



# BR CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS

2026



TRANSFORMING THE CAPITAL REGION THROUGH  
**PLACEMAKING | RESILIENCY | INNOVATION**

[brchoice.com](http://brchoice.com)

**Building a Community of Opportunity and Choice**



# WHO WE ARE



## VISION

The BR Choice Initiative is transforming the East Fairfields, Smiley Heights, and Melrose East neighborhoods with a clear focus on *resiliency, placemaking, and innovation*. We're shaping a community that can weather future challenges and create real opportunity for families. By blending local culture with strategic planning, we're turning disinvestment into momentum.

## MISSION

We believe that creating opportunity and choice for our community can help transform our entire neighborhood. By prioritizing people, neighborhoods, and housing, we are building a better future for families and future generations.



### PEOPLE

To create lasting opportunities for neighbors of our community that will enhance their quality of life for generations.



### NEIGHBORHOOD

To create an attractive, vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood with access to healthy foods, medical care, quality schools and neighborhood retail shops.



### HOUSING

To create a mixed inventory of high-quality housing opportunities for neighbors of our community.



# VALUES BEHIND THE CHANGE

The BR Choice transformation is rooted in three guiding values that shape how we rebuild, reinvest, and reimagine the community. These values work together to strengthen infrastructure, elevate community identity, and expand access to education and workforce opportunities.



## Resiliency

Strengthening infrastructure, preserving natural assets, and preparing the community to withstand future challenges. This approach supports long-term stability and aligns with major regional and national infrastructure priorities.



## Placemaking

Using art, culture, street names, and community-centered design to build identity, increase safety, and enhance overall quality of life. The Renoir Cultural District and local creative partners play a key role in shaping this vibrant sense of place.



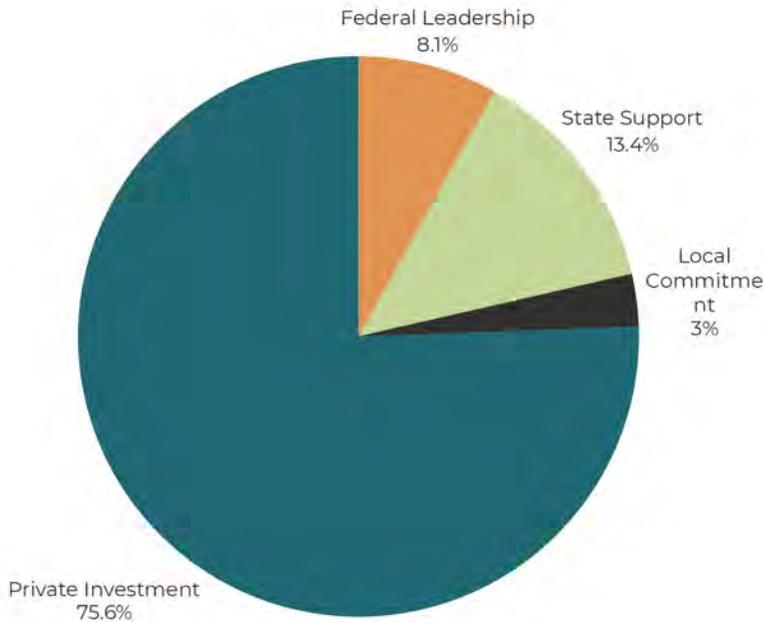
## Innovation

Expanding education and workforce pathways that support economic mobility and domestic manufacturing growth. Through BRCC, CTEC, and other training partners, students gain access to skills that fuel long-term opportunity.



# OUR PARTNERS

Public-Private Partnerships (P3) to move BR Choice forward



## FEDERAL LEADERSHIP

HUD Choice Neighborhoods program providing \$32M in catalyst funding

## STATE SUPPORT

Louisiana Housing Corporation: \$45M in funding and tax credits

Louisiana Office of Community Development: \$8M in flood recovery funds

## LOCAL COMMITMENT

City-Parish of Baton Rouge: \$12M Investment (\$10.253M Infrastructure; \$417K Acquisition; \$1.33M Housing)

## PRIVATE INVESTMENT

Over 40 public and private sector partners

# INVESTMENT STRATEGY

BR Choice partnership brings public agencies, developers, schools, and community stakeholders together to rebuild the East Fairfield–Smiley Heights–Melrose East area. Each partner contributes a specific role: planning, funding, development, or direct community support, to ensure the work is coordinated and grounded in community needs.

Workforce and education partners help expand job pathways, training programs, and support services for families. Community organizations and local leaders keep the work connected to neighborhood priorities and help guide day-to-day engagement.



# \$400M

## Total Investment =



**\$166M**  
(434 Homes)



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENTS

Mckay Automotive Technology Center	\$25M
BRCC Automotive Collision Center	\$6.5M
EBR Schools Career & Technical Education Center	\$17M
LEWCO Specialty Products Expansion	\$11.8M
Ardendale Oaks Apartments Renovation	\$9M
Bon Carre Technology Center	\$41.5M
Collegiate Academies & other Charter Schools	\$31M
Eden Park Library Renovation	\$3.4M
Liberty Lagoon	\$7.2M
Milton J. Womack Park/ Upper Deck batting cage	\$300K
Drakes Landing Apartments	\$38M
YWCA Early Childhood & Womens Resource Center(planned)	\$11M
Rouses Supermarket	\$6.6M
Peaks of Baton Rouge Senior Community	\$8M
MOVEBR Ardenwood-Lobdell Connector Rd.	\$3M
LADOTD TAP Grant City-Parish Matching Funds - LADOTD	\$1.75M
TAP Grant	\$ 435K
USDA Forest Service Grant	\$1M
EBRPHA Ardendale East (1.14 Acres) Land Acquisition	\$1.8M
MOVEBR Ardenwood Sidewalk Project	\$1.1M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$225M</b>

### \$12M CITY-PARISH INVESTMENT

- \$10.253M INFRASTRUCTURE
- \$417K ACQUISITION
- \$1.333M HOUSING

**\$3M**  
PEOPLE

**\$24.88M**  
HOUSING

**\$4.12M**  
NEIGHBORHOOD

2024  
2018  
2013

- \$2.5M - HUD Choice Neighborhoods Supplemental Grant
- \$29.5M - HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant
- \$500K - HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant

# \$332M



# HOUSING TRANSFORMATION

Our housing strategy replaces aging units with modern, workforce homes that strengthen the neighborhood and gives families a safe place to build their future.

## CYPRESS AT ARDENDALE

# \$166M

Total Housing Investment

## \$69M

### Phase I Investment

A total of 170 family homes have been completed and are currently in the leasing phase, showcasing the immediate impact of federal support.

## \$23M

### Phase II Senior Housing

A 70-home senior building is currently under construction. Cypress at Ardendale Senior has received tax credits from the Louisiana Housing Corporation.

## TBD

### Phase III Investment

Creating 134 high quality affordable family homes while maintaining Louisiana architectural character.

## \$21.5M

### Phase IV Investment

The final phase of Cypress at Ardendale, will deliver 60 additional family homes.





# HOW WE ARE LEVERAGING INVESTMENT



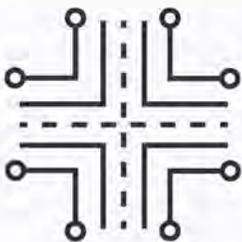
## **Housing Transformation**

Our approach prioritizes quality housing, safety, and lasting design. These investments strengthen the corridor and help attract continued reinvestment.



## **Economic Development**

Leveraging \$32M federal grant into \$400M+ total investment, demonstrating efficient use of taxpayer dollars.



## **Infrastructure Improvements**

Walking and biking paths, improved public transit, neighborhood road repairs, and gateway enhancements.



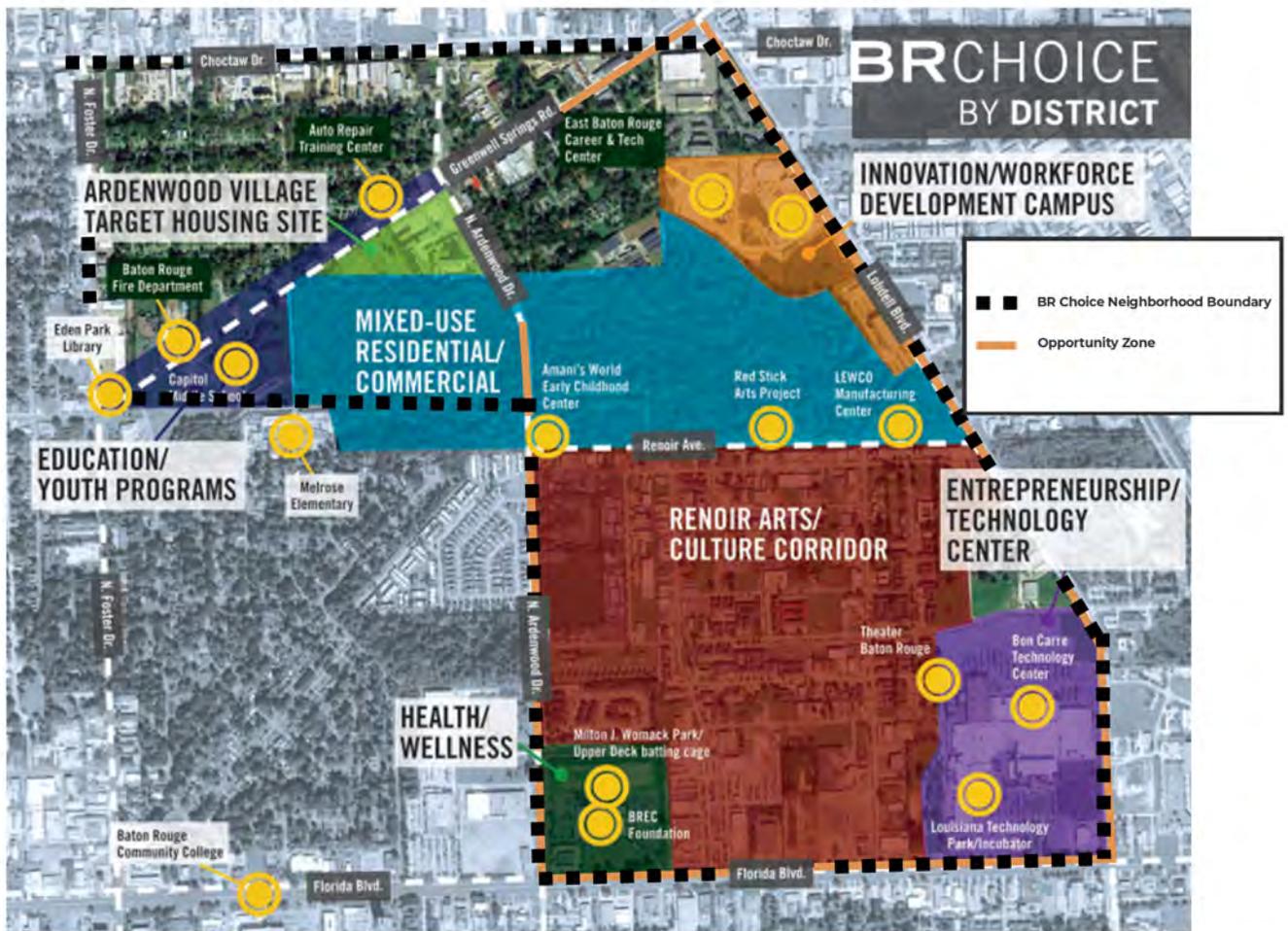
## **Commercial Development**

Attracting businesses to serve families: grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, and service providers.

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

INNOVATION

The BR Choice footprint sits within a federal designated **Opportunity Zone**, positioned to attract private investment, new development, and long-term economic growth. Combined with the BR Choice Neighborhoods Boundary and the City-Parish’s Economic Development District, the area is now aligned for redevelopment at a scale Baton Rouge hasn’t seen in decades. These tools work together to bring jobs, leverage capital, and support new commercial, educational, and residential opportunities across the corridor.



**200+**  
CONSTRUCTION JOBS DURING  
PHASE I

**WORKFORCE  
CAMPUSES**

Baton Rouge Community College,  
McKay Automotive Technology Center  
Direct pathways to employment

**PERMANENT  
JOBS**

Retail, Healthcare, Education,  
Social service opportunities,  
Entrepreneurship Support

  
**CYPRESS**  
 AT ARDENDALE

**Reimagining Homes**

As the primary housing component of BR Choice, Cypress at Ardendale replaces outdated units with modern, energy-efficient homes designed for stability and upward mobility. Families and seniors benefit from thoughtful design, green space, and close access to schools, training centers, and essential services.



**A FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH**



**An Intentional Connected Community**

Modern apartments and townhomes built with durable materials, Louisiana-inspired architecture, and amenities that support today's families. A blend of affordable, workforce, and market-rate housing that strengthens economic strength and keeps the neighborhood thriving.



**Designed for Stability and Future Homeownership**

These homes are built with quality materials, energy-efficient features, and layouts that support everyday living. Future phases will introduce single-family homes, giving renters real pathways to ownership and wealth-building.

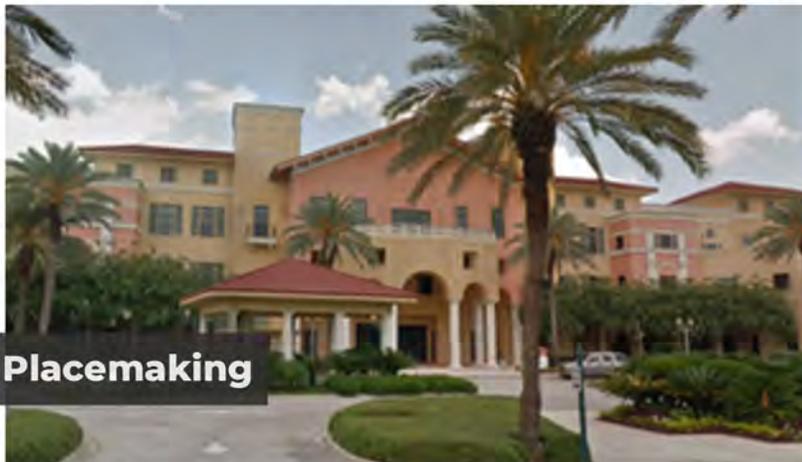
# MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS

## Rouses Supermarket

Rouses ended the food desert designation in the BR Choice footprint by bringing access to fresh food, prepared meals, and essential groceries. Its presence signals renewed private-sector confidence in the neighborhood.



**Placemaking**



**Placemaking**

## Bon Carré Technology Center

Bon Carré remains a major anchor employer with tech, finance, government, and support services. Its proximity gives BR Choice families direct access to a large job center with pathways into stable careers.

## Cypress at Ardendale Recognized

BR Choice's first major housing milestone delivered 170 homes with high quality design and strong family amenities. Cypress at Ardendale earned the 2025 Good Growth Award from the Good Growth Coalition for excellence in development and community impact.



**Innovation**

# MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS

## Baton Rouge Community College

BRCC anchors the educational spine and provides degree opportunities, certifications, and training that align with industry demand. Its campus gives students a clear pathway from high school to postsecondary opportunities.



**Innovation**



**Placemaking**

## EBR Schools

Three nearby public schools (Melrose Elementary, Capitol Middle, and Capitol High School) provide stable access to K-12 education. Their connection to the BR Choice Educational Spine ensures students can move smoothly into higher learning and career pathways.

## EBR Schools Career & Technical Education Center

CTEC offers hands-on training in high-demand fields, strengthening the link between students and career preparation. Its presence helps build a direct pipeline from high school to workforce opportunities.



**Innovation**

# MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENTS

## LEWCO

LEWCO, an internationally recognized textile manufacturer, expanded its operations within the BR Choice area. The growth was made possible through site control, infrastructure improvements, and Opportunity Zone benefits, bringing new jobs and strengthening the industrial base in the community.



**Placemaking**

## BRCC McKay Automotive Technology Center

The BRCC McKay Automotive Technology Center provides advanced automotive training that leads to careers in collision repair, diagnostics, refinishing, and other high-demand technical fields.

## Collegiate Academies

Collegiate Academies Baton Rouge is an open enrollment high school that delivers a strong academic program focused on college readiness, leadership, and student growth. The school consistently ranks among the top open enrollment high schools in the city for academic progress.



# PLACEMAKING AND CULTURAL INVESTMENT

## A Cultural Asset With Real Economic Tools

The Renoir Cultural District, certified in 2020, plays a direct role in the BR Choice strategy. The designation opens the door to state historic tax credits, giving this area a financial edge as we work to pull new investment into the neighborhood.

It also builds on the community's strong base of local artists, public murals, and creative energy that gives the area its personality. We are using the district as a practical tool to revive key corridors, tackle blight, and lift the look and feel of the neighborhood.



## Naming Place with Purpose

Street names are intentionally chosen to reflect culture and identity, grounding each place into a purposeful environment.

Surrounding murals and large-scale artwork build on that foundation, turning once-vacant structures into visible markers of neighborhood pride that people recognize and connect with.

# EDUCATIONAL SPINE

INNOVATION

The **Educational Spine** links neighborhood schools, early learning centers, and BRCC into one connected pathway. It's designed so families can access education, job training, and long-term career options without leaving the community.



## MoveBR Ardenwood-Lobdell Connector Road

The MoveBR Ardenwood-Lobdell Connector Road strengthens the Educational Spine by creating a safer, more direct route between early learning centers, K-12 schools, training facilities, and future housing. This connection reduces barriers, improves access, and ties the neighborhood into regional job and education networks.

### Early Childhood Learning

The YWCA Early Childhood Learning Center, and the Women's Resource Center will help children build a strong start.

### K-12 Access

Nearby schools keep education close to home. The Career & Technical Education Center (CTEC) gives students hands-on exposure to high-demand fields.

### Career & Higher-Ed Pathways

The BRCC McKay Automotive Technology Center and the Automotive Collision Center offer training, certifications, and degree pathways that connect families directly to strong, reliable careers.

# THE BIGGER PICTURE

INNOVATION

## The Dream Continues: Vision plan of the Ardendale “Agri-hood”



### A Working Landscape That Supports Community Life

The Ardendale “Agri-hood” is a planned working landscape that brings agriculture, technology, food production, education, and recreation together in one connected area. The concept places families close to fresh food, green space, and hands-on learning while supporting the BR Choice vision for long-term stability and investment.

This plan includes commercial farming areas, greenhouses, community gardens, aquaponics, livestock space, and pollinator parks. Together, these features are designed to create a healthier, more resilient environment and expand economic opportunity in the BR Choice area.

# THANK YOU

## LEAD PARTNERS



## P3 PARTNERS







Imagination Pkwy

Discovery Ave

