

LAKE CHARLES

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED AUGUST 13, 2023



CITY OF LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

The purpose of the Master Plan is to provide a comprehensive, consensus, cooperative, coordinated, and continuous (sometimes referred to as the “5-C Process”) framework to identify needs, wants and shovel ready priority programs and projects in the community. The Master Plan objective is to leverage strategies for implementation and maximum efficiency in the use of public dollars. Information and clarity in each of the Plan Elements facilitates both public and private sectors in their respective operations and investments.

State law, in addition to local practice, generally identify common elements comprising the Master Plan: Drainage, Transportation, Housing, Utilities, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Land Use, Public Buildings, Social Services, Education and Public Safety are reference standards. Other plan elements have emerged over the past thirty years to identify and include Environment, Human Health, and Resiliency needs in response to contamination and weather disasters.

Critical purpose of a master plan is providing consistent implementation and continuity on timelines for implementation. Protecting Master Plan integrity is intended to provide maximum efficiency in monies, resources, time, and energy needed to deliver on programs and projects identified in the Master Plan.

Louisiana Revised Statutes: 33:109 thru 119 and 140.61 and 140.62 provide the Planning Commission with responsibilities for preparation, review, adoption, and maintenance of the Comprehensive Master Plan. The Mayor and City Council may modify, adjust, and simply override any part or component of the adopted Master Plan temporarily or permanently under established qualifying conditions. Ideally, stakeholders of the Master Plan (planning commission, mayor, city council) work together for common objectives but, differences do occur and are normal in the process. Each stakeholder has their respective legal responsibilities.

MOST RECENT ADOPTED MASTER PLAN ELEMENTS AS AMENDED:

City of Lake Charles Planning Commission Resolution No. RES 22-01 Dated: August 8, 2022

City of Lake Charles Planning Commission Resolution No. RES 23-01 Dated: August 13, 2023

Economic Development Element*

Lake Charles enjoys a diverse industry portfolio that continues to strengthen and build upon the city’s historic economic base. The Economic Development Element is a priority for the city of Lake Charles. With a goal of sustained and diversified economic growth, the city has identified the following to incentivize private sector investment. *Reference City of Lake Charles Website for Plan project/program details.*

1. The Lakefront

Lake Charles has a focus on developing the lakefront into an activity center serving as a main attraction and boosting tourism as well as creating new job opportunities and enhancing quality of life. The vision for the Lakefront Development ties into the Quality-of-Life vision as it includes a boardwalk that spans from the existing Civic Center boardwalk and seamlessly connects to the beach area. While some private investments are already underway for this area, including the Port Wonder Children’s Museum and Crying Eagle, the city is actively working to incentivize and encourage mixed-use retail and restaurant uses on the lakefront creating an active, pedestrian friendly walkable district unlike any in the region.

Planned Lakefront projects:

- a. Seawall extension east to allow for additional development
- b. Civic Center Festival Plaza on Board du Lac Blvd
- c. Marina at Parking Garage on Lakefront
- d. Parking Garage for the Civic Center area
- e. Raise elevation of Pinnacle Tract
- f. Lakefront Boardwalk Phase 2
- g. Extend fiber along Lakefront Boardwalk

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD
- d. TBD
- e. TBD
- f. TBD

2. Downtown Lake Charles

Downtown Lake Charles is vibrant and active and is a focus for new investment. New businesses are locating in the CBD and existing businesses are rebuilding. The City of Lake Charles Plan is to expand streetscape projects, add multipurposed parking infrastructures, and introduce autonomous transit services. Streetscaping improvements include street trees, on-street parking, enhanced sidewalks, street/pedestrian lighting features, and include public seating, white sound, and artistic attributes that will create a welcoming environment to patrons and ultimately have the highest impact on downtown development. Planned multipurposed parking garages are scaled to provide a first-floor pavilion for protected activities and upper floors spaced for potential future retrofitting. Garage parking spaces are to include electric vehicle chargers and solar power generators. Autonomous transit vehicles are planned to interconnect downtown locations, parking garages and Civic Center.

Planned Downtown projects:

- a. Streetscapes: Bilbo, Broad, Division and Ryan streets
- b. Three multipurposed parking garages
- c. Autonomous vehicle transit services

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD

3. Chennault

Chennault International Airport is a public aerospace and industrial complex located in eastern Lake Charles. The airport has the longest runway along the Gulf Coast and can facilitate almost any aircraft in the world. Chennault has potential to be a major economic center for the area. The infrastructure needs include city water and wastewater services and upgraded internal and external street/road access network. The Chennault International Airport Authority has an adopted Master Plan (Reference Chennault Master Plan) supported by the City of Lake Charles as an economic investment with the following projects:

- a. Extend wastewater sewer service from E. Prien Road to Legion Drive and Mallard Cove Road
- b. Upgrade street/road network and provide SOWELA Community College with a campus environment for students and faculty
- c. Identify, design, and build a southern gateway into Chennault from E. Prien Lake Road
- d. Extend city potable water and wastewater sewer services to serve the La. Hwy. 397 area
- e. Working with Chennault International Airport and/or SOWELA Technical Community College to promote aviation skill sets and enhance immediate entry into the aviation job market.

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD
- d. TBD

Quality of Life Element

Lake Charles has the benefit of natural systems (bayous, lakes, rivers, swamps, marshes) with many outdoor opportunity offerings. The Master Plan specifically identifies numerous projects to provide interconnectivity (trails, bikeways, pedestrian paths) to a network of recreational, challenging, and passive corridors access to numerous activity destinations for residents and visitors.

Planned blue and green infrastructure projects:

- a. Bayou Greenbelt
- b. Bikeways
- c. Fishing piers
- d. Trailheads
- e. Pedestrian Paths

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD
- d. TBD
- e. TBD

Resiliency Element

1. Underground Utilities

The City of Lake Charles Master Plan has established an ambitious program to relocate overhead utilities underground to provide a more resilient public infrastructure system investment for both current and future generations. Businesses, industries, institutions, and residents must have critical assurance essential services can be maintained through climate change weather events and local disasters. Electrical and fiber infrastructure networks are included in the planned underground public initiative.

Planned phased underground resiliency projects:

- a. Phased Citywide Underground Infrastructure Plan
- b. Funding resources identified to support underground utility transition
- c. Schedule of underground utility infrastructure implementation

Implementation Status

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD

Utilities Element

2. Potable Water Utility

The City of Lake Charles has a Water Master Plan to meet needs of a growing population and service area. The Water Master Plan details a higher level of service to current customers while also extending water service to areas not currently served. *Reference City of Lake Charles Water Master Plan*

Planned potable water utility projects:

- a. New 8.0 MGD water plant in southeast Lake Charles
- b. New 4.0 MGD water plant in east Lake Charles
- c. Expansion of the Southwest Water Treatment Plant from 20 MGD to 27 MGD

- d. New elevated water storage tanks increasing storage capacity from 1.65 MG to 3.5 MG

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD
- d. TBD

3. City Wastewater Utility

Sewer systems are one of the most expensive infrastructure a local government can invest. Upgrading wastewater systems is a continuous need.

Planned wastewater utility projects:

- a. Replace Wastewater Treatment Plant A
- b. Plant B/C – Upgrade Solids Handling System
- c. Upgrade SCADA Towers
- d. Upgrade lift stations and trunk lines feeding WWTP A
- e. Plant A – Install new lift station to feed the plant
- f. Increase treatment capacity Plant D

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD
- d. TBD
- e. TBD
- f. TBD

4. The Fifth Utility - Fiber Optic and Broadband

The rapid growth of internet communication, fiber optic infrastructure and broadband services requires a public service infrastructure focus. The complexity, cost, and management of fiber communication is critical to economic expansion and community development. Projected demand and need for speed, capacity and affordability of internet services are defined as the “Fifth Utility” in public services. The Master Plan identifies fiber optic and broadband investment as a priority service objective.

Planned Public Fiber Optic and Broadband Infrastructure projects:

- a. Preparation of a citywide public fiber optic and broadband plan
- b. Development of a closed network or open network option public fiber system
- c. Establishment of three Economic Technology Enterprise (ETE) Centers (business)
- d. Adoption of revenue streams to support local public technology advancement

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD
- d. TBD

5. Drainage Utility

The city drainage system is a critical component of the Master Plan for very practical reasons. Rainfall events affecting the city directly and indirectly are regular reminders for investment in and maintenance of both the natural and manmade drainage network.

Planned Drainage Infrastructure projects:

- a. Enterprise Blvd. Drainage Project
- b. Veterans Memorial Drive Drainage Piping Replacement Project
- c. Legendre Street Piping Project
- d. Ditch Fills to Drainage Laterals Citywide Project
- e. Undersized Ditch Culvert Replacement Program
- f. CCTV Project (I-210 to I-10 and I-210 to Country Club Road)
- g. Citywide Underground Drainage System Inspection and Cleaning

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD
- d. TBD
- e. TBD
- f. TBD
- g. TBD

Public Buildings Element

The City of Lake Charles has many outdated (though recognized as “historic”) public buildings and buildings damaged by hurricanes Laura and Delta. Specific city services need to be relocated and expanded to serve a growing population.

1. New Public Works Complex

The Public Works campus suffered severe damage from the hurricanes with many buildings needing significant repair or replacement. The Public Works Complex is in the flight path of Chennault International Airport inhibiting future expansion of the airport and City Public Works operations.

Planned New Public Works Complex Project:

- a. Identification of New Public Works Complex Location
- b. Design plans for New Public Works Complex
- c. Funding resources for New Public Works Complex
- d. Construction of New Public Works Complex

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD
- d. TBD

2. New City Hall Facility

The current City Hall was not designed nor function well as a center meeting public service needs of a growing population in the digital age.

- a. Identification of New City Hall Facility Location
- b. Design plans for New City Hall Facility
- c. Funding resources for New City Hall Facility
- d. Construction of New City Hall Facility

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD
- d. TBD

3. Additional Public Facilities Plan

There are additional public facility needs addressed in the Master Plan:

- a. Civic Center Façade and Facility Upgrades
- b. Fire Training Facility
- c. Police Annex
- d. Southwest Lake Charles Recreation Center
- e. New Fire Station
- f. South Lake Charles Substation
- g. New Communication Tower

Implementation Status:

- a. TBD
- b. TBD
- c. TBD
- d. TBD
- e. TBD
- f. TBD
- g. TBD

Transportation Element

Bridges and high traffic volume streets and roadways are important to the overall transportation network of the City of Lake Charles. The City is a member of the Lake Charles Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) established to coordinate planning and implementation of transportation improvement programs and projects among local governments and state and federal transportation agencies. *Reference Lake Charles MPO website (PlanSWLA.com) for status of scheduled transportation projects in the City of Lake Charles.*