

Jefferson EDGE 2020 **BEAUTIFICATION** Status Report 5: June 2012

Prepared by JEDCO and GCR Inc.



Beautification

In response to concerns about quality of life in Jefferson Parish and its impact upon the community's economic competitiveness, JEDCO initiated the Jefferson Edge 2020 Quality of Life initiative. This initiative has produced eight "strategic implementation plans" which include a series of action items to address particular quality of life issues. Implementing the action items requires the total cooperation and keen interest of all involved, including JEDCO, the Jefferson Parish government, numerous other entities, and frequently State and Federal agencies. In 2008, JEDCO retained GCR & Associates, Inc. to prepare semiannual reports outlining the status of each of these action items and overall progress toward implementation.

The following table summarizes the progress made toward each of the beautification (B) action items.

B = Beautification

Progress as of June 2012				
Action ID #	Action Item	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
B1. IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE “BOULEVARDS INITIATIVE” TO SYSTEMATICALLY UPGRADE MAJOR THOROUGHFARES				
B1a	Devise detailed cost estimates, a financing strategy, and an implementation schedule for boulevards initiative			
B1b	Systematically upgrade infrastructure along the Parish’s major boulevards			
B1c	Implement a gateway improvement program with a principal emphasis on the corridors abutting the airport			
B1d	Create a small grant program to fund landscape improvements to older commercial properties			
B1e	Sponsor a design and engineering competition to devise interim aesthetic improvements to open drainage canals			
B1f	Work with utility providers to screen major utility infrastructure throughout the Parish			
B2. SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE BOTH THE CONTENT AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE PARISH’S LAND USE POLICIES AND REGULATIONS				
B2a	Revise the Envision Jefferson 2020 Comprehensive Plan to include an urban design element	No longer applicable and removed from beautification action items		
B2b	Incrementally re-write the Parish’s zoning ordinance			
B2c	Enact interim improvements to Parish codes and land use regulations	No longer applicable and removed from beautification action items		
B2d	Ensure the even application and vigorous enforcement of existing zoning regulations	No longer applicable and removed from beautification action items		
B3. INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF AND INVOLVEMENT IN BEAUTIFICATION				
B3a	Formalize a lasting public partnership with civic groups and other non-profits to plant additional trees in residential neighborhoods	Action item has been tabled indefinitely.		
B3b	Initiate a public outreach campaign to inform residents of on-going beautification initiatives			
B4. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PUBLIC ART INSTALLATIONS THROUGHOUT JEFFERSON PARISH				
B4a	Develop a formal program for incorporating public art into public works projects			
B4b	Coordinate with the state and New Orleans Public Belt Railroad to install decorative lighting on the Huey P. Long Bridge			

Prepared by



Beautification

Progress as of June 2012								
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress	
B1 Implement a comprehensive “boulevards initiative” to systematically upgrade major thoroughfares								
B1a	Devise detailed cost estimates, a financing strategy, and an implementation schedule for boulevards initiative	Issue RFP in late 2008, early 2009; complete project in 2009	<p>In January and February of 2011, GCR submitted a proposal to JEDCO and Jefferson Parish to prepare such an “implementation plan” for the boulevards initiative. The desired outcome of the plan was to be a pilot street segment or segments that would be appropriate for the kind of comprehensive aesthetic upgrade that is described in the beautification plan. However, due to the economic climate and severe financial constraints, it was suggested in the spring of 2011 that this planning effort be put on hold. One year later, the Parish’s fiscal outlook has not improved to a point whereby this plan could be pursued.</p> <p>There are, nonetheless, other avenues for pursuing this initiative. One is the forthcoming Jefferson Parish bicycle master plan. One of the required elements of the plan will be a “complete streets” element that will identify ways to make Jefferson’s streets more pedestrian and bicycle friendly and more aesthetically appealing.</p>	<p>Revisit the proposal to JEDCO and Jefferson Parish for a boulevards “implementation plan”.</p> <p>Monitor the status of the Jefferson Parish bicycle master plan, which will commence in the summer of 2012. Ensure that this plan includes “complete streets” policies as well as potential funding mechanisms.</p>				

Beautification

Progress as of June 2012							
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
B1 Implement a comprehensive “boulevards initiative” to systematically upgrade major thoroughfares							
B1b	Systematically upgrade infrastructure along the Parish’s major boulevards	Secure local funding and pursue external funding in 2009; secure interagency agreements in 2009; issue bids and initiate project in 2010; complete phase one by 2015	<p>While the Parish has not secured funding for a comprehensive boulevards study and a Parish-wide boulevards initiative, Jefferson continues to implement major improvements to its boulevards. A number of projects are in the concept phase or are currently underway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Two phases of tree plantings along Jefferson Highway, from Causeway to Clearview and from Clearview to the City of Kenner line, are in the planning phase. Plantings were delayed due to the drought in 2011, but work should commence in the fall of 2012.•Major design work has been completed by Greg Cantrell for an even more ambitious upgrade to Jefferson Highway. Funding to implement this project has not yet been identified, but the Parish has started a dialogue with the two beautification non-profits to implement these improvements.•Design work for further aesthetic upgrades to Bonnell has been completed, though implementation has been delayed by the 2011 drought and funding shortages. Jefferson Parish has started a dialogue with the non-profit Friends of Jefferson the Beautiful about funding this project.•Phase VI, the final phase of major improvements to Veterans Highway, is at the Family Gras site and is in the planning phase. Design work has been delayed by the ever shifting footprint of the Family Gras venue. <p>Other projects in the planning and implementation phases include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•The installation of a Michalopoulos sculpture at Severn and Veterans; this project will be completed in July, 2012.•Installation of artwork by David Hourini at the intersection of Veterans and Orion•Landscaping and tree planting on Veterans from I-10 to the Kenner line is in the design phase•The design of aesthetic improvements to drainage canals along Veterans between Transcontinental and Clearview is under way.	Continue to monitor the progress of landscape, streetscape, and public art projects underway. Secure funding to transition projects currently in the design stage into the construction stage. Continue to seek funding for a comprehensive boulevards study to set the stage for further capital improvements. Perhaps use the Jefferson bicycle master plan as a launch pad for even more sweeping improvements to the boulevards.			

Beautification

Progress as of June 2012							
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
B1c	Implement a gateway improvement program with a principal emphasis on the corridors abutting the airport	Secure local funding and pursue external funding in 2009; secure interagency agreements in 2009; initiate project in 2010; complete by 2013	<p>There are two major components to Jefferson's gateway improvement program: signage and landscaping at the major entrances to the Parish and major aesthetic improvements to the entrance from the airport. For the first initiative, the Parish had to modify its original design scheme for a brick or concrete sign to satisfy DOTD's concerns about safety. The final design that was chosen is a highway reflector sign with breakaway posts. Work is underway to procure these signs through the Department of Traffic Engineering.</p> <p>For the second initiative, Jefferson was successful in obtaining a \$1.6 million Transportation Improvement Program grant. Design work and the environmental assessment have been completed by DOTD. The Super Bowl in February of 2013 is the target date for the completion of these enhancements. Discussions with corporate partners regarding ongoing maintenance of the landscape improvements are ongoing. The project will be put out to bid by DOTD in July 2012.</p> <p>The focus of the improvements will be along the airport access road and along I-10 from the airport access road to the Veterans Boulevard interchange. Further improvements to the egress from the Airport may be possible through the \$1 billion Airport redevelopment initiative that is currently in the planning phase. A component of the "new" airport could be radically re-designed access roads.</p>	<p>With funding secured and with design work nearly complete for the airport gateway enhancements and the entrance signs to Jefferson Parish, this action item is now marked as completed.</p> <p>However, JEDCO and the Parish must continue to monitor these efforts to ensure that progress continues. Also, JEDCO and the Parish should be particularly engaged in plans for a "new" Louis Armstrong airport. The potential investment in the Airport should be leveraged to fund off-site improvements to access roads and the I-10 corridor.</p>			
B1d	Create a small grant program to fund landscape improvements to older commercial properties	Complete project design and solicit applications in 2009; initiate matching grant program in 2010 and annually thereafter	A major obstacle to this program is the absence of a funding source. While no Parish funding source is in place, the Beautification strike force began a dialogue with the Jefferson Community Foundation about the possibility of sponsoring a pilot grant or grants for shopping centers that currently have little or no landscaping. The Foundation was somewhat receptive to underwriting a pilot program, but there was some concern that the grant amount would not be sufficient to fund meaningful improvements. GCR has since conducted research on similar programs in other jurisdictions. This research will be shared with the Foundation and will possibly be the basis for the design of a pilot program in Jefferson.	<p>Continue dialogue with the Jefferson Community Foundation about a matching grant program.</p> <p>Engage members of the Parish Council and/or Parish President to spur interest.</p>			

Beautification

Progress as of June 2012							
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
B1e	Sponsor a design and engineering competition to devise interim aesthetic improvements to open drainage canals	Issue RFP and award grant in 2009; begin implementing recommendations in 2010	<p>In May of 2011, the Jefferson Community Foundation awarded \$30,000 to the top submission in the canal beautification design competition that the Foundation sponsored.</p> <p>Since then, the Parish has identified CPZ funds to implement a pilot beautification project along Veterans Boulevard from Clearview to Transcontinental. This exciting pilot project is currently in the design stage.</p> <p>Furthermore, a team of designers led by Waggoner and Ball Architects of New Orleans is assembling a “water management strategy” for the east bank of Orleans Parish, the east bank of Jefferson, and St. Bernard. One of the projects that this strategy is considering is exactly the kind of canal beautification improvements that came out of the aforementioned design competition.</p>	<p>Although this action item, per se, has been completed, follow up action will focus on funding and implementation.</p> <p>Monitor the progress of the pilot project along Veterans Boulevard. Monitor progress of Water Management Strategy, and push for the inclusion of canal beautification projects in Jefferson. Especially monitor discussions of potential funding strategies and implementation</p>			
B1f	Work with utility providers to screen major utility infrastructure throughout the Parish	Identify funds in 2009/2010; secure agreements with utility providers in 2010; initiate improvements in 2011	<p>The Jefferson Parish Department of Streets continues to be in contact with Entergy about lingering aesthetic problems with their utility infrastructure (leaning poles, abandoned poles, etc.) The streets department has compiled a spreadsheet of problematic infrastructure and locations and has written a number of letters to Entergy to address aesthetic shortcomings. Parish Councilmembers have been copied on this correspondence.</p> <p>Some progress has been made by Entergy, though progress to date has been limited.</p>	<p>Continue to monitor Entergy’s progress in remediating the problems enumerated on the Department of Streets’ infrastructure spreadsheet.</p> <p>Engage the Parish Administration and Council if further progress is not forthcoming.</p>			

Beautification

						Progress as of June 2012		
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps		Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
B2 Significantly enhance both the content and the enforcement of the Parish's land use policies and regulations								
B2a	Revise the Envision Jefferson 2020 Comprehensive Plan to include an urban design element	Identify funds in 2008; issue RFP and award contract in 2009; complete element in 2009	This item has been removed from the list of beautification action items, based on input from the Jefferson Parish Planning Department. However, incremental work on urban design problems should continue to be monitored.	Incremental work on urban design problems should continue to be monitored.		<i>No longer applicable and removed from beautification action items.</i>		
B2b	Incrementally re-write the Parish's zoning ordinance	Identify funds in 2008; issue RFP and award contract in 2009; adoption of new ordinance by year end 2010, beginning 2011	<p>Jefferson continues to make incremental changes to its zoning regulations. The most high profile change was the adoption of three new zoning districts for Fat City. However a number of other major changes are underway or have been completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •By Ordinance No. 24189, the Parish adopted strengthened hotel/motel regulations in order to address blight and illegal activity. •Planning continues to work on new regulations for electronic message signs. Public hearings are tentatively scheduled for summer, 2012. •Planning also continues to work on new off-street parking regulations. Resolution No. 117970 put in place interim parking standards for small-scale commercial uses. These standards require fewer off-street spaces. •Ordinance No. 24240, following a study, was also adopted. This ordinance institutes more stringent requirements for exterior wall materials for non-residential uses. <p>The Parish also continues to migrate the zoning ordinance into a "Unified Development Code" in Chapter 33 of the Parish Code of Ordinances.</p>	Monitor progress of public hearings for electronic message signs as well as progress in revising off-street parking requirements. Continue to advocate for the re-formation of a sign committee to draft comprehensive changes to Parish sign regulations. Continue to search for external funding sources (e.g. Office of Community Development) to make more sweeping changes to the Parish zoning ordinance				

Beautification

Progress as of June 2012								
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress	
B2c	Enact interim improvements to Parish codes and land use regulations	Identify gaps and weaknesses in present regulations; adopt amended, interim regulations in 2008 and 2009	This item has been removed from the list of beautification action items, based on the modification to action item B2b, i.e. the decision to pursue incremental rather than comprehensive changes to the Parish's land use regulations.	No further action required.	No longer applicable and removed from beautification action items.			
B2d	Ensure the even application and vigorous enforcement of existing zoning regulations	Ongoing; strive for Greater predictability starting in 2008 and 2009 as regulations are amended and coordination is enhanced	This action item has been removed from the beautification plan. It represents more of an on-going administrative approach to implementation rather than a unique, singular action.	No further action needed.	No longer applicable and removed from beautification action items.			
B3 Increase community awareness of beautification efforts and elicit further community involvement								
B3a	Formalize a lasting public partnership with civic groups and other non-profits to plant additional trees in residential neighborhoods	Development of Co-operative endeavor in 2008/2009; initiate tree planting program in 2009	In 2011, Jefferson Parish contacted “Hike for Katreena,” an organization that has been responsible for numerous tree plantings in the New Orleans area. The Parish had hoped to partner with this organization to schedule tree plantings in participating residential neighborhoods. However, after a number of initial meetings, community support was elusive. This action item is being tabled indefinitely, as there has not been the grassroots support that is necessary to support this project.	Revisit action item in 2013 to determine if there is any neighborhood/grassroots support for residential tree plantings.	Action item has been tabled indefinitely.			
B3b	Initiate a public outreach campaign to inform residents of on-going beautification initiatives	Develop website and newsletter layout in 2008/early 2009. Unveil in 2009	The public outreach campaign to support Jefferson EDGE 2020 has stalled in the past year due to budget shortfalls. Jefferson Life magazine, after a promising start, saw its advertising revenue wane. As a result, the magazine is on indefinite hold. Attempts to find a new publisher to purchase Jefferson Life have been unsuccessful to date. In the meantime, the Parish continues to maintain a Facebook presence.	Continue to maintain social media presence. In an era of declining print publications, determine whether it makes sense to continue to pursue the concept of a community magazine. Continue to advocate for marketing dollars from past supporters—the Parish, school system, and Sheriff's office.				

Beautification

Progress as of June 2012							
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
B4 Provide additional public art installations throughout Jefferson Parish							
B4a	Develop a formal program for incorporating public art into public works projects	Develop program and secure funding in 2008, 2009; Initiate program in 2009, 2010	Action item completed. See action item B1b above for updates on a limited number of additional public art projects. Also, see status report from July, 2011 for more information.	As the economy and fiscal outlook for Jefferson Parish improve, revisit the concept of earmarking a portion of capital projects for public art.			
B4b	Coordinate with the state and New Orleans Public Belt Railroad to install decorative lighting on the Huey P. Long Bridge	Initiate outreach in 2008 and 2009; install lighting before completion of bridge widening in 2013	In 2009, a study was completed by APEX Engineering that recommended decorative metal halide lighting for the Huey P. Long Bridge. The study assigned both a capital cost and a maintenance cost for this approach. Since the completion of the study, no funding source has been forthcoming. However, a group of business leaders in Jefferson is currently working with the Regional Planning Commission to identify potential grant funding to support the capital costs related to installation.	Provide support to citizens and business leaders in identifying potential grant funding to light the bridge.			



700 Churchill Pkwy.
Avondale, LA 70094
504 875 3908 fax 504 875 3923



GCR Inc.

2021 Lakeshore Drive, Ste. 500
New Orleans, LA 70122
504 304 2500 fax 504 304 2525