

Planning

+

Implementation

+

Progress

Building Community



Old South Baton Rouge

The Plan for Renewal in Old South Baton Rouge

The Old South Baton Rouge neighborhood is a historic community between downtown Baton Rouge and Louisiana State University. This three-square-mile area of approximately 11,800 residents is both culturally and historically rich, but suburban growth and increased mobility led to steady population decline over the past several decades, causing many residents to seek opportunities outside of their community.

Despite these challenges, the legacy of the neighborhood is strong and residents are committed to bringing their community back to prosperity. The process towards revitalization was initiated by the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, LSU, and the office of the Mayor-President in 2002 when these partners worked together to contribute initial funds to secure a HOPE VI grant of \$18.6 million to develop quality, affordable housing in Old South Baton Rouge. Through the continued leadership of the Foundation, Plan Baton Rouge, now Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX), joined with a national team of consultants to prepare a revitalization strategy for the community.

The team's first task was to identify the concerns of community residents. These concerns were carefully recorded, field checked, and overlaid with professional expertise to produce the Old South Baton Rouge Neighborhood and Economic Revitalization Strategy.

The strategy contains a series of general development recommendations identified as priority goals and actions. Based on the strategic plan, CPEX has rolled out several implementation programs aimed at revitalization, economic development, workforce training, and community strengthening.

Citizen Engagement

A critical component to the successful implementation of the Old South Baton Rouge revitalization strategy was to engage residents in all aspects of the process from the very beginning. During the development of the strategy, several neighborhood leaders were identified and came together to form the Old South Baton Rouge Partnership, an oversight and advisory body that represents a cross-section of the community and helped to guide the implementation of the strategy as well as acting as a voice for the concerns of community residents.

CPEX continued to support resident leadership development and engagement by securing scholarship dollars that allowed several residents to attend national workshops and training institutes that provided information on how grass roots leaders can lead meaningful community change.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

From the beginning, CPEX worked to ensure the revitalization strategy reflected the concerns and aspirations of neighborhood residents. These principles guided how CPEX engaged the community in shaping and implementing the plan:

- » Inclusiveness: the entire community was invited to participate in developing the plan. Outreach was broad and deep with the goal of including as many residents as possible
- » Influence: the final plan reflected the vision the community had for its own neighborhood
- » Input: no ideas were off the table. Every voice was heard
- » Involvement: the engagement process was focused on seeking out and facilitating the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in every decision about the community's future
- » Information: the process was open and transparent, ensuring residents understood that the final plan was the result of their participation

About this Guide

With generous support from the JP Morgan Chase Foundation, CPEX produced this guide to document the progress in Old South Baton Rouge and share practical strategies which could be replicated and implemented in other communities. While each neighborhood and its circumstances are unique, the story of the revitalization of Old South Baton Rouge contains lessons that are universal. Creating lasting community change depends on planning, a commitment to implementing the plan, strong partnerships, and a revitalization strategy that is shaped and led by residents.

Funding made possible by:



Contents

4 What is Implementation?

5 People + Places

Home Rehabilitation Grants

Commercial Facade Grants

Small Business + Technology Training

Volunteer Initiatives

13 Community by Design

Old South Baton Rouge Pattern Book

Urban Design Overlay Districts

Increasing Housing Choices

19 Growing Old South Baton Rouge

Community Gardens

GROW Sunflower Project

Solar Learning Pavilion

Fresh Food Access

23 On the Horizon

The Gateway Project

Old South Baton Rouge Cultural District

What is Implementation?

Implementing a Plan for Old South Baton Rouge

Every issue, goal, objective, and action step outlined in the Old South Baton Rouge Neighborhood and Economic Revitalization Strategy can be traced back to the issues and concerns raised by residents during the dozens of community meetings attended by hundreds of residents. The community planning process took into consideration resident concerns, the history of their community, and their hopes for the future. The process celebrated the role of residents in the revitalization process and responded to their interest in being active participants in the renewal of Old South Baton Rouge. As important as developing a detailed revitalization strategy, the success that has been achieved in Old South Baton Rouge is a result of an aggressive implementation strategy. A successful plan for community change depends on many things, but a plan is merely a blueprint without a detailed strategy for implementation.



*New Ark Community Garden, Old South Baton Rouge.
The home, left, was repaired through the Home Rehabilitation Grant Program*

Creating a Strategy for Implementation

Whether it's developing a plan to help revitalize an entire neighborhood, or simply organizing a group of concerned neighbors to clean up a park or start a community garden, successful community change begins with a plan and should have a detailed strategy for implementation. The elements of a successful implementation strategy include:

- » Creating an implementation plan
 - » What are the short-term, mid-term and long-term action items?
 - » What are the greatest opportunities?
 - » What are the greatest threats to implementing the plan? Develop a strategy to address them
- » Identifying who is responsible for each action item
 - » Identify all the players needed to implement your plan. This will help you hold them accountable
- » Prioritizing your work
 - » “Early wins” and going after “low-hanging fruit” builds credibility and will inspire confidence in your work and help generate support among stakeholders
 - » If your plan involves physical changes in your community, defining targeted geographic areas can help focus your work and allow you to identify and manage priorities
- » Developing a formal community engagement strategy
 - » Develop a strategy to keep existing partners engaged
 - » Develop engagement strategies for new partners
- » Monitoring your progress
 - » Regular communication with all stakeholders about your progress and challenges is essential

People + Places



How do you build a sense of community? Years of disinvestment in Old South Baton Rouge had frayed the bonds that form the foundations of healthy, thriving neighborhoods. Too many families who called Old South Baton Rouge home for generations had seen opportunities pass them by. Decade after decade, the population dwindled. Vacant and abandoned properties marred block after block, and businesses left. Those that remained struggled to compete, and it showed. Yet, even during its most difficult times, a sense of pride in what the community was, and could be again, was evident. During the community meetings that shaped the revitalization strategy for Old South Baton Rouge, it was clear the residents had a vision for the future: decent housing, safer streets, and businesses that provide the goods and services other neighborhoods take for granted. Every aspect of the revitalization strategy reflects the aspirations of the families who never lost faith in their community. The plan is also built on an extensive analysis of housing, demographic and economic data. Block by block and lot by lot, that faith is helping to build a stronger, safer community that embodies the pride and promise of Old South Baton Rouge.



People + Places

Home Rehabilitation Grants

THE BIG IDEA

Small home repairs can make a big impact

WHY

Aging homes in disrepair posed safety and health challenges to their owners

HOW

Improving the safety and appearance of homes stabilizes home values, builds household wealth and retains and attracts new residents

RESULTS

20 homes repaired

Overview

The Home Rehabilitation Grant Program facilitated the revitalization of the existing housing stock within the Old South Baton Rouge neighborhood, rekindled neighborhood pride, and helped spur private investment in the community. Substandard housing in a community promotes the perception that the area is generally unsafe. Improving and reinvesting in the current building stock is also key to attracting new homeowners to an area—a goal of the revitalization strategy in Old South Baton Rouge.

The program was designed to leverage private and public dollars to provide repairs to low-income homeowners, with an emphasis on elderly residents who lacked the financial resources to maintain their property. The repairs, which averaged \$23,000 in costs, addressed critical life and safety issues in order to stabilize the existing housing stock. The Home Rehabilitation Grant Program assisted residents in improving their homes so they could remain and thrive in their community. Exterior improvements were guided by design and preservation standards established to improve the aesthetic qualities of the neighborhood. With additional funding, the program also expanded into the Scotlandville Community.

Funders and Partners

JP Morgan Chase Foundation, East Baton Rouge Mortgage Finance Authority, NeighborWorks America, Capital One, Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors, Louisiana Housing Finance Agency, East Baton Rouge Parish Office of Community Development, LSU Community University Partnership, Mid City Redevelopment Alliance, The Home Depot

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- » Your parish or city Office of Community Development may have funds available for home repairs
- » Concerned local businesses and faith-based organizations might be interested in supporting a home repair program and be a source of volunteers
- » Define a clearly targeted area for home repairs. Clustering repairs in one neighborhood can have a greater impact
- » Lower-cost efforts, such as painting or landscaping, can still have a big impact and help restore a sense of pride in a neighborhood
- » Using volunteers can help leverage public and private dollars. Even unskilled volunteers can contribute to the success of a project by doing such activities as painting, landscaping and clearing debris
- » Document your success: take pictures and assemble testimonials from participants and volunteers to build ongoing support for your efforts

People + Places

Home Rehabilitation Grants

Smith Street Home Total cost of repairs: \$50,050



Repairs included exterior and interior painting, new flooring, new HVAC, new roof, insulation installation, complete bathroom remodel, new kitchen countertop and sink

Thomas Delpit Drive Home Total cost of repairs: \$4,953



Repairs included exterior painting, electrical repairs, rescreened front porch, HVAC repairs, weatherization, hot water heater repairs

CLICK FOR MORE

Neighborworks America

www.nw.org

Information on basic home maintenance tips to increase the value of a home

Habitat for Humanity

www.habitatmichigan.org

An overview of Habitat's Critical Home Repair Program

U.S. Housing and Urban Development

www.hud.gov

HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all

National Association of Home Builders

www.nahb.org

The National Association of Home Builders is a trade association that promotes the policies that make housing a national priority

My House, My Home (LSU Agricultural Center)

www.lsuagcenter.com

An interactive guide that provides information about building more sustainable homes

Commercial Facade Grants

THE BIG IDEA

Business improvements stabilize neighborhoods, encourage growth

WHY

Small businesses in need of facade improvements negatively impacted commerce and contributed to neighborhood decline

HOW

Improving the appearance of neighborhood-based businesses stimulates sales and contributes to economic revitalization

RESULTS

14 small businesses improved

Overview

Small businesses serve as engines for growth, providing employment opportunities, generating tax revenues, and serving as anchors for a community. Bringing back the small businesses that once thrived in Old South Baton Rouge, while stabilizing and expanding existing businesses, are key to the ongoing revitalization of the neighborhood.

CPEX and community partners implemented the Commercial Facade Grants Program, a competitive matching-grant program, as an incentive for owners of buildings and businesses to improve their building's facades and daily operating efficiency. The grant matched dollar-for-dollar, up to \$7,500, funds spent on exterior improvements to businesses within the Old South Baton Rouge community. The program also provided technical and design assistance to business owners through LSU's Office of Community Design & Development. Through a partnership with LSU's School of Architecture and School of Landscape Architecture, the grant recipients also received high quality renderings of design possibilities for their businesses.

Funders and Partners

JP Morgan Chase Foundation, East Baton Rouge Mortgage Finance Authority, Capital One, Regions Bank, NeighborWorks America

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- » New businesses and families are unlikely to locate to an area perceived as blighted. Relatively minor commercial facade improvements foster a climate more likely to attract new investments
- » Providing design assistance to program participants is essential to ensuring the improvements significantly enhance the appearance of the business and reflect the character of the area
- » Facade improvements should preserve or restore original decorative building elements
- » Improvements should correct code deficiencies related to the facade or the site
- » High-impact improvements include removing non-original wall cladding or materials blocking windows
- » Improved lighting and signage are inexpensive improvements that can considerably improve the visual appearance and accessibility of a business
- » Landscape improvements with hardy, climate-appropriate specimens are relatively low cost and can have a major impact

People + Places

Commercial Facade Grants

Accounting Solutions Total project cost: \$10,043



Repairs included painting and repairing stucco facade, adding shutters, exterior lighting, new planter boxes

Hilltop Barbershop Total project cost: \$10,006



Repairs included painting and repairing stucco facade, new windows, doors and awning, exterior lighting, new signage and barber pole, landscape improvements

CLICK FOR MORE

Many communities offer matching business improvement grant programs to help businesses spur sales and revitalize a community

Greenville County Redevelopment Authority

www.gcra-sc.org

This program requires participating businesses to conform with local design guidelines

Baltimore Development Corporation

www.baltimoredevelopment.com

This program leverages private improvements while making revitalization efforts affordable and creative

Bedford, Pennsylvania

www.downtownbedford.com

This program requires participants to follow established design guidelines so that improvements are consistent with the scale and character of their neighborhood and town as a whole

New Orleans Downtown Development District

www.downtownnola.com

The program provides an economic incentive for improving the appearance of business facades and encourages quality renovations

Small Business + Technology Training

THE BIG IDEA

Training and technology can help spark neighborhood renewal

WHY

Many small business owners and residents lacked the tools and training to effectively compete in the marketplace

HOW

Providing small business owners and entrepreneurs in Old South Baton Rouge with the skills needed to build and grow their businesses

RESULTS

15 business owners participated in the training

Overview

The 131 businesses in Old South Baton Rouge are unquestionably strong community anchors, yet the Old South Baton Rouge Neighborhood and Economic Revitalization Strategy identified the opportunity for existing businesses to capture more sales dollars through business development and growth.

Working with Capital One, CPEX facilitated *Getting Down to Business*, a small business training program, to provide training and support to a group of small business owners located within Old South Baton Rouge. The training provided skills to existing owners in growing their business and assisted entrepreneurs in opening new businesses. CPEX and the Capital Area Corporate Recycling Council (CACRC) also developed a pilot computer training class for low-income individuals in Old South Baton Rouge. Students received training in basic electronics, computer parts, software, and basic computer maintenance. Upon completion of the course, students were allowed to keep the computers they had rebuilt. The program acted as a first step towards further computer certification, and graduates were also eligible for internships with the CACRC.

Funders and Partners

Capital One, JP Morgan Chase, NeighborWorks America, Louisiana State University's School of Business, East Baton Rouge Mortgage Finance Authority

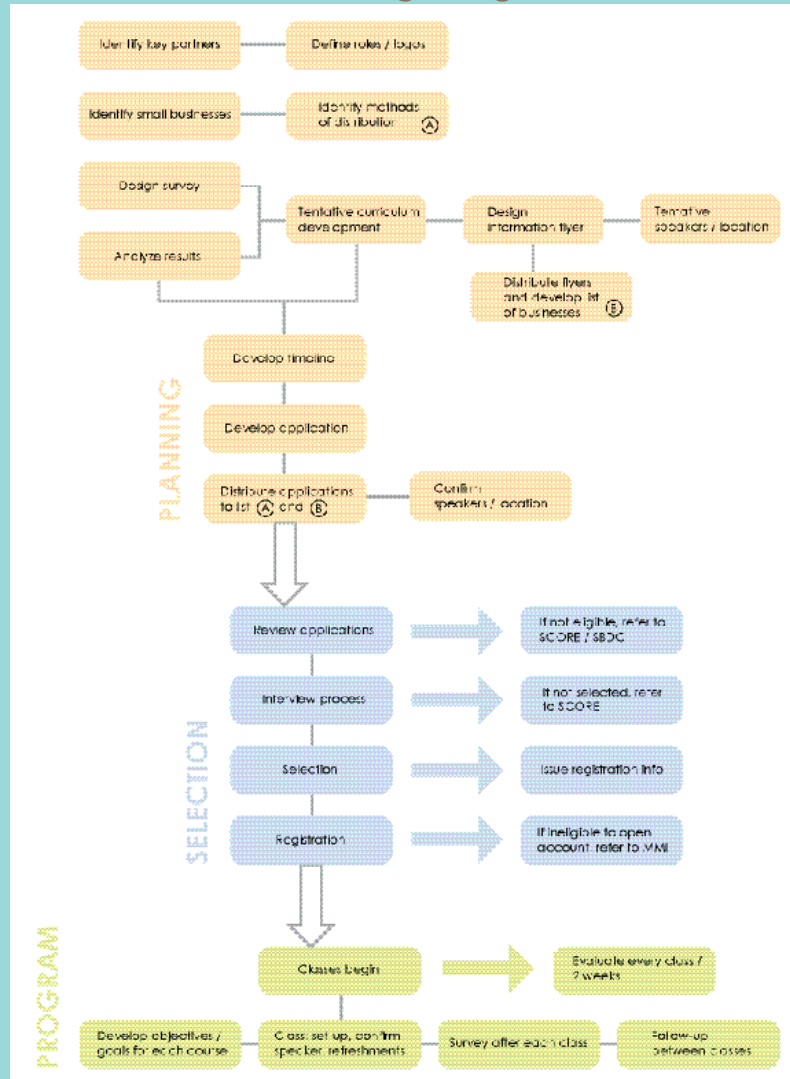


Strong small businesses are an important aspect of the ongoing revitalization of Old South Baton Rouge

People + Places

Small Business + Technology Training

Small Business Training Program Process



The process of implementing a small business training program began with identifying key community partners and included program evaluation, referrals to other resources and surveying participants to ensure the program provided useful tools and information

CLICK FOR MORE

SCORE

www.score.org

SCORE is a nonprofit association dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground and achieve their goals through education and mentorship

Louisiana Small Business Development Center

www.lsbdc.org

The Louisiana Small Business Development Center provides business consulting to entrepreneurs at no cost

United States Small Business Administration

www.sba.gov

The SBA is an independent agency of the federal government that aids, counsels, assists, and protects the interests of small business owners

Volunteer Initiatives

THE BIG IDEA

Volunteer efforts build a sense of community

WHY

Engaging residents and other stakeholders directly in the work of revitalizing the community builds a common sense of purpose and helps to sustain renewal efforts

HOW

Recruiting residents and others with a vested interest in neighborhood improvement efforts can help build a strong base of committed volunteers

RESULTS

65,000+ volunteer hours conducted over a five year period

Overview

From the very beginning, volunteers have played an important role in helping to implement the Old South Baton Rouge revitalization strategy. From neighborhood clean-ups, home repairs and community gardens to organizing the Old South Baton Rouge Partnership, volunteers have been the backbone of much of the success in Old South Baton Rouge.

Funders and Partners

Neighborhood residents, City Year, AmeriCorps, LSU Community University Partnership, LSU student organizations, friends and families of the YMCA, Shell, Old South Baton Rouge Civic Association, New Ark Baptist Church



Volunteers huddle prior to commencing work.
Martin Luther King Day 2012, Old South Baton Rouge

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

In order to get the most out of volunteers, consider these strategies to maximize their skills and talents:

» Supervision

Supported, coordinated and well-managed volunteers are likely to feel positive about their volunteer experience

» Resource Procurement

Volunteer activities are not cost free. Resources are needed to deliver effective volunteer management programs

» Appreciation

While volunteers do not participate for reward or recognition, it is important to acknowledge and thank volunteers

» Role Clarification

Written position descriptions equip volunteers with the tools they need to deliver maximum impact and gain a sense of personal fulfillment

» Balancing the Skilled + Unskilled

Assessing required skills for specific tasks enables the best use of volunteers and minimizes costs

» Development

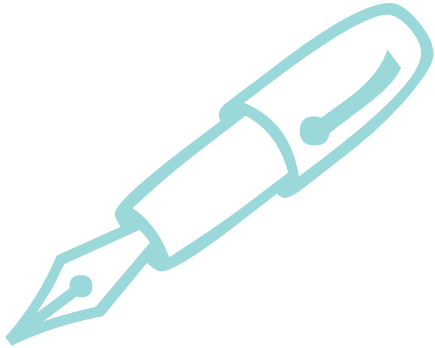
Training and development is important to nourishing strong volunteer leadership and extending the volunteer life cycle

» Recruitment

Effective recruitment strategies offer variety, flexibility, and meaningful experiences

Source: www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/volunteering

Community by Design



Building a sense of community does not happen by accident. Good design and thoughtful policy can support and encourage the connections that make neighborhoods more vital, with streets that are safe to walk and the existence of parks and public spaces that serve as community gathering spaces. Well-conceived design standards can honor a neighborhood's history while attracting and encouraging new investment. From the beginning of the planning process, residents of Old South Baton Rouge expressed a desire to attract new residents and businesses while retaining the character of their community. The revitalization strategy is a powerful tool that will shape stronger community connections for years to come because it honors the best of Old South's unique and rich history while planning for a brighter future for its residents.

Old South Baton Rouge Pattern Book

THE BIG IDEA

Build, renovate, and maintain homes while preserving the aesthetic character of the neighborhood

WHY

Homeowners and builders lacked information on how to build or remodel in a way that enhanced the historic character of Old South Baton Rouge

HOW

Creating a user-friendly guide that details the historic character of Old South Baton Rouge and providing information to owners and builders on how to enhance the existing character of the community

RESULTS

1,300 Pattern Books distributed

Overview

Pattern Books, modeled after those used by builders in the past, establish the basic form of buildings and provide key architectural elements and details to preserve the unique character of a neighborhood. For residential neighborhoods, these may be quite detailed. For commercial and downtown development, more general guidelines are used.

Pattern Books are often a continuation of work begun as an urban design or master planning project. Once general consensus has been reached on a master plan, the Pattern Book is a means of implementing it. The process engages builders, developers, architects, and real estate professionals in a more technical process. Pattern Books enable all participants to understand, embrace, and build from a shared vision and provides tips for building and maintaining structures in a way that will be cost effective and good for the environment.

The Old South Baton Rouge Pattern Book compliments the analysis done to identify eight Project Development Areas in Old South Baton Rouge. The Project Development Areas are distinct, relatively compact areas whose housing and retail stock were thoroughly documented in order to identify opportunities for future development. The Old South Baton Rouge Pattern Book was developed based on the recommendations found in the Old South Baton Rouge Neighborhood and Economic Revitalization Strategy, addressing the need for quality, affordable housing options for community residents while preserving the history and character of the neighborhood.

Funders and Partners

Mayor-President Melvin “Kip” Holden, Old South Baton Rouge Partnership, Jonathan Rose Companies, Inc., East Baton Rouge Mortgage Finance Authority, Baton Rouge Area Foundation

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- » Conducting a historic resource assessment of your neighborhood to document architectural styles and identify preservation sites is the first step if you are interested in providing guidance for building and maintaining structures in a way that reflects the character of your community
- » Identify and seek to preserve the best historic elements of your community
- » Establishing design guidelines for new development and proper renovation of existing structures will contribute to neighborhood character and vitality
- » A Pattern Book serves merely as a guide for character preservation and historic improvements within your community. If you are seeking to enforce compliance in regards to historic preservation, consider creating a set of design standards. Contact your city or parish planning department to learn how to begin the process

Community by Design

Old South Baton Rouge Pattern Book



The Old South Baton Rouge Pattern Book is a useful tool to help maintain the historic character of the community when building or renovating

CLICK FOR MORE

Center for Planning Excellence

www.cpex.org

Explore the Old South Baton Rouge Pattern Book

Louisiana Speaks Pattern Book

www.louisianaspeaks.org

The Louisiana Speaks Pattern Book is a regional guide for building in South Louisiana

The Foundation for Louisiana

www.foundationforlouisiana.org

Explore the Citizen's Guide to Urban Design and the Citizen's Guide to Land Use

National Trust for Historic Preservation

www.nationaltrust.org

The National Trust for Historic Preservation offers several types of financial assistance programs for preserving and restoring historical structures

The Foundation for Historical Louisiana

www.fhl.org

The Foundation for Historical Louisiana is committed to safeguarding our state's cultural and architectural heritage

Urban Design Overlay Districts

THE BIG IDEA

Land use guidelines can help a community redevelop successfully

WHY

No design or land use protections existed to ensure new development conformed to defined design standards

HOW

Creating a regulatory framework to protect the character of Old South Baton Rouge

RESULTS

Two Urban Design Overlay Districts created and adopted by the East Baton Rouge Parish Metropolitan Council

Overview

While the Old South Baton Rouge Pattern Book provides voluntary guidance for design or renovations in Old South Baton Rouge, the creation of two Urban Design Overlay Districts (UDODs) established a regulatory framework to preserve and enhance the historic character of the community.

The development of the UDODs and accompanying ordinances followed a year-long planning process that engaged hundreds of residents and stakeholders. Two commercial corridors were chosen because they were receiving the most intense development pressure. The Nicholson Drive Overlay District contains an area of Old South Baton Rouge that has undergone significant redevelopment since 2005. As a main thoroughfare in Old South Baton Rouge linking downtown to Louisiana State University, residential and commercial development has flourished in recent years. The UDOD requirements ensure the area will continue to revitalize in a manner compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. The North Gates Overlay District encompasses neighborhoods north of the campus of Louisiana State University. The North Gates area, like Nicholson drive, has seen significant commercial and residential development in recent years. Design standards now in place will guide future developments and preserve the area as a vibrant and walkable community.

Funders and Partners

Residents of Old South Baton Rouge, Old South Baton Rouge Partnership Board, East Baton Rouge Parish Planning Commission

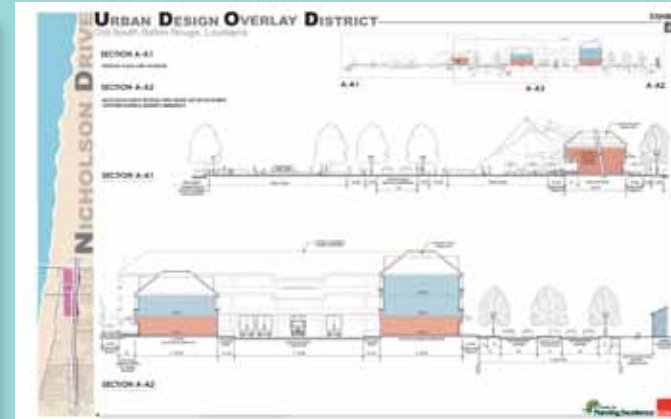
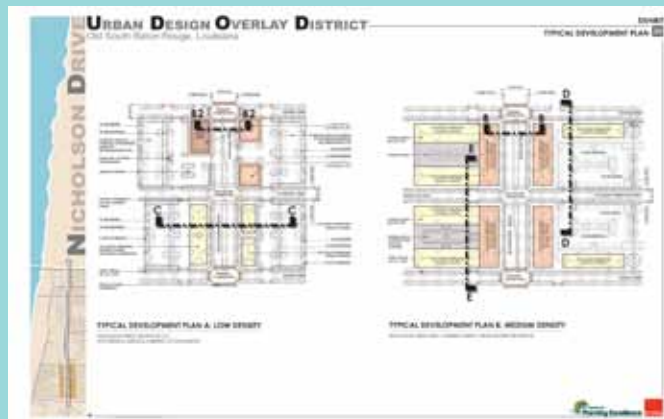
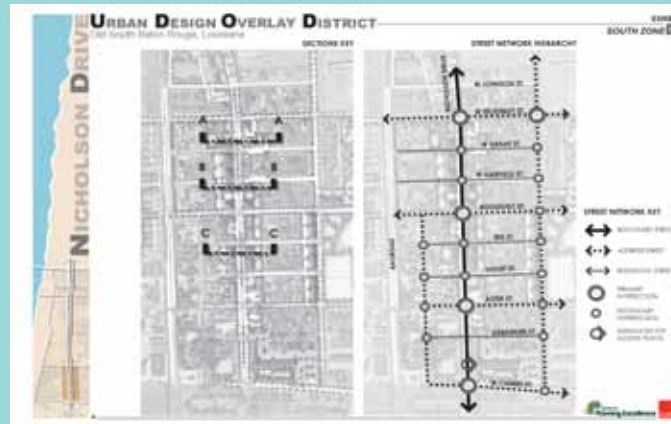
IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Each community is unique. Consider which assets you are seeking to preserve through the creation of an Overlay District. Potential uses may include:

- » Creating a walkable community
- » Preserving or enhancing a special district
- » Encouraging economic development
- » Preserving or enhancing rural character
- » Protecting quality of surface water
- » Protecting groundwater quality and quantity
- » Managing stormwater
- » Preserving sensitive areas/wildlife habitat
- » Protecting aesthetics of the natural environment
- » Preserving farmlands or open, green spaces
- » Maintaining the unique character of a neighborhood

Community by Design

Urban Design Overlay Districts



Two Urban Design Overlay Districts were created in Old South Baton Rouge after significant community input. The Overlay Districts help ensure new development builds on and complements the existing character of the community

CLICK FOR MORE

Office of the Planning Commission

www.brgov.com/dept/planning

Information about the Urban Design Overlay Districts in Old South Baton Rouge

Smart Growth America

www.smartgrowthamerica.org

An online resource for auditing your zoning code

Increasing Housing Choices

THE BIG IDEA

Quality, affordable housing attracts new residents, stabilizes property values and can attract retail investments

WHY

Decades of disinvestment and an aging housing stock stifled growth and contributed to neighborhood decline

HOW

Spurred by public investments in housing, private developers are increasing housing choice in Old South Baton Rouge

RESULTS

\$60 million + in new housing developments

Overview

The spark for new housing options in Old South Baton Rouge began with the awarding of a Hope VI grant in 2002. The grant allowed the East Baton Rouge Public Housing Authority to remove and replace substandard units with a mix of subsidized and market rate housing that demonstrated to the community and private developers the market potential for additional housing options in the area. Since the creation of the revitalization strategy, CPEX has facilitated and promoted the development of quality, affordable housing in Old South Baton Rouge. As outlined in a residential housing analysis CPEX commissioned to explore increasing housing choices in the area, Old South Baton Rouge has a number of advantages that have begun to attract private investments:

Location

- » Proximity to Downtown Baton Rouge
- » Proximity to the campus of Louisiana State University
- » Proximity to Baton Rouge Community College

Community Assets

- » McKinley Middle Magnet School which opened in 2006 and overlooks City Park
- » Carver Branch Public Library on Terrace Street
- » The restaurants, shops, and new housing that has been developed over the past decade adjacent to LSU

Community Engagement

- » The involvement of numerous individuals, organizations, and institutions in the revitalization of the study area

Funders and Partners

East Baton Rouge Parish Public Housing Authority, private developers

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Every market is different, and the development of affordable housing is a complex venture. However, successful projects share common elements:

- » Policy matters. No project can be successful if zoning, land use and other policies at the local level discourage the development of affordable multifamily or single-family homes. Understanding possible policy barriers is job #1
- » You can't go it alone. Engaging surrounding residents early and often to gather their input and earn their trust can make the difference between a successful project and a failed one
- » They build on strength. New housing benefits from its proximity to existing—and well-maintained—commercial, retail, and residential developments
- » Each housing initiative should be viewed not as a stand-alone project, but as a potential catalyst for additional residential development in surrounding blocks
- » Developments that are sensitive to the existing neighborhood and incorporate features that reinforce connections to neighbors have a competitive advantage and appeal to a broad range of buyers and renters

Community by Design

Increasing Housing Choices



Since 2005, public and private investments in Old South Baton Rouge have given new and existing residents more housing choices

CLICK FOR MORE

PolicyLink

www.policylink.org

Explore PolicyLink's Equitable Development Toolkit

The Center for Housing Policy

www.housingpolicy.org

The Center has created an online Toolbox on addressing housing needs in your community

Urban Land Institute

www.uli.org

Explore the publication *Ten Principles to Developing Affordable Housing*

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

www.hud.gov

Learn more about Low Income Housing Tax Credits—the largest source of funding for affordable housing

Crescent City Community Land Trust

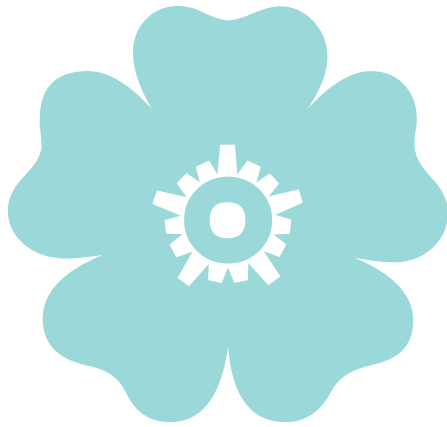
www.ccclt.org

Community Land Trusts can be used to achieve long-term affordability of housing



Community garden leader Sharon Terrance and Big Buddy participants plant flowers in the Stamp of Hope Community Garden, Old South Baton Rouge

Growing Old South Baton Rouge



Over the past six years, community change has taken root in ways big and small in Old South Baton Rouge. As community members surveyed the opportunities to transform vacant land into productive use, the idea of establishing community gardens blossomed. CPEX and other stakeholders helped to establish six community gardens in Old South Baton Rouge and continue to explore creative ways to ensure greater access to fresh fruit and vegetables. But not everything green in Old South Baton Rouge is grown—it can be built. Unique partnerships were forged to bring green technology to the Baranco-Clark YMCA through the construction of the Solar Pavilion, an outdoor space that will be used as a classroom and site for programming on healthy food options for children and neighborhood residents.



Growing Old South Baton Rouge Community Gardens

THE BIG IDEA

Community Gardens can build a sense of community and bring neighbors together for a common purpose

WHY

Limited options for fresh food for residents in Old South Baton Rouge

HOW

Reclaiming vacant or unused green space provided access to fresh produce and nutritionally rich foods that may otherwise be unavailable or difficult to obtain

RESULTS

Six community gardens established

Overview

The goal of the Community Gardens Initiative was to improve the quality of life in Old South Baton Rouge by facilitating the revitalization of vacant, unmanaged lots into community assets. The program was designed to utilize available land resources as a catalyst for neighborhood redevelopment—one of the goals of the revitalization strategy in Old South Baton Rouge. Key to the project were partnerships with local churches, Louisiana Master Gardeners and community organizations. Community Gardens can also incorporate workforce development opportunities by offering training in horticulture, food production and the emerging green economy.

Funders and Partners

LSU Community University Partnership, Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors, LSU Agricultural Center Extension Services, YMCA, Louisiana Delta Service Corps, South Garden Project, Baton Rouge Garden Alliance, Old South Baton Rouge Civic Association, Baton Rouge Green, East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, New Ark Baptist Church, City Year

Community Gardens in Old South Baton Rouge

- New Ark Baptist Church Garden
- Stamp of Hope Garden
- Aveia's Rainbow Community Garden
- Polk Elementary Garden
- Baranco-Clark YMCA Garden
- Head Start Gardens

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Community gardens offer many benefits:

- » Beautifying an area by transforming vacant or unused land into productive, attractive spaces
- » Providing fresh food for residents, volunteers and local food banks
- » Teaching a sense of self-reliance
- » Building a sense of community and providing opportunities for neighbors of all ages to interact
- » Creating a common sense of purpose among neighbors in support of an effort that contributes to the beauty and livability of a neighborhood
- » Inspiring neighbors to think about how vacant green space can be used in creative ways that enhance the appearance of the community

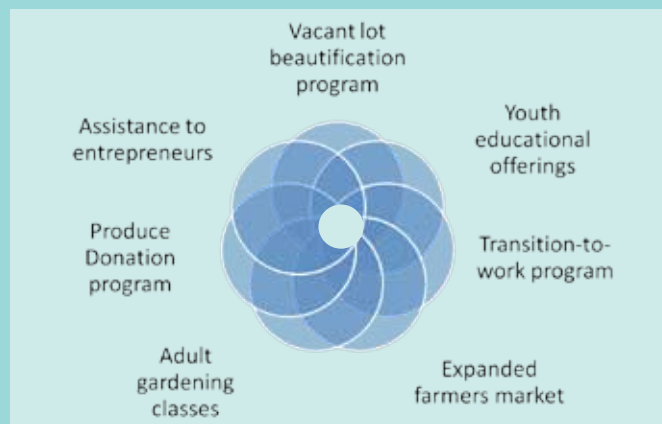
Growing Old South Baton Rouge Community Gardens

How to Sustain a Community Garden



In many ways, planting and harvesting a Community Garden is the easy part. Strong partnerships and a plan to support the effort are key to long-term sustainability

Potential Benefits of Community Gardens



The benefits of a Community Garden go far beyond the fresh food that can be grown and harvested

CLICK FOR MORE

USDA Food Desert Locator

www.usda.gov

Search for food deserts in your community

Healthy BR

www.healthybr.com

Baton Rouge's initiative to promote healthy eating and active living

Community Garden Startup Guide

celosangeles.ucdavis.edu

A guide that can help neighborhood groups and organizations along the path to starting and sustaining a Community Garden

Local Agricultural Cooperative Extension Office Search

www.usda.gov

The Cooperative Extension offices are staffed by experts who provide useful, practical, and research-based information

Local Master Gardener Program Search

www.extension.org

Master Gardener programs are volunteer programs that advise and educate the public on gardening

Growing Old South Baton Rouge

GROW. Hope. Thrive.

GROW Sunflower Project

Vacant lots in Old South Baton Rouge are often plagued by environmental issues such as the presence of trash and illegal dumping. In a pilot program, three vacant lots in Old South Baton Rouge were transformed through sunflower plantings in a partnership with the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority and Baton Rouge Green. An area approximately the size of one-quarter of an acre, on three sites, was planted by volunteers and neighborhood groups who were actively involved in the maintenance and harvesting of the lots. The mission of the GROW Sunflower Project was to enhance community engagement, remediate soil contamination, beautify the landscape, and put vacant land back into productive use.

YMCA Solar Learning Pavilion

A new open-air pavilion and outdoor classroom with solar panels on its roof is not only bringing green technology to Old South Baton Rouge, its construction helped create a lasting partnership between local colleges and neighborhood residents. Located adjacent to the playground at the Baranco-Clark YMCA, the Solar Learning Pavilion is a collaborative effort by CPEX, the LSU School of Architecture, and the Baton Rouge Community College's Solar Installation Program. Funding was provided by the Huey and Angelina Wilson Foundation. The eight solar panels power outdoor lighting and two fans and feed the main YMCA building to help reduce its utility bill. LSU and Baton Rouge Community College students designed and built the pavilion and landscape improvements surrounding the Solar Learning Pavilion were made possible through a grant from the Greater Baton Rouge Association of Realtors.

Fresh Food Access

Large portions of Old South Baton Rouge are classified as food deserts — areas where a substantial number of residents have limited access to a supermarket. While numerous “corner shops” exist in Old South Baton Rouge, residents lacking access to transportation may find it difficult to acquire the fresh fruits, vegetables and lower-cost staples available in a larger grocery store. Attracting a grocery store to the Old South Baton Rouge community was identified as a top concern of residents during the planning process and a detailed market analysis was conducted to determine if the Old South community could support one. The initial market survey revealed opportunities for the location of a supermarket, but that it would require substantial subsidies to be feasible. The East Baton Rouge Parish Redevelopment Authority and a number of organizations continue to explore increasing fresh food options in Old South Baton Rouge through a nonprofit retail model and possible mobile or satellite markets.



On the Horizon



The full story of Old South Baton Rouge is far from over. Not even a decade ago, few could have imagined the progress that could be achieved when residents are given the opportunity to help shape the future of their community. While every achievement is celebrated, there is still much work to be done. Yet, encouraging signs are on the horizon. New housing opportunities promise to bring quality, affordable housing to Old South. New business investments will mean expanded opportunities and more options for residents. Additional planning work is being done to help preserve the cultural aspects of Old South Baton Rouge and celebrate the history of this unique and vibrant community.

Gateway Residential Project

THE BIG IDEA

Attracting new residents is critical for continued neighborhood renewal

WHY

A shortage of quality, affordable multifamily housing in Old South Baton Rouge

HOW

Creating mixed-income housing in Old South Baton Rouge on a significant site that is a gateway to the community

RESULTS

Stay tuned!

Overview

A primary goal of the Old South Baton Rouge revitalization strategy was to create affordable housing options to attract and retain residents. CPEX and the Gulf Coast Housing Partnership have assembled a large tract of previously vacant land to create a signature project of mixed-income, mixed-use housing. Funds from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Program enabled portions of the property to be cleaned up and prepared for development.

Located near downtown Baton Rouge at a prominent entry point to Old South Baton Rouge, the Gateway project represents a nearly \$10 million investment and be among the largest multifamily, multi-use developments in Old South Baton Rouge with 53 units and space for retail.

Funders and Partners

Gulf Coast Housing Partnership, JP Morgan Chase, NeighborWorks America, Capital One, Entergy, Baton Rouge Area Foundation, East Baton Rouge Mortgage Finance Authority, East Baton Rouge Office of Community Development, Campus Federal Credit Union, East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority



Rendering of the proposed Gateway Residential Project

CLICK FOR MORE

Gulf Coast Housing Partnership

www.gchp.net



Gulf Coast Housing Partnership creates vibrant, high quality communities which are socially and economically integrated, affordable, and sustainable

The Urban Institute

www.urban.org



The Urban Institute's Metropolitan Housing & Communities Policy Center focuses on housing developments, neighborhoods, cities, and suburbs

Louisiana Housing Corporation

www.lhfa.state.la.us



LHC specializes in forming partnerships with federal, state and local governments, banks, lending institutions and non-profit and for-profit developers to make housing affordable for Louisiana's families

United States Environmental Protection Agency

www.epa.gov



The mission of EPA is to protect human health and the environment

Old South Baton Rouge Cultural District

THE BIG IDEA

Arts and Culture can be an engine for neighborhood renewal

WHY

Lack of a comprehensive plan to nurture and grow cultural assets in Old South Baton Rouge

HOW

Building an arts-centered community through planning and resident engagement

RESULTS

Stay tuned! Planning process to commence fall, 2012

Overview

Residents in Old South Baton Rouge identified preserving cultural and historical assets as an important part of the revitalization strategy. In its heyday, the Lincoln Theater hosted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Montgomery Bus Boycott and performances by legendary artists James Brown and Chuck Berry. Long an Old South Baton Rouge landmark, the theater has been closed for several years.

In 2010, The Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame purchased the theater and launched a fundraising campaign to complete its renovation. To support the project and ensure broader community impact, the Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, CPEX and the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority are exploring potential public/private partnerships to enliven arts and culture in Old South Baton Rouge with the Lincoln Theater as the lynchpin. An expanded Old South Baton Rouge Cultural District may include a performing arts theatre, an African American history museum, art classroom spaces, community gardens, live/work studio spaces, greenways and arts-oriented retail spaces.

Funders and Partners

The Kresge Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame, East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority



The historic Lincoln Theater, Old South Baton Rouge
Photo Courtesy of Colleen Kane

CLICK FOR MORE

The Kresge Foundation

www.kresge.org



The Kresge Foundation aims to advance opportunity and improve the quality of life for underserved populations by supporting work to strengthen the social and economic fabric in American cities

ArtPlace

www.artplaceamerica.org



ArtPlace is a collaboration of national funders and organizations investing in arts and culture to drive vibrancy and diversity with the goal of transforming communities

National Endowment for the Arts

www.nea.gov



Our Town invests in creative and innovative projects in which communities, arts and design organizations, and artists, are looking to increase their livability

Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism

www.crt.state.la.us



Supporting arts and culture across Louisiana



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