CENTRAL 2045

A Plan for the *Future*

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With special thanks to the residents of Central for their participation in community.

Contents

Contents i
1. Introduction 1
2. Who We Are 3
3. What We Said 5
4. Land Use 7
5. Infrastructure & Public Services 13
6. Environment & Resilience 16
7. Economic Development 19
8. Community Livability 21
9. Administration 24

APPENDICES
A: Community Profile
B: Update Process

CENTRAL 2045
A Plan for the *Future*

1. Introduction

Central 2045: A Plan for the Future is the City of Central's Master Plan, guiding growth and development over the next two decades. As the city evolves, this plan provides a vision for sustainable and resilient growth while addressing key challenges and opportunities. It acknowledges the continuous growth over the past two decades and assertively looks to the future by identifying goals and strategies that Central can implement to continue to be a wonderful place to live, work, and play!

This plan establishes a framework to shape land use, infrastructure investments, and community development initiatives through 2045. It provides policy direction for local decision-makers, including elected officials, city staff, business leaders, and residents. It serves as a roadmap for Central's future, helping align priorities and coordinate planning across sectors.



Figure 1. Family in local park

A Master Plan…

…is a blueprint for the future, intended to guide the growth and development of a community. It establishes a vision and goals with a broad focus, including population, housing, economy, transportation, community facilities, and land use.

…should be used by the community's residents, stakeholders, staff, and elected and appointed officials as they make decisions that shape the community.

…sends an important message that the community has invested the time and resources to plan for the future.

…is the same as a "comprehensive plan."

…is required by Louisiana State Law.

Central 2045 is an update to the 2010 Land Use Plan – Central's first master plan. After the City of Central was incorporated in 2005, City leaders and residents embarked on a multi-year planning process that led to the adoption of the 2010 Land Use Plan. Since then, the community has been impacted by several factors that necessitate an update, including:

- The 2016 Flood Event and other natural disasters
- Growth pressures, with new developments
- A diversifying population
- Large-scale infrastructure projects, such as the Central Thruway
- Regulatory changes

Central 2045 updates the 2010 Land Use Plan by:

- Identifying what worked well in the past;
- Identifying areas where improvement is needed; and
- Introducing new priorities supported by best practices, data, and community input.

This effort – coupled with an understanding of current development practices, infrastructure demands, and changing environmental conditions – will set Central on a path to be successful in implementing this plan. And remaining a vibrant, livable, and economically thriving community.



Figure 2. Fall Fest 2025

This plan is organized as follows:

2. Who We Are
Provides a brief snapshot of data about the people, places, and economy that make Central the community it is. Complete data can be found in Appendix A: Community Profile.

3. What We Said
Summarizes the community engagement and outreach process. States this plan's Vision Statement. The complete process and input collected can be found in Appendix B: Update Process.

4. Land Use
5. Infrastructure & Public Services
6. Environment & Resilience
7. Economic Development
8. Community Livability
The five elements of this plan. Each summarizes changes since 2010 and trends affecting the future.

9. Administration
Outlines how *Central 2045* should be administered and updated.

The City of Central recognizes private property rights as a fundamental principle of the community's character and economic vitality. The recommendations, policies, and Future Land Use Map contained in this Master Plan are advisory and intended to guide long-range decision-making. This Plan shall not be construed as altering existing zoning, creating regulatory restrictions on private property, limiting lawful use of property, or serving as the sole basis for approval or denial of land-use applications. Growth and development decisions should respect property rights while ensuring that adequate infrastructure, drainage, transportation, and public services are available to serve the community.

2. Who We Are

For many years, Central existed and developed a history through the connection of small communities and neighborhoods. Since its incorporation in 2005, Central has become the third-largest city in the Baton Rouge area and supports one of the most impressive K-12 education systems in the state. With its advantageous position between Zachary, Baton Rouge, Denham Springs, and Baker, Central is in the center of regional economic activity and educational achievement.

People

Central is home to about 30,000 people, an increase of about 3,000 people since the 2010 Land Use Plan.

40% of residents are middle-aged adults (ages 35 to 64), 27% are youth under 20, 20% are older adults (65 years and older), and 16% are younger adults (20-34 years old).

Most Central residents are white (77%) and are not Hispanic or Latino (95%). 14% are black or African American, 5% are two or more races, and 4% are all other races. Since 2010, the population has become more diverse, with a decrease in the percentage of residents who are white and an increase in the percentage who are black or African American or of two or more races.

Over 95% of Central residents have at least a high school degree (or equivalent) or higher, and 40% have an advanced degree (an associate's degree or higher).



Figure 3. Cooking in Central

The average household in Central has 2.61 people. 74% of households are families. Household size and composition have remained steady since 2010.

Most (78%) households are middle or upper class, earning more than $50,000 per year, with a median income of $88,020 – higher than Louisiana's median income of $60,023. The unemployment rate is 1.7% with a quarter employed in Business/Financial or Office/Admin occupations. Median income in Central has risen since 2010.

Many of the demographic trends that have defined Central have shifted in recent years. Central retains a strong economic standing particularly, when compared to the State of Louisiana as a whole. However, other trends – such as slowing population growth, smaller household sizes, and an aging population – present new challenges that this plan will aid the city in addressing.

Places

Central has about 11,400 housing units, with about 84% being owner-occupied, significantly higher than the 60% owner-occupancy rate in the country.

The city and region are greatly affected by flooding, with the 2016 Flood Event a recent notable example. Central participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and in the NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS), which currently earns a 25% discount on NFIP flood insurance premiums in Central.

Central is well-connected to the region via roadways, including Central Thruway, Hooper Road, Greenwell Springs Road, and Magnolia Bridge Road.

The city is served by two electric companies and a water company. Public sewer is provided in some areas of the city by East Baton Rouge Parish, but most of the city relies on private on-site sewer treatment.

Central operates Police and Fire Departments. It hosts a branch of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library system. It is home to five public parks operated by the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC).

The Central Community School System (CCSS) operates five public schools serving grades pre-K through 12, with a combined enrollment of over 4,600 students.

Economy

Central is home to roughly 14,000 jobs, with the largest share (20%) being educational and health services. The economy is relatively diverse, with jobs in many industries.

Planning From the Beginning

The City of Central began planning for its future in the fall of 2006, soon after incorporating in 2005. Throughout its 21-year history, Central has undertaken the following planning efforts:

- Land Use Plan (2010)
- Resiliency Master Plan (2013)
- Transportation Plan (2013)
- Master Plan Update (2018)
- Drainage Master Plan (2019)
- Economic Development Strategy (2023)



Figure 4. 2010 Land Use Plan visioning workshop

3. What We Said

Throughout the planning process, residents, business owners, and public officials consistently expressed a desire to preserve the small-town, rural feel and to support the health and well-being of its residents. Central 2045 aligns the "Central as a place where community is important" desire with promoting health and livability with:

Residential Growth
Supporting diverse and sustainable housing options.

Commercial and Service Development
Expanding businesses and services that enhance the local quality of life.

Infrastructure-Driven Growth
Prioritizing development in areas with established infrastructure.

Education Quality
Maintaining and improving the Central school system to support future generations.

Flood Risk Reduction
Implementing resilient planning and drainage solutions.

Sustainable Development
Encouraging growth strategies that align with community resilience

Defining the Vision

The "Vision Statement" of a master plan identifies and succinctly describes the community's vision for the future. The *Central 2045* Vision Statement is the backbone of the master plan update and connects the planning process to future goals for the City of Central.

Key Themes Shared by the Community

Central Thruway Corridor – What development happens now in the corridor?

Development of City Center in Central – How does this happen and when?

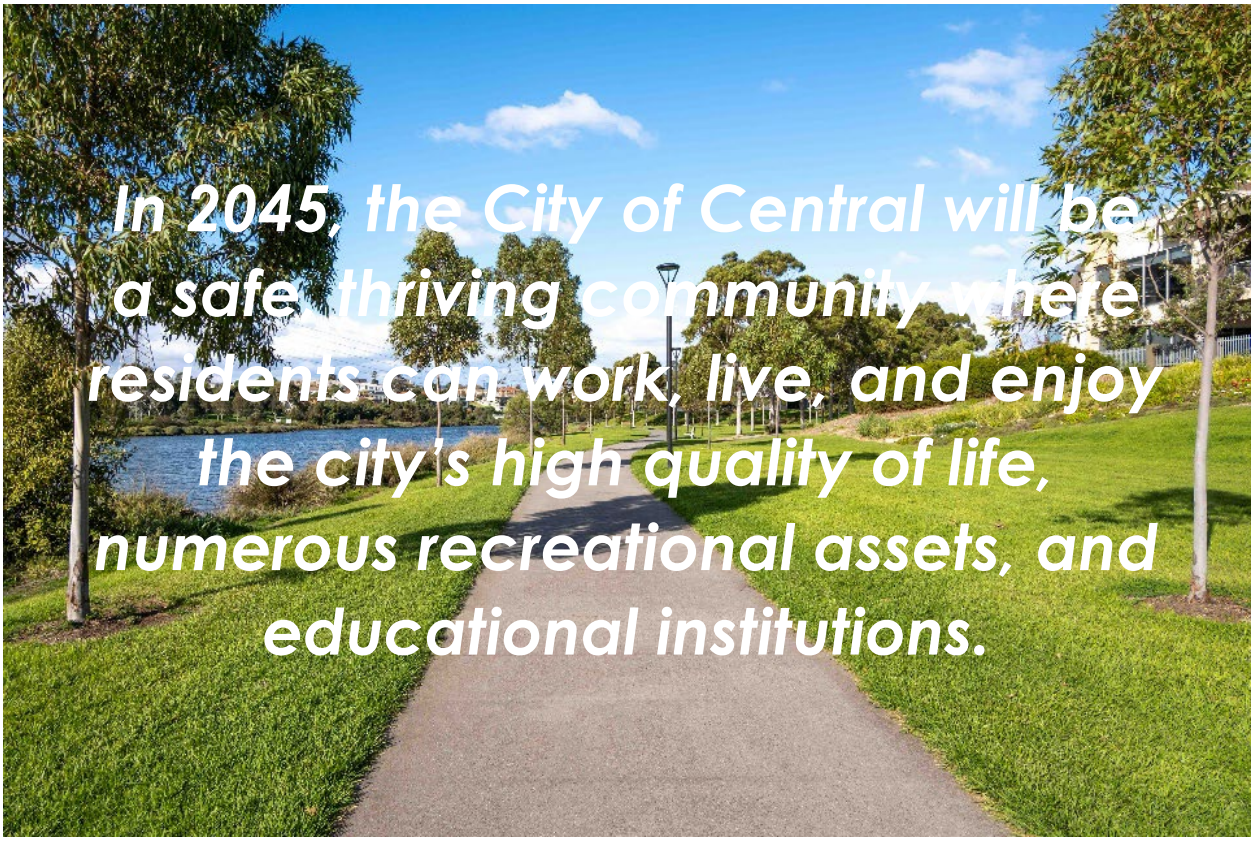
Maintaining high-quality public services and amenities – Central deserves high-quality services, but does too much growth too fast compromise services?

Residential Design Character – How is this accomplished while not driving up the cost of building housing in Central?

Continued improvement of drainage and other public infrastructure – Can growth be limited until improved infrastructure is in place?

Balancing growth with preservation of country and rural aesthetic – Central is a desirable place to live. How is this growth balanced to not change the character of Central?

Community health and well-being – What does Central need to do to prioritize community health and safety?



This **vision** includes six broad goals:

1. **Manage Growth**
   Preserve the rich heritage and small-town lifestyle enjoyed by our residents.

2. **Improve Stormwater Management**
   Protect our homes and businesses with stormwater infrastructure improvements and maintenance.

3. **Promote Community Health**
   Improve current parks and recreational facilities and expand recreational options.

4. **Incentivize Business**
   Maintain a business-friendly attitude while promoting responsible growth and entrepreneurship.

5. **Improve Road Infrastructure**
   Support the quality and stable construction and maintenance of new roads.

6. **Housing Choice**
   Support safe and plentiful housing opportunities for all residents.

Central 2045 provides the road map for achieving these goals and vision for Central's future, providing the foundation from which all planning and development decisions should be made.

4. Land Use

An integral component of *Central 2045* is supporting residents and community leaders in making decisions on land use, infrastructure investments, and community development initiatives. The framework for land use in this plan is different from the 2010 Land Use Plan, notably because of the following past changes and future trends:

Development in Northern Central

Historically, the northern part of Central developed as mostly rural and low-density residential land uses. Within this area, there are some commercial land uses that have existed since the incorporation of Central. Generally, this area is expected to continue to stay predominantly rural and low-density, especially the areas closer to Highway 64. However, if new infrastructure investment and new residential developments occur north of Hooper Road, there will be an eventual need for more non-residential supportive uses.



Figure 5. Rural land in northern Central on Joor Rd

Commercial Nodes and Corridors

The 2010 Land Use Plan focused on the concept of commercial nodes. This plan identifies and highlights nodes of commercial development supported by infrastructure, other services, and economies of scale; however, a focus on commercial corridors, especially those in the southern and central areas of Central, allows for the node concept to expand and more effectively align with infrastructure investments and economic development needs.

Infrastructure System Improvements

This plan's Future Land Use Map is informed by historic property uses; however, with respect to future infrastructure needs and plans, these areas can change. As connectivity within the city improves and future improvements are made to the infrastructure system, transitions within residential and, occasionally, commercial land uses will occur.

Dealing with Development Constraints

Some areas of Central have constraints to development, primarily constraints related to infrastructure and flooding. While this plan acknowledges these constraints, both active and historical, it does not mean there is no room for future development within Central. City leaders, developers, planners, engineers, and residents should work together to gather the best data and information available and listen to advice from experts to make the most informed development decisions.

Main Street 2030 Plan and Impacts

Main Street 2030 will change the future land use framework for Central's core. These new land uses will likely reflect compact, walkable, and mixed-use areas that strengthen local businesses, improve public spaces, and protect Central's small-town character as growth occurs.

Development Regulations

Since 2010, Central has dramatically amended regulations governing development. Changes included:

- Establishing new zoning districts and rezoning all property in 2013
- Creating overlay districts, including Corridor (year), City Center (year), and Central Thruway Corridor (2024)
- Enhancing floodplain and stormwater management regulations, including requirements for off-site drainage assessments in 2021 and 2024
- Creating a new Light Manufacturing (LM-1) zoning district in 2024
- Transitioning regulations back to a Unified Development Code

Taking these changes and trends into account, the *Central 2045* land use framework uses the following themes:

- Preserve and support the character of successful residential neighborhoods.
- Revitalize challenged neighborhoods with new development that contributes to character and new vitality.
- Support resilient development that reduces flood risk.
- Encourage development in areas with adequate public infrastructure.
- Promote development that can strengthen the city's tax and job base while serving citizen needs and preserving city character.
- Maintain, protect, and expand parks and open space.
- Promote walkable, mixed-use environments in areas of Central with a nexus of density and established development.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) illustrates a place-based vision for what Central will look like in 2045. It assigns all land in the city to one of five future land use categories, which describe general development patterns and types of uses that could be expected in an area.

Unlike the official zoning map, the FLUM is not regulatory; rather, it provides guidance for land-use decisions. It is the zoning district, not the FLUM category, which specifies the types of uses that are allowed and the standards that apply.

Future Land Use Categories and Activity Nodes

The Central 2045 Future Land Use categories and activity nodes are based on planning concepts and best practices that integrate generalized future land use categories and development-focused activity nodes. There are five categories and two activity nodes:

- Rural Residential (RR)
- Residential (R)
- Commercial (C)
- Mixed-Use/City Center (CC)
- Business/Manufacturing/Technology (MT)
- Activity Node: Village Center
- Activity Node: City Center

Rural Residential (RR)

The Rural Residential future land use category generally includes pasturelands, wooded lowlands, and natural and undeveloped landscapes, sometimes divided into large parcels or estates. Properties in this category typically have limited access to public infrastructure. Residential structures in this category are typically single-family homes on large lots, often with non-dwelling accessory structures (e.g., barns, stables, silos, or agricultural equipment storage).



Figure 6. Example of Rural Residential (RR)



Figure 7. Example of Residential (R)

Residential (R)

The Residential future land use category generally includes single-family homes. This category may include residential development on large parcels as well as single-family residences in established neighborhoods. This category generally has access to varying levels of public infrastructure, including community or public sewer treatment. This category may include small-scale institutional uses that are compatible and complementary to low residential densities, such as churches, schools, and libraries.

Commercial (C)

The Commercial future land use category includes medium- to large-scale retail and office that serve surrounding neighborhoods and areas immediately outside of the city. Commercial properties in this category vary from large retail stores to small shops and food service facilities and are generally located along major corridors and commercial nodes. Sites in this category should provide controlled points of access that promote efficient circulation and accessibility.

Mixed-Use/City Center (CC)

The Mixed Use/City Center future land use category includes both residential and commercial uses. This category encourages the development of medium-density residential uses, including single-family, two-family, and multi-family homes. This category also supports neighborhood-serving retail, personal service, and food service uses, as well as office development, with the intention of meeting the immediate commercial needs of surrounding residents. Compatible uses may include neighborhood schools, churches, small parks and playgrounds, libraries, and small day-care facilities.



Figure 8. Example of Mixed-Use/City Center (CC)



Figure 9. Example of Commercial (C)



Figure 10. Example of Business/Manufacturing/Technology (MT)

Business/Manufacturing/Technology (MT)

The Business/Manufacturing/Technology future land use category generally includes facilities or operations used for manufacturing and assembly activities and warehousing. Also included in this category are job and value-creating office complexes and medical complexes. Sites in this category should have adequate buffering and design standards that limit the negative impact on adjacent land and the community. Sites in this category should provide controlled points of access that promote efficient circulation and accessibility.

Activity Node: Village Center

The Village Center future land use activity node generally includes compact, walkable areas intended to serve as local gathering places for surrounding neighborhoods. Village Centers support a mix of small-scale commercial, civic, and residential uses, integrated within a coordinated development pattern. Typical uses may include neighborhood-serving retail and services, restaurants, professional offices, small civic facilities, and upper-story or adjacent residential development at low to moderate densities. Development within Village Centers should be designed at a neighborhood scale, with buildings oriented to streets and public spaces, shared parking strategies, and connections to sidewalks, trails, and nearby neighborhoods. Village Centers are intended to reinforce community identity, encourage reinvestment, and provide access to daily needs while maintaining compatibility with surrounding residential areas.

Activity Node: City Center

The City Center activity node generally includes the most active, mixed-use areas in Central and is intended to accommodate higher-intensity development that serves the city and the surrounding region. The City Center supports a broad mix of residential, commercial, civic, and institutional uses, including multi-story residential development, offices, retail, restaurants, entertainment, and public facilities. Development within the City Center will promote compact, walkable, and connected patterns, with buildings oriented to streets and public spaces, higher residential densities, shared or structured parking, and high-quality urban design. The City Center activity node is intended to function as a primary destination for employment, services, and community activity, support reinvestment and redevelopment, and reinforce Central's identity as it grows.



Figure 11. Example of Village Center Activity Node



Figure 12. Example of City Center Activity Node

Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

The purpose of the Future Land Use Map is to guide the city's growth and transition. As time passes and Central continues to grow and transition, the FLUM is and will be a vital tool to help guide growth and development.

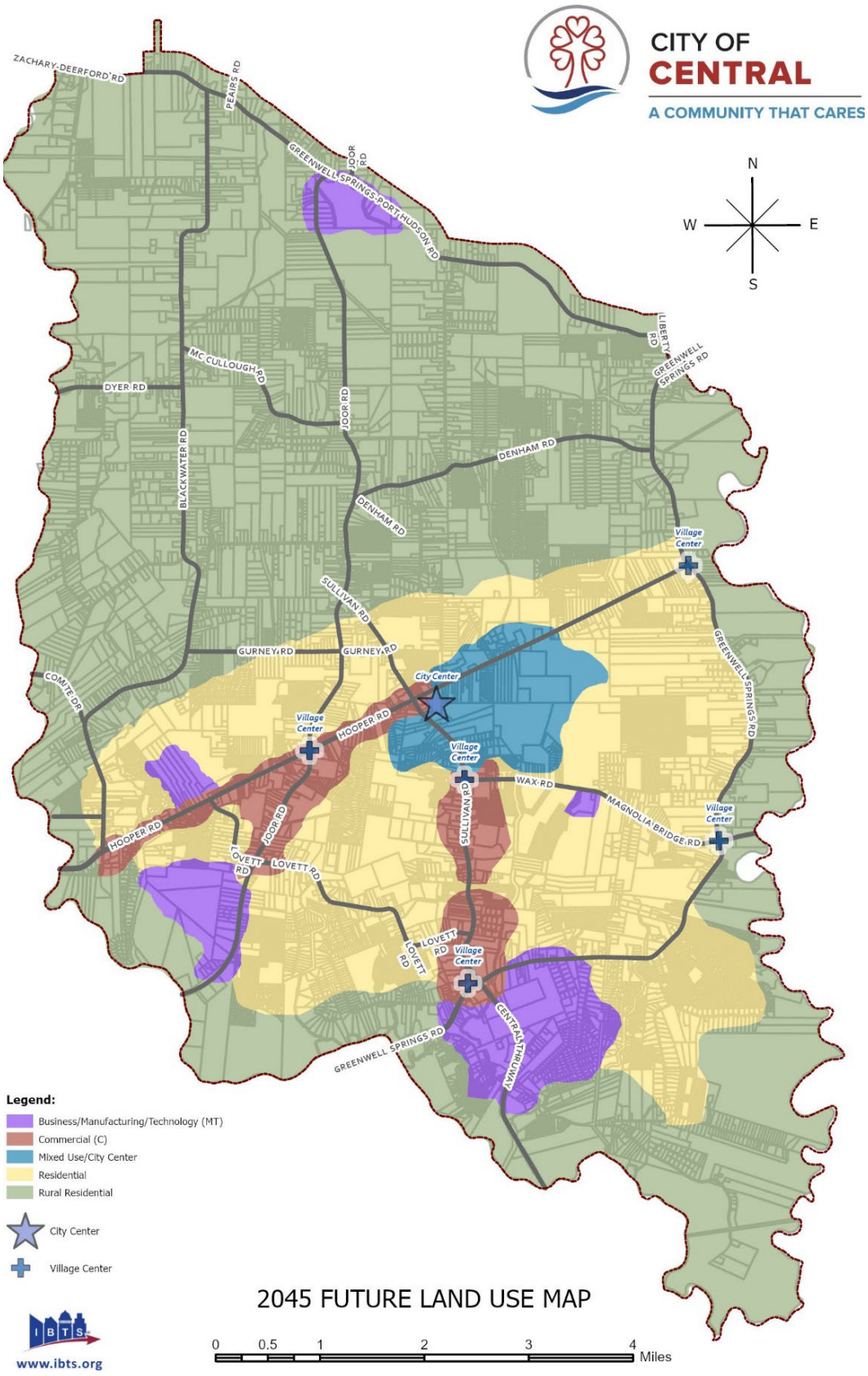


Figure 13. Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

5. Infrastructure & Public Services

Infrastructure and public services are essential, as they provide mobility, create recreation opportunities, and keep the community clean and safe. The infrastructure that serves Central requires maintenance to ensure its efficacy. As the city continues to grow, investing in infrastructure and public services to benefit current and future community members will be essential.



Figure 14. Central Thruway

Changes Since 2010

Central Thruway

The Central Thruway, completed in 2013, is a four-lane boulevard that connects Sullivan Road to Florida Boulevard and provides improved access to Interstate 12, the City of St. George, and the City of Baton Rouge.

New Magnolia Bridge

In 2012, the Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development (DOTD) completed the replacement of the Magnolia Bridge over the Amite River. The project replaced a two-lane bridge with a four-lane bridge and widened LA 64 (from Greenwell Springs Rd to LA 1019) to four lanes.

Transportation Plan

In 2013, Central developed a Transportation Plan. It included assessments of infrastructure, visioning, and community engagement, along with goals to increase the transportation network's efficiency.

Future Projects

Sullivan Road Improvements and Widening (DOTD)

Since the mid-2000s, Sullivan Road in Central has undergone significant change from a narrow two-lane road to a multiple-lane throughfare that serves the commercial center of Central. These improvements were built in phases focusing on easing traffic congestion, enhancing safety, installing new water and sewer lines, and accommodating commercial and residential growth. The most recent stretch of improvements from Wax Road to Hooper Road experienced several delays but is expected to be completed by 2027.

Hooper Road (DOTD and MOVEBR)

In 2013, DOTD introduced the Hooper Road Extension Project. The project scope includes extending Hooper Road over the Amite River and connecting it to Highway LA 1019. It is expected to alleviate commuter traffic along

Hooper Road and Magnolia Bridge. Additionally, the MOVEBR Plan proposes to expand capacity on Hooper Road between Blackwater Road and Sullivan Road, providing congestion relief for people accessing I-110, other areas of North Baton Rouge, and the City of Baker. The project will include pedestrian facilities on both sides of the roadway and drainage and safety improvements.

Wax Road/Magnolia Bridge Road (MOVEBR)

This project will widen the Wax Road and Magnolia Bridge Road corridor to four lanes between Greenwell Springs Road and Sullivan Road, resulting in a continuous four-lane corridor for the Magnolia Bridge Road Corridor between Sullivan Road and Highway LA 1019.

Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure

East Baton Rouge Parish developed a bike and pedestrian master plan with bikeways and pathways planned for the City of Central. This project was spearheaded by the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC) and will provide transportation and recreational benefits for residents of Central. A bikeway is planned for Hooper Road between Greenwell Springs Road and Blackwater Road providing important bike access along this corridor. In addition, a trail system along Beaver Bayou will connect many of BREC's parks.



Figure 15. Widening of Sullivan Road

Greenways Master Plan

In 2025, Central began developing a Greenways Master Plan. Promoting greenways and trails as part of the Greenways Master Plan supports the community's vision for a connected, healthy, and resilient future. As a fast-growing suburban community that celebrates its natural heritage, the Greenways Master Plan reinforces long-term goals for sustainability and quality of life by developing a network of multi-use paths that links neighborhoods, schools, parks, community facilities, and local destinations. The greenway network will not only expand transportation options beyond the existing auto-centric network but also promote outdoor recreation, improve public health, and create safe, scenic routes that connect residents with the region's natural landscapes.

The greenway corridors will be integrated within existing drainageways, servitudes, and public rights-of-way, shaped through community input and consensus. A smaller, denser network of local greenways, bike lanes, and trails will connect to larger regional corridors, creating inter-connected links across key quadrants of the city and forming a

cohesive, citywide trail system. The Greenways Master Plan envisions to attract future investment, strengthen community identity, and promote healthy mobility choices that unites people, places, and opportunities.

Maintaining stormwater infrastructure is essential to maintaining the quality of life in Central and helping ensure safety and well-being during flood events. The 2016 Flood Event was a reminder of the region's vulnerability to flooding, and stormwater management is a high-priority mitigation strategy to protect the community's safety and well-being. The City of Central understands that maintaining and improving this infrastructure is necessary to protect and preserve people and property, and is committed to providing that protection. Chapter 6, Environment and Resilience, provides more detail on stormwater infrastructure.

6. Environment & Resilience

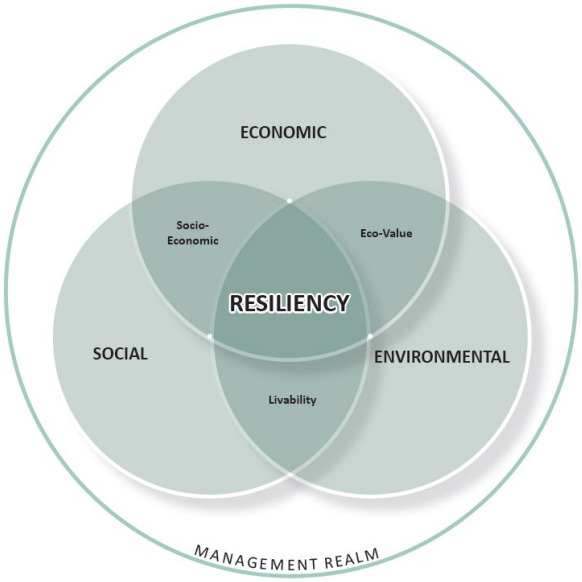
Located near the Comite and Mississippi Rivers, the land on which Central resides was once forests, swamps, and marshland, which historically offered natural protection from flooding, as well as stormwater absorbance that helped mitigate the impacts of natural events. Today, like many Louisiana communities, Central has experienced repeated flooding caused by excessive stormwater runoff, upstream storm events, and tropical disturbances. As new developments increase, the need for a holistic approach to environmental resilience is pressing and apparent.

In addition to the clear focus on flood risk reduction, why is environmental resilience important? Most will agree that development should be supported in areas with little to no flood risk, and that development within flood risk areas should be designed to not increase flood risk. Central has made serious commitments and undertaken major efforts to improve flood protection, stormwater systems, and community infrastructure while focusing on the preservation of natural and environmentally sensitive and important areas.

Addressing environmental challenges and improving strategies and infrastructure focused on flood reduction are crucial for resilience. Chapter 5, Infrastructure and Public Services, provides details on infrastructure improvements. This chapter focuses on resiliency and resilience-focused development practices.

Resiliency can be generally defined as a community's ability to prepare for and bounce back from challenges. The 2013 Central Resiliency Master Plan defined the approach for resiliency planning as:

- Reducing the risk of flooding and conserving the community's highly valued open spaces;
- Providing an environment that stimulates the positive economic development the city needs to improve overall community vitality and fiscal health; and
- Promoting positive social interaction through the creation of high-quality public spaces that reinforce community values.



Changes Since 2010

Since the 2010 Land Use Plan – and particularly since the 2016 Flood Event – Central has worked to support resilient development practices and improve community infrastructure.

Master Drainage Plan

In 2019, Central adopted its first Master Drainage Plan. The plan established existing conditions, identified deficiencies, and created a summary of improvements to mitigate damage from future flood events.

Debris Removal

Central initiated efforts to remove debris from storm drains, pipes, creeks, and bayous to reduce flood risk. An example is the **Comite River Cleaning Project**, initiated in 2023. The Comite River is one of the sources of flooding in Central, and recurring debris blockages have increased this risk in recent years. This project is a partnership between the Cities of Central and Baker, East Baton Rouge Parish, and a storm debris removal partner, DRC Emergency Services. In 2023 alone, the project removed nearly 8,000 tons of debris.



Figure 16. Comite River

The August **2016 Flood Event** flooded homes, businesses, and roads in Central and the surrounding region. Over several days, massive rainfall overwhelmed stormwater systems. More than half of Central was submerged in three or more feet of floodwater.



Figure 17. Gurney Road, just east of Centerra Court (looking west) during the 2016 Flood Event

Resilience District

In 2017, as part of efforts to implement the 2013 Resiliency Plan, Central developed a strategy to target drainage improvements along corridors and in areas which experienced the heaviest flooding during the 2016 Flood Event. The Resilience District is built on strategies and design principles to improve resilience in these areas, with the following primary goals:

- Reduce flood risk within the District.
- Stabilize property values by providing resilience best practices.
- Preserve and stabilize homeownership within the District.
- Improve the standard of aesthetics and character within the District.
- Provide opportunities for viable connectivity through enhanced pedestrian connections and bicycle pathways.

Floodplain Management and Conveyance Zones

Central recognizes the importance of protecting people and property from flooding and has updated its floodplain management regulations to address the risk. In 2021, the city began implementing conveyance zones. This mapping tool identifies areas that are most vital for stormwater conveyance and models the terrain so that stormwater runoff can be managed safely and limit potential impacts.



Figure 18. Ditch cleanout by IBTS-Public Works

Future Projects and Considerations

Comite River Diversion Canal

The Comite River Diversion Canal will provide urban flood damage reduction to mitigate risks from rainfall events and headwater flooding. It will include a 12-mile long diversion channel from the Comite River to the Mississippi River – roughly midway between Zachary and Baker – and structures to control the flow of water. It is currently under construction.

Preserving the Natural Environment

Both private and public lands can contribute to habitat restoration and natural environment preservation. Updated development regulations can ensure the prioritization of native landscapes and tree cover while limiting impervious surfaces and sprawl development that destroys natural areas. Designing new development with the preservation of natural features such as tree canopies and native plant groundcover will support preservation of the natural environment that is desired by Central residents.

7. Economic Development

Aligning economic development goals with land-use goals and real estate development best practices is extremely important to the success of *Central 2045*. The chapter focuses on areas where success is improved when both economic development and land use planning are supported and connected.



Figure 19. Local business on Greenwell Springs Rd

Changes Since 2010

Residential Development

Since the 2010 Land Use Plan, residential development has increased in Central, particularly in the area south of Hooper Road. More households and rooftops result in a higher demand for goods and services. As the city grows, fostering sustainable residential development will be a crucial variable in the economic health of Central.

Commercial Development

Since 2010, Central has seen significant commercial investment along numerous corridors such as Hooper, Wax, and Sullivan Roads. Supported by transportation improvements and new infrastructure, these corridors will continue to support current and new commercial development.

Mixed-Use Development

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs) are not new to Central. However, the success of developments such as The Village at Magnolia Square and The Settlement at Shoe Creek shows the appeal of mixed-use developments that incorporate residential, commercial, and civic components in Central.

Future Considerations

Commercial Corridors

Numerous commercial corridors in Central are experiencing growth. Ensuring sustainable economic development practices will foster a business-friendly environment. Coupling this with updated development regulations will draw and increase commercial investment. A focus on quality transportation networks and infrastructure to support access to and from commercial corridors will encourage residents to support the areas.

Main Street 2030 Plan

The Main Street 2030 Plan envisions a "downtown" centered on the confluence of Hooper, Sullivan, and Wax Roads. The plan lays out development goals to create a common space for Central residents to shop, work, and play. The plan specifically calls for the construction of new roadways that will create opportunities for mixed-use development, open space, and recreational opportunities, and will connect to civic anchors such as the Central High School Football Stadium and the new Central City Hall.

Additionally, creating a downtown/ main street area will have a profound economic development impact. Walkable and mixed-use areas provide a more efficient use of resources and infrastructure and are generally desirable and profitable areas for commercial investment. Additionally, this plan will address an important weakness identified in the 2023 Five-Year Economic Development Strategy, which was the lack of a traditional downtown district.

Land Use Regulation Updates

As Central continues to grow and experience new challenges, it is imperative that the city consider a comprehensive update to its land use regulations that balances development-friendly regulations with sustainability and resilience goals supporting economic development.

Regional Coordination

Central's position in the Baton Rouge Metropolitan provides a strategic advantage. Ensuring coordination with other municipalities, the parish, and the Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC) is important for continued economic growth and success.



Figure 20. Local business on old Sullivan Rd

8. Community Livability

A livable, healthy community supports the physical and mental health of its residents and offers a supportive social environment. The following areas are important to value in supporting a livable and healthy community:

- Safe and Inclusive Neighborhoods
- Diverse Housing Options
- Access to Nature and Recreation
- Health Services and Support
- Education and Economic Opportunity
- Social Connection and Engagement

This chapter supports maintaining the quality of life for residents of Central, including increased access to a variety of housing types, quality jobs, successful schools, health facilities, and recreational opportunities.

Future Considerations

Housing Choice

A key consideration for community growth and wellness is quality housing that supports current and future residents. For many, a single-family detached home with a long driveway and large yard meets their housing needs, but for others, housing may look different and may be more fluid. Healthy and thriving communities provide options to meet all housing needs that align with the community's character and are supported by community infrastructure.

Historically, Central is a community where single-family houses on quarter-acre and larger lots are the predominant housing type. However, Central also has a mix of housing stock, including multi-unit developments, manufactured housing on both large and small lots, and planned residential developments on smaller lots designed for walkability and access to retail and personal services.

To maintain a livable and healthy community, Central should support adequate housing for all residents. The following should be considered when planning for housing:

Infrastructure and Community Needs

Planning and supporting new housing in areas with current infrastructure capacity and planned future improvements (new sewer, planned road improvements, etc.) avoids expensive utility upgrades and improves the return on investment in the city's existing infrastructure. Within Central, the northern areas are more rural with less residential density than the southern areas. As a result, many of the areas participants identified for new housing are south of Hooper Road.



Figure 21. New construction in Magnolia Square

Residential Design Standards

Residential design standards can play a vital role in shaping future development and preserving community character. Examples include:

- Varied façades to avoid repetitive streetscapes
- Durable, aesthetically pleasing materials
- Trees or landscaped front yards
- Limited garage-forward designs
- Pedestrian-scale lighting

Manufactured Housing Solutions

Manufactured housing provides an opportunity to address housing affordability, community resilience, and demographic shifts when there is proper planning, clear and equitable standards, and strategic permitting and placement. Modern manufactured housing:

- Can include similar floor plans and amenities as site-built housing
- Can include energy-efficient and contemporary architectural features
- Allows for design and installation that blends with community character and design standards
- Offers a high-quality living option at a lower price point than site-built homes, helping meet the needs of first-time buyers, young families, essential workers, and seniors on fixed incomes

Senior Housing

Housing that meets the needs of older adults includes small-scale apartments, multi-unit homes, traditional senior housing, assisted living facilities, Active Adult Retirement Communities, and planned developments that cater to seniors. Additionally, mixed-use neighborhoods are an attractive option as they provide access to amenities, retail and personal services, social opportunities, and medical facilities.

Mixed Use Neighborhoods

Mixed commercial and residential developments align with community goals, provide needed housing, enhance public infrastructure and public services, and support residential and economic growth. Mixed-use neighborhoods provide diverse housing options, ranging from single-family houses on smaller lots to high-quality multi-unit homes or small-scale apartments. A variety of housing options near services and essential needs appeals to residents searching for a starter home, hoping to live close to work, or simply desiring a smaller home. Additionally, mixed-use neighborhoods in strategically defined areas promote improved infrastructure where growth is already occurring, and limit development pressures in rural areas.



Figure 22. Village at Magnolia Square

Community Health

Access to Healthcare

During the visioning and goals process for the 2010 Land Use Plan, the need for medical facilities emerged as a key issue for Central. The need for access to healthcare was highly ranked by participants during both the 2018 master plan update and this *Central 2045* planning process.

Access to healthcare plays a significant role in fostering a vibrant and active community. Current healthcare facilities in Central include primary care and urgent care; however, for many services, specialties, and emergencies, residents seek care outside of Central.

Recreational Opportunities

The Comite and Amite Rivers, plus the abundant woodland and wetland areas, are treasured assets for Central and provide natural beauty and character. The city's natural assets and existing parks and recreational facilities provide numerous opportunities for physical activity. To further enhance recreational opportunities, the city should consider:

- Improving connectivity between parks via pedestrian and bike-friendly pathways
- Encouraging developers to incorporate bike and pedestrian access in new projects
- Exploring additional outdoor spaces and community gathering areas that promote active lifestyles

Educational Opportunities

The Central Community School System is an important institution for Central and its residents, and one of the primary reasons for the city's incorporation. The 2010 Land Use Plan has education as one of its four primary goals.

To recruit new businesses and industries to Central, it is important to ensure that the workforce's skill sets match the needs of local businesses and industry. The K-12 school system, higher education, and vocational training programs provide skills needed for a strong workforce. Increasing opportunities to link continued education with the economic development needs of Central will create a more resilient local workforce.



Figure 23. Central High School

9. Administration

Central 2045 belongs to the city and its residents, stakeholders, and leaders. As a comprehensive plan for the city, it should be used by all.

But Central's Planning and Zoning Department, in collaboration with the Mayor and Planning Commission, is responsible for the day-to-day and long-term administration of this plan. This includes annual monitoring of plan implementation progress and evaluation of needed plan updates or amendments, including to the future land use map.

This is a 20-year plan that should be updated every five to ten years to reflect changing conditions.



Figure 24. City of Central Administration & Team