

# WAL-MART VILLAGE

*Pass Christian, Mississippi*

A preliminary concept by  
HRI Properties  
Robin Riley Associates  
Robert C. Tannen  
Wisznia Associates

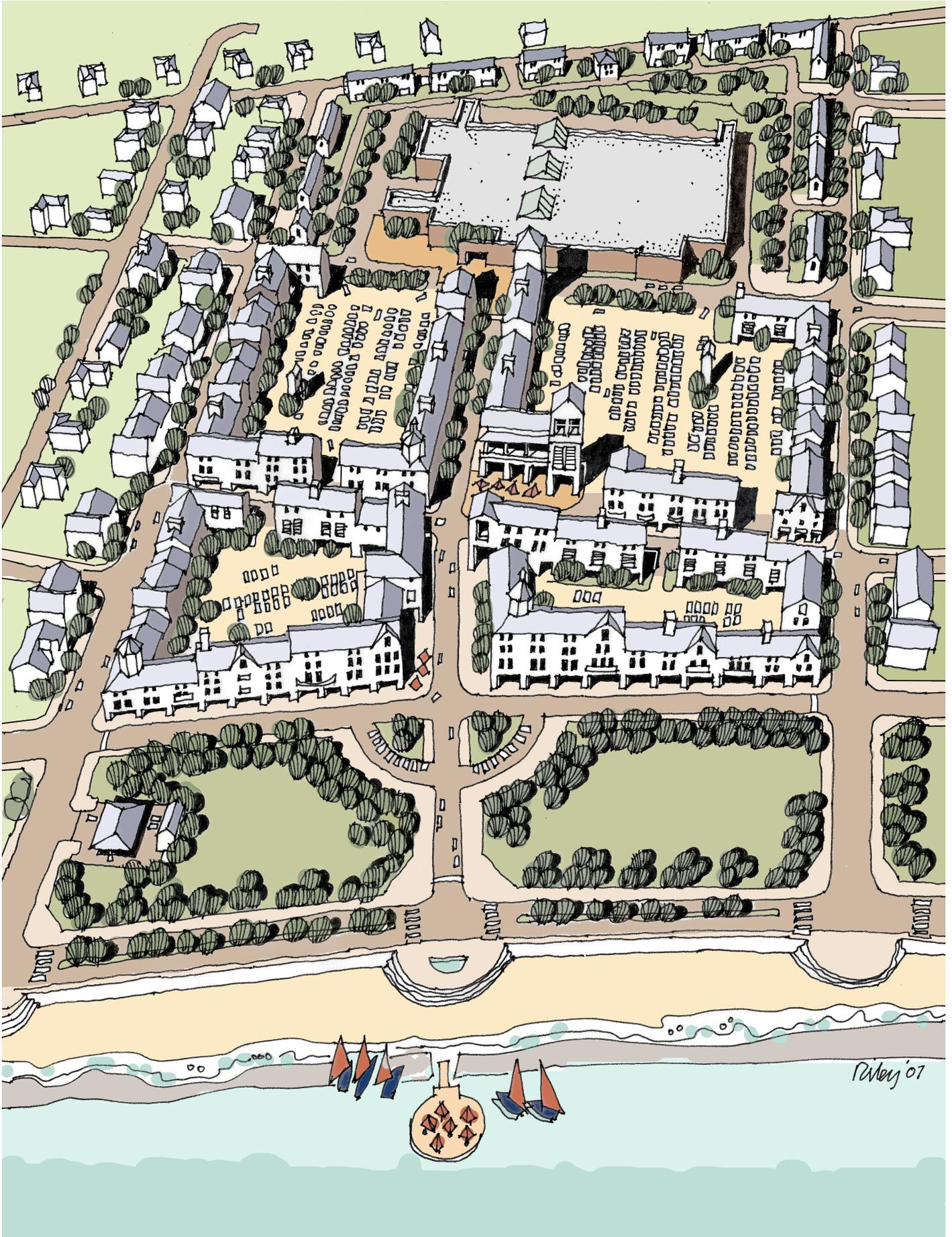
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*Wal-Mart Village is a new neighborhood proposed on property owned by Wal-Mart on the beachfront of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The project features a Wal-Mart super center, main street retail, a neighborhood square, a five acre public park and family oriented beach activities.*

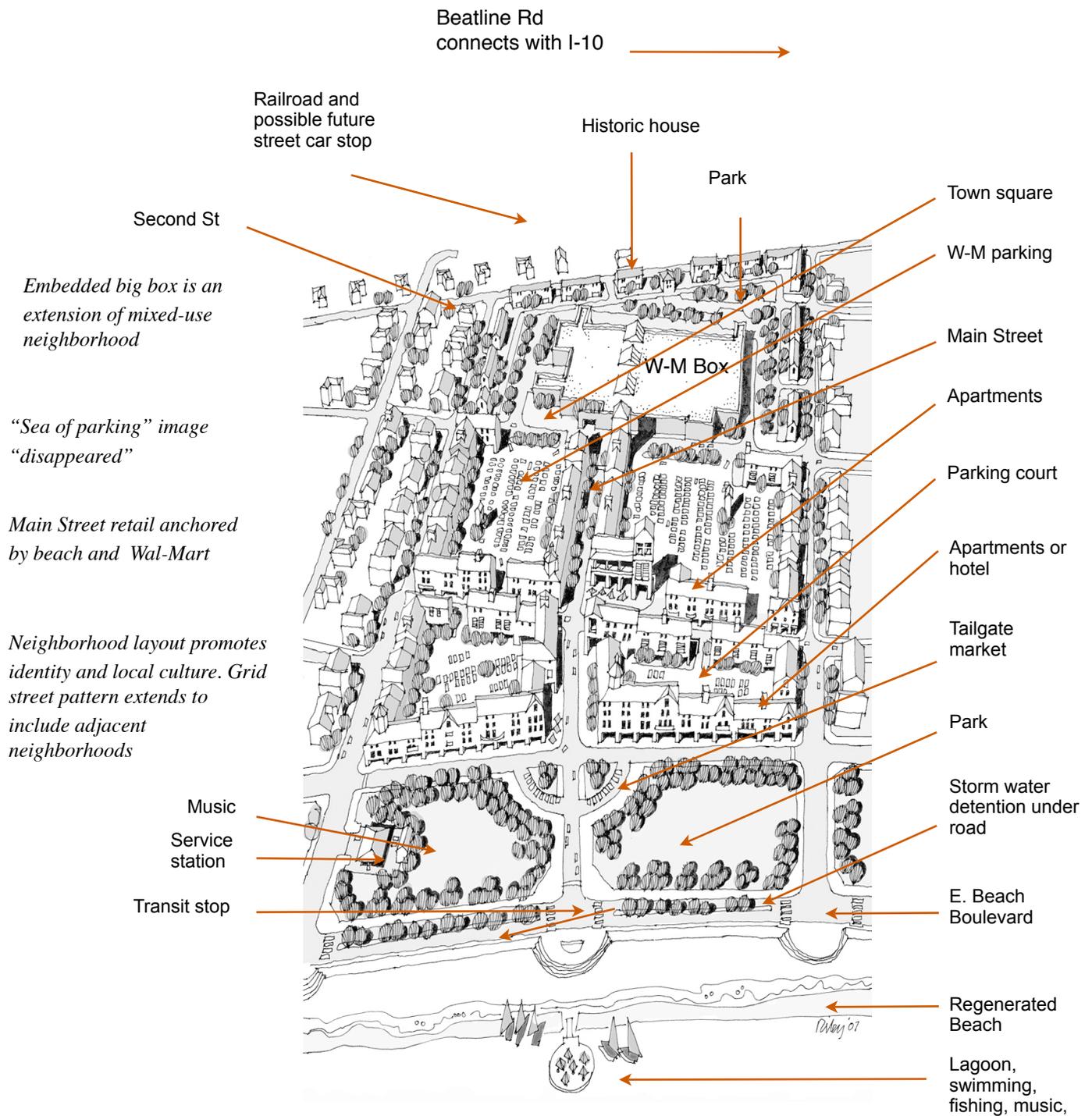
*It is intended that the Wal-Mart facility be re-built on it's former site on higher ground and fully integrated with the new neighborhood.*

*Wal-Mart Village will be a home for local residents who wish to maintain their Gulf Coast culture and live within walking distance of a regional shopping center.*

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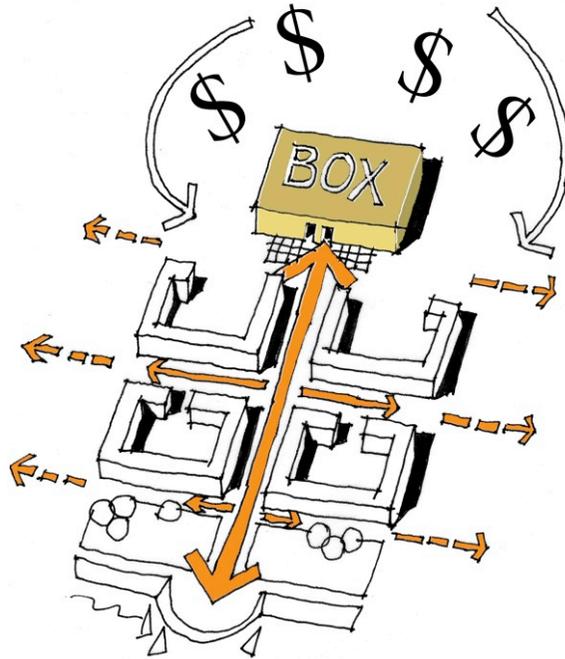
WAL-MART VILLAGE



Most successful settlements have a clear economic purpose such as the presence of a factory, being at a crossroads, a railhead or a harbor.

The strength of this proposal is the presence of a robust economic generator: a Wal-Mart “super center”.

# WAL-MART VILLAGE

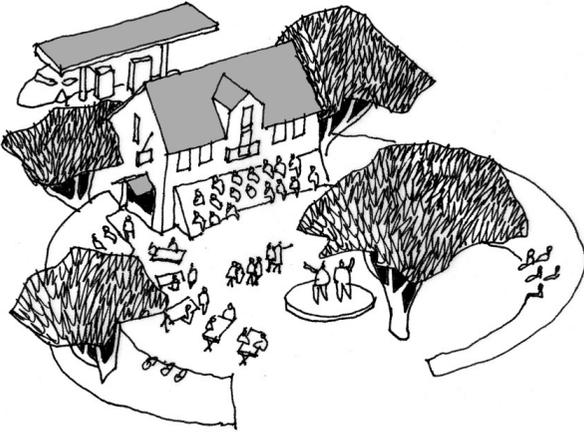


Basic concept: Plug the high energy box into the neighborhood

*Wal-Mart stores are massive economic engines whose energies are largely going unharnessed by the communities served by these stores. With good planning, the large regional pedestrian concentrations focussed at the doors of Wal-Mart stores can be managed in such a way that Wal-Mart shoppers can experience the authentic new neighborhoods in which the Wal-Mart stores are embedded.*

## Music

*A performing area is provided “behind” the service station under the oaks in the park. Families picnic on spread blankets on low grass mounds, sit at picnic tables, dance, eat and drink and enjoy magic evenings. Soft drinks, cold beer, margaritas and snacks are purchased from the concession. Occasions make a place.*



## Tailgate market

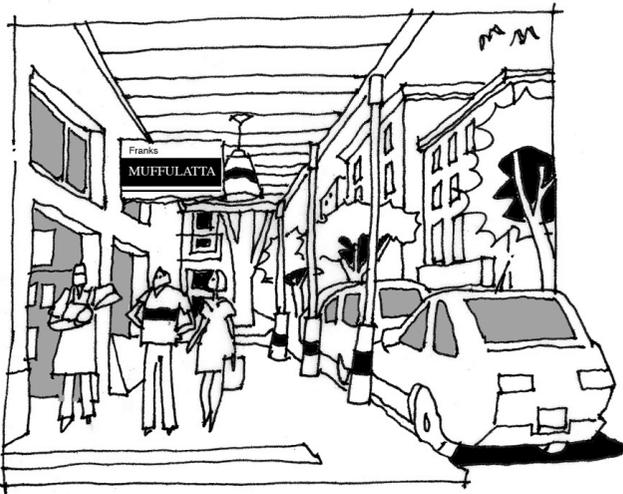
*A tailgate market on Main Street—at the entry to the neighborhood—provides a place where local producers can display and sell their goods. The flexibility of this arrangement allows the market to set up anywhere within the neighborhood and drive away if a storm approaches. All kinds of unique local goods and crafts can be sold here without competing with Wal-Mart,*



## Main Street retail

*Under Main Street arcades shallow depth “washaway” retail outlets provide unique goods and foods unavailable at Wal-Mart.*

*Should a hurricane threaten, the outlets can be driven away to safety.*

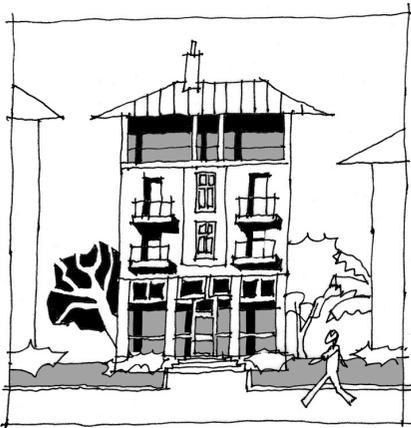




The primary views of all the apartments in the neighborhood will be outwards and away from the parking courts. However, the apartments arranged around perimeter blocks with internal parking (shown to the left) can have bedrooms facing onto parking since there will be little nighttime activity and low levels of incandescent lighting will suffice for security.

Units with their backs to Wal-Mart parking will have only kitchen windows overlooking the parking.

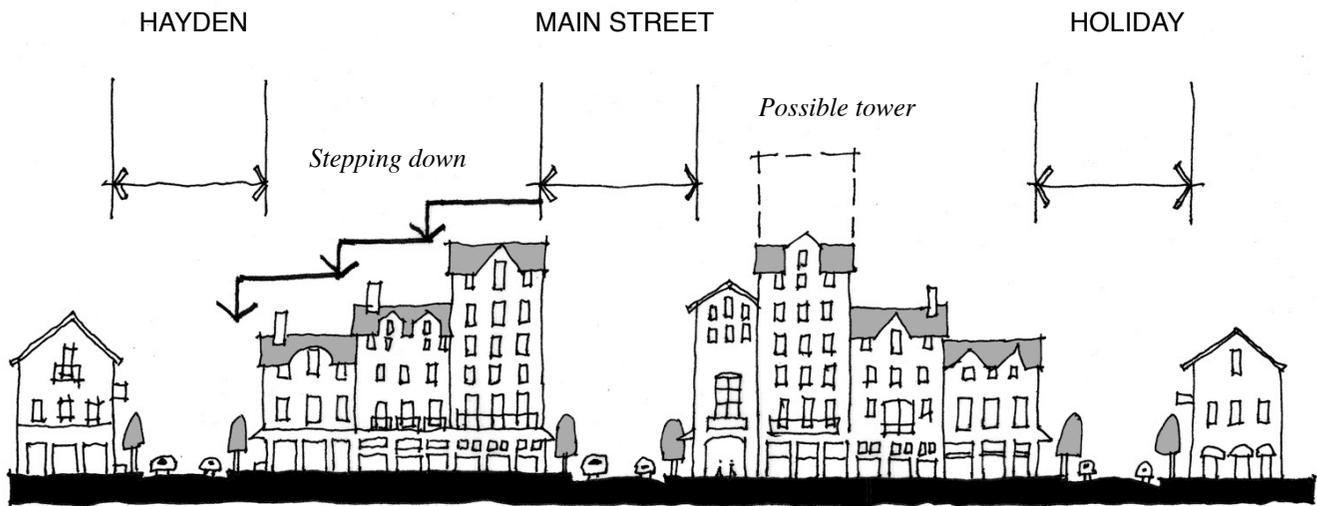
## Views



The first floors of all of the residential development south of the Wal-Mart box will need to be raised above the base flood elevation. Parking will be provided under the buildings but there will be room for lobbies and access to the upper floors. It is important that ways be found to engage the street at the ground floor so that there is a good social relationship with the neighborhood.

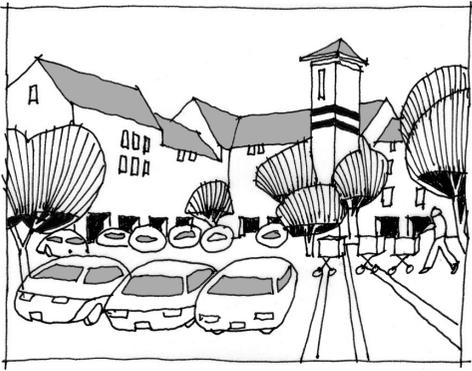
Screen porches on the ground floor of the apartments for the shared use of the residents offer a solution. The porch is raised three feet above a garden and provides a place where residents can sit, talk and look out over the sidewalk and gardens.

## Elevation



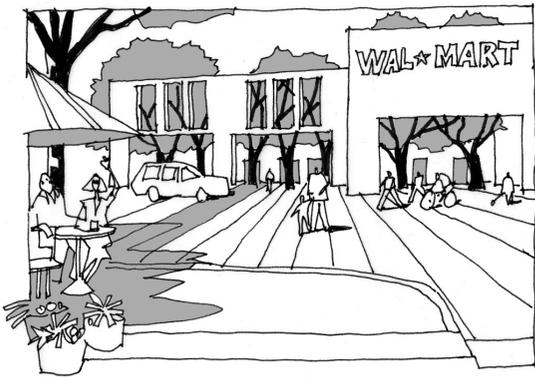
## Scale

This elevation, facing south towards the park, illustrates how the new buildings can be stepped down from the center of the neighborhood to Hayden Avenue and Holiday Drive—to provide a more neighborly engagement. This approach would allow some quite high buildings to be built on Main Street without affecting the scale of the abutting neighborhoods.



*Parking lots can be turned into parking courts—and real places with form and definition—with the addition of trees and punctuation. Here, as an example, a cart return kiosk is exaggerated to a civic scale with a small tower.*

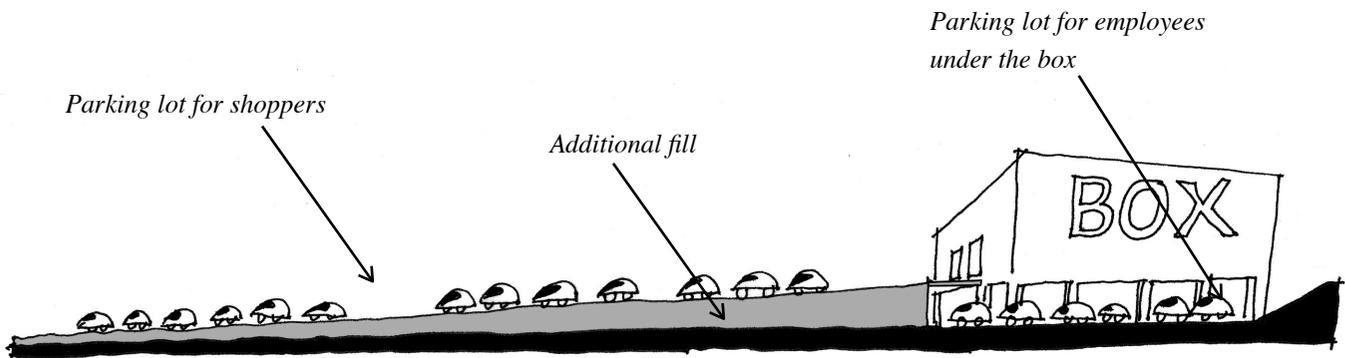
Parking courts



*The neighborhood square is the “100% corner”—the front door to Wal-Mart. This location is the spot of the highest retail pedestrian count in the region and it is the focus for civic and community activities for the neighborhood.*

Neighborhood square

*One idea that would free up space for more apartments would be to locate the employee parking under the box. This would involve raising the box (a good idea considering storm surges) and sloping the parking for shoppers south. The parking lot distances are so great compared to the few feet the box would need to be raised that the slope would be imperceptible to shoppers,*



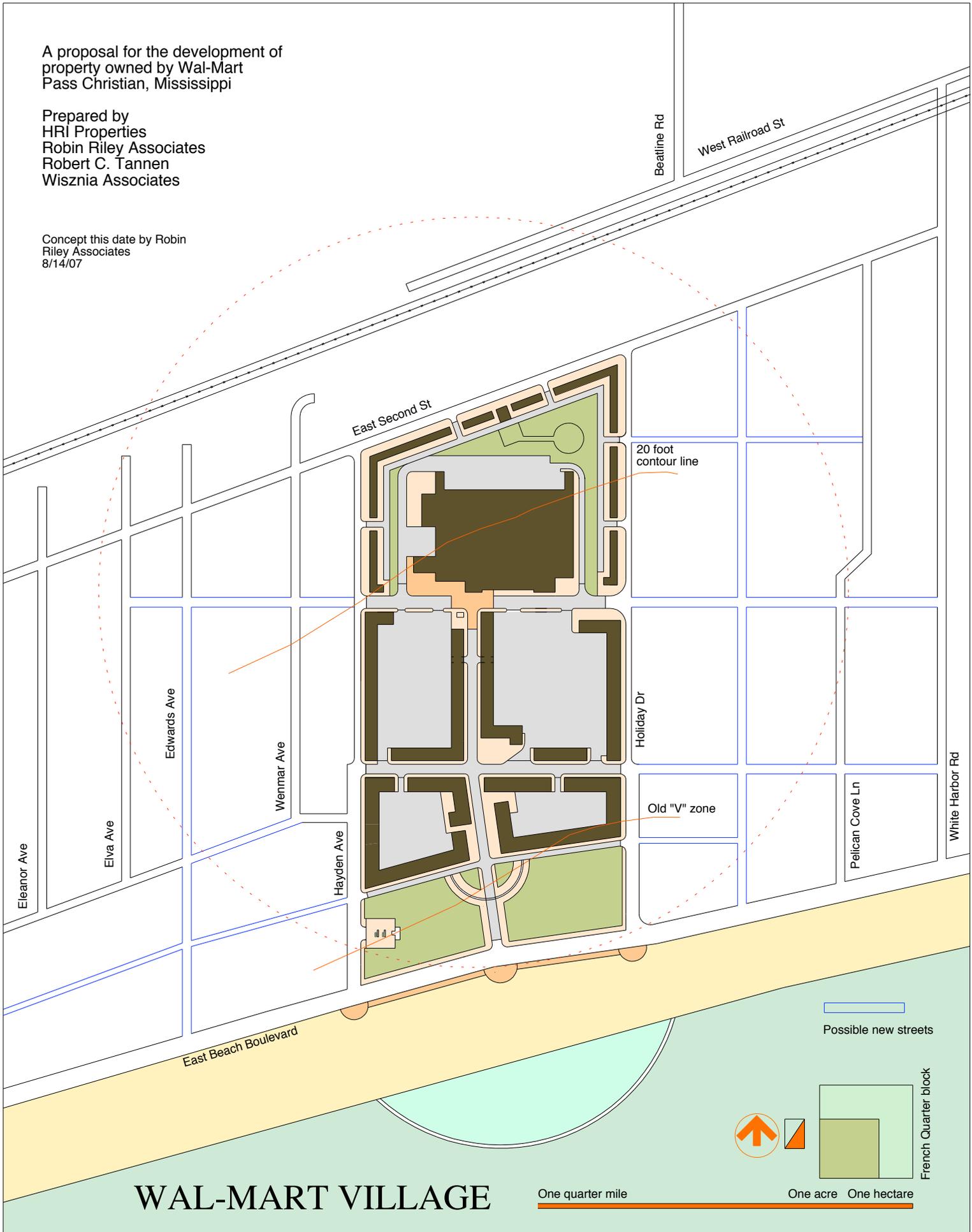
Parking

## WAL-MART VILLAGE

A proposal for the development of property owned by Wal-Mart Pass Christian, Mississippi

Prepared by  
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Concept this date by Robin Riley Associates  
8/14/07



# WAL-MART VILLAGE

One quarter mile

One acre

One hectare

## Background to the project

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Volume 11\* Number 3

### Housing village studied for Mississippi Wal-Mart

*Philip Langdon, Senior Editor*

If economic feasibility studies turn out favorably, there's a good chance that Wal-Mart will combine its rebuilt store in Pass Christian, Mississippi, with 300 to 500 townhouses and apartments.

Since last October's Mississippi Renewal Forum, new urbanists have been pushing the idea of building a "Wal-Mart village" on approximately 17 acres that the retail chain owns in Pass Christian, a Gulf Coast community devastated by Hurricane Katrina. Many feared that it would be difficult to persuade the Bentonville, Arkansas-based chain to be part of a mixed-use development.

Recently, however, a new urbanist contingent led by urban designer Laura Hall learned that Wal-Mart had in fact looked at a proposal for a mixed-use development on the Pass Christian site a full year ago. In April 2005, Pass Christian architect Robin Riley and three New Orleanians - architects Marcel Wisznia and Bob Tannen and developer Pres Kabacoff - went to Wal-Mart headquarters and suggested that housing be built in front of its store on West Beach Boulevard (US 90).

The company "didn't like the idea well enough to disrupt a functioning Wal-Mart," Riley told New Urban News. "They asked if we could do it in Orange Beach, Alabama, east of Mobile. Then Katrina came along, and Wal-Mart decided to resurrect the scheme" at the original site. Consequently, Riley's team is now conducting studies of who might occupy the housing, what it might cost, and whether it would be sufficiently profitable.

#### INTERESTS COINCIDE

Hall, a Santa Rosa, California, designer who has been working on a SmartCode for the 6,700-person community, said she was "stunned by the confluence of interest" between the Riley team's work and a proposal developed during the Renewal Forum. She said Riley's concept is not full-fledged New Urbanism, "but it is a step in the right direction."

Riley initially proposed erecting a deck over the parking lot in front of the store and constructing housing on it. The residents would have views across Beach Boulevard to the Gulf of Mexico, and Wal-Mart would have several hundred customers living just outside its door. Now that the store has been destroyed and the company has expressed interest in the development idea, the designers are considering three possible designs. One calls for building the replacement store at the rear of the sloping site, on higher ground, where it would be less vulnerable to any future storm surge. A second calls for constructing the store in the middle of the property, on top of dirt that would be brought in to elevate the store. The third calls for building the store on top of a parking deck. "From Wal-Mart's perspective, it's better to have the store at the same level as the parking," Riley noted.

No matter which of the three alternatives is chosen, Riley thinks the housing portion of the development should be elevated above ground-level parking - for protection from hurricane-driven water and for views. Prior to moving to Pass Christian in 2004, Riley, a native of the New Orleans area, had lived in New Zealand for 18 years. He was shocked to return to see "a supercenter with a parking lot in front of it, right on the beach" in Mississippi - shocked enough to propose denser and more attractive use of the coastal property.

He would like to develop townhouse style units and flats that would appeal to a local population with a mix of incomes rather than vacationers. Unlike the designs generated during the Renewal Forum, the Riley proposal does not call for wrapping part of the Wal-Mart with small stores. Riley said it's essential to make sure that the edges of the proposed parking structure on Beach Boulevard look appealing, however. One way to do this is to build porches - three feet above ground level- along the edge of the parking structure, he said.

When economic feasibility has been examined, the team will take the resulting proposal back to Bentonville. "Wal-Mart is very excited about this," he said. "They've spent a lot of time on this. We're hopeful that we can put together a design that will be a prototype. If only 1 percent [of Wal-Mart outlets] had the possibility of being something similar, what are we looking at? Fifty of these?"

Kabacoff, who developed a Wal-Mart in a HOPE VI project in New Orleans despite some local objections (see July 2003 New Urban News), said the Pass Christian development would probably have four to five stories of housing. "You wouldn't see the store itself from the street," he said, but signs would announce its presence. The three architects and Kabacoff would all be acting as developers, with Kabacoff's firm, HRI Properties, taking the lead. For years Tannen has known the Walton family, which started WalMart, so the group was able to take its proposal to Wal-Mart chief executive officer H. Lee Scott rather than risk being rejected by managers lower in the corporate hierarchy.

## TESTING MULTISTORY

The Wall Street Journal reported March 1 that across the nation, WalMart is "experimenting with several different multistory approaches," now that the retailer can no longer achieve its growth objectives solely by opening single-floor stores on properties averaging about 25 acres. In Chamblee, Georgia, a municipality of about 10,000 people near Atlanta, Wal-Mart is complying with city zoning guidelines requiring retailers to conceal parking lots and forgo auto-related uses such as lube shops. Most of the parking for the 12-acre Chamblee supercenter will be underground.

The Journal reported that the first multilevel store the chain built from scratch is a two-level, 167,000 sq. ft. store that opened in Oct. 2004 in EI Cajon, just east of San Diego. In the next five years the company expects to open 50 to 60 multilevel stores. The chain has approximately 20 multilevel stores, but nearly all of them were built for other retailers and only later occupied by Wal-Mart, the Journal said.

Communities that are trying to produce pedestrian-scale, mixed-use environments remain generally wary of Wal-Mart. The City Council of Hercules, California, a suburban municipality carrying out an ambitious new urbanist plan (see March 2005 New Urban News), voted in March to authorize the city manager to offer to buy 17 acres that Wal-Mart acquired near San Pablo Bay. Wal-Mart has wanted to build a 142,000 sq. ft. store there, but the city sees the company's intentions as inconsistent with the municipality's desire for a neighborhood shopping center.