

## **2023 Annual Report**

PlanLafayette is now nine years old and has seen significant momentum and implementation of key action items. A major plan amendment was undertaken in 2021.

To ensure the plan remains relevant and useful to the community, the City and Parish Planning Commissions and the Community Development and Planning Department, on behalf of the City and Parish Councils and Mayor-President, will monitor plan implementation progress annually. The preparation of annual reports was recommended in the PlanLafayette comprehensive plan document.

The following is the 2023 Annual Report prepared by the Community Development and Planning Department with assistance from staff across Lafayette Consolidated Government.

PlanLafayette has 463 action items. In addition to the number of items, all LCG departments and dozens of external agencies are involved with the implementation. At the time of this report, 322 action items have either been completed or work has begun. The major amendment removed 10 completed action items for PlanLafayette. Staff has organized this report by summarizing ongoing activities by projects and/or themes. This report is accompanied by a spreadsheet with activity comments on all 463 action items. Please note that generally the comments are cumulative or static from previous annual reports.

Each theme is generally described with the following information:

- Initiative name and summary
- Plan challenges addressed
- Action item reference (from the plan)
- Current tasks

**Final Report Delivered to the Parish Planning Commission**

**January 8, 2024**

**Final Report Delivered to the City Planning Commission**

**January 22, 2024**

### **Projects:**

The 2023 Annual Report structure focuses on five themes. The matrix of action items for PlanLafayette has been reviewed for the purposes of this annual report and is submitted as part of this report. This year's five highlights are:

- Lafayette Development Code/Administrative Adjudication Bureau
- Refining Government
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Corridor Planning
- Bike and Pedestrian Planning
- Environmental Initiatives
- LCG Departmental Initiatives

### **Amendments:**

There are no proposed amendments in this year's annual report.

### **Lafayette Development Code (LDC)**

Adopted by the City-Parish Council on May 5, 2015 the then UDC consolidated land development regulations, integrated standards and procedures, and streamlined the review process needed for new development. PlanLafayette served as the guidebook for creating regulations and making decisions for the city and parish. To effectuate plan implementation, the UDC was prepared immediately following the adoption of PlanLafayette. The UDC has been amended numerous times since adoption—with each batch of amendments focused on the smooth administration of the code in a way that protects property while also creating a development-friendly environment. In 2020, a major amendment, creating the Lafayette Development Code (LDC), was completed. Staff met with key stakeholders, interest groups and held public meetings to address outstanding issues in the former UDC.

Challenges addressed in the plan:

- Major roadway corridors are flanked by segregated, single-use commercial development creating unappealing edges to residential neighborhoods without offering substantive choices for amenities or services.
- Housing inventory that consists primarily of single-family homes. Greater diversity of housing choices is desirable to meet the needs of all types of households, especially those with very low incomes, single-person households, retirees, and young adults and families.

Action items addressed:

- 1.1.1 Review zoning classifications for consistency with the FLUM (Future Land Use Map).
- 1.1.3 Revise the zoning ordinance to allow and encourage mixed land uses and incentivize pedestrian and transit friendly development.
- 1.1.4 Revise the zoning ordinance to include design standards for new development that address quality, street frontage, building entrances, utility placement, and scale.
- 3.13.1 Establish regulatory and design guidelines for infill/redevelopment housing developments that ensure compatibility with surrounding properties.
- 10.1.6 Create incentives and develop Low Impact Development criteria for residential and commercial developments.

Planning staff has continued administrative rezonings (upwards of 170 parcels have been administratively rezoned in 2023) that address areas where uses are not consistent with the current zoning due to the elimination of cumulative zoning, and/or hard edges exist between heavy commercial zoning and single-family residential, and/or employing more neighborhood friendly, mixed-use zoning districts, and/or providing for more housing choice, and/or reducing the amount of heavy commercial and industrial zoned land. As a result of this review, staff has continued a consistent administrative rezoning procedure in an effort to more closely align the zoning map with appropriate and likely future development in those areas. Key initiatives in 2023 included rezoning Bertrand Dr. as it connects the north UL campus to Moncus park to plan for more walkable uses and site layout in the future, the rezoning of all LCG parks and recreation centers and LPSS's schools to Public Institutional zoning to define clear regulations and more flexibility for operation. Finally, in order to increase housing choice, staff has begun to increase the amount of Residential Mixed zoning and has begun an Infill/Housing Choice Subcommittee as an initiative to address obstacles to infill development and different housing types.

### **Administrative Adjudication Bureau (AAB)**

Enforcing property standards and building codes has been difficult in the past. LCG had few tools to compel compliance. Letters would be sent out to property owners but ensuring compliance was difficult because often it was hard to prosecute through civil court. In addition, there were no fines in place or ability to collect fines. The Administrative Adjudication Bureau was established in 2021 to adjudicate cases brought forward by LCG with a quasi-judicial process that requires that LCG make a sound case for prosecution.

In 2023, 225 cases were brought before the AAB: 60 cases with Lafayette Development Code violations, 110 cases with Property Maintenance Code violations, and 55 cases for junk vehicles. The Compliance Division plans to expand on the efforts made in 2023 to include more proactive inspections focusing on neighborhoods with excessive amounts of blighted properties and corridors that are inundated with prohibited signs, abandoned signs, and signs in disrepair. In other words, the AAB would be more strategic, working with planning staff and our neighborhood partners, in its application.

One challenge, acknowledged in PlanLafayette, is the deteriorating infrastructure, vacant and blighted properties, and poorly maintained streetscape and housing in some older and historic neighborhoods.

Action items addressed:

- P 1.13 Improve code enforcement of blighted or deteriorated properties that degrade the character of downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
- 3.3.2 Implement stricter code enforcement.
- P 3.3 Improve housing in blighted conditions and encourage residents to maintain and improve their homes.

### **Refining Government**

PlanLafayette consists of many goals, policies, and actions, most can be traced back to a handful of overarching themes originating from the Lafayette 2035 Vision, and “Refine Government” was one of the four big ideas that framed the plan to the public. In implementation, it provides a useful framework for those initiatives which recognize the community’s need to do more with less and leverage public resources whenever possible.

In 2021-22, the largest initiatives relevant to “refining government” were related to the departmental reorganization that took place which involved the combining of the former Community Development Department and the former Development and Planning Department. This was the second reorganization that has occurred in the department since the adoption of PlanLafayette. This merger was for the benefit of the department’s customers—both neighborhoods and low-income constituents and for the collaboration between the grant writers and planning staff. In 2022, planning staff moved to City Hall in the former Community Development Department offices.

In 2023, the Compliance Division was reorganized to incorporate the former Housing Section from the Codes Division. The division has been able to increase case referral for enforcement and has seen an increase in voluntary compliance through continued enforcement and education efforts. Consolidating the inspectors allowed more efficiency and comprehensive inspections both enforcing the Lafayette Development Code and the Property Maintenance Code. This section also conducted the condemnation process to demolish substandard buildings which is a critical activity to battle neighborhood blight and substandard housing.

These reorganization steps of the department met several goals simultaneously:

- Alignment of LCG planning and grant efforts.
- Improved collaboration among staff who work on similar projects like grant funding, project planning and development, neighborhood revitalization, home rehabilitation, and educational classes.
- Managing consultant effort to assist with completing grant applications and managing awarded grants related to the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (FIJA).

Action items addressed:

- 1.17.2 Seek out grants and technical assistance programs to help implement the recommendations of the comprehensive plan and the FLUM.

- 1.17.3 Coordinate departmental grant writing efforts and expand the current efforts of Community Development and Planning Department staff grant writers to include all areas of the plan, including community and economic development assistance and natural resource conservation.

In addition, MyGovernmentOnline (MGO) is the software that the CDP department implemented in 2021 for contractors and residents seeking permits and requesting inspections to now easily submit applications and plans online. The new Lafayette Consolidated Government MGO platform is more convenient, efficient, and saves time. The new online service is a one-stop shop for residents and contractors. It saves time from traveling to LCG's offices to fill out a paper application. Shortly after the MGO platform was implemented, LCG launched the Permit and Planning Guide which is a one-of-a-kind online tool to help residents, commercial developers and residential builders to navigate required permits and get estimates for LCG permitting costs. Currently, staff is working on a public interface where citizens can go to a map and find details regarding applications affecting them thereby reducing inquiries to staff and increasing transparency.

### **Neighborhood Revitalization**

PlanLafayette recognizes the importance of protecting and revitalizing our urban core neighborhoods. The neighborhood planning program has connected with key communities that are vulnerable or have been identified as a growth area to implement necessary action items that preserve identity and character while strengthening quality of life. Through the planning staff and the coterie, many community meetings occur monthly that generate actions to identify and implement strategies for infrastructure upgrades within neighborhoods. Staff has many one-on-one's monthly via teleconferences and/or in-person meetings to facilitate partnerships and mobilize resources on strategic long-range planning action items such as improving community appearance, promoting awareness of a neighborhood's history, redeveloping vacant lots, improving pedestrian safety, and attracting new businesses to serve residents in neighborhoods. Through the neighborhood planning effort, planning staff has consistently facilitated charrette-style meetings to ensure adequate neighborhood input. Two key accomplishments of our neighborhood planning program for 2023 are the ongoing revisions and completion of coterie neighborhood plans and the execution of the operations and maintenance neighborhood funds.

This was the inaugural year for the coterie operations and maintenance funds. These are dedicated, non-competitive funds for coterie cohort members to tackle maintenance and resident activation in their respective communities. There is great momentum across our urban core neighborhoods to enhance engagement and development efforts. Coterie O&M funds were used to improve and empower the community in many ways, including public realm clean-ups, beautification events, resident engagement, neighborhood identity elements, and culturally significant visuals that reinforce history and a sense of place.

LCG's planning staff continues to process adjudicated properties through the disposition process. Given the staff allocation, this process has been a reactive not proactive. In 2023, LCG, McComb-Veazey, and Lafayette Habitat for Humanity created a partnership to develop the Bulk Adjudicated Property Disposition Pilot in the McComb-Veazey Neighborhood. Through a collaborative and strategic process, with McComb-Veazey residents and stakeholders and Habitat for Humanity, 20 properties have been packaged to be positioned for redevelopment for various uses throughout the neighborhood's most visible and meaningful corridors. LCG allocated funds for legal fees to assist with this effort.

Planning staff, working with the Lafayette Historic Preservation Commission, has expanded their efforts to establish National Historic Districts and to expand the ability of property owners to protect their historic properties. Working with consultants, with historic preservation expertise, staff has produced draft guidelines for Sterling Grove and has documented historic black neighborhoods to be listed on the National Register of Historic places offering them opportunities for historic tax credits to assist with their preservation efforts. In the FY 2023/24 budget funds were allocated to do historic research on properties to be a part of the African-American Heritage Trail.

The Planning Division secured up to 12 million in the 2022/23 budget year for projects in neighborhoods impacted by the future I-49 Connector project, known as the Evangeline Corridor Initiative catalyst projects.

Challenges addressed in the plan:

- Preserving the character of older, historic neighborhoods while new development occurs – and maintaining older housing in existing neighborhoods.
- Lack of a streamlined process for reducing the number of adjudicated properties in the parish and bringing them into productive use.
- While downtown captures Lafayette’s unique history and culture, it lacks an established residential population and attractive and functional connections to surrounding areas.
- Obsolescence and disinvestment in older neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

Action items addressed:

- 1.2.5 Address vacant lots with a streamlined adjudicated property policy and procedures to protect the historic character of older neighborhoods.
- 1.13.1 Create an expedited process and streamline notice procedure for returning adjudicated properties, which represent a challenge in bringing a community’s abandoned and dilapidated structures, to commerce.
- 1.13.4 Utilize neighborhood planning to help identify, prioritize, and implement redevelopment within neighborhoods.
- 3.8.4 Promote the preservation of existing housing stock, particularly of historical and cultural value, by seeking funds and developing new programs to assist qualified families to rehabilitate existing housing units.
- 4.2.3 Develop a process that can become a vehicle for the Preservation Commission to help encourage the retention of those qualities that contribute to neighborhood character areas through the application of design guidelines consistent with the local context of each area.
- 4.2.4 Support and enhance the efforts of the Lafayette Preservation Commission to include a role in development review for properties within neighborhood character areas.
- 4.4.3 Celebrate the cultural history of Lafayette by increasing community awareness through the design of public projects and facilities such as parks, plazas, and community buildings.

Current key neighborhood initiatives:

- Oasis and Quiet Town coteries’ Gateway Neighborhoods Plan was endorsed as a supplementary plan to PlanLafayette in 2023 by the City and Parish Planning Commissions.
- The community grant project fund is an annual competitive grant cycle that accepts applications from community focused groups for small-scale project implementation that provides neighborhood benefit. We are now embarking on our third calls for projects. Seven projects have been awarded to this date.
- Seventy-two properties have gone to the City and Parish Councils and eighteen have successfully been disposed of and are back into commerce as part of LCG’s adjudication property process. The disposition ordinance was amended in 2020 to allow rental units in the renovation plan.
- Amended Lafayette Development Code preservation sections for the Lafayette Preservation Commission compliance with Certified Local Government requirements, enabling legal historic protections for selected portions of central core neighborhoods such as Sterling Grove & Nickerson Parkerson.
- Achieved National Register Historic District status for Mills Kennedy Hopkins Additions a north-adjacent neighborhood to downtown. Developers will now have easy access to both federal 20% and state 25% Historic Commercial Rehabilitation Tax Credits.
- Designated Alexander & Truman neighborhoods as a Lafayette Register Historic Neighborhood.
- Published Bicentennial version of Lafayette Historic Register Book.

### **Corridor Planning**

Like many communities, Lafayette has a transportation system that remains highly automobile dependent, with low rates of transit ridership, and inadequate facilities for pedestrians and bicycles. In 2018, LCG's then City-Parish Council adopted a Complete Streets Policy to set the course for all future roadways to be designed to be multi-modal. Planning staff has worked the last few years on some notable corridor plans which focus on both land use, safety, beautification, stormwater detention, and road design. Corridor planning initiatives attempt to more effectively pair land use, urban, suburban, or rural with appropriate land uses and site layout.

The corridor studies that are part of this report are the result of the Evangeline Corridor Initiative (ECI). The Evangeline Corridor Initiative examined the neighborhoods impacted by the I-49 Connector project, and through public input, the resulting plan offers recommendations for neighborhoods as well as how the neighborhoods will interface with the interstate project, e.g. The Grand Boulevard. The Evangeline Corridor Initiative concluded its planning work with more than 40 catalyst projects recommended, approximately 22 of which have some work that has already begun.

The City and Parish Councils funded design/construction dollars for Congress St., Jefferson St., and 12<sup>th</sup> St. Design has commenced for all three ECI projects. Construction dollars have been budgeted in the FY2022/23 budget. Rising project construction costs and ARPA deadlines required that funding be adjusted resulting in the defunding of Jefferson St. Staff facilitated the consultant's work to develop the University Plan which was completed in late summer of 2018. LCG applied for and was awarded a BUILD grant under the Trump Administration. Ten million dollars were awarded and combined with local and state funding of \$6 million. The first phase of the University Corridor project construction commenced in 2023.

Challenges addressed in the plan:

- Lack of tree canopy and functional landscaping along corridors to provide physical buffers and visual screening detracts from the overall experience and character of the community.
- Major roadway corridors are designed nearly exclusively for automobiles – decreasing walkability – and for the provision of public utilities which results in unappealing visual clutter that detracts from the community's overall sense of place.

The Public Works Department has begun designing sidewalks for targeted projects including Carmel sidewalks, ADA improvements for St. Mary Blvd., Northside High sidewalk network, S. College sidewalks, and 6th St. adjacent to Rosa Parks Transportation Center. These sidewalk projects are funded locally and through federal grants.

With the low cost of re-stripping, the Department of Traffic, Roads, and Bridges continues to actively look to transform roads that have been overbuilt for urban environments and over-capacity for the current traffic volumes, e.g. wide lanes, too many lanes, unnecessary turn lanes, etc., into roads that slow traffic down by using narrower lanes, on-street parking, and/or accommodate bike lanes.

Finally, in 2023, the Administration formed a committee to oversee the work of developing a Gateway Plan for our interchange entrances off I-10. Subsequently, funding was allocated, to begin implementing phase 1. PlanLafayette, as seen in the action items below, identifies the importance of gateways to the city, districts, neighborhoods, etc. Gateways create a sense of place and quality, pride of ownership, conveys community image, and helps elevate a community's identity.

- 1.4.2 Improve the appearance of gateways to the city of Lafayette from I-10/I-49 intersection.
- 4.9.1 Improve gateways into the city of Lafayette and downtown, including the I-10/I-49 North Gateway and Johnston Street, with coordinated streetscape improvements, signage, and amenities.

- 8.14.1 Improve physical streetscape connections from UL along Johnston Street, University Avenue, Bertrand Drive, and St. Landry Street to create a stronger visual relationship with the campus, improve gateways, and create more walkable connections between campus and the surrounding community.

Action items addressed:

- 2.5.1 Prioritize the mixed-use corridors illustrated on the Future Land Use Map (e.g., Johnston Street, University Avenue) for complete streets improvements and coordinated streetscape improvements.
- 2.6.3 Prioritize the identification of University/I-10 Gateway and corridor as the entrance to the University Corridor, UL, and the heart of the city, downtown.
- 6.4.1 Adopt a “Complete Streets” policy with implementation strategies, to create and implement street improvement plans.
- 6.2.3 Develop detailed corridor plans for specific/identified roadways in targeted areas.

Current key initiatives:

- Deliberative action to revise the enterprise GIS sidewalk layer so it is more current and can continue to be used for support to the Planning Commissions to require sidewalks, and to prioritize sidewalk capital projects and grant applications.
- Ongoing monitoring of safety data to supplement grant applications, prioritize sidewalk and bike improvements, and study possible streets for road diets, like Johnston St. through the downtown area.
- Engineering and design for intersection and spot improvements: 12<sup>th</sup> and Simcoe intersection, 12<sup>th</sup> and Surrey Sts., Pierce and Simcoe intersection, and spot improvements on Surrey St. and Pinhook Rd.
- Undergoing study of Pinhook Rd. east of the Thruway for complete street improvements to facilitate that leg of the Velloop and to improve access from the McComb-Veazey neighborhood to Heymann Park.
- Completed preliminary study of Johnston St. as it passes by downtown.

**Bike and Pedestrian Planning**

Traffic congestion cannot be solved by simply building more road capacity because of limited funding and what is called induced demand. Induced demand means that improved roadway capacity inevitably attracts additional traffic because if the capacity of a roadway is increased, motorists will change their routes to take advantage of the improved roadways. Low income census tracts tell us that up to 20% of households in our community do not own cars. Transit, walking and biking then become the only way to get goods and services and access places of employment.

The budget process committed to providing 14.5 million dollars to develop a functional, connected, safe network of bike trails and sidewalks from FY2021/22 to FY2026/27. In 2022, both City and Parish Planning Commissions endorsed, as a supplement to PlanLafayette, the Bicycle Lafayette Plan. This plan will guide and prioritize the expenditure of these funds for the next four years. The goals for plan development included safety, interconnectedness, comfortability, equity, high standards, and recreation. The plan consists of subway-like loops to connect neighborhoods, employment centers, parks and recreation centers, etc. The Velloop, or green line, is the urban core loop that is the first phase of plan implementation. As part of the design of these facilities, consideration is made to include recommended amenities, techniques and safety precautions such as wayfinding signage, street furniture, curb bulb outs, rapid flash beacons, mid-block crossings, protected intersection design for bikeways, hybrid pedestrian signals, ADA Ramps, etc.

Planning staff and Public Works continue to manage federal transportation funding. One source of funding is the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). DOTD’s 2023 Call for Projects to help fund the Pecan Orchard Rd. sidewalks project, a critical stretch of new sidewalk needed to interconnect the entire Northside High School sidewalk network (local and state funding was allocated for the first two phases of this network: Dunand St. connection to Louisiana Ave., small segment of Alexander St. and

Buick St. and E. Pine St. from Moss St. to E. Willow St.) Another piece of the plan routes that was awarded for TAP funding includes a stretch of multi-use path that follows Eraste Landry Rd. and connects UL's trail on Cajundome Blvd. to W. St. Louis St. into the Audubon Oaks and Oaklawn Subdivisions providing an important connection.

**Action items addressed:**

- 2.2.3 Establish a stronger pedestrian and transit connection between UL, downtown, and surrounding neighborhoods.
- 6.8.1 Plan, develop and maintain a comprehensive pedestrian, bicycle, and trail system network, with emphasis on growth areas, as an integral part of the regional transportation network.
- 6.8.2 Expand pedestrian and bicycle connectivity with new designated routes, enhanced or new signage, and connectivity.
- 6.8.5 Provide sidewalks, trails, and/or bicycle routes that link residential concentrations with transit stations, mixed-use activity centers, shopping districts, recreational facilities, employment centers, and major public facilities, and provide for pedestrian and bicycle circulation within mixed-use centers.
- 9.2.2 Create a network of trails and bikeways that link parks and recreation centers throughout Lafayette.
- 9.2.3 Create an integrated greenway network, connecting with the Park at the Horse Farm property as a key location.
- 9.2.5 Improve safety on off-street trails using lighting, directional signage, and ongoing maintenance of trails and surrounding landscape.

**Current key initiatives:**

- Congress St., as it passes downtown, is being designed to make permanent the restriping through a streetscape improvement project and will become part of the Veloop.
- Pinhook, east of the Evangeline Thruway, will be planned to determine the possibilities for a protected bike lane as part of the Veloop.
- Design/Engineering is underway for the first phase of the Veloop which is a trail that connects Moncus Park, through to West Bayou Parkway to Girard Park.
- Completion of University Common's bike path, a partnership between UL and LCG, to connect UL's main campus to Ira Nelson Horticulture Center.
- The rails-to-trails project that connects downtown to Pont Des Mouton has completed the Phase 1 environmental and land appraisal. The railroad company is being notified of LCG's interest in purchasing this property.
- Ongoing discussions with the I-49 Connector team to plan for a continuous bike path under the superstructure of the future interstate highway.

**Environmental Initiatives**

Lafayette's stormwater drainage system includes both engineered and natural waterways. Flooding due to poor drainage and flow capacity limitations of the natural drainage system are significant issues. In addition, large swathes of the parish are located in the 100 year flood zone. Stormwater runoff and outfalls particularly impact the quality of the parish's surface water resources. Pollution in the Vermilion, particularly fecal coliform pollution, is a health and environmental concern. One of the factors is the number of individual septic systems in the parish. Though monitored through complaints by the LA Department of Health and Hospitals many systems go uninspected.

Home septic systems inspections were retooled and streamlined with coordination between the Bayou Vermilion District septic inspection program, LCG Housing Rehabilitation Program, and LCG Environmental Quality. Collaboratively they identified new enforcement options that LCG EQ can deploy when a non-compliant home sewage system is identified, and a system has been established for warnings and fines to be issued, if needed. Additionally, marketing materials were created to better



communicate opportunities to qualified homeowners for grants to upgrade or repair faulty systems. Ongoing efforts with the Bayou Vermilion District’s Board of Commissioners and input from other state and local agencies will expand the reach and effectiveness of prevention measures to address septic system failures.

Planning staff and Public Works received technical assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and consultant experts on expanding the benefits our stormwater detention facilities have to offer. Specific redesigns were provided for four LCG drainage projects to incorporate not just flood reduction benefits but also added community recreation benefits, water quality improvement benefits, natural habitat and pollinator benefits, and sediment reduction benefits. Various LCG departmental staff collaborated and were engaged in concept design, priority setting and site selection. In addition to the specific designs, the EPA built-up our internal capacity and knowledge in what and how to incorporate these designed benefits into future LCG projects.

Challenges addressed:

- Protection of the region’s waterways from pollutants and erosion caused by stormwater runoff.
- Declining aquatic ecosystems and surface water quality thereby increasing the possibility of the state’s DEQ restricting the amount of discharge from commercial, industrial and the municipal sewer system.
- Increasingly, stringent environmental regulations concerning air quality and wastewater treatment and discharge limits.

Action items addressed:

- P.1.13 Improve process for review and inspection of independent on lot septic systems to reduce potential environmental contamination of water and soil resources.
- 1.5.8 Build stormwater capacity into capital projects, e.g. roads, to promote multi-purpose projects to more effectively use limited resources.
- 10.1.7 Work toward an inspection program for individual septic systems.
- 10.5.1 Create a green infrastructure network that provides recreational opportunities, helps alleviate stormwater runoff, and assists in protecting the parish from storm hazards.

**Other notable LCG Departmental Initiatives:**

**LUS/LUS Fiber**

To improve street light visibility and offer more environmentally friendly lighting, LUS is upgrading the current high-pressure sodium lights to LEDs. Ninety percent of the more than 21,000 LED street lights have been replaced which will improve night time traffic visibility and public safety, reduce electricity consumption, decrease maintenance costs, and create possibilities for smart city functions. Cost savings for LUS and the city are expected to be \$500,000-\$800,000 a year.

LUS continues to work collaboratively with LCG and the Downtown Development Authority to address a lack of sewer capacity, specifically in the downtown/urban core area. LUS worked with Lafayette Public Trust Finance Agency to build a lift station on 2nd St. that added sewer capacity to approximately 350 units in downtown and the surrounding area. LUS is undergoing a long term project that involves a new lift station and upgrades to the W. Bayou sewer plant which is expected to increase capacity by about 2,000 units. Finally, the current projects that includes the cleaning and repairing of old downtown sewer pipes is freeing up additional capacity for new development.

LUS Fiber started expansion of services into apartments by partnering with Bottle Art Lofts, a new development housed in the historic Coca-Cola Bottling facility in La Place neighborhood. Accelerating apartment communities’ access to its services

marks a significant shift for LUS Fiber. Expansion to Bottle Art Lofts marks the start of a goal to reach 1,000 apartment units a year with fiber internet services.

In addition, LUS Fiber received a multimillion-dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). These funds are for the deployment of a major expansion of fiber into additional portions of Lafayette Parish, St. Martin Parish, and Iberia Parish. High-speed fiber broadband is a catalyst for economic development, education access, and innovation.

Action items addressed:

- 1.7.3 Plan infrastructure improvements to increase the community’s Return on Investment (ROI) and minimize long term costs of services.
- 3.1.1 Provide improvements to public infrastructure – including water, sewer, and fiber availability – to service multifamily or attached housing units
- 5.3.2 Anticipate and make infrastructure investment in areas of the parish designated for employment, retail, and mixed-use growth in order to spur investment by development in key corridors or within principal nodes.
- 5.7.2 Expand LUS Fiber access to more customer locations in the city of Lafayette, including multifamily residential communities and office buildings, as it becomes financially feasible to do so.
- 6.4.2 Develop a streetscape classification system and associated design standards that emphasize multimodal facilities, landscape design criteria (with emphasis on native plant materials), and amenities (street furniture, pedestrian-scaled lighting, wayfinding signage, and bus stops) that enhance the safety and comfort of roadways for all users.

### **Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture (PARC)**

Construction has commenced on the Brown Park Baseball and Softball Super Complex. This project is much-anticipated and will bring about major improvements and benefits to the community. The complex will feature first-class fields for youth baseball and softball, with eight improved tournament-quality fields. The enhanced facilities and fields will have low glare, efficient LED lighting and digital scoreboards at the featured fields. These enhancements will enhance the overall experience for players and spectators, ensuring optimal visibility and real-time updates on the game. Furthermore, the complex will offer expanded and ample parking, larger spectator areas with added shade, plentiful and modern restrooms, pavilions, an inner park connector walkway, walking/jogging trails, and playgrounds.

Phase one of the Moore Park Soccer Super Complex has begun construction, valued as a \$15 million investment, it will bring nine state-of-the-art soccer fields, including a main stadium featuring artificial turf, LED sports lighting, and the capacity to seat 1,000 people. More enhancements include a photo wall stage that will supply a background for award ceremonies, two traffic-calming roundabouts for pedestrian safety, and a playground with inclusive playground equipment.

Action items addressed:

- 8.7.3 Promote participation in recreational programs for all ages through specials events and outreach through the media, President’s Office, Parks and Recreation Department, health organizations, and LPSS.
- 9.1.6 Develop new parks and expand existing parks to address service gaps and recommended growth areas, and plan for long term population growth and demographic that may impact service needs.
- 9.3.1 Partner with health providers and advocacy organizations to develop opportunities for passive and active recreation that is consistent with the needs of different user groups including – children, special needs communities, and seniors.

### **Public Works**

Improving downtown drainage infrastructure is being addressed – another retention area and additional inlets are under construction with completion anticipated in 2024. This investment will improve current and future downtown drainage infrastructure, including areas that continually flood during heavy rains. These interventions have involved a review of drainage options that are not typical, eg. stormwater detention ponds, but instead looking at integrating detention in an urban environment.

The Environmental Quality Division is collaborating with other departments to educate contractors on green infrastructure to help manage stormwater runoff, reduce flooding, and decrease the amount of pollutants flowing into waterways. Instead of solely relying on traditional networks of ditches, sewer pipes, gutters, and coulees to drain stormwater, using plants, soil, and landscaping to capture rainwater where it falls, reducing flooding and polluted runoff that travels to waterways. Amendments were made in the Lafayette Development Code regulations that look to filter water through landscaped areas by perforated curbs and grading to direct water to islands and buffer areas in commercial developments. The LDC early on required green infrastructure if a development wanted to exceed their parking requirement.

Action items addressed:

- 1.5.6 Encourage use of stormwater management tools including pervious pavers, rain gardens, bioswales, rain barrels, and other green infrastructure approaches to reduce the amount of runoff entering the region’s waterways.
- 10.1.1 Prepare a comprehensive green infrastructure plan with Low Impact Development strategies for the parish to address stormwater management, modifications to the storm sewer system, and integration with the open space and trails system.
- 10.1.5 Increase public education on the benefits of integrated green infrastructure practices in reducing stormwater, improving water quality, and providing potential recreational benefits.

### **Traffic, Roads, and Bridges (TRAB)**

TRAB worked with ParkMobile, a leading provider of smart parking and mobility solutions in the U.S., to launch the service of over 1,200 on-street and off-street parking spaces with contactless payment options in downtown Lafayette.

Action items addressed:

- 2.8.2 Implement the actions of the Downtown plan, including: Improve parking infrastructure and management downtown through technology, and a parking management plan.

Geaux Mow and Neaux Throw are departmental initiatives intending to address this action item:

- P 2.7 Work to ensure that Lafayette is a community that is aesthetically beautiful, uncluttered by litter, illegal signage, unkempt landscaping, etc.

The Project Geaux Mow initiative, implemented in 2020, continues to improve the department’s efforts and has allowed LCG crews to focus more on detail maintenance such as grooming, cleaning, edging, and weed control on sidewalks and rights-of-way. In 2021, the department implemented the “Neaux Throw” initiative, which allows for better coordination of reporting and pickup of litter throughout the community.