

2017

DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT
DISTRICT



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Development Year Book
2017

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Introduction

For 30 years, the Downtown Development District (DDD) has been passionate in its work to initiate, incubate, and support partnerships that develop and enhance Downtown Baton Rouge. The DDD and Downtown Baton Rouge's accomplishments have been recognized by other downtowns pursuing similar success, representatives and leaders from both Jackson, Mississippi and Lafayette, Louisiana visited Baton Rouge to learn from the our successes and community leaders.

The DDD continues to celebrate and build upon the accomplishments of Plan Baton Rouge, Plan Baton Rouge II, the Riverfront Master Plan, and Future BR. A major recommendation of Plan Baton Rouge II, as well as Future BR, is to increase downtown housing opportunities and provide a variety of housing types to attract more residents and strengthen continued investment. Downtown is quickly becoming one of the most desirable places to live in Baton Rouge; the residential developments currently underway will bring a total of 250 additional residential units within the Central business District alone. Complementing these developments are the public greenspaces being implemented by the DDD as part of Plan Baton Rouge II's Central Green concept. The DDD also works directly with public, private, and non-profit sector partners in the support of successful developments that enhance downtown.

New Businesses



Photo credit: 225 Magazine

New Businesses

THE PARLOR, is an intimate creative workspace in Beauregard Town, 705 Saint Joseph St. The Parlor strives to create beautiful things and host fun events!

DOWNTOWN HEALTHCARE & WELLNESS, located at 307 Third Street, is a full service primary care practice providing exceptional healthcare in Downtown Baton Rouge, treating acute and chronic medical conditions in patients 18 months and older.

REGAL NAILS, located in the Onyx building, Regal Nails is based out of Baton Rouge and brings innovations, new products, new services and the latest trends to promote and enhance the salon experience.

MILFORD'S ON THIRD pays homage to the New York-style deli, offering hand-crafted traditions in modern applications. The restaurant is located inside The Watermark Hotel, at the corner of Convention and Third Street.

COCHA, located at 445 North Sixth street, is a gathering place for harvest inspiring meals, wine tasting, and community events. The menu changes seasonally and highlights local, sustainable, and pure farmed foods that reflect the region's traditions with an international flair.

STARBUCKS, announced its first downtown location in the Courtyard Marriott Hotel. The hotel is currently under construction on the corner of Third and Florida Streets and the restaurant will have an outdoor seating area.

SONIC has opened a new concept restaurant and headquarters office at the intersection of South 10th and Government Streets. The 2,500-square-foot Sonic is nearly twice the size of the average Sonic restaurant and does not have any drive-in stalls. The restaurant was developed on a 40,000-square-foot site that also included a 4,000-square-foot, two-story building. The building was renovated to house Tucker's corporate offices.

ANOTHER BROKEN EGG restaurant is located in the IBM building on the corner of Main and Laurel Street. Another Broken Egg Cafe isn't your typical breakfast, brunch and lunch place. The menu is second-to-none, loaded with fresh ingredients and creative recipes across a wide variety of breakfast classics, memorable brunch dishes and lunchtime favorites.

CANE LAND DISTILLING COMPANY, located at 760 St. Phillip Street, is in the business of making finest spirits with the use of fresh local sugarcane. Alongside sugarcane products, Cane Land debuts all of their spirits uniquely produced in the heart of Baton Rouge inside the facility.

IBERIA BANK, located in the Onyx building, this is Iberia Bank's ninth location in Baton Rouge and will follow the model of their newly-built Alabama bank which the company calls the 'branch of the future'.

RED STICK ADVENTURES is a tour guide service offering the best sightseeing tours in the Baton Rouge region. Daily tours are offered with free pick-ups from hotels.

CAFE' MIMI in downtown Baton Rouge offers a unique breakfast and lunch dining option featuring Southern comfort food, Vietnamese favorites, along with vegan and healthy options. Cafe' Mimi is located in the former Harrington's Cafe' and will retain some of the Harrington's favorite menu items.

GEAUX RIDE combines healthy living with premiere entertainment through their one of a kind combination of bicycles, music, and great people. Every Thursday Geaux Ride hosts their weekly free public social bike ride. It all starts at Ruffins' Downtown Daiquiri Lounge located at 602 Main Street.

THE BENGAL TAPROOM, a sports bar and grill that will be located in the 3,000-square-foot space formerly occupied by The Draft House. The Bengal Taproom will offer a great place to view sports on TV and offer a full food menu.

CECILIA, will be a full service restaurant offering a traditional Creole menu. Located in the former Restaurant IPO location the 3,000 square foot restaurant will be open in January.

LOFT @ CECILIA, Above Cecilia, in the space that was once home to The Office bar, will be a 6,000-square-foot private event space called The Loft at Cecilia that will be available for receptions, luncheons and corporate parties.

RIVER HOUSE, will offer something new and exciting for smart in-town living in Baton Rouge. The live-work-play community will offer 224 new apartment homes featuring one and two bedroom floor plans in a gated secure environment along with 16,000 s.f. of shops and 32,000 s.f. of offices to compliment this master-planned development.

CENTER FOR COASTAL & DELTAIC SOLUTIONS, The 34,000 square-foot building designed by architects, Coleman Partners and Perkins+Will, consists of office spaces on the second floor while also housing a 6,000 square-foot conference center on the third floor. The Estuary Conference and Event Venue will play host to academic conventions, research conferences, as well as serve as an event venue for corporate events and private receptions. The first floor is a shared co-working space known as Waterworking.

New Developments



The Water Campus

The Water Campus is a reflection of the vision for the redevelopment of the Mississippi Riverfront, illustrated in the recommendations of Baton Rouge's master plans. Orchestrated by a unique collaboration involving the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF), the City of Baton Rouge, The Water Institute of the Gulf, Louisiana State University, and other coastal research institutes.

The Water Campus is the economic and cultural southern anchor of downtown, strengthening the connection to LSU. The 30 acre campus is located on the Mississippi Riverfront surrounding the old Municipal Dock near the Interstate-10 bridge and houses The Water Institute of the Gulf, an independent applied research organization focused on developing scientific coastal restoration solutions. Campus facilities, totaling approximately \$50 million in private and public investments, will contain the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's offices, the Coastal Education and Research Facility's public education exhibits, and the River Modeling Center's dynamic Mississippi River simulator. The Center for River Studies and the Louisiana Coastal Protection & Restoration Authority facilities were completed in 2016. The Water Campus's \$25 million iconic glass building extending into the Mississippi River celebrated a ribbon cutting in December and will function as the headquarters equipped with research facilities, offices, displays, and more.



Belvedere Townhomes

The Belvedere Townhomes are four riverfront luxury townhomes on Main and Lafayette, located adjacent to 525 Lafayette. \$8.5 million is currently being invested in the creation of these high end townhomes offering additional living options to Downtown Baton Rouge residents. Currently under construction overseen by Level Construction, the townhomes will sit on a quarter-acre lot, be four stories, and range in size from 3,500 to 5,000 square feet. All four units are pre-sold.

IBM & 525 Lafayette

State officials Governor Jindal and Secretary Moret, in collaboration with Mayor-President Kip Holden, and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber attracted this internationally renowned company with incentives to locate downtown and increase the economic viability of Baton Rouge. Complementing this unique partnership is the commitment from Louisiana State University (LSU) to increase computer related graduates, along with riverfront property improvements from The Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust. The riverfront property contains the IBM facility as well as 85 residential units within a residential complex known as 525 Lafayette. IBM began occupying the office tower in the spring of 2015 and 525 Lafayette residential units began leasing in 2016.

The IBM announcement has amplified the downtown development stage, adding to the recent surge of development including another riverfront property returning to commerce, technological employment centers investing in downtown, young entrepreneurs converging to catalyze additional community interest and investment, additional public greenspaces connecting downtown cultural and civic attractions, and residential opportunities.

More information about this project can be found on their websites: <http://www.ibmloisiana.com/jobs/> & <http://525lafayette.com/>



The Elias

Construction is nearly complete on a new four-story multifamily housing project located in the historic Beaugard Town neighborhood on the corner of Napoleon and America Streets. The development will include 25, one and two bedroom apartment units with garages on the ground floor. Designed to complement the exterior aesthetic of the existing neighborhood, The Elias will be located across from the House on the Hill development.



Maritime One

The Maritime One Building, located at 101 France Street, was purchased by Darryl Smith, a Hammond investor. The 35,000 square foot, 100 year old building was originally a warehouse and was part of the 1980's Catfish Town retail and restaurant development. It was later converted to office space, most recently housing offices for the Louisiana Department of Economic Development. Offering great views of the Mississippi River, the Maritime One Building is an ideal location for the 24 residential units. Construction is complete and most units are occupied.

Onyx Residences

Commercial Properties Realty Trust invested approximately \$7 million in the construction of a mixed-use development on the corner of Third Street and Convention Street that introduced an additional 28 residential units downtown. The Onyx Residences, conveniently located just a block away from North Boulevard Town Square, includes both one and two bedroom options that range in size from 600-1,100 square feet. Rents range from \$1,600 to \$2,500 a month and amenities such as SMART Home technology, fiber-based Internet provided by CenturyLink, and DirectTV service and balconies overlooking the street are included. The property also includes 5,600 square feet of retail space on the ground level which house Iberia Bank and Regal Nails.

More information about this project can be found on their website: <http://www.onyxresidences.com>.



Saltz Building

Developers Helena and Kevin Cunningham announced that they will be renovating the historic Saltz Building located at 442 Main Street. Built in 1924, the building renovations will include converting the 5,015 square foot space into six market rate one and two bedroom units. The development of this multifamily complex is a direct result of the success the developers experienced next door at 438 Main Street. Historic tax credits are being utilized for the construction expected in 2018.



Commerce Building

5th Floor Company, a New Orleans-based firm, acquired the international style Commerce Building in 2013 and hired the nationally recognized New Orleans architecture firm, Eskew+Dumez+Ripple Architects, to engage the downtown community in the programming of the vacant building previously housing several state offices.

The developers received state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits as well as a U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development loan to finance the \$30 million historical restoration multi-use project. Construction began in November 2014 on the eight-story, 180,000 square-foot building located on the corner of Laurel and Third Streets. This multi-use building includes 93 residential units, a rooftop pool, fitness center, on-site covered parking, and Magpie Cafe' on the bottom floor. The residential units comprised in the building are one, two, and three bedroom ranging from 603 to 1,500 square feet. The developers are still courting tenants to fill the 2 remaining retail locations.

More information on this project is available at www.thecommercebldg.com.



House on the Hill

With the goal of mixing classic history and present-day residential design, 15 houses will be either built or renovated within a 1.5 acre site of Beauregard Town known as House on the Hill. Susan Turner and Scott Purdin have acquired the property to complete this development bordered by America Street, Napoleon Street, St. Joseph Street, and Louisiana Avenue. The development will offer a mix of two bedrooms, three bedrooms, and studios. Plans also include a community greenhouse and kitchen with gardening space available to each resident. Utility lines have been installed, parking pavements will follow, and the rental units are expected to begin construction in 2018. The new, larger units designated for homeownership will be built as negotiated with the buyers.



Grand Lady

The Grand Lady, located at 310 Convention Street, was purchased by Mark and Debbie Hudson to renovate it back to its original architecture glory. One of the last Victorian homes in Downtown Baton Rouge, The Grand Lady was built in 1905 and the developer focused on preserving the historical details of the house, including the 12-foot ceilings and fireplaces. The \$1.8 million renovations were complete in the first quarter of 2016 and include seven residential units comprised of one and two bedroom apartments as well as an efficiency unit. Lease rates are approximately \$1,200 - \$1,400 per month for the one bedroom units, \$2,300 for the two bedroom units, and \$900 per month for the efficiency unit.



Elysian II

Gulf Coast Housing Partnership, the lead developer on the Elysian, a mixed-income apartment complex at the intersection of North 13th Street and Spanish Town Road, announced in late 2015 their plans to develop the Elysian II. The Elysian II will bring 100 additional units downtown, 51 affordable units and 49 market rate. The total cost of the project is \$17.2 million and received financing assistance from the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority. Construction is expected to begin in 2018. Improvements to the adjacent Spanish Town Park were also completed by BREC in the spring of 2016.



Lofts @ 6C

John O. Hearin, a local developer owning several downtown properties and parking lots, introduced the 142-unit apartment complex vision to the downtown community early in 2016. The project, located on Sixth Street between Florida and Convention Street, will be a six-story building with one and two bedroom units. The first two floors of the development will be garage space totaling between 250-260 spaces for residents and guests. The remaining upper floors will be comprised of the residential units. Amenities will also include a clubhouse, swimming pool, landscaped courtyards, and approximately 3,000 square feet of commercial space. Construction of the multi-use development began in the fall of 2016 and was approved for financing from the U.S Housing and Urban Development Department.



210 Laurel Street

Developer Prescott Baily purchased the building at 210 Laurel Street in the summer of 2015 for \$432,000 from the Louisiana Fraternal order of Police. Local architect Norman Chenevert designed the three story building with a total project cost of \$2 million. The first two floors are planned for office and retail use with the top floor housing a residential condominium that will have unobstructed views of the river. Jeffrey Carbo Landscape Architects, an Alexandria, LA based firm, has leased the 3,000 square foot ground floor space. The Lemoine Company is overseeing the construction of the modern building comprised of a combination of steel panels and fiber cement panels.



Deville Apartments

The Deville Apartments represent the ideals of Mid-Century Modern architecture. The apartments are receiving a \$2.5 million renovation. Collis Temple, Jr., owner and contractor, engaged Dyke Nelson as the architect leading the design of the apartment complex with a total of 30 apartments. The original building was built in 1956 by A.C. Lewis and highlights several notable architectural features of the era including a 17,000 square foot glass front paneled main building.



Watermark Baton Rouge

One of Baton Rouge's first skyscraper, built in 1926, was originally the home of Louisiana National Bank. It was purchased by developer Mike Wampold in the spring of 2014 and converted into an upscale hotel with two restaurants. The 12 story art deco building, located on the corner of Convention and Third Street, began interior renovation work in the spring of 2015 to convert the office building into a 148 room Marriott Autograph. The Watermark Baton Rouge also features two premier restaurants on the bottom floor. The Gregory, featuring vintage murals painted by Angela Gregory, offers refreshing culinary takes on Louisiana classics and Milford's on Third is a New York style deli focusing on local and family tradition.

Courtyard by Marriott

Windsor Aughtry Company, Inc. of Greenville, S.C., announced in the fall of 2014 that they would develop an approximately 85,000 square-foot, eight-story, 147-room Courtyard by Marriott Hotel at the epicenter of Downtown's Third Street Corridor, 260 Third Street. The Downtown Courtyard by Marriott's specific Third Street location pays homage to the Hotel Istrouma, Baton Rouge's first downtown hotel formerly at the same Third Street location.

Designed by Bounds and Gillespie Architects, PLLC., the hotel will take advantage of downtown's skyline along Third Street and Florida Street, as well as south to LSU, with approximately 35% of the rooms equipped with balconies. The completion of this \$23.6 million investment would complete four contiguous blocks of urban streetscape and complement the current diversity of the historic Third Street corridor. It will also create a cohesive urban streetscape and bring a Starbucks to hotel patrons as well as 50 full time and 10 part time employees. Construction began in the fall of 2016 and is expected to be completed in May of 2018.



Louisiana Realtors

The Louisiana Realtors is a member-based trade association established to assist its members in the business of real estate in Louisiana. In May 2013, their headquarters on Bennington Avenue was destroyed by fire. Since that time the association began looking for new place near the downtown area. The Louisiana Realtor selected their new headquarters to be within a 93 year old renovated and expanded downtown home on Main Street, formerly known as the Cangelosi House. Coleman Partners Architects, LLC created the plans for this renovation project.



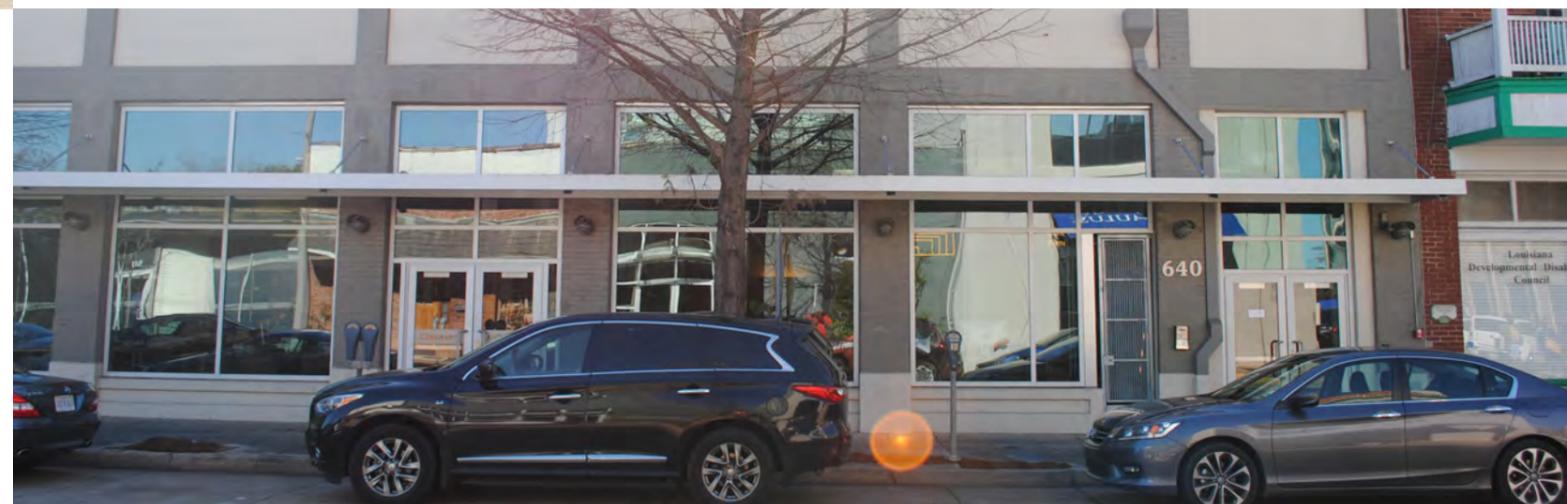
BRAC

564 Laurel Street has been the home of BRAC for over 50 years. The location has become part of the organization's identity. Given this, it's critical that the space match the mission. The new facility will become the new Center for Economic Development. The Center for Economic Development will be a modern business center located in the heart of downtown. A hub where entrepreneurs from the private sector can gather to determine growth plans and new innovations. A center where visionaries can meet to brainstorm, problem solve and chart new directions for business in the region. Construction of the Center is expected to be complete in 2018.

500 Laurel Street

Developers Dyke Nelson and David Weinstein announced in December 2014, the renovation of 500 Laurel Street into Class A office space. Responding to the high demand for this type of office space, the team focused their attention on this historical 30,000 square-foot office building located within close proximity to the state office buildings and other nearby office complexes. Also within close proximity to this building and the northwest quadrant of the Downtown Development District, other renovation projects have recently been completed or are in the renovation process.

The building was originally built in the late 1950s as the Union Federal Savings & Loan Building by renowned Louisiana architect A. Hays Town. State and federal historic tax credits provided financial assistance to complete the interior and exterior renovation of this historic building. The \$4.5 million renovations are complete and Business First Bank located its headquarters in the building upon its opening.



Butler Building

The Butler Building, located at 640 Main Street, was renovated into three office spaces totaling approximately 7,400 square feet. Developer Gordon LeBlanc Jr. purchased the old Butler Furniture Building in 2014 for \$530,000. Chenvert Architects, lead architect for the renovations of the Butler Building, relocated from their current space on 315 Third Street into a 5,000 square foot space within the space.



River Center Theatre

Post Architects, a local architectural firm, and the New Orleans based firm HMS Architects were chosen in early 2016 to redesign the existing Raising Cane's River Center Theatre with a renovation budget of \$12 million. The original theatre was built in 1977 and has had little improvements to the facility since that time, making it part of the strategic plan developed for the larger River Center facility years ago. Design funding for the project originates from state sales tax rebate funds with plans to finalize the design in 2018. Plans are to improve infrastructure related items and to reconfigure the interior seating, lobby, and theatre areas.

River Center Library @ Town Square

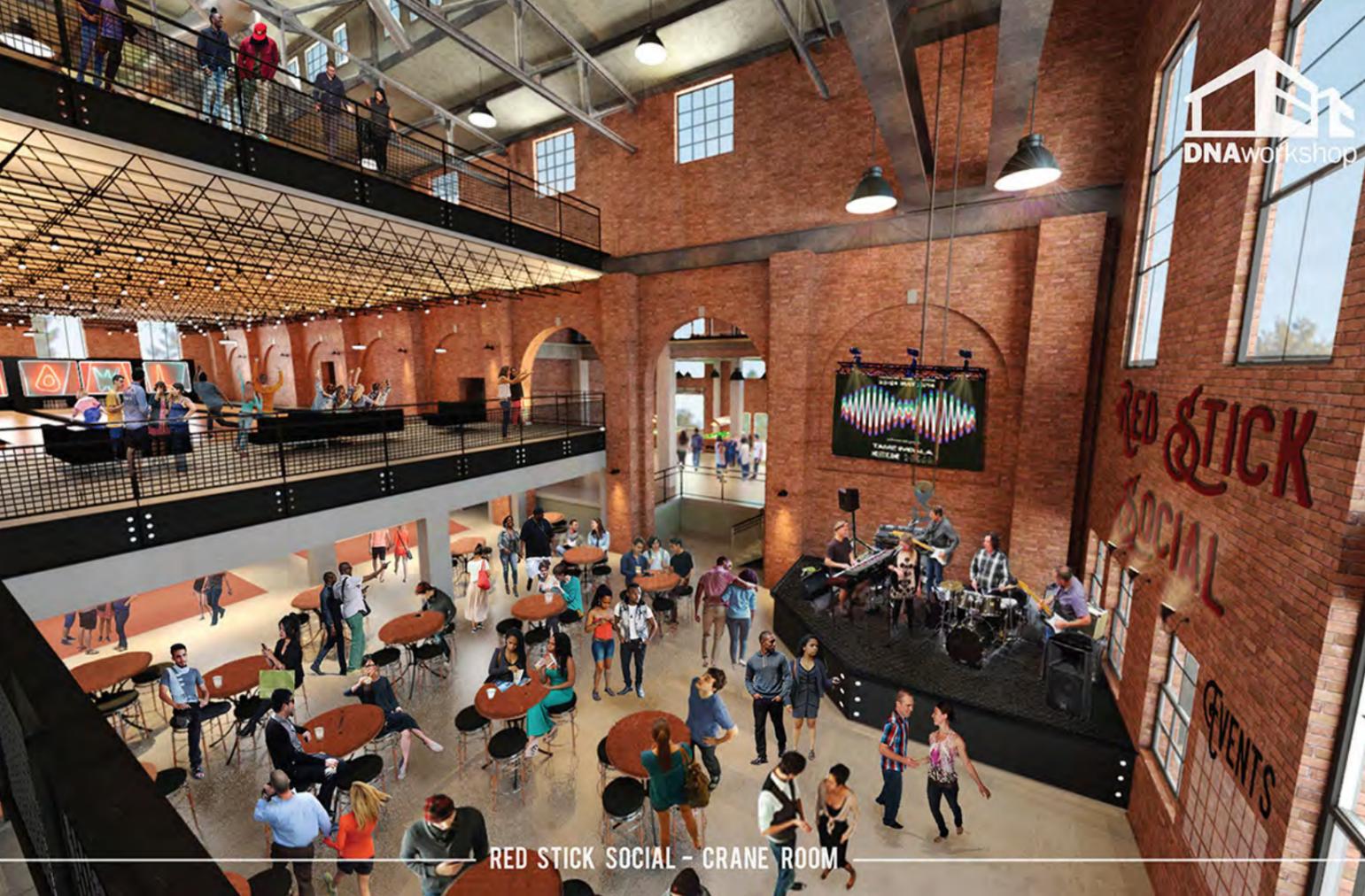
The vision of the New River Center Library began in 2004 with an allocated \$19 million to demolish the current outdated structure, and replace it with a new, approximately 45,000 square-foot, modern library. A joint venture of Washer Hill Lipscomb Cabaniss Architecture of Baton Rouge and Schwartz/Silver Architects of Boston was established to carry out the design of this state of the art facility.

The new downtown library will be the centerpiece of North Boulevard Town Square & the Central Green - a place where our City's civic and cultural attractions come together. It's four floors will encompass approximately 50,000 square feet of dynamic spaces for student, families, and professionals, as well as more technological and conveniences to cater to the surrounding community. The project will also feature several meeting rooms and a spectacular roof top terrace and green screen with views of the surrounding city skyline. Buquet & LeBlanc were awarded the construction contract that began in late 2016 for a total of \$14.6 million. The River Center Library is expected to complete construction in 2018.



River Center Branding

SMG and Raising Cane's agreed to an approximately \$4 million deal that now brands the City-Parish's entertainment center as the Raising Cane's River Center. Raising Cane's will maintain these branding rights to the River Center until 2026. The funding, earmarked to revitalize the River Center and attract well-known performers, will be used to implement new digital signs and renovations to the ballroom and arena. In the fourth quarter of 2017, large-scale, exterior signage was installed to identify the new brand of the River Center and showcase Raising Cane's as a corporation dedicated to the enhancement of the Baton Rouge community.



Forte & Tablada

Forte & Tablada announced in the spring of 2016 their plans to relocate to the bustling downtown area. Founded in 1961, Forte & Tablada, Inc. is a consulting engineering and land surveying firm specializing in civil, structural, environmental, and electrical engineering and land surveying. The engineering and surveying firm purchased the vacant lot at 1029 North Blvd with plans to develop a facility housing their employees on the site. The site is adjacent to Interstate I-110 with convenient access to all of downtown's amenities.

Electric Depot

Construction work has begun on the \$20 million redevelopment of the site previous occupied by Entergy on Government Street. The East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority (RDA) has spent the past few years securing ownership of the property and remediating the existing buildings through brownsfield remediation grant funding. The RDA recently contracted with Weinstein Nelson Development to lead the revitalization efforts of this project.

Weinstein Nelson Development unveiled the development name, "Electric Depot" and several tenants that would make up the unique mixed-use site in 2017. Positioned just east of Downtown East, a recently incorporated area of the Downtown Development District, the site is also strategically located east of the Kansas City Railway at 14th Street and is expected to become a catalyst for development in the heavily traveled area between mid city and downtown. A bowling alley, pizza parlor, apartments, and restaurant are amenities that have been announced in 2017 to be part of the Electric Depot. The project is expected to be complete the first phase of the redevelopment project by the end of 2018.



Arkel Development

Arkel Constructors announced in early 2016 their intention to renovate the entire 1000 block of Florida Street. The renovations were completed in the late summer of 2016 and primarily included cosmetic upgrades. Arkel's headquarters are located within the 16,000 square foot former Schaffer & Associates building, as well as the Division of Administrative Law, an independent agency in the Department of Civil Service. Four courtrooms are included in the building and a wrought-iron fence with a gated entrance was required as part of the renovations by the state.



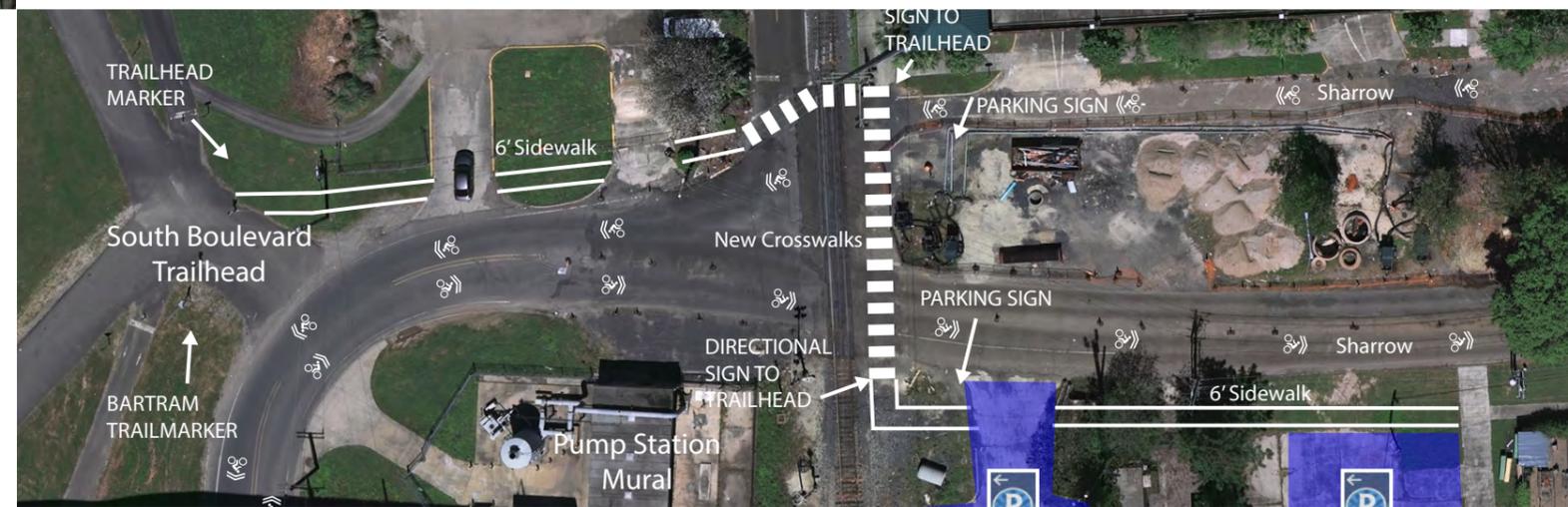
Spencer Calahan Offices

Eaton Rouge attorney, Spencer Calahan, and his team broke ground on a five-story downtown office complex in December 2017. The office complex is projected to cost \$11 million and will be located at the intersection of St. Louis Street and South Boulevard. The building will feature a helipad, covered terrace, two levels of parking and three floors of office space. Construction is expected to be complete by December 2018. The building will be prominently located downtown, along Interstate 10 at the base of the Mississippi River Bridge.

North Boulevard Lighting

The East Baton Rouge City-Parish has updated the lighting along North Boulevard from 10th Street to 19th Street to increase visibility and security. The previous lighting fixtures were replaced with LED fixtures, lowering the energy costs associated with the existing, aged fixtures. In addition, lighting upgrades will be installed under the North Boulevard underpass structure. The installation began in the fourth quarter of 2017 and will be complete in the Spring 2018.

Several community organizations and City-Parish departments are also in the process of developing strategies that would assist the homeless population that congregates beneath the North Boulevard underpass structure. The Capital Area Alliance for the Homeless has created this consortium of entities, united in the desire to direct the homeless population to appropriate housing, job, and medical resources that are needed to assist them in creating a secure and stable future within the Baton Rouge community. This consortium began meeting in 2017 and is actively working to assist the homeless in the area.



South Boulevard Improvements

The Downtown Development District and the East Baton Rouge City Parish Transportation & Drainage Department have developed a plan to increase bicycle and pedestrian user safety at the intersection of South Boulevard and River Road. A current lack of sidewalks and crosswalks at this intersection creates unsafe conditions for users accessing the Mississippi River Levee Trail from South Boulevard, and for users of the levee trail wishing to exit on the South Boulevard Trailhead and explore the southern end of downtown. Six-foot wide sidewalks, large crosswalk markings, and bicycle sharrow signs are expected to be installed in 2018.



DDD Projects



Marketing & Attraction

In order to most effectively market the complete downtown Baton Rouge experience to visitors, residents, and workers; the Downtown Development District has designed and released updated welcome guides. The contents of the welcome guide include: Attractions & Festivals, Restaurants, Merchants, Parking, New Business, and New Residents.

In addition to the welcome guides, the Downtown Development District created a Development Toolkit to provide developers and investors key market data and statistics about the downtown area and activities. The toolkit outlines numerous permitting processes, provides important contact information, and gives a snapshot into current downtown demographics. All available local and State economic incentives are also outlined within the document that is available on our website and in our complete marketing packets. In addition, the DDD website is being redeveloped by TILT. The new website focuses on a new, innovative design, as well as making information more easily accessible to each type of user.



Repentance Park

Repentance Park, a component of Plan Baton Rouge II's Central Green concept, was designed to provide a venue for large events and serve as a component of the southern anchor of the Arts & Entertainment District. It was planned and designed by Reed Hilderbrand and Associates, Reich Associates, and Susan Turner Associates Landscape Architects to connect the Louisiana Arts and Science Museum, River Road, Old State Capital, Convention Center, City Hall, Galvez Plaza, and Town Square. The dramatic landform carefully transitions users between the drastically different elevations at the eastern and western edges of the site. Daily activities and popular events, such as the Blues Festival, have utilized the open, flexible space since its opening.

Repentance Park has added a new energy to the area and provides improved accessibility for pedestrians visiting the City Hall and River Center campuses. Over 750 interactive fountain jets have been implemented in the space to provide a family friendly atmosphere that initiates child play and adult enjoyment. Construction for the \$3.5 million project was completed in April 2013 by Group Industries. With a budget of approximately \$187,000, the park's greenspace was also extended west in 2016, shortening the crosswalk length across to and from Repentance Park and LASM.



North Boulevard Town Square

Whether gathered together for a large parish-wide event or stopping to relax in the middle of a hectic day, citizens of Baton Rouge have an amazing place to be – North Boulevard Town Square, the Heart of Baton Rouge. North Boulevard Town Square, located in the Arts & Entertainment District, has been a focal point, continuously displaying significant community events to users of the space. Over 200 annual special events have utilized the space while inquiries and requests continue to be placed daily. Town Square has received 9 state, national, and international awards since its opening.

North Boulevard Town Square Phase I and the redesign of Galvez Plaza, design by was completed in the spring of 2012. The \$7.3 million development was designed by the joint venture design team Brown+Danos Land Design and Joseph Furr Design Studio and constructed by Arrighi Construction, LLC. Phase II will include corridor improvements along St. Phillip Street and North Boulevard, with ongoing beacon programming, event logistics, and landscape maintenance managed by the DDD. Signage for Town Square has been also been approved for \$30,000 to promote wayfinding within the space and improve event logistics. Construction of NBTS Phase II and signage installation is expected to begin in 2018



Photo credit: Tim Hursley



The Crest

The Crest, a \$1 million engineering and sculptural icon, is the result of joint effort comprised of Trahan Architects, Covalent Logic, the Downtown Development District, and the Mayor's Office. The Crest connects North Boulevard Town Square and the City Hall campus while also functioning as a support for electrical systems required for concerts. The suspended truss system is able to be disassembled when not in use. The Crest was completed in September 2013 and has since received three prestigious contractor awards and one public space from the International Downtown Association.

As part of the Riverfront Master Plan, Plan Baton Rouge II, and North Boulevard Town Square, a special-event stage was created to provide a venue for large events in the heart of downtown. This project furthers implementation of Plan Baton Rouge II building upon the Central Green concept - a unified system of greenspaces linking the area's cultural attractions with the City Hall and River Center Campuses. \$50,000 has also been allocated to light The Crest and is being designed in coordination with the City Hall Plaza Project.

City Hall Plaza

The renovation of City Hall Plaza will remove underutilized and harsh existing hardscapes in the plaza, replacing them with a large green lawn and shade trees. The redesign will provide better circulation throughout the City Hall and River Center Campuses, and allow the Galvez Stage to be used from both sides. Reed Hilderbrand Associates, Inc. with sub-consultants: Reich Associates; Trahan Architects; Forte and Tablada, Jeffrey L. Bruce and Company LLC; AssafSimoneaux Tauzin & Associates, Inc., Water Management Consultants and Testing, Inc.; and Lam Partners, Inc. were selected to design and plan the space.

The final designs improve ADA accessibility, covering the opening above the parking north of The Crest stage, and creating an open greenspace that allows views and access from both sides of the stage. City Hall is also incorporated into the City Hall Master Plan by extending a floating "porch" into the greenspace and closer to The Crest stage. Construction is expected to be complete in early 2018.



Downtown Greenway

The Downtown Greenway is a pedestrian and bicycling corridor that links inner city residential neighborhoods to downtown parks, businesses, and cultural attractions utilizing the existing BREC parks, interstate infrastructure, and public right-of-ways. The creation of the Greenway is also intended to spur new investments and redevelopment in the city's core. Baton Rouge received schematic design assistance in planning the Downtown Greenway through EPA's Greening America's Capitals program and Design Workshop was selected to complete the final design utilizing the approximately \$3 million in grant funding acquired.

Construction was completed on the first components of the Downtown Greenway in 2015 at BREC's **Expressway Park** and the Myrtle Street Connector to the Lincoln Theatre. The **North Boulevard** section of the greenway is complete and it features a separated 10' urban bicycle path and 5' pedestrian garden path, median crossings, specialty pavement, curb ramps, seating areas, lighting, sculpture, water fountains, bicycle racks, and lush landscaping. Construction is expected to begin on the **East Boulevard** section in the second quarter of 2018, following final LA Department of Transportation & Development approval.

Louisiana Avenue Connection

Parking under I-10 and I-110 around the downtown area has been available to residents and workers for many years, but with the increasing demand for downtown parking, the Downtown Development District is pursuing improvements and upgrades that will attract more users. Over 540 parking spaces have been identified at 440 between Laurel Street and Louisiana Avenue, and 100 at South Boulevard. The proposed improvements include clean parking lines, innovative safety lighting, wayfinding signage, and potentially a CATS bus stop. \$340,000 has been allocated as part of this overall Riverfront Gateway Lighting and Signage Project and parking striping has been completed by the City-Parish Department of Public Works.

The Downtown Development District is currently exploring additional design and infrastructure improvements at Louisiana Avenue, connecting the Downtown Greenway to the proposed Government Street bike lanes via Eddie Robinson Sr. Drive. The Louisiana Connector will connect currently disjointed sidewalks, bicycle sharrow markers, ADA compliant crosswalk improvements, wayfinding signage, and streetscape amenities to create a pleasant and safe traveling experience for bicyclists and pedestrians.



Photo credit: Mark Bienu



Riverfront Access @ Florida St.

A new Florida Street Riverfront Access point was completed in 2015 and provides a bicycle and ADA compliant access point to the riverfront at Florida Street and River Road. The \$1.1 million project was designed in house by DPW with input from Susan Turner Associates, WHLC Architects, Reed Hildebrand, Reich Associates. A multi-use path along River Road connects LASM and Town Square to the new access point, better linking downtown to the Mississippi River and LSU via the levee bike path. The new access point is a safe and welcoming amenity for tourists and residents and has already attracted various groups of people and performers for large and small events. Crosswalk improvements along River Road were also included for the intersections of North Boulevard, Convention Street, and Florida Street.

In early 2016, the DDD installed bistro tables and chairs, Adirondack river viewing chairs, and shade umbrellas to complement the amount of public activity that the space attracts. The Rotary Club of Baton Rouge has also committed to constructing a sculpture by a world renowned artist in celebration and acknowledgment of their upcoming 100 year anniversary in 2018.

Riverfront Wayfinding

A 4.31 mile stretch of the levee bike path extends from the end of the downtown promenade just north of the I-10 Mississippi River Bridge and continues south past Skip Bertman Drive at LSU down to Farr Park. The 15 foot wide path includes separate lanes for both bicycles and on-foot visitors as well as lighting, seating and water fountains. The path's northern end terminates at the one mile riverfront promenade in Downtown Baton Rouge. The DDD has installed several types of wayfinding signage along this pathway; continuing with the installation of wayfinding signage along the riverfront highlighting the nearby cultural and civic attractions is expected in early 2018.

The Levee Loop is a set of two marked trails along the riverfront promenade; a .5 mile and 1.5 mile circuit aimed at promoting health, community use, and active interaction with the Mississippi River. Signs with calorie burn information are located along the loops and call out some of the major features users can expect to see along the routes.



Desoto Park Nature Trail

The 20-acre footprint of the batture area historically known as 'DeSoto Park' presents a range of eco-tourism and recreational opportunities as a natural celebration of the Mississippi River and the batture wildlife habitats that it creates. By constructing simple hiking trails with interpretive and wayfinding signage, a new riverfront attraction can be created and used for nature exploration, bird watching, bike riding, photography, picnicking, wildlife and plant educational programs, and other nature based activities. The park will provide visitors with an opportunity to experience the river's edge in its natural state. Pedestrian access via the existing City/Parish ROW over the CN Railroad at North Street, as well as public parking at the Welcome Center, offers some of the infrastructure needed for safe access to the park space.

The DDD has begun the conceptual work toward the development of this trail system and other improvements, though a sustainable model for the management of this riverfront attraction will be necessary to achieve long-term success. The DDD will seek partnerships that can emerge between various entities such as the City of Baton Rouge, State of LA, BREC, and local/regional naturalist and trail seeking groups.



Yazoo Plaza

The pedestrian and cyclist portion of the Florida Riverfront Access project on the east side of the LASM building connects to the redesigned Yazoo Plaza by Suzanne Turner Associates at the northern end of LASM. In addition to being a new urban greenspace, Yazoo Plaza seamlessly connects North Boulevard Town Square, Repentance Park, and the multi-use path along River Road.

Surrounded by a grove of trees in a park like setting, the plaza provides a space for visitors to relax and enjoy the surrounding downtown views. The project is located at the intersection of North Boulevard and River Road and will include low maintenance plant materials, seating areas, and hardscape paths. The plaza provides a flexible space for the frequent and large groups of school children to safely congregate before, after, or for lunch during their field trips to the museum. Bistro tables and chairs were placed in the flexible space for users to enjoy in 2017.



Lafayette Street Improvements

Lafayette Street was conceived as the primary pedestrian spine linking the new Visitor Center and the Old State Capitol, and will become a vibrant urban street with a healthy mix of shops, restaurants, hotels, and apartments. In response to developments such as the IBM, 525 Lafayette, the Hampton Inn, and the Historic Tessier Building renovation, portions of Lafayette Street and Florida Street received funding in the amount of \$300,000 for streetscape improvements. Lafayette and Florida Street now offer a pleasant pedestrian experience for those traveling to nearby businesses and attractions such as the Hilton, Hotel Indigo, and the Shaw Center for Performing Arts.



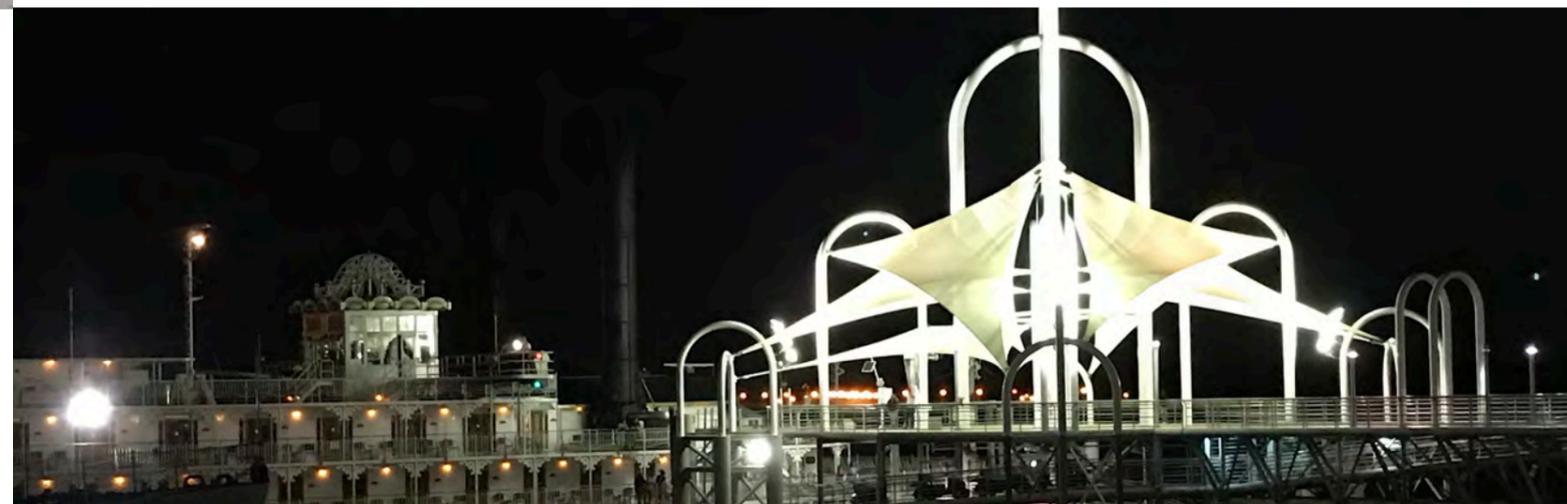
Bike Share Plan

In 2015, Baton Rouge received a technical assistance grant from the EPA's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program to investigate the feasibility and logistics of a bike share program, a transportation program ideal for short distance trip providing users the ability to rent and return a bicycle to and from stations strategically placed throughout the city. Baton Rouge Bike Share is planned to roll out in 2018 and will serve the Downtown, North Baton Rouge, and LSU areas initially with expansion goals for Mid City and the Health District in future phases. The Baton Rouge Bike Share Business and Implementation Plan was released publicly in November and can be downloaded at www.braf.org/bikeshare. Follow Baton Rouge BikeShare on Facebook at @BatonRougeBikeShare for updates as this project progresses.

River Road Bike & Pedestrian Paths

Recent, major developments along River Road including River Park and IBM currently lack surrounding bicycle and pedestrian amenities that would improve the safety and experience of travelers. Several projects are currently underway that will bring these amenities to River Road and connect the developments to the surrounding destinations and businesses.

Duplantis Design Group is currently contracted to plan and design the pedestrian path on the east side of River Road between Florida Street and the State Buildings to the North, integrated with the recently install streetscape adjacent to the IBM complex. These improvements will include street trees, sidewalks, crosswalks, and needed pedestrian signals. Bike and pedestrian paths extending north of the Riverfront Access Point at Florida Street on the west side of River Road are currently under construction. This project will also include road improvements to River Road as part of the State to City-Parish road transfer project. The east side of River Road is expected to begin construction in 2018.



Riverfront Dock Shade Sails

Post Architects have desinged a functional shade structure that will cover approximately 3,000 square feet of the Riverfront Dock, costing approximately \$130,000 - \$160,000. The tensile shade structure will provide shade and rain protection for downtown riverfront patrons, providing a pleasant site for small events and gatherings to celebrate and enjoy the Mississippi River. Illuminating the translucent panels with LED lighting that creates an exciting dock structure and attraction that not only accommodates users, but also showcases Baton Rouge's riverfront to travelers on the I-10 bridge. Lighting plans for the shade structures are in final design process.



Riverfront Plaza

Originally built in 1984, Riverfront Plaza is a classic water garden style public space, a signature of the particular era in which it was designed. The plaza offers and ADA accessible entry to the riverfront near the dock, but is in need of renovation to rectify numerous maintenance items that have been neglected for a number of years. Recent improvements to the transit shelter and additional wayfinding have been implemented.

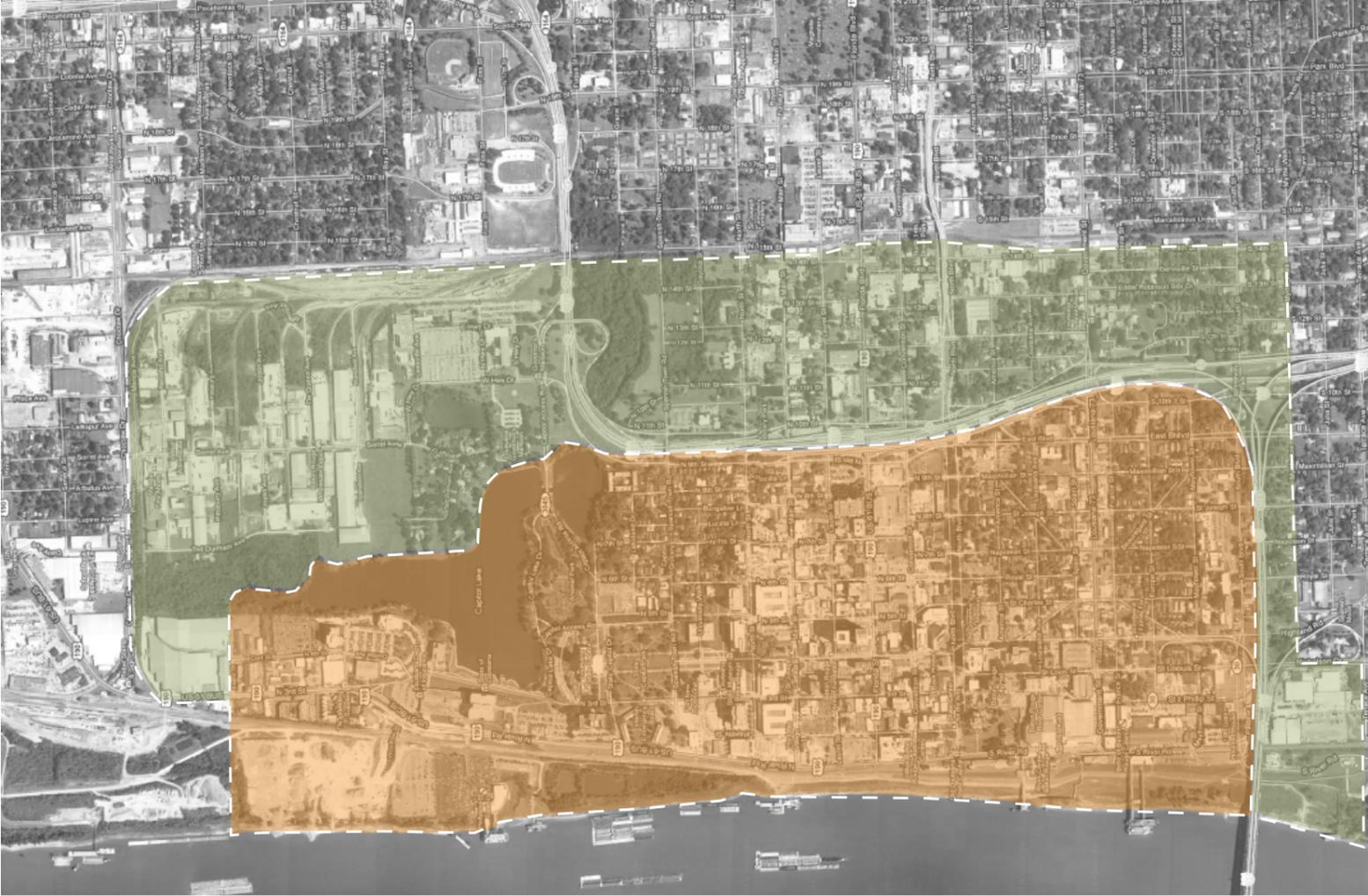
CARBO Landscape Architecture has created schematic plans to further enhance the areas within and adjacent to the plaza and dock area. These opportunities include ways to improve aesthetics while decreasing regular maintenance needs, and further defining individual spaces within the gardens that can be used for events and/or riverboat reception. Some of the enhancements include; upgraded event space, shade trellises for riverboat and daily visitors, 'no-mow' wildflower planting areas, River Road tree plantings, steel edging to define the railway space, additional security lighting, concrete repairs, and ADA improvements. CARBO Landscape Architecture is currently in the process of creating final design and construction plans. Construction is expected to begin in late 2018.

Community Events

Downtown residents and guests enjoy over 1,500 annual events including parades, races, and large events such as the popular Live After Five concert series. Many of these events take place in the recently implemented public greenspaces, North Boulevard Town Square and Repentance Park. The Downtown Development District strategically implemented these spaces as downtown master plan recommendations in order to spur investment and provide a constant stream of attractions and activity. Improvements to City Hall Plaza and the Riverfront Plaza stage are currently under construction or design to provide even more outdoor event opportunities.

In addition to implementing these unique public spaces, the DDD also manages all aspects of these greenspaces such as the beacon programming, assistance with event logistics, and maintaining the landscape in order to enhance the public's downtown experience. The DDD, functioning as a liaison between event coordinators and City-Parish Departments, also reviews event applications and assists in required permitting processes. Event information is also available and marketed through various DDD outlets including emails, social media, the North Boulevard Town Square Media Beacon, and website calendars. The Special Event Procedures and Guidelines Handbook, available online or in our office, was developed and is maintained as an overview to the logistics and processes in event coordination.

For more information on the event related resources provided by the DDD, visit www.downtownbatonrouge.org



Boundary Expansion

As an implementation item of our 2012 Strategic Plan and Plan Baton Rouge II, it was recommended that the downtown extend its geographical reach to the neighborhoods surrounding downtown. The expansion calls for an area plan that will focus on residential neighborhood revitalization and an employment center north of the State Capitol Building. Legislation was passed in 2012 that expanded the Downtown Development District boundary and was approved by voters in the Fall of 2015. The newly expanded area began contributing to the DDD tax base in 2017.

The western boundary of the expansion is at the Mississippi River immediately south of the Old Municipal Dock, with its eastern most boundary is the Kansas City Line Railroad. Its northern boundary is Choctaw Drive and extends west along the railroad towards the river. As creating an implementation strategy for this expansion is crucial to its successful redevelopment, the Downtown Development District is currently seeking funding sources for planning.

Parking Strategy

In 2016, the metropolitan council approved \$100,000 to hire Fregonese and Associates to expand upon the parking analysis study conducted in 2014 by AECOM. Baton Rouge has about 1,800 public parking spaces downtown and another 2,700 private parking spaces, but is not currently collecting their expected revenue. Of those 1,800 public spaces, 970 are on the street and 540 are metered. The consultant recommended hiring a parking management company to oversee the ticketing, operations, and management of a comprehensive parking program downtown.

The study also suggested upgrading the city's outdated parking meters with modern machines that accepted credit card and phone payments. Implementation of the new meters is expected in 2018.



Recognitions

Organization & Project Recognition

- 2016 River Road Project – Baton Rouge Growth Coalition – Good Growth Award
- 2016 DDD Toolkit – International Downtown Association – Merit Award, Marketing
- 2015 River Road Project – LA Chapter of the American Planning Association, Louisiana Great Places
- 2015 River Road Project – International Downtown Association – Merit Award, Public Spaces
- 2014 The Crest at Galvez Plaza – International Downtown Association – Merit Award, Public Spaces
- 2014 The Crest & Repentance Park - Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., Pelican Chapter
- 2014 The Crest & Repentance Park - Associated Builders and Contractors, Eagle Award (national)
- 2014 The Crest - The Associated General Contractors of America (national)
- 2014 The Crest at Galvez Plaza - Baton Rouge Growth Coalition Good Growth
- 2014 North Boulevard Town Square – LA Chapter of the American Planning Association - Great Street in Louisiana
- 2013 Repentance Park – International Downtown Association, Public Spaces
- 2013 Downtown Development District 25 Years – International Downtown Association, Leadership & Management
- 2013 North Boulevard Town Square – LA Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture, Honor Award
- 2012 North Boulevard Town Square – ENR TX/LA, Best Hardscape Urban Development Project
- 2012 North Boulevard Town Square - The United States Conference of Mayors, Merit Award, City Livability
- 2012 North Boulevard Town Square – International Downtown Association Merit Award, Public Spaces
- 2012 North Boulevard Town Square – Baton Rouge Growth Coalition Good Growth, People's Choice Award
- 2012 North Boulevard Town Square – Associated Builders & Contractors, Excellence in Construction
- 2012 North Boulevard Town Square – LA Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture, Planning
- 2012 North Boulevard Town Square – Municipal Association for Economic Development
- 2011 Downtown Greenway – International Downtown Association, Planning
- 2010 Greening of Downtown – International Downtown Association, Planning
- 2009 Arts & Entertainment District – International Downtown Association, Leadership & Management
- 2008 Wayfinding Signage – International Downtown Association, Outstanding Achievement



Special Thanks

We remain dedicated to the development and promotion of downtown Baton Rouge as we move forward in 2018. We thank all of the countless individuals who support our mission and cause, enabling downtown Baton Rouge to grow and develop into a place to live, work, and play. They include private developers, public agencies, and non-profit organizations. We are extremely grateful to the partnerships created to make such extraordinary projects happen. Special thanks to the Honorable Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome and the Metropolitan Council for the continued support of this vision.

Honorable Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome

East Baton Rouge City-Parish Metropolitan Council

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Trae Welch | District One |
| Chauna Banks-Daniel | District Two |
| Chandler Loupe | District Three |
| Scott Wilson, Pro Tempore | District Four |
| Erika L. Green | District Five |
| Donna Collins-Lewis | District Six |
| LaMont Cole | District Seven |
| Buddy Amoroso | District Eight |
| Dwight Hudson | District Nine |
| Tara Wicker | District Ten |
| Matt Watson | District Eleven |
| Barbara Freiberg | District Twelve |

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| Eric Dexter | |
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DDD Staff

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| Gabriel Vicknair | Assistant Executive Director |
| Whitney Hoffman Sayal | Development Project Director |
| Casey Tate | Development Project Director |
| Mary Olinde | Administrative Assistant |
| Kade Jones | Intern |

Special Thanks



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