

**2024 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**CITY OF BATON ROUGE / PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE**



**CITY OF BATON ROUGE**  
**PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**





**CITY-PARISH PLANNING COMMISSION  
2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

**MAYOR-PRESIDENT**

Sharon Weston Broome

**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Brandon Noel, Mayor Pro Tempore

Laurie Adams

Denise Amoroso

Chauna Banks

Carolyn Coleman

Patrica A. Derozan

Cleve Dunn Jr.

Rowdy Gaudet

Dwight Hudson

Darryl Hurst

Aaron Moak

Jennifer Racca

**PLANNING COMMISSIONERS**

Rossie Washington, Jr., Chair

Clifford Grout, Vice-Chair

Ulysses Addison, Jr.

Chauna Banks

Jody Boyd

Laura Brownell

Jayne C. Ellender

Michael "Blake" Fowler

Evan Scroggs



# Mission and Goals

The mission of the East Baton Rouge Parish Planning Commission is to be a driving force supporting the development and implementation of the comprehensive plan, providing guidance for growth, development, and restoration, while recognizing the importance of maintaining healthy, diversified neighborhoods, encouraging increased access to economic opportunity, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents of East Baton Rouge Parish.

## 2024 Goals

- Apply policies consistently through decision making and actions.
- Treat all applications and individuals fairly and objectively.
- Provide planning services that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Promote the education, awareness and involvement of the citizens in the planning process.
- Guide growth and development to encourage economic vitality and employment opportunities throughout the community without negatively impacting infrastructure, the environment or public services.
- Provide professional development and training for Planning Commission members and staff.



## Office of the Planning Commission

City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge  
Post Office Box 1471, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821  
or  
1100 Laurel Street, Suite 104, Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
Phone (225) 389-3144 Fax (225) 389-5342

Ryan L. Holcomb, AICP  
Planning Director

December 16, 2024

The Honorable Mayor-President, Members of the Metropolitan Council, and Residents of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish:

On behalf of the Planning Commission, I am pleased to present this report on our activities during the 2024 calendar year. It has been a productive year as we continue working to improve the quality of life in Baton Rouge.

In 2024, the Metropolitan Council unanimously approved the second 5-Year Update of FUTUREBR, the City-Parish's Comprehensive Plan, as mandated by State Law and the Home Rule Charter. The update process began in 2023 and involved public events, workshops, and extensive outreach. This revised plan will guide the City's growth over the next five years.

The Complete Streets Advisory Committee (CSAC), a 19-member group created by the Metropolitan Council, represents stakeholders dedicated to accommodating all users of the transportation network in the City-Parish. Since 2014, significant progress has been made in integrating complete streets concepts into our transportation system. In 2024, the Complete Streets Ordinance was adopted, and it will now apply to all City-Parish road projects, serving as a vital tool in shaping future transportation initiatives.

This year, our department worked with Build Baton Rouge and its consultant to review and guide the Florida Corridor planning process, a collective vision that came from intensive outreach and engagement efforts with community stakeholders. The Florida Corridor Small Area Plan was unanimously adopted and incorporated into FUTUREBR. We also revised several sections of the Unified Development Code, including updates to Chapter 4 (Site Plans and Plats), Chapter 13 (Streets and Sidewalks), and Chapter 17 (Parking and Loading).

Our Brownfields program received a \$500,000 Brownfield community-wide assessment grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Planning Commission has held multiple public meetings in the target areas for the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. In August 2024, we partnered with the Baton Rouge North Economic Development District (BRNEDD) to host the "Reimagining Reuse Brownfields Summit" at Baton Rouge Community College's Automotive Technology Center. The summit, attended by local developers, property owners, and stakeholders, provided valuable resources for transforming vacant properties into thriving assets and encouraged eligible applicants to participate in the Brownfields Program.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) continues its work to protect and preserve buildings, sites, and structures of historic significance. This year, the City-Parish received a Historic Preservation Fund grant from the State Historic Preservation Office. This grant will fund an update to the historic standing structures survey in the Central Business District of Downtown Baton Rouge.

I would like to thank my staff for their outstanding teamwork in 2024, which has been instrumental in achieving our goals. As Planning Director, I look forward to continuing our collaborative work with the Planning Commission, the development community, neighborhood groups, and other stakeholders in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Holcomb".

Ryan Holcomb, AICP  
Planning Director

## PLANNING COMMISSION



Rossie Washington, Jr.  
Chair



Clifford Grout  
Vice-Chair



Ulysses Addison

Baton Rouge created its City Planning Commission in 1941 under the provisions of State Act No. 204, written in 1926, and Section 33 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes. In 1949, the City of Baton Rouge combined with the Parish of East Baton Rouge to become one of the United States' first consolidated city and parish governing units; hence the name City-Parish Planning Commission.



Chauna Banks  
Metro Council  
Representative



Jody Boyd



Laura Brownell

The legislated role of the Planning Commission is "to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality and promote public interest in an understanding of a plan." With this charge, The Commission coordinates the implementation and update of the Comprehensive Plan and also develops zoning and subdivision regulations.



Jayme C. Ellender



Michael "Blake" Fowler



Evan Scroggs

The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the Metropolitan Council regarding ordinances, regulations and land use requirements, applying its knowledge and experience to the planning and zoning matters they consider at monthly public hearings.



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Ryan L. Holcomb, AICP  
Planning Director

December 16, 2024

The Honorable Mayor-President, members of the Metropolitan Council, and residents of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish:

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a seven-member committee established to aid in the preservation and protection of buildings, sites, monuments, structures and areas of historic interest or importance through their designation as historic landmarks or districts. I am providing this annual report on our activities and accomplishments for the year 2024.

The HPC issued five Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) for alterations to the exterior of structures visible from the street in Local Historic Districts as well as new constructions. The HPC also reviewed two demolition cases this year.

This year, the City-Parish was awarded a Historic Preservation Fund grant from the State Historic Preservation Office. This award will fund an update to the historic standing structures survey of the Central Business District in Downtown Baton Rouge. The HPC and Planning Commission staff will be working with the Downtown Development District to coordinate this effort.

In the past year, the Historic Preservation Commission continually discussed commission processes which would best serve the residents of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish. The Historic Preservation Commission members are detail-oriented in their review of cases and goal-oriented in their preservation of structures which will help preserve the character of our city. In 2024, there was a significant public display of support for historic preservation. Many residents showed interest in preserving two significant historic buildings in Downtown Baton Rouge, which highlights the value our residents place on preservation of our city's most character-defining historic assets. The Commission was able to assist residents by continuing to advise and advocate for best practices in preservation. In 2024, the Commission, along with other advocates, was able to gain public support for the preservation of these two historic buildings. This achievement not only belongs to the Commission but to the entire City-Parish.

Finally, the Historic Preservation Commission welcomed two new members in 2024. The Commission would like to thank members Uyuho Eduok and Amy Fransen who reached the ends of their terms this year.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve East Baton Rouge Parish. As members of the HPC, we will continue to promote historic preservation in 2025.

Sincerely,  
*Byron Washington*

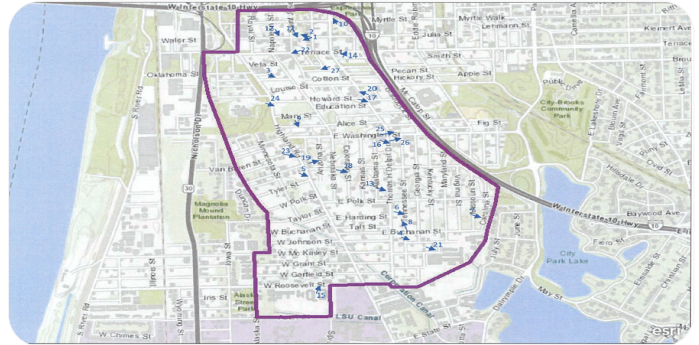
Byron Washington, Chair  
Historic Preservation Commission

## COMMITTEES

### Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was established by the Metropolitan Council in 2004. It is considered a part of the planning functions of City-Parish Government, and is administered by the staff of the Office of the Planning Commission.

In 2024, the HPC processed applications which included Certificates of Appropriateness for exterior alterations and new constructions in Spanish Town and Drehr Place. The HPC also reviewed two demolitions in the Downtown Character Area and three nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.



*This year, the HPC reviewed three National Register Nominations. The photo above shows the boundaries of the proposed Old South Baton Rouge historic district for the National Register of Historic Places.*

### Certified Local Government

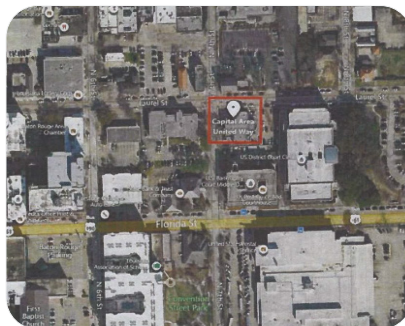
The Certified Local Government (CLG) program encourages communities to establish local historic preservation programs. The CLG program supports neighborhoods by assisting in the preservation of their community's heritage and by promoting up-to-date inventories of local historic properties. The National Park Service administers the program in coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office. Our participation in the program makes the city eligible for specialized technical assistance and programming from the State Historic Preservation Office and makes the community eligible for federal grants provided by the U.S. Department of the Interior and administered by the State Historic Preservation Office. Our Historic Preservation Commission received grant funding from the CLG program in 2024. This funding will be used to update the standing structures survey of downtown's Central Business District and create an accompanying digital historic storyboard.



*Kean's Apartment Building was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places this year. The building is located near LSU's campus, as shown in the map above.*

### Commission Members

- Byron Washington, Chair
- Sara Brignac, Vice Chair
- Michael Beck
- Shirley Bowler
- Rex Cabaniss
- Jason Hessick
- Genevieve Prosser



*The historical East Baton Rouge Parish Library in Downtown Baton Rouge was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places this year. The photos above show the location and the building.*

### 2024 Retired Members

- Uyuho Eduok
- Amy Fransen

**Thank You for your Service!**



## Office of the Planning Commission

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Ryan L. Holcomb, AICP  
Planning Director

December 16, 2024

The Honorable Mayor-President, members of the Metropolitan Council, and citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish:

The Complete Streets Advisory Committee (CSAC) was established by ordinance in 2015 and comprised of 17 community members representing a broad spectrum of interests within the Parish. In June 2024, the CSAC expanded membership to 19 members. For the first time, citizens of north Baton Rouge are represented on the committee through the addition of members representing the North Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce and the Baton Rouge North Economic Development District. This expanded committee will help ensure our efforts prioritize equitable infrastructure improvements to ensure all communities, especially those historically underserved, benefit from accessible and inclusive transportation options.

Under the requirements of the ordinance, I am providing a report of our activities and accomplishments from this year.

In 2024, the CSAC provided input on several rounds of revisions to the proposed Complete Streets ordinance, which codified the existing Complete Streets policy and merged it with the existing CSAC ordinance. The draft was regularly discussed at CSAC meetings until it was ultimately adopted on June 12, 2024.

Beginning in 2023, a CSAC representative served on the steering committee led by BREC to update the 2020 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (PBMP). The updated plan was approved by the BREC-led steering committee in September 2024 and will now be known as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP). To help build public support for the updated BPMP, the CSAC, with support from AARP, has worked to create a brochure demonstrating the current extent of the bicycle network and how it will expand over the next five years. This brochure project began in early 2024 and has been approved and adopted by CSAC.

Recognizing the value of having bicycle and pedestrian counting data, this year the CSAC formed a Bike Count Subcommittee to establish an ongoing program for acquiring bicyclist and pedestrian data in Baton Rouge. The Bike Count Subcommittee created a packet which would help guide various agencies in the Parish in creating a bicycle and pedestrian count program using both moveable and permanently installed bike counters. These agencies can use the data to plan a more effective active transportation network. By leveraging data on transportation usage patterns, we can better target infrastructure improvements to serve the needs of all residents, fostering a more inclusive and connected transportation network. The CSAC will review the packet and plan to distribute it to interested agencies in 2025.

The CSAC began holding regular discussions regarding educational outreach efforts in 2024 and will continue to do so in 2025. As part of this outreach, the CSAC distributes information to the public via its webpage located at <https://www.brla.gov/csac>. Information includes the benefits of Complete Streets, the local and state policies, a Transportation Map showing current and future projects, the East Baton Rouge Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, the brochure and other resources.

The CSAC continues to track implementation of complete streets using the Complete Street Measurable Outcomes and Metrics developed by the CSAC in 2022-2023 and can show how 2024 compares to 2023, particularly for the PBMP and MOVEBR Projects.

The success of these initiatives reflects ongoing collaboration with community partners, local stakeholders, and advocacy groups who share the vision of a more connected and accessible Baton Rouge. Moving forward, the Committee will continue to advise, educate, advocate, and support the implementation of an Active Transportation Network for citizens of all ages and abilities in East Baton Rouge Parish. Complete Streets projects not only improve safety and mobility but also catalyze economic development by enhancing access to local businesses and creating opportunities for growth for all Parish residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve East Baton Rouge Parish.

Sincerely,

  
Mark Martin, Chair  
Complete Streets Advisory Committee

## COMMITTEES CONTINUED

### Complete Streets Citizens' Advisory Committee

#### Ordinance Adoption

Complete streets are designed to accommodate all users regardless of age, physical ability, mode of transportation or location. A complete street enables pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transportation users to move more safely along and across the street. Since 2014, the Parish has had a policy in place to begin implementing these concepts into the transportation network. Progress has been made in the last ten years to have elements of complete streets throughout the Parish. On June 12, 2024, the Parish adopted a Complete Streets ordinance. The CSAC served on the committee led by the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) to update the 2015 ordinance establishing the committee and to revise, update and merge the 2014 Complete Streets policy and the CSAC ordinance. The ordinance will be a valuable resource going forward when transportation projects are being developed. Additionally, complete streets metrics are collected each year to track implementation of complete streets measures.

#### New Committee Members

The newly adopted Complete Streets ordinance added two new members to the Advisory Committee. The CSAC now has representation from North Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce and Baton Rouge North Economic Development District.

#### Bike and Pedestrian Transportation System

In 2024, a CSAC representative served on the committee led by BREC to update the 2020 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (PBMP), now named the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP)--which better reflects the focus of the plan on an Active Transportation Network (ATN) emphasizing bicycling. The CSAC chair worked closely with HNTB consultants hired to assist with the update and served as liaison between the BREC-led steering committee and CSAC. The updated plan was approved by the BREC steering committee in September 2024 and will be on a Metropolitan Council agenda in 2025.

While working on the plan, it became evident that pedestrian data is incomplete for large parts of the Parish; one recommendation of the BPMP is that a comprehensive assessment of sidewalks be undertaken as the first step in establishing a comprehensive pedestrian program. To help build public support for the BPMP, the CSAC, with support from AARP, developed a brochure which demonstrates the current extent of the bicycle network and how it will expand over the next five years. The map on the subsequent page shows the map included in the brochure, illustrating the dedicated bike and pedestrian facilities. This map will be used in public outreach and education in support of the BPMP. It will help City-Parish residents to identify transportation routes and will help the City-Parish Government in directing funding towards projects which will expand the network. The goal of the map is to educate and gain support for making progress on the active transportation network.

#### Committee Members

- Mark Martin, Chair
- Jessica Kemp, Vice Chair
- Vance Baldwin
- Jamie Bell
- Peter Breaux
- Rex Cabaniss
- Carolyn Coleman
- Charles Daniel
- Eric Dexter
- Rachel DiResto
- Jeanne George
- April Hawthorne
- Mark Heinicke
- Stephen Kauffman
- Edward Lagucki
- Laurence Lambert II
- Caila Miceli
- Dennis Mitchell
- Iboro Udoh

#### 2024 Retired Members

- Whitney Hoffman Sayal
- Reed Richard

*Thank You for your Service!*



# ANNUAL REPORT

Goals	Objectives	2023 Baseline	2023 EOY	2024 EOY
Improve Safety & Accessibility	1.1. Number of ADA projects in design	N/A <sup>2</sup>	21	21 <sup>D</sup>
	1.2. Number of ADA projects in construction	N/A <sup>2</sup>	8	8 <sup>D</sup>
	1.3 Total amount (\$\$) of investment in ADA improvements	N/A <sup>2</sup>	\$3,914,484	3,914,484 <sup>D</sup>
	1.4 Number of identified barriers to pedestrians and cyclists	146	146	146 <sup>D</sup>
	1.5 Number of ADA compliant crosswalks	21	21	21 <sup>D</sup>
	1.6 Number of ADA compliant intersection (audible)	1	5	5 <sup>D</sup>
		2023 Baseline	2023 EOY	2024 EOY
Improve Mobility	2.1 Percentage of on-road bike/ped facilities per mile	33.10%	33.67%	33.89%
	2.2 Percentage of off-road bike/ped facilities per mile	57.18%	57.34%	57.12%
	2.3 Percentage of increase in sidewalks per mile	1901.161 miles total	0.4% (7.767 miles)	4.18% (79.529 miles)
	2.4 Number of protected crosswalks per mile (signals, RRFB, Ped hybrid beacon, raised)	None Reported	None Reported	None Reported
	2.5 Number of trees planted within public ROW	N/A <sup>2</sup>	0	0 <sup>D</sup>
	2.6 Square footage of greenscape during road construction projects within public ROW	N/A <sup>2</sup>	None Reported	None Reported
	2.7 Number of pedestrian traffic signals	292	292	292
	2.8 Linear feet of roadside buffers (above 4 ft in width)	N/A <sup>2</sup>	0	0 <sup>D</sup>
		2023 Baseline	2023 EOY	2024 EOY
Safe routes to public places and accessibility	3.1 Number of pedestrian facilities within 1 mile radius of schools	119	119	117
	3.2 Number of pedestrian facilities within 1 mile radius of community centers, libraries	16	16	16
	3.3 Number of pedestrian facilities within 1 mile radius of parks	114	114	115
	3.4 Number of pedestrian facilities within 2 mile radius of schools	171	171	171
	3.5 Number of pedestrian facilities within 2 miles radius of community centers, libraries	17	17	17
	3.6 Number of pedestrian facilities within 2 mile radius of parks	151	151	152
		2023 Baseline	2023 EOY	2024 EOY
Safety	4.1 Number of intersections that meet Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) standard	N/A <sup>2</sup>	0	0
	4.2 Number of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within 1/4 mile of transit stop	441	441	441
	4.3 Number of improved safe pedestrian crossings on rail crossings	3	3	4
	4.4 Number of bicycle fatalities	N/A <sup>2</sup>	2	0 <sup>A</sup>
	4.5 Number of bicycle serious injuries	N/A <sup>2</sup>	12	21 <sup>A</sup>
	4.6 Number of pedestrian fatalities	N/A <sup>2</sup>	24	10 <sup>A</sup>
	4.7 Number of pedestrian serious injuries	N/A <sup>2</sup>	42	41 <sup>A</sup>
	4.8 Number of children pedestrian fatalities (up to age 14)	N/A <sup>2</sup>	0	0 <sup>A</sup>
		2023 Baseline	2023 EOY	2024 EOY
Mobility and Accessibility	5.1 Yearly Ridership	N/A <sup>2</sup>	1,461,232	1,401,708 <sup>B</sup>
	5.2 Number of new or improved ADA compliant transit stops/shelters	N/A <sup>3</sup>	N/A <sup>3</sup>	77
	5.3 Number of jobs served by transit	N/A <sup>2</sup>	2,024 <sup>C</sup>	3,011 <sup>C</sup>
	5.4 Annual on time performance	N/A <sup>2</sup>	60%	60%

<sup>1</sup> These metrics were not tracked in 2023

<sup>2</sup> No baseline needed. Raw data count each year

<sup>3</sup> Numbers not tracked in 2023, began in 2024

<sup>A</sup> Preliminary. EOY numbers are final September of the following year

<sup>B</sup> Monthly CATS ridership of 116,809 as of December 6, 2024.

Estimated number for the year.

<https://www.brcats.com/page/CATSdash>

<sup>C</sup> Data based on previous year ACS. 2024 EOY is 2023 ACS 1-Year for EBR Parish

<sup>D</sup> Numbers carried forward as 2023 estimates; will be updated once final numbers are received by MOVEBR consultant



The Complete Streets Advisory Committee worked with partners to create a simplified version of existing biking facilities and those that will be on the ground in the next five years. This map will be included in a brochure titled "RIDE TOGETHER: BATON ROUGE'S CYCLING REVOLUTION," which will show more complex areas such as Downtown to LSU and the Levee to Southern University in more detail. These facilities are part of the East Baton Rouge Parish Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, which includes routes planned out over the next 20 years.

This brochure will aid in Committee efforts to support the implementation of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan as well as the continual goal of educational outreach.

## PLANNING

### Awards, Conferences, and Recognition

#### Planning Director's Award

Every year, the Planning Director selects one member of staff whose contributions over the prior twelve months have contributed significantly to the success of the Planning Commission's work.

#### Employee of the Month

Employee of the Month is a recognition given by the Planning Director and Assistant Director to recognize employees for their work.

January - Donna Bennett  
February - Blanca Tejera  
March - Yulonda Derrick  
April - Jeremy Gremillion  
May - Jasmine Thomas  
June - Donnicha London  
July - Caroline Marse  
August - Don Arellano  
September - Glenn Hanna  
October - Mashanka Taylor  
November - Marie Hopkins  
December - Jeremy Gremillion

*: 2024 Planning Directors Award*

#### Conferences

Staff participated in the following conferences in 2024:

- APA National Conference (Minneapolis, MN)
- Louisiana Preservation Conference (Lafayette, LA)
- Louisiana Smart Growth Summit (Baton Rouge, LA)
- Louisiana Brownfields Conference (Violet, LA)
- EPA Regional Brownfields Conference (Dallas, TX)
- APA State Planning Conference (Baton Rouge, LA)
- Past Forward National Preservation Conference (New Orleans, LA)

#### Interns

Students who are enrolled or show interest in programs such as architecture, landscape architecture, geography, urban planning and related fields can be considered for the intern program. The program provides an opportunity for students to apply their studies to advance the work plan of the Planning Commission and gain valuable experience.

## Project Specific Committees

### Trust for Public Land: Park Equity Accelerator Committee (PEA)

Vance Baldwin, Assistant Planning Director, is part of the 10 Minute Walk: Park Equity Accelerator with the Trust for Public Land and BREC in coordination with peer cities' park equity gaps for development of recommendations and policy to address funding, operation and maintenance of park systems in the vicinity of low-income neighborhoods.

### Capital Region Planning Commission Technical Advisory Committee

Ryan Holcomb, Planning Director, and Vance Baldwin, Assistant Planning Director, serve on the Capital Region Planning Commission Technical Advisory Committee. This committee is tasked with developing, coordinating, and implementing a multi-modal transportation plan for the Baton Rouge Area.

### DOTD Regional Planning Officials Advisory Council: Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan (STP)

Ryan Holcomb, Planning Director, serves as a member for the Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan (LSTP) update. The LSTP is a long-range, comprehensive plan, developed with stakeholder and public input, to continue investing in a multi-modal transportation system that is safe and efficient today and equipped to handle transportation challenges and opportunities between now and 2055.

### Development Review Committee

Blanca Tejera, Planning Manager and Planners from the Current Division represents the Planning Commission office on the Development Review Committee hosted by the Subdivision Engineering Department.

### Plan Baton Rouge III Steering Committee

Ryan Holcomb, Planning Director, serves on the Plan Baton Rouge III Steering Committee. This committee meets to review and update the strategies and master planning efforts for Downtown Baton Rouge and its surrounding corridors to activate public spaces, secure financing for essential infrastructure and amenities, and attract further private sector development.

### Florida Corridor Plan Advisory Committee

Ryan Holcomb, Planning Director, served on the Florida Corridor Plan Advisory Committee. This committee met regularly throughout 2023-2024 to review and guide the Florida Corridor planning process, a collective vision that came from intensive outreach and engagement efforts with community stakeholders.

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Update Steering Committee (PBMP)

Vance Baldwin, Assistant Planning Director, serves on the steering committee to assist BREC in updating the plan with facility types, priority of routes, and implementation between the City-Parish and BREC.

### Scotlandville Food Access Commission

Vance Baldwin, Assistant Planning Director participated with this stakeholder group in identifying and supporting efforts to attract and bring grocery store developments to the historically underserved area of Scotlandville.

# ANNUAL REPORT

## Public Outreach

Planning staff presented before the following groups:

- Brownfields Grant Program Open House community meetings
- Scotlandville Area Foundation's Missing Middle Housing Summit
- Jones Creek Area Business Association
- Reimaging Reuse Brownfields Summit

## Community Planning

Numerous community meetings were attended around the parish by Planning staff in 2024 to discuss a variety of topics from master planning to neighborhood concerns regarding developments.

These include:

- FUTUREBR: 5-year update to City-Parish comprehensive plan
- Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Equity Impact Investment program- Baton Rouge North Economic Development District
- BRAC economic development EBR SSI Workshop
- Central Business District Building Survey update -- Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant
- Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors Commercial Invest Division
- Southern University Career Exploration Day
- Flood Awareness Month - Metropolitan Council Proclamation
- Bike Month - Metropolitan Council Proclamation
- Complete Streets Ordinance and update approved by Metropolitan Council
- Florida Corridor Small Area Plan (SAP) approved by Metropolitan Council
- APA LA Capital Section
- Baton Rouge Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI)
- Reconnecting Communities Grant Program
- Regional Planning Officials Advisory Council- Louisiana Statewide Transportation Plan
- EPA Brownfield Community Wide Assessment Grant Kickoff
- ULI Louisiana's Future of Affordable Housing Summit
- Capital Area Transit System (CATS) Center Goal Setting Workshop



*EPA Brownfield Community Wide Assessment Grant Kickoff in May 2024*

## Technology

### Enterprise GIS Team

Jasmine Thomas, Planning Manager, participates in the Parish's Enterprise GIS Team. The team is coordinated by Information Services and continues to develop improved methods to use EBRGIS to organize data and improve applications to better serve the public.

### Data Governance Committee

Planning Staff participates in the Parish's Enterprise Data Governance Committee. The committee focuses on inventorying and publishing data, working collectively to identify challenges or opportunities related to using shared data. Assistant Planning Director Vance Baldwin is the staff representative from the Planning Office.

## Cybersecurity

As attempts increase by hackers to damage, destroy, or steal sensitive information from a computer network or system, the Mayor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and Department of Information Services are actively working to stay "Red Stick Ready" when it comes to protecting against potential cyber threats, and it's important that employees adopt the same mentality. Information Services continues to provide guidance to keep systems safe. Assistant Planning Director Vance Baldwin is the staff representative from the Planning Office. All City-Parish employees are required to continue quarterly training and education.

## Resource Center

The Resource Center provides a planning professional who is available during all office hours to assist members of the public with the planning process and to answer general questions about planning regulations and procedures. Requests are responded to by telephone, by face to face, by mail, or by email. This helps to improve customer service by increasing accessibility to the planning staff, expediting the application process, providing numerous professional services, and disseminating information.

The Resource Center provided assistance to 3,077 people in 2024 (as of November). The majority of the questions are centered on the Unified Development Code and specific requirements of development.

## Professional Development and Public Engagement

### Education

The following staff hold professional certifications which require upkeep of continuing education units:

- Ryan Holcomb - American Institute of Certified Planners
- Vance Baldwin - Professional Landscape Architect, Certified Floodplain Manager
- Blanca Azucena Tejera - Building Code Enforcement Official
- Jasmine Thomas - American Institute of Certified Planners

### Boards and Organizations

Assistant Planning Director Vance Baldwin serves on the Complete Streets Advisory Committee, which reviews and makes recommendations on policy concerning multi-modal transportation in the City-Parish.

Assistant Planning Director Vance Baldwin serves on the Baton Rouge Area Chamber's Quality of Place Committee, which focuses on the attractiveness of the built and natural environment, with unique features and destinations, which add value to life, work and play, and the economic opportunities those create. This work includes improving maintenance and code enforcement, sustainable development and blight elimination.

Planning Manager Jasmine Thomas serves as Capital Section Director of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Planning Association.

Planning Manager Jasmine Thomas serves on the board for the Louisiana Brownfields Association.

### ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

The Administration Division of the Planning Commission oversees the duties of the Planning Commission, including the day-to-day management of the department and all personnel. This division is responsible for developing the department budget, developing and coordinating work programs, processing all Unified Development Code amendments and processing payroll. This division also works closely with other City-Parish department heads, agencies, and organizations to develop and monitor projects, and represents the Planning Commission before the public at various meetings including Metropolitan Council. Additionally, the administration division regularly provides informational updates on multiple projects to various groups, including the Greater Baton Rouge Federation of Civic Associations, neighborhood groups, the Board of Realtors and the Growth Coalition.



*From Top Left: Ryan Holcomb, Donna Bennett, Vance Baldwin, Annette Chambliss, Glenn Hanna*

### Reasonable Accommodation

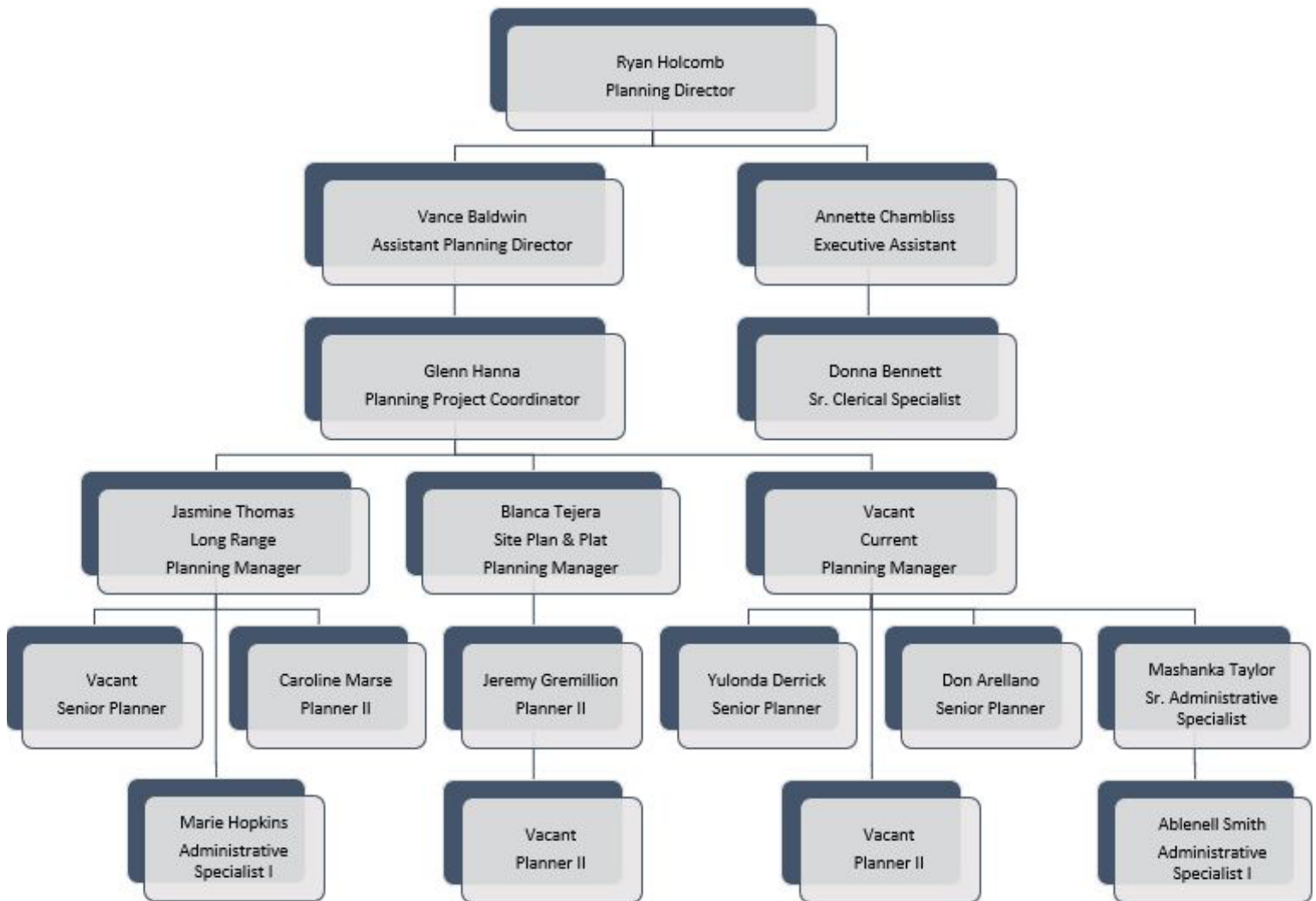
The Federal Fair Housing Act makes it unlawful for localities to make a dwelling unavailable to a person because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status or disability. A violation of this federal law occurs by showing that a policy or practice of a local government has a disparate impact on a protected class. Prohibited discrimination includes failure to make reasonable accommodation in rules and policies when such is necessary to afford a protected person equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. The Fair Housing Act defines “handicap” (the Americans With Disabilities Act uses the term “disability”) to include recovering substance abuse patients, meaning that the City-Parish must allow homes serving the needs of people with disabilities in all zoning districts that permit single family homes through the granting of a Reasonable Accommodation. In 2024, the Planning Commission processed 8 of these requests as of November.

### Amendments to the Unified Development Code

The following is a list of amendments to the Unified Development Code approved by the Metropolitan Council in 2024 on the recommendation of the Planning Commission.

- Chapter 4, Site Plans and Plats; Section 4.2.3, Manufactured Home Parks and Section 4.2.4, Recreational Vehicle Parks
- Chapter 13, Streets and Sidewalks; Section 13.2, Street and alley widths
- Chapter 17, Parking and Loading; Section 17.5.2.A.3, Locational Standards for Parking Areas and Figure 17.1 Garage Setback

### Organizational Chart

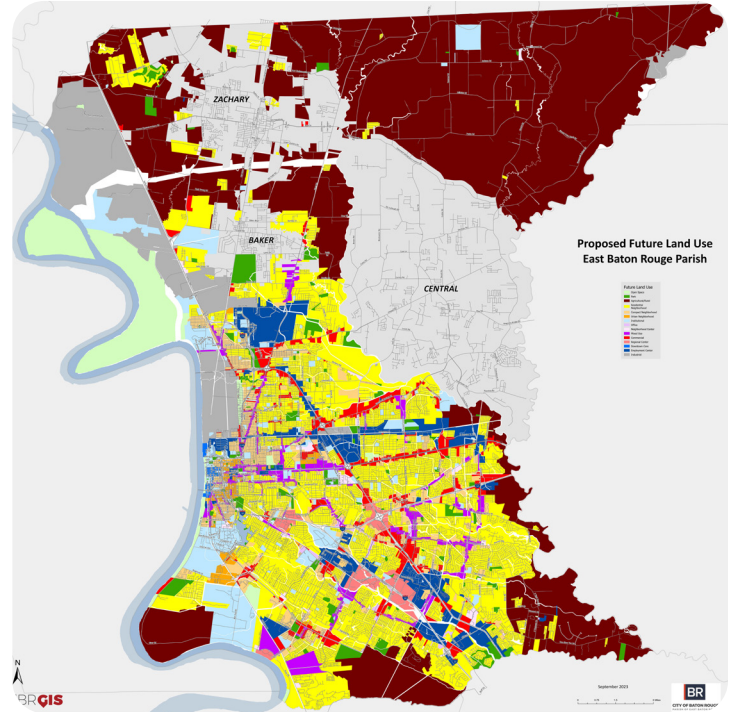


## LONG RANGE PLANNING DIVISION

The Long Range Planning Division is responsible for the coordination and implementation of FUTUREBR, the 20-year comprehensive land use and development plan for the City and Parish. The primary function of this Division is to focus on long-range, comprehensive planning for the City-Parish. The Long Range Planning Division also administers the Brownfields Program, Enterprise Zone Program and Restoration Tax Abatement Program along with staffing the Historic Preservation Commission and the Complete Streets Committees.

### FUTUREBR

FUTUREBR was adopted in 2011, and the first update was approved by the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council in 2018. In 2024, the second five-year update was approved. FUTUREBR serves as a guide for development within the Parish. Processes for amendments and updates to the plan were developed so alterations in growth patterns can be accommodated. Conditions change over time and require review at a greater detail for the plan to remain relevant. In 2024, staff processed 7 plan amendments. In addition, a proposed FUTUREBR Land Use Map (right) is included as part of the FUTUREBR 5-Year Update.



FUTUREBR 2024 Future Land Use Map Update  
Source: FUTUREBR

### Enterprise Zone

The Baton Rouge Enterprise Zone (EZ) program encourages the creation of permanent new jobs in geographically targeted areas of the Parish. The EZ program offers local sales tax rebate on construction materials and equipment purchases to new or expanding businesses.

In 2024, the Long Range Division received two Advance Notifications from Louisiana Economic Development (LED). The two projects were not in a locally designated EZ and therefore were not eligible for City-Parish sales/use tax rebates but may still qualify for the state benefits.



From left: Caroline Marse, Marie Hopkins, Jasmine Thomas

## Restoration Tax Abatement

The Restoration Tax Abatement (RTA) is a state incentive that provides up to a ten year abatement of local property taxes on renovations and improvements of existing commercial buildings and owner-occupied residences. This incentive is available to all businesses and homeowners in qualifying locations such as Economic Development Districts, Downtown Development District, Opportunity Zones, Historic Districts or those listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Long Range Planning Division processes RTA applications submitted to LED by preparing a summary of the project and estimate of the amount of property taxes that would be abated. The summary is sent to the affected taxing authorities and the Metropolitan Council for their evaluation and approval.

In 2024, the Long Range Planning Division processed three advances, one new application and two renewals. The Long Range Division also sent out three Letters of Eligibility. Ardendale Oaks Apartments, a 248 unit apartment complex, was approved for the RTA Renewal in August 2024 by the Metropolitan Council and in October 2024 by the State. Over half the units were uninhabitable and less than 100 units were currently occupied. Do to major renovations, the property was transformed into a un-subsidized and un-rent restricted apartment complex in North Baton Rouge.



The before and after photos of Ardendale Oaks Apartments



Photo Credit: Ardendale Oaks, LLC

## Brownfields Program

The Planning Commission has held multiple public meetings in the target areas for the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. In August 2024, the Planning Commission along with Baton Rouge North Economic Development District (BRNEDD) hosted the Reimagining Reuse Brownfields Summit at the Baton Rouge Community College's Automotive Technology Center- Ardendale Site. The summit was well attended by local developers, property owners, brownfield stakeholders and council members and provided tools and resources to turn vacant properties into thriving assets and encouraged eligible applicants to participate in Brownfields Program. Currently, there four brownfield sites enrolled in the program for environmental site assessments with more sites in the queue. A brownfields consultant is contributing to the brownfields program public outreach efforts and conducting environmental site assessments, clean-up planning and planning activities of brownfield sites.

## SITE PLAN AND PLAT DIVISION

The Site Plan and Plat Division processes applications regarding the division of land and site plan review developments. Divisions of property may include large subdivisions and conditional subdivisions--which require Planning Commission approval at a public hearing--as well as small divisions of family land and exchanges of property between adjoining property owners. Usually, proposed site plans and subdivisions are proposed on sites on which they are entitled by right according to their zoning district.

Site Plan review may include developments requiring substantial alterations to an existing building footprint or the planning of a project which may impact the surrounding property owners due to infrastructure improvements or projects within an overlay district. The Site Plan and Plat Division acts as a coordinator between several government offices within the City, including Traffic Engineering, Subdivision Engineering, Fire Department, Landscape, and Sewer Engineering, as well as the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Drainage and planning staff from other municipalities.

### Subdivisions

Subdivision activity includes the following:

- Division of a lot, tract, or parcel of land into two or more lots, plots, sites, or other units of land
- Dedication, granting, or construction of a road, highway, street, alley, or servitude through a tract of land regardless of area
- Exchange of property in which property lines are reconfigured, but no new lots are created
- Combination of smaller lots of record into larger tracts
- Final plats for both zoning entitled and Planned Unit Developments
- Changes of street names
- Right-of-Way Revocations



*From left: Jeremy Gremillion, Blanca Tejera*

### Site Plan Review

The Site Plan review process assures that all new major multi-family, commercial and industrial developments within the City-Parish have adequate drainage and sewer systems, parking facilities and space for vehicular circulation, as well as proper zoning and density. Staff Site Plan review applies to all medium to high density projects such as:

- Multi-family projects between 76 to 99 units
- Commercial or industrial uses with a building(s) between 30,000 to 50,000 square feet, or an addition to an existing structure in which the increase in aggregate floor area is greater than twenty percent
- Any building that falls within an Urban Design Overlay District

Different procedures apply for projects with more than 100 multi-family units or offices, shops, stores or other commercial uses with a building or buildings containing more than 50,000 square feet. Projects of this magnitude are subject to Planning Commission approval. Additionally, expansions of multifamily residential and other non-residential structures that result in the cumulative number of units representing more than 20% of units previously approved may also require a public hearing approval.

Manufactured home parks and RV park site plans also require approval at Planning Commission public hearings. Developers of properties that require Site Plan Review submit appropriate information, such as solid waste, fencing and open space, to the Planning Commission and coordinating agencies for review.

The Site Plan and Plat Division additionally ensures that proposed Wireless Towers are developed within zoning that allows their use by right. They are limited to certain heights and setbacks from residential uses and may require a waiver to be approved by the Planning Commission.

### Care South Lotus Village

*Located South side of Spanish Town Road and East of North 20th Street.*

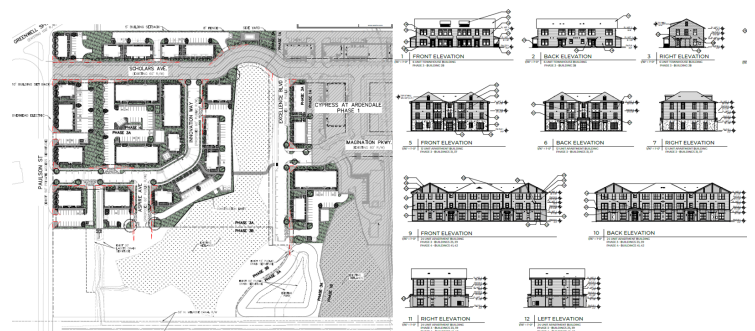
In September 2024, a site plan for the Care South Lotus Villages on a combination of three lots resulting in a total site of 2.03 acres was approved. The development will consist of one building with 35,569 sf to be utilized as a health clinic with other amenities such as offices, conference rooms, loading area, and parking on site. This development, in conjunction with CATS, will place a shelter at the bus stop designated area to provide a protected space for people waiting for the bus. The characteristics of design creates the opportunity in the neighborhood to encourage additional development within the neighborhood, revitalizing the north Baton Rouge regional area.



### Cypress at Ardenale - Phases 3 & 4

*Located North of Melrose Canal and East of Ardenwood Drive*

The Cypress at Ardenale is a multifamily high density residential with a mix of housing of apartment buildings, townhomes, senior living and an array of community amenities. The amenities include walking/bike paths, community leisure areas, tech plaza, picnic areas, buildings for community gathering and events located on previous approved Phase 1. There are pedestrian connections throughout the entire site and parking outside each building to accommodate everyone. There are 194 units proposed on these two phases. Phases 3 & 4 will include apartments and townhouses of one to four bedrooms.



*Left: Care South Lotus Village*

*Top: Cypress at Ardenale Phase 3 & 4*

## CURRENT PLANNING DIVISION

The Current Planning Division regulates rezonings and reviews development proposals for consistency with the Unified Development Code. They are responsible for presenting the applications at public hearings before the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council. They also provide professional assistance to the public for the development of land throughout East Baton Rouge Parish. The work includes processing the following:

- Rezoning
- Planned Unit Developments
- Traditional Neighborhood Developments
- Conditional Use Permits
- Letters of Interpretation

### Planned Developments

Planned developments (PUDs) tie zonings to site plans, which together specify the site's permitted uses and allow for variation in conventional zoning requirements with regards to setbacks and lot dimensions. PUDs encourage a mix of land uses and creativity in site planning. They contribute to a wider variety of environments and more suitable facilities, provide for infill development and adaptive reuse, and encourage non-vehicular circulation and live/work mixes. They promote public health, safety, and welfare by designing a variety of land use types.

Neighboring property owners can view details of the proposed development as well as make comments at public hearings as part of the PUD review process.

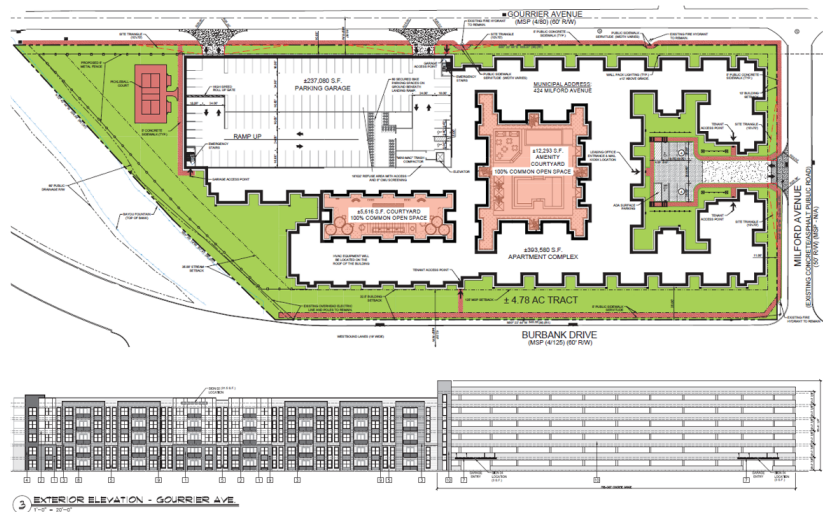
Planning Commission Staff coordinates with various city departments such as Transportation and Drainage, Landscape, and Subdivision Engineering in the review to ensure that each submittal complies with the Unified Development Code.



From left: Yulonda Derrick, Ablenell Smith, Mashanka Taylor, Don Arellano

### Letters of Interpretation

Letters and forms of interpretation provide verification of a property's current zoning. They are prepared by the Current Planning Division. These letters are often needed by the public for permitting, financial or insurance reasons. Every year, hundreds of these letters are issued.



*Sterling LSU Tiger Pointe, located south of Gourrier Avenue, west of Milford Avenue, is a multifamily high density residential development with one to five bedrooms per unit, leasing areas and a parking garage for the convenience of the students. The building area is 393,580 sf and the parking garage is seven stories and will hold 771 parking spaces.*

## 2024 Case Activity

Application Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Administration</b>					
UDC Amendments	8	4	8	4	4
Reasonable Accommodations	15	8	6	12	8
<b>Long Range Division</b>					
FUTUREBR Amendments	22	20	25	15	7
Demolitions	2	2	2	2	2
COA - Public Hearing	3	11	7	5	3
COA - Staff Level	6	8	8	4	2
National Landmark Designations	1	0	0	0	0
National Register Historic Landmark/District Designations or Expansions	0	0	0	1	3
<b>Current Division</b>					
Rezoning	63	94	82	69	54
Planned Unit Developments	58	62	45	35	25
SPUDs	11	7	10	4	3
ISPUDs	11	8	7	6	1
TNDs	19	13	4	5	0
Conditional Use Permits	13	8	14	9	9
Letters of Interpretation	244	313	362	162	207
<b>Site Plan and Plat Division</b>					
Large Subdivisions	12	15	17	4	7
Small Subdivisions (staff & public)	59	93	104	104	62
Exchanges of Property	88	88	110	58	65
Mobile Home Park	0	0	0	0	1
Revocations	6	12	4	3	7
Site Plans (staff & public)	10	21	17	18	11
Alternative Parking	4	2	7	5	11
Sidewalk Waivers	7	1	1	0	0
Street Name Changes	4	1	3	0	2
Bonds	1	10	7	16	6
Letters of Compliance	1	0	1	2	1

\*as of November 2024





# 2024 FUTUREBR PROGRESS REPORT

## ASSESSING OVERALL PROGRESS

FUTUREBR tracks progress in two distinct ways: annually updating the status of action items and utilizing the AARP Livability Score. The action item status updates provide a detailed overview of the advancement of specific goals and objectives, while the AARP Livability Score offers a broader measure of community well-being. This dual approach ensures a comprehensive assessment of FUTUREBR impact and allows for informed decision-making regarding future initiatives.

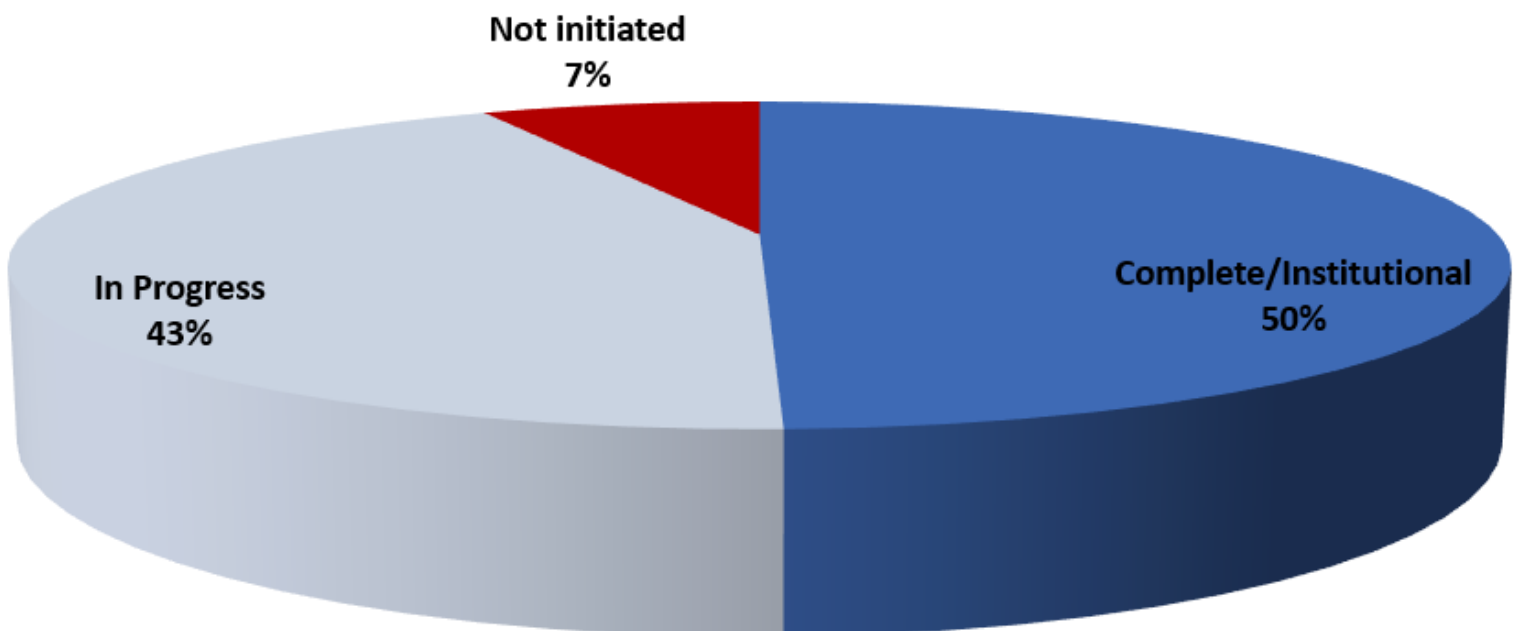
### AARP Livability Index and Trust for Public Land ParkScore

The AARP Livability Index is a tool that can be used to track progress on each of the elements of FUTUREBR. The index measures seven categories of livability: housing, neighborhood convenience, transportation, environment, opportunity, health, and civic engagement. Each category is scored on a scale of 1 to 100, with 100 being the most livable. The index can be used to track progress on FUTUREBR by comparing scores over time. For example, if the housing score for a particular community increases from 60 to 70, this would indicate that the community is becoming more livable.

To rate the City-Parish's park system, the ParkScore from the Trust for Public Land is used. The Trust for Public Land's ParkScore is a national standard used to compare park systems in the 100 most populous U.S. cities. This score ranks park systems based on five key categories: acreage, investment, amenities, access, and equity. Each category includes specific metrics, with points assigned for each measure. By analyzing these metrics, ParkScore provides a comprehensive evaluation of how well each city serves its residents with parks and green space.

### FUTUREBR Annual Action Item Updates

In order to assess and track FUTUREBR's nine elements, 482 Action Items were identified, along with 34 Lead Agencies to implement those action items. In 2023, the implementation of the plan is past the ten-year mark, marking it more than half way through implementation. Currently, seven percent of the Action Items have not been initiated. Fifty percent of the Action Items are either Complete or Institutional, meaning they are continuously being implemented. This is a one percent increase from last year's 49 percent Complete or Institutional.



## FUTUREBR CORE VALUES FROM THE VISION

This vision was developed by a diverse group of residents and stakeholders that provided input through workshops, open houses, interviews, focus groups and survey discussions. Respondents consistently cited the following core values and aspirations they believed should be the foundation for building a vision for East Baton Rouge Parish.

**Prosperity:** All residents have access to a thriving economy with job opportunities in growing diverse businesses.

**Equity:** All residents have access to a good education, public services, housing and job opportunities.

**Diversity:** The City is known for embracing diversity and acceptance of other cultures, ethnicities and groups.

**Safety:** People feel safe where they live, work and play.

### **Strong Neighborhoods and Communities:**

Neighborhoods in all areas of the City-Parish are desirable places to live and have a range of housing types and nearby amenities to serve residents.

**Convenient Transportation:** There is a variety of choices for moving both people and goods, as well as improving existing ways to move throughout the parish.

**Healthy Environment:** Natural resources are protected and conserved to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for current and future residents.

**Sustainability:** The future reflects the creativity and resiliency of East Baton Rouge Parish's residents and offers a sustainable place for citizens to thrive- with a focus on building a future based on fiscal, physical, environmental economic and equitable sustainability.

# 2024 REVIEW: ELEMENT BY ELEMENT

FUTUREBR proposes an ambitious blueprint for the future of Baton Rouge – how the Parish will look, function, and feel in the coming decades. This report can provide an early warning if goals are not being met. It also can provide information about successes, and achieving the goals of the plan.

The Progress Report provides an analysis of action items used to implement the plan, considers any changed priorities, and outlines successes and lessons learned from preceding activities. Using parish-wide and local indicators such as annual building permits issued, miles of trails completed, and rent burden, the Progress Report measures implementation of the plan toward achieving the Vision.

This report can be used by the administration to define budgetary priorities, Capital Improvements Planning and overall work programs for the City-Parish Departments and the Lead Agencies that assist in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. FUTUREBR completed its first update in 2018, and this progress report reflects those changes. This year, in 2024, the second 5-Year Update was completed.

## LAND USE GOALS

1. Use the adopted Comprehensive Plan to guide development decisions.
2. Make land use decisions that contribute to the Vision and East Baton Rouge Parish's economic vitality.
3. Build a community fabric of distinctive neighborhoods and diverse districts where Parish residents have access to local commercial areas, schools, libraries, parks and open space areas.
4. Maintain, stabilize and strengthen existing neighborhoods, making them places where new residents are attracted to live.
5. Promote development patterns that encourage connectivity and walkability.
6. Put procedures, processes and tools in place to effectively and equitably implement FUTUREBR.
7. Ensure that areas where new growth is occurring benefit from high quality sustainable development.
8. Preserve and enhance environmental assets.
9. Establish a mechanism and process to monitor movement towards realizing the Vision.
10. Enhance community design character by upgrading components of the built environment.
11. Support a distinctive urban identity, enriched sense-of-place, and high quality of life.

Total Element Objectives – 28

Total Element Action Items – 51

### Principal Lead Agencies

Planning Commission

Office of the Mayor-President

## LAND USE

The purpose of this element is to guide the physical growth of the City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge, and provide the framework for the creation of land development regulations and policies.

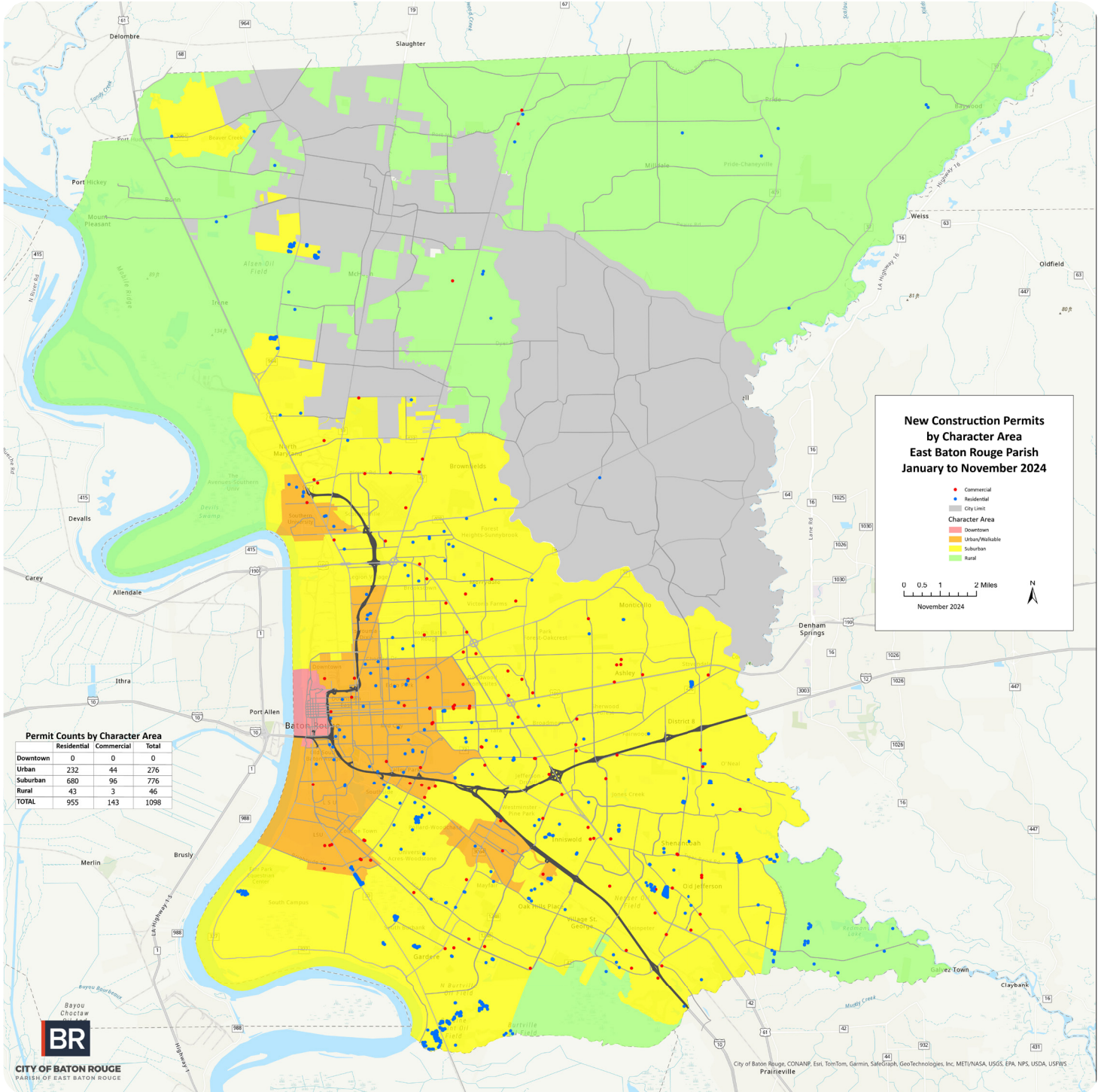
### Indicators

FUTUREBR anticipates the addition of roughly 48,000 new households and 135,000 new jobs in the Parish by 2030, and calls for ten percent of new growth to be infill and redevelopment. By analyzing new construction permits based on their location in the four character areas, the proportion of new growth that is infill can be determined by adding the percentages located in downtown and urban/walkable.

There has been a steady increase in new development. In 2024, twenty five percent of new development occurred in the Downtown and Urban/Walkable character areas, which is above the ten percent FUTUREBR infill goal and is the highest level since this data has been tracked. The map on the next page shows the breakdown of new developments based on character areas. The majority of new development were residential permits at 24 percent the highest in the last few years. However, commercial permits in the Downtown and Urban Walkable area were lower than last year down from 30 percent.

In 2023, East Baton Rouge had 207,671 households (U.S. Census Bureau 2023 ACS 1-Year Estimates). This is an increase of 829 households since 2022 and an increase of 19,952 since 2011, which estimated an additional 48,000 households by 2030.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment increased in four of the seven largest parishes in the state from March 2023 to March 2024. East Baton Rouge had the largest over-the-year increase in employment out of the seven largest parishes at 3.8 percent.



**Proportion of infill construction**

Infill New Development (Downtown + Urban Walkable)				
	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Commercial permits</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>21.7%</b>	<b>36.2%</b>	<b>30.8%</b>
<b>Residential permits</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>24.3%</b>

Percent of permits issued in the Downtown area and Urban Walkable areas, compared to all permits.  
 Source: City-Parish Permitting Office

**LAND USE GOALS**

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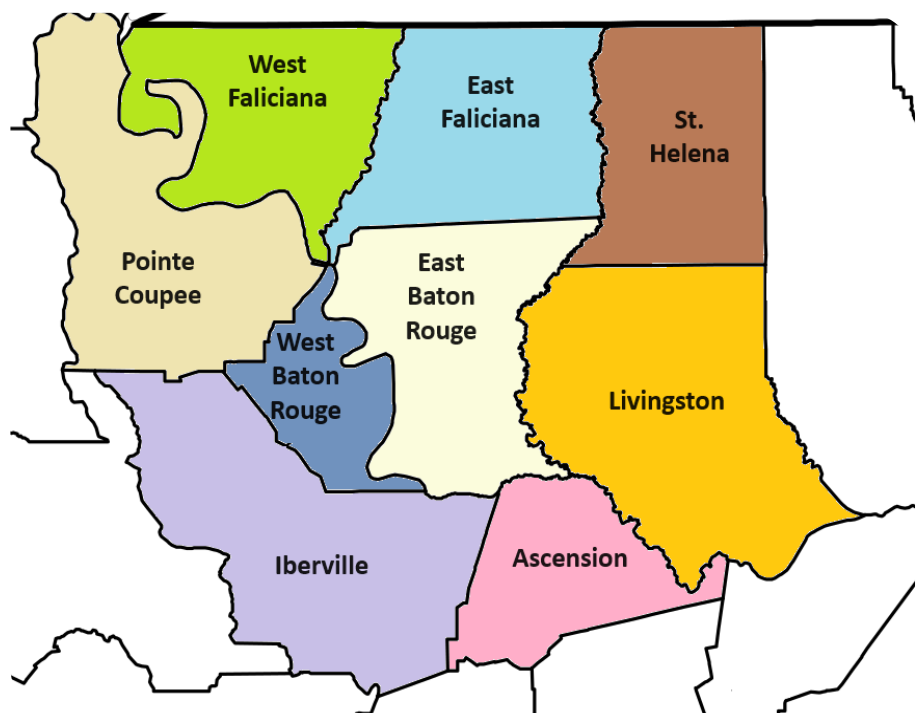
**Principal Lead Agencies**  
**Planning Commission**  
**Office of the Mayor-President**

**Greater Baton Rouge Metropolitan Statistical Area**

The general concept of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is that of a core area, in this case the City of Baton Rouge, containing a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core. The MSA includes eight other parishes: Ascension, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Point Coupee, St. Helena, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana.

When FUTUREBR was adopted in 2011, East Baton Rouge’s share of region-wide population was 55 percent. FUTUREBR projects that the Parish will retain its proportional share of the region’s population. After several years of slight declines, 2023 census data shows East Baton Rouge Parish with a population of 448,467 and the region’s population at 837,661. Even though East Baton Rouge Parish’s population decreased by 1.8 percent since 2020, East Baton Rouge is still the most populated parish. The image below shows the Baton Rouge MSA region. Ascension and Livingston Parishes have continued to increase over the past few years. Between 2020 and 2023, populations in Ascension and Livingston increased by 4.1 and 5.5 percent, respectively. All of the rural parishes in the MSA (West and East Feliciana, St Helena, Point Coupee and Iberville) have seen their populations decline.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau*



*Baton Rouge Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Small Area Plans

Small Area Planning is a partnership between the City-Parish and the area’s stakeholders – residents, businesses, institutions, and other government entities. The advantage of the Small Area Plan is that it engages community involvement to produce focused recommendations, ideas, and desires for one area with a goal of making the process more predictable and efficient.

In 2024, the Planning Commission completed the 5-Year Update of FUTUREBR. This update included addition of several Small Area Plans to FUTUREBR, such as the Imagine Plank Road and the Baton Rouge Lakes Master Plan. The Florida Boulevard Corridor Master Plan, the newest small area plan to be incorporated into FUTUREBR, was approved in September 2024. The plan aims to rejuvenate the 12-mile stretch of Florida Street and Florida Boulevard, addressing decades of economic decline and history of racial segregation.

### Plan Baton Rouge III Underway

A new master plan for downtown Baton Rouge called Plan Baton Rouge III is underway. The plan aims to guide comprehensive growth and investment over the next decade. The new Master Plan will build on previous plans for downtown, including Plan Baton Rouge I that was completed in 1998 and Plan Baton Rouge II that was completed in 2009. These earlier plans established a framework for coordinated actions that have fostered public and private partnerships, resulting in over \$3 billion of investments in downtown within the last two decades. The new plan is intended to build on downtown's unique strengths such as the riverfront. Request for proposals were completed earlier this year and planning efforts are expected to begin early next year.

AARP Livability Score  
Overall Livability Score

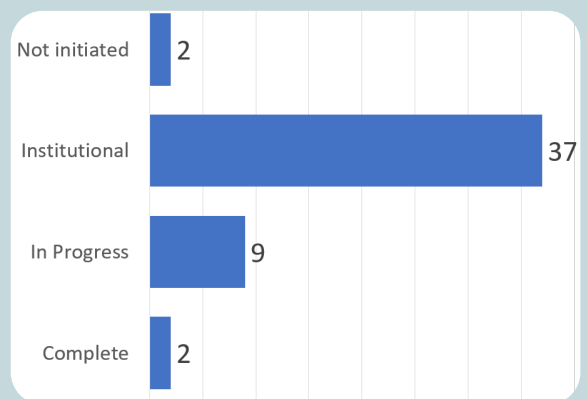
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### PROGRESS MADE

#### Key Accomplishments

Added New Small Area Plan  
Plan Baton Rouge III Underway

### ACTION ITEMS



## COMMUNITY DESIGN AND NEIGHBORHOODS GOALS

1. Enhance community character by upgrading components of the built environment.
2. Support a distinctive community identity; enriched sense of place, and high quality of life.
3. Promote development patterns that encourage connectivity and pedestrian orientation.

Total Element Objectives – 13

Total Element Action Items – 43

### Principal Lead Agencies

Office of the Mayor-President

Planning Commission

Build Baton Rouge

Department of Development



*The 2024 Connecting East Baton Rouge Neighborhood Convention was held in September and brought together neighborhood leaders and residents, business owners, city-parish department heads, public safety leaders, and youth from across the parish to share tools and best practices needed to build strong, connected neighborhoods.*

Source: [brla.gov](http://brla.gov)

## COMMUNITY DESIGN AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The purpose of this element is to guide new development and encourage reinvestment in existing neighborhoods so that strong interconnected neighborhoods and districts are created and enhanced which are healthy, walkable and comfortable. It includes descriptions that Baton Rouge can use to increase connectivity and walkability and includes policy goals which should be implemented through zoning. The Community Design and Neighborhood Element supplements the Land Use and the Transportation elements with recommendations for form, character, and functionality.

### Indicator

#### Walk Score

One metric used to measure the walkability of a city is the proprietary Walk Score indicator produced by [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com). The Walk Score measures walkability on a scale of 0 - 100, based on walking routes to destinations such as grocery stores, schools, parks, restaurants and retail.

As of November 2024, Baton Rouge has a walk score of 39 and a bike score of 44. The City-Parish continues to work to implement policies which will encourage more walkable development.

Source: [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)

## Accomplishments

### Neighborhood Registry

The East Baton Rouge Neighborhood Registry is the official list of neighborhood-based organizations throughout the city parish. In 1993, an action item of the comprehensive plan called for developing and promoting neighborhood preservation and improvement. A tool to accomplish this goal is the Neighborhood Registry. There are over 400 groups currently registered and all groups from the city parish are invited to join.

### Florida Corridor Plan

Build Baton Rouge, along with other institutional partners, has created a master plan for the Florida Corridor. The plan was approved by Metropolitan Council in September 2024 and has been incorporated into FUTUREBR as a result. This master plan is the first priority project of the Cortana Corridor Economic District--which was formed to encourage projects that enhance the district for surrounding communities and to attract and retain jobs--since its formation. The purpose of the plan is to provide a guide for economic development within the district while supporting investments in infrastructure along the corridor. The master plan will address not only community development but also transportation, land use, and urban design. This plan will help in the prioritization of community assets and amenities and aims to accommodate changing demographics. The City-Parish is invested in this effort, as it is proposed to address decades of decline with a new vision and steps for implementation and funding. Revisions to the Unified Development Code are anticipated in order to update the Florida Boulevard Design Overlay district which would assist in driving implementation.

### Public Art Progress

A new public art sculpture and two new murals were co-created by community members within the Renoir Cultural District neighborhood and the Arts Council. These works reflect neighborhood identity and have been installed. Additional murals are in progress as art planning efforts within the downtown area. A City-Wide art making festival was held this year and demonstrated the positive impact of arts participation on citizens.

**AARP Livability Score**  
**Neighborhood Category**  
*Access to life work and play*

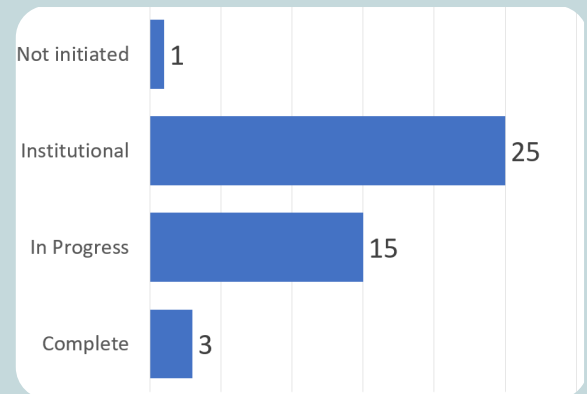
45

### PROGRESS MADE

#### Key Accomplishments

Florida Corridor plan adoption  
 Public Art Progress

### ACTION ITEMS



"Community Garden," mural by Eddie Mendieta  
 Source: Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge

## TRANSPORTATION GOALS

1. Establish a road network with improved and acceptable local and regional traffic congestion levels.
2. Establish and support the development of connectivity throughout the transportation system.
3. Implement complete street policies and design concepts.
4. Develop a modern, choice-rider transit system.
5. Enhance the bicycle and pedestrian network throughout the Parish.
6. Improve coordination between agencies to improve communication and transportation results.
7. Reduce vehicular emissions.

Total Element Objectives – 17

Total Element Action Items – 51

### Principal Lead Agencies

Department of Transportation and Drainage  
Mayor's Office

## TRANSPORTATION

This purpose of this element is to ensure a sustainable transportation network through connectivity, efficiency and flexibility which supports Baton Rouge's livability, sustainability, and overall economic growth. Transportation must be directly tied to land use.

### Indicators

#### Congestion

Interstate 10, 12, and 110 cut through the heart of the city and causes traffic buildup, especially Interstate 10 which is a major east-west corridor across the country. Sixty-seven percent of traffic between Acadian Thruway and the I-10/I-12 split is local. About 90 percent of daily traffic on I-10 between Ascension Parish and Bluebonnet Boulevard are local drivers; 85 percent of traffic between O'Neal Lane and the I-10/I-12 split is local traffic (see Infrastructure Element on I-10 widening).

*Source: Capital Area Road and Bridge District Commission*

#### Mean Travel Time to Work

This indicator measures the average time the citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish spend traveling to work. At 23.9 (Source: 2023 American Community Survey) minutes, workers in East Baton Rouge Parish had a shorter average commute time than the state (26.0 minutes) and the U.S. (26.8 minutes) in 2023.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2023 American Community Survey, most recent data available at publication*

## Accomplishments

### Complete Streets Progress

In 2024, the CSAC worked with consultants, City-Parish leaders, and community advocates to draft the new Complete Streets ordinance. The ordinance was adopted by Metropolitan Council on June 12, 2024. This ordinance will strengthen the Complete Streets policy resolution that has been in place in Baton Rouge for nearly a decade. The ordinance requires all transportation projects to consider the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transit in addition to cars. The adoption of this ordinance will aid in promoting equity and safety in the City-Parish.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

The Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) is working to provide an update to the East Baton Rouge Parish Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, which analyzes what it is like to walk and bike in East Baton Rouge Parish and recommends implementable bicycle and pedestrian projects for the City-Parish. Metropolitan Council adopted this plan, which laid the foundation for the creation and implementation of these projects, in 2020. In 2023 the Parish and BREC began developing an update to it. The update will need to be approved by the BREC Commission, then by the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council. The update is anticipated to be adopted in early 2025. A multi-disciplinary team of cyclists, designers, planners, and engineers developed the plan.

Currently, the City-Parish is in the early phases of implementing the plan. Implementation of the plan will develop the City-Parish's Active Transportation Network. The plan states the intention to clarify and revise the Bicycle and Pedestrian master plan to create a document which could be easily updated every five years.

**AARP Livability Score**  
**Transportation Category**  
*Safe and convenient options*

**39**

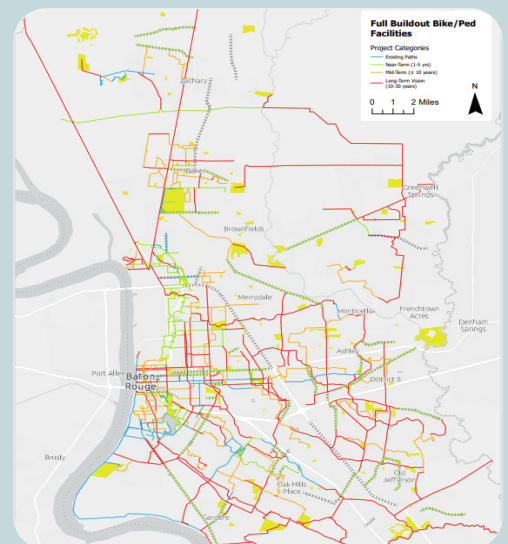
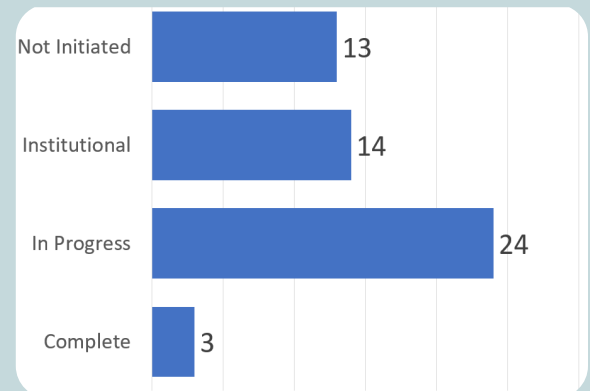
### PROGRESS MADE

#### Key Accomplishments

**Complete Streets Progress**

**Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update**

### ACTION ITEMS



*Full Buildout of proposed Bike/Ped Facilities*  
 Source: Draft East Baton Rouge Parish  
 Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan Update

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

1. Develop, cultivate and retain talent.
2. Support private sector business development.
3. Support employers in key geographic areas.
4. Connect education and training institutions with private and public sectors.

Total Element Objectives – 23

Total Element Action Items – 61

**Principal Lead Agencies**

**BRAC**

**Downtown Development District**

**Baton Rouge Area Chamber**

**Health District**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**

The purpose of this element is to provide an analysis of Baton Rouge’s economy, including long-term socioeconomic trends, an assessment of key industry clusters and an action plan that will guide Baton Rouge’s economic development efforts for future decades. Also included is a set of goals, setting the bar for the City-Parish economic development efforts. Much of the data and benchmarks which are included in this Progress Report come from the indicators and data gathered in the Economic Development Element.

**Indicators**

**Major Sector Jobs**

According to BRAC’s Quarterly Economic Indicator Dashboard, the Capital Region’s strongest sectors for job growth in the last year were construction and health care. All construction sector jobs have grown within the last year: Construction of Buildings (+1,000), Specialty Trade Contractors (+1,300) and Heavy & Civil Engineering (+5,000), as well as health care jobs (+1,000). State government jobs had its largest decline of the region’s top sector jobs, being down 2,400 jobs in the last year. Retail jobs also had a decline, being down 900 jobs in the last year. A lot of the region’s largest sectors are relatively unchanged in the last year, including local government, finance and insurance, wholesale trade and accommodations. The Baton Rouge Metro earnings grew seven percent in the last year in the private sector, making it the second-highest in Louisiana.

Source: BRAC’s Quarterly State of the Region

**Cost of Living Index**

The cost of living index for the Baton Rouge Metro is 93, which is seven percent below the national average of 100. The Baton Rouge Metro cost of living index is in-line with peer and aspirational metros, such as Greenville, Little Rock (94), Birmingham (92), and Jackson (91). The cost of living index for Baton Rouge Metro is six and nine percent higher than Lafayette and Lake Charles, respectively and 20 percent below New Orleans.

Source: BRAC’s Quarterly State of the Region

**Jobs in major sectors today vs. one year ago**

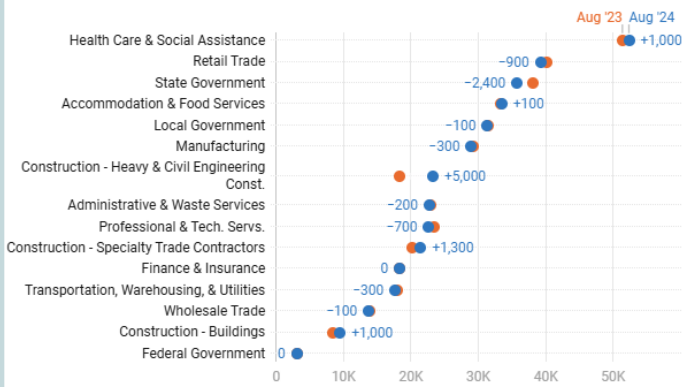


Chart: Baton Rouge Area Chamber • Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

**Major Sector Jobs today vs. one year ago**  
Source: BRAC’s Quarterly State of the Region

## Accomplishments

### New Aldi's Near Cortana Amazon Fulfillment Center

Aldi is opening its third location in Baton Rouge near the Cortana Amazon fulfillment center, at the intersection of Florida Boulevard and Airline Highway. According to the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court's Office, HPC Florline Land, LLC, which own most of the land at the former Cortana Mall site, sold the 3.1 acre piece of land to Aldi Louisiana, LLC for \$1.34 million. The purchase was part of expansion plans announced earlier this year and is a part of the Florida Corridor Small Area Plan. Currently, Aldi has 15 stores in Louisiana with more on the way. Aldi also closed on a deal with Southeastern Grocers to acquire all of its Winn-Dixie and Harvey's Supermarket locations. Aldi stores are typically smaller than traditional supermarkets and have a smaller selection of merchandise. Ninety percent of the approximately 1,600 items available in store are Aldi's own brand. Converting the stores over to the Aldi brand and format cuts down on costs like lean inventories and self-bagging. Aldi, who is known for its low prices, will provide fresh and nutritious food options at low costs in North Baton Rouge, which has historically become known as a food desert. Aldi applied for the permit in January and the store projects to be open by the end of the year.

Source: *The Advocate*

### Downtown Development District Pacer AI Data

The Downtown Development District and Visit Baton Rouge have been using Pacer AI to help shape the future of downtown Baton Rouge. Pacer AI data provides necessary insight on the number of people in downtown and compares it to other similar size downtown areas. Pacer AI counts the number of people in an area at a specific time by using location data from cell phone users, such as visitors, hotels, short-term rentals stays and website and social media visits. The software uses that data to track pedestrian movement in a certain location. Incorporating up-to-date technology in visitor recruitment is crucial to economic growth.

Source: *WAFB*

AARP Livability  
Score

Opportunity Category  
*Inclusion and possibilities*

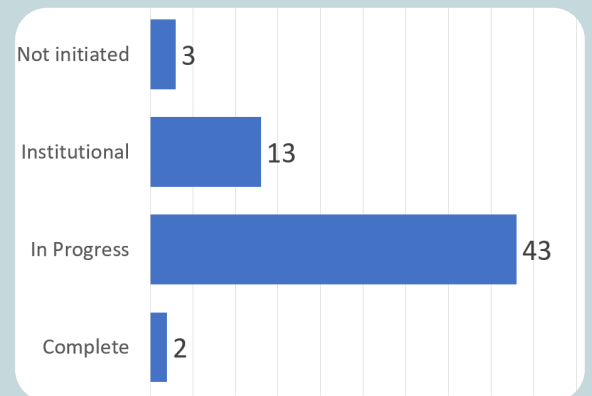
32

### PROGRESS MADE

#### Key Accomplishment

**New Aldi's Near Cortana Amazon Fulfillment Center**  
**Downtown Development District Pacer AI Data**

### ACTION ITEMS



**HOUSING GOALS**

1. Create a balanced housing supply.
2. Coordinate housing planning with the region.
3. Ensure that East Baton Rouge Parish’s existing neighborhoods are stable and strong.
4. Coordinate housing and economic development efforts.
5. Promote sustainable, energy-efficient housing in transportation-efficient neighborhoods.

Total Element Objectives – 10  
 Total Element Action Items – 50

**Principal Lead Agencies**  
**Office of the Mayor-President**  
**Office of the Planning Commission**  
**Build Baton Rouge**  
**EBR Housing Authority**

**HOUSING ELEMENT**

The purpose of this element is to determine which housing types should be targeted to meet the needs of the City-Parish’s population. If East Baton Rouge Parish cultivates a balanced housing mix that builds on emerging market dynamics, it will have a major competitive economic advantage over its peer cities.

**Indicators**

**Mix of Housing Types**

A goal of FUTUREBR is to encourage a balanced housing supply by supporting higher density in specified areas. The table below shows a high percentage of dense development, such as condos and apartments. In 2024, condos and apartments made up 17 percent of housing type, a 27 percent decrease from 2023. Townhomes decreased in 2023, going from 16 to five percent but increased in 2024 to 19 percent.

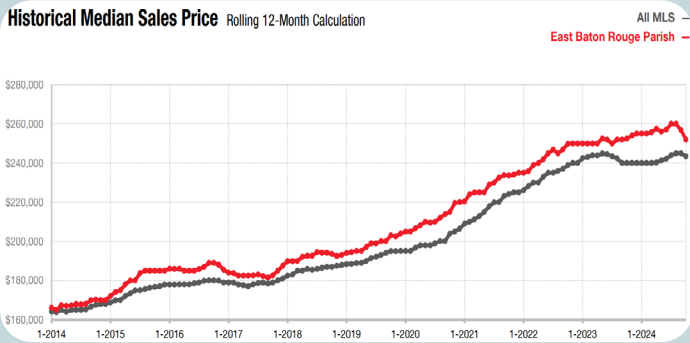
	2022	2023	2024
<b>Single Family</b>	866 (42%)	806 (51%)	761 (64%)
<b>Townhouse</b>	333 (16%)	80 (5%)	219 (19%)
<b>Condo/Apt</b>	848 (41%)	703 (44%)	203 (17%)

Source: EBRPGIS

**Housing Affordability**

The graph on the left shows the historical median sales price of East Baton Rouge Parish compared to the Greater Baton Rouge metropolitan statistical area over 10 years. Both East Baton Rouge Parish and the MSA are on a decreasing trend. However, the Parish median price is slightly higher at \$259,900 compared to \$255,000 of the Greater Baton Rouge Metro Area. According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2023 ACS 1-year estimates, the median household income for East Baton Rouge Parish is \$59,443 and \$64,500 for the Baton Rouge Metro Area.

Source: The Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors



Historical Median Sales Price rolling 12-Month Calculation. Current as of November 10, 2024. Source: The Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors

## Accomplishment

### Cypress At Ardendale Development Receives \$2.5M Federal Grant

The East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority (EBRPHA) and the BR Choice Neighborhood Transportation Plan was awarded a \$2.5 million grant by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to revitalize 200 acres of land between Florida Boulevard and Greenwell Springs Road. The grant will restore three neighborhoods in North Baton Rouge, creating the Cypress at Ardendale neighborhood which is a part of the Ardendale Master Plan. EBRPHA plans to use the funding to expand high-quality mixed-income housing opportunities and support services for families. The grant funding is instrumental in completing all four phases of the Cypress Ardendale community, which includes more than 430 homes over the next few years. Construction on Phase I of the project is expected to be completed by the end of the year and welcome about 170 families in 2025. Phase II, which is set to open in 2026, will allocate 70 homes for senior living. Phase III and IV will open later and will establish 134 and 60 homes, respectively. The remaining phases will continue until the community development is seen to completion. The development is anticipated to transform the area and attract more than \$330 million in investments.

Source: *The Advocate*; *BRProud*

### Metro Council Approves \$6 Million in Funding for Affordable Housing Projects

The East Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council approved funding for six different housing projects totaling over \$6 million. The housing projects include Hotel Lincoln Housing Development, the Villas at Mohican near Plank Road, the Dayton Street Housing Development, the Melrose IV Housing Development, the 1335 North Residences Project at the Historic Prince Hall Masonic Temple and the Melrose III Housing Development. The Villas at Mohican is expected to start in March 2025 with and plan to have it ready for residents to move in by the middle of 2026. The rent will be based on the area’s median income. This investment will help reduce poverty and strengthen neighborhoods that are lagging behind the Parish as a whole. According to a study done by the Housing First Alliance, 3,500 East Baton Rouge Parish residents need housing assistance and 900 are at risk of homelessness every year.

Source: *The Advocate*

AARP Livability Score

Housing Category

Affordability and access

52

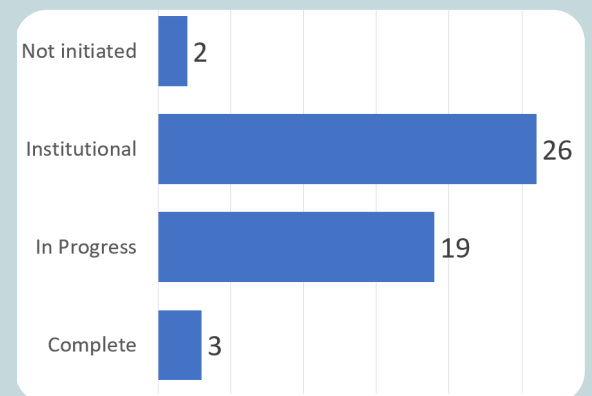
### PROGRESS MADE

#### Key Accomplishment

Cypress at Ardendale Development Receives \$2.5M Federal Grant

Metro Council Approves 6M in Funding for Affordable Housing

### ACTION ITEMS



Rendering of Cypress at Ardendale

## PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS

1. Increase quality of existing parks, access to parks and recreation facilities, and diversity of programs.
2. Improve and expand pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails to promote active recreation and to provide better connections to parks.
3. Expand the City-Parish's nature parks while providing educational and recreational opportunities to Parish residents.

Total Element Objectives - 7

Total Element Action Items - 27

### Principal Lead Agencies

Office of the Mayor-President  
BREC



Map of BREC's Freedom Heritage Trail  
Source: BREC.org

## PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

The purpose of this element is to establish programs for land and natural resource conservation and management, to promote BREC's priority actions. A high quality system of parks and recreation resources provides a multitude of community benefits: protecting our environment, preserving wildlife habitat, strengthening local economies, attracting new businesses, contributing to the local tax base, increasing property values, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

### Indicators

#### Park Amenities and Walkability to Parks

According to the Trust for Public Land 2024 ParkScore, the City of Baton Rouge is ranked of 62 out of the 100 largest cities. Baton Rouge has a large number of 'destination' parks, which include large natural areas and make up a large part of the acreage devoted to parks. Fifty-two percent of Baton Rouge residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park and fifty-four percent of low-income residents and children ages 0-19 live within a 10-minute walk of a park. Residents in neighborhoods of color have access to nine percent more park space than the city's average neighborhood and 47% more than those in white neighborhoods.

Source: The Trust for Public Land

#### Economic Benefit of BREC Parks

The Trust for Public Land's Economic Benefits of BREC Parks report estimates the value of the park system's economic benefits. Parish residents that use BREC parks and trails to meet all 150 minutes of weekly physical activity recommended by the CDC avoid over eight million dollars in healthcare costs each year. This translates to an annual cost savings of \$1,360 per year for parish residents 18 to 64 and \$2,720 for adults 65 and over. When accounting for what people pay in access fees and the time they invest traveling to such spaces, The Trust for Public Land found that BREC's parks provide \$280 million in recreational use value every year.

Source: The Trust for Public Land Park Serve "The Economic Benefits of BREC Park" report

## Accomplishments

### The Lakes Master Plan

A partnership between LSU, State, and local partners began the process for revitalizing the LSU lakes in 2016. This year the Master Plan was finalized. The team was led by the SWA Group, an international landscape architecture, planning, and urban design firm, with Biohabitats, a multi-disciplinary design firm, to create a plan using concepts that create a sustainable open space. The “Build Your Own Park” charrette provided community members the opportunity to learn about challenges of restoring the health of the lakes as well as contributing to the planning process. The final master plan includes strategies for habitat enhancement and ecological restoration, which will improve the lakes as an open space asset.

### BREC's Freedom Heritage Trail Ground Breaking

Crews broke ground on BREC's Freedom Heritage Trail, a project that will connect north and south Baton Rouge. According to officials, the six-mile trail will run from Memorial Stadium to BREC's Scotlandville Parkway Park. The trail will have a mix of side paths, bike boulevards, and off-road multi-use trails. The project's name was voted on by community stakeholders. BREC officials said the trail played a huge role in the Civil Rights Movement when students from Southern University marched from their campus to the state capitol in 1960 to protest segregation. The Freedom Heritage Trail is being federally funded through the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

### BREC's Zoo Grand Opening

BREC'S Baton Rouge Zoo held a grand opening to unveil a new entrance, 11 renovated exhibits, 11 new buildings, and seven new exhibits. These renovations will give guests a more immersive experience. While each area had been previously separated by species, now they are separated by geographical location. BREC also updated the Kid's Zoo and Playground with new equipment.

### Imagine Your Parks 3

In 2004 BREC began an effort that would culminate in the first Imagine Your Park Plan. This public outreach resulted in community park with splash pads, dog parks, and more walking trails. Ten years later they updated that plan again named Imagine Your Parks 3: Parks with Purpose and began reimagining the Baton Rouge Zoo and community parks. In this update BREC hopes to get input on how best to replace and renovate some of the older park facilities and infrastructure throughout the parish.

Trust for Public Land  
ParkScore

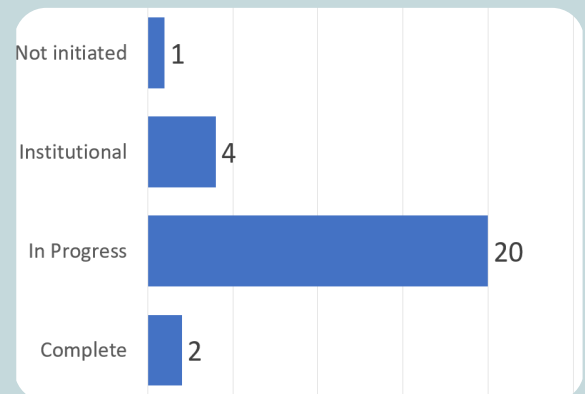
62

### PROGRESS MADE

#### Key Accomplishment

The Lakes Master Plan  
BREC's Freedom Heritage Trail Ground Breaking  
BREC's Zoo Grand Opening  
Imagine Your Parks 3

#### ACTION ITEMS



Lakes Master Plan and rendering  
Source: University Lakes Project.org



Source: BREC

## ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION GOALS

1. Preserve and enhance environmental assets.
2. Protect watersheds, wetlands, and floodplains.
3. Improve and protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater.
4. Preserve and restore the tree canopy.
5. Improve air quality to meet or exceed national ambient air quality standards.
6. Protect, preserve and enhance land resources and natural features.

Total Element Objectives - 16

Total Element Action Items - 68

### Principal Lead Agencies

Office of the Mayor-President

BREC

Baton Rouge Green

Development

Environmental Services

Transportation and Drainage



Brownfields Redevelopment Summit hosted in August 2024

## ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The purpose of this element is to provide recommendations that will protect and conserve the environmental assets of the City-Parish and to foster a green, active, ecologically diverse and economically sound community.

### Indicator

#### Air Quality Index

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) compiles an annual summary of Air Quality Index (AQI) values for geographic areas that center on an urban place and adjacent areas that are socioeconomically tied to it by commuting. AQI takes into account all of the air pollutants measured within. As stakeholders in Baton Rouge minimize air pollutant emissions from mobile and stationary sources, the AQI for the parish is steadily improving. The EPA has established five categories for daily AQI: *Good, Moderate, Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, Unhealthy* and *Very Unhealthy*. At the end of October 2024, 137 good days, 131 moderate days and 6 unhealthy days for sensitive populations were recorded.

## Accomplishments

### Climate Pollution Reduction Grant

The Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC) received \$1 million as part of the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant from EPA. CRPC has successfully delivered phase 1, which is the Prioritized Climate Action (March 2024). Currently, CRPC is developing a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan focused on best practices based on public outreach and engagement. This plan is estimated to be completed by June 2025, and the final deliverable "status report" is scheduled to be completed by June 2026.

### Brownfields Assessment Grant Progress

The City-Parish received a Brownfields Assessment Grant from EPA and has begun with assessment, clean-up and redevelopment of brownfield sites in target areas of Plank Road, Scotlandville and Mid-City. The brownfields program has several sites enrolled, including an old gas station and vacant lots. Some of the reuses include affordable housing and a restaurant. Remediating these sites helps to prevent further pollution and utilizes the land for productive uses. A Brownfields Redevelopment Summit and two open houses to involve the community were hosted this year. The Brownfields Advisory Committee continues to meet.

### Water Management in Parks

Water management is one of the primary goals of BREC's master plan, Imagine Your Parks 3, which was completed and adopted this year. The plan calls for increasing the capacity of BREC parks to manage stormwater and contribute to regional flood solutions through green infrastructure and innovative design. Key components of this recommendation include:

- Assessment of existing drainage systems
- Design of vegetated swales suitable for local conditions
- Removal of concrete structures; installation of vegetated swales
- Development of maintenance guidelines
- Staff training on swale maintenance
- Monitoring of swale performance over time

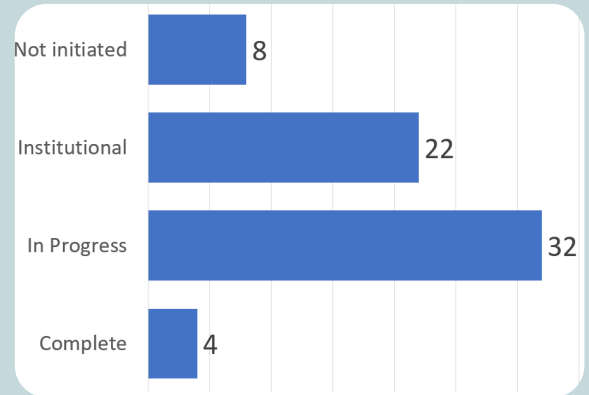
**AARP Livability Score**  
**Environment Category**  
*Clean air and water*

60

### PROGRESS MADE

**Key Accomplishment**  
**Climate Pollution Reduction Grant**  
**Brownfields Assessment Grant Progress**  
**Water Management in Parks**

### ACTION ITEMS



## INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

1. Collect wastewater and provide effective treatment in an efficient, reliable, sustainable and environmentally sound manner.
2. Reduce the impact of flooding.
3. Improve the drainage system to improve water quality.
4. Public buildings should be sustainability constructed, strategically located and comprehensively planned.

Total Element Objectives - 16

Total Element Action Items - 47

### Principal Lead Agencies

**Mayor's Office**

**Building and Grounds**

**Environmental Services**

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The purpose of this element is to provide an overview and assessment of the current City-Parish wastewater, drainage, drinking water and public buildings. The core values and aspirations of the Vision developed for FUTUREBR were used as the framework for developing recommendations for the City-Parish Infrastructure Element.

### Indicator

#### Community Rating System

A goal of the Infrastructure Element is to “reduce the risk of flooding to existing and future structures.” A proxy for measuring the progress on this goal is the Parish’s score on the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS is a voluntary program for National Flood Insurance Program participating communities; the score is based on the measures the community has implemented to provide protection from flooding with the lower number reflecting more activities implemented to reduce the risk of flooding. Communities with a 1 rating have the strongest floodplain management initiatives. In 2024, East Baton Rouge Parish was classified as a 6.

Parish	CRS Score
East Baton Rouge	6
Terrebonne	9
Orleans	7
Lafayette	7
Ascension	7

Source: Source: FEMA Community Rating, 2024

<https://www.fema.gov/floodplain-management/community-rating-system>

## Accomplishments

### Cleaning Waterways

Crews worked to clean out waterways in Baton Rouge in 2024. Work has commenced on the Amite River from East Feliciana to Ascension Parish, including in East Baton Rouge Parish. Debris has been pulled from Bayou Fountain, Jones Creek, Claycut Bayou, and Elbow Bayou. Dawson Creek has also been addressed, with the assistance of American Rescue Plan dollars. The Army Corps of Engineers worked on clearing and snagging Ward Creek as part of the East Baton Rouge Parish Flood Risk Reduction project. These projects follow the removal of debris from the Comite River last year.

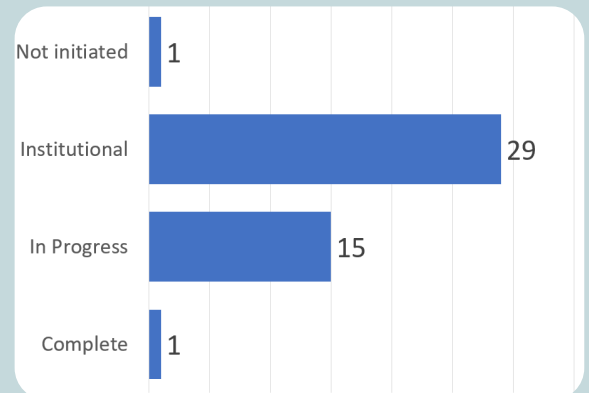
### Interstate 10 Widening

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) is currently working on a project to improve Interstate 10 in Baton Rouge. The project began in 2023. The goal is to widen I-10 from three to four lanes in each direction, improve safety and reduce traffic congestion. There are two segments, Segment 1 and Segment 2. Segment 1 is currently underway and covers the area from Highway 415 in West Baton Rouge Parish to the I-10/I-12 split.

### PROGRESS MADE

#### Key Accomplishment Army Corps Clearing and Snagging I-10 Widening

### ACTION ITEMS



The photo above shows dredging of Ward Creek  
Source: Amite River Basin Drainage & Water Conservation District

**PUBLIC SERVICES GOALS**

1. Provide efficient, effective, and coordinated services to the public.
2. Enable persons to have healthy and satisfying lives in a comfortable and safe natural environment.
3. Support an educational system which consists of academically and financially strong and stable schools.
4. Increase the sustainability of the Parish of East Baton Rouge and enhance the long term viability of the Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Total Element Objectives - 18

Total Element Action Items - 75

**Principal Lead Agencies**

***Office of the Mayor-President***

***MOHSEP***

***East Baton Rouge Parish School Board***

***East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office***

**PUBLIC SERVICES ELEMENT**

The purpose of this element is to address long term coordination with local, state and federal agencies. Coordinating policies, procedures, and information between agencies prevents duplication of services and efforts thereby ensuring efficiency of customer service and improving citizen access to these services.

**Accomplishments**

**Bloomberg Philanthropies What Works Cities Certification**

Baton Rouge was awarded a Gold Level Bloomberg Philanthropies What Works Cities Certification for establishing exceptional data. What Works Cities Certification sets the standard of excellence in city governance by evaluating how well cities are managed and whether they have the right people, practices and policies in place to put data and evidence at the center of decision-making. It recognizes local governments for their use of data in policy and budgetary processes, service improvements, program evaluation, and community engagement. Baton Rouge became one of only 28 cities across the U.S. to achieve a Gold Certification through What Works Cities. Baton Rouge was recognized for its commitment to using data and analytics to improve its services, specifically in areas such as blight remediation, public safety, stormwater, and drainage. Efforts included a focus on improving cybersecurity, enhancing data management and decision-making in public services, upgrading telecommunications infrastructure, and continued expansion of the Open Data BR and GIS programs.

*Source: Mayor's Office*

**City-Parish GIS Property Ownership Lookup Tool**

The City-Parish GIS (Geographic Information Systems) created a mapping tool to assist the public in looking up the ownership of properties throughout the parish. This was due, in large part, to the numerous requests for information on property ownership. This is just one more tool that the City-Parish provides as we work towards using technology to make the lives and business of our citizens more informed and convenient.



*Source: City-Parish website*

### Head Start Restart

Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome introduced The "Head Start Restart" initiative. This is a partnership with LaForce, a 501(c) (3) organization which will manage three additional early childhood facilities, which will expand access to an additional 280 children. This will allow the East Baton Rouge Head Start program to provide expanded offerings, including before- and after-school care to support working families. The final phase of the "Head Start Restart" initiative includes a proposed salary increase for Head Start teachers, teacher's aides, and case managers.

Source: Mayor's Office

### Reallocation of Funding for Community Improvements

The Metropolitan Council approved reallocation of \$2,557,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. This reallocation will be utilized in accordance with the U.S. Treasury guidelines under the negative economic impacts and revenue loss expenditure category, allowing these funds to be used for general government services impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency. "This reallocation of ARPA funds ensures that we maximize the use of federal dollars to benefit our community, saving local funds while addressing urgent needs," said Mayor Broome.

Source: Mayor's Office

### Digital City Ranking

Baton Rouge ranks third amongst mid-sized cities, marking a notable increase from its previous tenth place recognition. The City-Parish's ranking reflects its continued efforts to leverage data, technology, and digital innovation to modernize systems, streamline operations, promote digital transparency, and deliver more effective services to the residents of East Baton Rouge Parish.

The Center for Digital Government — a national research and advisory institute focused on IT best practices and policies within state and local government — distributes the comprehensive Digital Cities Survey to U.S. cities, towns, villages, and consolidated city-county governments to assess data and technology programs, policies, and initiatives. The Top 10 Digital City rankings recognize cities that effectively implement best practices, leverage digital experiences for employees and constituents, and actively work to enhance and expand their use of data and technology.

Source: brla.gov

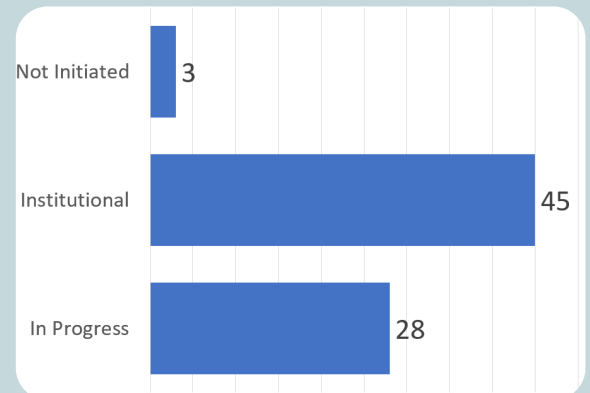
**AARP Livability Score**  
**Engagement Category**  
 Civic and social engagement

56

#### PROGRESS MADE

- Key Accomplishment**
- Bloomberg Philanthropies What Works Cities Certification
- Property Ownership Lookup Tool
- Head Start Restart
- Reallocation of Funding for Community Improvements

#### ACTION ITEMS



Source: Govtech.com

## Planning Commission Staff

Ryan Holcomb, AICP, Planning Director  
Vance Baldwin, PLA CFM, Assistant Planning Director  
Glenn Hanna, Planning Project Coordinator  
Annette Chambliss, Executive Assistant  
Donna Bennett, Senior Clerical Specialist

Jasmine Thomas, AICP, Long Range Planning Manager  
Caroline Marse, Planner II  
Osa Marie Hopkins, Administrative Specialist I

Don Arellano, Senior Planner  
Yulonda Derrick, Senior Planner  
Mashanka Taylor, Senior Administrative Specialist  
Ablenell Smith, Administrative Specialist

Blanca Azucena Tejera, ICC, Site Plan and Plats Manager  
Jeremy Gremillion, Planner II

Others Involved in the Annual Report  
Justin Priola, Data, Analytics, and Performance Manager

Special Thanks to Parish Attorney's Office  
Deane Frazier, Special Assistant Parish Attorney

**Coordinated by the Long Range Planning Division**