



## 1509 GOVERNMENT STREET

In the spring of 2010, John Spain and I met with Bill Mohl, who at that time was the President and CEO of Entergy Louisiana.

We had a very brash and bold proposition for Bill, and Entergy ... ***a really good deal...***

...the deal was that Entergy should donate its 6 acre site at 1509 Government St. to the RDA so that the RDA could use this significant and strategically located piece of property in some catalytic development...***yet to be determined...*** to help revitalize the area.

Without equivocation, Bill said it was a brilliant proposition – ***an offer he couldn't refuse*** - and that giving the property to the RDA would be great for the City and great for the legacy of Entergy.

Saying yes was the easy part. **It has taken us some 3 ½ years of hard work and intense negotiations to get this deal done.** Now I will turn it over to James to give you some highlights of what has happened from then til now.

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*Thank you Walter.*

*Once Mr. Mohl gave the green light, the donation process was underway.*

*Beginning in early 2011, the RDA and Entergy had the first of what would become several meetings with Entergy and our collective partners to negotiate the process towards this monumental donation, which was appraised at \$1.75 million that same year.*

*From day one, the RDA informed Entergy about our ability to access grant dollars for projects such as these...and I'm proud to announce because of our partnerships with the East Baton Rouge Planning Commission and LDEQ, over \$320,000 of grant funds have been accessed and secured for this project.*

*With the help of the Planning Commission, particularly Barrett Chaix, on September 22, 2011 work began on the necessary environmental studies. From those studies, the RDA built an action plan to remediate the site and prepare it for redevelopment.*

**(Provide an overview of the site and show cleanup pictures)**

*Entergy has gone above and beyond what was required in order to ensure the donation of an environmentally clean site...and I'm pleased to announce on November 15, 2013, LDEQ gave the site a clean bill of health.*

*This means because of Entergy's hard work, the RDA will be allowed to vision the property without limitations of use.*

*Now I would like to turn it back over to Walter to explain the RDA's vision going forward.*

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In **January of 2006** the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance completed a Master Action Plan that called for a Warehouse/Design District that includes an area along Government Street from Robinson Drive to 16<sup>th</sup> Street and traveling north to North Boulevard.

The Plan stated “...***the Entergy Building has the potential to act as a landmark and focal point of the Mid City Warehouse/Design District. The vision for the district is to create a mixed-use, live-work environment...***”

In **September of 2011**, the Mayor-President and Metro Council unanimously adopted FUTUREBR. The FUTUREBR plan envisions neighborhoods throughout the Parish that are thriving and citizens having housing options that are safe and affordable to a variety of income levels...

...neighborhoods with attractive open spaces and residents having transportation choices, including walking, biking, riding transit and driving.

Once such neighborhood called out in the plan is Mid City...including the Warehouse/Design District.

According to FUTUREBR, outside of downtown, perhaps no other area in East Baton Rouge Parish holds as much redevelopment potential as Mid City.

As the improvements to downtown continue to transform the city center into a primary destination, the market for redevelopment within Mid City will increase. People want to live within a pedestrian-friendly distance of downtown.

Redevelopment of Government Street is expected to lead the way in transforming Mid City into a vibrant, desirable area.

FUTUREBR identifies several strategies to achieve this vision, including implementing Complete Streets standards along Government Street...

...reinvigorating existing neighborhoods by investing in catalyst sites...

...and encouraging mixed-use developments that promote living, working and playing in close proximity to one another.

It is the RDA's desire to see that redevelopment of this site begins to implement those strategies by promoting walking, cycling and transit....

...mixing uses to provide a variety of destinations at one location...

...and employing exemplary design to serve as a model for investment in the area.

Additionally, the immediate area around the Entergy site at 1509 Government was once home to the Baton Rouge Railroad Station.

This site is now being called out as a possible new passenger rail station serving a passenger train between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. FUTUREBR estimates that a new passenger train between Baton Rouge and New Orleans could by 2030 "make eight trips per day... average over 90 mph... and make the journey from downtown to downtown in an hour".

The recent completion of the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District building, Town Square, Hampton Inn, and the construction of the new IBM offices bringing 800 new jobs to downtown....

...with the new development of the Water Institute, and the redevelopment of buildings such as the Onyx Building, Capital One building, Commerce building, EBRATS building and Commercial Properties apartments adjoining the IBM building...

...all of these projects have all accelerated the growth and success of the Downtown Development District.

Additionally, recently completed buildings of the Louisiana Housing Corporation's Mid City Garden Apartments, The Ellysian apartments, The Dufroq Elementary School and Baton Rouge High School... all nearby... create added momentum for the redevelopment of Mid City.

With all of this growth comes the demand and opportunity to develop the adjoining areas of Mid City to help meet the needs of a growing downtown and to accomplish the redevelopment goals laid out in FUTUREBR.

In the near future, the RDA will initiate a neighborhoods redevelopment strategy that will identify ownership, uses, zoning and values of all properties near the Entergy site.

The initial project boundaries we are considering are bordered by Government Street on the south, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street on the east, Interstate 110 on the west and North Boulevard on the north.

Working with partners like the Mayor's Office, the Department of Public Works, Louisiana Housing Corporation, East Baton Rouge Planning Commission, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, LSU's

College of Art & Design, the Arts Council, the EBRMFA and others, the RDA will compare existing conditions within the area with recommended actions from existing plans.

We will solicit community/business input, and identify documentable market demands for new housing and commercial development.

Once a realistic market demand is determined, the RDA will work with its partners to identify strategies for additional property assembly, public investment, developer recruitment and design to begin transformation of the entire neighborhood focused around and including the “Entergy site”.

Much work for preparing a redevelopment strategy for this neighborhood is already underway. The LHC has identified many property owners and land uses near its Mid City Gardens Apartments.

The RDA has been working with the LHC to identify funding sources for the neighborhood redevelopment strategy and to fund housing redevelopment once the market is identified.

LSU and Southern University’s Schools of Architecture have begun work visualizing growth potential along North Boulevard with property owned by St. Vincent DePaul. Students have also worked with community members on current community conditions and community needs.

The RDA has assisted private commercial properties such as Circa 1857 and the Ogden Market Shopping Center with property delineation and rehabilitation funds for mixed-use growth along the Government Street corridor.

The Dufrog School continues to excel as one of the Parish’s highest rated public elementary schools.

C-PEX and the Arts Council are underway with an Arts District Corridor Plan that includes the nearby Old South neighborhoods.

With all of this positive momentum, the “Entergy site” provides a monumental, catalytic opportunity to address blight, transportation, housing, commercial, environmental, educational and community needs along the Government Street Corridor in a well-planned and comprehensive manner.

Thru the great work of many people and a very brash, bold, and grand vision that started well over 3 ½ years ago, we come before you today, asking for your approval to accept this outstanding donation.

**1509 Government Street**, which has been owned by Entergy for more than 79 years, is being donated to the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority in order to further the RDA’s mission and to ensure that this prime piece of real estate becomes the catalyst for the redevelopment of this very important area of Baton Rouge. **We ask for your favorable consideration.**