

DUANY PLATER-ZYBERK & COMPANY

ARCHITECTS AND TOWN PLANNERS

Lake Charles Lakefront Master Plan Follow Up Report

**Final
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MIAMI WASHINGTON CHARLOTTE

1023 Southwest 25th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33135 Tel: (305) 644-1023 Fax: (305) 644-1021 www.dpz.com

Introduction

The Downtown Lake Charles Charrette Report was initiated as a way of assisting storm-damaged Lake Charles to develop a recovery vision. The plan was commissioned by the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) and facilitated by Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company. Planning and urban design professional experts from Louisiana and around the world were assembled for the Charrette in Lake Charles. This effort resulted in a forward looking plan that took advantage of imbedded assets – lakefront, existing buildings and infrastructure, interstate access – and integrated innovative planning concepts.

Heavily influenced by the public through the participatory charrette process, the plan reflects the desires and concerns of downtown Lake Charles stakeholders including a broad array of city residents and community leaders. The consensus was so strong that, upon the final presentation of the Charrette findings, the City immediately adopted the plan and passed six resolutions directing City leadership to pursue its concepts.

Since the final Charrette Report was completed much progress has been made by the Downtown Development Authority and their consultant team led by the Moore Planning Group. In addition a comprehensive retail and housing market study has been completed by ZVA. This follow up report “tunes up” the initial master plan in light of the new information and impressive progress of the past year.

Review of Findings From the Charrette Report

The priorities of the Downtown Lake Charles Charrette Report were developed by consensus through the charrette process. To date, nothing indicates that these overarching priorities have changed. They can be summarized as follows:

- to extend the urban fabric to the waterfront
- to provide lakefront amenities conducive to public use
- to upgrade waterfront storm surge and flood protection
- to entice private development through innovative codes
- to resolve existing traffic problems
- to accommodate / encourage transit-friendly development patterns
- to integrate projects under consideration before Rita
- to catalyze high-quality housing construction in the downtown area
- to use environmentally responsible building techniques
- to feature reduced storm-related risks

These priorities formed the basis for the downtown plan and will continue to permeate the decision process in the LDAP-Phase I work.

Critical Market Study Findings That Have Primarily Influenced This Report

After reviewing the ZVA market study and other information provided by MPG, DPZ has primarily focused on two findings:

- the Lake Charles market can absorb about 1000 new T-5 to T-6 housing units for younger and older adults in the near future; and
- a more pedestrian-oriented environment in the Downtown area could support as much as 3 to 4 times the food, entertainment, and specialty retail venues currently in business (an additional 150,000-200,000 SF).

Goal Refinements in Response to Market Study

In supporting and/or incentivizing new development, the following strategic goals are recommended:

- replace the 1600 surface parking spaces around the Civic Center with structured and street public parking lined with mixed use buildings;
- generally create a vibrant pedestrian environment;
- enhance the ability of downtown to support festivals and public events; and
- support incremental sequencing of development in Tract One of the Strategic Implementation Plan (on Page 3) along these stages:
 1. leading initially with *housing*, to build a base for
 2. more *restaurants, and specialty retail*, which will build a base for
 3. more *culture and entertainment venues*, which will build a base for
 4. a *grocery-anchored neighborhood center*, which could eventually build a base for
 5. a *Lifestyle Center*.

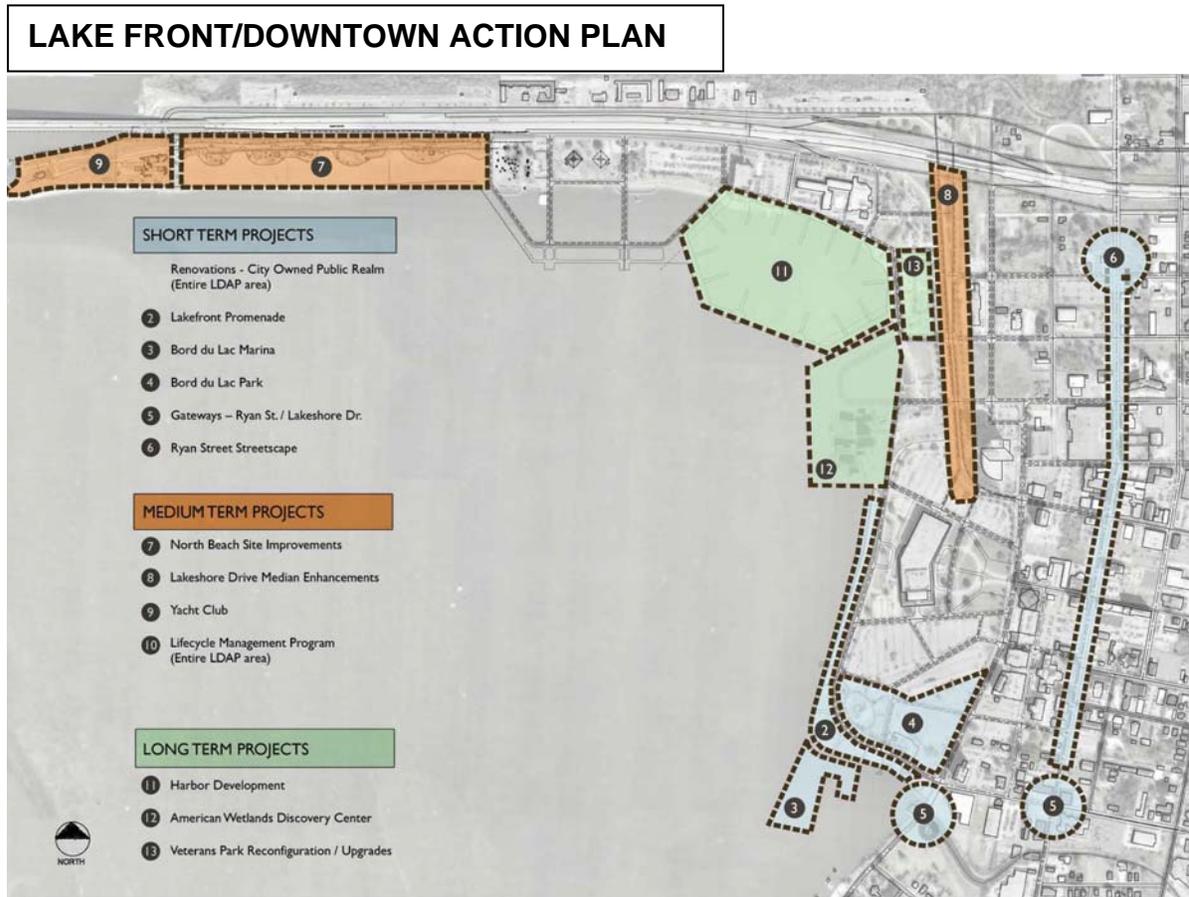
Recommended Initial Sequencing of Projects

- Venture with an experienced New Urban developer to establish an urban edge to along the newly proposed Bord du Lac Park and Promenade redevelopment. This edge development will include approximately 124 new townhomes and live work units with as many as 100 accessory apartments. Live/work and mixed use development that can begin as housing and be converted to commercial as the market matures should be prioritized. DPZ has revised the Bord du Lac/ Tract One area of the Master Plan to allow for more incremental, lower scale development that meets all the above stated goals.
- Within or nearby Tract One of the Strategic Implementation Plan (see Page 3) develop structured public parking facility to provide any additional parking spaces beyond what is made available by street parking. Venture with a developer to wrap the parking facility with mixed-use liner buildings. This structure will:
 - allow the redevelopment of current surface parking,
 - support a vibrant pedestrian environment,
 - serve the three existing and proposed initial anchors: a redeveloped Bord du Lac Park, a new Wetlands Discovery Center, the existing Civic Center.
 Funding for the parking functions of the structure could likely include:
 - bonds and other local funding that require developer participation;
 - lease of property freed up by demo of surface parking;
 - future State Capital Outlay;
 - federal appropriations; and

- long term parking leases to large downtown employers.

Initial phases of Downtown redevelopment will:

- Reduce unnecessary surface parking.
- Incentivize housing construction.
- Generally create a vibrant pedestrian environment.
- Enhance the ability of downtown to support festivals and public events.



Initial Anchor Projects:

- The Redevelopment of Bord du Lac Park and the Lake Front Promenade.
- The America’s Wetland Discovery Center (projected annual attendance of 270,000).

Initial Improvement Projects:

- Renovation Projects
- Lakefront Promenade
- Bord du Lac Park Marina
- Bord du Lac Park
- Ryan Street Streetscape
- Lakeshore/ Ryan Street Gateways

Long Term Considerations:

- Feasibility of Harbor Development uncertain but being explored
- Veterans Park would be reconfigured and upgraded if/when harbor is developed

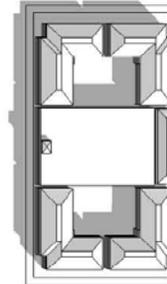
Lake Front’s Competitive Advantages Context (from market study):

- Downtown remains the business and civic hub for the region
 - It is particularly well positioned to capitalize on projected employment growth in the professional and business service industries.
 - Future office demand in the region will focus on Lake Charles
- 18,000 people live within a 5 minute drive of downtown
- Downtown did not experience severe blight brought on by white and middle class flight. Poverty is not concentrated in Downtown, and it does not suffer from the long term, more intractable social, economic, and physical problems common to other inner city areas.
- Generally the population is middle class with lower poverty levels than the rest of the state, but fewer wealthy households than other major Louisiana cities.
- With over 75 festivals held annually, Lake Charles is the major cultural and educational center in the southwest, Acadiana region of the state. Lake Charles is referred to as the Festival Capital of Louisiana.

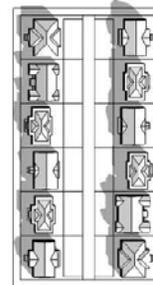
Housing - prepare for 1000 new T-4 to T-6 units for younger and older adults

The current Downtown market could absorb the following unit types and estimated numbers:

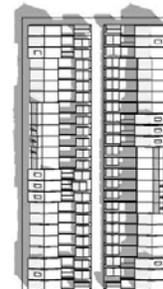
- 460 Rental lofts and apartments in complexes 3 to 4 stories high, with structured parking configured to allow easy conversion of the ground floor to retail as the market matures.



- 300 For-sale lofts and apartments, 2 to 4 stories high, configured to allow easy conversion of the ground floor to retail as the market matures.



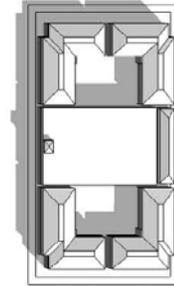
- 250 For-sale townhouse, 2-3 stories high especially live work units.



The primary markets are young adults and older adults, with little demand in the middle age and family markets. Live/work units that may initially function only as housing, and later be converted on the ground floor to commercial or office, could especially help transition the downtown market, and should be encouraged.

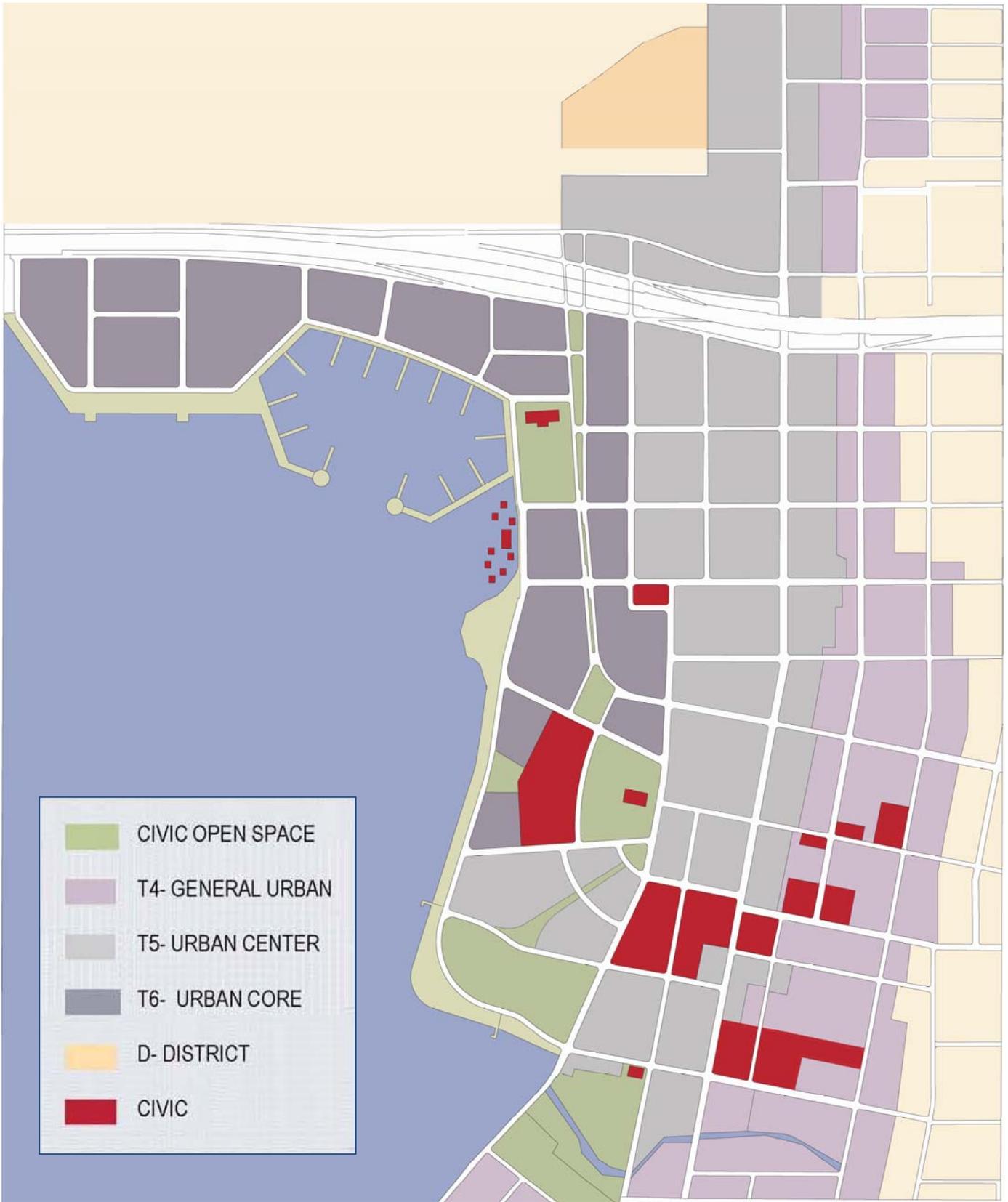
Retail- anticipate 150,000 -200,000 SF of new retail space

Retail will be developed incrementally as the downtown is redeveloped. Currently there is less than 50,000 square feet of retail in the Downtown- mostly eating and drinking establishments, accounting for less than 1% of the Metropolitan Area sales. It is estimated that investing in pedestrian friendly redevelopment could increase downtown's share of eating and entertainment expenditures by 3 to 4 times.



Transect Delineation

Currently none of the transects in the Lake Front Master Plan mandate more than 2 stories of development. T-6 allows up to 8 stories, and given the presence of existing 10 story towers in the T-6 transect zone, it is recommended that this 8 story maximum height be kept.



LAKE CHARLES LAKE FRONT TRANSECT DELINIATION PLAN

REVISED 10.6.08

INITIAL PROJECTS IN TRACT ONE OF STRATEGIC PLAN

1a. 2-3 STORIES-

The type and scale of a development initially needed to create a vibrant, pedestrian oriented downtown. As Project (2) is brought on line, the City could provide financial and zoning incentives for infill and renovation along Ryan street.

- a. 230 surplus parking spaces
- b. 114 town home/ live work units
- c. 10,000 SF ground floor retail
- d. 100 accessory apartments

1b /1c. 6 STORIES

Mixed Use Civic Center Annex buildings potentially including:

- a. Hotel, Office, and Retail uses
- b. Additional program space for Civic Center.

2. 4 STORIES-

Frees up the Bord Du Lac Park area from surface parking

- a. 700 surplus parking spaces
- b. 8000 SF ground floor retail
- c. 16 condo/apartment units

3. 4 STORIES

Could support the Wetland Discovery Center with parking and retail.

- a. 300 surplus parking spaces
- b. 30,000 SF ground floor retail
- c. 64 condo/apartment units

4. 5 STORIES

Ideal location for hotel and condo uses.

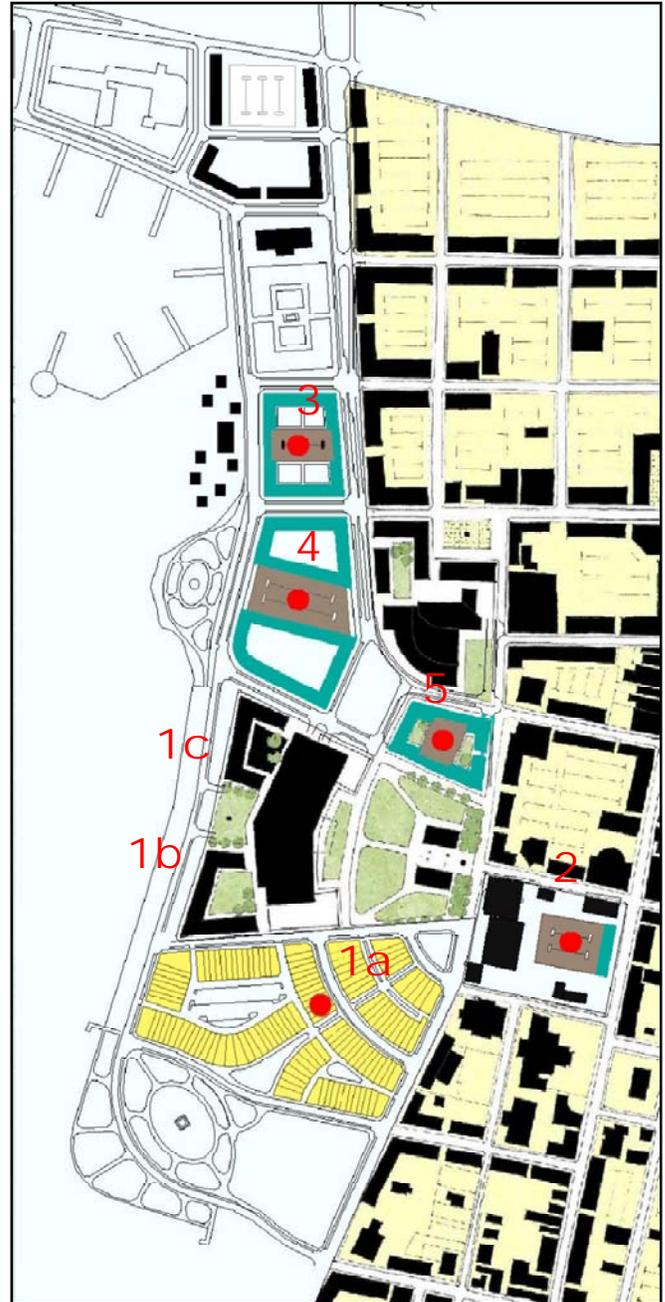
Can provide additional public parking if needed.

- a. 840 surplus parking spaces
- b. 50,000 SF ground floor retail
- c. 113 condo/apartment units

5. 4 STORIES

ideal for condos and apartments and can provide additional public parking if needed

- a. 150 surplus parking spaces
- b. 30,000 SF ground floor retail
- c. 60 condo/apartment units



TOTALS BETWEEN ALL PROJECTS

- a. 2,520 surplus parking spaces
- b. 128,000 SF ground floor retail
- c. 373 condo/apartment units
- d. 114 town home/ live work units

MARKET DEMAND

- a. 2,000 surplus parking spaces
- b. 460 condo/apartment units
- c. 150-200,000 SF ground floor retail
- d. 550 town home/ live work units