

APRIL 2025

Imagine ABBEVILLE

DRAFT MASTER PLAN

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A SPECIAL THANKS TO

Residents of Abbeville who gave their time and input to the plan

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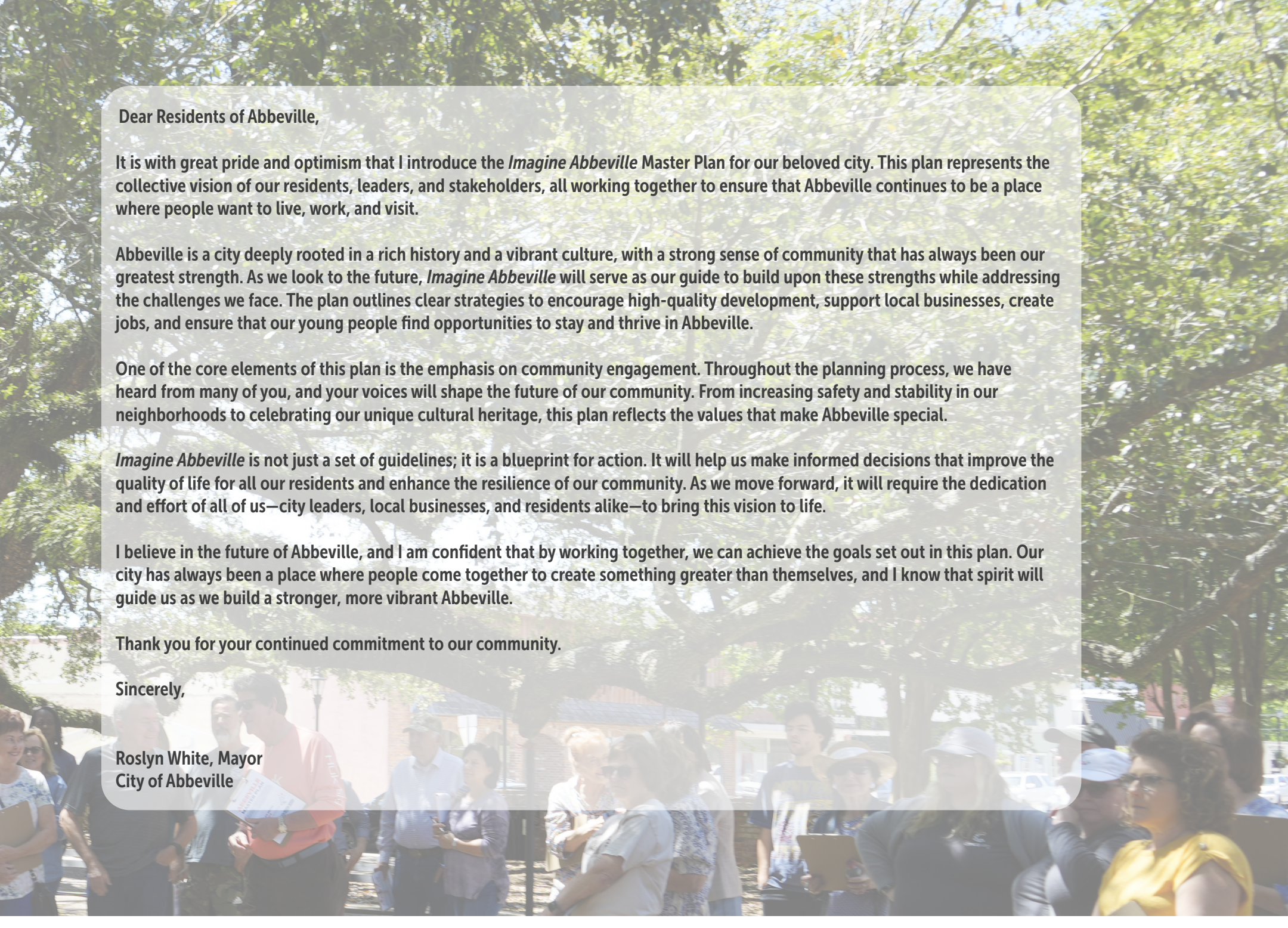
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CHAPTER 1

THE ABBEVILLE VISION





Dear Residents of Abbeville,

It is with great pride and optimism that I introduce the *Imagine Abbeville* Master Plan for our beloved city. This plan represents the collective vision of our residents, leaders, and stakeholders, all working together to ensure that Abbeville continues to be a place where people want to live, work, and visit.

Abbeville is a city deeply rooted in a rich history and a vibrant culture, with a strong sense of community that has always been our greatest strength. As we look to the future, *Imagine Abbeville* will serve as our guide to build upon these strengths while addressing the challenges we face. The plan outlines clear strategies to encourage high-quality development, support local businesses, create jobs, and ensure that our young people find opportunities to stay and thrive in Abbeville.

One of the core elements of this plan is the emphasis on community engagement. Throughout the planning process, we have heard from many of you, and your voices will shape the future of our community. From increasing safety and stability in our neighborhoods to celebrating our unique cultural heritage, this plan reflects the values that make Abbeville special.

Imagine Abbeville is not just a set of guidelines; it is a blueprint for action. It will help us make informed decisions that improve the quality of life for all our residents and enhance the resilience of our community. As we move forward, it will require the dedication and effort of all of us—city leaders, local businesses, and residents alike—to bring this vision to life.

I believe in the future of Abbeville, and I am confident that by working together, we can achieve the goals set out in this plan. Our city has always been a place where people come together to create something greater than themselves, and I know that spirit will guide us as we build a stronger, more vibrant Abbeville.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our community.

Sincerely,

Roslyn White, Mayor
City of Abbeville

Introduction and Purpose

The City of Abbeville is rooted in an enduring cultural heritage. This is evident in the preservation of its historic places like Magdalen Square and Frank's Theatre. Louisiana is known for its food, and Abbeville contributes to this treasured legacy. Restaurants—like Shucks!, Riverfront, Dupuy's, and more—pay homage to the area's coastal heritage. Steen's Syrup and Cajun Power Sauce are iconic brands on millions of family tables. Several marquee events—the Giant Omelette Celebration, Louisiana Cattle Festival, and Day Lily Festival and Garden Show—draw residents and visitors together to experience this unique place.

Starting in January 2024, the mayor called on residents and stakeholders for their input into a master plan that would build upon these assets and create a framework to guide the city into its future. This effort grew out of the *Imagine Abbeville* effort that began in 2022. Visioning sessions, walking tours, and meetings led to a stronger collective understanding of the community's strengths and challenges. Everyone's contributions pointed toward a future that would encourage high-quality development, new businesses, work opportunities, and housing that retain young people while ensuring aging residents can remain in the place they love.

Imagine Abbeville charts the community's vision and translates aspirations into action steps. This vision was developed in conjunction with the citizen advisory committee, combined with upon feedback from community input at public meetings, the committee helped to guide the planning effort. The goals and strategies that emerged from the planning process are meant to direct public and private investment as well as development. Future success will depend on a concerted effort by city leaders and the community to ensure development is consistent with the vision. When followed, the plan can act as a blueprint for the city to guide decision-making to improve the quality of life and community resilience for Abbeville's residents.



Image: 64 Parishes

Chefs at the Giant Omelette Celebration.

Ask someone to describe Abbeville in one word, and you might hear responses such as quaint, historic, beautiful, or timeless. Abbeville has physical charm as a result of its historic buildings and natural features as well as cultural charm rooted in its French and Cajun history. Its compact development pattern also contributes to its small-town appeal. Nothing is too far away, so you are likely to meet your daily needs with little effort—and run into someone you know in the process.

Abbeville is also modernizing, and change brings both opportunities and challenges. If managed correctly, change provides a means to reinforce the attributes of Abbeville that people have grown to love and create new opportunities for future Abbeville residents. Like any community, challenges also emerge over time. Deliberate and thoughtful planning is the key to navigate and address the challenges of the day in a way that builds a strong, vibrant community in years to come.

Building on Abbeville's Strengths

Abbeville is a community of neighborhoods.

Over half of Abbeville's land is devoted to residential uses. These neighborhoods are the cornerstone of the community. They define who Abbeville is today and are assets to leverage to create the Abbeville of the future. Strengthening neighborhoods by promoting quality infill development and redevelopment will meet the needs of the residents of tomorrow.

Abbeville's housing stock is aging with over 60% of the city's houses built before 1979. Nearly 30% of households are spending 30% or more of their monthly income to cover their housing costs. Residents would like to see an increase in the number of available houses and apartments, especially low–density multifamily and smaller single family–housing options. There is also an opportunity to repair or demolish vacant and abandoned structures within neighborhoods and replace them with new housing or other neighborhood assets. Doing so will improve access to safe, high-quality housing for people at all stages of life, living situations, and income levels.

Great neighborhoods are not made by housing alone. In addition to ensuring basic services like water, drainage, transportation, and sewerage are well-maintained, making public spaces within our neighborhoods more welcoming and developing more positive programs for young people can increase community safety, improve quality of life, and foster a distinct sense of place.

Abbeville has a compact development pattern.

Abbeville has a tight grid of streets, and development is relatively concentrated in the community's six square miles of land area. This development pattern can be helpful for the 20% of the residents of Abbeville who have no access to a vehicle, which is more than double the state average of 8.3%. Additionally, Abbeville has higher rates of physical inactivity as well as higher rates of many health challenges such as obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and stroke when compared to the parish. A compact network of streets creates a more connected system with shorter blocks making it easier for people to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines by walking or biking with infrastructure improvements.

Community members want improvements that will better serve all residents, like improved and additional sidewalks, new crosswalks, bike lanes, and public transit. Facilitating and encouraging people to walk and bike around town not only improves access to services for individuals who do not drive or have access to cars but promotes more physical activity that can help to address the health challenges many in Abbeville are currently dealing with.



Village of Abbeville map, circa, 1868.

Abbeville is a regional hub and cultural destination.

Abbeville was named the parish seat for Vermilion Parish in 1854, making it the center of government and a regional destination as a result. Today, Abbeville is home to festivals and cultural celebrations that draw people from the region and state to experience the city's historic charm, great food, warm people, and beautiful natural environment. However, economic benefits of being such a regional destination are not enjoyed equitably across the population. Abbeville has lower income and higher poverty rates, including child poverty, compared to the parish and to the rest of the state.

Residents would like to expand the city's local business ecosystem with strategies like business incubation, networking, and refined permitting processes in order to increase economic opportunities within the community. Carefully planning about how to create hubs around some of the city's biggest economic assets—such as the airport, hospital, and downtown—will encourage economic expansion and create more jobs available to the residents of Abbeville. Additionally, South Louisiana Community College (SoLAcc) houses opportunities to build a strong workforce pipeline that will help attract new business and investment to Abbeville.

Residents would also like to see increased opportunities for community gathering via festivals and regular programming for all of the residents and cultures in Abbeville. This would provide additional opportunities to build strong social ties within the community and celebrate Abbeville's cultural and racial diversity.



Abbeville Daylily Festival and Garden Show.

Source: Vermilion Parish Tourist Commission

Abbeville has natural beauty.

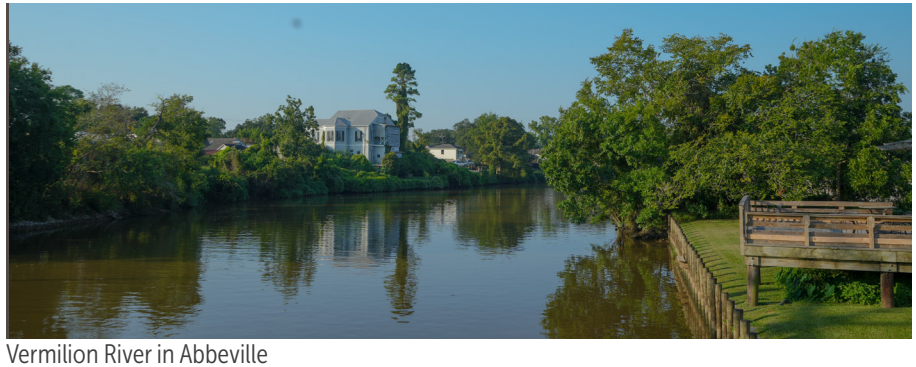
Abbeville was founded along the banks of the Vermilion River for trade and transportation opportunities. Over time the role of natural assets and open space has evolved. The city is the benefits from South Louisiana's beautiful terrain, which has given rise to the regional destinations such as America's Wetland Birding Trail–Vermilion Loop, and other ecological attractions, including Palmetto Island State Park. However, only 2% of Abbeville is dedicated to recreational and park land, many parks are underutilized, and the river has limited public access.

Residents want to improve connections to the natural environment and each other by increasing access to the Vermilion River, parks, and trails so that these amenities are more safe, attractive, and accessible. Quick wins such as organizing community volunteers to participate in park cleanups and making minor improvements can go a long way toward creating pride in ownership of park spaces. Eliminating fencing and improving lighting will increase use of neighborhood parks. These simple initiatives will enhance the overall health, safety, and quality of life within the community.

Abbeville is home to a young, diverse, and changing population.

The median age of an Abbeville resident in 2022 was just over 33 years old compared to over 37 for Louisiana as a whole. Additionally, nearly 58% of the residents of Abbeville are Black, Asia, and other ethnic minorities, compared to approximately 41% in the rest of the state. However, the overall population has declined by about 1,000 residents since 2010.

In order to retain residents, Abbeville wants to be attractive to the young population now and as they grow and evolve through different stages of life. The hope is to reverse the population stagnation that Abbeville has experienced in the last 20 years. Vibrant neighborhoods, a strong local economy, increased safety, and a community knitted community together with improved mobility and healthy green space will provide the quality of life necessary to keep Abbeville a great place to call home for years to come.



Vermilion River in Abbeville



Councilwoman Broussard at District D walk audit

Abbeville's Vision

Community Vision Statement

Abbeville is a welcoming, safe, and attractive community that residents are proud to call home and where others want to visit and invest. Its vibrant local economy makes it an anchor for the region, and our great neighborhoods attract residents in all phases of life. Abbeville is shaped by its proximity to the resources of the Vermilion River and Bay and pays tribute to its rich history and cultural heritage while remaining optimistic about its future.



Guiding Principles

The following principles highlight the community's core values that emerged from the public engagement process. These principles formed the basis for the master plan's goals and strategies and should be the city's North Star as elected officials, residents, and stakeholders make decisions about the future.

Strong, attractive neighborhoods are essential building blocks of a vibrant city.

Neighborhoods are the foundation upon which Abbeville is built. Strong, attractive, and stable neighborhoods are critical to realizing the vision articulated by residents during the planning process. Investing in Abbeville's neighborhoods–ensuring they are safe places to live and raise families, providing necessary amenities to meet daily needs, and maintaining quality of life–is a means to strengthen Abbeville as a whole and secure its future.

Access to everyday needs and new experiences results in a better quality of life.

A vibrant community provides ready access to what people need for daily living–from healthy food to safe homes to medical care–as well as opportunities and experiences that enrich their lives. Every resident deserves the social, economic, educational, and cultural support they need to have a positive quality of life.

Thriving communities retain residents and attract visitors and newcomers.

Thriving communities are places where generation after generation of families want to continue living and where people want to visit time and again. Abbeville has many assets to build on–such as its historic downtown, small-town charm, proximity to nature and big city services–that will continue to embrace families and draw visitors.

History and community deserve to be commemorated and celebrated.

The warmth and hospitality–along with the resilience–that many associate with Abbeville are anchored in its rich, distinctive heritage. It shows in the historic architecture as well as the festivals and celebrations throughout the year. These types of physical and experiential reminders of where a community came from and who a community is composed of are cornerstones that create Abbeville's sense of place.

Good community design fosters cohesion, connection, and health.

How strongly residents are connected to one another has multiple benefits to people's health and well-being. Abbeville's built environment can either help to support or make it difficult to create a tightly knit and well-connected community. Social connections can improve when people have more access to green space (like parks and areas with trees), places to walk and play, and safe neighborhoods where people want to continue to live.

Financial investments must meet both current and future community needs.

Making significant changes does not always require investing more but rather investing smartly. When money is strategically directed, the result can have multiple positive effects. For example, investing in park improvements can have several benefits, such as providing a safe place for children to play; improving health by encouraging exercise; addressing environmental challenges such as heat by increasing tree canopy and shade; and improving social connection within the community by providing space for neighbors to visit and connect. All of these benefits improve people's quality of life.

Top Strategic Initiatives

As a whole, *Imagine Abbeville* represents the vision expressed by Abbeville residents. Several projects and actions described within the plan have been designated as high priorities. If these are addressed first, they will have a greater impact for more people or a catalytic impact, which means subsequent changes will happen more quickly.

LAND USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Align ordinances with the Vision Map.

Abbeville currently has limited development regulations. To ensure that future development aligns with the community's goals, Abbeville should implement regulations to reflect the priorities in the Vision Map, outlined later in this plan. This may involve developing subdivision regulations and zoning or form-based land use codes as well as reviewing and updating building codes. The following examples are some key actions that support this initiative.

- Develop and adopt a subdivision ordinance.
- Develop land use regulations to ensure private development is consistent with the future land use vision map.
- Create and staff a planning and development department charged with coordinating implementation of this master plan as well as development activities within Abbeville.

Formalize a comprehensive Capital Improvement Program.

A well-structured Capital Improvement Program (CIP) can help Abbeville prioritize and track infrastructure needs, ensuring that investments are made efficiently and effectively in a way that supports the land use and development patterns desired by the community. The CIP should identify critical projects, allocate resources, and monitor progress. The following examples are some key actions that support this initiative.

- Conduct a capacity analysis of current infrastructure and identify gaps where anticipated land use will need additional infrastructure.



Men working on intersection improvements

- Develop and maintain a consolidated inventory of capital improvements needs for water, wastewater, drainage, and electricity that accounts for existing and projected needs to accommodate growth and useful life of facilities.
- Develop a consolidated five-year capital improvement program, identifying budgetary needs and potential sources of revenue to cover anticipated expenses.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Support and invest in neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods are the bedrock of the community. To strengthen existing neighborhoods, Abbeville should provide resources and support for community-identified needs in order to foster a sense of place and improve the quality of life for residents. The following examples are some key actions that support this initiative.

- Consider amendments to Article VIII—Landscape to provide for buffering, screening and transitions between residential and non-residential uses.
- Develop an ordinance to create separation among commercial, industrial, and residential uses to buffer incompatible impacts to residential neighborhoods.
- Explore options for police substations in neighborhoods or support other actions to increase positive community and police activities.
- Utilize crime data to prioritize public investments to improve visibility such as brush clearing and lighting. Map crime data along with improvements to track change over time.
- Identify quick wins that can involve the community in park improvements and increase ownership and use of park assets within a neighborhood.

Diversify housing choices and improve affordability.

Abbeville should explore strategies to increase housing affordability, such as promoting mixed-use development and supporting the development of additional housing types. This will help to ensure that a diverse range of people can find suitable housing in the community. The following examples are some key actions that support this initiative.

- Through public–private partnerships and engagement with housing developers, support the creation of diverse housing choices specifically for Abbeville's aging population, such as accessory dwelling units, smaller housing types, and senior housing.
- Allow a wider range of housing within neighborhoods, consistent with the Vision Map. These include, but are not limited to,
    - Duplexes or townhomes;
    - Small-scale mixed-use or multifamily units near commercial corridors;
    - Senior housing;
    - Cottage houses; and,
    - Apartments and condos.



Residential development in Abbeville.

MOBILITY

Improve road safety for all modes of transportation.

To enhance safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists, Abbeville should implement measures like improved sidewalks, bike lanes, and traffic calming techniques. This will make the city more accessible and encourage active transportation. The following examples are some key actions that support this initiative.

- Install crosswalks, sidewalk connections, and bicycle connections in priority areas (near schools, parks, and other public facilities).
- Adopt Streets for All policies and regulations. Identify initiatives that will improve road safety for all roadway users.
- Identify high–priority corridors for safety improvements based on crash data. Work with the Acadiana Planning Commission and LaDOTD to prioritize roadway safety countermeasures.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Capitalize on development opportunities around economic anchors.

Abbeville should identify opportunities to leverage its existing economic anchors, such as the airport and hospital, and downtown to promote development and create jobs. This may involve creating mixed-use zones or providing incentives for businesses to locate near these anchors. Key actions that support this initiative include:

- Conduct market study to determine potential for uses and development opportunities around the airport that is coordinated with a detailed corridor study of Veterans Memorial Drive.
- Develop special overlay regulations to encourage development of commercial uses complementary to the hospital such as medical offices, lodging, and retail.
- Develop an overlay district to encourage supportive development around the Riviana Rice Mill, such as housing and additional retail and services.
- Actively market vacant commercial properties and periodically organize vacant building tours with real estate and financing professionals.



Small business in downtown Abbeville.



Baseball game at A.A. Comeaux Park.

ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACE

Improve access to parks and open space.

To enhance the quality of life for residents and support outdoor recreation, Abbeville should invest in the creation and maintenance of parks, green spaces, and recreational facilities. This will provide opportunities for exercise, relaxation, and community gatherings.The following examples are some key actions that support this initiative.

- Conduct a survey of residents to identify how the parks are currently being used and desired uses for each park site.
- Create a long–term park improvement plan tied to a multi–year capital improvement budget.
- Identify underutilized or neglected spaces in neighborhoods for beautification, safety, and improvement efforts.
- Prioritize lighting improvements in and around parks.
- Provide low- or no-cost activities for people of all ages in the city's public park.


STEEN'S
PURE CANE SYR
NO PRESERVATIVES



CHAPTER 2

ABOUT THE PLAN

How the Plan was Developed

Initiated by the City of Abbeville and funded by both the City of Abbeville and the Delta Regional Authority, the *Imagine Abbeville* planning process was designed from the start to involve the entire community. Public engagement was a foundational element when planning for the city's future. The effort had to include residents of all ages and from diverse backgrounds because everyone has unique perspectives on what they and their neighbors need and want. Residents, as well as business owners and other stakeholders, are the experts who can identify important concerns and offer ideas for action that fit the local context and culture. By joining together, community members can build ownership and public support so that the plan reflects their combined hopes and wishes and provides a guide for what the people want even when their community's leadership changes.

Over the 16-month process to develop and adopt this plan, several opportunities were provided to allow the public to share their input. At the April 2024 visioning session, attendees learned more about the current conditions in Abbeville, from the demographics of their neighbors to the environmental issues they face. Together, they shared what they loved about the city, expressed what they'd like to see improved, and offered input into a future vision for Abbeville. During four walking tours, one in each council district, participants walked along specific routes and shared their feedback on mobility, safety, neighborhood atmosphere, and economic development opportunities. Two more public meetings were held in June 2024 to refine the draft strategies included in the plan.

More information about the planning process is located in the Appendix.

This effort also engaged a 18-member advisory committee. The members represented various areas of expertise and diverse groups. They worked with the planning team to be part of community meetings, review draft documents, offer feedback, and provide input on community engagement activities.



Downtown Abbeville walking tour to gather citizen input.

How the Plan Is Organized

This plan begins by outlining a foundational understanding of the people and conditions that comprise Abbeville today. This snapshot of the community—along with an understanding of trends and changes over time—helps to show the city's current direction. This information is essential so that residents, elected officials, and stakeholders know what areas need attention and can decide in what order to address them.

The plan includes five chapters that outline the path forward to achieve the community's vision: Land Use and Infrastructure, Housing and Neighborhoods, Mobility, Economic Development, and Environment and Open Space. For each content area, the chapters identify goals (what the community wants to accomplish), objectives (how the goals will be accomplished), and action steps (specific tasks to meet the objectives).

Land Use and Infrastructure

This chapter focuses on creating a desirable built environment framed around a future vision map that illustrates how the community wants to grow and change over time. The community deserves to have sustainable development that will use as few resources as possible, last for decades to come, and be equitable—giving benefits to people of all ages, income levels, and abilities. The plan includes development priorities (what's most important to build) as well as infrastructure planning (what services are needed, like sewers, electricity, and roads). Furthermore, land use decisions don't just determine what is constructed; these choices also significantly influence transportation patterns, accessibility, and economic opportunities. Recommendations about land use can also address how to preserve natural resources, protect ecologically sensitive areas, and promote a walkable and bikeable community.

Housing and Neighborhoods

Housing and neighborhoods are foundational hallmarks of vibrant communities. This chapter outlines how to meet the housing needs of Abbeville's residents and create and maintain safe and desirable neighborhoods. Abbeville has many great neighborhoods, but it also has challenges that need to be addressed—housing affordability, safety, and the need for diverse housing options. Future housing strategies include expanding housing choices, supporting neighborhood revitalization, promoting affordable housing, and addressing vacancy. By implementing these strategies, Abbeville can create a more vibrant and inclusive community for all residents.

Mobility

The transportation network is made up of roads, sidewalks, and bike lanes; together these modes provide routes for people to travel within and through the community. This chapter lays out a mobility framework for providing safe and accessible transportation options for all of Abbeville's residents. Expanding transportation options to better accommodate walking and biking significantly improves mobility in Abbeville. By prioritizing safety, connectivity, and accessibility, the plan can help realize a more livable and equitable city for everyone.

Economic Development

This chapter details how to create conditions that support economic growth and prosperity in Abbeville by focusing on strengthening its existing economic base while seeking opportunities for future growth. Actions in this chapter create a more vibrant and economically sustainable community.

Environment and Open Space

This chapter focuses on the natural assets and environmental conditions in Abbeville. Environmental issues include improving water quality, mitigating flood risks, enhancing green spaces, and promoting sustainable development. To achieve these goals, Abbeville should prioritize actions such as investing in green infrastructure, strengthening flood resilience, and expanding access to parks and open spaces. By addressing these environmental challenges, Abbeville can build a more sustainable and resilient future while also providing outdoor amenities for residents.

Small Area Plans

Small area planning is a tool to focus conversation, ideas, and activities around improving a particular area of town. This chapter lays out a methodology for developing small area plans in Abbeville as well as provides more detailed analysis and recommendations for two corridors, Lyman Street and AA Comeaux Memorial Drive/Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. It provides strategies to improve both of these corridors by taking advantage of planned investments that are bringing catalytic change to the area.

Strategic Implementation Plan

Adopting this plan, while an important step, is only the first step in a much longer and more detailed process to enacting change. Putting this plan into action will take the support and action of residents and community leaders from all parts of Abbeville. The chapter outlines the overall approach to how this plan should be implemented, identifies important initiatives for focus, and provides a framework for tracking progress and updating the plan to keep it relevant to the needs of Abbeville as they change.

Appendix

The appendix contains information about prior plans and policies that were used to develop the *Imagine Abbeville* plan, more details about the outreach and engagement process undertaken to create this plan, and an overview of neighborhood initiatives.



Imagine Abbeville public engagement.

How to Use the Plan

The implementation process requires champions and leaders who are dedicated to driving the incremental steps that culminate in realizing the community's vision. Policy makers, neighbors, and other local partners all have a role to play in charting Abbeville's course to the future. This plan will be a touchstone document that affects all manner of decision-making at the local level. Although the plan is not a regulatory document, it should be used to guide how choices are made. Both the Planning Commission and the City Council shall consider the plan before adopting local laws, ordinances, or regulations as required by state law. It should be referenced when making decisions concerning investments in infrastructure, defining programs to improve neighborhoods, and making decisions about how development should unfold in town. Annual budgets should consider how resources are being aligned with master plan priorities.

Neighborhoods and residents can use the *Imagine Abbeville Master Plan* to advocate for action to improve their quality of life or address local challenges. Residents and community groups can track and monitor progress toward goals. This plan can also be a platform to create an alliance of policy makers, city staff, residents, business owners, and community organizations that work collaboratively to achieve Abbeville's shared vision.



Neighborhood walking tour.



Downtown roadway demonstration project.



Abbeville courthouse plaza.


FRANK'S THEATRE
SORDID LIVES FEB 16 25
TIX ABBEYPLAYERS COM
SOUNDS ON THE SQUARE
MAR 14 21 APR 4 11
FARMERS
MAR 16
Abbeville...Kitchen of the Wetlands!
Allons manger



CHAPTER 3

HISTORY AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Abbeville's History

Long before people from Europe arrived in North America, the Chitimacha, Attakapas, and other Native American tribes lived on a wide coastal prairie covered in switchgrass, big bluestem, and yellow Indiangrass. For centuries, they fished, hunted, and gathered along the Teche-Vermilion Basin, which was replenished with freshwater from the Atchafalaya River.

When the British expelled French Acadians from Nova Scotia, Canada around 1760, hundreds settled in this prairie area that would become part of the Louisiana Territory. Many of these people were awarded land grants from the Spanish government–which controlled the area at that time–to clear and develop land throughout the region, including what is now Vermilion Parish. For these newcomers, who would become known as the Cajuns, this terrain was much like the place they'd had to leave more than 2,000 miles away.

In 1843, Père Antoine Désiré Mégret, a Capuchin missionary, purchased the land that would become Abbeville. He named the town after his hometown in France. His heritage influenced the newly founded community's layout with streets built in a grid pattern and a central town square. The original town boundaries were St. Victor Street, East Street, Lafayette Street, and the Vermilion River. The town's growth was anchored by Magdalen Square, the Parish Courthouse, and St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church. In 1844, Vermilion Parish was carved out of southern Lafayette Parish. Abbeville was named the parish seat in 1854, four years after its incorporation.

Early trade and transportation relied on steamboat traffic along the Vermilion River. Then in 1892, the Southern Pacific Railroad opened a line between Abbeville and New Iberia. These two modes of transportation served an important industry in the early development of Abbeville's economy—the cattle ranches that thrived on the rich, flat lands. The growth of other agricultural sectors like rice and aquaculture also benefited from the railroads and shipping facilities. Westward expansion of the railroad opened Abbeville to more economic growth in the decades that followed.



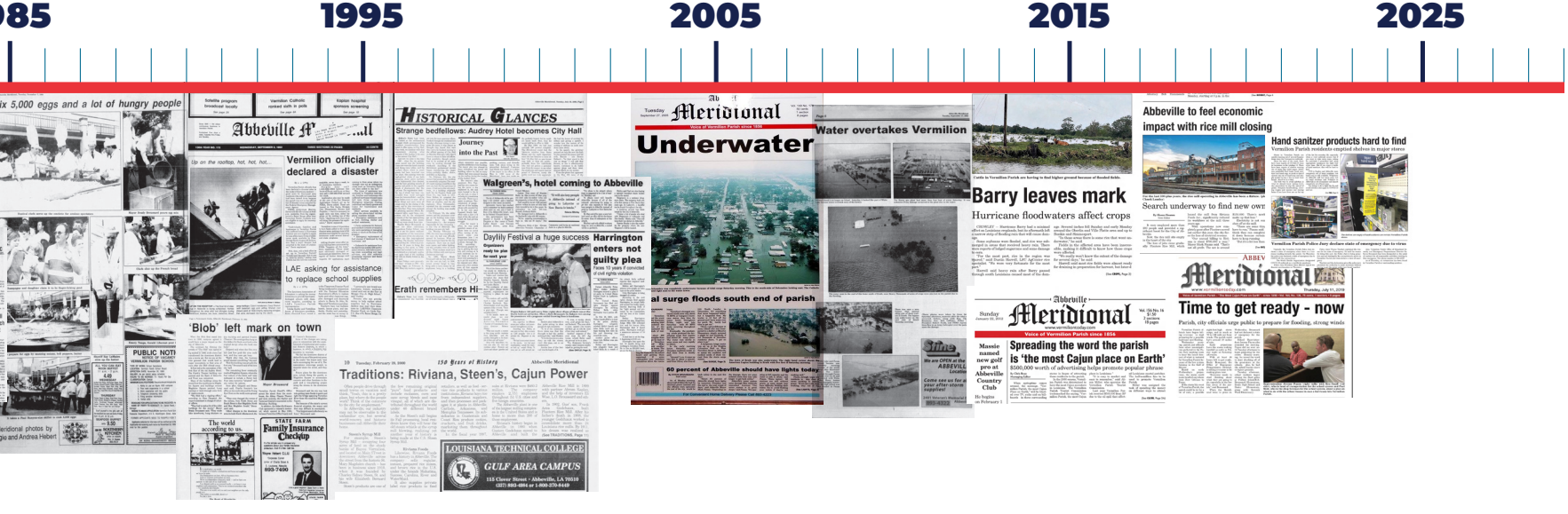
By the end of the nineteenth century, Abbeville had an established downtown commercial area, which was a hub for all of Vermilion Parish. Abbeville's road network began with dirt roads, and the first oyster shell paving was applied in 1903. That same year, a massive fire destroyed most of the downtown. The new construction yielded the buildings, streets, and sidewalks that residents and visitors recognize as Abbeville's iconic style today.

The early twentieth century ushered in economic growth and change for the community. By 1910, the population doubled from the decade before. Almost 3,000 people lived in Abbeville–59% White and 41% Black. Throughout the parish, farms covered a third of the land. People raised cattle, horses, mules, and swine. Major crops included figs, pecans, corn, sweet potatoes, rice, and sugar. That year, Steen's Syrup opened, and in 1911, the Louisiana Rice Milling Company formed. Frank's Theatre appeared in 1913. By the 1920s, the town's principal streets were graveled. The Audrey Hotel welcomed its first visitors in 1928.

In 1966, the LA 14 bypass was built to the north of the downtown core. This allowed for faster, more efficient regional travel, but it resulted in a slow migration of businesses and community services from the center of Abbeville toward the highway. The city's development patterns have continued to spread outward, with the most recent growth located north of LA 14.

Investments in infrastructure continued to grow and diversify the local economy. Many companies benefit from the transportation and logistics services offered by two local assets. The Abbeville Chris Crusta Memorial Airport, founded in 1948, is open to the public. Established in the 1980s, the Port of Vermilion serves companies that provide inland and offshore oil and gas support services.

While some of the industries, transportation networks, and institutions that shaped Abbeville have changed over time, the special culture and people make Abbeville a place to be proud of, where good food, natural beauty, and deep history endure.



Demographics

Understanding current demographic and recent trend data, especially as it compares to the broader region and state, is important to forecasting and shaping the future for Abbeville. Demographic trends influence economic and land use needs and should also help guide civic investment in infrastructure, transportation networks, and other public and nonprofit services to support residents. This section highlights information related to the current population such as age breakdown, educational attainment, poverty, and health as well as information about trends in how the population is changing over time. Additional demographic data can also be found in the Housing and Neighborhoods, Mobility and Economic Development chapters.

POPULATION

Abbeville's city population is shrinking.

Abbeville's population has hovered around 12,000 residents since 2000, although it has trended slightly downward. However, more recently, between 2020-2022, the population dropped more significantly. During that period, Abbeville lost nearly 1,000 residents, or almost 8% of the population. Compared to Louisiana as a whole, Abbeville is experiencing population loss at a faster rate in a region where other communities are growing.

Multiple factors are contributing to Abbeville's population decline and could continue to drive this trend. Through the public engagement process, people shared concerns about high property and insurance costs, the need for better schools, and the lack of housing options. Regional population growth is occurring in other parts of Vermilion Parish and nearby communities, such as Youngsville, Lafayette, and Carencro.

Abbeville's median age is younger than the state average, but the number of older adults is increasing.

While Abbeville's total population is decreasing, its population by age range is also shifting. From 2010 to 2022, the share of Abbeville's young children (0-10 years) and working adults (35-50) decreased while teens and young adults (15-35 years old) and retirement-age adults (60 and older) were on the rise. The highest rate of loss is among mid-career workers aged 35-54. Additionally, the median age of Abbeville's residents is 4 1/2 years younger than the median age of Louisiana residents as a whole. These shifts in age cohorts have bearing on the labor market, demand for public schools, transportation and housing needs, and social services required to serve the population.

Figure 3.1: Population in the United States, Louisiana, Vermilion Parish, and Abbeville, 2000 to 2022

					CHANGE 2000 TO 2022	
AREA	2000	2010	2020	2022	NUMBER	PERCENT CHANGE
United States	281,421,906	308,745,538	331,449,281	316,128,839	34,706,933	12%
Louisiana	4,468,976	4,625,470	4,657,757	4,597,740	128,764	3%
Vermilion Parish	54,094	58,083	59,378	56,953	2,859	5%
Abbeville	11,967	12,227	12,167	11,213	-754	-6%

Sources: US Census Bureau, 1990-2010 Decennial Census, 2008-2012 American Community Survey DP05, State of Louisiana

Figure 3.2: Median Age in Louisiana, Vermilion Parish, and Abbeville, 2000 and 2022

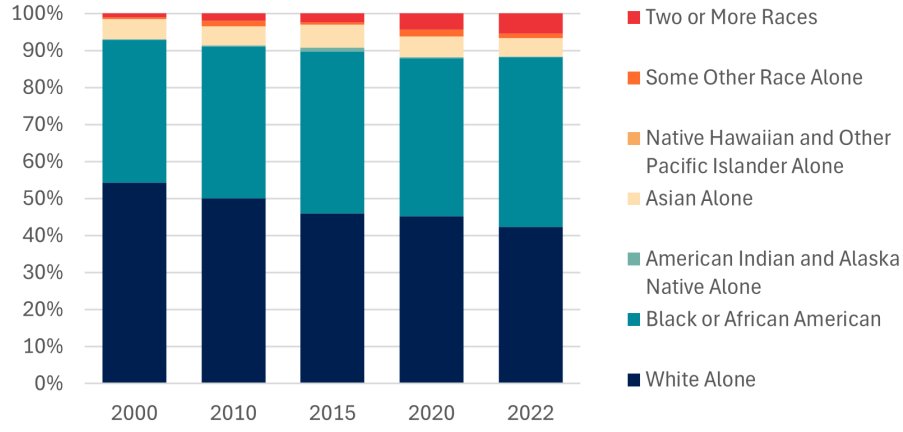
	MEDIAN AGE		PERCENT CHANGE
	2000	2022	
Louisiana	34.2	37.6	9.9%
Vermilion Parish	35.1	38.6	10.0%
Abbeville	34.6	33.1	-4.3%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year

Abbeville is becoming more racially diverse.

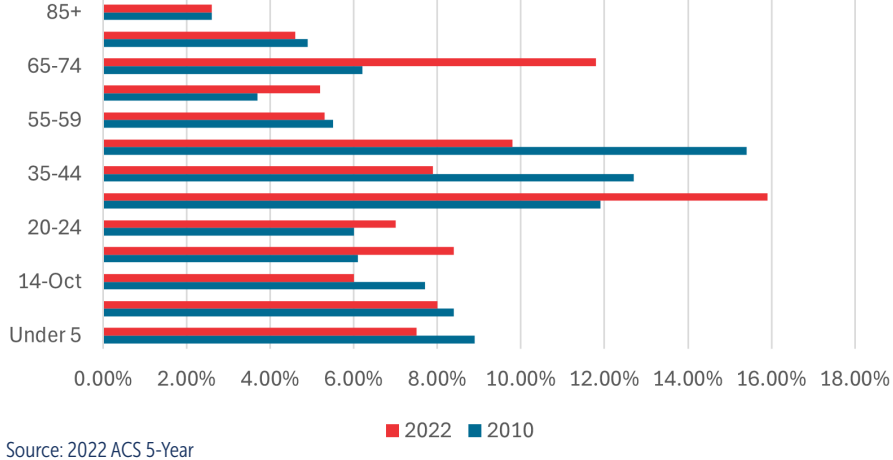
From 2010 to 2022, the White population decreased while the Black, Asian, and mixed populations increased.

Figure 3.3: Abbeville Racial Makeup, 2000 to 2020



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year

Figure 3.4: Percent of Population by Age in Abbeville , 2010 and 2022

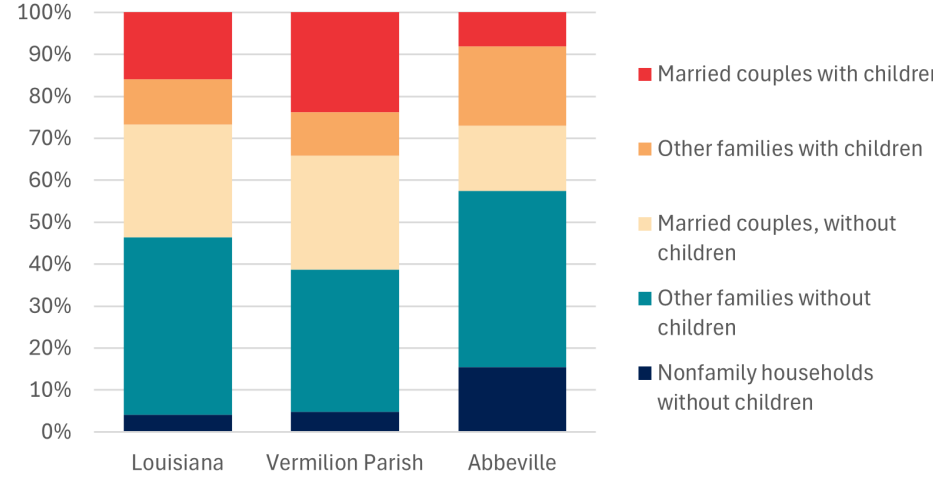


Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year

About one third of Abbeville's households are raising children.

In 2022, married-couple households in Abbeville accounted for 26.3% of total households while cohabitating couples accounted for 11.6% of total households. Thirty-five percent of Abbeville's households are headed by single women, which is 28% higher than the state average.

Figure 3.5 Household Type in Louisiana, Vermilion Parish, and Abbeville, 2022



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year

EDUCATION

Abbeville has a larger share of people without a college education and more people with less than a high school diploma than the state average.

In 2022, for those 25 years old and older, approximately 20% of the population of Abbeville had not graduated from high school, compared to 13% for the state of Louisiana. The same trend exists for higher education; compared to the state, Abbeville has fewer individuals obtaining college degrees.

Figure 3.6: Educational Attainment of Population over Age 25

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT			
	LOUISIANA	VERMILION PARISH	ABBEVILLE
Bachelor's, Graduate, or Professional Degree	24%	17%	12%
Some College or Associate's Degree	29%	26%	23%
High School Diploma or Less	47%	56%	66%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year

PUBLIC HEALTH

Abbeville has higher rates of chronic health conditions compared to Vermilion Parish and the state.

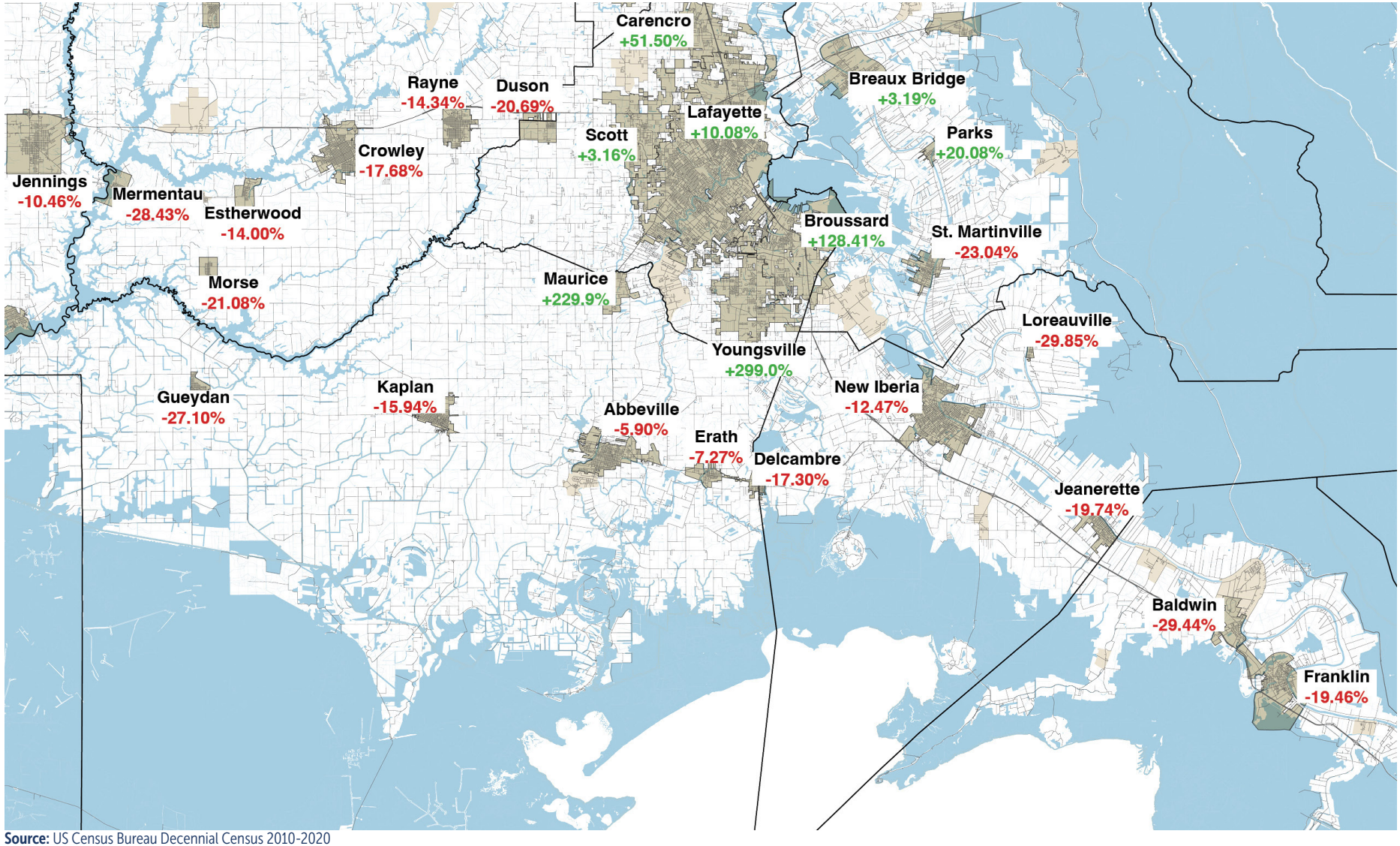
The most prevalent conditions include obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Additionally, a significant portion of the population lacks health insurance, which can exacerbate these health disparities. There is also a link between health outcomes and the built environment. Changing the built environment (buildings and infrastructure) to make walking and biking to destinations easier promotes a healthier lifestyle. Living in a place with quality housing, reliable public transportation, parks and green space, availability of healthy foods, clean air and water, and low violent crime reduces exposure to harm and improves a persons ability to engage in healthy behaviors. Many of the recommendations of the *Imagine Abbeville* plan work in concert to create a healthier place.

Figure 3.7: Population with Chronic Health Conditions, 2022

CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS			
	LOUISIANA	VERMILION PARISH	ABBEVILLE
Arthritis	27%	27%	28%
Cancer	6%	6%	6%
Chronic Kidney Disease	3%	3%	3%
Coronary Heart Disease	7%	6%	7%
Asthma	11%	10%	11%
Smoking	24%	23%	25%
Diagnosed Diabetes	13%	11%	14%
High Blood Pressure	39%	37%	41%
High Cholesterol	34%	35%	36%
No Leisure-Time Physical Activity	32%	30%	35%
Obesity	41%	39%	42%
Stroke	4%	3%	4%

Source: : 2022 ACS 5-Year

Figure 3.8: South Louisiana Regional Population Change, 2010 to 2020



Source: US Census Bureau Decennial Census 2010-2020

INCOME

On average, households earnings in Abbeville are less than the state and Vermilion Parish.

At just under $40,000 in 2022, the median household income in Abbeville was 29% less than the state and 33% less than Vermilion Parish.

In Abbeville, the overall poverty rate is 13% higher and the child poverty rate is 6.4% higher than in Louisiana.

In 2022, women who were full-time wage earners in Louisiana earned a median salary that was 22.7% less than their male counterparts. The high share of female-led households coupled with lower than average salaries likely contributes to the relatively high poverty rates and increased share of households categorized as Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE)–a measure that is tracked by the United Way.

In Abbeville, 30% of households are above the poverty line but qualify as ALICE.

In addition to measuring poverty rates, it is important to also consider households that are above the poverty threshold but still struggle to make ends meet. These residents include workers whose wages are not enough to keep up with rising costs. Some could be working two or more jobs. Many live paycheck-to-paycheck and are forced to make difficult financial decisions, such as whether to pay rent or buy food, as well as struggle to afford medical care or child care. It is noteworthy that only 38% of Abbeville's household incomes are above both the poverty and ALICE thresholds.

Figure 3.9: Median Household Income in Louisiana, Vermilion Parish, and Abbeville, 2000 and 2022 (all in 2022 dollars)

	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME		PERCENT CHANGE
	2000	2022	
Louisiana	$57,016	$57,852	1.5%
Vermilion Parish	$51,266	$56,194	9.6%
Abbeville	$34,079	$39,566	16.1%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year, 2000 rates inflated to December 2022

Figure 3.10: Abbbeville's Household Incomes in Poverty and ALICE Thresholds

TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY	ALICE HOUSEHOLDS	ABOVE ALICE HOUSEHOLDS
4,522	1,405	1,394	1,723

Source: United For ALICE

Figure 3.11: Percent of People Living At or Below the Poverty Line in Louisiana, Vermilion Parish, and Abbeville, 2000 and 2012 (all in 2022 dollars)

AT OR BELOW THE POVERTY LINE			
	2000	2022	PERCENT CHANGE
Louisiana	19.6%	18.7%	-4.6%
Vermilion Parish	22.1%	19.3%	-12.7%
Abbeville	37.7%	31.7%	-15.9%

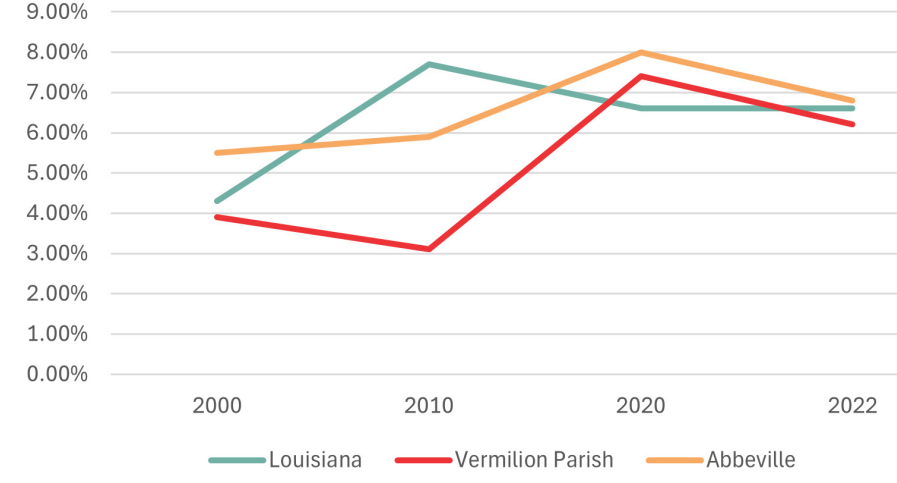
Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year

EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment rates in Abbeville tend to remain higher than parish and state averages.

The unemployment rate in Abbeville has consistently been higher than the parish and state. However, in 2022, the unemployment rates in Abbeville, Vermilion Parish, and Louisiana were closely aligned at around 6.5%. Though still higher than the unemployment rate in 2000 and 2010, workforce participation in Abbeville has improved since the COVID–19 pandemic.

Figure 3.12: Unemployment Rate in Louisiana, Vermilion Parish and Abbeville 2000 to 2022

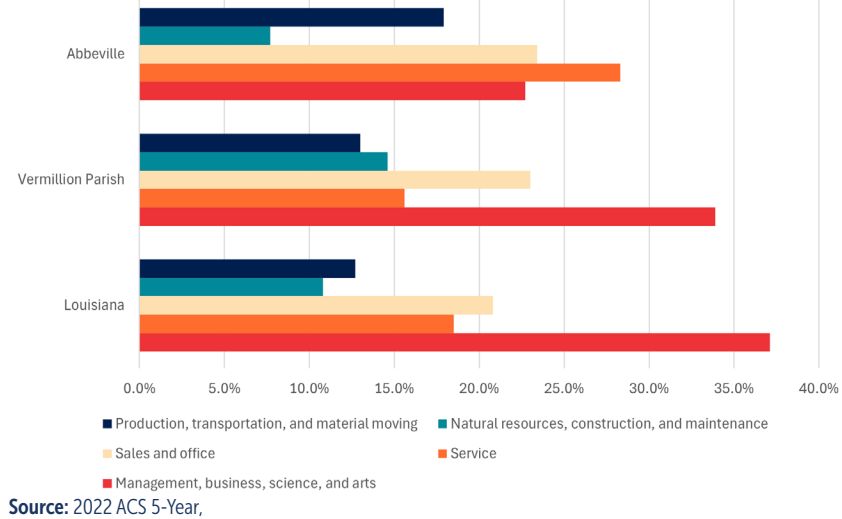


Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year,

The City of Abbeville has a smaller share of population employed in management, business, science, and arts than Vermilion Parish and the state and has more employment in services.

Comparing employment in these geographies shows that Abbeville has a higher percentage of workers in the "services" and "sales and office" categories and a lower percentage in the "natural resources, construction, and maintenance" and "management, business, science, and arts employment" categories.

Figure 3.13: Percentage of Workers in Covered Employment Categories. 2022



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year,

Schools and health care make up a significant percentage of Abbeville's jobs.

The largest percentage of jobs in Abbeville are in the sectors Educational services, health care and social assistance (30% of jobs), Retail Trade (13%), and Transportation and warehousing (10.5%).

Figure 3.14: Percent of Employment by Selected North American Industry Classification System, (NAICS), Sectors, Abbeville, 2022

NAICS SECTOR	PERCENT OF EMPLOYMENT
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	30.0%
Retail trade	13.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	10.5%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.7%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	8.7%
All other sectors	32.7%

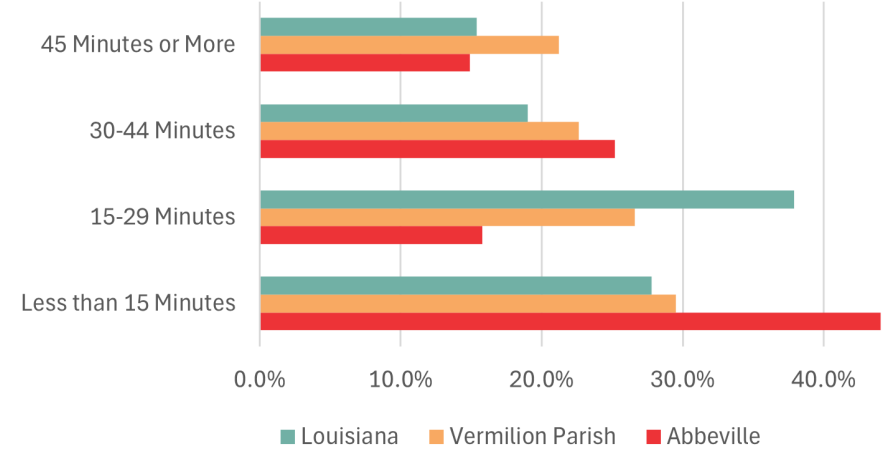
Source: 2022 US Census OnTheMap data

COMMUTING

Most Abbeville workers have a shorter average commute than those in the parish or state.

Most of Abbeville residents, 44%, enjoy a commute of less than 15 minutes as compared to the rest of the state where only 27% of residents have a 15 minute or less commute. However, 25% of Abbeville workers commute 30–45 minutes, which is a slightly higher number than both the state and Vermilion Parish, 19% and 22%, respectively.

Figure 3.15: Average Commute Times for Abbeville, 2022

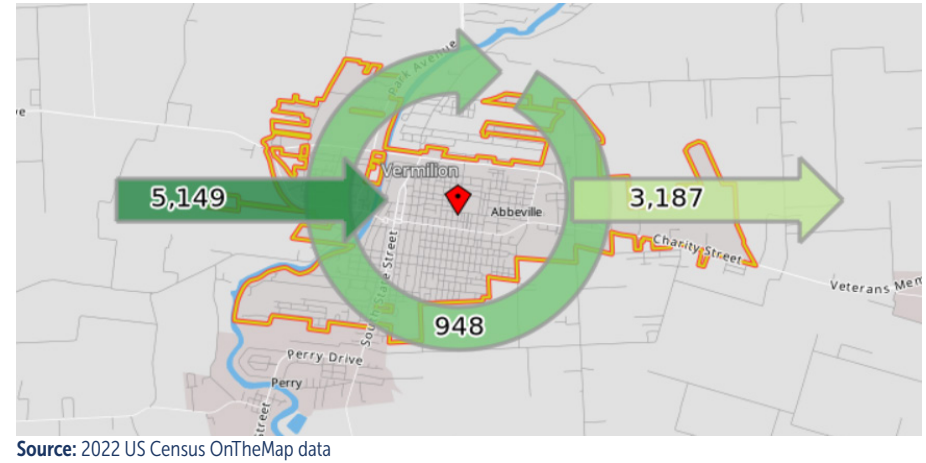


Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year,

More people commute to Abbeville to work than leave the city to work elsewhere.

The US Census Bureau's OnTheMap application provides information on employment statistics and can be used to show where people live and work. This tool shows that, in 2022, 948 people lived and worked in Abbeville, 5,149 commuted to the city, and 3,187 Abbeville residents left their homes to commute to jobs elsewhere.

Figure 3.16: Commuting Patterns for Abbeville, 2022



Source: 2022 US Census OnTheMap data

Abbeville Residents work close to home.

Among Abbeville's residents, 62% work in Vermilion Parish, and 14% commute to Lafayette Parish. When viewed by the city, 15% of the residents work in Abbeville, and almost 6% work in Lafayette.

Figure 3.17: Work Destinations by Parish and City for Abbeville Residents, 2022

PARISH	NUMBER	PERCENT
Vermilion	**3,804**	**62.4%**
Lafayette	867	14.2%
Iberia	274	4.5%
Acadia	196	3.2%
St. Martin	115	1.9%
St. Landry	86	1.4%
St. Mary	68	1.1%
Calcasieu	61	1.0%
East Baton Rouge	57	0.9%
Jefferson Davis	54	0.9%
All other parishes	515	8.4%
Total	**6,097**	**100%**

Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap.

CITY	NUMBER	PERCENT
Abbeville	948	15.5%
Lafayette	**362**	**5.9%**
Kaplan	268	4.4%
Perry	124	2.0%
Erath	109	1.8%
Youngsville	107	1.8%
Maurice	90	1.5%
New Iberia	84	1.4%
Delcambre	81	1.3%
Broussard	51	0.8%
All other cities	3,873	63.5%
Total	**6,097**	**100%**

Source: US Census Bureau, OnTheMap.


PLACE de la CONCORDE
Experts
Qubed
BLUSH
BB
117 CONCORD ST. SUITE B
119
BLADE
119



CHAPTER 4

LAND USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

LAND USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Where We Are Now

Land is a limited resource. How we use it, what we build upon it, and how we conserve its natural features defines how people experience and perceive Abbeville. The recommendations described in this chapter are intended to preserve Abbeville's historic charm, support its neighborhoods, and plan for and encourage development around key nodes in town. Taken together, these systems form the skeleton upon which the city is built.





Dupuy's, a local restaurant



Abbeville First Baptist Church



Abbeville General Hospital



Residential Development



Champagne's Supermarket

Throughout the city, there are clusters of similar types of development, known as "character areas," which will be described later in this document.

Pattern of Development

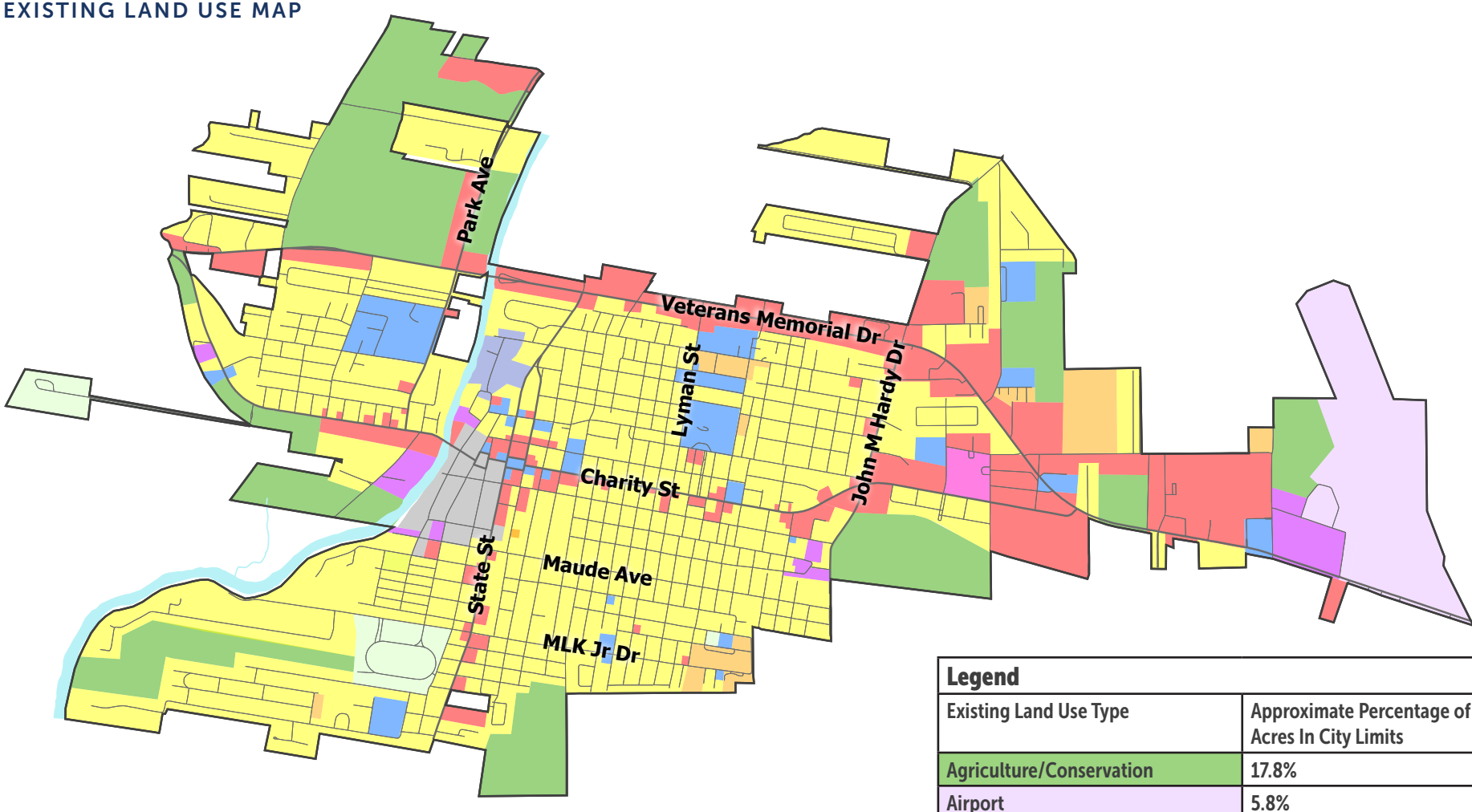
Abbeville is a generally compact community with a tight grid of streets. The majority of Abbeville's land is devoted to residential uses, with nearly half of the city's land developed as single-family residential homes and another 2% devoted to multifamily homes. Commercial uses account for approximately 14% of the land in Abbeville and are largely located along Veterans Memorial Drive, with additional concentrations along State Street and Charity Drive heading into downtown.

A number of parks are dotted throughout the community, comprising roughly 2% of Abbeville's land. They offer a range of recreational opportunities, including ballfields, courts, skateboard parks, trails, playgrounds, and recreational vehicle parking. Approximately 18% of Abbeville is either agricultural or open land—much of it within the 100-year floodplain.

Existing Land Use Character Areas

Abbeville's existing development patterns create a diverse tapestry of urban forms and experiences. The historic downtown area features a mix of commercial and residential uses, and its many historic structures serve as reminders of the city's rich past. The city also has several residential neighborhoods with a variety of housing types, including single-family homes, duplexes, and apartments. Along the major highways, there are larger-scale commercial developments, such as big-box retailers and shopping centers. Additionally, the city has industrial areas located around its outer boundaries.

FIGURE 4.1:
EXISTING LAND USE MAP



Legend	
Existing Land Use Type	Approximate Percentage of Acres In City Limits
Agriculture/Conservation	17.8%
Airport	5.8%
Commercial	14.4%
Downtown	1.5%
Historic District	0.6%
Industrial	1.7%
Medical	0.4%
Multifamily Residential	2.3%
Public/Government	4.0%
Recreation	2.1%
Residential	49.4%

Downtown

Downtown is Abbeville's cultural and historic anchor—home to numerous events, annual festivals, and the monthly Sounds on the Square. It is the home to both the parish and municipal governments, as well as various shops, services, and restaurants, with a mix of single-family homes. The area is organized by a tight grid of streets, some of which are undergoing improvements to increase safety and enhance attractiveness. The building types in the downtown area include main street style storefronts; civic and institutional buildings; stand-alone office buildings and other commercial structures; and single-family residences. There are several model examples of historic preservation while many other historic buildings offer opportunities for restoration and reuse, such as Frank's Theater, the Audrey Hotel, and the former Riviana Rice Mill. Magdalen Square, a central gathering place since the late 1800s, is downtown's primary open space.

LA 14/Veterans Memorial Drive

Veterans Memorial Drive is the primary east-west route through Abbeville. Along the road are retail stores, restaurants, services, and lodging as well as some residential uses. Cars, trucks, and other vehicles dominate this corridor, and there are no safe, designated places to walk or bike. The portion of the corridor west of the Vermilion River is generally less developed, with a large undeveloped tract of land just west of the Park Avenue intersection. The remainder of LA 14 is largely mixed commercial, anchored by the Chris Crusta Memorial Airport on the eastern end of town.

State Street

State Street is a part of the Highway 82 corridor that runs north-south through Abbeville, passing by the Vermilion Parish Courthouse. The corridor is a mix of residential, commercial, and downtown uses. As the city gains ownership over portions of this corridor, they will have more control of the roadway design as well as speed and vehicular weight limits which will better support the development character envisioned in *Imagine Abbeville.*

Charity Street

Charity Street is part of the LA 14 business corridor running east from downtown to Veterans Memorial Drive. It was the historic commercial and travel corridor through Abbeville before the Veterans Memorial Drive bypass was constructed. The corridor is developed with a mix of commercial, residential, and civic/institutional uses, and it is a main thoroughfare connecting neighborhoods to the downtown area. Development along this historic corridor has suffered since the construction of LA 14, and there are many opportunities for reinvestment. Abbeville General Hospital is located at the eastern end of Charity Street and provides an opportunity for additional health care-related development around the intersection of Charity Street and Veterans Memorial Drive.

Lyman Street

Lyman Street is a north-south connector consisting primarily of residential and neighborhood development, anchored by South Louisiana Community College at its northern end, a few blocks south of Veterans Memorial Drive. Additional institutional anchors include J.H. Williams Middle School and school athletic facilities. Planned safety improvements for the corridor will improve areas to walk and bike as well as help with traffic flow.

AA Comeaux Memorial Drive/East Martin Luther King Jr. Drive

The AA Comeaux Memorial Drive/East Martin Luther King Jr. Drive corridor is primarily residential in character and connects several neighborhoods to the AA Comeaux Park and McKinley Scott Park complexes. The corridor is anchored by the Vermilion River at one end and terminates near McKinley Scott Park on the other. On the western end of AA Comeaux Memorial Drive is AA Comeaux Park, which hosts regional sporting events and features a skate park, event rental space, walking paths, a splash pad, ball fields, and other recreational amenities. The eastern end of East Martin Luther King Jr. Drive features multifamily housing, McKinley Scott Park facilities, and the site of a proposed community center. There is an existing node of retail and restaurant uses at the intersection of the corridor with State Street, which could serve as a future community hub.



State Street



Lyman Street



Charity Street



Concord Street

Regulatory Landscape

In many communities, land use and requirements are typically handled through two primary types of regulations: zoning, which regulates the uses and types of development that can occur on a property; and subdivision regulations, which regulate the infrastructure requirements for land as it is being prepared to be built upon. Some communities consolidate both types of regulations into a single unified development code. While the City of Abbeville has neither a zoning nor subdivision ordinance, land use regulations in Abbeville are currently handled through numerous ordinances throughout Abbeville's Code of Ordinance that address various aspects of development.

In the City of Abbeville Code of Ordinances' Chapter 5, "Buildings," addresses building construction standards; specifies land uses of communication towers and multifamily developments; and includes articles detailing requirements for community and historic preservation, trees, landscaping, and signs. Chapter 11, "Manufactured Housing," includes requirements for modular housing and buildings; manufactured and mobile homes, and campgrounds. Chapter 14, "Planning and Development" provides flood and damage prevention requirements as well as provides for the creation of a Planning Commission for the City of Abbeville. Throughout some of these ordinances there are special requirements for properties along "Corridor No. 1," which is a product of the City of Abbeville's draft Smart Code regulations that were developed but not fully adopted. Corridor No. 1 runs primarily along Charity Street, Veterans Memorial Drive/Summers Drive, State Street, Wildcat Drive and Albert Road corridors, including some of the adjacent areas as shown in more detail in Figure 4.2 Corridor No. 1. Special Corridor No. 1 requirements include restrictions on sign materials, regulations for billboard placement, and prohibitions on the locations of manufactured housing, modular housing, and campgrounds.

Land use and infrastructure are inseparable. Infrastructure consists of the systems and facilities that support the daily activities of life, including sewers, drainage, electricity, roadways, public safety buildings, transportation

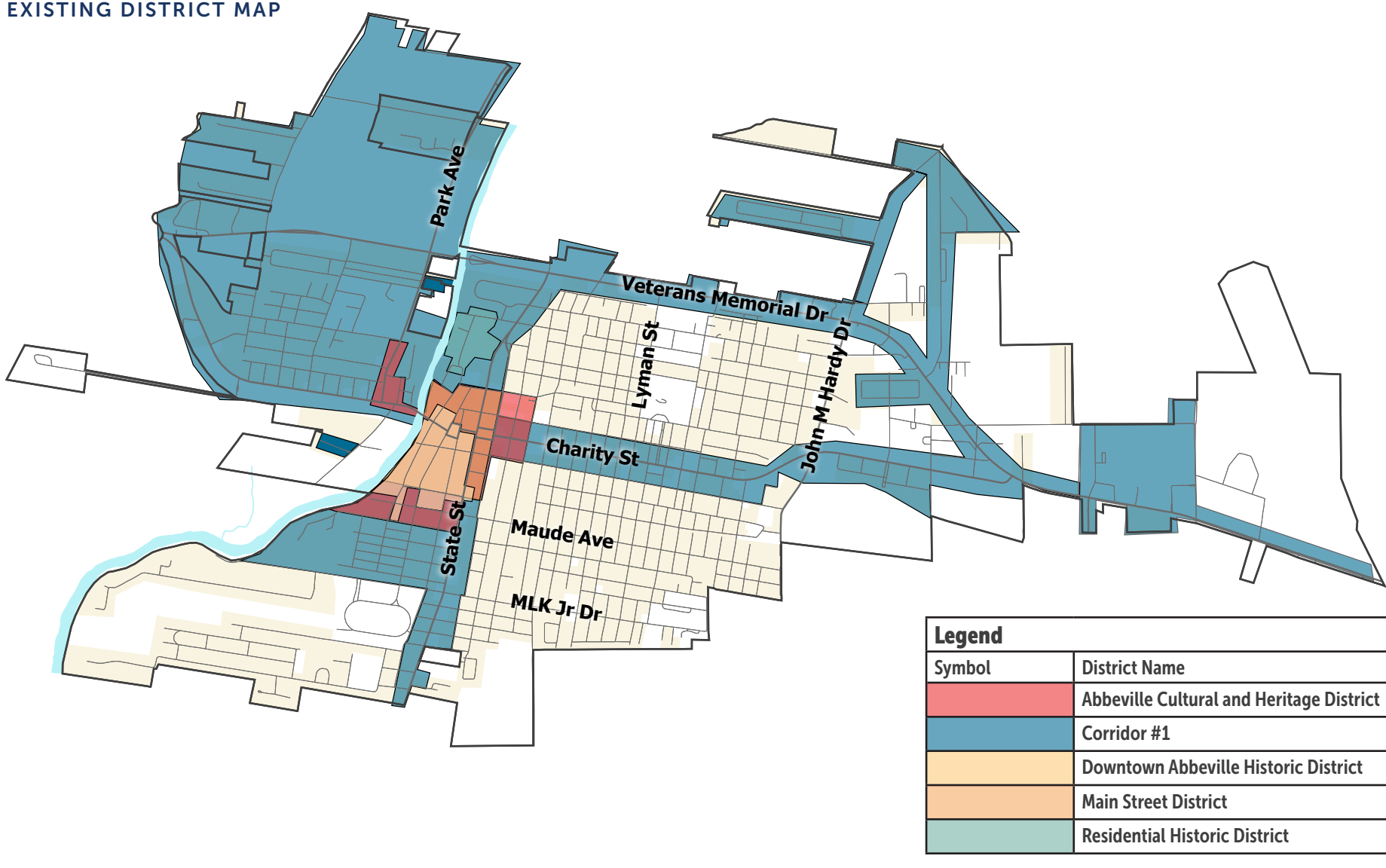
Existing Infrastructure

systems, and telecommunications. Maintaining functional infrastructure not only impacts residents' quality of life but also supports how well the economy functions and contributes to the community's resilience, helping people bounce back after major storms or other difficulties. Investing in infrastructure is important to support the people who live in Abbeville now and those who will live there in the future. When people have the utilities, transportation, and public facilities they need, this makes a city more desirable to new residents and businesses.

The way that land is developed and used can have an impact on infrastructure and services. For example, if a new subdivision is planned, the city must determine how to ensure the people will get the water, sewer, electricity, roads, and other facilities they need. If several acres of former farmland are to be developed with a large building footprint and parking lot, site drainage patterns would change, and the city would have to plan for those impacts to adjacent and downstream properties. Whatever new growth and development is planned, infrastructure improvements must be considered. Conversely, decisions the city makes on infrastructure design and investment can spur private development to occur. These public and private infrastructure improvements can spark even more economic development—the commitment to invest in the community encourages more investment.

Current conditions for most of Abbeville's infrastructure systems are covered in the following section. The transportation system is noted in detail in the Mobility chapter.

FIGURE 4.2:
EXISTING DISTRICT MAP



Potable Water

Drinking water is supplied by the Chicot Aquifer, which has a groundwater depth averaging 170 feet. The city operates three wells that provide treated drinking water to consumers. In 2025, Abbeville plans to begin a $9 million refurbishment project on its water plant to upgrade the facility and improve water supply security. A rate study is currently underway to analyze rates and provide insights into the system's financial sustainability. The city is also considering ways to reduce water loss, potentially through the implementation of smart meters.

Wastewater

Constructed in the late 1980s, Abbeville's current wastewater treatment plant is designed to treat an average flow of 1.5 million gallons per day, with a two-hour peak design capacity of 6 million gallons per day. The existing sewer collection system contains 8, 10, 12, and 18-inch gravity lines with 30 lift stations. The system serves 5,243 residential and commercial customers. The city is investigating options to expand wastewater capacity, which could include the construction of a second wastewater treatment plant and equalization basin in southern Abbeville. If needed, this second facility would divert approximately 25% of the current load from the existing plant and accommodate expansion as growth demands. In addition to this large capital project, the city periodically makes improvements to the network of sewer pipes and lift stations.

Stormwater

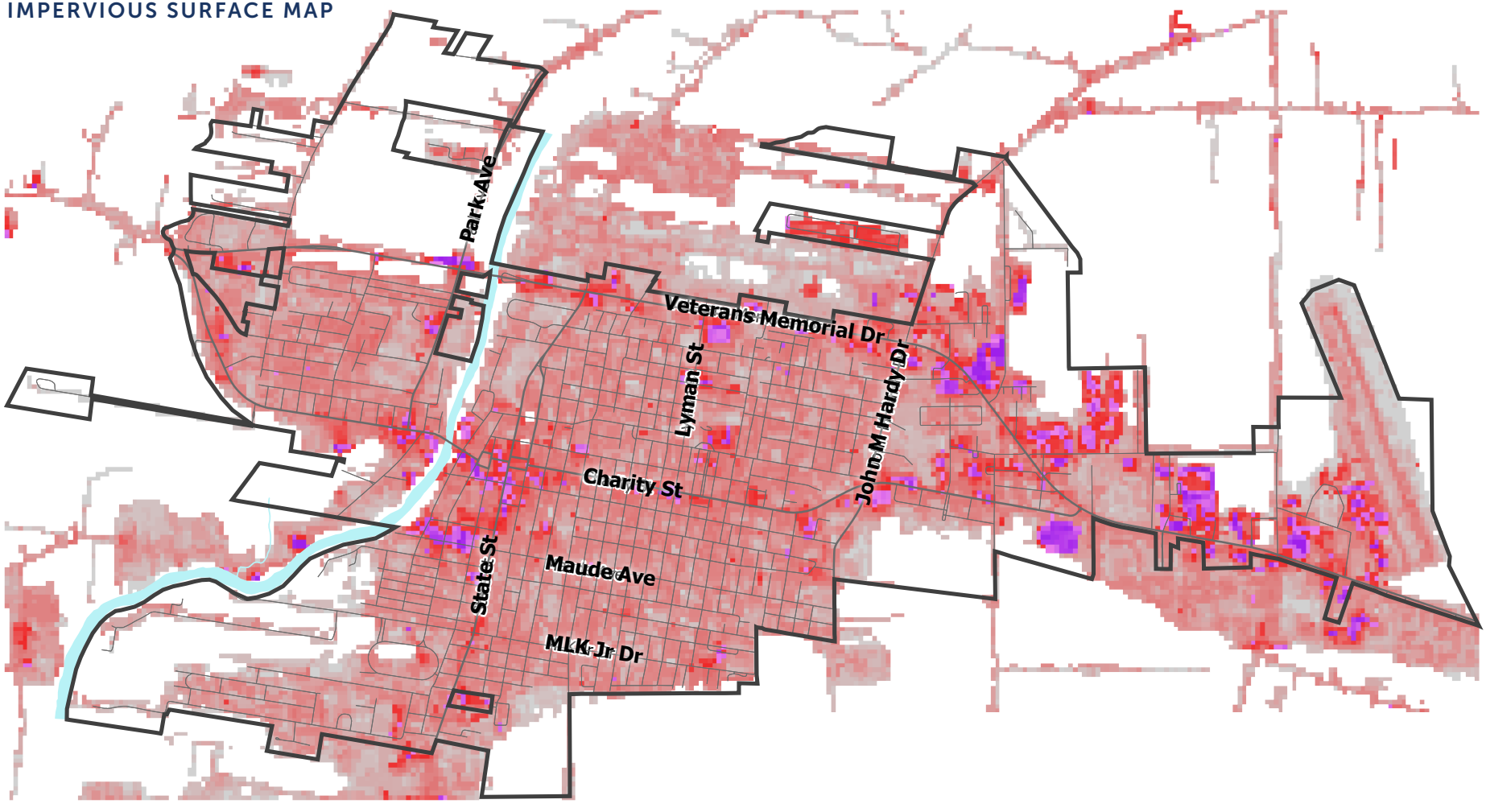
Stormwater management is a concern for Abbeville residents. Residents mentioned that the neighborhood along Sucre Circle becomes flooded during heavy rains. Others shared that flooding occurs in the neighborhood west of J.H. Williams Middle School and along the railroad tracks on Godchaux Street. Improved drainage is also needed on Lafayette Street and Charity Street.

Abbeville receives approximately 61 inches of rain annually, and the area's relatively flat topography creates challenges for managing rainfall and other local sources of flooding. The city's stormwater management systems are designed to collect and move runoff from rain events downstream and minimize community impacts. Currently, fifteen stormwater outfalls manage runoff and direct it to the Vermilion River, which leads to Vermilion Bay. The Department of Public Works is charged with managing and maintaining stormwater infrastructure as well as educating the public about stormwater pollution. The city's 2024 Stormwater Management Plan also addresses ways to ensure wastewater does not contaminate stormwater, since excess stormwater drains to natural waterways.

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)

Abbeville is required to meet the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) requirements for the conveyance and discharge of stormwater runoff to minimize pollution and environmental impacts to natural waterways, as governed by a Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP). This mandate under the MS4 permitting may require additional investments into the stormwater management system, thereby increasing cost of this service. In many cities this has led to a need to develop a stormwater management fee system to cover these additional expenses.

FIGURE 4.3:
IMPERVIOUS SURFACE MAP



Darker purple color's indicate areas with more impervious surfaces.

Electrical

The City of Abbeville owns and maintains the community's electric utility, which provides service to most business, industrial, and residential customers. Playing a vital role to support the community's economic development and overall quality of life, the utility offers competitive rates and a reliable power supply. Now and in the future, there will be unique opportunities for this municipally owned utility to update its system with advanced technologies. The city is engaged in several facility mapping and planning efforts to improve grid resilience. Abbeville was selected for a grant from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources to cover community engagement, planning, feasibility, design, and some engineering for modernization and hardening of Abbeville's electrical distribution system. The city is also using Delta Regional Authority funds to map the current grid using GIS software.

Broadband

High-speed internet is essential in today's economy, so it is necessary to ensure the community has equitable access to broadband for work and school purposes. Ten percent of Abbeville's households do not have an internet subscription. Most of those households—53%—had an income of less than $20,000 in the past 12 months.

Figure 4.4: Residents Without Internet Subscription Abbeville

HOUSEHOLD INCOME 2022 DOLLARS	PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS WITHOUT AN INTERNET SUBSCRIPTION
Less than $20,000	29.2%
$20,000-$74,999	6.9%
$75,000 or more	3.2%
Total Residents	10.3%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year

The Louisiana Division of Administration's Office of Broadband Development and Connectivity's Granting Unserved Municipalities Broadband Opportunities (GUMBO) program is helping to install broadband services in communities throughout the state. As part of this program, a number of broadband improvements are underway to install internet fiber lines in Abbeville, with completion expected by the end of 2024. Abbeville should continue to monitor areas of unmet need where businesses and neighborhoods require high-speed internet services. The city is encouraged to work with providers to install lines as needed as well as coordinate broadband upgrades or installation with other infrastructure improvements, such as road projects.

Make the Grid Resilient

Abbeville could enhance its current grid with *smart grids* (a network of multiple energy-producing sources—such as natural gas, coal, solar, wind, etc.—that is monitored by sensors and other technologies to get electricity to people more efficiently) and *microgrids* (localized power systems that can operate independently from the main grid, ensuring a reliable energy supply even during disruptions). These additional grids can make a city's whole electric system more stable and reduce the length of outages. Another option is to invest in renewable energy sources, including wind and solar. Alternative sources will provide more ways to generate electricity, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and lessen the impacts of climate change.

Public Safety

Public safety is a top concern for city officials. Ensuring the community is safe, secure, and protected is the foundation upon which any other economic activities are built and a key indicator of quality of life in a community. This generally comes in the form of fire and police protection.

Abbeville maintains four fire stations serving the community. The main station is located on West Vermilion Street near downtown. Three substations are located throughout town—Joffre Avenue on the western end of town; Veterans Memorial Drive at John M. Hardy Drive; and Maude Avenue in the southern portion of town.

The Fire Department has a Public Protection Classification rating of three on a scale of one to ten, with one representing superior fire protection and ten representing fire protection that does not meet minimum standards. A rating of three indicates excellent fire protection. This rating reflects an evaluation of facilities, equipment, training, and response times, among other criteria.

The Abbeville Police Department operates from a main facility located on Charity Street. The department's assets include patrol vehicles, firearms, communication systems, and specialized equipment for investigations and crime scene analysis.



Abbeville Fire Department

Planning for the Future

ABBEVILLE'S VISION MAP

Abbeville's Vision Map is a graphic illustration of the community's potential future for its neighborhoods, commercial areas, transportation networks, parks, and more. It is informed by the wealth of public input received during the planning process, expert analysis, and best practices. The Vision Map presented here is a representation of what Abbeville could become in the future. Overall, the city's land use and development patterns are generally fixed, but the Vision Map offers new ways to build on and reimagine what already exists in the community.

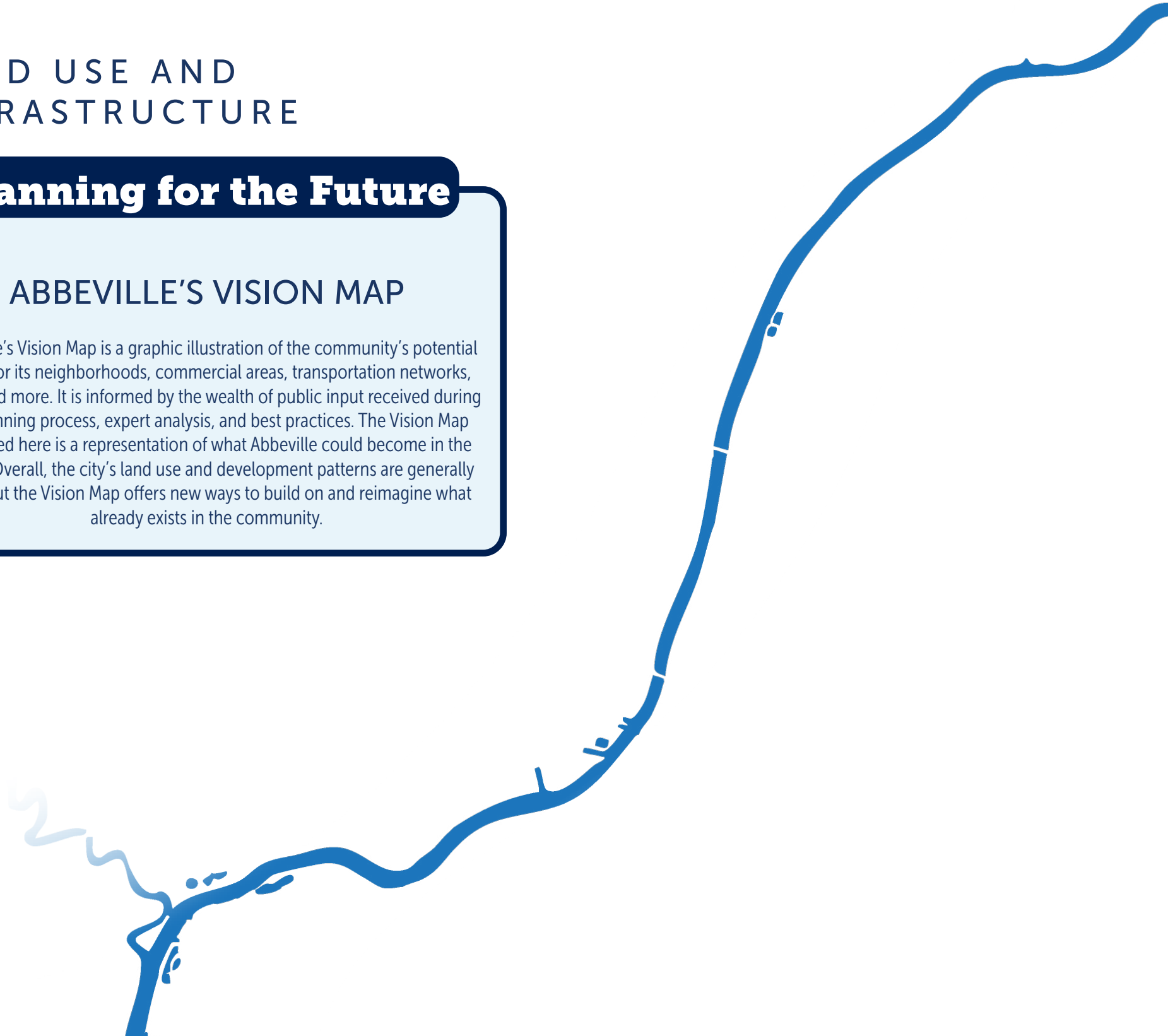
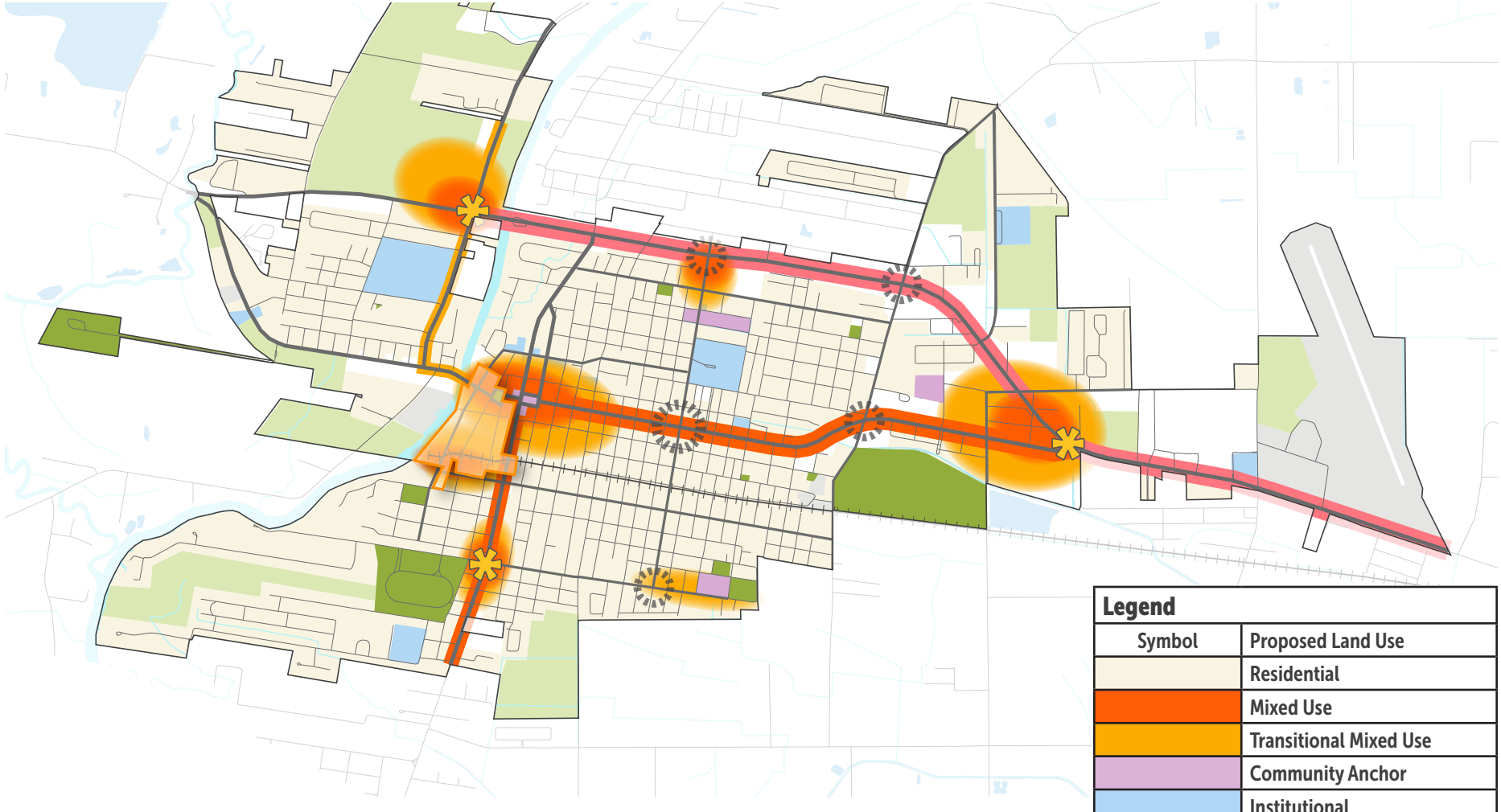


FIGURE 4.5:
ABBEVILLE'S VISION MAP



Vision Map Categories

The ten categories shown on the map generally indicate where certain types of buildings, commercial areas, and other land uses should be located. Whether a land use category is appropriate for a particular location in Abbeville should be determined not only by looking at the Vision Map, but by reviewing relevant recommendations in this plan. The map serves primarily as a framework for both public and private investment decisions.
The map also shows locations that are suitable for higher-density commercial, residential, and mixed-use development as well as priority areas for walkable, more compact development, which can create a stronger sense of community and reduce reliance on automobiles.

Residential

These areas are predominantly single family in nature; however, there may be a few instances of other housing types such as attached two-family dwellings. There may be additional neighborhood amenities located in these areas such as daycares, churches, and schools. Buildings in this zone are typically one to two stories. Any development occurring in this land use category should have a scale (sense of bulk and height); massing (general size, form, and shape of a building); average density (the number of buildings in a specific area); and layout (the location and organization of buildings on a site) that is compatible with the character of surrounding single-family residences and any relevant site constraints.

Transitional Mixed-Use

A transitional mixed-use area typically doesn't include large retail stores, strip malls, or big parking areas. The focus is on allowing a community to include housing, services, and employment near each other, often with streets designed for slowing traffic, areas to walk or bike, and safe crosswalks. These areas provide a transition between residential uses—such as detached or attached housing that is single family or low-density multifamily with two to four units—and other types of development such as office, retail, and related compatible uses in low-intensity areas (less developed areas that get basic infrastructure services). Buildings are typically one- and two-story structures with scale, massing, intensity, site layout, and specifications compatible with site constraints and character of surrounding residential development.

Mixed-Use

Mixed-use nodes are areas where there is a combination of offices, retail stores, personal services, light industrial businesses, and other compatible establishments. These places typically follow architectural, landscape, streetscape, parking, and signage standards to ensure a cohesive character. Residential uses in these areas may include single-family, attached housing or multifamily. Buildings in this zone are typically one to three stories.

Community Anchors

Community anchors include hospitals, educational institutions, civic entities, and nonprofits. These anchors are important to the overall economy, provide a means to build social bonds, and offer various resources to aid the community. Each can serve as a center with connections to other organizations that offer complementary services and opportunities for community building.

Downtown

Downtown is the historic core of Abbeville, featuring the hub of Magdalen Square. In this area, government offices, retail businesses, services, and institutions are the anchors—places where people need and want to go. Downtown is also characterized by dynamic open spaces, pedestrian-friendly streets, and a combination of mixed-use areas and single-family housing.

Institutional

Institutional nodes offer critical services to the community. These include community centers, schools, health facilities, senior housing facilities, nonprofits, and educational, philanthropic, religious, or charitable institutions.

Commercial Corridors

These corridors are key streets in the city that have commercial uses—office spaces, services, and retail—and serve as important connectors across Abbeville. Commercial corridors typically have larger-scale retail businesses with other mixed uses, including office and personal services. These corridors typically contain one- to three- story buildings where uses are generally horizontally mixed on a site, allowing retail, commercial, and residential spaces to exist near each other. Residential development may include senior housing or other multifamily structures.

Parks and Open Space

Public parks, semi-public parks, and recreation centers offer places where, ideally, people of all ages and abilities can exercise, relax, and visit with friends and neighbors. Open spaces are areas that aren't built up, such as farms, grasslands, rivers, and forests. On Abbeville's Vision Map, some privately owned properties are shown as open space to indicate where there are floodplains or other constraints that might limit development opportunities.

Gateways

Gateways are places where residents or visitors enter a community. Typically, a gateway is located at a street intersection or along a road. In Abbeville, the gateways are key streets along the city's boundary edges—such as the juncture of LA 14 and Charity Street—where people frequently travel in and out. These are important places to establish community identity by using signs, historical markers, public art, or other indicators to welcome people to the city.

Neighborhood Centers

These nodes provide commercial and other neighborhood-scale services within walkable distance from Abbeville's residential areas. These centers are distinct from the highway-oriented commercial development in other parts of the city and provide a convenient alternative to meet daily needs.

TOOLS TO ACHIEVE THE VISION

At this time, the city does not have the tools needed to achieve the types of development desired by Abbeville''s residents. Abbeville has developed organically in the past without a zoning or subdivision regulation. While infrastructure has been maintained and improved, a more comprehensive approach to infrastructure development can help spark new private investment in areas where the city wants to see development occur.

Development Regulations

Development regulations are one set of tools Abbeville can use to make progress toward the future laid out in the Vision Map. Historically, Abbeville's development reflected its small-town character. Main Street-style businesses, local shops, and residential neighborhoods defined the city's landscape. However, in recent decades, Abbeville has witnessed a shift toward big-box and national chain retail development, such as Walmart and dollar stores, along major corridors. This trend has led to sprawl and a decline in the downtown area's vitality. During the planning process, residents said they have a preference for more traditional small-town development patterns and building types rather than big-box retail or large-lot subdivisions.

Subdivision regulations ensure that new developments are planned and constructed in a safe, orderly, and efficient manner and that necessary infrastructure is also provided.

- **Form-based codes.** Establish design standards that encourage attractive public spaces, walkability, and transit-oriented development (homes, businesses, and recreation areas are in walking distance to public transportation).
- **Incentives for infill development.** Provide development or regulatory incentives for redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties (renovate, or demolish and build new) within the city center.
- **Historic preservation.** Continue to protect the city's historic resources and neighborhoods to maintain its unique character.

By carefully considering its development regulations, Abbeville can shape a future that balances growth with the preservation of its small-town charm. Development regulations can help to ensure that new development is compatible with existing land uses, protects the environment, promotes the overall well-being of residents, and implements the vision of the community. In addition, clear and concise regulations can help attract economic growth, as they protect the quality and character of both business owners' and homeowners' investments. However, it is important to avoid overly restrictive regulations that can stifle economic development and innovation.

Comprehensive Capital Improvement Programs

A comprehensive Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a strategic plan that outlines a multiyear investment strategy for essential infrastructure projects. For example, it might spell out the planned investments in road construction; new or updated city facilities such as police and fire stations; drainage improvements; or new water lines to be completed over the next five years. Key features of an effective CIP include the following components.

- **Prioritization of needs.** The city should conduct regular assessments to identify critical infrastructure needs, such as road repairs, water and sewer upgrades, and public safety facilities.
- **Community involvement.** The CIP process involves public input to ensure that projects align with the community's priorities and address their concerns.
- **Phased implementation.** The program is divided into phases, allowing for the allocation of resources over time and the consideration of changing priorities.
- **Financial planning.** The CIP includes a detailed financial plan that outlines the estimated costs of each project and the funding sources that will be used.
- **Performance metrics**. The city tracks the performance of completed projects to measure their effectiveness and inform future planning.

By following these best practices, Abbeville can effectively manage its infrastructure needs and improve the quality of life for its residents.

Land Use Goals, Objectives, and Actions

This section is organized into Goals that reflect the vision and Objectives and Actions that, if followed, will move Abbeville towards the community's vision.

Goals are the big ideas that support the citizen's vision. They capture big picture changes that must occur to implement the plan.

Objectives establish specific, measurable, attainable and realistic objectives that guide plan implementation by ensuring that stakeholders are clear about what must happen to move Abbeville toward the vision.

Actions delineate the steps needed to achieve the goals.



Identified by the Advisory Committee as important first steps to implement the vision.

LU–1: USE THE VISION MAP AS A GUIDE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT DECISIONS TO MEET CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS.

The Vision Map and associated character areas should be used to guide both public and private investment decisions. The map identifies corridors and locations of higher commercial, residential, and mixed-use development as well as priority locations for walkable, more compact development. Infrastructure investments should be designed to facilitate the development character of the Vision Map and provide multiple benefits to the public.

LU–1.1: Encourage development and land use patterns consistent with the Vision Map.

» LU–1.1.1: Develop and adopt a subdivision ordinance, which establishes the minimum standards for dividing land into individual parcels for development and coordinates development of infrastructure such as streets, water, parks, and drainage.

LU–1.1.2: Develop land use regulations to ensure private development is consistent with the future land use Vision Map.

LU–1.1.3: Revisit and update the Vision Map every five years or as needed to accommodate changing conditions.

LU–1.1.4: Create and staff a planning and development department that will coordinate implementation of this master plan as well as development activities within Abbeville.

LU–1.2: Coordinate infrastructure development with desired land use patterns.

LU–1.2.1: Conduct a capacity analysis of current infrastructure to see if it is sufficient for the community's needs and identify gaps where anticipated land use will need additional infrastructure, including seeking Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality technical assistance to assess feasibility of a second wastewater treatment plant.

LU–1.2.2: Develop and maintain a consolidated inventory of capital improvements needed for water, wastewater, drainage, green infrastructure, and electricity that accounts for existing and projected needs to accommodate growth and useful life of facilities.

LU–1.2.3: Develop a consolidated five-year capital improvement program, identifying budgetary needs and potential sources of revenue to cover anticipated expenses.

LU-1.2.4: Develop a citywide stormwater master plan that addresses MS4 requirements and considers alternative methods for stormwater retention and water quality, such as through deploying green infrastructure.

LU–2: ENCOURAGE NEW DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVE THE CHARACTER OF KEY COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS AND GATEWAYS.

Community entry points and busy corridors provide opportunities for increased economic activity, reinforce community character, and contribute to the overall impression of Abbeville. Well-planned and vibrant corridors that can be easily accessed by multiple modes of transportation serves the local residents' needs and becomes another defining element that is distinct to Abbeville.

LU–2.1: Promote infill development on vacant and underutilized parcels.

LU–2.1.1: Inventory the location of vacant and underutilized lots and identify potential catalytic redevelopment sites and priority areas for lot assemblage to support redevelopment.

LU–2.1.2: Conduct a market study to identify specific development opportunities on vacant and underutilized catalytic redevelopment sites.

LU–2.1.3: Work with property owners and brokers to proactively market vacant or underutilized commercial land for development opportunities that achieve the community's vision and support community anchors located along these corridors, highlighting available development incentives.

LU–2.1.4: Prioritize investments in infrastructure along Veterans Memorial Drive, State Street, and Charity Street that improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to significant destinations and create special treatments for nodes and important intersections.

» LU–2.2: Establish development regulations for and improve the appearance of key corridors and districts.

LU–2.2.1: Develop detailed corridor plans for Veterans Memorial Drive, Charity Street, Lyman Street, and East Martin Luther King Jr. corridors and further identify marketable development opportunities.

LU–2.2.2: Develop and implement landscape and development guidelines to improve the appearance of commercial corridors as part of corridor plans.

LU–2.2.3: Create a beautification strategy for corridors that includes volunteer cleanups or adopt–a–block efforts.

LU–2.2.4: Identify development approval process for corridors to ensure that development standards are met.

LU-2.2.5: Assess the feasibility of establishing Tax Increment Filing (TIF) districts or other mechanisms to generate funding for corridor improvements.

LU–2.3: Enhance gateways to signify to citizens and visitors that they are entering special areas of Abbeville.

LU–2.3.1: Improve signage to mark gateways.

LU–2.3.2: Develop landscape plans as well as install and maintain enhanced landscaping at gateways.

LU–2.3.3: Develop and implement long-term capital improvements for special intersection treatments, creation of plazas, or other enhancements to create welcoming entries into the city and neighborhoods consistent with the Vision Map.

LU–3: MAINTAIN AND SUPPORT EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS AND SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE IN LINE WITH THE COMMUNITY'S VISION.

To keep neighborhoods stable, residential areas must be protected from uses that aren't compatible and should support appropriate new development that promotes a better quality of life, including community centers or recreation areas. When residential and commercial areas are near each other, it's important to establish buffering, such as landscaping or screening that hides dumpsters and other commercial service areas from view. Appropriate screening and performance standards help to protect residences from negative impacts such as noise and glare. Another component to maintain neighborhood integrity is having good infrastructure, from sidewalks to drainage to electricity to broadband.

LU–3.1: Maintain infrastructure to support neighborhoods.

LU–3.1.1: Work with community representatives to conduct neighborhood walk audits to inventory priority infrastructure improvements such as lighting, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, street conditions, drainage, and landscape maintenance.

LU–3.1.2: Include neighborhood–identified community improvements into a citywide coordinated capital improvement plan for implementation.

LU–3.2: Ensure development is compatible with and supportive of neighborhoods.

LU–3.2.1: Inventory the location of vacant and underutilized residential lots and identify potential catalytic redevelopment sites and priority areas for lot assemblage to support redevelopment.

LU–3.2.2: Consider amendments to Article VIII–Landscape to provide for buffering, screening, and transitions between residential and nonresidential uses.

LU–3.2.3: Develop an ordinance to create appropriate buffering and performance standards among commercial, industrial, and residential uses to minimize incompatible impacts to residential neighborhoods.

LU–3.2.4: Encourage infill housing that looks like single-family homes and accessory dwelling units, particularly in areas identified on the Vision Map as Transitional Mixed-Use.

LU—3.2.5: Encourage applicants for zoning changes to meet with neighborhoods.

LU–3.3: Establish minimum standards for residential and multifamily development.

LU–3.3.1: Create standards that address Residential and Mixed-Use development, such as setbacks from property lines, housing design considerations, and buffers between higher- and lower-intensity uses.

LU–3.3.2: Encourage neighborhood-scale commercial and retail services at nodes identified in the Vision Map as neighborhood centers.

LU–3.3.3: Create standards for small and midsize multifamily development in areas identified on the Vision Map as Mixed-Use or Transitional Mixed-Use.

LU–3.4: Demonstrate neighborhood identity and improve community image.

LU–3.4.1: Create standards for housing development that encourage biking and walking, such as narrow setbacks from the street, front porches, sidewalks along street front, and street trees.

LU–3.4.2: Create neighborhood-scale plans to activate/redevelop vacant or adjudicated properties, prioritizing locations with the highest concentration of vacant and abandoned properties.

LU–3.4.3: Encourage the use of places like the library, community centers, and other gathering places (coffee shops, restaurants, gyms, churches, etc.) to create "third places" for youth and neighborhood residents.

Third Places

A "third place" is a neutral public place where people can gather and interact. It is termed a third place because it is separate and distinct from home (first place) and work (second place). These third places like outdoor restaurant spaces, beer gardens, cafes, coffeehouses, and social clubs become the heart of socialization and community mixing. Generally, they can be relied upon as a space to enjoy the company of regulars and newcomers alike. For more information on third places read *Celebrating The Third Place* by Ray Oldenburg.

LU–4: PRESERVE ABBEVILLE'S HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.

Abbeville's strong heritage is one of the community's defining characteristics that sets it apart from other places. Abbeville should support and build upon current programs, celebrate existing historic resources, and continue to identify additional candidates for preservation.

LU–4.1: Refine policies, tools, and other resources to inform and enforce preservation efforts.

LU–4.1.1: Review and adopt historic preservation standards and strengthen enforcement.

LU–4.1.2: Maintain a historic resources inventory to identify historic properties and/or districts that may be candidates for preservation efforts.

LU–4.1.3: Increase programming and staffing for the Abbeville Main Street program.

Placemaking

Placemaking is a process to allow people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces around shared values and vision. Well designed spaces strengthen the connection between people and place. While placemaking includes urban and landscape design components, placemaking should also consider how the space provides sociability, comfort and cohesion between the human and built environment. For more information on placemaking see Project for Public Spaces https://www.pps.org/

LU–4.1.4: Host an annual historic Abbeville tour to showcase historic properties, highlight successful preservation or adaptive reuse efforts, and raise awareness about threatened properties in need of preservation.

LU–4.1.5: Provide training to staff and decision-makers about the benefits of historic preservation and best practices for applying historic district regulations.

LU–4.2 Encourage opportunities for placemaking in Downtown Abbeville to reimagine public spaces and more strongly tie residents and visitors to a sense of place.

LU-4.2.1: Identify priority downtown locations for outdoor seating or public spaces to further activate the area.

LU–4.2.2: Incorporate public art, landscape improvements, street furniture, special paving, and other methods to support placemaking downtown.

LU–5: CREATE COMMUNITY DISTRICTS TO ENCOURAGE SUPPORTIVE AND COMPLEMENTARY USES AND PROVIDE FOR CONSISTENT DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER.

Abbeville has multiple institutions, businesses, and historical places that are important to or could boost the community's economy. The city should consider what could be built around these anchors that would enhance their use and service as well as provide benefits for residents and visitors.

LU–5.1: Establish a small-scale manufacturing and industrial hub around the city's airport.

LU–5.1.1: Identify and inventory properties to include in a potential commercial hub around Chris Crusta Memorial Airport.

LU–5.1.2: Conduct market study to determine priority development opportunities around the airport and Veterans Memorial Drive area.

LU–5.1.3: Develop special overlay regulations to encourage commercial uses complementary to the airport such as logistics, warehousing, and small-scale manufacturing, and include standards for lighting, streetscapes, building forms, and signage.

LU–5.1.4: Explore constructing infrastructure such as roads or extending water or sewer lines to encourage hub development by creating development-ready sites.

» LU–5.2: Establish a medical district around Abbeville General Hospital.

LU–5.2.1: Identify and inventory properties for inclusion in a potential commercial hub around Abbeville General. The inventory should include hospital-owned property, hospital supportive uses, and future development sites that could support medical services.

LU–5.2.2: Develop special overlay regulations to encourage development of commercial uses complementary to the hospital such as medical offices, lodging, and retail, and include standards for lighting, streetscape, building forms, signage, and other appropriate development regulations.

LU–5.3: Establish a district around the historic Riviana Rice Mill site.

LU–5.3.1: Develop an overlay district to encourage supportive development around the rice mill, such as housing and additional retail and services, and include standards for lighting, streetscape, building forms, signage, and other appropriate development regulations.

LU–5.3.2: Continue to work with the property owner to secure funding and define restoration and redevelopment plans.

LU–5.3.3: Provide open space and connectivity to the Vermilion River, downtown, and AA Comeaux Park as part of redevelopment plans.





CHAPTER 5

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Where We Are Now

Abbeville's residential neighborhoods comprise the majority of the city's land and constitute the heart of the community. *Imagine Abbeville* supports these areas by strengthening their quality and character while proposing a greater range of housing types and options across the city.

To accomplish this, Abbeville could make improvements to the housing stock (the number and quality of houses and apartments available); preserve some lower-density areas; promote increases in residential density around mixed-use nodes (allow more residences in close proximity to businesses in certain areas); and support infrastructure investment and development opportunities that match each neighborhood's character.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Abbeville has a variety of housing types, which are grouped using the following conditions:

- whether the structure is stand-alone or attached to another structure and,
- the number of dwelling units in each structure.

Abbeville's housing types include four categories that group housing types with similar development forms and densities together.

- **Single-family detached** includes single-family detached units, modulary housing, mobile homes, and manufactured housing.
- **Single-family attached** includes all structures with a common wall where each dwelling unit occupies a separate lot, such as row houses or townhouses.
- **Multifamily—2 to 4 units** includes attached housing with between 2 and 4 units per structure, such as duplexes or triplexes.
- **Multifamily—5 or more units** includes all attached structures with at least five units in the structure, such as multistory apartment buildings.



Stone Bridge Apartments - 5 or more units housing in Abbeville



Single-family detached house in Abbeville



Fourplex housing in Abbeville



Single family housing in Abbeville

CURRENT HOUSING ANALYSIS

Homeownership in Abbeville is lower than in Louisiana.

According to the US Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey, there are 5,786 total housing units in Abbeville with 53.8% owner occupied, which is lower than the state home ownership rate of 67%.

In 2022, the median value for an owner-occupied housing unit in Abbeville was $98,700, which is a 3.1 % increase from the median value for an owner-occupied housing unit in 2020 ($95,700).

Home ownership and rental is nearly evenly split in Abbeville.

The homeownership rate for Abbeville is about 54% while the percentage of persons renting is about 46%. Homeownership in Abbeville lags behind the state average of 67%.

Vacant homes present an opportunity.

In Abbeville, about 22% of the housing stock (1,264 homes) is considered vacant. While census data does not relate vacancy to structural condition, there are a large number of units that could provide new housing options for residents.

Renters are far more likely to be cost-burdened than homeowners.

About 56% of Abbeville **rental** households are cost-burdened, meaning they pay 30% or more of their household income in housing costs.

In Abbeville, the Housing Authority of the City of Abbeville (HACA) provides housing either through public housing or through the choice housing voucher program to extremely low-income households whose earnings are 30–50% less than the area median income.

Abbeville's monthly rent is lower than Louisiana's average; however, Abbeville's household incomes are also lower.

The US Census Bureau states that Abbeville's median gross monthly rent is $749 a month; for Louisiana, the average is $948. With the median household income at $39,566 per year, it is not surprising the majority of renters in Abbeville are rent burdened, which means rent costs more than 30% of the household income.

Home values in Abbeville are rising.

In 2022, the median value for an owner-occupied housing unit in Abbeville was $98,700, which is a 3.1 % increase from the median value for an owner-occupied housing unit in 2020 ($95,700).

From 2020 to 2022 the number of homes with a value less than $99,999 decreased, and the number of homes $100,000 and over increased. The rising expense of homeowners and flood insurance is an additional hidden housing cost. This burden—along with the challenge of having fewer insurance companies writing new policies—has made renting and homeownership increasingly challenging in coastal communities like Abbeville.

Abbeville's older housing stock is less resilient to high-intensity storms.

Nearly 40% of Abbeville's homes were built before 1960. Older housing in Abbeville contains a mixture of historic styles that anchor the cultural fabric

of the city. However, older homes typically have higher energy expenses and cost more to maintain. In Abbeville, this could mean a higher percentage of homes that may need improvements for energy efficiency and that would more likely experience significant loss because of hurricanes, major storms, or floods. Preservation efforts should be informed by a citywide inventory of historic structures. A strategic plan should be developed to guide preservation, demolition, or any other structural interventions.

Abbeville's newest housing construction has occurred away from the downtown core or just outside of the city limits. Within the last 34 years, nearly a third of Abbeville's housing stock—29%—was constructed. Half of these homes were built between 2010 and the present, when higher building standards were put in place. These homes are more likely to be well-insulated and constructed to withstand higher wind speeds.

Figure 4.4: Home Values In Abbeville For Owner Occupied Housing Units With Mortgages

HOME VALUE	% HOMES IN 2020	% HOMES IN 2022
Less than $50,000	15.3%	6.4%
$50,000 to $99,999	42.4%	29.4%
$100,000 to $299,999	38.1%	58.0%
$300,000 to $499,999	0.7%	1.1%
$500,000 to $749,999	3.5%	5.2%

Source: 2020 Census and 2022 ACS

Neighborhood safety and stability

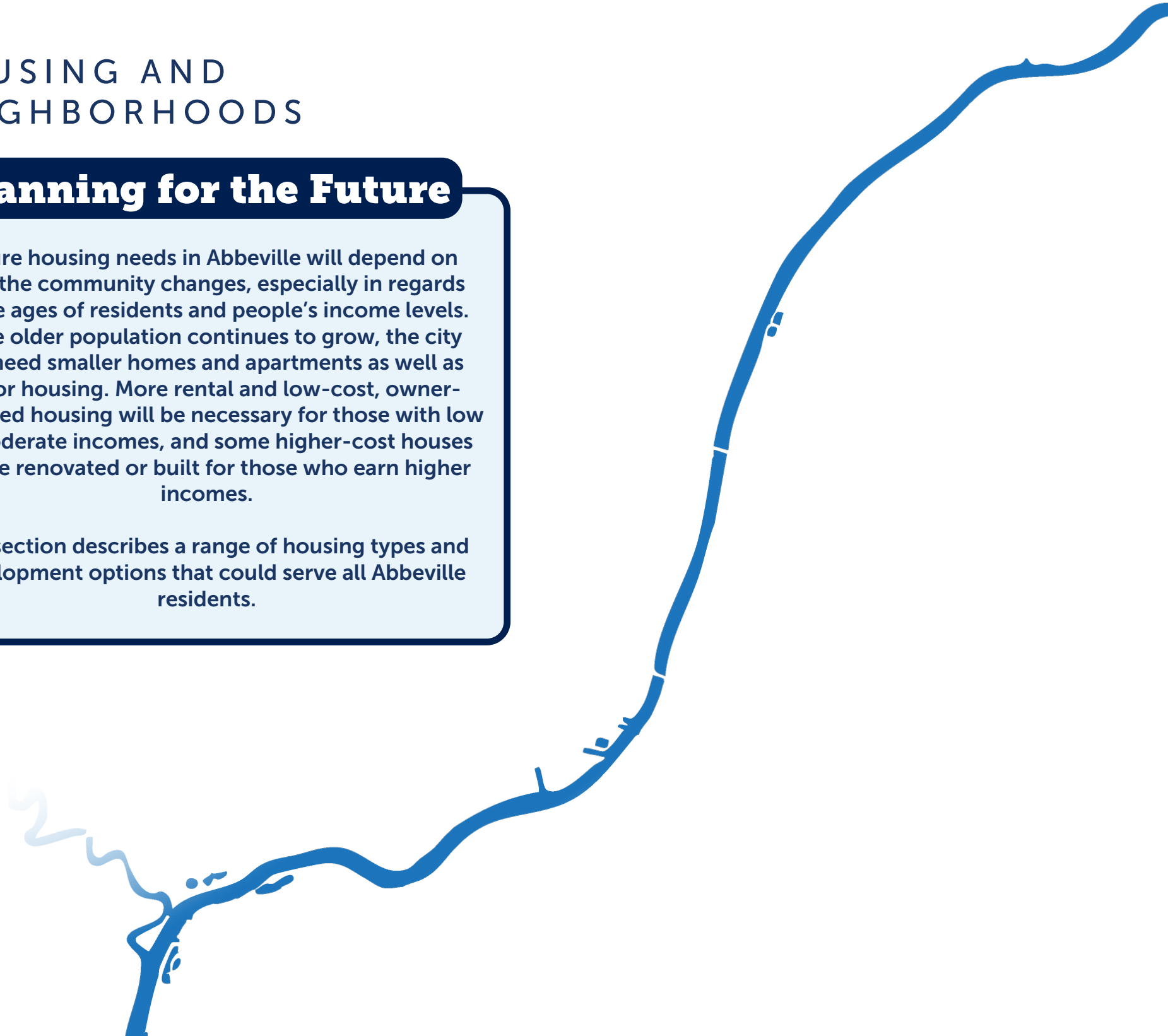
Throughout the public engagement process, residents shared their concerns about crime and violence. The consensus was that this issue must be addressed through a variety of coordinated actions. Because the police have an important role in maintaining public safety, enhanced law enforcement presence in high-crime locations could be a deterrent. Community design also impacts neighborhood safety and can be used to deter criminal activity; improvements in lighting and activating abandoned properties can help make places safer. By combining policing with social services, and by addressing blight and vacancy, Abbeville can pursue a holistic approach to neighborhood sustainability.

In communities throughout the United States, nonprofits and city agencies provide services designed to reduce violence and crime and give emotional, social, and educational support to people. These services include afterschool programs with homework assistance and outdoor recreation; street teams that provide conflict mediation; crisis intervention; supportive counseling; and wellness support. There was significant public support for the city to explore the expansion of social services for crime interventions, specifically programs that offer positive activities and personal development–particularly for young residents and in areas of high crime. Currently, several social service nonprofits—including the Christian Service Center, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Nehemiah Project—are working to develop spaces and programming for youth in an effort to reduce juvenile crimes. Other organizations like the YMCA/YWCA could be brought in as a partner to bring in new offerings.

Planning for the Future

Future housing needs in Abbeville will depend on how the community changes, especially in regards to the ages of residents and people's income levels. If the older population continues to grow, the city will need smaller homes and apartments as well as senior housing. More rental and low-cost, owner-occupied housing will be necessary for those with low to moderate incomes, and some higher-cost houses can be renovated or built for those who earn higher incomes.

This section describes a range of housing types and development options that could serve all Abbeville residents.



HOUSING NEEDS

Residents voiced a desire to ensure housing is available for people in all stages of life, in particular to accommodate the city's aging population. In terms of the preferred style of housing, residents were supportive of a variety of different housing types and configurations, including accessory dwelling units, small and midscale multifamily development, cottage housing, and mixed-use buildings that combine residential and commercial uses. Accompanying these preferences was a desire to create neighborhoods that promote a sense of place, offer areas to walk and bike, and provide public gathering spaces.

There was significant commentary at the public meetings about the need for more single-family homes, which is an important component of a stable housing base. However, given the low median income in the community, it is important to consider that single-family home ownership will not be the right housing fit for everyone. Like much of the nation, expanding housing choice to include smaller starter homes, small-scale multifamily options, condominiums, and larger multifamily buildings will be needed to meet both current and future demand.

The increasing costs of homeowner, commercial property, and flood insurance were identified as significant barriers to affordability both for housing and businesses. While this issue is larger than Abbeville, there was a desire to ensure Abbeville's leaders were engaged in this issue at the state and federal level to advocate for more affordable rates.

One important theme of public engagement was a desire for Abbeville to have a "stickiness" that encourages young residents to stay in the city after graduating from high school. Expanding the availability of quality rental housing could help address this. According to US Census Data, in 2022, 15.4% of Abbeville's population was between the ages of 15–24. Renters who want updated features and amenities have limited options in Abbeville because most of the multifamily housing consists primarily of older units.

According to US Rental Market Data, nationally, 85% of renter households are occupied by persons 27 years old and younger. New development of high-quality condominiums and apartments, implementing housing standards in existing rental housing and apartments, and encouraging new mixed-use (commercial/residential) developments could help meet this market demand.

Senior Housing

Senior housing includes several options—age 55 and over residential developments, assisted living communities, nursing homes, and smaller housing types including duplexes, townhomes, and condominiums. There are important locational considerations for senior housing that improve the residential experience. As residents age and rely less and less on driving, close proximity and access to health care and other everyday amenities is critical. Additionally, placing senior housing near locations that allow for social activities—such as a senior center, churches or other public gathering spaces—will help to retain a sense of belonging to the greater community.

INFILL AND HOUSING REHABILITATION

At public meetings, residents expressed significant interest in housing rehabilitation and raised concerns related to deteriorated, blighted, and vacant housing. Vacant structures can contribute to decreased value of surrounding properties and can be locations for illegal activities. Updating and strengthening codes could provide a benefit by reducing blighted structures and improving neighborhood stability.

Given Abbeville's distinct historic character, preservation of historic residential structures should be a priority. By rehabilitating vacant and substandard properties throughout the city, Abbeville can retain its historic character while providing safe, beautiful homes for residents. Preserving historic homes contributes to a neighborhood's character and quality and offers opportunities to have plaques or markers that note their significance.

However, new construction will be necessary where there are vacant lots or in places where buildings must be demolished because their conditions are too poor to renovate. An affordable housing developer—such as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)—would have the expertise and resources to renovate or create more units. An organization like this could be part of an infill effort to rehabilitate vacant houses or would build new homes on empty lots.

Residents noted areas of particular need of housing rehabilitation, which include Lyman Street, East Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Graceland Avenue, and State Street. The council districts considered most in need of housing rehabilitation were District A and District D.

Working through the Louisiana Housing Authority HOME program could assist property owners who have substandard rental units with funds to make improvements. This effort would address concerns about safety and crime by providing safe, quality housing and cleaning up the surrounding environments.

What is a CHDO?

A Community Housing Development Organziation, or CHDO, is a private nonprofit, community-based organization that develops affordable housing. CHDOs are eligible to use HUD HOME Investment Partnership Program funds to purchase or rehabilitate rental housing, cover the costs of new construction on rental housing, and renovate houses that residents can buy. In Louisiana, these organizations must also be certified or designated as a CHDO by the Louisiana Housing Corporation.

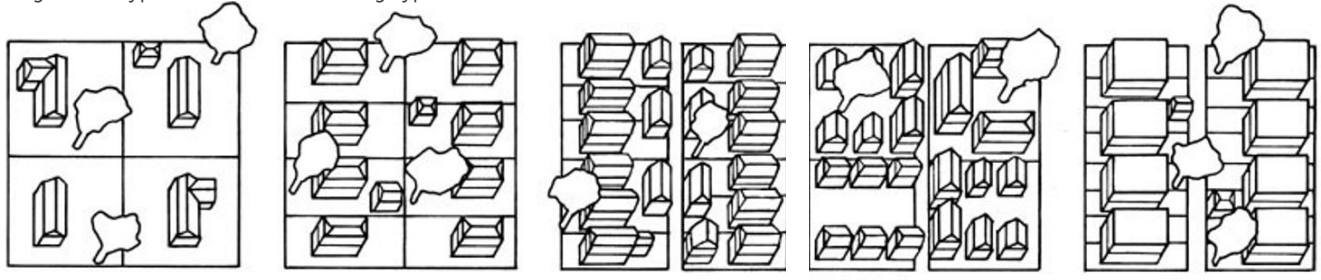
HOUSING TYPES AND DENSITY

Accommodating different phases of life means providing different housing types, lifestyle options, and densities.

Housing density—or residential density— refers to the number of homes per unit of land. It is typically reported in dwelling units per acre. Typical single-family neighborhoods are often about 6-8 houses per acre.

Figure 7.2 shows a selection of typical densities, but density can look very different, depending on the type of building, the parking configuration, and the type of construction. In addition, the amenities provided can change the perception of a property.

Figure 7.2: Typical Densities of Building Types



Suburban Ranch House, 4-6 units per acre

Single Family Detached, 8-12 units per acre

Small Lot Single Family with Second Unit, 16-24 units per acre

Cottage Court, 16-24 units per acre

Duplex/Fourplex, 16-24 units per acre

Images: *Smart Infill: Creating More Livable Communities in the Bay Area*, 2002, by Stephen M. Wheeler for Greenbelt Alliance

Land Banks and Land Trusts Help Build Neighborhoods

A **land bank** is a public entity that is authorized to acquire vacant, abandoned, and deteriorated (VAD) properties to hold and maintain them so that they can be ultimately transferred back into commerce through redevelopment or used for another public benefit (e.g., public park space, stormwater retention, etc.). Often, land banking agencies partner with Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) to increase the supply of new market rate and affordable housing in a community. For more information on land banks, see https://communityprogress.org/.

Community land trusts (CLTs) are nonprofit organizations that are created to ensure lasting home ownership and housing affordability in communities through a unique ownership model. Generally, in the CLT model, the land is held in trust by the nonprofit organization while the structure is purchased and sold to individual owners. This model helps to keep the overall property cost lower while still allowing wealth creation through increased equity over time. While many CLTs operate in areas where housing prices are rising, some CLTs work in partnership with land banks to develop affordable housing to help stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods that are in decline. For more information on land trusts, see https://groundedsolutions.org/.

HOUSING TYPE PREFERENCES

Throughout the public engagement process Abbeville residents provided feedback on housing styles they would like incorporated into future developments.



Image: CNU

Example of a mixed-use center

Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use development puts residents within walking distance of services they need and amenities they want. When people who live nearby shop locally, this stimulates economic growth by increasing sales and property taxes. When considering mixed-use development, Abbeville can plan for high-quality recreational spaces—which the community would like to have—as well as provide better connections to parks and historic areas. All of these improvements can foster a stronger sense of community, giving people places to be proud of and gather.



Image: HCM2 Landscape Architects

Example of a senior housing development

Senior Housing

Senior housing can take many forms—such as mother-in-law units, independent living apartments, assisted living communities, and nursing homes, Senior housing can support better health because residents have shared spaces that allow for recreation and foster a sense of community. Residents of Abbeville expressed concerns about their ability to age in place in their current homes. Senior living units in Abbeville would ensure safety and security for those who want to stay in the city limits rather than relocate to surrounding areas.



Image: Butler Permaculture Design

Example of cottage housing

Cottage Housing

Cottage housing is a type of versatile, adaptable residential development characterized by small, detached homes that are typically organized around shared yards and connected by walkways. Cottage housing is a more attainable, affordable option for first-time buyers as well as older adults who want to downsize. In Abbeville, home ownership is 13% lower than for Louisiana as a whole. Cottage communities could provide a way for more people to own their homes and accumulate wealth as the values of their properties increase over time.

Housing and Neighborhoods Goals, Objectives, and Actions

This section is organized into Goals that reflect the vision and Objectives and Actions that, if followed, will move Abbeville towards the community's vision.

Goals are the big ideas that support the citizen's vision. They capture big picture changes that must occur to implement the plan.

Objectives establish specific, measurable, attainable and realistic objectives that guide plan implementation by ensuring that stakeholders are clear about what must happen to move Abbeville toward the vision.

Actions delineate the steps needed to achieve the goals.



Identified by the Advisory Committee as important first steps to implement the vision.

HN–1: OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS AND CHOICES TO ABBEVILLE RESIDENTS.

Housing in Abbeville is predominantly single family. Alternative housing choices—such as townhomes, accessory dwelling units, smaller units, and senior housing—can broaden Abbeville's appeal because this would accommodate people of all ages, income levels, and stages of life.

»HN-1.1: Provide housing types that fit the affordability and stage of life needs of all Abbeville residents.

HN–1.1.1: Develop housing choices specifically for Abbeville's aging population, such as accessory dwelling units, smaller housing types, and senior housing.

HN–1.1.2: Work with SoLAcc to incorporate student housing options near their campus.

HN–1.1.3: Encourage a wider range of housing within neighborhoods, consistent with the Vision Map. These include, but are not limited to, duplexes or townhomes on corner lots; small-scale, mixed-use, or multifamily units near commercial corridors; senior housing; cottage houses; apartments; and condominiums.

HN–1.1.4: Work with partner organizations to improve and better connect resources for people experiencing homelessness.

HN—2: SUPPORT STRONG, SAFE, AND DESIRABLE NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGHOUT THE CITY.

During public engagement discussions, residents voiced a key theme—the need to invest in and support existing neighborhoods. To accomplish this, attendees suggested improving safety, ensuring code compliance, and offering community programs and spaces that encourage positive activities.

»HN–2.1: Improve safety conditions in the city's neighborhoods.

HN–2.1.1: Organize neighborhood watch and/or National Night Out programs.

HN–2.1.2: Explore options for police substations in neighborhoods or support other actions to increase positive community and police activities.

HN–2.1.3: Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Community Design (CPTED) principles in all public and private developments across the city.

HN–2.1.4: Utilize crime data to prioritize public investments to improve visibility such as brush clearing and lighting. Map crime data along with improvements to track change over time.

HN–2.2: Preserve and strengthen existing single-family areas through proactive enforcement and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

HN–2.2.1: Continue to access state grant funds to demolish vacant, abandoned, and blighted properties.

HN–2.2.2: Rehabilitate adjudicated properties and consider establishing a community land trust (CLT).

HN–2.2.3: Strengthen and enforce nuisance codes (trash, debris, blighted structures, etc.).

HN–2.2.4: Develop minimum property standards to ensure safe and habitable rental housing units.

» HN–3: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFFORDABLE AND MIXED INCOME HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.

Half of Abbeville's renters pay 30% or more of their income on housing costs. This indicates a serious need for more affordable options. Ideally, Abbeville can be a place that provides quality homes for everyone and remains a city where people want to live.

HN–3.1: Work with for-profit and nonprofit developers to encourage mixed-income developments in areas with access to everyday services.

HN–3.1.1: Create a coalition of housing providers, landlords, and developers to assess the opportunities for new and rehabilitated housing development. Work with community development corporations and the Housing Authority of Abbeville to reduce hurdles for nonprofit housing development.

HN–3.1.2: Coordinate with the Louisiana Housing Corporation to create local homebuyer training programs to increase eligible first-time homebuyers and take advantage of down payment assistance.

HN–3.1.3: In cooperation with the Housing Authority of Abbeville, identify opportunities to decentralize affordable housing developments through the HUD Choice Neighborhoods program similar grant programs.


LA 14 ABBEVILLE



CHAPTER 6

MOBILITY

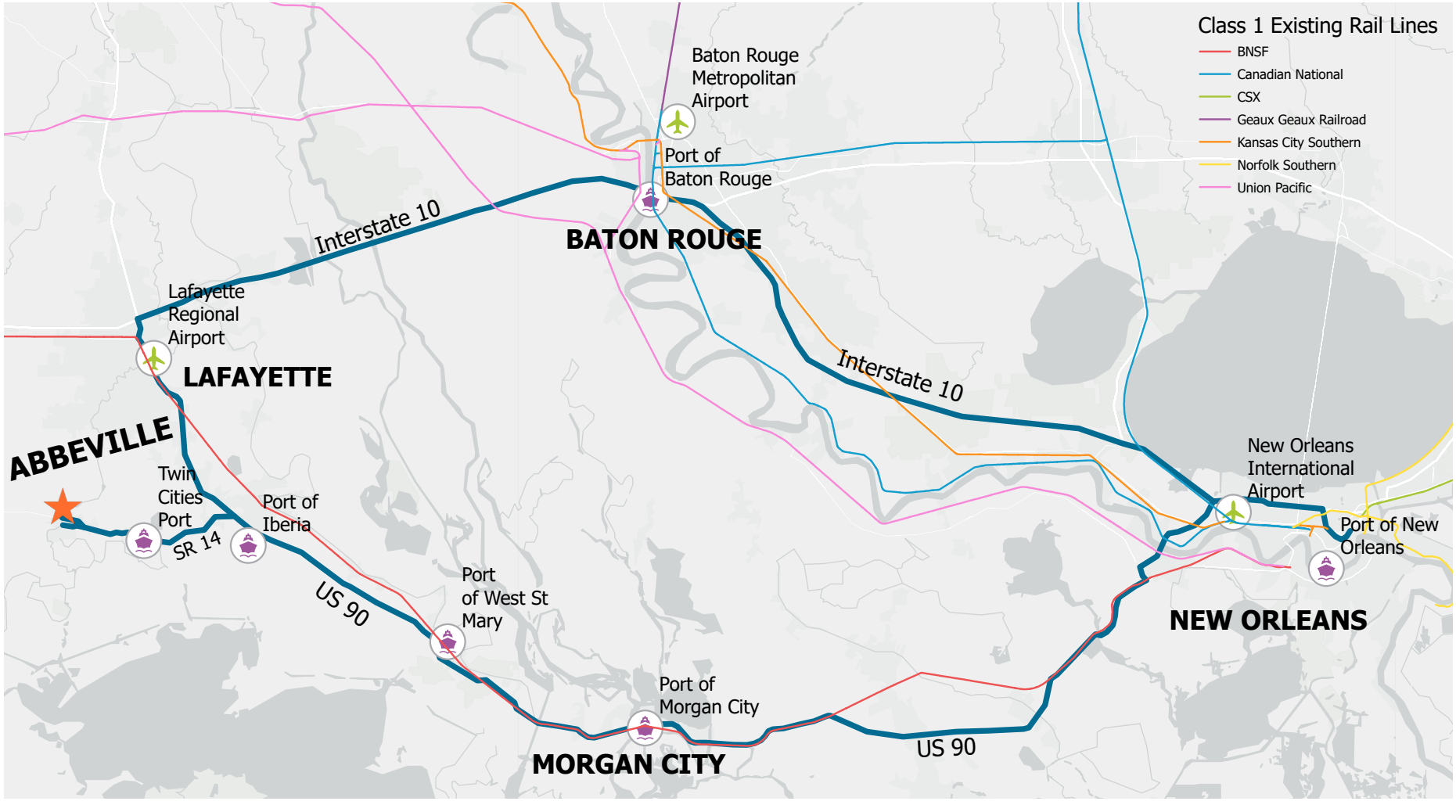
MOBILITY

Where We Are Now

Mobility describes how we move people and goods from place to place within and outside of our community. It considers all manner of transportation, including cars, bikes, pedestrians, transit, rail, water, and air. Abbeville has a compact grid of streets, which generally lends itself to efficient movement; however, its infrastructure is not currently built to accommodate all modes of transportation. Investing in infrastructure that provides safe, convenient mobility options for all users is a central theme for this chapter.



FIGURE 6.1: REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION MAP



ABBEVILLE'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Most people in Abbeville travel by automobile. However, according to 2020 US Census statistics, 19.6% of local households don't have access to a vehicle, which is more than double the state average of 8.3%. Additionally, Abbeville is challenged with an overall lack of sidewalks and crosswalks, which contributes to safety issues for those users. This manifests in pedestrian deaths and serious injuries. Making the roads safer for pedestrians will not only protect their lives and health but make it easier for them to run errands, get to work, and obtain the services they need.

Roads

Most of Abbeville's historic center follows a grid system, with the major routes being LA 14 (Veterans Memorial Drive), State Street, Saint Charles Street, Charity Street, and LA 338 (John M. Hardy Drive). While most of Abbeville's grid network results in short, walkable block lengths, there are some exceptions. For example, near Parker Hebert Park, the block lengths are longer, and connectivity of roadways to the north and east is limited. A well-connected network of roadways is critical for the safe and efficient movement of both vehicles and people.

Regionally, Abbeville is connected to other cities by state and US highways. US 167 to the north connects Abbeville to Lafayette, LA 14 (Veterans Memorial Drive) connects Abbeville to Kaplan to the west and Erath to the east, and LA 82 connects Abbeville to Perry and Esther to the south.

Rail

A rail spur enters from the southeast portion of Abbeville, primarily between Franks Alley and Maude Avenue. The connection is owned by the Louisiana and Delta Railroad and connects Abbeville to New Iberia. The city will evaluate the cost to restore rail service for commercial need or use. The city will also look into the feasibility of passenger rail service should the tracks be restored. If the rail tracks are abandoned in the future , the city should look into the possibility of developing a walking or biking trail that connects the Vermilion River to Lafitte park within the city limits.

Water Navigation and Services

Historically, the Vermilion River was used to transport Abbeville residents to neighboring towns and cities. Today, navigation by river is minimal and used mainly for freight transport. Five miles south of Abbeville, the Port of Vermilion is a diverse and growing terminal that provides considerable economic value to the parish. Currently, there are six companies docked at the Port of Vermilion that provide offshore oil and gas support services.

Air

The Abbeville airport, known as Chris Crusta Memorial Airport, is a city-owned, public-use airport located a few miles east of Abbeville's central business district. Currently, there are no commercial airlines connecting to this airport. However, several businesses rely on regular use of the airport, and a flight school operates there. Private citizens can hangar their aircrafts.

Transit

The St. Mary/Vermilion Community Action Agency (CAA) provides transportation services throughout St. Mary and Vermilion Parishes. Free or low-cost transportation is intended to be available for people who are older adults, low-income, disadvantaged youth, or Medicaid recipients. Transit services like these are primarily funded by grants from state and federal resources through the Federal Transit Administration's 5310 and 5311 programs, which require local funding matches.

Through these programs, individuals can get rides to work, school, doctor appointments, or places to run errands. Currently, service is minimal in

Vermilion Parish due to driver shortages, and improved access is needed to fully meet the transit needs of Abbeville residents.

Walking and Biking

When asked how they get around town, many residents who participated in public meetings said they walk. Because Abbeville, like many Louisiana cities, has a disconnected network of sidewalks, walking and biking to everyday designations is difficult and, in some instances, unsafe. This was reported throughout the public engagement where residents identified gaps in pathways, sidewalks that are overgrown with grass and plants, and some sections where repair is needed. Residents specifically mentioned the need for good sidewalks on and around State Street, Veterans Memorial Drive, and Charity Street.

Designated crosswalks provide a safer way for pedestrians and cyclists to navigate local streets. Multiple residents stated that Veterans Memorial Drive requires safe crossings, particularly at Cedar Street, Wildcat Drive, and John M. Hardy Drive. An Abbeville High School teacher mentioned her concern that many students walk from the school, located on Wildcat Drive, to the neighborhoods south of Veterans Memorial Drive. Some meeting attendees said State Street also needs crosswalks.

During public engagement sessions, residents shared that they prefer to walk on the roads because sidewalks are often in need of repair, and overgrown vegetation sometimes blocks passage. Sidewalk maintenance was repeatedly raised as a need through the public engagement process.

There is currently one designated bike lane in the city. This recent installation began as a demonstration project in which the city installed temporary bicycle improvements along State Street leading into downtown as part of a project that would reduce vehicular travel lanes.

There are many low-stress routes bicyclists could take to safely navigate most of the city. However, many necessary services are located along LA 14 (Veterans Memorial Drive), which has a high travel speed and the highest average daily traffic (ADT) volume in Abbeville. Because of the speed limit and traffic, the area—as it is now—isn't safe for people to walk or bike. Providing pedestrian and bicycle paths along and across LA 14 would improve access to jobs and daily services for residents who cannot travel by vehicle.

Downtown Parking

In public meetings, attendees said that adequate parking is often an issue downtown, especially on Sundays when people drive in for church services. Some suggested a parking garage downtown could alleviate problems where cars sometimes park two to three cars deep along the streets. Some highlighted the potential for better striping and signage on existing parking lots to alleviate parking strains.

Low-Stress Bike Route

A low stress bike route is defined as one that would be suitable for children to ride on or is suitable for ages 8 to 80. Low stress routes may include bike facilities such as separated and protected bike lanes, bike boulevards, or greenways. For on-road bike facilities, the roadway is characterized by lower vehicular travel speeds and decreased traffic volumes.

SAFETY

From 2018–2022, there was a total of 1,934 vehicle-related crashes in the Abbeville city limits, according to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD). Of these,

- 5 crashes were fatal, and 21 were suspected serious injury crashes.
- 13 crashes involved cyclist with 1 fatality and 1 suspected serious injury crashes.
- 22 crashes involved pedestrians with 1 fatality, and 5 suspected serious injury crashes.
- As of 2020, Vermilion Parish ranked 20th for crashes compared to all other Louisiana parishes.
- Hot spots for crashes include Veterans Memorial Drive intersections with Park Avenue, State Street, and John M. Hardy Drive.

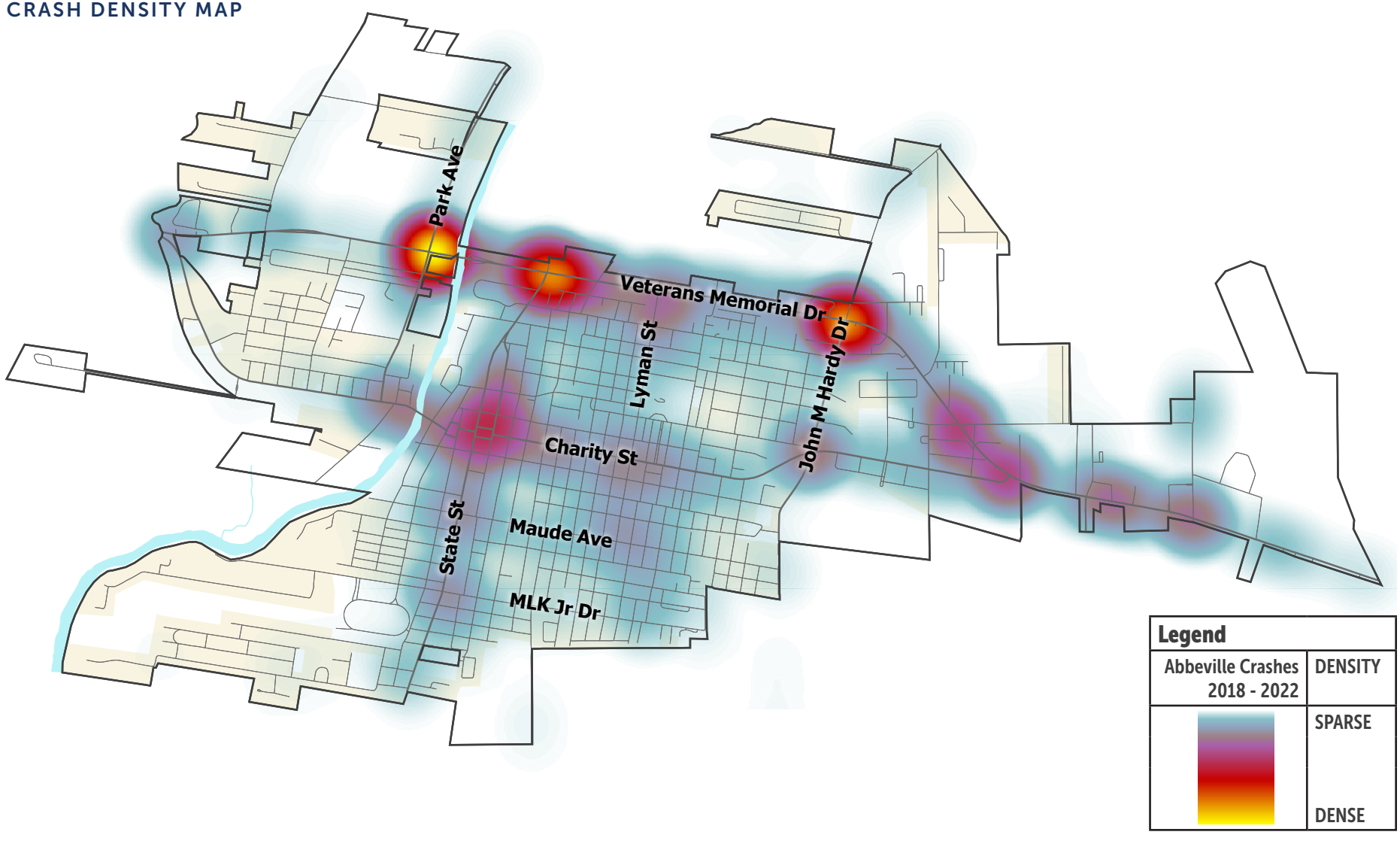
Lighting

During the engagement process, the public expressed a desire for increased lighting throughout the city, particularly around schools and parks. State Street, Veterans Memorial Drive, and Charity Street all need better lighting.



Pedestrians at a crosswalk in Abbeville.

FIGURE 6.2:
CRASH DENSITY MAP



CURRENT TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Abbeville Transportation and Mobility Coalition

Abbeville residents have formed a transportation and mobility coalition. This group advocates for providing Abbeville residents with alternative transportation modes such as public transit, biking, and walking. Through the coalition meetings, participants have expressed interest in developing an Abbeville commuter service between Abbeville and the Lafayette metropolitan region, helping connect residents to economic opportunities and regional services. Residents who participated in *Imagine Abbeville* public meetings shared support for a system that would provide access to both community destinations and have connections to Lafayette.

Road Transfer Program

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) has established a Road Transfer Program that places segments of the state highway system into local authority. Through this voluntary program, the state repairs roads "prior to transfer, and the receiving local governments will be credited for 40 years of routine and capital maintenance which can be applied to any highway capital project(s)." The purpose of this effort is not only to give local areas more control over their roads but to reduce the amount of public mileage the state maintains.

The following roadways have already been transferred* to the City of Abbeville or are planned** for transfer.

- State Street*
- Saint Charles Street*
- Port Street/Charity Street**
- Portions of John M Hardy Drive**

As part of these transfers, the state will repair the roads according to changes proposed by the Abbeville municipal government. In late 2023, Abbeville, in concert with the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX), conducted a road demonstration project along a portion of State Street and around the Vermilion Parish courthouse. The project was developed and refined based upon public input. For one month, the project converted the existing two-lane roadway into a one-lane road with bicycle lanes, angled parking, high-visibility crosswalks, and seating outside the courthouse for workers and residents to gather. The purpose of this demonstration was to show residents what this area could look like after the transfer occurs. Each road transfer presents an opportunity to reimagine the design, function, and character of significant community corridors.

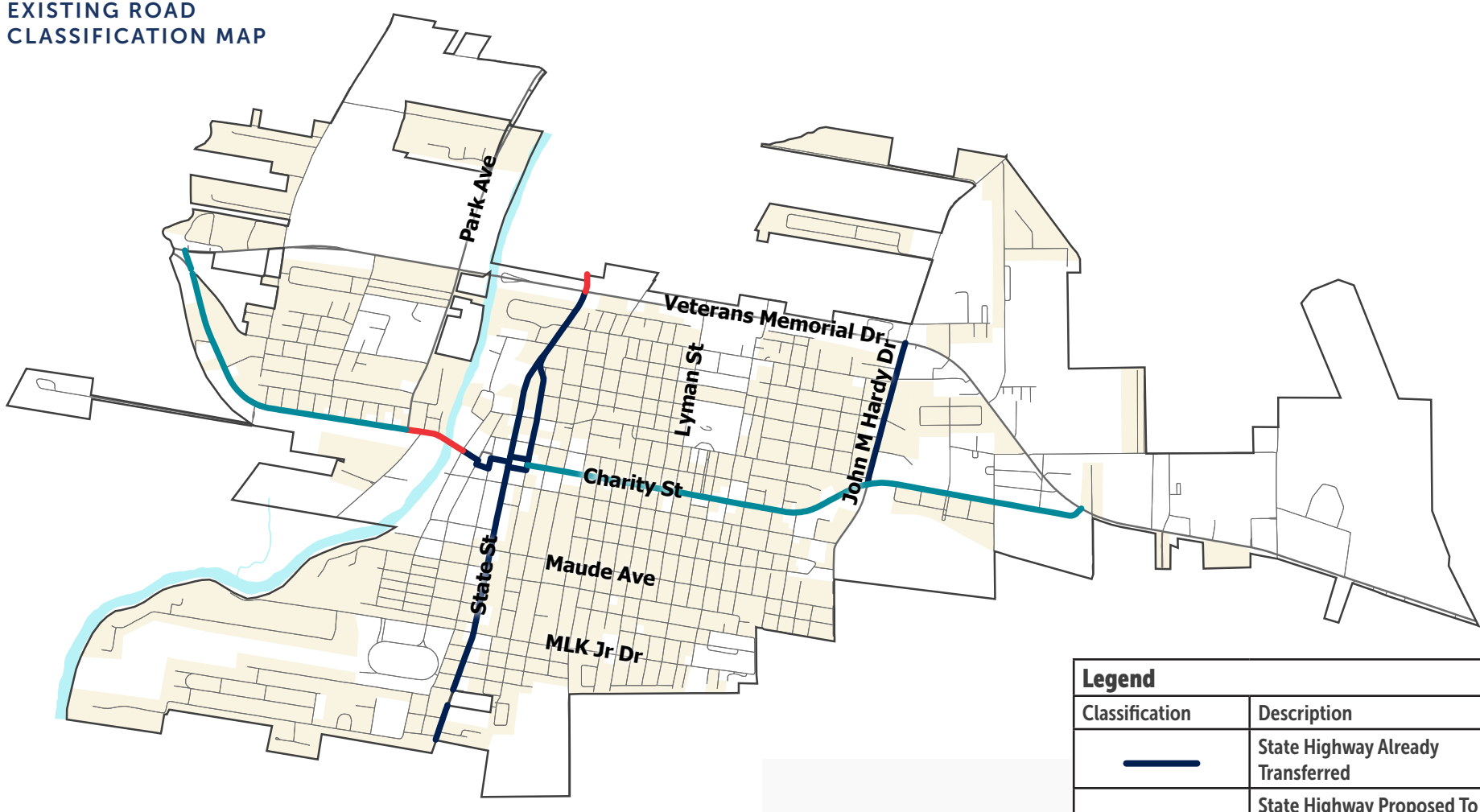
Safe Routes to Public Places—Lyman Street

In 2024, the City of Abbeville submitted a Safe Routes to Public Places Program (SRTPPP) federal grant for Lyman Street from Graceland Avenue to Charity Street. The proposed project's design is to improve lighting, increase accessibility for those with mobility challenges, and implement bike lanes, crosswalks, and safety enhancements.

Sidewalk Improvements Along Graceland Avenue

The city was recently awarded $325,000 through the State of Louisiana's Capital Outlay program to complete a sidewalk improvement project that includes six-foot sidewalks, speed bumps, and drainage improvements along Graceland Avenue from State Street to Lyman Street.

FIGURE 6.3:
EXISTING ROAD
CLASSIFICATION MAP



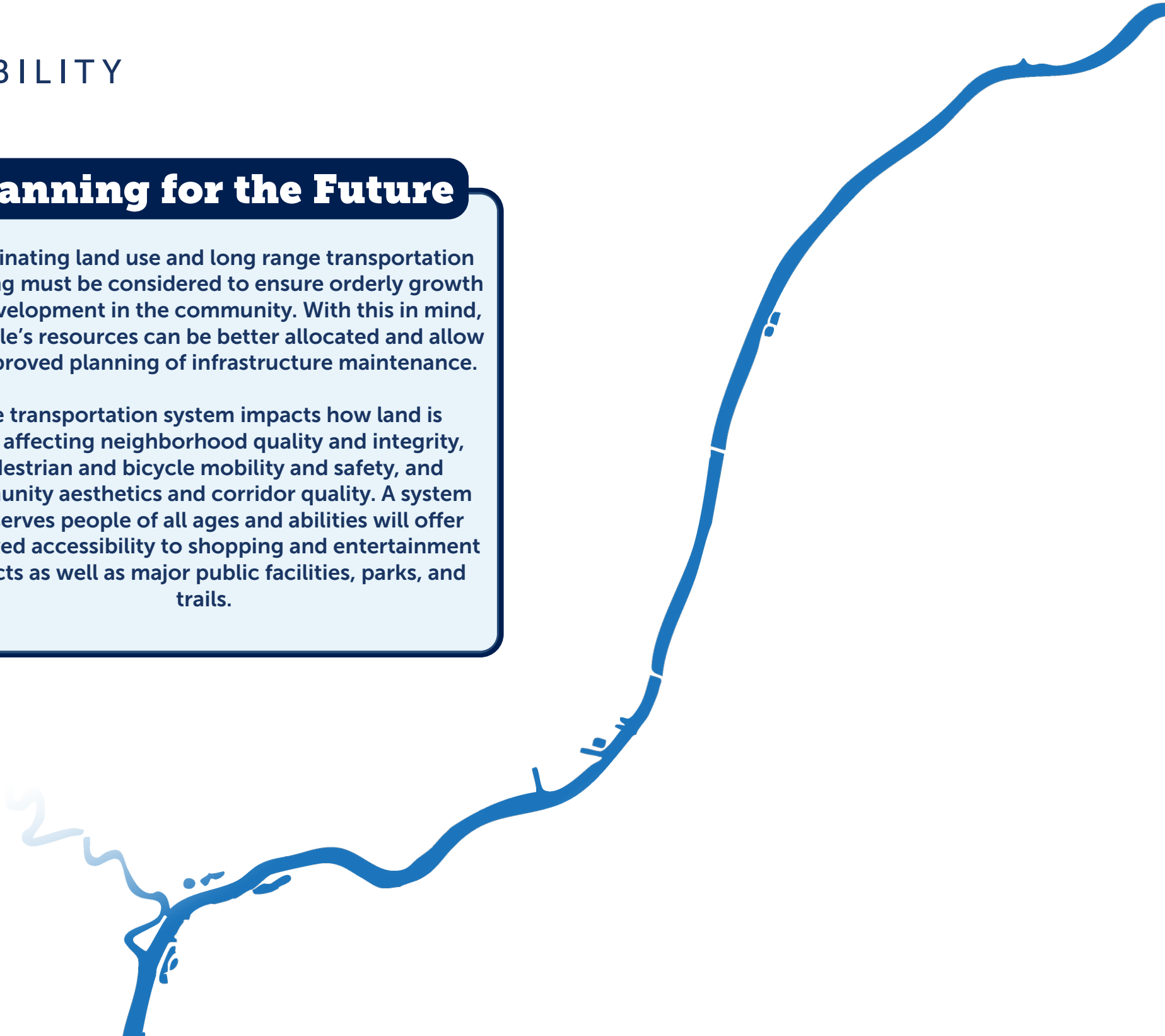
Legend	
Classification	Description
	State Highway Already Transferred
	State Highway Proposed To Transferred*
	State Highway To Be Transferred Under Existing Agreements
	State Owned Road
	Local Owned Road

*This map shows state highways proposed to be transferred as of 2024.

Planning for the Future

Coordinating land use and long range transportation planning must be considered to ensure orderly growth and development in the community. With this in mind, Abbeville's resources can be better allocated and allow for improved planning of infrastructure maintenance.

The transportation system impacts how land is used, affecting neighborhood quality and integrity, pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety, and community aesthetics and corridor quality. A system that serves people of all ages and abilities will offer improved accessibility to shopping and entertainment districts as well as major public facilities, parks, and trails.



STREETS FOR ALL

Once adopted, the Streets for All plan will establish a network plan and policies to ensure residents of all ages and physical abilities can get around the city. It includes specific recommendations for mobility improvements, including crosswalks, sidewalks, and bike lanes.

Residents expressed a desire for a cohesive sidewalk network that they can use to get around town primarily for health and recreation. It was also noted that those with disabilities and older adults have a difficult time maneuvering around the city because of inaccessible sidewalks and a lack of designated and accessible crosswalks.

The data for Abbeville shows that rethinking streets to accommodate people of all ages and abilities with varying needs and preferences is necessary for future movement throughout the city.

- As of 2022, approximately 10.1% of the population of Abbeville had an ambulatory disability compared to 8.2% for the state of Louisiana. As such, sidewalks, crosswalks, and roadways should be built to meet ADA standards.

- According to the 2022 US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, Abbeville residents struggle with poorer health compared to other incorporated places in Louisiana. Improved sidewalks and connections among parks would encourage people to be more active and improve their health. In studies published in the *Journal of American Medical Association*, walking around 10,000 steps a day appears to decrease cardiovascular disease and dementia as well as lessen the chances of heart disease, heart failure, and strokes.

- Abbeville residents aged 65 and older make up 19% of the population, compared to 16% for the state. As the population ages, the way people travel will need to be reevaluated with alternative forms of transportation coming to the forefront as well as ensuring accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Approximately 21% of households in Abbeville do not have access to a vehicle. Providing better walking and biking infrastructure for those without vehicles increases overall well-being by offering an alternative means to access jobs, medical facilities, and shopping.

- Abbeville had 1,934 crashes over a five-year span. Streets designed for all types of people and abilities improve safety overall by lowering speeds and decreasing crash frequency by as much as 50%

The Streets for All map identifies locations for sidewalks, crosswalks and bike facilities to improve safety, and connectivity for non-vehicular travel. This map should be the basis of a more detailed Safe Streets for All policy.

Public Transit

Throughout the public engagement process, people expressed a need for a regular transit service beyond that which is provided in partnership with the St. Mary Council on Aging to Vermilion Parish. Given the relatively high number of households that do not own vehicles in Abbeville, a public transit option would provide access to services, jobs, education, and cultural and recreational amenities.

Future options could include microtransit—like a small bus or van service that offers flexible routes and schedules—or a public fixed-route option, such as a bus or van that has set routes and fixed running schedules.



Family walking and biking in downtown Abbeville.

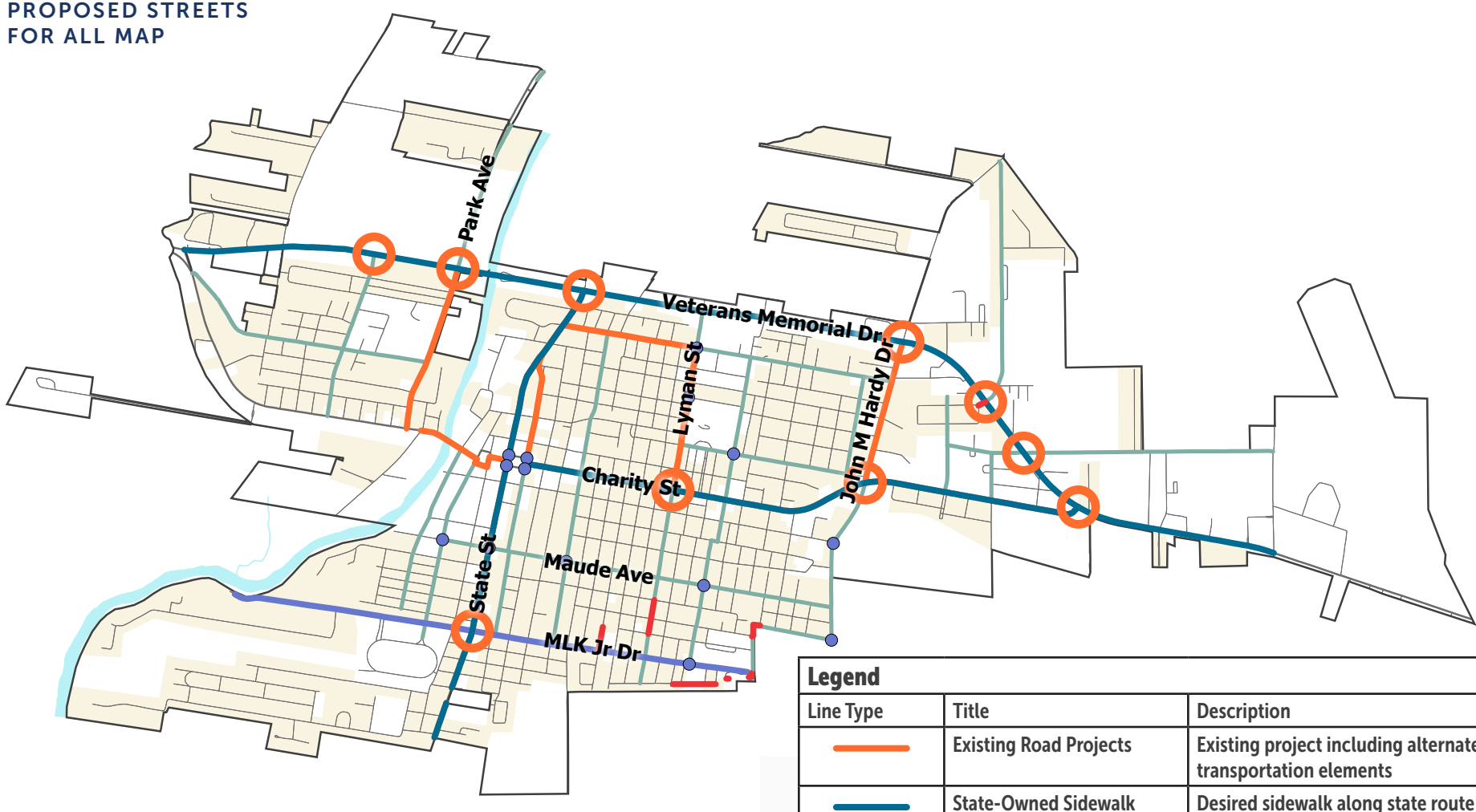
Safe Streets for All Action Plan Development Process

The intent of a Safe Streets for all action plan is to ground targets set by the City Council or other relevant governing body that establish the percentage decrease of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from crashes in the community and the time horizon to meet that target. Additionally, a target date is set for the complete elimination of serious injury or traffic deaths. The plan is also developed and implemented by a task force or steering committee appointed by the city.

The components of the plan include:

- Safety Analysis
- Engagement and Collaboration
- Equity Considerations
- Policy and Process Changes
- Strategy and Project Selections
- Progress and Transparency

FIGURE 6.4:
PROPOSED STREETS
FOR ALL MAP



Legend		
Line Type	Title	Description
	Existing Road Projects	Existing project including alternate transportation elements
	State-Owned Sidewalk	Desired sidewalk along state route
	Public Input Bicycle Facility	Desired route for bicycle facility
	Local Road Connections	Desired bicycle pedestrian route to connect network
	New Build Connections	New roadway projects alternate transportation elements
	Painted Crosswalk	Continental Crosswalk
	Signalized Crosswalk	Painted crosswalk with inclusion of signal

Mobility Goals, Objectives, and Actions

This section is organized into Goals that reflect the vision and Objectives and Actions that, if followed, will move Abbeville towards the community's vision.

Goals are the big ideas that support the citizen's vision. They capture big picture changes that must occur to implement the plan.

Objectives establish specific, measurable, attainable and realistic objectives that guide plan implementation by ensuring that stakeholders are clear about what must happen to move Abbeville toward the vision.

Actions delineate the steps needed to achieve the goals.



Identified by the Advisory Committee as important first steps to implement the vision.

M-1: PROVIDE SAFE, EFFICIENT, AND CONNECTED TRAVEL ROUTES FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF ALL ABILITIES.

Building safer streets requires careful attention to the needs of and accommodations for residents of all abilities, whether they drive, walk, bike, or use transit. Good street design can promote public health, increase public safety, improve environmental conditions, support economic growth, and expand equity.

M–1.1: Reduce crash rates within the city for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

» M–1.1.1: Develop and adopt a Streets for All plan and develop regulations and policies for public and private infrastructure that implements the plan.

M–1.1.2: Inventory all sidewalks and crosswalks in priority areas (near schools, parks, and other public facilities) and determine where the network exists, doesn't exist, or needs updating.

M–1.1.3: Utilize the Streets for All map in combination with bicycle and pedestrian crash data as well as locations near schools, parks and other public facilities to prioritize highest needs locations for bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure and traffic calming investments.

M–1.1.4: Work with DOTD to install pedestrian safety improvements, such as sidewalks and signalized crosswalks along state routes, with priority given to high crash areas and locations.

M–1.1.5: Identify high-priority corridors for safety improvements based on vehicular crash data. Work with the Acadiana Planning Commission and DOTD to prioritize roadway safety countermeasures.

M–1.1.6: Conduct a citywide street lighting inventory and make improvements based on need. The inventory should include

1. Locations with lighting and the lighting characteristics (lamp and bulb type, maintenance cost, color rendering, ownership, etc.);
2. Lists of locations most in need of lighting due to disrepair, cost issues, and absence;
3. Standards for lighting based on roadway type, ownership, and location;
4. Costs of lighting options;
5. Funding sources that can contribute to lighting improvements; and,
6. A maintenance schedule for all existing lighting.

M–1.2: Improve facilities and infrastructure to foster better connectivity for all transportation modes.

M–1.2.1: Use the Streets for All Map (See Figure 6.4) to prioritize project funding to create a bicycle and pedestrian network for Abbeville.

M–1.2.2: Create a sidewalk installation, maintenance, and repair program that

1. Provides standards and regulations for sidewalk maintenance and repair;
2. Specifies funding sources that can be used to repair sidewalks;
3. Inventories all sidewalks in the city (publicly and privately owned) and their condition;
4. Has a maintenance schedule for publicly owned sidewalks; and
5. Records all maintenance and repair complaints and keeps track of communication with sidewalk owners to address issues.

M–1.2.3: Install crosswalks at priority locations, concentrating on areas within a quarter mile of schools, parks and other public places.

M–1.2.4: Continue to support and fund infrastructure improvement downtown to improve walkability and safety.

M–1.2.5: Utilize the Abbeville transportation and mobility coalition to facilitate walk audits, prioritize project advancement, and act as a liaison between the community and city staff to ensure walking, biking, and transportation needs are met.



New sidewalk installation along Graceland Avenue.

M–2: IMPROVE ACCESS TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION.

Increased transit options within and outside of Abbeville will serve not only to provide improved access for Abbeville residents to jobs, schools, services, and other destinations within Abbeville but could better connect Abbeville to Lafayette. These types of investments, however, require careful study and analysis in order to make the best decisions for the community.

M–2.1: Explore transit options for residents to travel within and outside of Abbeville.

M–2.1.1: Evaluate the benefits and feasibility of a fixed-route transit system or microtransit service within Abbeville, considering demand, cost, and infrastructure needs. Explore state and federal funding opportunities to create a pilot transit service in Abbeville.

M–2.1.2: Work with the Acadiana Planning Commission to explore feasibility of and options for a commuter route between Abbeville and the Lafayette metropolitan area.

» M–2.1.3: Work with the Vermilion Police Jury to evaluate expansion of St. Mary/Vermilion Community Action Agency (CAA) services provided to older adults, people who are disabled, and those without vehicles.

M-2.1.4: Assess feasibility of repurposing the rail line that connects Abbeville to New Iberia to improve intercity travel.

M–3: EXPLORE ROADWAY CONNECTIONS TO IMPROVE WALKABILITY AND PROVIDE EASIER ACCESS TO DESTINATIONS.

To prioritize safe access to schools, medical facilities, parks, and libraries, a community must ensure existing street projects include pedestrian and bicycle facilities with additional local road connections. Thorough roadway and engineering studies are essential to determine what facility types would be best for these connections. Once Abbeville has this information, the city can refer to the following recommended improvements and apply them as needed.

» M–3.1: Extend roadways or create multiuse paths in areas where connectivity is limited.

M–3.1.1: Connect Greene Street to Berthier Avenue to improve movement along East Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Israel Parker Drive and provide better access to key destinations such as the commercial districts along Charity Street and John M. Hardy Drive.

M–3.1.2: Connect Camella Street to Wildcat Drive to connect high school students to the neighborhoods located between Veterans Memorial Drive and Charity Street.

M–3.1.3: Continue Lyman Street from Felicity Street to Vernon Street. Currently, Lyman Street stops at Felicity Street and picks up again at Vernon Street.



Railroad tracks at Riviana Rice Mill


AMBULATORY SURGERY SERVICES
OUTPATIENT SERVICES



CHAPTER 7

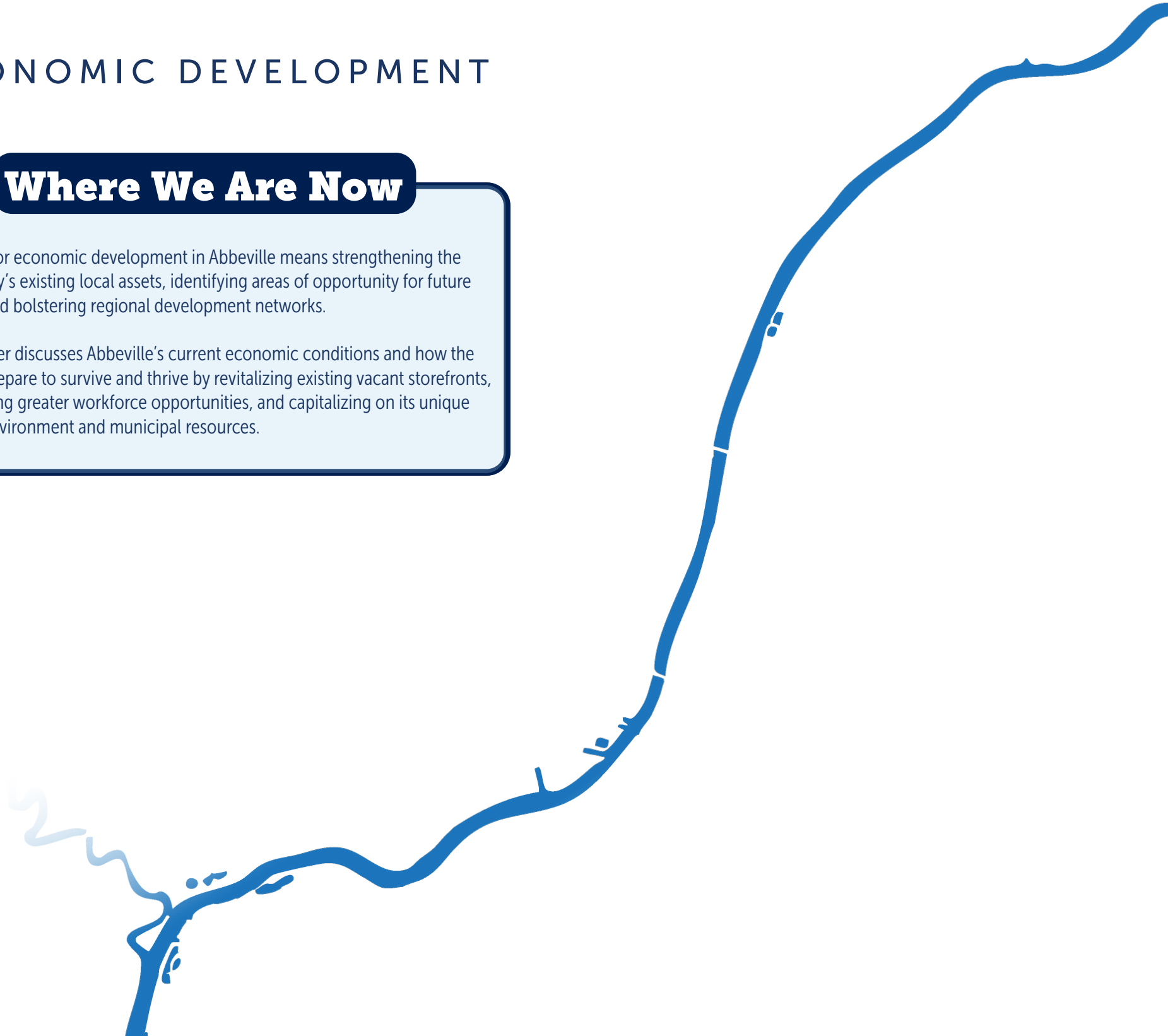
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Where We Are Now

Planning for economic development in Abbeville means strengthening the community's existing local assets, identifying areas of opportunity for future growth, and bolstering regional development networks.

This chapter discusses Abbeville's current economic conditions and how the city can prepare to survive and thrive by revitalizing existing vacant storefronts, encouraging greater workforce opportunities, and capitalizing on its unique culture, environment and municipal resources.



ABBEVILLE'S ECONOMY

The City of Abbeville is home to a robust industrial base and features a comprehensive network to support their operations. The Chris Crusta Memorial Airport and the Port of Vermilion accommodate a range of companies and offer transportation and logistics services to the region. The Port of Vermilion was established in the 1980s by the Abbeville Harbor and Terminal District and services vessels traveling the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and Freshwater Bayou Channel. The majority of its tenants are companies that provide inland and offshore oil and gas support services.

South Louisiana Community College has a Gulf Area Campus located in Abbeville. Programs offered there include heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration, industrial/agriculture, mechanics technology, medical assistant, practical nursing, welding, business, criminal justice, and cosmetology. This institution is an important asset for local workforce development.

The top industry sectors in Abbeville include health care and social assistance, educational services, government, retail trade, accommodation and food services, and oil and gas extraction. Major employers include Omega Protein, Abbeville General Hospital, Ecoserv, Pelican Pointe Healthcare and Rehabilitation, Acadian Contractors, and Maison du Monde Living Center.

Retail is a significant pillar of Abbeville's local economy. One in four jobs in the city is in retail, with an average annual wage of a retail worker ages 25 –54 of $35,376.

The downtown business district has long been a regional hub for goods and services. The construction of the LA 14 bypass made it convenient for visitors and residents to avoid downtown, and the downtown district today faces a host of significant challenges. One such challenge is widespread vacancy; many downtown structures are shuttered, vacant, or have fallen into disrepair. According to a report produced by Development Research Partners, in July 2022, there were an estimated 67 vacant buildings downtown. Reactivating these vacant spaces will help create a critical mass of active, attractive destinations. Because there are few restaurants and shops, downtown is not currently a hub of foot traffic or day-to-day activity within the city.

Within Abbeville there are several commercial corridors like Veterans Memorial Drive and Charity Street. These corridors have commercial offerings distinct from those downtown. Veterans Memorial Drive, in particular, has emerged as a hub for larger-footprint, higher-volume, chain retailers in the region. It features a mix of fast-food restaurants, grocery stores, car dealerships, gas stations, and other retailers. Charity Street, on the other hand, is the historic commercial corridor for the city and has seen a significant decline in activity in recent decades. While some active businesses are still located on Charity Street, the corridor is plagued by many of the same issues affecting downtown: vacancy, lack of a critical mass of businesses, and lack of foot traffic.

Abbeville Trade Area

The city's trade area extends well beyond the city limits, including nearby incorporated areas like Delcambre and Kaplan as well as much of the incorporated land in Vermilion Parish. The project team conducted an analysis of Abbeville's retail market, including a retail gap assessment. When an area's demand for retail goods and services does not match the supply, it creates what is called a retail gap, which is also referred to as "leakage." This leakage is money that leaves the area to be spent elsewhere because the particular good or service is not available within the defined area. Leakage information identifies the best potential source for new types of businesses to serve the trade area.

Figure 7.1: Abbeville Retail Trade Opportunity Summary

BUSINESS TYPE	MAXIMUM SUPPORTABLE SQUARE FOOTAGE
FURNITURE STORE (NAICS 4421)	37,429
HOME FURNISHING STORE (NAICS 4422)	33,093
SUPERMARKET AND OTHER GROCERY (EXCEPT CONVENIENCE) STORE (NAICS 44511)	87,357
CONVENIENCE STORES (NAICS 44512)	5,017
COSMETICS, BEAUTY SUPPLY STORES (NAICS 44612)	8,528
ALL OTHER HEALTH AND PERSONAL CARE STORES (NAICS 446119)	3,198
WOMEN'S CLOTHING STORE (NAICS 44812)	12,767
FAMILY CLOTHING STORES (NAICS 44814)	62,018
SHOE STORES (NAICS 4482)	10,436
JEWELRY STORES (NAICS 44831)	5,150
SPORTING GOODS STORES (NAICS 45111)	18,443
HOBBY, TOY, AND GAME STORES (NAICS 45112)	6,824
GIFT, NOVELTY AND SOUVENIR STORES (NAICS 45322)	6,779
USED MERCHANDISE STORES (NAICS 45333)	10,412
PET AND PET SUPPLY STORES (NAICS 45391)	6,111
ART DEALER (NAICS 45392)	1,977
DRINKING PLACES (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES) (NAICS 7224)	9,269
FULL SERVICE RESTAURANTS (NAICS 722511)	67,183
LIMITED SERVICE RESTAURANTS (NAICS 722513)	120,062
SNACK AND NONALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE BARS (NAICS 722515)	16,354

Source: Place + Main

Local Cultural Economy

Abbeville's close proximity to both coastal resources and a large metropolitan area make it a great candidate for developing a robust tourism sector. The city hosts several annual festivals, including the Daylily Festival, the Sicilian Celebration, the Louisiana Cattle Festival, the Giant Omelette Celebration, and multiple Christmas celebrations. Local museums and galleries like The Depot and the Abbeville Cultural and Historical Alliance Center offer a window into the people and events that have shaped Abbeville's history and identity. According to Abbeville Main Street, these cultural and tourism activities have had a significant positive impact on the local economy–creating 93 new jobs, generating 26 new businesses, yielding $8,982,146 in public-private investment, and resulting in 8,143 volunteer hours since its inception.

Environmental assets such as Palmetto Island State Park, located south of the city limits, and Vermilion Bay also draw birders and other people who enjoy the outdoors to the region. Within the city, the Abbeville RV Park is a popular recreational asset that offers close proximity to Coulee Kenny and the Vermilion River. Vermilion Parish's proximity to the Gulf of Mexico also makes the parish ideally situated for providing support services to the offshore oil and gas industry. The parish is home to one of the nation's largest fishing ports, and communities across Vermilion Parish are known for their bounty of fresh seafood.

Regional Impact

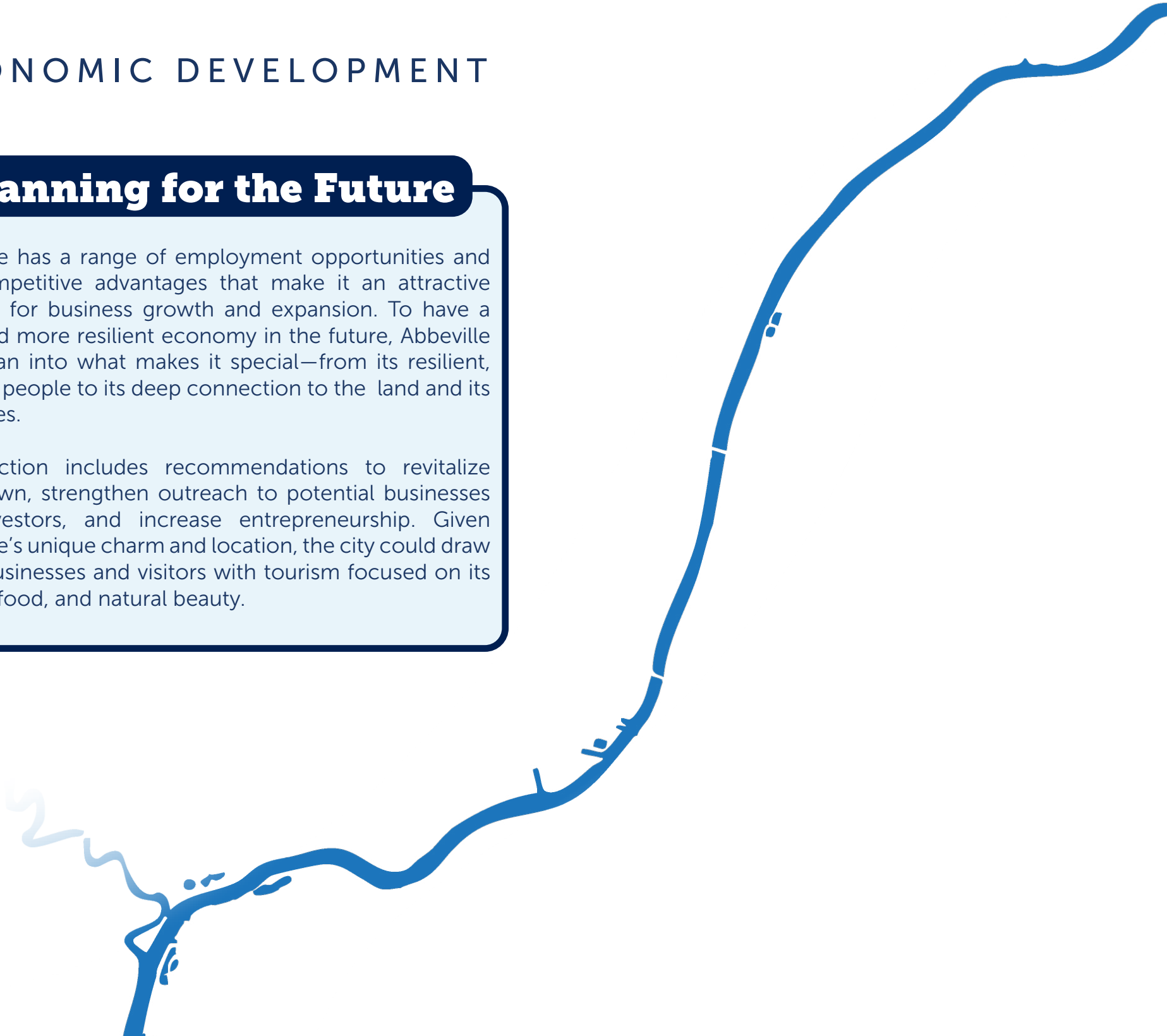
The Acadiana region's attractive, significant economic opportunities parallel the diverse, rich culture of the area itself. For decades, the region's economic anchors have been agriculture, oil and gas processing, and commercial fishing. Recent trends have shown an increasing concentration of economic opportunity in Lafayette Parish, with many people from surrounding parishes commuting to Lafayette for work.

The 2022 – 2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy published by the Acadiana Regional Planning Commission recommends the expansion of new and emerging sectors like e-commerce, renewable energy, and pharmaceutical production in the Acadiana region. In the realm of e-commerce, Abbeville has had an impactful investment with the development of an Amazon Last Mile facility. Located on Veterans Memorial Drive on the former Fruit of the Loom site, the facility will offer new jobs, provide faster deliveries to local businesses and residents, and potentially increase municipal tax revenue.

Planning for the Future

Abbeville has a range of employment opportunities and key competitive advantages that make it an attractive location for business growth and expansion. To have a balanced more resilient economy in the future, Abbeville must lean into what makes it special—from its resilient, creative people to its deep connection to the land and its resources.

This section includes recommendations to revitalize downtown, strengthen outreach to potential businesses and investors, and increase entrepreneurship. Given Abbeville's unique charm and location, the city could draw more businesses and visitors with tourism focused on its history, food, and natural beauty.



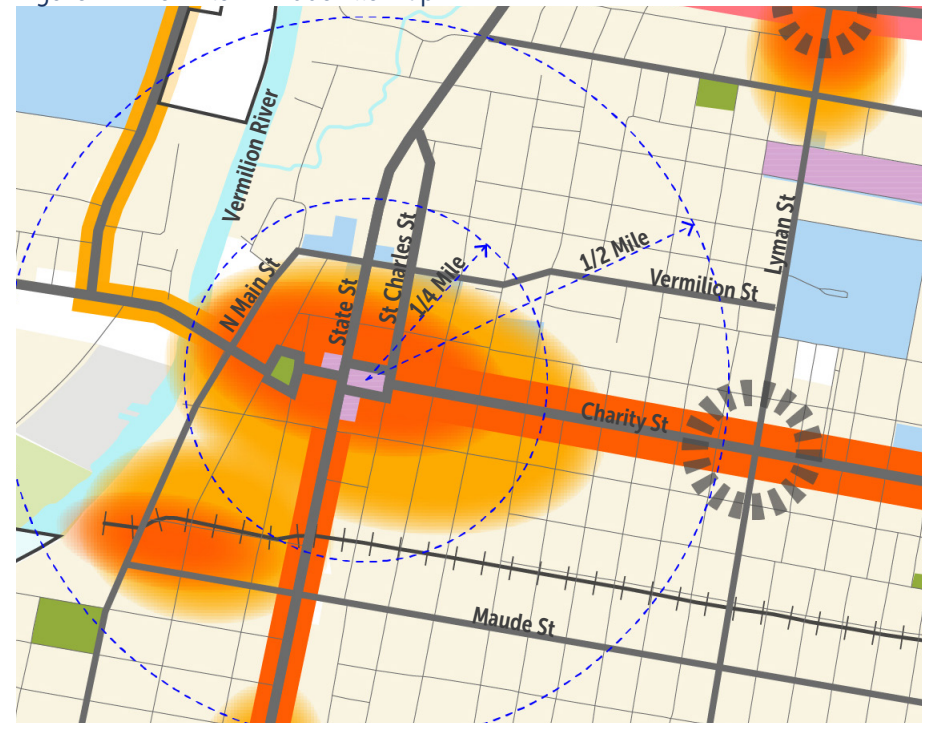
REVITALIZING DOWNTOWN

Visitor data for 2023 shows that downtown is most frequented during the weekday working hours, suggesting the courthouse, City Hall, and associated services and businesses are a primary draw. Throughout the engagement process, residents expressed a desire for more entertainment options, unique experiences, and events to bring the community together, including short-term strategies like pop-up shops in Magdalen Square. While residents will certainly benefit, these activities also draw visitors who support local shops, restaurants, and other businesses.

Providing more housing downtown would help the district thrive beyond the typical 9-to-5 workday and create a more vibrant and thriving activity center. Increasing density both in the downtown core and in the nearby adjacent neighborhoods would help drive new business development while helping existing businesses be more successful.

This housing strategy would allow for a better utilization of private property (including increasing the value of the real estate itself) as well as add new potential customers and spending to the immediate area. One significant benefit is that infrastructure—such as roadways, water lines, and sewer capacity—is already in place downtown, so the city would not need to spend money to extend these services.. The chart below shows the impact of what kind of additional new spending could be captured based on the aggregate number of new units. These projections are based on the estimated demand per household in 2028.

Figure 7.2: Downtown Abbeville Map



The ideal locations for additional housing opportunities would be within one–quarter to one–half mile of the main intersections of downtown or other key commercial corridors. Walkability experts believe this one–quarter to one–half mile radius is the optimal distance people are willing to walk (15–20 minutes) instead of drive.

Figure 4.4: Financial Impact Of New Housing Units

	2028 HH DEMAND	25 NEW UNITS	50 NEW UNITS	100 NEW UNITS	200 NEW UNITS
Total retail trade including food and drink (NAICS 44, 45, and 722)	$50,585	$1,264,634	$2,529,269	$5,058,538	$10,117,076
Retail trade 44 (NAICS 44 and 45)	$45,170	$1,129,260	$2,258,520	$4,517,040	$9,034,079
Food services and drinking places (NAICS 722)	$5,415	$135,375	$270,749	$541,498	$1,082,996

Source: Place + Main

In the downtown core, prime candidates for new housing units are vacant upper floors of multi-story buildings, single-story commercial structures that don't represent the area's historic charm, and underutilized buildings and parking lots. Housing should be added first to existing neighborhoods, which could use vacant lots and create accessory dwelling units (ADU's) and higher-density housing units like duplexes. Any vacant or underused parcels where infrastructure is already existing should be primary targets.

Throughout this planning process, residents expressed a need for more retail services throughout the city, particularly in the downtown area, along Charity Street, and along East Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Specifically, the public shared a desire for more youth-oriented businesses and services, a local grocery store, and additional restaurants, cafes, and drinking establishments. Many meeting attendees supported the concept of mixed-use development within the city, presenting an opportunity for new businesses to be developed alongside new housing.

The outskirts of the downtown district have several opportunities for redevelopment as well. Single-story, non-historic, and vacant commercial structures or vacant land are the least difficult to redevelop. Former heavy commercial or industrial uses would also be strong candidates for redevelopment. Utilization of the EPA Brownfields Program can help demystify the real and perceived cost to redevelop some of these properties.

CREATE A DEVELOPMENT GUIDE AND CITY TEAM

Understanding the city's role, the steps in which the development process occurs, and what a prospective developer or business must do in order to receive appropriate permissions is critical to aiding redevelopment in downtown. In order to create a smooth and identifiable process, the city should work to create a comprehensive and easy-to-understand development guide. This guide would outline the specific steps and timelines needed for property and business owners to achieve the project they want to do. This would include building rehabilitation, new construction, new signage, business licenses, rezoning, special use, and site plan review.

The key departmental staff related to development have long informally met with prospective businesses and developers prior to a project commencing. This team should be packaged and branded as part of the city's efforts to be more development friendly. Promoting the city's willingness to work with the development community can help build a pro-business image.



Planters Rice Mill Site

MARKETING VACANT PROPERTIES

With an estimated 90% of all commercial real estate searches starting online first, it is critical for the City of Abbeville to promote its available commercial and industrial real estate, as a strategy for economic growth through either a custom website or through the city's website. Showcasing these properties online would significantly increase their visibility to a broader audience, attracting potential investors and business owners from both local and global markets. An easily accessible and well-designed website acts as a virtual gateway, providing detailed property information, visual tours, and relevant data such as zoning regulations and market trends, all of which facilitate informed decision-making.

Furthermore, a dedicated real estate platform could highlight the unique advantages of investing in Abbeville, such as its strategic location, economic incentives, and community support, thereby enhancing the city's appeal as a prime location for business and industrial development. The real estate platform could include features like the ones in the following list

- **Link to real estate listing:** Property owners who will lease or sell through real estate agents typically have their properties shown as active listings on the agents' websites. When these are known, the city should includes links to those listings on a dedicated real estate page on Abbeville's website. Subsequent click-throughs can be tracked from the city's website and quantified to show local real estate agents the value of partnering with the city.
- **Add market data**: An updated market report would be a useful resource for prospective businesses. It should be available in the city's real estate listings page as a document to download or a link to another web page.
- **Property open houses:** The city can work with property owners and real estate agents to host city wide open houses for their available properties during popular festivals and events in the community.
- **Use events to solicit feedback on vacancies:** The city can use its festivals and events to solicit input from attendees on what they would like to see in a vacant storefront. Volunteers can use the same Post-it note exercise that was part of our planning process, in which people would ask visitors what they'd like to see and their ideas would be written down, gathered, and shared with the city.

INVEST IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Cultivating and expanding local businesses should be a critical component of Abbeville's overall strategy for economic growth and community development. This will require investing in an ecosystem for identifying entrepreneurial potential and providing the necessary resources for business success. Residents also supported the idea of a business incubator to grow local entrepreneurs. Some potential strategies for success are listed below.

- **Business incubator:** Offering coworking spaces for use by up-and-coming entrepreneurs is a way to lower the barrier to entry and increase access to business opportunities. Shared working spaces also foster an environment in which entrepreneurs can meet and collaborate with other entrepreneurs, providing an opportunity to share lessons learned, brainstorm, and grow in awareness of the local business ecosystem.
- **Focus on food:** Given the city's long heritage of iconic food brands and restaurants, capitalizing on that history and using it as a platform for expansion may be a fruitful strategy. Coordinating with existing regional assets like the Seafood Hub in Vermilion Parish and culinary schools in the Lafayette area will be critical for success in this realm. Offering a cohesive brand of food production tours, quality restaurant experiences, and fresh Gulf seafood may be a great launchpad for concerted entrepreneurial investments.



Sign advertising new business

REFINING THE CITY'S BRAND

Attracting new visitors, encouraging past visitors to return, and generating interest among residents to participate in the tourism economy offer great potential for economic growth within Abbeville. A comprehensive branding strategy would help the city refine its identity in the tourism market, differentiating it from neighboring communities and competitors, and communicate that brand effectively. It would also assist the city in prioritizing events, programming, preservation investments, and other activities. A few themes of particular interest and potential are included below.

- **Historic preservation:** The city has many well-preserved, historic architectural assets that are already an iconic part of the city's identity. Making those structures more accessible to visitors and residents alike could generate interest and draw in more people. To bring more attention to these places, Abbeville could arrange guided or self-guided tours, support gallery exhibits, market historic structures as event spaces, establish historic walking routes or trails and host interpretive programming or events that engage guests in the city's history.
- **Food:** The city's wealth of popular, recognizable food brands holds great potential for increased tourism. Offering tours of local facilities and providing an opportunity for guests to learn about the processes of well-known local food manufacturers may be effective. Abbeville has also been known as a restaurant destination in the past–bolstering this reputation with a campaign that highlights the city's long legacy of access to fresh seafood and local beef, alongside previously mentioned efforts to encourage new culinary businesses.
- **Ecotourism:** Abbeville's proximity to the Vermilion River, Vermilion Bay, and other coastal resources was an often-heard theme in community engagement. However, there are currently few opportunities for visitors or residents to engage with these rich resources. Increasing access to the Vermilion River by identifying distributed public access points and considering a river walk would help connect people to this important asset that runs through the city. It would also open commercial opportunities for outfitters, tour guides, and other types of outdoor programming enthusiasts. Ecotourism is also discussed in the Environment and Open Space section of this plan.
- **Agritourism:** Given the community's strong agricultural legacy and continued rural identity, agritourism may be another important pillar of Abbeville's marketing strategy. Offering tours of local rice farms, crawfish farms, and cattle ranches could attract a different segment of the tourist market and offer an experience that is different from and complementary to the "in-town" tourism opportunities mentioned earlier. Though outside of the city limits, this thread of tourism activity could also engage the port and offer a way for visitors to observe the bounty of the Gulf.



Black's Banquet and Receptions



J.H. Williams Middle School

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Residents voiced a need for more job opportunities and workforce development. Early exposure to employment opportunities for junior and high school students and formal training like internships and apprenticeships were also identified as needs . Public discussions included mentions of transportation services, childcare, and expanded community college offerings—all of which could increase the number of jobs and allow more Abbeville residents to participate in the workforce.

Creating and strengthening partnerships among the school district, the community college, the chamber, and existing industries would help to identify the pipeline of workforce needs while providing an opportunity to tailor training to youth.

Building upon public assets such as the South Louisiana Community College and the Abbeville General Hospital was suggested by several public meeting participants. These institutions serve as community anchors and provide critical educational and professional services within the city. These institutions can be important partners in community development, economic and job growth by expanding the services they provide, expanding their influence and reach within the surrounding community, and increasing access to their offerings among residents.

Economic Development Goals, Objectives, and Actions

This section is organized into Goals that reflect the vision and Objectives and Actions that, if followed, will move Abbeville towards the community's vision.

Goals are the big ideas that support the citizen's vision. They capture big picture changes that must occur to implement the plan.

Objectives establish specific, measurable, attainable and realistic objectives that guide plan implementation by ensuring that stakeholders are clear about what must happen to move Abbeville toward the vision.

Actions delineate the steps needed to achieve the goals.



Identified by the Advisory Committee as important first steps to implement the vision.

ED–1: STRENGTHEN AND ACTIVATE LOCAL COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS AND DISTRICTS.

Main corridors through town and assets—such as the airport, South Louisiana Community College Gulf Area Campus, and the hospital—serve as some of Abbeville's cornerstones for economic development. In order to take full advantage of these anchors, any economic strategy should tap into these resources and the development and business opportunities that surround them.

ED–1.1: Strengthen the identity and marketability of commercial corridors in town.

ED–1.1.1: Increase the opportunities to help existing businesses improve their building facades through nonprofit investment or expansion of cultural/historic districts.

ED–1.1.2: Actively market vacant commercial properties and periodically organize vacant building tours with real estate and financing professionals.

ED–1.2: Support downtown Abbeville's role as the heart of the community's local economy.

ED–1.2.1: Consider developing a vacancy registry ordinance for downtown to encourage activation of vacant and underutilized spaces.

ED–1.2.2: Encourage vertical mixed-use development downtown and in the blocks adjacent to downtown.

ED–1.2.3: Conduct a downtown parking inventory to address parking improvements, formalize street parking, and identify parking needs.

ED–1.2.4: Advertise and promote the Opportunity Zone in Abbeville and benefits of the program.

ED–2: FOCUS EFFORTS TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL UNITS DOWNTOWN.

Increasing density in the downtown core and near neighborhoods will help businesses be more successful and will better utilize existing infrastructure rather than necessitate infrastructure expansions.

ED–2.1: Target infill of vacant upper floor units and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized downtown properties for residential development within half a mile of the downtown core.

ED-2.1.1: Create a downtown housing task force composed of real estate agents, developers, builders, and property owners to identify key locations for housing in the downtown core and within a quarter-mile radius.

ED-2.1.2: Conduct a market study to understand the opportunities and challenges associated with housing development in downtown Abbeville.

ED-2.1.3: Encourage local building owners to renovate second-floor spaces for residential use, and ensure new code amendments support this mixture of uses.

ED-2.1.4: Evaluate the upper floors of City Hall, or other publicly held properties, for a mixture of residential, office, and/or hotel or lodging space.

ED–3: EXPAND LOCAL TOURISM BY BUILDING ON EXISTING CULTURAL AND NATURAL ASSETS.

For generations, Abbeville has been celebrating the region's special cultural and natural heritage. Situated in South Louisiana's unique geography, the city is already host to numerous festivals, events, and historic architecture. These attractions draw visitors and could be expanded on or added to in ways that would bring more economic growth.

ED–3.1: Craft a clear and compelling brand for tourism in Abbeville.

ED–3.1.1: Celebrate the city's legacy of food by offering factory tours, destination restaurants, incubator kitchens, and other similar locations.

ED–3.1.2: Attract lodging, dining, and retail offerings that establish Abbeville as a gateway to the region's outdoor recreational assets.

» ED–3.1.3: Develop a wayfinding network as well as a marketing and branding campaign for downtown and Abbeville proper.

ED–3.2: Build an integrated network of access to natural resources to celebrate local ecologies and expand ecotourism opportunities.

ED–3.2.1: Encourage public and commercial riverfront development y offering incentives such as development fee waivers and tax exemptions. In time, new attractions will draw residents and visitors to engage with the Vermilion River.

ED–3.2.2: Seek opportunities to establish canoe or kayak rentals in Abbeville and connect launch areas to other recreational assets.

ED–3.2.3: Collaborate with the Bayou Vermilion District on economic development and ecotourism opportunities.

ED–3.3: Increase lodging opportunities to support tourism.

ED–3.3.1:Encourage small-scale lodging options in and near downtown, such as bed and breakfasts or boutique hotels.

ED–3.3.2: Develop marketing material highlighting the number of visitors and attractions in Abbeville as well as regionally.

ED–3.3.3: Work with the Vermilion Chamber of Commerce and local hospitality and economic development professionals to draft a work plan to encourage more lodging development.

ED–4: FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT OF SUCCESSFUL LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

Entrepreneurship can grow economic opportunity from within the existing community. This can both build Abbeville's economic base and provide opportunities for Abbeville residents to succeed. Strategies should eliminate perceived barriers to participating in the market as well as showcase and support local talent and jobs.

ED–4.1: Develop a suite of resources to assist new and emerging local businesses.

ED–4.1.1: Create a comprehensive development guide that includes information about building rehabilitation, new construction, new signage, business licenses, rezoning, special use, and site plan review.

» ED–4.1.2: Evaluate city permitting and business licensing process and requirements in conjunction with the business community to identify and implement process improvements.

ED–4.1.3: Provide access to resources for new entrepreneurs (e.g., information on financing, real estate, etc.).

ED–4.1.4: Develop incubator and/or coworking spaces for new or growing businesses to rent and/or occupy.

» ED–4.1.5: Create a city staff position focused on economic development coordinating economic development activities and actions.

ED-4.1.6: Develop a platform to showcase available commercial properties online to increase their visibility to a broader audience, attracting potential investors and business owners from both local and global markets.

ED–4.2: Better understand barriers and challenges for prospective and existing local businesses and support entrepreneurial growth.

ED–4.2.1: Conduct regular visits by city staff to local businesses to discuss their needs, challenges, and opportunities.

ED–4.2.2: Develop traditional/social media feature stories/videos on locally owned businesses.

ED–4.2.3: Host regular markets or fairs featuring local businesses, goods, and services.

ED–4.2.4: In partnership with the chamber of commerce and local nonprofits, construct a business incubator to help support new business development.

ED–4.2.5: Partner with the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Louisiana Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Center (LEED) to bring entrepreneurial training to lower the barriers of entry for new Abbeville businesses.

ED–5: ATTRACT QUALITY LOCAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT WORKFORCE NEEDS FOR ABBEVILLE RESIDENTS.

Having a trained, educated, and ready workforce attracts jobs. Building and strengthening Abbeville's local economy requires not only understanding local economic assets and changing economic conditions but preparing and adapting the workforce to take advantage of what is on the horizon.

ED–5.1: Work with business and higher education leaders to align educational opportunities with industry needs.

ED–5.1.1: Engage the chamber of commerce and local and regional economic development centers to obtain short- and long-term job projections.

ED–5.1.2: Create an industry and education task force to align educational opportunities with industry needs, and work with the Acadiana Planning Commission to coordinate around a regional perspective.

ED–5.1.3: Engage the task force to review, recommend, and support the expansion of SoLAcc's Abbeville campus and programming to ensure career alignment.

ED–5.1.4: Increase SoLAcc course offerings to allow for flexible scheduling.

ED–5.2: Encourage coordination between the Abbeville School District and SoLAcc to create opportunities for collaboration and student advancement.

ED–5.2.1: Collaborate with local secondary schools to offer post-secondary courses at their campuses after school hours, such as the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) and industry-based credentials.

ED–5.2.2: Create a robust, age-appropriate, work-based learning program for secondary students that includes job shadowing, site visits, internships, career speakers, career academies, and interactive career expositions.

ED–5.3: Encourage collaboration between the school district and community-based organizations to evaluate barriers for school attendance and high school graduation and create pathways for change.

ED–5.3.1: Identify and address the root causes of truancy.

ED–5.3.2 Develop high-quality afterschool and holiday break programs that include tutoring and intramural sports programs.

ED–5.4: Help reduce barriers to labor force participation.

ED–5.4.1: Work with childcare providers to extend hours to cover evenings and weekends.

ED–5.4.2: Provide space and programming for adult learning programs such as digital literacy and GED attainment.

ED–5.4.3: Through the Transportation Mobility Committee, identify barriers for workforce transportation and identify priorities for solutions.


GENESIS



CHAPTER 8

ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACE

ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACE

Where We Are Now

Abbeville's growth and development is influenced by the Vermilion River and its proximity to the Gulf Coast. While this location offers natural beauty, it also exposes the city to significant environmental challenges.

Abbeville faces threats from hurricanes, storm surges, and flooding. Making Abbeville more resilient will depend on investing in hazard mitigation, improving water quality, preserving open space, and promoting sustainable land use practices. By taking proactive steps to mitigate these risks, Abbeville can safeguard its natural resources and ensure the long-term well-being of its community.



THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

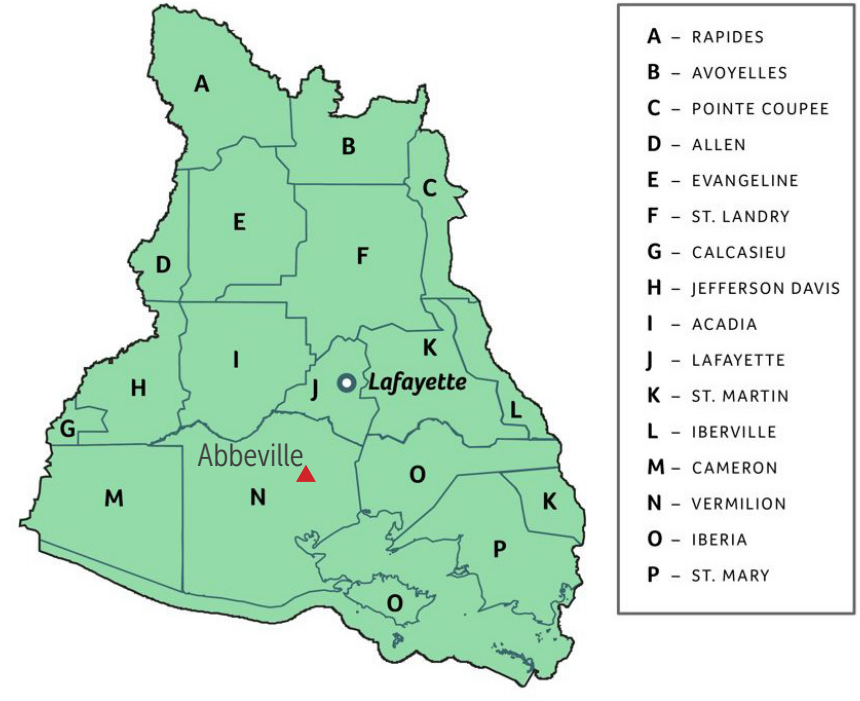
Abbeville is located within the northeastern quadrant of Vermilion Parish and within the state's Coastal Management Zone. The city sits at the eastern edge of the Chenier Plain—a region comprising over 6.5 million acres of former coastal tallgrass prairie and marsh—and is part of the Lafayette Loess Plains ecoregion. Prior to urban development, the area was characterized by broad spans of coastal prairie vegetation with forested edges along waterways. Only fragments of this native land cover remain. Today, most of the land has been converted for various agricultural activities—namely pasture, row crops, rice fields, and aquaculture.

An integral element of Abbeville's landscape and natural resources, the Vermilion River flows through the city's heart leading to Vermilion Bay and ending at the Gulf of Mexico. The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 led to the construction of a levee system that ultimately separated the Vermilion River from the Atchafalaya Basin. While levees protect the region from flooding, the project cut off freshwater from the basin and affected water quality. In the 1970s, the Vermilion was named the "most polluted river in America." By 1982, the US Army Corps of Engineers completed a pumping station that sends freshwater from the Atchafalaya into the Teche and Vermilion basins. However, water quality continues to be an issue because of agricultural runoff, poorly managed septic systems, and animal waste. River cleanup remains a local priority.

Rivers have a regional footprint, and improving them requires a regional approach. The Bayou Vermilion District upstream in Lafayette Parish is focused on improving the water quality of the bayou and promoting it as a cultural and recreational resource.

Residents expressed a strong desire to make the Vermilion River a larger community amenity by offering canoe, paddleboard, and kayak rental for river use.

Figure 8.1: Louisiana Watershed Initiative District 5 Map



ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS AND RISK

While proximity to the Gulf of Mexico brings great bounty, it increases exposure to hurricanes and tropical storms and their storm surges caused by strong winds that force seawater levels to rise. Hurricanes have impacted life and property in Abbeville since its settlement. In 1856, the Last Island Hurricane caused extensive regional flooding and widespread damage to properties. Throughout the twentieth century, storms disrupted and devastated communities with wind damage, storm surge, and saltwater intrusion. The 2005 hurricane season was particularly devastating for Abbeville and Vermilion Parish. Within weeks of each other, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita made landfall along the Louisiana coast, bringing catastrophic damage to the region.

These unprecedented storms led to significant disaster planning and preparedness in Vermilion Parish and across the state.

Abbeville is within the Acadiana Watershed District (AWD), whose overall goals are to "improve water management to address flood risk and mitigation proactively and effectively within the boundaries of the district; promote and support a unified effort to address drainage and flood issues in the region in cooperation with local, state and federal agencies; and cooperate with local and state entities engaged in establishing best practice development standards for flood-risk reduction." The district encompasses 16 parishes and five Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 8 watersheds: Atchafalaya, Teche, Vermilion, Mermentau, and Mermentau Headwaters. It has led investments in flood mitigation projects, a water monitoring network, green infrastructure (such as rain gardens and constructed wetlands), and gray infrastructure (such drainage pipes and concrete storage basins). The district's hydrologic and hydraulic watershed models provide information to make better decisions about the region's floodplain.

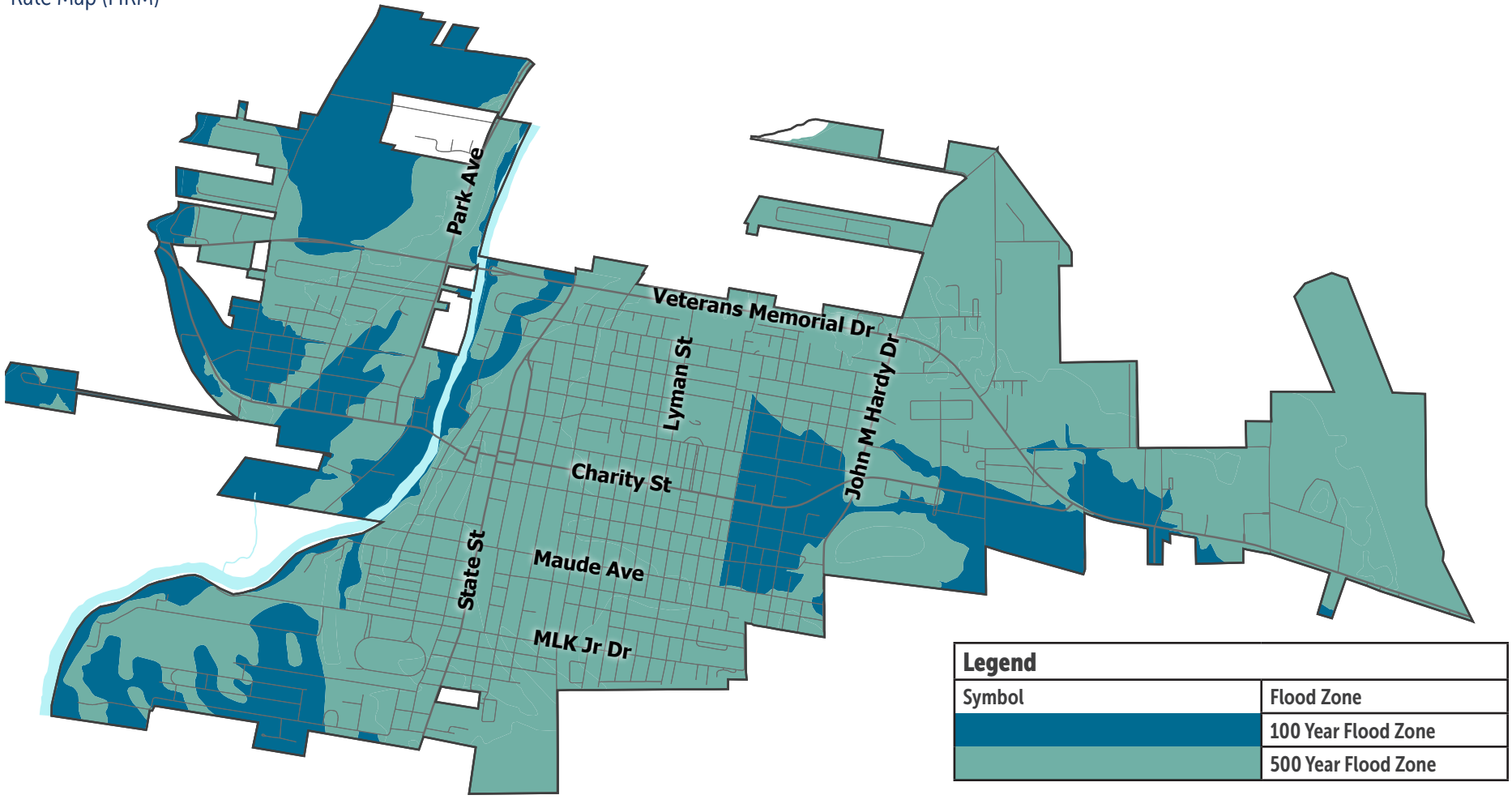
However, the city remains vulnerable to coastal hazards and flooding. Vermilion Parish updated its Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2020. For Abbeville, the analysis estimates $141,325,000 in losses that could affect 4,125 residents—33.7%—if a 100-year flood occurred. (A 100-year flood is an event that, statistically, has a 1% chance of happening in any given year.) If there were a 100-year hurricane, Abbeville's estimated total losses are $79,818,811, most of which ($69,816,274) will be for houses and apartments. All residents—100%—live in the hazard area for such an event. Additionally, Abbeville is susceptible to tornadoes. Residents who live in manufactured housing (almost 22% of the total housing in Vermilion Parish) are the most vulnerable to tornado damage and Abbeville has a large share of the parish's manufactured housing.

Other environmental concerns for Abbeville include ongoing coastal land loss, higher risk of storm surge, and increased land subsidence (sinking ground from natural or human-caused activities). While the City of Abbeville has a planning commission, they do not have a hazard mitigation planning committee, which surrounding towns like Kaplan and Delcambre have. Establishing a hazard mitigation planning committee could help develop policies and practices—such as limiting new construction in floodplains, fortifying building standards, improving energy grid resilience, and developing microgrids—that would help make Abbeville more resilient.

Extreme temperatures are a danger to health and the environment. Extreme heat is the leading cause of weather-related deaths and illnesses globally, and this threat is particularly critical in subtropical climates like those in South Louisiana–including Abbeville. According to the World Health Organization, exposure to high temperatures is constantly growing, especially affecting people age 65 and older. Heat exhaustion from long periods of exposure to high heat can cause dizziness, headaches, nausea, and progress to a heat stroke. Socioeconomic factors like high poverty and rising energy costs can contribute to growing vulnerability as heat intensifies.

Heat waves are more frequent and last longer compared to 60 years ago. In 2024, Abbeville experienced 132 days above 90 degrees and 56 days above 100 degrees. The climate forecast indicates that Abbeville is likely to see an increase in the number of dangerous heat days over the next 30 years. With the days becoming hotter, health risks like fatigue and dehydration, cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and death are significantly increasing.

Figure 8.2: FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)



Insurance Availability

Abbeville participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and has a floodplain ordinance that utilizes Flood Insurance Rate Maps adopted in 2011. There are 745 structures in Abbeville covered by NFIP policies. Thirty-three percent of Abbeville residents are susceptible to a 100-year flood event, based on modeling completed for the Vermilion Parish Hazard Mitigation Plan. The city has 24 repetitive loss properties. Of these, 22 are residential structures that are eligible for mitigation, such as raising the houses on piers, elevating HVAC and other systems higher off the ground, and replacing carpet with tiles. A repetitive loss property is one that has an "insurable building for which two or more claims of more than $1,000 were paid by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) within any rolling ten-year period."[1] These claims must have been made since the building's construction or since 1978, whichever is latest.

In general, the cost and availability of property and flood insurance are serious concerns for Abbeville property owners. Given the city's vulnerable location—fewer than 45 miles from the Gulf of Mexico—residents and business owners face the potential of catastrophic damage from high winds, storm surge, and flooding. Insurance costs are a macro-level statewide and nationwide issue, but Abbeville's leaders should continue to advocate for policy interventions and other strategies that could support lowering insurance costs. These activities include collaborating with insurance companies to identify risk reduction strategies, working with the city's federal delegation on policy changes that could impact insurance rates like changes to the National Flood Insurance Program, and prioritizing infrastructure investments to reduce flood risk and lower insurance costs. Additionally, it is recommended that Abbeville work toward entering into the FEMA Community Rating System (CRS), which provides flood insurance percentage discounts based on specific activities and policies employed at the community scale.

1 fema.gov/txt/rebuild/repetative_loss_faqs.text

PARKS AND RECREATION

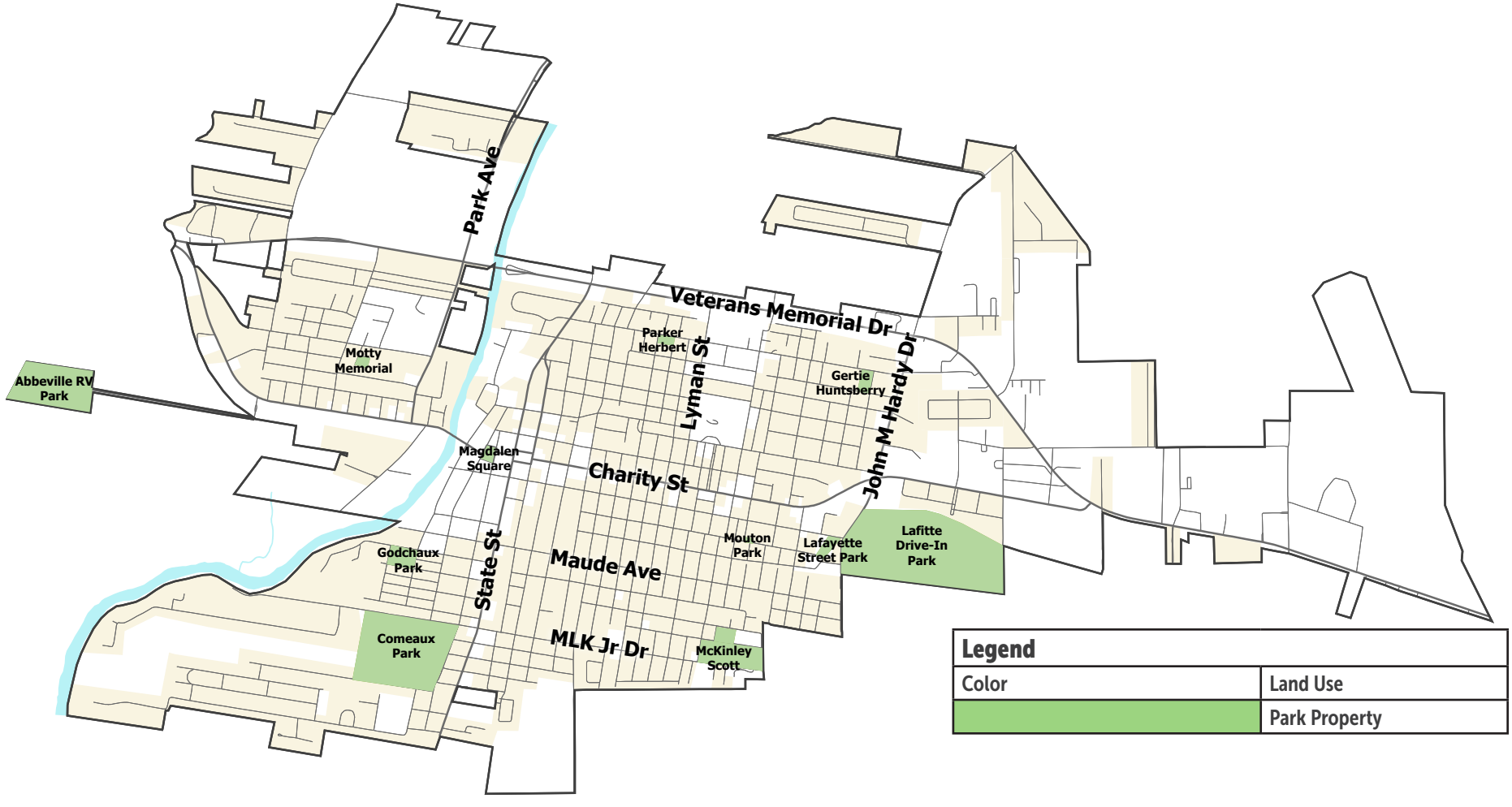
Existing Parks and Facilities

The City of Abbeville has 12 parks in its system, which is comprised of smaller neighborhood parks like Godchaux and Parker Hebert, and larger regional parks, such as AA Comeaux Park and the Lafitte Drive-In Park. The facilities include unprogrammed grass fields, baseball diamonds, basketball courts, soccer fields, and play areas. Residents are generally supportive of the city's existing parks–particularly noting parks that were dog friendly. They did indicate that upgraded facilities are needed in several parks (particularly Parker Hebert Park, Gertie Huntsberry Park, and McKinley Scott Park). Residents want increased programming and amenities for children and additional improvements downtown near Magdalen Square to support desired activities and programming.

Well-designed parks and trails offer a variety of community benefits. They provide a place for physical activity, which can reduce stress and promote mental well-being. They are also places where community members can meet, improving community connections. It is imperative that these spaces be both inviting and safe for this community interaction to occur. People who have access to green space, parks, and trails tend to walk more and are more physically active than people with limited access to these spaces.

The National Trust for Public Land has a tool that measures accessibility of residents to parks by a 10-minute walk. From their data, we know the majority of Abbeville residents live within a 10-minute walk to a park with public access, even though not all parks in the community have uniform facilities. Neighborhoods west of the Vermilion River are not as well served as those east of the river. As the city plans to improve parks, consideration should be given to those areas where residents cannot easily walk to a public park.

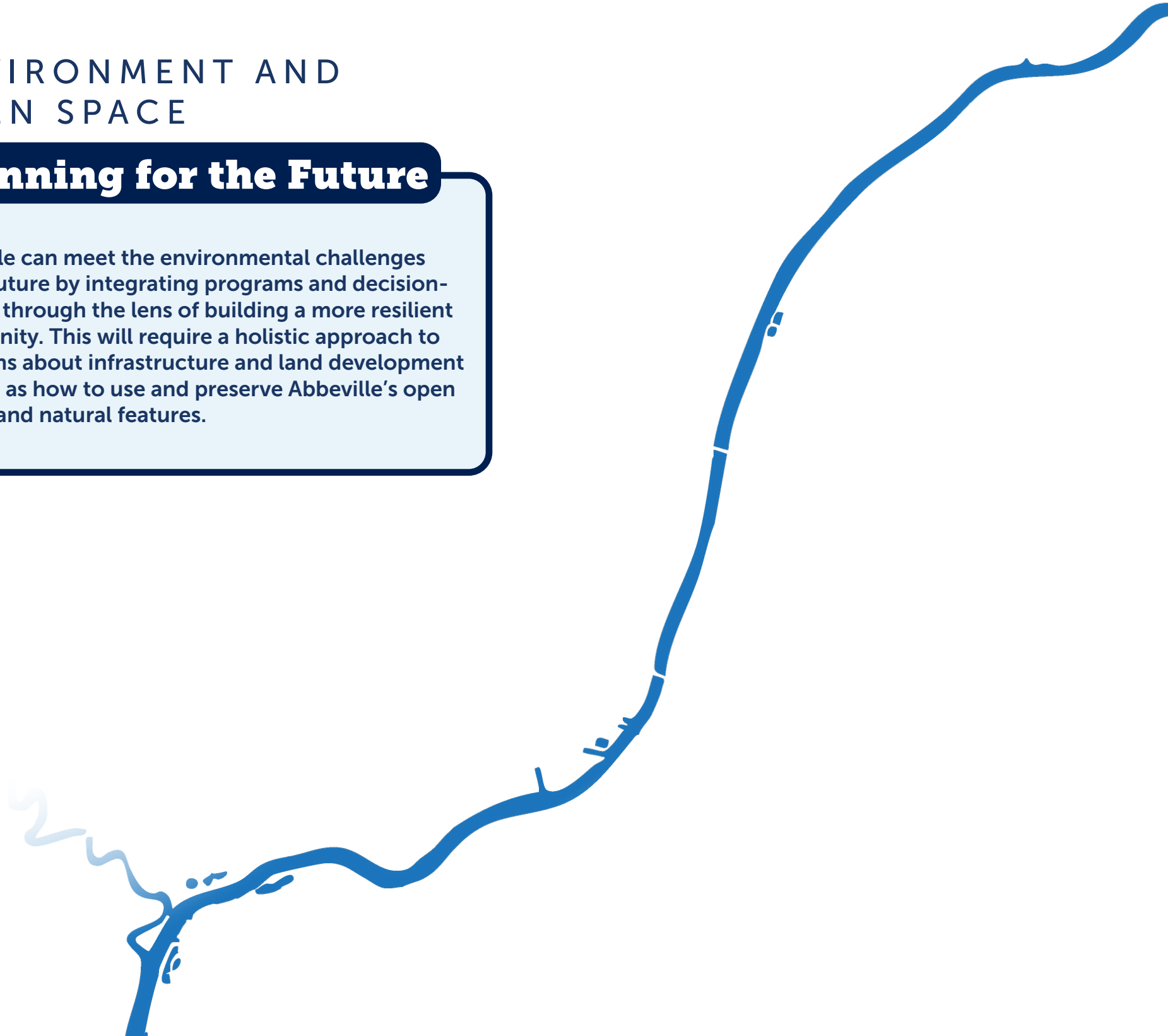
Figure 8.3: Existing Park Sites



ENVIRONMENT AND
OPEN SPACE

Planning for the Future

Abbeville can meet the environmental challenges of the future by integrating programs and decision-making through the lens of building a more resilient community. This will require a holistic approach to decisions about infrastructure and land development as wells as how to use and preserve Abbeville's open spaces and natural features.



RESILIENT ABBEVILLE

Encourage Infill over Greenfield Development

Greenfield development is a term used to describe new development into previously unused land, which typically occurs near the far edges of a community. While greenfield development is generally less expensive to develop, it usually requires costly extensions of public services, such as roads, water, sewerage, police, and fire protection. While some greenfield development is necessary, it is most typically associated with new residential or commercial developments. This construction tends to induce sprawl which in turn creates demand for municipal services which then increases costs to the city and residents.

Infill capitalizes on existing infrastructure and preserves open spaces for stormwater retention and groundwater recharge. When infill occurs on underutilized or vacant land or structures, the development injects vibrancy into an area of disinvestment. Funding sources such as the EPA Brownfields program could help to catalyze redevelopment of commercial sites into new mixed-use developments as envisioned in the Vision Map. Abbeville has historically developed as a compact and walkable community and should find ways to incentivize infill development to preserve its community character.

Community Rating System

The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary program of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) that both recognizes and encourages floodplain management activities at the community scale that exceed the minimum NFIP standards. As communities implement a greater number of suggested voluntary activities and programs, residents realize flood insurance rate reductions. The overarching goals of the CRS program are to reduce flood damage to insurable properties; strengthen and support insurance aspects of the NFIP; and encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management.

In Louisiana, the CRS program is coordinated through the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD). As Abbeville considers the CRS program, they can obtain information about the program responsibilities and can get matched with peer communities through the floodplain section at DOTD. Additionally, the Louisiana Association of Floodplain Managers could provide information on resources and training activities. The "National Flood Insurance Program / Community Rating System: Small Communities in the CRS" fact sheet published by FEMA provides a good starting point for Abbeville to consider the benefits and costs of entering the CRS program.

Incorporating Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure incorporates and mimics natural processes to improve water quality and manage stormwater quantity by slowing the movement of water and incorporating opportunities for infiltration. While green infrastructure cannot replace the use of traditional conveyance systems (also known as gray infrastructure), it can reduce the need for new gray infrastructure, which is typically more expensive. Green infrastructure can also be a beneficial component of the city's MS4 program by introducing water quality filtration measures to help meet pollution targets. Types of green infrastructure that could benefit Abbeville include stormwater microparks; bioswales in parking ares; rain gardens in public spaces; stormwater detention among public park spaces; and street improvements that incorporate flow through planters.



Landscape bulb out planters installed along roadway

Bayou Vermilion

Throughout the public engagement process, residents expressed a desire to connect with the Vermilion River. Seen as a defining element of the city, access to the Vermilion River could become a recreational and ecotourism destination. Activities include canoeing, kayaking, and shoreline walking trails, and nature lookouts could provide space for restaurants with outdoor seating as well as places for residents and visitors to enjoy the views. Upriver, the Bayou Vermilion District (BVD) in Lafayette Parish is also considering ways to make the Vermilion more accessible to the community. Partnering with the BVD could create the opportunity for complementary activities, further uniting these communities around this shared resource.



Vermillion River

Figure 8.4: Green infrastructure examples



Source: EPA 842-R-002, January 2015, Green Infrastructure Opportunities that Arise During Municipal Operations

Benefits of Trees

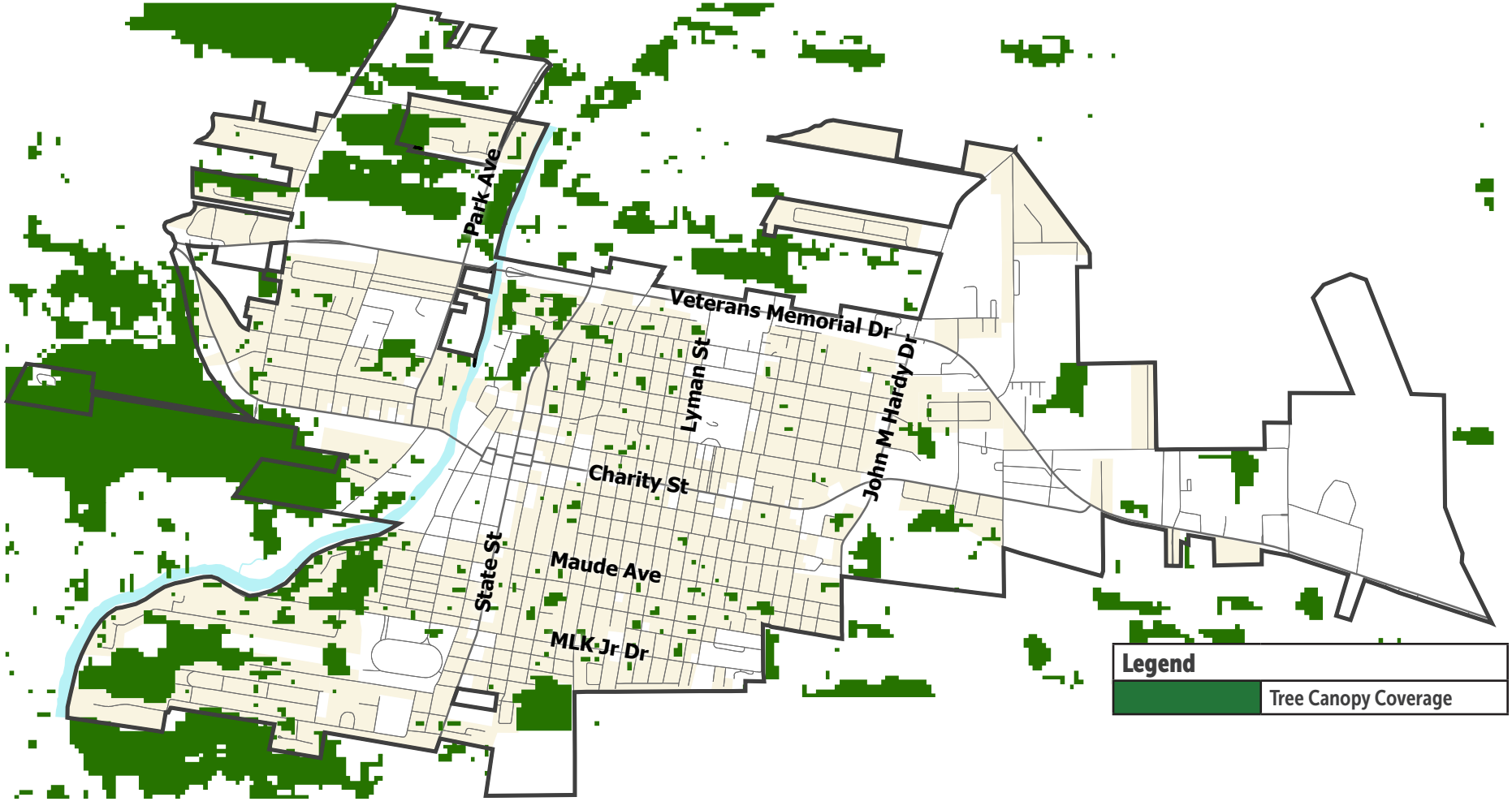
According to a I-tree Canopy Report, the trees in Abbeville sequester 1,730 tons of carbon annually. Overall, the trees in Abbeville have stored 33,510 tons of carbon and removed 1,025 pounds of carbon monoxide, 4,303 pounds of nitrogen dioxide, 55,479 pounds of sulfur dioxide, and 2,921 pounds of particulate matter annually. These benefits show the impacts that trees have on a community and the importance of keeping the trees healthy.

Tree Canopy

Improving tree canopy is one method to mitigate the impacts from extreme heat. Trees are an essential part of every community. They cool the air, remove pollutants from the atmosphere, and reduce urban heat islands—places where roads, parking lots, and buildings absorb heat and make the area hotter than a rural location without those elements. During storms, their roots uptake water, which can reduce flooding and stormwater runoff. Their presence is both beautiful and restorative. Being around trees can help people reduce their physical and mental stress, depression, and anxiety. During the engagement process, residents said how much they appreciate the area's trees, and many agreed that planting more to promote shade is needed.

25% of Abbeville's land area is covered by trees, signifying a strong tree canopy coverage compared to other US communities. Ideally, every census tract of Abbeville would have at least 30% of the land covered by trees which is a target acknowledged by the USDA Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy. For Abbeville, this would require planting around 20,000 more trees.

Figure 8.5: 2016 Tree Canopy Coverage

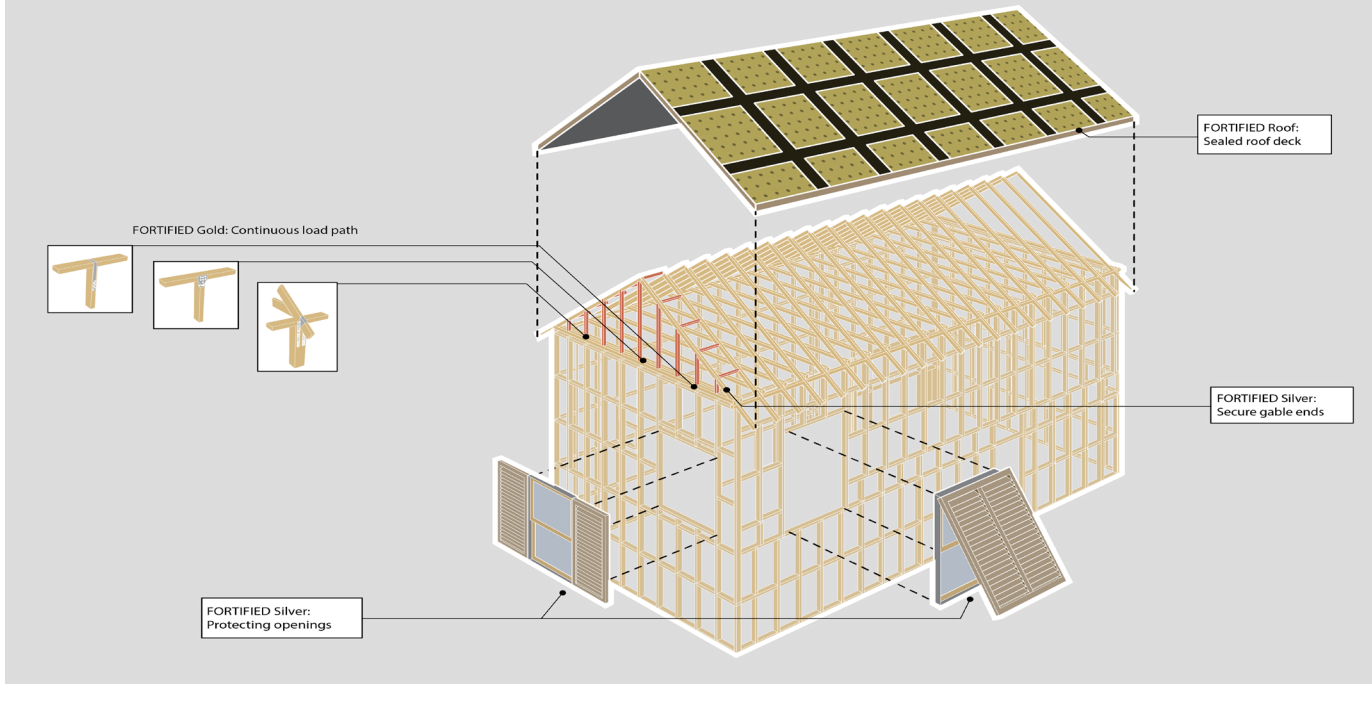


Fortified Building Standards

Developed by the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS), FORTIFIED is a construction method that building or roofing contractors can use to protect homes and businesses against severe weather. Decades of research went into designing ways to reduce the damage risk from high winds and hail associated with hurricanes, tropical storms, thunderstorms, and some tornado. This is a voluntary re-roofing and construction standard—meaning this is not legally required by any state— that home and business owners can choose to strengthen their properties' roofs, windows, and doors. While FORTIFIED homes are not disaster proof they are designed to minimize disaster-related damage.

In Louisiana, LaHouse at the LSU Baton Rouge campus is a research and education center that displays building techniques adapted to the states climate demands and also provides information on the FORTIFIED program.. LaHouse is open to the public for both self-guided and docent-led tours.

Figure 8.6: Components of a FORTIFIED Home



Source: LSU AgCenter

Building Grid Resilience

To make the community more resilient, Abbeville's electric grid must be prepared for current and future storm conditions. The city will likely have multiple solutions to generate and provide electricity to residents and business owners. Options include microgrids, more diverse energy sources (e.g., wind and solar), and infrastructure improvements such as replacing poles and under grounding utility lines. Another option is to build redundancy into the system, which means having a backup system that will come into use if problems interrupt the primary one. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) has a number of resources to support and guide the development of resilient energy systems.

Microgrids

A microgrid is a part of the electrical grid with defined boundaries that has the ability to operate both within the grid and also to disconnect from the grid in times of electrical disruption because they have their own power source. When operating disconnected from the greater electric grid, the microgrid functions as an island to continue to supply power to customers. Microgrids are often powered by a system of solar panels with battery storage.

Resilience Hubs

Resilience hubs serve as community gathering places during emergencies, providing essential services like food, water, shelter, and medical care. the buildings have continuous power during times of disaster or grid failures. through together New Orleans, the Community Lighthouse Project is working to create a hub network of 85 community institutions and congregations that will have "commercial-scale solar power and back-up battery capacity." CreentCare a New Orleans-based community health center, will be the Gulf Coast's first resilience hub. In 2021, because of Hurricane Ida, the center lost more than $250,000 in vaccines and medications when their gas-powered generators failed.[1]

In Abbeville, the community center planned near East Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Schlessinger Street is expected to serve as a resilience hub. Other locations throughout Abbeville should also be explored for similar partnerships.

1 "America's back up plan." The Wall Street Journal, Feb 19-20, 2022.

Park Beautification, Improvements, and Surveillance

In Macon, Georgia, the parks and recreation department beautified the Village Green Park and added picnic shelters, tables, grills, a playground unit, and new basketball courts, which increased park use by more than 25%. The park agency also partnered with the police athletic league to sponsor athletic programs at the facility.

Lighting and Programming

Los Angeles's Recreation and Parks Department hosts Summer Night Lights in 32 parks as a means to prevent gang-related violent crimes. Summer Night Lights extends nighttime hours in parks, keeping the lights on until midnight and hosting movies and family-oriented activities four nights a week. In 2017, 30 out of 32 participating parks saw a decrease or no change in gang-related crimes. From 2016 to 2017, there was a 43% decrease in gang crimes during Summer Night Lights. The idea here is that when parks are more accessible and inviting, people gather together and, by their presence as a group, deter crime.

Park Accessibility and Safety

Residents expressed a desire for Abbevillle's parks to be more open and inviting and indicated that some community parks were identified as "unsafe" due to real and perceived crime activity. Improving accessibility into and around parks will encourage greater use of the spaces and allow people to be physically active. The Safe Routes to Parks Action Framework helps local governments make policies for and plan safe, engaging parks for their communities. Some of the issues to consider are park siting, community engagement, fund allocation, traffic concerns, public safety initiatives, and existing park improvements. A successful Safe Routes to Parks project results in a well-maintained, comfortable park that's a 10-minute walk or bike ride away, accessible to people of all ages and abilities, and safe from personal danger and traffic.

In addition to accessibility, the city also must address matters of safety and community involvement. At this time, many local parks are enclosed by security fencing. While this works to reduce vandalism, it also creates a visual and mental barrier to the feeling of community ownership. Throughout the public engagement process, many residents expressed their reluctance to use the parks because of the perceived and real possibilities of personal harm, violence, and various crimes.

To address these concerns and promote equitable park access, residents must be at the center of the effort. Opportunities to convene community groups, park staff, law enforcement, and community-based organizations around crime prevention could result in strategies to deter and prevent crime that's appropriate for each neighborhood's needs. The city should hold community conversations about the park usage and accessibility, particularly in areas where vandalism and crime are a concern.



Woman pushing stroller in Godchaux Park

Environment and Open Space Goals, Objectives, and Actions

This section is organized into Goals that reflect the vision and Objectives and Actions that, if followed, will move Abbeville towards the community's vision.

Goals are the big ideas that support the citizen's vision. They capture big picture changes that must occur to implement the plan.

Objectives establish specific, measurable, attainable and realistic objectives that guide plan implementation by ensuring that stakeholders are clear about what must happen to move Abbeville toward the vision.

Actions delineate the steps needed to achieve the goals.



Identified by the Advisory Committee as important first steps to implement the vision.

EO–1: BUILD OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT ABBEVILLE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO THE VERMILION RIVER.

The Vermilion River has the potential to be a unifying open space asset in Abbeville. The majority of riverfront property is in private ownership, so the city will need to take advantage of strategic opportunities to better connect to the river when this is possible.

EO–1.1: Support and participate in efforts to improve water quality in the Vermilion River.

EO–1.1.1: Engage riverside property owners in implementing bank restoration best practices.

EO–1.1.2: Work with partners to remove litter and trash from the water channel.

EO–1.2: Increase river access throughout the community.

EO–1.2.1: Develop an inventory of undeveloped land along the Vermilion River.

EO–1.2.2: Identify properties that may be suitable for park space or conservation.

EO–1.2.3: Identify public-private partnership opportunities to develop access points along the river.

EO–2: MITIGATE COMMUNITY IMPACTS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS.

Like the rest of South Louisiana, Abbeville is vulnerable to natural disasters and other environmental hazards. In addition to strategies shown in the Hazard Mitigation Plan, Abbeville should look for other ways to reduce risks from environmental hazards and reduce the impacts from disaster events.

» EO–2.1: Engage in community-wide risk reduction activities.

EO–2.1.1: Participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) to lower insurance costs.

EO–2.1.2: Advocate for lower insurance costs by collaborating with insurance companies to identify risk reduction strategies. Work with the city's federal delegation on policy changes that could impact insurance rates like changes to the National Flood Insurance Program as well as prioritize infrastructure investments that can reduce flood risk and lower insurance costs.

EO–2.1.3: Identify and map repetitive loss properties and develop a mitigation plan.

EO–2.1.4: Support a communications campaign to educate the public about flood risk and other environmental hazards.

EO–2.1.5: Encourage the implementation of increased building standards to help withstand storm impacts (e.g.g. fortified roofs, resilient building codes, etc.) from high-wind events.

EO–2.1.6: Review and update, as needed, Abbeville's Flood Damage Ordinance to incorporate higher construction standards, such as minimum freeboard standard, for flood mitigation.

EO–2.1.7: Create a prioritization framework to green public spaces (parks, streets, civic spaces, etc.) in areas that lack a tree canopy to reduce impacts from extreme heat and improve stormwater uptake.

EO–2.1.8: Incorporate green infrastructure concepts into streets/rights of way and parking areas to reduce the impacts of localized street flooding.

EO–2.1.9: Consider using solar energy to power public buildings or other critical infrastructure to reduce the impact from electrical outages following storms.

EO–2.1.10: Review and evaluate Article VII–Trees to ensure adequate protection of existing tree canopy to mitigate urban heat.

EO–2.2: Develop neighborhood-scale risk reduction strategies.

EO–2.2.1: Identify resilience hubs as part of the city's emergency plans and communicate their locations and services provided to residents.

EO–2.2.2: Explore grid hardening and the development of microgrids to improve the resilience of the city's electric utility.

EO–2.2.3: Encourage the development of rain gardens and other green infrastructure in parks and vacant lots.

EO–2.3: Develop lot-scale risk reduction strategies.

EO–2.3.1: Advocate for public funding for a fortified roof program.

EO–2.3.2: Support and advocate for additional funding for home weatherizations, especially in areas of high utility burden.

EO–2.3.3: Improve the energy efficiency of public buildings by conducting energy audits and implementing recommendations.

EO–3: ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY AND AMENITIES IN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES.

Parks serve many functions: places of natural respite, social gathering spaces, and venues for exercise and recreation. They must be open, accessible, and safe community spaces as well as provide for the variety of activities desired by residents.

EO–3.1: Evaluate the park system and prioritize investments based on community desire and need.

EO–3.1.1: Create an inventory of existing park amenities and conditions that includes information such as park acreage, predominant use of the site, existing facilities and condition of improvements, maintenance needs and cost, and safety concerns.

EO–3.1.2: Conduct a survey of residents to identify how the parks are currently being used and desired uses for each park site.

EO–3.1.3: Identify parks that could be divested from the city's portfolio based on factors such as public demand for use of the site and maintenance costs.

EO–3.1.4: Create a decision matrix for park investment based on factors such as potential for stormwater mitigation, reduction in heat impacts, chronic health impacts, lack of access to a vehicle, density of residents near a park site. Use the matrix to guide decisions to prioritize areas of highest need.

EO–3.1.5: Develop a site-level park master plan, engaging with the public, to imagine or reimagine vacant and underutilized park spaces. Possible considerations are Lafitte Drive-In Park's usage and McKinley Scott Park's connections to Herbert Williams ark and the Nehemiah project site.

EO–3.1.6: Create a long-term park improvement plan tied to a multiyear capital improvement budget.

EO–3.1.7: Identify underutilized or neglected spaces in neighborhoods for beautification and improvement efforts which could be turned into temporary or permanent pocket parks.

EO–3.2: Increase safety and comfort in city public spaces.

EO–3.2.1: Develop a city parks maintenance program that guides decisions around operations, new investments, and routine maintenance.

EO–3.2.2: Prioritize lighting improvements in and around parks.

EO–3.2.3: Improve walking and bicycle access to and within park facilities to increase safety and provide destinations for active transportation.

EO–3.2.4: Organize volunteer efforts to improve public spaces and maintain them on an ongoing basis in partnership with the City of Abbeville such as through an Adopt-A-Park program.

EO–3.2.5: Prioritize the installation of shade structures and trees in parks to mitigate extreme heat.

EO–3.3: Increase the volume and diversity of recreational programming.

EO–3.3.1: Provide low- or no-cost activities for people of all ages in the city's public parks.

EO–3.3.2: Explore partnership opportunities for managing a robust portfolio of park activities.

Park Safety Best Practices

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

The National Crime Prevention Council—which has run McGruff the Crime Dog Public® public service announcements since the 1980s—identified ways that can effectively prevent crime and encourage community improvement. In the organization's resource manual, *Crime Prevention Through Community Design* (CPTED), residents, volunteers, city planners, landscape designers, law enforcement officers, and others can explore alternative interventions to increase safety within their communities. There are four key principles for concerned citizens and leaders to consider.

Access Control: This involves designing streets, sidewalks, building entrances, and neighborhood gateways to clearly indicate transitions from the public environment to semi-private and private areas.

Surveillance: A design principle that maximizes the visibility of people, parking areas, vehicles, and site activities. Strategies involve the strategic placement of windows, doors, walkways, parking lots, and vehicular routes.

Territorial Reinforcement: Sidewalks, landscaping, and porches help distinguish between public and private areas. This helps users display signs of "ownership" that send "hands-off" messages to would-be offenders.

Maintenance: When an area is maintained, this broadcasts that a person or community cares about the space. Activities include mowing grass, repairing broken fixtures, painting over graffiti, and landscaping.

CPTED principles have been used to address similar issues of vacant properties, faulty traffic flow, absentee landlords, overgrowth of foliage, and inadequate street lighting. These are all concerns that Abbeville residents brought up during our public meeting process. Thus, implementation of the CPTED principles would dovetail with existing efforts laid out in our master plan. For instance, territorial reinforcement and access control pair well with our efforts to address infrastructure concerns throughout the city.





CHAPTER 9

SMALL AREA PLANS

Opportunity Areas For Small Area Plans In Abbeville

A small area plan is like a mini-comprehensive plan that focuses on a specific geographic area of the city. The purpose of a small area plan is to spark conversation and generate ideas about how a place can evolve into the future with purposeful, intentional change. These plans lay the foundation for more detailed analysis and design to occur in order to develop very specific recommendations that respond to the particular conditions of the area. There are three scales of small area plans: neighborhood plans, corridor plans, and district plans. Examples of a small area plan might be a plan for downtown, a particular neighborhood, or the area immediately around a major development such as a hospital or airport.

Small area plans may address existing neighborhoods in need of revitalization, major streets or other corridors, and vacant areas where new development is desired.

Lyman Street and AA Comeaux Memorial Drive/Martin Luther King Jr. Drive are included as focus areas to illustrate how to apply some of the strategies in *Imagine Abbeville*. These areas were selected through discussions with the Advisory Committee. Some planning workshops for this master plan also included opportunities to provide direct input on each area through a design exercise where participants worked with design professionals to identify challenges and opportunities along each corridor.

Scales of Small Area Plans

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

Neighborhood plans generally encompass a single residential neighborhood or mixed-use area such as downtown. These plans often focus on encouraging appropriate infill development, identifying needed updates and improvements to infrastructure such as park improvements or drainage, and addressing city services such as code compliance.

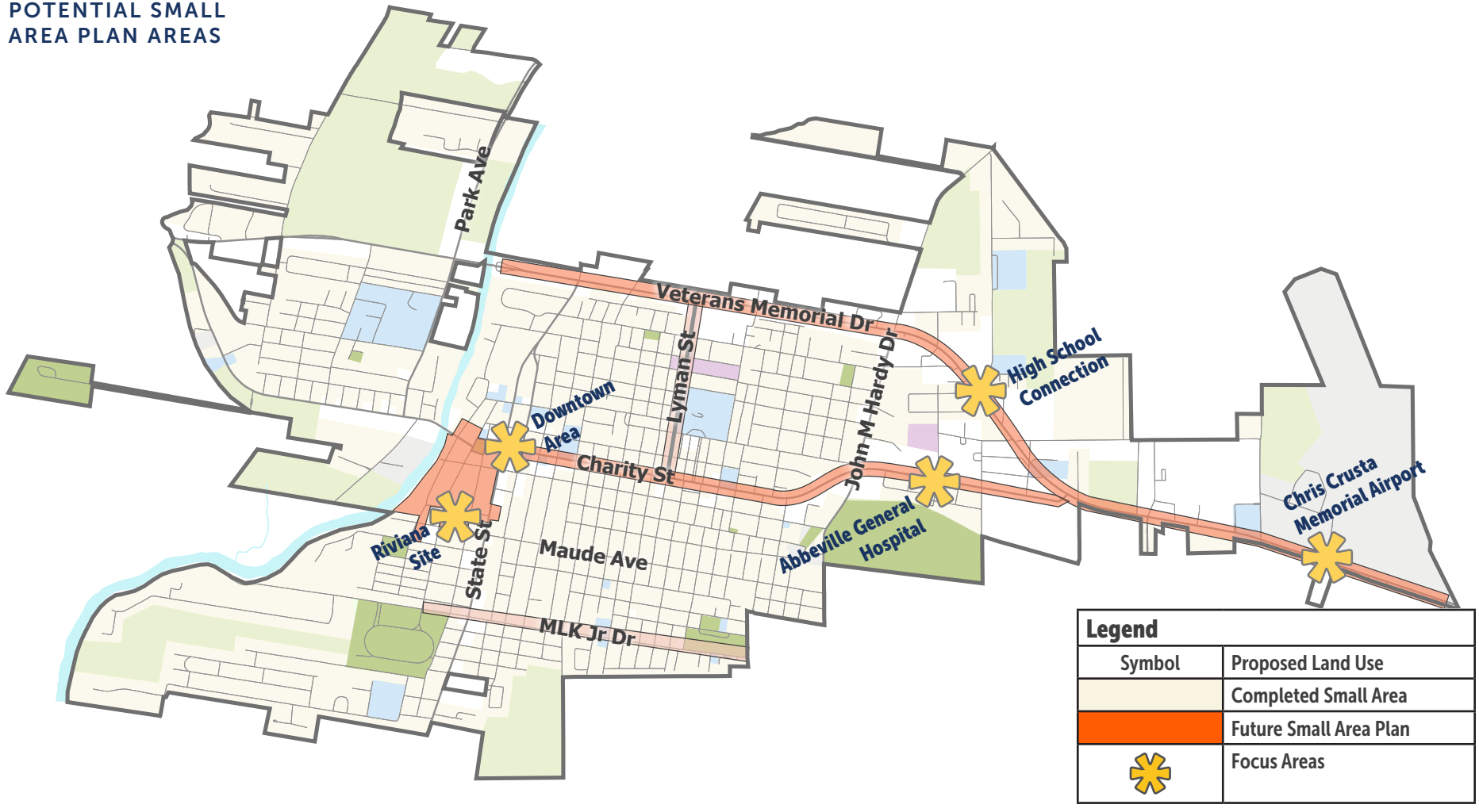
CORRIDOR PLANS

Corridor plans focus on long, linear features such as a major street, river, or greenbelt and the land adjacent to these features. Corridors may connect multiple neighborhoods or areas of town. Corridor plans may focus on a needed capital investment or a proposed development project that could impact a major portion of the corridor. Topics covered in a corridor plan might include proposing beautification projects, improving traffic safety, redesigning roadway infrastructure, encouraging business development, or providing open space access to trails and rivers.

DISTRICT PLANS

District plans cover areas that include one or more neighborhoods or corridors that are facing similar circumstances and challenges. District plans often cover topics including the land use, development opportunities, urban design, and mobility issues. These areas usually have multiple groups of stakeholders.

FIGURE 9.1:
POTENTIAL SMALL
AREA PLAN AREAS



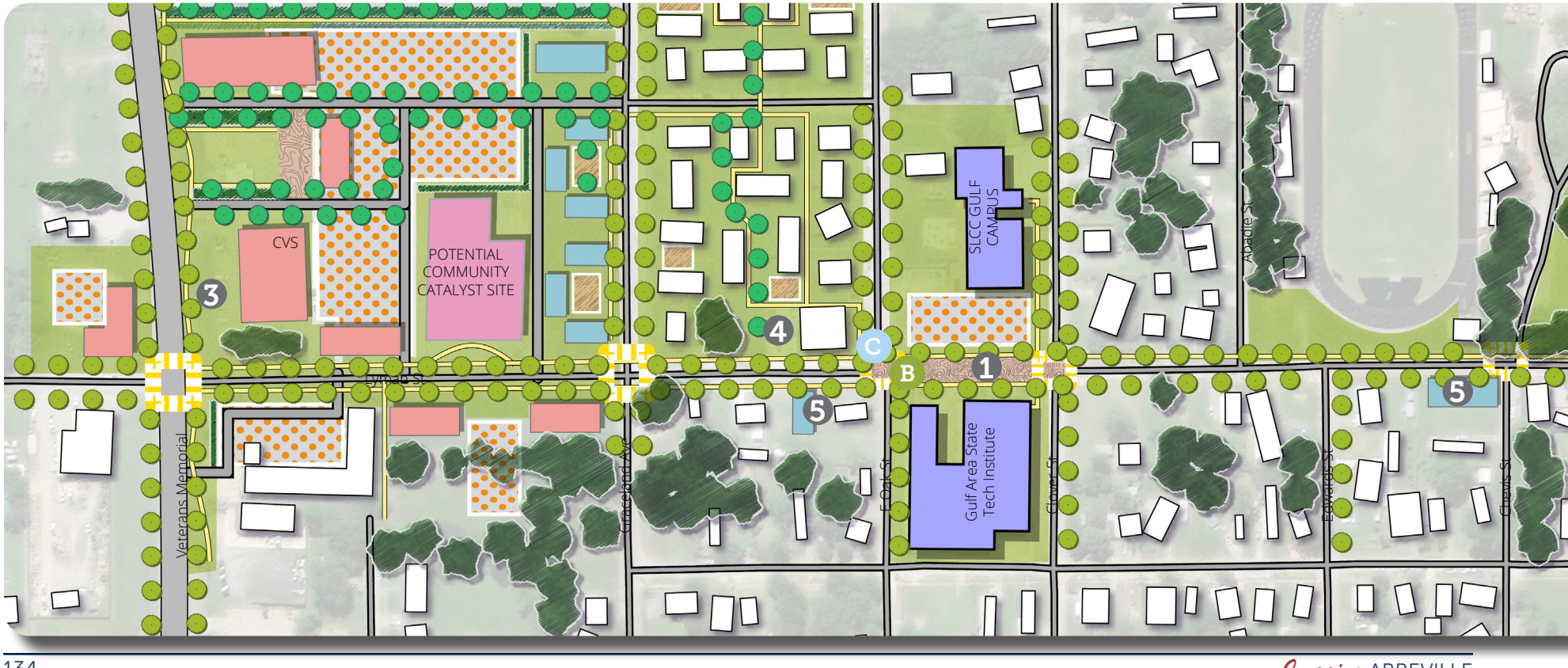
Lyman Street Corridor Small Area Plan

INTRODUCTION

Lyman Street is an important north-south corridor connecting Veterans Memorial Drive to Charity Street. The City of Abbeville has received a Safe Routes to Public Places Program federal grant for Lyman Street from Graceland Avenue to Charity Street to provide an assessment and feasibility study for improvements such as lighting, increased accessibility for those with mobility challenges, bike lanes, crosswalks, and other safety enhancements. These types of investments present an opportunity to reimagine the Lyman Street Corridor as a major spine for the community, improving access to destinations like J.H. Williams Middle School and South Louisiana Community College Gulf Area Campus (SLCC).

ASSETS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES

Conversations with stakeholders reinforced not only the significance of this corridor to the community as a transportation connector but as a community destination in itself. The corridor is anchored by several community-oriented uses including the SLCC, the Gulf Area States Technical Institute, J.H. Williams Middle School, and the Abbeville Community Health Center. Given the concentration of learning institutions, there is an opportunity to enhance Lyman Street as an "Education Corridor" by making investments and encouraging development that enhances and supports these schools. There were numerous safety challenges noted with access to some of these assets which the Safe Routes to Public Places funding will help to address. These improvements could also be themed to highlight the connection to the schools

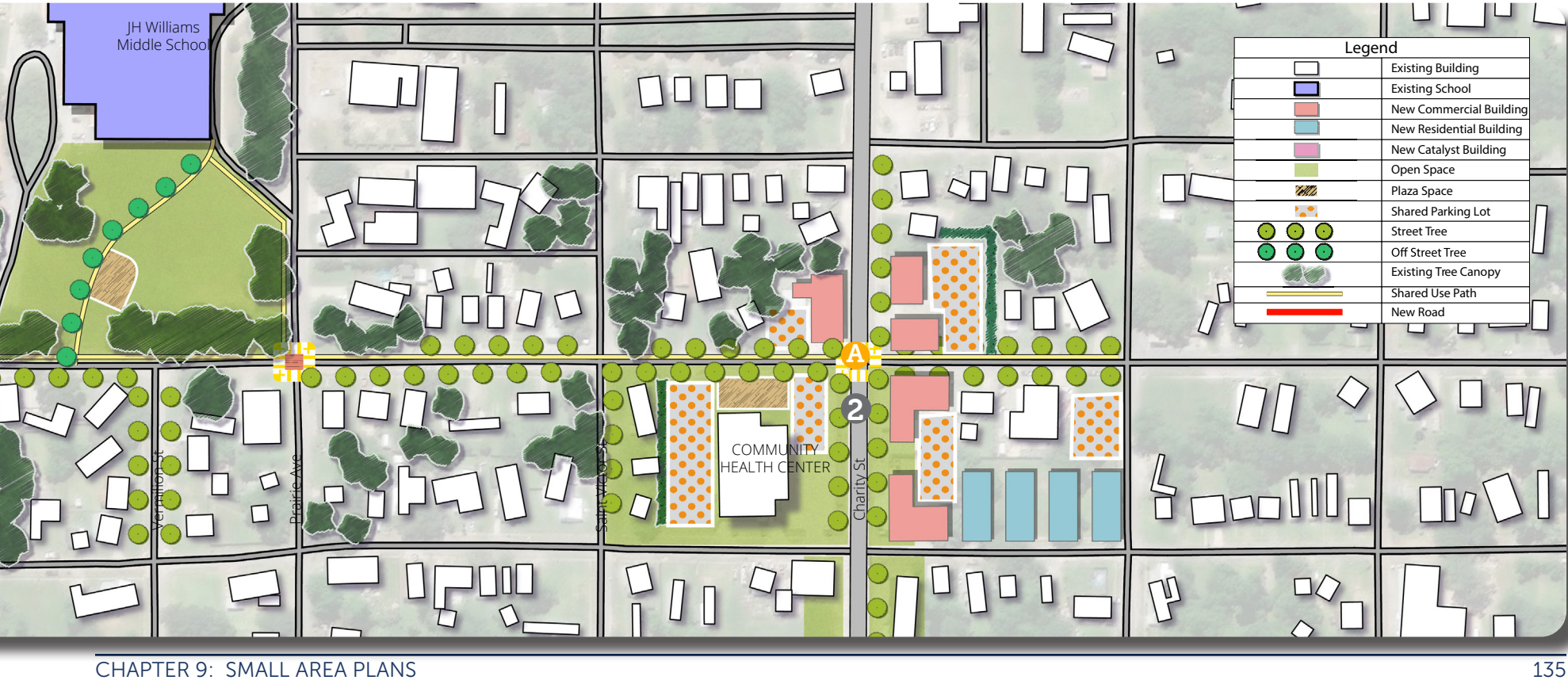


along the corridor. Several vacant or underutilized lots are located along the corridor. Vacancy can be both a challenge and an opportunity. While these properties may currently contribute to the overall sense of an area that is lacking vibrancy, they could be developed to provide additional uses that support the community such as student housing, coffee shops, and other retail uses. The desire is for an improved Lyman Street corridor to have a positive spillover impact on the surrounding neighborhood as well.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This corridor would benefit from a sidewalk and street tree program, design standards that improve street frontage along heavily trafficked corridors, and placemaking opportunities. The public housing could transition to include student housing and would be improved upon by adding internal pathways creating connections across the property, which would also provide opportunities for internal gathering spaces. Given the location of the middle school and SLCC, this area would benefit from placemaking that celebrates the campuses and has detailing and materials that unify the space. A summary of proposed improvements is included below.

1. Complete pedestrian safety enhancements and improve connectivity to J.H. Williams Middle School and Athletic Complex to surrounding neighborhood and SLCC.
2. Support a pedestrian-friendly node with sidewalks, street trees, and walkable destinations at Charity Street and address the potential brownfield from prior commercial development.
3. Encourage infill development opportunities at Veterans Memorial Drive.
4. Promote housing and other development around SLCC, such as small coffee shops.
5. Support residential-scaled infill development on vacant lots as well as reinvestment in existing structures along Lyman Street.



Lyman Street

Before

After

As one of the primary corridors through Abbeville, Charity Street is a natural gateway opportunity into the neighborhood along Lyman Street. The intersection could act as a neighborhood hub.





A. Lyman Street at Charity Street

The SLCC is one of the main institutional anchors along Lyman Street that could be further highlighted as an asset through placemaking strategies that create a stronger presence along Lyman Street.





B. Lyman Street SLCC

Housing along East Oak Street at Lyman Street could have additional amenities and improvements that integrate usable green space into the neighborhood.





C. Lyman Street at East Oak Street

ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

To achieve the plan recommendations outlined above, the following priority steps should be taken.

- Identify opportunity sites along the corridor. Develop a detailed design for right-of-way improvements for the whole corridor, including the intersections with Veterans Memorial Drive and Charity Street, that builds upon the Safe Routes to Public Places project and includes landscaping, sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, wayfinding, and district signs. Add unfunded improvements to the city's Capital Improvement Program. Identify additional funds to complete construction.
- Develop a branding program for the corridor that takes design cues from the adjacent educational institutions, and incorporate the brand into streetscape elements. Branding could include special crosswalks, sidewalk treatments, landscaping, and special development standards.
- Work with the Housing Authority to develop plans and identify funds to enhance the open spaces between housing units, provide additional community amenities and connections, and include student housing as part of the mix of housing units on the site. Identify long-term plans for the Housing Authority site and work to create opportunities for redevelopment through programs like HUD's Choice Neighborhoods.
- Work with property owners at the intersection of Veterans Memorial Drive and Charity Street to identify redevelopment opportunities. Create standards for future development at this site.
- Develop a partnership with the property owner at the intersection of Charity and Lyman about opportunities for redevelopment planning under the Louisiana Brownfields program.



Group participating in walk audit



Small area planning charette at open house.

AA Comeaux Memorial Drive / Martin Luther King Jr. Drive Small Area Plan

INTRODUCTION

AA Comeaux Memorial Drive/Martin Luther King Jr. Drive is an important east-west corridor connecting Hebert Williams Park to AA Comeaux Park. Along this corridor are numerous types of development: commercial, low- and high-density residential, and religious centers. There is a proposed community center development by the Nehemiah Projects of Acadiana near the eastern edge of MLK that could serve as a major hub for the community and provide needed services that support neighborhood amenities. This investment could serve as a catalyst for other neighborhood improvements.

ASSETS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND CHALLENGES

During walking tours, Advisory Committee discussions, and design workshops, the community was asked to help identify significant challenges for the corridor, highlight existing assets and opportunities, and share ideas to improve the AA Comeaux Memorial Drive/Martin Luther King Jr. Drive corridor. Common themes from those discussions included concerns about crime and lack of use of Herbert Williams Park. Dead-end streets and lack of connectivity, particularly on the east end, were cited as contributing factors to the crime due to lack of "eyes on the street" in those areas. Both parks could be repositioned to be stronger anchors and larger community destinations supporting the revitalization of the surrounding neighborhoods. The Nehemiah Project proposal could be a catalytic development opportunity that



brings direct investment in neighborhood improvements and provides much needed programming for youth and neighborhood residents. This corridor has the potential to be a vibrant community connector that stands out as a community anchor and improves access to adjacent neighborhoods, amazing park amenities, and local goods and services.

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This corridor would benefit from a sidewalk and street tree program as well as design standards that enhance placemaking at nodes along corridor. The multifamily construction at the end of the corridor could be reimagined as street fronting development with improved pedestrian connections to parks and future development.

1. Create a gateway at AA Comeaux Memorial Drive/Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and State Street.
2. Encourage development of coffee shops, restaurants, and other uses that will help to activate and support AA Comeaux Park.
3. Create a neighborhood center at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Lyman Street that provides small-scale neighborhood services, such as a laundromat or other neighborhood amenities, and cottage housing development.
4. Redevelop/rehabilitate Live Oak Manor.
5. Support community center investment at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Schlessinger Street.
6. Invest in Park improvements at Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Dorie Miller Street to create a more welcoming and user-friendly park.
7. Improve safe pedestrian access to parks and neighborhood amenities.
8. Complete the street grid where there are disconnected blocks to improve connections and access.



AA Comeaux / MLK

A. MLK Drive at State Street

As a gateway into Abbeville and entry into AA Comeaux Park, the intersection with State Street could provide recreation-oriented retail and other supportive uses.

Before



After



B. MLK Drive at Dutel Street

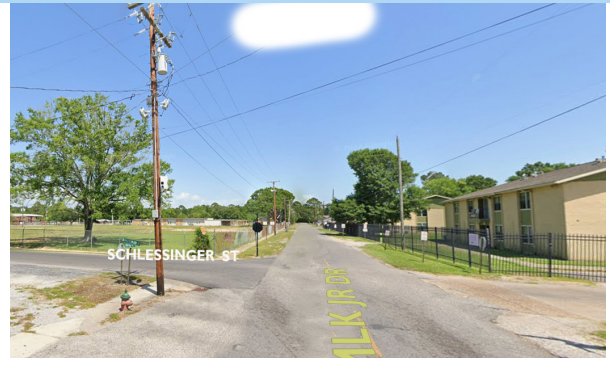
The intersection of MLK and Dutel Street could serve as a neighborhood center providing much-needed services to residents.





C. MLK Drive at Schlessinger Street

Investment near the intersection of MLK and Schlessinger Street could serve as a catalyst for additional change and investment.





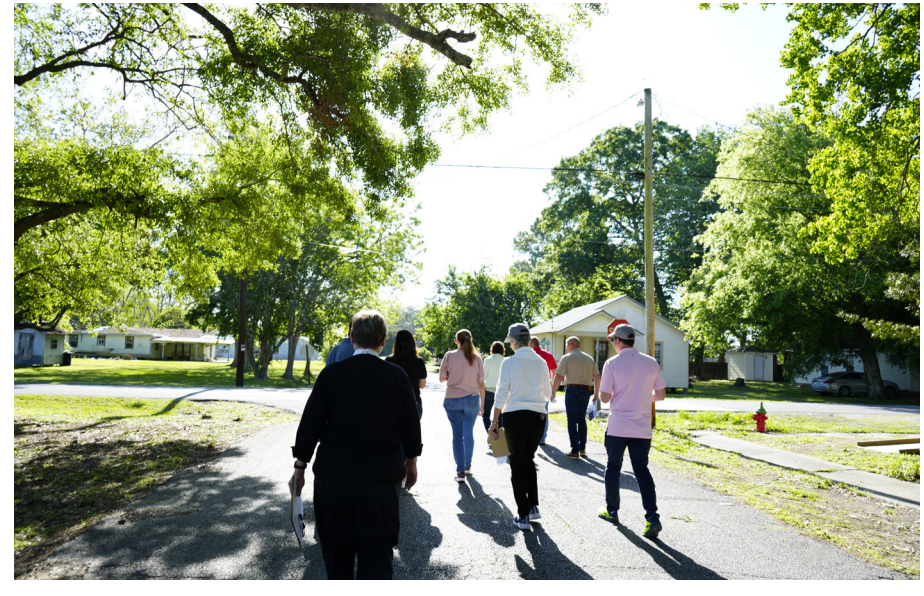
ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

To achieve the plan recommendations outlined above, the following priority steps should be taken.

- Identify opportunity sites along the corridor. Develop a detailed design for right-of-way improvements for the whole corridor that includes landscaping, sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, wayfinding, and district signs. Include these improvements in the city's Capital Improvement Program. Identify additional funds to complete construction.
- Work with property owners at the State Street intersection to identify development opportunities, which could include finding funds to improve AA Comeaux Park's northeaster corner with park-related amenities that would activate the street, such as a pavilion that could support temporary markets or food trucks. Create standards for future development in this area.
- Work with property owners at the intersection of Lyman Street to identify development plans for community uses with input from residents.
- Identify a housing partner to develop a pilot development for cottage housing near the intersection of Lyman Street.
- Continue to support and encourage the development of the community center space and programming to support community residents.
- Create housing standards for multifamily developments and work with the property owner of Live Oak Manor to implement them on site.
- Work with the community to develop a park improvement plan, including identifying quick wins to show immediate progress toward improvement.
- Hold a community cleanup to address litter and nuisance issues along the corridor and adjacent side streets.
- Include proposed road extensions to improve the connectivity of the street grid in the city's Capital Improvement Program.



Group discussing corrridor needs



Group participating in walk audit

SMALL AREA PLANNING PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a template for the future development of small area plans. Focused conversation and continued planning around Abbeville's opportunity areas are an important components of implementing *Imagine Abbeville*. Goals, objectives, and actions that are consistent with citywide guiding documents can be incorporated into the comprehensive plan and implemented through the city's development code to the extent practical. The small area plans should include specific actions and identify responsibility for each action.

EXAMPLE OF A SMALL AREA PLAN OPPORTUNITY

ABBEVILLE PARK PLANNING

Herbert Williams Park and McKinley Scott Park are located within a block of each other. Both facilities could be improved by reducing the fencing around them, which would provide open, inviting access to the public spaces. Close to the parks are several public and social services facilities, and the land west of Herbert Williams Park has been identified as the site for the Nehemiah community center.

Small Area Planning Process

1 DEFINE THE AREA PLAN BOUNDARIES

Work with community leaders and stakeholders to identify the area that should be included in the area plan, taking into consideration any planned investments, potential projects, or assets that could be used or improved to bring about desired change. Create a map of the planning area and identify with the community the priority locations that would be catalytic for future development.

2 OUTLINE THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Inventory the stakeholders that must be included in the conversation and determine if the process should be guided by an advisory committee. Outline the anticipated schedule and note key community input windows. Take into consideration any community events that may be scheduled during the planning process, since those can be effective ways to involve people that might not normally participate in planning conversations.

Define input methods that would be most effective at involving the highest number of stakeholders and give plenty of opportunity for feedback. Some common community engagement activities include

- Design workshops,
- Walk audits or walking tours,
- Community surveys,
- Focus group discussions,
- Recurring outreach and communication through newsletters or blog,
- Open house or informational sessions, and
- project website.

Because the parks are near each other and multiple community services are in proximity, a small area plan should be completed to reimagine and connect these spaces, based on current community needs. Residents and community supporters can join to identify strengths, concerns, and needs for the area. They can evaluate safety issues that prevent individuals and families from using Hebert Williams Park as well as determine what physical improvements and programs would encourage greater use. The plan should also look into creating a north-south bicycle/pedestrian route that connects through the Herbert Williams Park block so residents can easily move through the neighborhood without having to go around the park facility.

3 ANALYZE THE PLANNING AREA

Collect relevant data on the planning area such as population and development trends; health trends; land use; open space and environmental conditions such as tree canopy; infrastructure conditions; housing conditions; planned projects (both public, private, and infrastructure); transportation conditions and options; and economic conditions. From this analysis and through community conversations, make an inventory of the important issues facing the community, highlight community vulnerabilities, and define the assets and opportunities that can be used to create desired change. Encourage the community to locally collect data wherever possible.

4 WRITE A VISION STATEMENT AND DEFINE GOALS

The vision statement should be a concise statement that describes the community's aspirations or the future of the area. Goals are a list of what the community would like to accomplish in the planning area. The vision statement and goals should be developed collaboratively with the advisory committee and vetted with the community.

5 PROPOSE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Provide a list of concrete steps to achieve each of the goals. Define what needs to be done, who the responsible parties are to help complete the action, and what resources need to be used to implement the plan.

6 ADOPT THE PLAN

Each small area plan will need to be adopted by Abbeville's Planning Commission and recognized by the City Council to formalize the small area plan's role in guiding change in the area. Prior to the adoption process, the community must be given the opportunity to review and understand the small area plan as well as what opportunities they will have to provide formal input into its adoption, which can be done through public hearings.


ONE WAY



CHAPTER TEN

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementation Plan

Successful implementation of *Imagine Abbeville* will require a whole host of coordinated activities ranging from changes to city policies, investment in infrastructure and private development, and organizing community groups and other partners to aid in plan implementation. But what should happen first? What actions should be prioritized? And what will it take to complete them? This implementation plan addresses these issues and provides a roadmap to realizing the community's vision.

APPROACH TO IMAGINE ABBEVILLE IMPLEMENTATION

Imagine Abbeville is the result of collaboration of numerous stakeholders who devoted time, energy, expertise, and ideas to create this plan. That work and those conversations must continue. In fact, adopting this plan is really just the starting line. The discussions that built this plan must not only carry on but be expanded to include practical considerations about who will lead and support implementation of the community vision outlined in this document. *Imagine Abbeville* should be used as a helpful reference for decision making by community leaders and should empower residents and stakeholders to be a part of shaping the city's future. Some essential elements of this community-wide implementation approach are listed as follows.

- Build collaborative partnerships among the city, community organizations and nonprofits, business groups, and other government agencies to work toward achieving Abbeville's vision.
- Align department activities throughout the city with the plan by making *Imagine Abbeville* a cornerstone document that guides the city's strategic planning efforts, annual operating and capital budgeting, and departmental work plans.
- Clear a path for implementation by identifying hurdles and policy barriers to achieving the vision and addressing any necessary regulatory changes.
- Highlight the connections between Council or Planning and Zoning Commission actions and *Imagine Abbeville* by adding language to reports or agenda items indicating what goals and strategies will be advanced as a result of the requested action.

This approach serves as the backbone of the implementation infrastructure necessary to achieve the bright future for Abbeville that was expressed by the community and is documented in this plan.

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Tracking Progress

The old adage "What doesn't get measured, doesn't get done" is particularly relevant to the master planning process. To ensure that a plan does not sit on a shelf, there must be transparent reporting of plan progress on a regular basis. There are numerous methods to do so and keep the plan a central organizing document for community improvements. Some examples are listed below:

- Publish the Strategic Action Matrix on the city's website and continue public communication about the plan and its progress on the *Imagine Abbeville* blog.
- Form a collaborative committee of stakeholders and city representatives that meets regularly to review plan progress, discuss solutions to challenges with implementation, and further flesh out next steps when needed.
- Draft an annual report or host annual town halls on plan implementation that indicate progress on each action, noting both successes as well as hurdles to implementation.
- Survey residents on their opinions about the success at achieving the vision outcomes outlined in this implementation plan and publish results as a component of the reporting process.

Ongoing conversations with stakeholders about the plan and annual reports on its progress are also mechanisms to begin the process of assessing what is successful about *Imagine Abbeville*. Parts of the plan might need to be revisited to more effectively achieve the vision or adapt to changing circumstances.

Updating the Master Plan

Communities are always changing and evolving. For this plan to remain a relevant guide for the future of Abbeville, it must be revisited on a regular basis, typically about every five years, in order to reassess conditions and identify needed changes or adjustments to plan recommendations. Any number of changes might drive the need to update this plan, including demographic and population changes, shifts in community priorities, changes in economic conditions or development patterns, or the need to readjust priorities following natural disasters.

Determining the scope of the update begins by incrementally building an inventory of aspects of the plan that need to be updated based upon feedback from those involved in plan implementation. This inventory becomes the foundation for outlining the scope and magnitude of desired changes. These changes might range anywhere from revising actions, updating objectives, and adjusting the vision map to rewriting individual chapters of the plan to stepping back and doing a holistic update to the entire plan. Keeping an active eye on the plan, its progress, and the need for updates will ensure that the plan evolves with the community.

Strategic Action Matrix

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
LAND USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS				
LU-1	Use the Vision Map as a guide for development and infrastructure investment decisions to meet current and future needs.			
LU–1.1:	Encourage development and land use patterns consistent with the Vision Map.			
LU-1.1.1	Develop and adopt a subdivision ordinance, which establishes the minimum standards for dividing land into individual parcels for development and coordinates development of infrastructure such as streets, water, parks, and drainage.			
LU-1.1.2	Develop land use regulations to ensure private development is consistent with the future land use Vision Map.			
LU-1.1.3	Revisit and update the Vision Map every five years or as needed to accommodate changing conditions.			
LU-1.1.4	Create and staff a planning and development department that will coordinate implementation of this master plan as well as development activities within Abbeville.			
LU-1.2	Coordinate infrastructure development with desired land use patterns.			
LU-1.2.1	Conduct a capacity analysis of current infrastructure to see if it is sufficient for the community's needs and identify gaps where anticipated land use will need additional infrastructure, including seeking Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality technical assistance to assess feasibility of a second wastewater treatment plant.			
LU-1.2.2	Develop and maintain a consolidated inventory of capital improvements needed for water, wastewater, drainage, green infrastructure, and electricity that accounts for existing and projected needs to accommodate growth and useful life of facilities.			
LU-1.2.3	Develop a consolidated five-year capital improvement program, identifying budgetary needs and potential sources of revenue to cover anticipated expenses.			
LU-1.2.4	Develop a city wide stormwater master plan that addresses MS4 requirements and considers alternative methods for stormwater retention and water quality, such as through deploying green infrastructure.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
LU-2	Encourage new development and redevelopment to improve the character of key commercial corridors and gateways.			
LU-2.1	Promote infill development on vacant and underutilized parcels.			
LU-2.1.1	Inventory the location of vacant and underutilized lots and identify potential catalytic redevelopment sites and priority areas for lot assemblage to support redevelopment.			
LU-2.1.2	Conduct a market study to identify specific development opportunities on vacant and underutilized catalytic redevelopment sites.			
LU-2.1.3	Work with property owners and brokers to proactively market vacant or underutilized commercial land for development opportunities that achieve the community's vision and support community anchors located along these corridors, highlighting available development incentives.			
LU-2.1.4	Prioritize investments in infrastructure along Veterans Memorial Drive, State Street, and Charity Street that improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to significant destinations and create special treatments for nodes and important intersections.			
LU-2.2	Establish development regulations for and improve the appearance of key corridors and districts.			
LU-2.2.1	Develop detailed corridor plans for Veterans Memorial Drive, Charity Street, Lyman Street, and East Martin Luther King Jr. corridors and further identify marketable development opportunities.			
LU-2.2.2	Develop and implement landscape and development guidelines to improve the appearance of Commercial Corridors as part of corridor plans.			
LU-2.2.3	Create a beautification strategy for corridors that includes volunteer clean ups or adopt–a–block efforts.			
LU-2.2.4	Identify development approval process for corridors to ensure that development standards are met.			
LU-2.2.5	Assess the feasibility of establishing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts or other mechanisms to generate funding for corridor improvements.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
LU-2.3	Enhance gateways to signify to citizens and visitors that they are entering special areas of Abbeville.			
LU-2.3.1	Improve signage to mark gateways.			
LU-2.3.2	Develop landscape plans as well as install and maintain enhanced landscaping at Gateways.			
LU-2.3.3	Develop and implement long-term capital improvements for special intersection treatments, creation of plazas, or other enhancements to create welcoming entries into the city and neighborhoods consistent with the Vision Map.			
LU-3	Maintain and support existing neighborhoods and supportive infrastructure in line with the community's vision.			
LU-3.1	Maintain infrastructure to support neighborhoods.			
LU-3.1.1	Work with community representatives to conduct neighborhood walk audits to inventory priority infrastructure improvements such as lighting, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, street conditions, drainage, and landscape maintenance.			
LU-3.1.2	Include neighborhood–identified community improvements into a city wide coordinated capital improvement plan for implementation.			
LU-3.2	Ensure development is compatible with and supportive of neighborhoods.			
LU-3.2.1	Inventory the location of vacant and underutilized residential lots and identify potential catalytic redevelopment sites and priority areas for lot assemblage to support redevelopment.			
LU-3.2.2	Consider amendments to Article VIII–Landscape to provide for buffering, screening, and transitions between residential and nonresidential uses.			
LU-3.2.3	Develop an ordinance to create appropriate buffering and performance standards among commercial, industrial, and residential uses to minimize incompatible impacts to residential neighborhoods.			
LU-3.2.4	Encourage infill housing that looks like single-family homes and accessory dwelling units, particularly in areas identified on the Vision Map as Transitional Mixed-Use.			
LU-3.2.5	Encourage applicants for zoning changes to meet with neighborhoods.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
LU-3.3	Establish minimum standards for residential and multifamily development.			
LU-3.3.1	Create standards that address Residential and Mixed-Use development, such as setbacks from property lines, housing design considerations, and buffers between higher- and lower-intensity uses.			
LU-3.3.2	Encourage neighborhood-scale commercial and retail services at nodes identified in the Vision Map as neighborhood centers.			
LU-3.3.3	Create standards for small and midsize multifamily development in areas identified on the Vision Map as Mixed-Use or Transitional Mixed-Use.			
LU-3.4	Demonstrate neighborhood identity and improve community image.			
LU-3.4.1	Create standards for housing development that encourage biking and walking, such as narrow setbacks from the street, front porches, sidewalks along street front, and street trees.			
LU-3.4.2	Create neighborhood-scale plans to activate/redevelop vacant or adjudicated properties, prioritizing locations with the highest concentration of vacant and abandoned properties.			
LU-3.4.3	Encourage the use of places like the library, community centers, and other gathering places (coffee shops, restaurants, gyms, churches, etc.) to create "third places" for youth and neighborhood residents.			
LU-4	Preserve Abbeville's historic and cultural resources.			
LU-4.1	Refine policies, tools, and other resources to inform and enforce preservation efforts.			
LU-4.1.1	Review and adopt historic preservation standards and strengthen enforcement.			
LU-4.1.2	Maintain a historic resources inventory to identify historic properties and/or districts that may be candidates for preservation efforts.			
LU-4.1.3	Increase programming and staffing for the Abbeville Main Street program.			
LU-4.1.4	Host an annual historic Abbeville tour to showcase historic properties, highlight successful preservation or adaptive reuse efforts, and raise awareness about threatened properties in need of preservation.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
LU-4.1.5	Provide training to staff and decision-makers about the benefits of historic preservation and best practices for applying historic district regulations.			
LU-4.2	Encourage opportunities for placemaking in Downtown Abbeville to reimagine public spaces and more strongly tie residents and visitors to a sense of place.			
LU-4.2.1	Identify priority downtown locations for outdoor seating or public spaces to further activate the area.			
LU-4.2.2	Incorporate public art, landscape improvements, street furniture, special paving, and other methods to support placemaking downtown.			
LU-5	Create community districts to encourage supportive and complementary uses and provide for consistent development character.			
LU-5.1	Establish a small-scale manufacturing and industrial hub around the city's airport.			
LU-5.1.1	Identify and inventory properties to include in a potential commercial hub around Chris Crusta Memorial Airport.			
LU-5.1.2	Conduct market study to determine priority development opportunities around the airport and Veterans Memorial Drive area.			
LU-5.1.3	Develop special overlay regulations to encourage commercial uses complementary to the airport such as logistics, warehousing, and small-scale manufacturing, and include standards for lighting, streetscapes, building forms, and signage.			
LU-5.1.4	Explore constructing infrastructure such as roads or extending water or sewer lines to encourage hub development by creating development-ready sites.			
LU-5.2	Establish a medical district around Abbeville General Hospital.			
LU-5.2.1	Identify and inventory properties for inclusion in a potential commercial hub around Abbeville General. The inventory should include hospital-owned property, hospital supportive uses, and future development sites that could support medical services.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
LU-5.2.2	Develop special overlay regulations to encourage development of commercial uses complementary to the hospital such as medical officed, lodging, and retail, and include standards for lighting, streetscape, building forms, signage, and other appropriate development regulations.			
LU-5.3	Establish a district around the historic Riviana Rice Mill site.			
LU-5.3.1	Develop an overlay district to encourage supportive development around the rice mill, such as housing and additional retail and services, and include standards for lighting, streetscape, building forms, signage, and other appropriate development regulations.			
LU-5.3.2	Continue to work with the property owner to secure funding and define restoration and redevelopment plans.			
LU-5.3.3	Provide open space and connectivity to the Vermilion River, downtown, and AA Comeaux Park as part of redevelopment plans.			
HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS				
HN-1	Offer a wide range of housing options and choices to Abbeville residents.			
HN-1.1	Provide housing types that fit the affordability and stage of life needs of all Abbeville residents.			
HN-1.1.1	Develop housing choices specifically for Abbeville's aging population, such as accessory dwelling units, smaller housing types, and senior housing.			
HN-1.1.2	Work with SoLAcc to incorporate student housing options near their campus.			
HN-1.1.3	Encourage a wider range of housing within neighborhoods, consistent with the Vision Map. These include, but are not limited to, duplexes or townhomes on corner lots; small-scale, mixed-use, or multifamily units near commercial corridors; senior housing; cottage houses; apartments; and condominiums.			
HN-1.1.4	Work with partner organizations to improve and better connect resources for people experiencing homelessness.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
HN-2	Support strong, safe, and desirable neighborhoods throughout the city.			
HN-2.1	Improve safety conditions in the city's neighborhoods.			
HN-2.1.1	Organize neighborhood watch and/or National Night Out programs.			
HN-2.1.2	Explore options for police substations in neighborhoods or support other actions to increase positive community and police activities.			
HN-2.1.3	Explore options for police substations in neighborhoods or support other actions to increase positive community and police activities.			
HN-2.1.4	Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Community Design (CPTED) principles in all public and private developments across the city.			
HN-2.2	Preserve and strengthen existing single family areas through proactive enforcement and maintenance of existing infrastructure.			
HN-2.2.1	Continue to access state grant funds to demolish vacant, abandoned, and blighted properties.			
HN-2.2.2	Rehabilitate adjudicated properties and consider establishing a community land trust (CLT).			
HN-2.2.3	Strengthen and enforce nuisance codes (trash, debris, blighted structures, etc.).			
HN-2.2.4	Develop minimum property standards to ensure safe and habitable rental housing units.			
HN-3	Provide opportunities for affordable and mixed-income housing development.			
HN-3.1	Work with for-profit and nonprofit developers to encourage mixed-income developments in areas with access to everyday services.			
HN-3.1.1	Create a coalition of housing providers, landlords, and developers to assess the opportunities for new and rehabilitated housing development. Work with community development corporations and the Housing Authority of Abbeville to reduce hurdles for nonprofit housing development.			
HN-3.1.2	Coordinate with the Louisiana Housing Corporation to create local homebuyer training programs to increase eligible first-time homebuyers and take advantage of down payment assistance.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
HN-3.1.3	In cooperation with the Housing Authority of Abbeville, identify opportunities to decentralize affordable housing developments through the HUD Choice Neighborhoods program similar grant programs.			
MOBILITY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS				
M-1	Provide safe, efficient, and connected travel routes for all residents of all abilities.			
M-1.1	Reduce crash rates within the city for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.			
M-1.1.1	Develop and adopt a Streets for All plan and develop regulations and policies for public and private infrastructure that implements the plan.			
M-1.1.2	Inventory all sidewalks and crosswalks in priority areas (near schools, parks, and other public facilities) and determine where the network exists, doesn't exist, or needs updating.			
M-1.1.3	Utilize the Streets for All map in combination with bicycle and pedestrian crash data as well as locations near schools, parks and other public facilities to prioritize highest needs locations for bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure and traffic calming investments.			
M-1.1.4	Work with DOTD to install pedestrian safety improvements, such as sidewalks and signalized crosswalks along state routes, with priority given to high crash areas and locations.			
M-1.1.5	Identify high-priority corridors for safety improvements based on vehicular crash data. Work with the Acadiana Planning Commission and DOTD to prioritize roadway safety countermeasures.			
M-1.1.6	Conduct a citywide street lighting inventory and make improvements based on need. The inventory should include 1. Locations with lighting and the lighting characteristics (lamp and bulb type, maintenance cost, color rendering, ownership, etc.); 2. Lists of locations most in need of lighting due to disrepair, cost issues, and absence; 3. Standards for lighting based on roadway type, ownership, and location; 4. Costs of lighting options; 5. Funding sources that can contribute to lighting improvements; and, 6. A maintenance schedule for all existing lighting.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
M-1.2	Improve facilities and infrastructure to foster better connectivity for all transportation modes.			
M-1.2.1	Use the Streets for All map (See Figure 6.4) to prioritize project funding to create a bicycle and pedestrian network for Abbeville.			
M-1.2.2	Create a sidewalk installation, maintenance, and repair program that: 1. Provides standards and regulations for sidewalk maintenance and repair; 2. Specifies funding sources that can be used to repair sidewalks; 3. Inventories all sidewalks in the city (publicly and privately owned) and their condition; 4. Has a maintenance schedule for publicly owned sidewalks; and 5. Records all maintenance and repair complaints and keeps track of communication with sidewalk owners to address issues.			
M-1.2.3	Install crosswalks at priority locations, concentrating on areas within a quarter mile of schools, parks and other public places.			
M-1.2.4	Continue to support and fund infrastructure improvement downtown to improve walkability and safety.			
M-1.2.5	Utilize the Abbeville transportation and mobility coalition to facilitate walk audits, prioritize project advancement, and act as a liaison between the community and city staff to ensure walking, biking, and transportation needs are met.			
M-2	Improve access to local and regional transportation.			
M-2.1	Explore transit options for residents to travel within and outside of Abbeville.			
M-2.1.1	Evaluate the benefits and feasibility of a fixed-route transit system or microtransit services within Abbeville, considering demand, cost, and infrastructure needs. Explore state and federal funding opportunities to create a pilot transit service in Abbeville.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
M-2.1.2	Work with the Acadiana Planning Commission to explore feasibility of and options for a commuter route between Abbeville and the Lafayette metropolitan area.			
M-2.1.3	Work with the Vermilion Police Jury to evaluate expansion of St. Mary/Vermilion Community Action Agency (CAA) services provided to older adults, people who are disabled, and those without vehicles.			
M-2.1.4	Assess feasibility of repurposing the rail line that connects Abbeville to New Iberia to improve intercity travel.			
M-3	Explore roadway connections to improve walkability and provide easier access to destinations.			
M-3.1	Extend roadways or create multiuse paths in areas where connectivity is limited.			
M-3.1.1	Connect Greene Street to Berthier Avenue to improve movement along East Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Israel Parker Drive and give better access to key destinations such as the commercial districts along Charity Street and John M. Hardy Drive.			
M-3.1.2	Connect Camella Street to Wildcat Drive to connect high school students to the neighborhoods located between Veterans Memorial Drive and Charity Street.			
M-3.1.3	Continue Lyman Street from Felicity Street to Vernon Street. Currently, Lyman Street stops at Felicity Street and picks up again at Vernon Street.			
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS				
ED-1	Strengthen and activate local commercial corridors and districts.			
ED-1.1	Strengthen the identity and marketability of commercial corridors in town.			
ED-1.1.1	Increase the opportunities to help existing businesses improve their building facades through nonprofit investment or expansion of cultural/historic districts.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
ED-1.1.2	Actively market vacant commercial properties and periodically organize vacant building tours with real estate and financing professionals.			
ED-1.2	Support downtown Abbeville's role as the heart of the community's local economy.			
ED-1.2.1	Consider developing a vacancy registry ordinance for downtown to encourage activation of vacant and underutilized spaces.			
ED-1.2.2	Encourage vertical mixed-use development downtown and in the blocks adjacent to downtown.			
ED-1.2.3	Conduct a downtown parking inventory to address parking improvements, formalize street parking, and identify parking needs.			
ED-1.2.4	Advertise and promote the Opportunity Zone in Abbeville and benefits of the program.			
ED-2	Focus efforts to create opportunities for new residential units downtown.			
ED-2.1	Target infill vacant upper floor units and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized downtown properties for residential development within a half a mile of the downtown core.			
ED-2.1.1	Create a downtown housing task force composed of realtors, developers, builders, and property owners to identify key locations for housing in the downtown core and within a quarter-mile radius.			
ED-2.1.2	Conduct a market study to understand the opportunities and challenges associated with housing development in downtown Abbeville.			
ED-2.1.3	Encourage local building owners to renovate second-floor spaces for residential use, and ensure new code amendments support this mixture of uses.			
ED-2.1.4	Evaluate the upper floors of City Hall, or other publicly held properties, for a mixture of residential, office, and/or hotel or lodging space.			
ED-3	Expand local tourism by building on existing cultural and natural assets.			
ED-3.1	Craft a clear and compelling brand for tourism in Abbeville.			
ED-3.1.1	Celebrate the city's legacy of food by offering factory tours, destination restaurants, incubator kitchens, and other similar locations.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
ED-3.1.2	Attract lodging, dining, and retail offerings that establish Abbeville as a gateway to the region's outdoor recreational assets.			
ED-3.1.3	Develop a wayfinding network as well as a marketing and branding campaign for downtown and Abbeville proper.			
ED-3.2	Build an integrated network of access to natural resources to celebrate local ecologies and expand ecotourism opportunities.			
ED-3.2.1	Encourage public and commercial riverfront development by offering incentives such as development fee waivers and tax exemptions. In time, new attractions will draw residents and visitors to the Vermilion River.			
ED-3.2.2	Seek opportunities to establish canoe or kayak rentals in Abbeville and connect launch areas to other recreational assets.			
ED-.2.3	Collaborate with the Bayou Vermilion District on economic development and ecotourism opportunities.			
ED-3.3	Increase lodging opportunities to support tourism.			
ED-3.3.1	Encourage small-scale lodging options in and near downtown, such as bed and breakfasts or boutique hotels.			
ED-3.3.2	Develop marketing material highlighting the number of visitors and attractions in Abbeville as well as regionally.			
ED-3.3.3	Work with the Vermilion Chamber of Commerce and local hospitality and economic development professionals to draft a work plan to encourage more lodging development.			
ED-4	Foster an environment of successful local entrepreneurship.			
ED-4.1	Develop a suite of resources to assist new and emerging local businesses.			
ED-4.1.1	Create a comprehensive development guide that includes information about building rehabilitation, new construction, new signage, business licenses, rezoning, special use, and site plan review.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
ED-4.1.2	Evaluate city permitting and business licensing process and requirements in conjunction with the business community to identify and implement process improvements.			
ED-4.1.3	Provide access to resources for new entrepreneurs (e.g., information on financing, real estate, etc.).			
ED-4.1.4	Develop incubator and/or coworking spaces for new or growing businesses to rent and/or occupy.			
ED-4.1.5	Create a city staff position focused on economic development coordinating economic activities and actions.			
ED-4.1.6	Develop a platform to showcase available commercial properties online to increase their visibility to a broader audience, attracting potential investors and business owners from both local and global markets.			
ED-4.2	Better understand barriers and challenges for prospective and existing local businesses and support entrepreneurial growth.			
ED-4.2.1	Conduct regular visits by city staff to local businesses to discuss their needs, challenges, and opportunities.			
ED-4.2.2	Develop traditional/social media feature stories/videos on locally owned businesses.			
ED-4.2.3	Host regular markets or fairs featuring local businesses, goods, and services.			
ED-4.2.4	In partnership with the chamber of commerce and local nonprofits, construct a business incubator to help support new business development.			
ED-4.2.5	Partner with the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Louisiana Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Center (LEED) to bring entrepreneurial training to lower the barriers of entry for new Abbeville businesses			
ED-5	Attract quality local job opportunities and support workforce needs for Abbeville residents.			
ED-5.1	Work with business and higher education leaders to align educational opportunities with industry needs.			
ED-5.1.1	Engage the chamber of commerce and local and regional economic development centers to obtain short- and long-term job projections.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
ED-5.1.2	Create an industry and education task force to align educational opportunities with industry needs, and work with the Acadiana Planning Commission to coordinate around a regional perspective.			
ED-5.1.3	Engage the task force to review, recommend, and support the expansion of SoLAcc's Abbeville campus and programming to ensure career alignment.			
ED-5.1.4	Increase SoLAcc course offerings to allow for flexible scheduling.			
ED-5.2	Encourage coordination between the Abbeville School District and SoLAcc to create opportunities for collaboration and student advancement.			
ED-5.2.1	Collaborate with local secondary schools to offer post-secondary courses at their campuses after school hours, such as the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) and industry-based credentials.			
ED-5.2.2	Create a robust, age-appropriate, work-based learning program for secondary students that includes job shadowing, site visits, internships, career speakers, career academies, and interactive career expositions.			
ED-5.3	Encourage collaboration between the school district and community-based organizations to evaluate barriers for school attendance and high school graduation and create pathways for change.			
ED-5.3.1	Identify and address the root causes of truancy			
ED-5.3.2	Develop high-quality afterschool and holiday break programs that include tutoring and intramural sports programs			
ED-5.4	Help reduce barriers to labor force participation.			
ED-5.4.1	Work with childcare providers to extend hours to cover evenings and weekends.			
ED-5.4.2	Provide space and programming for adult learning programs such as digital literacy and GED attainment.			
ED-5.4.3	Through the Transportation Mobility Committee, identify barriers for workforce transportation and identify priorities for solutions.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS				
EO-1	Build opportunities to connect Abbeville residents and visitors to the Vermilion River.			
EO-1.1	Support and participate in efforts to improve water quality in the Vermilion River.			
EO-1.1.1	Engage riverside property owners in implementing bank restoration best practices.			
EO-1.1.2	Work with partners to remove litter and trash from the water channel.			
EO-1.2	Increase river access throughout the community.			
EO-1.2.1	Develop an inventory of undeveloped land along the Vermilion River.			
EO-1.2.2	Identify properties that may be suitable for park space or conservation.			
EO-1.2.3	Identify public private partnership opportunities to develop access points along the river.			
EO-2	Mitigate community impacts from environmental hazards.			
EO-2.1	Engage in community-wide risk reduction activities.			
EO-2.1.1	Participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) to lower insurance costs.			
EO-2.1.2	Advocate for lower insurance costs by collaborating with insurance companies to identify risk reduction strategies. Work with the city's federal delegation on policy changes that could impact insurance rates like changes to the National Flood Insurance Program as well as prioritize infrastructure investments that can reduce flood risk and lower insurance costs.			
EO-2.1.3	Identify and map repetitive loss properties and develop a mitigation plan.			
EO-2.1.4	Support a communications campaign to educate the public about flood risk and other environmental hazards.			
EO-2.1.5	Encourage the implementation of increased building standards to help withstand storm impacts (eg, fortified roofs, resilient building codes, etc.) from high-wind events.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
EO-2.1.6	Review and update, as needed, Abbeville's Flood Damage Ordinance to incorporate higher construction standards, such as minimum freeboard standard, for flood mitigation.			
EO-2.1.7	Create a prioritization framework to green public spaces (parks, streets, civic spaces, etc.) in areas that lack a tree canopy to reduce impacts from extreme heat and improve stormwater uptake.			
EO-2.1.8	Incorporate green infrastructure concepts into streets/rights of way and parking areas to reduce the impacts of localized street flooding.			
EO-2.1.9	Consider using solar energy to power public buildings or other critical infrastructure to reduce the impact from electrical outages following storms.			
EO-2.1.10	Review and evaluate Article VII–Trees to ensure adequate protection of existing tree canopy to mitigate urban heat.			
EO.2.2	Develop neighborhood-scale risk reduction strategies.			
EO-2.2.1	Identify resilience hubs as part of the city's emergency plans and communicate their locations and services provided to residents.			
EO-2.2.2	Explore grid hardening and the development of microgrids to improve the resilience of the city's electric utility.			
EO-2.2.3	Encourage the development of rain gardens and other green infrastructure in parks and vacant lots.			
EO-2.3	Develop lot-scale risk reduction strategies.			
EO-2.3.1	Advocate for public funding for a fortified roof program.			
EO-2.3.2	Support and advocate for additional funding for home weatherizations, especially in areas of high utility burden.			
EP-2.3.3	Improve the energy efficiency of public buildings by conducting energy audits and implementing recommendations.			
EO-3	Enhance accessibility and amenities in parks and open spaces.			
EO-3.1	Evaluate the park system and prioritize investments based on community desire and need.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
EO-3.1.1	Create an inventory of existing park amenities and conditions that includes information such as park acreage, predominant use of the site, existing facilities and condition of improvements, maintenance needs and cost, and safety concerns.			
EO-3.1.2	Conduct a survey of residents to identify how the parks are currently being used and desired uses for each park site.			
EO-3.1.3	Identify parks that could be divested from the city's portfolio based on factors such as public demand for use of the site and maintenance costs.			
EO-3.1.4	Create a decision matrix for park investment based on factors such as potential for stormwater mitigation, reduction in heat impacts, chronic health impacts, lack of access to a vehicle, density of residents near a park site. Use the matrix to guide decisions to prioritize areas of highest need.			
EO-3.1.5	Develop a site-level park master plan, engaging with the public, to imagine or reimagine vacant and underutilized park spaces. Possible considerations are Lafitte Drive-In Park's usage and McKinley Scott Park's connections to Herbert Williams Park and the Nehemiah project site.			
EO-3.1.6	Create a long-term park improvement plan tied to a multiyear capital improvement budget.			
EO-3.1.7	Identify underutilized or neglected spaces in neighborhoods for beautification and improvement efforts which could be turned into temporary or permanent pocket parks.			
EO-3.2	Increase safety and comfort in city public spaces.			
EO-3.2.1	Develop a city parks maintenance program that guides decisions around operations, new investments, and routine maintenance.			
EO-3.2.2	Prioritize lighting improvements in and around parks.			
EO-3.2.3	Improve walking and bicycle access to and within park facilities to increase safety and provide destinations for active transportation.			
EO-3.2.4	Organize volunteer efforts to improve public spaces and maintain them on an ongoing basis in partnership with the City of Abbeville such as through an Adopt-A-Park program.			
EO-3.2.5	Prioritize the installation of shade structures and trees in parks to mitigate extreme heat.			

GOALS / OBJECTIVES / ACTIONS	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS	FUNDING SOURCES
EO-3.3	Increase the volume and diversity of recreational programming.			
EO-3.3.1	Provide low- or no-cost activities for people of all ages in the city's public parks.			
EO-3.3.2	Explore partnership opportunities for managing a robust portfolio of park activities.			


ABBEVILLE
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POUR DIEU ET LA PATRIE