

Revitalizing Ocean Springs

Ocean Springs, MS

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Area: Ocean Springs, MS
Client: City of Ocean Springs
Year Completed: 2008
Website: mississippirenewal.com/documents/Rep_OceanSprings.pdf

For more information, visit doverkohl.com.



Ocean Springs is a city of neighborhoods as represented by the above illustration. The circles indicate a ¼ mile, 5-minute walking distance – the principle building block for neighborhood development.



More refined concepts were created for a new transit-oriented development along a corridor.



Proposed redevelopment transforms the Broome Grocery property into a multi-story, mixed-use building. With retail fronting the street and residential or office uses on upper floors, the new plan activates Government Street and can help to catalyze additional redevelopment in the area.



The Project

When Hurricane Katrina battered the Mississippi Gulf Coast, it left behind thousands of displaced families and 30 million cubic yards of debris. As part of a collaborative effort, Ocean Springs was one of 11 coastal communities studied during the Mississippi Renewal Forum charrette organized by the Congress for the New Urbanism following the hurricane. Dover, Kohl & Partners directed comprehensive studies of the city, identifying key opportunities to rebuild that would also reverse the momentum of region-wide sprawl existing before the devastation.

The Process

Following an all-day debriefing from Governor Barbour and intensive tours of the city's post-Katrina conditions, the Mississippi Renewal Forum design team held a public design charrette in October 2005 to prepare redevelopment and growth strategies for Ocean Springs. The initial plan, which was the result of extensive community input and feedback, was the foundation for all future planning.

The Plan

The primary goal to adopt a Green City framework that was also a "City of Neighborhoods" was a driving force of the plan. Understanding that redevelopment would happen over time, the design team promoted incremental infill in existing neighborhoods and created specific design plans for new development in special places, including: Ocean Springs Harbor; West End Landing & Front Beach; the Railroad Historic District; Singing River Hospital; Transit Oriented Developments; and the Berlin Property ("100 Acre Wood"). Encouraging mixed-uses throughout the city was also a central planning idea. Particularly, the plan envisioned the redevelopment of the Highway 90 "strip" (Bienville Boulevard) as a mature urban boulevard as one of the primary goals.

Status

As a follow-up to the Mississippi Renewal Forum in October 2005, Dover, Kohl & Partners was invited back in 2006 for to lead a charrette to create a plan for the waterfront. The team later returned in March 2008 to design the Downtown Master Plan and assist in calibrating calibrate the SmartCode for the city. Following the success of these projects, Dover-Kohl completed the Bienville Boulevard plan in June 2008, creating a plan for a transit-ready, mixed-use community along Ocean Spring's main commercial corridor. Dover-Kohl collaborated with numerous consultants in the creation of these plans, including Torti Gallas and Partners, Hall Planning & Engineering, TND Engineering, Chad Emerson, and Chael, Cooper & Associates. The City intends to adopt the Downtown Master Plan and calibrated Ocean Springs SmartCode in the spring of 2010.

Subsequent Projects Addressing a "Post-Katrina" Ocean Springs

The Waterfront

The Waterfront charrette was held to more closely evaluate the waterfront areas of Ocean Springs and to work with the community and private property owners to envision the area's future. Two distinct waterfront areas were addressed – Plummer's Point, which is the front door of the community and located where Highway 90 enters town, and Ocean Springs Harbor, the community's beach and a major waterfront access point. Numerous plans and renderings were created to illustrate how more compact and complete development could be incorporated without overwhelming the scale of neighboring residences. Studies exploring a more monumental entryway into the city were also produced. In one example, architectural bridge abutments (shown at right) were incorporated to highlight the landing of the bridge in Ocean Springs. From a practical standpoint, the abutments act as vertical circulation, facilitating the movement of pedestrians and cyclists down to the street level.



An aerial view of Plummer's Point demonstrates the way in which more intense development could help mark the entrance to the city.

Downtown Plan & SmartCode

Building upon the foundation of the previous studies, the Downtown Master Plan focused on tying the downtown neighborhoods and specific opportunity sites together into a single cohesive Ocean Springs Master Plan – thus providing a solid foundation for the implementation of the Ocean Springs SmartCode. The guiding principle was to extend the best historic patterns of architecture, urbanism, and green networks in Old Ocean Springs into strategic redevelopment opportunities and surgical infill projects. City-wide planning ideas as well as site-specific design concepts were created, addressing numerous intersections and streets as well as landmarks such as the historic Broome's Grocery and Plummer's Point.



The Ocean Springs Downtown Master Plan is based on the transect as identified in the SmartCode.

In addition to the plans and renderings produced during the charrette, a SmartCode was calibrated and a Downtown Regulating Plan was created. The SmartCode regulations are based on design details from the most revered places in Ocean Springs.

Bienville Boulevard Plan

The Bienville Boulevard charrette mapped out specific plans for the network of streets along Ocean Springs' primary commercial corridor. Multi-way boulevards, two-way parallel roads, alleys, bike paths, and widened, tree-lined sidewalks were introduced to accommodate traffic patterns and parking as well as to provide a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment. Mixed-use neighborhoods and parks were also designed so that as Ocean Springs develops eastward from its historic center, the boulevard will be a destination for visitors and a place to live, shop, and recreate.



A tree-lined main street leads from the multi-way boulevard into the center of a new neighborhood.