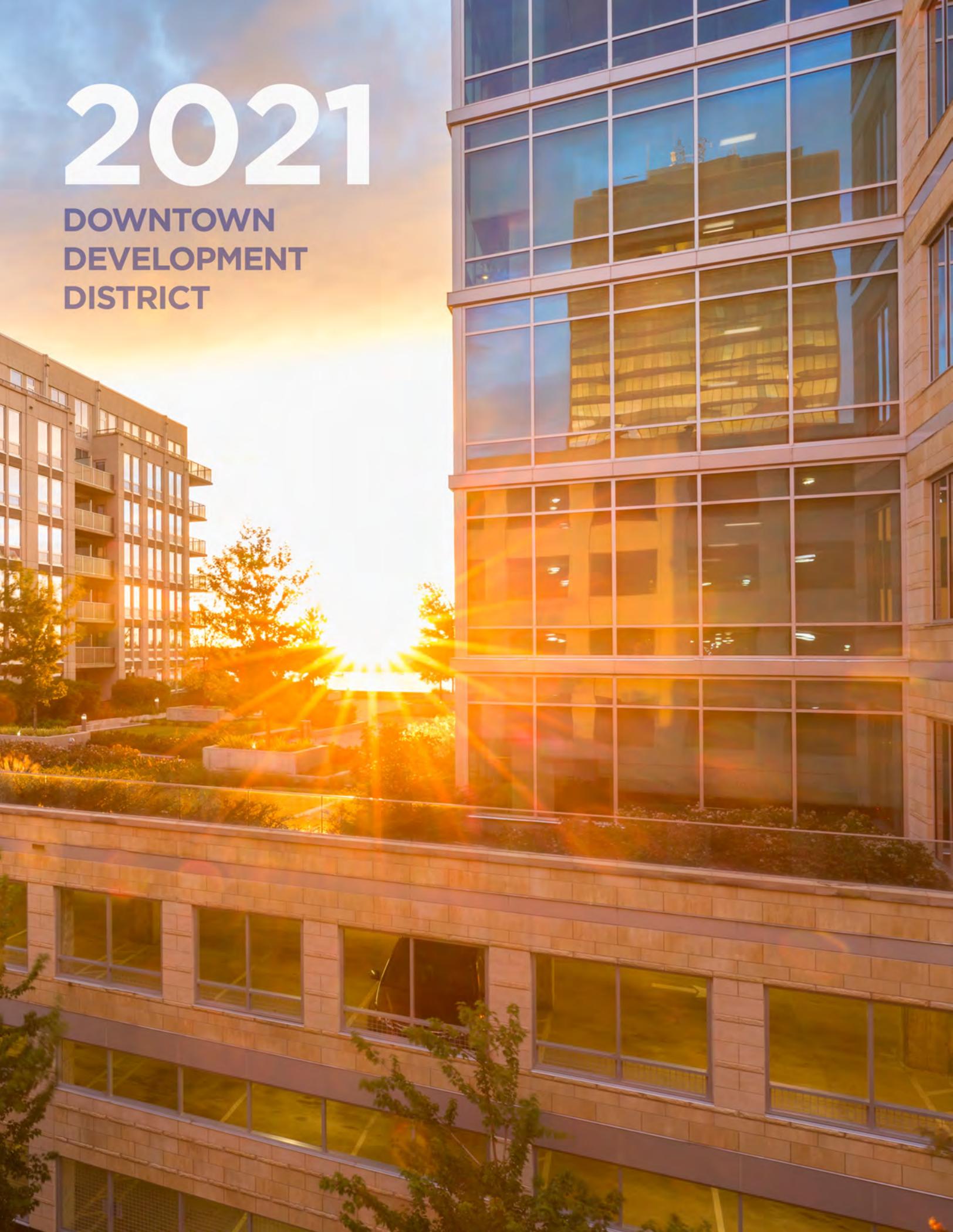


# 2021

**DOWNTOWN  
DEVELOPMENT  
DISTRICT**



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

**DEVELOPMENT YEARBOOK**  
**2021**

247 Florida Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70801  
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[www.downtownbatonrouge.org](http://www.downtownbatonrouge.org)

# 2021

**DOWNTOWN  
DEVELOPMENT  
DISTRICT**

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BATON  
ROUGE

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## REMEMBERING DAVIS RHORER

As Executive Director of the Downtown Development District, Davis Rhorer was responsible for carrying out the mission of the DDD to initiate, incubate and support partnerships that developed and enhanced Downtown Baton Rouge.

A native of Baton Rouge and graduate of the Louisiana State University's Reich School of Landscape Architecture, Rhorer always focused his work on improving his beloved hometown for the benefit of all residents. He served as a prominent leader in the development of the many plans and initiatives that transformed the Downtown area, working closely with the DDD Board of Directors to attract more than \$2.4 billion in investment. He played a critical role in numerous riverfront development projects and fought to revive Baton Rouge's oldest historic neighborhoods, Spanish Town and Beauregard Town. Downtown's music and food festivals, parades, holiday events, vibrant restaurant scene, museums and cultural attractions, and thousands of daily workers and visitors, are a testament to his vision, enthusiasm, determination, and tireless efforts.

His passion and commitment to the redevelopment of Downtown Baton Rouge were the spark that ignited a community, and his work will remain a shining example of what can be accomplished when people come together. The Downtown Development District staff and commissioners are committed to continue his legacy and vision for Downtown Baton Rouge.



# NEW BUSINESSES



## NEW BUSINESSES

**MERCER ANNEX**, 1010 NIC, is a salon that has moved its headquarters to 1010 NIC joining their partner barber shop Mercer Supply Company.

**CHELSEA'S LIVE**, 1010 NIC, a legendary Baton Rouge live music staple announced its return as Chelsea's Live, this time as a world class, artist-friendly venue. Chelsea's Live is located between the LSU campus and the edge of downtown Baton Rouge.

**BRASS**, 327 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge Area Souvenir Shop, BRASS for short; is a gift and souvenir shop for tourists and residents alike. From one-of-kind, handmade items by local artists to magnets and postcards; BRASS has everything a visitor needs to remember their time in Baton Rouge.

**PEDAL PUB**, 436 Government Street, Pedal Pub puts an interesting twist on fun by providing an outing with a one-of-a-kind experience. Hop on the iconic "Bike with the Barrel" for personalized tours to local bars, breweries, restaurants and unique city attractions.

**RIO TACO and TEQUILA**, 333 Third Street, Mexican style dishes, premium tequila choices and inspired cocktails in an electric environment, perfectly positioned in the heart of Downtown Baton Rouge.

**NARD FIT**, 440 Third Street, NardFit is specializing in personalized body weight training and creative and unique group workouts. Renard Thomas is owner of NardFit Studio and NardFit Elite 24hr Gym.

**SOUTHERN COFE' @ THE MARKET**, 501 Main Street, Southern Cofe' initially broke barriers in North Baton Rouge tackling the food desert crisis by providing fresh smoothies, sandwiches, soups, wraps, acai bowls, and other amazing menu options. Southern Cofe is now bringing these same delicious treats to the Main Street Market on a daily basis.

**ROYAL TASTE OF JAMAICA**, 320 St. Charles Street, the Royal Taste of Jamaica has been serving delicious home-style Jamaican food in Baton Rouge for years. Now located in the former Christina's Restaurant downtown providing Beauregard Town and City Court patrons a variety of Jamaican dishes!

**LOADSTAR**, 803 Main Street, Load Star is a logistics company for the chemical and petroleum plants who recently moved its headquarters to the newly renovated building on Main Street.

**SOCIAL COFFEE**, 521 Third Street Ste. B, is opening a brick and mortar location on North Street. Social Coffee will offer coffee, pastries, light food, and events in order to help build community in the area. Social Coffee currently serves weekly pop-ups at this location.

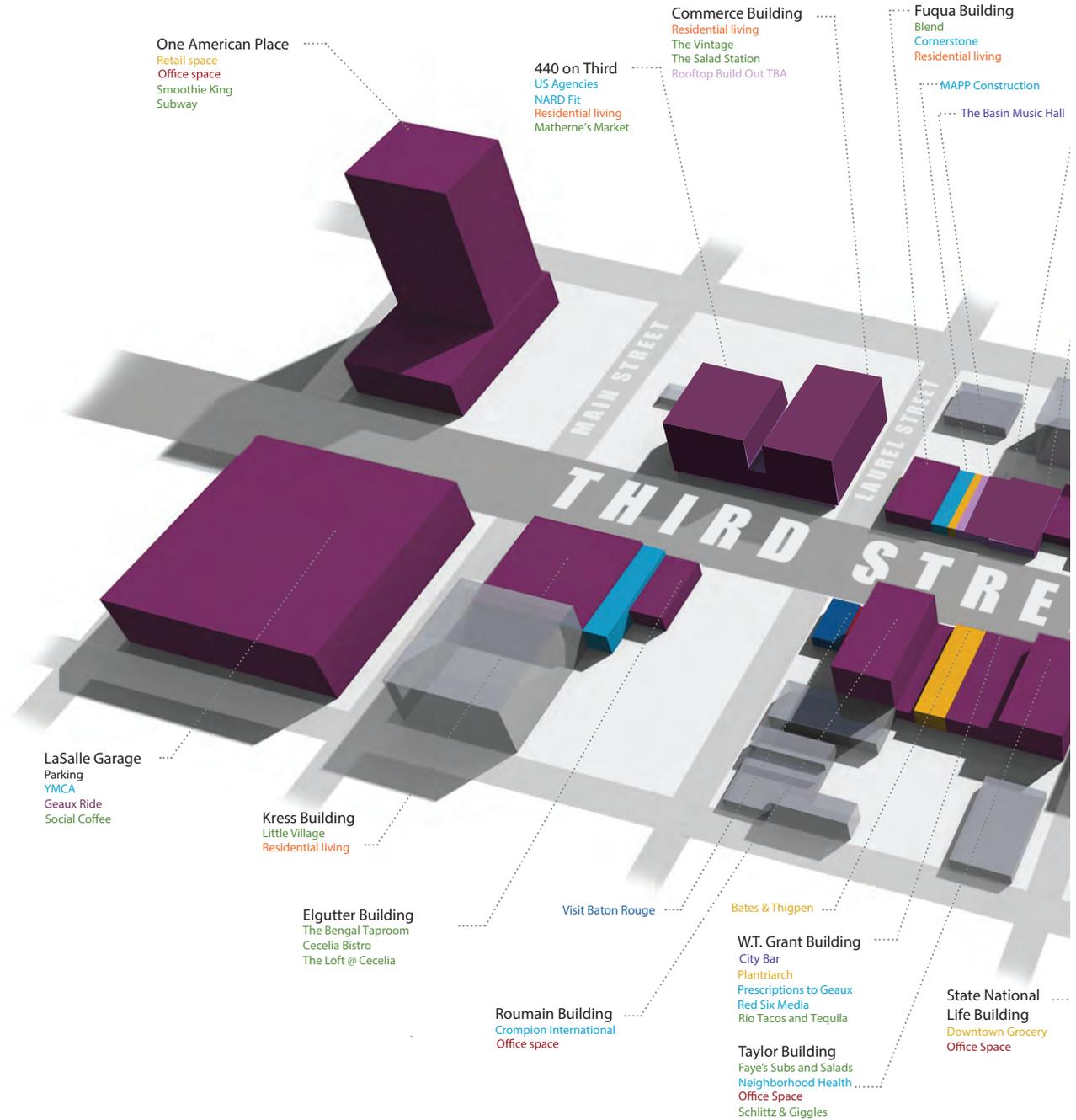
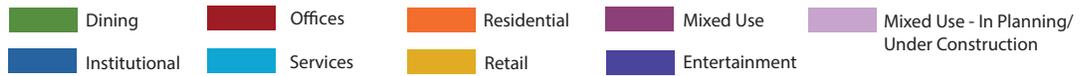
**RURAL SOURCING**, Location TBD, Rural Sourcing, a software development firm based in Atlanta says it will employ 150 people with average salaries of \$75,000 from a yet-to-be-announced downtown location.

**SHAMROCK MARINE EXPANSION**, 900 River Road, has been providing safe transportation to the shipping and towing industry for 15 years and counting. The Baton Rouge launch station and facilities have expanded to handle unloading/loading stores from trucks to their boats.



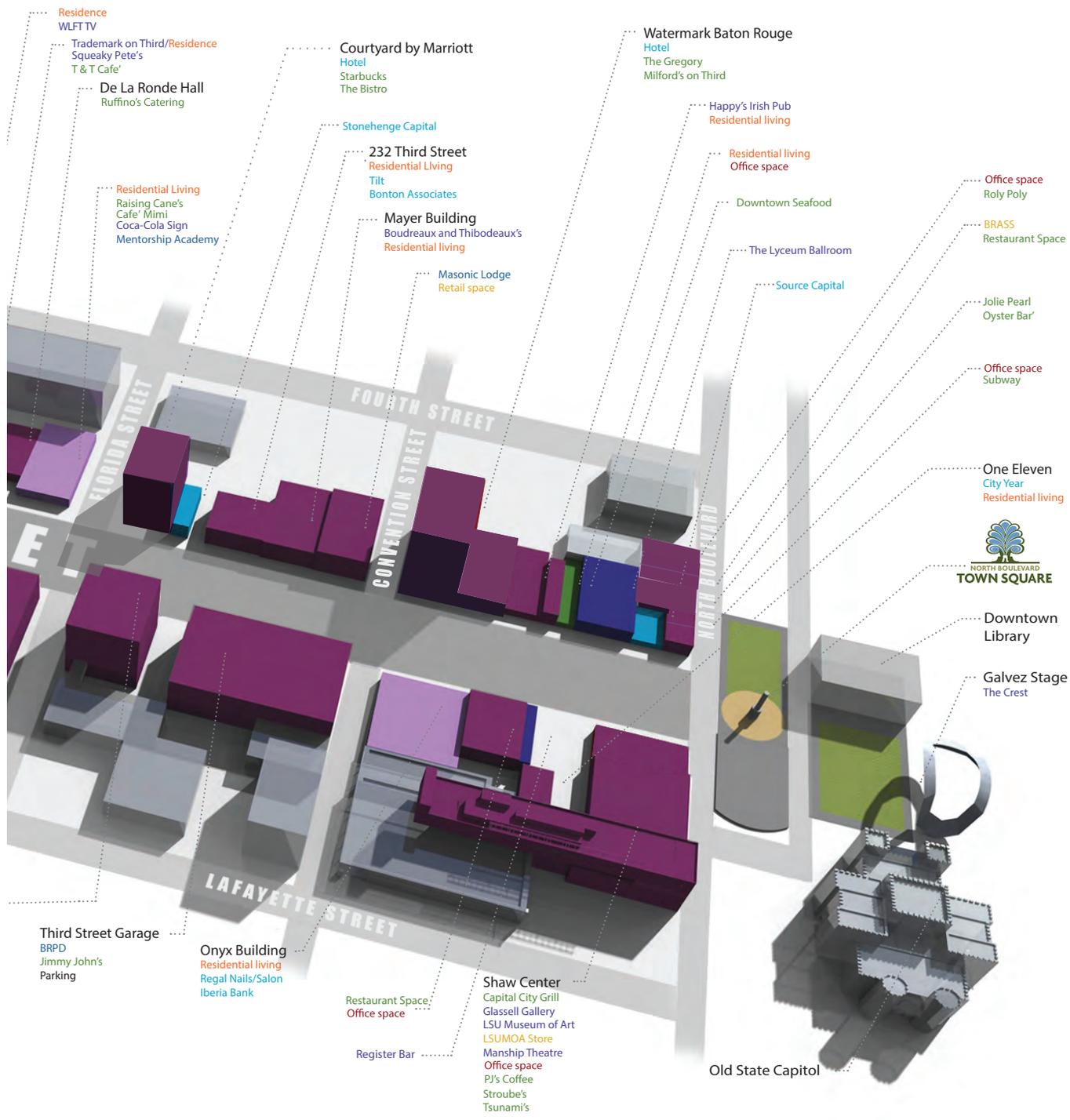


# **HIGHLIGHTED DEVELOPMENTS**



# THIRD STREET DIVERSITY

In 1950, Third Street was the heart of not only downtown, but of Baton Rouge. After years of decline, the Third Street corridor has re-emerged as the place to live, work, and play in Baton Rouge. New retailers and developments along Third Street are bringing more residents downtown than ever before, fulfilling a long-term vision for the city's center that's been in the works for more than two decades. Featuring many of the city's best restaurants, music venues, and bars, Third Street is already thriving with nightlife and entertainment options. Major investments in residential developments and essential services, such as a grocery store and a pharmacy, are helping to make downtown more livable.



In total, there are more than two dozen startups and small businesses downtown that are owned and operated by young entrepreneurs. This exciting spirit of youthful entrepreneurship is yet another reason why it is a great time to be downtown. New restaurants and bars provide a vast array of entertainment options, while new hotels, retailers and service based businesses provide convenience and shopping opportunities. Third Street was awarded by the Louisiana Chapter of the American Planning Association in 2018 as a 'Great Street.'



## I & II RIVERMARK CENTRE

In 2018, Mike Wampold, a local developer with several projects located throughout Baton Rouge, announced his plans to purchase and renovate the Chase South Tower located at 451 Florida Street the Chase South Tower is located in the heart of the Central Business District and was originally built in the 1960s, making the building eligible for Historic Tax Credits to assist with the renovation costs.

Chase South Tower is a 333,000 square-foot office building that Wampold plans to convert to a mixed-use development with retail, residential, and office space. The development is expected to bring an additional 140-150 residential units to downtown's Central Business District. Current plans include a variety of apartment sizes ranging from one-bedroom to large three-bedroom units with rental rates expect to be \$1.70 per square foot. Amenities will include a rooftop pool and a health club/fitness center. Renovation to the upper 11 stories into luxury apartments is expected to be complete in mid-2022.



## HOLLYWOOD CASINO EXPANSION

Hollywood Casino has begun construction on their new landside casino in early 2021. The casino looks to spend between \$21 million and \$25 million to expand its existing pavilion an additional 42,000 square feet for a total of over 100,000 square feet. The riverboat's 850 slot machines and 12 table games plan to move into the new 30,000-square-foot casino in the first quarter of 2022. The riverboat is open during construction of the new facility and the landside move means the casino can sell or lease its gambling boat to free up dock space, which will be used by cruise boats traveling the river. Plans include adding a sports bar & grill venue with 250 seats alongside a Shaquille O'Neal Big Chicken Restaurant.



## ONYX RESIDENCES

Commercial Properties Realty Trust invested approximately \$7 million in the construction of a mixed-use development on the corner of Third Street and Convention Street that introduced an additional 28 residential units downtown. The Onyx Residences, conveniently located just a block away from North Boulevard Town Square, includes both one and two bedroom options that range in size from 600-1,100 square feet. The development offers amenities such as SMART Home technology, fiber-based Internet provided by CenturyLink, DirectTV service, and balconies overlooking the street. The property also includes 5,600 square feet of retail space on the ground level which houses Iberia Bank and Regal Nails.

More information about this project can be found on their website: [www.onyxresidences.com](http://www.onyxresidences.com).



# COMMERCE BUILDING

5th Floor Company, a New Orleans-based firm, acquired the international style Commerce Building in 2013 and hired the nationally-recognized New Orleans architecture firm Eskew Dumez Ripple Architects to engage the downtown community in the programming of the vacant building, previously housed several state offices.

The developers received state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits as well as a U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development loan to finance the \$30 million historical restoration multi-use project. The Commerce Building is a eight-story, 180,000 square-foot building located on the corner of Laurel and Third Streets. This multi-use building includes 93 residential units, a rooftop pool, fitness center, on-site covered parking, the Vintage Baton Rouge restaurant, and the Salad Station restaurant. The residential units comprised in the building are one, two, and three bedrooms ranging from 603 to 1,500 square feet.

More information on this project is available at [www.thecommercebldg.com](http://www.thecommercebldg.com).



## COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT

Windsor Aughtry Company, Inc. of Greenville, SC, has completed an approximately 85,000 square-foot, eight-story, 147-room Courtyard by Marriott Hotel at the epicenter of Downtown's Third Street Corridor. The Downtown Courtyard by Marriott's specific location at 260 Third Street pays homage to the Hotel Istrouma, Baton Rouge's first downtown hotel formerly at the same Third Street location.

Designed by Bounds and Gillespie Architects, PLLC, the hotel takes advantage of downtown's skyline along Third Street and Florida Street, as well as south to LSU, with approximately 35% of the rooms equipped with balconies. The completion of this \$23.6 million investment completes four contiguous blocks of urban streetscape and complements the current commercial diversity of the historic Third Street corridor. It also creates a cohesive urban streetscape and houses downtown's first Starbucks on the ground level.



## WATERMARK BATON ROUGE

Built in 1926 as one of Baton Rouge's first skyscrapers, the recently renovated building was originally the home of Louisiana National Bank. It was purchased by developer Mike Wampold in the spring of 2014, and converted to an upscale hotel with two restaurants. The 12-story Art Deco building, located on the corner of Convention and Third Street was converted into a 148-room Marriott Autograph. The Watermark Baton Rouge also features two premier restaurants on the bottom floor. The Gregory, featuring original murals painted by Angela Gregory, offers refreshing culinary takes on Louisiana classics, while Milford's on Third, a New York-style deli focuses on local and family tradition.



## 440 ON THIRD

In 2015, Developers David Weinstein and Dyke Nelson renovated the old Capital One Bank Building at the corner of Third Street and Main Street, now known as 440 on Third. The approximately \$12 million project was converted into a multi-use facility with 65 residential units, offices, and ground floor retail. The apartments include one and two bedroom options and have available on site parking. Commercial tenants include USAgencies, NARD Fit, and the full-service grocery store Matherne's Market. The development also includes 28 parking spaces dedicated to supermarket patrons which are accessed from Fourth Street.



# CARY SAURAGE COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER

The Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge (ACGBR) recently renovated the “Triangle Building” on St. Ferdinand Street that formerly housed the District Attorney’s office. ACGBR’s renovations to the space includes a community art space, recording studio, rehearsal spaces, artist workshops, roof top patio, and gallery with a total estimated cost of \$2.6 million.

The newly renovated building, allows the Arts Council to be a resource center for the arts, centrally located in the heart of downtown. It features an arts education center; a two-story, open exhibition gallery; accessible spaces for rehearsals, meetings, classes and conferences; and an outdoor rooftop terrace to allow for community gatherings.

The facility also includes open studio spaces, a black box studio and an audio-visual studio, all where local artists can create demos, rehearse new works or show works in progress.



# RIVER CENTER BRANCH LIBRARY

The vision for the new River Center Library began in 2004 with an allocated \$19 million to demolish the original outdated structure and replace it with a new modern library. A joint venture of Washer Hill Lipscomb Cabaniss Architecture (WHLC) of Baton Rouge and Schwartz/Silver Architects of Boston was established to carry out the design of this state of the art facility.

The new downtown library is the centerpiece of North Boulevard Town Square and the Central Green - a place where our City's civic and cultural attractions come together. Its four floors encompass approximately 50,000 square feet of dynamic spaces for student, families, and professionals, as well as more technology and conveniences to cater to the surrounding community. The library features several meeting rooms and a spectacular roof top terrace with a green wall and views of the surrounding city skyline. Buquet & LeBlanc completed the construction of the project in late 2020.



## RIVER CENTER THEATRE

Post Architects, a local architectural firm, and the New Orleans based firm HMS Architects were chosen in early 2016 to redesign the existing River Center Theatre with a renovation budget of \$19 million. The original theatre was built in 1977 and has had little improvements to the facility since that time, making it part of the strategic plan developed for the larger River Center complex. Funding for the project originates from state sales tax rebate funds and construction is expected to be complete by spring 2022. Improvements to infrastructure related items and reconfiguration of the interior seating, lobby, and theatre areas are part of the project scope.



## THE WATER CAMPUS

The Water Campus is a reflection of the vision for the redevelopment of the Mississippi Riverfront, illustrated in the recommendations of Baton Rouge's master plans. This unique development has been orchestrated through a collaboration between the Louisiana Department of Economic Development, Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF), the City of Baton Rouge, The Water Institute of the Gulf, Louisiana State University, and other coastal research institutions.

The Water Campus is the economic and cultural southern anchor of downtown, strengthening the connection to LSU. The 30 acre campus is located on the Mississippi River near the old Municipal Dock and the I-10 bridge and houses The Water Institute of the Gulf, an independent applied research organization focused on developing scientific coastal restoration solutions. Campus facilities, totaling more than \$50 million in private and public investments, contain the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority's offices, LSU Center for River Studies, and the Center for Coastal & Deltaic Solutions. A multi-tenant office building on Brickyard Lane, and 200 Water Street, a residential development have recently been completed.



## 200 WATER STREET

The Water Campus' newest development is 200 Water Street, a twenty-unit loft-style apartment building located in the heart of the Water Campus and overlooking the Main Square. One and two bedroom luxury apartments are located conveniently to the levee bike path and just minutes to the heart of downtown and LSU. This residential development has an urban living feel in a coastal research campus setting. Tours of the building and leasing began in 2021.





## THE HERON DOWNTOWN

John O. Hearin, a local developer and downtown property owner, has completed construction on a 142-unit apartment complex called The Heron Downtown. Located on Sixth Street between Florida and Convention Street, the development is a six-story building with one and two bedroom units. The first two floors of the development are comprised of garage space with approximately 250 spaces for residents and guests. Approximately 3,000 square feet of commercial space is located on the ground floor with the remaining upper floors comprised of residential units.

The apartments at The Heron Downtown has natural hues that calm the senses and allow residents to unwind at ease. Spacious, sunlit floor plans boast wood grain floors; kitchens are elegantly outfitted with energy efficient appliances and imported granite countertops. All apartments feature private covered balconies, large walk-in closets, and in-unit washers and dryers. Other amenities include a clubhouse, swimming pool, landscaped courtyards, and access to the adjacent BREC Convention Street Park.

More information about this project can be found on their website: [www.herondowntown.com](http://www.herondowntown.com).



## IBM & 525 LAFAYETTE

A partnership between former Governor Bobby Jindal, former LED Secretary Stephen Moret, East Baton Rouge City-Parish, and BRAC attracted IBM to locate downtown and increase the economic viability of Baton Rouge. Complementing this unique partnership is the commitment from Louisiana State University (LSU) to increase Computer Science-related graduates, along with riverfront property improvements from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation and Commercial Properties Realty Trust. The riverfront property, which was formerly the home of the Baton Rouge Advocate, contains the IBM facility as well as 85 residential units within a residential complex known as 525 Lafayette. IBM began occupying the office tower in the spring of 2015 and currently employs around 800 people. Other tenants include Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers Headquarters, Fishman Haygood Law Firm and Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

IBM has amplified the downtown development stage, another returning riverfront property to commerce.

More information about this project can be found on their websites: [www.ibmloisiana.com/jobs/](http://www.ibmloisiana.com/jobs/) & [www.525lafayette.com](http://www.525lafayette.com)



## BELVEDERE TOWNHOMES

The Belvedere Townhomes are four riverfront luxury townhomes on Main and Lafayette Streets, located adjacent to 525 Lafayette. Approximately \$8.5 million was invested in the construction of these high-end townhomes that offer additional living options to Downtown Baton Rouge residents. The townhomes sit on a quarter-acre lot, are four stories, and range in size from 3,500 to 5,000 square feet. All four units were pre-sold.



## THE ELIAS

The Elias is a \$3-million multifamily housing project located in the historic Beaugard Town neighborhood on the corner of Napoleon and America Streets. The development includes 25 one and two bedroom apartment units with garages on the ground floor that are designed to complement the exterior aesthetic of the existing neighborhood.



## LABI

Louisiana Business and Industry (LABI) serves its broad membership by working towards the singular goal of fostering a climate for economic growth through consistently championing the principles of the free enterprise system. LABI sets the standard for advocacy, providing policymakers with the information and perspective necessary to advance sound public policy that supports strong economic growth. LABI is Louisiana's official state chapter for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. In the fall of 2019, LABI announced moving its headquarters downtown to 500 Main Street. The building's extensive upgrades were designed by Eskew Dumez Ripple of New Orleans and constructed by Faulk & Meek of Baton Rouge.



## RIVERBOAT VISITS

The 2021 riverboat schedule was released by Visit Baton Rouge, there were over 90 stops planned at the downtown riverfront dock post COVID-19 restrictions. The riverboats are expected to return to a full schedule in 2022. Each boat carries approximately 300 tourists, that are offered bus and walking tours of Baton Rouge when they arrive in the city. The number of riverboat cruises calling on Baton Rouge is expected to increase in the next couple of years, with Viking Cruise Lines starting its long-awaited Mississippi River service in August 2022.



## SHAMROCK MARINE EXPANSION

Shamrock Marine has opened its new headquarters just upriver from the I-10 bridge on the Mississippi River. The headquarters building is an abandoned tugboat wheel house re-purposed into the Shamrock Marine offices. In addition, the marine transportation company is expanding with plans including a new 430-foot dock on the Mississippi River and a day passenger boat. Owner Duncan Armentor's expansion is to provide additional space for docking to clients. The expansion has gotten the attention of the passenger boat companies that stop in Baton Rouge, who will use the dock as well. Armentor also intends to buy a day passenger boat to dock in Baton Rouge before the end of 2022. The boat, to be called Queen of Baton Rouge, will provide day trips along the Mississippi River.



## BATON ROUGE AREA CHAMBER

564 Laurel Street has been the home of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) for over 50 years and has been a part of the organization's identity. However, its previous condition was in need of updating and repairs. The recently renovated facility, designed by WHLC Architecture, now houses the Center for Economic Development. The Center for Economic Development is a modern business center located in the heart of downtown, and a hub where entrepreneurs from the private sector can gather to determine growth plans and new innovations. It is a center where visionaries can meet to brainstorm, problem solve and chart new directions for business in the region.



## 500 LAUREL STREET

Originally built in the 1950s as the Union Federal Savings & Loan Building by renowned Louisiana architect A. Hays Town. This building was renovated in 2016 by developers Dyke Nelson and David Weinstein. The \$4.5 million renovation consists of Class A office space, currently serving as B1 Bank headquarters. State and federal historic tax credits provided financial assistance to complete the interior and exterior renovation of this historic downtown building.



# **DOWNTOWN EAST**



## BREAC SPORTS ACADEMY

BREAC is exploring the possibility of improving Memorial Stadium and its surrounding site, as well as a new home for the Sports Academy currently located on Laurel Street. WHLC Architecture was hired to study the area and develop conceptual designs showcasing the possibility of such improvements. A recreation center is proposed as part of the development that will include basketball courts, an elevated track, fitness center, lobby, boxing ring, and several program spaces. Its proposed location near the I-110 corridor would provide an opportunity for the facility to become a community focal point. BREAC is currently developing a master plan for the area.



## ELECTRIC DEPOT

Construction has been completed on Phase I of the redevelopment of the site previously occupied by Entergy on Government Street. Build Baton Rouge secured ownership of the property and remediated the existing buildings through brownfields remediation grant funding. Build Baton Rouge contracted with Weinstein Nelson Development to lead the redevelopment efforts of this \$20 million project.

Now known as the “Electric Depot” the unique mixed-use site is located just in Downtown East, an area recently incorporated into the Downtown Development District. The site is also strategically located east of the Kansas City Railway at 14th Street, and is expected to become a catalyst for development in the heavily traveled area between Mid City and downtown, as well a stop on the planned New Orleans to Baton Rouge Commuter Rail. The development is anchored by Red Stick Social, with several other tenants including restaurants, retail, and offices. Included in the first phase are 16 apartments ranging from 650 to 900 square feet.



## LINCOLN HOTEL

The historic Hotel Lincoln, which hosted African-American guests in Baton Rouge during the period of segregation in the south, was purchased in 2017 by developer Anthony Kimble. Famous African-American musicians including Nat King Cole, James Brown, and Aretha Franklin stayed at the hotel in its heyday. The 12,000 square-foot building has been abandoned since the 1980s, but the developer plans to convert the building into apartments with a ground floor restaurant. The building was placed on the National Historic Register in August of 2018, qualifying it for state and federal historic building tax credits to help finance the redevelopment.



## KIMBLE PROPERTIES

A local investor Anthony Kimble who specializes in Downtown East & Mid City redevelopments has purchased property on Government and Julia Streets. Kimble purchased property at 1440 Government St. and 1419 Julia St. and plans to build 12 to 14 multifamily housing units on the Julia Street site, which is made up of three lots. Once those units are developed, Kimble will redevelop the 1440 Government Street site, a 27,500-square-foot building that is currently zoned for retail and office.



# ELYSIAN PROPERTIES

Gulf Coast Housing Partnership, the lead developer on the mixed income Elysian I, II and III residential complexes on Spanish Town Road between 11th Street and 13th Street, have begun construction on the Elysian III. The Elysian properties brings 242 additional units to Downtown East with 50% of units affordable and 50% market rate. The Elysian properties joins several planned or underway residential units in the Downtown East area, bringing additional residents to the city's core.



## COUNCIL ON AGING-SENIOR HOUSING

The Lotus Village senior housing development located in Downtown East has been approved for \$10 million in Piggyback Resilient Mixed-Income (PRIME) funding, according to The East Baton Rouge Council on Aging (EBRCOA). The Lotus Village is a planned residential rental housing designed for the senior population of EBR Parish. The facility will have 116 new Aging in Place Units, a geriatric healthcare facility, an open-air market, recreation therapy gym, and a walking path.



## VALENCIA PARK

Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Volunteers for America Southeast Louisiana, is developing a 122-unit apartment complex intended to house veterans in need of affordable housing. The 2.56 acre project site is bordered by Spanish Town Road, 14th Street, Gayosa Street, and 15th Street. The project is projected to cost \$22 million and has received a \$5.7 million Community Development Block Grant from the Louisiana Housing Corporation. Plans for the development include a community space, and outdoor pavilion, and improved walkways. Chenevert Architects, along with Humphreys & Partners Architects is designing the project and construction is to be completed in 2022.



## DOWNTOWN EAST HISTORIC DISTRICT

Dyke Nelson, a local architect and developer, has worked to establish a new historic district in the Downtown East area. The approximate boundaries of the district are I-110, North Boulevard, Park Boulevard, and Terrace Street, with some areas adjacent to these borders excluded. As an established historic district, property owners can receive federal tax credits to assist in renovating approved structures. Nelson has developed several other downtown and Mid City properties including 440 on Third, 500 Laurel, and the Electric Depot.



## BEAUREGARD TOWN HISTORIC SURVEY

Beauregard Town, one of two historic neighborhoods downtown, has completed a historic survey of the buildings and homes in the neighborhood through a grant acquired by the EBR City-Parish Planning Commission. The neighborhood was designated a national historic district in 1980, and is updating the survey to determine the possibility of becoming a local historic district. If the neighborhood pursues local historic district designation, it would join two other local districts in EBR Parish, Spanish Town and Drehr Place. The Beauregard Town National Historic District historical survey has been completed, and a draft of the design guidelines compiled. These guidelines are being reviewed by the state's Division of Historic Preservation for accuracy and appropriateness.



# TRANSPORTATION



## NOLA/BR PASSENGER RAIL

Canadian Pacific Railway announced that the railway is committed to the establishment of passenger service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. A passenger train has not run between Baton Rouge and New Orleans since 1969. Restarting the service has the support of the public. A 2019 poll of voters in Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Orleans, St. James and St. John parishes found 63% would be interested in riding the line. A vast expansion of passenger rail funding is included in the recently passed federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, offering \$66 billion in total for railway and other projects. This line would include stops in Baton Rouge, Gonzales, LaPlace, and at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, with a terminus at the Union Passenger Terminal in New Orleans.



## GOTCHA BIKE SHARE

In 2015, Baton Rouge received a technical assistance grant from the EPA's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities program to investigate the feasibility and logistics of a bike share program, a transportation program ideal for short distance trips providing users the ability to rent and return a bicycle to and from stations strategically placed throughout the city. In November 2018, the Baton Rouge Bike Share Business and Implementation Plan was completed and spurred the implementation of Bike Share in downtown, Louisiana State University, and Southern University in 2019. Gotcha Bike Share was awarded the contract with the City-Parish and currently has approximately 500 bikes and 50 stations installed across the city.



## BUS RAPID TRANSIT

A bus rapid transit (BRT) project connecting Plank Road to Nicholson Drive with stops in North Baton Rouge, downtown, and LSU was awarded \$15 million in federal grant funding through the Better Utilizing Infrastructure to Leverage Development (BUILD) program. The 9-mile BRT corridor will provide a new transit route connecting educational institutions, the Water Campus, the downtown business district, medical facilities, commercial businesses and residential neighborhoods along Plank Road, Florida Street and Nicholson Drive. The \$53.6 million BRT project will be achieved through unprecedented partnerships formed to leverage local, state and federal funding to connect north and south Baton Rouge with high-frequency transit service. In addition to the federal grant, funding is being provided through DOTD, CATS, and the MOVEBR program. [batonrougebtr.com](http://batonrougebtr.com)



## CATS TAX RENEWAL

East Baton Rouge Parish voters passed a tax renewal that brought the Capital Area Transportation System (CATS) between \$18 million and \$20 million annually from 2018 to 2020 by 59%, according to the Secretary of State's Office. The millage renewal stems from the transit system's positive impact on the quality of life and economy and the crucial role it plays in connecting workers to jobs.



# DDD PROJECTS



## MARKETING & ATTRACTION

In order to most effectively market the complete Downtown Baton Rouge experience to visitors, residents, and workers; the Downtown Development District has launched an extensive and informational website. The contents of the website include: Discover Downtown, Live Here, Do Business, and Get Around. The TILT-designed website was updated in late 2019. The new website focuses on a new, innovative design, as well as making information more easily accessible to different users.

In addition to the website, the Downtown Development District creates a yearly Development Toolkit to provide developers and investors key market data and statistics about the downtown area and activities. The toolkit outlines numerous permitting processes, provides important contact information, and gives a snapshot into current downtown demographics. All available local and state economic incentives are also outlined within the document that is available on our website and in our complete marketing packets. In addition, the DDD has welcome guides including Attractions and Festivals, Residential, Business, and Parking.



## THE CENTRAL GREEN

Over several years, DDD has worked to connect numerous civic and cultural institutions near the River Center and City Hall campuses through a unified system of greenspaces known collectively as the Central Green. In total, the Central Green boasts over 11 acres of accessible, contiguous public greenspace. The Central Green has become a premier regional destination, hosting hundreds of annual events on the lush greenspaces, ranging from large concert series that attract thousands of attendees to small informal gatherings.

The realization of the Central Green began as a primary recommendation of the community-driven master plan, Plan Baton Rouge II. The planning team, led by Chan Krieger Sieniewicz Urban Design and Planning and Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architecture, recommended removing barriers, prioritizing accessibility, increasing tree canopy and permeable surfaces, and creating a series of outdoor “living rooms” surrounded by a variety of cultural destinations. The subsequent implementation of the plan focused on removing concrete, changing surrounding road systems to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles, and replacing hardscape surfaces with expansive green spaces. North Boulevard Town Square, Repentance Park, City Hall Plaza, and Riverfront Plaza are all components of the Central Green. The Central Green has become the unifying connective tissue linking our civic and cultural attractions together. The International Downtown Association has informed the DDD that the project, Central Green: Connecting Community with Commerce & Culture has been selected for the Award of Excellence within the 2020 Achievement Awards Application - Planning, Design and Infrastructure category.



## REPENTANCE PARK

Repentance Park, a component of Plan Baton Rouge II's Central Green concept, was designed to provide a venue for large events and serve as a component of the southern anchor of the Arts & Entertainment District. It was designed by Reed Hilderbrand, Reich Associates, and Susan Turner Associates with the goal of connecting the Louisiana Arts and Science Museum, River Road, Old State Capitol, River Center, City Hall, Galvez Plaza, and Town Square. A dramatic landform carefully transitions users between the drastically different elevations at the eastern and western edges of the site. Daily activities and popular events such as the Blues Festival have utilized the open, flexible space since its opening.

Repentance Park provides improved accessibility for pedestrians visiting City Hall and the River Center campus. Over 750 interactive fountain jets were installed in the space to provide a family-friendly atmosphere that initiates child play and adult enjoyment. Construction for the \$3.5 million project was completed in April 2013 by Group Industries. With a budget of approximately \$187,000, the park's greenspace was also extended west in 2016, shortening the crosswalk length across to and from Repentance Park and the Louisiana Art & Science Museum.



# NORTH BOULEVARD TOWN SQUARE

Whether gathered together for a large parish-wide event or stopping to relax in the middle of a hectic day, residents of Baton Rouge have an amazing place to be – North Boulevard Town Square, the heart of Baton Rouge. North Boulevard Town Square, located in the Arts & Entertainment District, has been a focal point, continuously displaying significant community events to users of the space. Over 250 annual special events have utilized the space while inquiries and requests continue to be placed daily. Town Square has received multiple state, national, and international awards since its opening.

North Boulevard Town Square Phase I and the redesign of Galvez Plaza design by was completed in the spring of 2012. The \$7.3 million development was designed by the joint venture design team Brown+Danos Land Design and Joseph Furr Design Studio and constructed by Arrighi Construction, LLC. Phase II includes corridor improvements along St. Phillip Street and North Boulevard, with ongoing beacon programming, event logistics, and landscape maintenance managed by the DDD. Construction of North Boulevard Town Square Phase II was completed at the end on 2019 and additional signage was installed in the summer of 2020.



Photo credit: Mark Bienvenu

## RHORER PLAZA

The renovation of City Hall Plaza removed underutilized and unwelcoming hardscapes in the plaza and replaced them with a large green lawn and shade trees. The redesign provides better circulation throughout City Hall and the River Center Campus, and allows the Galvez Stage to be used from both sides. The project was designed by Reed Hilderbrand with sub-consultants Reich Associates, Trahan Architects, Forte and Tablada, WHLC Architects, Jeffrey L. Bruce and Company LLC., Assaf Simoneaux Tuzin & Associates, Inc., Water Management Consultants and Testing, Inc., and Lam Partners, Inc.

The finished space improves ADA accessibility, covers the opening above the parking north of The Crest stage, and features an open greenspace that allows views and access from both sides of the stage. City Hall was also incorporated into the City Hall Master Plan by extending a floating “porch” into the greenspace and closer to The Crest stage. Construction was complete in the spring of 2018 and the space has received four local and state awards since its opening.

\*In April 2021 the Metro Council, renamed City Hall Plaza to the Davis S. Rhorer Plaza, honoring the former executive director of the Downtown Development District who passed away in March of 2021 at the age of 65 from COVID-19.



## RIVERFRONT PLAZA

Originally built in 1984, Riverfront Plaza is a classic water garden style public space, a signature of the era in which it was designed. The plaza offers an ADA accessible entry to the riverfront near the dock, but was in need of renovation to rectify numerous maintenance items neglected for a number of years. Approximately \$750,000 was appropriated for this project from the state sales tax rebate funding dedicated to Riverfront Master Plan improvements.

CARBO Landscape Architecture redesigned the areas within and adjacent to the plaza and dock area to improve aesthetics while decreasing regular maintenance needs, and further defining individual spaces within the gardens that can be used for events and/or riverboat reception. Some of the enhancements include upgraded event space, new plantings, 'no-mow' wildflower planting areas, additional security and decorative lighting, educational and welcome signage, sound system, updated irrigation, concrete repairs, and ADA and bicycle accessibility improvements. Phase II is underway with additional landscaping, shade structures, and future plans call for an fitness station.



## RIVERFRONT ACCESS & ROTARY SCULPTURE

The Florida Street Riverfront Access point was completed in 2015 and provides a bicycle and ADA compliant access point to the riverfront at Florida Street and River Road. The \$1.1 million project was designed in house by DPW with input from Susan Turner Associates, WHLC Architects, Reed Hildebrand, and Reich Associates. A multi-use path along River Road connects LASM and Town Square to the new access point, better linking downtown to the Mississippi River and LSU via the levee bike path. The new access point is a safe and welcoming amenity for tourists and residents, and has already attracted various groups of people and performers for large and small events. Crosswalk improvements along River Road were also included for the intersections of North Boulevard, Convention Street, and Florida Street.

The Florida Riverfront Access Point is one of several redesign projects aimed at connecting downtown to the Mississippi River and accommodating the increasing amount of bicycle and pedestrian activity. The Rotary Club of Baton Rouge chose this site for the location of its Centennial Project, utilizing privately raised funds to construct a pinnacle sculpture piece marking the Rotary's centennial anniversary. World renowned artist Po Shu Wang was selected to design a sculpture visible from the Mississippi River Bridge with the largest sphere standing 14 feet tall. Inside of the sphere is a speaker that plays curated sounds and music by the sculpture's artist that represents the Mississippi River Delta. In 2020, the International Downtown Association recognized the DDD for the Sing the River sculpture project with a Best Practice Award for its professional urban place management principles.



## DOWNTOWN GREENWAY

The Downtown Greenway is a pedestrian and bicycling corridor that links residential neighborhoods to downtown parks, businesses, and cultural attractions utilizing the existing BREC parks, interstate infrastructure, and public rights-of-way. The creation of the greenway is also intended to spur new investments and redevelopment in the city's core. Planning for the Downtown Greenway was made possible by funding from the EPA's Greening America's Capitals program and Capital Area Finance Authority. An additional \$3 million in grant funding was secured to design and build early phases. Design Workshop was selected to complete the final design.

Construction was completed on the first components of the Downtown Greenway in 2015 at BREC's Expressway Park and the Myrtle Street Connector to the Lincoln Theatre. The North Boulevard section was completed in 2016 and features a separated 10' bicycle path and 5' pedestrian garden path, median crossings, specialty pavement, curb ramps, seating areas, lighting, sculpture, water fountains, bicycle racks, and lush landscaping. Construction on the T.J. Jemison / East Boulevard portion of the Downtown Greenway was completed in the beginning of 2020 and includes bicycle and pedestrian paths, lighting, and landscaping from Expressway Park to North Boulevard.



- |   |   |   |                                  |
|---|---|---|----------------------------------|
|  | Downtown Greenway: Complete/To be completed in 2021 |  | Connector: Completed             |
|  | Downtown Greenway: Planning/Future Phase            |  | Connector: Planning/Design Phase |
|  | Levee Trail   |  | Proposed BRT Route               |



## GREENWAY WAYFINDING

The DDD has installed several types of wayfinding signage along this pathway, including the recent installation of wayfinding signage along the North Boulevard Promenade and East Boulevard sections of the Downtown Greenway. These signs include directional messages for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as detailed “You Are Here” maps at critical points along the route. In 2021, the DDD also improved the riverfront wayfinding by highlighting the nearby cultural and civic attractions. These signs include directions and maps for the numerous daily visitors on the Mississippi River Levee.

Lastly, the Levee Loop is another set of marked trails along the riverfront promenade; a .5 mile and 1.5 mile circuit aimed at promoting health, community use, and active interaction with the Mississippi River. Signs with calorie burn information are located along the loops, and call out some of the major features users can expect to see along the routes.



## NORTH BOULEVARD PROMENADE

Construction was completed in 2016 on the North Boulevard Promenade section of the Downtown Greenway from Fourth Street to Ninth Street, and features separated bicycle and pedestrian paths, new lighting, landscaping, benches, and signage. The block between Ninth Street and East Boulevard was completed in 2020 in conjunction with the East Boulevard / TJ Jemison Boulevard section of the Downtown Greenway, which now seamlessly connects Expressway Park to River Road.



## EAST BOULEVARD / TJ JEMISON BOULEVARD

The second phase of the 2.75 mile Downtown Greenway includes East Boulevard / TJ Jemison Boulevard. This phase of the Downtown Greenway connects the recently constructed Phase One portions along North Boulevard to Expressway Park. The project features a 10' foot wide bicycle and pedestrian path as well as new lighting, shade trees, landscaping, trash receptacles, benches, and entry signage. Construction was completed in early 2020.



## LOUISIANA AVENUE CONNECTION

The Downtown Development District has proposed additional design and infrastructure improvements at Louisiana Avenue, connecting the Downtown Greenway to the Government Street bike lanes via Louisiana Avenue and Eddie Robinson Sr. Drive. The Louisiana Avenue Connector will connect currently disjointed sidewalks, bicycle sharrow markers, ADA compliant crosswalk improvements, wayfinding signage, and streetscape amenities to create a pleasant and safe traveling experience for bicyclists and pedestrians. The DDD has secured grant funding from the Transportation Alternatives Program and is pending grant approval from the Safe Routes to Public Places Program to implement the project.



## GATEWAY & PARKING IMPROVEMENTS

The DDD is moving forward with plans to improve the existing, 500 free parking spaces under I-110. These parking areas are underutilized, so DDD plans to install security lighting and wayfinding to make them safer and more accessible. The improved parking areas will provide a safe, convenient, and free parking option for downtown workers and visitors. Additional decorative lighting is planned for the gateway areas entering downtown. To fund this project, the DDD has applied for Community Development Block Grant funds that will be leveraged with local funds reserved for gateway improvements.



## THIRD STREET CROSSWALKS

The Downtown Development District received an AARP Challenge Grant in 2021 to add decorative crosswalks to the Third Street corridor. The goal of this project is to make the Arts & Entertainment District a safe and enjoyable place for all users, with an emphasis on pedestrians. As Third Street is the most heavily-traveled corridor, the DDD has developed a crosswalk initiative at four Third Street intersections. The installation of the crosswalk designs will take place in early 2022.



## RIVER RD. MULTI-USE PATH NORTH

The project will be to continue on the existing River Road path and construct a 10' multi-use path beginning at the Hollywood Casino entrance and extending North to the CN Railroad underpass entrance. The path will transition to a 5' walking trail due to the limited right of way and utility locations, before terminating at the entrance to the Riverview Condominiums. This will provide residents with a safe way to bike or walk to the Mississippi Levee access and Central Business District.



# RIVER ROAD BIKE & PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Recent major developments along River Road including IBM/525 Lafayette currently lack safe accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians. Several projects have recently been constructed or are currently underway that bring these amenities to River Road and connect the developments to the surrounding destinations and businesses.

Duplantis Design Group planned and designed the pedestrian path on the east side of River Road between Florida Street and the State Office Buildings to the north and integrated with the recently installed streetscape adjacent to the IBM complex. These improvements will include street trees, sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals. Bike and pedestrian paths extending north of the Riverfront Access Point at Florida Street on the west side of River Road were constructed in 2018. This project also included road improvements to River Road as part of DOTD's Road Transfer Program, which turned over operation and maintenance of River Road to the City-Parish. The east side of River Road is expected to begin construction in 2022.



# DESIGN RESOURCE CENTER

The Design Resource Center’s mission is to unite the design community with the public by creating a common ground for students, professionals, residents, and business owners to engage one another in design discussions focused on the promotion of commerce and culture in Downtown Baton Rouge. The center ultimately informs citizens on the direction of Baton Rouge as outlined in Plan Baton Rouge II, Future BR and other adopted master plans.

Students from the LSU School of Landscape Architecture and Architecture, Southern University, Mentorship Academy, and Rhode Island School of Design have utilized the space to showcase and discuss project ideas for Downtown Baton Rouge. Professional organizations including the Louisiana Chapter of the American Planning Association, Louisiana Chapter of American Society of Landscape Architects, Louisiana Chapter of American Institute of Architects, Baton Rouge Chapter of the Urban Land Institute, and many others have also used the space for design discussion and educational meetings.



## DOWNTOWN MAINTENANCE

Several downtown maintenance committees and groups were established to focus on several goals. The Ordinance Subcommittee updated the sidewalk café ordinance in 2016 and the Central Business District waste ordinance in 2018 to promote ADA accessibility as well as clean, sanitary streetscape conditions. The Education Subcommittee has developed several campaigns that award citizens and businesses that embody exemplary maintenance and anti-litter principles. The Enforcement Subcommittee works directly with DPW representatives to review the City-Parish's 3-1-1 citizen complaint and request system. The Volunteer Subcommittee identifies volunteer and funding opportunities to aid in these efforts. Recently there has been efforts by downtown residents and volunteers to clean up the Capitol Lakes area. Over a 12 month period, volunteers cleaned the lake 9 times pulling out 460 bags. Plans are to install litter catching booms at critical drainage points.



## PARKING STRATEGY

In 2016, the Metropolitan Council approved \$100,000 to hire Fregonese and Associates to expand upon the parking analysis study conducted in 2014 by AECOM. Baton Rouge has about 1,800 public parking spaces downtown and another 2,700 private parking spaces, but is not currently collecting their expected revenue. Of those 1,800 public spaces, 970 are on the street and 540 are metered. The consultant recommended hiring a parking management company to oversee the ticketing, operations, and management of a comprehensive parking program downtown. LAZ Parking was selected in 2019 to manage the River Center Parking Garages as the consultants suggested as part of the parking study. The study also suggested upgrading the city's outdated parking meters with modern machines that accepted credit card and phone payments. Implementation of the new meters is expected in 2022.



## COMMUNITY EVENTS

Downtown residents and guests enjoy over 1,500 annual events including parades, races, and large events such as the popular Live After Five concert series. Many of these events take place in the recently implemented public greenspaces, North Boulevard Town Square, City Hall Plaza, and Repentance Park. The Downtown Development District strategically implemented these spaces as downtown master plan recommendations in order to spur investment and provide a constant stream of attractions and activity.

In addition to implementing these unique public spaces, the DDD also manages all aspects of these greenspaces such as the beacon programming, assistance with event logistics, and maintaining the landscape in order to enhance the public's downtown experience. The DDD, functioning as a liaison between event coordinators and City-Parish departments, also reviews event applications and assists in required permitting processes. Event information is also available and marketed through various DDD outlets including emails, social media, the North Boulevard Town Square Media Beacon, and website calendars. The Special Event Procedures and Guidelines Handbook, available online or in our office, was developed and is maintained as an overview to the logistics and processes in event coordination. While many of 2020/21 events were canceled or postponed due COVID-19, event organizers are optimistic about a robust series of downtown events in 2022.

For more information on the event related resources provided by the DDD, visit [www.downtownbatonrouge.org](http://www.downtownbatonrouge.org).

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**RECOGNITION**



# 10 YEARS OF ORGANIZATION & PROJECT RECOGNITION

- 2020** Central Green - International Downtown Association – Award of Excellence, Connecting Community with Commerce and Culture  
 Central Green - Boston Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects – Merit Award, Design  
 Rotary Sculpture - International Downtown Association – Best Practice, Professional Urban Place Management Principles
- 2019** Davis Rhorer - LA Chapter of the American Planning Association, Partners in Planning  
 City Hall Plaza - Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. National Chapter, Excellence in Construction Pyramid Award  
 Downtown Greenway - LA Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture, President’s Award of Excellence  
 City Hall Plaza - LA Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture, Honor Award
- 2018** Power of Implementation Award to Davis Rhorer by the Center for Planning Excellence.  
 City Hall Plaza – Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. Pelican Chapter, Excellence Award  
 City Hall Plaza - Baton Rouge Growth Coalition – Good Growth Award  
 Historic Third Street - LA Chapter of the American Planning Association, Great Street  
 Central Green - LA Chapter of the American Planning Association, Implementation
- 2017** Certificate of Commendation for 30 years of Leadership from the EBR Office of Mayor President  
 Yazoo Plaza at The Louisiana Art & Science Museum - LA Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture, Merit Award
- 2016** River Road Project – Baton Rouge Growth Coalition – Good Growth Award  
 DDD Toolkit – International Downtown Association – Merit Award, Marketing
- 2015** River Road Project – LA Chapter of the American Planning Association, Louisiana Great Places  
 River Road Project – International Downtown Association – merit Award, Public Spaces
- 2014** The Crest – National Engineering News Record “Best of the Best” Landscape/Urban Development Category  
 Repentance Park - LA Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture, Merit Award  
 The Crest at Galvez Plaza – Engineering News-Record, LA & TX Region – Best Project, Landscape/hardscape/Urban Design  
 The Crest at Galvez Plaza – International Downtown Association – Merit Award, Public Spaces  
 The Crest & Repentance Park - Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., Pelican Chapter  
 The Crest & Repentance Park - Associated Builders and Contractors, Eagle Award (national)  
 The Crest - The Associated General Contractors of America (national)  
 The Crest at Galvez Plaza - Baton Rouge Growth Coalition Good Growth  
 North Boulevard Town Square – LA Chapter of the American Planning Association – Louisiana Great Places
- 2013** Repentance Park – International Downtown Association, Public Spaces  
 Downtown Development District 25 Years – International Downtown Association, Leadership & Management  
 North Boulevard Town Square – LA Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture, Honor Award
- 2012** North Boulevard Town Square – ENR TX/LA, Best Hardscape Urban Development Project  
 North Boulevard Town Square - The United States Conference of Mayors, Merit Award, City Livability  
 North Boulevard Town Square – International Downtown Association Merit Award, Public Spaces  
 North Boulevard Town Square – Baton Rouge Growth Coalition Good Growth, People’s Choice Award  
 North Boulevard Town Square – Associated Builders & Contractors, Excellence in Construction  
 North Boulevard Town Square – LA Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architecture, Planning  
 North Boulevard Town Square – Municipal Association for Economic Development

- 2011** Downtown Greenway – International Downtown Association, Planning

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**SPECIAL THANKS**

# SPECIAL THANKS

We remain dedicated to the development and promotion of Downtown Baton Rouge as we move forward into 2022. We thank all of the countless individuals who support our mission and cause, enabling Downtown Baton Rouge to grow and develop into a place to live, work, and play. They include private developers, public agencies, and non-profit organizations. We are extremely grateful for the partnerships that make such extraordinary projects happen. Special thanks to Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome and the Metropolitan Council for the continued support of the DDD's vision.

## **Honorable Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome**

## **Chief Administrative Officer Darryl Gissel**

## **East Baton Rouge City-Parish Metropolitan Council**

Brandon Noel	District One
Chauna Banks	District Two
Rowdy Gaudet	District Three
Aaron Moak	District Four
Erika L. Greene	District Five
Cleve Dunn Jr.	District Six
LaMont Cole, Pro Tem	District Seven
Denise Amoroso	District Eight
Dwight Hudson	District Nine
Carolyn Coleman	District Ten
Laurie Adams	District Eleven
Jennifer Racca	District Twelve

## **DDD Commissioners**

Melanie C. Montanaro	Chairwoman
Eric Dexter	Vice Chairman
Jude Melville	Treasurer
Prescott Bailey	Secretary
Erin Monroe Wesley	
Patrick Michaels	
Scott N. Hensgens	

## **DDD Staff**

Gabriel Vicknair	Interim Executive Director
Casey Tate	Development Project Director
Ute Cress	Administrative Assistant



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FIFTH



DOWNTOWN  
DEVELOPMENT  
DISTRICT