

# CITY OF ZACHARY

## 2025 COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

### *Community and Progress*



**March 2026**

**FINAL DRAFT**





## **Acknowledgements**

**Planning Commission List**

**City Council List**

**City Staff List**

**Other Acknowledgements**



**Planning Commission Official Resolution**

**Placeholder**



**City Council Official Resolution**

**Placeholder**



## **Letter From the Mayor**

**Placeholder**



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## Chapter 1: Welcome and Introduction



Source: Villavaso and Associates

### Welcome to the 2025 Zachary Comprehensive Master Plan Update 2025!

Zachary is a thriving mid-size city, located a few miles east of the Mississippi River, in northwest East Baton Rouge Parish. Over the past 50 years, Zachary has grown from a small rural town to a medium-sized city and regional commerce center with a well-regarded school system, notable national retail outlets, parks and sports facilities, and established community leadership. Zachary is no longer solely a bedroom community where residents commute to Baton Rouge for work, shopping, and recreation. Today, Zachary is a vibrant City, with thriving housing prices, and household incomes and educational attainment rates among the highest in the state. Zachary consistently ranks as one of the best places to live in the State of Louisiana and the entire southeastern United States. The 2025 Zachary Comprehensive Master Plan highlights the places, institutions, accomplishments, and people that contribute to the success and livability of Zachary.

Over the past fifteen years, Zachary experienced significant population growth. Zachary's population in the 1970 census was 4,964 residents, in the 2020 census the population was 19,316 residents. While the stunning growth and development in Zachary over the past few decades created many positives for Zachary such as improved infrastructure and well-funded schools, there are concerns of growth occurring too quickly and without guardrails that protect the character of the community. This demographic shift necessitates a re-evaluation of infrastructure, land use, housing, transportation, and public services to accommodate and manage the growing population, and residents outside of Zachary who utilize city services and amenities.

Since 2010, the technological advancements and shifts in the global economy have created an evolving economic landscape in Zachary with opportunities and challenges. To remain

competitive and resilient the city of Zachary requires a modern plan built on proven strategies and best practices of thriving communities.

The small-town character and legacy establishments in Zachary define the experience of long-time residents and foster a sense of continuity as these community members have raised families, built careers, and transitioned into later stages of life in the City. Some long-time residents view the recent growth as a threat to this small-town community character. Conversely, the attraction of a strong school system, growing and affordable housing supply, and proximity to the employment centers and amenities in Baton Rouge increased the number of residents new to Zachary. This group of community members is more likely to advocate for expanded commercial development, additional retail and service options, and increased recreational open space and parks within Zachary. While many are willing to travel to Baton Rouge, Central, Baker, or other parts of the region for various activities, there is strong support in enhancing local infrastructure to accommodate the evolving needs of the community.

A conversation around growth in Zachary should also include discussions on smart growth strategies, sustainability, and resilience, balanced with the need to provide quality infrastructure and support sustainable development that does not negatively impact future residents.

The 2010 Zachary Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the City of Zachary, states the following purpose for a master plan:

*Through this master plan, Zachary may determine how best to accommodate and manage its projected growth, as well as any redevelopment of its older neighborhoods or commercial and industrial areas. Like most, this master plan is aimed at ensuring that ongoing development and redevelopment will proceed in an orderly, well-planned manner so that public facilities and services may keep pace and residents' quality of life will be preserved. Significantly, by clarifying and stating the City's intentions regarding the area's physical development and infrastructure investment, this plan also creates an increased level of certainty for residents, landowners, developers, and investors. – Zachary Comprehensive Plan 2010*

The city of Zachary stands at a crossroads and the necessity of planning for the future is clear. As a community, the City of Zachary understands the need to update the 2010 Zachary Comprehensive Plan and develop a new plan that is a reflection of the community's vision and aspirations.

## What is a Master/Comprehensive Plan and what is the role of the Plan?

“Comprehensive Plan” and “Master Plan” are often used interchangeably. While the official title of the comprehensive plan update is the *City of Zachary Comprehensive Master Plan Update 2025: Community and Progress* the plan is referenced as the *Zachary 2025 Plan* in the document. The 2010 comprehensive plan and the current adopted plan is referred to as the *Zachary Comprehensive Plan*.

A Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint for the future. It is a long range, comprehensive document intended to guide the growth and development of a community/region over a period of time; often five, ten or even twenty 20 years into the future. A Comprehensive Plan establishes a vision and goals for a community, including history, context, analysis, and recommendations. The plan generally has a broad focus and speaks to a community’s population, housing stock, economy, transportation, community facilities, public infrastructure and land use.

In addition, Louisiana State Law requires communities to develop and adopt a master plan, including guidelines and clear legal authority for the plan. All plans, including this plan, should adhere strictly to the laws of the State of Louisiana defining the purpose, intent, content and use of a plan.

## What is a Master/Comprehensive Plan?



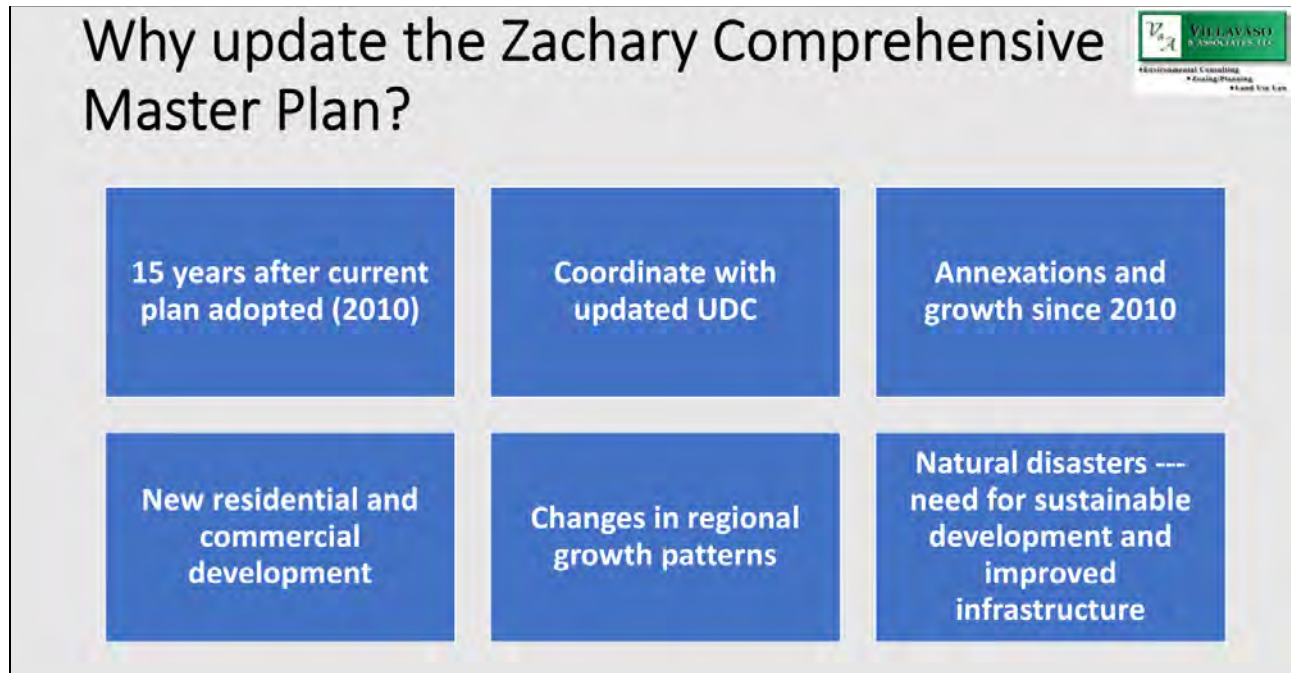
A MASTER PLAN is a document designed to help communities define a vision of what they want to look like in the future and to guide communities in implementing policies, laws, codes, new infrastructure and other strategic investments to implement the vision of the plan (LRS 33:106).

Source: Villavaso and Associates

## Why Update the Plan Now?

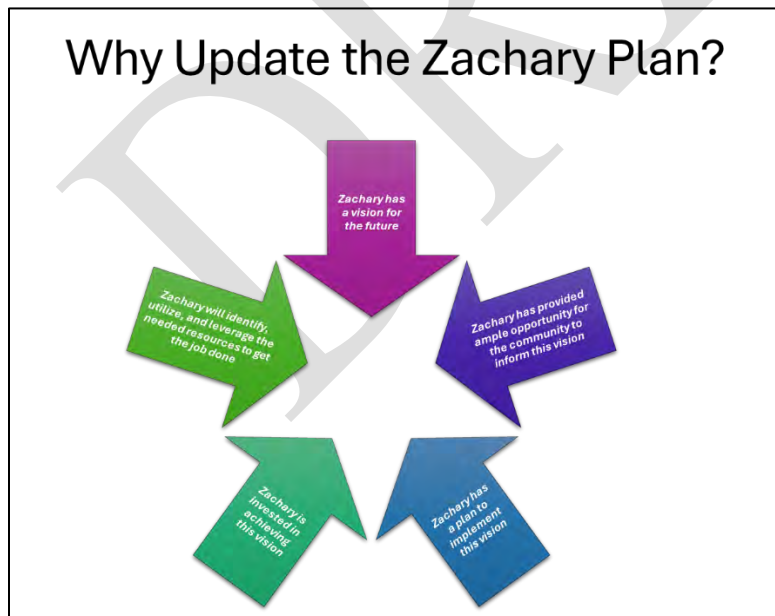
Comprehensive plan updates are necessary to ensure the goals and strategies of the plan align with the current and future needs of the city’s residents and environment. The following chart demonstrates why 2025 is the right time for a comprehensive plan update. An updated

comprehensive plan provides a framework for sustainable development, ensuring that new growth enhances the quality of life for all citizens.



Source: Villavaso and Associates

The City of Zachary will continue to thrive when citizens, community stakeholders, City staff, and elected officials use the plan to guide and support development. The comprehensive plan itself is a message to the community.



Source: Villavaso and Associates

## **2010 Zachary Comprehensive Plan Context and Connection to Plan Update**

The Zachary Planning Commission adopted the current Zachary Comprehensive Plan on April 5, 2010. This plan has served the City over the past fifteen and helped position the City to thrive in future years. The adoption of the 2010 plan followed the devastation of Hurricane Katrina (and Hurricanes Rita, Gustav and Ike). At that time, the federal and state governments offered significant resources to communities for local planning and development code updates. Zachary utilized these resources to develop the 2010 plan and the 2010 adopted version of the Zachary Unified Development Code.

The 2010 Zachary Comprehensive Plan contains key information and data integral to the planning process that informs the Zachary 2025 Plan. This current planning process includes an update of information, data, and community context from the 2010 plan. The Zachary 2025 Plan references the goals and themes of the 2010 Plan, celebrates achieved goals, and acknowledges the still in progress and uncompleted goals. Following the adoption of the Zachary 2025 Plan, the 2010 Plan will remain a valuable document and a historic reference to successful planning and community outreach in Zachary.

## **What to Expect in the Zachary 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan**

The Zachary 2025 Plan presents a vision and goals for the City of Zachary and serves as a roadmap to equip the city with the tools and strategies needed to navigate community changes and to seize new opportunities. As the community continues to change, the Zachary 2025 Plan will provide clarity and direction for decision-makers, ensuring that Zachary remains adaptable and proactive in the face of change.

### 2025 ZACHARY COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

In 2010, The City of Zachary adopted its current Master Plan. While this plan has served the City well, Zachary has continued to grow and evolve since 2010. In 2023, Zachary started the process of creating a new plan that will reflect the evolving needs and aspirations of residents and businesses, promote enhancing the quality of life through sustainable infrastructure and development and guide the future of the City! The result of this planning process is the 2025 Zachary Comprehensive Master Plan!

Below are a few of the key takeaways from the planning process that are addressed in the plan.

#### Key Takeaways

- Infrastructure should support current and future development
- More commercial options for residents...stay in Zachary for shopping and play
- Expansion of city limits for efficient public services
- Concerns about growth in Parish surrounding City
- Focus on drainage improvements
- More connectivity via sidewalks and trails
- Development and growth occurs in a logical and orderly manner



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### 2025 ZACHARY COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

#### Major Plan Components

##### **Current Conditions**

Presents Zachary's population and demographic data and information illustrating how the City is changing and where the City is heading in the future.

##### **Local and Regional Growth**

Summarizes the area's development patterns and challenges highlighting governance changes, evolving development patterns, shifting municipal boundaries, and new infrastructure impacting Zachary's future.

##### **Community Outreach and Visioning**

Presents findings from one-on-one meetings, focus groups, and planning workshops throughout the comprehensive planning process and defines the community planning vision.

##### **Land Use and Development**

Profiles current development patterns and trends affecting land use and presents a framework for future land uses development in the City.

##### **Downtown, Commercial Corridors, and Mixed-Use Developments**

Illustrates the importance of Zachary's downtown area and commercial corridors and shares strategies to enhance development in these areas.

##### **Economic Development**

Outlines how to leverage the economic strengths of Zachary and how economic growth is essential for a thriving community.

##### **Transportation and Mobility**

Assesses the current transportation network in the City, the status of current and future road and active transportation projects, and challenges and opportunities surrounding regional connectivity for all users.

##### **Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Resilience**

Illustrates Zachary's natural environment, flood-preparedness strategies, recreational opportunities, and key community resources with a focus on resilience and sustainability.

##### **Livability and Community**

Discusses how Zachary can prioritize community character, public health, housing opportunities, and public services to foster a healthy, safe, and thriving city.

##### **Implementation**

Sets out actions and procedures necessary to achieve goals outlined in each component/chapter of the plan with timelines, responsible agencies, and general expectations.

*Thank you for participating in the Zachary Comprehensive Master Plan Update Process!  
 Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.*

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The Zachary 2025 Plan includes:

1. ***A community profile with demographic information and data from various sources including the 2020 United States Census, the 2023 and 2024 American Community Survey (ACS), and other various data sources – Data and community information paints a picture of the changes in Zachary between 2010 and 2025 and shares projections and estimates for future years.***
2. ***Presentation of community engagement and plan vision statement – Shares activity and engagement opportunities where residents, businesses, and stakeholders shared their community values, questions and concerns, and identified key priorities for the future of Zachary.***
3. ***Chapters presenting key areas of the plan*** – Chapters include: Future Land Use and Development, Downtown Zachary and Commercial Corridors, Economic Development, Transportation and Mobility, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Resilience, and Livability and Community.
4. ***List of strategic recommendations and an implementation matrix with action items and timelines*** – These recommendations are built on best practices supporting the goals of the plan elements surrounding land use, economic development, housing, and quality of life.



## Zachary 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan MARCH 2026 FINAL DRAFT

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Since 2010, Zachary has faced new challenges and opportunities, from natural disasters to changes in state and federal policies. The City of Zachary's decision to update its 15-year-old Comprehensive Plan is a crucial step towards a prosperous, sustainable, and resilient future. By addressing current challenges and leveraging new opportunities, the updated plan will serve as a vital roadmap guiding the city's growth and development for years to come.

As a community that values progress, resilience and sustainability, it is essential to undertake a planning process to discuss the future; and to develop a plan that highlights the current and future needs of the city's residents and environment. Zachary is a community ready to embrace [the proven planning practices of smart growth and sustainable infrastructure management to support growth and a vibrant future.](#)

DRAFT

## Chapter 2: Community Profile

### History

Originating from a community of settlers in the late 18th and 19th century, the Town of Zachary was originally founded in 1884 when the Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas Railroad built and operated a train station on the land they had purchased from local farmer Darel Zachary. Shortly after, Zachary's first post office opened its doors in 1885, the Town elected Thomas Edward McHugh as its first mayor, and on August 2, 1889, the City of Zachary was incorporated. In 1903, the city experienced a massive fire, destroying many of the City's buildings. The fire devastated the city and was supposedly caused by a greengrocer trying to flame-ripen his bananas. The "historic village" at the center of the city is composed of buildings which either survived the fire, or were built shortly after it, the oldest (excluding the depot) being the 1898 Allison House. The first census was carried out in 1914 and reported just 419 residents. In 1966 Zachary became the first city in Louisiana since the Reconstruction Era to elect a Republican as mayor, Jack Louis Breaux.

Today, numerous historic buildings remain in Zachary, many located in the Zachary Historic Village/downtown area including a community museum, dwellings, a carriage house, a pavilion, a Railroad Depot and the Old Town Hall with an adjacent firehouse.

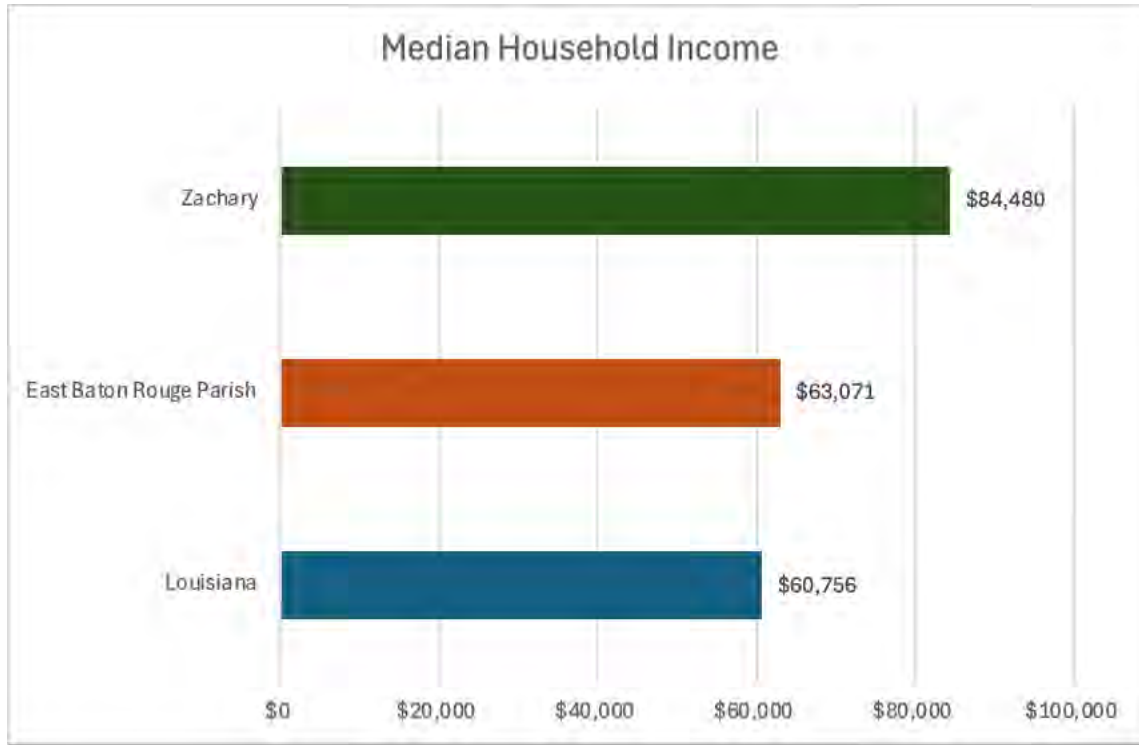
**Table 1: Demographic Profile**

RACE OR ETHNICITY	Estimate	Percent
Total population	19,637	100.00%
White	9,486	48.31%
Black or African American	9,223	46.97%
American Indian and Alaska Native	4	0.02%
Asian	467	2.38%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
Other Race	17	0.09%
Two or More Races	440	2.24%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	20	1.06%

**Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2023: Table DP05**

According to the 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, white residents make up an estimated 48.31% of the town's population, while Black residents make up the largest minority at an estimated 46.97%. Hispanic residents (of any race) make up 1.06% of the Town. The Parish is slightly more diverse, with larger Black (+9.6%) and Hispanic (+5.3%) populations.

**Table 2: Household Income**



**Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2024: Table DP03**

According to the 2024 ACS 5-year estimates, the City of Zachary has a median household income of \$84,480. This is significantly higher than the State of Louisiana (\$60,756) and East Baton Rouge Parish (\$63,071) as a whole.

**Table 3: Employment by Industry**

Civilian employed population 16 years and over	Estimate	Percent
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	28	0.3%
Construction	650	6.4%
Manufacturing	1,794	17.6%
Wholesale trade	135	1.3%
Retail trade	815	8%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	696	6.8%
Information	46	0.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	652	6.4%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	710	7%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	2,423	23.8%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	685	6.7%
Other services, except public administration	400	3.9%
Public administration	1,153	11.3%

**Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2023: Table DP03**

According to the 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, the three largest sectors of industry employing Zachary residents are educational services/ health care and social assistance (23.8%), manufacturing (17.6%), and public administration (11.3%). Following these, retail trade (8%), transportation and warehousing/ utilities (6.8%), and arts/ entertainment/ recreation/ accommodations and food services (6.7%) make up the new three largest sectors, followed closely by construction (6.4%) and finance and insurance/ real estate and rental and leasing (6.4%).



## **Zoning**

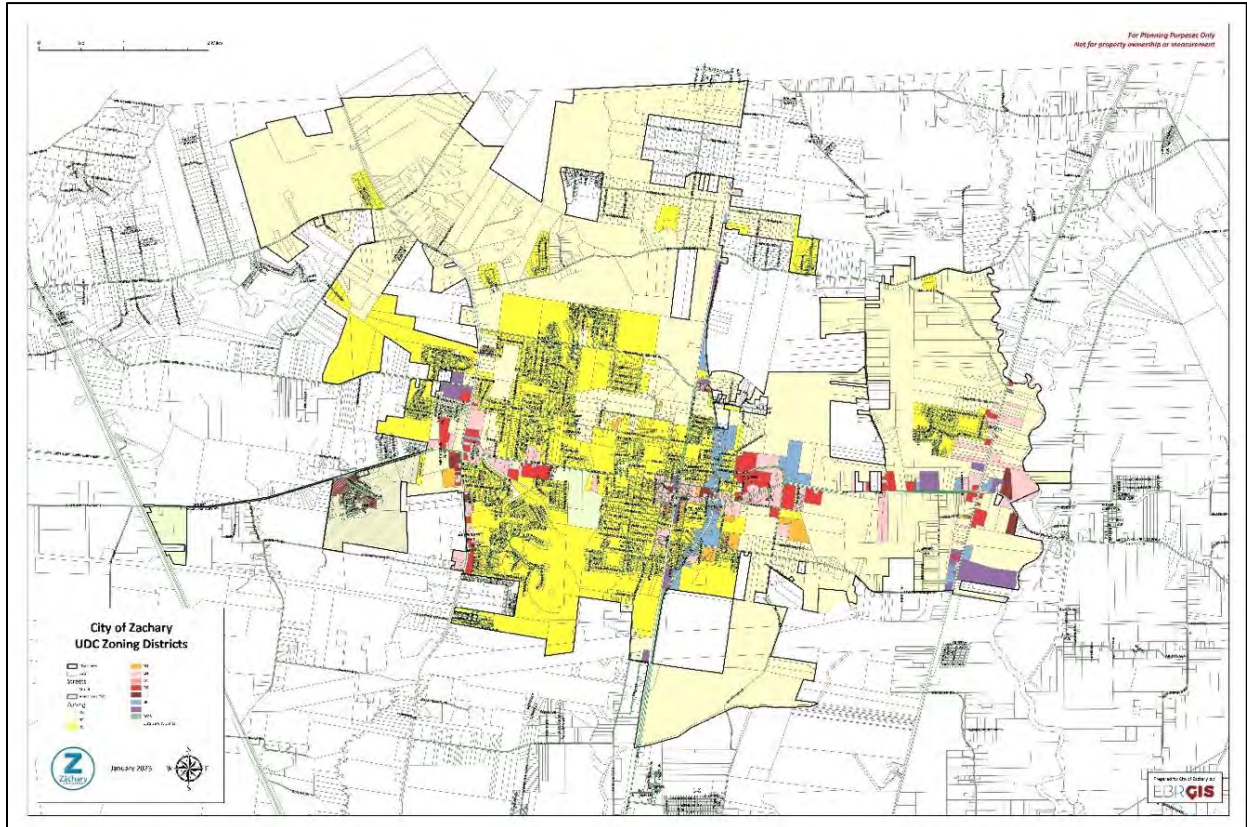
In 2010, the City of Zachary adopted a new Unified Development Code (UDC) which included zoning and subdivision standards. This development code replaced a zoning ordinance that was largely based on the existing East Baton Rouge Parish zoning ordinance and contained similar districts to that of the parish. The 2010 UDC was a performance-based zoning code.

Performance-based zoning codes generally have characteristics such as:

- Rather than a focus on specific uses, a focus on the performance of a parcel and how it impacts adjacent properties
- Evaluation of projects on a project-by-project basis that highlights existing conditions in the area and estimates the impacts of development on the community,
- Allows for amendments to the zoning ordinance and development approvals by adding performance standards based on permissible impacts rather than permissible uses (Planner's Dictionary, American Planning Association, 2017).

From 2011-2017, the Zachary City Council made numerous amendments to the 2010 UDC, and in 2019 Zachary began the process of a complete update of the UDC. Over 4 years from 2019-2022, the City Council approved 4 groups of updates to the 2010 UDC resulting in an almost complete rewrite of the text. Below is the City of Zachary Zoning Map.

**Map 1: Zachary UDC Zoning Districts 2025**



**Source: East Baton Rouge Parish GIS, City of Zachary Planning Department**



The City of Zachary has 11 zoning districts. The names and size of each district are listed in the table below:

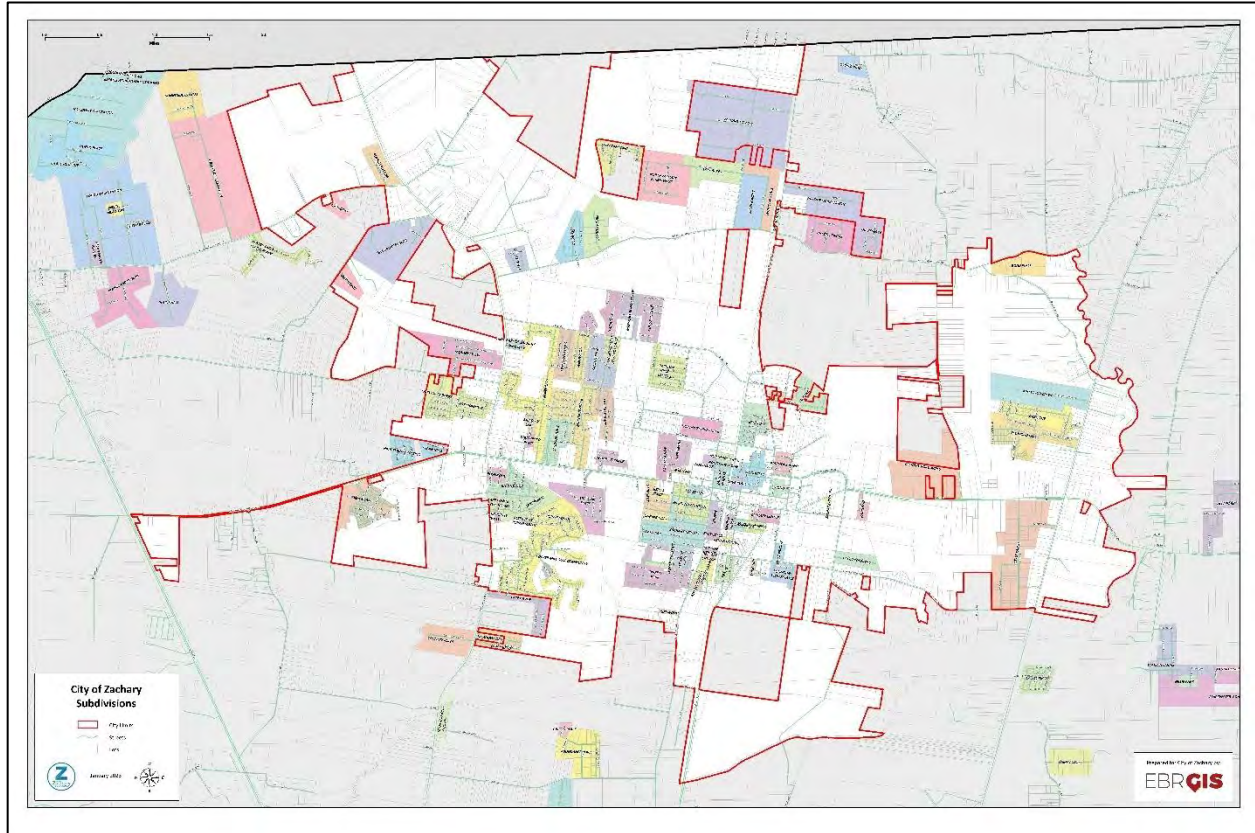
**Table 4: 2024 Zachary Lots and Total Acreage by Zoning District**

<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Lot Count</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>
<b>BP</b>	168	221.37
<b>CG</b>	138	245.1
<b>CN</b>	499	485.49
<b>I</b>	60	313.11
<b>PUD</b>	2	36.95
<b>R</b>	4	38.35
<b>RE</b>	1547	9,861.61
<b>RR</b>	5	198.12
<b>RS</b>	6,463	4,265.76
<b>RU</b>	184	106.42
<b>UC</b>	143	100.27
<b>Total Lots</b>	9,213	15,872.55

Source: East Baton Rouge Parish GIS, Villavaso and Associates

## Neighborhoods and Housing

Map 2: City of Zachary Subdivisions 2024

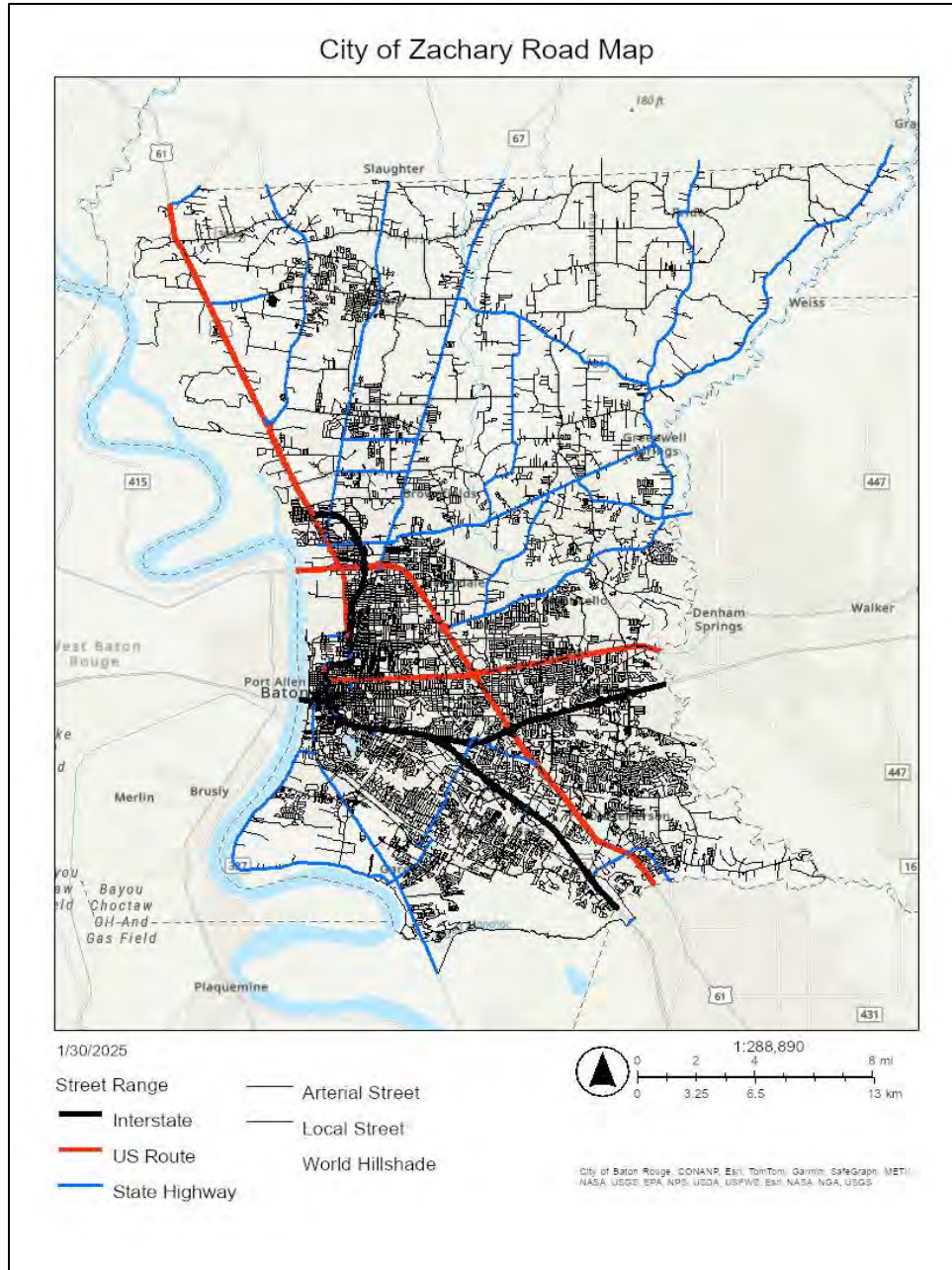


Source: East Baton Rouge Parish GIS, City of Zachary Planning Department

The historic center of development in Zachary was located along Main Street near the railroad tracks. As Zachary has grown from a small rural community to a City, Zachary has expanded in all directions. The City of Zachary Subdivision Maps shows the numerous residential subdivisions in Zachary. These subdivisions are largely composed of single-family detached residential housing, although some of these developments include a mix of housing types and some commercial development. Chapter 4 of this plan, **Zachary Growth and Regional Development** shares additional detail and context on the growth of Zachary.

## Current Infrastructure

**Map 3: City of Zachary Road Map 2025**

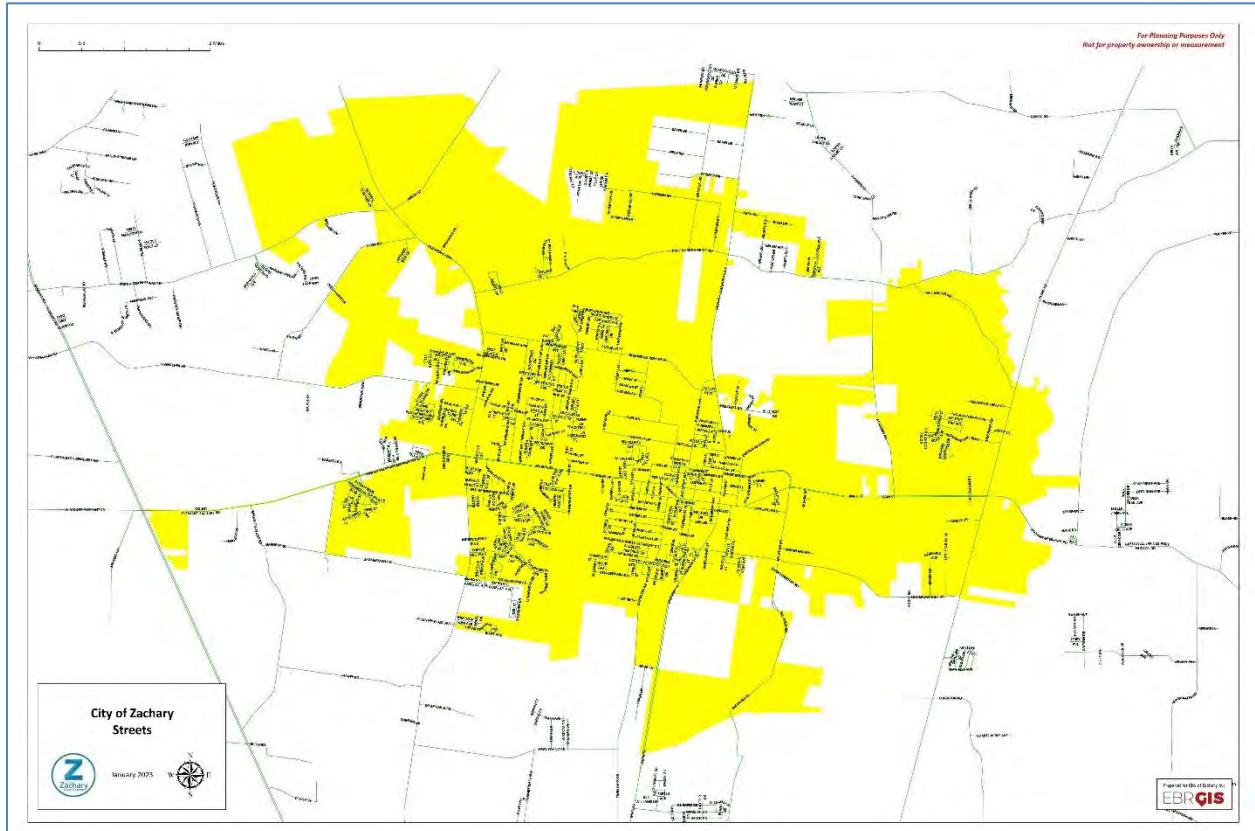


Source: East Baton Rouge Parish GIS and sources noted map

The City of Zachary is home to a network of roadways that connect Zachary to the surrounding region. Important roadways include US 61, Louisiana Highway 19, Plank Road, and Main Street. As the City of Zachary and the surrounding region continue to grow and develop, investing in

improvements to roadways and other transportation modes will be essential to mitigate future traffic impacts. See Chapter 8 of this plan, **Transportation and Mobility** for additional details on transportation in the City of Zachary.

**Map 4: City of Zachary Streets 2025**



**Source: East Baton Rouge Parish GIS, City of Zachary Planning Department**

**Utilities**

Entergy is the primary provider of electricity for the City of Zachary and its surrounding area. The City of Zachary offers many municipal utilities and services to residents. These utilities and services include:

- Water
- Gas
- Sewer
- Garbage Collection

All water and gas meter readings are the responsibility of the City of Zachary. The City of Zachary reads meters on a monthly basis. In an attempt to provide better service, the City combined technology by installing an automatic meter reading system (AMR). This enabled the City to reduce



meter reading time and manpower, provide highly reliable and accurate meters, as well as gain the ability to link meter data transfer to the billing process.

## **Community Services and Public Works**

### *Fire Department*

The Zachary Fire Department provides fire protection and emergency response services to the residents of the City of Zachary, Louisiana. The department operates from four stations strategically distributed through the community, to ensure efficient and prompt deployment to any incident site anywhere in the city. These stations are staffed by a combination of career and volunteer firefighters, ensuring comprehensive coverage and prompt response times across the community. The Zachary Fire Department has achieved a Class 1 rating from the Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL). This prestigious rating, awarded in 2020, is the highest possible and reflects the department's excellence in fire protection services.

#### Zachary Fire Station Addresses:

- Station 81 (Headquarters): 4525 Main Street, Zachary, LA 70791.
- Station 82: 2250 Flonacher Road, Zachary, LA 70791.
- Station 83: 9366 Main Street, Zachary, LA 70791.
- Station 84: 23060 Brian Road, Zachary, LA 70791.

### *Police Department*

The Zachary Police Department and Training Center is a 21,330 sq ft office building/training center located at 5160 Old Slaughter Rd.

### *Emergency Medical Services*

Since 2018, the City of Zachary has had a facility and office space for the operation of their team of Emergency Medical Services and ambulances, which were previously sharing space with the Zachary Fire Department.

## **Large Community Facilities & Institutions**

### *Lane Regional Medical Center*

Lane Regional Medical Center serves a critical function by delivering high-quality healthcare services to a broad region. Its service area extends beyond Zachary to encompass several surrounding communities in the northern part of the parish, including Baker, Central, Clinton, Jackson, St. Francisville, New Roads, and North Baton Rouge. This extensive reach underscores the hospital's importance as a regional healthcare hub. Recognizing the growing demand for its



services, Lane Regional Medical Center is currently undergoing an expansion project to boost its capacity. This expansion has the potential to create additional employment opportunities in the healthcare sector and anchor new development in the surrounding areas.

### *Zachary Community School District*

The Zachary Community School District stands as a cornerstone of the city's identity as a family-oriented community, consistently achieving high performance rankings within the state, alongside the Fire and Water Districts. This commitment to excellence is particularly crucial given the city's demographic makeup: a significant 29.1% of Zachary's population is composed of children and teenagers under the age of 18. This proportion considerably exceeds the national average of 21.7%. This data underscores the pivotal role that the Zachary Community School District plays in shaping the area's economic well-being. Additionally, estimates of educational attainments among residents over the age of 25 show that 94.5% of residents have a high school diploma or equivalent, and 38.5% of residents over the age of 25 have received a bachelor's degree or higher.

### *Zachary Historic Village*

The Zachary Downtown Historic District consists of eight buildings within a two-block area in the historic downtown area of Zachary, Louisiana. This district offers a rare picture of neighborhood life in a small town during the waning years of the 19th century through the 1960s. Three dwellings, a barn, a carriage house, a pavilion, a Railroad Depot and the Old Town Hall with an adjacent firehouse provide the setting for a leisurely walk down "Main Street USA".

The city museum began its development when a prominent family donated the first of the eight buildings in 1975. The City of Zachary assumed the administration of the museum and soon expanded the museum facility by reconstructing a barn (about 1980) near its original location and acquiring two other dwellings and a carriage house. By 1990, the City of Zachary had turned over the Old Town Hall building to the museum, constructed a pavilion, and acquired the depot to complete the collection of buildings.

### *Americana YMCA*

Zachary is also home to a large YMCA facility known as the Americana YMCA. This facility is located in the Americana PUD subdivision west of Zachary's historic core and just off Mt. Pleasant – Zachary Road. This YMCA contains many facilities including an aquatic center, gym and a tennis center. Programs for children in addition to teens and adults are available. This makes the YMCA an important community asset to the City of Zachary.



## **Local Community Parks**

The City of Zachary is home to a large number of parks and greenspaces that allow residents to explore the outdoors and take advantage of the natural beauty of the region.

### ***BREC Parks***

In the Zachary Area, the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) operates several parks. These parks include:

- Zachary Community Park
- Rollins Road Park
- Plank Road Park
- Rita Street Park
- Little Farms Park
- Flanacher Road Park

### ***Zachary Youth Park***

With youth in mind, a popular attraction for residents and visitors is the city-operated Zachary Youth Park Complex, housed on thirty-three acres. The park offers programs year-round for youth. The Zachary Youth Park, located at 1650 East Mount Pleasant Road provides facilities for baseball, softball, a half-mile walking track, playground and picnic areas. The park is one of the few complexes around that has synthetic turf grass fields that provide year-round playing for young athletes in the area.

Zachary Youth Park is comprised of six turf fields, two t-ball fields, one high school softball field with locker room, and two high school/middle school baseball fields, as well as two covered batting cage areas and an indoor facility. The indoor facility houses three batting cages, two pitching lanes, large locker rooms and a trainer facility for our high school sports. There are three concession stands located throughout the park, which serve a variety of refreshments, as well as bathroom facilities.

### ***HugYourPeople Community Park***

The HugYourPeople Community Park, located at 4412 Lee Street is owned by the City of Zachary. The park was officially dedicated on Saturday, May 18th, 2019. The beautiful tree lined memorial park is located at Virginia and Lee Street at the entrance of the Zachary Historical Village. The park now sits on two parcels of property formerly owned and occupied by \*Dr. W.D. Wall/Dr. Burl B. Lane Home and \*Marshall Bond Home.



The park features a bright colored train themed children’s playground and enjoy a fun-filled day, while remembering those whose lives were tragically lost in our community. The park is in memory of Joseph Hembra, Madeline Hembra and Darin Vince, who perished in a boating accident in 2018, Veronica Waldrop, who died of cancer in 2017 and Police Officer and Fireman, Chris Lawton, the first police officer to die in the line of duty in 2018. In 2020, the Zachary Charity League buried a time capsule at the park, which is scheduled for opening in the year 2040. The time capsule contains letters and pictures of experiences during the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic.

*Port Hudson Community Park*

Heading north on US Highway 61, eight miles from Zachary is the Port Hudson State Historic Site. Port Hudson is the site of the last stronghold on the Mississippi River by the Confederates during the Civil War. The site is a National Historic Landmark with a museum and several walking trails.

## Chapter 3: Engagement and Community Vision

### Community Outreach and Engagement

In 2010, the city of Zachary adopted their first Comprehensive Plan document to guide the future development and planning for the city of Zachary. The planning team began the Comprehensive Master Plan Update with a community engagement and outreach process to identify the City of Zachary's assets and opportunities. The Community Vision & Goals are informed by these assets and opportunities and help guide the planning team in developing the final elements of the 2025 Zachary Plan. Incorporating community engagement in the process ensures a final plan that reflects the input, ideas, concerns, and vision of the community. The 2025 Zachary Plan will provide a way to mitigate conflicting interests, where they exist, by soliciting resident input on the priorities for the community's future. The participatory process works to ensure that residents' voices are represented in the plan and any areas of conflict are thoroughly researched and analyzed to then make recommendations about what is best for the future of the community.



April 2024 Planning Workshop, Source: Villavaso and Associates

### Community Input

Throughout the planning process Villavaso and Associates utilized a variety of methods to engage City of Zachary public officials, residents, and other community stakeholders.

Community engagement tools include one-on-one meetings with public officials, focus groups, participating in community meetings, and community workshops.

## One-on-One Meetings

One-on-one meetings were held with public officials and City planning staff. The goal of these meetings was to facilitate a conversation where the participants guided the conversation and focused on the information, they felt was most important. During the one-on-one meetings, participants had the opportunity to guide the discussion around specific ideas, concerns, and visions for the City of Zachary's future.

## Zachary Rotary Club Presentation September 2022



September 2024 Rotary Presentation, Source: Villavaso and Associates

In Fall 2022, in anticipation of the plan kickoff the planning team gave a presentation on planning at the Zachary 2025 Plan to the Zachary Rotary Club. The planning team highlighted the goal of developing a plan update focusing on economic growth and development and resilient infrastructure, and shared plans for outreach initiatives and community planning workshops in 2023 to ensure public engagement and input.

Comprehensive Plan Kickoff and Visioning Meeting February 2023

Location: Zachary Branch EBR Library

In February 2023, the first Community Planning Meeting kicked off the planning process by informing citizens of the project, how to participate, and an introduction to the concept of comprehensive planning. It also served as means of introducing the planning team to the community and fostering community collaboration.



February 2023 Kickoff Meeting: Villavaso and Associates



February 2023 Kickoff Meeting: Villavaso and Associates



February 2023 Kickoff Meeting, Source: Villavaso and Associates

### Kickoff Meeting Key Takeaways

- More commercial options for residents...stay in Zachary for shopping and play
- Focus on drainage improvements
- Improve connectivity and walkability via sidewalks and trails
- Expand city limits via annexation for efficient public services
- Integrate smart growth best practices to ensure development and growth occurs in a logical and orderly manner
- Identify new areas for open space and recreation uses

## **Community Planning Workshops Introduction**

The planning team conducted three community workshops, open to the public, as part of the outreach phase. The purpose of these Community Planning Workshops were to:

- 1) Introduce the planning team and describe the planning process;
- 2) Present information and data collected during planning process, including a community profile, demographic information, and mapping tools;
- 3) Facilitate visioning, land use, and neighborhood planning exercises; and
- 4) Gather public comments and feedback on the planning process. These meetings are a critical opportunity for the planning team to better understand the community and for residents, business owners, and public officials to identify their issues and concerns.

During the workshops, residents were given the opportunity to voice their vision for the plan and identify everyday issues through three planning exercises. The exercises were provided by the planning team to gather data and opinions from the local community and identify the changes and direction that residents hoped to see in the City of Zachary's future. These exercises were conducted several times during all of the Community Town Hall meetings, in order to survey as much of the community as possible.

**Zachary Planning Workshop April 2023**

*Location: Zachary City Hall*



**April 2023 Plan Workshop, Source: Villavaso and Associates**



**April 2023 Plan Workshop, Source: Villavaso and Associates**

Zachary Planning Workshop October 2023

Location: Americana YMCA



October 2023 Plan Workshop, Source: Villavaso and Associates



October 2023 Plan Workshop, Source: Villavaso and Associates

Zachary Planning Workshop April 2025 – DRAFT Plan Review

*Location: Zachary Branch EBR Library*



April 2025 Plan Workshop, Source: Villavaso and Associates

### 2025 ZACHARY COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

In 2010, The City of Zachary adopted its current Master Plan. While this plan has served the City well, Zachary has continued to grow and evolve since 2010. In 2023, Zachary started the process of creating a new plan that will reflect the evolving needs and aspirations of residents and businesses, promote enhancing the quality of life through sustainable infrastructure and development and guide the future of the City! The result of this planning process is the **2025 Zachary Comprehensive Master Plan!**

Below are a few of the key takeaways from the planning process that are addressed in the plan.

#### Key Takeaways

- Infrastructure should support current and future development
- More commercial options for residents...stay in Zachary for shopping and play
- Expansion of city limits for efficient public services
- Concerns about growth in Parish surrounding City
- Focus on drainage improvements
- More connectivity via sidewalks and trails
- Development and growth occurs in a logical and orderly manner



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### 2025 ZACHARY COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

#### Major Plan Components

##### Current Conditions

Presents Zachary's population and demographic data and information illustrating how the City is changing and where the City is heading in the future.

##### Local and Regional Growth

Summarizes the area's development patterns and challenges highlighting governance changes, evolving development patterns, shifting municipal boundaries, and new infrastructure impacting Zachary's future.

##### Community Outreach and Visioning

Presents findings from one-on-one meetings, focus groups, and planning workshops throughout the comprehensive planning process and defines the community planning vision.

##### Land Use and Development

Profiles current development patterns and trends affecting land use and presents a framework for future land use development in the City.

##### Downtown Zachary and Commercial Corridors

Illustrates the importance of Zachary's downtown area and commercial corridors and shares strategies to enhance development in these areas.

##### Economic Development

Outlines how to leverage the economic strengths of Zachary and how economic growth is essential for a thriving community.

##### Transportation and Mobility

Assesses the current transportation network in the City, the status of current and future road and active transportation projects, and challenges and opportunities surrounding regional connectivity for all users.

##### Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Resilience

Illustrates Zachary's natural environment, flood-preparedness strategies, recreational opportunities, and key community resources with a focus on resilience and sustainability.

##### Livability and Community

Discusses how Zachary can prioritize community character, public health, housing opportunities, and public services to foster a healthy, safe, and thriving city.

##### Implementation

Sets out actions and procedures necessary to achieve goals outlined in each component/chapter of the plan with timelines, responsible agencies, and general expectations.

*Thank you for participating in the Zachary Comprehensive Master Plan Update Process! Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.*

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April 2025 Plan Workshop Handout, Source: Villavaso and Associates

## Community Workshop Data and Results

### *Land Use Categories Exercise*

During the Land Use exercise participants placed stickers, representing land use categories, on City of Zachary maps to illustrate desired land uses. This input informs the development of the Future Land Use Map (found in Chapter 5: Future Land Use and Development) is a tool to guide land use policy on zoning, infrastructure and development for the City of Zachary.



February 2023 Kickoff Meeting, Source: Villavaso and Associates

### *Community Themes Exercise*

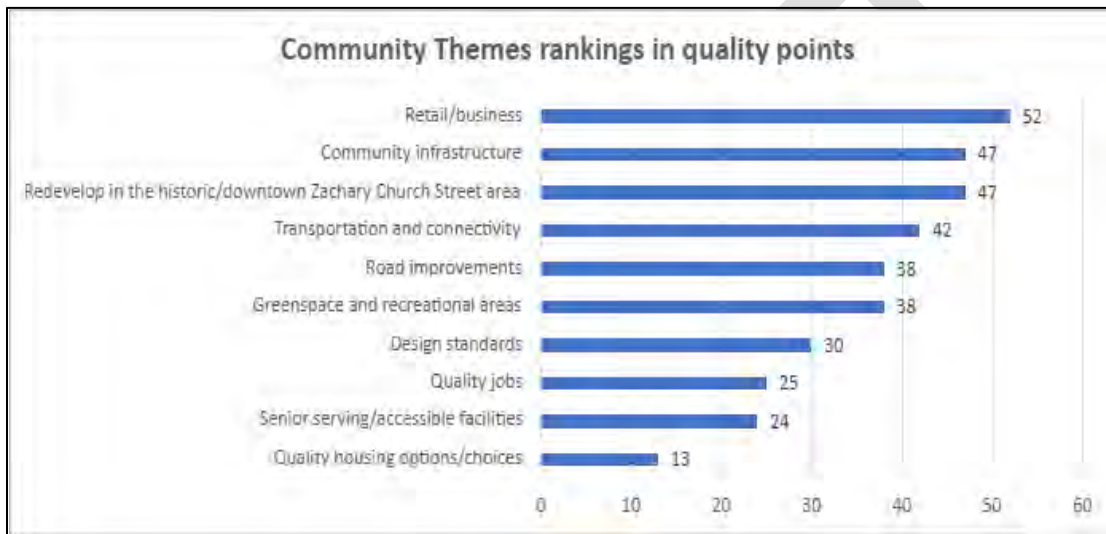
The purpose of the community themes exercise was to better understand the development priorities of community members. The exercise prompted citizens to rank community themes in order of importance for the City of Zachary. The exercise introduced the following themes with additional context provided by community comments

- Redevelop historic/downtown Zachary Church Street
- Improve transportation and connectivity via sidewalks and greenways
- Provide quality housing options/choices
- Attract more retail/business investment
- Conserve and/or add greenspace and recreational areas
- Road improvements on major corridors
- Design standards for new development

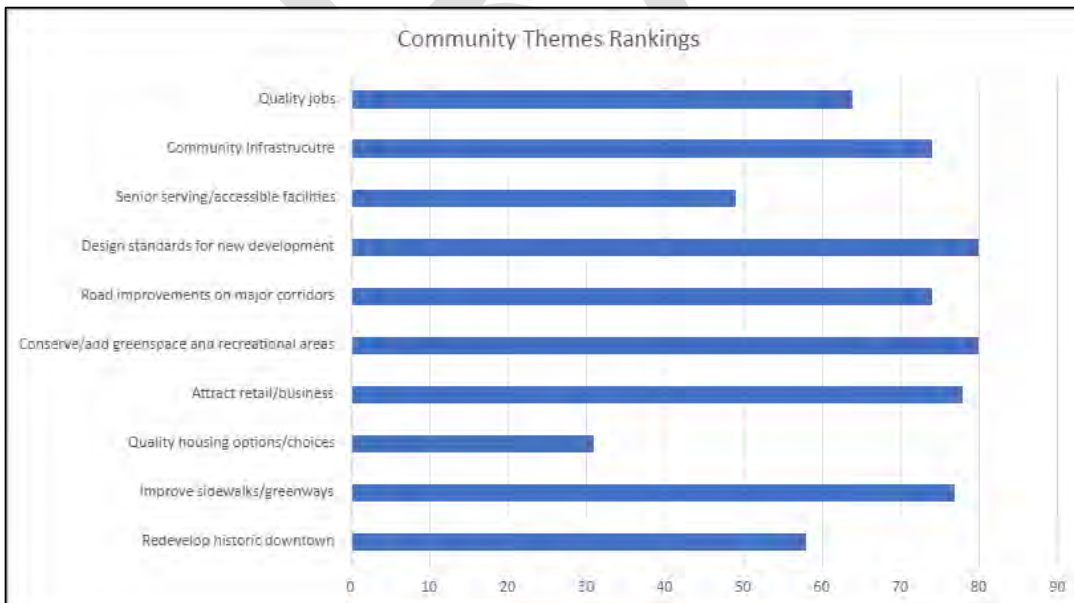
- Senior serving/accessible facilities for aging population
- Improve/expand drainage, sewer, water, and community infrastructure
- bring quality jobs

*Results*

The results from the community themes exercise indicated several prominent themes amongst respondents, with retail/business being the highest ranked theme. Tied for the second highest priority were community infrastructure and redevelopment of the historic/ downtown Zachary Church Street area.



Source: Villavaso and Associates



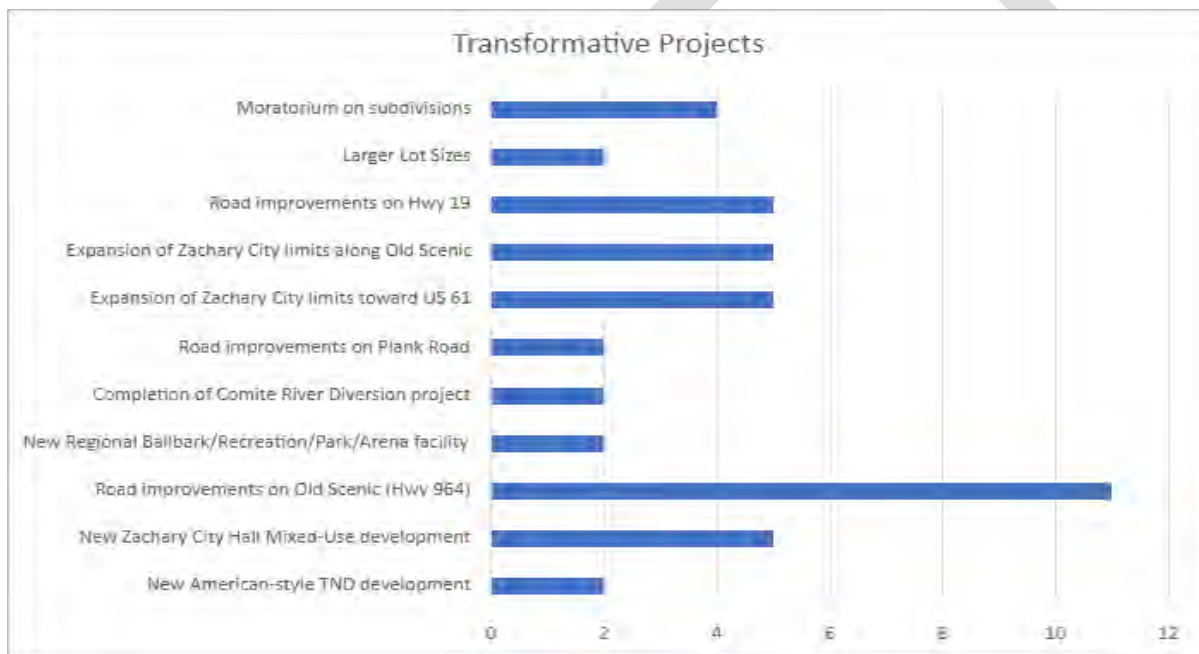
Source: Villavaso and Associates

***Transformative Projects Exercise***

The final community exercise gave participants the opportunity to rank ongoing transformative projects in the City of Zachary. The transformative projects exercise provided insight into which physical development projects residents have the most interest in completing. Residents selected three project(s) they believed were the most important for the City of Zachary to prioritize

***Results***

The results from the transformative projects exercise indicated that road improvements on Old Scenic were the top priority for respondents, with road improvements on Highway 19, expansion of city limits along Old Scenic, expansion of Zachary city limits toward US-61, and the New Zachary City Hall Mixed-Use Development all tying for the next highest priority.



Source: Villavaso and Associates

**Planning Commission Briefing March 2024**

In March 2024 the planning team held a briefing for the City of Zachary Planning Commission to update and inform the Planning Commission members on the Comprehensive Plan process and collect ideas and input from Commission members. This meeting helped the planning team ensure that the data collected and exercises conducted in community meetings was accurately translated into policy discussion and implementation in the plan.

## Zachary Comprehensive Master Plan Update

Zachary Planning Commission Update Presentation  
March 4, 2024



Source: Villavaso and Associates

### Planning Commission and City Council Joint Work Session July 2024

In July 2024, the planning team held a joint public work session with the City of Zachary's Planning Commission and City Council to review community priorities and concerns, and discuss strategies and the framework for addressing these comments in the Comprehensive Plan.



Source: Villavaso and Associates



Source: Villavaso and Associates

**Zachary Planning Commission DRAFT Plan Introduction February 2025**

In February 2025, the Zachary Planning Commission received a presentation on the framework of the initial public draft of the Zachary 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan. This presentation shared key findings gathered through technical analysis and community engagement. The planning team walked the Planning Commission and the public through the emerging vision, major themes, and preliminary recommendations, while inviting constructive feedback and introducing a recommendation for additional public input. This milestone marked the transition to public comments and input, ensuring that the final draft would reflect community priorities and remain grounded in practical, implementable strategies.

# Zachary Comprehensive Master Plan Update

**Comprehensive Master Plan Introduction Presentation**  
**Zachary Planning and Zoning Commission**  
**February 10, 2025**



Source: Villavaso and Associates

## Defining the Plan Vision

The “Vision Statement” of a Master Plan describes the vision for the future of Zachary. The Zachary 2025 Plan Vision Statement is the backbone of the Master Plan Update and connects the planning process to future goals for the City of Zachary. The vision statement highlights and supports the plan with a clear vision, strategy, and well-defined targets to guide the city's future.

### Growth with Purpose, Balanced with Quality of Life

Zachary is poised for a new era of growth. Zachary will not simply expand for the sake of population numbers but will **grow with purpose** — strategically annexing land, expanding opportunities for recreation, and diversifying our economy while preserving the small-town character that defines Zachary.

The Zachary 2025 Plan frames the future of Zachary around **Balanced Growth/Smart Growth**: growth that values both economic development and quality of life, where new commercial investment is matched with new parks, recreational opportunities, health resources, and cultural spaces. Zachary’s goal is not just to grow, but to become a **destination** place for residents and visitors alike.

## Vision Statement

**The City of Zachary will be known as a safe, thriving community, where residents can work, live, and enjoy the City’s recreational assets, educational institutions, and historic downtown district.**

The 2025 Zachary Plan vision includes seven objectives:

- 1) **Preserve Small Town Character** – Preserve the rich heritage and small-town lifestyle enjoyed by our residents will be centered as we make decisions in future.
- 2) **Expand Recreational Assets** – Improve current parks and recreational facilities and expand current recreational options to promote community health.
- 3) **Improve Drainage and Stormwater Management** – Protecting our neighborhoods, homes, and businesses by improving drainage and stormwater management via infrastructure improvements and maintenance.
- 4) **Update and Improve Road Infrastructure** – Rely on updated development practices supported by the quality and stable construction and maintenance of new roadway infrastructure.
- 5) **Incentivize Business** – Maintain a business-friendly attitude while promoting responsible growth and entrepreneurship.
- 6) **Create a Vibrant Historic Downtown** – Increase and redevelop civic, cultural and historical assets to foster a vibrant and sustainable downtown.
- 7) **Support ~~Housing Choice~~ Smart Growth** – Support safe and plentiful housing opportunities for all residents, using smart growth modes for safe, walkable neighborhoods.

The Zachary 2025 Plan will provide the road map for achieving these goals and vision for the community’s future. These goals provide the foundation to guide future planning and development decisions by Zachary staff and public officials together with citizens.

## **Chapter 4: Zachary Growth and Regional Development**

### **Introduction**

Due to its location in northern East Baton Rouge Parish (EBR), Zachary is also easily accessible to and from the cities of Baton Rouge, Baker and Central, the towns of St. Francisville and Slaughter, and East Feliciana, West Feliciana, and St. Helena Parishes. For much of its history, the development pattern of Zachary was aligned more with small towns located in East and West Feliciana Parishes that served as a center of commerce, educational facilities and local government for the surrounding agricultural and rural areas. However, by the 1980s and 1990s Zachary and Baker were growing significantly faster than other towns and cities in the region. This growth was highlighted by new commercial strip centers on state highways and new single-family detached subdivisions developed on large undeveloped parcels. By 1990’s Zachary was significantly more suburban than its neighbors to the north, and by the early 2000’s Zachary was in full transition from a mid-sized rural town to a mid-size suburban city.

### **Zachary Population Since 1970**

Year	Population
1970 Census	4,964
1980 Census	7,297
1990 Census	9,036
2000 Census	11,275
2010 Census	14,960
2020 Census	19,316

**Census.gov, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020 Population Reports; Zachary Comprehensive Plan, 2010**

### Growth from Baton Rouge Proper

The following factors have driven the growth in Zachary and surrounding areas over the past 40-50 years:

- Establishment and growth of the Zachary Community School District.
- New infrastructure investments in Northern East Baton Rouge Parish including expanded and new roads and sewer systems.
- Strong industrial job base along the Mississippi River north of Downtown Baton Rouge, highlighted by Exxon refinery and several other large industrial plants
- Strong industrial job base along Highway 61.
- White, middle-class populations migrations from Mid-City and Northern Baton Rouge areas.

This is a partial list of factors that have contributed to the exponential growth of Zachary and surrounding areas. Zachary has clearly benefitted from this growth and development. Zachary has a strong tax base, highly regarded schools, a highly-rated fire department and police department, and a growing medical community highlighted by the recent expansions of the Lane Regional Medical Center campus.

At the same time, not everyone is happy with the changes over years, for several reasons.

- Some long-time residents cite the loss of the small-town feel and community character and believe this has led to a lower quality of life for Zachary residents.
- Significant residential growth has, and is continuing to occur directly outside of the city limits of Zachary where there are concerns of access, adequate infrastructure, and encroaching development of rural areas.
- Furthermore, in addition to the growth directly outside of the city limits of Zachary, there are large areas in unincorporated East Baton Rouge Parish that are 1) located in the Zachary Community School District, but not in the Zachary City limits, and 2) directly or indirectly rely on the City of Zachary for public services, but the City of Zachary has no control over development in these areas.

This chapter discusses these issues and presents recommendations for Zachary to consider in addressing these issues and challenges while supporting future sustainable growth and smart growth in Zachary and the surrounding areas.

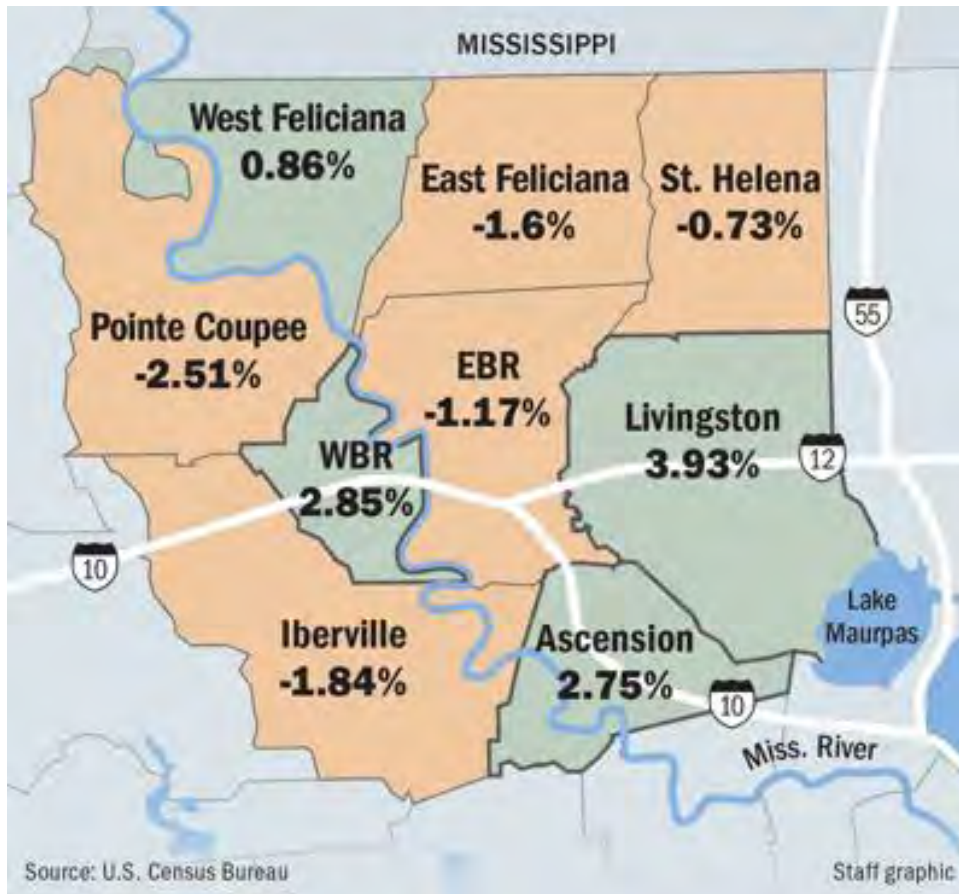
## **Zachary and Regional Growth in 2025**

From 1990 to 2020, East Baton Rouge Parish experienced consistent population growth. However, the population of City of Baton Rouge has been stagnant since 2000, and is projected to decrease in future years. This indicates that population growth did not happen uniformly across the parish. Both Central and Zachary, and surrounding un-incorporated areas have experienced, and are still experiencing slowing population growth. Additionally, some of the population losses at the parish level were due to out-migration to surrounding parishes, indicated by the population growth in Livingston and Ascension Parishes.

**What is the story behind this population conversation?** This plan presents four primary reasons to help understand what is happening:

- First, overall, the State of Louisiana is losing population and is projected to experience continued population loss in the future.
- At the same time, several parishes in the Baton Rouge metro are projected to show continued population growth, as references in the map from theadvocate.com (see next page).
- The respective school systems are generally considered a strong driver of this projected growth.
- Additionally, the availability of undeveloped land near existing population and commercial centers and highway access to the City of Baton Rouge and other regional centers is a driver of future projected growth.

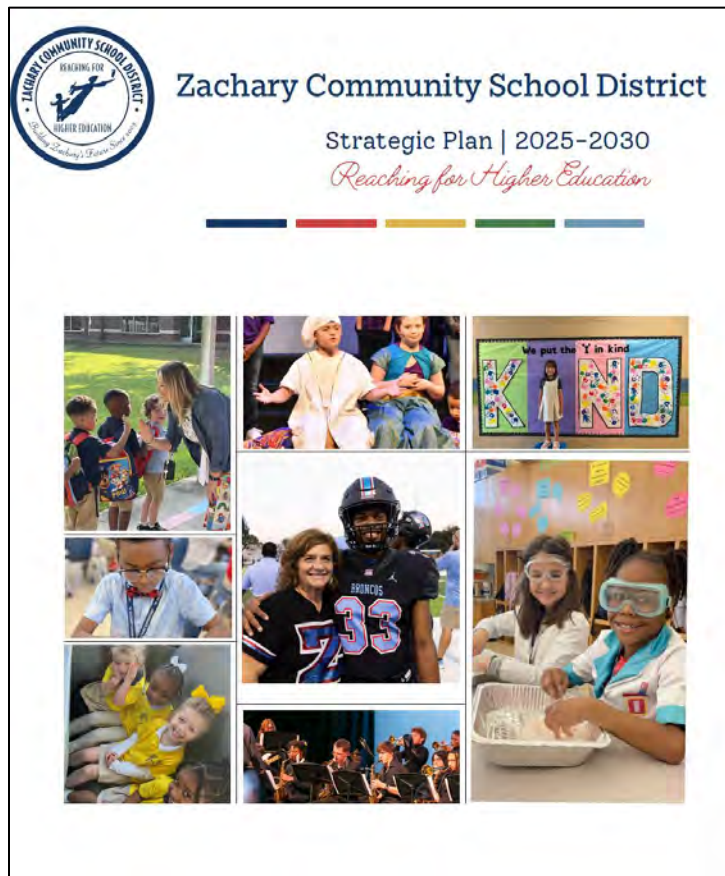
The City of Zachary shares these same characteristics with the parishes that are experiencing growth. Despite future projections showing flat population growth in Zachary this plan supports the premise that Zachary will continue to experience growth and the city of Zachary should focus on policies and practices that support managed and responsible smart growth for Zachary including the surrounding areas.



*Map of population changes in Baton Rouge area in 2023 (theadvocate.com) While recent census estimates show Louisiana's population shrinking by 1.3%, three parishes in the region continued to grow at among the highest rates in the state over the past two years.*

### Growth of Zachary Community School District

Since its establishment in the early 2000s, the Zachary Community School District has consistently performed at near the top of state rankings for school districts, attracting families seeking quality education. This demand has spurred residential development, with new subdivisions and residential development emerging to accommodate an influx of new students and residents. The school system's reputation continues to be a key factor in shaping the city's residential and commercial expansion. **The Zachary Community School District Strategic Plan 2025-2030** showcases their commitment to provide high-quality student experiences, foster supportive learning environments, and responsibly manage community resources (<https://zacharyschools.org/about/strategic-plan/>).



Source: Zachary Community School District - <https://zacharyschools.org/about/strategic-plan/>

The school district and the city of Zachary are different entities, however, there is still a strong and meaningful relationship and co-dependency between the school district and the City. Many residents consider both to be essentially the same even though they have different elected leaders and different governance structures.

### Zachary Community School District Attendance Zone

At the parish level, most parishes and school boards share the same official boundaries. However, this is not the case for the city of Zachary and the Zachary Community School District. The school district boundaries/attendance zone includes the entire city limits of Zachary AND areas in unincorporated East Baton Rouge Parish outside of the city of Zachary. The school district collects property taxes in their attendance zone which help fund their operations. However, those properties in the school district located outside of Zachary city limits do not contribute property tax to the city of Zachary. Furthermore, the city of Zachary has little to no authority to regulate development in these areas despite the fact that some of these areas are served by Zachary city services.



**School District Attendance Zones and Zone of Influence**

Over the years the relationship between Zachary and East Baton Rouge (EBR) Parish has evolved, particularly concerning zoning regulations, infrastructure investments, and economic development strategies. To address concerns from residents and Zachary leaders over the Zachary Community School District attendance zone, both the city of Zachary and EBR Parish agreed to a zone of influence process to provide Zachary residents, staff and public officials the opportunity to formally comment on projects within the school district attendance located outside of the city limits. The legislation states:

Each subdivider of land (hereinafter referred to as applicant), developer of apartment, commercial or industrial complexes (hereinafter referred to as applicant) or his representative should confer with the Planning Commission staff before preparing the tentative geometric layout, in order to become thoroughly familiar with subdivision requirements and with the proposals of the official Master Plan affecting the territory in which the proposed subdivision lies. The Director of the Planning Commission shall cause sufficient copies of these regulations to be prepared for distribution to interested parties.

The plans for all projects and developments to be constructed within the Zachary Community School District which require approval of the East Baton Rouge Planning and Zoning Commission Staff must also be submitted to the Zachary Planning and Zoning Commission within five (5) days of submission of the plans to the East Baton Rouge Parish Planning and Zoning Commission. The Planning and Zoning Commission may not act upon the proposed project or development until either the Commission has received a recommendation from the Zachary Planning and Zoning Commission, or a period of forty-five (45) days have elapsed since submission to the Zachary Planning and Zoning Commission."

Despite agreeing to participate in this process, many in Zachary feel that the Zone of Influence does not work and that recommendations made to the Parish are insignificant to final decisions on proposed developments.

## Sustainable Development Practices

### Opportunities for Infill in Older Areas of Zachary

The American Planning Association (APA) provides several definitions for infill development based on a best practices from existing communities. This definition is sourced from King County, Washington.

Infill development – Development of vacant, skipped-over parcels of land in otherwise built-up areas. Local governments are showing increasing interest in infill development as a way of containing energy costs and limiting costs of extending infrastructure into newly developing areas. *Infill development also provides an attractive alternative to new development by reducing loss of critical and resource lands to new development and by focusing on strengthening older neighborhoods.* (A Planners Dictionary, American Planning Association, PAS Report Number 521/522)

Revitalizing older area of Zachary, many in the core of the City, presents a valuable opportunity for growth without requiring new infrastructure investments and greenfield development. Infill development can enhance the city's vibrancy, repurpose underutilized properties, and encourage small business growth. Updating development codes to allow for infill development on smaller lots and strategic incentives for property redevelopment and infrastructure improvements will play a key role in making these areas more attractive for investment. This in turn may reduce growth pressures on the outskirts of Zachary and support the development of new housing units without high up-front cost and long-term maintenance cost of the infrastructure needed to support greenfield development. This is a list of priorities to consider that will promote, encourage, support infill development:

- Update development regulations to allow greater flexibility for small lot new development and accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and missing middle housing in core areas of Zachary.
- Establish incentives such as fee reductions, streamlined permitting and or tax abatements for infill residential projects.
- Prioritize infrastructure investments and upgrades in areas with infill potential.
- Develop design guidelines and infrastructure standards to ensure new housing respects the character of existing residential development in the areas.



- ~~Support the development community in identifying unused and vacant publicly-owned parcels suitable for re-development.~~

### **PUDs and TNDs**

The Americana TND, one of the first Traditional Neighborhood Developments in South Louisiana, was initially approved in 2011. Over the years Americana has grown to support significant commercial development, including several popular restaurants, over a hundred single family detached residences with more units planned in the coming years, over thirty multi-family units, and the Americana YMCA.



Source: City of Zachary Americana TND Application

Additionally, in 2023, the City of Zachary approve a new Planned Unit Development (PUD), Americana Crossing, located across Highway 64 from the Americana TND. This PUD will bring a mix of commercial and residential units to the City.



Source: City of Zachary Americana Crossing PUD Application

While PUDs and TNDs are not appropriate in every area of Zachary and for every new development in Zachary, they demonstrate the importance of a balanced development approach built on smart growth principles. These developments can benefit communities that are experiencing challenges managing growth and infrastructure by:

- Clustering development to preserve open space, protect natural resources, reduce sprawl, use land more efficiently, and reduce the need for large infrastructure extensions.
- Prioritizing parks and open space preservation, stormwater management features and sustainable design principles
- Included on-site and off-site improvements that improve infrastructure and public services for the entire City.

Additionally, these developments require detailed and clear development plans which must be vetted and approved by the City of Zachary staff, Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council, which requires transparency, consistency and accountability throughout the development process.

Additional housing solutions for Zachary are presented in Chapter 10, **Livability and Local Culture**.

### **Development of Greenfield Residential Subdivisions**

As Zachary continues to grow, previously undeveloped rural, agricultural and forestry land is being transformed into residential communities. New greenfield subdivisions may provide opportunities for new, modern housing units at price points that are attractive to younger and middle-class households. However, an over-reliance on these types of residential developments to meet the housing demands of the City of Zachary also presents challenges of building and maintaining infrastructure and environmental sustainability. Additionally, the growth of new residential subdivisions feels at odds with preserving Zachary's small-town feel for some residents. Over the past several years the City of Zachary has taken steps to update development codes to address these questions. Below are priorities for Zachary to consider in coordination with developers for new subdivision development:

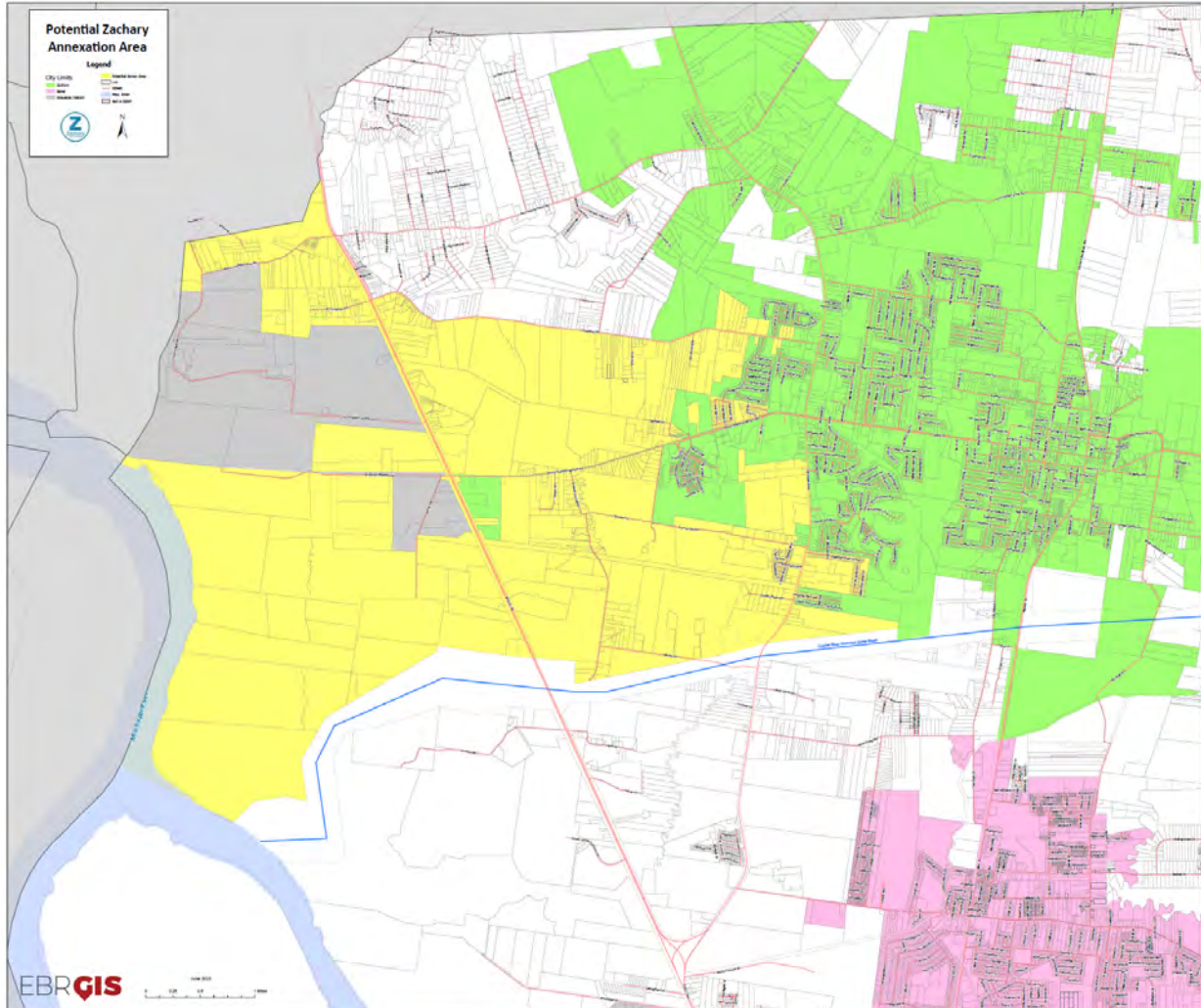
- Require preservation of natural features including open space, wetlands, and tree cover by integrating them into the subdivision layout.
- Encourage use of cluster development to ~~concentrate homes and~~ preserve larger open spaces.
- Include sidewalks, bike lanes, and trail systems to connect residential areas to parks and recreation, schools and services.
- Reduce cul-de-sacs and encourage a street grid or modified grid for safer routes, better circulation and emergency access.
- Use green infrastructure such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavement to manage stormwater, allow for impervious surfaces, and require protection of natural drainage patterns.
- Coordinate with public utilities and service providers to avoid leapfrog development and to adequate services and infrastructure will be in place before developments are occupied.
- Involve residents, landowners, and stakeholders in the planning process to address concerns and challenges.

### **Annexation Opportunities**

When used properly, annexation is a critical tool that helps communities manage growth, expand and upgrade municipal services for current and new residents, and plan for sustainability. Within the context of regional growth pressures, annexation could provide Zachary with opportunities to better manage growth on the outskirts of the City and within the school district boundaries.

Since Zachary also provides municipal services to areas outside of the City, a balanced annexation strategy will provide Zachary with opportunities to expand services and increase revenues which can be reinvested to maintain and improve services for existing residents.

Below is a DRAFT map that identifies areas Zachary may want to consider for future annexations.



Source: EBR GIS, City of Zachary Planning Department, Villavaso and Associates

## Regional Growth Strategic Recommendations

1. Develop a long-range *Zachary Growth and Annexation Strategy* to outline where, how, and when Zachary should consider expansion that is orderly, cost-effective, and aligned with community goals and smart growth principles
2. Conduct a *comprehensive review of the Zachary Unified Development Code, building codes, and other development-related ordinances* to reduce barriers to high-quality infill ~~residential~~ development within Zachary's core areas that will strengthen existing neighborhoods, support local businesses, and make efficient use of infrastructure and services.
3. In collaboration with the Parish and other municipalities in the region, develop a *Zachary/ Regional Infrastructure Demand Analysis planning tool* to evaluate the current capacity and future needs of infrastructure system such as transportation, stormwater, sewer and other utilities, identify where growth is expected and estimate future infrastructure needs for supporting balanced, sustainable resilient growth inside and outside of Zachary supported by smart growth best practices.
4. The City of Zachary shall develop a *Tracking System for Zachary 2025 Plan Progress* and prepare yearly update reports.

## Chapter 5: Future Land Use and Development

### Introduction

This chapter plays a critical role in the Comprehensive Plan and defines the location and type of desired future development in Zachary.

### Development of a Future Land Use Framework

The proposed Zachary Future Land Use Map (FLUM) provides a framework to inform and guide the City of Zachary through development and infrastructure decisions, and capital and financial investments, and informs future Unified Development Code (UDC) updates. The planning team developed the Zachary FLUM and created “Generalized” Future Land Use categories based on the examination and review of the following:

- Fieldwork, data collection, and surveys of existing conditions
- Public comments and planning exercises conducted during the planning process
- Comments and input from the Zachary Planning and Zoning Commission
- Review of 2010 Zachary Plan
- Comments and input from the Zachary Planning Department
- Current and projected demographic data
- Projected future infrastructure and transportation needs
- Projected open space and recreational needs
- Community resiliency needs
- Floodplain development best practices

### Future Land Use Descriptions

What is a future land use category? A future land use category is a general classification used in planning to describe the future intended use and development of land in a specified area.

The Generalized Future Land Use Map includes the generalized (and often broad) categories and definitions. Each category describes the general nature of land use in a specified area and how land use develops and changes in the area. It is important to note that land use is not zoning. This is a significant departure from the 2010 Plan and the 2010 Zachary UDC. The 2010 Plan’s Future Land Use Districts names and descriptions were identical to the 2010 Zachary UDC’s zoning districts. Similar land use and zoning district names and designations can create confusion for the public, and create inherent conflicts between land use and zoning when zoning map amendments happen over time (for more detail see sidebar).

### Future Land Use Map and Categories Development Criteria

**Criteria 1: Existing Land Use Informs Future Land Use.** In most areas, development occurs incrementally over a period of years, and it is rare for a town or city to experience significant land use changes over a brief period of time. Future land use must respect the current land use and provide vision and flexibility to anticipate future changes.

**Criteria 2: Future Land Use Should Consider the Natural Environment.** Future land and use should be flexible, but focused on sustainable development, which may include limiting development in areas with natural habitats with significant biodiversity, supporting low-impact development where appropriate, and encouraging balanced and sustainable physical and economic development, supported by appropriate infrastructure.

**Criteria 3: Population and Development Changes Inform Future Land Use.** Communities experiencing significant growth often designate additional land for a balance of residential (places where people live), commercial (places providing shopping and services), and institutional and recreational areas (places to attend school, participation and recreation activities and worship). Future land use should provide opportunities and flexibility to support development in areas where all of these activities occur in harmony such as downtowns and city centers, older residential neighborhoods near the core of the city including, mixed-use neighborhoods, and planned developments.

**Criteria 4: Future Land Use Should Align with Current and Future Infrastructure**  
Community infrastructure — such as roads, sewer, water, electricity, gas, transit, and drainage — requires significant investment of a municipality's time and financial resources. Future land use should reflect an understanding of current community infrastructure levels and the process for building new infrastructure. To capitalize on existing infrastructure and development future land use should present opportunities and flexibility to support development in areas where there is already significant community infrastructure such as downtowns and city centers, older residential neighborhoods near the core of the city, mixed-use neighborhoods, and planned developments.

The development of the Future Land Use Map follows six principles based on the Future Land Use map and category criteria:

- Preserve and support the character of successful residential neighborhoods
- Revitalize core city neighborhoods with new development that contributes to character and new vitality
- Support resilient development that reduces flood risk
- Encourage development in areas with existing adequate public infrastructure

- Promote economic and commercial development to [support fiscal responsibility](#) and preserve community character
- Maintain and protect parks and other essential green/open spaces

## Zachary Future Land Use Categories and Descriptions

### Rural Reserve (RR)

The Rural Reserve (RR) future land use category typically includes lands dedicated to agriculture, forestry, and environmental conservation. This category includes floodplains, wetlands, and other sensitive areas that provide important natural functions. Limited residential use may be allowed if it respects the rural character and can withstand natural hazards.

### Estate Residential (ESR)

The Estate Residential (ESR) future land use category typically includes large-lot residential areas that maintain Zachary's rural and semi-rural character. These properties often include pastureland, wooded areas, or natural landscapes. Estate lots may allow for barns, stables, or similar accessory structures while [maintaining the character of this area](#).

### Neighborhood Residential (NR)

The Neighborhood Residential (NR) future land use category typically includes areas of established neighborhoods with primarily single-family homes. These areas are intended to preserve community character, provide safe and walkable streets, and allow for limited compatible uses such as schools, parks, and small neighborhood amenities that support daily living.

### ~~Village Residential (VR)~~

~~The Village Residential (VR) future land use category typically includes areas of established older neighborhoods characterized by smaller lots, mature trees, and historic homes. These neighborhoods have a pedestrian-friendly feel and often include architectural styles and patterns that reflect Zachary's heritage. Village Residential areas provide a bridge between traditional single-family neighborhoods and nearby commercial or mixed-use centers. Development standards in these areas emphasize preserving neighborhood character, maintaining tree cover, and allowing modest infill or compatible residential improvements that respect the scale and character of the existing community.~~

### **Town Center (TC)**

The Town Center (TC) future land use category includes the city's primary civic and commercial cores, such as Downtown Zachary. These areas are intended to support a mix of civic, office, retail, and limited residential uses at a scale appropriate to existing infrastructure.

### **Local Marketplace (LM)**

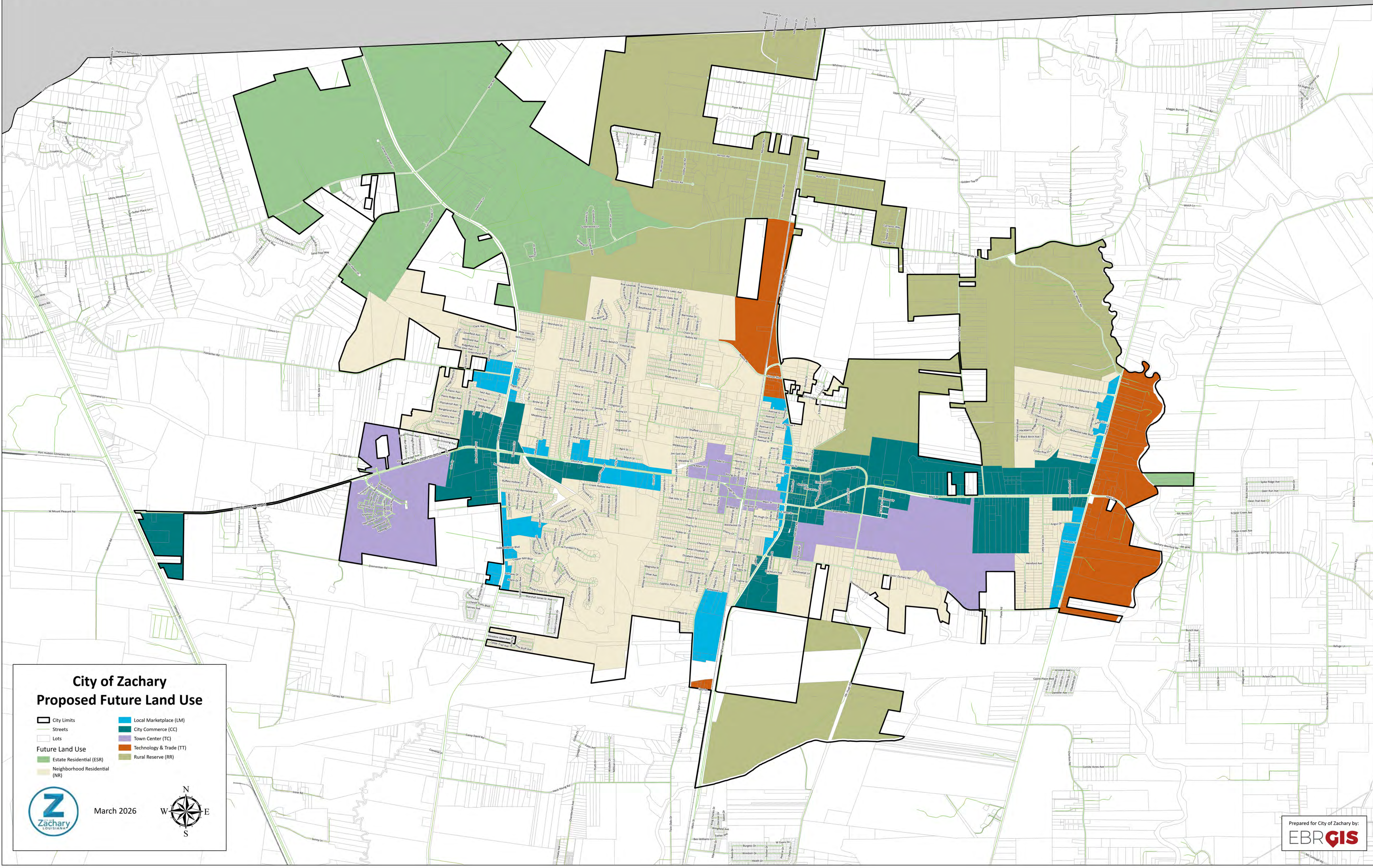
The Local Marketplace (LM) future land use category typically includes neighborhood-scale commercial areas that provide convenient goods and services close to where people live. Typical uses include small shops, restaurants, personal services, and professional offices. These areas are intended to support local neighborhoods and to be accessible, walkable, and compatible with other/adjacent neighborhoods.

### **Community Commerce (CC)**

The Community Commerce (CC) future land use category typically includes medium to large-scale commercial areas that serve the broader community and surrounding region. These include larger retail stores, shopping centers, dining, entertainment, and office developments. They are designed to be accessible by major roads and to support Zachary's growing economy.

### **Technology and Trade (TT)**

The Technology and Trade (TT) future land use category typically includes areas that support economic growth through job development and increase the local tax base by providing space for manufacturing, technological, and, in limited cases, industrial enterprises. Properties in this category have access to infrastructure levels sufficient to support the size and intensity of development, including transportation access and buffering to minimize impacts on surrounding areas.



**City of Zachary  
Proposed Future Land Use**

City Limits	Local Marketplace (LM)
Streets	City Commerce (CC)
Lots	Town Center (TC)
<b>Future Land Use</b>	Technology & Trade (TT)
Estate Residential (ESR)	Rural Reserve (RR)
Neighborhood Residential (NR)	

March 2026

## Special Emphasis Areas

In addition to the Future Land Use Map and Categories, three development emphasis areas connected to future land use are discussed in other chapters of the Zachary 2025 Plan.

- **Downtown Zachary: New Planning and Investment** – The Zachary 2025 Plan encourages the redevelopment of the historical mixed-use development landscape of Downtown Zachary including retail, office, residential, governmental, and entertainment uses. Planning for Downtown Zachary will focus on economic development, infrastructure improvements and regulations for streetscape design, landscape design, parking, architectural and façade design, and setback standards that enhance the visual appeal and walkability of the area.
- **Commercial Corridors: Incentives and New Focus** – The Zachary 2025 Plan supports new investments and developments in commercial corridors in Zachary to improve the tax base of the city, provide key services and amenities for residents, and build on economies of scale along commercial development corridors and nodes.
- **Medical Overlay District** – This district would support expansion around Lane Memorial Hospital and encourage complementary services, wellness facilities, and medical-related commercial growth.
- **The Plains Overlay District** – This district would preserve larger-lot neighborhoods character and reinforce transitions from rural land to denser development.
- **Americana Overlay (Lifestyle District)** – Refers to the Americana development as a mixed-use [development](#) combining housing, retail, recreation, and tourism, and incorporates connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods and parks.
- **Planned Unit Developments (PUD), Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), and Mixed-Use Neighborhoods in Zachary** – These special areas of future land use include a variety of residential — small lot, single family and multi-unit residential — and neighborhood oriented commercial development with sidewalks, bicycle paths and trails to increase walkability. The development of PUDs, TNDS, and Mixed-Use neighborhoods offer a range of benefits for Zachary and respects the community identity and desired scale of development.

## How to Use the Zachary Future Land Use Map

The Zachary Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is a strategic tool for city leaders, members of the public, future property owners, and developers in Zachary to identify appropriate areas for new development in the City. Below are several important criteria to understand and utilize the Zachary Future Land Use Map:

1. Future Land Use is policy and guidance, while zoning in the Zachary UDC is the law of the City of Zachary. The Zachary FLUM is a tool that will assist and support the City in making land use decisions.
2. There are constraints to new development in Zachary, primarily infrastructure-related and environmentally sensitive areas. However, as connectivity within the City improves (with upcoming and future planned road improvements) and improvements are made to water, sewer, and other infrastructure systems, transitions within future land use categories should and will occur.
3. City leaders, developers, planners, engineers, and citizens should strongly consider the Zachary FLUM and work together to make informed development decisions based on the best data and information available and expert advice.
4. The future land use categories represented in the Zachary FLUM support and encourage the use of managed and sustainable development practices including modern and smart growth design standards to enhance efficiency, environmental responsibility, and long-term economic viability.

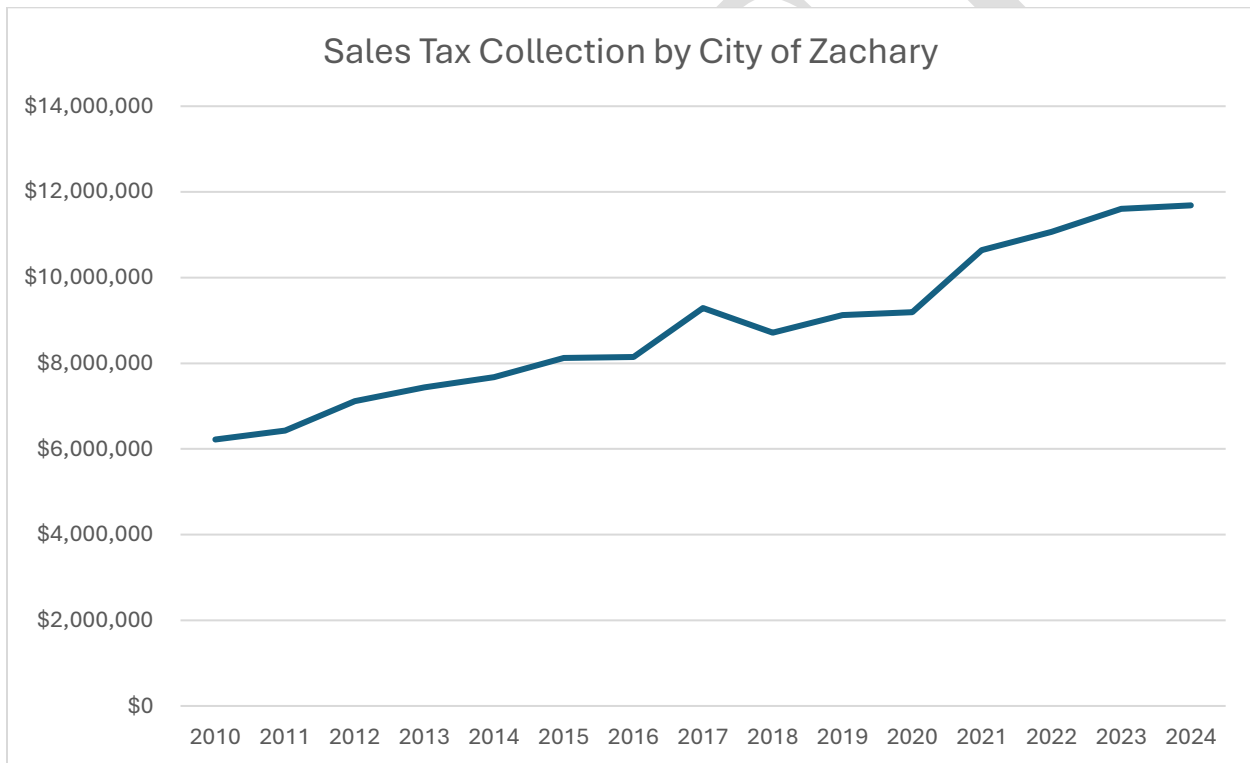
## Future Land Use Strategic Recommendations

1. Work with the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Staff, and residents to update the Zachary UDC and the zoning districts to align with the Zachary Future Land Use Map.
2. Identify areas in Zachary, including Downtown Zachary and the Medical District, for land use and design studies to determine appropriate land use, planning and design regulations to include in future UDC updates.
3. Revamp the Zone of Influence Process with East Baton Rouge Parish using Zachary Future Land Use Map and categories to guide the process.

## Chapter 6: Downtown and Commercial Corridor Development

### Introduction

As Zachary continues to evolve, the intentional development of areas such as commercial corridors and downtown where economic activity occurs will be essential to meet the growing demands of businesses and residents. Municipalities focus on revitalizing downtown areas and commercial corridors primarily to stimulate economic growth and diversification. These zones serve as economic hubs, attracting a variety of businesses that boost the local economy and create jobs. From 2010 to 2024 sales tax collection by Zachary has nearly doubled, increasing the capacity for municipal services.



**Source: City of Zachary**

Guiding development of areas of economic activity requires an efficient and far-sighted approach. For Zachary, redevelopment of existing infrastructure in downtown has expanded the lifespan of assets, preserved historical character, and attracted private investment. Private investment can also be orchestrated by governing entities to produce new infrastructure. Successful public- private partnerships maximize the impact of public investments, improving quality of life for residents while maintaining a favorable business environment. With intention, Zachary can continue to maintain growing demands while planning for future capacity. This

section of the plan shares recommendations to optimize commercial development efforts by the city and its partners.

### **Downtown Zachary**

The social and economic health of urban areas is significantly impacted by the vibrancy of their downtowns. Downtown functionally provides an area where commerce, entertainment, and civic activities converge. Presently, Zachary's downtown features essential services including banks, medical facilities, and city governance structures, alongside amenities such as Hug Your People Park that host a variety of community events and businesses.

**City Hall:** The functions of City Hall are currently split between two adjacent buildings, separated by Lee Street. The properties stand at the center of downtown and support municipal operations. Efforts have been made to unify City Hall, including a 2021 plan which proposed a newly constructed mixed-use building adjacent to the City Hall Annex, ultimately have not come to fruition although it remains a topic of interest as the demand for city services grows.

**Historic Zachary Depot:** The Historic Zachary Depot holds significant cultural and historic importance to the City, as it once hosted regional travelers and attracted entrepreneurship to the area. Today, the Depot is owned by the City of Zachary and began leasing the space in 2021. Improvements to adapt the structure for modern use have included kitchen equipment, a rooftop patio, and outdoor seating. This initiative is a successful example of the City of Zachary efficiently utilizing city assets, as the agreement allows for commercial value of the property to be realized, respects the historic fabric of the area, and adds to the vibrancy of Main Street.

**Churches:** These churches in the downtown area, First Baptist Church, Zachary United Methodist Church, and St. John the Baptist Catholic Church serve the faith-based community in Zachary.

**Hug Your People Park:** Dedicated in 2019, Hug Your People Park is owned by the City of Zachary and located behind City Hall. The park honors local history with a train-themed playground that features inclusive play equipment.

### **Historic Structures:**

In recent years the city has spearheaded a comprehensive approach to downtown development led by the strategic plan document, **Envisioning a New Downtown Zachary**, completed in 2020. Zachary has taken tangible steps towards the goals identified by the downtown strategic plan, bringing the city closer to its vision. Implemented recommendations from the plan included the sale of three city-owned, historic properties to expand commercial capacity. The sale and swift occupation of the buildings demonstrate private investors' appreciation for Zachary, as well

as the demand for new development supported by existing infrastructure in downtown. Revitalization efforts also included leasing the Historic Zachary Depot and dedicating the Old Town Hall as a future meeting space, city museum, and archive. Branding and marketing initiatives have rounded out the City's commitment to balancing the preservation of culture and economic development.

As Zachary continues to expand, reviewing standards regarding design and development are essential for shaping the experiences of future residents and visitors. Effective standards ensure that new constructions and renovations present an organized downtown that aligns with the community's vision. Thoughtful architectural design standards ensure that the downtown area is attractive and easily recognizable. Guiding the aesthetic and functional aspects of urban growth is particularly crucial for places like Zachary, where the downtown area is well - anchored and has the capacity to expand.

Enrolling Downtown Zachary's Main Street in the Louisiana Main Street program represents an opportunity to further bolster revitalization efforts. As an organization focused on preservation-based economic growth, its mission aligns well with Zachary's priorities for downtown revitalization. The organization offers a coordinating program, providing guidance for revitalization efforts and shares best practices proven effective in other municipalities.

*<<Pop out box in final design>>*

Title: Louisiana Main Street

Louisiana Main Street is an organization that promotes preservation-based economic growth. The program shares Main Street best practices and offers assistance with design, planning, staff training, and capacity building of historic corridors. Louisiana Main Street offers two tiers of programs to municipalities: Affiliate and Accredited. Affiliate programs are organizations that have demonstrated commitment to comprehensive community revitalization. This level of membership allows communities that are interested in learning about the Main Street model to access the national network's resources, and it allows those organizations that do not yet have the capacity for full designation to begin their revitalization efforts. A Main Street American Accredited program signifies a commitment to comprehensive revitalization, community engagement, and rigorous outcome measurement. Accreditation standards are slightly more rigorous, requiring an active board of directors, committees, an operating budget, and a program manager.

## **Commercial Corridors**

The success of commercial corridors is often linked to their ability to attract and retain businesses, create a diverse and appealing mix of retail and service offerings, and provide a safe and welcoming environment for pedestrians and shoppers. They are not only key drivers of the local economy, providing jobs and generating revenue, but also serve as important community gathering spaces. These key corridors create a sense of place and identity, encourage social interaction, preserves the character of neighborhoods and contribute to the overall activeness and vitality of a city. Zachary’s role in fostering the development of these areas should include placemaking initiatives at key locations, regulatory standards for design, and managing access.

## **Gateways**

Gateways serve as the first impression of a city, welcoming visitors and potential investors. The first impression of the city is shaped by factors such as development quality, property maintenance, the state of public amenities, the extent and condition of public spaces, and the design of streets and public infrastructure. Modernizing Zachary's primary entrances can foster civic pride and attract business investments. These gateways serve as a reflection of the city's character and values, and can significantly impact tourism and economic development. The following corridors have been identified as “gateways” to be considered for upgrading with additional signage and landscaping:

- LA 19 at the southern and northern City limits;
- LA 64 at the eastern and western City limits;
- The intersection of Plank Road and LA 64;
- Plank Road at the northern and southern City limits



**Source: Villavaso and Associates**

### **Design Guidelines**

As Zachary continues to grow and evolve, it is imperative that the city's design guidelines are in pace with the city's vision. This will ensure that new architectural projects maintain a cohesive aesthetic and complement the city's overall goals. This is particularly crucial along key commercial corridors, where the visual appeal and functionality of buildings directly impact economic activity and the city's image.

These design standards should not only address aesthetic concerns but also incorporate modern advancements in architecture and urban planning. Design guidelines that incorporate mixed-uses, sustainable building practices, energy efficiency, smart growth and the use of innovative materials show a commitment to progressive development. Additionally, the guidelines should consider the needs of a diverse population, ensuring that new developments are accessible and inclusive.

## Access Management

Effective access management stands as a cornerstone of efficient urban mobility, directly influencing traffic flow and congestion levels. This becomes increasingly critical in the face of burgeoning urban populations and expanding commercial activities.

Access management plans, either at a comprehensive or at a smaller scale, can optimize the utilization of existing infrastructure, design interventions for smoother traffic flow and minimize delays. Strategic plans not only enhance the overall efficiency of the transportation network but also contribute to a safer urban environment. Access control measures such as regulating the flow of traffic and minimizing conflict points reduces the likelihood of accidents and collisions. Furthermore, well-designed access control measures can encourage the use of sustainable modes of transportation, such as public transit, cycling, and walking. By prioritizing these modes and discouraging excessive private car use, cities can reduce their carbon footprint and promote a more environmentally friendly urban transportation system.

## Mixed-Use Developments

Mixed-use developments offer numerous benefits that enhance the community by combining commercial, public and institutional, residential, open space, recreational and manufacturing elements within a single project. ~~These developments promote greater housing variety and affordability by integrating different types, designs and sizes of residential units, and residential densities, catering to diverse backgrounds and lifestyles.~~ Mixed-use developments provide the opportunity to strategically increase both commercial and housing stock, including housing desirable for young professionals, families, and older adults.

Mixed-Use developments provide value by supporting smart growth and concentrating geographic areas of economic growth that are more efficient to provide infrastructure and are more easily supported by municipal services such as sewer, water, sanitation and public safety. Generally, commercial corridors are desired locations for mixed-use developments due to the ability to handle access and demand to the site, and again, more available infrastructure. Economically, they provide businesses with a residential base. Socially, they foster a sense of community by providing spaces where people can live, work, and play and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Mixed-use developments in Zachary can be a catalyst for significant community-wide infrastructure improvements. ~~These improvements encompass a wide range of projects, including the modernization and expansion of road networks, the enhancement and expansion of public trail systems, the upgrading of utilities such as stormwater management and sewage systems, and the implementation of advanced telecommunications infrastructure to ensure reliable~~

connectivity throughout the city. Zachary's role in creating ~~more inclusive and~~ vibrant communities ~~based on smart growth principles~~ should be a multifaceted effort including ~~regulatory frameworks, incentives, and strategic planning.~~

## Downtown and Commercial Corridors Strategic Recommendations

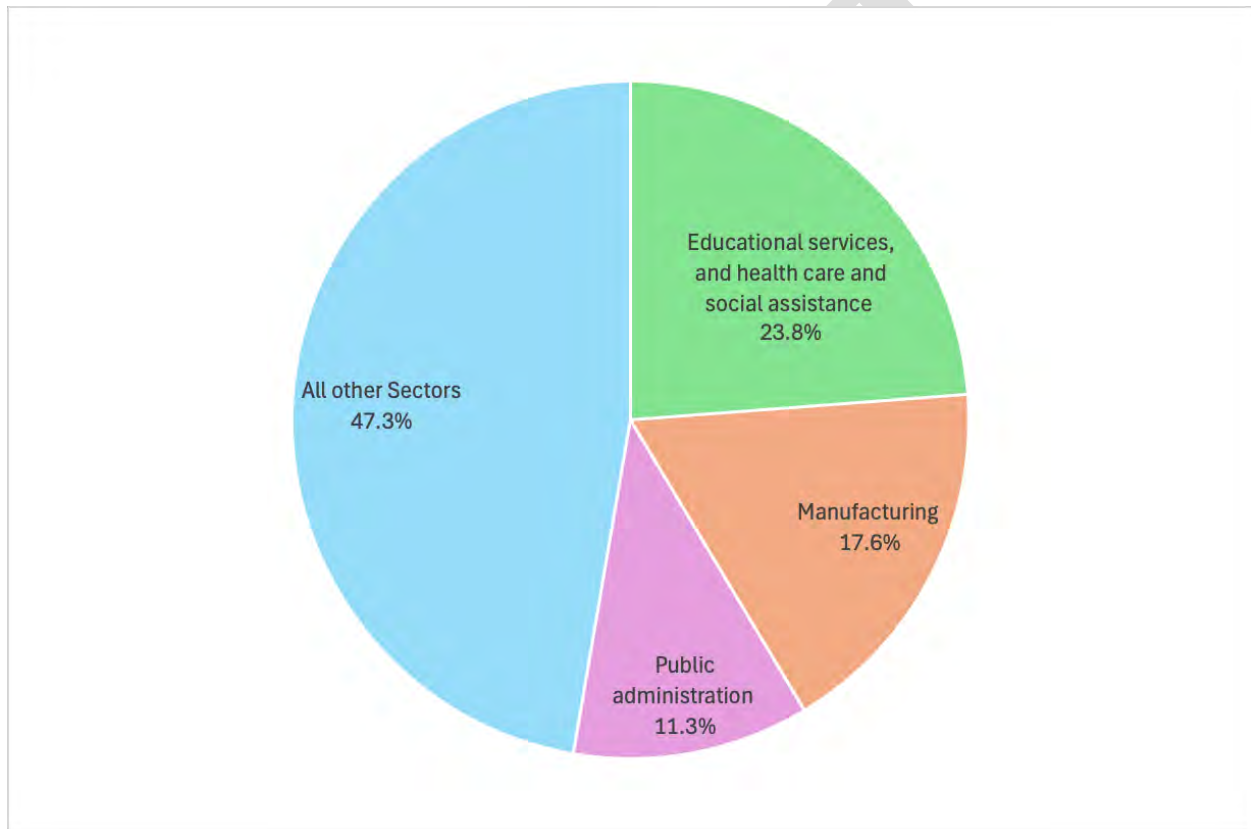
1. Pursue official Main Street designation for Zachary and pursue associated resource and funding opportunities.
2. Update the Downtown Zachary Plan with the theme *Destination Zachary: A Hub for Community and Visitors*, with a focus on new development in downtown, recreation and community anchors, and cultural identity.
3. Conduct special corridor planning studies that focus on enhancing the appeal and functionality of key commercial corridors by promoting business growth, increasing tax revenue, and improving the visitor and resident experience
4. Identify areas with suitable development characteristics for future ~~mixed-use/~~smart growth development to support a diverse community by encouraging developments that combine residential, commercial, and civic uses to create inclusive, walkable, and resilient neighborhoods.
5. Improve gateways to strengthen Zachary's identity and attract investment by establishing attractive, cohesive, and welcoming entry points into the city that reflect its values and growth potential.

## Chapter 7: Economic Development

### Local Economy

Zachary's economy is supported by three primary industries: educational services / healthcare and social assistance, manufacturing, and public administration. Together, these three industries employ approximately 52.7% of Zachary's workforce.

**Table 5: Largest Industries in City of Zachary**



American Community Survey 5-year Estimates; 2023: Table DP03

Notably, a significant portion of the workforce, 26.1%, is employed in local, state, and federal government positions. This strong presence of government employment is favorable to Zachary's economic stability due to the resilience of public-sector jobs during economic downturns and also underscores the critical role of public administration within the area.

Zachary's location near a larger metropolitan area offers valuable context for economic conditions. Zachary boasts a highly educated workforce, with 30.2% of residents over the age of 25 holding at least a high school diploma and 38.5% earning a bachelor's degree or higher. This

talent pool is strengthened by the city's access to Louisiana State University and Southern University, which provide a steady stream of skilled graduates. Commuters also play a vital role in diversifying Zachary's income base, as approximately 25.6% of residents - roughly 1 in 4 - work outside East Baton Rouge Parish. Zachary's placement allows for many opportunities within the regional context.

## **Trends**

The city's economic landscape is heavily influenced by key institutions such as Lane Regional Medical Center and the Zachary Community School District, which not only provide essential services, but also stand as major employers, shaping the overall identity of the city. The significance of these institutions is reflected in the strength of the education/ healthcare/social assistance sector, which accounts for 23.8% of the total employment in Zachary. This highlights the crucial role these sectors play in driving the local economy and providing livelihoods for a significant portion of the population. Manufacturing and public administration also contribute significantly, comprising 17.6% and 11.3% of total employment, respectively.

Zachary is well-connected by Interstate 110 and U.S. Highway 61, which provides direct access to Baton Rouge and other key regional markets. Census data shows a growing number of Zachary residents commuting to jobs outside of East Baton Rouge Parish.

Most residents have a commute time that falls between 30 and 34 minutes, suggesting that many Zachary residents either work in the city or commute outside for employment opportunities. Currently, 25.6% of Zachary residents commute outside of the Parish for work. This commuting trend indicates that Zachary's regional role is as a residential hub for workers employed in the larger metropolitan area.

Between 2017 and 2022, Zachary experienced unique demographic shifts. The most substantial growth was observed in the 65-74 age bracket, suggesting an increasing retiree population or an aging-in-place trend among existing residents. Following closely, the 45-54 age group also saw significant expansion. These demographic changes have implications for various sectors within Zachary, including healthcare, housing, and retail.

**Table 6: Age Distribution in 2017 and 2022**

Zachary Community Schools Population by Age Comparisons 2017 to 2022				
	2022	2017	Change	% Change
Population 1 year and over	26544	22725	3819	16.8%
<b>AGE</b>				
1 to 4 years	1308	1246	62	5.0%
5 to 17 years	5874	5260	614	11.7%
18 to 24 years	2442	2050	392	19.1%
25 to 34 years	3782	2924	858	29.3%
35 to 44 years	4121	3339	782	23.4%
45 to 54 years	3583	2379	1204	50.6%
55 to 64 years	2280	3135	-855	-27.3%
65 to 74 years	2186	1316	870	66.1%
75 years and over	968	1076	-108	-10.0%
Median age (years)	34.3	34.8	-0.5	-1.4%

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2017 and 2022 Estimates

[American Community Survey 5-year Estimates; 2017 and 2022: Table DP03](#)

### Local Economic Development Coordination

The City of Zachary's Department of Economic Development and the Zachary Chamber of Commerce collaborate to drive local economic development in Zachary. The Department of Economic Development takes the lead in fostering a strong and vibrant economy by supporting business recruitment, developing infrastructure, revitalizing the downtown area, and creating diverse housing options. The department has identified retail sectors, including restaurants, grocery stores, pet supply stores, and apparel stores, as beneficial areas for recruitment. By attracting new businesses and providing existing businesses with essential tools and training, the department helps ensure that the local economy can withstand changing economic conditions and market trends.

In 2023, the Zachary Chamber of Commerce and the City of Zachary established an Economic Development Committee. This committee is made up of local business leaders, realtors, bankers, chamber members, and council representatives; and its goal is to improve the city's economic health. The committee works to analyze current and future business needs, pinpoint potential development sites, encourage growth, and gather feedback from residents. By working together, they aim to attract commercial and industrial development that is a good fit for Zachary's needs, interests, and community identity.

**Pop out Box with following: <<<Louisiana Economic Development (LED)>>>**

The state's economic development agency, Louisiana Economic Development (LED) has been instrumental in supporting key capital investments in and surrounding Zachary, such as the

Georgia Pacific Paper Mill expansion at Port Hudson Mill. LED's Site Selection Initiative has also identified two "development ready" sites in Zachary. These sites offer access to transportation networks and are ideal for industries, such as manufacturing and innovation, that rely on efficient logistics. If developed, these sites may bolster an already prevalent industrial workforce in the city.

Pop out Box with following: <<<Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC)>>>

The Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) similarly advocates for economic development activity in the Capital Region, including East Baton Rouge Parish. BRAC has highlighted several key findings in its recent research, showcasing the region's economic recovery post-pandemic. The area has reached an all-time high in jobs, business numbers, and wages; with significant improvements in financial stability, including higher median household earnings and a sharp decline in poverty rates. However, challenges include net-negative migration, particularly among 25–44-year-olds, underscoring the need to create an environment that attracts and retains young professionals. These trends give insight to the business climate and future needs of the Capital Region as a whole.

### Local Economic Development Incentives and Strategies

Zachary has experienced significant population growth over the past several decades, and growth is expected to continue moderately in the future. In planning for the future, Zachary should focus on a balanced approach that utilizes economic development tools that align with smart growth best practices and strategies to stimulate and support sustainable economic growth. These opportunities may include targeted attraction efforts, incentivizing complementary businesses and industries, supporting existing businesses, fostering entrepreneurship, and investing in infrastructure and workforce development. Through proactive economic development, Zachary can continue to invest in its citizens while growing with intent.

### Development Credits

Development tax credits are financial incentives offered by government entities to stimulate private investment in projects aligned with public policy goals, such as economic development, improved infrastructure, ~~or workforce housing~~. These credits lower the tax burden for developers, making projects more feasible, while offering flexibility to balance development needs with community priorities.

For Zachary, customized incentive packages can work to address community needs while managing strategic growth. These packages could be designed to target specific issues, industries, and / or geographic areas. By identifying key areas for development and growth,

Zachary can strategically allocate resources and implement policies that will have the greatest impact.

Potential incentives within these packages could include infrastructure improvement credits which provide credits or subsidies to businesses that invest in enhancing local infrastructure, such as roads, utilities, or public transportation. Reducing property taxes is a common strategy and offers temporary or permanent reductions in property taxes for businesses that meet certain criteria, such as job creation targets or investment thresholds, could attract new businesses and encourage existing ones to expand. Grants for job creation can be utilized particularly to incentivize industries that offer high wages or require specialized skills. ~~Workforce housing credits can ensure that essential workers can afford to live within the community they serve. By incentivizing the development of workforce housing, Zachary can balance its growing housing demand while attracting and retaining a skilled workforce crucial to its long-term growth.~~

Zachary can proactively balance and manage its growth and attract businesses that will benefit both current and future residents by offering incentive packages that address the city's specific needs and opportunities.

### **Value Capture and Economic Development**

Value Capture is a toolbox of strategies that public jurisdictions can use to increase revenue for infrastructure projects such as transportation and transit projects, sewage and water, and parks and recreation spaces. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is very popular value capture tool that dozens of municipalities have embraced across the state of Louisiana. Other Value Capture strategies include impact fees, sales tax districts, joint development, land value taxes and negotiated exactions, transportation utility fees, special assessment districts, and business improvement districts. Value Capture strategies provide a critical and creative option for financing new infrastructure to support sustainable growth.

### **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a public financing method to subsidize redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects. The TIF method uses future gains in tax revenue, including the option to utilize property taxes or sales taxes, to subsidize current improvements that benefit existing residents and support growth. The completion of public infrastructure projects often result in an increase in the value of surrounding real estate, which generates additional tax revenue, and for commercial development, new sales tax revenue. When an increase in property value and private investment generates an increase in tax revenues, a portion of that future revenue is used to debt payments.

In Louisiana, the State will match the TIF tax with one percent of the four percent tax it collects on retail sales in the TIF district. No sales taxes are collected in a TIF district until it has retail stores. When stores open in the district the one percent TIF tax is collected in addition to the eight percent sales tax. The TIF taxes are in effect for at least 10 years until bonds for the infrastructure are paid off.

### **Public - Private Partnerships**

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are collaborative agreements between government entities and private sector organizations. PPPs can play a key role in development initiatives that commonly involve affordable housing, commercial buildings, and urban revitalization efforts.

Transportation infrastructure projects can include roads, bridges, transit systems, or pedestrian-focused developments. Additionally, PPPs have been used in renewable energy projects, educational facilities, and cultural or recreational spaces.

These partnerships can take various forms, including Lease Agreements, Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Contracts, Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Contracts, and Concessions. Each of these techniques has different implications for funding, maintaining, and ownership structure. The benefits of PPPs extend to both parties. For municipalities, PPPs can expedite the completion of large-scale projects, often at a reduced cost compared to traditional procurement and financing methods. By partnering with the public sector, private companies gain access to new markets and government incentives.

### **Entrepreneurial Incentives**

Business attraction, expansion, and retention are among the top priorities for Zachary residents, who desire a more diverse retail experience without the need to travel outside city limits. To meet these demands, entrepreneurial incentives - such as tax credits, grants, and low-interest loans- can be used to generate growth in targeted industries or geographic areas.

These incentives not only encourage local entrepreneurship but also provide a strategic pathway to diversify Zachary's economic base. By prioritizing investments in targeted industries, the City can cultivate sectors that align with its long-term goals. Furthermore, focusing on specific geographic areas—like underutilized commercial corridors—can revitalize key parts of the community and create vibrant hubs for both businesses and residents. This approaches economic development as both intentional and impactful, addressing community needs while eventually attracting larger retailers seeking to capitalize on the city's thriving consumer base and community appeal.

## Target Sector Opportunities

Zachary should respond to existing assets and pursue long-term growth by focusing on the following sectors: Retail and Leisure, Healthcare, Professional Services (locally focused), and Sports and Entertainment.

**Retail and Leisure:** For cities with a substantial commuter population, like Zachary, the Retail and Leisure sector presents the opportunity to capture external income and channel it into the local economy. Zachary can entice both residents and visitors to spend time and money within city boundaries by bolstering efforts to recruit diverse shopping, dining, and recreational experiences.

**Healthcare:** With a reputation for families choosing Zachary as their home and a significant increase of its population aged 45 and over, expanding healthcare services is essential to meet the evolving demands of residents. By strengthening this sector, Zachary can reduce the reliance on out-of-town healthcare providers, attract high paying jobs, and enhance overall quality of life. Offering accessible, high-quality medical services also attracts new residents and businesses while supporting the well-being of its growing population.

The recent expansion of Lane Memorial Hospital provides significant community health benefits for Zachary, additionally this supports economic development-focused medical and wellness services.

**Professional Services:** Zachary can reduce the need for residents to seek elsewhere for professional services such as legal, financial, accounting, marketing, consulting, and other specialized expertise through prioritizing the attraction and retention of local businesses. This approach strengthens the city's economic base and resilience, particularly during times of economic uncertainty. Additionally, a strong base of local professional services can enhance the city's attractiveness to other businesses, further stimulating economic development. This strategy will also contribute to the city's ability to attract upper wage professionals and lend to Zachary's identity as a Northern Baton Rouge metropolitan area employment center.

**Sports and Entertainment:** Creating opportunities for residents to enjoy high-quality recreational and cultural experiences can improve a city's quality of life and strengthen Zachary's identity as a hub for family-friendly activities in the region. Investing in local facilities, venues, and programming has the potential to attract visitors and generate

additional revenue for local businesses, while developing Zachary as an engaging place to live, work, and play.

### **Economic Development Strategic Recommendations**

1. Stimulate Retail Growth by developing a retail recruitment strategy to attract new businesses and fill gaps in the market.
2. Develop a Medical/Wellness-focused economic development district in Zachary to build on the growth of Lane Memorial Hospital and other new development in close proximity to the hospital.
3. Develop a business retention plan to support existing businesses and entrepreneurship supported with grants, low-interest loans, and business development resources.
4. Develop local policies and programs that foster a business-friendly environment, such as streamlined permitting and reduced barriers to entry.
5. Continue active engagement with regional stakeholders, including the Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC), Louisiana Economic Development (LED), and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), to align local efforts with broader economic strategies.
6. Participate in Louisiana's Economic Development Site Readiness Program (EDRED) to ensure Zachary's preparedness for future investment opportunities.

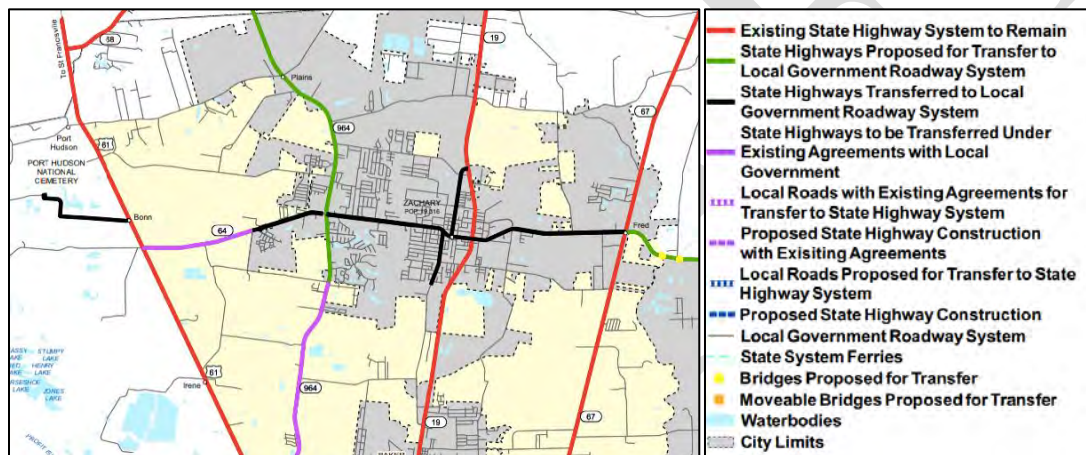
## Chapter 8 - Transportation and Mobility

### Introduction

A high-quality transportation system is essential for catalyzing economic development, future growth, and increasing the quality of life for residents. Roadways are frequently considered the primary transportation option, however a complete transportation system is multimodal and includes transportation options for people driving, walking, biking, and utilizing public transportation. The recent growth and commuter traffic to and from Baton Rouge mean the development of a complete and high-quality transportation system is essential for the City of Zachary.

### Roadways

**Map 6: Ownership/Management of Major Roadways in Zachary**



Source: Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD), 2025.

The City of Zachary is well served by a network of roadways that connect the city with the surrounding region. Specific roadways include:

**US 61:** US Route 61 is one of the main thoroughfares in the City of Zachary, connecting the City of Zachary to New Orleans in the southeast, and continuing through several more states and communities to the northwest.

**LA 19:** Louisiana Highway 19 is a central north-south corridor for the City of Zachary, intersecting the city’s major commercial corridors and downtown area, while also housing many of the commercial developments in Zachary. Highway 19 also connects Zachary with the Town of Slaughter to the north and to the City of Baker and the City of Baton Rouge to the South.

*LA 964/Old Scenic Highway:* Louisiana Highway 964 is a state highway that runs North and South through the City of Zachary, providing further connections to the nearby communities in East Baton Rouge Parish and East Feliciana Parish.

*LA 67/Plank Road:* Plank Road is one of the strongest commercial corridors in the City of Zachary, and constitutes the area in which the most development has occurred in recent years. In particular, Plank Road and its surrounding area has been characterized by a healthy mix of commercial, industrial, and residential development in recent years.

*Main Street:* Main Street also known as Louisiana Highway 64 is a strong commercial corridor that passes through the Zachary downtown district where it intersects with Louisiana Highway 19. This corridor continues east and west from Zachary's downtown district where it connects with major north-south roadways including Louisiana Highway 61, Louisiana Highway 964 and Plank Road

#### *LA DOTD Road Transfer Program*

Louisiana owns over 27% of its public roads compared to the national average of 19% and is among the top states in terms of state-owned road mileage. The Road Transfer Program aims to empower local entities with greater autonomy and responsibility by transferring approximately 5,000 miles of less critical state roads to local governments, along with maintenance funds for 40 years. This will decrease the percentage of public roads owned by the State of Louisiana to the national average. La DOTD identified Highway 964 as eligible for the program. The program primarily benefits municipalities that have the capacity for additional day-to-day road maintenance but lack the resources for capital improvements.

#### *Regional Transportation Planning*

The Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC) is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) that coordinates a unified vision for transportation planning and economic development in the Capital Region. MOVE2046 is the Capital Region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which establishes a shared vision for the future of transportation in the region and develops goals, strategies, and projects to help achieve that vision over the next 25 years. The MPO receives funding from many federal sources and distributes the funding in accordance with the MTP. The Transportation Plan faces funding challenges as transportation revenues have not scaled with the growing demand. Contributing factors include the gas tax not being indexed to inflation, more fuel-efficient vehicles, a rise in electric and alternative fuel vehicles, modest increases in vehicle miles traveled, and potential cuts in Federal funding contributions.

<<Pop Out>>

Title: MOVE2046 - A Regional Plan for Transportation <<move to pop out box>>

The latest MOVE2046 plan, released in 2022, highlights significant roadway improvement projects in Zachary, including a proposed rehabilitation of a 3,000-foot segment of New Weiss Road, stretching from Louisiana Highway 19 to Old Baker/Zachary Road. CPRC’s Transportation Improvement plan estimates delivery of this project to occur in 2027 and estimates a total cost of \$357k.

MOVE2046 also includes a “Visionary” component, which gives insight into identified roadways that are recognized as potential projects. Visionary projects are noted as important in serving the community, but are currently unfunded or unprogrammed due to fiscal constraints. The plan forecasts a need for the widening of Mt. Pleasant - Zachary Road, which serves as a vital corridor for residents and visitors of Zachary. The estimated project cost is \$26 million.

MOVEBR, the largest infrastructure investment project in East Baton Rouge Parish's history, is currently underway with funding from the half-cent MoveBR sales tax approved by voters in 2018. The parish recognized several corridors in Zachary as eligible for improvements. The MOVEBR Program budget allocates \$49 million of the available transportation infrastructure improvements funds for Future Community Enhancement (FCE) Projects. The FCE projects include the following five road improvement projects:

**MacHost Road:** This improvement project proposes to improve existing conditions along MacHost Road including alignment, sight distance, shoulders, and drainage. The City of Zachary maintains ownership for the design of this project.

**McHugh Road:** This new capacity project includes design and construction of a new/realigned rural, two-lane roadway. The United States Army Corps of Engineers is constructing the Comite bridge and anticipates completion in 2026.

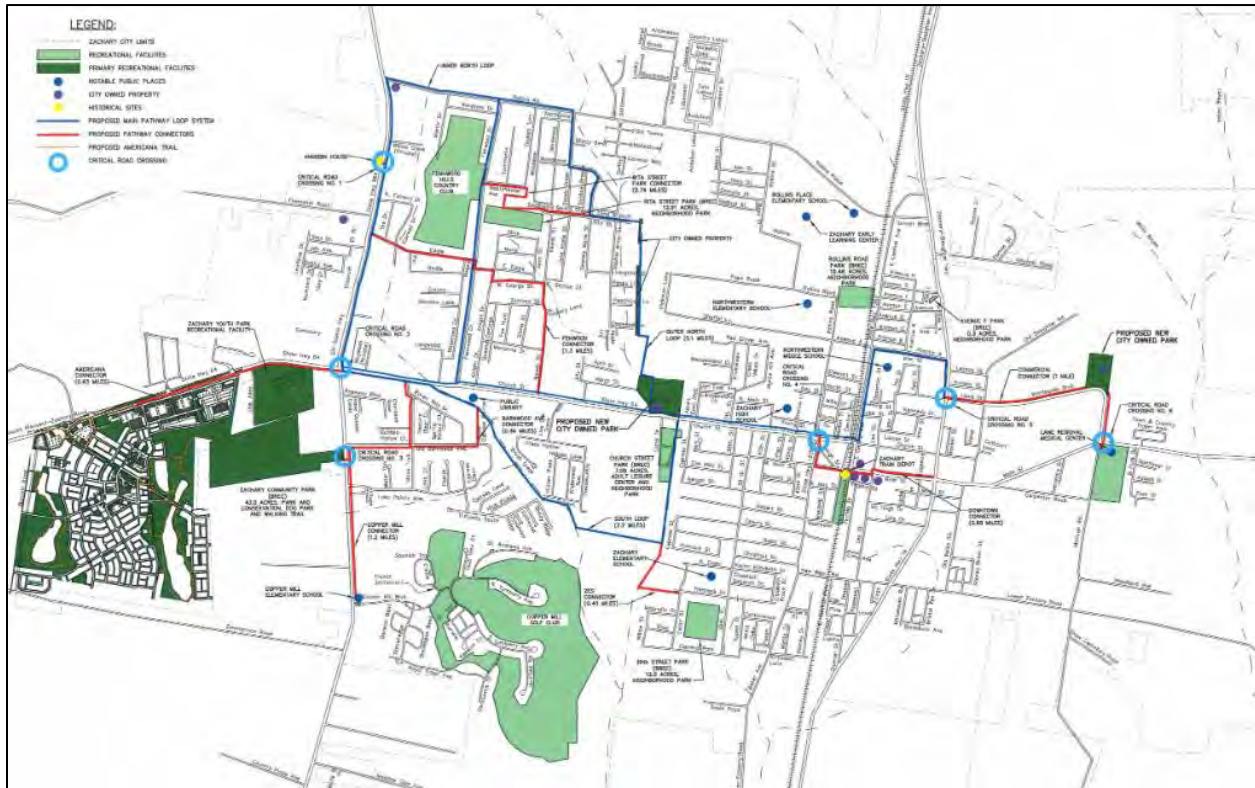
**Rollins Road:** This new capacity project’s planned scope of work includes closing in the existing ditches, reconstructing the existing roadway, and adding bike lanes and sidewalks to both sides of the road. The estimated letting date is 2027.

**Port Hudson-Pride Road:** The proposed new capacity project adds paved shoulders while open ditches will remain, though reconstructed, throughout the corridor. A sidewalk will provide connectivity between LA 964 and Pin Oak Landing on both sides of Port Hudson - Pride Road. The estimated letting date is 2026.

**Mount Pleasant Road:** This safety improvement project includes construction of new walkways and crosswalks near the Zachary Youth Park.

## Active Transportation

Map 7: Proposed Zachary Connector Network



Source: City of Zachary's Outdoor Recreation Master Plan

Communities seeking to increase quality of life for residents embrace active transportation. Shared-use paths create opportunities for physical exercise, environmental stewardship, and community connection. For citizens, it means safer and more engaging neighborhoods. For Zachary, it's an investment that meets public demand for equitable transportation options and presents the city as a model for smart urban development.

Over the next 20 years, the strategic development of sidewalks, trails, local bike paths, and regional greenways is pivotal in transforming Zachary. The City of Zachary developed an Outdoor Recreation Master Plan, completed in 2018, that provides analysis on the best fit solutions for connecting the city's recreational assets.

**Sidewalks:** To promote safe pedestrian access and as Zachary expands the City should continue prioritizing upgrades and expansions of the sidewalk network — particularly in areas around schools, parks, and senior centers to promote safe pedestrian access. Effective sidewalk improvement plans should aim to create a continuous, interconnected pathway throughout the

City through retrofitting existing sidewalks and constructing new sidewalks where gaps exist. Developing pedestrian-friendly streetscapes that prioritize alternative forms of transportation is key to sustainable and thoughtful urban development.

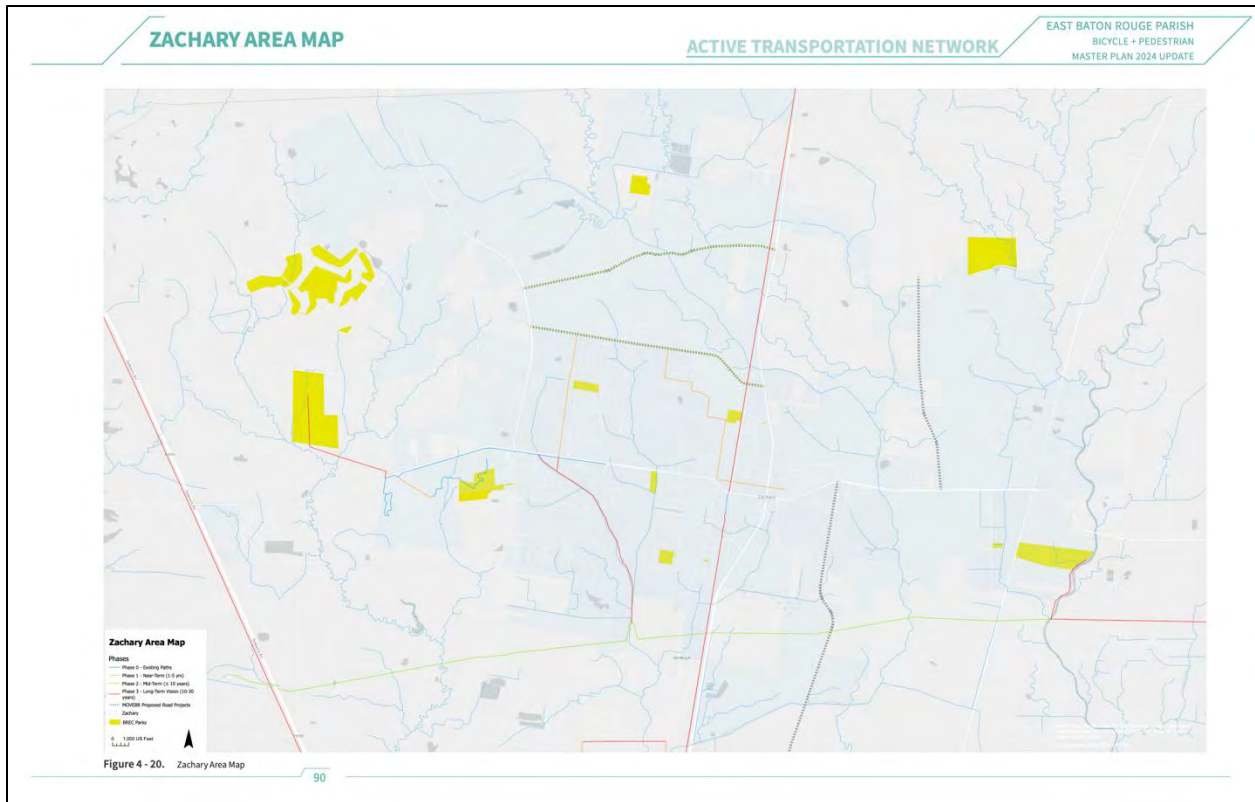
**Trails:** The Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge, BREC, maintains a total of 12 parks in or near Zachary city limits, with only two providing nature trails. These same parks contain 590 acres of land and amenities, however, the total amount of trails created is less than a mile (75%). Natural trails serve not only as recreational assets but also as vital connectors that link neighborhoods with nature reserves and parks. Partnership with BREC to improve trail development in Zachary will help preserve Zachary’s natural landscapes and provide active, accessible recreation to its citizens.

**Local Bike Paths:** The development of local bike paths are an integral component to enhance the City’s transportation framework. Strategically placed paths to key destinations such as schools, shopping districts, and employment centers can serve both recreational and commuter cyclists. Zachary can also encourage a bike-friendly environment by considering amenities such as bike lanes, bike racks, and repair stations.

**Greenways:** In the past efforts were made to address Zachary’s connectivity including the 2009 plan *Visions of Zachary*, completed in partnership with the Center of Planning Excellence (CPEX). The plan presented a greenway as a community-oriented and ecologically responsible solution to the challenges of fragmented urban development. Greenways are shared-use corridors that connect a city’s recreation and urban activities. To position Zachary as a leader in regional connectivity, the City may consider advocating for the development of greenways that extend beyond city limits and connect Zachary with neighboring communities and regional attractions via land or water (blueways).

The envisioned active transportation network in Zachary represents more than just infrastructure — it is a shift towards a healthier community.

Map 8: 2024 East Baton Rouge Bike + Pedestrian Master Plan

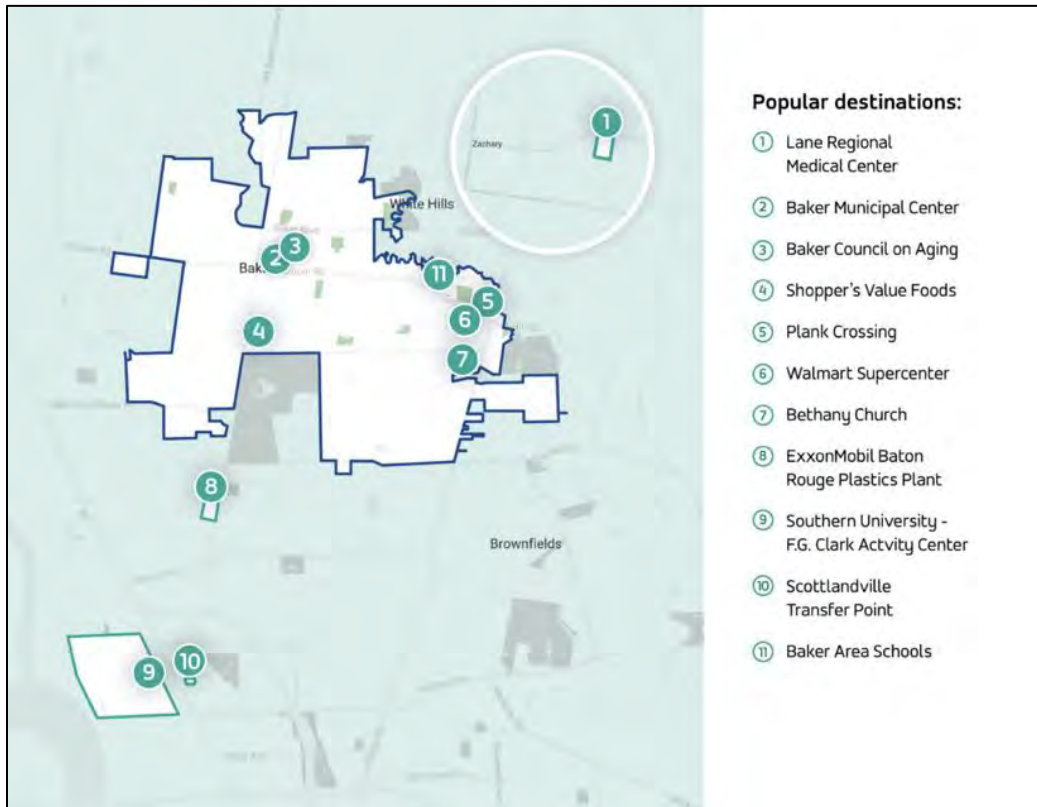


Source: 2024 East Baton Rouge Parish Bike + Pedestrian Master Plan Update)

Recently, East Baton Rouge Parish updated the parish wide transportation plan in the *2024 East Baton Rouge Parish Bike + Pedestrian Master Plan Update*. This update to the master plan identifies many corridors throughout Zachary for the development of bike facilities in the near-term (1 – 5 years), mid-term (less than 10 years), and long-term (10 – 30 years). Key corridors identified for the development of bike facilities in the near-term include Rollins Road and Port Hudson-Pride Road, both are also identified in the MOVEBR plans mentioned above. The Plan highlights a regional scale rails-to-trails project along Louisiana Highway 19 and Central Avenue that will connect with Baker in the long-term. The investments proposed in the *2024 East Baton Rouge Parish Bike + Pedestrian Master Plan Update* are essential for the City of Zachary to develop a complete and multi-modal transportation system.

## Partnership Opportunities

### Map 9: Lynx By CATS City of Baker Micro-Mobility Program Map



Source: CATS - City of Baker Micro-Mobility Program Map)

#### *Paratransit*

To cater to the needs of Zachary's diverse population, the city should proactively explore partnerships with local healthcare providers, hospitals, and community organizations that specialize in accessible care. These partnerships will address the current gaps in services where residents need it most. Key actions could include coordinating with healthcare providers to connect individuals who require paratransit services due to medical conditions or mobility limitations. Developing transportation programs specifically for those who cannot drive helps bridge mobility challenges. Furthermore, working with local hospitals to ensure that discharge planning includes transportation arrangements for patients without access to reliable transportation would further the city's efforts in addressing these needs.

#### *Microtransit*

Microtransit provides on-demand shared rides using vehicles like vans and shuttle buses. It combines aspects of both public transportation and rideshare services. The Capital Area Transit

System (CATS) does not formally extend to the Zachary area. However, Lane Regional Medical Center, is a popular destination for nearby Baker residents. Baker is served by the program LYNX by CATS, an on-demand public transportation service that allows residents to call for a shared ride through mobile app or phone call. The pilot program began in 2022 and has grown to 7,000 monthly users. The ride-share service provides residents with a flat fee for a ride to key amenities that cater to their needs, such as grocery stores and medical appointments.

#### *Regional/Job-Focused Transportation*

Investing in comprehensive transportation plans will help Zachary connect quality employment opportunities to the larger region. A focus on regional connectivity would include supporting the improvement of key routes and infrastructure, smart traffic management systems, and development of a transit system between nearby cities. Embracing regional connectivity can support resident needs while bolstering Zachary's importance to the Parish as a major employment center.

### **Transportation and Mobility Strategic Recommendations**

1. Coordinate with regional partners including the Capital Regional Planning Commission for the successful implementation of the proposed MOVEBR roadway improvements.
2. Begin building out a network of active transportation infrastructure including walking paths and bicycle lanes in alignment with the BREC plan and other local planning efforts.
3. Work with the Capital Region Planning Commission and East Baton Rouge Parish to develop a Zachary crosstown connection study to determine the feasibility of a new East/West connector road to link South Zachary from Highway 964 to Highway 73.
4. Conduct a study on local micromobility options (bicycles, e-bikes, scooters, and other small-scale shared transportation systems) and regional transportation connections that will support safe, affordable, and convenient connections for residents within Zachary's core neighborhoods, as well as to regional destinations outside the city.

## **Chapter 9: Community Resilience and Preservation**

### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on enhancing resilience and optimizing natural resources and infrastructure in the City of Zachary. Addressing environmental challenges and leveraging natural assets are crucial for preserving the City's assets and building the community's vision for the future. This chapter explores strategies and initiatives aimed at fortifying Zachary's resilience, managing natural resources responsibly, and enhancing hazard mitigation policy and infrastructure to enhance safety and community well-being. By investing in resilient infrastructure, Zachary aims to ensure long-term prosperity and quality of life for its residents.

### **Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment**

A diverse array of trees providing a green and lush canopy line neighborhoods and streets in Zachary, especially in the residential neighborhoods near downtown Zachary. Protecting and enhancing the local ecology and designing new development with the preservation of these natural features as a priority will ensure this canopy continues to be enjoyed by residents and future generations. Encouraging the expansion of the City's tree canopy in newly developed residential areas should be a priority for Zachary.

Land use regulations and the quality of new development will play major roles in determining the future landscape of the City of Zachary, and efforts should be made to prioritize the local natural features of the land. Both private and public lands can contribute to habitat restoration and preservation, with coordination between private landowners and local government allowing for more contiguous habitat corridors.

### **Regional Water Resources**

The primary sources of fresh groundwater in East Baton Rouge Parish from shallowest to deepest are the Chicot equivalent, Evangeline equivalent, and Jasper equivalent aquifer systems. Lake Maurepas, the Amite River, and the Mississippi River constitute the largest bodies of water within region, contributing to smaller creeks and branches near the City of Zachary. These include Little Colyell Creek, which intersects the City of Zachary, and Big Branch, which runs adjacent to the City. These waterways, which intersect the City and surrounding region, periodically rise from heavy rainfall and runoff, causing property damage and creating a hazard for the community. Development must take into consideration its proximity to rivers, lakes, creeks, floodplains, and even man-made water bodies such as engineered drainage ditches. Precautions should also be taken to ensure that all developments are also adequately elevated and

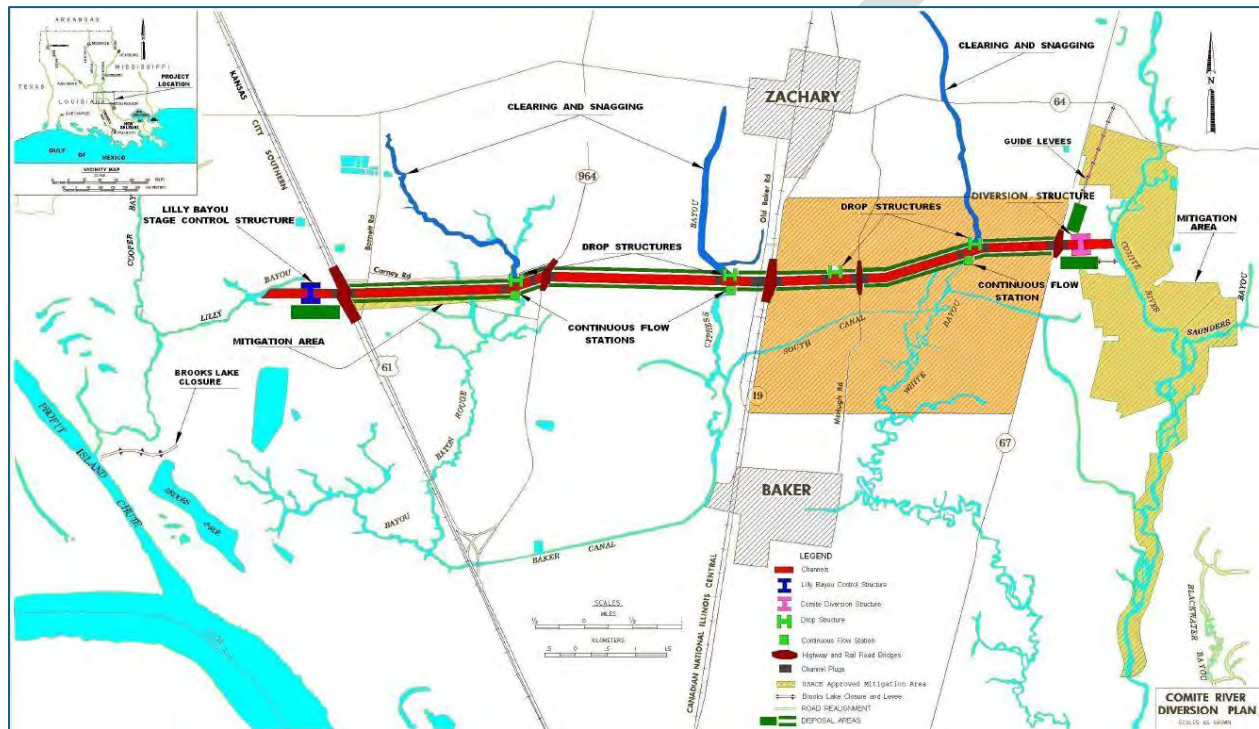
located to mitigate potential floodwater damages, and development within wet areas should be controlled to limit negative impacts to the surrounding ecosystem. Design for new subdivisions should prioritize developments with compact building footprints and situating them on less environmentally sensitive or significant areas. New and existing development can further these design goals by implementing structural or non-structural infrastructure solutions to minimize pollution runoff, prevent erosion, and reduce the added volume of stormwater produced by impervious surfaces.

### **Risk Assessment/Tactics for Reducing Risks**

Sources of flooding within the Zachary and East Baton Rouge area have been identified as primarily being associated with stormwater runoff coming from the Comite River, an important waterway to the drainage of the region. This flooding has been exacerbated by recurring debris blockages in the Comite River and increased rainfall in recent years. In response to these issues, there have been some clean up efforts to remove debris from storm drains, pipes, creeks, and bayous. One of these projects, the Comite River Cleaning Project, focused on clean-up of debris in the Comite River and its tributaries, including Ward Creek, which is located in the study area. This effort was a parish-wide partnership between Zachary, Central, Baker, and Baton Rouge, alongside storm debris removal partner, DRC Emergency Services. In October 2023, the cleanup effort in Ward Creek was completed, clearing out a total of 7,500 tons of debris. However, despite these cleanup efforts, there have been 2,765 3-1-1 drainage related calls made from the study area over the past year. This indicates a continued need for drainage maintenance in the area, as well as a need to identify new interventions that homeowners and residents can undertake to mitigate these issues. Undertaking interventions to mitigate flooding, stormwater runoff, and subsidence is a prudent decision that contributes to personal safety, while also contributing to broader efforts in environmental conservation and community resilience.

## Comite River Diversion Project

The Comite River Diversion Canal project will provide significant flood protection benefits for the City of Zachary by diverting excess water from the Comite River directly to the Mississippi River, reducing the risk of flooding during heavy rainfall events. This infrastructure project will help to protect homes, businesses, and critical infrastructure in Zachary and surrounding areas, enhancing public safety and supporting long-term economic resilience.



Source: DOTD, Comite River Diversion Project -- <https://dotd.la.gov/about/office-of-project-delivery/engineering/public-works/levees/comite-river-diversion-canal-project/>

## Maintaining Community Infrastructure

The infrastructure that serves the City of Zachary’s community requires regular maintenance and inspections to ensure its efficacy. Maintaining the integrity of utilities and stormwater infrastructure are essential functions to maintaining the quality of life of Zachary residents, and help ensure their safety and wellbeing during flood events. The 2016 Floods were a reminder of the local region’s vulnerability to flash flooding, and stormwater management has become a high priority mitigation strategy to protect the safety and wellbeing of the community. In addition to adequate and timely maintenance of infrastructure, including the following green infrastructure features in new developments will reduce flood risk and enhance the quality of development in Zachary.



### **Bioswales**

Bioswales are landscape features that are designed to capture storm water runoff, soak it into the ground, and filter out pollutants. Bioswales can also include native plants and grasses and be placed in public right-of-ways providing a way to beautify corridors and reduce polluted storm water runoff.

### **Rain Gardens**

A rain garden is a depressed area in the landscape that collects rain water from a roof, driveway or street and allows it to soak into the ground. Planted with grasses and flowering perennials, rain gardens can be a cost effective and beautiful way to reduce runoff. Rain gardens can also help filter out pollutants in runoff and provide food and shelter for butterflies, song birds and other wildlife.

### **Permeable Paving**

Alternatives to traditional pavement on our paved surfaces can help reduce runoff by infiltrating rain water. These alternative materials which include pervious asphalt, pervious concrete, interlocking pavers, and plastic grid pavers, allow rain and water to seep through the surface down to underlying layers of soil and gravel. In addition to reducing runoff, permeable pavements can help filter out pollutants that contribute to water pollution. Permeable pavements can also reduce the need for road salt and reduce construction costs for residential and commercial development by reducing the need for some conventional drainage features.

### **Vacant Lot Stabilization**

A vacant lot can be an opportunity to redefine its neighborhood through added economic and social value, while also providing essential protections for the community. Site improvements can include removing dumped items and vegetated overgrowth, planting grass, trees, or flowers, or installing simple structures such as fences or benches. In particular, prioritizing the planting of native species and the implementation of simple, non-structural enhancements to a lot's natural irrigation can help reduce runoff and support local ecosystems. General maintenance services can include cutting grass, keeping vegetation well-maintained, watering plants, and other services as necessary.

### **Runoff Retrofit**

Stormwater runoff is caused by widespread impervious surfaces blocking rainfall or snowmelt from infiltrating the ground. This water accumulates over the hard surfaces and flows over land directly into water bodies or down storm drains; however, if the rate or volume of flow exceeds



what the system can handle, it can result in flooding, pollution, and erosion. Under the Clean Water Act, stormwater is managed under a tiered permit program that regulates discharges from municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4), and requires covered systems to implement stormwater management practices, also called Best Management Practices (BMPs) to prevent the negative effects of stormwater runoff. BMPs can take many forms and include vegetative, structural, or managerial practices that help control flooding, stop pollution from entering waterways, and reduce soil erosion.

### **Cisterns and Rain Barrels**

Cisterns and rain barrels are structures that store rooftop runoff and reuse it for landscaping and other non-potable uses. Instead of a nuisance to get rid of, rooftop runoff would now be as a resource that can be reused or infiltrated. In contrast, conventional stormwater management strategies take rooftop runoff, which is often relatively free of pollutants, and direct it into the stormwater treatment system along with runoff from paved areas.

### **Brownfields**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines a brownfield as property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

Brownfield sites are vacant and underutilized properties where actual or suspected environmental issues are a barrier to redevelopment. Under the Office of Environmental Assessment, Remediation Division, LDEQ's Brownfields Program partners Federal, State and local resources to facilitate the reuse of Brownfield sites throughout the State. Addressing potential environmental issues, especially financial and regulatory hurdles, is often intimidating, creating a barrier to the redevelopment or expanded use of these sites. LDEQ's Brownfields Program helps convert these properties from community liabilities into community assets by assisting local governments and communities to navigate the environmental process from investigation to

## **Community Resilience Goals Strategic Recommendations**

1. Maintain and expand the City's stormwater and drainage infrastructure to ensure the community's safety and wellbeing. Ensuring this infrastructure is both maintained and improved will be a crucial element to protecting the City and its residents from existing and future flood hazards.
2. Integrate natural resource management into hazard mitigation efforts and enhance the role of natural resource conservation in hazard mitigation policies.
3. Pursue coordination between the City of Zachary and other municipal, parish, and state entities on developing long-range planning principles to guide sustainable development patterns, taking into consideration the unique geographical and environmental characteristics of City and larger region. Sharing knowledge on the efficacy and implementation of hazard mitigation strategies and natural resource management will allow the City of Zachary to make decisions in a regional context, and understand how those decisions will contribute to larger regional strategies.

## ~~Chapter 10: Livability and Local Culture~~

### ~~Introduction~~

~~This chapter focuses on Zachary continuing to be a great place to live in the future. This plan believes in “quality of life” as a driver of growth in a community, and that healthy communities experience a high quality of life. This chapter presents a series of opportunities to maintain the quality of life for residents of Zachary, including increased access to a variety of housing types, quality jobs, quality schools, health facilities, and recreational opportunities.~~

### ~~What is a livable, healthy community?~~

~~A livable, healthy community is a place that supports the physical and mental health of its residents and provide a supportive social environment. This can be accomplished through many paths including, a community that supports the following:~~

- ~~• Safe and Inclusive Neighborhoods~~
- ~~• Affordable, diverse housing options~~
- ~~• Access to Nature and Recreation~~
- ~~• Health Services and Support~~
- ~~• Education and Economic Opportunity~~
- ~~• Environmental Sustainability~~
- ~~• Social Connection and Engagement~~

### ~~Key Considerations For Zachary~~

- ~~1. **Residential Growth:** Supporting diverse and sustainable housing options.~~
- ~~2. **Commercial and Service Development:** Expanding businesses and services that enhance local quality of life, especially in Downtown Zachary and in the commercial corridor.~~
- ~~3. **Education Quality:** Maintaining strong working relationships with the Zachary Community School District and other educational partners in the region.~~
- ~~4. **Healthcare:** Branding Zachary as a regional healthcare hub and developing a medical district building on the expansion of Lane Regional Medical Center.~~

### ~~Housing Choice and Diversity for All Life Stages~~

~~Quality housing that support current and future community needs is extremely important for the growth and wellness of any community. While some individuals and families may live in a~~

single residence for many years of their lives, housing for many is more fluid and involves numerous relocations over a lifespan. A community with a high quality of life will have many housing options that supports residents through every stage of life, including:

- **Seniors:** accessible housing and retirement-friendly neighborhoods that allow aging residents to remain in the city.
- **Young Professionals:** townhomes, lofts, and mixed-use apartments close to commercial districts.
- **Families:** single-family homes, cottages, and larger-lot neighborhoods for those seeking space.

Zachary is often identified as a community where the predominant housing option is single-family houses on larger lots. While single family detached residential development is the predominate housing type, there are other housing options in Zachary. Zachary has several multi-unit buildings, manufactured housing on both large and small lots, and planned unit residential developments on smaller lots designed for walkability and access to commercial and personal services. Zachary can, and should, be a community that has adequate housing for all of its residents, including young individuals and families starting their careers, multi-generation families, aging families and families and individuals that support the Zachary economy.

This plan shares several **smart growth** strategies Zachary should use to prevent housing shortages, attract new talent, and keep families rooted in the community across generations.

#### ***Residential Design Standards***

Residential Design Standards in rural and suburban communities can play a crucial role in guiding future growth and preserving community character. Examples include:

- Variation in façade design to avoid repetitive streetscapes (e.g., alternating rooflines, front porch styles).
- Use of durable, aesthetically-pleasing materials (e.g., brick, fiber cement, wood accents).
- Tree planting or landscaping in front yards and between lots
- Limit garage-forward designs by encouraging side-entry or recessed garages
- Promote pedestrian-scale lighting for safety and aesthetics



~~These standards should be developed with community input and implemented through the Unified Development Code (UDC) and other Zachary development codes and regulations.~~

### ~~*Accessory Dwelling Units*~~

~~Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or “mother-in-law suites” are secondary housing units located on the same lot as a primary residence. ADUs may be attached or detached from the primary structure. ADUs can serve many purposes including providing additional rental housing, providing housing for families and/or other individuals wishing to age in place, and providing flexibility to for homeowners depending on their specific household needs. With appropriate design standards ADUs have little to no impact on adjacent residences and often contribute to increases property values in neighborhoods.~~

### ~~*Manufactured Housing Solutions*~~

~~As Zachary continue to grow, high-quality manufactured housing can provide an affordable housing option, especially in areas of Zachary were manufactured housing current exists. Manufactured housing—often misunderstood or underutilized—has advanced significantly in design, construction, and integration with traditional residential development.~~

~~Modern manufactured housing:~~

- ~~• Can be designed to include the same amenities as traditional site-built housing with similar floorplans~~
- ~~• Includes energy-efficient and contemporary architectural features~~
- ~~• Can be designed and installed a lot to allow the residence to blend with existing community character and design standards.~~
- ~~• Can offer high-quality living at a lower price point than traditional site-built homes, helping meet the needs of first-time buyers, young families, essential workers, and seniors on fixed incomes.~~

~~With proper planning and updated standards, manufactured housing can be permitted strategically in appropriate areas to address housing affordability, community resilience, and demographic shifts.~~

### ~~*Senior Housing*~~

~~A diversity of housing opportunities in mixed-use areas can also appeal to the older citizens Zachary and allow for more opportunities to age in place. National trends indicate aging~~



residents ~~often look to downsize to~~ housing units that are easier to maintain with designs, features and amenities that focus on accessibility.

Housing developments that meet the needs of older adults include ~~small-scale apartments, multi-unit homes, traditional senior housing and assisted living facilities, as well as Active Adult Retirement Communities and planned developments that cater to senior citizens.~~ Additionally, ~~mixed-use neighborhoods are attractive for older adult housing options as they can provide easy access to additional services including retail and personal services, social opportunities, and proximity to medical facilities.~~

### ~~Smart Growth Mixed-Use Neighborhoods~~

Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs), Planned Unit Development (PUD), and other developments that may include a mix of residential development typologies while aligning with the goals of the community can provide needed housing, enhance public infrastructure and public services, and support community residential and economic growth.

Mixed-use neighborhoods provide an opportunity for diverse housing options, ranging from single family residential on smaller lot sizes to high quality multi-unit homes or small-scale apartments on appropriately sized lots consistent in design and scale to existing neighborhoods. A variety of housing options in walkable ~~neighborhoods/~~ in close proximity to services and essential needs can attract new residents and support additional commercial development.

Another benefit to developing and planning for ~~smart growth neighborhoods is the provision of improved infrastructure can incentivize development in these areas, and disincentivize development in areas with limited infrastructure.~~ Ensuring a variety of housing options is essential to accommodate Zachary's evolving population while maintaining infrastructure and community needs.

### **Community Health**

Public health, wellness, and recreation are central to Zachary's growth and development strategy. Current and future investments such as the Lane Memorial Hospital expansion must be connected to broader city planning and development efforts. Linking medical, recreational, and civic initiatives together will result in a community where health and wellness are built into everyday life for all residents

The City of Zachary has convenient access to medical facilities. Zachary is home to the Lane Regional Medical Center which is the primary healthcare resource for Zachary and the



surrounding region of Baker, Central, Clinton, Jackson, St. Francisville, New Roads, and North Baton Rouge.

Zachary is investing in several priorities that will enhance community health including:

- Expanding green spaces, parks, and trail systems.
- Supporting wellness initiatives through walkability, bikeability, and fitness-oriented public spaces.
- Developing cultural and recreational destinations, such as Hug Your People Park, amphitheaters, and water-based recreation.

### **Education Opportunities**

The Zachary Community School District, established in 2002 after separating from East Baton Rouge Parish School System, serves nearly 6,000 Pre-K through 12 students across seven schools, maintaining a 19:1 student-teacher ratio. The district has consistently earned top academic rankings in Louisiana—dubbed a top-5% district—with an "A" letter grade from the state and numerous “Top Gains” and “Opportunity Honoree” designations. Beyond academics, the district invests in whole-child development, offering robust safety measures, character-building programs, extracurriculars, athletics, and virtual learning options rooted in community engagement. Its high-performing schools and comprehensive educational approach play a central role in drawing families to Zachary, supporting economic growth and enhancing the community’s quality of life

- Zachary Early Learning Center (Pre-K)
- Northwestern Elementary (K)
- Rollins Place Elementary (1st-2nd)
- Zachary Elementary (3rd-4th)
- Copper Mill Elementary (5th-6th)
- Northwestern Middle (7th-8th)
- Zachary High (9th-12th)

### **~~Livability and Local Culture Strategic Recommendations~~**

- ~~1. Implement clear design guidelines that will promote aesthetic consistency and sustainability utilizing smart growth principles.~~
- ~~2. Allow ADUs in specified areas of Zachary to provide flexible housing options, supporting multigenerational living and affordable rental opportunities.~~
- ~~3. Develop senior friendly housing solutions will enable residents to remain in their community as they age.~~
- ~~4. Ensure appropriate regulations and locations for manufactured homes that will support affordable housing options without compromising community character.~~
- ~~5. Focus new educational opportunities on aligning the skill set of the local workforce with targeted industries for economic growth.~~

## Chapter 11: Implementation

### Introduction

A Master Plan can **present** the perfect goals and strategies for a community, however, if the goals and strategies are not implemented, the plan will be end up nothing more than a nice book with a pretty cover sitting on a shelf. It is important that the goals and strategic recommendations presented in this plan are implemented by the City of Zachary. This chapter presents a framework that will guide Zachary in successfully fulfilling the promise of this plan.

### Who Implements the Zachary 2025 Plan?

The City of Zachary is the primary entity responsible for implementing the plan. State Law specifies that the Zachary Planning and Zoning Commission is responsible for adopting the plan. After adoption, implementation of the plan will take many forms and will be undertaken by several entities, public officials, and public bodies within the City.

The Planning and Zoning Commission makes decisions on subdivisions of land and **some** planning related applications **specified by the UDC**, and makes official recommendations to the Zachary City Council on UDC changes, conditional use permits and other development applications. The Zachary City Council makes decisions on UDC changes, development applications **specified by the UDC**, and other processes such as annexations. Additionally, the Mayor and City Council, through their budgeting authority, will be a primary force in the Plan's success.

The Zachary Planning Department will serve as the lead agency responsible for coordinating, guiding, and monitoring the implementation of this Master Plan. The department's role includes ensuring that development decisions align with adopted policies, tracking progress on the plan, initiating regular plan updates, and reviewing projects for consistency with community goals.

Last, a key and often neglected priority in successfully implementing the plan is **partnership and collaboration**. The City of Zachary, in partnership with various City departments and agencies, public officials, and regional and state agencies, should facilitate and support public education and outreach concerning the Zachary 2025 Plan, identify and pursue funding opportunities, and provide technical assistance and support to advance the vision, goals and recommendations of the plan. With partnership and collaboration, and vision and persistence, the Zachary 2025 Plan will remain a living document that continues to reflect the needs and aspirations of the Zachary's community.

## Implementation Matrix

The strategic recommendations included in Chapters 4-10 of this plan, are listed in an implementation matrix. The Matrix has three components:

### Strategic Recommendations

List of Strategic Recommendations from Chapter 4-10 of this plan.

### Action/Implementation Tool

This column shares action/implementations that should be used in addressing the strategic recommendations.

- **Planning Study:** Establishes policies to guide decision making or requires additional planning for specific implementation initiatives, or more detailed study to guide decision making.
- **Development Regulations:** Update UDC regulations and tools, such as subdivision standards or overlay districts to ensure consistent and successful implementation.
- **Capital Investment:** Requires public capital investments to complete the recommendation.
- **Partnerships:** developing specific partnerships among the public, private, non-profit, and institutional sectors.
- **Program Development:** New programs need to be developed and absorbed into the City's service structure and/or budget.
- **Enforcement:** Enforcement of existing codes and regulations by responsible City actors.

### Time Frame

General recommended timeline for completing the strategic recommendation.

- **Ongoing Initiatives (OG):** Actions in this category may be underway currently and/or require ongoing coordination and planning.
- **Short-Term Initiatives (ST):** Short term actions are anticipated to begin within one to two years of adoption of the plan.
- **Mid-Term Initiatives (MT):** Actions within this category require additional planning or detailed study and will require coordination with other agencies. Due to the complexity of actions in this category the expected time frame is two to five years.
- **Long-Term Initiatives (LT):** Actions within this category will require five to ten years to define needs, develop partnerships and establish funding sources.



<b>Zachary Growth and Regional Development (Chapter 4)</b>		
<b>Strategic Recommendations</b>	<b>Action/Implementation Tool</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Develop a long-range <i>Zachary Growth and Annexation Strategy</i> to outlines where, how, and when Zachary should consider expansion that is orderly, cost-effective, and aligned with community goals <u>and smart growth principles</u> .	Planning Study, Partnerships, Program Development	ST
Conduct a <b>comprehensive review of the Zachary Unified Development Code, building codes, and other development-related ordinances</b> to reduce barriers to high-quality infill residential development within Zachary’s core areas that will strengthen existing neighborhoods, support local businesses, and make efficient use of infrastructure and services.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Capital Investment, Partnerships, Program Development, Enforcement	ST
In collaboration with the Parish and other municipalities in the region, develop a <i>Zachary/Regional Infrastructure Demand Analysis</i> planning tool to evaluate the current capacity and future needs of infrastructure system such as transportation, stormwater, sewer and other utilities, identify where growth is expected and estimate future infrastructure needs for supporting <u>balanced</u> , sustainable and resilient growth in and outside of Zachary <u>supported by smart growth best practices</u> .	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Capital Investment, Partnerships, Program Development, Enforcement	MT
The City of Zachary shall develop a <b>Tracking System for Zachary 2025 Plan Progress</b> and prepare yearly update reports.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Capital Investment, Partnerships, Program Development, Enforcement	ST



<b>Future Land Use and Development (Chapter 5)</b>		
<b>Strategic Recommendations</b>	<b>Action/Implementation Tool</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Work with the Planning and Zoning Commission, City Staff, and residents to update the Zachary UDC and the zoning districts to align with the Zachary Future Land Use Map.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Enforcement	ST
Identify areas in Zachary, including Downtown Zachary and the Medical District, for land use and design studies to determine appropriate land use, planning and design regulations to include in future UDC updates.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Partnerships, Program Development	ST
Revamp the Zone of Influence Process with East Baton Rouge Parish using Zachary Future Land Use Map and categories to guide the process.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Partnerships	MT

<b>Downtown and Commercial Corridors (Chapter 6)</b>		
<b>Strategic Recommendations</b>	<b>Action/Implementation Tool</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Pursue official Main Street designation for Zachary and pursue associated resource and funding opportunities.	Planning Study, Partnerships, Program Development	MT
Update the Downtown Zachary Plan with the theme <i>Destination Zachary: A Hub for Community and Visitors</i> , with a focus on new development in downtown, recreation and community anchors, and cultural identity.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Partnerships, Program Development	ST
Conduct special corridor planning studies that focus on enhancing the appeal and functionality of key commercial corridors by promoting business growth, increasing tax revenue, and improving the visitor and resident experience	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Partnerships, Enforcement	MT - LT
Identify areas with suitable development characteristics for future <del>mixed-use</del> / <u>smart growth</u> development to support a diverse community by encouraging developments that combine residential, commercial, and civic uses to create inclusive, walkable, and resilient neighborhoods.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Capital Investment, Program Development, Enforcement	ST
Improve gateways to strengthen Zachary’s identity and attract investment by establishing attractive, cohesive, and welcoming entry points into the city that reflect its values and growth potential.	Capital Investment, Program Development, Partnerships	OG



<b>Economic Development (Chapter 7)</b>		
<b>Strategic Recommendations</b>	<b>Action/Implementation Tool</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Stimulate Retail Growth by developing a retail recruitment strategy to attract new businesses and fill gaps in the market.	Partnerships, Program Development	ST
Develop a Medical/Wellness-focused economic development district in Zachary to build on the growth of Lane Memorial Hospital and other new development in close proximity to the hospital.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Partnerships, Program Development	MT
Develop a business retention plan to support existing businesses and entrepreneurship supported with grants, low-interest loans, and business development resources.	Development Regulations, Partnerships, Program Development	MT
Develop local policies and programs that foster a business-friendly environment, such as streamlined permitting and reduced barriers to entry.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Partnerships, Program Development, Enforcement	ST
Continue active engagement with regional stakeholders, including the Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC), Louisiana Economic Development (LED), and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), to align local efforts with broader economic strategies.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Partnerships, Program Development	OG
Participate in Louisiana’s Economic Development Site Readiness Program (EDRED) to ensure Zachary’s preparedness for future investment opportunities.	Capital Investment, Partnerships	ST



<b>Transportation and Mobility (Chapter 8)</b>		
<b>Strategic Recommendations</b>	<b>Action/Implementation Tool</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Coordinate with regional partners including the Capital Regional Planning Commission for the successful implementation of the proposed MOVEBR roadway improvements.	Capital Investment, Partnerships,	OG - LT
Begin building out a network of active transportation infrastructure including walking paths and bicycle lanes in alignment with the BREC plan and other local planning efforts.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Capital Investment, Enforcement	ST - LT
Work with the Capital Region Planning Commission and East Baton Rouge Parish to develop a Zachary crosstown connection study to determine the feasibility of a new East/West connector road to link South Zachary from Highway 964 to Highway 73.	Planning Study, Capital Investment, Partnerships,	LT
Conduct a study on local micromobility options (bicycles, e-bikes, scooters, and other small-scale shared transportation systems) and regional transportation connections that will support safe, affordable, and convenient connections for residents within Zachary’s core neighborhoods, as well as to regional destinations outside the city.	Planning Study, Capital Investment, Partnerships, Program Development	ST



<b>Community Resilience (Chapter 9)</b>		
<b>Strategic Recommendations</b>	<b>Action/Implementation Tool</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Maintain and expand the City’s stormwater and drainage infrastructure to ensure the community’s safety and wellbeing. Ensuring this infrastructure is both maintained and improved will be a crucial element to protecting the City and its residents from existing and future flood hazards.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Capital Investment, Partnerships, Program Development, Enforcement	OG-LT
Integrate natural resource management into hazard mitigation efforts and enhance the role of natural resource conservation in hazard mitigation policies.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Program Development, Enforcement	ST
Pursue coordination between the City of Zachary and other municipal, parish, and state entities on developing long-range planning principles to guide sustainable development patterns, taking into consideration the unique geographical and environmental characteristics of City and larger region. Sharing knowledge on the efficacy and implementation of hazard mitigation strategies and natural resource management will allow the City of Zachary to make decisions in a regional context, and understand how those decisions will contribute to larger regional strategies.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Capital Investment, Partnerships, Program Development, Enforcement	MT

<b>Livability and Local Culture (Chapter 10)</b>		
<b>Strategic Recommendations</b>	<b>Action/Implementation Tool</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
Implement clear design guidelines that will promote aesthetic consistency and <u>sustainability utilizing smart growth principles.</u>	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Enforcement	ST
<del>Allow ADUs in specified areas of Zachary to provide flexible housing options, supporting multigenerational living and affordable rental opportunities.</del>	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Program Development, Enforcement	MT
Develop senior-friendly housing solutions will enable residents to remain in their community as they age.	Planning Study, Development Regulations, Capital Investment, Partnerships, Program Development	ST
<del>Ensure appropriate regulations and locations for manufactured homes that will support affordable housing options without compromising community character.</del>	Planning Study, Enforcement	ST
Focus new educational opportunities on aligning the skill set of the local workforce with targeted industries for economic growth.	Partnerships, Program Development	MT