



JOINT CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING BOARD WORKSHOP SESSION

Monday, April 20, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Nautical Landings Training Room | 106 S. Commerce Street, Suite 1-B, Port Lavaca, Texas 77979

PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING

The following item will be addressed at this or any other meeting of the city council upon the request of the mayor, any member(s) of council and/or the city attorney:

Announcement by the mayor that council will retire into closed session for consultation with city attorney on matters in which the duty of the attorney to the city council under the Texas disciplinary rules of professional conduct of the state bar of Texas clearly conflicts with the open meetings act (title 5, chapter 551, section 551.071(2) of the Texas government code).

(All matters listed under the consent agenda item are routine by the city council and will be enacted by one motion. There will not be separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be considered separately.)

AGENDA

Council will consider/discuss the following items and take any action deemed necessary.

MEETING PROCEDURE

Public notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Port Lavaca, Texas, will conduct a Joint Workshop Session, with the Planning Board, on MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026 beginning at 5:30 p.m., at the Nautical Landings Office Building Conference Room, located at 106 S. Commerce Street, Suite 1-B (South door entrance), Port Lavaca, Texas to consider the items listed.

[After publication, any information in a council packet is subject to change during the meeting]

The meeting will also be available via the video conferencing application "Zoom",

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82182482989?pwd=NVNDbi9HZVlHVU1BZTcvTVJvbzdTZz09>

Meeting ID: 821 8248 2989

Passcode: 912619

One Tap Mobile

*+13462487799,,82182482989#,,, *912619# US (Houston)*

Dial by your location

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

I. ROLL CALL

II. CALL TO ORDER

III. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

(Limited to 3 minutes per individual unless permission to speak longer is received in advance. You may make public comments as you would at a meeting by logging on with your computer and using "Join Zoom Meeting" information on first page of this agenda).

IV. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION - *Council will consider/discuss the following items and take any action deemed necessary*

1. Discuss 2026 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning with representatives of Baxter & Goodman. Presenter is Jody Weaver

V. ADJOURNMENT

CERTIFICATION OF POSTING NOTICE

This is to Certify that the above foregoing notice of a Joint Workshop Session of the City Council of the City of Port Lavaca, Texas, and the Planning Board, to be held **Monday, April 20, 2026, beginning at 5:30 p.m.**, was posted at City Hall, easily accessible to the Public, as of **5:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 14, 2026.**

Mandy Grant, *City Secretary*

ADA NOTICE

The Port Lavaca City Hall and Council Chambers are wheelchair accessible. Access to the building is available at the primary north entrance facing Mahan Street. Special parking spaces are located in the Mahan Street parking area. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Port Lavaca will provide for reasonable accommodations for persons attending meetings. To better serve you, requests should be received 24 hours prior to the meetings. Please contact City Secretary Mandy Grant at (361) 552-9793 Ext. 230 for assistance.

COMMUNICATION

SUBJECT: Discuss 2026 Comprehensive Plan and Zoning with representatives of Baxter & Goodman. Presenter is Jody Weaver

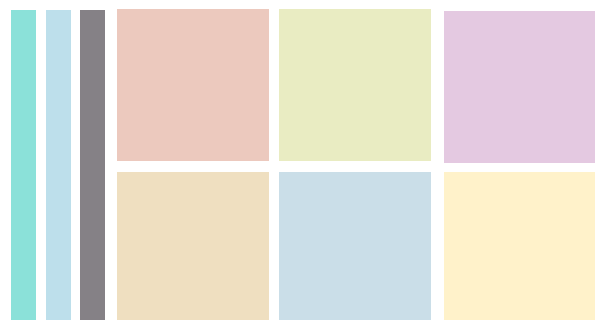
INFORMATION:

port lavaca COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



APPENDIX, EXISTING CITY REPORT

DRAFT 12-30-2025
PORT LAVACA, TEXAS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Appendix A

THE EXISTING CITY

- 3 Regulatory Environment
- 13 Utilities Infrastructure
- 21 Existing Transportation Systems
- 29 Existing Land Use and Community Character
- 41 Public Lands, Facilities, and Services
- 43 Housing and Neighborhoods
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WHAT IS THE EXISTING CITY REPORT?

The Existing City Report serves as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan, offering background information and analysis on Port Lavaca in its current state. The material in this section is organized into a series of standalone technical memoranda that have been compiled into one cohesive document. Together, these memoranda provide a detailed overview of existing conditions across key categories, including housing, development regulations, public services, utility infrastructure, land use, parks and recreation, community character, and transportation. Supporting tables, maps, and imagery accompany the analysis to further illustrate Port Lavaca's current conditions and provide a clear reference for decision-makers. In addition to documenting present circumstances, the Existing City Report establishes a baseline for future planning efforts. By consolidating technical data and contextual insights, it enables the City to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities that will inform long-range strategies. This appendix is intended not only as a record of Port Lavaca's current environment, but also as a foundation for guiding growth, investment, and policy decisions in the years ahead.



REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

ABOUT CITY REGULATIONS

The regulatory review for Port Lavaca's Comprehensive Plan includes an analysis of existing regulations, development controls, and enforcement mechanisms. The purpose of this assessment is to provide a high-level analysis of existing land use, subdivision, and other land development-related regulations for the City of Port Lavaca, to identify areas within the Code of Ordinances that may require strengthening, additions, or adjustments to ensure safe, high-quality, desired, and strategic development.

Port Lavaca's current Code of Ordinances (COO.) was adopted in 2021 and has been periodically updated since. A comprehensive review of all chapters in the Code is not provided in this critique; instead, a high-level summary of key regulations is presented, based on Comprehensive Plan elements and future recommendations, which is accompanied by a table that outlines what is included in the Code, what is not, and any gaps that may require attention.

The Regulatory Review is divided into the following sections:

- Table Overview
- Authorities
- Thoroughfare and Street Standards
- Building Regulations
- Subdivision Design Criteria
- Land Use Regulations
- Utilities
- Environmental and Regulatory Enactments
- Miscellaneous Standards

TABLE OVERVIEW

The table, Figure 1A, *Code of Ordinance Checklist in Port Lavaca*, highlights that while Port Lavaca's Code of Ordinances establishes baseline regulations for zoning, building, and property maintenance, several provisions commonly adopted in other Texas communities are absent. For example, Chapter 12 (Buildings and Building Regulations) and Chapter 42 (Subdivisions and Land Development) provide the framework for construction and land use, yet do not include Water and Sewer Impact Fees or a dedicated ordinance for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

Similarly, the City has not adopted Complete Streets policies, arts and cultural ordinances, or wetland preservation standards. In addition, Port Lavaca lacks Dark Sky regulations, which are increasingly used in other municipalities to reduce light pollution and protect night skies.

Together, these gaps illustrate areas where Port Lavaca's regulatory framework could be expanded to align with broader planning practices across Texas. Strengthening ordinances in these categories would support long-term goals for sustainability, housing diversity, infrastructure

Figure 1A, Code of Ordinance Checklist in Port Lavaca

Code Does Exist	Partial or Incomplete Code	No Existing Code	CODE	Code Does Exist	Partial or Incomplete Code	No Existing Code	CODE
LAND USE AND CONSTRUCTION				ENVIRONMENT			
X			Commercial Sidewalk Requirements	X			Tree Planting Requirements
X			Residential Sidewalk Requirements		X		Tree Destruction Permits / Regulations
X			Commercial Landscaping / Plan Requirements	X			Low-Impact Development Applications / Standards
	X		Residential Landscaping / Plan Requirements	X			Solar Generation Requirements / Standards
X			Lighting Standards / Requirements			X	Wind Generation Requirements / Standards
X			Sign and Display Standards / Regulations		X		Battery / Lithium Facility Requirements
X			Residential Mowing and Junk Requirements	X			Natural Gas/Fuel Storage and Transport
X			Brewery, Brew Pub, and Distillery Allowances			X	Electric Vehicle Charging Station Standards
		X	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) Code			X	Energy Efficiency Standards
X			Animal Husbandry in City (fowl, pigs, dogs, etc.)	X			Industrial Waste Discharge Regulations
	X		Warehousing Standards	X			Flood Damage Prevention Standards
	X		Consolidated Permitting Step-By-Step Manual			X	Drought Contingency Plan
MOBILITY						X	Railroad Quiet Zones
X			Thoroughfare Classifications (Cross-sections)		X		Emissions / Particulate Emissions Regulations
X			Sidewalk Standards (4')	X			Private Electrical Generator Standards
X			Crosswalk Standards			X	Dark Sky Ordinance
	X		Trail / Path Standards	X			Septic Tank and Release Standards
X			Commercial Truck Routes		X		RV Wastewater Elimination System Standards
	X		Bicycle / E-Bike Regulations		X		Lead+Copper Pipe Compliance / Review Program
	X		Scooter / Golf Cart / Horse / Micro-mobility			X	Light Trespass / DarkSky Ordinance
X			Recreational Vehicle Resorts and Park Regulations	ORDINANCES, PROCESSES, AND FUNDS			
		X	Heliport and Airplane Regulations		X		Emergency Evacuation Plans / Policies / Rules
		X	Drone and Air Delivery Regulations	X			Hotel Occupancy Tax Ordinance
X			Mobile Food Unit Requirements / Permitting			X	Percent For the Arts Ordinance
		X	Thoroughfare Impact Fees			X	Complete Streets Ordinance
X			Access Management Standards	X			Right-of-Way Management Ordinance
PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES						X	Tree Preservation Ordinance
		X	Water and Sewer Impact Fees			X	Wetland Preservation/Protection Ordinance
x			Water Conservation Methods		X		Historical Preservation Ordinance
X			HOA - New PUD Requirement	X			Parkland/Common Area Requirements Dedication
X			Wastewater Collection and Design Requirements	X			Annexation Standards and Processes
X			Waterline Distribution Design Requirements			X	Sidewalk Fund
X			Storm Drainage Design Requirements	X			Development Review Committee - Building Permits Review between Departments
X			Dumpster and Shared/Public Trash Requirements		X		Thoroughfare Reconstruction Schedule
X			Curb and Gutter Requirements	X			Utilities Replacement Program
X			Open-Ditch Drainage Requirements	X			Capital Improvement Plan
X			Water and Sewer Line Extension Requirements	X			Utilities Impact Fees (Extension services)
X			Fire Prevention and Protected Regulations		X		Code of Ordinances: Frequently Asked Questions and Public Summary documents
X			Mowing and Landscaping Standards				

AUTHORITIES

Roadway Authority

Thoroughfares and roadways in Port Lavaca are owned and maintained by multiple public entities. United States Highways, such as US 87, are operated by the U.S. Department of Transportation. State Highways, including SH 35, are operated by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Farm to Market FM roads, and roadways with Port Lavaca's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) are operated by Calhoun County. The majority of thoroughfares within Port Lavaca, such as local residential streets, and arterial thoroughfares including Austin Street, Virginia Street, Village Drive, and Half League Road, are operated and maintained by the City of Port Lavaca's Public Works Department.

Fire Department Protection

The City of Port Lavaca operates its own city fire department which includes two fire stations. The City Department services the entire County along with residents in City Limits. In addition to fire suppression, the Department is tasked with any hazardous materials response, water rescues, vehicle accidents, and fire code building inspections. Four other fire departments service Calhoun County. The Point Comfort Volunteer Fire Department is located east of Lavaca Bay in Point Comfort. The Olivia-Port Alto Volunteer Fire Department is located east of Point Comfort. The Port O'Connor Volunteer Fire Department is located in southern Calhoun County in Port O'Connor. The Seadrift Volunteer Fire Department is located in western Calhoun County in Seadrift.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Calhoun County has an Emergency Medical Services Department which operates within the county, City of Port Lavaca, and Port Lavaca's ETJ. The department is tasked with ambulance and medical service dispatch and transportation. The City of Port Lavaca does not operate its own EMS department or services.

Police Department Services

The City of Port Lavaca operates its own municipal Police Department, servicing only within City Limits (unless additional help is needed in the County). The Department is tasked with crime dispatch services, a patrol division, criminal investigations, citizen compliance and complaints, and records keeping. Calhoun County Sheriff's Office, located within Port Lavaca, services the entire county of Calhoun County including Port Lavaca's ETJ.

COO Chapter 2, Administration

Port Lavaca has eleven City Departments, which are tasked with the operations and services of specific City-related operations. Administrative city departments include, the City Manager's office, City Secretary, Finance Department, Human Resources Department, Utilities Billing Department, and Development Services Department. Emergency services departments include the Fire Department, Police Department, and Animal Control Department. One infrastructure department includes the Public Works Department. Notably, the Public Works Department is tasked with handling all public infrastructure, including streets, drainage, water storage and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, public parks maintenance (including Lighthouse Beach RV Park) and maintaining city harbors.

Boards and Commissions

In addition to the Municipal Departments, Port Lavaca has a City Council comprised of five council members, plus the City's Mayor. The City also has a number of boards and commissions tasked with providing guidance to the City Council regarding proposals, plans, and other operations. Commissions/boards currently in Port Lavaca include the Port Commission Board, Parks Board, and Planning Board.

THOROUGHFARE AND STREET STANDARDS

Chapter 40, Streets, Sidewalks, and Other Public Spaces

Chapter 40 provides brief descriptions and summaries of illegal activities involving public spaces and infrastructure. Such regulations include the prohibition of tampering and altering electrical lines and telephone wires, removal/altering of building electrical wires, and the building of temporary driveways during roadway construction and route alteration.

Chapter 48, Traffic and Vehicles

Article 1, In General, defines broad illegal vehicle behaviors (such as speeding, skidding, and improper braking) and outlines police authority to stop, fine, or impound vehicles. It also establishes the City Council's authority over traffic signals and signage, as well as the authority to create and enforce designated Safety Zones around schools, civic buildings, and parks.

Article 2, Parking, Stopping, and Standing, provides regulations regarding the authority of police and enforce parking requirements, along with such requirements. Regulations in Article 2 include places where parking is prohibited, the authority of establishing bus stops, illegal nighttime parking on streets designated by the City Council and signed, fire lane requirements and enforcement, off-street parking (locations and time allowances), and off-street loading (blocking and time allowances).

Article 3, Reserved, is a blank reserved section meant for future additions / revisions to the Code.

Article 4, Truck Routes, established specific streets where large trucks are and are not allowed to travel. Large trucks are considered any vehicle with two axels or ore, a truck with a bed longer than 12 feet, or any truck tractor, trailer, semitrailer, or vehicle designated for property transportation that exceeds a eight of 12,000 pounds. Designated truck routes are included in the Thoroughfare Classifications Map on page X, and are as follows:

- All of SH 35 within the city limits
- US 87 from northern city limits to Alcoa Drive
- FM 1090 from SH 35 North
- SH 238 from Alcoa Drive South
- All of FM 3084 within the city limits.

Roadways where truck traffic is restricted include:

- US 87 from Alcoa Drive South to Commerce Street
- FM 1090 from SH 35 South
- SH 238 from SH 35 South to Alcoa Drive

Additional regulations include the operation and storage of large trucks. It is illegal to park a tractor trailer or recreational vehicles on a public street for more than 72 hours. It is illegal to park a large truck on any public street for any amount of time, except for the purposes of load and unloading. School buses, public utilities trucks, City vehicles, emergency vehicles, and other public entity and government vehicles are exempt from the provisions in Chapter 48.

Article 5, Parades, provides regulations, permits, and legal descriptions of public parades on city streets. Public parades on city streets require a permit from City Council if it is within the Downtown or a permit from the City Finance Director if the parade is outside of Downtown. Permit submitters are required to provide information about the type of parade, times of operations, routings, clean-ups, and other relevant information.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

Chapter 12, Buildings and Building Regulations

Article 1, In General, provides authorities to the City Building Official to enact plan review fees and charges.

Article 2, Building Trade Codes, requires all buildings to be in compliance with multiple international and national codes, such as, but not exclusively, the 2021 International Building Code, 2021 International Energy Conservation Code, 2021 International Fire Code, and 2020 National Electrical Code. In addition, Article Two provides requirements and penalties for work without plan submittals or permits and work without licenses contractors.

Lastly, building setbacks and fence requirements are included within Sections 24 and 25 of Article Two. A table of listed subdivisions (mainly residential) is provided, which each have their own setback requirements, and are generally as follows:

- Front Building Setback Lines range from 20 to 40 feet, with typical setbacks falling between 25 to 30 feet
- Front Maximum Setback Lines (behind building line) are 10 to 40 feet, with setbacks typically around 25 feet.
- Interior Lot Boundary Lines range from 5 to 25 feet, with most lots using a standard five-foot setback.
- Rear Lot Boundary Lines range from 5 to 50 feet, with a typical Boundary Line of 25 feet for detached structure and 5 feet for attached structures.
- Corner Lot Lines range from 7.5 to 15 feet, with a typical Corner Lot Line ranging from 10 to 15 feet.
- Accessory Building (behind front setback line) Lines range from three to 50 feet, but typically require 40 feet setback line and three to six feet from an interiors

The Original Townsite or existing subdivisions that are not listed must comply with the following setback requirements:

- Front Setback Lines minimums are set at 15 feet.
- Corner lots have minimum 10 foot setback on the side street.
- Rear Setback Lines are set at five feet from utility easements and rear lot lines.
- Side Setback Lines are set at five feet from utility easements and rear lot lines, with 10 feet required for corner lots.
- Commercial lots may request variances, but must remain five feet from the edge of a utility easement.
- Concrete flat work used for driveways or sidewalks cannot be installed closer than 12 inches from the neighboring property line.

Fence requirements are as follows:

- Front setback line fences are to be no taller than three feet.
- Side and rear setback line fences are allowed, but no height specifications are provided.
- Side and rear setback line fences are allowed, but no height specifications are provided.
- Fences and landscaping (vegetation) cannot block or obstruct the view of people leaving a driveway or obstruct corner views of oncoming traffic.
- Permits are required for fence installation.

Article 3, Flood Damage Prevention, provides a set of regulations to prevent and reduce property damage and property loss within flood hazard areas. The article also includes the roles and responsibility of the City Floodplain Administrator, required permits and variance procedures, regulations and inclusions are as follows:

- All uses vulnerable to floods, including facilities which serve such uses, are to be protected against flood damage at the time of initial construction
- Restrict or prohibit uses within Flood Hazard Zones that are dangerous to health, safety, or property in times of flood
- A floodplain development permit shall be required
- No structure or land shall hereafter be located, altered, or have its use changed, within the Flood Hazard Zone, without full compliance of Article 3
- All residential construction must be elevated above base flood level
- Commercial structures are not required to be elevated above base flood level, but must have watertight and flood resistant walls and protections
- All manufactures homes and manufactures home parks, must be elevated above base flood level
- All manufactures homes and manufactures home park structures must be anchored to the ground, in compliance of State/National standards

Figure A2, Street Dimensions Standardization Table

Street/ Pavement Type	Min. ROW width	Min. Pavement width	Crown (parabolic)	Pavement Design
Arterial	The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)'s Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (2018) and other AASHTO standards for street pavement design.			
Collector	60 feet	40 feet	Three percent cross slope until 6.0 inches, then two percent cross slope	Provide for a minimum structural number of 3.0 using the coefficients listed in the table contained in subsection (f)(5) of this section.
Local Collector	60 feet	36 feet	9.0 inches	Provide for a minimum structural number of 2.66 using the coefficients listed in the table contained in subsection (f)(5) of this section
Local	55 feet	28 feet	7.0 inches	
Alleys	Alleys are not permitted except under special circumstances when recommended by the city engineer and authorized by the planning commission			

- Recreational vehicles, not anchored, are limited to a single constant location for no more than 180 consecutive days
- All subdivision proposals including the placement of manufactured home parks and subdivisions must include drainage infrastructure to reduce flood damage to property and infrastructure
- All new construction and substantial improvements shall be elevated on pilings and columns if located with a coastal high hazard area (Zones V1-3, Ve, and/or V), above base flood level

Article 4, Substandard Buildings outlines the conditions the City considers unsafe or unfit for occupancy, including both structural deficiencies and failures in basic utilities. A building may be deemed substandard if it lacks required electricity or running water, has an inadequate kitchen or bathroom, suffers from poor drainage, or shows signs of infestation. Additional indicators include dead tree limbs or overgrown vegetation, faulty foundations, inadequate roof or ceiling support, bulging walls or chimneys, hazardous plumbing, insufficient exits, weak floor supports, or unsecured openings, among other hazards. Article 4 also provides the authorities, duties, inspection details, and role of the City's Building Official and City's authority to condemn structures as uninhabitable (notice process, abatement process, and lien processes).

SUBDIVISION DESIGN CRITERIA

Chapter 42, Subdivisions and Plats

Chapter 42, Article One, In General, provides descriptions of terminology used in Chapter 42 (such as plats, drawings, submittals, setbacks, etc..) and the responsibilities of the City Engineer and City Council.

Chapter 42, Articles Two through Five, Preliminary Plat Requirements, Construction Plan Requirements, Final Plat Requirements, and Replat Requirements, describe the required documents, sheets, processes, and meetings for all new proposed development. Article 7 describes these same processes for multifamily housing. Required elements in plat and plan requirements includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- An outline of any deed restrictions and covenants
- A scale and legend on all maps and diagrams
- Setbacks and lot lines
- Surveyors' details including topography, wetlands, and sub-grade utilities
- Number and area dimensions of living units, parking areas, entry and exit points, area of street pavement, and net area

All submittals are required to be review by the City Engineer, and all Final Plats are subject to City Council approval.

Chapter 42, Article Six, Design Standards, includes design and placement requirements for lots, streets ad alleys, utilities easements, pedestrian easements, water and sanitary systems, storm sewer systems, and site grading. A description of requirements, per section topic, are as follows:

Lots

- Lots with City sewer must be 5,500 square feet total with a street frontage of 50 feet
- Lots without City sewer must meet Texas Department of Water Resources for Septic Tank Systems standards
- Corner lots shall be at least 70 feet wide
- Where practicable side lot lines shall be substantially at right angles to the right-of-way line of the street
- The width for lots restricted by the deed restrictions for manufactured home use may be reduced to a minimum of 40 feet
- Minimum front building setback lines shall be 25 feet, including all road frontages for corner lots
- Minimum rear setback lines shall be 15 feet from the centerline of a utility easement or no less than five feet in cases where no easement exists
- Minimum side setback lines shall be five feet, except for corner lots that require a 25-foot side setback
- Lots with a commercial land use, shall not require building setbacks. It shall be understood that any construction on such lots shall conform to Chapter 12, Buildings and Building Regulations

Streets and Alleys

- Street classifications are as follows: Arterial, Collector, Local, Marginal Access
- Street naming conventions are included.
- Figure A2, *Street Dimensions Standardization Table*, left page, provides the standard dimnsions and design standards.
- No street or gutter grade shall have a street grade less than 0.2 percent
- Curbs and Gutters: The soil in an area 12 inches behind the curb shall be compacted in six-inch lifts to 90 percent modified proctor to the depth of the flexible base or subgrade Utility Easements
- Each block, that does not contain an alley, shall have a utility easement at the rear of all lots reserved for use by all public utilities for service and main lines, conduits, manholes, meters, equipment, and maintenance procedures. These easements shall be a minimum 15 feet in width, taking footage from each lot where the

two lots abut each other

Pedestrian Easements

- 10 feet minimum width of a pedestrian easement (sidewalks, trails, paths)
- Four feet pavement width minimum for all pedestrian pavements

Water Systems

- No street or gutter grade shall have a street grade less than 0.2 percent
- Curbs and Gutters: The soil in an area 12 inches behind the curb shall be compacted in six-inch lifts to 90 percent modified proctor to the depth of the flexible base or subgrade Utility Easements
- Each block, that does not contain an alley, shall have a utility easement at the rear of all lots reserved for use by all public utilities for service and main lines, conduits, manholes, meters, equipment, and maintenance procedures. These easements shall be a minimum 15 feet in width, taking footage from each lot where the rear of two lots abut each other

Sanitary Sewer Systems

- Utilize all standards within the Texas Administrative Code chapter 317 entitled Design Criteria for Sewerage Systems
- Manholes shall be spaced no more than 500 feet apart

Storm Sewer Systems

- Storm sewer systems are to be designed in accordance with the Storm Drainage Design Manual for the City of Port Lavaca, Texas, and the latest edition of the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation's Standard Specifications for Construction of Highways, Streets, and Bridges

Site Grading

- Site grading designs and specifications are detailed within the Storm Drainage Design Manual for the City of Port Lavaca, Texas.

Multifamily Dwellings (Article Seven, Section 1)

- Construction of Multi-family dwellings of four or less units can be approved by the Building Inspections Department
- Construction of Multi-family dwellings of five or more units must be approved by the City Planning Board
- Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) must not exceed 1:2 (The maximum square feet of livable floor space per acre shall not exceed 50 percent of the lot size)
- Multi-family structures with two to four units per building must maintain a distance between buildings of 10 feet

with maximum 24-inch overhang

- Multi-family structures with five or more units per building must maintain a distance between buildings of 16 feet with maximum 36-inch overhang

Townhouses Specifications (Article 7, section 2)

- Maximum of 18 dwelling units per acre
- Units must average at least 2,500 square feet per unit
- No less than 80 percent of the townhouse lots in a project shall be a minimum 20 feet wide
- The coverage of a project shall not exceed 55 percent of the total site area
- Each lot shall contain a private yard with not less than 300 square feet of area
- An outdoor patio cannot cover more than 25 percent of the private yard area
- At least 7.5 feet of side yard shall be provided at the side property line of any townhouse project
- A wall or solid fence not less than five feet in height shall be required on side lot lines where the required private yard adjoins such lot lines
- No townhouse group shall exceed 200 feet in length
- No driveway located in the front yard of a townhouse lot shall exceed a 20-foot width

Patio Homes Specifications (Article 7, section 3)

- Lot coverage and area requirements are the same as Townhouse standards (above)
- Required separate utility meters for each patio home

Commercial Development Specifications (Article 7, section 4)

- The sidewalk must be a minimum of five feet wide.
- There are no building setbacks stipulated for commercial development.
- Landscape plans are required for all Commercial development. This includes protecting root zones of trees with barricades, irrigation designs, maintaining visible intersection sightlines, and a minimum of ten percent of the total building site devoted to landscaping, and at least one tree shall be provided per 800 square feet of landscaped area required.
- Street trees are required for all commercial development to be planted at regular intervals along a street's right-of-way; street trees shall be spaced 60 feet on center.

Dumpster Screening

- All dumpsters must be screened and buffered with a fenced or walled enclosure, including a gate and bollards, and the wall/fence height must fully screen the dumpsters height

LAND USE REGULATIONS

Chapter 26, Manufactured Housing and Recreational Vehicles

Manufactured housing, located outside of a manufactured home park, is allowed continued City water and waste services as long as the structure is considered and remains habitable (plumbing, electrical, repairs). Placement permits are required for all new manufactured homes within or outside City Limits when the manufactured home will be connected to the City's water and sewer system.

All manufactured housing subdivisions fall under and must comply with Chapter 42, Subdivisions and Plats.

All manufactured housing parks must receive a license from the City to remain in operation / remain habitable.

All manufactured housing park licenses expire on December 30th of every year. Any new manufactured housing park must be approved by City Council and adhere to the *City of Port Lavaca Future Land Use Plan*. Each manufactured house park lot must be supplied with water, sewer, electrical, (natural gas if applicable,) telephone, and other services; all required to be underground.

Manufactured homes are required to be connected to City water, but sewer collection and treatment can be either public (City) or private.

Spatial / Dimension Requirements:

- No dwelling shall exceed one story
- Minimum lot size of 50 feet by 120 feet
- A manufactured housing subdivision must have at least a two car driveway surfaced with a hard, dustless material
- All spaces shall be within 300 feet of an approved fire hydrant
- Any dead-end accessways in excess of 50 feet in length shall terminate in a cul-de-sac
- Manufactured housing units shall be 25 feet from any public roadway
- Required setbacks include 20 between housing units, 25 feet between the front of the house and the accessway, and 10 feet rear setback

All occupied recreational vehicles must be installed in licensed recreational vehicles parks or manufactured housing parks.

All recreational vehicle parks (RV parks) must receive a license from the City to remain in operation / remain habitable. All manufactured housing park licenses expire on September 30th of every year. RV parks are required to be inspected annually by the city for code compliance. A site development plan is required for all new RV park

proposals (including lot layouts, utility alignments, lighting signage, access and drive locations, etc.). RV parks can only be located within areas designated within the City of Port Lavaca Future Land Use Plan. A barrier or opaque fence is required on all side and rear property lines, while a landscaped buffer is required in the front property line (abutting a street).

Spatial / Dimension Requirements:

- One parking spot (10 by 20 feet) for each RV site is required
- All internal streets and drives must be at least 24 feet in width
- All streets must be paved with concrete or asphalt
- Dead-end streets are not allowed
- Each RV site must have a minimum area of 1,750 square feet and be at least 25 feet in width
- All sites must allow for a minimum of 10 feet between recreational vehicles

There is no mention of wastewater disposal and treatment of brown/black water within recreational vehicle parks within Chapter 26.

Chapter 32, Parks and Recreation

Chapter 32 lays out the responsibilities and duties of the Parks and Recreation Board, legal descriptions of existing parkland designated parcels, legal and illegal activities within parks, rules regarding specific park facilities (splash pads and skate parks), and overnight camping regulations (fires, cabana use, and tent locations).

UTILITIES

Chapter 50, Utilities

Chapter 50, Article One, In General, is a reserved section for future amendments and additions.

Chapter 50, Article Two, Water, provides regulations and standards regarding cross-connection controls, to prevent backflows, ensure safe non-hazardous connections, ensure fire hydrant operability, and maintain Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) compliance of irrigation systems. In addition, Article Two provides regulations and rules to prevent tampering with fire hydrants, falsified water usage, tampering water meters, and described the right of the City to replace and plan for water line replacement and upgrades. Lastly, Article Two includes descriptions of fees, inspections, and permit requirements for utilities servicing, including water wells, drilling, payment of water services, overdue penalties, and failure of compliance.

Chapter 50, Article Three, Sewers, similar to Article Two, provides regulations and standards regarding the connection, unauthorized use, fee's servicing inspections, and city authorities regarding sewer services, billing, and penalties.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY ENACTMENTS

Chapter 54, Waterways

Article 1, In General, describes that the City has waterway authorities over all waterways and standing water within the city Limits and ETJ.

Article 2, Port Commission, provides the legal framework behind the Prot Commission, including their roles, limitations, authorities, meeting times, and terms. The roles of the Port Commission is a body consisting of five to seven members, to provide recommendations to the city Manager regarding the use and planning processes for City ports, wharfs, and docks, as well as the improvements and budgets regarding the ports.

Article 3, Sunken Vessels, provides a short description of illegal maintenance and removal of sunken vessels. Regulations include the required removal of a sunken or partially sunken vessel within five days of the violation, and fees/penalty power granted to the Port Commission if this does not occur. The goal of this Article to prevent future water-based accidents and maintain clear and clean routes of navigation.

Article 4, Fishing, describes that it is illegal for anyone to fish for any type of Sealife within City High Dock areas, which includes the Lynn Bayou Turning Basin. The locational description included for the City High Dock areas is unclear within the Code.

Chapter 38, Solid Waste

Chapter 38, Solid Waste, provides rules, regulations, authorities, and penalties regarding garbage collection and disposal, burning of materials, and unauthorized handling of garbage and trash. Generally, rules include regulations for the placement of garbage cans, prohibitions of trash dumping, owner responsibilities for removing and placement of trash cans, what trash is not permitted to be serviced, and the garbage payment and rate systems.

MISCELLANEOUS STANDARDS

Chapter 6, Alcoholic Beverages

Chapter Six makes it illegal for anyone to consume, use, sell, or store alcoholic beverages on City property. Locational exemptions include Wilson Sports Complex City Park, the Bayfront property out of Patent Tract, the Bauer Community Center Tract, and the Nautical Landings Marina Building and deck area.

Chapter 10, Animals

Chapter 10 establishes rules to protect public health, safety, and welfare while ensuring humane treatment of animals. The ordinance requires dogs and cats to be licensed and vaccinated against rabies, empowers the Animal Control Department to enforce laws and manage stray or nuisance animals, and sets strict standards for the confinement of dangerous or vicious animals. Livestock and exotic animals are generally restricted within city limits, except in designated agricultural areas or by special permit, and owners must prevent nuisances such as excessive noise, roaming, or unsanitary conditions. The code also prohibits cruelty and neglect, aligning with state law, and provides procedures for impoundment, redemption, and adoption of animals.

Chapter 34, Peddlers, Solicitors, Itinerants Vendors, Garage Sales, and Mobile Food Units

Chapter 34 is intended to provide formality for retail and commercial sales of products and services. Key regulations included are as follows:

- It is unlawful for any solicitor to go from house-to-house selling or offering goods and services of any kind.
- A permit is required for itinerant vendors or transient vendors to sell and market goods and services.
- It is unlawful for a person to shout, block public rights-of-way, or use noise equipment to sell or market goods and services.
- Mobile Food Units (food trucks) can only be places on private property, with written property owner permission, only on lands zoned or identified in the Future Land Use Map for commercial purposes.
- Temporary connections to potable water are prohibited for mobile food units.
- All mobile food units are subject to inspection by the City

of Port Lavaca fire department for compliance.

- All mobile food units are required to obtain a City permit for operation.

Chapter 44, Taxation, Article 3+4, Hotel Occupancy Tax

- A Hotel Occupancy Tax set at 7 percent to be used for improving tourism and visitor-based locations within the community.
- Article 4, simply states: “There is hereby adopted an additional 0.5 percent sales and use tax within the city to be used to reduce the property tax rate.”

SUMMARY OF KEY MISSING REGULATIONS, STANDARDS, CODE, AND STATEMENTS

- There is no mention of wastewater disposal and treatment of brown/black water within recreational vehicle parks within Chapter 26.
- There are no parkland or public space requirements for residential subdivisions, recreational vehicle parks, or manufactured home parks.
- The locational description included for the City High Dock areas is unclear within Chapter 54, Waterways, Article Three, Fishing.
- Side and rear setback line fences are allowed, but no height specifications are provided in Chapter 12, Buildings and Building Regulations, Article 2, Building Trade Code, Section 12, Fences.
- Article 3, Flood Damage Prevention, Article 3, Flood Damage Prevention, provides multiple regulations that state that new construction / structures must be above “base flood elevation”, but does not explicitly state an exact standard for how far above base flood elevation (i.e., one- or two-foot above base flood elevation.)
- Chapter 34, Peddlers, Solicitors, Itinerants Vendors, Garage Sales, and Mobile Food Units, does not include regulations regarding the dumping, storage, or release of liquids or gases from the vehicle (beyond general trash can requirements). This can pertain to emissions, grill smoke, used oils, grey or black water, and other potential contaminants.
- There is no mention of room rentals, boarding houses, or

relational/marital requirements for housing occupancy within the Port Lavaca Code of Ordinances; However, Texas Property Code, Section 92.010 - Occupancy Limits states that a landlord may allow a maximum of three adult tenants per bedroom in a dwelling.

- Minimal design regulations and requirements are provided for commercial structures. Parking lot dimensions, drainage, and landscaping is detailed, but building heights, setbacks, form/function, and other structural dimensions are not included. This allows for adaptable commercial designs to be proposed, thus leaving room for developer friendly proposals, but also limits the predictability and assurance of quality of commercial structures.



UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

Utilities are fundamental to the growth, resilience, and sustainability of the City of Port Lavaca, and provide essential services that support residential, commercial, and industrial activity across the community. The city's utility infrastructure spans three core sectors: potable water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater management. Together, these systems ensure the reliable delivery of clean drinking water, the safe treatment of wastewater, and the effective management of stormwater, which forms the backbone of Port Lavaca's public health, environmental protection, and long-term growth and development strategy.

The potable water system is primarily dependent on imported raw water, as access to groundwater wells within city limits is limited. Raw water is purchased from the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) and treated locally for municipal and commercial use. Aging infrastructure within the system is currently being addressed through planned upgrades aimed at improving reliability, expanding capacity, to ensure long-term sustainability.

Port Lavaca's sanitary sewer system is a vital component of its public infrastructure, and has been designed to serve thousands of residential and commercial connections. The system includes an extensive network of sewer lines, lift stations, and a centralized wastewater treatment plant with a capacity of two million gallons per day (GPD). Managed by the city's Wastewater Department, the system is maintained through routine operations, regulatory oversight, and targeted improvements to ensure compliance with state and federal standards. As the city continues to grow, proactive monitoring and investment in the sewer system remain essential to meeting future demands and minimizing environmental impacts.

Stormwater management is an increasingly critical concern for Port Lavaca, where coastal geography, flat terrain, and aging infrastructure heighten the risk of flooding during major rain events. The city's proximity to Lavaca Bay and regional waterways such as Lynn's Bayou makes it particularly vulnerable to stormwater bottlenecks, which can result in widespread inundation when runoff is unable to drain effectively. In response to recent flooding, the city is acquiring land for the construction of a stormwater detention pond and is working with Clean Coast Texas to draft a new ordinance focused on improving drainage standards, floodplain management, and development regulations. These efforts reflect Port Lavaca's broader commitment to integrating green stormwater infrastructure, enhancing resilience, and protecting both public safety and environmental quality.

Key Takeaways

- Utilities infrastructure consists of three core sectors: potable water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater management.
- Potable water relies on imported raw water from GBRA; upgrades are planned to improve reliability and capacity.
- Sanitary sewer system serves thousands of connections, includes a two-million GPD treatment plant, and requires ongoing investment.
- Stormwater management is critical due to coastal geography and flood risks; the preparation of new stormwater detention policies and ordinances are currently in progress.
- Green infrastructure and resilience are priorities to protect public safety and environmental quality.

Port Lavaca Water Tower
Source: Baxter & Woodman



POTABLE WATER

The City of Port Lavaca's potable water system plays a vital role in supporting community infrastructure by delivering a consistent supply of clean, safe drinking water to residents, businesses, and future developments. The system relies on a combination of imported raw water, limited groundwater wells, wastewater treatment facility, and two above ground water storage facilities (illustrated in Map 1, *Potable Water Facilities*). Because groundwater access within the city limits is restricted, the city depends heavily on purchased raw water for both municipal and industrial use. This water is treated locally before being distributed throughout the community.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan's Community Snapshot provides an overview of Port Lavaca's current water infrastructure, including its distribution networks, storage capacity, and treatment processes. It also assesses system condition and capacity, outlines planned capital improvements, and highlights key challenges and opportunities involved in maintaining and upgrading the water supply to meet the needs of a growing population. Importantly, the system also supports fire suppression capacity, ensuring adequate water pressure and storage for emergency response.

Facilities and Distribution

Raw water is supplied by the GBRA and treated by Undine Texas, LLC. Undine recently acquired the water treatment plant from GBRA and now operates the facility located on Hwy 316. This plant serves as the primary source of potable water for Port Lavaca. Once treated, water is distributed through the city's network to homes, businesses, and critical services, including fire hydrants and suppression systems.

Condition

The existing water treatment plant's mechanical and electrical systems are nearing the end of their service life, prompting the need for modernization. Aging infrastructure poses risks to operational reliability and efficiency, making upgrades essential to maintain service standards, meet future demand, and ensure adequate fire suppression capacity. There are fire hydrants throughout the city, although there are no fire hydrants for the homes on the south side of Smith Road, as depicted in Map 1, *Potable Water Facilities*.

Capacity

The current treatment capacity of the plant is two million gallons per day (MGD). A major upgrade is underway to double capacity to four MGD, ensuring the system can accommodate population growth, industrial expansion, stricter regulatory requirements, and the water demands for firefighting. The expansion will retain the plant's compact footprint while significantly increasing its processing capabilities.

Capital Improvement Projects

Future Capital Improvement Projects should include the following infrastructure upgrades:

- Centralized instrumentation and control systems for more efficient operations
- Enhanced treatment processes, including phosphorus removal and reduced sludge production
- Upgraded infrastructure to improve reliability and reduce operational downtime
- Expanded storage and distribution capacity to strengthen fire suppression capabilities

To support this effort, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) approved \$39.3 million in financial assistance through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which could save the City approximately \$12 million over the life of the loan. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$70 million, meaning an additional \$30 million in funding will be required to complete construction and commissioning. Once finished, the upgraded facility will significantly enhance Port Lavaca's ability to deliver safe, reliable potable water, improve system resilience, and support long-term community growth.

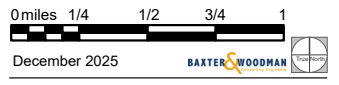
Key Takeaways

- Potable water system is essential for residents, businesses, industry, and fire suppression.
- Raw water supply comes from GBRA and is treated locally by Undine Texas, LLC.
- Aging infrastructure requires modernization to maintain reliability and emergency readiness
- Capacity expansion from two MGD to four MGD will meet growth, regulatory, and firefighting needs.
- Capital improvements include advanced controls, enhanced treatment, and expanded storage/distribution.

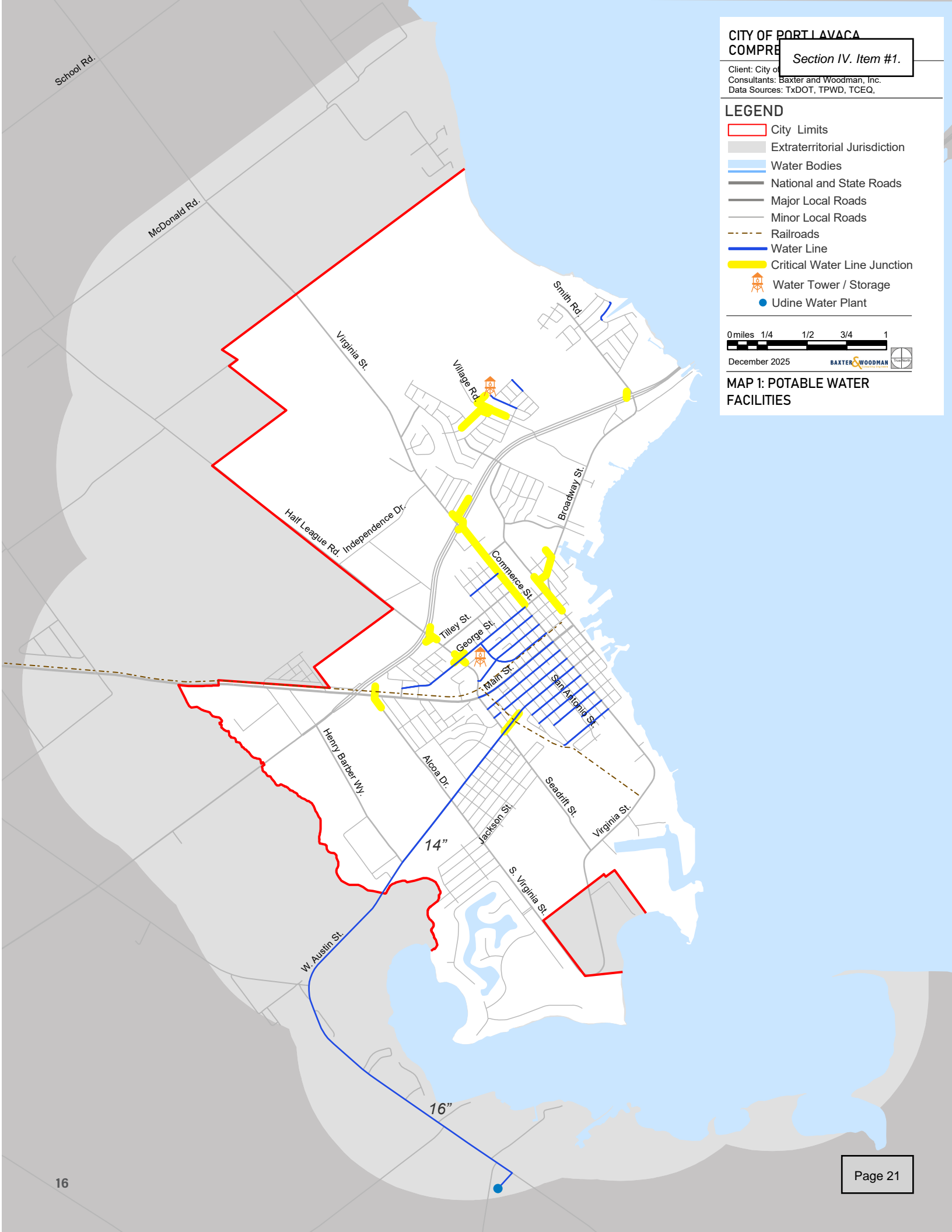
Client: City of
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Water Line
- Critical Water Line Junction
- 🏠 Water Tower / Storage
- Udine Water Plant



MAP 1: POTABLE WATER FACILITIES



SANITARY SEWER

The City of Port Lavaca's sanitary sewer system is a critical component of its public infrastructure, serving approximately 3,840 sewer connections across the community. The system includes roughly 40 miles of sewer lines and is supported by a wastewater treatment plant, located near Lynn's Bayou, that processes up to two million gallons of wastewater per day (GPD). The city is responsible for maintaining and upgrading this system, including main line repairs, sewer line cleaning, and installation of new sewage taps. Recent upgrades and testing efforts aim to improve efficiency, meet Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) compliance standards, and prepare the system for future growth.

Facilities and Distribution

Port Lavaca's sanitary sewer system is supported by 20 lift stations, depicted in Map 2, *Sewer Infrastructure*, that serve neighborhoods across the city, which help to transmit wastewater through the network. While most homes are connected to centralized sewer lines, some rely on grinder septic systems, which require regular maintenance.

A grinder septic system uses a pump to break down solid waste into a slurry before sending it into a septic tank or sewer line. These systems are typically installed where gravity flow is not possible, such as homes located below the main sewer line or on uneven terrain. The grinder pump allows waste to be transported efficiently through small-diameter pipes over long distances or uphill.

Advantages of Grinder Septic Systems

- Enable installation in challenging terrain
- Function effectively where gravity flow isn't possible (e.g., homes below sewer lines or on hills)
- Transport waste efficiently by converting solids into slurry for pumping through small pipes
- Save space by requiring smaller pipes, which can reduce installation costs
- Handle household wastewater reliably, even during peak usage

Disadvantages of Grinder Septic Systems

- Higher initial installation costs compared to gravity-fed systems
- Greater maintenance needs; pumps require regular servicing and can fail if non-flushable items are introduced
- Dependence on electricity; power outages can cause backups
- Higher repair and replacement costs than traditional systems

Because of these limitations, the City is considering an ordinance to prohibit new grinder systems, ensuring more efficient management of future sewage flow.

Condition

The existing Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, which monitors and controls equipment such as pumps, valves, and meters, is outdated and failing. This system is vital for detecting leaks, overflows, and equipment malfunctions in real time. Its automated functions also help reduce operational costs and anticipate maintenance needs. An upgrade to the SCADA system is being explored as part of broader plant improvements.

Additionally, the city recently conducted smoke testing to identify Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) issues, a term used to describe a condition where unwanted (storm) water enters the system through cracks or faulty connections, and is consequently treated; which increases the gross volume of treated wastewater, thus reducing the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant to serve additional volumes resulting from growth. This testing revealed defective manholes in specific neighborhoods. The city's code enforcement officer worked directly with residents to resolve these issues, resulting in a significant reduction in infiltration and improved treatment efficiency.

Capacity

The sanitary sewer system typically handles daily flows ranging from 1.1 to two MGD, occasionally exceeding this range during peak conditions. The current treatment plant is designed to accommodate this volume, but future growth and increased demand may require expanded capacity.

Capital Improvements

To meet regulatory standards and prepare for future demand, the city is planning upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant, including:

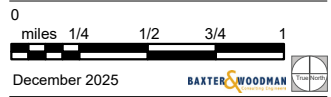
- Expansion of treatment capacity
- Modernization of mechanical and electrical systems
- Replacement of the failing SCADA system

These improvements are designed to enhance system reliability, reduce operational downtime, and ensure compliance with TCEQ regulations. Continued investment in infrastructure will be essential to support Port Lavaca's long-term growth and environmental sustainability.

Client: City of
Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Streams, Channels, and Drainage Ditches
- Sewer Lines
- Water Treatment Plant
- Manhole Covers
- Lift Station



MAP 2: SEWER
INFRASTRUCTURE



STORM WATER AND DRAINAGE

Storm Water Management System

Port Lavaca's coastal location and flat topography make it particularly vulnerable to both inland and coastal flooding. As climate variability increases, so too, does the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, the city faces growing challenges in managing stormwater and protecting its residents and infrastructure. This section outlines Port Lavaca's current approach to floodplain management, identifies areas of concern, and highlights ongoing efforts to improve stormwater systems and development practices. Currently, there are available maps depicting existing stormwater infrastructure. Map 3, *Floodplains and Drainage Infrastructure*, depicts mapped floodplains, bodies of water, and areas where drainage has been improved.

Floodplain Management

The City of Port Lavaca is actively working to strengthen its floodplain management program. In collaboration with Clean Coast Texas, the city is developing a comprehensive stormwater ordinance aimed at improving floodplain oversight, regulating development in flood-prone areas, and promoting low-impact development (LID) techniques such as bioswales, permeable pavement, and rain gardens. These strategies are designed to reduce runoff, enhance infiltration, and minimize flood risks while supporting environmental sustainability.

Flooding within the City of Port Lavaca

During heavy rain events, stormwater in Port Lavaca is often blocked from draining efficiently into Lavaca Bay, which creates a bottleneck that can lead to localized flooding. A recent rare storm event exemplified this worst-case scenario, which resulted in widespread inundation across the city. In response, the City of Port Lavaca is actively pursuing the acquisition of property to construct additional stormwater detention facilities, which will help temporarily store excess runoff and reduce peak flow rates during future storms.

Storm Water Detention and Retention Facilities

To address stormwater challenges, Port Lavaca is pursuing the acquisition of property for a stormwater detention pond, which will temporarily store excess runoff and reduce peak flow rates during major storms. In addition to detention ponds, the city is evaluating the feasibility of retention basins and other green infrastructure solutions to manage runoff more sustainably. These facilities are intended to complement existing drainage systems and reduce the impact of future rain events.

Development Regulations

The city's Flood Damage Prevention regulations, outlined in its Code of Ordinances, require new construction within designated flood zones to meet elevation and permitting standards. This will help to mitigate risk and ensure long-term resilience.

Regional Waterways

Port Lavaca's proximity to Lavaca Bay, Lynn's Bayou, and Little Chocolate Bayou increases its exposure to both coastal and inland flooding. These regional waterways play a significant role in the city's drainage patterns and flood risk profile. Their influence reinforces the importance of coordinated floodplain management and infrastructure planning across jurisdictional boundaries. These drainage channels have been consistently challenged during heavy storms, and Hurricane Harvey further emphasized the issues. Additionally, many sections of the four major drainage channels indicate they need to be expanded or have new diversion paths directed away to appropriate drainage spots. Additionally, there are segments of some drainage channels where vegetation needs to be removed to increase stormwater flow and prevent water from pooling and stagnating. Proposed drainage improvements are depicted in Map 3, *Floodplains and Drainage Infrastructure*.

Conclusion



Port Lavaca's evolving approach to stormwater management reflects a growing commitment to resilience, sustainability, and public safety. Through targeted infrastructure investments, strategic partnerships, and forward-looking development regulations, the city is actively addressing the challenges posed by coastal and inland flooding. As climate variability continues to intensify storm events, these efforts will be essential in protecting neighborhoods, preserving water quality, and ensuring the long-term health of the community's built and natural environments.

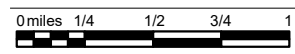


Drainage Ditch along La Salle Boulevard in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Client:
Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ.

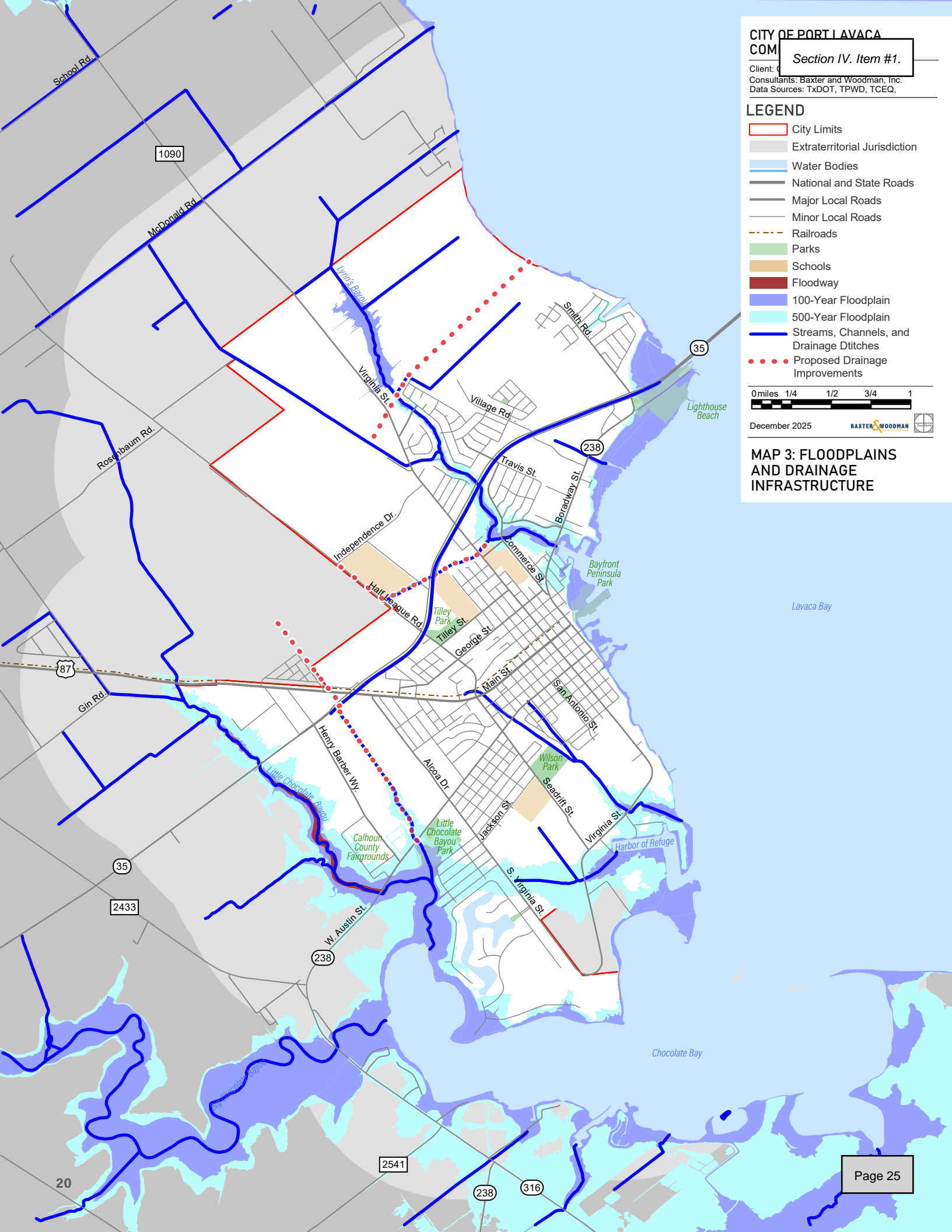
LEGEND

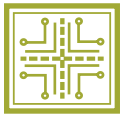
-  City Limits
-  Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
-  Water Bodies
-  National and State Roads
-  Major Local Roads
-  Minor Local Roads
-  Railroads
-  Parks
-  Schools
-  Floodway
-  100-Year Floodplain
-  500-Year Floodplain
-  Streams, Channels, and Drainage Ditches
-  Proposed Drainage Improvements



December 2025 

MAP 3: FLOODPLAINS AND DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE





EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

ROADWAY AND PORT AUTHORITIES

Thoroughfares

Thoroughfares within the City of Port Lavaca and its ETJ, as depicted in Map 4, *Functional Classification and Jurisdiction*, are operated and maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Calhoun County, and the City of Port Lavaca. Each entity plays a role in planning roadway improvements, expansions, and alignments to support safe and efficient mobility. As outlined in the city's proposed Thoroughfare Plan (refer to The Future City report, page XX), coordinated efforts between Port Lavaca, TxDOT, and Calhoun County are essential to accommodate new residential and commercial development.

Port Lavaca owns, operates, and maintains most thoroughfares within its municipal boundaries, while Calhoun County oversees roads outside the city limits. Where thoroughfares cross jurisdictional boundaries, maintenance responsibilities are typically assigned to the County. TxDOT manages major arterial routes entering and passing through Port Lavaca, including SH 35, which serves as a key corridor for regional connectivity. TxDOT also administers US 87, which originates in Port Lavaca and extends northward, through Lubbock, and ultimately into New Mexico, at Clayton. As depicted on Map 4, *Functional Classification and Jurisdiction*, entitled Main Street, SH 35 extends through Downtown Port Lavaca to Nautical Harbor on the coast. TxDOT routes such as FM 1090, FM 616, and FM 2433 intersect with local streets and provide access to surrounding communities like Point Comfort, Seadrift, and Victoria. As Port Lavaca continues to grow, the city will need to ensure safe and convenient access for all users including motorists, pedestrians, and freight carriers, particularly along key corridors such as SH 35 and US 87, which connects Downtown Port Lavaca to Lavaca Bay and the broader Gulf Coast region. Coordination with TxDOT will remain critical for managing traffic signals, pavement conditions, signage, and future roadway enhancements.

Railroads

Port Lavaca's current railroad infrastructure is limited but remains active, primarily serving industrial freight operations through the Point Comfort and Northern Railway (PCN) line. This short-line railroad facilitates the movement of raw materials and manufactured goods to and from the Port of Port Lavaca. The PCN runs approximately 14 miles between Point Comfort and Lolita, Texas, where it connects to the broader national freight network via Union Pacific. There is no passenger rail service, and current rail operations are focused exclusively on supporting local industry and regional logistics.

Calhoun Port Authority

The Calhoun Port Authority serves a vital role for the Texas mid-coast region's access to worldwide markets. The port supports Texas chemical manufacturing industries and the Calhoun County economy. The Port Authority also manages port operations, harbors, and related infrastructure including the Matagorda Ship Channel, the alignment of which passes between the Mainland and Matagorda island and provides direct access to and from the Gulf and Lavaca Bay.

Key Takeaways:

- Thoroughfares are managed jointly by Port Lavaca, Calhoun County, and TxDOT.
- SH 35 and US 87 are important corridors that provide is the key corridor for regional connectivity and future growth.
- Coordination with TxDOT is critical for roadway improvements and safe access.
- Rail service is freight-only, via the Point Comfort and Northern Railway (PCN), and provides no passenger service.
- The Calhoun Port Authority drives regional trade and helps support local industries.

LEGEND

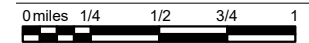
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- Railroads
- Parks
- Schools

Functional Classification

- Principal Arterial Thoroughfare
- Minor Arterial Thoroughfare
- Major Collector Thoroughfare
- Minor Collector Thoroughfare
- Local Thoroughfare

Jurisdiction

- City of Port Lavaca
- Calhoun County
- TxDOT / USDOT



December 2025



MAP 4: FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION AND JURISDICTION



ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT)

Context

Thoroughfares with the highest functional classifications, such as interstates, freeways, or major arterials, or those owned and operated by state entities like TxDOT and the Calhoun County Road and Bridge Department, typically record the highest Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts. AADT measures the number of vehicles traveling along a specific roadway segment, with data collected from the City of Port Lavaca, the Calhoun County Road and Bridge Department, and TxDOT in 2022 and 2023. As depicted in Map 5, *Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts (AADT)*, thoroughfares under TxDOT's jurisdiction consistently have the highest traffic counts, while those managed by the City of Port Lavaca typically experience lower daily volumes. It should be noted that while AADT provides a useful baseline for thoroughfare planning, it does not capture seasonal tourism peaks or freight surges tied to port activity.

Traffic Volumes on TxDOT and County Thoroughfares

SH 35 experiences the most daily traffic out of all thoroughfares in Port Lavaca, followed by SH 238 / W. Austin Street. SH 238 / W. Austin Street links several southern communities (i.e., Alamo Beach, Magnolia Beach, Indianola) to Port Lavaca, which is where residents of these smaller communities come to buy groceries. As regional development expands and employment opportunities grow, traffic along these corridors is expected to increase. There was no traffic data for US 87, but it is the main route between Port Lavaca and Victoria, where a large number of Port Lavaca employees live. FM 1090 on the north end of the ETJ experiences 3,000–5,000 vehicles daily, as it extends southward and connects with Virginia Street, ultimately intersecting SH 35 near downtown. While gaps in traffic count data leave an incomplete picture, these corridors clearly serve as primary routes through the city.

Traffic Volumes on Port Lavaca Thoroughfares

Henry Barber Way, a major collector, carries 2,000–3,000 vehicles per day, and is supported by its connection to SH 238 and SH 35. Other collectors include Alcoa Drive (3,000–5,000 vehicles per day), George Street and Tilley Street (1,000–2,000 vehicles per day), and Seadrift Street (200–500 vehicles per day).

Key Takeaways

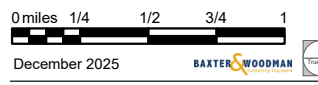
- TxDOT and County-managed roads consistently carry the highest traffic volumes; City-maintained streets see lower counts.
- SH 35 has the highest daily traffic, followed by SH 238 / W. Austin Street.
- FM 1090 also functions as a key connector into downtown, while City-maintained collectors such as Henry Barber Way and Alcoa Drive carry moderate traffic, and smaller streets like George, Tilley, and Seadrift see lighter volumes.



Client: City of
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

- LEGEND**
- City Limits
 - Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
 - Water Bodies
 - National and State Roads
 - Major Local Roads
 - Minor Local Roads
 - Railroads
 - Parks
 - Schools

- Existing AADT (2022 to 2024)**
- 0 to 249
 - 250 to 499
 - 500 to 999
 - 1,000 to 1,999
 - 2,000 to 2,999
 - 3,000 to 4,999
 - 5,000 to 9,999
 - 10,000 to 14,999
 - 15,000 and over



MAP 5: AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS (AADT)



CRASH DATA

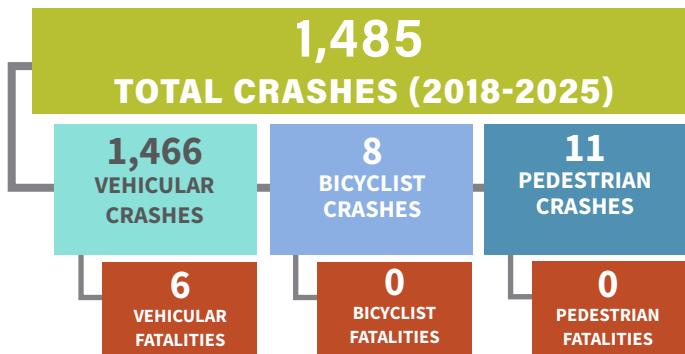
Map 6, *Crashes 2018-2025*, depicts all crash occurrences (vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian), including fatalities, in Port Lavaca and the surrounding ETJ from January 1, 2018 to October 5th, 2025. Data was collected from the TxDOT crash database which compiles state, county, and local crash data.

Of the 1,495 recorded incidents, 99 percent were vehicle-related, while bicyclist- and pedestrian-related accidents accounted for one percent (1%) of the remaining crashes. Notably, a trend in serious injury and fatality crashes happen along SH 316 and into SH 238. Crash hot-spots, where crashes occur most frequently, are at intersections along SH 6 and SH 35.

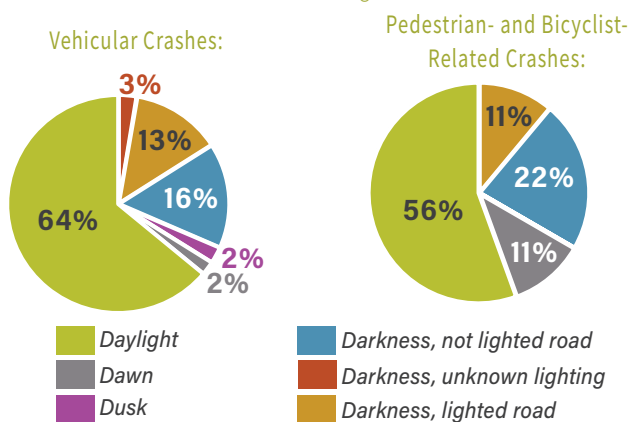
Crash Trends

Since 2018, as referenced in Figure 3A, *Crash Breakdown (2018-2025)*, the City of Port Lavaca has had six crashes resulting in fatality; which accounts for 0.4 percent of total

Figure 3A, *Crash Breakdown (2018-2025)*



Crashes Based on the Amount of Light:



crashes. All six crashes involving a fatality were vehicular crashes and occurred during dry conditions. Notably, five out of the six fatal crashes occurred at night (on both lighted and unlighted roads) with the sixth crash involving a fatality occurring during daylight hours. Alcohol, speed, and fatigue played a role in most of these crashes. The majority of crashes occurred at signalized intersections. The number of crashes has decreased annually since 2021. Crashes also tend to occur more during rush hour traffic.

Key Takeaways

- 99 percent of crashes involve vehicles only.
- The primary cause for all crashes is Driver Inattention.
- The majority of crashes happen during afternoon rush hour when traffic is at its peak.
- Intersections are the most common crash locations, indicating points of conflict.
- Fatal crashes are rare, but when they do occur, factors such as alcohol, speed, or fatigue appear to be the cause.

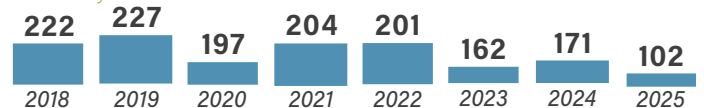
Primary Cause of Vehicular Crashes:

- #1 Driver Inattention
- #2 Slowing/Stopping - For Officer, Flagman, or Traffic
- #3 Failed to Control Speed
- #4 Disregard Stop and Go Signal / Stop Sign or Light
- #5 Had Been Drinking / Under the Influence

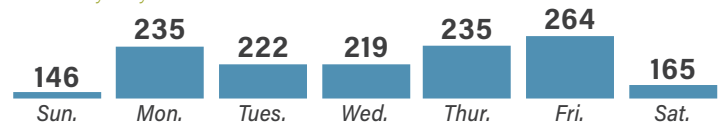
Primary Cause of Pedestrian and Bicyclist Crashes:

- #1 Driver Inattention
- #2 Pedestrian Failed to Yield Right-of-Way to Vehicle
- #3 Driver Disregarded Stop and Go Signal / Stop Sign or Light
- #4 Driver Failed to Yield Right-of-Way to Pedestrian

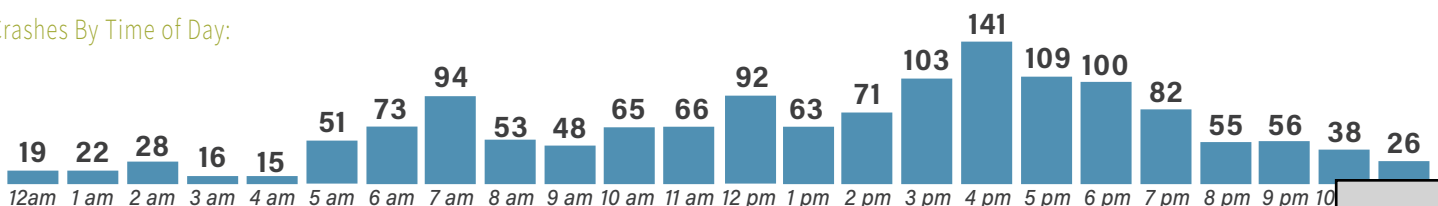
Crashes By Year:



Crashes By Day of Week:



Crashes By Time of Day:



Client: City of
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

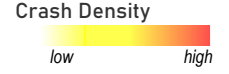
LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Parks
- Schools

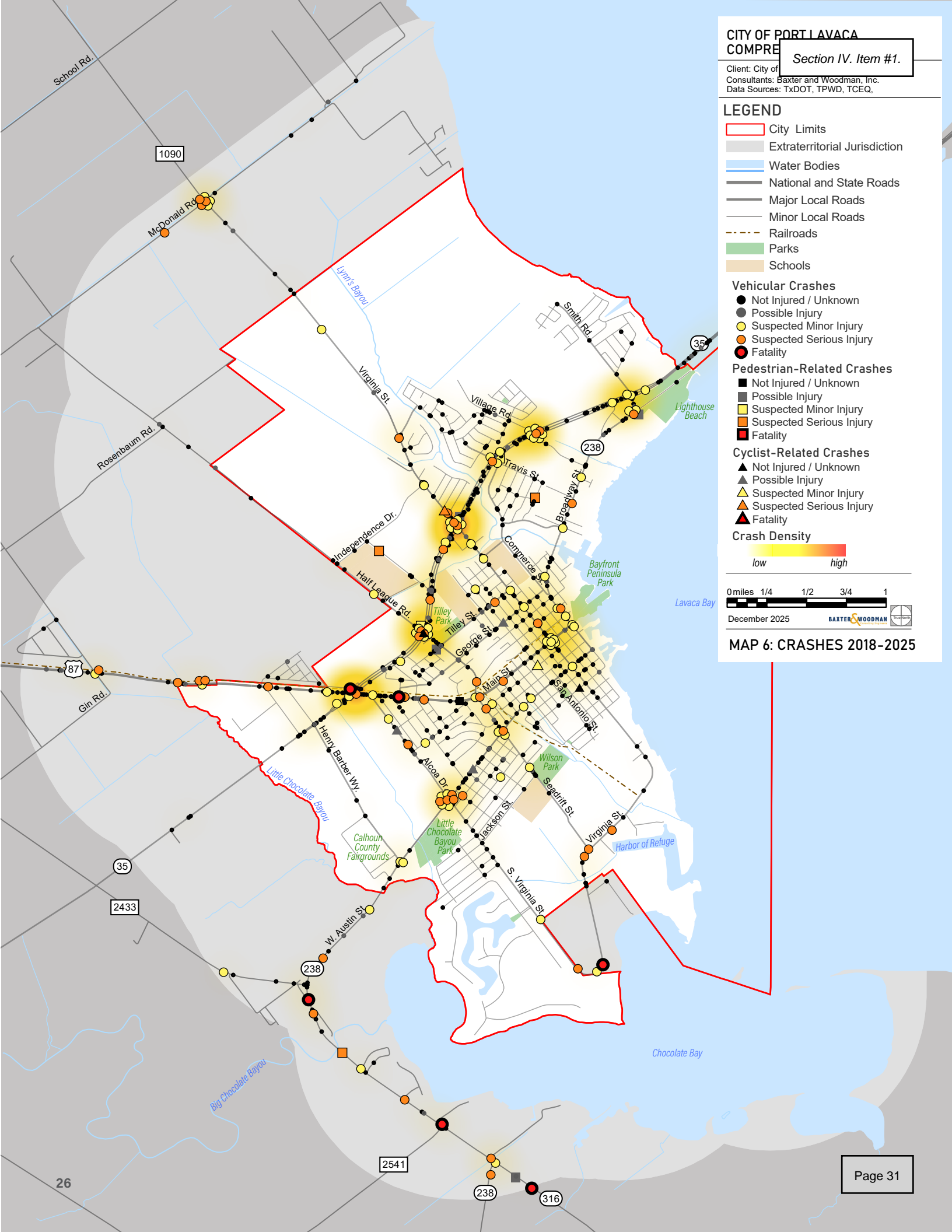
- Vehicular Crashes**
- Not Injured / Unknown
 - Possible Injury
 - Suspected Minor Injury
 - Suspected Serious Injury
 - Fatality

- Pedestrian-Related Crashes**
- Not Injured / Unknown
 - Possible Injury
 - Suspected Minor Injury
 - Suspected Serious Injury
 - Fatality

- Cyclist-Related Crashes**
- Not Injured / Unknown
 - Possible Injury
 - Suspected Minor Injury
 - Suspected Serious Injury
 - Fatality



MAP 6: CRASHES 2018-2025





ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Context

Active transportation refers to non-motorized, human-powered travel such as walking, bicycling, skateboarding, and other mobility devices. These modes are best suited for short trips and help reduce reliance on vehicles, which eases congestion and improves public health. In Port Lavaca, active transportation typically occurs on sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, multi-use paths, and within greenspaces. To be effective, infrastructure should provide safe, comfortable, and connected routes between neighborhoods and key destinations, accommodating users of all ages and abilities. Currently, Port Lavaca does not have bikeshare programs or ordinances for micromobility options such as electric bikes, scooters, or golf carts.



Bike lane on Smith Road in the process of being striped
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Planning should consider:

- Health and safety: Ensure well-lit sidewalks, protected bike lanes, safe crossings, and traffic calming to reduce accidents and encourage use.
- Personal mobility needs: Design routes that accommodate wheelchairs, strollers, and other mobility devices.
- Demand by location: Prioritize areas near schools, parks, shopping, and employment centers.
- Quality of life: Provide equitable access to recreation, services, and daily destinations.

Groups that benefit most from improved access include:

- *Students* - safer routes to walk or bike to school
- *Local residents* - pedestrian connections to parks, grocery stores, restaurants, and daily destinations.
- *Retirees and seniors* - safe routes to medical appointments, family visits, and recreation.

Active transportation also plays a key role in reducing traffic. According to the U.S. Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, about 45 percent of vehicle trips in the

U.S. between 2018 and 2022 were under three miles, and 28 percent were less than one mile. With safe and convenient alternatives, many residents may choose to walk or bike for shorter trips instead of driving, helping to reduce strain on local roadways as well as provide more opportunities for physical activity.

Sidewalk Connectivity

Sidewalks, referenced in Map 7, *Active Transportation Facilities*, are most prevalent along major TxDOT roadways but are limited in older residential areas. Newer residential subdivisions typically include sidewalks constructed along new streets. This can lead to short, sporadic gaps in the sidewalk network on properties where there is not a home built yet. The City has identified a strong need to expand sidewalk connections, particularly linking existing sidewalks to major origin-destination routes. For example, proposed five-foot-wide sidewalks between Austin Street and Jackson Street would connect residents to Jackson Roosevelt Elementary and Wilson Park. Additional sidewalks along SH 35 have also been prioritized to improve access to parks and schools on the north side of the city.

Proposed Bike and Shared-use Facilities

Existing bike infrastructure, depicted in Map 7, *Active Transportation Facilities*, in the city includes the painted bike lanes on Smith Road installed during the summer of 2025. This update also included the addition of new sidewalks. Future proposals call for additional bike lanes or multiuse paths, including a connection along SH 238 to link neighborhoods with Downtown Port Lavaca.

Key Takeaways

- Active transportation helps reduce vehicle reliance, traffic congestion, and improves public health.
- The City currently lacks bikeshare programs and micromobility ordinances (e-bikes, scooters, golf carts).
- With safe alternatives, many residents could shift short trips to walking or biking, reducing roadway strain.



Construction on Smith Road to add sidewalks and bike lanes.
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

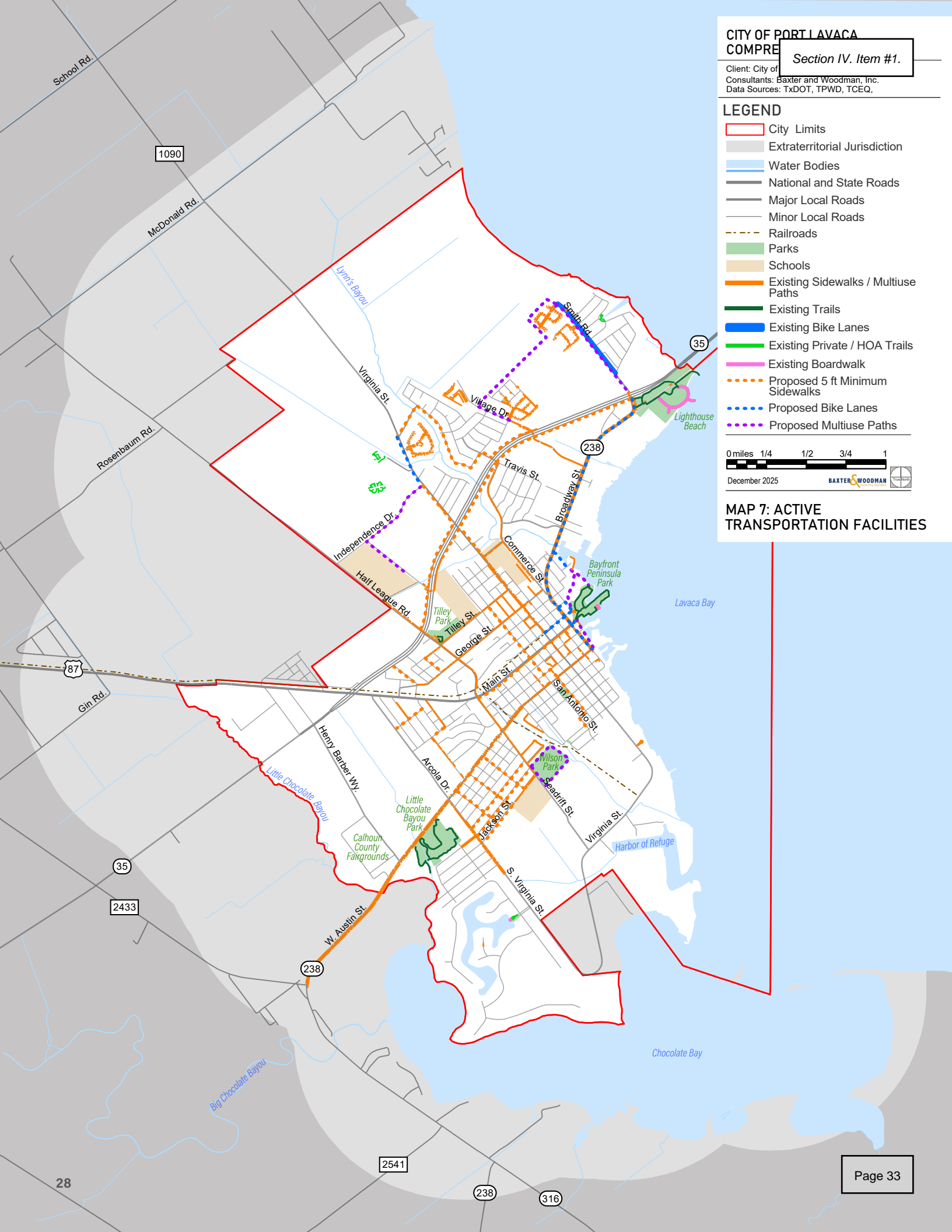
LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Parks
- Schools
- Existing Sidewalks / Multiuse Paths
- Existing Trails
- Existing Bike Lanes
- Existing Private / HOA Trails
- Existing Boardwalk
- Proposed 5 ft Minimum Sidewalks
- Proposed Bike Lanes
- Proposed Multiuse Paths

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December 2025

MAP 7: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES



EXISTING LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

WHAT IS LAND USE PLANNING?

Land use describes how a parcel of land is utilized by people, whether for farming, housing, commerce, or community needs. Land use planning plays a vital role in shaping how communities grow and function. This type of planning organizes parcels into dedicated uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and parks and open space to shape a municipality based on their long-term goals and community priorities. Effective land use planning helps manage growth efficiently, supports economic development, protects environmental resources, and enhances quality of life by guiding what can be built near homes, schools, and parks.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS IN PORT LAVACA

Port Lavaca’s Planning Area, calculated in Figure 4A, covers roughly 19.16 square miles (12,259.79 acres) encompassing both the city limits (8.82 square miles) and its one-mile-wide (10.76 square miles) ETJ. Port Lavaca has no established zoning ordinance, and so the city’s current land use reflects organic as well as sporadic growth. This element uses five broad designations to characterize and characterize land use in Port Lavaca, which are illustrated in Map 8, *Existing Land Use*, with several of these designations further subdivided, based on density and level of intensity. These five broad designations are:

- Agricultural / Undeveloped
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public / Institutional
- Parks / Open space

Figure 4A, Existing Land Use in City Limits and ETJ

Existing Land Use	City of Port Lavaca Only Acres	Number of Parcels	ETJ Only Acres	Number of Parcels	Total Acres	Total Square Miles	Percentage of Planning Area
Agricultural / Undeveloped	2,185.09	54	4,856.60	118	7,041.69	11.00	57.44
Vacant Lands	1,298.88	642	1,146.93	335	2,445.81	3.82	19.95
Parks and Open Space	69.74	18	163.58	10	233.32	0.36	1.90
General Commercial	146.18	197	29.91	22	176.09	0.28	1.44
Neighborhood Commercial	36.51	86	0	0	36.51	0.06	0.30
Regional Commercial	137.27	41	0	0	137.27	0.21	1.12
Central Business District	18.13	71	0	0	18.13	0.03	0.15
Light Industrial	109.32	96	54.78	25	164.10	0.26	1.34
Heavy Industrial	29.65	4	39.15	3	68.79	0.11	0.56
Public /Institutional	304.65	81	16.29	5	320.94	0.50	2.62
Utilities Infrastructure	19.21	12	137.13	2	156.35	0.24	1.28
Single Family Attached	19.68	46	0.34	1	20.02	0.03	0.16
Single Family Detached	821.04	3304	415.04	367	1,236.09	1.93	10.08
Multi-Family Residential	50.23	32	0	0	50.23	0.08	0.41
Manufactured Homes	86.50	309	22.10	56	108.61	0.17	0.89
Recreation Vehicle	41.10	9	4.75	3	45.85	0.07	0.37
TOTAL	5,373.19		6,886.61		12,259.79	19.16	

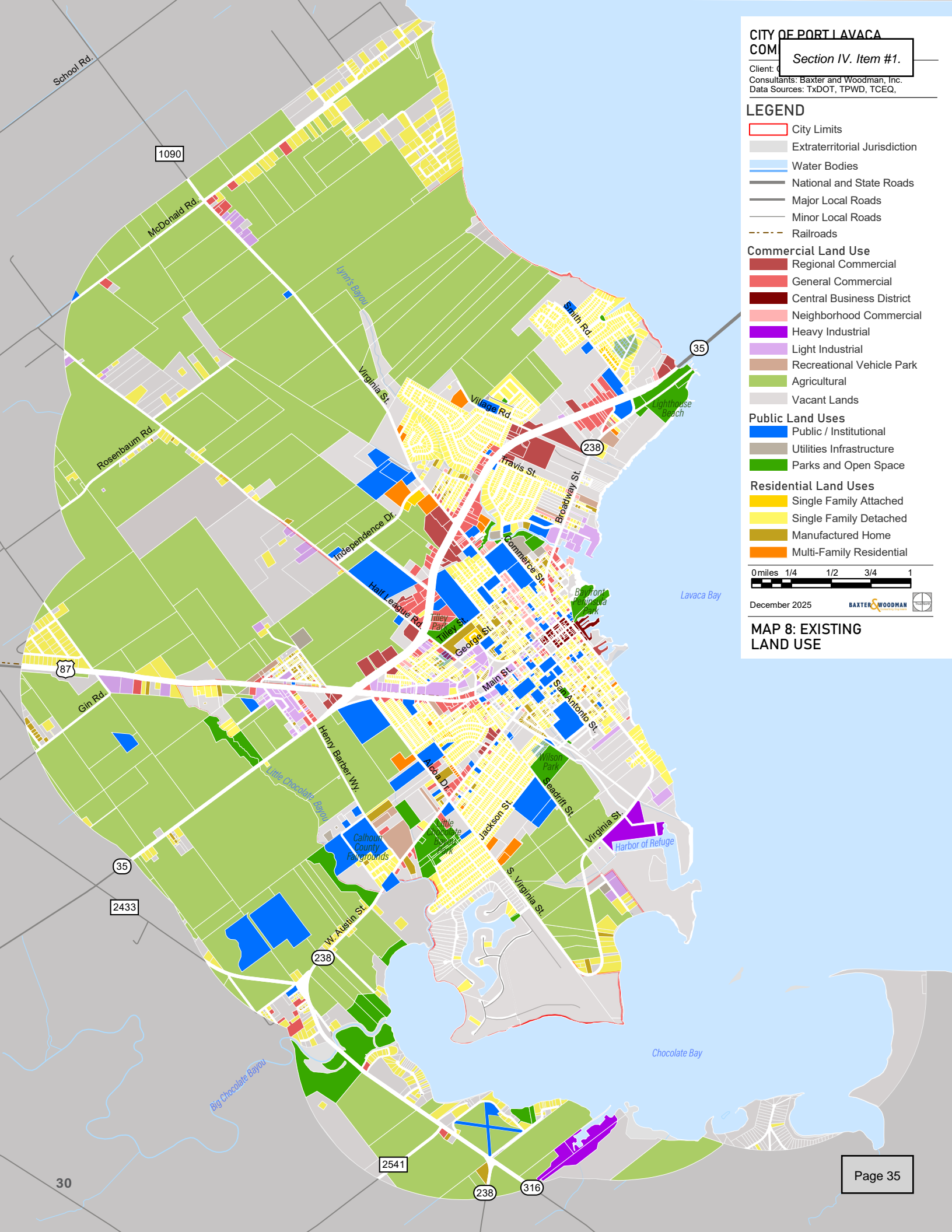
Client:
Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Commercial Land Use**
 - Regional Commercial
 - General Commercial
 - Central Business District
 - Neighborhood Commercial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Light Industrial
 - Recreational Vehicle Park
 - Agricultural
 - Vacant Lands
- Public Land Uses**
 - Public / Institutional
 - Utilities Infrastructure
 - Parks and Open Space
- Residential Land Uses**
 - Single Family Attached
 - Single Family Detached
 - Manufactured Home
 - Multi-Family Residential

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December 2025
BAXTER & WOODMAN

MAP 8: EXISTING
LAND USE



LAND USE DESIGNATION TYPES

The dominant land use categories are Agricultural/Undeveloped Lands, Vacant Lands, and Residential, which together make up the majority of the Planning Area. Notably 20 percent of the land area is vacant, while other land uses each account for less than five percent of the total area. Port Lavaca's housing stock is about 85 percent detached single family homes, often organized in residential subdivisions. Manufactured homes are present in some neighborhoods alongside detached homes. North of SH 35, there are apartment buildings and attached single-family units, while South Virginia Street and areas south of Downtown contain scattered multi-family dwellings.

Commercial businesses are predominantly located along SH 35 with some additional clusters dispersed throughout the city. Industrial land is located on the far south side near the Harbor of Refuge. The ETJ remains largely rural, with most vacant land and scattered clusters of homes and businesses along major thoroughfares. Notably, half of the city's vacant land lies within municipal boundaries, including Downtown, residential areas in north and south Port Lavaca, and formerly industrial sites along Lavaca Bay. These vacancies highlight opportunities to expand residential and commercial development, and community amenities, to improve economic opportunities and enhance resident's quality of life.

■ Agricultural / Undeveloped (57%)

Agricultural and undeveloped lands encompass large tracts of open space, agricultural fields, and natural landscapes. Property types include farms, ranches and pastures, orchards, and undeveloped parcels of land. These areas primarily support agricultural purposes, including farming activities, livestock grazing, and horticulture, with farms focusing primarily on growing crops and ranches emphasizing the raising and herding of livestock.

Development Types:

- Farms
- Ranches and Pastures
- Orchards
- Undeveloped parcels

Characteristics:

- Large tracts of open space and natural landscapes
- Primarily used for farming, livestock grazing, and crop production



Agricultural property in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Vacant lands (20%) are typically smaller parcels without agricultural activities or built structures. These lands are likely to be developed based on surrounding development land types and future land use designations.

■ Residential Land Use (12%)

A diverse and appealing residential housing stock is essential for attracting residents to areas like Port Lavaca, where living options must align with varying life stages, from young professionals to retirees. Housing isn't just about shelter; it's the bedrock of local economic growth. Residential land uses exist in the context of urban, rural, and suburban. As businesses expand, they rely on a steady supply of workers, and those workers need places to live. Port Lavaca's residents drive demand for goods and services, which influences new economic growth.

Urban

Residential dwellings in an urban context, such as downtown, can be drastically different housing types from single family detached to single-attached or multi-family and multistory dwellings. Lots in urban environments can have smaller setbacks compared to suburban and rural lots. Generally housing units are more compact or their footprint is spread out over multiple floors because they have smaller parcels to build on.



Single Family Detached housing within Port Lavaca's "Urban" core
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Suburban

The Suburban land use classification applies to current and future residential developments and includes both detached single-family homes and attached residential housing units like townhomes and apartments. These areas generally attract families and residents seeking space, affordability, and accessibility to the urban core. These homes typically have larger lot sizes larger than urban homes, but smaller than rural homes; as well as accommodations for automobiles. Multi-family homes like apartments typically have fewer stories and units but compensate by having larger floor plans.

Suburban developments are smaller communities typically located on the outskirts of the city, sometimes between the urban and rural boundaries. Many suburban neighborhoods are organized as subdivisions, some supported by a homeowner's association (HOA) that pays for shared amenities like pools, clubhouses, and playgrounds. Residents here often commute to jobs in the city center or to employers in neighboring suburbs. Proximity to grocery stores and other conveniences can vary by subdivision but typically require driving from one's home to the destination.

Rural / Ranch

The Rural land use classification applies to parcels that currently exhibit, and are expected to retain, a distinctly rural character throughout this planning period. These areas are marked by generous open space and low-density activities, such as farming, ranching, large-lot residential development, and semi-natural landscapes. Appropriate land uses for these areas are agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and public/institutional uses. These characteristics are typically found on the outskirts of the city and within the City's ETJ. In the context of Port Lavaca, a little over half of the Planning Area is identified as Agricultural or Undeveloped.

To preserve their rural nature, development in these zones should follow guidelines such as:

- Applying substantial setbacks
- Designing thoroughfares with rural design features (like open drainage ditches, absence of sidewalks, and no curb-and-gutter treatments)

Business expansion requires a steady supply of workers, and those workers require places to live. Port Lavaca's residents drive demand for goods and services, which creates a thriving marketplace. A robust housing supply helps to accommodate this customer base, supporting not only business retention but fueling future expansion.



Suburban single family homes in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Suburban Single Family Detached homes in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Rural single family detached homes in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Rural single family detached homes in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Single Family Detached (10%)

A single-family detached home typically consists of a single one- or two-story housing unit located on its own parcel of land. It is not physically connected to other units and is designed for use by a single household. Single family detached residential parcels typically feature a private yard, a driveway, and a front or side facing garage. This type of housing varies depending on the rural, suburban context. For example, in a rural context a home may have a larger setback from the street frontage, garages may be detached, and the home may take on a character of a rural farmstead. In a suburban context houses are setback generally enough from the street frontage to accommodate at least one car parking in the driveway, outside of the garage (30 to 50 ft.); and located within subdivisions or planned unit development. Lot sizes vary from one-quarter to one-half acre. As will be discussed, a single family detached home in a more urban context, such as downtown, will likely have a cottage style with minimal street setbacks, rear garages, front porches, and are generally closer to other housing structures.

Development types:

- Many different styles (Ranch, Craftsman, Farmhouse, Modern, etc.)

Characteristics:

- Private yard space
- Garage/car port may be integrated into the façade of the house, detached, or located to the rear of the dwelling
- Lower number of units per acre: two to 14 dwelling units per acre

Siting Criteria:

- Ensure easy access to utilities and road network
- Meet lot and setback requirements outlined in the city's subdivision regulations and other development standards



Single family detached home in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Single Family Attached (0.2%)

Single-family-attached homes are residential units that share at least one exterior wall with a neighboring residential unit. This configuration enables greater housing density while maintaining a focus on single-household occupancy. These homes commonly take the form of duplexes (two homes), triplexes (three homes), quadraplexes (four homes), and townhomes, among other residential configurations. Due to their typically lower cost compared to detached single-family dwellings, they are often considered attractive options for first-time homebuyers or those seeking more affordable options. Additionally, they serve as a vital component of “Missing Middle Housing,” a category of housing that bridges the gap between single-family homes and large apartment complexes, providing increased densities while maintaining preexisting neighborhood and community character, and addressing the lifecycle needs of a diverse and growing population.

Development Types:

- Duplex, triplex, quadraplex
- Townhomes

Characteristics:

- Shares at least one exterior wall with neighboring unit
- Suburban Density: two to 10 units per acre
- Shared off-street parking (i.e., driveway and parking garage)
- Individual front doors integrated into a uniform and symmetrical facade



Single family attached housing in Port Lavaca.
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Siting Criteria:

- Proximity to mixed use amenities to ensure walkability

Multi-Family (0.4%)

Multi-family dwellings are residential buildings that contain four or more housing units, organized around central amenities (i.e., swimming pool, picnic areas) with surface or structured parking areas around the perimeter and residential units arranged on multiple floors. Units are typically accessed via shared hallways, elevators, or staircases. Rentable units are commonly referred to as “apartments,” while owner-occupied units may be classified as “condominiums” or “cooperatives.” These structures frequently include shared amenities, such as common entryways, parking areas, laundry facilities, and recreational spaces. Designed to support higher residential density, multi-family housing is most often found in urban and suburban environments where space is at a premium. Depending on community character and subdivision regulations, building layouts can range from low-rise (1-2 stories), mid-rise (3-4 stories), or high-rise (5 stories or higher) configurations.

Development Types:

- Apartments (mid-rise, high-rise apartments)
- Condominiums
- Mixed-use Developments
- Student housing
- Age-restricted communities

Characteristics:

- Four or more housing units arranged across multiple stories
- Access via shared hallway, elevator, or staircase
- Typically include shared laundry and recreational amenities



Villas at Independence in Port Lavaca.
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Apartments in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Manufactured Housing (0.9%)

Manufactured homes are prefabricated homes built in a factory that are then shipped to the site and installed. Efficient fabrication and inexpensive building materials make manufactured homes affordable for low to moderate income homebuyers. Their efficient production process results makes them affordable for more potential homebuyers. These units can be installed on leased land, private lots, or within designated manufactured home “parks,” which also include interior vehicular circulation, driveways, and other site amenities.

Development Types:

- Single, double, triple-wide prefabricated homes

Characteristics:

- Factory built construction
- Must meet federal safety and construction standards
- Permanent or semi-permanent installation

Siting criteria:

- Lot size and setback requirements
- Access to utilities



Manufactured homes at Park Plaza Mobile Home Park in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Recreational Vehicle, (RV) Parks (0.4%)

Similar to manufactured home parks, RV parks are designated areas where RVs can park and utilize amenities provided by the park. RV parks have different length-of-stay options ranging from overnight, seasonal, or long-term. These spaces can provide security for RVs as well as create a sense of community among travelers.

Development Types:

- Destination or seasonal parks
- Temporary or semi-permanent living

Characteristics:

- Parking surface area that can accommodate various sizes of RVs
- Back-in or pull-through sites
- Utility hookups for potable water, sanitary sewer (grey / black water on-site or dump station), electricity, and cable
- Presence of recreational amenities (including pools, playgrounds, and trails), restrooms, and open spaces

Siting Characteristics:

- Easy access to highways or major roads
- Access to water, sewer, and other necessary facilities



RV Park in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Commercial Business Types (5%)

Commercial businesses aren't a one-size-fits-all concept. In land use planning, they generally fall into two primary categories: retail and services.

Retail

These businesses focus on selling goods and commodities directly to the public. The customer shopping experience within the business is central to their operation. Retail generates high vehicle traffic, which makes access and visibility critical factors that influence the location of retail uses.

Services

Service-oriented businesses offer a broad array of professional services including law, healthcare, banking, consulting, real estate, and more. Unlike retail establishments, these businesses usually involve less in-person interaction with customers, as many services can be accessed remotely. When selecting a location, convenience for patrons is a primary consideration

Regional Commercial (1%)

Regional commercial landuses host larger, big-box (50,000 sq. ft or more) anchor stores in a shopping center with smaller commercial/retail businesses. This diverse mix of retail usually includes national and international franchises alongside smaller businesses and services. Their primary function is to anchor larger supermarket and commercial chains with enough parking either through expansive lots or structured parking.

Development Types:

- Anchor big box stores
- Satellite retailers, services, and restaurants
- Entertainment venues, such as movie theaters and arcades



Calhoun Plaza with anchor stores.
Source: Baxter & Woodman

General Commercial (1%)

General commercial land uses are hubs that host a diverse mix of retail, dining, and entertainment establishments serving both local residents and visitors. These areas typically include property types such as strip malls, shopping centers, and restaurants. Their primary function is to offer a wide range of goods and services that contribute to a community's economic vitality and draw consumers from beyond the immediate vicinity. Common characteristics of general commercial land use designations include expansive surface parking areas, significant traffic volumes, and location along major thoroughfares and intersections.

Development Types:

- Shopping centers/strip malls
- Restaurants with high customer capacity, full-service kitchens, and equipped to handle large quantities of food

Characteristics:

- Large parking lots and high traffic volumes
- Serves local and regional community
- Located along major thoroughfares

Siting Criteria:

- Greater accessibility (located along major roads, public transit, parking)
- Proximity to residential neighborhoods, employment hubs, and areas with strong retail demand
- Sites with existing utilities and roadway capacity to support a new business
- Compatibility with surrounding land uses
- Compliance with noise, signage, and lighting regulations.



Retail and restaurant chains along north SH 35 Source: Baxter & Woodman



Retail and restaurant chains along north SH 35 Source: Baxter & Woodman

Neighborhood Commercial (0.3%)

Neighborhood commercial land uses, either small-scale, individual units, or aggregated in clusters (strip centers), are designed to serve the everyday needs of nearby residents. Examples of these types of businesses include small convenience grocery stores, coffee shops, pharmacies, hair salons/barber shops, and laundromats.

Development Types:

- Small-scale retail
- Service oriented retail

Characteristics:

- On-street and off-street parking options
- Accessible and convenient for nearby residents

Siting Criteria:

- Close proximity to neighborhoods and other population centers
- Typically one-half-acre or smaller
- Pedestrian and bike access is preferable



Lavaca BBQ on North Virginia Street Source: Baxter and Woodman



Neighborhood commercial businesses along North Virginia Street Source: Baxter & Woodman

Central Business District (0.2%)

The Downtown or Central Business District (CBD) serves as the commercial and cultural core of Port Lavaca. It features a blend of historic architecture, professional offices, boutique retail shops, dining establishments, and cultural venues. This district functions as the city's central hub for business, government, and community life. CBDs can also be great places to host community events and social gatherings; and is typically considered the community's "living room," the space where local residents bring out-of-town guests and visiting family members.

Development Types:

- Historic buildings
- Local restaurants and boutique shops
- Cultural institutions

Characteristics:

- Commercial and cultural hub
- Vibrant atmosphere and diverse architecture
- Center for business, government, and social activities
- Minimal setbacks from the street; wide sidewalks, suitable for petite dining; on-street parking
- Off-street parking to the rear of buildings or in a centrally-located parking structure

Siting Criteria:

- Positioned in the historical city center
- High density development
- High land value
- Location of corporate business headquarters, banks, and hotels
- Mixed-use development that may include residential, often on upper floors
- Regulations on building height, signage, and land use to manage congestion



Downtown Port Lavaca, Main Street businesses
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Downtown Port Lavaca, Virginia Street businesses
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Downtown Port Lavaca, Main Street businesses
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Industrial (2%)

Industrial land uses play a vital role in shaping Port Lavaca's future. Local industry generates employment, which attracts new residents to the city. In turn, this growing population fuels the demand for housing and creates a thriving market for commercial development. Beyond serving as economic engines, industry also contributes significantly to the city's tax base, funding essential government services and infrastructure.

Industrial areas often have the highest utility needs compared to other land uses. As such, planning for these zones takes into account several key factors:

- Ensuring existing businesses have space to expand their operations.
- Mitigating the impacts of environmental nuisance (e.g., noise, odor, particulate emissions and traffic conflicts with nonindustrial land uses).
- Supporting employee commuting and facilitating multi-modal connections for importing and exporting raw and finished materials.
- Providing high-quality municipal services with consistent supply and infrastructure readiness



Industrial business in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

To support thoughtful planning and land use, two subcategories- Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial- are used to differentiate the level and intensity of industrial activities in the area. This distinction helps guide land use decisions and infrastructure investment based on operational demands and potential impacts.

Light Industrial (1%)

The light industrial land use designation is characterized by fabrication operations, finished product warehousing and distribution. Unlike heavy industry, light industrial activities produce minimal environmental nuisance, such as air and noise pollution, light trespass, and vibration. Examples of light industrial businesses currently in Port Lavaca include concrete suppliers, construction/farm equipment rental, and assembly plants. While business parks do not currently exist in Port Lavaca, they can be useful for housing multiple commercial enterprises in one complex. Business parks typically host office buildings, light industrial facilities, and warehouses and provide amenities like controlled access, parking, conference areas, and sometimes cafeteria or recreational areas. Existing light industrial businesses in Port Lavaca could be integrated into these business parks to share amenities, network, and create a cleaner image for the city.

Development Types:

- Large equipment rental
- Assembly plants
- Light manufacturing- machinery is used to perform tasks like cutting, shape, and assembling components
- Storage and warehousing facilities

Characteristics:

- Produces minimal pollution and noise
- Compatible with adjacent commercial/residential land uses

Siting Criteria:

- Located away from homes or have buffers to create space between homes
- Low-impact operations
- Access to utilities, freight routes, and parking
- Standard business hours and regulations on safety and aesthetics to reduce disruption to surrounding area



Port Lavaca Warehouse
Source: Republic Commercial Land and Brokerage (placeholder)

Heavy Industrial (0.6%)

Heavy industrial areas are designated for more intensive industrial activities that have high land and infrastructure requirements. Property types for this land use include factories, processing plants, and heavy manufacturing of raw materials. Due to the risk of environmental pollution associated with industrial operations, heavy industrial land use designations are typically not compatible with and are located far from residential and commercial areas to minimize environmental and public health impacts. Historically, heavy industrial uses in the Calhoun County have included petroleum manufacturing, such as in Formosa Plastics in nearby Point Comfort. The purpose of heavy industrial is to support the production and refinement of raw materials and energy at high capacity which, in turn, supports regional and national economic activity.

Development Types:

- Factories and processing plants
- Sand and gravel open pit mining operations
- Oil refineries
- Transportation and logistics facilities

Characteristics:

- High land and infrastructure requirements
- High environmental impact
- Employs a large number of people

Siting Criteria:

- Remote location
- Suitable for heavy industrial activities; large site and flexible design.
- Robust access to freight routes, utilities, and rail or port facilities
- Ability to institute restricted access and safety buffers



Formosa petrochemical plant in Point Comfort (placeholder)
Source: Julie Demansky

Public / Institutional (3%)

This land use designation includes properties dedicated to government operations, education, healthcare, and community services. Examples include municipal governmental facilities, public libraries, schools, hospitals, churches, and community centers. Their primary role is to deliver essential services and resources that support residents' needs. By fostering access to knowledge, health, and civic engagement, these areas play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being and cohesion of the community.

Development Types:

- Government buildings including city hall, libraries
- Schools
- Hospitals, community centers, nursing facilities

Characteristics:

- Provides essential services for residents
- Supports education, community well-being, and functionality.

Siting Criteria:

- Easy access for public to access
- Compatible with nearby land uses
- Suitable land size and access to infrastructure
- Safe and secure areas
- Prioritizes area with greatest public need



Port Lavaca Police Department
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Parks and Open Space (2%)

Parks and Open Space land use designation is intended to preserve natural landscapes while offering recreational opportunities that promote public health, community engagement, and environmental sustainability. Facilities within these land uses are publicly accessible and designed to support leisure, physical activity, and social interaction. Beyond their visual appeal, these spaces provide critical environmental benefits including helping to manage stormwater runoff, mitigating urban heat island effects, and protecting native habitats and species. Their role in enhancing both ecological and community well-being makes parks essential infrastructure within a community.

Development Types:

- Public parks, nature reserves, greenbelts
- Playgrounds, sports fields, walking/biking trails, community gardens

Characteristics:

- Promotes outdoor recreation through public facilities
- Enhances quality of life
- Positive environmental impacts
- Highly programmed spaces in urban context.
- Passive/unprogrammed natural spaces are predominant in rural parks

Siting Criteria:

- Accessible and connected to neighborhoods for all ages
- Supports biodiversity and native habitat restoration
- Suitable for stormwater management in flood-prone areas

- Prioritizes underserved neighborhoods lacking parks or with high impervious surfaces
- Adequate land availability and compatibility with community
- Preserves landmarks and significant landscapes



Port Lavaca wetlands
Source: Baxter and Woodman

PUBLIC LANDS, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES

Public lands, facilities, and services are foundational to a city's livability and long-term resilience. They provide residents with access to recreational spaces, educational resources, and vital public services that support daily life. From parks and libraries to community centers and public safety buildings, these shared assets promote health, social connection, equity, and economic vitality. Thoughtful investment and ongoing maintenance help cities strengthen their identity, protect environmental resources, and foster inclusive environments where all residents can thrive. To ensure equitable access, every neighborhood should be reasonably served by community spaces such as schools, parks, and libraries. City offices and facilities should be centrally located and easily accessible to improve operational efficiency and convenience for residents. Emergency response services, which include fire stations, police departments, and emergency medical services (EMS), should be strategically distributed throughout the community to ensure rapid response times. This not only enhances public safety but can also influence insurance rates for both the city and its residents. Port Lavaca's stock of lands, facilities, and services are referenced in Map 9, *Public Lands*.

City and County Offices and Services

The City of Port Lavaca is home to a variety of City and Calhoun County government buildings. Port Lavaca's major hub for municipal and county services is located near Downtown, between Mahan Street and Austin Street. Services in this zone include City Hall, Department of Public Works, the Police Department, County Courthouse, Museum, and Library. Outside of this cluster of governmental buildings, there are two fire stations, serving the north and south side of the City. Port Lavaca Animal Control and Calhoun County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are both located next to the Calhoun County Fairgrounds on the west side of Henry Barber Way. The Bauer Community Center is located next to Lighthouse Beach Park along SH 238. Additional city owned land is located along the coast next to Lighthouse Beach Park, surrounding Bayfront Peninsula Park, and along the Harbor of Refuge.

Calhoun County Independent School District

Calhoun County Independent School District (CCISD) provides K-12 education for several regional municipalities including Port Lavaca, Point Comfort, Port O'Connor, Magnolia Beach, and Seadrift. Within Port Lavaca, there are five CCISD school properties: Calhoun High School, Hope High School, Travis Middle School, HJM Elementary, and Jackson Roosevelt Elementary; and an additional property for Port Lavaca Special Services.

Other Public Lands and Institutions

Other institutions within Port Lavaca City Limits are religious institutions which are scattered throughout the city, and a small presence of daycares, nonprofit buildings, private schools, including the Our Lady Of The Gulf Catholic School.

Health Services

Memorial Medical Center is the local hospital in Port Lavaca. The medical campus includes a 24-Hour Emergency Room and Heliport. Additional medical clinics and services including dentists, physical therapy clinics, and a chiropractor. These additional health providers are present and generally congregate around the North Central portion of the city. NextCare Urgent Care, located along SH 35 north of Half League Road, provides urgent care services to the area. Calhoun County EMS provides ambulance services up to throughout Calhoun County.



Memorial Medical Center campus
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Senior Facilities

There are also two Nursing and Rehabilitation facilities north of SH 35. Lavaca Bay Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is on Virginia Street and Port Lavaca Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is on Village Road. Trinity Shores of Port Lavaca is an assisted living facility located just north of Lavaca Bay Nursing. The non-profit Calhoun County Senior Citizens Association -located at Austin Street and Alcola Drive- also helps ensure that the local senior community has access to transportation, meals, fitness, and companionship.

Public Facilities Key

Calhoun County (CCISD) Property

- 1 Calhoun High School
- 2 HJM Elementary
- 3 Hope High School
- 4 Jackson Roosevelt Elementary School
- 5 Travis Middle School

City, County, State Facilities

- 6 Port Lavaca Fire Department
- 7 Port Lavaca Fire Station
- 8 Port Lavaca City Hall
- 8 Port Lavaca Finance Office
- 8 Port Lavaca Building Department
- 8 Port Lavaca Police Department
- 9 Calhoun County Emergency Medical Services
- 10 Calhoun County Library
- 11 Calhoun County Courthouse
- 11 Calhoun County Tax Assessor
- 11 Calhoun County Jail
- 12 Calhoun County Museum
- 12 Texas Department of Public Safety
- 13 Calhoun County Appraisal District
- 13 Calhoun County Emergency Communications District
- 14 Texas General Land Office
- 15 Bauer Community Center
- 16 Port Lavaca Maintenance Facility
- 17 United States Postal Service
- 18 Port Lavaca Public Works

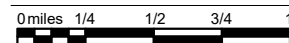
CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMP

Section IV. Item #1.

Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

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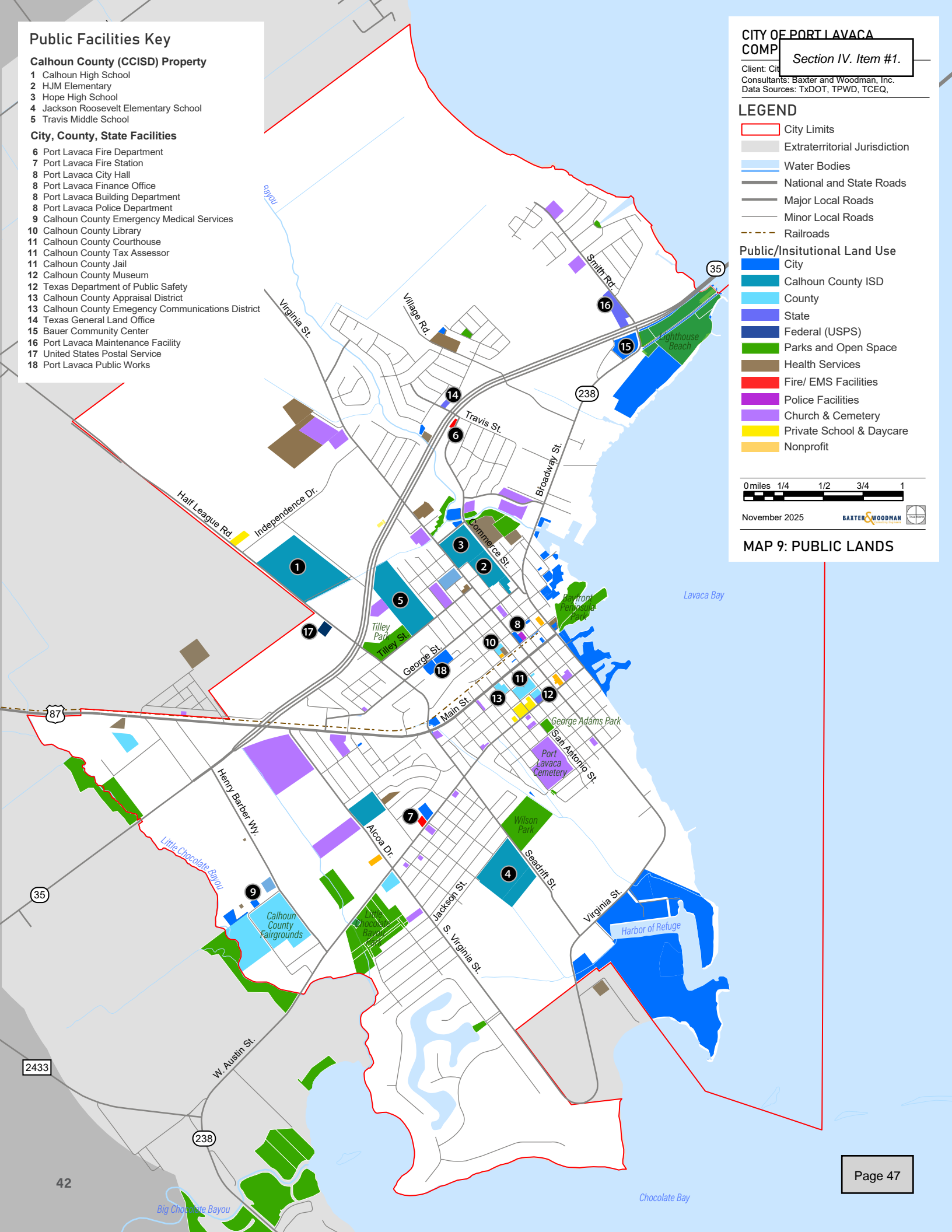
- City Limits
 - Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
 - Water Bodies
 - National and State Roads
 - Major Local Roads
 - Minor Local Roads
 - Railroads
- ### Public/Insitutional Land Use
- City
 - Calhoun County ISD
 - County
 - State
 - Federal (USPS)
 - Parks and Open Space
 - Health Services
 - Fire/ EMS Facilities
 - Police Facilities
 - Church & Cemetery
 - Private School & Daycare
 - Nonprofit



November 2025

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MAP 9: PUBLIC LANDS



HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The housing stock in Port Lavaca reflects a mix of residential types (depicted in Map 10, *Housing Typology and Developments*) shaped by the city’s coastal location, economic history, and evolving community needs. This section provides an in-depth analysis of housing typology, physical conditions, and market characteristics within the City of Port Lavaca and its surrounding planning area. It explores the range of housing types, price points, and structural features, while also identifying key trends that influence affordability, demand, and neighborhood stability.

The methodology used to compile this data includes correspondence with local realtors, site visits, and analysis of U.S. Census housing data. These sources offer insight into the age and condition of the existing housing stock (depicted in Figure 5A, *Existing Housing Typologies in Port Lavaca and ETJ*), buyer preferences, and current market dynamics. Together, this information presents a comprehensive snapshot of Port Lavaca’s residential landscape and serves as a foundation for



Single-Family Detached



Single-Family Attached



Multi-Family



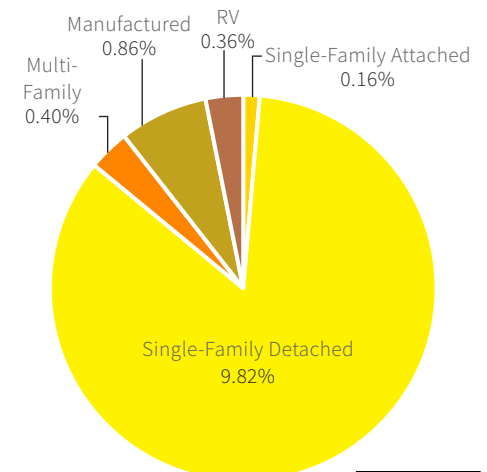
Manufactured Home



Recreational Vehicle

Figure 5A, Existing Housing Typologies in Port Lavaca Local and ETJ

Housing Typology	Number of Units	Acres	Percentage of Port Lavaca's Land Use (%)
Single-Family Detached	3,671	1,236.09	9.82
Single-Family Attached	47	20.02	0.16
Multi-Family	32	50.23	0.40
Manufactured Homes	365	108.61	0.86
Recreational Vehicle	12	45.85	0.36
TOTAL	4,127	1,460.80	11.61



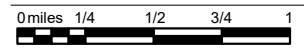
Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

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- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads

- Residential Land Uses**
- Single Family Attached
 - Single Family Detached
 - Manufactured Home
 - Multi-Family Residential

- New and Historic Neighborhoods**
- New Developments
 - Historic Neighborhood



November 2025

MAP 10: HOUSING TYPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENTS



Housing Types

Port Lavaca’s housing stock is relatively limited in diversity, with most residential options concentrated in traditional single-family homes. This section provides an overview of the primary housing typologies found within the city and its planning area, including single-family detached and attached homes, multi-family dwellings, manufactured homes, and recreational vehicle (RV) parks. Each typology is described in terms of its physical characteristics, development patterns, and siting criteria.

Single Family Detached Homes

Single-family homes in Port Lavaca are stand-alone residences typically characterized by private yards and may have a garage or carport. These homes generally range in price from 75,000 to 150,000 for older homes with newer homes selling in the lower \$300,000. The overall median price for single-family homes is around \$166,000. These dwellings typically fall between 1,200 and 2,500 square feet, situated on lots ranging from 0.25 to 0.5 acres. Most homes feature three to four bedrooms and two to three bathrooms, and are commonly built as one- or two-story structures.

Based on HAR listings, typical monthly costs for single-family detached homes, which include mortgage, property taxes, and insurance, are estimated to range from \$1,100 to \$1,600, depending on the purchase price and financing terms.



Single family style home
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Manufactured Homes

Manufactured homes are a more affordable housing option, with prices ranging from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and an average price of \$150,000. Rentals in Port Lavaca are around \$400 to \$800 per month. Prefabricated homes typically offer 1,000 to 1,500 sq ft of living space, situated on 0.1 to 0.5 acres of land. Manufactured homes typically have two to three bedrooms and two bathrooms, with single-story layouts. Port Lavaca manufactured homes exist within Mobile Home Parks or amongst single family homes in residential areas.

Townhomes

Townhomes, or multi-family units with shared walls but separate entrances, are more compact than single-family homes but offer individual ownership. Generally, these styles of homes have two to three bedrooms and three to four bathrooms. Rent for units in a newer building ranges around \$1,000 to \$1,500, and whole buildings

Duplexes

Duplexes are a versatile housing option with prices around 200,000 to 250,000 for both units combined. These properties typically offer between 2,000 and 3,000 sq ft of living space and are situated on lots ranging from 0.1 to 0.25 acres. Each unit generally features two to three bedrooms and one to two bathrooms, designed to accommodate families or tenants seeking independent living arrangements within a shared structure. Monthly rents for duplexes are between \$1,000 and \$1,500.



Duplex in Port Lavaca
Source: Zillow (placeholder)

Multi-family Residential / Apartments

Multi-family residential properties in Port Lavaca primarily consist of apartment complexes, which provide rental housing options with shared amenities. Rental rates typically range from \$800 to \$1,500 per month, offering affordability for a variety of households. Most available apartments are located in older buildings.



Apartment building in Port Lavaca
Source: Zillow (placeholder)

Housing Conditions

Site visits across Port Lavaca reveal a wide range of physical housing conditions that reflect both environmental vulnerability and economic challenges. A noticeable number of homes have boarded-up windows, though it was often unclear whether these were installed for storm preparedness, to secure vacant properties, or to cover broken windows. Regardless of the reason, these visual cues contribute to a perception of neglect or crime, which can deter potential homebuyers and reinforce stigmas about specific neighborhoods.



Home in Port Lavaca with boarded up windows
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Beyond boarded windows, many homes exhibited visible signs of deterioration, including peeling paint, damaged siding, sagging roofs, and other structural deficiencies. These conditions suggest deferred maintenance, likely stemming from limited household income, aging ownership, or absentee landlords. Port Lavaca's aging housing inventory, much of which was built between the 1950s and 1980s, increases the likelihood of future structural issues and costly repairs. Without intervention, the number of homes in disrepair is likely to grow. The city also has a significant stock of manufactured homes, which are particularly vulnerable to coastal weather conditions. Exposure to high winds, salt air corrosion, and flooding accelerates wear and tear, which underscores the need for resilient housing solutions.



Older manufactured homes
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Addressing these challenges will require a coordinated approach that includes housing rehabilitation programs, code enforcement, and community investment. Strategic partnerships with organizations like Clean Coast Texas, along with targeted use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), could help property owners fund repairs, improve curb appeal, and restore neighborhood confidence.

Market Characteristics:

According to data from local realtors and census housing surveys, Port Lavaca is currently facing a housing shortage. This imbalance is driving up prices for more desirable homes and pushing residents seeking affordable options toward neighboring communities like Victoria. Realtors report that most buyers are searching for homes in the low \$300,000 range, but the existing housing stock offers limited inventory at that price point. The average rent for a three bedroom home in Port Lavaca is around \$1,900

There is a strong demand for both starter homes for permanent residents and temporary housing for contract workers, especially those employed in the region's industrial and coastal sectors. Expanding the supply of new homes would help balance the market, provide more options for buyers, and support workforce stability

Conclusion

Port Lavaca's housing landscape presents a complex mix of challenges and opportunities that are central to shaping the city's future growth and livability. A growing housing shortage is driving up prices and limiting access to affordable options, particularly for first-time buyers and lower-income households. Addressing these dual pressures will require a coordinated strategy that combines housing rehabilitation, code enforcement, and new residential development. By investing in both the preservation of existing homes and the development of new housing options, Port Lavaca can foster a more inclusive, resilient, and economically vibrant community.

RESILIENCE

What is a Resilient City?

The Resilient Cities Network defines Urban Resilience as, “the capacity of a city’s systems, businesses, institutions, communities, and individuals to survive, adapt, and thrive, no matter what chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.” Acute shocks include sudden natural disasters like weather events; and chronic stresses include long-term factors like aging infrastructure, economic instability, drought, and factors related to climate change, like sea level rise. This allows for cities not only to “bounce back” but also plan and build strong and flexible municipal systems, communities, and environments that can thrive and evolve to face new challenges. This involves strengthening infrastructure, diversifying economies, ensuring vulnerable populations are protected and supported. Resiliency is especially important for coastal cities like Port Lavaca, where threats such as sea level rise and extreme weather events pose increasing risks to life and property. By factoring-in resilience into shaping land use, transportation, environmental policies and emergency management, cities can reduce long-term costs related to disaster recovery efforts, maintenance, insurance premiums, energy costs, and economic disruption.

The Climate Resiliency Report, prepared by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Allstate, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, utilized models that simulated disasters to see impacts on economic losses due to job loss, population decline, and economic activity. The models found that every dollar spent on preparing for disasters saves seven dollars in economic costs for the community. The results also noted that investments in resilience and preparedness can benefit communities by creating more jobs and encouraging community growth. So, while a city can still encounter loss during a major event, strengthening the city can at least reduce the number of losses and make it easier to get back on track.

The first step in building a resilient city is looking at its capacities and underlying risk factors. This emphasizes where priorities should be shifted to in order to protect the community, economy, and infrastructure. Adopting zoning, land-use practices, and building codes can prevent or reduce the amount of damage or disruption after a major event.



Lighthouse Beach Fishing Pier overseeing Lavaca Bay Causeway
Source: Kevin Stillman

Port Lavaca's Resilience Challenges

Port Lavaca faces several localized risk factors that heighten its vulnerability to climate-related impacts and infrastructure stress. Aging infrastructure, particularly water and wastewater systems, poses long-term reliability and service challenges. Residential areas that utilize septic systems are vulnerable to groundwater contamination if the area floods or there is a system failure. Coastal properties and infrastructure are also at risk from flooding, especially from storm surge. Damage to these areas can be a public safety concern. Redfish Retreat is at even more elevated risk as the entire neighborhood is on septic and located partially in the 500-year flood plain. Risks like these can be addressed through targeted investment for updated infrastructure, improved home-building policies, and environmental restoration of coastal and wetlands.

Hazard mitigation is a proactive approach to reducing the long-term risks posed by natural disasters and climate-related events. For Port Lavaca, this means identifying vulnerabilities in advance and investing in strategies that lessen the impact of flooding, storm surge, and infrastructure failure. Effective hazard mitigation not only protects lives and property but also lowers recovery costs and strengthens community resilience.

Key actions for Port Lavaca include:

- Managing floodplains
- Upgrading infrastructure
- Restoring coastal and wetland buffers
- Enforcing resilient building codes
- Integrating emergency preparedness

These proactive measures provide a framework for addressing Port Lavaca's most pressing vulnerabilities, beginning with its aging infrastructure.

Aging Infrastructure

Aging infrastructure is at an increased risk of failure because it is more prone to breaking down, especially when subjected to extreme wind and water inundation. These failures lead to a disruption in services which can cut off essential services, endanger public health and safety, and delay emergency response times. Old, outdated infrastructure also may not meet current standards to meet capacity for current demands and may not be compatible with current and future technology. Updated infrastructure should also consider if the location of the trunk and network is ideal and if these facilities need to be above or below ground.

Stormwater Management Systems

Effective stormwater management is essential for strengthening urban resilience and protecting communities from flooding. In Port Lavaca, which serves as a primary flow destination for the county, insufficient system capacity can quickly overwhelm infrastructure and inundate the city. To reduce these risks, culverts must be kept clear of debris through regular cleanouts to ensure water can flow, utilize gravity-driven pumps when possible because they do not require fuel, expand channels or improve grading to optimize water flow. Green stormwater techniques employ nature-based solutions, such as expanding native vegetation and creating permeable spaces, to help water directly absorb into the ground. Existing parkland and stormwater drainage are depicted in Map 11, *Parks and Green Space*. Beyond stormwater, wastewater and septic systems also present long-term challenges for resilience.



Houston Power Lines
Source: Houston Chronicle



Stormdrain in San Antonio, TX
Source: Joint Base San Antonio

Prevalence of Homes on Septic

For example, in the Redfish Retreat residential subdivision, all homes rely on septic systems and the subdivision is largely vacant. This area is a missed opportunity for preservation of wetlands since that area is low-lying and partially in a mapped flood zone, and the developer was not required to provide a connection to the main sewer network. While the septic tanks do have an alarm system and contingency space if they reach a minimum capacity, these systems are not sustainable in the long term because the septic tanks need to be managed independently from the main sewer network.

Impact of Sea Level Rise on Coastal Property and Infrastructure

The slightest rise in sea level can cause storm surge to travel further inland during a storm. Much of Port Lavaca's heavy industrial properties are located on the coast along Lavaca Bay. These brownfield areas could contaminate groundwater and other bodies of water if there were a major flooding event. Additionally, roads, docks, and utilities along the coast could be compromised by repeated saltwater exposure and flooding.

Older Structures and Land Uses

Older homes and buildings may not meet modern building codes for winds and flooding, which makes them more susceptible to damage. Older buildings are also less energy efficient. Retrofitting these buildings can preserve historical and culturally significant buildings for the future and maintain community identity. Newer, manufactured home sites can be more resilient than traditionally built homes, while older manufactured or mobile homes may be more at risk.



Blue Building in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Season and Climatic Events

The *Calhoun County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan* identifies several seasonal and climatic events as potential risks for Calhoun County, Texas:

Hurricanes: The region faces at least one hurricane threat each year. Tropical systems bring heavy rainfall, high winds, storm surge, and can spawn tornadoes.

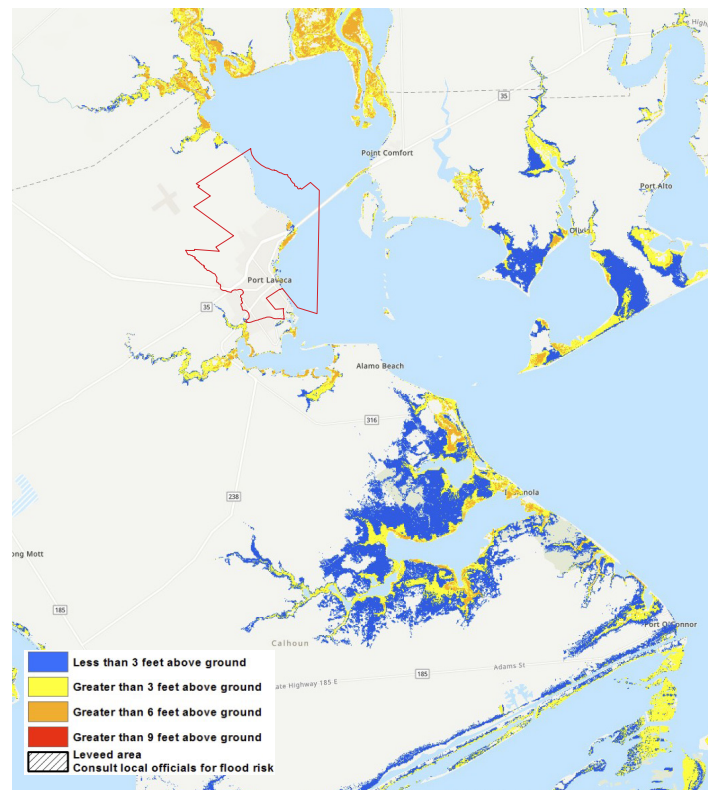
Extreme Heat: Excessive summer heat events are likely to occur annually. Extreme heat poses risks to human health and can damage agriculture and infrastructure.

Droughts: According to the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDS), current conditions in Port Lavaca are classified as “Abnormally Dry,” signaling a potential risk for future drought.

Wildfires: The probability of wildfires increases during drought and extreme heat. The U.S. Forest Service identifies a moderate wildfire risk in Port Lavaca, with surrounding Calhoun County facing higher risk. Beyond property damage, wildfire smoke can infiltrate homes, causing additional losses and health hazards.

Wind Storms:

Severe windstorms are common in Port Lavaca and neighboring communities such as Seadrift and Point Comfort. Calhoun County has a 77 percent chance of experiencing a severe windstorm each year.

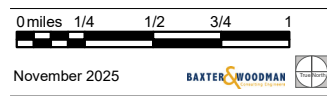


Storm surge risk map
Source: National Hurricane Center, Texas Parks & Wildlife

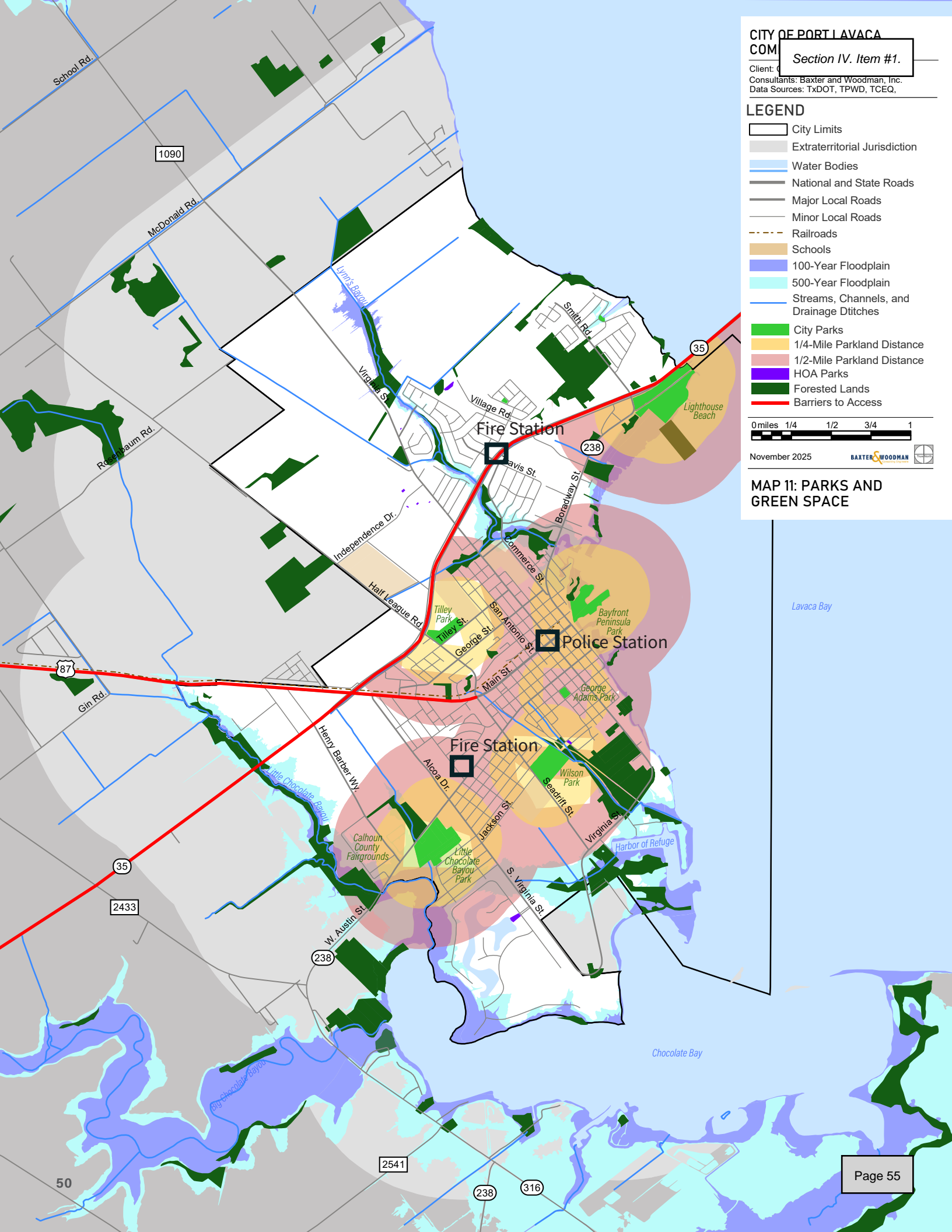
Client:
Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

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- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Schools
- 100-Year Floodplain
- 500-Year Floodplain
- Streams, Channels, and Drainage Ditches
- City Parks
- 1/4-Mile Parkland Distance
- 1/2-Mile Parkland Distance
- HOA Parks
- Forested Lands
- Barriers to Access



MAP 11: PARKS AND GREEN SPACE



ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Port Lavaca’s workforce is shaped by a blend of heavy industry, public service, and essential community providers. The city’s position on the Texas Gulf Coast has attracted large petrochemical and plastics manufacturers that anchor the regional economy, while schools, healthcare facilities, and local government ensure stability and everyday support for residents. Retail and marine construction further diversify employment opportunities, reflecting both Port Lavaca’s industrial strength and its role as a service hub for Calhoun County.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

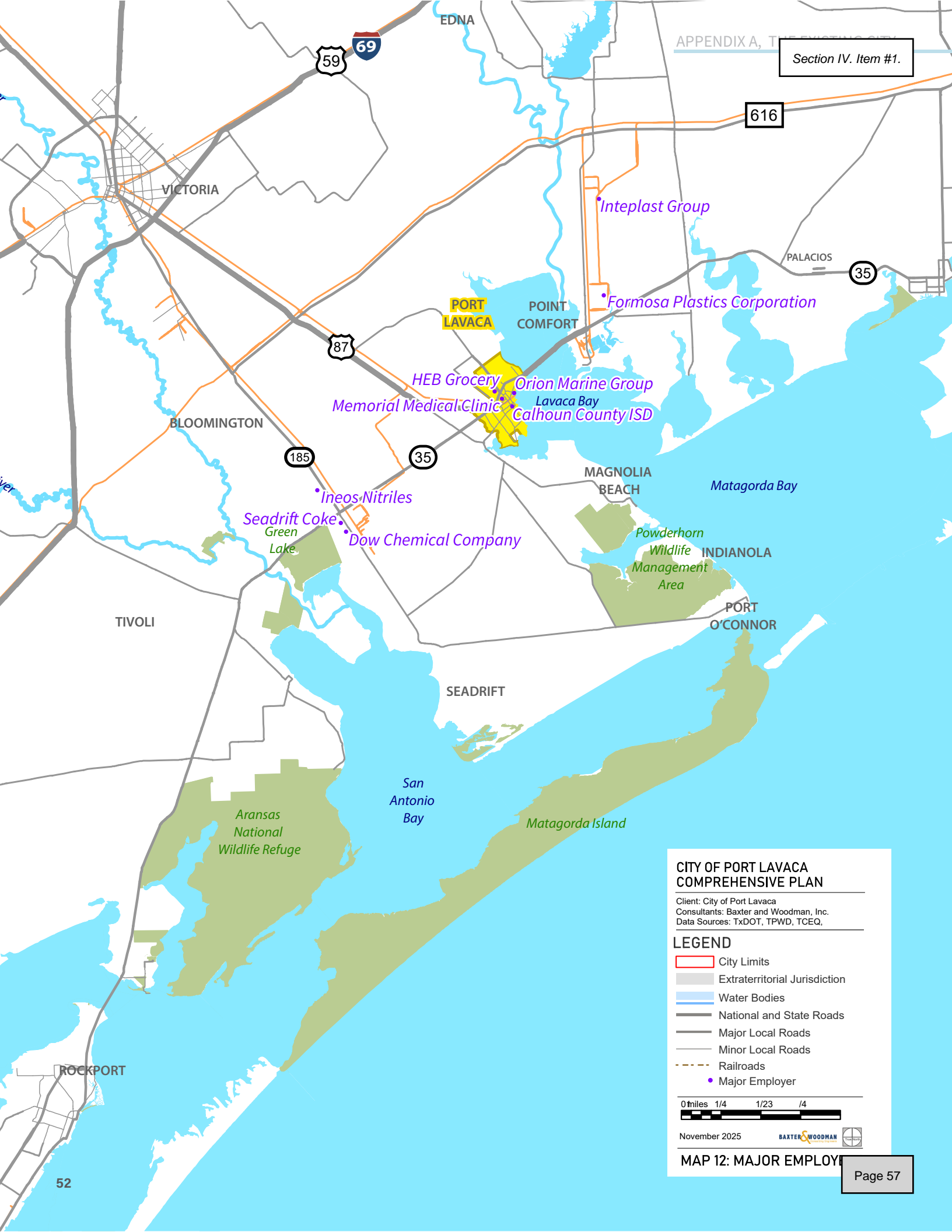
Port Lavaca’s economy is anchored by large petrochemical and plastics manufacturers (Formosa, Inteplast, Dow, Seadrift Coke, INEOS), which dominate industrial employment. These are balanced by public sector employers like Calhoun County ISD and county government, as well as essential services such as healthcare (Memorial Medical) and retail (HEB Grocery). Orion Marine Group adds strength in coastal and port-related construction. Together, these employers reflect a mix of heavy industry, public service, healthcare, and retail, shaping the workforce and economic resilience of the region. Formosa, Inteplast, and Dow Chemical employ the largest number of people, as referenced in Figure 6A, *Major Employers and Approximate Number of Employees*. The locations of major employers are depicted in Map 12, *Major Employers*.

Figure 6A, Major Employers and Approximate Number of Employees

Major Employers	Approximate number of Employees locally	Employer description
Formosa Plastics	2,800	Petrochemical plant
Inteplast Group	1,777	Plastics facility
Dow Chemical	1,400	Chemical producer
Seadrift Coke	153	Petroleum coke producer
INEOS Nitriles	141	Industrial chemicals facility
Calhoun County ISD	584	School district
Memorial Medical Center	200	Community hospital
H-E-B Grocery	100-150	Big box grocer
Orion Marine Group	Unknown	Marine construction



Orion Marine Group celebrating new dredge boat. Source: Workboat



**CITY OF PORT LAVACA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Client: City of Port Lavaca
Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

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- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Major Employer

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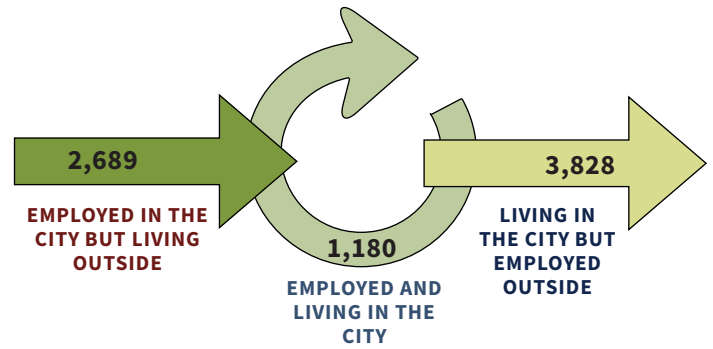
November 2025

MAP 12: MAJOR EMPLOYERS

INFLOW AND OUTFLOW

Between 2018 and 2022, Port Lavaca experienced notable shifts in its employment and commuting patterns. In 2018, 2,569 people were employed in Port Lavaca but lived outside the city, while 1,318 residents both lived and worked locally. At the same time, 4,204 residents commuted to jobs outside of Port Lavaca. By 2022, illustrated in Figure 25, *2022 Employment Flow*, the number of non-resident workers employed in the city had grown slightly to 2,689, reflecting a modest increase in inbound commuting. However, the number of residents who both lived and worked in Port Lavaca declined to 1,180, suggesting fewer local employment opportunities or a mismatch between available jobs and resident skill sets. Outbound commuting also decreased, with 3,828 residents traveling outside the city for work, a drop of 376 compared to 2018.

Figure 25, 2022 Employment Flow



Taken together, these trends indicate that Port Lavaca’s economy is becoming more reliant on workers from outside the city, while local residents are less engaged in the city’s job base. The slight rise in inbound workers points to employment growth that attracts non-residents, but the decline in resident employment highlights challenges in retaining local talent. Meanwhile, the reduction in outbound commuters suggests that some residents may be finding work closer to home or that the overall workforce is shrinking. These dynamics underscore the importance of aligning local job opportunities with resident needs to strengthen Port Lavaca’s economic resilience.

Socioeconomic Context: Southside Census Tract

Despite the strength of Port Lavaca’s industrial economy, disparities exist within the city. The census tract located on the southside of Port Lavaca is classified as low income, reflecting challenges in household earnings and access to opportunity. Residents in this area often face limited job mobility, with fewer connections to the higher-paying industrial positions that dominate the county’s employment base. This classification underscores the uneven distribution of economic benefits across the city, where industrial growth has not fully translated into local prosperity. Addressing these disparities through workforce development, targeted investment, and improved access to education and training remains critical to ensuring that Port Lavaca’s economic growth is inclusive and sustainable.

Key Findings

- The largest employers are in the chemical and plastics industries.
- The number of employees living in Port Lavaca has decreased, but the number of commuters into the city increased.
- Expanding employment opportunities, combined with improvements to local housing stock, could encourage more residents to live locally.
- Improving employer diversity may also help alleviate poverty in Port Lavaca's south side.

NORTH
35
TEXAS
↑
NORTH SOUTH
FARM FARM
1090 1090
ROAD ROAD
← →

ONE WAY →

O'Reilly
AUTO PARTS

port lavaca COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



PORT LAVACA, TEXAS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
DRAFT 12-30-2025



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mayor

The Honorable Jack Whitlow

City Council:

District 1 - Daniel Aguierre

District 2 - Tim Dent

District 3 - W. Allen Tippit, Jr.

District 4 - Rosie Padron

District 5 - Rose Bland-Stewart

District 6 - Justin Burke

Municipal Staff

Interim City Manager - Jody Weaver

Finance Director - Brittney Hogan

City Secretary - Mandy Grant

Fire Chief - Joe Reyes

Police Chief - Colin Rangnow

Director of Development Services - Derrick Smith

Director of Public Works - Wayne Shaffer

Harbor Master - Jim Redellat

Planning Board:

Chair - Justin Weaver

Board Members:

Melinda Cain

Cynthia Escalera

Sheryl Cuellar

Steve Butler

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chapter one

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Port Lavaca, Texas is a coastal community located in Calhoun County along the Gulf about 25 miles from Victoria, 21 miles from the Gulf shoreline, and 60 miles to the east of Rockport. As the City of Port Lavaca embarks on the 2025 update of its Comprehensive Plan, the emphasis is on fostering economic growth embracing coastal heritage, while maintaining the small town feel. By working closely with city staff, officials, residents, local businesses, and other regional stakeholders, this updated plan aims to address the community’s existing needs and create a resilient foundation for Port Lavaca’s future ventures.

PLANNING AUTHORITY

Port Lavaca is guided in its planning and development by several key authorities and legal frameworks. The primary planning authority is the City Council, which works alongside the Planning Board, Development Services Department, and the Public Works Department to oversee community growth and development. The legal foundation for Port Lavaca’s planning efforts is established by the Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 213, which mandates the creation and periodic updating of a comprehensive plan to guide future development. This comprehensive plan addresses various elements such as land use, housing, and transportation, and must involve public participation, as outlined in Section 213.003 of the Code. Public engagement in the planning process is also governed by the Texas Open Meetings Act and the Texas Public Information Act, which are designed to ensure transparency and community involvement.

Additionally, the Port Lavaca Code of Ordinances provides local regulations on subdivision of land and subsequent development, and building permits, while the Texas Administrative Code Title 1, Part 5, Chapter 1 offers state-level guidance on best practices for municipal planning. To keep a plan alive and serving the community's needs, Port Lavaca’s comprehensive plan should be regularly reviewed and updated through a structured process that assesses current conditions, incorporates community feedback, and considers changes as they become necessary. The proposed changes or amendments are proposed by the Development Services Department and placed on the City’s Planning Board for approval. All proposed changes, modifications, or approvals are sent to the City Council for their final approval, which ultimately approves or denies the updates.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is a policy and guidance document that outlines Port Lavaca's vision for the future and provides a roadmap for growth over the next 10-20 years and the challenges that may arise with population increases or decreases.. The Plan is intended to serve as the guide for governmental officials, City leaders, and community members. It offers a shared understanding and foundation by which decisions are made. Once finalized, the plan will act as the policy manual for the location and nature of growth and development within Port Lavaca. Comprehensive plans bridge the gap between public and private land interests, addressing the conservation of precious natural resources while planning for necessary infrastructure improvements. Comprehensive plans are also essential in analyzing and addressing various community issues, such as utilities infrastructure, housing and neighborhoods, parks and recreation, and transportation.

Provides a snapshot in time regarding the community’s preferences, needs, and desires



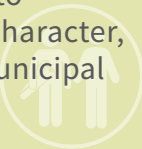
Helps develop and identify a community’s collective vision for the future



Helps plan for strategic investments and improvements



Provides tools and recommendations to improve the city’s character, regulations, and municipal operations



Provides a plan for transportation, utilities, park lands, and other municipal services



Helps identify growth strategies, management practices, and land use improvements



WHAT ARE THE INTENDED OUTCOMES OF THIS PLAN?

1. Shared-Community Vision and Priorities

Foster a shared community vision by actively engaging residents through presentations of concepts and ideas, neighborhood outreach meetings, and collaborative workshops. These efforts build consensus around priorities and ensure that community voices shape the city's future direction.

2. Infrastructure and Flood Mitigation Improvements

Through data analysis and system alignment, the plan recommends targeted infrastructure upgrades and flood mitigation measures. These improvements strengthen service reliability, reduce risk, and create a more resilient foundation for economic development and community growth.

3. Natural Lands, Parkland, and Active Transportation Improvements

Prioritize preserving ecosystems while expanding parkland and active transportation. Enhanced recreational services promote health, engage youth, reduce crime, and support senior participation. Safer routes connect residents to parks, schools, and downtown, while traffic and intersection upgrades improve mobility and efficiency across the community.

4. Placemaking and Cultural Priorities

Enhance Port Lavaca's visual character through strategic placement of regulatory and wayfinding signage and infrastructure upgrades, while celebrating the city's cultural heritage and history with downtown and landmark improvements. Community events, programming, and outreach activities further strengthen civic pride and create vibrant spaces that connect residents and visitors alike.

5. Improved Regulatory Frameworks

Strengthen Port Lavaca's regulatory frameworks by promoting flexible and strategic decision-making and clear prioritization. These improvements enhance local government efficiency and accountability, while continued community involvement, innovative solutions, and partnerships ensure policies remain responsive and effective in addressing future challenges.

PLANNING PROCESS

Developing a comprehensive plan for Port Lavaca, Texas requires a structured approach that clearly defines the community's long-term vision and translates it into actionable steps. The plan begins with an introduction that explains its purpose, scope, and the background of Port Lavaca. A vision and goals section follows, outlining the city's desired future and establishing SMART goals, an acronym which characterizes objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

The plan then examines current conditions across key areas such as land use, growth management, utilities infrastructure, housing, economic development, transportation, natural resources, and public facilities. A Future Land Use (FLU) Map identifies growth areas and proposed land use categories, while urban design guidelines suggest improvements to both function and appearance. Transportation strategies include roadway expansions and potential public transit enhancements, and housing policies underscore affordability and diversity. Conservation measures safeguard natural resources, while facility and service plans strengthen public amenities and emergency response systems. The plan's implementation framework details the actions, timelines, funding sources, and responsible parties needed to carry the plan forward.

The planning process itself unfolds in several phases. It begins with stakeholder engagement and the creation of a steering committee (which, for this plan, is the Planning Board), followed by data collection through surveys, workshops, and technical studies. Visioning sessions allow residents to shape a shared statement of community priorities. Drafts of the plan are prepared and open for public review, with revisions made before formal adoption by the City Council. Implementation then moves forward with a detailed action plan, supported by ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Regular updates and amendments ensure the plan remains responsive to new challenges and opportunities.

This comprehensive planning process ensures that Port Lavaca's plan is inclusive, adaptable, and forward-looking thus providing a strong foundation for sustainable growth, improved quality of life, and resilience in the years ahead.



Downtown Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Associates

REPORT STRUCTURE

1 CHAPTER ONE, PLANNING CONTEXT

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of Port Lavaca, tracing its historical background and development from its origins to the present day. It includes a timeline of key events that have shaped the city's identity, alongside an analysis of community demographics and psychographics based on U.S. Census data and Esri's Community Tapestry Segmentation, which offers insights into local lifestyles and socioeconomic trends. Additionally, the chapter highlights past planning efforts and notable achievements.

2 CHAPTER TWO, PLAN DIRECTION AND ASSUMPTIONS

This chapter summarizes and builds on what was learned from The Existing City Report (Appendix A) and establishes the city's growth trajectory regarding how to accommodate growth and ensure that it emulates the desired future character of the City. The report also provides optional growth scenarios regarding how the community may grow in the future with respect to varieties, intensities, and densities of land use, and multi-modal alternatives.

3 CHAPTER THREE, THE FUTURE CITY

The Future City report consists of seven plan elements, each of which has a dedicated chapter in this plan; and includes the City's growth capacity, development of safe multimodal transportation systems, defining future land use, evaluating the adequacy of public facilities and services, providing strategies and recommendations for housing, and improving the City's resilience to future shocks and stressors.

4 CHAPTER FOUR, IMPLEMENTATION

This final chapter provides steps and actions to help city leaders implement the community-oriented goals and strategies. The chapter also includes a series of benchmarking methods, outlines the amendment process, identifies local and regional action leaders and strategic partnerships. A list of community priorities is provided to help city leaders understand what the community feels is most important. Lastly, an implementation action table is provided with recommended timeframe (short-term, mid-term, and long-term), action leaders / partnerships, the level of effort needed to implement, and order-of-magnitude costs for implementing capital projects.

A APPENDIX, THE EXISTING CITY

The Existing City Report is an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan that provides a snapshot of Port Lavaca as it stands today. The report is composed up of several technical memos, each focused on a specific area. These memos are combined into one cohesive document that covers key aspects of the city, including housing, development regulations, public services, utilities, land use, parks and recreation, community character, and transportation. To help illustrate these topics, the report includes maps, tables, and images.

PLANNING AREA

The City of Port Lavaca's Planning Area includes all land within city limits plus a one-mile-wide Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), enabling the city to guide development and infrastructure in adjacent unincorporated areas. The Planning Area spans approximately 19.16 square miles, which includes approximately 8.39 square miles of City Limits and approximately 10.76 square miles of ETJ, encompassing a diverse mix of coastal landscapes, residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and industrial zones. Located along State Highway (SH) 35, Port Lavaca offers direct access to nearby communities such as Victoria, Point Comfort, and Bloomington, as well as broader connections across the Texas Gulf Coast.

Port Lavaca's position on Lavaca Bay is a defining feature, shaping both its economic base and infrastructure priorities. The city benefits from tourism tied to fishing, birding, and coastal recreation, while also supporting petrochemical industry that contribute to regional employment and investment. The historic Original Townsite, which includes the downtown core, remains a focal point of civic identity and urban form.

Port Lavaca's economy is anchored by a mix of agriculture, manufacturing, retail, and energy, all of which contribute to its long-term vitality. The plan promotes sustainable development practices to protect key resources such as parks, waterways, and wildlife habitat.

However, the region faces challenges, particularly flooding risks due to its flat terrain, coastal proximity, and exposure to extreme weather events. By engaging residents, businesses, and regional partners, Port Lavaca's Comprehensive Plan seeks to address current needs while preparing for future resilience. Through thoughtful planning and community collaboration, the city is positioned to foster economic growth, enhance quality of life, and preserve its unique coastal character for generations to come.

Environmental Setting and Coastal Influence

Port Lavaca is located within the Texas Gulf Coast region, a landscape defined by coastal plains, wetlands, and proximity to the Gulf of Mexico. This environment shapes the city's climate, natural resources, and recreational opportunities, with warm, humid conditions and exposure to seasonal storms. Port Lavaca's position on Lavaca Bay supports diverse ecosystems, such as estuaries and marshlands, that provide critical habitats for native wildlife. These natural features also influence the city's infrastructure and planning

priorities, emphasizing the need for resilience, conservation and sustainable development.

Calhoun County and Neighboring Communities

Calhoun County, situated along the Texas Gulf Coast, is a dynamic region known for its rich history, coastal landscapes, and thriving industries tied to Lavaca Bay. The bay plays a central role in shaping the county's economy, supporting sectors such as shipping, energy, fishing, and tourism. Port Lavaca, the county seat, serves as the administrative and economic hub of Calhoun County, with strong connections to surrounding communities and regional infrastructure.

Port Lavaca is surrounded by a network of nearby communities that contribute to the region's character and economy. Point Comfort, located just across Lavaca Bay, is home to major industrial and port operations. Seadrift and Port O'Connor are coastal towns known for commercial fishing, boating, and seasonal tourism. Magnolia Beach, Alamo Beach, and Indianola offer public beach access, RV parks, and vacation homes, drawing visitors during peak seasons and enhancing the area's recreational appeal. To the northwest, Victoria serves as the closest major city, providing expanded access to healthcare, education, retail, and employment opportunities that complement Port Lavaca's local offerings.

Port Lavaca's Jurisdictional Limits

Port Lavaca's city limits form the core of its Planning Area, encompassing the majority of the population and key infrastructure corridors, particularly SH 35. The city also includes parcels of coastal and rural land, with extensions reaching toward Lavaca Bay and adjacent natural features. These areas consist of residential neighborhoods, undeveloped open space, and environmentally sensitive zones such as bayous and wetlands.

In addition to land within the city limits, Port Lavaca exercises limited authority over its ETJ which include subdivision and development stands (ex: lot size, street layout, and drainage requirements), billboards/signs, cemeteries, utility systems, pollution control and abatement, and annexation. This authority allows Port Lavaca to guide development, infrastructure, and land use in nearby unincorporated areas, helping to manage growth and protect natural resources beyond its formal boundaries. Calhoun County is responsible for road maintenance, law enforcement, and county services within the ETJ. State agencies handle the remaining services.



PORT LAVACA'S HISTORY



Indigenous Roots

Port Lavaca, nestled along the Texas Gulf Coast, carries a rich legacy shaped by Indigenous tribes, early Anglo settlers, and the ever-changing tides of commerce and conflict. For centuries, the lands that now make up Texas were home to many Native American groups. Along the Gulf Coast, the Karankawa people thrived as nomadic coastal hunter-gatherers. Their name is believed to mean “dog-lovers” or “dog-raisers,” a reflection of the fox-like dogs they kept. Seasonally, the Karankawa migrated between the mainland and barrier islands, following abundant food sources: fish, shellfish, deer, bison, and alligator.

Later, the Comanche and Tonkawa tribes entered the region, leading to territorial disputes between all the tribes. The Tonkawa and Comanche tribes were rivals, with the Tonkawa aligning themselves with Anglo-American settlers. By the 1500s, the arrival of Spanish and French explorers ignited centuries of conflict. The influx of Anglo-American settlers in the early 1800s, coupled with colonization, disease, and warfare, drastically reduced the Karankawa population. Yet today, along the Gulf Coast, descendants of the Karankawa actively preserve and share their heritage and continue their legacy.

The Linnville Raid of 1840

The 1840 Comanche Raid was a retaliatory strike following the failed peace talks at the Council House Fight in March, during which Comanche delegates were taken hostage when they did not return all Texas captives. The confrontation led to the killing of the Comanche emissaries, sparking outrage among the tribe. On August 6th, Chief Buffalo Hump led a force of nearly 1,000 Comanches in attacks on Victoria, followed by the looting and burning of Linnville two days later. The response from Texans resulted in the Battle of Plum Creek, which marked a turning point in Texas-Comanche relations and reshaped frontier defense strategies.

Rise of a Port Town and the Civil War

The Town of Lavaca (La vaca meaning “the cow” in Spanish) emerged from the ashes of Linnville, quickly establishing itself as a premier shipping hub thanks to its strategic coastal location. Multiple sources claim different origins of the town’s name, but they were either named for the American Bison residing there or for the town’s role in exporting cattle. In 1857, the San Antonio Mexican Gulf Railroad opened a rail line connecting Lavaca to Victoria. By the mid-19th century, its docks shipped out exports such as cattle by-products, cotton, wool, pecans, and copper, as well as silver and lead, which had been imported from Mexico. According to the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) archives, at this time, Lavaca had a population of 315 people, including 84 enslaved individuals.

During the Civil War, Lavaca transitioned into a key military outpost, housing a large Confederate arsenal and a small-arms manufacturing facility. This strategic importance drew Union attention, which resulted in a naval occupation designed to stifle Confederate trade. In the winter of 1862–1863, Union forces intensified their campaign by destroying the town’s wharves and severing its railroad connection. Despite the challenges of reconstruction following the war, Lavaca demonstrated its resilient spirit and emerged as a center for trade and commerce in the new era. In 1879, Lavaca officially changed its name to Port Lavaca.

An Economic Comeback

The Civil War severely damaged Port Lavaca’s trade infrastructure, causing trade disruptions. During this time, the population of Port Lavaca fell from 778 in 1870 to 100 in 1880 and then decreased to 70 in 1884 as the Town of Indianola emerged as the Calhoun County Seat post-Civil War. Over the decades, Port Lavaca competed with Indianola for dominance as the county seat. The devastating 1886 Indianola Hurricane, which is the 8th most intense hurricane on record to make landfall in the U.S., provided the opportunity to overtake the now destroyed Indianola permanently. By 1896, the estimated population of Port Lavaca had grown to 800 residents.

The mass expansion of Texas’s railroad network during the 1880s resulted in a decline in Port Lavaca’s prominence for shipping cattle. The Port began focusing on exporting seafood, which included shrimp and fish. Additionally, during this period, the reconnected railways attracted weekend visitors from larger cities, such as Victoria, Houston, and San Antonio, who enjoyed recreational activities like oyster roasts, sport fishing, and hunting. However, passenger rail services ended in 1935. The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) connected to the town in 1913, which further boosted its maritime trading potential.

Other infrastructure improvements during this period included the construction of Texas SH 35 in 1917. The seawall was built in 1920 to protect the Port from high water and erosion, and several county road surfacing projects were completed, along with the Port Lavaca Causeway in 1931, which connected Port Lavaca with Point Comfort.

The discovery of local oil and natural gas in the 1930s marked a new period of economic growth for Port Lavaca. In 1940, the population of Port Lavaca had grown to 2,069 residents and counting. From the 1940s onward, this new industry diversified Port Lavaca's market, which led to the growth of national manufacturing facilities. Companies that established factories in the area include Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) in 1948, Union Carbide in 1953, and Formosa in 1983. With all this new industry, ships needed easy access to Lavaca Bay. The Matagorda Ship Channel construction was completed in 1966 and is a crucial component of maritime infrastructure, allowing ship access into Matagorda Bay and connecting to Port Lavaca and Port Comfort.

Population Growth then Decline

Port Lavaca and the Gulf Coast are no strangers to hurricanes. Since 1850, the Texas coast has experienced 111 tropical systems that made landfall (Adams 2024). The most recent storm to make landfall near Port Lavaca was Hurricane Beryl in 2024. Despite devastating tropical cyclones throughout the next several decades, Port Lavaca



Port Lavaca Main Street
Source: *Cinema Treasures*



Original Port Lavaca Lighthouse
Source: *Calhoun County Museum*

continued to grow. For example, Category Four Hurricane Carla produced a strong windstorm with peak gusts of 175 mph in 1961 in Port Lavaca ("Hurricane Carla - 50th Anniversary" 2011). During this time, the original wooden Port Lavaca Causeway was destroyed and later rebuilt with concrete that same year.

Despite continued storm events, between 1940 and 1970, Port Lavaca's population grew to between 2,000 and 3,000 people every decade. However, between 1970 and 2010, population growth began to stagnate, only gaining or losing 500 people each decade. The population reached its peak in 2010, with 12,248 residents. With the closure of the ALCOA plant, however, the City experienced a four percent population decrease to 11,557, as indicated in the 2020 U.S. Census.

The Future

Port Lavaca's future will be built on honoring its resilient past and boldly forging new paths forward. From deep indigenous roots and 19th-century trials to its rise as a vital hub for trade and industry, the City has repeatedly proven its ability to recover, adapt, and thrive. With a legacy of reinvention, Port Lavaca is ready to enter its Revival Era! So, it is time to embrace the next chapter for the City with vision, determination, and hope.



Postcard featuring the opening of the original Lavaca Bay Causeway: Military vehicles crossing.
Source: *Portal to Texas History*



Postcard of the view from City Hall.
Source: *Portal to Texas History*

HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- Pre 1800s:** ● Karankawa tribes are the first inhabitants to Gulf Coast region
- 1831-40:** ● The Town of Linnville is a center for commerce and warehousing.
- 1840:** ● The Town of Linville is destroyed in the Great Comanche Raid.
- 1840:** ● The Town of Lavaca is founded.
- 1840s-50s:** ● During this period of growth, Lavaca had seven wharves, where ships could dock.
- 1846-52:** ● Lavaca is the first county seat for the newly formed Calhoun County.
- 1849:** ● Presbyterian Church School is the first school built in Calhoun County.
- 1857:** ● San Antonio Mexican Gulf Railroad opens line connecting Port Lavaca to Victoria.
- 1858:** ● Halfmoon Reef Lighthouse is built on Lighthouse Beach.
- 1862-63:** ● Port Lavaca trade infrastructure is damaged during the Civil War.
- 1879:** ● The City is officially named “Port Lavaca.”
- Late 1880s:** ● Period of economic prosperity due to trade and tourism.
- 1886:** ● The Indianola Hurricane destroys Indianola.
- 1907:** ● The St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railway chartered and served 200 miles along the Gulf Coast.
- 1909:** ● Port Lavaca becomes a general law city.
- 1913:** ● The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) connects to Port Lavaca.
- 1917:** ● Construction of Texas State Hwy 35 is completed and becomes operational.
- 1920:** ● The City’s Seawall is constructed to protect the City from Gulf storms.
- 1931:** ● The Lavaca Bay causeway is built as part of the Texas SH 35 route.
- 1934-35:** ● Natural gas and oil are discovered in Port Lavaca.
- 1935:** ● US 87, a north-south route, opens and begins in Port Lavaca.
- 1948:** ● The ALCOA plant brought industrial jobs to the area, drawn by barge access on the GIWW.
- 1948:** ● Calhoun County Independent School District (CCISD) is formed. Calhoun High School is established.
- 1952:** ● Union Carbide joins the local petrochemical industry.
- 1956:** ● Port Lavaca became a home rule-chartered city.
- 1961:** ● Category 4 Hurricane Carla makes landfall in Calhoun County.
- 1966:** ● The Matagorda Ship Channel construction is completed.
- 1983:** ● Matagorda Island State Park is established as a natural protected area.
- 1983:** ● Formosa Plastic Corporation’s first petrochemical plant opened.
- 2019:** ● ALCOA Refinery Plant in Point Comfort officially closed.



Bay Trading Company by Percy Parks
Source: Calhoun County Museum



PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

REVIEW OF PAST PLANS AND STUDIES

The following Plans and Studies were reviewed and have been summarized below:

- Port Lavaca Waterfront Master Plan (August 2012)
- Plan Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan (2016)
- Port Lavaca Downtown Waterfront Final Master Plan (August 2023)
- USDA Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (2024)
- Calhoun County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023-2028 (2023)

Port Lavaca Waterfront Master Plan (adopted August 2012)

The Plan’s Existing Conditions Analysis subdivided Port Lavaca’s waterfront into several distinct sectors and analyzed the assets, opportunities, and constraints inherent within each sector, and included the following findings:
Waterfront Trail – Central to the Plan’s recommendations is providing greater public access and connectivity to key areas that compose the City’s waterfront. A multi-use waterfront trail is proposed that would link together several vacant parcels, some of which would include trailheads and parking areas. The trail would also provide opportunities for outdoor interpretive education, wildlife viewing, and fishing stations.



Source: Port Lavaca Waterfront Master Plan

Clement Cove Harbor – This area is held under single ownership and could conceivably be redeveloped into residential infill development. Unfortunately, in order to access this area homeowners would have to pass through neighborhoods composed of deteriorated homes and under-maintained properties.

Downtown Main Street – Main Street is composed of high-quality anchors, including a variety of historically significant structures, including the Seascapes Apartments, the 1936-era

Port Lavaca Main Street Theatre, and the Texas Traditions Cafe. There is an opportunity to expand niche retail uses, such as limited-service, sit-down restaurants and boutique clothing stores. Unfortunately, most buildings along this corridor are in need of extensive renovation before tenants can occupy these spaces.

Virginia and Commerce Streets – These thoroughfares link Port Lavaca’s waterfront tourism and industry to regional markets. Destinations along these corridors include the Memorial Medical center, Bauer Community Center, City Hall, and Lighthouse Beach. There is an opportunity for streetscape improvements. Another constraint includes the amount of truck traffic that emanates from the Harbor of Refuge and travels along these principal routes.

Fisher Harbor – Though largely undeveloped, property owners in adjoining neighborhoods are concerned about current development (oyster producer) that may exacerbate negative externalities, such as view obstruction, truck traffic, noise and odors. Any new residential, commercial, or industrial development may minimize public access to the waterfront.

Harbor of Refuge - Unlike other waterfront areas to the north, Harbor of Refuge has been publicly accepted as a general industrial area. The use of properties just outside the harbor are of more concern, given their transitional location between industrial and residential uses. As harbor activity increases, spin-off development, such as storage tanks has expanded the harbor’s area of influence. Nearby residents want protection from conflicting uses and encroachment.

City Harbor - City Harbor has historically functioned as the City’s working waterfront. The shrimp and oyster industries that are part of the City’s cultural identity contribute to the waterfront’s authenticity – unlike commercially driven development. The presence of a working waterfront can serve as a foundation to boost restaurant and recreation activity. This might include everything from “eat your own” oysters to kayaking trails.

Bayfront Peninsula Park - The park is located on a large peninsula adjacent to Nautical Landings marina and the terminus of Downtown. Its central location and proximity to non-recreational uses make it an authentic “dest

offering opportunities for users to park for the day and visit multiple venues within walking distance. Although the City has plans to improve this park with additional amenities there are recreational and boating limitations, including very shallow waters and large pieces of submerged debris which limit boating access.

Nautical and Smith Harbors - Nautical Harbor is surrounded by Bayfront Peninsula Park, Nautical Landings building and marina, and the Smith tract. Its close proximity to the park, marina, and Downtown position it as a key redevelopment area. Smith Harbor is located to the immediate south of Nautical Harbor and shares a peninsula of the Smith tract. Nautical Landings' parking lot can accommodate approximately 65 to 75 cars, and can help to support Downtown shopping, community festivals, and trailhead parking.

Existing Conditions Analysis

The Existing Conditions Analysis includes a Conditions & Characterization section, which identifies edge conditions along the City's waterfront (e.g., engineered bulkhead versus natural edge); areas that possessed significant historic character; areas that suffered from blighted conditions; vacant, buildable areas; vacant areas that embody significant topographic relief; areas predominantly containing compacted dirt; and areas ripe for new investment.

The Waterfront Master Plan's Opportunities Analysis focuses on the development of five (5) principal opportunity zones along Port Lavaca's waterfront, each with multiple recommended improvements, including the following:

Working Wharves

- Fishing industry hub, including charters and "Cannery Row" style seafood wholesaling and retailing
- Improved public access and viewing
- Restoration, adaptive reuse and infill development

Veterans' Park (Festival Grounds)

- Veterans' memorial
- Active recreation – basketball, tennis, multi-use ballfields
- "Kiddie" beach
- Staging area for large public events, fairs
- Public parking

Marina

- Marina services area with motorized boating and sailing center
- Dredging and widening of Smith Harbor with dredge-spoil donor area
- Peninsula shaping and seawall armoring edge treatment
- Elevated marina building
- Lowland trails

Lagoons

- Passive recreation
- Nature/eco-preserve
- Trails, hiking, nature-watching
- Mountain biking and paddle sports, sailing
- Elevated interpretive trails
- RV camping
- Potential nature center building

Master Planned Neighborhood

- Long-term redevelopment areas
- Land-banking initiative
- Reconstruction of street grid
- Street/sidewalk connections between Downtown and working wharves, with mixed residential
- Cantilevered overlook at "elbow" of Mahan and Bay



Source: Port Lavaca Waterfront Master Plan



Source: Port Lavaca Waterfront Master Plan



Source: Port Lavaca Waterfront Master Plan

Waterfront Development Ordinance

As summarized in the *Plan Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan*, the *Waterfront Master Plan* proposed establishing a Waterfront Development Ordinance (WDO) as an important tool through which to implement the Plan. As of the drafting

the Comprehensive Plan in 2016, these regulations had not been formally adopted by the City, would be instrumental in determining the type of development to be located along Port Lavaca's premier waterfront areas; and would regulate specific building characteristics like height, density, aesthetic quality and site orientation; in order to promote higher-quality development along the waterfront, and ensure the safety of the environment, and preserve community character. As stated in the WDO, the provisions are generally intended to:

1. Implement the vision, principles and objectives of the Waterfront Master Plan, adopted by the City Council.
2. Acknowledge the waterfront as a place of local significance, including its historical, cultural and architectural assets and their importance to the City.
3. Facilitate development, redevelopment and public infrastructure improvement projects in manners that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and its policies and recommendations.
4. Provide for development and redevelopment that is compatible with existing and planned future development and generally cohesive from site to site.
5. Encourage development of vacant lots or parcels and redevelopment or reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings in manners that further the implementation of the City's plans and which contribute positively to a quality character.
6. Strengthen the City's tax base through the development of quality, owner-occupied housing; stable, safe and highly livable neighborhood environments; growing sustainable businesses; and increased tourism of the improved, publicly accessible waterfront.
7. Add value to the waterfront and its environs for local residents, businesses and visitors through new public facilities and improvements, better access and opportunities for business and recreation.
8. Preserve the natural environs and conserve valuable resources through sound engineering and good land planning practices.
9. Improve the place qualities to achieve broad recognition as a destination on the Texas Gulf Coast.

Specifically, the WDO designates the waterfront area as a place of historical, cultural and architectural significance to the City of Port Lavaca. The WDO also provides the City with regulations to guide desirable development, thereby protecting Port Lavaca's valuable and most popular assets from the potential harmful effects of growth (Comp Plan, page 20). The WDO proposes three waterfront zoning districts – residential, commercial, and waterfront business (Comp Plan, page 60).

Plan Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2016)

Plan Port Lavaca is a nine-chapter Comprehensive Plan that provides findings and recommendations on the physical and economic aspects of growth and development over a 10- to 20-year planning horizon. The plan will serve as the guiding document for public officials, City staff, developers, and others who make the daily decisions and choices that will ultimately determine the future direction, fiscal stability, and quality-of-life of the community. As summarized within Chapter 1, Introduction, *Plan Port Lavaca* will be achieved through implementing the following actions:

- Major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the general fund and other public finance tools
- New and amended City ordinances and regulations that are closely partnered with the plan's objectives
- Departmental work plans and staffing in key areas
- Targeted programs and spending prioritized by the City's annual budgeting process, including everyday services like code enforcement and park maintenance
- Support for on-going planning and studies that will further identify community needs and action strategies, including the City Council and staff's own strategic planning
- Applying for external grant funding to supplement local funds and/or advance projects
- Pursuing initiatives with public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes that neither could have experienced alone (page 1).



Source: Plan Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan

Chapter 1 provides annotated summaries to the Plan's principal chapters, including the following:

- **Chapter 2, *Snapshot***, serves as the reconnaissance stage for the planning process. Historical population trends, demographics, existing conditions, physical constraints, and past planning efforts establish the baseline from which decisions are made.
- **Chapter 3, *Vision***, establishes the community's vision for the future, and is reflective of the many characteristics and values that Port Lavaca desires to preserve and provide for current residents and future generations. This section identifies the primary issues, goals, and objectives derived from stakeholder consensus.
- **Chapter 4, *Land Use and Recreation***, evaluates the land use patterns and needs, with an emphasis on recreational land uses by providing general guidance for future parks and open space improvements.
- **Chapter 5, *Transportation and Circulation***, provides a transportation framework that will serve as a guide for future transportation and other development decisions within Port Lavaca.
- **Chapter 6, *Infrastructure***, reviews existing conditions for water and wastewater infrastructure and recommends strategies to incrementally expand Port Lavaca's facilities appropriately to adequately provide for future growth and redevelopment.
- **Chapter 7, *Community Character***, summarizes the characteristics that contribute to a residential neighborhood's quality of life.
- **Chapter 8, *Economic Development***, examines the current economic conditions and proposes strategies for business retention, business attraction, and tourism.
- **Chapter 9, *Action Plan***, organizes and prioritizes the recommendations contained within the various plan elements into an understandable action plan.

At the time of this plan's development, Port Lavaca's and Calhoun County's population was expected to increase from 12,281 and 21,762, in 2104, respectively, to 16,969 and 29,622 by 2040; according to Texas State Data Center and Texas Water Development Board estimates.

Chapter 1 also summarized the goals outlined in a Strategic Plan the City developed in 2012, which included the following (page 16):

Governance - Port Lavaca residents are well informed and involved with the affairs of local city government.

Infrastructure - Port Lavaca residents enjoy new streets, sidewalks and other improvements year after year.

Business Development - Port Lavaca is known for creating a business development program that is responsive to existing business needs

Community Development - Port Lavaca is a culturally diverse community actively promoting tourism and economic development opportunities

Quality of Life - Port Lavaca residents enjoy a safe community with great amenities and affordable living.

The Strategic Plan was subsequently updated in 2014 and included the results of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis (page 17):

Strengths:

- Physical climate
- Strong leadership
- Fiscally sound
- Growth potential
- Friendly/small-town feel
- Geographic location/waterfront
- Eco-tourism
- Good schools/good hospital
- Reliable City services
- Secure water supply
- Civic pride
- "Braiding" between city/county/school district
- Ties with other communities
- Teamwork
- Historical significance/diverse culture
- Continuous public improvements

Weaknesses:

- Lack of housing/investment in housing
- No major retail
- Improvements to the infrastructure
- Lack of entertainment
- Unwillingness to change by some
- Limited industry within the city limits
- Shared sales tax
- Additional infrastructure
- Few sit-down restaurants
- Code of Ordinances
- High tax and water and sewer rates as compared to cities our size
- Occasional mixed signals from council
- Unable to attract new businesses
- Lack of parks and youth activities
- Lack of involvement among the police Officers in the community
- Lack of communication with the public
- Staff setting the example
- Maintenance of City properties

Opportunities:

- Host business conferences with potential
- Housing developers
- Seek grants for infrastructure construction

- Partner with community colleges, universities and trade schools for job conferences, training and apprenticeships to be held and conducted in Port Lavaca
- Host conferences with potential businesses
- Develop/purchase land in/around the port
- Partner with the Navigation District in the development of container handling facilities
- Partner with the area’s large industry plants to expand current training for Mill-rights
- Determine economic willingness of the community to add quality-of-life amenities
- Develop community events that highlight the diverse cultures of the area
- Entertainment venues in downtown area

Threats:

- Adequate funding
- Natural disasters/drought
- Unstable economy
- Indifference/unwillingness to change
- Avoiding the challenges
- Avoiding decision-making
- No follow-through
- Lack of courage
- Close-mindedness
- Opposition

Plan Port Lavaca’s Chapter 3, Vision:

Chapter Three summarizes the results of the plan’s public engagement process, which culminated in a specific Mission Statement and Vision for the future of the community. Major themes identified from the public engagement process included the following (page 41):

Housing	Port Lavaca’s housing stock offers a limited selection. Quality homes are generally expensive, while many of the affordable homes are in poor condition. Residents identified a need for a variety of housing types with adequate affordable inventory to meet current demand.
Beautification	To support future growth, attract new business and residents, and increase commerce, targeted beautification efforts were identified. Participants recommended improvement of residential and commercial attractiveness. The deterioration of many structures affects the natural beauty of the city. Additionally, Commerce Street, 87 South, Lighthouse Beach and Old Firehouse were identified for beautification projects.

Downtown	Downtown Port Lavaca has many assets. Main Street Theatre and available properties with potential for investment opportunities. In many ways, Downtown is a blank slate that can be converted to meet the vision of the citizens. Revitalization of Downtown was a key issue repeatedly mentioned by participants. Downtown revitalization as defined by the participants would include infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, parking, lighting, water, sewer, and drainage improvements. Participants identified a desire to preserve historic buildings, and create a connection between Downtown and the Waterfront. These two areas could essentially create an entertainment district for the City of Port Lavaca.
Waterfront	A need to better utilize the assets of the waterfront was a key theme throughout the discussion. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways however, the most dominant ideas presented by participants were, 1) providing waterfront restaurants, shopping, and water related activities such as paddle boats and kayaks; and 2) preservation of natural resources was also important to participants. Improving the bird habitat along the coastline was suggested as an opportunity to encourage ecotourism.
Infrastructure	Citywide infrastructure improvements were a key topic of discussion among the participants. The items identified as needing improvements were street maintenance and repair, sidewalks to provide safe pedestrian facilities, water and wastewater infrastructure, and drainage.
Economic Development	Ideas to improve economic conditions in the City were abundant and participants provided great insight into the opportunities for improvement. A focus on creating tourism revenue was of high priority. The ideas for achieving this economic initiative were focused on the waterfront and water-related activities. These included fishing related activities and the ancillary businesses associated with the recreational fishing industry. As expected, restaurants, retail, swimming, and water sports were all mentioned. Participants described

for additional restaurants throughout the City with a mix of chain and locally owned restaurants. Workforce development was also a key theme. The need to attract new talent, retain young talented workers, and incorporate high tech industry job opportunities were all ideas presented by participants.

Parks and Recreation

Participants identified a desire for more recreational facilities throughout the City. These facilities would provide adequate activities for the youth of Port Lavaca. The recommended facilities were: swimming pool, tennis courts, skate park, new baseball fields, and a City sports complex. In addition, small pocket parks, bike trails and additional green space were all discussed by participants.

Community Activities

Community activities are important to the participants of the meeting. The overarching theme was a general need for more entertainment options in the City. These may include, but are not limited to outdoor sponsored events such as festivals, live music, and community events.

Regulations And Policies

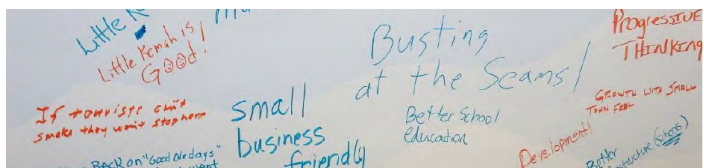
A need for zoning was a key issue discussed during the meeting. Additionally, design guidelines, sign regulations, and code enforcement were also considered as areas of focus.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to make Port Lavaca a desirable place to live through quality services, responsible use of public resources, and a progressive attitude toward community development. With enthusiasm, integrity and vision, we will maintain a safe environment and continually improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Vision

The Mayor and the City Council envision a friendly town on Lavaca Bay where economic and recreational opportunities abound, providing for a wonderful quality of life for both citizens and tourists, rich in history and looking toward a vibrant future!



Source: Plan Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan

Plan Port Lavaca’s Goals and Objectives include the following:

Goal #1: Promoting Quality of Life

Quality of life refers to the tangible and intangible characteristics that make a community a great place to live. Quality of life also includes the look and feel of the City. Improving the community’s aesthetics was an overwhelming theme from all sources of public input. In today’s competitive and global economy, quality of life is a major consideration when a business, industry, or resident chooses to locate in one city over another. Many relocations specifically look at a city’s quality of life as part of its decision-making process. Competitive cities are those that not only meet the basic functional needs of the city; they also provide a high quality of life for residents (page 45).

Objective 1: Connected neighborhoods for pedestrians and vehicles

Objective 2: Housing choices for young professionals and seniors

Objective 3: Recreation opportunities for youth, adults, and visitors

Objective 4: Adequate infrastructure to support future development

Goal #2: Protecting Investments

Protect (and thereby encourage) public and private investment in Port Lavaca. Investments tend to encourage future investments. When the future development pattern of an area is more certain, private property owners are more likely to invest in their properties and quality development is more likely to occur. The lack of zoning regulations in Port Lavaca creates a significant challenge in terms of beautification, quality of development, and appropriate land use types. While the City has actively pursued code enforcement and other community improvement efforts, the City’s resources are limited. Community empowerment, pride, and involvement to support the City’s efforts is critical for the City to continue to improve over time (page 45).

Objective 5: Compatible uses to reduce conflict

Objective 6: Beautiful community

Objective 7: Resilient waterfront that serves as an asset

Objective 8: Community empowerment to encourage ownership, pride, and involvement

Goal #3: Supporting Economic Development

In order to remain competitive in the region, the City must continue and enhance its proactive economic development strategy. Economic development planning is the process by which a community organizes, analyzes, plans, and then applies its energies to the tasks of improving the economic well-being and quality of life for those in the community. Economic development focuses on retaining existing

businesses, securing new businesses, and attracting tourism into the community (page 45).

Objective 9: Destination to attract visitors

Objective 10: Employment and entertainment opportunities

Objective 11: Exciting Waterfront amenities that generate activity and income

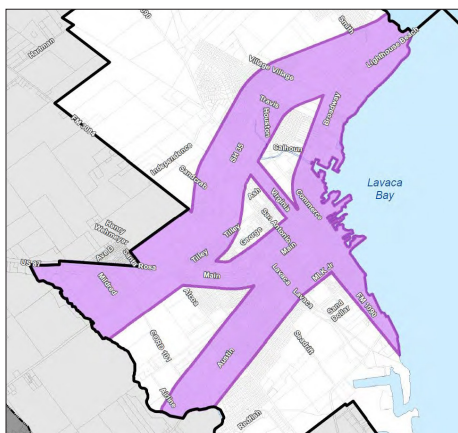
Objective 12: Active and unique downtown

Beyond providing Figure 11, *Existing Land Use Map* (page 50) and Figure 16, *Future Land Use Map* (page 58), *Plan Port Lavaca's* Chapter 4, *Land Use and Recreation*, provides a section on zoning, and defines “zoning regulations” as including “any requirements or restrictions adopted by the City Council to regulate future development. This often includes regulations addressing land use types, lot and building sizes, commercial building materials, landscaping, and many other topics. Zoning protects property values, promotes desirable neighborhoods, and contributes to the overall quality of life by enhancing aesthetics and reducing nuisances” (page 59). As summarized in a text box, “Zoning regulations could have a very strong positive impact on Port Lavaca, specifically related to the following issues identified by the community:

- Creating a more attractive community appearance
- Encouraging investments because property owners would be confident of the type and quality of future neighboring development
- Improving the mix of housing available in Port Lavaca
- Preventing future incompatible uses, such as a manufacturing business next to a home
- Ensuring that only desirable, pedestrian-oriented uses located in the downtown

Figure 1 (below), *Suggested Areas for Development Regulations Near-Term Consideration*, depicts areas where zoning could be most impactful in influencing and regulating

Figure 1, Suggested Areas for Development Regulations Near-Term Consideration



Source: *Plan Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan*

community’s appearance and vitality; and focuses on the major corridors, entryways into the City, downtown, and the large residential lots to the south.

Chapter 4, Land Use and Recreation:

Recommendations include the following:

- Continue to use the Future Land Use Map when making development and infrastructure decisions. Ensure that the map is reviewed by the Planning Commission annually.
- Define the area to be included in the regulations – citywide, downtown, along corridors, or the priority area in Figure 17 (page 60).
- Use the Future Land Use map to develop a zoning map to be adopted by City Council.
- Adopt the Waterfront Development Ordinance to work toward the vision of the Waterfront Implementation Plan.
- Provide an informational page on the City’s website to explain the purpose and impacts of zoning.
- Plan and budget to acquire future parkland as the population increases. Park locations should consider the underserved zones identified in Table 12 (page 62).
- Develop a detailed parks and trails master plan to ensure that recreation amenities grow with the future population.
- Adopt a parkland and trail dedication ordinance that requires land dedication (or fee-in-lieu) for parks and improvements. The ordinance should also require developers to dedicate and construct trails in accordance with the trails master plan.
- Identify a location for a teen activity center that is convenient to Travis Middle School and Calhoun High School. Consider a public-private partnership to share space with an existing facility/business. Appoint citizen volunteers to staff the teen activity center and to research grant/funding opportunities for the center.
- Allocate budget each year to replace aging playground equipment and install new types of facilities, which could be supplemented by park dedication improvement fees.
- Improve Lighthouse Beach by increasing signage at SH 35 and Broadway Street, encouraging food trucks to be present on a regular schedule, and considering implementing zoning regulations.
- Complete the planned improvements at Wilson Park and Bayfront Park.
- Develop recreational marketing materials that the City and Chamber of Commerce could distribute to residents and visitors to increase awareness and use of the City’s existing recreation amenities.

Chapter 4 also examines Port Lavaca’s current supply of parks and level of service for each park type; with respect to NRPA-recommended number of acres per capita. The current Mini and Neighborhood Park acreage provides an appropriate level of service for the City’s 2014 population; however the current park system does not meet the recommended

level of service for Regional Parks. Approximately 71 total acres of parkland should be acquired by 2020 – one acre of Mini Parks, one acre of Neighborhood Parks, nine acres of Community Parks, and 60 acres of Regional Parks. Some of the key parks and recreation-related recommendations include the following:

- Develop a Parks and Trails Master Plan to guide the future of park development. Building upon the priorities designated by the city, the Parks Master Plan will provide a long-term vision and guidance to make informed policy decisions. As of the drafting of this Comprehensive Plan Update, the City is currently in the process of developing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan (page 63).
- Adopt a park, trail, and improvements dedication ordinance to support efforts to expand the existing parks system. This ordinance would require developers to provide a certain amount of parkland and associated improvements to the City based on the size of development. Additionally, developers would be required to construct any trails that are shown on the Master Plan (page 63).
- Consider developing a new teen activity center, which would create place for youth to gather in a safe environment and participate in after-school activities. The activity center could provide both indoor and outdoor activities – sports, homework assistance, video games, exercise facilities, and computer access (page 63).
- Allocate budget each year to replace aging playground equipment and install new types of facilities, which could be supplemented by park dedication improvement fees (page 67).
- Improve Lighthouse Beach by increasing signage at SH 35 and Broadway Street, encouraging food trucks to present on a regular schedule, and considering implementing zoning regulations (page 67).
- Complete the planned improvements at Wilson Park and Bayfront Park (page 67).
- Develop recreational marketing materials that the City and Chamber of Commerce could distribute to residents and visitors to increase awareness and use of the City's existing recreation amenities (page 67).

According to Chapter 5, *Transportation and Circulation*:

The top issues include limited sidewalks, lack of public transit, and inadequate landscaping and maintenance. Major Traffic Generators include development along Highway 87 / Main Street and SH 35. In addition to these corridors, there are several other specific traffic generators around the City, including (page 70):

- Calhoun Plaza shopping center
- Lighthouse Beach
- Calhoun County ISD Schools
- Memorial Medical Center
- Calhoun County Offices

Chapter 5 provides crash data, traffic counts, thoroughfare functional classification, and the location of traffic signals. The chapter also provides recommendations related to the following topics (pages 85-86):

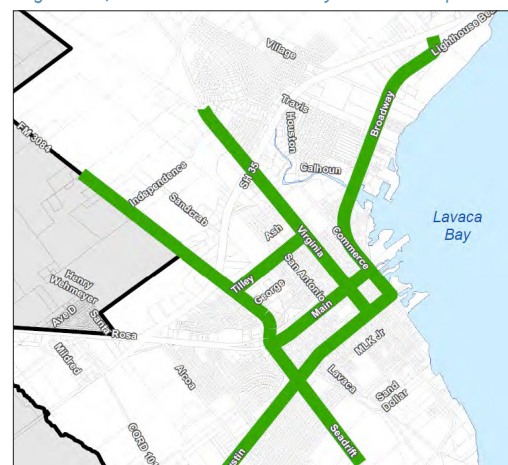
Roadway Network (page 75)

- Plan for extensions of Smith Road and Village Road (refer to the Plan's Figure 22).
- Focus corridor beautification efforts along the key corridors of SH 35, US 87, and Broadway.

Alternative Transportation (page 76)

- Develop a citywide sidewalk plan. Conduct an inventory of existing sidewalks and document current conditions. Identify priority areas for sidewalks by evaluating popular routes, missing connections, density, funding opportunities, and safety concerns.
- Evaluate the current traffic volumes, roadway and right-of-way width, ownership patterns, roadway conditions, and adjacent destination points along Virginia Street and Half League Road to determine appropriateness for Complete Streets retrofitting.

Figure 2, *Potential Roadways for Complete Streets*



Source: *Plan Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan*

- Allocate CIP budget regularly for retrofitting areas with sidewalks.
- As a component of the recommended sidewalk plan, identify key locations for pedestrian upgrades. Suggested target areas include the SH 35, US 87, and Broadway priority area, park access points, and school routes. Continue to pursue grant funding, such as the Safe Routes to Schools program.
- Revise the existing roadway cross-sections to include alternatives for the inclusion of on- or off-street bike lanes on future roadways.
- Conduct a community-wide survey, review the ridership records from the R-Transit service, and/or conduct a feasibility analysis to assess additional demand for local transit. If local demand warrants additional service, consider an agreement with R-Transit to increase services to accommodate the need. Confirm that residents are familiar with the existing R-Transit service. Any

routing service should include access to the waterfront and the Greyhound station along SH 35.

- Require 5 ft. wide sidewalks along at least one side of the roadway in all new residential developments.

Corridor Enhancements (page 78)

- Develop landscaping regulations for nonresidential and multiple family developments, particularly within the priority area. Develop and maintain a list of approved plant species that are appropriate for the region and drought tolerant.
- Establish an adopt-a-highway program to help maintain the medians and roadways, especially in the priority area.
- Continue to build welcoming entryway features and update the existing entry signage along US 87 in the eastern part of the City and on SH 35 near the Causeway. The signage should build upon Port Lavaca's waterfront character.

Access Management (page 84)

- Establish a minimum distance between median cuts (e.g., "at least 500 feet between median openings").
- Require new nonresidential developments along major thoroughfares and collector roadways to provide cross-access to adjacent developments to reduce the number of curb-cuts.

As summarized in Chapter 6, *Infrastructure*:

The top issues related to infrastructure include:

- Lack of water and wastewater master plans
- Deteriorating cast iron and asbestos cement water pipelines
- Infiltration and inflow into wastewater pipelines
- Lack of control over City's water distribution system
- Inadequate lift stations result in overflows during heavy rain events

As shown in Figure 26, Water System Map (page 90), Port Lavaca's water supply is provided by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), which diverts water from the Guadalupe River near Tivoli through the Calhoun Canal System. A 44.0 MG raw water reservoir is located onsite. GBRA built the Port Lavaca Surface Water Treatment Plant in 1970 with a 4.0 MGD capacity, expanded in 1993 to 6.0 MGD, and capable of future expansion to 9.0 MGD. The City has secured a treated water supply contract with GBRA for a firm supply of 3.2 MGD.

The City operates on a single pressure plane with two 0.5 MG elevated storage tanks. GBRA reserves capacity for their ground storage tank to meet the City's TCEQ storage requirements. The City's distribution system has nine meters interconnects used by GBRA to pass water through the City to rural water customers.

The Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ) requires 200 gallons per connection of storage of which 100

gallons must be elevated storage. The City currently has 1.0 million gallons of elevated storage capacity and GBRA reserves capacity in their ground storage tank. Since the limiting factor in this case is the elevated storage capacity, based on the current elevated capacity of 1.0 MG, the number of connections that would be allowed by TCEQ is 5,000. The City currently has 4,300 connections (page 88).

As shown in Figure 27, Wastewater System Map (page 92), Port Lavaca is served by the Lynn Bayou Wastewater Treatment Plant at 800 N. Commerce St. The plant has a permitted average capacity of 2.0 MGD under Permit WQ0010251001, with an average daily flow of about 1.3 MGD, and discharges to Lynn Bayou. The City has approximately 3,840 connections to the wastewater system and maintains a network of 40 miles of wastewater collection lines.

The City recently completed an infiltration and inflow (I/I) study of the wastewater system. The results of the study are being used to proactively target areas to identify and eliminate I/I sources. A rehabilitation program is also in place to replace aging sewer lines.

The Plan's infrastructure recommendations are grouped according to the following topics (page 94):

Water Ground Storage Tank Construction

- A 1.0 MG ground storage tank within the City would benefit both GBRA and Port Lavaca, allowing GBRA to pump to the tank and giving the City flexibility to control their own distribution system.
- Enlist the services of a consulting firm to develop a cost estimate and design for the new ground storage tank. Allocate budget in future CIPs to construct a new ground storage tank.

Wastewater Treatment Plant UV System Upgrade

- The ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system at the Lynn Bayou Wastewater Treatment Plant is no longer serviceable, is nearing the end of its useful life, and should be upgraded within the next year.
- Allocate budget in the CIP to replace the existing UV disinfection system at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Water and Wastewater Pipeline Completion

- The City should continue to pursue its five-year plan to rehab or replace the current cast iron or asbestos cement water lines to reduce the occurrence of water main breaks. The City should continue its efforts to rehab or replace wastewater lines as necessary to reduce system infiltration and/or inflow (I/I).
- Continue to fund, prioritize, and conduct replacement/rehab of current cast iron or asbestos cement water lines.

Lift Station Rehab

- City staff indicated that many residents experience problems with overflows during heavy rain events and

need larger wet wells and pumps to pass rain events. The City should begin rehab and/or replacement of lift stations to reduce overflows during heavy rain events.

- Allocate budget in future CIPs to rehab/replace lift stations, as prioritized by the condition assessment.

Water and Wastewater Master Plan

- The City should consider developing a Water and Wastewater Master Plan that takes into account current population levels, projected growth, updated future land use, and usage characteristics to develop solutions for operational issues. Additionally, the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system at the GBRA Port Lavaca Water Treatment Plant indicates that the water level in the George Street elevated tank must reach a certain level before the Village Road elevated tank begins to fill. Operational issues such as these could be reviewed and solutions developed in a Water and Wastewater Master Plan.
- Allocate budget in the CIP to develop a Water and Wastewater Master Plan. Enlist the services of a consulting firm to develop a Water and Wastewater Master Plan. Allocate budget in the CIP to fund the improvements recommended in the Water and Wastewater Master Plan.

Top issues covered in Chapter 7, Community Charter:

Chapter Seven includes issues (page 97):

- Limited housing choices
- Lack of quality affordable housing for young professionals, middle-class, and retirees
- Lack of property maintenance in some areas
- Need for community empowerment and organization to support the City’s efforts
- Limited resources and amenities for seniors
- 78 percent of survey respondents rated the City’s appearance as fair or poor
- 81 percent of survey respondents indicated that the City’s appearance is important or very important

Figure 3, *Housing & Neighborhood Conditions* (depicted right), identifies the general conditions of neighborhoods within Port Lavaca, based on housing condition, yard maintenance, and overall upkeep. The figure delineates areas within the city that are worthy of preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation. The chapter outlines recommendations related to the following topics:

Neighborhood Preservation, Restoration, and Rehabilitation

- Neighborhood strategies vary based on the predominant type and condition of housing in the neighborhood. It is important to keep in mind that these strategies apply based on the character of the neighborhood as a whole; individual homes may be in better or worse condition than the overall neighborhood. Table 13, *Neighborhood Strategies*, outlines possible applications, goals, and

strategies for ensuring healthy neighborhoods in the City (page 100).

- Maintain or increase the number of code enforcement actions.
- Provide information to property owners regarding the establishment of voluntary HOAs and other similar neighborhood organizations.
- Evaluate the feasibility of offering a City-sponsored housing improvement grant to match homeowners’ contributions toward renovations in “Rehabilitation” areas.
- Allocate budget for future demolitions of unsafe structures.

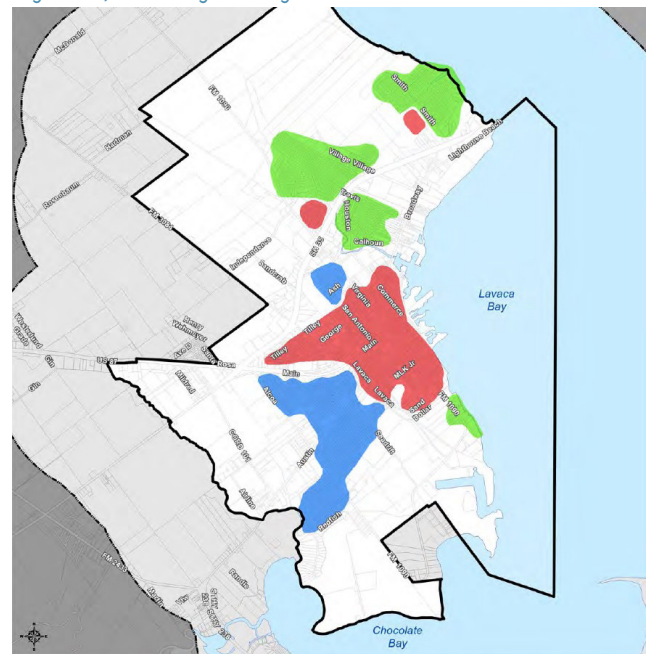
Housing Choices

- Figure 29, *Dwelling Types* (page 105), shows the range of housing across the city. While options exist, quality multi-family units are limited, with many dated or deteriorating complexes that fail to attract young professionals or empty nesters. The City may wish to encourage redevelopment of these properties into more modern apartment complexes or townhomes to accommodate the demand for housing variety. While the City’s opportunities for ensuring an appropriate mix of housing are limited by the lack of zoning regulations, the City could offer incentives to attract desirable development types (page 103).

Quality Neighborhood Designs

- The Plan advocates for heavily amenitized Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) development patterns.

Figure 3, *Housing & Neighborhood Conditions*

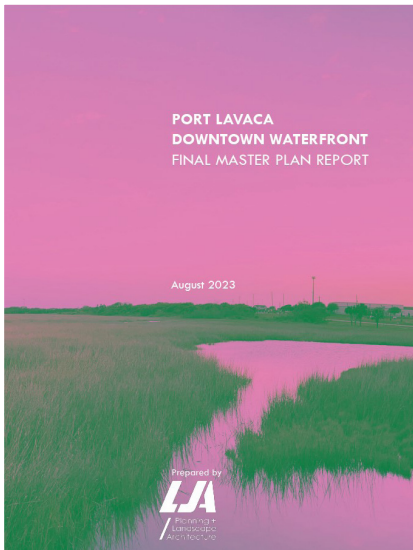


- Preservation
- Restoration
- Rehabilitation

Source: Plan Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan

Port Lavaca Downtown Waterfront Master Plan (2023)

The 2023 *Port Lavaca Downtown Waterfront Master Plan* was created to transform the city’s waterfront and downtown into a vibrant, accessible, and economically sustainable destination. The plan focuses on creating spaces that serve both residents and visitors, preserving the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the area, and integrating recreation, tourism, and community development in ways that enhance quality of life while celebrating Port Lavaca’s coastal identity.



Source: Port Lavaca Downtown Waterfront Master Plan

The vision of the 2022 Port Lavaca Downtown Waterfront Master Plan is to create a dynamic, inclusive, and economically thriving destination that strengthens community identity and fosters sustainable growth. Figure X, *Downtown Waterfront District*, shows the districts along the Downtown Waterfront section.

Key Goals for this Plan include:

1. Enhancing Public Access to the Waterfront

This includes expanding pedestrian connectivity between downtown and the shoreline through the construction of new sidewalks, trails, and ADA-compliant pathways. By making the waterfront more walkable and inclusive, the city aims to foster community engagement and promote outdoor activities.

2. Activating Waterfront Spaces, Introducing Multi-use Areas for Events, Markets, and Recreation

These spaces will feature amenities such as seating, shade structures, and landscaping to create a welcoming environment for gatherings and leisure.

3. Supporting Economic Development Activity

The strategy involves supporting local businesses through mixed-use development opportunities and attracting tourism with improved signage and waterfront attractions. Enhancing the downtown streetscape with lighting, landscaping, and wayfinding will help create a more inviting and walkable environment, encouraging visitors to explore local shops and restaurants.

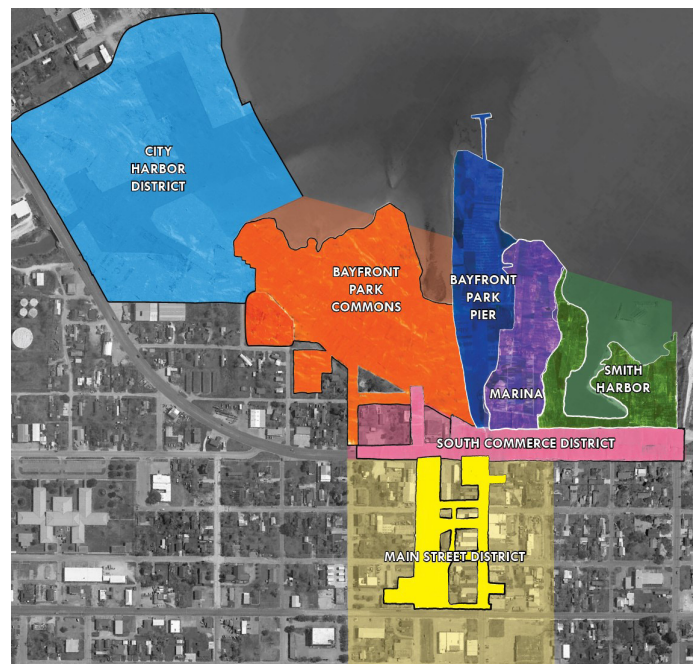
4. Resiliency & Sustainability

Prioritizing resiliency and sustainability, incorporating flood mitigation measures, stormwater management systems, and native landscaping to protect the area from environmental risks while maintaining its natural character.

Key components of the plan include:

- Harbor & Marina Improvements: Upgrade docks, boat slips, and fishing areas to attract recreational boating and tourism.
- Downtown Streetscape Enhancements: Beautify streets with lighting, landscaping, and wayfinding to create a walkable environment.
- Event & Gathering Spaces: Design flexible spaces for festivals, farmers’ markets, and community events.
- Transportation & Parking: Improve traffic flow and add parking near waterfront and downtown hubs.
- Implementation will occur in phases, while funding is from a combination of city resources, grants, and public-private partnerships:
- Short-term projects focus on sidewalks, signage, and

Figure 4, *Downtown Waterfront Districts*



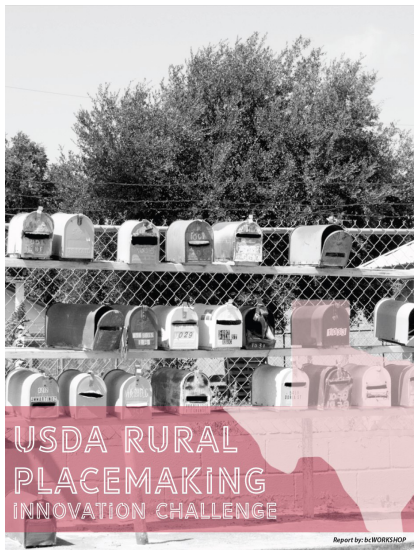
Source: Port Lavaca Downtown Waterfront Master Plan

USDA Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (Dec. 2024)

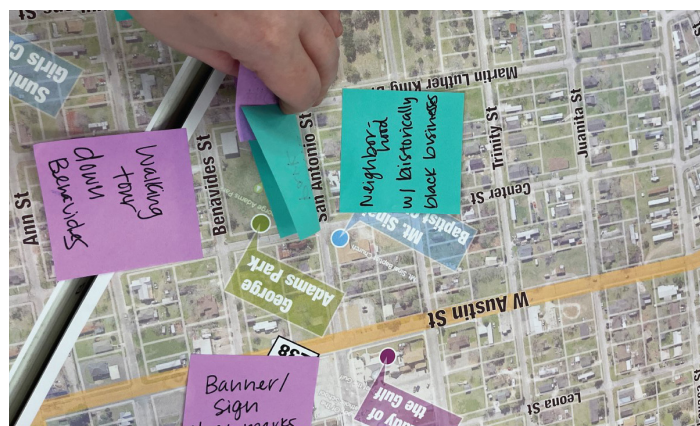
Purpose & Background

The *USDA Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge* (RPIC) aimed to help rural Texas communities address housing challenges and strengthen placemaking capacity. bcWORKSHOP partnered with three geographies in Denison, Port Lavaca, and Starr County in Texas to develop strategies for affordable housing, community engagement, and equitable development. Rising housing costs, aging infrastructure, and limited local resources have created significant barriers for rural residents, especially seniors and low-income households. The RPIC program provided technical assistance and planning support to address these issues while promoting inclusive and equitable development.

The vision was to build inclusive, resilient rural communities where residents have access to safe housing, vibrant public spaces, and opportunities for economic and social growth.



Source: USDA Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge



Source: USDA Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge

Project Objectives

- Build capacity in rural communities to address housing and placemaking challenges to develop Housing Guides for each geography with actionable strategies for improving housing stock and guiding new development.
- Support understanding of broadband access and other resource gaps.
- Provide tools for complementary placemaking topics (public space, economic development, Main Street design).
- Share lessons learned with other rural Texas communities to create replicable models for success.

Key Challenges

- Lack of affordable, quality housing options; homes falling into disrepair; title clearance issues.
- Limited infrastructure and public spaces.
- Gaps in community leadership and access to resources.

Community Engagement

- Over two years, bcWORKSHOP conducted workshops, surveys, and working groups to gather input and co-create solutions. Outreach included bilingual materials, door-to-door engagement, and partnerships with local organizations. Workshops focused on housing stabilization, broadband access, and preserving neighborhood identity.

Major Strategies & Tools

- Housing: Rental registration programs, ADU development, housing rehab assistance, community land trusts, mixed-income housing, and financing tools (gap funding, housing trust funds).
- Decision-Making: Community organizing, leadership training, data-driven planning, and development incentives.
- Place/Neighborhood: Creative placemaking through public art, walking tours, open space plans, and neighborhood branding.
- Access to Resources: Broadband expansion, financial literacy programs, legal aid for title clearance, and resource networks.

The impact of the RPIC project was significant. Each community received tailored Housing Guides and placemaking strategies, strengthening local capacity for equitable development and long-term planning. Partnerships among city governments, nonprofits, and residents were deepened, creating a foundation for sustainable growth. Ultimately, the vision of this initiative is to build inclusive, resilient rural communities where residents have access to safe housing, vibrant public

Calhoun County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023-2028

Summary of Plan

The updated *Hazard Mitigation Plan* (HMP) for Calhoun County and its cities including Port Lavaca, Seadrift, and Point Comfort, aims to reduce long-term risks to life and property from natural and human-caused hazards. This revision, prepared by KSBR, LLC in collaboration with local jurisdictions and stakeholders, builds on previous plans and incorporates current data, climate considerations, and community input.

Plan Maintenance and Integration

The HMP will be integrated into local planning mechanisms such as annual budgets, emergency plans, and capital improvement programs. Jurisdictions will monitor progress annually, update as needed, and conduct a comprehensive review every five years. Public involvement will continue through surveys and online access to the plan. Actions are prioritized as High, Moderate, or Low based on cost-benefit analysis and feasibility. Funding sources include grants, loans, and local funds.

Key Takeaways

- Calhoun County faces significant risks from hurricanes, flooding, and coastal erosion, compounded by climate change impacts.
- The plan emphasizes proactive measures, intergovernmental collaboration, and public engagement.
- Implementation depends on securing funding and maintaining compliance with federal and state standards.
- Continuous monitoring and integration into local governance will ensure resilience and preparedness for future hazards.

Purpose & Scope

The Plan prioritizes The updated *Hazard Mitigation Plan* (HMP) for Calhoun County and the cities of Port Lavaca, Seadrift, and Point Comfort builds upon previous plans from 2017 and regional efforts by the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority. Its primary goal is to reduce long-term risks to life and property from natural and human-caused hazards through coordinated mitigation strategies. The plan complies with Federal Emergency Management Agency FEMA and the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), and with federal regulations under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, and integrates standards from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and FEMA’s Community Rating System.

The plan prioritizes hazards classified as high or moderate risk, while low-risk hazards will be addressed in future updates. It emphasizes collaboration among jurisdictions, public engagement, and stakeholder involvement to ensure effective implementation.

Planning Process

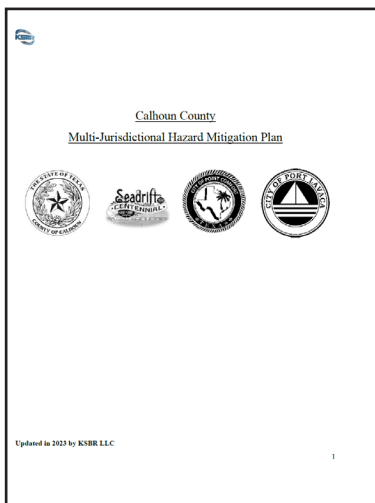
The update process began with a kickoff meeting in January 2023, followed by stakeholder and public meetings throughout the year. Public input was gathered via meetings and surveys, and stakeholders included local governments, emergency services, schools, hospitals, and regional agencies. The planning team reviewed previous plans, updated demographic and infrastructure data, and incorporated climate change considerations, adding winter storms and wildfires to the hazard list.

Hazard Identification

Significant hazards include hurricanes/tropical storms, flooding, coastal erosion, drought, extreme heat, wildfires, hailstorms, lightning, windstorms, tornadoes, winter storms, expansive soils, land subsidence, infectious diseases, and technological hazards such as dam failure, hazardous material releases, pipeline failures, and terrorism. Climate change has increased risks from extreme weather events, prompting new mitigation strategies.

The plan identifies natural, technological, and other hazards affecting Calhoun County:

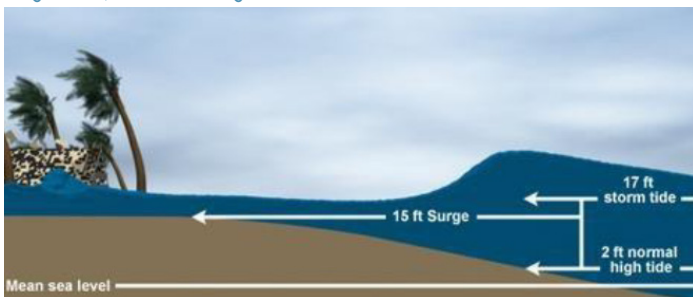
- Atmospheric Hazards: Hurricanes/tropical storms, extreme heat, hailstorms, wildfires, lightning, windstorms, tornadoes, and winter storms.
- Hydrologic Hazards: Coastal erosion, drought, expansive soils, flooding, and land subsidence.
- Other Hazards: Infectious diseases.
- Technological Hazards: Dam failure, hazardous materials release, pipeline failure, and terrorism.



Source: Calhoun County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Figure 5, *Storm Surge vs Storm Tide*, illustrates how sea level rise and high tide can significantly increase the height of a storm surge.

Figure 5, *Storm Surge vs Storm Tide*



Source: Calhoun County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Risk Assessment

The plan evaluates historical occurrences, probability of future events, and potential impacts on infrastructure, critical facilities, and the economy. Coastal vulnerability is a major concern due to Calhoun County's 560 miles of shoreline, making hurricanes, storm surge, and flooding high-priority hazards. Other risks include drought-related agricultural losses, wildfire threats, and technological hazards tied to industrial activity and pipelines.

Mitigation Strategies

Goals remain consistent with previous plans:

1. Protect public health and safety.
2. Increase coordination among governmental entities.

Actions include public education, infrastructure upgrades, drainage improvements, coastal protection projects, safe rooms, emergency equipment purchases, and NFIP compliance efforts. Projects are prioritized as high, moderate, or low based on cost-benefit analysis and feasibility.

Mitigation actions include:

1. Public Education and Awareness

- Goal: Increase community knowledge about hazards and preparedness.
- Actions: Develop and distribute brochures, pamphlets, and online resources explaining risks like flooding, hurricanes, and extreme heat. Promote programs such as "Turn Around, Don't Drown" for flood safety.
- Impact: Improves individual preparedness, reduces property damage, and enhances public safety during emergencies.

2. Infrastructure Hardening

- Generators and Backup Power: Install generators and quick-connect systems at critical facilities (fire stations, police departments, hospitals, sewer lift stations) to maintain operations during outages caused by hurricanes,

winter storms, or other hazards.

- Drainage Improvements: Upgrade culverts, stormwater systems, and construct detention ponds to reduce flooding risks. Projects include Corporation Ditch upgrades and North Relief Channel construction.
- Safe Rooms: Build FEMA-compliant safe rooms to provide shelter during tornadoes and hurricanes.

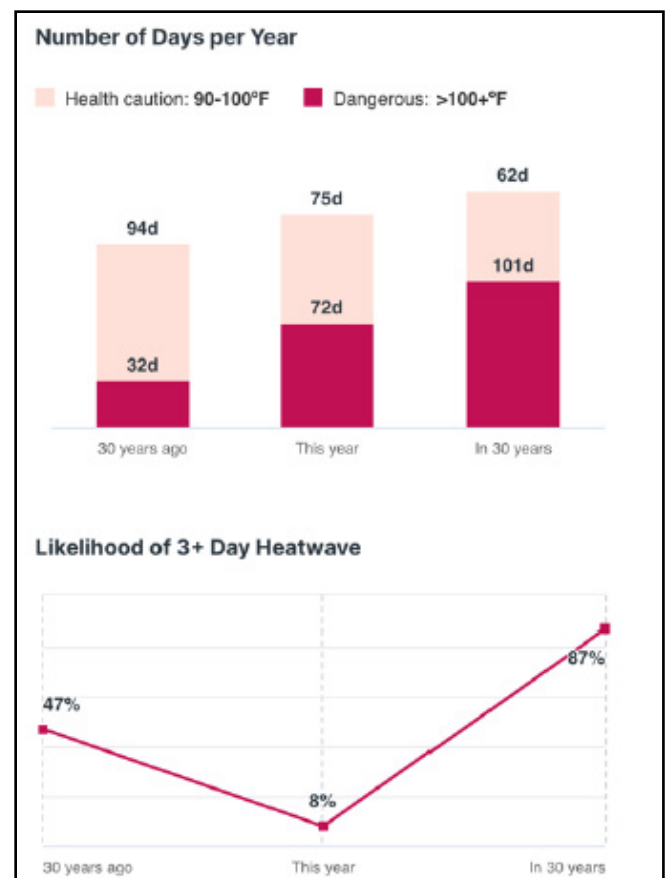
3. Coastal Protection and Erosion Control

- Wetland Restoration: Enhance and restore wetlands using marsh planting, rock structures, and beach renourishment to reduce erosion and storm surge impacts.
- Living Shorelines and Bulkheads: Construct living shorelines and bulkheads to stabilize coastlines and protect infrastructure from hurricanes and tidal surges.
- Groins and Breakwaters: Install groins and breakwaters at vulnerable beaches and harbors to mitigate erosion and protect recreational and industrial areas.

4. Climate Adaptation Measures

- Cooling and Heating Centers: Establish community centers equipped for extreme heat and winter storms to protect vulnerable populations. Figure 6, *Number of Days with High Temperatures in 2022*, presents historical data that can be used to guide preparation for future heat waves.

Figure 6, *Number of Days with High Temperature for 2022*



Source: Calhoun County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

- Drought Mitigation: Implement drought contingency plans, install low-flow water fixtures, and plant drought-resistant vegetation in public spaces.
- Expansive Soils Management: Apply soil stabilizers and update building codes to address foundation damage caused by soil expansion and contraction.

5. Emergency Response and Communication

- Equipment Upgrades: Purchase emergency vehicles, mobile command posts, and rescue boats for rapid response during floods and hurricanes.
- Communication Systems: Upgrade portable radios, install underground fiber lines, and acquire satellite phones to ensure continuity of operations during disasters.
- Training: Provide specialized training for first responders on hazards such as hazardous material spills, pipeline failures, and terrorism.

6. Hazard-Specific Measures

- Flood Mitigation: Promote NFIP participation, elevate roads like Ocean Drive, and construct stormwater detention ponds to reduce flood impacts.
- Wildfire Prevention: Create fire breaks around critical facilities and educate staff on wildfire mitigation techniques.
- Hazardous Materials and Pipeline Safety: Install sensors for hazardous material detection and conduct training for pipeline failure response.

7. Policy and Ordinance Updates

- Building Codes: Adopt ordinances requiring anchoring of temporary structures, foundation support for expansive soils, and measures to reduce groundwater depletion.
- Land Use Planning: Integrate hazard mitigation into capital improvement plans and zoning regulations to limit development in high-risk areas.

Homes and palm trees on Harbor Street and Commerce Street
Source: Baxter and Woodman



RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

From 2019-2025, the City of Port Lavaca has advanced a wide range of initiatives that strengthen infrastructure, enhance quality of life, and support long-term resilience. From rehabilitating streets and improving drainage systems to expanding parks and recreation opportunities, each project reflects a commitment to building a safer, more vibrant community. Investments in utilities have modernized essential services, while innovative programs and citizen-focused initiatives have fostered greater engagement and efficiency. Together, these accomplishments demonstrate the City's dedication to progress across all sectors, which lays the foundation for continued growth and sustainability.

NOTABLE OVERALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS (2019-2025)

- Completed reconstruction of Lighthouse Beach Fishing Pier
- Completed Phase 2 of CDBG-DR project (Original Townsite).
- Constructed a child-size stage at City Park, with help from the Port Lavaca Rotary and a Rotary District grant, as part of the United Way Born Learning Trail.
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement (WWTP) Project, funded in part by American Rescue Plan Act funds, was completed, improving efficiency at the WWTP.
- National Night Out was combined with Non-Profit Community Expo for an impactful event for residents.
- Continued cooperative agreement with Calhoun County and Victoria Economic Development Corporation (VEDC) Regional Partnership for Economic Development services.
- 1st Annual Port Lavaca Art Walk in March.
- Celebrated 50 years of Juneteenth celebrations in Port Lavaca with a three-day event at Bayfront Peninsula Park.
- City of Port Lavaca's commitment to beautification in the community was featured in the *Texas Town and City* magazine, August 2024.
- Streetlights over the city are converted to light-emitting diodes (LED).
- Skatespot at Wilson Park was completed.
- Port Lavaca won a 2022 Texas Municipal League Municipal Excellence Award for Public Safety.
- Several new businesses opened in Port Lavaca in 2023.
- Established a 25 mph speed limit for most residential streets.

Wilson Skate Spot
Source: City of Port Lavaca



2024

Streets and Drainage

- Completed Phase 2 of CDBG-DR project (Original Townsite).
- Awarded the construction contract and began construction of streets for Alamo Heights II Subdivision and drainage improvement project on Jackson, Leon, and Justice Streets.
- Awarded the construction contract and began construction of improvements to Independence Drive, complete with a ten foot wide sidewalk from Virginia Street to Sandcrab Boulevard.
- Street Department rehabilitated pavement on Parker, Garner, Eveline, and Randle Streets.

Recreation and Parks

- Installed a double tube slide at the City pool.
- Installed a restroom at the SkateSpot in Wilson Park.
- Commissioned a colorful mural to the southwest end of the Lighthouse Beach Pier restroom.
- Constructed a child-sized stage at City Park, with help from the Port Lavaca Rotary and a Rotary District grant, as part of the United Way Born Learning Trail.



Child-sized stage at City Park
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Utilities

- Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project, funded in part by ARPA funds was completed, improving efficiency at the WWTP.
- Launched Dropcountr app so customers can monitor their water use and be notified of potential leaks.
- Added new valves to water distribution system to repair long-standing slow leak on Alcoa Drive and Oren Drive.
- Conducted smoke testing of sewer lines in Hill Terrace and Loop 1090 Lift Station basins.
- Awarded construction contract for a new Ann Street Lift Station.

Public Safety

- National Night Out was combined with Non-Profit Community Expo for an impactful event for residents.
- Added two radar trailers to assist with traffic control, helping to make the city's streets safer.
- Completed transition to Combined Dispatch in Calhoun County, enhancing communication and coordination for emergency responses.
- Through Blue Santa, Christmas gifts were provided to 67 children in Port Lavaca.

Development

- Continued cooperative agreement with Calhoun County and VEDC Regional Partnership for Economic Development services.
- Issued Certificate of Occupancies for Taco Bell and DG Market.
- Issued eight permits and 11 certificates of occupancy for new residential single family home construction.
- Issued permit for a new "Speedy Stop."



City of Port Lavaca staff
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Communication and Initiatives

- Posted recordings of City Council and Board/Commission meetings on Port Lavaca YouTube channel.
- Launched SmartGov software, a public portal for online permitting.
- Launched MyPLTxT app to receive announcements and reminders of City events and activities via text.
- Launched Asset Management portal which lets citizens submit complaints and work orders online.
- Launched Lawn Library initiative.

Events

- 1st Annual Port Lavaca Art Walk in March.
- 3rd Annual Public Works Show & Tell at Spring Cleanup gathered 28 yards of brush, 25 yards of metal, 305 yards of bulky waste, 5 yards of cardboard, and 355 tires.
- 3rd Annual Clean It and Green It environmental event at City Park.
- Celebrated 50 years of Juneteenth celebrations in Port Lavaca with a 3-day event at Bayfront Peninsula Park.
- Bay Front Beats Summer Concert Series was extended to 9 weekends of live entertainment.
- 3rd Annual "Star Spangled Bay Bash Fires" (July 3) welcomed its biggest crowd yet.
- David Heard Memorial Hardhead Derby became a City-sponsored event.
- 3rd Annual Monster Mile Mash had the biggest crowd of trick or treaters ever.
- 2nd Annual Veteran's Day celebration had over 500 attendees.
- City of Port Lavaca's commitment to beautification in the community was featured in the *Texas Town and City* magazine, August 2024.

Other

- Streetlights were converted to energy-saving LEDs in Alamo Heights and Bonorden Subdivisions.
- Participated in Christmas Parade with award-winning floats from Port Lavaca Police Department and Public Works Department.
- City of Port Lavaca received Texas Municipal League's 2024 Municipal Excellence Award in City Spirit for the "Lil' Cop in the Shops" initiative.
- Provided City Information Booth at Calhoun County Fair.

2023

Streets and Drainage

- Completed Phase 1 of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) project (S. Lavaca and S. Juanita area).
- Completed 5th Street Drainage Improvements for Alamo Heights Section II.
- Completed Chevy Chase street improvements.
- Renovated portions of curb and gutter on Randle Street and San Antonio Street.

Recreation and Parks

- Added lights for nighttime use of SkateSpot along with additional parking.
- "Welcome to Port Lavaca" mural added to Light House Beach restroom wall.
- Added "Born Learning Trail" at City Park.
- Renovated volleyball court at City Park.
- Installed speed humps and speed indication sign on Lighthouse Beach Road within Lighthouse Beach Park.
- Dredged channel to boat ramp at the Lighthouse Beach.

ADA Access

- Installed new ADA compliant entrances at City Hall along with landscaping on Virginia Street.

Utilities

- Constructed new Brooks Lift Station (Half League Rd and SH 35)
- Installed new water meters.

Development

- A series of franchise commercial/retail establishments opened in Port Lavaca, including Burger King, Hampton Inn & Suites, Harbor Freight, and Starbucks.
- Issued Certificates of Occupancy for 18 new single family homes plus two new multi-family developments.

Other

- Adopted *Downtown Waterfront Master Plan*.
- Entered cooperative agreement with Calhoun County and VEDC for Economic Development services.
- Began providing recording of all public meetings on City's YouTube channel.
- Received bronze level designation as a Texas Scenic City.
- Completed two new homes as part of the HOME grant program.



Born Learning Trail
Source: City of Port Lavaca

2022

Streets and Drainage

- Completed Ezzell Street reconstruction with utility improvements and new sidewalk.
- Completed E. George Street reconstruction with sewer and drainage improvements and new sidewalk.
- Completed Porter Street & South Seadrift Street rehabilitation in cooperation with Calhoun County Precinct 1s & 2.
- Completed drainage study of Corporation Ditch drainage basin to identify critical improvements needed to improve drainage system performance.



Street curb and sidewalk improvement project
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Recreation and Parks

- Refurbished binoculars at Alcoa Bird Tower.
- Opened new SkateSpot Skate Park at Wilson Sports Complex.
- Completed one mile sidewalk and half mile bike path at Bayfront Park with solar lighting with funding from TPWL Trails Grant
- Installed new drinking fountain, refurbished merry-go-round and see saws at George Adams Park.
- Refurbished safety surfacing at City Park Tot Playscape.



Staff install new drinking fountain at George Adams Park
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Historical-Cultural Amenities

- Completed Phase 1 improvements to Southern Pacific Train Depot.
- Replaced air conditioning at Half Moon Reef Lighthouse.

Waterfront

- Completed Improvements to City Harbor Lower and Upper Docks with fall protection and ADA access.
- Dredged Smith Harbor.

Utilities

- Installed backup electric generators for WWTP and key lift stations with help from a Hazard Mitigation Grant.
- New Lynnhaven Sewer Lift Station (corner of Commerce and Calhoun).

City Appearance

- Bulk/brush pickup limit was increased from 5 cubic yards to 12 cubic yards and now includes light construction debris.
- "Sweep into Spring" City-wide cleanup event was a big success
- Code Enforcement Department uses Code Compliance approach and is working with various property owners towards needed demolition or renovation of their properties.

Safety

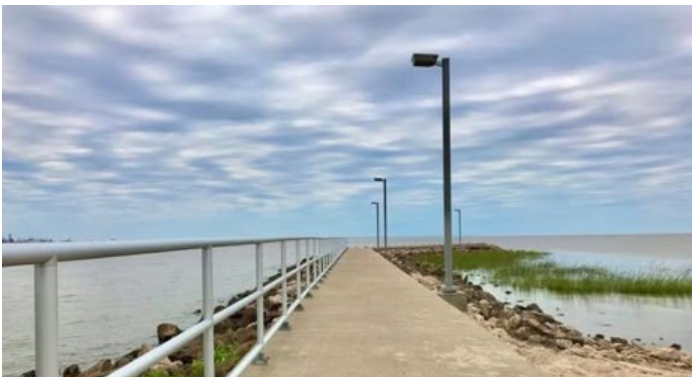
- Established a Mental Health Officer position in the Port Lavaca Police Department (PLPD).
- Converted streetlights in the Old Townsite and Lynnhaven Subdivisions to LED.
- Completed Security upgrades at the PLPD.
- Purchased new 1,000 gal 1,500 GPM Fire Truck.
- TxDOT completed sidewalk construction along SH 238 from the VFW to the Bauer Community Center.

Communication

- Featured informative inserts within monthly utility bills.
- First Annual Public Works "Shown 'N Tell" event in May was a huge success.

Other

- Replaced roof on the PLPD.
- Port Lavaca was featured in the March 2022 Business View Magazine.
- Port Lavaca won a 2022 *Texas Municipal League Municipal Excellence Award for Public Safety*.
- The City held a community review and update of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan.



New LED lights installed in Lighthouse Beach
Source: City of Port Lavaca

2021

Streets and Drainage

- Constructed sidewalk on Bauer Street
- Completed West George Street reconstruction
- Constructed new sidewalk on one side of West George Street from Half League Road to Border
- Constructed new sidewalk on Bauer Street from Oren Street to Austin Street.



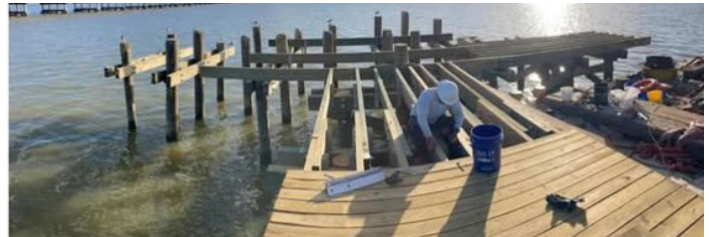
Sidewalk Installation on Bauer Street.
Source: City of Port Lavaca



Lighthouse Beach Playscape
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Recreation and Parks

- Completed Phase I of the Bayfront Park Improvements
- Installed shade structure over the Lighthouse Beach splash pad
- New handrails and solar lights on both rock groins at Lighthouse Beach Park
- Replaced roof at the Lighthouse Beach restroom at the pier.
- Replaced damaged slides at playscape on Lighthouse Beach
- Repaired playscapes at parks: George Adams, Wilson, and City Park
- Monthly Farmer's Market event "Depot Days" started in July



Reconstruction of Lighthouse of Fishing Pier
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Utilities

- Painting and upgrades to the George Street Elevated Water Tower

City Appearance

- Trimmed palms and removed those killed in the freeze along SH 35 and Lighthouse Beach
- Awarded construction contract to renovate exterior of Southern Pacific Train Depot Building with budgeted General Fund dollars.
- Conducted a "Sweep into Spring" City-Wide Cleanup in April.

Waterfront

- New concrete and improvements to Lower and Upper Docks at City Harbor
- Completed reconstruction of Lighthouse Beach Fishing Pier
- Dredged Smith Harbor

Safety

- Installed new bulkhead/walk and handrail by Scully's
- LED lights installed on Main Street, Virginia Street and Lighthouse Beach
- Replaced missing/damaged antique globe light fixtures at the Bauer Community Center and Faye Bauer Sterling Park.

2020 AND BEFORE

Streets and Drainage

- Constructed a new sidewalk on Tilley Street from Half League Road to Bonorden in 2019
- Constructed a new sidewalk on Houston Street from Newlin to SH 35
- Constructed new sidewalks on both sides of Jackson Street in front of J-R Elementary School.

Recreation and Parks

- Renovated concession stand, restroom, and press box building in Wilson Park.
- Constructed new parking lot in Wilson Park with 29 spaces and two ADA spaces, and an underground drainage system
- In 2019, completed reconstruction of Bayfront Fishing Pier
- Installed new recycled plastic playscape with "LaBelle" ship theme in Bayfront Park
- Completed upgrades to handrails at Bayfront Park's Pavilion and sidewalk improvements
- Completed Bayfront Park parking lot and sidewalk improvements on east end of Peninsula and installed solar lighting.
- Received \$200,000 TPWL grant for multi-use walk/bike path with solar lighting and other amenities
- The City's Five-year Capital Plan includes improvements to entrance of Bayfront Park to provide an exit turn lane and ADA access from Main Street into the park

City Appearance

- City conducted "Sweep into Summer Cleanup" in June 2019
- One substandard residential structure was demolished in 2019

Utilities

- New waterline was installed on SH 35 between Chaparral Motel and Walmart
- New PVC waterline was installed to replace an old cast iron line on Brookhowllow Drive
- Replaced 13 non-working fire hydrants

Other

- City of Port Lavaca employed full-time Code Enforcement Officer
- City staff worked with citizens towards code compliance vs code enforcement to positive results.
- Permit was approved for an additional taxi service

Safety

- All downtown streetlights were converted to LED

Historical-Cultural Amenities

- All asbestos and pigeon guano were abated from the Old Fire Station. The suspended ceiling was removed, placed new glass in windows, and installed new gutter and downspouts



La Belle playscape at Bayfront
Source: City of Port Lavaca



Pavilions at Bayfront
Source: Baxter and Woodman








Restrooms at Bayfront
Source: City of Port Lavaca



COMMUNITY PROFILE

Port Lavaca, the county seat of Calhoun County, is a coastal city with a population of 11,577 as of the 2020 U.S. Census, a 5.5 percent decline since 2010. The community is 62 percent Hispanic or Latino, with 57 percent identifying as non-white, and a median age of 34.5. The average family size is three, and the median household income is \$65,395. Major employers include Formosa Plastics, Dow Chemical, and Calhoun County Independent School District, with additional jobs in manufacturing, construction, and retail. These trends reflect Port Lavaca’s evolving role in the Texas Gulf Coast, balancing industrial growth with community development.

U.S. CENSUS: DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISON

	Port Lavaca (2017)	Port Lavaca (2023)*	Calhoun County	Texas	U.S.A.	
						
Median Age	36.8	34.5	39.9	35.9	39.2	• Median age (34.5) decreased by 2.3 years since 2017
<i>Ethnicity*</i>						
Hispanic or Latino Population	56.6%	62%	56.5%	50.1%	61.6%	• Median household income (\$65,395) increased by \$11,500 since 2017
<i>Race*</i>						
White Population	76.6%	43.5%	49%	39%	18.7%	• Bachelor’s degree attainment is well below state and national averages
Black Population	3.8%	3.1%	2.1%	12.2%	12.4%	• The percentage of the population who identify as two or more races increased by 27 percent.
Asian Population	6.1%	8.5%	5.6%	5.4%	5.6%	• Homeownership has grown by 8.7 percent, above state and national level.
Two or More Population	2%	15.5%	22.8%	17.6%	10.2%	• The average family size decreased from 3.36 to three.
Other Race	11.4%	28.8%	13%	14.7%	13.9%	• The labor force decreased by about 300 workers between 2017 and 2023.
Bachelor’s or higher	18%	13.8%	16.9%	34.2%	30.9%	• Port Lavaca Median Household Income is above the national level, but lower than both the county and state level.
Labor Force (Ages 15-64)	5,918	5,613	11,978	14,845,000	166,239,000	• Port Lavaca's Hispanic population increased from 56.6 percent to 62 percent.
Median Household Income	\$53,889	\$65,395	\$71,870	\$75,780	\$57,652	
Average Family Size	3.36	3	2.82	3.26	3.09	
Home Ownership	63.7%	72.4%	76.4%	62.6%	63.8%	
Home Rental	36.3%	27.6%	23.6%	37.4%	36.2%	

*Source: 2020 Decennial Census

U.S. CENSUS FINDINGS

Age and Race/Ethnicity

Figure 7, Age Group Comparison (2010* Vs. 2023***)

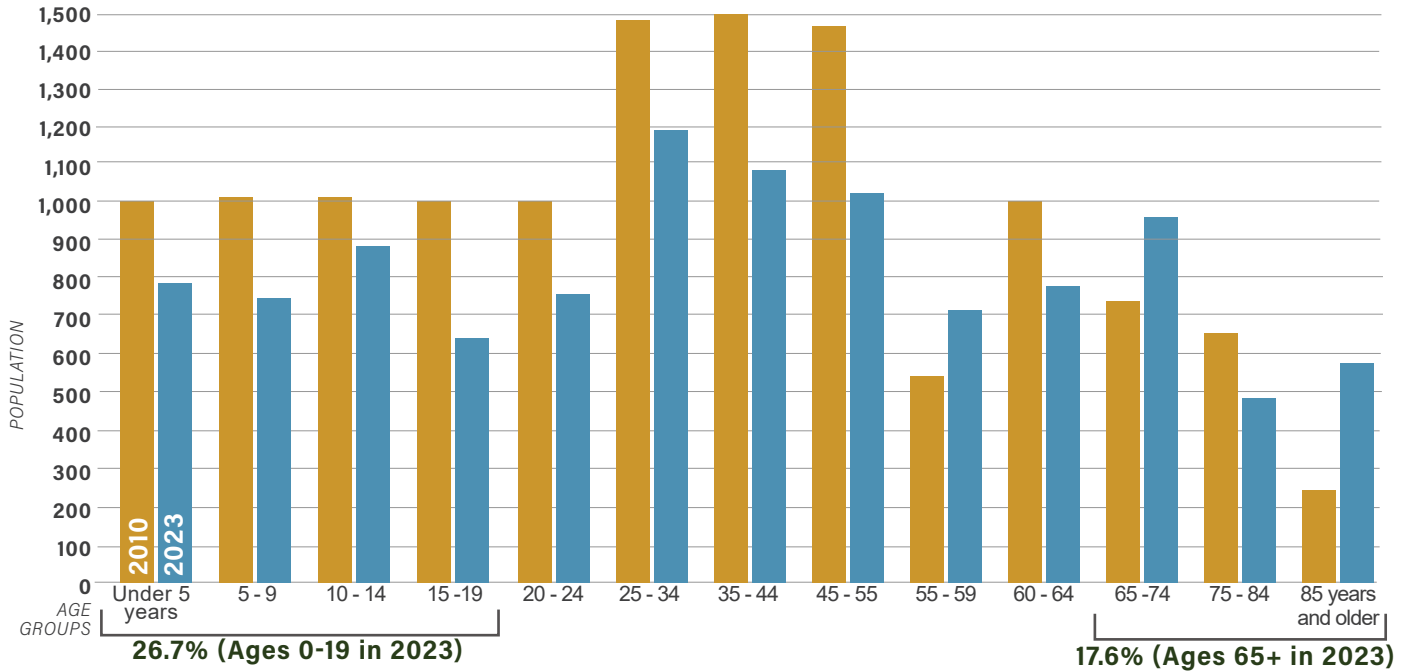
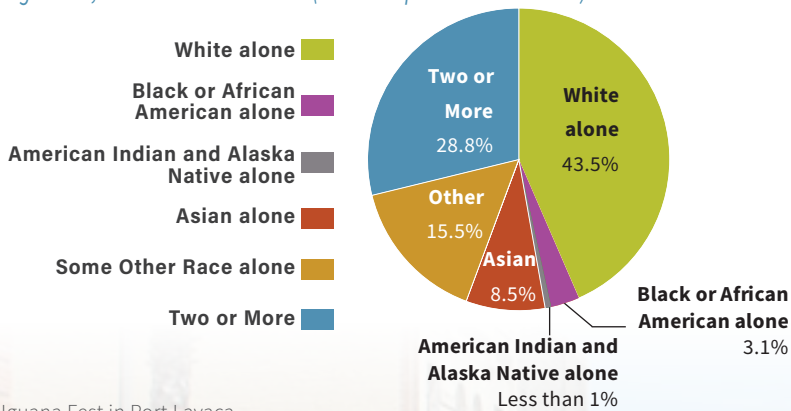


Figure 8, Port Lavaca Race (Not Hispanic or Latino) in 2020**



Iguana Fest in Port Lavaca
Source: City of Port Lavaca

In Port Lavaca, 26.7 percent of residents are under 19, while 17.6 percent are over 65. Since 2010, the population has both declined and aged, with the steepest decreases among youth and middle-aged groups. By contrast, the 55+ population has grown, underscoring a demographic shift toward an older community. Racial and ethnic composition has also changed, with more residents identifying as two or more races or shifting to different categories. Today, Port Lavaca is a diverse community: about 62 percent of the total population identifies as Hispanic or Latino. For non Hispanic or Latino populations, 44 percent as White alone, about 29 percent as Two or More races, 16 percent as Other, and nine percent Asian, three percent as Black or African American, and less than one percent of American Indian or Alaska Native.

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial 2010 Census
 **Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial 2020 Census
 ***Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023



HOUSEHOLD INCOME, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION

Figure 9, Median Household Income (2023*)

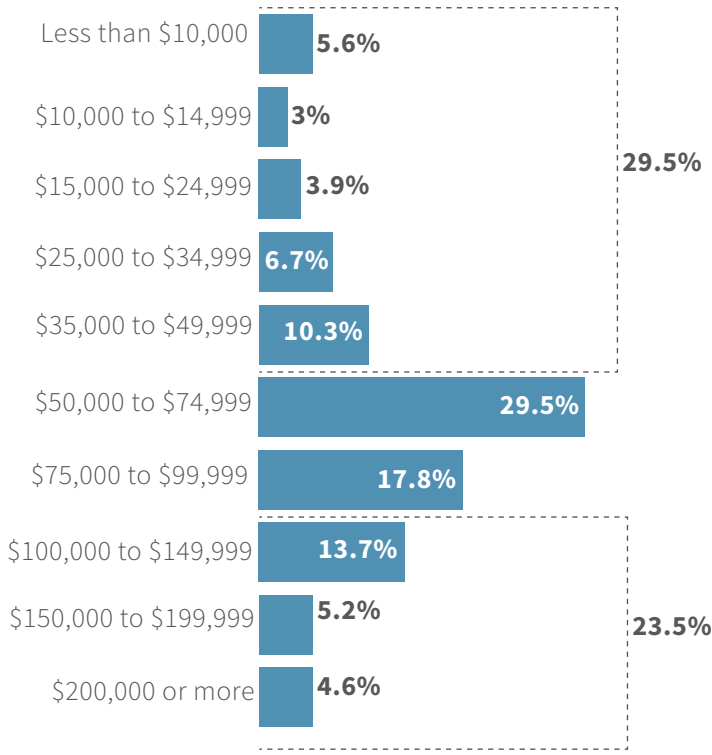


Figure 10, Employment By Occupation (2023*)

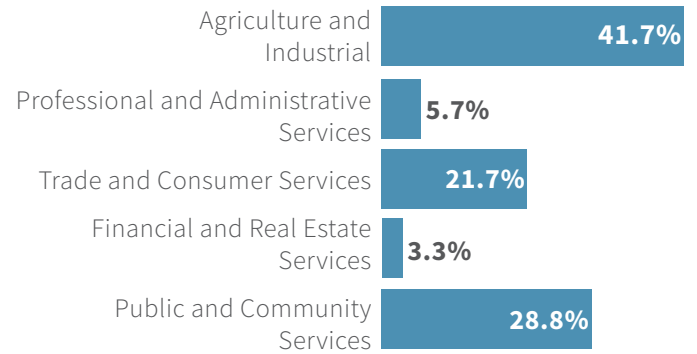
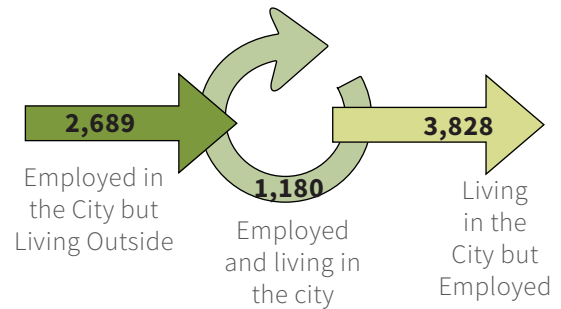


Figure 11, Employment Inflow and Outflow (2022**)



Nearly half of all Port Lavaca households earn between \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year. Approximately 30 percent of households make less than \$50,000 per year, and about 24 percent make over \$100,000.

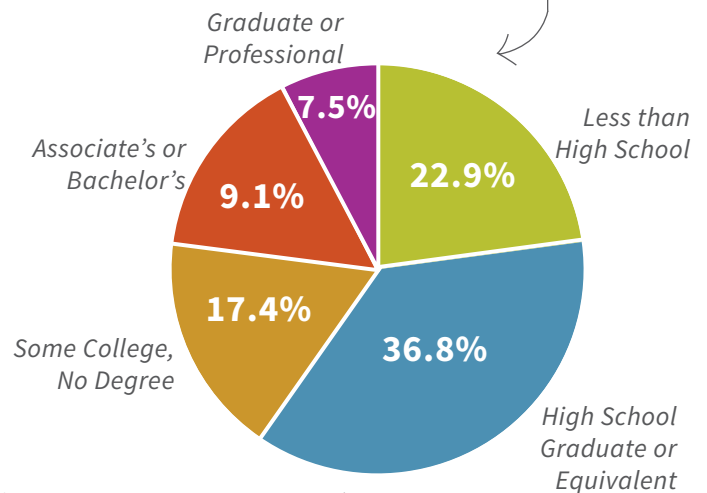
Agricultural and Industrial, which includes agricultural, construction, manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and utilities makes up about 42 percent of the labor force. Within this category, nearly 26 percent of jobs are in manufacturing.

About 29 percent of employed Port Lavaca residents work in Public and Community Services which includes educational services, healthcare, social services. The remaining approximately 22 percent of residents work in Trade and Consumer Services which includes entertainment, recreation, and food and retail services.

Approximately 37 percent of residents have a high school diploma and nearly 15 percent have a bachelor's, graduate or professional degree.

Figure 12, Educational Attainment (2023*)

- Less than a High School Graduate **22.9%**
- High School Graduate (inc.GED) **36.8%**
- Some College, No Degree **17.4%**
- Associate's or Bachelor's Degree **9.1%**
- Graduate or Professional Degree **7.5%**



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial 2020 Census
 **Source: U.S. Census Bureau, On The Map, 2022

HOUSING

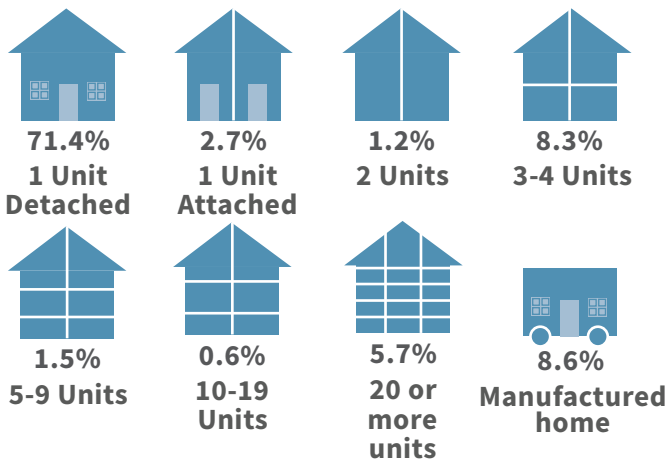
In terms of housing types, referenced in Figure 13, *Number of Housing Units in Structure*, 71 percent of units are single-family detached homes, suggesting a need for greater diversity in housing options to meet evolving community needs. Multifamily housing comprises only 20 percent of the housing stock, and about nine percent of homes are classified as mobile homes.

Figure 14, *Total Housing Units*, illustrates the total housing units and household characteristics in Port Lavaca. According to U.S. Census data, approximately 72 percent of housing units are owner-occupied, while approximately 28 percent are renter-occupied. The city has a total of 5,056 housing units, with roughly 66 percent classified as family households and 34 percent as non-family households. About 31 percent of total households have children. The average family size is three people, while non-family households average fewer than three members.

The existing housing stock is generally on the lower end of the price spectrum. Figure 15, *Housing Value*, shows that the median home price is approximately \$121,000. Of the total housing stock, around 61 percent are valued under \$150,000, and the remaining 39 percent of homes are valued over \$150,000. Around 26 percent of homes are valued between \$100,000 and \$149,000, and another 21 percent fall between \$50,000 and \$99,999. Only 1 percent of homes are valued above \$500,000.

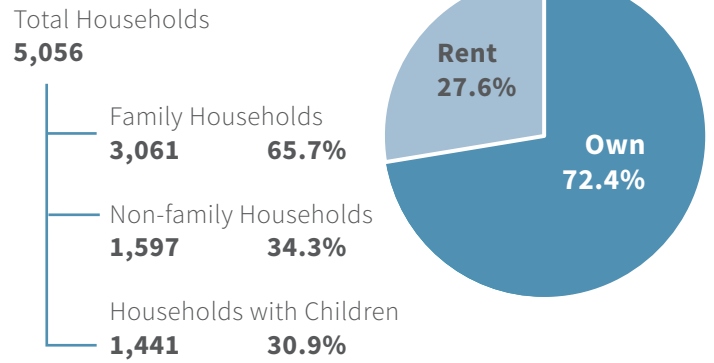
Figure 16, *Housing Age*, depicts the age of current housing. Much of the current housing (60 percent) was built between the 1950s and 1970s, with 25 percent of all homes constructed in the 1950s. Only 13 percent of homes were built between 2000 and 2019, indicating a decline in new housing development. While the Census recorded no homes built after 2020, satellite and on-site reconnaissance confirm that new construction has occurred between 2020 and 2025.

Figure 13, *Number of Housing Units in Structure****



*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial 2020 Census
 ***Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2023

Figure 14, *Total Housing Units**



Average Family Size
3

Median Home Price
\$121,000

Average Owner-occupied Household
2.42

Average Renter-occupied Household
2.31

Figure 15, *Housing Value****

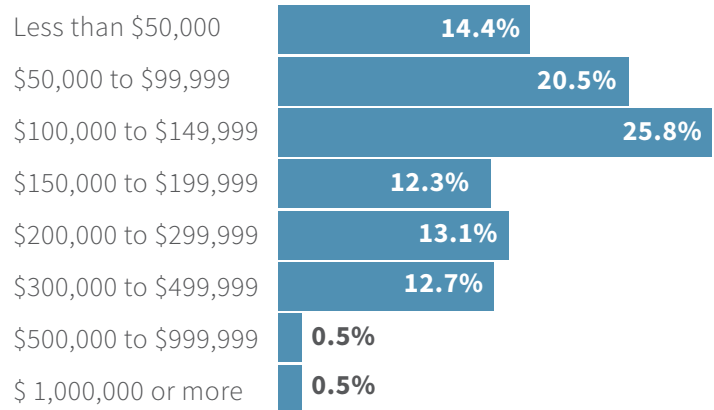
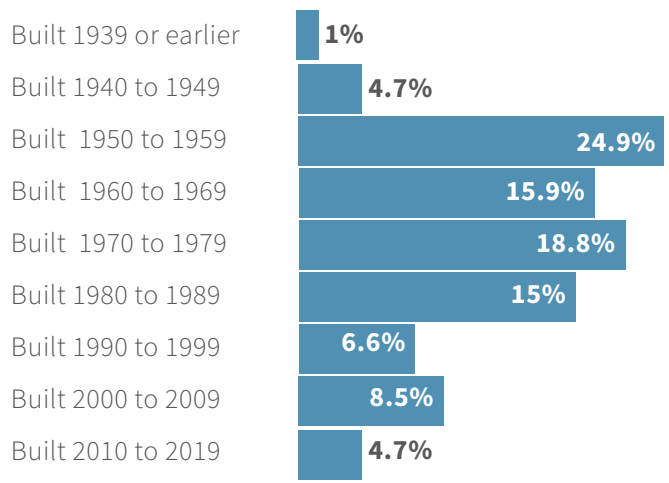


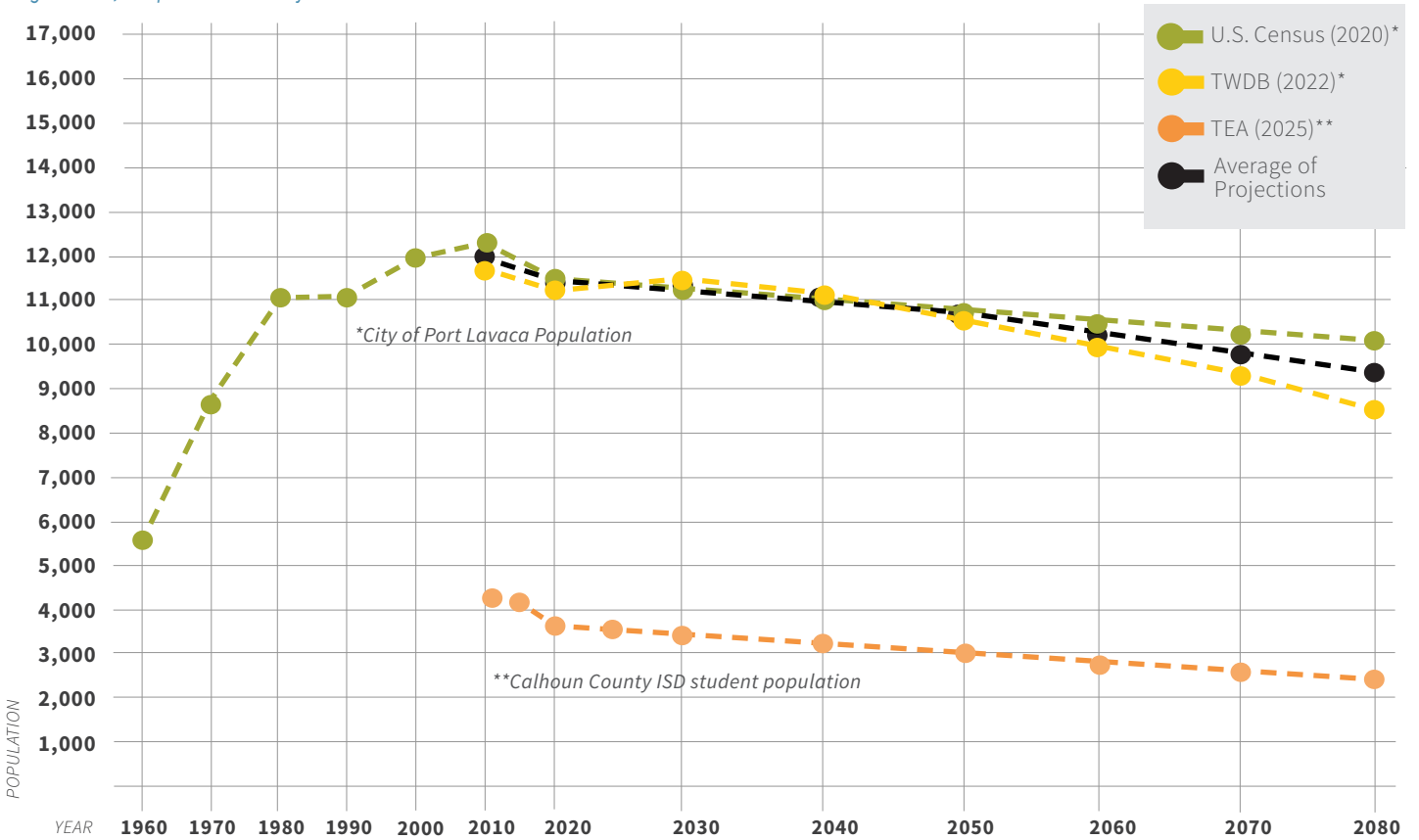
Figure 16 *Housing Age****



Built 2020 or later ← New homes built 2020-2025 (not in Census)

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Figure 17, Population Projections for Port Lavaca

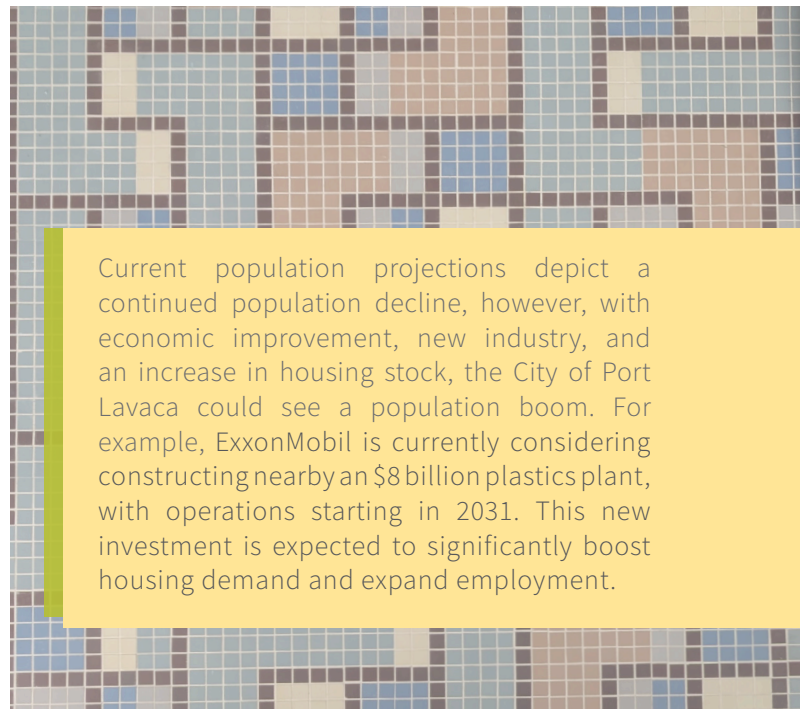


Context

Population projections are utilized to identify future anticipated population growth or decline. Multiple state and regional entities compile population projections to better plan for future investments and planning. Population projections can be utilized to model future growth patterns, expected municipal infrastructure expenditures, land needs to accommodate growth, and municipal budgetary adjustment to accommodate the changes in population.

Projection Findings

Existing population data from the U.S. Census and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), depicted in Figure 17, *Population Projections for Port Lavaca*, indicates a downward trend in population for Port Lavaca. The average of these two trends suggests the population of Port Lavaca, recorded at 11,557 people in the 2020 Census, will decrease to around 10,885 people by 2040.



Current population projections depict a continued population decline, however, with economic improvement, new industry, and an increase in housing stock, the City of Port Lavaca could see a population boom. For example, ExxonMobil is currently considering constructing nearby an \$8 billion plastics plant, with operations starting in 2031. This new investment is expected to significantly boost housing demand and expand employment.

Wall tiling at City Hall
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Sources of Data

The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) provides a population projection for the City of Port Lavaca, and a population prediction is calculated from the U.S. Census Bureau. Additionally, a future student enrollment prediction for Calhoun County is calculated from Texas Education Agency's yearly enrollment.

Findings per Entity

Texas Water Development Board (2026)

The TWDB provides annual municipal population projections to accurately predict future water demand. The 2026 TWDB Municipal Demand Projections provide the most conservative estimate of population growth. The TPWD estimates that beginning in 2030, Port Lavaca's population will decrease by about 600 residents every 10 years until 2080 (a -4.1 percent decline every 10 years). By 2040, TPWD estimates that Port Lavaca's population will decline to 11,088 and then decline to under 10,000 by 2060.

U.S. Census Bureau

The City of Port Lavaca's population peaked in the 2010 Decennial Census with a total of 12,248 residents; however, by the 2020 Census, the population had declined by nearly six percent. The average rate of growth and decline during 2000 and 2020 is -2.1 percent, and if existing trends continue, the U.S. Census projection shows a nearly two percent decline in population each decade.

Texas Education Agency

The TEA documents the number of students enrolled each year in school districts across Texas. The enrollment records for the last decade have shown a decrease in the number of students by 5.8 percent. The higher decline in number of students enrolled in Calhoun County could show a trend in the number of young families leaving the county, including in Port Lavaca. A declining number in the younger population can be especially problematic because it means the overall population of the city and county will age, putting a greater demand on healthcare services but less income from economic activity.

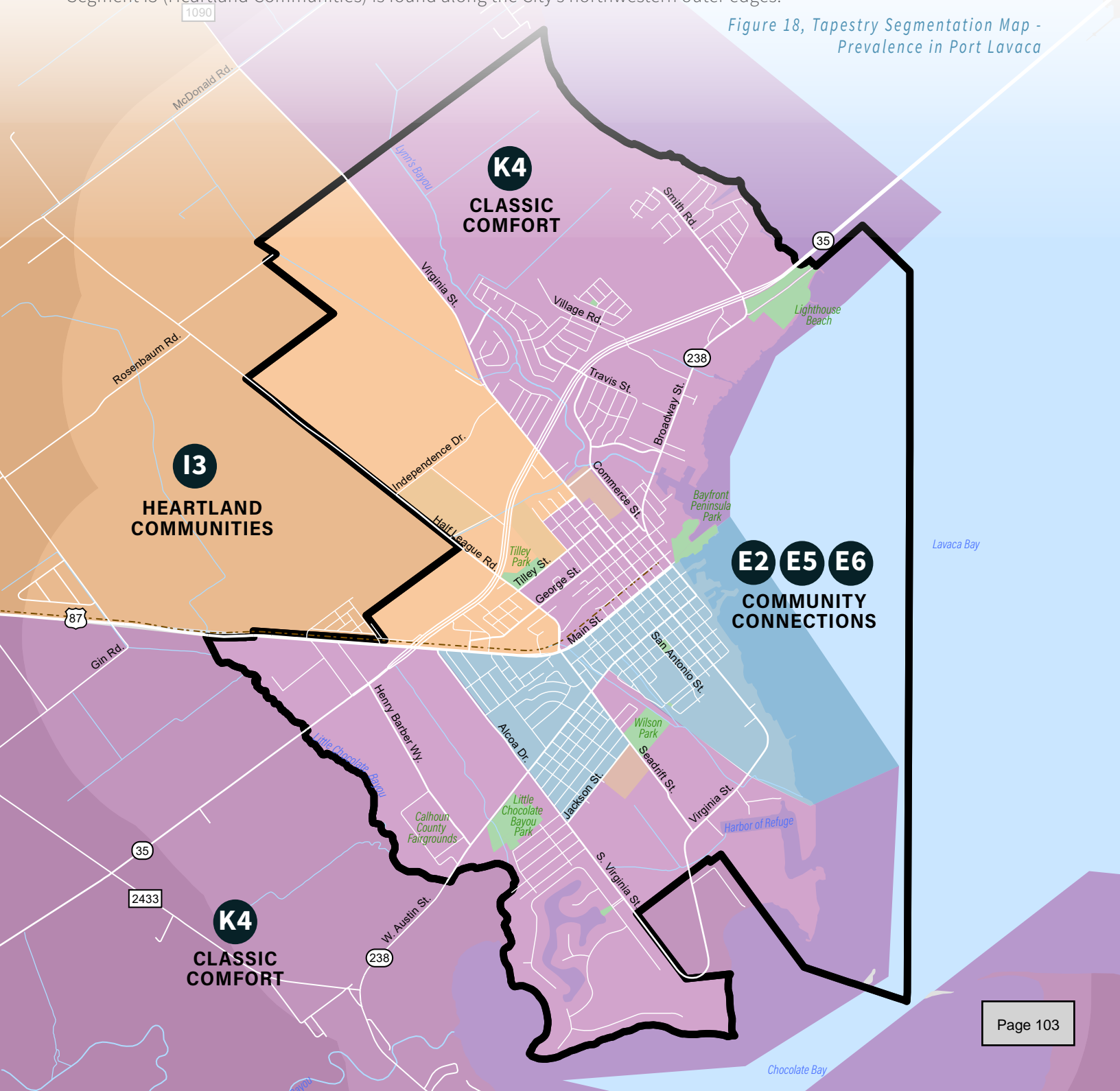
Key Takeaways

- Population projections for Port Lavaca indicate a steady decline. The U.S. Census projects a decrease of about 2 percent per decade, while the TWDB projects a decline of roughly 4 percent. Taken together, these estimates suggest an average population decline of approximately 3 percent per decade.
- Student enrollment in Calhoun County ISD schools is projected to decline by six percent each decade.
- Incoming economic activity could greatly impact these projections if more people move to Port Lavaca for work.
- The TWDB population projections are directly tied to future municipal water demand, meaning declining population forecasts will influence long-term infrastructure investment and utility planning.
- With fewer young families and declining school enrollment, the community will face an older demographic profile, increasing demand for healthcare and senior services while reducing the local labor force and economic activity.

COMMUNITY TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION

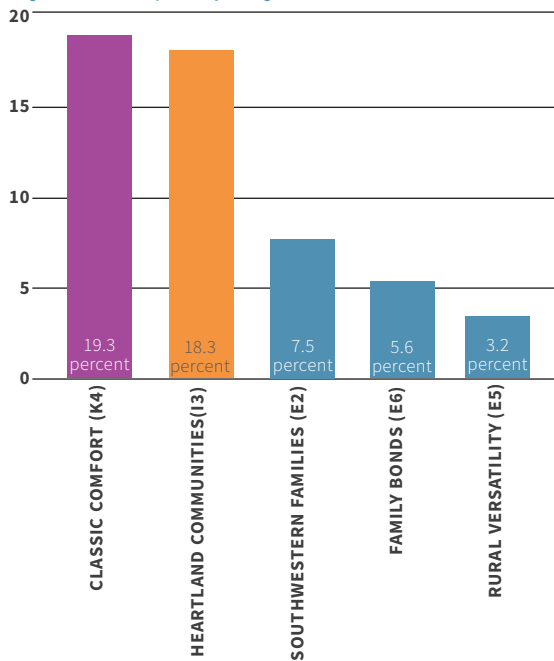
The ArcGIS platform, ESRI Business Analyst Tapestry Segmentation, is a geodemographic classification system that divides U.S. neighborhoods into LifeMode group segments based on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. The classification, known as “Tapestry Segmentation,” offers valuable insights into community dynamics and helps identify underserved areas and optimal locations for parks and recreational services. Each segment reveals detailed patterns in lifestyle, consumer behavior, and housing trends. Figure 18, *Tapestry Segmentation Map - Prevalence in Port Lavaca*, depicts the top five Tapestry Segments represented in the City of Port Lavaca. The LifeMode K4 segment, Classic Comfort, covers the largest portion of Port Lavaca, with Group E (Community Connections: E2, E5, E6) located in the southern part of the city. Segment I3 (Heartland Communities) is found along the City’s northwestern outer edges.

Figure 18, *Tapestry Segmentation Map - Prevalence in Port Lavaca*



COMMUNITY TAPESTRY IN PORT LAVACA

Figure 19, Tapestry Segmentation -Prevalence in Port Lavaca



Classic Comfort (K4)

Southern suburban neighborhoods are home to middle-income, full-time working families with multiple incomes, and a median age of 40. Employment is concentrated in wholesale trade, health care, education, and manufacturing, with a strong labor force participation rate of around 69 percent and low unemployment. Homeownership is about 81 percent with homes generally valued around \$262,806, and built between 1950 and 2000. Residents enjoy short commutes, own multiple vehicles, and tend to shop at discount stores while investing in lawn and garden tools. Their lifestyle includes a strong passion for sports and dining at both fast food and sit-down chain restaurants.

Heartland Communities (I3)

Residents in this segment live in small town and rural neighborhoods, often outside metro areas. Households are typically married couples or individuals living alone, with a median age of 44 and modest incomes supported in part by social security and public assistance. Employment is rooted in traditional industries like manufacturing, construction, agriculture, and health care. Most homes were built before 1990, are valued around \$139,000, and are owner-occupied, with short commutes and widespread vehicle ownership. Residents favor local banking, cash payments, pet care, and outdoor activities. They tend to avoid the latest technology, preferring practical, domestic products.

Southwest Families (E2)

Residents in this segment are primarily young, culturally diverse families living in urban and suburban areas of the Southwest, often in multigenerational households. Many work in office support, services, construction, or maintenance, with incomes in the low to middle range and a labor force participation rate of approximately 54 percent. Housing consists mostly of older, single-family homes with modest values, and while homeownership is common, rent burden is high. Lifestyle habits include shopping at discount stores, buying children's products, and enjoying family outings to movie theaters and theme parks. Households are highly connected through mobile devices and often support relatives financially through credit and money transfers.

Family Bonds (E6)

Residents in this segment live in urban or suburban Southern communities. The population is younger and has larger, often multigenerational households to help support each other, as well as nontraditional households. One in five residents is foreign-born and linguistic isolation is more than twice the national average. Employment centers on skilled trades and services like construction, with mid-level incomes and about 65 percent labor force participation rate. Most live in owner-occupied, pre-1990 single-family homes with moderate values, though many face rent burdens. Lifestyle trends include wholesale shopping, fast food and delivery meals, and frequent mobile internet use for streaming, gaming, and foreign-language content.

Rural Versatility (E5)

Rural Versatility neighborhoods are located in non-metro areas and are home to a mix of young families and older adults, with many seniors relying on retirement income. Over half of households consist of singles or childless married couples, and full-time employment is common in industries like manufacturing, agriculture, and construction. Most residents drive alone due to limited public transit, and housing is largely owner-occupied, single-family homes or mobile units valued around \$213,579. The median household income is \$58,911, and educational attainment is modest, with fewer than 20 percent holding a bachelor's degree. Lifestyle habits include shopping at hardware and department stores, maintaining vehicles and homes, listening to country radio, and caring for pets.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

Throughout the development of the Comprehensive Plan, public engagement served as the foundation of the process, ensuring that the final document reflects the voices, priorities, and aspirations of Port Lavaca's residents. Community input was not treated as a single step, but rather as a continuous dialogue that informed strategies and recommendations at every stage. A variety of outreach methods were employed to reach diverse audiences, including small group listening sessions with neighborhood residents, targeted meetings with city departments and local organizations, and open public comment opportunities designed to invite broad participation.

These efforts created multiple avenues for stakeholders to share their perspectives on issues such as housing, economic development, infrastructure, transportation, parks, and cultural identity. By combining technical analysis with lived experiences, the planning team was able to identify both challenges and opportunities that might otherwise have been overlooked. Importantly, engagement activities also helped build trust between the City and its residents, reinforcing the idea that the Comprehensive Plan is not just a technical document, but a shared vision for the future.

The insights gathered through this process are summarized in the following pages, providing a clear record of community priorities and concerns. These findings form the backbone of the plan's recommendations, ensuring that Port Lavaca's path forward is rooted in the values and needs of the people who call it home.

The Public Engagement meetings included:

- Nine Small Group Listening Sessions
- Two Public Open Houses
- Two City Department Meetings
- Four Neighborhood Outreach meetings
- Four Joint Workshops (City Council and Planning Board)
- Online Survey Responses

Small Group Listening Session
Source: City of Port Lavaca



As part of the Comprehensive Plan's public engagement process, five listening sessions were conducted with a diverse range of stakeholders to ensure that the perspectives of different groups were represented. These sessions included conversations with the City of Port Lavaca Department of Public Works, the Police and Fire Departments, and individual City Council members, providing insight into municipal operations, public safety needs, and governance priorities. Additional sessions were held with natural resource organizations, the Styler Cycling Group, and students from Calhoun High School, each offering unique perspectives on environmental stewardship, recreation and mobility, and the priorities of younger residents.

Together, these listening sessions created a well-rounded understanding of community needs, from infrastructure and safety to cultural identity and youth engagement. The feedback gathered directly informed the plan's strategies, ensuring that recommendations reflect not only technical analysis but also the lived experiences and aspirations of Port Lavaca's residents and stakeholders.

CITY DEPARTMENT LISTENING SESSIONS

Growth and Development:

- Top priorities identified are revitalizing downtown, expanding housing, and investing in placemaking.
- The City wants to establish a zoning ordinance to ensure predictable development in Port Lavaca.
- The City desires more residential and commercial growth.

Utilities and Public Services:

- Because groundwater access is limited in Port Lavaca, the City purchases raw water from the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), and Undine is contracted to treat the imported raw water.
- Trash services are contracted through Republic Services.
- The existing SCADA system is failing, and there is a proposal to upgrade the system and expand the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- The City will no longer allow grinder systems to be installed in new housing developments. New developments must connect to the existing city sewer infrastructure and lift stations. Septic in existing homes is likely slowing down new home purchases. Clair Crossing is the newest subdivision development with septic grinder stations.
- Grinder stations have alarms that trigger at a certain level but hold 100 extra gallons for contingency. Personnel must go out to clear them when alarms sound.

Infrastructure and Resilience:

- Infrastructure upgrades are currently underway, including parks, streets, sidewalks, and bike paths.
- New bike lanes and sidewalks were built by TxDOT.
- The City is in the process of purchasing property to build a storm detention pond.

- An excavator cleans out the drainage ditches every two years.
- The Public Works Department building is designed to withstand Category 3 hurricane wind speeds.

Community Engagement and Planning Tools

- The City needs a social media or communications manager to promote activities in town and engage residents.
- A tree survey was performed using Tree Plotter.
- The Deepwalk program will be used to scan sidewalks and road infrastructure.

Workforce and Policy:

- Starting wages and turnover have improved since 2017. In 2017, the starting wage was \$10/hour with an approximate 80 percent turnover rate. In 2025, the starting wage is \$17/hour with an approximate 2 percent turnover rate.
- A golf cart ordinance was introduced.



Police Department in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

SMALL GROUP LISTENING SESSIONS

August 25th-26th, 2025 Listening Sessions:

Nine small-group listening sessions were held with a diverse range of stakeholder groups. Participants included local business leaders and major employers, educational representatives, public service providers, the Calhoun County Independent School District, and both Port Lavaca and Calhoun County officials. To ensure broad perspectives were captured, sessions were organized around the following groups:

- Schools
- Major Employers
- Arts & Culture
- Realtors
- Developers
- Senior Citizens
- Downtown Business Owners

The insights gathered from these discussions provided valuable context for the plan and helped shape its recommendations. A summary of the key findings from each session is provided below.

Schools Meeting

Top Three Points:

- The city needs more housing for workers in Port Lavaca
- Schools need backup generators and fiber optic networks would greatly benefit the city's resilience.
- Downtown needs improvement.

Challenges / Concerns:

- Backup generators are needed for schools.
- More housing needed for Port Lavaca workers.
- More restaurant variety needed.
- Downtown needs improvement.
- Underground fiber optic network needed for storm resilience.
- Need entertainment options.
- Retention of locals is a challenge.
- Bowling alley is closed.
- Streetlights are all maintained by TxDOT (limited local control).
- A bypass is needed for SH 35.
- Crosswalks on Travis are dangerous.
- Indoor pool needed for both public and CCISD.

Desires / Opportunities:

- CCISD owns 20 homes in Port Lavaca for new teachers to rent.
- School buses serve the entire community and are used for evacuations.
- YMCA uses and rents school district gyms.
- Leagues use school fields.



Schools small group listening session
Source: City of Port Lavaca

- Texas A&M programs in Victoria provide nearby education that pull young people away from Port Lavaca.
- Partners and Education Committee meet three times a year with industry plants.
- EMS and Police cross-training strengthens emergency response.
- New skatepark at Wilson Park and new restrooms, playground, and trails at Little Chocolate Bayou Park
- Digital display boards enhance communication.
- Scenic city designation (no billboards) preserves community aesthetics.
- Hunting and fishing provide recreational and tourism opportunities.

Major Employers Meeting

Challenges / Concerns:

- There is a strong need for attractive, attainable, and diverse housing types at competitive prices to attract and retain residents.
- Young talent from major employers are leaving Houston after gaining experience in Port Lavaca.
- An aging workforce at Formosa is retiring and they currently have 85 job openings.
- Need more unique city restaurants and local recreation/entertainment.

Desires / Opportunities:

- Desire to retain skilled workforce.
- Point Comfort's old elementary school was converted into a Formosa education facility.
- Formosa owns 46-47 homes they rent, and an additional 19 units are rented out to teachers.
- Dow Chemical is planning a plan expansion to be complete by 2032.
- Dow Chemical plans to hire 200 people over the next 10 years.
- Defining TIRZ and creative financing could allow for more economic development in the future.
- Waterfront provides opportunities for economic opportunities.

Arts/Culture Meeting

Challenges / Concerns:

- Bauer Community Center is popular but booked far in advance (limited availability).
- Market Days needs to be indoors due to wind.
- Lack of venues for medium-sized events (40-100 people).

- Need for more sports fields, a pool, and a skate park.
- Visitors report limited things to do in Downtown.
- Limited restaurant choices and socializing spaces.
- Not enough businesses open in Downtown; some buildings used for junk storage.

Desires / Opportunities:

- Main Street Theater reopened with strong attendance at opening night.
- Local events (fishing, birding, boat shows, RV shows, Market Days, Calhoun County Fair) provide community and tourism appeal.
- More opportunities for public art, placemaking, and local artist engagement.
- Resources for visitors and residents include a yearly art periodical, biannual visitor newspaper, and online visitors guide.

Realtors Meeting

Challenges / Concerns:

- Most apartments are income-restricted, limiting market-rate rental options.
- Flood and windstorm insurance in AE Flood Zones can add over \$1,000/month, pricing out younger buyers.
- Victoria is more appealing due to lower wind insurance costs.
- Older properties face higher insurance rates compared to newer construction.
- Port Lavaca's beaches are less attractive due to commercial fishing facilities, reducing vacation home demand.
- Renovation permits are too complex and need simplification.
- Boarded-up windows deter potential buyers and hurt neighborhood appeal.





Port Lavaca Better Together Mural
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Desires / Opportunities:

- Short-term rentals could benefit Port Lavaca, especially as other cities restrict them.
- Higher-end multifamily housing could be viable at \$1,500–\$2,000 per month.
- Past subsidies built income-based housing, but current demand is shifting toward market-rate options.
- Vacant or underutilized properties could be redeveloped once permitting barriers are addressed.

Developers Meeting

Challenges / Concerns:

- Developers lack trust in the current market without City involvement in a TIRZ and want proof of concept.
- Downtown needs strategic investment due to limited parking, underused buildings, and lack of attractions.
- Rundown properties detract from the appearance of otherwise nice buildings.
- More sidewalks are needed to connect communities
- Median household income is too high to qualify for certain community grants.

Desires / Opportunities:

- Improvements in lighting, walkability, and venue access could transform Downtown into a cultural and economic hub.
- Port Lavaca’s strengths are water access, recreation, and business-friendly policies which support a “beach town identity.”
- Lower-priced homes (~\$300k) are selling well, showing market demand.
- Valor Park is targeting first-time homebuyer market.
- Homebuyers may prefer larger lots over amenities, shaping future development strategies.
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) could be popular in multigenerational communities.

Senior Citizens Meeting

Challenges / Concerns

- Transit limitations and sidewalk gaps reduce mobility and independence for seniors.
- Budget cuts have reduced the number of scheduled shuttle trips each week.
- Shortage of CNAs in local facilities impacts quality of care.
- Need for more income-based senior housing to meet affordability challenges.

Desires / Opportunities:

- Improving sidewalk connectivity and transit options would enhance safety, access, and quality of life for seniors.
- Nursing facility staff generally live within 10 miles of work, More housing options could encourage employees to live within Port Lavaca.
- Improving sidewalk connectivity and transit options would enhance safety, access, and quality of life for seniors.
- Seniors enjoy a variety of monthly social events through local organizations and facilities.

Downtown Business Owners

Challenges / Concerns:

- Absentee landlords.
- Stray animals living in abandoned buildings.
- Owners do not want to sell buildings.
- Buildings are being used for storage and are falling apart.
- Need ordinances for maintaining buildings and discourage empty buildings.
- Need to increase enforcement of city ordinances.
- A fire has already happened in one of these buildings and there are concerns another could start.

- Buildings have foundation problems.
- Lack of parking, want a parking garage.
- Need safe pedestrian access.
- Traffic calming needed for Commerce Street.

Desires / Opportunities:

- Space for stable retail like antique stores, food trucks, etc.
- City has a façade grant program up to \$10,000 for a \$20,000 project.
- Turning 87 into a One Way: TxDOT would need to turn over 87 to the City.
- Create a design standard for Downtown buildings.

September 23-24, 2025 Listening Sessions:

Five small group listening sessions and four neighborhood outreach meetings were held with local organizations, Calhoun County High School students, and Districts One through Five.

Biking and Walking Groups

Challenges / Concerns:

- Currently, only one bike lane exists on Smith Street.
- Animal Control needs more shelter space for the stray dogs they pick up.

Desires / Opportunities:

- Bike route around 1090 route.
- Alternative transportation grants would allow for more funding to projects.

Natural Resources

Challenges / Concerns:

- Superfund sites are polluted areas that require long term cleanup efforts. For example, the ALCOA/Lavaca Bay Superfund site. Advocacy groups are concerned dredging could cause more pollution in the bay, and want to raise more awareness about bay contamination.
- Expansion of the ship channel could alter bay water flow, which in turn could affect ecosystems.

Desires / Opportunities:

- Tighter regulations when it comes to wastewater discharge could reduce pollution.
- Regimented approach to wastewater treatment would address current system inadequacies.
- Closure of public boating ramps in Port O'Connor could encourage boater migration to Port Lavaca, especially with the expansion of the Harbor Refuge ramp.



Sand crab sculpture in front of Calhoun High School
Source: Baxter and Woodman

- Oyster farms, like Three Sisters Oyster, provide tourism opportunities and use sustainable farming practices.
- Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail sites makes Port Lavaca attractive for birding.

Calhoun High School Students (Three Classes)

Challenges / Concerns:

- Limited education opportunities: no local community college classes; cosmetology mentioned.
- Attracting and maintaining young people: limited job opportunities outside of plant work; lack of entertainment and leisure for young adults and families.
- Students want more activities for teenagers and kids (arcades, skating rink, trampoline parks, dance halls/clubs).
- Safety concerns: need more crosswalks on Virginia Street, sidewalks to connect the community, and road/pothole repairs.
- Internet access is limited and needs more bandwidth.
- Elementary and high schools need renovations: outdated styles, poor lighting, limited cafeteria food options.
- Daycare facilities described as “sketchy” and in need of improvements.

- Downtown needs more shops and improved walkability.
- Noted that there is a lot of vacant land in Port Lavaca.
- Cleaner, safer parks and neighborhoods are needed.

Opportunities / Desires:

- Develop indoor recreation and sports facilities
- Improve movie theaters and entertainment venues; add zoos, aquariums, rodeo arenas, and bowling alleys.
- Establish a commercial airport.
- Preserve open spaces.
- Introduce community college or UH-Victoria satellite courses.
- Renovate old buildings.
- Encourage pop-up shops.
- Expand restaurant options, including sit-down venues like Texas Roadhouse
- Create local community gardens.
- Develop a strip center mall or shopping court.

JOINT WORKSHOP

August 25, 2025 Joint Workshop

- High school students represent a critical voice in shaping Port Lavaca’s future. The benefits include civic pride, developing leadership skills, and ensures local planning choices reflect younger generations as well.
- Lower-income households are often most vulnerable to flooding, storms, and rising insurance costs, and would benefit greatly through resilience planning. This would ensure equity in disaster preparedness and long-term community stability.
- It is important to look at regional outlook through multiple contexts. These contexts include economic (industry and tourism), environmental (Lavaca Bay health and shoreline maintenance), and social (housing and workforce).
- Pollution in Lavaca Bay is a critical issue. Pollution impacts fishing, recreation, and tourism. Stricter monitoring, partnerships with industry, and public education campaigns could help reducing pollutants in the bay.
- Historic homes and sites are cultural assets. Grants show that funding opportunities exist to preserve historical sights to protect community character, strengthen identity, and attract tourism.
- Living shorelines stabilize coasts, reduce erosion, and provide habitat which increases resilience against storms and provides economic incentives. Utilizing carbon credit programs could generate revenue for future and ongoing conservation projects. The City owns land along



Students graduating from community college
Source: Danville Community College, VA

the shoreline which makes it easier for the City to move forward with living shoreline projects.

- Active transportation through sidewalks, trails, and shared-use paths, and recreational trails will improve walkability.
- Park enhancements could include disc golf which would provide additional recreational activities
- Interlocal discussions allow for collaboration between the County, CCISD, and regional partners to strengthen planning capacity. These help build positive relationships between all entities and work towards a shared vision.



Nurdles (plastic pellets from petrochemical plants) spilled onto a beach in Galveston, TX
Source: Jace Tunnell

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH MEETINGS

Four Neighborhood Outreach Meetings were held on September 23, 2025; September 24, 2025; and October 21st, 2025, at local community centers in Port Lavaca. The meetings were an over-discussion format, which provided residents the opportunity to discuss with City leaders and Comprehensive Plan consultant staff about their needs and concerns regarding their local neighborhood and Port Lavaca as a whole. A summary of key findings from all four meetings is provided below:



District 1 Neighborhood Outreach Meeting
Source: City of Port Lavaca

District 1

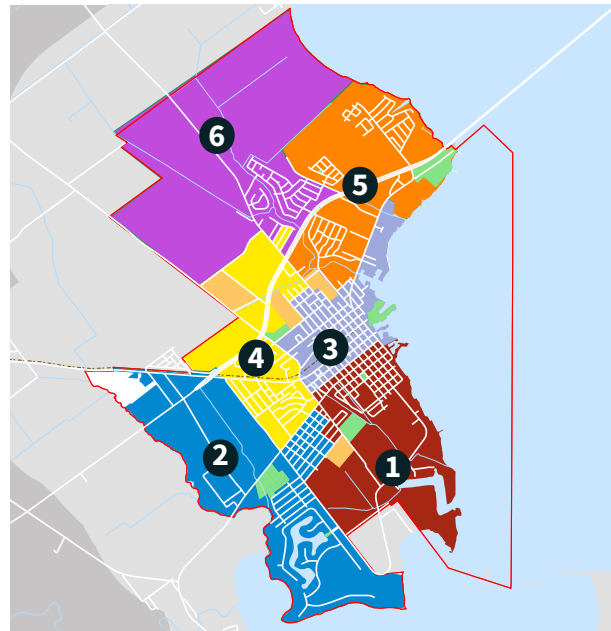
Challenges / Concerns:

- Limited dining options: Attendees expressed there are too many bars and not enough restaurants, especially restaurants with healthier choices.
- Downtown needs more shops and improved walkability
- Communication: In some communities, residents don't utilize social media. A Public Information Office was noted.
- Neighborhood lighting: The neighborhood is too dark and attendees expressed a want for lights on every corner.
- Resources: More resources for housing repairs. Homes are deteriorating.
- Outreach program needed for homebound

Desires / Opportunities:

- Fix what Port Lavaca already has.
- Establish a "Keep Port Lavaca Beautiful" chapter affiliate to help with volunteer efforts
- Summer recreation programs for kids
- Opportunities for competitive sports to be hosted in Port Lavaca
- Attendees from District 1 expressed a desire for more recognition of important landmarks and figures in the Black/African-American Community, like the Sunlight Girls Club, founded during the Civil Rights era and ran for 40 years. This club promoted education, leadership, and integrity.

Figure 20, Map of Port Lavaca Districts



Source: City of Port Lavaca

Districts 2 & 4

Challenges / Concerns:

- Downtown traffic flow: need for one-way streets (like US 87) and a turnback similar to Highway 35.
- Housing shortage: not enough housing available; affordability concerns noted.
- Tourism gap: Bayfront currently lacks attractions and activities to draw visitors.
- Economic equity – Districts 2 and 4 are economically challenged; residents call for livable wages and attainable housing/land.
- Lighting: neighborhoods and public spaces need improved lighting.
- Nuisance properties: vacant and deteriorating buildings are a concern.
- Vacant property management: many unused sites need redevelopment; an inventory of available properties is lacking.
- Water supply limitations: fresh water is scarce; raw water must be imported and groundwater is limited.
- Bayfront Pavilion: needs a windbreak to improve usability.

Desires / Opportunities:

- Natural beauty: leverage Port Lavaca's landscape and coastal setting to attract visitors and investment.
- Business growth: more businesses would generate revenue; discussion included property tax vs. sales tax strategies.
- Event facilities: potential to build a rodeo arena or similar venue.

- Active transportation: expand walkability and bike trails to connect neighborhoods and improve quality of life.
- Small business support: reduce barriers to entry and encourage entrepreneurship.
- Community spaces: create more “Third Places” such as cafes, parks (e.g., Little Chocolate Bayou Park), and hangout spaces attractive to young people.
- Dining diversity: expand restaurant options to provide more variety.
- Lighthouse Beach: establish a dedicated fund; currently only one employee manages the site.
- Events & tourism: Bird Festival scheduled for May 2026 offers a platform to showcase Port Lavaca.
- Recognition: Port Lavaca designated as the #2 Most Affordable Bayfront Community by the Natural Resources Association.

- Recruit high school students to paint and renovate homes as community service work or as a school-work program.
- Create a Recreation Department, not just a Parks department.
- Coastal business: Develop coastline with boat rentals, fishing/birding, and more options.
- Food truck court: needs power source
- Recreation and events: movies in the park, kayaking after the breakwater, fishing shows/tournaments, and high school plays through the drama club.

Districts 5 & 6

Challenges / Concerns:

- Attendees expressed concerns about the lack of lighting and lighting improvements, especially at Light House Beach has poor lighting along the pier and boardwalk with 50 lights not working, and 60 missing
- Community cleanup: Attendees noted that Little Chocolate Bayou regularly has trash in it and needs consistent cleanup, and also overall park safety needs to be improved

Desires / Opportunities:

- Sidewalks to bring community together.
- Waterfront is a major asset the city and there need to be more amenities along the waterfront. This is an opportunity to lean into a nautical/beach theme.
- Changing Main Street to Commerce Street into a one way street.
- More neighborhood parks.
- Food Truck Court in Downtown.
- Expand Marina to attract boats. Residents noted the Bulkhead Marina expansion in Washington as an example of what that could look like.



District 2 and 4 Neighborhood Outreach Meeting at Jackson Roosevelt Elementary
Source: City of Port Lavaca

District 3

Challenges / Concerns:

- Infrastructure issues: Aging infrastructure and streets and drainage issues.
- Youth: Kids are moving away because there is nothing to keep them here. There is nothing to do, but the parks are great. Texas A&M Victoria programs could help with retention and job creation.
- Manufactured homes should be in parks only.
- Resiliency: Living shorelines at City Harbor to Seawall.
- Aquaculture: have fisherman's cooperation in City Harbor fishing.
- Reagan building needs to be renovated, but maintain historic character.

Desires / Opportunities:

- District 1 was identified as having available sites for infill.
- Infill/redevelopment in available properties around the city.



Joint Workshop Meeting
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Online Community Survey

Summary will be provided once engagement is complete

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE #1

The first Port Lavaca Open House was held at the Bauer Community center on December 2, 2025. The 26 attendees included City of Port Lavaca staff and community members, who showed up for the presentation. There was a zoning workshop activity to explain what zoning is to community members and provide examples of what zoning could look like. The B&W team answered questions from community members, city staff, and council members. An online community survey was announced at the meeting and shared with community members, and 30 paper copies of the survey were provided at the event. The City will oversee sharing it to the rest of the community.

Safety Concerns:

- The intersection of 1090 and Virginia Street is a high crash point. Attendees expressed there need to be intersection improvements.
- Residential area on north side of town is prone to flooding.
- Concerns about air pollution due to southeasterly winds blowing over industrial plants into the City.
- The stray animal population is difficult for City operated Calhoun County Animal Control facilities to manage.

Infrastructure Improvement Opportunities:

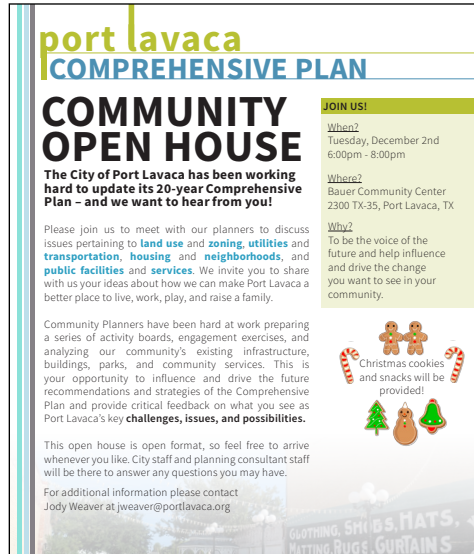
- Additional fire station suggested for west side of Port Lavaca when development occurs.
- A bike lane needed along George Street.
- Trail needed to connect Smith Road and Village Road areas along a drainage ditch.
- North 238/Broadway Street needs connection points to Downtown.
- Traffic congestion during rush hour (4:00 pm to 6:30 pm) along SH 35 has increased.

Housing Feedback:

- Concerns over number of tenants allowed to rent rooms in single family home properties. This results in too many cars parked on the street.
- New residential developments were identified.
- There is concern over future development accessibility around Housing Authority property.
- Need for additional multi-family housing, not income-based, within the Downtown.

Parks and Stormwater Infrastructure Opportunities:

- Baseball fields at Wilson Park need upgrades. Additional sports facilities have been requested.
- Need to fund the proposed detention pond in west Downtown to ensure stable economic investment.



Open House #1 promotional Flyer
Source: Baxter & Woodman

- Proposed green infrastructure improvements between Main Street and Railroad Street would improve view of Downtown Waterfront.
- Connections between Lighthouse Beach and Bayfront Park should be prioritized.
- Improvements that connect Main Street businesses with the waterfront is needed (trails, trees, lights, character).
- Need for a dog park at Tilley Park / City Park.
- Need for improved baseball and softball diamonds at Wilson Park.

Economic Improvement:

- There are erosion concerns for the northern shoreline.
- The Downtown Waterfront area has opportunities for improvement.
- There is an opportunity for oyster farming on the shoreline south of Bayfront Peninsula Park.
- Cleanup needed in shorelines south of Bayfront Peninsula Park to stabilize retaining walls and clear debris.
- Redevelopment needed east of Commerce Street, north of Bayfront Peninsula Park.

Key Findings:

- Intersection safety concerns need to be addressed at FM 1090 and McDonald / Maxwell Ditch Road.
- The Department of Public Works is in the process of updating infrastructure all over the city including in parks, trails, and green stormwater infrastructure.
- The stray animal population needs to be addressed more effectively.
- As residential and economic developments grow on the west side of Port Lavaca, there may be a need for an additional fire and emergency services.
- Over occupancy in single family homes need to be addressed.

Client: City of Port Lavaca
Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

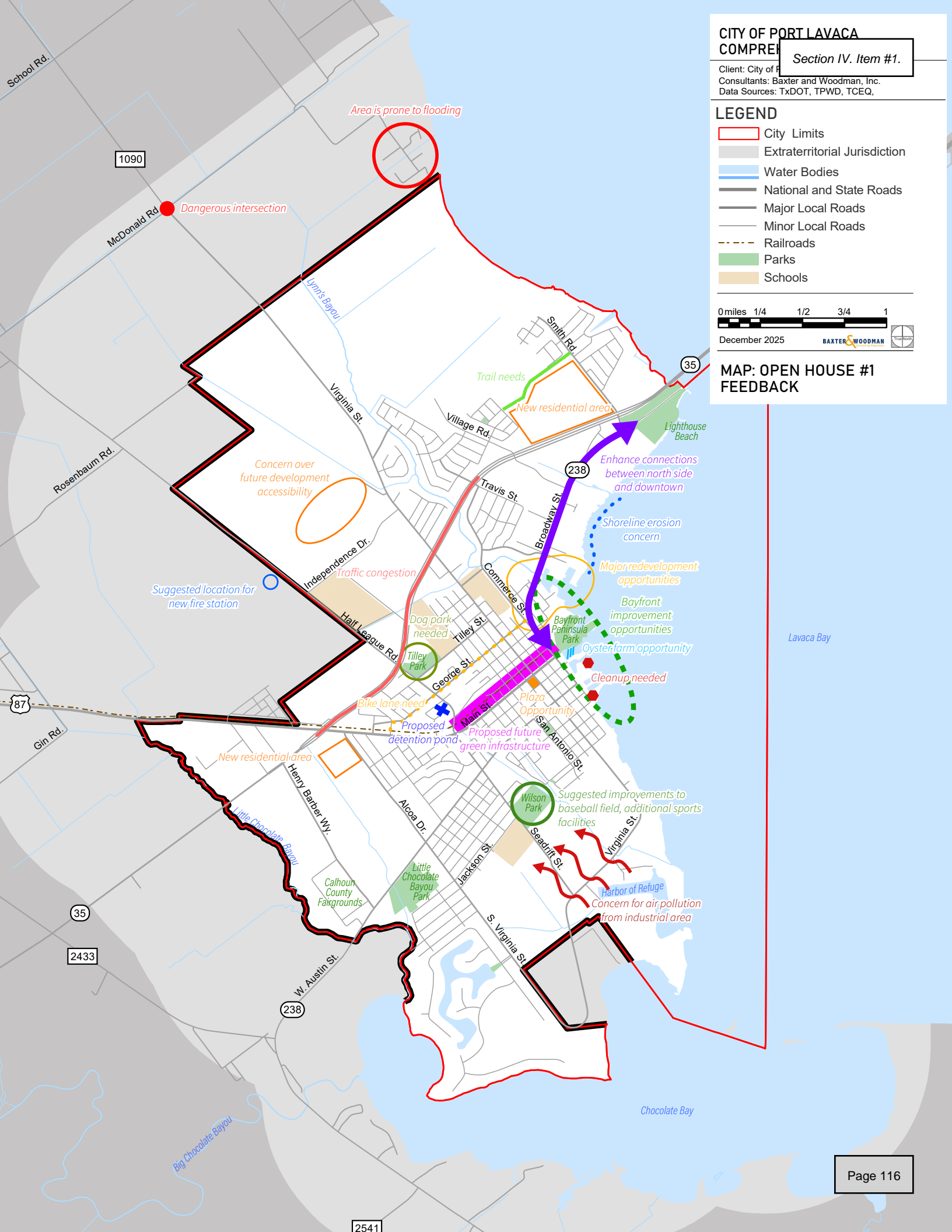
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Parks
- Schools

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December 2025



MAP: OPEN HOUSE #1
FEEDBACK



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Land Use

Community input on land use in Port Lavaca focused on the physical character and development patterns shaping the city. Residents emphasized the need for strategic investment in Downtown, where limited parking, underused buildings, and a lack of attractions prevent the area from serving as a true community anchor. Concerns were also raised about rundown and vacant properties, which detract from the appearance of otherwise well-maintained areas and discourage reinvestment. Participants stressed that addressing blight, improving infrastructure, and guiding development toward more connected, attractive, and functional spaces will be essential to strengthening Port Lavaca's neighborhoods and ensuring land use decisions support long-term community vitality.

Parks, Natural Spaces, and Resilience

Residents expressed appreciation for Port Lavaca's strong stock of parks and the recent upgrades that have enhanced recreational opportunities across the community. Living shorelines were highlighted as a key strategy to protect the bayfront from erosion and degradation, while also supporting habitat restoration and long-term environmental health. Overall, community input underscored the need to balance continued investment in park amenities with proactive measures that safeguard Port Lavaca's natural assets, ensuring both quality of life and resilience for future generations.

Transportation

Community members emphasized the importance of improving local transportation options, particularly through expanded sidewalk and cycling connections that make it easier to navigate around town. Attendees noted that Port Lavaca's current infrastructure limits safe and accessible movement for pedestrians and cyclists, and expressed a strong desire for more routes that connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, and Downtown. Enhancing walkability and bike access was framed not only as a quality-of-life improvement, but also as a way to promote healthier lifestyles, reduce reliance on cars, and strengthen connections across the community.

Culture and Community Development

Community members emphasized the importance of strengthening Port Lavaca's cultural and social fabric by creating more "Third Places," which are informal gathering spaces, such as cafes, parks, and hangouts that foster connection outside of home and work. Attendees noted that younger residents in particular need attractive, welcoming spaces to socialize and build community to encourage retention. In addition, participants expressed a desire for more opportunities to showcase public art and host cultural events, both to celebrate local creativity and to enhance the city's identity as a vibrant, inclusive place. Together, these ideas highlight the role of culture and placemaking in supporting community development and making Port Lavaca a more engaging and livable city.

Infrastructure and Utilities

The Wastewater Treatment Plant requires significant upgrades to meet current and future demand, underscoring the importance of investing in resilient systems. Attendees also emphasized the need for an underground fiber optic network to strengthen storm resilience and ensure reliable communications during severe weather events. Lighting was another priority, with residents noting that many neighborhoods and public areas remain too dark; however, the city is actively working to address this by installing new fixtures and replacing outdated or broken lights. Overall, participants stressed that modernizing infrastructure and utilities is essential to improving safety, resilience, and quality of life across the community.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY (CONT.)

Housing and Neighborhoods

There is a critical need for attainable and attractive housing in Port Lavaca. Both rental and ownership options are in short supply, forcing many employees to seek housing in other cities and weakening the local workforce base. Residents noted that many existing homes are aging, which makes them costly to repair and insure, further limiting affordability. Neighborhoods also face persistent challenges with vacant buildings in disrepair or homes with boarded-up windows, which detract from community appearance and discourage reinvestment. Overall, participants stressed that addressing housing shortages, improving affordability, and tackling blight are essential steps to strengthen neighborhoods and ensure Port Lavaca remains a place where families and workers can thrive.

Economy

Community input on Port Lavaca's economy highlighted both challenges and opportunities for growth. Developers expressed hesitation to invest without stronger City involvement, noting that tools such as a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) could provide proof of concept and build market confidence. Residents emphasized the need for Downtown revitalization, pointing out limited parking, underused buildings, and a lack of attractions that currently hinder business activity. Rundown properties were also identified as barriers, detracting from otherwise well-maintained areas and discouraging reinvestment. At the same time, participants saw potential in leveraging Port Lavaca's coastal identity, expanding small business opportunities, and diversifying retail and dining options to strengthen the local economy. Overall, feedback underscored the importance of proactive city leadership, strategic investment, and a focus on placemaking to create a more vibrant and resilient economic environment.



chapter one

THE FUTURE CITY

- 3 Growth Capacity and Infrastructure
- 7 Multimodal Transportation Systems
- 9 Future Land Use
- 13 Public Facilities and Services
- 25 Housing and Neighborhoods
- 31 Resilience
- 37 Additional Plan Elements

COMMUNITY GOALS

GOAL 1.0, LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Port Lavaca is a coastal community with small-town charm,

GOAL 2.0, TRANSPORTATION

Port Lavaca is a community that provides network of safe, connected, well maintained, and attractive transportation corridors and transportation infrastructure to facilitate efficient vehicular and active transportation.

GOAL 3.0, PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

A network of well-planned and attractive parks, open spaces, trails, and facilities serve the passive and active recreational aspirations of Port Lavaca's residents and visitors alike.

GOAL 4.0, HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

A thriving community built on a diverse mix of land uses and consistent development patterns fosters livable neighborhoods, resilient commercial districts, welcoming civic spaces, and high-quality housing options that accommodate families of all sizes.

GOAL 5.0, UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE

Fiscally responsible and carefully managed development that is aligned with the City's ability to deliver infrastructure and services in a safe, timely, and effective manner.

GOAL 6.0, PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Public services and facilities adequately serve the current and future needs of Alvin's residents and businesses

GOAL 7.0, RESILIENCE

GOAL 8.0, HISTORIC PRESERVATION

FUTURE CITY FRAMEWORK

The Comprehensive Plan's goals and recommendations are directly based on community public feedback, municipal departmental meetings, and existing conditions analysis and assessments. The goals and recommendations provide a high-level framework of actions, policies, and infrastructure investments which help meet the voiced needs of the community and challenges facing Port Lavaca. While not legally binding, the recommendations, infrastructure maps, and land use maps, provide a framework for City leaders and administration to help guide future decisions and policy priorities.

First: Each Comprehensive Plan goal is presented.

Second: A paragraph describing the intentions, impact, and results of implementing the goals recommendations is provided.

Third: A list of recommendations is provided, which may include recommendations maps of infrastructure improvements, example imagery, or additional tables and figures which help to illustrate the recommendations' intent and purpose.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Support the local economy through administrative assistance and Downtown growth.
2. Improve the quality and maintenance of infrastructure, streets, and utilities.
3. Support smart and strategic growth through targeting development priority areas.
4. Improve the visual character of structures, homes, businesses, and ensure adjacent land use compatibility.
5. Provide safe, connected, and efficient transportation systems, catering to all ages and all abilities.
6. Increase the quality, taxable value, and community-nature of development; Promote mixed-uses, diverse housing typologies, community amenities, and balanced income streams.

VISION STATEMENT

