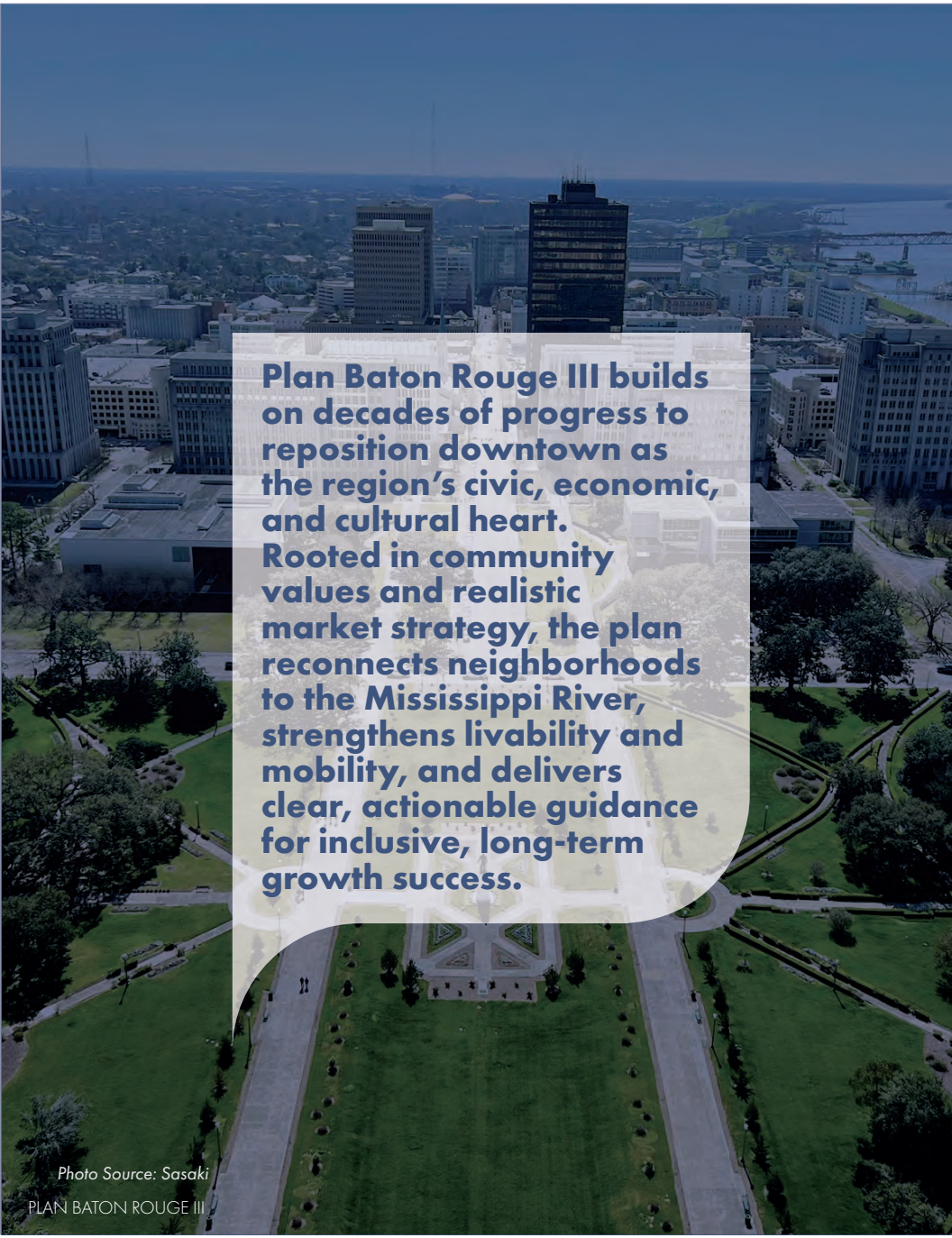


PLAN BR III

**PLAN BATON
ROUGE III**
2026



Table of Contents



Plan Baton Rouge III builds on decades of progress to reposition downtown as the region's civic, economic, and cultural heart. Rooted in community values and realistic market strategy, the plan reconnects neighborhoods to the Mississippi River, strengthens livability and mobility, and delivers clear, actionable guidance for inclusive, long-term growth success.

Photo Source: Sasaki

PLAN BATON ROUGE III

00. Executive Summary	06
01. Introduction	30
Regional Context	32
Downtown Study Area	34
What is a Downtown Masterplan?	36
Plan Baton Rouge I & II	38
Project Process	40
Shaping a Downtown Vision	42
Engagement Overview	44
02. Downtown Baton Rouge Today	48
Key Analysis Takeaways	46
History	52
People	62
Market	72
Land	80
Links	90
Character	98
03. Plan Baton Rouge III Vision	110
Community Aspirations	112
Plan Baton Rouge III Recommendations	114
Plan Baton Rouge III Framework Plan	116
Guiding Principles	118
Character Areas	140
Recommendation Summary	172
04. Implementation Guidance	192
Approach to PBR III Implementation Guidance	194
Organizing for Action	196
Funding Tools and Strategies	200
Community Priorities	204
Prioritization & Phasing Methodology	206
Tiered Recommendations	210
Goals & Metrics	212
Tier 1: Catalyze	216
Strategic Site Explorations	262

Master Plan Recognition

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, energy, and passion to shaping this vision for the future of Downtown Baton Rouge. This master plan would not have been possible without the insights and involvement of the community, as well as the support of the following groups and individuals:

BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

- Chris Meyer, President and CEO
- [Eric Dexter, Vice President of Civic Leadership \(Co-Chair\)](#)
- Sarah Gardner, Vice President of Communications

CLIENT REPRESENTATIVE

- Rachel DiResto (Emergent Method)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Council Member
- Carolyn Coleman
- Donna Collins-Lewis
- [Helena Cunningham](#)
- Charlie Davis
- Mark Drennen
- [Marty Engquist](#)
- Patrick Goldsmith
- [Todd Graves](#)
- Whitney Hoffman Sayal
- Ryan Holcomb
- Jessica Kemp
- Jill Kidder
- Kelly LeDuff
- Camille Manning-Broome
- Lori Melancon
- Nial Patel
- Jake Polansky
- Reed Richard
- Theo Richard
- Deidre Robert
- Dennis Shields
- Rob Stuart
- Casey Tate
- Anne Villa
- [Mike Wampold, III](#)

COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP

- Darlene Adams Rowland
- Sinella Aghasi
- Roy Alston
- Jeff Anding
- David Beach
- Jeremy Beyt
- Rex Cabanis
- Adam Chapman
- Renee Chatelain
- Joey Coco
- Meagan Collman Wick
- David Facey
- Senator Franklin Foil
- Jeremy Fontenot
- Edmund Giering
- Jeffrey Gober
- Patrick Gremillion
- Jonathan Grimes
- Jessica Guinn
- Ashlyn Harrison
- Sherreta Harrison
- Cordell Haymon
- Kendra Hendricks
- Scott Hensgens
- Nicole Hobson-Morris
- Raymond Jetson
- Beaux Jones
- Gary Jupiter
- Brandon Kelly
- Mahalie Kyzar
- Matthew Laborde
- Charles Landry
- Josh Landry
- Luke Lognion
- Lauralyan Maranto
- Kim Marousek

- State Representative Dixon McMakin
- Julio Melara
- Jude Melville
- Marlee Miller
- Patrick Mulhearn
- Kenny Nguyen
- Les Nicholson
- Adonica Pelichet-Duggan
- Enrique Pinerua
- Jennie Reilly
- Claude Reynaud
- Janet Simmons
- Priscilla Simpson
- John Snow
- Karen Soniat
- Chuck Spicer
- Luke St. John McKnight
- Ebony Starks
- Mary Stein
- Tommy Talley
- Edgardo Tenreiro
- Judi Terzotis
- Boo Thomas
- Tracy Tullier
- Suzanne Turner
- Brad Watts
- Jennifer Winstead
- Bruce Woods
- Amber Wroten

CONSULTANT TEAM

- Sasaki
- JLP+D
- Franklin Associates
- Trahan Architects
- Vectura Consulting
- CSRS

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

- Baton Rouge Area Foundation
- Downtown Development District
- Visit Baton Rouge
- B1 Bank
- Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership
- City of Baton Rouge
- State of Louisiana
- Capital Area Finance Authority
- Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge
- Kean | Miller
- Baton Rouge General
- Raising Cane's
- Wampold Companies
- Marty and John Engquist



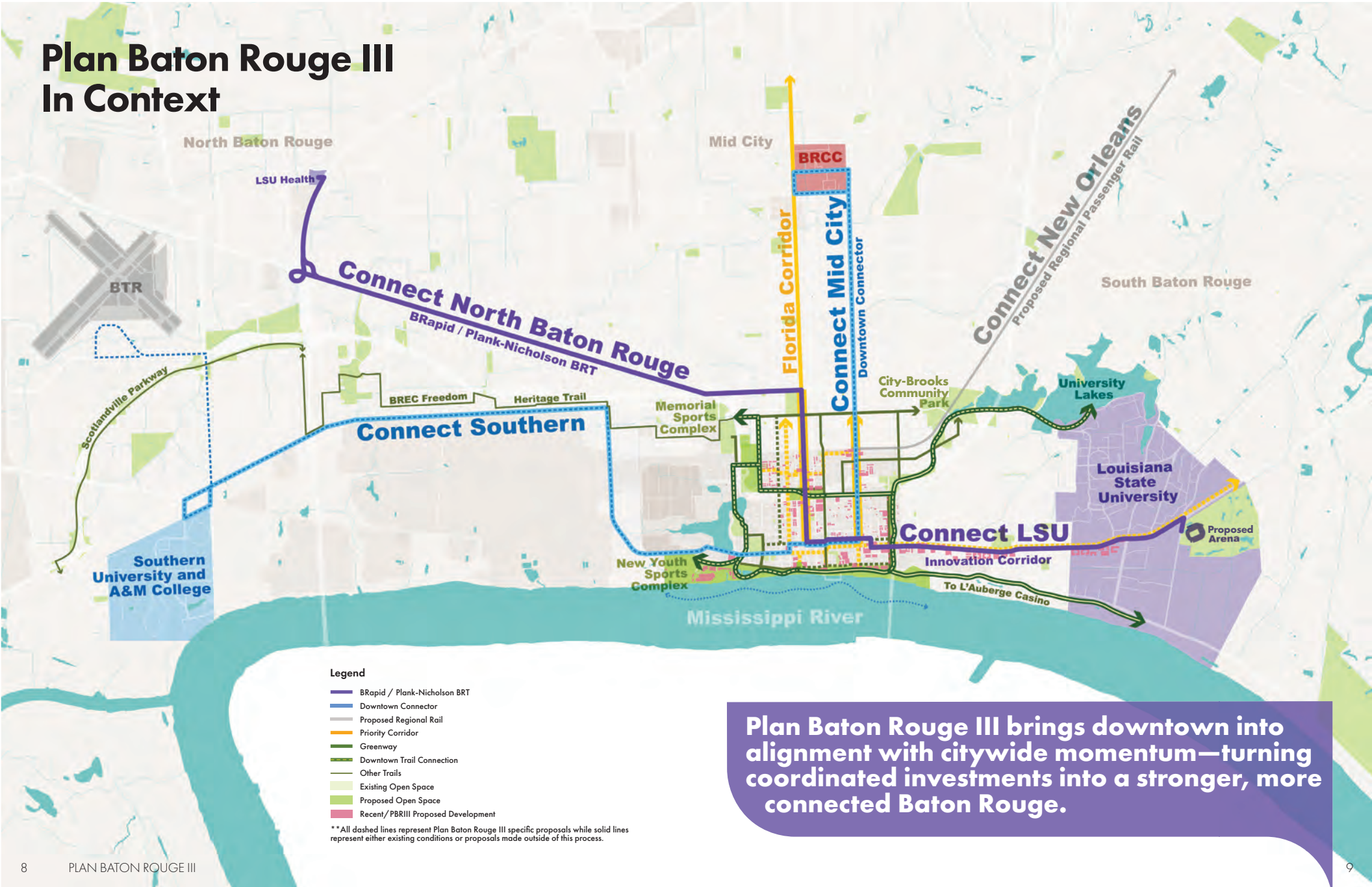
Photo Source: Sasaki



00 Executive Summary

Plan Baton Rouge III represents the next generation in a sustained continuum of downtown planning, building on the foundations established by Plan Baton Rouge I and II. It advances an integrated, inclusive, and forward-looking vision that responds to today's economic, social, and urban challenges.

Plan Baton Rouge III In Context



Plan Baton Rouge III brings downtown into alignment with citywide momentum—turning coordinated investments into a stronger, more connected Baton Rouge.

Foundational Insights

We used six lenses—History, People, Market, Land, Links, and Character—to create a clear and holistic framework for understanding Downtown Baton Rouge. Each lens reveals a different dimension of how downtown functions today: its origins and urban evolution; who lives, works, and visits; how economic forces shape growth; how land and natural systems influence opportunity; how mobility and barriers affect access; and how built forms and neighborhood identity define experience. Together, these lenses organize complex data into an integrated picture, grounding the master plan in a comprehensive understanding of downtown’s challenges and potential.



History

Downtown Baton Rouge contains a rich and layered history that grounds communities and physical elements in place. By intentionally revealing, celebrating, and connecting the stories of the communities that shaped the city, downtown can become a stronger platform for sharing these stories and a more desirable destination for learning about the region’s history and culture. *Photo Source: The Historic New Orleans Collection.*



People

Downtown’s low residential population signals opportunity. By expanding housing choices, strengthening everyday amenities, and cultivating a true neighborhood feel, Downtown Baton Rouge can become a welcoming place to live for all. Leveraging its strong network of civic champions creates a clear path to activate investment, build momentum, and deliver lasting change. *Photo Source: Downtown Development District.*



Market

Current market conditions present a call to action. With limited pent-up demand, Downtown Baton Rouge has the opportunity to make the market—using strategic investment, catalytic projects, and coordinated leadership to establish downtown as the region’s primary hub and social district across all market sectors. *Photo Source: Downtown Development District.*



Land

Downtown’s riverfront and green spaces are untapped assets. By better connecting and activating these areas, we can unlock their economic, social, and ecological potential—turning open space and natural ecosystems into vibrant destinations that define the city’s identity. *Photo Source: Sasaki*



Links

Downtown’s riverfront, green spaces, cultural hubs, and amenities are currently disconnected, presenting a prime opportunity to create a cohesive network. By linking trails, pedestrian crossings, transit, and nearby institutions like LSU, BRCC, and Southern, we can make downtown more accessible, navigable, and vibrant—unlocking its full economic, social, and ecological potential. *Photo Source: Sasaki.*



Character

Downtown’s distinct neighborhoods, character areas, and underutilized land present a unique opportunity to drive tailored, place-based growth. By leveraging the identity and strengths of each area, we can create diverse solutions that enhance cultural vitality, economic opportunity, and the overall experience of the city. *Photo Source: Sasaki.*

Plan Baton Rouge III Guiding Principles

A NEW FRONT PORCH

Establish a front porch mentality along the riverfront with destination park spaces and complementary land uses.

MARKET DIVERSITY

Introduce new economic anchors to diversify downtown's economy and catalyze public and private investment with a suite of easy to access economic tools.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLACES

Create a network of neighborhood nodes that provide daily life amenities, other active uses, and enhanced public realm to establish a more blended land use pattern and increased residential population.

CIVIC + CULTURAL SPINE

Create a unifying network within downtown to tie all historic and cultural amenities together through improved connectivity and intentional storytelling.

CLEAR CONNECTIONS, INSIDE + OUT

Connect to nearby neighborhoods, amenities, and institutions while creating a clear mobility network within downtown.



How Do We Measure Success?

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are measurable metrics used to track whether a plan's vision and guiding principles are becoming real outcomes. For Plan Baton Rouge III, they connect big ideas to specific recommendations by providing clear benchmarks to monitor progress, guide decisions, and adjust strategies over time. By establishing baselines and targets, KPIs promote accountability and help communicate progress to stakeholders and the public.

A New Front Porch

KPIs

- Activate 15% of the downtown riverfront with commercial uses.
- Activate 20% of the downtown riverfront with community gathering uses.
- Provide shade from the sun for at least 60% of the downtown riverfront zone.
- Provide pedestrian access to the riverfront zone from Downtown Baton Rouge at least every 1,000 feet between the Capitol and the I-10 bridge.
- Add 1,000 housing units to the downtown riverfront and 400 key hotel rooms.

Market Diversity

- Triple the downtown residential population within 10 years to over 10,000 residents.
- Establish at least three new anchor industries within downtown.
- Establish two new academic functions within downtown.
- Land at least two company headquarters to relocate into downtown.
- Add 10,000 jobs to the downtown area.

Neighborhood Places

- Ensure over 50% downtown residents live within a 5-minute walk of basic needs and daily-life amenities.
- Establish 5 new mixed-use public realm nodes throughout downtown; strengthen and diversify 2 existing nodes.
- Establish 3 new concentrated residential density nodes within downtown with 300+ units each.
- Decrease commercial vacancy within downtown by 50% (from 5.3% to 2.65%).
- Decrease retail vacancy within downtown by 50% (from 4.57% to 2.35%).
- Improve family amenities, including adding a K-12 school in downtown.

Civic and Cultural Spine

- Link all historic and cultural assets in downtown through a clear route with distinct branding that can be accessed on foot and via special-purpose transit. Increase tourist activity downtown by 25%.
- Improve the ecological conditions and accessibility of the Capitol Lake and increase visitorship by 25%.
- Capitalize on the presence of multiple museums downtown to create a cohesive Museum District. Increase visitorship and number of events by 50%.
- Develop downtown as a destination for cultural and entertainment events.

Clear Connections

- Establish a network of 3 pedestrian priority streets to improve the downtown experience.
- Expanding the downtown greenway network by adding 6 new green corridors and bike lanes to improve accessibility via active modes.
- Improve transit access and strengthen the transit link to LSU. Increase transit commuters to downtown to 10%, focusing on students.
- Improve public safety perceptions in downtown and increase nighttime activity.
- Reduce surface parking to 5% of downtown while ensuring adequate parking capacity.

Recommendation Summary

A NEW FRONT PORCH

- R-01** Establish a Riverfront Incentive Overlay District for active ground floors, density incentives, and public space.
- R-02** Establish a Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy to guide activation and maintenance of riverfront spaces.
- R-03** Enhance the Riverfront Promenade with shade, trees, seating, and wayfinding.
- R-04** Develop high-density riverfront housing south of River Center between S River Road and the levee.
- R-05** Build “The Great Park” with a large children’s playground and stepped riverfront lawn.
- R-06** Develop a riverfront sports and recreation hub focused on youth sports.
- R-07** Create a “Riverfront Loop” with mixed-use development, housing, cafes, and an elevated pedestrian path.
- R-08** Develop “The Porch” promenade with shade, seating, and boardwalks along the riverfront.
- R-09** Build a riverfront entertainment hub with events, hotel, housing, and food options.
- R-10** Add passive landscapes and nature play in Desoto Park with shade, seating, and walking paths.
- R-11** Build a pedestrian bridge linking the State Capitol Complex and Capitol Lake to the riverfront.

MARKET DIVERSITY

- M-01** Expand the River Center Convention Center with flexible spaces and modern amenities.
- M-02** Develop a vibrant mixed-use hub at River Center that brings together retail, a music venue, and a cultural or arts destination.
- M-03** Build multifamily housing along Nicholson Drive for students and workforce populations.
- M-04** Create a Student Housing Hub at the former Department of Public Safety and Corrections with modern residential units and amenities.
- M-05** Develop a TIF strategy around priority corridors and nodes with retail incentives, grants, and rent stabilization.
- M-06** Reinvest in Main Street as a small business corridor with small business grants and rental assistance.
- M-07** Create a Targeted Downtown Development Assistance (TDAT) team for marketing, site selection, financing, and permitting.
- M-08** Bolster the DDD Development Toolkit with pre-approved plans, streamlined permitting, and incentives.

MARKET DIVERSITY, CONT'D

- M-09** Develop the proposed “GUMBO” student food hub along South Boulevard with activated spaces under interstate.
- M-10** Develop a health and wellness hub at the former Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired.
- M-11** Expand the LSU Innovation Park with incubator and maker spaces supporting startups, collaboration, and innovation.
- M-12** Create a Downtown Business Accelerator Program with LSU, Southern, and BRCC.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLACES

- N-01** Create a Missing Middle Housing Toolkit with guidance, pre-approved plans, and other resources.
- N-02** Establish a Downtown Housing Navigator Program to assist with site selection, incentives, and permitting.
- N-03** Support local business activation along Main Street and 3rd Street with events and pop-ups.
- N-04** Reinvest in Government Street with mixed-use housing and commercial / retail.
- N-05** Incentivize missing middle housing across downtown neighborhoods.
- N-06** Coordinate a downtown activation strategy with year-round events and programming.
- N-07** Celebrate the unique character of downtown neighborhoods with localized programming and public space activation.
- N-08** Build a housing hub near the old post office and proposed K-12 school.
- N-09** Build mixed-income housing in the proposed Downtown East Block Step Neighborhood.
- N-10** Adaptively reuse the old post office as a K-12 school.
- N-11** Create the “Block Step Neighborhood Community Park” with playgrounds and active/passive recreation.

CULTURAL + CIVIC SPINE

- C-01** Support events like the Downtown Night Market with enhanced programming, infrastructure, and partnerships.
- C-02** Move USS KIDD north next to the Queen Baton Rouge Casino.
- C-03** Create a Beauregard Town Community Heart with adaptive reuse, parks, food, and housing.
- C-04** Establish a Downtown Museum District connecting existing museums and new cultural attractions.

CULTURAL + CIVIC SPINE, CONT'D

- C-05** Create a Downtown Civic Spine linking the State Capitol to Magnolia Mounds with art and wayfinding.
- C-06** Create a “Somerulus Arts District” celebrating local artists with live/work studios and monthly programming.
- C-07** Expand Live After 5 programming with improved infrastructure and vendor partnerships.
- C-08** Fund year-round arts, festivals, performances, and public cultural programming.
- C-09** Grow the Red Stick Farmers Market with more vendors, infrastructure, and local product promotion.
- C-10** Support the Civil Rights Trail with signage, preservation, and educational programming.
- C-11** Enhance historic storytelling with signage, interpretation, and promotion of local heritage.
- C-12** Support the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame Museum and Cultural Center at Lincoln Theater.
- C-13** Remediate Capitol Lake with landscaping, accessible paths, seating, and improved habitats.
- C-14** Activate Capitol Gardens as an accessible, welcoming civic and public space.
- C-15** Establish a downtown wayfinding with clear, accessible, and consistent signage for all users.

CLEAR CONNECTIONS

- T-01** Complete the Florida Street/Nicholson Drive BRT to LSU with stations, infrastructure, and signal priority.
- T-02** Create the Main Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-03** Create the Government Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-04** Study converting downtown east-west one-way streets to two-way for flow, safety, and connectivity.
- T-05** Create the Downtown Connector bus linking Mid City to Southern University with frequent, safe service.
- T-06** Develop the Government Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.
- T-07** Create the N 3rd Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-08** Develop the Main Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.
- T-09** Remove Laurel Street between Lafayette Street and S River Road.
- T-10** Support active, safe, well-lit spaces under interstates for recreation, art, and community events.
- T-11** Complete the Downtown Greenway on Spanish Town Road with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.
- T-12** Develop the Nicholson Drive Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.

CLEAR CONNECTIONS, CONT'D

- T-13** Build a downtown transit hub linking the Downtown Connector and BRT with accessible, coordinated facilities.
- T-14** Support Complete Streets improvements with sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, lighting, and landscaping.
- T-15** Implement a road diet on South Boulevard between St. Ferdinand Street and S. River Road.
- T-16** Complete the Downtown Greenway along River Road with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.
- T-17** Develop the Florida Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.
- T-18** Create the S 14th Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-19** Support the Downtown Greenway on Louisiana Avenue with enhanced seating and landscaping.
- T-20** Create the N 13th to N 12th Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-21** Create the St Louis Street to Nicholson Drive priority corridor with wider sidewalks, better crossings, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-22** Develop a downtown curb-management policy coordinating loading, parking, and rideshare.
- T-23** Create the Florida Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-24** Create a unified downtown parking system with signage, tech, and improved access.
- T-25** Study removing underused downtown interstate ramps to improve traffic, safety, and connectivity.
- T-26** Support TOD at the regional rail station with walkable, mixed-use design.
- T-27** Complete the Downtown Greenway from N 5th Street to Block Step Neighborhood Park (proposed) with trails and landscaping.
- T-28** Complete the Downtown Greenway from Park Boulevard to S 19th Street with bike lanes and landscaping.
- T-29** Complete the Downtown Greenway on Myrtle Avenue with bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.
- T-30** Complete the Downtown Greenway on N 4th and Ferdinand Street with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.
- T-31** Complete the Downtown Greenway on North Street with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.
- T-32** Complete the Downtown Greenway on N 10th Street and under the interstate with trails and bike lanes.
- T-33** Complete the Downtown Greenway from Eddie Robinson Sr Drive to City Brooks Park with trails and landscaping.
- T-34** Complete the Downtown Greenway on South Boulevard with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.

Tiered Recommendations

2026 2028 2030 2032 2034 2036 2038

Tier 1: Catalyze

Tier 1 recommendations are prioritized for early investment and implementation. These recommendations address the goals and principles of Plan Baton Rouge III head on and their early implementation offers the opportunity to catalyze further investment and realize other plan recommendations. They include essential operational programs and structures, key riverfront revitalization projects, and investing in priority corridors.

A New Front Porch: Enhance the Riverfront Promenade with trees, seating, and wayfinding

Market Diversity: Expand the River Center Convention Center

Neighborhood Places: Create a Missing Middle Housing Toolkit

Civic & Cultural Spine: Support downtown events with enhanced programming, infrastructure, etc.

Clear Connections: Complete the Florida Street/ Nicholson Drive BRT to LSU

2040 2042 2044 2046

Select recommendations from each Guiding Principle per tier. See *Chapter 03 Plan Baton Rouge III Vision* for more information.

With dozens of recommendations for achieving the aspirations of the Baton Rouge community and the Plan Baton Rouge III Guiding Principles, insight on prioritization and phasing is necessary to equip plan implementers with a strategy. Plan Baton Rouge III groups these recommendations into three tiers, based on the potential impact of proposed projects and a proposed sequencing of investments. These three tiers describe projects that will catalyze, grow, and evolve different components of downtown. While the tiers establish a strategic order of implementation, projects in later tiers may advance sooner if funding, partnerships, or other opportunities arise, ensuring progress can continue even when higher-priority initiatives face constraints

Tier 2: Grow

Tier 2 recommendations focus on ideas that grow downtown's populations, visitation, and offerings. They include projects and programs that increase housing development, strengthening neighborhood centers and corridors, and developing new attractions that appeal to a variety of types of visitors.

A New Front Porch: Build a riverfront entertainment hub with events, a hotel, housing, etc.

Market Diversity: Create a Targeted Downtown Development Assistance Team (TDAT)

Neighborhood Places: Build a housing hub near the old post office

Civic & Cultural Spine: Create a Beauregard Town Community Heart

Clear Connections: Create the Downtown Connector bus linking Mid City to Southern University

Tier 3: Evolve

Tier 3 recommendations call for ambitious transformation of corridors, nodes, neighborhoods, and other downtown areas. These projects evolve places to meet modern needs and become more viable after earlier catalytic and growth-oriented investments.

A New Front Porch: Build a pedestrian bridge linking the State Capitol Complex and Capitol Lake to the riverfront

Market Diversity: Expand the LSU Innovation Park

Neighborhood Places: Create the "Block Step Neighborhood Community Park"

Civic & Cultural Spine: Remediate Capitol Lake

Clear Connections: Support TOD at the regional rail station



Support downtown as a cultural and entertainment hub.

Improve transit access to LSU and Southern University.

Expand the downtown greenway network.

In the next 10 years...

5,000 new residential units

7,000+ new downtown residents

5,000+ new jobs

\$1.5B+ in early investments envisioned by Plan Baton Rouge III

The images in this chapter represent planning-level concepts for growth and redevelopment within Downtown Baton Rouge. Development of final proposals for each site will require more detailed study of site opportunities and constraints and coordination with individual property owners.

A New Vision for the Future...

New, exciting, and distinctive public spaces that connect people across downtown.

2+ miles of the riverfront is activated with new uses, gathering places, and pedestrian amenities.

A new riverfront identity for downtown, connecting its cultural and civic assets.

80 acres of public realm developed or enhanced across downtown.

...of Downtown Baton Rouge

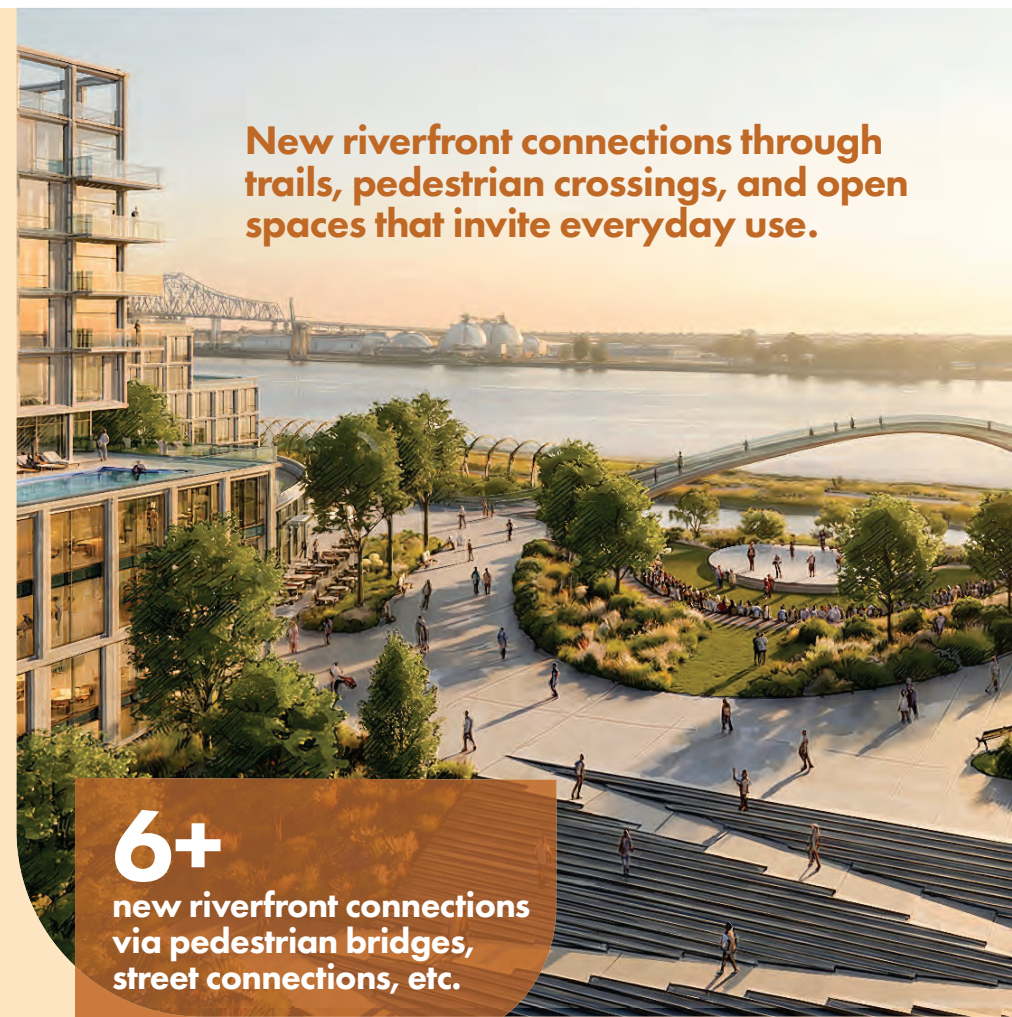


A New Vision for the Future...

7+
new neighborhood centers for community events and gathering.



A focus on neighborhood hubs to anchor daily life, strengthen local identity, and support walkable, connected communities.



New riverfront connections through trails, pedestrian crossings, and open spaces that invite everyday use.

6+
new riverfront connections via pedestrian bridges, street connections, etc.

...of Downtown Baton Rouge

A New Vision for the Future...

40 acres converted space / redevelopment over the next 10-15 years

Adaptive reuse to transform existing buildings into catalysts for resilient, vibrant places.

Strategic infill development to create and enhance downtown's vibrant neighborhoods.



10+ existing structures adaptively reused, including several historic structures.

...of Downtown Baton Rouge





New tournament-scale sports complex along the Mississippi River offer a one-of-a-kind destination for youth sports—working with Memorial Sports Complex and city facilities to create an active, riverfront experience unlike anywhere else in Baton Rouge. A new riverfront music and entertainment venue also establishes a signature gathering place for live music, events, and nightlife along the river.



01

Introduction

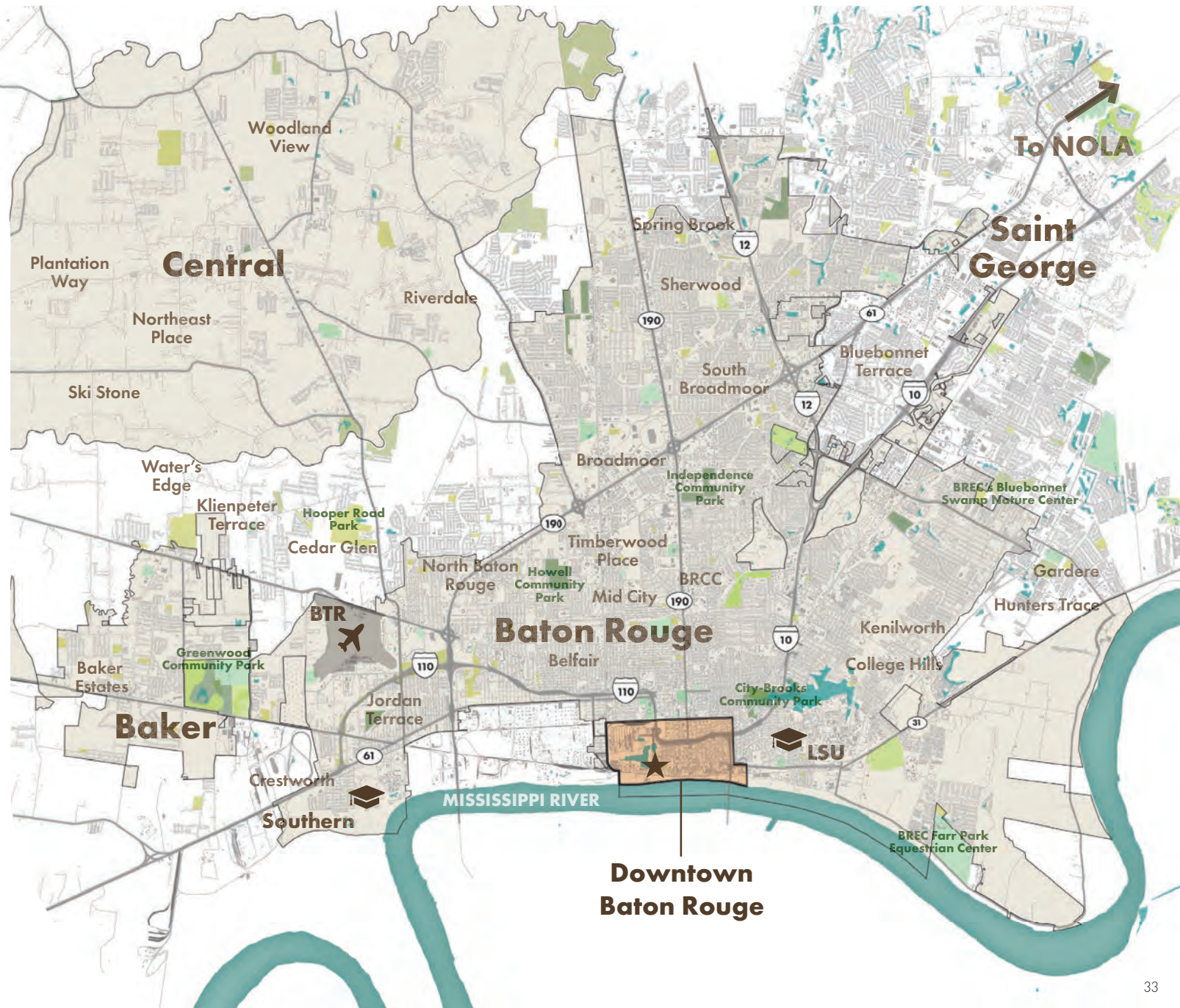
Photo Source: Sasaki

Plan Baton Rouge III builds on the legacy of earlier plans to chart a bold, inclusive vision for Downtown Baton Rouge's next chapter. It establishes a clear strategy to reposition downtown as the civic, economic, and cultural heart of the region, unlocking a new generation of opportunity.

Regional Context

Downtown Baton Rouge occupies a strategic position along a broad bend of the Mississippi River, serving as the civic, governmental, and symbolic heart of Louisiana's capital city. Downtown sits at the western edge of the larger Baton Rouge urban area, directly north of Louisiana State University (LSU) and adjacent to the river's primary port and industrial corridor.

Regional transportation connections—including Interstates 10 and 110—link downtown to New Orleans, regional employment centers, and the broader Gulf Coast. Surrounding neighborhoods such as Mid City, Broadmoor, and Southdowns provide a diverse mix of residential, institutional, and commercial contexts, while Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport and key regional corridors lie within a short driving distance. This central location positions downtown as a natural hub for culture, tourism, employment, and regional identity.



Downtown Study Area

The Downtown Baton Rouge study area encompasses the historic and functional core of the city, extending from the Mississippi River eastward to the Interstate 110 corridor and from the Industrial Park and Capitol Lake area to the north to the Water Campus and Beauregard Town to the south. The area includes Downtown East, the Central Business District, City Center, and the Capitol Area, as well as the neighborhoods of Spanish Town, Beauregard Town, and South Baton Rouge.

Major civic and institutional assets—such as the State Capitol, Capitol Park, several museums, and key state office complexes—anchor the western edge along the river. The study area is shaped by significant transportation infrastructure, including I-110, River Road, and the downtown street grid, and contains a mix of governmental, employment, residential, cultural, and open space uses that define downtown's role as the civic heart of Baton Rouge.

The Plan Baton Rouge III downtown study area matches the boundaries of the Downtown Development District.

1,443 acres
2.25 sq. miles





Why do a Downtown Master Plan?

Cities like Baton Rouge are benefiting enormously from focused and intentional master planning for their downtowns. Downtowns and city centers remain the primary places where civic identity, economic opportunity, and public life converge. A clear, shared vision is essential to guide investment, coordinate public and private action, and articulate what a city aspires to become amid rapid economic, technological, and demographic change. Downtown master plans establish this vision, defining how historic assets, public spaces, cultural institutions, and employment centers can work together to create a compelling and resilient urban core.

Downtowns also host the destinations that exist nowhere else in a region: state capitols, convention centers, museums, riverfronts, performing arts venues, and signature public spaces. Master planning ensures these assets are connected, visible, and supported by inviting streets, housing, and amenities that encourage residents and visitors to gather, linger, and return. In doing so, downtowns reinforce their role as shared civic living rooms and regional destinations.

From an economic development perspective, a strong downtown attracts employers, talent, visitors, and investment. It supports small businesses, anchors major institutions, and signals confidence to the private market. In an era when cities compete nationally for skilled workers, vibrant downtowns are also critical to combating brain drain. Young professionals and families increasingly seek walkable neighborhoods, authentic places, and opportunities for connection—qualities that are most effectively delivered in well-planned downtown environments.

Successful master plans must balance aspiration with realism. They should be visionary enough to inspire action while remaining grounded in current market conditions, infrastructure capacity, and fiscal constraints. Plan Baton Rouge I and II demonstrated this balance, translating bold ideas into tangible outcomes such as revitalized public spaces, catalytic development projects, and renewed private investment. Plan Baton Rouge III builds on this legacy, providing clear, actionable guidance that responds to today's challenges while positioning Downtown Baton Rouge for long-term success.



Shaw Center for the Arts (a product of Plan Baton Rouge I)

Photo Source: Sasaki

Plan Baton Rouge I & II

Plan Baton Rouge III is the latest in a continuum of downtown planning, beginning with Plan Baton Rouge I (1999) and through Plan Baton Rouge II (2009). Over the quarter century of modern planning for Downtown Baton Rouge, the city has seen many projects successfully implemented that contribute to the health and vibrancy of the city. Here are some of the projects recommended by those plans. Many have been completed and others are incomplete or in progress. Plan Baton Rouge III will build on this great legacy of planning and forward-looking progress.

Plan Baton Rouge I

Adopted in 1999, Plan Baton Rouge I re-centered state government in the downtown core by consolidating state offices and reinforcing the Capitol District as a primary employment hub. This strategy anchored daytime activity, supported surrounding mixed-use development, and established a stable foundation for long-term downtown revitalization and investment. Plan Baton Rouge I also envisioned what would become the Shaw Center for the Art (completed in 2005).

Plan Baton Rouge II

Adopted in 2009, Plan Baton Rouge II translated vision into action through various projects, including riverfront improvements, Galvez Plaza, Central Green, Downtown Greenway and new downtown housing. The plan advanced cultural investment, strengthened public spaces, improved connectivity, and solidified Downtown Baton Rouge as an active, mixed-use district.

Legend

- Plan Baton Rouge I Proposals
- Plan Baton Rouge II Proposals

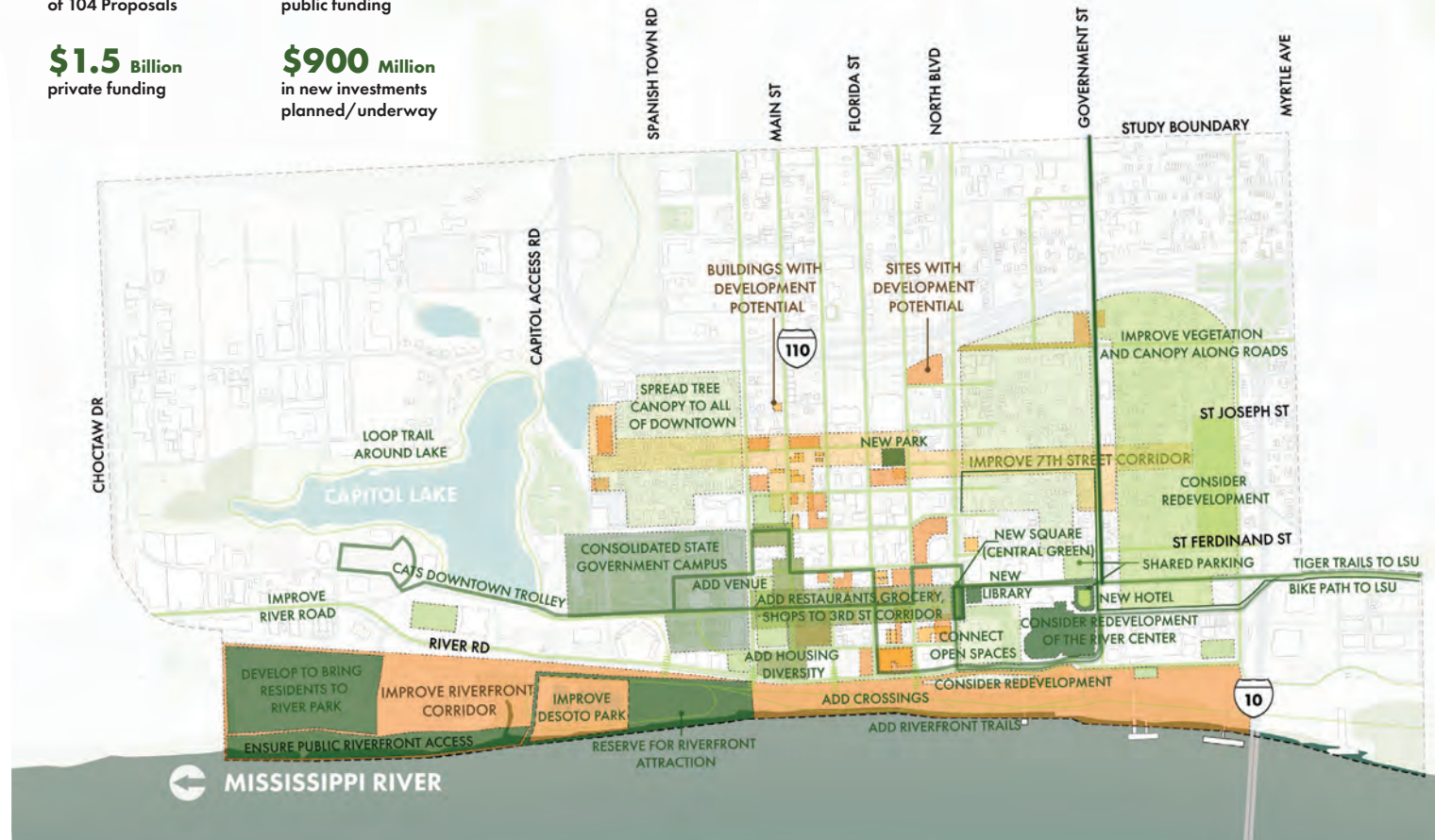
Outcomes

>80% Implemented
of 104 Proposals

\$500 Million
public funding

\$1.5 Billion
private funding

\$900 Million
in new investments
planned/underway

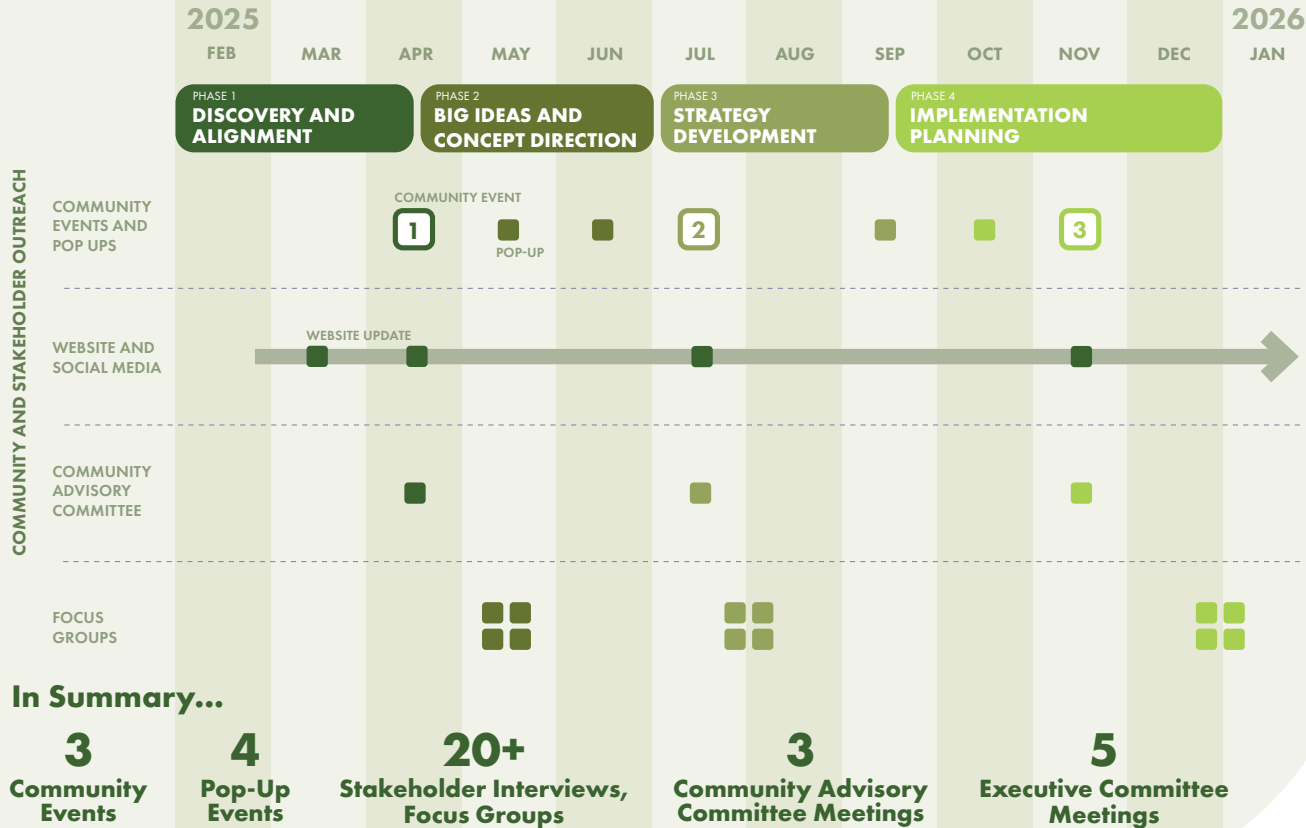


Plan Baton Rouge I
Revitalization and development of downtown: focusing on corridors, districts, neighborhoods, enhanced public spaces, and private investments

Plan Baton Rouge II
Greener downtown, more active downtown, better connected to the river, and better connected to the neighborhoods

Project Process

Schedule



In Summary...

- 3** Community Events
- 4** Pop-Up Events
- 20+** Stakeholder Interviews, Focus Groups
- 3** Community Advisory Committee Meetings
- 5** Executive Committee Meetings

The planning process for Plan Baton Rouge III kicked-off in February 2025 and concluded in January 2026. The project was funded and administered by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF) along with many local project sponsors. BRAAF and its partners conducted a national search for a consultant team to partner with and selected Sasaki (joined by JLP+D, Franklin Associates, CSRS, Vectura Consulting, and Trahan Architects) to lead the project. Over the course of the project's twelve months, the combined planning team conducted extensive analysis, community and stakeholder engagement, ideation, and strategic planning to reach the vision and recommendations put forth by Plan Baton Rouge III.

Team



Shaping a Downtown Vision

Developing a downtown master plan for Baton Rouge begins with establishing a clear shared vision for the future of the city's urban core. This vision is grounded in community values—reflecting local identity, aspirations, and priorities—and shaped through engagement with residents, stakeholders, and civic leaders. Together, these values and the plan vision articulate what Downtown Baton Rouge should become and why it matters to the region.

From this foundation, the process advances by translating vision into a set of big ideas. These big ideas define the major themes and opportunities for downtown, such as strengthening its role as the heart of the region, enhancing livability, supporting economic vitality, and reconnecting the city to the Mississippi River. Each big idea provides a clear organizing framework that helps align public and private decision-making.

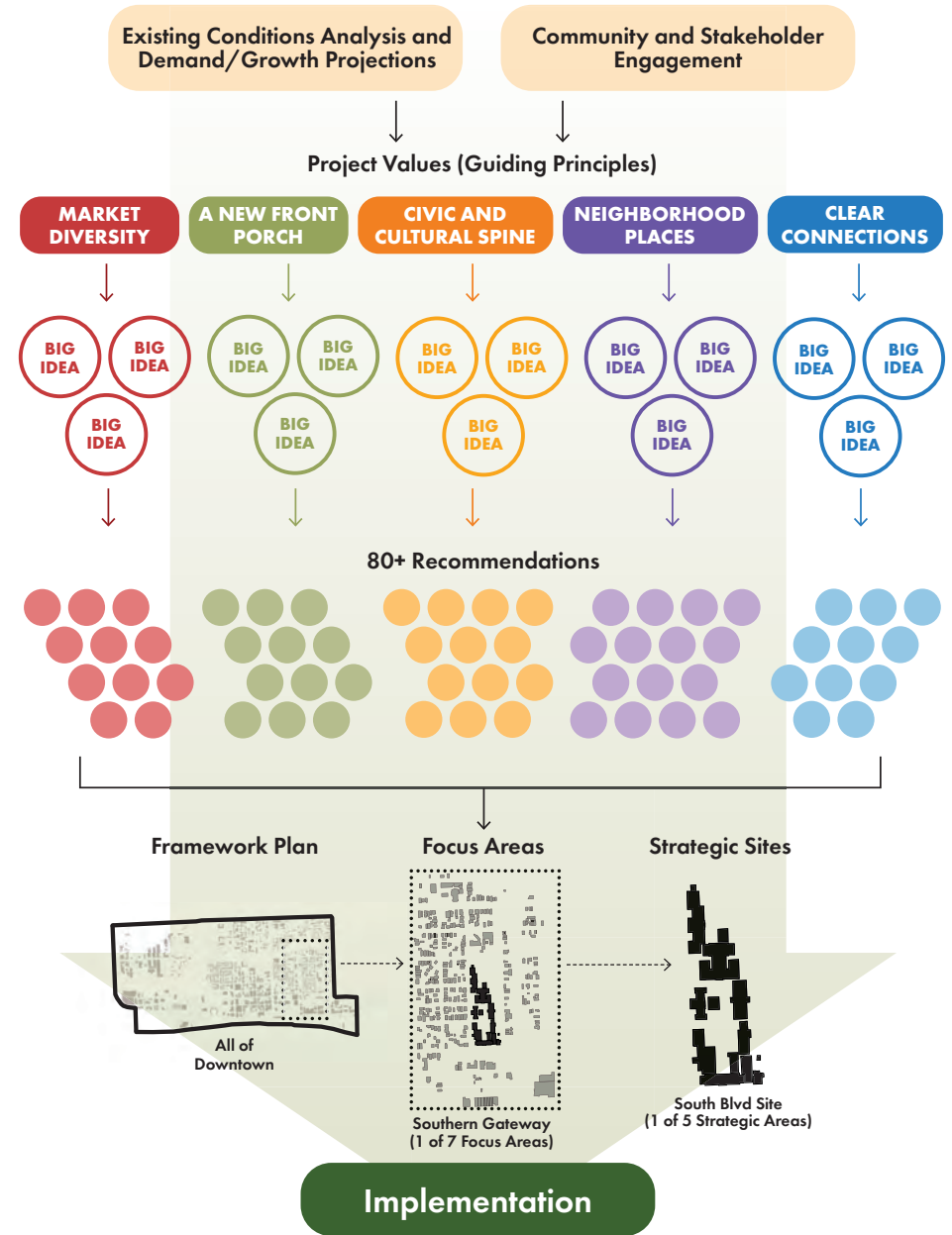
The big ideas are then refined into targeted recommendations that outline how change can occur. Recommendations address policy direction, physical improvements, partnerships, and programs needed to realize the vision. To ensure accountability and momentum, each recommendation is paired with specific action items—practical, implementable steps that identify responsibilities, sequencing, and potential funding approaches.

Finally, the plan is designed to be an implementation tool, not just a vision document. Continuous feedback loops allow lessons from implementation to inform future decisions, ensuring the downtown master plan remains relevant, actionable, and responsive as Baton Rouge evolves.

Chapter 02 Downtown Baton Rouge Today

Chapter 03 Plan Baton Rouge III Vision

Chapter 04 Implementation Guidance



Engagement Overview

Community engagement is essential to a successful downtown master planning process because it grounds the plan in the lived experience, priorities, and aspirations of the people who use downtown every day. Meaningful engagement builds shared understanding and trust, ensuring that the resulting vision reflects local values rather than abstract ideals. It surfaces opportunities and challenges that may not be evident through technical analysis alone, particularly related to access, safety, identity, and equity. Engagement also strengthens implementation by fostering local ownership and alignment among residents, businesses, institutions, and public agencies, increasing the likelihood that recommendations will be supported and acted upon over time. For a downtown as symbolically and functionally important as Baton Rouge's, inclusive engagement ensures the master plan serves not only as a policy document, but as a collective roadmap shaped by the community it is intended to benefit.

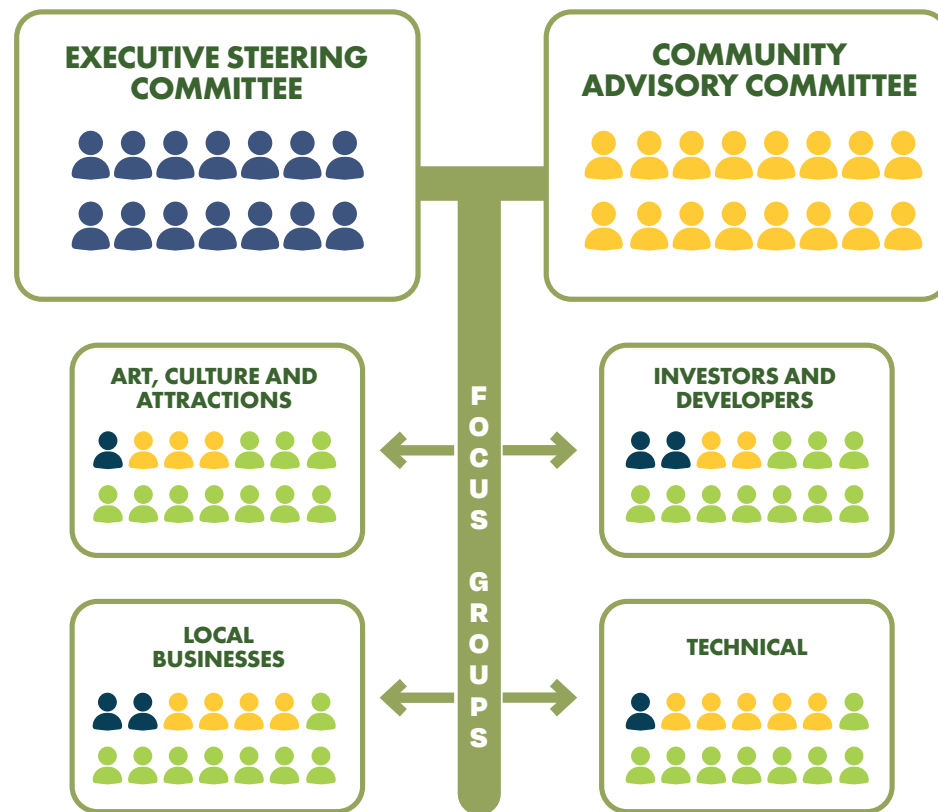
The community engagement process for Plan Baton Rouge III unfolded over a ten-month period and was designed to be inclusive, iterative, and accessible to a

wide range of stakeholders. Engagement was anchored by three major public events held at key milestones in the planning process, each structured to share progress, test ideas, and gather direct feedback on emerging concepts. These events were complemented by pop-up engagement activities at existing community gatherings, allowing the project team to reach residents and visitors who might not otherwise participate in a traditional planning meeting.

Digital tools played a central role in broadening participation. A custom project website served as the central hub for information, updates, and engagement opportunities, while online surveys and interactive tools enabled community members to provide input on priorities, challenges, and aspirations throughout the process. In parallel, a series of focused small-group discussions brought together stakeholders with expertise in areas such as economic development, housing, mobility, arts and culture, and downtown management, ensuring that technical and institutional perspectives informed the plan.



Guidance and oversight were provided by a Community Advisory Group composed of dozens of local leaders representing neighborhoods, businesses, civic organizations, and cultural institutions. An Executive Committee, comprising senior representatives from major public agencies, institutions, and employers, provided strategic direction and insight to ensure that the plan aligned with local initiatives, policies, and implementation capacity. Together, these layered engagement efforts ensured that the master plan was shaped by broad community input and grounded in local leadership.



Touch Points



2,500
Survey Responses

2
Surveys



600+
Public Meeting Attendees

3
Public Meetings



20+
Focus Group and Stakeholder Meetings

4
Pop-up Events

Engagement Event Overview





02

Downtown Baton Rouge Today

Plan Baton Rouge III is grounded in a comprehensive site analysis using six lenses—History, People, Market, Land, Links, and Character—to reveal how downtown functions today. Together, these insights establish a clear, place-based foundation for strategic and implementable change.

Key Analysis Takeaways

We used six lenses—History, People, Market, Land, Links, and Character—to create a clear and holistic framework for understanding Downtown Baton Rouge. Each lens reveals a different dimension of how downtown functions today: its origins and urban evolution; who lives, works, and visits; how economic forces shape growth; how land and natural systems influence opportunity; how mobility and barriers affect access; and how built forms and neighborhood identity define experience. Together, these lenses organize complex data into an integrated picture, grounding the master plan in a comprehensive understanding of downtown’s challenges and potential.



History

Downtown Baton Rouge contains a rich and layered history that grounds communities and physical elements in place. By intentionally revealing, celebrating, and connecting the stories of the communities that shaped the city, downtown can become a stronger platform for sharing these stories and a more desirable destination for learning about the region’s history and culture. *Photo Source: The Historic New Orleans Collection.*



People

Downtown’s low residential population signals opportunity. By expanding housing choices, strengthening everyday amenities, and cultivating a true neighborhood feel, Downtown Baton Rouge can become a welcoming place to live for all. Leveraging its strong network of civic champions creates a clear path to activate investment, build momentum, and deliver lasting change. *Photo Source: Downtown Development District.*



Market

Current market conditions present a call to action. With limited pent-up demand, Downtown Baton Rouge has the opportunity to make the market—using strategic investment, catalytic projects, and coordinated leadership to establish downtown as the region’s primary hub and social district across all market sectors. *Photo Source: Downtown Development District.*



Land

Downtown’s riverfront and green spaces are untapped assets. By better connecting and activating these areas, we can unlock their economic, social, and ecological potential—turning open space and natural ecosystems into vibrant destinations that define the city’s identity. *Photo Source: Sasaki*



Links

Downtown’s riverfront, green spaces, cultural hubs, and amenities are currently disconnected, presenting a prime opportunity to create a cohesive network. By linking trails, pedestrian crossings, transit, and nearby institutions like LSU, BRCC, and Southern, we can make downtown more accessible, navigable, and vibrant—unlocking its full economic, social, and ecological potential. *Photo Source: Sasaki.*



Character

Downtown’s distinct neighborhoods, character areas, and underutilized land present a unique opportunity to drive tailored, place-based growth. By leveraging the identity and strengths of each area, we can create diverse solutions that enhance cultural vitality, economic opportunity, and the overall experience of the city. *Photo Source: Sasaki.*

History

Downtown Baton Rouge's history is foundational to shaping its future. Its origins on the Istrouma Bluff established a strategic riverfront business district protected from flooding and positioned along vital trade routes. Early neighborhoods like Spanish Town (1805) and Beaugard Town (1806) still retain their intimate block patterns, diagonal streets, and human-scale character despite later citywide shifts toward auto-oriented development. Over time, wider roadways, parking structures, and the construction of I-110 altered the finer grain of the historic grid, leading to parcel

consolidation and a loss of walkable urban form. Today, the most intact historical fabric remains east of the interstate, while the Central Business District (CBD) and riverfront have changed dramatically. Although downtown contains five historic districts and dozens of landmarks, these assets are not well connected; visitors often encounter them by accident. There is a substantial opportunity to better reveal and celebrate downtown's layered history through improved connections, storytelling, and place-based design.

IT ALL STARTED AT THE RIVER

Baton Rouge's location on the Istrouma Bluff, the first natural bluff upriver from the Mississippi River Delta, allowed for the development of the levee system and a business quarter along trade routes that was safe from seasonal flooding.

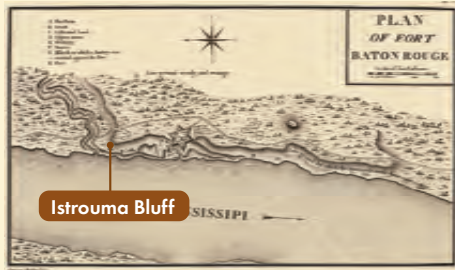


Photo Sources: RareMaps, University of South Florida Libraries, Wikimedia Commons, Fine Art America



Second Street (now Lafayette Street), 1821.
Photo Source: Friends of Magnolia Mound Plantation, Inc, The Advocate

Evolving Urban Form

The rise of the automobile and highway construction fundamentally reshaped Downtown Baton Rouge, transforming it from a compact, walkable core into a car-oriented place. Streets were widened, surface parking lots proliferated, and land once devoted to mixed-use development was reallocated for vehicles. The construction of Interstate 110, in particular, bisected and fundamentally altered largely historically Black neighborhoods, displacing families and fragmenting communities. These changes disconnected downtown from the riverfront, divided neighborhoods, and weakened street-level life. While automobiles and highways increased regional mobility, they left a legacy of physical and social barriers. Today, these challenges present an opportunity to reconnect neighborhoods, reclaim public space, and restore a more inclusive, vibrant downtown.

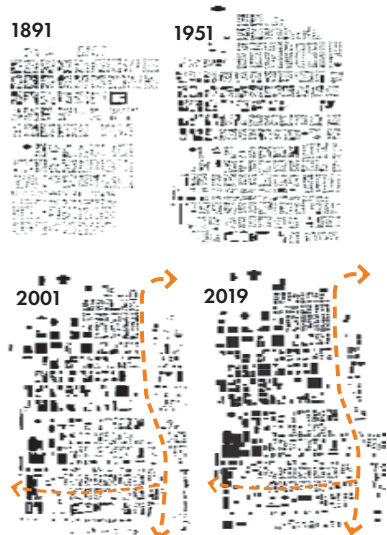


Image Source: Kühne and Jenal, Urban Science (2021)

EVOLUTION OF THE GRID

Multiple smaller parcels combined to create much larger, single parcels (historic parcels in white).

Some streets widened to accommodate the automobile. However, many streets in Spanish Town and Beauregard Town maintain their narrow widths.



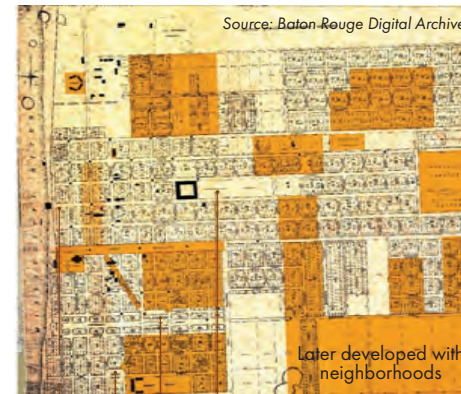
Building structures became larger surface parking lots and parking garages. Development became less human-scale.

Some blocks shrank to accommodate wider streets

CONNECTIVITY ACROSS BARRIERS

The CBD and Riverfront have experienced the most dramatic transformations in Downtown Baton Rouge, reflecting decades of redevelopment, modernization, and automobile-oriented infrastructure. Tall buildings, widened streets, and surface parking have replaced much of the historic urban fabric, creating a downtown that often feels disconnected from its past. In contrast, Spanish Town and Beauregard Town retain much of their historic character, with narrower streets, traditional lot patterns, and preserved architectural details that evoke

the city's layered history. While I-110 physically erased entire neighborhoods—displacing residents and severing community connections—the east side of the interstate still shows a clear continuation of historic city fabric. This surviving pattern offers a tangible link to the city's past and provides a foundation for thoughtfully reconnecting neighborhoods, restoring human-scale streets, and preserving cultural identity while accommodating growth and modern infrastructure needs.



1885

- PENITENTIARY + GROUNDS
- ROYAL SQUARE
- MEXICO SQUARE
- SMALL TIGHT GRID TO RIVER + WITHIN OTHER PARTS OF DOWNTOWN



Today (2025)

City features that appear similar today (light orange on the map).

Notable city features that no longer exist (called out with dark orange tags).

Historic Streets



3rd Street, 1907. Source: Wikimedia Commons



Church Street, 1919. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Historic Assets

Downtown Baton Rouge is a hub of historic assets with...

5 Historic Districts

39 Historic Landmarks

DISCONNECTED EXPERIENCE OF HISTORY

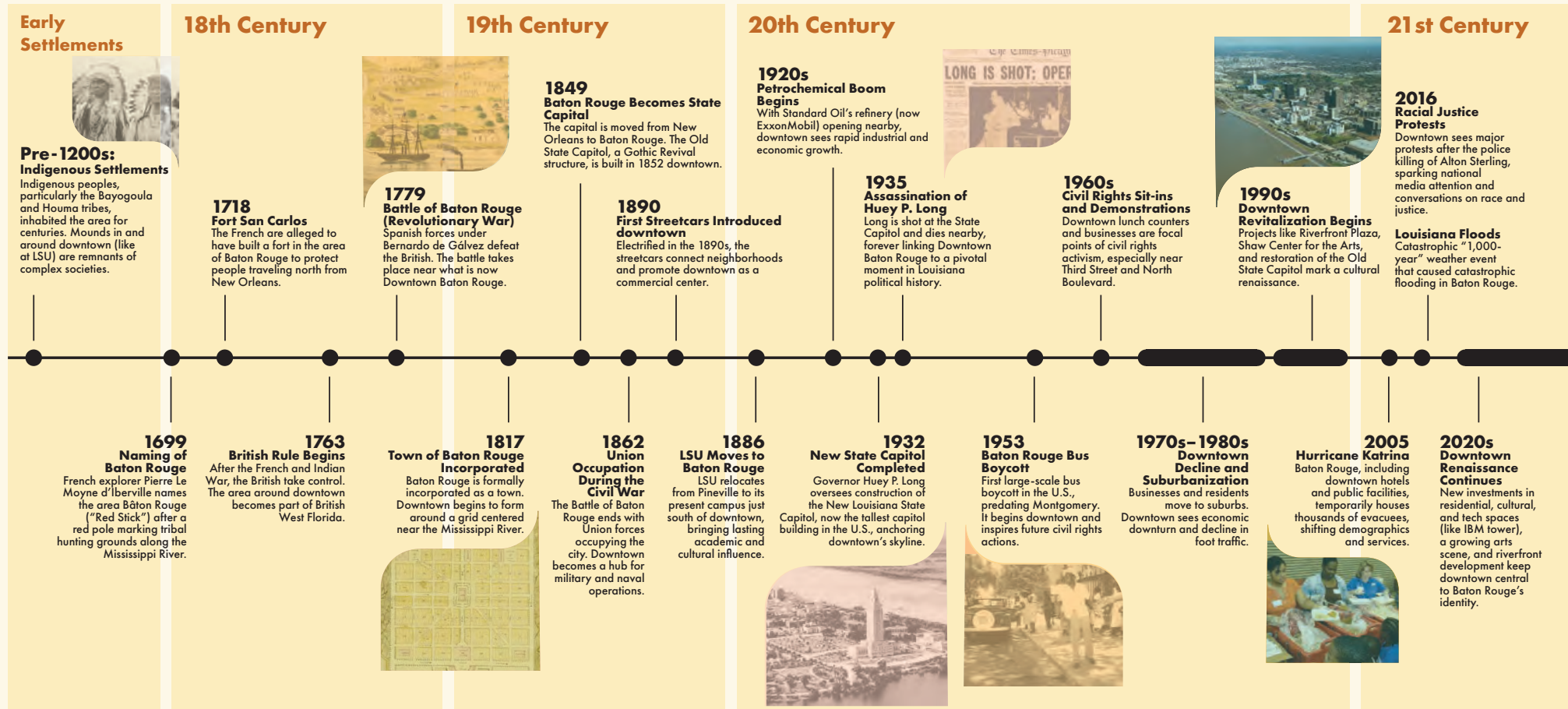
Visitors are more likely to stumble upon historic assets in the CBD where they are co-located with other things to do. While the Downtown Greenway and Central Green greatly improved connectivity in downtown, there is still a lack of clear connections (or cultural trails) that link this concentration of assets to other historic places like the State Capitol Complex and nearby historic districts.



Legend

- Study Boundary
- Local Historic District
- Local Landmark
- National Historic District
- National Landmark
- Historic Structure
- Historic Markers

Baton Rouge Through Time



Downtown is home to some of the most important sites and events in Baton Rouge and Louisiana history. The site has historically been settled for millennia, first by indigenous populations, then by various waves of European settlers before becoming the state capitol of Louisiana in the middle of the 19th century. Since then, the city has been host to political, social, and cultural moments of state and national importance, including several notable efforts of the Civil Rights Movement.

History: Key Takeaways & Challenges

OBSERVATION SUMMARY

1. It all started at the River

Downtown Baton Rouge serves as a crossroads of many important eras in the city's development and human history. The origin of Baton Rouge is intrinsically tied to the Mississippi River.

2. History shaping the city

Some historic plans for Baton Rouge were never fully realized. However, remnants of these plans, like Beauregard Town's diagonal streets, still exist today.

3. Evolving urban form

The automobile changed the city grid, with the construction of wider streets, parking garages, surface parking lots, and interstates. Small scale development transitioned to full block development (especially in the CBD and along the Riverfront).

4. Connectivity across barriers

While I-110 erased neighborhoods, there is a clear continuation of historic city fabric on the east side of the interstate.

5. Disconnected history experience

Visitors are more likely to stumble upon historic assets in the CBD where they are co-located with other things to do. There is a lack of clear connections (or cultural trails) that connect this concentration of assets to other historic places like the State Capitol Complex and nearby historic districts.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Downtown Baton Rouge holds a rich and layered history that presents a powerful opportunity. By revealing, leveraging, and celebrating the stories of the communities that shaped the city, downtown can transform its public realm into a distinctive, authentic experience—one that connects past and present while strengthening identity, pride, and place.

People

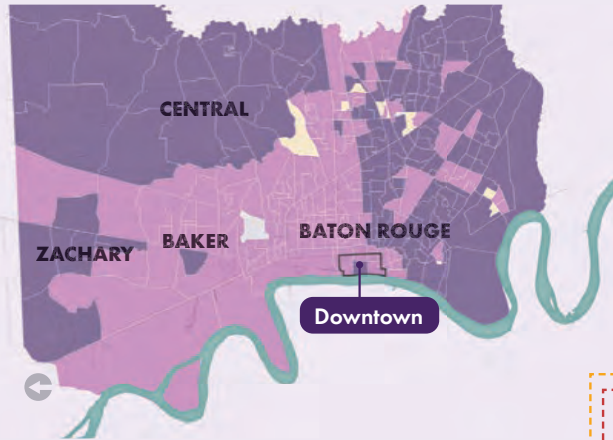
Downtown Baton Rouge’s demographic and social profile presents both opportunities and challenges for future planning. With 3,797 residents and a median age of 36, downtown trends younger and more diverse than the parish, yet population growth has slowed, and residential numbers remain comparatively low. Most households are renters, many are single-person, and housing options skew toward limited typologies—primarily mid-rise apartments and historic single family and small-scale multifamily development. Affordable and workforce units are concentrated along downtown’s edges, contributing to spatial imbalance.

While downtown offers cultural attractions, food and beverage destinations, and major civic institutions,

these amenities are not well integrated into a complete neighborhood experience. Housing is frequently disconnected from daily needs like grocery access and walkable services. At the same time, the area benefits from a robust civic ecosystem of nonprofits, government agencies, and local champions who can drive reinvestment. Strengthening residential appeal will require diversified housing, better amenities, and an intentional sense of community.

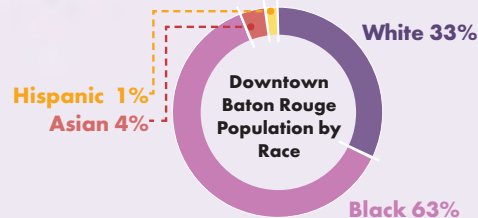
To understand how Downtown Baton Rouge compares to similar cities in the country, the planning team conducted a comparative analysis, looking to other mid-sized state capitals in the southern U.S. This analysis looked at the downtowns of Austin, TX; Little Rock, AK; and Montgomery, AL.

DOWNTOWN IS DIVERSE

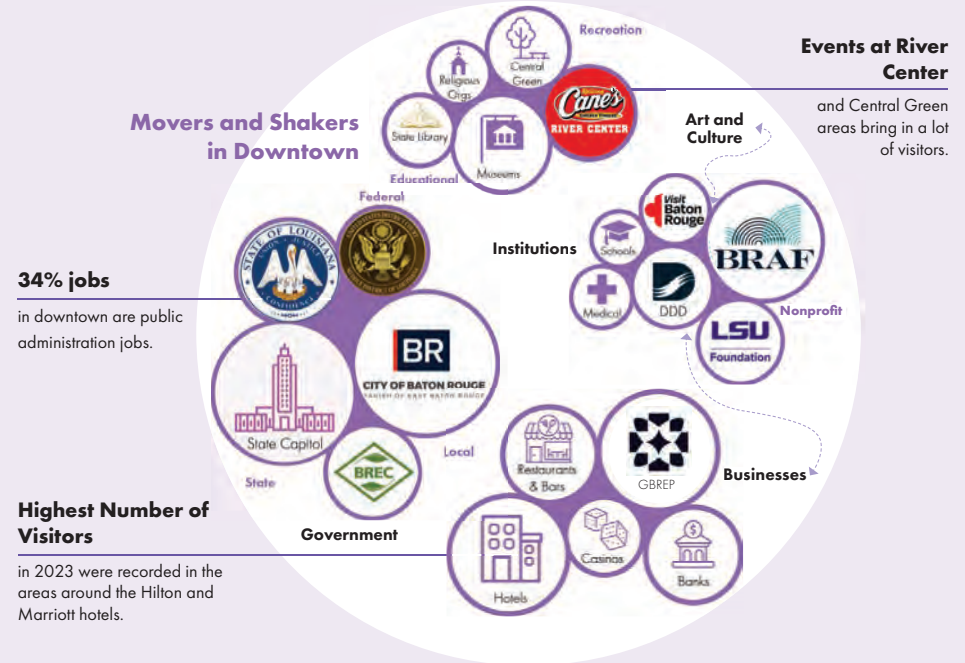


Legend
 ■ Majority White
 ■ Majority Black
 ■ Majority Hispanic

While Baton Rouge’s North and South sides show a clear racial divide, downtown is more diverse. Census and ESRI data reveal a mix of residents, workers, and visitors, highlighting downtown’s role as a regional hub and an opportunity to foster inclusive, unifying development.



DOWNTOWN BATON ROUGE CIVIC ECOSYSTEM



There is a robust network of civic champions in Downtown Baton Rouge, who, when organized and focused, can support substantial reinvestment work. There is a notable gap in educational and medical partners that can be a market driver for housing, office space, and retail.

Life Downtown

80/100

Housing Affordability Index
(higher = more affordable)

35%

Renters are housing-cost burdened
(exceeds 30% recommended maximum)

18%

Affordable housing serving 35% low-income population

-8%

% Decline in housing ownership (2000-2024)

+16.4%

Residential Growth (2012-2021)

94%

Residential Occupancy Rate in CBD



Legend

---- Study Boundary

Single-Family Housing (some duplex)

Multi-Family Housing

Historic District

Cultural Destination

Parking Garage

Place of Interest Density

Food + Beverage

Services

Shopping + Retail

MORE WALKABLE AMENITIES, DESTINATIONS:

Downtown has activity but lacks the amenities of a complete neighborhood, with housing often separated from destinations.

DOWNTOWN NEEDS A BROADER PRODUCT RANGE:

Recent higher-density development, like the Residences at Rivermark, has added housing downtown, while affordable and workforce units remain mostly at the edges.








Photo Sources: Valencia Park Baton Rouge, Zillow, Sasaki, Downtown Development District

Downtown Population

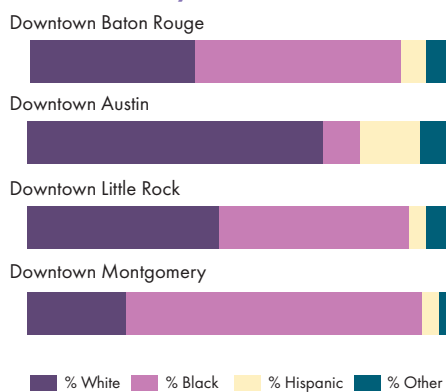
DOWNTOWN COULD BE MORE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD

Residential populations in Downtown Baton Rouge remain comparatively low. Residents tend to be young and rental-oriented, drawn by proximity to work and lifestyle amenities. Limited housing diversity, affordability, and gaps in everyday services constrain

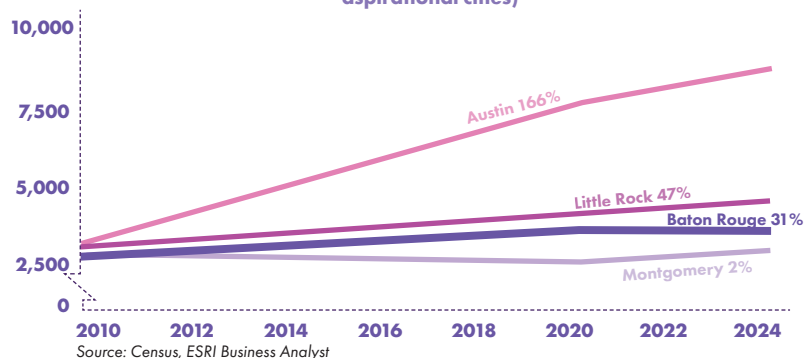
growth. This presents an opportunity: expanding housing options, activating underutilized parcels, and enhancing walkability and amenities could attract more residents, strengthen community, and create a more vibrant, 24/7 urban core.

-  **3,797** People live downtown (0.84% of Parish's Population)
-  **2,303** Downtown households (2023)
-  **36 yrs** Median age (compared to peer city average of 40 yrs)
-  **63/100** Diversity index (higher than all peer cities)
-  **60%** Households are single-person
-  **56%** Housing units growth (2010-2024)
-  **35%** Renters are housing cost-burdened (exceeds 30% threshold)

Race and Diversity



2010 - 2024 Downtown Population Trends (compared to peer and aspirational cities)



Who lives in Downtown?

Downtown trends young with a preference towards renting and living an urban lifestyle—income and lifestyle variation indicates the need for strategic housing solutions.



Household Type	Nonfamily, students	Single parents	Singles (40%+)	Single parent, multigenerational	Married couples + Single parents
Housing Type	Mix of student housing, 1/3 single family	Apartments in mid-rise buildings	Medium/large multi unit apartments	Predominantly single family	61% single family, 2-4 unit buildings
Home-ownership	75% renters	77% renters	72% renters	55% renters	60% renters
Education	College students	Mix; 25% without HS diploma	Many enrolled in college	25% without HS diploma	38% HS diploma only
Employment	Part-time, food service, college-related	Office/admin support	Food service, retail	Limited job opportunity, 50% labor participation	Service, manufacturing, retail
Transportation	Bike/ped. friendly, limited vehicles	Reliance on public transit and taxis	Walk/bike to work options	1/3 rely on carpool, walking, public transit	19% no vehicle
Consumer Behavior	Impulse buys, fashion, tech-savvy, enviro. conscious	Fashion-conscious, convenience of fast food	Image-conscious, deal-seekers, impulse buyers	Celebrity endorsements, TV preference, living for today	Cost-conscious, bulk purchases, generic brands

Source: Census, ESRI Business Analyst

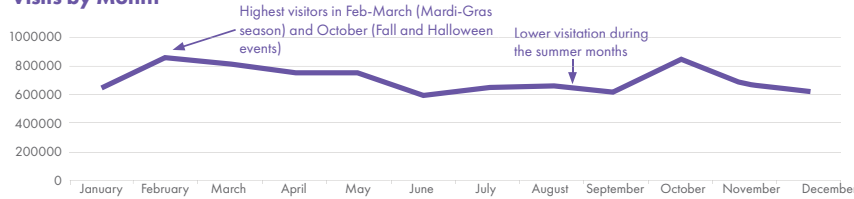
Downtown Visitation

DOWNTOWN VISITATION COULD IMPROVE

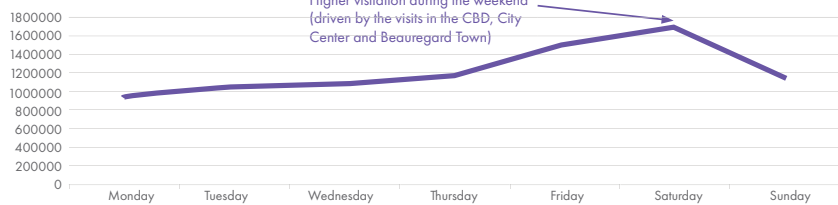
Downtown Baton Rouge welcomed 8.5 million visitors in 2024—excluding residents and daily workers—representing a 1.7% decline from 2023 (Source: Placer.ai). While visitation remains strong, this slight drop highlights opportunities to better attract and engage

tourists through enhanced programming, improved wayfinding, stronger connections between cultural and recreational assets, and more vibrant public spaces that encourage longer stays and repeat visits.

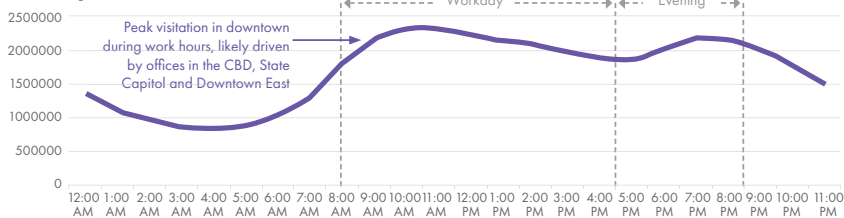
Visits by Month



Visits by Day



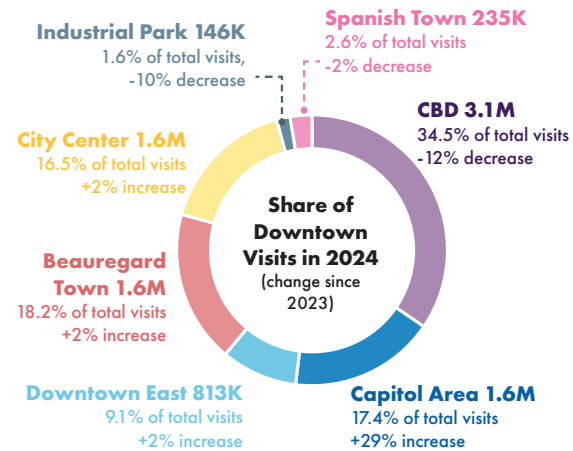
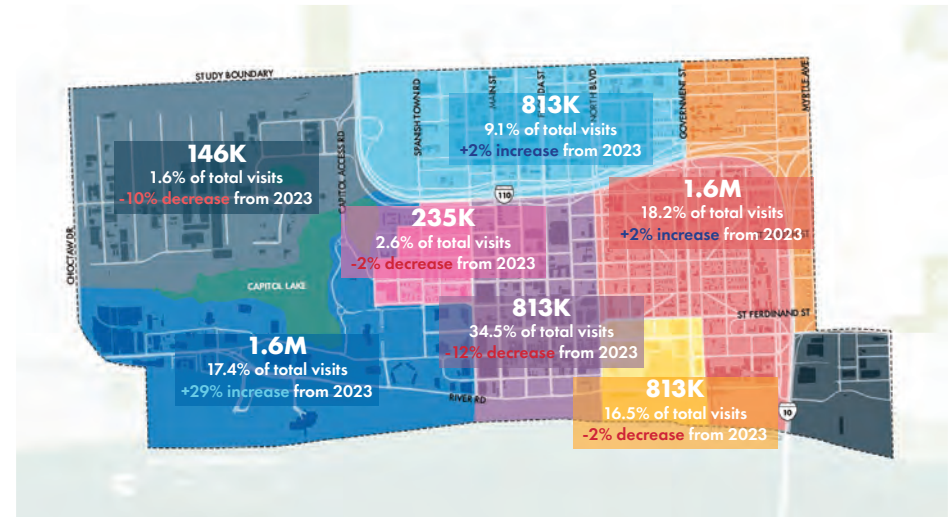
Visits by Hour



Data source: Placer.ai

*A visit is only counted when a visitor's device is registered in the area for longer than 10 minutes.

Visitation by Neighborhood or Character Area in 2024



While the CBD garners one-third of downtown's visits each year, it has seen a 12% drop since 2023. Conversely, the Capitol Area has seen a 29% increase likely due to the consolidation of workers and required back-to-office mandates.

People: Key Takeaways & Challenges

OBSERVATION SUMMARY

1. Downtown is diverse

While there is a clear racial divide between the North and South areas of the city, downtown's demographic makeup is more diverse.

2. More walkable amenities, destinations

Despite having things to do, downtown lacks places and amenities that reinforce a complete neighborhood. Housing is not always co-located with things to-do.

3. Downtown needs a broader product range

Recent higher-density residential development has added critical units to downtown's housing stock. As future housing strategies are developed, downtown has a unique opportunity to shape demand by prioritizing diverse housing typologies that both attract new residents and better serve the full range of existing households.

4. Downtown could be more of a neighborhood

Residential populations are comparatively low. Unlike peer downtowns, Downtown Baton Rouge faces slight population decline after having achieved 31% growth from 2010 to 2020. Downtown trends young and with a preference towards rentals—income and lifestyle variation indicates the need for strategic housing solutions.

5. Downtown visitation and tourism could grow.

Downtown received 8.5 million visitors in 2024 (not including residents and daily workers); this was 1.7% less than in 2023. While the Central Business District (CBD) garners one-third of downtown's visits each year, it has seen a 12% drop since 2023. Conversely, the State Capitol Complex has seen a 29% increase likely due to the consolidation of workers, required back-to-office mandates, and increased visitation capacity.

Photo Source: Sasaki

PLAN BATON ROUGE III

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Downtown's low residential population signals opportunity. By expanding housing choices, strengthening everyday amenities, and cultivating a true neighborhood feel, Downtown Baton Rouge can become a welcoming place to live for all. Leveraging its strong network of civic champions creates a clear path to activate investment, build momentum, and deliver lasting change.

Market

Downtown Baton Rouge is anchored by a young, educated workforce and strong institutional employment, but lacks sector diversity and organic demand growth. With 25,910 workers—many in state government—the area has a high 16:1 worker-to-resident ratio. Limited retail and office supply has driven premium rents while signaling constrained market depth, and workers remain disconnected from nearby amenities, limiting spillover activity. Economic momentum has shifted

toward the parish’s southeast, leaving downtown to “make the market” through targeted interventions, catalytic development, and public-private partnerships. Persistent financing gaps for housing, adaptive reuse, and mixed-use projects often require public tools such as Opportunity Zones and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The master plan must reposition downtown as the region’s social and economic hub through diversified employment and expanded amenities.

25,910 Total downtown workers
(10% of Parish-wide jobs)

26% In the 25-34 age group
(14.8% Parish-wide)

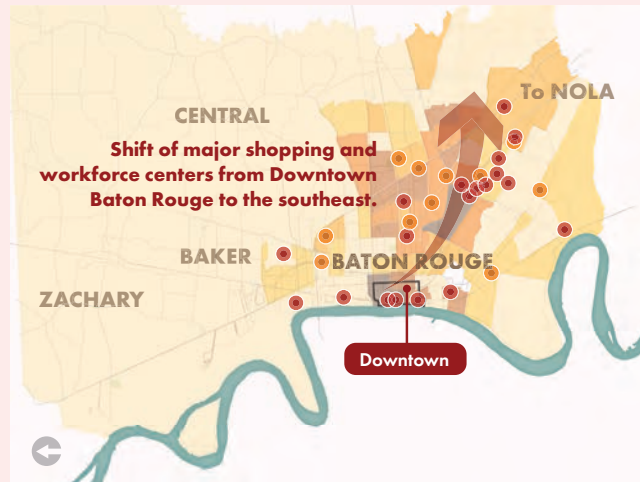
46% Professional occupations
(27% Parish-wide)

7% Jobs in information sector
(far exceeding peers)

ENERGY DRIFTED AWAY FROM DOWNTOWN

Completion of the interstate enabled the shifting of residences, businesses, and services to the southeast of the Parish. However, in recent years locals have noticed reinvestments downtown.

Workforce + Retail in the Region



Downtown Property Values are **2.5x higher** than Parish-wide average

5% Downtown portion of city-wide retail sales



CONSTRAINED SUPPLY + POSITIVE ABSORPTION

Downtown Baton Rouge’s constrained supply in both retail and office sectors creates economic premium.
Source: U.S. Census, ESRI Business Analyst

17% Office rental rate growth since 2015

60% Drop in office vacancy rate from 14% to 5% from 2015 to 2024

39% Retail space rental rate growth since 2015

Existing Retail Inventory

27%	28%	45%
Service-Oriented: 206,550 SF	Rest./Food: 214,200 SF	Storefront Retail: 344,250 SF

How does Downtown Baton Rouge compare to peer cities?

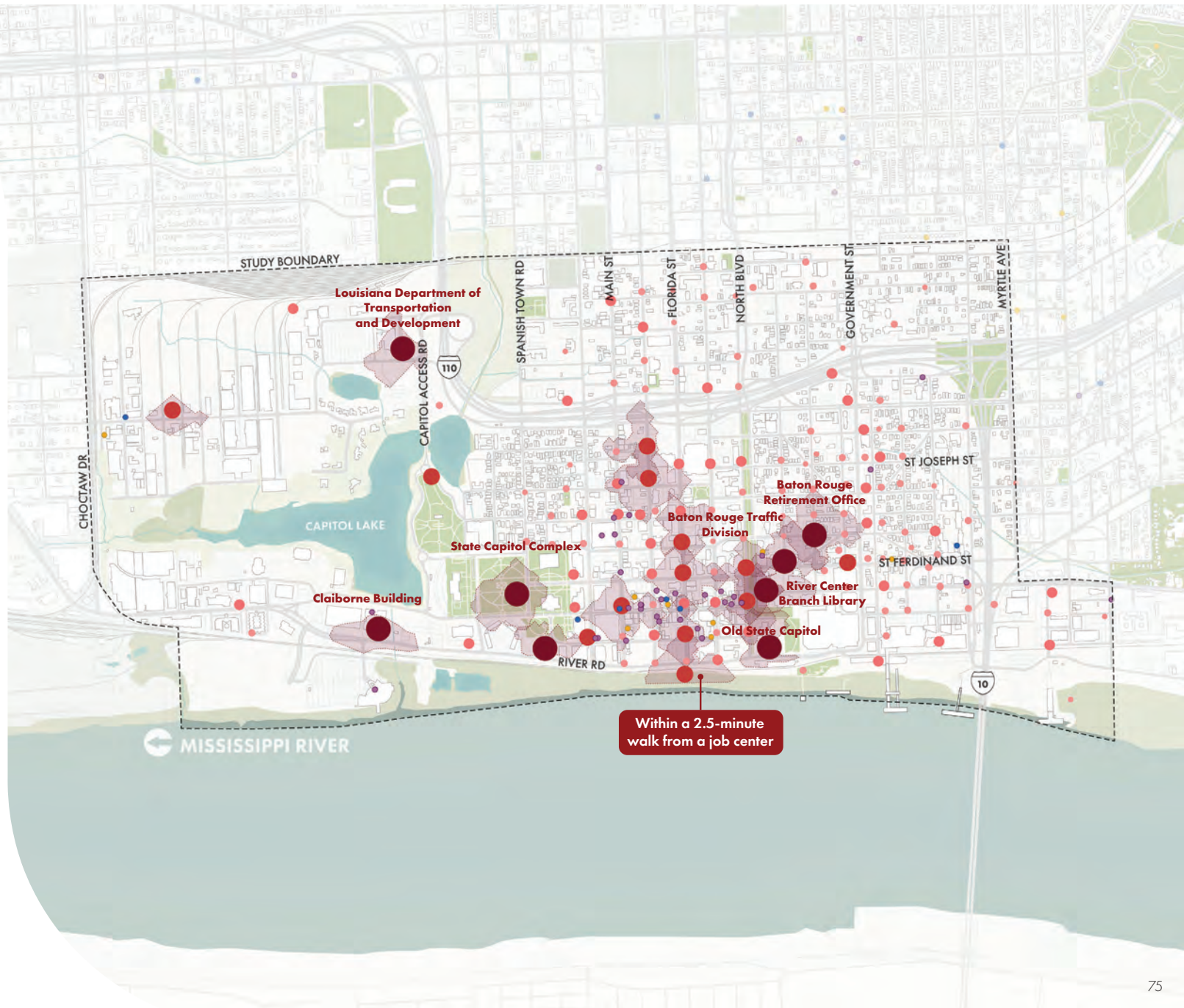
	Total Population	Worker to Resident Ratio	Downtown Median Household Income	Unemployment Rate	Bachelor’s Degree+
DOWNTOWN BATON ROUGE	3,727	16:1	\$54,127	4.6%	45%
Downtown Little Rock (peer city)	4,583	22:1	\$46,094	6.5%	53%
Downtown Montgomery (peer city)	2,988	23:1	\$52,164	4.7%	31%
Downtown Austin (aspirational city)	8,699	54:1	\$170,394	0.8%	76%

Significant concentration of young, educated professionals in service and information sectors creates a strong foundation for economic development opportunities despite recent lack of population growth.
Source: JLP+D

Downtown Employment

EMPLOYMENT SECTOR CONCENTRATION AND DISCONNECT

Downtown Baton Rouge's workforce is stacked heavily within the State Government with all other market sectors showing small numbers of daily employees. Workers are disconnected from things to do.



Legend

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| ---- Study Boundary | <u>Place of Interest</u> |
| Job_Count | ● Food + Beverage |
| ● 1-4 Jobs | ● Services |
| ● 5-52 Jobs | ● Shopping + Retail |
| ● 53-262 Jobs | |
| ● 263-825 Jobs | |
| ● 826-2015 Jobs | |

Recent Development

\$1.7
Billion Invested since 2010

Over the past 25 years, Downtown Baton Rouge has experienced steady but uneven development, shaped largely by public-sector investment and catalytic projects. Growth has focused on government facilities, civic institutions, and episodic private mixed-use development, with notable gains in residential conversion, cultural amenities, and riverfront improvements, while broader market-driven intensity has remained limited.



Legend

- Projects 2020-
- Projects 2010-2019
- Projects 2000-2009
- ▭ TIF district
- ▭ Economic Development District
- ▭ Former Enterprise Zone (phasing out)
- ▭ Downtown Development District

Market: Key Takeaways & Challenges

OBSERVATION SUMMARY

1. A young and skilled workforce

Significant concentration of young, educated professionals in service and information sectors creates a strong foundation for economic development opportunities despite population decline. Downtown jobs in the information sector far exceed peer cities.

2. Energy drifted away from downtown

Completion of the interstate enabled the shifting of residences, businesses and services to the southeast of the Parish. However, in recent years locals have noticed reinvestments downtown. Currently, downtown is not 'the' economic hub of Baton Rouge, but rather one of many smaller nodes across the Parish.

3. Constrained supply and positive absorption

Downtown Baton Rouge's constrained supply in both retail and office sectors creates economic premium. This drives higher than average rents and growth in retail while enabling positive office absorption.

4. Employment sector concentration and disconnect

Downtown Baton Rouge's workforce is concentrated heavily within the State government with all other market sectors showing small numbers of daily employees. A majority of workers are disconnected from things to do in downtown.

5. Public funding required to fill gaps

Gaps exist in financing models for new housing development. New developments projects require significant public funding to fill gaps and make projects feasible.

Photo Source: Visit Baton Rouge

PROBLEM STATEMENT

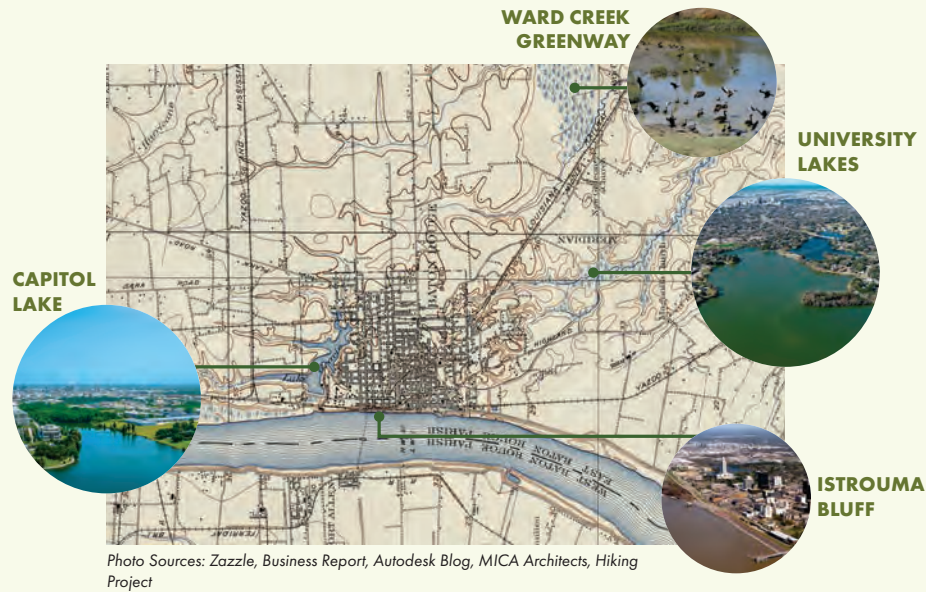
Current market conditions present a call to action. With limited pent-up demand, Downtown Baton Rouge has the opportunity to make the market—using strategic investment, catalytic projects, and coordinated leadership to establish downtown as the region's primary hub and social district across all market sectors.

Land

The land and ecological context of Downtown Baton Rouge is shaped by its riverfront location along the Mississippi River and the Istrouma Bluff. Despite proximity to valuable natural assets—such as the river, Capitol Lake, and nearby regional green spaces—downtown remains surprisingly disconnected from them. Limited public access, homogeneous edge conditions, and underutilized waterfront parcels diminish the river’s presence in everyday life. Protected habitats that connect parks citywide do not extend into downtown, resulting in fragmented open spaces with varying levels

of utilization. Many parks sit within a five-minute walk of residents, yet their programming and connectivity are weak. Open space edges around lakes and streams remain inaccessible and lack ecological value. As a result, downtown misses opportunities to leverage natural systems for recreation, climate resilience, and placemaking. Thoughtful planning can reimagine the riverfront, enhance ecological connections, and integrate green networks that support social, environmental, and economic vitality.

BATON ROUGE IS A RIVER CITY



Baton Rouge lies within the Southern Mississippi River Alluvium floodplain, shaped by the Mississippi River over time. The Istrouma Bluff rises along the riverfront, providing natural elevation that historically guided settlement and offered protection from flooding—distinguishing the city from many other riverfront communities.

DOWNTOWN’S GREEN SPACES ARE LESS CONNECTED THAN ELSEWHERE IN THE CITY

Veteran’s Memorial Park



Spanish Town Park



Capitol Lake



Baton Rouge Riverfront (View Toward I-10)



Photo Sources: Google Maps (User-contributed)

The existing open spaces are regionally well-connected; protected habitats follow the conveyance edges and act as bridges between the open spaces. Downtown does not share this same connectivity through protected habitats.

Downtown Open Space

Downtown has

1.3 mi of riverfront that is not easily accessible



Photo Source: 225 Baton Rouge

DOWNTOWN NEEDS STRONGER CONNECTIONS TO CITY OPEN SPACES

Downtown currently lacks connections to nearby valuable open space typologies that offer diverse amenities. There are concentrations of less accessible open spaces with lower utilization.

Legend

- Waterbody (River/Lake)
 - Wetland
 - Public Open Space Not Fully Utilized
 - Public Open Space with Good Utilization
 - Walkshed: Area Accessible to Open Space Within a 5 Minute Walk
 - Existing Bike Lane
 - Proposed Bike Lane
 - Existing Bike Share
 - Existing Greenway
 - Future Greenway
 - Sports Facility
 - Play Facility
 - Recreation Center/ Indoor Facility
 - Walking/Trails
- *The momentum from Plan Baton Rouge II led to the addition of multiple key greenways that improve the bike and pedestrian access through downtown.*



Mississippi Riverfront

LIMITED RIVERFRONT ACCESS

The Mississippi River's edge in Downtown Baton Rouge is defined by a dominant levee and hard concrete embankment that prioritize flood control over public use. Limited shade, sparse programming, and minimal development result in an under-activated riverfront with few amenities and weak connections to the adjacent downtown fabric.

There is a homogeneous edge condition along the riverfront and diminished ecological value. The land immediately adjacent to the riverfront is underutilized. Downtown turns its back on the river.

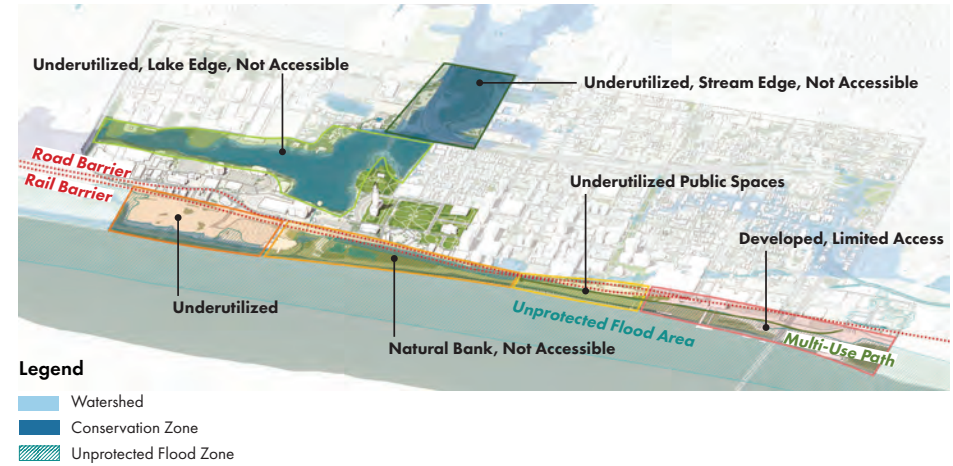
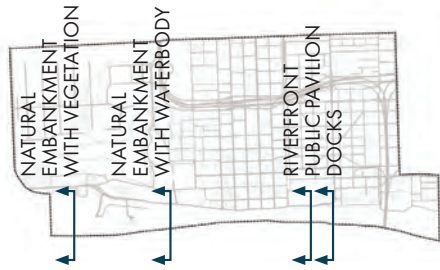
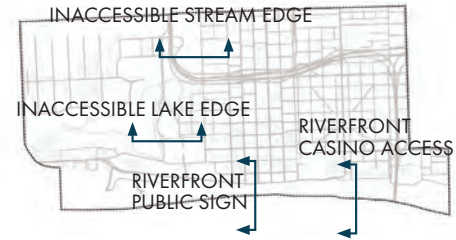


Photo Source: 225 Baton Rouge

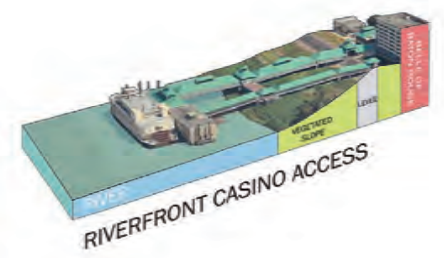
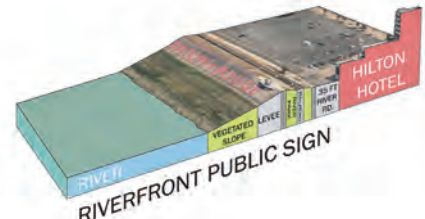
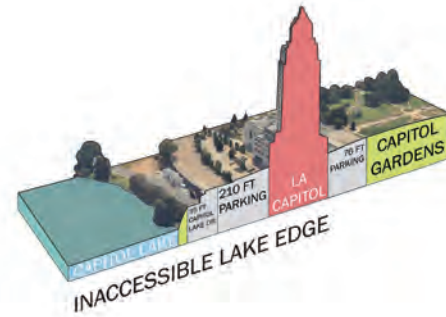
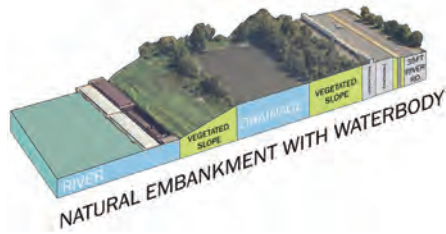
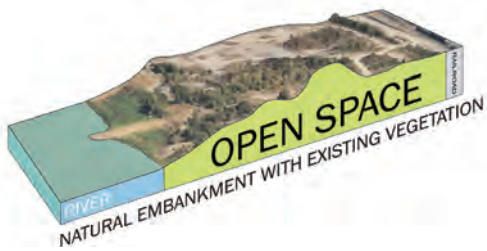
Riverfront Edge Conditions



There are underutilized areas of the natural embankment that have diminished ecological value and lack public utilization. There is limited access to the riverfront in downtown and minimal programming. The small stretch that is accessible to the public is a homogeneous edge and the levee blocks riverfront views and pedestrian connection. The land immediately adjacent to the riverfront is underutilized.



There is no planned access or programming with the lake or streams. The edge conditions are a by-product of the adjacent developments, lacking attention to recreation opportunities and ecological values. There is limited access to the riverfront in downtown and minimal programming. The programming that does exist is controlled by local businesses; these businesses create a development barrier between downtown and the riverfront.



Land: Key Takeaways & Challenges

OBSERVATION SUMMARY

1. Baton Rouge is a river city

The city sits on the Southern Mississippi River Alluvium flood plain with Istrouma Bluff along the riverfront. The origin of Baton Rouge is intrinsically tied to the Mississippi River.

2. Downtown's green spaces are less connected than elsewhere in the city

The existing open spaces are regionally well-connected; protected habitats follow the conveyance edges and act as bridges between the open spaces. Downtown does not share this same connectivity through protected habitats.

3. Significant opportunity to improve pedestrian connectivity

Existing open space and transit routes limit downtown's connectivity; gaps in the walkshed (area coverable within a 5 minute walk) represent the areas most in need of improved utilization and accessibility.

4. Downtown needs stronger connections to city open spaces

While the Central Green and Downtown Greenway significantly improve open space access and connectivity, Downtown still lacks strong connections to nearby open space typologies that offer a wider range of amenities. Some open spaces remain less accessible and are underutilized..

5. Limited riverfront access

There is limited access to the riverfront in downtown and minimal programming. There is a homogeneous edge condition along the riverfront and diminished ecological value. The land immediately adjacent to the riverfront is underutilized. Downtown turns its back on the river.

Photo Source: Sasaki

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Downtown's riverfront and green spaces are untapped assets. By better connecting and activating these areas, we can unlock their economic, social, and ecological potential—turning open space and natural ecosystems into vibrant destinations that define the city's identity.

Links

Downtown Baton Rouge’s mobility network reflects decades of auto-centric design, shaping how people move to, from, and within the area. While driving remains fast and convenient, transit travel times to LSU, Southern University, and the airport are disproportionately long, limiting accessibility for non-drivers. Most downtown residents live within a five-minute walk of a bus stop, but affordable housing clusters are not—reinforcing inequities in access. Surface parking consumes 95 acres, nearly 9% of downtown’s land area, and is distributed in a fragmented pattern that leaves some areas

underserved and others overbuilt. Walkability varies dramatically: narrow, low-traffic streets are comfortable for pedestrians, while multi-lane corridors remain difficult to cross. Major physical barriers, including I-110, rail lines, industrial edges, and even Capitol Lake, restrict connectivity with adjacent neighborhoods. Downtown planning should prioritize multimodal movement, reduce barriers, improve transit efficiency, and reclaim land from parking.

A CITY DESIGNED FOR CARS

Vehicular Access (5-, 10-, 20-min trip from downtown CBD)



While bus routes serve downtown, driving remains the fastest and most convenient option. Seventy-four percent of Baton Rouge residents commute by car, compared to just 1% by bus, reflecting transit travel times that are often too slow to compete with driving.

DOMINANT + DISCONNECTED PARKING



Legend

- Parking Garage
- Surface Parking
- Public Parking

Parking is disaggregated and inaccessible to some parts of downtown. Surface parking consumes a disproportionately large amount of land area, limiting opportunities for walkable streets, mixed-use development, and vibrant public spaces.

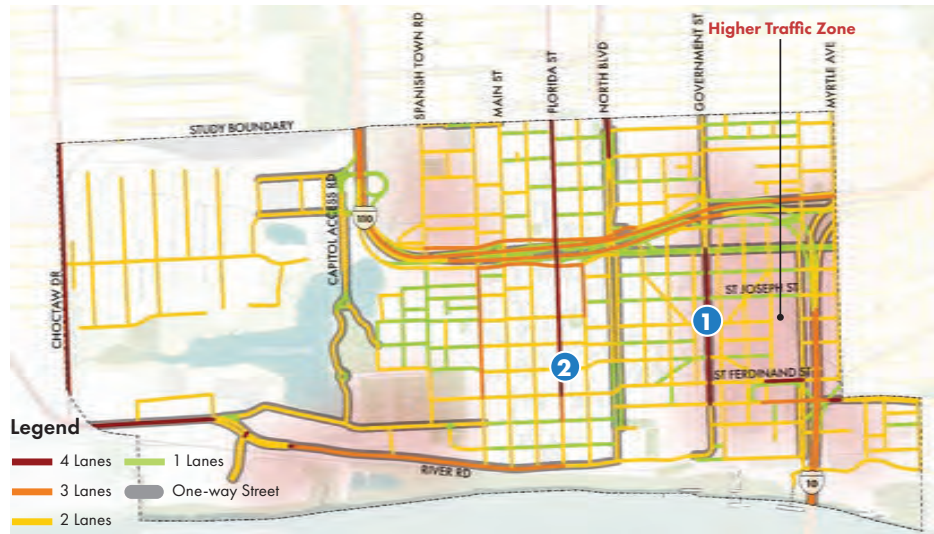
P **4,282**
Public parking spots downtown

9%
of downtown land is dedicated to surface parking lots (95.24 acres)

Access & Mobility Challenges

CHALLENGING PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE ON BUSY STREETS

Single lane streets tend to be very walkable while 3 to 4 lane streets are less so. Despite having a greenway, high traffic makes North Boulevard less pedestrian friendly.



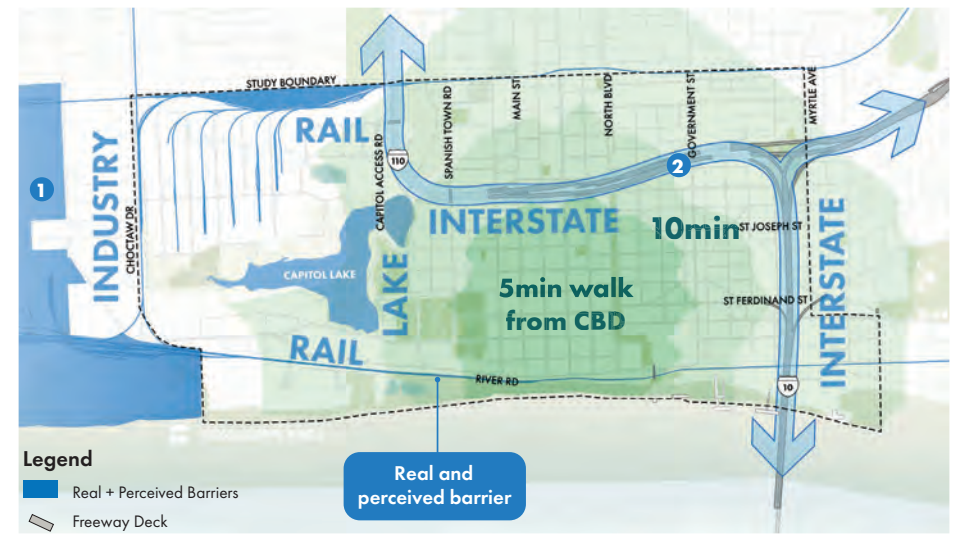
East Boulevard
1 Lane, Major Collector [low traffic, bike trail and sidewalks on either side, walkable]



North Boulevard
4 Lane, Minor Arterial, [high traffic, bike path, side walking path, sidewalks on either side, walkable]

DOWNTOWN IS SURROUNDED BY BARRIERS

Various barriers exist within and around downtown, including the interstates, rail lines, Capitol Lake, and adjacent industrial land.



Industry along Choctaw Drive



I-110 Underpass at Government Street

Circulation Network

UNRELIABLE TRANSIT

While most downtown residents are within a 5-minute walk of a bus stop, existing affordable housing is not. That said, proximity does not mean better access given how long it takes all residents to get between downtown and nearby destinations.

74% of downtown residents commute to work by car (vs. 1.5% by bus)

19 mins average commute time to work from downtown

9.5 miles Average commute distance in Baton Rouge
Source: Census, ESRI Business Analyst



Legend

- Study Boundary
- Bus Route
- Downtown Bus Circulator (Trolley)
- LSU Tiger Trails Bus Route
- Future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Proposed Regional Trail
- *MoveBR Street Improvement
- I-10 Widening Project
- Parking Garage
- Major Vehicular Route
- Residential

*Celebrating momentum from Plan Baton Rouge II: The MoveBR Project is a key initiative underway that aims to improve access to downtown through improvements in transit, biking and pedestrian infrastructure along Florida St.

Links: Key Takeaways & Challenges

OBSERVATION SUMMARY

1. A city designed for cars

Traveling by car to and from downtown is the easiest and fastest option (for those who own a vehicle). Transit takes longer.

2. Dominant and disconnected parking

Parking is disaggregated and inaccessible to some parts of downtown. Surface parking consumes a disproportionately large amount of land area that could be redeveloped with better placemaking uses.

3. Challenging pedestrian experience on busy streets

Existing open space and transit routes limit downtown's connectivity; gaps in the walkshed (area coverable within a 5 minute walk) represent the areas most in need of improved utilization and accessibility.

4. Unreliable transit

While most downtown residents are within a 5-minute walk of a bus stop, existing affordable housing is not. That said, proximity does not mean better access given how long it takes all residents to get between downtown and nearby destinations.

5. Downtown is surrounded by barriers

Various barriers exist within and around downtown, including the interstates, rail lines, Capitol Lake, and adjacent industrial land. Interestingly, Capitol Lake is more of a pedestrian barrier than Interstate 110.

Photo Source: Sasaki

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Downtown's riverfront, green spaces, cultural hubs, and amenities are currently disconnected, presenting a prime opportunity to create a cohesive network. By linking trails, pedestrian crossings, transit, and nearby institutions like LSU, BRCC, and Southern, we can make downtown more accessible, navigable, and vibrant—unlocking its full economic, social, and ecological potential.

Character

Downtown Baton Rouge encompasses nine distinct character areas, each with unique block patterns, building scales, and architectural traditions—from the intimate streets of Spanish Town to the civic monumentalism of the Capitol Area and the mid-rise density of the CBD. Despite this richness, the overall land-use mix underperforms relative to vibrant urban districts. Institutional, office, and residential uses dominate, while commercial, cultural, and mixed-use buildings occupy a smaller share of land. Approximately one-third of downtown is undeveloped, vacant, or used for surface

parking—limiting vibrancy, walkability, and cultural expression. Architecturally, downtown’s structures reflect a broad timeline of the city’s development, offering a strong foundation for place identity. Yet many assets remain disconnected or underleveraged within their surroundings. The master plan must harness the individuality of each character area, encourage context-sensitive infill, and transform underutilized parcels into destinations that reinforce a lively, welcoming, and distinctly Baton Rouge urban environment.

RICH WITH HISTORICALLY VALUABLE SITES

Downtown buildings exhibit a diverse and charming blend of architectural styles, showcasing Baton Rouge’s unique history.



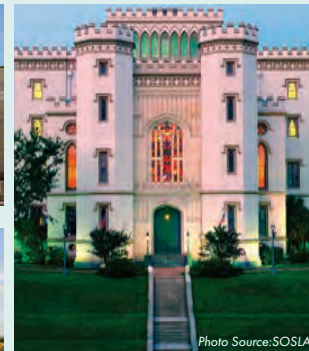
A Louisiana State Capitol



C Old Post Office



F Louisiana Old State Capitol



D River Center Branch Library



G Louisiana Art and Science Museum



B Rivermark Center



E Shaw Center



H City Dock



I River Center



K Catfish Town Historic Building



J USS KIDD Veterans Museum



L The Water Institute



Undeveloped Land

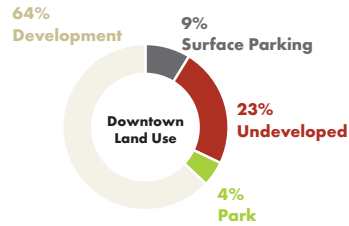
Downtown land is...

32%

Undeveloped, vacant, or dedicated to surface parking



- Legend**
- Undeveloped and vacant land
 - Surface Parking Lot
 - Park
 - Development



1 Underdeveloped Land north of the Queen Casino



2 Desoto Park



3 181 Florida St Surface Parking Lot

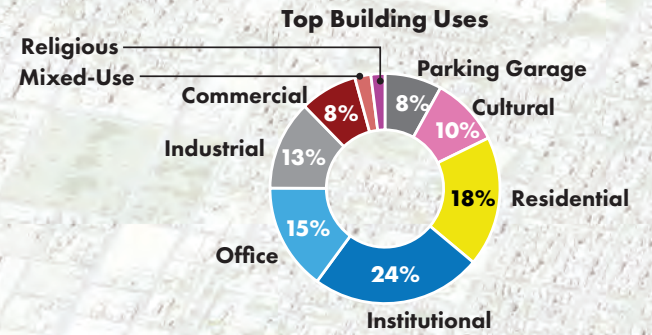


4 Baton Rouge Riverfront



23% of downtown land is undeveloped or vacant. Combined with surface parking (9%), one-third of downtown land is dedicated to uses (or non-uses) that contribute very little value to downtown's commercial and cultural vitality. This does not include the land dedicated to industrial uses.

Existing Building Use



Legend

- Study Boundary
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Parking Garage
- Multifamily Residential
- Single Family Residential
- Commercial
- Cultural
- Mixed-Use
- Office
- Religious

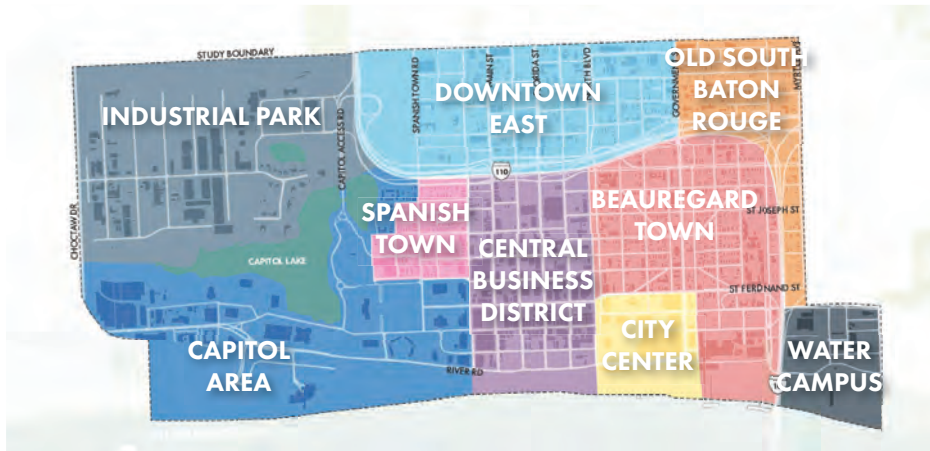
DOWNTOWN LACKS VIBRANCY

The top building uses in downtown include institutional, residential, and office. The current mix of uses includes a lower proportion of commercial and cultural uses than is seen in other, successful downtowns. Greater proportions of these active uses contribute to downtown vibrancy.

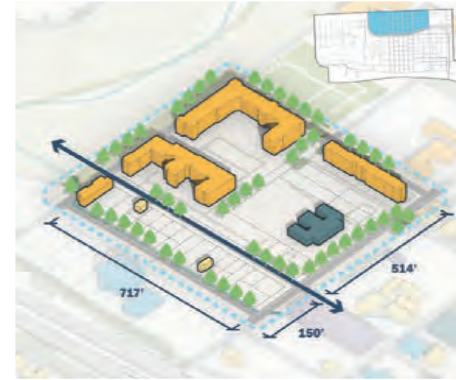
Downtown Neighborhoods

DOWNTOWN IS RICH IN URBAN CHARACTER

Five different neighborhoods are counted among Downtown's nine distinct character areas, each with different block patterns, architectural styles, and building use compositions.



DOWNTOWN EAST



0.21 Acre
Average lot size

24 Feet
Average Building Height



Photo Source: Downtown Development District

SPANISH TOWN



0.14 Acre
Average lot size

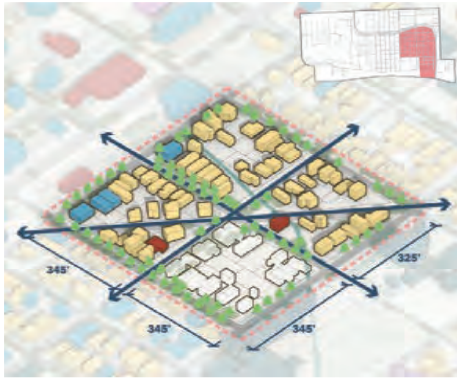
26 Feet
Average Building Height



Photo Source: Downtown Development District

Downtown Neighborhoods

BEAUREGARD TOWN



 **0.17 Acre**
Average lot size

 **25 Feet**
Average Building Height

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT



 **0.24 Acre**
Average lot size

 **40 Feet**
Average Building Height

OLD SOUTH BATON ROUGE



 **0.16 Acre**
Average lot size

 **25 Feet**
Average Building Height



Photo Source: Natasha Engle



Photo Source: Business Report



Photo Source: Downtown Development District

Character: Key Takeaways & Challenges

OBSERVATION SUMMARY

1. Downtown is rich with historically valuable sites

Downtown buildings exhibit a diverse and charming blend of architectural styles, showcasing Baton Rouge's unique history.

2. One-third of downtown is undeveloped

The existing open spaces are regionally well-connected; protected habitats follow the conveyance edges and act as bridges between the open spaces. Downtown does not share this same connectivity through protected habitats.

3. Downtown lacks vibrancy

The top building uses in downtown include institutional, residential, and office. The current mix of uses does not represent best practice in creating vibrant urban areas.

4. Downtown is rich in urban character

Downtown has nine distinct character areas, including five neighborhoods with differing block patterns, architectural styles, and building use compositions.

Photo Source: Downtown Development District

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Downtown's distinct neighborhoods, character areas, and underutilized land present opportunities to drive tailored, place-based growth. By leveraging the identity and strengths of each area, we can create diverse solutions that enhance cultural vitality, economic opportunity, and the overall experience of the city.

An aerial photograph of a city at dusk, showing a river with a bridge in the foreground and a dense urban area with many lit-up buildings in the background. The sky is a mix of orange and blue.

03

Plan Baton Rouge III Rouge III Vision

Plan Baton Rouge III envisions a future downtown that is bustling with energy, diverse in offerings and things to do, well-connected to the parish's neighborhoods, and a compelling destination for locals and visitors alike. This chapter explores the core components of that vision.

Community Aspirations

Across the first two phases of engagement, the community articulated a clear aspiration for Downtown Baton Rouge to become a lively, inclusive, and authentic urban heart that reflects the city's culture, history, and riverfront identity. Residents consistently emphasized the need for more people living downtown, supported by a wider range of housing options—including affordable, workforce, and student housing—paired with everyday amenities that make downtown viable for daily life. There is strong desire for a more vibrant market, with expanded retail, grocery options, restaurants, and entertainment that support families, workers, and visitors alike.

The Mississippi River is seen as downtown's greatest untapped asset, with aspirations for a transformed riverfront that functions as a "front porch" for the region—green, shaded, walkable, and programmed with events, culture, and recreation rather than dominated by parking. Participants also stressed the importance of walkability, shade, safety, and better connections between downtown, nearby neighborhoods, LSU, and Southern University. The community called for celebrating local history, arts, and neighborhoods through cohesive design, storytelling, and cultural corridors that reinforce a strong sense of place and civic pride.



Phase 1 Open House attendees voted for what they wanted to see or improve in downtown...



People want to see more dining and entertainment options in downtown and better pedestrian access to the river. They also voted for more cultural festivals, improved walking/biking infrastructure and green spaces.

Phase 2 Open House attendees provided feedback on and ranked initial guiding principles. They also prioritized locations in downtown where they wish to see investment and transformation.

Top 5 guiding principles the community wants prioritized in Plan Baton Rouge III...

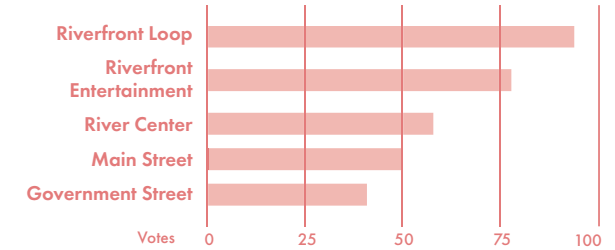
- 1st A New Front Porch**
(riverfront orientation and activation)
- 2nd Market Diversity**
(more kinds of uses in downtown)
- 3rd Clear Connections**
(improved multimodal mobility to and through downtown)
- 4th Neighborhood Places**
(active neighborhood centers throughout downtown)
- 5th Cultural + Civic Spine**
(cultural trails connecting sites throughout downtown)

Other major themes...

-  **More Affordable + Mixed Housing**
-  **More Arts + Entertainment**
-  **More Accessible Parking**
-  **More Support Services**



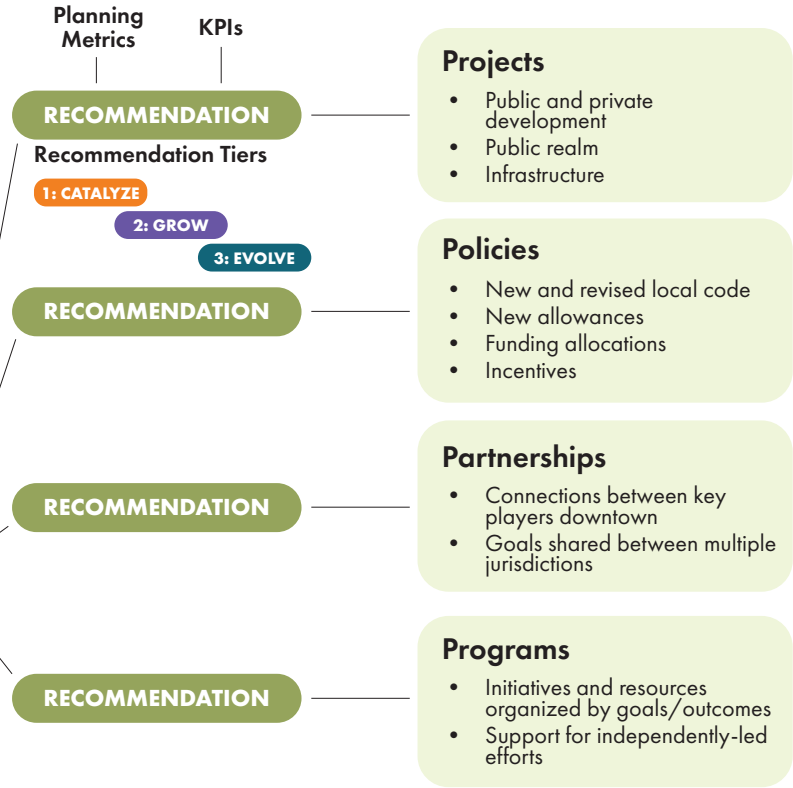
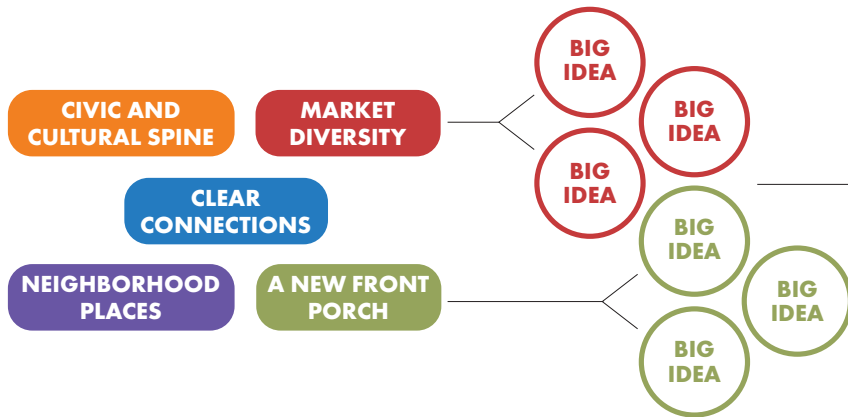
Top 5 areas the community wants prioritized in downtown...



Plan Baton Rouge III Recommendations

With a plan as far-reaching and large in scale as Plan Baton Rouge III, an overarching vision must inform the recommendations that will take shape over a long period of time. For this downtown plan, the vision is articulated with five Guiding Principles—shaped by project leaders and community stakeholders over the course of the planning process—and a series of big ideas for physical improvements that derive from those

Guiding Principles. These big ideas inspire a set of specific recommendations, often tailored to specific sites, corridors, and neighborhoods of downtown. Other recommendations focus on higher-level policy and program prescriptions. This section details these recommendations, as organized by the Guiding Principles, and provides high-level direction on pushing them forward.



Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles provide the conceptual foundation for a downtown master plan, translating community values, market realities, and long-term aspirations into a clear framework for decision-making. Rather than prescribing specific projects, they establish shared priorities that direct where investment should occur, how places should function, and what outcomes matter most.

Big Ideas

Each Guiding Principle is translated into planning and design guidance with three “big ideas” that describe physical opportunities to concentrate investment and improvements in key areas of downtown. Big ideas provide shape and form to the Guiding Principles and serve as the next level of organization for more site-specific and policy/programmatic recommendations.

Plan Recommendations

Recommendations are the basic unit of the Plan Baton Rouge III vision. These recommendations, organized by the Guiding Principles are the specific actions and site-specific plans that will culminate in the realization of the big ideas and the goals of the Guiding Principles. Each recommendation is supported with high-level guidance on potential paths to implementation in the following pages.

Recommendation Types

Each recommendation is categorized as one of four Ps—projects, policies, partnerships, or programs. Each of these recommendation types takes shape in a different way, covers different areas of downtown, and results in a different kind of impact. Recommendations that fit within each type are described above.

Recommendation Tiers

Each recommendation is tiered into: 1. Catalyze, 2. Grow, and 3. Evolve to support a phased implementation approach. This prioritization of recommendations is based on the perspectives of community leaders, community input, the level of expected impact on downtown, the potential to catalyze further investment.

Plan Baton Rouge III Framework Plan

The Plan Baton Rouge III framework plan sets in place a long-term vision for the physical organization, growth, and activation of Downtown Baton Rouge. The framework plan is targeted to the unique assets, energy, and opportunities of downtown's various areas and neighborhoods, but intentionally flexible, to allow for adaptation, variation, and a reshuffling of priorities throughout the next two decades, as new realities and investments emerge.

The framework plan focuses on creating a stronger and more meaningful connection between downtown and the Mississippi Riverfront. To better connect the city and parish to downtown's riverfront, strategic enhancements and growth concepts are proposed for key corridors from the riverfront through downtown and into the neighborhoods.

A renewed relationship is established between the State Capitol and downtown's various historic sites and assets as the story of Downtown Baton Rouge's history is revealed and emphasized as an experience.

These projects and priorities are some of the major themes of the Plan Baton Rouge III downtown framework. The next pages explore in greater detail how they can individually and collectively transform the experience of downtown.



Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles provide the conceptual foundation for a downtown master plan, translating community values, market realities, and long-term aspirations into a clear framework for decision-making. Rather than prescribing specific projects, they establish shared priorities that direct where investment should occur, how places should function, and what outcomes matter most. For Plan Baton Rouge III, the Guiding Principles focus attention on catalytic economic growth, livable downtown neighborhoods, reconnection to the Mississippi River, celebration of history and culture, and improved mobility and access. Together, they align public policy, private development, and civic action around a common vision. These principles help ensure that recommendations remain both aspirational and achievable—flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions while consistent enough to guide incremental decisions over time.

Taken together, the Guiding Principles function as an integrated system rather than a set of independent ideas. Economic growth is reinforced by livable neighborhoods; cultural assets are amplified through better connections; and the riverfront becomes more valuable when it is accessible, programmed, and connected to downtown life. This interdependence ensures that individual investments contribute to broader outcomes rather than isolated improvements. For Plan Baton Rouge III, the principles provide a consistent lens through which policies, projects, and partnerships can be evaluated, helping align near-term actions with long-term transformation. As conditions evolve, the principles remain a durable guide for implementation, decision-making, and accountability. *Photo Sources (top left to bottom right): Sasaki; Visit Greenville, South Carolina; World Economic Forum; Rundell Ernstberger Associates; Sasaki.*



A New Front Porch



Market Diversity



Neighborhood Places



Civic and Cultural Spine



Clear Connections

A New Front Porch

Establish a front porch mentality along the riverfront with destination park spaces and complementary land uses.

A New Front Porch repositions the Mississippi River as downtown's defining asset rather than a barrier at its edge. This principle establishes a vision for an accessible, active, and welcoming riverfront anchored by destination parks, trails, and river-oriented uses. Overcoming physical obstacles—such as River Road, the railroad, and the levee—is central to reconnecting downtown to the water. Complementary development and active frontages are encouraged to face the river, reinforcing it as a place for everyday use and special events. By prioritizing comfort, shade, and programming, the riverfront can become Baton Rouge's shared front porch: a civic space that supports recreation, culture, tourism, and regional identity.

Photo Source: 225 Magazine

HOW DO WE MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

- Activate 15% of the downtown riverfront with commercial uses.
- Activate 20% of the downtown riverfront with community gathering uses.
- Provide shade from the sun for at least 60% of the downtown riverfront zone.
- Provide pedestrian access to the riverfront zone from Downtown Baton Rouge at least every 1,000 feet between the Capitol and the I-10 bridge.
- Add 1,000 housing units to the downtown riverfront and 400 key hotel rooms.

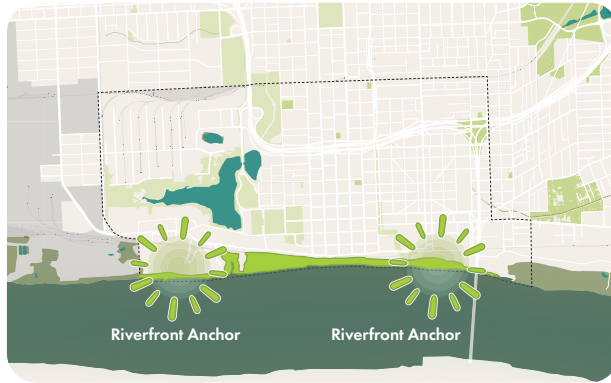
BIG IDEAS

Establish Riverfront Anchors
Provide Continuous Access
Develop the Edge

Big Ideas

Establish Riverfront Anchors

Establish riverfront anchors, including commercial and recreational destinations, on either end of downtown.



Provide Continuous Riverfront Access

Provide continuous pedestrian access along the riverfront with a promenade; include loops into and through the city.



Develop the Edge

Develop and densify the river's edge behind the levee, where possible, providing riverfront activation and views.



Case Studies

Cincinnati Riverfront Park Cincinnati, OH

Cincinnati's riverfront establishes strong anchors at both ends of downtown through Smale Riverfront Park and The Banks. Smale provides a major civic and recreational destination on the west, while The Banks anchors the east with sports venues, mixed-use development, and riverfront attractions, drawing activity, investment, and visitors to the Ohio River's edge.



The BeltLine Atlanta, GA

While not strictly a riverfront, the BeltLine provides continuous, connected pedestrian and bike access along former rail corridors, linking parks, neighborhoods, and waterways. Its design includes loops and spurs that bring people through downtown and adjacent areas, creating a linear promenade experience. By connecting green space, trails, and destinations, the BeltLine ensures continuous public access and encourages active use along Atlanta's waterfront-adjacent corridors.



The Wharf Washington, D.C.

The Wharf redeveloped the Potomac's edge with dense mixed-use buildings, activating the waterfront with restaurants, shops, residences, and cultural spaces. Boardwalks and terraces provide uninterrupted river views, while public plazas and piers encourage gatherings and events. By placing development close to the water and integrating accessible promenades, The Wharf transforms the river's edge into a lively, visually engaging, and highly activated downtown destination.



Market Diversity

Introduce new economic anchors to diversify downtown's economy and catalyze public and private investment with a suite of easy to access economic tools.

Market Diversity focuses on strengthening downtown's economic competitiveness by broadening the range of uses, employers, and experiences it offers. Downtown Baton Rouge cannot rely on a single sector to drive growth; instead, it must cultivate a mix of innovation, education, entertainment, tourism, housing, and daily-life retail. This principle emphasizes creating new economic anchors, supporting small businesses and startups, and making it easier to invest through streamlined processes and accessible development tools. By partnering with major institutions and targeting strategic redevelopment sites, downtown can attract sustained public and private investment. A more diverse market increases activity throughout the day and week, strengthens resilience, and reinforces downtown's role as a meaningful economic node within the region.

Photo Source: 225 Magazine

HOW DO WE MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

- Triple the downtown residential population within 10 years to over 10,000 residents.
- Establish at least 3 new anchor industries within downtown.
- Establish 2 new academic functions within downtown.
- Land at least 2 company headquarters to relocate into downtown.
- Add 10,000 jobs to the downtown area.

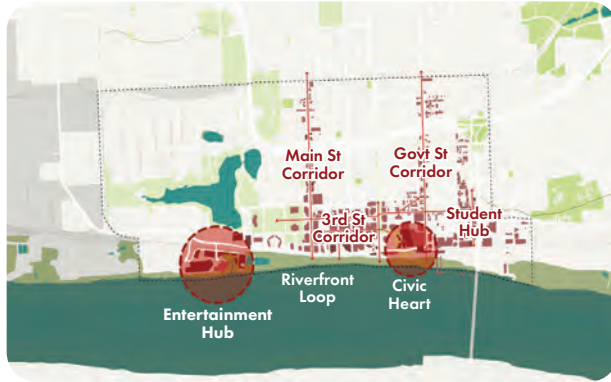
BIG IDEAS

Bring Students Downtown
Bring Visitors Downtown
Bring Businesses Downtown

Big Ideas

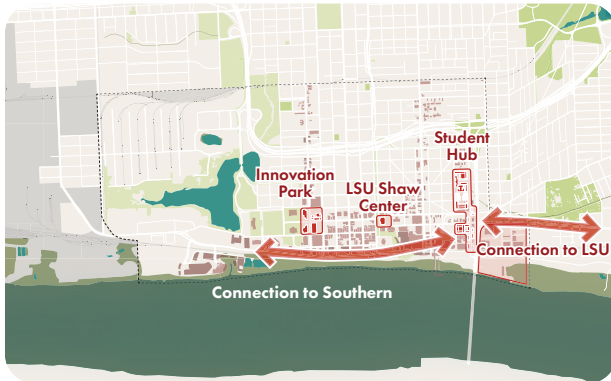
Bring People Downtown

Create a series of clustered destinations on ground floors along key streets downtown.



Bring Students Downtown

Make downtown a student hub with concentrations of student housing, academic programs, and student life.



Bring Businesses Back

Make downtown the region's most attractive destination for new and growing businesses.



Case Studies

Main Street Greenville, SC

Greenville used a clear sequence of public investments (riverfront park, pedestrian bridge, and streetscape) and consistent zoning/placemaking strategies to convert its downtown "Main Street" into a string of tightly clustered ground-floor destinations (cafés, restaurants, shops, galleries and plazas) that reliably draw people day and night. The result is a lively, walkable corridor anchored by Falls Park and reinforced by private reinvestment on Main Street.



Photo Source: Visit Greenville SC

Auburn University Auburn, AL

Auburn intentionally blurred the boundary between campus and downtown, transforming its historic downtown (centered on College Street and Magnolia Avenue) into an extension of student life rather than a separate commercial district. Today, downtown Auburn functions as the city's primary student hub while remaining active and attractive to residents and visitors.



Photo Source: City of Auburn

Downtown Bentonville Bentonville, AR

Bentonville revitalized its compact downtown by attracting professional, creative, and startup businesses. Key moves included providing flexible office and mixed-use spaces, investing in walkable streets, plazas, and cultural amenities, and aligning zoning and parking policies to support density. Downtown became the region's business hub, offering lifestyle and talent advantages suburban areas couldn't match, driving private investment, low vacancy, and a strong 24/7 professional presence.



Photo Source: AY Magazine

Neighborhood Places

Create a network of neighborhood nodes that provide daily life amenities, other active uses, and enhanced public realm to establish a more blended land use pattern and increased residential population.

Neighborhood Places focuses on transforming downtown into a collection of complete, walkable neighborhoods while reinforcing its role as the region's central gathering place. This principle calls for a network of identifiable nodes that offer daily amenities, active ground-floor uses, housing, and welcoming public spaces, creating both local identity and a shared destination for the broader community. By concentrating activity and improving the public realm around these nodes, downtown can support a stronger residential population while serving as the hub where people from across the region come together. Co-locating housing, retail, open space, and mobility improvements helps create places where people can live, work, and gather without relying on long car trips. Over time, these neighborhood places build vibrancy, improve safety through consistent activity, and make downtown more livable, human-scaled, and regionally significant.

Photo Source: Downtown Greensboro

HOW DO WE MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

- ❑ Ensure over 50% downtown residents live within a 5-minute walk of basic needs and daily-life amenities.
- ❑ Establish 5 new mixed-use public realm nodes throughout downtown; strengthen and diversify 2 existing nodes.
- ❑ Establish 3 new concentrated residential density nodes within downtown with 300+ units each.
- ❑ Decrease commercial vacancy within downtown by 50% (from 5.3% to 2.65%).
- ❑ Decrease retail vacancy within downtown by 50% (from 4.57% to 2.35%).
- ❑ Improve family amenities, including adding a K-12 school in downtown.

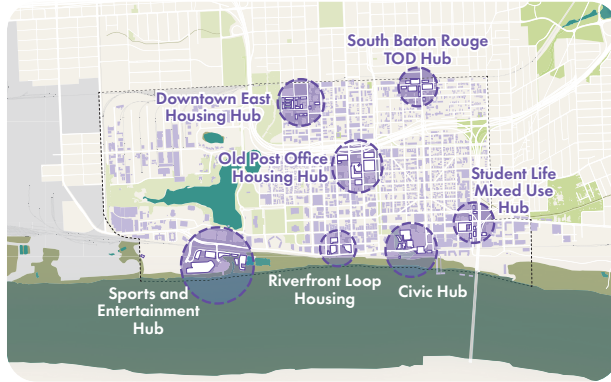
BIG IDEAS

Program and Activate
Promote Housing for All
Create Mixed-Use Hubs

Big Ideas

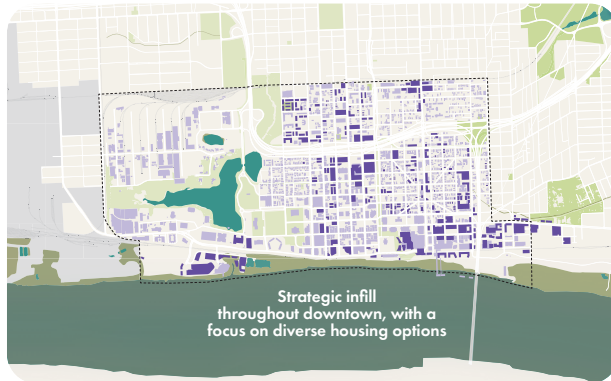
Program and Activate

Experiment with programming and activation strategies to bring more people to venues and businesses.



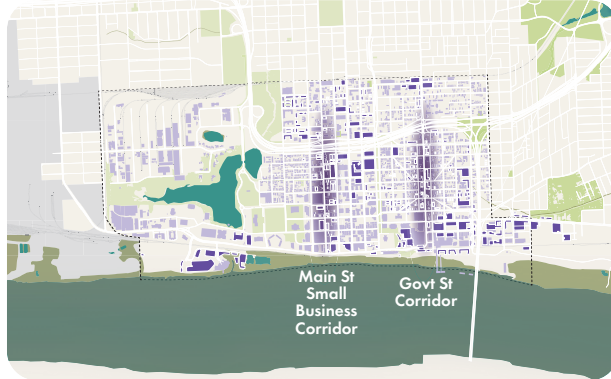
Promote Housing for All

Make downtown a larger and better neighborhood.



Create Mixed-Use Hubs

Promote a dense mix of uses in a concentrated node within each neighborhood downtown.



Case Studies

Downtown Asheville Asheville, NC

Asheville activates its downtown through festivals, weekly markets, pop-up shops, public art, and live performances. These events draw residents and visitors, support local businesses, and keep streets lively year-round. Collaborative partnerships with nonprofits and business groups enable flexible, low-cost programming that experiments with new ideas, creating a vibrant, adaptive, and consistently active downtown.



Missing Middle Housing

Introducing duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and small multi-unit buildings downtown or on adjacent streets expands the residential base without overwhelming the urban fabric. It increases housing diversity, supports walkable neighborhoods, and brings more residents near shops, transit, and amenities. This approach makes downtown a larger, more inclusive, and vibrant neighborhood while preserving character and scale.



15-Minute Cities

The 15-minute city concept envisions neighborhoods where residents can meet daily needs—work, school, shopping, healthcare, and recreation—within a 15-minute walk or bike ride. By emphasizing mixed-use development, local services, and active transportation, it reduces car dependency, strengthens local economies, fosters community connections, and creates healthier, more equitable, and resilient urban neighborhoods.



Civic and Cultural Spine

Create a unifying network within downtown to tie all historic and cultural amenities together through improved connectivity and intentional storytelling.

A Civic and Cultural Spine focuses on connecting downtown's rich concentration of historic and cultural assets into a legible, cohesive experience. Downtown Baton Rouge holds nationally significant history and a growing collection of museums, cultural institutions, and heritage sites, yet these assets are often experienced in isolation. This principle emphasizes improved physical connections, enhanced public realm, and intentional storytelling to unify these places. Cultural trails, public art, signage, and landscape improvements help reveal and celebrate downtown's layered history—particularly civil rights history and local neighborhood narratives. By linking culture and history into a continuous armature, downtown becomes both more educational and more engaging, strengthening civic pride and attracting visitors.

Photo Source: Downtown Development District

HOW DO WE MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

- ❑ Link all historic and cultural assets in downtown through a clear route with distinct branding that can be accessed on foot and via special-purpose transit. Increase tourist activity downtown by 25%.
- ❑ Improve the ecological conditions and accessibility of the Capitol Lake and increase visitorship by 25%.
- ❑ Capitalize on the presence of multiple museums downtown to create a cohesive Museum District. Increase visitorship and number of events by 50%.
- ❑ Develop downtown as a destination for cultural and entertainment events.

BIG IDEAS

Highlight Cultural Identity
Celebrate the Story
Walks of Discovery

Big Ideas

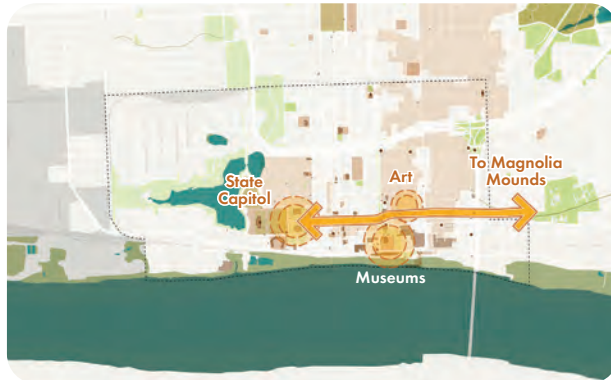
Highlight Cultural Identity

Make downtown the cultural capital of the region and the top destination for cultural events.



Celebrate the Story

Create a distinct identity for downtown's history and culture and create a cohesive experience tying it all together.



Walks of Discovery

Create opportunities to encounter or stumble upon cultural histories and stories in the daily experience of downtown.



Case Studies

Spanish Town Baton Rouge, LA

The historic Spanish Town neighborhood, with its distinctive architecture and traditions, anchors Baton Rouge's cultural identity. Its world-famous Mardi Gras parade, featuring flamboyant floats and pink flamingos, draws thousands downtown annually. Regular cultural programming and public celebrations rooted in local history make downtown the region's top destination for cultural events and community expression.



The Indianapolis Cultural Trail Indianapolis, IN

The Indianapolis Cultural Trail highlights the city's history, neighborhoods, and cultural landmarks through a connected network of bike and pedestrian paths. Public art, wayfinding, and design elements celebrate local stories, tying diverse districts together into a cohesive, accessible experience that strengthens downtown's identity and engages residents and visitors alike.



Civil Rights Heritage Trail Birmingham, AL

Birmingham's downtown features a network of over 100 markers highlighting key civil rights sites, including marches, protests, and leaders. This trail allows visitors and residents to encounter the city's history naturally while exploring downtown, creating a "walk of discovery" that integrates cultural storytelling into daily experiences and emphasizes Birmingham's role in the civil rights movement.





Clear Connections

Connect to nearby neighborhoods, amenities, and institutions while creating a clear mobility network within downtown.

Clear Connections addresses the need for a coherent, people-centered mobility network that links downtown internally and to surrounding neighborhoods and institutions. This principle prioritizes walkability, reliable transit, and safe, intuitive routes for all users while reducing the dominance of surface parking and infrastructural barriers. Establishing gateways, priority corridors, and a clear mobility hierarchy helps downtown feel more accessible and legible. Improved connections to LSU, Southern University, nearby neighborhoods, and regional destinations strengthen downtown's role as a hub. By treating infrastructure as an amenity rather than an obstacle, this principle supports economic activity, equity, and everyday ease of movement.

Photos Source: Sasaki

HOW DO WE MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THIS GUIDING PRINCIPLE?

- Establish a network of 3 pedestrian priority streets to improve the downtown experience.
- Expand the downtown greenway network by adding 6 new green corridors and bike lanes to improve accessibility via active modes.
- Improve transit access and strengthen the transit link to LSU. Increase transit commuters to downtown to 10%, focusing on students.
- Improve public safety perceptions in downtown and increase nighttime activity.
- Reduce surface parking to 5% of downtown while ensuring adequate parking capacity.

BIG IDEAS

Redefine the Pattern
Stitch and Weave
Transit Oriented Decisions

Big Ideas

Redefine the Pattern

Reorganize vehicular traffic patterns to better facilitate multimodal traffic and for pedestrian safety and comfort.



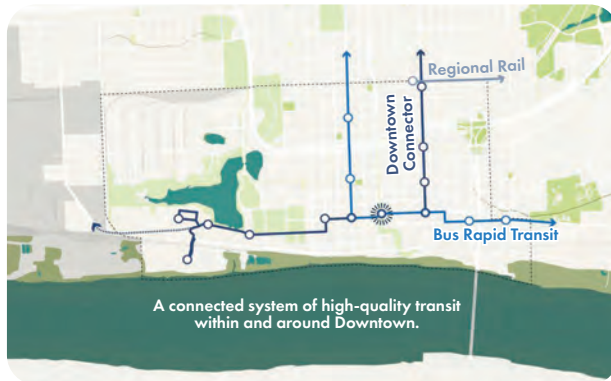
Stitch and Weave

Create a hierarchy of pedestrian-focused streets and paths that connect nodes of activity within and outside of downtown.



Transit-Oriented Decisions

Double down on priority transit routes and connections to provide options to where people want to go.



Case Studies

Downtown Traffic Reorganization Sulphur Springs, TX

Sulphur Springs redesigned its historic downtown square by converting one-way streets to two-way, narrowing lanes, and creating curbside brick streets to slow traffic. On-street parking, bump-outs, and flexible plazas improve pedestrian safety, comfort, and multimodal access. This reorganization revitalized street life, supported local businesses, and turned downtown into a more walkable, people-focused environment.



City Walk Birmingham, AL

City Walk reorganized downtown streets to prioritize pedestrians, linking key destinations such as parks, cultural venues, shops, and transit hubs. A hierarchy of walkable streets, plazas, and gateways guides movement and connects neighborhoods both within and adjacent to downtown. This approach enhances accessibility, encourages exploration, and weaves together activity nodes into a cohesive, vibrant urban fabric.



HealthLine Cleveland, OH

Cleveland's HealthLine demonstrates how prioritizing high-quality transit can reshape urban corridors. By concentrating investment along Euclid Avenue with dedicated lanes, frequent service, and walkable station areas, the project strengthened connections to major job centers and institutions, guided mixed-use redevelopment, and expanded reliable mobility choices aligned with where residents need to go.

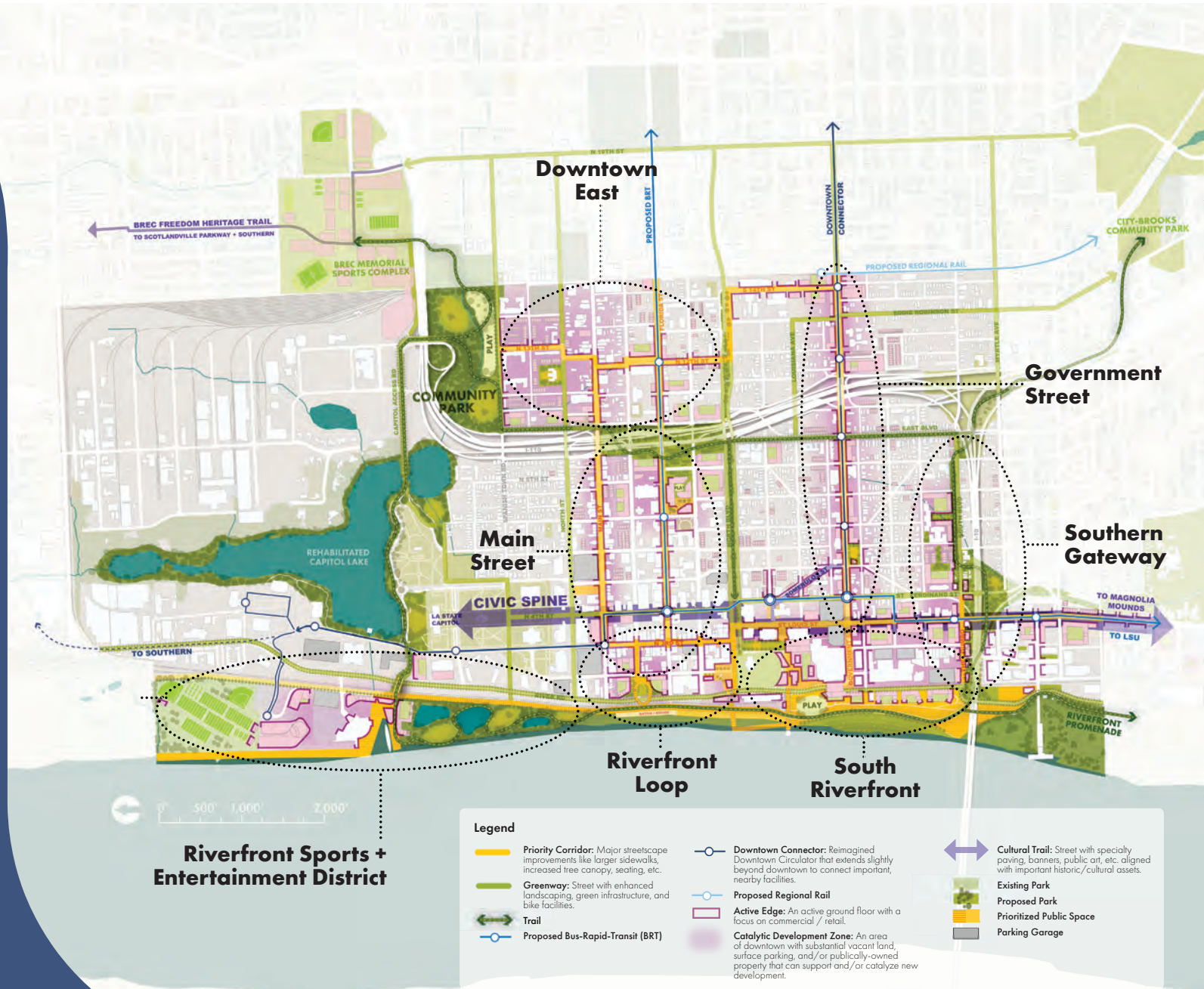


Focus Areas

Downtown Baton Rouge's two and a quarter square miles includes layers of urban design and development shaped over centuries. While downtown generally refers to the area outlined in this plan to the right, there is no one single downtown. Instead, downtown is a collection of neighborhoods, places, infrastructures, and features. Each neighborhood or sub-area of Downtown Baton Rouge offers a distinct character, defined by a distinctive mix of uses, development forms, height and densities, building vintages, vegetation profiles, and unique places and amenities.

To better understand and develop bespoke solutions for these different components of downtown, the planning team identified, studied, and proposed frameworks and growth concepts for seven distinct focus areas. Some of these focus areas are well known already, with distinct identities, such as Downtown East, Main Street, and Government Street. Others are creations of the Plan Baton Rouge III process, bringing together pieces of identifiable areas and new signature projects to compose a memorable and distinctive urban place.

This plan proposes redevelopment, investment, and growth approaches, projects, and priorities for each of these seven focus areas and depicts a potential future condition and identity for each. These schemes focus on progressing toward the goals of the Guiding Principles and delivering to Baton Rougeans the downtown they desire.



Southern Gateway

Market Diversity

- M4** Student Housing Hub
- M5** TIF Strategy
- M6** Bolster DDD Development Toolkit
- M7** The GUMBO (Going Under the Mississippi Bridge Overpass)
- M9** Nicholson Dr Housing

Neighborhood Places

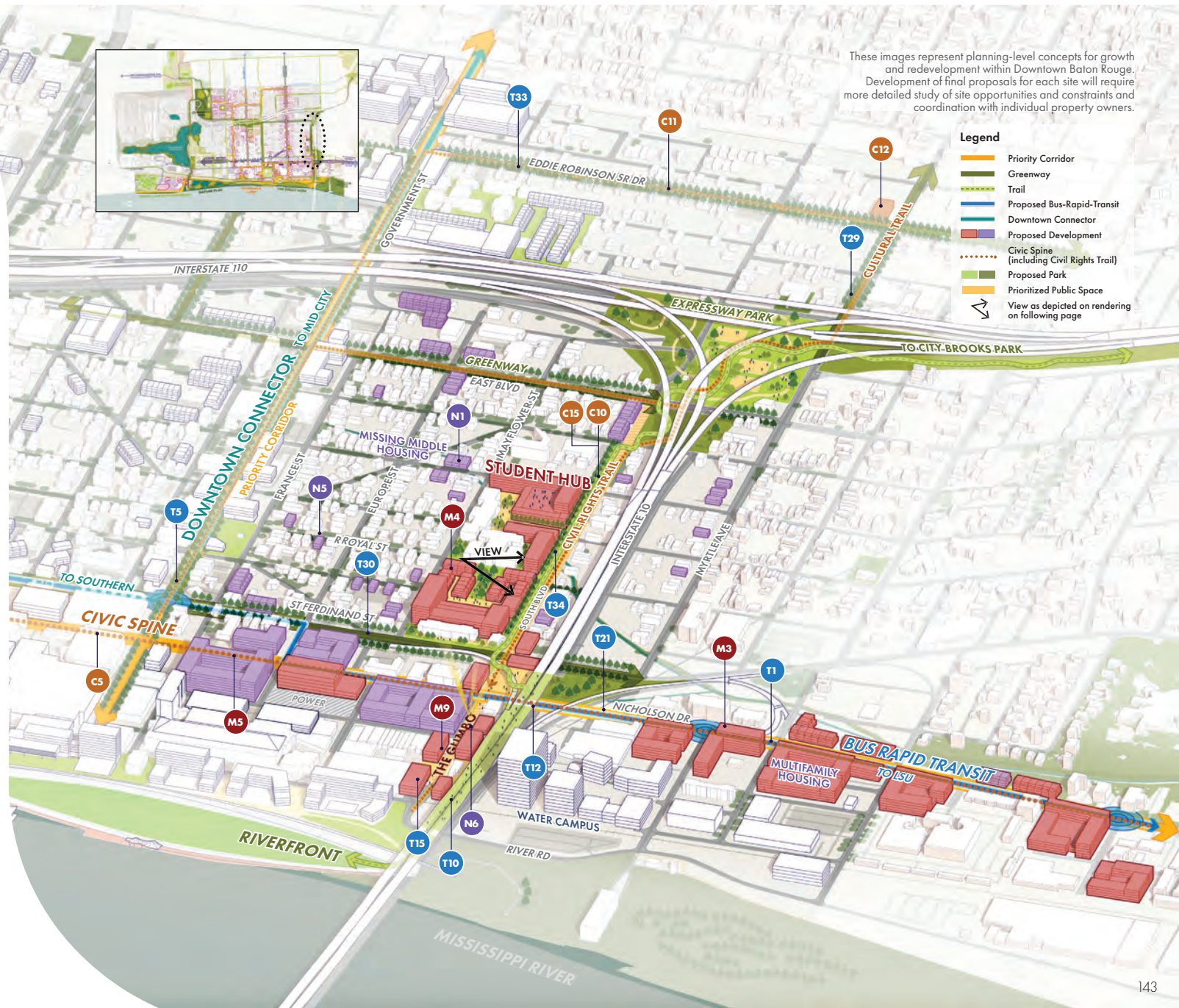
- N1** Missing Middle Housing Toolkit
- N5** Missing Middle Housing Incentives
- N6** Downtown Activation Strategy

Civic + Cultural Spine

- C5** Downtown Baton Rouge Civic Spine
- C6** Civil Rights Trail
- C11** Historic and Cultural Storytelling
- C12** Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame Museum and Culture Center
- C15** Downtown Wayfinding Ordinance

Clear Connections

- T1** Florida St / Nicholson Dr BRT
- T5** Downtown Connector
- T10** Programming Under Interstates
- T12** Nicholson Dr Gateway
- T15** South Blvd Road Diet
- T21** St Louis St to Nicholson Dr Priority Corridor
- T29** Myrtle Ave Greenway
- T30** N 4th St and Ferdinand St Greenway
- T33** Eddie Robinson Sr Dr Greenway
- T34** South Blvd Greenway



These images represent planning-level concepts for growth and redevelopment within Downtown Baton Rouge. Development of final proposals for each site will require more detailed study of site opportunities and constraints and coordination with individual property owners.

Legend

- Priority Corridor
- Greenway
- - - Trail
- Proposed Bus-Rapid-Transit
- Downtown Connector
- Proposed Development
- · - · - Civic Spine (including Civil Rights Trail)
- Proposed Park
- Prioritized Public Space
- ↔ View as depicted on rendering on following page

Student Hub at the Southern Gateway

Adaptive Reuse

Mid-Rise Student
Housing

Townhome Student
Housing

Native Landscapes

Government Street

Market Diversity

- M5** TIF Strategy
- M7** Downtown Development Assistance Team
- M10** Health and Wellness Hub

Neighborhood Places

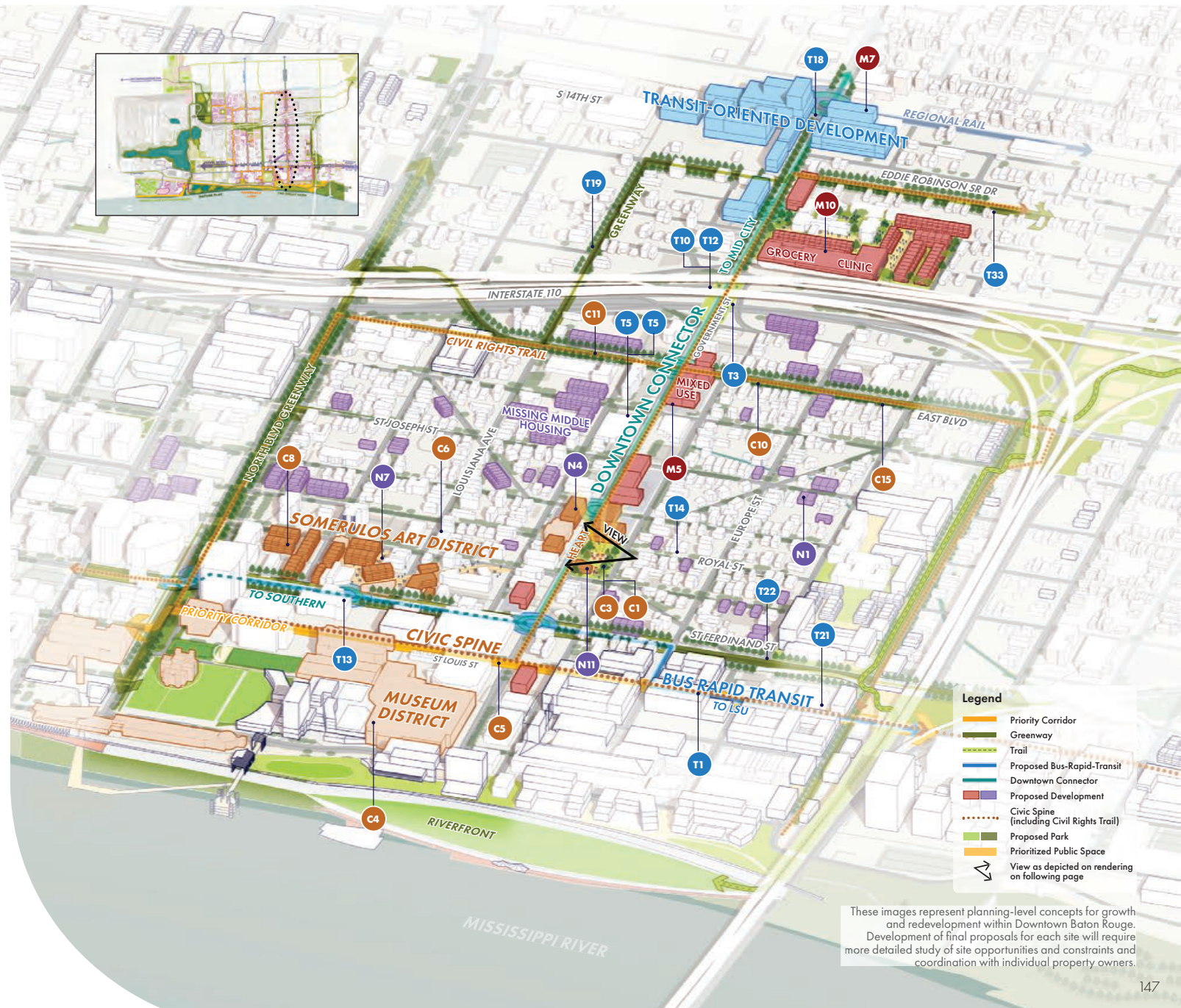
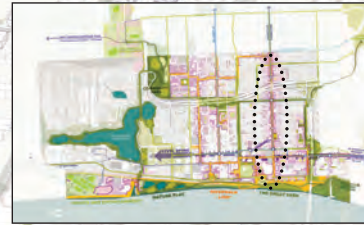
- N1** Missing Middle Housing Toolkit
- N4** Government St Mixed Use Housing Corridor
- N6** Downtown Activation Strategy
- N7** Downtown Neighborhood Programming

Civic + Cultural Spine

- C1** Support the Downtown Night Market
- C3** Beaugard Town Heart
- C4** Downtown Museum District
- C5** Downtown Baton Rouge Civic Spine
- C5** Somerulos Art District
- C8** Cultural Programming Funding
- C10** Civil Rights Trail
- C11** Historic and Cultural Storytelling
- C15** Downtown Wayfinding Ordinance

Clear Connections

- T1** Florida St / Nicholson Dr BRT
- T3** Government St Priority Corridor
- T5** Downtown Connector
- T10** Programming Under Interstates
- T12** Government St Gateway
- T13** Downtown Transit Hub
- T14** Complete Streets Improvements
- T18** S 14th St Priority Corridor
- T19** Louisiana Ave Greenway
- T21** St Louis St to Nicholson Dr Priority Corridor
- T22** Unified Curb Management System
- T30** N 4th St and Ferdinand St Greenway
- T33** Eddie Robinson Sr Dr Greenway



These images represent planning-level concepts for growth and redevelopment within Downtown Baton Rouge. Development of final proposals for each site will require more detailed study of site opportunities and constraints and coordination with individual property owners.

Beauregard Town Heart along Government Street



Food and Beverage Pavilion

Community
Gathering Space

Adaptively Reused
Fire Station

New Multifamily
Housing

Main Street

Market Diversity

- M11** LSU Innovation Park
- M6** Main St Small Business Corridor
- M12** Downtown Business Accelerator Program
- M5** TIF Strategy

Neighborhood Places

- N1** Missing Middle Housing Toolkit
- N2** Downtown Housing Navigator Program
- N3** Local Business Activation
- N8** Old Post Office Site Housing Hub
- N10** Old Post Office K-12 School

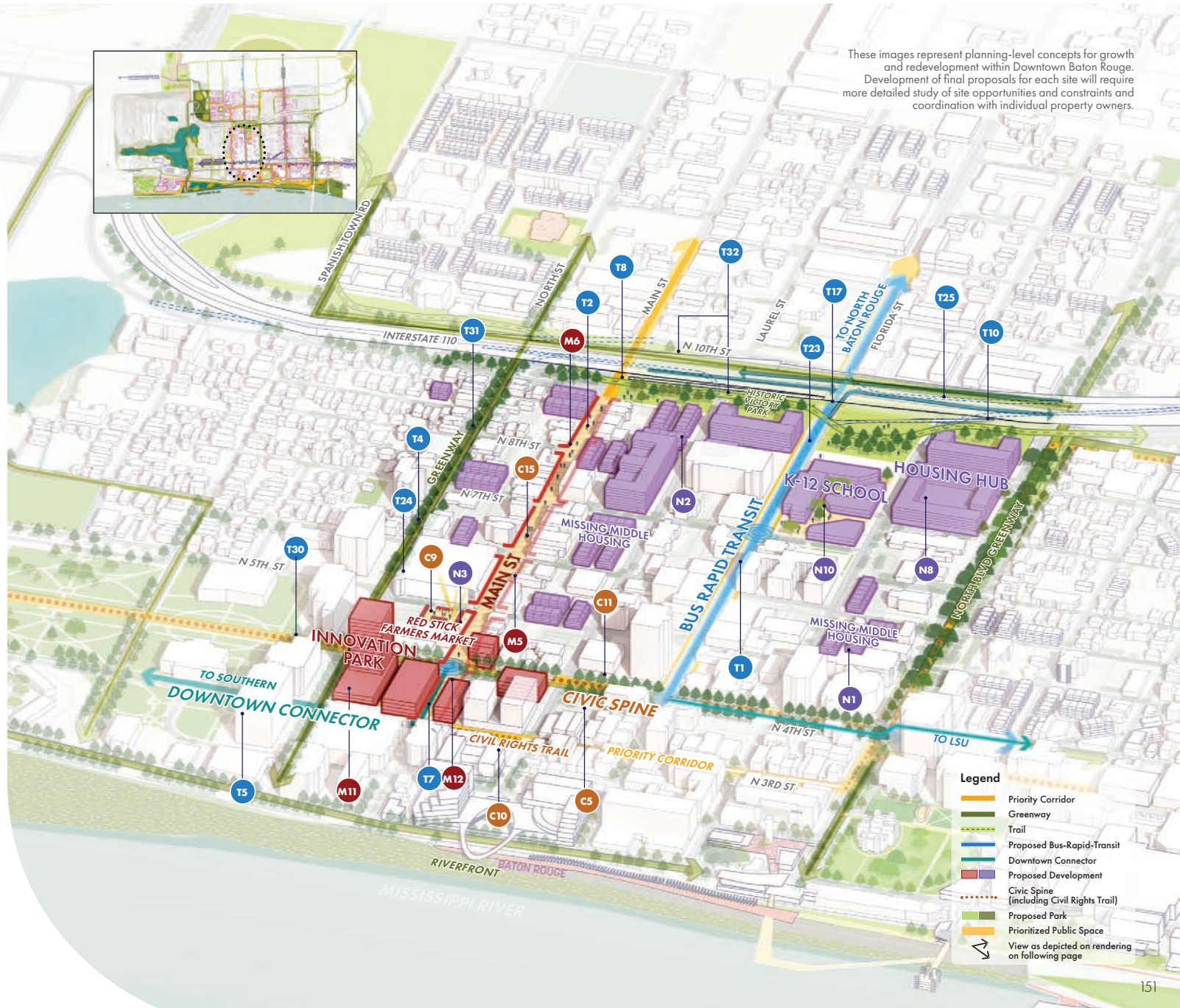
Civic + Cultural Spine

- C5** Downtown Baton Rouge Civic Spine
- C9** Support the Red Sticks Farmers Market
- C10** Historic and Cultural Storytelling
- C11** Downtown Wayfinding Ordinance
- C15** Civil Rights Trail

Clear Connections

- T1** Florida St / Nicholson Dr BRT
- T2** Main St Priority Corridor
- T4** One-way to Two-way Street Conversions
- T5** Downtown Connector
- T7** N 3rd St Priority Corridor
- T8** Main St Gateway
- T10** Programming Under Interstates
- T17** N 10th St Downtown Greenway
- T23** Florida St Gateway
- T24** Unified Parking System
- T25** Remove Select On-Off Ramps
- T30** Florida St Priority Corridor
- T31** N 4th St and Ferdinand St Greenway
- T32** North St Downtown Greenway

These images represent planning-level concepts for growth and redevelopment within Downtown Baton Rouge. Development of final proposals for each site will require more detailed study of site opportunities and constraints and coordination with individual property owners.



Downtown East

Market Diversity

- M6** Main St Small Business Corridor
- M8** Bolster DDD Development Toolkit
- M5** TIF Strategy

Neighborhood Places

- N1** Missing Middle Housing Toolkit
- N2** Downtown Housing Navigator Program
- N5** Missing Middle Housing Incentives
- N6** Downtown Activation Strategy
- N7** Downtown Neighborhood Programming
- N9** Block Step Neighborhood Housing
- N11** Block Step Neighborhood Community Park

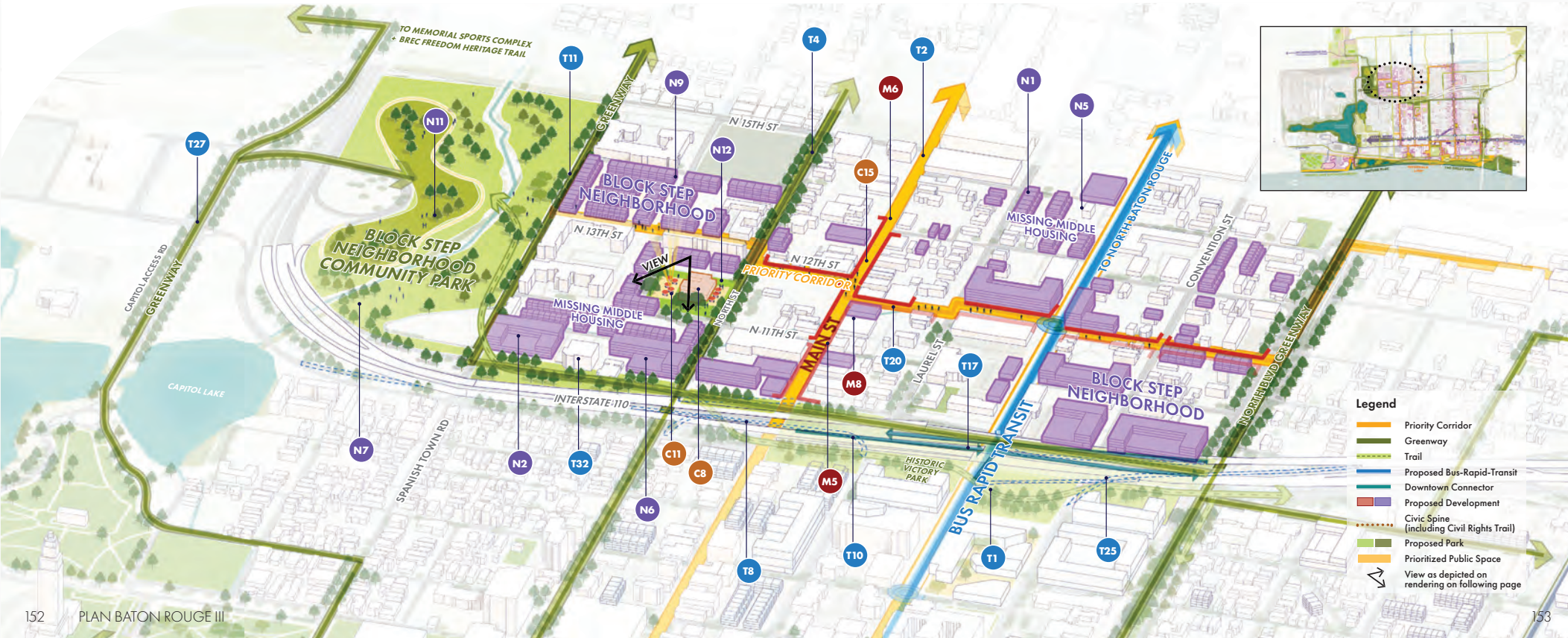
Civic + Cultural Spine

- C8** Cultural Programming Funding
- C11** Historic and Cultural Storytelling
- C15** Downtown Wayfinding Ordinance

Clear Connections

- T1** Florida St / Nicholson Dr BRT
- T2** Main St Priority Corridor
- T4** One-way to Two-way Street Conversions
- T8** Main St Gateway
- T10** Programming Under Interstates
- T11** Spanish Town Rd Greenway
- T17** Florida St Gateway
- T20** Block Step Neighborhood Priority Corridor
- T23** Florida St Priority Corridor
- T25** Remove Select On-Off Ramps
- T27** State Capitol to Block Step Neighborhood Community Park Greenway
- T32** N 10th St Downtown Greenway

These images represent planning-level concepts for growth and redevelopment within Downtown Baton Rouge. Development of final proposals for each site will require more detailed study of site opportunities and constraints and coordination with individual property owners.

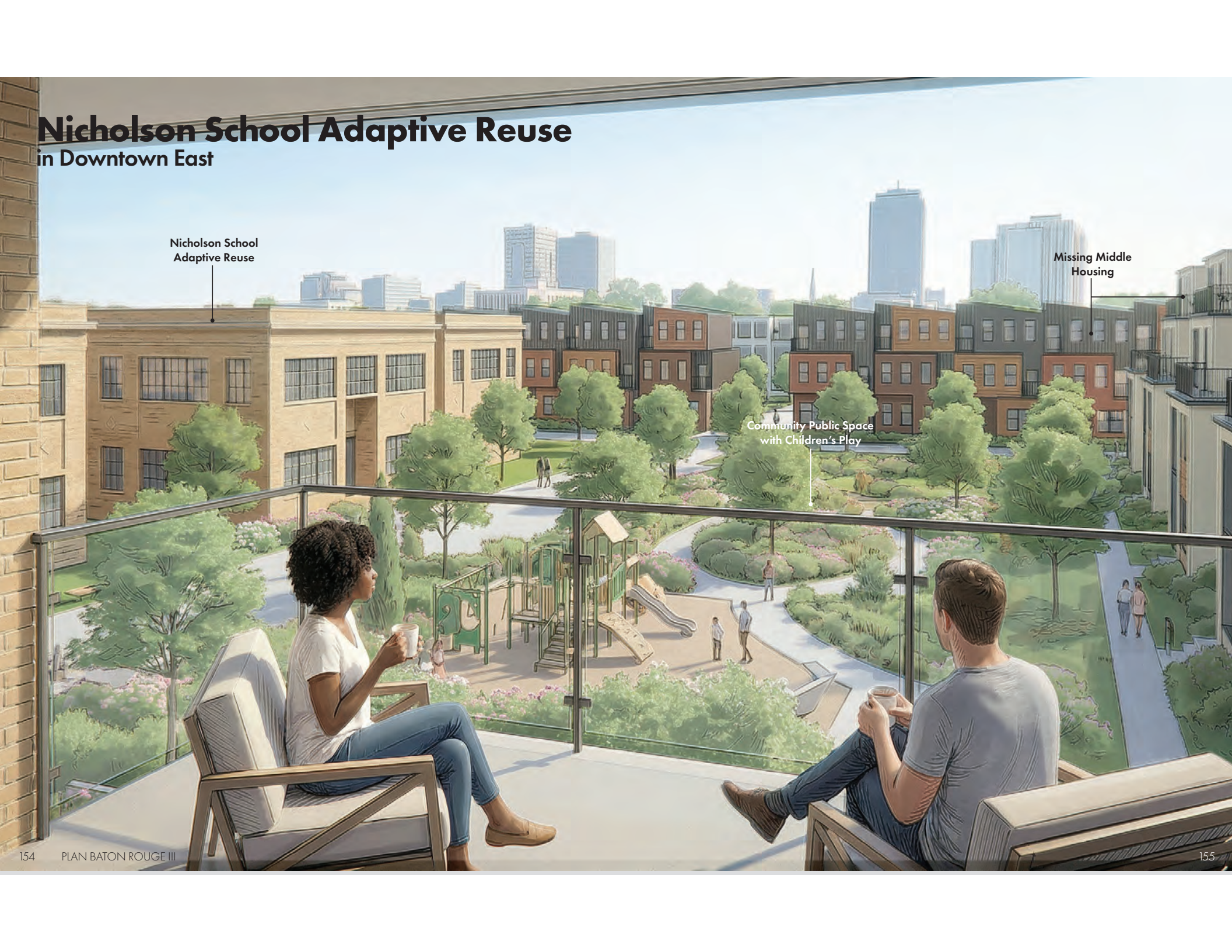


Nicholson School Adaptive Reuse in Downtown East

Nicholson School
Adaptive Reuse

Missing Middle
Housing

Community Public Space
with Children's Play



Sports & Entertainment Complex

Market Diversity

- M7** Targeted Downtown Development Assistance Team
- M8** Bolster DDD Development Toolkit

A New Front Porch

- R1** Riverfront Incentive Overlay District
- R2** Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy
- R3** Riverfront Promenade Enhancements
- R6** Riverfront Sports and Recreation Destination
- R9** Riverfront Entertainment Destination
- R10** Nature Play at Desoto Park
- R11** Pedestrian Bridge to Capitol Lake

Neighborhood Places

- N6** Downtown Activation Strategy

Civic + Cultural Spine

- C2** Move USS KIDD north next to Queen BR
- C5** Downtown Civic Spine
- C7** Support Live After 5 Series
- C8** Cultural Programming Funding
- C13** Remediate Capitol Lake
- C14** Activate Capitol Gardens
- C15** Downtown Wayfinding Ordinance

Clear Connections

- T5** Downtown Connector
- T16** River Rd Greenway
- T24** Unified Parking System
- T27** State Capitol to Block Step Neighborhood Community Park Greenway
- T30** N 4th St and St Ferdinand St Greenway

These images represent planning-level concepts for growth and redevelopment within Downtown Baton Rouge. Development of final proposals for each site will require more detailed study of site opportunities and constraints and coordination with individual property owners.



Sports & Entertainment Complex along the Northern Riverfront



Riverfront Ecological Park

Relocated USS KIDD Veterans Museum

Relocated USS KIDD

The Queen Baton Rouge Casino

Riverfront Event Venue

Indoor Recreation

Riverfront Youth Sports Complex

Entertainment Complex along the Northern Riverfront

Riverfront Hotel

Riverfront
Housing

Riverfront Restaurant

New USS KIDD Veterans Museum

Relocated
USS KIDD

Outdoor Dining

Native Landscapes

Riverfront
Public Spaces

Riverfront Loop

Market Diversity

- M5** TIF Strategy
- M6** Main St Small Business Corridor
- M7** Targeted Downtown Development Assistance Team
- M8** Bolster DDD Development Toolkit
- M12** Downtown Business Accelerator Program

A New Front Porch

- R1** Riverfront Incentive Overlay District
- R2** Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy
- R3** Riverfront Promenade Enhancements
- R7** Riverfront Loop
- R8** The Porch

Neighborhood Places

- N2** Downtown Housing Navigator Program
- N3** Local Business Activation
- N6** Downtown Activation Strategy

Civic + Cultural Spine

- C4** Downtown Museum District
- C5** Downtown Civic Spine
- C8** Cultural Programming Funding
- C10** Support Civil Rights Trail
- C11** Support Historic and Cultural Storytelling
- C15** Downtown Wayfinding Ordinance

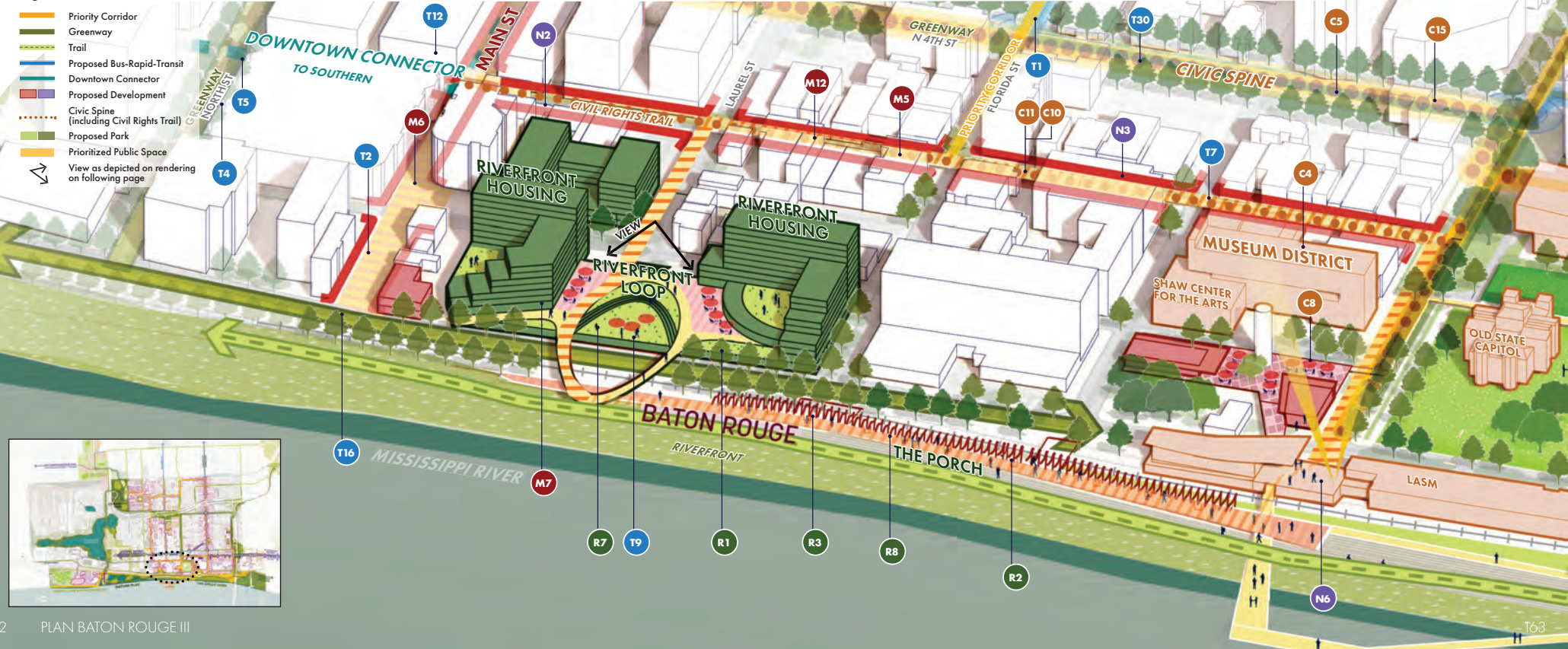
Clear Connections

- T1** Florida St / Nicholson Dr BRT
- T2** Main St Priority Corridor
- T4** One-way to Two-way Street Conversions
- T5** Downtown Connector
- T7** N 3rd St Priority Corridor
- T9** Remove Laurel St Segment
- T16** River Rd Greenway
- T30** N 4th St and St Ferdinand St Greenway
- T31** North St Greenway

These images represent planning-level concepts for growth and redevelopment within Downtown Baton Rouge. Development of final proposals for each site will require more detailed study of site opportunities and constraints and coordination with individual property owners.

Legend

- Priority Corridor
- Greenway
- Trail
- Proposed Bus-Rapid-Transit
- Downtown Connector
- Proposed Development
- Civic Spine (including Civil Rights Trail)
- Proposed Park
- Prioritized Public Space
- View as depicted on rendering on following page



Riverfront Housing

along the Riverfront Loop



Riverfront Housing

Views of the Mississippi River

Riverfront Public Space

Riverfront Dining

Riverfront Housing

South Riverfront

Market Diversity

- M1** River Center Convention Center Expansion
- M2** River Center Mixed-Use Entertainment Hub
- M5** TIF Strategy
- M7** Targeted Downtown Development Assistance Team
- M8** Bolster DDD Development Toolkit

A New Front Porch

- R1** Riverfront Incentive Overlay District
- R2** Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy
- R3** Riverfront Promenade Enhancements
- R4** High Density Riverfront Housing
- R5** The Great Park
- R8** The Porch

Neighborhood Places

- N2** Downtown Housing Navigator
- N4** Government St Mixed Use Housing Corridor
- N6** Downtown Activation Strategy

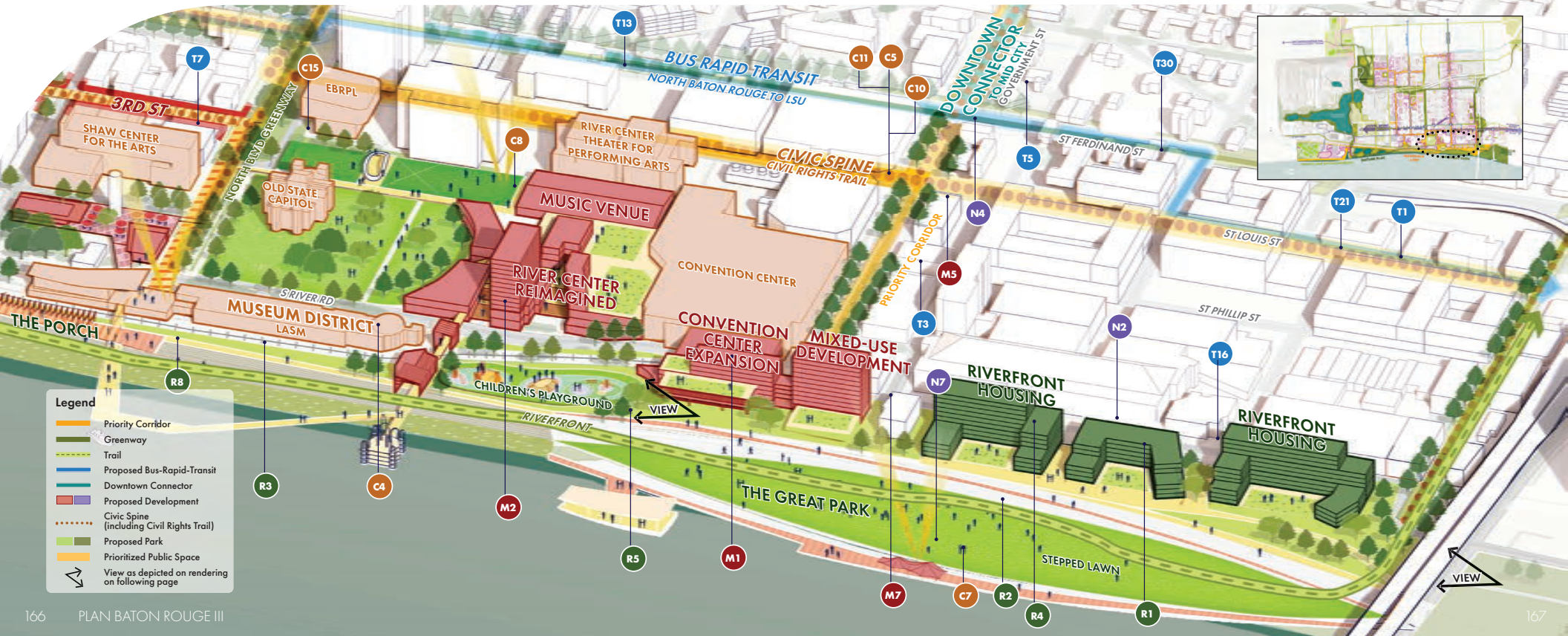
Civic + Cultural Spine

- C5** Downtown Civic Spine
- C4** Downtown Museum District
- C7** Support Live After 5 Series
- C8** Cultural Programming Funding
- C15** Downtown Wayfinding Ordinance
- C11** Support Historic and Cultural Storytelling
- C10** Support the Civil Rights Trail

These images represent planning-level concepts for growth and redevelopment within Downtown Baton Rouge. Development of final proposals for each site will require more detailed study of site opportunities and constraints and coordination with individual property owners.

Clear Connections

- T1** Florida St / Nicholson Dr BRT
- T3** Government St Priority Corridor
- T5** Downtown Connector
- T7** N 3rd St Priority Corridor
- T13** Downtown Transit Hub
- T16** River Rd Greenway
- T21** St Louis St to Nicholson Dr Priority Corridor
- T30** N 4th St and St Ferdinand St Greenway



Legend

- Priority Corridor
- Greenway
- Trail
- Proposed Bus-Rapid-Transit
- Downtown Connector
- Proposed Development
- Civic Spine (including Civil Rights Trail)
- Proposed Park
- Prioritized Public Space
- View as depicted on rendering on following page

Destination Children's Playground along the Southern Riverfront



LASM

Destination Children's
Playground

Riverfront Promenade

Pedestrian Bridge
Over River Rd

Convention Center
Expansion

New Riverfront
Housing

The Great Park along the Southern Riverfront



An Enhanced and Connected
Capitol Lake and Capitol
Gardens

New Centers for Business
and Innovation

More Complete and Enhanced
Downtown Neighborhoods

Robust, Walkable
Neighborhood Centers

A Better Connected and
More Legible Civic Spine

A Re-envisioned River
Center Complex

Vibrant and Infilled
Mixed-use Corridors

New Riverfront
Sports and
Entertainment
Destination

New River Access,
Destinations, and
Amenities

New Academic Uses and
Housing Downtown

Riverfront Housing
and Activation

New Places to Gather
and Celebrate

Recommendation Summary

A NEW FRONT PORCH

- R-01** Establish a Riverfront Incentive Overlay District for active ground floors, density incentives, and public space.
- R-02** Establish a Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy to guide activation and maintenance of riverfront spaces.
- R-03** Enhance the Riverfront Promenade with shade, trees, seating, and wayfinding.
- R-04** Develop high-density riverfront housing south of River Center between S River Road and the levee.
- R-05** Build “The Great Park” with a large children’s playground and stepped riverfront lawn.
- R-06** Develop a riverfront sports and recreation hub focused on youth sports.
- R-07** Create a “Riverfront Loop” with mixed-use development, housing, cafes, and an elevated pedestrian path.
- R-08** Develop “The Porch” promenade with shade, seating, and boardwalks along the riverfront.
- R-09** Build a riverfront entertainment hub with events, hotel, housing, and food options.
- R-10** Add passive landscapes and nature play in Desoto Park with shade, seating, and walking paths.
- R-11** Build a pedestrian bridge linking the State Capitol Complex and Capitol Lake to the riverfront.

MARKET DIVERSITY

- M-01** Expand the River Center Convention Center with flexible spaces and modern amenities.
- M-02** Develop a vibrant mixed-use hub at River Center that brings together retail, a music venue, and a cultural or arts destination.
- M-03** Build multifamily housing along Nicholson Drive for students and workforce populations.
- M-04** Create a Student Housing Hub at the former Department of Public Safety and Corrections with modern residential units and amenities.
- M-05** Develop a TIF strategy around priority corridors and nodes with retail incentives, grants, and rent stabilization.
- M-06** Reinvest in Main Street as a small business corridor with small business grants and rental assistance.
- M-07** Create a Targeted Downtown Development Assistance (TDAT) team for marketing, site selection, financing, and permitting.
- M-08** Bolster the DDD Development Toolkit with pre-approved plans, streamlined permitting, and incentives.

MARKET DIVERSITY, CONT'D

- M-09** Develop the proposed “GUMBO” student food hub along South Boulevard with activated spaces under interstate.
- M-10** Develop a health and wellness hub at the former Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired.
- M-11** Expand the LSU Innovation Park with incubator and maker spaces supporting startups, collaboration, and innovation.
- M-12** Create a Downtown Business Accelerator Program with LSU, Southern, and BRCC.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLACES

- N-01** Create a Missing Middle Housing Toolkit with guidance, pre-approved plans, and other resources.
- N-02** Establish a Downtown Housing Navigator Program to assist with site selection, incentives, and permitting.
- N-03** Support local business activation along Main Street and 3rd Street with events and pop-ups.
- N-04** Reinvest in Government Street with mixed-use housing and commercial / retail.
- N-05** Incentivize missing middle housing across downtown neighborhoods.
- N-06** Coordinate a downtown activation strategy with year-round events and programming.
- N-07** Celebrate the unique character of downtown neighborhoods with localized programming and public space activation.
- N-08** Build a housing hub near the old post office and proposed K-12 school.
- N-09** Build mixed-income housing in the proposed Downtown East Block Step Neighborhood.
- N-10** Adaptively reuse the old post office as a K-12 school.
- N-11** Create the “Block Step Neighborhood Community Park” with playgrounds and active/passive recreation.

CULTURAL + CIVIC SPINE

- C-01** Support events like the Downtown Night Market with enhanced programming, infrastructure, and partnerships.
- C-02** Move USS KIDD north next to the Queen Baton Rouge Casino.
- C-03** Create a Beauregard Town Community Heart with adaptive reuse, parks, food, and housing.
- C-04** Establish a Downtown Museum District connecting existing museums and new cultural attractions.

CULTURAL + CIVIC SPINE, CONT'D

- C-05** Create a Downtown Civic Spine linking the State Capitol to Magnolia Mounds with art and wayfinding.
- C-06** Create a “Somerulus Arts District” celebrating local artists with live/work studios and monthly programming.
- C-07** Expand Live After 5 programming with improved infrastructure and vendor partnerships.
- C-08** Fund year-round arts, festivals, performances, and public cultural programming.
- C-09** Grow the Red Stick Farmers Market with more vendors, infrastructure, and local product promotion.
- C-10** Support the Civil Rights Trail with signage, preservation, and educational programming.
- C-11** Enhance historic storytelling with signage, interpretation, and promotion of local heritage.
- C-12** Support the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame Museum and Cultural Center at Lincoln Theater.
- C-13** Remediate Capitol Lake with landscaping, accessible paths, seating, and improved habitats.
- C-14** Activate Capitol Gardens as an accessible, welcoming civic and public space.
- C-15** Establish a downtown wayfinding with clear, accessible, and consistent signage for all users.

CLEAR CONNECTIONS

- T-01** Complete the Florida Street/Nicholson Drive BRT to LSU with stations, infrastructure, and signal priority.
- T-02** Create the Main Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-03** Create the Government Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-04** Study converting downtown east-west one-way streets to two-way for flow, safety, and connectivity.
- T-05** Create the Downtown Connector bus linking Mid City to Southern University with frequent, safe service.
- T-06** Develop the Government Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.
- T-07** Create the N 3rd Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-08** Develop the Main Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.
- T-09** Remove Laurel Street between Lafayette Street and S River Road.
- T-10** Support active, safe, well-lit spaces under interstates for recreation, art, and community events.
- T-11** Complete the Downtown Greenway on Spanish Town Road with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.
- T-12** Develop the Nicholson Drive Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.

CLEAR CONNECTIONS, CONT'D

- T-13** Build a downtown transit hub linking the Downtown Connector and BRT with accessible, coordinated facilities.
- T-14** Support Complete Streets improvements with sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, lighting, and landscaping.
- T-15** Implement a road diet on South Boulevard between St. Ferdinand Street and S. River Road.
- T-16** Complete the Downtown Greenway along River Road with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.
- T-17** Develop the Florida Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.
- T-18** Create the S 14th Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-19** Support the Downtown Greenway on Louisiana Avenue with enhanced seating and landscaping.
- T-20** Create the N 13th to N 12th Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-21** Create the St Louis Street to Nicholson Drive priority corridor with wider sidewalks, better crossings, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-22** Develop a downtown curb-management policy coordinating loading, parking, and rideshare.
- T-23** Create the Florida Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.
- T-24** Create a unified downtown parking system with signage, tech, and improved access.
- T-25** Study removing underused downtown interstate ramps to improve traffic, safety, and connectivity.
- T-26** Support TOD at the regional rail station with walkable, mixed-use design.
- T-27** Complete the Downtown Greenway from N 5th Street to Block Step Neighborhood Park (proposed) with trails and landscaping.
- T-28** Complete the Downtown Greenway from Park Boulevard to S 19th Street with bike lanes and landscaping.
- T-29** Complete the Downtown Greenway on Myrtle Avenue with bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.
- T-30** Complete the Downtown Greenway on N 4th and Ferdinand Street with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.
- T-31** Complete the Downtown Greenway on North Street with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.
- T-32** Complete the Downtown Greenway on N 10th Street and under the interstate with trails and bike lanes.
- T-33** Complete the Downtown Greenway from Eddie Robinson Sr Drive to City Brooks Park with trails and landscaping.
- T-34** Complete the Downtown Greenway on South Boulevard with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.

A New Front Porch Recommendations

Riverfront recommendations reimagine the Mississippi River edge as an active, accessible civic asset. They emphasize incentives for river-oriented development, new housing and entertainment districts, major public spaces like The Great Park, enhanced shade and

amenities along the promenade, and a dedicated conservancy to steward long-term activation, maintenance, and programming.

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
R-01	Establish a Riverfront Incentive Overlay District for active ground floors, density incentives, and public space. Establish a Riverfront Incentive Overlay District (RIOD) to guide redevelopment along the riverfront requiring active ground floors and public space dedication for river-adjacent development and offer financial incentives in exchange for public benefits. Establish a Riverfront TIF District.	East Baton Rouge Parish, BRAF State Legislators, Property Owners, Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership, DDD	Policy	Tier 1: Catalyze
R-02	Establish a Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy to guide activation and maintenance of riverfront spaces. Establish the Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy, a cross-sector nonprofit partnership dedicated to coordinating, activating, and stewarding the city's riverfront, guiding long-term riverfront development, managing planning, programming, environmental stewardship, and fundraising.	Visit Baton Rouge, BRAF, BREC DDD, State of Louisiana	Partnership	Tier 1: Catalyze
R-03	Enhance the Riverfront Promenade with shade, trees, seating, and wayfinding. Enhance the Riverfront Promenade with shade structures, trees, seating, and other tactile interventions. Install wayfinding and history kiosks every quarter-mile to improve navigation, provide interpretive information, and enrich the visitor experience along the waterfront.	Riverfront Conservancy DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish, BRAF	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
R-04	Develop high-density riverfront housing south of River Center between S River Road and the levee. Develop high-density riverfront housing just south of the River Center, between River Road and the Mississippi River levee, with approximately 450-500 residential units that front directly onto the proposed "Great Park."	Developer East Baton Rouge Parish, State of Louisiana, Bally's Baton Rouge Casino and Hotel, Build Baton Rouge, BRAF	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
R-05	Build "The Great Park" with a large children's playground and stepped riverfront lawn. Create "The Great Park," a dynamic waterfront public space along the riverfront. Features include a large, engaging children's playground near the River Center and an iconic stepped riverfront lawn in front of Bally's Baton Rouge Casino and Hotel, activating the area for recreation, community gatherings, and scenic enjoyment.	Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy Lead, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Visit Baton Rouge, BRAF, DDD	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
R-06	Develop a riverfront sports and recreation hub focused on youth sports. Develop a major riverfront sports and recreation destination focused on youth sports tourism in partnership with Memorial Sports Complex that includes an outdoor stadium, outdoor fields, etc. Develop a major riverfront sports and recreation destination focused on youth sports tourism in partnership with Memorial Sports Complex that includes an outdoor stadium, outdoor fields, etc.	Developer, Build Baton Rouge, Visit Baton Rouge, State Legislature Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy, BREC, The Queen Baton Rouge Casino	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
R-07	Create a "Riverfront Loop" with mixed-use development, housing, cafes, and an elevated pedestrian path. Create a "Riverfront Loop" by developing a mixed-use district with housing, riverfront cafes, and restaurants around an elevated park and a pedestrian loop that connects 3rd Street to the riverfront.	Developer, Riverfront Conservancy DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
R-08	Develop "The Porch" promenade with shade, seating, and boardwalks along the riverfront. Develop "The Porch" as an expanded riverfront promenade with shade structures, seating, and boardwalks, and an expanded dock that allows for other boat docking.	Riverfront Conservancy, East Baton Rouge Parish DDD	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
R-09	Build a riverfront entertainment hub with events, a hotel, housing, and food options. Develop a premier riverfront entertainment destination on the vacant lands surrounding the Queen of Baton Rouge Casino, featuring event spaces, hotels, housing, dining, and nightlife. Include a pier and a 700-space parking garage, creating a vibrant mixed-use district that attracts tourism, supports economic growth, and activates the riverfront.	Developer, Build Baton Rouge, Visit Baton Rouge, State Legislature Riverfront Conservancy, BREC, The Queen Baton Rouge Casino, DDD	Project	Tier 2: Grow
R-10	Add passive landscapes and nature play in Desoto Park with shade, seating, and walking paths. Create passive landscapes and nature play in Desoto Park with shaded seating, walking paths, native landscaping, and passive recreation.	Riverfront Conservancy, State of Louisiana BRECE, DDD	Project	Tier 2: Grow
R-11	Build a pedestrian bridge linking the State Capitol Complex and Capitol Lake to the riverfront. Construct a pedestrian bridge connecting the State Capitol grounds and Capitol Lake to the riverfront, improving walkability and recreational access, strengthening tourism circulation and extending connectivity into the BRECE Sports Complex.	Riverfront Conservancy, State of Louisiana East Baton Rouge Parish, DDD	Project	Tier 3: Evolve

Market Diversity Recommendations

Market Diversity recommendations focus on catalyzing a more diverse downtown economy through targeted mixed-use development, small business support, and institutional anchors. Strategies include expanding the River Center, creating student housing and innovation

hubs, reinvesting in Main Street retail, and deploying coordinated incentives, technical assistance, and streamlined approvals to reduce barriers to private investment.

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
M-01	Expand the River Center Convention Center with flexible spaces and modern amenities. Rehabilitate and expand the River Center Convention Center into a state-of-the-art facility with modern amenities, flexible event spaces, and advanced technology to attract larger conventions and bolster downtown economic growth. The expansion would add approximately 100,000 square feet of convention space, accommodate a new 300-400 room hotel, and include the demolition or relocation of the existing stadium to optimize site layout and create a cohesive, high-functioning convention district.	Baton Rouge Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, East Baton Rouge Parish, City of Baton Rouge State of Louisiana, BRAF, Port of Greater Baton Rouge, Riverfront property owners, River Center Oversight Committee	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
M-02	Develop a vibrant mixed-use hub at River Center that brings together retail, a music venue, and a cultural or arts destination. Develop a mixed-use hub at the River Center that brings together retail, food and beverage, and a music venue to create a vibrant cultural and entertainment destination. This hub should be designed to attract both residents and visitors, support local businesses and artists, and activate the area throughout the day and evening with a diverse mix of experiences and programming.	Baton Rouge Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, East Baton Rouge Parish, City of Baton Rouge DDD, Visit Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, Developers, Philanthropic Partners	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
M-03	Build multifamily housing along Nicholson Drive for students and workforce populations. Develop additional multi-family housing around the proposed "GUMBO" and Nicholson Drive to support student and workforce populations, foster a vibrant neighborhood, and activate streets and public spaces.	Developer, Build Baton Rouge East Baton Rouge Parish, State of Louisiana, BRAF	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
M-04	Create a Student Housing Hub at the Department of Public Safety and Corrections with modern residential units and amenities. Develop a Student Housing Hub at the former Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, providing modern, accessible housing that supports LSU students and fosters a vibrant, connected downtown community.	LSU, Southern University, Developer BRAAF, DDD	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
M-05	Develop a TIF strategy around priority corridors and nodes with retail incentives, grants, and rent stabilization. Develop a comprehensive TIF district strategy focused on priority corridors and nodes to stimulate retail activity and attract essential businesses. This strategy would offer targeted incentives such as property tax abatements for first-floor retail, micro-grants for small businesses, and rent-stabilization bonuses for landlords providing long-term leases to key tenants like grocers and pharmacies.	BRAF, East Baton Rouge Parish DDD	Policy	Tier 1: Catalyze
M-06	Reinvest in Main Street as a small business corridor with small business grants and rental assistance. Reinvest in Main Street as a vibrant small business corridor by supporting local retailers, improving streetscape and pedestrian access, and fostering a lively, walkable environment for residents and visitors.	DDD BRAAF, East Baton Rouge Parish	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
M-07	Create a Targeted Downtown Development Assistance (TDAT) team for marketing, site selection, financing, and permitting. Create a Targeted Downtown Development Assistance Team (TDAT) to coordinate marketing, site selection, financing, and permitting support, streamlining development and uniting existing redevelopment resources.	DDD, Build Baton Rouge East Baton Rouge Parish, DDD, BRAAF	Partnership	Tier 2: Grow
M-08	Bolster the DDD Development Toolkit with pre-approved plans, streamlined permitting, and incentives. Enhance the DDD Development Toolkit by formalizing pre-approved development typologies and providing a comprehensive set of incentives to accelerate high-quality, diverse downtown redevelopment. Administered by the TDAT, this approach could include streamlined permitting and review processes, inclusionary housing bonuses, expedited approval for infill projects that meet design guidelines, a form-based code overlay supporting live-work and missing middle housing types, and adaptive reuse allowances and tools, such as historic tax credits. Together, these tools will simplify development, promote design consistency, encourage affordability, and unlock the potential of underutilized properties across downtown.	DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish	Project	Tier 2: Grow
M-09	Develop the proposed "GUMBO" student food hub along South Blvd with activated spaces under interstate. Develop the proposed "GUMBO" (Gone Under the Mississippi Bridge Overpass) as an iconic student food-and-beverage destination along South Boulevard, leveraging the road diet for new food and beverage spaces and activating areas under the interstate with programming and activities.	Developers, DDD, Visit Baton Rouge BRAAF, LSU, GBREP, East Baton Rouge Parish, DOTD	Project	Tier 2: Grow

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
M-10	Develop a health and wellness hub at the former Louisiana School for the Visually Impaired. Develop a new health and wellness hub at the former Louisiana School of the Visually Impaired site that includes various medical services, a grocery store, and diverse housing typologies.	Developer, BRAF, Build Baton Rouge East Baton Rouge Parish	Project	Tier 2: Grow
M-11	Expand the LSU Innovation Park with incubator and maker spaces supporting startups, collaboration, and innovation. Expand the LSU Innovation Park with incubator and maker spaces to support startups, foster collaboration between students and businesses, and create a hub for innovation and economic growth.	LSU, Southern University, State of Louisiana BRAF, Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership, Nexus Louisiana	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
M-12	Create a Downtown Business Accelerator Program with LSU, Southern, and BRCC. Create a Downtown Business Accelerator Program in partnership with LSU, Southern University, and Baton Rouge Community College, offering cohort-based programming, micro-loans, shared services, and support to grow local startups and entrepreneurs.	State of Louisiana, LSU, Southern University, BRCC, Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership BRAF	Program	Tier 3: Evolve

Neighborhood Places Recommendations

Neighborhood-focused recommendations prioritize housing choice, local business activation, and community amenities. They promote mixed-income and missing middle housing, adaptive reuse for schools and community hubs, reinvestment in key corridors, and

place-based programming that reinforces neighborhood identity, supports residents, and fosters walkable, inclusive downtown living environments.

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
N-01	Create a Missing Middle Housing Toolkit with guidance, pre-approved plans, and other resources. Develop a Missing Middle Housing Toolkit to support diverse housing types downtown by providing design guidance, streamlined approvals, financial incentives, and resources that encourage walkable, inclusive, and well-integrated neighborhoods.	DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish Build Baton Rouge, BRAF	Policy	Tier 1: Catalyze
N-02	Establish a Downtown Housing Navigator Program to assist with site selection, incentives, and permitting. Establish a Downtown Housing Navigator Program to assist developers with site selection, incentive applications, permitting, and other resources, streamlining housing development and supporting diverse, high-quality residential projects downtown.	DDD, Build Baton Rouge East Baton Rouge Parish	Program	Tier 1: Catalyze
N-03	Support local business activation along Main Street and 3rd Street with events and pop-ups. Support local business activation along Main and 3rd Streets through coordinated events and pop-ups that strengthen downtown's retail and dining core.	BRAF, DDD Local businesses, Visit Baton Rouge, CAFA	Program	Tier 1: Catalyze
N-04	Reinvest in Government Street with mixed-use housing and commercial / retail. Reinvest in Government Street as a mixed-use housing corridor by encouraging residential development, supporting ground-floor retail, and enhancing streetscapes to create a vibrant, walkable urban environment.	Developer, East Baton Rouge Parish DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish (DPW and HUD Partners), East Baton Rouge Housing Authority, housing non-profits	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
N-05	Incentivize missing middle housing across downtown neighborhoods. Promote the development of missing middle housing throughout downtown, with a focus on areas between Spanish Town and Beauregard Town, just east of the CBD. Provide incentives such as fee waivers, grants, low-interest gap financing, access to pre-approved building plans for diverse housing types such as duplexes, townhomes, and small apartment buildings to increase density, expand housing options, and support a more inclusive, walkable, and vibrant urban neighborhood.	East Baton Rouge Parish Office of Community Development, Housing Authority, CAFA, Build Baton Rouge, DDD	Program	Tier 1: Catalyze
N-06	Coordinate a downtown activation strategy with year-round events and programming. Establish a centralized downtown activation framework that coordinates scheduling, funding, marketing, partnerships, and operations for year-round events and place-based programming, strengthening economic vitality, visitor appeal, and downtown identity.	DDD BRAAF, Visit Baton Rouge, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish	Program	Tier 2: Grow
N-07	Celebrate the unique character of downtown neighborhoods with localized programming and public space activation. Strengthen downtown neighborhoods (both existing and new proposed hubs) by celebrating local character through strategic programming and public space activation, fostering distributed activity, neighborhood pride, and inclusive public life.	DDD East Baton Rouge Parish	Program	Tier 2: Grow
N-08	Build a housing hub near the old post office and proposed K-12 school. Develop a residential hub near the old post office site along Florida Street that includes housing and mixed-use development.	Developer East Baton Rouge Parish, Build Baton Rouge, DDD	Project	Tier 2: Grow
N-09	Build mixed-income housing in Downtown East's Block Step Neighborhood. Build a community hub in Downtown East, anchored by new mixed-income housing. Incentivize infill development of missing middle housing on smaller parcels. This "Block Step" Neighborhood will provide diverse housing options and create a more inclusive, connected, and vibrant urban neighborhood that supports residents of varying incomes and household types.	Developer East Baton Rouge Parish, Build Baton Rouge, DDD	Policy	Tier 2: Grow
N-10	Adaptively reuse the old post office as a K-12 school. Adaptively reuse the old post office site as a K-12 school, preserving the historic structure while providing modern educational facilities and fostering a community-centered campus. This could also evolve into a destination charter that is purpose-built for high school internships and businesses on campus that could tie in with the business corridor.	State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish State of Louisiana	Project	Tier 2: Grow
N-11	Create the "Block Step Neighborhood Community Park" with playgrounds and active/passive recreation. Create a large-scale community park in the existing drainage slew area north of Downtown East. Program the park with community amenities, feature, and recreation spaces.	BREC East Baton Rouge Parish	Project	Tier 3: Evolve

Civic & Cultural Spine Recommendations

These recommendations strengthen downtown's cultural identity through coordinated programming, adaptive reuse, and storytelling. Key actions include establishing museum and arts districts, expanding festivals and markets, enhancing historic interpretation and

wayfinding, and creating a continuous civic spine linking major cultural, historic, and public destinations from the Capitol to surrounding neighborhoods.

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
C-01	Support downtown events such as the Downtown Night Market with enhanced programming, infrastructure, and partnerships. Support and build upon the Downtown Night Market series by enhancing event programming, improving infrastructure, and partnering with local vendors and businesses. Strategically relocate and anchor the Night Market along Main Street to reinforce its role as a small business corridor. Expand support to other events such as LAF, Blues Fest, Christmas Festival, etc. This could also include or explore the need for a Clean and Safe Program to improve overall cleanliness, safety, and maintenance during events and throughout the downtown core, helping to create a more welcoming and consistently well-managed public realm.	DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish Main Street businesses, local vendors, Visit Baton Rouge, arts and cultural organizations, community organizations, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, BRAAF	Program	Tier 1: Catalyze
C-02	Move the USS KIDD north to the Sports and Entertainment District close to the Queen Baton Rouge Casino. Relocate the USS KIDD north to the site next to the Queen Baton Rouge Casino. Expand the protected bay there to create a safe harbor for the historic ship while connecting it as a major attraction in the proposed Sports and Entertainment District.	USS KIDD, State of Louisiana The Queen Baton Rouge Casino, DDD, Visit Baton Rouge	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
C-03	Create a Beauregard Town Community Heart with adaptive reuse, parks, food, and housing. Create the Beauregard Town Community Heart by adaptively reusing select buildings, adding parks and plazas, supporting food and beverage venues, incorporating housing, and improving pedestrian connections to foster a vibrant, inclusive, and active neighborhood hub.	DDD, Developer Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge	Program	Tier 2: Grow

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
C-05	Create a Downtown Civic Spine linking the State Capitol to Magnolia Mounds with art and wayfinding. Develop a Downtown Cultural Trail connecting the State Capitol to Magnolia Mounds through curated wayfinding, public art, and storytelling elements. Coordinate with the Civil Rights Trails Project and Arts Council to curate installations and guided "Capital City Story" walking tours, while reinvesting in historic assets needing maintenance.	DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish Visit Baton Rouge, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge	Project	Tier 2: Grow
C-06	Create a "Sommerulos Arts District" celebrating local artists with live/work studios and monthly programming. Establish the Sommerulos Arts District that celebrates Baton Rouge's artist community and includes live/work studios, galleries, murals, and monthly programming (e.g., First Friday).	Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge Visit Baton Rouge, DDD	Project	Tier 2: Grow
C-07	Expand Live After 5 programming with improved infrastructure and vendor partnerships. Enhance the Live After 5 series by expanding programming, improving event infrastructure, and partnering with local vendors and businesses.	Live After 5 LLC DDD, Downtown Business Association	Program	Tier 2: Grow
C-08	Fund year-round arts, festivals, performances, and public cultural programming. Fund cultural programming that supports local arts, festivals, performances, and exhibitions, encourages diverse expression, fosters partnerships with organizations and businesses, and activates public spaces to engage residents and visitors year-round.	Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge DDD, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, East Baton Rouge Parish	Program	Tier 2: Grow
C-09	Support the Red Stick Farmers Market with more better infrastructure, wayfinding, and signage. Support the Red Stick Farmers Market by improving market infrastructure and street amenities, better wayfinding, and signage.	BREADA, DDD East Baton Rouge Parish	Program	Tier 2: Grow
C-10	Support the Civil Rights Trail with signage, preservation, and educational programming. Support the Civil Rights Trail through coordinated signage, site preservation, and educational programming that highlights Downtown Baton Rouge's historic role in the Civil Rights Movement. Investments will improve visibility, interpretation, and accessibility of key sites while strengthening cultural tourism, community awareness, and heritage preservation.	DDD East Baton Rouge Parish, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, The Walls Project	Program	Tier 2: Grow

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
C-11	Enhance historic storytelling with signage, interpretation, and promotion of local heritage. Support historic and cultural storytelling in the public realm by enhancing historic assets, installing interpretive signage and public art, promoting local heritage, and creating engaging experiences for both residents and visitors.	DDD Visit Baton Rouge, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge	Project	Tier 2: Grow
C-12	Support the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame Museum and Cultural Center at Lincoln Theater. Support the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame Museum via clear wayfinding and signage to connect it to other cultural assets downtown.	Downtown Area Museum Group, DDD Visit Baton Rouge, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge	Project	Tier 2: Grow
C-13	Remediate Capitol Lake with landscaping, accessible paths, seating, and improved habitats. Redesign Capitol Lake by constructing a remediation pond north of the main lake to capture and treat industrial pollutants, and establish a system of surrounding wetlands to improve ecological health. Enhance the lake with landscaped walking paths, seating areas, and habitat restoration, creating a safer, more sustainable, and accessible space for recreation, community gatherings, and environmental education.	LA Division of Administration North Baton Rouge Land Development Co., State of Louisiana, BREC, DDD	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
C-14	Activate Capitol Gardens as an accessible, welcoming civic and public space. Improve and activate Capitol Gardens to enhance its role as a welcoming public space and civic destination in Downtown Baton Rouge.	State of Louisiana Visit Baton Rouge	Program	Tier 3: Evolve
C-15	Establish updated downtown wayfinding with clear, accessible, and consistent signage for all users. Boster the downtown wayfinding ordinance to establish clear, consistent signage that guides pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers, highlights key destinations, strengthens downtown identity, improves accessibility, and enhances the overall visitor experience. This should include a streetscape kit-of-parts.	DDD East Baton Rouge Parish, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge	Program	Tier 3: Evolve

Clear Connections Recommendations

Transportation and connectivity recommendations aim to create a safer, more legible, and multimodal downtown. They include completing BRT and transit hubs, upgrading priority corridors with shade and accessibility, expanding the Downtown Greenway, calming streets, activating

spaces under interstates, and aligning parking and curb management to better support walkability and transit use.

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
T-01	Complete the Florida Street/Nicholson Drive BRT to LSU with stations, infrastructure, and signal priority. Complete the Florida Street/Nicholson Drive BRT to LSU by finalizing stations, infrastructure, and signal priority to improve transit reliability, pedestrian access, and connectivity between downtown destinations.	Capital Area Transit System (CATS) DOTD, DDD, LSU, Federal Transit Administration, East Baton Rouge Parish, BRAF	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
T-02	Create the Main Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding. Develop a cohesive, walkable network of priority corridors across downtown that accommodates diverse uses, including food and beverage, daily retail, and day- and night-time programming. Enhance these corridors with wider sidewalks, safe crossings, accessible ramps, seating, shade, and clear wayfinding.	DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish, DPW, BREC, CATS, BRAF	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
T-03	Create the Government Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding. Develop a cohesive, walkable network of priority corridors across downtown that accommodates diverse uses, including food and beverage, daily retail, and day- and night-time programming. Enhance these corridors with wider sidewalks, safe crossings, accessible ramps, seating, shade, and clear wayfinding.	DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish East Baton Rouge Parish, Office of Community Development, Housing Authority, BRAF	Project	Tier 1: Catalyze
T-04	Study converting downtown east-west one-way streets to two-way for flow, safety, and connectivity. Study converting all east-west one-way streets downtown to two-way streets to improve traffic flow, enhance safety, support local businesses, and create a more connected and vibrant urban environment.	East Baton Rouge Parish DDD, BRAF	Project	Tier 2: Grow

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
T-05	Create the Downtown Connector bus linking Mid City to Southern University with frequent, safe service. Create the Downtown Connector, a high-quality bus linking Mid City to Southern University through downtown, providing frequent, reliable service with safe stops and improved pedestrian access to enhance connectivity.	CATS, East Baton Rouge Parish BRAE, DDD	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-06	Develop the Government Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation. Develop the Government Street Gateway (underpass) with enhanced pedestrian facilities, lighting, artwork, and public realm activation.	DDD, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge DOTD	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-07	Create the N 3rd Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding. Develop a cohesive, walkable network of priority corridors across downtown that accommodates diverse uses, including food and beverage, daily retail, and day- and night-time programming. Enhance these corridors with wider sidewalks, safe crossings, accessible ramps, seating, shade, and clear wayfinding.	East Baton Rouge Parish, DDD, BRAF State of Louisiana	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-08	Develop the Main Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation. Develop the Main Street Gateway (underpass) with enhanced pedestrian facilities, lighting, artwork, and public realm activation.	DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish State of Louisiana	Policy	Tier 2: Grow
T-09	Remove Laurel Street between Lafayette Street and S River Road. Remove Laurel Street between Lafayette Street and S River Road to create new developable parcels to allow for unified riverfront development. This approach will provide opportunities for targeted infill development, including the "Riverfront Loop" project.	East Baton Rouge Parish Property owners	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-10	Support active, safe, well-lit spaces under interstates for recreation, art, and community events. Transform the interstates from barriers into community amenities by activating underutilized spaces with programming such as green spaces, pop-up markets, skate parks, and cultural events. Initiatives like the "Under I-10 Market Series" featuring food trucks, skate jams, and maker fairs can bring life to these areas. By providing safe, well-lit environments with seating, landscaping, and flexible design, under-interstate spaces can become vibrant, engaging destinations that support recreation, art, and community connection.	DDD East Baton Rouge Parish, DOTD	Program	Tier 2: Grow

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
T-11	<p>Complete the Downtown Greenway on Spanish Town Road with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.</p> <p>Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network in partnership with the DDD, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.</p>	<p>DDD, BREC State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish, BREC</p>	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-12	<p>Develop the Nicholson Drive Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.</p> <p>Develop the Nicholson Drive Gateway (underpass) with enhanced pedestrian facilities, lighting, artwork, and public realm activation.</p>	<p>East Baton Rouge Parish State of Louisiana, DDD</p>	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-13	<p>Build a downtown transit hub linking the Downtown Connector and BRT with accessible, coordinated facilities.</p> <p>Create a downtown transit hub connecting the Downtown Connector and Florida Street/Nicholson Drive BRT with safe, accessible facilities, coordinated schedules, and multimodal connections to enhance transit efficiency and rider experience.</p>	<p>Capital Area Transit System East Baton Rouge Parish</p>	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-14	<p>Support Complete Streets improvements with sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, lighting, and landscaping.</p> <p>Support Complete Streets improvements with sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, lighting, and landscaping.</p>	<p>East Baton Rouge Parish State of Louisiana</p>	Policy	Tier 2: Grow
T-15	<p>Implement a road diet on South Boulevard between St Ferdinand Street and S River Road.</p> <p>Implement a road diet on South Boulevard between St Ferdinand Street and S River Road to reduce roadway width, enhance multimodal safety, and create new developable parcels. This approach will provide opportunities for targeted infill development, including new sites for the proposed "GUMBO" project, while improving pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation along the corridor.</p>	<p>East Baton Rouge Parish State of Louisiana, DDD</p>	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-16	<p>Complete the Downtown Greenway along S River Road with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.</p> <p>Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.</p>	<p>DDD State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish, BREC</p>	Project	Tier 2: Grow

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
T-17	<p>Develop the Florida Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.</p> <p>Develop the Florida Street Gateway with enhanced pedestrian facilities, lighting, artwork, and public realm activation - including a reinterpretation of the historic Victory Park underneath the interstate.</p>	<p>DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish State of Louisiana</p>	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-18	<p>Create the S 14th Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.</p> <p>Develop a cohesive, walkable network of priority corridors across downtown that accommodates diverse uses, including food and beverage, daily retail, and day- and night-time programming. Enhance these corridors with wider sidewalks, safe crossings, accessible ramps, seating, shade, and clear wayfinding.</p>	<p>DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish State of Louisiana</p>	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-19	<p>Support the Downtown Greenway on Louisiana Avenue with enhanced seating and landscaping.</p> <p>Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network in partnership with the DDD, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible seating and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.</p>	<p>DDD State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish, BREC</p>	Project	Tier 2: Grow
T-20	<p>Create the N 13th to N 12th Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, seating, shade, and wayfinding.</p> <p>Develop a cohesive, walkable network of priority corridors across downtown that accommodates diverse uses, including food and beverage, daily retail, and day- and night-time programming. Enhance these corridors with wider sidewalks, safe crossings, accessible ramps, seating, shade, and clear wayfinding.</p>	<p>East Baton Rouge Parish State of Louisiana, DDD</p>	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
T-21	<p>Create the St Louis Street to Nicholson Drive priority corridor with wider sidewalks, better crossings, seating, shade, and wayfinding.</p> <p>Develop a cohesive, walkable network of priority corridors across downtown that accommodates diverse uses, including food and beverage, daily retail, and day- and night-time programming. Enhance these corridors with wider sidewalks, safe crossings, accessible ramps, seating, shade, and clear wayfinding.</p>	<p>East Baton Rouge Parish LSU, DDD, DOTD,</p>	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
T-22	<p>Develop a downtown curb-management policy coordinating loading, parking, and rideshare.</p> <p>Develop a unified downtown curb-management policy to coordinate loading, parking, and rideshare zones, improve traffic flow, enhance safety, and maximize curb space efficiency for all users.</p>	<p>East Baton Rouge Parish DDD</p>	Policy	Tier 3: Evolve

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
T-23	Create the Florida Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding. Develop a cohesive, walkable network of priority corridors across downtown that accommodates diverse uses, including food and beverage, daily retail, and day- and night-time programming. Enhance these corridors with wider sidewalks, safe crossings, accessible ramps, seating, shade, and clear wayfinding.	DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish State of Louisiana	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
T-24	Create a unified downtown parking system with signage, tech, and improved access. Establish a comprehensive, unified downtown parking system that integrates existing parking infrastructure, consolidates management under a single operator, and provides a seamless public interface. The system should include clearly marked, coordinated spaces, intuitive wayfinding, real-time availability technology, and efficient access points to enhance convenience and comfort for daily commuters, occasional visitors, residents, and businesses alike.	DDD East Baton Rouge Parish	Program	Tier 3: Evolve
T-25	Study removing underused downtown interstate ramps to improve traffic, safety, and connectivity. Study and remove underutilized on/off interstate ramps in downtown to improve traffic flow, enhance safety, reconnect neighborhoods, and create opportunities for new public spaces, pedestrian connections, and economic development.	BRAF East Baton Rouge Parish, State of Louisiana, DDD	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
T-26	Support TOD at the regional rail station with walkable, mixed-use design. Support transit-oriented development at the future regional rail station by promoting mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly design and public amenities that enhance connectivity and create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods around the station.	DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish Developer	Program	Tier 3: Evolve
T-27	Complete the Downtown Greenway from State Capitol to Block Step Neighborhood Community Park Greenway with trails and landscaping. Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network in partnership with the DDD, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.	DDD, BREC State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
T-28	Complete the Greenway from Park Blvd to S 19th Street with bike lanes and landscaping. Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network in partnership with the DDD, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.	East Baton Rouge Parish DDD, State of Louisiana, BREC	Project	Tier 3: Evolve

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
T-29	Enhance the Downtown Greenway on Myrtle Avenue with bike lanes, seating, and landscaping. Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network in partnership with the DDD, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.	DDD State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish, BREC	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
T-30	Complete the Downtown Greenway on N 4th and Ferdinand Streets with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping. Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network in partnership with the DDD, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.	DDD State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish, BREC	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
T-31	Complete the Downtown Greenway on North Street with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping. Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network in partnership with the DDD, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.	DDD State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish, BREC	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
T-32	Complete the Downtown Greenway on N 10th Street and under the interstate with trails and bike lanes. Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network in partnership with the DDD, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.	DDD State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish, BREC	Project	Tier 3: Evolve
T-33	Complete the Downtown Greenway from Eddie Robinson Sr Drive to City Brooks Park with trails and landscaping. Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network in partnership with the DDD, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.	East Baton Rouge Parish DDD, State of Louisiana, BREC	Project	Tier 3: Evolve

REC #	RECOMMENDATION	POT. LEAD (BOLD) & SUPPORT PARTNERS	TYPE	PHASING TIER
T-34	<p>Complete the Downtown Greenway on South Boulevard with trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaping.</p> <p>Complete and expand the Downtown Greenway network in partnership with the DDD, connecting major destinations and surrounding neighborhoods. Enhance the Greenway with accessible trails, bike lanes, seating, and landscaped elements, including bioswales, to improve mobility, ecological function, and recreational opportunities while fostering a safer, greener, and more connected downtown.</p>	<p>East Baton Rouge Parish, DDD State of Louisiana</p>	Project	Tier 3: Evolve

An aerial photograph of a city at dusk, split vertically. The left side shows a river with a bridge and city lights reflecting on the water. The right side shows a dense urban area with many lit-up buildings. A white speech bubble is overlaid on the right side.

04

Implementation Guidance

Implementing the vision of Plan Baton Rouge III requires a coordinated and strategic approach. This includes prioritizing actions, marshalling resources, and embarking on catalytic projects that spur increased investment and activation within downtown.

Approach to PBR III Implementation Guidance

To prepare Plan Baton Rouge III implementers to immediately push forward on many of the early recommendations described in this plan, the planning team has provided implementation guidance in this chapter. This guidance is intended to serve as a starting

place for organizing, coordination across different sectors and groups, and commencing the work of turning recommendations into projects. The major elements of implementation guidance provided in this chapter are described here.

Proposed Structure to Organize for Action in Plan Implementation

With a vision as far-reaching, long-term, and multifaceted as Plan Baton Rouge III, implementation will require coordinated stewardship with many individuals and entities advancing different components simultaneously. Success will depend on the ability of local leaders to maintain momentum and public enthusiasm for the vision. This plan provides guidance on how Downtown Baton Rouge's cross-sector leaders can work together to shepherd Plan Baton Rouge III through implementation.

Understanding of Outcomes and Expected Impacts

Each of Plan Baton Rouge III's Guiding Principles articulates an idea for how downtown can evolve into a more distinctive place to live, work, and visit. Individual recommendations are organized under these Guiding Principles and detailed with projections for cost, potential revenue, and other metrics that help measure impact and success. This chapter includes calculations of these potential impacts over time.

Action Planning for Catalytic Recommendations

The highest priority recommendations of this plan are those that have the potential to be transformational to downtown in the short term and catalytic to further growth and investment. These catalytic projects are described in this chapter in a greater level of detail than other recommendations, with insights on factors like expectations of high-level costs, key implementation partners, and action steps.

Exploration of Prototypical Strategic Sites and Realistic Implementation Paths

Plan Baton Rouge III presents a long-term vision for the future of downtown. Accordingly, some recommended projects will take shape in the short term while others will advance years or even decades later. To assist with organizing around immediate- and short-term opportunities, the planning team has identified five strategic sites for more advanced and detailed modeling. These sites were chosen as typical opportunity sites, representing a diversity of proposed program mixes and neighborhood types. This chapter includes potential paths to transforming these sites that can serve as implementation models for sites throughout downtown.

Organizing for Action

With a vision as far-reaching, long-term, and multifaceted as Plan Baton Rouge III, implementation will require coordinated stewardship with many individuals and entities advancing different components simultaneously. Success will depend on the ability of local leaders to maintain momentum and public enthusiasm for the vision. Champions of downtown will need to work together to contribute to an organized Plan Baton Rouge III implementation campaign.

This plan provides guidance on how Downtown Baton Rouge's cross-sector leaders can work together to shepherd Plan Baton Rouge III through implementation. The structure proposed here is one example of how these leaders could begin to organize themselves to tackle plan recommendations in a strategic and distributed fashion.

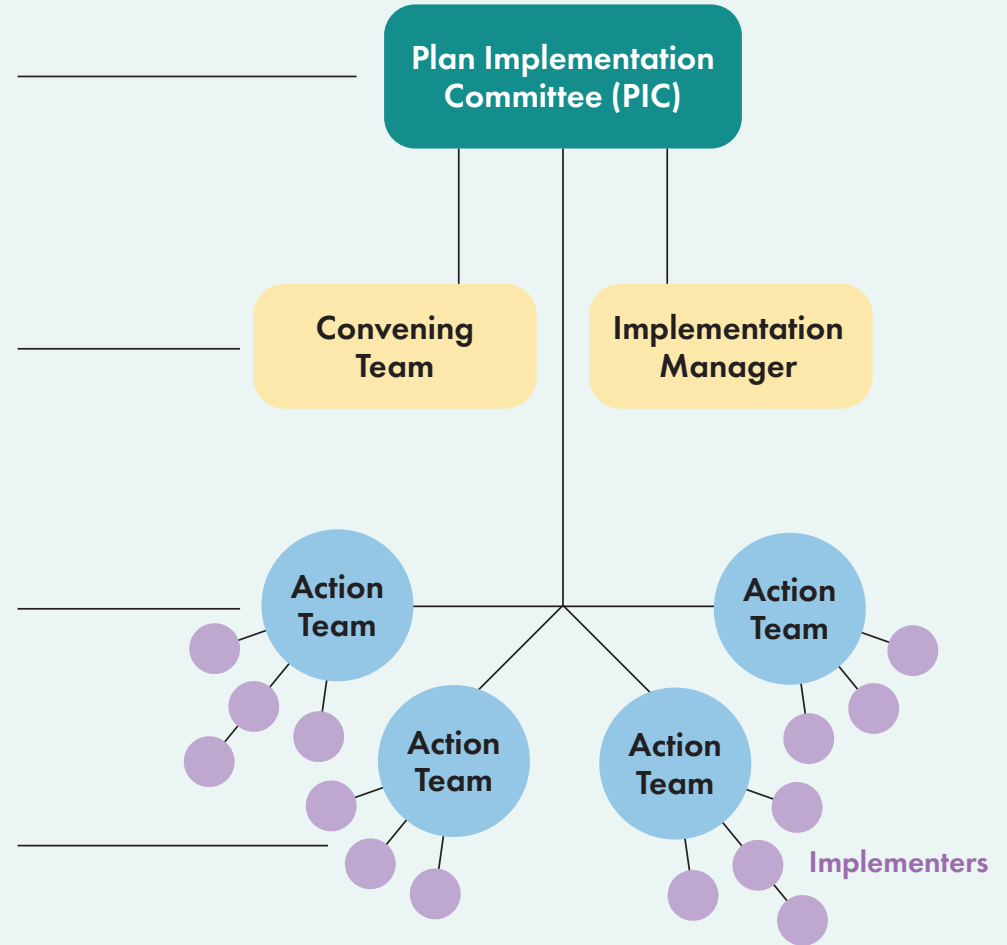
PROPOSED PLAN BATON ROUGE III IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

The Plan Implementation Committee (PIC) is a proposed governing body for Plan Baton Rouge III implementation efforts. This body could take shape as a formal, standalone non-profit organization or as a voluntary collective of local decision-makers coming together to provide strategic direction, resources, and advocacy for individual projects, policies, programs, and partnerships. The Plan Baton Rouge III Executive Committee serves as a good starting place for recruiting members of a future Plan Implementation Committee.

Organized implementation work and the success of the PIC will require administrative support. A subset of organizations (2-3) that comprise the PIC should appoint members to serve as part of a Convening Team that handles administrative tasks like coordination, agenda-setting, scheduling, communication, and outreach to external groups. This group could be supported/led by a hired full-time Implementation Manager who is tasked with ensuring things move forward.

Members of the PIC should organize themselves into Action Teams organized around Plan Baton Rouge III's major themes and areas of focus (e.g., housing, riverfront, infrastructure, transit, etc.). These groups should include members of the PIC and potentially external partners with relevant subject-matter expertise. Action Teams will organize and conduct advocacy around key projects and recommendations relevant to the Team.

Project implementers will include members of the PIC and Action Teams and many external partners. These entities will work together on discrete projects, coordinate with the Action Teams to maintain alignment with other implementation efforts and gain access to resources, and will report progress to the PIC. Implementers will include public, private, and non-profit individuals and organizations throughout Baton Rouge.



Organizing for Action

Delivering the full vision of Plan Baton Rouge III will require not only strong partnerships and sustained public investment, but also the right implementation infrastructure. As the scale and complexity of recommended projects increase, the community may benefit from evaluating whether additional tools or organizational capacity are needed to help bridge the gap between public investment and private development.

One capacity that has been discussed during the planning process is the ability to support strategic redevelopment—particularly projects that are catalytic but may face barriers related to site assembly, ownership complexity, or financing gaps. In many cities, this role is supported by mission-driven development entities that work alongside public agencies and private developers to help move complex projects forward.

If Baton Rouge chooses to explore this approach in the future, a community development or mission-driven development corporation is one example of the type of entity that can help fill this gap. Such organizations typically focus on assembling land, facilitating partnerships, and helping de-risk projects that align with community goals. Their purpose is not to replace existing organizations, but to complement them by strengthening the community's overall implementation capacity.

Any future consideration of this type of capacity should begin with the understanding that existing organizations—including the Downtown Development District (DDD)—will remain essential implementation partners. The appropriate tools, partnerships, and organizational structures should be evaluated through a separate, deliberate process involving the DDD, local government, BRAF, and community stakeholders.



Photo Source: 3CDC, Washington Park



Photo Source: 3CDC, Court Street Plaza



Photo Source: 3CDC, Fountain Square



Photo Source: 3CDC, Cincinnati Convention Center

One possible example often referenced for its downtown focus is the Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC). Formed through a partnership between the City of Cincinnati and the corporate community, 3CDC is a nonprofit real estate development and finance organization that has helped catalyze revitalization in downtown and the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. By combining land acquisition, development partnerships, financing tools, and long-term stewardship, the organization has supported catalytic projects, strengthened market confidence, and helped attract significant private investment.

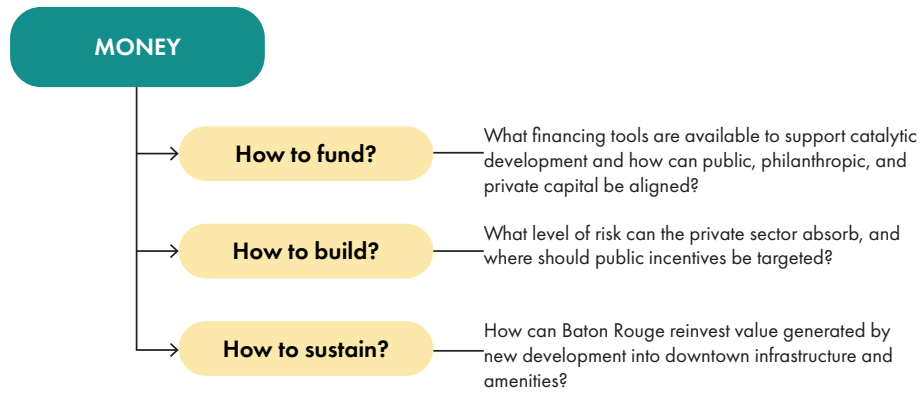
This example is not presented as a model to replicate, but as an illustration of how some cities have expanded their implementation capacity to help bridge the space between planning and development. As Baton Rouge moves toward implementation, evaluating whether additional tools, partnerships, or structures could strengthen delivery may be an important next step. It may also be valuable to consider a broader range of implementation-capacity approaches from peer cities such as Houston, Atlanta, Dallas, and Austin—not as templates to replicate, but as examples that can inform a locally tailored strategy.

3CDC in Cincinnati

Funding Tools & Strategies

The feasibility of catalytic downtown projects depends on the ability to assemble funding from multiple sources and to reduce risk for private developers. Rising construction costs, high soft costs, insurance pressures, and limited access to flexible capital make even strong downtown sites challenging to advance without coordinated financial tools and predictable public-sector participation.

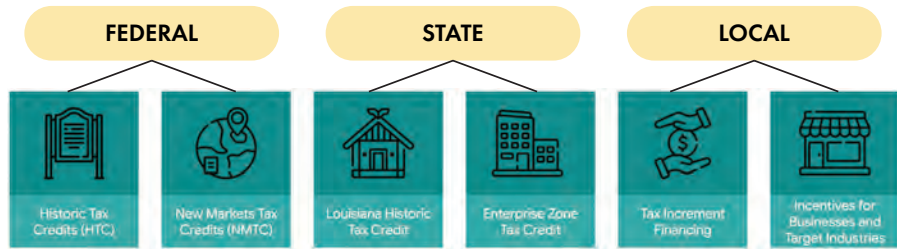
Key Project Financing Questions:



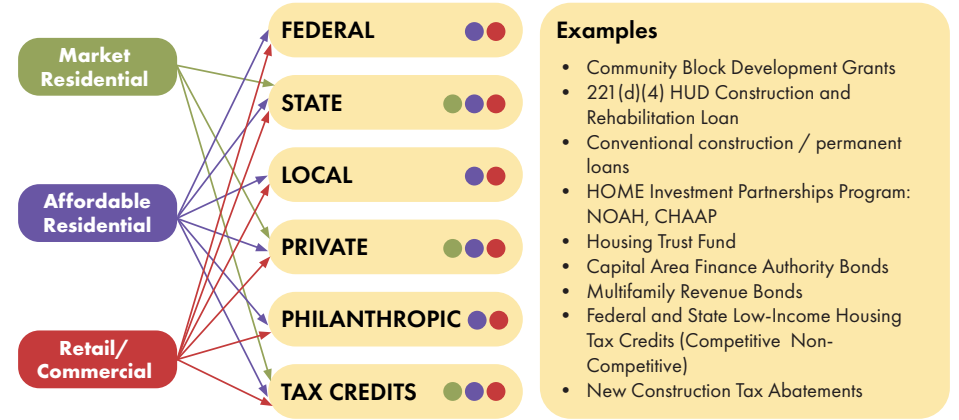
Building on Existing Tools and Precedent

Downtown Baton Rouge has successfully delivered complex redevelopment projects by leveraging layered financing strategies.

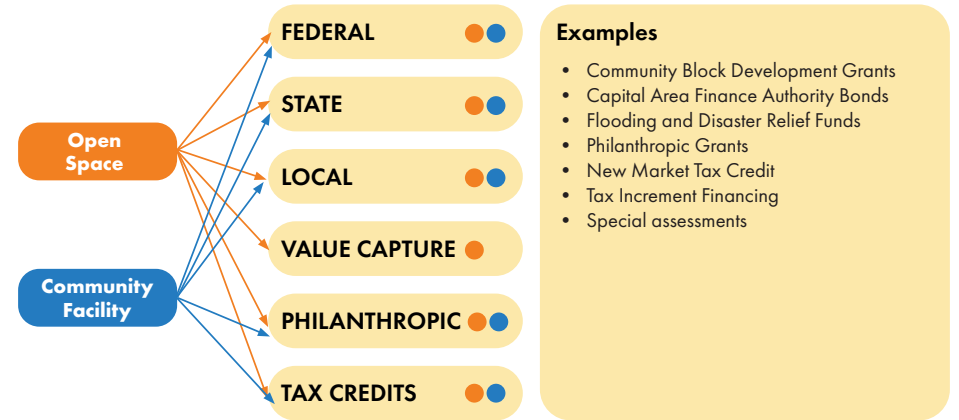
Pursuing complementary policies that help overcome current obstacles and thoughtfully attract and facilitate development will be key to the success of the proposed strategies and new, future efforts.



Development Sources: Residential and Commercial



Development Sources: Open Space and Community Facilities



Funding Tools & Strategies

Challenges Identified

High Construction and Soft Costs

- Multifamily construction costs of \$175–\$225 per square foot push required rents above current market levels.
- Soft costs can approach 35% of total development budgets, significantly impacting feasibility.
- Rising insurance premiums add significant operating burden, affecting underwriting assumptions.

Financing Complexity

- Developers noted that projects requiring incentives or public financing can experience long timelines due to coordination needs across agencies.
- There is no intermediary or financial entity dedicated to assembling catalytic capital stacks for downtown.
- In the real estate industry, speed is a form of incentive and can save projects significantly.

Limited Flexible Capital

- State bond allocations and housing resources fluctuate annually, making long-term planning difficult.
- Philanthropic capital is interested but not currently structured around a formal downtown redevelopment strategy.

Opportunities to Expand Money Alignment

Coordination

Improve coordination among City-Parish, DDD, BRAF, CAFA, and philanthropic partners to align funding priorities.

Predictability

Increase predictability around when and how public tools (e.g., PILOTs, TIF, infrastructure support) may be considered for catalytic projects.

Reinvested Value

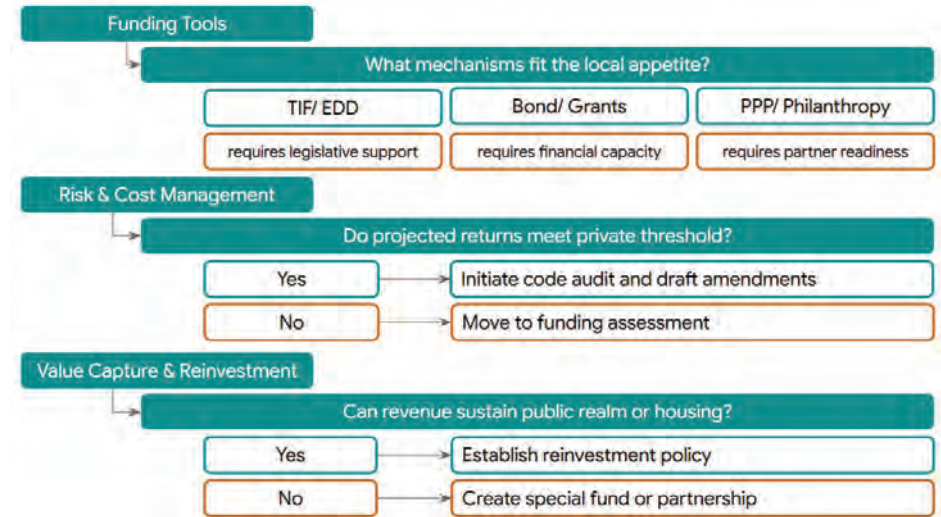
Explore mechanisms that reinvest value generated by development into shared infrastructure, streetscapes, and public spaces.

Risk Reduction

Identify opportunities to use public land or pre-development support to reduce early-stage project risk and increase development speed.

These opportunities are intended to expand financing readiness for downtown projects, not to predetermine which tools will be used.

Money Decision Pathway



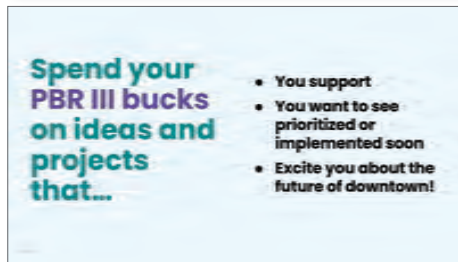
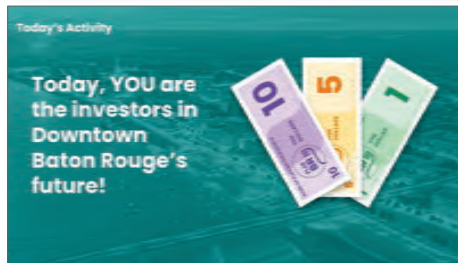
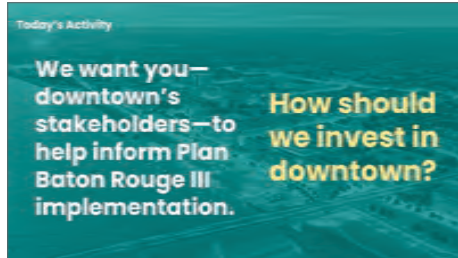
This sub-framework is intended to clarify funding decisions and implementation pathways. It does not prescribe a specific outcome.

Community Priorities

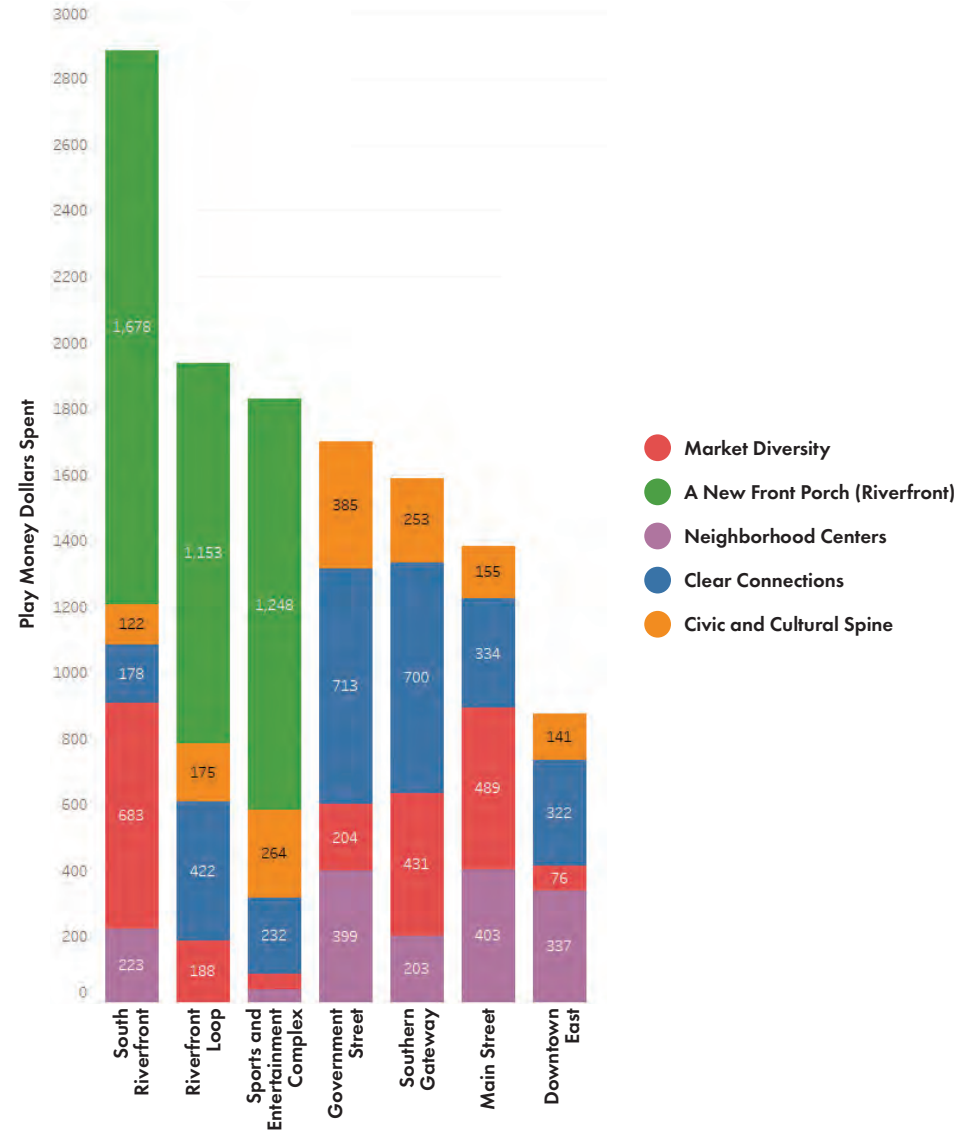
At the third community event hosted as part of the Plan Baton Rouge III process the planning team presented community members with the final draft recommendations for downtown. Following an open house featuring the Plan Baton Rouge III framework plan, Guiding Principles, and big moves, community members were presented with the latest concepts and recommendations for the future of downtown.

After the presentation, community members were invited to participate in an interactive participatory budgeting-style event where each participant was given a packet of one hundred dollars in play money and invited to spend it on Plan Baton Rouge III recommendations in accordance with their own enthusiasm and priorities for the future of Downtown Baton Rouge. The 80+ recommendations were organized into stations by the seven Focus Areas, giving community members a sense of how fairly technical proposed projects, policies, programs, and partnerships could reshape and transform parts of downtown. Over 120 community members participated, spending a total of \$12,200 in play money on Plan Baton Rouge III ideas.

The outcomes of this activity reiterate a clear interest in revitalizing and activating the downtown riverfront, with each of the three riverfront Focus Areas garnering the most amount of total spending and projects organized under the New Front Porch (i.e., riverfront) Guiding Principle receiving the most "investment." Spending elsewhere indicates a high level of support for right-of-way improvement and transit projects on key corridors, such as Government Street and Nicholson Drive and ideas that focus on densifying and activating neighborhood centers within downtown.



OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY "SPENDING" ON PLAN BATON ROUGE III FINAL DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS BY FOCUS AREA (ORGANIZED BY GUIDING PRINCIPLE)



Prioritization & Phasing Methodology

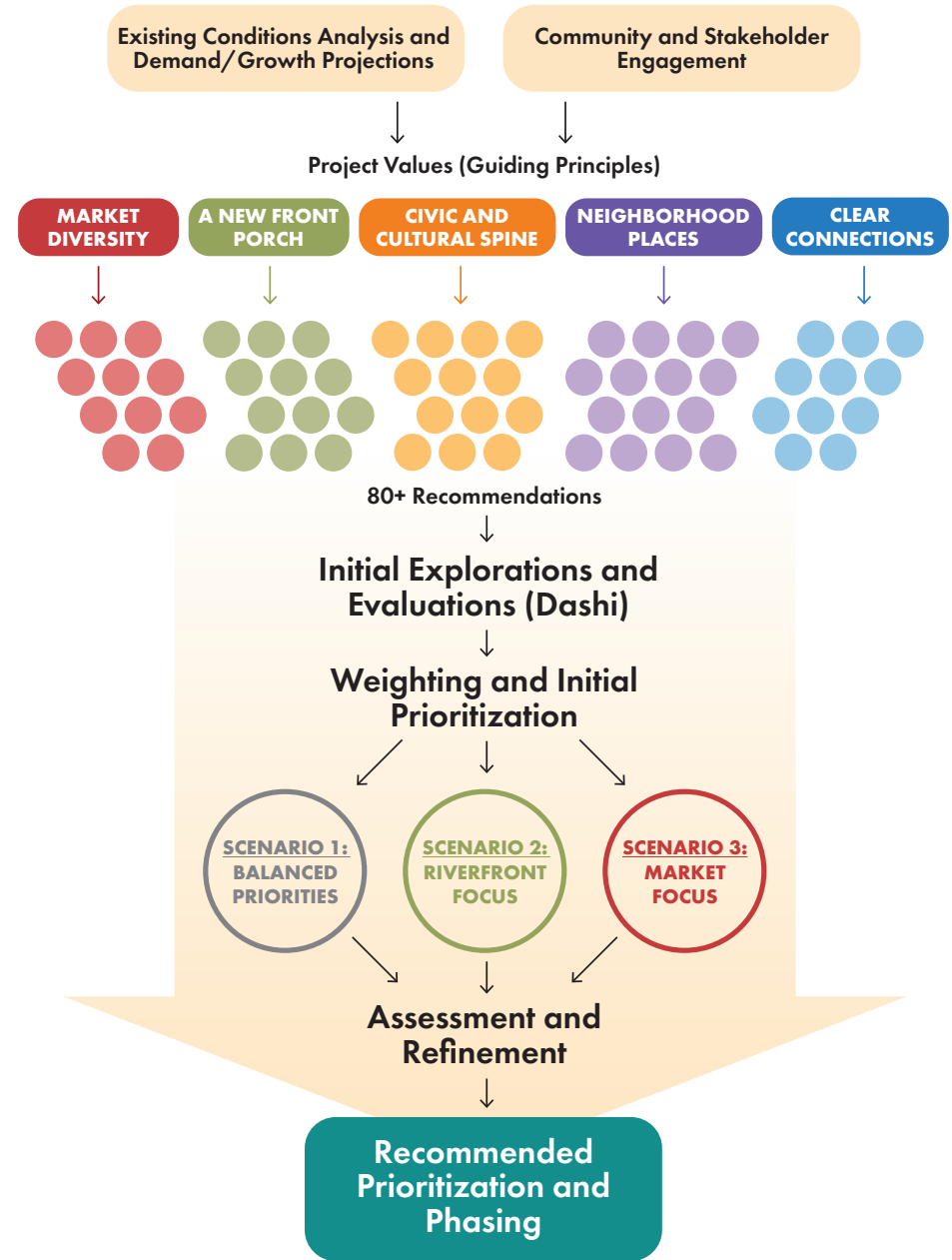
Plan Baton Rouge III includes dozen of recommendations across several categories of potential transformation and impact. Determining where to start and which recommendations are most worthy of early investment requires a clear and methodical process for prioritization. This process must take into account several factors, such as the kind and level of impact on downtown, the potential to catalyze further investment and unlock additional potential, the perspectives of community leaders who will ultimately advance the plan, and the priorities of the Baton Rouge community, as articulated throughout the planning process.

The planning team began this work at the outset of the process by exploring and uncovering the histories and existing conditions of downtown. This baseline condition assessment was furthered with projections for future growth and demand to get a clear picture of Baton Rouge today and what kind of change could be expected in the years to come. This analysis, along with the synthesized input received from project stakeholders and community member's in the project's first phase of engagement, were used to develop the plan's five Guiding Principles, which serve as the organizing framework for Plan Baton Rouge III.

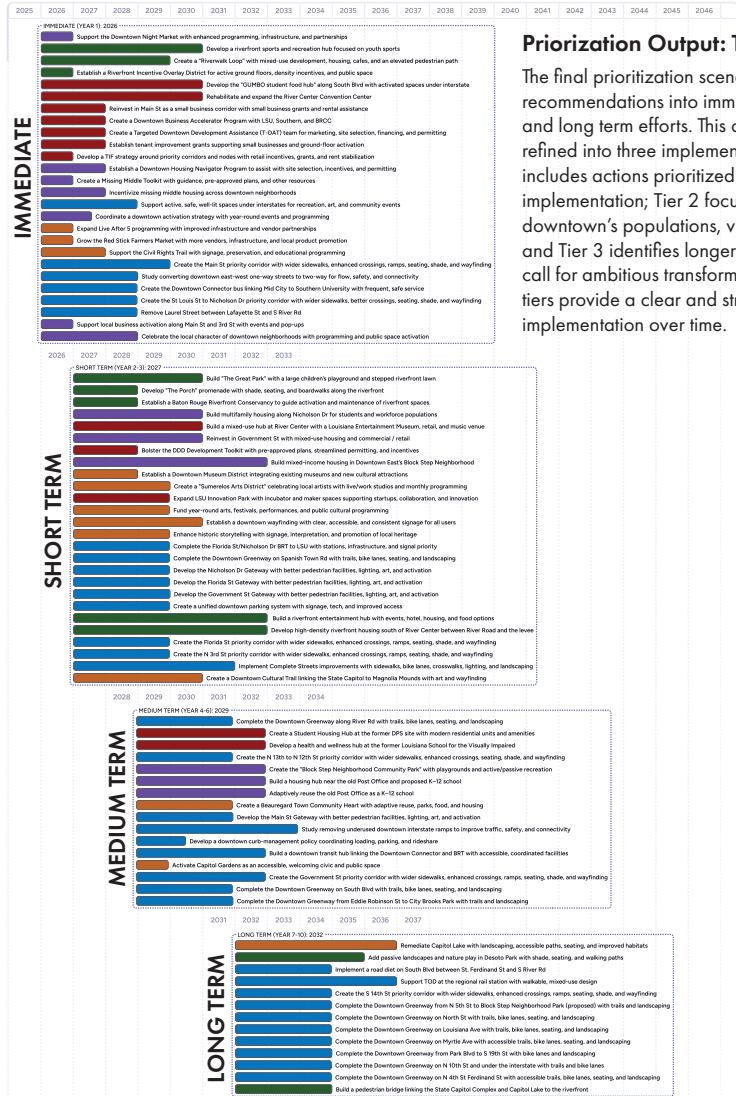
From there, dozens of recommendations were crafted, deriving from the Guiding Principles and the community aspirations that underpin them. The planning team then used Sasaki's proprietary Dashi tool to organize, sort, detail, and score each recommendation to understand how well each achieves the goals articulated by the Guiding Principles and to understand the potential impact each recommendation could have on downtown.

The Dashi tool allowed the team to evaluate the impact of each recommendation across Guiding Principles and measure the potential performance of each recommendation across a set of key performance indicators (KPIs). Dashi also allowed the team to measure outcomes across a variety of success metrics, including high-level cost, development area, and number of residential units planned. From there, the planning team worked with BRAF and its partners to generate scenarios that assigned different levels of weighting to the Guiding Principles and various expected outcomes. The three scenarios were generated in response to the priorities conveyed to the planning team by project leaders, the project Executive Committee, and community members throughout the first and second phases of engagement.

The planning team reviewed the scenarios and expected outcomes of each with project leaders, refined prioritization and phasing in concert with a phase of implementation planning. The team settled on a scenario to advance into final recommended prioritization and phasing. This scenario informed the final proposed action plan for strategic implementation of Plan Baton Rouge III recommendations.



Prioritization & Phasing Methodology



Prioritization Output: Timeline

The final prioritization scenario organized the recommendations into immediate, short, medium, and long term efforts. This organization was further refined into three implementation tiers. Tier 1 includes actions prioritized for early investment and implementation; Tier 2 focuses on ideas that grow downtown's populations, visitation, and offerings; and Tier 3 identifies longer-term opportunities that call for ambitious transformation. Together, these tiers provide a clear and strategic roadmap for implementation over time.

Potential Quick Wins

While the recommendations have been organized into tiers using a strategic, data-driven methodology, it is important to recognize that some actions can be implemented quickly and with relatively minimal resources. These "quick wins" are smaller in scale than major capital or development projects, but they have the potential to generate visible momentum, build public confidence, and create early catalytic impact.

The following recommendations could be potential quick wins—initiatives that could be advanced in the near term to demonstrate progress, support ongoing revitalization efforts, and lay the groundwork for more complex, long-term projects. Coordinating agencies should collaborate to further refine and formalize this list.

- ### EXAMPLE QUICK WINS (TIER 1)
- R-01** Establish a Riverfront Incentive Overlay District for active ground floors, density incentives, and public space.
 - R-02** Establish a Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy to guide activation and maintenance of riverfront spaces.
 - M-05** Develop a TIF strategy around priority corridors and nodes with retail incentives, grants, and rent stabilization.
 - M-06** Reinvest in Main Street as a small business corridor with small business grants and rental assistance.
 - N-01** Create a Missing Middle Housing Toolkit with guidance, pre-approved plans, and other resources.
 - N-03** Support local business activation along Main Street and 3rd Street with events and pop-ups.
 - C-01** Support downtown events such as the Downtown Night Market with enhanced programming, infrastructure, and partnerships.
 - C-08** Fund year-round arts, festivals, performances, and public cultural programming.
 - T-06** Develop the Government Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.
 - T-08** Develop the Main Street Gateway with better pedestrian facilities, lighting, art, and activation.

Tiered Recommendations

2026 2028 2030 2032 2034 2036 2038

Tier 1: Catalyze

Tier 1 recommendations are prioritized for early investment and implementation. These recommendations address the goals and principles of Plan Baton Rouge III head on and their early implementation offers the opportunity to catalyze further investment and realize other plan recommendations. They include essential operational programs and structures, key riverfront revitalization projects, and investing in priority corridors.

- A New Front Porch: Enhance the Riverfront Promenade with trees, seating, and wayfinding**
- Market Diversity: Expand the River Center Convention Center**
- Neighborhood Places: Create a Missing Middle Housing Toolkit**
- Civic & Cultural Spine: Support downtown events with enhanced programming, infrastructure, etc.**
- Clear Connections: Complete the Florida Street/ Nicholson Drive BRT to LSU**

2040 2042 2044 2046

Select recommendations from each Guiding Principle per tier. See *Chapter 03 Plan Baton Rouge III Vision* for more information.

With dozens of recommendations for achieving the aspirations of the Baton Rouge community and the Plan Baton Rouge III Guiding Principles, insight on prioritization and phasing is necessary to equip plan implementers with a strategy. Plan Baton Rouge III groups these recommendations into three tiers, based on the potential impact of proposed projects and a proposed sequencing of investments. These three tiers describe projects that will catalyze, grow, and evolve different components of downtown. While the tiers establish a strategic order of implementation, projects in later tiers may advance sooner if funding, partnerships, or other opportunities arise, ensuring progress can continue even when higher-priority initiatives face constraints

Tier 2: Grow

Tier 2 recommendations focus on ideas that grow downtown's populations, visitation, and offerings. They include projects and programs that increase housing development, strengthening neighborhood centers and corridors, and developing new attractions that appeal to a variety of types of visitors.

- A New Front Porch: Build a riverfront entertainment hub with events, a hotel, housing, etc.**
- Market Diversity: Create a Targeted Downtown Development Assistance Team (TDAT)**
- Neighborhood Places: Build a housing hub near the old post office**
- Civic & Cultural Spine: Create a Beauregard Town Community Heart**
- Clear Connections: Create the Downtown Connector bus linking Mid City to Southern University**

Tier 3: Evolve

Tier 3 recommendations call for ambitious transformation of corridors, nodes, neighborhoods, and other downtown areas. These projects evolve places to meet modern needs and become more viable after earlier catalytic and growth-oriented investments.

- A New Front Porch: Build a pedestrian bridge linking the State Capitol Complex and Capitol Lake to the riverfront**
- Market Diversity: Expand the LSU Innovation Park**
- Neighborhood Places: Create the "Block Step Neighborhood Community Park"**
- Civic & Cultural Spine: Remediate Capitol Lake**
- Clear Connections: Support TOD at the regional rail station**

Goals & Metrics

With the help of Sasaki's Dashi tool, the planning team was able to assign order-of-magnitude preliminary estimates on the potential impact of plan recommendations on downtown across plan themes and partners. These are some of the anticipated outcomes of Plan Baton Rouge III implementation from the vantage point of plan publication in late 2025.

In most cases, these estimates represent full implementation of each recommendation, where the opportunity envisioned is fully realized.

Possible Outcomes by 2045

8,400+

new residential units

doubling PBR III's goal for downtown.

2.1 miles

riverfront developed

riverfront activation across the downtown stretch

3,500 +

new jobs

15% growth in jobs envisioned within downtown

\$4B +

in investments envisioned by Plan Baton Rouge III



Phasing assignments represent when a project kicks off. Spending will often occur over a longer period of time.

12,000 + residents

Potential for over 12,000 additional downtown residents by 2045.

Goals & Metrics

Tier 1: Catalyze

For the early implementation recommendations, the planning team generated projections of expected impacts over the first 10 years of implementation. In most cases, these estimates represent full implementation of each recommendation, where the opportunity envisioned is fully realized.

Planned Outcomes in the First 10 Years

5,490

new jobs

\$10M

in additional annual Sales Tax Revenue

\$27M

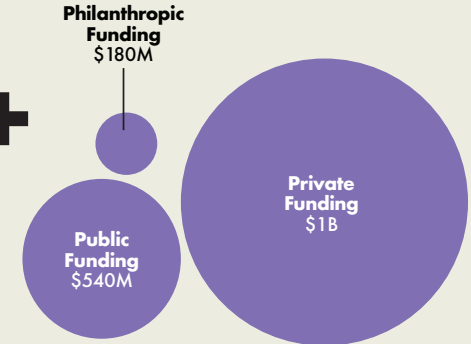
in additional annual Property Tax Revenue

4.5M

Additional visits to downtown per year

\$1.74B +

in early investments



Expected funding sources

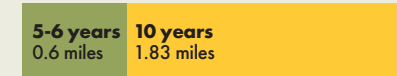
4,950

new residential units



2+ miles

riverfront developed



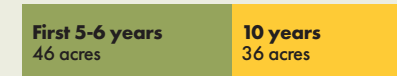
7,350

new residents



80 acres

public realm developed



Tier 1: Catalyze

(APPROXIMATELY 0-5 YEARS)

Tier 1 recommendations are those projects that can be transformational to key pieces of the downtown experience, unlock further activation and investment, and are recommended for immediate- and short-term implementation.

These recommendations touch upon each of the five Guiding Principles and reflect both catalytic potential—projects that will energize downtown and spur more development, activation, and investment—and community priorities for the future of downtown.

Catalytic projects are grouped into six primary themes:

DOWNTOWN RIVERFRONT

Development and public realm projects that improve and activate the Mississippi Riverfront, bringing more people, events, and spending to the riverfront.

STUDENT HOUSING HUB

Projects that establish downtown as a center of student life, forging stronger connections between LSU, Southern, and Downtown Baton Rouge.

GROWTH PLANNING

Tools and programs that support the goals of growth and investment in downtown.

REINVEST IN MAIN STREET

Projects and programs that focus on re-establishing Main Street as a primary commercial corridor in downtown.

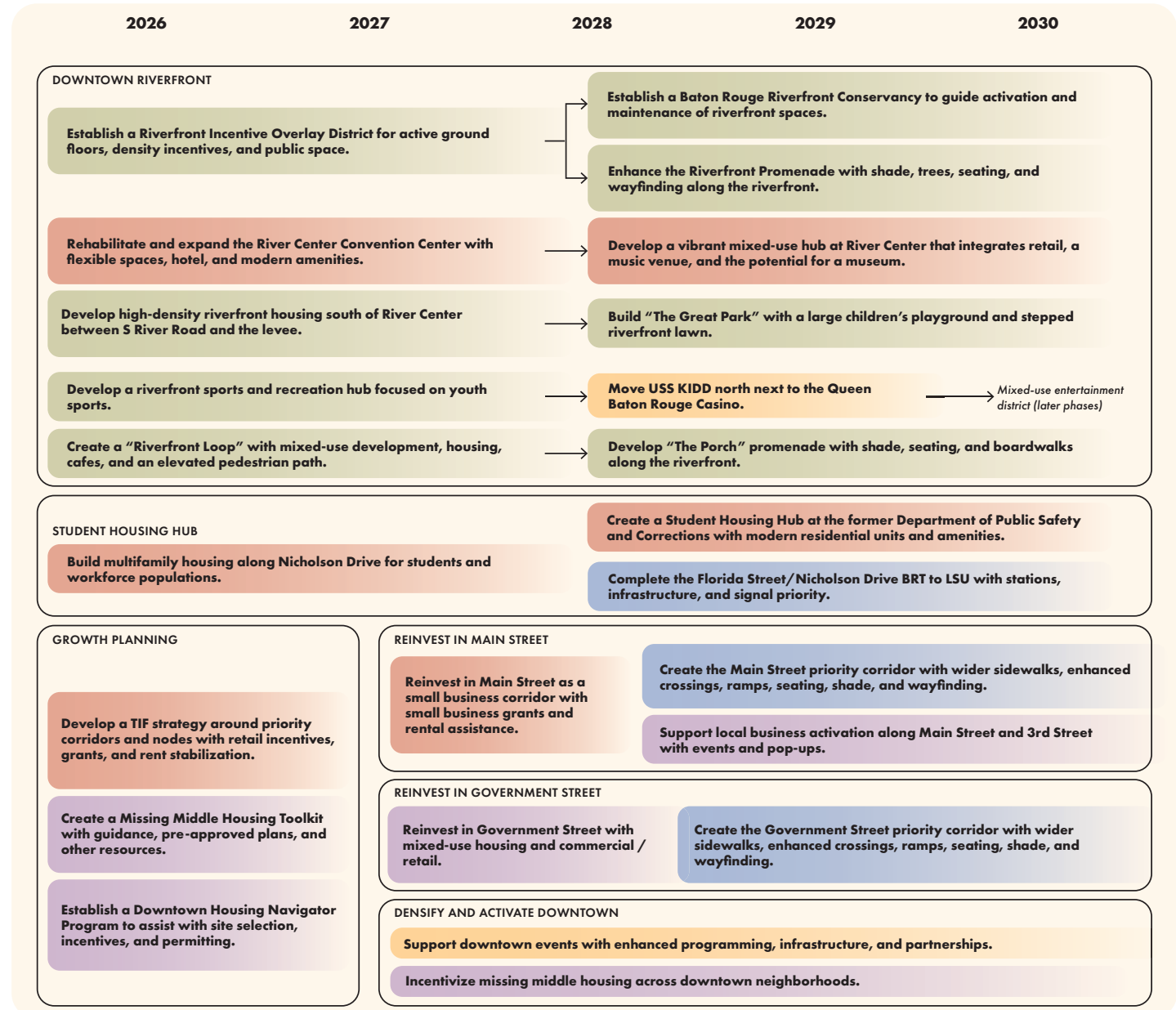
REINVEST IN GOVERNMENT STREET

Projects and programs that focus on revitalizing Government Street as a major connector and mixed-use corridor within downtown.

DENSIFY AND ACTIVATE DOWNTOWN

Recommendations that focus on infill development and increased events and activities throughout downtown.

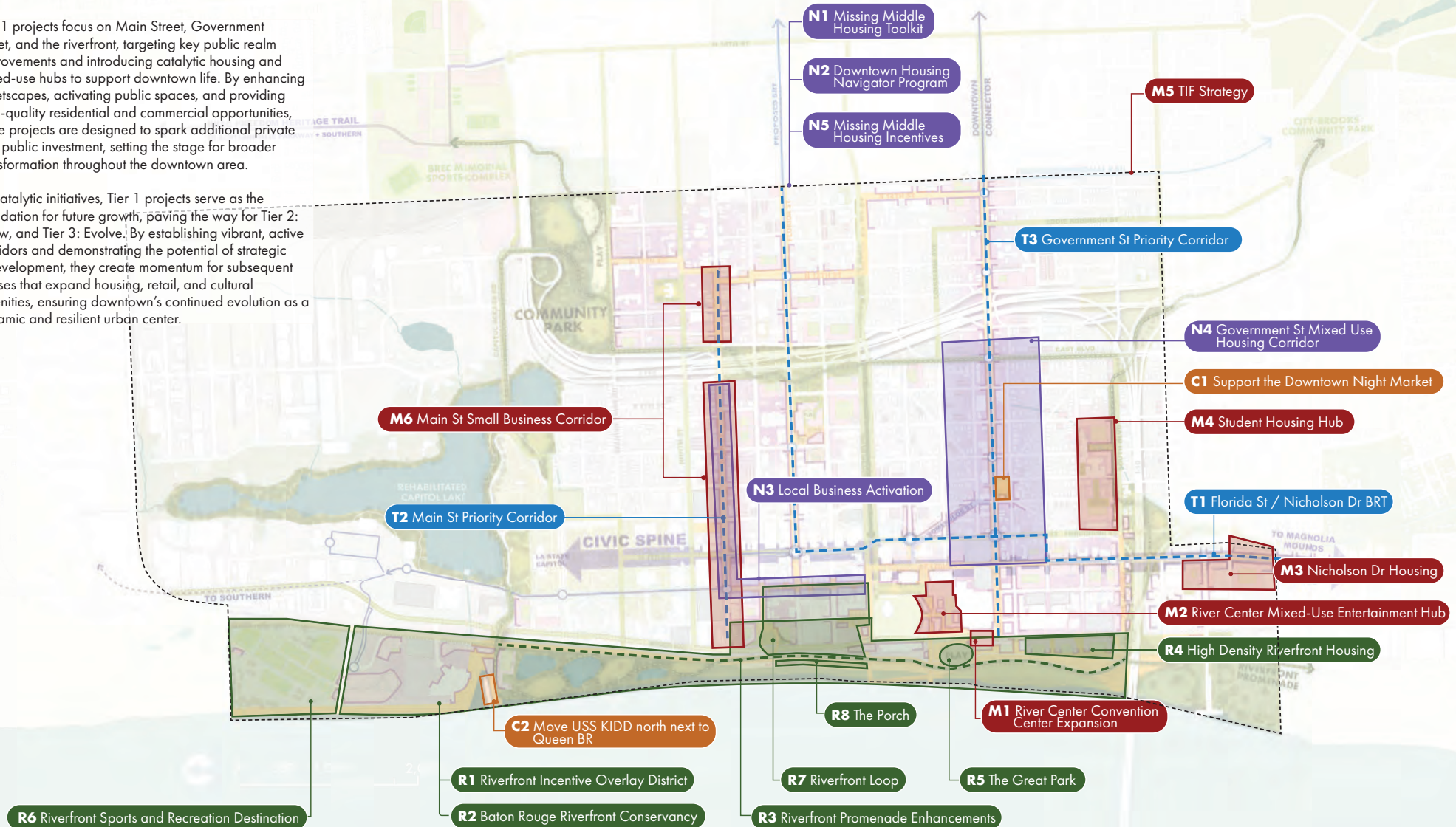
The following pages provide greater conceptual detail and potential paths to implementing these Catalytic recommendations. This includes high-level estimates on implementation timelines, action steps, and cost. These are for understanding scale and level of effort at the planning stage only. More refined and specific estimates should be generated before commencing project work on any recommendation.



Tier 1: Catalyze Projects

Tier 1 projects focus on Main Street, Government Street, and the riverfront, targeting key public realm improvements and introducing catalytic housing and mixed-use hubs to support downtown life. By enhancing streetscapes, activating public spaces, and providing high-quality residential and commercial opportunities, these projects are designed to spark additional private and public investment, setting the stage for broader transformation throughout the downtown area.

As catalytic initiatives, Tier 1 projects serve as the foundation for future growth, paving the way for Tier 2: Grow, and Tier 3: Evolve. By establishing vibrant, active corridors and demonstrating the potential of strategic redevelopment, they create momentum for subsequent phases that expand housing, retail, and cultural amenities, ensuring downtown's continued evolution as a dynamic and resilient urban center.



RECOMMENDATION

R-01

Establish a Riverfront Incentive Overlay District for active ground floors, density and public space.

Establish a Riverfront Incentive Overlay District (RIOD) to guide redevelopment along the riverfront requiring active ground floors and public space dedication for river-adjacent development and offer financial incentives in exchange for public benefits. Establish a Riverfront TIF District.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Map the Riverfront Incentive Overlay District boundaries and identify priority parcels and redevelopment opportunity sites.
2. Define active ground-floor requirements (e.g., retail, food & beverage, community uses, lobbies with transparency).
3. Define public space requirements and eligible space types.
4. Coordinate early with property owners, Port, and USACE.
5. Initiate legal and financial feasibility analysis for a Riverfront TIF District.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Policy

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

East Baton Rouge Parish, BRAF

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

State Legislators, Property Owners, Greater Baton Rouge Economic Partnership

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

Establishing a Riverfront Incentive Overlay District ensures that future riverfront development contributes directly to public access, activation, and long-term stewardship. By pairing active ground-floor requirements with targeted incentives, streamlined permitting, and a dedicated TIF district, Baton Rouge can leverage private investment to deliver a continuous, vibrant, and economically productive riverfront while ensuring public benefit.

B. Policy Development Phase (12–24 months)

1. Finalize incentive menu (density bonuses, tax abatements, parking reductions).
2. Draft Riverfront TIF District structure, boundaries, and eligible uses.
3. Develop streamlined joint permitting procedures for river-edge improvements.
4. Coordinate overlay standards with Riverfront Conservancy design guidelines.
5. Conduct public review, Planning Commission hearings, and adoption process.

C. Implementation Phase (24–48 months)

1. Apply overlay standards to new riverfront development proposals.
2. Administer incentives, public space dedications, and fee-in-lieu payments.
3. Deploy TIF revenues for riverfront, plazas, lighting, and maintenance.
4. Monitor development activity, public access delivery, and outcomes.
5. Adjust overlay standards periodically to maintain market feasibility.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$250,000–\$450,000	6–12 months	Establishing the RIOD may require minimal upfront investment to align partners and make required regulatory changes, but will eventually be a driver of value.
Policy Development	\$400,000–\$700,000	12–24 months	
Implementation	\$300,000–\$600,000	24–48 months	
Total	\$950k–\$1.75M	2–3 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Increased riverfront activity
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	In-lieu public space contributions
New/Enhanced Public Realm	5–15 acres (over time)	Public space dedication and TIF
Converted Space	Indirect	Incentivized redevelopment
New Residential Units	Indirect	Density bonuses
New Residents	Indirect	Riverfront housing growth
New/Relocated Jobs	100–300	Construction and ground-floor uses
New Pedestrian Traffic	+200k–400k annual visits	Continuous activation
Riverfront Developed	Indirect	Incentivized frontage
Mobility Corridors Added	Project-dependent	Riverfront and connectors

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Waterfront Overlay and Waterfront Park Conservancy – Louisville, KY

Louisville’s riverfront demonstrates how incentive zoning, coordinated governance, and reinvestment tools can successfully guide private development while delivering continuous, publicly accessible riverfront spaces and sustained activation.



Photo Source: BlueHealth Tool

RECOMMENDATION

R-02

Establish a Riverfront Conservancy to guide riverfront activation and maintenance.

Establish the Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy, a cross sector nonprofit partnership dedicated to coordinating, activating, and stewarding the city’s riverfront, guiding long-term riverfront development, managing planning, programming, environmental stewardship, and fundraising.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Draft the Conservancy’s mission, governance structure, bylaws, operational scope. Establish a list of foundational partners and their roles and commitments.
2. Define geographic boundaries (e.g., from River Center to N. 3rd St to South Blvd, or full downtown riverfront).
3. Secure initial seed funding from public partners, apply for foundation grants, and initiate other sponsorship discussions.
4. Begin pilot programming: pop-up events, temporary art installations, seasonal markets, etc.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Policy

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Visit Baton Rouge, BRAF, BREC

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

DDD, State of Louisiana

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Short term (year 2-3)

BENEFITS

Establishing the Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy ensures long-term stewardship and activation of one of the city’s greatest assets. Through a partnership structure including Visit Baton Rouge, BREC, the Port, and riverfront cultural institutions, the Conservancy will coordinate planning, manage programming, support fundraising, and oversee maintenance. This unified approach will expand public access, promote environmental stewardship, improve the visitor experience, and enable year-round activation of the Mississippi riverfront.

B. Policy Development Phase (12–24 months)

1. Develop a 5-year Strategic Plan for riverfront activation, maintenance, and development.
2. Prepare a Riverfront Programming and Events Plan.
3. Create a branding and communication strategy for the Conservancy.
4. Begin donor outreach and corporate sponsorship campaigns.
5. Hire Executive Director and support staff (programming, fundraising, operations).

C. Implementation Phase (24–48 months)

1. Host year-round programming: concerts, riverfront markets, fitness series, seasonal events.
2. Coordinate activation with USS KIDD, LASM, Downtown Greenway, and new riverfront development.
3. Oversee routine maintenance, landscaping, public art care, and riverfront cleanliness.
4. Secure long-term multi-source funding (grants, sponsorships, philanthropic support).
5. Track visitor numbers, event participation, maintenance needs, and funding status.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$425k–\$775k	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city, state) • Foundation grants • Private philanthropy and sponsorship • Fundraising
Policy Development	\$525k–\$900k	12–24 months	
Implementation	\$600k–\$1.3M	24–48 months	
Total (first 5 years)	\$1.5M–\$3M	3–5 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Increased visitation and activity
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Enhanced riverfront value
New/Enhanced Public Realm	2–5 acres (programming impact)	Across the full riverfront managed area
Converted Space	0 GSF	-
New Residential Units	0	-
New Residents	0	-
New/Relocated Jobs	5–10 direct staff	Contractor and programming jobs
New Pedestrian Traffic	+100,000 annual visits	Programming boosts usage
Riverfront Developed	Indirect	Activates existing 1+ mile corridor
Mobility Corridors Added	0	-

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Waterfront Park Conservancy – Louisville, KY

Louisville’s riverfront demonstrates how incentive zoning, coordinated governance, and reinvestment tools can successfully guide private development while delivering continuous, publicly accessible riverfront spaces and sustained activation.



Photo Source: The Courier Journal

RECOMMENDATION

R-03

Enhance the Riverfront Promenade with shade, trees, seating, and wayfinding.

Enhance the Riverfront Promenade with shade structures, trees, seating, and other tactile interventions. Install wayfinding and history kiosks every quarter-mile to improve navigation, provide interpretive information, and enrich the visitor experience along the waterfront.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Conduct a corridor-wide assessment to identify priority segments for shade, seating, and wayfinding upgrades.
2. Develop a palette of standard interventions (benches, shade structures, tree species, kiosk types).
3. Coordinate with cultural partners to curate interpretive and historical content for kiosks.
4. Identify sponsorship or grant opportunities for wayfinding and interpretive elements. Pilot temporary shade and seating.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Riverfront Conservancy

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish, BRAF

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Short term (year 2-3)

BENEFITS

Enhancing the Riverfront Promenade with targeted, repeatable interventions improves accessibility, supports tourism and downtown activity, and increases the value of adjacent public and private investments. Incremental improvements in shade, seating, and interpretive elements across the corridor ensure equitable access, strengthen identity, and create a cohesive riverfront experience without requiring full reconstruction.

B. Design Phase (12–18 months)

1. Prepare a comprehensive Riverfront Promenade Enhancement Plan.
2. Hire a landscape/ design firm to design modular shade structures, seating clusters, and tree planting details.
3. Develop standardized wayfinding and interpretive kiosk designs and content templates.
4. Coordinate with utilities, maintenance teams, and flood management agencies.
5. Complete construction documents and secure permits.

C. Construction Phase (18–36 months)

1. Install shade structures and tree canopy improvements in priority segments.
2. Add seating, lighting, and tactile amenities at regular intervals.
3. Install wayfinding and interpretive kiosks every quarter mile (approx. 5–6 total).
4. Improve surface treatments, overlook nodes, and river-edge furnishings where needed.
5. Coordinate long-term maintenance with the Riverfront Conservancy.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$600,000–\$1.1M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city, state) • Foundation grants • Private philanthropy and sponsorship • Fundraising • TIF funds
Design	\$1.2M–\$2M	12–18 months	
Construction	\$12.5M–\$24M	18–36 months	
Total	\$14M–\$27M	3–5 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Increased visitation and dwell time
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Uplift in adjacent riverfront values
New/Enhanced Public Realm	10–15 acres	Corridor-wide improvements
Converted Space	0 GSF	-
New Residential Units	0	-
New Residents	0	-
New/Relocated Jobs	50–75	Construction and maintenance
New Pedestrian Traffic	+250,000–400,000 annual visits	Comfort, shade, wayfinding
Riverfront Developed	7,000 LF	Promenade-wide enhancements
Mobility Corridors Added	7,000 LF	Improved pedestrian corridor

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Cincinnati Smale Riverfront Park– Cincinnati, OH

Smale Riverfront Park demonstrates how layered shade, flexible seating, and clear wayfinding can transform a linear riverwalk into a highly active public space, accessible to people of all ages. Its combination of trees, plazas, and pedestrian amenities supports daily use while accommodating festivals and large events.



Photo Source: Sasaki

RECOMMENDATION

R-04

Develop high-density riverfront housing south of River Center between S River Road and the levee.

Develop high-density riverfront housing just south of the River Center, between River Road and the Mississippi River levee, with approximately 450-500 residential units that front directly onto the proposed "Great Park."

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Define development parcels, density targets, and riverfront frontage requirements.
2. Coordinate with The Great Park planning to ensure strong public-private interface.
3. Conduct market feasibility, infrastructure capacity, and floodplain analysis.
4. Rezone necessary parcel/s.
5. Establish zoning, overlay, or incentive tools to support high-density residential development along with commercial uses.
6. Issue a developer solicitation (RFP/RFQ) for qualified mixed-income housing teams.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$1M–\$2M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private investment • TIF/EDD funds • New Market Tax Credits • CAFA bonds
Design	\$6M–\$10M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$180M–\$240M	24–48 months	
Total	\$185M–\$250M	4–7 years	

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Developer

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

East Baton Rouge Parish, State of Louisiana, Bally's Baton Rouge Casino and Hotel, Build Baton Rouge, BRAF

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

High-density housing along the riverfront is great for sustaining long-term activation of public spaces and maximizing the return on public investment. By locating new residential development directly adjacent to the park and riverfront, this recommendation increases daily activity, supports nearby retail and cultural venues, and reinforces Downtown Baton Rouge as a desirable place to live, aligned with market demand for waterfront living in walkable urban environments.

B. Design Phase (24–48 months)

1. Prepare site plans, building massing, and riverfront-facing design concepts.
2. Integrate ground-floor amenities, active frontages, and park-oriented entries.
3. Coordinate utilities, parking strategy, and resilience measures.
4. Advance entitlement approvals and secure financing commitments.
5. Finalize construction documents and phasing plan.

C. Construction Phase (24–48 months)

1. Construct residential buildings and structured or shared parking.
2. Deliver park-facing ground floors, lobbies, and shared amenities.
3. Complete riverfront-facing streetscape and pedestrian connections.
4. Coordinate construction sequencing with adjacent public projects.
5. Lease-up, occupancy, and transition to long-term property management.

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	\$1M–\$2M/yr	Increased visitation and dwell time
New Property Tax Revenue	\$6M–\$12M	Uplift in adjacent riverfront values
New/Enhanced Public Realm	3–5 acres	Corridor-wide improvements
Converted Space	200,000–350,000 GSF	-
New Residential Units	750	-
New Residents	1,000–1,400	-
New/Relocated Jobs	300–500	Construction and maintenance
New Pedestrian Traffic	+250,000 annual visits	Comfort, shade, wayfinding
Riverfront Developed	920 LF	Promenade-wide enhancements
Mobility Corridors Added	0-500 LF	Improved pedestrian corridor

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Cincinnati Smale Riverfront Park – Cincinnati, OH

Residential development adjacent to Smale Riverfront Park illustrates how high-density housing can successfully front major public spaces. Direct park access, river views, and integrated pedestrian connections increase residential value while activating the riverfront year-round.



Photo Source: The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

RECOMMENDATION

R-05

Build “The Great Park” with a large children’s playground and stepped riverfront lawn.

Create “The Great Park,” a dynamic waterfront public space along the riverfront. Features include a large, engaging children’s playground near the River Center and an iconic stepped riverfront lawn in front of Bally’s Baton Rouge Casino and Hotel, activating the area for recreation, community gatherings, and scenic enjoyment.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Define the boundaries, and conduct site analysis including grading, floodplain constraints, utilities, and river edge conditions.
2. Develop a preliminary program for the children’s playground, lawn terraces, event infrastructure, and amenities.
3. Coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
4. Rezone necessary parcel/s.
5. Coordinate with riverfront stakeholders and initiate community engagement.
6. Identify funding sources, including public capital funds, grants, and philanthropic contributions.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$1.2M–\$2M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city, state) • TIF funds • CAFA bonds • Foundation grants • Private philanthropy and sponsorship
Design	\$3.5M–\$6M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$30M–\$55M	24–36 months	
Total	\$35M–\$65M	4–6 years	

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy Lead

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulate

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Visit Baton Rouge, BRAF, DDD

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Short term (year 2-3)

BENEFITS

The Great Park establishes a defining civic space that elevates Baton Rouge’s riverfront from a linear edge to a true destination. By pairing a landmark children’s playground with a stepped riverfront lawn capable of hosting events and everyday use, the project attracts families, residents, and visitors while strengthening connections between the River Center, Museums, and adjacent neighborhoods. This investment supports tourism, enhances quality of life, and the value and visibility of surrounding public and private development along the riverfront.

B. Design Phase (12-24 months)

1. Prepare a comprehensive park master plan and detailed landscape architecture design.
2. Design the destination playground, including inclusive play elements and shade.
3. Design the stepped riverfront lawn, seating terraces, lighting, and event infrastructure.
4. Coordinate engineering, flood resilience strategies, and permitting, particularly with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
5. Finalize construction documents and secure approvals.

C. Construction Phase (24–36 months)

1. Construct site grading, utilities, and foundational park infrastructure.
2. Build the large children’s playground and associated amenities.
3. Construct the stepped riverfront lawn and river-edge seating terraces.
4. Install pathways, lighting, furnishings, and landscape plantings.
5. Complete final inspections, open the park, and transition operations to long-term stewardship.

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Increased visitation and event activity
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Adjacent development value uplift
New/Enhanced Public Realm	~9 acres	Signature park investment
Converted Space	393,000 GSF	Reclaimed and activated riverfront land
New Residential Units	0	-
New Residents	0	-
New/Relocated Jobs	75 - 125	Construction and ongoing operations
New Pedestrian Traffic	+300,000–500,000 annual visits	Playground, events and river views
Riverfront Developed	1,300 LF	Stepped lawn and promenade interface
Mobility Corridors Added	1,300 LF	Riverfront pedestrian circulation

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Great Bend Park - Evansville, OH (in-progress)

Great Bend Park’s proposed design highlights the role of large-scale play environments and terraced riverfront lawns in creating iconic, family-oriented destinations. The project emphasizes flood-resilient design, flexible event space, and strong visual connections to the river.



Photo Source: Sasaki

RECOMMENDATION

R-06

Develop a major riverfront sports and recreation hub focused on youth sports.

Develop a major riverfront sports and recreation destination focused on youth sports tourism in partnership with Memorial Sports Complex that includes an outdoor stadium, outdoor fields, etc.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Conduct ownership verification and negotiate acquisition of ~31.4 acres of industrial riverfront land.
2. Establish project governance and partnership frameworks (City-Parish, BREC, DDD, Memorial Sports Complex).
3. Conduct feasibility and market studies for youth sports tourism, hotel impact, and visitor spending and refine program.
4. Rezone necessary parcel/s.
5. Identify funding strategy blend, explore public-private models.
6. Early activation and branding as “Riverfront Sports District.”

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$31 M - 39 M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private investment • TIF/EDD funds • New Market Tax Credits • CAFA bonds
Design	\$7.25–9.25M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$107 M–\$159 M	24–48 months	
Total	\$145M–\$205M	4–6 years	

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Developer, Build Baton Rouge, Visit Baton Rouge, State Legislature

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Baton Rouge Riverfront Conservancy, BREC, The Queen Baton Rouge Casino

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

The Riverfront Sports Destination transforms underutilized industrial land into a regional anchor for youth sports tourism, providing economic benefits through visitor spending, job creation, and year-round tournament programming. The project strengthens riverfront access, enhances downtown vitality, and catalyzes adjacent mixed-use development. The stadium, tournament fields, and improved riverfront public realm position Baton Rouge as a competitive sports tourism market and a vibrant urban waterfront city.

B. Design Phase (12–24 months)

1. Develop site master plan for stadium, fields, riverfront integration, structured parking, and trail connections.
2. Complete detailed architectural and engineering design (stadium, multi-purpose fields, amenities, utilities, lighting, drainage, etc).
3. Secure required environmental permits and floodplain approvals.
4. Issue RFP for CMAR or design-build contractor.

C. Construction Phase (24–48 months)

1. Site prep, demolition of old structures, utility extensions, and soil remediation as needed.
2. Construction of facilities: 5,000-8,000 seat outdoor stadium, 4-6 multi-use fields, concessions, restrooms, locker rooms, operations and maintenance facilities, parking, etc.
3. Riverfront and Public realm enhancements: connections to Riverfront Loop, riverfront promenade upgrades, trees, shade, seating, lighting.
4. Opening and programming plan: staff hiring and training, marketing, tournament planning.

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	\$2–3.5M annually	Tournament-driven spending
New Property Tax Revenue	\$5–7M	Long-term mixed-use uplift
New/Enhanced Public Realm	23.5 acres	Riverfront improvements and open space
Converted Space	0 GSF	No adaptive reuse
New Residential Units	400 units	Adjacent development catalyzed
New Residents	600+	Based on 1.5 residents/unit
New/Relocated Jobs	1,500–2,000	Construction and operations
New Pedestrian Traffic	+250,000 annual visits	Tournaments and events
Riverfront Developed	1,200 LF	Public realm enhancements
Mobility Corridors Added	1,500–2,000 LF	Trail and circulation network

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Cincinnati Smale Riverfront Park– Cincinnati, OH

Smale Riverfront Park integrates recreational amenities, open lawns, and event-ready spaces within a central urban riverfront. Its success shows how recreation-focused destinations can drive tourism, support youth programming, and coexist with civic and cultural uses.



Photo Source: Sasaki

RECOMMENDATION

R-07

Create a “Riverfront Loop” with mixed-use development, housing, cafes, and an elevated pedestrian path.

Create a “Riverfront Loop” by developing a mixed-use district with housing, river-view cafes, and restaurants around an elevated park and a pedestrian loop that connects 3rd Street to the riverfront.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Acquire or assemble key parcels (including surface parking lots near Laurel Street).
2. Establish development program, density targets, and public access requirements.
3. Conduct market, feasibility, and floodplain analysis.
4. Coordinate with Riverfront Conservancy on programming and design standards.
5. Issue RFQ/RFP for mixed-use development teams.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Developer, Riverfront Conservancy

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

The Riverfront Loop transforms underutilized riverfront parcels into a vibrant mixed-use destination that blends housing, dining, and public space. By elevating a pedestrian loop above the riverfront edge and stitching it back to 3rd Street, this project creates a unique destination experience while improving flood resilience and public access. The addition of housing and active ground-floor uses ensures consistent foot traffic, supports downtown businesses, and reinforces the riverfront as a daily-use environment.

B. Design Phase (12–24 months)

1. Prepare master plan for housing, retail, cafés, and pedestrian loop.
2. Design elevated pedestrian path, riverfront plazas, and connections to The Porch.
3. Coordinate utilities, parking strategy, and structural systems.
4. Advance zoning approvals, overlay incentives, and design review.
5. Finalize construction documents and financing.

C. Construction Phase (24–48 months)

1. Construct mixed-use residential buildings and ground-floor retail.
2. Build elevated pedestrian loop and riverfront public spaces.
3. Deliver café and restaurant spaces with river-facing terraces.
4. Complete streetscape, lighting, wayfinding, and public art.
5. Lease-up residential units and activate ground-floor uses.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$2M–\$4M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private investment • TIF/EDD funds • New Market Tax Credits • CAFA bonds
Design	\$8M–\$15M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$160M–\$220M	24–48 months	
Total	\$170M–\$240M	4–7 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	\$2M–\$4M/yr	Dining and retail along the loop
New Property Tax Revenue	\$6M–\$10M	New housing and mixed-use development
New/Enhanced Public Realm	6–8 acres	Plazas, elevated walkway, open spaces
Converted Space	150,000–250,000 GSF	Mixed-use district redevelopment
New Residential Units	500	High-density riverfront housing
New Residents	750-1,000	Based on unit mix and household sizes
New/Relocated Jobs	25 - 40	Construction and maintenance
New Pedestrian Traffic	+400,000 annual visits	Newly created public realm
Riverfront Developed	640 LF	Active mixed-use frontage
Mobility Corridors Added	3,480 LF	Elevated loop and connections

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Grant Street Pier – Vancouver, WA

Grant Street Pier demonstrates how elevated pedestrian infrastructure can connect urban districts to the river while supporting adjacent mixed-use development. The project blends public access, scenic overlooks, and active ground-floor uses into a cohesive waterfront experience.



Photo Source: Visit Vancouver WA

RECOMMENDATION

R-08

Develop “The Porch” promenade with shade, seating, and boardwalks along the riverfront.

Develop “The Porch” as an expanded riverfront promenade with shade structures, seating, and boardwalks that allow for boat docking.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Riverfront Conservancy, East Baton Rouge Parish

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

DDD

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Short term (year 2-3)

BENEFITS

The Porch creates a shaded, accessible riverfront promenade that serves as Baton Rouge’s front porch to the Mississippi River. By delivering 900 feet of high-quality public realm with seating, boardwalks, and shade, the project strengthens connections between the Museum District, River Center, and “The Great Park” while significantly increasing riverfront use, comfort, and visibility.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Establish the inter agency project team.
2. Conduct a riverfront public realm feasibility and engineering study (floodplain/ hydrology, riverbank stability, ADA waterfront access).
3. Engage the public through design workshops and stakeholder sessions.
4. Identify funding strategy blend (Public, Private, Philanthropy and Grants).

B. Design Phase (12–18 months)

1. Prepare conceptual design for promenade alignment, canopy system, seating clusters, and boardwalk structure.
2. Complete detailed design and engineering (shade canopies, riverfront decking and structure, lighting, railings, and street furniture, drainage and riverbank stabilization).
3. Obtain all required permits and procure contractor.

C. Construction Phase (18–36 months)

1. Site prep and utility adjustments, including lighting and irrigation.
2. Construction of shaded promenade canopy structure.
3. Install boardwalk and overlook platforms over the river edge.
4. Install furnishings, seating, landscaping, lighting, and signage.
5. Complete promenade connections to LASM, Riverfront Housing, and Downtown Connector.
6. Launch with a public opening event and establish ongoing programming.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$500k–\$1M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city, state) • TIF funds • CAFA bonds • Private philanthropy and sponsorship • Foundation grants
Design	\$1M–\$1.5M	12–18 months	
Construction	\$8 M–\$14 M	18–36 months	
Total	\$10M–\$16M	3–5 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Increased visitation and adjacent attractions
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Uplift to adjacent parcels
New/Enhanced Public Realm	~2 acres	Linear promenade and nodes
Converted Space	0 GSF	-
New Residential Units	0	-
New Residents	0	-
New/Relocated Jobs	25 - 40	Construction and maintenance
New Pedestrian Traffic	+150,000 annual visits	Newly created public realm
Riverfront Developed	900 LF	Riverfront activation
Mobility Corridors Added	900 LF	Improved pedestrian corridor

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Cincinnati Smale Riverfront Park– Cincinnati, OH

Smale Riverfront Park’s intimate seating zones and shaded boardwalk areas provide a model for human-scaled waterfront promenades. These elements encourage lingering, social interaction, and everyday use while maintaining flexibility for events and seasonal programming.



Photo Source: Sasaki

RECOMMENDATION

M-01

Expand the River Center Convention Center with flexible spaces and modern amenities.

Expand the River Center Convention Center into a state-of-the-art facility with modern amenities and flexible event spaces to attract larger conventions and bolster economic growth, adding about 100,000 square feet of convention space, a new 300–400 room hotel, and include the demolition of the existing stadium.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–18 months)

1. Update convention market demand and feasibility studies, including hotel capacity analysis.
2. Prepare a Convention District Master Plan addressing expansion footprint, circulation, and public realm.
3. Evaluate stadium demolition or relocation strategy.
4. Establish a capital financing strategy (City-Parish, State, hotel-motel taxes, bonds, private capital). Coordinate governance, operations, and stakeholder alignment.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Baton Rouge Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, East Baton Rouge Parish, City of Baton Rouge

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

State of Louisiana, BRAF, Port of Greater Baton Rouge, Riverfront property owners, River Center Oversight Committee

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

Expanding and modernizing the River Center Convention Center strengthens Baton Rouge’s competitiveness in the regional and national meetings market. The addition of 100,000 square feet of flexible, state-of-the-art event space, combined with a new convention hotel and improved district layout, will significantly increase visitation, stimulate downtown commerce, and support surrounding housing and mixed-use development. By creating a cohesive, high-functioning convention district, Baton Rouge enhances its economic engine and elevates the riverfront visitor experience.

B. Design Phase (18–30 months)

1. Complete architectural and engineering design for expanded convention facilities.
2. Integrate flexible ballrooms, divisible meeting rooms, exhibit halls, and back-of-house operations.
3. Design advanced A/V, broadcast, and digital infrastructure.
4. Plan surrounding plazas, pedestrian connections, and riverfront linkages.
5. Secure permits and procure construction delivery (CMAR or design-build).

C. Construction Phase (30–60 months)

1. Demolish or relocate existing stadium and prepare the expanded site.
2. Construct approximately 100,000 square feet of new convention space.
3. Rehabilitate existing convention center spaces and building systems.
4. Upgrade utilities, stormwater, mechanical, and technology infrastructure.
5. Coordinate adjacent convention hotel development and district streetscape improvements.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$2.75M–\$5.15M	6–18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private investment • TIF/EDD funds • New Market Tax Credits • CAFA bonds
Design	\$23M–\$34M	18–30 months	
Construction	\$190M–\$310M	30–60 months	
Total	\$250M–\$400M	5–6 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	\$3M–\$6M annually	Convention, hotel, visitor spending
New Property Tax Revenue	\$4M–\$7M annually	Convention district redevelopment
New/Enhanced Public Realm	2–4 acres	Plazas, circulation, riverfront connection
Converted Space	~100,000 GSF	Expanded convention facilities
New Residential Units	Indirect	Adjacent mixed-use development
New Residents	Indirect	Housing enabled by district investment
New/Relocated Jobs	600–1,000	Construction, hospitality, operations
New Pedestrian Traffic	+500,000 annual visits	Convention, hotel, entertainment activity
Riverfront Developed	500–1,000 LF	Public realm and district connections
Mobility Corridors Added	~1,000 LF	Streetscape and access improvements

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Music City Center – Nashville, TN

A large-scale convention center expansion that catalyzed hotel development, downtown residential growth, and significant increases in visitor spending through integrated district planning and public-private partnerships.



Photo Source: Seth Parker

RECOMMENDATION

M-02

Develop a vibrant mixed-use hub at River Center that brings together retail, a music venue, and a cultural or arts destination.

Develop a mixed-use hub at the River Center that brings together retail, food and beverage, and a music venue to create a vibrant cultural and entertainment destination. This hub should be designed to attract both residents and visitors, support local businesses and artists, and activate the area throughout the day and evening with a diverse mix of experiences and programming.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–18 months)

1. Define program mix, square footage allocation, and operational model.
2. Conduct feasibility and market analysis for museum, music venue, and retail uses.
3. Identify museum governance structure and curatorial partners.
4. Coordinate site planning with Convention Center expansion and The Great Park.
5. Establish capital funding strategy (public, private, philanthropic).

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Baton Rouge Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, East Baton Rouge Parish, City of Baton Rouge

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

DDD, Visit Baton Rouge, State of Louisiana, Developers, Philanthropic Partners

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Short term (year 2-3)

BENEFITS

A mixed-use entertainment hub at the River Center establishes a year-round cultural anchor that extends activity beyond large conventions and events. By celebrating Louisiana’s music, film, and entertainment heritage through a dedicated museum—paired with live performance, dining, and retail—the project strengthens downtown’s identity, increases daily visitation, and reinforces the riverfront as a premier civic and cultural destination. This investment leverages existing assets while supporting surrounding public spaces and private development.

B. Design Phase (12–24 months)

1. Prepare architectural and interior design for museum, venue, and retail spaces.
2. Design flexible performance spaces, exhibit halls, and back-of-house operations.
3. Integrate advanced A/V, acoustic, and exhibit technology systems.
4. Design public plazas, outdoor gathering areas, and riverfront connections.
5. Secure permits and finalize construction procurement.

C. Construction Phase (24–42 months)

1. Rehabilitate and convert approximately 270,000 GSF of existing structures.
2. Construct museum galleries, music venue, and food & beverage spaces.
3. Build and landscape approximately 3 acres of public realm.
4. Install wayfinding, lighting, public art, and interpretive elements.
5. Complete tenant buildout, commissioning, and opening programming.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$3M–\$6M	6–18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private investment • TIF/EDD funds • New Market Tax Credits • CAFAs bonds
Design	\$12M–\$20M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$95M–\$145M	24–42 months	
Total	\$110M–\$170M	4–6 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	\$2M–\$4M annually	Ticket sales, dining, retail spending
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Increased district value
New/Enhanced Public Realm	~3 acres	Plazas and riverfront activation
Converted Space	267,780 GSF	Adaptive reuse of River Center assets
New Residential Units	-	-
New Residents	-	-
New/Relocated Jobs	200–300	Hospitality, operations
New Pedestrian Traffic	+400,000 annual visits	Museum and music venue draw
Riverfront Developed	500–700 LF	Activated edges and connections
Mobility Corridors Added	~500 LF	Plaza and riverfront circulation

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Tom Hanafen River’s Edge Park – Council Bluffs, IA

River’s Edge Park pairs an outdoor music venue with surrounding cultural and commercial uses to create a regional entertainment destination. Its integration of programmed events, riverfront access, and adjacent development illustrates how cultural anchors can drive sustained downtown activity.



Photo Source: City of Council Bluffs, IA

RECOMMENDATION

M-03

Build multifamily housing along Nicholson Drive for student and workforce populations.

Develop additional multifamily housing along Nicholson Drive, around the "GUMBO," to support student and workforce populations. This investment will introduce new residential density, activate streets, and reinforce Nicholson Drive as a vibrant, walkable corridor connecting LSU, and the South Riverfront.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Identify priority development parcels and assemble sites where needed.
2. Review the Nicholson overlay. Update zoning, overlays, and density incentives to support multifamily housing.
3. Coordinate with LSU and major employers on housing demand and unit mix.
4. Conduct market and feasibility analysis for student and workforce housing.
5. Issue RFQs/RFPs for development partners, if publicly owned land is involved.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$1.5M–\$3M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private investment • Institutional investment • TIF/EDD funds • New Market Tax Credits • CAFAs bonds • LIHTC • Enterprise Zone Tax Credit
Design	\$8M–\$15M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$300M–\$380M	24–48 months	
Total	\$310M–\$400M	4–6 years	

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Developer, Build Baton Rouge

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

East Baton Rouge Parish, State of Louisiana, BRAF

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

Expanding multifamily housing along Nicholson Drive addresses brings key residential population of students and workforce residents downtown while strengthening a key gateway corridor. Concentrating residential growth near transit, employment centers, and educational institutions supports mode shift, reduces commuting pressure, and activates surrounding retail and public spaces. This strategy reinforces Nicholson Drive as a high-performing mixed-use corridor connecting downtown to LSU.

B. Design Phase (12–24 months)

1. Prepare architectural and site designs for multifamily buildings.
2. Integrate ground-floor activation where feasible (lobbies, retail, amenities).
3. Design streetscape improvements, pedestrian access, and open space.
4. Coordinate parking strategy and transit access.
5. Secure approvals, permits, and financing.

C. Construction Phase (24–48 months)

1. Construct new multifamily residential buildings along Nicholson Drive.
2. Deliver a mix of student-oriented and workforce housing units.
3. Implement streetscape, lighting, and public realm improvements.
4. Activate ground floors and adjacent public spaces.
5. Lease-up units and integrate residents into the corridor's retail and transit ecosystem.

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Resident spending and corridor activation
New Property Tax Revenue	~	New multifamily development
New/Enhanced Public Realm	2–3 acres (indirect)	Streetscape and open space upgrades
Converted Space	257,411 GSF	Multifamily residential construction
New Residential Units	~1,700 units	Student and workforce housing demand
New Residents	~2,400–2,800	Based on unit mix and household sizes
New/Relocated Jobs	1,000–1,500	Construction and property operations
New Pedestrian Traffic	+500,000 annual visits	Daily residential activity
Riverfront Developed	0	-
Mobility Corridors Added	~2,000–3,000 LF	Streets and pedestrian improvements

INSPIRATION PROJECT

South Congress Gateway Multifamily Corridor – Austin, TX

A high-density residential corridor serving students and workforce populations, integrated with transit, active ground floors, and public realm improvements that support a vibrant, walkable district.



Photo Source: RUE Real Estate

RECOMMENDATION

M-04

Create a Student Housing Hub at the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections site with modern units and amenities.

Develop a Student Housing Hub at the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, including new student housing, a community center, and event spaces, through adaptive reuse and infill development.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Finalize site disposition strategy and development framework with the State.
2. Conduct structural, environmental, and reuse feasibility studies.
3. Define housing program, unit mix, and amenity requirements.
4. Rezone necessary parcel/s.
5. Coordinate with LSU on student housing demand and partnership opportunities.
6. Issue RFQ/RFP for development teams with adaptive reuse experience.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER
LSU, Southern University, Developer

POTENTIAL PARTNERS
BRAF, DDD

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME
Short term (year 2-3)

BENEFITS

Repurposing the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections into a student housing hub capitalizes on an existing public asset to bring student residents into downtown. Concentrating student housing in a purpose-built hub reduces pressure on surrounding neighborhoods, supports transit use, and activates adjacent streets and public spaces. By integrating community and event spaces, the project also creates shared amenities that contribute to neighborhood vitality and social cohesion.

B. Design Phase (12–24 months)

1. Prepare architectural and engineering designs for reuse and infill buildings.
2. Design modern student units, shared amenities, and community/event spaces.
3. Integrate pedestrian connections, courtyards, and outdoor gathering areas.
4. Coordinate parking, loading, and transit access.
5. Secure zoning approvals, permits, and financing.

C. Construction Phase (24–42 months)

1. Rehabilitate existing DPS structures for residential and community uses.
2. Construct infill student housing buildings and amenity spaces.
3. Build community center and flexible event facilities.
4. Implement streetscape, lighting, and mobility corridor improvements.
5. Complete tenant buildout, lease-up, and phased occupancy.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$2M–\$4M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private investment • Institutional investment • TIF/EDD funds • New Market Tax Credits • CAFA bonds
Design	\$6M–\$10M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$130M–\$170M	24–42 months	
Total	\$140M–\$185M	4–6 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Student spending and daily activity
New Property Tax Revenue	\$3M–\$4M annually	Residential redevelopment
New/Enhanced Public Realm	~1.5–2 acres	Courtyards and shared spaces
Converted Space	158,410 GSF	Adaptive reuse of DPS facilities
New Residential Units	~700 units	Purpose-built student housing
New Residents	~900–1,100	Student occupancy
New/Relocated Jobs	400–500	Construction and property operations
New Pedestrian Traffic	+300,000 annual trips	Daily residential movement
Riverfront Developed	0	-
Mobility Corridors Added	1,170 LF	Streets and pedestrian connections

INSPIRATION PROJECT

The Standard at Knoxville (former industrial site) – Knoxville, TN

A student housing redevelopment that combines adaptive reuse, modern amenities, and active ground-floor spaces to support university populations while integrating with surrounding neighborhoods.



Photo Source: Gemtichell & Company

RECOMMENDATION

M-05

Develop a TIF strategy around priority corridors and nodes with retail incentives, grants, and rent stabilization.

Develop a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) strategy focused on priority corridors and nodes. The strategy deploys retail-specific incentives such as first-floor property tax abatements, micro-grants for small businesses, rent-stabilization bonuses for landlords to reduce risk, support occupancy and commercial vitality.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (0–6 months)

1. Identify priority corridors and retail nodes eligible for TIF incentives.
2. Define eligible retail categories (e.g., grocery, pharmacy, daily services).
3. Model projected tax increment and funding capacity.
4. Draft policy framework for retail-specific abatements and bonuses.
5. Conduct outreach with property owners and business stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Policy

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

BRAF, East Baton Rouge Parish

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

DDD

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

Retail vacancy and short-term leasing undermine the vitality of priority corridors and limit access to essential goods and services. A corridor-based TIF strategy allows Baton Rouge to reinvest incremental tax growth into targeted incentives that lower barriers for small businesses, stabilize rents, and attract essential anchors such as grocers and pharmacies. By tying incentives to location, use, and lease terms, the City can promote long-term economic stability while reinforcing walkable, mixed-use corridors.

B. Policy Development Phase (6–12 months)

1. Establish retail incentive tools, including:
 - 5-year property tax abatement for first-floor retail
 - Micro-grants for tenant build-out and startup costs
 - Rent-stabilization bonuses for long-term leases.
2. Define performance requirements (hours, frontage, local hiring).
3. Create application and approval processes.
4. Coordinate with zoning and overlay districts.
5. Set up monitoring and compliance systems.

C. Implementation Phase (12–60 months)

1. Launch rolling retail incentive and grant programs.
2. Award abatements and bonuses tied to executed leases.
3. Prioritize essential businesses and anchor tenants.
4. Monitor lease terms, tenant performance, and corridor impacts.
5. Reinvest TIF revenues into public realm improvements as needed

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$250k–\$500k	0–6 months	Establishing a TIF district may require minimal upfront investment to align partners and make required regulatory changes, but will eventually be a driver of value.
Policy Development	\$400k–\$750k	6–12 months	
Implementation	\$1.5M–\$4M	12–60 months	
Total	\$2.2M–\$5.25M	5 years (renewable)	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Student spending and daily activity
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Resulting residential redevelopment
New/Enhanced Public Realm	Indirect	Courtyards and shared spaces
Converted Space	Indirect	Adaptive reuse of DPS facilities
New Residential Units	Indirect	Purpose-built student housing
New Residents	Indirect	Student occupancy
New/Relocated Jobs	150-300	Construction and property operations
New Pedestrian Traffic	+100,000 annual trips	Daily residential movement
Riverfront Developed	0	-
Mobility Corridors Added	Indirect	Streets and pedestrian connections

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC) – Cincinnati, OH

A student housing redevelopment that combines adaptive reuse, modern amenities, and active ground-floor spaces to Uses TIF-backed incentives, retail subsidies, and long-term lease strategies to stabilize key corridors and attract essential retail.



Photo Source: 3CDC

RECOMMENDATION

M-06

Reinvest in Main Street as a small business corridor with small business grants, rental assistance.

Reinvest in Main Street as a vibrant small business corridor by supporting local retailers, improving streetscape and pedestrian access, and fostering a lively, walkable environment for residents and visitors.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Establish a Small Business Grant Program for startup costs, façades, signage, and equipment.
2. Launch a Rental Assistance Program to offset early lease costs.
3. Conduct a building-by-building vacancy and storefront inventory.
4. Create a public database of available retail spaces.
5. Initiate early activation with pop-ups, temporary seating, planters, and corridor branding.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Program

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

BRAF

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

Main Street plays a critical role in downtown’s identity but faces challenges related to storefront vacancy, startup risk, and inconsistent pedestrian activity. A focused reinvestment strategy lowers barriers for local entrepreneurs, supports minority and locally owned businesses, and improves the visibility and quality of ground-floor retail. By pairing financial assistance with placemaking and programming, this initiative builds long-term commercial vitality while reinforcing Main Street as a vibrant, walkable destination.

B. Program Design Phase (12–24 months)

1. Implement façade and storefront improvement grants.
2. Improve signage, lighting, and wayfinding for small businesses.
3. Install light-touch public realm improvements (seating, shade, decorative lighting, parklets).
4. Streamline permitting for signage, outdoor dining, and minor improvements.
5. Refine grant and rental assistance programs based on early performance.

C. Implementation Phase (24–48 months)

1. Recruit and match entrepreneurs to available storefronts.
2. Prioritize locally owned, culturally relevant, and neighborhood-serving businesses.
3. Provide ongoing technical assistance and business support.
4. Host regular events such as night markets, art nights, and music programming.
5. Monitor vacancy rates, pedestrian traffic, and business performance.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$550k–\$1M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city) • Private investment • TIF/EDD funds • Foundation grants • Enterprise Zone Tax Credit
Program Design	\$2M–\$3.5M	12–24 months	
Implementation	\$1.5M–\$3.5M	24–48 months	
Total	\$4M–\$8M	~4 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Retail and food & beverage growth
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Reduced vacancy and reinvestment
New/Enhanced Public Realm	Indirect	Light-touch corridor improvements
Converted Space	45,800 GSF	Reactivated storefronts
New Residential Units	-	-
New Residents	-	-
New/Relocated Jobs	Indirect	Small business expansion
New Pedestrian Traffic	Indirect	Programming and active storefronts
Riverfront Developed	-	-
Mobility Corridors Added	-	Addressed in Priority Corridor projects

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Downtown Grand Rapids Small Business Support Program – Grand Rapids, MI

A corridor-focused initiative combining grants, rental assistance, façade improvements, and placemaking to reduce vacancy and strengthen local retail districts.



Photo Source: Travel + Leisure

RECOMMENDATION

N-01

Create a Missing Middle Housing Toolkit with guidance, pre-approved plans, and other resources.

Develop a Missing Middle Toolkit to support diverse housing types downtown by providing design guidance, streamlined approvals, financial incentives, and resources that encourage walkable, inclusive, and well-integrated neighborhoods.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (3–6 months)

1. Identify priority infill areas suitable for missing middle housing (focus on areas between Spanish Town and Beauregard Town).
2. Audit zoning and code barriers affecting small-scale multifamily.
3. Define target housing types and unit ranges.
4. Engage local architects, builders, and neighborhood stakeholders.
5. Establish performance goals (affordability, design, walkability).

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Policy

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Build Baton Rouge, BRAF

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

Downtown Baton Rouge has significant capacity for incremental low-density housing growth. Missing middle housing fills this gap by delivering attainable, walkable housing at a scale compatible with existing neighborhoods. A standardized Toolkit reduces cost, time, and uncertainty for small developers while ensuring design quality and neighborhood compatibility. By focusing incentives in areas between Spanish Town and Beauregard Town and east of the CBD, this strategy leverages existing neighborhood character.

B. Policy Development Phase (6–12 months)

1. Develop pattern book and design guidelines tailored to downtown contexts.
2. Create a library of pre-approved building plans (duplex through small apartment buildings).
3. Coordinate expedited review and by-right approval pathways.
4. Develop cost and feasibility models for small developers.
5. Publish Toolkit and launch developer outreach program.

C. Implementation Phase (12–60 months)

1. Offer financial incentives (permit fee waivers, small grants, low-interest loans).
2. Prioritize adaptive reuse and infill on vacant or underutilized lots.
3. Provide technical assistance to small developers and property owners.
4. Track production, affordability, and design outcomes.
5. Adjust Toolkit standards and incentives based on performance.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$300k–\$500k	3–6 months	Costs associated with this recommendation include funding future grant programs, providing technical assistance, and creating and updating the toolkit. Utilize new construction tax abatements.
Policy Development	\$600k–\$1M	6–12 months	
Implementation	\$2M–\$5M	12–60 months	
Total	\$3M–\$6.5M (5 years)	5 years (renewable)	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Increased population and activity
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Infill housing value
New/Enhanced Public Realm	Indirect	Context-sensitive infill
Converted Space	Indirect	Residential construction
New Residential Units	Indirect	Small-scale infill
New Residents	Indirect	Based on unit mix
New/Relocated Jobs	50–75	Construction and services
New Pedestrian Traffic	Indirect	Walkable housing
Riverfront Developed	0	-
Mobility Corridors Added	0	-

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Missing Middle Housing Toolkit – City of Portland, OR

A high-density residential corridor serving students and workforce populations, integrated with transit, active ground floors, and public realm improvements that support a vibrant, walkable district.



Photo Source: Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies

Copyright © 2020 Opticos Design, Inc. OPTICOS

RECOMMENDATION

N-02

Establish a Downtown Housing Navigator to assist with site selection, incentives, permitting.

Establish a Downtown Housing Navigator Program to assist developers with site selection, incentive applications, permitting, and other resources, streamlining housing development and supporting diverse, high-quality residential projects downtown.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (3–6 months)

1. Define scope, responsibilities, and performance targets for the Housing Navigator.
2. Secure initial funding and staffing (1–2 full-time positions).
3. Develop standardized intake and project tracking tools.
4. Create a centralized inventory of available sites, incentives, and zoning conditions.
5. Launch program branding and outreach to development community.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Program

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

DDD, Build Baton Rouge

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

East Baton Rouge Parish

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

Downtown housing development often faces fragmented processes, unclear incentives, and lengthy permitting timelines—particularly for small and mid-sized developers. These barriers increase costs, delay projects, and limit housing production. A Downtown Housing Navigator Program reduces friction by centralizing expertise, aligning incentives, and proactively assisting developers through complex processes. Similar programs in peer cities have proven effective in accelerating housing delivery, improving coordination across departments, and supporting a broader range of developers.

B. Program Design Phase (6–12 months)

1. Establish formal coordination protocols with Planning, Public Works, and permitting staff.
2. Develop housing incentive guides and application support materials.
3. Create fast-track pathways for priority housing types and locations.
4. Build relationships with lenders, CDFIs, and equity partners.
5. Publish annual Downtown Housing Opportunities Report.

C. Construction Phase (12–60 months)

1. Provide ongoing one-on-one developer assistance and project navigation.
2. Support incentive packaging (tax abatements, grants, loans, TIF, tax credits).
3. Coordinate interagency reviews to reduce permitting timelines.
4. Track housing production, approvals, and time-to-entitlement.
5. Adjust program focus based on housing market response and policy priorities.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$250k–\$400k	3–6 months	Costs associated with this recommendation include staffing, advocacy, and the development and maintenance of resources. Utilize new construction tax abatements.
Program Design	\$300k–\$500k	6–12 months	
Implementation	\$1.5M–\$2.5M	12–60 months	
Total	\$2M–\$3.4M	5 years renewable	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Increased downtown population
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Accelerated housing delivery
New/Enhanced Public Realm	Indirect	Mixed-use and residential activation
Converted Space	Indirect	Adaptive reuse projects
New Residential Units	Indirect	Reduced development friction
New Residents	Indirect	Unit mix and household size
New/Relocated Jobs	10–20	Program administration
New Pedestrian Traffic	Indirect	Residential population growth
Riverfront Developed	0	-
Mobility Corridors Added	0	-

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Kansas City Housing Accelerator — Kansas City, MO

A centralized development support entity that helps reduce barriers to housing production by coordinating site identification, zoning interpretation, incentive packaging, permitting assistance, and financing support for small and large multifamily projects.



Photo Source: City of Kansas City, MO

RECOMMENDATION

N-03

Support local business activation along Main Street and 3rd Street with events and pop-ups.

Support local business activation along Main and 3rd Streets through coordinated events and pop-ups that strengthen downtown’s retail and dining core.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (3–6 months)

1. Identify priority blocks and event-ready locations along Main and 3rd Streets.
2. Establish a coordinated activation calendar aligned with other downtown events.
3. Develop a pop-up vendor and event participation framework.
4. Secure permits, street-use agreements, and safety protocols.
5. Launch outreach to local businesses, artists, and food vendors.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Program

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

BRAF, DDD

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Local businesses, Visit Baton Rouge, CAFA

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

While Main Street and 3rd Street serve as downtown’s primary retail and dining corridors, inconsistent foot traffic and vacant storefronts limit economic potential. Temporary activations—such as pop-up retail, food vendors, markets, and cultural events—reduce barriers for local entrepreneurs, draw new visitors, and build momentum for permanent investment. By coordinating activation across both corridors, this program reinforces downtown’s commercial spine and supports small businesses during early growth phases.

B. Program Design Phase (6–12 months)

1. Procure shared activation infrastructure (tents, lighting, power, seating, signage).
2. Pilot regular pop-up retail, food, and cultural programming.
3. Coordinate marketing and branding with downtown promotions.
4. Partner with property owners to activate vacant storefronts.
5. Track participation, attendance, and business outcomes.

C. Construction Phase (12–48 months)

1. Host recurring events (monthly or seasonal) along both corridors.
2. Support vendor transitions from pop-ups to permanent leases.
3. Expand programming to evenings and weekends.
4. Integrate activations with Night Market and Main Street programs.
5. Adjust formats and locations based on performance data.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$200k–\$350k	3–6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city) • Private sponsorship • Vendor fees • Event sales revenue • Foundation grants
Program Design	\$300k–\$600k	6–12 months	
Implementation	\$500k–\$1.2M	12–48 months	
Total (first 4 years)	\$1.0M–\$2.15M	~4 years (ongoing after)	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Vendor sales and nearby spending
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Improved storefront occupancy
New/Enhanced Public Realm	1–2 acres (indirect)	Street activations
Converted Space	Indirect	Pop-up to permanent retail
New Residential Units	-	-
New Residents	-	-
New/Relocated Jobs	Indirect	Small business growth
New Pedestrian Traffic	+75,000–125,000 annual visits	Events and pop-ups
Riverfront Developed	0	-
Mobility Corridors Added	0	-

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Open Streets Pittsburgh – Pittsburgh, PA

A coordinated program using events and temporary retail to activate downtown corridors, support local businesses, and transition pop-up vendors into permanent storefronts.



RECOMMENDATION

N-04

Reinvest in Government Street with mixed-use housing and commercial / retail.

Reinvest in Government Street as a mixed-use housing corridor by encouraging residential development, supporting groundfloor retail, and enhancing streetscapes to create a vibrant, walkable urban environment.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Update zoning and land-use regulations to support higher-density mixed-use development.
2. Reduce barriers to adaptive reuse of older commercial buildings.
3. Establish a Government Street Housing Incentive Program (abatements, gap financing, fee reductions).
4. Conduct site readiness assessments and engage developers for catalytic projects.
5. Initiate corridor branding, temporary signage, and early placemaking efforts.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Developer, East Baton Rouge Parish

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish (DPW and HUD Partners), East Baton Rouge Housing Authority, housing non-profits

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

Government Street is one of Downtown Baton Rouge’s most important east–west corridors, yet many segments remain underutilized and lack pedestrian comfort. Strategic reinvestment that combines housing incentives, adaptive reuse, and streetscape improvements can transform the corridor into a complete neighborhood that supports residents, workers, and local businesses. By aligning zoning, incentives, and infrastructure upgrades, this initiative promotes mixed-income housing, activates ground floors, and strengthens access to transit and civic amenities.

B. Design Phase (12–24 months)

1. Prepare a Government Street corridor master plan and urban design guidelines.
2. Develop streetscape standards for sidewalks, lighting, shade, and seating.
3. Design ADA-compliant crossings, curb ramps, and pedestrian lighting.
4. Coordinate utility upgrades and green infrastructure.
5. Establish streamlined permitting and façade improvement programs.

C. Construction Phase (24–60 months)

1. Deliver approximately 400 new housing units across multiple sites.
2. Implement adaptive reuse of 114,200 GSF of existing buildings.
3. Construct enhanced sidewalks, shade trees, lighting, crosswalks, and public nodes.
4. Improve transit access and coordinate with BRT and Downtown Connector routes.
5. Support retail tenaning and ongoing corridor activation.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$1.5M–\$3M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private investment • TIF/EDD funds • New Market Tax Credits • CAFA bonds • LIHTC • Enterprise Zone Tax Credit • Historic tax credits
Design	\$4M–\$6M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$31M–\$47M	24–60 months	
Total	\$35M–\$70M	4–5 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Retail growth and new residents
New Property Tax Revenue	~	400 housing units and commercial space
New/Enhanced Public Realm	2–3 acres (indirect)	Streetscape and plazas
Converted Space	114,200 GSF	Adaptive reuse
New Residential Units	~400 units	Mixed-income housing
New Residents	~600–800	Based on unit mix and household sizes
New/Relocated Jobs	300–500	Construction and property operations
New Pedestrian Traffic	+500,000 annual visits	Improved walkability
Riverfront Developed	0	-
Mobility Corridors Added	1,000–2,000 LF	Streetscape improvements

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Government Street Corridor Revitalization – Mobile, AL

A corridor reinvestment strategy that combined mixed-use housing incentives, adaptive reuse, and streetscape upgrades to transform a key urban corridor into a walkable, mixed-income neighborhood.



RECOMMENDATION

N-05

Incentivize missing middle housing across downtown neighborhoods.

Implement the downtown Missing Middle Housing Toolkit by actively incentivizing and delivering missing middle housing across downtown neighborhoods, with a focus on areas between Spanish Town and Beauregard Town and just east of the CBD.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (3–6 months)

1. Designate priority missing middle implementation areas downtown.
2. Finalize incentive menu aligned with the adopted Toolkit.
3. Establish application, review, and approval procedures.
4. Coordinate with the Housing Navigator for project intake.
5. Launch developer outreach and education campaign.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Program

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

East Baton Rouge Parish

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Office of Community Development, Housing Authority, CAFA, Build Baton Rouge, DDD

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Short term (year 2-3)

BENEFITS

This recommendation moves from framework to action by deploying financial incentives, streamlined approvals, and technical assistance to support the construction of duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, courtyard apartments, and small apartment buildings. The program prioritizes incremental infill and adaptive reuse to increase density, expand housing choice, and reinforce walkable, mixed-income urban neighborhoods without large-scale redevelopment, resulting in measurable housing production and visible neighborhood change.

B. Program Design Phase (6–36 months)

1. Award small grants for predevelopment, design, and site preparation.
2. Provide low-interest loans or gap financing for missing middle projects.
3. Offer permit fee waivers and expedited administrative approvals.
4. Support adaptive reuse of small commercial or residential structures.
5. Provide technical assistance to small and first-time developers.

C. Implementation Phase (12–60 months)

1. Deliver missing middle projects across multiple neighborhoods.
2. Prioritize mixed-income and workforce housing outcomes.
3. Ensure design quality and neighborhood compatibility.
4. Monitor affordability, unit mix, and production pace.
5. Adjust incentives to respond to market performance.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$500k–\$750k	3–6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city) • TIF/EDD funds • CAFA bonds • LIHTC • Enterprise Zone Tax Credit • HUD Construction and Rehabilitation Loan • New Construction Tax Abatements
Program Design	\$4.5M–\$9.0M	6–36 months	
Implementation	\$2.5M–\$5.0M	12–60 months	
Total (first 5 years)	\$7.5M–\$15M	~5 years	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Increased resident spending
New Property Tax Revenue	\$2.5M–\$4.0M annually	Infill housing value
New/Enhanced Public Realm	Indirect	Walkable neighborhood infill
Converted Space	75,000–125,000 GSF	Adaptive reuse
New Residential Units	~500 units	Missing middle production
New Residents	750–900	Household size
New/Relocated Jobs	100–150	Construction and services
New Pedestrian Traffic	+150,000 annual visits	Neighborhood activity
Riverfront Developed	0	-
Mobility Corridors Added	0	-

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Incremental Development Alliance - Fayetteville, AR

The Incremental Development Alliance demonstrates how targeted incentives, technical assistance, and education can empower small-scale developers to deliver missing middle housing. By lowering barriers to incremental infill, the model supports neighborhood-scaled density, local ownership, and walkable urban growth.



Photo Source: Incremental Development Alliance



RECOMMENDATION

C-01

Support downtown events such as the Downtown Night Market with enhanced programming, infrastructure, and partnerships.

Support and build upon the Downtown Night Market series by enhancing event programming, improving infrastructure, and partnering with local vendors and businesses.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (3–6 months)

1. Confirm Main Street as the primary Night Market corridor location.
2. Establish a recurring annual or seasonal Night Market calendar.
3. Formalize partnerships with Main Street businesses and property owners.
4. Develop vendor recruitment and local business participation strategy.
5. Coordinate public safety, permitting, and operations plan.

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Program

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Main Street businesses, local vendors, Visit Baton Rouge, arts & cultural organizations, community organizations, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, BRAF

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

Events like the Downtown Night Market have emerged as a successful cultural and economic driver, drawing residents and visitors to downtown after hours. Expanding the Night Market—while relocating it to Main Street—creates a consistent, low-barrier platform for small businesses, food vendors, and artists while reinforcing Main Street’s identity as a walkable, vibrant commercial corridor. Enhanced infrastructure and partnerships across events will improve the visitor experience, support local entrepreneurship, and strengthen downtown’s nighttime economy.

B. Program Design Phase (6–12 months)

1. Design modular market layout adaptable to Main Street blocks.
2. Procure reusable infrastructure: lighting, power, shade, seating, signage.
3. Expand programming to include live music, cultural performances, and family activities.
4. Integrate wayfinding and branding to reinforce Main Street identity.
5. Pilot Main Street–based Night Market events and refine operations.

C. Implementation Phase (12–36 months)

1. Host recurring Night Markets (monthly or seasonal) on Main Street.
2. Provide small stipends or fee reductions for local vendors and startups.
3. Maintain and store shared event infrastructure.
4. Market events regionally in partnership with Visit Baton Rouge.
5. Track attendance, vendor sales, and business impacts.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$150k–\$300k	3–6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city) • Private sponsorship • Vendor fees • Event sales revenue • Foundation grants
Program Design	\$250k–\$500k	6–12 months	
Implementation	\$400k–\$800k	12–36 months	
Total (first 3 years)	\$800k–\$1.5M	3 years (ongoing after)	

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Vendor sales and nearby business spending
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Main Street commercial uplift
New/Enhanced Public Realm	1–2 acres (temporary activation)	Street closures and public use
Converted Space	-	Event based activation
New Residential Units	-	-
New Residents	-	-
New/Relocated Jobs	50–100 (part-time/vendor)	Event operations and small business
New Pedestrian Traffic	+75,000–150,000 annual visits	Recurring Night Markets
Riverfront Developed	-	Activated edges and connections
Mobility Corridors Added	-	Street activation only

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Asian Night Market – Richmond, VA

A recurring downtown night market that supports local vendors, activates underutilized streets, and serves as a major cultural draw while strengthening nearby small businesses.



Photo Source: Richmond Night Market

RECOMMENDATION

C-02

Move the USS KIDD north to the Sports + Entertainment area close to the Queen Baton Rouge Casino.

Relocate the USS Kidd north to the site next to the Queen Baton Rouge Casino. Expand the protected bay there to create a safe harbor for the historic ship while connecting it as a major attraction in the proposed Sports and Entertainment District.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–18 months)

1. Complete marine feasibility studies for dredging, harbor protection, and long-term vessel safety.
2. Coordinate early permitting with USACE, Coast Guard, and environmental agencies.
3. Develop a concept site plan integrating the harbor, visitor access, and district connections
4. Build a funding strategy using state, federal, philanthropic, and sponsorship sources.
5. Engage stakeholders, veterans groups, and tourism partners to align programming goals.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$2M–\$4M	6–18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private philanthropy and sponsorship • Public investment (state) • Foundation grants • Federal grants
Program Design	\$6M–\$10M	18–30 months	
Implementation	\$45M–\$70M	30–60 months	
Total (first 3 years)	\$55M–\$85M	4-5 years	

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

USS KIDD, State of Louisiana

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

The Queen Baton Rouge Casino, DDD, Visit Baton Rouge

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Immediate (year 1)

BENEFITS

Relocating the USS KIDD to a protected harbor improves the long-term preservation of one of Baton Rouge’s most important historic assets while repositioning it as a highly visible anchor for the Sports and Entertainment District. The move reduces operational risk from river currents and flooding, enhances visitor safety and access, and increases tourism exposure by colocating the ship with event venues, recreation fields, and hospitality uses.

B. Program Design Phase (18–30 months)

1. Advance detailed engineering for docks, breakwaters, dredging, and shoreline stabilization.
2. Design ADA-accessible gangways, lighting, security, and interpretive infrastructure.
3. Complete environmental documentation and mitigation requirements.
4. Finalize construction phasing, cost estimates, and bid packages.
5. Coordinate logistics with river navigation and nearby development projects.

C. Implementation Phase (30–60 months)

1. Construct the protected harbor, docks, utilities, and shoreline systems.
2. Relocate and secure the USS KIDD at the new site.
3. Build pedestrian connections, viewing areas, wayfinding, and public amenities.
4. Complete inspections, safety certifications, and operational testing.
5. Launch public reopening and district marketing campaign.

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Increased visitation and event spillover
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Uplift in surrounding development
New/Enhanced Public Realm	2–3 acres	Harbor edge and public access
Converted Space	-	-
New Residential Units	-	-
New Residents	-	-
New/Relocated Jobs	75 - 100	Museum operations and tourism services
New Pedestrian Traffic	+200,000–300,000 annual visits	District foot traffic and tourism
Riverfront Developed	800-1,200 LF	Harbor edge and promenades
Mobility Corridors Added	500- 1,000 LF	Pedestrian access improvements

INSPIRATION PROJECT

USS Midway Museum Waterfront Relocation and Harbor Integration – San Diego, CA

The USS Midway’s relocation and harbor integration transformed the aircraft carrier into one of San Diego’s top tourist attractions, supported by upgraded waterfront promenades, visitor amenities, and strong connections to adjacent entertainment and hospitality districts. The project demonstrates how historic naval vessels can enhance waterfront activation.



Photo Source: KPBS

RECOMMENDATION

T-01

Complete the Florida Street/Nicholson Drive BRT to LSU with stations, infrastructure, and signal priority.

Complete the Florida Street/Nicholson Drive BRT to LSU by finalizing stations, infrastructure, and signal priority to improve transit reliability, pedestrian access, and connectivity between downtown destinations.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Finalize corridor alignment, station spacing, and priority segments.
2. Assess right-of-way conditions, utilities, and intersection constraints.
3. Establish BRT design standards (stations, shelters, ADA access, branding).
4. Conduct a Transportation Impact Study.
5. Advance federal funding applications (FTA Small Starts or similar).
6. Conduct public outreach and stakeholder coordination.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$1M–\$1.5M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city) • TIF/EDD funds • CAFA bonds • Federal DOT grants • State DOT grants
Design	\$4M–\$6M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$31M–\$75M	24–48 months	
Total	\$36M–\$72.5M	4–5 years	

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

Capital Area Transit System (CATS)

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

DOTD, DDD, LSU, Federal Transit Administration, East Baton Rouge Parish, BRAF

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Short term (year 2-3)

BENEFITS

Completing the Florida Street / Nicholson Drive BRT is a foundational mobility investment that supports downtown growth, student and workforce housing, and riverfront activation. High-quality BRT service improves access to jobs, education, and cultural destinations while reducing congestion and parking demand. This corridor reinforces Nicholson Drive as a multimodal gateway and aligns with broader climate, equity, and economic development goals.

B. Design Phase (12–24 months)

1. Complete final engineering for stations, lanes, and signal systems.
2. Design accessible stations with shelters, seating, lighting, and real-time information.
3. Integrate transit signal priority and ITS technology.
4. Design pedestrian, bicycle, and streetscape improvements along the corridor.
5. Secure permits and finalize procurement strategy.

C. Construction Phase (24–48 months)

1. Upgrade ~20,000 LF of corridor with resurfacing, restriping, and bus-priority treatments
2. Construct 6–10 BRT stations with shelters, seating, and ADA platforms.
3. Install transit signal priority and corridor-wide ITS systems.
4. Improve pedestrian access, lighting, crosswalks, and wayfinding
5. Test systems, train operators, and re-launch full BRT service.

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	Indirect	Improved access to retail and jobs
New Property Tax Revenue	Indirect	Transit-oriented development
New/Enhanced Public Realm	4-6 acres (corridor-wide)	Station areas and streetscape
Converted Space	0	-
New Residential Units	Indirect	TOD near stations
New Residents	Indirect	Housing enabled by transit access
New/Relocated Jobs	100-150	Construction and transit operations
New Pedestrian Traffic	+250,000 annual users	Station access and corridor activity
Riverfront Developed	0	-
Mobility Corridors Added	20,000 LF	Enhanced BRT corridor

INSPIRATION PROJECT

HealthLine BRT – Cleveland, OH

A nationally recognized BRT corridor that significantly improved transit reliability, spurred billions in adjacent development, and transformed a major urban spine through high-quality stations, signal priority, and streetscape investment.



Photo Source: Sasak

RECOMMENDATION

T-02

Create the Main Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.

Transform Main Street into a priority corridor by upgrading sidewalks, crossings, lighting, shade, seating, and wayfinding to support walkable downtown retail, transit access, food & beverage uses, and day and night-time programming.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Inventory sidewalk widths, ADA conditions, lighting, shade, and furnishings along Main Street.
2. Identify priority blocks for Phase 1 implementation.
3. Conduct design workshops with Main Street businesses and property owners.
4. Conduct a Transportation Impact Study.
5. Coordinate pedestrian improvements with transit stops and service access.
6. Pilot tactical improvements such as temporary sidewalk extensions, seating, and shade.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$1M–\$1.4M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city) • TIF/EDD funds • CAFA bonds • Federal DOT grants • State DOT grants
Design	\$2.25M–\$3M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$12.5M–\$22.5M	24–48 months	
Total	\$15.5M–\$27M	3–4 years	

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

State of Louisiana, East Baton Rouge Parish, DPW, BREC, CATS, BRAF

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Short term (year 2-3)

B. Design Phase (12–24 months)

1. Develop Main Street-specific design standards for sidewalks, lighting, trees, and furnishings.
2. Prepare engineering and ADA-compliant construction documents.
3. Coordinate drainage, utilities, and curb geometry.
4. Secure DPW approvals and permits.
5. Package improvements into phased construction bid sets.

BENEFITS

Main Street is Downtown Baton Rouge’s historic commercial core but lacks consistent pedestrian comfort, accessibility, and streetscape quality. Establishing Main Street as a priority corridor directly supports small businesses, improves safety and accessibility, and creates a more inviting environment for residents, workers, and visitors. By focusing investment on one highly visible corridor, the City can deliver immediate impact, demonstrate success, and set a replicable standard for future streetscape improvements.

C. Construction Phase (24–48 months)

1. Widen and repave sidewalks where feasible.
2. Install shade trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, and trash receptacles.
3. Upgrade crosswalks, curb ramps, and pedestrian safety features.
4. Add branded wayfinding and corridor signage.
5. Launch the completed corridor with a public opening and programming.

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	\$250k–\$500k annually (indirect)	Increased retail activity
New Property Tax Revenue	\$500k–\$1M annually	Reduced vacancy and reinvestment
New/Enhanced Public Realm	2–3 acres	Widened sidewalks and seating
Converted Space	-	Streetscape project
New Residential Units	-	-
New Residents	-	-
New/Relocated Jobs	50–100	Small business growth
New Pedestrian Traffic	+150,000 annual users	Improved walkability
Riverfront Developed	-	-
Mobility Corridors Added	3,000 - 5,000 LF	Walkability improvements

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Main Street Streetscape – Greenville, SC

A focused corridor investment that transformed a downtown retail street through widened sidewalks, shade, lighting, and programming—supporting small businesses and sustained pedestrian activity.



Photo Source: Richmond Night Market VA

RECOMMENDATION

T-03

Create the Government Street priority corridor with wider sidewalks, enhanced crossings, ramps, seating, shade, and wayfinding.

Transform Government Street into a priority corridor by upgrading sidewalks, crossings, lighting, shade, seating, and wayfinding to support walkable downtown retail, transit access, food & beverage uses, and day and night-time programming.

ACTION STEPS

A. Activation Phase (6–12 months)

1. Inventory sidewalk widths, ADA compliance, crossings, lighting, and shade conditions.
2. Densify priority blocks and intersections for early implementation.
3. Conduct stakeholder workshops with businesses and residents.
4. Conduct a Transportation Impact Study.
5. Coordinate corridor improvements with transit routes and planned development.
6. Pilot tactical improvements such as temporary curb extensions, seating, and shade.

COST ESTIMATES AND TIMELINE

Phase	Cost Estimate	Duration	Funding Mechanism
Activation	\$1M–\$1.4M	6–12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public investment (city) • TIF/EDD funds • CAFA bonds • Federal DOT grants • State DOT grants
Design	\$2.25M–\$3M	12–24 months	
Construction	\$12.5M–\$22.5M	24–48 months	
Total	\$16M–\$27M	3–4 years	

RECOMMENDATION TYPE

Project

POTENTIAL LEAD IMPLEMENTER

DDD, East Baton Rouge Parish

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

East Baton Rouge Parish, Office of Community Development, Housing Authority, BRAF

TARGET IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Short term (year 2-3)

BENEFITS

Government Street is one of Downtown Baton Rouge’s most important corridors but lacks consistent pedestrian comfort and accessibility. Establishing it as a priority corridor improves safety, supports retail and dining activity, and creates the physical framework needed for mixed-use housing and corridor revitalization. By prioritizing walkability and universal access, this investment strengthens economic vitality, supports transit use, and enhances the everyday experience for residents, workers, and visitors.

B. Design Phase (12–24 months)

1. Develop Government Street-specific design standards for sidewalks, crossings, and furnishings.
2. Prepare engineering and ADA-compliant construction documents.
3. Design enhanced intersections, curb ramps, and pedestrian refuge areas.
4. Coordinate utilities, drainage, and tree placement.
5. Secure permits and finalize construction phasing.

C. Construction Phase (24–48 months)

1. Widen sidewalks and repave pedestrian surfaces where feasible.
2. Install shade trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, and trash receptacles.
3. Upgrade crossings with high-visibility markings, curb extensions, and accessible ramps.
4. Add branded wayfinding and corridor signage.
5. Launch the completed corridor with coordinated programming and events.

SUCCESS METRICS

Metric	Value	Driver
New Sales Tax Revenue	\$250k–\$500k annually (indirect)	Increased retail activity
New Property Tax Revenue	\$500k–\$1M annually (indirect)	Reduced vacancy and reinvestment
New/Enhanced Public Realm	2–3 acres	Widened sidewalks and seating
Converted Space	-	Streetscape project
New Residential Units	-	-
New Residents	-	-
New/Relocated Jobs	50–100	Small business growth
New Pedestrian Traffic	+150,000 annual users	Improved walkability
Riverfront Developed	-	-
Mobility Corridors Added	3,000 - 5,000 LF	Walkability improvements

INSPIRATION PROJECT

Government Street Complete Streets – Baton Rouge, LA (Mid-City segment)

A corridor transformation that improved walkability, supported local retail, and reinforced Government Street as a vibrant mixed-use urban corridor—providing a local precedent for downtown implementation.



Photo Source: Building Back Better, Baton Rouge Report

Strategic Site Explorations

Plan Baton Rouge III presents a long-term vision for the future of downtown. Accordingly, some recommended projects will take shape in the short term while others will advance years or even decades later. To assist with organizing around immediate- and short-term opportunities, the planning team has identified five strategic sites for more advanced and detailed modeling. These sites were chosen as typical opportunity sites, representing a diversity of proposed program mixes and neighborhood types.

This section includes an exploration of potential paths to redeveloping these sites. These explorations are intended to serve as models for these sites in particular, but also sites throughout the downtown that share similar proposed programming, configurations, and opportunities for transformation in the near term.

For each of the five strategic site explorations, the planning team developed a proposed program mix, a conceptual project funding capital stack, an assessment of any anticipated funding gap, an analysis of various potential funding and implementation tools, and a collection of case studies that convey findings and lessons from similarly situated projects in similar contexts.





North Riverfront Site

This approximately 18-acre L-shaped site sits along the Mississippi River west of Capitol Lake and immediately west of River Road. The site is part of what is envisioned by Plan Baton Rouge III as a full transformation of the largely vacant riverfront area north of the state capitol into a sports and entertainment complex. With much of this land under state ownership (north and south of the boundaries of this strategic site) and largely elevated out of the flood plain, there is significant opportunity to build on the river frontage and nearby destinations, such as the Capitol, museums, and the Queen casino, to develop a new collection of amenities and places.

Plan Baton Rouge III envisions a destination youth sports complex north of the northernmost rail underpass in this area. That development would bring significant new local and visitor foot-traffic to the area. This strategic site exploration focuses on the land just south of this area, where a riverfront entertainment district associated with the Queen casino is envisioned.

Key Strengths and Assets

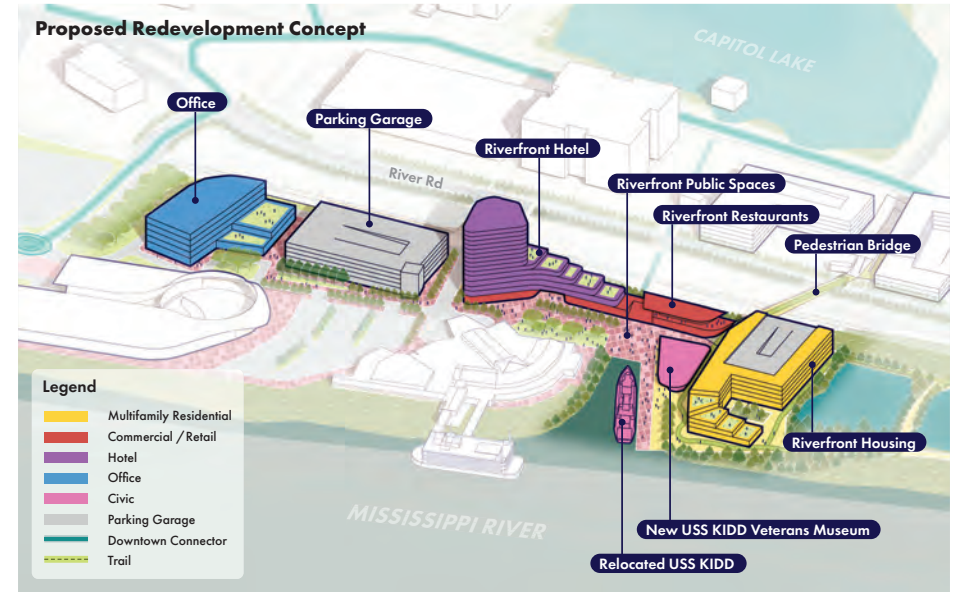
Direct Mississippi River frontage and trail access; planned park, plaza, and boardwalk network; pedestrian bridge improving connectivity across rail infrastructure; immediate proximity to the River Center and cultural core

Site Considerations

Successful implementation will require careful coordination of floodplain requirements, rail adjacency, and significant upfront investment in public realm and infrastructure.

Market Rationale

Market analysis indicates that waterfront locations consistently outperform other downtown sites in residential and hotel demand due to premium views, access, and visitor appeal. Proximity to many of downtown's tourism hotspots supports hospitality demand, while planned public realm investments improve feasibility by reducing market risk and supporting higher



achievable rents and ADRs.

Vision

Develop a signature mixed-use waterfront district that leverages river access and high-quality public space to support residential and hospitality development and establish a recognizable downtown destination.

Leadership

Key partners could include the City-Parish, DDD, BRAF, and CAFA. Hospitality operators and convention stakeholders are critical private partners. A long-term public realm management entity will be required.

Action Steps:

1. Confirm phasing strategy
2. Begin structuring the capital stack
3. Explore public space governance model

Conceptual Redevelopment Program

PROGRAM	UNITS/GFA
Residential (multifamily)	200 units
Hotel	250-300 units
Retail	35,000 SF
Parking (structured)	250 residential stalls; 900-1,000 public stalls
Net Developable Area	230,000 SF
Park Space/Plaza	7.25 acres
Pedestrian Bridge	600 linear feet

North Riverfront Site

Funding

Structured parking and riverfront infrastructure will require public participation. Revenue bonds, TIF, and NMTC matter most because parking, the pedestrian bridge, and riverfront infrastructure are the primary feasibility constraints—not housing affordability.

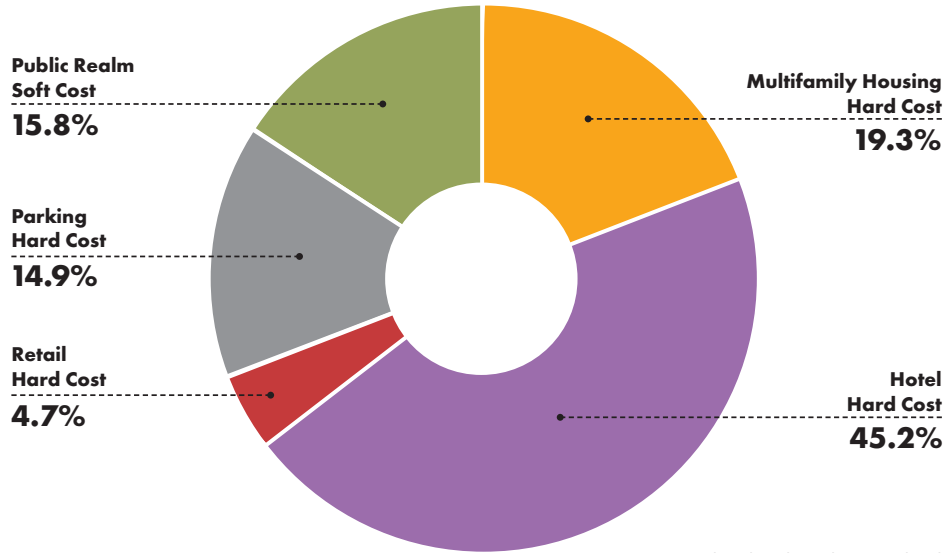
**Estimated Construction Cost
(with public realm improvements)**

\$302M - \$367M

**Estimated Construction Cost
(without public realm improvements)**

\$267M - \$302M

Breakdown of Estimated Hard Costs by Project Component



Hotel and parking dominate hard costs, reflecting the site's role as a destination waterfront anchored by hospitality and public infrastructure.

Illustrative Development Strategy

A premium waterfront mixed-use site where public infrastructure and connectivity are required to unlock high-value residential and hospitality development.

	% of Total Cost	Est. Cost	Program Component	Key Conditions
Total Est. Development Cost \$267M - \$302M	45-57%	\$135M - \$152M	Market-rate residential and hotel	Phasing and parking delivery must align with lease-up to manage exposure
	12-23%	\$34M - \$61M	Waterfront Multi-family and hotel equity	Clear exit tied to stabilized pricing
	11-23%	\$34M - \$61M	Public parking and ground-floor commercial	Retail structured as stand-alone, NMTC-eligible components.
	2-33%	\$4M - \$100M	Residential Feasibility Gap	Required government/philanthropy / special infrastructure funding such as value-capture tools (TIF) and revenue bonds backed by project revenues





South Boulevard Site

The redevelopment concept envisions the adaptive reuse of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections facilities to create a vibrant downtown student community in partnership with LSU. Rather than fully demolishing the site, select existing structures will be repurposed to house student services, academic spaces, and residential units. This approach preserves the historic and institutional character of the campus while supporting a mix of functional and social uses, allowing students to live, learn, and gather in a centralized, accessible location.

The site's existing natural features, including mature tree groves, will be leveraged to provide shaded outdoor spaces for study, recreation, and social interaction, enhancing the quality of student life. By integrating housing, student amenities, and outdoor open spaces, the plan fosters a strong sense of community in the heart of downtown. The project demonstrates a sustainable and context-sensitive strategy, balancing preservation, adaptive reuse, and modern campus needs to strengthen the connection between LSU students and the city.

Key Strengths and Assets

The site includes approximately 8.5 acres of developable land. It is adjacent to Beaugard Town and the Central Business District. The site can support integrated residential development and open space. It also offers opportunities for academic and institutional reuse.

Site Considerations

Development must carefully manage transitions in scale and design to respect Beaugard Town's historic character and address parking and infrastructure capacity. Relocation of existing tenants is also required.

Market Rationale

Continued demand for downtown housing supports large-scale residential development where projects can achieve economies of scale and offer diverse unit types. Proximity to downtown employment and adjacency to a stable historic neighborhood strengthen long-term market viability, while institutional ownership supports phased delivery.



Vision

Develop a high-density residential district that expands downtown's housing supply while respecting historic context, using academic reuse and integrated open space to anchor early phases.

Leadership

Key partners could include the City-Parish, DDD, institutional users, and residential developers, relying on local leaders and building on their past successes

Action Steps:

1. Identify an academic or institutional partner
2. Relocate existing site tenants
3. Rezone necessary parcel/s
4. Study sensitive historic edges
5. Launch townhome developer solicitation

Conceptual Redevelopment Program

PROGRAM	UNITS/GFA
Residential (townhomes)	35-40 units
Residential (multifamily)	800-900 units
Retail	10,000 SF
Academic	46,300 SF
Parking (structured)	400-500 stalls
Net Developable Area	370,260 SF
Horizontal Development	2.5 acres

South Boulevard Site

Funding

Housing finance tools, such as LIHTC, and historic tax credits lead, with TIF or PILOT supporting infrastructure and parking rather than destination amenities.

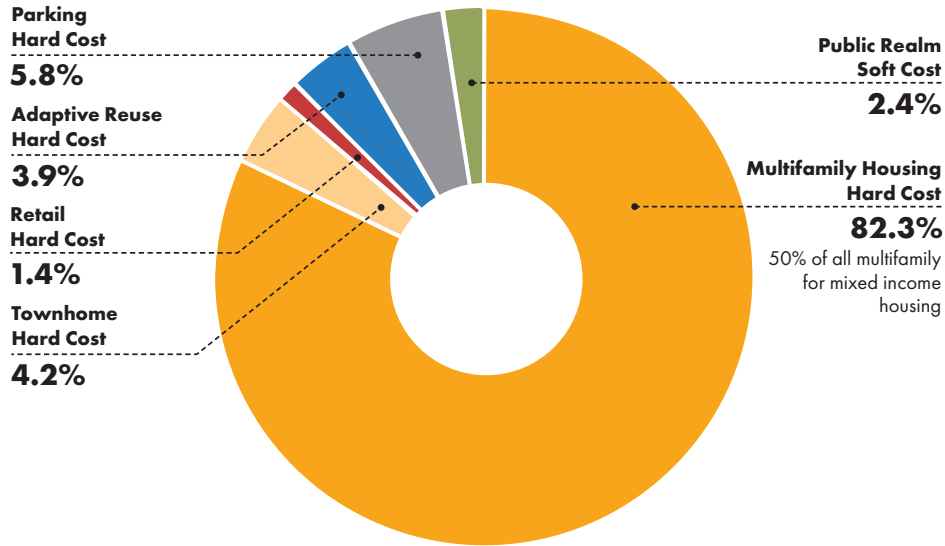
Estimated Construction Cost
(with public realm improvements)

\$308M - \$377M

Estimated Construction Cost
(without public realm improvements)

\$303M - \$371M

Breakdown of Estimated Hard Costs by Project Component



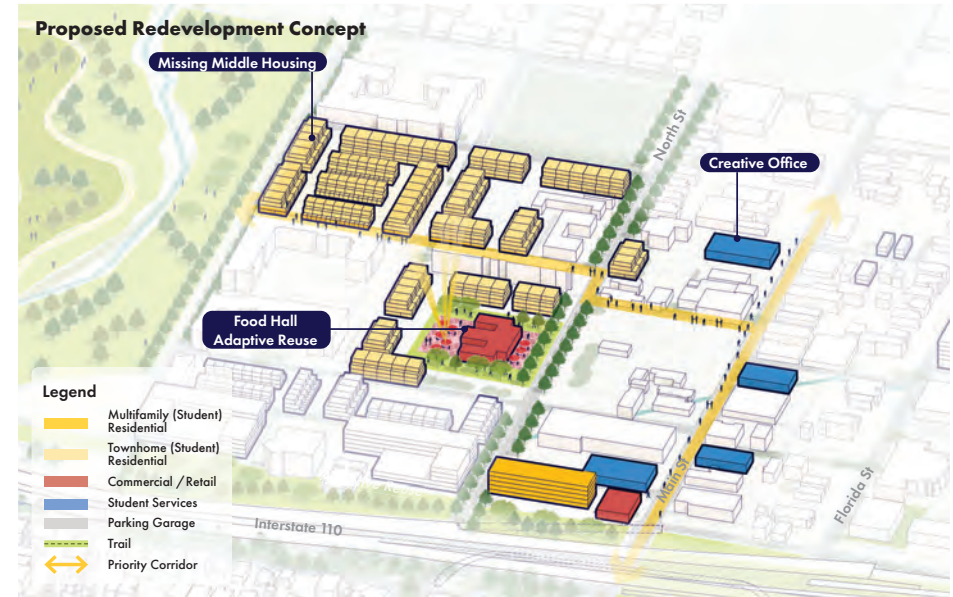
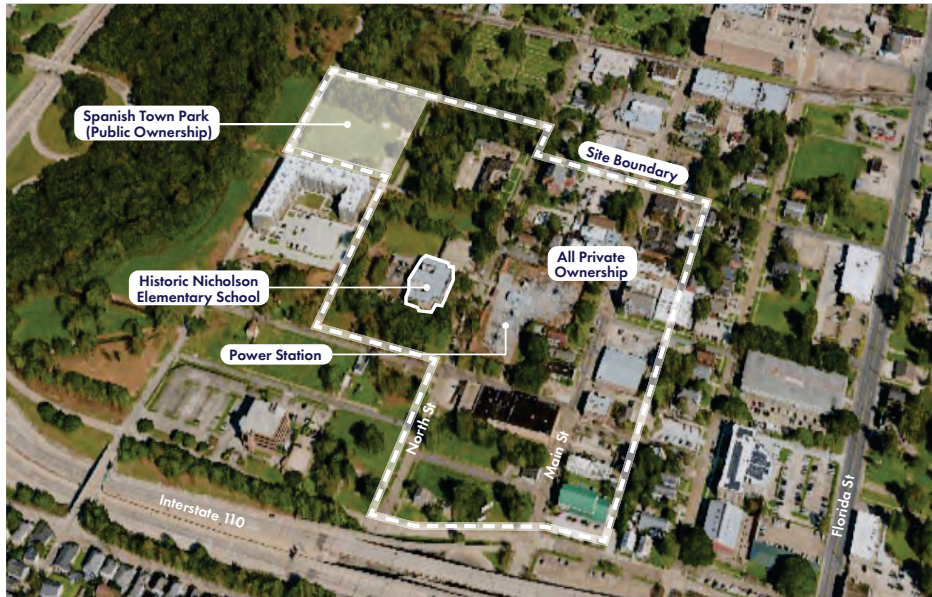
A housing-at-scale site where multifamily dominates, supplemented by townhomes and adaptive reuse.

Illustrative Development Strategy

A large housing-led redevelopment site where feasibility depends on delivering units at scale while integrating institutional reuse and historic context.

	% of Total Cost	Est. Cost	Program Component	Key Conditions
Total Est. Development Cost \$303M - \$371M	8-12%	\$30M - \$36M	Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Equity	Large-scale multifamily Phasing must support sustained compliance across multiple buildings
	10-20%	\$38M - \$62M	Historic Tax Credit Equity	Academic adaptive reuse Institutional use must be compatible with historic standards
	41-51%	\$150M - \$154M	Debt Financing	Market-rate Multifamily, townhomes, retail Absorption must be supported by phased infrastructure delivery
	5-10%	\$19M - \$31M	Private Equity	Market-rate residential Investors require confidence in neighborhood stability over time
	7-46%	\$21M - \$133M	Residual Feasibility Gap	Gap reflects affordability, structured parking, reuse and absorption Likely filled through institutional or public partnership such as LSU specific financing to support student housing





Downtown East Housing Site

This collection of sites in Downtown East sits between several recent and expected investments and developments in the neighborhood. Recent housing projects south of Spanish Town Road has breathed new life into the area while plentiful underutilized and undeveloped sites offer the opportunity for future transformation.

Several key downtown corridors traverse this area, including North Street and Main Street, offering opportunities to establish stronger connections within this area between Downtown East and the center of downtown on the other side of the elevated I-110 structure. Forthcoming investments and upgrades to Memorial Park to the north of these sites can further influence demand and interest in investing in this area for mid-scale missing middle housing, neighborhood-scale retail and commercial, and strategic upgrades of and installations into downtown’s public realm network.

Key Strengths and Assets

Nicholson School adaptive reuse opportunity; proximity to Government Street destinations; established arts and entertainment identity.

Site Considerations

Implementation should align with the neighborhood fabric and be paced to match neighborhood-scale absorption and infrastructure capacity.

Vision

Develop a mixed-use residential neighborhood that builds on Downtown East’s creative identity through adaptive reuse and smaller-scale infill.

Market Rationale

Market analysis supports incremental, diverse housing types in downtown. Demand is strongest for a diversity of residential formats, and locally oriented retail, which align with the area’s existing character.

Action Steps:

1. Advance the Nicholson School reuse concept
2. Define parcel phasing and disposition strategy
3. Rezone necessary parcel/s
4. Launch townhome-focused developer solicitation

Leadership

Key partners could include the City-Parish, DDD, arts organizations, and local developers.

Conceptual Redevelopment Program

PROGRAM	UNITS/GFA
Residential (townhomes)	180 units
Residential (multifamily)	175-200 units
Retail	15,000 SF
Office (creative)	36,000 SF
Parking (structured)	250 stalls
Net Developable Area	511,800 SF
Park Space/Plaza	1 acre

Downtown East Housing Site

Funding

Historic Tax Credits support adaptive reuse. Land strategy is critical to townhome feasibility. Small business incentives may be needed for retail.

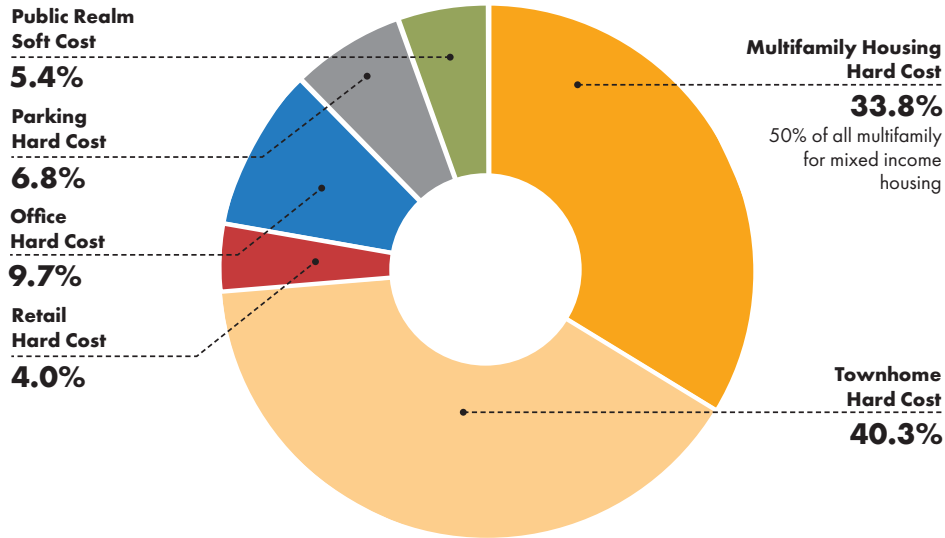
**Estimated Construction Cost
(with public realm improvements)**

\$170M - \$210M

**Estimated Construction Cost
(without public realm improvements)**

\$167M - \$201M

Breakdown of Estimated Hard Costs by Project Component



Multifamily Housing Hard Cost
33.8%
50% of all multifamily for mixed income housing

Townhome Hard Cost
40.3%

The most diversified site, balancing multifamily, townhomes, office, and neighborhood-serving retail.

Illustrative Development Strategy

An incremental, neighborhood-scale redevelopment area centered on mixed-income housing and adaptive reuse rather than premium pricing or scale.

	% of Total Cost	Est. Cost	Uses	Condition
Total Est. Development Cost \$170M - \$210M	3-5%	\$7M - \$8M	Mixed-income multifamily	Unit mix must balance affordability with absorption
	10-16%	\$21M - \$26M	Nicholson School reuse	Rehab scope must preserve historic character while enabling new uses
	10-21%	\$21M - \$35M	Community retail and creative office	Tenant mix must emphasize community and local-serving functions
	41-52%	\$83M - \$87M	Townhomes and non-subsidized uses	Phasing must align with incremental neighborhood demand
	7-35%	\$12M - \$70M	Driven by small-scale absorption, tenant improvements, rehab premiums	Requires flexible local such PILOT-supported payments where public improvements enable private absorption





Laurel Street Site

The Laurel Street Site is a collection of sites on three blocks straddling Laurel Street in the heart of Downtown Baton Rouge, immediately east of River Road. The most well-known elements of this strategic site includes two parking lots (one north of Laurel Street, and the other to its south) that front directly onto the Mississippi River. These sites have been considered for development for decades and have the potential to be a transformative project downtown.

Given the central location of this site and its proximity to several existing and emerging places within downtown, Plan Baton Rouge III envisions a major urban development on these blocks that include a range of new uses, including housing, retail, and parking, along with new signature moments in downtown's public realm—such as a levee-level elevated park, a new connection to the riverfront, and premium streetscapes all around, forging strong connections to Main Street, 3rd Street, and Florida Street.

Key Strengths and Assets

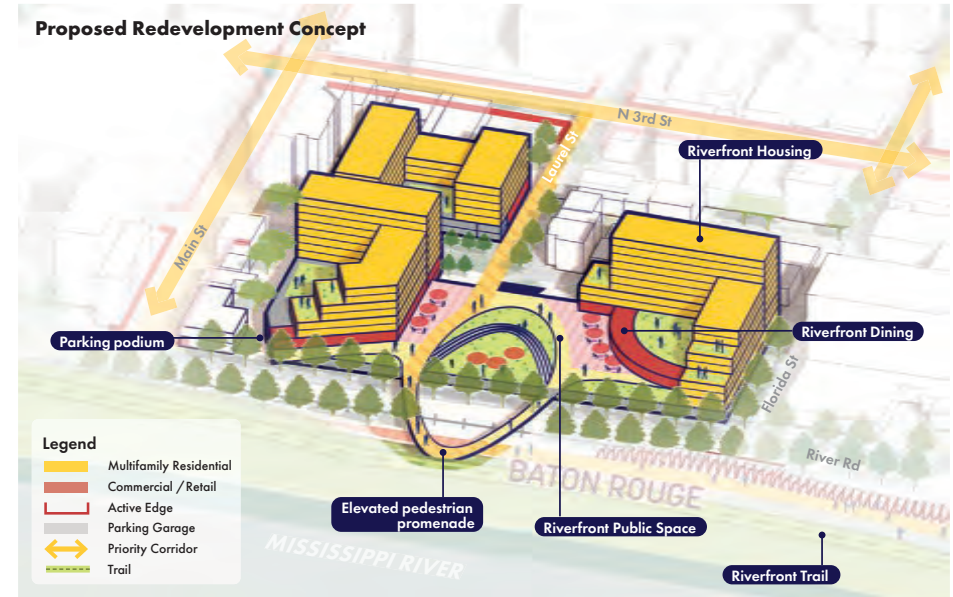
Approximately 4.5 acres of contiguous developable land; strong proximity to downtown jobs, hotels, and riverfront activity; elevated plaza creating premium frontage and visibility; curved pedestrian bridge improving access and identity.

Site Considerations

Feasibility is dependent on confirmation of street closure, traffic impacts, and coordination of parking, plaza, and bridge infrastructure.

Vision

Create a dense mixed-use district organized around an elevated public plaza, prioritizing residential density and ground-floor retail that serve the downtown core.



Market Rationale

The site's central location within the CBD and proximity to downtown employment support higher-density residential demand relative to other downtown locations. The assumed street closure creates a large, contiguous site with a low effective land basis, improving project feasibility while supporting retail and amenity use types in downtown. Demand is strongest for a diversity of residential formats, and locally oriented retail, which align with the area's existing character.

Action Steps:

1. Confirm the traffic impacts
2. Engage residential developers
3. Begin targeted retail recruitment

Leadership

Key partners could include the City-Parish, DDD, and private multifamily developers, relying on local leaders and building on their past successes

Conceptual Redevelopment Program

PROGRAM	UNITS/GFA
Residential (multifamily)	400-450 units
Retail	20,000 SF
Parking (structured)	500 stalls
Net Developable Area	196,000 SF
Park Space/Plaza (elevated)	1 acre
Pedestrian Bridge	480 linear feet

Laurel Street Site

Funding

Parking, the plaza, and the pedestrian bridge are the primary gap drivers. Conventional debt and modest LIHTC dominate, with public tools focused narrowly on parking and public space to enable density.

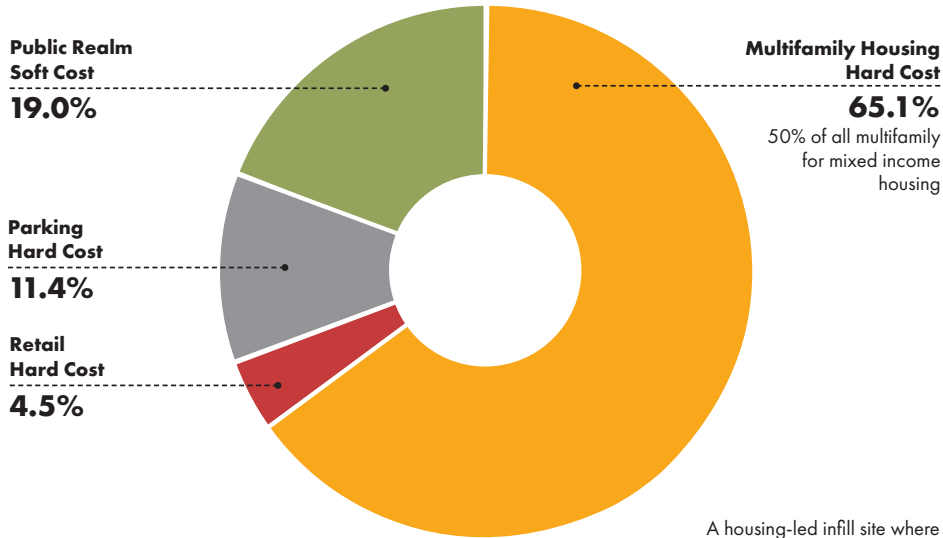
Estimated Construction Cost (with public realm improvements)

\$180M - \$200M

Estimated Construction Cost (without public realm improvements)

\$158M - \$182M

Breakdown of Estimated Hard Costs by Project Component



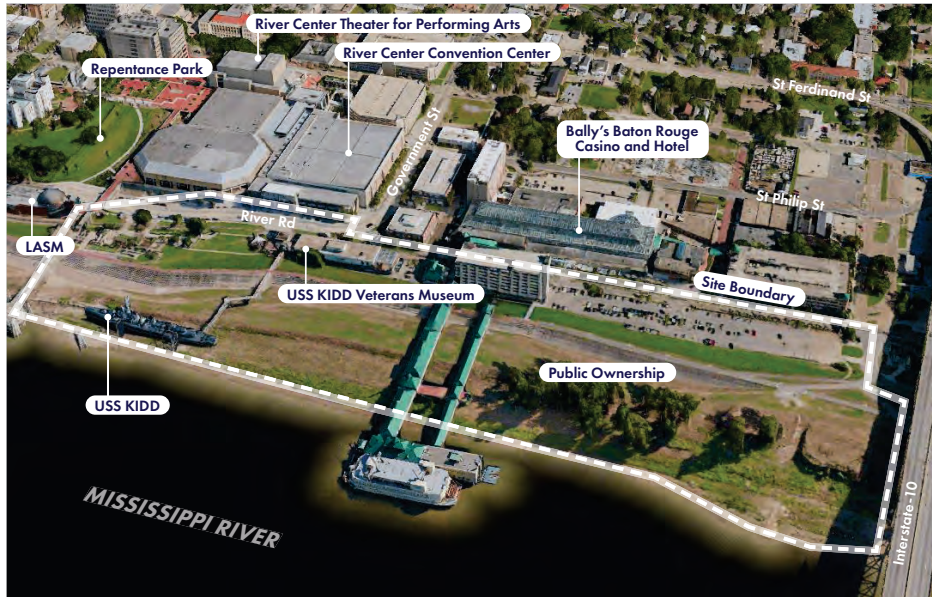
A housing-led infill site where multifamily overwhelmingly drives both area and cost.

Illustrative Development Strategy

A centrally located, high-density residential infill site that can absorb multifamily development with limited but targeted public support.

	% of Total Cost	Est. Cost	Program Component	Key Conditions
Total Est. Development Cost \$180M - \$200M	46-58%	\$83M - \$91M	Multifamily and retail	Zoning and entitlements must support planned density and parking ratios
	4-6%	\$7M - \$9M	Income-restricted multifamily	Mixed income units concentrated to maximize bond efficiency.
	11-17%	\$21M - \$27M	Market-rate multifamily equity	Returns achieved without reliance on large public capital layers.
	19-39%	\$30M - \$71M	Residual Feasibility Gap	Requires targeted City participation; Financing Gap may include TIF or revenue-bond proceeds where incremental tax value or parking revenue can be pledged.





Riverfront South Site

This site presents a rare opportunity to transform underutilized riverfront land into a signature civic destination anchored by a major urban park on the Mississippi River. Approximately 19 acres of park and open space will create a highly visible, regionally significant place for children's play, everyday recreation, and direct engagement with the river, while supporting adjacent residential, hospitality, and convention-oriented development connected to the River Center and surrounding civic assets.

Key Strengths and Assets

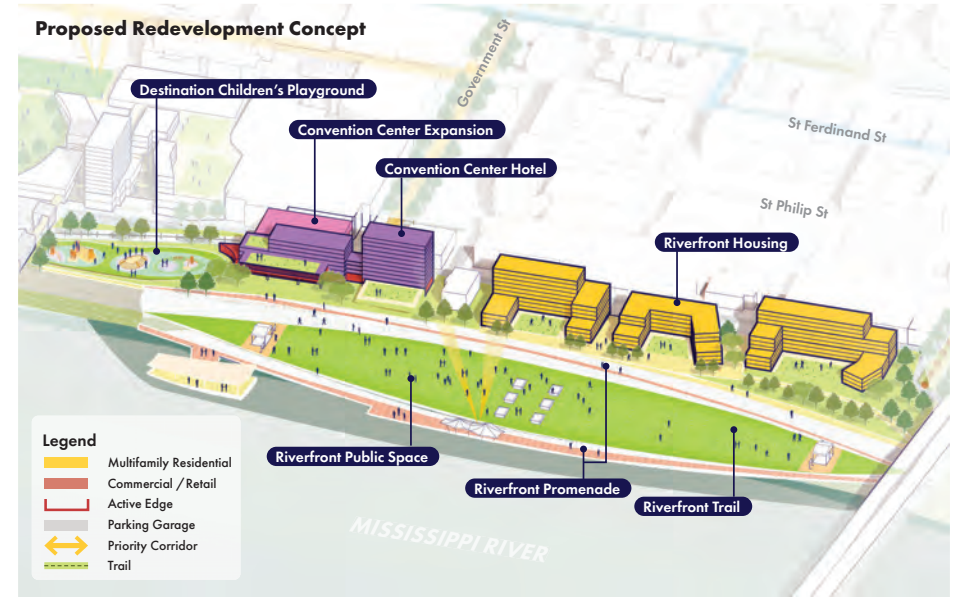
Nineteen acres of planned park and open space; direct adjacency to the River Center and civic landmarks; capacity for coordinated hotel, residential, and convention development; high visibility and regional draw

Site Considerations

Delivery will require careful phasing, sustained public and philanthropic funding, and alignment between park programming and convention operations.

Vision

Establish a premier urban park as a civic and economic anchor, integrating convention expansion, hospitality, and residential uses around a shared public space.



Market Rationale

Convention-oriented districts are often supported by adjacent hotels, open space, and walkable amenities. Public investment in a major park and convention expansion strengthens long-term demand for hospitality and residential development while reducing uncertainty for private partners.

Action Steps:

1. Finalize integrated park and development framework
2. Define project phasing and delivery strategy
3. Rezone necessary parcel/s
4. Establish long-term operations and maintenance model

Leadership

Key partners could include the City-Parish, River Center leadership, DDD, Visit Baton Rouge, and hospitality developers. Philanthropic partners may support park development.

Conceptual Redevelopment Program

PROGRAM	UNITS/GFA
Residential (multifamily)	450-500 units
Hotel	350-400 keys
Retail	20,000 SF
Convention Center (expansion)	40,000 SF
Parking (structured)	300 stalls
Net Developable Area	217,800 acres
Park Space/Plaza	19 acres

Riverfront South Site

Funding

Layered public capital—bonds, LIHTC, and NMTC—is essential because private market financing alone cannot carry the scale of civic investment.

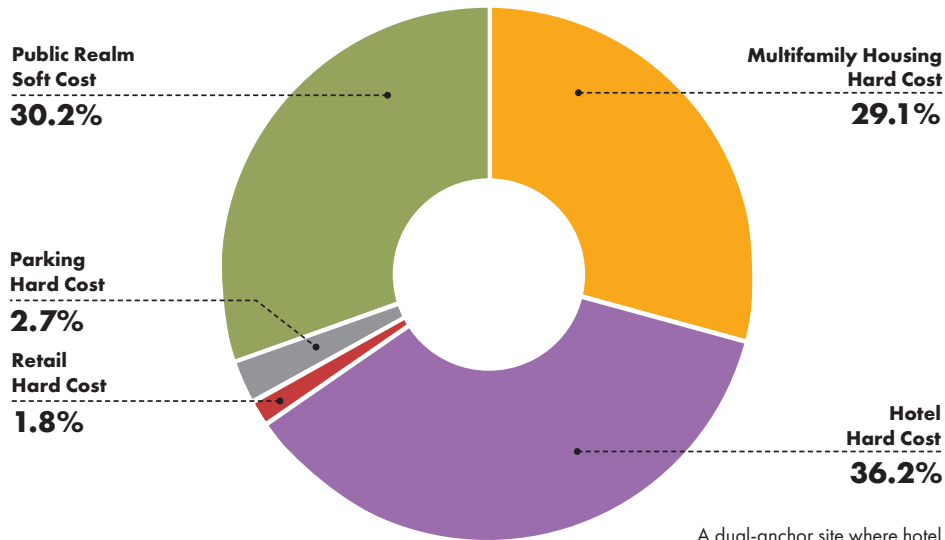
**Estimated Construction Cost
(with public realm improvements)**

\$430M - \$510M

**Estimated Construction Cost
(without public realm improvements)**

\$331M - \$413M

Breakdown of Estimated Hard Costs by Project Component



A dual-anchor site where hotel development rivals multifamily in cost, reflecting its convention and visitor orientation.

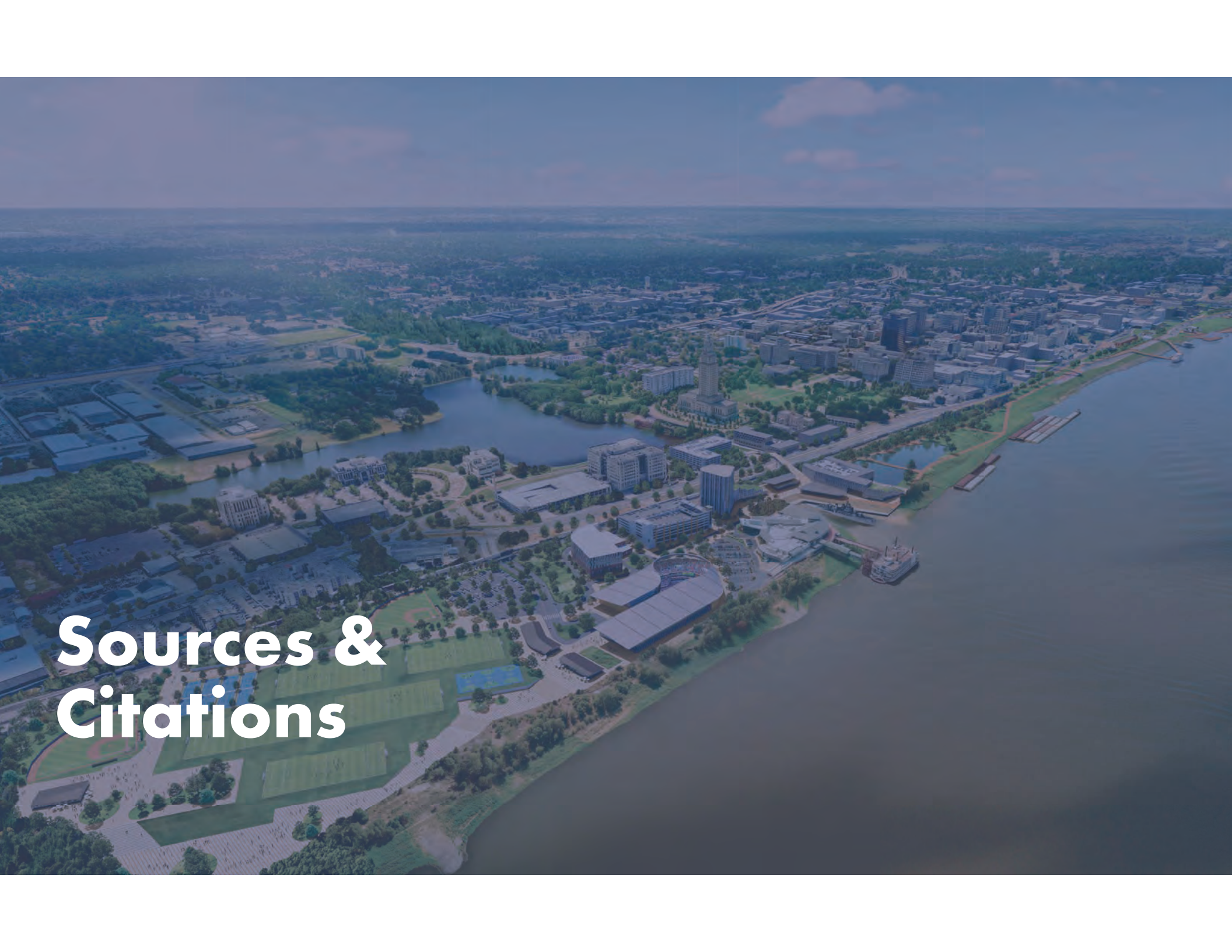
Illustrative Development Strategy

A civic-scale anchor project where large public investments in parks and convention facilities must precede and support private housing and hotel development.

	% of Total Cost	Est. Cost	Program Component	Key Conditions
Total Est. Development Cost \$331M - \$413M	44-52%	\$180M - \$172M	Market-rate housing and hotel	Hotel timing coordinated with convention expansion delivery.
	25-33%	\$103M - \$108M	Convention-adjacent commercial and community uses	Uses remain community-serving throughout compliance period.
	6-13%	\$26M - \$43M	Hotel and multifamily equity	Private capital contingent on binding public commitments.
	2-25%	\$8M - \$105M	Community-serving uses may not fully self-finance	Requires public appropriations such as through CAFA bonds or a special district with flexible incentives.

Rendering of Conceptual Redevelopment





Sources & Citations

AJC. "The Banks Development, Cincinnati." n.d. <https://www.ajc.com/news/the-banks-development-cincinnati/NvNPPkaeb9hPmajxDyybhP/>.

Alvarez, J. T. "We Asked Local Leaders to Share Their Big Dreams for the Red Stick." 225 Magazine, November 2, 2019. <https://www.225batonrouge.com/our-city/asked-local-leaders-share-big-dreams-red-stick/>.

ArchDaily. "River Center Branch Library / Schwartz Silver Architects + WHLC Architecture." 2022. <https://www.archdaily.com/987380/river-center-branch-library-schwartz-silver-architects-plus-whlc-architecture>.

Architect Magazine. "Water Institute of the Gulf." n.d. <https://www.architectmagazine.com/project-gallery/water-institute-of-the-gulf/>.

Autodesk. "Restoring the University Lakes of Baton Rouge." 2024. <https://www.autodesk.com/blogs/water/2024/06/25/restoring-the-university-lakes-of-baton-rouge/>.

Baton Rouge Digital Archive. "Baton Rouge (Historical Image Collection)." n.d. <https://batonrougedigitalarchive.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15196coll4/id/0/>.

Business Report. "EPA Will Make Funding for Capitol Lakes Cleanup a National Priority." 2024. <https://www.businessreport.com/business/epa-will-make-funding-for-capitol-lakes-cleanup-a-national-priority>.

Chamberlain, Lisa. "The Surprising Stickiness of the '15-Minute City.'" World Economic Forum, March 15, 2022. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2022/03/15-minute-city-stickiness/>.

Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation. "Projects." Accessed April 13, 2026. 3CDC Projects

City of Champaign, IL. "Incremental Development and Zoning." n.d. <https://champaignil.gov/planning/zoning/incremental-development/>.

City of Kansas City, MO. "Housing Accelerator Program." n.d. <https://www.kcmo.gov/city-hall/housing/accelerator>.

CPEX. "Building Back Better Baton Rouge Report." 2025. https://cpex.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/BBBR_report_final_web.pdf.

Downtown Baton Rouge. "USS Kidd Veterans Museum Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony." n.d. <https://downtownbatonrouge.org/discover-downtown/events/uss-kidd-veterans-museums-pearl-harbor-remembrance-ceremony>.

Downtown Development District. "City Center." n.d. <https://downtownbatonrouge.org/live-here/historic-neighborhoods/city-center>.

DowntownGreensboro.com. "Downtown Greensboro Domain for Sale." n.d. <https://downtowngreensboro.com/>.

Explore Louisiana. "Louisiana Art & Science Museum." n.d. <https://www.explorelouisiana.com/family-fun/louisiana-art-science-museum>.

Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies. "Surveying Missing Middle Housing Trends." n.d. <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/surveying-missing-middle-trends-us-and-massachusetts-challenges-and-opportunities>.

Hiking Project. "Natalbany Creek Trail, Louisiana." n.d. <https://www.hikingproject.com/featured/family-friendly/trails/natalbany-la>.

iStock. "Baton Rouge Cityscape." n.d. <https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/baton-rouge-gm450310025-24864438>.

iStock. "Old Post Office, Baton Rouge, Louisiana." n.d. <https://www.istockphoto.com/photo/old-post-office-baton-rouge-la-gm488785763-39807728>.

Jacobs, D. "Downtown's New Strategic Plan Will Likely Focus on Safety and Cleanliness." 225 Baton Rouge, March 7, 2023. <https://www.225batonrouge.com/our-city/downtowns-new-strategic-plan-will-likely-focus-safety-cleanliness/>.

Kühne, Olaf, and Corinna Jenal. "Baton Rouge—A Neopragmatic Regional Geographic Approach." 2021. <https://doi.org/10.3390/urbansci5010017>.

Louisiana Secretary of State. "Louisiana's Old State Capitol." n.d. <https://www.sos.la.gov/HistoricalResources/VisitMuseums/LouisianasOldStateCapitol/Pages/default.aspx>.

"Mayor-President." City of Baton Rouge / Parish of East Baton Rouge, <https://www.brla.gov/588/Mayor-President>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2026.

MICA Architects. "Baton Rouge Future Visioning." n.d. <https://micaarchitects.com/projects/baton-rouge-future-visioning>.

Multifamily Executive. "Baton Rouge Office-to-Residential Conversion." n.d. https://www.multifamilyexecutive.com/design-development/mfe-awards/baton-rouge-office-to-residential-conversion-nabs-multifamily-project-of-the-year_0.

RAE. "Indianapolis Cultural Trail, a Legacy of Gene & Marilyn Glick." n.d. <https://www.reasite.com/projects/indianapolis-cultural-trail>.

Rare Maps. "Baton Rouge, Louisiana (Historical Map)." n.d. <https://raremaps.com/gallery/detail/63478>.

REA. "Indianapolis Cultural Trail, a Legacy of Gene & Marilyn Glick." n.d. <https://www.reasite.com/projects/indianapolis-cultural-trail>.

Richmond Night Market VA. "Richmond Night Market." n.d. <https://www.richmondnightmarketva.com/>.

Sasaki. "Evansville Riverfront Visioning and Strategic Plan." n.d. <https://www.sasaki.com/projects/evansville-riverfront-visioning-and-strategic-plan/>.

Sasaki. "John G. and Phyllis W. Smale Riverfront Park." n.d. <https://www.sasaki.com/projects/cincinnati-john-g-and-phyllis-w-smale-riverfront-park/>.

ShadeFLA. "City Dock Baton Rouge (Tension Sails)." n.d. https://shadefla.com/gallery/tension-sails-gallery/city-dock-baton-rouge/img_0282-1-1/.

Shaw Center for the Arts. "Shaw Center for the Arts." n.d. <https://www.shawcenter.org/home-alt>.

TD Saturday Market, Visit Greenville SC. "TD Saturday Market." n.d. <https://www.visitgreenvillesc.com/listing/td-saturday-market/6167/>.

The Advocate. "200 Years of Baton Rouge: A City That Grew Up Around Present-Day Downtown." 2017. https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/200-years-of-baton-rouge-a-city-that-grew-up-around-present-day-downtown/article_c3c4da04-d913-11e6-b9cf-6b1a955ba1b5d.html.

The Advocate. "Belle of Baton Rouge Delays Push to Demolish Catfish Town." 2024. https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/belle-of-baton-rouge-delays-controversial-push-to-demolish-catfish-town-building/article_e755bd6c-33f6-11ef-b403-cf8e3107d8cc.html.

The Advocate. "See All of the Winners in the Best of Baton Rouge 2025." The Advocate (Spotlight), April 2025. https://www.theadvocate.com/spotlight/see-all-of-the-winners-in-the-best-of-baton-rouge-2025/html_fcc9fe47-5877-4032-9890-0cb74e47f6dd.html.

The Advocate. "The Renovated Bally's Baton Rouge Casino." 2024. https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/business/the-renovated-ballys-baton-rouge-casino/article_6ab8ab44-5b7b-46a0-b8c9-e8dd1296c49b.html.

University of South Florida Libraries. "Baton Rouge." n.d. https://etc.usf.edu/clipart/54800/54870/54870_batonrouge.htm.

Valencia Park Baton Rouge. "Valencia Park Apartments." n.d. <https://www.valenciaparkbatonrouge.com/>.

Visit Vancouver WA. "Grant Street Pier." n.d. <https://www.visitvancouverwa.com/listing/grant-street-pier/2989/>.

Wikipedia. "Old Baton Rouge." n.d. https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Old_baton_rouge.jpg.

Wikimedia Commons. "Church Street, Baton Rouge (Postcard)." n.d. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Church_Street_Baton_Rouge_postcard.jpg.

Wikimedia Commons. "Third Street, Baton Rouge, 1907 (Postcard)." n.d. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Third_Street_Baton_Rouge_1907_Postcard.jpg.

World Landscape Architect. "John G. and Phyllis W. Smale Riverfront Park: A Catalyst for Activities and Entertainment." n.d. <https://worldlandscapearchitect.com/john-g-and-phyllis-w-smale-riverfront-park-a-catalyst-for-activities-and-entertainment/?v=0b3b97fa6688>.

Zillow. "1614 Blouin Ave, Baton Rouge, LA." n.d. https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/1614-Blouin-Ave-Baton-Rouge-LA-70808/66236441_zpid/.



SASAKI