of a neighborhood association with business owner and resident participation	Parish Council, Fat City Residents, and Property Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a Fat City neighborhood association 	Staff time	Continue outreach to residents and businesses in 2009; establish neighborhood association in 2009-2010
FC15	Pursue collaborative crime prevention initiative	Proposed BDD, Proposed neighborhood association, and JPSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of routine schedule for interaction between law enforcement and neighborhood stakeholders Formulation of collaborative action plan to monitor and prevent crime 	Staff time, supported by the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office (JPSO)	Initiate formal initiative in 2010
FC16	Continue to conduct regular code enforcement sweeps	Jefferson Department of Inspection and Code Enforcement, JPSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of periodic code sweeps and elevated code activity 	Staff time, supported by the General Fund	Continue sweeps in 2009 and beyond
FINANCING/INCENTIVES					
FC17	Designate public/private liaison and grants coordinator to secure external funding and monitor plan implementation	Proposed Business Development District (BDD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of Business Development District Hiring of liaison/grants coordinator 	Approximately \$75,000 per year, supported by BDD funds	Establish BDD and fill position in 2009-2010
FC18	Develop a landscape assistance program to improve landscaping of existing development sites	Proposed Business Development District (BDD) and Parish Planning Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of design of landscape assistance program Identification of recurring funding sources Implementation of program 	Approximately \$50,000 - \$100,000 per year, supported by BDD and Council District funds	Design program in 2010; begin implementation in 2010-2011
FC19	Develop a façade assistance program to improve the appearance of existing buildings	Proposed Business Development District (BDD) and Parish Planning Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of design of façade assistance program Identification of recurring funding sources Implementation of program 	Approximately \$50,000 - \$100,000 per year, supported by BDD and Council District funds	Design program in 2010; begin implementation in 2010-2011

Chapter 7: Conclusion

According to numerous individuals who were involved in past efforts to revitalize Fat City, the commitment, cooperation, and collective will that have been exhibited in the crafting of this plan are unprecedented. They portend a strengthened commitment to providing the public investments, the regulatory tools, the administrative capacity, and the funding streams that are all necessary to effect a lasting change in Fat City.

This plan has articulated a vision for what Fat City can and should be—an exciting, pedestrian oriented, mixed use neighborhood in the commercial heart of Jefferson Parish. Through a continued commitment to the specific action items outlined in this plan, that vision will be realized in the coming years.

Chapter 8. Acknowledgments

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The following individuals and organizations were contributing partners to this report:

Jefferson Parish Administration

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Jefferson Parish School Board

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Entergy

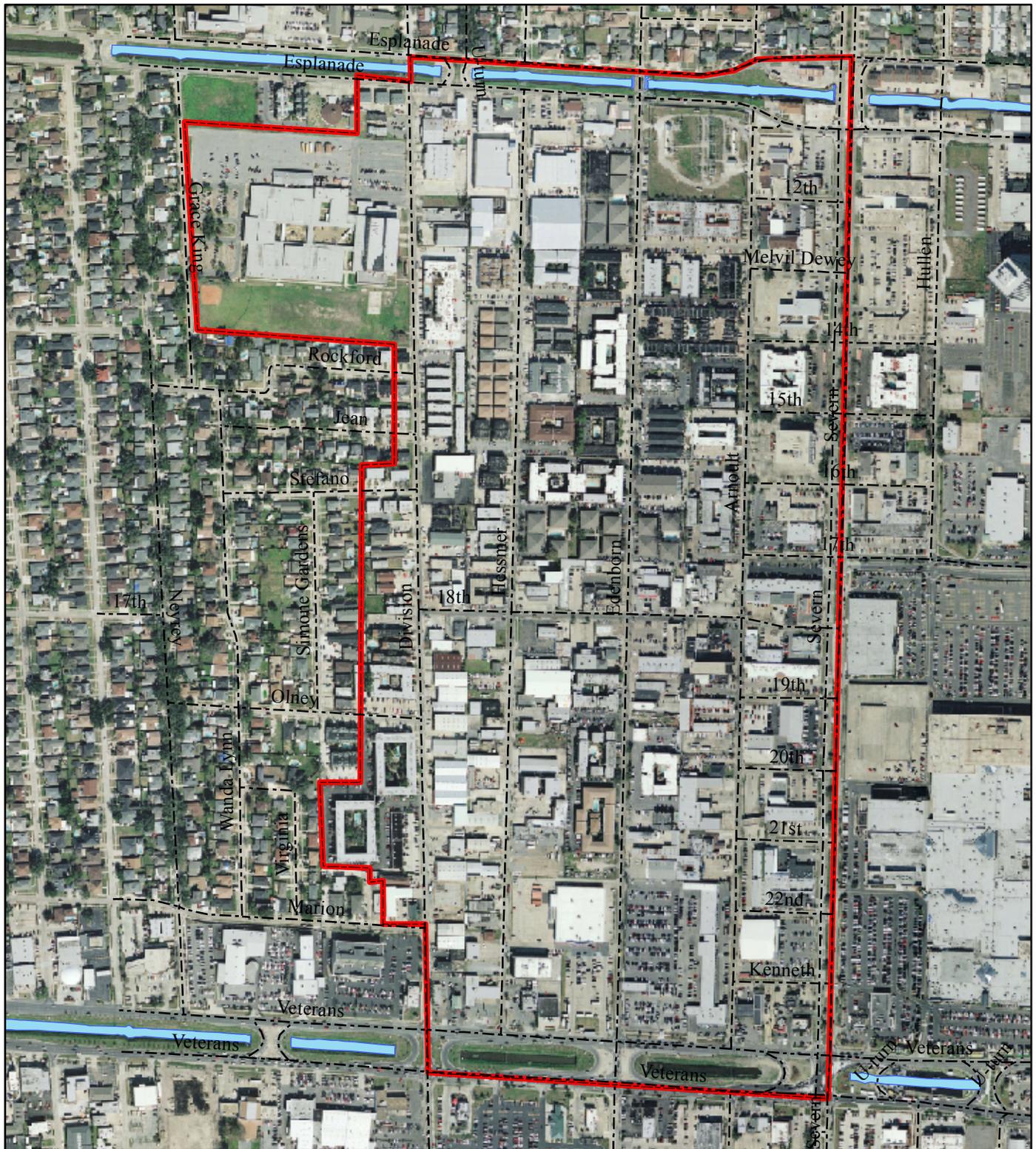
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Appendix: Plan Maps

Map 1 - Base Map



- Street Centerlines
- ▭ Fat City Boundary



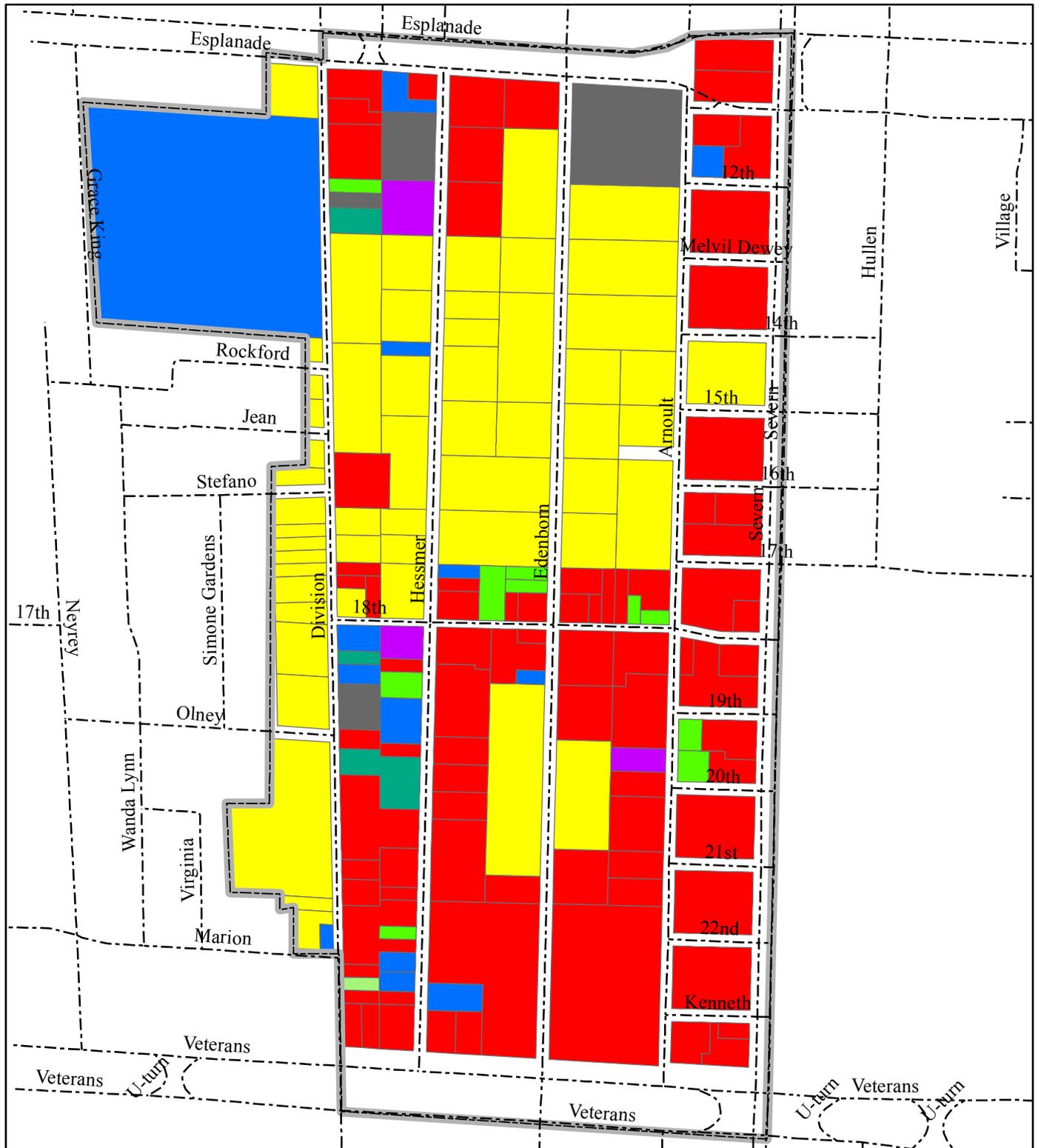
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Map 2 - Existing Land Use



- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| --- Street Centerlines | LBCS Function | 5000 Arts / Entertainment |
| Fat City Boundary | 1000 Residential | 6000 Education |
| | 2000 Commercial | 7000 Construction |
| | 3000 Industrial | 9000 Vacant |
| | 4000 Transportation / Utilities | |



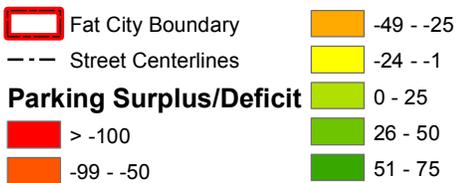
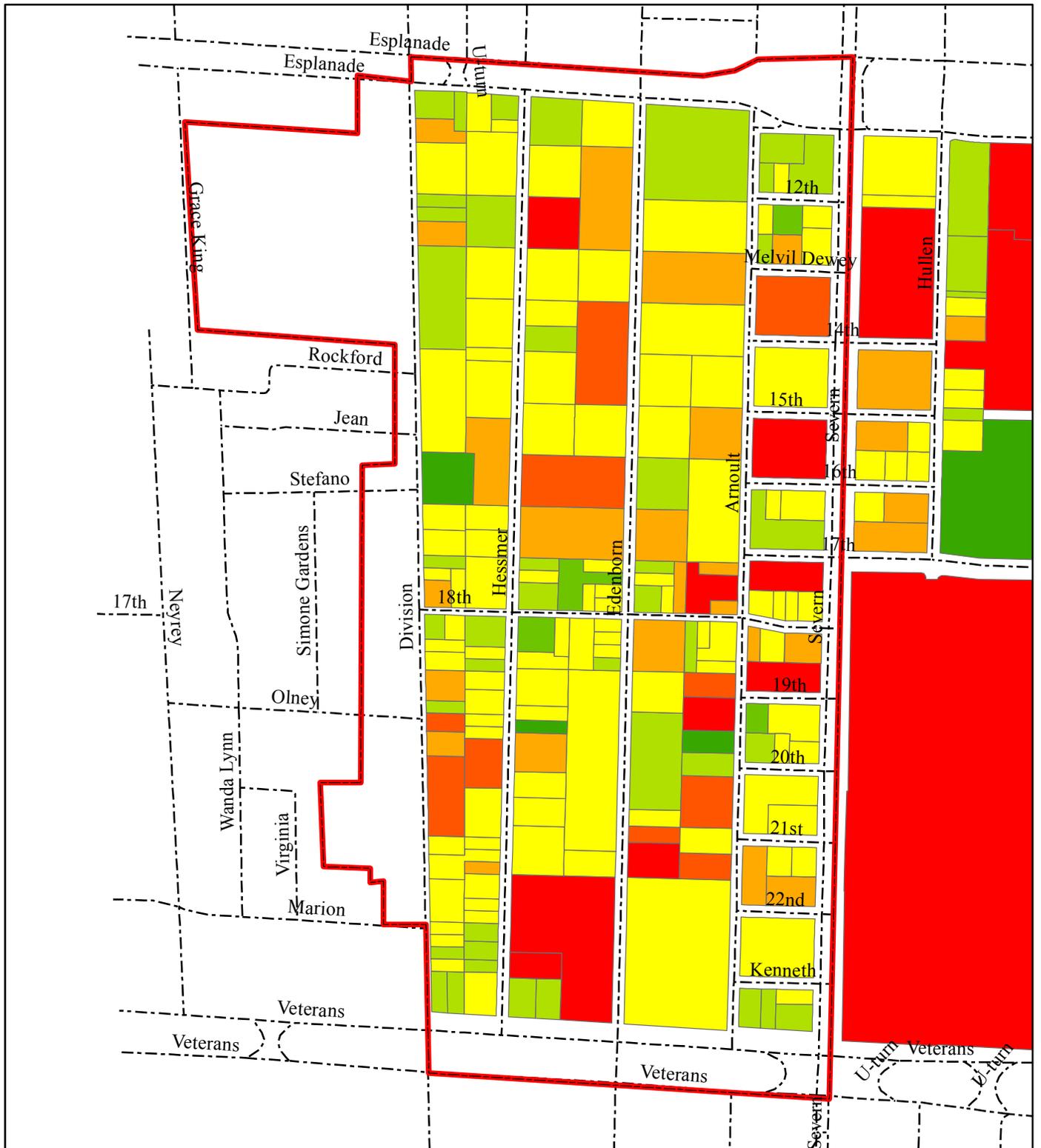
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Map 3 - Parking Surplus/Deficits



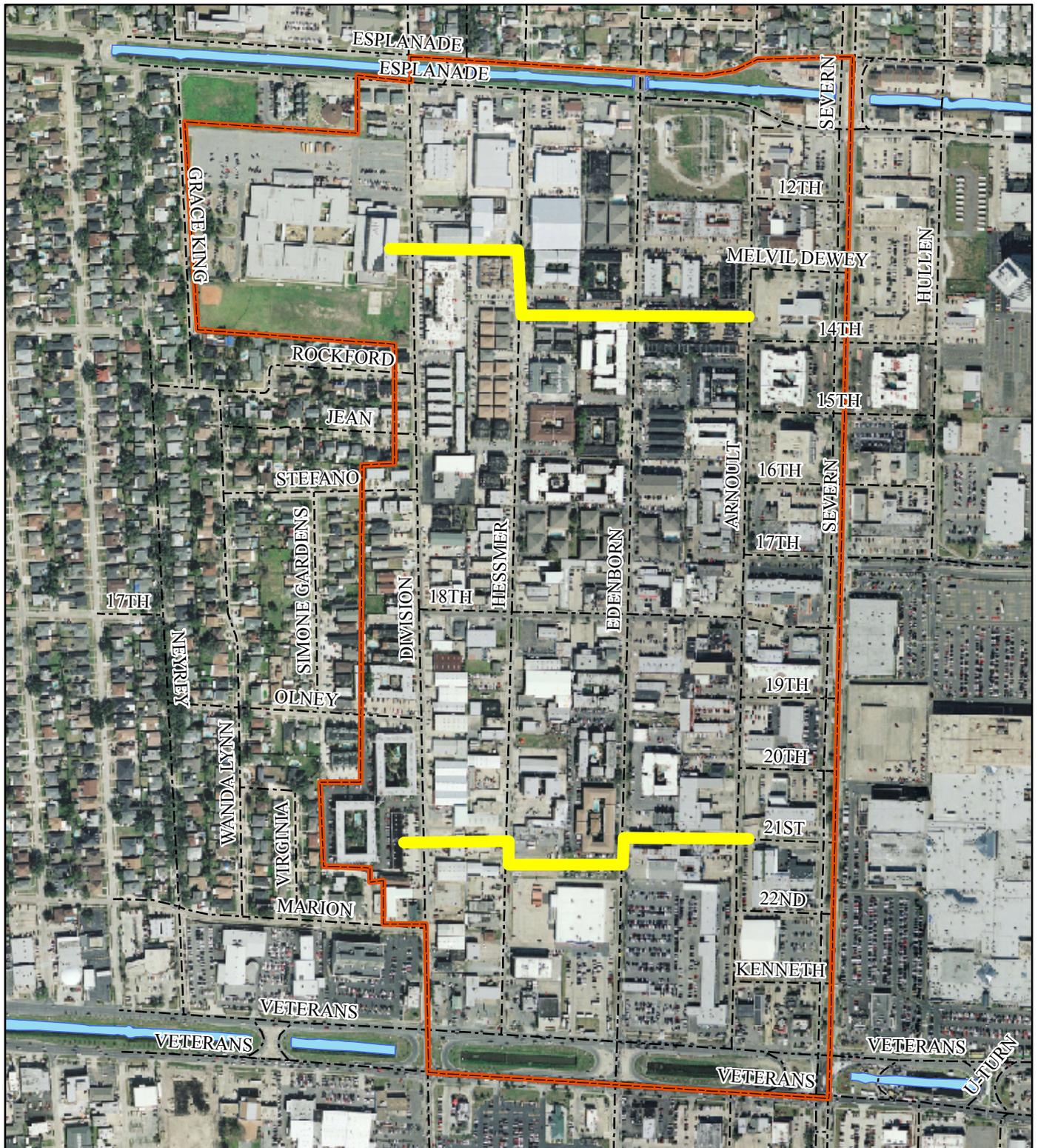
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Map 4 - Potential Street Connections



- Proposed Street Connection
- Fat City Boundary
- Street Centerlines



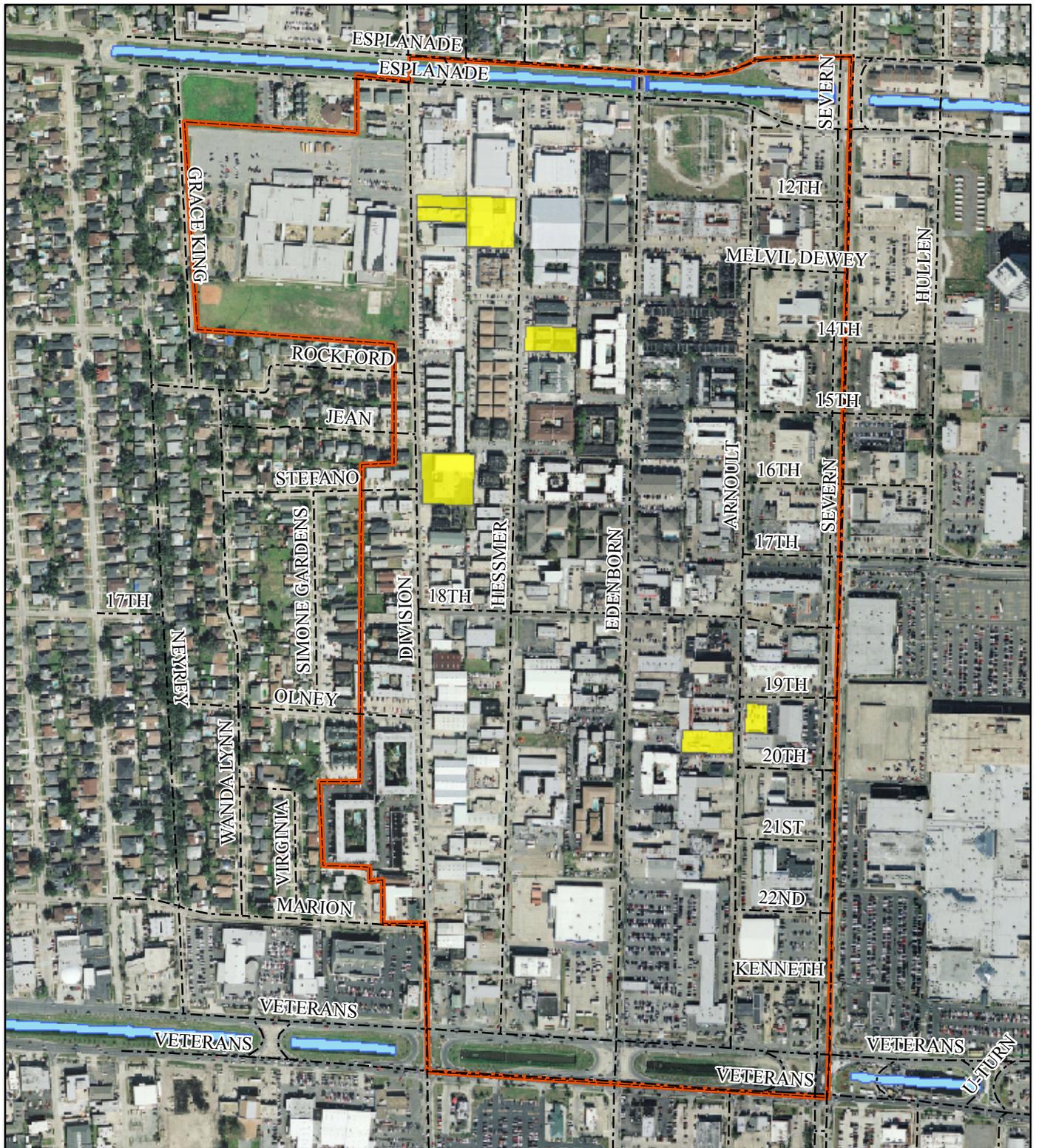
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Map 5 - Potential Parking Sites



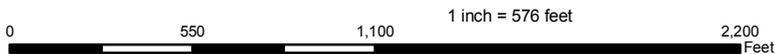
- Street Centerlines
- ▭ Fat City Boundary
- ▭ Potential Parking Sites



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