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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gulfport 2030, the City of Gulfport Comprehensive Plan was prepared under direction of the City of Gulfport, Mississippi.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information, please contact the City of Gulfport at P.O. Box 1780, Gulfport, MS 39502 or by calling (228) 868-8700.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PLAN PURPOSE

Gulfport 2030, the City of Gulfport, Mississippi's new Comprehensive Plan, serves as a primary planning guide for local decision-makers and stakeholders. The Plan offers goals, objectives and recommendations for the community's long-term growth and development and serves as the basis for important decisions regarding the following:

- the quality and character of development Downtown, and in existing and developing centers, and along commercial corridors;
- the rebuilding of neighborhoods damaged by Hurricane Katrina and the improvement of neighborhoods city-wide;
- the conservation of sensitive natural and cultural resources; and
- future investments in the transportation system, community facilities, and capital improvements.

As an important statement of municipal policy, the Plan is adopted by resolution of the City Council and implemented through the City’s land development regulations, including the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, SmartCode, Floodplain Management Ordinance, other municipal codes and ordinances, and various programs and budgets of the City of Gulfport.

1.2 PLANNING AUTHORITY

Title 17-1-1 of the Mississippi Code enables municipalities to prepare and adopt a "comprehensive plan for the purpose of bringing about coordinated physical development in accordance with present and future needs."

A Comprehensive Plan is a "statement of public policy for the physical development of the entire municipality or county adopted by resolution of the governing body, consisting of the following elements at a minimum:

(i.) Goals and objectives for the long-range (twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) years) development of the county or municipality. Required goals and objectives shall address, at a minimum, residential, commercial and industrial development; parks, open space and recreation; street or road improvements; public schools and community facilities.

(ii.) A land use plan, which designates in map or policy form the proposed general distribution and extent of the uses of land for residences, commerce, industry, recreation and open space, public/quasi-public facilities and lands. Background information shall be provided concerning the specific meaning of land use categories depicted in the plan in terms of the following: residential densities; intensity of commercial uses; industrial and public/quasi-public uses; and any other information needed to...
adequately define the meaning of such land use codes. Projections of population and economic growth for the area encompassed by the plan may be the basis for quantitative recommendations for each land use category.

(iii.) A transportation plan depicting in map form the proposed functional classifications for all existing and proposed streets, roads and highways for the area encompassed by the land use plan and for the same time period as that covered by the land use plan. Functional classifications shall consist of arterial, collector and local streets, roads and highways, and these classifications shall be defined on the plan as to minimum right-of-way and surface width requirements; these requirements shall be based upon traffic projections. All other forms of transportation pertinent to the local jurisdiction shall be addressed as appropriate. The transportation plan shall be a basis for a capital improvements program.

(iv.) A community facilities plan as a basis for a capital improvements program including, but not limited to, the following: housing; schools; parks and recreation; public buildings and facilities; and utilities and drainage.

Mississippi enabling law requires that zoning and other land use regulations be based on and in conformance to a Comprehensive Plan. Regulations, such as zoning, must be consistent or conform to all elements of the Comprehensive Plan, including its policies, goals and objectives, future land use plan, transportation plan, and community facilities plan.

1.3 PLANNING PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan update planning process, begun in the summer of 2008, provided multiple opportunities for community involvement. During summer and fall 2008, the planning team including the City, HDR, Hall Planning & Engineering, and Economics Research Associates held various work sessions, public workshops, and stakeholder interviews were held to gain the community’s perspective on the assets, issues, and opportunities the City may face over the next two decades.

The early stages of the process also included the collection of data on existing land use, transportation, and community facilities and an analysis of existing and projected market conditions. Building on this initial data collection and analysis, a long-range vision, goals and objectives, and policies and implementation strategy were established for the City including a Future Land Use Plan. Plan elements were synthesized into a draft plan.

Data Collection & Background Analysis

The initial focus of the planning process was on data collection and analysis that included a review of existing City policies, regulations, and planning practices.

The planning team reviewed existing plans and studies, assessed existing conditions and facilities, examined land use and development patterns, and held listening sessions with staff from City departments, business community, and regional and state agencies. The planning team also evaluated the market and population trends that will likely affect the growth, preservation, and development of the City of Gulfport during the next twenty years.
Inventory maps were prepared to show existing land use and facilities, development controls, potential for development, natural features, and environmental and physical constraints.

**Engagement & Outreach**

Community engagement and outreach were a vital component of the Planning Process. The following efforts were undertaken to raise community awareness and understanding of planning issues and encourage residents and business owners to share ideas and concerns.

**Web Site & Advertisements.** A special website for the Comprehensive Plan update was created to provide information regarding planning process, public survey, announcements regarding upcoming public workshops, draft plan and other materials available for public review, and public comment form. Survey results and comments were used to develop plan recommendations. The Gulfport 2030 website was directly accessible from the City’s website.

**Stakeholder Interviews.** A series of small-group meetings were held between consulting team, city staff, and various interested members of the public, business community, and government representatives between August and October 2008. The purpose of these meetings was to gather background data and discuss key elements of the Plan, review preliminary goals, and identify specific objectives for cultural and historic resources, neighborhoods and housing, economic development, parks and recreation, natural resources, transportation and utilities, and public facilities.

**Ideas Workshops.** During the week of October 27, 2008, residents gathered for a series of public workshops held on subsequent evenings at the Handsboro Community Center, St. Joseph Catholic Church (Northwood Hills), and the Gulfport Yacht Club. The purpose of these workshops was to provide the public with information about the City’s Comprehensive Plan and gather input from the community regarding their ideas for future growth and development. Following a brief presentation to introduce the planning process and work to date, workshop participants shared their views on the City’s most important assets, issues, and ideas for the future of the community.

**Plan Development, Public Review, & Adoption**

Information gathered during the initial stages of the planning process were assembled into individual reports on existing land use and development capacity and market analysis and economic profile. Public and stakeholder input was compiled and used to guide the preparation of a Vision statement, Plan goals and objectives, and a Future Land Use Plan for the City. A preliminary assessment of development potential of land beyond the current City limits was also prepared to help the City plan for potential future growth. These initial elements of the plan were then compiled into a preliminary draft plan.
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2.0 VISION & GOALS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The vision and goal statements in this chapter serve as a foundation for the balance of the Comprehensive Plan. Together, they paint a picture of the City in the year 2030 and articulate the community’s ideas and aspirations for the future. They provide broad direction for the City’s long-term conservation, growth, development.

The Vision for the City’s future is presented below, followed by a review of Plan Goals.

2.2 VISION

A Great Place to Live, Learn, Play & Prosper

Gulfport residents—long-time residents and newcomers alike—will appreciate the City as a great place to live, to raise a family, to learn, and to prosper. People will talk about the City as a community rich in history and diverse in culture. As a dynamic destination in a growing region, the City will be well known for its quality of life, strong neighborhoods, and economic vitality.

Since its founding as a working seaport and lumber city over 100 years ago, through its development as a leading regional center of business and culture, Gulfport will continue to inspire in its residents a thoughtful concern for the future and a practice of civic activism.

A Diverse & Vital Economy

The region’s overall quality of life will be tied directly to the health of the City’s economy. Over time, the City’s role as an economic engine in the region will evolve and strengthen. The City’s efforts to attract investment and encourage revitalization will result in the development of a vital economy.

Beyond Downtown, expanded Port operations, military facility improvements, and new industrial facilities will provide a solid base of employment, as well as a stable tax
base. The City will become known for the quality of its work force, low cost of living, and its commitment to quality education and neighborhood livability. As the City’s reputation continues to spread, business investment will increase, new residents will be drawn to the area, and the City’s fiscal health will improve.

Vital Centers & Corridors

Focusing on accessibility, design quality, safety, and livability, the City’s Downtown, commercial corridors and centers will become attractive destinations for residents and tourists. Through a combination of public and private action, Downtown will strengthen its position as the heart of the region’s economic, cultural, and social life. The City’s older existing commercial centers and corridors will be revitalized and its newer commercial areas will gradually be transformed into attractive, pedestrian-friendly destinations.

Opportunities for revitalization and more urban forms of development will be encouraged through City policy, regulations, and incentives. Conflicts between different land uses will be resolved through careful planning and sensitive design.

Strong & Sustainable Neighborhoods

The City’s reputation as a good place to live and work will grow from the quality of its neighborhoods. With their distinctive character, history, and natural setting, City neighborhoods will be safe, affordable, and offer a strong sense of identity.

Through post-Katrina rebuilding efforts and a new focus on promoting conservation, reinvestment, and sensitive infill development, the City will ensure a wide range of housing options are available to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse regional housing market. City investments in transportation improvements, parks, schools, and public facilities will strengthen and reinforce neighborhood character.

Connected Places

A range of transportation options will provide residents, visitors, businesses, and employees with especially high levels of accessibility and mobility. With new infrastructure designed to meet the highest standards for multi-modal planning and context-sensitive design, future public investments in transportation infrastructure will serve as models for communities across the Gulf Coast. The City will promote the development of an interconnected network of streets that efficiently meet the needs of automobile and truck traffic, expand transit options, and support walking and biking as safe and attractive alternative to vehicle travel.

Unique Assets

The City will promote the efficient and effective use of its most unique and significant assets. While promoting growth and development, the City will encourage context-sensitive and environmentally-responsible investment and the careful management of public and private facilities and lands.

The City’s natural setting—its place along the Gulf Coast, bayous, streams, and waterways—and its unique history and heritage continue to contribute to its special sense of place. Concern for the conservation of the City’s resources and assets will result in successful efforts to stabilize and revitalize historic neighborhoods and landmarks, attract investment and activity to the City’s traditional commercial corridors and centers, and promote new development sensitive to local and regional design character.
Quality Facilities & Services

The City’s community facilities, services, and infrastructure—parks and recreation facilities, public transit, streets and highways, public facilities, and utilities—will play a central role in supporting and sustaining Gulfport’s livability and economic vitality.

Ensuring actions and investments at all levels of government are coordinated, market-responsive, and sensitive to community goals and objectives will be of fundamental importance to the City. The City will ensure the efficient, effective delivery of public services that will guide public and private development decisions. Public improvements will reinforce the City’s distinctive character and set a high standard of design quality.

2.3 PLAN GOALS

To achieve its Vision for the future, the City has adopted a number of goals to guide the actions of local stakeholders. These goals outline broad directions for future action that address a wide range of topics related to the various elements of the City’s character that its citizens wish to protect, improve, or enhance. The goals will be used in subsequent chapters of the Plan to frame more detailed objectives and specific policies and strategies that the City and its partners can take to achieve the goals and realize its Vision for the future. The goals are organized by general topic areas.

Land Use & Development

GOAL 4.1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.
Ensure economic development initiatives are fully aligned with Plan goals for the creation of a livable, sustainable, and economically vital City.

GOAL 4.2. EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT PATTERN.
Encourage forms, patterns, and intensities of development that maximize the use of limited land resources, benefit from the presence of existing infrastructure, and protect value of natural systems.

GOAL 4.3. SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS.
Rebuild, stabilize, and revitalize the City’s older urban neighborhoods and promote the creation of new neighborhoods incorporating a mix of housing types with pedestrian oriented streets, small scale neighborhood-oriented office and commercial uses within easy walking distance of parks, schools, and civic uses.

GOAL 4.4. EFFECTIVE REGULATIONS.
Ensure the city’s land development regulations are understandable, easily administered, and effective in creating livable, vital, and sustainable places.

GOAL 4.5. FUTURE GROWTH.
Plan for the long term growth and development of the City beyond the current corporate limits.

Transportation

GOAL 5.1. LONG-RANGE PLANNING & COLLABORATION.
Create a multi-modal transportation network supportive of the City’s land use and economic development goals.

GOAL 5.2. INTERCONNECTED ROADWAY NETWORK.
Promote the creation of an interconnected network of walkable, cyclist-friendly roads with slow design speeds, block-and-street layouts, and quality streetscapes.

GOAL 5.3. COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN.
In areas designated for development or redevelopment as Town and Neighborhoods Centers and where appropriate by context, transform existing thoroughfares into “great streets” that are tree-lined, accommodate
moderate vehicle speeds, and encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use.

**GOAL 5.4. TRANSIT.** Support the creation of a rich menu of transit choices, with a citywide and regional public transportation system that enhances the mobility and safety of riders, and provides long-term support for higher intensity, pedestrian-friendly development.

**GOAL 5.5. BICYCLING.** Design a transportation system that safely and efficiently encourages bicycling and recognizes that cyclists fare best when they act and are treated as the drivers of vehicles.

**GOAL 5.6. PORT RESTORATION.** Ensure effective coordination between MSPA Plans for the Port of Gulfport restoration and local and regional economic development, transportation, land use, and utilities plans.

**Community Facilities**

**GOAL 6.1. PERFORMANCE.** Support efforts to evaluate existing services and anticipate demands for community facilities and services, to ensure that they adequately meet community needs.

**GOAL 6.2. ACCESSIBILITY & COORDINATION.** Provide community facilities and services in a cost-efficient manner and in a manner that makes facilities accessible and convenient to citizens.

**GOAL 6.3. PUBLIC SAFETY.** Provide for public safety facility development, equipment acquisition, and staff to meet future community needs for public safety services and ensure continued levels of service.

**GOAL 6.4. PARTNERSHIPS.** Work with public school districts, higher education institutions, and the public library system to ensure quality educational opportunities are available to all residents.

**GOAL 6.5. PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES & GREENWAYS.** Provide a range of high quality recreational opportunities while creating a continuous open space network that preserves the natural features of greenways and waterways.

**Public Utilities**

**GOAL 7.1. EFFICIENT & COST-EFFECTIVE UTILITY SYSTEM.** Provide needed utility service in an efficient and cost-effective manner to address existing deficiencies and meet demand for future development and redevelopment.

**Natural Systems**

**GOAL 8.1. NATURAL SYSTEM PROTECTION & CONSERVATION.** Protect and enhance natural resources to increase their function in mitigating hazards.

**GOAL 8.2. HAZARD MITIGATION & FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION.** Establish property protection programs and measures in special flood hazard areas and floodplains.

**GOAL 8.3. COASTAL SYSTEM NATURAL RESOURCES.** Manage the coastal system natural resources within the City limits in a manner that will maintain and enhance the environment, recreational opportunities, and protect human life.

**GOAL 8.4. GREENWAY SYSTEM.** Develop a system of greenways, based on key corridors shown in Map 8.5, that protect natural resources, enhance connectivity, and provide recreational opportunities throughout the City.
3.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Information presented in this chapter serves as a foundation for planning recommendations, proposals, and policies presented in the balance of the Plan. Provided below is a review of existing City, County, and regional planning efforts; a review of population, housing, and economic conditions affecting the City’s livability and sustainability; a summary of existing land uses by major category of use; projections of population and employment to the year 2030; and an estimate of the development potential for major categories of land uses based on the employment and population projections.

3.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

Building an understanding of demographic, economic, and land use conditions is the first step in the process of crafting long-range plans and policies to achieve the City’s vision for quality development. Included in this section is a review of recent planning initiatives and studies, a summary of population and employment information, a review of factors driving the region’s economy, and a report on the types and patterns of land uses in the City.

Plans & Studies

Since the last Comprehensive Plan update, much has changed in the City and along the Gulf Coast. A number of important plans and studies have been prepared to address the region’s economic future, grapple with issues like housing affordability and neighborhood livability, and since August 2005, find ways to spark post-Katrina rebuilding and reinvestment and promote more sustainable forms and patterns of development. A review of plans and studies containing information and proposals relevant to the Comprehensive Plan is provided below.

CITY PLANS & STUDIES

Leisure Services Citizens Master Plan, 2000. The purpose of the Citizens Master Plan, prepared by the City’s Department of Leisure Services in 2000, was to evaluate existing recreational facilities, programs, management, and operations and to develop an action plan for the Department’s top priorities based on demographic trends and citizen preferences. The 2000 Plan built upon a 1995 study and included results of a citizen’s interest and satisfaction survey. The Plan recommends the continued expansion of the Sportsplex, development of parks in newer areas of the City including Orange Grove, improvements to existing citywide facilities, and consolidation and centralization of indoor centers and facilities. Additional recommendations include increased programs for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, cultural arts, special events, and after school activities.

Comprehensive Plan, 2003. The City of Gulfport’s first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1968. Most recently updated in 2003, the
Plan’s focus was the creation of a long-term vision to accommodate increased demands on infrastructure and services due to the 1994 annexation that nearly doubled the City’s land area and population. The 2003 Plan looked at population and housing trends, offered projections for demands for housing and other types of land use, and developed plans to manage future land use, transportation, and community facilities.

Redevelopment Master Plan Charrette Book, October 2005. To jump start recovery planning processes in coastal cities affected by Hurricane Katrina, the Governor’s Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal and the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) joined forces to organize the Mississippi Renewal Forum. The Forum, a week-long charrette held October 12-18, 2005, resulted in the creation of theoretical and practical frameworks redevelopment and renewal. The plans prepared for Gulfport, presented in the Redevelopment Master Plan Charrette Book, offered recommendations for the following: reestablishing a mixed-use downtown; optimizing the locational opportunities of the Port and waterfront properties; reinforcing and strengthening the character of the City’s older neighborhoods; creating linkages and diversity among newer neighborhoods; establishing regional transportation diversity; and reinforcing underlying regional ecosystems. The plan was presented to the community in December 2005.

SmartCode Ordinance, 2007. In 2007, the City of Gulfport adopted a SmartCode Ordinance to serve as an alternative to its conventional Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. Prepared following an intensive public engagement effort that included a six-day charrette held in February 2006, the SmartCode provides for the application of transect-based standards for rebuilding and new development through completion of area-specific Community Plans.

SmartCode Community Plans, 2007-2009. To date, the City has prepared and adopted SmartCode Community Plans for five areas of the City. In these areas, listed below and highlighted on Map 3.1, SmartCode transect zones and development standards replace those in the City’s conventional Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations:

- Mississippi City Community Plan (June 2007)
- Old Gulfport Community Plan (June 2007)
- Handsboro Community Plan (February 2008)
- Florence Gardens Community Plan (March 2008)
- Westside Community Plan (March 2009)

Hazard Mitigation & Flood Protection Plan Update, 2007. The City of Gulfport first adopted its’ Hazard Mitigation and Flood Protection Plan in 2000. In order to meet eligibility for FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the Plan was updated in 2007 to address all natural hazards that may affect the City of Gulfport. The Plan provides a mechanism for yearly review and plan maintenance and will continue to be updated every five years. Additionally, the Plan meets the requirements for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System Program for the development of a Flood Protection Plan. The Plan provides a risk and vulnerability assessment of all natural hazards that may affect the City; a capacity assessment that describes the City’s regulations and ordinances; a mitigation strategy to address plan goals and determine priorities; and a plan maintenance section to address plan updates and evaluation.

Turkey Creek & North Gulfport Community Action Plan, 2007. The Community Action Plan, prepared in 2006 by the Turkey Creek Community Initiatives and the North Gulfport Community Land Conservancy, defines community goals and action steps for the North Gulfport and Turkey Creek communities and the lower Turkey Creek
MAP 3.1 SMARTCODE PLANNING AREAS

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
Basin. The Plan’s key action steps focus on the following seven community needs: to develop an inclusive process and structure to facilitate comprehensive neighborhood revitalization; to identify sites for new infill housing construction while continuing historic preservation efforts; to establish Turkey Creek and North Gulfport neighborhood historic districts; to identify transportation improvements to maintain community character and safety; to implement the Turkey Creek Watershed Improvement Plan; to identify priority areas for capital improvements; and to stimulate economic development opportunities. Though not prepared under the City’s direction, the Community Action Plan provides valuable data for use in the community’s official planning processes and programs.

REGIONAL PLANS & STUDIES

Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area Management Plan, 2005. In 2004, six Mississippi Gulf Coast counties, including Harrison County and Gulfport, were designated by Congress as a National Heritage Area (NHA), or a “place where natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography.” The Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Management Plan provides an implementation framework to guide actions to conserve the area’s heritage resources, strengthen the sense of heritage identity, and promote and market the heritage area. The Management Plan has identified goals and strategies to help preserve the area’s unique assets, promote heritage tourism and eco-tourism, and provide economic benefits such as new jobs, businesses, and increased tax revenue.

Written prior to, but published following Hurricane Katrina, the Management Plan notes the importance of “defining the cultural, historical, and natural heritage elements in the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area and incorporating them into the recovery plan in order to retain the area’s culture and identity.” The Plan’s appendices include a pre-storm inventory of the area’s natural, cultural, historical, archaeological, and recreational resources. Following Hurricane Katrina, the resource inventory in the Plan’s appendices was updated to reflect post-storm status of resources.

Gulf Region Water & Wastewater Plan, 2006. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) prepared the Gulf Region Water and Wastewater Plan (GRWWP) in 2006 to identify water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure needs in the six Gulf Region Counties - Hancock, Harrison, George, Jackson, Pearl River, and Stone. The purpose of this regional plan is to provide infrastructure for long-term growth and recovery in these counties and identify priority projects in order to gain eligibility for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. MDEQ was directed by the Governor to develop a plan that addresses the following priorities: a storm proof infrastructure; an infrastructure to address growth and redistribution of population; an opportunities to gather local input necessary for plan development and success; and identification of a set of prioritized projects.

Gulf Coast Transit Development Plan, 2007. The Coast Transit Authority (CTA) operates a transit service for Mississippi’s three coastal counties. In 2007, based on the Governor’s Commission Report on Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal (2006), CTA prepared their own post-Katrina plan of action to identify the agency’s role in shaping and serving the coastal communities in the future. This Plan, the Gulf Coast Transit Development Plan (TDP) addresses the current and future travel needs of residents and the gaming and tourism industry, identifies the cost of improvements, indicates potential
funding sources, and outlines the benefits of improved regional transit services. The purpose of the TDP is to design and choose an appropriate transit network to meet the needs and interests of the area for both short-term and long-range investments.

Potential short-term transit investments for the City of Gulfport include improvements to existing routes along Pass Road, US 49, US 90, and the downtown circulator. Long-term investments include replacement of the trolley bus with streetcar service in downtown Gulfport, development of an east-west corridor bus rapid transit route along the CSX rail line to lessen demand on US 90, and future intercity high-speed rail passenger service.

HARRISON COUNTY PLANS & STUDIES

2030 Comprehensive Plan, 2008. In the two years following Hurricane Katrina, Harrison County completed six Community Plans for the unincorporated areas of the county. The 2030 Comprehensive Plan, completed in 2008, summarizes these Community Plans and integrates their goals and strategies into a larger-scale planning document to guide long-range development and growth throughout the entire county. The County’s Plan includes: policies and plans for land use, transportation, tourism, and economic vitality; strategies for the creation of healthy and safe communities; plans for increasing intergovernmental cooperation; and a fiscal plan. The Plan also reports on existing conditions and provides analyses on County population, housing, land use, economy, natural resources, community facilities, and infrastructure. Appendices to the plan include background information on the planning process and public involvement, as well as potential funding and grant sources to help implementation of the Plan.

Sand Beach Master Plan, 2008. Harrison County Sand Beach Authority’s draft Sand Beach Master Plan is an advisory document created to provide a vision for guiding redevelopment and growth along the 26-miles of Sand Beach in Harrison County over the next 20 years. This long-term plan consists of goals, action statements, and implementation strategies based on community input and site analysis. The physical plan includes design guidelines, site plans, conservation areas, and an illustrative program for future development at specific locations along the Sand Beach. The policy plan provides policies, strategies, and action steps in an implementation timeline that looks at how to guide growth in order to achieve the vision.

Population

20TH CENTURY GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

From its founding in 1898 through the 1970’s, the City experienced relatively steady increases in population. According to U.S. Census estimates shown in Table 3.1, the City’s population rose from 1,000 in 1900 to 40,000 in 1970. The City’s population held steady during the 1970s and 1980s, but grew by almost 75 percent during the 1990s due to a gain of 25,000 residents following the 1994 annexation of a 33-mile square mile area including the unincorporated communities of Orange Grove, North Gulfport, and Turkey Creek. By 2000 Census, the City’s population had reached 71,127.

KATRINA’S EFFECTS ON POPULATION

According to the City’s 1995 Consolidated Plan and Census estimates, the City’s population grew modestly in the years between the 1994 annexation and Katrina’s landfall. Between 2000 and 2005, the City added a little over 2,000 residents, increasing in population from 71,127 to 73,340.

Post-Katrina, the City experienced an immediate and significant decline in population. Census estimates show the City
lost over 5,000 residents or 7 percent of the total pre-storm population between July 2005 and July 2006, with 73,340 residents one month before Katrina made landfall and only 68,005 the following July. Despite the on-going challenges related to rebuilding, the City’s population has rebounded quickly. According to Census estimates, the City had 70,055 residents by July 2008, 96 percent of its pre-storm population. Pre- and post-storm estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau are presented in Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1.

The general rate of recovery reported by the Census is supported by several sources including records of municipal water and sewer accounts, electric service, and public school enrollment. For example, in July 2008, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Business Council (GCBC) released survey results for pre- and post-storm residential power hookups for the three Gulf Coast counties. Their findings show that 17 percent of residential utility accounts were closed in Harrison County between August 2005 and January 2006. By June 2008, 98 percent of the August 2005 electric hookups were back on line. In addition, water and sewer billing records for commercial and residential accounts show the City lost 10 percent of its accounts, or 2,641, after Katrina and by January 2009, the lost accounts were regained and an additional 3 percent, or 862 accounts, had been established.

Some decline in population following Hurricane Katrina may be explained by shifting population within the city limits and out-migration to adjacent unincorporated areas of Harrison County. Following the storm, residents moved away from the coast into northern areas of the City and unincorporated areas of the County and some have not yet returned. This is demonstrated by City and County school district enrollment numbers. For the 2008-2009 school year, the Gulfport School District was at 89 percent of pre-storm enrollment from the 2004-2005 school year. During the same school year, the Harrison County School District school enrollment slightly exceeded pre-storm enrollment.

Table 3.1. Historic Population, 1900 - 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gulfport</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>6,386</td>
<td>8,157</td>
<td>12,547</td>
<td>15,195</td>
<td>22,659</td>
<td>30,204</td>
<td>40,791</td>
<td>39,676</td>
<td>40,775</td>
<td>71,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison Co.</td>
<td>21,002</td>
<td>34,658</td>
<td>32,855</td>
<td>44,143</td>
<td>50,799</td>
<td>84,073</td>
<td>119,489</td>
<td>134,582</td>
<td>157,665</td>
<td>165,365</td>
<td>189,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>1,551,270</td>
<td>1,797,114</td>
<td>1,790,618</td>
<td>2,009,821</td>
<td>2,183,796</td>
<td>2,178,914</td>
<td>2,178,141</td>
<td>2,216,912</td>
<td>2,520,638</td>
<td>2,573,216</td>
<td>2,844,658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Decennial Census (1900 to 2000)

Table 3.2. Population Estimates, 2000-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gulfport</td>
<td>71,127</td>
<td>73,230</td>
<td>66,388</td>
<td>68,005</td>
<td>68,052</td>
<td>68,981</td>
<td>69,084</td>
<td>67,264</td>
<td>70,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison Co.</td>
<td>189,601</td>
<td>195,756</td>
<td>186,530</td>
<td>172,955</td>
<td>171,875</td>
<td>176,366</td>
<td>181,764</td>
<td>176,105</td>
<td>178,460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>2,844,658</td>
<td>2,898,209</td>
<td>2,824,156</td>
<td>2,896,713</td>
<td>2,910,540</td>
<td>2,921,030</td>
<td>2,906,118</td>
<td>2,918,785</td>
<td>2,938,618</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 3-Year Survey Estimates: 2005 to 2007
Housing

TRENDS & EXISTING CONDITIONS

Corresponding with the population increase due to annexation, Gulfport experienced a dramatic increase in the number of housing units during the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000, 11,000 new housing units were added, an increase of 62 percent. During the same time period, the rate of homeownership grew slightly and vacancy rates dropped from 13.4 percent to 8.9 percent. Figure 3.2 shows the increase in occupied units and the increase in renter-occupied units between 1990 and 2000.

As data in Table 3.3 indicates, Hurricane Katrina caused serious devastation to the City’s housing stock, primarily those units located in the coastal and low-lying areas of the City. According to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) estimates, over two-thirds of the 27,839 occupied housing units in Gulfport were damaged or destroyed by wind or flooding. The City estimates that 3,000 housing units were destroyed and an additional 5,000 were severely damaged.

Average household size and vacancy rates were affected by the storm as displaced residents relocated into vacant units or other existing households with friends and families. In 2000, the average household size was 2.51, fell to 2.47 in 2005, but rose sharply to 2.68 in 2006. As the housing stock recovers, household sizes have decreased with Census estimates for 2008 placing average household size at 2.27 persons per unit. Prior to the storm in August 2005, 12 percent of the 31,000 housing units were vacant. In the month following the storm, the City’s vacancy rate declined by half. Figure 3.3 shows housing unit occupancy prior to and following the storm.
The storm also resulted in a change to the City’s distribution of housing types. Before the storm, the City’s housing stock was over 70 percent single-family detached units. In the two years following the storm, the City gained roughly 900 multi-family units and 300 mobile homes, and the percent of single-family detached units decreased by 6 percent. Table 3.3 shows the City’s housing stock distribution by type.

Before Hurricane Katrina, a large percentage of the city’s affordable housing units were renter-occupied. The City has slowly regained

**Figure 3.2. Housing Tenure, 1980-2008**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census (1980-2000); SMPDD, Mississippi Housing Data Project, January

**Figure 3.3. Housing Occupancy, 2000-2008**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census (2000); SMPDD, Mississippi Housing Data Project, January 2009
rental-housing stock lost during the storm. The Gulf Regional Planning Commission’s (GRPC) Mississippi Gulf Coast Apartment Survey, reports that the City has 1,200 fewer rental units than pre-storm. The 2009 survey indicates supply has continued to increase and rents have declined, but not substantially due to newness of the supply.

Between September 2005 and January 2009, the City approved over 6,000 new or rehabilitated residential units and issued 3,610 new construction permits. Approved units by residential type and affordable or workforce housing program are shown in Table 3.4.

In general, housing recovery has been slow but steady in devastated areas along the coast. Development of vacant and underutilized sites north of I-10 continues despite insurance costs and the tightening of credit markets nationwide. While the number of sales transactions has declined, sales prices have held steady, indicating that the market for housing

### Table 3.3. Housing Distribution by Type, 1990-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL UNITS</td>
<td>18,236</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>29,593</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-unit, detached</td>
<td>11,537</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>19,349</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-unit, attached</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 4 units</td>
<td>1,653</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 units</td>
<td>1,229</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>3,127</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 or more units</td>
<td>2,378</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>3,222</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home</td>
<td>1,101</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>2,240</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat, RV, van, etc</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 3.4. Approved New and Rehabbed Residential Units, 2005 - 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Approved Units</th>
<th>Market Rate Units</th>
<th>Total Afford. Units</th>
<th>Tax Credit Units</th>
<th>CD Rehab</th>
<th>CD New Const.</th>
<th>HH Rehab</th>
<th>HH New Const.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>2,362</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>912</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Rehab</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>224</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condo</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplex</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family</td>
<td>1,990</td>
<td>1,410</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>1,015</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>148</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>4,336</td>
<td>1,864</td>
<td>1,519</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Gulfport, Subdivision Development and Permit Data
Notes: Includes units approved under Residential Subdivision Developments, Zoning Variances, and Recorded Affordable Housing Developments between August 29, 2005 and January 1, 2009; CD - Gulfport Division of Community Development programs (including CDBG, HOME); HH - Habitat for Humanity
remains strong relative to other areas of the state and Southeast. Regional leaders anticipate the combination of coastal re-population and new development will result in modest increases to the overall housing stock in the near term, with the pace of development picking up as national economic conditions improve, insurance issues are sorted out, and major planned investments are made at the Port of Gulfport and at federal facilities along the Coast.

**HOUSING AFFORDABILITY**

Since Hurricane Katrina, insurance costs have tripled in most areas of the Gulf Coast. According to City staff, insurance costs and taxes are too high for most homeowners to consider rebuilding their homes on existing sites near the water or to purchase a new home in northern areas of the city. Many individuals are priced out of “affordable” units when additional costs are considered. Newly constructed housing in the $150,000 to $200,000 range is plentiful, but should not be considered “affordable” for this area due to income of residents and additional costs for insurance, taxes, and underwriting rules.

Despite the efforts of the City and non-profit organizations, the current national housing downturn and local and regional market challenges will continue to affect housing affordability in Gulfport. GCBC reports that while Gulfport could use additional affordable housing supply, the true factors affecting affordability in the City include:

- high insurance costs;
- inability of individuals with credit problems to obtain FHA and HUD financing;
- inability of applicants to obtain conventional home loans as the national real estate downturn worsens;
- elevation requirements;
- location issues, such as supply imbalances between areas;
- the “Katrina Bubble” effect caused by increased housing prices due to decreased supply of available housing;
- the public’s lack of awareness of available programs; and
- the relative inefficiencies in certain programs offered by the state that are structured to assist as many individuals as possible in the aftermath of Katrina, but have ultimately left some behind.

In summer 2009, the State of Mississippi appropriated $20 million to help maintain 42,000 wind pool policies on the Gulf Coast. This short term solution should help to ease the burden on coastal property owners while long term solutions to high insurance costs are explored. According to a report conducted by the John C. Stennis Institute of Government at MSU, these funds will permit the sale of 1,500 existing homes that will result in $26 million in new tax revenues for the state, not counting the impact of rebuilding on the coastline, including income tax revenues from potential new jobs.

**HOUSING PROGRAMS**

The City recognizes the importance of diversity in housing choices and has worked to replace and increase the number of affordable housing units. As shown in Table 3.4, the City has approved almost 1,900 affordable housing units, including new or rehabbed single-family dwellings, apartments, and townhouses, since the storm, with a little over 400 units completed by early 2009. These units include those funded through the Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program, Habitat for Humanity, and programs overseen by the City’s Community Development Division.

**Community Development Programs.** The Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program allows state and local governments to target their own community development priorities, including rehabilitation
of affordable housing and improvement of public facilities. The City received $786,370 in CDBG Entitlement Funds in 2009.

The City was awarded $15 million in additional CDBG funding during Phase I and II of HUD’s Gulf Coast Disaster Grant from the Long Term Work Force Housing Program over several years. Gulfport was awarded $9 million during Phase I to construct 235 units, and $6 million in Phase II to provide a minimum of 165 low and moderate income eligible homebuyers with $50,000 in assistance to purchase affordable homes.

Using CDBG funds and a grant from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, a new $2 million transitional workforce housing facility is under development by the Pass Christian DeLisle Community Center in downtown Gulfport on 19th Street. This 10,000-square-foot facility will provide housing and training for 60 residents as they transition into more permanent housing.

The HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) program is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to produce affordable housing for low-income families. The Biloxi-Gulfport-Harrison County HOME Program Consortium provides funding to carry out multi-year housing strategies through assistance to first-time homebuyers and existing homeowners, property acquisition, rehabilitation, and new construction of affordable housing. The City has a proposed expenditure of $455,980 for the HOME Program for 2009.

**Partnerships with Private Developers & Non-Profit Organizations.** Several non-profit organizations have worked to increase the number of affordable and workforce housing units in the City over the past four years. Habitat for Humanity has constructed or rehabbed over 100 homes since Hurricane Katrina.

The Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation Regional Employer Assisted Collaborative Housing (REACH Mississippi) was launched in August 2008. Using CDBG funding, REACH is an employer-assisted housing program designed to address challenges to the area’s rebuilding process by providing gap financing directly to individuals or families that make up the workforce of South Mississippi. This program provides a three-to-one match to employer contributions for qualified workers earning less than 120 percent of the area median income. In April 2009, a new $80 million program was launched by the Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation in partnership with local lenders, agencies, and community organizations. The goal of the My Home My Coast program is to provide down payment and closing cost assistance grants to home owners in the coastal counties who earn 120 percent or less of the area median income (AMI).

In addition to providing public housing, the Region VIII Housing Authority has partnered with a private developer, the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), and the Mississippi Home Corporation to construct affordable housing units within the City. This includes the $16.7 million Regency Way apartments on the site of the former Camelot public housing site on 28th Street and six other projects in Harrison and Jackson Counties.
Employment

Changes in employment are a fundamental index of overall economic development and are a key “driver” of demand for various types of land use. As such, it is important to understand the occupational and employment characteristics in Gulfport and the surrounding region and explore how the City and regional economy have performed in the past and present.

Information in this section is based on analyses performed during early stages of the planning process and builds on information reported in a wide variety of sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau, HUD, GCBC, Smith Travel Research, ESRI Business Analyst, Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors’ Bureau, MDA, and GRPC. Forecasts of growth in employment through 2030 were obtained from Woods and Poole Inc. (a demographic forecasting firm based in Washington, D.C.).

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The City of Gulfport has historically been a center for regional employment. In 2000, the City had almost half of the total jobs in Harrison County, including all cities and unincorporated areas. However, over the past eight years, the City’s percent of total County jobs has declined slightly as retail, casinos, and military employment has expanded in neighboring cities and unincorporated areas of the County.

Three years after Hurricane Katrina, the local economy had nearly fully recovered in terms of employment. GCBC reports indicate that in 2008, the number of establishments reporting jobs was at 95 percent of pre-Katrina levels throughout the Gulf Coast. However, during the past year as a result of the national economic downturn, employment growth has stalled and in some sectors declined.

Employment in construction, government, and waste management continue to be strong, while job growth in the retail and leisure and hospitality sectors has decreased.

In addition to the military, industrial, retail and wholesale trade, medical, transportation, and hospitality and leisure employers highlighted in the previous section, other major employers in the City include the Harrison County School District, the Gulfport School District, and the City of Gulfport.

ECONOMIC ENGINES

The following section offers information regarding several major drivers of the City and regional economy. Included are descriptions of the region’s major employers and employment sectors, and information on planned investments and potential impacts on the City and region’s population and employment.

Bernard Bayou Industrial Park. Located along Seaway Road and adjacent to the Industrial Seaway and I-10, the Bernard Bayou Industrial Park occupies 1,695 acres. It is the first and largest industrial park developed by Harrison County Development Commission and is divided into the Port Intraplex and Intraplex 10. Major industrial employers include Future Pipe Industries, Gulf Ship, Northrup Grumman Shipbuilding, Trinity Yachts, United States Marine Inc, Seemann Composites, and Soprema. Following recent contract awards, Northrup Grumman Shipbuilding has expanded their facilities and added 100 jobs.

The Bernard Bayou Industrial Park is reaching build-out, with approximately 100 acres available for development. With the recent approval of non-industrial projects, the Industrial Park’s ability to support major heavy industrial users has been diminished. While non-industrial users may be accommodated in other commercially-zoned areas of the
City, few sites existing to support large-scale industrial and manufacturing operations such as those currently in the Industrial Park. The lack of large sites for industrial is a key challenge as the City and region seek to attract quality investment.

**Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport (GPT).**
Originally constructed to serve as a training field during WWII, Gulfport Field was conveyed from the War Department to the City of Gulfport in 1949. Airline service began in the 1950s, along with the development of a Mississippi National Guard training center. The Gulfport-Biloxi Regional Airport Authority was established in 1977.

Over the next two decades, passenger service expanded, especially following the development of the gaming industry in the 1990s. Two major terminal expansions were completed in the past 10 years, expanding service capacity for the 1,700-acre site with two runways. According to the GCBC, the airport passenger counts in 2007 exceeded pre-Katrina figures and 2008 counts were even higher. Currently, five commercial airlines, cargo base operations, military, general and corporate aviation facilities continue to make Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport (GPT) an important center of employment for the City of Gulfport. In 2009, several airlines expanded or added new service from Atlanta, Charlotte, Dallas-Fort Worth, Jacksonville, and Tampa. According to GCBC, the Mississippi Air National Guard Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot at GPT is currently planning a potential $103 million facility expansion that would double the size of the existing facility.

**Port of Gulfport.** The Mississippi State Port of Gulfport, established in 1902 as one of just a few deep-water ports along the Gulf Coast, is a 184-acre complex situated at the southern edge of downtown directly. Access to the Port is provided by a 16-mile shipping channel, which crosses the Gulf Intracoastal waterway located five miles offshore. The Port is a Mississippi Enterprise Agency governed by the State Port Authority and operates like a private business, deriving revenue from port usage, service fees, lease agreements, and other tenant related fees. While all piers are public, most facilities operate through leases, operating agreements, or space assignment agreements with private operators.

Hurricane Katrina caused significant damage to Port facilities including the loss of 700,000 square feet of warehouse space, seven out of ten berths, and the entire rail system. To date, 400,000 square feet of warehouse space has been rebuilt and four out of ten berths are operational. Plans for restoration and expansion of Port infrastructure are underway, financed in part through $600 million in CDBG funding.

**Naval Construction Battalion Center/Gulfport.**
Established in 1942, the Naval Construction Battalion Center/Gulfport, commonly referred to as the Seabee Base, occupies a 1,098-acre site on western edge of the city. Population includes 4,230 active duty, 264 reservists, 2,560 family members, and 780 civilians. The base employees approximately 7,000 people. GCBC reports that the Seabee Base has over 24 projects valued at $320 million planned for construction, including 212 on-base housing units and 60 off-base units that were under construction in August 2008.

**NASA John C. Stennis Space Center.** The Stennis Space Center is located west of Gulfport in Hancock County, but annual economic impacts generated by the Center total $700 million within 50 miles of the facility. Companies and organizations located on the Stennis campus include: U.S. Navy, National Oceanographics and Atmospheric Administration, Rolls Royce, Pratt & Whitney, U.S. Government Printing Office, and the Mississippi Enterprise for Technology.
According to GCBC, Stennis Technology Center now has 22 high-tech resident companies and is currently undergoing a $1.2 million expansion. The NASA Shared Services Center has hired over 500 additional staff since the storm and recently moved into a new $30 million building. INFINITY at NASA Stennis Space Center is a new $42 million, science and education center that will open in 2010 and will serve as the Stennis Welcome Center.

**Keesler Air Force Base.** Located in nearby Biloxi, Keesler is the site of the largest underway military construction program in the Air Force, with over $950 million in investments. This includes a 1,028-unit military housing project at a cost of $287.4 million, a new medical center at $172.6 million, and a new Cyberspace Training facility serving an additional 600 new students. In 2008, the base employed almost 11,000 civilian and military personnel, and created an estimated economic impact of $1.1 billion.

**Memorial Hospital.** Founded in 1946 by the Harrison County Board of Supervisors, Memorial Hospital is a not-for-profit organization located west of downtown near the Seabee Base. With a staff of over 2,800 employees, including 275 physicians, Memorial Hospital is a multi-specialty medical complex licensed for more than 440 beds.

**Garden Park Medical Center.** Located north of I-10 east of US 49, this 130-bed facility provides emergency room, inpatient, and outpatient care to residents in the northern half of the City. Garden Park has over 160 physicians, specialists, and dentists and 400 clinical, professional, and support personnel.

**Gaming, Leisure, & Hospitality.** Tourism and the gaming industry are important components of both Gulfport and the Gulf Coast’s economy. According to the Harrison County Comprehensive Plan, casinos have been the primary driver of employment growth for the county, providing 0.5 jobs for every gaming job. As reported by GCBC, Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast’s gaming industry, destroying several properties along the coast and shutting down the entire industry for three months. Recovery came quickly all along the Gulf Coast under new rules that permitted on-land facilities. In 2006, Gulfport’s Grand Casino reopened as the Island View Casino and by 2007 the regional gaming market had a record year with total gaming revenue of $1.3 billion. This compares to pre-storm records of $1.2 billion in revenue. This is particularly remarkable given the decline in other national gaming markets during the same period and the reduction of jobs and hotel space by 70 percent.

Today, the gaming market has been affected by the national recession, with only $1.2 billion in revenue reported for 2009. Another impediment to tourism along the Coast is a lack of hotel rooms. While hotel rooms along US 49 now exceed pre-Katrina levels, GCBC reports that the total number of rooms is only 70 percent of pre-storm rooms.

Until the national and regional economies recover, local tourism and gaming will continue to be affected, but local efforts are underway to market the region, make capital investments, and create opportunities in the future. Recent completion of Beach Boulevard improvements and the Mississippi Coast Coliseum in Biloxi combined with future long-term investments like those proposed by the City for the Veterans Hospital property on US 90 will position the Gulf Coast to attract tourists. Continued promotion of sports and recreational uses at the Sportsplex and local golf courses, along with efforts by the newly created Mississippi Gulf Coast Sports Commission will help encourage tourism along the Gulf Coast. It is expected that the economic growth of the casinos may slow in the near term, but in the future will
continue to generate significant levels of employment. In March 2009, the Mississippi Tourism Rebate program was created by the State to allow eligible tourist attractions, hotels, or golf course to seek sales tax rebates to reimburse for significant capital investments.

Retail & Wholesale Trade. Gulfport’s retail sector provides significant tax revenue for the City. The City’s primary retail centers are located along US 49 near the interchange with I-10, including several large national retailers including Walmart, Home Depot, and Best Buy in addition to Prime Outlets Shopping Center and Crossroads Shopping Center. Following Hurricane Katrina, the economic gain from retail sales helped to offset the loss of gaming revenue from the City’s casinos. According to the City’s 2007 Hazard Mitigation Plan, retail businesses located in the North Gulfport and Orange Grove were outside the surge inundation zone and received minimal flooding, which allowed them to quickly reopen. These businesses were some of the first to become operational after the storm and supported not only the City of Gulfport, but the entire Gulf Coast. In evidence, sales tax diversions increased by almost 40 percent between FY 2005 and 2006, from $18 million to $25 million.

However, retail and wholesale trade is contributing less to the local economy in the past three years. Between 2007 and 2009, sales tax diversions for the City have declined, from $24.8 million in FY 2007 to $22.3 million in FY 2008, to $20.5 million for FY 2009. As other municipalities in the region continue to rebuild and grow their retail sector and the national recession continues to affect the retail sector, Gulfport’s share of the market may continue to decline.

Existing Land Use & Development Potential

EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY

To update data compiled in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and ensure changes in land use resulting from Hurricane Katrina are fully-documented, a detailed inventory of existing land use was completed during the early stages of planning process. The resulting inventory—with up-to-date parcel-based information regarding existing use by type—was compiled using a number of sources, including property information from the 2008 Harrison County Tax Assessor’s property database regarding ownership, property improvements, and improvement values; datasets from the City’s geographic information system (GIS) with information regarding use, utility service and billing, and development activity; and post-Katrina satellite imagery and aerial photography. For properties with conflicting or unconfirmed information on use, including numerous properties along the City’s commercial corridors, field surveys were conducted. For parcels with multiple uses, only the primary land use was coded.

The inventory resulted in a detailed snapshot of existing land uses in the City of Gulfport. The inventory established land use classifications for platted lands (33,406 parcels comprising 30,819 acres) with the remaining unplatted lands (comprising 9,100 acres) within the City limits categorized as street or railroad right-of-ways, utility easements, or sound or inland waters. According to the inventory, almost sixty percent of platted lands, or 18,711 acres, in the City is developed in either a residential, industrial, commercial, public and institutional, or street or right-of-way use, and the remaining forty percent of land is undeveloped or is categorized as open water, sand beach, or undeveloped but used for resource production or extraction.
Table 3.5 and the following text provide a breakdown of existing land uses in the City by number of parcels, acreage, percent of total land area, and percent of developed area. Map 3.2 shows existing land uses within the City.

**Residential.** At over 51 percent, residential uses account for the largest percentage of developed land area in the City. This includes single-family, duplex, multi-family condominium or apartments, mobile home parks, group quarters, and other residential uses such as sheds, garages, or homeowner association common lands. The majority of residential land in the City is single-family, 9,604 acres or almost 45 percent of the City’s total developed land. Low-density residential is located primarily in the northern half of the City in the Lyman, Biloxi River Estates, and Lorraine neighborhoods and at the western edge of the City north of the Seabee Base in Gulfport Heights. Low- to medium-density residential developments include Orange Grove and Pine Hills north of I-10 and Bayou View North and South to the east of the airport. The highest density neighborhoods are found in the southern portion of the City including North Gulfport, West Beach, and Soria City. Map 3.2 shows the location of residential land by type.

**Commercial.** Including retail shopping centers, medical and professional offices, repair, business, or personal services, lodging, restaurants, and service stations, commercial uses occupy around 10 percent, or 1,837 acres, of the City’s developed area.

### Table 3.5. Existing Land Use, 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># of Parcels</th>
<th>Total Parcel Acreage</th>
<th>Parcels</th>
<th>Parcel Acreage</th>
<th>Developed Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GULFPORT</td>
<td>33,406</td>
<td>30,819</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>24,708</td>
<td>18,711</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>21,826</td>
<td>9,604</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>20,205</td>
<td>8,406</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2F</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>1,683</td>
<td>1,837</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>4,224</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streets &amp; ROW</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public &amp; Institutional</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>3,024</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Production &amp; Extraction</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeveloped</td>
<td>8,572</td>
<td>11,290</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Ownership</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>1,365</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Ownership</td>
<td>7,726</td>
<td>9,925</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Areas</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: City of Gulfport, Division of GIS; Harrison County Tax Assessor; HDR, Inc.
MAP 3.2 EXISTING LAND USE

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS, Harrison County Tax Assessor. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
development is located primarily along the City’s major corridors, US 49 and Pass Road, at several key intersections such as US 49 and I-10, and in Downtown Gulfport.

**Industrial.** Almost one-quarter of developed land in the City of Gulfport is in an industrial use, the second highest developed use after residential. Industrial land includes the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport, the Bayou Bernard Industrial District, and the Port of Gulfport. Industrial land is located primarily in the southern half of the City, south of I-10.

**Public & Institutional.** Occupying over 3,000 acres, or 16 percent, of the total developed land in Gulfport, public and institutional uses including governmental services, military bases, correctional facilities, recreational facilities, golf courses, religious institutions, schools, daycares, institutions of higher learning, and welfare, professional, and civic organizations are the third largest developed land use in the City. Public and institutional land consists of federal, state, regional, county, and locally-owned property located throughout the City, including large sites such as the Seabee Base, Gulfport Sportsplex, Veteran’s Administration complex, and Air National Guard facilities.

**Resource Production & Extraction.** A small percentage of land in the City, less than 2 percent, is in resource production and extraction use. This includes land used for agricultural, forestry, or mining. This use is located primarily in the more rural areas, specifically in the northern and western edges of the City.

**Undeveloped.** A total of 11,000 acres in the City of Gulfport are—36 percent of the City’s total land area. A majority of this land (9,925 acres) is privately owned, while the remainder (1,365 acres) is in federal, state, regional, county, or local ownership. Undeveloped land includes all land that is currently vacant with no existing structures and includes land that may affected by environmental constraints such as wetlands or floodplains. Public undeveloped land includes tracts adjacent to the Gulfport-Biloxi Airport, Industrial Waterway, Sixteenth Section land near the US 49/I-10 intersection, and smaller tracts in floodplain areas.

**LAND WITH DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

An evaluation of undeveloped and underutilized property in the City resulted in the identification of slightly more than 4,100 acres of land with the potential to support new investment. These lands, which include vacant and partially-developed sites without significant environmental constraints, account for about 13 percent of platted property within the current limits of the City. (Not counted as having development potential were smaller parcels, those with poor access to the regional road network, and areas of parcels with wetlands and floodplains.

To determine the total acreage available for particular land uses, land identified as having development potential was sorted by general zoning district—residential-, commercially-, or industrially-zoned lands—and a factor of 0.70 was applied to account for property not likely to support development for reasons other than the presence of environmental constraints and limited access. The factor was based on an assumption that some lands currently zoned for development may be required for rights-of-way, utilities, or other public purpose and that some may not become available for new development during the life of the Plan. After applying this factor, approximately 2,900 acres were identified as having development potential.

The following text and Table 3.6 provide a summary of development potential by general zoning category. The location of all
undeveloped land by general zoning category is shown on Map 3.3.

**Land Zoned for Residential Uses.** The City contains approximately 2,400 acres of unconstrained land with residential zoning (R-1-10, R-1-15, R-1-5, R-1-7.5, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-E, and R-UE in conventional zoning and T3 and T4L in SmartCode zoning). These areas are comprised primarily of scatter lots within existing neighborhoods but also included area a few larger-scale properties with potential located north of Dedeaux Road in the northern half of the City. These includes roughly 400 acres of R-1-15 zoned land south of O’Neal Road between Florence Gardens and SR 605 near John Ross Road; approximately 100 acres west of Three Rivers Road; and additional upland tracts located between Duckworth Road and Swan Road.

**Land Zoned for Commercial Uses.** Within the City’s commercial districts (B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, E-G, R-B, and R-O in conventional zoning and T4+, T5, and T6 in SmartCode zoning) almost 300 acres of undeveloped land is available to support larger-scale development. Key locations for future commercial development include the area surrounding the intersection of SR 605 and Dedeaux Road north of the I-10 interchange, two large tracts with frontage on US 49 north of Dedeaux Road, and one on the western edge of town on 34th Avenue. Other sites for development include properties on SR 605 north of Lorraine Road and along Dedeaux Road and Three Rivers Road. However, all sites present challenges for large-scale mixed-use development. Large areas of the SR 605 sites are constrained by wetlands and floodplains and the many undeveloped sites on US 49 are split-zoned commercial and residential.

**Land Zoned for Industrial Uses.** The City currently has little vacant land available to support industrial development—only 163 acres of industrially-zoned lands (I-1, I-2, or I-3 in conventional zoning) has been identified as available and two of the largest sites (76 total unconstrained acres), located on 34th Avenue west of US 49, have recently been purchased by the Mississippi State Port Authority and are thus unavailable for private use. The only properties with the potential to support industrial development are located south of the airport and within the Bayou Bernard Industrial District, but these sites are relatively small and therefore unlikely to attract significant investment.

---

**Table 3.6. Land Available for Development by Zoning, 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unconstrained Acreage with Development Potential*</th>
<th>Acreage Available for Development^</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Land Available</td>
<td>4,137</td>
<td>2,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>3,479</td>
<td>2,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HDR, Inc.

* Commercially- and Industrially-Zoned acreage available for development includes undeveloped parcels with unconstrained area greater than 5 acres with proximity to a major roadway. Residentially-Zoned Land acreage available for development includes unconstrained area of undeveloped parcels and residential parcels with more than 10 acres.

^ Net acreage calculation based on assumption that 70 percent of unconstrained acreage would be available for development to the year 2030. The 76 acres on 34th Avenue recently purchased by MSPA has not been included in the industrial acreage as it is unlikely the site will be available for private development.
MAP 3.3 DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY BY CURRENT ZONING

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS, Harrison County Tax Assessor.
Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
3.3 PROJECTIONS FOR 2030

While the previous section of the chapter focused on existing conditions, this section includes projections for population and employment to the year 2030 and a series of planning targets estimating the long-term demand for housing units and commercial and industrial land uses.

Population Projections

The City’s projections for population growth to the year 2030 build on long-range projections prepared by the MDEQ and GRPC, the only long-range projections available for Gulf Coast communities following Hurricane Katrina. These two sets of projections, used to support region-wide planning efforts for transportation, sewer, and water system improvements, each suggest the region will experience significant increases in population to the year 2025 (the horizon year for MDEQ’s projections) and 2030 (the horizon year for GRPC’s projections). In Gulfport, the largest share of anticipated population growth is forecast to occur in areas north of I-10, as well as in unincorporated areas of Harrison County north of the City. Figure 3.4 offers a comparison between the existing projections prepared by MDEQ, GRPC, and the City based on Census Population Estimates.

EXISTING REGIONAL PROJECTIONS

MDEQ’s projections, presented in the 2006 GRWWP, estimate that Gulfport will grow by 1.4 percent annually between 2005 and 2025 resulting in an estimated increase in population of over 22,000 persons. While MDEQ projections hold the City’s growth rate constant for the 20-year period, forecasts for the County show an above-average rate of growth for the near term. Between 2005 and 2010, MDEQ projects the County’s population will increase by 6.6 percent annually for a total gain of over 64,000 persons. This projection is based on short-term demand for 25,000 homes to replace damaged and destroyed housing and an assumption that much of the replacement housing will be located beyond Gulfport’s city limits. Over the long term, MDEQ’s projections assume the County’s rate of growth will continue to outpace the City’s, with the County’s population expected to reach 332,788 persons by 2025, an overall increase of 76 percent over 20 years.

GRPC’s projections, completed in 2007, are based on a similar set of assumptions regarding the pace and pattern of regional development—slow but steady growth in the City and high rates of growth in unincorporated areas of the County. GRPC’s forecasts suggest the City’s population will increase at an average rate of 1.3 percent per year, slightly less than the County’s projected 1.7 percent annual rate of growth. Between 2007 and 2030, GRPC estimates that the City’s population will increase by almost 28,000 residents, at an annual pace of 1,200 persons per year and the County’s total population will increase at an annual pace of 4,500 persons. According to the projections, the City’s proportion of the total population in the County is expected to decrease from 38 to 34 percent between 2007 and 2030.

CITY PROJECTIONS

The City’s population projections, which serve as the basis for policies and proposals presented in later chapters of this Plan, share GRPC’s and MDEQ’s basic forecast that the region’s population growth will continue through the year 2030. However, the City’s projections are based on an assumption that City will capture, through careful planning and targeted infrastructure investments, a larger share of the region’s population growth in the later years of the 20-year planning time frame. Specifically,
the City’s projections are designed to take into account the following four factors affecting the pace and pattern of regional growth:

- **Expanded Employment Opportunities.**
  Several major investments designed to support substantial growth in regional employment, announced since the publication of MDEQ’s and GRPC’s projections, are expected to result in high rates of population growth region-wide. Of particular importance to the City are plans for the rebuilding and future expansion of the State Port, a project regarded as the single largest economic development project in the history of Mississippi, and one that will have significant impacts on the economy of the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast. As the Port’s restoration and expansion gets underway and new jobs are created, the increased demand for housing will generate a market for new housing in the City and across the Coast.

- **Better Tools to Promote Infill & Redevelopment.** Since MDEQ’s and GRPC’s projections were published in 2006 and 2007, the City has made significant strides towards the promotion of quality infill and redevelopment in older areas of Gulfport. Since the regional projections were prepared, the City has adopted the SmartCode Ordinance and prepared Community Plans for five areas of the City. The City’s updated regulations will allow for higher intensity, mixed-use development within the existing City limits.

---

**Figure 3.4. Population Projections, 2000-2030**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>69,586</td>
<td>73,448</td>
<td>71,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>68,408</td>
<td>78,440</td>
<td>73,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>72,780</td>
<td>83,505</td>
<td>72,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>80,621</td>
<td>89,039</td>
<td>79,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>86,330</td>
<td>94,939</td>
<td>90,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>90,502</td>
<td>101,230</td>
<td>102,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>107,938</td>
<td>118,249</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Investments to Support Neighborhood Livability. The City has made significant investments to promote the livability of City neighborhoods. Since adoption of the initial versions of the Citizens Master Plan, prepared by Leisure Services in 1995 and updated in 2000, the City has made significant investments in neighborhood parks and recreational facilities. Since Hurricane Katrina, the City has greatly expanded programs to support the development of high-quality, affordable housing in older neighborhoods, and community-based efforts to improve the livability of places like West Side, Soria City, North Gulfport, and Turkey Creek contribute to the ongoing renewal of older City neighborhoods.

Demographic Shifts & Changing Consumer Preferences. Several recent studies indicate that the types, densities, and accessibility of housing in many of the City’s older neighborhoods and encouraged under SmartCode in infill projects and new neighborhoods like Florence Gardens will increase in popularity during the next two decades. Researchers have found that increasingly large segments of the population prefer compact, walkable, diverse neighborhoods, and they project a strong increase in demand for such neighborhoods due to demographic and cultural factors. For example, a 2002 National Association of Homebuilders survey found that while a majority prefer big, low-cost, spread-out houses, a full 25 to 35 percent of people want destinations within walking distance, sidewalks, workplaces closer to home, and creating a demand for infill in center city or inner suburban locations.

Based on these factors influencing Gulfport’s future population, projections call for modest rates of increase during the early years of the Plan with higher growth rates forecast in the later years to account for the impact of new jobs at the Port of Gulfport and at Federal facilities across the Coast. By 2030, the City’s population is expected to increase to almost 120,000 residents.

2030 POPULATION
The City’s projections call for modest rates of population increase during the early years of the Plan with higher growth rates forecast in the later years to account for the impact of new jobs at the Port of Gulfport and at Federal facilities across the Coast. By 2030, the City’s population is expected to increase to almost 120,000 residents.

As indicated in Figure 3.4, the City experienced a sharp decline in population following Katrina and is in a period of a slow but steady recovery that is expected to continue through the year 2010. Following the post-Katrina recovery, the City projects population will increase at a rate of 2 percent through the year 2015, increasing to a 2.5 percent growth rate between 2015 and 2025 and to 3 percent from 2025 to 2030. Applying these rates of growth would ultimately result in a projected population of 118,249 in the year 2030. This translates to a gain of approximately 47,000 residents between 2000 and 2030.

While recognizing the difficulty in predicting future conditions and that a range of factors may require reassessment of the projections, it is reasonable to assume the City’s rate of population growth will increase as the national economy improves and new jobs are added in the region, and ultimately, the pace of growth will accelerate as major investments at the Port, Stennis, Keesler, and elsewhere generate demand for housing in the City and across the region.
Employment Projections

Job growth in particular sectors of the economy is a critical barometer of demand for workplace real estate such as office buildings, industrial parks, and shopping centers. Three sources were used to analyze historic trends and create forecasts for “at-place” employment growth, or the number of jobs likely to be located in the City. These sources include GRPC countywide estimates for gross job growth by TAZ zones and Woods and Poole long-term forecasts by job sector within Harrison County.

GRPC long-term forecasts suggest that Harrison County will gain 60,500 new full-time jobs between 2012 and 2030. GRPC estimates that 42 percent of total Harrison County employment is currently located in Gulfport. Forecasts suggest that even with an absolute gain in the number of jobs, the City’s proportion of jobs will decline over time as additional commercial development in unincorporated parts of Harrison County generates job growth there.

Woods and Poole employment data shows that Harrison County lost almost 15,000 County jobs between 2000 and 2007, but will regain those jobs by 2012. Employment forecasts then anticipate an increase of 57,500 new jobs over the next 20+ years, including part-time and self-employed positions. As shown in Table 3.7, the largest gains are expected in the Services and Government sectors, as it is expected that employment in leisure and hospitality, private education, medical, professional and business services, and military will continue to dominate the local economy.

It’s important to note that the GRPC and Woods and Poole projections do not account for the potential effects of the Port’s restoration and expansion and should thus be considered conservative. While the potential direct and indirect effects of the Port’s expansion on the local labor market have not been estimated, it is likely that key sectors will experience significant increases, including Mining and Construction in the short term and Transportation/Communications, Manufacturing, and Wholesale and Retail Trade in the longer term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining &amp; Construction</td>
<td>7,571</td>
<td>6,580</td>
<td>7,457</td>
<td>8,870</td>
<td>10,647</td>
<td>3,190</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>5,821</td>
<td>3,749</td>
<td>4,036</td>
<td>4,492</td>
<td>5,060</td>
<td>1,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation/Communications</td>
<td>6,334</td>
<td>5,590</td>
<td>6,251</td>
<td>7,309</td>
<td>8,630</td>
<td>2,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale &amp; Retail Trade</td>
<td>25,199</td>
<td>23,613</td>
<td>26,616</td>
<td>31,422</td>
<td>37,433</td>
<td>10,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance/Insurance/Real Estate</td>
<td>6,309</td>
<td>6,205</td>
<td>6,965</td>
<td>8,183</td>
<td>9,706</td>
<td>2,741</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>43,490</td>
<td>37,377</td>
<td>45,257</td>
<td>57,876</td>
<td>73,661</td>
<td>28,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>30,237</td>
<td>26,460</td>
<td>28,892</td>
<td>32,869</td>
<td>37,833</td>
<td>8,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL EMPLOYMENT</td>
<td>124,961</td>
<td>109,574</td>
<td>125,474</td>
<td>151,021</td>
<td>182,970</td>
<td>57,496</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Woods and Poole Inc.
3.4 MARKET POTENTIALS

To understand the impact increases in population and employment may have on the City, an analysis was completed to determine how much real estate—such as office space or new housing—may be required to accommodate projected increases in population and employment. This section identifies how future trends will affect the potential for new housing and workplace uses and the demand for new residential, commercial (retail, office, hotel) and industrial development in Gulfport. This analysis provides a “big picture” view of potential trends with sufficient depth to assist the City in defining long-term growth potentials and implications for planning policies and initiatives.

Following the 2010 Census, the release of updated GRPC projections, and when more detailed information on proposed developments including the Port expansion is made available, the following market projections should be carefully reevaluated.

HOUSING DEMAND

Based on the projection of 47,122 new residents by 2030 and household sizes and vacancy rates holding at current rates, the City should expect demand for approximately 19,500 new housing units in the next twenty years. Accommodating this level of demand would result in a gradual increase in the rate of housing development from roughly 600 units per year in 2015 to 1,300 in 2030. By comparison, the City issued a sustained annual average of 516 permits between 1998 and 2005. Notably, if the City’s average household size, or number of persons per household, declines over the life of the Plan (as is the projected trend nationally), demand for new housing units may increase at a faster rate than projected.

Analysis assumed that distribution of new housing units by type remains similar to what was reported in Gulfport for the 2000 U.S. Census. Table 3.8 shows the potential distribution for the projected 19,500 new housing units.

OFFICE DEMAND

Given the lack of data regarding the amount, type, and occupancy levels of office space in the City of Gulfport, it is difficult to prepare detailed projections of demand for new office space. However, it is possible to provide a rough estimate of demand based employment projections available for the County.

Based on projections the County will add 57,500 new jobs between 2012 and 2030, and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Type</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2030</th>
<th>New Units (2000-2030)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-family</td>
<td>19,349</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>19,631</td>
<td>24,480</td>
<td>32,055</td>
<td>12,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplex</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>1,032</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-family</td>
<td>7,349</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>7,456</td>
<td>9,295</td>
<td>12,167</td>
<td>4,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home</td>
<td>2,240</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>2,273</td>
<td>2,836</td>
<td>3,717</td>
<td>1,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>29,562</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>29,993</td>
<td>37,399</td>
<td>48,970</td>
<td>19,428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000; HDR Inc.
assuming 32% of those jobs are in office-using positions, a little over 4.1 million square feet of new office space will be required in the County by the year 2030. If the City achieves it’s projected share of future jobs, estimated to be 37% of the total jobs in the County in the year 2030 according to GRPC, demand for new office space in the City could be as high as 1,520,000 square feet.

Achieving this high rate of capture assumes rapid expansion at the Port with spin-off development Downtown, successful economic development initiatives focused on corporate and business retention and recruitment, and successful redevelopment of key sites including the non-maritime use area at the Port, and successful development of the VA Hospital, the Sportsplex, and suburban sites across the City.

**INDUSTRIAL DEMAND**

The estimate of demand for industrial space is based on projections that approximately 34 percent of new jobs in the County will be accommodated in industrial space, resulting in a projection of demand for approximately 4.5 million square feet of new industrial space in the County by the year 2030. Using the same methods used for projecting office demand, it is estimated that demand for up to 1.9 million square feet of new industrial space may be needed in the City by the year 2030.

Based on the limited availability of land in the City to support new industrial development (refer to the following section addressing Development Capacity), it is not likely the City will be able to accommodate such a high rate of capture during the life of the Plan. Consequently, the City will need to work closely with the County to ensure sufficient land is available in unincorporated areas to support projections. To support overall economic development goals, it will be important for the City to maintain employment intensive uses in close proximity to existing and planned population centers.

**RETAIL DEMAND**

Currently, Gulfport benefits from a net inflow of retail spending from various segments, including households from other jurisdictions, tourists to area casinos, business visitors, and others. With over 34,000 dwelling units, the current Citywide retail inventory is 78 square feet per dwelling unit. This is significantly above the national average and reflects the City’s role as a retail destination for surrounding rural counties as well as retail spending by visitors to the Gulf Coast.

Assuming that the existing ratio of 78 square feet of retail square feet per dwelling unit is maintained through the life of this Plan, the City may expect to support an addition 1.5 million square feet of retail space by the year 2030. Of course, maintaining this high ratio of retail space to dwelling units will require aggressive marketing of existing retail space, the successful recruitment of a retail projects to key sites along I-10, and successful incorporation of retail in mixed use projects planned for Downtown, the non-maritime use area of the Port, and Town and Neighborhood Centers.
3.5 DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

A preliminary development capacity analysis was undertaken to determine the potential of existing undeveloped lands in the City to support projected housing, commercial uses and industrial uses. The analysis involved a simple comparison between the amount of land required to support project demand and the acreage of land by general zoning category identified as having the potential to support new development.

RESIDENTIAL CAPACITY

The development capacity analysis undertaken for residential land indicates there will be a significant shortage of land available to support projected demand for residential development at current typical densities of 3 dwelling units per acre. It is estimated that residually-zoned land identified as available for development in the City could support only 7,300 new housing units. This compares to a market potential of 19,500 dwelling units, a difference of over 12,000 units.

To accommodate projected demand, the City will need to focus planning programs and policies on the following:

- promoting compatible infill development on vacant and underutilized sites in existing neighborhoods;
- increasing permitted densities in strategic locations while protecting the character of existing neighborhoods;
- encouraging moderate to high density residential uses in redevelopment projects Downtown and areas designated on the Future Land Use Map as Town Centers, Neighborhood Centers, and Revitalization Corridors; and
- exploring the potential to support moderate density residential uses in areas beyond the current City limits.

COMMERCIAL CAPACITY

The development capacity analysis for retail and office uses suggests the City has just enough land to support the market potential for commercial development through the year 2030. Commercially-zoned land within the City could support approximately 3.2 million square feet of new commercial space including office and retail, while the highest market

---

### Table 3.9. Development Capacity by Zoning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Net Acreage Available for Development</th>
<th>Development Capacity</th>
<th>Market Potentials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Land Available</td>
<td>2,890</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>2,435</td>
<td>7,306 DU</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>3,239,775 SF</td>
<td>1,520,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>568,458 SF</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: HDR Inc. and ERA-AECOM.

^ Net acreage calculation based on assumption that only 70 percent of unconstrained acreage with development potential is available for private development.

* Total Dwelling Units (DU) is based on a typical density of 3 units/acre and Commercial Square Footage (SF) is based on an 0.25 Floor Area Ration (FAR) and Industrial Square Footage (SF) is based on an 0.15 Floor Area Ration (FAR).
potential for new retail development is 1.5 million square feet and up to 1.5 million square feet for new office development.

Based on this analysis, the City appears to have enough commercially-zoned land to meet projected demand for retail and office space over the next 20 years, but there does not appear to be enough land to meet demand beyond that time frame. To satisfy demand beyond the year 2030, the City will have to promote more dense forms of development, aggressively support the redevelopment of existing under-performing commercial sites throughout the City, and identify lands beyond the current City limits with the potential to support commercial and mixed use development.

INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY

According to the capacity analysis, the City has substantially less industrially-zoned than is required to support the City’s projected share of demand for industrial development through the year 2030. The land available to support industrial development is projected to accommodate only 568,000 square feet of space at an FAR of 0.15 while the City’s share of regional demand is expected to be almost 2 million square feet.

To address the significant shortage of industrially-zoned land in the current incorporated limits, the City will need to take the actions to accomplish the following:

- maximize the development intensity of future projects on existing industrially-zoned sites in the City;
- protect industrially-zoned land from the encroachment of uses that may be accommodated on commercially-zoned sites; and
- work with the HCDC to identify sites within close proximity of the City to support projected demand.
4.0 FUTURE LAND USE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Plan addresses the revitalization, growth, and development of Gulfport’s centers and corridors, employment districts, and neighborhoods. The chapter provides a brief review of conditions, issues, and opportunities; a review of city-wide recommendations, a description of the preferred pattern and form of development city-wide; a review of potential growth areas beyond the current city limits.

Given the scarcity of large tracts of unconstrained, undeveloped land within the City limits, planning recommendations presented in the chapter focus on the following:

- maximizing the development potential of Downtown and other existing centers and potential centers of activity to support higher intensity, mixed use development;
- encouraging infill and redevelopment of underutilized sites and districts throughout the City;
- improving and protecting the livability of existing residential neighborhoods;
- improving the quality and character of development along the commercial corridors throughout the City; and
- exploring the potential for future growth beyond the current City limits.

4.2 CONDITIONS, ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Provided below are summaries of key issues and opportunities identified during the planning process. The topics addressed below, drawn from recently completed plans and studies, the planning team’s research, and feedback from workshops with residents, business owners, and city staff, serve as the basis for land use recommendations and goals and objectives provided in the final sections of the chapter.

Smart Growth & New Urbanism

In response to feedback received during public workshops and meetings with key stakeholders in the City, the land use provisions of the Plan promote development and redevelopment consistent with the following general principles of smart growth and new urbanism:

- compact development and a mix of uses are encouraged to promote walking, support shared parking and transit use, and minimize disturbance of natural areas, wildlife corridors, and natural drainage ways;
- buildings should be designed to reinforce regional design traditions, frame the public realm, enliven streetscapes, and provide for the informal surveillance of public spaces;
- primary entries, windows, storefronts, porches, and stoops should open onto streets, sidewalks, and public spaces;
- parks, squares, plazas, and promenades should be designed to promote community...
life and provide a variety of outdoor public space for informal gatherings, public events, and community activities;

- streets should be designed in interconnected networks with generous sidewalks, shade trees, well-marked crossings, and amenities like pedestrian-scaled lighting, benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, and transit shelters; and
- parking areas (except for on-street spaces), loading docks, and service entries should be screened from public view and accessed from alleys, service courts, and side streets.

Though the City’s transformation consistent with these broad principles may not occur quickly or completely, the principles offer both a clear sense of direction and benchmarks for the evaluation of plans and proposals.

As the City works towards the realization of key objectives—the revitalization of Downtown, the creation of new Town and Neighborhood Centers, the rebuilding and revitalization of neighborhoods—these principles should serve as a foundation for decision-makers and key stakeholders.

**Centers, Corridors, & Districts**

To address the absence of large scale, unconstrained, undeveloped sites for new commercial and industrial development, the Plan promotes reinvestment and redevelopment of strategically-located sites with the potential to support high quality, high intensity development. To maximize development potential in these areas, the City will focus planning and economic development efforts on the following:

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Figure 4.1. Charrette Rendering of Port Non-Maritime Use Area Redevelopment Concept.
• positioning Downtown as premier regional destination for commerce, culture, entertainment, and living;
• attracting private investment in key districts along the Coast, including Mississippi City, Old Gulfport, and the VA Hospital site; and north of I-10 at the Sportsplex and the SR 605 interchanges;
• setting the stage for the long-term transformation of suburban centers along I-10 into regional mixed use centers;
• focusing moderate density residential and neighborhood-serving commercial uses in attractive, walkable neighborhood centers;
• encouraging quality, mixed use redevelopment along the City’s older commercial corridors; and
• improving existing and potential districts for industrial and employment-intensive land uses.

Neighborhood Stabilization & Improvement

The stabilization and improvement of existing neighborhoods is a central objective of the City. Katrina’s destruction along with issues associated with an aging stock of housing—market obsolescence, property maintenance, code compliance, and insurability—create significant challenges. Expanding existing City efforts to improve infrastructure and community facilities, promote community development programs and initiatives, and ensure compatible infill development and redevelopment will be critical in helping maintain values and attract appropriate investment.

To provide for the needs of an increasingly diverse population, the Plan encourages the continued development of affordable and workforce housing as infill development in existing neighborhoods and as integral parts of new, walkable mixed use communities. The City should encourage the development of Gulfport’s fair share of low income, workforce, affordable, and senior housing by working with non-profit housing providers, identifying suitable sites, removing regulatory barriers to affordability, and working with housing stakeholders to improve and expand existing incentive programs.

Design Character & Quality

Plan recommendations also focus on addressing concerns about the character and quality commercial development city-wide. Participants in planning meetings and workshops expressed concern about a range of issues, including the unattractiveness of signs and buildings, poor access and connectivity, and the lack of landscaping and pedestrian amenities. Criticism focused on conditions in both older strip commercial areas and more recently developed auto-oriented centers.

Figure 4.2. Examples of traditional architecture of homes in the Westside neighborhood.
In several older commercial areas, early signs of distress are evident. High visibility locations along US 49 and Pass Road are experiencing high rates of site and building vacancies, underutilization of larger commercial spaces, and signs of deferred building and site maintenance. In more recently developed areas, traffic, access, and connectivity issues were raised, as were concerns about the quality of building designs, scale of signs, mix of uses, and the lack of landscaping.

To address these challenges and better position the City’s commercial centers and corridors for reinvestment, the Plan offers recommendations for redevelopment and intensification of key centers, the improvement of streets and public spaces, and the creation of new standards for commercial corridor development.

**Development Regulations**

Gulfport’s land development regulations—the local rules and standards that guide private development—are among the most important tools available to implement Comprehensive Plan policies and strategies. Properly drafted and administered, the city’s land development regulations have a powerful influence both on the quality of development and the City’s competitiveness in the region.

Currently, the City regulates development in two ways: through the administration of its conventional Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations and through the application of the recently adopted SmartCode and related SmartCode Community Plans covering Westside, Old Gulfport, Mississippi City, Handsboro, and Florence Gardens.

The City’s Zoning Ordinance, a conventional ordinance focused on the separation of land uses and the regulation of development by density and intensity, has been in effect since the late 1970s. Although it has been updated and improved over the years, its shortcomings promoting quality development are well recognized and have been at least partially addressed through the adoption of the SmartCode and the completion of an initial round of SmartCode Community Plans. SmartCode, which focuses on the physical form and character of development and deemphasizes land use as a primary control, is designed to promote redevelopment of older traditional communities and the creation of new mixed use neighborhoods and centers on large tracts of undeveloped land.

While neither the conventional Zoning Ordinance or SmartCode are perfect in their current form and the administration of two sets of land development regulations presents unique challenges for staff and the local development community, the continuation and improvement of the dual-track approach is recommended. To improve each track and streamline project application and review processes, the Plan provides recommendations to improve the effectiveness of existing regulations and simplify development review processes and procedures.

In addition, the City should revisit its current rules for the regulation of building heights. Currently, tall buildings in the City existing in only a few locations between US 90 and the CSX Railroad. These include several buildings downtown—the Hancock Bank Building (15 stories), First National Bank Building (8 stories), the Hewes Building (5 stories), Markham Hotel (7 stories), U.S. District Courthouse (7), Bank Corp South Building (6 stories), Mississippi Power Building (8 stories); two buildings west of downtown—Isle View Casino (8 stories) and the Isle View hotel (20 stories); and one building immediately east of downtown—the Courtyard by Marriott (5 stories). In addition, three 8-story towers are being built at the Armed Forces Retirement Home and two high-rise condominiums are
located on the eastern end of the beachfront—Siena Towers (12 stories) in the Mississippi City Planning Area and Legacy Towers (14 stories) located near Debuys Road.

Although only three conventional zoning districts (I2, B3, and E-G) allow heights greater than 50 feet and only two SmartCode transect zones (T5 and T6) allow buildings over five (5) stories, the Zoning Ordinance includes a provision allowing the Planning Commission to approve heights greater than 50 feet. Unfortunately, this results in the potential for buildings on property not covered by a SmartCode Community Plan to greatly exceed defined height limits without seeking a rezoning. To address this issue, the plan recommends a more stringent definition of areas where tall buildings are permitted.

### Historic Resource Conservation

As most of the City’s earliest settled areas are close to the coast or inland low-lying areas, many of the City’s most significant historic sites and buildings were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Properties that were destroyed include the Harrison County Circuit Clerk’s Office, Grass Lawn, the Hewes House, and the Danzler Houses. Although many prominent properties are being restored—reconstruction of Grass Lawn is completed and there are plans for reconstruction or repair of several other sites—protecting and preserving what remains must be a high priority.

Table 4.1 lists the city’s historic buildings and districts that have already been designated on the National Register for Historic Preservation or as a Mississippi Landmark, along with the current status of each property or area.

To ensure the City’s built heritage is protected and conserved, the City should explore adoption of a historic preservation program, establishment of a preservation commission and architectural design guidelines, pursue designation as a Certified Local Government, and designate areas of the city with historic or cultural importance as a local historic site or district.

### Growth Beyond the City Limits

To address the Gulfport’s long term fiscal health and ensure regional patterns of growth, development, and conservation are consistent with the community’s goals, a preliminary review of existing conditions and development potential in areas beyond the existing City limits has been undertaken. Though not as detailed as a formal annexation study, the evaluation provides general guidance regarding areas the City should consider for further study.

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**Table 4.1. Historic Sites and Districts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Register of Historic Places</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas and Melinda Benton House (c. 1870)</td>
<td>minimal damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.B. Dantzler House (1924)</td>
<td>destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harbor Square Historic District (Downtown between Railroad, 23rd Ave, 13th St, 27th Ave)</td>
<td>many buildings destroyed/damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hewes Building (1903-4)</td>
<td>moderate damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milner House (Grass Lawn)</td>
<td>reconstructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Post Office and Customhouse</td>
<td>severe damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finley B. Hewes House (1904)</td>
<td>destroyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Medical Center</td>
<td>severe damage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mississippi Landmark</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Library (MS Sound Historical Museum)</td>
<td>damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass Lawn</td>
<td>reconstructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulfport City Hall</td>
<td>damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulfport Firehouse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulfport Depot (L&amp;N Railroad Depot)</td>
<td>damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Old) Gulfport High School Complex</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Old) Harrison County Circuit Clerk’s Office</td>
<td>destroyed, plans to rebuild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soria City School (II)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MS Gulf Coast National Heritage Area Management Plan, 2005.
4.3 LAND USE PLAN

Overview

Provided below are planning recommendations, policies and strategies organized in the following three categories: 1) City-Wide Policies and Strategies; 2) Future Land Use Plan; and 3) Future Growth Areas. Under each section, the Plan offers recommendations to guide City decisions regarding actions to promote redevelopment and revitalization, guide future land use decisions, and focus capital investment.

City-Wide Policies & Strategies

This section of the chapter offers recommendations to guide City decisions regarding land use and development citywide. The recommendations, organized by general topic, focus on ways to advance the community’s vision for the creation of a more livable, attractive, sustainable, and competitive City.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

A detailed, comprehensive, city-wide Economic Development Strategy should be prepared, and, as appropriate, economic development-related policies and strategies should be incorporated in future updates of the Comprehensive Plan. The strategy should focus on the following:

- clarifying and reinforcing Gulfport’s position and identity in the regional economy;
- expanding efforts to attract private investment to key districts in the City, including Downtown, the VA Hospital property, the Sportsplex, and other highly-visible, underutilized sites along US 90 and I-10;
- realizing the full economic benefits—new jobs, new investments in support services, and new housing—associated with the Mississippi State Port Authority’s improvement program for the Port of Gulfport and the investments planned by major drivers of the regional economy, including the Gulfport-Biloxi Airport, the Naval Construction Battalion Center, the John Stennis Space Center, and others;
- reinforcing Gulfport’s position as a regional and national tourism destination and center for culture, leisure, and sports events and activities;
- addressing policy and regulatory barriers and providing infrastructure, access, housing, and other services required to support and attract targeted uses, industries, and market sectors;
- mitigating the impacts of industrial and employment-intensive uses on the livability and sustainability of existing and planned neighborhoods; and
- promoting appropriate investment by strengthening of regional economic development organizations, expanding retention and recruitment efforts and branding initiatives, and promoting the City and region through expanded marketing campaigns.

DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

A multi-phase program to improve existing development regulations with the ultimate aim of consolidating standards in a single, form-based development code should be developed. In the initial phases of the program, the City will accomplish the following:

- prepare and adopt overlay districts for application along commercial corridors not covered by SmartCode to improve landscaping, signage, building materials, cross-parcel access, and site design;
- prepare a consolidated schedule of permitted uses/building functions for application under the existing Zoning Ordinance and SmartCode, with particular attention paid to the regulation of adult-oriented businesses;
review and consider eliminating the excess height section of the supplementary height regulations in the existing Zoning Ordinance with exceptions for buildings in designated Employment Districts and for institutional buildings so long as transitions in height are provided in close proximity to land zoned for single family residential use;

• prepare a schedule of permitted thoroughfare types based on SmartCode Table 3C for application under the existing Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and SmartCode;

• amend SmartCode to clarify application and review procedures, clarify density bonus and transfer provisions, remove provisions for sector-scale plans;

• consolidate development application and review processes, including the development of public information materials, check-lists, and application forms; and

• expand efforts to increase awareness and understanding of SmartCode among key stakeholders through the improvement of introductory material and participation in workshops and seminars.

DEVELOPMENT & DESIGN QUALITY

To improve the attractiveness and design quality of new buildings throughout the City, the following initiatives should be undertaken:

• prepare and adopt overlay districts for application along commercial corridors not covered by SmartCode to address landscaping, signage, building materials, cross-parcel access, and site design;

• using the Patternbook for Gulf Coast Neighborhoods and the Downtown Architectural Design Guidelines as references, complete research to identify historic and traditional design treatments and urban patterns that contribute to the City’s character and prepare architectural guidelines describing preferred urban patterns, building types, architecture styles and details, and site designs;

• provide for the application of guidelines by reference in SmartCode Community Plans or Overlay Districts, and implement appropriate administration and review processes and procedures;

• establish and provide on-going support for the establishment of a Town Architect position in the Community Development Department;

• work with local design advocacy organizations to prepare publications—presentations, exhibits, brochures, walking tours—highlighting the City’s unique design character, built heritage, and cultural landscapes; and

• support the establishment of an annual design awards program to recognize outstanding design, development, and rehabilitation projects.

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

To ensure the conservation and improvement of existing neighborhoods and the provision of safe, affordable, and attractive housing, the City should implement policies and initiatives designed to:

• encourage existing and support the organization of new neighborhood organizations like those in place in West Side, Soria City, and North Gulfport/Turkey Creek;

• seek funding and partnerships for the organization of City Neighborhoods Summit to identify opportunities for neighborhood-based community improvement and capacity building;

• consider creation of a neighborhood planner position in the Urban Development Department;

• protect existing residential neighborhoods from the encroachment of incompatible uses;

• attract high quality housing to new neighborhoods, mixed use centers, and infill sites in existing neighborhoods and conserve the rural character of existing low density neighborhoods;

• ensure regulations allow for the development of a range of housing types.
HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The City should work to increase the stock of affordable and workforce housing and avoid concentrations of poverty, work with regional and local partners to identify opportunities for new housing on vacant, underutilized sites; publicly-owned property; and in new mixed use projects. Increase available housing by:

- working with non-profit housing providers to analyze the development potential of publicly-owned sites and prepare preliminary designs and financial feasibility assessments for mixed income housing projects;
- identifying candidate sites for affordable, workforce, and mixed income housing and prepare preliminary studies for pilot projects. The evaluation should focus on vacant and underutilized sites within designated Centers and Corridors, Urban Neighborhoods, and Suburban Neighborhoods, and within comfortable walking distance of mass transit, commercial and personal services, schools, and parks and recreation facilities;
- amending existing commercial zoning districts to allow for small scale mixed use projects with residential above or in close proximity to retail, office, personal, and professional service uses to increase the diversity of housing outside of existing neighborhoods and areas covered by SmartCode Community Plans; and
- expanding code enforcement efforts to ensure residential sites and buildings are adequately maintained and encourage stabilization and improvement of declining areas through a combination of financial and regulatory incentives, code enforcement, and participation in state and federal programs.

CULTURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION

With assistance from the Mississippi Department of Archive and History, prepare and adopt an historic preservation ordinance establishing a preservation commission in accordance with federal and state guidelines and consider application for Certified Local Government (CLG) status. Once certified, seek financial assistance from Archives and History through the CLG program to prepare/update existing Cultural Resources Surveys for the following areas of the City: Downtown, Old Gulfport, Mississippi City, North Gulfport/Turkey Creek, West Side, and Soria City.

Based on the results of the surveys, prepare preservation strategies which may include the following:

- creation of local historic districts and development of guidelines to protect their integrity and significance;
- development of local tax abatement, grant, and low income loan programs to support rehabilitation of historic sites and buildings; and
- creation of public information materials—brochures, booklets, interpretive signage, walking tours, etc.—to increase awareness of the City’s history and cultural heritage.
Future Land Use Plan

This section of the chapter describes the preferred pattern, form, and distribution of future land uses in Gulfport through the year 2030. As summarized in Table 4.2 and shown on the Future Land Use Plan, Map 4.1, the City’s plans policies and strategies to guide future development are organized under broad future land use categories: Centers and Corridors, Employment Districts, and Neighborhoods, and more specific policy and strategy statements are provided for subcategories. A review of policies and strategies by future land use subcategory is provided below.

DOWNTOWN GULFPORT

Downtown Gulfport, the historic center of regional commerce, is designated as a Town Center on the Future Land Use Plan. The designation recognizes Downtown’s position as a prime location for civic and cultural institutions, as an important address for corporate headquarters and Class-A office space, and as an attractive location for a variety of retail, restaurant, and high density residential uses.

Land Use & Development. Development in Downtown Gulfport shall comply with the following general guidelines addressing the preferred mix and intensity of uses, form and character of buildings, and access and mobility:

- As the City’s primary Town Center, Downtown Gulfport is planned as the area with the highest intensity mix of uses in the City and the priority location for cultural, institutional, and civic uses of citywide and regional importance.
- As the City’s traditional urban center, Downtown benefits from the existing pattern of small blocks and dense network of walkable streets. Public streets and spaces are defined by buildings with generally continuous facades and heights up to a maximum of 24 stories. Parking is located on-street, in mid-block surface lots, or structured garages. Reinforcing the existing urban pattern and character of development is critical to Downtown’s long-term success as a vital center of commerce, culture and urban living.
- The Plan calls for Downtown to become the multi-modal hub of the local and regional transportation network with highest capacity local and regional transit service and roadways providing connections to other centers and the regional

Table 4.2. Planning Strategies by Future Land Use Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Land Use Category</th>
<th>Planning Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centers &amp; Corridors</td>
<td>• Revitalizing existing or creating new mixed-use destinations in the form of compact, pedestrian-friendly centers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Gulfport</td>
<td>• Improving the character and quality of development along major road corridors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Centers</td>
<td>• Focusing public investments in roadway, streets, and public spaces to promote private investment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Centers</td>
<td>• Providing incentives to increase intensity and mix of uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinvestment Corridors</td>
<td>• Encouraging revitalization, infill development, and redevelopment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Districts</td>
<td>• Maximizing the use and attractiveness of existing and emerging employment districts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Neighborhoods</td>
<td>• Supporting effort to improve livability and stability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Neighborhoods</td>
<td>• Promoting appropriate levels of density based on availability of infrastructure, access to roadways and transit, and other public facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Neighborhoods</td>
<td>• Conserving and improving existing neighborhoods and providing safe, affordable, and attractive housing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
transportation network. Promoting walking and transit will continue to be key consideration in land use and transportation planning.

**Downtown Master Planning.** To strengthen Downtown’s competitiveness and ensure it’s attractiveness for mixed use development, a detailed Downtown Master Plan should be prepared to address the following interrelated issue: business retention and recruitment, parking development and management, regulatory and financial barriers to reinvestment, non-maritime development on Port Authority property, connectivity to Jones Park, and other matters relevant to downtown’s revitalization and improvement. Working through the Gulfport Main Street and the Gulfport Development Commission, continue efforts to provide technical assistance to downtown property owners and tenants, promote quality infill development, attract private investment, and improve the public realm.

**Port Impacts & Non-Maritime Development.** In partnership with the Mississippi State Port Authority, MDA, and MDOT, the City should conduct a detailed assessment of the potential impacts of the Port's redevelopment on downtown. The assessment should address:

- impacts of the Port access alternatives (addressed below in the Transportation Chapter) on access, traffic flow, pedestrian mobility, scenic resources, and water views;
- strategies to maintain and improve access between Downtown and Jones Park, and to ensure the continuity of waterfront access through the non-maritime portions of the MSPA property;
- the potential form and character of development on the non-maritime use area of the MSPA property; and
- other matters associated with the Port’s plan.

**Regional Transit Hub.** To increase mobility and access, support efforts to promote Downtown’s position as the regional transit center. Support existing effort to improve local and regional transit options, revisit proposals for streetcar service along Beach Boulevard and north to airport along 25th Avenue, and explore plans for transit service (in the form of Bus Rapid

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Figure 4.3. Illustration showing streetscape and public space improvements in Downtown.
Transit or Light Rail Transit) along the Railroad Street corridor.

**Parking Management.** Prepare a detailed parking management strategy to assess the following:

- projected demand for long-term public parking and the financial feasibility of constructing surface or structured parking;
- the effectiveness of SmartCode provisions addressing parking in new development;
- management of high-turnover, on-street parking spaces to serve Downtown merchants; and
- the potential for a circulator services to connect Downtown Destinations and maximize the use of existing public parking resources.

**Streets & Public Spaces.** Continue efforts to enhance Downtown streetscapes and public spaces. Continue to seek funding for the extension of streetscape improvements on US 49 north of the railroad tracks and on streets beyond the current project limits, and for the construction of proposed improvements to Jones Park.

**Development Regulations.** To ensure new development fits well within Downtown’s historic context, conduct a review of provisions in the SmartCode Community Plan for Downtown which allow for increased height and intensity in T5 and T6 zones, density transfers to save historic structures, provisions ensuring effective transitions between downtown and surrounding single-family residential neighborhoods.

**TOWN CENTERS**

The Future Land Use Plan identifies the following areas as having the potential to develop as mixed use Town Centers:

- the traditional centers at Mississippi City and Old Courthouse along US 90;
- the VA Hospital Property west of Mississippi City;
- existing suburban activity centers in the more suburban areas of the city including the area surrounding US 49 at Landon Road and Creosote Road near the intersection with I-10 and the area at Cowan-Lorraine Road (SR 605) at John Ross Road and Dedeaux Road north of the I-10; and
- the City-owned property surrounding the Sportsplex south of Landon Road.

The Town Center designation defines these areas as being ideal locations for compact, pedestrian-oriented development with a mix of residential, commercial, and civic uses. Though the Gateway, Northeast, and Sportsplex areas currently support low intensity, single use, auto-oriented development, the designation recognizes their long term potential to support higher intensity, mixed use development.

**Land Use & Development.** Development in areas designated as Town Centers shall comply with the following general guidelines addressing the preferred mix and intensity of uses, form and character of buildings, and access and mobility:

- The Town Center designation calls for high intensity development with a mix of local and regional retail, office, and residential uses. Mississippi City and Old Gulfport have existing civic and institutional uses that are local serving in nature. The Gateway, Northeast, and Sportsplex areas are existing, auto-oriented, single-use areas that have long-term potential to develop as centers with a wider mix of uses, including moderate density housing, office, and locally-serving civic uses.
- Areas designated as Town Center are urban centers with a pattern of small blocks and a dense network of walkable streets. These areas are planned to have mostly continuous building façades fronting directly on streets and public spaces. Building heights in the Old Gulfport and Mississippi City can reach up to an absolute maximum of 16 stories.
and parking is accommodated in mid-block surface or structured garages. The Gateway, Northeast, and Sportsplex areas are auto-oriented districts with potential during the life of the Plan to take on a more urban form with small to mid sized blocks, two-to four-story buildings fronting streets and public spaces, and rear yard parking lots and structures.

- Areas designated as Town Centers are served by the highest capacity regional thoroughfares and local and regional transit service and are pedestrian priority areas. Although pedestrian amenities are limited in the Gateway, Northeast, and Sportsplex areas, the Plan calls for improvements to improve transit access and walkability.

Redevelopment & Capital Improvement Plans.
To promote investment and redevelopment, the City will set priorities for the completion of redevelopment and capital improvement plans for area designated as Town Centers. For areas where planning work has recently been completed, including Old Gulfport, Mississippi City, the VA Property, and the Sportsplex, the City will continue current efforts to promote private investment. Specifically, the City will:

- support efforts by the Gulfport Development Commission to attract private investment to implement approved plans for the VA Property and the Sportsplex;
- prepare short-term plans, in partnership with GRPC and MDOT, for access and aesthetic improvement of properties along US 49 north and south of I-10, including development of plans for improving access through the transformation of US 49 into a multi-way boulevard; and
- prepare public investment plans to implement thoroughfare, streetscape, and civic space improvements identified in the adopted Old Gulfport and Mississippi City Community Plan; and
- ensure capital investments in thoroughfares, transit, public facilities, and public utilities support goals for compactness, walkability, and accessibility.

Development Regulations. Following completion of redevelopment and capital improvement plans, provide for increased development intensities and a wider range of uses through the adoption of SmartCode Community Plans or through changes in conventional zoning. Conduct a review of SmartCode provisions for increasing height and intensity in T5 and T6 transect zones and ensure maximum development potentials are reasonably achievable.

Neighborhood Encroachment. The existing extent of land zoned for commercial and mixed uses in areas designated as a Town Center is considered sufficient to support anticipated demand. Consequently, the City generally does not support rezoning of existing residentially-zoned land to allow for commercial use.
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

Areas of the City identified as Neighborhood Centers on the Future Land Use Plan are intended for moderate intensity, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development. Within each of these centers, the Plan recommends neighborhood-serving commercial uses, a mix of multi-family and live-work units, improved public spaces, and connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Ensuring effective transitions from existing residential neighborhoods and new, mixed development is a central objective—parking, loading and service areas should be screened from view, traffic should not adversely impact neighborhood streets, and building heights, frontage conditions, and land uses at the edge of a Center should be similar to those in the surrounding neighborhood.

Land Use & Development. Development in areas designated as Neighborhood Centers shall comply with the following general guidelines addressing the preferred mix and intensity of uses, form and character of buildings, and access and mobility:

- Areas designated as Neighborhood Centers are primarily auto-oriented, commercial developments with a neighborhood-serving mix of uses. These smaller-scale centers have long-term potential for mixed-use development including multi-family residential, retail, and civic uses to support daily needs of adjacent neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood Centers are auto-oriented districts with potential during the life of the Plan to become more attractive and walkable. These areas have potential for long-term redevelopment with one- to four-story, mixed use buildings fronting more pedestrian-friendly streets with parking in the rear or side.
- Currently, these areas are served by high capacity regional thoroughfares and local and regional transit service. The Plan identifies these areas as priority locations for public and private investment to support pedestrian mobility.

Redevelopment & Capital Improvement Plans. To promote investment and redevelopment, the City will set priorities for the completion of redevelopment and capital improvement plans for Neighborhood Centers with priority given strategically located Centers at Hewes Avenue and Pass Road and in North Gulfport at US 49 at Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. In addition, prepare public investment plans to implement thoroughfare, streetscape, and civic space improvements identified in the adopted Community Plans for Handsboro and West Side.

Development Regulations. Following completion of redevelopment and capital improvement plans, provide for increased development intensities and a wider range of uses through the adoption of SmartCode Community Plans or through changes in conventional zoning. Conduct a review of SmartCode provisions allowing for increased height and intensity in T5 and T6 transect zones and ensure maximum development potentials are appropriate and reasonably achievable.

Neighborhood Encroachment. The existing extent of commercially-zoned land in areas designated as Neighborhood Centers is considered sufficient to support anticipated demand. Consequently, the City generally does not support rezoning of existing residentially-zoned land to allow for commercial use.

REINVESTMENT CORRIDOR

Improving conditions along commercial corridors—strip commercial districts with minimal landscaping, broad expanses of parking, and undistinguished buildings—is among the Plan’s top priorities. With proper planning and strategic public investment, areas identified as Reinvestment Corridors on the Future Land Use Plan have the long term potential for redevelopment and improvement.
Land Use & Development. Development in areas designated as Reinvestment Corridors shall comply with the following general guidelines addressing the preferred mix and intensity of uses, form and character of buildings, and access and mobility:

- Corridors identified for reinvestment have an existing mix auto-oriented retail uses. These areas have long-term potential to support neighborhood-serving mixed-use development.
- These corridors are characterized by existing suburban strip commercial developments set back from roadways behind disconnected surface parking lots. The Plan promotes reinvestment along these corridors to improve aesthetics, connectivity between sites, and walkability.
- Currently, these areas are served by high capacity local and regional thoroughfares. Along these corridors, the local transit services link to the regional transit system. The corridors are predominantly auto-oriented, and while pedestrian improvements are desirable, they should not be top priority.

Targeted Code Enforcement. To improve the safety, function, and aesthetic quality of older commercial properties along major roadways, focus city code enforcement resources on areas with high numbers of code complaints and citations and work with property owners to bring properties into compliance.

Access Improvements. In partnership with GRPC and MDOT, prepare short-term plans for access and aesthetic improvement of properties along US 49 north and south of I-10, including development of plans for improving access through the transformation of US 49 into a multi-way boulevard.

Corridor Overlay District. To guide development and redevelopment along designated Reinvestment Corridors not covered under a SmartCode Community Plan, prepare a Corridor Overlay District requiring enhanced landscaping, greater buffering and shading of parking areas, improved commercial signage, enhanced standards to ensure architectural quality and compatibility, and incentives for quality development. At minimum, the Corridor Overlay District will promote the following:

- building forms and designs compatible with and reflective of the region’s traditional architecture;
- compact, pedestrian-friendly building and site designs;
- enhanced landscaping with priority given to the preservation of existing mature trees and use of native vegetation;
- streetscape and sidewalk amenities providing for pedestrian movement, shade, seating, and lighting;
- mixed use projects incorporating commercial uses as well as housing, office, and personal and professional services;
- parking in side and rear yard locations and generally screened from public view;
- effective screening of utility infrastructure and service/loading areas;
- transitions in building form and scale to ensure compatibility with existing development; and
- pedestrian and vehicular connections between neighboring destinations.

Neighborhood Encroachment. The existing extent of commercially-zoned land in areas designated as Reinvestment Corridors is considered sufficient to support anticipated demand. Consequently, the City generally does not support rezoning of existing residentially-zoned land to allow for commercial use.

EMPLOYMENT DISTRICTS

Areas of the City outside of Downtown with the highest existing and potential employment densities are identified as Employment Districts on the Land Use Plan. Existing conditions and planned developments at the City’s
existing Employment Districts—the Bernard Bayou Industrial Area, Gulfport Construction Battalion (Seabee) Base, Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport, Memorial Hospital, and the Port of Gulfport—are described in the Planning Context Chapter of this Plan.

The one are identified in the Future Land Use Plan as Employment District - Potential is the 34th Street Industrial Area. This area is primarily zoned industrial and has the potential to develop more intensively and provide close-in employment opportunities. It currently includes a mix of light to heavy industrial manufacturing, warehouse, and distribution uses on 34th Street, 34th Avenue, and 28th Avenue. This area also includes some commercial zoned areas which face on US 49 and John Hill Boulevard.

Land Use & Development. Development in areas designated as Employment Districts shall comply with the following general guidelines addressing the preferred mix and intensity of uses, form and character of buildings, and access and mobility:

- Employment Districts are areas designed to support industrial and institutional uses with unique locational requirements and high employment densities.
- The City’s Employment Districts are distinctive in character and are defined by the requirements of individual use and operation.
- Employment Districts are directly linked to national and state goods movement corridors. Transit service in these areas is related to employment densities.

Industrial & Employment-Intensive Land. To encourage re-use of existing sites and maximize the potential for redevelopment, the City should work with the Harrison County Development Commission and local real estate professionals to develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of sites available for industrial and employment-intensive development. The inventory should include sites in existing industrial parks as well as other sites with appropriate zoning, infrastructure service, and access.

Regional Analysis. The City should continue working with the Harrison County Development Commission to identify potential locations outside the City’s existing limits for industrial and employment-intensive development. The analysis should focus on large-scale vacant and underutilized sites in close proximity to I-10, US 49, and US 67 and identify strategies to provide public utilities and services.

Airport District Expansion. The City should work with the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport to implement long-term land use and capital improvement plans for areas surrounding the existing limits of the airport property. Efforts should focus on improving access to development sites, ensuring adequate infrastructure, consolidating ownership, and providing effective buffering and transitions to minimize impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.

Development Regulations. The City should support the continued intensification of use in existing districts, protect the long-term viability of designated Employment Districts from unnecessary intrusion of conflicting land uses, including retail and office uses not directly related to industrial activities; and ensure appropriate transitions to surrounding areas.

URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS

The City’s older traditional residential areas are designated as Urban Neighborhoods on the Land Use Plan. These areas have relatively high residential density, with a narrow grid of streets, and a range of urban housing types typical of late 19th and early
20th Century development. These mature neighborhoods, located along the coast and in low-lying inland areas south of I-10, were heavily damaged during Hurricane Katrina and have struggled with challenges associated with aging infrastructure, unsympathetic infill development, poor zoning, and uneven investment.

**Land Use & Development.** Development in areas designated as Urban Neighborhoods shall comply with the following general guidelines addressing the preferred mix and intensity of uses, form and character of buildings, and access and mobility:

- Urban Neighborhoods are predominately residential in use with a mix of housing types, along with clusters of neighborhood-scale civic, retail, and office uses.
- These neighborhoods are characterized by small blocks and lots on a pedestrian-friendly, urban street grid.
- Urban Neighborhoods are linked to the regional transportation network by local roadways. Street and block configurations enhance local mobility and promote walking as a safe alternative to automobile travel.

**Development Regulations.** To ensure infill housing contributes to their stabilization, attractiveness, and sustainability of the City’s older, more densely developed neighborhoods, the density and design standards in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations should be improved. Code improvement efforts should focus on the following:

- revision or replacement of the R-2 Zoning District to ensure the density and form of infill development is compatible with existing and planned conditions;
- addition of standards addressing parking and landscaping to minimize impervious surfaces, promote side and rear yard parking, and promote tree preservation and the use of native vegetation; and
- addition of form-based standards to ensure compatibility with traditional forms and patterns.

**Right-of-Way Preservation.** The City should prepare maps indicating the general location and extent of land required to support planned roadway improvements, new roadway facilities, greenway corridors, public facilities, and easements required for water and sewer infrastructure, and ensure such lands are reserved through site plan and subdivision plan review processes.

**Flood Hazard Mitigation.** A number of low-lying, non-coastal areas within older neighborhoods have been identified as repetitive loss areas due to flooding. This designation, which predates Katrina, sparked a multi-year effort to buy properties within these areas, including special flood hazard areas along brickyard bayou (as shown on Map 9.3). To reduce future repetitive losses in areas not subject to earlier buyout programs, the City will work with FEMA and MEMA to identify new areas for the program’s application.

**Targeted Neighborhood Revitalization & Code Enforcement.** Neighborhoods experiencing the highest rates of disinvestment, property value decline, deteriorating housing stock, and high rates of code violations should be targeted for revitalization and stabilization efforts including enhanced code enforcement, increased marketing of housing assistance programs, community policing efforts, public space improvements, and other public programs designed to improve livability and stabilize property values.

**Great Southern Golf Course/William Carey University.** Given the relocation of the William Carey University Campus to a new site in Tradition, the area east of Mississippi City between Anniston and Debuys Road is ripe for redevelopment. Under current zoning, the portion of the Golf Course north of the
Figure 4.6. The Westside Community Plan resulted in a rezoning from R-2 to SmartCode zones that permit infill development compatible with the existing neighborhood fabric.

railroad tracks is R-2, which has the potential for moderate density multi-family residential development. The portion of the golf course south of the tracks and the William Carey University Site are currently zoned R-1-7.5, which allows for single-family housing.

Given its location within stable single-family neighborhoods and proximity to areas planned for high intensity mixed use development, this area does not appear to be appropriate for commercial or high-intensity residential development. However, the city should conduct a study to determine appropriate future uses within this area, considering the following:

- potential for resort development and a mix of low and moderate density residential development;
- potential for public and/or private recreational uses including continued use of all or a portion of the golf course;
- strategies to ensure development is compatible with existing surrounding single family neighborhoods;
- conservation of the wetland area north of the railroad between the Great Southern Golf Course and Debuys Road; and
- effects of extending railroad boulevard east from Teagarden Road to Debuys Road.

**SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD**

The Land Use Plan designates single-use neighborhoods in suburban settings as Suburban Neighborhoods. These areas developed during the second half of the 20th Century and are typified by low and moderate-density, residential subdivision and multi-family developments of townhouses and garden apartments. Suburban Neighborhoods are located generally east of the airport and north of I-10.

**Land Use & Development.** Development in areas designated as Suburban Neighborhoods
shall comply with the following general guidelines addressing the preferred mix and intensity of uses, form and character of buildings, and access and mobility:

- These neighborhoods are primarily residential in use, with clusters of neighborhood-scale civic, retail, and office uses on a fragmented street network.
- The City’s Suburban Neighborhoods are moderate-density conventional suburban neighborhoods that are characterized by a fragmented street grid and front yard drives and parking.
- Suburban Neighborhoods are linked to the regional transportation network by local roadways. There is a low priority for roadway or transit capacity improvements.

**Traditional Neighborhood Development.**
Through the continued application of SmartCode, the revision of existing zoning, and strategic public investment, the City will support the development of neighborhoods with the following characteristics:

- a mix of housing types and price points to accommodate the diverse ages and incomes of City residents;
- housing designs with front stoops and porches and detached rear garages or alley-loaded parking;
- interconnected networks of narrow streets with crosswalks, streetscaping, and other traffic-calming measures;
- a variety of civic spaces—playgrounds and pocket parks, squares, greenways; and
- parks, schools, civic buildings, and neighborhood-serving commercial uses within walking distance of homes.

To encourage a greater mix of housing types in new developments and place appropriate limits on the scale of new multi-family projects, the City will encourage the use of SmartCode for infill and new development projects and establish limits on the amount and location of land eligible for rezonings to R-B, R-2, R-3 and R-4. To encourage the use of SmartCode, the City should reduce the minimum area required for the preparation of Community Plans under Articles 3 and 4 and limit the type and intensity of non-residential uses for areas zoned T-4L.

**Rural Neighborhood**

Only a few areas within the city are characterized by low-density housing built on large lots. These neighborhoods, located near the northern city limits and along the Biloxi River, have been designated as Rural Neighborhoods on the Future Land Use Plan.

**Land Use & Development.** Development in areas designated as Suburban Neighborhoods shall comply with the following general guidelines addressing the preferred mix and intensity of uses, form and character of buildings, and access and mobility:

- Low-density residential communities in the city that have limited potential for infill housing development or public amenity improvements have been designated as Rural Neighborhoods on the Future Land Use Plan.
- Rural Neighborhoods are existing, low-density residential areas with limited public improvements. These neighborhoods have poor access to public amenities including water and sewer service, parks and recreation, and streetscape improvements.
- The Rural Neighborhoods within Gulfport are linked to the regional transportation network by local roadways. Rural Neighborhoods have low priority for roadway or transit capacity improvements.

**Conservation Policies.** For areas designated as Suburban Neighborhoods, allow sewer extension only in areas with failing septic systems, ensure transitions between suburban and rural neighborhoods, and explore the potential for buyouts and conservation of subdivided lots in designated flood hazard areas.
Plan for Long-Term Growth

OVERVIEW

To address the form and timing of future development in unincorporated outlying areas, a Future Growth Study Area was defined for a 151-square-mile area to the west and north of the current city limits. This area was identified for possible expansion because it offers the opportunities for achieving a variety of community goals and objectives that may not be feasible within the existing corporate boundaries. Existing land use and current County plans were examined for four sub-areas within the Future Growth Study Area. These Sub-Areas are described below and shown on Map 4.2.

The Future Growth Study Area is a predominantly undeveloped area within unincorporated Harrison County, with less than 6 percent of the total land area developed in a residential and commercial use. The County’s land cover data shows that three-quarters of the total land area within the Study Area is forested, including area within the DeSoto National Forest. The remaining land in the Study Area is agricultural, 15 percent, or surface water or sand, less than one percent.

Current Planning. The area within the Future Growth Study Area is currently regulated by Harrison County land use and zoning controls, including the 2008 Harrison County Comprehensive Plan. The County’s Future Land Use Map designates Sectors defining the preferred future pattern of development for unincorporated areas of the County.

The County Plan designates one-third of the Future Growth Study Area as Preserved Open or Reserved Open, indicating areas that are permanently protected, such as the DeSoto National Forest, or areas that should be protected, such as wetlands and floodplains. Five areas within the Future Growth Study Area, accounting for 13 percent of the total area, are designated by the County for Intended Growth and/or Infill and Redevelopment Growth. Almost 20 percent of the land area has been designated Controlled Growth where mixed-use development is encouraged along major thoroughfares. A small percentage of land owned by government agencies has been designated Special District. The remaining 30 percent of the land area has been designated Restricted Growth, indicating areas where development should be limited since it remains outside an urban service area.

Sub-Area Designations. For the purpose of this discussion, the Future Growth Study Area has been divided into the following four geographic areas based on topography, development patterns, and transportation network:

- I-10 Corridor Sub-Area
- SR 53 Corridor Sub-Area
- US 49 Corridor Sub-Area
- SR 67 and SR 605 Corridors Sub-Area

The following sections provide information on existing conditions and current County land use controls and planning efforts. A preliminary growth strategy is also presented for each of the four Sub-Areas. Several areas appropriate for intensive development—identified as potential Regional Growth Centers in the following text—are recommended for evaluation as future annexation areas.
MAP 4.2 FUTURE GROWTH STUDY AREAS
**I-10 CORRIDOR SUB-AREA**

**Existing Land Use.** Located west of city limits on the north and south sides of Interstate 10, the I-10 Corridor Growth Study Sub-Area is roughly 25-square-miles (16,000 acres) between the city limits and approximately one-half mile west of County Farm Road. The northern boundary of the Sub-Area is Bayou Bernard. This area is the most developed sub-area within the Future Growth Study Area, with ten percent of land in either a residential or commercial use. Over sixty percent of the I-10 Corridor Sub-Area is forested, almost twenty-five percent is in an agricultural use, and the remaining four percent is sand or surface water.

**County Plan.** The County’s Future Land Use Map designates Intended Growth Sector for the thirteen percent of the Sub-Area, located between Interstate 10 and Landon Road adjacent to two interstate interchanges at County Farm Road and Canal Road. One-quarter of the land area is designated Reserved Open, but less than one percent of land is designated Preserved Open. Thirty-five percent is designated Controlled Growth, along Landon Road and County Farm Road, with the remaining twenty percent of land further from existing utility service areas designated Restricted Growth. This Sub-Area is located within the Pineville and Western Harrison Community Planning Areas.

**Growth Strategy.** Two areas in the I-10 Corridor Sub-Area—the I-10 and County Farm Road and the I-10 and Canal Road/ proposed SR 601 areas—have the potential to become Regional Growth Centers able to support mixed-use development and should be evaluated for potential future annexation.

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**SR 53 CORRIDOR SUB-AREA**

**Existing Land Use.** The SR 53 Corridor Growth Study Sub-Area is situated northeast of the city limits between the Bayou Bernard and the Little Biloxi River. This study area is roughly 28-square-miles (18,000 acres) and is predominately an agricultural and low-density residential area. Sixty-six percent of the land area is forested and one-quarter is agricultural. Five percent is residential, two percent is commercial, and the remaining two percent is sand or surface water.

**County Plan.** Harrison County’s Future Land Use Map has designated over fifty percent of the land area in the Sub-Area as Controlled Growth, primarily the existing low-density residential areas near SR 53, Canal Road, Swan Road, and Three Rivers Road. Special Districts within this area include the new West Harrison High School under construction near the County Fairgrounds on County Farm Road. The County has designated two Intended Growth Sectors in this Sub-Area; a commercial area strip along US 49 and the Rivers Hills master planned community along Old Highway 49 north of the city limits. Only a small portion of land within this Study area has been designated Preserved Open or Reserved Open. The remaining land has been designated Restricted Growth. This Sub-Area is located within the Western Harrison Community Planning Area.

**Growth Strategy.** The SR 53 and Canal Road area in SR 53 Corridor Sub-Area has the potential to become a Regional Growth Center able to support mixed-use development and should be evaluated for potential future annexation.
US 49 CORRIDOR SUB-AREA

Existing Land Use. North of the Little Biloxi River along the US 49 corridor, this Growth Study Sub-Area encompasses roughly 33 square miles (21,000 acres). Less than six percent of the land area is developed in a residential or commercial use, primarily in the towns of Saucier and Wortham or along major thoroughfares like US 49. Outside of the towns, this area remains largely undeveloped with eighty percent of land forested and thirteen percent in an agricultural use. The remaining one percent of land is sand or surface water.

County Plan. This Sub-Area is located within the Saucier Community Planning Area. The Saucier Town Plan, a form-based code promoting compact development, was prepared for the 400-acre existing center located along US 49. This area is designated on the County’s Future Land Use Map as Infill Redevelopment. The area surrounding the Saucier Town Center is designated Intended Growth and Controlled Growth. A smaller area between US 49 and Old Highway 49 on the southern edge of the Sub-Area is also designated Intended Growth. Thirty percent of the Sub-Area is designated Preserved Open or Reserved Open. The remaining land in the Sub-Area is designated Restricted Growth or Special District.

Growth Strategy. Saucier and the area around the intersection of US 49 and SR 67 within the SR 53 Corridor Sub-Area has the potential to become a Regional Growth Center able to support mixed-use development and should be evaluated for potential future annexation.

SR 67 & SR 605 CORRIDORS SUB-Area

Existing Land Use. Northeast of current city limits, this approximately 64-square-mile Sub-Area (41,000 acres) is roughly defined by Saucier Creek to the west and the DeSoto National Forest to the east. At the center of this Sub-Area are new or improved major thoroughfares; SR 67, from US 49 southeast to Biloxi, and SR 605, from SR 67 south to Gulfport. This Sub-Area is the largest of the four and the least developed, with only three percent of land in a residential or commercial use. The area is predominately forested and has only ten percent of land in an agricultural use.

County Plan. Fifty percent of the Sub-Area has been defined as Preserved Open or Reserved Open, primarily the DeSoto National Forest and the Biloxi River watershed. Over 5,000 acres of the Sub-Area at the intersection of SR 67 and SR 605 are designated Intended Growth, roughly the same area planned for the Tradition master planned community. The remaining area within the Sub-Area is designated Restricted Growth or Special District. This Sub-Area is located within the Saucier and Eastern Harrison Community Planning Areas. Harrison County has also adopted a Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for the newly constructed SR 67 Corridor, the first designated scenic highway in the County.

Growth Strategy. Two areas, the Tradition master-planned community at the intersection of SR 67 and SR 605 and proposed Belle LaView community between SR 605 and Lorraine Road within the SR 67 and SR 605 Corridors Sub-Area have the potential to become Regional Growth Centers able to support mixed-use development and should be evaluated for potential future annexation.
4.4 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following set of goals and objectives provide a comprehensive set of recommendations for community conservation, renewal, and improvement for the City of Gulfport.

GOAL 4.1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.
Ensure economic development initiatives are fully aligned with Plan goals for the creation of a livable, sustainable, and economically vital City.

GOAL 4.2. EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT PATTERN. Encourage forms, patterns, and intensities of development that maximize the use of limited land resources, benefit from the presence of existing infrastructure, and protect value of natural systems.

Objective 4.2.1. Encourage quality design and development to improve the economic vitality and competitive position of the City’s centers and corridors, employment districts, and neighborhoods.

Objective 4.2.2. Maintain Downtown Gulfport as the priority location for high intensity, mixed use development—focus policies and public investments on retaining and attracting office and commercial uses; new housing; regionally-significant civic institutions; and arts, cultural, and entertainment venues.

Objective 4.2.3. Align planning and public investment strategies to promote the transformation of strategically-located commercial areas into Town and Neighborhood Centers and ensure infill and redevelopment projects in these areas meet City goals for the creation of compact, mixed use, walkable, and accessible centers of activity.

Objective 4.2.4. Improve safety, attractiveness, and accessibility of underutilized and under-performing property along the City’s existing commercial corridors.

Objective 4.2.5. Ensure adequate amounts and types of land are available for business expansions, start-ups, and relocations by maximizing the development potential and competitive position of designated Employment Districts and exploring the potential for new Employment Districts in Future Growth Study Area.

Objective 4.2.6. Promote the construction of new housing and rehabilitation of existing housing to satisfy the demands of an increasingly diverse local and regional housing market.

Objective 4.2.7. Preserve and enhance the value of the City’s significant historic and cultural resources to the community and ensure that new development reinforces the City’s unique character and sense of place.

GOAL 4.3. SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS.
Rebuild, stabilize, and revitalize the City’s older urban neighborhoods and promote the creation of new neighborhoods incorporating a mix of housing types with pedestrian oriented streets, small scale neighborhood-oriented office and commercial uses within easy walking distance of parks, schools, and civic uses.

Objective 4.3.1. Promote traditional neighborhood development as the preferred form and pattern of development. Through policies, development regulations, and public investments, support the development of neighborhoods with the following characteristics:

- a mix of housing types and price points to accommodate the diverse ages and incomes of City residents;
- housing designs with front stoops and porches and detached rear garages or alley-loaded parking;
interconnected networks of narrow streets with crosswalks, streetscaping, and other traffic-calming measures;
• a variety of civic spaces—playgrounds and pocket parks, squares, greenways; and
• parks, schools, civic buildings, and neighborhood-serving commercial uses within walking distance of homes.

**Objective 4.3.2.** Encourage the development of a full range of housing types, including affordable and workforce housing, as infill development in existing neighborhoods, as part of small-scale mixed use projects in designated Centers and Corridors, and as integral parts of new walkable, mixed use communities.

**Objective 4.3.3.** Expand support for neighborhood organizations and neighborhood-based planning programs and initiatives.

**GOAL 4.4. EFFECTIVE REGULATIONS.**
Ensure the city’s land development regulations are understandable, easily administered, and effective in creating livable, vital, and sustainable places.

**Objective 4.4.1.** Ensure SmartCode, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and other development controls promote quality sustainable development.

**Objective 4.4.2.** Conserve and reinforce the City’s unique character and sense of place through the application of city-wide or area-specific design improvement programs.

**Objective 4.4.3.** Conserve and celebrate the City’s architectural history and cultural heritage.

**Objective 4.4.4.** Increase public awareness of the importance of quality design and development in improving livability and economic vitality.

**GOAL 4.5. FUTURE GROWTH.** Plan for the long term growth and development of the City beyond the current corporate limits.

**Objective 4.5.1.** Pursue annexation of strategically located areas appropriate for moderate to high intensity mixed use development.

**Objective 4.5.2.** Assign priority for future annexation to areas that may be efficiently served by public utilities and services, are directly linked to the City via existing or planned high capacity thoroughfares, and have the development potential to support projected growth and employment-intensive uses.

**Objective 4.5.3.** Establish a cooperative relationship with Harrison County to establish some measure of coordination in long range planning and growth management for areas identified in the City Plan as Growth Areas.

**Objective 4.5.4.** Explore the feasibility of requiring mandatory petition to annex property as part of any agreement to provide municipal services to unincorporated property.
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5.0 TRANSPORTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Plan provides recommendations for the sustainable accommodation of growth and development through the integration of land use and transportation planning. Following the paradigm of Land Use First-Transportation Second (LU1-TR2), this chapter offers recommendations for a multi-modal transportation system supportive of the land use and development strategies presented in the Future Land Use Chapter.

For communities along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the Gulf Regional Planning Commission (GRPC) serves as the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Along with input from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), GRPC is responsible for the development of the region’s Long-Range Transportation Plan, or the Mississippi Gulf Coast Area Transportation Study (GCATS). The 2006 GCATS serves as the basis for allocation of federal transportation improvement funding and draws heavily from the lessons learned in the post-Katrina Mississippi Renewal Forum charrettes. The GCATS describes the multi-modal transportation system that currently exists in the region and provides recommendations for additional projects to repair or complete the transportation system.

The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) prepares a Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), a listing of four-year multi-modal projects that is consistent with the Gulf Coast MPO’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). MDOT then processes federal funding requests for eligible projects through the Surface Transportation Program (STP) that allocates funds based on population.

Building on these existing planning efforts for the region’s street, highway, and transit networks, this chapter provides recommendations for improving local and regional mobility and implementing concepts introduced during the Mississippi Renewal Forum for the creation of a more connected, walkable, transit-supportive, and bicycle-friendly City.

5.2 CONDITIONS, ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

This section of the chapter summarizes issues and opportunities related to the City’s transportation network and provides a review of relevant concepts, studies, and proposals for improvements in the City organized under the following categories:

- Thoroughfare Network
- Street Design & Function
- Transit
- Bicycling
- Airport
- Ports & Harbors
Thoroughfare Network

The City’s thoroughfare network consists of federal, state, and local roadways serving the travel demands of local and regional residents, businesses, and visitors. The City works in cooperation with GRPC and MDOT to designate functional classifications for each of the City’s roadways, including I-10 and several key thoroughfares classified as principal and minor arterials. These streets that comprise the regional network are mostly multi-lane facilities designed to support high travel speeds and carry high average annual daily traffic (AADT) volumes. Current classifications for the City’s roadway system are indicated on Map 5.1 and are described below. Traffic counts, or AADT, are indicated in Table 5.1 and Map 5.1.

Past transportation planning efforts emphasized the value of creating a regional network comprised of a few large-scale, multi-lane roadways. Regional trips, as well as a fair number of local trips, were thus channeled onto a few roadways, which, in turn, became congested and the subject of further plans for widening and other kinds of investments to increase capacity and improve operations.

Shifting from this arterial-focused approach, more recent transportation plans address the need to improve local vehicle travel and support alternative travel modes (in part to relieve pressure on existing arterials). Improvement programs seek to expand local travel options and build a more fine-grained network of well-designed, two- and four-lane thoroughfares that serve local needs while relieving pressure on the regional network.

A brief review of conditions, issues, and opportunities for each of the major existing or potential thoroughfares and corridors follows. The Plan Recommendation section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway</th>
<th>Functional Classification</th>
<th>Number of Travel Lanes</th>
<th>2006 AADT</th>
<th>Maximum Volume at Level of Service &quot;C&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-10</td>
<td>Interstate Highway</td>
<td>6 lanes divided</td>
<td>46,000 - 58,000</td>
<td>81,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 49</td>
<td>Principal Arterial</td>
<td>4 lanes divided (O’Neal Rd north)</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 lanes divided (I-10 to O’Neal Rd)</td>
<td>68,000</td>
<td>40,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 lanes undivided (28th St to I-10)</td>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>40,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 lanes undivided (US 90 to 28th St)</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>22,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 90</td>
<td>Principal Arterial</td>
<td>4 lanes divided</td>
<td>20,000 - 34,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR 605</td>
<td>Principal Arterial</td>
<td>2 lanes undivided (north of I-10)</td>
<td>8,900</td>
<td>11,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
<td>4 lanes undivided</td>
<td>28,000 - 31,000</td>
<td>22,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 lanes undivided</td>
<td>28,000 - 30,000</td>
<td>22,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass Road</td>
<td>Principal Arterial</td>
<td>4 lanes undivided</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>18,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedeaux Road</td>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
<td>2 lanes undivided (Three Rivers Rd to SR 605)</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>9,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: 2006 Average Annual Daily Traffic (GRPC); 2006 GCATS (Table 5-1, GRPC)
MAP 5.1 FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS FOR EXISTING THOROUGHFARES

Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.

Roadway Functional Classification

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS, Gulf Regional Planning Council
Map prepared by HDR, Inc., for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
of this chapter details specific improvements to address capacity issues and opportunities to improve connectivity and mobility discussed in this section.

**NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDORS**

Given the City’s coastal location and its role as an important commercial and industrial center, Gulfport’s north-south roadways serve an essential role in the movement of people and goods between the coast and inland areas of the City and state. With only two roadways providing direct connections between coastal destinations, I-10, and more residential areas to the north, north-south mobility has been identified as a major regional issue. Specific issues by major corridor are outlined below, as well as potential opportunities for improvements:

- **US 49.** This existing north-south highway divides Harrison County roughly in half and has historically been the primary route between coastal Mississippi and northern areas of the state. US 49, also called 25th Avenue in portions of the City, provides important access to Biloxi-Gulfport International Airport, the Port of Gulfport, Downtown Gulfport, and coastal business and recreation centers. Given it’s interchange with I-10, this four to six lane facility serves as an important gateway to the City from the east and west. Throughout much of its length, US 49 experiences significant capacity issues. Current plans call for widening, the addition of medians, and other improvements in key locations.

- **SR 605.** This existing north-south corridor, also referred to as Cowan-Lorraine Road, provides a connection from US 90 and coastal neighborhoods north to residential areas, across the Biloxi River to Tradition and SR 67. Recently realigned and widened north of I-10, it serves as a primary hurricane evacuation route from the coast to upland areas. SR 605 is one of three roadways that provide a direct connection between the northern and southern areas of the City, and provides direct access to I-10.

- **Three Rivers Road.** This roadway provides an indirect central connection between the northern and southern portions of the city but no direct access to I-10. Currently a two-lane roadway, Three Rivers Road connects major east-west roadways in the northern portion of the city including Swan Road, O’Neal Road, and Dedeaux Road. South of I-10, Three Rivers connects with industrial areas along Seaway Road, Creosote Road, and Airport Road. Roadway improvements are currently underway or planned for sections between O’Neal Road and Airport Road. Plans call for future extension of the roadway south of Airport Road to 34th Street.

- **SR 601.** The first of three phases is currently underway on SR 601, a limited access highway that will run from the Port north to the Stone County Line. Also referred to as the Canal Road Port Connector, Central Harrison County Highway Connector, or I-310 if included in the interstate system, SR 601 is designed as a new four-lane parkway that will provide direct connection between the Port, I-10, and points northward. This highway aims to improve regional access to the Port and Downtown Gulfport, removing significant truck traffic from local roads. The highway roughly parallels US 49, and will serve as a bypass from this heavily congested thoroughfare. The first phase will provide access between 28th Street and I-10. The second phase currently under study will connect the Port to 28th Street. The final phase will provide a link between I-10 and Stone County.

- **Canal Road.** Running parallel to US 49 along the western limits of the City, this two-lane roadway provides access from 28th Street and the Seabee Base north through unincorporated portions of the County to an interchange with I-10 and north to SR 53. Current plans call for the road’s improvement as a 2-3-lane facility.

- **Latimer Road & Steward Road.** A potential north-south corridor roughly aligned along Latimer Road and Stewart Road is proposed to connect from O’Neal Road to I-10,
Seaway Road, and Airport Road. Located halfway between Three Rivers Road and SR 605, this corridor could continue south along Washington Avenue or Hewes Avenue to improve connectivity to destinations along US 90.

EAST-WEST CORRIDORS

Coastal/Southern Corridors

Paralleling the coast, east-west corridors in the southern portion of the City provide access within the older residential areas, the Downtown, the Port of Gulfport, and other beachfront destinations.

- **US 90.** Running east-west along the Mississippi coast, US 90 connects New Orleans with Pascagoula. Reconstructed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina has resulted in the installation of state of the art traffic signals, roadway lighting, replacement of curbs and sidewalks, and milling and overlaying of the road surface.
- **Pass Road.** Pass Road provides continuous east-west access from the Seabee Base and US 49 in Gulfport to Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi. Vehicular capacity and pedestrian and bicycle mobility are concerns along Pass Road, as existing right-of-way and development limits the potential for expansion or addition of vehicular lanes, bike facilities, medians, turn lanes, or pedestrian amenities. Pass Road ends at the Seebee Base, and does not provide direct connection to the west of the City. A range of potential improvements have been identified for Pass Road, including improvements along 28th Street between Pass Road and US 90 to improve east-west connectivity.
- **Railroad Street.** To further improve east-west connectivity, construction of a continuous roadway along Railroad Street and the railroad right-of-way running the entire width of the City from Biloxi to Long Beach has been proposed. This road would serve as an inland alternative to US 90, providing a vital link in the event of storm inundation.

Central Corridors

East-west corridors in the central portion of the City provide connections between commercial areas adjacent to I-10 at US 49 and SR 605, the industrial areas south of I-10, and the Gulfport-Biloxi Airport.

- **Interstate 10.** Passing through Gulfport, I-10 is a major east-west route for commerce and tourism that crosses the United States from Jacksonville, Florida to Los Angeles, California. I-10 is centrally located approximately five miles north of US 90 and Downtown Gulfport. I-10 also serves as a major link in the Gulf Coast’s network of hurricane evacuation routes.
- **Dedeaux Road.** As a key arterial located north of I-10, Dedeaux Road provides an east-west between commercial and medical destinations at US 49 and future commercial areas at SR 605. Currently, Dedeaux Road is a four-lane roadway between US 49 and Three Rivers, and two lanes east to SR 605. Potential widening of the two-lane portion of the roadway could help address capacity issues.
- **Creosote Road, Seaway Road & Airport Road.** These three east-west roadways south of I-10 serve local trips between commercial destinations along US 90, industrial areas off Bernard Bayou, and the Biloxi-Gulfport Airport. None of these roadways provide direct, cross-city connections. Potential extension of Creosote Road to Canal Road could improve connectivity south of I-10.
- **Landon Road and Crossroads Promenade.** These two roadways provide an east-west connection north of I-10 between Three Rivers Road and Canal Road. They provide connection between the industrial area along Seaway Road, commercial areas along US 49, and the Gulfport Sportsplex.

Northern Corridors

Providing direct connections north of I-10 between Canal Road, US 49, Three Rivers Road, and SR 605, the City’s northern east-
west corridors serve the predominantly residential areas of the City.

- **O’Neal Road & John Clark Road.** These two roads provide east-west access between SR 605, US 49, and Canal Road. O’Neal Road ends at the Biloxi River, but potential extension of the roadway could provide connection east to Woolmarket Road. O’Neal Road connects to SR 605 via John Ross Road, and provides the only access over the Biloxi River north of I-10.

- **SR 53, North Swan Road & Three Rivers Road.** These roads provide east-west connection at the northern edge of the City, between Canal Road, the proposed SR 601 corridor, US 49, Three Rivers Road, and SR 605.

### Street Design & Function

Effective thoroughfare networks are designed to function efficiently at two scales: the regional scale and the local scale. At the regional scale, the network is designed to carry longer distance regional trips and link major destinations. At the local scale, networks are designed to serve the daily travel needs of residents.

While the transportation function of streets in local networks is to provide access to property, including homes, shops, and services, these streets also serve as important civic spaces and have the potential to reinforce the character and special quality of neighborhoods, neighborhood centers, and town centers. A street’s uniqueness stems from an interplay between its physical design, the character of buildings and public spaces along it, and the mix of uses it provides access to. Some examples of regionally and nationally-significant streets include King Street in Charleston; Washington Street in Ocean Springs; and Dauphin Street in Mobile. The character of these unique local streets creates an indelible impression on residents and visitors.

In many cases, segments of important regional thoroughfares play key roles in shaping community character and identity. For example, 25th Avenue (US 49) functions as an arterial street connecting Beach Boulevard (US 90) with North Gulfport, I-10, and Orange Grove while also serving as an important civic space. As postcard images from the 1930s and 1940s show, 25th Avenue was once an attractive part of Downtown. Its narrow travel lanes, generous planted medians, on-street parking, and continuous storefronts contributed to its status as one of the best addresses along the Gulf Coast (Figure 5.1). Unfortunately, by the mid-20th Century, its function in the regional thoroughfare network took precedence over its role as an attractive destination, and many
of its most distinct qualities were destroyed in efforts to improve traffic capacity. Once its arterial status was fully realized in the 1970s, 25th Avenue’s role as one of Gulfport’s best civic spaces was lost. (To strike a better balance between its roles in regional and local networks, current traffic plans for the most southern extent of 25th Avenue call for the restoration of a landscaped median, the removal of right-turn lanes, and the widening of sidewalks as shown in Figure 5.2)

The 25th Avenue example points to the importance of balancing the regional and local function of streets in a regional network, especially in areas where place-making and walkability are central to the City’s vision for development. This balance is easiest to manage where a fine-grained network of streets is available, as is found in the older portions of Gulfport. Where many streets exist and alternative routes are possible, there are many options for travel, and traffic will more evenly distribute itself without overburdening any particular street. Within Gulfport, local network interconnectivity exists south of Pass Road/25th Street and east of 44th Avenue. This includes the traditional, older portions of Gulfport, most of which were laid out before WWII. Within this area, there are many routing options for traveling north-south or east-west, though there are a limited number of streets that continue uninterrupted for more than a few blocks.

In newer areas between Pass Road and I-10, however, the network connectivity thins noticeably. North-south connectivity is relatively good, but east-west connectivity is much more limited and circuitous. The more suburban areas north of I-10 have poor street connectivity, with only Dedeaux Road and O’Neal Road providing an east-west connection, and US 49, Three Rivers Road, and SR 605 providing north-south connectivity. Consequently, when designing for walkability, bicycling, and transit, the area north of I-10 presents many more connectivity challenges as compared to locations south of I-10.
COMPLETE STREET DESIGN

As demonstrated by 25th Avenue in Downtown, the design of a thoroughfare must change to reflect the context of the area through which it passes. The same road might be a two-lane country highway in a rural area, transitioning into a Main Street as it passes through a village, and back to a rural highway on the other side of the village. The design of a rural highway, with 12-foot travel lanes and a 55 mph design speed, is inappropriate for a Main Street; just as the design of a ‘Main Street’, with narrower travel lanes, on-street parking, sidewalks lined with storefronts, and a 25 mph design speed, is inappropriate for a rural countryside. The road’s design changes to reflect the appropriate context.

Unlike conventional traffic planning and engineering approaches that focus narrowly on addressing regional travel needs and alleviating congestion, a Complete Streets approach reintroduces the notion of the street as a shared public space with the potential to serve a variety of users, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, as well as motorists. Complete Streets are not “car-free” or pedestrian-only, but rather streets that integrate and activate other modes of transportation. A Complete Streets approach allows thoroughfare networks at both the regional and local scale to more efficiently serve driver demands as well as the needs of those who cannot drive (children, the elderly, and others) or wish to have options to driving to meet their daily needs.

The single greatest design factor in creating a Complete Street is management of vehicle speeds. To create a complete street environment where pedestrians can thrive, speeds must be kept at or below 25 mph. At this speed, bicycles can also share the street, thereby activating the bicycling mode. Because pedestrians can easily and safely cross and use these streets, transit also becomes a viable mode. Managing vehicle speed opens the door for activation of bicycling, walking, and transit as transportation modes, creating a Complete Street.

However, managing vehicle speeds is not simple. Transportation planning and traffic engineering literature is geared almost exclusively to maximizing vehicle speeds, rather than minimizing them. Street design requirements for wider travel lanes, “clear zones”, and longer distances between intersections all result in higher vehicle speeds. A Complete Street design addresses the concern for speed control through short block lengths (less than 500 feet), narrower travel lanes, and enclosure of the street by buildings, trees, and on-street parking. Where all of these design features are used, speeds can be managed to a maximum speed of 25 mph. Many of the streets in older portions of Gulfport already meet these criteria and are natural Complete Streets.

A Complete Streets approach may be considered for regional scale thoroughfares, but the design of specific segments of roadways must be modified to suit context. As compared to the rich pedestrian environment in a city or neighborhood, arterial streets within suburban locations have with deeper setbacks and in rural locations have limited adjacent development.

Although transit may run along arterials in suburban or rural areas to provide rapid travel between destinations, these streets have little to offer in the way of transit ridership opportunities. Pedestrians and cyclists may be found on these streets, but they are often not there by choice and will not be present in great numbers. At best, these streets may accommodate other modes, but their primary function is the movement of automobiles. In suburban and rural locations, an appropriate Complete Streets design may include bike lanes, sidewalks, and a shared use path or trail to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.
A good example of a continuous arterial roadway that has changing context is Pass Road as it travels through Gulfport. For most of its length, Pass Road serves a regional arterial function and interfaces with land uses primarily at driveway cuts accessing strip shopping centers. In more urban locations where walkability and transit access is a priority, especially within the Town and Neighborhood Center locations identified in the Plan, the land use changes to a more urban character, with buildings located closer to the street. In these urban locations where higher levels of bicycling, walking, and transit are desired and expected, the street design of regional scale thoroughfares must be modified. To promote walkability, travel speeds along arterial roadways must drop to the 25-30 mph target speed. This can be accomplished through narrowing travel lanes, bringing buildings up to the street, and adding on-street parking and street trees.

Recommended applications of Complete Street redesign are provided in the Plan Recommendations section of this Chapter.

**Transit**

Currently, bus transit is provided only in the southern portion of the City, connecting the major employment and commercial sites along major thoroughfares. Coast Transit Authority (CTA) provides fixed route and demand response service within Gulfport, on routes 26, 34, 37, 38, and the Beachcomber Route. CTA’s Gulfport routes are shown in Figure 5.4. Headways are relatively short for this type of service—30 minutes for Routes 37 and 26, and 45 minutes for Routes 34 and 38.

Route 34 runs along Pass Road and connects through Biloxi. Route 26 runs along US 90 and also connects to Biloxi at the Edgewater Transfer Center. Route 37 provides internal circulation within Gulfport, running up US 49 to the Crossroads Shopping Center. Route 38 circulates through the area west of downtown.

Ridership has increased steadily over the past several years. Monthly ridership increased from 30,000 passengers per month in 2007 to 48,474 in 2008. Transit ridership is projected...
to increase substantially by 2030. Given this Plan’s support for higher intensity, pedestrian-friendly development in designated Town and Neighborhood Centers, increased demand in ridership may be expected in contexts where transit can thrive. However, in areas where conventional suburban intensities and patterns of development exist and where walking is especially difficult, providing effective transit service will be difficult. As shown in Figure 5.3, large, unconnected surface parking lots create barriers, and a lack of sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities make transit less appealing to potential riders.

Additional opportunities exist for greater use of bike-on-bus programs. Experience in other cities has shown that transit and bicycling can support each other once buses are equipped with bike racks. Finally, a long-term opportunity exists for rail transit to connect the entire Gulf Coast. The Mississippi Renewal Forum produced several detailed plans for improving rail transit within the Gulf Coast region, utilizing existing rail lines along the coast.

Specific recommendations from these plans are presented later in this Chapter.

**Bicycles**

With only a few exceptions, bicycling in the older areas of Gulfport is easily accomplished on the existing streets. In areas where streets are relatively narrow with on-street parking and automobile speeds at 30 mph or less, the street can be safely shared between cyclists and motorists with no additional improvements.

For streets with increased motor vehicle traffic speeds and volumes, safety is a major concern for bicyclists. The City has limited existing bicycle facilities, but many opportunities exist to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and mobility. In locations where greater amounts of cycling are present or desired, one of several types of bicycle facilities, including

Figure 5.4. CTA Fixed Routes within Gulfport, May 2009. (Source: Map enlarged from CTA system map)
bike lanes, sharrow or shared lane marking, and shared use paths, should be considered.

The bike lane is a separate, four- to six-foot-wide lane reserved for cyclists who ride for transportation and have similar routing needs as motorists. Bike lanes are located along the right-hand shoulder of a street with high volumes and/or speeds greater than 30 mph, including arterial streets. According to research conducted for this Plan, SR 605 is the only street within the City with existing bike lanes.

Another method of providing bicycle facilities is a shared lane marking, or sharrow, that is used to indicate to motorists and bicyclists that the drive lane is to be shared. There are no sharrows in use in Gulfport.

Shared use paths and trails are also limited in Gulfport. Currently a shared use path is planned for the beachfront and adjacent to Seaway Road, but no paths have yet been built. Paths and trails provide excellent recreational facilities and can sometimes be used for transportation as well.

**Air Transportation**

The Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport (GPT), centrally located between the Downtown and Interstate 10, continues to increase service to the Gulfport region. Two major terminal expansions were completed in the past 10 years. Between 2007 and 2008, passenger traffic increased by 6.5 percent to over 974,000 total annual passengers. The airport is served by several commercial airlines including American, Continental, Delta/Northwest, and US Airways. Six rental car agencies and seven taxi services provide ground transportation, and there are dedicated shuttles to the major casinos and resorts, plus Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi. Using federal economic recovery funding, the Airport Authority is currently expanding its general aviation and air cargo services through the expansion of its Fixed Based Operator (FBO) facilities, constructing a new traffic control tower, runway upgrades, and improving access to areas south of the airport.

**Ports and Harbor**

Situated on the Mississippi Sound, separated from the Gulf of Mexico by a series of barrier islands, coastal Gulfport offers a wide range of opportunities for water-related commerce and pleasure.

**SMALL CRAFT HARBOR AND JONES PARK**

Following devastation by Hurricane Katrina, work has begun on a $24.8 million Small Craft Harbor development plan. Facilities will include a new marina, fisherman’s retail village, baseball field, boat launching facilities, 318 boat slips, residential condominiums, restaurants, marine life education center and the redesign of Jones Park, the largest public park on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Located next to Jones Park, a new $1.5 million Ship Island Ferry Terminal will begin construction in 2010. The ferry provides connection to Ship Island, a barrier island located 11 miles offshore that is part of the Gulf Islands National Seashore and is protected by the U.S. Park Service.

**PORT OF GULFPORT**

Overseen by the Mississippi State Port Authority (MSPA), the Port of Gulfport is a bulk, break bulk, and container seaport—the third busiest container port on the US Gulf of Mexico, behind Houston and New Orleans. This deep water port is connected to the Gulf of Mexico via a dredged ship channel through the Mississippi Sound between West Ship...
Island and Cat Island. The port’s channel is 250 feet wide and is maintained to a depth of 36 feet. Ten berths are provided, ranging from 525 to 750 feet long. Present tenants include Chiquita, Dole Fresh Fruit Company, and Crowley Liner Services, Inc.

The port was extensively damaged during Hurricane Katrina, losing covered storage space, its cold storage facility and most of its berths. MSPA’s proposed Restoration Plan calls for a $600 million redevelopment of the Port to position it for long-term recovery and viability. The proposed restoration plan calls for elevation of port facilities above Base Flood Elevation, the reconfiguration of docks to maximize use of improved infrastructure, and a roadway and rail line to link the port with I-10.

The City is working with MDOT and MSPA to explore alternatives for construction of a new multi-lane roadway and rail line to connect

Figure 5.5. Port Access & US 90 Realignment Alternatives.
the port with I-10. The design of the Port Connector may require either the relocation of US 90 to allow the new roadway to go under the existing east-west CSX rail line or the removal of east-west rail line and a bridge over US 90. Further study is needed to assess the potential impact that this connector will have on adjoining neighborhoods and thoroughfares.

Currently, three port access corridor alternatives are under evaluation. It is anticipated that the review of the alternatives will be completed following this Plan’s adoption and adjustments to the Plan may be required. Table 5.2 provides an overview of each of the three alternatives under consideration, including a general description of each route and an evaluation of land use and transportation impacts. Figure 5.5 provides an aerial view of the port access corridor and potential US 90 realignments.

THE MSPA Vision Plan calls the following realignment of US 90 that runs north along 32nd Avenue, turns east at the CSX railroad right-of-way, and splits into a two-way pair with eastbound lanes on new and existing rights-of-way aligned with 14th Street and westbound lanes along the CSX tracks to 25th Avenue and on new and existing rights-of-way aligned with 15th Street. Between 20th Avenue and 22nd Avenue, eastbound lanes curve south to reconnect with existing eastbound US 90 lanes and westbound lanes on 15th Street connect directly with existing westbound US 90 lanes.

An alternative alignment of US 90 along 13th Street would permit the use of existing rights-of-way that would allow for four lanes of traffic and center median/turn lanes, reduce impacts to neighborhoods west of rail/truck corridor similar to proposed alternative, and create less rights-of-way and land use impacts on central downtown. Another alternative realignment of US 90 along 19th Street would allow the use of existing rights-of-way and permit four lanes of traffic and a center median or turn lanes. However, connection to US 90 east and west of Downtown would require acquisition of additional rights-of-way and clearance of residential and commercial properties between 19th Street and existing US 90.

Table 5.2. Potential Effects of Port Access Improvements on Downtown Gulfport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative 1 - MSPA Vision Plan</th>
<th>Alternative 2 - Elevated Route</th>
<th>Alternative 3 - At-Grade Route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE</td>
<td>Construction of new consolidated rail/truck route along west side of Port property connecting to a depressed corridor along 30th and 31st Avenues. Due to proposed transition in grade from plus 25 MSL at the Port to below grade under the existing CSX tracks, the proposed route would require US 90 realignment through downtown along existing and new rights-of-way and northward relocation of the CSX tracks to accommodate a realignment of US 90.</td>
<td>Construction of new consolidated rail/truck route along west side of Port property connecting to an elevated corridor along 30th and 31st Avenues. The elevated alternative allows for grade separation at US 90 and at the CSX tracks. The proposed rail/truck route would not require realignment of US 90 or the CSX tracks but would require construction of access ramps for US 90 and other connections to existing roadways.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.2. Potential Effects of Port Access Improvements on Downtown Gulfport (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative 1 - MSPA Vision Plan</th>
<th>Alternative 2 - Elevated Route</th>
<th>Alternative 3 - At-Grade Route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAND USE IMPACTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for improved connections between downtown and waterfront sites south of existing US 90, including the MSPA redevelopment zone.</td>
<td>• Existing US 90 remains a barrier between downtown and waterfront sites south of existing US 90, including the MSPA redevelopment zone.</td>
<td>• Existing US 90 remains a barrier between downtown and waterfront sites south of existing US 90, including the MSPA redevelopment zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opens new land for development due to removal of existing south leg rail connection to Port.</td>
<td>• Requires acquisition of rights-of-way and clearance of residential and commercial properties along 30th and 31st Avenues for depressed north and south rail/truck route; along 32nd Avenue between existing US 90 and CSX tracks for realigned US 90; between 28th and 30th Avenues for extension of 14th Street; between 24th and 25th Avenues for extension of 15th Street; and along Railroad Street north of existing CSX tracks for northward relocation of CSX tracks.</td>
<td>• Requires acquisition of rights-of-way and removal of residential and commercial properties along 30th and 31st Avenues north of US 90 and to accommodate elevated rail/truck corridor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Requires acquisition of rights-of-way and clearance of residential and commercial properties along 30th and 31st Avenues for depressed north and south rail/truck route; along 32nd Avenue between existing US 90 and CSX tracks for realigned US 90; between 28th and 30th Avenues for extension of 14th Street; between 24th and 25th Avenues for extension of 15th Street; and along Railroad Street north of existing CSX tracks for northward relocation of CSX tracks.</td>
<td>• Potential for elevated corridor to act as a barrier between downtown and Westside.</td>
<td>• Potential for elevated corridor to act as a barrier between downtown and Westside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Additional rights-of-way acquisition and property impacts associated with potential widening of existing streets.</td>
<td>• Additional rights-of-way acquisition and property impacts associated with ramps and other improvements to access elevated structure.</td>
<td>• Potential for elevated corridor to act as a barrier between downtown and Westside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased traffic volumes and removal of on-street parking may effect development potential along relocated US 90.</td>
<td>• Opens new land for development due to removal of existing south leg rail connection to Port.</td>
<td>• Opens new land for development due to removal of existing south leg rail connection to Port.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential effects on cultural resources—US 90 realignment may affect historic sites and districts (Harbor Square Historic District and potential Westside District).</td>
<td>• Potential effects on cultural resources—elevated corridor may impact historic sites and districts.</td>
<td>• Potential effects on cultural resources—new corridor may impact historic sites and districts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential effects of proposed increase in land elevation on public and private property along existing US 90.</td>
<td>• Potential for negative visual impacts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Requires new right-of-way and relocation CSX tracks to accommodate US 90 realignment.</td>
<td>• Existing US 90 remains a barrier between downtown and waterfront sites south of existing US 90, including the MSPA redevelopment zone.</td>
<td>• Increased truck and rail traffic will block traffic on US 90 and on east-west streets north to 28th Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Direct CSX connection to Port eliminated due to grade separation.</td>
<td>• Impacts on east-west circulation through downtown and across the proposed rail/truck corridor.</td>
<td>• Existing US 90 remains a barrier between downtown and waterfront sites south of existing US 90, including the MSPA redevelopment zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential negative impacts on local traffic and pedestrian movements caused by US 90 one-way pair through downtown.</td>
<td>• Direct CSX connection to Port eliminated due to grade separation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential negative impacts on east-west circulation through downtown and across the proposed rail/truck corridor.</td>
<td>• Potential to maintain at-grade local street connections with elevated rail/truck corridor between CSX tracks and 28th Street.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential to maintain at-grade local street connections across depressed rail/truck route between CSX tracks and 28th Street.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Transportation Plan for Gulfport is formed by a combination of already planned improvements and additional refinements designed to ensure future transportation investments support the City’s long-term goals for the creation of a livable, sustainable, and competitive community. A multi-modal approach is reflected in the following set of recommendations included in a Thoroughfare Plan, Complete Streets Redesign Plan, Transit Plan, and Bicycle Plan.

The Thoroughfare Plan includes planned roadway improvements for the next 20 years. As thoroughfare projects are designed, careful attention must be paid to the context through which the thoroughfares pass. A Complete Streets Redesign Plan recommends thoroughfare sections for designated Town Centers and Neighborhood Centers, and along corridors connecting these locations. These thoroughfare redesigns are recommended to correctly address the multiple transportation demands in these locations. Additional recommended improvements for bicycle and transit transportation are provided in the Transit Plan and Bicycle Plan.

Thoroughfare Plan

A number of thoroughfare improvements are planned for Gulfport, mostly as part of regional plans from MDOT, Harrison County, or GRPC. Recommendations and planned improvements from the following plans that specifically relate to Gulfport have been included in the Thoroughfare Plan.

- Transportation Improvement Program: 2010-2013 (TIP 2010-2013), Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO
- Mississippi Gulf Coast Area Transportation Study (GCATS), Gulf Regional Planning Commission, 2006
- Harrison County Comprehensive Plan, Harrison County, 2008
- City of Gulfport Transportation Routes Plan (CITY), June 2009

Table 5.3 lists the recommended thoroughfare improvements that have been organized by roadway functional classification. The table provides information regarding the type of planned improvement, indicating proposed new facilities, capacity improvements, redesigns, or corridor studies and the source of the proposed improvement—GCATS, TIP 2010-2013, or CITY. A brief description of the proposed improvement and anticipated timing—Short Term (2010 to 2013), Intermediate Term (2014 to 2020), and Long Term (2021 to 2030)—is also indicated. All improvements are also shown on the Thoroughfare Plan, Map 5.2.
MAP 5.2 THOROUGHFARE PLAN

Thoroughfare improvements are described in more detail in Table 6.2. Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS and Public Works, Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO TIP (2010-2013) and GCATS, Harrison County Comprehensive Plan, Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc., HDR, Inc. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport.

MAP 5.2 THOROUGHFARE PLAN

Thoroughfare improvements are described in more detail in Table 6.2. Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS and Public Works, Mississippi Gulf Coast MPO TIP (2010-2013) and GCATS, Harrison County Comprehensive Plan, Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc., HDR, Inc. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport.
### Table 5.3. Planned Thoroughfare Improvements, 2010-2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map ID #</th>
<th>Thoroughfare</th>
<th>Planned Improvement [Source]</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Functional Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1        | SR 601/Port Connector/ Central Harrison County Highway Connector | a. NEW FACILITY - Construct new four-lane parkway from 28th Street to I-10. [GCATS & TIP 2010-2013]  
   b. NEW FACILITY - Construct new parkway from Port to 28th Street. Alignment should be evaluated to address impact to Downtown streets and street network. [GCATS & TIP 2010-2013]  
   c. NEW FACILITY - Construct new four-lane roadway with interchange from I-10 to Stone County line. [GCATS] | a. Short Term  
   b. Intermediate Term  
   c. Long Term | Arterial (Limited Access); New Interchange with I-10 |
| 2        | US 49 / 25th Avenue | a. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing roadway by adding 2 lanes from O’Neal Road north to School Road. Road with capacity modifications such as access management or frontage roads from 28th Street to O’Neal Road. MDOT plans to add two lanes to US 49 from, with construction scheduled to begin in 2009. [GCATS, CITY, & TIP 2010-2013]  
   b. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing four-lane road from 28th Street to O’Neal Road. [GCATS & CITY]  
   c. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing four-lane road from 28th Street to Pass Road. [GCATS & CITY]  
   d. REDESIGN – Complete study to identify potential traffic, multi-modal, safety, and aesthetic improvement along US 49 from US 90 to city limits. [CITY] | a. Short Term  
   b. Short Term  
   c. Intermediate Term  
   d. Intermediate Term | Principal Arterial |
| 3        | US 90/Beach Boulevard | REDESIGN - Improve lighting, landscaping, and pedestrian crossings along US 90 from Biloxi to Long Beach. Streetlight project funded (ARRA) from SR 605 to DeBuys Road. [CITY] | Intermediate | Principal Arterial |
| 4        | Pass Road | CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing four-lane road and intersections from US 90 to DeBuys Road. Add turn lanes, median, sidewalks, streetscaping, and other pedestrian improvements. [GCATS, TIP 2010-2013, & CITY] | Short Term | Principal Arterial |
| 5        | 28th Street | a. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Add lanes from 23rd Avenue to 34th Avenue. [TIP 2010-2013]  
   b. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Reconstruct as a super two-lane or three-lane from US 49 to Pass Road. [GCATS]  
   c. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve to a four-lane boulevard from 34th Avenue west to Beatline Road. [GCATS] | a. Short Term  
   b. Intermediate Term  
   c. Intermediate Term | Minor Arterial |
| 6        | Three Rivers Road | a. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing two-lane road from Dedueaux Road to Seaway Road, widen to five lanes from Seaway Road to Dedueaux Road (Phase I Seaway Road to Angela Drive). [GCATS, CITY & TIP 2010-2013]  
   b. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing two-lane road from Creosote Road to Airport Road. [TIP 2010-2013]  
   c. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing two-lane road to a super two-lane or three-lane divided avenue from Dedueaux Road to O’Neal Road. Add middle turn lane (GCATS & TIP 2010-2013).  
   d. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing roadway from O’Neal Road to SR 605. [CITY]  
   e. NEW FACILITY - Construct a new four-lane divided road from Airport Road to John Hill Boulevard extension. [GCATS] | a. Short Term  
   b. Short Term  
   c. Short Term  
   d. Long Term  
   e. Long Term | Minor Arterial/ Collector |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map ID #</th>
<th>Thoroughfare</th>
<th>Planned Improvement [Source]</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Functional Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dedeaux Road</td>
<td>CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve to four-lane boulevard from Three Rivers Road to SR 605. (GCATS, CITY 5 lane, &amp; TIP 2010-2013)</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT – Improve existing 2 lane road from I-10 to 28th Street. (GCATS)</td>
<td>Intermediate Term</td>
<td>a. Minor Arterial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT – Improve to a three-lane roadway from SR 53 to I-10. (CITY)</td>
<td>Intermediate Term</td>
<td>b. Minor Arterial/Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Canal Road</td>
<td>a. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Add 2 lanes to SR 53 from US 49 to Canal Road. (TIP 2010-2013 &amp; CITY)</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>a. Minor Arterial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve N Swan Road and S Swan Road from US 49 to Three Rivers Road. (CITY)</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>b. Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SR 53/N Swan Road/S Swan Road</td>
<td>a. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve the existing two-lane roadway to a three-lane avenue or four-lane boulevard from Three Rivers Road to US 49. (GCATS &amp; CITY)</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>a. Minor Arterial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. NEW FACILITY - Extend Creosote Road easterly to Rippy Road/Washington Avenue as a super two-lane or three-lane divided roadway. (GCATS)</td>
<td>Intermediate Term</td>
<td>b. Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing 2 lane road from Airport Road to 48th Street. (GCATS &amp; CITY)</td>
<td>Intermediate Term</td>
<td>c. Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing 2 lane roadway from Three Rivers Road to Rippy Road. (GCATS)</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>d. Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Creosote Road/ Rippy Road/ Washington Avenue</td>
<td>CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Construct new two or four-lane divided road paralleling I-10 from the end of Factory Shops Boulevard to Canal Road. [GCATS &amp; CITY]</td>
<td>Intermediate Term</td>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I-10 Frontage Road / Factory Shops Boulevard Extension</td>
<td>NEW FACILITY - Construct new two or four-lane divided road paralleling I-10 from the end of Factory Shops Boulevard to Canal Road. [GCATS &amp; CITY]</td>
<td>Intermediate Term</td>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Hewes Avenue to US 90 Connector (Jody Nelson Drive and &quot;D&quot; Avenue Extension)</td>
<td>CORRIDOR STUDY - Complete study to determine alignment for connector roadway and evaluate potential for improving existing facilities and/or construction of new facilities to provide direct connection between US 90 and Hewes Avenue near Brickyard Bayou. (GCATS &amp; CITY)</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>Minor Arterial; Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lorraine Road Realignment</td>
<td>REDESIGN - Replace existing bridge over Biloxi River and realign eastern approach to bridge. [Project funded by ARRA]</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>Minor Arterial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>New I-10 Interchange &amp; Dedeaux Road to Airport Road Connector</td>
<td>CORRIDOR STUDY - Determine feasibility of new interchange at I-10 and connector road from Dedeaux Road to Airport Road along existing Steward Road alignment. (GCATS)</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I-10 Frontage Road (north)</td>
<td>CORRIDOR STUDY - Construct new road paralleling north side of I-10 from Canal Road to Biloxi River.</td>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Railroad Street/ East-West Corridor Road</td>
<td>NEW FACILITY - Construct new four-lane divided road from Long Beach to Biloxi. Upgrade some portions of existing and/or construct new connections along both sides of rail line to create an urban boulevard/multi-modal corridor. (GCATS &amp; CITY)</td>
<td>Intermediate Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5.3. Planned Thoroughfare Improvements, 2010-2030 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map ID #</th>
<th>Thoroughfare</th>
<th>Planned Improvement [Source]</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Functional Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>O’Neal Road/John Clark Road</td>
<td>a. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing roadway from Sullivan Lane to Three Rivers Road. [TIP 2010-2013 &amp; CITY]</td>
<td>a. Short Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT – Improve existing roadway from Three Rivers Road to John Ross Road. [GCATS &amp; CITY]</td>
<td>b. Intermediate Term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT &amp; NEW FACILITY – Upgrade existing roadway from John Ross Road to Biloxi River. Construct new two-lane divided road from Biloxi River to Woolmarket Road. [GCATS]</td>
<td>c. Long Term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d. CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing John Clark Road from Canal Road to US 49. [CITY]</td>
<td>d. Long Term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>DeBuys Road</td>
<td>CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing road from Runnymede Street to Pass Road. [GCATS]</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Landon Road</td>
<td>CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve this existing two-lane road from Canal Road to US 49 as a super two-lane or three-lane roadway. [GCATS, CITY &amp; TIP 2010-2013]</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>John Hill Boulevard Connector</td>
<td>a. NEW FACILITY – Construct new super two-lane road from US 49 to 8th Avenue as eastern extension of John Hill Boulevard. [GCATS]</td>
<td>a. Short Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. NEW FACILITY – Construct new super two-lane road from US 49 to 28th Street. [GCATS]</td>
<td>b. Short Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Duckworth Road</td>
<td>CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve existing road from Old Highway 49 to Three Rivers Road. [CITY]</td>
<td>Intermediate Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Seaway Road</td>
<td>CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT - Improve to four-lane boulevard from Lorraine Road to Three Rivers Road. [TIP 2010-2013]</td>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>North Latimer Road Corridor</td>
<td>CORRIDOR STUDY - Construct north-south connection between O’Neal Road and Dedeaux Road along existing North Latimer Road. [CITY]</td>
<td>Intermediate Term</td>
<td>Collector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Complete Streets Redesign Plan

As discussed in the Future Land Use Chapter of this Plan and shown on Map 5.2, development in Gulfport is envisioned as a series of nodes, varying in scale from Town Center to Neighborhood Center, with some designated centers along streets with extensive existing development, such as Pass Road and US 49 at I-10 and others in areas with comparatively little development, such as along SR 605 at Dedeaux Road and US 90 east of Downtown. The thoroughfare designs for each of these locations should support goals for walkability as well as traffic mobility. As envisioned for the future, designs should rebalance the function of the street for increased walkability, thereby activating other modes of transportation such as transit, walking, and bicycling, consistent with a Complete Streets design.

Many thoroughfares in designated centers currently reflect the rural and/or highway character of their original function. To permit walkability and support the vision for land uses intensification, these streets must be transformed into walkable thoroughfares and support more walking, biking, and transit usage. In between the walkable locations, the existing street design would continue, augmented in some locations with wider sidewalks and bicycle facilities.

As shown in the Complete Streets Redesign Plan, Map 5.3, and described in the following text, four thoroughfare types are proposed for the primary roadways leading into and through designated centers and corridors, including two Multi-way Boulevard sections, a Connector Street, and a Town Center Main Street. Each of the designs are intended as modifications of existing streets to allow these streets to change over time and better support the proposed land uses and pattern of development.

MULTI-WAY BOULEVARD (BV 200-68 & BV 180-68)

A Multi-way Boulevard can simultaneously move large volumes of through traffic while encouraging street front development appropriate for a Town Center. The concept and operating characteristics of Multi-way Boulevards are described comprehensively by Allen Jacobs and Elizabeth McDonald in *The Boulevard Book*, the source for much of the information related here.

The Multi-way Boulevard is a time-tested concept found worldwide. Several fine examples were built at the end of the 19th century in New York, and modern Multi-way Boulevards have been constructed in Chico, California and San Francisco, California. The general form of a Multi-way Boulevard is described in the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) manual, “Policy on Geometric Design of Streets and Highways,” as Exhibit 7-9.

Function of a Multi-way Boulevard. A Multi-way Boulevard is comprised of several elements. As shown in Figure 5.6, at the center of this thoroughfare type is the "motor vehicle realm" with four to six vehicle travel lanes. These lanes serve the traditional function of an arterial street—to move automobiles quickly and safely. Design considerations for these lanes follow the motor vehicle mobility function, as with contemporary arterial design. A key concession to pedestrians is that speeds are managed in the 30-35 mph range by techniques such as narrower lanes and shorter blocks. By keeping speeds below 45 mph, the option of 10-foot and 11-foot travel lanes becomes available under AASHTO guidance. The narrower lanes provide shortened pedestrian crossing distance as well.
MAP 5.3 COMPLETE STREETS REDESIGN PLAN
The area located on either side of the center travel lanes to the front of the buildings, is considered the “pedestrian realm.” This includes wide, park-like medians with shared-use paths, one-way access lanes, on-street parking, a wide sidewalk, and street-front buildings. Depending on development intensity, parking may occur on both sides of the one-way access lanes. The one-way access lanes are designed for speeds of 15 mph. Within this area, design considerations place the pedestrian function first, with walkability as the primary design goal.

Multi-way Boulevards are often supported by a network of streets behind the buildings that provides for local circulation. Where this network is available, a true Multi-way Boulevard design with one-way, low speed side access lanes can be constructed, as shown in Figure 5.6. Where this network is not available, a modified design with two-way frontage roads may be provide an interim solution.

The Multi-way Boulevard design combines the specific needs of multiple functions into a single, comprehensive, balanced thoroughfare. Pedestrian mobility is a primary function, facilitated by managed motor vehicle speeds. Commercial viability is enhanced with access via multiple travel modes, specifically walking, biking, transit and motor vehicle use. Through movement of commuter and local circulating traffic is also provided without significant loss of capacity. Capacity is provided by green time and lane arrangement at key intersections.

Multi-way Boulevards are ideal for transit operations. The walkable design 0provides ideal transit passenger conditions, and the wide medians provide ample room for bus stops or shelters. The wide medians can also be equipped with a multiuse path, as shown in the diagrams here, or used for separated transit right-of-way in a future condition.

Each element of the Multi-way Boulevard illustrated in Figure 5.6 functions in a unique manner as described below:

1. Center Through-Travel Lanes. These lanes do the “heavy-lifting” of traffic movement, allowing large volumes of traffic to pass through the area. They also bring potential customers within viewing distance of the shops and storefronts built along the boulevard edges.

2. Wide Park-like Median. These side medians mark the beginning of the pedestrian realm. Trees within the median provide a sense of enclosure for motorists in the center travel lanes, which helps to manage travel speeds. The median and shared use path provide shade and protection for pedestrians, bicyclists, rollerbladers, with ample space for benches and other pedestrian amenities. The median is a centerpiece of the Town Center design, much as a park would be in a traditional town design such as Savannah, Georgia.

3. Access Lanes with On-Street Parking. The multi-way boulevard’s one-way access lanes parallel the central through lanes and serve as parking access lanes. These one-way connections serve the following functions:

- provide a quiet lane for the store fronts facing the boulevard, analogous to a park view main street due to the wide median;
- provide vital on-street parking and pedestrian connections between blocks;
- allow locally circulating traffic to make easy right-hand turns while circling the block, looking for parking; and
- allow local traffic to access parking without using the center lanes.

4. Wide Sidewalk. Sidewalks adjacent to the on-street parking allow pedestrians to circulate freely between store fronts, parking spaces, and the median “park” area. The wide sidewalk area provides necessary space for pedestrian shopping and mobility needs with room for sidewalk café tables, sidewalk sales racks, and street trees and plantings. Buildings should be
located immediately along the public right-of-way to maintain pedestrian convenience and to establish the street wall.

5. Storefronts. Retail frontage provides economic viability for town center and other retail areas. On-street parking on arterial streets is often removed when posted speeds are increased to 40 or even 55 mph, destroying the viability of ‘Main Street’ and town center shops. Store fronts at the edge of sidewalks, facing Multi-way Boulevards benefit from reasonable access to passing traffic and a calmed, walkable lane frontage that functions like the traditional downtown park street.

Design Characteristics. As shown in Figures 5.7 and 5.8, this Plan recommends two Multi-way Boulevard cross sections with different widths for the park-like median space—a 200-foot right-of-way and a 180-foot right-of-way. The side medians can be adjusted as necessary to fit existing right-of-way.

Access to adjacent buildings is vital and provides the traffic necessary to patronize the boulevard’s shops and commercial services. The multi-way boulevard includes a 14-foot sidewalk with shade trees, a 7-foot parallel parking lane, a 9-foot one-way access lane, a 28- to 38-foot wide park-like median, a 6-foot bike lane, two 10-foot travel lanes, a 12-foot safety strip and a repeat of these elements in mirror image.

Pedestrian fatalities increase geometrically with increased motor vehicle speeds, thus speed management in high pedestrian areas is essential. The 10-foot center travel lanes require the addition of a safety strip—a textured flush median safety strip in the center of the street safety strip provides separation between opposing travel lanes and also serves as a left turn storage area. The textured pavement discourages continuous driving on the safety strip but allows temporary usage of the strip by oversize vehicles as needed. The safety strip transitions into left turn auxiliary lanes where needed.
**Recommended Application of Type.** The Complete Streets Redesign Plan (Map 5.4) recommends Multi-way Boulevards for several locations within the City. Multi-way Boulevards should only be planned to support areas where walkable land use designs, such as Town Centers, are expected and desired. The Multi-way Boulevard design is recommended for the following locations in Gulfport:

- SR 605 at Dedeaux Road
- SR 605 at John Ross Road
- 25th Avenue (US 49) at MLK, Jr. Boulevard
- US 49 at Dedeaux Road
- US 49 at O’Neal Road

In the initial stages, the Multi-way Boulevard for portions of US 49 and SR 605 can be realized using the existing pavement widths and right-of-way. Rudimentary access lanes, or frontage roads, have been in place for years connecting many retail and commercial businesses along US 49, for instance, and could easily be converted over time to a multi-way boulevard side access lane.

For other locations, planning for Multi-way Boulevard locations can begin by establishing access roads parallel to the main road. The conventional access roads can then be morphed over time into the side access lanes of the Multi-way Boulevard, when redevelopment is ready to occur.

Figure 5.7. Multi-way Boulevard (BV 200-68)
**CONNECTOR STREET (ST 70-50)**

The Collector Street (ST 70-50) thoroughfare is designed to provide bike lanes and sidewalks along undivided roadways with multiple direct driveways with limited walkability.

**Design Characteristics.** As shown in Figure 5.9, this street section consists of a 5-foot sidewalk, a 5-foot planting strip with street trees, curb and gutter and a 5-foot bike lane, and two 10-foot travel lanes, mirrored in the opposite direction.

At intersections where turn lane capacity is required, the bike lanes drop away to provide space for left turn storage. The length of the transition area should be sufficient to provide for left-turn storage at the intersection, up to a maximum of 100 feet. Upon approach to the intersection, a "Bike Lane Ends – Share the Road" sign indicates that the bike lane drops and cyclists continue into the through-right lane. Cyclists will travel through the intersection in this lane, and the bike lane will pick up again on the other side of the intersection.

**Recommended Application of Type.** This thoroughfare redesign type is recommended for Pass Road and Dedeaux Road in between designated Town Centers, and as an interim...
design for thoroughfares prior to development of the Town Centers. Portions of Pass Road and Dedeaux Road are currently built as four-lane, undivided streets with direct driveway access. There are no provisions for bicycles and limited sidewalk availability.

The required 70 feet of right-of-way for this thoroughfare type is available along most portions of Pass Road and Dedeaux Road, with only a few portions of Pass Road having less right-of-way. In many locations, the existing right-of-way exceeds 70 feet. In those locations, the additional right-of-way should be added into the planting strip between the sidewalk and the bike lane.

**TOWN CENTER MAIN STREET (MS 80-56)**

The Town Center Main Street thoroughfare type is recommended for roadways where the current configuration of roadways does not reflect the desired Town Center walkable street design. This thoroughfare type is recommended for developing Town Center locations that require wide sidewalks, buildings to the back of the sidewalk, on street parking, and narrower travel lanes to manage traffic speeds.

**Design Characteristics.** When Town Centers develop, the design of key roadways should be modified as well, to the section shown in Figure

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**Figure 5.9. Connector Street (ST 70-50)**

**Figure 5.10. Town Center Main Street (MS 80-56)**
5.10. This thoroughfare design maintains the four lanes of traffic, but has 12-foot sidewalks with trees in treewells, 8-foot parking spaces, and two 10-foot travel lanes, mirrored on the opposite side. Bicycles are provided for using the shared lane marking, described in a following section of this Chapter.

**Recommended Application of Type.** This thoroughfare redesign type is recommended for four-lane roadways within the following designated Town Center locations as they develop. Pass Road is four lanes for its entire length and Dedeaux Road is four lanes from US 49 to Three Rivers Road.

- Pass Road at Hewes Avenue
- Pass Road at Courthouse Road
- Pass Road at SR 605
- Pass Road at 25th Avenue
- Dedeaux Road at Three Rivers Road

**Transit Plan**

Recommendations for future transit service in the City of Gulfport are illustrated in Map 5.4. As indicated, the Plan calls for an extended transit network complementing the existing service along the Coast and linking designated Town Centers on US 49 north and south of I-10, future Town Centers on SR 605 north of I-10, and Neighborhood Centers throughout the City.

**REGIONAL TRANSIT PLANS**

The City of Gulfport has an opportunity to benefit from the extensive regional transit planning that has occurred in the last few years. The Mississippi Renewal Forum produced plans for regional passenger rail service and local street car service, which continue to be carried forward in planning efforts conducted by CTA and GRPC.

**Redevelopment Master Plan Charrette Book, October 2005.** This plan for Gulfport, produced during the Mississippi Renewal Forum, recommends a regional street car system connecting the airport with Biloxi and Ocean Springs along Beach Boulevard/US 90. Additional recommendations include bus rapid transit (BRT) along the existing CSX tracks, with feeder bus service to town centers along Pass Road. This plan also calls for rail transit connections from the Port north along Old US 49 to points north of Gulfport.

**Mississippi Renewal Charrette Transportation Report, November 2005.** This report from the Mississippi Renewal Forum recommends moving the CSX freight operations north of I-10 on a new alignment, which would free up the existing right-of-way for the creation of a ‘Railroad Boulevard’ with inter-urban rapid transit facilities. In addition, the report calls for redevelopment in towns using walkable neighborhood and town centers, with great emphasis on transit connectivity. Regional high-speed rail connections to other cities in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama are also recommended.

**Gulf Coast Transit Development Plan, 2007.** Initiated by CTA, in cooperation with GRPC and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the 2007 Transportation Development Plan (TDP) provides a vision for regional transit development over the next 20 years. The TDP calls for main line transit along the US 90 corridor connecting the Gulf Coast communities, with high-frequency circulator routes serving individual towns and cities. Steps have already been taken to implement this vision in Gulfport, as the existing headways represent more frequent and improved service compared to pre-Katrina service.

The TDP calls for a new Gulfport downtown circulator route and the development of a
MAP 5.4 TRANSIT PLAN

Source: City of Gulfport Division of GIS, Coast Transit Authority (CTA), Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc., HDR, Inc.

Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.

Legend:
- CTA Route
- Proposed Bus Route
- Roundabout/Transfer Point
- Cargo Rail
- Proposed BRT or Regional Rail Transit Line
- Proposed BRT Stop
- Proposed Regional Rail Transit Stop

Notes:
- Employment District
- Urban Neighborhood
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Rural Neighborhood
- Roadway Improvement
- DeSoto National Forest
- Constrained (Wetland/Floodplain)

Sources:
- City of Gulfport Division of GIS
- Coast Transit Authority (CTA)
- Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.
- HDR, Inc.

Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and/or regional rail service along US 90 or the existing CSX rail line, with express trains running from New Orleans to Mobile. In addition, the TDP identifies several “Activity Centers” for priority transit access. These are located at the Seabee Base, the Memorial Hospital, Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport, and the Crossroads Shopping Center.

**TRANSIT-FRIENDLY DESIGN**

As Town Centers, Neighborhood Centers, and Reinvestment Corridors are developed or redeveloped, the interface between land use and transit can be critical. The following design considerations and recommendations are provided as guidance in promoting effective transit service in the City’s Centers and Corridors.

**Site Layout.** To minimize walking distance for transit passengers and provide an effective and comfortable pedestrian experience, locate buildings along sidewalks, rather than to the back of parking lots. Not only does this minimize the door-to-door distance for transit passengers (important in hot or rainy weather), it also creates a pleasant experience that is more likely to be repeated, compared to having to wade through a sea of asphalt parking lot to reach the front door of a shop or business.

In situations where this is not possible, such as when site modifications do not involve building relocation, the bare minimum for acceptable transit access is the provision of a clear sidewalk or pathway, preferably shaded, through the parking lot to the front door of the shopping center or business.

**Site Routing.** With a few exceptions, such as large malls or transfer locations, transit operations are generally best left on the street, rather than requiring buses to enter and circulate through a site. Walkable land use design that focuses on the street, rather than focusing inward, will address this concern naturally.

**Bus Shelters.** Developers can be required to provide a bus shelter as part of site plan approval in transit corridors. The shelter can be of a design specified by CTA, or another design architecturally compatible with an adjacent structure. In the South, shade is the essential component of a useful transit shelter, with protection from wind and rain being secondary.

**“SmartBus” technology.** Modern fareboxes are increasingly offering sophisticated GPS technology to track fare collection data. These can often be used for other transit functions, such as countdown times, automatic vehicle location systems, and web-based passenger information systems such as NextBus™. These systems can be used to minimize passenger waiting times at bus stops by providing countdown timers indicating the arrival of the next bus. Passengers can then arrive at the stop shortly before the bus, confident that they will not miss the bus, thereby reducing the need to provide for large amounts of long-term waiting areas, such as bus benches.

**Transit Stops and On-Street Parking.** In an effort to optimize operations, transit systems can sometimes conflict with on-street parking. While many of the thoroughfare types recommended for application in the City’s Centers and Corridors include on-street parking, there is no reason for on-street parking and transit to conflict with each other. In fact, the two can be mutually-supportive, as they both contribute to great walkability.

Where possible, far-side bus stops should be used in areas with on-street parking. Transit vehicles generally require 100 feet of curb space for a bus stop, which equates to about 5 parking spaces. This distance is needed to allow
a bus to exit the travel lane, park along the curb, and re-enter the travel lane. If the transit stop is placed at the far-side of an intersection, however, the space needed to exit the travel lane can occur as the transit vehicle crosses the intersection, so only 70 feet of curb spaces is needed for the bus stop, and part of that space is restricted for parking anyway. This minimizes the loss of parking spaces.

Some transit operators prefer near-side stops, reasoning that far-side stops can force a bus to “stop twice”—once for a traffic signal and then again to pick up passengers. Curb extensions or “bulf-outs” preclude this type of bus stop location, and the thoroughfare designs provided here do not include curb extensions. On multi-lane streets with on-street parking, however, mid-block curb extensions 30- to 40-feet long can be used as bus loading areas.

Bike Lanes and Transit. Transit and bike lanes are generally not located in the same locations, because bike lanes are typically not appropriate along walkable pedestrian thoroughfares due to difficulty achieving the 25-30 mph target operating speed. Where bike lanes are located along rural or arterial roadways as an edge condition or in locations that are minimally walkable with “pioneer” transit access, the 5-foot bike lane actually provides a suitable bus stop.

The bike lane can provide similar advantages to a bus “pull-out” but without problem of reentering traffic. A bus stopped in a bike lane has 5 feet of the vehicle clear of the travel lane, leaving about 3 feet in the travel lane. On a typical 12-foot travel lane, this leaves 9 feet for an automobile to carefully pass the bus without encroaching on the opposing lane. When the bus is ready to pull back into traffic, the maneuver is easy to accomplish because almost half the bus is already in the travel lane.

Bicycle Plan

Some portions of Gulfport, particularly the older areas south of Pass Road, provide good bicycling conditions and are supportive of bicycle transportation, as described below. Other areas, primarily north of Pass Road and everything north of I-10, are relatively poor for bicycling. While not intended to be a complete Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, this Bicycle Plan, describes the range of bicycle facilities available and Map 5.5 shows the recommended application within the City.

BICYCLE FACILITY TYPES

The following options for bicycle facilities in Gulfport are recommended: bike lanes, the shared lane marking or sharrow, and the shared use path or sidepath. Each recommended facility type is described in the following text with specific locations indicated on Map 5.5.

Bike Lanes. As shown in Figure 5.11, a bike lane is a 4- to 6-foot lane along the right-hand edge of the street for use of bicyclists. Bike lanes have a number of advantages, beyond providing space for bicyclists. They help protect the pavement edge, provide recovery areas for automobiles, provide bus loading areas, and provide additional separation between fast-moving vehicles and pedestrians on sidewalks.

As part of the “Complete Streets” approach described above, streets become sharable when traffic speeds are managed to 25-30 mph. Bike lanes will make this speed very difficult to obtain, as the additional space for the bike lane essentially eliminates the traffic calming associated with a narrower street. Therefore, bike lanes are contra-indicated for most of the city street network.

As shown in Map 5.5, bike lanes are recommended primarily along faster arterial
MAP 5.5 BICYCLE PLAN

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS, Harrison County Sand Beach Authority Master Plan, Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc., HDR, Inc. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
street sections, such as US 49 and SR 605, and portions of four-lane roads such as Pass Road and Dedeaux Road outside of Town Centers where speeds are expected to exceed 30 mph. Bike lanes are generally acceptable on new roads constructed with a design speed of 35 mph or more.

**Shared Lane Marking (Sharrows).** For street sections within Town Center locations, the recommended thoroughfare design offers built-in provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists. One such provision to maintain bicycle movement along a roadway within a Town Center is a pavement marking that assists bicyclists and motorists in sharing the road—the Shared Lane Marking, or sharrow. This traffic control device, shown in Figures 5.12 and 5.13, is included in the draft *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) and is already in use in many cities in the United States.

Unlike a bike lane, which requires additional pavement width and right-of-way, the sharrow can be used on the existing pavement. The sharrow indicates to bicyclists and motorists that they are expected to share the travel lane, rather than travel in separate travel lanes. For transition areas, the sharrow is accompanied by “Bike Lane Ends” and “Bicycles Sharing Roadway” signs, indicating to motorists and cyclists that the context is changing and therefore the street design is also changing.

This Plan recommends using the sharrow wherever traffic speeds are to be maintained at 30 mph or less, rather than incorporating a bike lane. Where a transition from a bike lane street section to a sharrow street section is needed, the transition should be accomplished per MUTCD guidance using appropriate merge distances and signing, based on roadway travel speeds. Possible locations for sharrows on existing streets include any Downtown streets with on-street parking where bicycle travel is to be encouraged.

**Shared Use Paths.** Designed for easy travel by cyclists and pedestrians, Shared Use Paths (Figure 5.14) are off-street facilities completely separated from motor vehicle traffic. Shared Use Paths are similar to a wide sidewalk but offer greater separation from the travel

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Figure 5.11. Bike lanes adjacent to parking lanes place cyclists in the “door zone”. An opening car door can strike a passing cyclist, or cause the cyclist to veer in front of passing traffic, creating one collision in an attempt to avoid another.

Figure 5.12. Shared Lane or sharrow marking.
Shared Use Paths are designed for non-vehicular recreational traffic, including pedestrians who are strolling, running, or walking pets; children on scooters or tricycles; rollerbladers; or even pedestrians not moving at all but stopped to sight-see or rest.

Shared Use Paths and bike lanes are not equivalent facilities, and the presence of one should have little bearing on the need for the other. Since most Shared Use Paths are recreational in nature, many cyclists using a shared use path are not operating their bicycles as vehicles, as they are when they are in a bike lane. The mix of traffic, which may include small children on tricycles, pets on leashes, and cyclists of varying levels of skill and experience (see Figure 5.15), makes shared use paths suboptimal facilities for bicycle transportation, as bicycle speeds must be kept very low to avoid crashes if these other users are present. There may be situations where both facilities are provided, depending on the target users and intended transportation function.

If Shared Use Paths connect origins and destinations, they may also be used for conventional transportation purposes since many cyclists feel more comfortable being separated from motor vehicle traffic. Shared Use Paths work best in a rural or suburban context, where intersections with other streets are infrequent. In urban areas where frequent intersections are required, paths require more careful consideration because expectations are unclear at the intersection of a path and a street.

As shown in Map 5.5, Shared Use Paths are recommended along the beachfront and along Seaway Road. Additional path routes may be possible along stream and flood prone areas. A complete off-road path system is not proposed in this Plan, but may be considered as part of a greenway system or a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan conducted at a later date.
BICYCLE PARKING

From the perspective of encouraging walkability and bikeability, the provision of adequate bicycle parking at either end of the bicyclist’s trip is as important as adding bike lanes. Bicycle parking is often overlooked but is critical to encouraging bicycle usage. Ideally, bicycle parking should be provided in front of buildings, easily visible from inside. Simple ‘U’ racks, a two or three-inch diameter pipe bent into a ‘U-shape’ and anchored upside-down into the sidewalk, are recommended for bicycle parking. A single rack can accommodate two to four bikes at one time.

BIKE ON BUS/REGIONAL BIKE NETWORK

Many transit systems today have installed bike racks onto their buses, allowing up to two cyclists to store their bikes on the rack and ride the bus for some portion of their trip. Such a system provides a way for cyclists to avoid long, difficult, or uncomfortable rides (such as during inclement weather or over streets that are unfriendly to cyclists.) These “bike on bus” programs (Figure 5.16) also benefit the transit system by expanding the area from which passengers can be drawn. While the generally accepted walking distance for a pedestrian to reach transit is one-quarter mile, roughly a five-minute walking distance, a bicyclist can easily cover four times this distance in the same time, expanding the potential “passenger shed” to a mile or more.

CTA is adding bike racks to their buses and has recently coauthored a Bike Routes Plan with the GRPC. The Bike Routes Plan indicates streets and routes covered by CTA buses, equipped with bike racks, and prioritizes these routes for bicycle and transit facility improvement.

In designated Town and Neighborhood Centers, additional bike parking should be provided including covered parking and bike lockers. These facilities will allow cyclists to bicycle from home to a transit stop, store their bicycles and ride transit to work, and pick up their bicycles to ride home at the end of the day.

BIKE ROUTE SYSTEM

In addition to streets with sharrows, bike lanes, and shared use paths, many of the streets in Gulfport are easy to ride on without additional bicycle facilities. Many streets in Gulfport’s older neighborhoods are naturally traffic-calmed by having narrower lanes, short blocks, and on-street parking. The high level of interconnectivity in this part of Gulfport ensures that traffic volumes are spread over many streets and remain low on any given street. With low traffic speeds and low traffic volumes, these streets are excellent for bicycling and do not require any additional

Figure 5.16. Bike rack for buses.
facilities. A “bike route” system using green bike route signs can guide cyclists along neighborhood streets to key destinations.

As shown in Figure 5.17, the older areas of Gulfport offer a high level of connectivity through neighborhood streets parallel to Pass Road. These streets are not continuous, which discourages their use by regional through trips as an alternative to Pass Road, but they do provide a way for local trips to circulate independent of Pass Road.

This type of circulation is important for cyclists, many of whom may be uncomfortable traveling on Pass Road in its current configuration. Pass Road does not currently have either bike lanes or sharrows. As shown in Figure 5.17, however, it is possible to travel from Downtown to SR 605 on a bicycle along just the neighborhood streets, with no need to travel on Pass Road. The neighborhood centers are shown as well on Figure 5.17, and the existing street network provides good connectivity to these centers.

The solid blue lines in Figure 5.17 indicate the most direct routing parallel to Pass Road, and the dashed lines are alternative routes. The blue lines could be signed as “bike routes” to guide cyclists from and through the neighborhood to the new neighborhood centers along Pass Road, or to existing transit stops along Pass Road. NOTE: These routes have not yet been ridden, and additional research, including riding these routes on bicycles, must be conducted before final bicycle route signing is applied.

Figure 5.17. Possible Bike Routes parallel to Pass Road.
5.4 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following set of goals and accompanying objectives are aimed at improving connectivity and efficiency of all major modes of transportation within the City of Gulfport.

GOAL 5.1. LONG-RANGE PLANNING & COLLABORATION. Create a multi-modal transportation network supportive of the City’s land use and economic development goals.

Objective 5.1.1. Work in collaboration with the GRPC, MDOT, MSPA, Harrison County, and neighboring municipalities to ensure transportation investments provide for a safe, balanced, multi-modal transportation system.

GOAL 5.2. INTERCONNECTED ROADWAY NETWORK. Promote the creation of an interconnected network of walkable, cyclist-friendly roads with slow design speeds, block-and-street layouts, and quality streetscapes.

Objective 5.2.1. Support development of a regional thoroughfare network with a fine-grained network of local streets and regional system of higher capacity thoroughfares that efficiently serve citywide and regional travel demand.

GOAL 5.3. COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN. In areas designated for development or redevelopment as Town and Neighborhoods Centers and where appropriate by context, transform existing thoroughfares into "great streets" that are tree-lined, accommodate moderate vehicle speeds, and encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use.

Objective 5.3.1. Prepare design standards for new local streets and the redesign of existing streets to promote the creation of a fine-grained network of interconnected streets, small block sizes, and street with narrow travel lanes, on-street parking, landscaping, and urban sidewalk conditions.

Objective 5.3.2. Within designated Town Center and Neighborhood Centers, apply Complete Street designs.

Objective 5.3.3. To encourage walkability while providing ample movement of through vehicles, utilize Multi-way Boulevard designs in several high-intensity locations. Multi-way boulevards are characterized by 4 or 6 vehicle travel lanes serving automobile movement, but with a wide park like median, adjacent 15 mph one-way access lane, a shared path and wide sidewalk on each side to provide access to property and safely serve pedestrians and bicyclists. Appropriate multi-may boulevard locations in Gulfport include the following:

- US 49 at Creosote Road
- US 49 at Landon Road
- SR 605 at Dedeaux Road
- SR 605 at John Ross Road

GOAL 5.4. TRANSIT. Support the creation of a rich menu of transit choices, with a citywide and regional public transportation system that enhances the mobility and safety of riders, and provides long-term support for higher intensity, pedestrian-friendly development.

Objective 5.4.1. In Town Centers or Neighborhood Centers, locate buildings to the back of the sidewalk, rather than to the back of a parking lot. This is done to minimize walking distance for transit passengers and to provide a comfortable pedestrian experience.

Objective 5.4.2. In transit corridors, coordinate with CTA and developers for provision of bus shelters as a condition of new development, if new development is not constructed with buildings located to the back of sidewalk.
Objective 5.4.3. Utilize new, efficient technologies such as “SmartBus” using GPS technology to track fare collection data and web-based passenger information systems.

Objective 5.4.4. Where possible, use far-side bus stops along streets with on-street parking, with stops placed at the far side of an intersection.

Objective 5.4.5. Use bike-on-bus programs to create multi-modal connections between bicycles and transit.

Objective 5.4.6. Implement recommendations from Mississippi Renewal Forum plans for rail transit, regional street car, and bus rapid transit systems in Gulfport.

Objective 5.4.7. Designate a signed “bike route” network parallel to Pass Road to provide alternative access to shopping and transit within the City’s older neighborhoods.

Objective 5.4.8. Where bus routes pass through Neighborhood Centers and Town Centers, install additional bike parking facilities for daily use, including bike lockers and covered bike racks, to allow cyclists to “park and ride” the bus.

Objective 5.4.9. Prepare a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan with detailed recommendations for sidewalks, bicycle, and connectivity improvements throughout the study area.

GOAL 5.5. BICYCLING. Design a transportation system that safely and efficiently encourages bicycling and recognizes that cyclists fare best when they act and are treated as the drivers of vehicles.

Objective 5.5.1. Utilize bike lanes only for street sections where automobile speeds are expected to be 35 mph or higher. Provide bike lanes for street sections shown on Proposed Bike Lanes and Paths (Map 5.5).

Objective 5.5.2. Utilize the sharrow or shared lane marking on 30 mph or lower-speed streets.

Objective 5.5.3. Plan and design shared use paths carefully according to context, with primary use in rural and suburban locations and more limited use in urban areas.

Objective 5.5.4. Where appropriate, provide bicycle parking facilities (e.g. a ‘U’ rack) at key city destinations. Racks should be installed in the front of a store or building where they will be easily visible to store customers and passersby.

Objective 5.5.5. Designate a signed “bike route” network parallel to Pass Road to provide alternative access to shopping and transit within the City’s older neighborhoods.

Objective 5.5.6. Where bus routes pass through Neighborhood Centers and Town Centers, install additional bike parking facilities for daily use, including bike lockers and covered bike racks, to allow cyclists to “park and ride” the bus.

Objective 5.5.7. Prepare a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan with detailed recommendations for sidewalks, bicycle, and connectivity improvements throughout the study area.

GOAL 5.6. PORT RESTORATION. Ensure effective coordination between MSPA Plans for the Port of Gulfport restoration and local and regional economic development, transportation, land use, and utilities plans.

Objective 5.6.1. Work with MSPA and MDOT to study potential impacts of Port expansion on transportation infrastructure including demands on the regional and local networks associated with projected increases in regional population and employment.

Objective 5.6.2. Work with MSPA to ensure design of Port Connector or realignment of regional and local streets are consistent with vision for downtown development and stabilization/renewal of older and historic neighborhoods along the 30th Avenue corridor.

Objective 5.6.3. Work with MSPA to ensure plans for redevelopment of Port’s non-maritime use area is consistent with the City’s vision for the Downtown.
6.0 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Gulfport’s community facilities and associated activities provide a high level of service to residents and businesses. Many facilities were destroyed or severely damaged by Hurricane Katrina. The City must continue to find ways to ensure remaining resources are maintained, restored, or expanded and allow these community facilities to serve as an economic benefit by attracting new residents and businesses. As the City continues to grow, its population shifts, or demands for service change, new public facilities and improvements to existing services will be needed.

The management and maintenance of the City’s community facilities directly influence investment decisions by future residents, local institutions, and commercial enterprises. The following sections document Gulfport’s existing conditions and issues relating to the City’s schools, public safety services, and parks and recreational areas.

The goals, objectives, and strategies at the end of this chapter reinforce the high level of service standards currently in place and are consistent with the City’s long-range goals of economic development and neighborhood livability.

6.2 CONDITIONS, ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Public Safety

The provision of quality emergency services in Gulfport is vital as the City expands and is faced with natural hazards in the future. While meeting the demands of a growing population and assisting in recovery efforts, the City’s Police and Fire Department has been challenged by its own recovery efforts due to the loss or severe destruction of many of the City’s public safety facilities. The City’s public safety facilities are listed in Table 6.1 and are shown on Map 6.1.

GULFPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT

With over 200 sworn personnel and approximately 100 civilian staff members, the Gulfport Police Department currently operates out of a main headquarters and two substations. The Police Department’s jurisdiction is confined to the Gulfport city limits.

Police headquarters are currently occupying the former 28th Street Elementary School building along with the Municipal Court. The new Robert J. Curry Public Safety Center for the police department and courts will replace the Downtown structure destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. This new 60,000 square foot, three-story hardened structure is currently under construction on a site adjacent to City Hall. This building has been designed to
meet national accreditation standards and will also serve as the Emergency Operations Center for the City. An additional police substation is planned for the Orange Grove Municipal Center. This three-acre site on Dedeaux Road one-half mile east of Route 49 will also include a new central fire station, public works facility, and water billing office.

Recent planning efforts for police services include a post-Katrina staffing report for Orange Grove and the entire City and a ten-year needs assessment and growth analysis.

**GULFPORT FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The Gulfport Fire Department employs almost 200 personnel that provide around-the-clock fire protection and rescue services. Operating out of twelve fire stations located throughout the City, the Gulfport Fire Department responds to a wide array of emergency calls within the City and adjacent areas.

The City currently has a Class 4 Fire Rating (1-10 scale, 1 is best) which is based on water system, response time, and staffing. Currently the City has an adequate level of service, but increased demand due to growth could result in the City’s rating and insurance rates for property owners. Developments outside the City limits are not paying for the fire service, but are receiving the benefits. In many areas, utility lines border the city limits along a major roadway where the incorporated area of the City includes only one side of road. In some cases, the City of Gulfport provides public safety services on both sides of the roadway including areas within unincorporated Harrison County. Residents and business owners within the unincorporated Harrison County may be receiving these services without paying for them and potentially jeopardizing the level of service for city residents. Future annexation should consider demands for public service areas and try to avoid municipal boundaries that include just one side of a roadway.

### Table 6.1. City of Gulfport Police & Fire Department Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Gulfport Police Substation</td>
<td>8335 Tennessee Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Grove Police Substation</td>
<td>12188 Highway 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Headquarters (temporary)</td>
<td>2810 34th Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert J. Curry Public Safety Center</td>
<td>23rd Avenue/15th Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Fire Station</td>
<td>1515 23rd Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 2</td>
<td>1200 42nd Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 3, Training Tower, &amp; Service Shop</td>
<td>2324 25th Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 4</td>
<td>1038 E. Railroad Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 5</td>
<td>641 41st Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 6</td>
<td>1000 E. Pass Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 7</td>
<td>200 Cowan Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 8</td>
<td>13440 Old Highway 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 9</td>
<td>15239 Dedeaux Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 10</td>
<td>12001 Dedeaux Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 11</td>
<td>13000 Three Rivers Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 12</td>
<td>15550 Martin Luther King Boulevard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAP 6.1 POLICE & FIRE FACILITIES

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
Additionally, areas north of Interstate 10 that were developed under County regulations and annexed in 1994 have inadequate utilities, roadways, and drainage, which make fire service more difficult. The City needs a method to anticipate service needs and plan for future development in infrastructure design, in addition to upgrading existing infrastructure within the city limits.

**Public Schools**

The City of Gulfport is served by two public school districts. The Gulfport School District includes the older areas in the southern half of the City. The rest of the City’s student population is served by the Harrison County School District. The City is also served by seven private schools. School facilities by district are listed in Table 6.2 and identified on Map 6.2.

**Gulfport School District**

The City’s school district currently operates thirteen schools within Gulfport, with a current enrollment of 5,700 students. This includes six elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Student enrollment has remained steady since Hurricane Katrina, but has yet to reach pre-storm enrollment of 6,200 students.

One school, 28th Street Elementary, remains closed and is currently housing the police headquarters and Municipal Court. A new school is under construction in the adjacent area to replace the 28th Street Elementary and will open by March 2010. The School District administrative offices are relocating into a new technology and support services building and a Culinary Arts Academy is planned for the High School campus expansion.

**Harrison County School District**

Harrison County School District operates 21 schools in both unincorporated areas of the County and portions of incorporated municipalities, including Gulfport, Biloxi, Saucier, and D’Iberville. Within the City of Gulfport, Harrison County School District operates eight schools. Students living in the northern half of the City attend Harrison County High School, which is located about one mile north of the Gulfport city limits. In January 2009, a small number of Gulfport students who live east of SR 605, between O’Neal Road and Interstate 10, transferred to the new D’Iberville High School, located on Lamey Bridge Road north of the new SR 67 extension. To accommodate additional growth, a third high school, West Harrison High School, opened in Fall 2009 on County Farm Road to serve students who live west of US 49.

While the Gulfport School District has only recovered 89 percent of its pre-storm student population, the Harrison County School District has reached 99 percent recovery as of Fall 2007. This corresponds with a growing population in the northern areas of the City and inland, unincorporated areas of the County.

**Coordination and Planning**

Residential development in the northern areas of the City and unincorporated areas adjacent to the City may influence school enrollment patterns and school capacity issues for the Gulfport and Harrison County School Districts. The Gulfport School District has seen decreased enrollment since Hurricane Katrina, while Harrison County schools have recovered. If population growth continues in the northern parts of the City, the demand within each district will likely change as well.

Currently, there is little coordination between the City and County School Districts to plan for changes in the student population, school capacity issues, and the possibility of redistricting schools. The County and City school districts each coordinate their own
### Table 6.2. Public School Facilities by District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gulfport School District</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Grade Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28th Street Elementary School (opening March 2010)</td>
<td>3136 34th Avenue</td>
<td>K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anniston Elementary School</td>
<td>2314 Jones Street</td>
<td>K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayou View Elementary School</td>
<td>4898 Washington Avenue</td>
<td>K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayou View Middle School</td>
<td>212 43rd Street</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Elementary School</td>
<td>1043 Pass Road</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaston Point Elementary School</td>
<td>1526 Mills Avenue</td>
<td>K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulfport Central Middle School</td>
<td>1310 42nd Avenue</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulfport High School</td>
<td>100 Perry Street</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulfport High School Technology Center</td>
<td>100 Perry Street</td>
<td>Alt. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulfport School District Technology Support Services &amp; Community Education</td>
<td>2014 Pass Road</td>
<td>Admin./Alt. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School GED Program - &quot;The Blue School&quot;</td>
<td>2507 21st Street</td>
<td>Alt. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass Road Elementary School</td>
<td>37 Pass Road</td>
<td>K-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning Center</td>
<td>1215 Church Street</td>
<td>3-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Elementary School</td>
<td>4051 15th Street</td>
<td>K-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harrison County School District</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bel-Aire Elementary School</td>
<td>10531 Klein Road</td>
<td>K-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossroads Elementary School</td>
<td>10453 Klein Road</td>
<td>K-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D’Iberville High School</td>
<td>15625 Lamey Bridge Road</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison Central Elementary School</td>
<td>15451 Dedeaux Road</td>
<td>K-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison Central High School &amp; Technology Center</td>
<td>15600 School Road</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison County Alternative School</td>
<td>11072 Highway 49</td>
<td>Alt. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison County Child Development Center</td>
<td>94 29th Street</td>
<td>Alt. Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison County District Office</td>
<td>11072 Highway 49</td>
<td>Admin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison County Special Education Office</td>
<td>16049 Orange Grove Road</td>
<td>Admin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyman Elementary School</td>
<td>14222 Old Highway 49</td>
<td>K-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Gulfport Seventh and Eighth Grade School</td>
<td>4715 Illinois Avenue</td>
<td>7-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Grove Elementary School</td>
<td>11391 Old Highway 49</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pineville Elementary School</td>
<td>5192 Menge Avenue</td>
<td>K-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Rivers Elementary School</td>
<td>13500 Three Rivers Road</td>
<td>K-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Harrison High School</td>
<td>10399 County Farm Road</td>
<td>9-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolmarket Elementary School</td>
<td>12513 John Lee Road</td>
<td>K-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAP 6.2 PRIVATE & PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School District Facility

- Biloxi
- Gulfport
- Harrison County
- Private
- Long Beach

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.

0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Miles
planning efforts for changes in enrollment levels and patterns and need for new or improved facilities.

The Harrison County’s School District owns developable Section 16 land surrounding the US 49 and Interstate 10 interchange. The County’s School District has sold or leased much of that land, while not going through the City’s subdivision review process. Development review is essential for land in these high-growth and high-impact areas to allow the City and other related agencies to plan for services and facilities based on growth in this area.

**PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

The City has several private primary and secondary schools. The Catholic Diocese of Biloxi recently completed construction of a new middle and high school—St. Patrick High School—in the Tradition development north of the City to replace an older high school on Pass Road. The Diocese operates two elementary schools within the City limits: St. James Elementary School and St. John Elementary School. Other private schools include: Northwood Christian Academy, Temple Christian Academy, Westminster Academy School, and Christian Collegiate Academy.

**Higher Education**

Prior to Katrina, Gulfport had two institutions of higher learning within the city limits - William Carey University on the Coast and Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. In Fall 2009, William Carey University relocated to a new campus within Tradition, the master planned community north of the City. Gulfport is also in close proximity to two other institutions of higher learning—the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast campus in Long Beach and Tulane University’s School of Continuing Education in Biloxi.

**MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE (MGCCC)**

MGCCC is a multiple-campus college organized as a single institutional entity with three traditional campus locations, four centers, and a non-traditional campus without walls. The Mississippi Gulf Coast Junior College District includes Harrison, Stone, Jackson, and George counties. Within the City of Gulfport, there is one traditional campus, two centers, and one non-traditional campus.

- **Jefferson Davis Campus.** This is a 120-acre, traditional campus at Switzer Road and Debuys Road. Construction will soon begin on a $12 million hospitality and resort center. This campus offers Hospitality and Tourism Management credit programs, workforce training, and continuing education that will help accommodate the Gulf Coast’s growing tourism and casino industry.
- **Naval Construction Battalion Center.** This center offers night courses for degree-seeking military and civilian students.
- **Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Center.** Located in the Intraplex 10 in Bayou Bernard Industrial District at 10298 Express Drive, this center is a joint partnership between MGCCC, Mississippi Power Company, and the Harrison County Development Commission.
- **Community Campus.** This “Campus Without Walls” is the non-traditional campus headquartered at the Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Center. This facility offers non-credit courses for continuing education, adult basic education and lifelong, and workforce training programs.

**WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY**

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, William Carey University on the Coast was one of three locations in the private Baptist-affiliated William Carey University system, which includes a main campus in Hattiesburg and
a nursing school in New Orleans. In 1976, William Carey College purchased the 20-acre Gulf Coast Military Academy campus located on Beach Boulevard. As a result of Hurricane Katrina, the Gulfport campus was condemned in August 2005 and operated out of temporary portable facilities between 2005 and 2009. Phase I of the new 30-acre campus was completed in Fall 2009 in the Tradition master planned community located north of the City along SR 67. The new campus currently offers selected undergraduate and graduate degree programs to nearly 700 students. Eventually, the new campus will grow to accommodate a student population of 3,000.

Public Library

Around 1912, Gulfport’s first public library opened in City Hall. The City’s Carnegie Library opened in 1917 in the 24th Avenue building now occupied by the Mississippi Sound Historical Museum. The Gulfport Public Library merged with the Harrison County Public Library in 1947.

In 1966, a new Gulfport-Harrison County Public Library opened on 21st Avenue at 14th Street. A branch opened in Orange Grove in 1973. In 2005, the Gulfport Library on 21st Avenue was severely damaged during Hurricane Katrina. Current proposals call for FEMA-funded construction of two new libraries to replace the existing buildings, with a new library headquarters in Orange Grove and smaller branch in downtown Gulfport.

Parks & Recreational Facilities

The City of Gulfport has a diverse assortment of parks, community centers, and other recreational areas and facilities, provided by the City’s Department of Leisure Services, the County’s Parks and Recreation Department, and the County’s Sand Beach Authority. The Leisure Service Department operates parks, athletic fields, and facilities throughout the entire City. Parks and facilities that were previously outside of the City before the 1994 annexation continue to be maintained by Harrison County. All parks and recreational facilities within the City are identified on Map 6.3 and listed in Table 6.3.

Gulfport Department of Leisure Services

In addition to parks, athletic fields, community and senior centers, and other recreation facilities including fishing piers, the City’s Department of Leisure Services also manages and maintains four cemeteries within the City. The department operates out of two facilities—the Cemetery Maintenance Facility at 3908 28th Street and the Leisure Services Department at 135 Courthouse Road.

The Department’s Citizens’ Master Plan was completed in 2000 outlining a plan for improving Leisure Service’s facilities, programs, department management and operations, and developing a short-term action plan. A top priority of this Plan included the completion of the City’s 250-acre SportsPlex located north of I-10. The SportsPlex provides an economic benefit to the City by hosting several large tournaments that supports tourism in the community. With numerous baseball, softball, and soccer fields and a 16-acre water park, the SportsPlex is the largest facility of its type in the multi-state region. Future development at the SportsPlex will include a new indoor recreational facility, trail system, nature center, amphitheatre, and additional ball fields.

As shown in Map 6.3, the northern half of the City has fewer parks and recreation facilities than the older parts of the City. Two new facilities are planned—the Orange Grove Community Center will be rebuilt and the new Dedeaux Road Community Center is underway.
MAP 6.3 PARKS & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
### Table 6.3  Park & Recreational facilities by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map ID</th>
<th>Community or Recreation Facility</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19th Street Community Center</td>
<td>3319 19th Street</td>
<td>Located in 19th Street Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Artemis Tuggle Community Center</td>
<td>14205 Rippy Road</td>
<td>CLOSED; located in Turkey Creek Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Charles L. Walker Senior Center</td>
<td>4008 8th Street</td>
<td>Near Westside Community Center &amp; Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Francis X. Collins Fitness Center</td>
<td>2204 Swetman Blvd</td>
<td>Francis X. Collins Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gaston Point Recreation Center</td>
<td>1506 Mills Ave</td>
<td>Located in Gaston Point Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gaston Hewes Recreation Center</td>
<td>2608 28th Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Good Deeds Community Center*</td>
<td>15101 Madison Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Handsboro Community Center</td>
<td>1890 Switzer Road</td>
<td>Located in Bayou Bernard Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Herbert Wilson Recreation Center</td>
<td>3625 Hancock Ave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Katie Patterson Booth Center</td>
<td>501 26th Street</td>
<td>Located in Magnolia Grove Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Isiah Fredericks Community Center*</td>
<td>3312 MLK, Jr. Drive</td>
<td>Located near Isiah Fredericks Ballfields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Lyman Community Center</td>
<td>13472 Touriel Road</td>
<td>Under construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Orange Grove Community Center</td>
<td>Dedeaux Road</td>
<td>Planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Westside Community Center</td>
<td>4006 8th Street</td>
<td>Near Westside Park &amp; Charles L. Walker Senior Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Willie Lock Community Center</td>
<td>1707 19th Street</td>
<td>Located in Willie Lock Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Map ID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map ID</th>
<th>Park or Athletic Field</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8th Avenue Park</td>
<td>2800 8th Avenue</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Tennis courts, ball field, playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19th Street Park</td>
<td>3319 19th Street</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Ball field, playground, outdoor basketball court, pavilion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28th Street Park</td>
<td>2723 33rd Avenue</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4 basketball courts, pavilion, ball field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30th Street Park</td>
<td>2400 30th Street</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Basketball court, open field, playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bayou Bernard Park &amp; Trails</td>
<td>1890 Switzer Road</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>Boat launches, fishing piers, pavilion, boardwalk trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bayou View Baseball Complex</td>
<td>4401 Searle Avenue</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>5 baseball fields, concession area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bayou View Park</td>
<td>4901 Jefferson Avenue</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>Playground, lighted walking track/swings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Broadmoor Park</td>
<td>2315 Broadmoor Place</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bruce Ladner Memorial Park*</td>
<td>Highway 53</td>
<td></td>
<td>T-Ball field, 200' baseball field, 300' baseball field, small playground, concession stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bullis Avenue Park</td>
<td>1919 Bullis Avenue</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>Enclosed basketball court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Dedeaux Park</td>
<td>13880 River Road</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>East North Gulfport Park</td>
<td>8240 Florida Avenue</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Playground, pavilion, basketball court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>East Park</td>
<td>27 East Park Street</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Ball field, basketball court, picnic grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Francis X. Collins Park</td>
<td>2204 Swetman Blvd</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5th-mile walking track, playground module, pier &amp; pond, swimming pool, pavilion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Gaston Point Park</td>
<td>1501 Mills Ave</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Ball field, 5th mile walking track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Gulfport Lake Boat Launches</td>
<td>Tramark Golf Course</td>
<td></td>
<td>Boat launches and parking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.3  Park & Recreational Facilities by Type (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map ID</th>
<th>Park or Athletic Field</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Gulfport Sportsplex &amp; Gulf Island Water Park</td>
<td>17200 16th Street</td>
<td>248.6</td>
<td>The Gulfport Sportsplex is a 250-acre recreational park located near Interstate-10 within the city limits of Gulfport. Operated by City of Gulfport Dept. of Leisure Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Harrison Central Elementary Ballfields^</td>
<td>15451 Dedeaux Road</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>On grounds of Harrison Central Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Harrison County Skate Park*</td>
<td>269 Debuys Road</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Enclosed arena, beginner and intermediate/advance ramps sections, a concrete bowl, snack areas, and a pro shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Isiah Fredericks Ballfields &amp; Concession*</td>
<td>4318 Kentucky Avenue</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>CLOSED; Ballfields, walking track, basketball court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Jack &amp; Florence Goldin Park</td>
<td>12136 Purdie Circle</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>Softball/baseball fields, tennis courts, playground, pavilion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>James Hill Park &amp; Piers</td>
<td>1950 Switzer Road</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>Pavilion, ball field, 2 tennis courts, playground, boardwalk trails, fishing pier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Joseph T. Jones Park</td>
<td>2200 Jones Park Drive</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>Playground, boat launches, parking, pavilion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Magnolia Grove Park</td>
<td>501 26th Street</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>Behind Katie Booth Center; Pavilion, basketball court, picnic areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Milner Stadium**</td>
<td>1403 38th Street</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grandstand, locker room, concession, press box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Olivet Park</td>
<td>302 Mary Drive</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Owen T. Palmer Park</td>
<td>1400 2nd Street</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Tennis court, playground, pavilion, basketball court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Silver Ridge Park</td>
<td>366 Live Oak Ave</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>St. James Park</td>
<td>607 West Avenue</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>CLOSED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Three Rivers Park*</td>
<td>13000 Three Rivers Road</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 baseball fields, concession stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Triangle Park</td>
<td>3801 Park Blvd</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>Ball Field, Playground, pavilion (closed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Turkey Creek Park</td>
<td>9400 Halsell Road</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>West Gulfport; playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Villa Del Ray Park</td>
<td>3610 Reynosa Drive</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>West Gulfport; playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Washington Avenue Park</td>
<td>4100 Washington Avenue</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Westside Park</td>
<td>3904 W. Beach Blvd</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Pavilion, tennis court, fifth-mile walking track, KABOOM playground module, shoo fly, splash pad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Willie Lock Park</td>
<td>1707 19th Avenue</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Walking track, playground module</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Piers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Ken Combs Pier</td>
<td>US 90 / Courthouse Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Kremer Landing</td>
<td>under Cowan-Lorraine Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Moses Pier</td>
<td>Gulfport Small Craft Harbor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Urie Pier</td>
<td>Gulfport Small Craft Harbor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Westside Pier</td>
<td>US 90 / Broad Ave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unless noted, all facilities are operated by the City of Gulfport Department of Leisure Services.
* Harrison County Parks & Recreation
^ Harrison County School District
** Gulfport School District
HARRISON COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

Harrison County maintains and operates several parks and public facilities within neighborhoods annexed in 1994. These facilities are identified with an (*) in Table 6.3 and are shown in Map 6.3.

HARRISON COUNTY SAND BEACH AUTHORITY

The Sand Beach Authority is responsible for maintaining and managing the 26-miles of Harrison County shoreline, including the landscaping, parking and access, boardwalk, seawall, drainage, and sand beach. The City of Gulfport has over seven miles of shoreline. The County’s Sand Beach Master Plan establishes a plan for improved amenities, access, type and intensity of use for the entire beach front area. The Plan considered existing conditions, public input for future improvements, conservation needs, and access and connection to neighboring areas. The Plan proposes a continuous recreational path along the entire length of the beachfront, the addition of amenities including restrooms, pavilions, and playgrounds, and increased vehicular and pedestrian access to the beachfront.

GOLF COURSES

The City has four private and public golf courses including Tramark Golf Course along Lake Gulfport, the Great Southern Golf Club along the Gulf Coast, the Pine Bayou Golf Course on the SeaBee Base, and an executive course south of the airport that is currently closed.

MAINTENANCE & PROVISION OF SERVICES

The City and Harrison County maintain, fund, and plan their parks and recreational facilities independently of each other. Additionally, the Gulfport School District and the Harrison County School District also operate recreational facilities, sometimes directly adjacent to City or County parks. For example, Bayou View Park and Bayou View Elementary School are located right next to each other, but the park is needed right next to the school does not permit use of facilities after school hours.

This situation has created a duplication of services due to the lack of inter-agency coordination between the multiple agencies that provide services to the City’s residents. According to City staff, Gulfport has too many community centers that are not strategically located or utilized to their highest capacity. Staff recommends closing some facilities and maintaining five centrally located facilities to provide services that are more efficient.

The City should explore opportunities to consolidate and eliminate duplication of recreational services. The City should work to improve city-wide coordination between the various agencies that are currently operating and planning independently to maximize the potential for efficient services provision.

FUTURE FACILITY PLANNING

The City of Gulfport’s Department of Leisure Services completed a Citizens’ Master Plan in 2000. Most of the recommendations in Leisure Services’ plan have been met, and the City should consider the development of an updated parks, recreation, open space, and trails plan. A key part of this plan should involve public involvement, a plan for inter-agency cooperation and coordination, and a plan to evaluate current levels of service and establish targets for future needs for facilities.
Open Space and Trail Network

In addition to evaluating the need for parks and recreational opportunities, the City should work to develop an overall open space network that connects the City’s existing and proposed facilities via a system of connected trails, greenways, bikeways, and pedestrian links. Currently, the City does not have a system of trails or open space, but has individual sites and facilities that are not connected. The City has many opportunities for the creation of a trail network, such as the use of unused right-of-way along canals, streams, and bayous to link parks and create walking or bicycle paths. An updated Leisure Services’ plan should explore the development of an open space, greenways, natural trails, and bicycle and pedestrian network.

The Greenway Corridor and Trail Opportunity Map in the Natural Systems Chapter of this Plan includes major corridors which should be evaluated to determine open space acquisition and resource conservation, trail, and passive recreation opportunities. The Bicycle Plan in the Transportation Chapter of this Plan includes sites for off-roadway bicycle facilities. These corridors and proposed bicycle paths, along with those proposed in the Harrison County Sand Beach Master Plan and the Mississippi Renewal Form Charrette Plan, should be considered for inclusion into a updated parks, recreation, open space, and trails plan.

6.3 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following list of goals and objectives are presented to provide a guide to improve the quality of life and provision of public services for Gulfport’s residents:

**GOAL 6.1. PERFORMANCE.** Support efforts to evaluate existing services and anticipate demands for community facilities and services, to ensure that they adequately meet community needs.

**Objective 6.1.1.** Establish standards or performance criteria for assessing appropriate level of services for community facilities.

**Objective 6.1.2.** Use standards to assess demands for services and facilities based on projected growth throughout the city and adjacent area.

**Objective 6.1.3.** Consider incorporating level of service standards or other performance measures into the Capital Improvement Plan and the annual operating budget.

**GOAL 6.2. ACCESSIBILITY & COORDINATION.** Provide community facilities and services in a cost-efficient manner and in a manner that makes facilities accessible and convenient to citizens.

**Objective 6.2.1.** Explore opportunities for cost-sharing and coordination of facilities and services with joint use and planning efforts with other agencies including Harrison County and the public school systems.

**Objective 6.2.2.** In planning for existing and new community facilities, explore the feasibility of co-locating facilities or providing multi-purpose facilities.
**Objective 6.2.3.** Improve levels of collaboration and planning for any new major facility development in joint park-school sites.

**Objective 6.2.4.** Improve access to schools, libraries, and other community facilities through the development of sidewalks, pedestrian trails, and bicycle paths.

**GOAL 6.3. PUBLIC SAFETY.** Provide for public safety facility development, equipment acquisition, and staff to meet future community needs for public safety services and ensure continued levels of service.

**Objective 6.3.1.** Consider recommendations from Police Department staffing report and ten-year needs assessment and growth analysis.

**Objective 6.3.2.** Develop methods to anticipate service needs and plan for future development in infrastructure design, in addition to upgrading existing infrastructure within the City limits.

**Objective 6.3.3.** Use level of service standards to study police and fire station locations and determine where changing development patterns or potential annexation may require new facilities.

**Objective 6.3.4.** Maintain adequate level of fire service to ensure insurance rates and housing costs for property owners remain affordable.

**Objective 6.3.5.** Avoid municipal boundaries that include just one side of a roadway.

**GOAL 6.4. PARTNERSHIPS.** Work with public school districts, higher education institutions, and the public library system to ensure quality educational opportunities are available to all residents.

**Objective 6.4.1.** Promote coordination between City and County school districts, particularly as they relate to impact from City’s growth strategies for Town and Neighborhood Centers.

**Objective 6.4.2.** Encourage major employers to play an active role in City planning, revitalization, workforce development, and promotional efforts.

**Objective 6.4.3.** Increase effectiveness of efforts to inform citizens about the quality of public and private services and facilities.

**Objective 6.4.4.** Support efforts to improve the quality of public schools and institutions of higher learning.

**GOAL 6.5. PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES & GREENWAYS.** Provide a range of high quality recreational opportunities while creating a continuous open space network that preserves the natural features of greenways and waterways.

**Objective 6.5.1.** Increase recreational opportunities to meet the needs all citizens, including any underserved segments of the population.

**Objective 6.5.2.** Provide safe, accessible, and attractive recreational facilities that encourage recreational use and that can be effectively managed, maintained, and staffed.

**Objective 6.5.3.** Prepare an update to the Citizens Master Plan in conjunction with a greenway and trails plan to assess opportunities to meet existing needs, achieve future demands, and create an open space and recreational system network.

**Objective 6.5.4.** Identify and strive to meet appropriate performance standards for programs and facilities.
Objective 6.5.5. Develop maintenance standards and estimated costs and identify committed funding sources to ensure long-term maintenance of all buildings and facilities.

Objective 6.5.6. Establish standards for the development of passive recreational use facilities and trails to prevent disruption of natural functions of greenways.

Objective 6.5.7. Update existing indoor recreational facilities and park facilities to meet current codes and to enhance their appearance, function, and utilization.

Objective 6.5.8. Develop a system of bicycle and walking trails within the greenway system that connects with an on-road bicycle network.

Objective 6.5.9. Enhance and create public access points to conservation areas and greenways for recreational and educational opportunities; include interpretive signage, fishing piers, boardwalks, bicycle trails, and canoe launch points.
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7.0 PUBLIC UTILITIES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Information in this chapter of the Plan is drawn from plans and studies addressing utility services provided for and by the City of Gulfport. Sources include the City of Gulfport Public Works Department, Harrison County Utility Authority (HARCUA), Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and others. This chapter is intended to provide an overview of existing services and preliminary findings on future demand based on projected population and employment growth to 2030. A complete analysis of existing service, capacity and demand is currently underway as part of the City’s Water and Sewer Master Plan update.

7.2 CONDITIONS, ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

The City of Gulfport provides a wide range of utility services to residents within and adjacent to the city limits. Current services include potable water, sanitary sewer, solid waste, storm collection and drainage, and flood control. These services and associated facilities are provided to protect the health and safety of the public, contribute to economic development, and improve the quality of life in the City. A brief review of plans and studies addressing the City’s utility systems follows.

Regional Utility Planning

In April 2006, the Mississippi Legislature authorized the creation of the Harrison County Utility Authority (HARCUA) as part of a comprehensive relief program initiated for Hurricane Katrina. HARCUA is tasked with the development and consolidation of water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure within Harrison County and serves as the mechanism for orderly growth and sharing of resources among the residents of each municipality in the County. HARCUA replaced the Harrison County Wastewater and Solid Waste Management District as the County Utility Authority. The HARCUA Board consists of seven members, the Mayors of each five cities in Harrison County (Gulfport, Biloxi, Long Beach, Pass Christian, and D’Iberville) and two members appointed by the County Board of Supervisors.

HARCUA was also tasked with helping to identify priority projects for inclusion in the Gulf Region Water and Wastewater Plan (GRWWP), first adopted in January 2007. This long-range planning document was developed by MDEQ to identify infrastructure needs for long-term growth and recovery in each of Mississippi’s six Gulf Region counties. Projects identified in the GRWWP are eligible for federal CDBG Disaster Recovery funding.

The GRWWP identified water supply, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure improvements within each county to address anticipated growth resulting from rebuilding efforts.
As shown in Figure 7.1, the GRWWP identified 26 projects in Harrison County. Of these projects, 14 of the projects currently in design or under construction are within the Gulfport city limits or within the Future Growth Study Area. The majority of the project are located in the Future Growth Study Area.

**Water System**

The City of Gulfport owns, operates, and maintains potable water facilities within the city limits and adjacent areas. Potable water service is also provided by utility service districts, non-profit rural water associations, and private entities. Within the City, the water
The City's water system provides potable water, irrigation, and reused water to more than 27,600 customers using approximately 358 miles of water mains. The existing service area includes areas located south of Interstate 10 as well as areas acquired in 1994 through annexation. Existing water facilities, distribution lines, and the general service area are shown on Map 8.1.

Following the 1994 annexation, the City acquired several privately-owned water utility systems, including North Gulfport, Oakleigh Manor, and Orange Grove Utilities. More recently, the City has acquired the Superior Utility Systems (2002); Dedeaux Utility Company (2004); and Lyman Utilities (2007).

In areas beyond the City limits, the following water service providers are in operation:

- Lakewood Environmental Corporation provides water service west of the City in the Windance subdivision;
- River Bend Utilities Inc. serves areas to the north and northwest of City;
- Sutter Water Services Inc. provides water service to the west of the City; and
- Central Harrison County Public Utility District provides water service to Tradition.

**WATER SUPPLY & WELL CAPACITY**

MDEQ’s Office of Land and Water Resources permits the City’s water supply, which is authorized to divert or withdraw approximately 13.18 MGD for public consumption, recreational purposes, and irrigation. The City’s primary water sources are the Pascagoula and Graham Ferry Formation aquifers with the majority of permitted capacity coming from the Lower Graham Ferry Aquifer.

To provide potable water, the City owns and operates 28 deep wells with a total production capacity of approximately 21,610 gallons per minute (GPM). Currently, the available well capacity is sufficient to meet the peak demand requirements of the system.

Pursuant to Federal and State regulations, the City routinely monitors its water supply for contaminants and compliance with Federal and State allowable standards. While it can be assumed that all drinking water may contain at least small amounts of some contaminants, such as microbiological, inorganic, pesticides and herbicides, organic, chemical, and radiological, the City’s water system has routinely met or exceeded established requirements.

The City’s water supply is supported by 18 storage facilities—12 elevated steel storage tanks and six pressure steel storage tanks.

**WATER DISTRIBUTION**

The water distribution system consists of approximately 358 miles of pipe principally ranging in size from 2-inch to 16-inch. According to information derived from the City’s comprehensive annual financial statements, the City pumped an estimated 4,221 million gallons in FY2007 compared to estimated annual sales of 2,442 million gallons.

This would indicate losses and unaccounted for water of approximately 1,779 million gallons (MG), or 42.15 percent of total gallons pumped in FY2007. Unaccounted for water results from numerous factors, including metering inaccuracies, leaks, non-metered uses such as fire protection and flushing of lines. As shown in Table 8.3, during FY2005-2007, losses and unaccounted for water as a percentage of gallonage pumped ranged from 17.86 to 42.15 percent. The American Water Works Association (AWWA) considers good performance to be at or below 10 percent.

**OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE**

The City contracts with Operations Technologies Inc. (OpTech)—owned by
MAP 7.1 EXISTING WATER SERVICE AREA & INFRASTRUCTURE

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
Southwest Water Company Inc.—to manage its water utility and billing system and provide maintenance of streets and drainage. Optech is responsible for maintaining and operating the City’s water system facilities, in addition to:

- obtaining water supply sufficient to meet consumption and fire flow requirements;
- treating water supply to standards established by the DEP;
- maintaining treatment, storage and delivery mains and meters;
- repairing leaks;
- constructing minor line extensions;
- setting meters; and
- making “wet” taps.

The City uses independent contractors and engineers to design and drill wells and to design and construct major mains and line extensions.

**Sewer System**

Regulated by MDEQ, the City of Gulfport’s sewer system collects, treats, and disposes of wastewater for approximately 24,800 customers located in and about the City. In addition to the presence and use of septic tanks, there are several private wastewater utilities that provide sewer transport service to predominantly residential developments in and about the City. Six separate sewer systems operate within and adjacent to the City of Gulfport, including:

- City of Gulfport System;
- Dedeaux Utility Company System;
- Harrison County Development Commission System;
- Oakleigh Manor System;
- Orange Grove Utilities System;
- Superior Utilities System; and
- U.S. Naval Base System.

The City of Gulfport acquired the Orange Grove Utilities System in 1999. The U.S. Naval Base System is owned and operated by the U.S. Government, but discharges wastewater into the City of Gulfport System for treatment. The existing sewer system is shown in Map 7.2.

In addition, there are two franchised sewer service areas located outside the City corporate limits:

- Seashore Utilities Inc. owns and operates the sewer system west of the City in the Windance Subdivision area; and
- Riverbend Utilities Inc. serves areas north and northwest of City.

**COLLECTION SYSTEM**

The City of Gulfport System serves the area south of Interstate 10, while the other systems are located north of Interstate 10. Force mains in the City of Gulfport system south of Interstate 10 are comprised of SDR-26 PVC, C-900 PVC, or ductile iron pipes. The majority of the City of Gulfport sewer collection lines are comprised of SDR-35 PVC pipe with some areas still served by clay and concrete pipe. As required by MDEQ, areas served by clay and concrete pipes will be upgraded to SDR-35 pipe. While limited information is available for sewer systems north of Interstate 10, it is thought that the collections system is also made up of SDR-35 PVC pipe and clay pipe.

The City of Gulfport System currently owns and operates 141 pump stations. An additional 14 pump stations, owned and operated by HARCUA, serve areas south of the I-10 and in the Orange Grove, Dedeaux, Oakleigh Manor, and Superior Systems service area. The City also owns and operates four regional pump stations and five regional interceptor systems.

**WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES**

Under a service agreement with HARCUA, the City’s collection system conveys wastewater to three wastewater treatment facilities
A summary of these facilities and associated treatment capacities are provided below:

- **Gulfport South WWTF.** This facility serves the area south of Interstate 10. It is located north of the Gulfport-Biloxi Regional Airport and south of Bernard Bayou. It was originally constructed by the Corps of Engineers as a primary treatment facility in 1940 and converted to a trickling filter plant in 1961. Improvements were made in the 1980s and 1990s. The trickling filter-activated sludge process at the Gulfport South facility is designed to treat 8.22 MGD with a peak flow capacity of 40 MGD.

- **Gulfport North WWTF.** The Gulfport North WWTF serves the area north of Interstate 10. It is an oxidation ditch plant located in the Bayou Bernard Industrial Park south of Interstate 10 and discharges through an effluent ditch indirectly into Bayou Bernard. The plant was designed to treat an average flow of 7.75 MDG.

- **West Biloxi WWTF.** The West Biloxi WWTF serves the area south of Interstate 10 and east of Courthouse Road. The West Biloxi facility is designed to treat an average flow of 9 MGD with a peak flow capacity of 25.2 MGD.

A new WWTF is under construction within the East Central Harrison County Public Utility District that serves the Tradition master planned community. Phase I of the 0.2 MGD package plant was completed in January 2007. Total permitted capacity will reach 4.0 MGD as additional phases are constructed.

**OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE**

Optech, which also manages the City’s water utility, maintains and operates the wastewater treatment plants and collection lines for the City and HARCUIA. Specific tasks include:

- maintaining the sewage collection system;
- receiving wastewater for treatment from independent wastewater haulers;
- operating and maintaining the treatment facilities to ensure that wastewater is treated to standards established by the DEP;
- disposing of sludge and treated effluent;
- constructing minor line extensions; and
- repairing lift stations.

The City uses contractors and engineers to design and construct major treatment facilities, force sewers, and major collectors and interceptors. Contractors are also utilized to perform taps on force sewers and to rehabilitate manholes.

**Drainage System**

The City of Gulfport is currently implementing its Storm Water Phase II Program. This program has been developed via collaboration and cooperation among all of the cities of Harrison County, namely Biloxi, D’Iberville, Gulfport, Long Beach, and Pass Christian, and the Harrison County Board of Supervisors.

The program developed is tailored for the City of Gulfport and the other Member Agencies, and has been developed to address water quality impairment due to polluted storm water runoff. The program has been developed as an issue-specific Storm Water Phase II Program. The specific issues to be addressed via program are as follows:

- General Storm water Runoff Pollution
- Illegal Dumping and Improper Disposal of Household Hazardous Wastes, Automobile Wastes and Disposal of Litter and Debris;
- Erosion and Sedimentation Associated with Construction and Development;
- Leaks from Auto Salvage Yards, Seafood Factories, Landfills, and Publicly Owned Treatment Works;
- Ports, Marinas, and Harbors
- Leaking Individual On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems and Sewage Pollution
- Impaired Water bodies and TMDL Programs
MAP 7.2 EXISTING SEWER SERVICE & INFRASTRUCTURE

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
The Program components include Public Education, Public Involvement, Illicit Discharges Detection and Elimination, Construction Site Runoff Controls, Post-Construction Runoff Controls, and Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping.

7.3 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

General Considerations

Currently, Gulfport’s utility systems have adequate capacity to meet existing and near term demand. As indicated above, the City has made efforts to rebuild and expand systems lost or damaged during Hurricane Katrina while continuing to address condition issues and meet demand for new service in growth areas north of I-10.

However, as the City updates its Water and Sewer Master Plans, long term demand for condition improvements and capacity expansion must be carefully evaluated. Defining long term needs, both within and beyond the existing City limits, will require consideration of the following factors impacting utility systems in the region:

- **Impact of Hurricane Katrina.** Continued migration from the coastal neighborhoods to areas north of I-10 may result in regional shifts in lower overall residential densities, potentially raising per unit costs for service.
- **Smart Growth Planning Strategies.** The realization of goals and policies for intensification and more compact forms of development in areas already served by water and sewer infrastructure, including Downtown and areas designated in the Plan as Town and Neighborhood Centers, should result in additional population along the Coast and in key locations north of I-10. Achieving these goals, and maximizing the use of existing and recently improved systems, could lessen demand for new service and result in lower per unit costs over the life of the Plan and into the mid 21st Century.
- **Interstate 10 as a Barrier.** From a utility design perspective, crossing I-10 with infrastructure is problematic, and therefore the highway acts a dividing line between the older areas of Gulfport south of I-10 and the newer, more rural areas north of I-10. This barrier will continue to present unique design challenges as systems north and south of I-10 are expanded and improved.
- **Use of On-site Sewage Facilities/Septic Systems.** Many existing developments on septic systems are located within areas with poorly drained soils and high groundwater tables. This condition with eventually result in an increasing number of failing septic systems within the City and Future Growth Study Area. As the City’s sewer collection system develops, there could be increasing pressure on the City to provide access to the sanitary sewer system to existing developments.
- **Serving Future Growth Areas.** Anticipated growth in unincorporated areas adjacent to the City and north along US 49 and SR 605 will result in increased demand for services which may be most efficiently served by the City. Determining the most efficient and effective method to meet this long-term demand must become among the City’s highest priorities.

**Future Demand & Programmed Improvements**

The following section of the chapter provides a preliminary assessment of anticipated demand for sewer and water services to the year 2030. The assessment, based on GRPC’s population projections for both the City and area beyond the current limits defined as the Future Growth Study Area in the Land Use chapter, offers a general overview of potential demand, a review of existing planned investments, and a list of potential investments. Upon completion of
the Water and Sewer Master Plan, the City will update the demand projections and finalize the list of required investments.

GRPC’s population projections estimate that population within incorporated Gulfport will increase to 107,938 by 2030. An additional 41,000 residents are expected to reside in the Future Growth Study Area. To establish preliminary projections for water and sewer service based on these projections, future rates of flow were estimated for areas within the City limits and for each of the four subareas of the Future Growth Study Area. A review of these projections, as well as a summary of planned and potential investments to serve these demands, follows.

WATER SERVICE

To serve population with the current City limits, a water flow increase of 3.45 MGD has been projected, with the majority of the increased demand occurring north of I-10 and in the following pockets to the south of I-10: Seaway Island; the Area north of W. 28th Street; and West North Gulfport. In the Future Growth Study Area north of the City, preliminary projections indicate the potential for demand of 4.1 MGD and peak flows of over 9.1 GPM.

Projected demand by planning area is shown on Map 7.3 and in Table 7.1.

To meet the projected demand for water service in the City and the Future Growth Study Area, the following improvements are currently planned:

**Planned Water System Improvements to Serve Demand in the City**

- **W16 – Gulfport VA Area Water System Improvements.** To accommodate additional demand from redevelopment at VA site, an additional 1,000,000 gallons of water storage in elevated tanks will be constructed.
- **W17 – South Gulfport Regional Water Supply.** To accommodate high-density residential and commercial redevelopment along the US 90 corridor, a new 1,000 GPM well will be constructed near Teagarden Road and the CSX railroad. Existing water transmission main sizes will also be upgraded to accommodate increase demand.

**Planned Water System Improvements to Serve Demand in Future Growth Areas**

- **W11 – Central Harrison County Regional Water Supply.** To serve Saucier and US 49 north of Gulfport, an additional 1,250,000 gallon elevated tank, a water supply well with 2,000 GPM of well capacity, and transmission mains will be constructed in the Saucier area.
- **W15 – North Gulfport/Lyman Regional Water Supply.** To provide water supply

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<th>Flow (GPD)</th>
<th>Peak (GPM)</th>
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Source: GRPC and HDR Inc.
MAP 7.3 WATER DEMAND INCREASE, 2000 TO 2030

STONE COUNTY
HARRISON COUNTY

I-10 Corridor Sub-Area
SR 53 Corridor Sub-Area
SR 67 & SR 605 Corridors Sub-Area
US 49 Corridor Sub-Area

2000-2030 Water Demand Increase (GPD)

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS, Gulf Regional Planning Council, HDR, Inc.
Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
system from SR 605 to Lyman in the northern limit of the city, with new water supply wells with an additional 2,000 GPM of well capacity and elevated tanks with an additional 1,000,000 gallons of water storage will be constructed.

- **W18 – Eastern Harrison County Regional Water Supply.** To serve growth along the newly realigned SR 67, six 1,000 GPM water supply wells and 3,500,000 gallons of water storage will be constructed at strategic locations, including a 750,000 gallon elevated tank in Tradition and transmission lines along Tradition Parkway.

In addition to the above improvements, it is anticipated that additional investments will be required to improve existing systems and support projected demand. Such investments, to be identified during the development of the Water System Master Plan, may include the following:

- additional well and storage capacity to support increased demand in the City and the Future Growth Study Area;
- upgraded water mains for fire protection and replacement of existing asbestos cement pipe in the Seaway Island and Orange Grove areas of the city; and
- improvement water distribution to support development in areas planned for intensification, including Downtown and the Port of Gulfport.

**Water System Operations & Maintenance**

As capital improvements are constructed and water systems expand to accommodate growth, a host of comprehensive improvements to the system should be considered. These improvements which include the overall operation and maintenance of the system should address the following:

- a hydrant flushing program in areas of known water quality problems;
- a well maintenance program to regularly monitor production and integrity of casing;
- an on-going tank maintenance program to include the exterior and interior of tanks, including re-painting;
- a meter testing/replacement program to ensure accurate billing and to reduce water loss;
- a program to replace undersized lines to increase pressure and improve fire fighting capabilities;
- a telemetry and supervisory control program to monitor tank levels and system pressures; and
- updating the Water System Master Plan as changes in City policy or population growth dictate.

**SEWER SERVICE**

Based on GRPC’s population projections, sewer flow in incorporated areas is expected to increase by 2.76 MGD by the year 2030 and the total demand in the Future Growth Study Area is expected to reach 3.28 MGD.

Projected demand by area is shown on Map 7.4 and in Table 7.2.

Although the City currently has sufficient capacity to meet current sewer demand, collection and transmission systems in older parts of the City are in severe need of upgrades and the collection system in many parts of Orange Grove is inadequate and in need of improvement.

To address existing deficiencies and meet the projected demand for water service in the City and the Future Growth Study Area, the following improvements are currently planned:

**Planned Sewer System Improvements to Serve Demand in the City**

- **S17 – Gulfport VA Area Wastewater System Improvements.** Much of the US 90 corridor experienced massive hurricane damage, including the area surrounding the Veterans Administration Building. This area
MAP 7.4 SEWER FLOW INCREASE, 2000 TO 2030

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS, Gulf Regional Planning Council, HDR, Inc.
Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
is projected to experience higher-density development as recovery efforts continue. In order to support this development, wastewater infrastructure improvements are needed including a pump station along Railroad Street and a transmission main to the existing pump station on 34th Street.

- **S18 – South Gulfport Regional Transmission System.** The US 90 corridor in Gulfport is expected to experience rapid, high density development in the next few years. In order to accommodate development in this area and to provide well-managed wastewater treatment systems, the selected plan is to locate a regional pump station and transmission main from the area along US 90 in East Gulfport to the existing Gulfport North WWTF.

Planned Sewer System Improvements to Serve Demand in Future Growth Areas

- **S10 – Saucier WWTF and Riverbend/Robinwood Forest Transmission System.** Two 0.2-MGD interim WWTFs will be constructed to meet immediate needs in the US 49 Corridor Sub-Area. One Interim WWTF is planned at the proposed Northpark Industrial Park west of US 49 in Saucier. The other Interim WWTF will be constructed in Robinwood Forest area and will provide regional wastewater treatment to include the Robinwood Forest and Riverbend developments.

- **S11 – East Central Harrison County Regional WWTF.** The SR 67/SR 605 Sub-Area, which includes Tradition and North Woolmarket, is expected to develop rapidly over the next few years. Currently this area has no centralized sewer services. In order to accommodate anticipated development, a regional WWTF is needed. The proposed project includes a 2.0 MGD WWTF will be built adjacent to an existing, smaller facility near Tradition.

- **S14 – West Gulfport Regional Interceptor.** The area south of SR 53 and west of US 49 is projected to experience rapid growth in the next few years. In order to accommodate development in this area and to provide well-managed wastewater treatment systems, the proposed project will provide a gravity main west of Gulfport. The interceptor will be constructed along Flat Branch, between MS 53 and John Clark Road, to the existing Gulfport city limits. This gravity main will deliver wastewater to the existing Gulfport North WWTF.

- **S15 – West Gulfport Regional Transmission System.** To accommodate expected growth along the I-10 corridor, a transmission main and pump station will run along Landon Road and Canal Road west of Gulfport to an existing pump station south of Interstate 10 west of the US 49 interchange. This transmission main will deliver wastewater to the existing Gulfport North WWTF.

### Table 7.2. Sewer System Flow Requirements by Planning Area

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<th>Planning Area</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: GRPC and HDR Inc.
In addition to the above improvements, it is anticipated that additional investments will be required to improve existing systems and support projected demand. Such investments, to be identified during the development of the Sewer System Master Plan, may include the following:

- phased upgrades in treatment capacity in the North Gulfport System to meet projected demand in areas of the City north of I-10;
- lift station upgrades in the North Gulfport System;
- system-wide replacement of clay and concrete lines;
- replacement of the interim WWTF being constructed in Saucier to support flows projected in the western portions of the Future Growth Study Area; and
- upgrades to the planned 2.0 MGD WWTP designed to serve Tradition.

Sewer System Operations & Maintenance

As capital improvements are constructed and the wastewater collection system expands to accommodate growth and address deficiencies, other comprehensive improvements to the system should be considered. These improvements which include the overall operation and maintenance of the system are best implemented through on-going programs. These operation and maintenance programs would include:

- a flushing and cleaning program for shallow sloped lines or lines with ongoing maintenance problems;
- a root cutting program to regularly clean out lines with a history of root problems and lines located in backyard easements or wooded areas;
- a grease trap inspection program to ensure that all commercial customers maintain their grease trap;
- a basin-by-basin video inspection program to monitor the overall structural condition of the system;
- an on-going lift station maintenance program to include the lift station pumps, and the wet well and dry well;
- an inflow and infiltration (I/I) program to eliminate sanitary sewer overflows and to ensure that the WWTF is not overloaded with extraneous flows;
- a telemetry and supervisory control program which not only ensures the efficiently of the existing collection system but also protects the public and environment from lift station failures and sewer line backups and overflows; and
- updating the Sewer System Master Plan as changes in City policy or population growth dictate.

On-Site Waste Disposal

Septic tanks will continue to provide a major source of sewage treatment and disposal within Gulfport and the Future Growth Study Area in the foreseeable future. At the present time, there are approximately 24,000 on-site systems in Harrison County, with 9,600 estimated failing units. These private systems have cumulative flows up to 1.9 MGD. The continued use of septic systems is expected until such time as the sewers can be extended to serve these areas.

Problems associated with septic systems include the improper design and installation of new septic system, improper operation and lack of maintenance of septic systems, and the improper application of septic systems for business and commercial type developments. An additional potential problem with septic systems is the risk to the public health through the contamination of surface water/groundwater resources. The degree of this problem has not been examined. The City should consider a sewer expansion program to replace areas currently served by septic tanks. Projects could be prioritized based on possible environmental impacts and areas with failing septic tanks.
Service Agreement Review

A review of existing agreements between HARCUA and the City of Gulfport is recommended for the overall success and viability of future utility operations. A service agreement provides the structural basis by which HARCUA’s potential customers, including cities, rural utility associations, and other entities engaged in wastewater production and treatment, would benefit from wastewater treatment and transmission resources owned and operated by the Authority.

HARCUA has a long-standing service agreement with the City of Gulfport and consideration should be given to updating this agreement to address issues related to future growth within the city limits and in the Future Growth Study Area, defined in Chapter 5 of this Plan. The relationship and nature of the service agreements between the City of Gulfport and HARCUA will be a critical component of providing service to the Future Growth Study Area.

On-Going Land Use & Capital Improvement Programming

This chapter of the plan is designed to provide general guidance to ensure plans for utility investments support the community’s visions and goals for future development. As such, the conditions summary, demand projections, and capacity assessments are provided for planning purposes only.

The City has recently initiated an effort to complete comprehensive updates to the City’s Water, Sewer, and Drainage Master Plans. Although past utility master planning has resulted in revisions and assessments to allow for effective coordination with HARCUA, the existing plans are recognized as outdated and in need of careful review.

As the utility master planning process is completed, this chapter of the Plan should be revised to reflect the findings of each updated plan and incorporate specific recommendations to serve as the basis for the preparation of a detailed five-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Once complete, the CIP should be analyzed each year to reassess systems needs for the five-year planning horizon, ensure planned and approved development is served in a timely and cost-effective manner, and maintain a high level of consistency between the City’s long range land use plans and investment decisions.
7.4 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following goal and objectives offer general recommendations for improving the existing utility service systems, planning for maintenance and continued upgrades, and meeting anticipated demand.

**GOAL 7.1. EFFICIENT & COST-EFFECTIVE UTILITY SYSTEM.** Provide needed utility service in an efficient and cost-effective manner to address existing deficiencies and meet demand for future development and redevelopment.

**Objective 7.1.1.** Maintain utility assets at a level adequate to protect the City’s capital investments and minimize future maintenance and replacement costs.

**Objective 7.1.2.** Identify the most cost-effective methods for the financing and construction of improvements to existing and construction of new utilities.

**Objective 7.1.3.** Continue on-going collaboration with HARCUA and other local, regional, and state entities to ensure effective utility planning, operations, and maintenance to serve the region’s long-term development and redevelopment.

**Objective 7.1.4.** Ensure capital improvements are consistent with and act as a means of implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

**Objective 7.1.5.** Schedule capital improvements to coordinate with land use decisions and fiscal resources to maintain adequate levels of service to meet future needs.

**Objective 7.1.6.** Ensure utility rates reflect the actual and anticipated costs of service through the institution of a regularly-scheduled rate assessment and adjustment program.
8.0 NATURAL SYSTEMS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The City of Gulfport is greatly defined by its environmental setting, with numerous aquatic resources and associated floodplains and wetlands within the City’s boundaries. Situated at the center of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the City’s southern boundary includes seven miles of frontage on the Mississippi Sound and much of its eastern boundary follows the Biloxi River. These natural systems both set the character of the City and influence the areas of potential growth and development.

As the City has developed over the past century, pressures have increased to build on sensitive natural lands. Citizens have expressed a desire to increase efforts to protect natural and environmental resources. In order to create a development pattern that considers constraints and ensures resiliency to natural hazards, the goals, objectives, and strategies at the end of this Chapter strive to create a more sustainable community and protect and promote the City’s excellent natural resources.

8.2 CONDITIONS, ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

The natural features of the City of Gulfport, including the soils, topography, and water resources, have a significant impact on the suitability of land for development. It is important to understand the physical constraints of land within the City and identify and prevent development areas that are prone to natural hazards and protect areas that have the potential for recreational purposes as well as ecological benefits.

Soils

The City of Gulfport is situated along a seven-mile segment of the shoreline of the Mississippi Sound. According to the General Soil Map for Harrison County, Mississippi prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soil Conservation Service, the City includes four distinct soil associations that correspond to physiographic characteristics of the natural landform as it extends from the shoreline northward. The southernmost portion of the City lying between the Mississippi Sound and Brickyard Bayou as it flows through the City into Big Lake is predominately made up of organic sandy soils flooded by salt water.

The area extending from just south of Brickyard Bayou to just north of Interstate 10 and extending further north up the floodplains of Bayou Bernard and Flat Branch consists of loamy and sandy soils of the uplands on
broad flats and floodplains. The northernmost part of the City extending from just north of Interstate 10 and up the floodplains of Bayou Bernard and Flat Branch to the northern edge of the Comprehensive Plan’s area consists of loamy soils that have loamy subsoil and uplands. These natural environmental characteristics react differently to urbanization and require different types of development regulation and development infrastructure.

**Topography**

The City of Gulfport is located within the Gulf Coast Flatwoods and the Southern Lower Coastal Plains. The Gulf Coast Flatwoods includes a 5-mile wide area of coastal lowlands that runs along the Mississippi Sound in Harrison County. Within the City of Gulfport, the Gulf Coast Flatwoods consists of a shallow coastal ridge with elevations of between 20 to 25 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD), located a half-mile inland from the Mississippi Sound running roughly parallel with Pass Road. The area north of this ridge, near Brickyard Bayou, drops to an elevation of about 10 feet NGVD.

Elevations along the east-west CSX Railroad line paralleling the Mississippi Sound are stable at 30 feet NGVD. Elevations along the KCS Railroad route from the Port of Gulfport to Highway 53 rise from 10 feet NGVD to 100 feet NGVD. Along the east-west KCS Railroad route from the City’s western boundary line to the north-south KCS rail line, the elevations fall from 33 feet NGVD to 23 feet NGVD.

The Gulf Coast Flatwoods transitions to the Southern Lower Coastal Plain north of Brickyard Bayou and the elevations begin to increase sharply toward the northern limits of the City of Gulfport (City of Gulfport, 2000). As shown in Map 8.1, elevations in the northwestern limits of the City of Gulfport are the greatest with general elevations between 80 to 85 feet NGVD, rising up to 100 feet NGVD in some areas and declining down to 70 feet NGVD in other areas. Generally, the landform slopes from this northwest corner of the City southeasterly toward the Biloxi River’s outlet into Big Lake, which has an elevation of approximately 7 feet NGVD. Similarly, numerous rivers, streams, and bayous traverse the City flowing southeasterly toward the Biloxi River and Big Lake, eventually to be discharged into the Mississippi Sound.

**Coastal and Aquatic Resources**

The aquatic resources and their drainage patterns within Gulfport and its adjacent Planning Area also significantly influence the location of potential land for urban development and use. Map 8.2 identifies the major aquatic resources within the City and the surrounding area. The overall general drainage pattern of the area flows southerly and easterly through the area’s primary streams, including the Biloxi River, Bayou Bernard and the Industrial Seaway. These primary streams in turn flow directly into Big Lake and the Biloxi Back Bay. In the eastern portion of the City, the Little Biloxi River and Fritz Creek flow southerly into the Biloxi River. Turkey Creek and Brickyard Bayou are located in the southern portion of the City of Gulfport and flow directly into Bayou Bernard. Flat Branch, located in the northwestern portion of the City flows into the northern reaches of Bayou Bernard, just north of the Interstate 10 and US 49 intersection. Associated with and along these drainage ways are regulatory floodways, floodplains, wetlands that further influence the potential pattern of urban development and use.

The southern border of the City of Gulfport is the Mississippi Sound, which is ultimately the recipient of the streams and creeks mentioned above. The Mississippi Sound bordering the City of Gulfport is bounded to the south by
MAP 8.1 TOPOGRAPHY

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS, FEMA. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.

Elevation (feet)

2  20  40  60  80  100  120  140  160

0  0.5  1  2 Miles
Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
the Cat and Ship barrier islands, part of the National Park Service’s Gulf Islands National Seashore. A channel through the Mississippi Sound provides access to the deepwater Port of Gulfport from the Gulf of Mexico.

Fronting on the Mississippi Sound, the Sand Beach and its seawall serve as a protective barrier to minimize erosion along the 7-mile long southern boundary of the City. The Sand Beach was constructed and is overseen by the Harrison County Sand Beach Authority to manage erosion. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers renourishes the beach occasionally as wind and storms continue to erode the sand.

Existing land uses adjacent to the beach include a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial. The beach itself includes both active and passive recreational uses as well as natural areas set aside for dunes and associated vegetation to provide future storm protection. Harrison County recently updated the county-wide Sand Beach Master Plan to help guide the redevelopment and future growth along the beachfront in coordination with the other jurisdictions, including the City of Gulfport, that lie adjacent to it.

**Flood Hazard Areas**

Numerous flood-prone areas, regulatory floodways, and designated floodplains are located within the City of Gulfport and are largely associated with the surface water bodies and drainages discussed above. Flood-prone areas in the City generally follow the rivers and streams and are influenced by the topographic conditions along these drainage routes. Regulatory floodways tend to closely follow the streambeds of major water bodies. Designated floodplains tend to extend beyond the floodway boundaries and are influenced by the topography in the area and the constrictions of flow potential within the floodways.

Historically, the City of Gulfport has experienced flooding due to heavy rains within the coastal areas and also in the upper reaches of the rivers that run through it. The water bodies throughout the City, as part of the regional hydrologic system, are prone to flooding from heavy rains in the upper reaches of Harrison County. The City’s location on the Mississippi Sound also makes it vulnerable to coastal and tidal flooding.

In August 2005, the City of Gulfport was impacted by Hurricane Katrina, a Category 3 Hurricane, which became the deadliest and costliest natural disaster to ever affect the United States. During this event, the City of Gulfport experienced coastal flooding from the tidal surges and above normal high tides driven from the hurricane, as well as flash floods from heavy rainfall. In response to Hurricane Katrina, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) updated the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the City of Gulfport and Harrison County. As a result, there was an increase in the number of areas in the City that were subject to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards. The NFIP identifies areas as regulatory floodways or Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA).

Regulatory floodways in the City of Gulfport include Brickyard Bayou, Bayou Bernard, Industrial Waterway, Turkey Creek, Flat Branch Creek, Fritz Creek, and portions of the Biloxi River. Coastal flood zones with velocity hazards are located along the coast of the Mississippi Sound and at the mouth of the Biloxi River near Big Lake. SFHA are located adjacent to all of the regulatory floodways and in the coastal areas adjacent to the Mississippi Sound. The revised FIRM maps also identify other flood-prone areas. Beyond the areas adjacent to the coast, the majority of the other flood-prone areas occur south of Interstate 10 in the vicinity of Bayou Bernard, Brickyard Bayou, and Turkey Creek. Map 8.3 and Table
MAP 8.3 FLOOD HAZARD AREAS
Starting in 2001, the City, working with FEMA through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, began to acquire homes where there had been a concentration of repetitive losses. As of 2007, over 200 of these properties have been acquired by the city, helping to reduce the number of vulnerable structures in this neighborhood.

As shown in Map 8.3, repetitive loss areas in the City include Easy Street and Government Street adjacent to Flat Branch, the Bayou View West subdivision south of 34th Street, areas near the Biloxi River, the Port of Gulfport, and areas adjacent to Turkey Creek, Bayou Bernard, Lake Gulfport, Brickyard Bayou. Other repetitive loss areas located mostly outside the SFHA include two small areas north of Dedeaux Road and two areas north of Brickyard Bayou—one south of Pass Road north of the Brickyard Bayou between Bullis Avenue and 15th Avenue and one south of the Seabee Base between 38th and 49th Avenues.

Table 8.1. National Flood Insurance Program Flood Hazard Area Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flood Hazard Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA)</td>
<td>The land area covered by the floodwaters of the base flood, or 1% annual chance flood, on NFIP maps. The SFHA is the area where the NFIP’s floodplain management regulations must be enforced and the area where the mandatory purchase of flood insurance applies. The SFHA includes Zones A, A0, AH, A1-30, AE, A99, AR, AR/A1-30, AR/AE, AR/A0, AR/AH, AR/A, V0, V1-30, VE, and V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floodway</td>
<td>The channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height. Communities must regulate development in these floodways to ensure that there are no increases in upstream flood elevations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Flood Areas</td>
<td>Areas of 0.2% annual chance flood; areas of 1% annual chance flood with average depths of less than 1 foot or with drainage areas less than 1 square mile; and areas protected by levees from 1% annual chance flood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Flood Zone with Velocity Hazard</td>
<td>Coastal high hazard areas where wave action and/or high-velocity water can cause structural damage during the base flood. They are subdivided into elevation zones with BFEs assigned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: FEMA.
Wetlands

Wetlands have many valuable functions—the most vital is perhaps the flood and erosion control they provide. Wetlands act as sponges by trapping and slowly releasing surface waters, rain, and flood waters within the floodplain. The vegetation associated with wetlands helps to slow water flow and redistribute it throughout the floodplain at a sustainable pace, reducing the potential flooding to developed areas. This function of capturing water and slowly redistributing it can lower flood heights and reduce erosion (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1995). According to the USEPA (2006), wetland restoration and preservation is an important component of a comprehensive flood protection strategy.

In Gulfport’s environmental setting, wetlands are an important consideration influencing the extent and configuration of potential development. Wetlands in Gulfport and the adjacent area are largely associated with the area’s water bodies and floodplains. Map 8.4 provides an overview of the wetlands in the City and surrounding area. The wetlands were mapped using data from the National Wetlands Inventory.

The greatest concentrated wetland areas are located in the Turkey Creek and Biloxi River watersheds. Other concentrations of wetlands occur within the upper reaches of Bayou Bernard, Flat Branch, and Fritz Creek. The consideration of wetlands in the land development process includes prohibition of development, replacement, mitigation, enhancement, or other tools to preserve the environmental integrity and function of the wetlands while accommodating development.

Natural Open Spaces, Greenways and Trails

The City of Gulfport currently does not have a greenways or trail network, but there are many opportunities for the development of a natural open space system. Map 8.5 has identified low-lying areas along waterways or within the SFHA as Conservation Study Areas, or areas that should be considered for incorporation into a greenway or trail network. Significant areas within the identified Conservation Study Area are currently under public ownership.

Continued acquisition and utilization of natural areas and public right-of-way along waterways and the creation of a system of open spaces, greenways, and trails would improve recreational facilities while providing ecological benefits to water resources and help to mitigate flooding and the loss of property.
MAP 8.4 WETLANDS - NATIONAL WETLANDS INVENTORY

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS, National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
MAP 8.5 GREENWAY CORRIDOR & TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

Sources: City of Gulfport Division of GIS, Harrison County Tax Assessor, FEMA, HDR, Inc. Map prepared by HDR, Inc. for the City of Gulfport. Map for planning purposes only.
8.3 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Plan recommends several goals and objectives to protect the City’s natural systems, mitigate natural hazards from impacting the built environment, and enhancing the enjoyment and use of the City’s natural resources:

**GOAL 8.1. NATURAL SYSTEM PROTECTION & CONSERVATION.** Protect and enhance natural resources to increase their function in mitigating hazards.

**Objective 8.1.1.** Establish measures and identify and prioritize projects to restore the function and quality of wetlands, bayous, and floodplains to mitigate future flood and wind damage.

**Objective 8.1.2.** Establish education and incentive programs to encourage landowners (homeowners, businesses, and developers) to use Low Impact Development (LID) techniques, such as pervious surfaces and restored wetlands to protect natural resources and floodplains and reduce the potential effects of flooding.

**Objective 8.1.3.** Support watershed management planning, such as the Turkey Creek Watershed Implementation Plan, as a comprehensive approach to protecting and enhancing the functions of wetlands and floodplains while providing public recreational opportunities.

**Objective 8.1.4.** Establish a priority list and program for the acquisition of environmentally-sensitive lands in cooperation with local, county, state government agencies, private landowners, and other organizations, such as the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain and the Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District.

**Objective 8.1.5.** Establish standards for new development adjacent to wetlands to reasonably assure that the quality and quantity of their stormwater discharge does not adversely affect the physical, hydrological, and/or ecological features of those habitats.

**GOAL 8.2. HAZARD MITIGATION & FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION.** Establish property protection programs and measures in special flood hazard areas and floodplains.

**Objective 8.2.1.** Support and implement the mitigation efforts and priorities identified in the City’s adopted Hazard Mitigation and Flood Protection Plan.

**Objective 8.2.2.** Promote both structural and non-structural flood and erosion control measures to reduce the potential effects of flooding, including beach renourishment, marsh and wetland restoration, and restoration of levees.

**Objective 8.2.3.** Enforce and regularly review and update the City’s Master Drainage Plan based on ongoing development patterns and drainage needs in the City.

**Objective 8.2.4.** Reduce the number of vulnerable structures in special flood hazard areas by pursuing acquisition or elevation of structures in repetitive loss areas. Work with FEMA to expand effort to assist homeowners living in these areas by elevating structures or acquiring properties using FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding.

**Objective 8.2.5.** Enforce the City’s adopted building code for all development and the City’s substantial damage and substantial improvement rule and the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance for development within the Special Flood Hazard Areas.
GOAL 8.3. COASTAL SYSTEM NATURAL RESOURCES. Manage the coastal system natural resources within the City limits in a manner that will maintain and enhance the environment, recreational opportunities, and protect human life.

Objective 8.3.1. Support the efforts of the Harrison County Sand Beach Authority and the implementation of the Sand Beach Master Plan within the City.

Objective 8.3.2. Consider the establishment of development standards specific to coastal development in coordination with the Sand Beach Master Plan.

Objective 8.3.3. Maintain or improve public access to the waterfront and encourage connectivity of the waterfront to other areas of the City through a system of greenways and trails.

Objective 8.3.4. Support the creation of sand dunes and protect existing sand dune systems as a natural protection measure for the City's coastal areas.

GOAL 8.4. GREENWAY SYSTEM. Develop a system of greenways, based on key corridors shown in Map 8.5, that protect natural resources, enhance connectivity, and provide recreational opportunities throughout the City.

Objective 8.4.1. Create a task force to identify and prioritize greenways and trail opportunities within the City with representation from neighborhood, environmental, real estate, legal, construction/engineering, business, and non-profit organizations.

Objective 8.4.2. In cooperation with the Greenways and Trails task force and the Department of Leisure Services, develop a plan to create a formal system of parks and open spaces with greenway or trail connectors between them based on the natural environmental conditions, particularly along waterways and their associated natural areas, that extend throughout the City.

Objective 8.4.3. Educate and cooperate with landowners and other organizations to organize a program to systematically purchase or accept donations of open space in fee simple or conservation easement for the protection of natural areas and public access to greenways and waterways within the City.