

TRANSFORMATIVE
DEVELOPMENT YEAR BOOK
DECEMBER 2016

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Development Year Book
2016

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Introduction

For more than 29 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 over 350 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



New Businesses

BUSINESS FIRST BANK, relocated its headquarters in the summer of 2016 to the historic 500 Laurel St. Building, a six-story structure in the heart of downtown that was designed in 1955 by the late A. Hays Town.

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'.

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.

MAGPIE CAFE, opened its second Baton Rouge location this summer at 333 Laurel Street in the bottom floor of the Commerce Building. The restaurant specializes in coffees and local seasonal foods.

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.

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

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.

BIG SQUEEZY, featuring raw and nutrient dense cold pressed juices prepared daily on premise, as well as other super-food smoothies and unique offerings, opened in the fall of 2016 at 327 North Boulevard.

SOMOS BANDIDOS, opening in the fall of 2016 at 303 North Boulevard, this Mexican restaurant features creative tacos at an affordable price.

DRIFTWOOD CASK & BARREL, located at 326 Third Street, is a gastropub that has an easy-going atmosphere with thoughtfully paired food and drinks. Guests are invited to sit down and relax, have a drink, a few bites, and stay awhile.

THE GREGORY, located in The Watermark Hotel at 150 Third Street, offers refreshing takes on Louisiana classics. The restaurant is centered between a spacious kitchen and a full bar, surrounded by vintage murals painted by Angela Gregory.

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.

LAVA CANTINA serves delicious Creole dishes with a Mexican twist in a musical atmosphere often featuring live music. The restaurant is located at 151 Third Street.

ANOTHER BROKEN EGG announced its plans to open a downtown location in the spring of 2016. Currently under construction, the restaurant will be located in the IBM building on the corner of Main and Laurel Street.

CHEF CELESTE BISTRO offers a delicious blend of salads, sandwiches, and other flavors to delight the palette. Serving breakfast, lunch, drinks, and coffee in the Main Street Market located on the corner of 5th and Main Street.

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 will debut some other spirits uniquely produced in the heart of Baton Rouge.

SHAMROCK MARINE, provides the Towing and Shipping Industry with fast and safe vessel transport of groceries, supplies, filters, palletized cargo, and personnel. The company opened a base location at South Boulevard and River Road in 2016.

REDSTICK CROSSFIT, is a fitness facility that focuses on strength and conditioning through constantly varied functional movements performed at high intensity. The facility is located at 600 Main Street.

CI GROUP specializes in designing, procuring and installing intelligent commercial office furniture & interiors as well as industrial warehouse solutions. It is located in The Kress Building at 447 N. 3rd Street, Suite D.

COSI BELLA is Downtown Baton Rouge's first professional holistic full service salon. Featuring organic hair products and located at 240 Laurel Street on the second floor.

NEW APERIO is a mobile application and software development company based in Baton Rouge, LA. It is located at 650 Main Street and specializes in custom web applications

COMPOSE DIGITAL DESIGN located at 522 Europe Street, is a full service Communication Design Firm specializing in the production of creative products for three primary medias; Graphic Design, Video Production, and Web Design.

ZIP CAR a company that rents vehicles by the hour and day, is beginning a four-car pilot program in Downtown Baton Rouge, following its recent launch success at LSU. The metropolitan council approved the company's use of 4 city-parish parking spots in the fall of 2016.

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 (BRAf), the City of Baton Rouge, The Water Institute of the Gulf, Louisiana State University, and other coastal research institutes.

The Water Campus will be the economic and cultural southern anchor of downtown, while strengthening the connection to LSU. The 30 acre campus will be located on the Mississippi Riverfront surrounding the old Municipal Dock near the Interstate-10 bridge and will house 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 began construction in November 2015 and will function as the headquarters equipped with research facilities, offices, displays, and more.



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 is projected to contain the IBM facility as well as 85 residential units within a residential complex known as 525 Lafayette. The location of the IBM offices in Downtown Baton Rouge will provide over 800 new jobs within the capital region. IBM began occupying the office tower in the spring of 2015 and 525 Lafayette residential units began leasing this year.

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/>



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.



Beauregard Quarters

Construction began on a new four-story multifamily housing project located in the historic Beauregard 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, Beauregard Quarters will be located across from the House on the Hill development. Beauregard Quarters is expected to complete construction in early 2017.



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 currently under construction and expected to complete construction in the beginning of 2017.

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.

The groundbreaking ceremony for this residential project located in the heart of the arts and entertainment district took place on September 15, 2014 and construction was finished in the fall of 2016.

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



Saltz Building

At the end of 2015, developers Helena and Kevin Cunningham announced the renovation of 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 to begin in early 2017.



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 the 3rd quarter of 2017. The new, larger units designated for homeownership will be built as negotiated with the buyers.

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 will be available for rent upon completion. Construction was completed in the second quarter of 2016 and Magpie's Cafe officially opened in the summer.

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



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 the first quarter of 2017. Improvements to the adjacent Spanish Town Park were also completed by BREC in the spring of 2016.



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, will lease the 3,000 square foot ground floor space. Construction began in the second quarter of 2016 and is expected to be complete in the first quarter of 2017. The Lemoine Company is currently overseeing the construction of the modern building comprised of a combination of steel panels and fiber cement panels.



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.



Deville Apartments

The Deville Apartments represent the ideals of Mid-Century Modern architecture and received a \$2.5 million renovation earlier this year. 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. The project is currently under construction.



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 in 2016. 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 was completed in the fall of 2016 and 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 Aughtin Company, Inc. of Greenville, S.C., announced in the fall of 2014 that they will 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 by the end of 2017.



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. The Louisiana Realtors held a groundbreaking ceremony on December 4th at 821 Main Street and the association moved into their new facility in the first quarter of 2016. Coleman Partners Architects, LLC created the plans for this renovation project.



Trademark on Third

The former Latil's Stationery and Office Supplies building located at 326 Third Street has been renovated by local restaurateur Andy Blouin into a multi-use development that adds to the diversity on Third Street. Blouin and his business partner Sean Malone purchased the 1920s building for \$850,000 to renovate the space into a reception hall and event venue, as well as a restaurant and bar.

The second story event space includes a 6,000 square foot banquet and reception hall that is able to accommodate up to 300 people. Bryan Lott and Zac Love, owners of Uncle Earl's bar currently located on Perkins Road, opened Driftwood Cask & Barrel on the bottom floor in December 2016. The gastropub restaurant features an easy-going atmosphere with thoughtfully-paired food and drinks.

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 were completed in the first quarter of 2016 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 2,400 square feet. Developer Gordon LeBlanc Jr. purchased the old Butler Furniture Building in 2014 for \$530,000. Chenvert Architects, lead architect in for the renovations of the Butler Building, relocated from their current space on 315 Third Street into a 5,000 square feet space within the space. Construction was complete in early 2016 on the approximately \$1 million renovation project.



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.



Rotary Project

The Florida Riverfront Access Point is one of several redesign projects aimed at connecting downtown to the Mississippi River and accommodating the increasing amount of bicycle and pedestrian activity. The Baton Rouge Rotary chose this site for the location of its Centennial Project, utilizing \$350,000 of privately raised funding to construct a pinnacle sculpture piece marking the rotary's centennial anniversary in 2018. World renowned artist Po Shu Wang was selected to design a sculpture that will be visible from the Mississippi River Bridge with the largest sphere standing 14 feet tall. A sensor, located in the Mississippi River, measures the speed of the current and the height of the river and converts the data frequencies to a singing sound within the sculpture that visitors are able to speak back to by speaking or pressing buttons.



Coca-Cola Sign

The ownership of the historic Coca-Cola sign located on the corner of Third and Florida Streets was transferred to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation with a separate nonprofit entity created to be the official owner of the sign. The non-profit has a board consisting of representatives from the Arts Council, the Downtown Development District, Coca-Cola, BRAF, and the building owner of where the sign sits. The relighting of the Coca-Cola sign was celebrated in April of 2016, ensuring that it continues to be enjoyed by the Baton Rouge community for years to come.

Diversity of Development on Third Street



'Raising Cane's' 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 early 2017. Plans are to improve infrastructure related items and to reconfigure the interior seating, lobby, and theatre areas.



TramLink BR

TramLink BR, a recommendation of the FutureBR master plan, was awarded a \$1.8 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant in the fall of 2014. The proposed approximately 3-mile long route of the tram will connect downtown to LSU, stretching primarily along Nicholson Drive. The City-Parish completed studies on the preferred alternative and obtained environmental approval from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in 2016. The City-Parish plans to seek additional federal and local funding to complete the final design and construction of the proposed modern streetcar.

Third Street Diversity

In 1950, Third Street was the heart not only of Downtown but of Baton Rouge. After a hard decline, the Third Street corridor has re-emerged as the place to live, work, and play in Baton Rouge. New retailers and developments along Third Street are bringing more residents downtown than ever before, fulfilling a long-term vision for the city's center that's been in the works for more than two decades. Featuring many of the city's best restaurants, music venues, and bars, Third Street is already thriving with nightlife and entertainment options. But new investments in residential developments and essential services, such as a grocery store and a pharmacy, are helping to make downtown more livable.

In total, there are more than two dozen startups and small businesses downtown that are owned and operated by young entrepreneurs. This exciting spirit of youthful entrepreneurship is yet another reason why it is a great time to be downtown. The area is thriving day and night. New restaurants and bars provide a vast array of entertainment options, while new hotels, retailers and service based businesses provide convenience and shopping opportunities. Come live, work and play with us.



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 near adjacent to Interstate I-110 with convenient access to all of downtown's amenities.

Green Park

In October of 2016, the City of Baton Rouge launched the "Green Park" initiative that promotes the use of eco-friendly electrical powered vehicles. Green Park is a city-wide Electric Vehicle Awareness Program to inform policy makers, state and local government, utilities, fleets, private sector businesses, and individual consumers about the clear and actionable roadmap for the widespread adoption of electric vehicles. Those with electric powered cars parking in the downtown area can now charge for free at one of the designated stations.

The program began in Downtown Baton Rouge with 10 charging stations across 5 locations including; the Shaw Center for the Performing Arts on Lafayette Street, Main Street Market between 5th and 6th Street, IBM/525 Lafayette, between North and Main Street, and within the Third Street Parking Garage. Entergy sponsored the first phase of the project and the City-Parish plans to install a total of 45 stations following this first phase.



Arkel Development

Arkel Contractors 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.



Spanish Town Park

In May of 2016, BREC hosted a ribbon cutting at Spanish Town Park located at 1300 Spanish Town Road. The park offers nearby residents, including the recently opened Elysian I and future Elysian II apartment complexes, playground equipment, picnic tables, barbecue grills, benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks. The existing basketball court was refurbished and a new pavilion was also added for park users. BREC is also exploring the possibility of an expansive Sports Academy complex near the Spanish Town Park for the ever increasing number of Downtown East residents and surrounding community to enjoy.

Expressway Park Lighting

On November 3rd 2016 lights for the recently renovated football field were christened by Coach Terry Boyd and the South Baton Rouge Jaguars Football team. Many other amenities have also been implemented in Expressway Park over the past few years including a Walk-Ons basketball court, exercise equipment, park furnishings, and interior improvements to the Recreational Center. A portion of the Downtown Greenway, a 2.75 mile bicycle and pedestrian corridor, is also located within the park and links to inner city residential neighborhoods, other downtown parks, businesses, and cultural attractions utilizing the existing BREC parks, interstate infrastructure, and public right-of-ways.

Expressway Park is strategically located, connecting all to enjoy its amenities, from the downtown workers of the Water Campus to the inner city residents of Beauregard Town, Spanish Town, Central Business District, Downtown East, Mid City, Garden District, and Old South Baton Rouge.



South Boulevard Mural

Over the past several years, the Mayor's Office and a number of departments have been working to identify ways the City-Parish can upgrade infrastructure while contributing positively to the community and surrounding neighborhood. The pump station located at South Boulevard and River Road received upgrades to the infrastructure via the Sanitary Sewer Overflow (SSO) Program and the Love Our Community Summer Youth Employment Program. The mural project was complete in the summer of 2016 in conjunction with the youth program and created a sense of pride and ownership in program participants, who played an active role in making their community a better place to live, work, and play.

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 has been redeveloped by Covalent Logic. 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 in the second quarter of 2017.



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 begin in the first quarter of 2017.



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 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. It is currently under construction by Rotolo Consultants and is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2017. Construction is expected to begin on the East Boulevard section in the second quarter of 2017, following final LA Department of Transportation & Development approval.

Underpass Improvements

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. \$250,000 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 sharrows 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 Bienvenu



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 including Levee Loop signage, ADA accessibility, and appropriate park usage information. Continued installation of wayfinding signage along the riverfront highlighting the nearby cultural and civic attractions is expected in the second quarter of 2017.

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.



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 are planned to be placed in the flexible space for users to enjoy in 2017.

Lafayette & Florida St. 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.

Reich Associates, a local Landscape Architecture firm designed and planned the project that includes bulb-outs, paved crosswalks, tree grates, and lighting. Hard Rock Construction was selected as the contractor for the street improvements in early 2016 and completed the project in the fall of 2016. 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 late Summer 2017 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 tress, 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 have been bid out and are expected to begin construction in the first quarter of 2017. 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 by the end of 2017.



Downtown Bike Racks

Throughout downtown residents and visitors can will find a growing number of bike friendly businesses and amenities. In order to better accommodate the increasing bike traffic, bike racks have been placed strategically along major points of interest and access including Third Street and River Road. These racks are formed specifically to facilitate a bike friendly downtown while maintaining the strong level of aesthetic that has come to be expected with downtown's growing developments.



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 the 4th quarter of 2017.

Riverfront Dock

Post Architects have chosen 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.

Plans to illuminate the translucent panels with multi-colored LED lighting will create 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. The light fabric shade structure was bid for installation in the 4th quarter of 2016.



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. Future improvements to City Hall Plaza and the Riverfront Plaza stage are currently being developed to provide even more outdoor event opportunities.

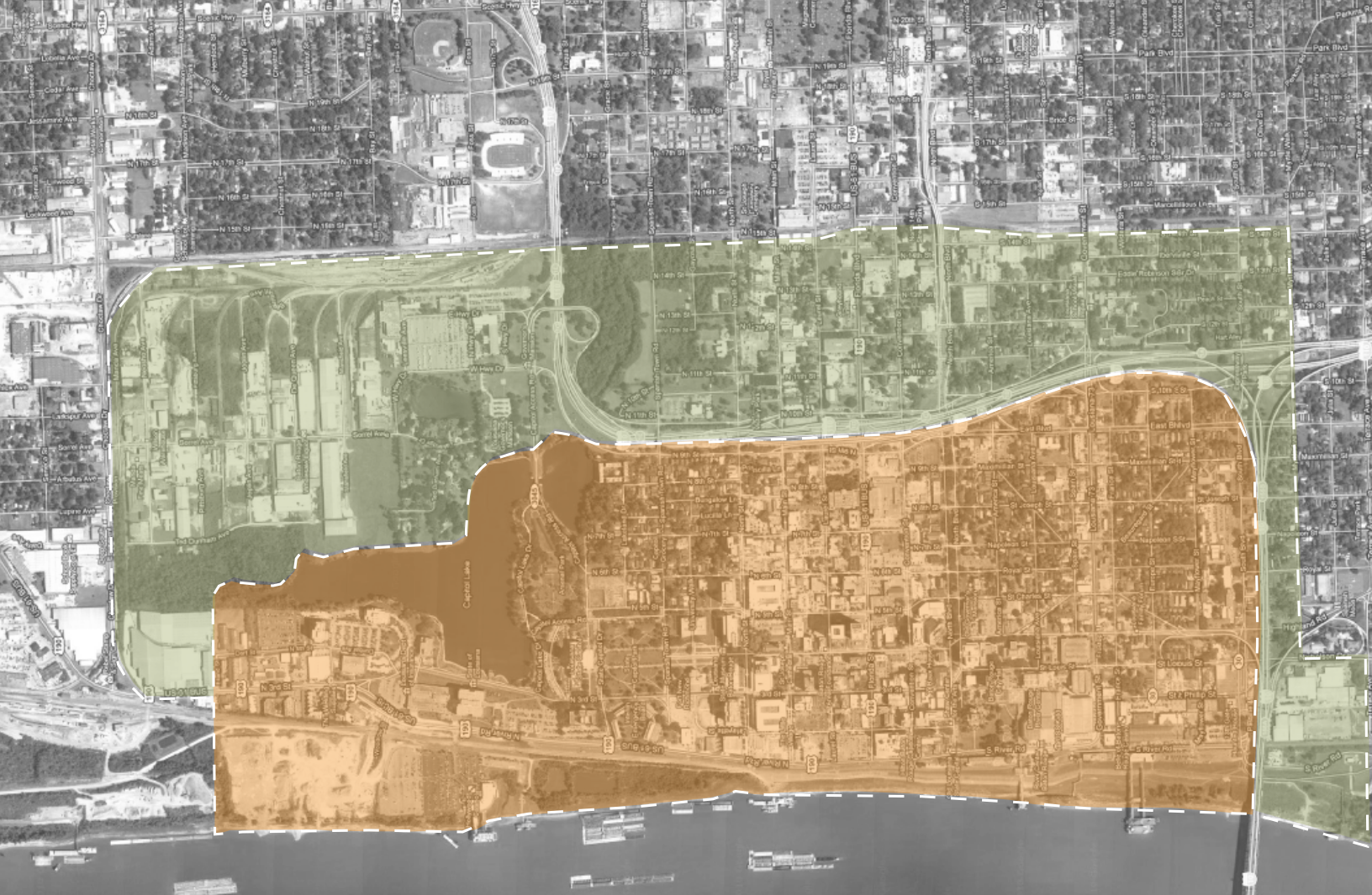
In addition to implementing these unique public spaces, the DDD also manages all aspects of these greenspaces such as the beacon programming, assistance with event logistics, and maintaining the landscape in order to enhance the public's downtown experience. The DDD, functioning as a liaison between 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

Design Resource Center

The Design Resource Center's mission is to unite the design community with the public by creating a common ground for students, professionals, residents, and business owners to engage one another in design discussions focused on the promotion of commerce and culture in Downtown Baton Rouge. The center ultimately informs citizens on the direction of Baton Rouge as outlined in Plan Baton Rouge II, Future BR and other adopted master plans.

Students from the LSU School of Landscape Architecture and Architecture, Southern University School of Architecture, Mentorship Academy, and Rhode Island School of Design have utilized the space to showcase and discuss project ideas for Downtown Baton Rouge. Professional organizations including the Louisiana Chapter of the American Planning Association, Louisiana Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects, Louisiana Chapter of American Institute of Architects, Baton Rouge Chapter of the Urban Land Institute, and many others have also used the space for design discussion and education meetings. The center is also currently being used for the Downtown Maintenance Committee, an initiative focused on the enhancement of the built and natural environment by increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of maintenance resolutions through the development of ordinances, educational campaigns, enforcement procedures, and volunteer/funding activities compatible with the current dynamic and condition of the Downtown Development District.



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 will begin 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.

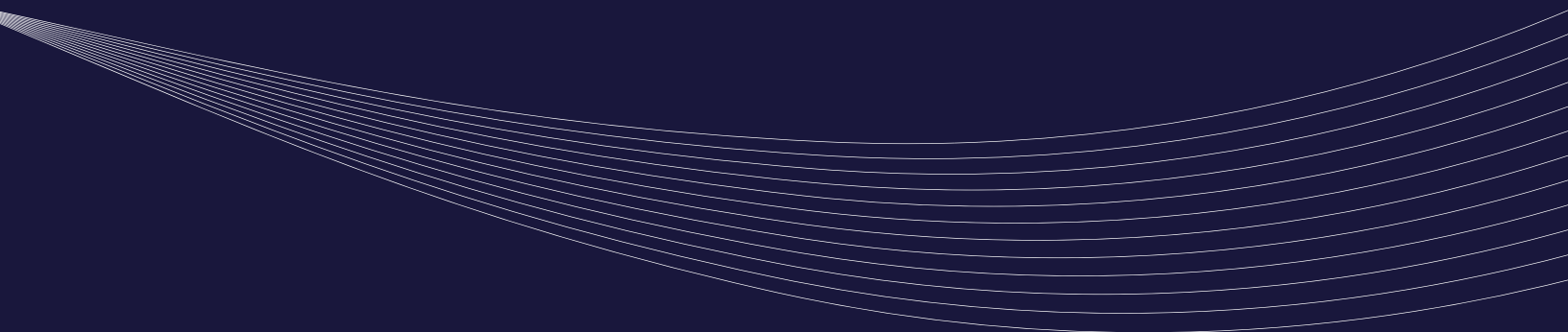
The study also suggested upgrading the city's outdated parking meters with modern machines that accepted credit card and phone payments. A parking management company was selected at the end of 2016 and the project is expected to begin implementation in the beginning of 2017.



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

