WORKING DRAFT

Plan LAFAYETTE

our people.

our community.

our economy.

WORKING DRAFT 1/7/14

WORKING DRAFT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (in progress)

02 CONTEXT (in progress)

03 VISION (in progress)

04 ELEMENTS (INCLUDED)

05 IMPLEMENT (in progress)

WORKING DRAFT

04 ELEMENTS

1. LAND USE

Lafayette Parish has experienced steady population and employment growth over the last century, nearly tripling in population since 1960 , growing from about 85,000 to over 220,000 in 2010. Today, unemployment is relatively low (dropping below 4% in 2012) and job and wage growth is high in comparison to other metro areas. With the steady population and employment growth, developed areas of the parish have increased. While the city of Lafayette remains by far the largest municipality in the parish, its share of the population is shrinking as new housing is built in rural outlying areas of the parish. Population projections suggest that housing growth will continue to occur at faster rates to the north and south of the traditional city center.

Through the planning process, the community reviewed a trend growth projection and three alternative development scenarios. Based on public input, a preferred growth scenario was selected, one which reverses the trend of spreading out in a disconnected fashion, and instead focuses growth and development in mixed-use centers and corridors with greater access to transit, jobs, walkable neighborhoods, and parks and recreation. The "preferred scenario" is projected to consume less land, reduce costs associated with water and sewer extensions, and encourage walkable, mixed-use development patterns. The preferred scenario is refined into a Future Land Use Map (Figure 4.1) to guide and accommodate new development and supporting infrastructure. The Future Land Use Map is intended to set the direction for specific changes to the zoning map and ongoing decisions about neighborhood and land use planning and infrastructure.

As expressed by the community, priorities for future development include:

- Increased redevelopment and reuse of existing buildings and sites
- Focused development in existing and emerging centers and corridors
- Stronger bicycle and pedestrian connections
- More mixed-use development
- Improved transit service and access
- Conserved farmland and open space
- Lower infrastructure and service costs

OUR COMMUNITY

OUR PEOPLE

OUR ECONOMY

WORKING DRAFT

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Uncertainty of future land uses, weak regulations, and lack of predictability for developers and property owners, especially in unincorporated areas of the parish despite the recently adopted land use ordinance.
- Obsolescence and disinvestment in older neighborhoods and commercial corridors.
- Fragmented development patterns and segregated residential, commercial, and industrial land uses impacting the viability of agricultural land use in the unincorporated parish.
- Continued growth pressures in the southern portion of the parish, in areas near Youngsville, Broussard, and Milton, which are placing strain on water and sewer services, roads, drainage, environmental resources and water quality, and community services such as schools.
- Assembling and re-platting land and/or securing financing for mixed-use development, especially downtown.
- Retrofitting commercial, auto oriented corridors into mixed-use, pedestrian friendly transportation corridors.
- New Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) expansion of land classified as located within the floodway, 100 and 500 year floodplains and risk of flooding as impervious surfaces increase and development occurs in flood prone areas.
- Maintenance and upgrades for water, drainage, road/sidewalk and sewer infrastructure in older, urban areas of the city.
- Increasing transit service to accommodate a growing and aging population and provide alternative modes of transportation to reach jobs and services.
- Concerns regarding impacts of the I-49 Connector project on surrounding land uses, community character, and pedestrian connectivity downtown and through neighborhoods.
- Lack of accurate, parcel-based land use information in GIS to track and plan for land use changes in the parish.
- Lack of a streamlined adjudication process for reducing the number of adjudicated properties in the parish and bringing them into productive use.
- Existing islands of unincorporated areas within the city limits.
- Lack of clear annexation policies and criteria (e.g., positive economic impact to city, adjacency to existing developed area) for annexing land into city of Lafayette.

River Ranch residential development; Photo: ASW Architects Southwest

Downtown Businesses

Mixed-Use Centers include: Downtown and the Oil Center, Ambassador Caffery North and Gloria Switch, Moss Street at the Northgate Mall, Johnston near the Acadiana Mall, Kaliste Saloom and Ambassador Caffery South.

Mixed-Use Center

Core mixed-use areas of the parish, including downtown. Uses include retail, office, services, restaurants, and residential. The mixed-use centers are envisioned as walkable districts served by transit. The mixed-use centers are anticipated to range in scale and density. The highest density uses and activity would take place downtown, with more moderate density and uses in the outlying centers.

Examples of Mixed-Use Centers

Transitional Mixed-Use occurs along corridors and between centers and residential neighborhoods.

Transitional Mixed-Use

Includes both commercial and residential mixed-uses. The transitional mixed-use category is anticipated to serve as a transition between higher density mixed-use (from the mixed-use center) to residential or other lower density uses. It is envisioned to include residential, retail, and office in a walkable neighborhood along a transportation corridor or as a ring surrounding a mixed-use center in a walkable, pedestrian friendly pattern.

Examples of Transitional Mixed-Use

WORKING DRAFT

Commercial/Office

Includes general commercial and employment uses, such as neighborhood retail, services, office, and limited residential. The scale of uses will vary based on the context surrounding each area. Newly developed and redeveloped areas are encouraged to accommodate all types of users – including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists. Development should include pedestrian friendly design features such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and street trees. Parking should be located at the interior or rear of the site, rather than fronting the primary road.

Commercial/Office is found along the I-49 planned extension, I-10, Kaliste Saloom Road, and sections of Ambassador Caffery Parkway

Examples of Commercial / Office

Office/Industrial

Includes both light and heavy industrial uses existing in the parish. New light industrial or office park employment uses are also targeted in these areas, including along Cameron Street, Pont Des Mouton, and the Airport, and Southpark Road. Buffering is recommended to help screen and transition between surrounding residential and mixed-use areas and office/industrial areas.

Office/Industrial is found along Cameron Street, Pont Des Mouton, and the Airport, and Southpark Road.

Examples of Office / Industrial

Mixed Residential is located in centers and corridors surrounding Transitional Mixed-Use areas.

Mixed Residential

Includes a range of housing types within one or more neighborhoods. Housing types may include detached single family, attached single family, multifamily, and accessory dwelling units. While this area is envisioned to be predominantly residential, it could also include neighborhood retail and convenience uses.

Examples of Mixed Residential

Residential areas are found throughout the parish and near centers and corridors.

Residential

Predominantly detached, single family neighborhoods that also include appropriately located semi-attached and attached multifamily dwelling units. Neighborhood retail, services, offices, and institutions are also included in appropriate locations (e.g., along transportation corridors or at intersections).

Examples of residential neighborhoods

WORKING DRAFT

Rural Residential Mix:

Includes areas adjacent to the city of Lafayette that may be appropriate for annexation in the future, as well as, unincorporated agriculture, residential single family, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. Regulation through conditional use requirements and buffering is recommended as part of the new Unified Development Code. Buffering recommended for commercial, institutional, and industrial uses. Conditional uses could include residential multifamily and mobile home parks, with all other uses treated as conditional and subject to buffering.

Rural Residential Mix includes areas adjacent to the city of Lafayette.

Examples of Rural Residential Mix

Rural / Agriculture

Unincorporated parish land, predominantly used for agricultural and rural residential single family. The Rural / Agricultural land use category is the least intensive in terms of density and is anticipated to remain primarily rural residential and agricultural land uses. Regulation through conditional use requirements and buffering is recommended as part of the new the Unified Development Code. Conditional uses could include residential multifamily and mobile home parks, with all other uses treated as conditional and subject to buffering.

Rural / Agriculture is unincorporated parish land generally used for agricultural or rural residential uses.

Examples of Rural / Agricultural Uses

Parks are located throughout the city and include existing LCG parks.

Public Park

Includes parks and golf courses owned by LCG.

Examples of Public Parks

Planned and Committed Transportation Improvements are shown on the Future Land Use Map throughout the parish.

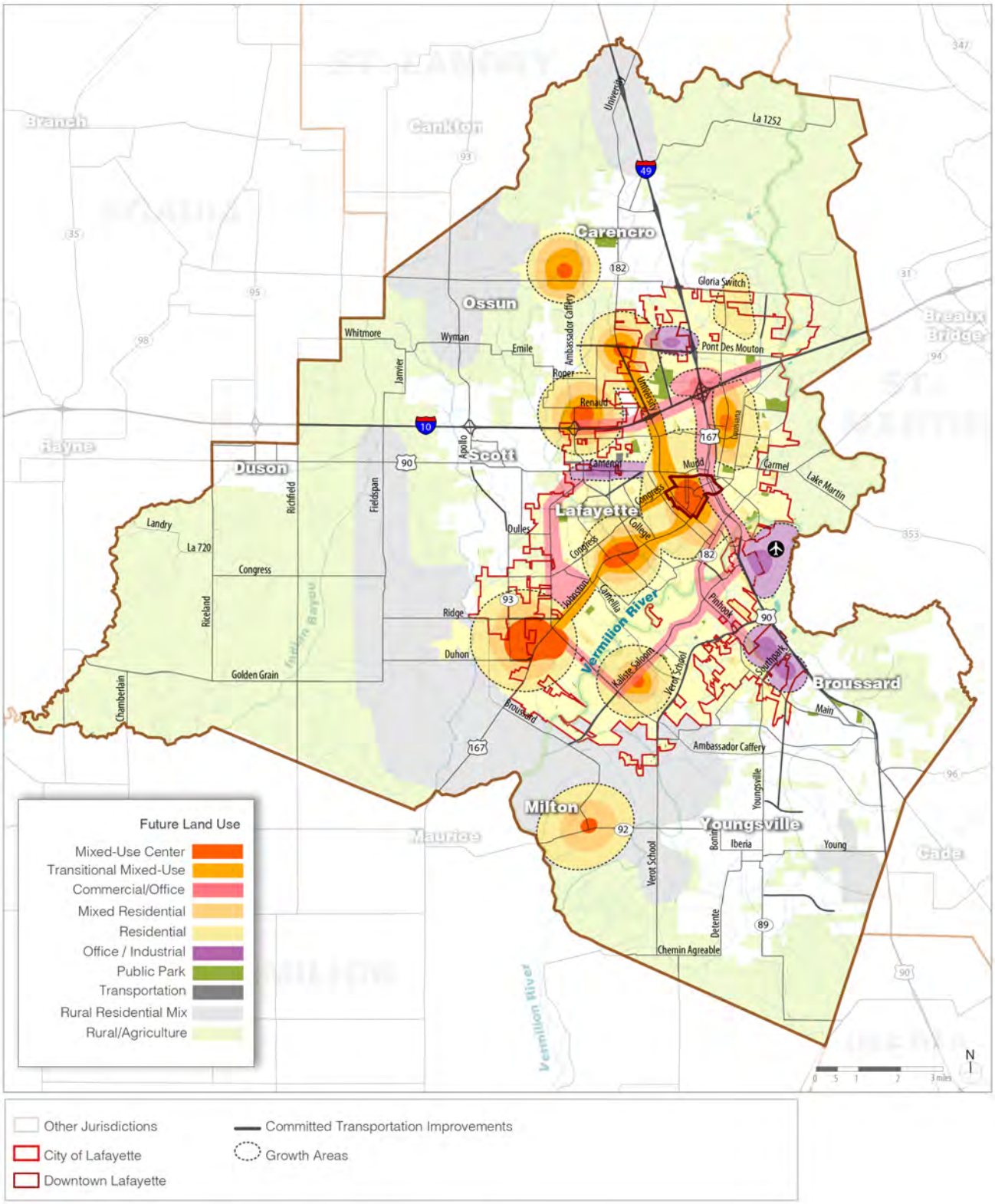
Transportation

Includes transportation facilities and infrastructure for rail and roadways.

Types of Transportation Facilities

WORKING DRAFT

Figure 4.1 Draft Future Land Use Map



GOAL 1

ALIGN LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION, AND UTILITY PLANNING WITH THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP.

POLICIES:

» P 1.1. Encourage compact, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly development in centers and along corridors as designated by the Future Land Use Map. (Related to Community Character - Policy 10.)

ACTIONS:

1.1.1
Review zoning classifications for consistency with the Future Land Use Map.

1.1.2
Review proposed transportation improvements (e.g., new roads, road extensions, road widening, transit facilities, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, etc.) for consistency with the Future Land Use Map.

1.1.3
Revise the zoning ordinance to allow and encourage mixed land uses and incentivize pedestrian and transit friendly development.

1.1.4
Revise the zoning ordinance to include design standards for new development that address quality, street frontage, building entrances, utility placement and scale.

1.1.5
Study existing parking availability and need, and consider creating maximum parking standards for new development in mixed-use areas.

1.1.6
Implement incentives through the UDC and review process to encourage and direct development in centers and along corridors.

1.1.7
Use the Small Area Plans and Model Nodal Plans as prototypes to illustrate desired land use and design principles for future development.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

View of Downtown Lafayette

Downtown Lafayette, Public Trust Finance Authority Redevelopment Concept

POLICY:

» P 1.2. Protect and improve residential neighborhood character, including historical and cultural neighborhood resources.

ACTIONS:

1.2.1
Require transitions in building height and landscape setbacks or buffers between higher intensity uses and residential neighborhoods.

1.2.2
Build capacity for local neighborhood planning through a citizen planner and advocacy program that provides training, examples of best practices, and information about resources available to improve neighborhoods. (Related to Housing and Neighborhoods Policy 11.)

1.2.1
Produce a Neighborhood Planning Citizen Handbook designed to nurture better grassroots understanding of the neighborhood planning program. (Outreach and Communication – consider new Public Information Officer.)

1.2.2
Address vacant lots with a streamlined adjudicated property policy and procedures to protect the historic character of older neighborhoods. (Related to Housing and Neighborhoods Policy 12, Future Land Use Policy 12.)

» P 1.3. Encourage employment and retail centers located throughout the parish, with downtown serving as one of the major centers for concentration of jobs and retail businesses.

ACTIONS:

1.3.1
Work with LEDA and the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce (GLCC) to identify undeveloped or vacant sites within future and existing employment centers to be marketed to employers.

1.3.2
Develop standards that require all new and rehabbed retail and employment areas to be safe and accessible for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

1.3.3
Work with business and property owners to implement streetscape and public amenities in employment and retail areas.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 1.4. Locate jobs near workforce living in the northern and northern central part of the parish near I-10 and better utilize existing infrastructure.

ACTIONS:

1.4.1
Implement the Future Land Use Map and its designation of office, retail, and industrial employment along I-10, I-49, Cameron Street, and downtown.

1.4.2
Improve the appearance of gateways to the city of Lafayette from I-10/I-49 intersection.

1.4.3
Work with the city of Scott to implement an office/light industrial gateway and corridor along Cameron Street into the city of Lafayette.

» P 1.5. Encourage employment and retail centers located throughout the parish, with downtown serving as one of the major centers for concentration of jobs and retail businesses.

ACTIONS:

1.5.1
Develop a regional drainage and green infrastructure plan to reduce flooding through stormwater management improvements and enhanced buffers along waterways.

1.5.2
Increase buffer and building setbacks requirements from the Vermilion River and other coulees.

1.5.3
Work with the Bayou Vermilion District to include a site plan review for all development applications adjacent to the Vermilion River. (Needs review with BVD)

1.5.4
Revise landscape standards to encourage tree preservation over replacement of trees where possible and to include Low Impact Development practices such as curb cuts, rain gardens, bioswales, and native plants in parking lots.

1.5.5
Continue to protect and improve water quality and filtering in wetlands and marshes.

1.5.6
Encourage use of stormwater management tools including pervious pavers, rain gardens, bioswales, rain barrels, and other green infrastructure approaches to reduce the amount of runoff entering the region's waterways.

1.5.7
Explore opportunities to promote regional detention planning.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

POLICY:

» P 1.6. Improve connectivity by encouraging bike and pedestrian paths that provide a variety of safe options for traveling, including walking, biking, transit, and vehicle travel. (Related to Transportation and Mobility Policy 3.)

ACTIONS:

1.6.1
Create public information materials, such as a brochure, illustrating the planned multi-use and bicycle trail network and opportunities for recreation and transportation. (Outreach and Communication – consider new Public Information Officer.)

1.6.2
Work with the MPO and the Louisiana DOTD to ensure that bike and pedestrian improvements are consistent with the Future Land Use Map and the Comprehensive Plan.

1.6.1
Strengthen street connectivity standards and requirements in the subdivision regulations.

1.6.2
Develop a local "Complete Street Policy" and design guidelines that applies to all transportation projects within a range of scales, and is consistent with Louisiana DOTD policies.

» P 1.7. Plan for water and sewer improvements and extensions in areas of planned mixed-use, residential, and employment growth. (Related to Utilities Policy 1.)

ACTIONS:

1.7.1
Extend and increase capacity of water and sewer as needed to areas illustrated by the Future Land Use Map.

1.7.2
Review all LUS water and sewer extensions for compatibility with the comprehensive plan annexation and water sewer extension standards.

1.7.3
Plan infrastructure improvements to increase the community's return on investment and minimize long term costs of municipal services.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 1.8. Align taxation policy with the provision of hard (i.e. water, sewer, roads, electricity) and soft infrastructure (i.e. fire, police, library, parks).

ACTIONS:

1.8.1
Eliminate Taxation vs. Services Abnormalities. Identify the areas where the taxation rates for services are substantially higher or lower than the cost of the current services being provided, and provide a framework for correcting any abnormalities.

1.8.2
Develop a "Return on Infrastructure Investment Tool" to accurately and comprehensively calculate the expected return on investment to the public on prospective infrastructure investments.

1.8.3
Utilize the Return on Infrastructure Investment tool to develop and prioritize the annual CIP, allowing policy makers and public officials to understand both the cost of prospective infrastructure investments, as well as, their expected return.

1.8.4
Analyze whether current tax assessment policies support or undermine development goals in the Comprehensive Plan. If warranted, develop a strategy for changing state laws to align with a modern value assessment approach.

» P 1.9. Coordinate with the Louisiana DOTD to ensure that the I-49 Connector corridor improvements are consistent with established policies, working within the parameters of the I-49 Connector Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan. (Related to Housing and Neighborhoods Policy 10, Transportation and Mobility Policy 8.)

ACTIONS:

1.9.1
Reestablish the Evangeline Thruway Redevelopment Team facilitated by MPO staff and update the Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan, as necessary, to devise strategies for addressing anticipated impacts of the I-49 Connector such as noise abatement, all types of connectivity, relocation, and design of I-49 Connector and crossings.

1.9.2
Lead a public process, with assistance from the Louisiana DOTD I-49 Coordinator, to steer the preliminary design of the I-49 Connector through the urban area adjacent to the downtown area.

1.9.3
Coordinate with community stakeholders, including the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), LEDA, the GLCC, and other partners, to pursue strategies to increase economic development opportunities in the corridor.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

GOAL 2

CREATE A CLEAR PROCESS FOR LAND USE AND ZONING REVIEW, LAND USE PLANNING, ANNEXATION, AND EXTENSION OF UTILITIES.

POLICY:

» P 1.10. Review zoning, subdivision, and site plan applications for consistency with the Lafayette Comprehensive Plan.

ACTIONS:

1.10.1
Develop a set of comprehensive plan consistency standards to guide site plan review for future projects.

1.10.2
Expand the Areawide Development Review Committee's process to include review for compliance with the comprehensive plan.

1.10.3
Create a clear application process and outcomes for site plan approval and rezoning applications to reduce uncertainties for property owners.

» P 1.11. Improve the availability of parcel-based ownership and land use data for neighborhood planning, regional and annexation planning, parks planning, infrastructure planning, and disaster preparedness.

ACTIONS:

1.10.1
Support efforts to complete and continually update the parish's parcel-based land use inventory in GIS that is related to the Lafayette Parish Assessor's database with information about detailed land uses, and develop a feedback system for regular updates and managing of the data.

1.10.2
Add parcel-based land use data, flood zones, parks and trails, evacuation routes, and community resources (e.g., hospitals, libraries, and other public buildings) to the online Lafayette GIS Interactive Map layers site.

1.10.3
Integrate the updated parcel-based data with the city's CityWorks software to monitor and track 311 complaints, service requests, work orders, and inspections and provide access to improve interdepartmental coordination of projects.

1.10.4
Work with departments with complaint data collection to integrate into CityWorks for its mapping capabilities.

1.10.5
Increase interdepartmental coordination and awareness of GIS mapping availability, including right of way acquisitions, and consider how to better integrate GIS staff with the Planning, Zoning, and Development Department (PZD).

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 1.12. Improve process for review and inspection of independent on lot septic systems to reduce potential environmental contamination of water and soil resources. (Related to Natural Resources Policy 1.)

ACTIONS:

1.12.1
Require homeowner inspection of individual onsite sewer systems prior to sale or change in use.

1.12.2
Work with the Department of Health and Hospitals to conduct periodic inspections of onsite sewer systems.

» P 1.13. Improve code enforcement of blighted or deteriorated properties that degrade the character downtown and of surrounding neighborhoods. (Related to Housing and Neighborhoods Policy 3.)

ACTIONS:

1.13.1
Create an expedited process and streamline notice procedure for returning adjudicated properties, which represent a challenge in bringing community's abandoned and dilapidated structures, to commerce.

1.13.2
Accelerate the successful "Operation Blight Out" program.

1.13.3
Create incentives to encourage renovation and upkeep of buildings.

1.13.4
Utilize neighborhood Coteries to help identify, prioritize, and implement redevelopment within neighborhoods.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

GOAL 3

STRENGTHEN LOCAL PLANNING, REGIONAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION WITH SURROUNDING MUNICIPALITIES.

POLICY:

» P 1.14. Develop a clear annexation planning policy/agreement that is based on the need and benefit of expanding the tax base and efficient delivery of services and utilities that can be adopted by all political jurisdictions in Lafayette Parish.

ACTIONS:

1.14.1
Develop a set of annexation principles (e.g., prioritize annexation of land within city boundaries, areas that are economically and efficiently served by existing services, areas with citizen petitions for annexation) to guide planning and annexation to the city of Lafayette.

1.14.2
Coordinate and establish agreements among all municipalities in Lafayette Parish concerning future "areas of influence," planning together for future annexation strategies.

» P 1.15. Continue to limit extensions of water and sewer service beyond city of Lafayette boundaries, other than as represented by the Future Land Use Map and planned annexation areas, to efficiently use resources and reduce overall infrastructure costs. (Related to Utilities Policy 1.)

ACTIONS:

1.15.1
Facilitate coordinated joint review of water and sewer service extensions in context of the Future Land Use Map and annexation planning with LCG departments, including LUS staff.

1.15.2
Continue to study estimated costs associated with water and sewer extensions to service planned mixed use centers and redevelopment areas.

» P 1.16. Strengthen multi-municipal planning and coordination through the MPO, Lafayette Public School System (LPSS), and emergency service providers, including land use planning, coordination of parks, transportation improvements, schools, community buildings, and provision of police, fire, and EMS services.

ACTIONS:

1.16.1
Create a regular coordination process to share and update the MPO and regional service providers on planning projects and monitoring and tracking of comprehensive plan actions.

1.16.2
Continuously update LCG and the MPO on short and long-range LPSS planning and emergency service provider plans.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 1.17. Coordinate annual budgeting, the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and new applications for funding sources to ensure funding is appropriated in accordance with the comprehensive plan. (Note: will be developed further in implementation chapter 5.)

ACTIONS:

1.18.1
Integrate the budgeting and capital improvement plan with the comprehensive plan by creating a system for ensuring proposed capital improvements are consistent with the plan.

1.18.2
Seek out grants and technical assistance programs to help implement the recommendations of the comprehensive plan and the Future Land Use map.

1.18.3
Expand the current efforts of Community Development staff grant writers to include all areas of the plan, including community and economic development assistance and natural resource conservation.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

2. COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Community character is a broad phrase used to describe a set of attributes that make a community unique. It can include any number of characteristics, but is largely defined by two overarching ingredients - a community's population and its built environment. Together they define how we experience a community through our daily activities and create what may be referred to as a "sense of place." A dynamic and memorable sense of place provides an inviting environment for existing residents, future residents, and visitors by improving the overall experience of the place and ultimately the community's quality of life. It can also correlate directly to a more diverse and growing economy by attracting new residential development, investment, and jobs.

As it pertains to population, Lafayette's rich Cajun and Creole heritage, its creative scene and culture of innovation, and authentic "joie de vivre" combine to create a unique and attractive place. Coupled with the built environment, that is the focus of the Community Character element, how the community looks and feels is of critical importance and is defined by how we protect, maintain, and create desirable neighborhoods, how we encourage compatible and diverse land uses, how we provide for ease of mobility, and how we protect cultural and natural resources.

Lafayette Parish has numerous areas with distinct characteristics and opportunities for improvement that collectively define the region's character. These areas include downtown, the UL Lafayette campus, the Oil Center, major roadway corridors such as Johnston Street and University Avenue, activity centers such as the Northgate and Acadiana Malls and River Ranch, and the parish's outlying agricultural and rural lands. Finally, Lafayette's neighborhoods, which range from historic to contemporary and from urban to rural, form the backbone of the community by serving as primary places of residence and daily activity.

Maintaining and improving Lafayette's community character means that the built environment will be defined by a high standard of quality that is applied to roadways, public spaces, buildings, and landscape. This quality is applied to aesthetics, function, and maintenance.

OUR COMMUNITY

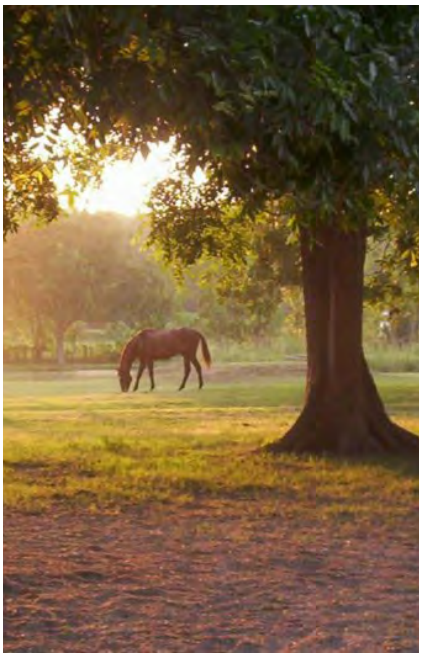
OUR PEOPLE

OUR ECONOMY

WORKING DRAFT

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- While downtown captures Lafayette's unique history and culture, it lacks an established residential population and attractive and functional connections to surrounding areas.
- Major roadway corridors are designed nearly exclusively for automobiles and utilities, resulting in unappealing visual clutter that detracts from the community's overall sense of place and its walkability.
- Major roadway corridors are flanked by segregated, single-use commercial development creating unappealing edges to residential neighborhoods without offering substantive choices for amenities or services.
- Lack of adequate, coordinated, and context sensitive standards for roadway and streetscape design.
- Lack of tree canopy and functional landscaping along corridors to provide physical buffers and visual screening detracts from the overall experience and character of the community.
- The existing architectural character of Lafayette's commercial corridors does not convey the cultural heritage of the community.
- Obsolete and underutilized single-use commercial centers with expansive parking lots are in need of adaptive re-use or redevelopment.
- Disconnected and dispersed development in the unincorporated parish is threatening the rural character and viability of agricultural land use.
- Deteriorating infrastructure, vacant and blighted properties, and poorly maintained streetscape and housing in some older and historic neighborhoods.
- Lack of adequate green space and opportunities for residents to engage in healthful recreational activities.
- Lack of protection and public access to water resources, particularly coulees located within the city limits.



Lafayette Horse Farm

Art Walk

GOAL 1

PRESERVE AND CAPITALIZE ON LAFAYETTE'S UNIQUE CHARACTER.

POLICIES:

» P 2.1. Protect and preserve historic and cultural resources and maintain historic character – especially in downtown and surrounding areas - while promoting reinvestment that is complementary to community character. (related to Historic and Cultural Resources Policy 1)

ACTIONS:

2.1.1
Identify and create incentives for adaptive reuse of buildings that are in need of redevelopment, including, but not limited to grants, tax incentives, fee waivers, revolving loans, expedited permitting, and flexible land use and building regulations.

2.1.2
Develop regulations that discourage the fragmentation of the historic urban framework such as the closure of streets and demolition of buildings with historic and/or cultural value.

2.1.3
Create special development review processes for sensitive areas, including the Bayou Vermilion District, areas adjacent to wetlands, and within the 100-year floodplain to ensure complementary development near culturally and/or environmentally sensitive areas.

» P 2.2. Promote downtown, UL Lafayette, and surrounding neighborhoods as the historic and cultural epicenter of the Lafayette community as described in the Downtown Framework (see p. #)

ACTIONS:

2.2.1
Support the Downtown Development Authority and its information, marketing, and special events promotion activities.

2.2.2
Develop an activity plan for residents and visitors in downtown in order to take full advantage of downtown culture and amenities.

2.2.3
Establish a stronger pedestrian and transit connection between UL Lafayette, downtown, and surrounding neighborhoods.

2.2.4
Expand the downtown boundaries to include a core that includes UL Lafayette and the Oil Center.

2.2.5
Support UL Lafayette initiatives to provide on campus housing, bike and pedestrian routes and structured parking to relieve pressure on surrounding neighborhoods.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

Festivals Acadiens

POLICY:

» P 2.3. Protect the character of rural areas and the viability of agricultural uses.

ACTIONS:

2.3.1
Create incentives for planned centers of development that preserves rural and agricultural lands with special emphasis on the conservation of farmland, wetlands or water bodies, floodplains, historic sites, scenic view-sheds, important woodlands, wildlife corridors, and recreation areas.

2.3.2
Consider an agricultural land program that encourages farmland preservation through conservation easements, minimum lot sizes for residential development on land classified as agriculture by the parish tax assessor, and/or further reductions in taxes for working farms

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

Lafayette agricultural land

WORKING DRAFT

GOAL 2

PROJECT AN ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY IMAGE.

POLICY:

» P 2.4. Incorporate an aesthetic into the built environment that exemplifies Lafayette's regional character, history, and culture.

ACTIONS:

2.4.1
Use the Future Land Use categories to establish design guidelines that reinforce existing and/or desirable characteristics

2.4.2
Create a parish-wide strategy to integrate coulees and floodways into the built environment through access easements, increased connectivity, opportunities for walking and biking, and improved landscape treatment with the goal of increasing recreational opportunities, improving community and environmental health, and creating a green infrastructure network. (related to Resource Conservation Policy 1)

» P 2.5. Integrate streetscape and pedestrian amenities into transportation corridors and streets to provide a distinct character and image and serve to better connect our neighborhoods. (related to Transportation Policy 3)

ACTIONS:

2.5.1
Prioritize the mixed-use corridors illustrated on the Future Land Use Map (i.e., Johnston Street, University) for complete streets improvements and coordinated streetscape improvements.

» P 2.6. Integrate architectural and landscape features or public art such that they serve as gateways to important districts and enhance the overall community aesthetic.

ACTIONS:

2.6.1
Identify strategic locations for the integration of public art, historical markers, and gateway features into public projects and establish a dedicated funding mechanism for implementation.

2.6.2
Evaluate feasibility of designating neighborhood arts and cultural corridors or gateways, with associated streetscape elements, in targeted mixed-use areas.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

POLICY:

» P 2.7. Work to ensure that Lafayette is a community that is aesthetically beautiful, uncluttered by litter, illegal signage, unkempt landscaping, etc.

ACTIONS:

2.7.1
Expand the signage ordinance to include the unincorporated parts of the parish.

2.7.2
Create a public awareness campaign to educate businesses and the general public about right-of-way signage restrictions.

2.7.3
Encourage the public to report sign violations through the CityWorks program.

2.7.4
Evaluate current staff capacity to enforce the sign ordinance, and other aesthetically related ordinances, and propose alternatives to assist with the enforcement.

2.7.5
Coordinate with other agencies, e.g. UL, the business community, to advance efforts to strengthen sign regulations and support roadside beautification efforts.

2.7.6
Coordinate with Public Works and the DOTD to work toward a more sustainable planting to reduce costs of maintenance and to increase aesthetics in roadway rights-of-ways.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

GOAL 3

STRENGTHEN THE CHARACTER OF DOWNTOWN AND ITS SURROUNDING AREAS AND NEIGHBORHOODS.

POLICY:

» P 2.8. Implement the Downtown Strategic Framework as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

ACTIONS:

2.8.1
Create a district-based structure for downtown Lafayette that will reinforce the downtown's diversity and accommodate community recommendations related to use, scale, intensity and character.

2.8.2
Implement strategies to overcome downtown physical barriers and reinforce the individual districts that comprise downtown Lafayette, including:
- Reinforce existing paths;
- Focus on the core;
- Increase the variety of open space;
- Enhance mobility with new paths and better entrances; and
- Improve connections from downtown to UL Lafayette

» P 2.9. Promote the redevelopment and associated improvements within the Oil Center.

ACTIONS:

4.2.8A
Review and update as necessary the Re-envisioning the Oil Center Community Design Workshop findings as a basis for the creation of land use regulations and design standards that address the uniqueness of the Oil Center and are consistent with the comprehensive plan.

» P 2.10. Support the implementation of the UL Lafayette Master Plan and its Guiding Principles.

ACTIONS:

2.10.1
Adopt appropriate land use controls to help transition from the campus edges to surrounding neighborhoods.

2.10.2
Strengthen physical connections along key corridors including along Congress and St. Landry, and along Johnston Street – from the Horse Farm to downtown.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

GOAL 4

DIRECT GROWTH TOWARD MIXED-USE CENTERS AND MAJOR CORRIDORS.

POLICY:

» P 2.11. Encourage compact development/redevelopment within existing activity centers and along corridors that includes a mix of uses supportive of vibrant daily activity patterns. (related to Future Land Use Policy 1)

ACTIONS:

4.2.10A
Create land use regulations that:

- Encourage the incorporation of a gridded system of walkable streets and a high degree of connectivity to surrounding areas;
- Allow flexibility in how buildings are used by simplifying the process to adapt from one use to another recognizing building code requirements; and
- Encourage bicycling and walking connections between neighborhoods and retail areas.

» P 2.12. Ensure that new development preserves the unique qualities of existing places and neighborhoods and where needed, enhances that character while engaging with those places and neighborhoods to promote connectivity (related to Transportation and Mobility Policy 5).

ACTIONS:

4.2.1A
Create land use regulations that provide for appropriate transitions in building mass and scale and provide for adequate buffers to existing neighborhoods.

4.2.1B
Provide publicly accessible open space such as plazas, parklets, and pop-up installations to augment the park inventory for surrounding neighborhoods.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

Downtown Lafayette

3. HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Lafayette has a broad range of diverse neighborhoods that contribute to the parish's community and residential character. As primary places of residence, neighborhoods and housing units have significant impact on residents' daily activities and are the foundation of a safe, enjoyable community in which to live. Providing high quality, affordable, and diverse housing choices throughout the parish is essential to the future prosperity of Lafayette.

The majority of housing units within parish neighborhoods consist of single family attached or detached homes. A smaller percentage consists of multi-family units, most of which are located within the city of Lafayette, and mobile homes, primarily in the unincorporated parish. Relative to comparable housing markets, Lafayette Parish's housing market is in a generally healthy state, having remained relatively stable throughout the 2009 recession and housing crisis. With its variety of housing stock, large areas of developable land, and moderate housing cost in relation to incomes, Lafayette's housing market is generally affordable and serves the majority of households, even a large number of families below the area median income. According the Center for Neighborhood Technology's Housing and Transportation Index (H+T), 86% of housing in the parish is considered affordable (i.e., spending 30% or less of income) to the typical median income household. The majority of housing is, however, single family detached dwelling units – limiting the availability of smaller, potentially more affordable choices.

While housing is generally considered affordable under the traditional definition of affordability, adding the cost of transportation (i.e., owning, driving, and maintaining a car) to the cost of housing means that the majority of households in Lafayette Parish are spending more than 45% of income on housing. In fact, 80% of typical, median income households are spending 45% or more on housing and transportation costs combined. These costs combined are greater for those living in suburban and rural areas where most households own more than one car and have longer distances to drive to work.

Households with very low incomes (including those living below the poverty level, or a reported 18% of all residents in 2012) continue to struggle to identify good quality market rate housing without some form of housing assistance such as Section 8 or public housing. Without this assistance these households generally live in lower quality housing. This is primarily because of expenses associated with ongoing household utility costs, upkeep of properties, and other household costs. As a result, even though properties may be debt free, very low income renters and owners often live in housing that does not meet national standards for housing quality. From a broader community development perspective, this creates conditions of blight in some neighborhoods, which inhibits reinvestment in many areas of the city and parish – especially in older neighborhoods surrounding downtown.

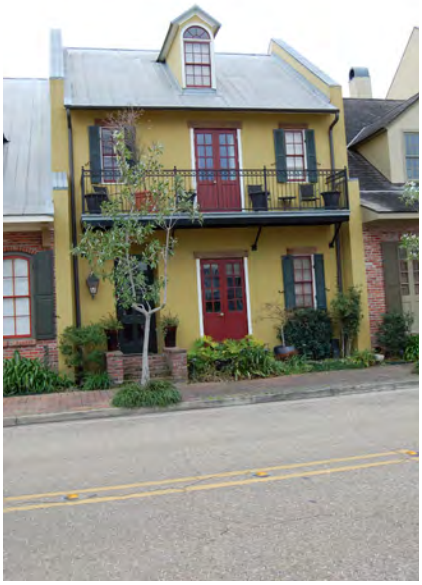
OUR COMMUNITY

OUR PEOPLE

OUR ECONOMY

WORKING DRAFT

As a result, in a currently (and for the foreseeable future) well-functioning housing market such as Lafayette, the principal housing strategies need to focus on the strengthening and stabilizing older neighborhoods through reinvestment and infill development. A second focus is the location of housing, with respect to employment and commuting distances, that helps to determine overall affordability (housing and transportation costs) of neighborhoods. A third strategy relates to demographic shifts underway and is associated with changing housing preferences for retiring baby boomers and their children, the Millenials, who will increasingly prefer alternatives to single family suburban homes, including attached homes and apartments in and around downtown, the University and other compact, walkable neighborhoods with an urban character.



River Ranch residential development

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Limited housing inventory that consists primarily of single family homes. Greater diversity of housing choices is desirable to meet the needs of all type of households, especially those with very low incomes, single person households, retirees, and young adults and families.
- UL Lafayette provides a limited amount on campus student housing and, as a result, there are a large number of students living and renting in the surrounding areas downtown. The university is currently building housing that will help to strike a better balance between rental and owner occupied housing, but the need is expected to continue.
- Neighborhood resistance to affordable, poorly designed, workforce housing and other types of multifamily housing.
- Need for greater diversity of housing, especially downtown, and flexible parking standards based on the type of development.
- Need for additional high quality affordable housing inventory to meet the needs of families below 40 percent of median income, as well as, the homeless and those who are about to become homeless.
- Preserving the character of older, historic neighborhoods while new development occurs – and maintaining older housing in existing neighborhoods.
- Managing the potential impacts of the future I-49 Connector in surrounding neighborhoods.

Typical Lafayette housing

GOAL 1

ENCOURAGE A DIVERSE RANGE OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES AND CHOICES.

POLICY:

» P 3.1. Encourage a variety of housing types at varying densities within residential areas.

ACTIONS:

3.1.1
Provide improvements to public infrastructure – including water, sewer, and fiber availability – to service multifamily or attached housing units.

3.1.2
Provide incentives to encourage mixed-use and multifamily housing in targeted growth areas.

3.1.3
Collaborate with UL Lafayette to plan and implement the development of student housing that is compatible with the character of neighborhoods surrounding downtown Lafayette.

3.1.4
Revise land use regulations and policies to promote compatible housing diversity in residential neighborhoods. Allow for "in-law apartments," for aging family members, on single family properties.

3.1.5
Use amenities such as improved sidewalk connections and public transit options to attract and encourage higher density housing in centers and along corridors.

» P 3.2. Increase opportunities for mixed-use housing development and live work units downtown and in mixed-use centers.

ACTIONS:

3.2.1
Foster public-private partnerships between the Downtown Development Authority, LEDA, and others (e.g., Acadiana Center for the Arts) to encourage new types of housing in downtown Lafayette.

3.2.2
Revise zoning to allow live-work units, accessory units, and senior living units in mixed-use centers.

3.2.3
Study parking needs and encourage shared parking agreements to reduce onsite parking needs, as well as parking that is sensitive to the context and surrounding uses.

3.2.4
Leverage historic and low income housing tax credits to rehab existing buildings into multifamily housing.

3.2.5
Continue developing marketing efforts to brand downtown living, including variety in housing options, arts and cultural amenities, walkability, restaurants, music venues, and retail.

3.2.6
Encourage adaptive reuse of buildings for housing.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

Habitat for Humanity Infill, Lafayette, LA

Rendering of St. Mary Streetscape, ASW Architects Southwest

GOAL 2

PROMOTE QUALITY HOUSING AND ENCOURAGE THE REHABILITATION AND/OR REUSE OF DECLINING HOUSING STOCKS.

POLICY:

» P 3.3. Improve housing in blighted condition and encourage residents to maintain and improve their homes.

ACTIONS:

3.3.1
Provide housing improvement incentives for the rehabilitation and repair of housing.

3.3.2
Implement stricter code enforcement.

3.3.3
Implement a Volunteers Housing Rehabilitation Coordination, where the parish can designate a member of its team to serve to coordinate volunteer housing rehabilitation and building efforts in low income communities with the investment of in kind resources from charitable and related groups.

3.3.4
Support the Keep Lafayette Beautiful Committee and encourage a program that recognizes and rewards well groomed and attractive properties.

3.3.5
Strengthen neighborhood associations to increase accountability among stakeholders in the neighborhoods and encourage neighbors helping neighbors.

3.3.6
Create an "Adopt-a-Lot" program to aid in litter abatement.

3.3.7
Consider types of tax incentive for reuse of declining property.

» P 3.4. Expand the current inventory of housing units' conditions and level of maintenance throughout the parish.

ACTIONS:

3.4.1
Create a Housing Condition Inspections program to conduct a condition survey of housing stock to gather data on housing unit conditions, degree of blight, and abandoned homes.

3.4.2
Create a rental housing inspection and licensing program to ensure that rental housing is safe and habitable.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 3.5. Provide opportunities for residents to build stability and wealth by investing in their own real estate in order to ensure maintenance of properties.

ACTIONS:

3.5.1
Partner with community based organizations to implement a tool loan program that would lend tools to neighborhood residents for property improvements.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

Simcoe Street: Housing in need of repair

GOAL 3

DEVELOP AND FACILITATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.

POLICY:

» P 3.6. Continue to maximize and manage state and federal housing dollars through the Lafayette Housing Authority (LHA) and the Community Development Department to ensure decent, safe, and sanitary affordable housing.

ACTIONS:

3.6.1
Collaborate with affordable housing providers in the community to increase access to affordable rental and for sale units.

3.6.2
Encourage development of mixed income housing (market rate and affordable units) development.

» P 3.7. Work with lenders to leverage funds and ensure the availability of mortgage products for lower income buyers.

ACTIONS:

3.7.1
Promote programs– such as Second Loan Home Purchase Programs for assisting low and moderate income working families' movement from renting to homeownership.

» P 3.8. Work with lenders to leverage funds and ensure the availability of mortgage products for lower income buyers.

ACTIONS:

3.8.1
Review and evaluate training and educational programs for low and moderate income first time buyers to ensure successful transition and maintenance of home ownership.

3.8.2
Assist the private sector in developing affordable and workforce housing through the provision of incentives such as infrastructure upgrades, expedited permitting, fee waivers, parking reductions, additional density or intensity, special design considerations, etc.

3.8.3
Work with community development corporations and local and regional nonprofit groups to help provide affordable housing units.

3.8.4
Promote the preservation of existing housing stock, particularly of historical and cultural value, by seeking funds and developing new programs to assist qualified families to rehabilitate existing housing units.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 3.9. Assist the private sector and concerned public agencies to find shelter for homeless families and individuals.

ACTIONS:

3.9.1
Develop public private partnerships with local homeless prevention organizations and shelters to assist in the development of transitional or short term housing for homeless families.

3.9.2
Monitor and assist homeless population and population vulnerable to becoming homeless through surveys, outreach, and counseling.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

Siena Place Townhomes

GOAL 3
PROTECT AND REVITALIZE NEIGHBORHOODS AND ASSETS.

POLICY:

» P 3.10. Create a comprehensive strategy to address the impacts on neighborhoods and housing associated with potential future I-49 Connector changes. (Related to Future Land Use Policy 7, Transportation Policy 8.)

ACTIONS:

3.10.1
Review, revise where necessary, and implement the Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan to protect housing that is occupied and in good condition, build new housing for displaced units as necessary, and improve pedestrian and bicycle crossings and design of the I-49 Connector.

» P 3.11. Strategically target the neighborhood planning program to provide support and guidance on best practices in growth areas. (Related to Future Land Use Policy 2.)

ACTIONS:

3.11.1
Dedicate fiscal and staff resources for neighborhood planning in key growth areas.

3.11.2
Identify funding opportunities through grants and public private partnerships with local businesses.

3.11.3
Implement a citizen planner program to build capacity for neighborhood planning and community building. (Related to Future Land Use Policy 2.)

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 3.12. Identify strategies to encourage redevelopment and prevent and mitigate blighting influences such as foreclosures, adjudicated occupied housing, and vacant properties in neighborhoods.

ACTIONS:

3.9.1
With the support of LEDA, the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, and other interested parties, reestablish a Redevelopment Authority with the ability to acquire vacant property, provide a land bank, assist with assembly of land suitable for development, and partner with the private sector.

3.9.2
Develop a program, such as the "Lot Next Door" or homesteading, to provide assistance to homeowners in the purchase of a blighted or abandoned property immediately adjacent to their home through the new Redevelopment Authority.

3.9.3
Encourage the development of a Community Land Trust (neighborhood nonprofit) to develop affordable and mixed income housing, community gardens/farms, arts and cultural uses, and other neighborhood services through partnership with the Redevelopment Authority.

3.9.4
Promote the utilization of vacant sites as public parks or community gardens or public art installations to reduce undesirable impacts of vacancy and provide a neighborhood asset. Funding can be acquired through state and federal grants, with other community partners, or through crowdsourcing.

3.9.5
Continue to expedite the demolition of condemned structures.

3.9.6
Work with property owners and the police departments to encourage Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in design of streetscape and lighting, parks, building entrances, and landscaping on private property to eliminate problem spots for vandalism and other crimes.

» P 3.13. Create infill and housing redevelopment strategies that complement and enhance the character of existing neighborhoods.

ACTIONS:

3.11.1
Establish regulatory and design guidelines for infill/redevelopment housing developments that ensure compatibility with surrounding properties.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

POLICY:

» P 3.14. Identify and assess the infrastructure needs of older neighborhoods and provide for improvements needed to maintain their sustainability.

ACTIONS:

3.14.1
Support existing Coterie/Neighborhood plans to identify and implement strategies for quality housing and infrastructure upgrades within neighborhoods.

3.14.2
Consider establishing an LCG fund dedicated to upgrading infrastructure to meet mandates to improve drainage capacity and improve water pressure in neighborhoods.

3.14.3
Encourage neighborhoods to apply for state and federal historic registries to qualify for historic tax credits for home improvements.

3.14.4
Adopt conservation and improvement programs to increase the quality and sustainability of neighborhoods.

» P 3.15. Ensure that new housing and infrastructure is developed in a quality manner that reduces future costs associated with operations, maintenance, and redevelopment.

ACTIONS:

3.15.1
Establish and enforce minimum quality standards for residential and neighborhood development throughout the parish.

3.15.2
Improve physical connections between and within neighborhoods through road extensions or improvements, bicycle lanes and trails, and a connected sidewalk network.

3.15.3
Encourage sustainable site design principles (e.g., onsite stormwater management, tree preservation, reductions in impermeable surfaces, greater energy efficiency) through regulatory incentives.

3.15.4
Increase use of LUS free or low cost services that encourage energy efficiency (e.g., energy audits, incentives for lower income households) to reduce operating costs and create healthy home environments.

3.15.5
Establish criteria for utility easements that do not preclude the many tenets of walkability, including street tree placement, building setbacks, etc.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

LUS maintained utility lines

4. HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Lafayette is located at the center of a diverse region that is known for its Acadian (Cajun) and Creole culture. The region's French heritage can be traced back to the forced migration of the French from what is now known as Canada. People who settled in Louisiana were nicknamed "Cajuns" and the local culture was born. The Creole population consisting of people from African, West Indian, and European descent joined Acadians in the then Spanish controlled territory of Louisiana. Today's residents speak a variety of languages including Cajun French, Creole French, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The parish's festivals, music, arts, and food showcase the local culture and traditions.

Culture stands at the core of every great city. In Lafayette culture is not just what we do - it is essential to our daily lives. From Festivals to Fais Do-Do's, from the Culinary Arts to Grammy-winning music, from extraordinary exhibits to theater and dance - Lafayette's culture is what makes us unique, sets us apart and brings us together. The Acadiana Center for the Arts (ACA) serves the region as a culture hub through community development; grant making, arts-in-education, exhibits, career development, public art and all things performing arts on large and small stages.

There are over 95 locally designated landmarks, National Register buildings and districts, and significant cultural places located in the parish, the majority of which are found in and around downtown and its older neighborhoods. The Lafayette Preservation Commission is responsible for designating local Historic Properties, helping to revitalize business districts and historic neighborhoods through enhancement of historic resources, and developing uniform standards for protection and enhancement of special cultural and historic places and elements.

Downtown Lafayette is designated by the State of Louisiana as a "Cultural Products District," attracting visitors from across the country. Historic Preservation Tax Credits are available for properties within the district, in addition to a state sales tax exemption for all original works of art purchased in the district. Many downtown art galleries participate in a monthly ArtWalk to showcase local and regional arts and culture. Other significant historic resources include the Sterling Grove Historic District, a residential district of 250 acres and 43 buildings located northeast of downtown, and the Vermilionville Living History Museum and Folklife Park. Vermilionville, a major cultural and historic landmark within the Bayou Vermilion District, is one of the largest representations of early Acadian settlements and attracts nearly 50,000 visitors a year.

OUR COMMUNITY

OUR PEOPLE

OUR ECONOMY

WORKING DRAFT

Lafayette has a number of cultural institutions that act as a foundation for the thriving arts scene. These include the Acadiana Center for the Arts, the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra and Conservatory of Music, the Lafayette Ballet Theatre, the Children's Museum of Acadiana, the Lafayette Science Museum, Cite des Arts, and the Hilliard University Art Museum. Major festivals and attractions include Festival International, Festivals Acadiens et Creoles, Mardi Gras, and the Zydeco Festival.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Maintenance and preservation of older structures of historical and cultural value.
- Reuse of existing historically or culturally significant structures.
- Coordination and reducing overlap between historic al and cultural organizations.
- Limited state and local funding for arts and culture.
- Access to arts and culture in underserved areas, schools, and neighborhoods without resources to get to downtown venues.
- Managing potential conflicts between arts and cultural events and festivals and the growing downtown population.
- Communicating value of arts, culture, and local history in economic terms.

Cajun Dancers

Horse Farm

GOAL 1

PROMOTE AND HIGHLIGHT KEY HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.

POLICY:

» P 4.1. Support utilization of significant historical and cultural resources with the potential to serve as neighborhood anchors and community assets.

ACTIONS:

4.1.1
Develop community partnerships with historical and cultural organizations to provide gathering and educational spaces for neighborhoods, as well as, build community and financial support for the organizations.

4.1.2
Encourage alternatives to the demolition of significant resources, such as architecturally compatible rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and relocation.

4.1.3
Review impacts on historic resources during the planning and review of de¬velopment projects, including considering alternatives to demolition or alteration of a historic property's character.

4.1.4
Work with Preservation Alliance Lafayette to create a historic preservation fund to provide a monetary source for local preservation incentives, such as an architectural assistance program for property owners. The fund may be supported through grants, private or public donations, or other sources.

4.1.5
Apply for Certified Local Government (CLG) status with the Louisiana Historic Preservation Office to be eligible for grant funds for historical and cultural preservation through the National Parks Service

4.1.6
Document and protect archaeological resources on public land (e.g., along the Vermilion River) through education and explanatory and wayfinding signage.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

Historic St. John's Cathedral, Downtown Lafayette

POLICY:

» P 4.2. Preserve and strengthen neighborhoods that are culturally and historically valuable but which do not meet eligibility criteria for designation as a local, state, or national district. (Related to Community Character Policy 1.)

ACTIONS:

4.2.1
Continue to maintain an up to date database of significant buildings and sites with historic, cultural, archeological, or environmental value using the parish's GIS.

4.2.2
Establish a process to identify, evaluate and designate culturally and historically significant neighborhoods as "neighborhood character areas."

4.2.3
Encourage the retention of those qualities that contribute to "neighborhood character areas" through the application of design guidelines consistent with the local context of each area.

4.2.4
Support and enhance the efforts of the Lafayette Preservation Commission to include a role in development review for properties within "neighborhood character areas."

4.2.5
Support the purchase of significant properties with wide appeal to the community.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 4.3. Increase coordination and resource sharing between organizations with a focus on historical and cultural resources, including the Preservation Alliance of Lafayette, Downtown Development Authority, Acadiana Historical initiative at UL Lafayette, Lafayette Preservation Commission, Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission, and others.

ACTIONS:

4.3.1
Create a "culture plan," through a collaborative process with cultural stakeholders, civic leadership, and the community, in order to leverage our culture to help attract business, serve economic development, and build community. This may involve grants, a new cultural campus, public art parks, neighborhood corridors, and civic beautification.

4.3.2
Create a parish wide membership organization as a vehicle for affiliated historical and cultural resources partners to share information, resources, and increase opportunities for grants and funding.

4.3.3
Develop and implement straightforward and transparent preservation strategies, guidelines, and regulations for historic areas, sites and structures, and cultural resources.

4.3.4
Develop a property owners' guide to historic preservation that includes an overview of the roles of each of the local organizations, available incentives, and funding opportunities.

4.3.5
Continue to leverage recognition of Lafayette's historic preservation program, participate directly in federal and state historic preservation programs, and gain access to designated historic preservation funding.

4.3.6
Support local cultural and performing arts organizations by making available municipal facilities for performances and as exhibition space, where appropriate.

4.3.7
Expand historical tourism through Lafayette Conventions & Visitors Commission marketing materials including a comprehensive listing of historical assets and walking tour ideas.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

POLICY:

» P 4.4. Expand education and awareness of Lafayette's unique history and cultural identity in schools and community centers.

ACTIONS:

4.4.1
Create a partnership between UL Lafayette's Public History Program's Acadiana Historical initiative and the Lafayette Parish Public Schools to expand the reach of the historic and storytelling aspect of the initiative and connect students with seniors.

4.4.2
Use Lafayette's public libraries as community resources to introduce new residents, including non-English speakers, to the history and culture of the region through collections and events.

4.4.3
Celebrate the cultural history of Lafayette by increasing community awareness through the design of public projects and facilities such as parks, plazas, and community buildings.

4.4.4
Encourage the development of educational literature on Lafayette's historical and architectural resources and share with students through curriculum and program development.

4.4.5
Encourage active community involvement in preservation efforts through historical and cultural resource sponsorship programs.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 4.5. Create additional opportunities for heritage, culture, and ecotourism in Lafayette Parish.

ACTIONS:

4.5.1
Continue to highlight Vermilionville as a major cultural and tourism attraction and support education about smaller historic sites throughout the parish.

4.5.2
Continue to create low cost guided walking tours of historic resources in Lafayette to showcase the region's numerous historic buildings, including in downtown and the Sterling Grove Historic District

4.5.3
Design and install outdoor interpretative and wayfinding signage highlighting historical resources and supporting self-guided tours.

4.5.4
Expand opportunities for ecotourism in the region, including bayou tours and other opportunities within the parish's waterways and future greenways.

4.5.5
Work with neighboring communities to expand cultural programming throughout the region.

4.5.6
Cultivate Lafayette's position as a food destination by evaluating and expanding on "food infrastructure" in the Lafayette community.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

GOAL 2

INCREASE COMMUNITYWIDE ARTS AND CULTURAL ACCESS AND EDUCATION.

POLICY:

» P 4.6. Strengthen cultural and arts education in Lafayette schools.

ACTIONS:

4.6.1
Work with the Lafayette Parish School System (LPSS) and Acadiana Arts Council to assess the results and strategies for implementing the Community Audit for Arts Education – including training materials and arts integration.

4.6.2
Expand opportunities for afterschool arts programming and communicate opportunities through the schools.

4.6.3
Create public art, such as murals, that involve schools and children in design and creation of projects.

» P 4.7. Preserve and share Lafayette's history through increased use of oral histories, storytelling, photographs, and archival data.

ACTIONS:

4.7.1
Partner with the Preservation Alliance, UL Lafayette, and other historic al and cultural groups to create the opportunity for volunteers to interview and record oral histories of local residents.

4.7.2
Create an exposition or art show of local stories and photographs to educate and share the Lafayette community's history and culture.

4.7.3
Encourage the participation of Lafayette's rich diversity of ethnic groups in efforts to preserve historical and cultural resources through the inclusion of ethnic resources in collections and archival data.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 4.8. Grow Lafayette's successful downtown arts and cultural district and increase galleries, art and performance space, and cultural facilities.

ACTIONS:

4.8.1
Continue marketing efforts to attract and grow support for existing and new downtown art galleries and cultural venues.

4.8.2
Encourage the development of live-work artist space and studio space downtown.

4.8.3
Consider funding mechanisms for a coordinated public art program downtown. (Related to Community Character Policy 7.)

4.8.4
Expand development of galleries, performance spaces, and cultural venues downtown. (Related to Historical and Cultural Resources Policy 11.)

4.8.5
Create stronger linkages and awareness between the downtown arts and cultural district and UL Lafayette's Hilliard University Art Museum and other related resources using signage and promotional materials.

» P 4.9. Strengthen gateways and placemaking within Lafayette commercial centers and neighborhoods with public art and coordinated streetscape elements. (Related to Community Character Policy 6.)

ACTIONS:

4.9.1
Improve gateways into the City of Lafayette and downtown, including the I-10/I-49 North Gateway and Johnston Street, with coordinated streetscape improvements, signage, and amenities.

4.9.2
Designate and encourage "Neighborhood Arts Corridors" as a way to distinguish different character of areas and neighborhoods.

4.9.3
Inventory and preserve historic sidewalk stamps, street signs, lampposts, street trees, and other hardscape and cultural landscape elements, in addition to designated historical buildings, structures, and sites that contribute to the historic character of a neighborhood.

4.9.4
Encourage the use of local history themes in public art projects, when appropriate.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

GOAL 3

VALUE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY.

POLICY:

» P 4.10. Maintain and grow Lafayette's festivals and cultural events.

ACTIONS:

4.10.1
Consider future needs for festivals and special events as they continue to grow, including a permanent, larger location for outdoor festival and events downtown.

4.10.2
Coordinate with retailers, restaurants, and the Lafayette Convention and Visitors Commission to offer smaller special events targeted to visitors.

» P 4.11. Communicate the value of arts and culture to the Lafayette community.

ACTIONS:

4.11.1
Partner with LEDA or the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce to measure economic impact of arts and cultural events, activity generated by arts walks and galleries, and educational impact of involving students in arts, historic, and cultural projects or events.

4.11.2
Create materials to communicate the value of arts and culture through LEDA and the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. (Outreach and Communication – consider new Public Information Officer)

4.11.3
Participate in and use National Historic Preservation Week to recognize those individuals, groups or businesses that have made a significant contribution to the preservation, protection or restoration of historical or cultural resources.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

Cajun Courir de Mardi Gras

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Lafayette is known as the "Hub City" of southern Louisiana because of its central location within the regional road network, its location at the crossroads of Interstates 10 and 49, and its position as a regional leader and destination for retail, healthcare, technology, oil and gas, and education. The population in Lafayette's trade market area is estimated to be in excess of 600,000 people.

Job growth and per capita income are strong in the region; in fact in 2012 the Lafayette metro area was ranked 24 on the national list of 200 best performing metro areas – moving up nearly 70 spaces from 2011. While job and population growth have remained strong, cost of living and crime rates are relatively low in Lafayette, making the region attractive to new residents and businesses. Major industry employment sectors in order of number of jobs in 2011 include: Health Care; Retail Trade; Gas and Oil/Mining; Tourism and Accommodations; Manufacturing; Education; Professional and Technical Services; and Finance and Real Estate.

The Comprehensive Plan is one critical process where economic strategies can be aligned within the broader overarching planning context, and concurrently the Comprehensive Plan can be aligned with economic development needs of the community. As a result, the economic development element of the plan identifies key challenges or hurdles for the future of the parish as it relates to investment and job growth that can be ameliorated or overcome through changes or investment in land use polices, infrastructure, housing, education, tourism and other plan elements.

OUR COMMUNITY

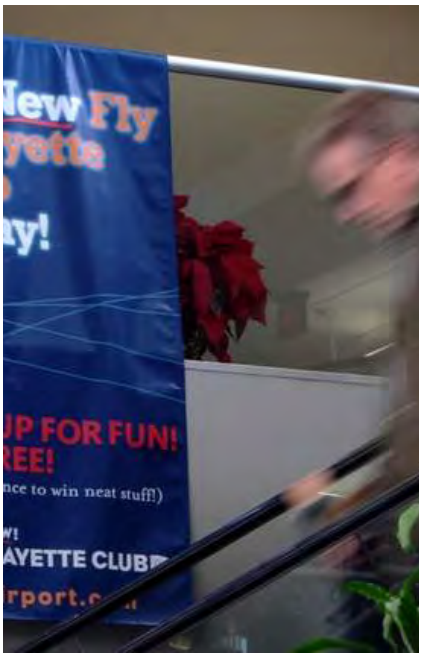
OUR PEOPLE

OUR ECONOMY

WORKING DRAFT

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Need for a greater number of qualified workers with technical skills to meet the needs of the local economy.
- Limited airport service to attract a wide range of global corporations outside of petroleum and health care.
- Somewhat limited diversity in economy with a dependence upon three major industries, petroleum, health care and higher education, to drive the economy.
- Difficulty recruiting talented executives to Lafayette in the three primary industries due to a lack of jobs in nonrelated industries for spouses and the perceived shortcomings of the public education system.
- A significant agriculture and aquaculture sector whose fortunes are dependent upon the global commodities markets and the continued moving of production to lower cost- higher production agriculture markets around the world.
- Meeting the infrastructure needs of new development, including transportation and utilities, in fast growing areas of the parish.



Lafayette Airport

LUS Infrastructure

GOAL 1

PRODUCE MORE SKILLED WORKERS LOCALLY FOR LOCAL JOBS.

POLICY:

» P 5.1. Increase business skills training for high school graduates to allow local companies to hire and compete globally. (Related to Community Facilities Policy 7.)

ACTIONS:

5.1.1
Target federal and foundation grants that support greater workforce training, collaboration with major employers and industries, mentoring, and career path programs.

5.1.2
Work with LPSS to advocate for increased business skills training for local high school students through the Thibodaux STEM Magnet Academy, South Louisiana Community College (SLCC), and others.

» P 5.2. Enhance coordination between the region's colleges and universities and major employers. (Related to Community Facilities Policy 10.)

ACTIONS:

5.2.1
Develop a business driven education development strategy led by LCG, LEDA, and GLCC that includes the desired skills needed in local employees and expected growth in job sectors.

5.2.2
Annually survey HR managers to determine perceived improvement or diminishment of readiness of recent local hires.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

University Art Museum

Cajun Courir de Mardi Gras; Philip Gould

GOAL 2

BROADEN EMPLOYMENT SECTORS THAT DRIVE THE PARISH ECONOMY.

POLICY:

» P 5.3. Encourage population growth that will in turn provide the basis for a more diverse economy.

ACTIONS:

5.3.1
Align government infrastructure planning and incentive programs with LEDA business attraction and economic development efforts.

5.3.2
Anticipate and make infrastructure investment in areas of the parish designated for employment, retail, and mixed-use growth in order to spur investment by development in key corridors or within principal nodes.

5.3.3
Explore special assessments for improvements (i.e. street signage, enhanced lighting, landscaping) in redevelopment areas where investment in imminent or already occurring in order to further drive property values and activity.

» P 5.4. Diversify economy by supporting startup and entrepreneurial businesses.

ACTIONS:

5.4.1
Foster interaction between the public and private sector that enables innovation, secures talent, and improves the business climate for a growing industrial base.

5.4.2
Support local incubators, like Opportunity Machine, and research and development efforts at UL Lafayette to foster entrepreneurship and growth in technology related businesses.

5.4.3
Continue to support energy innovation which is at the forefront of the newest wave of technological development.

5.4.4
Leverage the Parish's anticipated growth in the health sector to encourage both public and private investment in training within in fields such as Emergency Medicine Training, Outpatient Care and Home Care.

5.4.5
Leverage R&D activity at UL Lafayette to grow local business.

5.4.6
Continue to market region as a leader in technology related businesses with access to the fastest fiber in the country.

5.4.7
Evaluate the potential of a business license, or a similar program, to aid economic development by helping track and analyze trends in local business, and to increase the efficiency and accuracy of sales tax collection.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 5.5. Dedicate resources to encourage existing/additional airlines with greater levels of jet service to Lafayette on an enhanced schedule.

ACTIONS:

5.5.1
Schedule community and elected leaders (including Congressional Delegation) to meet every two years with airline route management executives to update on community growth and progress.

5.5.2
Offer targeted airlines marketing support or incentives to commit to Lafayette.

5.5.3
Obtain local corporate commitments to utilize enhanced service for a select period of time.

5.5.4
Update research every several years which indicates need for enhanced service and projected utilization levels.

» P 5.6. Continue to increase tourism and expand the range of activities available to visitors. (Related to Historical and Cultural Resources Policy 3.)

ACTIONS:

5.6.1
Invest in assets and infrastructure to ensure that gateways are attractive, streets are clean, pedestrian friendly, and well maintained.

5.6.2
Enhance key visitor support services such as dining, lodging, parking, taxi service, and tourism related services and destinations.

5.6.3
Develop training programs for frontline staff to elevate level of service which is critical to tourism development.

5.6.4
Improve support services for a better visitor experience, including wayfinding signage, self-guided tours, packaged visitor guide videos for local hotels, increased quality taxi availability, and transit shuttles for major events.

5.6.5
Expand synergies and coordination of marketing by linking existing destinations, festival and events.

5.6.6
Expand ecotourism through national exposure to events and competitions (e.g., fishing tournaments, triathlon events, etc.).

5.6.7
Support expansion of the UL Convention Center to include hotel facilities in order to increase competitiveness for potential conferences and special events.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

POLICY:

» P 5.7. Maintain competitive national position with regard to speed and breadth of internet connections.

ACTIONS:

5.7.1
Monitor national rollout of ultrahigh speed internet access by firms such as Google and AT&T to ensure that Lafayette business community and residents have equivalent or better speed, coverage, cost, and availability of access in relation to their peer cities as the high speed market continues to evolve.

5.5.2
Work to ensure that LUS access is extended to the entire Lafayette city including multifamily residential communities and office buildings.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

GOAL 3

CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THE IDENTITY AND MIX OF USES IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE.

POLICY:

» P 5.8. Establish downtown as the heart of the community and a center of cultural activity with a mix of retail, service, civic, office, and residential uses. (Related to Future Land Use Policy 3, Community Character Policy 2.)

ACTIONS:

5.8.1
Encourage higher density and intensity of development, given its central location, development patterns, and proximity to employment, services, education, and other amenities.

5.8.2
Increase residential and office uses downtown to help establish a "24 hour market" for commercial success and increased pedestrian activity.

5.8.3
Evaluate opportunities for capturing mid to longer term downtown/Oil Center hotel demand that is driven by both overnight leisure and business sectors.

5.8.4
Emphasize gateways to downtown, strengthen the sense of place and identity downtown, and enhance navigation to help residents, workers, and visitors navigate the area.

5.8.3
Encourage a new or enhanced civic gathering space downtown that is integrated into the fabric of downtown and provides public amenities.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

6. TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

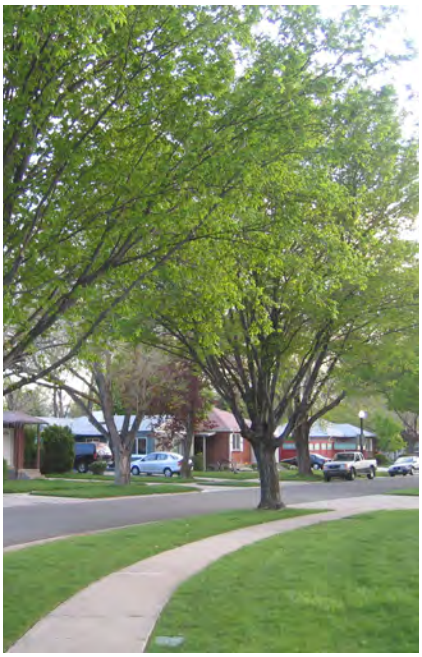
Like many peer communities, Lafayette has a transportation system that remains highly automobile dependent, with low rates of transit ridership, and most areas of the city and parish lacking convenient access to accessible transit routes or facilities for safe pedestrian and bicycling. Lafayette's highly constrained road network has a significant amount of congestion induced travel time delays during peak periods of the day. An analysis of the 2010 Lafayette Travel Demand model results show that commuters lost over 2.8 million hours and $59 million annually due to traffic congestion in the Lafayette metropolitan area. This congestion can be attributed to the high rate of single occupancy vehicle use, lack of alternative travel choices, and lack of parish wide connectivity.

Communities cannot solve traffic congestion simply by building as much roadway capacity as the anticipated demand for travel would seem to require due to the funding constraints and the reality of induced demand, that is, additional roadway capacity inevitably generates additional traffic. Two principles which have guided the development of this plan have been to increase road network connectivity and expand the availability of alternative travel options and make those options available wherever possible. Possibilities include enhanced connectivity requirements, new or improved parallel transit routes, or modal choices that serve the same origins and destinations. In the case where there is a projected need for additional roadway capacity, the preferred response may not be a wider facility, but enhanced operational efficiency. Improvements can be achieved using Transportation System Management (TSM), Travel Demand Management (TDM), or Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) strategies and Access Management (AM) techniques that serve to optimize the performance of a facility.

WORKING DRAFT

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Improving the traffic efficiency of the road network, through improved access management, coordinated signal timing and improved street interconnectivity.
- Maintenance and preservation of existing transportation facilities to avoid expensive rehabilitation projects.
- Reducing congestion on existing Vermilion River crossings.
- Expediting completion of the I-49 Connector.
- Implementation of Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies such as ridesharing, staggered work hours etc., for more efficient use of transportation resources.
- Implementation of a comprehensive and interconnected pedestrian, bicycle, and trail system network as an integral part of regional transportation network.
- Reducing Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) use and making transit more attractive to choice riders.
- Providing quality fixed transit service to urban and rural areas of the parish.



Residential street typology

Existing Johnston Street Signage

GOAL 2

PRESERVE THE EXISTING AND PLANNED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

POLICY:

» P 6.1. Continue to manage and maintain existing transportation facilities, including safety features such as signing, lighting, striping, pedestrian crosswalks, and traffic signal equipment.

ACTIONS:

6.1.1
Improve the conditions of existing transportation facilities in areas identified on the Future Land Use Map as mixed-use centers and corridors and use transportation spending funds to prioritize these areas.

6.1.2
Use the 311 system to allow citizens to report missing and/or needed improvements of the transportation system and track the information using the City Works database.

» P 6.2. Improve corridor preservation and management to protect existing and planned transportation corridors from inconsistent development and potential negative environmental, social, and economic impacts.

ACTIONS:

6.2.1
Continually work with the MPO to review and update the Lafayette Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan (CTP) to ensure that it conforms to the priorities identified in the parish Future Land Use Map, with an emphasis on improvements to existing roadways.

6.2.2
Develop and adopt parish wide Functional Classification Design Standards that incorporate best practices in "Complete Streets" design.

6.2.3
Develop detailed corridor plans for specific/identified roadways in targeted areas.

6.2.4
Improve coordination and collaboration between the numerous departments that impact roadway design standards and sections – including the Louisiana DOTD, Planning, Zoning, and Development (PZD), Public Works, LUS, and the MPO.

6.2.5
Develop and adopt a parish wide Corridor Preservation Plan that conforms to the priorities identified in the parish Future Land Use Map and plans for land preservation within designated corridor right of ways.

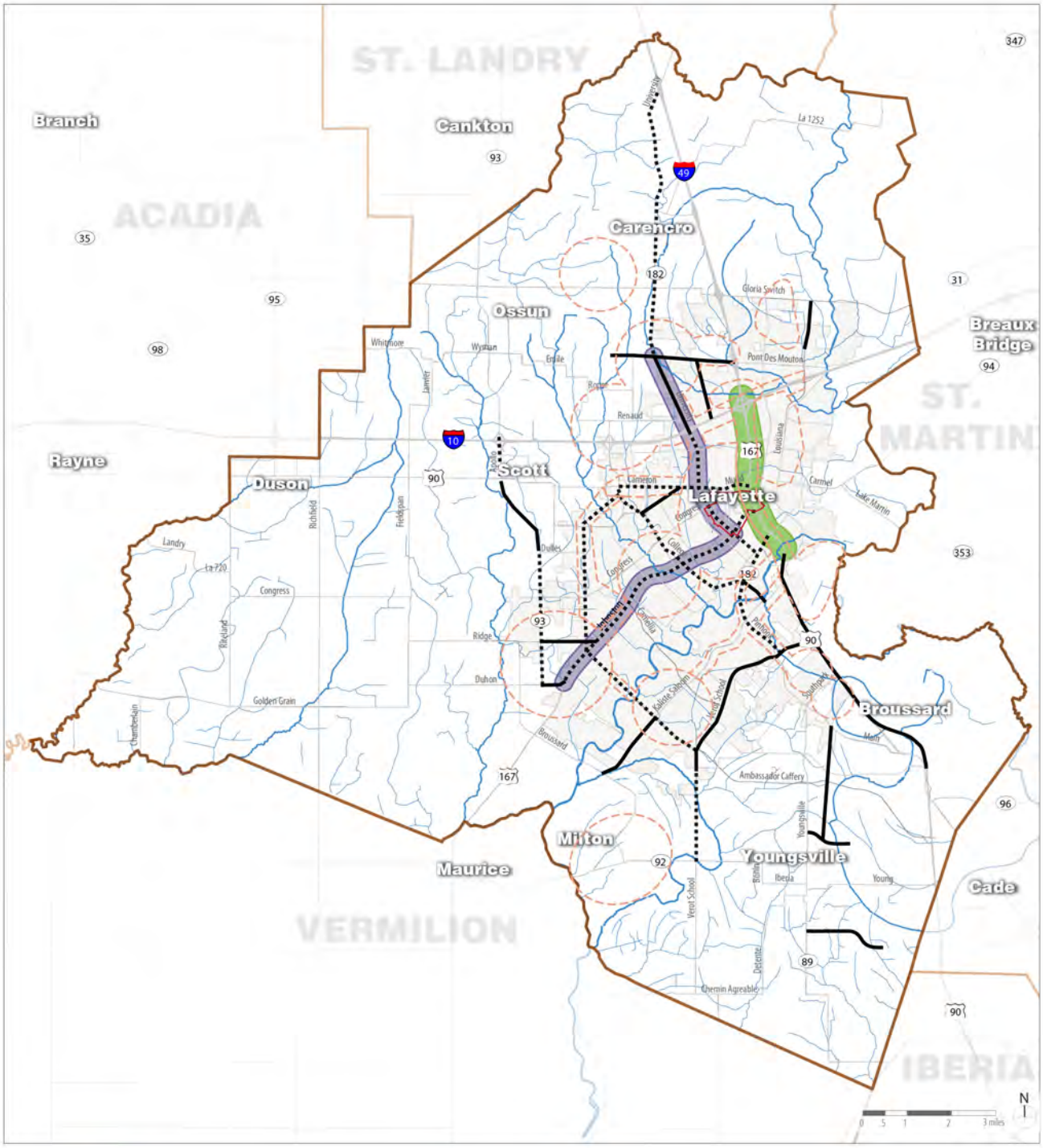
6.2.6
Preserve and protect planned transportation corridors identified in the CTP, even when the implementation of project is many years into the future.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

Figure 4.2 Draft Transportation Improvements



POLICY:

» P 6.3. Continue to improve transportation efficiency through access management planning and implementation.

ACTIONS:

6.3.1
Develop a comprehensive Access Management Plan in coordination with Louisiana DOTD, MPO and statewide Access Management Policy that implements strategies to preserve and enhance the efficiency of the arterial street network by reducing and consolidating private entrances and median crossovers.

6.3.2
Promote access management practices such as raised medians, driveway consolidation and connectivity.

6.3.3
Require Traffic Impact Studies for new and redevelopment projects based on the estimated trips generated by the proposed development to identify and mitigate adverse impacts on the surrounding transportation system.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

GOAL 2

PROVIDE A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT FACILITATES THE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVE MOVEMENT OF BOTH PEOPLE AND GOODS.

POLICY:

» P 6.4. Provide multi-modal facilities along transportation corridors to improve connectivity for neighborhoods and surrounding uses by facilitating mobility for all users. (Related to Community Character Policy 11.)

ACTIONS:

6.4.1
Adopt a "complete street" policy with implementation strategies, to create and implement street improvement plans that balance the utilization of public rights-of-way between transit, automobiles/trucks, bicycles, and pedestrians.

6.4.2
Develop a streetscape classification system and associated design standards that emphasize multimodal facilities, landscape design criteria (with emphasis on native plant materials), and amenities (street furniture, pedestrian scaled lighting, wayfinding signage) that enhance the safety and comfort of roadways for all users.

6.4.3
Work with the MPO to update the Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan with streetscape classification system and associated design standards that are sensitive to the surrounding context.

6.4.4
Implement the recommendations of the draft 2040 Lafayette MPO Bikeway Plan when consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

» P 6.5. Invest in new technology to enhance transportation efficiency and improve safety.

ACTIONS:

6.5.1
Develop parish wide Intelligent Transport System (ITS) Deployment and Implementation strategies using technology to improve congestion, inform users of delays and alternate routes, and improve safety in an emergency evacuation scenario.

6.5.2
Improve congestion management using automated data collection and analysis of traffic volume and accidents.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

POLICY:

» P 6.6. Increase transit service, efficiency, and use.

ACTIONS:

6.6.1
Work with the MPO to review and continually update the parish wide Transit Plan and ensure its consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

6.6.2
Develop a transit trip planner application to provide real time trip information and bus stop locations.

6.6.3
Improve public transit service and access through technology, educational and marketing materials, and improved transit shelters and facilities.

6.6.4
Support increased transit service and frequency of service by encouraging higher density development in mixed-use centers and corridors and coordination with transit routes.

6.6.5
Investigate the feasibility of limited free bus service and dedicated routes along targeted multimodal corridors such as University Avenue and Johnson Street to encourage ridership and increased density and to support commercial activity and tourism.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 6.7. Reduce congestion and improve mobility, regardless of mode.

ACTIONS:

6.7.1
Invest in low cost strategies, such as channelization, turning lanes, signal retiming, signage etc., to maximize efficiency and safety for immediate congestion relief.

6.7.2
Reduce traffic on arterials roads by improving connectivity and creating new linkages between existing local and collector roads.

6.7.3
Work with local businesses to help implement Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies such as ridesharing, staggered work hours, alternative work schedules, and telecommuting, for more efficient use of transportation resources.

6.7.4
Plan and fund roundabouts as a viable alternative to grade separations and standard at grade intersections.

6.7.5
Consider innovative intersection designs such as Reduced Phase Intersections (RPI), J-turns etc., but only when such designs are compatible and complimentary to pedestrian and bicycle travel.

6.7.6
Reduce traffic congestion by redesigning major corridors to prioritize safe walking, biking, transit, and driving options and incorporating those elements through all phases of the planning and design process.

6.7.7
Update the Corridor Preservation and Management Action Plan to guide the I-49 Connector project with support from the MPO.

6.7.8
Pursue the construction of a new Vermilion River crossing at South College and South City to reduce the traffic load on already congested existing crossings.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

POLICY:

» P 6.8. Make Lafayette a model city that is safe, convenient, and attractive for walking and biking options for people of all ages and abilities.

ACTIONS:

6.8.1
Plan, develop and maintain a comprehensive pedestrian, bicycle, and trail system network, with emphasis on growth areas, as an integral part of regional transportation network.

6.8.2
Expand pedestrian and bicycle connectivity with new designated routes, enhanced or new signage, and connectivity.

6.8.3
Require sidewalks on both sides of streets for all proposed new and redevelopment projects. Also, provide connections to existing and/or proposed sidewalks to ensure an interconnected pedestrian system.

6.8.4
Provide for clearly marked bicycle and pedestrian features, such as sidewalks, bicycle routes, trails, designated crosswalks, curb cuts, refuge areas and pedestrian signals, in the construction and reconstruction of transportation corridors.

6.8.5
Provide sidewalks, trails and/or bicycle routes that link residential concentrations with transit stations, mixed-use activity centers, shopping districts, recreational facilities, and major public facilities, and provide for pedestrian and bicycle circulation within mixed-use centers.

6.8.6
Develop promotional materials that clearly show the beneficial health impacts of walking and biking, and encourage residents to take advantage of the parish's expanding network of bicycle paths, trails, and sidewalks.

6.8.7
Work with the development community to accommodate multimodal transportation in new developments (e.g., bicycle parking, shading, neighborhood connections, etc.).

6.8.8
Collaborate with external agencies to develop design standards for bicycle and pedestrian facilities and integrate these into recommended cross sections for LCG sponsored roadway projects and/or improvements.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 6.9. Ensure that transportation system improvements are in compliance with the Future Land Use Map and review for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

ACTIONS:

6.9.1
Require all new development and redevelopment include pedestrian and bicycle amenities to mitigate adverse impacts upon the transportation system and provide transportation options.

6.9.2
Develop policies that encourage higher density residential development in mixed-use activity centers to promote non-motorized trips and transit services to reduce Single Occupancy Vehicle use.

6.9.3
Develop policies and design guidelines that encourage the design and development of mixed-use projects to support public transportation and non-motorized travel and reduce traffic on major roads.

6.9.4
Develop policies that encourage compatible commercial use and appropriate land uses such as childcare facilities in mixed-use centers and in close proximity to public transportation stations.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

GOAL 3

ENSURE SAFETY FOR ALL USERS OF TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES.

POLICY:

» P 6.10. Proactively manage safety deficiencies of transportation system.

ACTIONS:

6.10.1
Analyze crash records to identify high crash locations and probable causes.

6.10.2
Develop and implement an annual safety improvement plan with dedicated funds to correct identified safety deficiencies.

6.10.3
Pursue safety funds from state and federal agencies and continue collaboration with the Acadiana Transportation Safety Coalition

6.10.4
Continue to explore technological tools to improve and address community safety transportation related issues.

6.10.5
Develop public information campaigns to educate citizens about the most common crash types caused by driver behavior to reduce the occurrence of these crashes.

6.10.6
Plan to resolve conflicts between motorized and non-motorized traffic by correcting unsafe conditions for walking and bicycling.

6.10.7
Monitor and enforce the provisions and regulations for transporting hazardous materials.

» P 6.11. Institute traffic calming measures and geometric street designs to reduce vehicular speeds in residential neighborhoods, improve safety, and improve pedestrian and bicyclist comfort.

ACTIONS:

6.11.1
Continue and expand the existing traffic calming program to additional neighborhood streets meeting the program's criteria and with support from the community.

6.11.2
Educate citizens on traffic calming program through success stories, before and after photographs to show the impact, and results of changes in behavior

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 6.12. Prepare for emergencies through an Emergency Evacuation Plan.

ACTIONS:

6.12.1
Develop a parish wide evacuation plan in concert with statewide evacuation plan.

6.12.2
Plan to provide assistance for residents without means of transportation during an evacuation and provide ongoing outreach and education to ensure residents are aware of evacuation plans.

6.12.3
Develop a parish wide designated evacuation routes and shelter locations map.

6.12.4
Continuously educate all residents about designated evacuation routes and install evacuation route signs along the designated evacuation routes where missing.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

GOAL 3

IDENTIFY THE FUNDING NEEDED FOR THE CITY-PARISH'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND POTENTIAL SOURCES FOR THAT FUNDING.

POLICY:

» P 6.13. Pursue local, state and federal funding support for the city-parish's transportation system.

ACTIONS:

6.13.1
Develop a stable source of local transportation funding and secure local matching funds from local, state, and federal funds with consideration for alternatives such as local option gas tax, roadway frontage fee, and driveway access fee.

6.13.2
Strengthen coordination with Louisiana DOTD and the Legislative Delegation to receive fair share of state and federal funding.

6.13.3
Partner with LEDA and GLCC to develop a city-parish policy regarding Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts to fund infrastructure improvements. The policy should establish prioritized and preferred criteria for TIF District proposals.

6.13.4
Work with the MPO to secure funds from the 10% Urban Systems fund commitment for bicycle infrastructure.

» P 6.14. Increase public-private partnerships as part of infrastructure projects.

ACTIONS:

6.14.1
Seek out and facilitate public-private partnerships, to finance new construction, new transportation services, and improvements to existing facilities and services.

6.14.2
Work with local business and property owners to fund transportation improvements, signage, and streetscape improvements in key locations.

6.14.3
Work with the reestablished Redevelopment Authority and partners to facilitate infrastructure projects.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

Aerial view of Lafayette

7. UTILITIES

The Lafayette Utilities System (LUS) is a city of Lafayette owned entity that provides electric, water and wastewater and fiber optic services mainly to the city of Lafayette and, by limited exceptions, to other areas within parts of Lafayette Parish. In providing these services, it is notable that LUS is owned only by the city of Lafayette, and not by Lafayette Consolidated Government (LCG). The provision of any LUS services outside the city limits of Lafayette does not convey any ownership rights to entities outside of the city, but are only made when such expansions inure to the long term benefit of LUS and the city. The critical services provided by LUS are significant elements in providing support for the city's infrastructure. These essential quality of life services play an important role in continuing to shape the patterns of development throughout the city and, to a much lesser extent, the parish.

Since its inception in 1896, the LUS has been a driving force in shaping what Lafayette has become. These basic, yet necessary and critical services continue to be a foundation for residential, commercial and industrial development in the area. Today, LUS employs more than 530 people and operates as a department of LCG. As a publicly owned utility, LUS can provide its customers with competitive electric utility rates. In addition, LUS provides significant revenues to LCG through annual in lieu of tax payments thereby keeping taxes low and helping to support the city of Lafayette's General Fund services including police and fire, parks and recreation, and community development. While focused on LUS, the following policies and actions also relate to Public Works and Planning, Zoning, and Development – realizing the need for continued coordination to strengthen these interrelationships.

OUR COMMUNITY

OUR PEOPLE

OUR ECONOMY

WORKING DRAFT

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Increasingly, stringent environmental regulations concerning air quality and wastewater treatment and discharge limits.
- Electric transmission capacity and reliability.
- Expansion of LUS Fiber to the remaining parts of the city and parish.
- Ability to grow the base of the LUS power system through annexation, consistent with the growth and land use policies of the comprehensive plan.
- Obtaining permits for new facilities and obtaining property for new or expanded facilities.
- Making timely investments in electric, water, wastewater and telecommunications systems to handle future growth.
- Ensuring safety and compliance in electric, water and wastewater systems.
- Addressing the need to increase energy generation, water production and wastewater treatment and plant infrastructure, including LUS Fiber, to meet future growth.
- Sludge management.
- Rural water district infrastructure upgrades and needed to meet current and future water demands especially in the area served by the Lafayette Parish Waterworks District North.

Lafayette Utility System

LUS utility meter

GOAL 1

COORDINATE WITH LUS TO ENSURE THAT UTILITIES INCORPORATE THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING OF SYSTEM EXPANSIONS TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE SERVICE TO ALL CUSTOMERS IN THE SERVICE AREA.

POLICY:

» P 7.1. Ensure that there are adequate LUS and LUS Fiber facilities available to serve future growth areas.

ACTIONS:

7.1.1
Develop or update existing master plans of LUS utilities (electric, water, and wastewater) and LUS Fiber facilities in compliance with the Future Land Use Map.

7.1.2
Identify new city of Lafayette infrastructure and LUS Fiber facility locations and/or existing facility expansions to serve future growth areas that cannot be served by current facilities, including the new centers at Ambassador Caffery and Gloria Switch and Ambassador Caffery and I-10.

» P 7.2. Develop policies that encourage new development within the service areas of existing infrastructure with excess capacity, or where systems can be realistically expanded, including identification of revenues to support those policies.

ACTIONS:

7.2.1
Review existing facility capacity, current demands and expansion potential.

7.2.2
Identify feasible existing facilities for expansion to serve the needs of future growth.

7.2.3
Preserve land near existing facilities for future expansion.

7.2.4
Adopt incentives to encourage development within the existing services areas such as requiring the proposed developments to bear the cost of new facilities outside existing service areas.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

LUS managed water tower and power lines

GOAL 2

CONTINUE TO PROVIDE RELIABLE SERVICE TO ALL CUSTOMERS.

POLICY:

» P 7.3. Maintain high reliability of LUS utility services through continued proactive monitoring of usage and capacity, and maintaining infrastructure systems.

ACTIONS:

7.3.1
For the electric utility, continue to maintain a tree trimming program for its entire distribution system to minimize outages and maintain high reliability of the overall system and revisit current PZD policies related to planting smaller tree species that are compatible with overhead power lines.

7.3.2
Monitor the Chicot Aquifer, locally and through state and federal agencies, as it is vital to the future of Lafayette Parish.

7.3.3
Encourage planting of drought resistant and native plants and continue to support water conservation through the parish wide water conservation policy regarding lawn watering for all local governments through intergovernmental agreements.

7.3.4
Develop a program for the installation of appropriate backflow prevention devices for residential and commercial customers to ensure the safety of potable water supply.

» P 7.4. Seek the eventual conversion to all underground electric utilities, contingent upon an adequate funding source.

ACTIONS:

7.4.1
Continue to require underground electric utilities in all new developments funded by both developers and the utility system.

7.4.2
Develop a long term master plan, based on the parish Future Land Use Map, and identify funding, including participation by landowners, to convert existing overhead electric facilities to underground, including addressing other service providers using those facilities (i.e. telephone, cable, fiber), contingent upon an adequate funding source.

7.4.3
Consider strategies and funding for Public Private Partnerships for converting existing overhead line facilities underground.

7.4.4
Determine a source of annual funding for the systematic conversion of existing overhead facilities to underground, in accordance with the long term master plan and determined priorities.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

GOAL 3

SATISFY ALL ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE REGULATIONS ESTABLISHED BY FEDERAL AND STATE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCIES.

POLICY:

» P 7.5. Ensure existing and future regulatory compliance.

ACTIONS:

7.5.1
Continue to identify existing and future regulatory requirements and conduct a gap/deficiency analysis to identify action items needed to meet the requirements.

7.5.2
Implement plan of action items using Best Management Practices to meet regulatory requirements.

7.5.3
Educate residents and business owners about new regulations and Lafayette's efforts to improve environmental quality.

» P 7.6. Increase sustainable practices in electric, water, sewer utilities and waste management, contingent on adequate funding. (Related to Resource Conservation and Hazard Mitigation Policy 1.) (Needs review with Public Works.)

ACTIONS:

7.6.1
Work with Public Works to manage stormwater runoff by appropriate water detention and retention practices, and to design solutions that add aesthetic value to surrounding areas and provide potential recreational amenities.

7.6.2
Partner with the Bayou Vermilion District to increase water protection, expand stormwater management efforts, and limit potential negative impacts of development and impervious surfaces within the district.

7.6.3
Expand the Rain Barrel Program to improve water quality by reducing the amount of stormwater runoff and surface water pollutants that enter the Bayou Vermilion watershed.

7.6.4
Increase the volume of recycled materials (including yard waste and compost) so as to decrease the volume of solid waste going to landfills.

7.6.5
Expand the current recycling program to include multifamily residential and commercial buildings in the city of Lafayette.

7.6.6
Expand awareness of the "household chemical day" and continue to accept e-Waste materials to divert electronic materials from landfills and generate revenue for the recycling program.

7.6.7
Expand the LUS land application (land farming) program within Lafayette Parish to additional farms to reuse biosolids (sludge) that results from wastewater treatment practices.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

POLICY:

» P 7.7. Enhance flood protection in the parish. (Related to Resource Conservation and Hazard Mitigation Policy 5.)

ACTIONS:

7.7.1
Study the establishment of Drainage Utility Districts to adequately fund drainage improvements.

7.7.2
Ensure adequate and continued maintenance of existing drainage facilities..

7.7.3
Establish adequate drainage maintenance easements or servitudes.

7.7.4
Complete periodic updates of the parish wide Drainage Master Plan.

7.7.5
Coordinate with FEMA to adopt the final FIRMs and decrease uncertainty.

» P 7.8. Increase energy efficiency and reduce per capita energy use (Related to Housing and Neighborhoods Policy 15.)

ACTIONS:

7.8.1
Conduct energy audits of public buildings and implement improvements that reduce costs, while improving energy efficiency.

7.8.2
Increase outreach and education to LUS customers about cost savings associated with lighting improvements, smart meters, insulation, maintaining systems, and other home energy improvements.

7.8.3
Consider workshops and demonstration projects that help to educate the public, real estate professionals, and developers about energy efficiency and indoor air quality.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

GOAL 4

ENSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR NEEDED EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSIONS AND NEW FACILITIES.

POLICY:

» P 7.9. Develop and maintain a capital improvement and asset management plan consistent with the Future Land Use Map

ACTIONS:

7.9.1
Conduct periodic studies to ensure adequate utility rates using cost-of-service methodologies set forth by LUS bond covenants, including adequate funding for capital improvements.

7.9.2
Implement a cost sharing program and set of guidelines for infrastructure expansions, contingent upon a funding source.

7.9.3
Maintain strong revenues through efficient and reliable operations and enhanced telecommunications while keeping rates competitive.

7.9.4
Strive to obtain and maintain the highest bond rating levels possible, recognizing the uniqueness of LCG and LUS, in order to more cost effectively fund future large scale projects.

7.9.5
Evaluate current practices of selling excess water and power outside of the city as compared to the impact on the revenues of LUS, the city of Lafayette, and on annexation decisions.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

8. COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Police, Fire, EMS, and Community Health

In addition to the state police and Layette Parish Sherriff's Office, there are six municipal police departments, serving Lafayette, Carencro, Youngsville, Broussard, Scott, and Duson. The Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Office serves unincorporated areas of the parish, and the state police serve the entire parish.

Service calls in Lafayette Parish have been increasing since 2005. The number of calls for police service has increased each year since 2005, with the exception of a large decrease in 2006. Between 2005 and 2011, the years in which data is available, the total number of calls increased by 25%. The Lafayette Police Department struggles to fund and maintain enough police officers to keep up with population growth. The current level of police service (2.03 officers per 1,000 people) is above the national recommended standard of 1.9 officers per 1,000 people for communities under 249,000 residents. The total number of crimes committed in Lafayette Parish has remained relatively consistent in the last decade; however the per capita crime rate has been decreasing. According to the parish's Uniform Reporting Statistics, combined violent and property crimes have remained fairly constant over the years despite population growth. As a result, the per capita crime rate, with the exception of 2007 and 2009, has decreased.

The parish's fire departments are stretched to respond to newly annexed and widely dispersed areas as the parish's population grows. Lafayette Parish has eight total fire districts: Duson, Broussard, Carencro, Judice, Youngsville, Lafayette, Milton, and Scott. However, Lafayette's fire stations are centrally located within or near the city limits calling into question response times for outlying unincorporated areas of the parish, particularly in the southern reaches of the parish. Lafayette fire fighters are full time, while the other municipalities use volunteer fire fighters. Despite an increase in the number of calls by 6% between 2002 and 2012, the Lafayette Fire Department staff has not increased. There is no separate taxing district for services such as fire. In addition, there may be a need for greater regionalization of services and/or new fire stations to adequately serve the parish population. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is provided by Acadian Ambulance Service, which operates the National EMS Academy in Lafayette. Acadian Ambulance Service is a private company.

In addition to being a major employment industry in the parish, the healthcare system in Lafayette is an essential piece of overall community health and wellness. The percentage of the population living below poverty level in Lafayete is estimated at 16% in the parish and 17% in the city. While this is slightly below the state poverty rate (18%), many residents and households struggle to afford housing, food, and healthcare. LCG and community and social service organizations, such as Lafayette Catholic Services, United Way, Acadiana C.A.R.E.S, and religious organizations, are working to help families, children, and other residents in need of services.

OUR COMMUNITY

OUR PEOPLE

OUR ECONOMY

WORKING DRAFT

Based on several different health indicators (e.g., related to disease, lifestyles, heath care, social and environmental factors, and the physical environment) Lafayette Parish ranks 5th in the state for overall healthy communities. The parish rates in the top ten in part due to its access to clinical care, relatively high education attainment, and low unemployment. However, Lafayette ranks lower than national benchmarks for adult obesity, teen pregnancy rates, poor physical health days, and access to fresh foods. In addition, 20% of the parish under the age of 65 was uninsured in 2013. There are 7 hospitals located in the city of Lafayette, all located south of downtown (see Figure 4.3). Generally there are many more health service providers – doctors' offices, hospitals, and health clinics located on the south side of the parish.

Firefighter statue outside Lafayette fire house

Education and Libraries

The Lafayette Parish School System (LPSS) serves the entire Lafayette Parish. Within this system, nine sub districts serve the student population. Each sub district typically includes multiple middle schools and elementary schools, and there are 6 traditional high schools distributed throughout the parish. Lafayette has a relatively high percentage of students attending private schools; in 2009, 25% of all students (about 10,000 students) in Lafayette Parish attended private schools according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

In 2012, LPSS released a progressive six (6) year Turnaround Plan to address its challenges and improve the performance of the district. The plan focuses on pre-K school readiness, health, school facilities, and academic performance and sets a goal of moving the district from a "C" rating under state categories to an "A" district by 2018. Based on the fall 2012 and 2013 accountability releases, LPSS as a district earned the letter grade "B" for the second consecutive year. Overall, LPSS moved from 25th to 19th in the state based on 2008 and 2013 district performance scores. Between 2011 and 2012 the number of schools earning a "D" or "F" score fell from by 15% (from 53 to 28 percent).

Lafayette Public School System students

Lafayette Parish is home to several postsecondary institutions, most notably the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (UL Lafayette) – the largest of the University of Louisiana System with nearly 17,000 students enrolled. Other institutions of higher education include South Louisiana Community College (which has expanded to include the former Louisiana Technical College), and several for profit colleges, all located in the city of Lafayette.

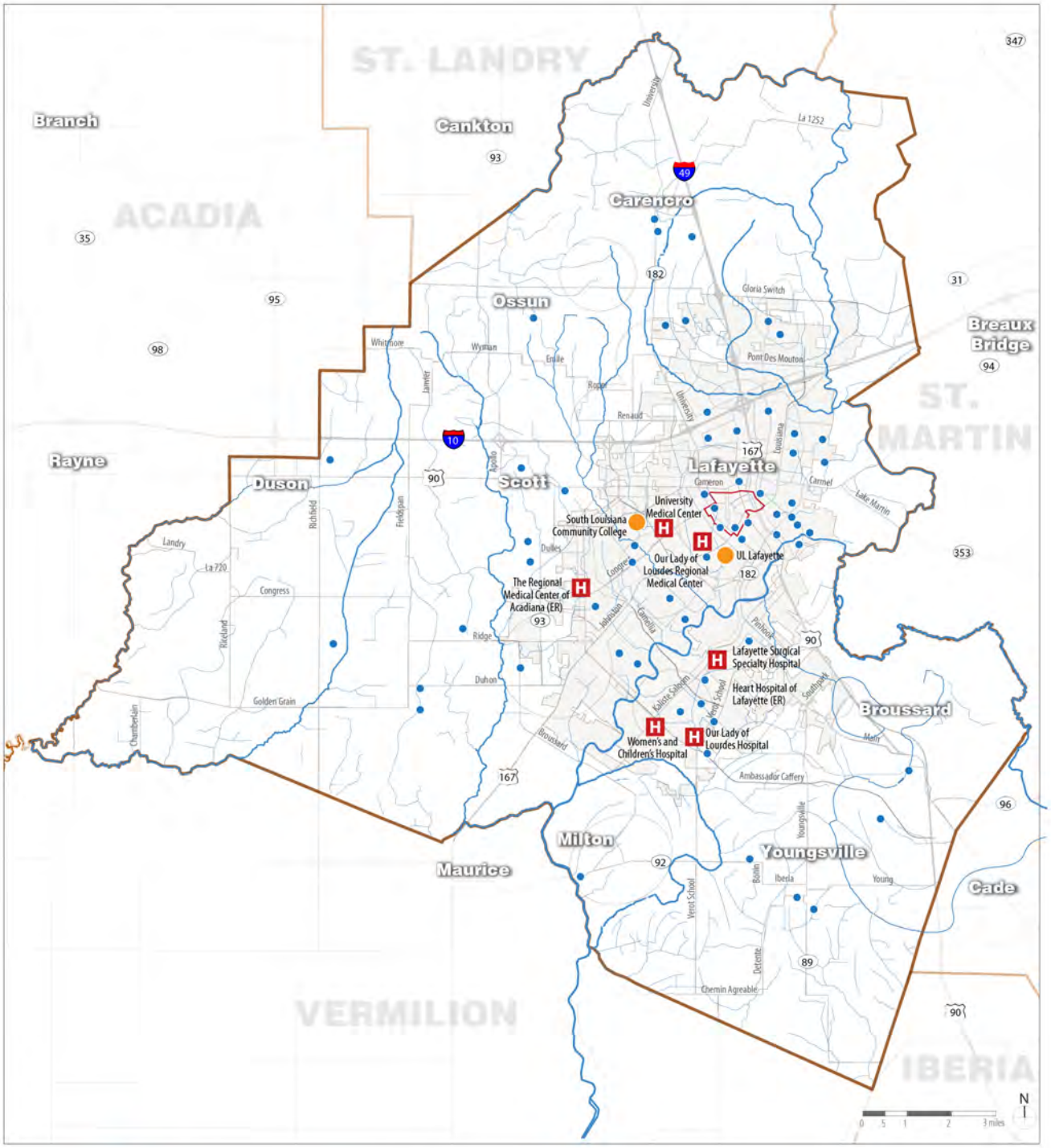
The parish is served by 10 geographically distributed public libraries. The library system has expanded in recent years, including the current expansion of the main library. With the expansion, the library is expected to meet or exceed comprehensive standards for libraries located within 90% of the population, 1 librarian per 10,000 persons, and collections of 2.5 per capita. The parish libraries offer a range of community and educational events and services (e.g., children's story times, ESL, book clubs, computer training) targeted to children, adults, and seniors.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Continuing to provide high quality police, fire, and EMS services as the population grows.
- Reducing response times for fire departments and creating an equitable system for sharing services among districts.
- Sharing resources and coordinating across municipal boundaries and with the larger Acadiana region.
- Addressing school facility needs, including buildings that are too large, too small, or in need of major repair or replacement.
- Ensuring that Lafayette graduates receive the training and skills needed to compete in the region's economy and contribute to the vitality of the region.
- Lack of public trust in the school system.
- Strengthening relationship between UL Lafayette and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Reducing overlap between community services and increasing resource sharing.

WORKING DRAFT

Figure 4.3 Future Growth Areas and Institutions



Hospital
K-12 School
University
Future Growth Area
City of Lafayette
Downtown Lafayette

GOAL 1

CONTINUE PROVIDE RELIABLE SERVICE TO ALL CUSTOMERS.

POLICY:

» P 8.1. Use the Future Land Use Map as a guide to engage in long term planning for population growth and police, fire, and EMS facility needs.

ACTIONS:

8.1.1
Locate new police and fire stations near planned population centers and secure future sites where possible.

8.1.2
Coordinate between police, fire, EMS and other community centers or facilities to co-locate facilities where possible (e.g., community center, health center, police post or station) to reduce costs and gain efficiencies in building construction, parking, maintenance, sharing resources, etc.

» P 8.2. Continue to increase community policing efforts and work with community organizations and schools in neighborhoods dealing with higher crime rates.

ACTIONS:

8.2.1
Increase outreach to the community through bike and walking patrols, neighborhood meetings, and school outreach.

8.2.2
Use precinct place-based data to target areas for increased patrols to respond to high crime areas or current hot spots.

» P 8.3. Coordinate on a regional basis to reduce crime, improve safety, and share resources with the greater region's police and fire districts.

ACTIONS:

8.3.1
Increase cooperation with state police, Sheriff's Office, Lafayette's municipal police departments, and surrounding parishes to share information, target high crime areas, and share training and staffing resources.

8.3.2
Provide crime prevention and safety education to Lafayette residents through coordination between police, fire, and EMS, with particular focus on new residents and those with limited English language skills.

8.3.3
Create a feedback loop for implementation of the MPO's Transportation Safety Plan and Safe Routes to Schools between the MPO and the parish's public safety departments.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 8.4. Improve level of service standards and reduce response time for fire districts.

ACTIONS:

8.4.1
Develop an equitable policy and fee schedule for sharing fire and emergency response services between the city of Lafayette and surrounding municipalities and the unincorporated parish.

8.4.2
Encourage participation in volunteer and paid firefighter employment opportunities and educate students about the type of training and career skills needed.

8.4.3
Encourage planned, phased development that is consistent with the Future Land Use Map, as an approach to help to reduce response times and distance needed to travel between stations and developed areas.

8.4.4
Require that all new construction adhere to a common parish wide address posting guidelines to facilitate enhanced EMS, fire and police service.

» P 8.5. Adequately fund police, fire, and EMS services as population grows.

ACTIONS:

8.5.1
Continue to plan for new stations and staff to serve a growing population, including adjusting staffing models based on density and housing types, through long range strategic plans and capital improvement planning.

8.5.2
Clearly communicate the costs of emergency services and benefit to the community.

» P 8.6. Improve community health and wellness through greater access to health services, reduction in preventable

ACTIONS:

8.6.1
Partner with health providers to improve access to health and wellness services in underserved areas, particularly north of downtown through siting new locations or considering mobile health centers.

8.6.2
Create education and promotional materials about the benefits of active living, recreation, and fresh foods for all ages (Related to Parks and Recreation Policy 4, Resource Conservation and Hazard Mitigation)

8.6.3
Work with LPSS and early education providers to ensure that all children have access to quality early education and childcare.

8.6.4
Work with the Lafayette Transit System to increase service and ensure access to major community health, wellness, schools, and childcare facilities.

GOAL 2

SUPPORT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE LAFAYETTE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM PERFORMANCE.

POLICY:

» P 8.7. Work with LPSS to implement its strategic Turnaround Plan in the short term and continue to improve school district educational opportunities and results.

ACTIONS:

8.7.1
Work with LPSS on facilities planning and continue the development of "safe routes to schools" to encourage safe pedestrian paths with adequate lighting and traffic calming measures.

8.7.2
Involve local schools in neighborhood planning efforts and seek to improve connectivity with the surrounding neighborhoods through neighborhood quality strategies, community use of school facilities, before and after school programs, etc.

8.7.3
Support LPSS in identifying and establishing partnerships / alliances that can facilitate the implementation of the Turnaround Plan.

» P 8.8. Strengthen planning and coordination between LCG and LPSS to improve forecasts for student and facility needs.

ACTIONS:

8.8.1
Assist LPSS in forecasting student enrollment and demographic trends and coordinate planning to locate schools and facilities in areas with adequate roads, water, and sewer infrastructure.

8.8.2
Work with LPSS to evaluate transit needs of high school students and provide solutions to increase transit use.

8.8.3
Develop strategies to improve and mitigate transportation management during peak school arrival and departure times.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 8.9. Partner with local businesses and employers to ensure students have an opportunity to gain skills needed in the local workforce. (Related to Economy Policy 1.)

ACTIONS:

8.9.1
Assist in leveraging the business community, including LEDA and the Chamber of Commerce in connecting directly with students on mentoring and career planning.

8.9.2
Engage business community to support teachers and principals on curriculum development related to career training and opportunity for apprenticeship programs.

» P 8.10. Improve community health by increased outdoor play and education in schools (Related to Parks and Recreation.)

ACTIONS:

8.10.1
Develop educational and environmental based programs and activities at local parks and centers.

8.10.2
Provide afterschool recreational opportunities and coordinate with LPSS to encourage student participation.

» P 8.11. Encourage community involvement in LPSS long range planning and decision making.

ACTIONS:

8.11.1
Create a Joint Planning Committee to recommend and adopt acceptable Level of Service (LOS) Standards for the school district and plan for future school locations and supportive infrastructure.

8.11.2
Create a Technical Advisory Group to support the Joint Planning Committee with professionals appointed by LCG, LPSS, and each municipality. Study development applications and demographic trends to determine if enrollment LOS Standards will be exceeded by planned development and create recommendations for the parish's planning and development review commissions.

8.11.1
Encourage increased sharing of development permit information with LPSS and the Joint Planning Committee to better project future school needs.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

GOAL 3

CONNECT UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE, DOWNTOWN, AND SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS.

POLICY:

» P 8.12. Coordinate with the University of Louisiana to support implementation of its Master Plan and Guiding Principles to realize the benefits of investment in the urban core. (Related to Community Character Policy 9.)

ACTIONS:

8.12.1
Improve physical, streetscape connections from UL Lafayette along Johnston, University, and St. Landry Streets to create a stronger visual relationship with the campus, improve gateways, and create more walkable connections between campus and the surrounding community.

8.12.2
Extend the commercial corridor along Jefferson Street and McKinley to connect downtown with Freetown-Port Rico and UL Lafayette.

8.12.3
Continue to strengthen university and neighborhood relations through student participation in community organizations, partnerships with regional nonprofits, and partnerships with local high schools.

» P 8.13. Expand research, technology, and economic development through UL Lafayette's research park and LEDA. (Related to Economy.)

ACTIONS:

8.13.1
Support UL Lafayette's efforts to develop a master plan for growth of the research park.

8.13.2
Work with LEDA to identity target industry centers and potential tenants.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

GOAL 4

ENCOURAGE A RANGE OF TECHNICAL TRAINING, ADULT EDUCATION, AND HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN LAFAYETTE.

POLICY:

» P 8.14. Collaborate with the parish's colleges, university, and public school system to increase access to technical schools and colleges and match workforce training with employer needs. (Related to Economy.)

ACTIONS:

8.14.1
Survey area businesses to determine gaps in employee skills sets.

8.14.2
Encourage low cost adult education and technical training that provides the type of skills employers are seeking.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

GOAL 5
ENHANCE THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY CENTERS, LIBRARIES, AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS AS CENTERS OF ACTIVITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCES.

POLICY:

» P 8.15. Continue to expand community based classes, events, and opportunities for neighborhood interaction at the parish's libraries, recreation and senior centers.

ACTIONS:

8.15.1
Survey residents through community centers and libraries about community interest in different types of classes or groups.

8.15.2
Create theme based classes focused on health and foods, gardening, book clubs, local culture, arts and crafts.

» P 8.16. Partner with historic, cultural, and arts-based organizations to enhance programs through Lafayette's public buildings and libraries. (Related to Historical and Cultural Resources, Economy.)

ACTIONS:

8.16.1
Create and update free or low cost exhibition space for local historic, cultural, and arts based organizations.

8.16.2
Partner with organizations to design and install public art in public buildings.

8.16.3
Encourage educational and art based sponsored lecture and discussion series at Lafayette's public libraries.

» P 8.17. Reduce costs and improve efficiency through increased sharing of resource and facilities, as well as joint use agreements between agencies.

ACTIONS:

8.17.1
Integrate public buildings into the community through easy access for pedestrians and bicyclists and as part of mixed-use neighborhood development.

8.17.2
Develop public buildings to high standards of energy efficiency, sustainable design practices, and use of native plants in landscape design.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

POLICY:

» P 8.18. Encourage development near community facilities and services (e.g., schools, recreation centers, health facilities) to fully utilize existing services and limit duplication.

ACTIONS:

8.18.1
Strengthen relationships between service providers by encouraging resource sharing and physical linkages between neighborhoods and health providers, recreation centers, and schools.

8.18.2
Develop policies that incentivize developments that complement and link to community facilities and services.

» P 8.19. Co-locate future community facilities to maximize efficiencies in service provision and reduce capital and operating costs.

ACTIONS:

8.19.1
Evaluate space needs, departmental roles, and interagency relationships to determine opportunities to maximize collaboration and improve efficiency.

8.19.2
Upgrade public buildings through energy efficiency improvements, modernization, and technology improvements through a coordinated capital improvements program.

8.19.3
Plan for future space needs located in areas best suited to serve the regional population and co-locate public services where possible (e.g., recreation center, health facility, social service facility).

8.19.4
Increase the number of joint use facilities agreements that encourage school playgrounds to serve some of the community's parks needs and schools to serve some of the need for recreational facilities.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

9. RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

The LCG Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains the parish's 36 parks, 10 recreation centers, pools and golf courses, totaling over 1,500 acres. Within the parks inventory, the Central Parks Network is a network of three urban parks / special event venues supporting the downtown cultural district. They are owned and maintained by LCG and managed by Downtown Lafayette Unlimited. Most of LCG's parks are located within city boundaries and are considered moderate sized parks, ranging between 18 and 70 acres.

Significant city of Lafayette parks include Moore Park close to the I-10/I-49 interchange, Girard Park and Recreation Center, and centrally located City Park, which also includes an 18 hole golf course. In addition, the department operates two other municipal golf courses. Most of Lafayette's parks offer active recreation facilities, including a variety of ball and sports fields, picnic areas, and playgrounds. Some include trails, swimming, and cultural or natural resources. The recent transfer of the Horse Farm property on Johnston Street to LCG has added about 100 acres to the parks inventory. The Horse Farm is planned to be one of the region's signature parks. Its design and transition into a passive community park is being overseen by nonprofit Lafayette Central Park, Inc.

The Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of athletics and sports programs including baseball, basketball, soccer, and tennis. Lafayette's 10 recreation centers offer a variety of low cost and free recreational classes and activities, as well as hosting community group meetings. More than 50,000 youth and adults participated in programs in 2011. Much of the success of these programs is made possible through the volunteer driven Neighborhood Youth Association that assists with organization, coordination, and financial support for the athletic teams.

The Parks and Recreation Department has a staff of about 118 in five divisions. In FY 2011-2012, the Department had an adopted budget of $12.12 million, of which approximately one-fourth was allocated to operations and maintenance. Funding for parks and recreation is a challenge as there is no dedicated millage in the parish and the city millage has remained at the same rate as 1961. The Community Assessment for the Comprehensive Plan, completed in 2012, found that per capita park spending in Lafayette was lower than comparable communities, about $54 per person, compared to $100 per person in Baton Rouge, and $150 per person in Raleigh, NC. The Parks and Recreation Department does not have official level of service standards or adopted park typologies.

OUR COMMUNITY

OUR PEOPLE

OUR ECONOMY

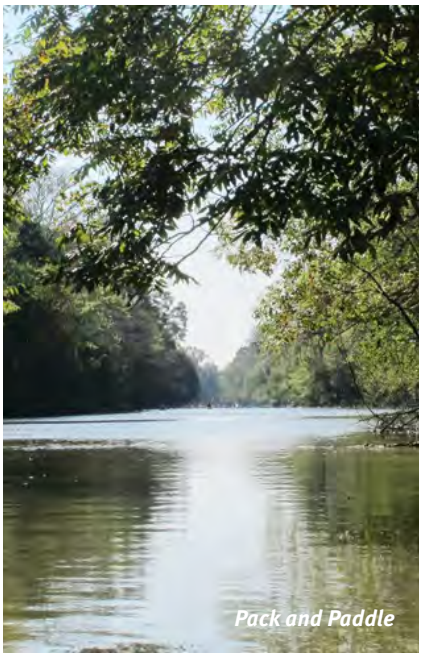
WORKING DRAFT

At present the current park inventory, both active and passive, totals 1,500 acres, or 6.7 acres per 1,000 population in the parish. While this is well below what many comparably sized communities provide, Lafayette is unique in its outdoor recreation culture and extensive natural resources for fishing, hunting, boating and other forms of resource based recreation. Planning for future park and recreation needs is handicapped by the lack of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan identifying park development priorities, and tools to objectively determine them. These could include the creation of a set of Level of Service (LOS) standards for parks and recreational facilities, and for park spacing, tailored to the recreational preferences and participation rates unique to Lafayette, based on a recreational preferences and participation survey.

Horse Farm

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Funding for maintenance or expansion of existing parks and acquisition of new parks.
- Increased demand on urban and neighborhood parks, particularly in areas where growth is targeted (e.g., downtown parks, along University Avenue, and Johnston Street).
- Providing a range of accessible options for recreation, including walking, hiking, biking trails for a growing population.
- Lack of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, as well as, Level of Service Standards to guide planning, measure needs and priorities future park and recreation investment.
- No dedication or fee in lieu requirement for new development or subdivisions or a way for the Parks and Recreation Department to accept and maintain small parcels of land.
- Lack of a greenway network of trails, bike paths, and sidewalks connecting parks and recreation centers.
- Ongoing maintenance needs for recreation centers, equipment, and parks; lack of funds to maintain small neighborhood and pocket parks; and little ability to incorporate new types of parks into the system.
- Lack of public access to the Vermilion River.



Bayou Vermilion

GOAL 1

OPERATE AND MAINTAIN LAFAYETTE PARKS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS TO EXPERIENCE AND ENJOY THE PARISH'S OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION.

POLICY:

» P 9.1. Plan for present and future park and recreation needs and encourage multi-use public spaces that can function in a variety of ways to serve the recreation needs of the surrounding neighborhoods.

ACTIONS:

9.1.1
Create level of service and park classification standards for neighborhood, community and special use parks, and active recreation facilities, based on a community survey of recreation preferences and participation rates and an evaluation of present facility utilization.

9.1.2
Create level of service standards and minimum park size standards for park classifications that differentiate between the needs of different areas of the urbanized and the rural areas of the parish

9.1.3
Develop a set of evaluation criteria to determine how well each park within the Lafayette park system is meeting the community's needs (e.g., appropriately size for facilities and programs, serves multiple age groups, is connected and accessible to surrounding neighborhood or business district, protects diversity of landscape, contributes to watershed health, etc.).

9.1.4
Apply the level of service standards and park classification standards to the current and projected population to determine present and future deficiencies in parks, by classification and recreation facilities.

9.1.5
Prepare a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan that creates a connected park system and identifies priorities, general locations and funding sources to build and operate future park and recreation facilities. Conduct a survey of community needs in relation to existing parks and recreational facilities, as part of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

9.1.6
Develop new parks and expand existing parks to address service gaps and recommended growth areas, and plan for long term population growth and demographic shifts that may impact service needs.

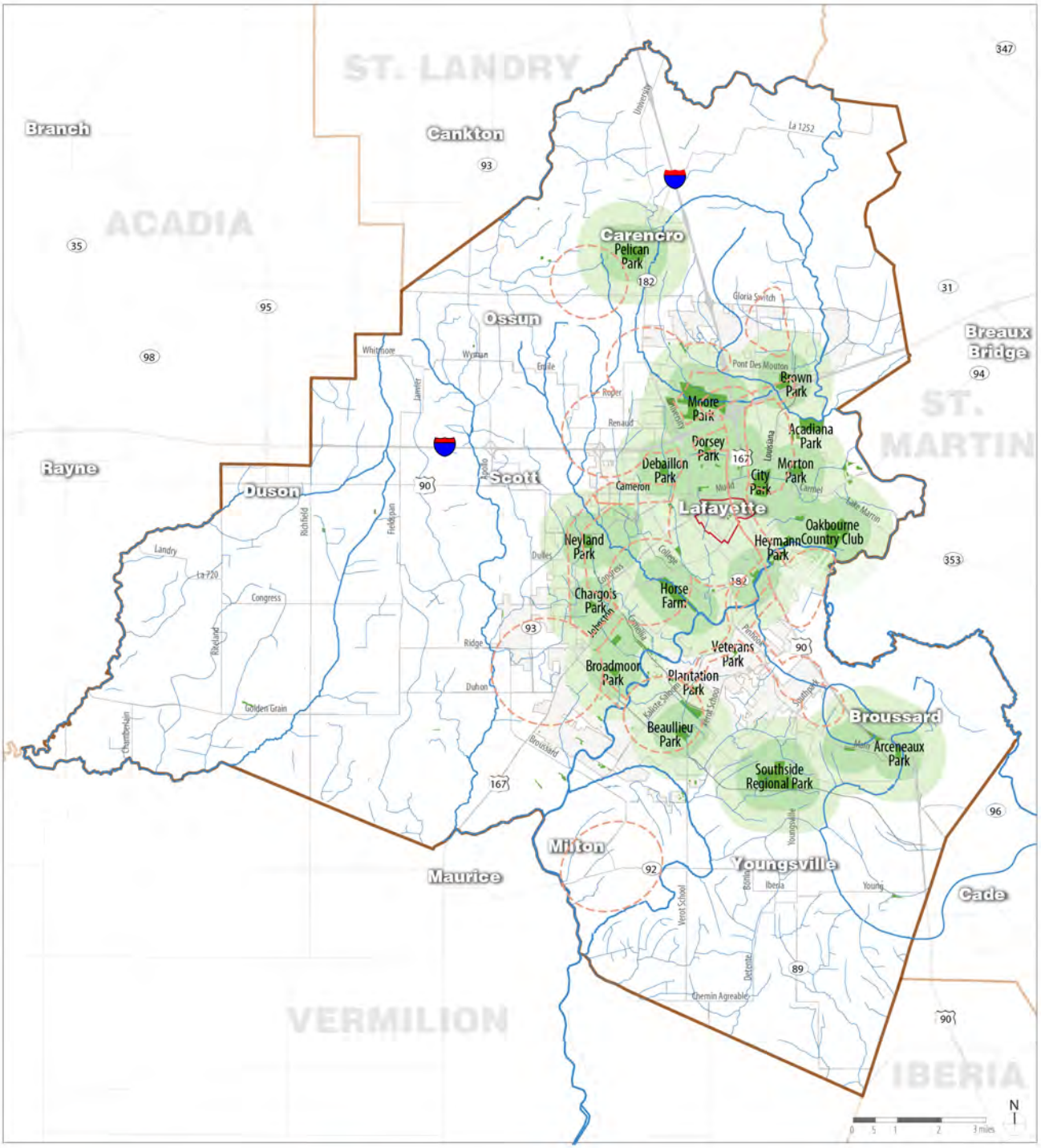
9.1.7
Develop a fair cost sharing approach that provides funds from residents throughout the parish, including those in unincorporated areas.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

Figure 4.4 Future Growth Areas and Park Service Areas



Parks
1/2 mile Service Area
1 mile Service Area
Future Growth Arera
Downtown Lafayette
City of Lafayette

POLICY:

» P 9.2. Increase access and connectivity between and within parks and neighborhoods through a network of safe sidewalks, bike paths/trails, greenways, and transit options.

ACTIONS:

9.2.1
Improve walkability to parks by filling in gaps in the sidewalk network and building new sidewalks in priority locations, including in areas that connect to parks and recreation sites. (Related to Transportation, 2035 Pedestrian Plan.)

9.2.2
Create a network of trails and bikeways that link parks and recreation centers throughout Lafayette. (Related to Transportation, 2035 Bikeway Plan.)

9.2.3
Create an integrated greenway network, connecting with the Horse Farm property / Central Park as a key location.

9.2.4
Increase secure bike parking near entrances to Lafayette's recreational facilities.

9.2.5
Improve safety on off-street trails using lighting, directional signage, and ongoing maintenance of trails and surrounding landscape.

9.2.6
Continue partnering with organizations such as TRAIL (Transportation Recreational Alternatives in LA) to improve trails and bicycle infrastructure in the region. (Related to Transportation.)

9.2.7
Increase transit accessibility to parks by expanding or planning new routes that have stops within a ¼ mile or 5 minute walk of a park. (Related to Transportation.)

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

GOAL 2

EXPAND ROLE OF PARKS AND RECREATION IN PROMOTING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION.

POLICY:

» P 9.3. Increase coordination between health providers and Lafayette Department of Parks and Recreation.

ACTIONS:

9.3.1
Partner with health providers and advocacy organizations to develop opportunities for passive and active recreation that is consistent with the needs of different user groups – children, special needs communities, and seniors.

9.3.2
Share research and evidence based findings that show improved mental and physical health (reduction of chronic diseases) related to the use and impact of parks and recreation sites.

» P 9.4. Communicate value of parks and recreational programming in improving the health of the Lafayette community.

ACTIONS:

9.4.1
Develop a promotional campaign to encourage active recreation through walking, biking, and programing currently available in Lafayette's parks and recreational facilities.

9.4.2
Consider parks and recreation sites that are best suited to host farmers market and/or dedicate space for community gardens and urban agriculture.

9.4.3
Partner with school districts to increase educational use of parks (e.g., nature programming) and recreational activity.

9.4.4
As maintenance is required, increase variety in parks and playgrounds to serve different needs and provide variety between parks.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

POLICY:

» P 9.5. Support education through outdoor play and recreation.

ACTIONS:

9.5.1
Coordinate with school district, afterschool programming, and community groups in design and programming of parks and recreation centers near schools.

9.5.2
Encourage outdoor educational programs and "classrooms" that may include special opportunities for science, writing, or environmental projects through partnerships with Lafayette schools similar to the Nature Station in Acadiana Park.

9.5.3
Continue to partner with schools and organizations (e.g., Boy Scouts / Girl Scouts) to increase resource and facility sharing through shared use agreements.

9.5.4
Design parks that become community meeting places with play opportunities that are available to children of all levels of ability.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

GOAL 3

UTILIZE PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND WATERWAYS TO EXPAND THE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK.

POLICY:

» P 9.6. Protect the quality of the Vermilion River and its use for passive and active recreation.

ACTIONS:

9.6.1
Consider requirements to increase landscape buffers or setbacks from the Vermilion River to filter and reduce potential runoff and improve water quality.

9.6.2
Involve the Bayou Vermilion District in the review of all zoning and subdivision review of properties adjacent to the Vermilion River.

9.6.3
Increase special events (e.g., kayak trips) and educational events at and connecting Bayou Vermilion's parks – Beaver Park, Rotary Point, and Southside Park.

» P 9.7. Communicate the value of green infrastructure's essential environmental, economic, and social benefits (e.g., community health) to the community.

ACTIONS:

9.7.1
Work with LCG Departments, including the Public Works Environmental Quality Division, to coordinate communications materials, Best Management Practices (BMPs), and create incentive programs to encourage residents to implement stormwater management practices. (Outreach and Communication – consider new Public Information Officer.)

9.7.2
Communicate the numerous benefits of green infrastructure practices to the community through education, the website and social media, and outreach. (Outreach and Communication – consider new Public Information Officer.)

» P 9.8. Use parks to improve water quality, increase tree canopy, and connect people with multi-use trails.

ACTIONS:

9.6.1
Create a connected park system through developing new parks as needed and identified in the Parks Master Plan and increasing trail, bicycle, and greenway connections between parks and

9.6.2
Create best practices demonstration projects (e.g., rain gardens, pervious pavers, green roofs on parks and recreation buildings, bioswales) and communicate their benefits in

9.6.3
Prioritize park and recreation sites for planting new trees.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

RESOURCE CONSERVATION & HAZARD MITIGATION

Lafayette Parish is part of the Bayou Vermilion Watershed area. A watershed is an area of land that drains to the waterway. The Vermilion River (or Bayou Vermilion) is the major hydrological feature of our watershed. Approximately 8 miles of the river flow through the city of Lafayette, roughly paralleling Johnston Street. This is considered the "urban river corridor." From Pinhook Bridge southward, the Vermilion River is considered navigable for larger vessels by the Army Corps of Engineers. Stewardship over the Bayou Vermilion is the responsibility of the Lafayette Parish Bayou Vermilion District. Aside from the Vermilion River, the parish contains several other important waterways that are part of the Teche–Vermilion Watershed. The primary groundwater resource of Lafayette Parish is the Chicot aquifer system, followed by the Atchafalaya aquifer.

Lafayette maintains a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems, known as a MS4, with the state's Department of Environmental Quality that mitigates watershed protection and stormwater management. Lafayette's stormwater drainage system includes both engineered and natural waterways. Flooding due to poor drainage and the flow capacity limitations of the natural drainage system are significant issues. In addition, large swathes of the parish are located within the 100 year flood zone. Stormwater runoff and outfalls particularly impact the quality of the parish's surface water resources. Pollution in the Vermilion River is a health and environmental concern, but has been improving over the last several years. Factors contributing to the shift include reduced cattle ranching in the north part of the parish, efforts to reduce runoff from farming operations, increased natural vegetation buffers along the river, reduced individual septic from subdivisions, and increased enforcement of commercial dumping.

While the region remains vulnerable to flooding, storms, and high winds, its higher elevation (36 feet above sea level) and location on the Louisiana Prairie Terrace means that the region does not experience the same flooding risks as areas to the south and west. However, the Bayou Vermilion has a limited capacity for drainage and flooding is a major concern to citizens and businesses in flood prone areas. The Lafayette area historically averages 55-60 inches of rainfall per year and it is projected that the "100 year flood" is actually happening as often as every 10 years. In 2012, the parish declared a state of emergency due to a major flash flood that stranded many residents, hitting Carencro particularly hard. FEMA's preliminary floodplain mapping (draft Flood Insurance Rate Maps) significantly expands the areas of the parish classified as special hazard areas or within the 100 year floodplain.

OUR COMMUNITY

OUR PEOPLE

OUR ECONOMY

WORKING DRAFT

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

- Protection of the region's waterways from pollutants and erosion caused by stormwater runoff.
- Declining surface water quality thereby increasing the possibility of the state's DEQ restricting the amount of discharge from commercial, industrial, and the municipal sewer system.
- Conserving open space and natural resources as the parish's population grows.
- Monitoring development in and near sensitive environmental areas.
- Creating an integrated watershed approach for stormwater management that provides improvements in surface water quality and community recreation.
- Preserving and enhancing the region's tree canopy.
- Protecting people and property from storms and flooding.

Horse Farm Tree Canopy

Illes des Cannes Coulee

GOAL 1
CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

POLICY:

» P 10.1. Enhance the protection of rivers, coulees, and wetlands to improve water quality and stormwater management.

ACTIONS:

10.1.1
Prepare a comprehensive green infrastructure plan with Low Impact Development strategies for the parish to address stormwater management, modifications to the storm sewer system, and integration with the open space and trails system.

10.1.2
Monitor and maintain existing drainage network throughout the parish.

10.1.3
Increase Bayou Vermilion District capacity and involve the district in review of all applications for development within the district boundary.

10.1.4
Continue to work with agricultural landowners and farmers to reduce animal waste and fertilizers from entering waterways.

10.1.5
Increase education to the public on the benefits of integrated green infrastructure practices in reducing stormwater, improving water quality, and providing potential recreational benefits.

10.1.6
Create incentives and develop Low Impact Development criteria for residential and commercial developments.

10.1.7
Work toward an inspection program for individual on lot septic systems.

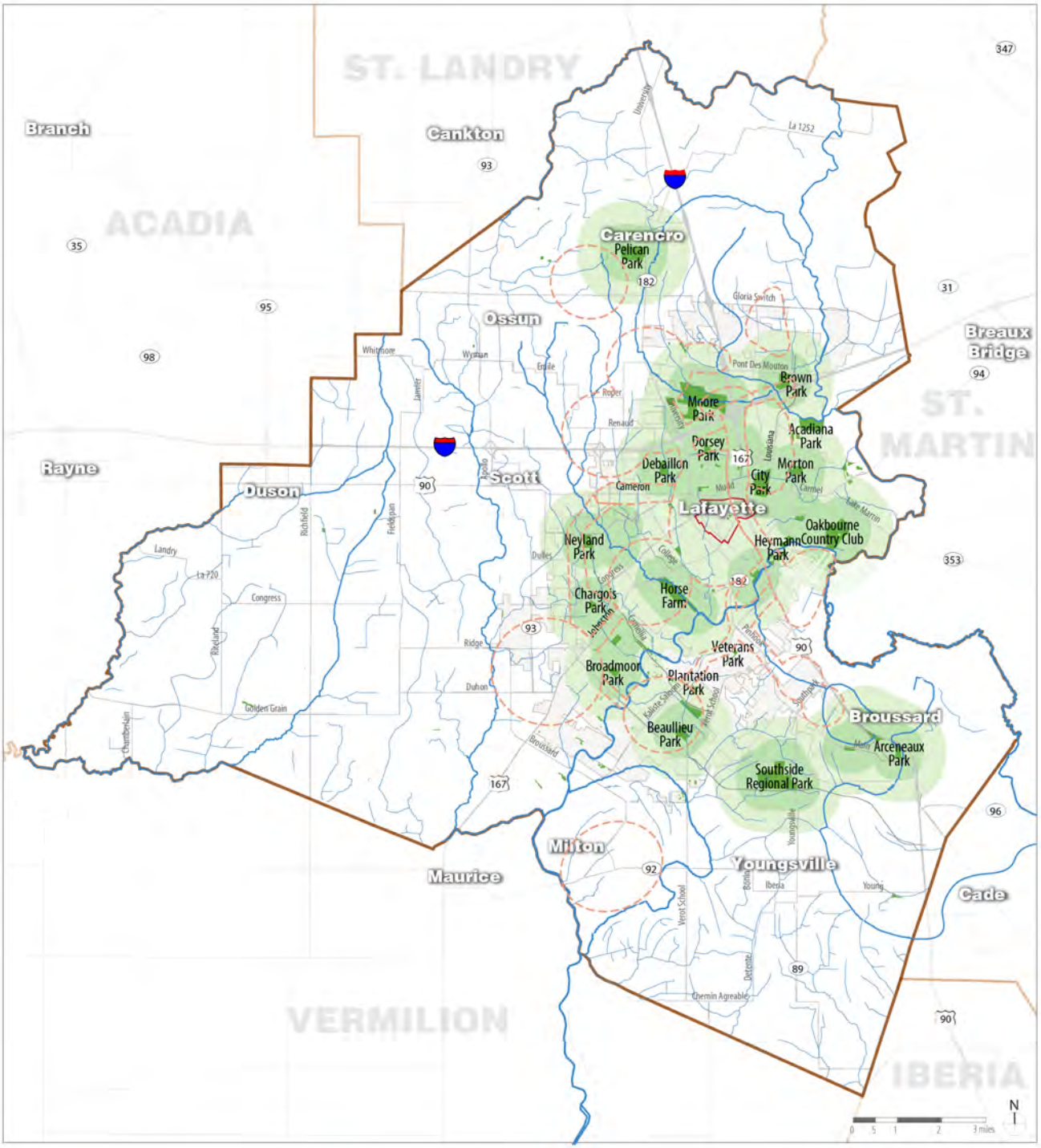
10.1.8
Using GIS, create a system for prioritizing waterways in need of buffers and improved water quality.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

Figure 4.5 Green Infrastructure Opportunity Areas



Parks
1/2 mile Service Area
1 mile Service Area
Future Growth Arera
Downtown Lafayette
City of Lafayette

POLICY:

» P 10.2. Increase the urban tree canopy in established and new neighborhoods, as well as in newly developing areas.

ACTIONS:

10.2.1
Develop a consolidated set of street tree planting guidelines that are sensitive to surrounding context and use and align conflicting rules.

10.2.2
Revise land development codes to encourage tree preservation over tree replacement.

10.2.3
Work with organizations like Trees Acadiana to encourage landowners to plant native trees on their property through grants, incentives, and assistance with installation.

10.2.4
Partner with local nurseries to offer discounts or promotions to encourage planting of native trees.

» P 10.3. Encourage agricultural preservation and local food production. (Related to Community Character.)

ACTIONS:

10.3.1
Work with farmers to identify challenges and barriers to continued farming related to land development and the transportation network.

10.3.2
Encourage implementation of best management practices such as integrated pest management, reduced use of nitrogen fertilizers, and increased buffers to limit runoff to waterways.

10.3.3
Work with farmers to increase direct sales through farmers markets, u-pick locations, and value added products.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that

WORKING DRAFT

GOAL 2

PROTECT PEOPLE AND PROPERTY FROM HAZARDS.

POLICY:

» P 10.4. Reduce potential property damage through sound building and site design practices. (Related to Utilities.)

ACTIONS:

10.4.1
Continue to require building elevating and flood proofing in the Special Hazard Areas.

10.4.2
Increase onsite stormwater management through education and incentives

» P 10.5. Increase open space and create a green infrastructure network that provides recreational opportunities, helps alleviate stormwater runoff, and assists in protecting the parish from storm hazards. (Related to Parks and Recreation.)

ACTIONS:

10.5.1
Create a green infrastructure network through planning, coordination between departments, easements, and/or land acquisition that is focused on improving resiliency from storm events.

10.5.2
Focus on improving health of wetlands plant and animal communities to improve filtering of water and drainage.

10.5.3
Increase plant buffers along all waterways to reduce erosion and protect properties from flooding.

10.5.4
Use guidance on best practices – e.g., Best Practices Manual for Development in Coastal Louisiana – to guide planning and design.

10.5.5
Develop a greenways plan and work with property owners to create easements or other means to provide recreational access (i.e., walking/biking trail) along coulees within the city of Lafayette. (Related to Recreation and Open Space Policy 2.)

10.5.6
Connect waterways to parks and allow community access through trails, signage, boating facilities (e.g., launches, boat rentals), and fishing piers.

METRICS:

» # of this
» % of that