

CHAPTER 4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The City of D'Iberville finds itself at a point in time where its resources and development momentum may never be as substantial as they are now. For many years, the City of D'Iberville has been primarily a bedroom community within a larger metropolitan employment and entertainment market. However, the city does have distinct advantages and potential to become a *preferred* location for spinoff commercial and residential development on a rather large scale. Located at the juncture of Interstate Highways 10 and 110 and MS Highway 67 (The Biloxi D'Iberville Scenic Expressway), D'Iberville is uniquely positioned to develop and capture an even larger share of the gulf coast regional retail market and is slated for casino development at two locations along the Back Bay.

The post Katrina Citizens Master Plan identifies this potential due to the City's strategic location. D'Iberville has the ingredients to support a strong retail sector, an extra-regional economy from casinos and other resort type projects, and a thriving local or small business sector capitalizing on the major developments and the returning local residents and workforce.

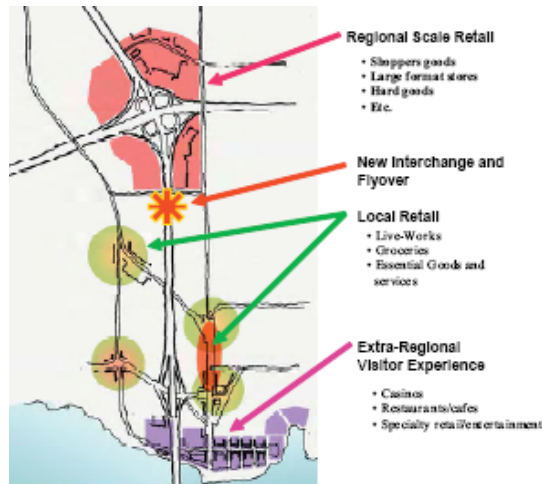


Figure 4.1 Generalized development concepts for D'Iberville

The new Highway 67 has begun to funnel even greater numbers of workers, tourists and shoppers to and through D'Iberville. From a recovery standpoint, *north shore* locations seem to be developing more rapidly than those areas along the waters edge. The likely reason may relate to the cost of development (or redevelopment) within those areas hardest hit by Katrina. Because of the increased costs to redevelop, the City of D'Iberville recognizes that the allowable land use mix must change in order justify the expense of redevelopment. The City of D'Iberville is committed to rebuilding and redeveloping all of those areas devastated by Katrina.

INTERSTATE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the last ten years, the northeast quadrant of the I10/I110 Commercial District has exploded with growth. Called the Lakewood Shopping Center, anchor tenants on this 60 acre development include: Wal-Mart, Lowes, and dozens of small retail businesses comprising nearly 500,000 square feet of space with more under various stages of permitting and construction. Lakewood Development has started a chain reaction of similar development in the remaining quadrants of the interchange wishing to capitalize of this strategic location. Lakewood has evolved into not only a place to shop, but also a place to recreate and seek personal

and professional services as well.

The northwest quadrant has recently developed into the *Promenade*, an 800,000 square foot shopping center featuring anchor tenants such as Target, Kohl's, Marshalls and Office Depot. This will establish D'Iberville as the retail power center for the coast.

Shoppers from Biloxi and surrounding cities and travelers from as far as 50+ miles away will travel to D'Iberville to shop the new major big box retailers and other national recognized businesses not currently open anywhere in this region.

The southwest and southeast quadrants are also on the drawing board for specialty retail and outlet type shopping centers, office space, services, and housing. Together, the Interstate District of the I-10/110 Interchange comprises one of the City's two most important mixed-use development zones.

Although the city has financially participated heavily in these developments through Tax Increment Financing plans, the result has been the influx of significant tax dollars. The City of D'Iberville must continue its financial commitments to successful redevelopment and the creation of other special districts within the city, particularly a downtown and waterfront area.

DOWNTOWN AND WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION

A primary component of the economic development strategy plan is to create a new *town center* in concert with the reconstruction of Central Avenue to serve as a gateway to the historic downtown, waterfront and residential areas of old D'Iberville. A proposed **French Market Square** is strategically located with frontage on Central Avenue and Rodrigues Street enabling mixed use retail, conference and meeting other services complimentary to adjacent small

The City of D'Iberville has the opportunity to develop the downtown area. The county school and several state agencies have funding redevelopment in the area. Of substantial area is that of repopulation. New housing in sufficient density to support the development price to be within reach of retail, casino, military, units must be compact, affordable and most throughout the entire area and sufficient enough of a vibrant live-work-play-shop area close to

Another key to the success of the French Market land uses for the area which will draw large sense of continuing activity in the area. A casino, for instance, would serve this purpose. Also, given the fact the school district owns underutilized property within the area, potentially an educational use could locate in the area, such as a maritime museum or an aquatic center.

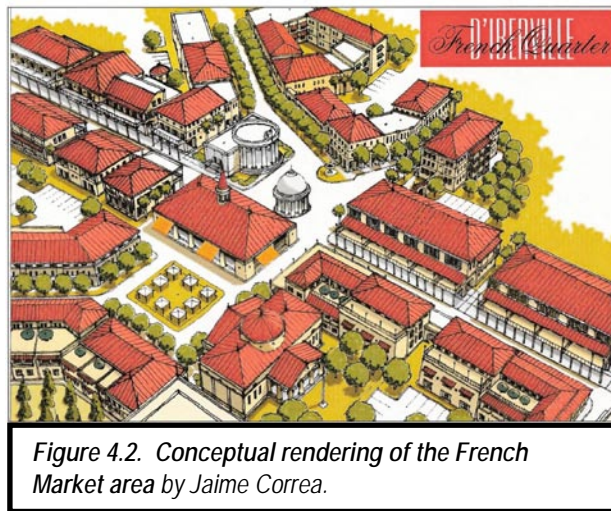


Figure 4.2. Conceptual rendering of the French Market area by Jaime Correa.

the development of a town green, visitor's center, facilities, entertainment, food & beverage and businesses and a waterfront casino zone.

involve and leverage several "partners" to board owns substantial acreage within the area, opportunities to support infrastructure and importance in the success of the French Quarter opportunities for area workers must be available cost and within an affordable rental / purchase and people of similar income. These housing importantly attractive. They must be distributed in number to create a critical mass for realization jobs.

area is an anchor. The City should pursue major volumes of patrons into the area and create a

The City is also working closely with Coast Area Transit to develop a multi-modal hub and connecting bus service between D'Iberville and the transit hub in Biloxi. The proposed new transit center would be located in association with the French Market and form a nucleus of activity which small business development would thrive. Centralized parking would be a tremendous asset to the development of the French Market in that it aids in achieving the built environment envisioned in the Citizens Master Plan.



Figure 4.3 *Rendering of the D'Iberville waterfront development and French Market area by Jaime Correa.*

The Citizens Master Plan envisioned a vibrant downtown area anchored by casinos, mixed use retail, a convention facility, restaurants, entertainment, offices, housing, and sports. The combination of waterfront, gaming, and small local businesses in an attractive quaint setting will become a significant asset for the city. Coordinated recruitment of conventions and events between the City and the casinos will generate a mix of visitors and local residents creating a special small town feel.

The implementation of this will not be easy. As with any public project there will be political struggles, both for and against, and the economic recession will slow private sector participation in the development of the French Market area. The City of D'Iberville must remain vigilant in its efforts to create this highly unique asset.

