



# PLAN

## PORT LAVACA

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

[ADOPTION DATE]

# JOINT WORKSHOP

DRAFT

7/6/2016

Prepared by:



# Acknowledgements

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## **City Council**

Jack Whitlow, Mayor

Jerry Smith, District 1

Tim Dent, District 2

Lee Rivera, District 3

Rosie Padron, District 4

Jim Ward, District 5

Ken Barr, Mayor Pro Tem, District 6

## **Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee**

Russell Cain

Tania French

Lisa Gonzales

Roshanda Thomas

Doug Jensen

Steve Marwitz

Jim Story

Olga Szela

Keri Wickliffe

## **City Staff**

Robert Bradshaw, City Manager

Darren Gurley, Public Works Director

Scotty Jones, Finance Director

Chad Odom, Economic Development Director

## **FNI Consultant Team**

Dan Sefko, FAICP

Erica Craycraft-Bartlett, AICP, LEED Green Assoc.

Richard Weatherly, P.E.

Corrie Bondar, P.E., GISP

Michelle Queen

Alexis Garcia

# PLAN PORT LAVACA



## 2016 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Plan Port Lavaca represents a deliberative planning and citizen involvement process that resulted in this comprehensive plan document. The plan's findings and recommendations focus on the physical and economic aspects of growth and development over a 10- to 20-year planning horizon. The Plan Port Lavaca Comprehensive Plan makes recommendations that are achievable through the prioritization of short-, mid-, and long-term strategies with an emphasis on near-term efforts that could be catalysts in activating greater community change.

## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

### HIGHLIGHT OF THE INPUT FROM THE PLANNING PROCESS



#### COMMUNITY SURVEY

A 15-question survey was posted to both the project and City's website, and paper copies were provided to the community in the weekly newspaper.

#### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CPAC) MEETINGS

The CPAC met seven times to discuss major themes and/or issues so that members could provide in-depth feedback and discussion on complex issues like economic development, future land use, neighborhoods, and quality of life, to name a few. The CPAC was an integral part in the development of the goals and objectives that ultimately lay the foundation of this plan.



#### COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Residents of Port Lavaca attended a community meeting designed to familiarize residents with the planning process and help them articulate their thoughts regarding the opportunities and challenges facing the city. The meeting featured several ways for citizens to provide their feedback and input, including interactive boards on a variety of topics, a visual preference survey, focus group discussions, and comment cards.





# IMPLEMENTATION

## ACTIONS FOR YEARS ONE AND TWO



Consider adopting development regulations



Improve downtown and waterfront



Amend the subdivision ordinance



Continue park improvements



Continue proactive and assertive code enforcement



Focus on historically- and culturally-significant amenities



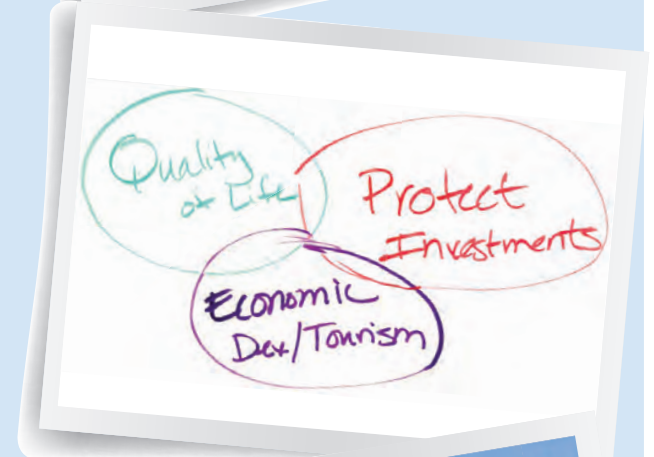
Ensure adequate funding resources



Beautify the community and its corridors



Promote tourism opportunities



## ACTIONS FOR YEAR THREE AND BEYOND

- Park and trail master planning
- Lighthouse Beach improvements
- Tourism marketing materials
- Corridor beautification
- Sidewalks and connectivity
- Transportation options
- Water and wastewater planning
- Neighborhood grant opportunities
- Quality neighborhood design
- Economic development tools
- Shoreline restoration
- Water sports and recreation
- Teen activity center
- Downtown streetscape improvements

# PLAN de PORT LAVACA



2016 PLAN MAESTRO

El Plan de Port Lavaca representa un proceso de planificación y participación ciudadana que resulto en este plan integral. Las recomendaciones del plan se centran en los aspectos físicos y económicos del crecimiento y el desarrollo en un horizonte de planificación de 10 a 20 años . El Plan de Port Lavaca hace recomendaciones que son alcanzables a través de la priorización de estrategias de corto, mediano y largo plazo, con énfasis en esfuerzos de corto plazo que podrían ser catalizadores en la activación de un mayor cambio en la comunidad.

## ¿CÓMO LLEGAMOS AQUÍ?

### CONTRIBUCIONES DEL PROCESO DE PLANIFICACIÓN



#### Encuesta para la Comunidad

Una encuesta de 15 preguntas fue publicada en los sitios web de la Ciudad y del proyecto y copias de la encuesta en papel fueron distribuidas a la comunidad en el periódico semanal.

#### Reuniones del Comité Consultivo del Plan Integral (CPAC)

El CPAC se reunió siete veces para discutir temas importantes y/o problemas de modo que los miembros podrian ofrecer sus comentarios y discutir temas complejos como el desarrollo económico, el futuro uso de la tierra, vecindades y la calidad de vida, para nombrar unos pocos. El CPAC era una parte integral en el desarrollo de las metas y objetivos que sientan las bases de este plan.

#### Reuniones de la Comunidad

Los residentes de Port Lavaca asistieron a una reunión de la comunidad diseñada para familiarizar a los residentes con el proceso de planificación y para ayudarles a articular sus pensamientos con respecto a las oportunidades y desafíos que enfrenta la ciudad . La reunión contó con varias maneras para que los ciudadanos proporcionen sus comentarios, incluyendo tableros interactivos de una variedad de temas, una encuesta de preferencia visual, discusiones de grupo, y tarjetas para comentarios .



# IMPLEMENTACIÓN

## Acciones Para los Años Uno y Dos



Considerar la adopción de los reglamentos de desarrollo



Mejorar el centro de la ciudad y la línea de costa



Enmendar la ordenanza de subdivisión



Continuar mejoras del parque



Continuar la aplicación del código en una forma proactiva y asertiva



Centrarse en las comodidades de importancia cultural y histórica



Garantizar la financiación y los recursos adecuados



Embellecer la comunidad y sus corredores



Promover oportunidades de turismo



## Acciones Para los Años Tres y Adelante

- Planificación de Parques y Senderos
- Mejoras en la playa del faro
- Materiales de marketing de turismo
- Embellecimiento de Corredores
- Banquetas y conectividad
- Opciones de transporte
- Planificación del agua y aguas residuales
- Oportunidades para becas de Vecindad
- Diseño de Calidad de Vecindades
- Herramientas de desarrollo económico
- Restauración de la línea de costa
- Los deportes y la recreación acuática
- Centro de actividades para adolescentes
- Mejoras al centro de paisaje urbano



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# Chapter 1 | Introduction

*Plan Port Lavaca* represents a deliberative planning and citizen involvement process resulting in this comprehensive plan document. The plan's findings and recommendations focus on the physical and economic aspects of growth and development over a 10- to 20-year planning horizon.

The timing of this plan coincides with regional growth and the proactive agenda of Port Lavaca's strong and active leadership. This plan respects Port Lavaca's rich history and traditions by building on the community's unique assets and accomplishments. It also identifies challenges that can hinder positive change and improvements. A balanced approach to implementing the plan's recommendations will enable the community to gather resources and support substantial accomplishments. Once adopted, *Plan Port Lavaca* will remain a living document that is frequently reviewed and amended to account for changes in the community's physical, social, and economic contexts.

The plan will serve as the guiding document for public officials, City staff, developers, and others who make the daily decisions and choices that will ultimately determine the future direction, fiscal stability, and quality-of-life of the community. *Plan Port Lavaca* will be implemented by the following steps:

- Major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the general fund and other public finance tools;
- New and amended City ordinances and regulations that are closely partnered with the plan's objectives;
- Departmental work plans and staffing in key areas;
- Targeted programs and spending prioritized by the City's annual budgeting process, including everyday services like code enforcement and park maintenance;
- Support for on-going planning and studies that will further identify community needs and action strategies, including the City Council and staff's own strategic planning;
- Applying for external grant funding to supplement local funds and/or advance projects; and
- Pursue initiatives with public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes that neither could have experienced alone.

It is important to note the functional differences between this *Plan Port Lavaca* comprehensive plan and the City's development regulations, such as the zoning and subdivision ordinances. This plan makes policy recommendations regarding roadways, infrastructure, utilities/services, economic development, and other aspects of municipal responsibilities. The City's Code of Ordinances establishes regulations for the physical subdivision of land, the design of roads, utility lines, and drainage facilities.

## Historical Timeline

### 1846

*Calhoun County was formed*

### 1849

*First county school was opened in Lavaca*

### 1852

*Indianola named county seat*

### 1909

*Construction of the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway*

### 1931

*Construction of a causeway over Lavaca Bay that linked the area to the South Texas highway system*

### 1934 - 1935

*Discoveries of natural gas and oil near Port Lavaca*

### 1947

*Alcoa Plant at Point Comfort was built and employed over 2,600 workers*

### 1952

*A Union Carbide and Carbon Chemicals Company plant near Seadrift, employing 1,400 people*

### 1961

*Hurricane Carla devastates Calhoun County*

### 1988

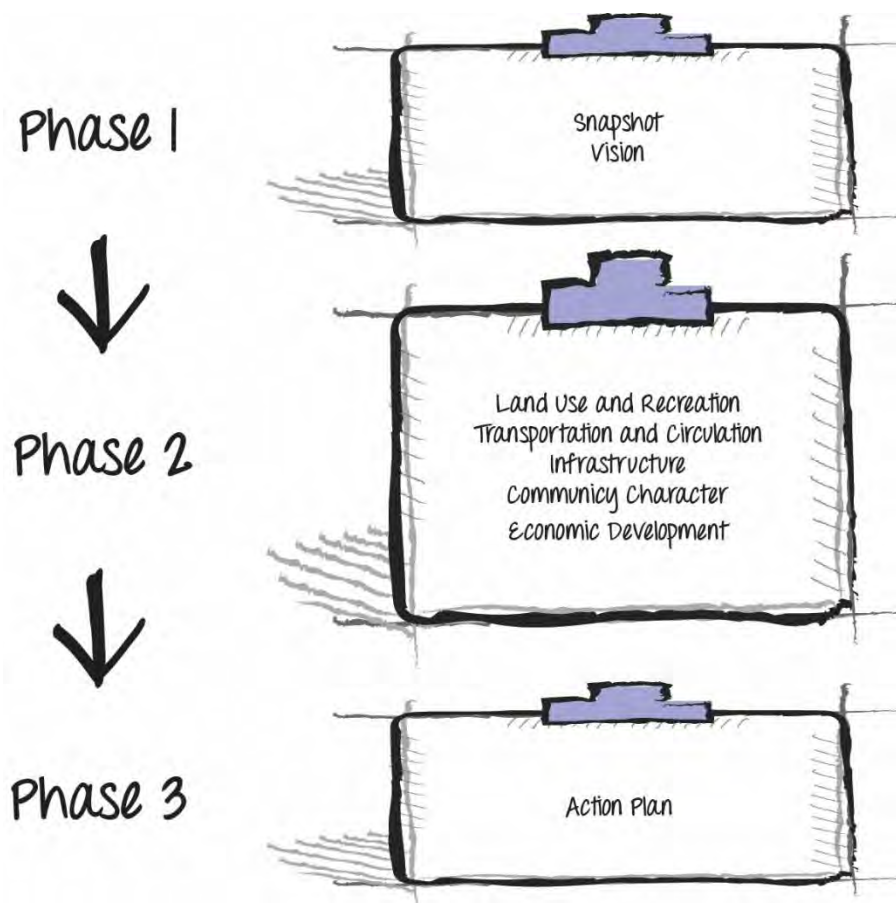
*Formosa Plastic Corporation of Taiwan established a petrochemical factory at Point Comfort*

*Source: Texas State Historical Association*

The development of this plan utilized a deliberate process involving background research, visioning, recommendations, and implementation. This process is reflected in this document's following components:

- Chapter 2 | Snapshot* To understand where Port Lavaca is going, it is first necessary to understand the City's recent history. This section serves as the reconnaissance stage for the planning process. Historical population trends, demographics, existing conditions, physical constraints, and past planning efforts establish the baseline from which decisions are made.
- Chapter 3 | Vision* The community's vision is reflective of the many characteristics and values that Port Lavaca desires to preserve and provide for current residents and future generations. This section identifies the primary issues, goals, and objectives derived from stakeholder consensus.
- Chapter 4 | Land Use and Recreation* This chapter evaluates the land use patterns and needs, with an emphasis on recreational land uses by providing general guidance for future parks and open space improvements.
- Chapter 5 | Transportation and Circulation* This chapter provides a transportation framework that will serve as a guide for future transportation and other development decisions within Port Lavaca.
- Chapter 6 | Infrastructure* Public investment into community services and the level of services provided are critical to manage growth and safety. This chapter reviews existing conditions for water and wastewater infrastructure and recommends strategies to incrementally expand Port Lavaca's facilities appropriately to adequately provide for future growth and redevelopment.
- Chapter 7 | Community Character* Community character refers to the characteristics that contribute to a residential neighborhood's quality of life.
- Chapter 8 | Economic Development* This chapter examines the current economic conditions and proposes strategies for business retention, business attraction, and tourism.
- Chapter 9 | Action Plan* This chapter organizes and prioritizes the recommendations contained within the various plan elements into an understandable action plan.

*Plan Port Lavaca* represents an accumulation of public participation, volunteer work, stakeholder discussions, data analysis, and City initiatives. The comprehensive planning process occurred over a 15-month period, beginning in April 2015 and culminating in May 2016. A Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) guided the development of goals, strategies and recommendations. The CPAC was made up of citizens, staff, and community stakeholders, intended to facilitate meaningful discussion and ensure that a variety of perspectives are considered.



The CPAC members gathered throughout the project to discuss a variety of topics and issues related to the development of *Plan Port Lavaca*. Initial stages of the process included issue identification and visioning exercises. The committee's foresight, in conjunction with public participation, formulated the plan's visions and goals.

Community input was gathered through a variety of communication channels and techniques. An online survey (discussed beginning on page 23) was developed to poll citizens on issues and a variety of other areas such as transportation and parks. In addition to the CPAC meetings, two public meetings were conducted during the course of the project to gather input, develop scenarios and to present recommendations. Engagement exercises used during the planning process included visioning exercises, issue identification, and workshops to develop planning goals and strategies. The results of the survey are discussed in **Chapter 3 | Vision**.

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## Chapter 2 | Snapshot

### Community Profile

*Plan Port Lavaca* can more effectively inform decisions for future generations with a deeper understanding of who is living here today. This section provides the background and history of Port Lavaca so that this plan can build upon the achievements and successes of previous generations. Physical conditions and previous planning efforts are included, along with demographic data like age, race, ethnicity, and households.

To be applicable and effective, *Plan Port Lavaca* must be grounded in the City's current issues. Port Lavaca and Calhoun County are unique and face many difficult challenges, as well as exciting opportunities. Understanding the unique conditions and planning framework will help mitigate challenges and leverage strengths to achieve the community's objectives.

*The area surrounding the bay was range for the American bison. The Spanish, having no name for such an animal, called them La Vaca, hence the name of the bay and the town.*

*Source: Calhoun County Museum*

### Physical Context

As seen in **Figure 1. Regional Location Map**, Port Lavaca is located 26 miles southeast of Victoria, 82 miles northeast of Corpus Christi, 127 miles southwest of Houston, 145 miles southeast of San Antonio and 150 miles south-southeast of Austin, making it easily accessible to these major cities.

*Approximately one-fourth of the county's 540-square-mile area is under water.*

*Source: Calhoun County*

Calhoun County is a coastal county on the mid-Texas coast where U.S. Highway 87 begins and the Guadalupe River ends. Organized in 1846, Calhoun County consists of 540 square miles. It is bordered from the southwest to the southeast by major inland bays and the Gulf of Mexico with more than 560 miles of coastline.

*Calhoun County website*

[In 1846], Calhoun County was formed from parts of Victoria, Jackson, and Matagorda counties and named for John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, who had advocated Texas statehood. Lavaca was the first county seat. But, as a result of the development of the Indianola Railroad, the formation of other transportation lines, and a shift of population, Indianola became more important and was made county seat in 1852.

*Diana J. Kleiner, "Calhoun County"*

# Figure 1. Regional Location Map





Calhoun County is considered coastal prairie with elevations that only vary slightly from zero to 50 feet. The terrain is relatively flat and moderately/poorly drains due to the soil composition of the area, which includes surface loams underlain by cracking, clayey subsoils. The county is drained by the Guadalupe River, Chocolate Bayou, and several smaller creeks. The climate is mild and rainfall averages about 40 inches annually, making between 21 and 30 percent of the land “prime farmland;” thus it is no surprise that the growing season lasts nearly 305 days a year.<sup>1</sup> Native plants include tall grasses and live oaks with cordgrasses and sedges along the coast, which are home to a variety of animals including quail, deer, doves, cottontail rabbits, jackrabbits, armadillos, skunks, opossums, raccoons, and coyotes.

Because of the accessibility to the Gulf via Port O’Conner’s jetties, fisherman, and sportsman frequent the area making it one of the most popular fishing resorts on the Texas Coast. Due to its location along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, Calhoun County has vibrant and unique ecosystems including those that inhabit the water, coastal prairies, and marshes. In addition to fishing, birding, and eco-tourism are popular pastimes in this area with over 400 different species of birds and eight birding sites on the Texas Birding Trail.<sup>2</sup> The county’s population of 21,000 people often doubles on tournament weekends or holiday weekends when visitors from all over the State seek sport, sun, salt, and fresh air.



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<sup>1</sup> Texas State Historical Association. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcc02>. Accessed June 21, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Calhoun County. [www.calhouncotx.org](http://www.calhouncotx.org). Accessed June 21, 2015.

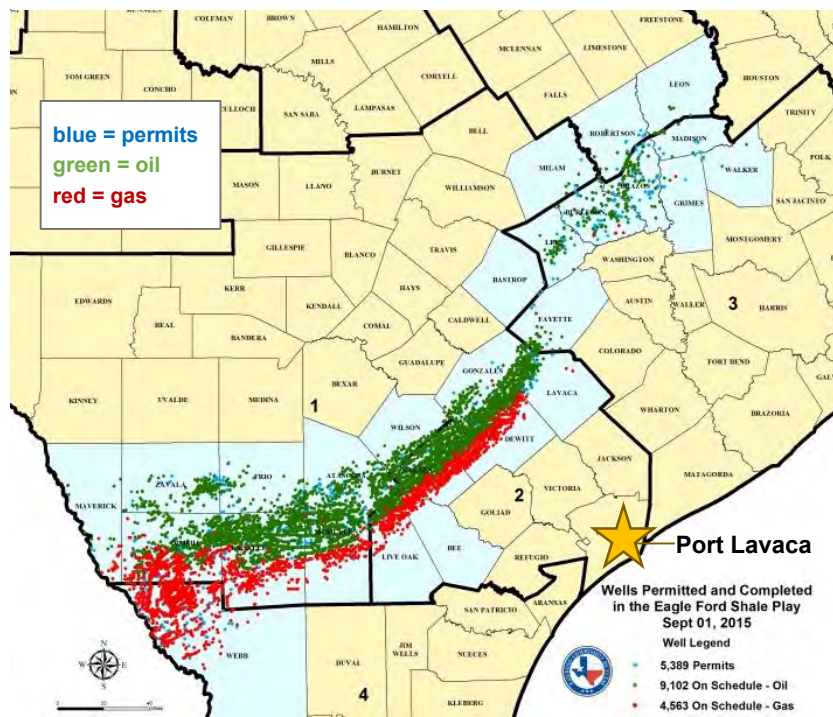
### Eagle Ford Shale

The Eagle Ford Shale (EFS) is one of the largest oil, natural gas and natural gas liquids producing developments in the world based on capital invested.<sup>3</sup> The EFS is about 50 miles wide and spans over 400 miles from northern Mexico to north of Houston. The EFS is one of the most significant domestic oil finds in history and is currently the most active shale in the world. It contains upwards of 70-percent carbonate shale, much higher than usual, which makes it more brittle and easier to frack.<sup>4</sup> The growth of extraction in the EFS has been exponential, with the number of drilling permits nearly tripling across 14 counties between 2010 and 2011.<sup>5</sup>



Although the EFS does not extend to Calhoun County, its economic impacts affect the entire region and state. The EFS can serve as a major economic engine for the Texas economy; however, the recent downturn in the oil industry serves as a reminder of the potential negative economic impacts of the EFS. The common “boom and bust” cycle of the oil industry often results in increased employment, business, tourism, and population, followed by high rates of unemployment and unoccupied hotels and homes. This cycle highlights the need for a diversified economy in Port Lavaca.

Figure 2. Wells Permitted and Completed in the EFS Play (2015)



Source: Texas Railroad Commission

<sup>3</sup> Eagle Ford Shale Play. <http://eaglefordshale.com>. August 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Eagle Ford Shale Information. Railroad Commission of Texas. <http://www.rrc.state.tx.us/oil-gas/major-oil-gas-formations/eagle-ford-shale/>. August 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Learn About Eagle Ford Shale. South Texas Energy and Economic Roundtable (STEER). <http://steer.com/learn-about-eagle-ford-shale/>. August 2015.

## Population Demographics

### Total Population

Port Lavaca has experienced a small amount of growth in recent years, increasing by fewer than 300 people since 2000 (as seen in **Table 1. Population Growth**).

Developing population projections can be difficult due to the variety of external factors that can affect the outcome – employment opportunities, natural resources, and natural disasters like hurricanes, to name a few. It will be imperative that the City monitor population changes to ensure appropriate growth management tactics with regard to the adequate provision of infrastructure maintenance and City services. As seen in **Table 2. Population Projections**, different data resources have quite different expectations for future growth. Port Lavaca’s population has generally grown and declined alongside the population fluctuations of Calhoun County (with the exception of 2010), so it is likely that the City will continue to see slow but steady growth as Calhoun County continues to grow.

**Table 1. Population Growth**

	Port Lavaca			Calhoun County	
	Population	% Change	Compound Annual Growth Rate	Population	% Change
<b>1970</b>	10,491	-	0.39%	17,831	-
<b>1980</b>	10,911	4.0%		19,574	9.8%
<b>1990</b>	10,886	-0.2%		19,053	-2.7%
<b>2000</b>	12,003	10.6%		20,647	8.4%
<b>2010</b>	12,248	1.8%		21,381	7.7%
<b>*Est. 2014</b>	12,281	0.3%	0.07%	21,762	1.8%

*Source: U.S. Census; \*Texas State Data Center January 1, 2014 Pop. Estimates*

**Table 2. Population Projections**

	2014*	2030 TSDC	2030 TWDB	2040 TSDC	2040 TWDB
<b>Port Lavaca</b>	12,281	-	15,513	-	16,969
<b>Calhoun County</b>	21,762	26,866	29,964	24,592	29,622

*Source: \*Texas State Data Center (TSDC) January 1, 2014 Pop. Estimates, Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)*



### Race and Ethnicity

The Census records race (e.g., White, African-American) separate from ethnicity (e.g., Hispanic, Non-Hispanic). Nearly 85 percent of Port Lavaca’s population identifies as White, compared to about 75 percent of the State’s population. It is interesting to note that Port Lavaca has a higher Hispanic population than the rest of the State of Texas (57 percent versus 38 percent). The Hispanic population is predicted to continue growing rapidly – paralleling State projections and national trends – so it can be expected that Port Lavaca will continue to see the Hispanic population increase into the future.



Figure 3. Ethnic Composition

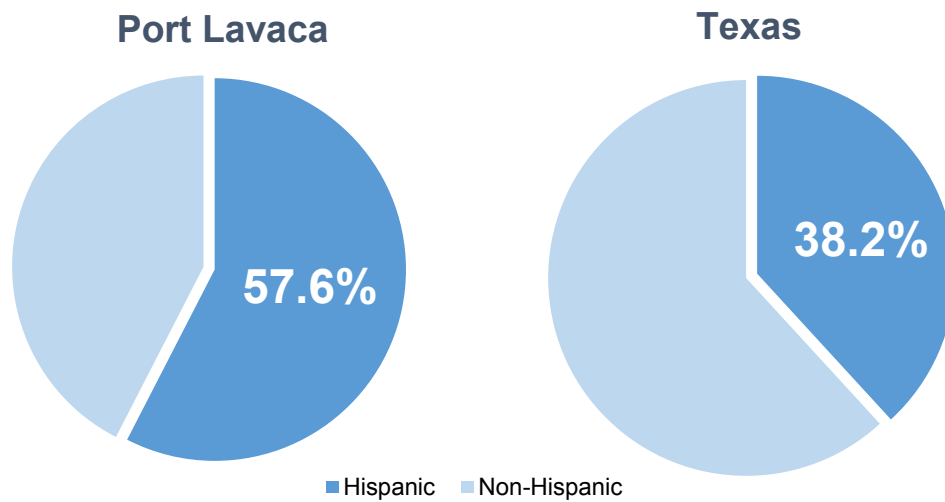


Table 3. Race

	Port Lavaca		Texas	
	#	%	#	%
<b>White</b>	10,423	84.8%	19,499,105	74.7%
<b>African-American</b>	548	4.5%	3,094,227	11.9%
<b>American Indian/Alaska Native</b>	26	0.2%	127,236	0.5%
<b>Asian</b>	529	4.3%	1,067,008	4.1%
<b>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	0	0.0%	21,867	0.1%
<b>Some Other Race</b>	178	1.4%	1,662,288	6.4%
<b>Two or More Races</b>	585	4.8%	620,302	2.4%
<b>Total</b>		12,289		26,092,033

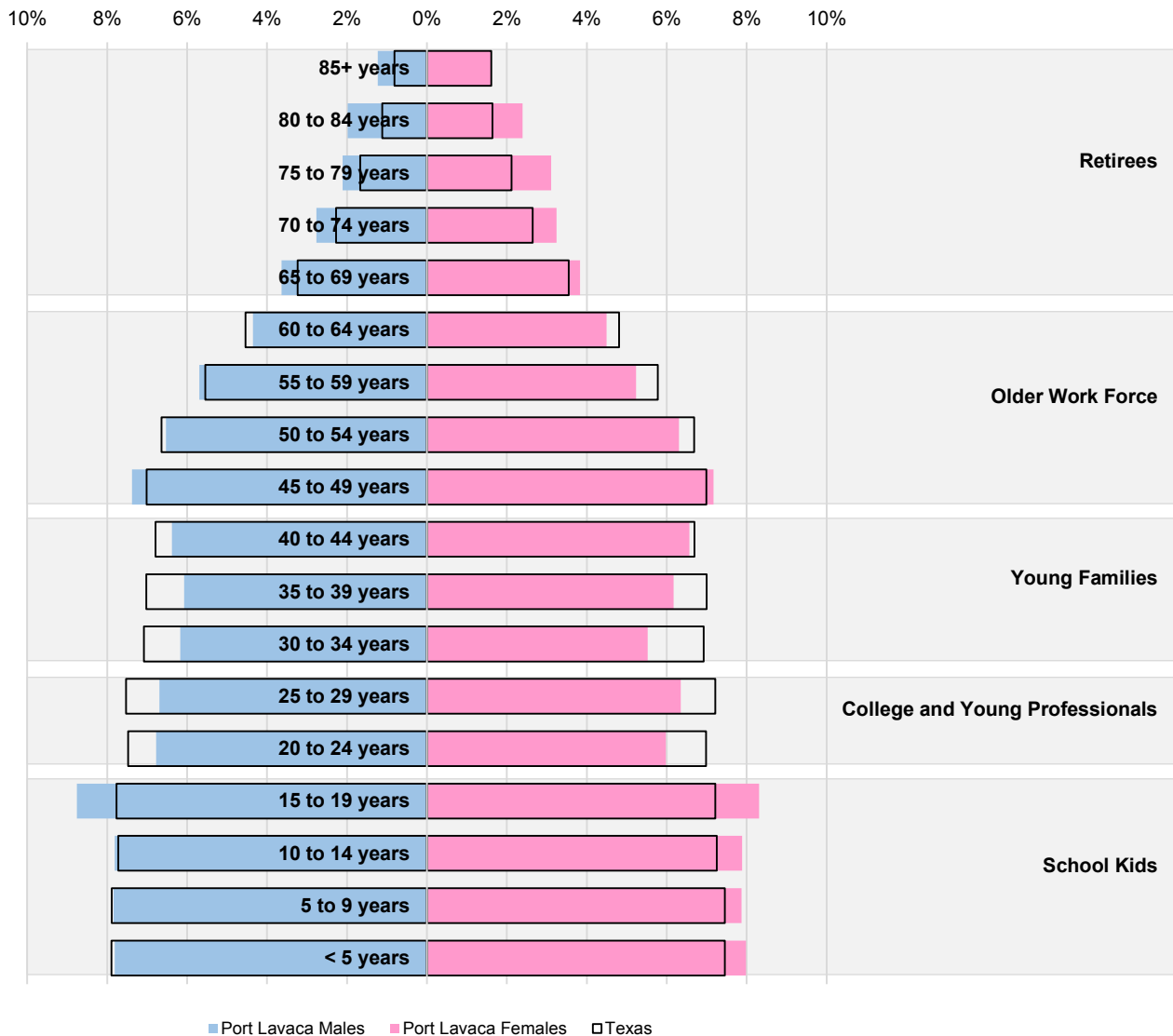
*Source: 2000 U.S. Census, 2009-2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates*

## Age

Port Lavaca's population age distribution is very similar to the State of Texas. As shown in **Figure 4**, Port Lavaca has a slightly lower percentage of residents between 20 and 44 years of age, and slightly higher percentage of children under 19 and adults over 70 years of age when compare to the State. Given the slow projected growth discussed earlier, it is expected that Port Lavaca will continue to see an aging population that will need special considerations like an increased need for services, programs, housing options, and amenities.



**Figure 4. Age Distribution**

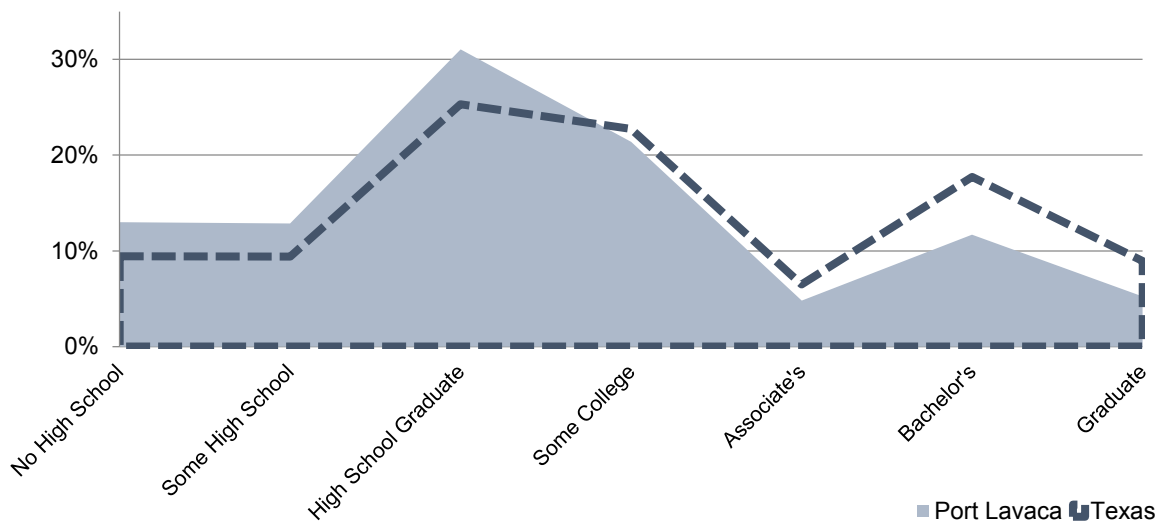


### Education

Educational attainment levels are often evaluated by prospective industries or employers. When compared to the State’s educational attainment percentages (**Figure 5**), Port Lavaca has a moderate shift toward lower educational attainment levels. About 81 percent of the State’s population holds a high school diploma, compared to about 74 percent in Port Lavaca; however, this is an increase from 68 percent in 2000. Similarly, about 27 percent of the State’s population holds a bachelor’s degree, compared to 17 percent in Port Lavaca; this is an increase from 13 percent in 2000. These figures indicate that while the attainment levels are slightly lower when compared to the State, the City is experiencing a positive trend toward higher levels of education.

In 2011, Calhoun County ISD was rated *Recognized* by the Texas Education Agency, which is the second highest rating based on exam passing and dropout rates. This is a significant achievement for the community, as many potential residents will make their residency decision based on school academic rankings. The ISD also partners with Victoria College to offer college credit courses for students. Enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year was 4,278 students (*Calhoun County ISD Demographics*). A strong school system can be the foundation for future economic growth by attracting employers and developing an educated workforce over time.

Figure 5. Educational Attainment of Port Lavaca Compared to the State



Source: 2009-2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates



## Housing Characteristics

This section addresses dwelling type, age, occupancy, and value. Dwelling types and housing conditions are addressed in more detail in **Chapter 7 | Community Character**.

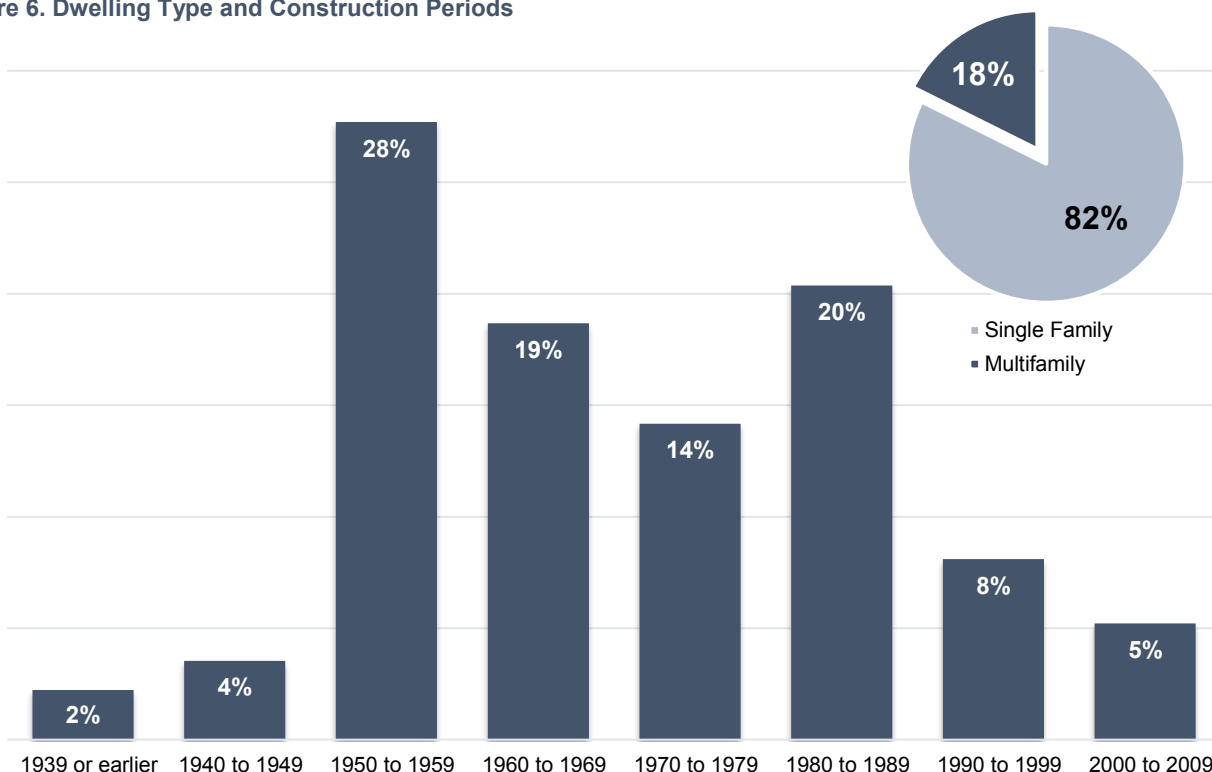
Housing can be a challenge for many communities, especially when they are experiencing slow growth rates. Developers hesitate to invest due to limited demands from the local populations, which leaves potential and current residents with limited housing options. As a result, it can put cities at a disadvantage when attempting economic development efforts to recruit new businesses, as many major employers seek locations where their employees can secure adequate housing.



### Housing Age and Type

**Figure 6** displays the construction periods for the current housing in Port Lavaca. Most homes were constructed between 1950 and 1989, with the largest percentage of construction occurring between 1950 and 1959. This is important to note, as a large portion of the homes are about 60 years old; without proper maintenance over time, this can indicate a deteriorating housing stock. The type of home – single family versus multifamily – is also indicated in **Figure 6**. Expectedly, single family homes are the predominant housing type, constituting 82 percent of Port Lavaca’s dwellings.

**Figure 6. Dwelling Type and Construction Periods**



Source: 2009-2013 ACS

### Occupancy and Value

As shown in **Table 4**, about 59 percent of the occupied homes in Port Lavaca are owner-occupied; about 41 percent are renter-occupied. Of the homes that are currently vacant, 41 percent are available for rent, 8 percent are for sale, and 11 percent are used as vacation homes.

The median home price in Port Lavaca is \$81,400, which is considered affordable based on the median household income of \$42,712. Assuming a zero percent down-payment, five percent interest, and a 30-year mortgage, less than 20 percent of the household’s income would be spent on housing costs ([www.usmortgagecalculator.org](http://www.usmortgagecalculator.org)). Note that this figure includes taxes and insurance estimates, but does not include household utilities. Typically, up to 30 percent of the household income can be spent on housing costs before the household is said to be “burdened.”

**Table 4. Housing Occupancy**

	Units	%
<b>Total</b>	4,664	100.0%
<b>Occupied</b>	4,165	89.3%
<b>Owner-Occupied</b>	2,465	59.2%
<b>Renter-Occupied</b>	1,703	40.9%
<b>Vacant</b>	499	10.7%
<b>For rent</b>	205	41.1%
<b>Rented, not occupied</b>	0	0.0%
<b>For sale only</b>	40	8.0%
<b>Sold, not occupied</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Seasonal, recreational or occasional use</b>	56	11.2%
<b>For migrant workers</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Other vacant</b>	198	39.7%

*Source: 2009-2013 ACS*

**Table 5. Housing Values**

	2000				2013			
	Port Lavaca		Texas		Port Lavaca		Texas	
<b>Owner-Occupied Units</b>	2,256		3,849,585		2,462		5,623,552	
<b>Less than \$50,000</b>	971	43.0%	875,444	22.7%	638	25.9%	696,839	12.4%
<b>\$50,000 to \$99,999</b>	976	43.3%	1,561,509	40.6%	831	33.8%	1,354,805	24.1%
<b>\$100,000 to \$149,999</b>	231	10.2%	700,830	18.2%	397	16.1%	1,226,288	21.8%
<b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>	63	2.8%	335,179	8.7%	244	9.9%	891,339	15.9%
<b>\$200,000 to \$299,999</b>	15	0.7%	223,968	5.8%	296	12.0%	775,333	13.8%
<b>\$300,000 to \$499,999</b>	0	0.0%	104,821	2.7%	43	1.7%	452,712	8.1%
<b>\$500,000 to \$999,999</b>	0	0.0%	37,697	1.0%	13	0.5%	173,240	3.1%
<b>\$1,000,000 or more</b>	0	0.0%	10,137	0.3%	0	0.0%	52,996	0.9%
<b>Median Value</b>	\$56,600		\$82,500		\$81,400		\$128,990	

*Source: U.S. Census 2000, 2009-2013 American Community Survey*



## Related Plans

### Port Lavaca Strategic Plan

Port Lavaca developed a Strategic Plan in 2012, which was updated in 2014. This Strategic Plan will enable the City to continue to grow and provide the citizens of Port Lavaca with high-quality and timely services. The plan consists of five areas of emphasis – Governance, Infrastructure, Business Development, Community Development, and Quality of Life – each with a corresponding strategic goal (see **Figure 7**). Council and staff worked together to define the City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and to identify strategies to build upon the results of this analysis (see **Figure 8**).

Port Lavaca has very proactive and judicious community leaders who have worked hard to accomplish goals and initiatives set for them. In 2012, the City Manager and various department directors met to discuss, develop and prioritize short- and long-term strategies for the City staff to accomplish. The following list highlights some of the City's major accomplishments since 2012:

- Implemented a rolling 5-Year Capital Improvement Program
- Replaced multiple water and sewer lines
- Phasing in a plan to convert Wilson Field into a Multi-Sports Complex
- Complete reconstruction of several streets and sidewalks
- New amenities at Bayfront Park
- New amenities Lighthouse Beach Park
- Replaced floating docks at Nautical Landings
- Built a new Public Works Service Center



Figure 7. 2014 Strategic Plan Areas of Emphasis and Strategic Goals

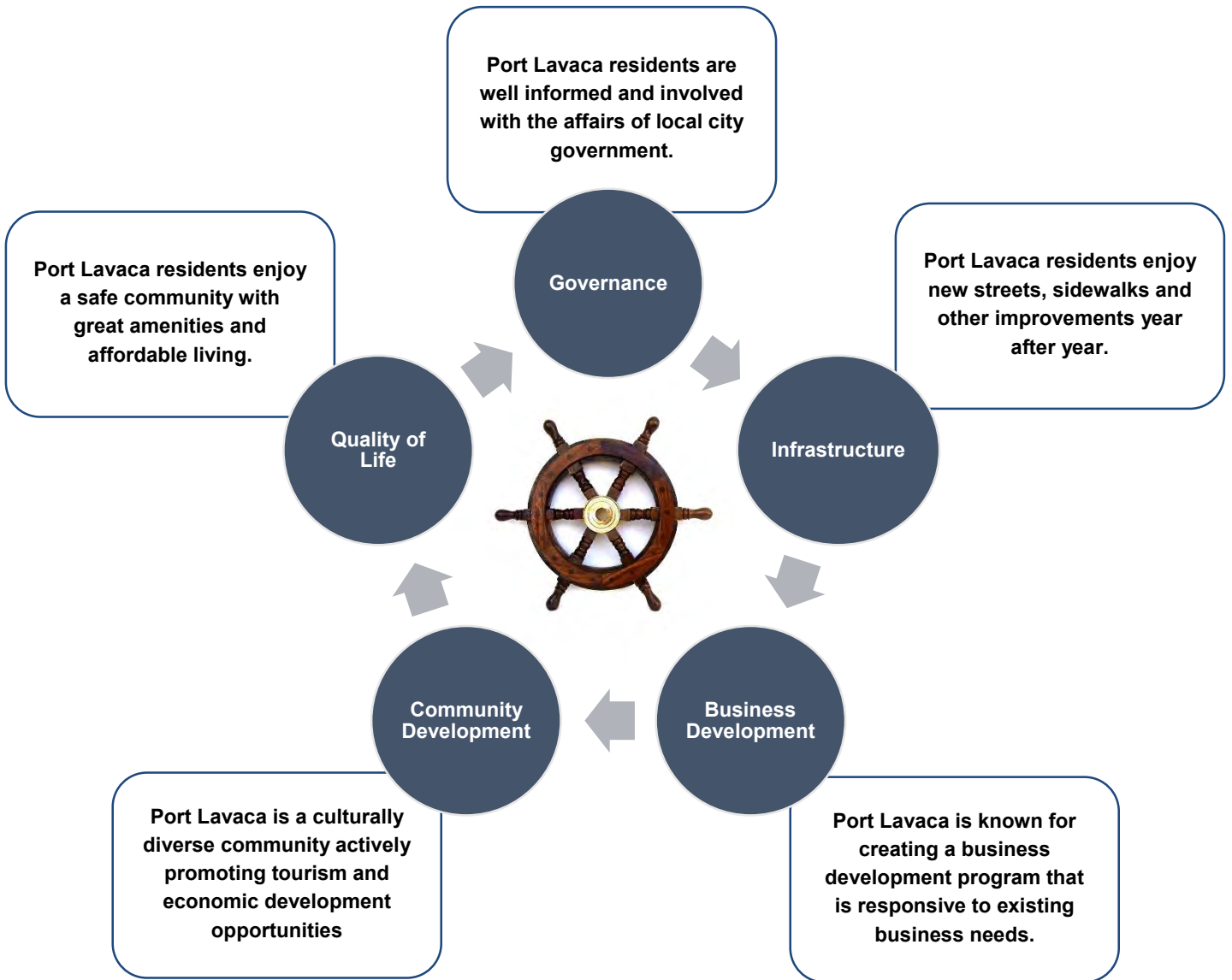


Figure 8. Strategic Plan Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Analysis (2012)

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical climate</li> <li>• Strong leadership</li> <li>• Fiscally sound</li> <li>• Growth potential</li> <li>• Friendly/small-town feel</li> <li>• Geographic location/waterfront</li> <li>• Eco-tourism</li> <li>• Good schools/good hospital</li> <li>• Reliable City services</li> <li>• Secure water supply</li> <li>• Civic pride</li> <li>• “Braiding” between city/county/school district</li> <li>• Ties with other communities</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Historical significance/diverse culture</li> <li>• Continuous public improvements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of housing/investment in housing</li> <li>• No major retail</li> <li>• Improvements to the infrastructure</li> <li>• Lack of entertainment</li> <li>• Unwillingness to change by some</li> <li>• Limited industry within the city limits</li> <li>• Shared sales tax</li> <li>• Additional infrastructure</li> <li>• Few sit-down restaurants</li> <li>• Code of Ordinances</li> <li>• High tax and water and sewer rates as compared to cities our size</li> <li>• Occasional mixed signals from council</li> <li>• Unable to attract new businesses</li> <li>• Lack of parks and youth activities</li> <li>• Lack of involvement among the police Officers in the community</li> <li>• Lack of communication with the public</li> <li>• Staff setting the example</li> <li>• Maintenance of City properties</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host business conferences with potential housing developers</li> <li>• Seek grants for infrastructure construction</li> <li>• Partner with community colleges, universities and trade schools for job conferences, training and apprenticeships to be held and conducted in Port Lavaca</li> <li>• Host conferences with potential businesses</li> <li>• Develop/purchase land in/around the port</li> <li>• Partner with the Navigation District in the development of container handling facilities</li> <li>• Partner with the area’s large industry plants to expand current training for Mill-rights</li> <li>• Determine economic willingness of the community to add quality-of-life amenities</li> <li>• Develop community events that highlight the diverse cultures of the area</li> <li>• Entertainment venues in downtown area</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequate funding</li> <li>• Natural disasters/drought</li> <li>• Unstable economy</li> <li>• Indifference/unwillingness to change</li> <li>• Avoiding the challenges</li> <li>• Avoiding decision-making</li> <li>• No follow-through</li> <li>• Lack of courage</li> <li>• Close-mindedness</li> <li>• Opposition</li> </ul>

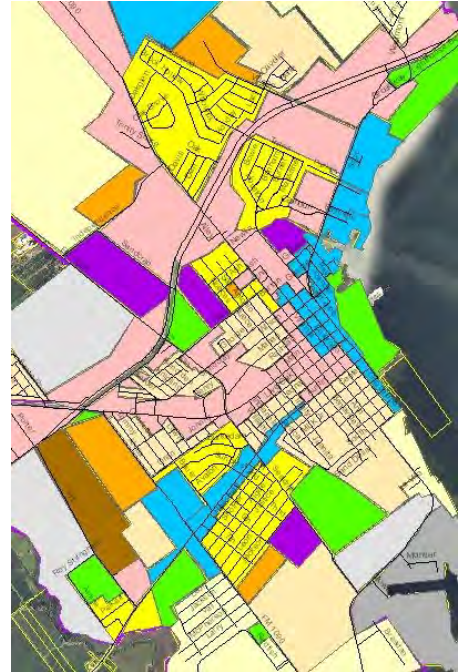
*\*Note: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats listed herein were taken from the Port Lavaca 2014 Strategic Plan*

## Port Lavaca Future Land Use Plan

“The City of Port Lavaca is beginning to see sustained growth, after many years of relative stable population. New single family homes, apartments, and businesses are locating within the City. This represents an opportunity for the City to define its future and chart how new development should occur. The goal of a Future Land Use Plan is to identify a vision of how the City should grow and develop policies that support that vision.

Port Lavaca is fortunate to have a significant amount of undeveloped land within the current city limits. This means future development can occur in proximity to existing utility infrastructure, allowing the City to grow without extensive utility extensions. While the City does not have a Zoning Ordinance, it can use its subdivision authority, and this future land use plan, to ensure new development meets community goals. The goals outlined in this plan provide the framework for City leaders to make informed decisions, based on an agreed community vision, to ensure future development complements the character of Port Lavaca and benefits the entire community.”

*- Port Lavaca Future Land Use Plan*



In 2014, the City developed a Future Land Use Plan. This plan was adopted following a City staff workshop, and a public workshop with the City Council, Parks Board, Planning Board, Port Commission, and interested citizens. This plan resulted in several recommendations to give City leaders the tools they need to implement the vision and guide growth appropriately. The recommendations include:

- Ensure adequate land reserved for industrial uses,
- Ensure adequate park land to support new residential development,
- Consider design guidelines for the central business district and waterfront,
- Utilize the waterfront as a community asset,
- Protect the integrity of residential areas, and
- Develop ‘gateways’ marking entrance to the community.

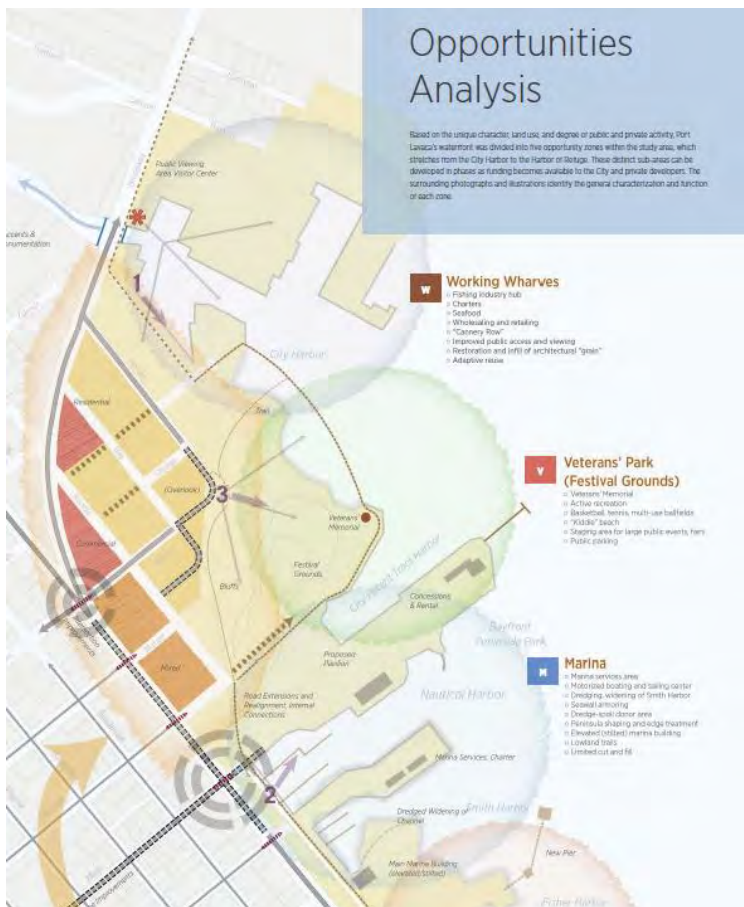
This plan established a starting point to build the vision and recommendations within the existing environment in Port Lavaca. The plan is discussed in further detail in **Chapter 4 | Land Use and Recreation**.





**Working Wharves**

- Fishing industry hub
- Charters
- Seafood
- Wholesale and retailing
- "Cannery Row"
- Improved public access and viewing
- Restoration and infill of architectural "grain"
- Adaptive reuse



**Opportunities Analysis**

Based on the unique character, land use, and degree of public and private activity, Port Laredo's waterfront was divided into five opportunity zones within the study area, which stretches from the City Harbor to the Harbor of Refuge. These distinct sub-areas can be developed in phase as funding becomes available to the City and private developers. The surrounding photographs and illustrations identify the general characteristics and function of each zone.

**Working Wharves**

- Fishing industry hub
- Charters
- Seafood
- Wholesale and retailing
- "Cannery Row"
- Improved public access and viewing
- Restoration and infill of architectural "grain"
- Adaptive reuse

**Veterans' Park (Festival Grounds)**

- Veterans Memorial
- Active recreation
- Seated bleachers, multi-use ballfields
- "Fiddle" beach
- Seating area for large public events, tents
- Public parking

**Marina**

- Marina services area
- Motorized boating and sailing center
- Docking services of Smith Harbor
- Seated amphitheater
- Design-level donor area
- Flexible playing and/or stage treatment
- Elevated (partial) marina building
- Landfill site
- Limited cut and fill

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

**Waterfront Implementation Plan**

The Waterfront Implementation Plan, developed in 2012, suggests how the Bayfront could be physically organized by grouping together certain land uses and activities in distinct areas. The plan focuses specifically on the stretch between the City Harbor to Fisher Harbor. The recommendations made in this plan vary from preliminary ground-laying measures to focused stand-alone projects.

The Waterfront Implementation Plan identifies three phases through which the City can best position itself for development along the Bay:

**Capacity Building**

Launching a large-scale Bayfront redevelopment initiative will require that the City have a long view and the ability to leverage its current resources to leverage external resources like federal, state, corporate and non-profit grants and staffing resources. Essentially, getting powerful and interested groups to champion for the project once the planning process is complete – keeping the momentum of the project and continuing to drive for action and change.

**Enforcement Strategies**

The plan suggests establishing a redevelopment authority entity that can acquire land and help jump-start the development process, as well as support more proactive and diligent code enforcement actions.

**Potential Funding Sources**

Lastly, the plan outlines potential funding opportunities in the form of recreational, environmental, hazard mitigation, economic development and technical assistance/education grants.

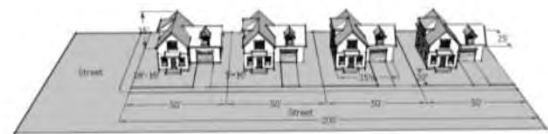
## Waterfront Development Ordinance

The Waterfront Development Ordinance (WDO) is a proposed implementation tool for the Waterfront Master Plan. These regulations, which have not been formally adopted by the City at this time, would determine the type of development to be located along Port Lavaca's premier waterfront areas. The WDO regulates specific building characteristics like height, density, aesthetic quality and site orientation. The idea behind these regulations is to promote higher-quality development along the waterfront, and ensure the safety of the environment, and preserve community character.

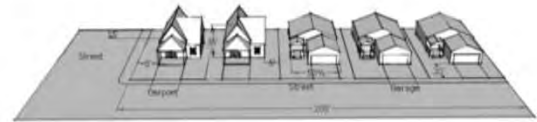
As stated in the WDO, the provisions are generally intended to:

1. Implement the vision, principles and objectives of the Waterfront Master Plan, adopted by the City Council.
2. Acknowledge the waterfront as a place of local significance, including its historical, cultural and architectural assets and their importance to the City.
3. Facilitate development, redevelopment and public infrastructure improvement projects in manners that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and its policies and recommendations.
4. Provide for development and redevelopment that is compatible with existing and planned future development and generally cohesive from site to site.
5. Encourage development of vacant lots or parcels and redevelopment or reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings in manners that further the implementation of the City's plans and which contribute positively to a quality character.
6. Strengthen the City's tax base through the development of quality, owner-occupied housing; stable, safe and highly livable neighborhood environments; growing sustainable businesses; and increased tourism of the improved, publicly accessible waterfront.
7. Add value to the waterfront and its environs for local residents, businesses and visitors through new public facilities and improvements, better access and opportunities for business and recreation.
8. Preserve the natural environs and conserve valuable resources through sound engineering and good land planning practices.
9. Improve the place qualities to achieve broad recognition as a destination on the Texas Gulf Coast.

Specifically, the WDO designates the waterfront area as a place of historical, cultural and architectural significance to the City of Port Lavaca. The WDO also provides the City with regulations to guide desirable development, thereby protecting Port Lavaca's valuable and most popular assets from the potential harmful effects of growth.



Standard Single-Family Detached (above)



Narrow Single-Family Detached (above)

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



## Chapter 3 | Vision

### Community Input Process

Community input is vital to the comprehensive planning process. Public input and information was gathered throughout the comprehensive planning process and in a variety of ways, including: a community survey, public meetings, input exercises, project website, and several meetings with the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. In addition, the City also played a role in promoting the planning process through their website, email notifications, e-newsletters, and in the Port Lavaca Wave Newspaper.

Nine key topics emerged from the community input:

1. Affordable housing options
2. Beautification
3. Downtown
4. Waterfront
5. Infrastructure
6. Economic development
7. Parks and recreation
8. Community activities
9. Regulations/policies



## Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee

A Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) was selected to guide the process through their input and participation over the course of the planning process. The members served as a sample of the Port Lavaca community, representing local residents, business owners, property owners, students, and other types of stakeholders within the community.

The CPAC met several times to share ideas and provide feedback on complex issues. The meetings addressed the following topics:

Meeting #1 | Introduction to the comprehensive planning process and issue identification exercises

Meeting #2 | Review of community survey results and discussion of goals

Meeting #3 | Innovation and brainstorming charrette

Meeting #4 | Feedback on initial ideas and recommendations

Meeting #5 | Feedback on draft plan document

Meeting #6 | Additional feedback on draft plan document

Meeting #7 | Review of the draft plan

Meeting #8 | Final review of the draft plan

The CPAC members played an integral part in the development of this plan. On June 30, the CPAC recommended the *Plan Port Lavaca* draft to move forward for a joint workshop with the Planning Board and City Council.



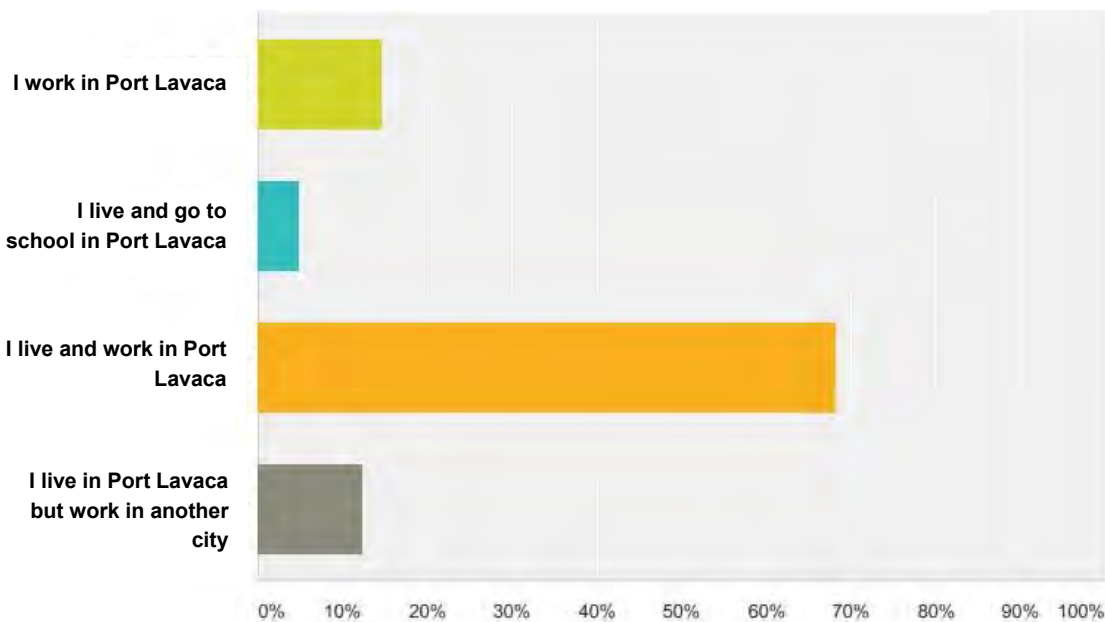
## Community Survey

A 15-question survey was posted to both the project and City’s website and paper copies were provided to the community in the weekly newspaper. The questions ranged from general visioning questions to specific questions about economic development and quality of life. Over the course of the plan, the survey was answered by 271 individuals who live and/or work in Port Lavaca.



### Question 1: Which best describes you?

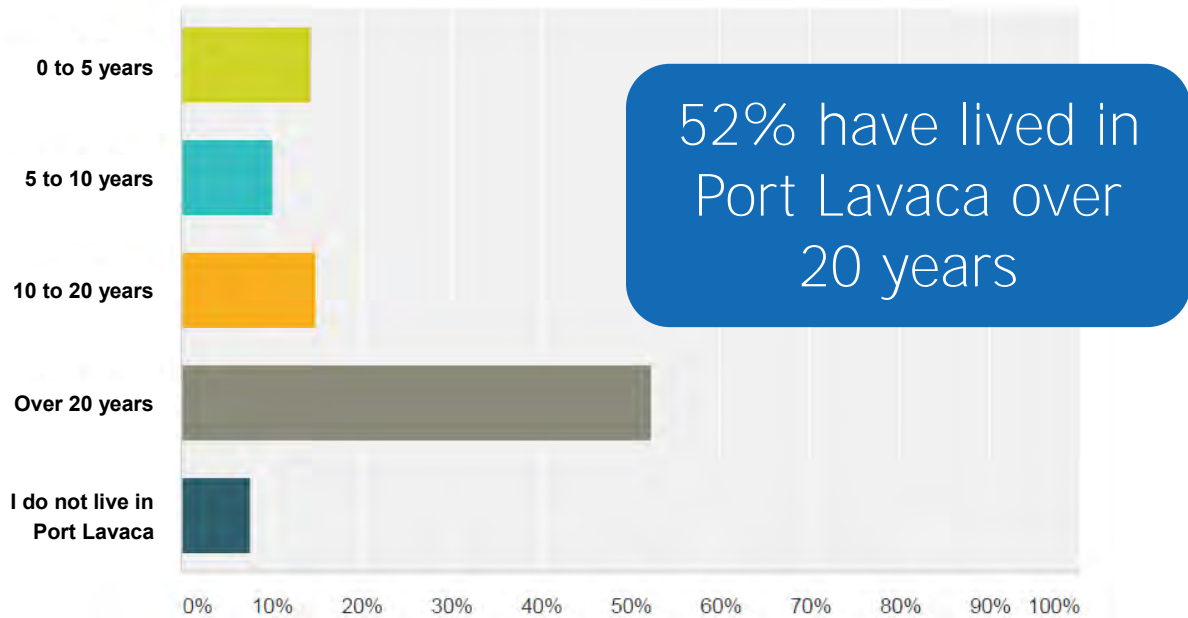
Over two thirds of respondents both live and work in Port Lavaca. Over a quarter of respondents commute to or from Port Lavaca for work and another five percent are both residents and students. The responses indicate that Port Lavaca has a strong locally-based workforce. However, the relatively high amount of commuters also signifies the importance of attracting people to move locally, provide amenities like retail that generate revenue from daytime population influxes, and work with neighboring cities to maintain regional transportation infrastructure.





*Question 2: How long have you lived in the City of Port Lavaca?*

Almost 52 percent of the online survey respondents have lived in Port Lavaca for over 20 years – indicating that many residents are invested in the community and know the community’s history and past, as well as the intricacies of the issues and challenges facing Port Lavaca today.



*Question 3: Imagine Port Lavaca as you want it to be in 10 - 15 years. What is it like? Write a brief description of the three changes you would prioritize to create the city you want in the future.*

When asked to imagine and describe Port Lavaca in 10 to 15 years, survey responses ranged from recreation to infrastructure topics. Some of the repeated responses included:

- Better recreation for youth
- Developed downtown
- More restaurants, shopping, and businesses
- Peaceful
- Developed waterfront/bay area
- Tourism
- Sidewalks all around the city

*Question 4: What types of jobs and businesses are most important so Port Lavaca’s economy is sound and successful?*

Respondents identified medical, retail, industrial, and tourism jobs/businesses as the types of jobs/businesses that are most important in keeping Port Lavaca’s economy sound and successful. Other responses included: small businesses, higher paying jobs, teachers, government jobs and police, factories and plants, real estate, and new businesses.

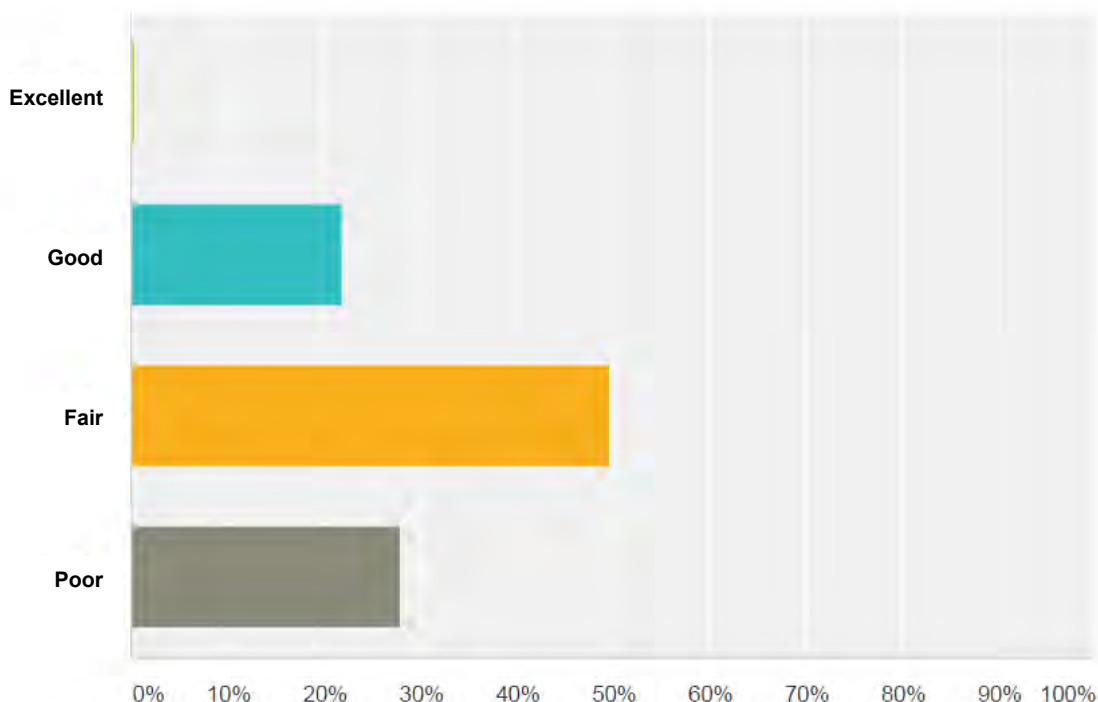


*Question 5: If you could select one other city that has amenities that you would desire in Port Lavaca, what city would that be and what are those amenities?*

The responses to this question can help to draw a picture of what residents would like to see in future Port Lavaca – cities like Rockport, San Marcos, Katy, Corpus Christi, Sugar Land, Victoria, and San Antonio were mentioned. Specifically, Rockport’s Main Street and walkability; Corpus Christi’s family activities; Katy’s recreation for youth; San Antonio’s attractions; and Rockport’s attractions, shops, and dining. The communities cited by citizens as examples and amenities specified directly tie back to the vision the residents also provided, as well as specific input from the public meetings.

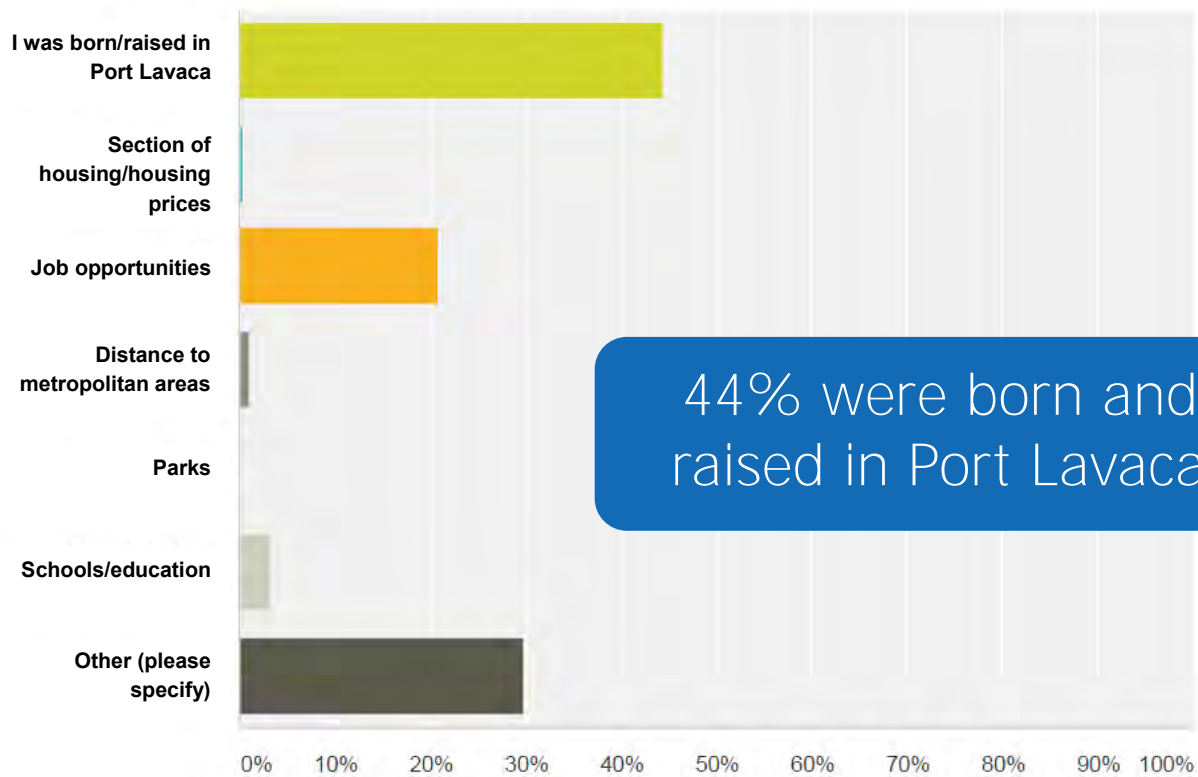
*Question 6: How would you rate Port Lavaca in terms of general appearance?*

When asked how Port Lavaca rated in terms of general appearance, only 22 percent of the respondents think the appearance is excellent or good, while nearly 78 percent believe it is fair or poor.



*Question 7: What was the most important factor for you when you decided to move to Port Lavaca?*

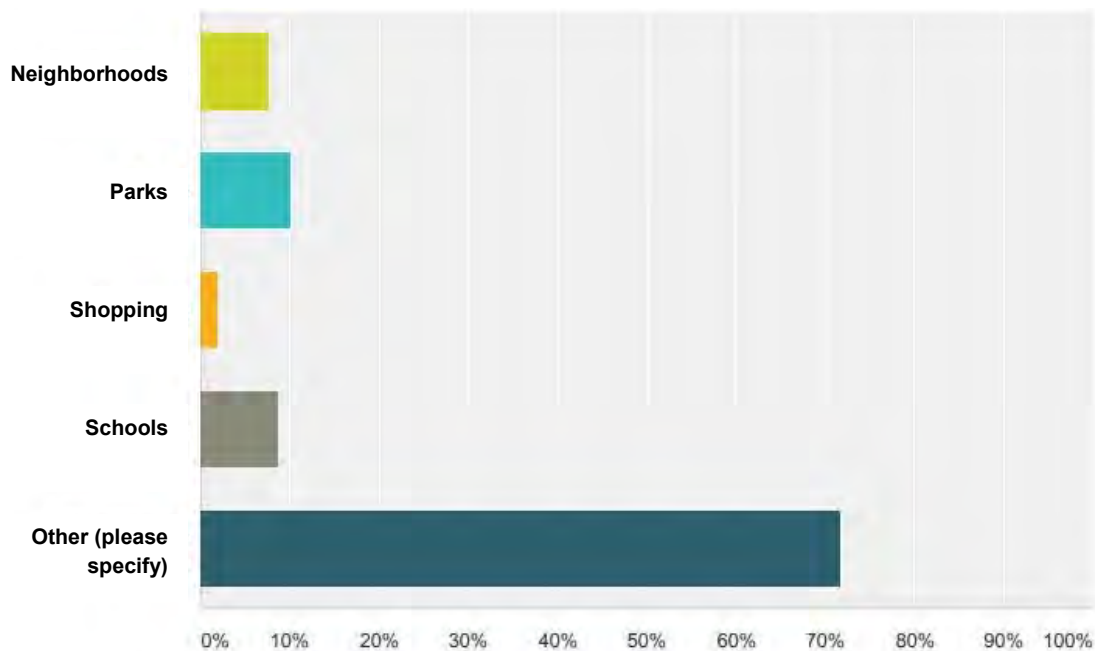
Residents said that they chose to live in Port Lavaca for a number of reasons ranging from birthplace to job opportunities. Nearly 44 percent of the respondents were born and raised in Port Lavaca. Twenty percent of respondents decided to move to the City for job opportunities. Thirty percent chose “other” and some of the most repeated responses included: parents/family, proximity to water, and cost of living.



*Question 8: What makes Port Lavaca attractive and distinguishable from surrounding communities?*

When asked what makes Port Lavaca attractive and distinguishable from surrounding communities, over a quarter selected neighborhoods, parks, and schools; ten percent identified parks, nine percent identified schools, and nearly eight percent identified neighborhoods. This indicates the importance promoting and investing in amenities and services that strengthen sense of community. However, nearly 72 percent of respondents added other answers. The most popular answers included:

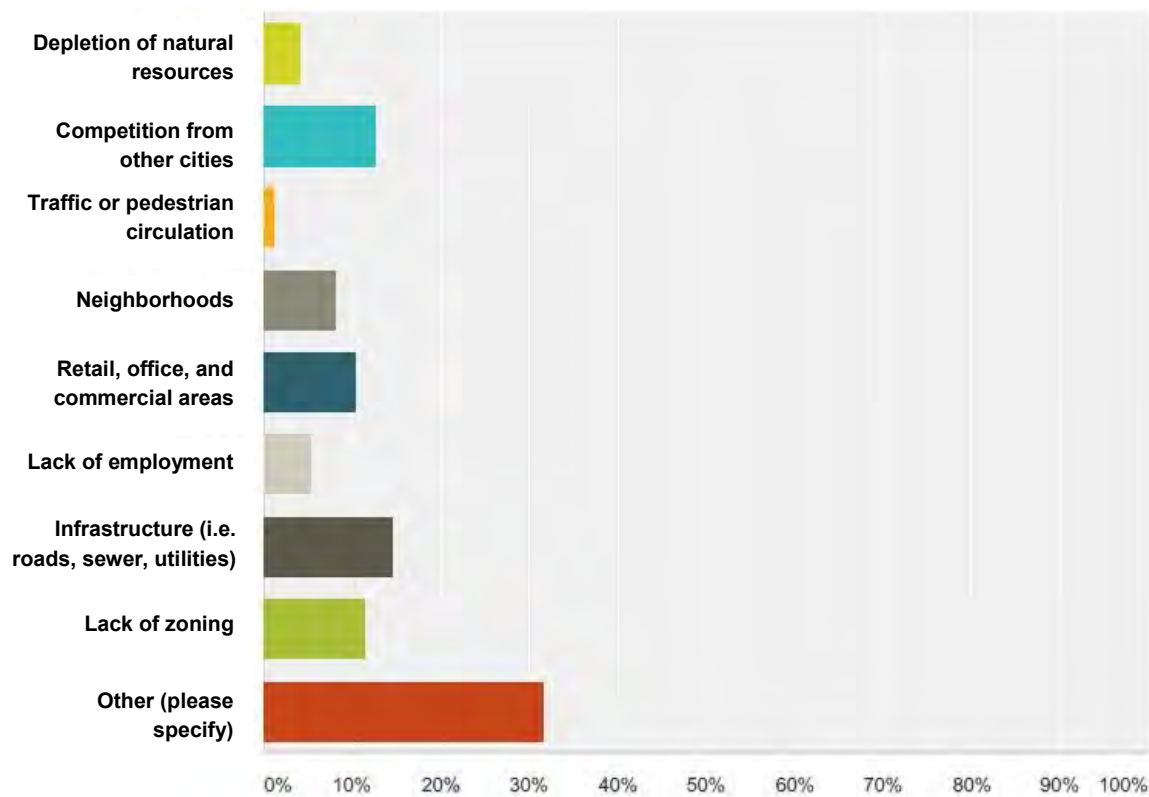
- Water/ocean/beaches
- Small town feel
- Fishing
- Parks and neighborhoods



*Question 9: What would you consider the greatest single issue facing Port Lavaca today?*

One of the most important goals of the community survey is to begin to identify the community’s issues and what the people of the community perceive to be the most important. The survey asked citizens what they considered to be the greatest issue facing Port Lavaca today, and there were mixed responses. Nearly 15 percent identified infrastructure as a major issue, while 12 percent chose competition from other communities. Over thirty percent chose other and specified the following issues:

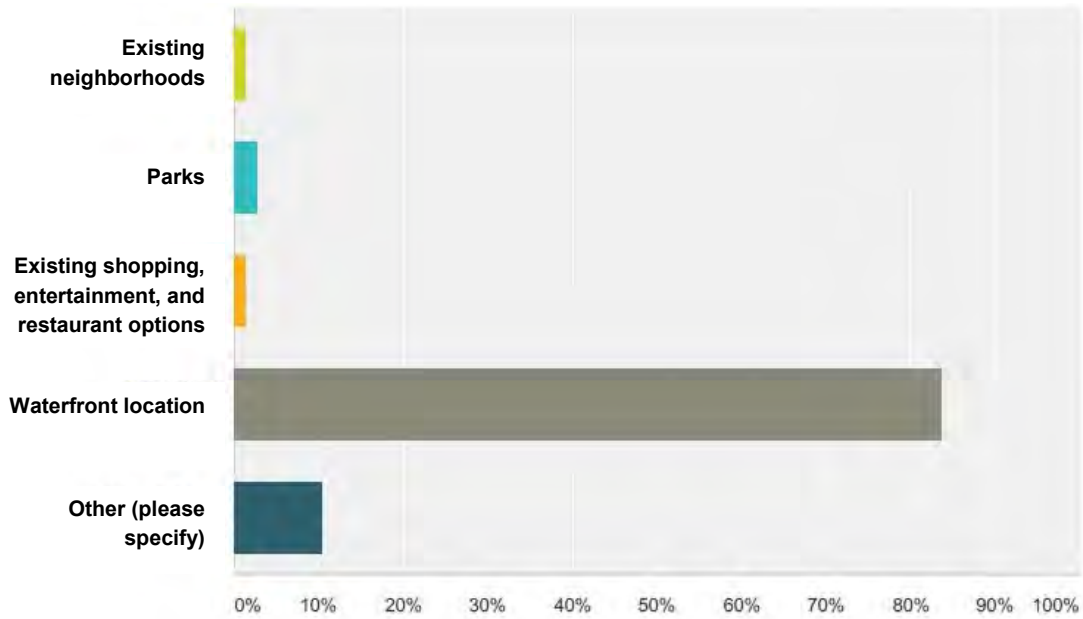
- Youth recreation/retention
- Aesthetic appeal
- Lack of zoning
- Lack of leadership
- Local retail
- Housing variety
- Future employment





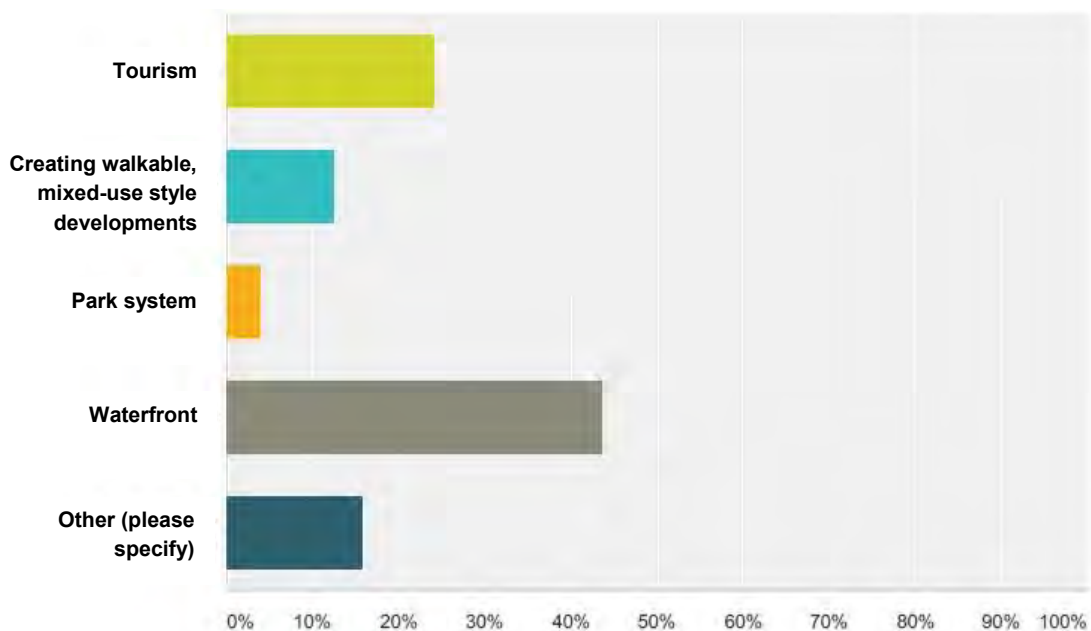
*Question 10: What would you consider to be Port Lavaca's greatest asset?*

In addition to identifying the issues, it is just as important for the survey to attempt to identify the community's assets and opportunities. Nearly 84 percent of respondents said that the waterfront location was the greatest asset.



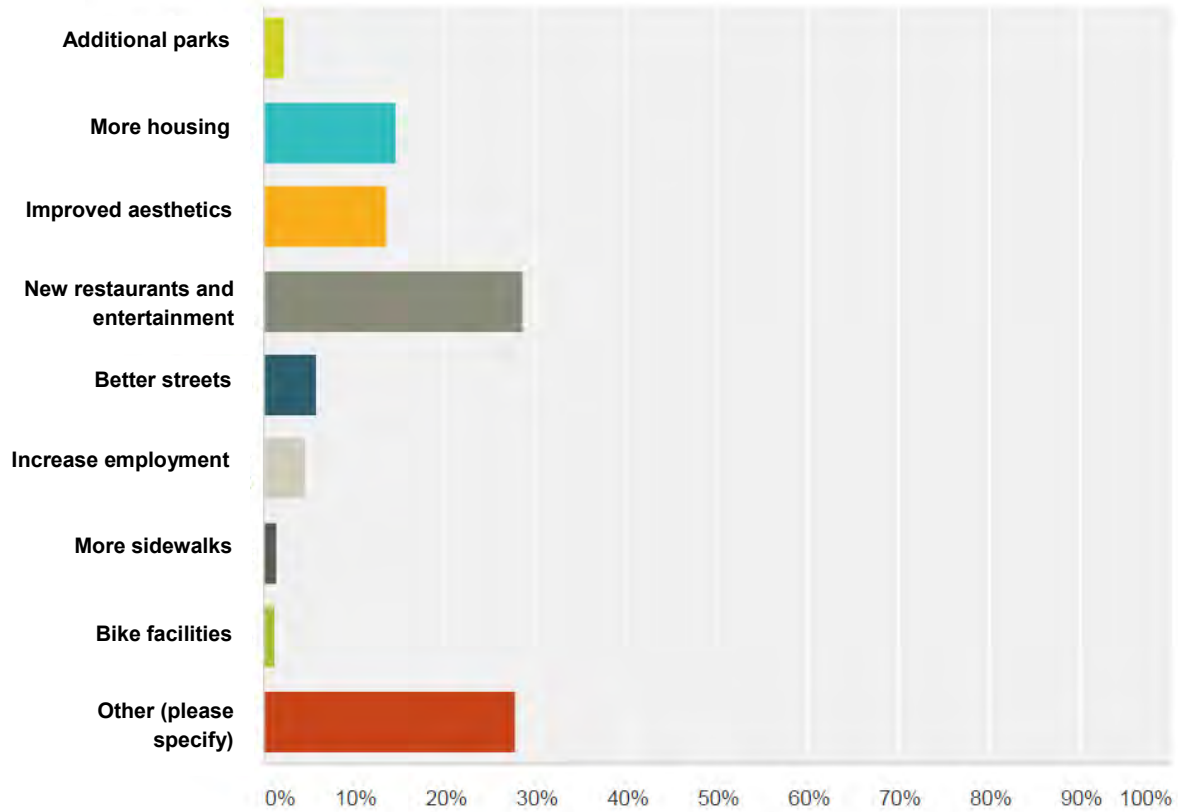
*Question 11: What would you consider to be Port Lavaca's greatest opportunity?*

Nearly 44 percent also identified the waterfront as the City's greatest opportunity. Nearly 24 percent said that tourism is the City's greatest opportunity, which is strongly tied to the waterfront location as well. Other answers included: all of the above, appearance, and family activities.



*Question 12: What is your number one desire for Port Lavaca?*

The survey asked respondents what their number one desire for Port Lavaca was and again there were a variety of answers, some of which reflect answers given throughout the survey. Almost 29 percent identified new restaurants and entertainment as their number one desire for the City. Over ten percent wanted more housing and improved aesthetics for the city. Almost 30 percent responded other and the most frequent answer given by these respondents was “all of the above.”



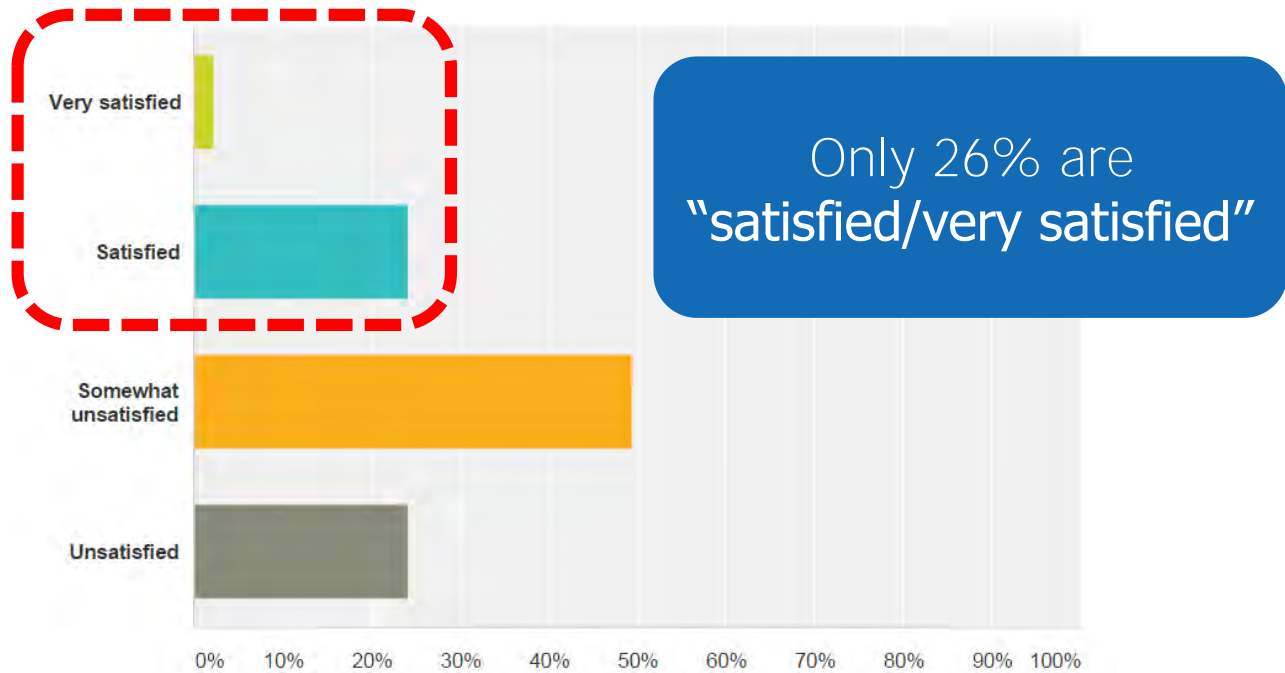
*Question 13: How important or unimportant are the following to you in terms of Port Lavaca’s quality of life?*

This question asked respondents to rate each topic as Very Important, Important, Somewhat Important, Unimportant, or Very Unimportant. The red dashed lines indicate the topics that were most often identified as Very Important. As shown, the appearance of the City, employment opportunities, safe and easy to walk, and mixed use developments were the highest supported topics. Overall, respondents generally felt that all topics were at least somewhat important, with fewer than 25 percent rating any topic as Unimportant or Very Unimportant.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Parks and trail system	42.44% 101	36.97% 88	16.81% 40	1.68% 4	2.10% 5
Appearance of the City	72.02% 175	24.28% 59	2.06% 5	0.41% 1	1.23% 3
Availability of single family homes	47.68% 113	33.33% 79	14.35% 34	2.95% 7	1.69% 4
Availability of multifamily homes	21.85% 52	31.51% 75	24.37% 58	14.71% 35	7.56% 18
Availability of townhomes/condos	17.95% 42	32.91% 77	29.91% 70	12.82% 30	6.41% 15
Public art	13.42% 31	27.71% 64	34.63% 80	18.18% 42	6.06% 14
An effective roadway network	41.81% 97	37.50% 87	16.81% 39	3.02% 7	0.86% 2
Employment opportunities	64.29% 153	29.41% 70	4.62% 11	0.84% 2	0.84% 2
Enhancing the City’s identity	53.19% 125	33.62% 79	9.36% 22	1.70% 4	2.13% 5
Establishing community focal points	38.36% 89	41.38% 96	14.66% 34	3.88% 9	1.72% 4
Local retailers and specialty shops	50.42% 120	33.19% 79	13.03% 31	1.68% 4	1.68% 4
National retailers	39.15% 92	28.94% 68	21.70% 51	6.38% 15	3.83% 9
Recreation centers	53.42% 125	29.91% 70	13.25% 31	2.14% 5	1.28% 3
Safe and easy to walk	57.63% 136	28.81% 68	11.86% 28	0.85% 2	0.85% 2
Mixed use development (Places where people can shop, live, and work in one location)	56.25% 135	26.25% 63	12.92% 31	3.75% 9	0.83% 2

*Question 14: How satisfied are you with the current state of the City?*

It is important to note that only 26 percent of the community is Satisfied/Very Satisfied with the current state of the City. Nearly 50 percent are Somewhat Unsatisfied and 24 percent are Unsatisfied. This is a difficult reality, but one that the community can overcome by making strategic investments in the community and gaining community support and participation in implementation.



*Question 15: What other ideas should be considered in shaping the plan for Port Lavaca's future?*

Citizens provided other ideas for consideration in shaping the plan, including:

- Water conservation
- Community advisory board to help guide officials
- Neighborhood/city-wide cleanup
- Tourism
- Retail/restaurants
- Activities/entertainment
- Family recreation
- Prolonged community involvement

Many of these ideas will be discussed and addressed in later chapters of this plan. The input gained from the community survey helped gain consensus on the major issues and themes of this Comprehensive Plan, many of which were reinforced by additional public input methods—including public meetings, CPAC meetings and stakeholder meetings, which are discussed in the following sections.

### Conclusions from the Survey

The survey responses paint an interesting picture of important issues in Port Lavaca. The survey reflects perceptions and opinions about the City that resonate with residents and illustrate many opportunities for enhancement moving forward. Based on feedback, Port Lavaca is comprised largely of native residents who also work in the City. Additionally, a significant percentage of people commute into or out of the City for work.

A large majority of the survey participants feel that Port Lavaca has only a fair or poor overall appearance. By the same margin, a large majority also have an overall unsatisfied perception of the state of the City. However, the reasons for this varied widely. Identification of the single greatest issue was distributed over more than nine issues, with none receiving majority votes. This gives Port Lavaca a tremendous amount of room to address issues based on timeframe, popularity, budget, and urgency; however it also indicates potential difficulty in identifying consensus on various issues.

The survey also identified a wide range of opinions and lack of consensus regarding participants' strongest desire for Port Lavaca. The most common responses were more housing, aesthetic improvements, and new restaurants and entertainment, though no single category was a clear consensus. There was also a wide range of responses with regard to what factors are most important to quality of life in Port Lavaca.

It is important to note that the only significant consensus came when participants identified Port Lavaca's waterfront location as the City's greatest asset. The survey also identified other perceived opportunities in the City in addition to the waterfront, namely tourism and creating walkable, mixed use development. The recurring ranges of opinions indicate that the City isn't constricted to addressing any one issue first, allowing for thoughtful and deliberative planning. Consensus that the waterfront is the City's greatest feature identifies an important point of emphasis for continued enhancement of Port Lavaca.

### Public Meetings

Residents of Port Lavaca attended a community meeting on April 21, 2015 designed to familiarize residents with the comprehensive planning process and help them articulate their thoughts regarding the numerous opportunities and challenges facing the Port Lavaca. The meeting featured several ways for citizens to provide their input, including interactive boards on a variety of topics, a visual preference survey, focus group discussions, and comment cards.

Over sixty people attended the community meeting, including both new and long-time residents, commuters, and youths. This broad turnout resulted in a wide range of responses and feedback, which is critical in creating a plan that reflects its community.

### Interactive Input Boards

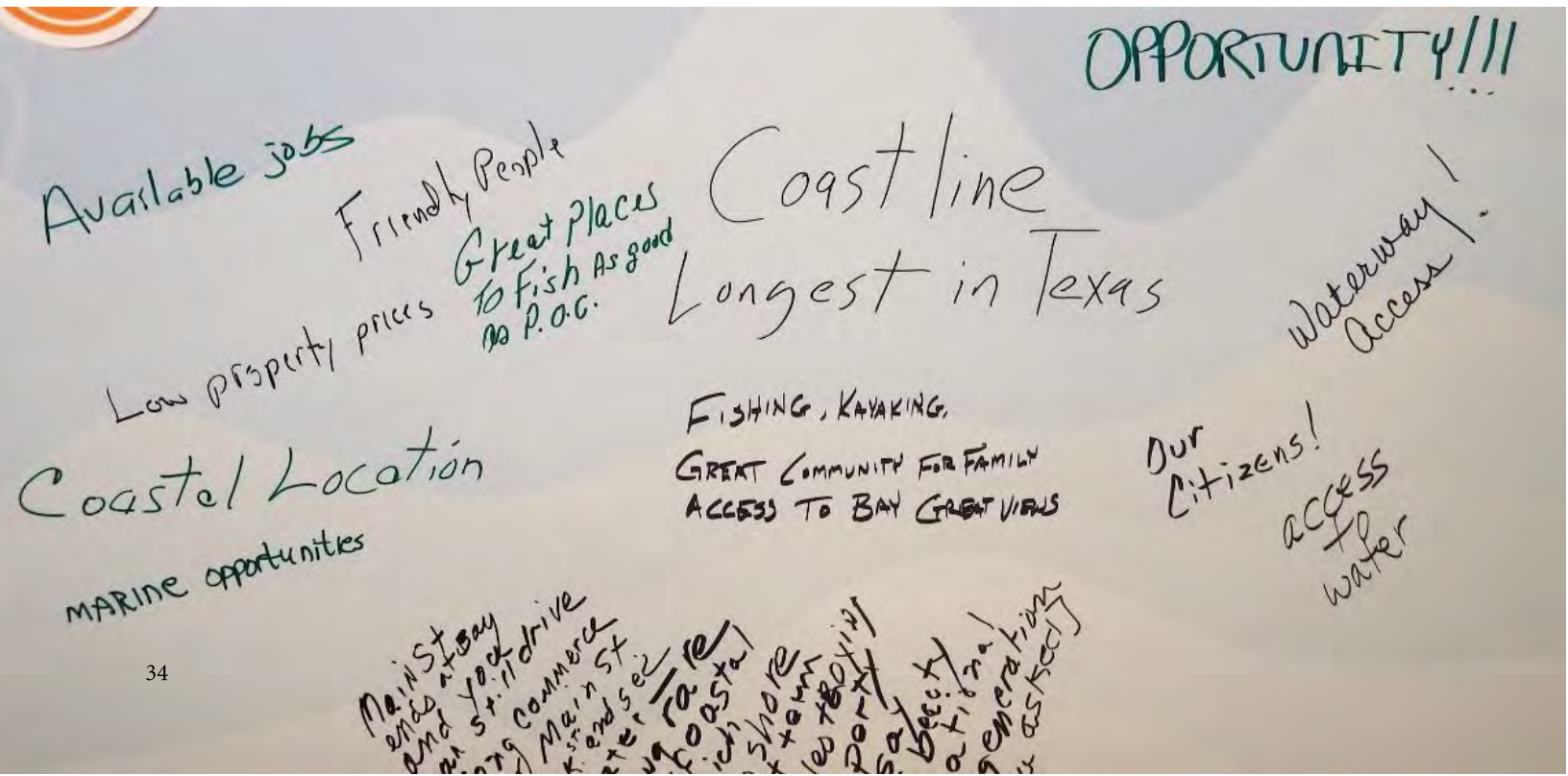
During this exercise, residents were posed a series of questions regarding their overall perceptions of Port Lavaca and asked to indicate their answer on display boards. This exercise allowed residents to convey responses in their own words and also allowed them to see how their feedback was different or similar to that of others, as shown in the following pages. The input boards are a useful tool to gain candid citizen responses that also serve as a platform to share what others in the community are thinking and gain consensus on key issues.





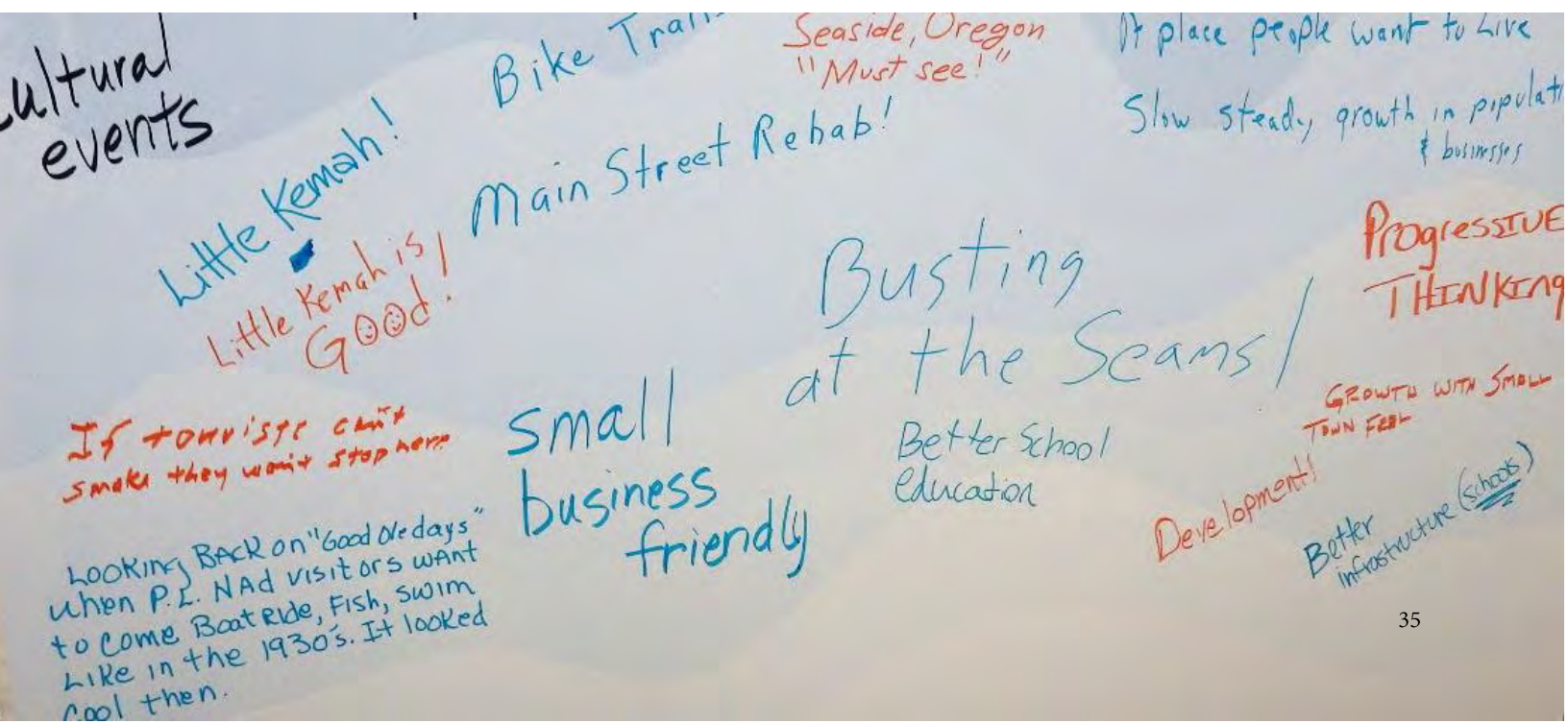
## What makes Port Lavaca unique?

Residents described a community known for its relationship to the coastline, great views, water-related activities and recreation, friendly people in a tight-knit community, and ample job opportunities.



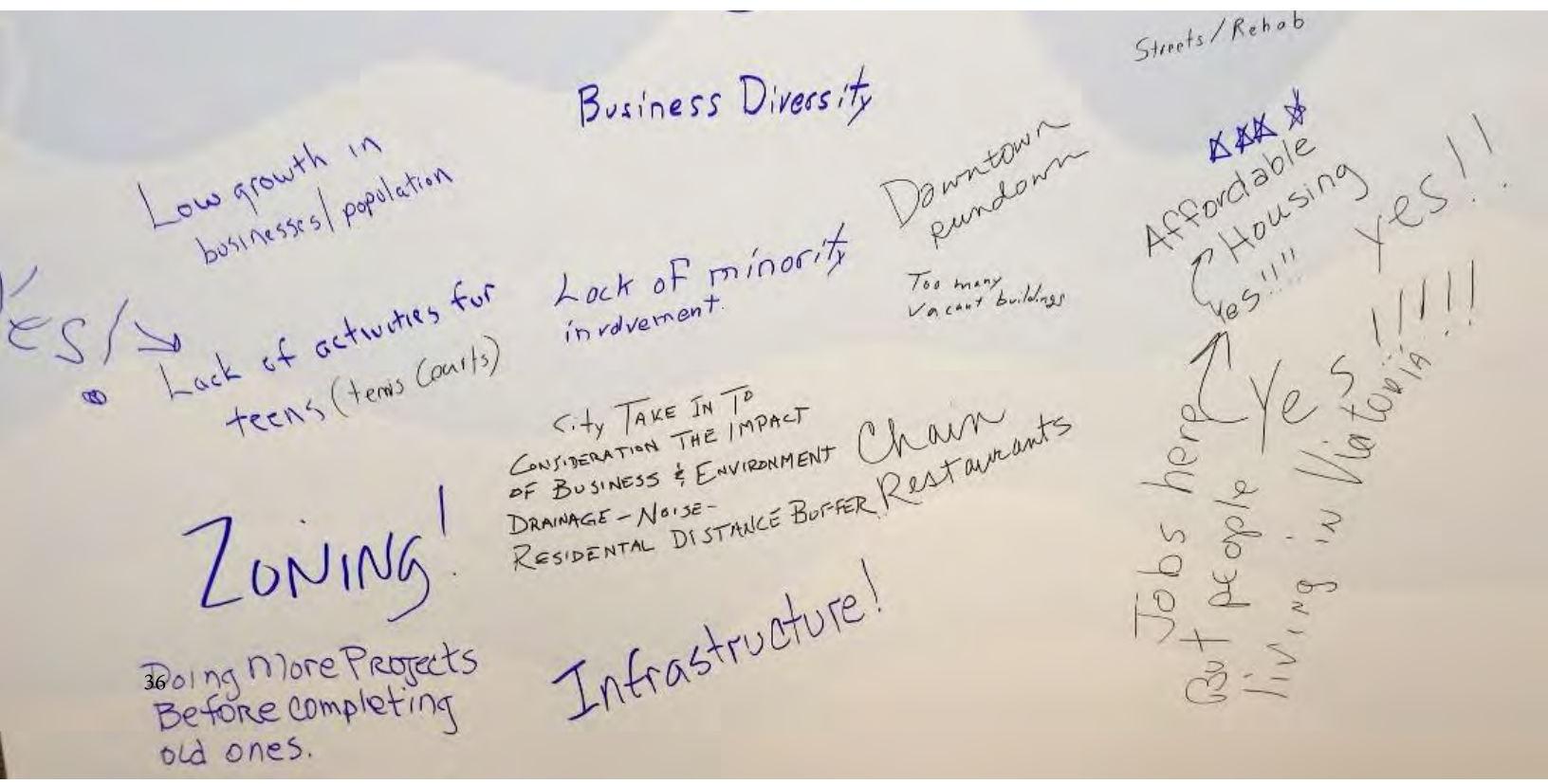
## What is your vision for Port Lavaca?

Participants provided a wide range of desires. Answers included: cultural events, small business friendly, good education, progressive thinking, rehabilitated Main Street, greenspace, reputation, and new development.



## What would you consider the biggest issues facing Port Lavaca today?

Participant feedback was generally consistent. Citizens wrote: lack of citizen involvement, low growth in business and population, lack of youth activities, lack of business diversity, rundown downtown, deteriorating infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, and too much vacancy, to name a few.







**Table 6. Summary of Focus Group Comments**

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
<p>Tourism infrastructure and amenities like bait stands, sailing rentals, swimming, signage</p> <p>Shopping, nightlife, and restaurants</p> <p>South Commerce should accommodate tourists and waterfront living</p> <p>Workforce development, recruit talent</p> <p>Focus on implementation</p> <p>Improve housing mix/affordability</p> <p>Beautification and building conditions</p> <p>Downtown/Waterfront needs entertainment, shopping, longer hours, local and chain restaurants, connections, housing options</p>	<p>Street planning and maintenance; safe walkways for pedestrians</p> <p>Transparency; dedicated leadership with open lines of communication</p> <p>Public transportation</p> <p>RV parks needed</p> <p>Make goals, follow up, Master Plan</p> <p>Issues: Bayfront development, zoning</p> <p>Beautification of City</p> <p>Jobs plentiful but no housing available</p> <p>Continue adding to Bayfront; better utilize waterfront access; industrial uses along waterfront</p> <p>Better retail</p> <p>Downtown improvement</p> <p>Conservation of natural resources</p> <p>Advertise great fishing; fishing tournaments</p> <p>Business/residential attraction</p> <p>Work with schools to achieve improvement</p> <p>Develop parks and open area</p> <p>Entertainment activities for youth</p> <p>Promote health and safety</p>	<p>Growth (population, industry, economic)</p> <p>Variety of housing type, inventory, affordable</p> <p>City incentives</p> <p>Regulations, processes lacking, design guidelines</p> <p>Waterfront opportunities</p> <p>Desire for tourism</p> <p>Downtown/waterfront connection</p> <p>Trails and recreation</p>

Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
<p>A place people want to live</p> <p>Better infrastructure (water, sewer, road)</p> <p>Meet current demand and allow for future growth</p> <p>Need market rate apartments, not rent controlled</p> <p>Entertainment</p> <p>More outside sponsored events</p> <p>Less restrictions on events</p> <p>Attractions for teens</p> <p>Shopping</p> <p>More land inside city limits</p>	<p>Economic development</p> <p>Affordable housing</p> <p>Industrial diversity/industrial park is needed (high tech)</p> <p>Downtown assets: Main Street theatre, available properties, blank slate for investment</p> <p>Downtown challenges</p> <p>Accessibility (ADA, sidewalks, parking)</p> <p>Lighting</p> <p>Infrastructure (water, sewer, drainage, electrical)</p> <p>Parks and recreation</p> <p>Peninsula park development</p> <p>Inadequate youth athletic fields</p> <p>Need investment in smaller pocket parks in neighborhoods</p> <p>Family-oriented parks (splash pads, playgrounds)</p> <p>Community character</p> <p>Diverse, tight-knit, blue-collar community is an asset</p> <p>Historically resistant to change</p> <p>Need to invest in youth oriented development and programs</p> <p>Lack of support for higher education opportunities</p>	<p>Housing (workforce housing, apartments, designated areas for manufactured homes)</p> <p>Bring young work force back to stay</p> <p>Drainage</p> <p>Water supply</p> <p>Zoning; plan together</p> <p>Capitalize on the waterfront (tax abatements)</p> <p>Ecotourism (birds)</p> <p>Welcome packet for new businesses</p> <p>Main street and waterfront</p> <p>Joint facilities with ISD</p>



Group 7	Group 8	Group 9
<p>Money for housing; updated housing options</p> <p>No entertainment</p> <p>Need a variety of services</p> <p>Centrally located</p> <p>Amenities (water park)</p> <p>Bayfront drive opportunity</p> <p>Preserve the waterfront</p> <p>Swimming pool</p> <p>Eco-tourism with schools, groups; preserved resources that other cities don't have</p> <p>Diversity (occupations, ethnicities)</p> <p>Subsidized new manufactured housing not available to teachers, workers, etc.</p> <p>No zoning, sign regulations, maintenance (hinders investment)</p> <p>No pride to maintain</p> <p>Beautification</p> <p>Mentality</p> <p>Beautification of Commerce Street, 87 South, Lighthouse beach, Old Firehouse</p>	<p>Student involvement</p> <p>Bike trails</p> <p>Green space</p> <p>Housing: very expensive; hard for newcomers; shortage</p> <p>More community events</p> <p>Festivals and live music</p> <p>Kids museum</p> <p>Parks and open space (skate park; tennis courts; cleaner parks)</p> <p>Downtown:</p> <p>Downtown rehab</p> <p>Cool entrance to Old Town</p> <p>Sidewalks</p> <p>Education for business owners</p> <p>Preserve historic buildings</p> <p>Hard to find</p> <p>Waterfront:</p> <p>Walkway from Lighthouse Beach to Downtown</p> <p>Places to eat on waterside</p> <p>Shops</p> <p>Kayaks, paddle boats</p> <p>Economic development and tourism:</p> <p>Attract more food options</p> <p>Brewery</p> <p>Food truck festival</p> <p>Improve bird habitat</p> <p>Viewing tower</p>	<p>Assets:</p> <p>Coast</p> <p>Waterfront</p> <p>Work opportunities</p> <p>Lighthouse beach</p> <p>Medical care</p> <p>Bayfront peninsula</p> <p>Veteran's memorial</p> <p>Needs:</p> <p>A lot of work</p> <p>Affordable housing</p> <p>New baseball fields</p> <p>City sports complex</p> <p>Downtown improvements</p> <p>Clean up town</p> <p>Zoning</p> <p>Industrial park</p> <p>Annexation</p>

### Comment Cards

The final method of citizen feedback at the public meeting came from comment card that participants had the option of filling out and turning in at the end of the meeting. Comment cards are an important part of the input process because they allow every participant's voice to be heard even if they chose not to verbally express them.

The majority of comment cards received expressed desires to see the waterfront better utilized and for quality and diverse commercial development. Other recurring comments included desire for increased tax revenue and diverse housing options, concerns regarding resource preservation, desire for improved aesthetics and downtown revitalization, concern regarding lack of zoning, and community resistance to change.

When combined, the public participation methods utilized turn the community's thoughts and desires for the City into information that can be used to make a comprehensive plan that is deliberate and representative. The current challenges and opportunities to achieving this vision were clearly identified during the meeting. The general themes included a need for affordable housing options for the residents and workforce of Port Lavaca. Residents also identified a need for beautification efforts, or improvements to the overall aesthetics of the City. In concert with beautification efforts, a consensus for downtown revitalization and waterfront improvements was clear.



## Major Themes Identified from Community Input

- Housing** Port Lavaca's housing stock offers a limited selection. Quality homes are generally expensive, while many of the affordable homes are in poor condition. Residents identified a need for a variety of housing types with adequate affordable inventory to meet current demand.
- Beautification** To support future growth, attract new business and residents, and increase commerce, targeted beautification efforts were identified. Participants recommended improvement of residential and commercial attractiveness. The deterioration of many structures affects the natural beauty of the city. Additionally, Commerce Street, 87 South, Lighthouse Beach and Old Firehouse were identified for beautification projects.
- Downtown** Downtown Port Lavaca has many assets. Main Street Theatre and available properties with potential for investment opportunities. In many ways, Downtown is a blank slate that can be converted to meet the vision of the citizens. Revitalization of Downtown was a key issue repeatedly mentioned by participants. Downtown revitalization as defined by the participants would include infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, parking, lighting, water, sewer, and drainage improvements. Participants identified a desire to preserve historic buildings, and create a connection between Downtown and the Waterfront. These two areas could essentially create an entertainment district for the City of Port Lavaca.
- Waterfront** A need to better utilize the assets of the waterfront was a key theme throughout the discussion. This may be accomplished in a variety of ways however, the most dominant ideas presented by participants were: providing waterfront restaurants, shopping, and water related activities such as paddle boats and kayaks. Preservation of natural resources was also important to participants. Improving the bird habitat along the coastline was suggested as an opportunity to encourage Ecotourism.
- Infrastructure** Citywide infrastructure improvements were a key topic of discussion among the participants. The items identified as needing improvements were street maintenance and repair, sidewalks to provide safe pedestrian facilities, water and wastewater infrastructure, and drainage.
- Economic Development** Ideas to improve economic conditions in the City were abundant and participants provided great insight into the opportunities for improvement. A focus on creating tourism revenue was of high priority. The ideas for achieving this economic initiative were focused on the waterfront and water related activities. These included fishing related activities and the ancillary businesses associated with the recreational fishing industry. As expected, restaurants, retail, swimming, and water sports were all mentioned. Participants described a need for additional restaurants throughout the City with a mix of chain and locally owned restaurants. Workforce development was also a key theme. The need to attract new talent, retain young talented workers, and incorporate high tech industry job opportunities were all ideas presented by participants.
- Parks and Recreation** Participants identified a desire for more recreational facilities throughout the City. These facilities would provide adequate activities for the youth of Port Lavaca. The recommended facilities were: swimming pool, tennis courts, skate park, new baseball fields, and a City sports complex. In addition, small pocket parks, bike trails and additional green space were all discussed by participants.
- Community Activities** Community activities are important to the participants of the meeting. The overarching theme was a general need for more entertainment options in the City. These may include, but are not limited to: outdoor sponsored events such as festivals, live music, and community events.
- Regulations and Policies** A need for zoning was a key issue discussed during the meeting. Additionally, design guidelines, sign regulations, and code enforcement were also considered as areas of focus.

## Mission and Vision Statements

A mission statement provides an overview of the community's plans to realize its vision by identifying the service areas, target audience, and values and goals of the community.

A vision statement describes and represents the closely-held values of the community and to spell out the community's values at a high level. The following questions were considered when developing the 2014 Port Lavaca Strategic Plan Vision Statement:

- What should the City become?
- What is the overall purpose of the community?
- What does the community value?

The vision for Port Lavaca, as defined by the citizens, would be a place people want to live and work that is business friendly, active with cultural and community events, and a city that capitalizes on the possibilities of the waterfront and natural resources. The citizens also envision an improved educational system, upgraded public infrastructure, and a vibrant downtown and waterfront district.

### **City of Port Lavaca Mission Statement:**

*Our mission is to make Port Lavaca a desirable place to live through quality services, responsible use of public resources, and a progressive attitude toward community development. With enthusiasm, integrity and vision, we will maintain a safe environment and continually improve the quality of life for all citizens.*

### **Our Vision...**

*The Mayor and the City Council envision a friendly town on Lavaca Bay where economic and recreational opportunities abound, providing for a wonderful quality of life for both citizens and tourists, rich in history and looking toward a vibrant future!*

*- Port Lavaca Strategic Plan 2014*

## Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives should serve as the foundation for decision-making and judgment regarding:

- The timing and availability of infrastructure improvements to serve new development;
- The compatibility of proposed development and redevelopment;
- The consistency of land use designations and policy-related actions with the principles and policies of this plan;
- Expansion of public facilities, services and programs to meet current and future demands;
- Priorities for annual capital budgeting;
- Potential re-write and amendments to the City's land development ordinances and related code elements; and
- Intergovernmental coordination and agreements, operations, capital improvements and programming.

A goal is defined as a general statement of guidance that outlines how various issues should be addressed in a broad sense. This plan identifies three overarching goal themes from which objectives and targeted actions will culminate. The three major goals are:

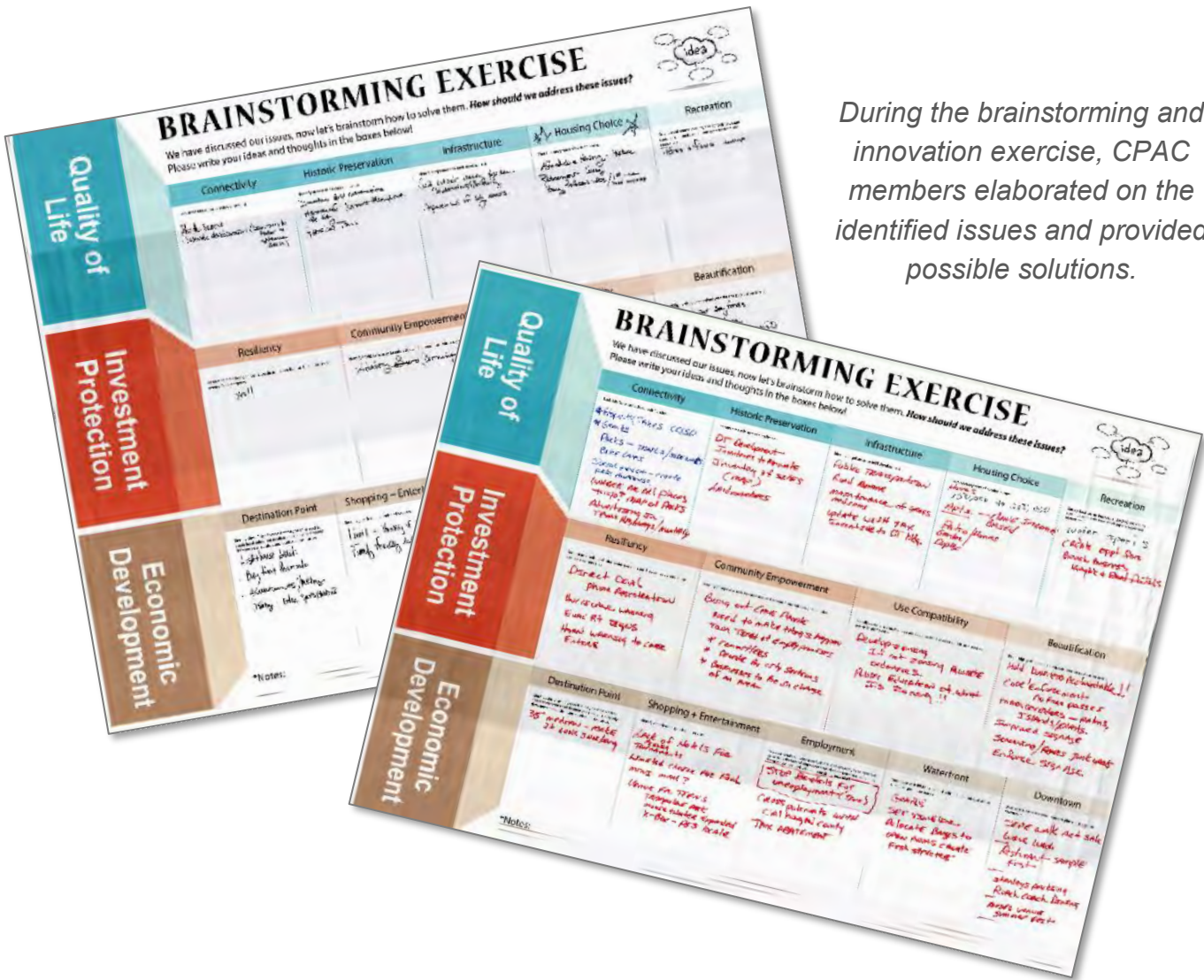
- Improving quality of life
- Protecting investments
- Supporting economic development

These goals are distinct but are not mutually exclusive; many objectives and action items in this plan will work toward achieving more than one goal theme.

Objectives are defined as statements of intent that will lead the City to achieve its goals. Through many meetings with the CPAC and community stakeholders, as well as public comments and input, 12 objectives were identified. The objectives are listed beneath each respective goal in the chart below. Many of the objectives are directly derived from the public input previously discussed. Each chapter will include action items, which are specific recommendations outlining the steps necessary to accomplish the goals.







During the brainstorming and innovation exercise, CPAC members elaborated on the identified issues and provided possible solutions.

Goals	Promoting Quality of Life	Protecting Investments	Supporting Economic Development
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connected neighborhoods for pedestrians and vehicles</li> <li>2. Housing choices for young professionals and seniors</li> <li>3. Recreation opportunities for youth, adults, and visitors</li> <li>4. Adequate infrastructure to support future development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Compatible uses to reduce conflict</li> <li>6. Beautiful community</li> <li>7. Resilient waterfront that serves as an asset</li> <li>8. Community empowerment to encourage ownership, pride, and involvement</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Destination to attract visitors</li> <li>10. Employment and entertainment opportunities</li> <li>11. Exciting Waterfront amenities that generate activity and income</li> <li>12. Active and unique downtown</li> </ol>

## Promoting Quality of Life

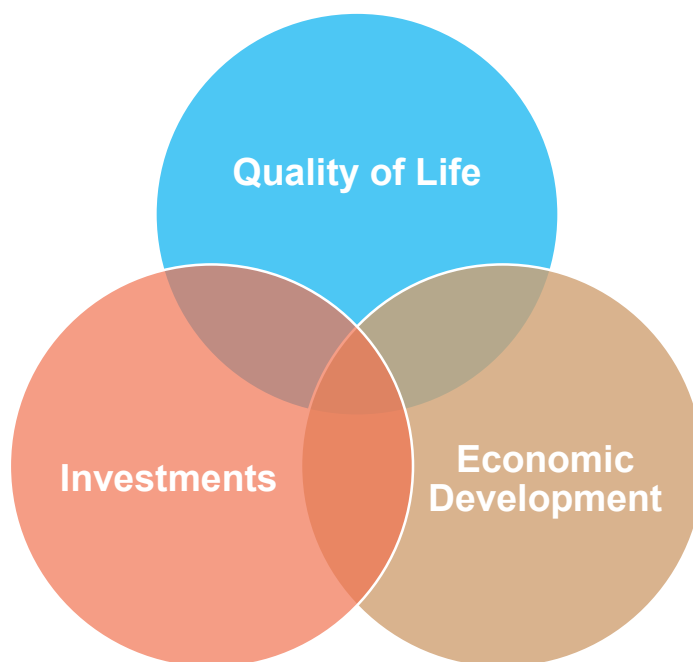
Quality of life refers to the tangible and intangible characteristics that make a community a great place to live. These characteristics include connecting neighborhoods, providing housing options for residents of all ages and incomes, promoting recreational amenities to support active lifestyles, and ensuring that residents have safe and sufficient water and wastewater services, among many others. Quality of life also includes the look and feel of the City. Improving the community's aesthetics was an overwhelming theme from all sources of public input. In today's competitive and global economy, quality of life is a major consideration when a business, industry, or resident chooses to locate in one city over another. Many relocations specifically look at a city's quality of life as part of its decision-making process. Competitive cities are those that not only meet the basic functional needs of the city; they also provide a high quality of life for residents.

## Protecting Investments

This goal theme seeks to protect (and thereby encourage) public and private investment in Port Lavaca. Investments tend to encourage future investments. When the future development pattern of an area is more certain, private property owners are more likely to invest in their properties and quality development is more likely to occur. The lack of zoning regulations in Port Lavaca creates a significant challenge in terms of beautification, quality of development, and appropriate land use types. While the City has actively pursued code enforcement and other community improvement efforts, the City's resources are limited. Community empowerment, pride, and involvement to support the City's efforts is critical for the City to continue to improve over time.

## Supporting Economic Development

In order to remain competitive in the region, the City must continue and enhance its proactive economic development strategy. Economic development planning is the process by which a community organizes, analyzes, plans, and then applies its energies to the tasks of improving the economic well-being and quality of life for those in the community. Economic development focuses on retaining existing businesses, securing new businesses, and attracting tourism into the community.



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# Chapter 4 | Land Use and Recreation

## Issues and Existing Conditions

### Existing Land Use

Port Lavaca has a total of 8,213 acres within its current city limits. Agricultural uses constitute the largest land use type, comprising nearly 27 percent, or 2,213 acres, closely followed by bay/streams (26 percent) and vacant land (16 percent).

Port Lavaca's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) is 12,752 acres, nearly a third greater than its current city limits. The ETJ serves two purposes: First, cities can annex land only within their ETJ, and there is a statutory prohibition against a city annexing into the ETJ of another city; and cities can extend and enforce their subdivision regulations into their ETJ.

Approximately 17.9 percent of Port Lavaca's planning area is considered vacant or undeveloped land. This amounts to nearly 3,745 acres that have the potential to be developed in the future or preserved for agricultural or community open space uses. The importance of analyzing the amount of vacant land within the City is that it will allow Port Lavaca to grow in population and develop in the future. This land also represents areas where decisions must be made regarding service provisions and roadway expansions, and subsequent maintenance demands. The amount of land available within the City is also significant because it has the potential to be developed in different ways and in accordance with the ultimate vision for Port Lavaca.

The existing land use of Port Lavaca reflects past development decisions and tells the story of the City's development history and trends. The planning process helps to ensure that coordinated land use decisions enhance the overall quality of life in Port Lavaca by mitigating the impacts of incompatible uses near residential neighborhoods. This process begins with examining the types and locations of existing land uses within Port Lavaca and determining how and where new growth and development may be accommodated.

#### Top Issues Related to Land Use and Recreation:

- Lack of zoning and development regulations
- Underutilization of water and waterfront
- Lack of activities for youth
- Limited connectivity
- Lack of knowledge about park amenities
- Strong survey response that the waterfront (fishing, beaches, atmosphere) is what makes Port Lavaca unique



### *Land Use Types*

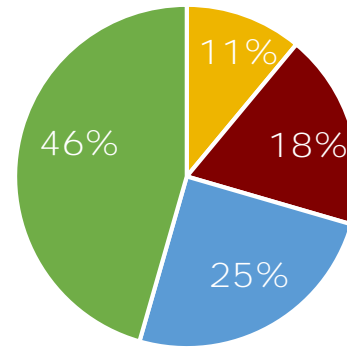
The following land use types currently exist within the City of Port Lavaca, its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), or its planning area (City limits and ETJ combined).

<b>Agriculture</b>	A property used for both agricultural purposes and for a single family dwelling.
<b>Single Family</b>	A single dwelling unit that is detached from any other dwelling unit and built on-site.
<b>Townhomes</b>	At least four vertical single family dwelling units attached with shared walls.
<b>Two-Family</b>	A structure with two attached dwelling units that is designed to be occupied by two families (one in each unit).
<b>Multi-Family</b>	A structure with numerous attached dwelling units that is designed to be occupied by several families (one in each unit).
<b>Manufactured Home</b>	A single family dwelling unit that is manufactured in a factory rather than on-site.
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	Public or private park land, open space, and/or recreation area that is outside.
<b>Public / Semi-Public</b>	Uses that are generally accessible to the public, such as schools, churches, public buildings, cemeteries, and some medical facilities.
<b>Office</b>	All types of professional and administrative offices.
<b>Retail</b>	Businesses that primarily sell commodities or goods to consumers.
<b>Commercial</b>	Establishments that primarily provide a service to consumers.
<b>Industrial</b>	Allows for the processing, storage, assembly, and/or repairing of materials. Activities may take place indoors or outside.
<b>Bay / Streams</b>	Various waterbodies and waterways.
<b>Vacant Building</b>	Developed property with a structure and without an active use taking place.
<b>Open Storage</b>	Land used for open storage of equipment and other materials.
<b>Right-of-Way</b>	Public access for transportation routes, often includes roadways and sidewalks.
<b>Vacant</b>	Unimproved land without an active use currently taking place.



The largest land use categories include the bay, agriculture, and vacant land, which indicates a low density development pattern. The largest active use of land is single family residential. Nonresidential uses are limited, including mainly right-of-way, commercial, and public/semi-public uses.

Figure 10. Existing Land Uses within the City Limits

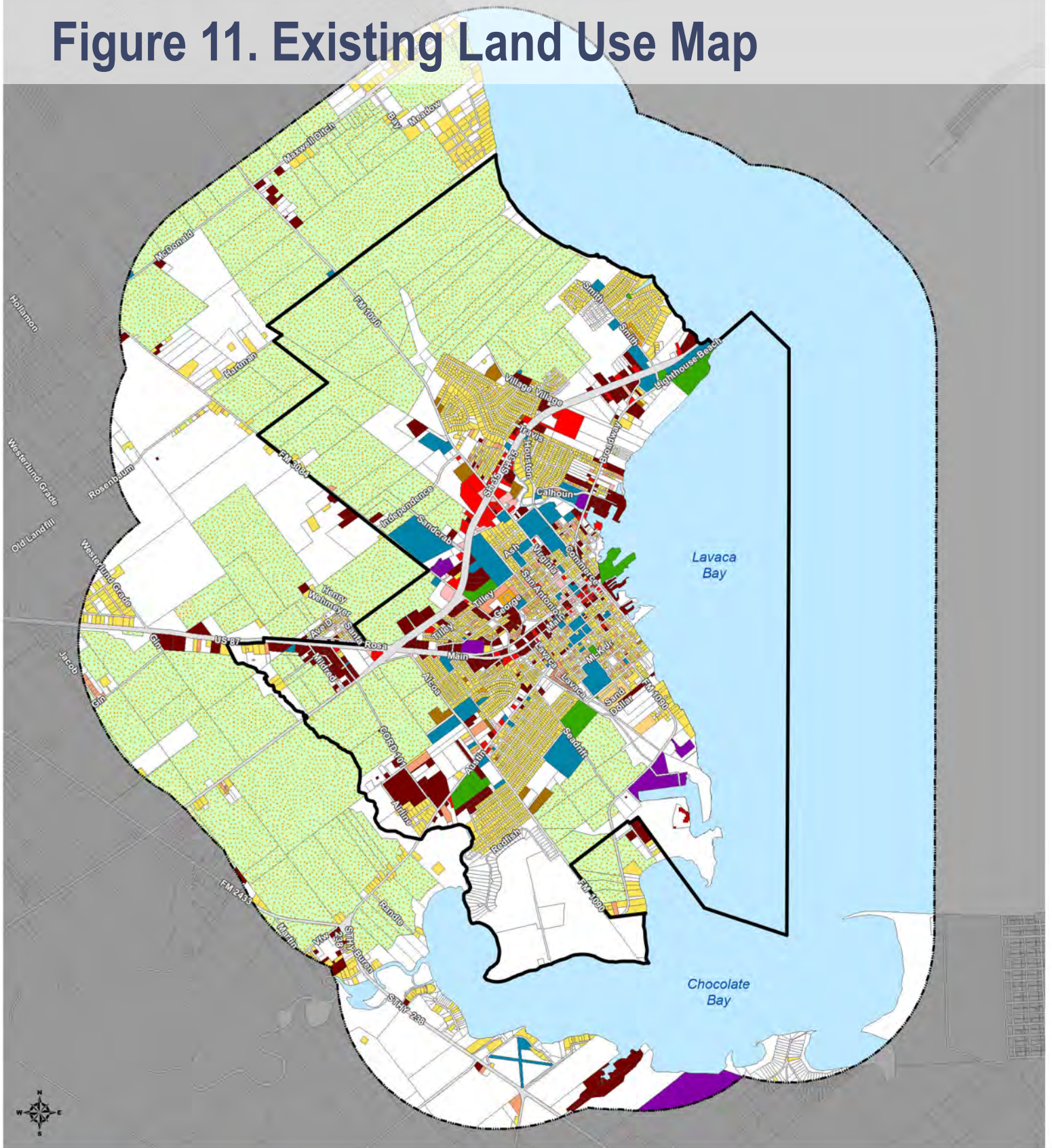


■ Residential ■ Nonresidential ■ Bay ■ Ag/Vacant

Table 7. Existing Land Use

Land Use	City Limits		ETJ		Total Planning Area	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	2,212	26%	3,434	26%	5,646	25%
Single Family	793	9%	328	2%	1,121	5%
Townhomes	21	0%		0%	21	0%
Two-Family	13	0%		0%	13	0%
Multi-Family	40	0%		0%	40	0%
Manufactured Home	85	1%	19	0%	103	0%
Parks and Open Space	120	1%		0%	120	0%
Public/Semi-Public	289	3%	14	0%	303	1%
Office	31	0%		0%	31	0%
Retail	100	1%		0%	100	0%
Commercial	315	4%	116	1%	431	2%
Industrial	56	1%	62	0%	118	1%
Bay/Streams	2,153	26%	6,412	48%	8,565	39%
Open Storage	10	0%	6	0%	16	0%
Right-of-Way	673	8%	247	2%	920	4%
Vacant	1,720	20%	2,640	20%	4,360	20%
Totals	8,631		13,278		21,909	

# Figure 11. Existing Land Use Map



	Agriculture		Parks and Open Space		Bay / Streams
	Single Family		Public/Semi-Public		Vacant
	Townhomes		Office		Open Storage
	Two-Family		Retail		Right-of-way
	Multi-Family		Commercial		Port Lavaca City Limits
	Manufactured Home		Industrial		Port Lavaca ETJ

## Existing Recreation

**Table 8. Existing Park Inventory**, documents current park facilities for Port Lavaca. The City's Public Works department maintains the sites, which includes mowing, debris removal, and tree trimming. The department is also responsible for the cleaning of three restroom facilities daily, inspecting and repairing of playground equipment at all parks. Additional responsibilities include emptying and maintaining trash receptacles downtown and the mowing of all City right-of-ways.

Planning for the future livability of Port Lavaca requires an understanding of the existing recreation facilities. In order to identify deficiencies based on the developed classifications and standards, this inventory provides a baseline understanding for parks as they currently exist at the beginning of this study.

In 2010, the City identified the following five priorities for expansion of the park system:

1. Developing a citywide hike & bike trail system
2. Development of a sports complex (Wilson Field)
3. Development of the Wetland Wildlife Preserve
4. Placement of thematic "Port Lavaca Park System" signage in all City parks
5. Renovation of playground equipment in parks

In 2015, City Staff identified the following recreational issues to be addressed in response to the input received at a public Town Hall meeting:

1. Establish a parks dedication ordinance anticipating new development.
2. Establish a parks master plan.
3. Explore opportunities for community gardens throughout the City, utilizing abandoned lots in neighborhoods.
4. Explore and create beautification programs for the community.

**Table 8. Existing Park Inventory**

Park Name	Acreage
<b>Mini Parks   3 Parks</b>	
Butterfly	0.6
Faye Bauer Sterling	0.1
Pool	2.8
TOTAL	3.5
<b>Neighborhood   3 Parks</b>	
George Adams	1.8
Sulton	0.2
Tilley	11.0
TOTAL	13.0
<b>Community   3 Parks</b>	
Bayfront	17.7
Wilson	21.7
Little Chocolate Bayou	41.0
TOTAL	80.4
<b>Regional   1 Park</b>	
Lighthouse Beach	22.5
TOTAL	22.5

### Recreation Mission Statement

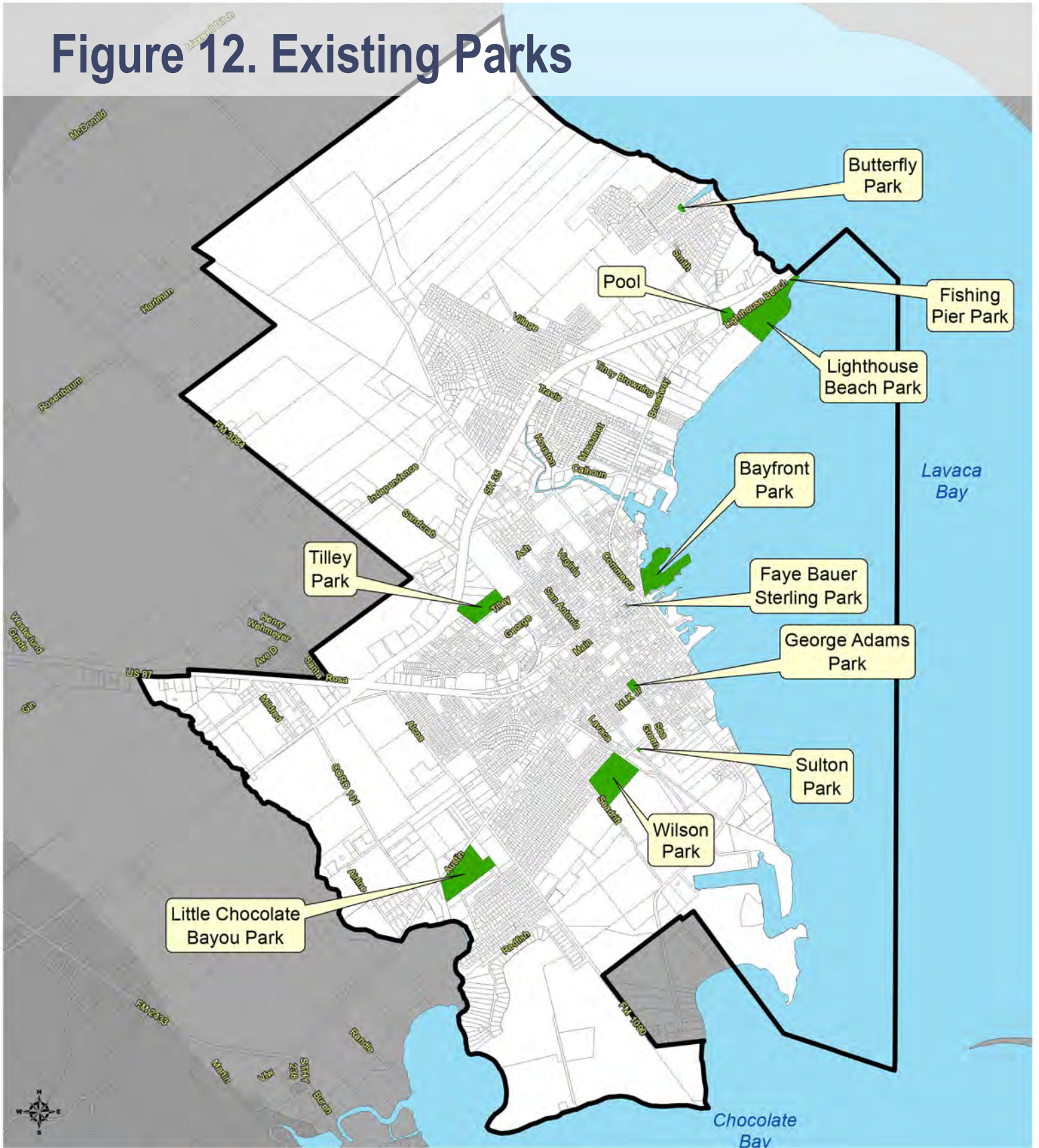
*The City of Port Lavaca and its citizens want their park system to:*

- *Beautify the City's neighborhoods through protection/enhancement of the area's natural resources.*
- *Provide needed services for all citizens, including disabled citizens, military personnel, and the citizens of nearby rural areas who use the City's parks.*
- *Build facilities, which foster the sense of history and identity of Port Lavaca.*

*Source: City of Port Lavaca Park Goals, 2010*



# Figure 12. Existing Parks





### Wilson Park

The Master Plan for Wilson Park was developed in 2011. The community expressed a strong desire for upgrades to the park; as a result, the park is undergoing phased improvements anticipated to continue through 2021.

Wilson Park is located along Seadrift Street across from Jackson Roosevelt Elementary in the southern core of the City. This park features 4 baseball diamonds, 2 soccer fields, a playground, and a trail loop. Wilson Park serves the community and region by hosting soccer and baseball tournaments for local recreational leagues and regional high school teams. The size of the park and available parking facilities allow the park to be utilized for other events that require space to accommodate large amounts of people such as concerts, festivals, and 5k runs.

The City has approved improvements to the park in the annual Capital Improvement Plan. The status of approved CIP projects is indicated in **Table 9**.

**Table 9. Wilson CIP Projects**

	Projects
Completed or in Progress	Fence
	Lighting
	Playground
	Soccer fields
	Softball field
	T-ball field
Remaining Projects	Sidewalk/trail
	Parking lots
	Basketball slab
	Skate park slab
	Pavilion/restroom
	Cabanas
	Swing set

**Figure 13. Wilson Park**





### Bayfront Park

Like Wilson Park, the Master Plan for Bayfront Park was developed in 2011. The community expressed a strong desire for upgrades to the park; as a result, the park is undergoing phased improvements anticipated to continue through 2021.

This park is conveniently located near the Main Street shopping area and serves the local business and residents. Special events such as parades and festival on Main Street can take advantage of the park pavilion to integrate the adjacent space. The linear park juts into the bay, giving it a unique setting and one-of-a-kind views. Special features of this park include a pavilion that can be rented for events, a splash park for children, and pirate ship themed playground. On a nearby point is the Veterans Memorial Park, a park designed to honor military members that have served in the twentieth century.

The City has approved improvements to the park in the annual Capital Improvement Plan. The status of approved CIP projects is indicated in **Table 10**.

**Table 10. Bayfront CIP Projects**

	Projects
Completed or In Progress	Playground
	New pavilion
	Restrooms
	Boat ramp
	Splash pad
	Picnic areas
	Veterans memorial
	Underground power and lighting
Remaining Projects	Parking lots
	Sidewalk
	Swing set
	Amphitheater
	Seal coat
	New street

**Figure 14. Bayfront Park**



## Recommendations

The following section outlines recommendations related to the following topics:

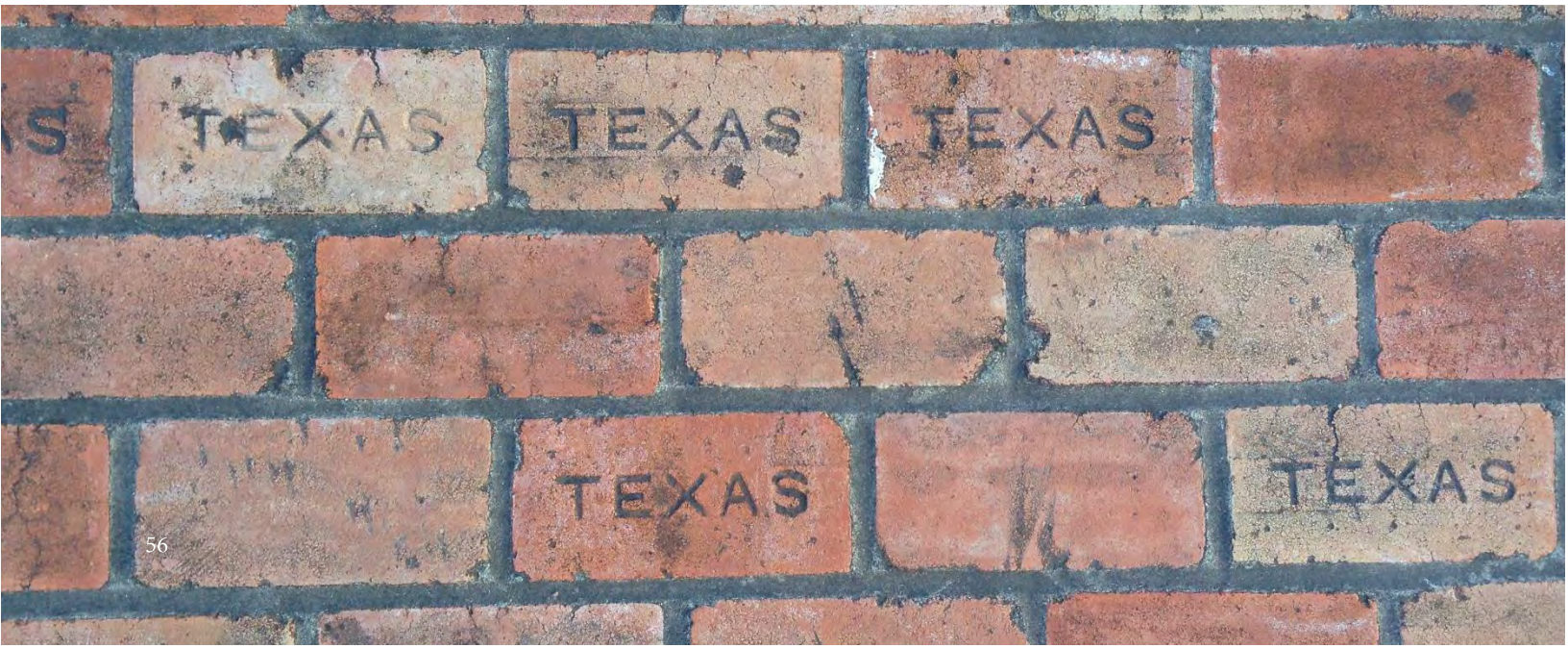
- Future Land Use Planning
- Zoning Regulations
- New Parks, Trails, and Amenities
- Park Enhancements



## Future Land Use Planning

The right of a municipality to coordinate growth is rooted in its need to protect the health, safety, and welfare of local citizens. An important part of establishing the guidelines for such responsibility is the Future Land Use map, which sets an overall framework for the preferred pattern of development within Port Lavaca. Specifically, the plan designates various areas within the City for particular land uses, based principally on the land use strategies outlined herein.

The Future Land Use map should serve as the City's long-range "roadmap" to establish an overall framework for the preferred ultimate development pattern of the City based principally on balanced, compatible, and diversified land uses. The Future Land Use map should ultimately reflect the City's long-range statement of public policy and should be used as a basis for future development decisions. It is important to note that the Future Land Use map is not a zoning map, which legally regulates specific development requirements on individual parcels. If the City chooses to implement zoning in the future, this map should be used to guide its development and future zoning decisions.



### Land Use Types

This section of the plan reviews each type of recommended land use as shown on the Future Land Use map. Land uses are grouped into two primary categories – residential land uses and nonresidential land uses.

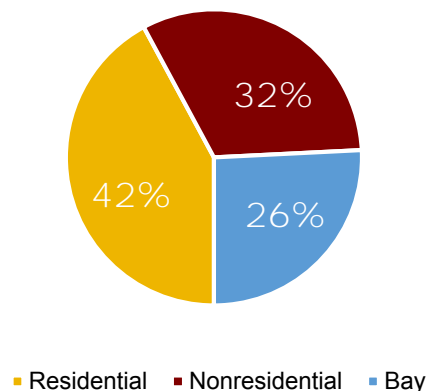
- Low Density Residential** Single family homes with lot sizes over 9,000 sq ft
- Mid Density Residential** Single family homes with lot sizes between 5,000 – 9,000 sq ft (Predominantly the existing homes in Port Lavaca)
- High Density Residential** Single family homes on lot sizes below 5,000 sq ft, patio homes, duplexes and townhomes allowed on larger lots within these areas
- Multi-Family Residential** Apartment complexes and townhomes
- Manufactured Home Park** Semi-permanent, prefabricated structures intended for residential use\*
- Mixed Use** Multiple uses allowed including office, retail, high density residential, potential for mixed use buildings of retail and office on first floor, residential above
- Park** Outdoor space intended for recreation, sometimes including amenities (playground, picnic tables, restrooms, etc.) \*
- Public** Public facilities, such as schools, wastewater plant, etc.
- Commercial** Retail and commercial uses (restaurants, offices, shopping centers)
- Light Industrial** Light industrial uses, with minimal external impacts (machine shops, etc.)
- Industrial** Heavy industrial uses, with some external impacts (high traffic, noise, odors, etc.)

Source: Port Lavaca Future Land Use Plan  
\*Descriptions developed by FNI

Table 11. Future Land Use

Land Use	City Limits	
	Acres	Percent
Low Density Residential	1,897	22%
Mid Density Residential	571	7%
High Density Residential	862	10%
Multi-Family Residential	181	2%
Manufactured Home Park	80	1%
Mixed Use	598	7%
Park	257	3%
Public	149	2%
Commercial	1,244	14%
Light Industrial	293	3%
Industrial	272	3%
Lavaca Bay	2,226	26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,631</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 15. Future Land Use Distribution









## Zoning Regulations

The City of Port Lavaca does not currently have zoning regulations. The City should consider adopting zoning regulations and a zoning map; this is perhaps the most critical step toward implementing the vision established by this comprehensive plan. The term “zoning regulations” includes any requirements or restrictions adopted by the City Council to regulate future development. This often includes regulations addressing land use types, lot and building sizes, commercial building materials, landscaping, and many other topics. Zoning protects property values, promotes desirable neighborhoods, and contributes to the overall quality of life by enhancing aesthetics and reducing nuisances.

Zoning regulations were first established in 1916 – 100 years ago – for the purposes of promoting the public’s health, safety, morals, and general welfare. Today, the City’s rights and requirements for regulating development are outlined in the Texas Local Government Code, specifically Chapters 211 and 213:

### Chapter 211

Chapter 211 of the Texas Local Government Code allows the government body of a community to regulate zoning and requires zoning to be in conformance with a plan.

### Chapter 213

Chapter 213 allows the governing body of a community to create a comprehensive plan for the “long-range development of the municipality.” Basic recommendations for comprehensive planning are to address land use, transportation, and public facilities, but may include a wide variety of other issues determined by the community.

**Zoning regulations could have a very strong positive impact on Port Lavaca, specifically related to the following issues identified by the community:**

- **Creating a more attractive community appearance**
- **Encouraging investments because property owners would be confident of the type and quality of future neighboring development**
- **Improving the mix of housing available in Port Lavaca**
- **Preventing future incompatible uses, such as a manufacturing business next to a home**
- **Ensuring that only desirable, pedestrian-oriented uses locate in the downtown**

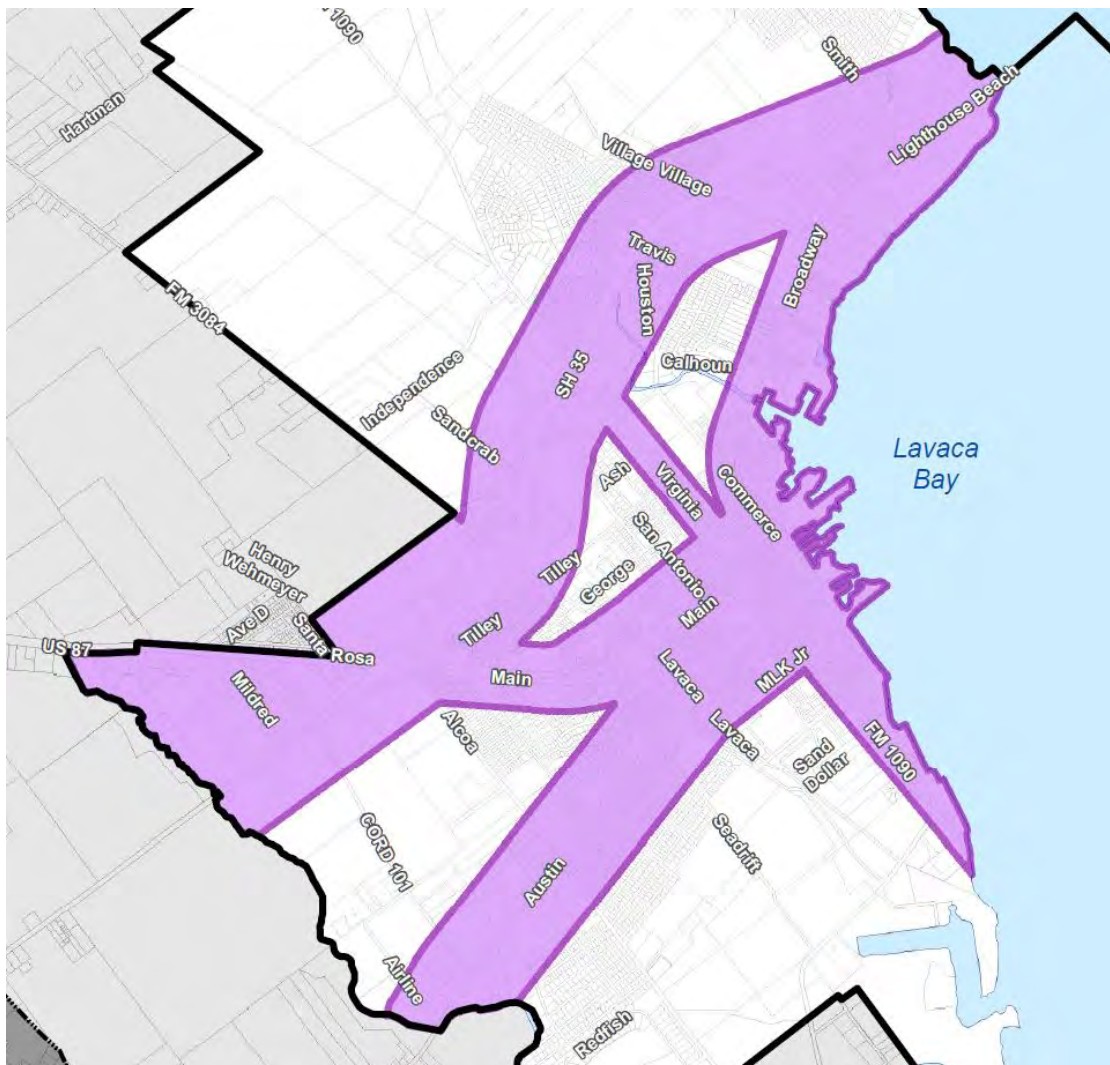


Zoning regulations are accompanied by a zoning map that identifies districts where different standards apply. It is important to note the difference between a zoning map and the Future Land Use Map – a zoning map is an enforceable regulation, while the Future Land Use Map identifies the envision land use of a particular area. However, the Future Land Use Map should closely guide the development of a zoning map.

Zoning may encompass small areas such as street corridors and downtown areas, or include the entire city. One option is to begin with a smaller zoning area as opposed to citywide regulations, however, it is recommended to include the priority area shown in **Figure 17. Suggested Areas for Development Regulations Near-Term Consideration**. This area focuses on the major corridors, entryways into the City, downtown, and the large residential lots to the south. This approach provides an opportunity to implement zoning regulations in a limited area to create a significant impact on the community’s appearance and vitality.

As mentioned in **Chapter 2 | Snapshot**, Waterfront Development Ordinance (WDO) was developed to enact the recommendations of the Waterfront Implementation Plan; however, the WDO was never adopted by City Council. These regulations could be adopted as a standalone ordinance or as part of a future zoning ordinance. The WDO proposes three waterfront zoning districts – residential, commercial, and waterfront business. The City should reconsider adoption of the WDO and develop a corresponding map designating locations for the three zoning districts.

**Figure 17. Suggested Areas for Development Regulations Near-Term Consideration**



Although most cities in Texas have zoning, Houston is commonly noted as the largest city in the U.S. without zoning. However, Houston does utilize deed restrictions to regulate land use and other regulations for setbacks and parking. Because zoning is not universally accepted in the greater Houston region, residents who are not familiar with zoning may be skeptical and hesitant to accept the regulations. Community education about what zoning is and its effects on property owners is important. The process of adopting zoning ordinances should be transparent and include public involvement. Incorporating multiple public meetings to educate residents and property owners about the benefits of zoning will help to resolve issues and answer questions. Information should also be available on the City's website as a way to conduct additional individual research. The following are common misconceptions about zoning:

*Any new zoning regulations would apply to future developments or major expansions within the designated area; existing homes and structures would generally be "grandfathered" and exempt from the new regulations.*

**I'll have to close my business or remodel my house if it doesn't comply with the new code.**

**False.** Zoning does not apply retroactively. Any use or structure that was legal at the time of zoning adoption is considered a "legal nonconforming" use or structure. However, significant future expansions will likely be required to conform to the standards in place at the time.

**Zoning is granted to a specific person or a business entity.**

**False.** Zoning is applied to the property, and it stays with the property until a zoning change is made by the City Council. A piece of property can be conveyed (e.g., sold) to another person regardless of the zoning placed on that property, and the zoning "runs with the land" until such a time that it is changed.

**Only the City Council can decide to change the zoning on a piece of property.**

**True.** An application for a change in zoning can be submitted by any person or entity that owns the property or who has been given the authority to act on behalf of the land owner, but only City Council can officially authorize a change in zoning. A zoning change is formally accomplished when the City Council adopts an ordinance after a public hearing at a City Council meeting.

**Zoning can require additional government "red tape".**

**True.** Zoning requires proper administrative procedures, just like any other ordinance; however, zoning can often be administered by a community's existing staff.

**Only an attorney can prepare a zoning application.**

**False.** In most cities which have zoning, attorneys generally do not prepare the applications for a change in zoning on a property.

**Zoning a piece of property will automatically increase the ad valorem property taxes on that property.**

**False.** Zoning alone would typically not increase the tax on a particular property, nor would it eliminate any agricultural exemption on the property. Ad valorem taxes may increase as the property is improved and increases in appraised value.

## New Parks, Trails, and Amenities

### Future Park Needs

A park system can be measured by its level of service to the community, which is calculated by the number of park acres per 1,000 residents. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has established target ratios for each park type. Park types are classified as follows:

- Mini Parks are the smallest unit of parks and are used to address limited, isolated, or unique recreational needs.
- Neighborhood Parks provide a defining character of individual residential areas. Neighborhood Parks should provide amenities based on adjacent populations and primarily serve the surrounding neighborhood within walking distance.
- Community Parks are the next level of park service and have a much larger service area. Community Parks provide recreation opportunities citywide.
- Regional Parks provide regional significance and attract year-round visitors.

**Table 12. Level of Service and Necessary Acquisitions** examines Port Lavaca’s current level of service for each park type. The *Recommended Acres per 1,000 People* is based on NRPA recommendations. As shown, the current Mini and Neighborhood Park acreage provides an appropriate level of service for the 2014 population, however the current park system does not meet the recommended level of service for Regional Parks. Approximately 71 total acres of parkland should be acquired by 2020 – 1 acre of Mini Parks, 1 acre of Neighborhood Parks, 9 acres of Community Parks, and 60 acres of Regional Parks.

While it may seem unrealistic to attain 71 additional acres of parkland within four years, it is important to keep in mind that nearly every city faces funding challenges for the upkeep of existing parks and development of new parks. By planning ahead, implementing plans for park dedication, and acquiring external funding sources for future parks, it is realistic for the City to meet its target level of service in the coming years. Support from City leadership and coordination with the County is necessary to accomplish continuous improvements and focus on measurable and achievable actions.

**Table 12. Level of Service and Necessary Acquisitions**

Park Type	Existing Acres	NRPA’s Rec. Acres per 1,000 people	Current Acres per 1,000 people*	Recommended Acres per 1,000 people	2020**		2030***	
					Total Acres Needed	Additional Acres Needed	Total Acres Needed	Additional Acres Needed
<i>Mini</i>	3.5	0.25 - 0.5	0.3	0.3	4	1	5	1
<i>Neighborhood</i>	13.0	1 - 2	1.1	1.0	14	1	15	2
<i>Community</i>	80.4	5 - 8	6.5	6.5	90	9	100	20
<i>Regional</i>	22.5	5 - 10	1.8	6.0	83	60	92	70
<b>Total</b>	119.4				190	71	212	93

\*Based on 2014 estimated population of 12,281

\*\*Based on 2020 estimated population of 13,770

\*\*\*Based on 2030 estimated population of 15,391



### *Parks and Trails Master Plan*

It is the community's desire to increase livability through quality of life by promoting improvements to the existing parks and trail system. To effectively accommodate the recommended future acquisition of park lands and facilitate improvements on existing parks the city must develop a Parks Master Plan to guide the future of park development. Building upon the priorities designated by the city, the Parks Master Plan will provide a long-term vision and guidance to make informed policy decisions. The plan identifies community desires for recreational uses and associated park growth areas as well as emphasizing trail recommendations. This document should be used as a planning tool by citizens, elected officials, boards, the City Council, and developers to understand community desires and make certain long-term community success.

Increasing park and trail access will preserve and enhance the values that already make Port Lavaca an attractive community. A comprehensive on- and off-street trail system throughout the community will create better connectivity throughout the City and promote a more physically active lifestyle. The plan should designate locations for future parks using **Figure 18. Existing Park Service Zones Map** to identify underserved parts of the community and identify locations for potential facilities. Special consideration should be made for Regional Parks, which are currently underrepresented in Port Lavaca. Trail planning should align with the proposed sidewalk plan (see page 76) and proposed boardwalk along the shoreline (see page 135) and focus on connecting key destinations, such as the park system. The development of new parks, improvement of existing facilities and the expansion of trail connections will all play a key role in increasing overall quality of life in Port Lavaca.

### *Park, Trail, and Improvements Dedication*

The City should adopt a park, trail, and improvements dedication ordinance to support efforts to expand the existing parks system. This ordinance would require developers to provide a certain amount of parkland and associated improvements to the City based on the size of development. Additionally, developers would be required to construct any trails that are shown on the Master Plan. The City should also offer a fee-in-lieu option, which is a method to fund park enhancements where City Council has the ability to decide whether a financial contribution would be preferred to land dedication. In certain cases, the dedication of open space may not be desirable, or the City does not want the extra maintenance of another park. The fee collected for the development can be used in another area to make a more significant impact. These new regulations could be adopted as a standalone ordinance or incorporated within the subdivision ordinance.

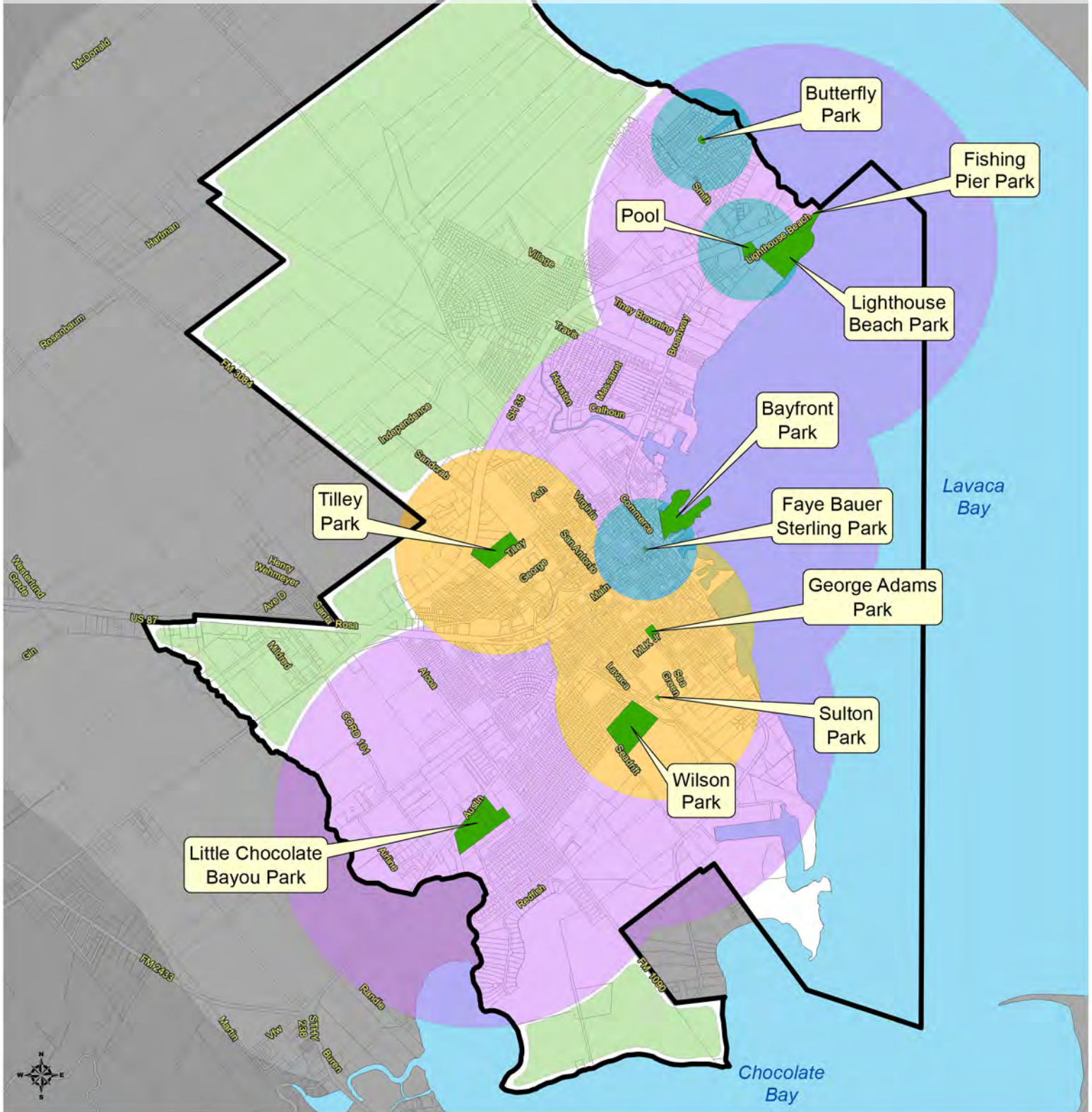
### *New Activity Center*

It is important to ensure the quality of life for residents of all ages. Citizen input recognizes a lack of activities oriented towards teens in the community. A new activity center would create place for youth to gather in a safe environment and participate in after-school activities. Activity centers often provide both indoor and outdoor activities – sports, homework assistance, video games, exercise facilities, and computer access.

A citizen committee can be tasked with the planning and implementation of the new facility. Planning for the facility should include funding opportunities for a new structure or renovations of an existing structure, plans for staffing with volunteers, and activity center amenities. A location near the Middle School or High School would provide easy access for teens and may allow for partnerships with the ISD for the use of sports fields or indoor facility use. Consideration should be made to enter into a public-private partnership with the ISD, YMCA, an existing business, or other nonprofit with existing resources to facilitate youth-oriented programming.



# Figure 18. Existing Park Service Zones Map



- Parks and Open Space
- Mini-Park (1/4 mile service zone)
- Neighborhood Park (1/2 mile service zone)
- Community Park (1 mile service zone)
- Regional Park (Entire City)



## Park Enhancements

Improvements for existing parks should go hand-in-hand with community revitalization efforts of *Plan Port Lavaca*. Existing and future trails will provide access to destination points, greenbelts, and promote natural areas. While expectations have been established, these parks and trails should not be viewed as minimum standards, but rather essential elements to fulfill the community's needs. Port Lavaca has already set aside funding for park enhancements to Wilson Park and Bayfront Park in the Capital Improvement Program. To ensure completion of the current projects and future park enhancement projects, the City should continue to set aside funds in the annual budget. To efficiently administer the funds, plans should detail when each park will receive improvements based on a schedule. In addition to City funds, park dedications and improvement fees from developers can assist in funding improvements as well as providing additional park spaces.

The existing park system could be enhanced through increased visibility and marketing. When residents are more knowledgeable about the park system, they are more likely to utilize the resources available to them. Marketing by the City, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, should be established to encourage recreational activities in City parks. Information about where parks and trails are located, what amenities are available in each park, and a schedule of upcoming and on-going park programs should be available on the City's website. Informational signage at the parks also increases knowledge about what amenities are available and directional signage located on the major roadways assists resident and visitors with navigating to the parks. When possible, parks should engage visitors with educational components. Historical markers, nature facts, and interactive activities are passive installations that help increase involvement.

Programming at the different parks could include activities for children, older adults, or the whole family. Organized events at City parks encourages recreational activities, and community involvement. Holiday activities, special competitions, and festival utilize park facilities. Additional amenities such as food trucks should be a consideration to increase utilization.



## Summary of Land Use and Recreation Action Items

Goals	Promoting Quality of Life	Protecting Investments	Supporting Economic Development
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connected neighborhoods for pedestrians and vehicles</li> <li>2. Housing choices for young professionals and seniors</li> <li>3. Recreation opportunities for youth, adults, and visitors</li> <li>4. Adequate infrastructure to support future development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Compatible uses to reduce conflict</li> <li>6. Beautiful community</li> <li>7. Resilient waterfront that serves as an asset</li> <li>8. Community empowerment to encourage ownership, pride, and involvement</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Destination to attract visitors</li> <li>10. Employment and entertainment opportunities</li> <li>11. Exciting waterfront amenities that generate activity and income</li> <li>12. Active and unique downtown</li> </ol>

Recommendations	Future Land Use Planning <small>Page 56</small>		
		Continue to use the Future Land Use Map when making development and infrastructure decisions. Ensure that the map is reviewed by the Planning Commission annually.	●
		Determine what type of development regulations should be adopted by the City (e.g., zoning, aesthetics, historic character).	●
		Define the area to be included in the regulations – citywide, downtown, along corridors, or the priority area in <b>Figure 17</b> (page 60).	●
		Use the Future Land Use map to develop a zoning map to be adopted by City Council.	●
		Adopt the Waterfront Development Ordinance to work toward the vision of the Waterfront Implementation Plan.	●
		Provide an informational page on the City's website to explain the purpose and impacts of zoning.	●
		Plan and budget to acquire future parkland as the population increases. Park locations should consider the underserved zones identified in <b>Table 12</b> (page 62).	●
		Develop a detailed parks and trails master plan to ensure that recreation amenities grow with the future population.	●
		Adopt a parkland and trail dedication ordinance that requires land dedication (or fee-in-lieu) for parks and improvements. The ordinance should also require developers to dedicate and construct trails in accordance with the trails master plan.	●
		Identify a location for a teen activity center that is convenient to Travis Middle School and Calhoun High School. Consider a public-private partnership to share space with an existing facility/business. Appoint citizen volunteers to staff the teen activity center and to research grant/funding opportunities for the center.	●

<b>Park Enhancements</b> <small>Page 65</small>	Allocate budget each year to replace aging playground equipment and install new types of facilities, which could be supplemented by park dedication improvement fees.	●
	Improve Lighthouse Beach by increasing signage at SH 35 and Broadway Street, encouraging food trucks to be present on a regular schedule, and considering implementing zoning regulations.	●
	Complete the planned improvements at Wilson Park and Bayfront Park.	●
	Develop recreational marketing materials that the City and Chamber of Commerce could distribute to residents and visitors to increase awareness and use of the City's existing recreation amenities.	●

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# Chapter 5 | Transportation and Circulation

## Issues and Existing Conditions

The thoroughfare system forms one of the most visible and permanent elements of the community. It establishes the framework for community growth and development and, along with the Future Land Use Plan, forms a long-range statement of public policy. Therefore, an important part of *Plan Port Lavaca* will be to examine the relationship between the Future Land Use Plan and the existing thoroughfare system. The purpose of this section is to provide a transportation framework, which will serve as a guide for future mobility decisions within Port Lavaca.

### Top Issues Related to Transportation and Circulation:

- Limited sidewalks
- Lack of public transit
- Inadequate landscaping and maintenance

## Current Transportation Network

The transportation network in Port Lavaca is generally at a 45-degree angle with a grid system of collector and local streets connected by two main highways. Due to the angled grid system, there are very few roads that truly run north to the south. Generally, the transportation network is developed in the central and southern portions of the City, while the northern portion has yet to be developed. The strategies and recommendations outlined in this chapter will guide the development of the future roadways in Port Lavaca.

### Highways

**US Highway 87** extends from Montana to Texas, terminating at Broadway Street in Port Lavaca. US 87, known as Main Street in Port Lavaca, runs east-west through the City alongside the railroad tracks.

**SH 35** runs southwest-northeast through the middle of the City. To the west, SH 35 extends across Lavaca Bay (called the Lavaca Bay Causeway) and to the east it connects to Corpus Christi. In the city limits, most of SH 35 is a two-lane divided roadway. A majority of the City's commercial and retail development is located along this roadway.



### Major Corridors

**Broadway Street** generally runs north-south to provide a connection between Main Street and SH 35. Just north of Main Street, Broadway Street turns into Commerce Street. Broadway Street ends to the north at Lavaca Bay.

**W. Austin Street/Highway 238** runs southwest to northeast south of Main Street. To the east, Austin Street ends at Commerce Street and to the west Austin Street turns into Highway 238.

**Virginia Street** runs through the center of the City as a north-south connection at a 45-degree angle. This roadway intersects with SH 35, Main Street, and Austin Street. Near the southern city limits, Virginia Street loops back to the north and turns into Alcoa Drive.

**Alcoa Drive** generally runs north-south and provides a connection from Virginia Street to Main Street. This roadway intersects with Austin Street/Highway 238.

### Major Traffic Generators

Development along Highway 87/Main Street and SH 35 generates a large amount of traffic for Port Lavaca. In addition to these corridors, there are several other specific traffic generators around the City:

- Calhoun Plaza shopping center
- Lighthouse Beach
- Calhoun County ISD Schools
- Memorial Medical Center
- Calhoun County Offices

## Recent Accident History

The following locations have been identified by the City of Port Lavaca Police Department as the sites of accidents on major corridors that were reported in 2015:

- 10 Accidents – W. Austin Street/Highway 238 runs southwest to northeast south of Main Street. To the east, Austin Street ends at Commerce Street and to the west Austin Street turns into Highway 238.
- 6 Accidents – Virginia Street runs through the center of the City as a north-south connection at a 45-degree angle. This roadway intersects with SH 35, Main Street, and Austin Street. Near the southern city limits, Virginia Street loops back to the north and turns into Alcoa Drive.
- 4 Accidents – Broadway Street generally runs north-south to provide a connection between Main Street and SH 35. Just north of Main Street, Broadway Street turns into Commerce Street. Broadway Street ends to the north at Lavaca Bay.
- 4 Accidents – Alcoa Drive generally runs north-south and provides a connection from Virginia Street to Main Street. This roadway intersects with Austin Street/Highway 238.



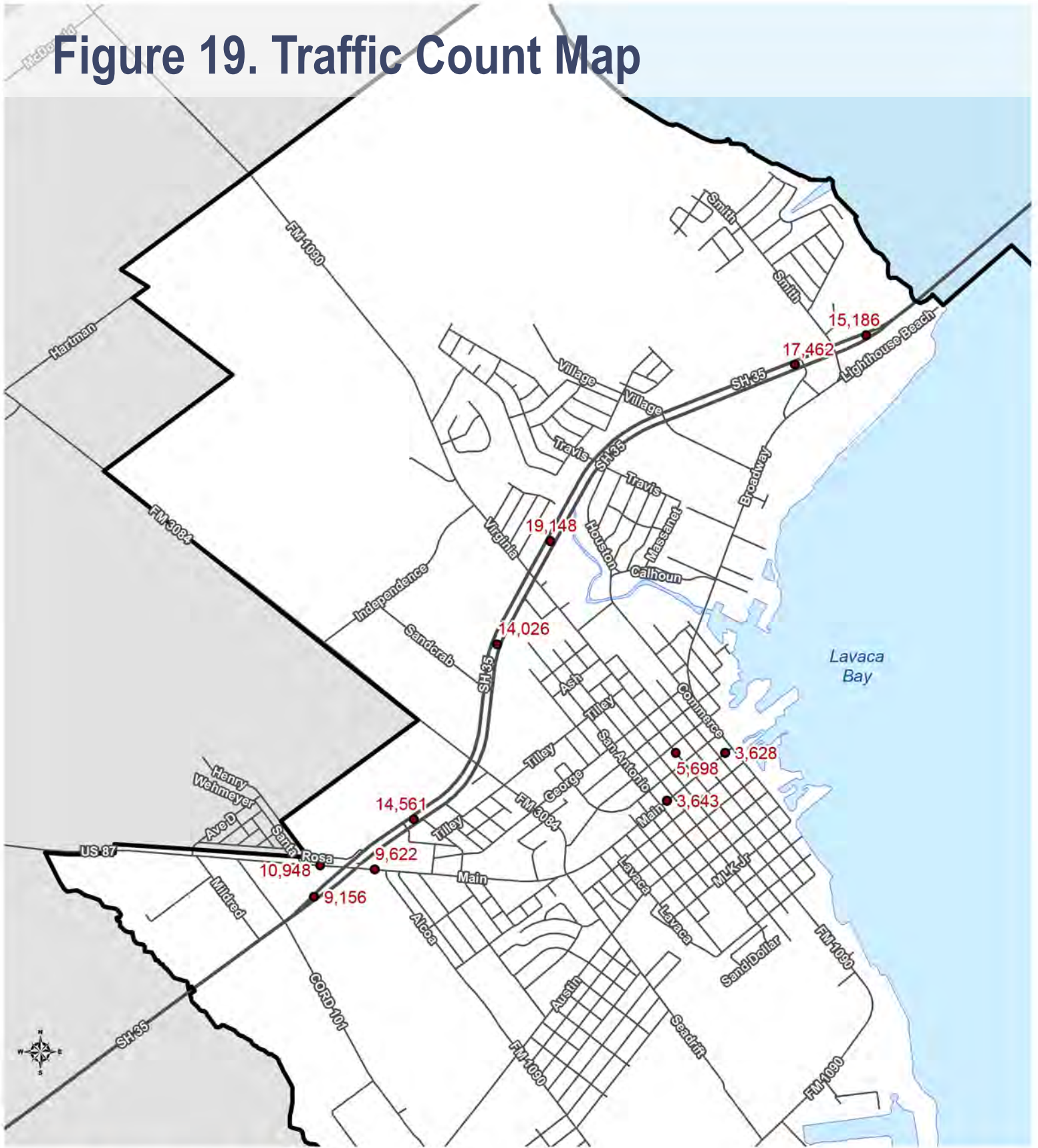
## Traffic Counts

The majority of traffic is along SH 35, with the most being at the center of the City near the intersection of Virginia Street and SH 35. The next highest traffic counts are to the west, before the Causeway. **Figure 19** shows the existing traffic counts that were collected by Catalyst for the Port Lavaca Merchandising Plan in 2011.

## Existing Traffic Signal Locations

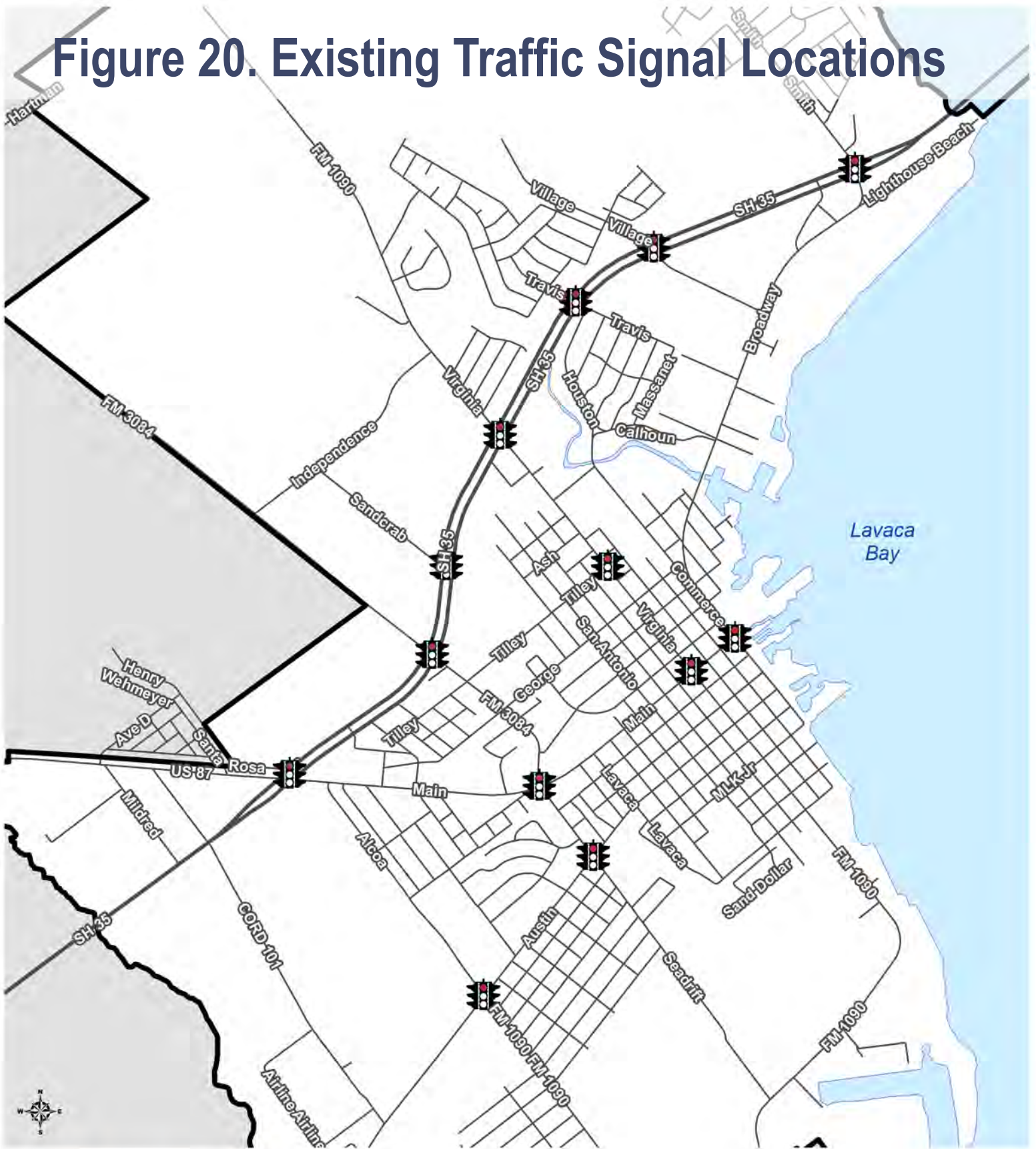
**Figure 20** shows the existing traffic signal locations in Port Lavaca. These traffic signals are in the areas with the most traffic and provide intersection safety for vehicles and pedestrians. As the City grows, more traffic signals may be needed.

# Figure 19. Traffic Count Map

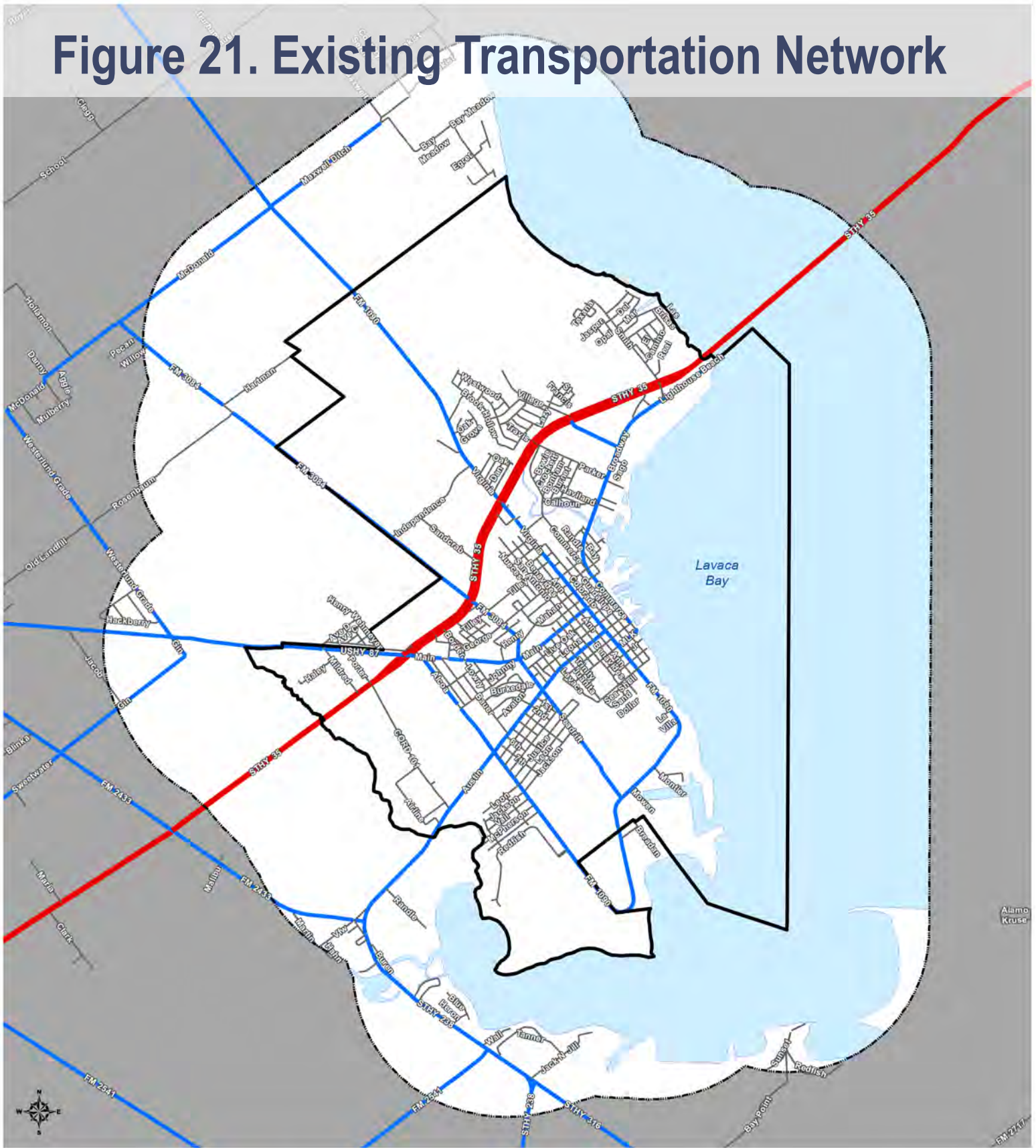




# Figure 20. Existing Traffic Signal Locations



# Figure 21. Existing Transportation Network



-  Major Arterial
-  Minor Arterial
-  Collector
-  Port Lavaca City Limits
-  Port Lavaca ETJ
-  Lavaca Bay



## Recommendations

The following sections outline recommendations related to the following topics:

- Roadway Network
- Alternative Transportation
- Corridor Enhancements
- Access Management

## Roadway Network

### Key Corridors

Future transportation efforts should be focused on the following key corridors:

- SH 35
- U.S. Highway 87/Main Street
- Broadway Street
- Virginia Street

### Future Roadways

Port Lavaca's existing roadway is generally sufficient to accommodate the existing level of development; however, extensions of Smith Road and Village Road to FM 1090 are desirable to facilitate future growth in the northern areas of the City near the bay.

Figure 22. Proposed Extensions of Smith Road and Village Road



## Alternative Transportation

### Sidewalk Plan

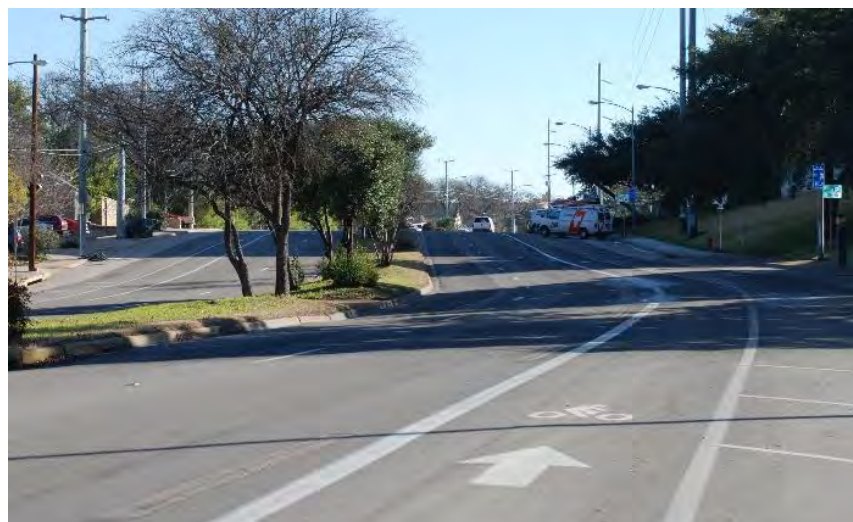
On-street trails are synonymous with “sidewalks”, and can be integrated along roads in a variety of ways. This would be an effective way to encourage non-vehicular mobility and promote a healthy lifestyle. Sidewalks do not need to be in all areas of the City, but rather in areas with heavy pedestrian traffic. School sites and parks are examples of prime locations for sidewalks. Sidewalks in business areas are typically six feet wide. In neighborhoods, the sidewalks can be four to five feet wide. Additionally, the City should require that all new developments install sidewalks. To ensure pedestrian safety and connectivity in Port Lavaca, a sidewalk plan with identified priority areas should be developed for the City’s CIP. Identifying these priority areas for the CIP will allow the City to add sidewalks to areas that are lacking efficient pedestrian mobility. The plan should include an inventory of existing sidewalks and document the current conditions. It should also identify priority areas for sidewalks by evaluating popular routes, missing connections, density, funding opportunities, and safety concerns.



As an additional component of the sidewalk plan, key locations for pedestrian upgrades should be identified. These pedestrian upgrades should promote safety – like enhance crosswalks, lighting, and signage. Suggested target areas include, park access points, school routes, and the roadways shown in **Figure 23** (page 80) that are recommended to become Complete Streets. The City should continue to pursue grant funding, such as the Safe Routes to Schools program.

### Bike Lanes

Improvements related to bicycling should be centered on the connectivity between on-street facilities and the City’s off-street trail system. The connections to the trail system should be along roadways that also connect destination points in Port Lavaca – such as schools, parks, shopping, and other public facilities. Bike lanes can be easily implemented within existing roadways by restriping existing traffic lanes, which in some cases may result in the narrowing of traffic lanes, allowing for a wider outside lane for cyclists and striping some outside lanes as bicycle lanes or buffered bike lanes. Traditional bike lanes of five and six feet in width are better applied to roadways with speed limits less than 35 mph. For roadways with greater than 35 mph, adding a striped buffer space separating the bicycle lane from the adjacent motor vehicle travel lane is preferred for safety. The City should revise the existing roadway cross-sections to include alternatives for the inclusion of on- or off-street bike lanes on future roadways.





### Shuttle Service

Another issue that was identified is the need for community transportation services. A shuttle bus service would allow residents to travel around the City to places like restaurants, grocery shopping, and medical appointments without the stress of driving an automobile. Port Lavaca is currently served by R-Transit, which is operated by the Calhoun County Senior Citizens Association and provides curb-to-curb demand response services. The shuttle bus services are available to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and the general public. Even though the shuttle is available to anyone in the service area, the schedules of rides are still limited due to the number of vehicles and personnel. The shuttle has fares ranging from \$0.50 to \$5.00, with different rates for youth, adults, and those who are elderly or disabled depending on the mileage of the ride.



The City should conduct a community-wide survey, review the ridership records from the R-Transit service, and/or conduct a feasibility analysis to assess additional demand for local transit. If the studies warrant the need for additional demand, the City should partner with R-Transit to expand the services offered to Port Lavaca residents by offering subsidies to increase the ridership and meet the needs of more residents. To ensure that the shuttle system best serves residents, public meetings should be held to allow the public to participate in identifying additional route(s) for the shuttle service. It is important to make sure that the City helps promote R-Transit to make sure that all residents are aware of this existing alternative transportation option.



## Corridor Enhancements

SH 35, U.S. Route 87, and Broadway Street are the three most visible roadways in Port Lavaca and should be given high priority in terms of roadway improvements and development standards, as indicated in **Figure 17** on page 60. It is important to note that SH 35 and U.S. Route 87 are State-maintained roadways, which limits the City's abilities to control the roadways; however, the City can focus efforts on the corridor areas surrounding the roadways.

### Key Corridors

#### SH 35

SH 35 is a major arterial providing the only access route across Lavaca Bay to the north. The highway also creates convenient access to U.S. Route 87 to the south. According to a 2014 report by the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), the annual Daily Traffic (ADT) ranges between 12,000 and 13,400 cars a day. As a highly visible corridor through the City, development in this area should be of high priority. Any future development codes in the area should emphasize enhanced aesthetics, more landscaping for new development, and special highway oriented signage requirements. Uses along the highway should favor chain restaurants and commercial development, while restricting residential uses. Gateway zoning designations should be implemented at the intersection of Broadway Street and SH 35; and at the intersection of U.S. Route 87 and SH 35. Locations with a gateway designation should have specific design guidelines within the zoning ordinance or separate ordinance.

#### U.S. Route 87

U.S. Route 87, also known as Main Street in the downtown area as it approaches Broadway Street at the Bay, is a major access route from the west. This roadway was constructed along the Union Pacific Railway, resulting in primarily industrial development toward the west; this is in contrast to the more commercial and residential uses located in the city center. As this area develops, the City should design development codes that ensure compatibility among uses in the corridor and design standards to address screening and buffering between industrial uses and adjacent properties. Properties in the corridor should transition from intense industrial uses on the west end to basic commercial approaching the gateway at SH 35 to the east. In the downtown area, U.S. Route 87 becomes a low intensity commercial shopping area with walkable streets and water front views.

#### Broadway Street

Broadway Street runs north-south along Lavaca Bay. Properties in this area have major potential for development due to great accessibility to the highway and close proximity to the water front. The roadway also creates a connection between Bayfront Park and Lighthouse Beach. A tax increment refinancing zone (TIRZ) encompassing both the downtown area and properties along Broadway Street would help further reinvestment in the area by providing an incentive for the development of vacant lots. This roadway is not located in the 100-year floodplain, however properties located on the east side of the road along the water front have the potential to flood. Development codes should be implemented with design restrictions to accommodate flood resistant construction and aesthetically-pleasing design.

#### Austin Street

Austin Street, also known as SH 238, runs northeast-southwest through Port Lavaca, extending south along Chocolate Bay. This corridor should also utilize development regulations to ensure desirable development, specifically focusing on ensuring compatible development with the existing residential neighborhoods.

## Complete Streets

Complete Streets is an initiative that aims to maximize the utilization of public rights-of-way for all transportation users, regardless of age or ability. Complete Streets is not about special projects, but about changing the approach to projects on all streets. It is an incremental approach aimed for long-term results. These policies utilize the entire right-of-way while focusing on safety, comfort, and convenience as well as cohesiveness with the context of the community. Complete Streets make it easier to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work which in turn makes the City a better place to live.

Complete Streets improve safety, provide choices, reduce costs, and lead to better health and stronger economies. By considering the many different users of the roadway, streets can be designed to accommodate everyone and improve the livability of the community. Additionally, Complete Streets provide the following benefits:

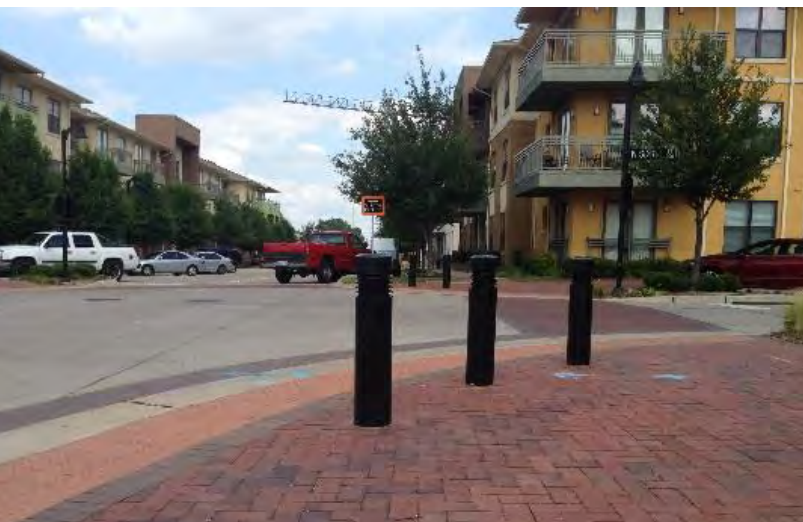
**Improve Safety** – Reduced travel speed which lowers risk to pedestrians and cyclists as well as include pedestrian infrastructure such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, crossings, median islands, and curb extensions.

**Provide Choices** – By building safe, comfortable, and convenient infrastructure for other modes of transportation, residents are more willing to use them.

**Reduced Costs** – By reevaluating the needs of the residents and incorporating community input at the beginning of the project, the schedule, scope, and budget can often be reduced. Narrowing the pavement area will also reduce costs.

**Better Health** – With an aging population, older adults look to be more active. This demographic, along with kids and teens who cannot drive, look for pedestrian and bicycle facilities to become more active and independent.

**Stronger Economies** – Areas that provide safe and comfortable walkability have lower commercial vacancies and higher home and office space values.



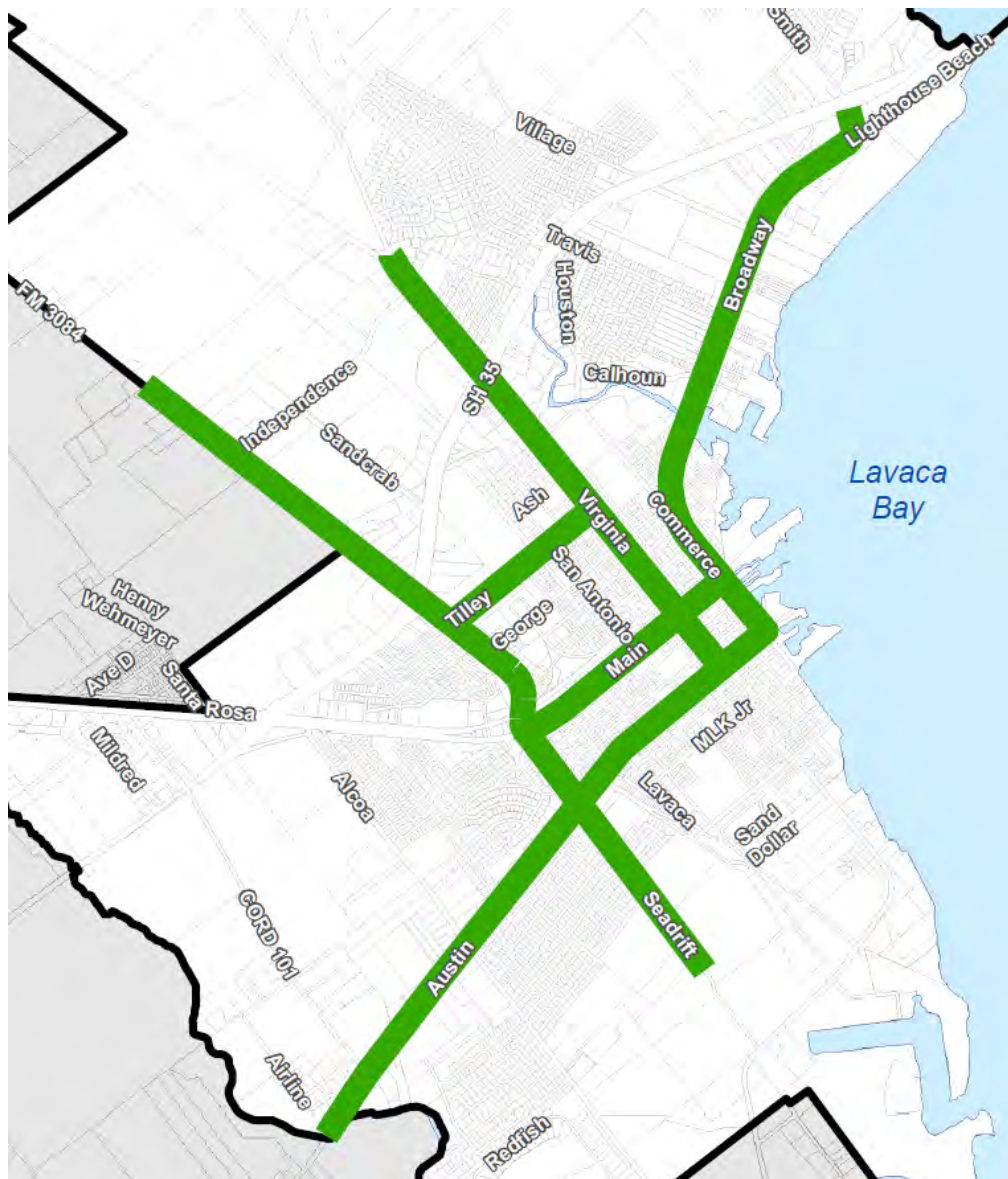


While retrofitting existing streets may be cost-prohibitive, some streets could be converted to a Complete Street with minor improvements like striping for bike lanes/sharrows or adding sidewalks additional right-of-way is available. The construction and repair of sidewalks should be prioritized in the Capital Improvement Plan in the future. Improvements to these corridors act as a catalyst for better development in other areas. The roadways shown in **Figure 23** should be the focus for adding Complete Street elements. In addition to the Complete Street practices discussed in this section, the roadways in the priority area should also have extra development standards to enhance the design, safety, and overall quality of the corridor.

### Areas for Complete Streets

**Figure 23** identifies roadways in Port Lavaca that would be most suited for Complete Streets. While the recommendations in this section may be applied city-wide, the efforts should be focused on these roadways due to traffic volumes, visibility to visitors, location of existing businesses, inclusion of downtown, inclusion of the waterfront, development density, and concentrating expenditures in the City's core.

Figure 23. Potential Roadways for Complete Streets





### *Gateway Features*

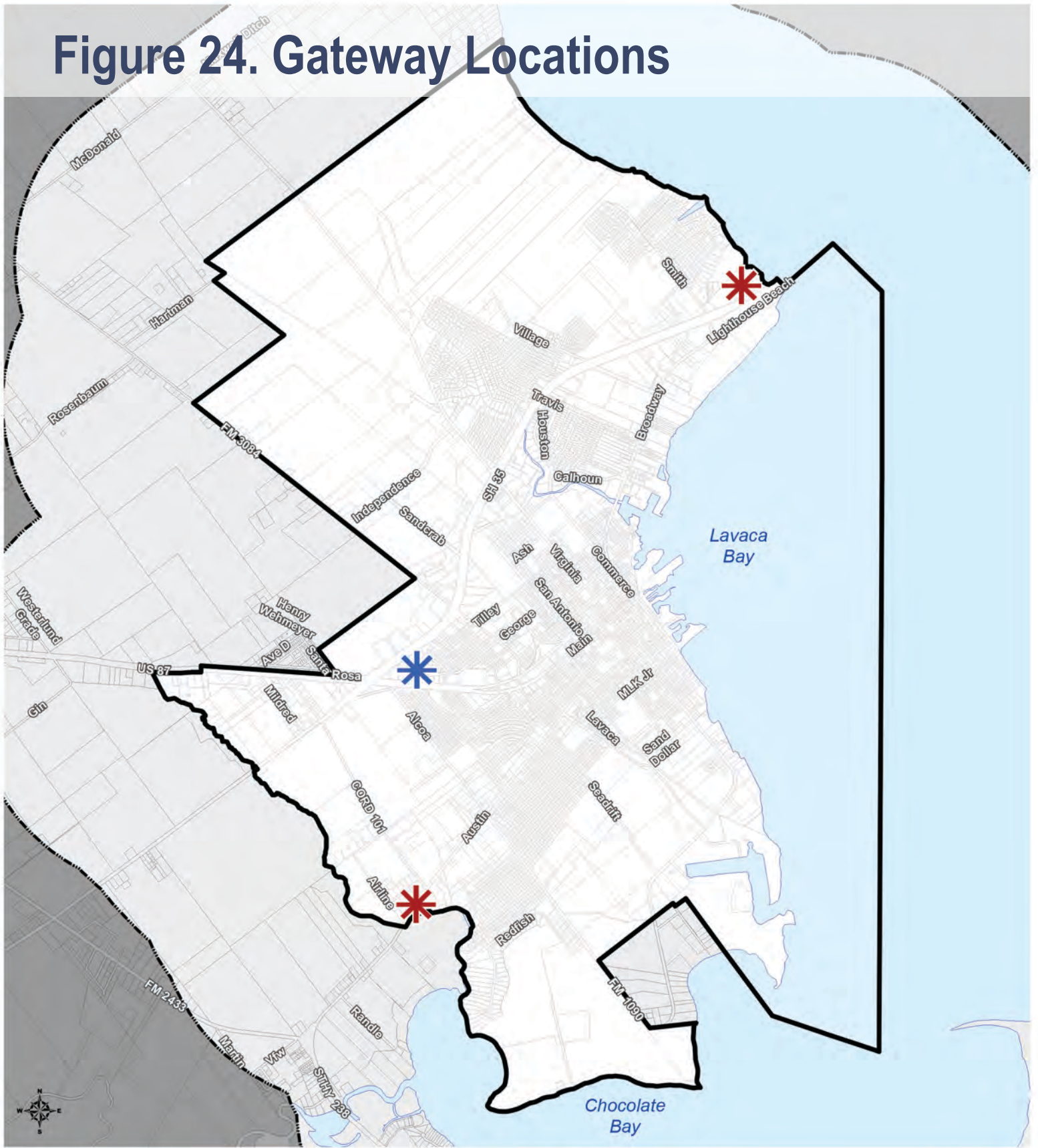
Gateways can provide a strong sense of arrival to and from the community. These features are the first impressions for visitors as they arrive in the City. The City currently has a gateway sign at the highly-visible intersection of SH 35 and U.S. 87.



Based on traffic volume and visibility, the best location for a second gateway is on SH 35 near the Causeway. The addition of this gateway will give Port Lavaca two branded and distinct entry points to the City – one in the east and one in the west. A third gateway should be planned on the south side of Austin Street near the western city limit boundary.

The design of gateway elements should build upon Port Lavaca's waterfront character. Materials for consideration should include brick, stone, glass, wood, and potential accents of metal. The signs or elements should be significant in size to be noticeable from the roadways.



# Figure 24. Gateway Locations



-  Existing Gateway
-  Proposed Gateway



## Landscaping

Quality landscaping can enhance the aesthetic quality of corridors as well as help improve Port Lavaca's overall image. Enhanced landscaping in the priority area roadways shown in **Figure 17** (page 60) should be encouraged. This effort would require coordination with TXDOT along US 87 and SH 35; however, the City currently maintains the median landscaping along SH 35.

One way to encourage maintenance and beautification for these corridors is to establish an adopt-a-highway program where local business and organizations can volunteer time to clean up the litter along the highways. In addition to cleaning up any litter, the volunteers can also assist with maintaining the landscaping. This program is cost-effective for the City and also allows the community to take ownership of the City's beautification.

The City should evaluate standards and practices for plantings and maintenance on private property. The City does not currently regulate landscaping. The City should adopt landscaping regulations (either as part of zoning or a standalone ordinance) for nonresidential and multiple family developments, particularly within the priority area. City Staff should develop and maintain a list of approved plant species that are appropriate for the region and drought-tolerant. A larger amount of required landscaping and buffering should be provided for larger roadways.



## Access Management

Access management refers to the practice of coordinating access connection points onto a roadway by considering specific design criteria for the location, spacing, design and operation of driveways, median openings, and intersections. The flow of traffic is disrupted by vehicles frequently slowing to turn into a particular development. Access management seeks to improve traffic safety and movement by reducing the number of access points and requiring internal connections between businesses. Roadways that are intended to provide mobility, such as major thoroughfares, should not be compromised by an abundance of separate access points for land uses. Collector roadways are intended to provide both mobility and access, but the former is much more effective if the latter is controlled.

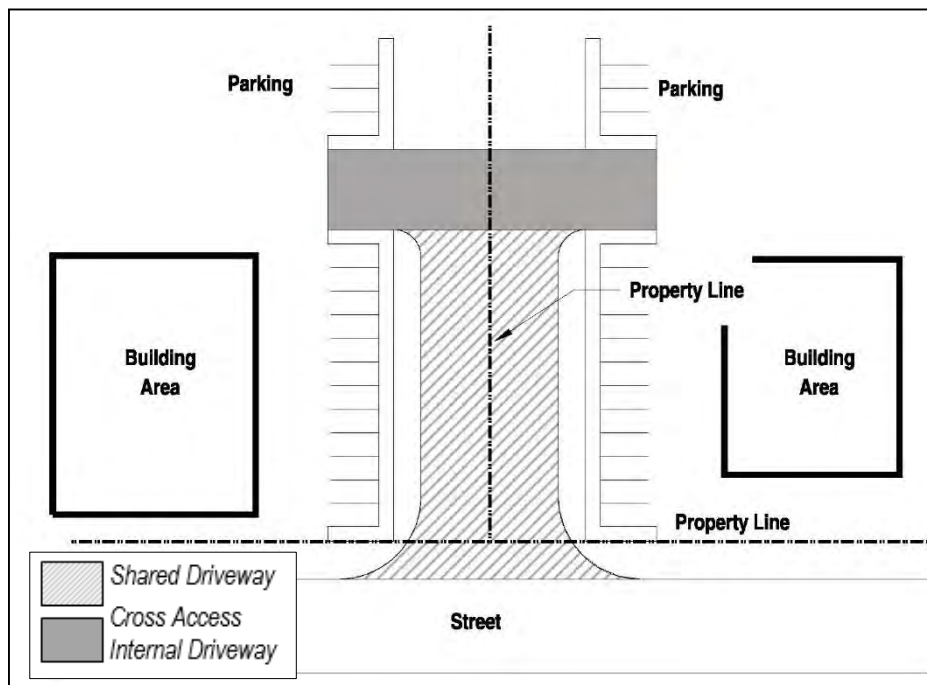
The City should consider potential benefits of requiring new nonresidential developments along major thoroughfares and collector roadways to establish shared access driveways.

- New nonresidential developments should be required to share the driveway of the adjacent development, if possible (i.e., if the driveway is positioned near the lot line/setback line of the lot that is being developed).
- New nonresidential developments should be required to make provision for sharing their driveway with the adjacent development in the future, if the adjacent lot is not yet developed.
- New nonresidential developments that require more than one driveway by current regulations should construct that driveway at least one driveway such that it is or can be shared.

Additionally, the City should require new nonresidential developments along major thoroughfares and collector roadways to establish cross access with adjacent developments.










- New developments should be required to provide access to adjacent development through an internal driveway.
- If adjacent development has not yet occurred, provision for future cross access should be made.

**Figure 25. Example of Cross and Shared Access**





## Summary of Transportation and Circulation Action Items

Goals	Promoting Quality of Life	Protecting Investments	Supporting Economic Development
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connected neighborhoods for pedestrians and vehicles</li> <li>2. Housing choices for young professionals and seniors</li> <li>3. Recreation opportunities for youth, adults, and visitors</li> <li>4. Adequate infrastructure to support future development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Compatible uses to reduce conflict</li> <li>6. Beautiful community</li> <li>7. Resilient waterfront that serves as an asset</li> <li>8. Community empowerment to encourage ownership, pride, and involvement</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Destination to attract visitors</li> <li>10. Employment and entertainment opportunities</li> <li>11. Exciting waterfront amenities that generate activity and income</li> <li>12. Active and unique downtown</li> </ol>
Recommendations	<b>Roadway Network</b> <small>Page 75</small>	Plan for extensions of Smith Road and Village Road.	
		Focus corridor beautification efforts along the key corridors of SH 35, US 87, and Broadway.	
	<b>Alternative Transportation</b> <small>Page 76</small>	Develop a citywide sidewalk plan. Conduct an inventory of existing sidewalks and document current conditions. Identify priority areas for sidewalks by evaluating popular routes, missing connections, density, funding opportunities, and safety concerns.	
		Evaluate the current traffic volumes, roadway and right-of-way width, ownership patterns, roadway conditions, and adjacent destination points along Virginia Street and Half League Road to determine appropriateness for Complete Streets retrofitting.	
		Allocate CIP budget regularly for retrofitting areas with sidewalks.	
		As a component of the recommended sidewalk plan, identify key locations for pedestrian upgrades. Suggested target areas include the SH 35, US 87, and Broadway priority area, park access points, and school routes. Continue to pursue grant funding, such as the Safe Routes to Schools program.	
		Revise the existing roadway cross-sections to include alternatives for the inclusion of on- or off-street bike lanes on future roadways.	
		Conduct a community-wide survey, review the ridership records from the R-Transit service, and/or conduct a feasibility analysis to assess additional demand for local transit. If local demand warrants additional service, consider an agreement with R-Transit to increase services to accommodate the need. Confirm that residents are familiar with the existing R-Transit service. Any regular routing service should include access to the waterfront and the Greyhound station along SH 35.	
Require 5' sidewalks along at least one side of the roadway in all new residential developments.			

<b>Corridor Enhancements</b> <i>Page 78</i>	Develop landscaping regulations for nonresidential and multiple family developments, particularly within the priority area. Develop and maintain a list of approved plant species that are appropriate for the region and drought-tolerant.	●
	Establish an adopt-a-highway program to help maintain the medians and roadways, especially in the priority area.	●
	Continue to build welcoming entryway features and update the existing entry signage along US 87 in the eastern part of the City and on SH 35 near the Causeway. The signage should build upon Port Lavaca's waterfront character.	●
<b>Access Management</b> <i>Page 84</i>	Establish a minimum distance between median cuts (e.g., "at least 500 feet between median openings").	●
	Require new nonresidential developments along major thoroughfares and collector roadways to provide cross-access to adjacent developments to reduce the number of curb-cuts.	●

# Chapter 6 | Infrastructure

## Issues and Existing Conditions

Planning for and providing infrastructure is perhaps one of the most important responsibilities of a municipality. Citizens need to be secure in the knowledge that they can rely on their local government to ensure an adequate and safe water supply and wastewater capacity for current populations and that proper plans are developed to provide for future growth. Additionally, citizens look to the City to regulate growth to protect citizens from flooding.

There are numerous detailed technical studies that can be used to analyze these current and future needs for the City. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to determine whether the City has made or plans on undertaking these types of efforts. This assessment is intended to provide a broad overview of Port Lavaca's infrastructure system and capacity and assess the system's ability to reliably serve current and future populations. The Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority provides water treatment and the City provides water distribution, wastewater collection and treatment and stormwater collection.

### Top Issues Related to Infrastructure:

- Lack of water and wastewater master plans
- Deteriorating cast iron and asbestos cement water pipelines
- Infiltration and inflow into wastewater pipelines
- Lack of control over City's water distribution system
- Inadequate lift stations result in overflows during heavy rain events





## Water System

The current water supply is provided by the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA), which diverts water from the Guadalupe River near Tivoli by GBRA's Calhoun Canal System. The raw water intake structure is located on GBRA's Calhoun Canal System. A 44.0 MG raw water reservoir is onsite. GBRA constructed the 4.0 MGD Port Lavaca Surface Water Treatment Plant in 1970. It was expanded in 1993 to a peak treatment capacity of 6.0 MGD. The plant has the capacity to be upgraded to a 9.0 MGD plant.

The City of Port Lavaca has secured a treated water supply contract with GBRA for a firm supply of 3.2 MGD. The City is currently negotiating a new contract with GBRA.

The City operates on a single pressure plane with two 0.5 MG elevated storage tanks. GBRA reserves capacity in their ground storage tank to meet the City's TCEQ storage requirements. The City's distribution system has nine metered interconnects used by GBRA to pass water through the City to rural water customers.

The Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ) requires 200 gallons per connection of storage of which 100 gallons must be elevated storage. The City currently has 1.0 million gallons elevated storage capacity and GBRA reserves capacity in their ground storage tank. Since the limiting factor in this case is the elevated storage capacity, based on the current elevated capacity of 1.0 MG, the number of connections that would be allowed by TCEQ is 5,000. The City currently has 4,300 connections.





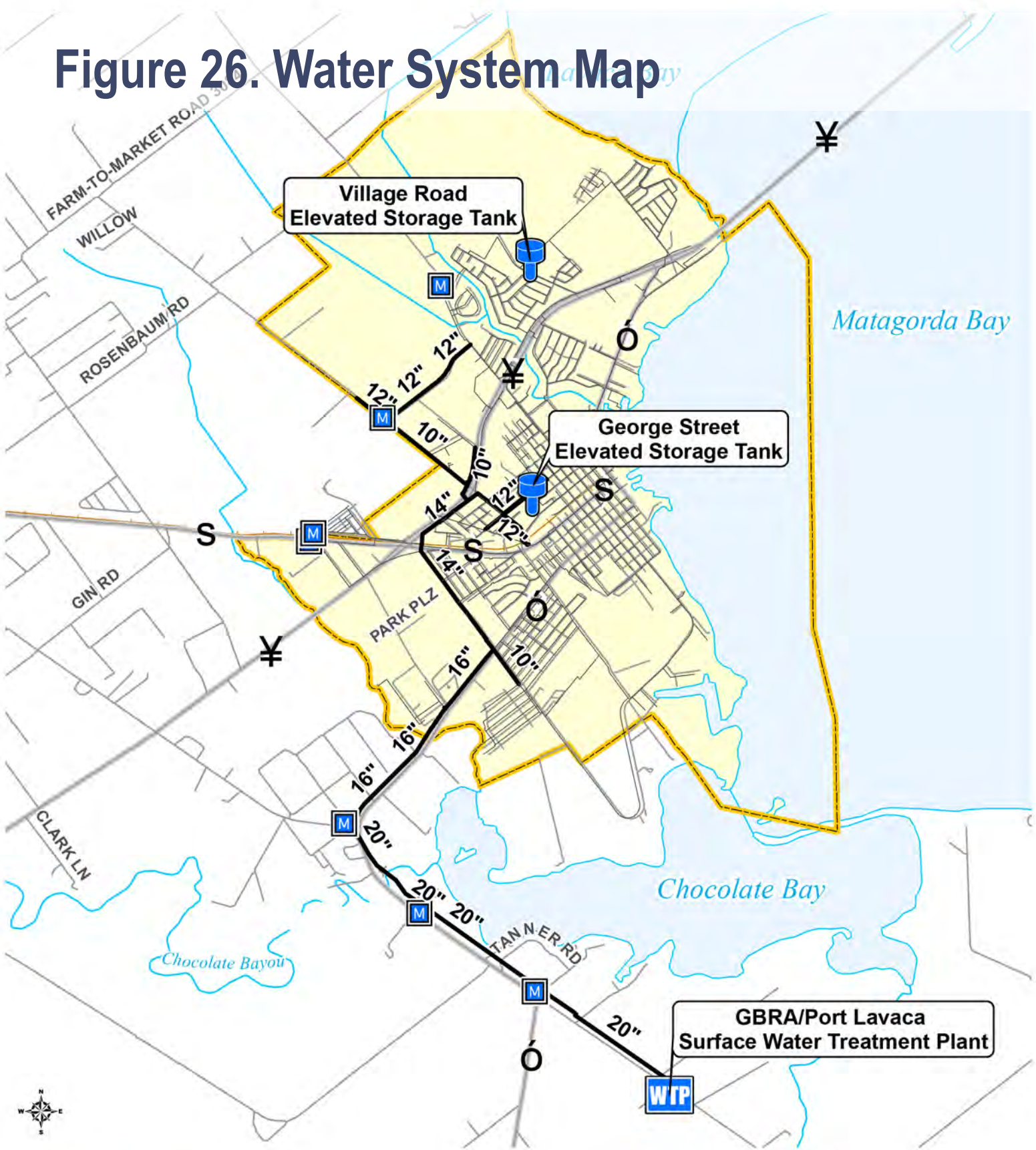
The City does not operate any pumping facilities but relies on GBRA to fill their elevated tanks using their high service pumps. GBRA has 5.0 MGD pumping capacity and experienced a maximum daily demand of approximately 3.6 MG in 2011.






The City owns and maintains 65 miles of water lines. During the drought of 2011, they experienced 600 main breaks, primarily on cast iron and asbestos cement pipes. In addition, the cast iron lines contribute to brown water issues for residents. As a result, the City has a five-year plan to replace or rehab the cast iron pipes using pipe bursting and cured in place techniques.

The City is in the process of GPS locating and converting all meters to Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters. The City does not anticipate much extension to the distribution system except in areas where developers would design and install required infrastructure.



# Figure 26. Water System Map



-  GBRA Meter
-  Elevated Storage Tank
-  Water Treatment Plant
-  8" and Smaller Water Line
-  10" and Larger Water Line



## Wastewater System

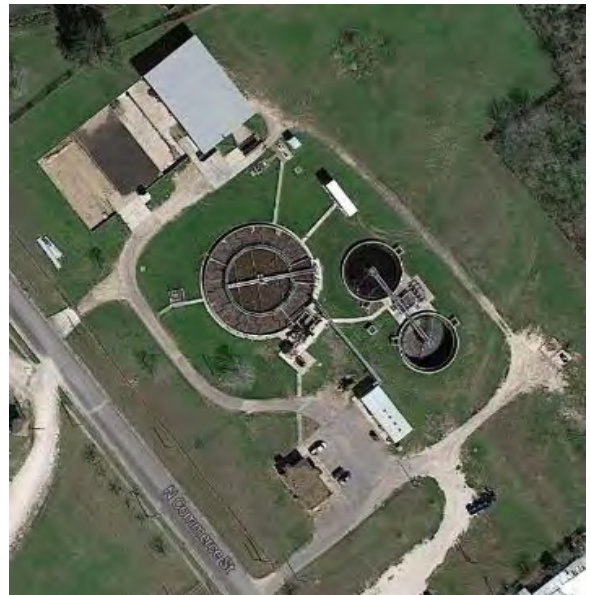
The City of Port Lavaca is currently served by the Lynn Bayou Wastewater Treatment Plant located at 800 N. Commerce St. in Port Lavaca. The treatment plant has a permitted average day capacity of 2.0 MGD under Permit WQ0010251001. The average daily flow is approximately 1.3 MGD. The plant discharges to Lynn Bayou.

The City has approximately 3,840 connections to the wastewater system and maintains a network of 40 miles of wastewater collection lines.

Due to the terrain within the City, lift stations are required. The City currently owns and operates 18 lift stations. These lift stations are connected to a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, which monitors the system electronically.

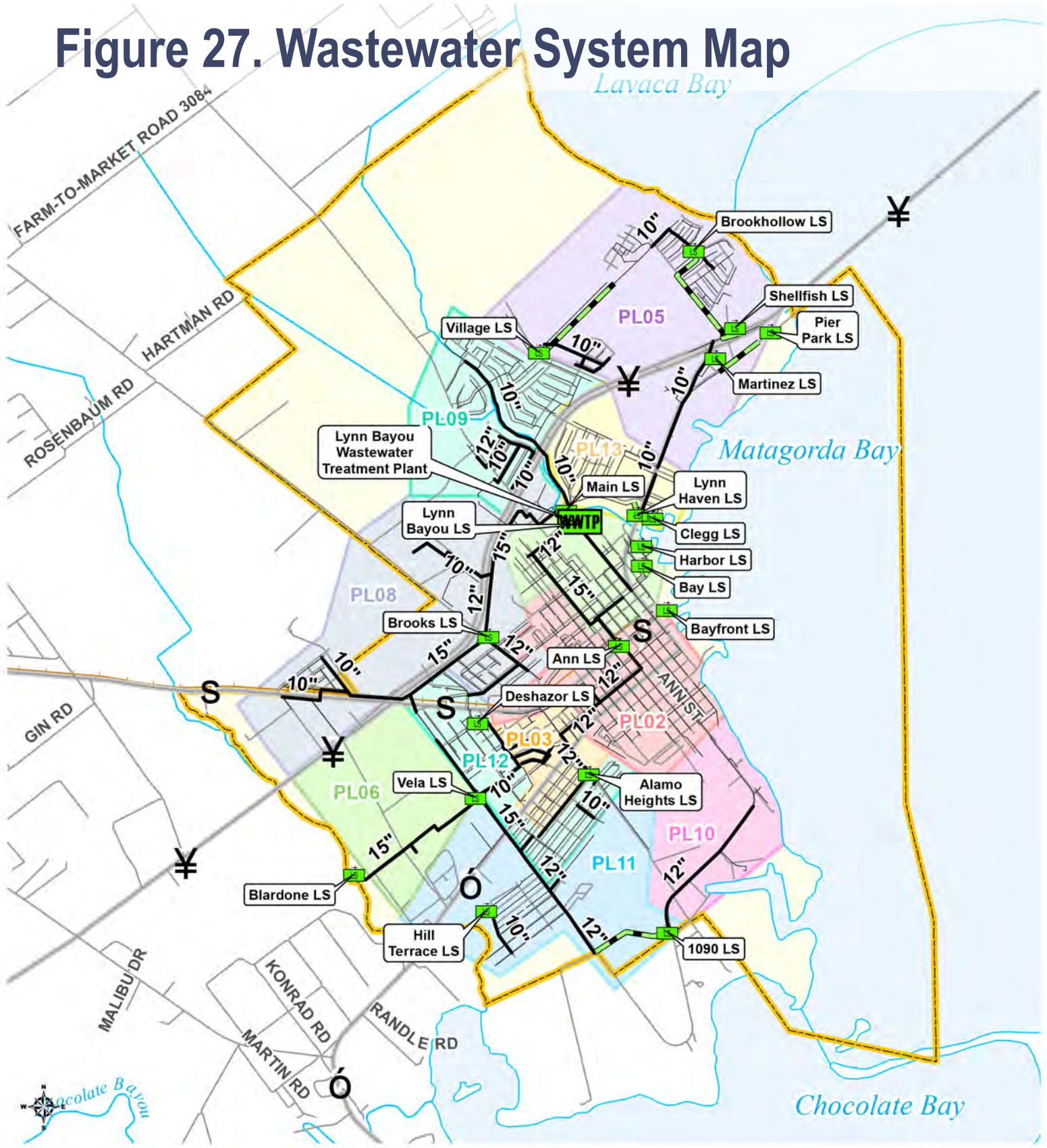
The City uses public funds to rehabilitate and maintain the system. The City recently completed an infiltration and inflow (I/I) study of the wastewater system. “Infiltration” refers to groundwater that has infiltrated the system; “inflow” refers to water from another source (e.g., drains or sump pumps) that unintentionally flow into the system. Infiltration and inflow can decrease treatment efficiency and cause the system to exceed design capacity. The results of the study are being used to proactively target areas to identify and eliminate I/I sources. A rehabilitation program is also in place to replace aging sewer lines.






The City does not anticipate much extension to the system except in areas where developers would design and install required infrastructure. New subdivisions pay for their impact on the downstream system.





# Figure 27. Wastewater System Map



-  Wastewater Treatment Plant
-  Lift Station
-  8" and Smaller Gravity Main
-  10" and Larger Gravity Main
-  Force Main



## Recommendations

The following section outlines recommendations related to the following topics:

- Water Ground Storage Tank Construction
- Wastewater Treatment Plant UV System Upgrade
- Water and Wastewater Pipeline Completion
- Lift Station Rehab
- Water and Wastewater Master Plan

## Water Ground Storage Tank Construction

The City currently purchases capacity in Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority's (GBRA's) ground storage tank in order to meet TCEQ storage requirements. The GBRA Port Lavaca Water Treatment Plant Division supplies the City of Port Lavaca, the Calhoun County Rural Water Supply Corporation, and the Port O'Connor Municipal Utility District with treated drinking water. It would benefit both GBRA and the City to build a 1.0 MG ground storage tank within the City. GBRA could pump to this ground tank and allow the City the flexibility to control their own distribution system.

## Wastewater Treatment Plant UV System Upgrade

The ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system at the Lynn Bayou Wastewater Treatment Plant is no longer serviceable and is nearing the end of its useful life. It should be upgraded within the next year.

## Water and Wastewater Pipeline Completion

The City should continue to pursue its five-year plan to rehab or replace the current cast iron or asbestos cement water lines to reduce the occurrence of water main breaks. The City should continue its efforts to rehab or replace wastewater lines as necessary to reduce system infiltration and/or inflow (I/I).

## Lift Station Rehab

City staff indicated that many residents experience problems with overflows during heavy rain events and need larger wet wells and pumps to pass rain events. The City should begin rehab and/or replacement of lift stations to reduce overflows during heavy rain events.

## Water and Wastewater Master Plan

The City should consider developing a Water and Wastewater Master Plan that takes into account current population levels, projected growth, updated future land use, and usage characteristics to develop solutions for operational issues. Additionally, the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system at the GBRA Port Lavaca Water Treatment Plant indicates that the water level in the George Street elevated tank must reach a certain level before the Village Road elevated tank begins to fill. Operational issues such as these could be reviewed and solutions developed in a Water and Wastewater Master Plan.

## Summary of Infrastructure Action Items

Goals	Promoting Quality of Life	Protecting Investments	Supporting Economic Development
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connected neighborhoods for pedestrians and vehicles</li> <li>2. Housing choices for young professionals and seniors</li> <li>3. Recreation opportunities for youth, adults, and visitors</li> <li>4. Adequate infrastructure to support future development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Compatible uses to reduce conflict</li> <li>6. Beautiful community</li> <li>7. Resilient waterfront that serves as an asset</li> <li>8. Community empowerment to encourage ownership, pride, and involvement</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Destination to attract visitors</li> <li>10. Employment and entertainment opportunities</li> <li>11. Exciting waterfront amenities that generate activity and income</li> <li>12. Active and unique downtown</li> </ol>
Recommendations	<b>Water Ground Storage Tank Construction</b> <small>Page 94</small>	<p>Enlist the services of a consulting firm to develop a cost estimate and design for the new ground storage tank. Allocate budget in future CIPs to construct a new ground storage tank.</p>	●
	<b>Wastewater Treatment Plant UV System Upgrade</b> <small>Page 94</small>	<p>Allocate budget in the CIP to replace the existing UV disinfection system at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.</p>	●
	<b>Water and Wastewater Pipeline Completion</b> <small>Page 94</small>	<p>Continue to fund, prioritize, and conduct replacement/rehab of current cast iron or asbestos cement water lines.</p>	●
		<p>Continue to fund, prioritize, and conduct replacement/rehab of wastewater lines to reduce I/I.</p>	●
	<b>Lift Station Rehab</b> <small>Page 94</small>	<p>Allocate budget in future CIPs to rehab/replace lift stations, as prioritized by the condition assessment.</p>	●
<b>Water and Wastewater Master Plan</b> <small>Page 94</small>	<p>Allocate budget in the CIP to develop a Water and Wastewater Master Plan. Enlist the services of a consulting firm to develop a Water and Wastewater Master Plan. Allocate budget in the CIP to fund the improvements recommended in the Water and Wastewater Master Plan.</p>	●	



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# Chapter 7 | Community Character

## Issues and Existing Conditions

Every community is defined by its neighborhoods. Retail centers, employment centers, and industrial parks provide jobs and the foundation for our economy. Residential areas are where we live, raise families and, many times, invest in private property. Each of Port Lavaca's neighborhoods face different challenges and opportunities and so while neighborhoods are important, they also face many obstacles.

Neighborhood revitalization is a complex issue because it must be respectful of not just the physical structure itself, but also of the people who reside in it, including their physical and financial abilities to maintain the property's integrity. The City can contribute to neighborhood revitalization financially and by empowering residents, however neighborhood stability and integrity ultimately depend on the residents of the neighborhoods themselves.

### Top Issues Related to Community Character:

- Limited housing choices
- Lack of quality affordable housing for young professionals, middle-class, and retirees
- Lack of property maintenance in some areas
- Need for community empowerment and organization to support the City's efforts
- Limited resources and amenities for seniors
- 78% of survey respondents rated the City's appearance as fair or poor
- 81% of survey respondents indicated that the City's appearance is important or very important

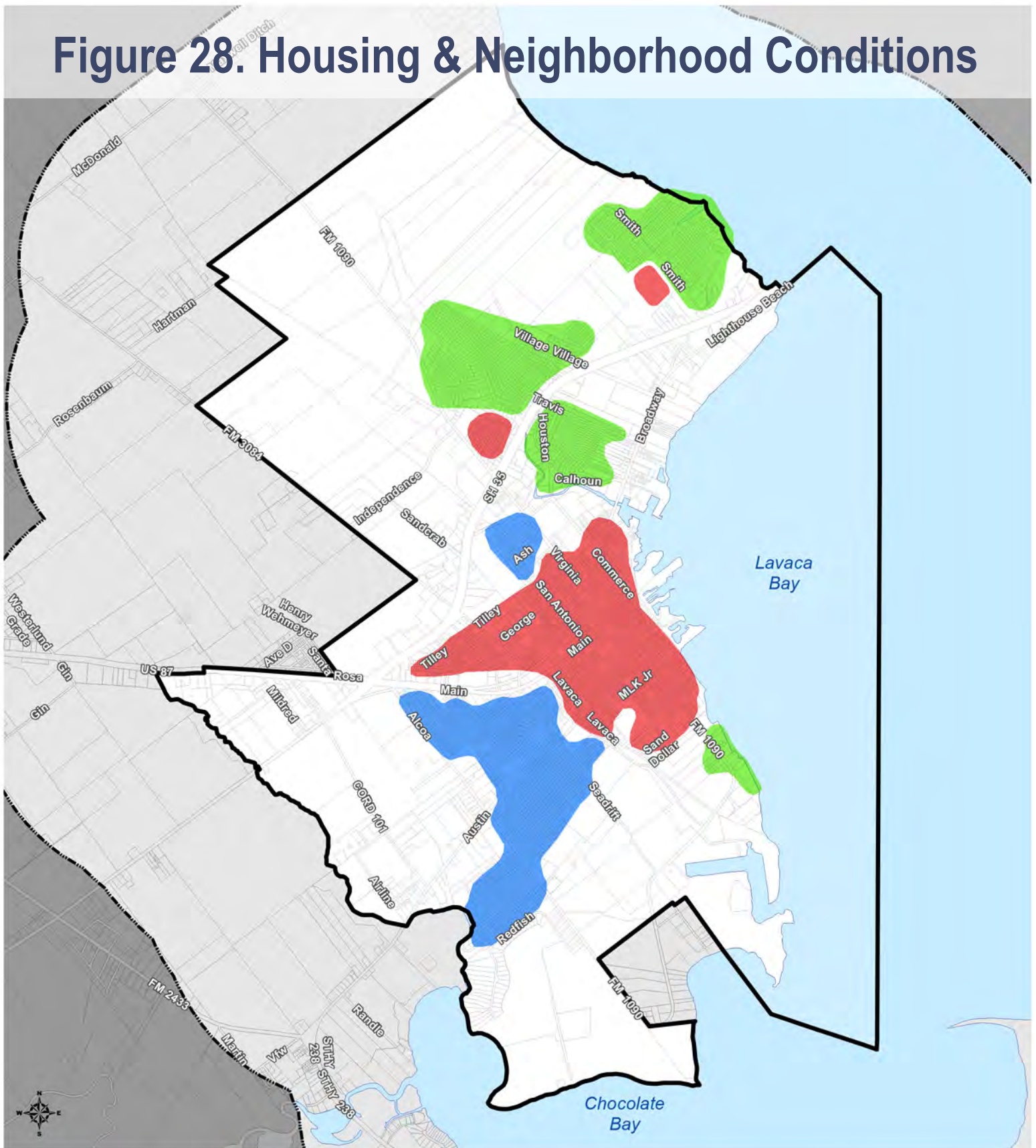
## Neighborhood Conditions

**Figure 28** identifies the general conditions of neighborhoods within Port Lavaca. It is important to note that this assessment does not apply to every home, but rather the image of the neighborhood as a whole. This assessment considers housing condition, yard maintenance, and overall upkeep.

The condition ratings generally correlate to the age of the homes in the neighborhood, which is common for many cities. Many of the homes in the central core need professional assistance to repair the structures, while others will likely require demolition. The historic character of the core's structures is a unique asset and should be preserved when possible. This category also includes the manufactured home park along SH 35. The "Restoration" areas experience issues with property maintenance -- both yard and structure. Many of these issues could be resolved through the homeowners' efforts. The "Preservation" areas are generally the newest construction in the City and have been well-maintained thus far.



# Figure 28. Housing & Neighborhood Conditions



## Recommendations

The following section outlines recommendations related to the following topics:




- Neighborhood Preservation, Restoration, and Rehabilitation
- Housing Choices
- Quality Neighborhood Designs
- Community Clean-Up Efforts



## Neighborhood Preservation, Restoration, and Rehabilitation

Neighborhood strategies vary based on the predominant type and condition of housing in the neighborhood. It is important to keep in mind that these strategies apply based on the character of the neighborhood as a whole; individual homes may be in better or worse condition than the overall neighborhood. **Table 13** outlines possible applications, goals, and strategies for ensuring healthy neighborhoods in the City.

**Table 13. Neighborhood Strategies**

Preservation	Restoration	Rehabilitation
		
<p><b>Application:</b></p> <p>Neighborhoods that are in good health and appearance, generally the newest neighborhoods.</p>	<p><b>Application:</b></p> <p>Neighborhoods that are beginning to show signs of wear and tear. The physical structures are in sound condition but minor exterior improvements may be needed.</p>	<p><b>Application:</b></p> <p>Neighborhoods with homes that have exceeded their useful life and may be structurally compromised.</p>
<p><b>Goal:</b></p> <p>Maintain the current condition to prevent decline, which can begin with minor code violations. Quality, well-designed neighborhoods maintain their value and attract reinvestment long after construction.</p>	<p><b>Goal:</b></p> <p>Correct code violations and encourage homeowners to make minor repairs to prevent further decline.</p>	<p><b>Goal:</b></p> <p>Encourage homeowners to hire assistance for major repairs, allocate funding for demolitions when necessary, and target redevelopment/infill areas.</p>
<p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code enforcement and compliance</li> <li>Access to parks and recreation</li> <li>Neighborhood organizations and home owners' associations (HOAs)</li> <li>Quality neighborhood design</li> <li>Quality building materials</li> <li>Compatible nonresidential development (prohibiting incompatible uses)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code enforcement and compliance</li> <li>Improvements to existing parks and recreational facilities</li> <li>Facilitating neighborhood organizations</li> <li>Neighborhood branding</li> <li>Housing maintenance programs (grants or events such as Rebuilding Together)</li> <li>Housing maintenance incentives for minor repairs (rebates or matching funds)</li> <li>Maintenance assistance (identification of elderly or at-need households)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Code enforcement and compliance</li> <li>Significant public investment in parks and quality of life enhancements</li> <li>Improving neighborhood and community centers and programming</li> <li>Neighborhood branding</li> <li>Facilitating neighborhood organizations</li> <li>Proactive housing demolition</li> <li>Property acquisition</li> <li>Infill/redevelopment incentives</li> </ul>

Infill and redevelopment utilizes existing water, wastewater, and roadway infrastructure, decreases “sprawl” into the more rural areas, and promotes reinvestment in existing neighborhoods. These efforts should be concentrated on the areas identified as “Rehabilitation” condition in **Figure 28** (page 98). Redevelopment of the residential area with many manufactured homes along the north side of SH 35 could allow for complete redevelopment of the businesses along the corridor as well. This site, approximately 30 acres in area, could be an ideal location for a hotel/resort, business park, shopping center, or a combination thereof.

As previously mentioned, the downtown and central core area support the City’s historic character and unique charm. However, many of the structures in the area may be aged or otherwise deteriorated beyond repair. The City should carefully apply the strategies from **Table 13** to retain the character and enhance the neighborhood’s conditions. As redevelopment occurs in this area, it is important that future construction be compatible with the existing homes and charm. Development regulations could be used to ensure that the historic, small- to medium-scale character is protected. Any adopted development regulations should also consider the provision of complementary nonresidential uses in this area – that is, professional offices located in residential-style buildings. Allowing these uses would maintain the historic character, support neighborhood upkeep, and encourage neighborhood activity.

The “Rehabilitation” areas located along the bay are also prime target areas for redevelopment and infill. These properties hold the potential for high-end waterfront residences or vacation homes. Development in this area should echo the quality of development along Harbor Drive on the northern portion of the bay.





While development will continue to occur in other parts of the City, stabilizing and reinvigorating the core will ensure that all of Port Lavaca grows and prospers. Infill development will be a crucial component of reinvigorating the core. It is only through community and financial support that revitalization of core areas can be achieved.

Infill housing development incentives will generally be required if core revitalization is to be realized. There are a variety of different programs and incentives that can be used. The type and amount of incentives is directly related to the market itself. Redevelopment, especially those who begin the redevelopment process, assumes a significant amount of risk. The purpose of the incentives is to reduce or mitigate some of the risk that a builder assumes when they pursue redevelopment projects. As with most other incentives, the primary goal of offering assistance is to stabilize and increase property values and invigorate neighborhoods. Strong, stable neighborhoods benefit the community as a whole through tax generation. The following are potential incentives that could be used to attract infill housing:

- Waiving development fees for infill housing,
- Fast-track review and approval procedures,
- Acquired land is given to developer at a significantly reduced cost,
- Rebates or grants awarded per housing unit constructed in focus area,
- Infrastructure upgrades for infill projects over a certain value or number of units,
- Tax abatements such as taxation for a specified amount of time at the original value when a home is demolished and rebuilt, and
- City partnership with a specific residential developer(s) for construction of a certain type of housing on city-owned lots (public-private partnership).



## Housing Choices

### Life Cycle Housing

Life cycle housing serves the needs of individuals, families, and different segments of the population through all stages of their lives – young singles, professionals, families with children, families without children, empty-nesters, retirees and seniors. When an adequate mix of housing options are available, a person has the opportunity to live their entire life within the community and even within a desired neighborhood. As an individual progresses through the different stages of life, “life cycle” housing provides suitable options along the way. An example of this cycle includes renters who move into the starter home market, families who move into larger homes, and seniors who move into smaller units requiring less upkeep.

Rather than following the model of traditional suburban design where housing types are segregated, a distinct benefit of life cycle housing is the ability of families to put down roots in their neighborhood, children to remain in the same schools, social networks and bonds to remain in place, and seniors to live close to family and friends. In order to achieve these benefits, the appropriate mix of housing options is critical. The following information outlines the key components of successful life cycle housing.

**Figure 29** (page 105) displays the dwelling types located throughout the City. As shown, a range of housing opportunities currently exist. However, limited amounts of quality multi-family units are available. Many of these apartment complexes are dated and deteriorating, and are not appealing to young professionals or empty-nesters. The City may wish to encourage redevelopment of these properties into more modern apartment complexes or townhomes to accommodate the demand for housing variety. While the City’s opportunities for ensuring an appropriate mix of housing is limited by the lack of zoning regulations, the City could offer incentives to attract desirable development types.



### Single Family Homes

Small single family homes are often referred to as “starter homes” and are generally the most affordable option for single family housing. Individuals or smaller families seeking housing options with more space and privacy, or moving into the home-ownership market find the starter home as a great option. Starter homes are usually on small lots, sometimes as small as 5,000 square feet. These homes meet the needs of individuals with limited housing budgets and a desire to have their own personal space.

Medium-sized single family homes are typically larger in square footage than the small starter home. These homes typically include additional bedrooms and bathrooms with upgraded amenities. Often times, medium-sized single family homes are located on larger lots. This housing segment is ideal for a growing household seeking opportunities to expand and renovate the home over time.





Some members of a community may desire a larger footprint for their home. This need can be met with larger homes (i.e., additional square footage), or larger lots that provide more open space and increased separation from neighbors and adjacent land uses. This large lot housing type plays an important role in allowing for variation in density and home size within a community.

### Two-Family Homes

Two-family homes – often referred to as a duplex – is a house divided into two separate dwelling units, each with its own entrance. Duplex housing serves a segment of the community who may want to live in an increasingly dense setting while having the look and feel of a single family home. This housing type is important for residents and a community due to its affordability, range of amenities available, and the transitional nature of the housing itself.

### Townhomes

Townhomes are attached single and multi-story dwelling units. Similar to apartments and duplexes, townhomes serve as an alternative to apartment living, and meet a demand in the rental market. One key difference is the fact that townhomes also meet a need for home ownership. Many segments of a community find townhomes appealing, from young professionals to small families. This housing option can also serve the needs of seniors seeking a simplistic home-ownership experience.

### Multi-Family Homes

The range of apartment options is very broad in an effort to meet the needs and desires of a diverse rental market. The traditional apartment is a multi-story building within an apartment community arranged in a garden or courtyard style configuration. An alternative approach to including apartments is through mixed use development – higher density apartments above ground-level retail shops.

### Manufactured Homes

Manufactured homes provide affordable housing options, however these areas are often subject to lower levels of property upkeep and reinvestment. Note that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established safety and construction standards for manufactured homes in 1976; therefore, the term “mobile home” is appropriate for structures built prior to 1976.



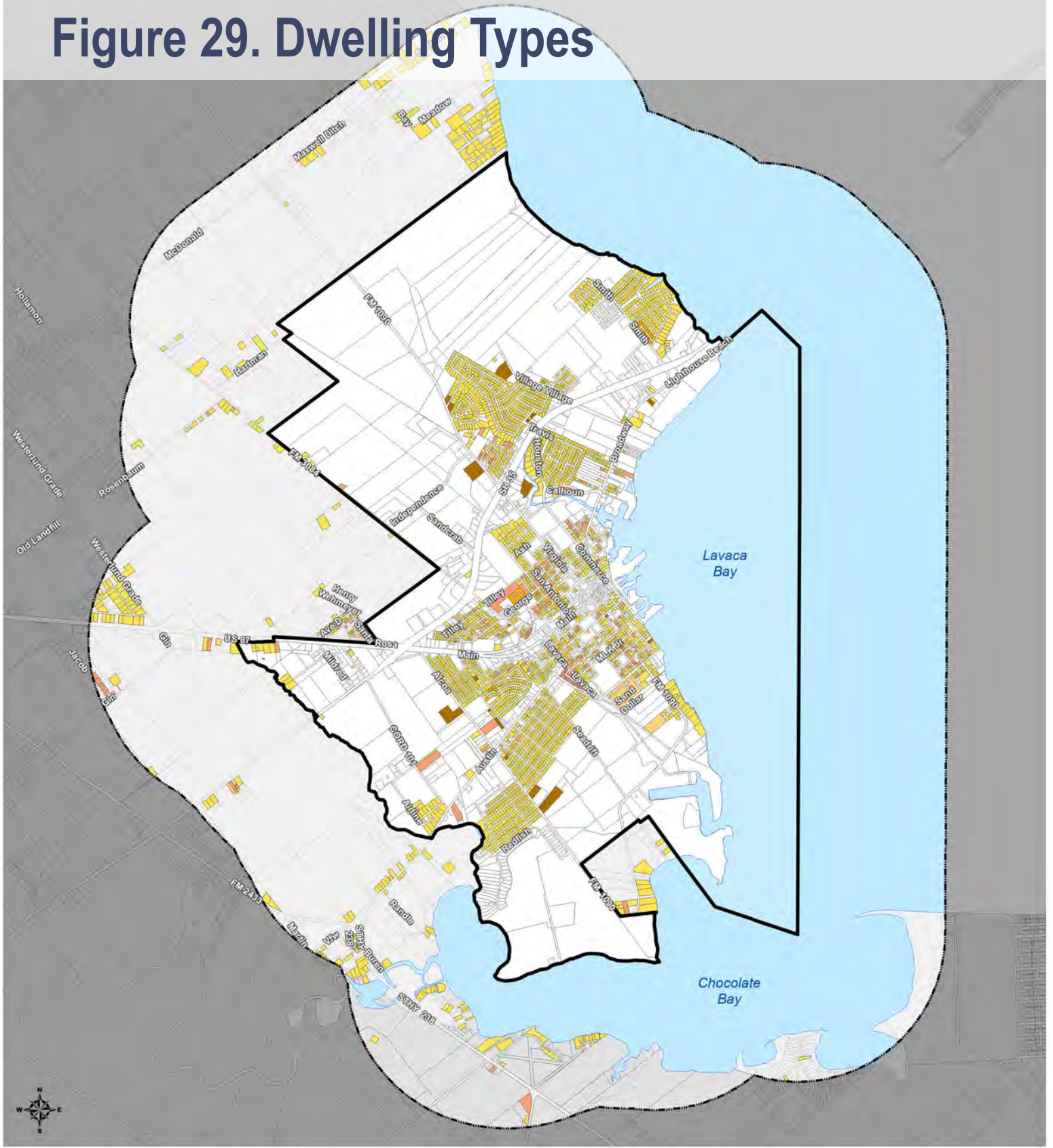
### Accommodations for Seniors

An integral part of retirement is the connection to family, friends, and the community in which a senior has grown to call home. In order to allow a senior or retiree to age in place, housing options must be available. The need for decreased maintenance, increased access to transportation options, and accessibility to amenities such as fresh food and medical facilities are critical. Many of the housing options included here can meet these needs. Apartments, duplexes, and townhomes may provide the necessary housing options. However, there may also be a need for smaller single family homes on small lots or “zero lot-line” units to accommodate seniors.

To support life cycle housing, the City should consider becoming a Certified Retirement Community (CRC). The CRC Program is an initiative by Texas Department of Agriculture to attract current and future retirees to settle in rural Texas communities. Applicants are evaluated by housing choices, employment/volunteering opportunities, health, education, entertainment, and safety. Three gulf area cities are already designated CRCs: South Padre Island, West Columbia, and Orange.

The Department of Agriculture details the benefits of the program to be involvement in State-sponsored marketing and social and economic gain. However, it should be reiterated that the amenities and conditions required to become a CRC would benefit the full life cycle population in Port Lavaca.

# Figure 29. Dwelling Types



### *Workforce and Affordable Housing*

Workforce housing is defined by the Urban Land Institute's Terwilliger Center for Workforce Housing as housing for individuals or families earning 60 to 100 percent Average Median Income (AMI) for an area. Interestingly, those members of the community falling into this category are often the ones serving in supportive roles within the community. Teachers, public safety workers such as police or firefighters, nurses, or civil service workers often fall into this category. Affordable housing, on the other hand, is generally related to low-income housing. These needs are often met through non-profit housing corporations and grants from the federal and state levels.

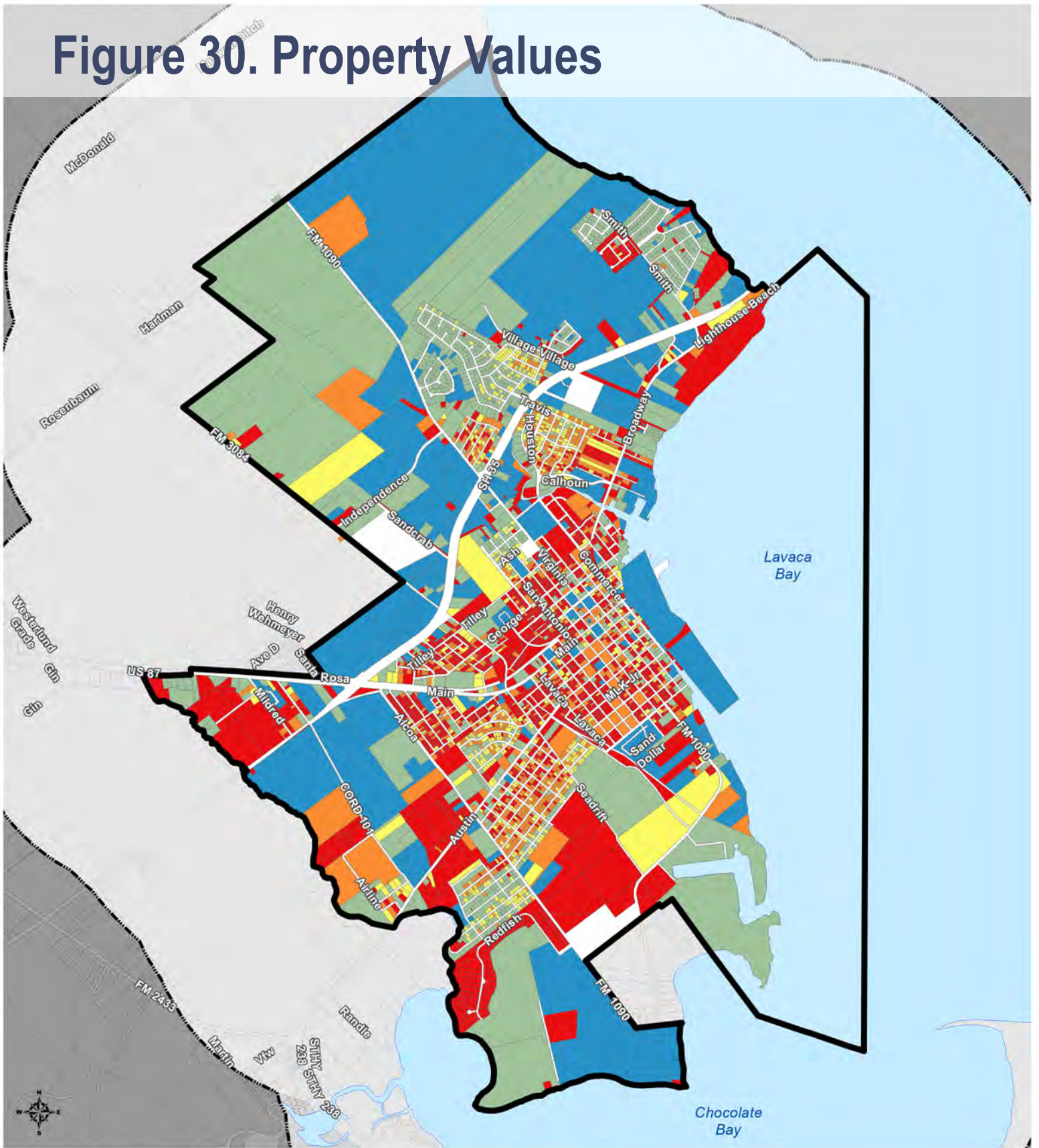
**Figure 30** utilizes U.S. Census data to map home values throughout Port Lavaca. The color-coded categories divide the housing stock into five value ranges. As shown, most of the homes in the central core area are valued at \$75,000 or less. Many of the properties valued at \$100,000 or greater are large multi-acre tracts of land located along the waterfront or SH 35.



As noted in **Chapter 2 | Snapshot** (page 14), Port Lavaca's housing stock is generally considered affordable for the median income of the City and the State. Although affordable housing is currently available, the City should pursue opportunities to encourage new construction of affordable homes. There is a strong correlation between the lower value homes and the lowest housing conditions classification in **Figure 28** (page 98). This indicates that the housing is likely affordable because it has deteriorated over time. As these structures continue to deteriorate, affordable housing opportunities will become more limited.



# Figure 30. Property Values



**Table 14. Workforce and Affordable Housing Programs****Affordable Communities of Texas**

The Affordable Communities of Texas (ACT) program is a statewide land banking/land trust initiative targeted at local nonprofit and government agencies. Blending land banking strategies with local housing knowledge, TSAHC has developed partnerships with more than 25 local housing nonprofit and government entities to combine expertise in acquiring land and foreclosed properties with expertise in community development and neighborhood stabilization. This act offers the following services:

- Exclusive access to “First Look” foreclosure listings from more than 10 national financial institutions and mortgage servicers
- Access to construction lines of credit for neighborhood stabilization efforts
- Lower holding costs through our land banking services, and potentially long-term tax-exemption under our ACT land trust
- Technical assistance with development planning and financial modeling

Source: <http://www.tsahc.org/developers-property-managers/act>

**Homes for Texas Heroes Program**

TSAHC provides home buyer assistance specifically for teachers, police officers, correctional officers, fire fighters, EMS personnel, and veterans meeting certain income requirements. These professionals have dedicated their lives to the welfare of Texas families, and this program helps them to buy a home in the communities they have worked so hard to protect.

Source: <http://www.tsahc.org/homebuyers-renters/homes-for-texas-heroes-program>

**TDHCA Housing Tax Credit Program**

The Housing Tax Credit program is one of the primary means of directing private capital toward the development and preservation of affordable rental housing for low-income households. The HTC program funds the development of affordable multifamily rental properties or rehabilitation of existing properties that are willing to maintain affordable rents for an extended period of time. Private for-profit and nonprofit multifamily housing developers are eligible to participate.

After the property is developed by the applicant, the applicant will affirmatively market the property in the surrounding community. Tenants earning up to 60% of the area median family income for the area for their household size and who meet the screening and eligibility restrictions of the property may qualify for a reduced rent unit.

Source: <https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/multifamily/housing-tax-credits-9pct/index.htm>

**The National Housing Trust Fund**

A new affordable housing production program that will complement existing Federal, state and local efforts to increase and preserve the supply of decent, safe, and sanitary affordable housing for extremely low- and very low-income households, including homeless families. HTF supports the acquisition, new construction, or reconstruction of rental units for extremely low-income families or families with incomes below the poverty line, whichever is greater.

**Fair Housing Initiative Program (FHIP)**

Federal program administered by the Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Office; allocates funds on a competitive/discretionary basis; generally no requirement for matching funds on the part of the receiver.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

Federal, state, and county program administered by the Community Planning and Development Office (a department of HUD). The program allocates finding on a formula/entitlement basis and funds activities directed toward neighborhood revitalization, economic development and the provision of improved community facilities and services. Participation can be through funds allocated by the state or county with generally no requirement for matching funds on the part of the receiver. CDBG funding is variable, depending on federal government allocations.

**HOME Investment Partnerships Program**

Federal, state, county, and local program administered by the Community Planning and Development Office (a department of HUD). The program allocates funds on a formula/entitlement basis and funding may be used for a variety of activities including housing rehabilitation, tenant-based rental assistance, assistance to homebuyers, acquisition of housing, new construction of housing, site acquisition, site improvements, demolition and relocation. There is typically a matching funds requirement on the part of the receiver equal to 25 percent of the total grant amount.

### Neighborhood Initiatives Grant

Federal, state, county and local program administered by the Community Planning and Development Office (a department of HUD). The program allocates funds on a competitive/discretionary basis; generally no requirement for matching funds on the part of the receiver.

### Habitat for Humanity 501(c)(3)

Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization that builds and rehabilitates homes through partnership with low-income residents. Houses, sold at no profit to pre-qualified, low-income families, are financed through no-interest mortgages. Mortgage payments are returned to a revolving fund, which is used to finance more construction. Pre-qualified homeowners are required to invest hours directly working on the Habitat project. The organization utilizes volunteer labor, monetary, and in-kind donations to build houses.

### Organizational Support

These types of activities bring the community together to help residents in need. They can be organized at various times of the year and involve local organizations, civic groups and places of worship. Citizens provide the labor, businesses provide the supplies, and the City provides contact and organization. The City can also participate by helping identify housing units in need, prioritizing properties in need of improvement, and obtaining donations from local businesses. These programs have been proven to help to improve numerous homes on an annual basis.

### Mixed-Income Projects

These projects help to disperse affordable options throughout the community and combat concentrated poverty. Public housing projects should be built with low, moderate and market rate units.



## Quality Neighborhood Designs

### *Traditional Neighborhood Design*

Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) is a development that is compact, pedestrian-oriented, and promotes a traditional, small-town atmosphere. These developments incorporate a blend of housing types and land uses into one area at a neighborhood scale. TNDs are similar to typically subdivisions but place emphasis on the following characteristics:

- A connected street grid with short blocks to promote walkability
- Varied lot sizes and housing types to create full life cycle neighborhoods with options for mixed incomes
- Organization of homes fronting to parks with community space into its design
- Neighborhood retail incorporated within a community square
- Front porches and maximum setbacks to bring homes closer to the street and increase pedestrian orientation
- Driveway access via alleys to avoid disrupting the pedestrian realm with curb cuts
- Architectural design that facilitates interaction and promotes safety through Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles

TND principles should be available as an alternative form of subdivision design. Incentives may be appropriate to encourage this style of development.



## Neighborhood Amenities

One of the most critical elements of neighborhood design is access to amenities. Neighborhood amenities can include internal and external amenities. Internally, new subdivisions can include private parks, trails and recreational facilities, a club house for events, a basketball court, playground or walking trails. External amenities include City investments in neighborhoods such as connecting neighborhoods to the overall parks and trails system. A current trend in Texas and nationally is the use of abandoned railroads or utility easements for linear trails, which could possibly be applied along the Union Pacific railway. Linear trails are different than parks in that they provide opportunities for active recreation such as biking or jogging.

As new neighborhoods are designed, easements for parks and trails should be secured. This plan can only be achieved when all development partners, including the City and developers, work together to make the plan a reality. The ability to develop should not take priority over the ability of the City to create quality amenities and long-lasting neighborhoods. These types of provisions are common in most markets.

With the use of zoning, the City could create a menu of amenities and a certain number of amenities must be incorporated into the subdivision design. For example, the City could provide a list of 10 amenities and developers would be required to incorporate five elements of their choice into their designs. Examples of amenities that could be included are:

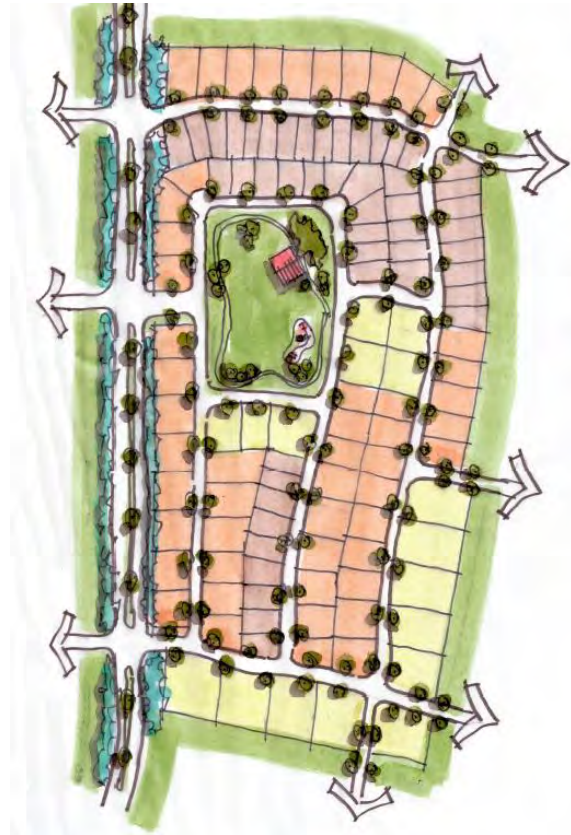
1. Neighborhood parks/pocket parks
2. Neighborhood activity centers
3. Walking trails through the neighborhood or around the perimeter
4. Trail or pedestrian access to existing parks
5. Safe pedestrian connections to schools and community facilities
6. Linear trails through the use of utility or pipeline easements
7. Street trees in a parkway strip between the sidewalk and the street
8. Landscaped medians at key entrances
9. Decorated/enhanced lighting fixtures and signage
10. Rock or brick walls/supports in lieu of solid wood fencing



### Connectivity

Connectivity refers to the ability of various subdivisions to connect to one another. Cities were historically designed in a grid-type pattern, as seen in Port Lavaca's central core area. This network of streets seamlessly integrated new subdivisions into the overall city framework. The advantage of the grid system is it provided automobile and pedestrian connectivity throughout the community.

Today's newer neighborhood design is different in that neighborhoods are relatively self-contained. Rather than being a part of the overall grid network, they are a system of local streets that are tied together by collector roadways and the larger arterial network. It is important, however, that neighborhoods still think beyond their borders and consider their part in the overall community framework. This includes providing automobile and pedestrian connections to adjacent subdivisions, retail centers and recreational amenities. It is important that each new neighborhood provide connections to adjacent vacant areas in accordance with the future land use plan. If residential is depicted, multiple connections should be created so that as vacant land is developed it can build off and continue the network of the existing neighborhood. The total number of connections should be based upon the number of lots within the subdivision and should be regulated by the subdivision ordinance.



### Wind Energy Protection

Wind turbines – once generally limited to agricultural areas – are becoming increasingly popular in developed areas along the coast. Turbines may be standalone towers or smaller devices attached to buildings. Freestanding wind turbines should require a fall zone for safety purposes equal to the height of the tallest blade. Also for safety purposes, the City should include within its regulations that blades must have a clearance of 18 feet from the ground. Roof-mounted turbines should be limited to five feet above the maximum height of buildings in order to protect the aesthetics of the area.





## Community Clean-Up Efforts

Many residents have voiced concerns regarding the community's appearance; however, the City has limited resources and needs community involvement to help maintain an attractive appearance. In order to address some of these issues, the City should coordinate volunteer efforts within the community. These grassroots efforts would also build a sense of ownership and pride within the community. The City currently has a City Wide Clean-Up program in place, which provides quarterly bulk pick-up services to the community. To supplement this effort, the City could identify an annual calendar outlining the clean-up needs and encourage local groups to sign up for a particular event, as shown in **Table 15**. The City would need to designate a staff member or appoint a volunteer coordinator to ensure that a sponsor group has been identified for each month's event. The City or other sponsoring group could provide lunches for volunteers, t-shirts, advertisement, or prizes for litter pick-up scavenger hunts to encourage participation.

**Table 15. Example of a Community Clean-Up Calendar**

Month	Focus Area	Tasks	Sponsor Group (Examples Only)
January	Funding event	Secure a location and host a fund raising event (e.g., bake sale, auction, raffle) to establish a small budget to support the community clean-up efforts.	Red Hat Society
February	Litter pick-up	Assemble a team to collect litter along SH 35. Request donations of supplies (e.g., trash bags, gloves, trash grabbers) from local retailers.	Rotary
March	Home repairs	Assemble a team to help with basic exterior home repairs, which may include both skilled and untrained volunteers. Request donations of supplies (e.g., paint brushes, paint, nails, hammers, wood) from local retailers and volunteers/materials from local contractors. Identify homeowners in need who may be interested in receiving this service.	Home Depot
April	Litter pick-up	Assemble a team to collect litter in the downtown area. Request donations of supplies (e.g., trash bags, gloves, trash grabbers) from local retailers.	Lions Club
May	Plantings	Assemble a team to plant flowers or maintain landscaping for interested homeowners in need or in public areas. Request donations of supplies (e.g., plants, small shovels, gloves) from local retailers.	4-H
June	Litter pick-up	Assemble a team to collect litter near Bayfront Park. Request donations of supplies (e.g., trash bags, gloves, trash grabbers) from local retailers.	Boy Scouts
July	Clearing	Assemble a skilled team to clear debris or overgrowth from trails, parks, and other public areas.	Jaycees
August	Litter pick-up	Assemble a team to collect litter near Lighthouse Beach. Request donations of supplies (e.g., trash bags, gloves, trash grabbers) from local retailers.	Girl Scouts
September	Home repairs	Assemble a team to help with basic exterior home repairs, which may include both skilled and untrained volunteers. Request donations of supplies (e.g., paint brushes, paint, nails, hammers, wood) from local retailers and volunteers/materials from local contractors. Identify homeowners in need who may be interested in receiving this service.	Walmart
October	Litter pick-up	Assemble a team to collect litter in the area south of Main Street. Request donations of supplies (e.g., trash bags, gloves, trash grabbers) from local retailers.	Church Group
November	Graffiti removal	Assemble a team to remove graffiti on public buildings or structures. Request donations of supplies (e.g., solvents, paint, paint brushes, paint scraper, wire brushes) from local retailers.	Kiwanis
December	Litter pick-up	Assemble a team to collect litter in the area between Main Street and SH 35. Request donations of supplies (e.g., trash bags, gloves, trash grabbers) from local retailers.	Church Group

Another method to facilitate community participation is enrollment in the Keep Texas Beautiful (KTB) Program. KTB is an affiliate of the national Keep America Beautiful program; both strive for litter prevention, beautification, and waste reduction through community education and engagement. KTB has local affiliate programs throughout Texas. These local programs host community-wide events and participate in state-sponsored events.

Enrollment requires a yearly fee of \$100 and hosting/participating in at least one event annually. Meanwhile, the benefit of this program is the community pride and ownership fostered through beautification as well improved sense of place and beautification. Aesthetics, the waterfront, and greenspace were key areas of interest of citizens who participated in the *Plan Port Lavaca* input process, demonstrating an affordable opportunity for Port Lavaca and its residents to take on community improvement together.

The City has existing recommendations in place to promote community involvement and empowerment, however these recommendations have not been implemented at this time. The following is a summary of the recommended programs.

#### **Block Captain Program**

The Block Captain Program is designed to promote good will, provide a forum for expression of problems and concerns, rid neighborhoods of criminal activities and restore neighborhoods to a level acceptable by all citizens. In addition, a successful program can provide an area where children can grow and play without fear. The program can also provide a safe place where the elderly can sit peacefully in their yard or on their porches.

#### **Eyes of Port Lavaca**

The Eyes of Port Lavaca is designed to involve active participation by all citizens in the City. The program is structured to provide a point of contact for citizens with a specific problem such as an overgrown lot, abandoned vehicle or vacant home. In addition, the program can provide additional services to residents with other problems as well. Residents who notice suspicious activity or water leaking into the streets are encouraged to call a city department to initiate a complaint. A list of all departments is available to every citizen.

#### **Alley Rally**

An Alley Rally is a means of introducing an individual to the philosophy of clean and healthy neighborhoods. Rallies are a good way to allow neighbors to unite in a common effort toward the common goal of a clean neighborhoods. Once an area is identified, residents are notified of the time and date of the event. The City should then be contacted to provide services—environmental control, code enforcement, solid waste related issues, etc.

#### **Street Parties**

Street Parties are the result of a strong interest in the Block Captain Program. After an initial meeting with interested neighbors and after a block captain has been designated and a neighborhood is interested, a block party is planned for the area. Areas with local parks can be used as gathering place. A church or community center makes an excellent spot to hold a meeting. Meetings can be held in backyards, weather permitting, and everyone can bring a favorites item for the grill. The city will provide all publicity and secure all necessary permits.

#### **Adopt-A-House**

The Adopt-A-House program is designed to involve groups organized to do painting, minor repairs and yard work for elderly, disabled or handicapped homeowners. The program can take on a variety of names such as Paint-The-Town, Operation Cleanup or another name that identifies a location or specific area of the community.

### Block Certification

The Block Certification Program is designed to recognize those blocks that have taken steps toward significantly improving a neighborhood. To be considered for Block Certification, a neighborhood will have to demonstrate the following:

- A majority of residents (51 percent) within a neighborhood belong to the Neighborhoods Involvement Association (NIA) for their block;
- At least one program of the NIA has been completed, such as Block Captain Program, Eyes of Port Lavaca, Alley Rally, Street Party or Adopt-A-House;
- A meeting has been held and a regular meeting date is set to continue the program;
- Key people are identified and appointed to serve and are well informed of their duties;
- A training meeting is set to discuss responsibilities of the NIA and to the City's involvement with the group; and/or
- The neighborhood should present an attractive appearance, no code violations or other visual infractions.

Once a neighborhood meets all certification criteria, an award will be presented stating that the residents support the Neighborhood Involvement Association and believe in the clean city program one-block-at-a-time concept. The award will be signed by the Mayor and presented to the neighbors at a City Council meeting.

*Source: 2010 City Council Strategic Planning Meeting Packet*










***“You don’t love a neighborhood  
because it’s code compliant; you love it  
because it shows pride”***

*– Michael F. Schubert*



## Summary of Community Character Action Items

Goals	Promoting Quality of Life	Protecting Investments	Supporting Economic Development
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connected neighborhoods for pedestrians and vehicles</li> <li>2. Housing choices for young professionals and seniors</li> <li>3. Recreation opportunities for youth, adults, and visitors</li> <li>4. Adequate infrastructure to support future development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Compatible uses to reduce conflict</li> <li>6. Beautiful community</li> <li>7. Resilient waterfront that serves as an asset</li> <li>8. Community empowerment to encourage ownership, pride, and involvement</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Destination to attract visitors</li> <li>10. Employment and entertainment opportunities</li> <li>11. Exciting waterfront amenities that generate activity and income</li> <li>12. Active and unique downtown</li> </ol>

Recommendations			
Neighborhood Preservation, Restoration, and Rehabilitation <i>Page 100</i>		Maintain or increase the number of code enforcement actions.	
		Provide information to property owners regarding the establishment of voluntary HOAs and other similar neighborhood organizations.	
		Evaluate the feasibility of offering a City-sponsored housing improvement grant to match homeowners' contributions toward renovations in "Rehabilitation" areas.	
		Allocate budget for future demolitions of unsafe structures.	
		Establish a list of appropriate incentives to encourage desirable use types and infill development (e.g., fee waivers, fast-tracked reviews, grants).	
Housing Choices <i>Page 103</i>		Establish several residential zoning districts with varying lot dimensions to create additional variety and predictability in lot sizes.	
		Apply to become a Certified Retirement Community. Assemble a board to lead the application process.	
		Pursue (or assist property owners to pursue) affordable housing and housing improvement grant opportunities.	
Quality Neighborhood Designs <i>Page 110</i>		Allow for and possibly encourage Traditional Neighborhood Design subdivisions. Possible incentives may include permit fast-tracking, waived fees, and reductions to applied development standards.	
		Require future subdivisions to integrate a minimum number of amenities from a menu into the development design (e.g., trails, landscaping, masonry fences).	
		Require connections to existing or future adjacent developments, as depicted on the Future Land Use Map. The number of connections should increase based on the number of lots in the subdivision.	
		Adopt regulations (either in a future zoning ordinance or in a standalone code) to address safety concerns related to wind turbines. Regulations should ensure a minimum clearance and fall zone.	

<b>Community Clean-Up Efforts</b> <small>Page 113</small>	Develop a Community Clean-Up Calendar customized to Port Lavaca's specific needs and prepare a packet of information to provide to the Sponsor Group coordinator that outlines the tasks, expected outcomes, applicable rules, tips for requesting donations, and other logistics details. Designate a staff member or appoint a community volunteer to coordinate the program and manage any associated budget.	●
	Participate in the Keep Texas Beautiful or Keep America Beautiful program.	●
	Evaluate the recommended neighborhood empowerment programs to determine which programs would be most effective for Port Lavaca.	●

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# Chapter 8 | Economic Development

## Issues and Existing Conditions

Port Lavaca's vision as it relates to economic development can be summarized by the following:

Port Lavaca is a community with the opportunity to create its own future. It has a prime location to grow existing refining operations while having the land and workforce development capabilities to attract new plants. The Port of Port Lavaca's deep water port, barge traffic, and freight traffic along with our proximity to the Intracoastal waterway and the Gulf of Mexico give Port Lavaca a multitude of competitive advantages. It has a strong quality of life with many recreational and cultural amenities. It has seen continued economic growth with increased sales and hotel tax receipts over time. Rather than being a bedroom community for Victoria, Port Lavaca is focusing its attention on supporting existing businesses and building a strong workforce to attract new primary employers to serve the community.

*- City of Port Lavaca Economic Development Department*

Generally, there are three basic topics encompassed by the term "economic development":

1. Existing business and industry retention,
2. Creating new businesses and industries, and
3. Attracting tourism.

This chapter will summarize the current and previous efforts, and provide recommendations focusing on these three topics.

### Top Issues Related to Economic Development:

- Desire for more restaurants, entertainment, and shopping
- Desire for increased employment opportunities
- Emphasis should be on medical, retail, industrial, tourism, and small businesses
- 68% of survey respondents selected tourism and the waterfront as Port Lavaca's greatest opportunities
- Port access is an asset
- Sufficient water and wastewater utilities to allow for future growth
- Lacking in finance and other "white collar" professional industries



## Previous Efforts

The City of Port Lavaca has conducted or commissioned several studies in recent years related to the economic climate in the City and region. These efforts include the following:

- Staff Retreat Meeting Summary (Ron Cox Consulting, 2015)
- Strategic Plan Update (City of Port Lavaca, 2014)
- Demographic and Economic Profile (Holtkamp Planning, 2013)
- Retail Analysis & Merchandising Plan (Catalyst, 2011)

These documents, along with the City's efforts, created the foundation for this chapter.

## Local Economic Characteristics

### *Organizations Supporting Economic Development*

#### **Economic Development Department**

The City of Port Lavaca has a dedicated Economic Development Department that uses various incentive tools to encourage and recruit new businesses and redevelopment. Port Lavaca is “braiding” with other entities to work toward the goal of community improvement. The City of Port Lavaca is charged with expanding and diversifying the tax base and employment opportunities for the City through business development.

#### **Chamber of Commerce**

The Port Lavaca Chamber of Commerce is an association of nearly 200 business members to support and promote the local business community. The Chamber provides a number of programs, services and events to energize the local business climate along the Coastal Bend. In addition to developing such community events, the Chamber also focuses on working with local business owners and leaders to determine the tools and information necessary to continue establishing Port Lavaca as an economic and tourism leader along the Texas Gulf Coast.

The Chamber's 2016 Strategic Plan promises to build on the current economic momentum in the Texas Crossroads area. New community events and festivals, the inaugural Port Lavaca Chamber of Commerce Leadership Academy, additional networking opportunities and informational programs will ensure that the Chamber is providing the most value to members and positions Port Lavaca to become one of the most dynamic economic engines along the Texas Gulf Coast.

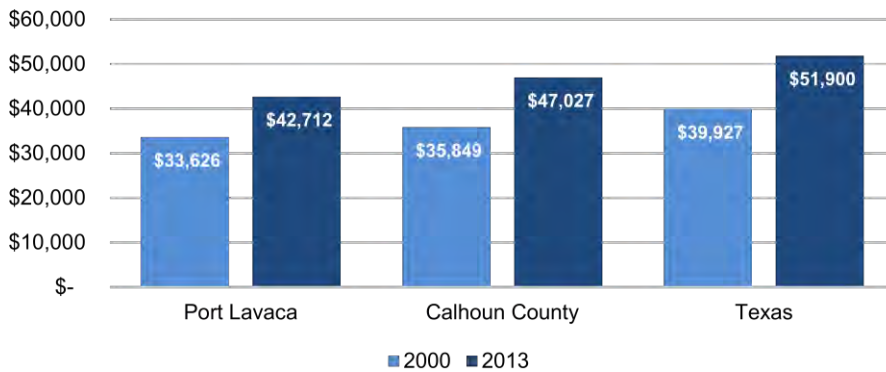


Source: [www.portlavacachamber.org/](http://www.portlavacachamber.org/)

### Income and Employment

Port Lavaca’s median income of \$42,712 is significantly lower than the State’s median income of \$51,900. Port Lavaca’s median income increased by 27 percent (\$9,086) between 2000 and 2013. For comparison, Calhoun County and Texas increased by 31 and 30 percent, respectively. Although Port Lavaca’s median income is lower by comparison, it is following the positive trend of increasing over time.

**Figure 31. Median Household Income**



**Table 16. Household Income**

	Port Lavaca	Calhoun County	Texas
<b>Total Households</b>	4,165	7,870	8,886,471
<b>Less than \$10,000</b>	4.9%	5.9%	7.4%
<b>\$10,000 to \$14,999</b>	5.8%	5.5%	5.3%
<b>\$15,000 to \$24,999</b>	17.8%	14.9%	11.0%
<b>\$25,000 to \$34,999</b>	12.8%	11.1%	10.7%
<b>\$35,000 to \$49,999</b>	16.1%	15.5%	13.8%
<b>\$50,000 to \$74,999</b>	17.8%	18.9%	17.8%
<b>\$75,000 to \$99,999</b>	11.0%	11.8%	11.7%
<b>\$100,000 to \$149,999</b>	8.9%	11.5%	12.6%
<b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>	1.3%	2.0%	4.8%
<b>\$200,000 or more</b>	3.5%	2.9%	4.7%
<b>Median</b>	\$42,712	\$47,027	\$51,900

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2009-2013*

#### Major Employers

Calhoun County is fortunate to have a diversity of major employers, providing a range of job opportunities with various skill sets and workforce needs. The largest employers within the County include:

- Formosa Plastics
- Inteplast Group
- Calhoun County ISD
- Alcoa
- Dow Chemical
- Orion Marine Group
- Calhoun County
- Memorial Medical Center
- Seadrift Coke
- INEOS Nitriles
- HEB Grocery

*Source: Port Lavaca Strategic Plan 2014*

Employment data in each sector can be seen in **Table 17**. One surprising characteristic is that there are currently **5,148** jobs estimated in Port Lavaca, which is an additional 452 jobs since 2000. About 20 percent of Port Lavaca's labor force is in manufacturing; these jobs usually require less skill and pay lower wages. Educational services, and health care and social assistance jobs account for 19 percent of the labor force, the second largest employment sector in Port Lavaca. The third and fourth largest employment sectors include construction (15.2 percent) and retail jobs (13.8 percent), which also tend to be low-wage jobs.

**Table 18** contains similar information from a different source – the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is a method of categorizing businesses for analytical purposes. As shown by the gold highlights, the two sources have consistent data that show the most common industries in Port Lavaca are construction, manufacturing, retail, education/social services, and public administration. Many of these industries do not require higher standards of education, which may indicate that Port Lavaca is in need of additional workforce training opportunities.

**Table 17. Employment by Industry**

Employment Industry	2000		2013	
	#	%	#	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	156	3.3%	128	2.5%
Construction	726	15.5%	783	15.2%
Manufacturing	1,194	25.4%	1,052	20.4%
Wholesale trade	94	2.0%	110	2.1%
Retail trade	381	8.1%	709	13.8%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	149	3.2%	204	4.0%
Information	45	1.0%	58	1.1%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	122	2.6%	145	2.8%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	193	4.1%	236	4.6%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	869	18.5%	977	19.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	421	9.0%	433	8.4%
Other services, except public administration	144	3.1%	132	2.6%
Public administration	202	4.3%	181	3.5%
Total employment	4,696	100.0%	5,148	100.0%

*Source: U.S. Census 2000, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

**Table 18. Employment by NAICS Code**

Industry	Businesses	Employees	Employee %
Ag, forestry, fishing	10	14	0.3%
Mining	3	9	0.2%
Utilities	1	4	0.1%
Construction	33	580	14.1%
Manufacturing	15	304	7.4%
Wholesale trade	18	102	2.5%
Retail trade	91	670	16.3%
Transportation & warehousing	15	106	2.6%
Information	7	39	0.9%
Finance & insurance	23	135	3.3%
Real estate	25	74	1.8%
Professional services	46	145	3.5%
Administrative & waste services	92	180	4.4%
Education	12	449	10.9%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	9	27	0.7%
Accommodation & food services	46	162	3.9%
Other services	79	244	5.9%
Public administration	23	574	13.9%
Total, all industries	588	4,123	100%

*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, www.bls.gov*



## Revenue Sources

Property, sales, and hotel tax are the primary source of revenue for most local governments, including Port Lavaca. The following information was included in the City's Demographic and Economic Profile (Holtkamp, 2013) and included here for reference.

## Property and Sales Taxes

The majority of funding for local governments comes from property taxes and sales tax. Property taxes are collected by a number of entities, with the City, County, and School District being the primary drivers. In addition, there are a number of special districts that collect taxes in all or part of the County. These districts provide specific services and collect taxes to be used within that district's boundaries on approved projects. **Table 19** provides an overview of the taxing districts and the basic rate. Specific information on exemptions, etc. can be found at the County Appraisal website.

The Sales Tax in Port Lavaca is the State maximum of 8.25 percent. Of this, 6.25 percent goes to the State of Texas, while the remaining is divided between the City and County. Calhoun County collects 0.5 cent, leaving 1.5 cents for the City. The City has seen steady growth in sales receipts since the economic downturn in 2008 and receipts have finally regained the level they were in 2008. These figures are shown by calendar year, rather than fiscal year, so they may be different than City records.

In 2011, the City hired Catalyst Commercial to develop a detailed Marketing Profile of the community. This report has extensive details on the existing retail environment in Port Lavaca. Rather than recreating the wheel in this report, it is recommended the City review this report for details on the retail marketplace.



**Table 19. Property Tax Rates and Entities (2013)**

	Rate / \$100
Calhoun County	0.4900
City of Seadrift	0.5000
City of Point Comfort	0.9156
Port Lavaca	0.7900
Calhoun County ISD	1.2936
Calhoun Port Authority	0.0025
WCID #1	0.0565
LaSalle WCID #1A	0.5700
Drainage District #6	0.0320
Drainage District #8	0.2964
Drainage District #10	0.1957
Drainage District #11	0.1719
Port O'Connor Improvement District	0.3700
Port O'Connor MUD Defined Area #1	0.6300
Groundwater Conservation District	0.0100
<i>Source: City of Port Lavaca</i>	

### Hotel and Motel Taxes

Hotels, motels, and bed and breakfast establishments are levied a Hotel / Motel tax. This tax is intended to be used on projects that will put 'heads in beds', which means projects need to promote tourism in the community. This can include marketing, festivals and events, and similar projects. In 2014, the City had 11 hotel properties and collected \$482,646 in hotel sales tax. This is a significant increase over the receipts from the same timeframe in 2013, which was \$351,208. This, combined with growth in retail receipts, show that Port Lavaca is seeing solid economic growth. It will be important to focus on diversifying the economy and adding higher wage, primary employment to supplement the growth in the retail and service economy.

**Table 20. Hotel Tax Revenue**

	4th QTR 2014	1st QTR 2015	2nd QTR 2015	3rd QTR 2015
<b>Best Western</b>	\$21,107.30	\$15,758.81	\$19,231.68	\$19,986.27
<b>Chaparral Motel</b>	\$12,812.53	\$6,155.92	\$3,640.33	\$5,598.79
<b>America's Best Value</b>	\$19,684.63	\$6,968.14	\$7,404.87	\$12,450.44
<b>Executive Inn</b>	\$11,962.23	\$7,876.35	\$6,832.26	\$11,508.95
<b>KV Corp (Holiday Inn)</b>	\$2,186.44	\$1,037.83	\$1,078.65	\$1,250.72
<b>Motel 6</b>	\$8,760.59	\$5,723.11	\$6,136.90	\$8,108.62
<b>Holiday Inn</b>	\$27,415.61	\$25,945.10	\$27,982.23	\$34,535.46
<b>Royal Inn</b>	\$10,308.03	\$3,988.56	\$3,101.87	\$5,330.21
<b>Sands Motel</b>	\$983.39	\$897.53	\$822.71	\$861.34
<b>Surf Motel</b>	\$1,391.23	\$691.41	\$121.98	\$386.99
<b>La Quinta</b>	\$27,023.15	\$18,770.04	\$19,063.86	\$23,525.05
<i>Source: City of Port Lavaca</i>				

### *Recent Successes*

Port Lavaca's Economic Development (ED) Department, created in 2015, has hit the ground running by establishing and restoring old county, regional, and statewide partnerships to advance the economic development of the City and Calhoun County. Relationships with the Governor's Office of Economic Development & Tourism have been established and our ED Department is in the pipeline for industrial Requests for Information (RFI's) and are responding and building inventory to respond for future requests. The information is being compiled by using our local partners including Calhoun County Commissioner's Court, The Port Authority of Calhoun County, and Victoria Economic Development Corporation.

A comprehensive Business Retention and Expansion Program is currently being developed by utilizing partnerships between the City's ED Department, Chamber of Commerce, and the University of Houston - Victoria Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The SBDC has entered into a Memo of Understanding with the City and the Chamber to provide business consulting services at the City's offices on a regular basis. This regional effort is the first of its kind to bring these services to a rural community.

The City has submitted a letter of determination to the Texas Historic Commission to establish a state- and federally-recognized historic district so that aging and underutilized or blighted properties will qualify for state and federal tax credits to support development of our historic downtown.

Two downtown buildings have already changed hands to owners who plan to use the incentives to renovate and reopen the buildings as event centers and live-above residences.

Redfish Retreat – a 550-acre development that has been dormant since the real estate collapse of 2008 – has revived and resumed selling lots and building the infrastructure for future development of the property. Last year, 44 of the 55 Phase I lots were sold. There will be a total of 345 lots added to the housing market once the development is completed. Sales will resume in the Spring.

The future of Port Lavaca is bright and the Economic Development department will continue to be persistent in bringing the tools and best practices to Port Lavaca that will help stimulate the growth Port Lavaca seeks as a community.

*- City of Port Lavaca Economic Development Department*

## Local Attractions

### Downtown

Downtown Port Lavaca offers numerous opportunities, including the Main Street Theater, historic murals, and a wide variety of shopping. The area is overseen by Port Lavaca Main Street, which provides funding and leadership for downtown improvements and activities. The downtown is marked by several historic buildings including Melcher's Hardware (designated), Beach Hotel, and Main Street Theatre. The downtown also features Faye Bauer Sterling Park, a Mini Park between the hulls of two old buildings. As the Waterfront Master Plan discusses, downtown has a unique character with lots of opportunity for renovation and renewal. The area is well suited for boutique shops, local restaurants, and low intensity services as opposed to major retail operations.



### Waterfront and Nautical Landings Marina

Nautical Landings Marina is the only marina in proximity to the Lavaca, Cox, Keller, and Chocolate Bays. The marina features newly-renovated floating docks, dayroom, and restrooms. The marina offers limited services aside from docking, and is within relative biking or walking distance of shops. The Marina is adjacent to Bayfront Peninsula Park, one of Port Lavaca's two waterfront parks and the only locations of public waterfront access. Because Nautical Landings is the sole local marina, it is prime for higher intensity and quality development and use. The marina is a potential launch point for future waterfront activities or events.



### Lighthouse Beach and RV Park

Lighthouse Beach is Port Lavaca's other waterfront park, also doubling as the City's public beach. Maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department, the Beach features nearly a mile of talking trail, boardwalk, picnic areas, and a covered pavilion. The area also features a full RV park that accommodates up to 55 units. Lighthouse Beach is another potential launch point for future waterfront activities or events and could serve as one of the focal points for Port Lavaca's coastal culture.





### Port Lavaca Main Street Theatre

The Port Lavaca Main Street Theater was at its prime in the early to mid-1900s. The theatre fell into disrepair following decentralization of the City's downtown until it was renovated in 1990s. Today, the Main Street Theatre is fully-functional with a stage, balcony, and 263 seats. The theatre puts on a number of shows annually. The site is owned and operated by the Main Street Committee.



### Calhoun County Museum

The Calhoun County Museum was established by the Calhoun County Commissioner's Court in 1964. The museum is currently located in an add-on to the original jail building that was built in 1896. The museum continues to grow and serve the citizens of Calhoun County by keeping its rich history alive. It is the mission of the Calhoun County Museum to acquire, document, preserve, study, and exhibit artifacts relating to the history, natural history, and maritime history of Calhoun County so that these important artifacts of culture can be shared with future generations. The Museum also provides information related to historic sites and offers a historic sites tour with more than 40 sites in Calhoun County.



Source: Calhoun County Museum

### Port Lavaca Southern Pacific Depot

The Southern Pacific Depot is located along the former San Antonio and Mexican Gulf Railroad, which began construction in 1850. The line initially extended from Indianola to Port Lavaca; the line was later connected to Victoria and then San Antonio in 1877. The rail line was originally used to transport goods, then later provided passenger service to Port Lavaca's beaches through the 1930s. The City purchased the train depot from the Chamber of Commerce in 2014.



### Events

Port Lavaca hosts a number of events throughout the year that draw attention and revenue to the City. Port Lavaca's Flip Flop Festival, now entering its ninth year, is one of the best examples. Held every September in Bayfront Park, the festival features music, contests, and food while raising money for the Bayfront Veteran's Memorial and honoring military members and veterans. Other local events include carnivals, an annual Consignment Auction, and various holiday activities at Bayfront Peninsula, among others.

*"It's a chance for Port Lavaca to show what it has for people visiting from different communities."*

*Tim Dent, Victoria Advocate 2015*

## Recommendations

The following section outlines recommendations related to the following topics:

- Economic Development Toolkit
- Waterfront Protection and Enhancements
- Tourism Accommodations
- Downtown Enhancements

## Economic Development Toolkit

The following incentives and tools are possible funding and economic development resources to retain existing businesses and attract new businesses to Port Lavaca. These incentives focus on efforts that would be initiated by the City. The City should investigate the following programs to determine which, if any, are appropriate for Port Lavaca. Many other tax credits and loan programs are available for property/business owners, which can be found at the Texas Comptroller's website or the Office of the Governor's website.



**Table 21. Economic Development Toolkit**

### Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones

Tax increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs) are special districts where public improvements are funded with tax revenues resulting from increased property values. A TIRZ is not an additional tax assessment. The property tax rate paid by property owners is the same as paid in other areas of a city, but the additional tax paid on the increased property value is allotted to a special fund to finance improvement projects within the TIRZ.

The major benefit of a TIRZ is that the property owners are paying the same tax rate as without the TIRZ, however all of the increment is used for improvements in that area. Also, other taxing jurisdictions can partner with the City and add some or all of their "increment" to the pool of funds to leverage the public improvements within the district. The disadvantages are that only public improvements as defined in the statute can be paid for by the TIRZ. Also, the district is dissolved once the TIRZ debt is paid off, leaving the improvements to be maintained by the general fund of the city. TIRZs rely on large increases in taxable property values to create the revenues needed; therefore they are utilized mainly for either "raw land" developments or large scale redevelopment projects with demolition of "blighted" properties and subsequent large increases in property values.

### Public or Business Improvement Districts

Public or Business Improvement Districts (PIDs/BIDs) rely on additional assessments of property owners to pay for public improvements within the district. The City Council, upon petition by the property owners, may create an "assessment district" and existing properties are "assessed" based on existing property values and benefit to the property. It is not a tax because the property owner's petition to be assessed an annual fee to provide the revenues needed to pay for the public improvements within the district. Unlike a TIRZ, increases in values are not needed to fund the district so it is an excellent mechanism for redevelopment projects. The disadvantage is that property owners must pay the additional assessment in addition to existing property taxes.

### Municipal Management Districts

A Municipal Management District is a special district that can be set up with some of the attributes of both a TIRZ and a PID. It can use a combination of existing and new taxes and also can use special assessments to construct public improvements within the district. It has a process of being set up either by the City or by special legislation.

### 380 Agreements

Chapter 380 grants and sales tax rebates are direct financial contributions to the developer or new business owner. While care needs to be used in this incentive mechanism, it is effective in attracting underutilized sectors of economic development. Chapter 380 Agreements allow cities to attract development by refunding a portion of the sales tax the project generates back to the developer under a long-term contract.

### Community Development Financial Institution

Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) provide financial services to lower-income and otherwise underserved communities, which may include small business loans, bond assistance, affordable housing, venture capital, and nonprofit support, among other services.



### **Community Development Entity/New Markets Tax Credit Program**

Becoming a Community Development Entity (CDE) allows an entity to participate in the New Markets Tax Credit Program (NMTCP). The NMTCP provides tax credits in exchange for equity in the CDE to promote development in economically distressed communities.

### **Texas Enterprise Fund**

A 'deal-closing' fund that provides cash grants for job creation and capital investment for projects looking at a Texas site versus an out of state location.

### **Business Rent Subsidy Program**

A Business Rent Subsidy Grant Program is a way to stimulate commercial investment in the City. The program utilizes rent subsidy to encourage the filling of previously unoccupied buildings with new businesses. The program would enhance the economic development of the City by offering matching grant funds for rent subsidy to help new businesses survive and thrive during their initial months in a previously unoccupied building. This helps with the creation of new businesses and fills empty buildings at the same time.

## Waterfront Protection and Enhancements

The area along the waterfront primarily consists of parks, beaches, marinas, marshes, and wetlands. Much of the area is underutilized and in need of improvements. Past economic policies have impacted Port Lavaca's environmental and infrastructure conditions. Over time, the need for restoration of the landscape became apparent. The City is pursuing revitalization of the environmental conditions in the bay to create a resilient and prosperous economy focused on the shoreline. These efforts will emphasize restoring ecological conditions and modernization/revitalization of the shoreline infrastructure. This strategy is supported by the community input obtained throughout the planning process.



RESTORE Act funding is available to communities along the Gulf Coast shoreline for a variety of revitalization approaches connected to estuary water quality improvements, ecological restoration, and economic improvements in balance with the natural environment. This source is one of the best alternatives to fund the community's shoreline needs. If Port Lavaca is selected to receive these grants, it will be a major opportunity to complete a series of phased projects. The proposed projects include:

1. Shoreline clean-up, debris removal, structure removal, and sediment investigations
2. Shoreline habitat creation through beneficial use of dredge material (creation of marshes, oyster reefs, and living shorelines)
3. Develop tourism opportunities on the City shorelines (boardwalk, educational programs, ecotourism industry)

The positive impacts of these projects would be seen community-wide, through improved quality of life, increased property values, increased tax revenue to the City, increased tourism to support local retail and restaurants, and establishing new employment opportunities, among many others. These initiatives can only be achieved with financial support from programs such as the RESTORE Act, Texas General Land Office coastal programs, TPWD, and NOAA habitat programs, USACE's beneficial use of dredging material, and other funding from non-governmental organizations and local industries.

The following recommendations build upon these proposed projects as well as those established by the Waterfront Implementation Plan. These recommendations seek to organize a balance between park improvements, quality of life amenities, local economic development, and wetland preservation.

### ***RESTORE Act:***

*Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act*

## Wetlands and Living Shorelines

### Wetlands

Wetlands are some of the most diverse and important ecosystems, and are a major feature of the landscape in many parts of the world. They are commonly known as valuable resources for fish and wildlife protection, but are also known to stabilize groundwater in times of both flood and drought, protect shorelines, and cleanse polluted water from both natural and human sources. Wetlands are also biological hotspots, not only because of the unique habitat they provide, but the food chain and biodiversity they support.

Many think of wetlands simply as shallow water “swamps,” but wetlands encompass ecosystems from coastal salt marsh to the classic northern sphagnum bog. Wetlands can be challenging to define due to the wide range of characteristics and habitats where they occur. Despite the differences, three main components are used to define wetlands:

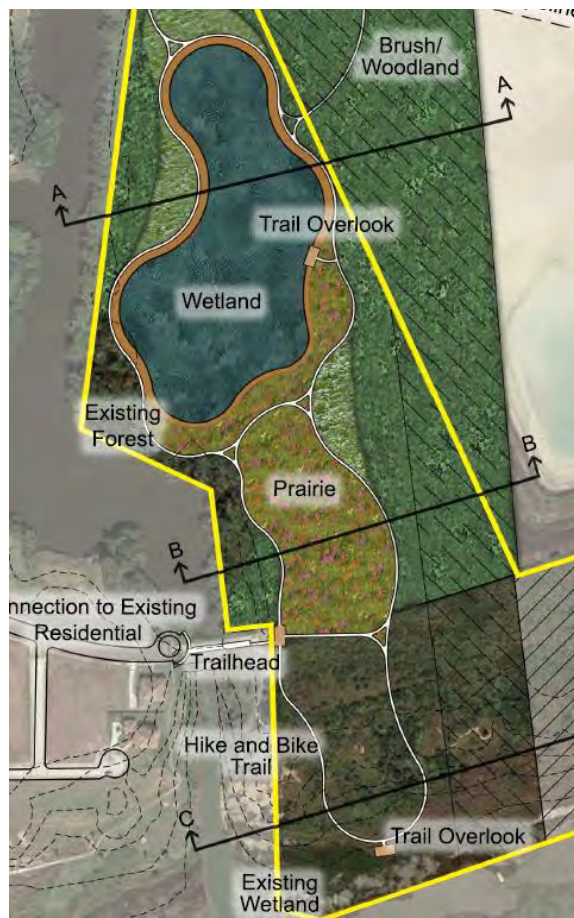
1. Hydrology: Defined by the presence of water at the surface or within the root zone
2. Soils: Wetlands have unique soil conditions marked by the influence of water
3. Vegetation: Wetlands support vegetation adapted to wet conditions, and lack vegetation intolerant of wet conditions

Wetlands are often located at the edges between uplands and deep water environments, and range in size from prairie potholes dotting the landscape to large expanses of wetlands thousands of acres in size. Their loss can happen through the development of large parcels, or more commonly through a process called cumulative loss, where small pieces are lost over time and the wetland gradually becomes fragmented, losing its hydrology.

The health of humans and the rest of the planet can be tied to the importance of wetlands, and their protection is now recognized and has been translated into protection laws. Conservation of wetlands, and their incorporation into development plans remains a vital way to protect their beneficial role in the environment. Part of this shift in mindset pertains to the recognition that wetland values, processes, and functions are critical. These commonly recognized wetland ecological functions, values, processes are considered “ecological services” and include:

- Flood abatement and attenuation, alteration
- Provision of wildlife habitat/biodiversity
- Nutrient sequestration and filtration, transformation
- Groundwater recharge
- Groundwater discharge
- Sediment stabilization and toxicant retention

Figure 32. Example of Wetland Planning



Source: FNI

## Living Shorelines

Shorelines are oftentimes protected and stabilized with hard structures, such as bulkheads, riprap, and seawalls. Although locally effective for protection, increased erosion usually occurs on nearby unprotected shorelines. Additionally, ecological functions of shorelines are lost when a hardened structure is used, since habitat provision and marsh establishment is usually non-existent. Lastly, a hardened structure may withstand most storm events, but structure failure requires large economic investment to fix and maintain. Living shorelines, if designed correctly, are highly resilient and almost self-sustaining.

As more individuals and communities recognize the need for ecosystem services and functions in the built environment, living shorelines are becoming the most appropriate and resilient alternative to shoreline protection. Living shorelines use structural and organic materials for shoreline protection and these typically include:

- Beneficial use of dredged material to create marsh
- Oyster reefs and other substrates that attract oysters
- Wetland and marsh vegetation
- Hard reef structures (stone, reclaimed concrete, etc.)
- Fiber logs

Oyster reef establishment and marsh creation are the two primary living shoreline approaches used along the Texas Coast, and many projects incorporate both approaches. Although the primary reason for creating a living shoreline may be for shoreline protection, living shorelines could provide the following benefits:

- Wave break or wave attenuation
- Oyster establishment
- Water filtration or remediation (via marsh plants or oyster filtration)
- Increased finfish habitat (habitat for economically/recreationally important fish)
- Increased shellfish habitat (habitat for economically/recreationally important shrimp and crabs)
- Flood abatement and storm surge protection
- Relatively affordable to create and maintain





### Boardwalk

A boardwalk is proposed along the bay from Lighthouse Beach Park to Nautical Landings Marina. This boardwalk could act as a preservation technique for sensitive natural resources, a source of entertainment for the community, and a driver for the local economy.

This boardwalk should be a major feature in the City, acting as a primary destination and focal point for many civic activities. The boardwalk should provide views overlooking the bay and have ample pedestrian space with shade pavilions, seating areas, fishing outlets, and beach access. It is recommended that the boardwalk have several pedestrian entrances at street ends. Public right-of-ways should connect the boardwalk to the streetscape and open space system in Port Lavaca, creating a cohesive experience. The character of design elements such as lighting, information kiosks, and seating should be incorporated along the boardwalk add to the overall experience and create a memorable place. The boardwalk route should include informational signage reflecting the ecological value of the bay environment and the history of the City as a key player in the bay culture in Texas.

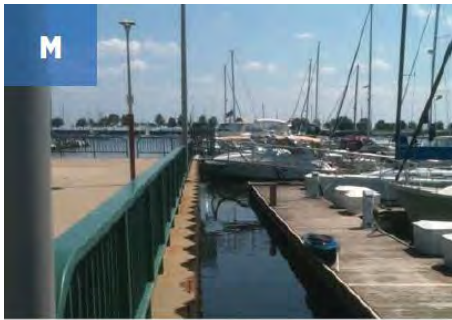
The boardwalk would create an interesting juxtaposition of the natural and built environments – scenic views and educational opportunities strategically complemented by restaurants and storefronts to create a uniquely vibrant area in Port Lavaca. To ensure the wetland area is properly preserved, Port Lavaca should create a small area plan for the shoreline and a boardwalk design plan. The small area plan may include an in-depth look at feasibility, environmental impacts, and a variety of build-out options. The boardwalk design plan, on the other hand, may include construction details and design guidelines for the boardwalk.





The Waterfront Implementation Plan (highlighted in **Figure 33**) identifies the key destinations along the bay. The boardwalk should be used to connect these destination points to create a walkable and vibrant Bayfront area.

**Figure 33. Waterfront Implementation Plan Opportunities Analysis for Shoreline Area**



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

### *Bay Clean-Up Efforts*

Several sunken barges are currently located in the Lavaca Bay, which are highly visible from Port Lavaca's shoreline. Additional debris in the bay waters and along the shoreline includes broken pipelines, navigation markers, sunken boats, and industrial equipment. This debris not only detracts from the natural beauty of the area, but also poses a threat to boats in the harbor, other recreational uses, and the bay ecosystems.

The City has initiated previous efforts to clean debris from the shoreline, however the sunken barges remain a significant challenge for the City. The City should continue to pursue funding support from FEMA and the RESTORE grant opportunity. Removal of these sunken barges would allow for future restoration efforts, recreational activities, improved water quality, and habitat restoration, among other benefits.

**Figure 34. Aerial Image of Sunken Barges in Lavaca Bay**



*Source: Google Maps*



## Water Recreation and Ecotourism

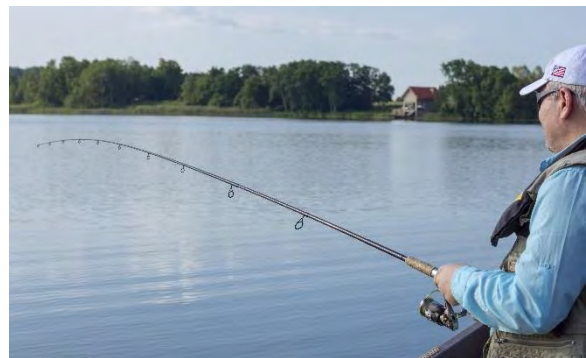
Port Lavaca's location on Lavaca Bay differentiates the City from many other cities in the region and places it in a prime position to capitalize from water-related development, amenities, and activities. Currently, Port Lavaca's use of the waterfront is vastly underutilized – a point repeatedly raised by citizens during the feedback process. Over 80 percent of residents identified the City's waterfront location as the City's greatest asset.

One way that Port Lavaca could begin utilizing its waterfront in the short term is to invest in and promote tourism-related amenities and activities. These initiatives can be undertaken faster than development, quickly benefit the City's perception, and immediately add new tax dollars to the City's revenue. Family friendly options like the beach, waterfront parks, and water sports allow the whole family to find an activity that interests them.

### *Sports and Recreational Activities*

Port Lavaca should identify a variety sports and activities to focus on attracting to the area, such as windsurfing, paddle boarding, fishing, kayaking, jet skiing, and boating. The City should then conduct a feasibility study to determine the best fit activities by popularity and demand. Such studies consider factors like market conditions, comparable amenity benchmarking, competitive amenity analysis, potential user interviews, and community outreach to determine financial projections, project funding, and economic impact of the activities deemed to be a good fit. Once best fit activities have been identified, Port Lavaca should seek to host events centered on these activities (e.g., tournaments, festivals, training camps). These kinds of events draw visitors to the area, improve public perception of the City, and contribute to sense of place.

Water recreation could be supported through zoning regulations to capitalize on the appropriate development along the bay. Water sport, hotels, and marine oriented businesses should be encouraged on properties along the bay. Directional signage for available rentals and water access should be located within the City and advertisements for rentals and special events should be oriented to the highways to attract visiting traffic. The City should conduct an analysis of the surrounding areas to determine underrepresented watersports and consider hosting an annual water sport events such as fishing, sailing, and waterskiing. Regional tournaments attract a wide audience and annual reoccurrence creates a cyclical event to market.





### *Ecotourism*

Ecotourism is another opportunity for Port Lavaca to capitalize on its desirable coastal location. Ecotourism is defined by the World Conservancy Union as “environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples.”

Ecotourism differs from traditional tourism in the following ways: ecotourism stresses conservation, education, traveler responsibility and community involvement, while traditional tourism can be counterproductive or harmful to ecotourism. To mitigate these harmful effects, initiatives require deliberate planning with regards to sustainability, environmental protection, and resource preservation.

Ecotourism practices that could fit within Port Lavaca include scuba diving, coastal birdwatching, fishing, nature education centers, or responsible marine life excursions. The City may wish to explore ecotourism certifications, such as Green Globe or Green Key, to highlight Port Lavaca as an ecotourism destination. Additionally, establishing a policy regarding ecotourism would help clarify the City’s goals and intent. For example, the City may wish to state it will focus on sustainable practices, environmentally-responsible marketing, education, and benefitting local communities.



### *Promotional Materials*

Port Lavaca should undertake an advertising initiative including printed materials for distribution to hotels and tourism offices, advertising in related publications, promotion on social media, and marketing to potential sponsors or partners. In addition to marketing, Port Lavaca should create guides for visitors including maps, trip planners, and packing itineraries.

A number of coastal cities in Texas exemplify Port Lavaca’s potential, particularly Corpus Christi, Galveston, and South Padre. All three example cities offer variations of boating, sailing, surfing (including wind and kitesurfing), kayaking, and fishing. Some offer additional amenities like horseback riding, scuba diving, extreme sports, birdwatching, and marine education. All three cities are also home to waterparks and host events that highlight their attractions including kite festivals, concerts, spring break, and competitions.

## Tourism Accommodations

### *Hotels and Motels*

Hotels and motels generate hotel occupancy tax revenue for the City and support the tourism industry. Port Lavaca currently has 11 hotels/motels, all of which are located along SH 35:

1. Americas Best Value Inn
2. Best Western Port Lavaca Inn
3. Chaparral Motel
4. Days Inn
5. Executive Inn Port Lavaca
6. Holiday Inn Express & Suites Port Lavaca
7. La Quinta Inn & Suites Port Lavaca
8. Motel 6
9. Royal Inn
10. Sands Motel
11. Surf Motel



All of these hotels/motels are considered “limited service”. To attract a wider array of visitors, the City should focus its efforts on attracting a full or select service hotel. An ideal location for a future hotel site may be near Downtown/Bayfront Park. These recommendations could be accomplished through economic development incentives and/or zoning regulations.

**Table 22. Hotel Types**

#### **Full Service Hotels**

A full service hotel is distinguished by the abundant provision of food and beverage services for guests and groups. Hotels of this type also have the ability to facilitate large meetings and special events, and generally have on-site restaurants, lounges, and meeting spaces. Spas, doormen, valet parking, extended room service, concierge services, and high-end restaurants are other distinguishing features of full-service hotels. Examples include: DoubleTree, Embassy Suites, Hilton, Marriott, Renaissance, Ritz-Carlton, W Hotels, and Westin.

#### **Select Service Hotels**

A select service hotel is a hybrid between full service and limited service. Select service hotels generally have more in common with the limited service hotels, but some features of a full service hotel at a smaller scale. A select-service hotel might have a specialty restaurant, but only offer a limited menu and select days, or have small-scale meeting facilities. Examples include: Courtyard by Marriott, Wyndham Garden Inn, Hilton Garden Inn, Hyatt Place, Clarion, and Ramada.

#### **Limited Service Hotels**

A limited service hotel is distinguished by simple guest services; or a hotel without restaurant and banquet facilities. Typical services offered by a limited-service hotel could be a business center, fitness room, laundry facility, and swimming pools. Examples include: Candlewood Suites, Comfort Inn, Fairfield Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Hampton Inn, La Quinta, Motel 6, SpringHill Suites, and Super 8.

### Short-Term Residential Rentals

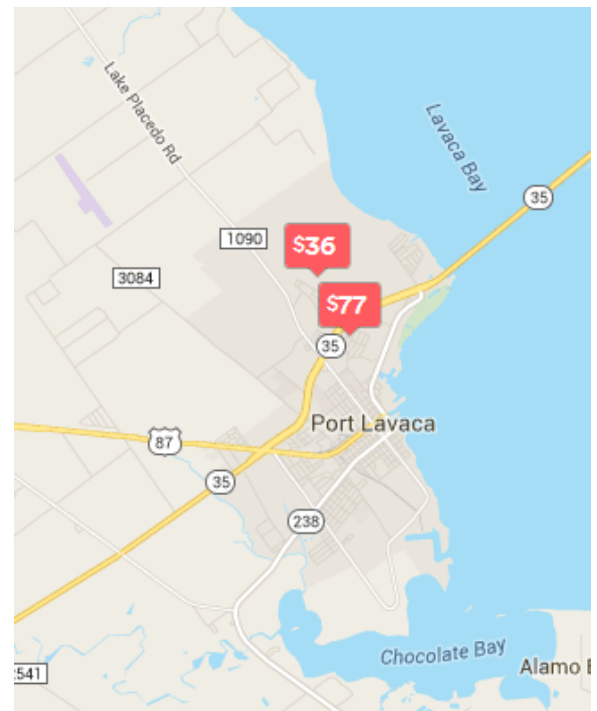
Many tourists seek residential rentals for lodging rather than a hotel. Short-term residential rentals can be more appealing due to location, price, comfort, amenities, number of guests, and many other reasons. While vacation homes have likely existed in Port Lavaca for years, websites such as AirBNB, HomeAway, and VRBO have recently increased the popularity of these rentals.

The City currently has no regulations in place for short-term residential rentals. It is recommended that the City develop short-term residential rental regulations to address the following issues:

- Must be included on a City-maintained registry and must receive a permit from the City,
- Must pay the applicable hotel occupancy taxes, and
- City can revoke the permit due to recurring complaints, code violations, nonpayment of hotel occupancy taxes, or other reasons.

These regulations could be a standalone ordinance or incorporated within a future zoning ordinance.

Figure 35. Rentals Currently Available via AirBNB



Screenshot taken Feb 25, 2016



## Downtown Enhancements

The downtown area is an asset to Port Lavaca because of the historic feel and charm it brings to the City; however, special attention needs to be given to this area to revitalize the buildings and create a destination. Creating a sense of place in the downtown area will allow Port Lavaca to have a unique element that will benefit residents, as well as draw tourists from around the region.

### *Downtown Streetscape Improvements*

One of the biggest differences between an urban and suburban environment is pedestrian orientation and walkability. Walkability refers to how conducive an area is for walking. A successful downtown area should be walkable. The visitor should be able to park their vehicle in one location and walk throughout downtown to various destinations.

There are a variety of design features that should be incorporated downtown to ensure this walkability. Port Lavaca is somewhat constrained in terms of streetscaping due to the limited right-of-way width. However, some of these design features may be added to the existing pedestrian realm or could be incorporated into any future redevelopments in the area. The incremental redevelopment of downtown will start to attract attention to the area.





## Wayfinding

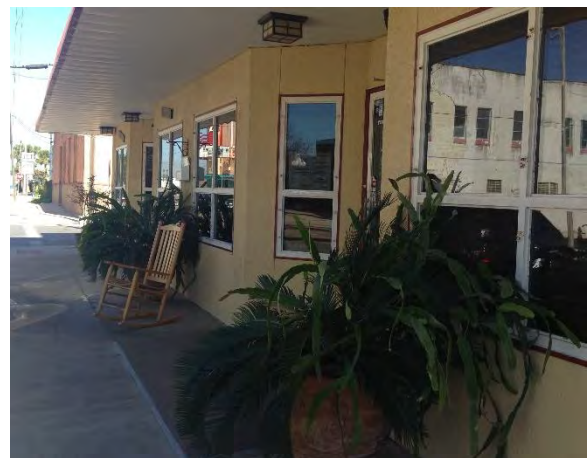
Wayfinding signage serves two purposes. First, it helps to direct downtown visitors to places of interest including the bay, parks, public facilities, and other activity generators. The second purpose is downtown branding. Consistent wayfinding signage reinforces downtown's design characteristics and helps to establish a sense of place. Wayfinding monuments are pedestrian-level signage – they are designed to be seen and read by pedestrians, not motorists. The wayfinding signs should be designed around a central theme to compliment the other streetscape elements like benches and lighting poles.



## Landscaping

Landscaping is a critical element for a downtown because it helps to create a sense of place and enhances the overall aesthetic feel of the area. Port Lavaca's downtown area currently does not have landscaping and there is not sufficient right-of-way to add landscaped areas between the street and the sidewalk. Several current businesses have placed planter boxes and seating on the sidewalk, which helps create a more inviting and interesting environment. It is important that the planter boxes are adequately maintained by the business owners and allow for sufficient pedestrian movement along the sidewalks.

A cooperative partnership with the Main Street organization could allow for shared funding of these planter boxes. Additionally, a community event could be held to invite residents to come downtown and help build planter boxes. This event would also help to create interest and a feeling of community in the downtown area.



### Sign and Façade Improvements

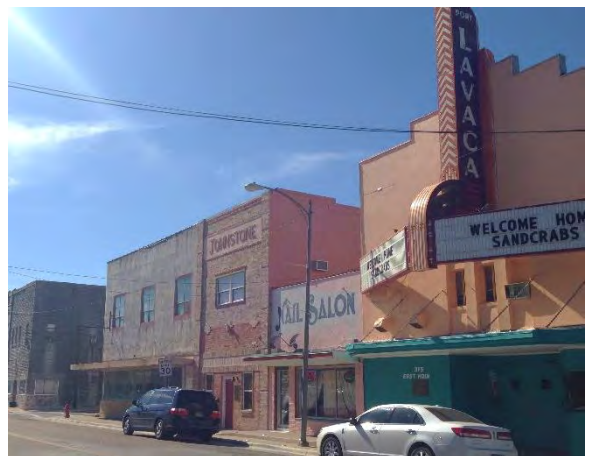
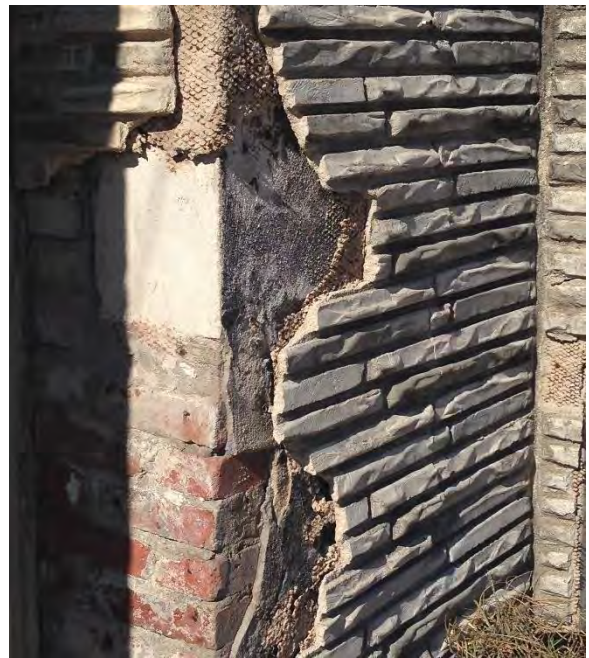
To attract visitors and enhance the overall streetscape, all existing businesses should be encouraged to improve the building façade. Simple exterior upgrades can improve the overall perception of the downtown area. Port Lavaca has many buildings downtown that can be an asset to the area. For example, the Port Lavaca Main Street Theatre has unique character and signage. Exterior upgrades would help to enhance the appearance of the building and attract more visitors.

These façade and signage improvements can be implemented through partial funding from the City and/or Main Street association. These groups could also serve as a Façade Review Committee to review applications from business owners and determine the amount of funding that can be given based on the need.

There should be specific requirements as to what the money can be used for like lighting, awnings, signage, window repair, architectural repair, etc. Many cities around Texas have implemented façade improvement programs. Examples of these cities are El Paso, New Braunfels, Fort Worth, and Buda. In addition to this type of program, federal and state programs can be explored, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

### Main Street Theatre

The Main Street Theatre is a unique asset for Port Lavaca, bringing unique character, historical significance, and cultural opportunities to the City. Many efforts have been made to support the Main Street Theatre, including generous donations from local residents and business hours and countless hours of volunteerism. The City should partner with the Main Street association to identify mutually beneficial opportunities related to the theatre. For example, the City could plan an event downtown that is coordinated with opening night of a performance, or a free matinee show. The City could also explore opportunities to hold events at the theatre, such as staff training, fundraising and drives, or banquets. Another possibility for coordination is for the City to include a link to the theatre's webpage to advertise upcoming events and performances.





### *Port Lavaca Southern Pacific Depot*

The City purchased the depot with the intention of renovating the train for public access. This would be an added benefit to the City since many residents have requested increased preservation of historic buildings, greater tourism opportunities, increased entertainment venues downtown, and a reflection of the “good old days”. This resource also allows an opportunity for the City to seek grant funding for much of the necessary rehabilitation.



### *Adaptive Reuse*

Older structures can provide unique living spaces and are often attractive to creatives and Millennials. Converting some of the older buildings in downtown into residential apartments and lofts will help to rehabilitate vacant buildings and bring permanent residents to downtown. Residents would generate activity and support businesses, creating a thriving destination point within Port Lavaca. Business owners who own an entire building but are only utilizing the first floor for their business can renovate the upper story to a loft to rent. This will add more residential options in downtown, as well as creating additional income for the business owner.

In addition to residential uses, some of the vacant buildings can be retrofitted into shared working spaces. Shared work spaces are increasingly popular as more people work from home or remotely. These spaces are equipped with tables, computers, printers, and meeting rooms. In addition, a coffee shop or small restaurant can accompany the shared workspaces.





### *Downtown Events*

Downtown events are important to the vitality of the area. Annual and seasonal events help to attract more visitors to the area and create more tax-base. The events can be coordinated through the Main Street association, the City, or through a cooperative effort of both entities. Events should utilize the street, by closing off parts of Main Street, to allow for more pedestrian access and for vendors to have space to set up shop. Some events may be one time, but others should be annual events to help brand and market the downtown area. Additionally, the Main Street association should decorate the downtown area in accordance with the season (e.g., Octoberfest, Christmas, Memorial Day, Fourth of July). This will add a unique flair between special events. Example of potential downtown events are:

- Weekly or monthly farmer's markets
- Parades
- Shop local Saturdays with sidewalk sales
- Street festivals with live bands
- Christmas events
- Fall festivals
- Beautification days





## Summary of Economic Development Action Items

Goals	Promoting Quality of Life	Protecting Investments	Supporting Economic Development
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connected neighborhoods for pedestrians and vehicles</li> <li>2. Housing choices for young professionals and seniors</li> <li>3. Recreation opportunities for youth, adults, and visitors</li> <li>4. Adequate infrastructure to support future development</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Compatible uses to reduce conflict</li> <li>6. Beautiful community</li> <li>7. Resilient waterfront that serves as an asset</li> <li>8. Community empowerment to encourage ownership, pride, and involvement</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Destination to attract visitors</li> <li>10. Employment and entertainment opportunities</li> <li>11. Exciting waterfront amenities that generate activity and income</li> <li>12. Active and unique downtown</li> </ol>
Recommendations	<b>Economic Development Toolkit</b> Page 130	Consider establishing a TIRZ that encompasses the downtown and/or waterfront areas if financially feasible.	●
		Encourage a local bank or create a new entity to pursue CDFI designation.	●
		Explore and research various economic development organizations formations to model that will best serve the City, County, and/or regional partners.	●
		Provide informational materials to property/business owners to seek funding opportunities on the Texas Comptroller's website or the Office of the Governor's website.	●
		Finance director to maintain checklist of upcoming budget needs and requests.	●
	<b>Waterfront Protection and Enhancements</b> Page 132	Compile materials and submit an application for RESTORE funding for the three identified projects.	●
		Utilize potential RESTORE funding to conserve and restore wetlands and build living shorelines to repair the natural ecosystem.	●
		Identify the desired placement and path of a boardwalk in Port Lavaca. Consider developing a detailed plan for the boardwalk design.	●
		Continue to pursue RESTORE and FEMA funding to remove the sunken barges from the bay.	●
	<b>Water Recreation and Ecotourism</b> Page 138	Consider a feasibility study to identify water-related sports that are underserved in the region. Allow, encourage, and advertise watersport rentals along the bay to provide entertainment to residents and attract visitors. Develop promotional materials for Port Lavaca's waterfront amenities to attract visitors from across the state and country.	●
		Identify a preferred location for watersport vendors.	●
		Coordinate with potential sponsors to host annual watersport events identified through the feasibility study.	●

	Review materials from the International Ecotourism Society and Texas Parks and Wildlife to assess the potential benefits and demands of becoming an ecotourism destination. If desirable, include ecotourism elements into the RESTORE projects.	●
	Pursue an ecotourism certification and develop a policy statement to define ecotourism in Port Lavaca.	●
<b>Tourism Accommodations</b> <i>Page 140</i>	Focus economic development efforts on attracting a select or full service hotel.	●
	Identify at least one target location for a future hotel (e.g., near Main Street and Commerce Street).	●
	Develop regulations for short-term residential rentals, either as part of a zoning ordinance or as a separate standalone ordinance.	●
<b>Downtown Enhancements</b> <i>Page 142</i>	Allocate budget in future CIPs for downtown streetscape improvements. Evaluate opportunities for partnerships with the Main Street organization to implement these improvements.	●
	Allocate budget in future CIPs for enhancing crosswalks in downtown with lighting and paint.	●
	Coordinate a community event to build landscaping planter boxes in downtown. Request donations of supplies from local building supply stores/hardware stores/nurseries in exchange for advertising.	●
	Evaluate the feasibility of offering a matching program for façade and sign improvements in downtown.	●
	Establish a coordination meeting between the City and the PLMST Board of Directors to plan at least two joint events each calendar year.	●
	Renovate amenities such as the Southern Pacific Depot, Main Street Theater, and Fire Station.	●
	Ensure that adaptive reuse of downtown structures is permitted and facilitated. Approach local developers with incentives to purchase buildings to convert to residential space. Consider creation of a shared workspace/resource center/innovation incubator in these structures.	●
Continue to pursue designation of historic downtown properties on the National Register of Historic Places.	●	

## Chapter 9 | Action Plan

This Action Plan chapter should serve as a “to-do list” for City staff and officials. The Planning Board should conduct annual reviews of *Plan Port Lavaca*, focusing on this chapter. These reviews should be similar to the process of updating the capital improvements plan and budget – completed actions (or recommended actions that may no longer be relevant) should be removed, new actions should be added as needed, and the matrices should be updated.

A special emphasis on the actions that should be initiated within the first year following plan adoption. Some of these actions are “low-hanging fruit” that can be easily accomplished to begin seeing immediate results, while other actions “get the ball rolling” for a larger future endeavor. Note that the items in each table are not listed in order of priority.

The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting started is breaking your complex, overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.

– Mark Twain

**By changing nothing,  
nothing changes.**

– Tony Robbins

Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together.

– Vincent van Gogh

**Success is the sum of small efforts,  
repeated day in and day out.**

– Robert Collier

The key to realizing a dream is to focus not on success, but on significance – and then even the small steps and little victories along your path will take on greater meaning.

– Oprah Winfrey

**Nothing would ever be attempted  
if all possible objections must  
first be overcome.**

– Samuel Jackson

A year from now, you will wish you had started today.

– Karen Lamb

*Big things have small beginnings.*

– Prometheus



## Acronyms used in the Action Plan Tables

### **CDFI**

A Community Development Financial Institution is a designated bank that provides financial services to lower-income and otherwise underserved communities.

### **CIP**

A Capital Improvement Plan is a city's budget for capital improvements for the upcoming year and beyond. Capital improvements include projects such as roadway construction, sidewalk retrofits, or a new park; capital improvements do not include regular operation and maintenance costs such as salaries or most studies.

### **FEMA**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has indicated possible willingness to participate in the removal of the sunken barges in the Bay.

### **HOA**

A Homeowners' Association is a neighborhood organization that contributes to the maintenance and upkeep of a particular subdivision or neighborhood.

### **I/I**

Additional water flows unintentionally entering the wastewater system. Infiltration refers to groundwater that enters the wastewater system; Inflow refers to instances when water from another source flows into the wastewater system.

### **PLMST**

The Port Lavaca Main Street Theatre is a historic and cultural asset located in Downtown Port Lavaca.

### **RESTORE**

The Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economies of the Gulf Coast States Act is federal funding available to communities along the Gulf Coast shoreline for revitalization efforts related to water quality, ecological restoration, and other economic development in coordination with the natural environment.

### **TIRZ**

A Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone is an economic development tool that uses the additional tax revenue from increased property values to fund improvements in the immediate area.

### **UV**

Ultraviolet light can be used as a wastewater disinfectant.

## Actions for Years 1 and 2

Benchmark	Responsible Official(s)	Actions	Goal	Potential Resources
1 Consider adopting development regulations.	City Manager or Designee	Determine what type of development regulations should be adopted by the City (e.g., zoning, aesthetics, historic character). Define the area to be included in the regulations – citywide, downtown, along corridors, or the priority area in <b>Figure 17</b> (page 60). (66)	●	Current city staff time
		Adopt the Waterfront Development Ordinance to work toward the vision of the Waterfront Implementation Plan. (66)	●	
		Develop landscaping regulations for nonresidential and multiple family developments, particularly within the priority area. Develop and maintain a list of approved plant species that are appropriate for the region and drought-tolerant. (86)	●	
		Develop regulations for short-term residential rentals, either as part of a zoning ordinance or as a separate standalone ordinance. (141)	●	
2 Work to improve the downtown and waterfront areas through various activities.	City Manager or Designee	Consider establishing a TIRZ that encompasses the downtown and/or waterfront areas if financially feasible. (130)	●	Current city staff time
		Identify a preferred location for watersport vendors. (138)	●	
		Compile materials and submit an application for RESTORE funding for the three identified projects. Continue to pursue RESTORE and FEMA funding to remove the sunken barges from the bay. (132)	●	
		Continue to pursue designation of historic downtown properties on the National Register of Historic Places. (142)	●	
3 Amend the Subdivision Ordinance.	City Manager or Designee	Adopt a parkland and trail dedication ordinance that requires land dedication (or fee-in-lieu) for parks and improvements. The ordinance should also require developers to dedicate and construct trails in accordance with the trails master plan. (63)	●	Current city staff time
		Require 5' sidewalks along at least one side of the roadway in all new residential developments. (76)	●	
		Establish a minimum distance between median cuts (e.g., “at least 500 feet between median openings”). (84)	●	

			Require new nonresidential developments along major thoroughfares and collector roadways to provide cross-access to adjacent developments to reduce the number of curb-cuts. (84)	●	
			Require connections to existing or future adjacent developments, as depicted on the Future Land Use Map. The number of connections should increase based on the number of lots in the subdivision. (112)	●	
4	Continue park improvements.	City Manager or Designee	Complete the planned improvements at Wilson Park and Bayfront Park. (65)	●	General fund
5	Continue proactive and assertive code enforcement.	City Manager or Designee	Maintain or increase the number of code enforcement actions. (100)	●	Current city staff time
6	Focus efforts on historically- and culturally-significant amenities.	City Manager or Designee	Renovate amenities such as the Southern Pacific Depot, Main Street Theater, and Fire Station. (144)	●	Hotel/motel fund, general fund, and grant funding opportunities
7	Ensure adequate funding resources to support the upcoming Plan Port Lavaca actions.	City Manager or Designee	Finance director to maintain checklist of upcoming budget needs and requests. (130)	●	General fund
8	Beautify the community with a special emphasis on its corridors.	City Manager or Designee	Develop a Community Clean-Up Calendar customized to Port Lavaca's specific needs and prepare a packet of information to provide to the Sponsor Group coordinator that outlines the tasks, expected outcomes, applicable rules, tips for requesting donations, and other logistics details. Designate a staff member or appoint a community volunteer to coordinate the program and manage any associated budget. (113)	●	Hotel/motel fund, general fund, and grant funding opportunities
			Participate in the Keep Texas Beautiful or Keep America Beautiful program. (113)	●	
9	Promote tourism opportunities in Port Lavaca.	City Manager or Designee	Review materials from the International Ecotourism Society and Texas Parks and Wildlife to assess the potential benefits and demands of becoming an ecotourism destination. If desirable, include ecotourism elements into the RESTORE projects. (132)	●	Hotel/motel fund and general fund
			Pursue an ecotourism certification and develop a policy statement to define ecotourism in Port Lavaca. (139)	●	
			Identify the desired placement and path of a boardwalk in Port Lavaca. Consider developing a detailed plan for the boardwalk design. (135)	●	
			Establish a coordination meeting between the City and the PLMST Board of Directors to plan at least two joint events each calendar year. (148)	●	



### Actions for Years 3 to 9

Benchmark	Responsible Official(s)	Actions	Goal	Potential Resources
10 Land Use and Recreation	City Manager or Designee	Continue to use the Future Land Use Map when making development and infrastructure decisions. Ensure that the map is reviewed by the Planning Commission annually. Use the Future Land Use map to develop a zoning map to be adopted by City Council. Provide an informational page on the City's website to explain the purpose and impacts of zoning. (59)	●	Current city staff time
		Plan and budget to acquire future parkland as the population increases. Park locations should consider the underserved zones identified in <b>Table 12</b> (page 62). Develop a detailed parks and trails master plan to ensure that recreation amenities grow with the future population. Allocate budget each year to replace aging playground equipment and install new types of facilities, which could be supplemented by park dedication improvement fees. (62)	●	Current city staff time, general fund
		Improve Lighthouse Beach by increasing signage at SH 35 and Broadway Street, encouraging food trucks to be present on a regular schedule, and considering implementing zoning regulations. (65)	●	Current city staff time
		Develop recreational marketing materials that the City and Chamber of Commerce could distribute to residents and visitors to increase awareness and use of the City's existing recreation amenities. (65)	●	Current city staff time, hotel/motel fund
11 Transportation and Circulation	City Manager or Designee	Focus corridor beautification efforts along the key corridors of SH 35, US 87, and Broadway. (78)	●	Current city staff time, general fund, grants
		Develop a citywide sidewalk plan. Conduct an inventory of existing sidewalks and document current conditions. Identify priority areas for sidewalks by evaluating popular routes, missing connections, density, funding opportunities, and safety concerns. As a component of the recommended sidewalk plan, identify key locations for pedestrian upgrades. Suggested target areas include the SH 35, US 87, and Broadway priority area, park access points, and school routes. Continue to pursue grant funding, such as the Safe Routes to Schools program. Allocate CIP budget regularly for retrofitting areas with sidewalks. (76)	●	Current city staff time, general fund, grants
		Revise the existing roadway cross-sections to include alternatives for the inclusion of on- or off-street bike lanes on future roadways. (76)	●	Current city staff time
		Evaluate the current traffic volumes, roadway and right-of-way width, ownership patterns, roadway conditions, and adjacent destination points along Virginia Street and Half League Road to determine appropriateness for Complete Streets retrofitting. (79)	●	Current city staff time
		Establish an adopt-a-highway program to help maintain the medians and roadways, especially in the priority area. (78)	●	Current city staff time

			Continue to build welcoming entryway features and update the existing entry signage along US 87 in the eastern part of the City and on SH 35 near the Causeway. The signage should build upon Port Lavaca’s waterfront character. (81)	●	Current city staff time, general fund
12	Infrastructure	City Manager or Designee	Enlist the services of a consulting firm to develop a cost estimate and design for the new ground storage tank. Allocate budget in future CIPs to construct a new ground storage tank. (94)	●	Utility fund, bonds
			Allocate budget in future CIPs to rehab/replace lift stations, as prioritized by the condition assessment. (94)	●	Utility fund
			Allocate budget in the CIP to replace the existing UV disinfection system at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. (94)	●	Utility fund
			Allocate budget in the CIP to develop a Water and Wastewater Master Plan. Enlist the services of a consulting firm to develop a Water and Wastewater Master Plan. Allocate budget in the CIP to fund the improvements recommended in the Water and Wastewater Master Plan. (94)	●	Utility fund, bonds
			Continue to fund, prioritize, and conduct replacement/rehab of current cast iron or asbestos cement water lines. (94)	●	Utility fund
			Continue to fund, prioritize, and conduct replacement/rehab of wastewater lines to reduce I/I. (94)	●	Utility fund
13	Community Character	City Manager or Designee	Provide information to property owners regarding the establishment of voluntary HOAs and other similar neighborhood organizations. Evaluate the recommended neighborhood empowerment programs to determine which programs would be most effective for Port Lavaca. (113)	●	Current city staff time
			Pursue (or assist property owners to pursue) affordable housing and housing improvement grant opportunities. Evaluate the feasibility of offering a City-sponsored housing improvement grant to match homeowners’ contributions toward renovations in “Rehabilitation” areas. (106)	●	Current city staff time
			Allow for and possibly encourage Traditional Neighborhood Design subdivisions. Possible incentives may include permit fast-tracking, waived fees, and reductions to applied development standards. (110)	●	Current city staff time
			Allocate budget for future demolitions of unsafe structures. (100)	●	General fund
			Require future subdivisions to integrate a minimum number of amenities from a menu into the development design (e.g., trails, landscaping, masonry fences). (111)	●	Current city staff time

			Establish a list of appropriate incentives to encourage desirable use types and infill development (e.g., fee waivers, fast-tracked reviews, grants). (110)	●	Current city staff time
			Adopt regulations (either in a future zoning ordinance or in a standalone code) to address safety concerns related to wind turbines. Regulations should ensure a minimum clearance and fall zone. (112)	●	Current city staff time
			Establish several residential zoning districts with varying lot dimensions to create additional variety and predictability in lot sizes. (110)	●	Current city staff time
			Apply to become a Certified Retirement Community. Assemble a board to lead the application process. (103)	●	Current city staff time
14	<b>Economic Development</b>	City Manager or Designee	Explore and research various economic development organizations formations to model that will best serve the City, County, and/or regional partners. Encourage a local bank or create a new entity to pursue CDFI designation. (130)	●	Current city staff time
			Provide informational materials to property/business owners to seek funding opportunities on the Texas Comptroller's website or the Office of the Governor's website. (130)	●	Current city staff time
			Utilize potential RESTORE funding to conserve and restore wetlands and build living shorelines to repair the natural ecosystem. (132)	●	Current city staff time
			Consider a feasibility study to identify water-related sports that are underserved in the region. Allow, encourage, and advertise watersport rentals along the bay to provide entertainment to residents and attract visitors. Develop promotional materials for Port Lavaca's waterfront amenities to attract visitors from across the state and country. Coordinate with potential sponsors to host annual watersport events identified through the feasibility study. (138)	●	Current city staff time, general fund, hotel/motel fund
			Coordinate a community event to build landscaping planter boxes in downtown. Request donations of supplies from local building supply stores/hardware stores/nurseries in exchange for advertising. (142)	●	Current city staff time, general fund
			Ensure that adaptive reuse of downtown structures is permitted and facilitated. Approach local developers with incentives to purchase buildings to convert to residential space. Consider creation of a shared workspace/resource center/innovation incubator in these structures. (145)	●	Current city staff time
			Identify at least one target location for a future hotel (e.g., near Main Street and Commerce Street). Focus economic development efforts on attracting a select or full service hotel. (140)	●	Current city staff time

## Actions for Year 10 and Beyond

	Benchmark	Responsible Official(s)	Actions	Goal	Potential Resources
15	Land Use and Recreation	City Manager or Designee	Identify a location for a teen activity center that is convenient to Travis Middle School and Calhoun High School. Consider a public-private partnership to share space with an existing facility/business. Appoint citizen volunteers to staff the teen activity center and to research grant/funding opportunities for the center. (66)	<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	Current city staff time, general fund, grants, YMCA
16	Transportation and Circulation	City Manager or Designee	Plan for extensions of Smith Road and Village Road. (75)	<span style="color: brown;">●</span>	Current city staff time
			Conduct a community-wide survey, review the ridership records from the R-Transit service, and/or conduct a feasibility analysis to assess additional demand for local transit. If local demand warrants additional service, consider an agreement with R-Transit to increase services to accommodate the need. Confirm that residents are familiar with the existing R-Transit service. Any regular routing service should include access to the waterfront and the Greyhound station along SH 35. (77)	<span style="color: blue;">●</span>	Current city staff time, general fund
17	Economic Development	City Manager or Designee	Allocate budget in future CIPs for downtown streetscape improvements. Evaluate opportunities for partnerships with the Main Street organization to implement these improvements. Allocate budget in future CIPs for enhancing crosswalks in downtown with lighting and paint. Evaluate the feasibility of offering a matching program for façade and sign improvements in downtown. (142)	<span style="color: brown;">●</span>	General fund, hotel/motel fund, grants