Staff Report

port

Text Amendment

Case #: TA-2019-11-00015

Attachments:

Staff Report, Proposed Ordinance, Commercial Highway

Zoning Commission Public Hearing:	Thursday, February 3, 2022
City Council Introduction:	Tuesday, February 22, 2022
City Council Hearing:	Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Request:
TA-2019-11-00015 Text Amendment to UDC #14-5364 Article 6.3 to revise build-to-areas for primary and side streets for zoning districts MX-C, C-H, C-N, C-R, I-L, and I-H outside transition zones according to proposed zoning maps.

Additional Information

All zoning districts that require max building setbacks that is located inside this proposed area must still comply with the maximum building setbacks.

All zoning districts that require maximum building setbacks that is located outside this proposed area can build beyond the maximum building setbacks.

City Planner Recommendation

As per the Commercial Highway Build to Line Report

- Create Overlay District for lots fronting the following streets:
    - University Avenue – City Limits to Cherry Street
    - West Thomas Street – City Limits to one-way pair split (North Carter Street)
    - East Thomas Street – City Limits to one-way pair split (South Range Road)
    - North Morrison Boulevard
    - SW Railroad Avenue – City Limits to one-way pair (First Avenue)

- Within the overlay district, require the following:
    - Build to line of 60 feet;
    - Screening shall be provided on each side of such parking area which abuts upon or faces a Street, Alley or place. A parking area Screening shall be not less than four (4) and not more than six (6) feet in height above the grade of the parking lot surface, but in no case shall be permitted to within the Sight Distance Triangle (Appendix C).

CITY OF HAMMOND
ORDINANCE No. _____

An Ordinance to Amend the Hammond Unified Development Code
To Add the _____ Overlay District

WHEREAS, upon the recommendation of the Hammond Planning & Zoning Commission that an additional overlay district be created in the City of Hammond, the Hammond Unified Development Code be amended to add an additional overlay district called the _____ Overlay District;

BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of Hammond, Louisiana, that the Hammond Unified Development Code, Article 8 be amended to add Section 8.6 as follows:

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Article 8. Overlay Districts

…

8.6 Suburban Highway Overlay District (SH)

8.6.1 Purpose

Purpose - In suburban areas along Major Highways there is a need for a more flexible design for the health, safety, and welfare of City residents. Build-to lines are used in many zoning districts around the country and were created for several reasons. The most crucial reason is for pedestrian accessibility. By ensuring the buildings are close to the street it helps with pedestrian accessibility and safety. However, it also helps the overall design of the city by ensuring buildings are placed on the site to be in scale with the surrounding areas. By having large open areas in front of buildings, such as large parking lots, it creates scaling within the city that doesn't fit within the context of the Comprehensive Plan. This overlay improves site requirements along corridors identified as Major Arterials in the Major Street Plan.

- Location: Create Overlay District for lots fronting the following streets:
  - University Avenue – City Limits to Cherry Street
  - West Thomas Street – City Limits to one-way pair split (North Carter Street)
  - East Thomas Street – City Limits to one-way pair split (South Range Road)
  - North Morrison Boulevard
  - SW Railroad Avenue – City Limits to one-way pair (First Avenue)
- Within the overlay district, require the following:
  - Build-to-line of 60 feet;
  - Screening shall be provided on each side of such parking area which abuts upon or faces a Street, Alley or place. A parking area Screening shall be not less than four (4) and not more than six (6) feet in height above the grade of the parking lot surface, but in no case shall be permitted to within the Sight Distance Triangle (Appendix C).

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The above and foregoing ordinance having being duly submitted to the Hammond City Council in writing; introduced at a public meeting on _____**, 2022** of the Hammond City Council and

discussed at a public meeting held on _____**, 2022;** after motion and second was submitted to the official vote of the Hammond City Council.

On motion by Councilman _____ and Second by Councilman _____ the foregoing ordinance was hereby declared adopted on _____**, 2022** by the following roll call vote:

<u>Votes</u>: Councilman Wells ( ), Councilman DiVittorio ( ), Councilman Andrews ( ), Councilwoman Gonzales ( ), Councilman Andrews ( ).

WHEREFORE the above and foregoing ordinance was declared duly adopted on the ____ **day of _____, 2022,** at Hammond, Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana.

_____	_____
Kip Andrews	**Honorable Pete Panepinto**
President, Hammond City Council	**Mayor, City of Hammond**

_____
Lisa Cockerham, Clerk
Hammond City Council

City of Hammond Planning and Zoning

Commercial Highway Build to Line

Introduction

1. Background
2. Commercial Highway Zoning
3. Hammond Major Street Plan
4. Hammond Comprehensive Plan
5. Final Recommendation

Background

The City of Hammond's Zoning Code was adopted from the Louisiana Land Use Toolkit, which was created to allow for communities to build a regulatory framework that is appropriate for needs of individual communities. The Code Requirements for build-to lines in the C-H Zoning Code for the City of Hammond was determined using this toolkit which varies from contextual areas ranging from urban, suburban, to rural. Build-to lines are used in many zoning districts around the country and were created for several reasons. The most crucial reason is for pedestrian accessibility. By ensuring the buildings are close to the street it helps with pedestrian accessibility and safety. However, it also helps the overall design of the city by ensuring buildings are placed on the site as to be in scale with the surrounding areas. By having large open areas in front of buildings, such as large parking lots, it creates scaling within the city that doesn't fit within the context of the Comprehensive Plan.

However, lots of issues come with regulating a building so close to the street in a suburban area along Commercial Highways. In these cases, a more flexible design is needed for the health, safety, and welfare of the City and its residents.

This report will look at our current code requirements and how it relates to the Comprehensive Plan. Recommendations will be given on how to improve the regulatory framework of the build-to line in the Hammond Unified Development Code. The main points being taken into consideration are sites within the Commercial Highway Corridor (C-H) Zoning Code along streets identified as Major Arterials in the Major Street Plan.

Commercial Highway Corridor Zoning

The American Planning Association (APA) has many resources on Best Practices for Planning and Zoning Codes.

Example 1 - Huntersville, North Carolina

General Requirements

1) Along existing streets, new buildings shall respect the general spacing of structures, building mass and scale, and street frontage relationships of existing buildings. New buildings which adhere to the scale, massing, volume, spacing, and setback of existing buildings along fronting streets exhibit demonstrable compatibility. New buildings which exceed the scale and volume of existing buildings may demonstrate compatibility by varying the massing of buildings to reduce perceived scale and volume. The definition of massing in Article 12 illustrates the application of design techniques to reduce the visual perception of size and integrate larger buildings with pre-existing smaller buildings. Nothing in this subsection shall be interpreted to conflict with the building design element provisions as found in N.C.G.S. 160D-702(b) for structures subject to the North Carolina Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings.

2) On new streets, allowable building and lot types will establish the development pattern.

3) In major subdivisions and planned developments, the aggregate number of dwelling units contained in attached houses, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings shall not exceed 30% of the total number of dwelling units in a project.

4) Notwithstanding the limitations of 3), above,

(a) In any section of a major subdivision located within ¼ mile of a designated rail transit station, the percentage of dwelling units contained in attached houses, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings is not limited. Higher overall density is encouraged within 1/4 mile of rail transit stations. Rail transit stations are those locations designated by resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Huntersville.

(b) In a pedestrian-oriented development organized around a system of streets and blocks, and anchored with retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses, 100% of the dwelling units which are located in the same block with commercial uses maybe contained in attached houses, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings. To qualify under this paragraph, at least one parking space per dwelling unit must be replaced in a parking deck which is located on the interior of the block, and at least 20% of the habitable first-floor area in each block must be devoted to commercial

uses. Habitable first-floor area includes all first-floor building area that is used for interior human activity (including storage areas of retail shops, kitchen areas and pantries for restaurants, and similar uses). Habitable first floor area does not include the first floor of a parking deck nor outdoor areas used for restaurant seating or retail display. Hotels, light manufacturing and assembly facilities, and laboratories and associated research facilities are permitted within the development, but may not be used to meet the 20% minimum first-floor commercial requirement. The higher density residential environment permitted by this exception provides a full-time population which animates the streets, supports the businesses on a daily basis, and accesses goods and services without sole dependence on private vehicles.

(c) Within a Mixed-Use Node, the aggregate number of dwelling units contained in attached houses, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings shall not exceed80% subject to the following requirements:

i. Housing density shall decrease in intensity on streets further away from the Commercial Use(s); apartment buildings and mixed-use buildings housing density shall not exceed 18 units per acre; attached housing density shall not exceed 8 units per acre; detached housing density shall not exceed 3 units per acre.

ii. A minimum of 50% of the node acreage must be for residential use.

iii. All mixed-use buildings shall count towards the residential acreage requirements.

iv. An approved Mixed Use Node that contains less than 100 acres may be expanded to include parcels that are adjacent to the approved Mixed-use Node and its major thoroughfare. The number and type of dwelling units permitted at an expanded Mixed Use Node shall not exceed the overall allowable density as prescribed herein.

5) Where screening is required by Article 9 for activities involving any sale, use, repair, storage, or cleaning operation, the specified standard of Section 7.5 shall apply.

6) Any Highway Commercial District shall be bordered on at least one side by a major or minor thoroughfare.

7) Abutting Interstate 77, the specified buffer requirement of Section 7.5 applies.

8) The arrangement of multiple buildings on a single lot shall establish building facades generally parallel to the frontage property lines along existing streets and proposed interior streets.

9) Every building lot shall have frontage upon a public street or urban open space except as follows: in specific locations where factors beyond developer control, such as a limited access

highway, an existing development, or the location of an existing intersection, prohibit completing a street connection in the Highway Commercial District, a private drive may be substituted for the interior street which cannot be connected to the public network.

10) See Section 8.16, Standards for Residential Lot Widths, Alleys, Garages and Parking in Residential Districts

Example 2 - Billings, Montana

Arterial setbacks. Minimum arterial setbacks as follows apply to all commercial and mixed-use districts, except CBD and DX districts:

1. No building or structure shall be erected or maintained within fifty (50) feet of the centerline of an arterial street. In addition, no required parking area or portion thereof, including driving aisles, shall be constructed or located within forty (40) feet of the centerline of an arterial street. Any new construction that increases the number of required off-street parking spaces, must locate these additional required parking spaces in areas that comply with these locational standards.

2. Approved signs and public use controls and systems, trees trimmed up eight (8) feet and canopies with at least eight (8) feet clearance, shall be permitted in this setback area. For the purpose of this subsection, canopies shall be defined as covers that are solely attached to and supported by the structure on which it is attached to and which can be removed without destroying any part of that supporting structure. This shall only apply to canopies attached to the principal structure.

The designation of a street as an arterial shall be recommended by the city engineer, or in conformity with the most recent urban transportation plan.

City of Hammond Major Street Plan

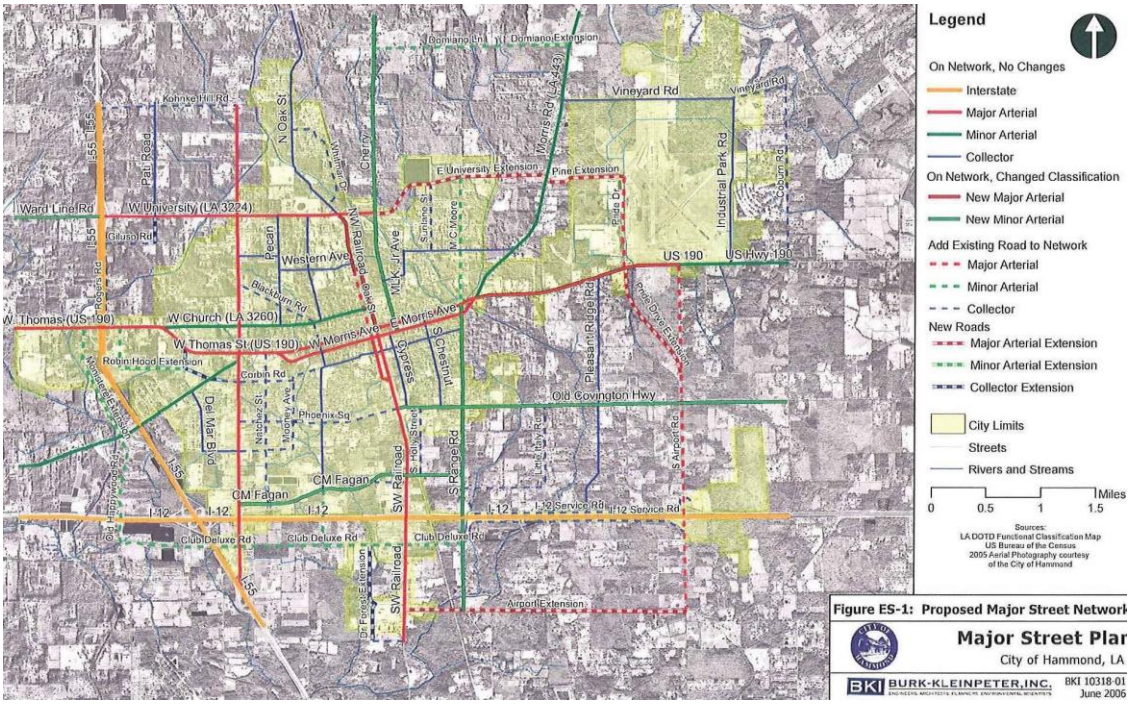


Table ES-4
Proposed Major Street System - Major Arterials
Existing Streets and New Construction

	Street Name	Limits	Location			Road Status		Existing Street Width (in feet)								Length (in miles)
			Urban	Sub-urban	Rural	In Network	On 2002 Functional Class Map?	Existing ROW		Design Standard		ROW Deficency		Existing Pavement		
No Additional Right-of-Way Required	E/W Thomas St (US 190) / E/W Morris Ave	Carter Street to Morris Road	☒			Yes	Yes	- 60	ft each	120	ft	*none apparent*		24	ft each	7.4
	N/S Oak Street / NW/SW Railroad	NW Railroad to SW Railroad / N Oak to South Oak	☒			Yes	Yes	- 60	ft each	120	ft	*none apparent*		20 / 22	ft	1.1
	N/S Morrison Blvd (US 51)	I-55 to Northern Study Area Limits	☒	☒	☒	Yes	Yes	120	ft	120-150	ft	*none in urban area; 30 ft in suburban/rural areas*		60	ft	4.4
Corridors with Right-of-Way Need	SW Railroad Avenue	W Thomas to edge of project study area	☒	☒		Yes	Yes	40-70	ft	120-150	ft	50-80	ft	24	ft	2.7
	US Highway 190	Morris Rd to Airport Rd		☒	☒	Yes	No	80	ft	150	ft	70	ft	24	ft	1.9
	W University (LA 3224)	I-55 to N. Cherry Street Extension	☒	☒		Yes	Yes	70	ft	120	ft	50	ft	22	ft	2.5
	S. Airport Road	US Highway 190 to S. I-12 Service Road			☒	Yes	No	70	ft	150	ft	80	ft	24	ft	2.5
Corridors to be Constructed	E. University Extension	N. Cherry St. Ext to Morris Road		☒	☒	No	No			150	ft					1.6
	Pride Avenue Extension	US Highway 190 to S. Airport Road			☒	No	No			150	ft					1.1
	New Major Arterial South of I-12	SW Railroad to S. Airport		☒	☒	No	No			150	ft					2.6
	New Major Arterial - east of W. University	W. University to Pride Drive		☒		No	No			150	ft					3.0
	New Major Arterial, west of Pride Drive	Morris Rd to Pride Dr Extension		☒		No	No			150	ft					0.5

Notes:
(1) Existing Major Street information from the 2002 Highway Functional Classification Map, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.
(2) Average Right-of-Way (ROW) and paved section information from a map entitled "City of Hammond, Louisiana, City Streets, City Limits and Rights-of-Ways", prepared by the City of Hammond. It was noted on the map that the City only guarantees information on the State Highway Right-of-Ways.
(3) Design standard corresponds to applicable Louisiana DOTD Design Standard, as contained in the Appendix.

Major Arterials

Major Arterials identified in the Major Street Plan are the corridors in the city that would more align with a larger setback or build-to line. These roads are designed “to move traffic from city to city… These corridors may be higher speed, provide access to the interstate highway network within cities and may run through downtown areas.” (Hammond Major Street Plan, Page ES-5).

However, a blanket change to the C-H Zoning Code would not create a consistent need across the City. Several things to consider when looking at this regulation is pedestrian activity currently in the area, density of existing development, and it’s location within the City (urban or suburban).

Hammond Comprehensive Plan

Community character is a major concern of the residents of the City and this applies to streets as much as to the development that lines streets. The Major Streets Plan delineates urban, suburban and rural areas and leaves open the possibility of reapplying these designations as areas intensify. Arterial roads should become urban main streets as they enter urban areas or new community centers. High-speed roads should transform to low-speed designs as they enter neighborhoods to slow traffic to pedestrian-friendly speeds of 20 miles per hour or less for the sake of safety. Widening roads to accommodate through-traffic decreases local livability and should be avoided. New road capacity created through widening is quickly absorbed by drivers who previously avoided the congested road. This is known as “induced traffic” and this explains the failure of newer, wider roads to reduce traffic congestion. Every increase in roadway capacity leads to increases in vehicle miles travelled. To reduce congestion, public transit, bikeways, sidewalks and mixed-use zoning and land use patterns that allow people to walk between destinations rather than drive should be explored. The proposed arterial loop to the Airport is intended to be used for unimpeded transportation. Where this road passes through rural areas west of the airport development should be discouraged because it undermines the movement of through-traffic. The construction of a new road should not necessarily result in an up-zoning of roadside properties to long linear strips of commercial uses. Hammond has many areas with this character already. Community centers may be desirable along the arterial road as identified in the Sector Plan and as part of a coordinated program for developing complete neighborhoods but changes to land use should be accompanied by planning for entire areas as coherent neighborhoods and centers.

Vision Statement and Goals

The City of Hammond's vision is to continue its role as an expanding regional hub of economic, transportation, higher education and cultural activity while growing in a sustainable manner that respects our history, enhances our quality of life and creates a stronger, more complete community for all residents while maintaining our City's character and appeal.

The City of Hammond will:

Ensure that future development preserves and enhances existing neighborhoods; encourages a high-quality mix of uses in a traditional neighborhood form; respects the natural environment and agricultural areas; and discourages sprawl development.

Encourage sustainable design that enhances and expands the existing community character and identifies Hammond as a special place.

Provide safe and convenient mobility and support a multi-modal transportation system that provides linkages to neighborhoods, schools and other community facilities and uses; at the same time the city will efficiently provide for and equitably fund quality infrastructure facilities.

Encourage a variety of good quality, affordable housing choices through preservation, rehabilitation, code enforcement and new development.

Improve the quality of Hammond's natural resources, by protecting wetlands, native habitat, water and air quality; recognizing that local efforts have local, regional and global effects.

Identify and foster opportunities for expanded cooperation with the Parish, including intergovernmental and annexation agreements, to manage growth, promote economic development, create gateways that impart a positive image of the city, and form a rational city pattern.

Provide community services and facilities that meet the physical, educational, economic, and recreational needs of all segments of Hammond's community.

FIGURE 2.7: TIER 2 - NEW DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT AREAS: BUILDING COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

Complete, compact, pedestrian-friendly mixed use neighborhoods that offer the opportunity to live, work and play within a short walk may be possible under the existing regulations but could be encouraged to a greater degree under form-based regulations.

Conventional Suburban Development: Perspective View

Traditional Neighborhood Development: Perspective View

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Large-format auto-oriented shopping centers and offices define the character of Hammond outside the Downtown. Required front setbacks and required buffers often create suburban-style developments which may be desired in some places in the City but in others a more walkable, compact environment may be desirable.

The setback requirement for commercial structures is typically 25', 15' of which is required to be planted green space. Once a building is required to be set back even 25' it then often makes sense to the site designer to set the building back far enough to include the entire site's parking between building and street. Buildings setbacks eliminate the possibility that pedestrians will be sheltered by awnings or colonnades. Required tree buffers do a good job of hiding the facade of buildings but eliminate the possibility of storefronts within view of strolling pedestrians.

In areas where walkability is intended a 0' setback with no landscape requirement may be preferred. A build-to line with a maximum setback of 2' can also line storefronts into coherent street walls.

PROPOSED CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Allowed to evolve, shopping centers can become centers of the community. Continuous perimeter buildings define blocks where parking can be located at the interior, out of sight. Office and residential uses are located above commercial uses. New main streets are possible perpendicular to West Thomas Street that are safe, comfortable and interesting to the pedestrian with on-street parking and continuous street trees which create a walkable place.

Optimally, this kind of redevelopment would be encouraged by the creation of a multi-way boulevard along West Thomas Street. The multi-way boulevard features an access lane between West Thomas Street and storefronts which can serve local trips, provide on-street parking, and even have on-street dining on ample, tree-lined sidewalks.

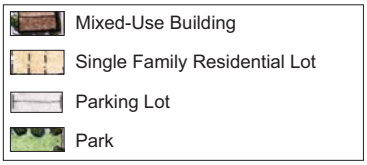
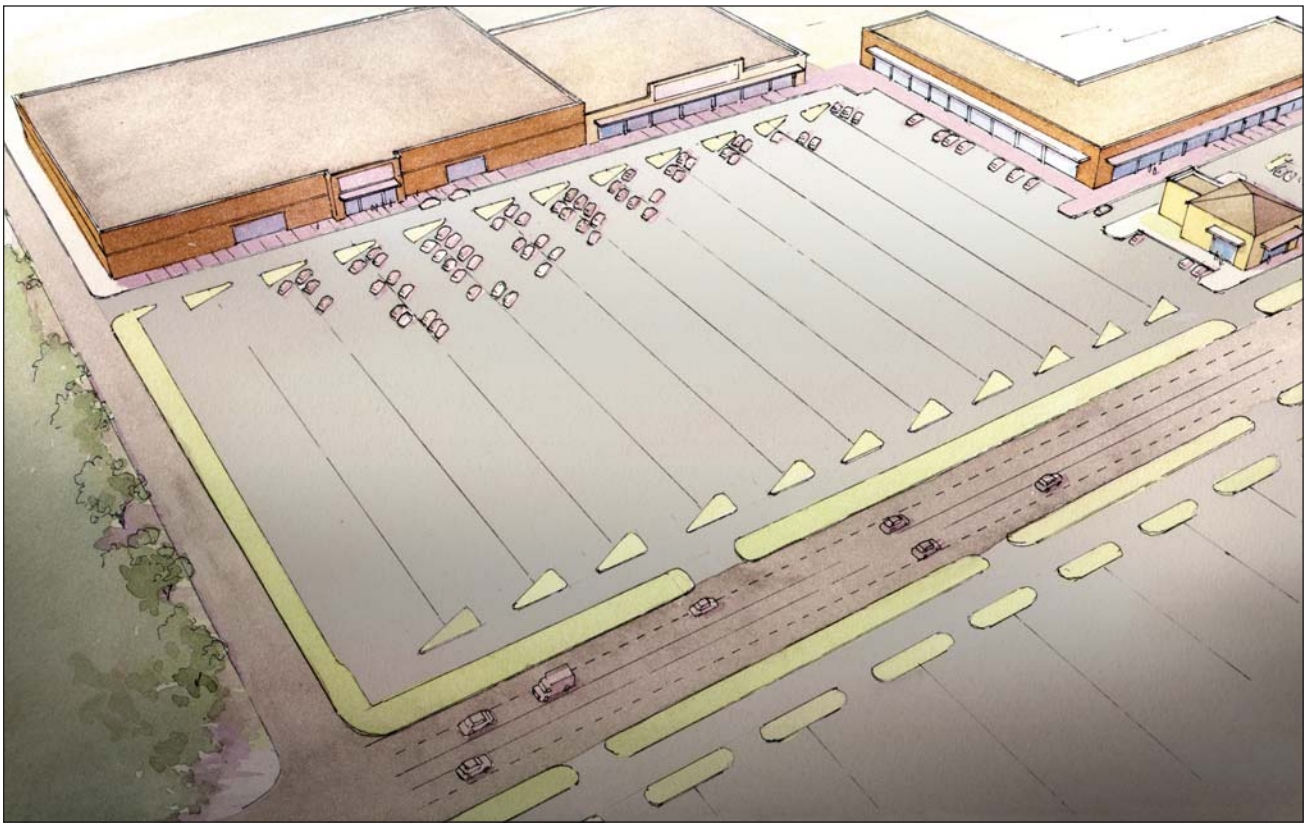


FIGURE 2.6: TIER 2 - NEW DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT AREAS: REDEVELOPING THE COMMERCIAL STRIP

The same principles that apply to making great neighborhoods can be applied to making choice worthy shopping districts.



Existing Conditions: Perspective View

After Creative Redevelopment: Perspective View

UNIVERSITY EAST

FACILITATE INFILL PROJECTS BETWEEN SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY AND DOWNTOWN

The area between downtown and Southeastern Louisiana University and east of the Railroad tracks is poised for new development. The property owner, working in conjunction with the city, has proposed an urban block system that continues downtowns grid with compact development consisting of multi-story, mixed-use buildings positioned along sidewalks and a formal green.

These improvements will result in an enhanced tax base, a variety of shops, restaurants, places of business and other amenities for residents and businesses alike and a more complete "park once" environment, encouraging visitors and local residents to walk rather than drive. Ideally, a "park never" environment can be achieved, thus eliminating dependence on automobiles, in which residents and students can fulfill all of their daily needs by foot, bike or transit.

The unique opportunity for University East to become a community, university focal point and multimodal center raises the stakes for the urban design and architecture. It is essential that the development is designed as a high-quality, exemplary walkable center, fronting all primary streets with street-oriented urban architecture, shopfronts, urban landscaping, and on-street parking. Parking lots should be located mid-block and should be fully concealed by liner buildings with retail on the ground floor along the main roads and housing or offices above. Service uses such as loading and garage entrances should be located on secondary streets, hidden from public view and out of the way of pedestrian traffic. If these service uses are located on primary streets, they will create long-term obstacles to the community's vision for walkability.

CREATE MAJOR AND MINOR “QUADS” FOR CITY LIFE

The quad of a campus, its main green, is the centerpiece for student life, a formal public space framed by landscaping and fronted by high-quality architecture. Along the whole length of the corridors in Hammond there are few comparable spaces, large or small, for the visitors and residents of Hammond as are found on the University campus. In the City, just as on the campus, the space between buildings cannot be treated as residual space. It must be designed to encourage community life. The plan proposes several simple, modest green spaces and plazas, to be used from everything from public gatherings and festivals to pick-up soccer games and casual meetings between friends. The design of these greens and plazas can be simple. Their purpose is to facilitate events by providing unobstructed spaces. Rows or double rows of trees at the edge would allow for picnicking and sitting in the shade and can create a sense of enclosure. New and renovated buildings frame the spaces, and architectural features such as porticos, balconies, porches and arcades provide visual variety and continual surveillance.

PLACE STUDENT HOUSING IN THE DOWNTOWN

Student rental housing within established neighborhoods can at times be a nuisance to long-time residents. The excitement that students thrive on can be provided throughout University East, in the heart of the city, and within walking distance to student complexes. Students within walking distance to campus or to a transit stop are less likely to commute by car.

CREATE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is walkable, mixed-use and generally dense development that is designed with comfortable, convenient pedestrian connections to existing, or anticipated, public transit stops. TODs can be as modest as a block of dense development around a transit stop, or they can be an entire neighborhood or cluster of neighborhoods that are built within a half-mile radius of a transit stop. When developed correctly, TODs allow residents and visitors to meet all of their needs without the use of an automobile. This allows for greater density without the traffic impacts of conventional, auto-oriented development.

The optimal transit stop provides a dignified wait by offering a safe, comfortable, clean and dry place to sit, ideally with a cup of coffee and newspaper available. The path between centers and the transit stop must be direct and pleasant and not involve crossing parking lots, the blank facade of parking garages or other dead zones.

Housing above commercial uses can be constructed at densities that can support public transportation at each of the main intersections in Hammond along the proposed transit loop. Developing these intersections as transit oriented development will link this otherwise-isolated areas of Hammond to the rest of the city through a more reliable and frequent transit system.

FIGURE 3.15

General Recommendations

- (A) The grid is extended past the railroad tracks from the downtown.
- (B) New connections across the railroad tracks at Dakota Street improves connectivity for pedestrians and motorists.
- (C) Streets cross across the stream connecting existing neighborhood to Downtown.
- (D) Urban squares and plazas serve visitors to the surrounding businesses.
- (E) Potential transit stop
- (F) Prominent sites are reserved for civic or landmark buildings.
- (G) Commercial uses are limited to create great streetscapes for the surrounding new neighborhood.
- (H) A mix of building types and lot sizes can provide a variety of housing types for SLU students and new Hammond residents.
- (I) Street trees improve the streetscape and provide shade for pedestrians.
- (J) Parking is located at the middle of the block and buildings face the street.
- (K) Shared parking lot entrances through alleys reduce the interruptions to traffic movement.
- (L) Community gardens for students/neighbors
- (M) A grocery store can be used by students and surrounding residents.
- (N) Neighborhood parks give residents a place to gather and recreate.

UNIVERSITY WEST

CREATE A GATEWAY

The intersection of University Drive and Morrison Boulevard functions as one of the main gateways to Hammond. However there is no distinction in architectural design or in the character of the street to announce arrival. The plan recommends street oriented buildings throughout and landmark architectural features such as a tower element and chamfered corner at intersections. The heights of structures would naturally step down from the intersection, a signature building with a landmark feature at University Drive would signify the intersection's role as an entryway. Ample sidewalks and large caliper street trees could accommodate an increase in pedestrian activity.

INCREASE DENSITY AT MAIN INTERSECTIONS

During the workshop, the residents of Hammond asked for the City's main intersections to be transformed into vibrant, mixed-use centers of development. These main intersections include: West Thomas Street and Morrison Boulevard, CM Fagan Drive and Morrison Boulevard, University Avenue and Morrison Boulevard, West Church Street and Morrison Boulevard, West Club Deluxe Road and SW Railroad Avenue, CM Fagan Drive and SW Railroad Avenue, North Oak Street and University Avenue, and South Airport Road and Highway 190.

Hammond's commercial corridors, subdivisions, parks, recreation areas, and civic institutions should be integrated with streetscaping and architecture that reflects the elegant character of Hammond. Improved standards to encourage mixed-use development outside of the downtown will help to create a cohesive character for the area, and will increase community pride.

REQUIRE SMALL BLOCK SIZES AND A COMPLETE STREET NETWORK

Small block sizes are the number one factor for walkability. Pedestrians will rarely walk if they do not feel that there is a relatively straight path between their origin and destination and a walk time no longer than five minutes.

A connected street network is essential for distributing traffic, and promoting walking and cycling. Streets are a city's circulation system and its main public space. Undoubtedly, projects that propose to close rights-of-way and create large superblocks will be proposed by potential developers. However, rights-of-way should not be vacated. The loss of connectivity will stunt economic vitality.

ENFORCE A BUILD-TO LINE

The best streets take on a defined spatial form, sometimes compared to a public "room"; the buildings form the walls. When the proportion of building height to street width is sufficient to create a sensation of spatial enclosure, a stronger sense of place will result. When the proportion of building height to street width is too low it is difficult to achieve a sense of place. It is essential that the front walls (or planes) of storefronts be aligned. A build-to line tells a designer exactly where the front plane of each building should be located to form a coordinated street wall.

REGULATE FRONTS AND BACKS

Every building has a front and back – a public side and a private side. Great streets have street-oriented architecture in which the front of the building addresses the street with doors, windows, storefronts and balconies facing the sidewalk. This makes the street interesting and safe. When buildings front the street with service, or "back of house" uses, blank walls, and unlined parking garages, they compromise the safety and visual interest of the street, and have long-term negative impacts on the economic performance of the area.

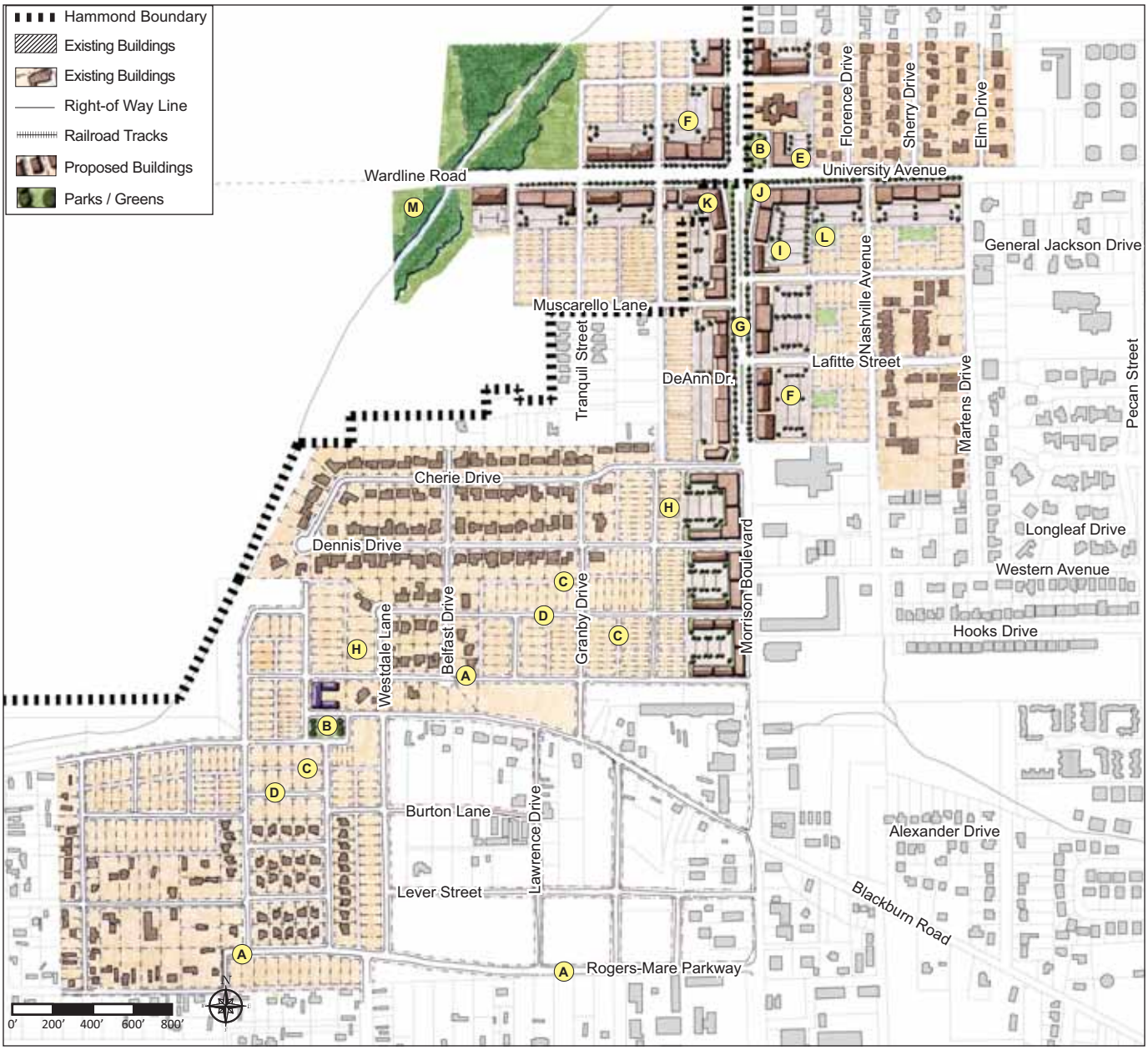
RETROFIT STREETS TO SUPPORT PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

Motorists driving through Hammond, on Thomas Street for example, are aware when they have entered Downtown. Travel lanes are narrow, pedestrian crossings are frequent, block sizes are small and on-street parking is present. In contrast, the segment of Thomas Avenue from Interstate 55 to Natchez Street has the design of a speedway. The design of University Avenue is uniformly characterized by wide lanes, inconsequential medians and highway-scaled lighting.

CREATE AN ACCESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The existing conditions along Morrison Boulevard are dominated by the automobile in part because of the abundant curb cuts which disrupt the sidewalk and place pedestrians at risk of being struck by turning cars. Reduce the number of curb cuts by consolidating the number of driveway entrances to each business from the roadway. This will create a more continuous sidewalk for pedestrians and traffic will flow more efficiently.

FIGURE 3.17



General Recommendations

(A) New neighborhoods can connect existing subdivisions to the street grid improving connectivity for pedestrians and motorists.

(B) Greens and parks should be a part of all new neighborhoods.

(C) Alleys can reduce the number of curb cuts in residential areas allowing more on-street parking.

(D) On-street parking calms traffic and provides a buffer for pedestrians.

(E) Gateway marks the entrance to Hammond.

(F) Parking is located at the middle of the block and buildings face the street.

(G) A multiway boulevard section along Morrison Boulevard.

(H) Infill buildings respect the scale and character of the neighborhood.

(I) Strip centers are converted to town blocks.

(J) Potential transit stop

(K) Increased density at the main intersection.

(L) Storm water retention can occur in mid-block locations.

(M) A bike trail along existing streams will increase residents connection to nature.

WEST THOMAS STREET & MORRISON BOULEVARD

MAKE WEST THOMAS AVENUE A WALKABLE "GREAT STREET"

As it is currently configured, West Thomas Avenue is a thoroughfare whose primary purpose is to move traffic east and west. Instead of functioning solely as a route from one place to another, West Thomas Street should be transformed into a place of its own. The character of West Thomas Street must be valued as highly as its capacity to move traffic. During the charrette, residents expressed their desire to see West Thomas Street enhanced with street trees and reconfigured as a place that is safe and inviting to pedestrians. Walking, cycling, shopping, working, and living experiences must be increased and improved to transform West Thomas Street from a conventional strip-commercial corridor to a great street. The illustrative master plan shows new directions for the massing, frontage and orientation of new structures. Parking is consolidated and located mid-block, behind buildings. A continuous system of sidewalks connects the entire length of West Thomas Street.

CONTROL SIZE AND SCALE

Commercial, office and residential development should not be consumed in single, massive complexes, they should be developed at numerous multiple mixed-use centers. Development must be encouraged along major intersections first, to create walkable centers where each new reinvestment will encourage the next. Any intersection that achieves redevelopment on all four sides will have the feel of a complete place and become a magnet for new investment.

It is essential that new development respect the existing neighborhoods and make appropriate transitions from larger mixed-use buildings along the main corridors to residentially-scaled development closer to homes. This can be achieved with form-based regulations which employ metrics that respect the community's vision for the corridors.

PLANT AND MAINTAIN PROPER URBAN STREET TREES

Trees improve property values, and establish a sense of place. Urban street trees should be planted in aligned rows, with regular spacing, using consistent species. Proper, formal tree placement shapes public space, produces shade continuous enough to make walking viable, and has a calming effect on traffic. Trees should be native species which are pollution tolerant and do not produce seeds or fruit which stain and litter the sidewalk.

CREATE NEW GREENS AND PARKS ALONG THOMAS STREET

The plan shows two large greens on Thomas Street east and west of the Morrison Boulevard intersection which would provide two centers, two different and differentiable places on Thomas Street, which is currently an undistinguished strip of development. The green spaces should be spaced at 5-minute walking intervals approximately 4 to 5 blocks apart. The green spaces should be fronted with commercial storefronts or urban format residences to ensure that they are well used. The spaces will be safer if buildings front them and people frequent them.

GROW A MIX OF USES & DESTINATIONS

Currently, the majority of lots and parcels along the corridors contain single uses. To provide a center for the community and better address transportation issues, Thomas Street and Morrison Boulevard need to support a healthy mix of uses. These uses would include housing, offices, commercial spaces, civic uses and green spaces.

Focused centers in a main street environment create interesting places for residents and destinations for visitors. If land uses are mixed, fewer automobile trips will be necessary for residents to meet their daily needs and congestion will be reduced.

MANAGE PARKING

Balance pedestrian and vehicular access to buildings by creating a variety of parking options. Parking should be located behind buildings, with on-street parking next to the sidewalk. Insist that varied uses (retail, entertainment, civic, office, housing) share their parking supply efficiently. As the area is built out, a shift to structured parking will allow for the better use of valuable land. These practices will reduce the amount of land dedicated to parking.

DENSITY HAND-IN-HAND WITH CONSERVATION

The potential for a transferable development rights program should be investigated as many small agricultural uses exist within the current City boundary that would ideally be preserved in perpetuity. People are increasingly willing to pay for local, fresh, healthy food yet the incentive to sell farms to residential developers is high. Through a transferable development rights (TDR) program a farmer that plans to sell his or her farm can instead sell the farm's developmental potential while continuing to work the land. Higher density development along corridors than would otherwise be allowed could be achieved through the purchase and transference of development rights from farms.

FIGURE 3.18

General Recommendations

- (A) Urban squares and plazas serve visitors and the surrounding businesses.
- (B) Street trees improve the streetscape and provide shade for pedestrians.
- (C) Mid-block parking garages remove parking from the pedestrian view.
- (D) Parking is located at the middle of the block and buildings face the street.
- (E) On-street parking calms traffic and provides a buffer for pedestrians.
- (F) Shared parking lot entrances reduce the interruptions to traffic movement.
- (G) Thomas Street and Morrison Boulevard could be converted to multiway boulevards.
- (H) Additions to existing buildings along the corridor help to define the street and reestablish the historic urban fabric.
- (I) Sidewalks should be added the length of West Thomas Street
- (J) Increased density at the main intersection
- (K) New streets improve connectivity for pedestrians and motorists.
- (L) Potential transit stop
- (M) Agriculture can be integrated with neighborhoods and commercial centers.
- (N) Big box stores can be integrated into town centers.
- (O) A roundabout and new civic building will allow Thomas and Morris Streets to reconvert to 2-way traffic.

CM FAGAN DRIVE & MORRISON BOULEVARD

BUILD MULTI-STORY BUILDINGS

In commercial areas, build multi-story buildings. Successful streets depend on the sense of spatial enclosure that is created when certain proportional relationships are achieved between the width of the street space and the height of the buildings on either side.

Multi-story buildings can also adapt better to a changing market than large, single-story, single-use buildings because of the wider range of potential tenants and the ability to include multiple tenants who provide a mix of goods and services.

DESIGN THE STREET AS A UNIFIED WHOLE

An essential distinction of vibrant, pedestrian-oriented districts is that the whole public space which businesses front is designed as an ensemble, including auto elements (such as travel lanes, parking and curbs), public components (such as trees, sidewalks and lighting) and private elements (shopfronts and buildings). These elements should be coordinated to create a unified outdoor space, just as rooms are designed to achieve a unified, comfortable space. A proper urban landscape is safe, comfortable and interesting to pedestrians.

MULTIWAY BOULEVARDS

The multiway boulevard is a unique street type in its ability to accommodate higher levels of regional traffic and still function as a beloved neighborhood street. Multiway boulevards are able to serve both functions through the separation of regional, faster-moving traffic in the central through-going lanes from slow-moving local traffic, pedestrians, bicyclists, and on-street parking in the side access lanes. The central lanes and side lanes are separated by wide, landscaped medians that can be designed as linear parks, with generous landscaping and jogging paths. Finally, wide, tree-lined sidewalks encourage pedestrians to visit shopfronts, dine at outdoor cafes, or walk to their neighbor's house.

New sidewalks and parallel parking should be added, and street trees should be planted in rows on the median and along the sidewalks. Private investment will follow public investment, yet regulatory reform is necessary to require the kind of development which lives up to its multiway boulevard address. Redevelopment in appropriate places should be in the form of multi-story, multi-use buildings with storefronts and mid-block parking.

ADD A FRONTAGE ROAD THAT PARALLELS MORRISON BOULEVARD

A frontage road allows local traffic from the neighborhoods east of Morrison Boulevard to patronize local businesses without having to enter Morrison Boulevard. Design the new street to be pedestrian- and retail-friendly, with wide sidewalks, landscaping and on-street parking. The median between Morrison Boulevard and the frontage road should be designed as a generous linear park, with shade trees lining the streets. A double row of trees and center path provides a promenade for pedestrians. A frontage road of this sort can be created through a public-private partnership, in which private property owners dedicate the land necessary for the frontage road in exchange for special development rights for their property.

BUILD FOR THE LONG-TERM WITH A VARIETY OF TYPES AND SIZES

Require developers to build for the long-term with buildings that can be adapted and reused. Places with a variety of uses and building types adapt well to economic changes and create a stronger sense of place. Add buildings in a variety of types and sizes, configured for incremental growth. The mix should include civic buildings, mixed-use shopfront buildings, apartment buildings, attached rowhouses and single-family detached houses.

There are only a few types of businesses that can take advantage of a large "big box" building. Should the property become vacant, the time it takes to attract a new tenant or redevelop the site can result in a long period of lost tax revenue for the municipality. Learn from the past and build for a longer time horizon. In the last few decades many buildings were built under the assumption that the developer would get a return on their investment within a span of 7 to 10 years and would then abandon the property.

FIGURE 3.20

General Recommendations

- (A) Municipal fields and courts place recreational facilities close to the center of the City.
- (B) A mix of buildings uses, types and sizes accommodates a mix of households and incomes.
- (C) Parking is located mid-block reducing curb cuts and allowing on-street parking
- (D) Neighborhood green protects a wetland and creates a public gathering space.
- (E) Buildings front the streets.
- (F) Morrison Boulevard becomes a true multi-way boulevard.
- (G) A civic building terminates the view down Windrush Drive.
- (H) Strip centers are enclosed within street oriented buildings.
- (I) A civic building is located on a major intersection.
- (J) Perimeter buildings, which line the block and define the sidewalk are the default form.
- (K) Multi-story, mixed-use buildings.
- (L) Attached residential units like (rowhouses, town houses or live/works).
- (M) Small single family houses
- (N) Large single-family houses
- (O) Locations for garage apartments

HAMMOND SQUARE AREA

MAKE HAMMOND SQUARE A NEIGHBORHOOD
For all its merits Hammond Square lacks some of the qualities of a complete place. With strategic infill, Hammond Square can become a complete, compact, mixed-use center for the neighboring area accessed by local streets, while remaining a regional destination accessed by the highway.

The plan illustrates one way that the existing commercial buildings at Hammond Square can be integrated into a block system with streets and a variety of townhouses and rowhouses. Courtyards and squares should be supervised by the street-fronting windows of pedestrian-scaled residences.

PROVIDE A CENTRAL PUBLIC SQUARE
By definition, a square is an open space type, available for unstructured recreation or civic purposes. Such a space could be added to the Hammond Square complex. A square is spatially defined by building frontages and located at the intersections of important streets. Its landscape consists of paths, lawns, and trees, formally disposed. The plan identifies an area for such a space.

REQUIRE APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT
The land along CM Fagan Drive is an attractive location for development given its proximity to I-12. It is essential that any new development in the area respect the scale and character of existing neighborhoods, provide amenities for the community, and minimize the negative effect of cut-through traffic. A form-base code and innovative traffic-calming techniques may be essential.

It is essential that new development is built as a complete neighborhood, with an urban pattern of blocks, streets and greens that include an appropriately-scaled mix of uses within walking distance to each other. The student and elderly housing complexes discussed for Hammond may help offset the reliance on Veterans Avenue by providing a balance of services, jobs and housing within the same walkable area. Traffic calming features such as narrow streets, on-street parking, and offset intersections will help to ensure that the traffic through the area is predominately local.

WHEN LARGE-FOOTPRINT BUILDINGS ARE UNAVOIDABLE INTEGRATE THEM INTO THE URBAN FABRIC
Large format stores are difficult to arrange within the urban fabric without detracting from the overall scale, connectivity, image and walkability of urban neighborhoods. Yet such stores can serve as anchors for activity centers, bringing in large amounts of sales tax revenue and adding regional drawing power and an advertising presence that benefits other businesses.

There is often enough land available in the parking lots of large footprint buildings to create a multi-use, transit-oriented development (TOD) with a walkable center. Any proposed big box retailers should be sited away from potential centers because large format buildings in the center of a community create pedestrian "dead zones" along the blank sides and backs of the structure. The planning for a complete community with a traditional, connected block structure should be required of large-format development proposals. Even if the developer is not required to construct the entire urban community, the market will, in time, make building densely practical.

SCRUTINIZE LARGE-FOOTPRINT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS
Large-footprint buildings should be subject to intense development-approval scrutiny on a site specific, case-by-case basis. Such uses should not be a pre-permitted use allowed as-of-right, but as a conditional use subject to review and approval.

Because of recent trends in retailing and outrage at the character of big-boxes from residents around the country, many big boxes are seeking alternative formats for communities of character. Smaller, more customized formats are being introduced where standard megastores are difficult to permit. This option should be investigated on a case-by-case basis. Communities only receive as high quality a design as they demand.

FIGURE 3.22

General Recommendations

- (A) The outparcels of Hammond Square can become residential and mixed use, increasing the critical mass of people that can walk to the big box stores.
- (B) Parking lots can be converted to blocks and be infilled with a mix of uses.
- (C) A community square can be incorporated as a town center.
- (D) A roundabout at the I-12 exit will help move traffic.
- (E) Street grid is continued from the downtown relieving traffic on the main arterials.
- (F) Traffic calming can make the straight stretches of the grid safe for pedestrians.
- (G) A bike trail along existing streams will increase residents connection to nature.
- (H) A pedestrian crossing below I-12 could be created by the stream.
- (I) Potential transit stop
- (J) Add sidewalk on Minnesota Parkway from Range Road to Railroad Avenue.

Staff Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Identify Corridors

- University Avenue - City Limits to Cherry Street
- West Thomas Street - City Limits to one-way pair split (North Carter Street)
- East Thomas Street - One-way pair split (South Range Road) to City Limits
- North Morrison Boulevard
- SW Railroad Avenue - One-way pair (First Avenue) to City Limits

Recommendation 2

Set Zoning Standards

- Create overlay districts for lots fronting the corridors identified above.
- Identify those areas as Suburban Commercial Highway's and include the following language for the Zoning Code site plans:

  The current build-to line requirement may be waived if the following is implemented

  - *Build to line of 60 feet (two lines of parking with a drive in the middle;*
  - *Screening shall be provided on each side of such parking area which abuts upon or faces a Street, Alley or place. A parking area Screening shall be not less than four (4) and not more than six (6) feet in height above the grade of the parking lot surface, but in no case shall be permitted to within the Sight Distance Triangle (Appendix C).*

Recommendation 3

Recommend Infrastructure Improvements

- Sidewalk and Bike Improvements
- Louisiana DOTD Road Transfer Program Review

Recommendation 4

Update Existing Plans

- Ten year update to Hammond Comprehensive Plan;
- Create a Bike and Pedestrian Plan;
- Update and Review Major Street Plan