PLANNING BOARD

Wednesday, October 28, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Electronically through Zoom

PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING

AGENDA

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

MEETING PROCEDURE

Public notice is hereby given that the Planning Board of the City of Port Lavaca, Texas, will hold a regular meeting Wednesday, October 28, 2026 beginning at 6:00 p.m., at the regular meeting place in Council Chambers at City Hall, 202 North Virginia Street, Port Lavaca, Texas to consider the following items of business:

[After publication, any information in the Planning Board 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/81970731908?pwd=U4IyOTF2aacO0BKH0RqlWospfq2SaR.1

Meeting ID: 819 7073 1908
Passcode: 670581

One tap mobile
*+13462487799,,81970731908#,,,,*670581# US (Houston)*

ROLL CALL

CALL TO ORDER

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).*

ACTION ITEMS - *Board will consider/discuss the following items and take any action deemed necessary*

1. **Approval of Wednesday, September 23, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes**
2. **Consider and discuss approval for a Variance to the ordinance Sec. 12-24. - Building Setbacks for Block 5, Lot 3 of the Mariemont #1 Addition (2204 McPherson Drive), Parcel ID # 20509.**
3. **Discuss proposed Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map**

REQUEST FROM BOARD

ADJOURN

CERTIFICATION OF POSTING NOTICE

This is to certify that the above notice of a regular meeting of The Planning Board of The City of Port Lavaca, scheduled for **Wednesday, October 28, 2026** beginning at 6:00 p.m., was posted at city hall, easily accessible to the public, as of **5:00 p.m., Thursday, October 22, 2026.**

_____

Derrick Smith, *Director of Development Services*

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: **Approval of Wednesday, September 23, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes**

INFORMATION:

PLANNING BOARD

Wednesday, September 23, 2026 at 6:00 PM
City Council Chambers | 202 N. Virginia Street, Port Lavaca TX 77979

MINUTES

STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTY OF CALHOUN §
CITY OF PORT LAVACA §

MEETING PROCEDURE

Public notice is hereby given that the Planning Board of the City of Port Lavaca, Texas, will hold a regular meeting Wednesday, September 23, 2026 beginning at 6:00 p.m., at the regular meeting place in Council Chambers at City Hall, 202 North Virginia Street, Port Lavaca, Texas to consider the following items of business:

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Justin Weaver	Chairman
Gary Crone	Board Member
Betty Birdwell	Board Member
Sheryl Cuellar	Board Member
Lindy Cain	Board Member
Steve Butler	Board Member

ABSENT

Cynthia Escalera	Board Member

CALL TO ORDER

- Chairman Justin Weaver called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and presided

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).*

- None

ACTION ITEMS - *Board will consider/discuss the following items and take any action deemed necessary*

1. Approval of Wednesday, August 26, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Board Member L. Cain

NOW THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED BY THE PLANNING BOARD OF THE CITY OF PORT LAVACA, TEXAS:

THAT, the August 26, 2026 Regular Minutes are hereby approved

Seconded by Board Member B. Birdwell

Voting Aye: Chairman Justin Weaver, Board Member Sheryl Cuellar, Board Member Gary Crone, Board Member Steve Butler, Board Member Betty Birdwell, Board Member Lindy Cain
Voting Nays: None

2. Consider a request for the development of storage facilities and a variance to the required toilet facilities on property described as A0035 MAXIMO SANCHEZ, TRACT PT 27, ACRES 7.33, & ABST 12 A.ESPARZA, TR PT 12. Property ID# 37976

Motion made by Board Member L. Cain

THAT, in accordance with recommendation of staff, the Planning Board hereby approved the conceptual and variance to the required toilet facilities on property.

Final approval will be subject to compliance with all applicable requirements, including Engineering, parking, setbacks, and water and sewer connections.

Seconded by Board Member S. Butler

Voting Aye: Chairman Justin Weaver, Board Member Sheryl Cuellar, Board Member Gary Crone, Board Member Steve Butler, Board Member Betty Birdwell, Board Member Lindy Cain
Voting Nays: None

3. Discuss proposed Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map

Planning Board Members discussed this agenda item.

No action necessary and none taken.

REQUEST FROM BOARD

- None

ADJOURN

Chairman Justin Weaver made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Motion was seconded by Board Member B. Birdwell

These minutes were approved on October 28, 2026

Justin Weaver, Chairman of the Planning Board

Alyssa Calzada, Development Services Coordinator

COMMUNICATION

SUBJECT: Consider and discuss approval for a Variance to the ordinance Sec. 12-24. - Building Setbacks for Block 5, Lot 3 of the Mariemont #1 Addition (2204 McPherson Drive), Parcel ID # 20509.

INFORMATION:

CITY OF PORT LAVACA

MEETING: October 28, 2026 **AGENDA ITEM _____**

DATE: 10.21.2026

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: DERRICK SMITH, DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Consider and discuss approval for a Variance to the ordinance Sec. 12-24. - Building Setbacks for Block 5, Lot 3 of the Mariemont #1 Addition (2204 McPherson Drive), Parcel ID # 20509.

This Variance request is to construct a 16' x 20' pergola that will project into the required front building setback line. The dimensions of the finished pergola would be approximately 3 feet from the property line and approximately 16 feet from the edge of street. Please see applicant Request for Variance for more details.

Sec. 12-24. - Building setbacks

(a) *Definitions.* For the purpose of this article, the term "building setback lines" means to the distance that buildings or structures must be from the property line.

(d) Minimum setback requirements.

(10) Subdivision building lines.

Subdivision	Front Building Setback Line
Mariemont #1	25 feet

Staff Recommendation: Denial. Granting the request would give the property owner rights that neighboring property owners do not have, and it would alter the fundamental character of the neighborhood.

Attachments:

- Request for Variance w/ supporting documents
- Building Permit Application
- CCAD property information

Property ID: 20509 For Year 2026

Property Details

Account		
Property ID:	20509	**Geographic ID:** S0205-00050-0003-00
Type:	R	**Zoning:**
Property Use:		**Condo:**
Location		
Situs Address:	2204 MCPHERSON PORT LAVACA, TX 77979	
Map ID:	S0205-00050-0003-00	**Mapsco:**
Legal Description:	MARIEMONT #1 (PORT LAVACA), BLOCK 5, LOT 3	
Abstract/Subdivision:	S0205	
Neighborhood:	(1400) MARIEMONT AREA	
Owner		
Owner ID:	20509	
Name:	SHAW JOHN P	
Agent:		
Mailing Address:	& WF SHYRL GAIL 2204 MCPHERSON PORT LAVACA, TX 77979	
% Ownership:	100.0%	
Exemptions:	HS - For privacy reasons not all exemptions are shown online.	



City of Port Lavaca

Request for Non-Residential

Planning Board Review

Date: 10/28/2026

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: 202 N Virginia St. Port Lavaca, TX 77979

APPLICATION DUE: 10/19/2026

125.00 NON – REFUNDABLE FEE

Date: 10-15-26

Applicant Name: JOHN + GAIL SHAW

Property ID or Address for variance: 2204 McPHERSON

Reason for request:

CONSTRUCT 16'×20' pergolla
FRONT OF PERGOLLA WILL BE APPROX 3'
FROM PROPERTY LINE & 16' from street. THERE ARE A
FEW PROPERTIES IN AREA THAT ARE LESS
THAN THE 25' REQUIREMENT. LEON ST &
McPHERSON ST.

Signature: John Shaw

Phone No. 361-649-9714

JOHN SHAW
2204 MC PHERSON
361-649-9714

6 - 8" x 8" x 8' treated square post

6 - 8" anchors

2 - 2" x 8" x 20' treated boards

3 - 2" x 8" x 18' treated boards

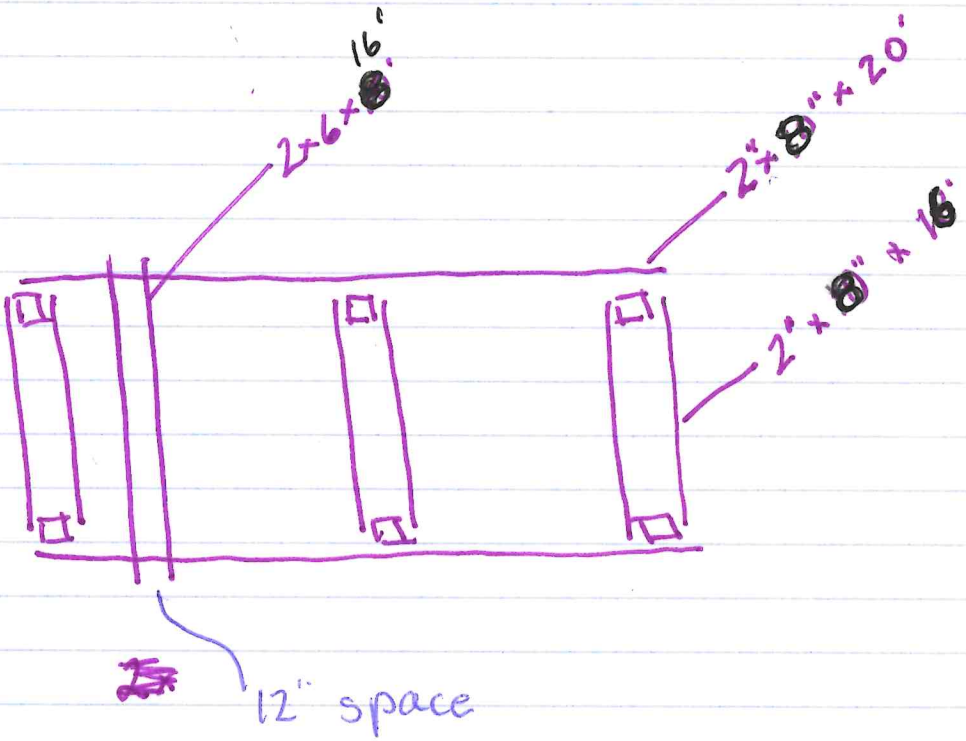
25 - 2" x 6" x 10' treated boards

8' x 20' sun cloth

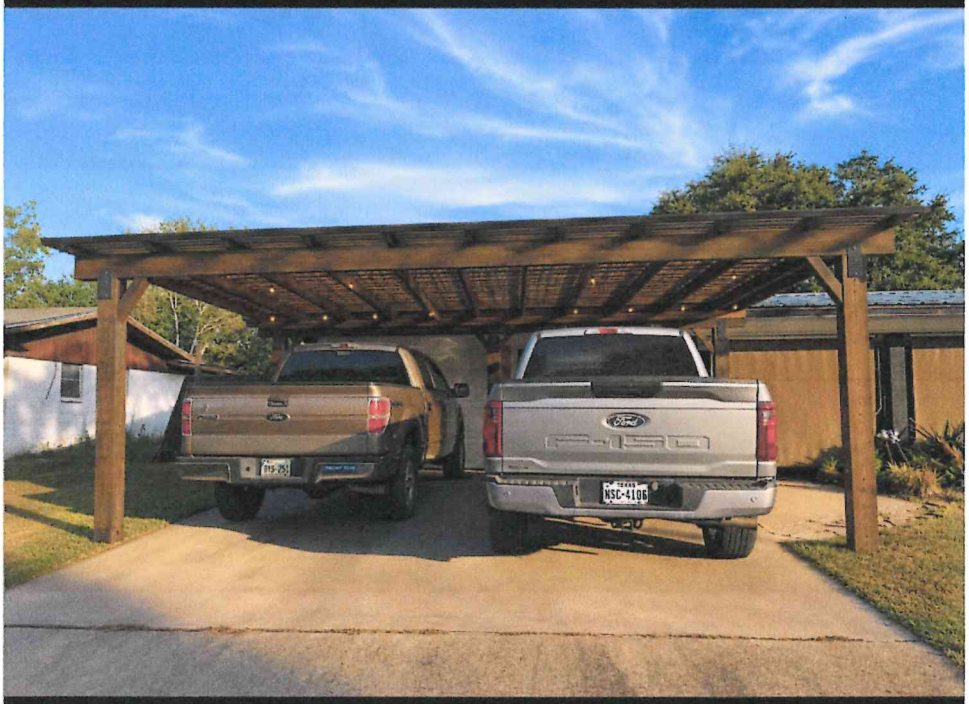
2 box 3½" x #10 screws

70 hurricane straps





Curb



CITY OF PORT LAVACA

TEXAS

Permit Number

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION

Requirements - PLEASE READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY
Your application **will not be accepted** if any of the below items are missing or incomplete. Submit applications to buildingdepartment@portlavaca.org.

- ☐ Completed and signed application form
- ☐ Contractors registered with City of Port Lavaca
- ☐ **Digital submission** of all required plans, as well as a printed labeled sets of required plans.

Project Information

Property Address: 2204 McPherson

Building/Suite/Unit Numbers: _____ Flood Zone ☐ Yes ☑ No

Square footage: 144 Project Valuation: $5,000

Type of construction: ☐ New construction ☑ Addition ☐ Remodel

Describe work to be done in detail (scope of work): Add a 20' x ~~8~~ 16' Pergolla with a sun cloth top to driveway. Not attached to house & ~~5' from street~~ ENDING APPROX 16' from curb

Contractor Information *(Serves as primary contact for this permit)*

Contractor Name: JOE M RIVERA

Company Name: JOE M. RIVERA

Address: 5327 State Hwy 238

Phone: 361-655-8574 Email: JMRPainting

Property Owner Information

Owner Name: JOHN SHAW

Owner Address: 2204 McPHERSON

Owner Phone: 361-649-9714 Owner Email: gailshaw1957@gmail.com

Applicant Agreement

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and completed all applicable requirements. I understand that if I have submitted an incomplete or false application, my application may be rejected.

Signature of Applicant: Joe M Rivera J Shaw Date: 10-6-26

For Office Use Only

Completeness Check

Application form completely filled and signed?	☑ Yes	☐ No
Attached plans? partial	☐ Yes	☐ No
Contractors registered?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Fee paid?	☐ Yes	☐ No

Sign **Date**

Planning and Zoning Review

Property zoning: Res

Is the property platted?	☑ Yes	☐ No
Are all required plans included?	☐ Yes	☑ No
Construction meets setback standards?	☐ Yes	☑ No
Is proposed structure in any easements?	☐ Yes	☑ No
Is proposed structure in a floodzone?	☐ Yes	☑ No

Sign Derrick Smith **Date** 10/6/2026

Marie mont #1 Subdivision requires 25 feet front building setback.

Derrick Smith
10/6/2026

COMMUNICATION

SUBJECT: **Discuss proposed Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map**

INFORMATION:

port lavaca COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



PORT LAVACA, TEXAS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
DRAFT 10-22-2026

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mayor:
The Honorable Jack Whitlow

City Council:
District 1 - Daniel Aguirre
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 Rudellat

Planning Board:
Chair - Justin Weaver

Board Members:
Melinda Cain
Cynthia Escalera
Sheryl Cuellar
Steve Butler

Plan Development:
Baxter and Woodman, Inc.:
- Project Manager - Cristin Emshoff, AICP, ENV SP
- Deputy Project Manager - Jackson Marvel
- Planner - Aaron Tuley, AICP, ENV SP, CNU-A
- Planner - Joe Carli
- Planner - Brianna Barr

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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 and 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.



Smith Harbor
Source: Baxter and Woodman

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 Wood

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, THE FUTURE CITY

The Future City consists of eight 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.

3 CHAPTER THREE, IMPLEMENTATION

The 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 timeframes (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 REPORT

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 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. 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.



Source: TPWD, TCEQ, TxDOT, City of Port L

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 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, but the new concrete SH 35 causeway was already being built and nearly complete.

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.



Port Lavaca Main Street
Source: Cinema Treasures



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



Original Port Lavaca Lighthouse
Source: Calhoun County Museum



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: Half Moon Reef Lighthouse is built at Matagorda Bay.

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+1919: 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 (Finalized 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.

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 Seascape 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.



Source: Port Lavaca Waterfront Master Plan

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

terminus of Downtown. Its central location and proximity to non-recreational uses make it an authentic "destination," 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

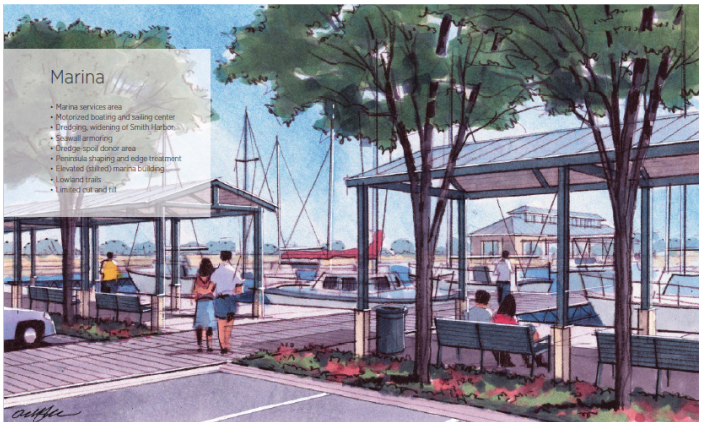
Lagoons
- Passive recreation
- Nature/eco-preserve
- Trails, hiking, nature-watching
- Mountain biking and paddle sports, sailing
- Elevated interpretive trails
- RV camping
- Potential nature center building

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

Waterfront Development Ordinance (Not Adopted)

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







Source: Port Lavaca Waterfront Master Plan

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 ad 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 a ne

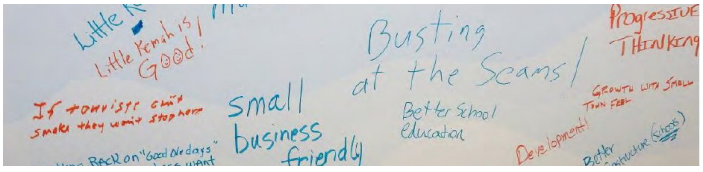
	for additional restaurants throughout the City with a mix of chain and locally owned restaurants. Workforce development was also a key theme. The need to attract new talent, retain young talented workers, and incorporate high tech industry job opportunities were all ideas presented by participants.
Parks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

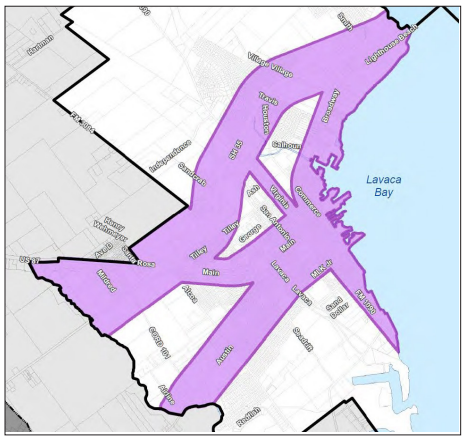
Objective 9: Destination to attract visitors
Objective 10: Employment and entertainment opportunities
Objective 11: Exciting Waterfront amenities that generate activity and income
Objective 12: Active and unique downtown

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 under-served 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):

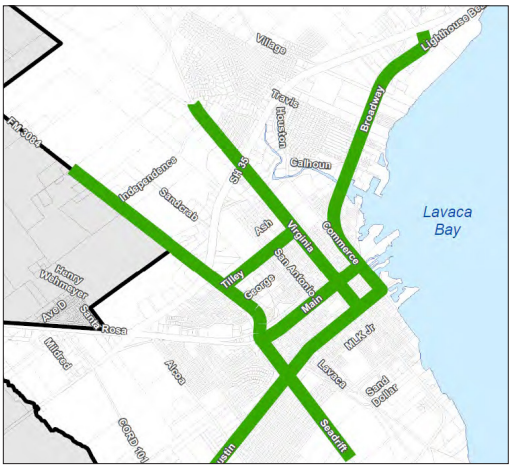
Roadway Network (page 75)

- 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 regu

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.

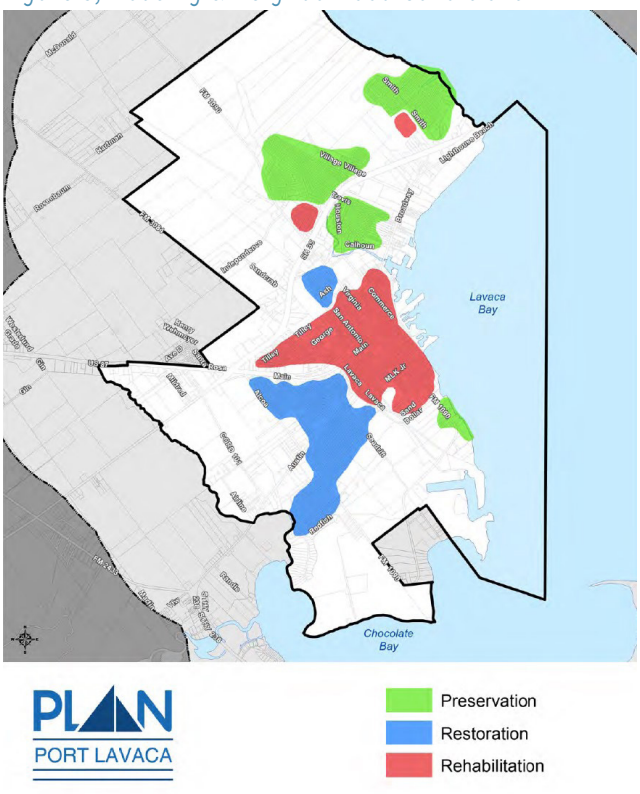
Housing Choices

- 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



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.

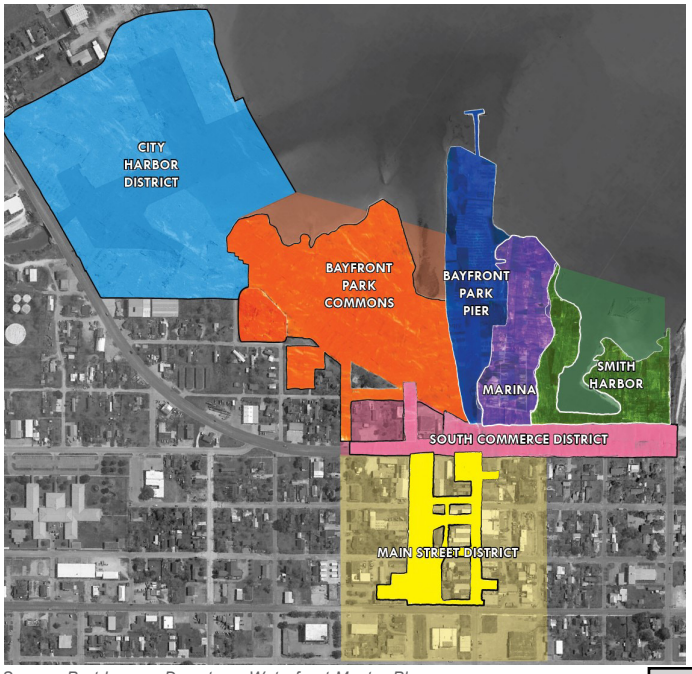
4. Resiliency & Sustainability

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



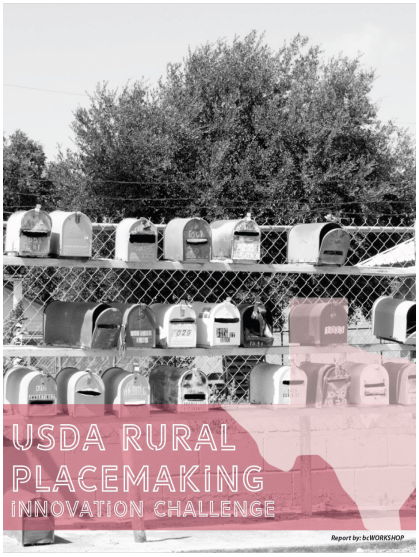
Source: Port Lavaca Downtown Waterfront Master Plan

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 spac

Calhoun County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023-2028

Summary of Plan

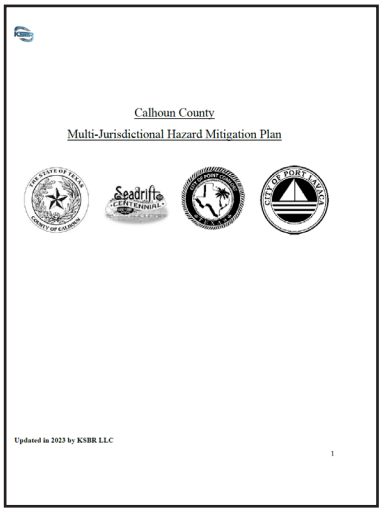
The updated *Hazard Mitigation Plan* (HMP) for Calhoun County and its cities including Port Lavaca, Seadrift, and Point Comfort, aims to reduce long-term risks to life and property from natural and human-caused hazards. This revision, prepared by KSBR, LLC in collaboration with local jurisdictions and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


Calhoun County
Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
Updated in 2023 by KSBR LLC

Source: Calhoun County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

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

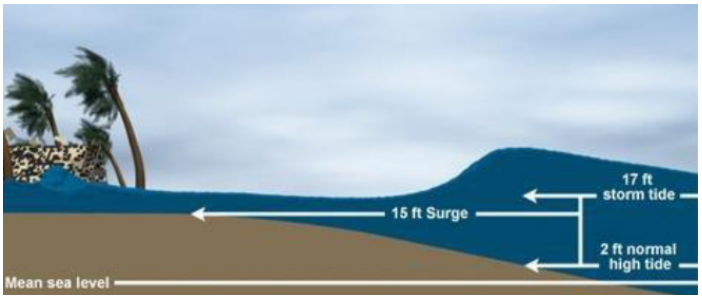
Significant hazards include hurricanes/tropical storms, flooding, coastal erosion, drought, extreme heat, wildfires, hailstorms, lightning, windstorms, tornadoes, winter storms, expansive soils, land subsidence, infectious diseases, and technological hazards such as dam failure, hazardous material releases, 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.

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.

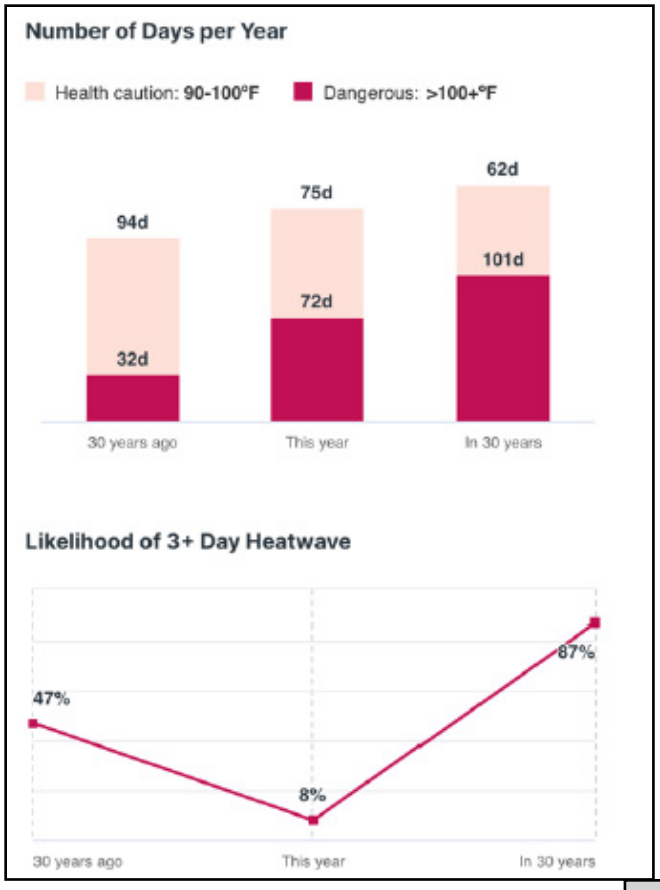
3. Coastal Protection and Erosion Control

- Wetland Restoration: Enhance and restore wetlands using marsh planting, rock structures, and beach re-nourishment 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 streets and drainage improvements in the Original Townsite with CDBG-DR funding.
- 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 Park 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.
- Port Lavaca won a 2024 Texas Municipal League Excellence Award for City Spirit.

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



Construction in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

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
*Ethnicity**					
Hispanic or Latino Population	56.6%	62%	56.5%	50.1%	61.6%
*Race**					
White Population	76.6%	43.5%	49%	39%	18.7%
Black Population	3.8%	3.1%	2.1%	12.2%	12.4%
Asian Population	6.1%	8.5%	5.6%	5.4%	5.6%
Two or More Population	2%	15.5%	22.8%	17.6%	10.2%
Other Race	11.4%	28.8%	13%	14.7%	13.9%
Bachelor's or higher	18%	13.8%	16.9%	34.2%	30.9%
Labor Force (Ages 15-64)	5,918	5,613	11,978	14,845,000	166,239,000
Median Household Income	$53,889	$65,395	$71,870	$75,780	$57,652
Average Family Size	3.36	3.00	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

- Median age (34.5) decreased by 2.3 years since 2017
- Median household income ($65,395) increased by $11,500 since 2017
- Bachelor's degree attainment is well below state and national averages
- The percentage of the population who identify as two or more races increased by 27 percent.
- Homeownership has grown by 8.7 percent, above state and national level.
- The average family size decreased from 3.36 to three.
- The labor force decreased by about 300 workers between 2017 and 2023.
- Port Lavaca Median Household Income is above the national level, but lower than both the county and state level.
- Port Lavaca's Hispanic population increased from 56.6 percent to 62 percent.

U.S. CENSUS FINDINGS

Age and Race/Ethnicity

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

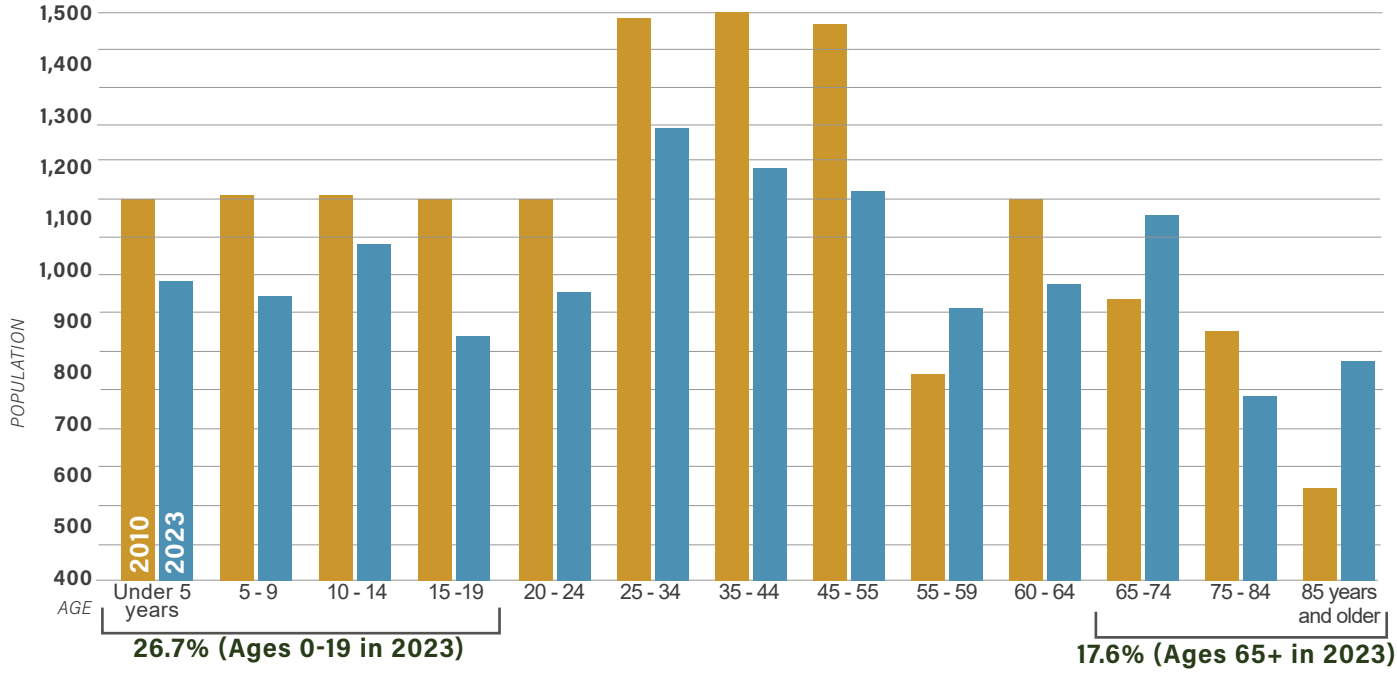
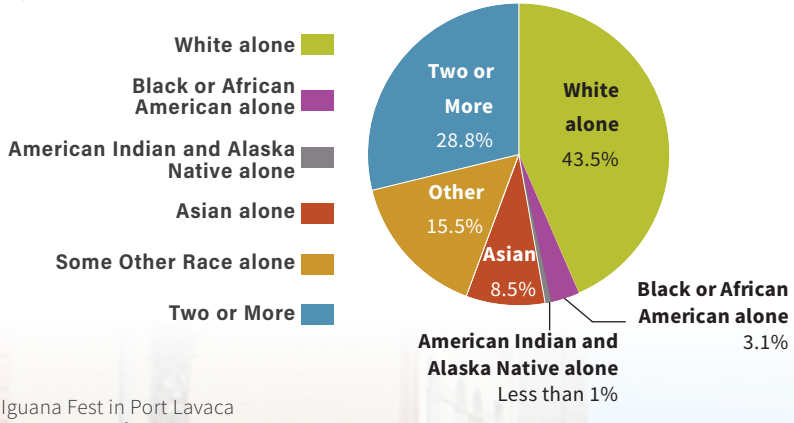


*Figure 8, Port Lavaca Race (Not Hispanic or Latino) in 2020***



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



Iguana Fest in Port Lavaca
Source: City of Port Lavaca

HOUSEHOLD INCOME, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION

Figure 9, Median Household Income (2023)*

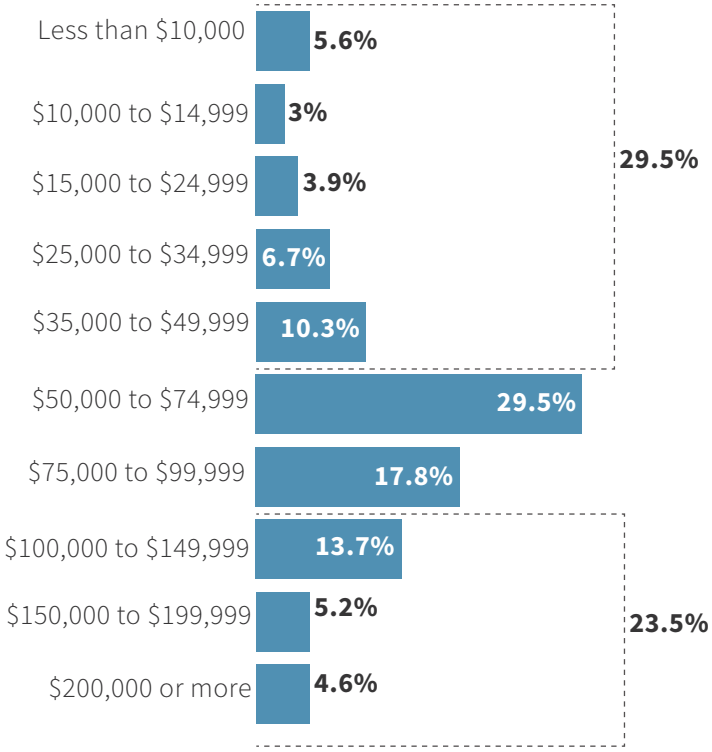


Figure 10, Employment By Occupation (2023)*

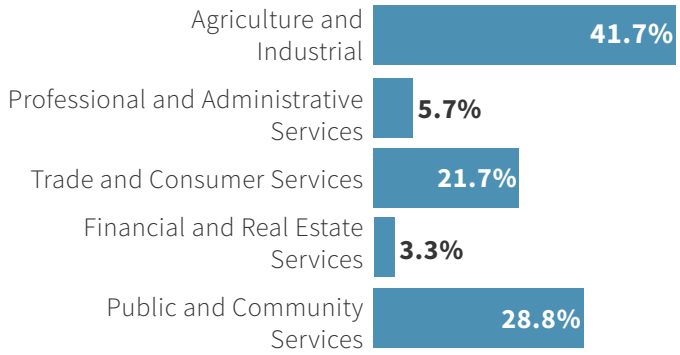
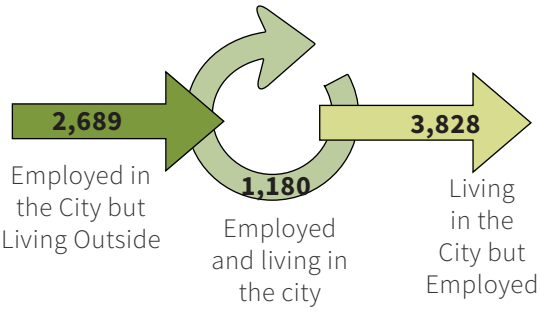


*Figure 11, Employment Inflow and Outflow (2022**)*



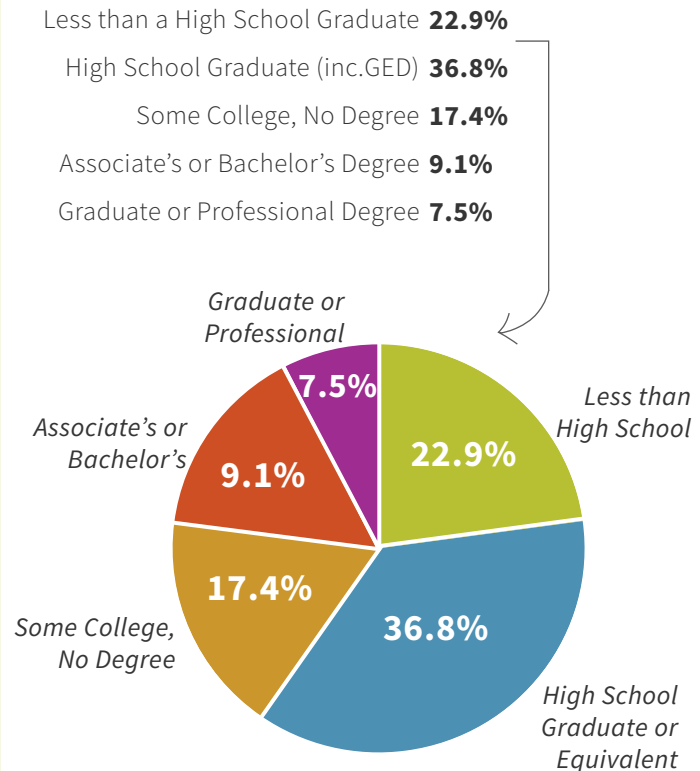
Nearly half of all Port Lavaca households earn between $50,000 to $100,000 pear year. Approximately 30 percent of households make less than $50,000 per year, and about 24 percent make over $100,000.

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)*



*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****

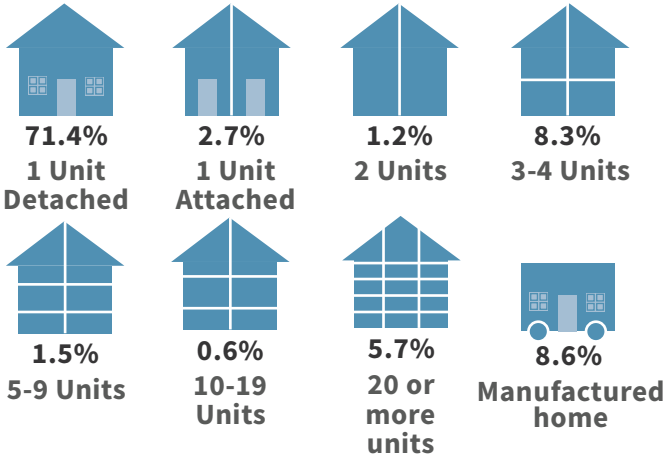
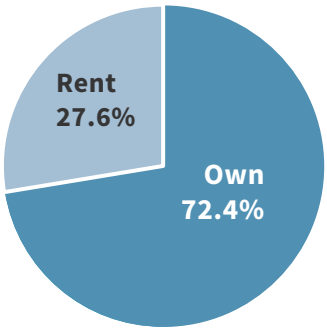


*Figure 14, Total Housing Units**



Total Households
5,056

- Family Households **3,061** **65.7%**
- Non-family Households **1,597** **34.3%**
- Households with Children **1,441** **30.9%**

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****

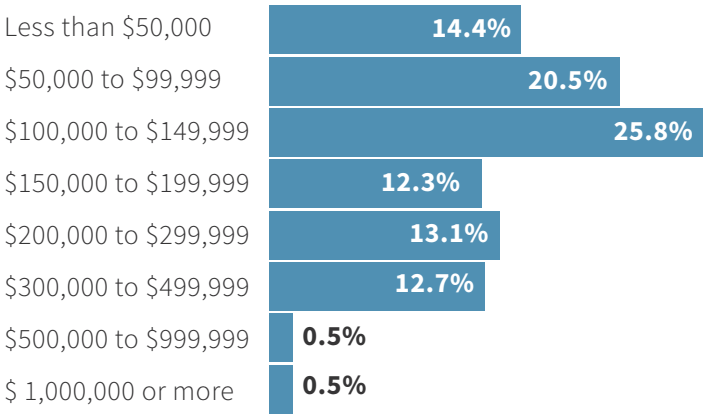
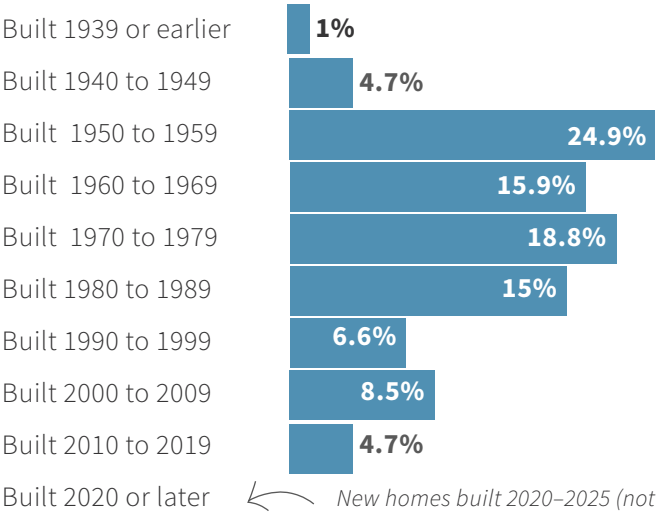


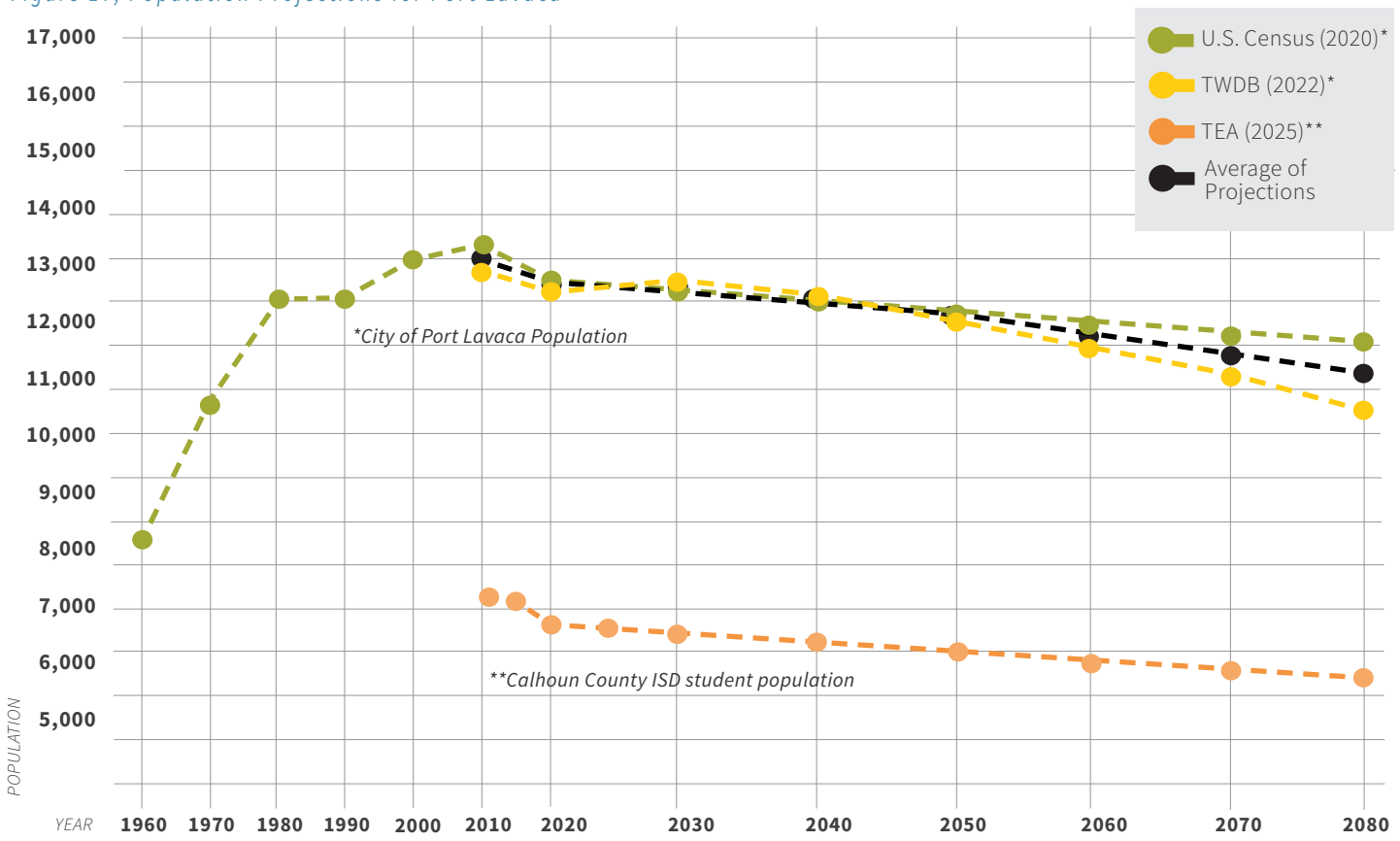
*Figure 16 Housing Age****



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

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Figure 17, Population Projections for Port Lavaca

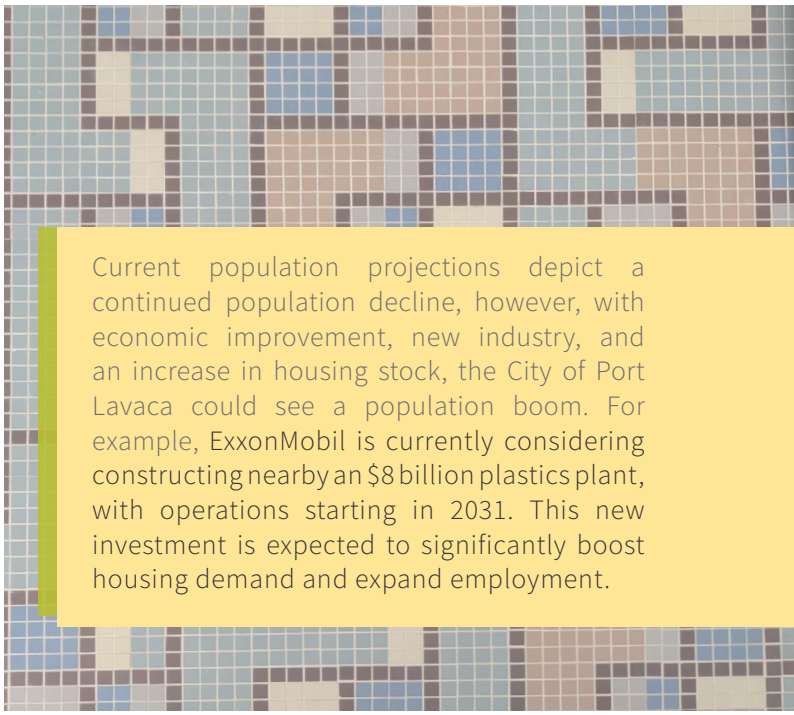


Context

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

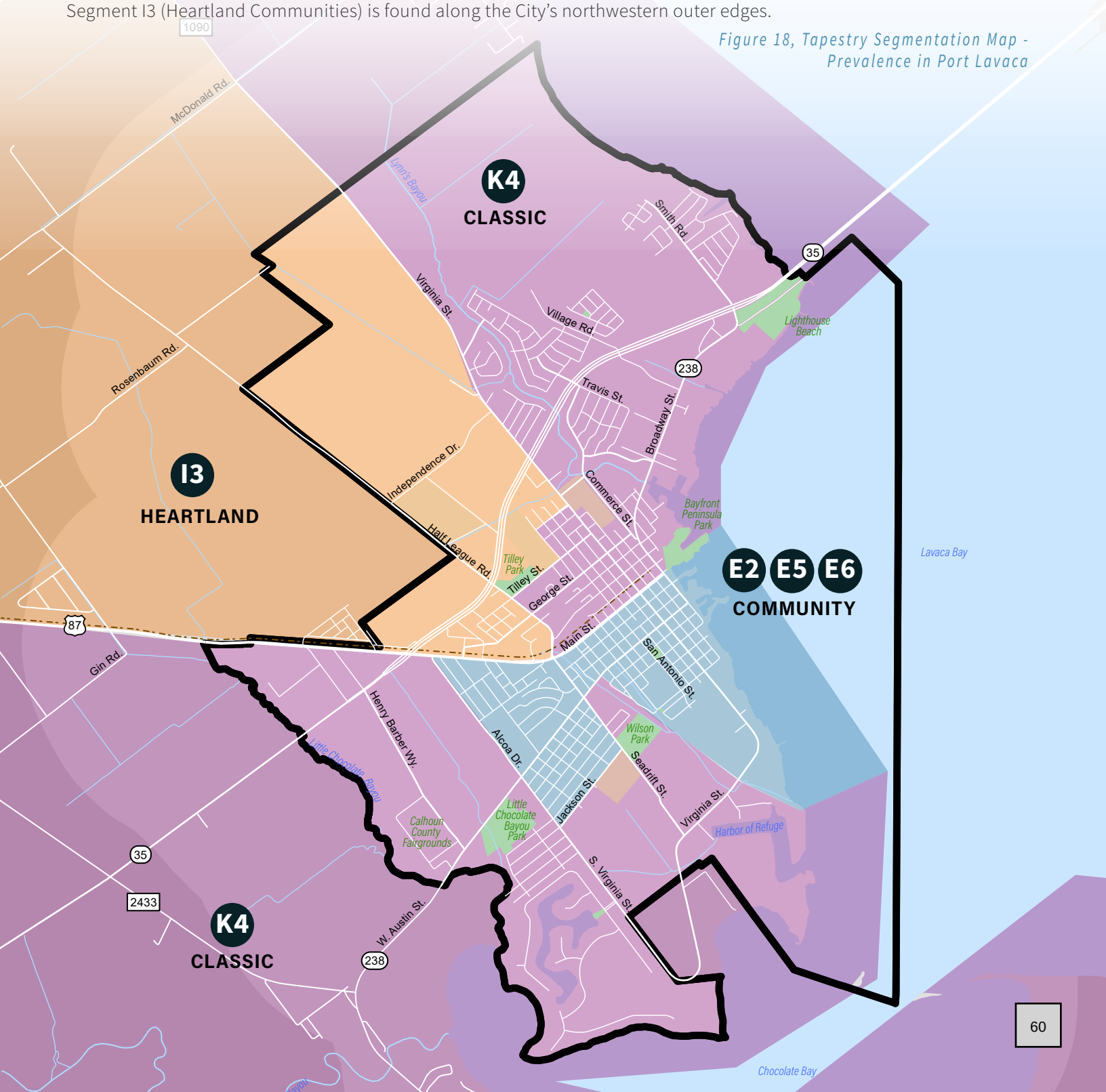
- Population projections for Port Lavaca indicate a steady decline. The U.S. Census projects a decrease of about 2 percent per decade, while the TWDB projects a decline of roughly 4 percent. Taken together, these estimates suggest an average population decline of approximately 3 percent per decade.
- 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.

Railroad Tracks in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

COMMUNITY TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION

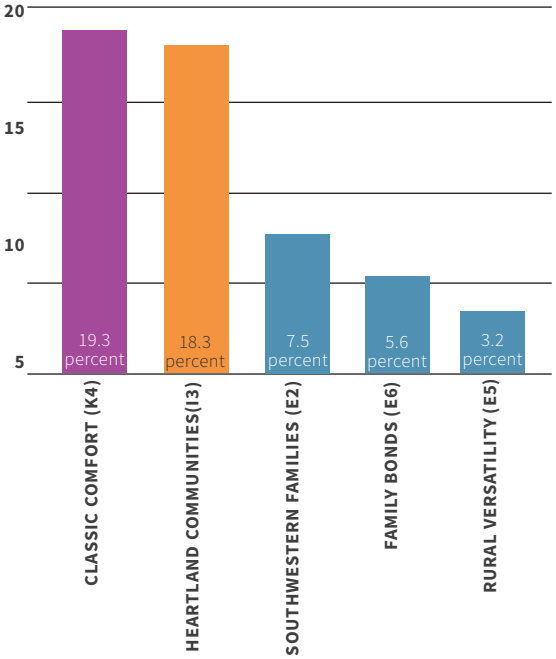
The ArcGIS platform, ESRI Business Analyst Tapestry Segmentation, is a geodemographic classification system that divides U.S. neighborhoods into LifeMode group segments based on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. The classification, known as "Tapestry Segmentation," offers valuable insights into community dynamics and helps identify under-served 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 multi-generational 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 multi-generational 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.



City Hall 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 small group listening session
Source: City of Port Lavaca

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.
- 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.

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.



Realtors small group listening session
Source: City of Port Lavaca



Port Lavaca Better Together Mural
Source: City of Port Lavaca

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 multi-generational 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.
- Build a Pleasure Pier similar to Galveston's.
- Expand local healthcare job opportunities.
- Create more gathering spaces.
- Provide public e-scooter options.
- Support infill development around the Walmart shopping center.



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

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 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

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

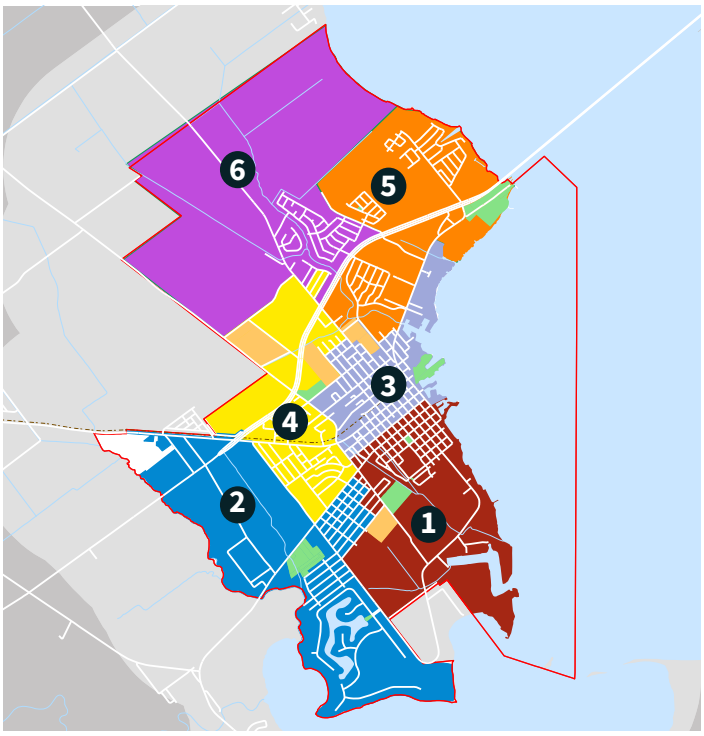
Desires / Opportunities:

- 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.



District 1 Neighborhood Outreach Meeting
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Figure 20, Map of Port Lavaca Districts



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.

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.
- 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.

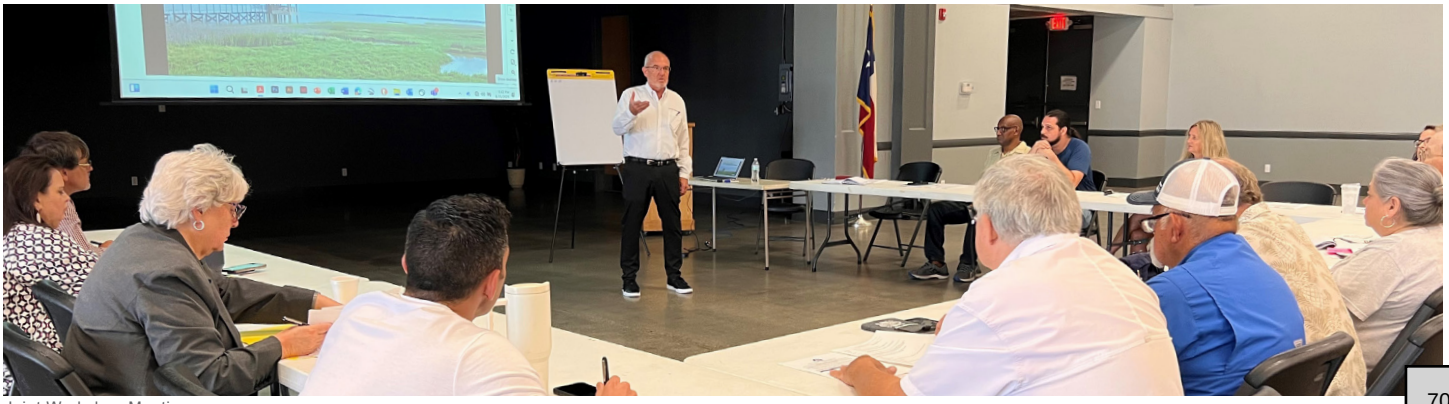
Districts 5 & 6

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.



Joint Workshop Meeting
Source: City of Port Lavaca



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

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.



Open House #1 promotional Flyer
Source: Baxter & Woodman

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:

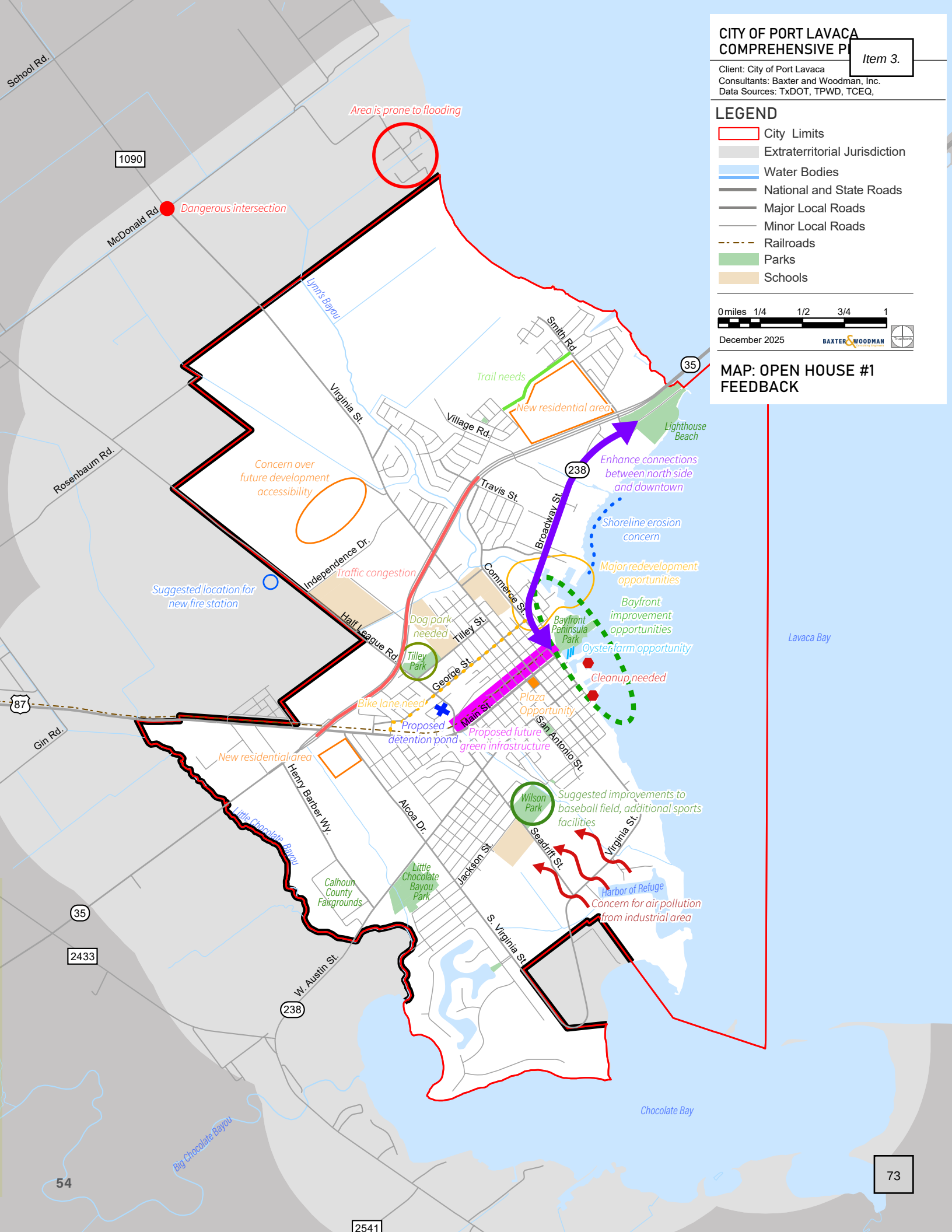
- Baseball fields at Wilson Park need upgrades. Additional sports facilities have been requested.
- Need to fund the proposed detention pond in west Downtown to ensure stable economic investment.
- Proposed green infrastructure improvements between Main Street and Railroad Street would improve view of Downtown Waterfront.
- Connections between Lighthouse Beach and Bayfront Park should be prioritized.
- Improvements that connect Main Street businessess 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 ad 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.


CITY OF PORT LAVACA
COMPREHENSIVE PL
Item 3.
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
0 miles 1/4 1/2 3/4 1
December 2025
BAXTER & WOODMAN
MAP: OPEN HOUSE #1 FEEDBACK
School Rd.
1090
McDonald Rd.
Dangerous intersection
Area is prone to flooding
Lynn's Bayou
Rosenbaum Rd.
Virginia St.
Smith Rd.
Trail needs
New residential area
Village Rd.
35
Lighthouse Beach
238
Enhance connections between north side and downtown
Travis St.
Broadway St.
Concern over future development accessibility
Shoreline erosion concern
Independence Dr.
Traffic congestion
Major redevelopment opportunities
Suggested location for new fire station
Commerce St.
Bayfront improvement opportunities
Half League Rd.
Dog park needed
Tilley St.
Bayfront Peninsula Park
Oyster farm opportunity
Tilley Park
George St.
Cleanup needed
87
Bike lane need
Plaza Opportunity
Main St.
Gin Rd.
Proposed detention pond
Proposed future green infrastructure
San Antonio St.
New residential area
Henry Barber Wy.
Alcoa Dr.
Wilson Park
Suggested improvements to baseball field, additional sports facilities
Little Chocolate Bayou
Seadrift St.
Virginia St.
Jackson St.
Little Chocolate Bayou Park
Calhoun County Fairgrounds
Harbor of Refuge
Concern for air pollution from industrial area
35
S. Virginia St.
2433
W. Austin St.
238
Lavaca Bay
Chocolate Bay
Big Chocolate Bayou
54
2541
73

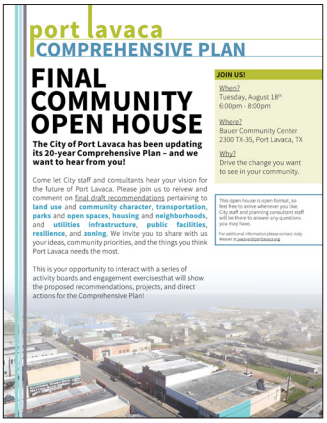
COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE #2

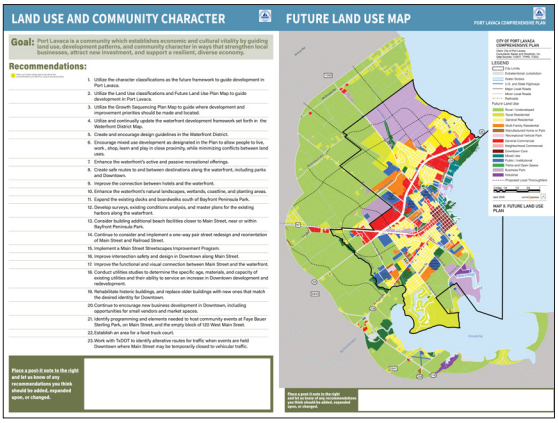
The second Port Lavaca Open House was held at the Bauer Community center on August 18, 2026. The 22 attendees included City of Port Lavaca staff and community members. A series of engagement boards displaying each proposed Comprehensive Plan goal and associated recommendations were presented. Attendees were asked to review each engagement board and place sticky dots on the recommendations/strategies that they want the City to prioritize. Attendees were also able to write down suggestions on sticky notes that could be placed directly on the correlating engagement board.

Open House #2 Summary Findings

- Attendees were most interested in expanding recreational programs, activities, facilities, and creating a farmers market
- Attendees showed strong support for planning potable water, sanitary sewer, and drainage projects to meet future demand
- Attendees indicated their interest in establishing a zoning map guided by the Character-Based Future Land Use Map
- Attendees were in favor of the City considering the means to utilize and develop underutilized public lands
- Attendees were supportive of the City encouraging new business development in Downtown

Promotional Poster and Engagement Board Format







Which of these topic areas should the City prioritize?

Place up to three dots next to the community goals/topics you think the city should focus on/prioritize.

Land Use and Community Character	Transportation	Parks and Open Space	Housing and Neighborhoods
●●●●●●		●	●●●●●● ●●●●●

Utilities Infrastructure	Public Facilities	Resilience	Zoning
●●●●	●		●●●●●● ●●●●●● ●●●

= 1 Dot Response *#.#.#: = Numbers correspond with the Goal, Objective, and Strategy numbers found in Chapter 2*

GOAL 1: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

1.5.7: Continue to encourage new business development in Downtown, including opportunities for small vendors and market spaces.

1.5.6: Rehabilitate historic buildings, and replace older buildings with new ones that match the desired identity for Downtown.

1.5.9: Establish an area for a food truck court.

1.4.3: Encourage mixed use development as designated in the Plan to allow people to live, work , shop, learn and play in close proximity, while minimizing conflicts between land uses.

1.4.4: Enhance the waterfront's active and passive recreational offerings.

1.4.5: Create safe routes to and between destinations along the waterfront, including parks and Downtown.

1.4.7: Enhance the waterfront's natural landscapes, wetlands, coastline, and planting areas.

1.4.8: Expand the existing docks and boardwalks south of Bayfront Peninsula Park.

1.4.10: Consider building additional beach facilities closer to Main Street, near or within Bayfront Peninsula Park.

1.5.4: Improve the functional and visual connection between Main Street and the waterfront.

1.5.5: Conduct utilities studies to determine the specific age, materials, and capacity of existing utilities and their ability to service an increase in Downtown development and redevelopment.

1.1.1: Utilize the character classifications as the future framework to guide development in Port Lavaca.

1.2.1: Utilize the Land Use classifications and Future Land Use Plan Map to guide development in Port Lavaca.

1.3.1: Utilize the Growth Sequencing Plan Map to guide where development and improvement priorities should be made and located.

1.4.1: Utilize and continually update the waterfront development framework set forth in the Waterfront District Map.

1.4.2: Create and encourage design guidelines in the Waterfront District.

1.4.6: Improve the connection between hotels and the waterfront.

1.4.9: Develop surveys, existing conditions analysis, and master plans for the existing harbors along the waterfront.

1.5.1: Continue to consider and implement a one-way pair street redesign and reorientation of Main Street and Railroad Street.

1.5.2: Implement a Main Street Streetscapes Improvement Program.

1.5.3: Improve intersection safety and design in Downtown along Main Street.

1.5.8: Identify programming and elements needed to host community events at Faye Bauer Sterling Park, on Main Street, and the empty block of 120 West Main Sreet.

1.5.10: Work with TxDOT to identify alterative routes for traffic when events are held Downtown where Main Street may be temporarily closed to vehicular traffic.



GOAL 2: TRANSPORTATION

2.1.6: Establish an approved plant list to support corridor beautification.

2.1.9: Establish a gateway and wayfinding signage program at major junctions, district entrances, and at city limit boundaries.

2.4.3: Revise TxDOT truck routes and establish "No Truck Zones" in the City.

2.2.3: Expand and upgrade existing sidewalks and curb ramps to comply with state and national standards.

2.5.2: Evaluate if ridership needs are met and if a collaboration with R-Transit is needed to provide adequate transit access to residents.

2.1.3: Establish guidelines for on-street parking space design, including parallel and angled parking.

2.2.5: Implement a Neighborhood Streets Improvement Program that combines elements of traffic calming, streetscape enhancements, and pedestrian interconnectivity.

2.2.10: Designate bike routes on low speed, local thoroughfares for safe and efficient travel.

2.2.11: Install bicycle amenities at major destinations and rest stops, as well as bicycle traffic signals at intersections along designated bike routes.

2.2.12: Encourage cycling through school programs so that the younger generation can build the habit of biking.

2.5.1: Conduct a SH 35 Corridor Capacity Evaluation in coordination with TxDOT.

2.5.3: Keep connected with TxDOT about future plans for the causeway replacement.

2.5.4: Revise existing truck route designations to prevent truck traffic in undesired areas.

2.1.1: Utilize the proposed Thoroughfare Plan map to guide future roadway expansions, alignments, and right-of-way preservation.

2.1.2: Utilize and update thoroughfare standards to align with the proposed thoroughfare cross sections.

2.1.4: Encourage participation in Adopt a Highway Programs or similar program to help keep roads clean and reduce overall maintenance costs.

2.1.5: Establish access management standards in the Code of Ordinances.

2.1.7: Establish updated crosswalk and striping standards at City and TxDOT Intersections.

2.1.8: Implement new intersection controls.

2.2.1: Utilize the proposed Active Transportation Plan to expand trail, sidewalk, and shared use path network.

2.2.2: Establish standards for the active transportation network and educate the public on these changes.

2.2.4: Implement wayfinding and regulatory signage for active transportation, as well as for drivers to be reminded to share the road and be aware of bicyclists and pedestrians.

2.2.6: Ensure that active transportation facilities do not dead-end abruptly.

2.2.7: Utilize and update the City's Code of Ordinances with new active transportation facility standards and dimensions.

2.2.8: Require all residential and commercial developers to add 5-foot sidewalks along all public rights-of-way, with new or substantial construction.

2.2.9: Encourage and adopt policies to make the City bicycle friendly.

2.4.1: Implement intersection safety improvements throughout the City.

2.4.2: Create local road access on the north side of the city to connect disconnected residential areas.

2.4.4: Consider adopting a "Complete Streets" policy.

Sticky Note Comments

Attendees placed sticky notes provide recommendations, suggested additions, and/or edits for each goal. Comments for Goal 2: Transportation are below:

"Adopt a **complete streets policy**/ordinance requiring pedestrian and bicycle accessibility."

"**Sidewalks**; South Virginia Street needs sidewalks from Austin all the way to La Villa Street. "

"(Add) A CCISD **bus route** with students on street corners."

GOAL 3: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

3.2.3: Continue to work with Calhoun County ISD (CCISD), Calhoun County Library, and YMCA to expand youth programs and recreational activities, including summer camps, aquatic lessons, developmental programs, and athletics-based offerings.

3.1.8: Develop a farmers market and seafood market at Bayfront Peninsula Park.

3.1.11: Develop additional teen and young adult activities and facilities.

3.1.2: Consider developing three new parks in Port Lavaca, two of which have public beach access points.

3.3.6: Conduct a boat ramp conditions survey, needs assessment, and capacity analysis for Port Lavaca's existing ramps at Bayfront Park and Lighthouse Beach.

3.2.1: Consider expanding the Bauer Community Center to include centers for learning, fitness, community, and cultural arts.

3.1.7: Continue to promote opportunities for park-based tourism.

3.1.10: Encourage the development of canoe and kayak boat launches and a network of blueway routes in Lavaca Bay and Chocolate Bay.

3.1.12: Consider a performance stage and an additional playground zone towards the entrance of Bayfront Peninsula Park, northeast of East Railroad Street.

3.1.14: Provide adequate shade protection on city sidewalks, trails, and shared-use paths.

3.2.2: Continue to collaborate with Calhoun County and the Victoria Economic Development Corporation (VEDC) to provide high quality amenities for visitors and residents.

3.3.1: Conduct a Programs and Services Capacity Study for all programs, including, facilities, staffing, and budgets associated with the Port Lavaca park and recreation facilities.

3.3.3: Conduct a Lighting Survey at night of all parklands and facilities to identify dark zones, lighting inconsistencies, and potential safety hazards.

3.3.4: Continue assessing the community's parkland and facility needs on an annual basis, including potential new sports and recreation facilities, shade enhancements, safety improvements, and programming needs beyond those identified in this Comprehensive Plan.

3.3.5: Conduct a Tree Survey in Port Lavaca.

3.1.1: Utilize the proposed Parks and Open Space Plan map to identify additional future parkland sites, recommended protected areas, and future active transportation facilities.

3.1.3: Utilize the updated 2026 Port Lavaca Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

3.1.4: Consider projects, facility expansion, and improvements to existing Port Lavaca's Parks.

3.1.5: Incorporate inclusive play elements into all parks for people of all ages and all abilities.

3.1.6: Continue to expand opportunities for public feedback and environmental education.

3.1.9: Consider adding parks facilities that Port Lavaca does not yet have to make each park a unique experience.

3.1.13: Prioritize sidewalk and trail projects that connect to and are adjacent to parkland and civic buildings.

3.2.4: Continue to incorporate local artist's art and unique design elements into all Port Lavaca parks.

3.2.5: Continue to work with home developers to provide parklands in new developments within areas not already served by parks to help meet the communities demand.

3.2.6: Continue to work with TxDOT and Calhoun County to implement the Comprehensive Plan's shared use path and trails network along major State highways.

3.2.7: Consider adding parkland dedication requirements without a fee-in-lieu option to Chapter 42 of the City Code of Ordinances.

3.2.8: Consider a "bike to the event" incentive, rewards, or offerings to encourage walking and biking to local City events.

3.3.2: Continue to develop a digital library through Google MyMaps and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) portals of all parkland facilities and amenities, and begin to develop an Asset Management Program.

GOAL 4: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

4.3.3: Repair or replace unsafe or substandard homes, especially older housing stock that poses health or safety risks.

4.1.6: Continue to encourage a mix of housing options within Downtown and central Port Lavaca, including townhomes, apartments, senior-living, single-family homes, apartments, bungalows, and cottage homes.

4.3.5: Provide and market opportunities for financial assistance for families to repair their homes.

4.1.8: Consider allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) within specific city zones and in special cases.

4.2.1: Continue progress towards the goal of manufactured homes only in manufactured home parks.

4.2.3: Require manufactured home parks to have a minimum planting, recreation, and buffering style guide.

4.3.1: Establish a neighborhood program to help revitalize historical / older neighborhoods at risk of decline.

4.3.6: Consider financial incentives for the rehabilitation of historic properties.

4.1.1: Continue to encourage the development of multi-family and single-family housing that is market rate/ driven by the market.

4.1.2: Create a comprehensive Developer's Guide that outlines the full process for development approvals, permitting, and annexation.

4.1.3: Continue to encourage high-quality housing construction and attractive home designs styles in Port Lavaca.

4.1.4: Establish a "Look Book" and Desired Amenities Guide to communicate Port Lavaca's preferred development character.

4.1.5: Encourage and / or require subdivision interconnectivity with streets and trails.

4.1.7: Within the Downtown, consider requiring new single -family homes to have front-facing covered porches and minimize the impact of garages.

4.1.9: Encourage the development of owner-occupied housing in central Port Lavaca and the development of infill lots.

4.1.10: Encourage and allow for a strategically located mix of housing lot sizes and home sizes to be developed in a single planned subdivision or residential development; If a smaller-lot variance is desired, then require the development of large lots to the proposed development.

4.2.2: Provide a design guide for manufactured homes.

13. Require manufactured home parks to have a minimum planting, recreation, and buffering style guide.

4.3.2: Ensure that senior facilities maintain high-quality services for aging residents.

4.3.7: Work with the Calhoun County Museum to develop a historical structures and sites inventory, designation criteria, and historical repair program.



GOAL 5: UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE

5.1.1: Plan for future potable water, sanitary sewer, and drainage projects to meet the City's future demand.

5.1.5: Continue to prioritize aging infrastructure, such as implementing a clay pipe replacement program, to reduce impacts on the City's treatment plant.

5.1.10: Conduct comprehensive sidewalks, curb ramp, and accessibility assessment in Downtown, along major corridors, and near parks and schools, to identify utility conflicts, ADA compliance issues, deficit areas without sidewalks, and needed sidewalk pavement updates.

5.1.2: Continue to identify capacity and distribution issues and incorporate them into the City's CIP.

5.1.7: Incorporate green infrastructure and low impact development (LID) solutions within water management and drainage utilities systems.

5.2.1: Continue to expand on the capital improvement program and address aging infrastructure with a proactive approach.

5.2.3: Port Lavaca should consider ways to educate the public in the future to fund infrastructure programs.

5.3.4: Ensure the City of Port Lavaca maintains reliable and regulatory-compliant water treatment capacity to support current demand, future growth, and regional service commitments.

5.3.5: Until wastewater treatment capacity is expanded, require large industrial users to provide their own water treatment solutions.

5.1.3: Continue to explore alternative methods for water reuse as alternatives become available.

5.1.4: Continue to address Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) challenges.

5.1.6: Develop a Stormwater and Drainage Master Plan.

5.1.8: Continue to identify where additional stormwater drainage lines need to be directed.

5.1.9: Conduct street drains, culverts, and drainage ditch survey to identify areas where drainage capacity is needed, blockages are or may occur, drains may be damaged, and compliance issues may be located.

5.2.2: Continue funding key infrastructure projects, such as a rate study, that are needed in the community.

5.3.1: Regardless of Port Lavaca's population growth, there is interest in keeping heavy industry treatment facilities separate from Port Lavaca's System.

5.3.2: Continue to utilize shared utilities improvement agreements with developers to help reduce future financial impacts of upgrading/replacing utilities infrastructure.

5.3.3: Continue to require all new development to connect to the City's sewer network.

5.3.6: Identify where additional infrastructure water trunk lines need to be directed.

5.4.1: Continue to update and digitize utility mapping.

5.4.2: Consider hiring an engineering firm to help collect infrastructure data (water, wastewater, and drainage facilities) on an on-going basis.

5.4.3: Develop a program that collects infrastructure as-built data after a project is complete from the engineers who prepared the plans for each project to keep the asset management program up to date.

5.4.4: Continue to educate, inform, and notify the public of infrastructure projects.

GOAL 6: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

6.3.2: Consider the means to utilize and develop underutilized public lands (including ISD land, City land, and County lands).

6.3.3: Develop an updated Strategic Operating Plan and ensure cross-collaboration between the City Council, City staff, department heads, and City boards/commissions.

6.2.3: Update facilities and equipment at City Hall and other City-operated buildings.

6.2.4: Update emergency response (Fire, EMS, Police) facilities and equipment in coordination with Calhoun County.

6.2.2: Continue to improve the capacity and quality of utilities services.

6.2.1: Consider public facility expansions and additional service locations.

6.1.1: Ensure that City departments are well staffed and have the technical expertise to continue to improve and provide strong services.

6.1.2: Ensure that City and County joint-departments are well staffed and have the technical expertise to continue providing strong services.

6.3.1: Continue to utilize up-to-date and improve modern technology systems, programs, contracted services, and security protocols.

GOAL 7: RESILIENCE

7.3.9: Continue to utilize grant funding to implement city projects, and seek long-term internal institutional stability with grant acquisition training of newer staff and annual city budgeting processes.

7.4.4: Continue to provide funds and sponsor community and city-led events.

7.4.1: Continue to coordinate disaster relief efforts, storage houses, and emergency medical relief networks in times of hurricanes, droughts, and adverse weather.

7.4.5: Continue to encourage and establish programs and community-led projects with local non-profit groups.

7.1.1: Continue to preserve existing sensitive environmental areas or areas of high visual and characteristic value, such as wetlands, tributary corridors, and forested lands.

7.1.2: Work with local coastal environmental agencies to ensure safe and proper development of the waterfront and prevent airborne and waterborne pollutants.

7.1.3: Continue to mitigate and assess former light industrial sites for potential contaminants, mitigation steps, required funding, and development potential.

7.1.4: Relocate, remove, and/or address loose contaminants and structures temporarily located in Lavaca Bay near Bayfront Peninsula Park and other potential locations.

7.1.5: As described and identified in Objective 1.1.4, Waterfront Plan, expand, reestablish, and ensure the continued health of wetlands and riparian flood buffers along the coast.

7.1.6: Protect and work with developers to require and/or encourage the healthy maintenance of existing wetlands and riparian areas, such as at the mouth of Little Chocolate Bayou, Lynn's Bayou, and smaller tributaries leading to Lavaca Bay.

7.1.7: Consider requiring the planting of only native species of trees and landscapes within all new developments.

7.1.8: Protect trees within the right-of-way and medians of roadways, along with older trees on private property.

7.2.1: Ensure existing developments in vulnerable areas are prepared, and new development is built with the risk factors in mind.

7.2.2: Amend the City's Code of Ordinances to add regulations for the provision of EV (Electric Vehicle) charging stations on private and public property.

7.2.3: Require dark sky compliant lighting fixtures at any public development along the waterfront and within parks.

7.2.4: Amend the City's Code of Ordinances to add residential and commercial Codes regarding the installation and placement of rooftop solar panels.

7.2.5: Continue to encourage the adaptive reuse of properties that are market-feasible

7.2.6: Encourage permeable pavements within the City and reduce the amount of impermeable surfaces as much as possible.

7.2.7: Require all new city and public facilities to include, incorporate, and/or consider green infrastructure and energy efficient utilities.

7.2.8: Establish a guidebook to help residents and business owners understand the wide range of environmental adaptive improvements they can conduct.

7.2.9: Require all new developments to include improved and higher capacity street drains and encourage natural detention basin designs.

7.3.1: Strengthen land use code enforcement to ensure compliance, address incompatible uses, and maintain community character.

7.3.2: Re-establish code enforcement expectations with existing property owners.

7.3.3: Continue to allow small-scale, home-based businesses.

7.3.4: Ensure availability of land for Business Park and Industrial use in desirable areas.

7.3.5: Consider encouraging the expansion of aquaculture-related businesses.

7.3.6: Promote and assist the viability of agriculturally based economic activities in the Planning Area.

7.3.7: Explore funding opportunities for reinvestment into existing communities.

7.3.8: Conduct a property tax assessment to guide better development practices that can aid in fiscally responsible utilities and infrastructure replacement.

7.3.10: Continue to address Lavaca Bay depths to ensure economic viability of needed shipping routes, while protecting sensitive environmental areas.

7.3.11: Develop an allocation, tracking, and benchmarking system for the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) district in Port Lavaca.

7.4.2: Conduct a comprehensive survey and study of all community-based buildings for the purposes of pop-up relief centers.

7.4.3: Continue to ensure the viability, accuracy, and efficiency of the Calhoun County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2025).

GOAL 8: ZONING

8.1.1: Establish a Zoning Map that is created from the Character-Based Map and Future Land Use Map, separating the residential areas from land uses that cause more nuisance, and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

8.1.2: Establish a zoning framework for appropriate placement of development within the community.

8.1.4: Strengthen this zoning ordinance, ensuring that accessory uses and conditional use permits are incorporated into certain areas, and add standards for new construction.

8.2.1: Update the processes and procedures for zoning in the Code of Ordinances that adhere to the Texas Local Government Code.

8.1.3: Introduce standards for manufactured homes in the zoning ordinance that specifically address this housing typology as a conditional use.

8.1.5: Add additional zoning districts that were not part of the original zoning districts in Port Lavaca, including Downtown Core (DC) and Waterfront District (WF).

Sticky Note Comments

Attendees placed sticky notes provide recommendations, suggested additions, and/or edits for each goal. Comments for Goal 8: Zoning are below:

"Establish an **industrial zoning code** in order to protect inhabitants/ property in local and adjacent neighborhoods, maintain residential property values, protect farmland, and support safe recreation/gathering in public spaces and school areas."

"Adopt/establish/ implement railroad **quiet zone**."

"Establish industrial construction and **operational standards**."

"Establish specific **minimum setbacks** for heavy and light industrial use from residential properties, schools, parks, recreational facilities, and other sensitive uses."

"Impliment a code for **emmissions**/ particulate regulations."

"Enforce existing commercial/ industrial **truck route**. Increase Port Lavaca Police Department patrol."

"Establish **landscape requirements** to address industrial use adjacent to residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, recreation areas, and public strees including usual screening and vegetative buffers."

"**Emergency preparations** - shelter-in-place plan for neighbors of Equalizer (in the event of) a fire."

"Would vote here (recommendation 1), if proposed map had **Equalizer development** area classified as industrial."

"Adopt an industrial Dark Sky/ **light tresspass** ordinance."

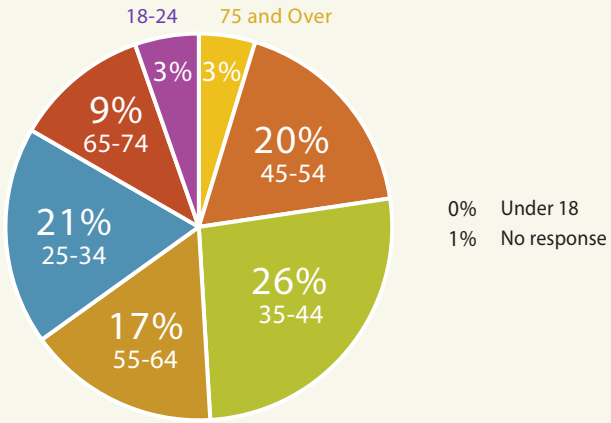
"Continue and complete development of **industrial screening** and buffering standards."



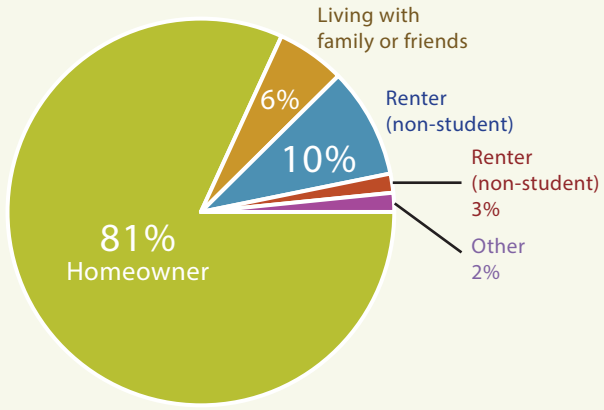
COMMUNITY SURVEY

An online community survey was conducted from December 11th, 2025 to May 25th, 2026. The survey was available online and through paper copies at public engagement events. The Community Survey received **318 responses**, accounting for 2.7% of the 11,577 total population of Port Lavaca (2020 U.S. Census). The following sections highlights key findings from each community survey question.

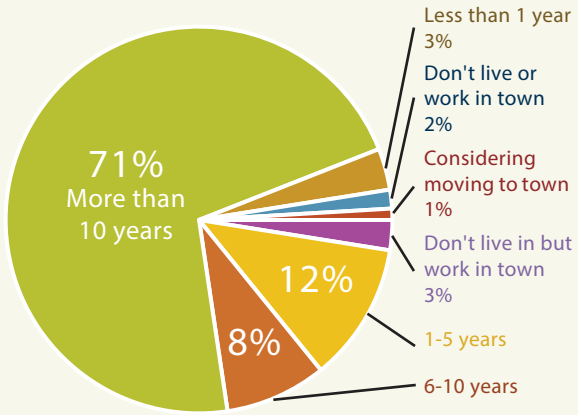
Ages of Respondents



Living Arrangements of Respondents



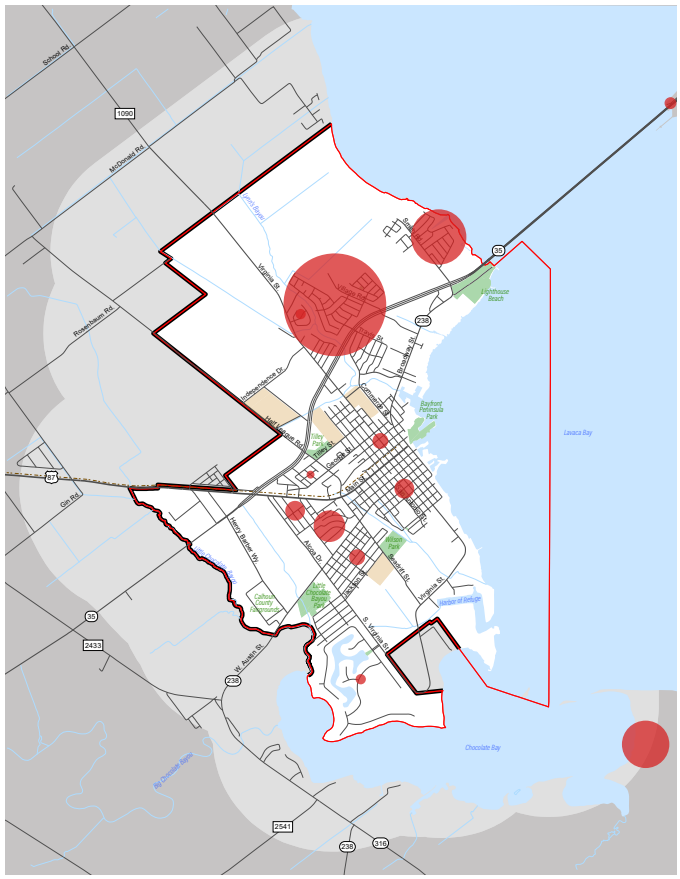
How Long Have Respondents Lived in Port Lavaca?



Community Survey Flyer



Where do Respondents live?



The 318 respondents' cover a wide range of the City and surrounding area, including rural areas, historic Downtown, and new residential subdivisions. Dot sizes correlate with the number of respondents who are from the associated area. The most participation came from residents of the Brookhollow Estates subdivision, and residents living on or near Brookhollow Drive.

PORT LAVACA COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

Open From December 11th, 2025 to May 25th, 2026.
318 Total Responses (2.7% of the City's Total Population)

Respondent Characteristics

- 71% of respondents have lived in Port Lavaca for 10 or more years.
- Response rates by age are relatively equal between age groups, with the majority age range being between the ages of 35-44, at 26%.
- 81% of respondents are homeowners, while 72.4% of Port Lavaca residents overall are homeowners.

Satisfaction

- Only 33% of all respondents say they feel satisfied living in Port Lavaca.
- Respondents note roadway repairs, increased entertainment options, and sanitation improvements would improve the City.

Housing

- Respondents feel the top needs for housing in the community are affordability, quality, cleanliness, and proximity to education and essential services.
- The most desired housing types among respondents are single-family detached homes, single-family attached homes, and townhomes.
- Respondents consider safety and cleanliness, affordability, and quality of schools as the most important factors when selecting a living location.

Transportation

- Respondents feel the City's top transportation needs are better road conditions, more sidewalks and trails, and improved traffic flow.
- Nearly half of respondents feel there is a need for expanded public transportation options.
- 43% of respondents say they walk or bike at least once a day or weekly.
- 93% of respondents say their primary mode of transportation is car.
- The most common walking or biking destinations are the Bayfront, Little Chocolate Bayou Park, and Lighthouse Beach.
- 64% of respondents favorably rate the availability of safe walking/biking facilities.

Downtown

- Respondents feel Downtown Port Lavaca's top needs are building and storefront renovations, the addition of more retail, and landscaping improvements.
- 11% of respondents say they visit Downtown at least once a week, with 31% saying they never visit Downtown.
- 71% of respondents support the preservation of historic buildings and sites Downtown.
- About half of respondents hope to see Port Lavaca's waterfront developed into either a boardwalk, or retail shops and restaurants.

City Services

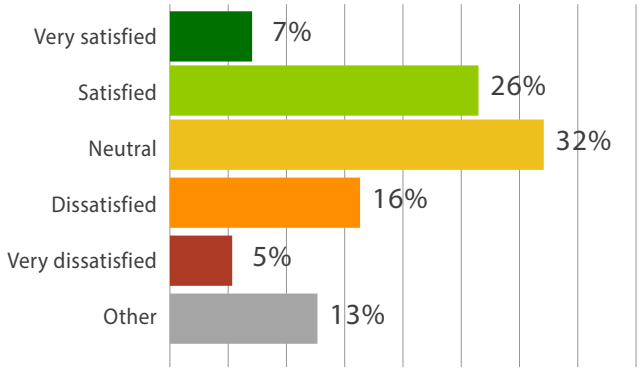
- Respondents consider the City's top utility infrastructure challenges to be aging infrastructure, poor water quality, and high utility rates.
- Respondents consider the City's top drainage infrastructure challenges to be aging infrastructure, blocked or clogged street drains and gutters, and flooding after heavy rain.

Port Lavaca's Future

- Respondents say the City's greatest strengths are a strong sense of community, proximity to major cities, and parks, open spaces, and natural features.
- Respondents say the top challenges facing Port Lavaca are housing affordability, limited retail and services, and limited job / employment opportunities.
- Respondents say the parks and recreation features that are lacking are parks and trails, youth activities and sports, and community centers.
- Respondents say the development and infrastructure features that are lacking and should be prioritized are the Downtown area, sewer and potable water facilities, and schools and education.
- Half of respondents say they might consider zoning in Port Lavaca, but need more information.
- Over the next 20 years, respondents said they'd like to see Port Lavaca become a more attractive destination for businesses and job creation, focus on making Downtown a lively place with additional commercial/retail, and focus on becoming a regional hub for retail and services.

SATISFACTION

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with living in Port Lavaca?



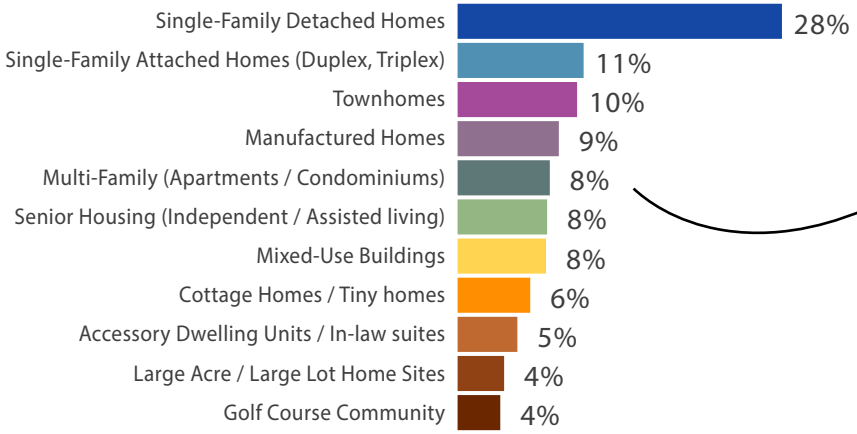
What could be added or what actions could be taken by the City of Port Lavaca to make living in Port Lavaca better? Why?

Respondents most noted actions or additions include:

1. *Add more recreational opportunities*
2. *Revitalize Downtown*
3. *Improve the Waterfront*
4. *Address street litter and trash*
5. *Renovate vacant buildings*
6. *Improve community programming*
7. *Add more housing*
8. *Increase amount of retail*
9. *Improve community safety*
10. *Repair damaged Roads*
11. *Improve water quality*

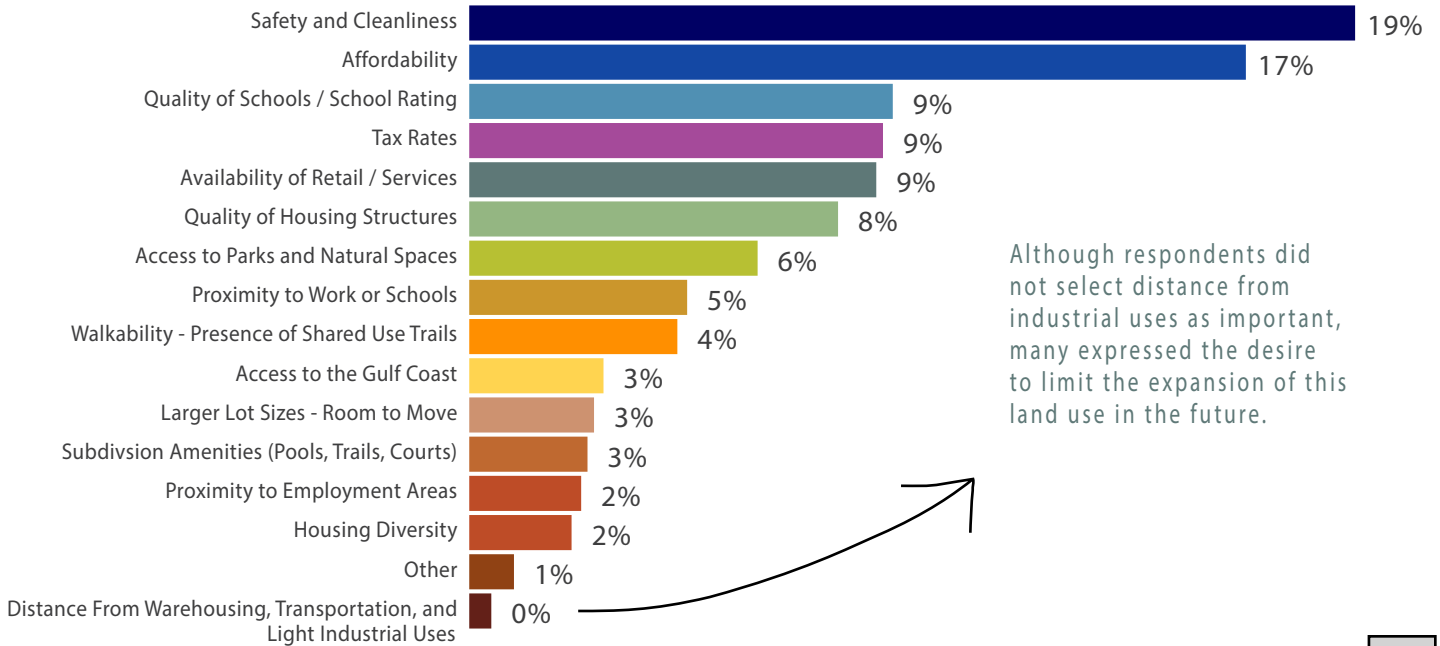
HOUSING

What types of housing would you like to see more of in Port Lavaca? (Select all that apply)



37% of respondents selected a form of multi-family housing typology, while 28% selected single-family homes.

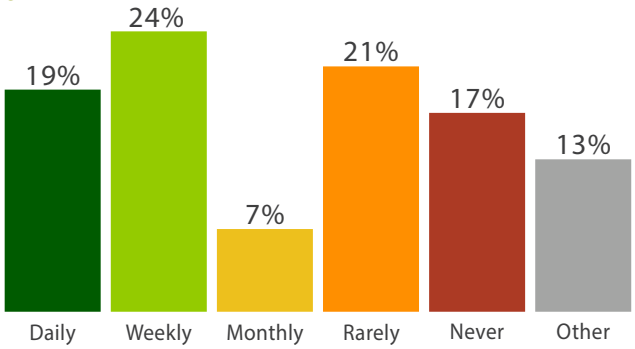
What are the most important factors when considering moving to a new community? (Select up to five)



Although respondents did not select distance from industrial uses as important, many expressed the desire to limit the expansion of this land use in the future.

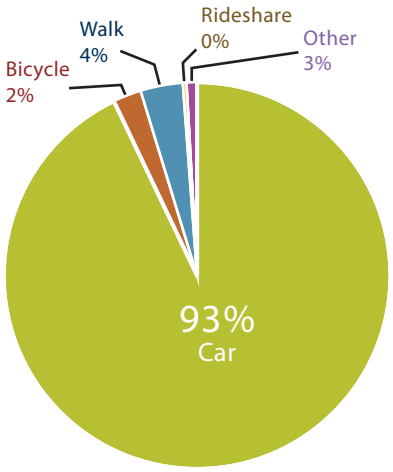
TRANSPORTATION

How often do you walk or bike for leisure or errands within Port Lavaca, and where do you go?

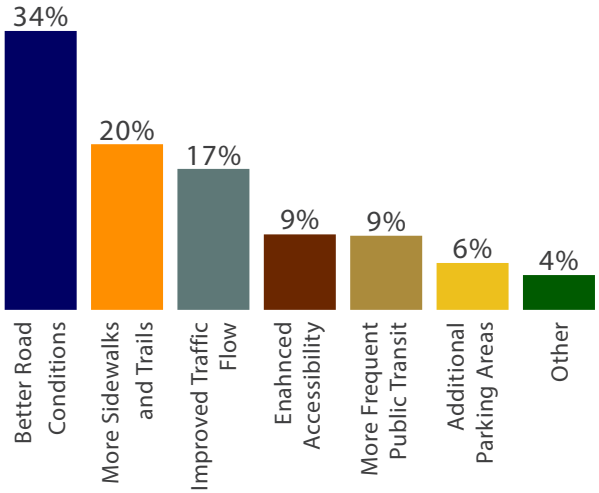


Respondents who said "Rarely" or "Never" noted a lack of safe routes and a lack of sidewalks and trails as the main reason for not walking or biking.

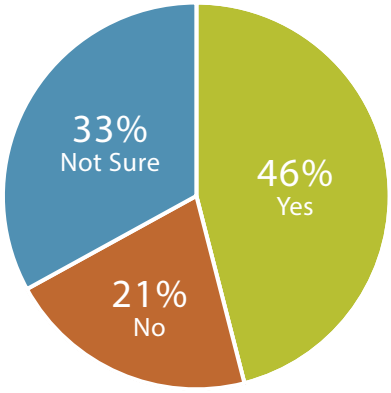
How do you typically travel within Port Lavaca for work, school, or errands?



What would most improve your ability to get around Port Lavaca? (Select all that apply)



Do you feel there is a need for expanded public transportation options in Port Lavaca (i.e., fixed-route service, ADA-accessible transit services for seniors, employment connections, etc.)?



Where in Port Lavaca do you walk or bike?

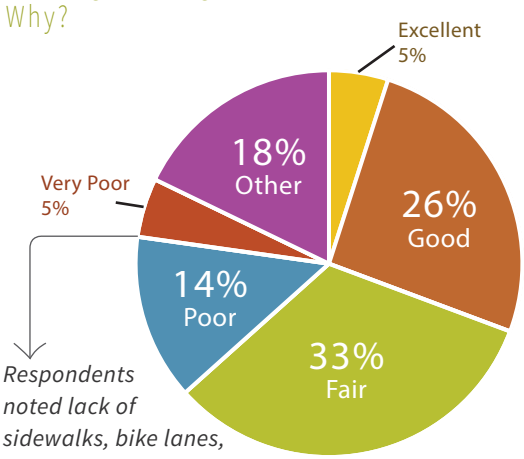
- Bayfront - 74
- Little Chocolate Bayou Park - 58
- Within Own Neighborhood - 56
- Lighthouse Beach - 44
- Local Parks - 11
- Beach - 11
- Sandcrab Stadium - 10
- Boardwalk - 6
- Downtown - 6
- Various Locations - 70

"Respondents primarily walk or bike for recreation, but expess the desire to walk or bike for more practical purposes like errands."

- Community Survey Respondent



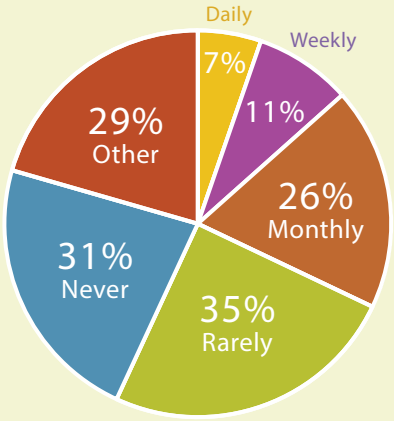
How would you rate the availability of safe walking / biking facilities in Port Lavaca, and Why?



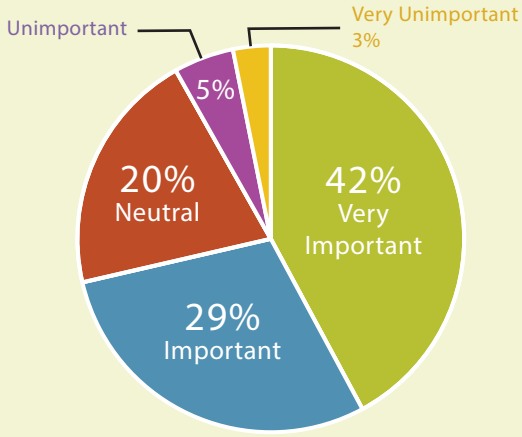
Respondents noted lack of sidewalks, bike lanes, and adequate lighting as the main reasons for rating "Poor" or "Very Poor".

DOWNTOWN

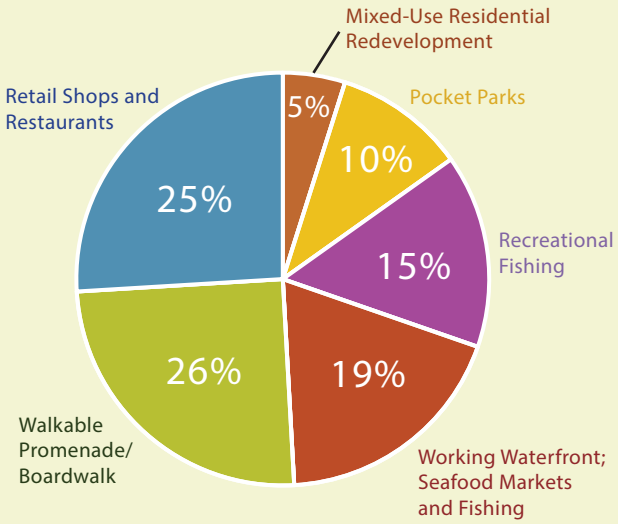
How often do you visit Downtown Port Lavaca, and why or why not?



How important is the preservation of historic buildings and sites inDowntown Port Lavaca?



How would you like to see Port Lavaca's waterfront developed?



What buildings or locations do you feel should be preserved and added to Port Lavaca's identity:

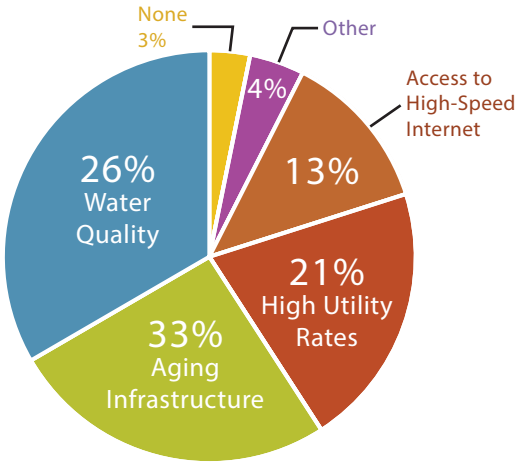
- Downtown / Old Town - 58
- Main Street - 46
- Other - 23
- All Historic Structures - 17
- Theatre - 12
- Don't Know - 10
- Lighthouse - 9
- None - 8
- Waterfront - 7
- Beach Hotel - 6
- Any Building Possible - 6
- Train Depot - 4
- All Dilapidated Buildings - 4
- Museum - 3
- Firehouse - 3

What additional features would make Downtown Port Lavaca more attactive?

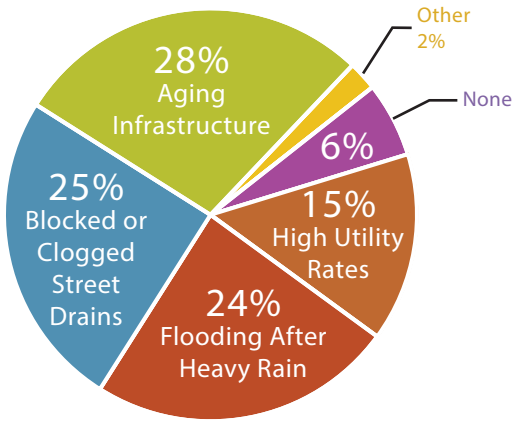
- Building Facade Improvements - 190
- Food Truck Court - 172
- Better Shade, Trees, and Landscaping - 146
- Public Art - 133
- Greenspaces / Parks - 130
- Public Restrooms - 123
- Improved Lighting - 119
- More Parking Options (on-street, shared lots) - 108
- Improved Crime Prevention - 84
- Accessible, Connected, and Safe Pedestrian / Bicycle Infrastructure (sidewalks, on-street bike lanes, shared-use paths) - 82
- Utilities Screening and Buffering / Removal of Overhead Utility Lines - 57
- Safer Intersections - 51
- More Housing Options - 50
- Other - 38
- Wayfinding and Directional Signage - 38
- Vehicle Charging Stations - 12

INFRASTRUCTURE

What concerns do you have regarding Port Lavaca's utilities infrastructure?

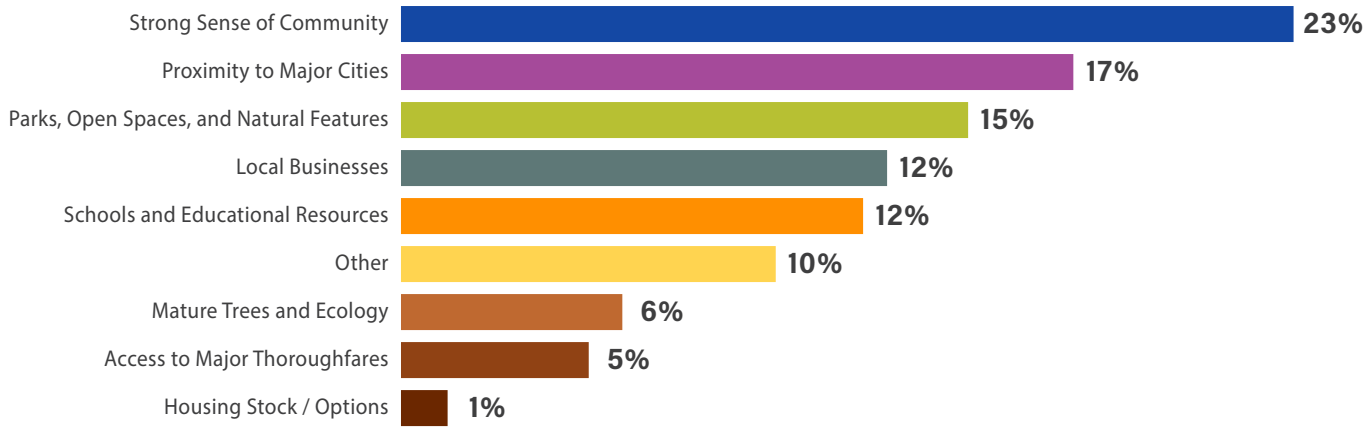


What concerns do you have regarding Port Lavaca's drainage infrastructure?

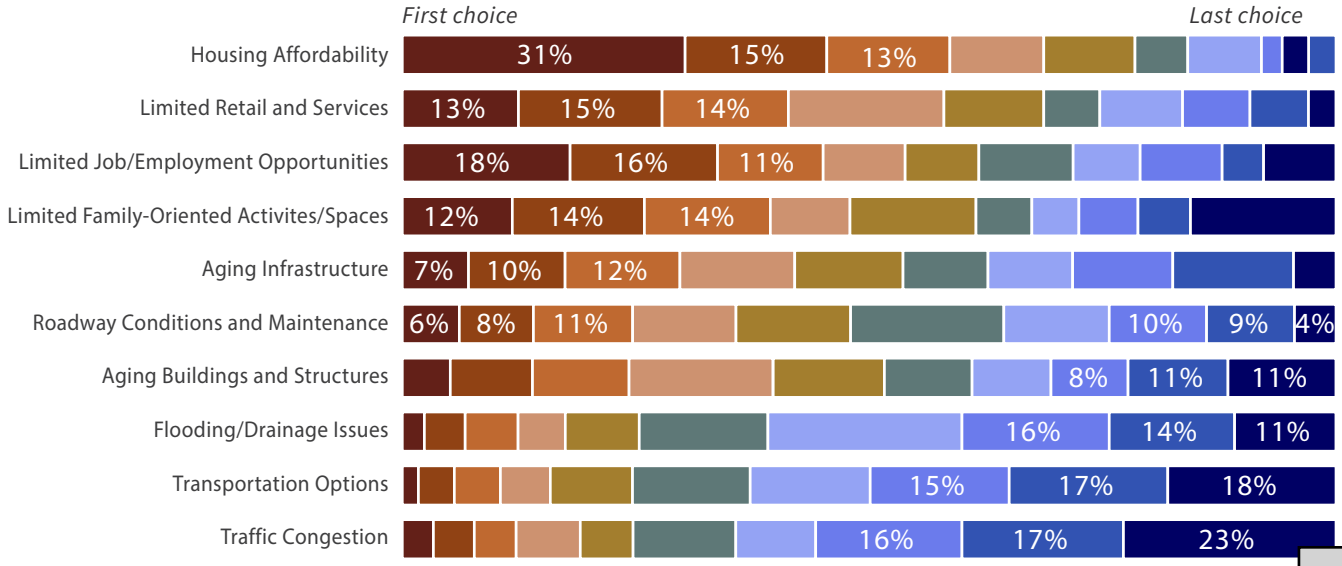


PORT LAVACA'S FUTURE

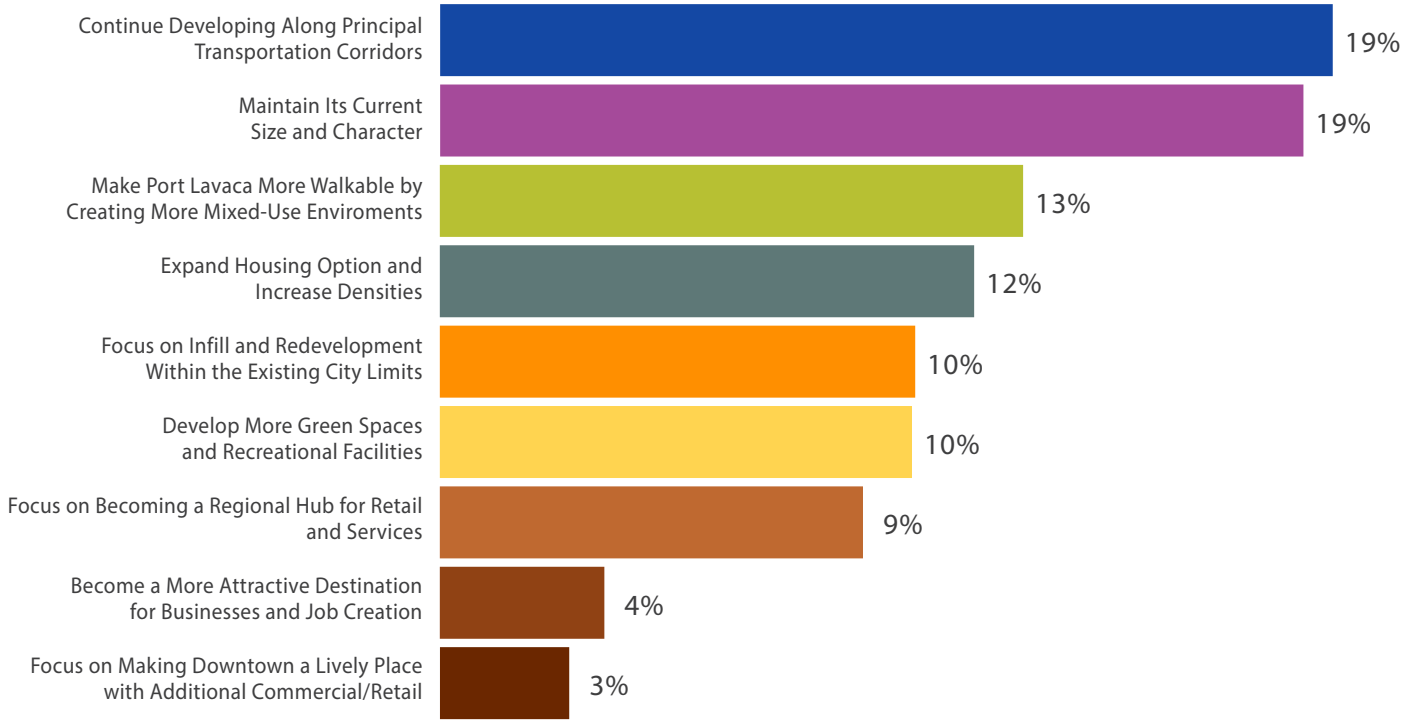
What do you see as Port Lavaca's greatest strength or asset?



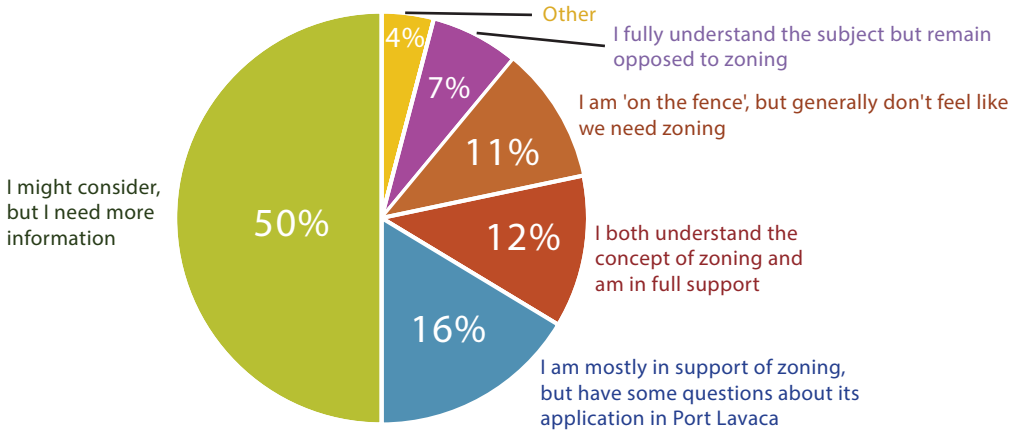
What are the top challenges Port Lavaca faces as a viable community to live, work, and play?



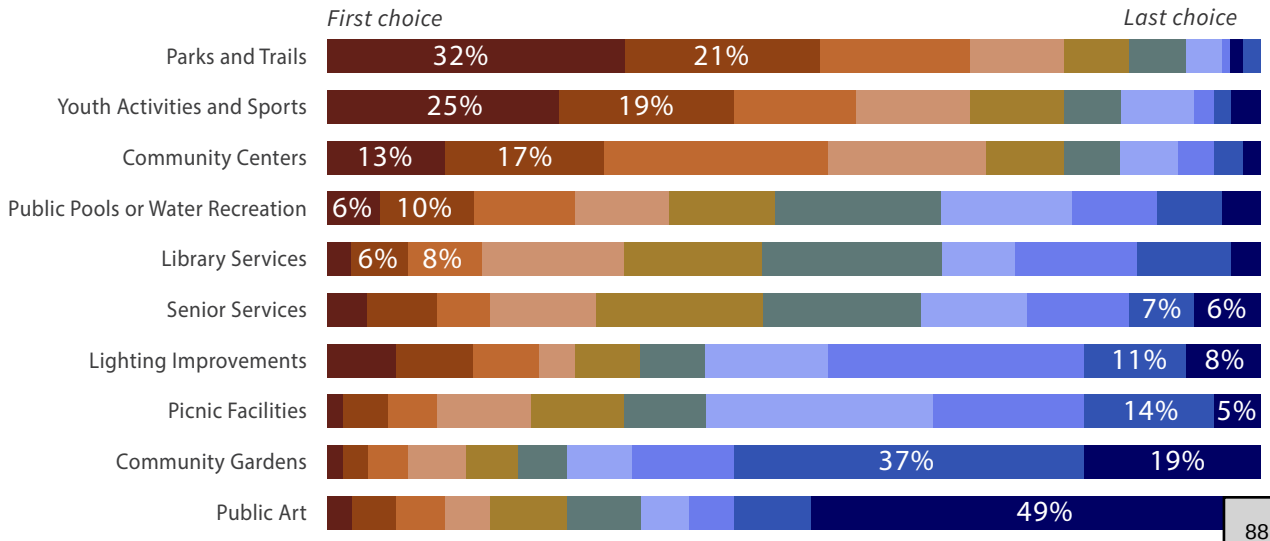
How would you like Port Lavaca to grow over the next 10-20 years?



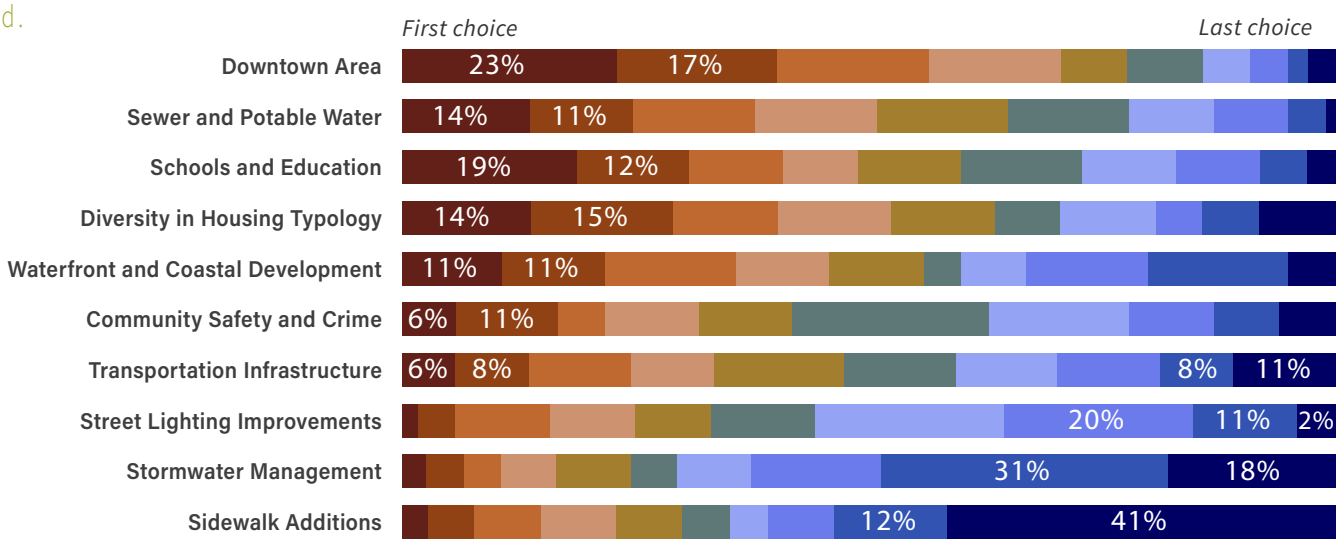
How strongly would you consider or not consider zoning in Port Lavaca?



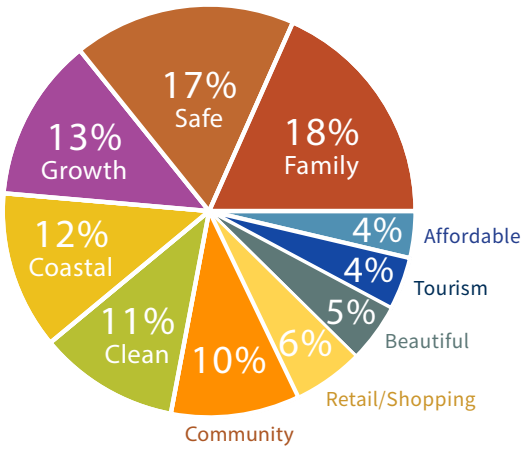
What Parks and Recreation community features do you feel are lacking within the City of Port Lavaca and should be prioritized? Please rank the following options where 1 (highest) is your top priority/need.



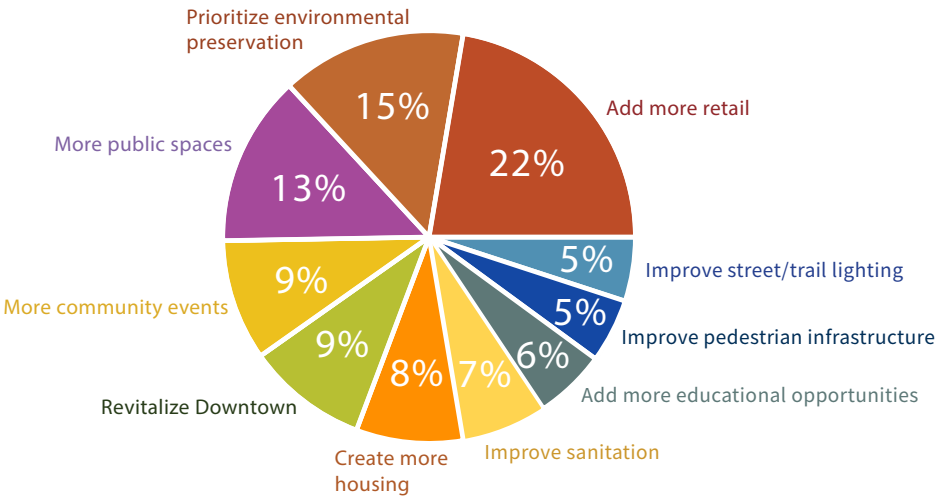
What Development and Infrastructure community features do you feel are lacking within the City of Port Lavaca and should be prioritized? Please rank the following options where 1 (highest) is your top priority/ need.



Please provide three (3) words you would want to include in a Community Vision Statement that best characterize how you would like to see Port Lavaca grow and develop in the future:



What additional ideas, concerns, or priorities would you like the City to consider as it shapes the vision for the Comprehensive Plan?



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.

Community Quotes

"Expand waterfront activities and options. Prioritise beautification efforts. Enhance appearances and encourge visitors to the area. Give investors more leadway in opportunities to grow our city. Cut the redtape"

- Community Survey Respondent

"We need locals and out of town employees to spend money here by creating more stores like target, local coffee shops, restaurants, which will create more employment opportunities"

- Community Survey Respondent

"I feel like the people of Port Lavaca want to enjoy the outdoor spaces that we have. Whether that's exercising, using them to commute, or for entertainment. We have the areas and people to make great things happen here"

- Community Survey Respondent

" We need to expand our options for life in all aspects in this town. I believe with more growth in the right direction we can make this town as nice if not nicer than some of the coastal vacation towns in our state we just need the right plan for the next 20 years"

- Community Survey Respondent



chapter two
THE FUTURE CITY

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FUTURE CITY FRAMEWORK

OVERVIEW

Chapter Two, *The Future City*, of the Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan, provides the key strategies, frameworks, and recommendations that Port Lavaca should implement and utilize moving forward. The strategies and recommendations are based on the findings from key public engagement activities (as summarized in Chapter One), analysis and assessment findings (as described in Appendix A, The Existing City), and key city departmental meetings and community discussions.

The Chapter is divided into eight overarching goals for the community (as depicted on the facing page), which are then followed by guiding principles, key objectives, and strategies that help Port Lavaca achieve each goal. Many of the community goals include development framework maps, graphics and conceptual designs, and example imagery, which should be utilized as a basis for future growth and redevelopment initiatives.

COMMUNITY VISION

Port Lavaca is a community that leverages its location along Lavaca Bay for economic development, recreational space, and eco-tourism opportunities, while showcasing and encouraging the continuing redevelopment of the community's historic Downtown, neighborhoods, and waterfront areas.



Bayfront Pinnesula Park
Source: Baxter & Woodman

COMMUNITY GOALS

GOAL 1.0, LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Port Lavaca is a community that establishes economic and cultural vitality by guiding land use, development patterns, and community character in ways that strengthen local businesses, attract new investment, and support a resilient, diverse economy.

GOAL 2.0, TRANSPORTATION

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

GOAL 3.0, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Port Lavaca's park system emphasizes eco-tourism, waterfront amenities, accessibility to all residents, parkland connectivity, recreational services, and preservation of critical landscapes for environmental protection and flood management purposes.

GOAL 4.0, HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

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

GOAL 5.0, UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE

Port Lavaca's water, wastewater, and storm sewer systems remain reliable, compliant, and sustainable through the reduction of inflow and infiltration, investing in aging infrastructure and capacity improvements, and planning for future growth and industrial demands without overburdening municipal systems.

GOAL 6.0, PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Port Lavaca is a community which continually provides public facilities, community services, and emergency response coordination within a small-town capacity.

GOAL 7.0, RESILIENCE

Port Lavaca is a community that utilizes a systems-based approach to integrating economic, social, environmental, and infrastructure resilience into all aspects of social life, development, and infrastructure investment.

GOAL 8.0, ZONING

Establish a model zoning district that supports the community's comprehensive plan by simplifying and consolidating zoning districts, protecting neighborhoods and environmentally sensitive areas, ensuring compatible land uses, and updating standards, with clear definitions and specific provisions for manufactured housing.

GOAL ONE: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

PORT LAVACA IS A COMMUNITY THAT ESTABLISHES ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL VITALITY BY GUIDING LAND USE, DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER IN WAYS THAT STRENGTHEN LOCAL BUSINESSES, ATTRACT NEW INVESTMENT, AND SUPPORT A RESILIENT, DIVERSE ECONOMY.

OVERVIEW

Land Use Planning is the process by which a city determines the type of development that should take place on each parcel within the community based on the land use type, compatibility of land uses located near each other, the intensity and size of development, and the regulations that should be in place to keep cohesion between land uses that could cause more harm to adjacent land uses. For example, industrial land uses are the most intensive development types, often requiring lighting, noise, and truck traffic to operate, and therefore need the most restrictions to prevent disturbance to other land uses, such as nearby retail, commercial, and residential uses. During the Comprehensive Plan process, a Future Land Use map is drawn to guide future development.

Some communities take land-use planning a step further by implementing zoning regulations. During this process, zoning districts are created to designate the land uses that are allowed within each district, whether it be residential or non-residential uses, with its own set of rules about what can be built and what activities are allowed in the zoning districts. They are further divided into requirements such as landscaping, setbacks, and buffering, as outlined in Chapter Eight, *Zoning*.

While Goal One focuses on broad Land Use recommendations within Port Lavaca, Goal Eight further details the recommendations for Port Lavaca regarding Zoning categories and a Zoning Ordinance. Additionally, Goal One outlines priority development zones, redevelopment opportunities, and a framework for future investments in Port Lavaca. A Downtown Plan and a Waterfront Plan are proposed in this section, detailing a number of projects and priorities to help rebuild Port Lavaca's Main Street corridor and waterfront, further serving as the beating heart of the community and reflecting the community's desired character.



Nail Salon on Main St
Source: Baxter & Woo

Guiding Principles for Land Use and Community Character (LUCC)

The nine guiding principles below provide a contextual framework and strategic basis for all the following recommendations found in goal one. These guiding principles should be utilized by the City when making future decisions regarding land use and community character.

LUCC Principle 1: Ensure Equity.

Promote fairness and equity in meeting the housing, service, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all residents. Land use, transportation, and urban form decisions should support equitable access to community resources and reduce disparities by expanding opportunities for underserved and under-represented populations.

LUCC Principle 2: Preserve Community Character and Identity.

Preserve Port Lavaca's rich history as a Gulf Coast port and its small coastal-town character. Enhance the natural beauty of its bays, shorelines, and parks, and strengthen neighborhoods and commercial areas by maintaining quality housing and supporting reinvestment where needed, while minimizing adverse development impacts.

LUCC Principle 3: Preserve Resources.

Protect agricultural land and coastal resources for their long-term value to future generations, community resilience, and environmental health. These landscapes support food security, open space, flood management, commercial and recreational fishing, eco-tourism, and the working waterfront.

LUCC Principle 4: Mix of Uses.

Promote mixed-use development that places housing, retail, office, public-institutional, and recreational uses within walkable, compact, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods. A diverse mix of uses improves accessibility, reduces traffic congestion, and supports the long-term vitality of existing and future development.

LUCC Principle 5: Development Patterns.

Encourage land-use patterns and densities that support efficient, cost-effective development. Well-planned patterns reduce long-term municipal and utility service demands and promote fiscally responsible growth.

LUCC Principle 6: Development Intensities.

Maintain development intensities that align with transportation capacity and established land-use policies. New development should be compatible with surrounding areas in use, density, building height and scale, and potential off-site impacts.

LUCC Principle 7: Transportation Efficiency.

Support land-use patterns that improve the efficiency and safety of the transportation network. Compact, connected development reduces congestion, enhances mobility options, and strengthens overall system performance.

LUCC Principle 8: Cultural Expression and Foster a Sense of Place.

Foster cultural and artistic expression to strengthen Port Lavaca's identity and sense of place. Integrate local art into the public realm through public and private investment to enrich existing areas and enhance new development.

LUCC Principle 9: Highest and Best Use.

Encourage the development and redevelopment of parcels to their highest and best uses. For example, a newly developed parcel located within the historic Downtown should not contain mostly parking lot or a drive-thru, nor should a development along the waterfront have zero public or semi-private access or relationship to the waterfront. There should always be a relationship and desire to "max-out" the taxable and buildable value of all developments.

A CHARACTER-BASED FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Making Character-Based Decisions

Moving forward, Port Lavaca should utilize a character-based decision process for approving new development and redevelopment standards. With a process that identifies the overall intensity of use, building setbacks, building height, roof types, materials, parking orientation, signage, window treatments, and other functional features of a development can be encouraged or out-right regulated through code.

Understanding community character is important because it helps planners and city leaders identify what aspects of the community should be preserved, enhanced, or changed. By grounding decisions in the community's existing identity and values, planners can guide development in a way that protects important aesthetic qualities, natural resources, and neighborhood patterns while supporting a future that aligns with residents' goals.

Community character reflects the physical, social, cultural, and environmental qualities that shape a community's identity. Physical qualities include building scale and density, the distribution of parks and open space, and the mix of permeable and impervious surfaces such as streets and parking areas, in relationship to the building's location within the property limits.

Social and cultural elements, such as land uses, historic resources, and the places where people live, work, and gather, show how residents interact with their surroundings and what they value.

Environmental features, including natural landscapes and ecological systems, further contribute to a community's sense of place.

KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES TO ADDRESS WITH LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Retain and strengthen Port Lavaca's coastal small-town feel and character.
- Develop redevelopment priority zones and focus redevelopment within the Downtown, Waterfront, and along TX-35.
- Strengthen code enforcement to ensure compliance, address incompatible uses, and maintain community standards.
- Designate appropriate areas for manufactured homes and recreational vehicle parks, reducing intermixing with single family neighborhoods and improving overall neighborhood cohesion.
- Encourage reinvestment in aging neighborhoods to stabilize property values and improve community appearance.
- Designate clear and defined areas for light industrial, manufacturing, and transportation-related land uses separate from residential areas, ensuring it is well compatible with surrounding uses.
- Improve the connection between hotels, Downtown, and the Waterfront by creating comfortable, continuous pedestrian and bicycle links, and reassessing hotel locations that are not isolated along major corridors.
- Identify underutilized parcels, such as vacant lotsand aging commercial strips, and consider infill housing, mixed-use development, and new parks.
- Create a Downtown district and a Waterfront district focusing on historic preservation and encouraging economic development, striving to maintain and improve the character within each district.

Spatial Scales of Development

The scale of development and building placement are the defining factors for the way someone feels within a space and interprets the area's character. Character includes the height of buildings, the size of windows, materials, building orientation on the parcel, the distance between structures and buildings, parking and pavements, and the way adjacent spaces and landscaping interact with the building's edge. Character defines where one area starts and another begins.

Port Lavaca should continue to make development decisions based on the area's defined form, character, and intended function. Below is a detailed example of how a structure, such a restaurant, can take on multiple forms and functions based on the design of the site and surrounding areas, followed by the designated character traits that make up the location of each development type.

Downtown and Neighborhood Commercial

Locations:

- Downtown along gridded and walkable streets
- At minor street corners on the edges of residential districts
- Intended to service pedestrian and bicyclist access from adjacent neighborhoods, with minimal vehicular travel

Character:

- One to two story structures
- Compact, walkable area of commercial, civic, and mixed-use buildings
- Minimal setbacks and street oriented storefronts
- Building entrances face the street to ensure convenient access for customers arriving by vehicle or on foot
- Minimal to no parking, relying on on-street parking or small five to six parking spaces behind or on the side of the structure
- Includes outdoor seating and landscaping, and blends into the existing architectural design features of the neighborhood and residential structures



Neighborhood bakery and coffee shop
Source: Hopscotch Bakery



Newer-style suburban restaurants and businesses, in Midlothian, Texas
Source: GoogleEarth Imagery

Regional Commercial and Strip Centers

Location:

- Along major arterial thoroughfares
- At major intersections serviced by regional corridors
- Highly visible to pass-through and regional traffic
- Buffered from adjacent residential uses

Character:

- Large setbacks from the major adjacent thoroughfare
- Large parking lots and additional out-lot businesses fronting the main structures
- One to two-story structures designed in a linear or clustered layout
- Serviced typically by regional and national businesses and companies
- Includes large loading docks and semi-truck traffic capacity in the rear



Traditional suburban style restaurants and businesses
Source: Dobbins Aerial Photography



Traditional commercial-retail shopping center strip
Source: CRC Realty

Objective 1.1: Utilize a character-based decision framework when considering future land-uses, development, redevelopment, and transportation networks.

Strategy 1.1.1: Utilize the following character classifications as the future framework to guide development in Port Lavaca.

Community character is a collection of physical and experiential features of a community that define what it looks like and how it feels to be there. Character areas can be defined by their identifying physical features, their potential to develop a unique identity, and the need for special consideration of existing development patterns or issues. A character-based approach to community planning looks beyond basic land use categories (residential, commercial, industrial, public/institutional, etc.), as depicted in Map X, *Character Areas,* to consider the scale, placement, and design of buildings, as well as the planning of sites, neighborhoods, districts, and corridors.

The character-based classifications designated for Port Lavaca are:

- Waterfront District
- Downtown District
- Auto-Urban Commercial
- Neighborhood Conservation
- Rural Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Neighborhood Restoration
- Industry
- Business Park

This approach focuses on key variables such as development intensity, which includes the density and layout of residential areas, the scale and form of non residential buildings, and the balance between building coverage, pavement, open space, and natural features. Vehicle accommodation further shapes character through street design, access patterns, and parking placement, all of which influence the placement of buildings. Together, these elements guide how new development or redevelopment will shape the community's future image and identity.

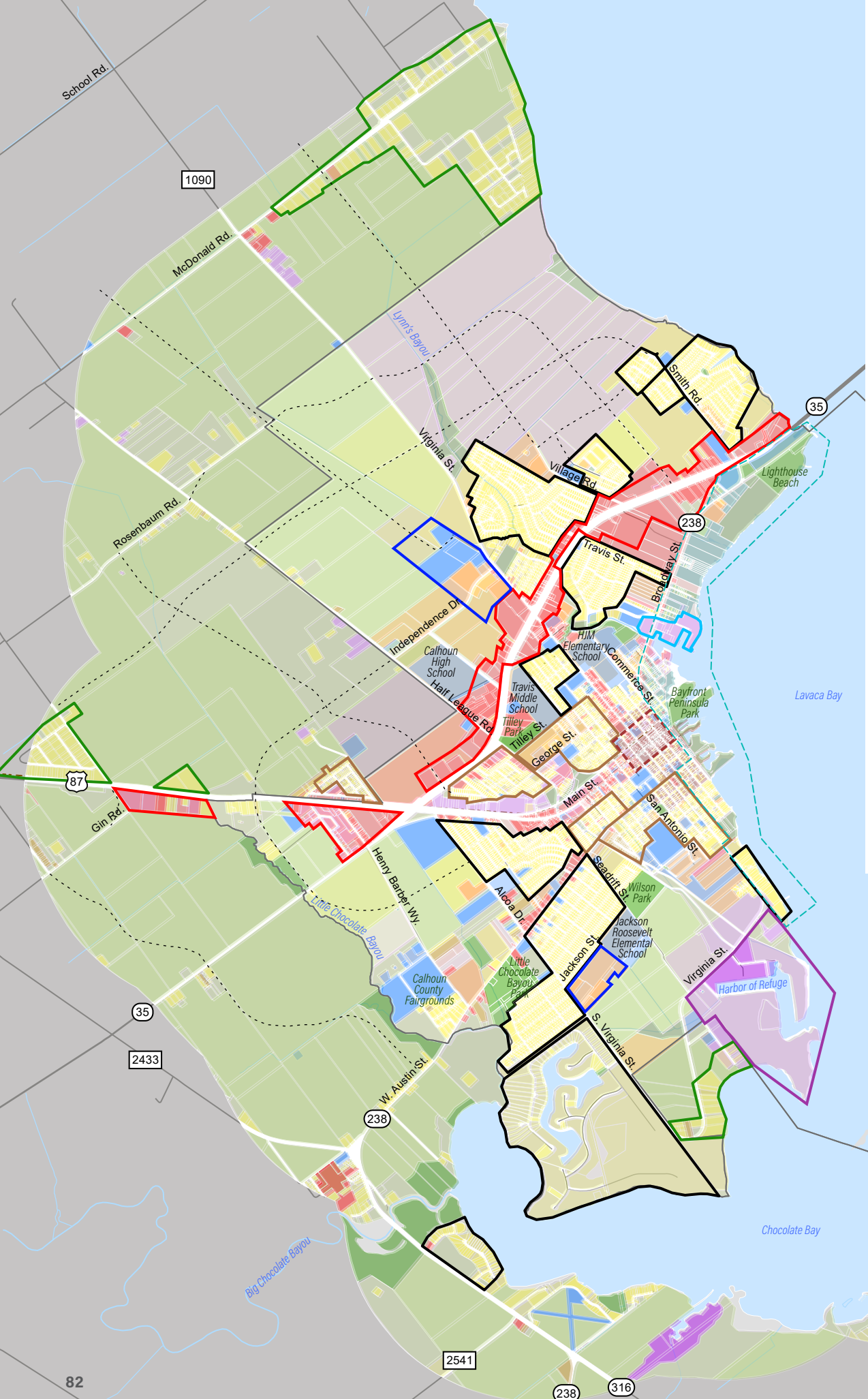
Port Lavaca has expressed a desire to become an economically balanced, highly attractive, family-oriented, and well-maintained coastal community made up of neighborhoods that offer a variety of high-quality housing options for households at different stages of life and income levels. This vision supports a mix of single family and multifamily homes that broaden housing choice while maintaining the character and quality expected by residents. To ensure this vision can become reality, the City must translate these aspirations into land-use policies and development regulations that guide the future of Port Lavaca's growth. A community character analysis was conducted to evaluate existing development within the Planning Area and to document the land use patterns and design elements that define the character of individual developments and the community as a whole. This approach provides the foundation for establishing standards that will help achieve the City's desired character.



Faye Bauer Sterling Park in Downtown Port Lavaca (2025)
Source: Baxter & Woodman

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIV

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
- Proposed Thoroughfare

Future Land Uses

- Rural / Undeveloped
- Rural Residential
- General Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Manufactured Home or Park
- Recreational Vehicle Park
- General Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Downtown Core
- Mixed Use
- Public / Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Business Park
- Industrial

Character Areas

- Waterfront District
- Downtown District
- Auto-Urban Commercial
- Neighborhood Conservation
- Rural Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Neighborhood Restoration
- Industry
- Business Park

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June 2026

BAXTER & WOODMAN

MAP X: CHARACTER AREAS

CHARACTER-BASED CLASSIFICATIONS:

Waterfront District

Location:

- The Port Lavaca coast line from Lighthouse Beach Park to South Commerce Street

Character:

- Facing waterfront with activities that utilize the waterfront
- Properties in flood plain are raised so that the main structure does not flood

Applicable Land Uses:

- Mixed-Use
- Parks / Open Space
- Business Park
- General Residential
- Multi-Family Residential (Urban)

Waterfront District



Corpus Christi North Padre Island waterfront
Source: Visit CC

Downtown District

Location:

- Within City Center and historic Downtown core

Character:

- Urban hub featuring high concentration of commercial activity
- Higher walkability and less auto-oriented than Auto-Urban
- Smaller building setbacks and lot sizes
- Mix of urban residential (including loft apartments), office space , and commercial

Applicable Land Use:

- Central Business District
- Mixed-Use
- Urban Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Multi-Family Residential (Urban)

Downtown District



Downtown Galveston
Source: Texas Highways

Auto-Urban Commercial

Location:

- In the Suburbs or edge of City

Character:

- Two to three-story apartment complexes with stairwells, external hallways, elevators, surface parking (18 to 30 DU/acre)
- Collection of manufactured homes in a park that share amenities including shared driveways and roads
- Strip center retail, big box stores, and chain retail and entertainment
- Larger parking lots than Urban in front of buildings
- Less emphasis on a walkable environment

Applicable Land Use:

- Multi-Family Residential
- General Commercial
- Manufactured Home Park and RV Park

Auto-Urban Commercial



Red River Street auto-urban commercial property in Victoria, Texas
Source: Belinda Realty

Neighborhood Conservation

Location:

- Edge and middle of the City

Character:

- Established neighborhoods that are largely built out and stable where no significant change in development type or pattern is expected
- Housing type is dependent on the existing neighborhood standard style
- Larger lot sizes than urban areas (typically 1/4 to 1/2 acre parcels)

Applicable Land Use:

- General Residential
- Neighborhood Commercial

Neighborhood Conservation



Suburban neighborhoods in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Rural Residential

Locations:

- Adjacent to forested, natural, and agriculture areas

Character:

- Large acre farming
- Horse stables or riding ranches
- Small storehouses and equipment sheds
- Low-density residential or clustered rural neighborhoods
- Vacant or natural areas that not have been improved, including environmentally sensitive lands such as wetlands, flood prone areas, or steep slopes where development may be limited

Applicable Land Use:

- Rural / Undeveloped
- Rural Residential- large lot
- General Residential

Rural and Rural Residential



Home in Redfish Retreat with large front setback.
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Multi-Family Residential

Location:

- In urban core or suburban areas along Arterial Corridors

Character:

- Includes duplexes, tri-plexes, condominiums, townhomes, rowhomes, walk-ups, and single-family attached structure
- Lot size and set backs dependent on what part of town it is located in

Applicable Land Use:

- Mult-Family Residential
- Public / Institutional (Senior Living, Assisted Living)
- Mixed-use
- Downtown Core (CBD)

Multi-family Residential



Colorful multi-family apartment homes with shared amenities
Source: Residence at West Beach

Neighborhood Restoration

Character:

- Neighborhoods with homes that range from needing cosmetic improvements to being completely replaced
- Number of structures with code violations and/or are unsafe
- Contain manufactured homes on single lots

Neighborhood Restoration



Manufactured housing near Downtown Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Industry

Location:

- Edge of town away from non-compatible land uses including general residential and general commercial

Character:

- Large lot sizes with buffers and screening from non-industrial land uses
- Reserved for industrial manufacturing activities including producing, processing, storing, and distributing goods. Examples of these businesses are chemical processing and power plants.

Applicable Land Use:

- Industrial

Industry



Calhourn Port Authority ports
Source: Caller Times

Business Park

Location:

- Edge of town or suburban areas

Character:

- Large campus of buildings with buffers and screening from non-business park land uses

Applicable Land Use:

- Business Park (formerly Light Industrial)

Business Park



Commerce Center business park in Sugar Land, Texas
Source: RE Journals



Seagull on post in Lavaca Bay
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Objective 1.2: Utilize the Future Land Use Plan to guide the type and location of future development in Port Lavaca.

OVERVIEW OF FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES IN PORT LAVACA

Land use designations are designations that describe how land is intended to be used and the physical relationships that define an area's character, including the intensity of development and the arrangement of buildings, streets, open spaces, and landscapes. These physical patterns influence how people interact with their surroundings and shape opportunities for social and economic activity. Differences in development form (such as building scale, street layout, and the presence of open space) create distinct community character types that support different lifestyles and development expectations.

Historically, rural, suburban, and urban areas developed with different functions and physical forms. Rural areas were characterized by low density settlement and agricultural production; urban areas with concentrated commerce, employment, and higher density housing; and suburban areas emerged as lower density residential districts connected to cities by transportation networks. Each of these areas developed a distinct physical character that influenced how residents lived, worked, and moved. In contemporary communities, these distinctions have become less rigid. Commercial and employment uses have expanded into suburban areas, and mixed use development has become more common across all contexts. As a result, character classifications now reflect a spectrum of development patterns rather than strictly separated zones.

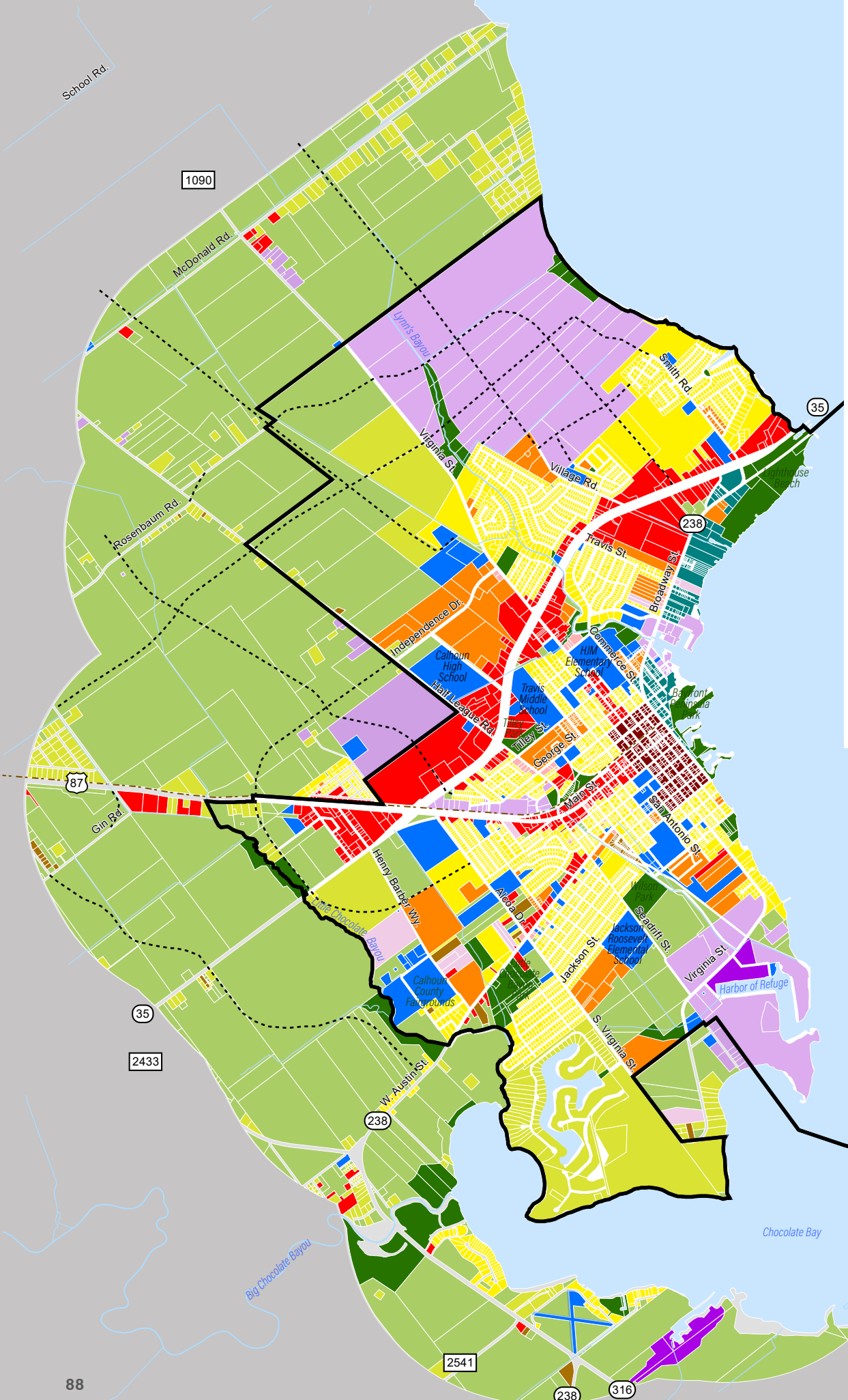
For the purposes of this plan, Port Lavaca uses a set of land use designations to guide growth and redevelopment. These designations reflect both community character types and functional land uses. As shown in Map X, *Future Land Use Plan*, land uses include, Recreational Vehicle Park, Manufactured Home or Park, Rural Residential, Mixed Use, Rural/Undeveloped, Multi-Family Residential, General Residential, Parks and Open Space, Public/Institutional, Business Park, Industrial, Neighborhood Commercial, Downtown Core, and General Commercial. Together, these categories help describe the future land uses that are desired in Port Lavaca and provide a framework for shaping future development in a way that aligns with the community's goals and identity.

Strategy 1.2.1: Utilize the following Land Use classifications and Future Land Use Plan Map to guide development in Port Lavaca.

As depicted in Map X, *Future Land Use Plan*, Port Lavaca should plan for and align future development decisions based on the future plans as depicted. Based on public engagement, previous planning efforts, anticipated developments, existing property owners, and current development trends, the proposed map depicts the likely and intended land uses of parcels in Port Lavaca and the ETJ. Note that the Future Land Use Plan is in alignment with the Character Classifications laid out in Objective 1.1 and the Growth Sequencing Plan laid out in Objective 1.3.

Key Future Land Use features and changes include:

- Overall, the vast majority of land in Port Lavaca's ETJ remains agricultural (rural/ undeveloped) and rural residential), as minimal to no largescale development is anticipated
- Lands between the existing residential subdivisions of Claret Crossing and Brookhollow Estates are designated as general residential to accommodate future residential development patterns
- Lands surrounding Independence Drive adjacent to existing apartment and condominium complexes are designated as Multi-Family Residential, further creating a cluster of multi-family housing nearby to the high school and commercial-retail lands
- Mixed-use land uses are designated along the coastline, within the proposed Waterfront District (see Objective 1.4) to accommodate a wide range of adaptable development options catering towards the eco-tourism industry and economy
- The historic Downtown, surrounding Main Street and Commerce Street, is designated as Downtown Core, where land uses and building typologies should align with the existing small-scale and small-town development patterns
- Land previously designated as heavy industry are now designated as Business Park, such as along Half League Road, Virginia Street, Lynn's Bayou harbor area, and the Formosa lands north of Smith Road
- Future General Commercial land designations remain along primary corridors including Main Street, West Austin Street, and TX-35



CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIV

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

LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- U.S. and State Highways
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads

Future Land Use

- Rural / Undeveloped
- Rural Residential
- General Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Manufactured Home or Park
- Recreational Vehicle Park
- General Commercial
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Downtown Core
- Mixed Use
- Public / Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Business Park
- Industrial
- Proposed Local Thoroughfare

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August 2026

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MAP X: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

LAND USE CHANGES

Figure 1, *Future Land Use in City Limits and ETJ*, and Figure 2, *Percentage Change between Existing and Future Land Uses*, provide a numerical depiction of the Future Land Use Plan Map and the by-acre adjustments and impacts of the new land use designations. Overall, key changes include the integration of many Neighborhood Commercial uses into the Central Business District designation, the addition of a Mixed Use designation, the integration of Light Industrial into a Business Park designation, a decrease in acres under Manufactured Homes and Recreational Vehicle designations, and an increase in the General Residential, General Commercial, and Multi-Family Residential designations.

Figure 1, Future Land Use in City Limits and ETJ

Future 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 (%)
Rural / Undeveloped	1,257.41	206	5,650.40	338	6,907.81	10.79	55.91
Rural Residential	595.96	93.00	428.72	320	1,024.68	1.60	8.29
General Residential	1,138.05	3,360.00	72.64	188	1,210.69	1.89	9.80
Multi-Family Residential	244.74	180	0.34	1	245.08	0.38	1.98
Manufactured Home Park	21.56	47	13.38	18	34.94	0.05	0.28
Recreational Vehicle Park	25.57	10	0	0	25.57	0.04	0.21
General Commercial	459.35	409	51.7	36	511.05	0.80	4.14
Neighborhood Commercial	14.66	29	0.00	0	14.66	0.02	0.12
Downtown Core	67.68	285	0.00	0	67.68	0.11	0.55
Mixed Use	105.24	181.00	0.00	0	105.24	0.16	0.85
Public / Institutional	436.13	104	25.07	6	461.20	0.72	3.73
Parks and Open Space	263.67	65	163.58	10	427.25	0.67	3.46
Business Park	1,077.08	70	171.67	25	1,248.75	1.95	10.11
Industrial	27.22	2	42.46	5	69.68	0.11	0.56
TOTAL	**5,734.32**		**6,619.96**		**12,354.28**	**19.30**	**100.00**

Figure 2, Percentage Change between Existing and Future Land Uses

Future Land Use	Existing (Acres)	Future (Acres)	% of Planning Area (Existing)	% of Planning Area (Future)	Percent Change
Rural / Undeveloped	9022.8	6,907.81	77.7%	55.9%	-21.8%
Rural Residential	336.02	1024.68	2.9%	8.3%	5.4%
General Residential	176.1	1210.69	1.5%	9.8%	8.3%
Multi-Family Residential	0	245.08	0.0%	1.0%	1.9%
Manufactured Home Park	35.21	34.937	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%
Recreational Vehicle Park	24.9	25.57	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
General Commercial	164.1	511.05	1.4%	4.1%	2.7%
Neighborhood Commercial	0	14.66	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Downtown Core	68.8	67.68	0.6%	0.5%	0.0%
Mixed Use	320.9	105.24	2.8%	0.9%	-1.9%
Public / Institutional	1256.1	461.2	10.8%	3.7%	-7.1%
Parks and Open Space	50.2	427.25	0.4%	3.5%	3.0%
Business Park	108.6	1248.75	0.9%	10.1%	9.2%
Industrial	45.8	69.68	0.4%	0.6%	0.2%

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Rural / Undeveloped Lands

Agricultural and undeveloped lands encompass large tracts of open space, agricultural fields, and natural landscapes on the edge of the urban area

Character:

- 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

Rural Residential

Locations:

- Surrounded by agricultural or natural lands

Character:

- One to two-story structures
- 0.3 to 4 acre lots
- 40+ feet setbacks
- Often includes open ditch drainage



Agricultural property in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

General Residential Designations

Single Family Detached

Locations:

- In all Urban, Suburban, and Rural character areas

Character:

- One to two-story structures
- 0.2 to 4 acre lots
- Unique housing styles and architecture
- Attached garage
- 20-40 feet Setback from the ROW



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

Single Family Attached

Locations:

- Predominantly along Smith Road
- Affordable housing development on Clois Green Circle
- Urban townhomes located on the side of Commerce Street and Guadalupe Street

Character:

- Duplexes, Townhomes, Quadplexes
- Shares at least one exterior wall with neighboring unit
- 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
- Proximity to mixed-use amenities to ensure walkability



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



Single-family attached townhomes in Galveston utilizing warm tones.
Source: Realtor.com

Multi-Family Residential

Location:

- Apartments are near Virginia Street and Independence Drive, and Village Drive
- Senior living facilities are on Trinity Shores Drive

Character:

- Four or more housing units arranged across multiple stories
- Access via shared hallway, elevator, or staircase
- Typically include shared laundry and recreational amenities
- Depending on character area: low-rise (1-2 stories), mid-rise (3-4 stories), or high-rise (5 stories or higher)
- Proximity to land uses and amenities for a specific clientele (for example, student housing and senior living)



Multi unit complex in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Manufactured Home or Park

Location:

- Along Alcoa Drive and Tilley Street

Character:

- Community of manufactured homes
- Factory built construction
- Must meet federal safety and construction standards
- Permanent or semi-permanent installation
- Small lot size
- Access to utilities
- Prescence of shared amenties including driveways, roads, or playgrounds



Modern Manufacutred Home in Manufactured Home Park with front landscaping in Euless, Texas

Recreational Vehicle (RV) Parks

Location:

- Parks located along all Secondary/Minor Arterial Roadways and Major Collectors

Character:

- Temporary or semi-permanent living
- Parking surface area that can accommodate various sizes of RVs
- Presence of recreational amenities (including pools, playgrounds, and trails), restrooms, and open spaces
- Buffered with fencing, landscaping, and planting strips from adjacent land uses



RV Park in Canton, Texas with tree buffers
Source: Mill Creek Ranch Resort



Coastal RV park landscaped with flowering bushes and buffered with palm trees
Source: Visit Galveston

General Commercial

Location:

- Along SH 35 and Commerce Street

Character:

- Large, concentrated areas of commercial activity that serve a broad regional market
- Includes big-box retail, lodging, restaurants, and entertainment venues
- Requires coordinated planning for land uses, parking layout, internal traffic circulation, and design of buffers/ transitions and multimodal connections



White Oak Crossing Shopping Center in Port Lavaca
Source: White Oak Development

Neighborhood Commercial

Location:

- Along minor collector streets within walking distance to major residential intersections and zones

Character:

- Small-scale one to two-story free-standing structures
- Includes every-day uses such as barbershops, salons, day-scare, offices, restaurants, and cafes
- Similar in scale to adjacent residential structures
- Minor off-street parking (four to eight spaces) and on-street parking
- Outdoor seating and awnings if applicable



Bier Hoause in Port Aransas, Texas
Source: Bier Hause Facebook

Downtown Core

Location:

- Within the historic core of Port Lavaca, roughly bounded by Commerce Street, MLK Drive, Benavides Street, and Wilson Street

Character:

- Small-scale single-family residential and multi-family structures
- Two to four-story mixed-use buildings
- Prioritizses on-street parking for commercial/retail uses, with some minor off-street parking
- Commercial structures largely oriented towards the street and up to/close to the right-of-way edge
- Outdoor dining, lounging, and gathering spaces
- Residential front porches, gable roofs, and historic small-town characteristics
- Includes some public-institutional uses, such as schools, parks, and civic buildings
- Emphasizes pedestrian-scale streetscape elements such as benches, decorative lighting, and sidewalks



Iguana Fest in downtown Port Lavaca
Source: Tour Texas

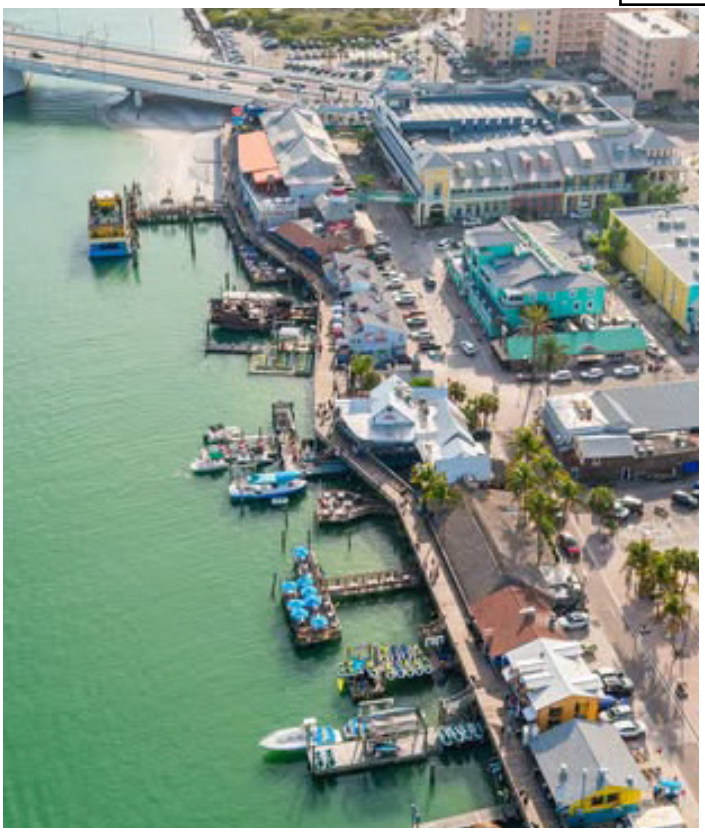
Mixed-Use

Location:

- Along the Waterfront (Lavaca Bay) adjacent to Broadway Street and Commerce Street

Character:

- Variable uses intended to serve recreational, residential, and economic development
- Should allow for unique and diverse economic activities and options, depending on the proposed development
- Includes mixed-use housing development, condominiums, townhomes, and other residential complexes
- Includes hotels, conference spaces, and public gathering sites oriented towards tourism
- Emphasizes shared-use path, boardwalk, and trail connectivity
- Includes commercial/retail sites with small to medium-sized parking lots, aimed at preserving costal views and access
- Aimed at preserving critical natural habitats and wetlands



Madeira Beach
Source: Visit St.Pete-Clearwater

Public / Institutional

Location:

- Varied community locations depending on specific site use and purpose

Character:

- Typically one to two-story structures
- Includes City and County facilities such as City Hall, EMS and Emergency service stations, jails and courthouses, schools, and medical facilities and hospital
- Typically includes off-street parking lots and requires adequate street connectivity to major and minor arterial thoroughfares



Pearland City Hall and Police Department entry
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Parks / Open Space

Location:

- Along the waterfront
- Within a 10-minute walk (1/2-mile) distance to residential areas
- Along critical drainage, forested, and floodplain corridors where development should be limited or out-right not allowed

Character:

- Natural spaces with minimal to no built or vertical structures
- Lands with programmed recreational activities such as sports fields/courts, playgrounds, camp grounds, beaches, boat ramps, fishing piers, amphitheaters, picnic grounds, and boardwalks and wetland zones



Lighthouse Beach in Port Lavaca
Source: KOA.com

Business Park

Location:

- Away from residential areas
- Along the waterfront
- In clustered zones along TX-35 and major arterial corridors
- Along designated truck routes

Character:

- One to two-story, medium- to large-scale sites
- Includes on-site parking, transportation storage sites, and loading bays
- Includes warehousing and distribution centers, fabrication sites, offices, aquaculture-related activities, and transportation hubs



Creekside Business Park in Tomball, Texas
Source: Newman Kellyy

Industrial

Location:

- Along Virginia Street near the Harbor of Refuge and north of TX-35

Character:

- One to two-story, medium- to large-scale sites
- Includes on-site parking, storage facilities, and lay-down / storage yards
- Includes maximum buffering and screening requirements from adjacent land uses
- Includes petro-chemical storage, processing, and distribution
- Includes other mineral resource, transportation, and processing uses



Asphalt processing palnt
Source: Cummings Electrical

Objective 1.3: Utilize the Growth Sequencing Plan to inform the City's level of effort and focus relating to land use decisions and new development planning.

Strategy 1.3.1: Utilize the Growth Sequencing Plan Map to guide where development and improvement priorities should be made and located.

The Growth Sequencing Plan, depicted in Map X, *Growth Sequencing Plan*, identifies short-term, medium-term, and long-term development and redevelopment focus areas within Port Lavaca and its ETJ. The parcels and location identified are likely targets for development and redevelopment based on existing land sales, city discussions, high-demand locations, existing construction trends, and existing utilities connections. Map X provides a rough framework of likely development, but is not set in stone, as the future is largely unpredictable and susceptible to outside economic influences, but should still help guide city planning efforts, focuses, and decisions.

In the short term, the primary emphasis should be on the Downtown district, the central core, and spot locations along major thoroughfares, with efforts concentrated on redevelopment and infill projects, supplemented by commercial and housing developments. As the central core of the City begins to be redeveloped with infill development and redevelopment, in the long-term, the City's focus should shift to outlying areas of the City and ETJ at current agricultural and undeveloped sites.

Projected growth is organized into four timeframes:

- **Ongoing Continued Growth Priority:** Future development is expected to remain concentrated along SH 35, Main Street, Downtown, and the Waterfront, with an emphasis on commercial and retail activity.
- **0–5 Years Growth Priority:** Near-term growth areas include commercial and general residential parcels primarily located along SH 35 and Broadway Street on the Waterfront District side.
- **5–15 Years Growth Priority:** Medium-term growth priorities include areas along Independence Drive and Half League Road, where multi-family housing and additional commercial developments are anticipated.
- **15+ Years Growth Priority:** Long-term growth areas consist of parcels adjacent to existing development. These areas are expected to become viable once infill development is largely completed. These parcels include general residential expanding North of Virginia Street, land at the intersection of Half League Road and Independence Road.

Long -Term Focus Areas

Port Lavaca's long range growth strategy should prioritize:

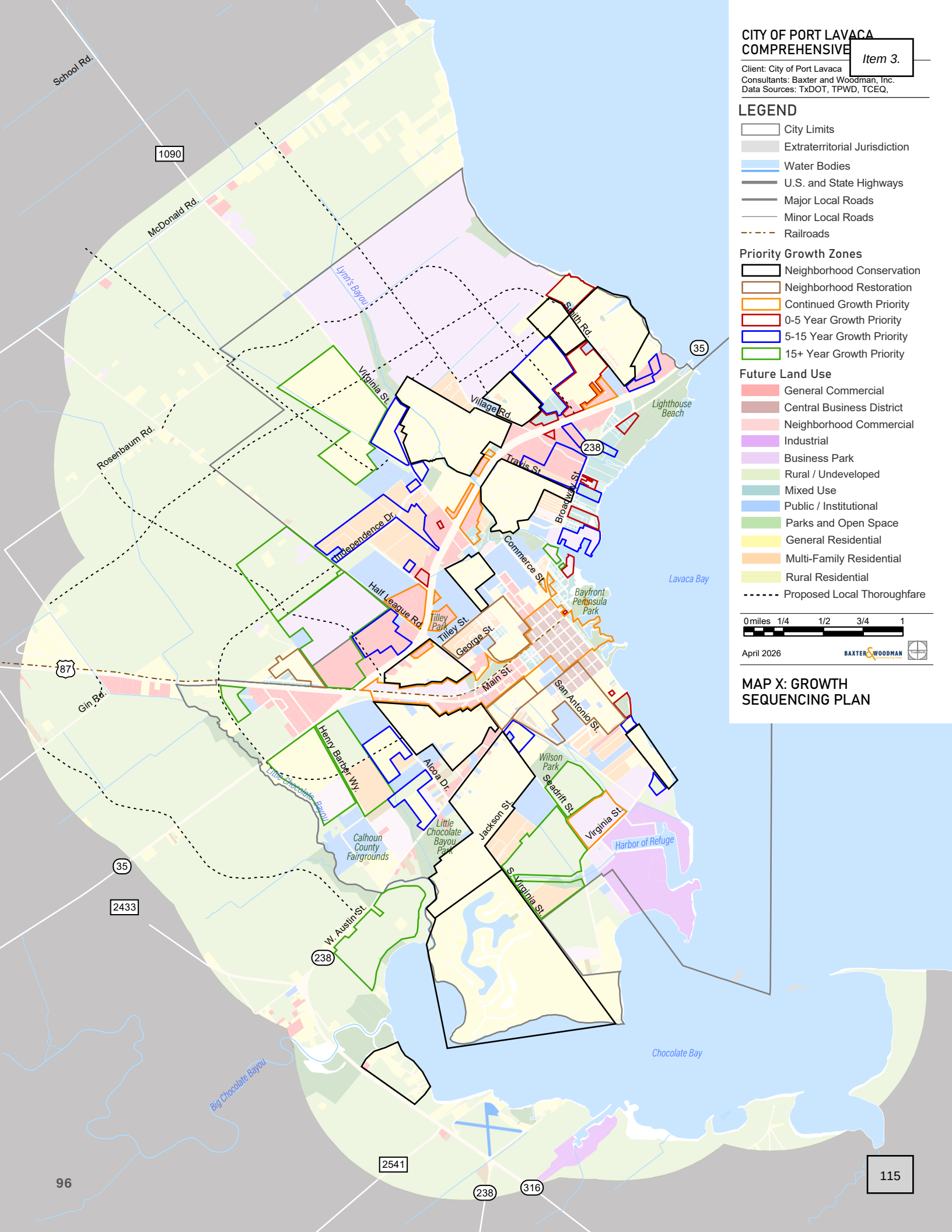
- Preserving agricultural land to maintain access to local produce
- Approving new greenfield development only where strategically important and where utility expansion or upgrades are justified
- Designating land for future industrial and business park development
- Supporting additional commercial growth along SH 35.
- Revitalizing the Downtown and Central Business District
- Continuing to improve and reinvest in existing neighborhoods before expanding outward
- Encouraging infill and redevelopment in both residential and commercial areas

Neighborhood Conservation and Neighborhood Restoration

Neighborhood conservation areas are well-established residential districts with a consistent character the community intends to preserve. These include newer and less historic neighborhoods adjacent to Jackson Roosevelt Elementary School, subdivisions north of SH 35, and within the Waterfront residential area just north of the Harbor of Refuge. Neighborhood restoration areas contain a higher concentration of homes needing cosmetic improvements or structures that do not currently meet Port Lavaca's regulatory standards. These areas are prioritized for reinvestment, rehabilitation, and code-compliant upgrades to strengthen long-term neighborhood stability.

Uncertainties

As described in *Population Projections* on page 39, in *Chapter One*, Port Lavaca is experiencing a slow stagnant decline in population; However, future employment opportunities in industry or regional economic shifts could significantly alter growth patterns for the City.



CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE

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

LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- U.S. and State Highways
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads

Priority Growth Zones

- Neighborhood Conservation
- Neighborhood Restoration
- Continued Growth Priority
- 0-5 Year Growth Priority
- 5-15 Year Growth Priority
- 15+ Year Growth Priority

Future Land Use

- General Commercial
- Central Business District
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Industrial
- Business Park
- Rural / Undeveloped
- Mixed Use
- Public / Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- General Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Rural Residential
- Proposed Local Thoroughfare

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April 2026

BAXTER & WOODMAN

MAP X: GROWTH SEQUENCING PLAN

Objective 1.4: Establish a Waterfront District.

Lavaca Bay is the major prominent and most significant landmark and asset of Port Lavaca. The waterfront should be a pilar of economic activity and recreational possibilities. The waterfront is currently home to the historic Downtown core, Bayfront Peninsula Park, Light House Beach, residential developments, fishing and aquacultural operations, and multiple boat slips, wetlands, and boardwalks. Although the activity along the waterfront is currently active, much of the land along the waterfront is undeveloped, underutilized, or contains former commercial and industrial sites that sit abandoned / unused. As identified through public engagement, existing conditions analysis, and discussions with city leaders, the waterfront should be the primary focus of investment and development in Port Lavaca.

The series of strategies laid out under this objective aim to catalyze growth along the waterfront, address current infrastructure and visual deficits, enhance existing recreational offerings, establish regulations to encourage redevelopment, and address the environmental and flood protective nature of the coastal ecosystem. Other recommendations relating to the Port Lavaca's waterfront and coastline may also be found in Goal 3.0, *Parks, Trails, and Open Space*, and Goal 7.0, *Resilience*.

THE WATERFRONT DISTRICT VISION

Port Lavaca's waterfront is a vibrant corridor of mixed-use development, wetlands, economic activity, and recreational possibilities. The waterfront is the economic heart of Port Lavaca, which mixes new development with historic structures. The waterfront is the recreational and eco-tourism heart of Port Lavaca, providing locals and visitors with boating opportunities, boardwalks and docks, sports and athletic facilities, parklands, environmental sight-seeing, community events and programming, and a small-town harbor sense of place.



Lighthouse Beach Boardwalk in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Strategy 1.4.1: Utilize and continually update the waterfront development framework set forth in Map X, *Waterfront District*.

Map X, Waterfront District, on pages 93 and 94, provides a visual framework for the following recommendations and infrastructure recommendations included throughout Objective 1.4. The map includes:

- The proposed District Boundary, which should be established as a separate Zoning designation
- Shared-use path (10-foot wide), trail, and boardwalk expansion plans, which help to create a direct continuous link between Downtown and Lighthouse Beach
- Multiple wetland preservation, enhancement, and establishments zones, along with new breakwater structures, for the purposes of environmental enhancement, shoreline stabilization, and flood protection
- New recreational amenities recommendations including establishing new parkland, new sports courts, beach access, and boat ramp improvements
- Expansion plans for new boat docks and anchoring sites
- The identification of land suitable for preservation, redevelopment, and development (undeveloped sites)
- Gathering space opportunities including enhanced pavilions, a new amphitheater space, and playground



Bradenton, Florida, docks and piers with commercial and residential development
Source: Gina Morgando

Strategy 1.4.2: Create and encourage design guidelines in the Waterfront District.

A regulatory framework document along with a design guide book / flip book of representative images should be produced by the City to show developers the desires character, form, and aesthetic the City decides the Waterfront District should take. Waterfront development may need design guidelines to balance access, views, and environmental protection. Keep in mind, in the State of Texas, municipalities are not allowed to dictate aesthetic designs and materials of construction, unless it is dictated by fire code, wind code, or flood protection requirements.

Key design considerations may include:

- Structural and utilities flood elevations above base level
- Paint and material colors
- Planting and landscaping species and layouts
- Wetland protection buffers
- Pavement types, designs, and features
- Public access routes and designations
- Boardwalk design and fixtures
- Lighting, signage, and wayfinding streetscape elements
- Public seating, benches, and gathering spaces
- Street drainage, culvert, detention basin, and rain garden aesthetics
- Parking lot placement away from the waters edge
- Design relationships between boardwalks, store fronts, residential access points, and walkways
- Roofing materials and types

Strategy 1.4.3: Encourage mixed-use development as designated in the Plan to allow people to live, work, shop, learn, and play in close proximity while minimizing conflicts between land uses.

Mixed-use development places housing, shops, services, and community amenities close together, creating walkable areas where daily needs are easily reached. When located in designated areas, this approach supports vibrant activity and reduces potential conflicts between different land uses. The Waterfront District should cater towards "destination-based" design, where once at the District a visitor can travel throughout the District with ease and have direct access to and between parklands and commercial zones. The mixed-use land use designation within the Waterfront District helps to provide future adaptability and open opportunities for new and innovative ideas that the city has not yet considered.



Granbury, Texas, has developed a 10 to 12-foot wide shared-use path following Business US-377 and their Brazos River waterfront connecting a public beach, their downtown, hotels, and the local conference center.
Source: Visit Granbury



Curpus Christi North Padre Island waterfront features boat ramps, docks, fishing piers, parkland, commercial property, and public gathering space pavilions
Source: Visit CC

Lavaca Bay

Beach & Pavilions

LIGHTHOUSE BEACH

RV Park & Campground

Splash Pad Playground

Proposed Playground Expansion

Alcoa Bird Tower

Holiday Inn Express & Suites

Quality Inn & Suites

Restaurant

Playground

YMCA Port Lavaca City Pool

Halfmoon Reef Lighthouse

Bauer Community Center

EL CAMINO REAL STREET

SMITH ROAD

BROADWAY STREET

Lighthouse Beach Apartments

Lavaca Bay RV Park

SAIL BOAT DRIVE

Best Western

Motel 6

Hotel/Motel

Executive Inn

Hampton Inn & Suites

TINEY BROWNING BOULEVARD

Walmart

Lavaca Bay Place

Lonestar RV Park

PRIVATE ROAD DRIVE

PARKER STREET

PARKVIEW DRIVE

BAYVIEW DRIVE

BROADWAY STREET

City Marina

Sanddollar RV Park

First Baptist Church

CALHOUN STREET

Lynn's Bayou

HARBOR

118

PROPOSED PARK
VIRGINIA STREET
BAYFRONT PENINSULA PARK
Proposed Marina #3
Picnic Pavilions
La Bella Playground & Splashpad
Nautical Landing Marina
Proposed Marina #2
Restrooms
Proposed Community Garden
Calhoun County Bayfront Veterans Memorial
Picnic Pavilions
Proposed Sports Courts
Proposed Amphiteater
Proposed Playground
Nautical Landing
Proposed Plaza
COMMERCE STREET
GUADALUPE STREET
LIVE OAK STREET
COLORADO STREET
MAIN STREET
VIRGINIA STREET
AUSTIN STREET
CENTER STREET
M.L.K JR DRIVE
ALICE WILKENS STREET
CHESTNUT STREET
SOUTH STREET
Alice O. Wilkins School & Sunshine Girls Club Markers
GEORGE ADAMS PARK
Port Lavaca Cemetery
Texas Dept. of Public Safety
Calhoun County Museum
Calhoun County Jail
Our Lady Of The Gulf
BENAVIDES STREET
SAN ANTONIO STREET
ANN STREET
LEONA STREET
JUANITA STREET
WILSON PARK
BAY STREET
RANDLE STREET
GEORGE STREET
MAHAN STREET
RAILROAD STREET
COMMERCE STREET
City Hall

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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

LEGEND

- Proposed Waterfront District

Land and Landscape

- Wetland Preservation
- Wetland Reestblishment / Improvement
- Landscaping Improvement
- Beach Establishment
- Aquaculture Opportunity
- Proposed Parkland

Development and Structures

- Proposed Recreation Element
- Park Buildings and Structures
- Development Opportunity Site
- Redevelopment Opportunity Site
- Historic Preservation Site
- Existing Spits/ Breakwaters
- Proposed Spits/ Breakwaters
- Proposed Habor Study

Transportation and Mobility

- Existing Boat Ramp
- Existing Boat Docks
- Proposed Boat Docks
- Existing Boardwalks
- Proposed Boardwalks
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- Proposed Shared-use Paths
- Proposed Bike Routes
- Proposed Parking Lot Edge Improvement
- Proposed Parking Lots
- Proposed Intersection Improvement

0 miles 1/4 1/2 3/4 1

April 2026

MAP X: WATERFRONT DISTRICT



West Harbor revitalization project in San Pedro, California, pictured with newly constructed harbor buildings, landscaping, shoreline stabilization, and public access walkways and boat docks
Source: CoStar News, Brannon Boswell



Kayak launch site signage at the Port O'Connor Paddling Trail
Source: San Antonio Bay Partnership



A wetland and sandbar costal restoration site in Port O'Connor, Texas
Source: Engineering With Nature







Surf City Crab fresh coastal seafood market in Topsail, North Carolina
Source: TripAdvisor; George H, Wandering963

Strategy 1.4.4: Enhance the waterfronts active and passive recreational offerings.

The Waterfront District should continue to provide recreational opportunities for visitors. Port Lavaca should focus on the continued development of boardwalks and trails to connect existing destinations and parklands. Key projects of note include:

- The expansion of the Bayfront Peninsula Park trails with a boardwalk and wetland reestablishment connecting to Fulton Street
- Connect Bayfront Peninsula Park trails to Main Street and Commerce Street
- Consider additional small beach sites (see Strategy 1.4.10)
- Consider adding sports courts, an additional playground, and an amphitheater space at Bayfront Peninsula Park
- Expand boat docks and boardwalks south of Bayfront Peninsula Park (see Strategy 1.4.8)
- Reconstruct and improve the existing two boat ramp slips at Bayfront Peninsula Park and Lighthouse Beach
- Consider additional seating, plantings, and educational signage at the Lighthouse Beach and Bayfront Peninsula Park pavilions
- Develop a series of kayak launch sites and promote a blueway trail system (see Strategy 3.1.10, under Goal 3.0, Parks, Trails, and Open Space)
- Consider a reoccurring farmers market and seafood market at Bayfront Peninsula Park (see Strategy 3.1.8, under Goal 3.0, Parks, Trails, and Open Space)
- Develop the Kitchen Site as new parkland (see Strategy 3.1.2, under Goal 3.0, Parks, Trails, and Open Space)
- Consider expanding the playground facilities at Lighthouse Beach (see Strategy 3.1.4, under Goal 3.0, Parks, Trails, and Open Space)
- Consider replacing the fall surfacing and adding additional elements to the Lighthouse Beach Splashpad (see Strategy 3.1.4, under Goal 3.0, Parks, Trails, and Open Space)
- Consider a number of shared fire pits and gathering spaces with grass-based 'party' games at the Lighthouse Beach RV Park (see Strategy 3.1.4, under Goal 3.0, Parks, Trails, and Open Space)
- Add a wildlife viewing station, informational signage, and a bird blind pavilion at the proposed expanded boardwalk and wetlands at Bayfront Peninsula Park (see Strategy 3.1.6)

Strategy 1.4.5: Create safe routes to and between destinations along the Waterfront, including parks and Downtown.

In these heavy pedestrian areas, it will be important for Port Lavaca to invest in safe connections for visitors to each land use. The Safe Routes program offers grants through the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to help improve areas that are on routes to schools and parks. The existing parks within the planned Waterfront District may also qualify for these grants.

Strategy 1.4.6: Improve the connection between hotels and the Waterfront.

Create comfortable, continuous pedestrian and bicycle links through eight to 10-foot wide shared-use paths and bicycle route designated roads. This connects hotel locations so they are no longer only isolated along major corridors but integrated within major destinations including Downtown, Lighthouse Beach, and Bayfront Park.

Strategy 1.4.7: Enhance the Waterfront's natural landscapes, wetlands, cost line, and planting areas.

Coastal ecosystems along a water's edgeline provides numerous benefits including eco-tourism and wildlife viewing opportunities, enhanced coastal aestetics and beauty, erosion control, and stormwater/storm surge mitigation. Port Lavaca should encourage the expansion and continued health monitoring of native wetland ecosystems along the City's coast line and low-lying tributaries. As depicted in Map X, Waterfront Plan, Port Lavaca should expand wetland ecosystems with re-establishment plantings and monitoring north of Bayfront Peninsula Park. In addition, wetland re-establslihment should be undertaken south of Nautical Landing Marina where multiple existing peninsulas exist, but have experienced major erosion and deterioration. Additional wetland zones, as depicted, should be protected as development occurs, such as between Lynn's Bayou and Light House beach and at the mouth of Little Chococlate Bayou and Chocolate Bayou. Future infrastructural efforts and development should not detract from, reduce, or harm the existing wetland and coastal grasses ecosystems currentenly in place. The goal is to balance environmental protection with public enjoyment.

Strategy 1.4.8: Expand the existing docks and boardwalks south of Bayfront Peninsula Park.

Create comfortable, continuous pedestrian and bicycle links through eight to 10-foot wide shared-use paths and bicycle route designated roads. This connects hotel locations so they are no longer isolated along major corridors and now are integrated within major destinations including Downtown, Lighthouse Beach, and Bayfront Park.

Strategy 1.4.9: Develop Surveys, Existing Conditions Analysis, and Master Plans for the existing harbors along the Waterfront.

Multiple harbors exist along Port Lavaca's waterfront that experienced their height of economic activity and harbor development between the 1950s and 1980s. Today, many of these harbors have been underutilized, abandoned, or contain empty sites. These harbors are key opportunities in Port Lavaca to spur economic development and eco-tourism. Surveys and Master Plans should be conducted on each of the harbors listed below, to determine the suitability and feasibility of waterfront redevelopment.

Potential unknowns and development determinations that should be decided, considered, and discovered include:

- Potential contaminants and risk of exposed pollutants
- Soil suitability for development
- Soil stability and composition
- Retaining wall, coastal erosion, and embankment integrity
- Species and existing vegetative challenges
- Water depths and accessibility

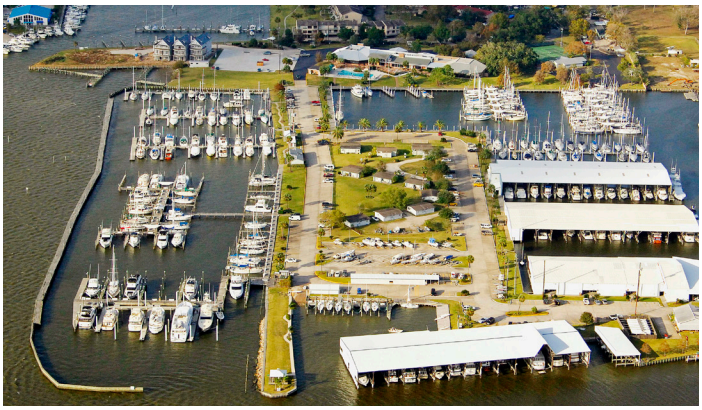
Harbors that Port Lavaca should conduct Master Plans and Feasibility Studies of are as follows:

- Nautical Landing Habor #2 (at 304 S. Commerce Street)
- South Commerce Street Habor site (at the Fisher Channel and Dock Company site, near 423 N. Commerce Street)
- Harbor of Refuge (at 202 N. Virginia Street)
- Lynn's Bayou Habor site (at 902 Broadway Street)
- Westmond Road Habor site (at 2615 N. Highway 35)

Strategy 1.4.10: Consider building additional beach facilities closer to Main Street, near or within Bayfront Peninsula Park.

As depicted in Map X, *Waterfront Plan*, consider utilizing existing low lying slope zones and protected inlets, which do not already have established wetland ecosystems, at Bayfront Peninsula Park and the proposed Kitchen Site park to develop sand beach zones.

These smaller sand zones can provide a beach area that is more manageable than a larger beach, such as at Lighthouse Beach, and expand water-oriented opportunities close to Downtown Port Lavaca. Established beaches should be protected from erosion and sediment redeposition with naturally occurring protective inlet lands and/or man-made spits/ rock outcroppings.



Lakewood Yacht Club in Seabrook, Texas, shows the commercial proximity to the waterfront
Source: Marinas.com



Commercial structures oriented along a boardwalk and harbor in Beaufort, North Carolina
Source: Diane Chamberlain



Existing boat docks and boardwalk at Bayfront Peninsula Park, proposed to be extended
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Objective 1.5: Encourage the redevelopment and revitalization of Downtown to strengthen its role as the cultural and economic heart of Port Lavaca.

The Downtown Plan, depicted in Map X, *Downtown Plan,* on the facing page, envisions a walkable, welcoming Main Street where pedestrians feel prioritized like drivers. At the heart of the project is a redesigned intersection at Commerce and Main Streets, upgraded to improve safety, enhance visibility, and fully meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. These improvements set the tone for a district that's easier to navigate and more enjoyable to spend time in.

Along Main Street, the plan introduces 10-foot shared-use paths (wide sidewalks both for pedestrian and cyclist use) on both sides, creating space for strolling, outdoor seating, and street-level activity. To make crossings safer and more intuitive, the design incorporates bulb-outs and pedestrian islands, reducing the distance people need to cross and slowing vehicle speeds at key points.



Marked parallel and angled parking, lighting, and sidewalks in Downtown Biloxi, Mississippi, on Howard Avenue
Source: Caroline Eubanks

Straegy 1.5.1: Continue to consider and implement a one-way pair street redesign and reorientation of Main Street and Railroad Street.

Continue to coordinate with TxDOT the redesign and reorientation of Main Street and Railroad Street into two one-way streets meeting at Commerce Street and Virginia Street. As depicted in Map X, *Downtown Plan*, Main Street will become a northward street while Railroad Street will become a southward Street. To accommodate the change in traffic circulation, a four-way stop or traffic light signal may be needed at Virginia Street and Railroad Street, while a left turn lane striping may be needed on Commerce Street (leading onto Railroad Street).

As depicted in the the proposed thoroughfare cross sections A and B, within Goal 2.0, *Transportation*, on page 109, Main Street can either include one travel lane north with parallel parking on one side and angled parking on one side, or include two travel lanes north with parallel parking on one side. Due to existing traffic volumes and the need to retain existing parking capacity, the one travel lane option may be preferred.

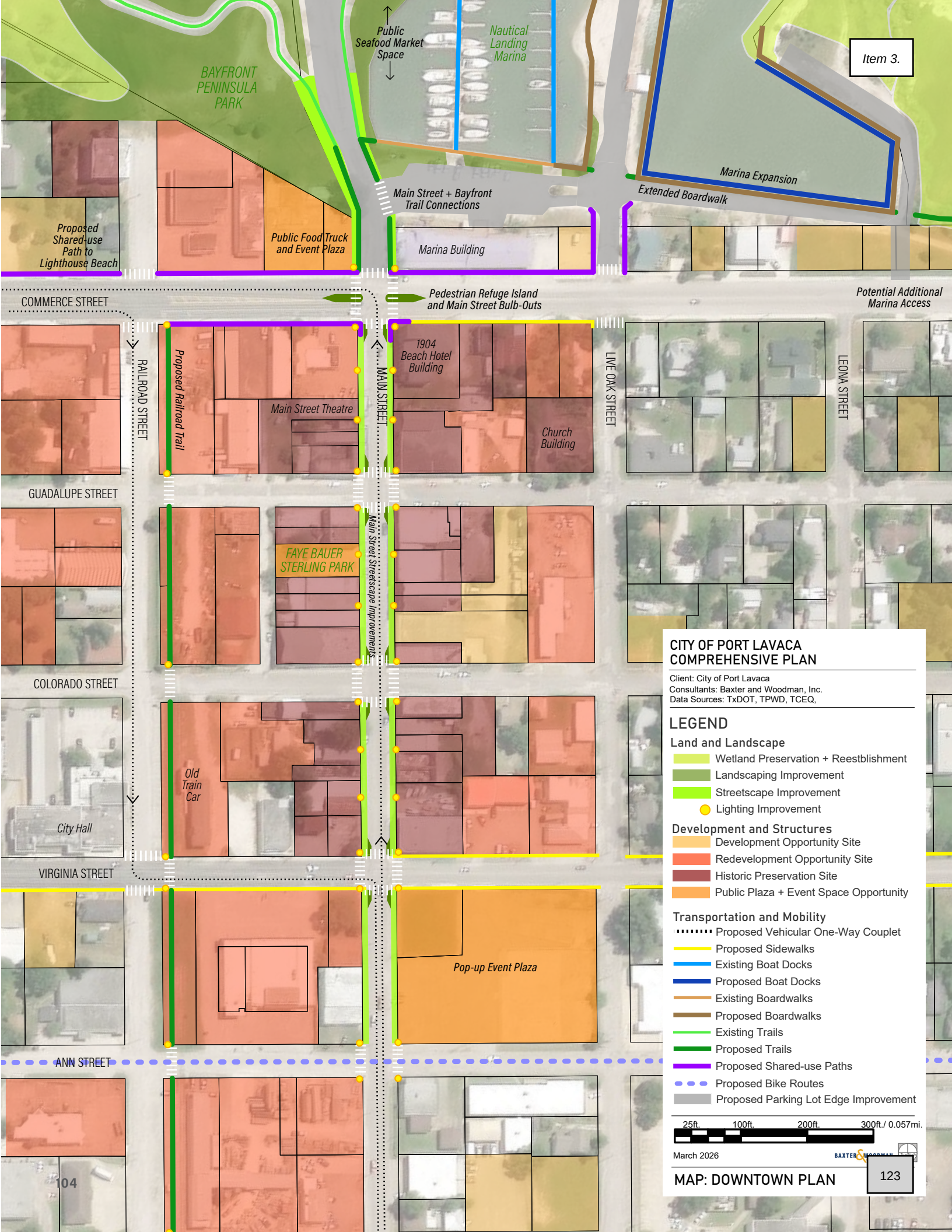
The Main Street redesign can also allow for an additional four to eight feet of pedestrian sidewalk space for streetscape elements, which can include street trees, benches, new lamp posts and banners, and curb-outs / neck-downs at intersections. The proposed blub-outs reduce pedestrian crossing distances and provide opportunities for planting beds and rain gardens which can mitigate flood impacts and reduce the overall capacity need of storm drains.



Farmers Market in Downtown Corpus Christi, Texas
Source: Visit Corpus Christi



Rockport, Texas, Heritage District at South Austin Street, bulb-outs and streetscape
Source: Visit Corpus Christi



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LEGEND

Land and Landscape

- Wetland Preservation + Reestblishment
- Landscaping Improvement
- Streetscape Improvement
- Lighting Improvement

Development and Structures

- Development Opportunity Site
- Redevelopment Opportunity Site
- Historic Preservation Site
- Public Plaza + Event Space Opportunity

Transportation and Mobility

- Proposed Vehicular One-Way Couplet
- Proposed Sidewalks
- Existing Boat Docks
- Proposed Boat Docks
- Existing Boardwalks
- Proposed Boardwalks
- Existing Trails
- Proposed Trails
- Proposed Shared-use Paths
- Proposed Bike Routes
- Proposed Parking Lot Edge Improvement

25ft. 100ft. 200ft. 300ft./ 0.057mi.

March 2026

BAXTER & WOODMAN

MAP: DOWNTOWN PLAN

Stategy 1.5.2: Implement a Main Street Streetscapes improvement program.

Redesigning the Downtown streetscape to make it safer, more attractive, and more walkable can help draw more activity and strengthen local businesses. Traffic flow will shift to two one-way lanes with parallel parking along the right side of the street or one one-way driving lane with two parallel or pull-in parking lanes (depicted in Figure 4, Downtown Streetscape Design) on both sides of Main Street (depicted in Typology A.2, on page 109, in Figure 5, Proposed Thoroughfare Cross Sections.)

Streetscape improvements such as wider sidewalks, upgraded lighting, street trees, pedestrian amenities, and stronger visual connections to the waterfront will create a more welcoming environment for residents and visitors.

Port Lavaca should implement a street tree planting program, which utilizes tree species with small root balls that can withstand limited soil conditions and limited to no water after established.

Wooden or metal planter boxes should be added along the street to reduce the visual presence of hardscape materials and improve the visual character of the street. In addition, planters can be added along the sidewalk edge along empty properties to retain a continuous and comfortable streetscape between existing buildings.

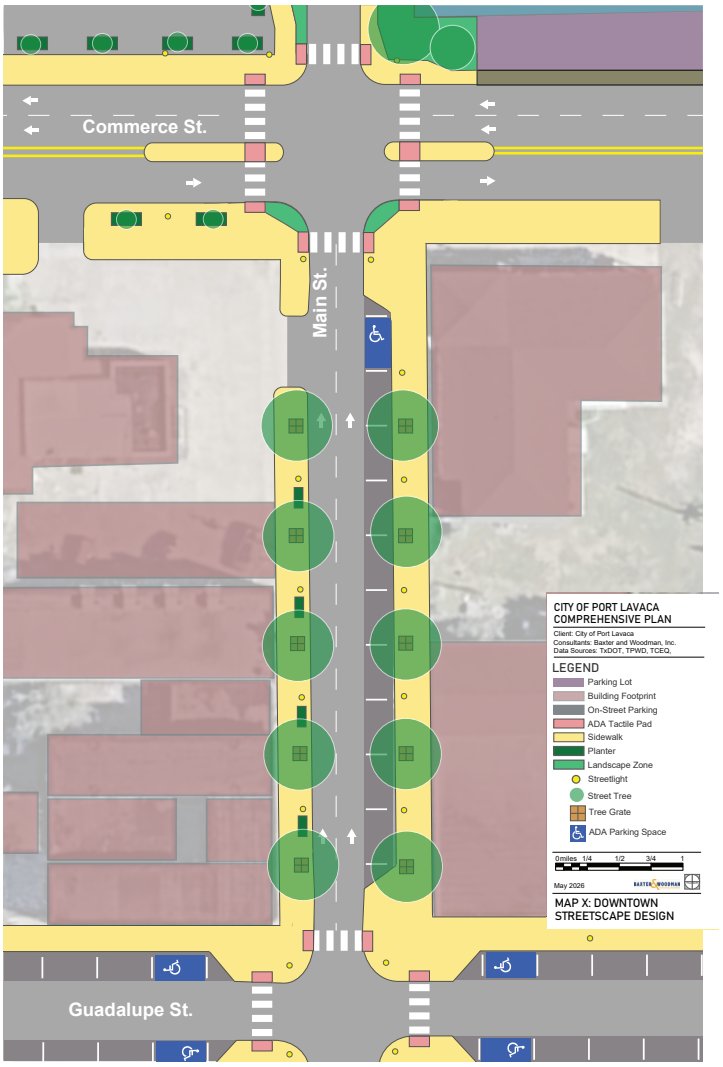
The widened sidewalks (from the existing eight to ten feet to the proposed 11 to 13 feet) will allow for outdoor seating and dining options for adjacent businesses.

New pedestrian-scale light poles, with banner attachments, can help to promote Port Lavaca's heritage, local events, and add additional historical-style to an area that has lost much of its historic structures and architectural details.

These features work together to create a cohesive character that reflects Port Lavaca’s identity and enhance the existing historic aspects of Main Street.

Together, these enhancements elevate safety, accessibility, and overall appeal, transforming Downtown into a lively, people-centered place that supports long term economic vitality.

Figure 4, Downtown Streetscape Design





Ennis, Texas, downtown streetscapes redesign before and after
Source: GoogleMaps Imagery

Stategy 1.5.3: Improve intersection safety and design in Downtown along Main Street.

In addition to the Streetscape Improvement proposed in Strategy 1.2.4, intersection reconstruction should take place along Main Street intersections from Virginia Street to Commerce Street. This may also include the improvements of Railroad Street intersections adjacent to the proposed rails-to-trails trail project.

Utilizing TxDOT and National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) standards, Port Lavaca should implement a number of traffic calming and safety measures to encourage pedestrian and bicycle activity within the Downtown to aid in the economic vitality of local businesses and parks. Recommended safety features include:

- Bulb-outs at Main Street intersections help to reduce crossing distances for pedestrians, increase pedestrian visibility, and provide opportunities for rain garden drainage mitigation techniques.
- Updated curb ramp reconstruction improvements will help in overall accessibility and comfort for visitors, encouraging a wider age and range of visitation for older residents or those with children or disabilities.
- High-visibility continental-striped crosswalks / piano key crosswalk striping will increase pedestrian visibility and encourage safer driving habits in the Downtown. This crosswalk striping style, versus a more common double line crosswalk increases the striping visibility for vehicles from a greater distance and is more visible in foggy or rainy conditions.
- The aforementioned pedestrian-scale lighting will aid in overall nighttime safety and encourage activity in the Downtown after dusk, enhancing nightlife and community interaction opportunities.
- Pedestrian crossing signage and bicycle route signage at intersections should be added to the pedestrian-scale lighting poles, reducing the number of signage posts (which can block sidewalk paths and become "visual clutter" if not reduced). In addition, "one-way " signage should be added to stop signs to further reduce the number of signage posts.



Bulbout with furnishings including plants, bench, and shade structure
Source: Mantega Bulletin

Stategy 1.5.4: Improve the functional and visual connection between Main Street and the Waterfront.

Strengthening the visual and functional connection between Main Street and the bay will help establish Downtown as a memorable and vibrant destination.

Currently there is a lack of visual clarity and consistency between Main Street and Bayfront Peninsula Park. The intersection of Main Street and Commerce Street and adjacent sidewalks should be reconstructed to encourage travel and visitation between both locations. Improvements should include:

- Add planter boxes and/or planting strips at 101 North Commerce Street to reduce the visual impact of the large parking lot and lack of historic structures lining the street.
- Add pedestrian refuge islands to Commerce Street for pedestrian crossings between Downtown and the waterfront.
- Add a 10-foot-wide shared use path to the northern entrance drive to Bayfront Peninsula Park and a standard five-foot-wide sidewalk to the south access drive, connecting to existing trails and boat dock access paths.
- Add street trees along the access drive to Bayfront Peninsula Park and improve landscaping at all four corners of the intersection; This will encourage the discovery of and travel to the park for visitors of Main Street.
- Consider options to move or consolidate existing electrical poles and wires at the entry of Bayfront Peninsula Park, and reduce the amount of pavement with new plantings, to reduce the visual presence of poles and pavement and preserve views of the docks and waterfront.

Straegy 1.5.5: Conduct utilities studies to determine the specific age, materials, and capacity of existing utilities and their ability to service an increase in Downtown development and redevelopment.

As summarized, in part, in Goal 5.0, *Utilities Infrastructure*, infrastructure across the City should adequately meet future demands of the city. Utilities should be in place before new development occurs or developers should contribute to updating utilities to service their development. Particularly within the Downtown along Main Street and surrounding streets, it is advantageous for Port Lavaca to preemptively ensure that water, sewer, and storm drainage can adequately meet the future needs of new redevelopment and in-fill development. Prioritizing utilities upgrades and services within the Downtown can further encourage developers to invest in projects within Downtown.

Strategy 1.5.6: Rehabilitate historic buildings, and replace older buildings with new ones that match the desired identity for Downtown.

Historic buildings contribute significantly to Downtown's character and should be preserved and restored whenever possible. When older structures are beyond repair, replacement buildings should reinforce the architectural style, scale, and walkable environment that define Downtown. This approach supports both heritage preservation and long-term reinvestment. Map X, *Downtown Plan*, identifies parcels containing existing historic structures which warrant protections considerations, parcels that have abandoned or heavily dilapidated structures that can be redeveloped, and parcels that are currently vacant that are prime for new development. As the Main Street corridor is further redeveloped, continue to consider what the community wants to maintain, preserve, redevelop, enhance, and showcase. In addition, continue to encourage structure assessments which can help further identify structural deficits and if buildings are worth saving, or if rehabilitation is financially unfeasible.

Texas Main Street Program (TMSP), under the Texas Historical Commission, works with communities to assess and acquire funds for historic building renovations and revitalizations, such as the buildings along Main Street. Across the state downtown projects have occurred where multiple building were saved from demolition due to TMSP funding and local support/ initiative.

Straegy 1.5.7: Continue to encourage new business development in Downtown, including opportunities for small vendors and market spaces.

Supporting a diverse mix of businesses can help activate Downtown throughout the day and evening. Market spaces for small vendors, pop up shops, and local entrepreneurs can add vibrancy, attract visitors, and create a more dynamic retail environment.

Straegy 1.5.8: Identify programming and elements needed to host communtiy events at Faye Bauer Sterling Park, on Main Street, and the empty block of 120 West Main Sreet.

As identified on Map X, *Downtown Plan*, multiple public plaza and pop-up event space opportunties existing along Main Street. Port Lavaca should assess and consider the needs of the sites to adequately host public events. Considerations may include emergency access, power and electrical generation capacity, electric connections, restroom accessibility, pavement safety, and lighting.

Strategy 1.5.9: Establish an area for a food truck court.

A designated food truck court can support local entrepreneurs, activate public spaces, and draw residents and visitors to key activity centers. Locating the court in the Waterfront District or Downtown can help reinforce these areas as vibrant destinations while providing a structured and visually appealing setting for mobile food vendors. A new food truck court on the northwest side of Commerce Street adds a lively gathering spot, offering a flexible space for vendors and community events. This area is already paved and framed with grass buffers, so maintaining this surface would be ideal for cost saving measures. It is recommended that the Food Truck Court have shade provided through umbrellas or a shade structure that can withstand blustery days. Seating for this area can be picnic table and benches, or more temporary seating like tables and chairs that can be stored away when the food truck court is closed.

Straegy 1.5.10: Work with TxDOT to identify alterative routes for traffic when events are held Downtown where Main Street may be temporarally closed to vehicular traffic.

To maintain the current option of temporarily closing Main Street for vehicles from Commerce Street to Virginia Street for local events, alterative traffic patterns will need to be decided. Potential temporary northern alignments could include the temporary two-way orientation of Railroad Street or Austin Street.



East Alley in Three Rivers, Michigan
Source: PatronCity



Food Truck court in Downtown Baston, TX with shade structure, picnic tables, lighting, and a live music stage.
Source: Chestnut Grove Footruck Court



Intersection with bulb-outs, crosswalks, and parallel parking, similar to the proposed Main Street redesign in Pe
Source

GOAL TWO: TRANSPORTATION

PORT LAVACA IS A COMMUNITY THAT PROVIDES A NETWORK OF SAFE, CONNECTED, AND WELL MAINTAINED ATTRACTIVE TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT FACILITATES EFFICIENT VEHICULAR, ACTIVE, AND RECREATIONAL TRANSPORTATION.

OVERVIEW

Transportation Planning is a collaborative process, between the public, the city, and local entities, that defines future policies, goals, investments, and spatial planning to shape the future of the transportation facilities network. The provided transportation systems influence where people live, where and how often people travel for household trips, support decisions about where businesses are located, provide ways to travel to work, facilitate the movement of goods and services, and ensure that emergency responders can reach those in need. Transportation planning requires an understanding of the purposes behind people's travel choices and how these patterns affect community connectivity and overall city resilience, which is a city's ability to adapt, withstand disruptions, and continue functioning effectively over time. The Comprehensive Plan's Transportation element and Thoroughfare Plan and Active Transportation Plan provide the framework to guide policy-based decisions regarding infrastructure objectives and associated capital investments into transportation-related improvements to ensure the community achieves its vision for a safe, efficient, and well-connected transportation system.



On Mobility

The Relationship Between Transportation and Land Use

Because transportation and land use are tightly interconnected, new or upgraded infrastructure can stimulate economic activity, guide where housing and businesses locate, and change how people choose to move through a community. At the same time, land-use decisions generate travel demand and determine where transportation investments are most needed. In this plan, transportation modeling is used to analyze current traffic patterns and forecast future needs based on expected development, reinforcing the idea that mobility systems and urban form evolve together.

Expanding the range of transportation infrastructure types within a community strengthens the idea of freedom of choice. When residents can select from a variety of homes that match their lifestyle and mobility preferences, people gain greater control over how they live and how they travel. Some people may choose to live near trails and within walking distance of daily needs, while others may prefer quieter areas that rely more on personal vehicles. Providing this range of options supports a more inclusive and adaptable community.

Virginia Street in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Guiding Principles of Transportation (TP)

TP Principle 1.- Mode Choice: Transportation for All (Complete Streets)

Complete streets use a multimodal approach that is designed with safety in mind for everyone using the streets including pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. The strategies used in complete streets also consider seniors, people using mobility devices, and users who do not own a car and need access to goods and services. There is no one size fits all for a complete street, as a "complete street" has a different meaning for each community. The physical constraints of the right-of-way will also heavily influence the final design of the street. Thus, each complete street project will look a little different from each other as they are designed with different factors and needs in mind.

In the context of Port Lavaca, a complete street could include:

- Sidewalks
- Bicycle lanes, either separated by a physical barrier (protected) or painted on the road (unprotected)
- Shared-use paths
- Curb extensions and median islands to shorten the time a pedestrian is in the road.
- High-visibility raised crosswalks that alert the driver to slow down
- Street trees that act as both a buffer between cars and non-car users as well as shade, beauty, and air quality improvements.
- Parallel parking spaces can act as an additional buffer between sidewalks and bike paths

TP Principle 1.- Access.

Effective access management is supported by providing multiple entry points for commercial properties and creating local level, slow speed roadways that connect schools and parks to surrounding residential areas.

TP Principle 2.- Connectivity.

Great connectivity ensures that destinations and high-demand areas are connected by multiple active transportation options, such as through streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, or multi-use paths; as well as encouraging developers to add trails and pathways along adjacent drainage corridors and green spaces.

TP Principle 3.- Safety.

Safe street design includes high-visibility crosswalks, appropriate lighting, ADA-compliant ramps, well-timed light signals, clear sightlines for turning vehicles. These design features reduce conflict points, increase user awareness, and ensure that all mode users can safely travel throughout the community.

TP Principle 4.- Efficiency.

Efficiency means enabling people to move quickly and reliably throughout their community using a variety of safe and convenient travel options. A well connected network provides multiple route options that disperse vehicle traffic away from high demand corridors while also offering continuous sidewalks, protected bike lanes, and multi use paths that allow people to travel efficiently without a car. Local, slow speed parallel routes further support this system by giving residents practical alternatives during peak travel times and reducing pressure on major arterials.

TP Principle 5.- Integrated Planning.

A balanced transportation system should be shaped through coordinated land use decisions, economic development, environmental conservation, and transportation investments. Community input, best case scenario modeling, and context sensitive street design should guide how each area functions. For example, downtown streets should support slower, people oriented activity, while state routes should emphasize efficiency, speed, clarity, and through traffic. All new development and redevelopment should incorporate appropriate transportation choices from the start.

ABOUT THOROUGHFARE DEVELOPMENT

The critical anatomical elements for building a thoroughfare network include key features that should be considered for each proposed roadway type (major thoroughfare, arterial, collector, local roadway, etc.):

- Sidewalks- pathways for people to safely walk alongside a thoroughfare.
- Crosswalks- designated pedestrian crossing areas where people can safely cross the street in a high visibility area. These are typically found at intersections of midblock crossings, and can be emphasized by signage and flashing beacons, or raised above grade to further increase their visibility.
- Street trees- Street trees are planted within the right-of-way and line the thoroughfare. These trees offer shade, improve street appearance, and calm traffic by narrowing the view of the road. Trees also provide environmental benefits including reducing the effects of urban heat islands, managing stormwater, and improving air quality by filtering out pollutants.
- Streetscape elements include wayfinding signage, traffic lights or stoplights, benches, street lighting, public art, awnings, and overhead utilities such as power and telecommunication lines.
- Drainage- curb and gutter or open ditch move water off the roadway and either into the sewer network or into open ditches.

Thoroughfare Issues and Challenges

- Narrow Rights-of-Way (ROW)
- Large signalized intersections often owned and operated by TxDOT (outside of the city's full jurisdiction)
- Need for high capacity open ditch drainage in some locations limits the available right of way for widened/ additional sidewalk and bicycle hardscape pavements
- Roadway quality due to weathering and maintenance such as faded roadway markings and debris
- Limited lighting availability along all roadways
- Limited local and collector level thoroughfares that bypass/avoid major regional thoroughfares and intersections
- Limited street trees, planting locations,
- Limited sidewalk availability in the City
- Limited bike routes and trails
- Stormwater drainage is insufficient for extreme rain events
- Lack of safe north to south connections across SH 35, especially for people and bicycles
- Railroads adjacent to thoroughfares and existing crossing locations limit the efficiency and connectivity potential of future roadway alignments

Corridor Appearance

The community's major corridors play an important role in shaping the first impression of Port Lavaca. Their design, streetscape enhancements, and overall visual character help define how residents and visitors experience the city. The appearance of both the roadway and the character of the properties along the corridor are essential to creating an attractive, welcoming environment and reinforcing a strong sense of place.

Traffic Management

Effective traffic management requires maintaining the efficient movement of vehicles while ensuring that roadways function safely and predictably and in accordance to their Level of Service (LOS) standards. Preserving the traffic carrying capacity of key corridors requires careful coordination between roadway design, adjacent land uses, and how access is provided to properties along major thoroughfares. LOS helps measure how well a roadway handles current or projected traffic, highlighting where congestion or operational issues may emerge. LOS is measured on an A–F scale, where A represents free flowing, uninterrupted traffic and F represents highly congested, stop and go conditions. Thoughtful access management, context appropriate roadway design, and strategic land use decisions all work together to support reliable travel, maintain acceptable LOS, and reduce congestion across the network.

Public Transit

Port Lavaca does not have a fixed-route transit system serving the Planning Area. R-Transit, operated by the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission, provides on-demand, curb-to-curb paratransit service for the general public, seniors, and people with disabilities. These services are critical for residents who do not own or cannot drive a car. Paratransit services can be a cheaper and flexible option for cities, but the system can become overwhelmed if there is not enough capacity (in terms of the number of vehicles and fixed routes available) to serve the existing need. Limitations can include not enough drivers, buses, or funding which can lead to schedule reductions. Port Lavaca's previous *Comprehensive Plan* (2016) recommended for the City to conduct a community survey, review of R-Transit ridership records, or a feasibility study analysis to assess additional demand for transit to determine whether the City should partner with R-Transit to expand services in Port Lavaca.

Active Transportation:

Active transportation refers to any form of people-powered travel, including walking, bicycling (including e-bikes and e-scooters), using wheelchairs or mobility devices, skateboarding. These transportation modes physically engage the user when moving from one place to another. The purpose of an Active Transportation Plan is to create accessible and safe, connected, and convenient opportunities for people to use these modes throughout the city, to get to where they want to go. By providing reliable non-vehicle travel options, the Active Transportation Plan (refer to Map X, *Active Transportation,* on Page XX) ensures that residents of all ages, abilities, incomes, and neighborhoods can access essential destinations and community amenities.

Active Transportation Issues and Challenges

- Gaps in Infrastructure: Incomplete sidewalks, disconnected bike lanes, and physical barriers to safely crossing roads such as large intersections, especially those without pedestrian refuge islands, and expansive thoroughfares, such as highways and interstates.
- Safety concerns: High-speed vehicular traffic, poor lighting and visibility, and inadequate buffers between sidewalks and bike lanes can discourage alternative mode choice preventing users from using particular routes and puts users at risk of serious injury.
- It Takes too Long to Get Anywhere: Low-density areas, where destinations are spread-out potentially miles apart, lengthen the travel distance from points of origin to key destinations. This could make trips from home to work, the grocery store, and other services impractical to travel on foot, but may still be possible to bike.
- Outdoor Conditions: The weather and geography/ terrain of an area can discourage more casual active users from walking or cycling to their destination. Dressing appropriately for travel is important for active transportation in the event it's a hot or cold day, rainy, or dark. Lack of shade along sidewalks and bike lanes can make the immediate area hotter, especially if near a road which radiates heat.
- Driving Culture and Habits: The culture and habit of driving can prevent people from choosing to walk or cycle because they just did not think about the option. There needs to be a shift to make bicycling or walking more attractive in the city; otherwise the only people who will use it are those who have no other choice, which also further stigmatizes walking and bicycling.
- Funding and Maintenance: While in the long term, active transportation infrastructure is cheaper to maintain, it still requires significant levels of investment to construct pedestrian and bicycle facilities. For smaller communities, this can be especially challenging without funding assistance. Neglected sidewalks and bike lanes can be hazardous to use as infrastructure falls into disrepair, which poses trip or crash risk, so it is important to plan for future financial needs.
- Limited Right of Way and Drainage Impacts: Retrofitting older corridors can be challenging, particularly if they have a smaller right-of-way, as their existing design often limits the ability to add modern pedestrian or bicycle facilities without removing vehicle travel lanes. Without these improvements, these corridors can become difficult or unsafe for people walking or biking to use. Drain inlets can pose a hazard for bicyclists, since the grates can catch wheels and cause crashes, further reducing the safety and comfort of the route.

Aerial view of Port Lavaca from the SH 35 and US 87 Interchange
Source: Homes.com



OBJECTIVE 2.1: Ensure that Port Lavaca incorporates the full suite of transportation planning tools and best practices to ensure an efficient and safe transportation system.

Guiding Principles for Vehicular Transportation (VTP)

VTP Principle 1.
Incorporate sustainable development best practices to reduce environmental impacts.

VTP Principle 2.
Thoroughfare design should prioritize safety for all users.

VTP Principle 3.
Support accessible and reliable transportation options that meet the mobility needs of all residents.

VTP Principle 4.
Promote attractive, well designed corridors that enhance community character and create a positive visual experience for residents and visitors.

VTP Principle 5.
Enhance the community's identity by establishing welcoming gateway entries that create a positive first impression for residents and visitors.

VTP Principle 6.
Collaborate with local and regional agencies and stakeholders to ensure that thoroughfare improvements align with and support the community's long term vision



Road with bioswale green infrastructure
Source: NACTO

Strategy 2.1.1:

Utilize the proposed Thoroughfare Plan to guide future roadway expansions, alignments, and right-of-way preservation.

As depicted in Map X, *Future Thoroughfare Plan*, the proposed thoroughfare extensions strengthen connectivity across Port Lavaca by linking areas of the city that are currently disconnected. On the north side of Port Lavaca, the new routes create additional local street options between the northeast and west sides of the city, which reduces reliance on major corridors such as SH 35 and US 87. This becomes increasingly important as traffic volumes continue to rise, particularly for travelers moving through Port Lavaca to reach Point Comfort.

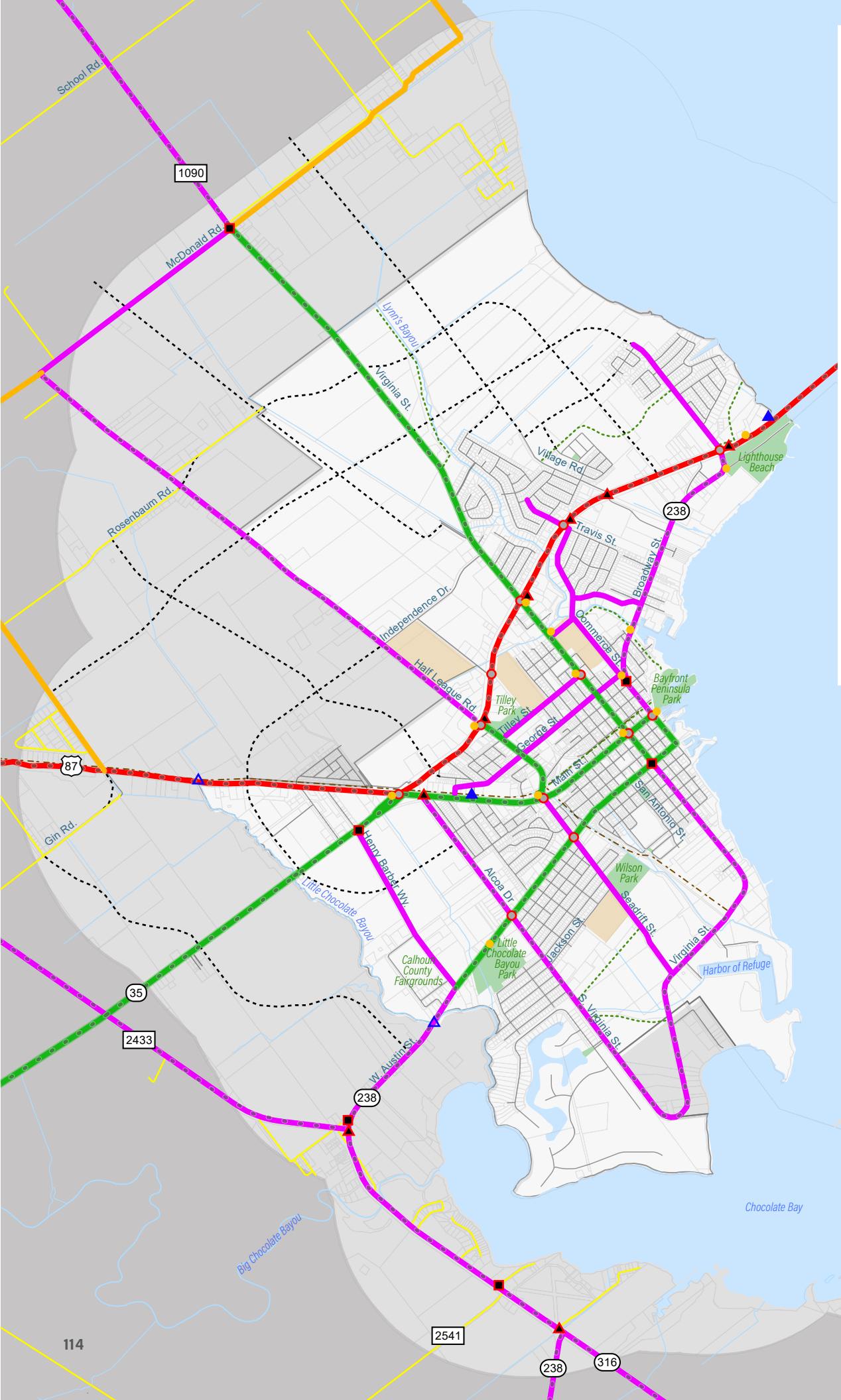
The Thoroughfare Plan's principal features include:

- New northeast to southwest corridors are proposed to reduce traffic along SH 35 and encourage new development, such as an extension of Independence Drive, Smith Road, Rosenbaum Road, and Jacob Road
- Village Road, Smith Road, and Trinity Shores Drive are proposed to extend northward to accommodate future housing and economic development
- Additional connections to US 87 and SH 35 are proposed to prevent truck traffic near schools and residential areas

Strategy 2.1.2:

Utilize and update thoroughfare standards to align with the proposed Thoroughfare cross sections.

As depicted in Figure X, *Proposed Thoroughfare Cross Sections*, on pages X through X, the proposed thoroughfare cross sections are separated by thoroughfare classification (widths, number of lanes, and drainage facilities), as well as their semi-urban or rural context. Proposed revisions to the City's Code of Ordinances include several updates intended to strengthen multimodal mobility and corridor design. These revisions would widen the standard sidewalk width from four feet to five feet meeting the TxDOT standard, establish formal on-street parking design standards, and clarify that golf carts are permitted to use shared-use facilities. In addition, the updates would introduce new thoroughfare typologies that better support both multimodal travel and vehicular circulation throughout the city.



CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE

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

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
- Existing Traffic Signal
- Existing Gateway

Proposed Improvements

- Proposed Local Thoroughfare
- Proposed All-Way Stop
- Proposed Intersection Improvements
- Proposed Regional Gateway
- Proposed Wayfinding Signage

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May 2026

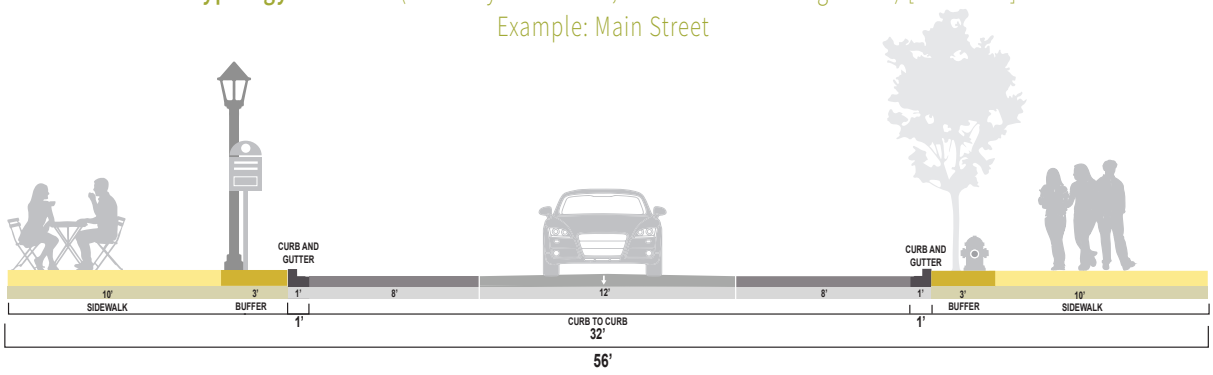
BAXTER & WOODMAN

MAP X: FUTURE THOROUGHFARE PLAN

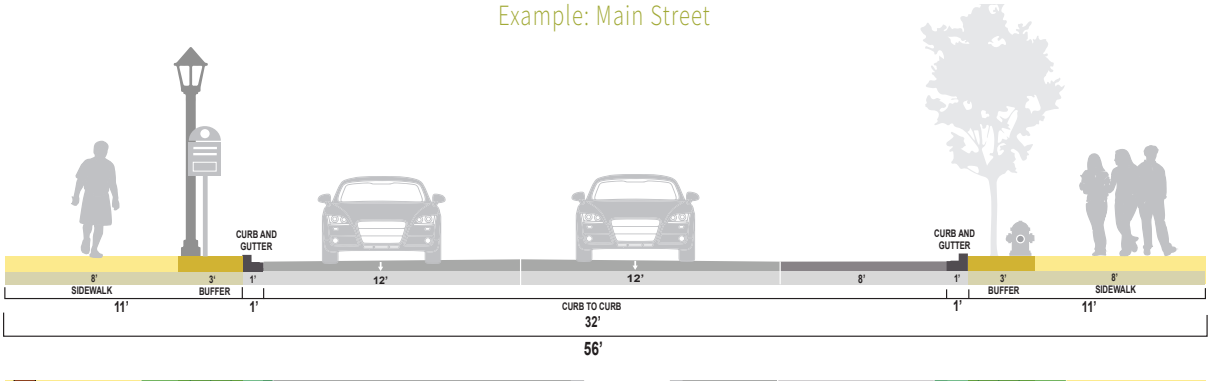
Figure 5, Proposed Thoroughfare Cross Sections

As described in Strategy 2.1.1, and 2.1.2, below and on the following pages, are proposed thoroughfare typologies and standards Port Lavaca should utilize during new roadway development and roadway reconstruction.

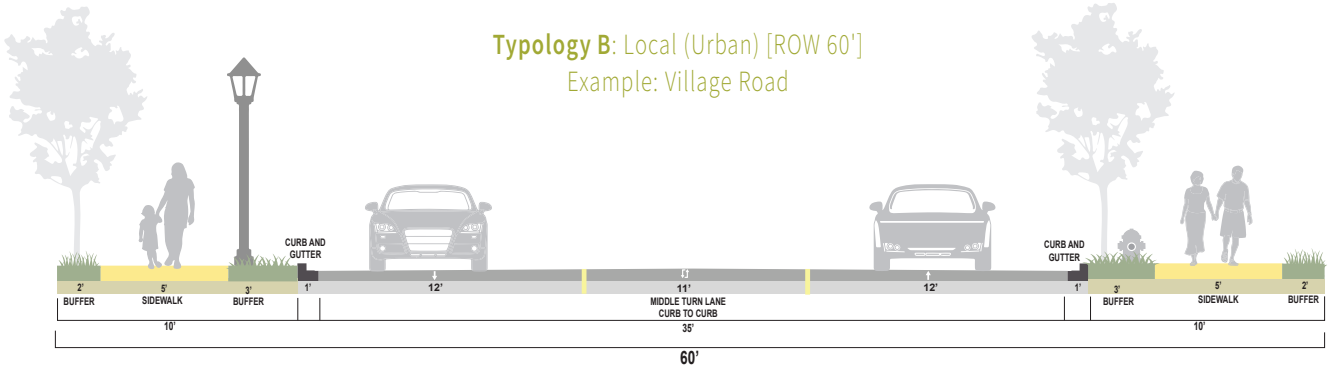
Typology A.1: Local (One-Way Downtown, Two Parallel Parking Lanes) [R.O.W 56']
Example: Main Street



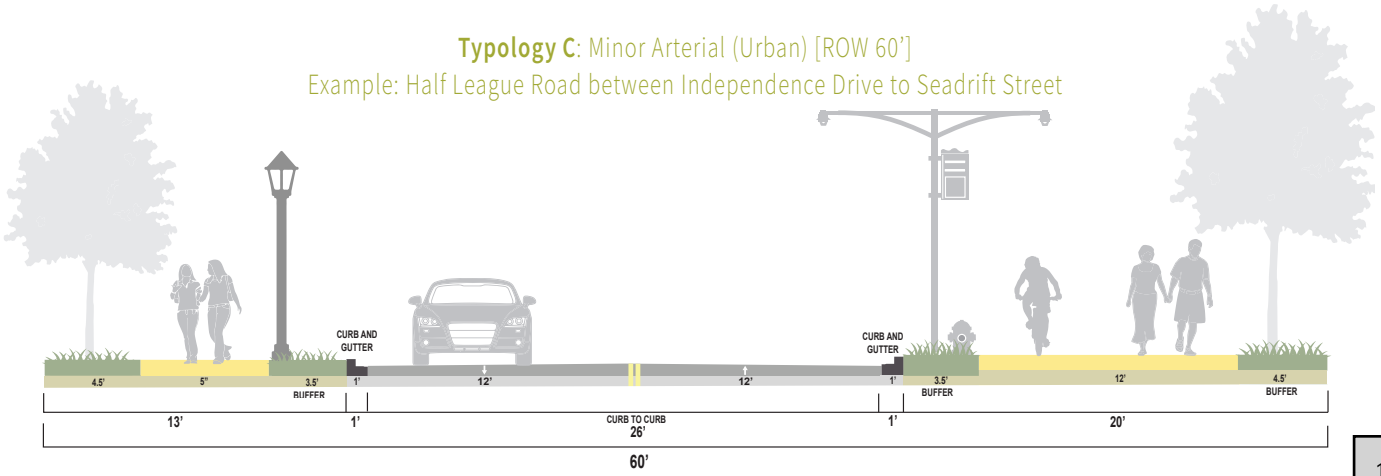
Typology A.2: Local (One-Way Downtown, Two Travel Lanes, Parallel Parking) [R.O.W 56']
Example: Main Street



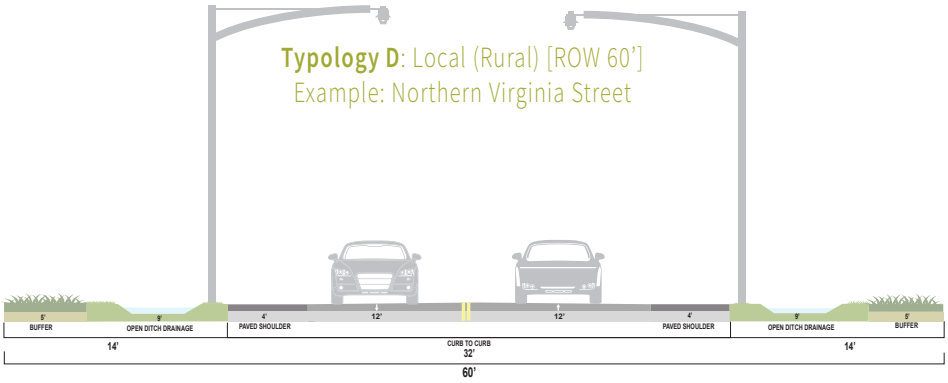
Typology B: Local (Urban) [ROW 60']
Example: Village Road



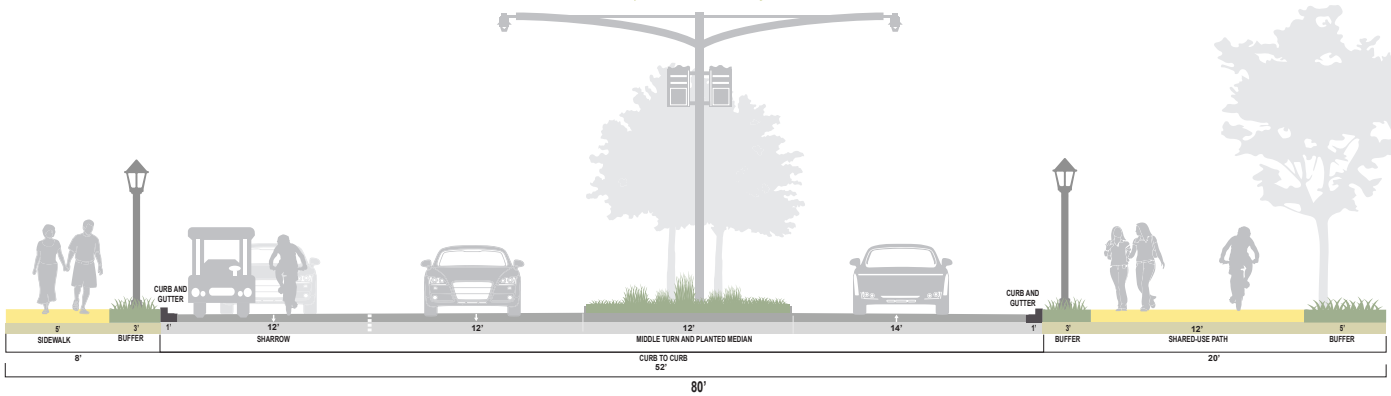
Typology C: Minor Arterial (Urban) [ROW 60']
Example: Half League Road between Independence Drive to Seadrift Street



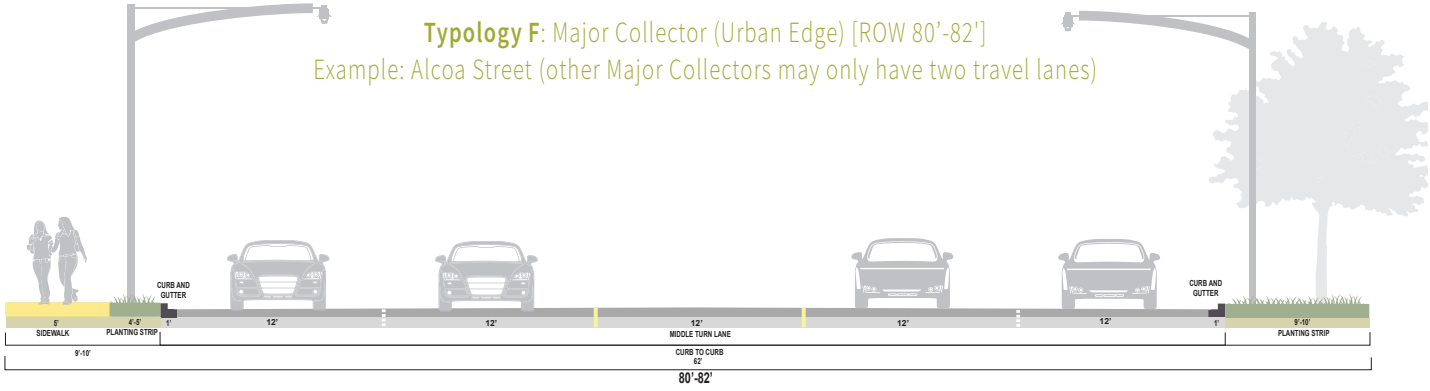
Typology D: Local (Rural) [ROW 60']
Example: Northern Virginia Street



Typology E: Major Collector (Urban) [ROW 80']
Example Broadway Street



Typology F: Major Collector (Urban Edge) [ROW 80'-82']
Example: Alcoa Street (other Major Collectors may only have two travel lanes)



Typology G: Minor Collector [ROW 80']
Example: Maxwell Ditch Road

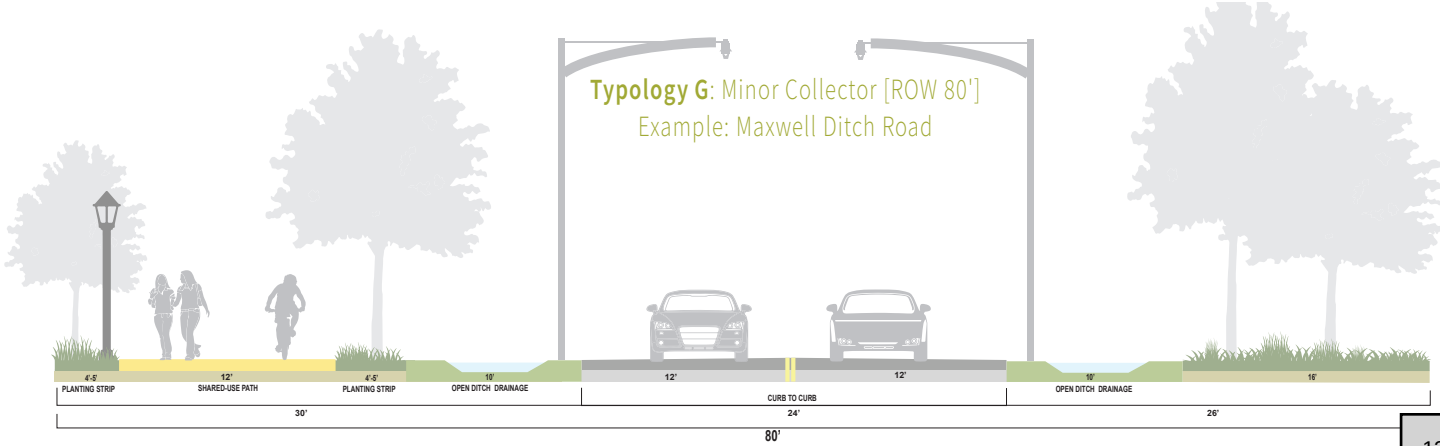
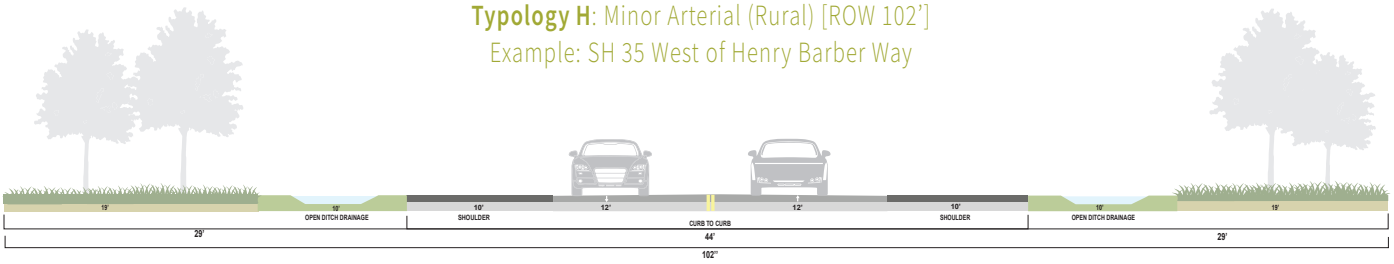
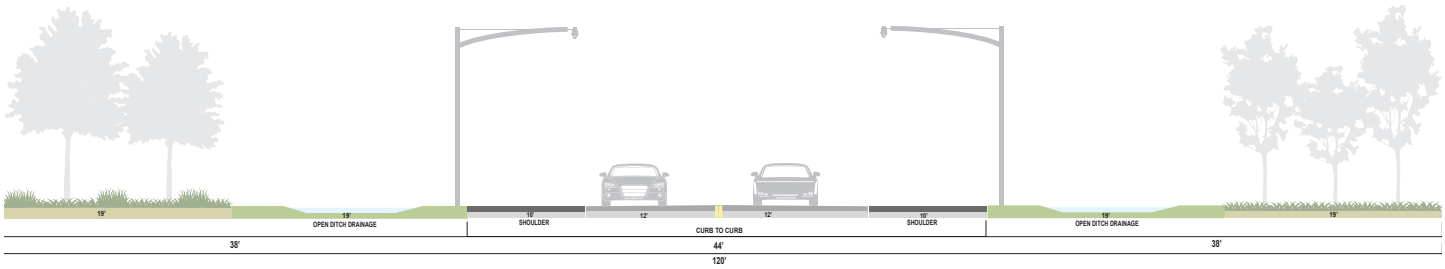


Figure 5, Proposed Thoroughfare Cross Sections (cont)

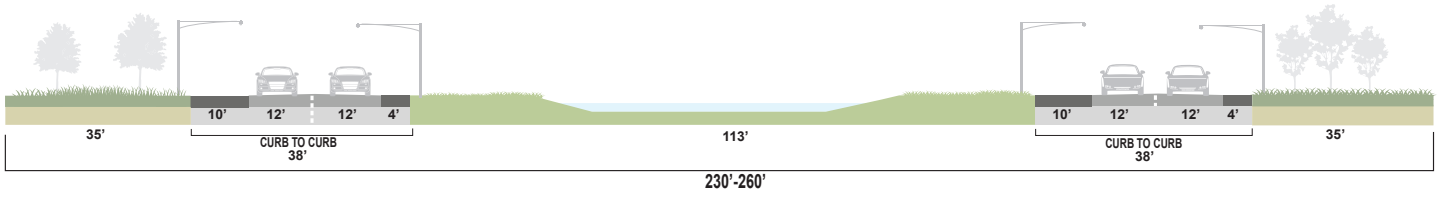
Typology H: Minor Arterial (Rural) [ROW 102']
Example: SH 35 West of Henry Barber Way



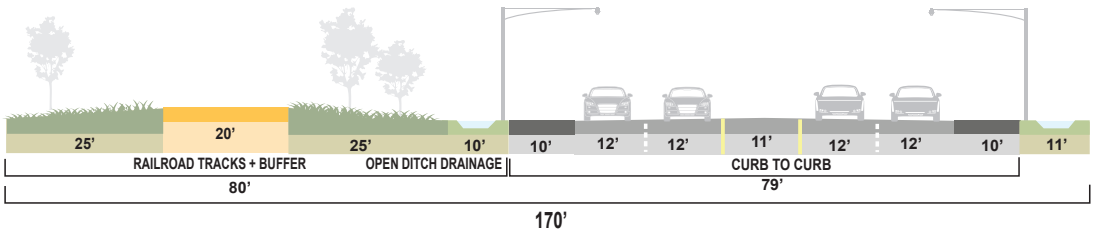
Typology I: Major Collector (Rural Road) [ROW 120']
Example: SH 238



Typology J: Major/Principal Arterial (Alt. 1) [ROW 230'-260']
Example: SH 35 East Side towards Causeway



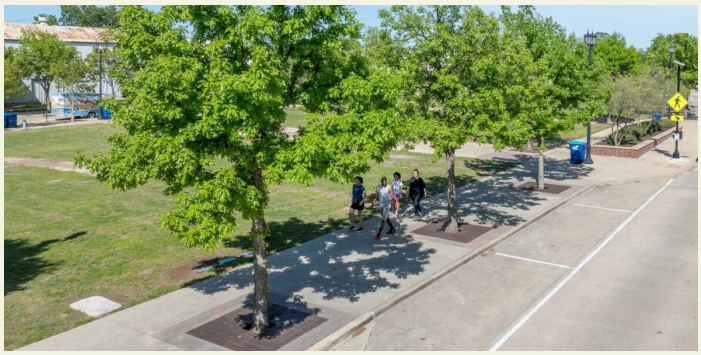
Typology K: Major/Principal Arterial (Alt. 1) [ROW 130'-170']
Example: SH 35 East Side towards Causeway



The Impact of Streetscape Elements

Beyond curb, gutter, sidewalks, and roadway pavement, additional streetscape elements help to make a place feel localized, special to the city it's in, and provide a number of functional benefits including shade, resting spots, visual interest, additional user comfort, and can help to improve economic development along a corridor with streetscape elements. These elements are incorporated throughout the proposed Thoroughfare Cross Section standards, as shown in Figure 5 , Proposed Thoroughfare Cross Sections, and should always be an integral aspect of all roadway projects in Port Lavaca.

Street Trees



Street trees in Downtown Rowlett, TX
Source: Deeproot

Public Art



Civil War sculpture in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Benches and Bike Racks



Texas Flag Bench and fish shaped bike rack in Port Lavaca's Bayfront Park
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Waste Recepticle



Trash cans in Downtown Houma, LA
Source: Houma Times

Streetlights



Pedestrian scale lighting and taller street lighting in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter & Woodman



Pedestrian scale streetlight with banner holders in Arlington, MA
Source: The Word on the Street



Larger scale streetlights typically found in auto-urban areas
Source: Lighting Gallery

Strategy 2.1.3:

Establish guidelines for on-street parking space design, including parallel and angled parking.

The City should collaborate with TxDOT to develop on-street parking standards that align with agency requirements and support local mobility goals. These guidelines should address design dimensions, sight distance requirements, curbside management needs, accessibility considerations, and the relationship between parking and adjacent bicycle or pedestrian facilities. The standards should also clarify where on street parking is appropriate, how it should be marked, and how it should be integrated into corridor cross sections.

Strategy 2.1.4:

Encourage participation in Adopt a Highway Programs or similar program to help keep roads clean and reduce overall maintenance costs.

This strategy promotes community involvement in keeping local roadways clean and well maintained. By encouraging residents, civic groups, schools, and local businesses to participate in Adopt a Highway or similar volunteer programs, the City can reduce litter, improve corridor appearance, and lower long term maintenance expenses. Expanding participation in these programs also fosters community pride and shared responsibility for the condition of public spaces.



Adopt a Highway sponsorship signage and clean-up
Source: Houston Chronicle

Strategy 2.1.5:

Establish access management standards in the Code of Ordinances.

The City should establish access management standards that are compliant with TxDOT's access management standards. To ensure standards are appropriate, Port Lavaca should consult with TxDOT to create these standards. Components of the Port Lavaca Access Management standards need to include the maximum number of driveways per parcel, location of driveways, minimum spacing been driveway on each roadway classification, and the minimum clearance between driveways and intersections.

Access management can provide several important benefits, including:

- Reducing number of crashes
- Improving traffic flow, reducing stop and go movements
- Decreasing travel time and congestion
- Improving how driveway and street access points are planned so future developments have safe, well designed, and efficient entrances.
- Supporting economic activity by creating a safer and more efficient transportation system
- Minimizing the number of gaps in active transportation facilities infrastructure
- Preserving community character and livability by ensuring land development and transportation options are planned in tandem in a way that supports safe, comfortable, and accessible travel.

Strategy 2.1.6:

Establish an approved plant list to support corridor beautification.

This strategy focuses on creating a consistent, attractive, and sustainable approach to landscaping along key corridors. By developing an approved list of plants, the City can ensure that landscaping choices are visually cohesive, drought tolerant, low maintenance, and appropriate for the local climate. A standardized plant list also helps guide developers, utility partners, and public agencies toward species that enhance corridor aesthetics, improve environmental resilience, and reduce long term maintenance costs. Establishing these guidelines will support a unified look and feel across the city's major streets while promoting healthy, sustainable landscapes.

Access Management

Access management is the practice of regulating how vehicles enter and exit parcels adjacent to roadways in order to keep traffic moving smoothly and safely. It focuses on controlling the number, spacing, and design of driveways, intersections, and other access points so that traffic flow is less disrupted. By managing where and how vehicles can turn, merge, or cross streets, communities can reduce crashes, improve travel efficiency, and support a more reliable transportation network.

At minimum, typical access management standards should include the following:

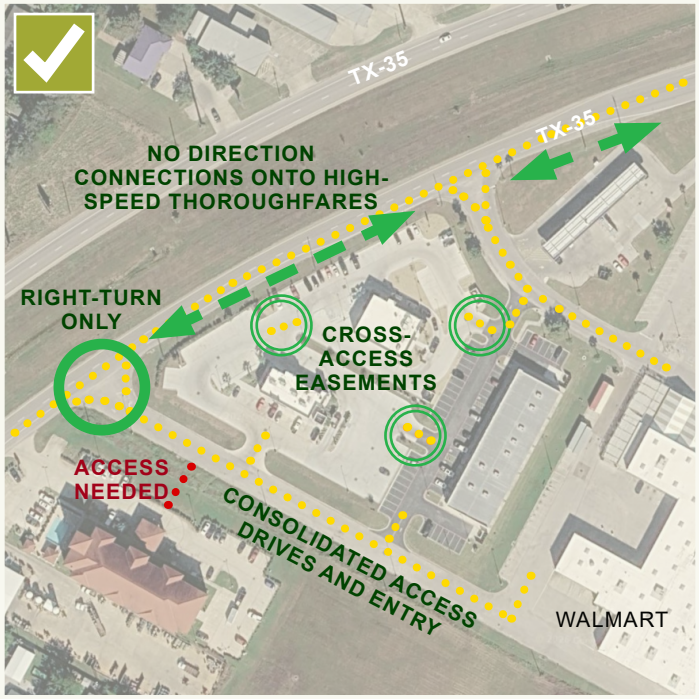
- Reducing driveway density by closing, consolidating, or relocating access points
- Manage the spacing of intersections and driveways to minimize conflict points
- Limit where drivers can turn left, focusing on right turns in and out of driveways
- Locate driveways on the approach side of the intersection and not on the side where vehicles are turning or merging into traffic.
- Install raised medians to restrict unsafe roadway crossings
- Use designs that reduce left-turn conflicts, such as roundabouts, while reducing opportunities for U-turns
- Where ROW space allows, provide dedicated turn lanes for left or right turns
- Incorporate lower-speed side roads that run parallel to the main road to give drivers safer, more convenient places to turn into nearby destinations.

Cross access easements allow neighboring properties to enter into agreements regarding the sharing of driveways or internal paths so drivers can move between sites without having to re-enter the main thoroughfare. Cross access easements improve safety, access, and efficiency by reducing the number of driveways and conflict points along busy corridors. These agreements can ease traffic congestion by reducing the number of driveways and conflict points along corridors.

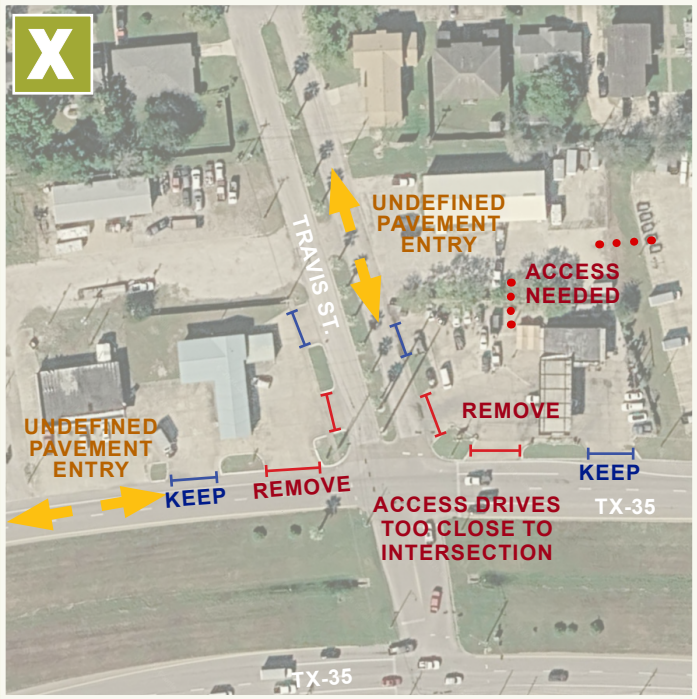
The benefits for cross access easements are:

- Improved traffic safety from fewer conflict points between drivers entering and exiting driveways
- Reduced congestion from drivers not having to re-enter the main roadway to cross properties
- Increased efficiency in accessing adjacent businesses
- Reduced infrastructure costs due to shared driveways and network

Proper Access Management in Port Lavaca



Improper Access Management in Port Lavaca



These examples in Port Lavaca depict the proper and improper application of access drive distances from intersections, cross-access easements between properties, right-turn only requirements, and access drive consolidation.
Source: Google Earth, Baxter and Woodman

Strategy 2.1.7:

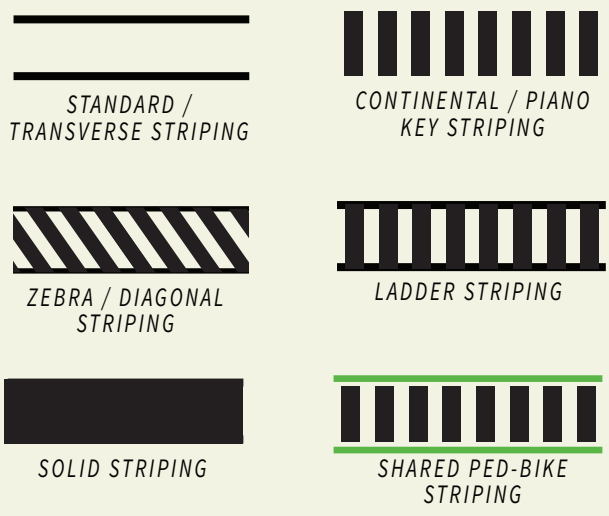
Establish updated crosswalk and striping standards at City and TxDOT Intersections.

As depicted on Map X, *Future Thoroughfare Plan*, the City should upgrade crosswalk striping and signage at busy intersections to increase pedestrian and cyclist viability and help create safer driving habits. Crosswalk striping standards should be added to the City's Code of Ordinances and include where applicable crosswalk striping should be added. Standards can include:

- Continental style / Paino Key or Zebra crosswalks at all trail crossings, intersections within the Downtown, Intersections along TX 35, intersections at the entrance of or near parks, intersections at church entrances, and intersections within School Zones.
- Ladder or Zebra crosswalks with green edge striping at all trail and shared-use path crossings at major thoroughfares with travel speeds over 40 miles per hour.
- Standard / Transverse crosswalks at crossings of minor and major collector streets where vehicle speeds are 35 miles per hour or less
- Solid crosswalks within Parks which can include decorative engravings or stamping equines
- Mid-block crossings, not an intersection, should be striped as Ladder or Zebra crosswalks and include crossing signage

Crosswalk Striping

Pavement markings, such as crosswalks, should be consistent in application throughout the City and align with the roadways vehicle speeds and adjacent active transportation facilities. For example, on a residential subdivision's local road, a piano key crosswalk may be too expensive or not needed due to low vehicle volumes and speeds. Pedestrian crossings of major arterial thoroughfares such as TX-35, Commerce Street, and US-87, should have continental / piano key markings. Continental striped crosswalks are more visible from a distance to vehicles and should include additional pedestrian crossing signage or even pedestrian activated flashing beacons. Utilize TxDOT's *Roadway Design Manual*, Chapter 19, *Pedestrian Facilities*, Section 6, *Intersections and Crossings*, for more guidance on design applications.



Strategy 2.1.8:

Implement new intersection controls.

As identified in Map X, *Future Thoroughfare Plan*, numerous intersection safety recommendations and new intersection traffic control considerations are proposed, such as all-way stop sign intersections and traffic light additions. Intersection improvements are based on existing traffic volumes, crash occurrences and crash types, and anticipated commercial, residential, and industrial development. Further study and inter-local coordination is needed to further decide what traffic control system is best suited for each intersection, although an educated assumption can be made, as depicted. In order to receive TxDOT funding for new traffic controls, a detailed survey and study must be conducted with on-ground peak hour considerations and turning movements identified.

Strategy 2.1.9:

Establish a gate ways and wayfidning signage program at major junctions, district entrances, and at City Limits boundaries.

As depicted on Map X, *Thoroughfare Plan*, the City should continue to implement City Welcome signage along major roadways entering and crossing City Limits. In addition, the city should develop a series of branded gateway signage leading into important districts / zones, such as the Downtown, Waterfront District, Lighthouse Beach, the Lynn's Bayou Habor zone, and historic neighborhoods. In addition, way finding signage should be develop and added to new or existing signage posts indicating the direction and distance to major destinations, such as Downtown, Lighthouse Beach, schools, grocery stores, hotel zones, trails, boardwalks, bicycle routes, parks, and tourism hubs.

Gateways and Wayfinding Signage

Gateway entrances mark the transition into a city, or a special district or neighborhood within the city, and provide an opportunity for visitors and residents to acknowledge this change. Gateway features can include community branding, landscaping, and lighting that provide a first impression for the City's identity. Additionally, gateway signage can alert drivers to slow down as speed limits may be reduced within this new context. In Port Lavaca, design elements for future gateway improvements should celebrate the community's waterfront, the Downtown, and/or significant neighborhoods. As of the drafting of this Plan, upon entering the City of Port Lavaca, there are two gateway signs: one on the north entrance of SH 35 just past the Causeway, and a second one at the intersection of SH 35 and US 87. Port Lavaca's previous Comprehensive Plan (2016) recommended a third gateway at the transition point for SH 238 into Austin Street. This Plan keeps this recommended gateway and proposes additional enhancements along US 87 upon arrival into the City.



Fairhope Gateway Sign with seasonal flowers and American flags
Source: City of Fairhope, Alabama



Existing Port Lavaca Gateway Sign with nautical theme at SH 35 and US 87
Source: Baxter & Woodman



Victoria, Texas historic neighborhood signage
Source: City of Victoria, Texas



Port Arthur, Texas Gateway sign with landscaping
Source: Clark Condon



Existing Port Lavaca Gateway Sign with seahorse theme on SH 35 westbound entrance
Source: Baxter & Woodman



Wayfinding and directional signage
Source: Mountain View Visitor's Center



Lake Jackson, Texas gateway sign wtih stone facade
Source: Brazosport



Kyle, Texas gateway sign with state outline and brick facade
Source: KVUE



Wayfinding signage in Fort Worth, Texas
Source: Corbin Design

OBJECTIVE 2.2: Build a network of safe, accessible, and connected active transportation facilities through Port Lavaca.

Guiding Principles for Active Transportation (ATP)

ATP Principle 1.

Develop and maintain a comprehensive, well connected active transportation network that provides safe, comfortable, and convenient walking and bicycling access to key destinations throughout the city.

ATP Principle 2.

Enhance mobility, recreation, and access to natural, cultural, and scenic destinations by providing a diverse network of pedestrian facilities along the waterfront and throughout the community.

ATP Principle 3.

Support multimodal travel by implementing Complete Streets principles along designated corridors to safely accommodate all users.

ATP Principle4.

Incorporate streetscape improvements to create attractive, comfortable, and pedestrian friendly environments.

ATP Principle 5.

Provide clear, pedestrian scale signage that improves navigation, visibility, and the overall active transportation experience.

ATP Principle 6.

Locate bicycle facilities in highly visible, accessible places to ensure convenience and security.

Strategy 2.2.1:

Utilize the proposed active transportation plan to expand trail, sidewalk, and shared use path networks.

The proposed Map X, Active Transportation Plan is designed to link Port Lavaca's neighborhoods with key destinations, including commercial areas, schools, and parks. The system is built around a combination of shared use paths, bike routes, on street bike lanes, and off street trails that together create a connected, citywide network. Virginia Street, Broadway Street, and Railroad Street form the primary spine of the system, with Broadway providing a signature coastal riding experience. An inner loop surrounds the area between Railroad Street and SH 35, creating a central ring from which multiple trails and paths extend north and south. These connections allow residents to access the network from nearly any part of the city. The inclusion of shared use paths and off street trails ensures that bicyclists have access to protected, comfortable infrastructure throughout the majority of the bicycle network.

A stronger active transportation network also helps reduce traffic congestion and supports public health by encouraging daily physical activity. Community health is further improved as the network reduces emissions from local traffic and increases opportunities for residents to experience nature, promotes eco-tourism, allows for transportation options for people of different socioeconomic backgrounds, and contributes to cleaner air and healthier natural resources across the city. Additionally, active transportation supports downtown and local economic vitality by making it easier for people to reach local businesses, Main Street businesses, coastal parks, and hotels, all by strengthening walkable and bike friendly commercial corridors.

Strategy 2.2.2:

Establish standards for the active transportation network and educate the public on these changes.

The City should regularly review ridership patterns, service gaps, and community demand to understand where improvements may be needed. Based on this evaluation, the City may explore partnerships with R-Transit to expand service within the City either through fixed routes or expanding on-demand capacity. This approach ensures that transit access remains responsive, equitable, and aligned with community needs.

Strategy 2.2.3:

Expand and upgrade existing sidewalks and curb rampstop comply with state and national standards.

Conduct a survey to assess the needs for upgrading sidewalks and curb ramps to meet ADA and TxDOT requirements ensures that all residents, including those with mobility challenges, can travel more easily and independently. The City should prioritize connections between neighborhoods and important destinations that strengthen daily mobility, reduces barriers for people who walk or use mobility devices, and supports a more connected and equitable transportation system across the City.

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE P

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
- Existing Bike Lanes
- Existing Trails
- Existing Private / HOA Trails
- Existing Boardwalk

Proposed Improvements

- Proposed Thoroughfare
- Proposed 5 ft Minimum Sidewalks
- Proposed Bike Routes (Sharrows)
- Proposed Shared Use Paths
- Proposed Trail
- Proposed Boardwalk
- Proposed Crosswalk Improvements

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June 2026

BAXTER & WOODMAN

MAP X: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Active Transportation Facilities

Sidewalk

Sidewalks are designated pedestrian pathways that allow for safe passage along thoroughfares in the community. To ensure they can be used by everyone, all sidewalks must comply with the federally regulated Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) standards, regarding curb cuts, pavement textures and finishes, and crosswalks. While the ADA minimum sidewalk width requirement is three feet, TxDOT requires a minimum of five-foot wide sidewalks. The five-foot width allows for two people to walk either side-by-side or pass each other on the sidewalk. Tactile paving, such as rumble pads and tactile crosswalk pavement at intersections is required so people with low vision can feel a difference in paving type when approaching an intersection or driveway crossing.

On-Street Bike Lanes and Cycle Tracks – Protected vs. Unprotected

Protected bike lanes utilize a physical separation or barrier between the lane and vehicular travel lane, and may include armadillo humps, free-standing concrete curb, bollards, and/or grade-separation with a planting strip. Unprotected bike lanes may utilize a striped buffer which is painted on the road with no other physical separation besides pavement markings. Cycle tracks are bi-directional on-street bike lanes on one side of a thoroughfare.

Sharrows

Sharrows are shared lane markings that depict a bicycle symbol with two chevrons in the direction of travel. They are commonly used because they are simple and inexpensive to install, and feasible for thoroughfares with narrower rights-of-way. Sharrows are typically paired with Bike Route designation signs to signal to both drivers and bicyclists that the roadway is intended to be shared use.

Shared-Use Path

Shared use paths are grade separated pedestrian/bicycle facilities that are adjacent to a thoroughfare, are a minimum of eight feet wide, and provide one or two way travel lanes for pedestrians and bicyclists. Shared-use paths can be thought of as “high-capacity sidewalks” and service higher-capacity pedestrian corridors. The extra pavement width allows space for bicycles to safely pass pedestrians, thus reducing safety conflicts.

Off-Street Recreational Trail

Off-street recreational trails are spatially separated from vehicular thoroughfares, the route of which may or may not follow the alignment of a thoroughfare. Off-street recreational trails are at minimum, 10 feet wide (TxDOT standard), though they may be wider.



Protected bike lane next to sidewalk.
Source: Austin Capital Services



Bicyclists in Portland, Oregon, neighborhood with sharrow route
Source: Cycling in Christ Church



A shared-use path in College Station, Texas
Source: All Trails, Fiona Allen



Pedestrians and bicyclists using an off-street recreational trail
Source: Ohio Department of Transportation

Strategy 2.2.4:

Implement wayfinding and regulatory signage for active transportation as well as for drivers to be reminded to share the road and be aware of bicyclists and pedestrians.

The City should implement a coordinated wayfinding system for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers that improves navigation and reinforces safe behavior on shared streets by all users. This should include directional signage for walking and biking routes, as well as reminders for motorists to watch for people walking and biking. A consistent, easy to understand signage program will help users choose safe routes, increase awareness at key conflict points, and support a more comfortable environment for all travelers. These signs can include route identification signs for bike and pedestrian paths, yield to pedestrians signs placed at crosswalks, and “Share the Road” signs.

Strategy 2.2.5:

Implement a neighborhood streets improvement program that combines elements of traffic calming, streetscape enhancements, and pedestrian interconnectivity.

A neighborhood streets improvement program involves utilizing a number of pavement and design safety features to create a safer, more comfortable, and more connected residential areas. This approach combines traffic calming measures, streetscape enhancements, and improved pedestrian connections to reduce vehicle speeds, increase driver awareness, and make walking and biking more appealing. Treatments such as curb extensions, raised crosswalks, enhanced lighting, street trees, pedestrian refuge islands, chicanes, speed humps, additional signage, speed indicators, pedestrian-scale lighting, reflector strips, and upgraded crosswalk markings, can transform neighborhood streets into places that support everyday mobility rather than just vehicle movement. By integrating these elements, the City can strengthen neighborhood safety, encourage active transportation, and create a more welcoming public space for residents and tourists of all ages and abilities.

Strategy 2.2.6:

Ensure that active transportation facilities do not dead-end abruptly.

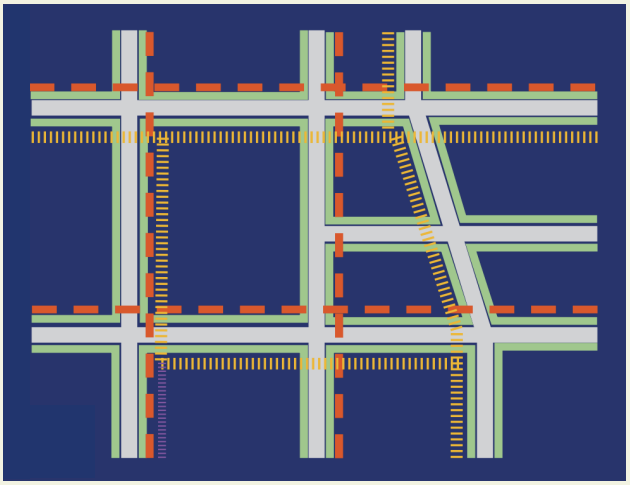
All active transportation facility alignments should continue or have a connection/ transition to another active transportation facility type, avoiding dangerous "drop-offs" and "dead-ends", which can place users in unsafe conditions.

Creating a Network

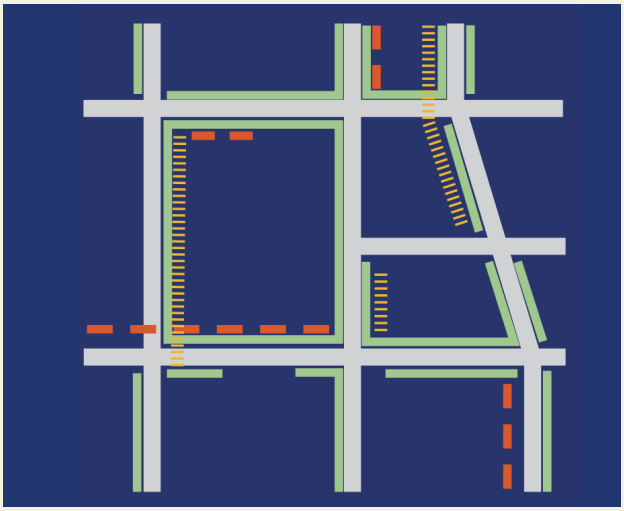
A connected active transportation network links neighborhoods, schools, parks, commercial areas, and waterfront destinations with routes that are accessible to users of all ages and abilities. By improving sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, crossings, and other supportive infrastructure, the City can expand travel options, reduce reliance on short car trips, and promote healthier, more active lifestyles. A well designed network also enhances safety by providing predictable, dedicated spaces for people walking and biking, ultimately contributing to a more vibrant and connected community.

The network graphics below demonstrate the difference between what makes a network, and what makes a disconnected network. *A Complete Connected Network* represents a complete network with multiple route options for users, where as *A Disconnected Network* has disconnected paths that dead-end

A Complete Connected Network



A Disconnected Network



Source: Baxter and Woodman, Village of Downers Grove, IL, Active Transportation Plan

Strategy 2.2.7:

Utilize and update the City's Code of Ordinances with new active transportation facility standards and dimensions.

Port Lavaca should update the City's Code of Ordinances to include the updated required dimensions, materials, sub-grade requirements, and transition requirements for all active transportation-related facilities including ADA curb ramps, crosswalk striping application, bicycle lanes, recreational trails, sharrows (shared lanes), and shared-use paths.

The City's Code of Ordinances should align with the dimensions and requirements set forth by The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), as discussed in Active Transportation Standards. Ensure that the proposed active transportation facilities and thoroughfare typologies are being developed to the revised standards are new roadways are being constructed

Strategy 2.2.8:

Require all residential and commercial developers to add 5-foot sidewalks along all public rights-of-way, with new or substantial construction.

Upgrading sidewalks to meet ADA and TxDOT requirements ensures that all residents, including those with mobility challenges, can travel more easily and independently. The City should prioritize connections between neighborhoods and important destinations that strengthen daily mobility, reduces barriers for people who walk or use mobility devices, and supports a more connected and equitable transportation system across the City.

The Code of Ordinances should mandate the construction of 5-foot-wide sidewalks along all public roadway frontage within commercial, retail, residential, and industrial development. In addition, sidewalks should be required for all commercial and retail development leading from the public right-of-way edge to the front entry of any retail/ commercial building entrance.

Ensure that all new residential development, including in-fill development, provides five-foot-wide sidewalks on both sides of the street, with proper ADA curb ramps, signage, and internal sidewalks connectivity to the entrance of the subdivision along public rights-of-way.

Active Transportation Standards

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), are the major administrative entities which dictate the design guidelines and considerations regarding active transportation facilities across the US. Below is a summary of the design standards and guidelines provided that Port Lavaca should follow:

SIDEWALKS

Width: 5 to 6 feet wide (4-feet in low-density or dimensionally constrained areas)
Buffering: Preferred grass and planting buffer between the curb and sidewalks
Material: Concrete
Slopes: Slopes and grading must be ADA compliant, not exceeding more than 5% (1:20) or 8.33% (1:12) for short steep sections

SHARED-USE PATHS

Width: 12 to 15 feet wide (10 feet in constrained locations)
Buffering and Slopes: Slope requirements and buffering recommendations are the same as sidewalks

ON-STREET BIKE LANES AND CYCLE TRACKS

Width: 4 to 7 feet wide for each direction of travel
Buffering: 1-foot wide buffering striping is recommended; a 2 feet wide buffering strip with the addition of protective curbs and bollards is recommended
Material: Concrete or asphalt matching the roadway pavement type
Signage: "Bicycle lane" signage and "bicycle lane ends" signage is required
Striping: Solid white line striping with arrows, green solid paint is recommended where a bicycle lane crosses an access drive or intersection

SHARROWS

Speeds: Sharrow markings should only be added to low-speed streets- 35-mph. or lower
Striping: Bicycle chevron markings should be added at every sharrow turn and/or every 75 to 250 feet
Signage: "Bicycle route" signage should be added at major intersection crossings and/or every 250 feet

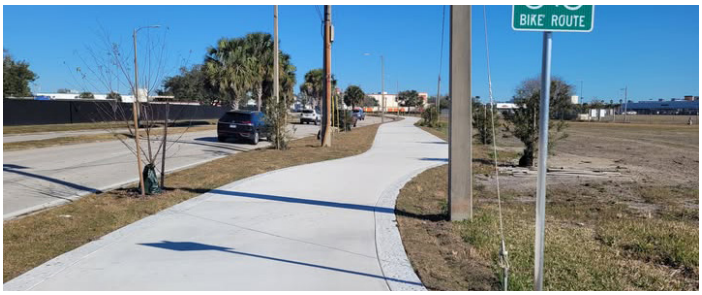
OFF-STREET RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Width: 8 to 12 feet wide
Material: Concrete, decomposed granite, natural turf
Lighting: Lighting in desired areas is recommended
Signage: Pedestrian crossing signage is required and safety/ informational signage is recommended

Strategy 2.2.9:

Encourage and adopt policies to make the City bicycle friendly.

Promote a cycling culture in Port Lavaca by encouraging and adopting policies that expand bicycle amenities at trailheads and key destinations. Providing secure bicycle parking along bike routes and greenways will make it easier for residents to choose bicycling for short trips and ensure they have a safe place to store their bikes. Increasing bicycle amenities also reduces the demand for vehicle parking and the amount of paved surface needed. Potential policies and incentives could include allowing bicycle parking to substitute for a portion of required vehicle parking spaces, offering funding to add shower facilities in government and office buildings, requiring bicycle parking in new developments, and expanding bicycle parking at City facilities.



Shared-use path connecting
Source: Alert Today Florida

Strategy 2.2.10:

Designate bike routes on low speed, local thoroughfares for safe and efficient travel.

Designated bike routes help improve safety for people biking as they travel through the City's network. These routes include bike lanes, shared use paths, trails, or shared lane markings on low speed residential streets where the right of way is too narrow to install separate bicycle infrastructure. These routes are also marked by wayfinding signs that help keep riders on the intended path and alert drivers that they are required to share the road. Additionally, digital or paper maps of the bike routes can help users learn how to use the routes.



Port Saint Lucie, Florida, costal roadway reconstruction with pathways and medians
Source: City of Port Saint Lucie

Strategy 2.2.11:

Install bicycle amenities at major destinations and rest stops, as well as bicycle traffic signals at intersections along designated bike routes.

The City should install amenities along bike routes, shared-use facilities, and trails at major destinations like parks and commercial areas. These amenities can include bike racks, repair stations equipped with basic tools, water bottle fill stations, lighting along trails and routes, shade from trees or built structures, and landscaping or public art that enhances the experience of riding. These amenities make it easier for riders to secure and maintain their bicycles during trips. Bicycle signals at major intersections along designated bike routes can also improve safety by clearly indicating when bicyclists should proceed, reducing the risk of collisions and creating a more predictable environment for all roadway users.

Strategy 2.2.12:

Encourage cycling through school programs so that the younger generation can build the habit of biking.

Encouraging cycling through school programs helps build lifelong biking habits among Port Lavaca's younger residents. By introducing students to safe riding skills, bicycle safety education, and opportunities to bike to school or participate in group rides, the City can normalize bicycling as a fun, healthy, and reliable way to get around. School based programs also help families feel more comfortable with their children biking, which can reduce traffic congestion around schools and support a more active community overall. Over time, these efforts contribute to a stronger cycling culture and a new generation of confident, safety minded riders.



Shared-use path with a tree and shrub buffer along the adjacent street
Source: Land Design

OBJECTIVE 2.4: Promote Intra-city connectivity

Strategy 2.4.1:

Implement intersection safety improvements throughout the City.

This strategy focuses on enhancing safety at intersections where conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists are most likely to occur. Improving intersection safety involves identifying high risk locations, evaluating crash patterns, and applying appropriate design treatments that reduce speeds, increase visibility, and create clearer, more predictable movements for all users. These improvements may include upgraded crosswalks, enhanced lighting, signal timing adjustments, curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, or other context sensitive measures that make intersections safer and more comfortable for people traveling by any mode.

Hot Spot No. 1 – Downtown One-way Couplet

- Issue: Two-way traffic and the current lane configuration on Main Street in Downtown Port Lavaca creates a less pedestrian-friendly environment and limit opportunities for streetscape improvements. See Map X, Downtown Plan, on page XXX.
- Solution: A one-way configuration on Main Street with parallel on-street parking would create a more pedestrian-friendly environment and free up space for added streetscape features such as lighting and planter boxes, helping support downtown redevelopment. Converting the street to a single travel lane also improves pedestrian safety by reducing conflict points and increasing driver visibility at crossings.

Hot Spot No. 2 – Intersection of McDonald Road and FM 1090/Virginia Street

- Issue: The intersection of McDonald Road/Maxwell Ditch Road and FM 1090 has numerous crashes as a result of north and south bound traveling cars crashing into left and right turning traffic.
- Solution: A traffic study by TxDOT will determine if there is enough traffic to warrant an all-way stop at the intersection. Additional signage such as "Cross Traffic Does Not Stop" or "Intersection Ahead" paired with lighting improvements would help drivers safely cross the intersection. Angling McDonald Road so that vehicles can drive straight across to Maxwell Ditch Road would also reduce the number of conflict points.

Hot Spot No. 3 – Intersection of Alcoa Drive and Austin Street

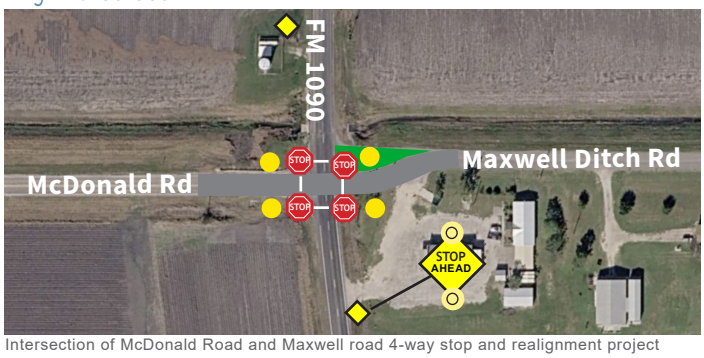
- Issue: This intersection is near Little Chocolate Bayou

Figure X, Downtown One-Way Couplet



Downtown Port Lavaca Central Business District streetscape, trail, one-way pair project
Source: Google Earth, Baxter & Woodman

Figure X, Intersection of McDonald Road and FM 1090/ Virginia Street



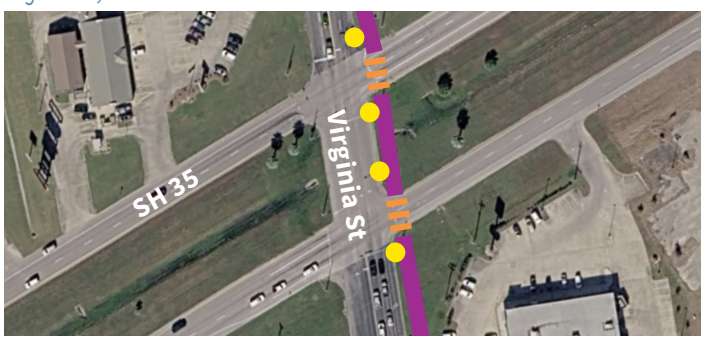
Intersection of McDonald Road and Maxwell road 4-way stop and realignment project
Source: Google Earth, Baxter & Woodman

Figure X, Intersection of Alcoa Drive and Austin Street



Alcoa Drive and Austin Street crosswalk and lighting upgrades project
Source: Google Earth, Baxter & Woodman

Figure X, SH 35 Intersections



Virginia Street and SH 35 lighting, sidewalks, and curb ramp improvements project
Source: Google Earth, Baxter & Woodman

Park and the Calhoun County Fairgrounds, making it a high-activity area with frequent pedestrian use, especially by children and families. Intersections next to parks, schools, and event spaces require added safety measures because they experience heavier foot traffic and a greater risk of conflicts with vehicles.

- Solution: Upgrading this intersection with treatments used at Austin Street and Seadrift Street—such as a high-visibility crosswalk, improved lighting, and signal enhancements—would improve pedestrian visibility and safety when crossing (see Hot Spot No. 5).

Hot Spot No. 4 – SH 35 at intersections Half League Road, Sandcrab Boulevard, Smith Road, Virginia Street, Village Road, and Travis Street.

- Issue: It is necessary to cross SH 35 traffic to travel back and forth from the north and south side of Port Lavaca. Currently, the intersections are very long, and could use improvements to make them more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.
- Solution: Intersection improvements are recommended along SH 35 at Half League Road, Sandcrab Boulevard, Virginia Street, Travis Street, Village Road, and Smith Road. The Right of Way for SH 35 is approximately 160 feet wide, which is large enough to accommodate multi-modal configurations that allow for vehicles, golf carts, pedestrians, and bicycles to safely and efficiently cross. Some options could include the addition of sidewalks, pedestrian islands, and improved priority signals for pedestrians and bikes to cross the street before cars.

Hot Spot No 5 – Intersection of Seadrift Street and Austin Street

Continue to monitor the impact of recent upgrades at this intersection.

Hot Spot No. 6 – Improve entry to Lighthouse Beach

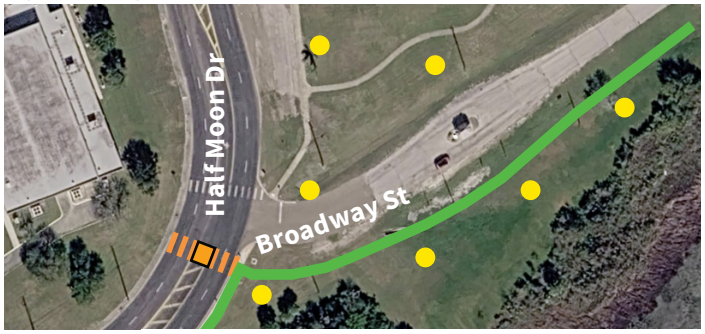
- Issue: Lighthouse Beach Park needs safer pedestrian access from Broadway Street.
- Solution: Relocating the crosswalk to the south side of the intersection and constructing a pedestrian refuge with a flashing beacon and signage to shorten crossing distances and increase visibility. In addition, there needs to be an ADA-compliant ramp and a new high-visibility crosswalk on the south corner, and extend the sidewalk along the south side of the entry drive. There is also an opportunity to upgrade this path to a share-use path. Define the roadway edge at the park and pool entrances with landscape plantings, and add pedestrian-scale lighting to enhance safety and comfort. Strengthening pedestrian and bicycle connections, along with improved placemaking and beautification, would make Lighthouse Beach a more inviting and active destination.

Figure X, Intersection of Seadrift Street and Austin Street



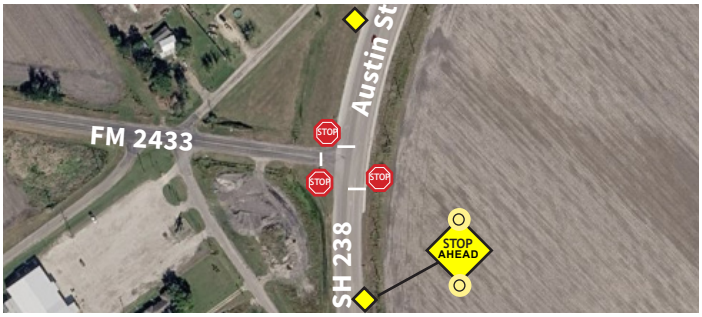
Intesection of Austin Street and Seadrift Street where improvements were completed around 2023
Source: Google Earth, Baxter & Woodman

Figure X, Lighthouse Beach Improvements



Access improvement to Light House Beach from Broadway Street with new crosswalk location (midblock crossing depicted in orange box with black outline) and shared-use path depicted in green. Approximate location for lighting improvements in yellow.
Source: Google Earth, Baxter & Woodman

Figure X, Intersection of SH 238 and FM 2433



Intersection of SH 238 and FM 2433 all-way stop project
Source: Google Earth, Baxter & Woodman

Figure X, Intersection of SH 238 and FM 2451



Intersection of SH 238 and FM 2541 all-way stop project
Source: Google Earth, Baxter & Woodman

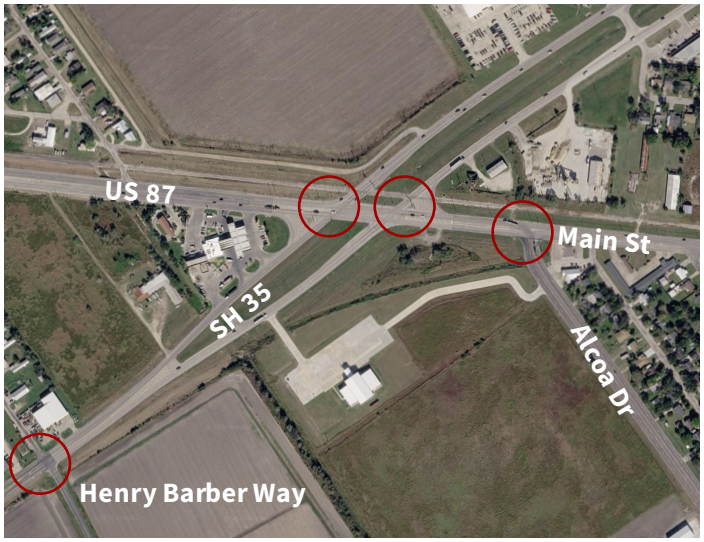
Hot Spot No. 7 – Improve intersections along SH 238

- Issue: Crash data from 2018-2025 indicated that causes for crashes included speeding and vehicles hitting other vehicles turning into driveways.
- Solution: SH 238 and FM 2433 and FM 2541 were identified to benefit for flashing All-Way Stop Signs, with the inclusion of “Stop Ahead” signs, to slow down traffic on this low-density residential strip. Additionally, lighting installation at intersections and reflectors could help increase visibility.

Hot Spot No. 8 – US 87, Henry Barber Way, SH 35, and Alcoa Drive

- The intersection of 87, Henry Barber Way, SH 35, and Alcoa Drive has many access points, and the City should ask TxDOT to perform a traffic study here to determine if a redesign of this span of intersections would better accommodate larger traffic flow heading to and from the Causeway.

Figure X, Port Lavaca Interchange



Interchange for US 87, SH 35, Alcoa Drive, and Henry Barber Way with conflict points circled in red
Source: Google Earth, Baxter & Woodman

Strategy 2.4.2:

Create local road access on the north side of the city to connect disconnected residential areas.

This strategy focuses on enhancing safety at intersections where conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists are most likely to occur. Improving intersection safety involves identifying high risk locations, evaluating crash patterns, and applying appropriate design treatments that reduce speeds, increase visibility, and create clearer, more predictable movements for all users. These improvements may include upgraded crosswalks, enhanced lighting, signal timing adjustments, curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, or other context sensitive measures that make intersections safer and more comfortable for people traveling by any mode.



Residential road connections
Source: Synder & Associates

Strategy 2.4.3:

Revise TxDOT truck routes and establish "No Truck Zones" in the City.

The proposed Truck Route Plan (see page 106) redirects heavy-vehicle traffic away from the downtown core by guiding trucks toward US 87, SH 35, and SH 238. To further protect areas with high pedestrian activity, such as downtown streets and school zones, truck-clearance restrictions are introduced to prevent large vehicles from entering these sensitive areas. This approach enhances safety, reduces congestion, and preserves the walkability of key community spaces. Additionally, "No Truck Zones" help reduce repair and maintenance costs on local roads.



Installation of truck route signage alerting trucks of low clearence.
Source: Pensacola News Journal

Strategy 2.4.4:

Consider adopting a "Complete Streets" policy.

The City should plan, design, and operate its streets to serve all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and drivers. This approach helps ensure that people of all ages and abilities can travel safely and comfortably throughout the community. It does not require every roadway to include a dedicated facility for each mode, but it does ensure that the needs of all modes are considered when determining how a street should function.

The City should prioritize locations with a history of crashes, complex traffic movements, or high pedestrian and bicycle activity. Improvements may include upgraded signage and high visibility pavement markings, enhanced lighting, improved signal timing, and the addition of features such as curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, or protected turn light cycle phases. By systematically addressing the design and operation of intersections, the City can reduce conflict points, improve visibility, and create safer, more predictable conditions for all roadway users.

One example is Half League Road, which functions as the primary north–south corridor for schools and parks, linking City (Tilley) Park, Calhoun High School, and the neighborhoods along its length. Tilley Street intersects Half League Road as an east–west connection, providing direct access from Travis Middle School and City Park to the corridor. Meanwhile, Jackson Elementary and Wilson Park are on the south end of this network along Seadrift Street, which Half League Road also connects to.

Together this T-shape connection will make it safer for families to travel to schools and parks. Grant opportunities through Safe Routes to Schools and Parks partnerships could help provide funding for these improvements. Additionally, Complete Street improvements could make it safer for golf carts to utilize bicycle routes and shared use paths to travel north and south, as depicted in Map X, *Active Transportation Plan.*



Shadey canopy along Complete Street in Washington, DC., with parking and a bike lane
Source: Smart Growth America



High visibility crosswalk, pedestrian refuge, and curb cuts
Source: Smart Growth America

Complete Streets Policy Example

Terrell, TX, adopted *Resolution No. 976* in June 2020 to establish a citywide Complete Streets policy. The resolution commits the city to planning, designing, and maintaining streets that are safe and accessible for all users, including children, older adults, and people with disabilities. It emphasizes that transportation infrastructure must support everyone traveling on, along, or across Terrell's streets and walkways, noting that features like sidewalks without curb ramps effectively exclude some residents.

The policy requires that Complete Streets principles become standard practice in all new transportation projects and maintenance. This includes ensuring safe street design, accessible sidewalks, and improved intersection crossings. The City of Terell identified several key implementation priorities including integrating complete street designs into Downtown Terrell revitalization efforts, developing a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program in partnership with Terrell ISD, and collaborating with developers to ensure new projects support Complete Street objectives. The City is actively applying these principles through the *Downtown Complete Streets and Quiet Zones Project* (2023) which utilized public workshops and open houses to gather community input for improving Downtown corridors and railroad crossings.

Source: North Central Texas Council of Governments

OBJECTIVE 2.5: Promote inter-city connectivity regionally.

Strategy 2.5.1:

Conduct a SH 35 Corridor Capacity Evaluation in coordination with TxDOT.

Work with TxDOT to perform a traffic study to decide if SH 35 west of US 87 warrants expansion from 2 lanes to 4 lanes as regional growth between Rockport, Tivoli, and Point Comfort continues.

Strategy 2.5.2:

Evaluate if ridership needs are met and if a collaboration with R-Transit is needed to provide adequate transit access to residents.

The City should regularly review ridership patterns, service gaps, and community demand to understand where improvements may be needed. Based on this evaluation, the City may explore partnerships with R-Transit to expand service within the City either through fixed routes or expanding on-demand capacity. This approach ensures that transit access remains responsive, equitable, and aligned with community needs.



R Transit Bus
Source: Community Connections of Lavaca County

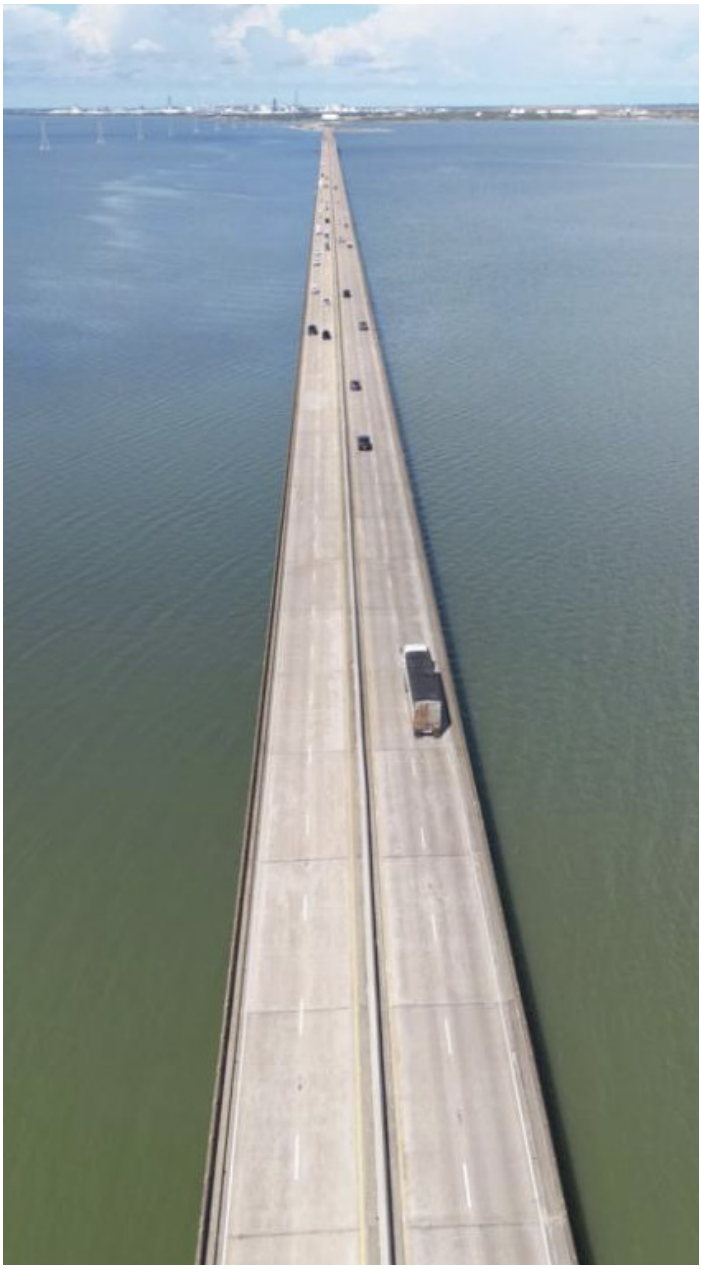


Port Lavaca Causeway heading towards Point Comfort
Source: Google Maps

Strategy 2.5.3:

Keep connected with TxDOT about future plans for the Causeway replacement.

Continue to keep to do date with the TxDOT rebuild of the Lavaca Bay Causeway. The City should keep up to date on this future project. Known details for this project include the bridge being rebuilt horizontally across without the vertical hump, so there wont be future boat access. This will make a shipping industry north of Port Lavaca logistically near impossible as there will be no direct ship access clearance.



Aerial image of Port Lavaca Causeway (2024)
Source: Texas A&M Harter Research Institute



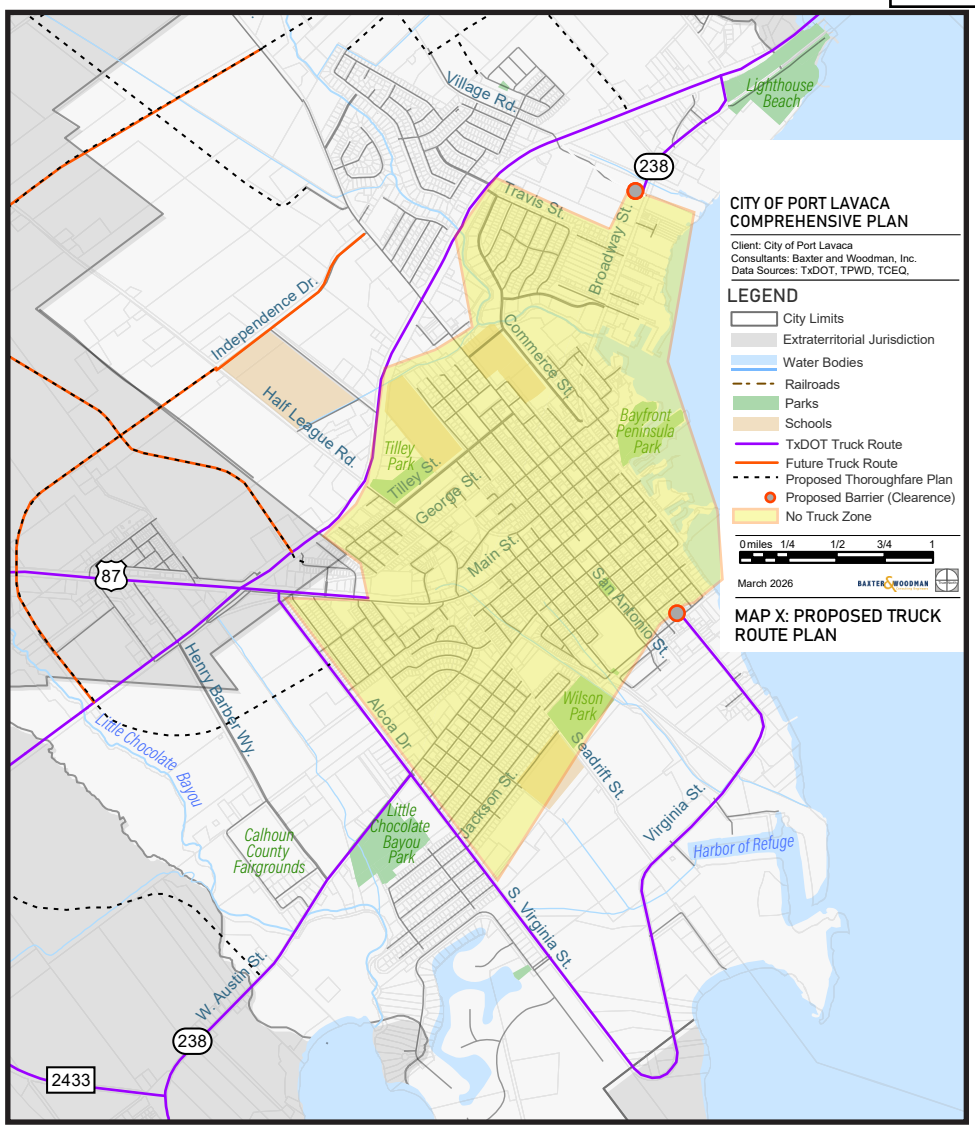
Permanent Truck Barrier with flashing lights in Elwood, IL
Source: Google Earth



Yellow barrier frame with hanging clearence bar
Source: BC Signs Illuminated



Truck and Truck Route signage
Source: Environmental Health



Strategy 2.5.4:

Revise existing Truck Route designations to prevent truck traffic in undesired areas.

TxDOT has approved revisions to the official truck route, redirecting truck traffic around the City of Port Lavaca rather than through Main Street as before. The updated route terminates at the Harbor of Refuge on the south side of the city, with trucks continuing along Virginia Street to Alcoa Drive to reconnect with US 87 and SH 35. In scenarios where development occurs north of SH 35 near the Business Park, the proposed plan recommends adding Independence Road to the revised truck network. Updated wayfinding signage installed by TxDOT will help guide truck traffic along the designated route.

Port Lavaca should work with TxDOT to establish new truck routes as new roadways are constructed and as development occurs.

To keep trucks out of undesired areas, clearance barriers are recommended on Broadway Street and Main Street. These barriers activate flashing lights when an oversized truck is detected. The example shown in the in the top, adjacent photo shows a permanent truck barrier in Elwood, IL featuring a stone façade, while the example on the bottom right is a more utilitarian bright yellow structure without additional lighting.

The truck route alignments are decided upon and should coordinate with where light industrial and business park land uses are planned. Non-designated truck route should still allow for temporary/ non- commercial uses of trucks, such as moving trucks, buses, public event trailers and trucks, personal recreational vehicles, mail/ shipping trucks, which are intended for residential and civic purposes not tied to a specific commercial property.

GOAL THREE: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

PORT LAVACA'S PARK SYSTEM EMPHASIZES ECO-TOURISM, WATERFRONT AMENITIES, ACCESSIBILITY TO ALL RESIDENTS, PARKLAND CONNECTIVITY, RECREATIONAL SERVICES, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AS A MEANS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

OVERVIEW

Port Lavaca benefits from a connected landscape of parks, trails, natural areas, and community programs that promote safety, wellness, and accessible recreation for people of all ages. The waterfront's park spaces and natural areas should serve as the economic and outdoor activity anchor for the city with unique costal experiences, which is then bolstered by inland nodes of more traditional recreational opportunities such as sports fields, playgrounds, and passive trails. Port Lavaca should aim for all residents and hotel accommodations to be within a 10-minite walk or a ½-mile distance to a publicly accessible park space. First and foremost, Port Lavaca should work towards a system of costal parks interconnected with a shared-use path, trail, and boardwalk network. Additional Park improvements to inland parks, such as Tilley Park, Wilson Park, and Little Chocolate Bayou Park, should continue to provide high-quality neighborhood and community-based recreational amenities. As roadway reconstruction occurs and new development is constructed Port Lavaca should ai towards developing a network of shared-use paths along major and minor arterial thoroughfares to serve as the primary active transportation corridors connecting all neighborhoods and destinations. Lastly, new parkland should be added, when the opportunity assises, within new residential neighborhoods, along the waterfront, and areas not already served by publicly accessible parkland.



Bayfront Peninsula Park playground in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter & Woodman



Guiding Principles for Parks and Open Space

PTOS Principle 1. - Access.

Parks, trails, and nature spaces should be accessible to all residents and visitors in Port Lavaca. No residents should be more than a ½-mile or 10-minute walking distance to a publicly available park and open space. All parks and open spaces should be connected to adjacent areas with sidewalks, shared-use paths, and/or trails, and include functional ADA curb ramps, crosswalks, and safety features.

PTOS Principle 2. - All Ages and All Abilities.

Parks should be usable, purposeful, and impactful for all residents regardless of their age or abilities. All parks should include usable and desired recreational facilities for residents and visitors of all ages, including toddlers, teenagers, adults, and seniors. In addition, all parks should include inclusive play elements and recreational facilities that cater to people with disabilities, physical or mental limitations, or other sensitivities. Facilities, for example, can include a wheelchair accessible swings, handicap accessible restrooms, pictorial signage, shade structures and adaptive seating, non-verbal communicative play elements, and texture-based interactive elements.

PTOS Principle 3. - Ecosystem Services.

Parks should serve as environmental respite from developed lands. Parks should serve as a functional usable space for residential, as well as a space for flood protection zones, buffers, and drainage sinks. All parks should be engineered to serve the needs of and mitigate the impacts of adjacent development and provide environmental protection for native species and fauna (such as dry-detention basins, wetland protection zones, and native costal prairie no-mow zones).

PTOS Principle 4. - Economic Strategy.

Continue to support and utilize Port Lavaca's parks, trails, boardwalks, and natural landscapes as an economic asset for the city, building and growing the eco-tourism capacity and potential of existing City landscapes and sites.

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Improve parkland accessibility and develop new park opportunities.

Strategy 3.1.1:

Utilize the proposed Parks and Open Space Plan Map to identify additional future parkland sites, recommended protected areas, and future active transportation facilities.

As identified on Map X, *Parks and Open Space Plan*, consider the acquisition of land to establish new parkland sites where existing residents have limited access to parkland, open spaces, and recreational amenities. Deficit areas are identified as areas without a park within a ten-minute walk or areas "cut-off" from parkland access due to major barriers such as major thoroughfares or rail lines. For example, to address existing needs for public parkland, which will only increase as north development occurs, consider the addition of parkland along North Virginia Street.

In addition, overall as development occurs and funding arises, consider the addition of parkland amenities adjacent to and on public and semi-public facility grounds such as at Calhoun County ISD school sites, City Hall, and land adjacent to churches, medical facilities, hotels, and assisted care facilities.

Also, ensure that new residential subdivisions and development include parklands and trails, especially in deficit areas not already served by parks, such as along northern Virginia Street, northern Smith Road, and some parts of southern Port Lavaca. For the detailed proposed, active transportation alignments (trails, shared use paths, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks) see Page X, Map X, *Active Transportation Plan*.

Lastly, continue to seek opportunities to develop parklands and protected vegetative corridors along critical waterways, such as the Chocolate Bayou and Mustang Bayou for the benefit of the general public.

Strategy 3.1.2:

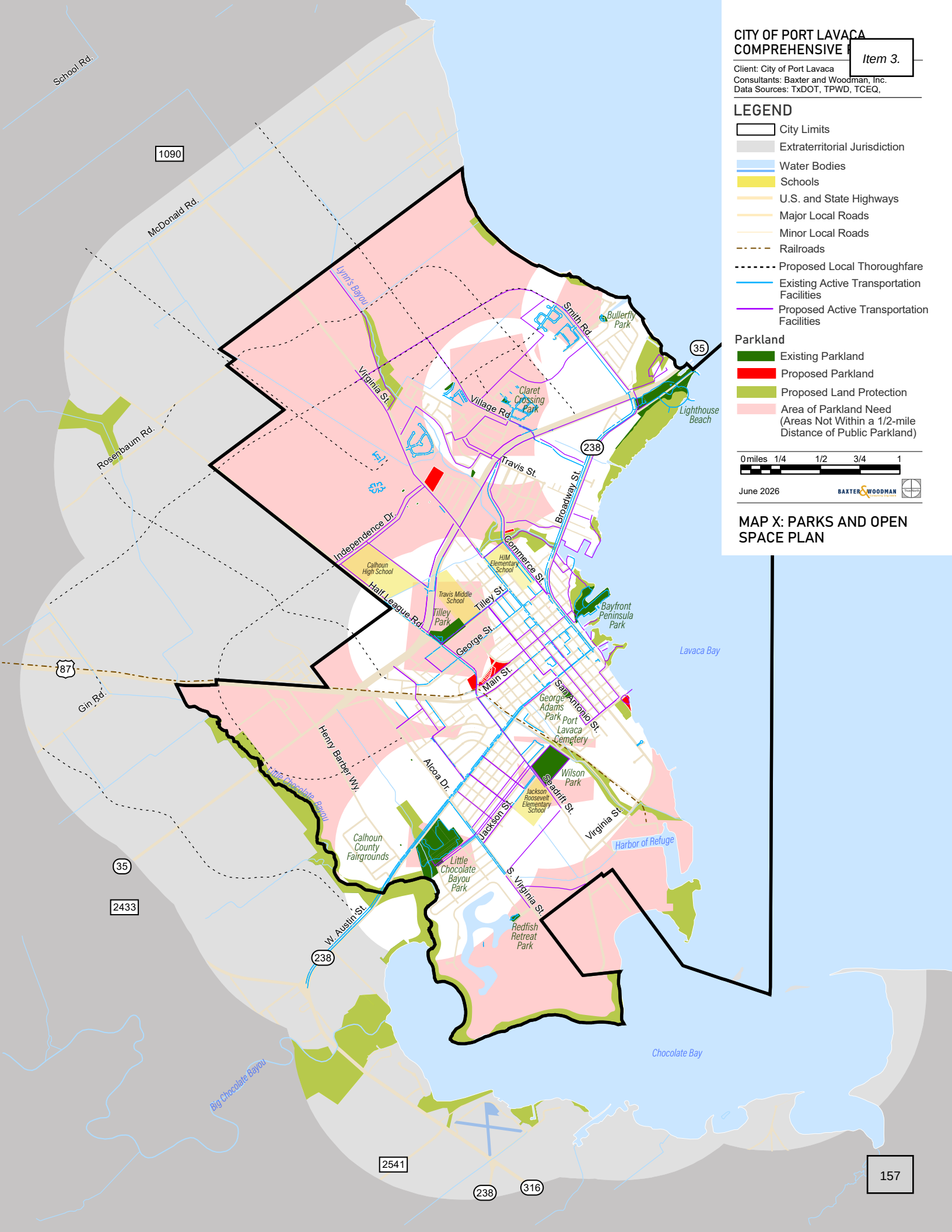
Consider developing three new parks in Port Lavaca, two of which have public beach access points in Port Lavaca.

Expanding public access to the waterfront and natural landscapes is essential as the Waterfront District and Downtown region continues to grow. Establishing two new public beach access points will ensure that both residents and visitors can enjoy the shoreline as development intensifies. These access points would help distribute visitor activity more evenly, reduce congestion at existing beaches, and strengthen the city's identity as a welcoming coastal destination. Additional inland parklands will also help serve residents immediate needs within a walkable distance. Key considerations include identifying parkland locations that balance environmental sensitivity with public demand, integrating amenities such as parking, restrooms, shade, water retention/ protection, and ADA compliant pathways. Coordinating ongoing waterfront improvements with roadway improvements and drainage projects will allow existing and future projects to connect seamlessly with trails, parks, and commercial areas, and help mitigate potential funding issues by pairing multiple projects together within one geographic area.

One potential park site includes the city owned Kitchen Site, located at/near 202 East South Street, which should include unpaved walking trails, a small parking lot, and potentially a wetland and beach access zone with a small pier.



Millville Waterfront Park on the Watson Bayou in Panama City, Florida
Source: Destination Panama City


CITY OF PORT LAVACA
COMPREHENSIVE
Client: City of Port Lavaca
Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,
LEGEND
City Limits
Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
Water Bodies
Schools
U.S. and State Highways
Major Local Roads
Minor Local Roads
Railroads
Proposed Local Thoroughfare
Existing Active Transportation Facilities
Proposed Active Transportation Facilities
Parkland
Existing Parkland
Proposed Parkland
Proposed Land Protection
Area of Parkland Need (Areas Not Within a 1/2-mile Distance of Public Parkland)
0 miles 1/4 1/2 3/4 1
June 2026
BAXTER & WOODMAN
MAP X: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN
School Rd.
1090
McDonald Rd.
Rosenbaum Rd.
Gin Rd.
87
35
2433
238
316
2541
Lynn's Bayou
Virginia St.
Village Rd.
Claret Crossing Park
Smith Rd.
Bullerfly Park
Lighthouse Beach
Travis St.
Broadway St.
Independence Dr.
Calhoun High School
Half League Rd.
HIM Elementary School
Commerce St.
Travis Middle School
Tilley St.
Tilley Park
George St.
Bayfront Peninsula Park
Lavaca Bay
Main St.
George Adams Park
Port Lavaca Cemetery
San Antonio St.
Henry Barber Wy
Little Chocolate Bayou
Alcoa Dr.
Wilson Park
Seadrift St.
Jackson Roosevelt Elementary School
Jackson St.
Virginia St.
Harbor of Refuge
Calhoun County Fairgrounds
Little Chocolate Bayou Park
S. Virginia St.
W. Austin St.
Redfish Retreat Park
Chocolate Bay
Big Chocolate Bayou

Port Lavaca should also look to establish an additional public access point along Broadway Street between the Existing City Harbor (Bayview Drive) and Lighthouse Beach. As development occurs, public access and easement agreements should be made with developers to allow for shared-community space adjacent to the waterfront.

The third parkland site could be located north of the old railroad half-diamond interchange along Half League Road (Parcel ID's 38625 and 19679). This area is already being considered for a detention pond, which will enhance capacity storage juts north of bottle neck caused by the railroad culvert. This pond will then drain into the drainage ditch parallel to the railroad heading south into Lavaca Bay. A simple trail network with native plantings and grasses can help to provide a non-water based natural space for residents and help screen and mitigate the existing light-industrial and transportation land uses along this portion of Main Street.

Strategy 3.1.3:

Utilize the updated 2026 Port Lavaca Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The most recent Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Port Lavaca is being updated in 2026. This document will have more specific analysis and strategies for maintaining and updating Port Lavaca parkland and facilities. Recommendations from the plan should be incorporated into annual budget and CIP to ensure that priorities, condition assessments, and long-term strategies remain aligned. The City should continue their regular review cycle to track progress towards goals and adjust priorities as needed.



Stonepine HOA single pikcleball court in Tomball, Texas
Source: BuildMyCourts

Strategy 3.1.4:

Consider projects, facility expansion, and improvements to existing Port Lavaca's Parks.

Utilize the following high-level list of improvements at each Port Lavaca park to improve facility and expand the overall recreation offerings provided:

Little Chocolate Bayou Park (County facility):

- Utilize the zone south of the existing playground (Property ID 18217) for an unpaved walking trail, small benches, and native planting groves
- Reconstruct the existing fishing piers
- Add other native no-now costal grass zones with small educational signage
- Develop wayfinding small-post signage at critical park junctions pointing to park facilities and locations
- Consider a small bench seating ring (nature education site and meeting space)
- Connect the trails to the existing dead ends of Purple Sage Drive and Oleander Drive
- Add an additional drinking fountain to the north side of the park
- Add a mural to the restroom building
- Add a canoe/ kayak launch site
- Develop native no-mow zones within the park (to reduce maintenance costs and improve the parks visual aesthetics)

Tilley Park / City Park:

- Add shade structures over the existing playgrounds
- Consider additional handicap and inclusive play elements and park features, such as a wheelchair assessable swing, all-abilities climbing bars, non-verbal interactive communications boards, tactile and sensory fidget elements, spinning and turning elements.
- Consider fence replacement and planting options surrounding the existing rectangle field
- Assess the sports field lighting, seating, structures, and storage facilities on site
- Add landscaping screening surrounding the utilities control sites
- Assess, schedule, and replace existing swing-sets
- Consider the addition of a shared/ dual-striped tennis, pickleball, and basketball rectangle concrete pad
- Develop native no-mow zones within the park (to reduce maintenance costs and improve the parks visual aesthetics)



Little Elm Park shade canopy in Dallas, Texas
Source: ForkNewsChannel



Firefly Resort RV Park in Corpus Christi, Texas
Source: Julie A., Trip Advisor, Firefly Resorts



Roberts Point Park in Port Aransas, Texas
Source: Amanda Spencer, Texas_Explorer

Claret Crossing Park (HOA Park):

- Assess the condition, potential damage, and weathering of the newer facilities to identify long-term replacement schedules and funding needs
- Consider a shade structure over the playground

Butterfly Park / Brookhollow Estates Park:

- Consider different fencing and screening options for utilities locations
- Implement the fencing project of the park
- Consider different fencing and barriers surrounding the large drain culvert, to create a sightline to the waterfront from the park
- Add pedestrian scale lighting
- Consider additional handicap and inclusive play elements and park features, such as a wheelchair accessible swing, all-abilities climbing bars, non-verbal interactive communications boards, tactile and sensory fidget elements, spinning and turning elements.

Lighthouse Beach Park:

- Add a row of trees and bushes along the parks edge with TX-35 to decrease noise pollution and improve campground experiences
- Improve the trail access into the park at Broadway Street by switching the unsignalized pedestrian crossing to the south side of the intersection, adding a refuge median, and connecting a continuous trail path on the costal edge of the street
- Consider additional playscape elements at the beachside playground (jungle-gym climbers, swings, exercise equipment, teeter-totters, etc.)
- Assess the conditions, replacement schedule, and potential to expand and improve the quality of and number of water-based elements at the Lighthouse Beach Splash Pad
- Consider alterative seating options under the existing pavilions, such as basket seats, hanging benches, and more
- Add unique small murals to each of the existing blue pavilions
- Develop plantings surrounding existing utilities fences zones to improve visual aesthetics
- Add a canoe/ kayak launch site
- Consider additional handicap and inclusive play elements and park features, such as a wheelchair accessible swing, all-abilities climbing bars, non-verbal interactive communications boards, tactile and sensory fidget elements, spinning and turning elements.
- Consider a number of shared fire pits and gathering spaces with grass-based 'party' games

Bayfront Peninsula Park:

- Implement the expand wetlands and boardwalk protect
- Define the parking lots edges, narrow driveways, and eliminate underutilized gravel and replace with native grass cover
- Consider the location for new sports courts
- Add an amphitheater/ small stage platform near the entrance of the park
- Add a shade structure to the existing playground
- Consider developing an addition small beach zone near the entrance of the park in between the two peninsulas
- Add a park map and signage near the entrance
- Maintain sightlines of the waterfront from the park entry at Commerce Street
- Add a canoe/ kayak launch site
- Consider additional handicap and inclusive play elements and park features, such as a wheelchair assessable swing, all-abilities climbing bars, non-verbal interactive communications boards, tactile and sensory fidget elements, spinning and turning elements.
- Consider additional ways to prevent beach sand erosion without solely relying on beach nourishment (note that from 1995 to 2025 the beach has been reduced from 3.24 acres to 1.71 acres, a 47% decrease)

Fae Bauer Sterling Park:

- Consider shade structure and canopy options
- Consider additional outdoor seating options
- Consider a small wooden elevated pergola style stage
- Increase the number of plantings and planter boxes to reduce the visual prevalence of hardscapes and increase natural ambient cooling effects of the space

Geroge Adams Park:

- Implement and construct the planned loop trail
- Utilize a conditions assessment and develop a replacement schedule for the climbing elements, merry-go-round spinner, and spring rider/ rocker, in the far west corner of the park
- Improve pavement access and material transition locations at the existing restrooms
- Conduct a long-term feasibility analysis to assess the replacement and update needs of the existing restroom structure



Waterfront stage example
Source: Town of Courtland



Painted mural by Justin Lopez at The Salty Pelican in Surfside Beach, Texas
Source: Justin Lopez





Examples of unique coastal themed play elements
Source: Eckernforde, Island Rental of Hilton Head

Redfish Retreat Park (HOA Park):

- Assess the condition, potential damage, and weathering of the newer facilities to identify long-term replacement schedules and funding needs
- Implement the long-term vision for the park with additional trees, wetland plantings, a small gazebo, and other vegetative improvements

Wilson Park:

- Add a concrete or decomposed granite trail loop surrounding the park
- Consider additional teenage and young-adult based activities, which could include sports courts, a young-adult climbing facility, and a basketball court, at Wilson Park near the existing skatepark
- Assess the sports field lighting, seating, and storage facilities on site
- Consider additional handicap and inclusive play elements and park features, such as a wheelchair assessable swing, all-abilities climbing bars, non-verbal interactive communications boards, tactile and sensory fidget elements, spinning and turning elements, and fully accessible restroom facilities

Port Lavaca YMCA Municipal Pool (County facility):

- Conduct a conditions assessment to determine deficits and improvements to extend the lifetime of the pool, including pavements, filters and pumps, lighting, tables and seating, parking and gates, shade structures, and restroom facilities
- Consider access management of the parking lot/ Redefine the parking lots edge along Half Noon Drive to improve clarity, flow, and aesthetics
- Consider planting shade trees around the pool and/or adding an additional shade structure to one corner



Pine Gully Park decomposed granite trails and playscape elements
Source: City of Seabrook, Texas

Strategy 3.1.4:

Continue to update the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) list to incorporate projects that improve parklands, open spaces, and recreational facilities.

As the need arises and funding streams allow, port Lavaca should add the parkland and facility improvement described in Strategy 3.2.2. in their updated CIP projects list. Reference Chapter 3, Implementation, for a list of potential funding partnerships and implementation strategies for these improvements. In recent years, Prot Lavaca has made numerous improvements to the parks and recreation system through public moneys and grants, as described in Chapter One within the accomplishments section (such as a new playground at, bike lanes on Smith Road, new sidewalk alignments, and a new skatepark at Wilson Park. Existing funding revenue streams for CIP projects includes a general fund, public utility fund, utility construction fund, beach fund, hotel occupancy fund, port and harbors fund, bonds/loans, capital leases, and grants (of which grants are the largest 2026 to 2030 funding source, at $44,779,217, accounting for 54% of all existing city allocated funds as of 2026).

A list of the existing park and recreation facility related projects, already included in the City's 2026-2030 CIP projects list, includes:

- The Beach Fund - Beach improvements for 2026, 2027 and 2028, totaling $4,350,000
- Port and Harbor Fund - Funds allocated for 2026, 2028, 2029, and 2030, totaling $21,896,306
- The General Fund's Parks Category - Funds allocated for each fiscal year totaling $1,625,000
- Butterfly Park - Wrought Iron/Brick Fence (2026)
- Wilson Park - Covered Basketball Court (2026)
- Cabana Structure at Butterfly Park (2026)
- "Kitchen Property" Public Access to Lavaca Bay (2026)
- Coastal Resiliency - Living Shoreline (2026)
- Bayfront Park - Improvement (2027)
- Bayfront Park Entrance Rehabilitation (2027, 2028)
- Bench Shade Structures at Parks (2027)
- Shared-use Path from Bayfront Park to Scully's (2028)
- George Adams Park Sidewalk (2028)
- Wilson Park - Pickleball Courts (2028)
- George Adams Park Shade Structure (2028)
- Parking Improvements at City Park (2028-30)

Strategy 3.1.5:

Incorporate inclusive play elements into all parks for people of all ages and all abilities.

Inclusive park elements include those that people with disabilities, sensitivity, or other mental or physical limitations can utilize with barrier. Inclusive play facilities address the physical limitations due to age, cognitive or behavioral limitations (autism, down syndrome, dementia, ADHD, etc.), physical limitation (cerebral palsy, deafness, blindness, language barriers, sun sensitivity, etc.).

In 2025, Calhoun County completed the inclusive playground in Little Chocolate Bayou Park and it is currently the only inclusive playground in Port Lavaca. For Port Lavaca's city parks, when considering what facilities to add, they should also consider facilities that encourage inclusive play, such as tactile, musical, and climbing elements and playground facilities that are wheelchair accessible. Additionally, consider all sensory elements within the parks, such as smells, textures, sightlines, noise, lighting, distances between elements, clarity of navigation, levels of exposure, languages and pictorials, and the styles of interaction between users. Lastly, park elements should be ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) complaint, such as trails and pathways, pavement and playground surfacing transitions, restroom ramps and access, and parking.

Strategy 3.1.6:

Continue to expand opportunities for public feedback and environmental education.

Educational resources and campaigns are one of the most impactful ways to influence residents' behavior and perceptions. An understanding of native ecosystems, natural processes, and the human impact on native/ local environments to central costal Texas, can help decrease littering, increase appreciation for wetlands, and provide hands-on learning experiences for youth. As new wetland, boardwalk, shoreline erosion, and coastal projects are undertaken, ask the public for their feedback, as a means to continually improve the outcomes of future projects. The city should also install signage at wetland and eco-system locations which educate reader on the importance of wetlands and about the flora and fauna they will likely see. In addition, continue to provide avenues where residents can let the city know about tree and vegetation issues in city parks and city-maintained right-of-way. Lastly, consider educational partnerships with Calhoun ISD for ecosystem educational opportunities, such as field trips, educational demonstrations, and interactive planting opportunities.

Typical Inclusive Park Elements

Pictorial, Tactile, and Multi-language Signage



Multi-functional Swings and Rockers



Tactile Play Elements



Auditory Play Elements



Clearly Defined Walkways and Markings with No Vertical Edges



Sliding / Climbing Elements for Independent Arm or Leg Use



Multi-person Spinning and Rotating Elements



Covered Seating, Electrical Connections, Seating Options, and Respite Zones



Image Sources: WGTE Public Media, Landscape Structures, Design Concepts, Playworld, TerrainGroup

Strategy 3.1.7:

Continue to promote opportunities for park-based tourism.

The city should continue to promote the eco-tourism industry in Port Lavaca as a means of stable and reoccurring revenue generation. The city should consider joint campaigns with Port O'Connor, Calhoun County, and the Victoria Economic Development Corporation (VEDC), to promote region-wide recreation offerings.

Consider the city's capacity to digitally promote new construction projects, ecosystem education, the Light House beach campgrounds, boat slips and docks, pathways, Downtown, annual events, and local businesses.

In addition, consider joint campaigns with local hotels during peak visitor months, such as in the fall and spring, during the annual Calhoun County Fair, and during the city's Texas Mid-Coast Birding Festival (which brought in over 300 visitors in its inaugural year of 2025). Ensuring the long-term viability of local hotels is crucial to maintain the Hotel Occupancy Tax fund's revenue generation for the city.

Lastly, continue to promote the Texas Mid-Coast Birding Festival and assess the annual capacity to expand offerings and event programming. This event could become a crucial marketing campaign for the city and become its hallmark tourism event, increasing the city's regional prestige and perception.



Small-scale biridng and wildlife viewing boardwalk platform
Source: Aquidneck Land Trust

Strategy 3.1.8:

Develop a farmers' market and seafood market at Bayfront Peninsula Park.

Farmers and seafood markets help expand access to fresh, locally sourced produce and seafood, support regional growers and fishers, and provide local residents with healthier food options. Markets also serve as community gathering spaces where visitors can socialize, attend local events, and encourage small-business growth. A seafood market in particular helps strengthen Port Lavaca's coastal identity by highlighting the region's fishing heritage. Together, these markets can contribute to economic resilience and food security as well as bring regular economic activity to the park throughout the year. The City should consider how often the market should be held based on vendors and space availability. Consider utilizing the existing pavilion at Bayfront Peninsula Park as a covered space for a seafood and farmers' market. Once established, reconsider the location of the market and the operational capacity at other locations, such as at City Harbor. Reference Strategy X.X.X., within the Waterfront Plan section of Goal 1, *Land Use and Community Character*, on page XX.



Rockport Fulton Market Days is a large-scale reoccurring market event held at Rockport Harbor that Port Lavaca can model a smaller local market after
Source: City of Rockport, Texas



Birding and wildlife education signage at the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory
Source: Visit Brazosport

Strategy 3.1.9:

Consider adding parks facilities that Port Lavaca does not yet have to make each park a unique experience.

The facilities and offerings within the park system should be unique to the city and place its in. Additionally, each park within a city's system should offer unique experiences, showcasing its unique landscape, natural features, and location. So often, every park within a city provides much of the same facilities- a playground, a swing set, a loop trail, and maybe a basketball court or two. Port Lavaca should aim to balance resident needs while making each park a unique experience. Currently every Port Lavaca park has at minimum a playground facility and a simple trail. As funding arises the City should instead look to add unique facilities that the city does not already have, such as a nature playground, tennis and pickleball dual-stripes courts, field games, a running track, canoe/ kayak launches, public art features, a tiny-tots playscape, loose-parts play, sports bike pump-track, a fitness equipment zone, a sandbox, and a dog park.

For example, the dual county-city Little Chocolate Bayou Park has a unique mix of park facilities featuring a fishing pond, community garden, a large inclusive playground, a picnic table and grills pavilion, and new restroom facilities. The park could be enhanced to showcase the water-based park location through no-now denaturalization sites, reconstructing the fishing piers, adding a small outdoor education seating ring, and providing additional educational landscape signage.



Kayak and canoe launch site in League City, Texas
Source: City of League City

Strategy 3.1.10:

Encourage the development of canoe and kayak boat launches and a network of blueway routes in Lavaca Bay and Chocolate Bay.

Port Lavaca's waterfront and bay system offer significant opportunities to expand water based recreation and eco tourism. Paddling, wildlife viewing, and outdoor activities continue to be popular activities within the region, such as the Port O'Connor paddle/ blueway trail. Utilizing the existing waterfront parks and safe passage inlets, the City should actively support the development of canoe and kayak launches and a coordinated network of blueway routes throughout Lavaca Bay and Chocolate Bay, connecting to Port O'Connor if determined safe. These facilities can enhance resident access to the water, attract visitors seeking water-based activities, and strengthen the City's identity as a coastal recreation destination. Blueway's typically include in-water post markers (similar to trail markers), safety and regulatory signage at launch sites, and either floating or embankment launch pads. Reference Strategy X.X.X., within the Waterfront Plan section of Goal 1, *Land Use and Community Character*, on page XX.

As described within the Calhoun County Texas Shoreline Access Plan, bayous should be utilized as public access recreational routes, with occasional public launch sites. Port Lavaca should consider launch sites at Little Chocolate Bayou Park, Lighthouse Beach Park, Bayfront Peninsula Park, the proposed park at the Kitchen Site, Port Lavaca Shooting Range, and on the south shore of Chocolate Bay as development occurs.



Kayak and canoe launch site and amenities
Source: National Parks Service

Strategy 3.1.11:

Develop additional teen and young adult activities and facilities.

Park facilities and outdoor spaces often cater towards kindergarten through sixth and seventh grade-aged residents, while teenagers often lack sufficient recreational options and amenities. The needs of different age groups should always be met with the park facilities available. Port Lavaca has recently added a skatepark to Wilson Park, which helps target the teenager and young adult demographic. Continued efforts to engage teenagers should be made to identify the most desired and feasible facilities needed, such as additional sports courts, programming, community event features, rope climbs/ challenge parks, kayaking and canoeing, unpaved narrow trails, and additional wheeled sports locations. Providing recreational offerings in a smaller community like Port Lavaca can help deter vagrancy and crime, through providing healthy and stable means to engage with friends and deter boredom.

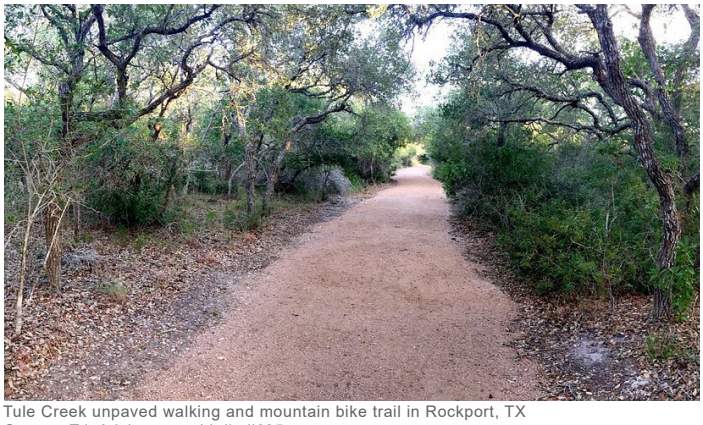
Strategy 3.1.12:

Consider a performance stage and an additional playground zone towards the entrance of Bayfront Peninsula Park, northeast of East Railroad Street.

Currently, most facilities at Bayfront Peninsula Park are located towards the end of the peninsulas. To help draw people into the park from Commerce Street, addition parkland amenities should be added to the open fields just east of the high berm at the dead ends of Railroad Street and Randle Street. The small performance stage/ amphitheater and the additional playground zone will provide visitors to Downtown and Downtown events with additional leisure space and help develop the capacity for events within the park itself. Ensure that the added facilities do not block sight lines of the water from Commerce Street and do not detract from the visual integrity of the shoreline and waterfront overall.



Frontier Park in Erie, Pennylvania, utilizes the natural berm slope of the land to create a slide features and walkways
Source: Goric Playscapes



Tule Creek unpaved walking and mountain bike trail in Rockport, TX
Source: TripAdvisor user Lhdhall625

Strategy 3.1.13:

Prioritize sidewalk and trail projects that connect to and are adjacent to parkland and civic buildings.

As the City evaluates future sidewalk and trail investments, priority should be given to projects that create or strengthen connections to existing parks, waterfront areas, and planned open spaces. Sidewalks and trails that directly link neighborhoods to parkland not only increase walkability but also enhance safety, reduce reliance on vehicle trips for short distances, and encourages daily physical activity. When sequencing projects, the City should focus on filling in the gaps of routes to parks, especially in areas where there is no safe and direct access on foot.

For example, the proposed shared-use path on the coastal side of Broadway from Lighthouse Beach to Downtown and the Trail corridor along Railroad Street should be the next top priorities for the city, as these corridors connect the major economic and recreational hubs in Port Lavaca. In addition, sidewalk and trail connections to community and civic buildings should be prioritized including the Bauser Community Center, schools, and the Calhoun County Library.

Strategy 3.1.14:

Provide adequate shade protection on city sidewalks, trails, and shared-use paths.

One of the major barriers in central Texas to walking and biking can be the heat. Providing occasional benches surrounded by two to three trees can provide a rest-stop location for trail and pathway users. Ensure that tree's planted within the thoroughfare rights-of-way, adjacent to active transportation facilities, are tree species that will eventually provide large tree canopies and are adapted to survive major hurricanes and drought.

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Improve local coordination, programs, and community buildings.

Strategy 3.2.1:

Consider expanding the Bauer Community Center to include centers for learning, fitness, community, and cultural arts.

As described in the City's 2026 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and guided by community feedback provided throughout the Comprehensive Plan engagement process, the City should increase capacity at the Bauer Community Center. The community supports new buildings and additions to house community and social services offices and flex spaces, a wellness and fitness center, and a learning and opportunity centers for non-profit groups, tutoring/ trainings, and community events.



Example of a community center game room and fex space
Source: Eielson Air Force Community Center

Strategy 3.2.2:

Continue to collaborate with Calhoun County and the Victoria Economic Development Corporation (VEDC) to provide high quality amenities for visitors and residents.

Port Lavaca, being the largest municipality in the county and economic hub for the costal Lavaca River region, requires county-wide coordination to maintain existing stability and encourage growth. Port Lavaca has the county's major grocery stores, the Calhoun County Fairgrounds and major nearby employers, which can work in tandem with the parks system as a promotional tool for further investments in the city.

Economic strategies, funding mechanisms, inter-municipal efforts, and larger regional projects should be in alignment with County goals and wider regional trends. Larger funding streams for coastal and inter-municipal projects can be attained through coordination with VEDC. Many residents of Victoria travel to the cost of day-trips and weekend recreational offerings, which is a major revenue generator for the city. Maintaining and building relationships with the County and VEDC can help provide funding, research, and leverage to develop and attract larger eco-tourism, coastal economic, and resilience-based projects.



Example of a community-scale fitness room
Source: The Pointe at Victoria



Example of a newly constructed community meeting room
Source: Montgomery County, Texas, Precinct Three

Strategy 3.2.3:

Continue to work with Calhoun County ISD (CCISD), Calhoun County Library, and YMCA to expand youth programs and recreational activities, including summer camps, aquatic lessons, developmental programs, and athletics-based offerings.

As described in Strategy X.X, youth and teenager activities are key to retaining long-term residents, improving the familial quality of life in Port Lavaca, and encouraging outdoor activity. The Calhoun County YMCA has a well-established history of providing sports and recreation to local residents. The Port Lavaca YMCA building was built in 2008, and provides opportunities for youth activities, fitness, and volunteering. The YMCA also manages Port Lavaca City Pool, and provides swimming lessons, water fitness classes, and open swim. The CCISD has high quality indoor sports courts and sports fields that the City can partner with the schools to use for public events.

Port Lavaca should continually assess the potential for expanded and new summer camps, aquatic lessons, developmental programs, and athletics-based offerings at Little Chocolate Bayou park, the Bauer Community Center, and the YMCA Pool.

Currently, city and local entities provide special community events, teen programs, foreign language learning, senior programs, teen programs, child programs, and historical programs. Popular offerings in other communities, not already fully provided in Port Lavaca include, cooking classes, open gymnasium time, outdoor adventure programming, gymnastics/ tumbling, social dances, wellness activities, therapeutic recreation, e-sports, and daylong summer camps.



Newly built fishing/crabbing deck at Smith Harbor
Source: City of Port Lavaca, Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust

Strategy 3.2.4:

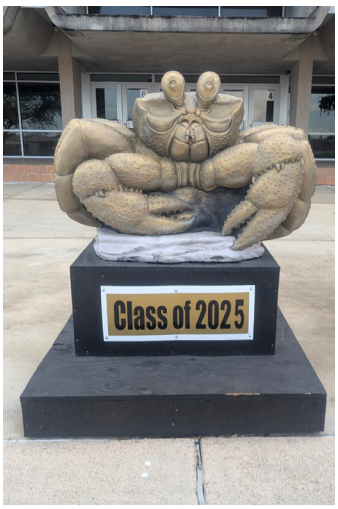
Continue to incorporate local artists' art and unique design elements into all Port Lavaca parks.

Each Port Lavaca park should be a unique destination. Standard facilities can have details that make it distinguishable from the facilities at other parks. For examples, the La Belle at Bayfront has a nautical ship theme that makes it easily identifiable and complements the view of the Bay. Some other artistic elements include the sandcrab statues around the City. These sandcrab statues could also be installed in parks with a corresponding theme. The Butterfly Pocket Park could incorporate butterfly themed art and attractive gardens for pollinators. Wilson Park could incorporate vibrant murals celebrating sports to match its more active feel. The existing murals on restrooms buildings at Bayfront and Lighthouse beach, could be expanded to include developing art at Wilson Park, Little Chocolate Bayou Park restrooms, and other city buildings with blank walls.

Other unique recreational facility designs can include natural wood-based swing sets, nature playgrounds and climbing grounds, additional statue arts, kinetic sculptures, decorative crosswalks (such as at Bayfront park), and plaster-casted costal animal features for climbing.



Boat art in Port Aransas, Texas
Source: Amberlynn Christian



Sandcrab statue in Port Lavaca, Texas
Source: Baxter & Woodman



Heron statue at Oso Bay Wetlands Preserve in Corpus Christi, Texas
Source: Caller Times

Strategy 3.2.5:

Continue to work with home developers to provide parklands in new developments within areas not already served by parks to help meet the communities demand.

The City of Port Lavaca should continue to collaborate with home developers to incorporate parklands and recreational amenities in neighborhoods that are not currently served by existing City parks. Developer constructed or HOA maintained parks can play a key role in meeting community demand by providing nearby open space, playgrounds, and gathering areas within new subdivisions. The addition of past parks by developers, such as Butterfly and Claret Crossing parks, helped provide park facilities in locations where gaps in park service exist within Port Lavaca. Keeping up this strategy will help increase the number of parkland in Port Lavaca. Additionally, the City should support opportunities for developers to dedicate publicly accessible trail easements to create future connections between neighborhoods and adjacent parcels. These trail easements should integrate with the broader trail and mobility concepts outlined in the Transportation Goal recommendations on Page X.

Strategy 3.2.6:

Continue to work with Tx,DOT and Calhoun County to implement the Comprehensive plan's shared use path and trails network along major state highways.

As detailed in Objective 2.2, and on Map X, *Active Transportation Plan*, multiple 10-foot-wide share use path and trail projects run along and within Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and Calhoun County roadway rights-of-way. The city should continue to work with the state and county to coordinate funding and construction plans for these active transportation facilities as fit. Trail and shared-use path projects should be undertaken in-tandem with other drainage improvements, grading projects, utilities upgrades or replacements, roadway reconstruction, or other roadway improvement plans. This will help increase the potential funding options, encourage proper/ desired construction design from the on-set, and reduce overall construction phase impacts.

Strategy 3.2.7:

Consider adding parkland dedication requirements without a fee-in-lieu option to Chapter 42 of the City Code of Ordinances.

While most newer residential subdivisions in Port Lavaca have public parks, the city should consider out-right requiring new residential subdivisions and multi-family residential complexes to dedicate new public park land within the Code of Ordinances. The Code should include/ establish minimum standards and facilities with a number of recreational facilities, what is considered usable and reasonable parkland, maintenance and upkeep standards, responsibilities and access requirements, public trail options, sidewalk and pathway standards, pavilions and shade options, benches and seating, and options to preserve wetlands and forested lands as a means to decrease formal traditional requirements.

In addition, Port Lavaca should consider parkland, public open space, outdoor seating, and/or plaza space requirements for commercial-retail development above a certain acreage (particularly larger strip malls, subdivided rental space construction, and larger business park development).

Strategy 3.2.8:

Consider a "bike to the event" incentive, rewards, or offerings to encourage walking and biking to local city events.

Providing free meal tickets, entries into a raffle, or reduced entry pricing for special event visitors who arrived by way of walking or biking can help to increase the use of active transportation facilities, encourage attendance, and reduce large event parking concerns. These incentives could be utilized for multiple events including Iguana Fest, Juneteenth Celebration, Port Lavaca Art Walk, Star Spangled Bay Bash, the County Fair, and Christmas Parade. These incentives should also be considered by employers within Port Lavaca where access to the place of employment is feasible by way of walking or cycling.

OBJECTIVE 3.3: Enhance the administration, operations, and maintenance of city parks and recreational facilities.

Strategy 3.3.1:

Conduct a programs and services capacity study for all programs, facilities, staffing, and budgets associated with the Port Lavaca park and recreation facilities.

To ensure that Port Lavaca's parks and recreation system can meet current and future community needs, the City should continually assess its existing programs and services. This assessment should evaluate the operational capacity of all recreational programs, facilities, staffing levels, and budget resources associated with the City's parks, recreation offerings, and the Senior Center. By regularly reviewing performance and capacity, the City can identify gaps, anticipate future demand, and make informed decisions about program expansion, staffing adjustments, and facility improvements.

Below is a summary list of considerations that should be assessed every fiscal year:

- Assess the capital, staffing, and funds needed to expand programs
- Assess if the parks staffing provides adequate operational support and maintenance capacity
- Consider shared-program agreements with public and private institutions for additional recreational space
- Work with Calhoun County ISD and YMCA to identify options for expanding recreational offerings as identified in Recommendation XXX

Strategy 3.3.2:

Continue to develop a digital library through Google MyMaps and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) portals of all parkland facilities and amenities and begin to develop an Asset Management Program.

The City currently maintains a digital library through Google MyMaps to document project progress, future plans, and inventory park facilities throughout Port Lavaca. The KMZ files created through MyMaps can be converted into GIS shapefiles, allowing features to be quickly documented in MyMaps and then integrated into a GIS ArcPro portal. While both platforms can create maps, GIS ArcPro provides more advanced editing, data management, and spatial analysis tools that support long-term asset management.

GIS allows multiple attribute fields to be associated with each asset, enabling the City to organize information such as condition, installation date, maintenance history, size and length of facilities, and responsible maintenance entity within a single point or feature. GIS also supports a wide range of spatial analysis tools (including buffer, service area, hotspot, overlay, and network analyses) which can help identify service gaps, prioritize improvements, and support data-driven decision-making. Lastly, a true GIS asset management program will allow the city to receive updates on needed and upcoming replacement and project needs.



New parking lot, sidewalk connections, culverts and entry to Wilson Park in Port Lavaca (2023). *Source: City of Port Lavaca*

Strategy 3.3.3:

Conduct a lighting survey at night of all parklands and facilities to identify dark zones, lighting inconsistencies, and potential safety hazards.

Respondents to the Port Lavaca Community Survey expressed concerns about insufficient lighting and malfunctioning fixtures along trails, within parks, and along city streets. To address these issues, the City should complete a daytime and nighttime comprehensive lighting survey documenting location of existing light figures, pole heights, materials, light levels (footcandles), tree limb obstructions, bulb types, and the condition of poles, fixtures, and pavilion lighting. Findings from the survey will help the City identify and prioritize areas where lighting improvements are most needed, particularly in locations with limited or no existing lighting. Ensure that all park entrances and access points have adequate lighting for overall public safety.

Strategy 3.3.4:

Continue assessing the community's parkland and facility needs on an annual basis, including potential new sports and recreation facilities, shade enhancements, safety improvements, and programming needs beyond those identified in this Comprehensive Plan.

The City should continue to regularly evaluate additional park needs as they emerge. Ongoing engagement with residents, community leaders, and developers will be essential to understanding evolving priorities and ensuring that future improvements align with community expectations.

Strategy 3.3.5:

Conduct a tree survey in Port Lavaca.

The city should conduct a tree survey along major arterial corridors, within parks, on public-facility grounds, and at other notable locations. A tree survey/ inventory is an on-site assessment and/or LiDAR assessments of existing tree species, estimated age, species, invasives identification, health detriments, and other factors which effect a trees visual health and integrity. A tree survey can help the City make informed decisions about the care and management of their existing tree stock long-term. Outcomes of this survey can spur a change in median tree management, root protection, improved protections of the oldest city trees, and locations of sensitivity or preservation when new construction occurs.

Strategy 3.3.6:

Conduct a boat ramp conditions survey, needs assessment, and capacity analysis for Port Lavaca's existing ramps at Bayfront Park and Lighthouse Beach.

The City should conduct a survey of existing boat ramps to assess the lifetime of the infrastructure. Factors to assess include the water dept at multiple locations, erosion and damage locations, concrete stability, sloping or sagging, concrete joint separation, sediment build-up, and existing users / growth capacity. This strategy aims at ensuring the long-term viability of existing boat slips and identifying the long-term needs to maintain operations.







Examples of boat ramp improvement projects, which include signage, soil restabilization, boardwalks, and piers.
Source: City of Gulf breeze, City of Cape Coral, Deltaville Community Association



Millville Waterfront Park on the Watson Bayou in Panama City, Florida
Source: Destination Panama City
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GOAL FOUR: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

PORT LAVACA IS A COMMUNITY OF INTERCONNECTED NEIGHBORHOODS AND DISTRICTS OFFERING DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON NEIGHBORHOOD-SCALE CHARACTER, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, AND SHARED AMENITIES THAT FOSTER CONNECTION AND A STRONG SENSE OF PLACE.

OVERVIEW

Beyond employment, housing is often among the top reasons new residents move into a city. The quality and attributes of housing structures and neighborhoods, along with the amenities offered, define a city and how its residents move about and operate day-to-day. Factors regarding housing and neighborhoods that impact residents include the type of housing, quality of housing, locations of neighborhoods, connectivity between and proximity to everyday needs (daycares, grocery stores, schools, pharmacies), and access to green spaces, waterfronts, and parkland amenities. The recommendations within this Housing and Neighborhood section aims to further provide the needed housing types, housing quality, and commercial-retail viability needed for a growing and diversifying community. Through implementation, Port Lavaca will become a more livable, walkable, drivable, and safer community. The addition of neighborhood-commercial space within and adjacent to multi-family and single-family housing development will help create a sense of community and help provide residents with more housing options that fit their stage of life. The preservation and rehabilitation of sub-standards housing and historical commercial-retail structures will help preserve Port Lavaca's history. Lastly, a series of regulations, requirements, and incentives can help to provide a complete interconnected trail system, spur the development of larger lot homes, and aid in the need for higher quality homes and residential structures. For additional recommendations regarding land uses, housing, commercial structures, and community character, see Goal 1, *Land Use and Community Character*, and Goal 7, *Resilience.*



Clement Cove housing development along Lavaca Bay
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Guiding Principles for Housing and Neighborhoods

HN Principle 1. - Neighborhoods are designed to promote social interaction and foster a safe, comfortable environment.

Residential neighborhoods and subdivisions should provide spaces for social interaction, infrastructure that aids in social and economic mobility, and housing that is safe and adequate for resident's needs.

HN Principle 2. - Provide for a mix of different housing types.

Multiple housing typologies and layouts within a city create a resilient housing market, provide suitable accommodation for people in different life-stages, and can help promote the historical-style bungalow and coastal cottage charm of Port Lavaca.

HN Principle 3. - Neighborhood Commercial should enhance access to everyday needs.

Small-scale neighborhood commercial spaces (cafés, daycares, etc.) should be located adjacent to, within, and within proximity to residential structures.

HN Principle 4. - Use planning and development regulations to protect neighborhoods from incompatible land uses or nuisance to residents.

Neighborhoods and districts should feel cohesive, but not redundant or monotonous. Industrial lands, or land uses deemed a nuisance, should not be located within or directly adjacent to residential lands. Housing typologies within a neighborhood should vary, but overall have a similar character, style, quality of construction, and standard.

HN Principle 5. - Design neighborhoods with access to parks, green spaces, and coastal amenities.

All residents should have easy, safe, and convenient, access to parks, green spaces, and coastal amenities. The coast should be treated as a public amenity shared by all Port Lavaca, and access should not be hindered where viable.

HN Principle 6. - Neighborhoods should be accessible via bikes or walking.

Neighborhoods and residential districts should have an adequate number of sidewalks, trails, and safe streets, which allow for the comfortable use of walking or cycling. New subdivisions should be connected internally with a network of sidewalks and connected externally to the wider sidewalk and trail network of the City.

HN Principle 7. - Use planning and development regulations to protect neighborhoods from incompatible land uses or nuisance to residents.

Support preservation strategies that respect the heritage, context, design, and scale of older neighborhoods while recognizing the evolution of those neighborhood's built form.

HN Principle 8. - Promote neighborhood identity.

Neighborhoods should feel cohesive and display some form of permanence. The structures which residents take the most pride in are often historic and have a sense of generational impact, such as along Main Street, churches, and parklands. A neighborhood's or district's character, identity, and design features should always be showcased, preserved, and consistent with new in-fill development.



OBJECTIVE 4.1: Ensure neighborhoods have a wide variety of housing options with access to public amenities and everyday necessities.

Strategy 4.1.1:

Continue to encourage the development of market rate multi-family and single-family housing.

Port Lavaca has a large stock of income-based apartments, where residents have to earn under a certain amount of income to live there. This was the result of Port Lavaca historically being a lower-income community, but now the average annual income is above the state average. This leaves middle-class residents in Port Lavaca with limited options for apartments, multi-unit housing, and rental options. For higher income residents, there are no options for higher end apartments. Because of this lack of options for owner market-rate housing, employees in the region are choosing to live in cities, such as Victoria, that offer more variety of housing. Other factors in Port Lavaca limiting housing option availability include the expense of hurricane and flood-resistant construction (sub-base, roofing, windows, etc.), the lack of nearby lumber and supply hubs, which increases material transportation costs, and high residential insurance costs.

As a result, the city should continue to promote home ownership and broaden the range of available owner-occupied housing typologies. The city should also continue to seek opportunities for bulk-building (where multiple homes are constructed at once to reduce construction costs), developing in less flood prone areas (to reduce insurance costs), and fostering relationships with housing developers with clear lines of communication.



Newly built Lavaca Bay Place homes in Port Lavaca
Source: Realtor.com

Strategy 4.1.2:

Create a comprehensive Developer's Guide that outlines the full process for development approvals, permitting, and annexation.

Port Lavaca should develop a centralized Developer's Guide to help applicants navigate regulatory requirements more efficiently, reducing delays, and improving compliance. The guide should provide step by step instructions, timelines, checklists, department contact information, and illustrative examples of successful projects. In addition, the City should clearly outline its annexation standards, annexation incentives, permitting requirements, and infrastructure expectations on the Development Services website. A Pre-Development Checklist should also be available to help developers identify all applicable requirements early in the process and ensure alignment with city procedures. By improving transparency and consistency, the Developer's Guide can strengthen partnerships between Port Lavaca and the development community, ultimately supporting more predictable, higher quality, and more desirable growth and amenities.



Newly built Bayview Townhomes in downtown Port Lavaca
Source: Port Lavaca Apartment

Strategy 4.1.3:

Continue to encourage high-quality housing construction and attractive home designs styles in Port Lavaca.

Throughout the public engagement process, residents and city leaders expressed the desire for higher-quality and higher-end homes for both first time buyers and current homeowners looking to purchase a new home. While municipalities cannot dictate housing materials and housing design elements, Port Lavaca can work with developers to provide and encourage the construction of higher quality homes, with better siding materials, design details, increased attached garage sizes, masonry, custom elements, and other qualities which constitute quality home structures.

Strategy 4.1.4:

Establish a “Look Book” and Desired Amenities Guide to communicate Port Lavaca’s preferred development character.

To enhance the character and overall quality of life within new residential subdivisions and infill development, Port Lavaca should create a "Look Book" and Desired Amenities Guide that visually communicates the community’s preferred development patterns. This document should outline the development’s desired character type, architectural form and style, and amenities. It can also serve as a practical tool to support conversations with residential and commercial developers.

The "Look Book" should include exemplary images and descriptions of desired amenities, architectural styles, recreational features, street layouts, landscaping approaches, and other key design elements for residential and commercial development. It should showcase a variety of housing typologies and architectural styles, multiple playground and youth oriented activity options, different commercial center formats, preferred development patterns within Downtown and the Waterfront District, and a range of streetscape designs that incorporate Complete Streets elements.

Desired "Look-Book" Examples












Images Source: Homes.com, Congress For New Urbanism, David Weekly Homes, Advanced House Plans, Architectural Designs, Risewell Homes, Prevu Real Estate, Stiles, Newmark Zimmer, City of Panama Beach

Strategy 4.1.5:

Encourage and / or require subdivision interconnectivity with streets and trails.

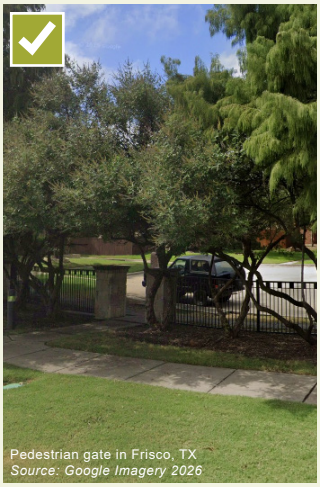
Require residential and commercial developers to provide multiple vehicular and pedestrian connections to neighboring parcels, if feasible. Examples of encouraging interconnectivity:

- Two subdivisions directly adjacent to each other should have multiple connections between them and linking through them to avoid traffic congestion points, provide emergency vehicle access, and encourage community interaction. Ensure that primary and secondary streets within subdivisions are directly interconnected between each subdivison to create a wider secondary network.
- Residential subdivisions that form a boundary of or contain a waterway or drainage ditch not fully contained within the subdivision should be required to make a public access easement or route with a trail and open space adjacent to the waterway. For example, if a subdivision falls along or within any proposed trail or shared-use path alignment, as outlined in the Active Transportation Plan Map, on page 120, the developer should be required to incorporate the trail or path into their development design, retaining full public access. Another example can include if a subdivision or development is adjacent to Lynn's Bayou and Little Chocolate Bayou; they should be required to retain a public access through route with a trail along the bayou from property line to property line. This will help ensure that as the region is developed a complete trail system along the coast, bayou's, and major drainage corridors remain viable and continue to be developed and funded.
- Residential subdivisions that are located at or touch an external street intersection should have a direct publicly available sidewalk or trail connecting to the external intersection, to avoid a lack of walkability and provide easy access. Where courts and streets that are geographically close or nearly meet with each other, require public access connections (gated access, fence cuts, sidewalks, etc.)
- Residential subdivisions with perimeter fences should be required to provide multiple entry and exit gates, especially when a court or road runs directly adjacent to or dead-ends at the perimeter fence line.
- Developments should be required to continue the alignment of any existing dead-end street adjacent to their property.
- Aim to limit the amount and visual impact of hard-barrier fences and barrier walls surrounding neighborhoods, which can impact the visual attractiveness of streets.

On Neighborhood Connectivity

Below are six Texas-based examples of undesired and desired neighborhood connectivty impacting residential access, quality of life, and mobility.

Street Gated Access


Pedestrian gate in Frisco, TX
Source: Google Imagery 2026

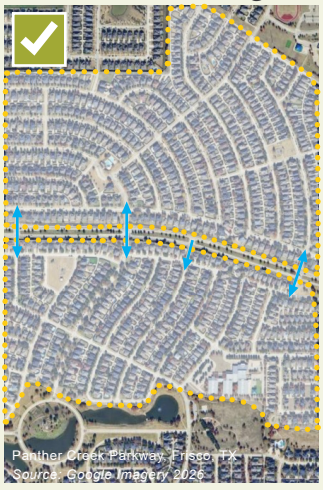

Pedestrian gate in Frisco, TX
Source: Google Imagery 2026

Retail and Residential Adjacency


Castle Hills neighborhood, Lewisville, TX
Source: Google Imagery 2026


Prairie View neighborhood, Frisco, TX
Source: Google Imagery 2026

Access Between Neighborhoods


Panther Creek Parkway, Frisco, TX
Source: Google Imagery 2026


Disconnected Neighborhoods, Richmond, TX
Source: Google Imagery 2026

Strategy 4.1.6:

Continue to encourage a mix of housing options within Downtown and central Port Lavaca, including town homes, apartments, senior-living, single-family homes, apartments, bungalows, and cottage homes.

Current housing stock within the central core of Port Lavaca consists mainly of single-family bungalow, cottage, and ranch-style homes, with a smaller mixture of manufactured housing, townhomes, and two to three-story multi-family structures. Moving forward Port Lavaca should continue to encourage the construction of bungalow and cottage style homes as the primary residential structural type for central Port Lavaca. Many empty parcels within Downtown should be encouraged for in-fill development matching this existing "coastal cottage" character. At strategic locations, multi-family structures should be constructed, specifically along major downtown corridors and along the waterfront. Many newer residential constructions in the Downtown have been multi-family condominiums / townhomes, which shows a market desire for this housing typology. Lastly, in alignment with recommendations within Objective 4.2, on the following pages, aim to phase-out manufactured housing typologies ("Mobile homes" / "RV-homes") within non-designated zones.

Strategy 4.1.7:

Within the Downtown, consider requiring new single-family homes to have front-facing covered porches and minimize the impact of garages.

To match existing housing typologies, maintain community character, and promote social interaction, new residential structures within Downtown should require a usable covered front porch. Porches should be no smaller than five-by-six feet and be located on the structure's primary front face.

No more than 60- to 50-percent of properties' primary frontage should consist of a garage structure and garage doors. Residential structures with Downtown should primarily look like a traditional house with windows and a front door composing the primary front facing features. Avoid the common Texas development typology where a once single-family parcel is split into two parcels and two three-story structures are built where the first floor is solely dedicated to a staircase and a garage. This typology ends up creating "streets of garages" and dramatically increases impervious surface cover as more lots are redeveloped.

Lastly, encourage the development of residential structures with gable roofs, avoiding flat-top roofs, unless utilized for rooftop solar panels or private gathering space. This is another means to maintain the existing community small-town character and feel as development occurs.



Small-lot homes in Austin, Texas
Source: Aura Austin



Small-lot homes in Houston, Texas
Source: Sandcastle Homes



Newly built small-lot residential housing in Downtown Resenburg, Texas
Source: Google Imagery 2024



Port Lavaca small-lot development at Colorado Street and Mahan Street
Source: Google Imagery 2022





Before and after imagery of new infill development in Port Lavaca on Guadalupe Street
Sources: GoogleMaps Imagery, Baxter & Woodman

Strategy 4.1.8:

Consider allowing Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADUs) within specific city zones and in special cases.

Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADUs) are secondary residential structures that are allowed on one residential parcel. ADU's can take the form of a tiny home/ cottage home behind a larger single-family home or as a detached garage apartment. Sometimes an ADU, if allowed, can be an attached addition onto an existing house with a separate entry or an adapted basement ADU. ADU's are useful for those wanting to have an in-law suit, a separate room for those in assisted-living situations, or for those wanting a secondary stream of household income. ADUs have become increasingly popular and widely accepted in communities as a means to increase housing supply and increase housing options, while not expanding utilities and transportation infrastructure to formerly agricultural lands, utilizing what is already built. As detailed in Goal 8, *Zoning*, ADUs should be allowed within Residential Zoning districts One (R1), Two (R2), and Three (R3), the Downtown Core Zoning District (DC), and Waterfront Zoning District (WF).



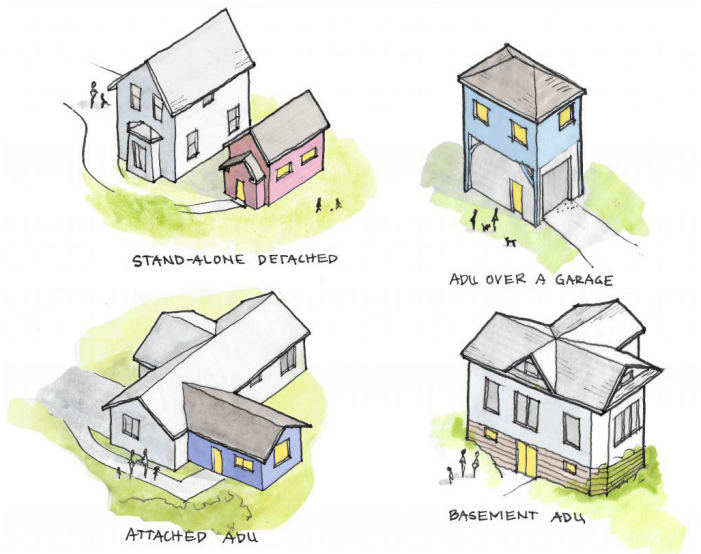
Auxiliary dwelling unit example
Source: Sightlines Institute

Strategy 4.1.9:

Encourage the development of owner-occupied housing in central Port Lavaca and the development of in-fill lots.

The City should encourage the development of owner-occupied housing typologies, such as bungalows, tiny-homes, duplex homes, and cottage court homes, to address housing affordability, changing family-sizes, provide homes for an aging community, and help fill vacant lots within central Port Lavaca.

In-fill lot home sites should be owner-occupied and not renter-driven, as to maintain the quality and permanence of the homes. Homes should face the street and not be located behind fences or within internal-lot rows (such as is typical with recreational vehicle park designs). Homes should be surrounded by vegetation and yard space and include one to two car garages and/or car ports. Avoid situations, such as 301 North Colorado Street, where smaller homes were built in 2021, but they do not include formal foundations, do not face the street, do not include yards or vegetation, and are surrounded by a fenced perimeter.



Example configurations of auxiliary dwelling units (ADUs)
Source: Housing Solutions Network



Auxiliary dwelling unit example
Source: Saint Pete Rising

Strategy 4.1.10:

Encourage and allow for a strategically located mix of housing lot sizes and home sizes to be developed in a single planned subdivision or residential development; If a smaller-lot variance is desired, then require the development of large lots to the proposed development.

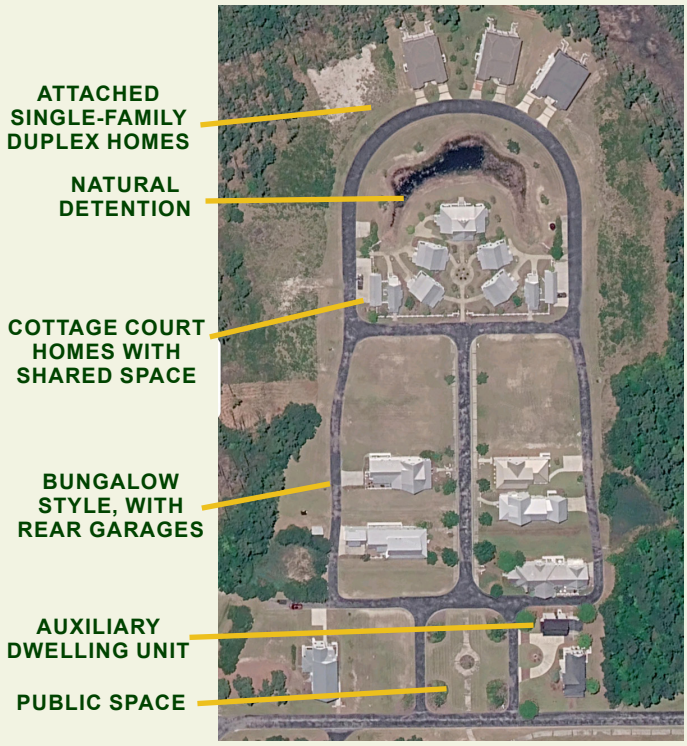
As depicted on the following pages (157 and 158), a broad variety of housing types, house sizes, and lot sizes should be encouraged and constructed within all new residential subdivisions. The variety of housing types and lot sizes can help provide housing for senior populations, young families, and help to maintain a semi-rural character. This also allows for alterative larger lots to be developed, larger garage options, and encourages multi-generational neighborhoods. The development of multiple structural types, strategic clustered and mixes within one subdivision development can encourage close-by familial living situations and ensure that one housing typology doesn't fully dominate the city long-term.

In addition, encourage developers to avoid the monotony often seen in modern developments dominated by dark blue and grey tones, and to consider a diverse palette of colors for residential siding to foster vibrant and visually engaging neighborhoods. Lastly, encourage multiple housing styles and designs that fit into Port Lavacas existing fabric, such as colonial, coastal, bungalow-style, classic-cottage, Tudor, arts and crafts-style, and other home designs.

Examples suitable for Port Lavaca can include:

- A development of a "cottage-court" style development along North Virgina Street
- The addition of groupings of attached-single family one or two-story homes within a detached single-family home neighborhood
- The addition of one or two small two-story apartment buildings (six to eight units) adjacent to a neighborhoods/ subdivision park
- The development of townhomes/ row homes along a subdivision's primary frontage, with single-family detached home behind (further into the development)
- The integration of retail-commercial at the front entrance to a subdivision, then followed by small townhomes, which then lead into a single-family residential zone
- Cluster subdivisions where homes are clustered into groupings with open spaces and preserved land in between home clusters to preserve open space and maintain a semi-rural feel

MIXED HOUSING TYPE DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLE





River Dunes development in Oriental, NC
Image Sources: GoogleEarth Imagery

- The addition of small live-work units (first story office, second story apartment) at the front of a subdivision adjacent to other commercial-retail uses
- Utilizing back alleys for garage access with all home frontages consisting of livable floor space and a front patio
- Integrating a public access right-of-way boardwalk along a developments waterfront with mid-density row homes facing a waterfront linear park with single-family homes in the rear

Innovative and Alterative Housing and Commercial-Retail Design

Numerous commercial developments and residential subdivisions around the U.S. and in Texas are utilizing new and innovative neighborhood designs to attract buyers, shoppers, and meet the needs of new communities. As depicted in the series of images, newer neighborhoods and commercial developments commonly feature a central public green space, a set of small neighborhood locally-based restaurants and commercial spaces, a wide diversity of owner and renter occupied housing typologies for multiple ages, 55+ age-specific housing, public community gardens / farming spaces, back alleys to reduce the visual impact of garages, and a walkable street layout with minimized dead-end courts and prioritized safe vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks, narrower streets, and trails). Many commercial developments now include mixtures of apartments and town homes, either fully integrated into the retail spaces, or directly adjacent with sidewalk and trail connections between them. While not all the examples provided may be fully applicable to Port Lavaca, the design and spatial considerations of these newer developments are traits that Port Lavaca should encourage as new development occurs.

Lakeland Village (Houston, TX)







Source: Google Maps Imagery

Habersham (Beaufort, SC)











Sources: Google Maps Imagery, Apartments.com, Re/Max. Habersham Homes

Indigo Community (Richmond, TX)







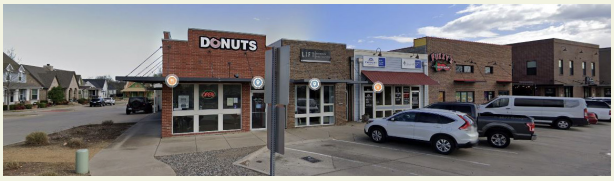




Source: Indigo Communities, David Weekly Homes

Mid Towne (Midlothian, TX)







Source: GoogleMaps Imagery

Palmilla Beach (Port Aransas, TX)




Source: GoogleMaps Imagery

Alys Beach and Rosemary Beach, Florida, Developments






Images Source: GoogleMaps Imagery

OBJECTIVE 4.2: Designate appropriate areas for manufactured homes and recreational vehicles (RVs), reducing intermixing with single family neighborhoods and improving overall neighborhood cohesion.

Strategy 4.2.1:

Continue progress towards the goal of manufactured homes only in manufactured home parks.

Port Lavaca already has a regulation that allows a manufactured home on a single lot to be replaced only once. After that replacement occurs, any future manufactured home on that lot must be located within a designated manufactured home park. Continuing to enforce and communicate this rule will help gradually transition manufactured homes into appropriate areas while respecting existing property rights. This approach also supports more consistent neighborhood patterns over time. Currently, manufactured homes are commonly inter-mixed with single-family homes, particularly in the Downtown core south of TX-35. Moving forward, the city should consider alternative owner-occupied housing typologies within these areas as to not reduce the residential population dramatically, which currently live within walkable distance to schools, parks, and Main Street.

Strategy 4.2.2:

Provide a design guide for manufactured homes.

Similar to the overall design "look-book" recommended in Strategy 4.1.4, a design guide for manufactured homes can help ensure that the structures meet basic expectations for appearance and compatibility. The guide may include requirements such as minimum size, new construction standards, entry orientation, utilities hook up locations, setbacks and distances between homes, and notations of penalty for non-conformity. Clear expectations help property owners and developers understand what is allowed and support a more cohesive look within manufactured home parks and other designated areas. This can be as general as requiring new manufactured homes be new construction build on-site or a specific size.

Strategy 4.2.3:

Require manufactured home parks to have a minimum planting, recreation, and buffering style guide.

Attractive and consistent landscaping can help manufactured home parks present a more welcoming appearance. Simple practices such as maintaining healthy trees, trimming grass regularly, and planting resilient and easy to maintain flowers and native plants can strengthen the overall look of the park. Fencing and landscape buffering should also be detailed within the design guide, detailing height, distances, materials, and planting types. In addition, add minimum open space and recreational amenities listings, similar to other residential subdivisions. This will ensure that RV and manufactured home parks have adequate open spaces and passive recreational areas that meet city standards. A basic style guide can encourage ongoing upkeep, support a shared sense of identity among residents, contribute to a more cohesive and appealing environment, and ensure adequate buffering and planting standards.



Bluewood Ranch Mobile Home Park and La Dominion Apartments in Victoria, Texas
Source: Four Leaf Properties, EEG Management



Housing construction at Claret Crossing in Port Lavaca (2025)
Source: City of Port Lavaca

State Laws/Restrictions Regarding Housing

Texas does not have statewide zoning laws. Instead, zoning authority is granted to municipalities under Chapter 211 of the Texas Local Government Code, which allows cities to regulate land use, building height, density, setbacks, and other development standards. Counties have limited zoning powers, mostly in unincorporated areas or near major cities. When a Texas community adopts or updates a Comprehensive Plan, zoning regulations are often revised afterward to align with the plan's goals and guide land use and development in the public interest. Zoning regulations help address housing needs by defining the style, placement, and types of structures within each zoning category.

MUNICIPALITIES CANNOT:

- Enforce land use designations that are not adopted through a zoning ordinance
- Enforce or regulate zoning in the ETJ
- Prohibit or restrict building materials that are allowed under national model codes, except in limited circumstances such as historic districts or safety related exceptions
- Provide zoning regulations without an adopted Comprehensive Plan

MUNICIPALITIES CAN:

- Buffer residential areas from industrial or hazardous uses
- Establish safety standards for buildings and structures
- Preserve neighborhood character and protect commercial districts
- Safeguard environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands
- Designate land for future growth and development
- Promote predictable land use to enhance property values
- Improve efficiency in targeting growth and redevelopment
- Implement goals from comprehensive plans
- Ensure adequate lot layout, parking, light, air, and privacy for homes

OBJECTIVE 4.3: Ensure Port Lavaca's housing and commercial structures are attractive, safe to occupy, maintain good up-keep, and enhance the historical character of the city.

Strategy 4.3.1:

Establish a neighborhood program to help revitalize historical / older neighborhoods at risk of decline.

To help older neighborhoods retain a sense of community and allow for additional neighborhood advocacy, many Texas cities have established programs and funding to help establish and improve neighborhoods. Similar Gulf Coast communities to Port Lavaca, Corpus Christi supports neighborhood cohesion through programs such as National Night Out, Neighbors on Watch, and its Minor Home Repair Program; Galveston invests in neighborhood revitalization through the Galveston Historic Neighborhood program, which promotes housing rehabilitation initiatives; and, Lake Jackson promotes neighborhood quality and community engagement through the Keep Lake Jackson Beautiful commission. In addition, the City of Amarillo and City of Fort Worth, Texas, have created a Neighborhoods Empowerment Zones program, with dedicated funding and advocacy meetings for historic neighborhoods without an HOA. Together, these programs demonstrate a range of approaches that Port Lavaca could adapt to help strengthen older neighborhoods, encourage reinvestment, and empower residents to participate in local planning and improvement efforts.



'Before and after' examples of housing assistance program rehabilitation projects across Texas
Source: Our Old HouseFacebook page, Habitat for Humanity

The following tactics are multiple methods Port Lavaca could utilize to help improve the character and quality of life in historic / older neighborhoods:

Tactic 1: Strictly enforce code compliance for housing structures. Do not allow vacant, run-down, or condemned housing structures to remain standing, because they pose a safety hazard and can contribute to crime and neighborhood decline. Of these buildings that are historically significant need to have a preservation plan to ensure quality restoration of the property.

Tactic 2: Create the frameworks and regulatory pathways to allow for neighborhoods to formalize self-created districts, such as. These districts, while not having any legal authority (sucha s what an HOA has), can be the standing advocacy group for neighborhoods. As a result, residents can communicate their needs more efficiently and allows for more community activity and self-involved investment.

Tactic 3: Allocate funding within the City budget to allow for neighborhood groups or residents to apply for or request funding for City-approved neighborhood improvement projects. These projects can include landscaping enhancements, drainage ditch improvement, community events and neighborhood gatherings, and other organized initiatives.

Tactic 4: Connect residents of historic neighborhoods or properties to resources for grant funding, home repairs, utilities stabilization, flood protection measures, crime prevention tactics, and structural integrity standards.

Tactic 5: As street signs are replaced or upgraded, incorporate neighborhood district signage that highlights each neighborhood's name, character, and date of establishment or platting. This reinforces neighborhood identity and helps celebrate Port Lavaca's historic areas.



Strategy 4.3.2:

Ensure that senior facilities maintain high-quality services for aging residents.

As the senior population in Port Lavaca continues to grow, the City should monitor and ensure there are enough facilities to support elderly residents. Currently, a cluster of senior-care, assisted living, independent living, and nursing homes are located along North Virginia Street and Village Road. The city should ensure that these facilities are connected with shaded trails and sidewalks to public park space and commercial-retail options. Moving forward the city should consider encouraging senior-care and retirement-based housing within the Downtown and south of TX-35, to encourage walkability and prevent social exclusion, as often these residents do not own a car or have limited mobility. Lastly, on an annual basis, ensure that the facilities have adequate evacuation plans, operational back-up generators or power sources, proper transportation services, and annually host a meeting with facilities and housing providers to continually foster forms of communication.





Senior community programming at Trintiy Shores retirement and assisted living facility
Source: Trinity Shores of Port Lavaca





'Before and after' of housing improvements and reconstruction in Port Lavaca (2011-2022)
Source: GoogleMap Imagery

Strategy 4.3.3:

Repair or replace unsafe or substandard homes, especially older housing stock that poses health or safety risks.

Largely due to hurricane damage and financial strain, many homes in Port Lavaca experience prolonged damage. This includes boarded-up windows, roof damage, fallen tree limbs, and other undesired or unsafe conditions. The city should continue to reduce the number of homes that present hazards to occupants aimed at making community safer, reducing blighted properties, and helping to maintain property values. This strategy requires identifying homes that do not meet code regulations, and either repairing or replacing the structure. Work with property owners to enact notices, schedule repairs, and acquire the proper permits. Consider additional leeway for properties that are owner-occupied, while additional attention should be given to property owners who own multiple properties (especially within one geographic area where many of the homes may experience similar limited maintenance or repair).

Currently, the City of Port Lavaca has a HOME (Investment Partnerships Program and Homeowner Reconstruction Assistance Program, through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs), which provides funds for low-income applicants who seek to replace their current home with a new home. This program allows for up to $65,000 per household in assistance to repair structural issues including roofing, electrical, plumbing, structural deficits, and the complete reconstruction of homes.

Strategy 4.3.5:

Provide and market opportunities for financial assistance for families to repair their homes.

Some home-owners may not be able to afford to repair their property on their own without financial assistance. Internally to Port Lavaca, financial assistance can take the form of grants, waved fees, or extended timelines. Externally, multiple national state programs provide grants and loans for families in need. Reducing financial barriers to home repairs can help buildings meet code requirements with a reasonable framework for both the city, property owners, and adjacent property owners.

As mentioned in Strategy 4.3.4 the City of Port Lavaca currently has a HOME (Investment Partnerships Program and Homeowner Reconstruction Assistance) Program, which provides fund for home improvements and reconstruction. Consider utilizing and marketing the additional resources detailed below:

National and state programs to help aid in housing repairs include-

USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Section 504 Home Repair Program:

- Provides grant and loan funds for Section 504 single-family housing to repair roofs, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and structural repairs up to $50,000.

USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Section 504 Rural Home Repair Program:

- Provides grant funding for home repairs, including roof replacement, patching, reducing structural decay, and eliminated health hazards, with grants \up to $10,000, and loans up to $40,000. In addition, seniors over 62 can receive a lifetime grant of up to $10,000. Lastly, for residents over 62 years of age that are considered 'very-low-income' can receive a 1% fixed-interest loan up to $40,000.

Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' Homeowner Reconstruction Assistance Program:

- Provides grants to owner-occupied homes, typically below 80% of the area's median income, for home reconstruction, housing replacement, floodplain relocation, and disaster-related rebuilding.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Programs:

- Provides $5,000 emergency repair grants, $25,000 rehabilitation grants, and $25,000 to $75,000 deferred forgivable loans for structural improvements and energy efficiency repairs.

Texas General Land Office Disaster Recovery Programs, including the Homeowner Assistance Program (HAP), Homeowner Reimbursement Program (HRP), and Disaster Recovery Housing Program (DRHP):

- Provides funding for home repairs, reconstruction, elevation, storm hardening, flood mitigation, and temporary relocation from an annual allocated state fund.

Texas General Land Office's Resilient Housing Program and Housing Oversubscription Supplemental Program:

- Provide grants for non-storm or emergency-related repairs, such as rebuilding to higher-standards, flood resistance, elevated structures, and storm hardening.

Texas Health and Human Services Department's Area Agencies on Aging programs:

- Provides localized grant funding, through the Golden Crescent Regional Planning Commission, for minor home repairs, accessibility modifications, aging-in-place adjustments, and slip prevention. In addition the program offers contractor assistance and volunteer repair programs with non-profit entities. Direct grants are provided through the Older Americans Act (Title III-B and III-E) for a maximum of $5,000, while full-house replacement funds are available up to $58,650.



A new home reconstruction, including foundation elevation and a ramp, funded through the Texas General Land Office Disaster Recovery Program
Source: Texas GLO

Strategy 4.3.6:

Consider financial incentives for the rehabilitation of historic properties.

The character of existing neighborhoods and districts with Port Lavaca is largely defined by newer development built after 1960. Although, within the central core, scattered coastal-cottage style structures built before 1960, "main-street-style" 1900-1940's structures, and historic churches, define the local character. Most historical Victorian and mid-century constructions in the Downtown region have been lost due to hurricane damage and lack of proper maintenance/ repairs. The low number of remaining historical main street shops and historical homes and structures provide immense character and value to older neighborhoods. The city should work with property owners and developers to find funding to preserve existing structures which already have the desired character, but may face structural deficits or are at risk of decline.

One major barrier to improving structures is funding. Often, if one project is being completed on a structure, it is required that other required improvements must be made at the same time to achieve a fully compliant structure meeting code and safety requirements. The city should assist property owners to encourage the improvement of structures and reduce financial barriers.

The City of Galveston, Texas, provides financial incentives for historic properties. The incentives include:

- A 35-percent city property tax exemption for five years for historic properties designated as landmarks throughout the City
- A City tax freeze on substantially rehabilitated properties (invests at least 50-percent of the value of the building) at the assessed value prior to the rehabilitation for ten years
- Properties designated as New Conservation Districts receive a 25-percent city property tax exemption for five years

Port Lavaca should consider similar incentives to help protect historical homes, civic buildings, and commercial sites to help protect at-risk or important structures. These funds could be dedicated by the city as part of a dedicated fund or utilize construction fees for new development to fund improvements to older development needing rehabilitation. In addition, the city could utilize the proposed TIRZ (Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone) funding and city funds to help preserve and improve major well-known structures.

Historic Downtown Snapshot



Image Sources: Baxter & Woodman (2025-2026)

Strategy 4.3.7:

Work with the Calhoun County Museum to develop a historical structures and sites inventory, designation criteria, and historical repair program.

The City should conduct a comprehensive historical structures inventory and identify the needed repairs and deficits of each structure. From this, the city can target properties for preservation efforts, mitigation measures, and work further with property owners to preserve the remaining historic structures in the city.

The city should also consider developing a historical plaque program, taxation benefits from receiving a historic city designation, and/or a guided historical structural Halloween walking tour event.










Sources: Baxter & Woodman, Google Imagery

Below is a list of, but not limited to, notable structures and locations within Port Lavaca that should be considered for preservation and/or be a focus of preservation efforts:

- Main Street structures between Virginia Street and Commerce Street
- Guadalupe Street structures between Live Oak Street and Railroad Street
- Port Lavaca Main Street Theatre
- Beach Hotel (at 87 N. Commerce Street, built 1904)
- Former Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church (at 126 S. Guadalupe Street)
- Current Our Lady of the Gulf Catholic Church (at 415 W. Austin Street)
- Grace Episcopal Church (at 213 E. Austin Street)
- Temple of Faith Church (at 419 N. Colorado Street)
- Catholic Church (at 401 N. Colorado Street)
- First United Methodist Church (at 814 N. San Antonio St.)
- Port Lavaca Cemetery
- Ranger Cemetery
- Halfmoon Reef Lighthouse (Oldest wooden lighthouse in Texas)
- Port Lavaca Railroad Depot and Railcar
- Nautical Landing structure (at 106 S. Commerce Street)
- Former Hotel Navidad/ Seagull Hotel (at 429 E. Railroad Street)
- Former City Hall, Police Station, and Fire Station (at 216 E. Mahan Street)
- Retail site (at 702 N. Virginia Street)
- Retail site (at 619 Broadway Street)
- Retail site (at 224 N. Commerce Street)
- Commercial site (at 636 and 612 Harbor Street) [consider feasibility]
- Commercial site/ Former fill-station (at 532 N. Virginia Street)
- Retail/ Residential site (at 631 and 643 Broadway Street)
- Residential home (at 401 N. Commerce Street)
- Residential home (at 207 S. Commerce Street)
- Residential home (at 323 S. Commerce Street)
- Residential home (at 419 S. Commerce Street)
- Residential home (at 603 S. Colorado Street)
- Residential home (at 303 S. Colorado Street)
- Residential home (at 303 N. Guadalupe Street)
- Residential home (at 203 E. Mahan Street)
- Residential home (at 312 E. Mahan Street)
- Residential home (at 324 Guadalupe Street)
- Residential home (at 216 W. Wilson Street)



Historic house along Broadway Street in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter & Woodman

GOAL FIVE: UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE

PORT LAVACA'S WATER, SANITARY SEWER, AND STORM SEWER SYSTEMS REMAINS RELIABLE, COMPLIANT, AND SUSTAINABLE THROUGH THE REDUCTION OF INFLOW AND INFILTRATION, INVESTMENT IN AGING INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAPACITY IMPROVEMENTS, AND PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH AND INDUSTRIAL DEMANDS WITHOUT OVERBURDENING MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS.

OVERVIEW

Port Lavaca faces interconnected water and santiary sewer challenges driven by inflow and infiltration, aging clay sewer infrastructure, and growing regulatory and capacity pressures, underscoring the need for sustained funding and public engagement that communicates the intentions and needs of these systems. Insufficient connections and deteriorated pipes continue to overload the treatment system. At the same time, limited inspection resources constrain targeted remediation efforts, even as the city advances a citywide santiary sewer rehabilitation program and upgrades critical lift stations, as storm sewer systems are limited or non-existent.

With potential population growth and major industrial development on the horizon, the city needs to establish standards for water, wastewater, and storm sewer infrastructure as new development enters the community, such as keeping heavy industrial water and wastewater systems separate from municipal facilities to protect public drinking water capacity and quality. Long-term water supply planning is prompting continued evaluation of alternatives such as reuse and desalination despite high costs and capacity constraints, as well as discussions about potential third-party utility operations. To address these needs, the city is advancing a comprehensive rate study and considering treatment plant expansion to meet TCEQ requirements, recognizing that significant future investments will be necessary to support an aging infrastructure system.



Contruction and development in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Guiding Principles for Utilities Infrastructure

The guiding principles for goal five provide a contextual framework and a strategic basis for the following recommendations. These guiding principles should be utilized by the City when making future decisions regarding utilities infrastructure.

UI Principle 1. - Ensure Reliable and Compliant Utility Systems.

Prioritize infrastructure investments that improve reliability, reduce inflow and infiltration, and maintain compliance with state and regulatory capacity requirements.

UI Principle 2. - Support Infrastructure through Proactive Asset Management.

Adopt a proactive asset management approach to address aging infrastructure through continuous rehabilitation, targeted upgrades, and timely expansion to extend system life and avoid emergency-driven costs.

UI Principle 3. - Support Growth through Responsible Infrastructure Planning.

As the community grows, guide development to protect municipal system's capacity and performance, including, when feasible, keeping heavy industrial water and wastewater demands separate from public facilities.

UI Principle 4. - Build Long-Term Water Supply Resilience.

Evaluate and diversify future water supply options, including reuse and alternative sources, with an emphasis on sustainability, cost-effectiveness, and regional capacity constraints.

UI Principle 5. - Maintain Financial Sustainability for Aging Infrastructure.

Sustain aging infrastructure through a financial strategy that reflects the true cost of operating, maintaining, and reinvesting in the system, ensuring long-term community support and system health.

UI Principle 6. - Foster Public Transparency and Engagement.

Educate and engage the public early and often to build understanding and support for infrastructure needs, funding decisions, and long-term planning efforts.

UI Principle 7. - Coordinate Strategically Across Systems and Partners.

Collaborate with engineers, regional partners, and regulatory agencies to ensure integrated, data-driven planning and decision-making across all publicly or privately owned water, wastewater, and storm sewer systems.



OBJECTIVE 5.1: Create a proactive plan to address aging infrastructure that is planned, maintained, and upgraded to meet current community needs and support safe, reliable, and efficient service delivery.

Strategy 5.1.1:

Plan for future potable water, sanitary sewer, and drainage projects to meet the City's future demand.

Utilize Map X, *Utility Infrastructure Plan*, to plan for future utilities infrastructure and facilities that could be expanded, altered, or modified to meet regulatory requirements and the demands of a growing population. This map and data should be continually updated by the city to reflect the current capital projects underway throughout the community and help prioritize future potential projects. The map identifies all existing 2026 to 2030 City Capital Improvement Program (CIP) items, as well as corridors for future water capacity expansions connecting to areas designated for development, partially within the Downtown Core, along the waterfront.

In addition, with help from the City's engineering staff, locations for future detention, lift stations, and drainage improvements are identified. Lastly, several roadway pipelines and drainage corridors are identified as potentially needing future capacity expansion due to the increase in development north of Tx-35, which will place further strain on existing drianage pipes and ditches south of Tx-35, the terminus of the City's water treatment and potable water systems. Further study and capacity analysis is needed to define all future projects, especially with new development proposals.

Consider adding this Utility Infrastructure Plan map to a public facilities and city projects drop page on the city's website which can incorporate CIP projects, timelines, schedules, and clickable links to City Council agenda minutes and other relevant information.

Strategy 5.1.2:

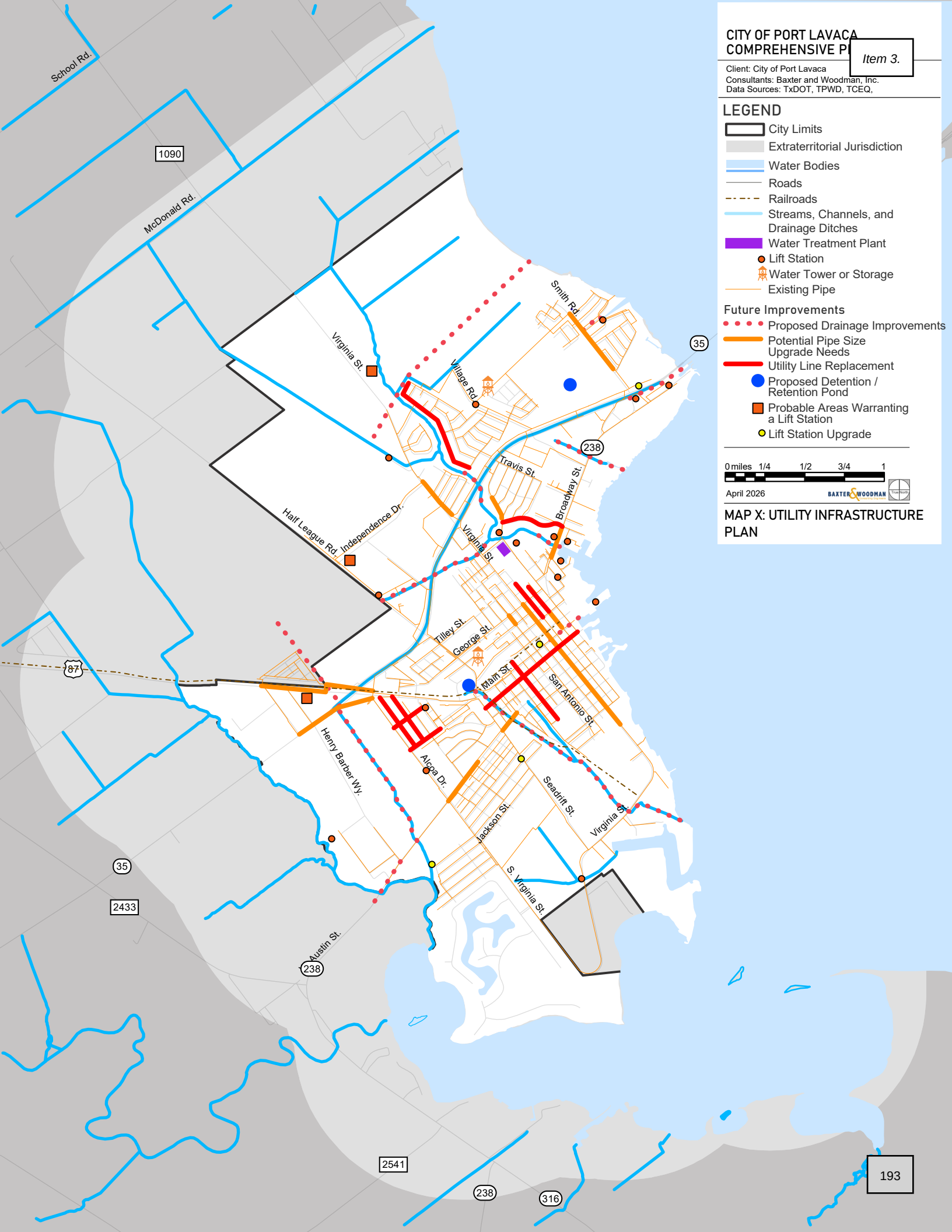
Continue to identify capacity and distribution issues and incorporate them into the City's CIP.

Currently, Port Lavaca's CIP incorporates intersection, roadway, underground utilities, parks and recreation, and City facility improvements for the years 2026-2030. As further studies, surveying, and other immediate improvements are identified, new items should be added to the City's CIP. Ensure that new items do not overexpand the City's overall utilities footprint, continuing to focus on replacement and improvement of existing lines. Ensure that CIP prioritization aligns with future development and City investment to recoup major infrastructure investments.

Strategy 5.1.3:

Continue to explore alternative methods for water reuse as alternatives become available.

Long-term water supply remains a concern, as future industrial growth could drive water demand to as high as 25 million gallons per day. Potential new sources include the Lavaca-Navidad River Authority (LNRA), as both LNRA and Gaudalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) withdrawal from the Guadalupe River face capacity constraints, and the City is currently contracted for only 4 MGD. There have been local discussions about pursuing water reuse or a desalination plant as an alternative to reliance on GBRA; however, the high cost of salt removal makes reuse financially challenging, even though copper and zinc are not major concerns. Some city council members have proposed selling the water and wastewater utilities to a third-party operator, with Undine Texas, LLC expressing interest. At this time, it is a costly exercise, but it should be considered in the future as alternatives are discovered.


CITY OF PORT LAVACA
COMPREHENSIVE PL
Item 3.
Client: City of Port Lavaca
Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,
LEGEND
City Limits
Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
Water Bodies
Roads
Railroads
Streams, Channels, and Drainage Ditches
Water Treatment Plant
Lift Station
Water Tower or Storage
Existing Pipe
Future Improvements
Proposed Drainage Improvements
Potential Pipe Size Upgrade Needs
Utility Line Replacement
Proposed Detention / Retention Pond
Probable Areas Warranting a Lift Station
Lift Station Upgrade
0 miles 1/4 1/2 3/4 1
April 2026
BAXTER & WOODMAN
MAP X: UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN
School Rd.
1090
McDonald Rd.
Virginia St.
Village Rd
Smith Rd.
35
238
Travis St.
Broadway St.
Half League Rd.
Independence Dr.
Virginia St
Tilley St.
George St.
Main St.
San Antonio St.
87
Henry Barber Wy.
Alcoa Dr.
Seadrift St
Virginia St
Jackson St.
S. Virginia St.
2433
Austin St.
2541
316
193

Strategy 5.1.4:

Continue to address Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) challenges.

The City of Port Lavaca has a list of successful grant-funded projects that should continue to address I&I. Although I&I is not the sole driver of system capacity issues, it exacerbates the challenges posed by aging infrastructure. The existing clay sewer pipes break easily, and are sometimes improperly connected to rain gutters send additional stormwater into the wastewater system, increasing flow to the City's treatment facility and causing the plant to exceed its intended capacity. While the City has cameras capable of inspecting small-diameter lines, there is currently no dedicated budget to expand this effort.

Strategy 5.1.5:

Continue to prioritize aging infrastructure, such as implementing a clay pipe replacement program, to reduce impacts on the City's treatment plant.

A citywide, ongoing wastewater rehabilitation program is underway, and many of the most problematic areas have already been addressed due to burst pipes, which occurred particularly in lower-income neighborhoods and were funded through grants. However, the widespread prevalence of clay pipes throughout the system makes it more difficult to identify and prioritize remaining problem areas. The city has also begun investing in lift stations, with four submersible lift stations identified as needing upgrades. These projects should continue to be identified for grant funding, funding partners, and upgraded as new developments are underway.



Roadside open ditch drainage systems / rain garden
Source: Pacific Institute

Strategy 5.1.6:

Develop a Stormwater and Drainage Master Plan.

Currently, there are few, if any, stormwater facilities mapped in the city's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program. The City of Port Lavaca should fund a citywide stormwater and drainage master plan that identifies existing storm sewer systems, potential upgrades, and the need for retention or detention. In addition, the engineering manual could include a dedicated Stormwater and Drainage chapter, or a dedicated stormwater and drainage master plan could be created to support resiliency efforts in Port Lavaca. The intention of preparing them are to help identify locations for additional detention basins, inadequate street drains, critical flooding points, outfalls and pipes that need to be upgraded, open ditch drainage corridor improvements, and any additional conditions that affect flooding conditions and street quality.

Strategy 5.1.7:

Incorporate green infrastructure and low-impact development (LID) solutions within water management and drainage utilities systems.

Natural solutions for drainage often provide cost-effective and reliable flood mitigation for small-scale stormwater runoff. LID strategies can include rain gardens, vegetative bioswales, wetland drainage, and pool-riffle-run drainage channel systems (as shown on the following page). Green infrastructure can lower capital and maintenance costs, soften the visual impact of drainage improvements, and preserve the character of surrounding development. These approaches also create opportunities for public amenities, habitat enhancement, and ecosystem services such as improved water quality, groundwater recharge, and urban heat reduction. Integrating these practices into future projects will help the City manage stormwater more sustainably while supporting community livability and environmental stewardship.

Innovative Water Management & Low-Impact Development (LID) Solutions

Detention basins, rain gardens, drainage ditches, and low-lying spaces can serve as natural filtration systems for water runoff, temporary holding locations, such as sponge-parks, and help improve soil permeability to reduce impacts of flooding with native plantings. With recent research and case studies, newer developments are increasingly including vegetative ditches and vegetated dry-bottom detention basins. These plantings do not inhibit or deter the process of drainage, but provide a more visually attractive and productive ecosystem in otherwise under-utilized/ under-optimized landscapes. Below is a series of examples of renaturalization of ditches, basins, and roadway medians, which can serve as a visual baseline for Port Lavaca.

VEGETATIVE DITCHES, RAIN GARDENS, MEDIANS, AND RETENTION BASINS



Source: Keep It Clean Partnership



Source: MD Anderson, Brian Malloch



Source: Urban Green UP



Source: Philidelphia Water Logs



Source: Westside Creeks Project



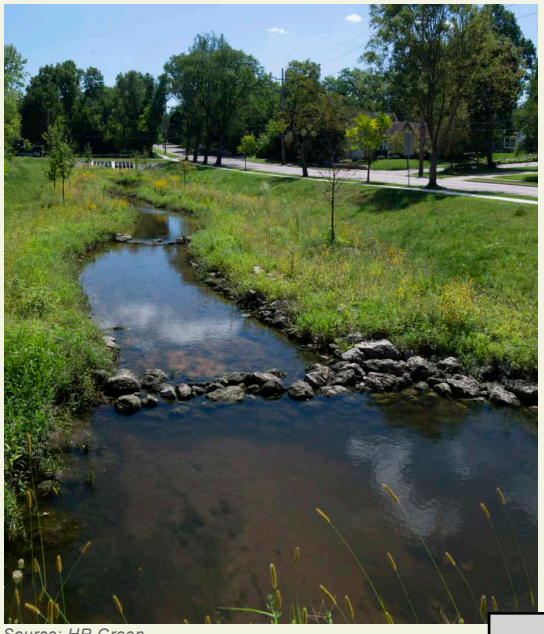
Source: Hartford County, MD



Source: Garden Drum

POOL-RIFFLE-RUN DRAINAGE SYSTEM

Developing a pool-riffle-run drainage corridor is a way to mimic the natural drainage systems within man-made ditches. The network provides a repeating sequence of pooling sites and flow corridors which help to filter sediments, mitigate erosion of stream banks, and helps manage large onslaughts of rainfall which can overwhelm systems. This design provides temporary holding chambers for water where a culvert or inlet may have temporary limited intake capacity during large rain events.



Source: HR Green

Strategy 5.1.8:

Continue to identify where additional stormwater drainage lines need to be directed.

Due to sitting at a lower elevation than the rest of Calhoun County, most of the County stormwater runoff flows through Port Lavaca's drainage network into Lavaca Bay. In a recent major rain event, Port Lavaca's stormwater infrastructure was overwhelmed as runoff from neighboring communities concentrated into Port Lavaca. To better prepare for future severe weather events, the City needs additional capacity for stormwater drainage and clearer pathways for stormwater to flow efficiently into Lavaca Bay or treatment plants. Additional drainage channels and low-impact development (LID) can help reduce localized flooding and accelerate the removal of excess stormwater. Current efforts by Port Lavaca include acquiring property for a stormwater detention pond, which will temporarily store excess water and reduce peak flow rates.

Strategy 5.1.9:

Conduct street drains, culverts, and drainage ditch survey to identify areas where drainage capacity is needed, where blockages are or may occur, where drains may be damaged, and where compliance issues may be located.

As part of creating a Stormwater and Drainage Master Plan (SDMP) mentioned in Strategy 5.1.6, Port Lavaca could hire an intern who is home from college to collect and prepare a map, with their guidance, that indicates drainage concerns to prioritize over the year. The Public Works Department staff could help the intern prioritize improvements by location (e.g., Downtown region, within the floodplain, and in areas with recurring standing water or blockages) in relation to the call log the city receives regularly for these types of needs. Note that standing water, blockages, and outdated facilities contribute to poor pavement quality and subsoil conditions, as well as erosion along ditch edges will be important aspects to work into the program.

Strategy 5.1.10:

Conduct comprehensive sidewalks, curb ramp, and accessibility assessment in Downtown, along major corridors, and near parks and schools, to identify utility conflicts, ADA compliance issues, deficit areas without sidewalks, and needed sidewalk pavement updates.

Sidewalks should be free and clear of weeds and tripping hazards, and level. Creating a list of areas ripe for improvement could be budgeted over the years, with targeted character improvement and local reinvestment. Sidewalks and curb ramps should be attractive, up to current standards, and provide the requisite connectivity to retail, shops, public parks, and other attractive features. In areas with very steep sidewalks, the required rumble strips are missing, and the sidewalks are heavily damaged, partly due to poor drainage. The general age of the facilities should be considered for improvement first.



Port Lavaca Smith Road bike lane and sidewalk construction (2025)
Source: City of Port Lavaca



Port Lavaca Independence Drive development, roadway and utilities expansion construction (2025)
Source: City of Port L

OBJECTIVE 5.2: Create a Capital Improvement Program that protects and maintains critical stormwater, potable water, and wastewater infrastructure, ensuring high-quality services that safeguard public health and the environment.

Strategy 5.2.1:

Continue to expand on the capital improvement program and address aging infrastructure with a proactive approach.

A complete list of all proposed projects and improvements, regardless of whether funding is allocated, should be created to help the city plan for future Capital Improvement Projects, schedule construction and timeframes, and secure funding across multiple improvement types. All utility-related projects should be considered in tandem. This means that if a street is identified for reconstruction, the adjacent water, wastewater, storm sewer, and roadway should be evaluated for complete replacement during roadway design and construction. This not only reduces construction time for residents impacted by the project but also enables the most efficient delivery of a capital project.

The list of CIP 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 to strengthen fire suppression capabilities

Strategy 5.2.2:

Continue funding key infrastructure projects, such as a rate study, that are needed in the community.

Currently, Port Lavaca is funding a rate study expected to conclude in 2026. Because the utility enterprise is currently only breaking even, and while some capital improvements have been made using CIP funds, the estimated $40 million needed for future improvements would translate to a $40 monthly increase per household. The rate study should help identify a fee structure that can cover the costs of new infrastructure and foreseeable maintenance.

Strategy 5.2.3:

Port Lavaca should consider ways to educate the public in the future to fund infrastructure programs.

As these multiple infrastructure challenges converge, City leadership is reassessing how best to encourage public engagement during the planning process. They note that open-house formats have proven more effective in the past and recognize the potential need to coordinate closely with the engineering team responsible for the City's water and wastewater plans to ensure the public receives clear, consistent information. As future capital improvement projects and potential bond programs are identified, the public should continue to be informed about upcoming infrastructure needs.



Nautical Landings Marina parkinglot permeable pipe run-off project and sidewalk construction (2026)
Source: City of Port Lavaca

OBJECTIVE 5.3: Continue to provide, maintain, and update infrastructure as the community grows.

Strategy 5.3.1:

Regardless of Port Lavaca's population growth, there is interest in keeping heavy industry treatment facilities separate from Port Lavaca's System.

Regionally, Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) is developing a reservoir on the west side of Calhoun County, and large industrial investments are on the horizon, including a Dow Chemical Company modular nuclear plant and mineral processing facility. The Dow modular nuclear plant is planned for 2029, bringing 300 permanent jobs and 1,000 construction jobs, and will operate its own dedicated wastewater plant. The nearby mineral processing facility, which sources raw materials from Australia, is expected to have similar employment impacts and to maintain its own independent wastewater treatment. To protect the quality of drinking water and maintain reliable service, the City is considering policies that would allow heavy industries to supply and operate their own water and wastewater infrastructure rather than connect to Port Lavaca's municipal treatment facilities.



Port Lavaca Alamo Heights storm sewer pipe upgrade project (2024)
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Strategy 5.3.2:

Continue to utilize shared utilities improvement agreements with developers to help reduce future financial impacts of upgrading/replacing utilities infrastructure.

Shared utility improvement agreements remain an important tool for coordinating the cost of water, wastewater, and other utility upgrades associated with new development. These agreements ensure that developers contribute to the infrastructure needed to support their projects, helping the City avoid future financial strain and enabling more predictable long-term planning for system maintenance and replacement.

The City is also evaluating policies that would allow heavy industrial users, including petrochemical facilities, to construct and operate their own independent water supply and wastewater treatment systems. Allowing these industries to manage their own high-demand utility needs helps protect the quality of the municipal drinking water supply, preserve treatment capacity for residential and commercial customers, and reduce the likelihood that industrial growth will trigger costly expansions of City-owned facilities. This approach also gives industries greater control over their operational requirements while ensuring that municipal resources remain reliable for the broader community.

Strategy 5.3.3:

Continue to require all new development to connect to the City's sewer network.

To reduce reliance on septic systems and ensure consistent wastewater management, all new developments must connect to the existing City sewer network wherever service is available. The City is also evaluating an ordinance that would prohibit new grinder pump systems, which typically require frequent servicing and carry higher repair costs. Limiting their use would support more efficient long-term sewer operations and reduce maintenance burdens on both property owners and the City

Strategy 5.3.4:

Ensure the City of Port Lavaca maintains reliable, regulatory-compliant water treatment capacity to support current demand, future growth, and regional service commitments.

The City is considering expanding its existing water treatment plant to keep pace with demand and regulatory requirements. Currently, water use in Port Lavaca averages about 4 million gallons per day, and once the wastewater treatment plant upgrade is complete, the plant's treatment capacity will align with that volume. The City purchases raw water from the GRBA under a cost-plus-11% contract for treated water, not only for local use in Port Lavaca but also for Port O'Connor, which required additional treatment capacity at the plant. With regulatory pressure mounting, TCEQ requires utilities to begin design once facilities reach 70 percent capacity and to be under construction by the time they reach 90 percent capacity. Port Lavaca has not met this requirement and has exceeded capacity for some time. Additional funding should be reserved for future improvements to ensure the system remains compliant.



George Street ground storage water tank and high service pump station restoration (2024)
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Strategy 5.3.5:

Until wastewater treatment capacity is expanded, require large industrial users to provide their own water treatment solutions.

Current population projections do not indicate an immediate need to expand the City's water or wastewater treatment capacity, and the City is evaluating whether to postpone upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). If the decision is made not to proceed with an expansion, the City should continue to closely monitor treatment capacity to ensure it remains sufficient for municipal needs.

In the absence of a plant upgrade, the City should require large new industrial users to provide their own wastewater treatment solutions or pretreatment systems. This approach will prevent excessive strain on the existing WWTP, protect service reliability for residents and businesses, and ensure that future industrial growth does not outpace the City's available treatment capacity.

Strategy 5.3.6:

Identify where additional infrastructure water trunk lines need to be directed.

The Future Land Use Plan recommends designating areas in northern Port Lavaca for Business Park and commercial growth. If this area were to develop, the City will need to evaluate where additional water trunk lines should be extended or upsized to ensure adequate capacity for commercial and business park users. Industries should be required to manage their own wastewater treatment plants to avoid contaminating municipal water. Proactively identifying these future trunk line corridors will help the City maintain reliable service, support economic development, and avoid costly retrofits once development is underway.

OBJECTIVE 5.4: Continue to manage a modern, data-driven framework for managing public infrastructure by improving the accuracy, accessibility, and integration of the City's utility information systems.

Strategy 5.4.1:

Continue to update and digitize utility mapping.

The City of Port Lavaca is currently digitizing utilities. To continue this program, it can be expanded not only by digitizing, standardizing, and updating all utility mapping data, including water, sanitary sewer, and drainage infrastructure, but also by receiving and incorporating the developers' as-builts as new construction is built. This initiative will improve the accuracy of system information, strengthen long-term planning, and support more informed decision-making across departments. It will also allow staff to track project progress in real time, document maintenance activities, and maintain a reliable historical record of system conditions. By reducing information gaps, streamlining coordination, and improving the efficiency of future capital improvements, repairs, and asset management efforts, these files can be shared with developers who want to build in Port Lavaca.

Strategy 5.4.2:

Consider hiring an engineering firm to help collect all infrastructure (water, wastewater, and drainage facilities) on an ongoing basis as new developments enter the community.

To maintain accurate and up-to-date records, the City should consider hiring an engineering firm to update infrastructure data as new developments are constructed continually. The firm selected would be responsible for gathering field-verified asset information, integrating drawings of new lines provided by the developers, and updating the City's GIS database. This approach will ensure that new infrastructure is consistently updated, providing an accurate and reliable database of what infrastructure exists and when it was last serviced.

Strategy 5.4.3:

Develop a program that collects infrastructure as-built data after a project is complete from the engineers who prepared the plans for each project to keep the asset management program up to date.

Utility priorities, projects, upgrades, and expansions should be continually reassessed during each annual budget review to align with new developments, proposals, partnerships, and budgetary constraints or capabilities.

Strategy 5.4.4:

Continue to educate, inform, and notify the public of infrastructure projects.

Enhance public understanding and engagement by providing clear, timely, and accessible information about ongoing and upcoming infrastructure projects, including their purpose, timelines, and community impacts. Expand public education efforts to help residents understand how to maintain private infrastructure components properly, recognize early signs of system issues, and report concerns to the City. Improving public awareness and participation will reduce preventable system failures, support proactive maintenance, and help the City avoid costly long-term repairs resulting from unreported or neglected issues.



Port Lavaca looking east fr
SH-35 and US 87 Interchange
Source: Home

GOAL SIX: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

PORT LAVACA IS A COMMUNITY WHICH CONTINUALLY PROVIDES PUBLIC FACILITIES, COMMUNITY SERVICES, AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATION WITHIN A SMALL-TOWN CAPACITY.

OVERVIEW

The following recommendations require that city buildings, city storage and equipment storage hubs, city services, and community locations can provide the most effective and efficient services to the public. Within the financial and operational capacity of a smaller city like Port Lavaca, the investments in the town should be made with conservation and should aim to improve services to the best of the city's ability. Public facilities and service improvements also include non-profit and organizational cooperation, emergency management efforts, coordination with Calhoun County and their facilities, and promoting public events and programs for the community.

Factors which affect the efficiency of public services and facilities include staffing, funding utilities, utilizing technologies and programs, overall structural integrity, City departmental operations and coordination efforts, city events and sponsorships, and equipment utilized by emergency responders.



Port Lavaca Police Station
Source: Baxter & Woodman

OBJECTIVE 6.1: Ensure adequate staffing of city departments, city services, and community emergency services.

Strategy 6.1.1:

Ensure that City departments are well staffed and have the technical expertise to continue improving and providing strong services.

Port Lavaca has multiple departments, divisions, and official civic administrative branches serving the community. These include, City Council, Municipal Court, City Manager's Office, City Secretary's Office, Human Resources, Public Relations, Financial Department, Utility Billing Department, Development Services, Public Works, a city operated Police Department, and multiple citizen boards and advisory commissions.

Moving forward, the city should consider additional departmental staff and organizational adjustments to continue to provide municipal and community services at the current level. Consider the following staff and departmental adjustments over the next five to ten years (based on city department and administration discussions):

- Hire additional parks maintenance staff
- Consider moving the Parks Department/Division into its own department apart from Public Works
- Consider hiring a formal Director of Parks and Recreation
- Consider hiring a full-time Geographic Information Systems (GIS) coordinator and data specialist
- Consider the needs for a full-time or part-time staff or contracted Engineer
- Continue utilizing out-of-house contracted services to review plat amendments, development proposals, and site plans
- Consider the hiring of a second code enforcement officer who can perform dual-positions, such as building inspections
- Consider an in-house full-time public communications staff member to manage online social media, city publications, and the city website, and who can coordinate with the public events coordination team

Strategy 6.1.2:

Ensure that City and County joint-departments are well staffed and have the technical expertise to continue providing strong services.

Within Calhoun County, fire services, animal control services, and EMS services are joint combined units serving the entire county and City of Port Lavaca, while the Calhoun County EMS is a county-level department. The Port Lavaca Fire Department, the Calhoun County Emergency Communications Division, and the Port Lavaca Animal Control Departments should be well staffed and trained to meet future population needs and growth in economic activity. Based on discussions with city and county departments consider the following additional staff positions over the next five to ten years:

- Hire at least three additional fire department staff
- Hire four to six additional police dispatch staff
- Hire an additional animal control officer and assess building capacity needs and continue the inter-local agreements with the Calhoun County and Point Comfort

OBJECTIVE 6.2: Ensure that city facilities, equipment, and buildings are adequately positioned and maintained to service the community.

Strategy 6.2.1:

Consider public facility expansions and additional service locations.

Utilize Map X, *Proposed Public/ Institutional Facilities*, to guide future large-scale investments in new public facilities. As Port Lavaca continues to grow to the north and west, a new joint fire, emergency medical services (EMS), and police sub-station may be required to service new development along northern Half League Road and Independence Drive. Typically an emergency response call should have a two to four minute response time from emergency responders. To maintain the two to four minute response time, and to maintain an adequate ISO rating, consider future service zone expansions as the need and funding arises.

Note that a fire ISO rating (an Insurance Services Office rating) is decided through the Public Protection Classification (PPC) Program. This program utilized factors such as fire department capabilities and equipment, water supply, emergency communications equipment, and overall risk prevention programs and protocols, to assign an ISO score to a community. This score heavily affects the cost of public and private insurance coverages for homes and property owners.

Strategy 6.2.2:

Continue to improve the capacity and quality of utilities services.

Based on city administration and staff meetings and based on current growth and services, minor adjustment may be needed to ensure the same level of service of utilities in Port Lavaca in the future. Consider the following improvements:

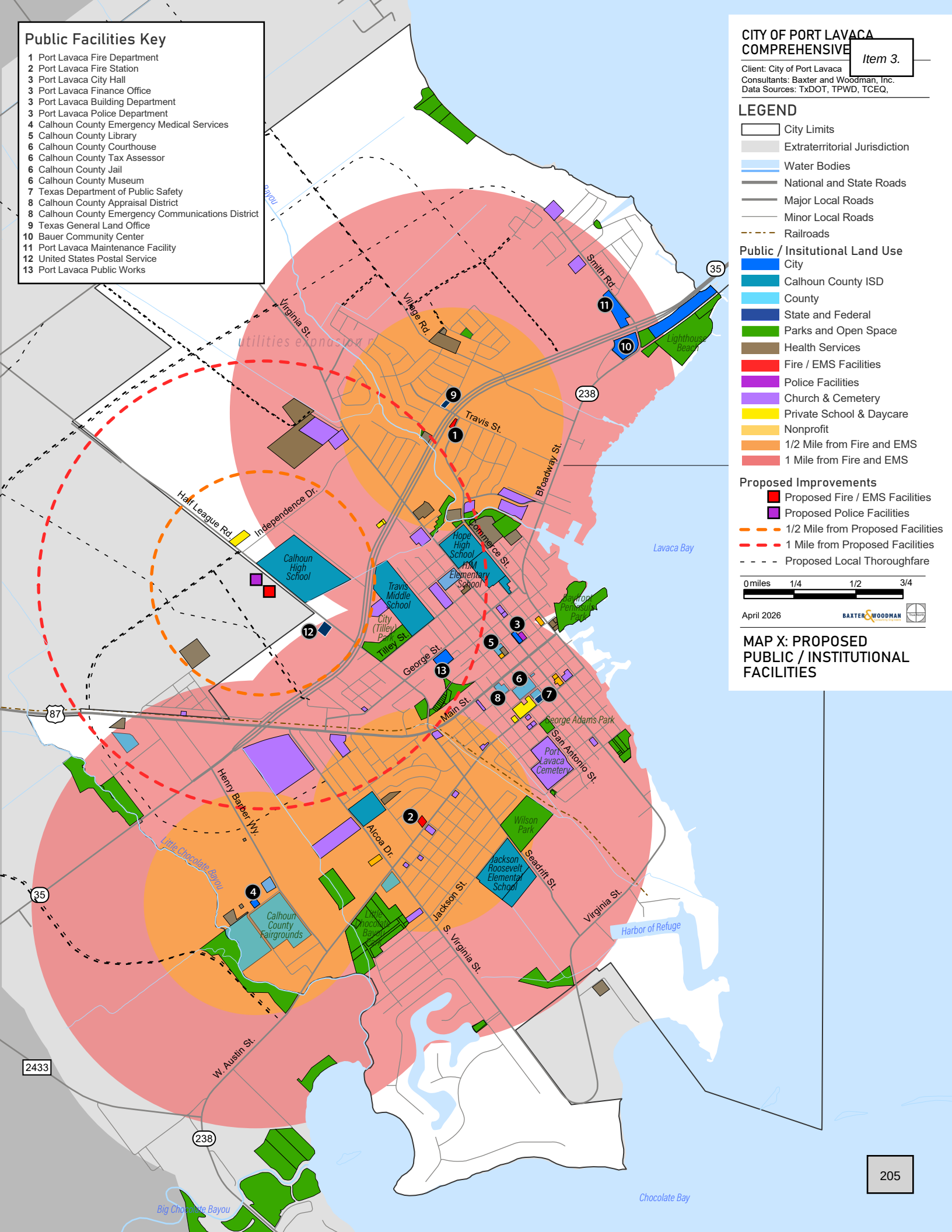
- Update Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems relating to lift station monitoring
- Continue to keep the Water Treatment Plant operational, although with any significant growth, the site capacity will likely need to be expanded
- Consider expanding and constructing a 12-inch water line connecting both existing water towers to better adapt to changes in water needs

Strategy 6.2.3:

Update facilities and equipment at City Hall and other City operated buildings.

Port Lavaca continues to improve the existing City Hall building (a former 1970s-80s bank building) and the Public Works Building to provide secure and effective public services in Port Lavaca within the financial means of the city. Recent improvements include the updating of video and audio equipment, as well as new television monitors and adjusted wall partitions to create more office/ meeting space at City Hall. Moving forward consider the following improvements to City Hall, the Public Works Building, and other city buildings (based on city department and administration discussions):

- Continue to consider and implement enclosures/ bullet-proof resistant spaces
- Update security cameras systems and continue to utilize strong contract-based security, cyber-security, and monitoring systems
- Continue to implement secure door lock systems/ limited access zones
- Update fire alarm and sprinkler systems at City Hall
- Continue to adjust and consider capacity needs to optimize the existing City Hall and Police Department joint-building, which is at or near full-capacity
- Assess the lifetime and needs for- and replace H-VAC and rooftop systems at the City Hall and Police Department building
- Assess the capacity for the Bauer Community Center, City Hall, County offices, Calhoun County ISD schools, medical facilities, senior centers, and civic buildings to withstand high-impact disasters, and consider that each facility houses a back-up generator
- Consider the future needs of the Public Works building and storage houses as structures continue to age
- Consider the need for an additional Public Works storage and maintenance hub closer to Lighthouse Beach
- While not City facilities, the City should continue to coordinate with the Calhoun County Library and local YMCA to assess facility needs such as new pool pumps, computers, and utility needs


Public Facilities Key
1 Port Lavaca Fire Department
2 Port Lavaca Fire Station
3 Port Lavaca City Hall
3 Port Lavaca Finance Office
3 Port Lavaca Building Department
3 Port Lavaca Police Department
4 Calhoun County Emergency Medical Services
5 Calhoun County Library
6 Calhoun County Courthouse
6 Calhoun County Tax Assessor
6 Calhoun County Jail
6 Calhoun County Museum
7 Texas Department of Public Safety
8 Calhoun County Appraisal District
8 Calhoun County Emergency Communications District
9 Texas General Land Office
10 Bauer Community Center
11 Port Lavaca Maintenance Facility
12 United States Postal Service
13 Port Lavaca Public Works
CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE
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
Public / Insitutional Land Use
City
Calhoun County ISD
County
State and Federal
Parks and Open Space
Health Services
Fire / EMS Facilities
Police Facilities
Church & Cemetery
Private School & Daycare
Nonprofit
1/2 Mile from Fire and EMS
1 Mile from Fire and EMS
Proposed Improvements
Proposed Fire / EMS Facilities
Proposed Police Facilities
1/2 Mile from Proposed Facilities
1 Mile from Proposed Facilities
Proposed Local Thoroughfare
0 miles 1/4 1/2 3/4
April 2026
BAXTER & WOODMAN
MAP X: PROPOSED PUBLIC / INSTITUTIONAL FACILITIES
Half League Rd.
Independence Dr.
Virginia St.
Village Rd
Smith Rd
Travis St.
Broadway St.
Commerce St.
Tilley St.
George St.
Main St.
Henry Barber Wy.
Alcoa Dr.
Jackson St.
S. Virginia St.
Seadrift St.
San Antonio St.
W. Austin St.
Calhoun High School
Travis Middle School
Hope High School
HM Elementary School
City (Tilley) Park
Bauer Port Peninsula Park
George Adams Park
Port Lavaca Cemetery
Wilson Park
Jackson Roosevelt Elemental School
Calhoun County Fairgrounds
Little Chocolate Bayou Park
Lighthouse Beach
Lavaca Bay
Harbor of Refuge
Chocolate Bay
Big Chocolate Bayou
Little Chocolate Bayou
35
87
238
2433

Strategy 6.2.4:

Update emergency response (Fire, EMS, Police, File) facilities and equipment in cooridnation with Calhoun County.

The City of Port Lavaca should coordinate efforts with Calhoun County to ensure that emergency responder equipment and services remain up-to-date and are meeting the needs of the community. Based on city department and staff discussions the following improvements may be needed:

- Consider the need and funding for a fire ladder truck for the entire county
- Consider the needs for updated police body camera and vehicle camera systems
- Continue to coordinate training and educational facilities for police, fire, and EMS staff and programs

OBJECTIVE 6.3: Ensure that city facilities and operations utilize up to date and effective technologies, programs, and security measures.

Strategy 6.3.1:

Continue to utilize up-to-date and improve modern technology systems, programs, contracted services, and security protocols.

Based on city department and staff discussions the following improvements may be needed:

- Develop more thorough active shooter protocols within City Hall and city facilities
- Continue to coordinate engineering and plat review processes through contract agreements, and reconsider the ways these contracts are funded and how permit fees may be more optimized
- Consider the needs for updated police body camera and vehicle camera systems
- Continue to coordinate training and educational facilities for police, fire, and EMS staff and programs
- Consider acquiring a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) digital program
- Continue to reassess the scheduling technology platforms for the Bauer Community Center and city spaces

Strategy 6.3.2:

Consider the means to utilize and develop underutilized public lands (including ISD land, City land, and County lands).

Multiple sites owned by the City, Calhoun County ISD, and Calhoun County are partially utilized or underutilized. Seek ways to optimize existing public and private lands to service the community through public and public-private coordinated efforts. Consider the following:

- Consider how the structures and land at 701 South Ann Street (currently a ISD property and historical African American school site) can be utilized for public events or as community space
- Consider how the empty block (privately owned) at 120 West Main Street can be temporarily activated for events
- Consider how the Halfmoon Reef Lighthousecan be further utilized during events
- During the design phase and once completed, consider how the land surrounding the old railroad depot and railroad trail can be utilized and enhanced near City Hall
- Assess how lands surrounding the Wastewater Treatment Plant and utilities/electrical substations can be further utilized for un-paved trails and passive programming

Strategy 6.3.3:

Develop an updated Strategic Operating Plan and ensure cross-collaboration between the city council, city staff, department heads, and city boards/commissions.

The City of Port Lavaca should update the City's 2012 Strategic Operating Plan (SOP) to align with the priorities and outcomes of the Comprehensive Plan. The updated SOP should include overall city strategic goals and efforts (short-term and long-term), benchmarkable metrics, Department-specific operating plans and goals, and new joint city-county operating protocols.

In addition, consider establishing an annual of bi-annual department retreat where city council, city staff, city departments, and county staff gather in a location and conduct a "workshop" to establish and update the overall strategic vision and SOP.



Iguana Fest in Downtown P
Source: City of P

GOAL SEVEN: RESILIENCE

PORT LAVACA IS A COMMUNITY WHICH UTILIZES A SYSTEMS-BASED APPROACH TO INTEGRATING ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE INTO ALL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL LIFE, DEVELOPMENT, AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT.

OVERVIEW

As further described on page XXX, to the right, resilience is the ability to respond, adapt, and ensure the continuation of strong ecological environmental, sustainable economies, efficient public services, and foster social engagement. As a smaller community in Texas, primarily driven by the fishing and oil economies, and impacted regularly by hurricanes and flood risks, Port Lavac's resilience is all the more important. The limited economic and governmental capacity in a small town requires harder work to serve the community and all actions should build into something greater (the "two-birds one-stone "approach). The following recommendations, along with recommendations provided in all other goals, provide strategies and methods for Port Lavaca to become a more resilient community and help grow the ability for Port Lavaca to remain a viable and vibrant place to live.



Shrimp boat at City Harbor in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter & Woodman

What is Resilience?

Resilience is more than just an ecological or environmental term. There are largely four types of resilience to a community; environmental, infrastructure, economic, and social. All aspects of resilience help to create a city which can respond to immediate changes, deal with threats or impacts larger than the city itself, and have the adequate tools to maintain services and the quality of life as stressors occur.

A Systems-Based Approach to Resilience

Port Lavaca should think of resilience as a system. A systems-based approach to resilience treats all aspects of a community as a web of interconnected causes and effects, each strengthened by another. Every aspect of a community is not isolated, and every action has impacts down the line further than what may be immediately understood. Without resilience as a frame of mind, services can become inefficient, large gaps in services may occur, infrastructure maintenance and services may become more expensive, crime and social distrust may increase, and a community's physical health may decline. Ensuring that all aspects of resilience are addressed in a community helps to provide "future-proofing" as economies, societies, and environments change. As new developments are proposed, as developments age, and as redevelopment shifts social fabrics, resilience and longevity should remain at the forefront of decision making.

Environmental Resilience

Environmental resilience is the ability for a community to maintain operations and services during natural disaster, and the ability to withstand and recover from environmental disasters and changes.

Environmental resilience efforts help to:

- Protect properties along the shoreline from water inundation
- Reduce saltwater infiltration into farmlands
- Reduce shoreline erosion
- Provide natural buffers between open water, wetlands, and developed areas
- Provide water filtration at water outflows and run-off zones protecting water ecology and health
- Reduce the chances of minor and recurring flooding
- Reduce sole reliance on expensive man-made hardscapes and infrastructure
- Improve the communities health and well-being

Infrastructural Resilience

Infrastructural resilience is the ability for a community to continue operations and services long-term, and in fiscally-reasonable way, as natural disasters occur and infrastructure ages.

Infrastructural resilience efforts help to:

- Reduce harmful contaminants and pollution
- Withstand droughts, floods, and hurricanes
- Reduce impacts of blackouts and loss of power
- Reduce energy costs and increase energy use efficiency
- Protect residential and commercial utilities
- Expand options for public and private power generation
- Reduce impacts of temporary losses of water or gasoline

Economic / Fiscal Resilience

Economic and fiscal resilience is the ability for a communities economy and fiscal expenditures to adapt to budgetary constraints and changing economic frameworks.

Economic and fiscal resilience efforts help to:

- Reduce the cost of city services and building maintenance
- Reduce potential budget deficits
- Provide the ability to financially respond to natural disasters in a more timely manner
- Ensure the adequacy and longevity of police, fire, and emergency medical services
- Provide immediate relief services during and directly after natural disasters
- Encourage workplace and employment diversity to strengthen the economy during specific industry slow-downs.
- Provide tools for property owner repairs
- Ensure longevity of food banks, senior assistance, and social/work training opportunities

Social Resilience

Social resilience refers to the strength, ability for, and cohesion of the community, social gatherings, community identity, and social trust in community members and civic leaders.

Social resilience efforts help to:

- Ensure adequate housing suited for all stages of life
- Encourage youth social activities and programs
- Reduce loneliness and social isolation
- Provide spaces suited for community gatherings
- Develop social cohesion through events and programming
- Foster a sense of community safety
- Encourage artistic and cultural expression
- Improve civic engagement and leadership

Guiding Principles for Resilience

The guiding principles for goal seven provide a contextual framework and a strategic basis for the following recommendations. These guiding principles should be utilized by the city when making future decisions regarding development, fiscal expenditure, costal adaptation, community programs, and emergency management.

R Principle 1. - Non-Politicization.

Resilience should not be a political issue or topic. It is the ability for a household or city to be able to react and deter negative consequences from issues larger than the city of household itself, such as pollution and natural disasters. Resilience means improved economic stability, maintaining existing qualities of life, continually adapting and improving flood mitigation techniques, reducing waste, improving energy efficiency (savings on energy costs), protecting natural landscapes and agricultural lands, and reducing human-risk during natural disasters.

R Principle 2. - Long-term Thinking.

Resilience is a long-term strategy which sees long-term benefits. Short-term decisions because they may be the easiest should not be the default decision, instead the reprecussions and long-term impacts of decisions should be contually considered.

R Principle 3. - Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services.

Man-made infastrucure such as detention basins, drain culverts, and levees, should work in tandem with nature biological systems. The natural drainage processes, wetlands, and soil composition should be integrated into the man-made systems; both should work together to decrease costs of maintenece and hard-infastrucure construction.

R Principle 4. - Community-driven.

Resilience is a community driven effort where all community members are responsible for ensuring a clean, healthy, and thiving city. Non-profits, churches, communtiy events, schools, community organizations, and youth groups are all pioneers of social and economic resilience.

OBJECTIVE 7.1: Strive for environmental resilience by improving and protecting natural resources, ensuring economic and development activities don't negatively impact the environment long-term, and mitigating structural hazards or contaminants.

Strategy 7.1.1:

Continue to preserve existing sensitive environmental areas or areas of high visual and characteristic values, such as wetlands, tributary corridors, and forested lands.

Natural landscapes serve a critical role in reducing flood risks and reducing the financial and construction burden of man-made drainage infrastructure. Natural systems such as, rooted erosion control, wetland filtration, and increasing water-soil permeability are strategies that aid in the efficiency and long-term sustainability of mid-made underground systems and infrastructure.

As described in the Waterfront District recommendation (Objective 1.4), Port Lavaca should continue to preserve and also expand existing and historic wetland sites along Lavaca Bay, providing erosion prevention and eco-tourism opportunities.

Also, as depicted in the Future Land Use Map, Strategy 1.1.1, several existing waterway corridors and forested groves are designated as natural open spaces, for the purposes of preservation when adjacent development occurs. These last remnant costal shrublands and forests serve a critical role in the seasonal costal migration routes for birds as rest stops, feeding spots, and nesting sites.

Strategy 7.1.2:

Work with local coastal environmental agencies to ensure safe and proper development of the waterfront and prevent airborne and waterborne pollutants.

Work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (San Antonio Bay Ecosystem Field Office), Texas General Land Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), and the Matagorda Bay Mitigation Trust (MBMT), and other coastal agencies to ensure desired development outcomes. The city should work with local entities to encourage, protect, and ensure environmental compliance of new parkland, recreational opportunities, planting re-establishments, coastal economic developments, and harbor development. Continually monitor new construction sites, vacant parcels, vacant structures, and operating businesses, to ensure proper use and protection of the waterfront, eliminating any dumping activities, structural leaking, or activities which damage the coastline and pollute waters.

Strategy 7.1.3:

Continue to mitigate and assess former light industrial sites for potential contaminants, needed mitigation steps, required funding, and development potential.

Many sites along Port Lavaca's coastline are non-operational, abandoned, or empty sites that once hosted fishing, light industrial, and transportation-based industries. Areas, such as at Harbor of Refuge and City Harbor should be continually monitored and tested or potential pollutants and adverse effects. Such actions and considerations include:

- Removal or sealing of old above-ground and underground storage tanks
- Structural stability as to not pose a hazard to adjacent operational parcels
- Lay-down and storage yard run-off and the piling of degraded construction or building materials
- Preventing anaerobic bacteria and sulfides from building due to fish-waste dumping or storage
- Ensuring continued flow of water/ avoiding structural stagnation
- Ensuring that petroleum, natural gas, and systems are functional and contained after and before major storms
- Soil testing of sites to identify, prevent and contain heavy metal soil saturation (mercury, cadmium, arsenic, etc.)
- Preventing harmful saltwater erosion of retaining walls and hydrostatic pressure blowouts
- Preventing illegal waste disposal and pumping (including hazardous materials, illegal drug production waste, tires and automotive parts, and trash debris)
- Assessing damage over-time to coastal plantings and ecology due to regular fishing and light-industrial-type activities



Wetland restoration project along Texas' Gu
Source: Port of Houston A

Strategy 7.1.4:

Relocate, remove, and/or address loose contaminants and structures temporarily located in Lavaca Bay near Bayfront Peninsula Park and other potential locations.

Former boat dock and structural debris often makes its way into Lavaca Bay after major hurricanes and storm surges. Port Lavaca should remove any existing debris and continue to remove future debris. The fallen structures can pose environmental risk, as rust and materials can pollute the water and boats can hit the debris if it is not visible or shifts from its standard location.

Strategy 7.1.5:

As described and identified in Objective 1.1.4, Waterfront Plan, expand, reestablish, and ensure the continued health of wetlands and riparian flood buffers along the coast.

To prevent shoreline erosion and mitigate flooding impacts to coastal properties, continue to encourage and develop native wetland costal ecosystems as the first line of defense to water inundation events. The wetlands and riparian buffers serve as critical infrastructure protecting the city, build the city identify as a small-town costal community, and are economic development tools in the form of eco-tourism.



Buffalo Bayou Trail prairie development in Houston
Source: Texan By Nature

Strategy 7.1.6:

Protect and work with developers to require and/or encourage the healthy maintenance of existing wetlands and riparian areas such as at the mouth of Little Chocolate Bayou, Lynn's Bayou, and smaller tributaries leading to Lavaca Bay.

As development continues, the city should place increasing scrutiny of site plans and concepts that destroy, reduce, remove, or impact existing wetland and costal ecosystems. For example, the Red Fish Bay subdivision protected a strip of coastal riparian and wetland ecosystem 100 to 500 feet deep into the development. This is a good example of development maintaining natural ecosystem services and protective buffers, although some protective brushlands were lost. Developments such as the Holiday Inn Express & Suites Port Lavaca, homes along southern Guadalupe Street and South Virginia Street (abutting the waterfront), and Brookhollow Estates have hard edge retaining wall buffers, but no vegetative or rip-rap erosion control, which can lead to sloping, sagging, and deterioration of the retaining wall. As future land is developed on the coastline and along bayous, increasingly encourage and work with developers to increase the distance of protective buffers while still providing views and adequate public access point to the waterfront and bayou edges. Currently the city's Code of Ordinances dictates a minimum 25-foot buffer between high-water lines and the edge of development. The city should also consider increasing this buffering distance to 50 feet, which provides a more usable and adaptable preservation strip for faunal use, greater protection when coastal erosion occurs, and helps to maintain proper buffer distances if vegetation die-off or encroachment occurs at the buffer's edges.



River Dunes development in Oriental, NC, with large preserved wetland buffers
Source: GoogleMaps Imagery

Strategy 7.1.7:

Consider requiring the planting of only native species of trees and landscapes within all new developments.

The required planting of only native trees and landscapes by developers should be added to the City Code of Ordinances. Refer to the Native Plant Society of Texas Houston Chapter's Native Plant Guide and the City of Houston's / AgriLife Extension Texas A&M's guide for Native and Adapted Plants for Houston to identify native plants which fit within the Texas Coastal Prairie eco-region. Native plants provide numerous benefits to residents, the ecosystem, and city leaders, such as:

- Native trees can withstand hurricanes and storms better than non-natives
- Encourages groundwater recharge
- Increases rainwater permeability
- Avoids the build-up of brush and invasive bramble
- Reduces run-off and pollutants in the water
- Helps enhance man-made engineering projects
- Encourages soil stabilization
- Promotes native Texan and ecosystem education

Currently, only one shade tree or ornamental tree is required for each single-family residential lot within new residential subdivisions and one tree per unit in multi-family developments (Chapter 42, Article 7). The City should consider amending and increasing the standard to require at least two shade trees and specify that they should be non-ornamental trees.

The Code currently requires that within commercial-retail development, one tree is planted for every 1,000 square feet of developed land, and one tree per every 2,000 square feet over 10,000 feet. The code also requires at least 10% of the entire building site to be landscapes and that 70% of that must be placed inside the "street yard frontage". Consider amending the code to explicitly state spacing requirements for trees along the property frontage, such as requiring a planted tree along a commercial developments primary frontage spaced at every 30 feet to ensure shaded sidewalks.

The City does have an approved tree and planting species list, but this should be amended to only include the listing of native trees, native grasses, and native flora. The extended / amended list of plantings will be the point of reference for developers as to what native plants are approved. Ensure that enough planting types are added to the approved list, as to not limit the diversity of the ecosystem, and help prevent tree disease.



The Sunbridge community development, in Florida, utilizes native plantings and ecosystem preservation as a way to market and sell home sites.
Source: Tavistock Development Company

Strategy 7.1.8:

Protect trees within the right-of-way and medians of roadways, along with older trees on private property.

Port Lavaca should conduct a Tree Survey to catalog and identify the location, age, health of city trees. In addition, the city should alter and change right-of-way standards, sidewalk treatments, and pavement sub-base, to protect and preserve trees on public and private property. This could involve temporary easements to avoid a trees root bulb zone, temporarily including segments of decomposed granite, establishing a new fund to help property owners maintain older tree stock, and increasing Code requirements for tree protections during development.

Currently the Code of Ordinances does not include any tree protection requirement for new development. The code does include the offering of tree protection credits (minimizing the tree planting requirements) if a developer chose to protect a tree during construction. The city also does not require a tree or landscape environmental survey before development/ construction occurs. The city should consider amendments to the code to include a tree, plantings, and landscaping survey if the site is within the floodplains or has significant forested/vegetated areas. Also consider additional benefits and incentives to protect wetlands and large trees on new development sites. Lastly, for existing development, consider potential penalties for cutting down and destroying an existing tree of a specific size, and destroying, minimizing, or altering wetland riparian habitats, unless approved by the city.

OBJECTIVE 7.2: Improve the community's infrastructural resilience by incorporating safe and modern building practices, innovative energy use methods, and protecting critical utilities and city services

Strategy 7.2.1: Ensure existing developments in vulnerable areas are prepared, and new development is built with the risk factors in mind.

Flood prone areas, storm surge zones, and locations with erosion risks may require additional standards to protect people and property. This may include land use restrictions, elevated building requirements, open space buffers, or improved drainage practices. Supporting preparedness for existing development and guiding new development with risk in mind will help reduce long term hazards and improve community resilience. Elevating housing, exterior utilities, and other critical features two-feet or higher above base-flood elevation is standard and should continue to be implemented in Port Lavaca.



Elevated foundations of residential structures
Source: P3Elevation

Strategy 7.2.2: Amend the City's Code of Ordinances to add regulations for the provision of EV (Electric Vehicle) charging stations on private and public property.

As EV usage increases, many municipalities are taking an active role in establishing partnerships to create electric vehicle charging stations / locations. Currently, Port Lavac's City Code of Ordinances does not include provisions, regulations, or incentives for private and public Electric Vehicle charging stations / locations.

The Code of Ordinances, in Chapter 26 (Manufactured Housing and Recreational Vehicles), does state that within Commercial Recreational Vehicle (RV) parks that only RV's may be charged not personal vehicles, the regulations are largely up to the property owner.

The City Code overall does not include any specifications, requirements, incentives, or penalties regarding electric vehicle hook ups on private residential property, at commercial centers, or at public facilities. The city should consider adding language to the Code regarding the regulation of specific EV charging rules and operations. As well, consider incentives for new commercial developers adding EV charging stations to their development. As well, the city should study the feasibility of adding electric vehicle charging ports to the Light House Beach campgrounds for vehicles and RVs. Lastly, the city should include provision regarding the tampering, disposal, and unsafe storage of large electric batteries, and further amend Chapter 40 (Solid Waste), Article One, to include these same provisions.



Electric vehicle charging addition to an existing parking lot
Source: ABC South West, Kate Stephens



Residential solar panel installation
Source: Houston Public Media

Strategy 7.2.3: Require dark sky complaint lighting fixtures at any public development along the Waterfront and within parks.

Consider adding language to Port Lavaca's City Code of Ordinances that required Dark-Sky compliant lighting along public trails, within parks and wetland areas, in high-use public zones, and within the Waterfront District for newly developed public properties. Dark-Sky compliant fixtures reduce light trespass, reduce energy use, enhance public visibility, and reduces impacts on costal animal migratory and nocturnal activities.

Strategy 7.2.4: Amend the City's Code of Ordinances to add residential and commercial Codes regarding the installation and placement of rooftop solar panels.

Currently, Port Lavaca's City Code of Ordinances does not include provisions, regulations, or incentives for private and public solar panel installation. Port Lavaca, should consider clarifying language within the Code of Ordinances which describes what is considered a solar installation, where solar installations are allowed and not allowed, structural requirements, required roof fire access buffers, historic preservation related requirements, and other terms which help to mitigate potential visual, structural, or grid connection issues with the addition of solar panels. Utilize the 2018 International Building Code, Texas Department of Insurance windstorm checklist, and the Texas Property Code 202.010 to formulate language.

Strategy 7.2.5: Continue to encourage the market-feasible adaptive reuse of properties.

As described in the Downtown and Waterfront Plans (Objective 1.4 and 1.3), Port Lavaca should strive to renovate, retain, and preserve existing historic and legacy structures. Although in many cases structural stability and deterioration has likely occurred beyond reasonable salvageability, many structures may still be viable options for adaptive reuse. The City should seek to continually reuse and improve existing structures as much as possible. This method of redevelopment often reduces the amount of new materials needed, opens possibilities to reuse brick and wood elements, and can reduce timber and steel frame construction costs. One great example of adaptive reuse in the City is Lavaca Barbeque, which is housed in an old 1940s-60s fuel and auto repair shop, which helps to preserve the limited number of mid-century modern structures in the city and utilizes the existing fuel stations as a covered outdoor dining canopy.



Strategy 7.2.6: Encourage permeable pavements within the City and reduce the amount of impermeable surfaces as much as possible.

Port Lavaca should consider incentives for development that include permeable surfaces/ pavements and rain gardens. This helps to reduce the amount of water flowing into the storm drain system, reduces sheet-flow, and decreases the potential for pooling water in undesired areas.

Currently, the Code of Ordinances required impervious surface and run-off calculations for any new development with 10,000 square feet or more of continuous impervious cover, any new commercial property, and any new housing subdivision. Consider amending the code to trigger an impervious surface calculation for any new development or structural erection above 2,500 square feet within the Waterfront District (the most vulnerable location in Port Lavaca).

In addition, currently, the Code of Ordinances requires one parking space for anywhere between 200 square feet to 300 square feet of developed retail space, personal service shops, banks, medical clinics, wholesale showrooms, and gasoline service centers. The Code also states that any commercial shopping center must provide one parking space for every 250 square feet of gross floor area, and at minimum 400 parking spaces for any store over 100,000 square feet (such as "big-box" retailers). Consider incentives and alterations to the Code which could incentivize reducing parking minimums for low-vehicle parking inducing retail/commercial operations such as banks and drive thru-restaurants. The city should also consider ways to reduce the amount of parking requirements if the needs can be met through on-street parking (particularly within the Downtown) and/or through shared parking agreements with churches (which often induce parking demand only one to two days of the week).

Strategy 7.2.7: Require all new city and public facilities to include, incorporate, and/or consider green infrastructure and energy efficient utilities.

The U.S. Green Building Councils LEED for Cities and Communities (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) sets standards, benchmarks, and scoring systems which provide an overview of a structures, infrastructure system, or operations sustainability. LEED uses a framework of benchmarking and performance measures to assess and certify the sustainability of cities and communities. A municipality, entity, project, or structure can receive a LEED certification of Silver, Gold, or Platinum, as a recognition of an entities sustainable practices.

A LEED certification can help a municipality attract environmentally conscious businesses reducing operational costs of water treatment, reduce water usage and needed ground-water intake, reducing taxes due to improved city-facility operations costs, and can help increase commercial and residential structure resale value.

As city building infrastructure and utilities are renovated, LEED improvements and qualified infrastructure should be added. In addition, LEED improvements should continue to be considered and applied in the collection and treatment of trash and waste disposal services. Any new parkland and recreational improvements, such as lighting, bathroom structures, pavilions, the Bauer Community Center and more, improvements should incorporate LEED standards. Lastly, as new housing development occurs, consider working to with developers to provide LEED certified housing structures, with a focus on energy efficiency, sustainable materials sourcing, and efficient water usage. See strategy X.X.X., under Goal 6, *Public Facilities and Services*, for a list of potential city building improvements and utility needs.





Permiable pavement parking spaces in new Texas developments
Source: TrueGrid Pavers, Shepher's Construction

Strategy 7.2.8: Establish a document guidebook to help residents and business owners to understand the wide-range of environmental adaptive improvements they can conduct.

Port Lavaca should create a document guidebook for both public and private use which can help encourage and provide resources to help adapt structures and infrastructure to be more environmentally resilient and secure. Utilizing resources from the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program, Port Lavaca can help to formalize, encourage, and assist land owners in improving flood protection, energy efficiency, and storm damage mitigation of their property. The guidebook should include multiple approved ways of mitigating and adapting infrastructure, the permits needed for each improvement, annual costs and savings benefits of the improvements, and step-by-step processes and regulations related to the improvement.

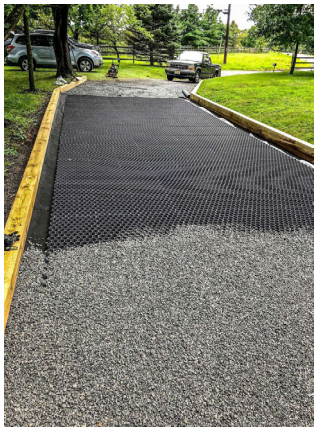
Example improvements can include elevating exterior heating and cooling (AC) units to prevent high-water inundation, replacement of windows and window frames, the installation of energy efficient streetlights and parking lot fixture bulbs, roof replacements, permitting processes, financial benefits guides, and home-based or commercial roof-top solar installation information.





Elevated residential H-VAC units
Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Office Of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Excel Mechanical





Permiable pavement driveway installation progress
Source: TrueGrid Pavers, Core Landscape

Strategy 7.2.9: Require all new developments to include improved and higher capacity street drains and encourage natural detention basin designs.

Throughout Texas, specifically along the coast, it always seems as though there are never enough street drains or the street drains seem inadequate to deal with major downpours of rain. To address this, Port Lavaca should reevaluate and amend the Code (Chapter 42, Article VI, Section 42-141) Storm Drainage Design Manual for the City of Port Lavaca to include the installation requirement of higher-capacity drainage systems and provide the requirements of street drains at a standard interval as a minimum unless run-off and impact calculations say otherwise. In addition, the city should encourage developers to utilize Low-Impact Development detention basin and drainage ditch methods which utilize semi-natural plantings and buffers as a means to improve the visual quality of neighborhoods and reduce the visual impact of large open detention zones.



Digital wireless water meter minitoring technology
Source: The Water Meter Guys



Small raingarden depressions help to pull water away from a homes foundation
Source: LPD Watersheds

OBJECTIVE 7.3: Improve the economic and fiscal resilience of Port Lavaca's businesses, city operations, and households.

Strategy 7.3.1: Strengthen land use code enforcement to ensure compliance, address incompatible uses, and maintain community.

This strategy focuses on improving the consistency, clarity, and effectiveness of code enforcement activities. Stronger enforcement helps protect neighborhood character, reduce nuisances, and ensure that properties contribute positively to the community.

Strategy 7.3.2: Re-establish code enforcement expectations with existing property owners.

For successful code enforcement, the City should reach out to property owners to remind them about common violations and how they can remain in compliance. Regular communication can help property owners know that the city is serious about code enforcement and could help encourage voluntary compliance. Continually assess how the City corporates and works with property owners, within their means, to improve neighborhood character and safety.

Strategy 7.3.3: Continue to allow small-scale, home-based businesses.

Continue to support a local economic through home-based services such as a hair or nail salon, tax office, realtor office, or internet-based business that does not cause nuisance to existing neighborhoods.

Strategy 7.3.4: Ensure availability of land for Business Park and Industrial use in desirable areas.

Identify and reserve land for new industrial and business park development, ensuring it is well located, serviced, and compatible with surrounding uses. Designate land either on the north side of Port Lavaca or consider the alternative of development along US 87. Consider future Industrial location based on southeastern winds that will blow smells and fumes to the northwest. Ensure that existing residential will be minimally impacted by location of future development and ensure that neighborhood developers are aware of these plans. Formosa owned land on the north side of Port Lavaca could be considered for Business Park to respect existing nearby residential to the south and north.



Boats docked
Source: EZ Docks



Small home hair salon business in converted space
Source: Happy Place Hair Studio



Oyster farming
Source: Louise Gray

Strategy 7.3.5: Consider encouraging the expansion of aqua-culture related businesses.

The seafood and fishing industry is a major economic driver in Port Lavaca that can should be enhanced with addition funding for docks, boat yards, and boat service centers. In addition, land off of Bayfront Peninsula Park as identified in Map X, Downtown District, should be considered for oyster farming and other aquatic-based farming practices.

Strategy 7.3.6: Promote and assist the viability of agriculturally based economic activities in the Planning Area.

Protecting farmland from industrial and commercial pollutants helps ensure that crops, soil, and water remain safe. Agricultural areas also provide permeable surfaces that allow stormwater to drain naturally, reducing flooding and improving watershed health. Supporting agriculture may include land use protections, best practice guidance, and partnerships with local producers to maintain the economic and ecological value of these lands.

Strategy 7.3.7: Explore funding opportunities for reinvestment into existing communities.

As the City evaluates creating a Tax Increment Redevelopment Zone (TIRZ) district, revise and expand the proposal to include funding for residential facade improvements and structural repair programs and explore additional or non matching funding sources to support these efforts.

Strategy 7.3.8: Conduct a property tax assessment to guide better development practices that can aid in fiscally responsible utilities and infastrucure replacement.

Often, a city receives a lower amount of taxes from single-family residential properties when compared to multi-family residential properties and commercial businesses. These lower density developments often represent a net-loss for a city, due to the amount of utilities and infrastructure servicing properties costing more to replace when compared to the overall taxes coming in from those properties over time. Buildings such as commercial properties and multi-family structures provide a larger tax base for the city, while being serviced by less utilities and infrastructure per residents, per acre, and/or per dollar received. Port Lavaca should ensure that development approval is balanced and that the resulting tax versus expenditure ratio doesn't go negative. A city tax base analysis should be conducted which assesses the current annual tax base by taxation type (property, sales, permits, fines, etc.) and assesses the about of city revenue on a parcel-by-parcel basis. This standard analysis provides a city with an idea of where the most profitable land uses and locations are and how a city can better balance income revenues to ensure that increasing the number of single-family residential properties and possible annexation is still financially viable.



Farmland inside Port Lavaca's ETJ
Source: Farm & Ranch



Business Park in Carrollton, TX
Source: Morrison Seifert Murphy Architects, USA

Strategy 7.3.9: Continue to utilize grant funding to implement city projects, but seek for long-term internal institutional stability with grant acquisition training of newer staff and annual city budgeting processes.

As previously mentioned, and included in Chapter 1, *Planning Context*, Port Lavaca often relies on grant funding to implement projects; contributing a significant amount to the city's budgetary process. Port Lavaca should ensure that the internal institutional knowledge of grant writing, application processing, benchmarking, and financial tracking remains strong within the City. Continue to train and encourage the spread of knowledge around grant applications and implementation. Moving forward the City should continue to utilize grant funds (matching or in full) as a means to implement needed infrastructure and quality of life projects without placing a large strain on city budgets and residents.

Strategy 7.3.10: Continue to address Lavaca Bay depths to ensure economic viability of needed shipping routes, while protecting sensitive environmental areas.

Multiple dredged ship channels lead to Port Lavaca's harbors, such as the /Habor of Refuge, Nautical Landing Marina, and City Harbor. Continue to monitor and work with Army Corps of Engineers to ensure proper depths for safe navigation and functional economic activity. In addition, ensure that the depths of each ship channel are reassessed following large storm events, hurricanes, and flooding occurrences, which shift the bay-floor sediment.

Strategy 7.3.11: Develop an allocation, tracking, and benchmarking system for the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) district in Port Lavaca.

Recently established, The Port Lavaca TIRZ district Board and the City should develop the means to assess the success of the district's revenues and projects. The project funding process should be formalized with clear decision-making criteria, stepped processes, and applications for civic requests. In addition, financial tracking should be established to annual review the direct and indirect revenues generated from TIRZ-funded investments. Lastly, as the TIRZ district is established for at least a year, conduct a joint City-TIRZ Board conference to identify long-term goals, projects, desired outcomes, and methodologies for ensuring the most effective use for funds generated.

OBJECTIVE 7.4: Continue to develop the community's social resilience through emergency relief coordination, continued public communications, and city sponsored civic efforts.

Strategy 7.4.1: Continue to coordinate disaster relief efforts, storage houses, and emergency medical relief networks in times of hurricanes, droughts, and adverse weather.

Port Lavaca should continue disaster relief and preparedness effort coordination with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), Calhoun County, Texas, and local partners (such as Calhoun County ISD, H-E-B). The city should continue to establish relief stations throughout the community after disasters occur which lead to a loss of structures, water, air conditions, and utilities.

In addition, the City should consider developing and providing a pamphlet on disaster preparedness and relief efforts to new homeowners and newly constructed households within Port Lavaca to ensure continued community knowledge of relief locations ,risks, local programs, and evacuation routes. Lastly, update the City's website and police department portal with additional disaster relief and preparedness materials, include images and video links, and links to external funding and relief guidance.



2017 Hurricain Harvey damage in Port Lavaca
Source: Rick Wilking, Reuters

Strategy 7.4.2: Conduct a comprehensive survey and study of all community-based buildings for the purposes of pop-up relief centers.

As described in Goal 6, *Public Facilities and Services*, assess the capacity for the Bauer Community Center, City Hall, County offices, Calhoun County ISD schools, medical facilities, senior centers, and civic buildings to withstand high-impact disasters.

Identify the feasibility and needs for each building to serve as emergency relief centers, cool-off and warm-up centers, food distribution hubs, temporary sleeping stations, and pop-up medical and financial service hubs. Identify the overall wind-risk, sturdiness of walls and roofs, emergency electrical generation capacity, flood prone risks, access to and from the site during high-water, and spatial needs of each facility. From this study, ensure that enough capacity is available for standard disaster events and that these centers can be geographically distributed in a way to serve all residents within a reasonable distance.

Strategy 7.4.3: Continue to ensure the viability, accuracy, and efficiency of Calhoun County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2025).

Utilizing the *Calhoun County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan* (2025), Port Lavaca should continue to monitor risks, assess the effects of smaller weather events which may indicate larger issues, and coordinate drought relief efforts with local municipalities and communities. Continue to implement the resulting recommendations from the Plan which include coordinative efforts, the purchase of vehicles and back-up generators, ensuring reliable utilities services and plans, and adjusting ordinances to reduce risks and threats.



Every year, the Port Lavaca Chamber of Commerce organizes and helps fund the **Calhoun County Lemonade Day**. The event is a youth-based entrepreneurship program aimed at promoting social gathering, entrepreneurship, and skill learning. This is a relatively low-cost high-impact event that Port Lavaca should aim to mimic the success of in other events and community projects.
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Strategy 7.4.4: Continue to provide funds and sponsor community and city-led events.

Port Lavaca, community groups, and Calhoun County, should continue to support and promote local events in the city and county. Local events, such as the Lemonade Day, Iguana Fest, winter events, and Independence Day holiday events, help draw in visitors from the surrounding region and greatly improve the quality of life in Port Lavaca. Continually assess the capacity to develop additional community-led programs, include new features and elements to existing events, and optimize inter-government coordination efforts.

Strategy 7.4.5: Continue to encourage and establish programs and community-led projects with local non-profit groups.

The City should continue to utilize local organizations, such as the Scout of America, local schools, church organizations, Calhoun County Senior Food Box Program, United Way of Calhoun County, Port Lavaca Rotary Club & Lions Club, Harbor Children's Alliance, Calhoun County Senior Citizens Association and more. Often times, these groups assist with city events, disaster relief, local event tents, parks and recreational sponsored eagle scout projects, and more.

GOAL EIGHT: ZONING

ESTABLISH A MODEL ZONING DISTRICT THAT SUPPORTS THE COMMUNITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY SIMPLIFYING AND CONSOLIDATING ZONING DISTRICTS, PROTECTING NEIGHBORHOODS AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS, ENSURING COMPATIBLE LAND USES, AND UPDATING STANDARDS, WITH CLEAR DEFINITIONS AND SPECIFIC PROVISIONS FOR MANUFACTURED HOUSING.

OVERVIEW

Zoning laws regulate how land is used within defined areas of a community, establishing zoning districts with specific standards that determine permitted land uses, building height and scale, and development density. These regulations are exercised under the police powers of state governments and are commonly delegated to local jurisdictions for adoption and enforcement. According to Texas Local Government Code Chapter 211, zoning is mandated by State Law whereby the governing body of a municipality may regulate the height, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structure; the percentage of a lot that may be occupied; the size of yards, courts, and other open spaces; population density; the location and use of buildings, other structures, and land for business, industrial, residential, or other purposes; and the pumping, extraction, and use of groundwater by persons other than retail public utilities in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.



Main Street facing sou
Source: Home

Guiding Principles for Zoning (ZG)

Through conversations with the City Staff, including the City Manager, Director of Development Services, and Code Enforcement Officer, as well as other entities that are influenced by zoning matters, such as the Victoria Economic Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce, Public Works Director, Realtors, and developers, the top challenges were categorized throughout this section. The guiding principles for this chapter are as follows:

ZG1. - Implement the community goals and objectives of the Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan.

A comprehensive plan is a policy and guidance document that outlines a vision for the future and provides a map for growth over the next 10-20 years. This document addresses future development challenges and opportunities facing the city. Serving as the guide for governmental officials, it offers a consistent foundation that extends beyond political terms. Once adopted by the City Council, the plan will act as the policy manual for the location and nature of growth and development within Port Lavaca. Chapter 211 of the Local Government Code identifies that zoning regulations should be developed, "in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan," which means the goals, objectives, and strategies for each chapter should align with zoning. The goal for each planning element includes the following:

- Existing Land Use, Future Land Use And Community Character
- Transportation (Vehicular, Bicycle, Pedestrian): Provide a safe, connected, and efficient multimodal transportation network that meets the mobility needs of all Port Lavaca residents.
- Parks, Trails, And Open Space
- Housing And Neighborhoods
- Utilities Infrastructure (Potable Water, Sanitary Sewer, Drainage)
- Public Lands, Facilities, And Services
- Resilience
- Zoning

ZG 2. - Conserve the character of existing neighborhoods and commercial districts.

As part of the creation of the Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan, a Character-Based map was developed to help identify and assess all the areas that encompass the community. This Character-Based map categorizes the physical and functional character of areas by identifying these patterns within the existing development in the City. Factors included in this analysis include building form and placement; relationship to the street; scale and compatibility; public vs. private street access, sidewalks and open spaces, walkability and urban design. This character-based assessment served as a guiding set of parameters for the further development of zoning. The identified character distinctions in the community include Rural, Suburban, Neighborhood Conservation, Neighborhood Renovation, Auto-Urban, Semi-Urban, Suburban, and Industrial. Refer to the Character-Based Map on page 76.

After the character map was created, the Future Land Use map was prepared as a development guide, assessing the types and percentages of preferred designated land uses (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial, etc.) for each parcel in the community. Although this map helps communicate the Comprehensive Plan's intentions, it is not legally enforceable and is subject to public-requested amendments. This map provides guidance for planners and municipal leaders on where specific types of uses are desired within a community for future development. Refer to the Future Land Use Map on page 82.

ZG 3. - Protect environmentally sensitive areas and incompatible land uses, including the placement of agricultural lands, new subdivisions, and industrial properties, and determine which land uses should occupy the land based on nuisance and availability of water and the roadway network.

Incompatibility of uses refers to conflicts that arise when dissimilar or conflicting land uses or activities are located near one another. Such incompatibility can result in adverse impacts, including noise, vibration, smoke, odors, hazardous materials, or radiation. These conditions may create negative economic, environmental, or quality of life effects, such as increased traffic congestion, excessive noise, or pollution. Currently, Port Lavaca has undeveloped properties and developments surrounding the community that should be protected from the petrochemical industry from surrounding communities. As more developments enter the area, residential properties should be protected and preserved, with stricter rules and regulations for petrochemical and non-residential developments entering the community.

ABOUT ZONING

Potential Advantages of Zoning

- Zoning offers a range of advantages that help guide orderly and sustainable community development. One of its primary benefits is separating residential areas from potentially harmful or incompatible uses, such as industrial or noxious activities, which help protect public health and quality of life. Zoning also establishes safety standards for structures, ensuring buildings meet requirements that reduce risks. At the same time, it helps conserve the character of existing neighborhoods and commercial districts by maintaining consistent land uses and development patterns.
- Another key benefit of zoning is environmental and long-term resource protection. By regulating land use, zoning can safeguard environmentally sensitive areas, including agricultural land, and preserve them for future generations. It also enables communities to set aside land for future growth, ensuring that expansion occurs in an organized and thoughtful manner. This predictability in land use often leads to increased property values and encourages long-term investment, as property owners have greater confidence in how surrounding areas will be developed.
- Zoning also contributes to more efficient and functional community planning. It helps direct growth and redevelopment to appropriate areas, making infrastructure and service delivery more efficient. In doing so, it supports the implementation of broader community goals and objectives outlined in comprehensive plans. Additionally, zoning ensures practical site design by promoting efficient lot layouts, adequate parking, and proper spacing between buildings. These standards help guarantee sufficient light, air, and privacy for residents, ultimately improving overall livability.

Potential Disdvantages of Zoning

- On the other hand, zoning, while widely used as a planning tool, also has several potential drawbacks that can affect communities and development patterns. In some cases, zoning regulations may unintentionally perpetuate undesirable development by locking in patterns that are outdated or no longer aligned with current needs. They can also limit housing options and reduce the variety of available housing types, making it more difficult to accommodate diverse populations. Additionally, zoning often restricts where and how buildings can be constructed, which can limit flexibility and prevent property owners from adapting their land to changing demands.
- Another common criticism is that zoning can overly separate uses that might otherwise complement each other, such as residential and retail spaces. This separation can reduce walkability, increase reliance on vehicles, and limit the vibrancy of mixed-use neighborhoods. Zoning regulations also add layers of oversight and administrative procedures, particularly when property owners seek to change land use or deviate from established rules. These processes can be time-consuming and costly, both for developers and for local governments, which must allocate resources to enforce compliance with zoning codes.
- Furthermore, zoning can act as a barrier to innovation by discouraging creative or unconventional development projects that fall outside existing regulations. Property owners may also feel that zoning requires them to give up some individual freedom for the benefit of the broader community. In addition, strict zoning requirements can increase the cost of new construction by imposing detailed standards and compliance measures. This extends to renovations and additions as well, as “new” developments are often subject to updated rules and requirements, further adding to the financial and administrative burden.

Source: Urban Institute



Potential Advantages of Zoning

- Separate residential areas from noxious activities, and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses
- Establish safety standards for structures
- Conserve character of existing neighborhoods and commercial districts
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas, including agricultural lands
- Set aside land for future growth
- Increase property values and long-term investments through predictable land use development
- Create efficiency in targeting growth areas and redevelopment
- Help to implement the community goals and objectives of a comprehensive plan
- Provide for efficient lot arrangement and ensure parking availability
- Guarantee adequate light, air, and privacy to new homes

Potential Disadvantages of Zoning

- Perpetuate the construction of undesirable development
- Limit housing options and housing variety
- Restrict building options and locations
- Overly separate complementary uses (residential and retail)
- Add additional regulatory and oversight procedures for changing land use
- Require additional costs for enforcing zoning code compliance
- Limit creative or innovative developments that are not currently planned
- Require relinquishing some individual property freedoms for the common good
- Increase the cost of building new structures
- Require additional rules and standards for “new” developments (renovations, additions, etc.)

Zoning - Terms and Definitions Matrix

Accessory Building or Use - A subordinate building, or portion of the principal building, located on the same lot as the principal building, or a subordinate use of land, either of which is customarily incidental to the principal building or to the principal use of land.

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) - An accessory residential building, either attached or detached, which contains a dwelling unit. See 38.320.120.B for standards related to accessory dwelling units.

Agriculture, Cropland - The cultivation or tilling of soil or use of other growing medium for the purpose of producing vegetative materials for sale or for use in a commercial operation. Agriculture does not include gardening for personal use.

Agriculture, Grazing - The raising or tending of animals for commercial sale or use. Agriculture does not include keeping of house pets or animals.

Apartment - A multi-family dwelling unit contained in a building that is comprised of three or more dwelling units, each having an entrance to a hallway, stairway, or balcony in common with at least one other dwelling unit.

Aquaculture - The cultivation and harvesting of aquatic organisms in a controlled or managed environment.

Auto Urban - A character classification that refers to areas that are comprised of an automobile-oriented urban development pattern.

Bed and Breakfast - A lodging establishment in a former single-family dwelling or detached guesthouses on a lot where the property owner provides management, cleaning, and meal services guests, and may or may not reside on site.

Buffer - A designated area that is designed to absorb, preclude, or mitigate the impacts of development on neighboring uses or natural areas by some combination of construction design, vegetative plantings, fences, and/ or maintenance practices which will be permanently maintained.

Building Frontage - The width of a building along the street that the primary façade of the building faces.

Building Height - The vertical height of a building, measured from the ground to the tallest point of the roof, including roof equipment.

Business Park - Uses that involve research and development, assembly, compounding, packaging, testing, or treatment of products from previously prepared materials, with limited outside storage and limited external impacts or risks; or wholesale uses; or rental or sale of large items that are stored outside. For illustrative purposes, light industry uses include:

- Assembly, testing, or refurbishing of products, instruments, electronics, office and computing machines, and fixtures from pre-manufactured components;
- Offices of general contractors, specialty subcontractors, or tradesmen which include:
  - Bay door access to indoor storage of tools, parts, and materials;
  - Parking of commercial vehicles; or
  - Outdoor storage areas that are smaller than the area of the first floor of the building that are used for storage of materials or vehicles that are less than 12 feet in height.
- Communications facilities, except wireless telecommunications facilities;
- Data centers, server farms, telephone exchange buildings, and telecom hotels;
- Food production and packaging other than meat and seafood processing and restaurants;
- Furniture making or refinishing;
- Manufacture of textiles or apparel;
- Screen printing of apparel;
- Printing and publishing, except copy centers (which are commercial and personal services), and except printing presses that require a Stationary Source permit or Title V permit for air emissions (which are heavy industry);
- Research and development, scientific testing, and product testing;
- Disassembly of consumer electronics and / or appliances into component parts, where all operations and storage are within an enclosed building;
- Manufacture or compounding of pharmaceutical products, dietary supplements, health and beauty products, and herbal products; and
- Packaging of products.

Commercial Retail - commercial and retail uses that do not include regular outside storage or sales. The term includes uses that are comparable to the following:

- Furniture and home furnishings stores;
- Electronics and appliance stores;
- Paint and Hardware stores;
- Food and beverage stores;
- Health and personal care stores;
- Clothing stores;
- Sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores;
- General merchandise stores

Character - Refers to the distinct physical and functional qualities of an area based on factors like building form, placement, scale, compatibility and walkability, among other things.

Commercial Retail - Commercial and retail uses that do not include regular outside storage or sales. The term includes uses that are comparable to the following: Furniture and home furnishings stores; Electronics and appliance stores; Paint and wallpaper stores; Hardware stores; Food and beverage stores; Health and personal care stores; Clothing and clothing accessory stores; Sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores; General merchandise stores; and Miscellaneous store retailers.

Day Care Center - A child-care facility that provides care at a location other than the residence of the director, owner, or operator of the child-care facility for seven or more children under 14 years of age for less than 24 hours a day, but at least two hours a day, three or more days a week.

Density - The number of dwelling units allowed on an acre of land. Density is measured as gross density and net density, which are measured as follows:

- Density, Gross - calculated by dividing the number of dwelling units by the site area.
- Density, Net - is calculated by dividing the number of dwelling units by the net buildable area, which excludes the area of open space.

Duplex - A building designed as a single structure, containing two separate living units, each of which is designed to be occupied as a separate permanent residence for one family, and each of which has its own primary outside entrance. Duplexes may be configured side-by-side or over-and-under.

Dwelling - A building, or portion thereof, used as a place of residence, containing sleeping, cooking, and sanitary facilities, excluding commercial lodging facilities.

Dwelling Unit - One or more rooms physically arranged so as to create an independent housekeeping establishment for occupancy by one family, with separate facilities for all of the following: sanitation, living, sleeping, cooking, and eating.

Industrial - land uses involving large scale production, processing, or extraction activities that rely on significant capital investment, machinery, or energy, including:

- Mining facilities
- Chemical manufacturing plants
- Power generation facilities (coal, natural gas, petroleum/ oil)
- Large scale manufacturing plants (e.g., automotive, aerospace, heavy machinery)

Landscaping – Plant material such as lawns, groundcover, trees, bushes, and the like, in formal, informal, or natural arrangements.

Manufactured Home - A structure transportable in one or more sections, which is built on a permanent chassis and is designed for use with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities.

Manufactured Home Park - A parcel (or contiguous parcels) of land divided into two or more manufactured home lots for rent or sale with a shared maintenance structure.

Mixed Use - Development in which a combination of residential and commercial uses (e.g., residential-over-retail), or several classifications of commercial uses (e.g., office and retail), are located on the same parcel proposed for development.

Multi-Family - Buildings that contain two or more dwelling units that: Are accessed by interior elevators or hallways, or from individual exterior entrances; and are separated by interior walls and/or floors.

- Types of Multifamily homes:
  - Duplex
  - Multi-Unit Dwelling
  - Apartment/Condo

Zoning - Terms and Definitions Matrix (continued)

Multi-Unit Dwelling - A multi-family building type that is designed to resemble a large single-family home. Units may have either private or shared access and may be arranged in a variety of configurations, including back-to-back, side-to-side, or over-under. Multiplex buildings contain three to five dwelling units per building.

Park and Open Space

- Community Park a larger public park (typically 10 to 25 acres) designed to serve multiple neighborhoods within about a one mile radius. It provides community level recreation opportunities while preserving important open spaces and landscapes.
- Neighborhood Park is a small local park serving nearby residents, typically within a quarter to half mile radius. It should be safely accessible without crossing major roads and connected throughout its service area by sidewalks or trails.
- HOA Park is a private park maintained by HOA fees and intended for use by residents only within that neighborhood
- Open Space means land areas that are intended to be undeveloped

Personal Services – Nonmedical services that used frequently by a consumer, such as: Copy centers; Small item repair services and shops; Parcel service drop-off locations and mailbox services; Nail salons, beauty and barber shops, skin care, tanning salons, and day spas; and Laundry and dry-cleaning services, except dry cleaner processing plants that use petrochemical solvents.

Principal Building or Structure - The main building on a property in terms of size, area, and function.

Public / Institutional - A place where the people assemble for civic, educational, cultural, or day care purposes. The term includes the following:

- Places of worship; conference centers; cultural or arts centers; museums, libraries
- Pre-schools; elementary, middle, and high schools
- Senior care facilities

Recreation Vehicle - A single frame vehicle, 400 square feet or less, that is self propelled or towable by a light duty truck and intended for temporary recreational, camping, travel, or seasonal living.

Restaurant, Drive-Thru - A restaurant located either within a retail center, or situated on its own freestanding pad, which: Contains a drive-in or drive-through facility; Primarily serves food that is prepared and packaged within five minutes; and Customarily serves food in disposable containers.

Restaurant, General – A restaurant that occupies its own building and/or lot.

Restaurant, Neighborhood – A restaurant that is within the ground floor of a mixed-use building.

Rural / Undeveloped (Agriculture) - Land (whether or not it contains farm residences) primarily used for commercial crop production, orchards, vineyards, horticulture, dairying, pasturage, aquaculture, and truck farming. It also includes the raising of livestock, cattle, horses, and poultry at densities not exceeding one animal equivalent unit per acre, as well as beekeeping. Rural/undeveloped land may also include open fields, woodlands, or natural areas that remain largely unimproved.

Setback - A stated minimum distance from a lot line to a building, structure, or use.

Shrub - Means any of the following: A woody plant of less size than an understory tree, and usually with several stems from the same root; Perennial plants that reach at least three feet in height; and Ornamental grasses that reach at least three feet in height.

Single-Family Attached - Housing types with two or more dwelling units that are located in a single structure or attached structures:

- Which are separated from each other by an un-penetrated dividing side wall (e.g., side-by-side duplexes and all types of townhomes); and / or
- Which are separated by a floor (e.g., over-under duplexes and duplex townhomes), but have ground floor entrances for each unit.
- The middle housing in “missing middle housing.”

Single-Family Detached -Dwelling units that are:

- Located in individual buildings that are constructed on Individual lots;
- Separated from each other by outside walls; and
- Intended for the use of a single housekeeping unit.

Subdivision - The division or redivision of a lot, tract, or parcel of land, by any means, including by means of a plan or a description by metes and bounds, into two or more lots, tracts, parcels, or other divisions of land, for the purpose, whether immediate or future, of lease, of the transfer of ownership, or of building development.

Townhouse or Townhome - A single-family attached dwelling unit, with a single unit going from ground to roof and with individual outside access.

Tree, Canopy - A tree with a canopy that, at maturity, would occupy the upper level of a forest in a natural ecological situation. These trees are commonly called shade trees. They typically reach heights of more than 50 feet at maturity.

Tree, Evergreen – A broad leaf evergreen tree or cone-bearing evergreen tree that, at maturity, typically has a height of greater than 35 feet. For the purposes of this UDC, evergreen trees that typically have a height of 12 to 35 feet at maturity are considered understory trees, and evergreens that typically have a height of less than 12 feet at maturity are considered shrubs.

Tree, Non-Canopy - A tree with a canopy that would occupy the intermediate level of a forest in a natural ecological situation. They are also found as dominant species in old field succession. These trees are commonly called ornamental trees. Understory trees are deciduous trees that typically reach heights of 12 to 44 feet at maturity, and evergreen trees that typically reach heights of 12 to 35 feet at maturity.

Yard - Generally, a yard is the area between the lot line and the portion of the principal building that is closest to the lot line; and A required yard is the area between the lot line and the required setback in relation to that lot line.

Zoning Map – The Official Zoning Map of Port Lavaca, Texas.

OBJECTIVE 8.1: Develop a zoning ordinance that consolidates the zoning districts proposed in the Unified Development Code and expands the zoning districts and standards in the current Port Lavaca Code of Ordinances, enabling a clear vision for land use placement.

The new zoning ordinance should focus on areas where the city's existing zoning ordinance does not provide enough detail on where land uses should be located in the town, and the designated zoning districts cannot be applied across different areas of the community. The proposed Unified Development Code was too complicated for Port Lavaca to implement, with too many zoning districts, rules, and regulations that seemed to be written for a larger city. The new zoning ordinance should lay out a clear, concise framework for future development in the city, help manage and maintain a development pattern compatible with the existing community, and include a zoning map that reflects the code's intent, with updated definitions to clarify it. The following considerations should be taken into account when developing the next zoning ordinance: Establish a model zoning district that supports the community's comprehensive plan by simplifying and consolidating zoning districts, protecting neighborhoods and environmentally sensitive areas, ensuring compatible land uses, and updating standards, with clear definitions and specific provisions for manufactured housing.

Strategy 8.1.1: Establish a zoning map that is created from the Character-Based Map and Future Land Use map, separating the residential areas from land uses that cause more nuisance, and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

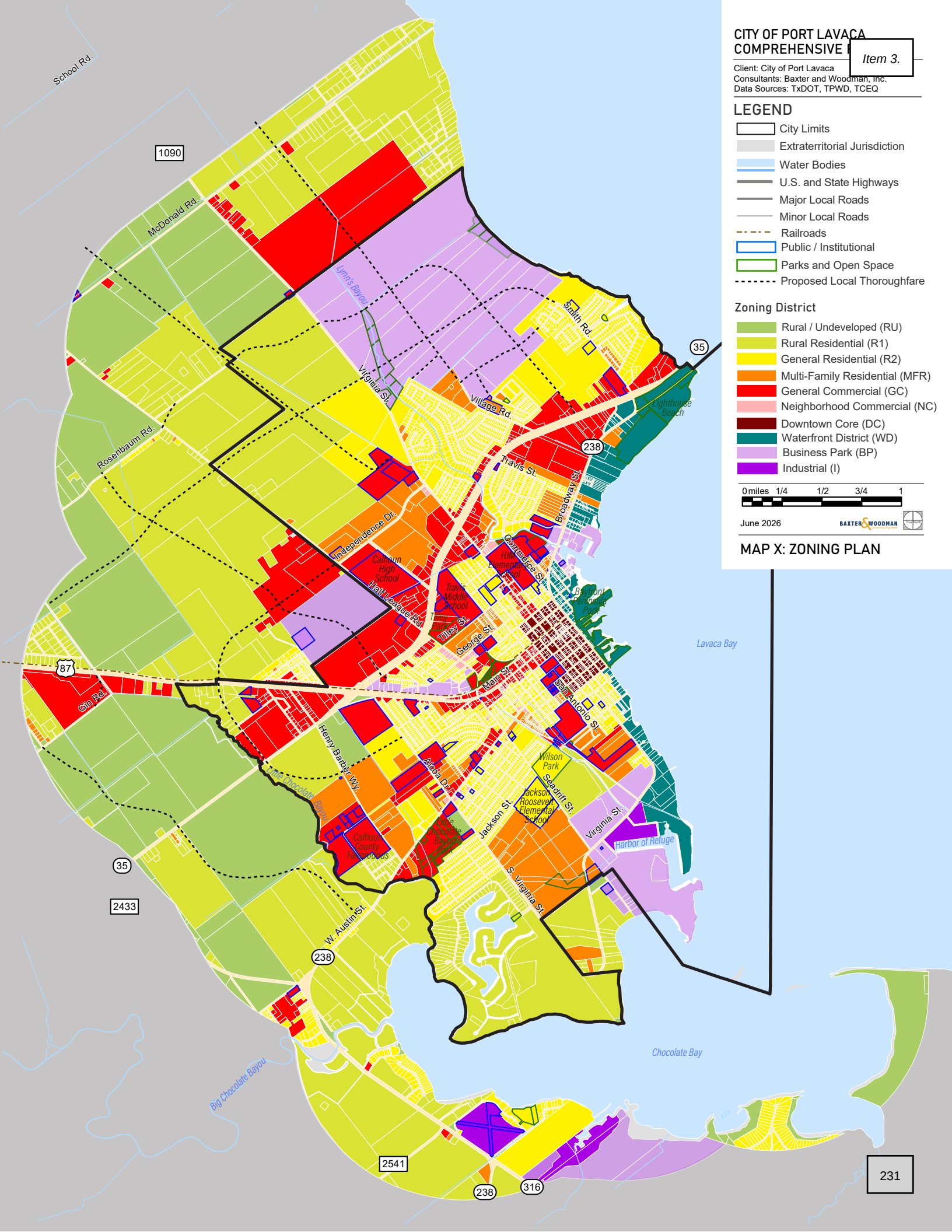
The Zoning Map (on the left) must be informed by the Character-Based Map and the Future Land Use Map mentioned in Goal One, Land Use. This Zoning Map designates the applicable regulations for each parcel, rather than the general character of the surrounding area. By indicating the land use of each parcel (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial, etc.), and the corresponding form and intensity standards for things like the size of the lots, height of buildings, density, parking, landscaping, and buffering within each zoning district, the map is a graphic representation of the development regulations throughout the community.

The proposed zoning regulations propose ten zoning districts, including four residential districts; one district dedicated to light industrial in a business park setting; one district dedicated to heavy industrial and manufacturing uses; two retail and commercial districts; and two mixed-use districts that allow a combination of residential and retail or commercial uses. Manufactured housing is allowed within the proposed Multi-Family Residential District (R-3) as a conditional use to ensure appropriate location and compatibility. The level of detail within these zoning districts is envisioned to strike a balance between the overly complex 2020 Unified Development Code Draft that was not well-suited to a community the size of Port Lavaca, and the existing Code of Ordinances, which lacks sufficient guidance on appropriate and compatible land use location, repeatable zoning districts, and updated definitions.

The following zoning districts were developed in this project:

10 Zoning Districts Created from the Future Land Use Plan:

- Rural/ Undeveloped (RU)
- Rural Residential (R1)
- General Residential (R2)
- Multi-Family Residential (R-3)
- General Commercial (GC)
- Neighborhood Commercial (NC)
- Downtown Core (DC)
- Waterfront (WF)
- Business Park (BP)
- Industrial (I)


CITY OF PORT LAVACA
COMPREHENSIVE
Client: City of Port Lavaca
Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ
LEGEND
City Limits
Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
Water Bodies
U.S. and State Highways
Major Local Roads
Minor Local Roads
Railroads
Public / Institutional
Parks and Open Space
Proposed Local Thoroughfare
Zoning District
Rural / Undeveloped (RU)
Rural Residential (R1)
General Residential (R2)
Multi-Family Residential (MFR)
General Commercial (GC)
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)
Downtown Core (DC)
Waterfront District (WD)
Business Park (BP)
Industrial (I)
0 miles 1/4 1/2 3/4 1
June 2026
BAXTER & WOODMAN
MAP X: ZONING PLAN
School Rd.
1090
McDonald Rd.
Rosenbaum Rd.
Lynn's Bayou
Virginia St.
Smith Rd.
Village Rd.
Lighthouse Beach
35
238
Travis St.
Broadway St.
Independence Dr.
Calhoun High School
Hall League Rd.
Travis Middle School
Tilley Park
Tilley St.
George St.
Commerce St.
HJW Elementary School
Bayfront Peninsula Park
Lavaca Bay
87
Gin Rd.
Main St.
San Antonio St.
Henry Barber Wy.
Big Chocolate Bayou
Alcoa Dr.
Wilson Park
Seadrift St.
Jackson Roosevelt Elementary School
Jackson St.
Virginia St.
Harbor of Refuge
Calhoun County Fairgrounds
S. Virginia St.
2433
W. Austin St.
Chocolate Bay
2541
316
231

The next step is to categorize zoning districts by establishing the residential zoning districts (indicated in yellow in the table below) and matching them to the land uses in the right column. Land uses that cause more nuisances are those that generate light, sound, truck traffic, or noise above the level a neighborhood would experience, and are classified in the purple categories, which include heavy industrial and light industrial uses. Uses that are less intense than the purple zoning districts and more intense than the residential zoning districts are indicated in yellow and shown in brown (multifamily residential), red (retail and commercial), and dark red (most intense retail, commercial, and residential) zoning districts and permitted land uses. Although the land uses in this table are limited for discussion purposes, the proximity, location, and character are considered when creating the zoning map with the zoning districts shown in the left column. The land uses are further broken into additional categories such as permitted, conditional, or nonconforming, which will be discussed in the next section.

The Zoning Map must be informed by the Character-Based Map and the Future Land Use Map mentioned in Goal One, Land Use. This Zoning Map designates the applicable regulations for each parcel, rather than the general character of the surrounding area. By indicating the land use of each parcel (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial, etc.), and the corresponding form and intensity standards for things like the size of the lots, height of buildings, density, parking, landscaping, and buffering within each zoning district, the map is a graphic representation of the development regulations throughout the community.

The proposed zoning regulations propose ten zoning districts, including four residential districts; one district dedicated to light industrial in a business park setting; one district dedicated to heavy industrial and manufacturing uses; two retail and commercial districts; and two mixed-use districts that allow a combination of residential and retail or commercial uses. Manufactured housing is allowed within the proposed Multi-Family Residential District (R-3) as a conditional use to ensure appropriate location and compatibility. The level of detail within these zoning districts is envisioned to strike a balance between the overly complex 2020 Unified Development Code Draft that was not well-suited to a community the size of Port Lavaca, and the existing Code of Ordinances, which lacks sufficient guidance on appropriate and compatible land use location, repeatable zoning districts, and updated definitions.

10 Zoning Districts Created from the Future Land Use Plan:

- Rural/ Undeveloped (RU)
- Rural Residential (R1)
- General Residential (R2)
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- General Commercial (GC)
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- Downtown Core (DC)
- Waterfront (WF)
- Business Park (BP)
- Industrial (I)

The next step is to categorize zoning districts by establishing the residential zoning districts (indicated in yellow in the table below) and matching them to the land uses in the right column. Land uses that cause more nuisances are those that generate light, sound, truck traffic, or noise above the level a neighborhood would experience, and are classified in the purple categories, which include heavy industrial and light industrial uses. Uses that are less intense than the purple zoning districts and more intense than the residential zoning districts are indicated in yellow and shown in brown (multifamily residential), red (retail and commercial), and dark red (most intense retail, commercial, and residential) zoning districts and permitted land uses. Although the land uses in this table are limited for discussion purposes, the proximity, location, and character are considered when creating the zoning map with the zoning districts shown in the left column. The land uses are further broken into additional categories such as permitted, conditional, or nonconforming, which will be discussed in the next section.

ZONING DISTRICT	LAND USES
Rural / Undeveloped (RU)	Rural, Undeveloped, Residential, single family
Rural Residential (R1)	Residential, Rural (large lot, detached garage), single-family
General Residential (R2)	Residential, General (missing middle, attached), single-family, duplex
Multi-Family Residential (R-3)	Residential, multi-family, townhomes, multi-unit dwellings, apartments/condominiums
General Commercial (GC)	Commercial, General (big box, strip center), restaurants (general), hotels, automobile sales and maintenance
Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	Commercial, Neighborhood home business, walk-in clinic, personal fitness, personal services, restaurants (neighborhood)
Downtown Core (DC)	Limit creative or innovative developments that are not currently planned
Waterfront (WF)	Require relinquishing some individual property freedoms for the common good
Business Park (BP)	Increase the cost of building new structures
Industrial (I)	Require additional rules and standards for “new” developments (renovations, additions, etc).

Strategy 8.1.2: Establish a zoning framework for appropriate placement of development within the community.

Figure X, Zoning Districts Classifications, on the next page provides additional detail on this topic. It proposes a clearer, simpler and more workable regulatory framework that aligns with the city’s future vision while remaining practical enough to implement. Overall, the update seeks to clearly define which land uses are permitted throughout the city, with an intentional separation between industrial or manufacturing activities and residential, commercial, or mixed-use areas.

The revised ordinance would incorporate meaningful standards that were unclear or missing in the past, including sensible setbacks and buffers between conflicting uses; updated definitions; clearly defined accessory uses that specify appropriate size limits and allowability of attached or detached structures; continued restrictions on storage buildings to prevent unauthorized occupation; and clear development standards for new construction that addresses parks, landscaping, streets, and turning radii.

Additional elements would include native landscaping requirements, right-of-way landscaping requirements, refined screening standards such as front yard screening for outdoor storage, a potential fence height limit, conditional use permits for drive thru businesses, traffic impact, water, and wastewater capacity analyses requirements, lighting and noise standards, planned unit developments supported by master plans for mixed use projects, and annexation requirements.

The proposed framework for the City of Port Lavaca should include the following elements, organized by the zoning districts shown in Strategy 8.1.1:

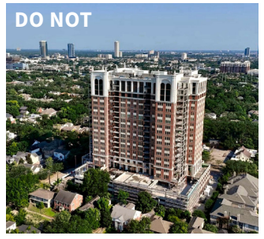
Figure X, Zoning Districts Classifications

Zoning District Name	1. Rural/ Undeveloped (RU)	2. Rural Residential (R1)	3. General Residential (R2)	4. Multi-Family Residential (R3)	5. General Commercial (GC)	6. Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	7. Downtown Core (DC)	8. Waterfront (WF)	9. Business Park (BP)	10. Industrial (I)
Character	Rural	Rural	Suburban and/ or Neighborhood Conservation	Auto Urban and/or Neighborhood Rennovation	Auto Urban	Neighborhood Conservation	Semi-Urban	Semi-Urban	Suburban	Industrial (I)
General Purpose of the District	Preservation of open space, farm land or individual homes within the largest parcels in the community	Homes within this category are rural in nature with larger front, back and side setbacks within parcels that are typically an acre in size and have a larger open space ratio.	Smaller in size than the Rural Residential District, these lots are dedicated to a suburban nature, located in neighborhoods of a similar character	Areas of existing neighborhoods with a mixture of single-family detached and attached dwellings, multifamily units, recreation vehicle parks, and manufactured homes on smaller lots and parcels that are encouraged for neighborhood renovations.	Mostly dedicated to a variety of commercial and residential uses with surface parking or on-street parking	This district provides for non-strip center neighborhood convenience uses, with a building scale and site design that is compatible and cohesive with the abutting predominant character of the neighborhood. It may also accommodate upper-floor residential and live-work units, as well as multiplexes.	A central gathering place for the community, featuring a mix of highest-density attached residential (townhomes, duplexes, multi-family) and non-residential uses within a walkable, traditional downtown environment. Buildings are positioned close to the street with minimal setbacks, and parking is provided on-street, off-site, or within parking structures.	Properties of this category are located near the east side of the community along the coast and are intended for a walkable mixed use area intended for shopping, entertainment and liviving with a unique character.	This district provides an office type of environment where office, research and technology uses can be taken place, while hidden behind walls and large overhead doors.	Heavy industrial uses, outdoor storage and outdoor operations are within this district and often have more truck traffic than any other zoning district.
Permitted Land Uses	Rural / Undeveloped Residential, Single-family (detached garage) Agricultural, Cropland Agriculture, Grazing Agriculture, Sales Farming and Pastureland Nursery or Greenhouse Stable or Riding Academy Police or Fire Station Parks and Open Spaces	Residential, Single-family (min. 1,000 sf) (detached garage) Schools Public Institutional Parks and Open Spaces	Residential, Single-family (attached or detached garage) Residential, Duplex (attached or detached garage) Schools Parks and Open Spaces	Residential, Manufactured Residential, Medium-Density (attached or detached; townhomes) Residential, Duplex Residential, Multi-Unit Dwelling Residential, Apartments/ Condominiums Parks and Open Spaces	Commercial, General (big box, strip center) Walk in Clinic Restaurants (General) Parking Lots Automobile Sales and Maintenance Commercial, Retail (grocery store, shopping centers) Medical Office Hotels, Motels Residential, Medium-Density (attached [variance]) Residential, Medium (townhome, duplex, apartment) Parks and Open Spaces Public Institutional	Commercial, Neighborhood Home Business Walk in Clinic Indoor Recreation/ Personal Fitness Restaurant (Neighborhood) Service Businesses (dentist, veterinarian, accountant, dry cleaners, laundromat) Shopping (garden shop, hardware store) Farmers Market Parks and Open Spaces Public Institutional	Commercial, Semi-Urban General Professional, Medical Office, Office Mixed Use Restaurant (Neighborhood) Daycare Boutique Hotel Commercial Retail, small scale (personal services, shopping) Residential, General (missing middle, attached- townhomes, duplexes) Residential, Medium-Density (attached) Parks and Open Spaces	Commercial, Semi-Urban Coffee Shop Bakery Restaurant (Neighborhood) Theatre Boutique Hotel, Bed and Breakfast Personal services (salon) Shopping (clothes store, gift shop) Residential, General (missing middle, attached-townhomes, duplexes) Residential, High-Density (attached) Aquaculture Fisheries Parks and Open Spaces	Light Industrial (assembly, warehousing/ storage, distribution) Outdoor Storage Small Engine or Tool Repair Shop (mowers, saws) General Professional Medical Office Office Outdoor Entertainment (amphitheater) Aquaculture Fisheies Parks and Open Spaces Public Institutional	Large Veterinary Clinic Automobile Washes Commercial Retail (personal services, shopping centers) Fuel Charging Wholesale Nursery or Greenhouse Construction Services Heavy Industry Pawn Shop Recycling Center Self Storage Solid Waste Facility Petrochemical Plants Lumberyard or Equipment Self Storage Warehouse Logistics Parks and Open Spaces
Conditional Use Permit	Daycares, home occupation, bed and breakfast; fences above 8' in height, only allowed in backyard	None	Group Housing	Group Housing, Manufactured Homes (min 1,000 sf), Manufactured Homes Parks, Recreational Vehicle Parks On-Street Parking Agreement	Apartments; Drive-Thru Restaurants or Theatre; Surface Parking Lots	Automobile Sales or Maintenance, Drive-Thru, Daycare Center, Event Facility or Dance Hall	None	Structures taller than 33'	None	None
Lot Size	Min. - 2 ac	Min. - 1 ac Max. - 2 ac	Min. - 5,500 sf Max. - 1 ac	Min. - 5,500 sf (single family, duplex, multi-unit dwelling, apartment) Min. - 3,000 sf (townhome) Min. - 3,000 sf (single mfd. hm.) 10-12 du/ac (mfd. home park) 16-24 du/ac (RV park)	No minimum lot area Min. frontage: 50 ft	No minimum lot area Min. frontage: 50 ft	No minimum	No minimum	No minimum	No minimum

Zoning District Name	1. Rural/ Undeveloped (RU)	2. Rural Residential (R1)	3. General Residential (R2)	4. Multi-Family Residential (R3)	5. General Commercial (GC)	6. Neighborhood Commercial (NC)	7. Downtown Core (DC)	8. Waterfront (WF)	9. Business Park (BP)	10. Industrial (I)
Setbacks	Front: 75 ft Rear: 75 ft Interior Side: 30 ft Street Side: 30 ft	Front: 50 ft Rear: 50 ft Interior Side: 30 ft Street Side: 30 ft	Front: 25 ft Rear: 15 ft Interior Side: 5 ft Street Side: 25 ft	Front: 20 ft Rear: 25 ft Interior Side: 10 ft Street Side: 15 ft	Front: 20 ft Rear: 20 ft Interior Side: 10 ft Street Side: 15 ft Res District Boundary: 20 ft	Front: 25 ft Rear: 30 ft Interior Side: 10 ft Street Side: 25 ft	Front: 0 ft Rear: 0 ft Interior Side: 0 ft Street Side: 0 ft	Front: 15 ft Back: 30 ft Sides: 0 ft	Front: 30 ft Rear: 25 ft Interior Side: 10 ft Street Side: 20 ft Residential District Boundary: 50 ft	Front: 30 ft Rear: 40 ft Interior Side: 20 ft Street Side: 25 ft Res District Boundary: 50 ft
Accessory Dwelling Units	Detached garages can serve as an accessory building, given the main structure is already built, the secondary structure is less than 50 percent of the primary building's footprint, and do not occupy more than 50 percent of the rear yard.			None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Requires Planned Development	None	None	None	None	Mixed-use residential and commercial uses (bed and breakfast, live-work multiplex, and combination buildings	None	None	Outdoor entertainment & gathering (amphitheater/ plaza)	Outdoor entertainment & gathering (amphitheater/ plaza)	None
Building Height (maximum)	33 ft	33 ft	33 ft	33 ft	33 ft	33 ft	3-Stories	3-Stories or 40 ft, whichever is less (including roof equipment)	33 ft	33 ft
Maximum Building Coverage	Building coverage; Max. 30%	Building coverage; Max. 40%	Building coverage; Max. 50%	Building coverage; Max. 70%	Building coverage; Max. 70%	Building coverage; Max. 70%	Building coverage; Max. 90%	Building coverage; Max. 70%	Building coverage; Max. 60%	Building coverage; Max. 50%
Parking	None	None	None	Requires a private parking lot or, if needed, a parking agreement with the city to use on-street parking, which also requires a public hearing for the request.					Requires a private parking lot	
Landscaping and Screening	A minimum of ten percent of the total building site area must be devoted to landscaping comprised of native plants. Building site area excludes square footage of building foorprints and/or areas designated as fenced and secured storage. At least 70 percent of the required landscaped area must be located within the street fronting yard. For Multi-Family developments, with the approval of the pre-development committee, the percentage of landscaping to be located in the street fronting yard may be reduced in order to dispurse landscaping throughout the building site. Street trees are required to be planted in street tree lawns and medians (when applicable) for new developments that construct new public streets, or private street easements. Parking lots are subject to additional landscaping and screening requirements.				A minimum of ten percent of the total building site area must be devoted to landscaping comprised of native plants. Building site area excludes square footage of building foorprints and/or areas designated as fenced and secured storage. At least 70 percent of the required landscaped area must be located within the street fronting yard. For Multi-Family developments, with the approval of the pre-development committee, the percentage of landscaping to be located in the street fronting yard may be reduced in order to dispurse landscaping throughout the building site. Street trees are required to be planted in street tree lawns and medians (when applicable) for new developments that construct new public streets, or private street easements. Parking lots are subject to additional landscaping and screening requirements. For drive-thru business, additional screening is required in the rear setback. In addition, fences or planting, and setbacks are required for buffering between residential and non-residential/mixed-use properties, non-residential and mixed use properties, and along street and railroad rights of way. Requirements within Business Park (BP) and Industrial (I) are more strict.			
Sound, Lighting, Signage	Lighting and sound parameters are provided, but are less strict than in the commercial, mixed use and industrial districts.				Signage rules are required for non-residential and mixed use businesses. Lighting and sound parameters are more strict in these districts. Dark Sky Compliance required.					

Zoning Standards

- **Building Height:** The maximum vertical height, measured from the ground level to the tallest point of the roof (including roof equipment), allowed in a zoning district. The intention of this standard is to maintain consistent scale and aesthetic within a neighborhood, to protect access to light or air for surrounding properties, and to ensure adequate utility infrastructure capacity (e.g. water or wastewater) for developments.



Source: Houston Chronicle



Source: S3DA Design

- **Lot Size:** The total area of the parcel of land. Establishing a minimum size for lots within a subdivision, usually with density requirements (see below) to maintain the character (look and feel) of a subdivision. They are often geared toward finding a balanced mix of higher-income and more affordable housing throughout the community.



Source: iStock



Source: Flickr

- **Setbacks:** The minimum required distance between a building (or structure) and a property line, street, or other designated point, as established by local zoning ordinances. Setbacks are applied to the front yard (distance from the street or front property line), side yards (distance from side property lines), and rear yard (distance from the back property line). This distance creates a buffer zone where structures are not allowed, creates privacy between neighboring properties, provides space for utilities and drainage, and reduces fire hazards.



Source: StrongTowns

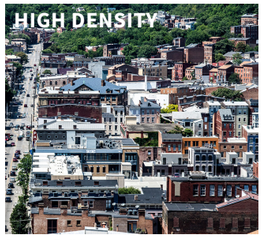


Source: Architectural Styles of America

- **Density:** A land-use regulation that controls how intensely land can be developed by limiting or encouraging the number of structures or dwelling units allowed within a given area. Put in place to manage population growth and prevent sprawl, low-density, medium-density, and high-density areas can be located throughout a community. Higher density often means more housing supply and affordability, while lower density preserves open space and privacy.



Source: Kelledy Jones



Source:Politico

- **Parking:** Parking spaces are designated areas for vehicles, usually required to be on the same lot as the use they serve. In some areas, such as downtown, on-street parking can be provided to encourage more dense development. Parking rules within zoning districts specify the number of spaces required for off-street parking lots and the number of spaces allowed within the City's rights-of-way for on-street parking.



Source: Nantucket Current



Source: Embark

- **Lighting:** Outdoor lighting is regulated to ensure the prevention of excessive light or glare produced from one light fixture during nighttime hours, and to standardize the placement of light sources in the city's rights-of-way in order to create safe illumination for streets, parking lots, and pedestrian areas.



Source: Kilkenny Live

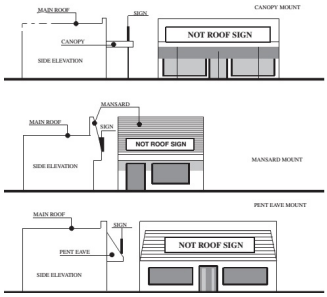


Source: Traffic Innovation

- **Signage:** Rules that govern the design, size, placement, and type of signs allowed within a community or along the city's rights of way. These rules aim to balance business visibility with public safety, aesthetics, and legal compliance. Signage requirements must be content-neutral and respect free speech.



Source: Edward Burtynsky



Source: International Code Council

- **Landscaping and Buffering:** The design, installation, and maintenance of native plants, trees, groundcover, and related features on a property to meet specific regulatory standards. These requirements aim to enhance the visual appeal of developments and public spaces, screen undesirable views, such as parking lots, dumpsters, and loading zones, and buffer conflicting land uses, such as residential areas adjacent to commercial properties. Landscaping also improves environmental quality by reducing stormwater runoff, improving air quality, and conserving energy through shade and wind protection. For non-residential properties, landscaping should be provided, along with buffering standards that use a mixture of plant materials or fencing to screen the public from unsightly views, such as outdoor screening.



Example Source: Gardening and Landscaping Stack Exchange



Source: Price Right Trees

Permitted Land Uses

Throughout the community, the strategic placement of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses can be shown on the Port Lavaca zoning map. Permitted land uses are approved for development by right, meaning that, because they meet the requirements and intentions of the zoning district, they can be built without a permit if they comply with all city development regulations. This requirement establishes consistency within a zoning district and generally has the following land uses, although an expansive list can be seen in ***Figure X, Zoning Districts Classifications:***

- Rural / Undeveloped
- Residential, Single Family Detached
- Residential, Missing Middle
- Residential, Multi-Family
- Commercial, Neighborhood
- Commercial, General
- Commercial, Central Business District
- Public / Institutional
- Business Park
- Parks / Open Space

Permitted Land Uses

A land use that is not automatically permitted in a zoning district but may be allowed if certain conditions are met and a special permit is granted. This is typically done through a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). A list of land uses that might require additional public or planning commission review should be considered with all zoning districts. Often, these uses are identified in areas where parking, lighting, noise, or traffic volumes can be challenging, such as schools, daycares in residential areas, home-based businesses, car washes, or gas stations.

Permitted Land Uses

Once a zoning ordinance is adopted and in place, there may be properties that were used legally when established, but due to a change in zoning regulations, that use no longer complies with current rules. Instead of forcing immediate compliance, most jurisdictions allow continued use under a principle known as "grandfathering." The goal is to establish standards detailing how long non-conforming uses should be allowed to remain in place. Often, businesses that have outdoor storage within their front property lines are a good example of this.

Strategy 8.1.3 Introduce standards for manufactured homes in the zoning ordinance that specifically address this housing typology as a conditional use.

Manufactured homes are an important element of Port Lavaca's housing inventory, comprising a significant portion of the City's affordable housing stock. Currently, some manufactured homes in Port Lavaca are dilapidated and have substandard living conditions. To improve conditions for the development of manufactured home parks, future zoning regulations should consider allowing this housing typology as a conditional use within the Multi-Family Residential (R-3) zoning district.

- **Compatibility:** The Multi-Family Residential zoning district is the most appropriate zoning designation to accommodate manufactured home parks because it is intended to support higher residential densities and it incorporates a diverse range of housing typologies.
- **Distinction via Conditional Use Permit:** While manufactured housing is consistent with the general composition of the Multi-Family Residential zoning district, this residential use differs from the rest of the allowed residential uses due to its unique set of needs and considerations that are often site-specific. Considerations for manufactured home sites that differ from standard multi-family developments include:

Key Manufactured Home Park Conditional Use Permit Criteria:

- Internal road/driveway layout and emergency access
- Utility distribution systems
- Water, sewer, and stormwater management
- Operational management, i.e. Community Associations/ HOAs.
- The creation of a Homeowners' Association should be required as part of the Conditional Use Permit process for manufactured home parks. The implementation of HOAs will help to manage the maintenance and upkeep of both shared community spaces and induvial homes by ensuring consistent resource allocation and enforcement.

Strategy 8.1.4: Strengthen this zoning ordinance, ensuring that accessory uses and conditional use permits are incorporated into certain areas, and add standards for new construction.

While the purpose of zoning is to more thoroughly regulate land use and development, it is important for it to allow for some flexibility in order to not restrict normal uses of property. Accessory uses enable the character of zoning districts to remain consistent, while also giving property owners the ability to enhance their property in ways that support the property's existing land use. An accessory use is a use that is located on the same lot as the principal use and is related and subordinate to the principal use in size and scale. Accessory uses cannot exist without a principal use already present. Accessory uses are often subject to additional development regulations, which are specific to their intended use.

Conditional uses are important in zoning regulations for similar purposes, as they also allow for increased flexibility within the code. A conditional use permit allows a property owner to use their land for a purpose that is not automatically allowed within the zoning regulations but may be approved if specific criteria are met. Conditional uses are defined within the zoning regulations for each zoning district. Therefore, only pre-determined uses are eligible for consideration for a conditional use permit. Additionally, while the zoning regulations prescribe criteria for the allowance of conditional uses, they are considered on a case-by-case basis. This means that every conditional use permit is evaluated on individual merit, site-specific factors, and community input.



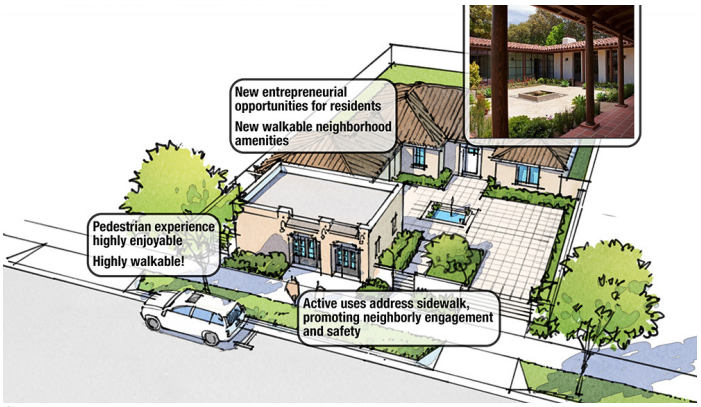
Source: Washington State Department of Commerce



Source:Buildinganadu.com

Accessory Uses and Conditional Use Permits:

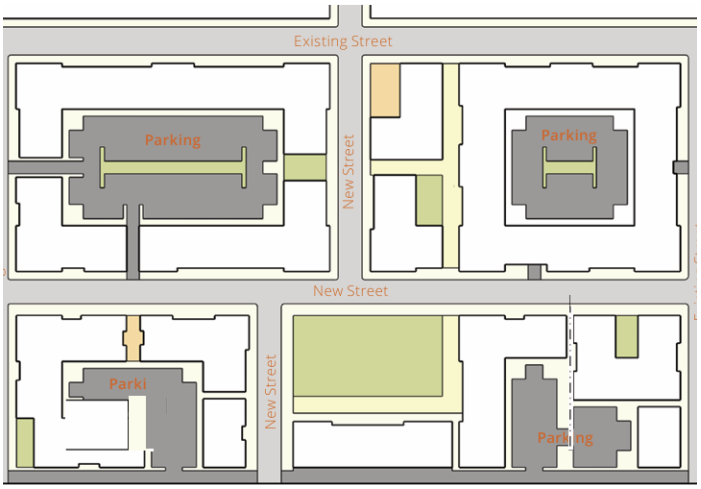
- Allow accessory uses in certain areas. Accessory structures in the form of detached garages should be allowed in single-family residential zoning districts: Rural/Undeveloped-RU, Rural Residential-R1, and General Residential-R-2. The zoning regulations should allow detached garages to serve as accessory buildings in these districts, so long as the main structure is already constructed, and the secondary structure is less than 50 percent of the primary building's footprint and does not occupy more than 50 percent of the rear yard.
- Consider categorizing drive-thru businesses as a conditional use in the General Commercial (GC) and Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning districts.



Source: American Planning Association

Requirements for New Construction:

- Provide clear standards for new construction: dedication of parks, new landscaping, buffering, roads, turning radius, parking requirements, etc.
- Add traffic impact analysis and water and wastewater capacity analyses for new developments, from the developer to be reviewed by the city.



This diagram demonstrates how development standards like open space dedication, parking requirements, and roadway connectivity could look when applied.
Source: Opticos

Strategy 8.1.5 Add additional zoning districts that were not part of the original zoning districts in Port Lavaca including *Downtown Core (DC)* and *Waterfront District (WF)*

Our listening sessions in Port Lavaca have consistently communicated to us that the community wants to see the downtown core revitalized and restored to its full potential. In conjunction with this, the community expressed their desire for the City to identify ways to encourage the addition of businesses both downtown and along the waterfront, creating a synergistic connection that should be captured with the zoning districts. Clarifying the differences between these zoning districts is important for developers to know what is intended within each district. This distinction will help both areas retain their respective character and grow in a way that is compatible with their individual identities. Defining the intent of a zoning district affects the way property within is analyzed by developers, and helps to attract development proposals towards the appropriate areas.

Downtown Core (DC)

This zoning district is intended to address the downtown area to ensure any future development in the core is compatible with its existing character. This zoning district should bolster downtown as a central gathering place for the community and comprise a mix of small-scale non-residential uses and the highest allowable residential densities, such as duplexes, townhomes, multi-unit dwellings, and apartments, all within a walkable, traditional downtown environment. New construction should match the existing development pattern by being positioned close to the street with minimal setbacks. To ensure the walkable environment is maintained, parking for newly constructed buildings should be provided on-street, off-street, or within parking structures.

Waterfront (WF)

This zoning district is intended to address the properties near the east side of the community that are along the coast. This zoning district should promote a walkable, mixed-use environment, and serve as a node for shopping, entertainment, and lifestyle.

OBJECTIVE 8.2: Identify and incorporate processes and procedures that adhere to the intentions of the Comprehensive Plan and the new zoning regulations, focusing authority and oversight of the zoning chapters.

Strategy 8.2.1 Update the Processes and Procedures for Zoning in the Code of Ordinances that adhere to the Texas Local Government Code

The Texas Local Government Code Chapter 211 mandates that, upon adoption of a zoning ordinance, it must be in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, comply with the Open Meetings Act, and establish standards for the enforcement of zoning regulations. Processes and procedures should be established to meet this requirement. Upon adoption, the following steps should take place:

Create Necessary Boards and Processes for Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Implementation

Currently, Port Lavaca has a Planning Board to implement the Comprehensive Plan but lacks the appropriate zoning boards and commissions to administer the zoning ordinance. The first step is to set them up:

- Set up administration of the Planning and Zoning Commission for future amendments, proposed zoning changes, and add the responsibility of implementing the Comprehensive Plan to this board.
- Appoint a Zoning Board of Adjustment with dedicated members responsible for administering variances for zoning rules and appeals for administrative errors.

Establish a Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance Review Process

Require a procedure that all major development applications, rezonings, subdivision plats, site plans, and public investments being considered as agenda items include a formal review demonstrating consistency with the Comprehensive Plan:

- Schedule monthly meetings for the Planning and Zoning Commission to discuss, review, and approve planning matters. Place the schedule on the City's website.
- Develop a Comprehensive Plan Consistency Checklist. Standardize review comments and define approval timelines per State law and internal needs.
- Establish an internal review team that includes the City Engineer, Development Services, Building Official, Public Works, Police and Fire Departments to review and approve the planning items before they are sent to the Planning and Zoning Commission or City Council for approval.
- Require the Planners to write their staff reports referencing the relationship between the intentions of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinances, when agenda items are being considered at the Planning and Zoning Commissions and City Council meetings.
- Require applicants requesting zoning changes to demonstrate how their proposal advances plan goals.

Develop Staff and Board Training Programs

As the Comprehensive Plan is updated and new Zoning regulations are in place, regular training will be needed to ensure consistency across the Staff, boards, and commission members. Provide regular training for:

- Planning and Zoning Commissioners
- City Council members
- Board of Adjustment members
- Development review staff

Training should focus on:

- Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan
- Intent of zoning districts
- Legal standards for zoning decisions
- Resiliency and hazard mitigation principles

Establish Periodic Plan and Ordinance Monitoring

Within the first year, the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning ordinance are in place, and a process to measure whether adopted policies are achieving their intended outcomes should be established and reported to the Planning and Zoning Commission each year. Possible metrics include:

- Number of rezonings consistent with the Future Land Use Map
- Residential and commercial growth patterns
- Flood risk reduction accomplishments
- Open space preservation
- Infrastructure adequacy

Update Development Regulations to Align with the New Zoning Ordinance

At this point, Port Lavaca has drafted zoning ordinances that advance the goals of Comprehensive Plans. Over time, these regulations might need to be revisited and revised to eliminate conflicts and ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The review of the following documents should be reviewed, as necessary:

- Subdivision regulations
- Engineering design standards
- Drainage criteria manuals
- Street standards
- Landscaping and tree ordinances
- Floodplain regulations
- Capital improvement policies

Implement Resilience-Based Development Review Criteria

Building on the goals of the General Land Office's Resilient Communities Program, establish review standards that address long-term resilience through the continuous establishment of:

- Flood hazards
- Drainage impacts
- Infrastructure capacity
- Emergency access
- Environmental constraints
- Future climate and hazard risks

Utilize Overlay Districts and Special Area Plans

As growth occurs, more detailed implementation tools might be necessary for priority areas and should be considered in the future. Examples can include the following:

- Downtown districts
- Corridor plans
- Flood resilience overlays
- Mixed-use districts
- Redevelopment districts

Maintain a Five-Year Update Cycle

A scheduled review cycle prevents plans from becoming outdated and maintains alignment between policy and implementation. Both the Comprehensive Plan and zoning regulations should be periodically reviewed to reflect:

- Population growth
- Market conditions
- Infrastructure investments
- Hazard mitigation priorities
- State and federal regulatory changes





chapter three
IMPLEMENTATION

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IMPLEMENTATION INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan serves as a proactive roadmap for the City's future growth and development, shaped by the collective voices of community members and stakeholders. Many individuals have dedicated their time and effort to crafting this unified vision through collaboration. Now is the moment to build on the energy from creating this plan to ensure the Plan remains relevant to the goals and objectives stated in the Plan. This Implementation chapter is designed to keep the Plan dynamic and prevent it from becoming obsolete or overlooked.

To make the Comprehensive Plan a dependable and frequently referenced tool, the City must integrate it into everyday decision-making across policies, planning efforts, regulations, and capital investments. This chapter and the broader Plan Update seek to weave the Plan into the fabric of the City's daily functions. To remain impactful, the Comprehensive Plan should:

- Be reviewed regularly to maintain clarity of purpose and alignment with current policy, planning, regulatory, and infrastructure priorities.
- Operate as a "living document," evolving to reflect new goals, assumptions, strategies, and actions related to land use and public services.
- Encourage continued engagement and support from elected officials, City staff, residents, business leaders, institutions, and partner agencies who contributed to its development.
- Include a structured system for monitoring and reporting, enabling the City to track progress, recognize emerging challenges and opportunities, and recalibrate priorities as conditions change.



FROM VISION TO REALITY: PUTTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INTO MOTION

The Comprehensive Plan lays the groundwork for shaping the City's future growth and development. This concluding chapter transforms that vision into action by offering a structured, prioritized, and phased roadmap for implementation. The chapter's main goal is to translate the Plan's components into a practical framework that supports sound decision-making and promotes accountability at every stage. It also details the essential steps to keep the Plan adaptable and aligned with the City's changing needs and priorities.

Yet, having an implementation roadmap alone does not ensure success. Its strategies must be actively used and consistently applied in everyday decisions to achieve the Plan's vision and objectives. City leaders and staff should rely on the Plan as a key reference point when evaluating:

- Scheduling and financing infrastructure projects
- Reviewing development and redevelopment initiatives
- Considering annexation requests, whether City-led or landowner-initiated
- Making zoning and land use determinations
- Planning for the expansion of public services, facilities, and programs
- Preparing the annual capital improvement budget
- Updating zoning regulations and related municipal codes
- Coordinating with other governmental entities and forming agreements
- Guiding departmental planning, capital investments, and program development

Why this Implementation Section is Important for the City of Port Lavaca:

- Emphasizes the importance of not only creating a plan, but translating it into real action, and tangible, beneficial results.
- Introduces a short-term strategic focus to complement the Plan's long-term vision for Port Lavaca's growth and enhancement over the next 20 years.
- Provides an Implementation Action Plan that guides the City and partner organizations in prioritizing and coordinating efforts during the first several years after adoption.
- Highlights the importance of keeping the Plan current through annual reviews, progress reporting, and periodic updates.
- Reinforces the value of ongoing community engagement throughout the implementation process.

Implementation Priority Questions to Consider:

- How does the proposed project contribute to the overall progress and well-being of the community?
- Is the project part of a larger program or objective, and how do these components relate to one another?
- How many residents will benefit from the project, and how many may be negatively affected if it is not implemented?
- In what ways will the project add value to the surrounding area or neighborhood?
- Will the project improve the efficiency of a City service or reduce long-term operational or maintenance costs?
- Does the project support the community's economic development goals? Which improvements would most effectively retain or attract commercial or industrial investment?
- Is the project necessary to complete or fully utilize a major public improvement already underway or planned?
- Will growth and development in the area of the proposed project increase the costs of land acquisition or construction if the project is deferred?
- Is the project clearly defined, easy for the public to understand, and likely to gain community or voter support?

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementing the Comprehensive Plan is not just about outlining a framework, but also a consistent action and alignment with the community's vision. The policies and action priorities in this Plan should be consulted regularly and widely used by decision makers as the basis for judgments related to:

- Timing and availability of infrastructure improvements
- Proposed development and redevelopment applications
- Landowner-requested annexations
- Zone change requests and other zoning-related actions
- Expansion of public facilities, services, and programs
- Annual capital budgeting
- Intergovernmental coordination and agreements

Strategies

The following seven strategies provide the foundation for turning the plan's goals into reality:

1. Policy-Driven Decision-Making

Land use and development choices should reflect the guiding principles outlined in this Plan. While updated codes that address subdivisions, landscaping, signage, and other development standards will help evaluate private proposals, broader decisions such as annexations, infrastructure investments, and land use map changes remain under the authority of the City Council. This Plan provides a cohesive policy foundation to guide those decisions.

2. Development Codes and Technical Standards

Regulations governing subdivisions and engineering standards shape the physical character of the City. Since private development plays a significant role in shaping the built environment, these rules must balance community values with economic practicality. They should promote high-quality growth while avoiding unnecessary obstacles to appropriate development.

3. Capital Investment Planning

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) outlines major infrastructure and facility investments over a multi-year horizon, typically five years. These investments includes roads, utilities, parks, public buildings, and large equipment. Project priorities should align with the Plan's vision and policy direction.

4. Collaborative Efforts and Partnerships

Many initiatives require working beyond City departments. Success often depends on collaboration with other government entities, non-profits, and private partners. These efforts may involve joint funding, intergovernmental agreements, volunteer support, or public-private partnerships. Community boards, commissions, and civic groups also play a key role in advancing implementation.

5. Targeted Programs and Initiatives

Some objectives will be achieved through focused efforts such as launching new programs, forming interlocal partnerships, expanding outreach, or offering training. These initiatives help translate the Plan's vision into practical, flexible actions.

6. Focused Planning and In-Depth Studies

Specific areas or topics may need more detailed analysis than the Comprehensive Plan provides. Follow-up studies or small-area plans can help refine strategies and guide implementation more granularly.

7. Ongoing Policy Refinement and Responsiveness

As new development proposals arise, City staff, advisory bodies, and elected officials should use the Plan as a reference point. Regular updates to policies and program priorities will help ensure the Plan remains adaptable and practical as conditions evolve.



Poor Boy Bait Shop in Port Lavaca
Source: Michael Harding

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The top twenty priorities are based on the public's dot prioritization exercise held at Open House #2 (on August 18, 2026) and City department priority discussions. At Open House #2, the community chose the most important recommendations (as presented in Chapter 2, *The Future City*) that they want to see implemented first or that the city should prioritize. The top recommendations are in ranked order below by the number of votes recieved, with additional consideration and prioritization from City leaders. Note that this is not a comprehensive list of all recommendations considered important to the community, but the ones they chose to rank the highest.

THE TOP 20 STRATEGIES

#1 8.1.1: Establish a Zoning Map that is created from the Character-Based Map and Future Land Use Map, separating the residential areas from land uses that cause more nuisance, and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses.

#2 5.1.1: Plan for future potable water, sanitary sewer, and drainage projects to meet the City's future demand.

#3 3.2.3: Continue to work with Calhoun County ISD (CCISD), Calhoun County Library, and YMCA to expand youth programs and recreational activities, including summer camps, aquatic lessons, developmental programs, and athletics-based offerings.

#4 6.3.2: Consider the means to utilize and develop underutilized public lands (including ISD land, City land, and County lands).

#5 1.5.7: Continue to encourage new business development in Downtown, including opportunities for small vendors and market spaces.

#6 4.3.3: Repair or replace unsafe or substandard homes, especially older housing stock that poses health or safety risks.

#7 2.1.6: Establish an approved plant list to support corridor beautification.



#8 3.1.8: Develop a farmers market and seafood market at Bayfront Peninsula Park.

#9 3.1.11: Develop additional teen and young adult activities and facilities.

#10 6.3.3: Develop an updated Strategic Operating Plan and ensure cross-collaboration between the City Council, City staff, department heads, and City boards/commissions.

#11 7.3.9: Continue to utilize grant funding to implement city projects, and seek long-term internal institutional stability with grant acquisition training of newer staff and annual city budgeting processes.

#12 1.5.6: Rehabilitate historic buildings, and replace older buildings with new ones that match the desired identity for Downtown.

#13 4.1.6: Continue to encourage a mix of housing options within Downtown and central Port Lavaca, including townhomes, apartments, senior-living, single-family homes, apartments, bungalows, and cottage homes.

#14 1.5.9: Establish an area for a food truck court.

#15 2.4.3: Revise TxDOT truck routes and establish "No Truck Zones" in the City.

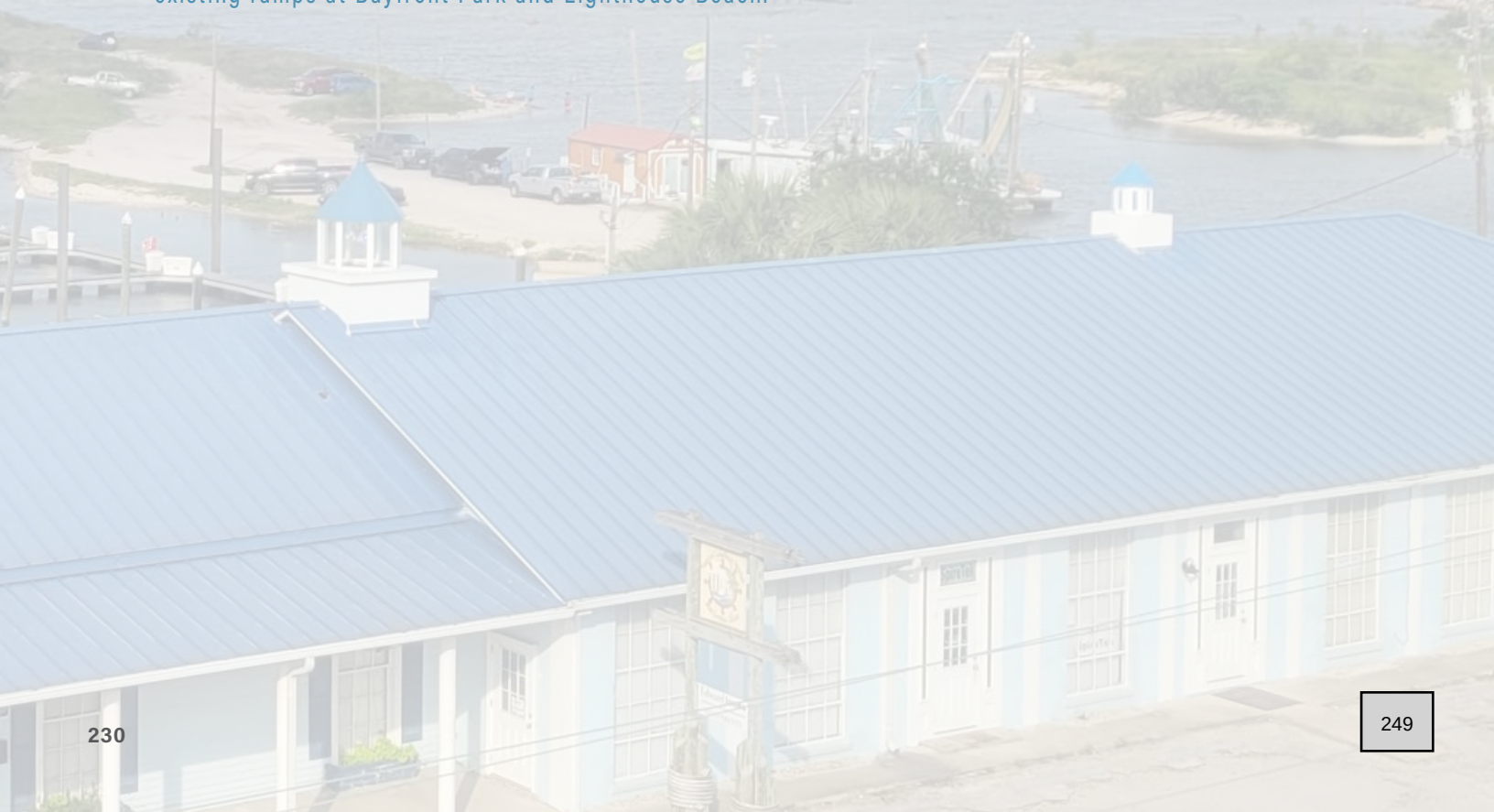
#16 2.1.9: Establish a gateway and wayfinding signage program at major junctions, district entrances, and at city limit boundaries.

#17 4.3.5: Provide and market opportunities for financial assistance for families to repair their homes.

#18 7.4.4: Continue to provide funds and sponsor community and city-led events.

#19 3.1.2: Consider developing three new parks in Port Lavaca, two of which have public beach access points.

#20 3.3.6: Conduct a boat ramp conditions survey, needs assessment, and capacity analysis for Port Lavaca's existing ramps at Bayfront Park and Lighthouse Beach.



IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

Table, *Implementation Action Plan*, on the following pages, lists the comprehensive plans recommendations as presented in Chapter 3, *Future City*. The table provided outlines the improvement type, estimated level of effort for implementation, timeframes for recommended action / implementation, key strategic partners, and potential funding resources and agencies.

Action Type. The majority of recommendations are either infrastructure improvements (physical capital-related actions) or regulatory / standards-based improvements (warranting a change or addition in policy, ordinances, or codes).

Level of Effort. The zero to five point rating scale for level of effort provides a rough estimate of the amount of time, additional considerations needed, level of collaboration and community input, and / or level of additional funds needed to implement the recommendation.

- Low Effort: Recommendations which do not involve outside entities beyond Alvin, and / or strategies which are a one-time decision or action are identified as a low level of effort.
- Medium Effort: Recommendations which may involve outside local entities (such as Brazoria County or other regional organizations), a major change to City code or policy, and / or involve a continued effort to adhere to the recommendation (such as future land uses and design principals) are identified as a medium level of effort.
- High Effort: Recommendations which involve State or National entities, additional planning and studies, construction documentation, and / or may need major grant funding or partnerships are identified as a high level of effort.

Action Leaders. The list of action leaders provides a framework of who the City should contact, work-with, coordinate, and/or form funding partnerships with to achieve an implemented recommendation.

Schedule. The Schedule/ timeframes provided in the table, along with the Level of Effort rating and list of Community Priorities (facing page 147) serve as a starting point for setting immediate, near-term, and long-term priorities. Each recommendation timeframe should align with the City's annual budget, Capital Improvements Program (CIP), and departmental planning.

The Comprehensive Plan Administrators should initiate a first-year work program with City management, departments, and partners, followed by an annual comprehensive review/ benchmarkng report:

- An annual near-term outlook: Near-term priorities should be reviewed annually to track progress, address challenges, and adjust priorities based on changing needs and opportunities. Grants, mandates, or partner enthusiasm may expedite the early implementation of some items, while high-priority items may face delays due to budget constraints or other factors. A step-by-step process or month-by-month process should be outlined for recommendations or projects seeking completion within the year.
- An annual medium-term outlook: Upcoming priorities for the next two or five years should be considered and discussed with city leaders and the community. Recommendations/projects set for implementation within five years of the annual review process should be the future focus of items listed in the Capital Improvements Program at this time and partnerships should be formed.
- An annual long-term outlook: Long-term priorities recommendations, and actions should always be considered. An annual review of grant opportunities, collaborative partnerships, and fiscal opportunities should be assessed. Funding, additional studies, and design schematics for long-term recommendations should be in process or have earmarked funding if the recommendation is anticipated or desired to be implemented within the next six to seven years of the annual review process.

Table X, Implementation Action Table

ACTION LEADERS

ISD Calhoun County ISD
CCAP Calhoun County + Appraisal District
COPV City of Port Lavaca
CORG Community Non-profits/ Organizations/ Agencies
FPEMS Fire, EMS, Police Services
MUD Local Municipal + County Utility Districts/ Agencies
COST Coastal Organizations + Regulators
VEDC Victoria Economic Development Corporation
TxDOT Texas Department of Transportation

LEVEL OF EFFORT

●○○○○ low level of effort
●●○○○ medium-low level of effort
●●●○○ medium level of effort
●●●●○ medium-high level of effort
●●●●● high level of effort

Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule				Action Type					Action Leaders	Level of Effort
		Ongoing	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years	Capital Projects	Policies + Programs	Regulations + Standards	Partnership + Collaboration	More Targeted Planning		
GOAL 1: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER												
OBJECTIVE 1.1: UTILIZE A CHARACTER-BASED DECISION FRAMEWORK WHEN CONSIDERING FUTURE LAND-USES, DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT, AND TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS.												
STRATEGY 1.1.1:	Utilize the character classifications as the future framework to guide development in Port Lavaca.	X						X			COPV	●●○○○
OBJECTIVE 1.2: UTILIZE THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN TO GUIDE THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN PORT LAVACA.												
STRATEGY 1.2.1:	Utilize the Land Use classifications and Future Land Use Plan Map to guide development in Port Lavaca.	X						X			COPV,	●●●○○
OBJECTIVE 1.3: UTILIZE THE GROWTH SEQUENCING PLAN TO INFORM THE CITY'S LEVEL OF EFFORT AND FOCUS RELATING TO LAND USE DECISIONS AND NEW DEVELOPMENT PLANNING.												
STRATEGY 1.3.1:	Utilize the Growth Sequencing Plan Map to guide where development and improvement priorities should be made and located.	X						X			COPV	●●○○○
OBJECTIVE 1.4: ESTABLISH A WATERFRONT DISTRICT.												
STRATEGY 1.4.1:	Utilize and continually update the waterfront development frame work set forth in the Waterfront District Map.	X						X			COPV	●●●○○
STRATEGY 1.4.2:	Create and encourage design guidelines in the waterfront district.	X						X			COPV	●●●○○
STRATEGY 1.4.3:	Encourage mixed use development as designated in the Plan to allow people to live, work , shop, learn and play in close proximity while minimizing conflicts between land uses.	X							X		COPV, VEDC	●●○○○
STRATEGY 1.4.4:	Enhance the waterfronts active and passive recreational offerings	X				X	X			X	COPV, TxDOT, VEDC	●●●○○
STRATEGY 1.4.5:	Create safe routes to and between destinations along the Waterfront, including parks and Downtown.	X				X				X	COPV, TxDOT, VEDC	●●●●○
STRATEGY 1.4.6:	Improve the connection between hotels and the waterfront.	X				X				X	COPV, TxDOT, VEDC	●●●○○
STRATEGY 1.4.7:	Enhance the waterfronts natural landscapes, wetlands, cost line, and planting areas.	X				X			X	X	COPV, CORG, COST,	●●●●○
STRATEGY 1.4.8:	Expand the existing docks and boardwalks south of Bayfront Peninsula Park.	X		X	X	X			X	X	COPV, CORG, COST	●●●●●
STRATEGY 1.4.9:	Develop Surveys, Existing Conditions Analysis, and Master Plans for the existing harbors along the Waterfront.		X	X						X	COPV	●●●○○
STRATEGY 1.4.10:	Consider building additional beach facilities closer to Main Street, near or within Bayfront Peninsula Park.	X				X			X	X	COPV, COST	●●●●●

Table X, Implementation Action Table

ACTION LEADERS

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COPVA City of Port Lavaca
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MUD Local Municipal + County Utility Districts/ Agencies
COST Costal Organizations + Regulators
VEDC Victoria Economic Development Corporation
TxDOT Texas Department of Transportation

LEVEL OF EFFORT

●○○○○ low level of effort
●●○○○ medium-low level of effort
●●●○○ medium level of effort
●●●●○ medium-high level of effort
●●●●● high level of effort

Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule				Action Type				Action Leaders	Level of Effort
		Ongoing	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years	Capital Projects	Policies + Programs	Regulations + Standards	Partnership + Collaboration	More Targeted Planning		
OBJECTIVE 1.5: ENCOURAGE THE REDEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF DOWNTOWN TO STRENGTHEN ITS ROLE AS THE CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC HEART OF PORT LAVACA.											
STRATEGY 1.5.1:	Continue to consider and implement a one -way pair street redesign and reorientation of Main Street and Railroad Street.		X			X			X	X	COPV, TxDOT	●●●●●
STRATEGY 1.5.2:	Implement a Main Street Streetscapes Improvement Program.	X		X	X	X			X	X	COPV, TxDOT	●●●●●
STRATEGY 1.5.3:	Improve intersection safety and design in Downtown along Main Street.		X	X		X		X	X	X	COPV, TxDOT	●●●●○
STRATEGY 1.5.4:	Improve the functional and visual connection between Main Street and the waterfront.	X	X			X			X	X	COPV, TxDOT, CORG, COST	●●●●○
STRATEGY 1.5.5:	Conduct utilities studies to determine the specific age, materials, and capacity of existing utilities and their ability to service an increase in Downtown development and redevelopment.	X					X			X	COPV, MUD, VEDC	●●●●●
STRATEGY 1.5.6:	Rehabilitate historic buildings, and replace older buildings with new ones that match the desired identity for Downtown.	X					X		X	X	COPV, CCAP, CORG	●●●●●
STRATEGY 1.5.7:	Continue to encourage new business development in Downtown, including opportunities for small vendors and market spaces.	X					X		X		COPV, VEDC	●●●●○
STRATEGY 1.5.8:	Identify programming and elements needed to host community events at Faye Bauer Sterling Park, on Main Street, and the empty block of 120 West Main Sreet.	X					X		X	X	COPV, VEDC	●●●○○
STRATEGY 1.5.9:	Establish an area for a food truck court.			X		X			X		COPV	●●●○○
STRATEGY 1.5.10:	Work with Tx DOT to identify alterative routes for traffic when events are held Downtown where Main Street may be temporarily closed to vehicular traffic.		X					X	X		COPV, TxDOT, FPEMS	●○○○○

Table X, Implementation Action Table

ACTION LEADERS

ISD Calhoun County ISD
CCAP Calhoun County + Appraisal District
COPVA City of Port Lavaca
CORG Community Non-profits/ Organizations/ Agencies
FPEMS Fire, EMS, Police Services
MUD Local Municipal + County Utility Districts/ Agencies
COST Costal Organizations + Regulators
VEDC Victoria Economic Development Corporation
TxDOT Texas Department of Transportation

LEVEL OF EFFORT

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Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule: Ongoing	Schedule: 1-5 Years	Schedule: 5-10 Years	Schedule: 10+ Years	Action Type: Capital Projects	Action Type: Policies + Programs	Action Type: Regulations + Standards	Action Type: Partnership + Collaboration	Action Type: More Targeted Planning	Action Leaders	Level of Effort
GOAL 2: TRANSPORTATION												
OBJECTIVE 2.1: ENSURE THAT PORT LAVACA INCORPORATES THE FULL SUITE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES TO ENSURE AN EFFICIENT AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.												
STRATEGY 2.1.1:	Utilize the proposed Thoroughfare Plan to guide future roadway expansions, alignments, and right-of-way preservation.	X				X		X	X		COPV, TxDOT	●●●○○
STRATEGY 2.1.2:	Utilize and update thoroughfare standards to align with the proposed Thoroughfare crosssections.	X						X	X		COPV, TxDOT	●●●○○
STRATEGY 2.1.3:	Establish guidelines for on-street parking space design, including parallel and angled parking.		X					X			COPV	●○○○○
STRATEGY 2.1.4:	Encourage participation in Adopt a Highway Programs or similar program to help keep roads clean and reduce overall maintenance costs.	X					X		X		COPV, TxDOT, VEDC	●●○○○
STRATEGY 2.1.5:	Establish access management standards in the Code of Ordinances.		X					X			COPV, TxDOT	●●○○○
STRATEGY 2.1.6:	Establish an approved plant list to support corridor beautification.			X	X			X	X	X	COPV, COST	●●●○○
STRATEGY 2.1.7:	Establish updated crosswalk and striping standards at City and TxDOT Intersections.		X					X	X	X	COPV, TxDOT	●●●○○
STRATEGY 2.1.8:	Implement new intersection controls.	X				X			X	X	COPV, TxDOT, FPEMS	●●●●○
STRATEGY 2.1.9:	Establish a gate ways and wayfinding signage program at major junctions, district entrances, and at City Limits boundaries.		X	X		X	X		X		COPV, TxDOT, CCAP, VDEC	●●●●○
OBJECTIVE 2.2: ENSURE THAT PORT LAVACA INCORPORATES THE FULL SUITE OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES TO ENSURE AN EFFICIENT AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.												
STRATEGY 2.2.1:	Utilize the proposed active transportation plan to expand trail, side walk, and shared use path network.	X				X			X	X	COPV, TxDOT	●●●○○
STRATEGY 2.2.2:	Establish standards for the active transportation network and educate the public on these changes.		X				X	X	X		COPV, TxDOT	●●●○○
STRATEGY 2.2.3:	Expand and upgrade existing sidewalks and curb ramps to comply with state and national standards.	X				X			X	X	COPV, TxDOT	●●●○○
STRATEGY 2.2.4:	Implement wayfinding and regulatory signage for active transportation, as well as for drivers to be reminded to share the road and be aware of bicyclists and pedestrians.			X		X	X		X		COPV, TxDOT, VDEC	●●●●○
STRATEGY 2.2.5:	Implement a neighborhood streets improvement program that combines elements of traffic calming, streetscape enhancements, and pedestrian interconnectivity.			X	X	X	X			X	COPV, TxDOT, CORG	●●●●○

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Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule: Ongoing	Schedule: 1-5 Years	Schedule: 5-10 Years	Schedule: 10+ Years	Action Type: Capital Projects	Action Type: Policies + Programs	Action Type: Regulations + Standards	Action Type: Partnership + Collaboration	Action Type: More Targeted Planning	Action Leaders	Level of Effort
STRATEGY 2.2.6:	Ensure that active transportation facilities do not dead-end abruptly.	X					X				COPV	●○○○○
STRATEGY 2.2.7:	Utilize and update the City's Code of Ordinances with new active transportation facility standards and dimensions.		X					X			COPV, CCAP	●●○○○
STRATEGY 2.2.8:	Require all residential and commercial developers to add 5-foot side walks along all public rights-of-way, with new or substantial construction.		X					X			COPV	●○○○○
STRATEGY 2.2.9:	Encourage and adopt policies to make the City bicycle friendly.	X					X				COPV	●●○○○
STRATEGY 2.2.10:	Designate bike routes on low speed, local thoroughfares for safe and efficient travel.			X		X	X			X	COPV, ISD	●●○○○
STRATEGY 2.2.11:	Install bicycle amenities at major destinations and rest stops, as well as bicycle traffic signals at intersections along designated bike routes.	X				X			X	X	COPV, ISD, CORG, TxDOT, VEDC	●●●○○
STRATEGY 2.2.12:	Encourage cycling through school programs so that the younger generation can build the habit of biking.	X							X		COPV, ISD, CORG	●●○○○
OBJECTIVE 2.3: PROMOTE INTRA-CITY CONNECTIVITY.												
STRATEGY 2.3.1:	Implement intersection safety improvements throughout the City.	X				X			X	X	COPV, ISD, CORG, TxDOT, VEDC	●●●●○
STRATEGY 2.3.2:	Create local road access on the north side of the city to connect disconnected residential areas.			X	X	X				X	COPV, ISD, CORG, TxDOT	●●●○○
STRATEGY 2.3.3:	Revise TxDOT truck routes and establish "No Truck Zones" in the City.		X			X		X	X	X	COPV, TxDOT, VEDC	●●○○○
STRATEGY 2.3.4:	Consider adopting a “Complete Streets” policy.			X			X				COPV	●●○○○
OBJECTIVE 2.4: PROMOTE INTER-CITY CONNECTIVITY REGIONALLY.												
STRATEGY 2.4.1:	Conduct a SH 35 Corridor Capacity Evaluation in coordination with TxDOT.		X	X			X		X	X	COPV, TxDOT, VEDC	●●●●○
STRATEGY 2.4.2:	Evaluate if ridership needs are met and if a collaboration with R-Transit is needed to provide adequate transit access to residents.			X			X		X	X	COPV, TxDOT, CORG, VEDC	●●●○○
STRATEGY 2.4.3:	Keep connected with TxDOT about future plans for the Causeway replacement.		X	X	X	X			X	X	COPV, TxDOT,	●●○○○
STRATEGY 2.4.4:	Revise existing Truck Route designations to prevent truck traffic in undesired areas.		X					X	X	X	COPV, TxDOT, VEDC	●●○○○

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Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule: Ongoing	Schedule: 1-5 Years	Schedule: 5-10 Years	Schedule: 10+ Years	Action Type: Capital Projects	Action Type: Policies + Programs	Action Type: Regulations + Standards	Action Type: Partnership + Collaboration	Action Type: More Targeted Planning	Action Leaders	Level of Effort
GOAL 3: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE												
OBJECTIVE 3.1: IMPROVE PARKLAND ACCESSIBILITY AND DEVELOP NEW PARK OPPORTUNITIES.												
STRATEGY 3.1.1:	Utilize the proposed Parks and Open Space Plan Map to identify additional future parkland sites, recommended protected areas, and future active transportation facilities.	X					X	X	X	X	COPV, VEDC, COST, CORG, ISD, CCAP	●●●●○
STRATEGY 3.1.2:	Consider developing three new parks in Port Lavaca, two of which have public beach access points.	X				X			X	X	COPV, VEDC, COST, CORG, CCAP	●●●●●
STRATEGY 3.1.3:	Utilize the updated 2026 Port Lavaca Parks and Recreation Master Plan.	X					X				COPV, VEDC, COST, CORG, CCAP	●●●●○
STRATEGY 3.1.4:	Consider projects, facility expansion, and improvements to existing Port Lavaca's Parks.	X				X			X	X	COPV, VEDC, COST, CORG, CCAP	●●●●●
STRATEGY 3.1.5:	Incorporate inclusive play elements into all parks for people of all ages and all abilities.	X				X	X			X	COPV, VEDC, COST, CORG	●●●○○
STRATEGY 3.1.6:	Continue to expand opportunities for public feedback and environmental education.	X					X		X		COPV, COST, CORG	●●○○○
STRATEGY 3.1.7:	Continue to promote opportunities for park-based tourism.	X					X		X		COPV, VEDC	●●●○○
STRATEGY 3.1.8:	Develop a farmers' market and seafood market at Bayfront Peninsula Park.			X		X	X		X	X	COPV, CORG	●●●●●
STRATEGY 3.1.9:	Consider adding parks facilities that Port Lavaca does not yet have to make each park a unique experience.	X				X			X	X	COPV, COST, VEDC, CORG	●●○○○
STRATEGY 3.1.10:	Encourage the development of canoe and kayak boat launches and a network of blue way routes in Lavaca Bay and Chocolate Bay.		X	X		X	X		X	X	COPV, COST, VEDC, CORG	●●●●●
STRATEGY 3.1.11:	Develop additional teen and young adult activities and facilities.	X		X		X				X	COPV, CORG ISD	●●●○○
STRATEGY 3.1.12:	Consider a performance stage and an additional playground zone towards the entrance of Bayfront Peninsula Park, northeast of East Railroad Street.				X	X					COPV, COST, VEDC, CORG	●●●●●
STRATEGY 3.1.13:	Prioritize sidewalk and trail projects that connect to and are adjacent to parkland and civic buildings.	X				X					COPV, ISD, CCAP	●●○○○
STRATEGY 3.1.14:	Provide adequate shade protection on city sidewalks, trails, and shared-use paths.	X				X					COPV	●●●○○
OBJECTIVE 3.2: IMPROVE LOCAL COORDINATION, PROGRAMS, AND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS.												
STRATEGY 3.2.1:	Consider expanding the Bauer Community Center to include centers for learning, fitness, community, and cultural arts.			X	X	X			X	X	COPV, CCAP, VEDC, CORG	●●●●●

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Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule				Action Type				Action Leaders	Level of Effort
		Ongoing	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years	Capital Projects	Policies + Programs	Regulations + Standards	Partnership + Collaboration	More Targeted Planning	
STRATEGY 3.2.2:	Continue to collaborate with Calhoun County and the Victoria Economic Development Corporation (VEDC) to provide high quality amenities for visitors and residents.	X				X			X	X	COPV, COST, VEDC, CORG	●●●○○
STRATEGY 3.2.3:	Continue to work with Calhoun County ISD (CCISD), Calhoun County Library, and YMCA to expand youth programs and recreational activities, including summer camps, aquatic lessons, de elopmental programs, and athletics -based offerings.	X				X	X		X	X	COPV, COST, ISD, CORG	●●●○○
STRATEGY 3.2.4:	Continue to incorporate local artists' art and unique design elements into all Port Lavaca parks.	X				X	X				COPV, CORG ISD	●●○○○
STRATEGY 3.2.5:	Continue to work with home developers to provide parklands in new developments within areas not already ser ved by parks to help meet the communities demand.	X					X	X	X		COPV	●●●●○
STRATEGY 3.2.6:	Continue to work with TxDOT and Calhoun County to implement the Comprehensive Plan's shared use path and trails network along major state highways.	X				X			X	X	COPV, TxDOT, CCAP,	●●●●●
STRATEGY 3.2.7:	Consider adding parkland dedication requirements without a fee -in-lieu option to Chapter 42 of the City Code of Ordinances.		X					X			COPV	●●○○○
STRATEGY 3.2.8:	Consider a "bike to the event" incentive, rewards, or offerings to encourage walking and biking to local city events.			X			X		X		COPV, VEDC, ISD, CORG	●●○○○
OBJECTIVE 3.3: ENHANCE THE ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE OF CITY PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.												
STRATEGY 3.3.1:	Conduct a programs and services capacity study for all programs, facilities, staffing, and budgets associated with the Port Lavaca park and recreation facilities.			X			X				COPV, CORG, CCAP	●●●○○
STRATEGY 3.3.2:	Continue to develop a digital library through Google MyMaps and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) portals of all parkland facilities and amenities and begin to develop an Asset Management Program.	X						X			COPV	●●○○○
STRATEGY 3.3.3:	Conduct a lighting survey at night of all parklands and facilities to identify dark zones, lighting inconsistencies, and potential safety hazards.		X	X			X		X	X	COPV, TxDOT	●●●●●
STRATEGY 3.3.4:	Continue assessing the community's parkland and facility needs on an annual basis, including potential new sports and recreation facilities, shade enhancements, safety improvements, and programming needs beyond those identified in this Comp. Plan.	X						X		X	COPV, VEDC	●●○○○
STRATEGY 3.3.5:	Conduct a tree survey in Port Lavaca.		X	X			X		X	X	COPV	●●●●●
STRATEGY 3.3.6:	Conduct a boat ramp conditions survey, needs assessment, and capacity analysis for Port Lavaca's existing ramps at Bayfront Park and Lighthouse Beach.		X				X		X	X	COPV, COST, VEDC	●●●●○

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Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule				Action Type				Action Leaders	Level of Effort
		Ongoing	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years	Capital Projects	Policies + Programs	Regulations + Standards	Partnership + Collaboration	More Targeted Planning	
GOAL 4: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS											
OBJECTIVE 4.1: ENSURE NEIGHBORHOODS HAVE A WIDE VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS WITH ACCESS TO PUBLIC AMENITIES AND EVERYDAY NECESSITIES.											
STRATEGY 4.1.1:	Continue to encourage the development of market rate multi-family and single-family housing.	X					X				COPV ●●○○○
STRATEGY 4.1.2:	Create a comprehensive Developer 's Guide that outlines the full process for development approvals, permitting, and annexation.		X				X			X	COPV ●●●○○
STRATEGY 4.1.3:	Continue to encourage high-quality housing construction and attractive home designs styles in Port Lavaca.	X						X			COPV ●●○○○
STRATEGY 4.1.4:	Establish a "Look Book" and Desired Amenities Guide to communicate Port Lavaca's preferred development character.		X				X				COPV ●●●○○
STRATEGY 4.1.5:	Encourage and / or require subdivision interconnectivity with streets and trails.	X						X			COPV ●○○○○
STRATEGY 4.1.6:	Continue to encourage a mix of housing options within Downtown and central Port Lavaca, including town homes, apartments, senior-living, single -family homes, apartments, bungalows, and cottage homes.	X					X				COPV ●○○○○
STRATEGY 4.1.7:	Within the Downtown, consider requiring new single -family homes to have front-facing covered porches and minimize the impact of garages.		X					X			COPV ●●○○○
STRATEGY 4.1.8:	Consider allowing Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADUs) within specific city zones and in special cases.		X					X			COPV ●●○○○
STRATEGY 4.1.9:	Encourage the development of owner-occupied housing in central Port Lavaca and the development of infill lots.	X					X				COPV ●●○○○
STRATEGY 4.1.10:	Encourage and allow for a strategically located mix of housing lot sizes and home sizes to be developed in a single planned subdivision or residential development; If a smaller-lot variance is desired, then require the development of large lots to the proposed development.	X					X				COPV ●●●○○
OBJECTIVE 4.2: ENSURE NEIGHBORHOODS HAVE A WIDE VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS WITH ACCESS TO PUBLIC AMENITIES AND EVERYDAY NECESSITIES.											
STRATEGY 4.2.1:	Continue progress towards the goal of manufactured homes only in manufactured home parks.	X					X				COPV ●●○○○
STRATEGY 4.2.2:	Provide a design guide for manufactured homes.		X					X			COPV ●●○○○
STRATEGY 4.2.3:	Require manufactured home parks to have a minimum planting, recreation, and buffering style guide.		X					X			COPV ●●○○○

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Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule				Action Type				Action Leaders	Level of Effort
		Ongoing	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years	Capital Projects	Policies + Programs	Regulations + Standards	Partnership + Collaboration	More Targeted Planning	
OBJECTIVE 4.3: ENSURE PORT LAVACA'S HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES ARE ATTRACTIVE, SAFE TO OCCUPY, MAINTAIN GOOD UP-KEEP, AND ENHANCE THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE CITY.											
STRATEGY 4.3.1:	Establish a neighborhood program to help revitalize historical / older neighborhoods at risk of decline.			X			X		X		COPV	●●●●●
STRATEGY 4.3.2:	Ensure that senior facilities maintain high-quality services for aging residents.	X						X	X		COPV, CORG	●●○○○
STRATEGY 4.3.3:	Repair or replace unsafe or substandard homes, especially older housing stock that poses health or safety risks.	X					X		X		COPV, CORG	●●●○○
STRATEGY 4.3.4:	Provide and market opportunities for financial assistance for families to repair their homes.	X					X		X		COPV, VEDC	●●●○○
STRATEGY 4.3.5:	Consider financial incentives for the rehabilitation of historic properties.	X					X		X		COPV, VEDC	●●●○○
STRATEGY 4.2.6:	Work with the Calhoun County Museum to develop a historical structures and sites inventory, designation criteria, and historical repair program.		X				X		X	X	COPV, CORG, CCAP	●●●○○
GOAL 5: UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE											
OBJECTIVE 5.1: CREATE A PROACTIVE PLAN TO ADDRESS AGING INFRASTRUCTURE THAT IS PLANNED, MAINTAINED, AND UPGRADED TO MEET CURRENT COMMUNITY NEEDS AND SUPPORT SAFE, RELIABLE, AND EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY.											
STRATEGY 5.1.1:	Plan for future potable water, sanitary sewer, and drainage projects to meet the City's future demand.	X				X	X		X		COPV, MUD	●●○○○
STRATEGY 5.1.2:	Continue to identify capacity and distribution issues and incorporate them into the City's CIP.	X				X	X		X		COPV, MUD	●●○○○
STRATEGY 5.1.3:	Continue to explore alternative methods for water reuse as alternatives become available.	X					X	X	X		COPV, MUD, COST	●●●○○
STRATEGY 5.1.4:	Continue to address Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) challenges.	X				X					COPV	●●●○○
STRATEGY 5.1.5:	Continue to prioritize aging infrastructure, such as implementing a clay pipe replacement program, to reduce impacts on the City's treatment plant.	X				X	X				COPV	●●●○○
STRATEGY 5.1.6:	Develop a Stormwater and Drainage Master Plan.		X	X			X		X	X	COPV	●●●●○
STRATEGY 5.1.7:	Incorporate green infrastructure and low impact development (LID) solutions within water management and drainage utilities systems.	X				X	X	X	X		COPV, MUD, COST	●●●○○
STRATEGY 5.1.8:	Continue to identify where additional stormwater drainage lines need to be directed.	X						X	X	X	COPV, MUD	●●○○○
STRATEGY 5.1.9:	Conduct street drains, culverts, and drainage ditch survey to identify areas where drainage capacity is needed, where blockages are or may occur, where drains may be damaged, and where compliance issues may be located.		X	X			X		X	X	COPV, COST, CCAP, TxDOT	●●●●○

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Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule: Ongoing	Schedule: 1-5 Years	Schedule: 5-10 Years	Schedule: 10+ Years	Action Type: Capital Projects	Action Type: Policies + Programs	Action Type: Regulations + Standards	Action Type: Partnership + Collaboration	Action Type: More Targeted Planning	Action Leaders	Level of Effort
STRATEGY 5.1.10:	Conduct comprehensive sidewalks, curb ramp, and accessibility assessment in Downtown, along major corridors, and near parks and schools, to identify utility conflicts, ADA compliance issues, deficit areas without sidewalks, and needed sidewalk pavement updates.			X				X	X	X	COPV, TxDOT, ISD	●●●●○
OBJECTIVE 5.2: CREATE A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM THAT PROTECTS AND MAINTAINS CRITICAL STORMWATER, POTABLE WATER, AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE, ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES THAT SAFEGUARD PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT.												
STRATEGY 5.2.1:	Continue to expand on the capital improvement program and address aging infrastructure with a proactive approach.	X				X	X			X	COPV, TxDOT	●●●○○
STRATEGY 5.2.2:	Continue funding key infrastructure projects, such as a rate study, that are needed in the community.	X					X			X	COPV	●●●○○
STRATEGY 5.2.3:	Port Lavaca should consider ways to educate the public in the future to fund infrastructure programs.	X					X				COPV, CORG, COST	●○○○○
OBJECTIVE 5.3: CONTINUE TO PROVIDE, MAINTAIN, AND UPDATE INFRASTRUCTURE AS THE COMMUNITY GROWS.												
STRATEGY 5.3.1:	Regardless of Port Lavaca's population growth, there is interest in keeping heavy industry treatment facilities separate from Port Lavaca's System.	X					X				COPV, VEDC	●○○○○
STRATEGY 5.3.2:	Continue to utilize shared utilities improvement agreements with developers to help reduce future financial impacts of upgrading/replacing utilities infrastructure.	X					X		X		COPV, MUD	●●○○○
STRATEGY 5.3.3:	Continue to require all new development to connect to the City's sewer network.	X						X			COPV, MUD	●○○○○
STRATEGY 5.3.4:	Ensure the City of Port Lavaca maintains reliable, regulatory-compliant water treatment capacity to support current demand, future growth, and regional service commitments.	X								X	COPV, MUD	●○○○○
STRATEGY 5.3.5:	Until wastewater treatment capacity is expanded, require large industrial users to provide their own water treatment solutions.	X					X	X	X		COPV, MUD	●●○○○
STRATEGY 5.3.6:	Identify where additional infrastructure water trunk lines need to be directed.	X								X	COPV	●●○○○
OBJECTIVE 5.4: CONTINUE TO MANAGE A MODERN, DATA-DRIVEN FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE BY IMPROVING THE ACCURACY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND INTEGRATION OF THE CITY'S UTILITY INFORMATION SYSTEMS.												
STRATEGY 5.4.1:	Continue to update and digitize utility mapping.	X						X		X	COPV	●●●○○
STRATEGY 5.4.2:	Consider hiring an engineering firm to help collect all infrastructure (water, wastewater, and drainage facilities) on an ongoing basis as new developments enter the community.		X	X		X	X			X	COPV	●●●●○

Table X, Implementation Action Table

ACTION LEADERS

ISD Calhoun County ISD
CCAP Calhoun County + Appraisal District
COPVA City of Port Lavaca
CORG Community Non-profits/ Organizations/ Agencies
FPEMS Fire, EMS, Police Services
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COST Costal Organizations + Regulators
VEDC Victoria Economic Development Corporation
TxDOT Texas Department of Transportation

LEVEL OF EFFORT

●○○○○ low level of effort
●●○○○ medium-low level of effort
●●●○○ medium level of effort
●●●●○ medium-high level of effort
●●●●● high level of effort

Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule				Action Type					Action Leaders	Level of Effort
		Ongoing	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years	Capital Projects	Policies + Programs	Regulations + Standards	Partnership + Collaboration	More Targeted Planning		
STRATEGY 5.4.3:	Develop a program that collects infrastructure as-built data after a project is complete from the engineers who prepared the plans for each project to keep the asset management program up to date.			X			X			X	COPV, MUD	●●●●●
STRATEGY 5.4.4:	Continue to educate, inform, and notify the public of infrastructure projects.	X					X				COPV	●●○○○
GOAL 6: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES												
OBJECTIVE 6.1: ENSURE ADEQUATE STAFFING OF CITY DEPARTMENTS, CITY SERVICES, AND COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES.												
STRATEGY 6.1.1:	Ensure that City departments are well staffed and have the technical expertise to continue improving and providing strong services.	X					X				COPV	●●●○○
STRATEGY 6.1.1:	Ensure that City and County joint-departments are well staffed and have the technical expertise to continue providing strong services.	X					X				COPV	●●●○○
OBJECTIVE 6.2: ENSURE THAT CITY FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND BUILDINGS ARE ADEQUATELY POSITIONED AND MAINTAINED TO SERVICE THE COMMUNITY.												
STRATEGY 6.2.1:	Consider public facility expansions and additional service locations.	X				X					COPV, MUD, CCAP	●●●●○
STRATEGY 6.2.2:	Continue to improve the capacity and quality of utilities services.	X				X					COPV, MUD, CCAP	●●●●○
STRATEGY 6.2.3:	Update facilities and equipment at City Hall and other City-operated buildings.	X				X					COPV, MUD, CCAP	●●●●○
STRATEGY 6.2.4:	Update emergency response (Fire, EMS, Police) facilities and equipment in coordination with Calhoun County	X				X					COPV, MUD, CCAP, EMS	●●●●○
OBJECTIVE 6.3: ENSURE THAT CITY FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS UTILIZE UP-TO-DATE AND EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGIES, PROGRAMS, AND SECURITY MEASURES.												
STRATEGY 6.3.1:	Continue to utilize up-to-date and improve modern technology systems, programs, contracted services, and security protocols.	X					X		X		COPV, CCAP, EMS	●●○○○
STRATEGY 6.3.2:	Consider the means to utilize and develop underutilized public lands (including ISD land, City land, and County lands).			X	X	X	X		X	X	COPV, MUD, CCAP	●●○○○
STRATEGY 6.3.3:	Develop an updated Strategic Operating Plan and ensure cross-collaboration between the city council, city staff, department heads, and city boards/ commissions.		X					X			COPV, MUD, CCAP, EMS	●●●○○

Table X, Implementation Action Table

ACTION LEADERS

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TxDOT Texas Department of Transportation

LEVEL OF EFFORT

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●●●●● high level of effort

Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule				Action Type					Action Leaders	Level of Effort
		Ongoing	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years	Capital Projects	Policies + Programs	Regulations + Standards	Partnership + Collaboration	More Targeted Planning		
GOAL 7: RESILIENCE												
OBJECTIVE 7.1: STRIVE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE BY IMPROVING AND PROTECTING NATURAL RESOURCES, ENSURING ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES DON'T NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE ENVIRONMENT LONG-TERM, AND MITIGATING STRUCTURAL HAZARDS OR CONTAMINANTS.												
STRATEGY 7.1.1:	Continue to preserve existing sensitive environmental areas or areas of high visual and characteristic value, such as wetlands, tributary corridors, and forested lands.	X					X	X	X		COPV, CORG, COST, MUD	●●●●○
STRATEGY 7.1.2:	Work with local coastal environmental agencies to ensure safe and proper development of the waterfront and prevent airborne and waterborne pollutants.	X					X	X	X		COPV, CORG, COST, VEDC	●●●●●
STRATEGY 7.1.3:	Continue to mitigate and assess former light industrial sites for potential contaminants, needed mitigation steps, required funding, and development potential.	X					X	X	X	X	COPV, CORG, COST, VEDC	●●●●○
STRATEGY 7.1.4:	Relocate, remove, and/or address loose contaminants and structures temporarily located in Lavaca Bay near Bayfront Peninsula Park and other potential locations.		X				X	X	X	X	COPV, CORG, COST	●●●○○
STRATEGY 7.1.5:	As described and identified in Objective 1.1.4, Waterfront Plan, expand, reestablish, and ensure the continued health of wetlands and riparian flood buffers along the coast.	X					X	X	X		COPV, CORG, COST, VEDC	●●●●●
STRATEGY 7.1.6:	Protect and work with developers to require and/ or encourage the healthy maintenance of existing wetlands and riparian areas such as at the mouth of Little Chocolate Bayou, Lynn's Bayou, and smaller tributaries leading to Lavaca Bay.	X					X	X	X		COPV, CORG, COST, VEDC	●●●●●
STRATEGY 7.1.7:	Consider requiring the planting of only native species of trees and landscapes within all new developments.		X					X			COPV	●●○○○
STRATEGY 7.1.8:	Protect trees within the right-of-way and medians of roadways, along with older trees on private property.	X				X	X	X	X	X	COPV	●●●○○
OBJECTIVE 7.2: IMPROVE THE COMMUNITY'S INFRASTRUCTURAL RESILIENCE BY INCORPORATING SAFE AND MODERN BUILDING PRACTICES, INNOVATIVE ENERGY USE METHODS, AND PROTECTING CRITICAL UTILITIES AND CITY SERVICES.												
STRATEGY 7.2.1:	Ensure existing developments in vulnerable areas are prepared, and new development is built with the risk factors in mind.	X					X	X	X		COPV, COST, MUD	●●●●○
STRATEGY 7.2.2:	Amend the City's Code of Ordinances to add regulations for the provision of EV (Electric Vehicle) charging stations on private and public property.		X				X	X			COPV	●●○○○

Table X, Implementation Action Table

ACTION LEADERS

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●●●●● high level of effort

Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule				Action Type					Action Leaders	Level of Effort
		Ongoing	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years	Capital Projects	Policies + Programs	Regulations + Standards	Partnership + Collaboration	More Targeted Planning		
STRATEGY 7.2.3:	Require dark sky compliant lighting fixtures at any public development along the Waterfront and within parks.		X	X				X			COPV, VEDC, MUD, CCAP	●●●○○
STRATEGY 7.2.4:	Amend the City's Code of Ordinances to add residential and commercial Codes regarding the installation and placement of rooftop solar panels.		X					X			COPV, VEDC	●●○○○
STRATEGY 7.2.5:	Continue to encourage the market-feasible adaptive reuse of properties.	X					X		X	X	COPV, VEDC	●●●●○
STRATEGY 7.2.6:	Encourage permeable pavements within the City and reduce the amount of impermeable surfaces as much as possible.	X					X	X	X		COPV, COST, MUD	●●○○○
STRATEGY 7.2.7:	Require all new city and public facilities to include, incorporate, and/or consider green infrastructure and energy efficient utilities.		X			X	X				COPV, VEDC, CCAP	●●○○○
STRATEGY 7.2.8:	Establish a guidebook to help residents and business owners understand the wide range of environmental adaptive improvements they can conduct.			X				X	X		COPV, COST, CORG	●●●○○
STRATEGY 7.2.9:	Require all new developments to include improved and higher capacity street drains and encourage natural detention basin designs.		X					X		X	COPV, COST, MUD	●●●○○
OBJECTIVE 7.3: IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC AND FISCAL RESILIENCE OF PORT LAVACA'S BUSINESSES, CITY OPERATIONS, AND HOUSEHOLDS.												
STRATEGY 7.3.1:	Strengthen land use code enforcement to ensure compliance, address incompatible uses, and maintain community character.	X					X				COPV	●●●●○
STRATEGY 7.3.2:	Re-establish code enforcement expectations with existing property owners.		X				X				COPV	●●●○○
STRATEGY 7.3.3:	Continue to allow small-scale, home-based businesses.	X					X				COPV, VEDC	●○○○○
STRATEGY 7.3.4:	Ensure availability of land for Business Park and Industrial use in desirable areas.	X					X		X		COPV, CCAP, VEDC	●●○○○
STRATEGY 7.3.5:	Consider encouraging the expansion of aquaculture-related businesses.	X					X		X		COPV, CCAP, VEDC CORG, COST	●●○○○
STRATEGY 7.3.6:	Promote and assist the viability of agriculturally based economic activities in the Planning Area.	X					X		X		COPV, CCAP, VEDC CORG	●●○○○
STRATEGY 7.3.7:	Explore funding opportunities for reinvestment into existing communities.	X					X		X	X	COPV, CCAP, VEDC	●●○○○
STRATEGY 7.3.8:	Conduct a property tax assessment to guide better development practices that can aid in fiscally responsible utilities and infrastructure replacement.			X					X	X	COPV, MUD, CCAP	●●●○○

Table X, Implementation Action Table

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●●●●● high level of effort

Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule				Action Type					Action Leaders	Level of Effort
		Ongoing	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years	Capital Projects	Policies + Programs	Regulations + Standards	Partnership + Collaboration	More Targeted Planning		
STRATEGY 7.3.9:	Continue to utilize grant funding to implement city projects, but seek long-term internal institutional stability with grant acquisition training of newer staff and annual city budgeting processes.	X					X		X		COPV	●●●●●
STRATEGY 7.3.10:	Continue to address Lavaca Bay depths to ensure economic viability of needed shipping routes, while protecting sensitive environmental areas.	X				X	X		X	X	COPV, COST, CORG, VEDC	●●●○○
STRATEGY 7.3.11:	Develop an allocation, tracking, and benchmarking system for the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) district in Port Lavaca.		X				X		X	X	COPV	●●●●○
OBJECTIVE 7.4: CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THE COMMUNITY'S SOCIAL RESILIENCE THROUGH EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATION, CONTINUED PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS, AND CITY-SPONSORED CIVIC EFFORTS.												
STRATEGY 7.4.1:	Continue to coordinate disaster relief efforts, storage houses, and emergency medical relief networks in times of hurricanes, droughts, and adverse weather.	X					X		X		COPV, CORG, VEDC, COST, TxDOT, CCAP, ISD, FPEMS	●●●●○
STRATEGY 7.4.2:	Conduct a comprehensive survey and study of all community-based buildings for the purposes of pop-up relief centers.			X			X		X	X	COPV, VEDC, CCAP, FPEMS	●●●●●
STRATEGY 7.4.3:	Continue to ensure the viability, accuracy, and efficiency of the Calhoun County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (2025)	X					X		X		COPV, CORG, VEDC, COST, TxDOT, CCAP, FPEMS	●●●●○
STRATEGY 7.4.4:	Continue to provide funds and sponsor community and city-led events.	X					X		X		COPV, CORG VEDC	●●●○○
STRATEGY 7.4.5:	Continue to encourage and establish programs and community-led projects with local non-profit groups.	X					X		X		COPV, CORG	●●○○○

Table X, Implementation Action Table

ACTION LEADERS

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Goal / Objective / Strategy		Schedule				Action Type					Action Leaders	Level of Effort
		Ongoing	1-5 Years	5-10 Years	10+ Years	Capital Projects	Policies + Programs	Regulations + Standards	Partnership + Collaboration	More Targeted Planning		
GOAL 8: ZONING												
OBJECTIVE 8.1: DEVELOP A ZONING ORDINANCE THAT CONSOLIDATES THE ZONING DISTRICTS PROPOSED IN THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE AND EXPANDS THE ZONING DISTRICTS AND STANDARDS IN THE CURRENT PORT LAVACA CODE OF ORDINANCES, ENABLING A CLEAR VISION FOR LAND USE PLACEMENT.												
STRATEGY 8.1.1	Establish a zoning map that is created from the Character-Based Map and Future Land Use Map, separating the residential areas from land uses that cause more nuisance, and prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses.		X					X		X	COPV	●●●●●
STRATEGY 8.1.2	Establish a zoning framework for appropriate placement of development within the community.		X					X		X	COPV	●●●●○
STRATEGY 8.1.3	Introduce standards for manufactured homes in the zoning ordinance that specifically address this housing typology as a conditional use.		X					X		X	COPV	●●●●○
STRATEGY 8.1.4	Strengthen this zoning ordinance, ensuring that accessory uses and conditional use permits are incorporated into certain areas, and add standards for new construction.		X					X		X	COPV	●●●●○
STRATEGY 8.1.5	Add additional zoning districts that were not part of the original zoning districts in Port Lavaca, including Downtown Core (DC) and Waterfront District (WF).		X					X		X	COPV	●●●●○
OBJECTIVE 8.2: IDENTIFY AND INCORPORATE PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES THAT ADHERE TO THE INTENTIONS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND THE NEW ZONING REGULATIONS, FOCUSING AUTHORITY AND OVERSIGHT OF THE ZONING CHAPTERS.												
STRATEGY 8.2.1	Update the Processes and Procedures for Zoning in the Code of Ordinances that adhere to the Texas Local Government Code.		X					X		X	COPV	●●●●○

Table X, Proposed Active Transportation Improvements

Street	From	To	Ownership	5 Foot Sidwalk (one side)	5 Foot Sidwalks (both sides)	Bike Route (Sharrow and/or Signage)	Protected Bike Lane (1 or 2 *See Options)	Shared Use (2 way path)	Golf Cart Use	Crossing Improvements	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
3rd St.	Austin St.	Jackson St.	City of Port Lavaca		x	x			x		Install sidewalks on both sides of 3rd St. Designate 3rd St. as part of PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.		
5th St.	Austin St.	Jackson St.	City of Port Lavaca		x	x			x		Install sidewalks on both sides of 5th St. Designate 5th St. as part of PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.		
7th St.	Austin St.	Jackson St.	City of Port Lavaca		x	x			x		Install sidewalks on both sides of 7th St. Designate 7th St. as part of PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.		
Ann Street	Railroad Street	South Street	Port Lavaca			x					Designate Ann St as part of PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.		
Bauer St.	Austin St.	Oren St.	City of Port Lavaca		x						Extend existing sidewalk segments on Bauer St. so both sides of St. have sidewalks.		
S Benavides S.	Austin St.	South St.	City of Port Lavaca		x	x			x		Install sidewalks on both sides of Benavides St. Designate Benavides St. as part of PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.	Install sidewalks along San Antonio St. between Austin St. and South St. instead.	
Bonorden St.	Tilley St.	George St.	City of Port Lavaca		x						Install sidewalks on both sides of Bonorden St. to connect to sidewalk on Tilley St.		
Broadway St.	SH 35	Commerce St.	TxDOT		x		x		x	x	Broadway St. has sidewalks on both sides, but there is no buffer separating the the sidewalk from the road. Converting one vehicle trave lane into a two-way bike lane would additionally create a buffer between the sidewalk and vehicle traffic.	Widen sidewalk to a shared use path.	Expand roadway for bike lane capacity on either side of the road which can act as a buffer for sidewalk and cars on either side
Broadway St.	Bayview Drive	Calhoun Street	TxDOT							x	Proposed crosswalk improvements at the Intersection of Broadway Street, Bayview Drive, and Calhoun Street.		
Broadway St.	Calhoun Street	-	TxDOT							x	Proposed crosswalk improvements at the Intersection of Broadway Street and Commerce Street.		
Broadway St.	Half Moon Drive	-	TxDOT							x	Move Crosswalk to south side of intersection at Broadway Street and Half Moon Drive		
Broadway St.	Harbor Street	-	TxDOT							x	Crosswalk improvements at the intersection of Broadway Street and Harbor Street.		
Border St.	SH 35	George St.	City of Port Lavaca		x						Install sidewalks on both sides of Border St. to connect to existing sidewalk on George St.		
Brookhollow Dr.	Westwood Dr.	Holiday Ln.	City of Port Lavaca		x	x					Install sidewalks on both sides of Brookhollow Dr. Designate Brookhollow Dr. as part of PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.		
Deshazor St.	Alcoa Dr.	Lowey Dr.	City of Port Lavaca		x						Install sidewalks on both sides of Deshazor St. to connect to existing sidewalk on Charlotte Dr. Deshazor St. is the entry St. into the neighborhood as well as a through St. Lowey Dr., so people will need a sidewalk.		

Street	From	To	Ownership	5 Foot Sidwalk (one side)	5 Foot Sidwalks (both sides)	Bike Route (Sharrow and/or Signage)	Protected Bike Lane (1 or 2 *See Options)	Shared Use (2 way path)	Golf Cart Use	Crossing Improvements	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
George Street	San Antonio Street	-	City of Port Lavaca							x	Crosswalk improvements at intersection of George Street and San Antonio Street		
Guadalupe Street	South Street	MLK Jr Drive	City of Port Lavaca					x			Shared use path on east side of road connecting to to proposed trail on proposed Marina #3.		
Half League Rd.	Independence Dr.	Main St.	TxDOT	x				x	x		60 foot ROW leaves enough space to maintain 11 to 12 foot travel lanes for vehicles, and a 5 foot sidewalk on the west side of the road, and a 12 foot Shared Use Path.		
Half Leage Road	Tilley Street	-	TxDOT							x	Crosswalk improvements at intersection of Half League Rd and Tilley St.		
Houston St. / Commerce St.	Travis St.	Broadway St.	City of Port Lavaca			x			x		Designate Houston St. / Commerce St. as a designated PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.		
Independence Dr.	Half League Rd.	Virginia St.	City of Port Lavaca			x		x	x		Install sidewalk on north side of Independence Dr. Designate Indepenendence Dr. as a designated PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.	Widen sidewalk to a shared use path.	
Jackson St.	Alcoa Dr.	Third St.	City of Port Lavaca		x	x			x		Install sidewalk on north side of Jackson St. Designate Jackson St. as a designated PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.	Extend sidewalk along Jackson St. west to intersection of Purple Sage Dr.	
Justice Dr.	Alcoa Dr.	Seadrift St.	City of Port Lavaca		x	x			x		Install sidewalks on both sides of Justice Dr. Designate Justice Dr. as part of PL Bike Route. Add bike route signage along Justice Dr. and painted sharrows on road.		
Leon Dr.	Alcoa Dr.	Seadrift St.	City of Port Lavaca		x	x			x		Install sidewalks on both sides of Leon Dr. Designate Leon Dr. as part of PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.	Extend sidewalk along Leon Dr. to intersection of Purple Sage Dr.	
Mahan St	Ann St.	San Antonio Street	City of Port Lavaca			x					Designate as part of bike route and provide signage alerting motorists.		
Main St	Guadalupe St.	Colorado Street	City of Port Lavaca							x	Crosswalk improvements at the intersections of Main Street/ Guadalupe and Main Street/Colorado Street		
Oakglen Dr.	Virginia St.	Brook Hollow Dr.	City of Port Lavaca		x						Install sidewalks on both sides of Oakglen Dr. Designate Oakglen Dr. as part of PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.		
San Antonio St.	Tilley St.	Austin St.	City of Port Lavaca		x	x			x		Install sidewalks on both sides of San Antonio St. Designate San Antonio St. as part of PL Bike Route and install bike route signage.	Extend sidewalk to intersction of South St.	
Sandcrab Blvd.	Bus Ramp Ln.	Independence Dr.	City of Port Lavaca	x							Extend sidewalk along Sandcrab Blvd. to Independence Dr.		
Seadrift St.	Austin St.	Virginia St.	City of Port Lavaca	x							Install sidewalk on west side of Seadrift St. so both sides of the St. will have sidewalks.		

Street	From	To	Ownership	5 Foot Sidwalk (one side)	5 Foot Sidwalks (both sides)	Bike Route (Sharrow and/or Signage)	Protected Bike Lane (1 or 2 *See Options)	Shared Use (2 way path)	Golf Cart Use	Crossing Improvements	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Smith Road	SH 35	End of Smith Road	City of Port Lavaca		x	x					Install sidewalks along Smith Road.		
State Highway 35	Half League Road	Light House Beach	TxDOT		x				x	x	Install sidewalk on both sides of SH 35. Improve safety of crossings for pedestrians, bicyclists, golf carts, and traffic crossing SH 35.		
State Highway 35	Smith Road	-	TxDOT							x	Crosswalk improvements at intersection of SH 35 and Smith Road		
State Highway 35	Travis Street	-	TxDOT							x	Crosswalk improvements at intersection of SH 35 and Travis Street.		
State Highway 35	Village Road	-	TxDOT							x	Crosswalk improvements at intersection of SH 35 and Village Road.		
State Highway 35	Virginia Street	-	TxDOT							x	Crosswalk improvements at intersection of SH 35 and Virginia Street.		
Sunnydale Dr.	Brookhollow Dr.	into Ridge Crest Dr.	City of Port Lavaca		x	x					Install sidewalks on both sides of Sunnydale Dr. into Redgecrest Dr. so that it lines up with Candlight Ln. and Lazy Ln. access points to Village Road.	Additional route, turn onto Candle Light Ln. from Sunnydale to intersect with Travis St. and complete sidewalks.	
Village Rd.	SH 35	End of Village Road	City of Port Lavaca		x						Complete sidewalks on either side of Village Rd.		
Virginia St.	Austin St. (east side)	Austin St. (west side)	TxDOT		x		x		x		Virginia St. has sidewalks on both sides, but there is no buffer separating the the sidewalk from the road. Converting one vehicle trave lane into a two-way bike lane would additionally create a buffer between the sidewalk and vehicle traffic.	Widen sidewalk to a shared use path.	Expand roadway for bike lane capacity on either side of the road which can act as a buffer for sidewalk and cars on either side
Virginia St.	East Pine St.	Austin St.	TxDOT		x				x		Upgrade sidewalk on either side of Virginia St. Paint sharrows on right most lanes for bike use. Possible golf cart route.	Upgrade sidewalks on either side of road. Redirect bike traffic at end of shareduse path to go on Colorado St. or Ann St. so that bikes can travel on a lower traffic road.	
Virginia St.	East Pine St.	Oakglen Dr.	TxDOT					x	x		Install shared use path along Virginia Street.		
Virginia St.	George St.	-	TxDOT							x	Crosswalk improvements at intersection of Virginia Street and George Street.		
Virginia St.	Main St.	-	TxDOT							x	Crosswalk improvements at the intersection of Virginia Street and Main Street		
Virginia St.	Tilley St.	-	TxDOT							x	Crosswalk improvements at intersection of Virginia Street and Tilley Street		

SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

The effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan depends on strong leadership, a shared understanding of its goals, and consistent applications across City operations. Throughout the planning process, representatives from government, business, neighborhoods, civic organizations, and other sectors worked together to shape a collective vision. Continued dedication from current and future leaders is essential to advancing and adapting the Plan's policies as new challenges and opportunities arise.

Although the Comprehensive Plan operates strategically, it is a multifaceted document reflecting the interconnected nature of policy decisions. Educating those responsible for its implementation is a crucial first step after adoption. City Council members, Planning Commissioners, and department leaders must develop a unified understanding of the Plan's priorities, responsibilities, and interpretations to ensure coordinated and effective action.

A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM & COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INCLUDES...

Developing a clear explanation of the roles and responsibilities of the City Council, Planning Commission, advisory bodies, and staff	Implementation tasking and priority setting, leading to one-year, two-year, and five-year action agendas, with benchmarking and success tracking	Continual public engagement and reassessment of key community priorities	Timing, funding, and coordinating multiple infrastructure improvements and initiatives at one time / within one project	Conducting bi-annual joint workshops with City leaders and Departments to assess upcoming projects, priorities, and actions
Ensuring continued project integration, revision, and inclusions within the City's Capital Improvement Program	Coordinating and developing agreements and projects with other governmental entities, including inter-City and City/ County partnerships	Developing and revising City codes, regulations, restrictions, and incentives, to immediately align with the Plans proposed future built-form, land uses, and projects	Continued announcements and public communications involving accomplishments and future project schedules	Developing key department and city vision statements and goals, and developing successful tracking metrics

ONGOING PLAN OVERSIGHT AND UPDATE PROCESS

To ensure the Comprehensive Plan remains current and effective, the Planning Commission, working alongside City staff, should be conduct reviews of the Comprehensive Plans progress, priorities, and implementation to date. Continual, annual, bi-annual, and five-year reviews should be conducted by City staff, as described below:

1. Minor Revisions – These can be introduced anytime and typically involve limited updates, such as adjustments to the Future Land Use Map or incorporation of recent studies. They may be addressed immediately or during the annual review cycle.

2. Annual Review – Every year the City Manager and key City department heads, and the Planning Commission should develop a short review document and host a strategic outlook meeting. This annual meeting should be the primary driver of the Plan's implementation and help focus the departments goals and help plan for short-term upcoming projects. This is also the time to review the years capitol projects schedules and ensure smooth operations and management of construction.

3. Two-Year Review – Based on the annual report and input from staff and the Planning Commission, the City will determine whether amendments are warranted and propose the amendments on the two-year cycle. This is also the time to begin planning for upcoming projects that are partially through the planning or design process and set to begin between the next year and three years. In addition, the two-year review should include a formal presentation by the City Manager to City Council on the implementation tracking, prior and future recommendation priorities, and the successes and challenges of Plan implementation.

4. Five-Year Comprehensive Updates – Conducted every five years, a review should be completed to fully reassess the Plan's vision, goals, and assumptions. This process may include removing outdated content, introducing new strategies, or refining existing policies. In addition, this review should incorporate new capital projects recommended in the Plan and set mid-term five-year priorities for City staff, Departments, and Council.

Comprehensive Plan Review Checklist

Annual Review

- ☐ Have I provided a yearly Plan update to Council and City commissions on Plan progress?
- ☐ Have the City Manager and Major met to prioritize and discuss upcoming Plan actions?
- ☐ Has there been a re-review of proposed maps and infastructure alignments, ensuring compliance and a continuation from the previous year?
- ☐ What new funding cycles and grants have been developed or updated for the upcoming year?
- ☐ Based on community feedback and agenda minutes, are there any Plan recommendations that should now be a prorotiy for the next year?
- ☐ Has a Joint-Workshop been conducted with Department heads and key City staff to help strategize and prioritize actions for the next year?

2-Year Review

- ☐ Has a Comprehensive Plan status update presentation been given to City Council?
- ☐ Have all projects set to be conduted within the next two years been compared/anasessed against all proposed Maps and relevant frameworks?
- ☐ Have we reviewed what Plan recommendations have been completed, are on-going, and are set to be prioized for the next two years?

5-Year Review

- ☐ Have we incorporated new recommendations within the updated Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)?
- ☐ Have we re-reviewed the Zoning Ordinance, Code of Ordinances, policies, and regulations, to "fix" or address issues and needs that have arisen?
- ☐ Is there a need to ammend (edit/ alter) the Plan's proposed Land Use Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, Infastructure Plan, and other guiding maps?

Roles and Responsibilities of The Plan Updates and Review

As the community's elected officials, the City Council should assume the lead role in implementing the Plan. Its primary responsibilities include establishing priorities, setting timeframes for initiating and completing actions, and determining the budget available for implementation efforts. Working alongside the City Manager, Council members must also help ensure effective coordination among the various groups responsible for carrying out the Plan's strategies.

City Council

The City Council will take the lead in the following areas:

- Adopting the Plan and ratifying Plan amendments, after recommendation by the Planning Commission
- Acting as the "champion" of the Plan
- Setting overall implementation priorities and timelines for initiating and completing action strategies
- Reviewing and approving funding commitments necessary to support implementation
- Adopting new or amended land development regulations to implement the Plan
- Approving intergovernmental and development agreements that will advance implementation of the plan after recommendation by the Planning Board.
- Providing final approval of projects and associated costs during the budget process, ensuring consistency with the Plan
- Offering policy direction to the Planning Board and City staff

Planning Board

The Planning Board will take the lead in the following general areas:

- Periodically gathering public input to keep the Plan up to date, using a variety of community outreach and citizen and stakeholder involvement methods.
- Ensuring that recommendations forwarded to the City Council are reflective of the plan goals, priorities, and action strategies.
- After holding one or more public hearings to discuss new or evolving community issues and needs, adopting plan updates and amendments making recommendations to the City Council regarding ratifying Planning Board recommendations and adoptions.
- Assisting in preparing bi-annual reports to the City Council summarizing progress on Plan implementation

City Staff

City Staff will take the lead in the following general areas:

- Managing day-to-day implementation of the Plan, including coordination through an interdepartmental Plan Implementation Committee.
- Supporting and carrying out capital improvement planning efforts.
- Managing the drafting of new or amended land development regulations.
- Conducting studies and developing additional plans.
- Reviewing applications for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan as required by the City's land development regulations.
- Negotiating the specifics of intergovernmental and development agreements.
- Administering collaborative programs and ensuring open channels of communication with various private, public, and non-profit implementation partners.
- Maintaining an inventory of potential plan amendments, as suggested by City staff and others, for consideration during annual and periodic plan review and update processes.

Adaptive Management

Most used by natural resource managers, adaptive management is an iterative process of improving management practices and decision making by learning from the outcome of previous practices and decisions. Applied to a policy instrument like a comprehensive plan, this basic concept can be used to periodically recalibrate an implementation program by assessing the results of past actions and aligning future actions with new knowledge of the trends what will shape the community's future.

Godschalk and Anderson, 2012 Sustaining Places: The Role of the Comprehensive Plan Planning Advisory Service Report No. 567

PERFORMANCE METRICS

Performance metrics track and assess urban development activities' efficiency, effectiveness, and progress, providing insights into how well goals and objectives are being met. Performance metrics for Comprehensive Plan Implementation should be included during reporting when possible. These are some samples that can be used:

- Development Activity: Acres were developed, housing units were built, and commercial/industrial space was added per the plan
- Infrastructure Expansion: Increases in utility capacity (e.g., water, power) and related capital investments
- Parks & Trails: New or improved open space acres, trail mileage, and sidewalks mileage
- Neighborhood Quality: Code enforcement, home upgrades, and historic preservation efforts
- Mobility Improvements: Miles of new bike lanes and sidewalks supporting alternative transportation
- Redevelopment Impact: Property value growth, tax revenue increases, and new mixed-use spaces
- Sustainability Gains: Cost savings from energy and water efficiency in City facilities
- Community Engagement: Number of residents involved in outreach and education events
- Level of Replacement: Amout of pipelines and utility lines replaced with modern up-to-date facilities

Ongoing Community Outreach and Engagement

All review processes and updates related to this Comprehensive Plan should emphasize and incorporate ongoing public input and engagement. During the course of plan development, the City sponsored multiple venues and opportunities to involve it citizens and solicit input, including a community survey and open house, and multiple listening sessions with special interest groups. The City should, however, strive to identify, target, and include members of the community who were not fully represented or involved during the Plan development process, including area youth, disenfranchised at-risk populations, minority neighborhoods, single parents, etc.

Proposal Review Checklist

To help ensure continual progress towards the Comprehensive Plans goals, and ensure continued future alignment/ continuity of the Plan's strategies, below is a check-list of high-level considerations and questions to ask when a new development or project is proposed.

- ☐ Does the proposal conflict or mis-align with the Plan's priority growth zones (Downtown, Waterfront, and SH-6)?
- ☐ Does the proposal conflict or mis-align with the Land Use Plan, Thoroughfare Plan, Utility Priorities, Active Transportation Plan, or preservation zones?
- ☐ Does the proposal fully algin with the Zoning code, Code or Ordinances, Engineering Stanards, Fire Code, required Analysis, and other regulations?
- ☐ Does the proposal meet the desired quality, character, and standards the City wants?
- ☐ Are there oportunities for shared agreements, shared-infastrucure costs, or can the propsal help meet other Plan goals?
- ☐ Does the proposal strain the City long-term, with EMS services, utility services, infastrucure replacement, and maintence?
- ☐ Does the proposal include innovative green-infastrucure solutions, flood risistance techniues, and energy efficient utilities?
- ☐ Are there oportunities to compromise or add variances to the proposal to help create a "win-win" for the city and developer?
- ☐ Has the public, City commissions, and Council received proper notice and ability to comment, a statement of impact, and recieved project schedules or timelines?
- ☐ Has this proposal recived enough scrutiny due to the visual and community-value placed on the proposed location (downtown, gateways, major intersections, the waterfront)?

DECISION MAKING FACTORS + MANAGING PROJECTS

A fundamental aspect of implementation is understanding how a capital project progresses from a general concept in the Comprehensive Plan to a built, tangible improvement on the ground. Budgeting, capital improvement planning, and programming become integral parts of the City's annual budgeting cycle. This process often begins with City staff identifying potential project needs and priorities based on their knowledge of community infrastructure, facilities, and operations, as well as external requirements and emerging opportunities. At the same time, elected officials and their constituents may identify priorities of their own, often from a less technical but equally important perspective.

The range of activities to incorporate into a CIP extends far beyond street, drainage, and utility infrastructure projects. Activities also include parks and trails, City buildings, land and right-of-way or easement acquisition, major vehicle and equipment purchases, soft costs such as planning and design studies that support major initiatives, and aesthetic or tourism-related improvements such as community gateway features, corridor streetscape enhancements, and wayfinding signage. With this range of potential project types in mind, the next step is to understand how these efforts are organized and advanced through a structured project development process.

Project Breakdown and Phasing

The next step in managing a complex capital project is to break it into smaller, more manageable parts, as shown in the Project Lifecycle. This approach clarifies the interim steps and the sequence of activities that must occur on the path toward the final outcome. A major infrastructure project, for example, may involve a series of components, some of which must be completed before others can begin:

- Arranging funding through City sources such as the general fund or capital budget, grant opportunities, cost-sharing with public or private partners, or a combination of these
- Hiring new staff or reassigning existing personnel to provide technical expertise or project oversight
- Securing consultant support, including consultant selection when needed before design work begins
- Conducting environmental assessments and preparing required documentation
- Completing design activities, including preliminary schematics and detailed engineering design
- Managing the bid and award process prior to construction
- Acquiring property, rights-of-way, or easements
- Obtaining necessary permits from relevant agencies
- Executing project bidding, award, and contracting
- Finalizing intergovernmental or public-private agreements needed to finance or carry out the project

Considering the array of projects that might be included in a CIP, this "chunking" of bigger projects is a way to move multiple initiatives forward simultaneously as the timing and cost of interim steps will vary across projects. Another essential reason for breaking down a complex project into its component parts is to separate out aspects that might be eligible for grant funding (e.g., environmental remediation) versus elements that in all likelihood will be the full responsibility of the City to finance, such as operational costs and project maintenance. Steps that require greater lead time will also stand out, such as necessary state or federal permitting. Once the major components and sequence of work are understood, the City can begin estimating the full range of costs associated with each phase of the project.

Project Prioritization

As with any priority-setting process, a range of criteria can be applied when determining which capital projects should advance first. For municipal governments, the most fundamental consideration is the protection of public health, safety, and welfare. Some projects simply cannot be deferred because they are mandated by state or federal regulations or are required as a condition of a permit, such as water and wastewater system compliance with water quality standards. Once a set of candidate projects has been identified, several factors may justify placing certain projects ahead of others, including:

- Projects that are relatively easy and quick to accomplish. Advancing these early can build momentum, demonstrate capacity, and provide visible early wins.
- Projects that offer strong cost-benefit value may rise to the top. This criterion is often favored by City Administrators.
- Projects that produce visible, meaningful outcomes can be especially appealing, as they demonstrate the effective use of public funds. Elected officials often prioritize projects that can show results within a shorter timeframe.

These are incremental steps toward a larger, long-term objective. While individual phases may not yield immediate results, they are essential to achieving a significant community benefit over time

Some projects have an obvious funding source, such as a dedicated enterprise fund, and can be implemented sooner than later. In some cases, a project that might not otherwise rank highly as a community priority may quickly move to the top of the list when a new grant opportunity comes along at the regional, state or federal level.

Port Lavaca's Comprehensive Plan, along with specialized plans and studies from Calhoun County and regional partners, identifies a wide range of potential projects for the City to consider. These sources help distinguish true community needs from desirable but less urgent wants, making prioritization criteria especially important. Because taxpayer resources are involved, project selection must balance technical analysis with considerations of equity and geographic fairness so that improvements benefit all parts of the community. Ongoing engagement from City leadership, community groups, and residents remains essential to advancing and updating the Plan's goals, strategies, and actions over time.

Questions to Ask When Decision-making:

Does this project or action align with the goals and recommendations of the Comprehsnive Plan?

Does this project or action prevent the development of or inhibit the implemetation of other commuity goals or projects?

Does this project or action align with the cities prefered economic, environmental, and aestetic vision?

What internal staff and time is needed to ensure implementation and prefered outcomes (meetings, plan review, consultants, etc)?

Are there outside entities, non-profits, or advisory groups I need to incldue or work with?

Does the City have the advinistative and infastrucural capacity now and in the future to develop the initiative (maintence, continued becnhmarking)?

Will the funding dedicated to implement the project see a direct social or environmental return (return on investment)?

Is this the most cost effective way to implement, manage, or go outabout this inititive?

Who else needs to but-in on the plan proposal, including advisory committees, community groups, the public, Calhoun County, etc.?

Are there other funding mechanisms to be used, such as grants, shared construction or maintence -agreements, public-private partnerships, ect.?

What should the intended outcomes be in five-years? Do my actions today directly help create that prefered outcome?

What is the general level of communtiy support and will to take on such a project or initiative?

What are the negetive consequences if this project is not implemenetd or implemented incorrectly?

Is this action a short-term reactionary fix or does it move the city towards a long-term sustainable sultion?

What "road-blocks" or challenges might arise during this process (funding, engagement, regulations, review, etc)?

