

# Jefferson EDGE 2020 **BEAUTIFICATION** Status Report 2: October, 2009

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Prepared by JEDCO and GCR & Associates, Inc.

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**JEDCO**  
Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission



## 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

Action ID #	Action Item	Progress as of October 2009		
		Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
<b>B1. BOULEVARDS INITIATIVE</b>				
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			
<b>B2. ENHANCE LAND USE POLICIES AND REGULATIONS</b>				
B2a	Revise the Envision Jefferson 2020 Comprehensive Plan to include an urban design element	No longer applicable.		
B2b	Incrementally re-write the Parish's zoning ordinance			
B2c	Enact interim improvements to Parish codes and land use regulations	No longer applicable.		
B2d	Ensure the even application and vigorous enforcement of existing zoning regulations	No longer applicable.		
<b>B3. INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF AND INVOLVEMENT IN BEAUTIFICATION</b>				
B3a	Formalize a lasting public partnership with civic groups and other non-profits to plant additional trees in residential neighborhoods			
B3b	Initiate a public outreach campaign to inform residents of on-going beautification initiatives			
<b>B4. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PUBLIC ART</b>				
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			

# Beautification

						Progress as of October 2009		
Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress	
<b>B1 Implement a comprehensive “boulevards initiative” to systematically upgrade major thoroughfares</b>								
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	Initial meetings among Parish departments highlighted concerns about the magnitude of this effort, the level of coordination required, and funding. There has not been any funding allocated by the Parish to develop this study, but candidate corridors/boulevards have been identified on the East and West Banks. A possible funding source for this study is the Greater New Orleans Foundation/Jefferson Community Foundation. Meetings are being held with the staff and board of the Foundation to determine how much funding would be available to pursue this study and whether funding from other foundations may be obtained for this project. Also, the possibility was raised of creating an independent authority to implement beautification measures. This may prove to be an effective mechanism for funding and managing the boulevards initiative.	Determine the amount of funding available from foundations and other sources to pursue this study. Initiate study. Also, study the feasibility of establishing an independent authority to manage and fund beautification improvements.				
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	Greg Cantrell, Inc. has been retained to develop the plans for beautifying Jefferson Highway and Lapalco Boulevard. The development of those plans is on-going. The Parish has also applied for a Transportation Improvement Grant for Jefferson Highway through the Louisiana DOTD in the amount of approximately \$1.4 million. The Parish will hear whether the grant request has been approved in late November or December of 2009.	Determine whether the Jefferson Highway initiative rises to the level of a “demonstration” or pilot project. If funding is insufficient to effect a major transformation, seek additional funding. Await results of study described in B1a to tap a funding source and implement improvements.				
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	The Jefferson Parish Public Works – Streets Department has made significant progress with this initiative in planting flora along I-10. The Department is in the design and construction phase of landscaping and signage for all Parish entry points. The Parish submitted an application for, and was recently awarded, a \$1.6 million Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) grant through the State Department of Transportation and Development.	Monitor the programming of the Transportation Improvement Program grant. Determine whether additional funds will be needed to implement the vision outlined in the Beautification plan. Continue discussions with RPC, LANOIA, and City of Kenner about how to further improve the airport ingress/egress.				

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Action ID #	Action Item	Original Timeline	Accomplishments/Benchmarks Met	Next Steps	Action Item Complete	Substantial Progress	Little/No Progress
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	The Jefferson Parish Parkways Department is in the process of identifying candidate shopping centers for this grant initiative. However the list has not been finalized, and no funding source has been identified.	Finalize list of candidate properties, secure funding and program guidelines, and initiate outreach.			
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	The staff of the Greater New Orleans Foundation has completed a draft version of an RFP for a design competition/study to improve the appearance of the open canals in Jefferson. The RFP has not been finalized yet, but the draft version proposes a budget/award of \$50,000. The preliminary response date for submissions is December, 2009.	Finalize the RFP and initiate the design study/competition.			
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	All candidate utility infrastructure has been identified, and the Parish has requested that landscape and other aesthetic improvements be implemented.	Ensure that utility providers follow through on commitment to screen and improve utility infrastructure.			

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<b>B2 Significantly enhance both the content and the enforcement of the Parish's land use policies and regulations</b>								
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	After considering budget constraints and more immediate priorities for the Envision Jefferson 2020 Plan, the Parish has decided to indefinitely table this action item. The cost and staff commitment that would be required to complete this initiative could not be justified in light of more pressing planning needs. Instead, aesthetic issues will be addressed on an incremental basis through capital improvements and regulatory changes stemming from on-going efforts such as the signage study underway. Additionally, the existing components of Envision Jefferson 2020 already address urban design issues in part; and when the land use element of the Plan is revisited in 2011, there may be an opportunity to address urban design in the context of modifications to the land use element.	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.	<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>After considering the cost and scale of comprehensively re-writing the Parish's zoning ordinance, the Parish has decided to pursue a strategy of incremental improvements to the existing ordinance. Thus, the action item has been changed from "comprehensively re-write" to "incrementally re-write." Considerable progress is being made on improving land development regulations, from the completion of new subdivision regulations in 2008 to the re-organization of land use regulations into a new, unified development code (ch. 33 of the Code of Ordinances).</p> <p>The development of three new zoning districts for Fat City will provide a test case and potentially a template for revised, improved regulations parish-wide. These may include new, more stringent sign regulations, improved landscape and parking requirements, an administrative design review process, and a new mixed use classification.</p> <p>Although a completely new zoning ordinance will not be pursued, JEDCO and the Parish should remain vigilant and aggressive in working towards improved signage, landscape, and design review guidelines/regulations in the coming years. Finally, as part of the larger code enforcement effort, certain zoning regulations have been modified, and enforcement of those regulations has been strengthened.</p>	Continue to re-organize zoning regulations in chapter 33 of the Code of Ordinances. Complete signage study and implement recommendations through changes to the zoning ordinance. Devise a schedule for implementing other key changes to the ordinance.				

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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	Given that the Parish has decided to pursue an incremental, rather than wholesale, approach to revising its land use regulations, this action item will be removed from the beautification plan. Action item B2b has been changed to reflect the shift toward incremental change, making this action item (B2c) redundant.	No further action needed. 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.			
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	Upon further consideration, 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. This item has been removed from the list of beautification action items, yet Parish leaders should continue to strive for greater predictability in enforcement.			
<b>B3 Increase community awareness of beautification efforts and elicit further community involvement</b>							
B3a	Formalize a lasting public partnership with civic groups and other non-profits to plant additional trees in residential neighborhoods	Development of Cooperative endeavor in 2008/2009; initiate tree planting program in 2009	Through an existing Jefferson Parish program to improve subdivision entrances, the Parish has formed strong ties with civic and neighborhood associations. However, the specific mechanisms to get a tree planting program underway have not been established. Funding sources (internal or external) have not been identified; a tree planting goal has not been established; and the administrative infrastructure to oversee this initiative has not been finalized.  On a pilot basis, the two beautification non-profits in Jefferson Parish are committing resources to plant trees to complement the efforts underway to beautify Jefferson Highway. This project could be a foundation for a parish-wide effort to plant trees in residential neighborhoods.	Identify funding sources; establish programmatic guidelines and tree planting goals; and designate a responsible agency.			
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	JEDCO is spearheading the production of a custom publication, "Jefferson Life Magazine", which highlights a different quality of life initiative every issue. "Jefferson Life Magazine" is mailed to select households and is available at multiple pick-up points around Jefferson Parish. The cover story of the first issue (published summer, 2009) was about beautification efforts in Jefferson. While this represents prominent publicity about planned efforts and efforts underway, this action item is not marked as complete because continued public outreach on this topic is essential throughout the life of the Jefferson EDGE initiative.	Continue to explore multiple avenues and formats for informing residents about planned and on-going beautification initiatives in Jefferson.			

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Progress as of October 2009

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<b>B4 Provide additional public art installations throughout Jefferson Parish</b>							
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	Artists have been commissioned for a total of 18 public art pieces; locations have been identified; and the design of foundations and associated amenities is progressing. Preliminary discussions are underway for a second initiative, but no concrete decisions have been made thus far.	Complete the installation of the 18 selected pieces. Determine whether phase II is feasible and whether funding is available. Determine whether additional public art measures are desirable or feasible over the next several years.			
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	The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) contracted APEX Engineering to study the feasibility of lighting the Huey P. Long Bridge. APEX has published their study in July of 2009, outlining a menu of three different types of bridge lighting including 1) "Necklace" lighting across the top of the bridge, 2) metal halide floodlighting for the bridge structure and piers and 3) LED color floodlighting for the bridge structure and piers. These options range in cost from \$780,000 to \$1.24 to \$1.39 million, respectively. Annual costs of maintenance and operation would cost \$17,500 to \$57,800 to \$56,700, respectively. APEX identified option 2— metal halide lighting—as the system which meets the requests of the majority of participants in their information gathering efforts.  According to the APEX report, no funding for the installation, maintenance and operation of the lighting has been identified and that the completion of this project is contingent upon identifying a funding source.	Review feasibility studies and designs; secure funding for installation and maintenance			