



The ‘Stitch’

THE STITCH

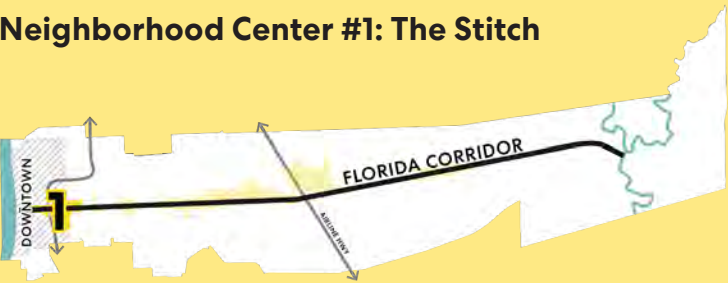
N 5th Street – N 19th Street

Character and Community

The eastern end of The Stitch Neighborhood Center area was once the location of a large greenspace called Victory Park (between Florida Street and Laurel Street and Eight Street and Tenth Street). In the 1930's, the federal government built the Russell B. Long US Federal Courthouse and parking lot that consumed much of the Victory Park. The construction of elevated I-110 highway in the 1950s spurred closure of a prominent Community Club on the north side of the Florida Corridor and further severed the connection between Downtown and neighborhoods to the east. Today, the transition between Downtown and Downtown East is difficult to navigate on foot and visibility below and beyond the highway structure is limited.

By including parcels to the east of I-110, the Florida Corridor Plan hopes to re-connect Downtown East and Downtown, activating the edge and creating a stronger presence and gateway into the downtown area.

Neighborhood Center #1: The Stitch



The Stitch area today presents other challenges and opportunities, including:

- Proximity to Downtown Baton Rouge destinations, employment, and the riverfront.
- Plank-Nicholson BRT investment will significantly improve transit access and experience.
- The Stitch is the area of highest social vulnerability of the 6 Neighborhood Centers.
- This area falls partially within the Downtown Development District, which offers additional funding and implementation support.
- Proximity to the BR Planning Commission to leverage opportunities to partner on development and/or programming.

Several businesses and institutions anchor this focus area today. Renaissance Park has taken over the former Goudchaux's Department Store. The Office of the City-Parish Planning Commission occupies the renovated historic Baton Rouge Junior High, and is in the same block as a Public Works Permit office and the Health Unit and the society of Street Vincent De Paul provides services for the neighboring unhoused community. Two large sites have uncertain futures--the Greyhound Bus Station and the USPS facility, which is on the Federal Government's Surplus List and has been subject of past redevelopment discussions.

Area Character & Destinations

The cost of constructing I-110 was the destruction of Victory Park, which featured a prominent Community Club on the north side of the Florida Corridor.



Then: Community Club Hall in Victory Park, 1923

TODAY



Now: United States Postal Service Facility (#2 on Zoning & Assets Map)



COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

Strengths & Challenges

- [The Stitch] is a critical link between Downtown to Mid City and a benefit for both in terms of development, quality of place, and bike/pedestrian accessibility.
- Interstate [Greyhound] bus station provides connections to other cities.
- Downtown Farmer’s market is a strength.
- The Red Dragon Listening Room is a valued entertainment venue.
- St Vincent de Paul is a very worthwhile organization doing well for the community.

Ideas & Needs

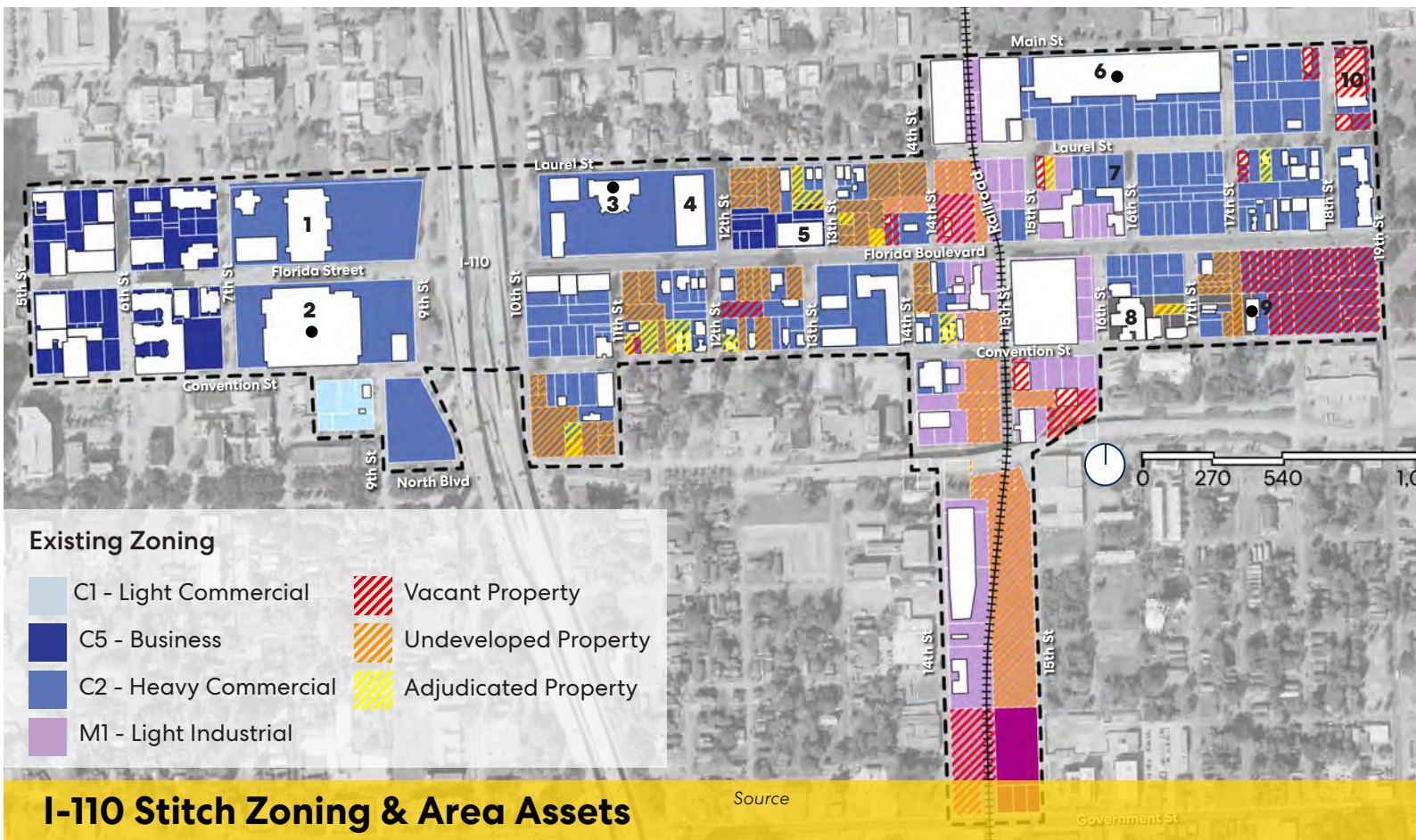
- Need for affordable multi-family housing, and some market rate housing.
- Need to develop areas around Baton Rouge General Medical Center as a mixed-use hub for the neighborhood.
- This is a good location for food trucks, but pedestrian crosswalks may be needed.
- Need for more lighting and improved maintenance beneath elevated I-110.
- The Florida corridor would benefit from protected bike lanes, wide sidewalks, elevated crosswalks, and other pedestrian and cycling friendly features and infrastructure that make streets more aesthetic, safe, and accessible.



Baton Rouge Planning Commission (#3 on Zoning & Assets Map)

Existing Assets

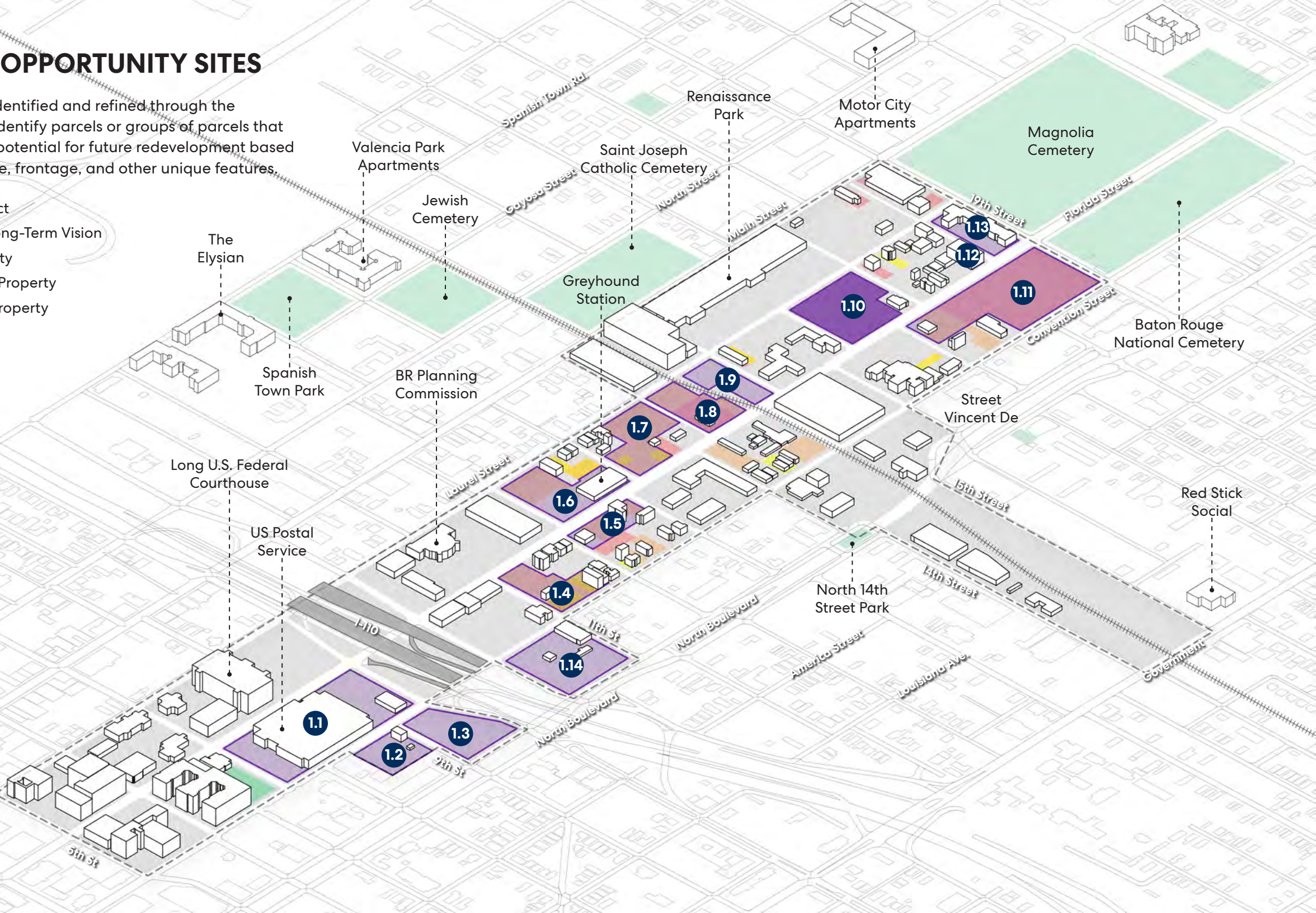
1. Russell B. Long Federal Building
2. United States Postal Service
3. Baton Rouge Planning Commission
4. East Baton Rouge Parish Health Unit
5. Greyhound Station
6. Renaissance Park
7. Inglesia Ni Cristo
8. Saint Vincent De Paul
9. Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church
10. Mid City Redevelopment Alliance



EXISTING: OPPORTUNITY SITES

Opportunity Site identified and refined through the planning process identify parcels or groups of parcels that offer the greatest potential for future redevelopment based on ownership, scale, frontage, and other unique features.

- # Catalyst Project
- # Mid-Term & Long-Term Vision
- Vacant Property
- Undeveloped Property
- Adjudicated Property



EXISTING: OPPORTUNITY SITES



1.1 750 Florida St



1.4 1116 Florida Blvd



1.6 1253 Florida Blvd



1.10 1659 Florida St



1.11 205 N 19th St

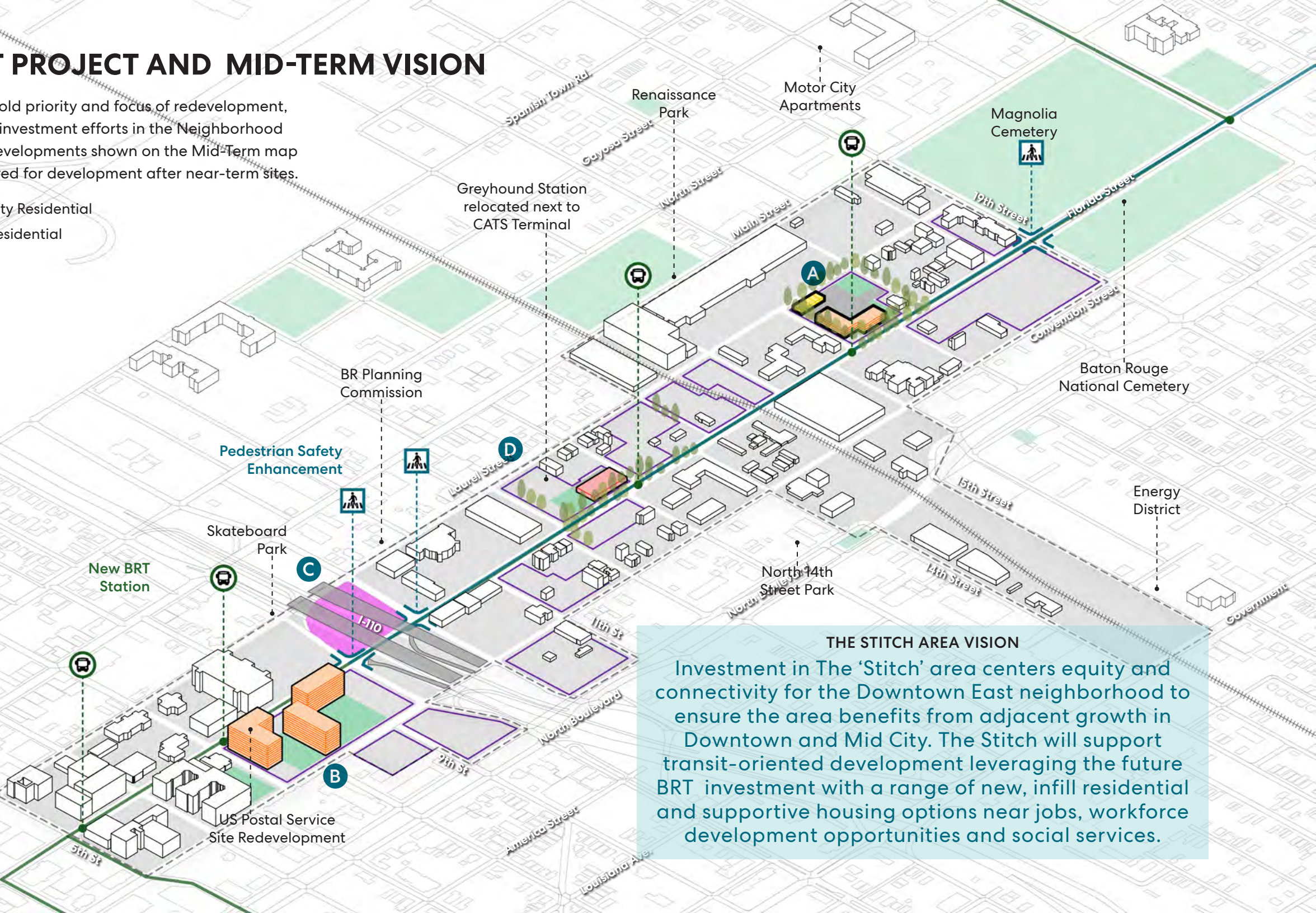


1.13 1819 Florida St

CATALYST PROJECT AND MID-TERM VISION

Catalyst Projects hold priority and focus of redevelopment, coordination, and investment efforts in the Neighborhood Center. Other redevelopments shown on the Mid-Term map should be considered for development after near-term sites.

- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Commercial
- Green Space
- Parking



THE STITCH AREA VISION

Investment in The 'Stitch' area centers equity and connectivity for the Downtown East neighborhood to ensure the area benefits from adjacent growth in Downtown and Mid City. The Stitch will support transit-oriented development leveraging the future BRT investment with a range of new, infill residential and supportive housing options near jobs, workforce development opportunities and social services.

Site	Area (acres)	Parcels (count)	Owner	Description
1.1	5.07	1	not available	Oversized USPS office
1.2	0.97	5	Louisiana Companies	Land listed on the federal surplus
1.3	1.62	1	not available	Land listed on the federal surplus
1.4	1.43	11	multiple	Vacant parcels surrounded by single family housing
1.5	0.91	7	multiple	Vacant parcels surrounded by housing & small businesses
1.6	1.99	17	multiple	Vacant parcels near housing abutting the Greyhound site
1.7	1.69	8	multiple	Vacant parcels next to homes and a Food Mart
1.8	1.26	11	multiple	Vacant commercial building and parcels near train tracks
1.9	0.86	6	Renaissance Park, LLC	Surface lot near train tracks
1.10	2.45	18	multiple	Surface lot in front of Renaissance Park
1.11	4.21	30	multiple	Surface Lot, former Cintas site
1.12	0.19	1	East Baton Rouge Parish	Midcentury Modern Building
1.13	0.97	1	East Baton Rouge Parish	Vacant building with surface lots
1.14	2.16	14	multiple	Vacant Parcels along North Blvd

*=assembled area

Source:

GROWTH POTENTIAL

Real Estate Use	Market Capacity	Considerations
Multifamily	High	- With proximity to downtown, future BRT investments, and passenger rail to New Orleans, there is opportunity for higher density residential - As the focus area with the highest social vulnerability, residential should include mixed-income housing with supportive services
Retail	Medium	Short-term activation strategy could test viability of more retail in the area in the future; potentially at the I-110 underpass or the Baton Rouge Planning Commission site
Office	Low	- Future BR future land use includes an employment center in I-110 Stitch, however there is no demand for more office space in this area - Any office focus should be paired with workforce training to maximize connections with existing residents
Hotel	Low	Focus area could capitalize on its proximity to Downtown Core to attract hotel in the future.

Source: HR&A

Growth Potential

The Stitch can bring together the assets of the Downtown Core and Downtown East neighborhoods with a focus on mixed-income housing and short-term retail activation strategies. This area is a critical gateway that can promote connectivity for the Downtown East neighborhood to benefit from adjacent growth in Downtown and Mid City. With proximity to downtown, funded MOVEBR Plank-Nicholson BRT and streetscape enhancements, and potential future passenger rail to New Orleans, there is opportunity for higher density residential in The Stitch. There should be a focus on mixed-income housing with supportive services though, as this focus area has the highest social vulnerability of all six Neighborhood Centers. Short-term retail activation strategies could test the viability of more retail in the area in the future.

Other Considerations

The Stitch is a highly accessible location connected to transit and proximate to major employers. A **workforce development program** that provides training, education, and resources to improve individuals' skills, employability, and career advancement would be well located in this area.

Several food manufacturers already exist in The Stitch Neighborhood Center, including FlowersFoods/Flowers Wholesale Baking. Advantages exist for **food-based businesses or manufacturers** where there is a critical mass of co-located businesses to draw consumers from further afield or consolidate logistics.

CATALYST PROJECT



A Surface Parking Redevelopment fronting Renaissance Park:

Concept for redevelop the existing underutilized surface park lot fronting Renaissance Park (currently office space) into a multi-phased, mixed-income residential development positioned adjacent to the planned Plank-Nicholson BRT Station at 16th and Florida Street. Consolidated ownership (all parcels owned by 1500 Main, LLC), scale of the site (2.45 Acres), no existing structures requiring demolition, and direct frontage to Florida Street, make this a prime redevelopment opportunity.



Concept Site Plan



Existing



Concept Rendering

MID-TERM DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS



B

USPS Site(s):

This large, highly visible site offers great redevelopment potential and scale that could support a larger housing development and associated greenspace. The 5.07-acre USPS site is on the Federal Surplus list - gaining site control would require attention from local political leaders. Site is in an advantageous position to be redeveloped to meet broader housing goals included mixed-income housing with affordable units. Mid-rise development suitable for downtown living is encouraged for this site.

C

Enhancement Pathway under I-110 Structure:

Mirror improvements led by the DDD at Louisiana Ave to North Blvd., including expanded and protected walkways, lighting, and landscaping at intersections. Consider expanded project including a skate park under the highway structure (Florida St to Laurel St)

D

CATS Terminal Enhancement/ Expansion into Multi-modal Center:

Concept to create an enhanced CATS Terminal & multi-modal center. The Mid City Neighborhood Center offers the potential to relocate the Greyhound Bus Terminal and adaptively re-use the existing building as a commercial office/workforce development use with some retail adjacent to new infill residential units including on-site affordable units and supportive housing.



Africatown Community Land Trust,
Seattle, WA

A nonprofit corporation that acquires land on behalf of the African American community, while serving as a steward for affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces, and other community assets



Motor City Apartments
Baton Rouge, LA

Modern apartments in a historic setting with indoor & outdoor amenities, nestled in the Mid City neighborhood of Baton Rouge.



Interstate Overpass Lighting
Baton Rouge, LA

Lighting & public space concept design under Interstate 110 as part of the Downtown Development District.

LONG-TERM VISION

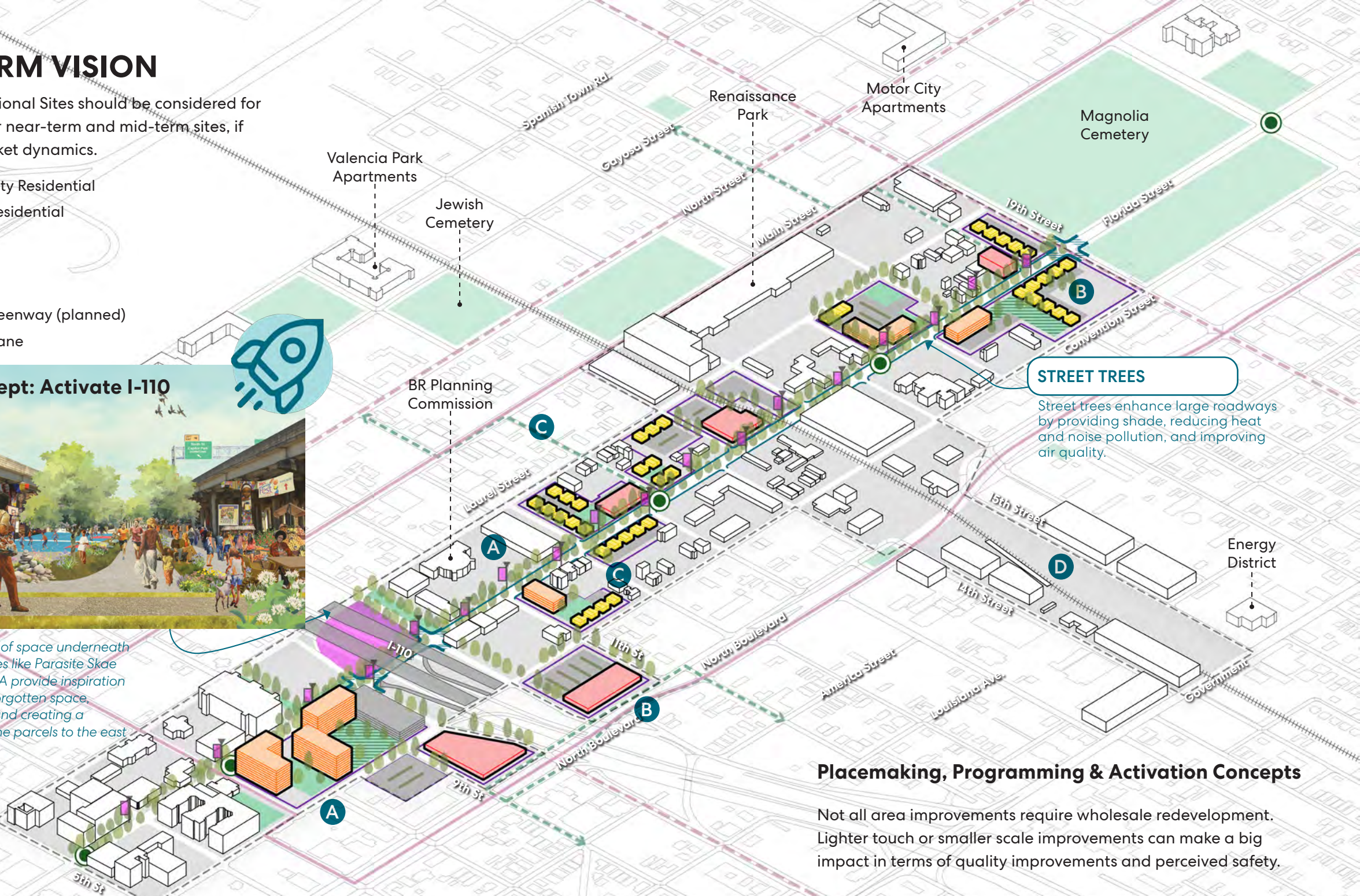
Long-Term Aspirational Sites should be considered for development after near-term and mid-term sites, if supported by market dynamics.

- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Commercial
- Green Space
- Parking
- Downtown Greenway (planned)
- Existing Bike Lane

Project Concept: Activate I-110 Overpass



Concept for activation of space underneath I-110 structure. Examples like Parasite Skae Park in New Orleans, LA provide inspiration for active uses in this forgotten space, drawing new activity and creating a connection between the parcels to the east and west.



STREET TREES

Street trees enhance large roadways by providing shade, reducing heat and noise pollution, and improving air quality.

Placemaking, Programming & Activation Concepts

Not all area improvements require wholesale redevelopment. Lighter touch or smaller scale improvements can make a big impact in terms of quality improvements and perceived safety.

PLACEMAKING & ACTIVATION

Placemaking and programmatic initiatives offer opportunities to increase activity in public spaces and place and respond to community needs before private development picks up.

A



Pedestrian Scale Lighting & Banner Signage

Enhanced lighting along pedestrian pathways would highlight MOVEBR investment and improve perceived safety along this segment in the evening. Banner signage would bring color and visual interest into the streetscape where street frontage isn't consistent, and could identify this area as part of the Mid City Baton Rouge Cultural District (I-110 to Foster).

Pole Mounted Banners - Lincoln Park, Chicago IL (Duroweld)

B



New Pocket Park

Pocket Parks are small urban green spaces that typically create opportunities for recreation or enhance neighborhood aesthetics in smaller, irregularly shaped parcels or leftover spaces. A pocket park located next to future infill housing (Adjacent to 205 N 19th Street) would provide an additional amenity for new and existing residents.

Pocket Playground in Lamanda CA Library (Landscape Structures)

C



Enhanced Pedestrian Infrastructure

The Stitch area is the only segment with accessible sidewalks, signals and curb ramps. Future development provides the opportunity to further enhance the streetscape with painted crosswalks and bulb out treatments.

Painted bulb out. Seattle, WA

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS



Future development concepts provide precedent projects from other places that relate or respond to the growth potential in each Neighborhood Center. Future development concepts provide precedent projects from other places that relate or respond to the growth potential in each Neighborhood Center.

D

Transit-Oriented Development around Baton Rouge Passenger Rail Station:

The Baton Rouge Passenger Rail Station Master Plan (March 2019) identified the Amtrak Station in The Stitch area as a priority for future passenger rail station improvements. If funded and implemented, this station would connect downtown Baton Rouge and downtown New Orleans (including several other stations along the way). Transit-oriented development just south of North Boulevard would reinforce the station area.

Food-Focused Businesses & Incubators: Building off the existing node of food manufacturing in The Stitch, the potential for a commercial grade community kitchen or food retail incubator type development with associated business support programs would align well with the existing area industry and proximity to Downtown and I-110 access.



The Hatchery Chicago, IL

Non-profit food and beverage incubator with commercial kitchen facilities for scale-up food industry accelerator



GhostLine Kitchens Austin, TX

Purpose built commercial kitchen created for growing food businesses of all shapes and sizes

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