

# Transforming Mid City

Analysis of the Direct and Catalytic Impacts of the work  
of GCHP and its Partners in Mid City Baton Rouge, LA



Prepared by PlaceEconomics  
Washington, D.C.  
2023







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GCHP Project Profiles





Photo credit: GCHP

## Gulf Coast Housing Partnership

### 17 Years of Transformative Development

**AT GCHP, THE MOTTO IS, “BIG PROBLEMS ARE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BIG CHANGES.”**

Gulf Coast Housing Partnership (GCHP) opened its headquarters in 2006 in New Orleans as an effort to assist in rebuilding efforts after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. GCHP creates opportunities for transformative development that support vibrant, socially, and economically integrated communities throughout the Gulf Coast. Partnering with public, nonprofit, and private entities GCHP facilitates development and preservation projects that have a tangible, positive impact. GCHP is also savvy when it comes to navigating and utilizing a wide variety of funding mechanisms including navigating multiple sources of tax credit finance. GCHP’s work has indeed had a transformative impact in Baton Rouge’s Mid City. Prior to GCHP’s involvement, the neighborhood had suffered from vacancy and disinvestment. This study quantifies the catalytic impact of GCHP’s work in Mid City Baton Rouge.

## History of Mid City Baton Rouge

### From Vacancy to Vitality

**PARTNERSHIPS ARE RAISING THE PROFILE OF MID CITY AS A SHOPPING, DINING, AND CULTURE DESTINATION.**

Mid City represents a roughly one square mile neighborhood east of Baton Rouge’s downtown core. Once considered a rural outskirts, the neighborhood has experienced periods of growth, decline, and resurgence. Mid City was largely developed throughout the early twentieth century. Mid City neighborhoods like the Garden District and the Roseland Terrace Historic District speak to a first construction boom in the 1920s and 1930s and are considered Baton Rouge’s earliest suburb. However, several trends in the mid-20th century would shape Baton Rouge into the sprawling city it is known as today. Construction of the Baton Rouge Expressway in 1957 severed Mid City from downtown. In the 1970s, Baton Rouge experienced a petrochemical industry boom, which combined with the completed interstate system, fueled an urban exodus of economically mobile, primarily white families away from the city’s near-downtown neighborhoods. This white flight away from Mid City continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s. These historical patterns have had consequences still visible in the landscape of Mid City. Decades of disinvestment have meant that many buildings stand boarded up and large tracks of land have been cleared and left undeveloped. Because of this, Mid City was until recently considered a non-descript commuting stretch of Baton Rouge between downtown and outlying suburban neighborhoods.

However, Mid City also benefits from many strengths. The neighborhood is economically and racially diverse, and it is home to many community anchors and institutions, like Baton Rouge High School, Calandro’s Supermarket, and Baton Rouge General Hospital. Despite high levels of vacancy, much of Mid City’s neighborhood character remains: historically and architecturally significant buildings, locally owned businesses, and modest single-family home neighborhoods, like Progress Park and the Government Corridor. Today, organizations like the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, O’ Brien House, Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless, and Gulf Coast Housing Partnership are building on these strengths to revitalize Mid City. Their work over the last two decades is attracting new residents and investment to Mid City. Today, the neighborhood is recognized as a State Arts and Culture District, and Government Street is known as a destination for antique shopping, funky retail, and hip bars and restaurants.



BETWEEN 2008  
AND 2022, MID  
CITY SAW OVER  
**\$210  
MILLION**  
IN TOTAL INVESTMENT.

2008



O'Brien House

2011



OneStop



Scott School

2013



The Elysian



Corona



Belt Line

2016-2020



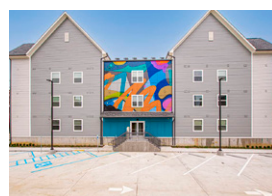
Progress Park

2019



Elysian II

2021



Elysian III

2023



Lotus Village

Under  
Construction



Government  
Corridor

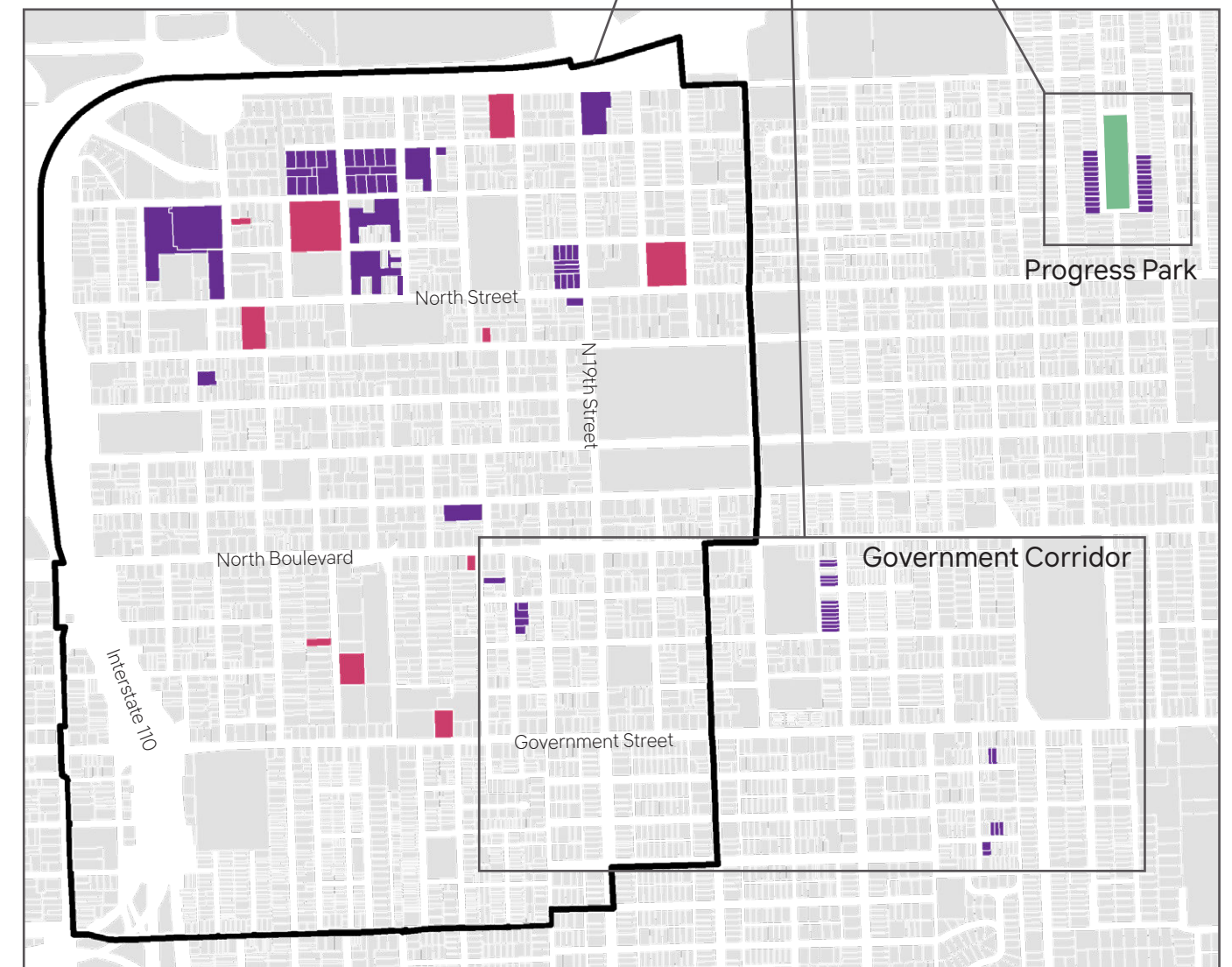
## Mid City Projects - GCHP and Other Developments

In addition to the ten completed projects in Mid City, GCHP has invested nearly \$3 million into the preservation and recapitalization of individual homes across the area. Across all projects, GCHP has invested \$125.8 million in Mid City and the surrounding neighborhoods.

### Mid City Projects

- GCHP Investment: **\$118.5 million**
- Investment by others: **\$84.5 million**

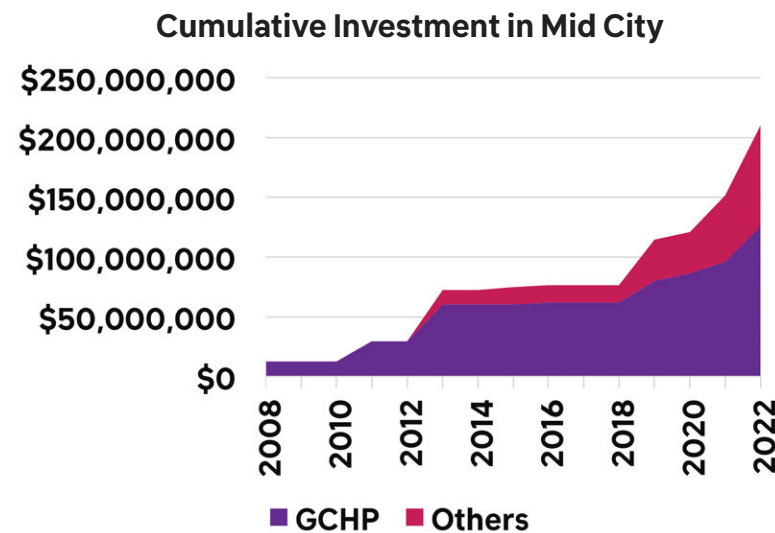
### Mid City Study Area and GCHP Projects





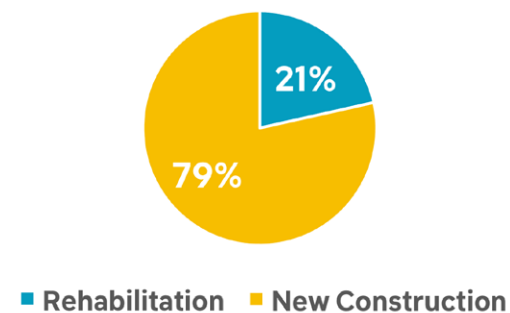
## New Construction and Rehabilitation

Between 2007 and 2022, the Mid City area saw \$210 million in total investment from GCHP and other developers. In total, GCHP has invested \$125.7 million, while others have invested \$84.5 million. In the first four years of GCHP's involvement, GCHP accounted for nearly 100% of the major investment in Mid City. However, their investments inspired others to follow suit in Mid City. In 2022, GCHP's investments accounted for 60% of the total cumulative investment.



The majority of GCHP's total investment has been in new construction while 21% has been in rehabilitation. GCHP's investment in historic buildings have maintained the character and history of Mid City's single-family neighborhoods and preserved significant buildings like the Scott School, while their investments in new construction have added critical affordable housing and homeless services centers to the neighborhood.

**Rehab vs. New Construction Investment**



## Financial Investment

GCHP's projects have invested **\$125.7 million** in Mid City. Other projects have invested another **\$85.4 million** for a total investment of over **\$210 million**.

For every **\$100** of GCHP investment an additional **\$71.1** is generated in economic activity.

## Property Tax Generation

Even though GCHP is a non-profit organization and most of their work involves providing affordable housing, their portfolio still has a sizable property tax bill. The taxes that GCHP projects generate **each year** is enough to:

 Pay the annual salaries of **three new teachers**, and...

 **\$10,000 to support** public park improvements, and

 The annual salary of **one experienced librarian**, and

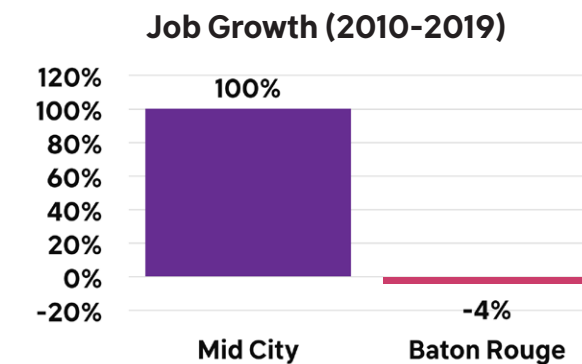
 **\$9,000 for operational costs** for emergency services, and

 Provide **\$200/month rental subsidy** for 100 families, and

 Still pay **\$65,000** for other local government services.

## Job Growth

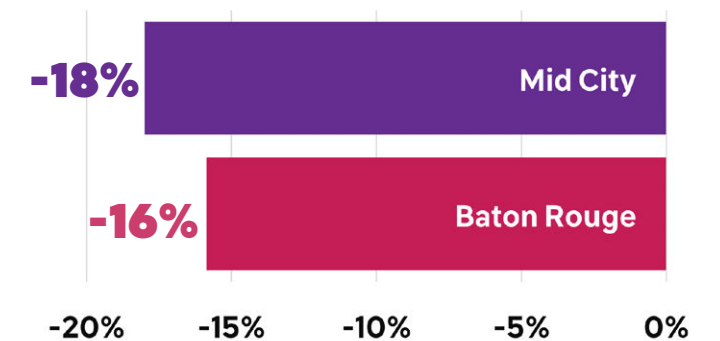
Since 2010, Baton Rouge has seen a 4% decrease in the city's total number of jobs. In that same period, Mid City has seen a 100% increase in jobs, with most of that change taking place between 2015 and 2019.



## Business Vacancy

Since 2014, the number of vacant business addresses in Baton Rouge has decreased by 16%. However, Mid City has seen a slightly greater reduction in vacancy at 18%.

**Change in Business Vacancy (2014-2021)**



## Jobs Creation: GCHP Construction

**Each year** since 2009, GCHP's rehabilitation and new construction activity has generated an average of:



GCHP projects create good paying jobs.

**\$55,000**

annual income for direct jobs, 26% more than the median household income in Baton Rouge.

**127**

direct jobs and

**\$7 million**

in direct labor income **each year**

**54**

indirect and induced jobs and

**\$2.3 million**

in indirect and induced labor income **each year**

GCHP's **\$118 million investment** in Mid City has ultimately meant nearly **\$104 million in economic activity** for in and around Baton Rouge. For every **10 jobs** working directly on a GCHP project, **4.3 jobs** are created elsewhere in Louisiana.



A "direct job" is a job that is created by the project. In the case of historic rehabilitation that would include a carpenter, plumber, electrician, etc. "Indirect jobs" are not created by the project, but are supported by it. In this case, the sales person at the lumberyard, or the truck driver that delivered materials to the job site are good examples of indirect jobs. An "induced" job is a job that is supported by employees' own spending on goods and services with wages earned through direct and indirect jobs.



## Housing Units

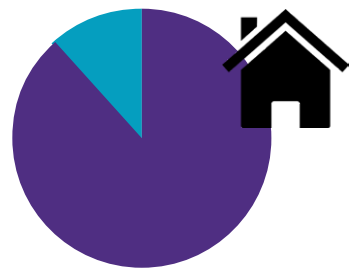
Between 2007 and 2023

**1188**

housing units were created or are under construction in the Mid City, with

**828**

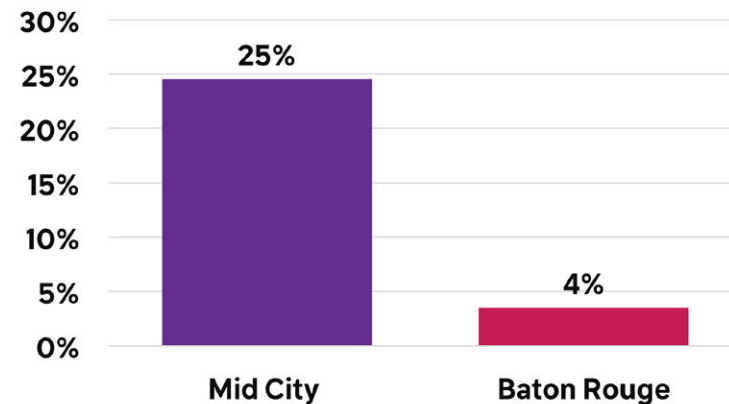
by GCHP and Partners.



## Housing Unit Growth

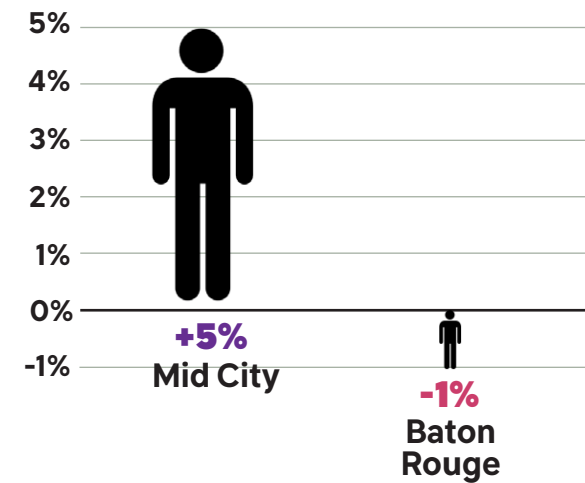
Since 2010, the total number of housing units in Mid City has increased by 25% as opposed to just 4% in the city overall.

Housing Unit Growth (2010-2020)



## Population Change

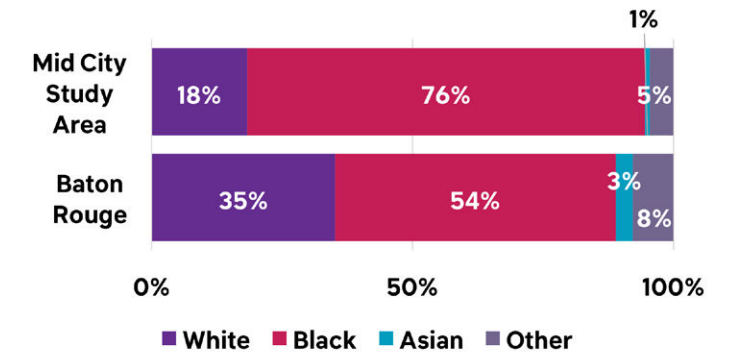
Overall, Baton Rouge has seen little population change between 2010 and 2020. The population of the Mid City Study area has increased slightly by 5%, while the population of Baton Rouge decreased slightly.



## Diversity

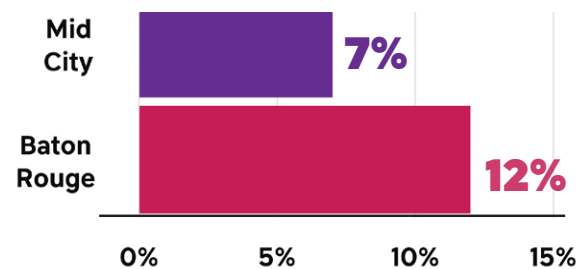
Overall, the area in which GCHP has concentrated their investments is much more diverse than Baton Rouge as a whole. Eighty-two percent of the population in Mid City Study Area are minority residents.

Racial Distribution (2020)



## Residential Vacancy

According to the US Census Valassis lists (which tracks vacant postal addresses via the USPS), the number of *vacant residential addresses* since 2014 has increased less in Mid City than in Baton Rouge overall.



## Home Values

Between 2010 and 2020, the median home value in the city overall increased by 36%, while the median home value in the Mid City Study Area increased 129%.

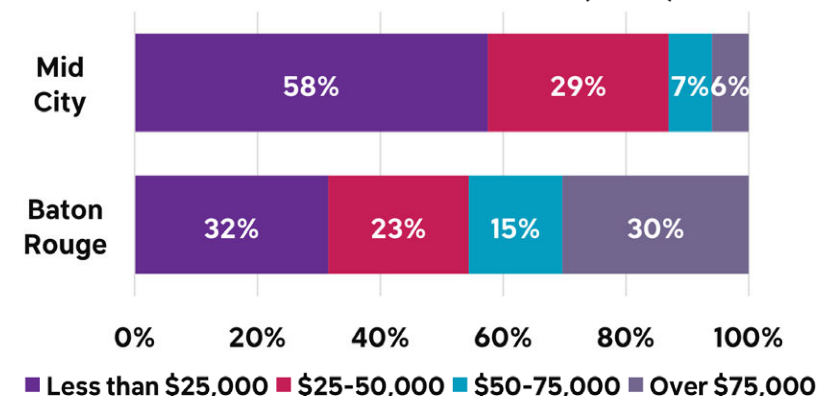
**129%** Mid City  
**36%** Baton Rouge



## Household Income

In 2020, the median household income in Baton Rouge was \$44,177. 84% of households in Mid City make less than the median income, and nearly 60% make less than \$25,000.

Household Income Distribution (2020)



## Housing Affordability

GCHP is providing housing at a price point that Mid City needs.

**63%**

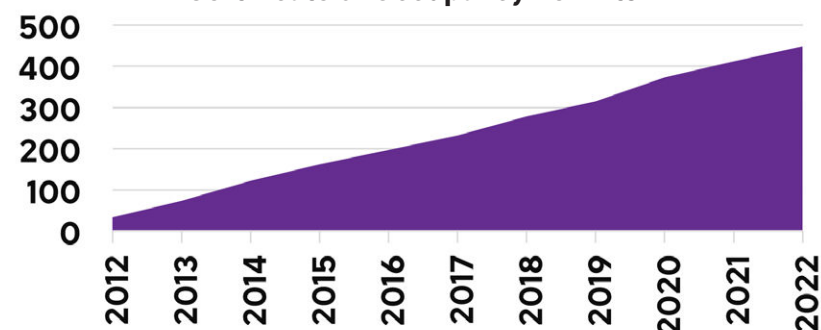
of households in Mid City make 80% AMI or less

**86%**

of housing units created by GCHP are affordable at 80% AMI

Since 2012, Mid City Baton Rouge has seen 448 new occupancy permits. The number of occupancy permits has grown steadily each year over the last 10 years.

Certificate of Occupancy Permits



## Purchasing Power

The spending power of households with modest incomes is often underestimated. In Baton Rouge, 86% of GCHP housing units are occupied by households with incomes less than 80% of the Area Median Income. However, those households are bringing purchasing power to their neighborhoods.



**\$25 million**

in annual expenditures to the neighborhood (excluding rent), helping to bring sustainable purchasing power to the neighborhood.



## Conclusion

### A Mid City Revival

**MID CITY BATON ROUGE IS BEING TRANSFORMED, AND GCHP AND ITS PARTNERS ARE MAKING IT HAPPEN.**

GCHP's focused, incremental investment in Mid City has been an instrumental component of the neighborhood's progress. In 17 years, GCHP's financial and human capital investments have transformed Mid City's vacant residential blocks into sources of pride for Baton Rouge. Their investments in housing and community-oriented services are charting the course for a vibrant Mid City. A wide range of measurements were applied in this study, and each told a positive story – increased population, reduced vacancy, increased property values and property tax revenues, new construction, historic rehabilitation jobs, and more.

GCHP has invested at every scale, from multi-million-dollar mixed use complexes to small historic buildings. GCHP has invested with partners from all three sectors of the economy: public, private, and non-profit. GCHP has served as mentor and facilitator for others who were attracted to the neighborhood because of GCHP's leadership. GCHP's investment has been the indisputable catalyst for the investments of others. Although chartered as a not-for-profit organization, GCHP has proven itself to be an extraordinarily entrepreneurial developer. It has effectively utilized grant programs, tax credits, special financing mechanisms, and creative partnerships to meet goals of providing quality, affordable housing and revitalizing urban neighborhoods.

GCHP calls its work "Transformative Development." Mid City is being transformed, and GCHP and its partners are making it happen.

## Methodology

This analysis relied on data from the Gulf Coast Housing Partnership, other state and federal databases, local parish and city offices, nonprofits, online research platforms, newspaper and social media outlets, and interviews.

- Tax credit data from the Louisiana Department of Culture and the National Park Service
- Property tax value data from East Baton Rouge Parish
- Building permit from the City of Baton Rouge
- Calculations for jobs and income created through building rehabilitation were based on IMPLAN, an input-output econometric model
- Population data from the US Census Bureau
- Purchasing power data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey.

## Project Team

This report was prepared and written by Donovan Rypkema, Alyssa Frystak, and Katlyn Cotton. Rypkema is principal of PlaceEconomics, a Washington D.C.-based real estate and economic development consulting firm. He is author of *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide* and an adjunct professor in the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Pennsylvania. Frystak is Director of Research and Data Analytics at PlaceEconomics. Cotton is the Director of Communications and Design at PlaceEconomics.



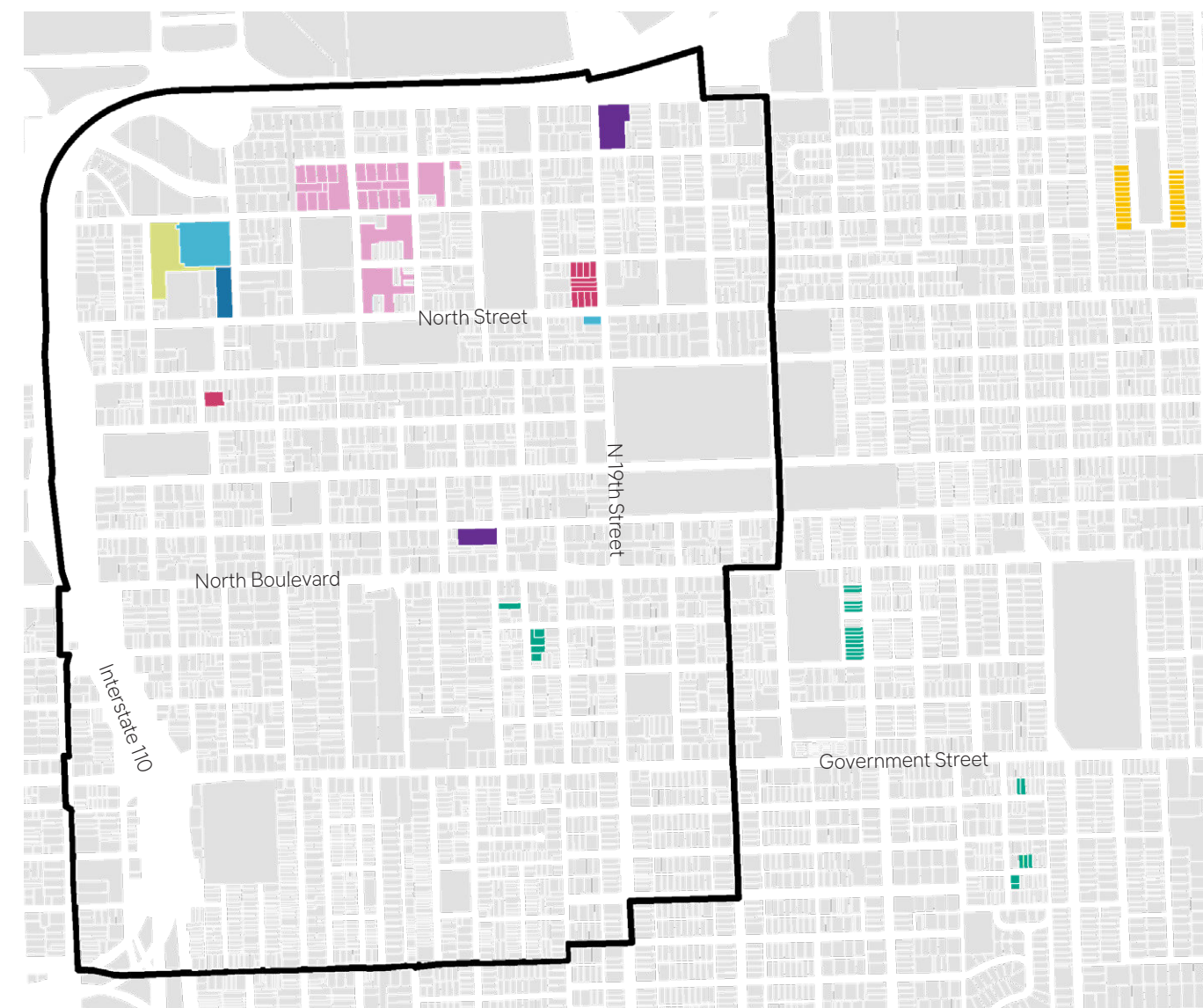
# Appendix

## Projects



# GCHP Direct Projects

GCHP has completed 10 major projects in Mid City since 2008, with one more project underway.

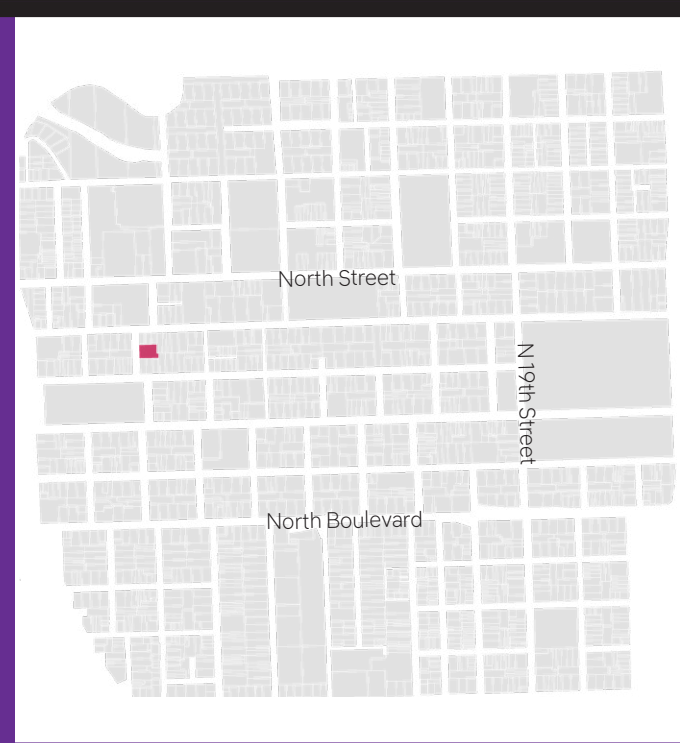


- 2008
- 2011
- 2013
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2023
- Under Construction



## O'Brien House Inc.

Year Completed: 2008  
 Address: 1231 Laurel Street  
 Square Feet: 23,425  
 Budget: \$3.9 Million  
 Transformed Into: 38 Transitional Housing Units and Community Center



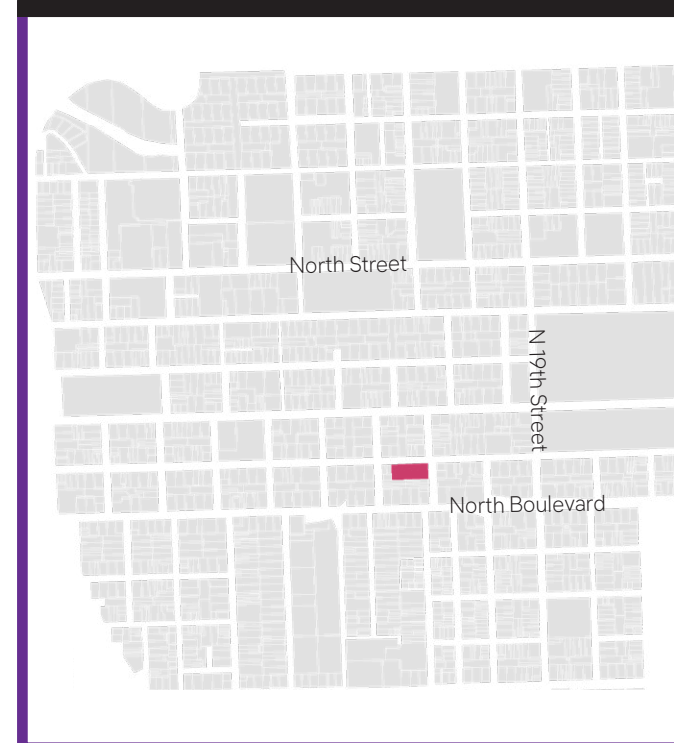
O'Brien House, Inc., a Baton Rouge-based substance abuse treatment provider with a transitional housing program, approached GCHP to develop permanent housing in a campus setting for O'Brien House clients. Working closely with O'Brien House, GCHP financed land acquisition and assembled construction and permanent financing to develop 38 single-room occupancy units and an adjoining community center in the Mid City neighborhood of Baton Rouge. The project overcame its greatest challenge in July 2007 when a welding accident burned the 60% completed building to the ground. Remarkably, the project was still completed on time and within budget, reaching 100% occupancy just one month after completion. The development continues to be fully occupied and is an income producing asset for O'Brien House, Inc.



Photo credits: GCHP

## One Stop Homeless Services Center & Housing

Year Completed: 2011  
 Address: 153 North 17th Street  
 Square Feet: 33,000  
 Cost to Construct: \$8.4 Million  
 Transformed Into: 36 Supportive Housing Units and Supportive Services Facility



The Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless, Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of Baton Rouge, and Gulf Coast Housing Partnership collaborated in a holistic approach to end homelessness in Baton Rouge by building a new state-of-the-art housing and services facility.

The One Stop Homeless Services Center, a vision of the Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless since 2004, represents an innovative approach to providing a full range of "Continuum of Care" support services to Baton Rouge's population experiencing homelessness and those at-risk of becoming homeless, incorporating 36 units of permanent supportive housing within the facility's campus.

Services available, both to the residents and day population, include on-site primary medical, dental and pharmacy services, behavioral health services, mental health screening, HIV/ AIDS quick testing, legal services for disability determination and mainstream resource enrollment assistance, and day Center Services such as showers, laundry, phone, mail, and computer access.

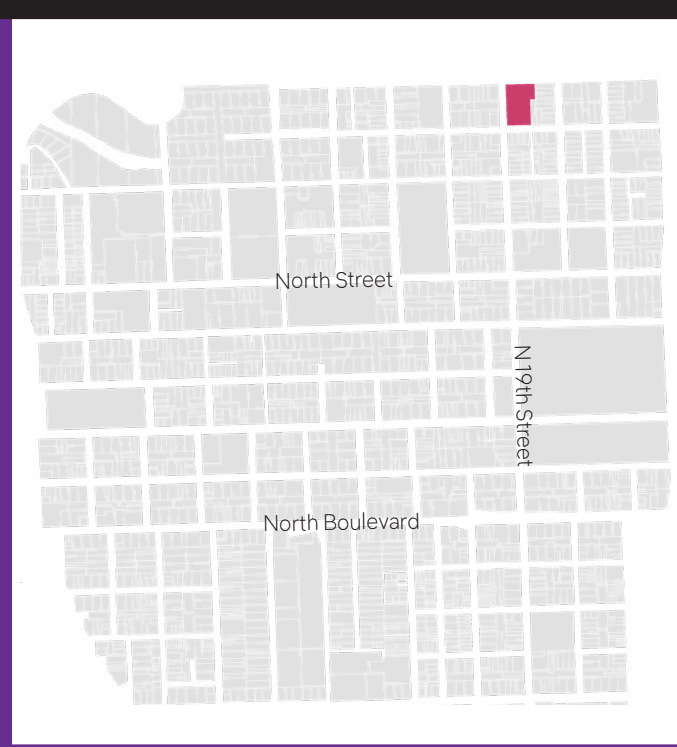


Photo credits: GCHP



## Scott School Apartment Homes

Year Completed: 2011  
 Location: 900 North 19th Street  
 Square Feet: 40,296  
 Cost to Construct: \$8.5 Million  
 Transformed Into: 60 Affordable Housing Units



In collaboration with the Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless, GCHP purchased the historic Scott Street Elementary School building at auction in 2007. The development, which included the historic rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the existing school as well as new construction of an adjacent structure, includes 60 affordable rental units – 20 one-bedroom apartments and 40 efficiency units.

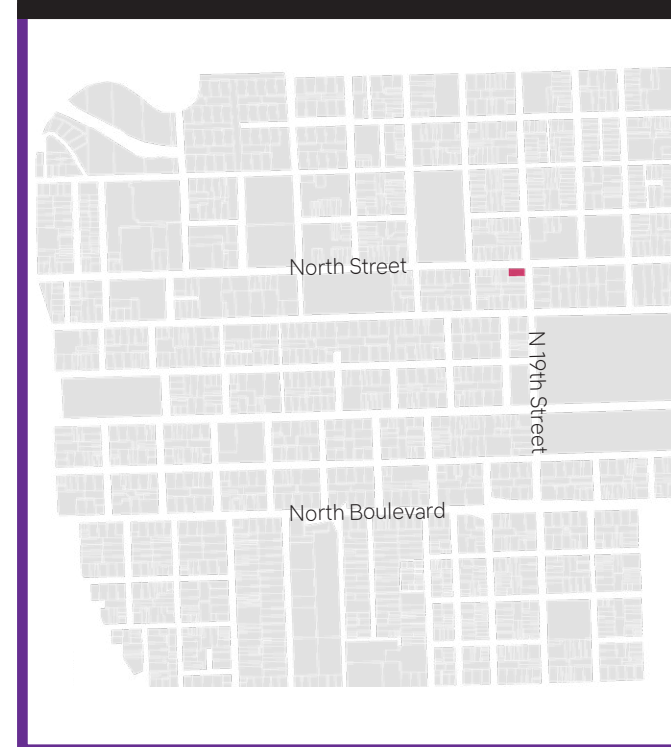
The decline of the Low-Income Tax Credit Market commencing in 2008 resulted in the withdrawal of two separate investors from their equity commitments to the Scott project. In the face of that challenge, GCHP restructured financing and proceeded to raise an additional \$3.175 Million in project funding to complete the development in 2011.



Photo credit: GCHP, Milton J Womack

## The Corona

Year Completed: 2013  
 Address: 1854 North Street  
 Square Feet: 34,108  
 Cost to Construct: \$7.7 Million  
 Transformed Into: 37 Affordable Housing Units



In partnership with Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, The Corona is a historic rehabilitation project that involves the adaptive reuse of the first Olinde Furniture store in Baton Rouge into residential housing. The development is located in the Mid City Cultural District and is in close proximity to downtown Baton Rouge, state and city government, educational facilities, and public transportation. The historic building has been transformed into 37 units, consisting of 24 one-bedroom and 13 studio apartments. The conversion includes on-site parking, a multipurpose room, a community garden, and pavilion. The 33,000 square-foot property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Photo credit: GCHP



# The Elysian, Elysian II, and Elysian III

Year Completed: 2013, 2019, 2021  
Address: 1120 Spanish Town Road and 1205 North Street  
Square Feet: 248,618  
Cost to Construct: \$42.5 Million  
Transformed Into: 242 Affordable and Mixed Income Housing Units



Located at North 13th Street and Spanish Town Road, The Elysian is a four story 111,500 square foot multi-family development, offering residents high quality affordable and environmentally friendly mixed-income rental housing. The Elysian has 75 affordable housing units and 25 market-rate apartments. The design incorporates pedestrian oriented streetscapes, porches and balconies, a community room and fitness center, playground area, bike racks, outdoor gathering space, and an outdoor kitchen. By the time GCHP broke ground on the Elysian II apartments, the first Elysian was at 100% occupancy. The success of the Elysian also led to improvements in the surrounding neighborhood, like new equipment, sidewalks, and landscaping at BREC's Spanish Town Park.

Elysian II was completed in 2019. The development has 100 - one, two, and three-bedroom units,

a fitness center and a rooftop deck. As opposed to the first Elysian apartments, of which roughly 75% were affordable units, the Elysian II featured 51 affordable units and 49 market-rate apartments.

Elysian III is the third phase of the Elysian Apartments. The 42-unit development has one, two, and

three-bedroom, mixed income apartments. In the summer of 2021, GCHP partnered with DNA Workshop and The Walls Project to bring public art to Mid City. The project, titled ShapeShift, brought a vibrant, abstract mural concept to the front entrance of the Elysian III.



Photo credit: BREC

The Elysian



Elysian II



Elysian III



Photo credit: GCHP, Apartments.com



## Belt Line Townhomes

Year Completed: 2013  
 Address: 1833 Gayosa Street  
 Square Feet: 33,423  
 Cost to Construct: \$7.1 Million  
 Transformed Into: 32 Affordable Housing Units

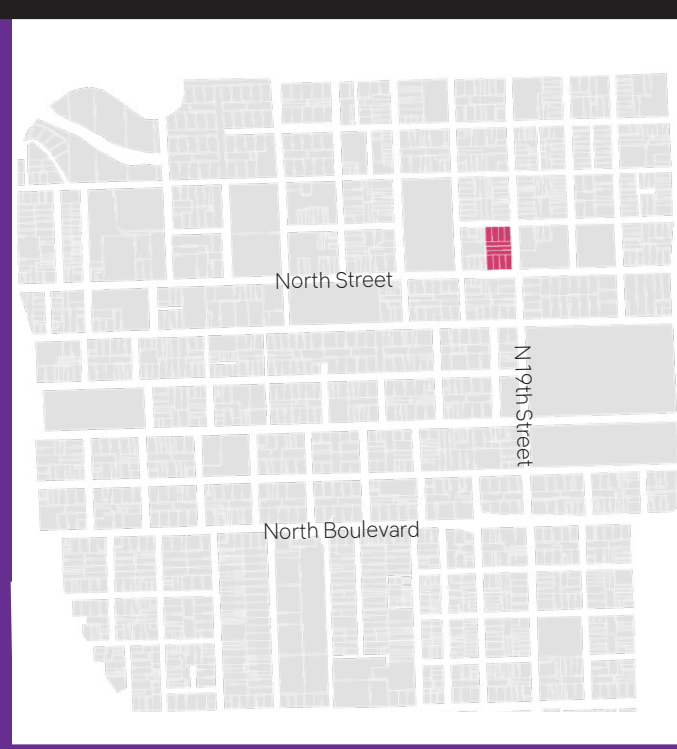
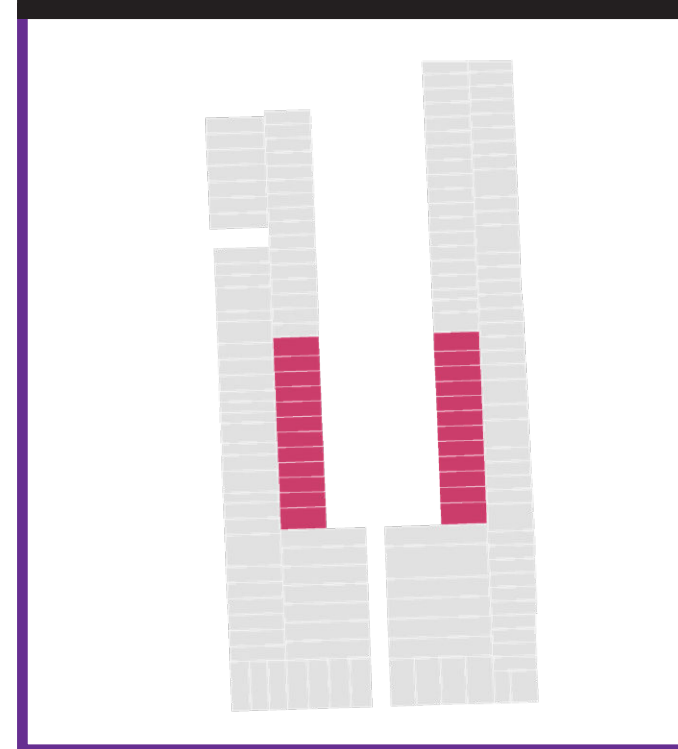


Photo credit: GCHP

In partnership with Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, GCHP constructed a 32-unit rental townhome community directly across from the Corona site. The development includes 16 two-bedroom and 16 three-bedroom townhomes as well as a community pavilion accessible to both residents and the broader neighborhood.

## Progress Park

Year Completed: 2020  
 Location: 723 North 30th Street  
 Square Feet: 31,430  
 Cost to Construct: \$6.6 Million  
 Transformed Into: 48 Senior Affordable Housing Units



In 2020, GCHP completed the redevelopment of Progress Park, a 48-unit historical affordable housing community located in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Progress Park is dedicated to seniors aged 55 or older and is comprised of 24 duplex style structures, lining either side of the Mary J. Lands Park. Progress Park is in the Mid City Neighborhood of Baton Rouge where GCHP has already made a substantial commitment, this was GCHP's seventh completed development project in this community.



Photo credit: Rent.com



## Lotus Village

Year Completed: 2023  
Address: 1600 Gracie Street  
Square Feet: 97,559  
Cost to Construct: \$25 Million  
Transformed Into: 116 Senior Affordable Housing Units



GCHP, in partnership with the East Baton Rouge Council on Aging, began construction on the Lotus Village Senior Living Community in 2021. Across 55 duplex and fourplex buildings, the development features 116 affordable units for seniors, located next to the East Baton Rouge Council on Aging's Lotus Senior Center. With the project's completion in 2023, the East Baton Rouge Council on Aging will provide supportive services for senior residents, where they can maintain their independence and enjoy social interaction through assistance and activities, including access to an exercise gym, sewing classes, a computer center, games, and much more.



Photo credit: GCHP, Red River Bank

## Government Corridor

Year Completed: Under Construction  
Address: 1760 America Street  
Square Feet: 25,000  
Cost to Construct: \$7 Million  
Transformed Into: 34 Detached Single Family and Duplex Homes



The Government Corridor project is in the Mid City of Baton Rouge, with original construction dating back to the 1920s. In 2023, GCHP broke ground on a \$7 million effort to rehabilitate 34 detached single-family and duplex homes across the neighborhood. Rehabilitation work is underway and scheduled for completion in February 2024. The scope of renovations includes substantial changes to most of the properties, including new floor plans and layouts and significant interior updates. Upon completion, the project will offer high-quality housing for families earning up to the 30, 50, and 60 percent of the Area Median Income. Of the 34 units, seven will be set aside for supportive services with five of the units fitted for audio and visual impaired residents, and two will be accessible.

Additionally, GCHP is partnering with Family Services of Greater Baton Rouge to provide services like family counseling, parenting education, domestic abuse counseling, and HIV and AIDS counseling.



Photo credit: GCHP

Source: <https://huntcapitalpartners.com/press/hunt-capital-partners-invests-6-15-million-in-lihtc-financing-for-the-rehabilitation-of-century-old-louisiana-affordable-housing-development-government-corridor/>



Prepared by:

