

# TOWN OF OBERLIN

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## COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED FEBRUARY 22, 2022



## INTRODUCTION

*The purpose of a local/regional public master plan is to provide a comprehensive, coordinated, continuous, cooperative and consensus developed vision (sometimes referred to as the “5-C Process”). The plan objective is to leverage strategies for implementation and maximum efficiency in the use of public dollars. Information and clarity on identified programs and projects in the Plan elements facilitate an understanding in both public and private operations and investments.*

*State law, in addition to local practice, generally identifies common elements that comprise the plan: Drainage, Transportation, Housing, Utilities, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Land Use, Public Buildings, Social Services, Education, and Public Safety. Other plan elements have emerged over the past thirty years to identify Environmental, Human Health, and Resiliency needs in response to contamination and weather disasters.*

*Critical to the purpose of a master plan is providing consistent implementation and continuity timelines to protect the integrity of money, time, and energy needed to deliver identified programs and projects.*

### **LOUISIANA REVISED STATUTES: 33: 109 THRU 119 AND 140.61 AND 140.62**

*Where a planning commission does not exist, the legislative body (council/police jury) or board adopt and authorize amendments to the local plan. Master plans may comprise one page or three hundred plus pages. The following listed plan elements, programs and projects may comprise the entirety of the local plan or identify select short- and long-term needs and wants as currently adopted.*

### **MOST RECENT ADOPTED MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS AS AMENDED:**

**Town of Oberlin Council Resolution No. 2022-02-22 Dated February 22, 2022**

*The Town of Oberlin does not currently have a planning commission; therefore, the Town Council is the final authority managing the municipal comprehensive master plan.*

*The Council encourages and supports citizen involvement and participation in the community development process.*

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

The Economic Development element of the Oberlin Comprehensive Master Plan is a priority need and implementation focus for the municipality:

### **1) OBERLIN ECONOMIC TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISE CENTER ETE (BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INCUBATOR)**

The Town of Oberlin proposes to establish a business development center with the fundamental purpose of providing local and potentially new businesses with resources and assistance to facilitate start-ups and sustainable economic viability for the short- and long-term, competitively. The Oberlin Economic Technology Enterprise (ETE) Center Project is designed to provide thirty (30) separate business enterprises with access to high speed, high capacity, and affordably competitive internet service. Support services would include a new business incubator, as well as enhance long-term businesses with financial assistance, web marketing, and management strategies. Fortified infrastructure would be included to compensate for power outages and provide continuous uninterrupted services.

### **IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

a. TBD

**2) OBERLIN SIGNATURE ATTRACTION PROJECT**

The Oberlin Signature Attraction Project is designed to engage visitors to see and participate in something not readily available anywhere else in the region. For example: Wildflower vistas, bird watching, scenic rivers, and agri-tourism.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. March 30, 2022. A group of Oberlin citizens formed to design, implement, and sustain the Oberlin Signature Attraction Project as a non-profit fundraising operation.

**3) OBERLIN PUBLIC MARKET**

The proposed Oberlin Public Market is a regional service to the public providing a broad range of local goods and services needed and produced in the area. Designed in the art deco style of the parish courthouse, the Oberlin Public Market is designed as a covered pavilion 200 feet in length and 50 feet in width including forty stalls for selling produce, crafts, and specialty items on a regularly scheduled basis. Costs to manage the facility is proposed to be shared with both public and private sponsors. Fundamental to the market’s operation is easy access, adequate parking, demonstrations on how best to prepare and cook local produce, local music on market days, and a selection of new and interesting local products and services.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. TBD

**4) TOWN OF OBERLIN WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE AND UTILIZATION**

The Town Council recognizes a highest priority need for the municipality to develop, maintain, and utilize a website for public information and participation in the community development of the Town of Oberlin. Concurrently, there is also a need to market Oberlin business enterprises for economic development purposes.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. TBD

**5) SELECTION AND CERTIFICATION OF INDUSTRIAL PARK SITES IN OR NEAR THE TOWN OF OBERLIN**

Essential to the long-term development of the Town of Oberlin is the need for one or more industrial parks to attract and sustain major employers to the community. Selection and Certification by the Louisiana Economic Development Department (LED) qualifies a site for industry prospects.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. February 1, 2022. The Town Council is currently working with the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance to inventory six potential industry park sites for certification review.

**UTILITIES ELEMENT**

**1) MUNICIPAL SEWER SERVICE SYSTEM RESILIENCY PROJECT**

The Oberlin Sewer System includes 15 lift stations and requires systemwide upgrades.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. TBD

**2) INTERNET SERVICE ENHANCEMENT AND RESILIENCY THROUGH PUBLIC FIBER NETWORKS**

The Town of Oberlin seeks to provide municipal residents and businesses with the best available internet services involving speed, capacity, and affordability as a public utility. Louisiana law prohibits local government from building, owning or operating internet services as a public entity; however, reliance is comprehensively limited to private providers. However, the Town of Oberlin is desirous of continually seeking to provide municipal residents and businesses with options. The Oberlin Internet Public Service Enhancement and Resiliency Project is a fundamental utility objective in the city’s master plan.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. TBD

**3) OBERLIN WATER SYSTEM UPGRADES PROJECT**

The Town of Oberlin completed comprehensive upgrades to the municipal water system in 2020. The upgrades included an Automated Monitor Infrastructure (AMI), but additional phased improvements are needed.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. February 1, 2022. The Town Council is evaluating funding options for final water system phased improvements.

**TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

**1) LOUISIANA HIGHWAY 26 BYPASS PROJECT**

Louisiana Highway 26 is routed through the Town of Oberlin. There are two major 90 degree turns in the center of town. Allen Parish has a timber industry economy with timber laden trucks running regularly on La. Hwy. 26. The Hwy. 26 Bypass Project is proposed to reroute heavy traffic on and along West 9th Street on the north side of Oberlin corporate limits.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. TBD

**2) EAST/WEST 6TH STREET BOULEVARD IMPROVEMENTS**

The focal street of the Town of Oberlin is the historical East/West 6th Street. Once an aesthetically landscaped boulevard, this primary right-of-way has been entirely surfaced for roadway and adjacent parking. The planned boulevard for East/West 6th Street Boulevard Improvement Project is projected to restore original design and purpose of boulevard aesthetics and enhancement for the center of town. The purpose of the La. Hwy. 26 Bypass Project in the Town of Oberlin is to reroute heavy industry traffic out of downtown Oberlin and allow for a multipurpose aesthetically enhanced main street.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. TBD

**3) MUNICIPAL STREET OVERLAY PROJECT**

The City of Oberlin has identified all municipal streets for an overlay resurface project to maintain and protect longevity and durability.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. November 6, 2021. State Capital Outlay Application submitted by Town Council for \$650,000.
- b. February 14, 2022. Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission proposes to pilot a regional street/road overlay inventory every twelve months to assist member governments in securing optime material and cost savings.

**RECREATION ELEMENT**

**1) BEAUTIFICATION OF VETERANS PARK AND ADAMS HIGH PARKS. REPLACEMENT OF ½ MILE WALKING PATH IN VETERANS PARK AND ADDITION OF NEW RECREATION EQUIPMENT TO BOTH PARKS.**

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. TBD

**2) OBERLIN REGIONAL SPORTS COMPLEX**

The Town of Oberlin is centrally located in Allen Parish with easy and ready access throughout the region. The Oberlin Regional Sports Complex is planned to take advantage of the central geographic location and provide a state-of-the-art sports complex including baseball, soccer, tennis, volleyball, handball, and velo track. Designed as a public facility, the Oberlin Regional Sports Complex will be managed by a non-profit and supported by both private and public resources.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. TBD

**3) GATEWAY TO OUISKA CHITTO CANOE RECREATIONAL TRAIL**

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. TBD

**4) REGIONAL TRAILHEAD FOR RECREATIONAL BIKE RIDERS**

The Louisiana Region 4 Watershed plan includes several initiatives and projects encompassing the Town of Oberlin. A Regional Bikeway and Hiking Trail network is proposed to connect flood management infrastructure locations throughout the nine-parish region.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. July 4, 2022. The planned Mills Creek Reservoir, a component of the Region 4 Watershed, is added to the Southwest Louisiana Regional Comprehensive Plan and is located northwest of the Town of Oberlin.

**HOUSING ELEMENT**

**1) OBERLIN RESIDENTIAL HOMESTEAD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

The Oberlin Residential Homestead Program is a component of the Southwest Louisiana Comprehensive Plan operating through the Regional Planning Commission as the Centerpiece Housing Initiative. Utilizing adjudicated properties, the ORHP allows potential homeowners to “homestead” available lots or parcels of land that have been abandoned by original property owners

and currently maintained by municipal and parish governments. A qualifying applicant is provided resources to build and reside on adjudicated property or lot for a period of six years or until title insurance can be secured and clear ownership achieved at some point in the future.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. February 14, 2022. Southwest Louisiana Regional Planning Commission announced it is assisting member governments in preparing an inventory of adjudicated lots and parcels throughout the Southwest Louisiana Region.

**MISCELLANEOUS ELEMENT**

**1) OBERLIN SELECT TREE PLANTING PROJECT**

The Oberlin Select Tree Planting Project is a program to enhance and identify the Town of Oberlin with a specific ornamental tree or trees blooming at different times of the year. Select trees would not be limited to a public street right-of-way but encouraged to be planted on both public and private property.

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. June 30, 2022. Citizens group proposes two species of flower trees for voluntary planting throughout the corporate limits to improve aesthetics of the Town of Oberlin.

**2) WELCOME TO OBERLIN SIGNAGE ON U.S. HIGHWAY 165 AND LA. HIGHWAY 26 ACCENTED BY ATTRACTIVE LANDSCAPING AND NATIVE TREES.**

**IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- a. February 14, 2022. Citizens group proposes three design options for welcome signs and landscaping.