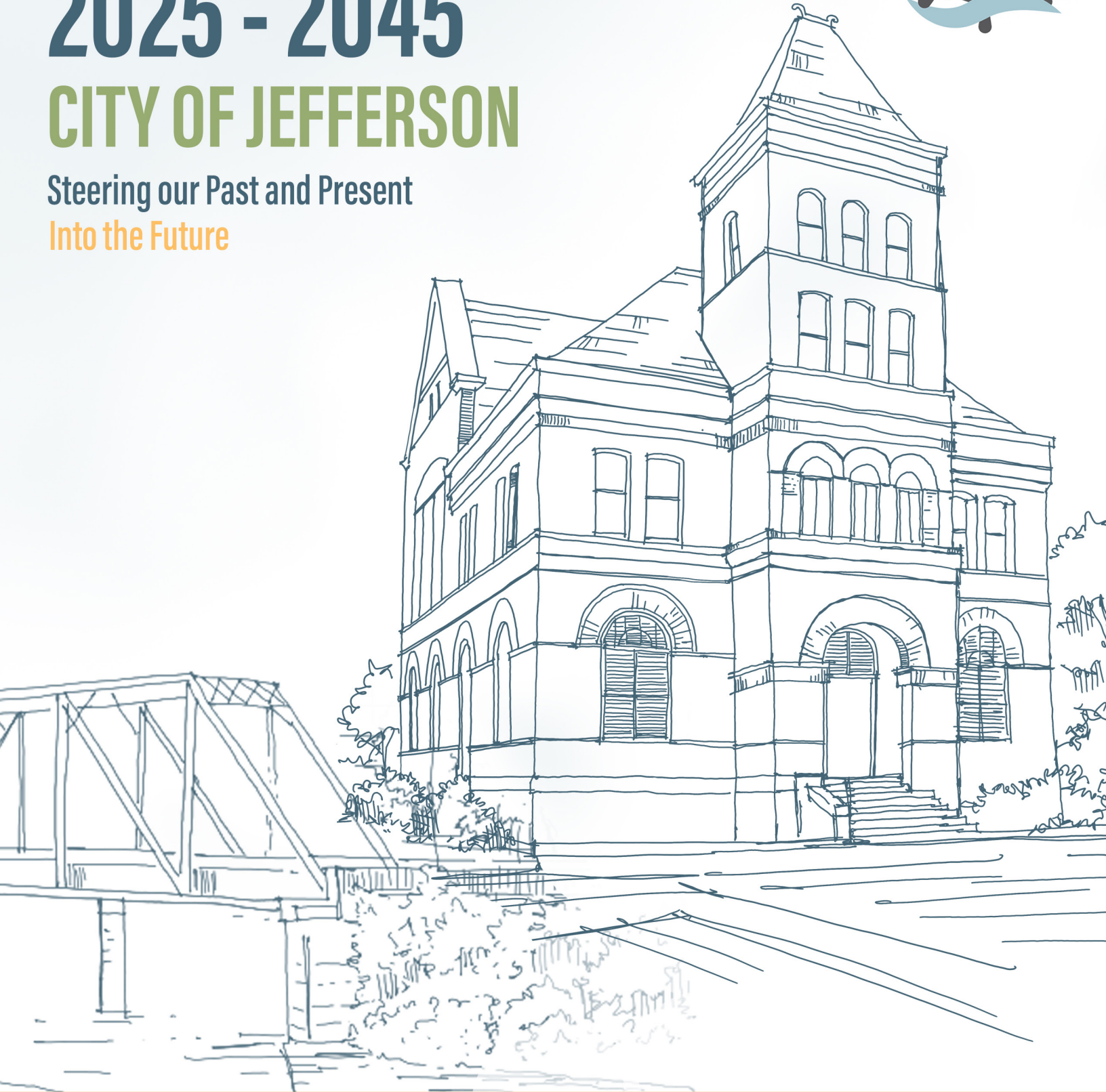# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2025 - 2045

CITY OF JEFFERSON

Steering our Past and Present

Into the Future

JEFFERSON
GENERAL
STORE

Coffee 5¢

OLD FASHIONED
Soda Fountain
HAND DIPPED CONES

Cold 'n' Creamy

Austin Street Bistro
Lunch and Dinner
European Pastry & Artisan Breads

CADDO MERCANTILE
ANTIQUES
1/2 BLOCK

CADDO MERCANTILE
ANTIQUES
WE BUY
RECORDS

ANTIQ

Executive Summary

This comprehensive plan has been prepared to guide development for the City of Jefferson, Texas for the next 20 years, and reflects the goals and aspirations of the city's residents that were gathered with intensive community outreach and feedback.

In 2022, The City of Jefferson, the Jefferson Economic Development Corporation (JEDCO) and Texas Target Communities (TxTC) entered into a partnership to create a community feedback report, then a comprehensive plan for the city. This included the work of students from the Texas A&M University Landscape and Urban Planning Department of the School of Architecture.

During the course of the community engagement process, six major themes were identified to guide the planning process and develop goals and strategies for the community: Thriving Neighborhoods and Vibrant Places, Celebration of History and Culture, Harmony with Nature, Multigenerational Community, Diverse Economy, and Improved Infrastructure.

Each of these themes are chapters of the comprehensive plan, which contains the following goals:
- Strengthen Jefferson's assets and promote responsible growth that aligns with community character.
- Promote housing diversity and expand housing choice.
- Create economically thriving commercial areas and continue to support a vibrant downtown.
- Preserve and tell the histories of the various groups that have called Jefferson home.
- Increase historical and cultural programs, activities, and events in and around Jefferson.
- Promote community health and wellness by providing services to meet the needs of our community's aging population and encourage young families in the region.
- Enhance the supply of affordable housing and quality of neighborhoods to meet the community's housing needs effectively.
- Develop and promote a range of community facilities, support services, and age-appropriate activities for all residents.
- Promote community-forward safety and security.
- Enhance educational pathways, skill training, and diversify career opportunities available in Jefferson.
- Empower local businesses and foster new business development and innovation in Jefferson.
- Elevate Jefferson as a dynamic tourism hub for ecotourism, cultural experiences, and business events.
- Enhance and preserve parks and natural spaces for residents and visitors.
- Promote community-wide environmental stewardship to protect Jefferson's natural assets.
- Strengthen the community's resilience to protect the community from hazard risks.
- Create and maintain roads and policies that ensure safety for all road-users.
- Provide clean, safe, and reliable water and wastewater service to residents, visitors, and businesses.
- Ensure comprehensive telecommunication and broadband coverage for all residents of the City of Jefferson.
- Elevate city infrastructure and community services to meet current and future community needs.

City of Jefferson

Special thanks to the Core Team and Task Force Members for volunteering their time to work on this project:

CITY ADMINISTRATION

City Council

Mayor Patricia Finstrom
Former Mayor Rob Baker

City of Jefferson Aldermen

Hollis Shadden
Jim Finstrom
Will Thomas
Robin Moore
April Taylor Johnson
Richard Turner
Charles Haggard
Ray Hengst

Planning and Zoning

Kim Shaw
Laura Omer
Cindy Pinkerton
Hugh Lewis
Margie Smith
Tommy Engel
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John Kelsey
Gordon Vaughn
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Core Team Members

Charles Haggard
Melissa Boyd
Robin Moore
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Andre Hunter
John Kelsey

JEDCO

Ray Sanders
David Ozee
Doug Thompson
Charles Haggard
Mack Jordan
Porsche Johnson
Lynn Daughrity
Jim Finstrom
Jamey Parsons
Sean Fuquay
David Westbrook
Steve Shaw
Harrison Moller

A note of thanks to the residents and stakeholders who participated in the Public Planning Workshops, engaged with the project, and provided valuable feedback.

Planning Team

The Jefferson Economic Development Corporation and the Jefferson City Council contacted Texas Target Communities at Texas A&M University to help the community plan for the future. While the City had conducted a planning and capacity study in 2019, the community had never come together to discuss their needs and priorities. The new partnership with TAMU presented an opportunity to connect with residents, review and validate the findings of the previous planning study, and foster a collaborative envisioning of the future.

Founded in 1993, Texas Target Communities (TxTC) is a program in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning in the School of Architecture at Texas A&M University. TxTC provides technical assistance to small, under-served communities across the state and focuses on holistic efforts to address land use planning, development management, and a host of challenges (i.e. civic, environmental, economic, etc.) encountered by communities today. Additionally, the thoughtful community engagement serves as a "real world" transformational learning experience for students at Texas A&M University.

TEXAS TARGET COMMUNITIES STAFF

Jaimie Hicks Masterson, AICP, Director

Jeewasmi Thapa, AICP, Senior Program Coordinator

Interns: Elizabeth Dupont, Keerti Rath, Adam Sierack, Cedric Shy, Jenna Beyer, Sarah Cumm, Matt Bodine, Sam Fowler, and Farzana Ahmed

Thanks to: Dr. John T. Cooper, Jr., Arthur Chambers, and Natalie Franz

TEXAS A&M FACULTY AND STUDENTS PARTICIPATION

PLAN 661 Communications in Planning instructed by Justin Golbabai, AICP

The students in this class performed the initial community outreach to create the vision statement and priorities for future planning work. The project won the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association's Student Project Award for community engagement in 2023.

Students: Sarah Cumm, Tanner Fuller, Jordan Gregory, Zyreshia Jackson, Patricia Michel, Reece Neathery, Hannah Solis, Joe Allen, Matthew Bodine, Kelly Brasseaux, Disha Chaturvedi, Muyang Li, and Samuel Schaaf

PLAN 678 Applied Transportation Studio instructed by Dr. Bill Eisele

The students in this class performed an analysis of the transportation system in Jefferson and made recommendations for improvements to be incorporated into the comprehensive plan.

Students: Hannah Solis, Gwendolyn Jones, Evan Cheung, and Disha Chaturvedi

PLAN 662 Applied Planning Studio instructed by Jeewasmi Thapa, AICP

The students in this class created the future land use map and created recommendations based on community feedback that would help to facilitate future planning projects.

Students: Alexander Hardy, Caroline Couch, Connor Ford, Keerti Rath, Laura Lee Gunn, Elizabeth Dupont, Farzana Ahmed, John Hoang, Subin Yee, Taylor Cooleen, Cassidy Fielding, Cole Bakley, Gwendolyn Jones, Mahya Mahdavi, and Noah Garcia.

What is Planning?

For a city, planning is the process of evaluating the current conditions of your community and talking with residents and community partners to learn how they want to see the city become better. This vision for the future is used to identify priorities, goals, and strategies that can help the city achieve a better, more livable place for residents to call home. Cities big and small have limited resources that they can use at any given time to put towards projects and programs that they want to implement. These can include financial, personnel, and time limitations that require careful budgeting and planning to ensure that projects can begin in a timely manner and have the appropriate resources to be completed.

The planning process that has been used to create this plan approaches this issue as a basis for bringing together community members and partners so as to identify and prioritize how and where these resources are used. A plan that does not incorporate community feedback can be difficult to implement or instigate unexpected changes that ultimately break down trust and injure the relationship between the city and its residents. By working to achieve a community designed vision for the future, city staff can allocate resources that best reflect the needs of the community.

WHAT IS COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING?

While there are many different ways to plan for a city's future, comprehensive planning is often the most holistic in its scope with the longest plan horizon, measured in decades. In addition to establishing how land is intended to be used and developed, comprehensive plans cover topics such as community health, parks and greenspaces, economic development, transportation, infrastructure and housing.

During the comprehensive planning process, planners reach out to and incorporate community feedback into the visioning and goal setting process by asking what they would like their city to be like in the future. This creates a framework for the planning process by ensuring that the issues and concerns that the community has are addressed in the plan for future improvements. Additionally, task force groups and targeted outreach is performed to get specific feedback from interested parties in the community about topics that affect them directly. While much of the community input is done at the beginning of the process, planners also check in with the community at milestones in the planning process to ensure that they are addressing the concerns raised and confirming interest from the community.

The goals and objectives of a comprehensive plan are intended to be large and community shaping and often objectives are completed over the course of years rather than months. This means that the goals need to be future-minded, and aim for the best possible outcome for the city and its residents. Every 3-5 years it is recommended that the plan and its implementation are evaluated for success, and modified to address new or changing needs of the community. Ultimately, even if not every objective is fully completed as set out in the comprehensive plan, having a framework can assist with organizing the relevant stakeholders and funding sources for the projects that can be undertaken. And when new funding or resources become available, the plan can help to identify projects that the community needs to be addressed.

Development of the Plan

THE STRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

The guiding principles for this planning process were shaped by Jefferson's vision statement and goals, developed with input from the core team, task force, and stakeholders. These goals address key areas of growth and development, including thriving neighborhoods and vibrant places, celebration of history and culture, multigenerational community, diverse economy, harmony with nature, reliable infrastructure, and implementation. The current conditions assessment identifies issues, strengths, and opportunities, serving as a foundation for stakeholder consultations and community engagement. This assessment helps establish a baseline for recommendations and future benchmarks.

Chapter 1 provides background information and a snapshot of Jefferson and its residents. Chapter 2 details the planning process and discusses the community's vision for Jefferson's future. Chapters 3 through 8 outline the goals, objectives, and policies for each identified sector, exploring issues and opportunities to form strategies for implementation. These chapters address anticipated challenges with recommendations and proposed solutions, supported by maps and analytical tools. Finally, Chapter 9 outlines policies, a timeline of actions, funding sources, and responsible parties.

All themed chapters share some common characteristics- such as a range of special boxes; each identifiable by their unique style. The styles are discussed as follows:

Case Studies & Examples
The case study special boxes present cases that may aid the city in implementations through learnings gathered from other cities and towns across the United States. Case Studies are particularly helpful in assessing the potential barriers as well as the impacts of positive outcomes. Examples from similar communities and plans can also be found to inspire the city to incorporate similar designs or policies.

Planning Definitions
These boxes explain technical jargon and apply them to the city's needs. Additionally, these boxes list if there exist any cross-references between the comprehensive plan and other planning documents.

Idea Box
Some potential catalyst projects are presented in special box for the community to consider for future explorations.

Resources and Partners
The Resources & Partners special boxes highlight key organizations, agencies, and funding sources that can support the implementation of Jefferson's comprehensive plan.

How to read and use this plan

This planning document includes recommendations for projects, programs, and policies that can be developed and implemented to achieve the city's vision for the future. Each recommendation will require additional project organization, but does include recommended project leaders, partners, and funding sources, included in the Implementation chapter.

Each chapter of this planning document begins with an overview of the current conditions that are relevant to the chapter topic. This data was gathered from census and other organizations, and was used to support community feedback and insights. The next section is a summary of the community's feedback that was used to prioritize and generate goals and strategies. The last section of the chapter lists and explains the recommendations that have been created by Texas Target Communities staff to address the issues identified. Additionally in this section are short deep dives into special topics and case studies that further explain and clarify the recommendations. There are also appendices that include further information and resources for projects, programs, and funding opportunities.

CONTENTS

JEFFERSON INTO THE FUTURE!

West Fraser

Jefferson High School

Lockett Stadium

Cedar Grove Cemetery

Bulldog Dr

North St

Laverne St

Marion Co. Community Center

Jefferson Junior High

Hill St

Titus St

Haywood St

River Oaks Dr

Dan Terry St

MLK St

Woodland Dr

Lynn St

Mulberry St

Jefferson Elementary

Pecan Ct

Magnolia Dr

Westview Dr

E Whelan St

Oakwood Memorial Park

N Line St

S John St

Pecan Way

Sedbery St

N Alley St

N Gass St

Mt Sinai Cemetery

W Harrison St

E Harrison St

E Douglas St

N Owens St

N Friou St

St Ann St

W Douglas St

Tuttle St

N Willard St

E Webster St

Oakwood Cemetery

N Walcott St

N Canal St

State Hwy 49

W Watson St

E Watson St

N Washington St

Black Cypress St

Jamison St

Gray St

MLK St

E Broadway St

N Line St

N Clarksville St

E Elizabeth St

N Main St

N Bridge St

N Soda St

N Polk St

Hughes St

W Broadway St

E Broadway St

N Walnut St

W Dixon St

E Dixon St

E Bonham

Collins Academy

E Walker St

W Henderson St

E Austin St

Jefferson Primary

S Owens St

E Baker St

W Orleans St

N Vale St

See Inset

E Delta St

S Friou St

S Alley St

S Main St

S Bridge St

S Line St

N Market St

E Jefferson St

E Locust St

Lion's Club Park

E Taylor St

N Marshall St

S Polk St

Moseley St

S Line St

S Austin St

W Dallas St

US Hwy 59

E Benners St

W Lake St

E Speaks St

Rush St

W Camp St

Seymour St

Houston St

Commons St

Inset (Downtown Jefferson)

N Polk St

N Walnut St

Tourism & Visitor Center

W Henderson St

W Orleans St

E Lafayette St

E Austin St

N Vale St

City Hall, Fire Department, Police Department

N Market St

Port Jefferson

Carnegie Library

Post Office

Marion Co. Courthouse

W Austin St

Otstott Park

S Polk St

0   0.1   0.2   Miles

Downtown Jefferson

City Boundary

N
W   E
S

0   0.25   0.5   Miles

CHAPTER 1

Context

Jefferson, Texas is the seat of Marion County, located in northeast Texas near the Louisiana border. The city spans 4.4 square miles, representing approximately 19.3% of the county's population, and boasts a scenic setting in the hilly Piney Woods region of east Texas, bounded by the Big Cypress and Black Cypress Bayous.

Jefferson benefits from its proximity to major metropolitan areas, including Longview, Shreveport, and Texarkana, all within reasonable commuting distances. U.S. Highway 59 and State Highway 49, along with the Union Pacific and Kansas City Southern railroads, provide vital transportation links to these regional centers and beyond. Additionally, the city enjoys access to natural recreational areas, such as Caddo Lake and Lake O' the Pines.

The Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for Jefferson's development and growth over the next twenty years. By leveraging the city's historical heritage, embracing sustainable practices, and fostering a vibrant community with a high quality of life, Jefferson can steer its past and present into a bright future that meets the evolving needs and aspirations of residents and stakeholders.

As the first step in the planning process, it is important to assess the current state of the community. This foundation helps ground future goals, set benchmarks for success, and ensure objectives and strategies align with Jefferson's unique makeup and characteristics. This chapter provides an overview of Jefferson's demography, including trends in population, housing, education, and income.

AUSTIN

DALLAS

HOUSTON

TYLER

LONGVIEW

Demographics

Residents form the heart and soul of a community, and understanding demographic trends is essential for future planning efforts, resource allocation, and economic development. By examining population dynamics, Jefferson can better prepare for the needs of both current and future generations.

Population Growth

Jefferson's population has experienced fluctuations over time, with its peak occurring during the Reconstruction era. Since then, the city has seen periods of both growth and decline, with a steady population decrease between the 1950s and early 2000s. Despite these historical changes, Jefferson's population has remained relatively stable over the past century, though recent years have shown a slight downward trend.

As of the 2020 Decennial Census, Jefferson had a population of 1,875 residents, making up approximately 19.3% of Marion County's total population of 9,725. More recent 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates indicate a population of 2,111, suggesting a slight increase, though ACS figures are estimates.* Current projections indicate that neither Jefferson nor Marion County is expected to see significant population growth in the near future. Factors such as aging demographics, economic trends, and migration patterns continue to shape the city's population outlook.

Age Distribution

Jefferson's median age was 52.3 years in the 2020 Census, reflecting an older population. However, 2023 ACS estimates suggest a decrease to 41.7 years, possibly due to shifts in household composition or new residents.
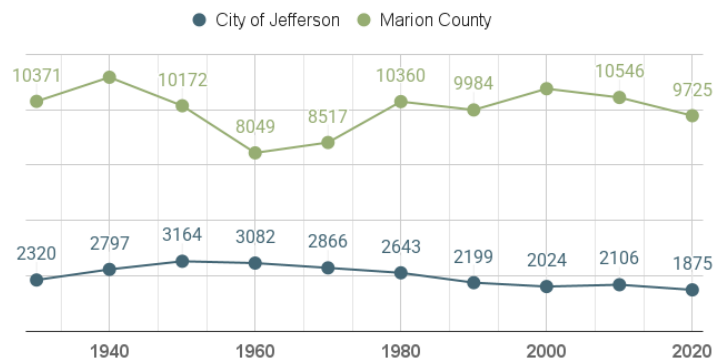
With 30% of residents aged 65 and older, Jefferson has a larger senior population than the Texas average, emphasizing the need for senior housing, healthcare, and accessible infrastructure. At the same time, the decrease in median age may signal demographic shifts, reinforcing the importance of youth services, workforce development, and senior amenities.

Approximately one-fifth of residents are under 18, highlighting the need for ongoing support for schools, parks, and libraries. Meanwhile, with over half the population in their prime working years, job creation and economic development will be key to retaining younger adults and ensuring long-term community stability.
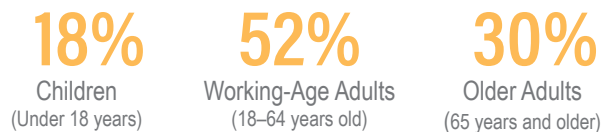
1,875
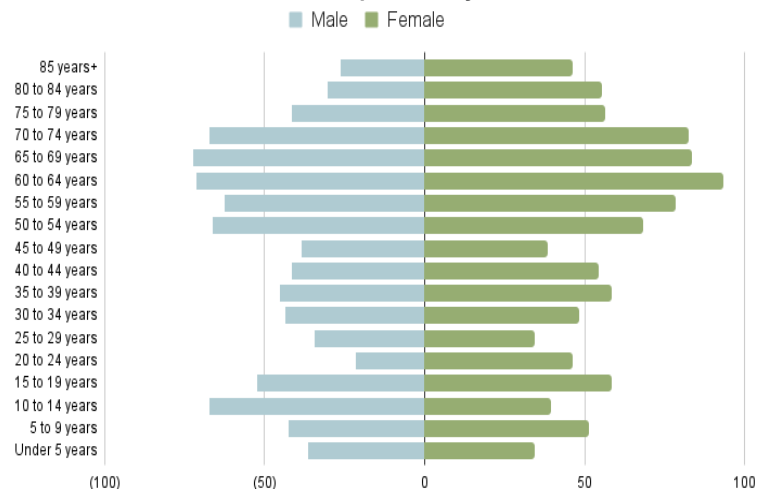Jefferson
Population

9,725
Marion County
Population

Population Trend (1930 - 2020)

● City of Jefferson ● Marion County

Marion County values: 10371, 10172, 8049, 8517, 10360, 9984, 10546, 9725

City of Jefferson values: 2320, 2797, 3164, 3082, 2866, 2643, 2199, 2024, 2106, 1875

Years: 1940, 1960, 1980, 2000, 2020

Age Breakdown

18%
Children
(Under 18 years)

52%
Working-Age Adults
(18–64 years old)

30%
Older Adults
(65 years and older)

2020 Population Pyramid

■ Male ■ Female

85 years+
80 to 84 years
75 to 79 years
70 to 74 years
65 to 69 years
60 to 64 years
55 to 59 years
50 to 54 years
45 to 49 years
40 to 44 years
35 to 39 years
30 to 34 years
25 to 29 years
20 to 24 years
15 to 19 years
10 to 14 years
5 to 9 years
Under 5 years
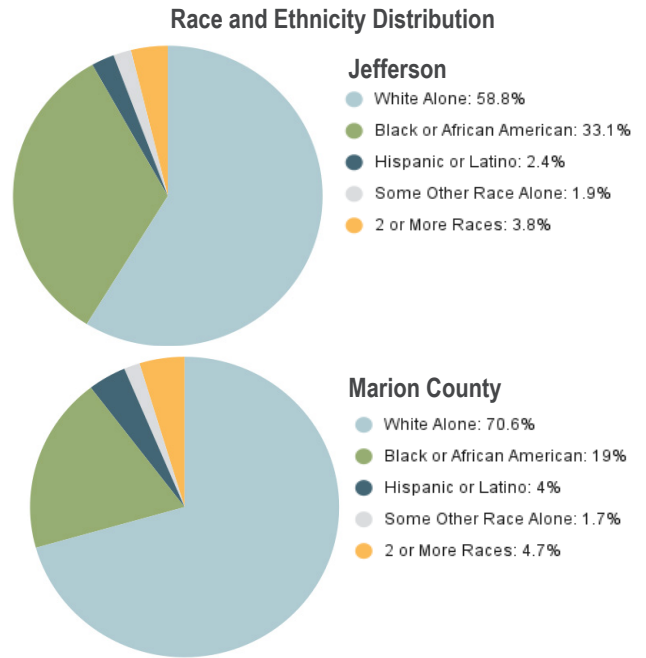
(100)   (50)   0   50   100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census

*The 2020 Census provides the most accurate population count at a specific point in time, while ACS estimates are based on a multi-year sample and subject to variability. The Census offers a precise snapshot, whereas the ACS reflects more recent trends but includes a margin of error. For small cities like Jefferson, where population shifts may be more subtle and sample sizes smaller, ACS estimates can fluctuate more significantly.

Race and Ethnicity

According to the 2020 Decennial Census, Jefferson's population is primarily White alone (58.8%), with a significant portion identifying as Black or African American (33.1%). Around 2.4% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, and 3.8% identify with Two or More Races. An additional 1.9% of the population falls under a combined some other race category, which reflects several smaller racial groups including Asian or Native American.

By comparison, Marion County's overall population is 70.6% White alone, 19.0% Black or African American, and 4.0% Hispanic or Latino. Although similar to Jefferson in its broad racial composition, the county's share of White residents is higher, while its Black population is relatively smaller. This distinction in the city's demographics points to Jefferson's unique multicultural character even within the county context.
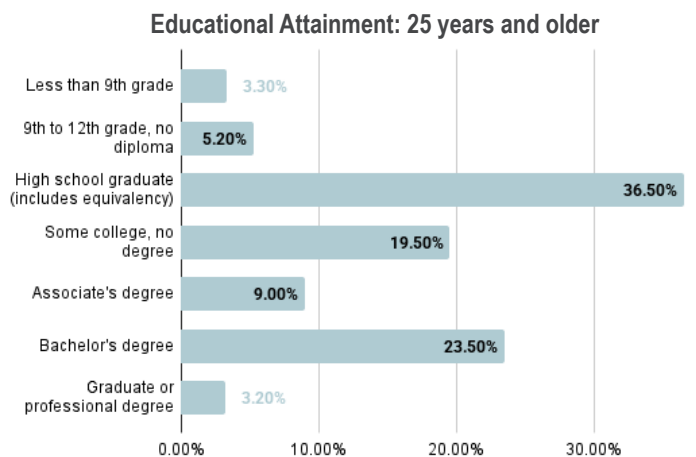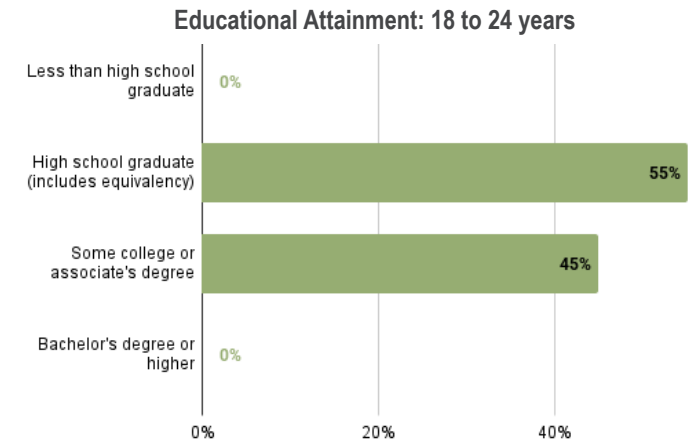
Education

The U.S. Census Bureau collects school enrollment data through the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. In 2023, roughly 357 Jefferson residents aged 3 years or older were enrolled in school, with the majority (96%) at the K–12 level. Jefferson Independent School District serves most local students, though K–12 students reportedly attend private schools.

According to the 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, all 18-to-24-year olds in Jefferson have at least a high school diploma or GED, with 55.1% holding a high school diploma as their highest level of education and 44.9% having some college experience or an associate's degree. However, none in this age group have completed a bachelor's degree or higher, suggesting that many may leave the area for higher education or career opportunities.

Among residents aged 25 and older, 36.5% have a high school diploma, while 32.5% have pursued higher education, earning an associate's degree (9%), a bachelor's degree (23.5%), or a graduate/ professional degree (3.2%). Despite strong high school graduation rates, 8.5% of adults have not completed high school, and only about a quarter of the adult population holds a bachelor's degree or higher.

These trends highlight the need for expanded access to higher or continuing education, vocational training, and workforce development programs to support local career growth.

Race and Ethnicity Distribution

Jefferson
- White Alone: 58.8%
- Black or African American: 33.1%
- Hispanic or Latino: 2.4%
- Some Other Race Alone: 1.9%
- 2 or More Races: 3.8%

Marion County
- White Alone: 70.6%
- Black or African American: 19%
- Hispanic or Latino: 4%
- Some Other Race Alone: 1.7%
- 2 or More Races: 4.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census

Educational Attainment: 18 to 24 years
- Less than high school graduate: 0%
- High school graduate (includes equivalency): 55%
- Some college or associate's degree: 45%
- Bachelor's degree or higher: 0%

Educational Attainment: 25 years and older
- Less than 9th grade: 3.30%
- 9th to 12th grade, no diploma: 5.20%
- High school graduate (includes equivalency): 36.50%
- Some college, no degree: 19.50%
- Associate's degree: 9.00%
- Bachelor's degree: 23.50%
- Graduate or professional degree: 3.20%

Source: 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Households and Family Composition

Jefferson has 960 households, with an average household size of 2.09 and a family size of 2.93. Married-couple households make up 27.8%, while the majority (56.9%) are female-led households, many of which include single parents or individuals living alone. Male-headed households account for 14.7%, with most consisting of individuals living alone. Households with seniors (65+) make up 40.6%. Meanwhile, 24.7% of households include children.
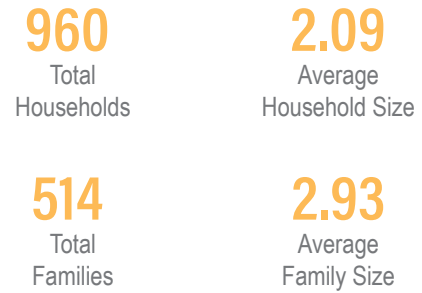
Household Income

Based on Census Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2023 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars), Jefferson's median household income was $40,865, more than 30% lower than the Texas median of $75,780 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023, Table S1901). In Marion County, the median household income is slightly higher at $47,447, though still below state averages. This income disparity suggests that residents may face greater financial strain in affording housing, healthcare, and other essential expenses, particularly as wages in the region remain lower than state levels.

Household income varies depending on household composition. In Jefferson, families have a median income of $50,625, whereas non-family and single-person households tend to earn less, often due to having only one income source. This follows a broader economic trend where households with multiple earners generally achieve greater economic security.

Lower household incomes contribute to higher poverty rates in Jefferson, where economic conditions reflect both significant income disparities and financial hardship. Based on 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 23.2% of Jefferson residents live below the federal poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023, Table S1701). However, poverty disproportionately affects certain groups. Children (44%) and African American residents (48.4%) face significantly higher poverty rates, highlighting the need for expanded support to families, workforce development initiatives, educational support, and social service programs to support the community.

Households and Families

960 Total Households	2.09 Average Household Size
514 Total Families	2.93 Average Family Size

Source: US Census Bureau 2023, Table S1101

Median Household Income (dollars)

40,865 Jefferson	47,447 Marion County	75,780 Texas

Median Family Income (dollars)

50,625 Jefferson	60,500 Marion County	91,467 Texas

Household Income Distribution

Income Range	Percentage
Less than $10K	11.60%
$10K-$15K	8.90%
$15K-$25K	12.90%
$25K-$35K	12.40%
$35K-$50K	20.60%
$50K-$75K	13.30%
$75K-$100K	7.10%
$100K-$150K	9.00%
$150K-$200K	1.70%
$200K or more	2.60%
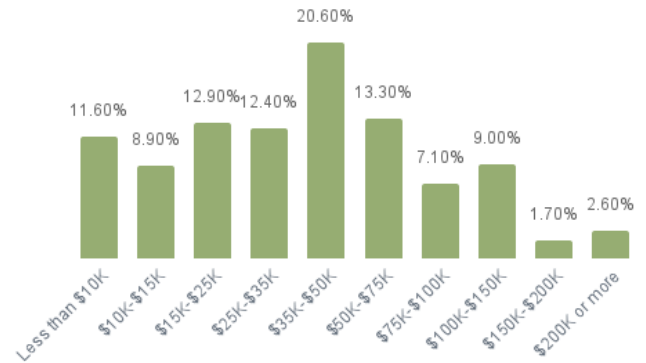
Source: US Census Bureau 2023, Table S1901

*It is important to note that American Community Survey (ACS) estimates are based on sample data and include a margin of error. While these figures provide valuable insight into income and poverty trends, they may slightly vary from actual conditions.

Housing

Housing availability and occupancy patterns in Jefferson reflect both regional trends and local housing demands. According to the 2020 Decennial Census, Jefferson had a total of 1,003 housing units, of which 829 were occupied, resulting in an overall occupancy rate of approximately 82.7%.

The city has a higher share of renter-occupied units (41%) compared to Marion County's 21.5%, indicating that rental housing plays a more significant role in Jefferson's housing market. Conversely, owner-occupied housing units make up 59% of occupied units in Jefferson, lower than Marion County's 78.5% homeownership rate. This distinction suggests that Jefferson may have a higher demand for rental properties or a more transient population compared to the broader county.

Housing Vacancy Rates (2020 Census)
- Homeowner Vacancy Rate: 3.1%
- Rental Vacancy Rate: 10.6%

Tourism and seasonal rentals play a role in Jefferson's housing landscape. The higher-than-average rental vacancy rate (10.6%) may reflect a mix of available long-term rentals and competition from short-term vacation properties. Policies should ensure that short-term rentals do not significantly reduce long-term housing affordability for local residents. Meanwhile, the 3.1% homeowner vacancy rate suggests a relatively stable market for owner-occupied housing. These figures highlight the importance of balancing housing policies to support both renters and homeowners while maintaining a healthy, sustainable housing market in Jefferson.

Housing will be futher explore in Chapter 3: Thriving Neighborhoods & Vibrant Places and Chapter 5: Multigenerational Community.

Economy

Jefferson's local economy consists of tourism, small-scale retail, hospitality, and various service industries, partly driven by the city's historical significance and proximity to nearby lakes. Additionally, there are some wood product industries in Jefferson. Some residents commute to larger cities like Longview or Shreveport for employment.

Economy will be futher explore in Chapter 3: Thriving Neighborhoods & Vibrant Places and Chapter 6: Diverse Economy.

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(All data retrieved from data.census.gov.)

Population & Demographics (Age and Sex)
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2. U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). ACS 5-Year Estimates, Age and Sex (Table S0101).

Race & Ethnicity
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Education
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5. U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). ACS 5-Year Estimates, Educational Attainment (Table S1501).

Housing & Household Characteristics
6. U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). Decennial Census, Housing Characteristics (Table DP1).
7. U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). ACS 5-Year Estimates, Housing Occupancy and Tenure (Table S2501).

Income & Poverty
8. U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). ACS 5-Year Estimates, Income and Benefits (Table S1901).
9. U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). ACS 5-Year Estimates, Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months (Table S1701).

CHAPTER 2
Planning Process

Participatory planning is central to Jefferson's Comprehensive Plan. Since the plan affects every community member, engaging the entire community at every stage of the process was crucial. Active involvement ensures that residents are informed about and understand the plan and that they have a meaningful impact on actions that will shape Jefferson's future.

Genuine public participation allows community members to identify and express their needs and desires openly. Throughout the planning process, stakeholders collaborated to create a community vision, set goals, and develop principles and action steps. This chapter aims to thoroughly explain the participatory planning process, which follows a phased inclusive approach.

Engagement Events

February 9, 2023

Task Force Meeting, Transportation

To identify issues and opportunities in the transportation network – vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit

Jefferson Visitor and Tourism Center, Virtual

FEBRUARY 2023

APRIL 2023

April 27, 2023

Public Meeting

To present and discuss strategies on economy, housing, and transportation to garner public feedback

Jefferson Visitor and Tourism Center

SEPTEMBER 2022

OCTOBER 2022

September 9, 2022

Kick-off Meeting
Introduction to the project
Virtual

October 12, 2022

Public Workshop
Establish community vision for the future
Marion County Community Center

October 13, 2022

Pop-up event, surveys
Identifying community strengths and weaknesses
Jefferson High School Brookshire's Downtown Jefferson

Social Pinpoint Feedback

322

Online Surveys Responses

93

Idea Wall Responses

22

Interactive Map Responses

39

JULY 2023

July 24, 2023

Task Force Meeting

To present and discuss strategies on parks, environment, economy, historic preservation, and facilities

Virtual

Task Force Meetings

3

Public Meetings & Presentation

6

Pop-up events

3

OCTOBER 2023

FEBRUARY 2024

MAY 2024

October 23, 2023

Public Meeting

Review and prioritize draft strategies and objectives on environment, housing, economy, nature, and infrastructure

Jefferson Primary School

February 22, 2024

Public Meeting

Present preliminary land use strategies and receive community feedback

Jefferson Visitor and Tourism Center

May 2, 2024

Public Meeting

Present the future land use chapter and update the community on other chapter's progress

Jefferson Visitor and Tourism Center

ASSEMBLING THE TASK FORCE

The City assembled a task force of key stakeholders to participate in the planning process. This task force represents the community at large and the various communities within Jefferson. Additionally, the task force acts as a conduit, communicating the progress of the comprehensive plan to the community and conveying the community's hopes and desires to the planning team. The task force was crucial in identifying additional stakeholders for engagement. By involving a diverse group of stakeholders, Jefferson ensures that the comprehensive plan reflects the needs and aspirations of the entire community.

ASSESSING CURRENT CONDITIONS

As one of the first steps in developing Jefferson's Comprehensive Plan, the planning team gathered previous studies and data from various sources to understand current conditions, trends, and patterns. This included an assessment of population characteristics, economic conditions, land use, transportation, housing conditions, community facilities, and environmental conditions. This information was presented to the community in a public workshop to start the conversation on community needs and priorities.

01 Organize
02 Connect
03 Assess
04 Envision
05 Prioritize
06 Implement
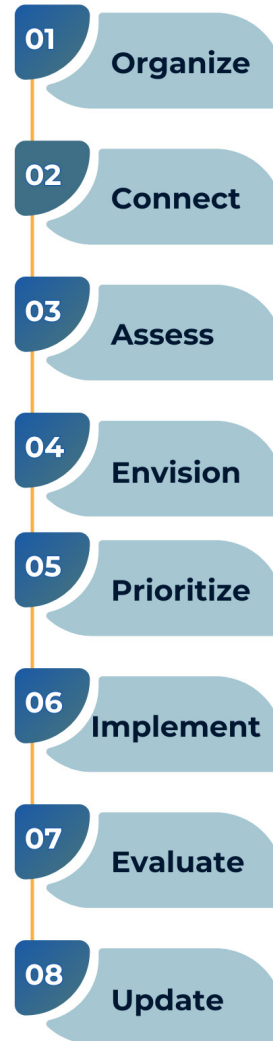07 Evaluate
08 Update

Figure 2.1. Plan Making Process

Presenting and discussing existing conditions information to ground truth the data

ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC

In the fall of 2022, graduate students in the Master of Urban Planning program in the Communication in Planning course undertook the engagement process. Students developed a multifaceted approach embracing traditional public meetings, interactive pop-up engagements, and cutting-edge virtual technology. To enable broader participation, a virtual engagement website called Social Pinpoint was launched. This allowed residents to engage from the comfort of their homes. Additionally, the team collaborated with Jefferson High School to conduct outreach activities and engage Jefferson's youth. High school students utilized the Social Pinpoint platform to identify community assets and areas of improvement. Youth bring fresh perspectives and offer unique insights into their generation's challenges, aspirations, and needs

Engaging with residents and visitors at the downtown pop-up event

COLLABORATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The planning team conducted multiple small-group stakeholder meetings to ensure community leaders and champions engaged and provided diverse perspectives in the community. Targeted stakeholder interviews allowed for focused discussions with members of the community who possess special expertise or interests, further enriching the planning process.

Task force members and core team members from the City and JEDCO created a stakeholder list of community leaders and champions. Using the list, they actively engaged with 81 local stakeholders promoting the engagement effort, building connections, and establishing trust and rapport in the community. As part of the focus group interviews, students interviewed stakeholders, including city staff, city leadership, Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Corporation, Chamber of Commerce, schools, health care providers, real estate agents, and developers, the housing authority, religious groups, and community-based organizations. Engaging these groups of stakeholders was essential to build the foundation of planning and effective implementation.

FOCUS GROUP TOPICS

- City Leadership
- Community Service Organizations
- Economic Development
- Education
- Health
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Public Works
- Real Estate/Housing
- Religious/Outreach
- Safety
- Tourism/Culture

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Public engagement efforts resulted in 128 total surveys submitted, 232 map dots for location-specific comments, and 992 other written statements. Students analyzed the data gathered from public meetings, surveys, stakeholder interviews, and engagement activities deriving meaningful insights like common themes and emerging needs. Finally, they compiled all the information in an accessible report (Public and Stakeholder Engagement Summary) to present a comprehensive roadmap for action. By visually representing strengths and challenges, the report provides the location-based opportunities and gaps of investment.

In December 2022, the planning team presented the findings at the City Council Meeting. They also provided the complete report with all the community comments to the city leaders and staff and shared the document online for the public. The process initiated community-wide discussion about community needs, issues, assets, and desires.

The public engagement process aimed to reach a diverse audience who engaged in conversation on Jefferson's assets, voiced their needs and concerns. By casting as wide of a net as possible through various public engagement activities, the team gathered a broad range of opinions and ideas from over 200 members of the Jefferson community. The findings of this engagement effort capture the current thoughts and views of the community and serve to set priorities for future growth. The public input obtained from these activities is intended to help elected officials understand community priorities, identify locations that need more attention and development, form goals, objectives, and inform city initiatives, programs, and capital improvements.

The public engagement process successfully reached a diverse audience who engaged in conversation on Jefferson's assets, voiced their needs and concerns, and found common ground to influence government decision-making. By casting as wide of a net as possible through various public engagement activities, the team gathered a broad range of opinions and ideas from over 200 members of the Jefferson community. The findings of this engagement effort capture the current thoughts and views of the community and serve to set priorities for future growth. The public input obtained from these activities is intended to help elected officials understand community priorities, identify locations that need more attention and development, and inform city initiatives, programs, and capital improvements.

Discussing community priorities, goals, and strategies

STEERING OUR PAST & PRESENT
INTO THE FUTURE!

Join Us for a JEFFERSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MEETING!

We invite you to join us in creating a future plan for our community!

Jefferson Tourism and Visitor Center
305 E Austin St, Jefferson, TX 75657

February 22, 2024
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Inviting residents to discuss future scenarios and preferred future land use.

COMMUNITY THOUGHTS

Through the engagement process, the planning team discovered Jefferson's greatest strength lies in its close-knit community. Residents passionately expressed their deep-rooted connection to the city, highlighting the welcoming atmosphere that embraces both residents and visitors. Jefferson was seen as a destination with its vibrant downtown, unique tourism experience, and strong sense of character and identity. The engagement process also highlighted the strained relationships between socioeconomic groups and a disproportionate focus on the downtown area, emphasizing the importance of balanced development and equitable opportunities for all neighborhoods. Planning for aging infrastructure, housing affordability, and access to health emerged as priorities.

Stakeholders highlighted the diversification of local businesses and industries to enhance economic growth and provide employment opportunities, creating a thriving local economy. They also emphasized investing in transportation supporting Complete Streets to improve connectivity and ease mobility challenges. The engagement process revealed numerous opportunities to harness Jefferson's untapped potential. Stakeholders identified the significance of embracing Jefferson's environmental features, such as its proximity to Caddo Lake and Lake O' the Pines. They also stressed the empowerment of the younger generation, to actively shape the city's future.

COMMUNITY VISION

The insights and recommendations from the community captured in the engagement report provide a roadmap for the vision, goals, objectives, and actions of this plan.

> **JEFFERSON IS A WELCOMING AND VIBRANT SMALL TOWN THAT TREASURES ITS DIVERSE COMMUNITY, RICH HERITAGE, AND NATURAL BEAUTY. STEERING THE PAST AND PRESENT TOGETHER, THE COMMUNITY NAVIGATES INTO THE FUTURE THAT SUPPORTS A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE AND EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS WHILE PRESERVING THE UNIQUE SENSE OF PLACE AND CONNECTION TO THE RIVER.**

Themes to Guide Toward the Future

THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS AND VIBRANT PLACES

Jefferson boasts a beautiful downtown and unique spaces. Residents are keen on showcasing all neighborhoods, and as new development locations are chosen, they aim to maintain Jefferson's historic charm and natural environment while also creating accessible housing and economic development opportunities. where they are currently lacking.

CELEBRATION OF HISTORY AND CULTURE

Jefferson has a long storied history, and residents want to highlight and promote that history and how it has evolved and affected life in Jefferson. Finding ways to preserve and capture stories and precious artifacts will ensure that future generations can appreciate them as well.

MULTIGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY

Many generations of families have called Jefferson home. Having places that residents of all ages can enjoy and services that all residents need available is important to the town's health and quality of life.

DIVERSE ECONOMY

Jefferson has seen a variety of businesses over its history. Creating and maintaining an environment that encourages a diverse economy that can provide jobs and services will help to retain youth and expand Jefferson's livability.

HARMONY WITH NATURE

With proximity to the Big Cypress Bayou and the beautiful forests of East Texas, residents are aware of both the beauty and the danger of living so close to nature. Residents want to find ways to live together with the natural world and to take advantage of its benefits while accounting for its risks.

RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Road, water, and other types of infrastructure in Jefferson are in need of updating and improvements, especially to help support future developments. Building the improvements needed will not only create a foundation for future growth, but also ensure residents see consistent service as well.

Goals and Objectives

STRATEGIZING FOR JEFFERSON'S FUTURE

After gathering the community's vision and priorities, TxTC staff analyzed the feedback to identify strategies for achieving these goals. These strategies were refined during multiple public meetings.

In spring 2023, students from the Texas A&M Transportation Planning course presented an overview of Jefferson's transportation network, along with traffic and demographic data. Based on public engagement and task force discussions, their initial recommendations focused on enhancing safety and efficiency, establishing a maintenance schedule, and increasing multimodal paths. In April 2023, students discussed transportation, economic development, and housing needs. On July 24, 2023, the task force reviewed strategies for historic preservation, community development in health and education, and parks and recreation. Based on feedback, these strategies were adjusted and presented to the public on October 3, 2023. Attendees reviewed and prioritized the strategies and identified local partners for implementation.

At the February 22, 2024, meeting, the community emphasized concerns about the lack of medical facilities and the need for more community amenities. They also preferred improving existing infrastructure before extensive expansions. Students compiled data on existing conditions, including land suitability for development and food and health services locations, city hall, and the fire station. This information was presented to the community, who then mapped out where they would like to see more services in the future. The students developed scenarios for Jefferson's future development, emphasizing tourism, recreation, civic amenities, and economic growth.

Through a series of planning workshops, Jefferson residents developed goals to address their current needs and ensure sustainable future growth. Each topic area includes specific goals and objectives to make Jefferson a more connected and attractive place to live and visit.

THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS AND VIBRANT PLACES

- GOAL 3.1 Strengthen Jefferson's assets and promote responsible growth that aligns with community character.
- GOAL 3.2 Promote housing diversity and expand housing choice.
- GOAL 3.3 Create economically thriving commercial areas and continue to support a vibrant downtown.

CELEBRATION OF HISTORY AND CULTURE

- GOAL 4.1 Preserve and tell the histories of the various groups that have called Jefferson home.
- GOAL 4.2 Increase historical and cultural programs, activities, and events in and around Jefferson.

MULTIGENERATIONAL COMMUNITY

- GOAL 5.1 Promote community health and wellness by providing services to meet the needs of our community's aging population and encourage young families in the region.

- GOAL 5.2 Enhance the supply of affordable housing and quality of neighborhoods to meet the community's housing needs effectively.

- GOAL 5.3 Develop and promote a range of community facilities, support services, and age-appropriate activities for all residents.

- GOAL 5.4 Promote community-forward safety and security.

DIVERSE ECONOMY

- GOAL 6.1 Enhance educational pathways, skill training, and diversify career opportunities available in Jefferson.
- GOAL 6.2 Empower local businesses and foster new business development and innovation in Jefferson.
- GOAL 6.3 Elevate Jefferson as a dynamic tourism hub for ecotourism, cultural experiences, and business events.

HARMONY WITH NATURE

- GOAL 7.1 Enhance and preserve parks and natural spaces for residents and visitors.

- GOAL 7.2 Promote community-wide environmental stewardship to protect Jefferson's natural assets.

- GOAL 7.3 Strengthen the community's resilience to protect the community from hazard risks.

RELIABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

- GOAL 8.1 Create and maintain roads and policies that ensure safety for all road-users.

- GOAL 8.2 Provide clean, safe, and reliable water and wastewater service to residents, visitors, and businesses.

- GOAL 8.3 Ensure comprehensive telecommunication and broadband coverage for all residents of the City of Jefferson.

- GOAL 8.4 Elevate city infrastructure and community services to meet current and future community needs.

# Thriving Neighborhoods & Vibrant Places

Jefferson is a city rich in history and natural beauty. Like many small rural towns, it faces challenges such as aging infrastructure, maintaining the quality of existing neighborhoods, and attracting new development that fits well with the community. This chapter outlines the community's vision for Jefferson's future and examines how the goals of this plan will shape the city's spaces and places. The goals include highlighting and protecting Jefferson's unique assets, guiding new development to suitable areas, expanding housing options for all income levels, and developing thriving commercial areas and a vibrant downtown. This chapter will guide the City in making land use decisions to achieve these goals, ensuring a bright and sustainable future for all residents.
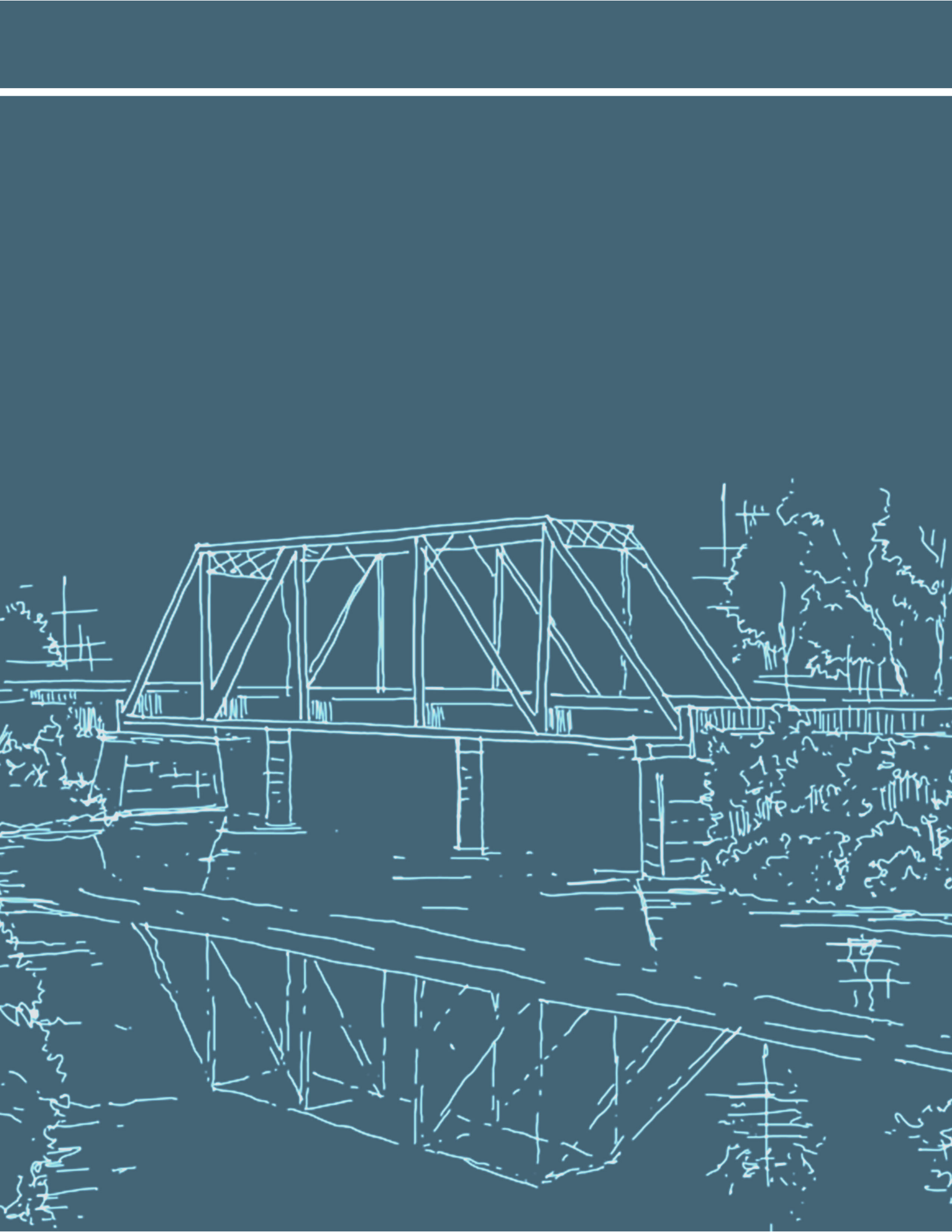
Existing Conditions

NEIGHBORHOODS

Jefferson is a city with diverse neighborhoods, each contributing to its unique character and history. This section provides an overview of some of the key neighborhoods, highlighting their distinct features and current challenges.

Figure 3.1. City map showing the location of neighborhoods
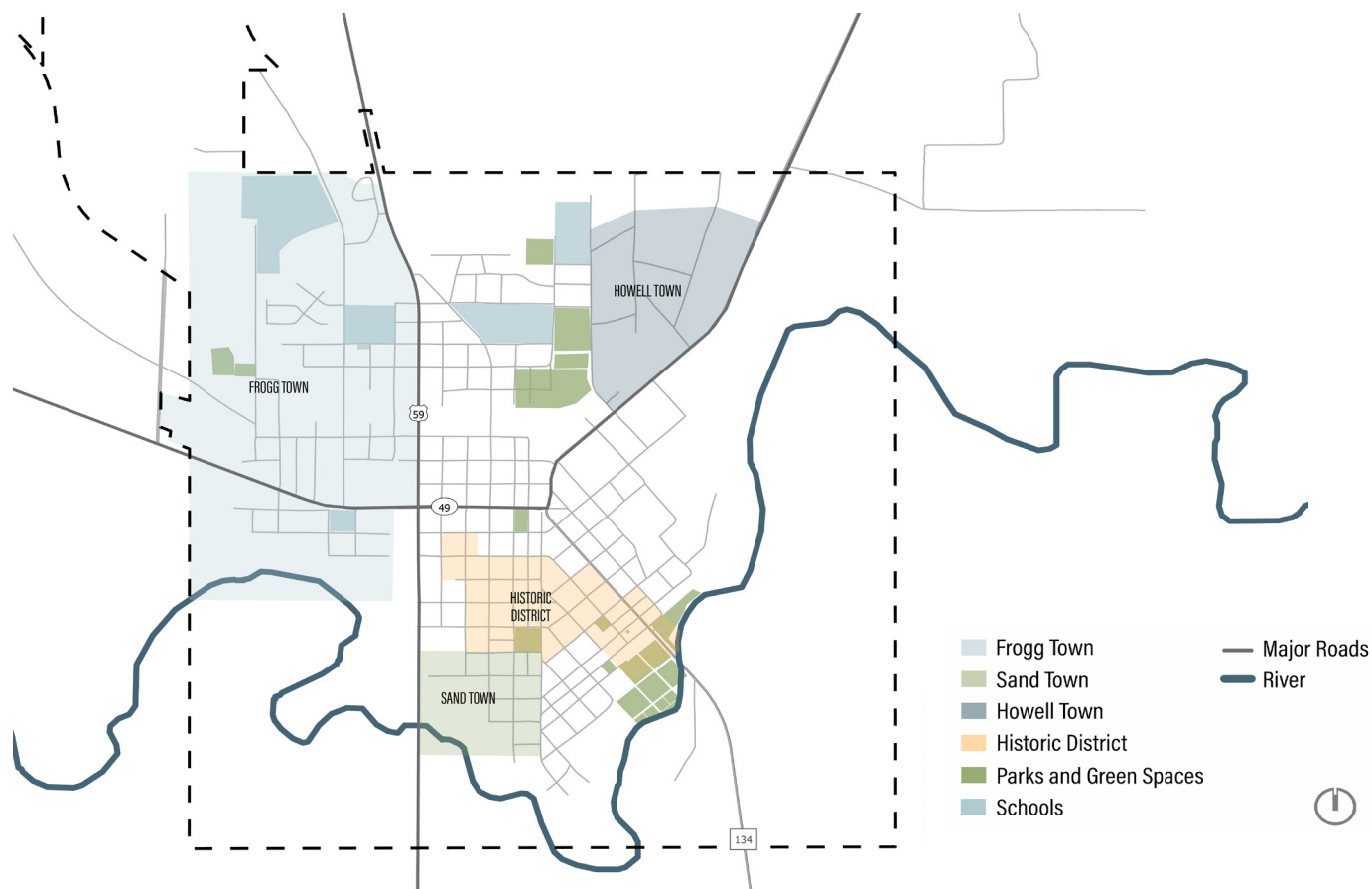
Historic Downtown District

Located in southeastern Jefferson, the Historic Downtown District is one of the oldest and most historically significant neighborhoods. Centered along S. Polk St. (FM 134), this district has over 56 historically significant structures and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. The downtown area is densely built, with narrow streets and brick pavements, creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. It serves as Jefferson's central business district, featuring numerous restaurants, shops, and small businesses within its historic buildings.

Sandtown

Sandtown is located in the southernmost part of Jefferson, within a bend of Big Cypress Bayou. Historically significant during the riverboat era, this wooded area has access to the river and offers a scenic environment. The neighborhood is bordered by the First Baptist Church and is home to the Union Missionary Baptist Church which sits on Houston Street. The Union Missionary Baptist Church was a central hub for black religious and political activities in Marion County during the Reconstruction era. Renovated in 2017, the church is now used as a cultural heritage center and event venue. Today, Sandtown is a popular location for bed and breakfasts, attracting visitors. In recent years, Sandtown has been seeing growth.

Froggtown

The Froggtown neighborhood is locally identified as the area west of US-59, Walcott Street. This historically black neighborhood has faced underinvestment, resulting in limited retail and other developments. Residents are advocating for increased focus and investment in the area through neighborhood groups like Revitalize Froggtown. The neighborhood is home to Jefferson Primary School, Jefferson Elementary School, Jefferson High School, and Marion County Community Center. The West Fraser plant and T J Blackburn Syrup Works are to the west of the neighborhood.

Howell Town

Situated in northeast Jefferson, Howell Town is bordered by TX 49 and N Cass St. This neighborhood is adjacent to the historic Oakwood Cemetery, Oakwood Memorial Park, and Mt. Sinai Cemetery. Primarily consisting of rural land and single-family homes, Howell Town has seen little investment in community facilities and commerce.

While most investment and efforts have historically been prioritized in and near the downtown area, other neighborhoods in Jefferson hold significant untapped potential. These areas represent prime opportunities for transformative housing and development initiatives aimed at revitalization.

Historical Land Use and Development

Jefferson's land use was initially shaped by the steamboat industry along Big Cypress Bayou, making it a leading commercial hub in Northeast Texas by the late 1840s. The downtown area grew adjacent to Big Cypress Bayou, forming the Central Business District, while residential areas spread westward with Greek Revival mansions and eastward with modest housing for the black community.

Today, Jefferson's land use reflects its historical roots with a mix of commercial and residential areas. Commercial development mainly consists of small retail and service businesses, with tourist-oriented shops downtown. The city faces a need for more essential services to support growth.

 Land Use vs. Zoning

The concept of land use and zoning is fundamental to the planning and development of cities, yet these terms are often confused and mistakenly used interchangeably. It is crucial to understand the clear distinction between them to effectively guide the growth and sustainability of Jefferson. Land Use refers to the organization of how land is used to meet the needs of the community while considering the land's capabilities. It involves planning the allocation of land for various purposes, such as residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, and agricultural uses. Effective land use planning ensures that the development of land contributes to the community's overall well-being and sustainability.

Zoning is a regulatory tool that specifies the types of land uses allowed on a particular parcel of land. It divides the city into zones, each with its own set of regulations regarding the intensity and type of development permitted. Zoning helps to control and direct the growth of the city in a systematic way, ensuring that incompatible land uses are separated and that the character of different areas is preserved.

CURRENT LAND USE

This section provides an overview of the various land uses within Jefferson as identified through a parcel-by-parcel land use inventory. The current land use map reflects the diverse ways in which land is utilized across the city. Jefferson's current land uses include: residential, commercial, industrial, civic, park, and utilities. Commercial uses are primarily within downtown, and along the US 49 and US 59 thoroughfares. There are additional commercial areas in the east and northwest areas of town that have not been subdivided. Residential uses are distributed throughout the town, but are less dense in the southwest and eastern side of town. Civic uses are distributed throughout the town. There are parks placed in multiple areas, but are primarily in the southeast of town by the river, and next to Jefferson Middle School
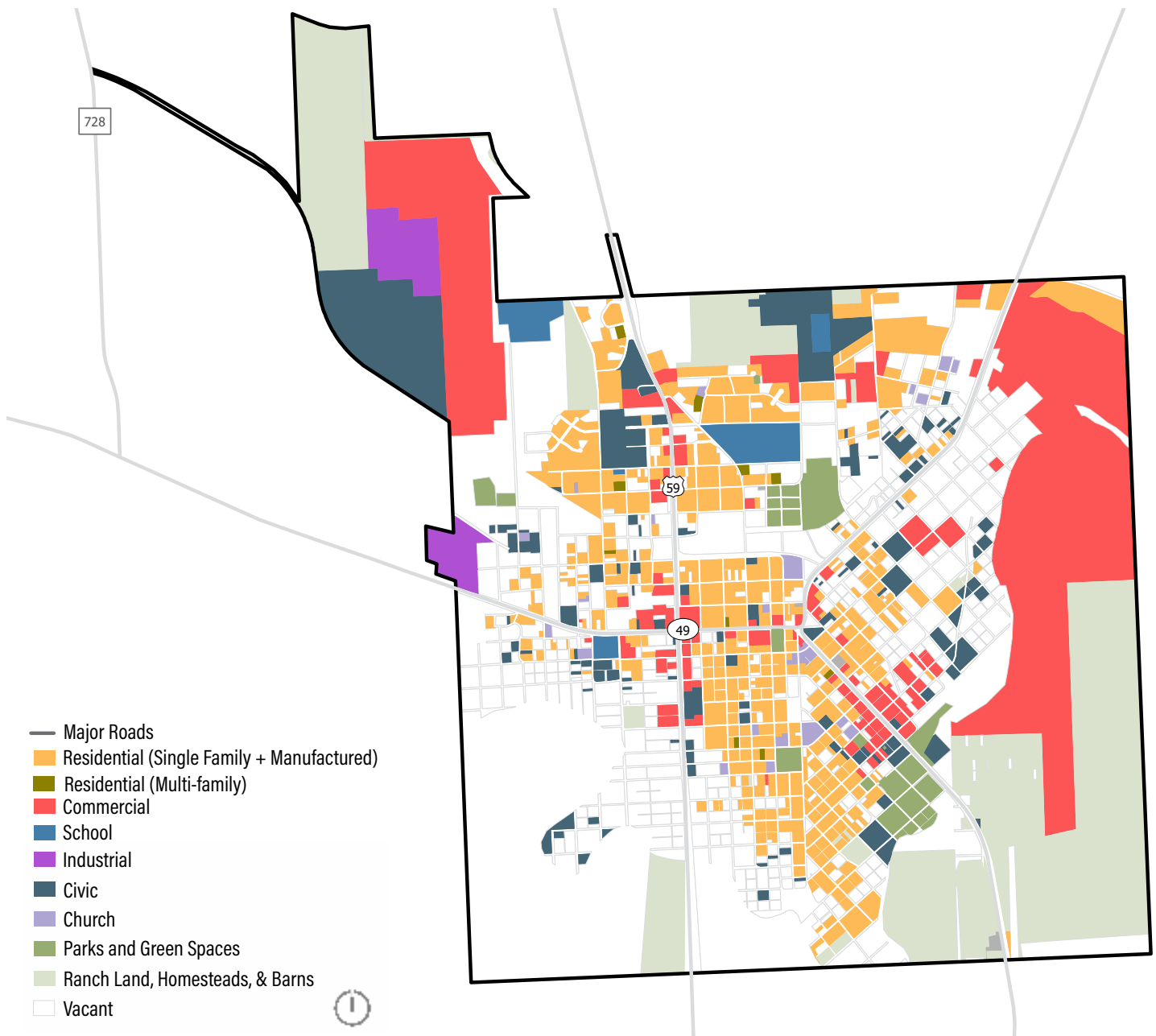

Legend:
— Major Roads
- Residential (Single Family + Manufactured)
- Residential (Multi-family)
- Commercial
- School
- Industrial
- Civic
- Church
- Parks and Green Spaces
- Ranch Land, Homesteads, & Barns
- Vacant

Figure 3.2.Current Land Use within the city limits of Jefferson.

Residential Land Use

Single-family units and manufactured homes occupy 334 acres, whereas multi-family residential units cover 4.5 acres of land in the city.

Single-Family Residential: Single-family residential structures are designed to house one family unit and constitute approximately 67% of all housing units, according to the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Detailed Table DP04. These units cover a significant portion of Jefferson's residential land.

Manufactured Homes: These housing structures, including mobile homes and trailers, are fabricated off-site and transported to their location. According to the 2022 ACS estimates, manufactured homes make up about 18% of all housing units.

Multi-Family Residential: Multi-family residential buildings contain two or more dwelling units and are managed as single projects or developments. They represent about 15% of all housing units, based on the 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Table DP04.

Ranch Land and Homesteads

These land uses support agricultural activities and preserve the rural character of certain areas and cover 469 acres of land.

Commercial

Commercial land use in Jefferson encompasses retail establishments, service businesses, offices, and repair shops, primarily situated in business districts or along major thoroughfares. Approximately 460 acres are dedicated to commercial purposes, supporting the city's economic activities and providing essential services to residents. While commercial locations are scattered throughout Jefferson, they are predominantly found along Walcott Street (US 59) and Broadway Street. The downtown area consists largely of shops and restaurants, catering to Jefferson's tourism industry.

Industrial

Industrial areas in Jefferson are designated for uses such as large warehouses, lumberyards, and small manufacturing operations. They cover 44 acres of land. Major companies in this district includes T.J. Blackburn and West Fraser.

Public and Quasi-Public

Public and semi-public uses include educational facilities like schools, civic facilities like City Hall and fire station, post office, parks, cemeteries, and churches

School: Land used for educational purposes encompasses properties operated by the school district, including all school buildings, sports facilities, offices, and maintenance/bus areas.

Parks and Open Spaces: Parks and open spaces are dedicated to active and passive recreation or the preservation of natural areas. This category includes parks and cemeteries and covers 51 acres of land in Jefferson, offering residents places for leisure and outdoor activities.

Civic: Civic land use includes government-owned buildings and land and properties operated by non-profit organizations. This category spans 185 acres and encompasses facilities that provide various public services and community functions.

Churches: Churches occupy around 15 acres of land in Jefferson, serving as essential centers for worship and community gatherings.

Utilities: Approximately 2 acres of land are designated for utility, supporting the infrastructure necessary for the city's daily operations and services. This category doesn't include roads.

FLOODPLAIN

To reduce the risk of harm to people and property, it is important to plan for floodplain management. This approach involves identifying flooding hazards, assessing their impacts, and implementing mitigation strategies to ensure community safety. Flooding can occur as stormwater inundation or rapid water rise in low-lying areas, which pose significant risks.

Jefferson is surrounded by high to moderate flood risk from the Caddo Lake (Cypress River Basin). Only sections centrally located in the city limits are out of the river's flood risk leaving many homes and businesses threatened by natural hazards. It is crucial to consider these threats in future land use planning. Developing in the floodplains can worsen flooding by obstructing stormwater

runoff and natural waterway flow, causing water buildup in unintended areas. In circumstances where seasons are fairly dry, it may appear that floodplain management can be an afterthought, but for a community like Jefferson where the risk is so high, floodplains must be considered at every point of future land use considerations.

Flood resilience for Jefferson isn't as simple as developing strictly outside of the high-risk flood areas as illustrated in Figure 1, instead, strategic regulation such as the use of floodplain areas for passive recreation/ open space and other similar strategies must be introduced to ensure the future of Jefferson isn't risked by flooding. Harmony with Nature Chapter will go into greater detail about potential flooding mitigation techniques and their aligned implementation.
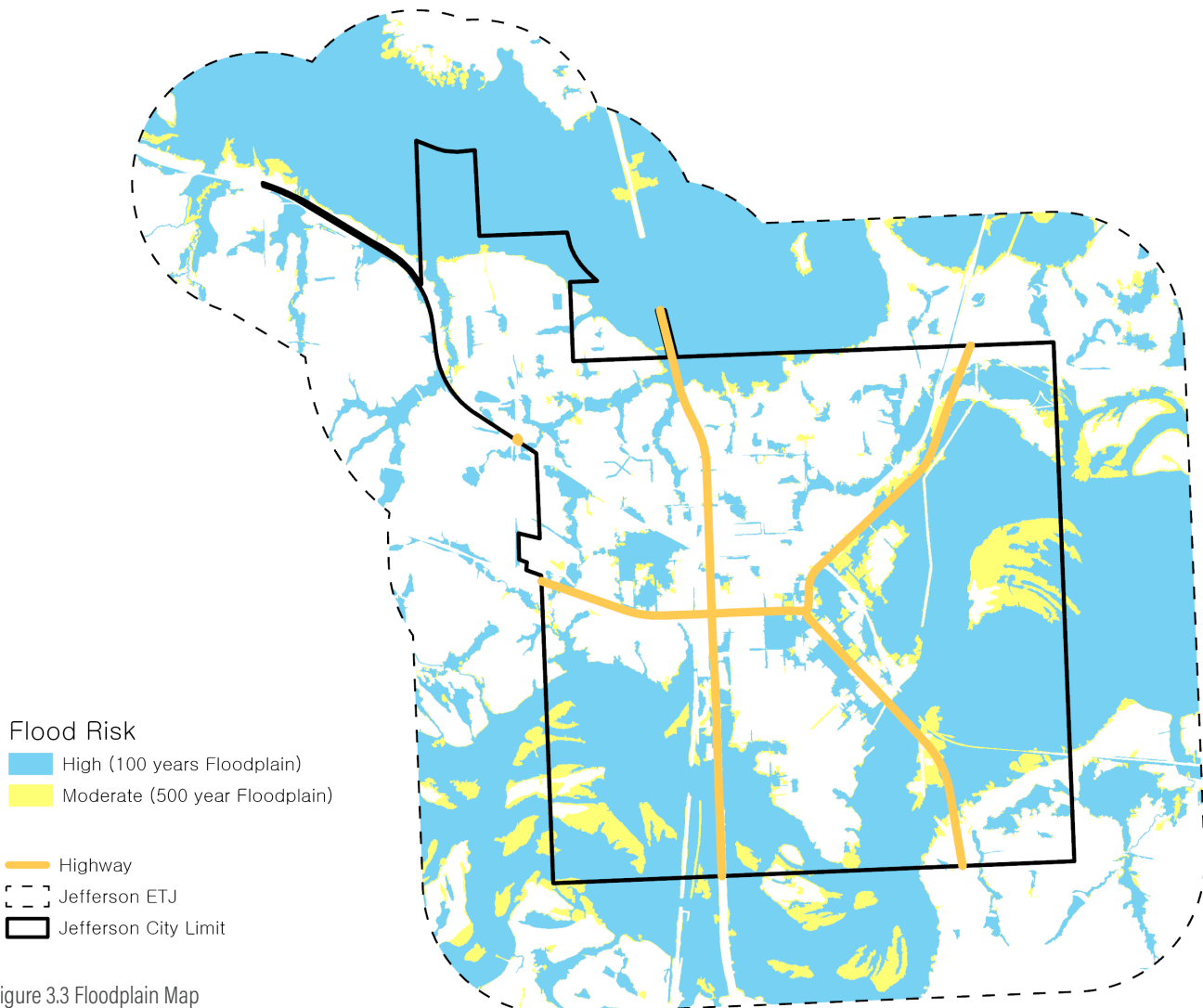

Flood Risk
- High (100 years Floodplain)
- Moderate (500 year Floodplain)

- Highway
- Jefferson ETJ
- Jefferson City Limit

Figure 3.3 Floodplain Map
Source: https://webapps.usgs.gov/infrm/estbfe/

EXISTING REGULATIONS AND ZONING

The City of Jefferson has established a comprehensive Code of Or-dinances, adopted by the City Council on April 11, 2002. This Code, based on the 1980 Code and subsequent ordinances, regulates vari-ous aspects of city life to ensure orderly development and community well-being. Ordinances are crafted to regulate various aspects of city life, ensuring orderly development and community well-being.

Residential Areas

The city's code includes Divisions 3 and 4, which cover a single-family residential neighborhood bounded by Ferris Street to the east, Hay-wood Street to the west, and Harrison Street to the north. This area is characterized by homes and residential yards, maintaining the neighborhood's residential nature. The code also specifies areas for manufactured homes. These areas are located along Tuttle, Elizabeth, and MLK Streets, extending westward to Hwy 49 West and bounded by the KCS Railroad Track to the south. Additionally, the Manufactured Housing Area (Section 18-2) is situated between Cass, Sedberry, and Titus Streets, bordered by the Union Pacific Railroad.

General Retail District

In the city's zoning ordinances, the area south and east of Big Cypress Bayou, Division 2, is designated as a general retail district, restricting building permits to conform with retail-oriented purposes. Permitted uses within this district include retail shops, hotels, and restaurants, while activities like manufacturing, residential, and outdoor displays are strictly prohibited.

Enterprise Zone

The Code also includes an area nominated for enterprise zone. This is a 5.347 square mile tract of land within Jefferson and Marion County. It starts at the intersection of the Kansas City Southern Railway tracks and Big Cypress Bayou, extending through various boundaries includ-ing the Union Pacific Railway tracks, State Highway 49, Farm to Market Road 728, and the Southwestern Electric Power Company transmis-sion line, among others. The zone encompasses key intersections and landmarks, creating a defined area intended for economic revitaliza-tion efforts. This designation aims to stimulate economic growth by providing tax incentives to attract private investment and create jobs in a severely distressed area of the city.

Flooding safeguards for permits

According to the Sec. 18-84. Of the Code, before issuing a building permit, the city ensures that the proposed building site is reasonably safe from flooding. If there is a flood hazard, any new construction or significant improvement (including prefabricated and mobile homes) must meet the following requirements:

- The structure must be designed or modified and securely an-chored to prevent flotation, collapse, or lateral movement during a flood.
- Construction materials and utility equipment used must be re-sistant to flood damage.
- Construction methods and practices must be employed to min-imize potential flood damage.

Building Code

The City has adopted the International Building Code (IBC) 2000 standards. The IBC provides a comprehensive set of building safety regulations that address structural integrity, fire safety, and life safe-ty requirements for new and existing buildings.

In the Alcoholic Beverages chapter, the Code indicates that Down-town Jefferson is the Central Business District in how it describes what streets comprise its border of.

As Jefferson evolves, it is crucial to review and update existing regu-lations and codes, including the areas designated as zones in the or-dinances, the building codes, and floodplain management. Regular updates ensure that these regulations meet the changing needs of the community, address new development challenges, and incorpo-rate advancements in building safety and sustainability.

Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)
ETJ is a designated buffer area located just outside of the city limits. The Texas Local Government Code defines the size of the extraterritorial jurisdiction based on its population. Jef-ferson's ETJ is a buffer of a half mile from the city boundary. Annexation is a growth management tool authorized by state law that cities can utilize to regulate properties within ETJ. However, S.B. 2038, which went into effect on September 1, 2023, allows property owners in a city's extraterritorial juris-diction (ETJ) to petition for removal from the ETJ through a letter, petition, or election process.
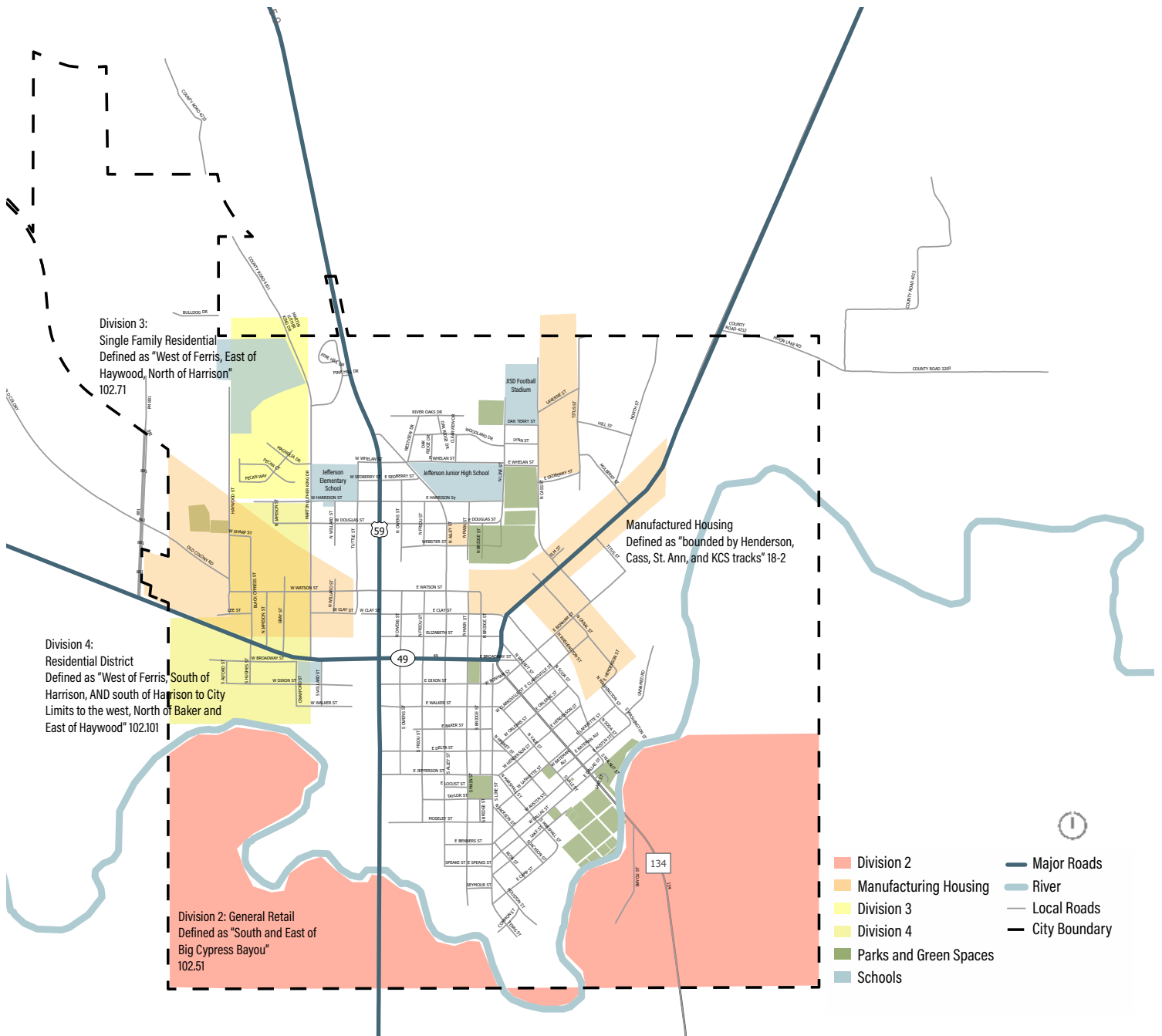
Figure 3.4 Designated zones in the current City Code of Ordinances

Division 3:
Single Family Residential
Defined as "West of Ferris, East of
Haywood, North of Harrison"
102.71

Division 4:
Residential District
Defined as "West of Ferris, South of
Harrison, AND south of Harrison to City
Limits to the west, North of Baker and
East of Haywood" 102.101

Division 2: General Retail
Defined as "South and East of
Big Cypress Bayou"
102.51

Manufactured Housing
Defined as "bounded by Henderson,
Cass, St. Ann, and KCS tracks" 18-2

Division 2
Manufacturing Housing
Division 3
Division 4
Parks and Green Spaces
Schools

Major Roads
River
Local Roads
City Boundary

Scenario Planning

Scenario planning is an essential tool for envisioning Jefferson's future and aligning development strategies with the community's needs and aspirations. The following scenarios were developed to explore future development in Jefferson. They outline potential pathways for growth, emphasizing tourism, recreation, civic amenities, and economic development.

Scenario 1: The Playground- Investing in recreation and tourism

The "Playground" scenario is focused on parks, ecotourism, and downtown. This looks at a future where Jefferson continues to focus and enhance tourism and connect the community to recreation opportunities.
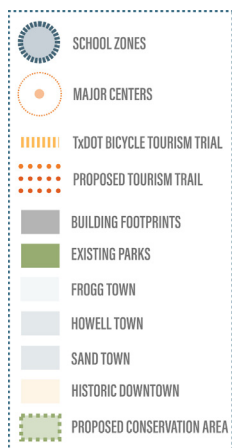
Key features

- Improving community spaces such as parks, recreational facilities, and historical landmarks.
- Maintaining a lively and pedestrian-friendly Downtown area.
- Developing network of trails.
- Creating more connection to the Big Cypress Bayou.
- Building on the network of bed and breakfast accommodations.

Challenges and Considerations

- Securing adequate funding for recreational facility improvements.
- Allocating resources effectively to support tourism and other community priorities
- Ensuring consistent community involvement and support.
- Maintaining infrastructure to support increased tourism.
- Implementing sustainable practices in park and trail development to minimize environmental impact.
- Ensuring the safety and security of tourists and residents in recreational areas.

Ideas

- Create an interactive physical and online trail & city map for the nature center to share with residents and tourists.
- Develop a walking tour that traverses the community to include registered historical markers/museums.
- Promote local art and mural culture through a social media/online scavenger hunt.
- Update wayfinding infrastructure within the downtown core to assist tourists in navigating the area.
- Connect the different neighborhoods in Jefferson with bike trails.
- Provide new park and playground opportunities by redeveloping vacant and decrepit lots neighboring community facilities.
- Purchase the old train property adjacent to the nature center.
- Investigate partnerships for micro-mobility infrastructure (rentable scooters/golf carts).

SCHOOL ZONES
MAJOR CENTERS
TxDOT BICYCLE TOURISM TRIAL
PROPOSED TOURISM TRAIL
BUILDING FOOTPRINTS
EXISTING PARKS
FROGG TOWN
HOWELL TOWN
SAND TOWN
HISTORIC DOWNTOWN
PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA

Scenario 2: The Service Provider - Investing in Facilities and Amenities

Jefferson not only is an anchor for its residents, but also for the broader region of Marion County. It is the location of the schools in the Jefferson ISD, which serves the entire county in its boundary and is the location of most amenities available in the area. This scenario focuses on increasing civic and community facilities and improving access to health and food services. This scenario looks at different approaches on how these resources are distributed and where to locate them in town and in the neighborhoods.

Key Features

- Increased accessibility to services and amenities
- Become a main service provider hub for Marion County
- Increase variety of services and retail options
- Redevelop areas that lack nearby amenities
- Strategic location of city hall, fire, and police stations for better communication and response times.
- A civic center accommodating current and future communities needs to facilitate city projects and programs.
- Centers providing goods and services within neighborhoods.

Ideas

- Upgrade infrastructure (water, sewer, roads)
- Activate Marion County Community Center Area
- Elder housing and support facilities
- Youth programs & facilities with JISD
- New grocery store
- Establish community garden
- Relocate the fire station
- Relocate City Hall
- Establish medical facilities

Challenges and Considerations

- Securing funding for the development and relocation of civic and community facilities.
- Coordinating with Marion County, Jefferson ISD and other stakeholders.
- Ensuring equitable distribution of services and amenities across neighborhoods.
- Overcoming resistance to relocating city hall and fire stations.
- Addressing potential logistical issues in relocating and upgrading infrastructure (water, sewer, roads).
- Ensuring long-term maintenance and operational sustainability of new facilities.
- Hazard risk and safety considerations for critical facilities.

LEGEND

- Potential Development Areas
- Neighborhoods
- Parks
- Floodplain
- City Hall & Fire Department
- Schools
- Grocery Stores
- Community Center

Scenario 3: The Economic Hub - Investing in Workforce and Industries

This scenario focuses on diversifying Jefferson's economy, expanding local industry, creating workforce housing, and strengthening commercial corridors along major highways to ensure sustainable and beneficial development.

Key features

- Local economic revitalization through investments in commercial and industrial zones.
- Job creation and educational opportunities.
- Encouraging young people to work and start families in Jefferson.
- Workforce housing for varying income levels to promote community stability.

Challenges and Considerations

- Securing funding for development projects and attracting businesses.
- Integrating new developments with Jefferson's historical character without compromising its charm and appeal.
- Ensuring the infrastructure (water, sewer, roads) can support new developments.
- Planning and coordinating the I-69 extension to maximize its benefits, while dealing with an uncertain timeline and project details.

Ideas

- Increase and diversify industry in Jefferson by enhancing production of popular local goods, such as nut production and woodworking.
- Strengthen local trade and education through satellite college campuses, trade schools, and community centers hosting educational courses.
- Develop housing for workers near industrial and educational locations, utilizing vacant parcels within Jefferson.
- Attract commercial development on TX-49 and US-59 to increase local spending and service neighborhoods with limited access to grocery stores, restaurants, and shopping destinations.
- Establishing a commercial district at the intersection of Walcott and Broadway.
- Developing co-working spaces.

Legend
- ★ Education/Trade Hub
- Workforce Housing
- Commercial District
- Industry
- Signage

Public Feedback

Engagement activities in October 2022 and a public participation event on February 22, 2024, gathered residents' feedback on Jefferson's strengths and weaknesses. Residents highlighted a need for health facilities, diverse businesses, amenities, and more job opportunities. Housing issues included a need for affordable and diverse housing types.

BUILDING ON ASSETS

Residents see parks, downtown, surrounding open spaces and the history as key assets for Jefferson's future.

- "There's more history in this city outside of what is downtown. There need to be a deep dive into the history of ALL of Jefferson"
- "Need to utilize unused open spaces for small parks "
- "Neighborhood-specific landscape/ gardening like Azalea trail"
- "Erosion and flooding concerns along the river"
- "Expanding the existing trail system. Finish the truss bridge and integrate it into the parks system"
- "Rentable garden space for the community"
- "Build up the park - community center and updates Lions Park (toilets and maintenance)"
- "License against the increase in AirB&B"
- "Connecting genealogy to tours "
- "Needs a performing arts center."
- "The upkeep of local facilities - collaboration with Collins Academy"
- "Integrating the train facility with the boat ramp"
- "Instead of tourism just in the downtown include tourist camping around perimeter"

QUALITY OF LIFE

Community members want to maintain the charm of Jefferson but would like to add jobs, services, and facilities so everyone in the community can have a high quality of life.

- "We should encourage more industry to provide jobs for families that live here. Also industry would attract young families to move here. With that, there needs to be more apartment and housing options."
- "Growth for better tax base without destroying the ambiance/historical charm - need attention paid to roads and areas not in the downtown/historic district"
- "You have to drive to Marshall for emergency services. Some people even go to Longview, Texas for good medical services. Even better UT Tyler who could easily expand their services to Jefferson."
- "Need industry and business diversification"
- "It would be nicer to have additional grocery stores. Grocery store would be fine on the outskirts."
- "If we can escalate annexation with Brookshire, they can bring a drug store"

Moving Forward

BUILDING ON ASSETS

1 *Strengthen Jefferson's assets and promote responsible growth that aligns with community character.*

DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

1.1 Update development regulations to reflect the city's development goals, maintain community standards and address community needs.

As Jefferson looks to implement projects, developments, and programs that aim to support and improve the city, identifying land that is most suitable for development or protection is vital for the success of these initiatives. In order to do this, the city must enact and enforce rules and regulations that allow them to maintain and encourage development and growth in a way that aligns with the community's goals.

Action Items:
- Amend the current Zoning Ordinance which would provide land-use controls that regulate the future growth, character, and land-use patterns of Jefferson.
- Create floodplain ordinances and develop floodplain overlay to limit and control types of development in and around the floodplain.
- Review permitting process to make sure it is clear and streamlined.
- Create a packet for codes related to development for existing and new developers to provide clear and accessible information on the code of ordinances and permitting process.
- Create the position of Code Enforcement Officer for enforcement of existing ordinances, ensuring buildings and properties compliant, and imposing penalties for noncompliance.
- Perform regular check-ins with the community to ensure expectations for development patterns are being met.

FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use provides a visual guide to the future development and growth of the city, bringing together elements of the comprehensive plan such as economic development, housing, community facilities, environment, and transportation. Scenario planning was utilized to imagine potential outcomes by taking into account various community priorities. Each scenario emphasized different community investments and embodied a distinct overall ambiance. These scenarios were shared with residents at a public meeting for input and adjusted to create the final future land use map.

The future land use map (Figure 3.10) was developed based on the feedback that was received during the scenario planning public meetings. The future land use map is not a zoning map and doesn't show any zoning district boundaries.

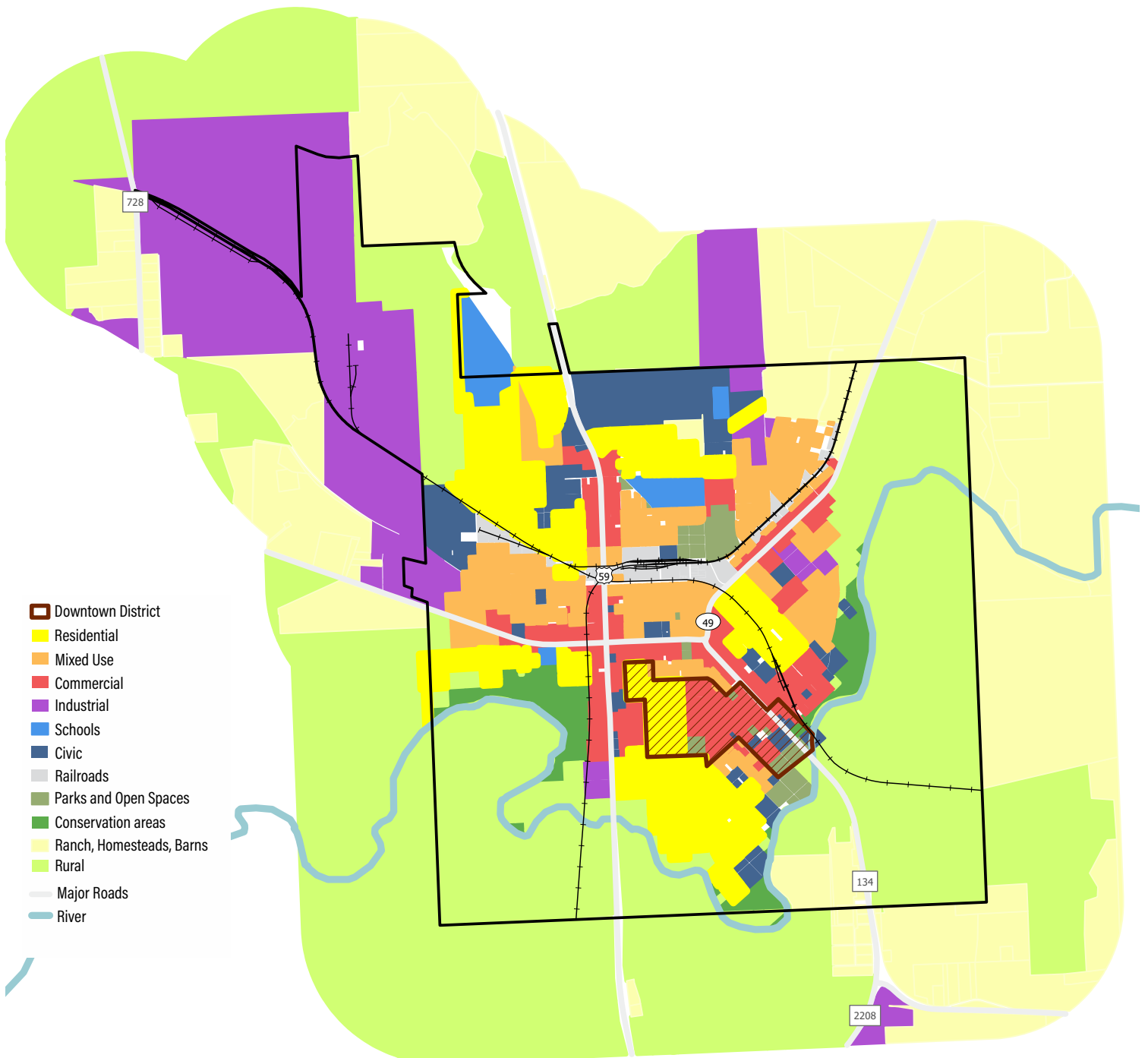A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

Figure 3.10 : Future Land Use Map

Legend:
- Downtown District
- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Schools
- Civic
- Railroads
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Conservation areas
- Ranch, Homesteads, Barns
- Rural
- Major Roads
- River

CATEGORIES

Residential: Residential areas are designated for housing, including single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, and apartments. These areas should provide a mix of housing types to meet diverse needs, maintain neighborhood character, and ensure infrastructure and services support residents effectively.

Mixed Use: Mixed use areas combine residential, commercial, and sometimes light industrial uses within the same development or neighborhood. These areas promote walkability, support local businesses, and create vibrant, dynamic communities with easy access to amenities.

Commercial: Commercial areas are designated for retail stores, offices, restaurants, and other businesses that provide goods and services. These areas should be accessible, offer ample parking, and support the local economy by attracting and retaining businesses.

Industrial: Industrial areas are designated for manufacturing, warehousing, and other industrial activities. Considerations include mitigating environmental impacts, ensuring safety, and providing necessary infrastructure such as transportation and utilities.

Education/Schools: Education areas are designated for institutions such as elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as higher education facilities. These areas should ensure safe and accessible locations, provide space for growth, and integrate well with the community.

Civic: Civic areas are designated for government buildings, community centers, libraries, and other public facilities. These areas should be centrally located for easy access, provide adequate parking, and be designed to foster community engagement.

Parks and Open Spaces: Parks and open spaces are designated for recreational use, including parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and community gardens. These areas should be equitably distributed, well-maintained, and offer amenities.

Conservation Areas/Natural Spaces: Conservation areas are designated for the preservation of natural resources. These areas should protect ecological integrity, restrict development, and provide opportunities for passive recreation and education needs.

Rural: Rural areas are designated for low-density residential and agricultural uses. These areas should maintain rural character, support agricultural activities, and ensure sustainable land use practices. Ranch/Homesteads/Barns: Ranch and homestead areas are designated for traditional agricultural activities, including ranching, farming, and homesteading.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

1.2 Highlight Jefferson's historic and cultural assets to create vibrant spaces that reflect the community's identity.

Jefferson's historic and cultural assets are essential to creating vibrant spaces that reflect the community's unique character. This objective aims to preserve these unique assets to strengthen community pride and maintain a sense of place.

Action Items:
- Establish a historic district in the downtown area to help maintain the sense of place of Jefferson.
- Identify key landmarks and areas in Froggtown, Howell Town, and Sand Town to preserve the historic character of the neighborhoods and to create spaces that bring the community together.
- Create and implement wayfinding and signage on major corridors, creating gateways, and connecting to landmarks throughout Jefferson.
- Identify key areas for public arts, highlighting each neighborhood, historic district, and the gateways.
- Implement adaptive reuse strategies to maintain the community character while renovating and updating historical structures for new purposes.
- *Refer to Chapter 4: Celebration of History and Culture.*

GREEN SPACES AND NATURAL ASSETS

1.3 Cultivate green spaces and promote protection of the natural spaces.

Green spaces provide residents with recreational areas, enhance the beauty of the place, and contribute to a healthier environment by improving air quality and reducing urban heat effects. Protecting natural areas improves stormwater, flooding, and drainage issues. They can also boost property values and attract tourists, contributing to the local economy. Ensuring that parks, conservation areas, and natural habitats are integral to Jefferson's development plans will help support a sustainable, vibrant, and resilient community. Additionally, Jefferson can repurpose vacant and undeveloped lots through active and passive use of the green space to build a healthier, more vibrant community. Specifically, designing pocket parks allows us to use these spaces while creating more recreational and leisure opportunities and amenities. This will involve redeveloping spaces and incorporating small parks and amenities throughout Jefferson to enhance community connectivity and engagement.

Action Items:
- Ensure parks and conservation spaces are part of the zoning ordinances to continue protection.
- Collaborate with land owners to designate specific areas along the bayou for recreational use and natural space protection, utilizing a combination of public and currently private lands
- Identify empty or condemned lots that can be converted into greenspace, prioritizing areas in or near the floodplain
- Identify specific currently utilized or underutilized sites for the creation of pocket parks within the city limits
- Designated green space in neighborhoods to be parkspace for equitable access to park spaces for all neighborhoods.
- Implement an integrated downtown and nature center trail network that connects key landmarks and natural assets with a trail system.
- Identify and activate local civic groups willing and able to participate in stewardship
- *Refer to Chapter 7: Harmony with Nature.*

IDEA - POCKET PARKS

Small parks can enhance the overall green space connectivity, along with minimizing social recreational disparities. Creating pocket parks in Jefferson will provide residents with accessible green spaces for relaxation, exercise, and socializing, which in turn will boost physical and mental well-being while also enhancing the town's aesthetic appeal to visitors and potential residents. Elements that could be established in these pocket parks include benches, lighting , trash cans, lawn games, water features, themes such as magnolia trees or butterfly garden, and interactive music or sculpture features for kids.

Resources and external partners:
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- National Parks Foundation
- Texas Recreation and Parks Society
- Potential grants: TPWD Local Parks Grant; NAR Placemaking Grants.

Where to start?
- Conduct a series of community meetings to understand the specific recreational and leisure needs of residents in different neighborhoods of Jefferson.
- Develop a guideline for selecting suitable locations for pocket parks.
- Engage with local community groups, neighborhood associations, city officials, and others to gather support for the initiative
- Develop a comprehensive design plan for each pocket park that meets the specific needs and preferences of the surrounding community.
- Launch a public awareness campaign to inform residents about the benefits of pocket parks and encourage active participation in the initiative.

Example Concept and site plan for a potential pocket park

2 · Promote housing diversity and expand housing choice.

HOUSING DIVERSITY

2.1 Increase housing options for service workers, families, first-time home-buyers, and persons with various income levels in Jefferson.

The income distribution in Jefferson reflects a mix of economic conditions. Many residents belong to the lower-income bracket or the middle-income group. Given the high percentage of households in Jefferson City within lower to middle-income ranges, a significant portion of the population may find it challenging to afford housing. "Cost-burdened," is defined by The Department of Housing and Urban Development, as spending more than 30% of income on rent/mortgage and utilities. To attract and retain young people and teachers, Jefferson should have a variety of affordable, appealing, and accessible housing for young families, service workers, and educators.

Action Items:
- Create housing design guidelines that enable more varied lot layouts.
- Work with developers and relevant stakeholders to ensure the financial feasibility of design guidelines.
- Offer incentives and breaks for local developers to provide additional affordable units.
- Consider establishing a land acquisition fund for a community land trust.
- Develop a partnership with the lumber industries in Marion County to explore ways to increase high-quality, affordable housing using local materials.
- Make sure the updated zoning code encourages and allows a variety of housing, including modular and cluster home development, duplexes, triplexes, and townhouses.
- Recruit home builders and developers to build in Jefferson.
- Regularly review housing policies and practices to comply with the Fair Housing Act.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to include specific provisions for manufactured home parks.
- Explore a licensing permit system for short-term rentals to balance resident needs with tourism interests.
- *Refer to Chapter 5: Multigenerational Community, Goal 5.2.*

Case Study: Short-term Rental
Balancing resident needs with tourism interests

Jefferson is in a unique position as a smaller to mid-sized municipality that also receives a large amount of tourism. Prioritizing the quality of daily life for permanent residents of the town remains the primary objective, but that can only be achieved by coalescing the benefits that tourism provides to the town. Ensuring that infrastructure improvements extend beyond the downtown core and placing control mechanisms upon vacation rentals will allow city officials to guide the direction of the town as one municipality united.

One of the major economic drivers in Jefferson is its Bed and Breakfast (BnB). Fredericksburg has had major success in its short-term rentals and has been instrumental in reaffirming its reputation as a premier tourist destination. This town, with a population of 10,000 people, has a staggering 1,500 vacation rental options. Fredericksburg's approach to short-term rentals has specific regulations that ensure the integrity of residential areas while maximizing tourism benefits. The city has a dedicated website and clear step-by-step guidelines that help streamline the process for hosts, ensuring compliance with regulations. Additionally, the city's emphasis on maintaining the character of neighborhoods by enforcing restrictions such as minimum stay requirements, occupancy limits, and parking provisions has contributed to a positive experience for both residents and visitors.

Jefferson, TX, could attempt to replicate Fredericksburg's success by implementing similar strategies tailored to its unique characteristics. With the city's focus on historic charm and natural beauty, Jefferson could capitalize on its appeal to tourists seeking a retreat from urban life. By establishing a dedicated website for short-term rentals and providing comprehensive guidance on regulations, Jefferson could simplify the process for their potential hosts. By promoting responsible hosting practices, and regulations and emphasizing the preservation of the town's character, Jefferson can ensure that short-term rentals contribute positively to the community.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

2.2 Promote mixed-use in downtown and other areas to increase housing options.

Mixed use development involves creating areas where residential, commercial, and sometimes light industrial uses coexist in close proximity. This approach allows for a blend of homes, shops, offices, and community spaces within the same neighborhood, fostering a vibrant and walkable environment. For Jefferson, mixed use can mean having apartments above local shops, integrating small cafes and offices within residential areas, and ensuring that essential services are within easy reach. This strategy not only enhances convenience for residents but also supports local businesses and contributes to a lively community atmosphere.

Action Items:
- Create an inventory of buildings in the downtown with potential second-story lofts.
- Consult property owners about issues barring vertical mixed-use conversions.
- Establish a repository of potential partners to help with redevelopment such as local developers, contractors, etc.
- Review the zoning ordinance to allow mixed-use development that combines residential and commercial units (retail stores that can convert to offices or offices that can convert to residential space) and allow small shops in residential neighborhoods.

INFILL HOUSING

2.3 Promote housing through infill opportunities.

Infill development involves utilizing vacant or underutilized parcels of land within existing areas to create new housing, businesses, or community spaces. This approach focuses on filling empty lots, abandoned properties, or areas with dilapidated buildings. By making better use of available space and existing infrastructure, infill development helps revitalize neighborhoods, improve land use efficiency, and strengthen the community.

Action Items:
- Identify lots that are available within the city for infill development.
- Create an ordinance that outlines the system through which the city acquires condemned or dilapidated properties.
- Allocate budget to demolish and clear acquired properties safely.
- Make these properties available to developers willing to create desirable high-quality starter homes or a variety of housing.

POTENTIAL HOUSING OPTIONS

Accessory Dwelling Units - A secondary housing unit on the same lot as a primary residence, serving as guest houses, rental units, or housing for relatives.[1]

Cottage Clusters - Small, single-family homes grouped around a shared open space. Encourages community interaction while maintaining private living spaces.[2]

Mixed-Use -Combine residential units with commercial spaces, such as apartments above retail shops. Promotes walkability and local business support.[3]


Duplexes - Single buildings divided into two or three separate units. Ideal for extended families or rental income opportunities while preserving a residential feel.[4]

Housing Complexes - Multi-family housing developments that offer rental units and can include amenities to enhance the quality of life.[5]

Manufactured Housing -Generally less expensive than traditional homes, making homeownership more accessible and quicker on-site assembly times.[6]
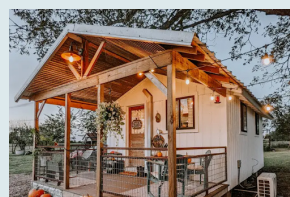
Tiny Homes - Compact, efficiently designed homes, typically under 400 square feet.[7]

3

Create economically thriving commercial areas and continue to support a vibrant downtown.

COMMERCIAL HUBS

3.1 Attract businesses in high-potential areas away from the flood plain.

Community feedback highlights the need for economic development that brings higher-paying jobs and new opportunities. Jefferson can enhance its economic vitality by attracting businesses to high-potential areas outside the floodplain. Prioritizing infrastructure development beyond the downtown core will ensure these areas are equipped to support new businesses.

Action Items:
- Amend zoning ordinances to relocate the current enterprise zone in the floodplain to discourage business development in risk areas.
- Inventory priority areas for development and identify infrastructure needs.
- Create an incentive program (such as providing TIFs and low-interest loans) to encourage the creation of particular types or developments in priority areas.
- Encourage commercial development in areas adjacent to downtown or along major thoroughfares such as US-59 and TX-49 using the amended Zoning Ordinance as the mechanism for growth.
- Delineate industrial park location north of TX-49 to encourage industrial growth.
- Create an inventory of existing industries and properties within the industrial park boundary.
- Advertise the intersection of US-59 and TX-49 and the intersection of Polk St and TX-49 as development-ready to guide interested businesses and developers to these areas of commercial concentration.
- Prioritize infrastructure development in neighborhoods beyond the downtown core. *Refer to Chapter 8: Reliable Infrastructure.*
- Work with Brookshire's and other property owners/businesses in ETJ to establish strong partnerships to bring essential services in a safe and resilient manner. *Refer to Chapter 6: Diverse Economy.*

DOWNTOWN

3.2 Maintain downtown as a hub for tourism and businesses.

Downtown Jefferson serves as the central hub for business, tourism, and social activities. Maintaining and enhancing this area is crucial for its continued success. A lively downtown attracts visitors, supports local businesses, and brings the community together. Jefferson can ensure a thriving, cohesive community by preserving its unique character, fostering collaboration among local business owners, and participating in programs like Texas Main Street.

Action Items:
- Establish a Downtown Jefferson Committee whose focus would identify improvements to reinforce the downtown character, prioritize the list of improvements, and develop a plan for implementation.
- Identify buildings that can be redeveloped for new uses.
- Create funds for businesses to access repairs and remodeling that align with the historic overlay.
- Initiate public meeting campaigns to collaborate with local business owners to identify issues and facilitate growth.
- Become a Texas Main Streets program member through the Texas Historical Commission.

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING:

Jefferson should implement a wayfinding system that seamlessly guides visitors and potential investors from the corridors to the downtown area. Effective branding creates a welcoming environment, attracting visitors and businesses. Clear signage and wayfinding improve navigation, helping residents and visitors easily find key destinations and points of interest. Gateways serve as the entry points, creating the first impression for visitors. Attractive and welcoming gateways set a positive tone and invite exploration. Placing well-designed gateways in strategic locations provides a sense of arrival, signaling visitors have entered a special and significant area.

RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CONNECT WITH :

- Texas Historical Commission
- Trust for Public Land
- Texas Historical Commission - Texas Main Street Program
- Trust for Public Land
- Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office
- National Council for Public-Private Partnerships

PARTNERS TO INCLUDE

- Jefferson Economic Development Corporation (JEDCO)
- Marion County Chamber of Commerce
- Marion County
- Housing Authority of Jefferson
- Jefferson Historical Society and Museum
- Historic Jefferson Foundation
- City Tourism Board
- East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG)
- Jefferson ISD
- Jefferson Christian Academy
- Country Day School
- Happy Hippopotamus Daycare
- Collins Academy
- East Texas Economic Development District
- Texas State Technical College
- Jefferson Historical Society and Museum
- Historic Jefferson Foundation
- Marion County Community Center
- Jefferson Police Department
- Jefferson Volunteer Fire Department
- Marion County Sheriff
- Marion County Emergency Management
- Churches and faith-based organizations
- Community groups
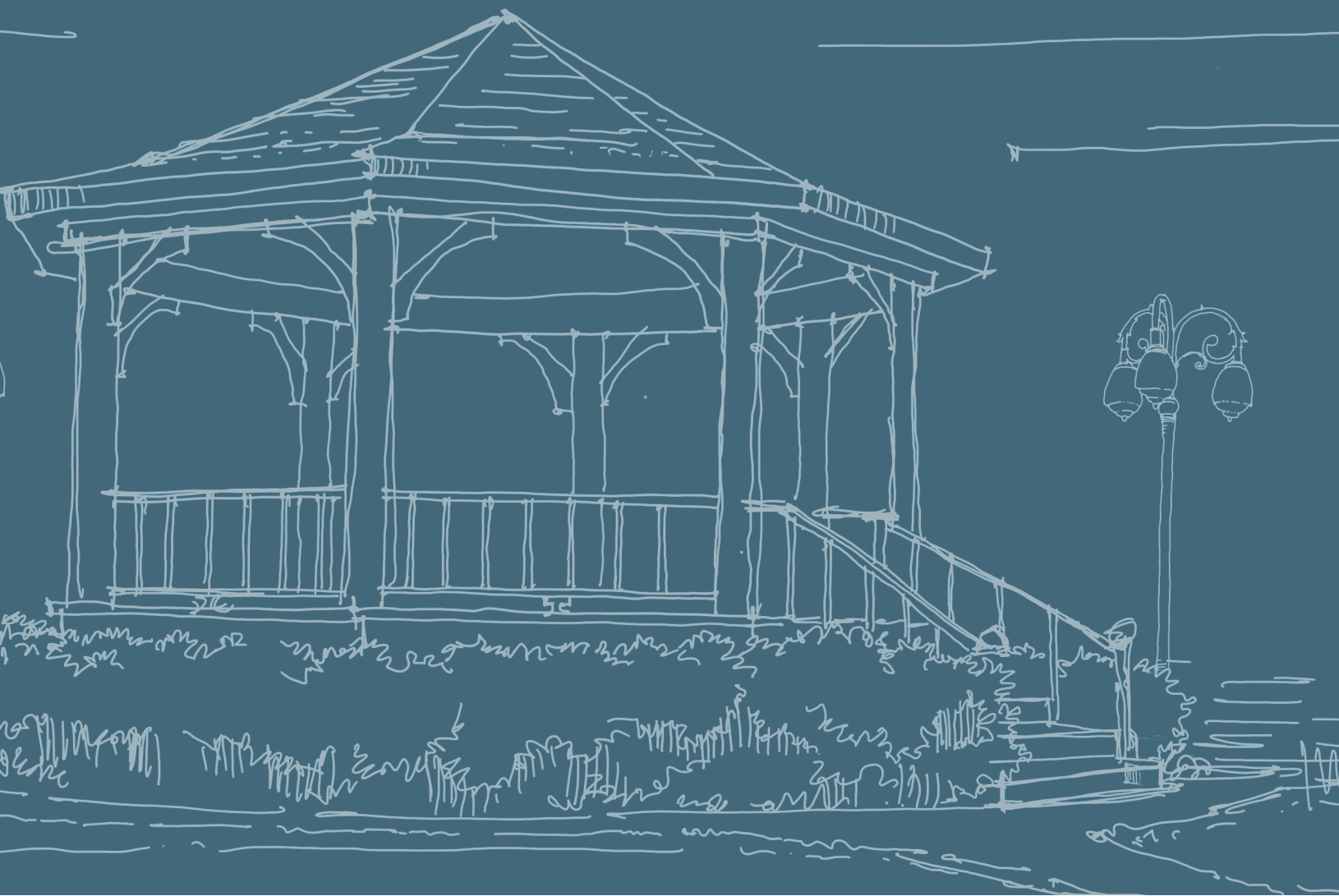- Property owner
- Business owners

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CHAPTER 4
Celebration of Historical and Cultural Heritage

Jefferson is home to many historic landmarks, museums, and attractions, including sites listed on the Texas State Historic Sites and National Register of Historic Places. Community members take immense pride in the city's rich history, architecture, and cultural heritage. They are deeply committed to preserving these historic assets, gathering and sharing important stories in the community, and celebrating the diverse cultures in Jefferson. This chapter outlines the goals to support ongoing preservation efforts and expand on available activities and events for residents and visitors.

Jefferson's History

1836 - Republic of Texas was created.
1835 - Caddo Indians are expelled from the Texas Territories.

1861-1865 - US Civil War
1870 - Jefferson Gas Light Company, chartered.
1873 - Log Raft is removed from the Red River

1910 - Oil is discovered in Marion County
1913 - Stern Memorial Fountain
1930 - Jay Gould Railroad Car

1840 **1860** **1880** **1900** **1930**

1845 - First steamboat arrives
1846 - Jefferson becomes county seat of Cass County
1854 - Excelsior House established
1860 - Jefferson chosen as a County seat in Marion County

1880 - First Federal Courthouse Built
1900 - Jimplecute is founded by Taylor and Taylor
1907 - Jefferson Public Library Built, Carnegie Library

1970 - Listing of 56 structures on the National Register of Historic Places, identified as a historic community.
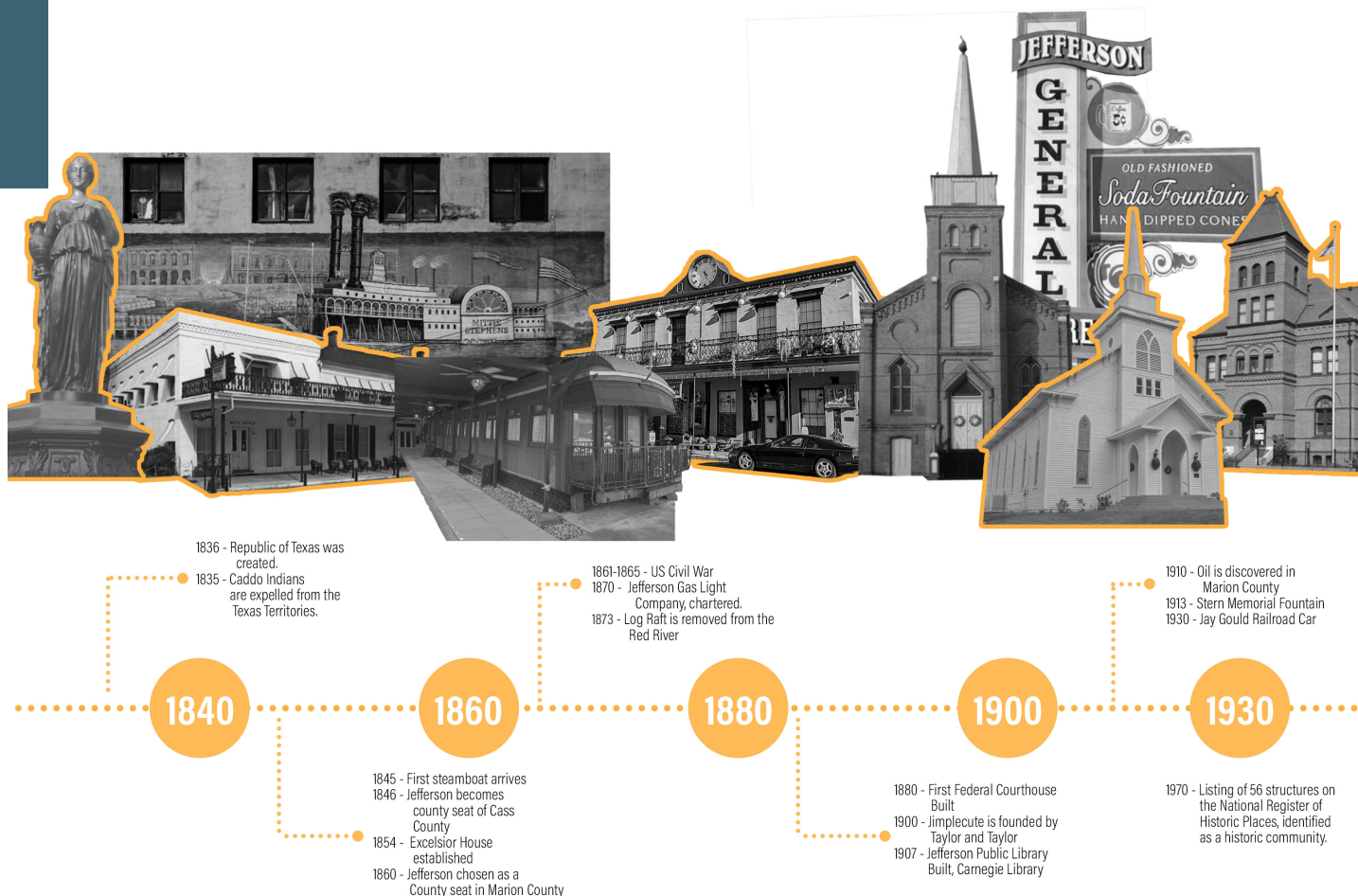
Figure 4.1: City of Jefferson timeline.

EARLY AND HISTORIC NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE REGION

Multiple native groups have lived in the area that is now Marion County. The northern section of the border between present day Texas and Louisiana is the southern tip of the territory that was primarily controlled by the Osage tribe. The Kadohadacho (commonly called Caddo) had been active in the area between the Red River and the Sabine River since approximately 800 A.D., and actively farmed and hunted in the Piney Woods. They moved to the area around what is today called Caddo Lake in the 1780's, after being pushed into the area by the Osage Raids. These groups remained in the area until the new Republic of Texas began to push them out of the region between 1835-1842.

FOUNDATIONS

The City of Jefferson was founded between the 1830s and mid-1840s, first appearing on a map as part of Bowie County in 1844. The city was named after Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, and was founded by Allen Urquhart and Daniel Alley. Urquhart was a surveyor and ferry owner who developed the port and commercial areas of the city. A few years later, Alley developed the residential areas. However, the two oriented their layouts in different directions, contributing to the city's unusual layout. Urquhart oriented the commercial area towards the bayou, whereas Alley aligned streets in his addition with the four cardinal directions, as seen in Figure 4.2. The town grew quickly, with the first post office established in 1846 and the first newspaper founded in 1847. The community was officially incorporated on March 20, 1848, with a population of approximately 1,000 in 1860. In 1860, Jefferson became the seat of the newly formed Marion County, and remains the county seat to this day.

Figure 4.2: Panoramic view of Jefferson, 1874[2]

Economic Prosperity and the Civil War Years

Urquhart had accurately judged the site's potential as an inland port. The Red River Raft, a logjam that raised water levels and allowed boat traffic to travel up into Texas from Louisiana, allowed Jefferson to become the second busiest port in the state, only surpassed by Galveston in terms of tonnage transported. East Texas farms and plantations were able to ship out their products from Jefferson, reaching the Port of New Orleans in 4-5 days, compared to overland. By 1870, the U.S. Census would have the population of Jefferson at 4,190.

As more people moved into Marion County, they brought a significant number of slaves, and before the Civil War, the population was an estimated 51% enslaved. After Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States, Texas voted to secede from the U.S. and Jefferson became actively involved in the Confederate war effort. A meat cannery, and other provision production businesses were established to supply Confederate troops. During the early months of the Civil War, Jefferson served as a key supply port until the Union naval blockade of New Orleans.

RECONSTRUCTION IN JEFFERSON

After the end of the war in 1865, Jefferson and Marion County continued to see economic and population growth. Following the events of Juneteenth, at least 18 freedom colonies of recently liberated African-American settlers were established in the county.[3] Like elsewhere in the South, tensions between White Southerners, previously enslaved African American Freedmen, and White Northerners were high. The infamous Stockade Case exemplifies the complex and often fraught reality of the Reconstruction Era in the United States.

Population Peak

In 1866, a fire destroyed most of the business district in Downtown Jefferson, but the town was able to rebuild quickly due to its prosperity. After the war, trade out of Jefferson more than doubled, with over 75,000 bales of cotton being shipped out annually. In 1867, Jefferson became the first town in Texas to use natural gas for street lights. By 1870, the U.S. Census would have the population of Jefferson at 4,180. By 1872, a supplementary census would set the population at 7,297. However, this level of prosperity ended with the removal of a natural dam in 1873, significantly changing regional waterways and cutting off the Red River boat traffic. Since the rail line that was supposed to pass through Jefferson was never completed, Jefferson was not able to compete in the new rail dominated era of overland shipping. [4]

MODERN ERA

In addition to new challenges in navigating waterways, the Texas and Pacific Railroad routes were built bypassing Jefferson. Originally, the city was supposed to be on a rail line that was in the process of being laid when the outbreak of the Civil War halted its progress. This lack of rail access resulted in an economic downturn after the removal of the logjam, as shipping shifted to Marshall and Longview along the railroad. Jefferson saw some economic growth when oil was discovered in Marion County in the 1930s, but the population has since been in decline.

In the 1970s, 56 structures were listed on the National Register of Historic Places, in response to a renewed interest in local history and preservation.[5] These sites, along with the others that have been designated since, are part of the historical tourism for which Jefferson is now known. Currently, Jefferson boasts historic homes and other attractions downtown and the region contains a number of important African-American historical sites, including churches, cemeteries, and Freedom Colonies, shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Dr. A.J. Woods Building (Source: Keerti Rath)

Historic and Cultural Assets

EXISTING HISTORIC AND CULTURAL ASSETS

Marion County is full of cultural and historical significance to a wide range of groups and organizations that have called the area home. The City of Jefferson has a wide variety of existing recognized places, events, and organizations that preserve, celebrate, and share history in the city and surrounding areas.

Historic Places

The City of Jefferson has 70 sites listed on the Texas State Historic Sites, and 18 National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Many of these are located in the Downtown Historic District, which was designated by the NRHP in 1971 and includes 14 of the historic buildings.[7] The city also has museums that explore a variety of topics, including: Gone With the Wind Museum, Jefferson Historical Museum, Mason-Dixon Line Military Museum, Museum of Measurement & Time to name a few.[8]

Native American Sites

In addition to recognized historic sites on state and national lists, there are areas around Jefferson that are of cultural significance to the modern Native American tribes that have a connection to the land. These areas may not be fully documented, and require special consideration and handling if they are discovered.

- Caddo Lake
- Piney Woods
- Lake O' Pines Mounds (Whelan Site)[9]
- Sha'chahdínnih (Timber Hill) [10]
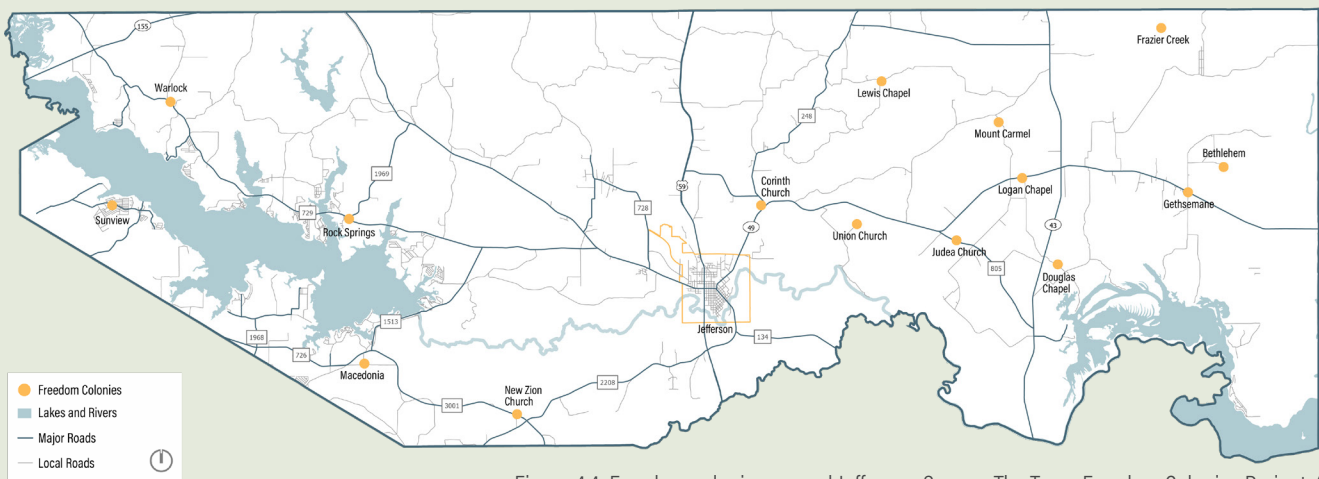
Freedom Colonies in Marion County

Figure 4.4: Freedom colonies around Jefferson. Source: The Texas Freedom Colonies Project. (n.d.)

"Freedom Colonies" is the name given to historically significant settlements made by formerly enslaved people in Texas, where they were able to separate themselves from the prejudices, predatory economic practices, and other barriers that existed for them in general White society. The majority of these settlements were made in East Texas, due to proximity to the major farms and plantations that the formerly enslaved had been living. This land was also otherwise undesirable and cheap due to consistent flooding. These towns provided safety and were generally self-sustaining, requiring little to no outside resources. Over the decades since their establishment, many have been absorbed into other metro areas, gentrified, or otherwise declined due to disenfranchisement. Their location in flood prone areas also makes them susceptible to loss from extreme weather and natural disasters.[6] In Marion County there are 18 known Freedom Colonies.
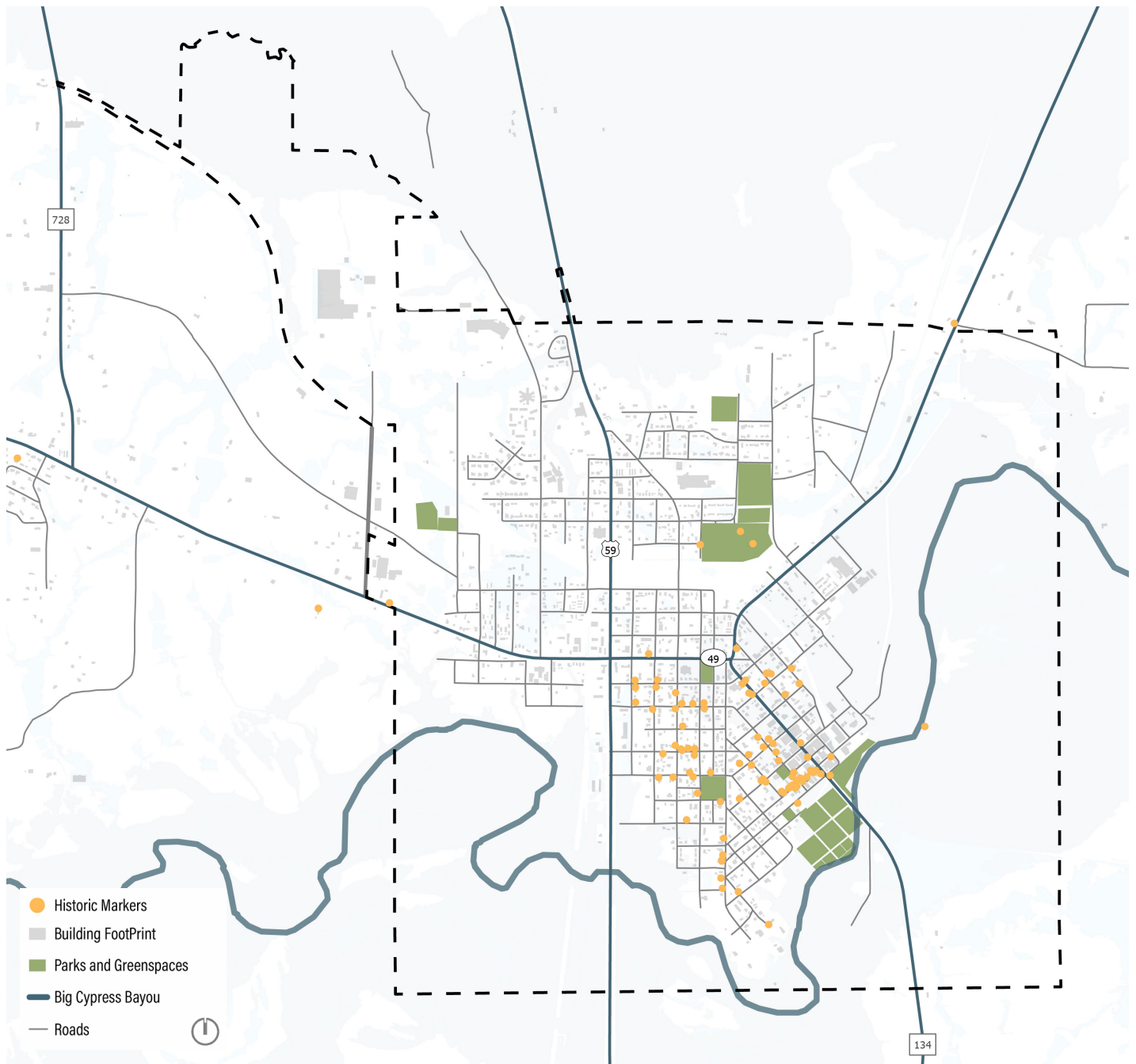
Figure 4.5: Map Showing Historic Landmarks Of Jefferson

Carnegie Library	Statue of Hebe	Jefferson Ordinance Magazine	Jefferson General Store
Jefferson Playhouse	Golden Era Mural	1879 Howe Truss Lighted Bridge	Museum of Measurement and Time
Historic Walking Tour	First United Methodist Church	First Ice Factory in Texas	Jefferson Historical Museum
Mittie Stephens Mural	First Baptist Church	Excelsior House	Historic Jefferson Railway
Port Jefferson History	Jay Gould Railroad Car	The Magnolia House	Cumberland Presbyterian Church
and Nature Center Trails		Oakwood Cemetery	Christ Episcopal Church

Community Events and Programs

Jefferson has a lively calendar of events. Throughout the year, residents and visitors can participate in various festivals celebrating the city's historical legacy that showcase Jefferson's architectural treasures and stories. Events include art exhibitions, music festivals, theatrical performances, house tours, and seasonal celebrations. These events foster a sense of community pride, attract visitors, and stimulate economic growth, further enhancing the city's vitality and reputation as a regional cultural hub.

Partners : Organizations and Groups

Jefferson has a vibrant network of community organizations and groups dedicated to celebrating and preserving the city's rich history and cultural heritage. From historical societies and preservation groups to cultural associations and heritage foundations, these organizations play a pivotal role in fostering a deep appreciation for Jefferson's heritage, ensuring that the community and visitors can continue to embrace and celebrate the city's unique identity.

- Jefferson Historical Society and Museum
- Historic Jefferson Foundation
- City Tourism Board
- Jefferson Playhouse
- Jefferson Opera House Theater Players
- Old Oakwood Cemetery Association
- Jessie Allen Wise Gardening Club
- Historic Tours of Jefferson
- Historic Jefferson Ghost Walk
- Marion County Chamber of Commerce
- Jefferson Economic Development Corporation

Figure 4.7: Residents celebrating Independence Day at the Otstott Park Gazebo.

Figure 4.8: Residents and visitors watching the Mardi Gras parade down Austin Street. Source: The Longview News-Journal (2020).

Figure 4.6: Sign welcoming visitors to Jefferson on the Howe Truss trestle bridge. Source: Courtesy of Eddie Millard

Public Feedback

Jefferson's history is rich and is reflected in the way that people talk about what they want to maintain and encourage Jefferson's future development. Many comments emphasized wanting to maintain this character as part of the city's identity. Residents also recognize the need to share more varied stories from Jefferson's past. There was also interest in encouraging visitors and residents to explore different areas and learn about the histories that they can share.

GATHERING AND PRESERVING HISTORY

While there are efforts to preserve and gather artifacts and information that reflect Jefferson's history, residents want to ensure that these efforts are done with care and support. Establishing historic preservation guidelines that maintain the character of the various neighborhoods in Jefferson as areas change is important to residents.

- "The history of Jefferson, its continued support of Historic Preservation and growth with restrictions"
- "Difficulty imposing historic preservation"
- "The downtown area is particularly beautiful and quaint; the emphasis on preserving historic architecture is a significant asset."

SHARING AND CELEBRATING HISTORY

As Jefferson is known for its history, residents would like to ensure that all types of stories and areas are well represented in the history that is presented to themselves and visitors. Creating inclusive programs and engaging with other areas of the city would help to accomplish this.

- "Beautiful, historic, friendly, opportunities abound"
- "Become more inclusive and celebrate the history in Jefferson. Commit to becoming a real community in the sense of day-to-day city operations."
- "Jefferson could benefit from highlighting and promoting education and understanding of different cultural and ethnic groups."
- "Charming small tourist town with fabulous history. Many communities admire all the activities we hold here."

"*Finally, it is imperative that we protect historic buildings in order to save history for future generations. Learning about the past is always possible through reading, but as those of us who love historic places can attest, there is nothing more valuable than learning through place. Experiencing a space where history happened is crucial for fostering the shared connection that builds a stronger community.*"

-SavingPlaces.org"

N Polk St, Jefferson, TX Image Source: Keerti Rath

Moving Forward

History is not just in the stories that we pass from generation to generation, but also in the built environment and objects that surround us. The soil itself can hold meaning when those peoples and structures are no longer present to tell their stories. Maintaining these pieces of the past can ground us in our identities, and be proof of lived experiences that we no longer encounter in our everyday lives, but still shape the world we see today. Jefferson has already been recognized as a place of historic significance, both at the state and national levels, and has even more that it can offer to not only local residents but to visitors as well. Moving forward, the City of Jefferson seeks to fully embrace our rich history and culture for future success.

GATHERING AND PRESERVING HISTORY

1 — *Preserve and tell the histories of the various groups that have called Jefferson home.*

- Consider applying to the Certified Local Government Program to expand resources available to the community.
- Regularly consult with the public about planned preservation projects to get their feedback and inputs.

STANDARDS AND REGULATION

1.1: Strengthen regulatory measures and processes to safeguard, protect, and maintain Jefferson's historical districts and notable structures.

As a city, Jefferson can create different ordinances and regulations that protect and standardize the historic preservation process. Creating standard procedures for the research, development, and maintenance of these sites will also help to ensure that all applicants have resources available to them if they need them. Mapping district boundaries and ordinances make these historically important sites and neighborhoods clear to developers and residents, as well as ensure a consistency of implementation and design.

Action Items:

- Establish a Historic Review Board to oversee proposed changes and construction in the historic district.
- Adopt a Historic Preservation District Ordinance that protects and preserves the Jefferson Historic District.
- Identify neighborhoods where a preservation overlay zoning district is desirable.
- Create design standards for identified neighborhoods that align with the historic character of Jefferson.
- Plan for the maintenance and care of unique historical assets; such as the Jefferson Railroad Bridge, Jay Gould Railroad Car, and historic cemeteries.

Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Character

Design guidelines are a defined set of elements and structures that create a cohesive character or aesthetic. In urban planning, these can vary in scope and scale based on how much control a city wants to have over the look and feel of an area. These guidelines can cover the design of roads, facades, street signs, acceptable plants, and architectural styles, among many other things. For example, in Hebron, CT they have guidelines that list acceptable architectural styles for houses and what each must include, detail what constitutes "human-scale" design, site plan component requirements, and store sign design parameters among other things in their 101-page document. On the other hand, Lancaster, TX's 16-page design guidelines include overall design goals for the city, and compare desirable and undesirable aesthetics and design schemes with photos. These guidelines can be city-wide or neighborhood specific, and should ultimately serve to create a cohesive community aesthetic.

PRESERVATION AND CARE

1.2: Engage local residents and stakeholders in preservation efforts of properties and historical assets.

One of the biggest resources that a community has in historic preservation is its residents and community members. Often, some individuals would like to be more involved in the process but do not know how to become so or believe that their stories are going to be overlooked. Sharing information and publicizing resources is a helpful way to get more people involved.

Action Items:

- Collaborate with historical societies and property owners to share best preservation practices.
- Create a booklet and online page with resources to connect community members to local, state, and federal historic preservation programs.
- Create a volunteer research group to help with background research and documentation for national and state historic site recognition applications.
- Organize historic preservation workshops that address resources, and how to maintain and rehabilitate historic properties by connecting with organizations like the Texas Historical Commission and the National Alliance of Preservation Commission.
- Provide guidance for federal and state funding requirements necessary to undertake repairs and weatherproofing upgrades to ensure historic properties are safe and protected from natural hazards.
- Provide workshops and training programs for local contractors and craftsmen on best practices for retrofitting and repairing historic buildings.
- Initiate programs where community members can volunteer their time and skills to preservation projects, including hands-on restoration work to research and archival tasks.
- Publicly acknowledge individuals, groups, and businesses that contribute significantly to preservation efforts through an annual award ceremony or featuring in local media.
- Establish an 'Adopt a Monument' program, encouraging local businesses and residents to take an active role in maintaining and preserving historic sites.

UNDERREPRESENTED STORIES

1.3: Fully incorporate the history from underrepresented groups in Jefferson's narrative.

Historically, the types of buildings and sites that would be considered "worthy" of preservation fell under strictly defined architectural styles and construction and neglected to include the vast variety of homes and buildings that have played a part in our national and local histories. As such, only about 8% of the sites listed on the NRHP are associated with minority groups or women's history.[12] The failure of these requirements has been recognized with efforts to rectify disparities. Even so, due to the time and resource intensive process of applying for the NRHP, some groups are still at a disadvantage. Community support that provides resources and facilitates connections to larger state and national programs can provide the network needed for recognition.

Action Items:

- Create a historical subcommittee that focuses on the historical resources from minority communities.
- Recruit members of the target communities to fill the committee.
- Collaborate with the Historic Jefferson Foundation and Jefferson Historical Museum to curate and showcase exhibits that focus on lesser-known historical narratives of Jefferson.
- Collaborate with the Freedom Colonies Program to research the history of African-American settlement in and around Jefferson.
- Work with local historians and the Jefferson Opera House Theater Players to bring lesser-known historical perspectives to life.
- Explore developing an African-American Museum.
- Connect with Preservation Texas to get support for endangered sites. Preservation Texas provides advocacy support, publicity, connections to professional resources, and assistance in fostering and building community partnerships.
- Apply to the National Park Service's Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants program to stabilize and restore African-American historic buildings.

African-American Heritage Preservation

Groups like Preservation Texas provide resources and grants to aid in preserving African-American Heritage.
" A recent National Historic Landmark theme study by the National Park Service identified rural African American churches, schools, and masonic lodge halls as key sites that document efforts by newly emancipated men and women to build institutions to support these new Freedom Colonies. These buildings are important landmarks and are often the only remaining vestiges of these largely vanishing nationally significant communities." [13]

ARCHIVES AND ARTIFACTS

1.4: Maintain a repository for historic documents and artifacts that can be accessed by the public.

Responsible stewardship of historic sites, artifacts, and archives includes careful preservation for future generations to learn from and explore. Prioritizing their care and safety is just as important as documenting the stories we learn from them. Every object and place will have many narratives that it is part of, and making room for those interpretations is key to ensuring the fullest presentation of the past. These things can be accomplished through repositories, museums, and displays, as well as many other methods.

Action Items:

- Identify a site where a repository can be built or an existing building that can be modified to become a repository.
- Create a history committee to investigate, gather, and organize historical information and artifacts, including individuals familiar with historical preservation to lead the project.
- Hire a director and registrar for the repository.
- Collect materials and artifacts with community assistance and under the guidance of the repository director and history committee.
- Contract with a company familiar with archival storage to create or modify selected buildings.
- Reach out to members of the community to request documents, media, and artifacts.
- Develop a digital archiving system for documents and artifacts and digitize existing physical resources.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

1.5: Promote sustainable practices and disaster resiliency for Jefferson's historic properties.

As historic sites age, they become more susceptible to natural disasters and climate-related damage. In some cases because the construction of them did not account for extreme weather, and in some because they were constructed someplace before the floodplain shifted towards them. Planning for and mitigating risk is crucial to rescuing or salvaging these sites after disaster strikes. Educating and providing resources not only to city leadership but also to property owners can help lower the community's risk of losing its historic properties.

Action Items:

- Conduct risk assessments of historic properties to understand their vulnerabilities to natural disasters.
- Develop a disaster preparedness plan, outlining steps to protect historic properties in the event of a disaster.
- Host workshops to educate property owners on disaster preparedness and building resilience.
- Create resources to encourage owners of historic properties to undertake necessary repairs and weatherproofing upgrades.
- Conduct workshops to educate property owners about sustainability and energy efficiency in historic preservation.
- Partner with the Texas Historical Commission to incorporate the use of the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program for owners who are retrofitting and upgrading their historic properties.
- Encourage the use of sustainable and locally-sourced materials for retrofitting and upgrading projects, to further enhance the sustainability of these efforts.
- Foster partnerships with technical schools, and vocational programs in the region to provide training for students in retrofitting and upgrading historic buildings, providing a new generation of skilled workers for these tasks.

SHARING AND CELEBRATING HISTORY

<div style="border: 1px solid;">**2**</div> *Increase historical and local tourism in and around Jefferson*

PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

 2.1: Increase outreach to residents to encourage community involvement in cultural and historic activities.

Jefferson's historic character is something that makes it attractive to visitors, but it is also what connects current residents to previous generations that have called the city home. Keeping residents engaged and excited about the unique history and character of the city can help to build community connections and bring to light new stories to tell.

Action Items:

- Create marketing products and strategies that promote Jefferson's unique historical and cultural attributes and programs to residents.
- Continue to recruit local partners [Jimplecute, social media page, organizations] to promote events and activities.
- Design a user-friendly city app, offering features such as self-guided tours, interactive maps, historical trivia, and event calendars.
- Partner with the Historic Jefferson Foundation, local historians, and artists to develop educational materials and programs about Jefferson's unique history.

Historic Preservation and Sustainability - Loudoun County, VA

Loudon County is located at the northern border of Virginia, and has a population of approximately 420,595 as of the 2020 Census. As part of the original 13 colonies, the county has multiple areas that contain historic structures so the county has designated 6 Historical and Cultural Conservation Districts to manage its historical assets. To help residents understand what is involved in the historic designation and preservation process, the county produced the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines and created additional guidelines for the particular needs of districts that are not universal. These guidelines include not only the processes but also explain the significance of each step and provide external resources for residents to get additional information. It also details how historic structures can be modified to have more energy and resource efficiency without compromising their historic status.[14]

Figure 4.9: The Jeffersonian Institute, E Austin St, Jefferson, TX (Source: Keerti Rath)

County Historic Tour
Abbeville County, South Carolina

The Abbeville County Historical Society In 2021, the Abbeville County Historical Society released a web app for smart phones that guides users through a tour of approximately 60 historic sites in Abbeville County. Each historic site and building is marked with a sign that has the name and number of the site, and also a QR code that can be scanned into the application for more information. In the app, every site has a page with photos and a blurb explaining the significance of the site's history. This style is great for people who stumble on the sign and want to investigate without having the application downloaded on their phones. The app currently has one tour, but this style of app could contain multiple themed tours, or audio tours. [15]

Figure 4.10: Historic Abbeville Walking Tour Signs

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

Objective 2.2: Develop and enhance additional programming and events that showcase Jefferson's history.

Jefferson has many existing organizations and institutions that share its history and culture with residents and visitors. Their capacity to make these stories accessible to a broad audience can be increased with different types of support and partnerships. These partners can be found with the city, and also with local residents and businesses that can provide their unique insights and skills in presenting Jefferson's history.

Action Items:

- Develop and promote guided tours of the historic district, highlighting key architectural, historical, and cultural sites.
- Collaborate with the Jefferson Historical Museum and local art galleries to create rotating exhibits and interactive events that celebrate Jefferson's history and culture.
- Establish strategic partnerships with local businesses and nonprofits to co-host cultural events and programs.
- Collaborate with the Jefferson Historical Museum on public lecture series, workshops, and other events to increase public awareness of Jefferson's past, river port history, and Victorian architecture.
- Develop a series of public art installations in collaboration with local artists and JISD students.
- Launch a local scavenger hunt program for showcase Jefferson's art and murals.
- Use vacant spaces in downtown and other neighborhoods as pop-up activation and programming showcasing Jefferson's history and culture.
- Collaborate with the Jefferson Opera House Theater Players Jefferson Playhouse, and other local organizations to develop additional plays that tell stories from Jefferson's past.
- Invest in Community Center to accommodate local performing arts.

RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CONNECT WITH :

- National Parks Service Museum Handbooks and Conserve-O-Grams
- American Alliance of Museums
- National Parks Service Park Ethnography Program
- Texas Freedom Colonies Oral History Resources
- Preserve Texas, Non-Profit
- The Campaign of Historic Trades
- Texas Historical Commission
- Trust for Public Land https://www.tpl.org/
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM)
- Texas Emergency Extension Service (TEE)

PARTNERS TO INCLUDE

- Jefferson Historical Society and Museum
- Historic Jefferson Foundation
- City Tourism Board
- Jefferson ISD
- Jefferson Playhouse
- Jefferson Opera House Theater Players
- Old Oakwood Cemetery Association
- Jessie Allen Wise Gardening Club
- Historic Tours of Jefferson
- Historic Jefferson Ghost Walk
- Jefferson Economic Development Corporation
- Marion County Chamber of Commerce
- City Museum Archives
- Churches and faith based organizations
- Jefferson Carnegie Library

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CHAPTER 5
Multigenerational Community

As Jefferson celebrates and shares its past, it is important to ensure that the residents today are also being celebrated and supported for generations to come. Accomplishing this can come in many forms through the policies and programs that the government and citizens can enact and embrace every day. Ensuring that residents of all ages and abilities are supported as they determine where they want to be in the future will help to build and maintain a healthy and vibrant community. This chapter covers the policies and programs that can be used to ensure access to healthcare, education, workforce development, and a safe home that can further build on the sense of community that is already present in Jefferson.

HEALTHY BODIES AND MINDS

Currently, there are limited healthcare providers within Jefferson and Marion County. Attracting and connecting residents to medical services will help create the foundation for a healthier community. This also includes ensuring that all residents have access to healthy foods and recreational activities to support healthy minds and bodies.

Community

Family

Friendship
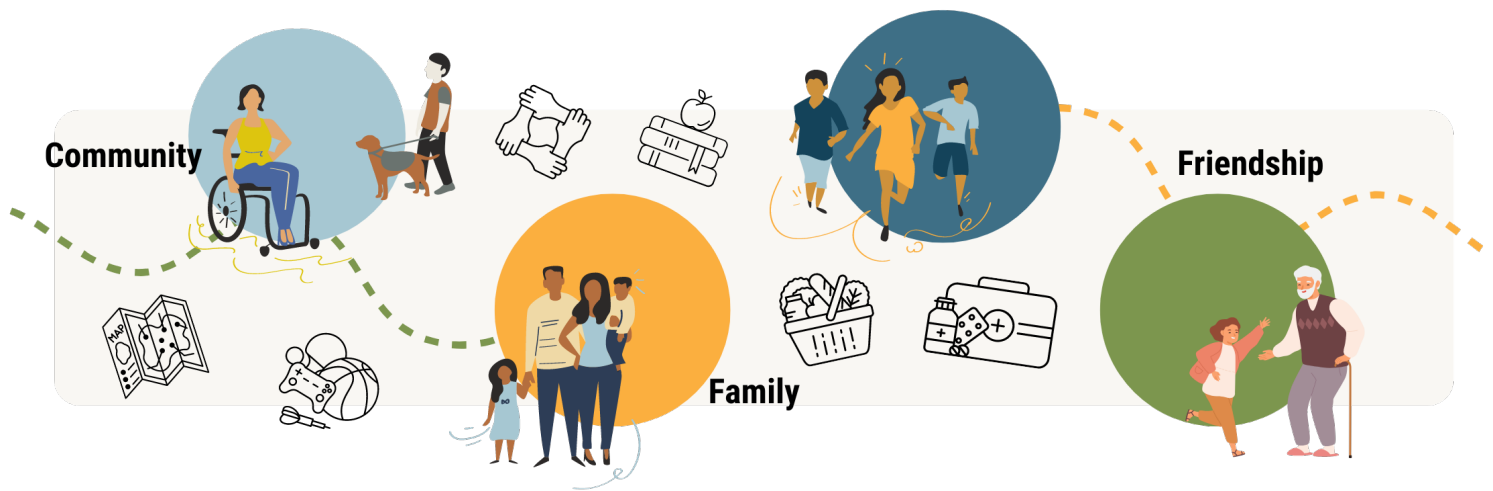
Healthcare Access

Rural health services in the United States are generally limited, due to the lower population density and wide coverage areas that providers need to be able to serve. In this trend, the available healthcare services within Jefferson and Marion County are extremely limited. In 2021, the American Community Survey estimated that the population of Marion County was 9,748.[1] That year, per 10,000 in the population there was an estimated one doctor in the county with an MD, 6.25 nurse practitioners, one dentist, and no primary care physicians.[2] This lack of nearby services means that residents of Jefferson and the county must travel significantly further for care and appointments. This can lead to increased complications for injuries or illnesses that require quick action for the best outcome.

Access to Groceries

Presently, there are three grocery providers in Jefferson, the Brookshires on Broadway, the DG Market, and the Family Dollar on Walcott. These are primarily located in the northern part of Jefferson, leaving the southern portion of the city with less immediate access to grocery options. Due to Jefferson's small footprint, these are relatively easy to travel to by car, but for residents who do not have access to personal transportation, these may still be out of reach. There are portions of the city where a store is over half a mile away, which is difficult to navigate for individuals with limited mobility.
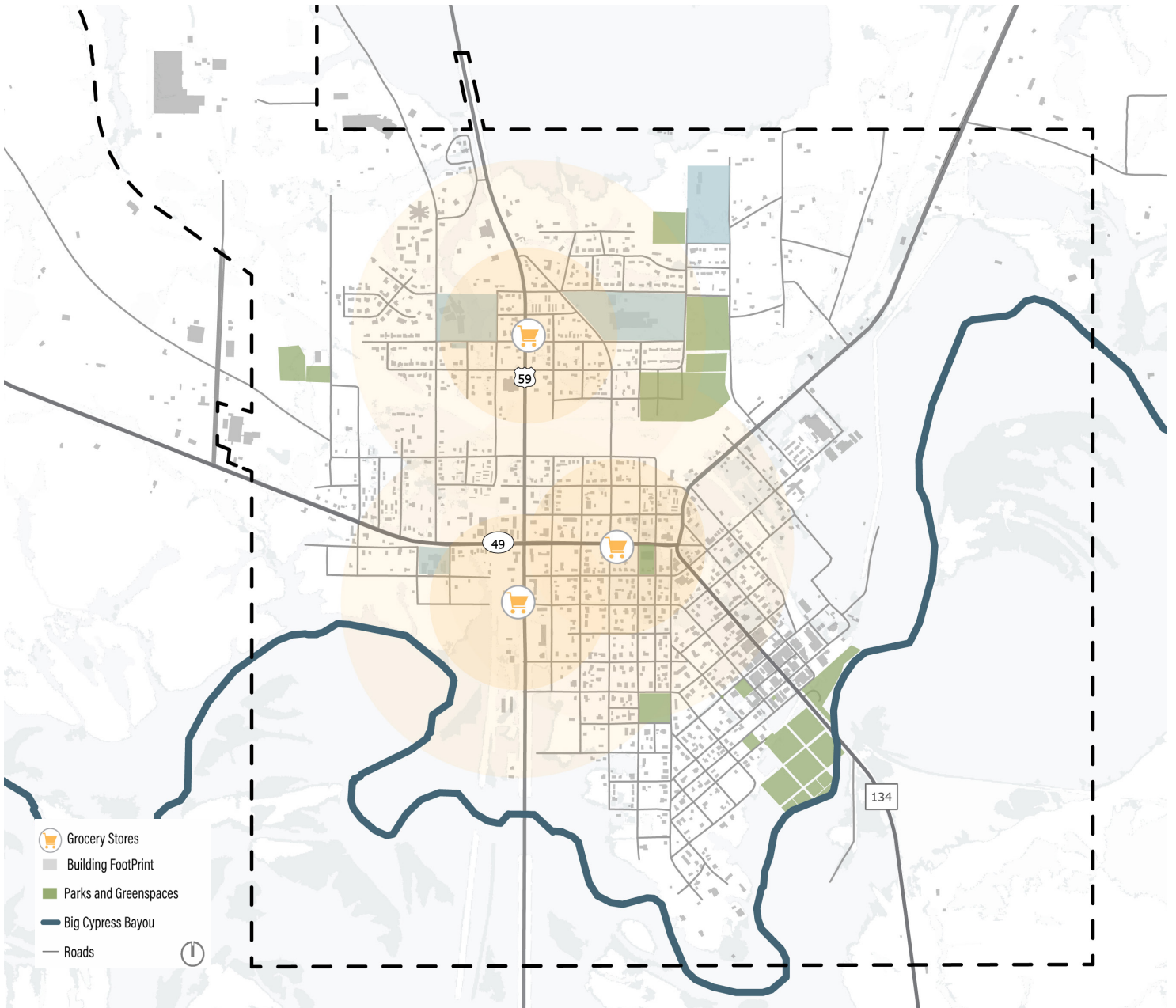
Figure 5.1: Map showing health care and grocery store facilities with 0.25 and 0.5 buffers.

Youth Food Access

In 2021, Marion County had 29.5% of children experiencing food insecurity.[3] One strategy to mitigate this in Jefferson has been through school meals. Jefferson Independent School District (ISD) provides free breakfast and lunch to all students through the National School Lunch Program and National School Breakfast Program and provides supper meals to the elementary and junior high school. They also provide meals during the summer for any students under 18 years of age or younger. This helps students perform better in school by mitigating distraction from hunger and supports healthy food access for kids.

TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY

Marion County is served by the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG) GoBus service, which serves fourteen counties in East Texas. The service available in Marion County is on-demand, where riders schedule trips at least 24 hours in advance. These services are intended to take riders to appointments and necessary services in more urbanized areas in the ETCOG region though they will take riders to any location within the region. Trips into Tyler and Longview are only available two times a week. Regular riders can buy a reloadable pass to ease the process of onboarding.[4]

In October 2023, GoBus reported that out of the 9,903 passengers they had that month, only 88 came from Marion County.[5] This could stem from a variety of factors, such as unfamiliarity with how the current system operates or the inability to schedule trips online or over the phone. Ensuring that residents are familiar with and able to use the system will help to connect them with more transportation options, and also to help identify how the system needs to adjust or be bolstered to meet the needs of all residents.

Reliable transportation is one of the most important ways to maintain independence and connect with community members and resources. For members of the community who are unable to drive personal vehicles, the availability of transit options will determine how much they must rely on others to get around, and also how easily they can reach the destinations they need to participate in the community.

COMING TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY

Remaining physically active is only one aspect of a healthy lifestyle. Connecting with neighbors and friends is the foundation of community, and these types of relationships are key to having a supportive and healthy mental and emotional state. Currently, Jefferson supports this by providing locations and organizations that bring residents together to learn, play, and support each other to foster and maintain these relationships.

Community Centers

Public community centers are great places to come together and do activities with family, friends, and neighbors. They not only provide a location for events but also a common ground to come together and learn and grow. Within Jefferson, two common locations are used this way: The Marion County Community Center and the Jefferson Convention and Visitor Center.

The Marion County Community Center is a privately operated facility located in Froggtown on the west side of Jefferson. It has served as a location for events and recreational activities in the community and is considered vital to maintaining connections in Froggtown and the surrounding area. Presently, the center has indoor event space, kitchen facilities, an indoor basketball court, and an outdoor playground.

Figure 5.2: Marion County Community Center. (Source: Natalie Franz)

Located downtown, the Jefferson Convention and Visitor Center is operated by the City of Jefferson Convention and Visitors Bureau. In addition to being the visitor center for tourists to learn more about Jefferson's offerings, it serves as an activity center for residents near downtown and the eastern side of Jefferson. Its proximity to the shopping and hotels also makes it an attractive place to hold events. The center has multiple meeting spaces and can accommodate groups of up to 350.

Additionally, rental spaces in Jefferson Carnegie Library and the Jeffersonian Institute are also available for community events and private celebrations.

SUPPORTING FUTURE GENERATIONS

As Jefferson looks forward to the next era of its existence, it is important to build and develop the next generation of creative and dynamic leaders that can create Jefferson's future. By providing quality education both for youth and new young professionals and connecting them to the resources, Jefferson can help them to succeed wherever they go, and however they stay in the community.

Education

Jefferson residents highly value the future of their children, and ensuring that they are receiving a quality education is at the forefront of their concerns. Jefferson ISD boasts a high graduation rate, with 98.8% of students receiving a high school diploma in 2021, compared to the state average of 90%.[6] There are opportunities for improvement with student reading and math scores, which are lower than the state average, but with the recent introduction of the Texas ACE Program, elementary and junior high students have increased access to resources to help with homework and keep on track with learning objectives.

Schools in Jefferson	Grades Served	Student Population (2021-2022)
Jefferson Primary School	Pre-K and Kindergarten	130
Jefferson Elementary School	1st - 4th Grade	303
Jefferson Junior School	5th - 8th Grade	354
Jefferson High School	9th - 12th Grade	373
	Total	1160

Table 5.1: List of Jefferson schools[7]

Youth Recreation Opportunities

Within Jefferson, there are varied programs that children and youth can participate in for organized and guided activities. These activities not only facilitate healthy and well-rounded development, they also provide skill development opportunities to explore interests and passions. The programs currently provided include organized sports, fine arts, and afterschool programs, listed below.

- Marion County Youth Football (MCYF)
- Bulldog (Youth) Basketball
- Jefferson Dixie Youth Baseball & Softball Association
- Jefferson ISD Athletics - Football, Basketball, Baseball, XC, Track & Field, Powerlifting, Golf, Volleyball
- Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) Program
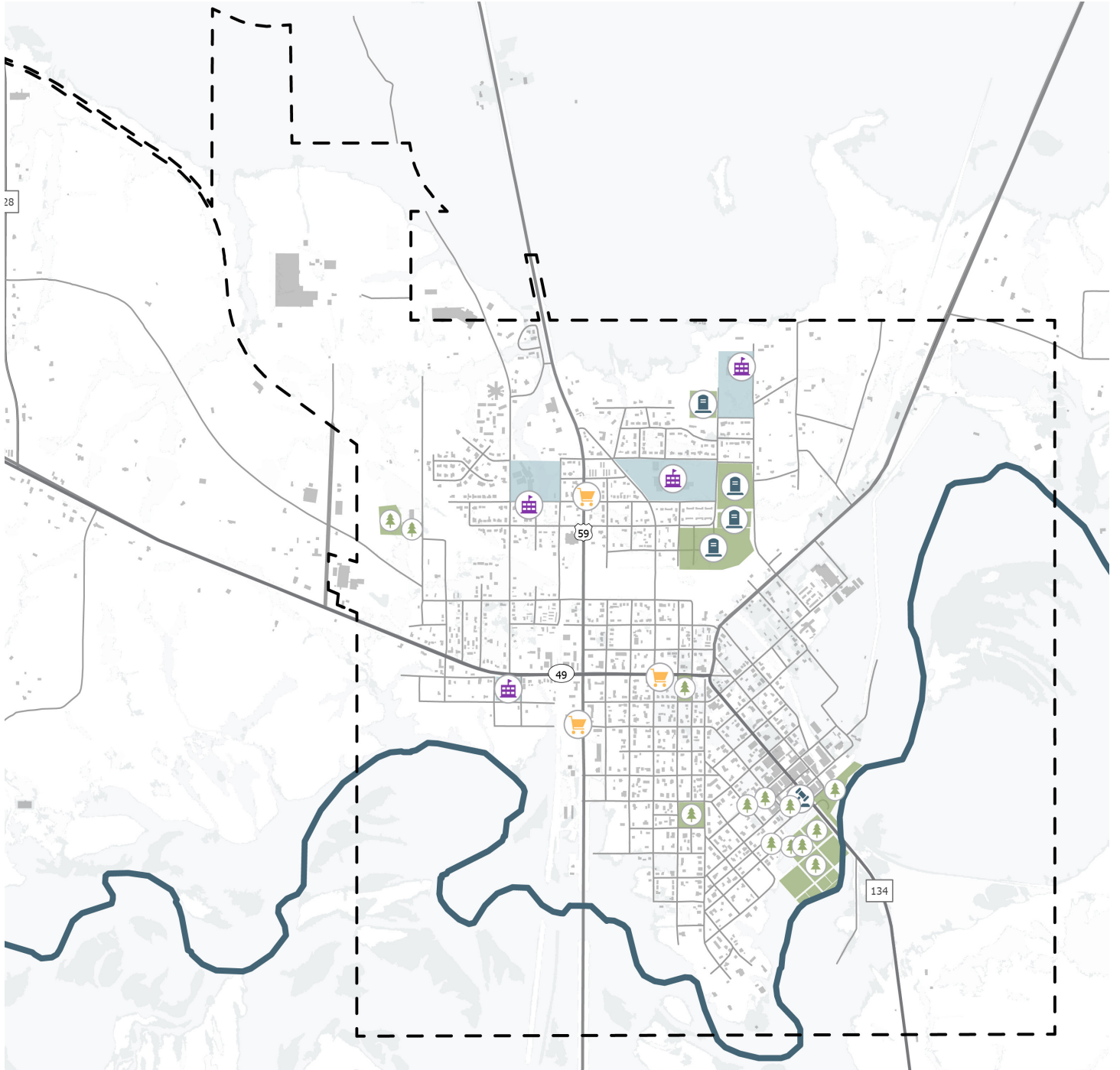- East Texas Performing Arts
- The Collins Academy

Figure 5.3: Map showing amentities in Jefferson, Texas

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Jefferson faces housing affordability challenges. Homeowners in Jefferson are more likely to be cost-burdened than their counterparts in the county and state. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development considers cost burden to be housing costs over 30% of a household's income. In 2021, 30.1% of rental households in Jefferson were cost-burdened. 59.4% of households were on the threshold of being cost-burdened, paying 20-29% of their income on rent.[8]

The Housing Authority of Jefferson is a public housing agency based in Jefferson and serves Marion County. The authority operates a Section 8 housing voucher program and public housing units. There are two other apartment complexes in Jefferson that offer affordable apartments. Both are supported by the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. In addition to the credit, one of them has a Project-Based Section 8 contract and receives funding through Section 515 Rural Rental Housing.

An increase in home value may burden more owners due to an accompanying rise in property taxes. While a higher home value increases wealth for existing owners, it makes it more difficult for renters to become first-time homebuyers. Public housing and assistance have been successful in addressing rental affordability. Unfortunately, the private market has not been able to supply the demand for middle-class households, particularly renters. Thus, the ability for residents to improve their standard of living while remaining in Jefferson is constrained.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police
In 2022, The City of Jefferson had six full-time officers, and three reserve officers associated with the department. Four of the full-time staff were hired in 2022. They were able to offer a variety of services in addition to normal peace-keeping duties, including vacation watch, East Texas Baptist University-Criminal Justice Internship, EMS training, and participation in Project Life-Saver to assist in locating Alzheimer's patients if they wander away from where they should be. As outlined in their 2022 End of Year Report, the department is focusing on officer training and becoming recognized by the Texas Police Chief Association for enacting all 166 best practices that are dictated by the association to promote public safety.[9]

Fire
The City of Jefferson is served by a volunteer fire department, with 24 volunteer firefighters as of 2023. They serve the city and the surrounding area of Marion County. The Public Protection Classification (PPC) score not only indicates the level of fire risk that a community faces, based on what types of fire department resources are available and how far homes are from water sources, but the score also affects insurance rates for property owners. It is on a scale of 1-10, 1 being the best and 10 indicating no nearby fire service in the area. Jefferson's current PPC score is 5/5X, which means that there are areas to improve, such as proximity to water sources and response times.

Figure 5.4: Jefferson Volunteer Fire Station (Source: Elizabeth Dupont)

Public Feedback

Creating a community-oriented network of services and programs begins with understanding what the community needs and wants. Jefferson residents clearly understand where their community needs more attention, with a focus on attaining more medical and housing options. Additionally, there were many comments that highlighted things that would bring the community together and provide a sense of security, with new activities and programs being requested.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

While there is a high number of assisted-living facilities in Jefferson, the city would benefit from an urgent care system. There is an opportunity to establish more health facilities like a city hospital with ambulance services and improve the local pharmacy.

- Need for additional health facilities
- Lack of mental facilities
- Better non-car transportation-walking
- More variety of grocery stores

HOUSING

There is a wide disparity between wealthy and low-income housing options with no middle-income housing options. Repairs and renovations are needed on many homes. Froggtown suffers from aging infrastructure and faces flooding, limited affordable options, and poor-quality housing.

- Knowing how to access help from public housing and other assistance
- No good housing for medium-income people
- More discussion on different types of housing
- Renovations and repairs are needed on many homes

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Most students and residents believe Jefferson does not have enough facilities for youth entertainment and recreation. The city would benefit from a recreation department with dedicated staff. The Marion County Community Center is an asset that needs greater maintenance attention.

- Need more activities for children to do
- Need community closet type for low-cost or free needed items (eg. car seat)
- Senior citizen programs
- Marion County Community Center Board - Community gardens near the building, redo the 3 baseball fields, pond, emergency designation rights back, walking trails, educational programs, grants.

CIVIC AND SAFETY FACILITIES

The city should transition from a volunteer fire department to a professional, full-time fire service Community members also expressed desire for more police presence in schools, and improved surveillance around school zones other comments included:

- Lack of animal services
- No tornado shelter
- Opportunity for Emergency Services
- Need a new location and volunteers for the fire station
- Opportunity to move the Fire Station from the City Hall to an open lot near Brookshire Brothers.
- City Hall - Prime real estate that could be sold. There is a clean lot right across.
- The tourism center doesn't pay for itself, so it should be filled with administrative positions for city hall.
- Infrastructure for water and sewer is really needed.

"*Every village cannot have all these improvements at once, but each can over-come self satisfaction and can plan specifically for the betterment of conditions. The sooner these changes are planned the more easily they will be realized, year by year, even though only one improvement can be made at a time. .If the plan is flexible and the goal is always kept in view, the village may easily direct its growth and development, thus avoiding the necessity of making itself over later under great difficulties and at great expense.*"
    - Rural Planning: The Village, USDA Farmers' Bulletin No. 1441 (rev. 1935)

Moving Forward

The topics addressed in this chapter are complex and multifaceted, but addressing the areas that the community has identified as gaps in support will serve to create a healthier, and more connected community. By supporting and serving the health and safety of residents, Jefferson can work towards building a city in which future generations will live and thrive.

PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLNESS

1 *Promote community health and wellness by providing services to meet the needs of our community's aging population and encourage young families in the region.*

SERVICE AND CAPACITY

1.1: Expand the capacity of healthcare services and facilities in Jefferson.

Jefferson and Marion County currently lack nearby medical resources and services that can be readily accessed. Increasing the number of services in the county and the number of medical professionals that can provide them will increase positive health outcomes and reduce risks associated with untreated or under-treated ailments.

Action Items:

- Establish telemedicine and online health education services through USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants and FCC's Rural Health Care Program.
- Advocate for the establishment of a county hospital and emergency care center with ambulance services.
- Incentivize the establishment of additional pharmacies in the community.
- Reach out to Community Health Core to establish a primary care clinic in Jefferson to address mental health needs.
- Establish a Community Paramedicine Program that allows EMS clinicians such as emergency medical technicians and paramedics to provide primary health care and preventive services.
- Consider creating a medical district and create tax incentive program to support new private medical facilities within the medical district.
- Attract health professionals to Jefferson through recruitment to increase the availability of services.

Community Paramedicine Programs

"Community paramedicine is an emerging field in health care where EMS providers, including emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and paramedics, operate in expanded roles to increase access to primary care and facilitate appropriate use of emergency care resources. Community paramedicine has its origins in providing services to people with multiple chronic conditions who face several challenging social determinants of health such as living in rural areas or having trouble getting to a provider's office. These services are designed to fill gaps in primary care delivery, including post-hospital discharge; provide non-urgent home visits to assist patients with chronic disease management; and conduct general risk assessment. To maximize these services, community paramedicine programs are, ideally, integrated within the healthcare system and collaborate with organizations or practitioners who facilitate community–clinical linkages, and who have a shared commitment to enhance access to healthcare, reduce health disparities, improve health outcomes and reduce health care costs. Examples include EMS agencies, health care systems, payers, CHWs, social workers, and advocates for people who are medically underserved (e.g., rural dwellers, elderly adults, people who are homebound)"

From the CDC's Best Practices for Heart Disease and Stroke: A Guide to Effective Approaches and Strategies (2022) [10]

PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLNESS

1.2: Support public health awareness to encourage positive health behaviors.

Personal health can be a complex thing to manage, but providing and creating resources to help residents make good choices for their physical and mental well-being can help to mitigate the factors that increase a person's likelihood of needing medical intervention. Resources that promote healthy lifestyles are valuable for helping to maintain a strong community that cares for all of its residents during any stage of life.

Action Items:

- Create a working group of local community organizations, social service providers, and health care providers in the area to assess community health needs.
- Create wellness outreach programs that provide education about preventive healthcare, nutrition, and chronic disease management.
- Look into the Community Health Worker and Health Support Worker Training Program to train and employ community health workers who understand the health needs of the community.
- Create an aging-in-place resource hub for residents and caretakers to learn more about aging-in-place and the resources and services available to do it safely.
- Partner with an existing university health system to develop services.

IDEA: RURAL MEDICAL DISTRICT

An idea to bring more services is to develop a medical district to serve as a centralized area that could include a hospital, a hub for rotating mobile health clinics, a pharmacy, and other specialized medical services. The medical district is meant to be like an office park where it is easily navigable and accessible to all citizens and is intended to have low-rise buildings. This is deliberate in conforming to the character of Jefferson and the community surrounding it. A suitable location for this could be on the north side adjacent to Highway 59.

Mental Health and Telemedicine in Rural Areas

Americans all over the U.S. experience mental illness and periods of difficulty that are best addressed with the help of a mental health professional. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health estimated that approximately 23% of the non-metropolitan adult population reported dealing with mental health issues in 2022. In rural areas, mental health services can be difficult to access due to the lack of service providers outside of urban metro areas. This can mean long commutes to appointments, or services being provided outside of insurance coverage. In addition to trying to attract services into rural communities, or within closer proximity to them, connecting residents with telemedical resources and service providers can help to mitigate the lack of care in the immediate area. Telemedicine is any medical service provided over the phone or the Internet by a provider. These services can be subsidized through programs like the FCC Rural Health Care Program (Telecommunications Program). It subsidizes the difference between urban and rural rates for telecommunications services. Under the Telecommunications Program, eligible rural health care providers can obtain rates on telecommunications services in rural areas that are reasonably comparable to rates charged for similar services in corresponding urban areas.[11]

NUTRITION AND FOOD ACCESS

1.3: Promote accessibility and consumption of healthy foods by fostering a locally-sourced food economy.

Eating well is just as much a matter of access as it is of personal choice. Being able to reliably acquire healthy food options is key to ensuring that all residents are able to make the choices that are right for them and their families. Locally sourced food is also a great way to foster connections between growers and farmers and the communities they provide for, increasing the local food market and access to fresh seasonal produce.

Action Items:

- Establish a local grocery co-op to set up locations in underserved areas of Jefferson.
- Support the farmer's market to sell excess produce to help pay for expenses.
- Develop community gardens and food forests at key points like schools, parks, open lots, and other suitable locations to grow food for consumption.
- Create a regular gardener resource event to help connect new gardeners with resources.
- Collaborate with Brookshires to improve access to healthy food in the community.

IDEA: FOOD ACCESS

Potential strategies to increase food access in Jefferson include community gardens, food pantries, and cooperative grocery stores. They can be integrated into existing community facilities or unused central space.

Potential Locations

Food Access Case Study: Farm to Family Cooperative

Like many rural areas around the country, the town of Hay Springs, Nebraska did not have a grocery store. Instead, residents needed to drive 15 miles to reach one, posing a significant barrier to food access. In June 2021, residents opened the Farm to Family Cooperative, a member-owned grocery store that aims to "strengthen the local community by providing access to affordable, healthy fruits, vegetables, and meat that are locally and regionally produced." Supported by donations and investors from the community, the Farm to Family Cooperative can keep prices competitive with larger stores. Building off of success in Hay Springs, neighboring towns of Lynch and Bayard have each opened their grocery cooperatives, expanding food access for rural Nebraskans throughout the regiontions.[12]

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

1.4: Increase transportation options to improve access to nutritious food and health services.

Having access to amenities is not only dependent on their existence in a community but also on the ability of residents to get to them. For some members of the community, that can be difficult if they are unable to drive personal vehicles or move freely on their own. Individuals who become unable to drive may also become isolated from services that they need to reach. Accessibility can be improved by increasing access to public transportation and other services.

Action Items:

- Work with ETCOG to increase the availability of GoBus within and around Jefferson.
- Improve communication and outreach to human service agencies and residents on available services, such as paratransit service
- Connect community partners with ETCOG to provide donations and partnerships that could increase service capacity in Jefferson.
- Amend the ordinance to allow ride-share services to operate in Jefferson

EXPANDING HOUSING CHOICE

2 *Enhance the supply of affordable housing and the quality of neighborhoods to effectively meet the housing needs of the community.*

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND REHABILITATION

2.1: Support affordable housing development and rehabilitation.

As Jefferson works to increase amenities and services in the community, it is important to also ensure that all residents can live safely and comfortably in housing that they can afford to either buy or rent. This also allows residents to establish roots and take ownership of their neighborhoods for future generations to enjoy and thrive in.

Action Items:

- Establish a Housing Board/Department to oversee all housing issues in Jefferson.
- Delegate a staff person to oversee the Housing Program.
- Conduct a housing assessment to identify weaknesses in the local housing market, informing future strategies and interventions.
- Apply for the Texas HOME Investment Program to support a variety of activities including Homebuyer Assistance with New Construction and Single-Family Development.
- Promote and work with developers/builders/contractors for new construction, or renovation projects using HOME funding.
- Connect property owners and developers to ETxADRC's Housing Navigator program to bring additional housing stock into the area.

Affordable Housing Case Study: Essex, CT

Essex is a town of 6,733 as of the 2020 Census located in south central Connecticut. Noticing that many residents were struggling to find affordable housing opportunities, the town's leaders collaborated with their regional council of governments, the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments, to develop an affordable housing plan for the city. The Council of Governments worked with two consultants on the plan, which consisted of an extensive community engagement process, a housing needs assessment, and a set of strategies and action items for increasing affordable housing opportunities in Essex. The plan that the town adopted includes strategies such as making affordable housing information readily available on the town website, adjusting zoning regulations and policies to allow for more types of housing to be built such as ADUs, and changing their land use policies to identify areas around transportation corridors to incentivize for developers. Additionally, the town identified and partnered with local organizations and the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments to implement broader policies and outreach with the community and developers moving forward.[13]

Using Cooperative Code Enforcement to Build Better Neighborhoods

Also known as facilitative enforcement, cooperative enforcement of code involves the city code enforcement officer working with property owners to mitigate problems and meet the code. This can include education programs, connecting homeowners to resources to help pay for repairs, or identifying low-cost services that can perform repairs or maintenance. This model of enforcement is intended to help property owners address problems early, and with potential additional funds, more effectively. By working together to fix issues the city benefits from not only a safer environment but also more equitable neighborhoods.

HOUSING STANDARDS AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY

2.2: Improve housing standards to foster quality neighborhoods.

As neighborhoods work to grow and improve, Jefferson can incorporate housing policies and programs that both support and encourage smart and inclusive property improvements that make both the individual home and the community as a whole a safer and more comfortable place to live.

Action Items:

- Adopt a Cooperative Code Enforcement system that works with homeowners to get them up to code.
- Coordinate city and county services that can work on relevant code-related tasks for faster response time.
- Create a program for residents to request proactive assistance with at-risk property
- Develop a volunteer program to assist with low-cost maintenance and preventative upkeep of low-income housing.
- Provide information to residents on the USDA Rural Development's Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants Program.

RESOURCES AND EDUCATION

2.3: Educate and connect residents with housing resources.

Every home should provide safety and comfort to the people inhabiting it. Jefferson can help to ensure that all residents have access to the resources and services they need to make their homes and neighborhoods safe and inclusive for all families and all levels of need.

Action Items:

- Collaborate with nonprofits and government agencies to gain insights on available resources and support in promotion and outreach.
- Hold Fair Housing Open House meetings that inform the community on available affordable housing resources
- Create an education campaign that connects residents with rent and mortgage payment assistance.
- Create an education campaign to connect residents with resources to assist in purchasing their first home.
- Connect residents and developers to the ETxADRC Housing Navigator Programs to provide information on available affordable housing in the region.

Figure 5.5: The Jeffersonian Historic Farmer's Market, N Polk St
(Source: Keerti Rath)

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

3 *Develop and promote a range of community facilities, support services, and age-appropriate activities for all residents*

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

3.1: Expand youth and children opportunities to promote social skills, relationship building, learning, and preparation for productive lives.

Providing young people with opportunities to interact and participate in activities with their peers is important for the development of social skills and a sense of belonging. Creating a variety of options for them to choose from allows them to develop and discover more about themselves and the world around them.

Action Items:

- Convene a Youth Development Working Group, made up of organizations that pledge to support youth development.
- Recruit a program coordinator to organize daily activities and recruitment efforts
- Develop youth recreation and educational programs, including recreation, instruction, life skills, etc through the Marion County Community Center.
- Increase additional programming in the Summer and Winter to encourage youth activity in town
- Work with community groups to establish local clubs like Boys and Girls Club and sports leagues to keep youth engaged.
- Create an event center for youth activities and programming.

FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

3.2: Maintain and enhance current community facilities and spaces where residents gather.

Jefferson has many locations that are important to the history and local culture of the town. Maintaining and updating them will help them remain touchstones for future generations to gather and connect with the previous ones as they continue traditions and make new ones.

Action Items:

- Create a parks and recreation department to oversee and maintain green spaces and community facilities.
- Improve the facilities and operations of the Marion County Community Center.
- Assess the use of the Tourism Center and explore ways to expand the programming for community use.
- Explore developing the Jefferson Primary School facility for community use, catering to both children and adults.
- Collaborate with the school district to provide sports fields and facilities for community sports leagues to serve the whole community.
- Ensure that all community facilities are ADA-compliant and accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Park Enhancement Case Study: Nolanville, TX

The town of Nolanville, TX is a small town located near Killeen and Harker Heights in central Texas. For several years, the city owned a park that was really more like a patch of grass at the end of a street. After years of disinvestment, the park became known as a haven for crime in an otherwise safe community. After applying for and winning multiple grant awards, the city improved the park with several amenities. Monarch Park was upgraded with a butterfly garden, a new walking path, a splash pad, a basketball court, a soccer field, and a multi-use building. The park's renovation also gave birth to the town's first recreational sports league and child care through the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. In addition to reviving the park as a safe, active, and welcoming community space, Monarch Park has earned the city multiple awards, including a Gold Star recognition from Keep Texas Beautiful.

IDEA: MARION COUNTY COMMUNITY CENTER REVITALIZATION

The Marion County Community Center, located on Haywood Street, has been a cornerstone of the Jefferson community since its construction in the late 1960s. Focusing on education and community service activities, this center serves as both an emergency services location for Marion County and a hub for various community events. This facility has the capability to accommodate 200-250 overnight guests and includes 12 showers, a dining room, and a kitchen. Additionally, this center has a spacious basketball court that doubles as a venue for community activities and meetings. The property is also adjacent to a 2-acre city park, complete with play equipment, outdoor basketball courts, and a pavilion. This center is currently undergoing revitalization, including the restoration of baseball/softball fields, the development of walking trails, a kitchen remodel, and the creation of a community garden. Plans are also underway to introduce arts programs for both adults and children, as well as regular exercise and baking programs.

Strategies
- Offer the community a "third space" to facilitate social interaction and encourage recreation and relaxation.
- Enhance opportunities for community organizations to gather and host meetings or educational sessions.
- Upgrade recreation spaces in the community to the center.
- Develop a community garden space; refresh the baseball field; basketball court resurface; add four square or tetherball courts; add murals; remove unnecessary fencing; add lighting; add trash cans; add water fountains.
- Improve trail network loop, the revitalization of the baseball diamond, and the creation of community garden space behind the community center building.
- Improve in phases according to desire and funding.

Idea Exploration: Conceptual site plan for improvements at MCCC

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

3.3: Expand recreation spaces that provide opportunities for residents to relax, play, and enjoy.

Having a variety of activities for all interests and abilities gives all residents the opportunity to get out and enjoy themselves on their own or with their friends and neighbors. Filling existing gaps in recreational facilities will expand options and provide opportunities to expand and develop new interests and relationships.

Action Items:

- Identify and convert land within neighborhoods into park spaces with playgrounds and splash pads.
- Build an indoor recreation center for activities in underserved areas of Jefferson.
- Collaborate with the school district to provide sports fields and facilities for community sports.
- Invest in public facilities such as a swimming pool, dog park, theater/auditorium space, information center for local residents, and more public restrooms.
- Work with JEDCO and the county in jointly recruiting private recreation development, such as a bowling alley, skating rink, or miniature golf course, in or near Jefferson.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

3.4: Strengthen community resources and social services.

Making sure that all residents feel supported and connected is important not only for the individuals and families in need but also for the community as a whole. Knowing that there are resources available when you are in need helps to move through and get to a more secure future.

Action Items:

- Develop a program to match volunteers with community needs, fostering a culture of community service.
- Create a central hub where residents can access various services, including counseling, legal aid, and financial advice.
- Implement services tailored to seniors, such as health screenings, social activities, and transportation assistance.
- Establish a community donation resource center to assist members of the community with accessing items, such as a "community closet"

Aging in Place

The concept of "aging in place" is not new. The desire to stay in your home and within the community that you are part of and care about as you get older is common and can lead to a higher quality of life and longevity. There are many things that need to be accounted for to ensure that this is done safely for the individual, and also for the community that supports them.

Services that provide at-home assistance with chores and medical care and access to activities and spaces outside the home are vital to creating an inclusive community that attends to its residents at all ages. It is also important to provide resources for caretakers and families that will be supporting their older relatives to ensure that they are able to provide safe and reliable care when needed.

Figure 5.7: The Marion County Community Center Field

PUBLIC SAFETY AND RESILIENCE

<div style="border:1px solid;">4</div>

Promote community safety and security through enhanced services and facilities.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS

4.1: Ensure a prepared police force to promote public safety.

Addressing the public's concerns and interests in public safety is important for maintaining a sense of security for residents. Making sure that the police department is properly prepared to react to the variety of situations that may arise will help to ensure that responses are prompt and achieve public safety.

Action Items:

- Create a schedule for training to meet state and federal requirements
- Determine what equipment is missing from the current inventory that is appropriate for policing a town of 2,000
- Prioritize equipment for purchase to ensure minimum needs are met first
- Create collaboration with law enforcement and health service providers to strengthen mental health crisis response

Case Study: Bellevue, Nebraska

Bellevue is a town of around 50,000 people located outside of Omaha, Nebraska. Before 2010, Bellevue had the largest all-volunteer fire department in the country, staffed by over 150 individuals who donated their time on a part-time basis. Over time, a decline in volunteer hours and an increase in calls made it clear that a change was needed. In 2010, Bellevue transitioned from a fully volunteer-staffed fire department to a paid department. After hiring the department's first fire chief, a 25-year veteran of the Omaha Fire Department, the department began slowly and incrementally implementing changes to upgrade its service. The chief emphasized the need to include volunteers in the transition process, and all volunteers were eventually upgraded to part-time paid positions. After hiring additional full-time staff for EMS response and outfitting the stations for 24-hour shifts, the Bellevue Fire Department witnessed an improvement in staffing, training, and organization. Looking toward the future, the department is now considering moving to a full-time model in an effort to reduce employee turnover in other departments. [14]

FIRE SAFETY AND PROTECTION

4.2: Establish a professional fire department to serve Jefferson and the surrounding area.

Creating a professional fire service will be able to provide a more timely response to incidents and fire emergencies, not only within the Jefferson ETJ but also in the surrounding area of Marion County.

Action Items:

- Hire a full-time staff for the Fire Department
- Expand on the existing fire stations resources and the create a new fire station
- Establish appropriate annual or regular training for firefighters

EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND FACILITIES

4.3: Create facilities and programming to be fully prepared for emergency response.

When there are emergencies, knowing where to go and what to do can save time and resources for individuals and families, and help to get more people to safety. Having distributed and readily accessible facilities not only helps residents in times of crisis but also helps first responders and aid workers know where to send supplies and equipment.

Action Items:

- Invest in a county tornado shelter and identify an existing community center that could serve as this and that meets multiple community goals.
- Expand emergency capacity at the Marion County Community Center and other community facilities.
- Look into establishing an an Emergency Operation Center (EOC).
- Create programming for schools and community centers to inform the population of disaster plans .
- Identify high-risk households that may need additional assistance during disasters.
- Publish and distribute a map of disaster centers, evacuation routes, and high-priority buildings in Jefferson.
- Ensure schools feel safe for students and parents by auditing the current safety protocols for the different campuses and identifying any safety gaps.
- Identify locations that are vulnerable to heat and establish areas for a cooling center.

Storm Shelter: West Plains, Missouri

The town of West Plains, Missouri is part of a region that has experienced several tornado outbreaks in the past. With the help of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the town constructed a storm shelter that serves multiple functions in the community. Currently serving as the gymnasium for the local middle school, the shelter was built to FEMA-specific safe room standards. The agency covered 75% of the costs of construction or about $2 million out of the $2.8 million required. Capable of holding over 3,000 people, the shelter is an example of a multifunctional community storm shelter. [15]

ANIMAL CONTROL AND SAFETY

4.4: Create and operate animal control services in Jefferson.

In order to maintain safe streets and control the spread of animal diseases, it is important to have animal control services that are able to respond to strays and animal incidents. It is also important to have resources and protocols for strays and animal adoption to ensure that the system is able to handle the animal population in and around Jefferson.

Action Items:

- Establish an animal control office in Jefferson.
- Create and enforce stray animal ordinances.
- Provide support to the current volunteer community that cares for and rehomes animals with no permanent caretakers

Case Study : City of Luling, Texas

The City of Luling has a population of about 5,500. Their Animal Control Department expenses for the 2021 fiscal year were $187,702.54. The shelter has two animal control officers and a shelter manager. The City of Luling Animal Control works together with the Luling Animal Welfare Society (LAWS), a non-profit corporation for the benefit of the animals within the city's limits. LAWS raised funding in order to build the Animal Shelter and continue to host events for the shelter's operating budget. This includes the annual Thumpin 5K & 1 miles Fun Walk. LAWS were also the beneficiary of the Luling Ladies Luncheon which raised almost $8,000 which will be used for projects at the shelter. LAWS operates on donations and volunteers. They do not have paid employees and all of their funds go toward the veterinary needs of dogs and cats.

IDEA: MUNICIPAL SERVICES DISTRICT

The creation of a designated municipal service district is one suggested approach for improving municipal services along E Broadway Street, Alley Street, E Elizabeth Street, and N Main Street. This area could include critical amenities such as a new city hall and a fire station, which would be strategically located to maximize accessibility and coverage across the region. The location is along a major road guarantees that emergency vehicles have easy access, allowing for faster response times in the event of a fire or other emergency. The proposed location has significant advantages since it centralizes critical municipal services in this region, including administrative duties and fire services. It improves ease and accessibility for citizens, companies, and municipal employees by simplifying administrative procedures and increasing service delivery efficiency. The planned placement of the new facilities offers greater coverage across the city than earlier locations.
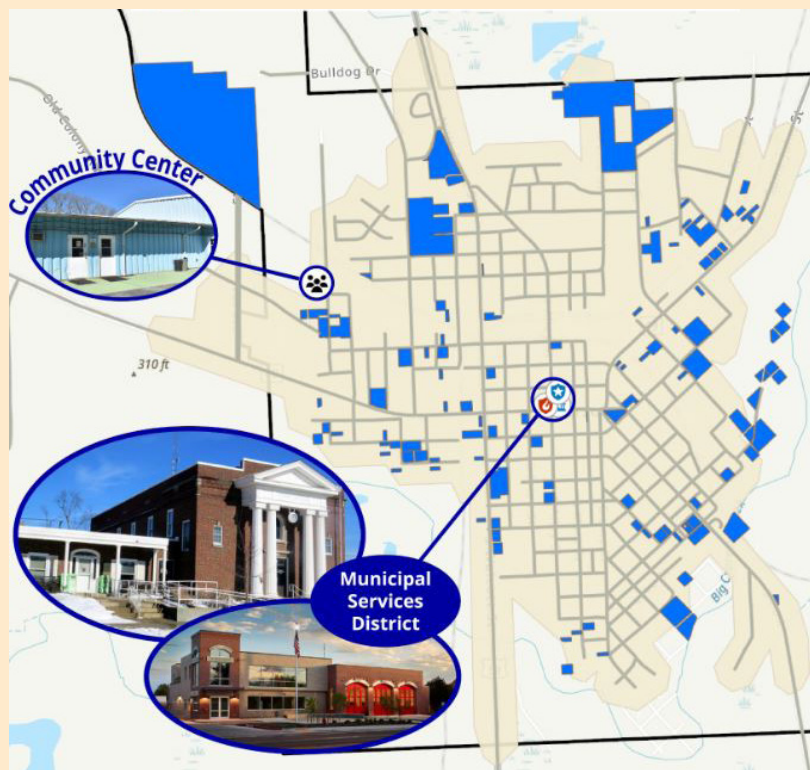
Idea Exploration: Municipal Service District Concept

RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CONNECT WITH :

- Texas Health and Human Services (THHS)
- UT Health Science Center at Tyler
- Texas A&M Rural Health Program
- Episcopal Health Foundation
- CHRISTUS Good Shepherd Wound Care Center - Marshall
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
- East Texas Baptist University
- Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM)
- Texas Emergency Extension Service (TEEx)
- Texas Police Chief Association
- State Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Association
- Texas A&M Forest Service
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fort Worth Regional Office
- United States Department of Agriculture

PARTNERS TO INCLUDE

- Marion County Hospital District
- East Texas Aging & Disability Resource Center (ETxADRC)
- Area Agency on Aging of East Texas
- East Texas Center for Independent Living (ETCIL)
- East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG)
- Regional East Texas Food Bank
- Local Health Service Providers
- Grocery Stores - Brookshires, DG Market, and the Dollar Tree
- Jefferson ISD
- Jefferson Christian Academy
- Country Day School
- Happy Hippopotamus Daycare
- Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) Program
- East Texas Performing Arts

- Jefferson Carnegie Library
- Collins Academy
- Marion County Community Center
- Jeffersonian Institute
- Jefferson Economic Development Corporation (JEDCO)
- Marion County Chamber of Commerce
- Housing Authority of Jefferson
- East Texas Aging & Disability Resource Center (ETxADRC)
- Jefferson Police Department
- Jefferson Volunteer Fire Department
- Marion County Sheriff
- Marion County Emergency Management
- Churches and faith-based organizations
- Jessie Allen Wise Gardening Club
- American Legion Post 304
- Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts
- Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club
- Krewe of Hebe
- Revitalize Froggtown
- F.R.E.S.H.
- Marion County Diversified Civic and Social Concerns Organization
- Lions Club
- Masonic Lodge
- Rotary Club of Jefferson
- St Vincent de Paul Food Pantry
- Dream Center Food Pantry
- Blessings of Grace Food Pantry
- Shepherd's Pasture Retreat Center
- Churches and faith based organizations

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CHAPTER 6
Diverse Economy

Jefferson's history is tied to its role in the regional economy. Over time, with the introduction of rail lines, the destruction of the log raft that made the Red River rise to the banks of downtown, and the modern preference for highway freight, Jefferson has had to adapt to a changing economic landscape. Today, Jefferson is able to use its unique history and beautiful location to inspire those interested in Texas culture and nature to visit and spend time in the city. It also can leverage its abundant local forests to create lumber and wood products. These are valuable industries and can provide a strong base from which to grow. In this chapter, Jefferson explores the need to diversify and strengthen other sectors of the local economy, bolster the local workforce, and broaden economic opportunities to improve residents' access to jobs and services.
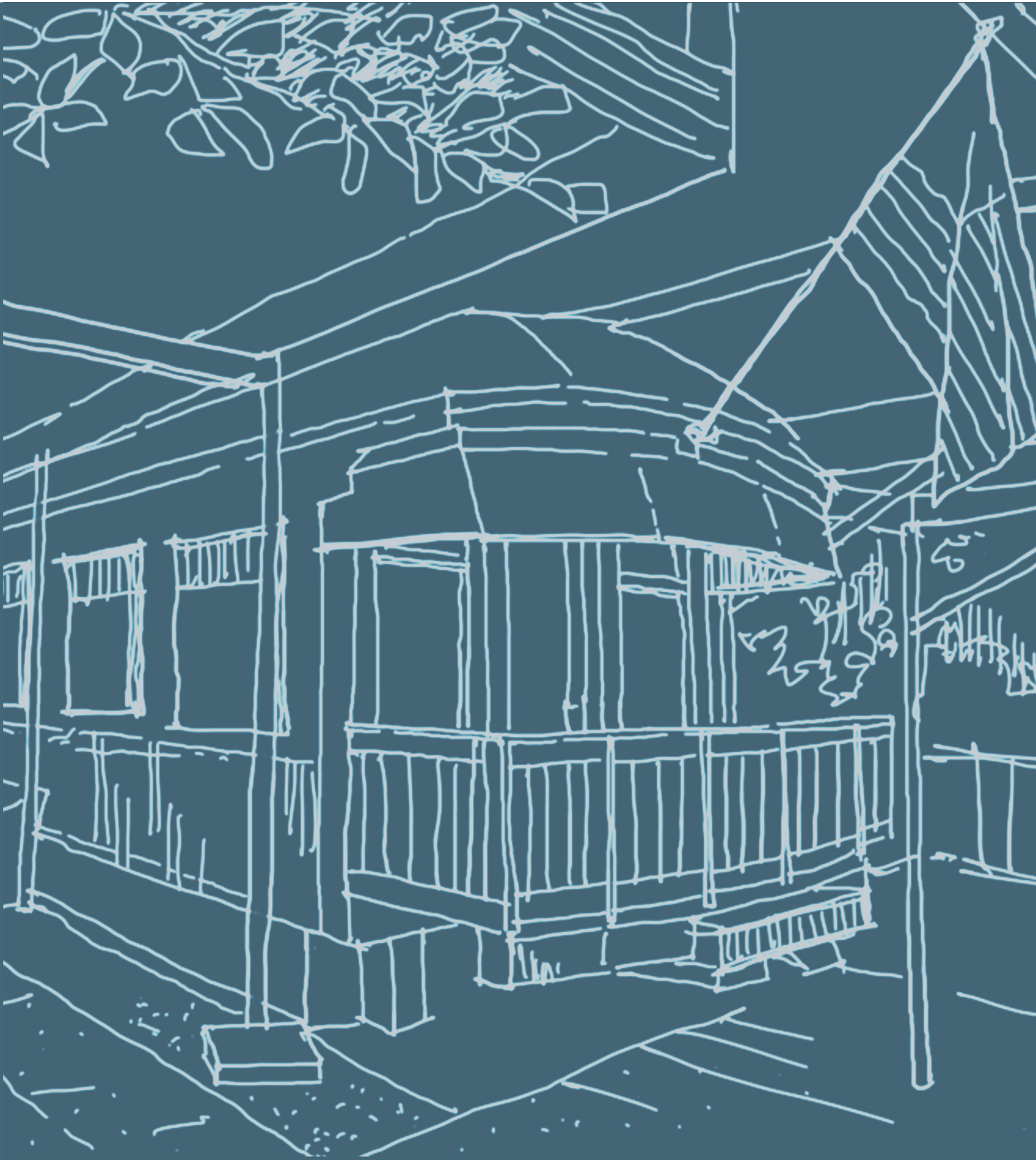
Current Conditions

Located on Big Cypress Bayou, Jefferson found early prosperity as the preferred port for North Texas agriculture, trading cotton, corn, and livestock along the bayou to Louisiana. Today the main economic drivers are tourism, lumber and lumber processing, and food processing.

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR FORCE

Income and Employment

The median family income is $47,524, about $500 less than the rest of Marion County and $25,000 lower than the Texas median. Jefferson's 2022 unemployment rate of 10.8% was similar to Marion County's 10.7% and significantly greater than the statewide rate of 5.2%. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has likely impacted these figures, more recent information is not available.

An Older Workforce

There are an estimated 1,705 Jefferson residents over the age of 16, of which 984 participate in the workforce. About 25.4% of Jefferson's employed residents live and work in the city. Jefferson's employed workforce is predominately middle-aged, as nearly half of that population is between the ages of 35 and 54 years old. Overall, the majority of the workforce are over age 35. Figure 6.1. represents the Labor Force Participation Rate of the Census-designated age ranges.

By comparison, Marion County had a distribution of 42.8% male and 57.2% female, and Texas had a distribution of 53.5% male and 46.5% female.

Racial Distribution

The racial distribution for workers in Jefferson in 2021 according to Census was as follows:

- White alone: 1,181 workers, 69.0% of the worker population
- African American alone: 493 workers, 28.8% of the worker population
- Asian alone: 14 workers, 0.8% of the worker population
- American Indian or Alaska Native alone: 8 workers, 0.5% of the population
- Two or More Race Groups: 16 workers, 0.9% of the worker population

Additionally, 109 workers (6.4%) identified as Hispanic or Latino. Proportionally, the racial distribution of Jefferson's workforce is similar to the racial distribution of the whole residential population. However, African American participation in the workforce is lower than would be expected given population share, although it appears to be somewhat higher among Jefferson residents working outside the city.

Figure 6.1: Labor force participation rate.
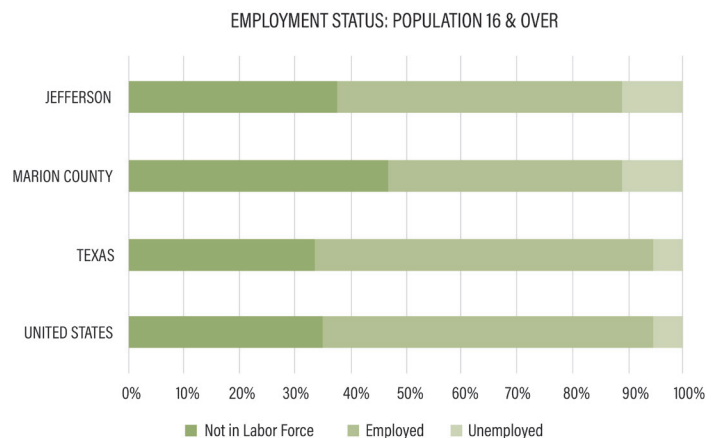
Figure 6.2: Employment status for population 16 years old and over.

ECONOMIC SPECIALIZATION

There were an estimated 1,712 jobs in Jefferson in 2021, accounting for Jefferson residents working in the city and workers living outside the city and commuting to work in Jefferson. Based on this measurement, the top industry sectors in Jefferson were:

- Health Care and Social Assistance*: 477 (27.9% of all jobs)
- Educational Services: 370 (21.6% of all jobs)
- Manufacturing: 252 (14.7% of all jobs)
- Accommodation and Food Services: 215 (12.6% of all jobs)
- Retail Trade: 143 (8.4% of all jobs)

*The NAICS for Health Care and Social Assistance includes nurses, doctors, physicians, dentists, nursing homes and assisted living, home care, childcare facilities, and mental health facilities, among others.

Industry Specialization By Employment Share

Based on the 2022 Census Estimates, the top industries in Jefferson in terms of resident employment are:
- Retail trade: 162
- Educational services: 118
- Social assistance and health care: 112
- Accommodation and food services: 106
- Manufacturing: 78

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is a tool used by the Federal government to identify and classify businesses and industries in the U.S. for business and economic analysis purposes. There are 20 base categories and hundreds of subcategories that a business can be classified as. For example, a company that manufactures mahogany veneer would be classified as 321211 Hardwood Veneer and Plywood Manufacturing. Generally, when these numbers are reported, they are reported at the base category level, in this case, Manufacturing (3), or at the first sub-sector level. For our example, that would include any Wood Product Manufacturing (321) like lumber, flooring, and doors, and manufactured housing construction. This means that the exact count per subcategory may not be seen without deeper analysis, and may not reflect the true variation or specialization of your particular area.

Figure 6.3. Union Baptist Church in Jefferson. (Source: Keerti Rath)

ECONOMIC GROWTH

From 2008 to 2021, total employment in Marion County grew from 1,417 to 1,686. However, the county saw a net decrease in the number of establishments, from 151 to 143. Meanwhile, the rate of net jobs created over that time period increased from -1.743 to 1.924, meaning that 1.924 jobs were created in Marion County for every job lost in 2021. This rate is higher than both Texas' job creation rate (-4.031 in 2021) and the United States' job creation rate (-4.561 in 2018.) However, these rates are likely impacted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking at net job creation rates for the pre-pandemic year of 2019, Marion County's rate of -5.163 was significantly lower than the statewide rate of 2.636 and the national rate of 1.724.

Looking more closely at growth per type of occupation, OnThe-Map estimates that most job growth lies within Educational Services occupations, which saw a net increase of 250 jobs from 2011 to 2021, more than a three-fold increase. The second largest increase came from Health Care and Social Assistance, which saw an increase of 115 jobs during the same period. Additionally, the number of Manufacturing jobs in Jefferson increased by 37 from 2011 to 2021, and Accommodation and Food Service occupations saw a net increase of 27 jobs from 2011 to 2021. Additionally, several occupation types saw a net decrease, including Retail, which lost 26 jobs from 2011 to 2021, a decline from 13.0% to 8.4% of overall jobs. Additionally, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services saw a decrease from 30 jobs to just 2 by 2021, and Transportation and Warehousing reported a decline of 14 jobs during the same period.

Figure 6.4. Marion County Courthouse (Source: Keerti Rath)
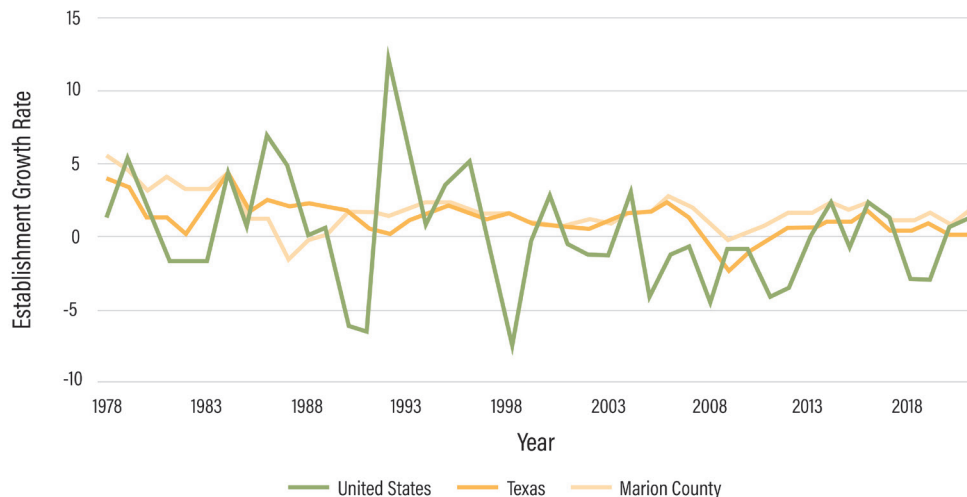
Figure 6.5. Net Rate of Establishment Growth. Source: US Census Bureau. (2021) Business Dynamics Statistics: NAICS: 1978-2021.

EMPLOYMENT LOCATION

US Census Bureau data can be used to identify job clusters and commute patterns through worker inflow and outflow analysis, as well as employment location mapping.

Inflow/ Outflow Analysis

Inflow/outflow analysis represents movement in and out of the study area for work. As the main city in Marion County, much of the county's workforce commutes into Jefferson for work, and, in some cases, vice-versa. Also, being near the Texas-Louisiana border, Marion County sees a portion of the workforce working outside of the state.

In 2021, there were an estimated 1,712 occupied jobs in Jefferson. Of these jobs, 1,506 (88.0%) were occupied by workers who lived outside of Jefferson, and 206 (12.0%) were held by Jefferson residents. This reflects an increase in the number of jobs in Jefferson since 2011, along with a slight increase in the number of jobs held by residents who lived outside of the city. Out of 1,300 total jobs in the city in 2011, 1,077 (82.8%) were held by workers who lived outside of Jefferson, and 223 (17.2%) jobs were held by Jefferson residents.

Along with the increase in the number of occupied jobs, data suggest a decline in the number of Jefferson residents who worked from 2011 to 2021. In 2011, there were 1,191 Jefferson residents in the workforce, and 968 (81.3%) of these worked outside of the city, with the remaining 223 (18.7%) working in their city of residence. By 2021, Jefferson's local labor pool had shrunk to 810 residents, 74.6% of whom worked outside of the city, the remaining 206 (25.4%) working in Jefferson.

In 2021, about 72.0% of Jefferson's residential workforce worked outside of the county, and about 2.7% of the same population worked outside Texas. This is an increase from 69.1% and 2.6%, respectively, since 2011.

In 2021, most commuters traveled west and south, particularly to Marshall and Longview, with 41.0% of workers commuting more than 50 miles. This is a slight decrease compared to 2011 when 46.4% of Jefferson workers traveled more than 50 miles to work. Since 2011, there has also been a relative increase in local employment, with 27.7% of workers traveling fewer than 10 miles to work, compared to just 21.1% in 2011.
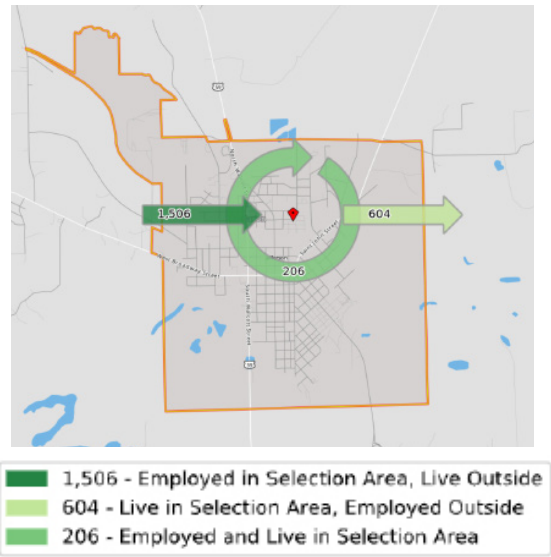
Figure 6.6. Inflow-Outflow Analysis. Source: US Census Bureau Center for Economic Studies. (2021). OnTheMap.

Percentage of Occupied Jobs in Jefferson Held by Residents vs. Non Residents (2011&2021)

Work outside the city — Work in Jefferson

Percentage of Workers from Jefferson that Work within or Outside the City (2011&2021)

Work outside the city — Work in Jefferson
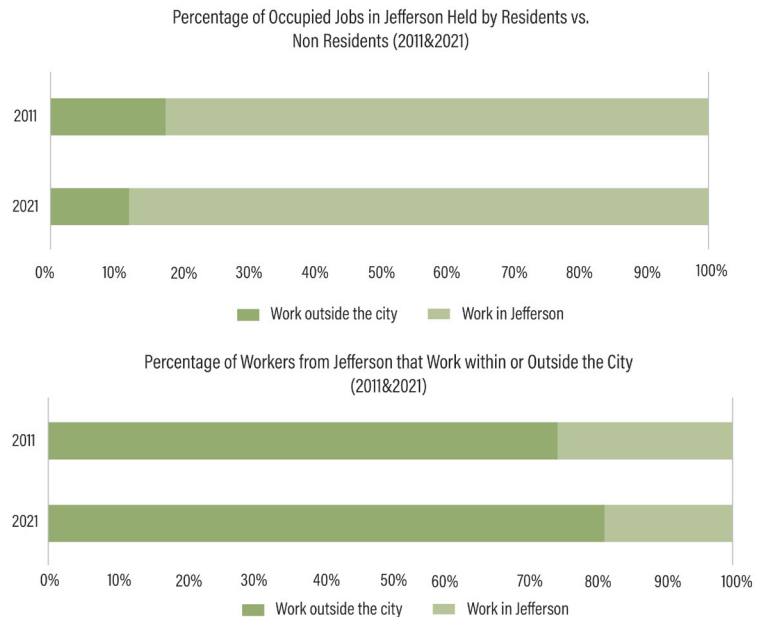
Figure 6.7. Percentage of Occupied Jobs in Jefferson held by Residents vs Non Residents and Workers from Jefferson that Work within or outside the city. (2011&2021)

Labor Force Training

As for education backgrounds of the Jefferson labor force, in 2018, 182 (10.6% of total) workers had less than a high school education, 472 (27.6%) workers held a high school diploma but no college, 441 (25.8%) workers had some college or held an Associate's Degree, and 275 (16.1%) workers held at least a Bachelor's Degree.

Workforce Solutions East Texas, administered by the East Texas Council of Governments, provides no-cost recruitment and employment services to Marion County and surrounding counties in the COG. They have an access point open once a week in Jefferson at the Jeffersonian Institute. For 2021, they served 54 employers, $19,182 invested in employee training, and 34 unemployment claimants served. They also provided child care assistance in the form of temporary financial assistance, $106,621 to 57 customers. There were 2 Texas Rising Star providers that received $3,400 in quality improvement funds. For 2022, they served 183 employers, $21,361 invested in employee training, and 31 unemployment claimants served. Childcare services include $57,646 in temporary financial aid for eligible families that allows them to work for 45 customers. There was 1 Texas Rising Star provider that received $1,125 in quality improvement funds.

Texas Tech at Jefferson brings non-academic, professional education opportunities. The classes they offer come from the Texas Tech Coding Academy.

Tourism

In the past 15 years or so, Jefferson's tourism industry has generated approximately $112,506,663 in local travel-related spending, averaging $6,618,039 a year. There was a downturn in local travel spending after the 2008 Recession, which was in line with national trends. Similarly, there was a downturn in local travel spending during the main shutdown period of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which rebounded significantly in 2021.

In contrast, tourism industry employment in Jefferson has not experienced the same rebound to pre-pandemic levels and has continued to decrease, falling from an average of 110 employed in 2019 to 70 in 2022. the amount of travel-related spending in Jefferson compared to the average number of jobs it generated that year. (Dean Runyan Associates, Travelstats.com)
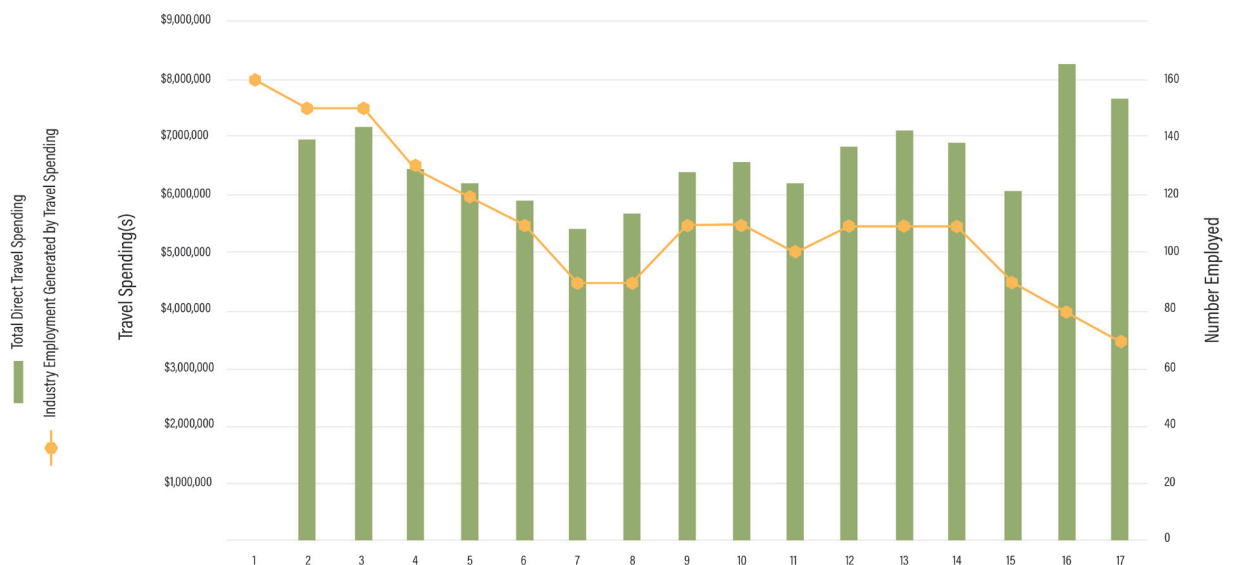
Figure 6.8. Direct Travel spending compared to Travel industry employment in Jefferson (2006- 2022)
Source: Dean Runyan Associates Travelstats.com

- Direct Travel Spending - Purchases by travelers during their trip, including lodging taxes and other applicable local and state taxes, paid by the traveler at the point-of-sale.
- Direct Employment - Employment associated with earnings; this includes both full and part time positions of wage and salary workers and proprietors averaged annually.
- Direct Tax Receipts - Tax receipts collected by state, counties, and municipalities, as levied on applicable travel-related purchases, including lodging, food and beverage service, retail goods, and motor fuel. Source: Dean Runyan Associates Travelstats.com

The local tax revenue generated by travel purchases has historically been between $100,000-$150,000 annually, averaging $104,084 a year. In 2021, in line with the increased travel spending, local tax revenue from travel was $217,096, more than twice the average. There was a small decrease in 2022 to $169,458, still significantly above the historic average. Figure 6.9 shows the tax revenue generated by visitors to Jefferson combined with the taxes paid by residents that is related to travel expenses. (Dean Runyan Associates, Travelstats.com)

Figure 6.9. Local Tax generated by travel spending in Jefferson Source: Dean Runyan Associates Travelstats.com

Hotels and Short-term Rentals

Jefferson's tourism industry is supported by the local hotels, bed and breakfasts, vacation rentals, and recreation parks that provide accommodations for visitors. The self-proclaimed "Bed and Breakfast Capital of Texas, Jefferson boasts 5 hotels, 3 RV parks, and 28 vacation rentals, and 15 B&Bs, according to the Visit Jefferson website, created by the City of Jefferson Conventions and Visitors Bureau. Most of these are located in downtown, or in the southeastern quadrant of the city, as seen in Figure 6.10.
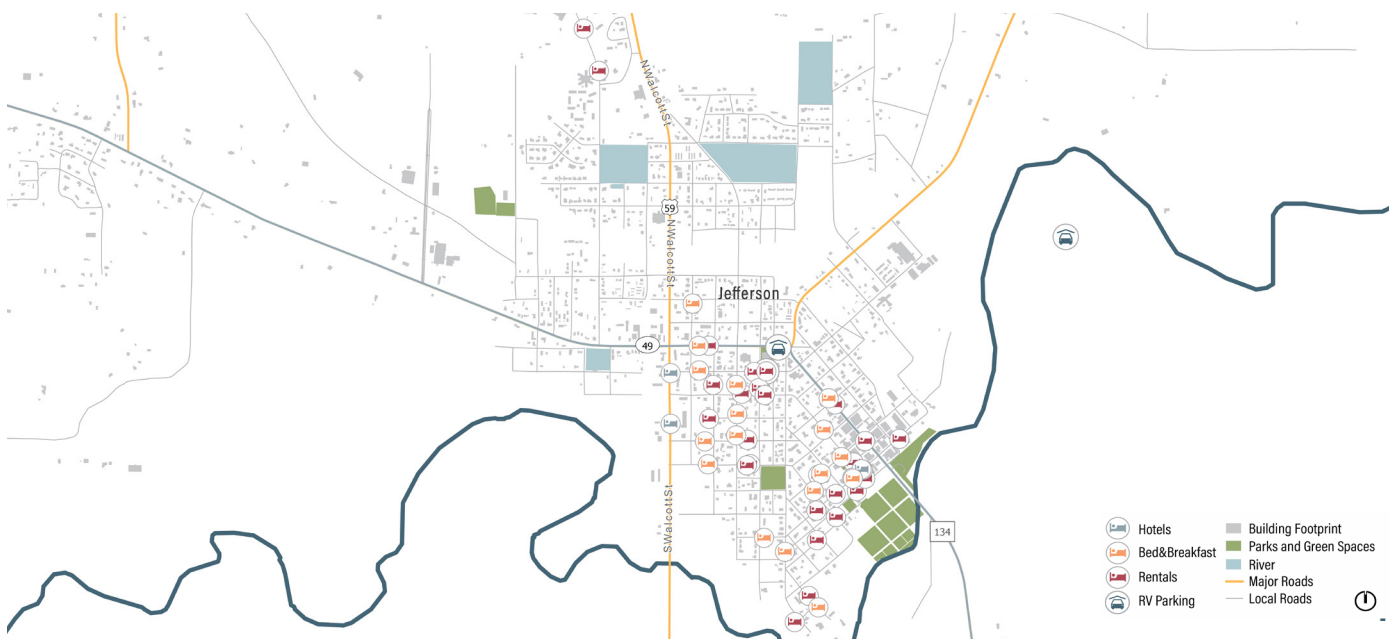
Figure 6.10. Map showing Hotels and Air B&B in Jefferson

Public Feedback

There were many public comments that were about, or related to Jefferson's economic development. While there was pride in the existing industries, such as tourism, that are supported in town, there were concerns about the lack of business diversity and that it puts too much focus on a narrow aspect of what Jefferson can provide. This also raised the related issue of a limited job pool for new and young professionals that may be looking for different work than what is available. Additionally, there was significant interest in training and work programs aimed at high school students and others looking for new or different opportunities.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Part of ensuring Jefferson's future is developing the future workforce and entrepreneurs to build up what Jefferson has to offer. Residents would like to see more training and educational opportunities for youth and recent graduates to expand their skills and talents.

- "Industries for jobs coming out of high school. In school, they need to learn trade."
- "Need training in the tourism industry"
- "Poverty, need good job opportunities, industry, a business park, etc, things to do, better education for all ages, schools are failing, affordable housing"

BUSINESS DIVERSITY

Jefferson has a reliance on limited industries to maintain the local economy, and residents would like to see more diversification to support more types of work and create access to more types of businesses.

- "It's too and I do mean way too many trucks(18-wheelers, commercial vehicles, etc.) that come through the city of Jefferson and for the city to not capitalize on it. Jefferson is a hub for so many connecting cities. More restaurants, better hotels, and better wages. The city is growing and needs to diversify its job market. Everything is manual labor here."
- "More restaurants would be nice. Diversity of types of restaurants."
- "Need industry and business diversification"

TOURISM

Tourism has become a significant part of the local economy, and residents are both proud of the interest in their city and frustrated by the perceived reliance on historical tourism as an economic driver. Residents would like to see more activities and amenities for their use and to diversify the tourism activities and the areas that are promoted.

- "Downtown area has lots of interesting shops and lots of restaurants for tourists"
- "Tourism is strong but the city seems to have forgotten the residents and their needs"
- "Tourism and business retention is good within the "downtown" area. There are many more opportunities however for other people and places within the county"

Figure 6.10. Public Meeting on 23rd October 2023.

"Over time, all communities experience changes that affect the industries, technologies, and land use patterns that help form the foundation of their local economies. Economically resilient towns, cities, and regions adapt to changing conditions and even reinvent their economic bases if necessary...While most economic development strategies involve some recruitment activities, many successful small towns and cities complement recruitment by emphasizing their existing assets and distinctive resources. Even if the community has lost its original or main economic driver, it has other assets that it can use to spur the local economy and rebuild its economic foundation."
- Environmental Protection Agency, How Small Towns and Cities Can Use Local Assets To Rebuild Their Economies: Lessons From Successful Places (2015)

Moving Forward

Jefferson's history is deeply tied to the nature of its commerce and the industries that it has been involved in over the last 200 years. As it looks to the future, finding new avenues for residents to grow and develop their businesses and create new ones will help to build up Jefferson's local economy and amenity and service accessibility. Developing programs that support youth development alongside technical training will help to create a new generation of Jefferson citizens that can create a strong future for the city and themselves.

PREPARING A SKILLED WORKFORCE

1 *Enhance educational pathways, skill training, and diversify career opportunities available in Jefferson.*

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

1.1: Promote programs to help youths build skills and stay engaged in the community.

Helping young residents reach their full potential is part of creating a strong and resilient future economy. Making program information available and connecting with interested residents can create opportunities for them to pursue their career interests and establish new businesses in Jefferson.

Action Items:

- Work with ISD to establish educational programs centered around "real world education", such as apprenticeship programs or skills-based learning opportunities.
- Connect with the Department of Labor to create a YouthBuild program, which provides job training and education for people between the ages of 16 and 24 who left school without a secondary diploma.
- Design a summer program that aligns youth with city department projects for real-world insight and experience in various initiatives within and outside local government.
- Collaborate with ISD to create a volunteer program for high school and middle school students to engage in local volunteer opportunities and gain diverse experiences.
- Partner with religious and social organizations to pair students with volunteer activities run through those organizations.

- Develop a scholarship program sponsored by local investors for students seeking education beyond high school.
- Organize annual outreach programs with students to learn what types of industries they are interested in working in to target appropriate local businesses.

Workforce Development
Youth Registered Apprenticeship Program - Washington, Missouri

Washington, Missouri is a rural city of about 14,000 people. To increase the number of youth who enter the local workforce, the Four Rivers Career Center (FRCC) partnered with the local school district to start an apprenticeship program. High school students qualify for the program based on merit during their junior year. They take career courses at FRCC and are then matched with a participating employer. If the students excel at their apprenticeship and academics, they become eligible for full-time, paid employment during their senior year.

In accordance with U.S. Department of Labor guidelines, students are eligible to receive occupational credit and journeyman status following the completion of their apprenticeship. In addition to providing career opportunities for local students, the program has also fostered connections with local businesses and helped to reduce the skills gap for the skilled and technical trades. Starting in 2020, the program launched with only two employer partners but quickly grew to have 29 employers and 44 participants by 2021.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

1.2: Broaden the range of educational opportunities and training to elevate workforce competency.

As new technologies, methods, and industries spread throughout the country, ensuring that residents have access to new information and training opportunities can help to keep Jefferson at pace with the rest of the state and the country at large. Increasing the number and variety of educational and training opportunities can keep residents informed and up-to-date.

Action Items:

- Partner with ISD, Panola College, Kilgore College, and other regional educational institutions to expand courses and career training offered in Jefferson.
- Work with Texas Tech Office of Continuing and Professional Education to promote and expand existing courses offered at the Jeffersonian Institute.
- Facilitate partnerships with local educational institutions and industries to offer specialized courses, ensuring a skilled workforce that meets the industry's needs, including manufacturing.
- Develop adult-learning programs to bolster job skills by providing classes to help with reading, math, writing, and computer skills.
- Encourage employers to participate in On-The-Job training programs.
- Develop a "grow our own" program for industries seeking skilled employment in the community.
- Foster partnerships with technical schools, and vocational programs in the region to provide training for students in retrofitting and upgrading historic buildings, providing a new generation of skilled workers for these tasks.
- Partner with the Rural Medicine Program at Texas A&M University to increase education and awareness in high school about opportunities in medicine and attract students to pursue a healthcare career tract.

RESIDENT RESOURCES

1.3: Develop programs to help residents find well-paying and meaningful work in the community.

Business owners who create and support the local economy may be looking to grow or maintain their businesses. Connecting residents who are looking for employment opportunities with local businesses not only supports both, it creates a more robust network of existing services and amenities.

Action Items:

- Create a local workforce development board to assist in bringing new programs and partnerships.
- Develop recruitment events and career fairs to connect existing employers to workers.
- Partner with Workforce Solutions and Texas Workforce Commission to connect job-seekers trying to move into new industries with education and financial resources.
- Connect with private and public sectors in surrounding cities and counties to promote information on available job opportunities in diverse fields and various industries in the region.
- Promote the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for expenses such as work subsidies, education and training, and transportation for employed persons.
- Establish teacher incentive programs to attract and retain teachers.
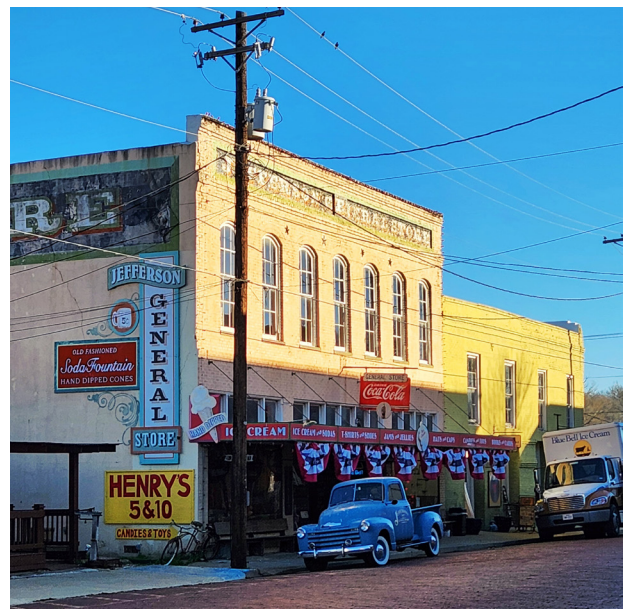
Figure 6.11. Jefferson General Store, E Austin St, Jefferson, TX

SUPPORTING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

2

Empower local businesses and foster new business development and innovation in Jefferson.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

2.1: Support local businesses to ensure they remain part of the market and further their growth.

The locally owned businesses and locations of a place are what distinguishes one place from another, and one local community's identity from another. Supporting local businesses and giving them opportunities to flourish will maintain Jefferson's character and develop it into the future.

Action Items:

- Work with JEDCO and Marion County Chamber of Commerce to conduct a business retention and expansion (BR&E) program.
- Create and maintain a business database of existing businesses.
- Develop visitation programs to connect with existing businesses.
- Organize industry or business recognition programs with appreciation dinners and certificates.
- Encourage small businesses to participate in community events (sponsor, buy advertisement and promotion spots, etc).
- Create a "buy local" campaign and encourage local purchasing of goods and services and participation in the local farmer's market.
- Plan and implement farmers' market and other local events by identifying locations in different neighborhoods.
- Partner with Texas Friendly Hospitality Customer Service Workshop to organize training to help current business owners develop and learn new strategies and skills to improve their business.

LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP GROWTH

2.2: Promote new talent and entrepreneurs to help create and start new businesses.

It can be difficult to start a new business in any area, especially when the subject or product is new on the local market. These new businesses, though, can maintain the vitality of an area, and create a new service or amenity for residents and visitors to enjoy. Promoting and supporting new businesses is important for giving them the chance to be successful in the future.

Action Items:

- Create mentorship programs to pair experienced business owners with startups to help new entrepreneurs better understand the challenges and needs of running a businesses.
- Develop an incubator and entrepreneurship center with coworking rental space, internet access, conference room, and management support to help start-ups and new ventures.
- Allow the establishment of home-based businesses in the city ordinance and zoning code.
- Provide tax and business consultation and classes for new business owners.
- Connect with organizations like SCORE mentoring network, SBA SBDC for business and managerial enhancement programs for local business owners.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION

2.3: Attract a commercial and small industrial development that are compatible with Jefferson's character and serve the community's needs.

There are some businesses and industries that the local community desires to have that may not be feasible or of interest to create locally. Attracting businesses from outside of Jefferson that help to meet community needs and interests will help to improve the services and amenities available.

Action Items:

- Perform retail and service business mix analysis or retail gap analysis to identify market potential
- Create an online database of available sites and buildings including available infrastructure, acreage of land, building square footage, lease price and conditions, minimum and maximum lease spaces.
- Develop resources with community profiles, data on available buildings, developable sites, infrastructure, and potential incentives to attract new businesses.
- Incentivize businesses that will develop youth-oriented businesses (community needs - movie theaters, mini golf, arcades, skating rinks, bowling alleys, arcade) or other in-person activities to support our community's youth development goal.
- Proactively reach out to fresh food and health-related businesses to serve the needs of the community's residents.
- Identify and target emerging industries that could utilize the remoteness of Jefferson.
- Encourage new businesses to consider high economic development opportunity areas including areas along US 59 and SH 49 and (land use map) first when choosing a location.

IDEA: WOOD INNOVATION

Jefferson should leverage the lumber industry to promote housing by promoting work with local industries. Jefferson is nestled in the East Texas forests and boasts a robust local lumber industry. Using this industry to its advantage will help increase innovations in wood technology, allowing for new applications of wood and bringing down the prices of homes. Technologies like cross-laminated timber allow for specialization in the market.

Economic Base Analysis of Jefferson

Economic Base Analysis is a way to discover the industries that contribute to the local economy by selling or exporting goods or services outside the study area. "Basic" industries, such as resource extraction, manufacturing, and agriculture, bring added value to the local economy by creating jobs that will require additional employment in "non-basic" support industries. Non-basic industries include service industries like, restaurants, retail, and salons, and other supportive industries like home construction. Generally, it is understood that more basic jobs will incentivize more non-basic jobs in an area. This represents one way basic industries are economic drivers and advance local economies.

The economic base multiplier for Jefferson is 5.82. So, for every basic job created in Jefferson, 5.82 non-basic jobs are created. Ultimately, this type of analysis addresses broad trends in the economy, and the classification system necessarily combines many sorts of smaller industries into larger groups. An additional limitation lies in the fact that economic base theory assumes that an industry is either entirely basic or entirely non-basic in its regional analysis. The reality is certainly more nuanced within different industries and types of work. Despite these limitations, economic base measurements are a useful tool for getting the pulse of a regional economy in the form of a broad, relatively straightforward calculation. In addition to emphasizing the interconnectedness of regional industries in the real world, economic base statistics can provide a picture of economic development over time.

STRENGTHENING TOURISM

3 *Elevate Jefferson as a dynamic tourism hub for ecotourism, cultural experiences, and business events.*

REGIONAL COLLABORATION

3.1: Strengthen regional collaboration to establish Jefferson and the region as a thriving ecotourism hub and cultural destination.

Jefferson is full of rich history and opportunities to expand on the stories that shape our understanding of the past. Its location in the Piney Woods and proximity to Lake O' the Pines and Caddo Lake also make it an ideal destination for cultural and ecotourism. Connecting with regional partners who understand the possibilities of this area will help to create a strong force for promoting Jefferson and Marion County for new tourism opportunities.

Action Items:

- Partner with neighboring towns, Marion County, COG, community groups, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to create joint marketing initiatives to promote the region.
- Engage with regional Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Councils (EDCs) to synchronize tourism efforts and create a cohesive regional identity
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce and EDCs in the region to develop packaged tours and shared transportation options.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

3.2: Enhance the tourism experience to encourage visitors to stay longer in the region.

For visitors to Jefferson and Marion County, or even to the state of Texas, exciting and interesting things to do or see can be difficult to locate or learn about if they are not exposed to them. Connecting Jefferson and the region to larger programs and events can create new opportunities for visitors to learn about the things that they can do there to make their trip special.

Action Items:

- Develop or participate in themed "trails" that have travelers move from place to place based on a set theme, like whiskey, wine, or food
- Design both printable and digital maps showing trail routes, historical markers, and landmarks.
- Distribute map resources to tourism agencies and promote its use to both residents and visitors
- Install seatings and signage such as arrows pointing in the direction of the trail or can include more detailed information such as mileage to other trails, towns or attractions.
- Connect with Texas Travel Alliance for educational resources and networking.
- Promote activities and events as multi-day activities as part of extended-stay experiences to attract tourists.
- Regularly update the historic landmarks, heritage sites, attractions, and events in Jefferson on the Texas Time Travel Website to showcase all the heritage and historic sites in the Forest Trail Region of the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Heritage Trails Program.
- Engage local community members as guides, educators, or stewards of the land.
- Develop a public private partnership to support eco-tourism and rental equipment facility for items such as kayaks, bicycles, fishing equipment, etc.

TOURISM DIVERSIFICATION

3.3: Broaden economic opportunities through creative industry.

While Jefferson often frames itself in its historical and cultural context for tourism, there are many other opportunities that the city could take advantage of to boost tourism for other types of travelers. Connecting with and developing tourism activities that expand into regional and state tourism models can broaden the types of visitors and businesses that can come to Jefferson.

Action Items:

- Encourage and incentivize hotels and local businesses to upgrade their facilities with multifunctional spaces for meetings and coworking areas designed to attract corporate retreats and conferences.
- Develop packages that combine local attractions with team-building activities, wellness programs, or corporate training workshops.
- Connect with the Texas Film Commission to designate Jefferson as a Film-Friendly City, attracting filmmakers and media exposure that further boosts tourism.
- Organize and host film festivals, art fairs, music festivals, or other events that celebrate creative works, attracting visitors and industry professionals from beyond the local community.
- Engage with the Texas Music Office to pursue the "Music Friendly Community" certification, demonstrating the community's commitment to supporting the music industry.
- Utilize the "Music Friendly Community" designation to attract music professionals, events, and businesses to the area, leveraging the certification in marketing materials and promotional efforts.

Figure 6.12. The Magnolias, Bed & breakfast in Jefferson, Texas

What is Heritage Tourism?

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) defines "heritage tourism" as travel to experience the heritage of a city, region, state, or country. One major communities employ this type of tourism is the positive economic impact that heritage tourism brings. Additionally, heritage tourism is more sustainable than other types of tourism because it builds on assets that already exist in a community rather than requiring the construction of new ones. Heritage tourism also promotes the preservation of historic sites, which in turn promotes further tourism and awareness of these assets. The THC describes this process as a "cyclical win-win", benefitting local economies and preservation at the same time. Lastly, heritage tourism helps small towns distinguish themselves because they can provide experiences that are not offered elsewhere, contributing to a town's local identity and brand. The THC's Heritage Tourism Guidebook details the principles for an effective heritage tourism program, including: preserving and protecting resources through historic preservation planning, focusing on authenticity and quality when communicating the history of a site, and promoting storytelling through creative, sensitive, and inclusive interpretation strategies. The report also emphasizes community education and outreach, along with the pursuit of community partnerships and cross-promotion for maximizing exposure and promoting a cohesive visitor experience in a region.

Source: https://thc.texas.gov/

What is Ecotourism?

Ecotourism is a type of tourism that aims to promote environmental conservation and sustainability. According to the International Ecotourism Society, the principles of ecotourism include minimizing the environmental impact on local communities, building cultural awareness and respect, providing direct financial benefits for conservation, providing positive experiences and benefits for visitors and hosts, and promoting awareness and sensitivity of political, environmental and social conditions in the host area. By utilizing the area's natural beauty and recreational opportunities, ecotourism could be a useful way of promoting tourism in Jefferson and stimulating the local economy, while striving to preserve the natural character of the area.

Source: https://ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism/

What is Business Tourism?

Business tourism, also known as "corporate tourism", is travel that takes place for business purposes. According to Allied Market Research, the global business tourism market is expected to globally reach nearly $2 trillion by 2028. Business tourism builds on the importance of face-to-face communication in business relationships. In-person contact between business partners remains valuable, even in the age of remote work, contributing to better productivity and employee satisfaction. According to TravelPerk.com, some of the main types of business tourism include traditional business traveling, such as presentations, meetings, and formal dinners among executives, incentive trips to top-performing employees, and conferences or exhibitions. Today, business travel increasingly involves a mixture of leisure and business activities. This means that business travelers are more likely to engage in activities common to other types of tourists than before, part of the reason why it is a growing component of the tourism industry.

Source: https://www.travelperk.com/

RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CONNECT WITH :

- Texas Historical Commission
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
- Texas Economic Development & Tourism Office
- National Council for Public-Private Partnerships
- EPA's Office of Community Revitalization
- USDA Forest Service
- Texas Film Commission
- Texas Music Office
- Workforce Solutions
- Texas Workforce Commission

PARTNERS TO INCLUDE

- Marion County
- Jefferson ISD
- Jefferson Christian Academy
- Country Day School
- Jefferson Economic Development Corporation (JEDCO)
- Marion County Chamber of Commerce
- Jeffersonian Institute
- Collins Academy
- East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG)
- East Texas Economic Development District
- Texas State Technical College
- Jefferson Historical Society and Museum
- Historic Jefferson Foundation
- City Tourism Board
- Jefferson Playhouse
- Jefferson Opera House Theater Players
- Jessie Allen Wise Gardening Club
- Historic Tours of Jefferson
- Historic Jefferson Ghost Walk
- Businesses - West Fraiser, MasterCraft, Brookshire's

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CHAPTER 7

Harmony with Nature

Jefferson is characterized by its lush surroundings and proximity to the natural world. The surrounding Piney Woods and Big Cypress Bayou have both provided economic and recreational opportunities that shaped so much of Jefferson's early history and made it a place people today enjoy. Maintaining a healthy relationship with nature stems from understanding not only the benefits and joys of it but also the ways in which it can create harm. Providing access to public resources is key when dealing with the more dangerous aspects of the natural world, such as during severe weather and flooding events. These situations call for personal planning, but public resources are vital to ensuring that all members of the community can safely endure these events. Mitigating situations to lessen danger, and building up resources where they are most needed can keep bad situations from worsening. In this chapter, we explore the relationship between green space management and natural hazard mitigation, and how Jefferson can preserve its natural and built assets for future generations.

Current Conditions
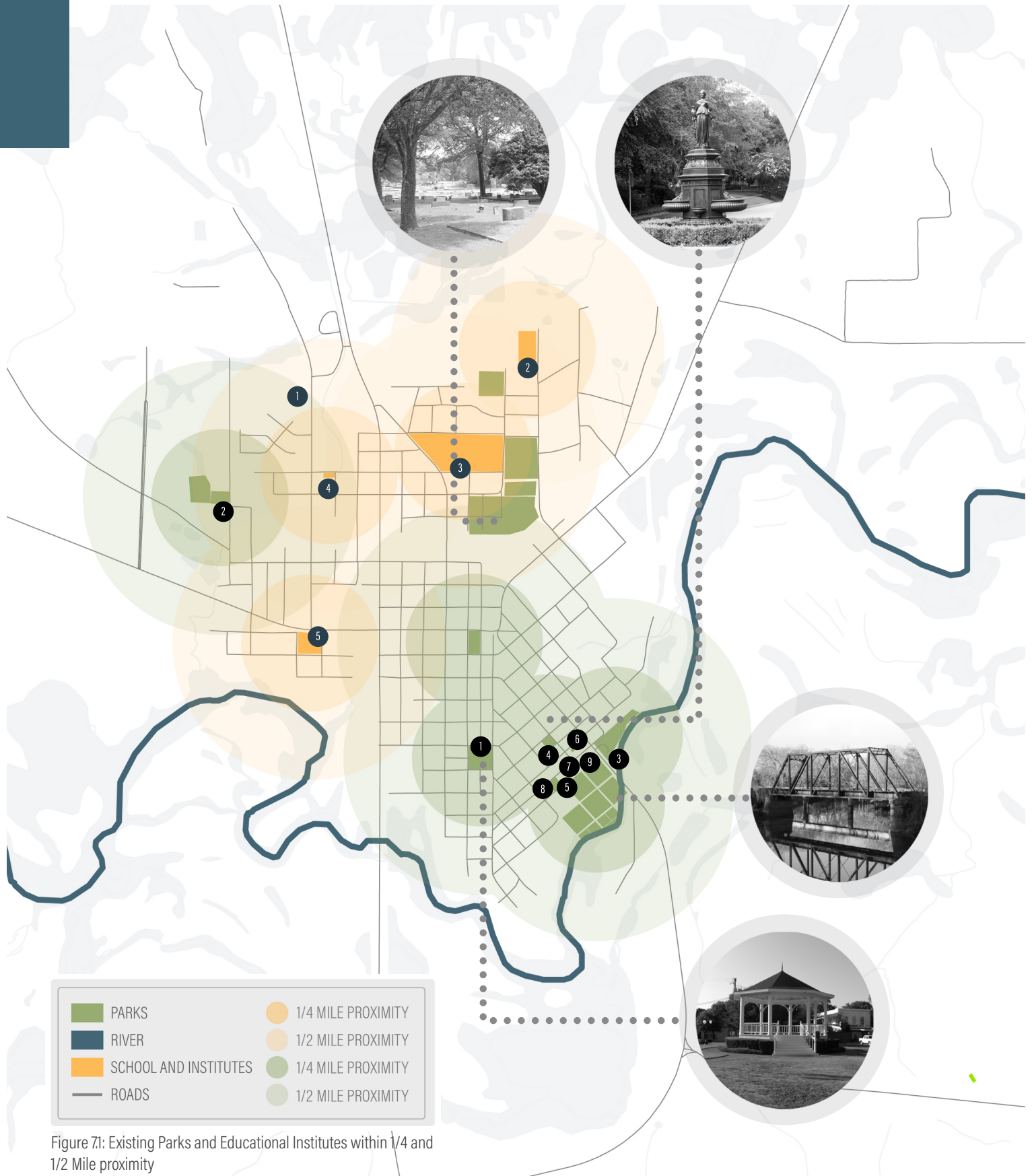
Figure 7.1: Existing Parks and Educational Institutes within 1/4 and 1/2 Mile proximity

Legend:

- PARKS
- RIVER
- SCHOOL AND INSTITUTES
- ROADS
- 1/4 MILE PROXIMITY
- 1/2 MILE PROXIMITY
- 1/4 MILE PROXIMITY
- 1/2 MILE PROXIMITY

PLAY AND RECREATION

Currently, the City of Jefferson has 116.02 acres of available park and open space, with school areas comprising approximately 70% of that area. These facilities provide access to a variety of recreational activities, such as baseball fields, basketball courts, a football field, gardening, playgrounds, multi-use fields, tennis courts, volleyball courts, walking trails, and picnic and pavilion space.[1]

Additionally, Jefferson's placement in the Piney Woods provides access to regional parks, such as the Sabine and Angelina National Forests. Jefferson is also in close proximity to Caddo Lake, the only natural lake in Texas, and Lake O' the Pines which provide fishing, camping, and hiking trails for local residents and visitors to the area.

City Parks/Open Space Areas			
1	Lion's Club Park	2.6 Acres	2.24%
2	Westside Park	4.57 Acres	3.94%
3	Port Jefferson History and Nature Center	26.07 Acres	22.43%
4	Otstott Park and Gazebo	0.6 Acres	0.52%
5	Sterne Memorial Fountain	0.02 Acres	0.02%
6	Stuart Hamblin Park	0.22 Acres	0.19%
7	Thomas Jefferson Park	0.13 Acres	0.11%
8	Perry Park	0.24 Acres	0.21%
9	Jaycee Park	0.2 Acres	0.17%
10	Beth Mead Memorial City Park	0.13 Acres	0.17%
Parks Total		**35.76 Acres**	**30%**

Table 7.1: Jefferson parks and areas.

School Areas			
1	Jefferson High School	28.25 Acres	24.33%
2	W.F. Lockett Stadium	18.52 Acres	15.95%
3	Jefferson Junior High School	17.39 Acres	14.97%
4	Jefferson Elementary School	13.02 Acres	11.21%
5	Jefferson Primary School	4.19 Acres	3.61%
School Areas Total		**81.37 Acres**	**70%**

Table 7.2: Jefferson schools and areas.

Natural Assets of Marion County
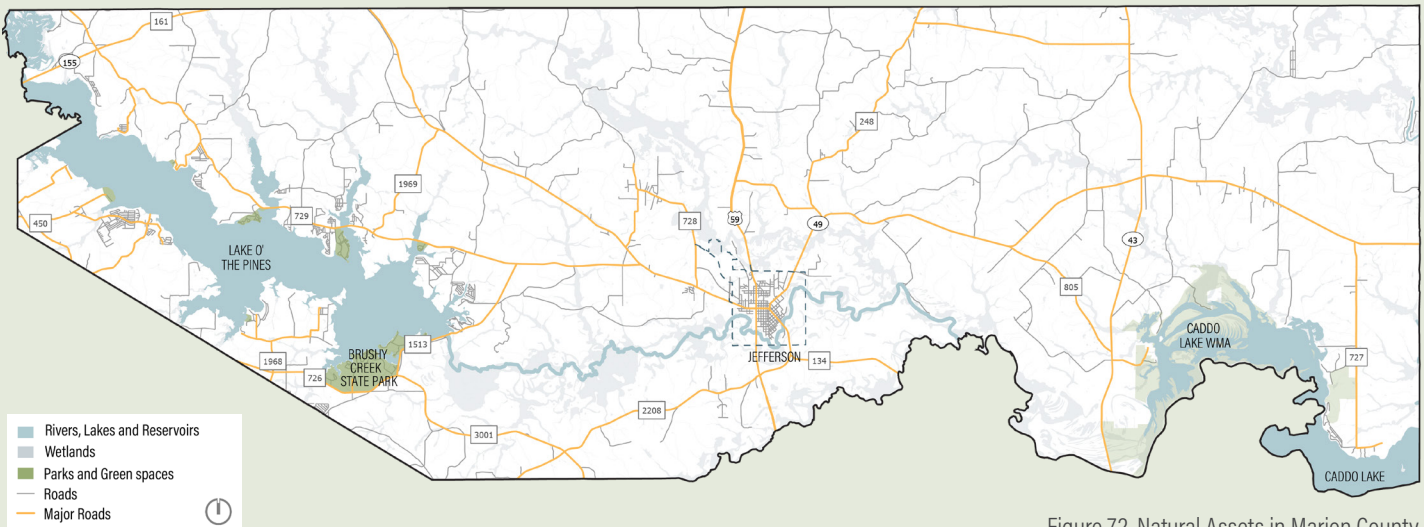
Figure 7.2. Natural Assets in Marion County.

Rivers, Lakes and Reservoirs
Wetlands
Parks and Green spaces
Roads
Major Roads

Jefferson is located in the South Central Plains ecoregion, which is locally referred to as the "Piney Woods", characterized by coniferous and hardwood forests and wetlands. Within this ecoregion are the Floodplains and Low Terraces that line the lakes and waterways. Within Marion County, there are the major lakes, Lake O' The Pines, and the Caddo Lake system that spans into Louisiana and the major river for the region, the Big Cypress Bayou. The abundance of forest and water features make the area ideal for nature recreation and tourism, but also require balancing those activities with responsible stewardship.

Exisiting Recreational Facilities

Type of Facility	Lions Club Park	Jaycee Park	Otstott Park	Port Jefferson History & Nature Center	Westside Park	Primary School	Elementary School	Junior H.S.	High School	W.F. Lockhart Stadium	Beth Mead Memorial City Park
Baseball/ Softball Fields	y				y			y	y		
Basketball Goals					y	y	y	y	y		
Football Field										y	
Gardening				y							
Group Shelter/Pavilion	y		y		y						
Nature Center				y							
Picnic Areas	y	y			y						y
Playground Area	y				y	y	y	y			
Practice/ Open Fields	y										
Tennis Courts									y	y	
Track Field										y	
Volleyball Courts									y		
Walking Trails	y			y	y						

Table 7.3: Jefferson recreational facilities. Compiled from: Planning & Capacity Building Study, City of Jefferson

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mitigating Costs - Natural disasters and storms can be costly, in every sense of the word. For a city, the costs associated with clearing and rebuilding can make prioritizing long-term goals difficult, especially as residents are looking for normalcy and support after a disaster. Mitigating potential hazards early can lower the risk of severe damage, and increase the durability of community resources.

Supporting Tourism - One of Jefferson's selling points as a tourist destination is its proximity to the forests of the Piney Woods and the bayou. Keeping these areas natural and safe will allow future visitors to continue to enjoy them and contribute to the local economy to experience them.

HISTORIC NATURAL DISASTERS

Marion County's proximity to the Red River and the Gulf Coast place it in an area that is prone to flooding and extreme weather events, such as hurricanes. The county's proximity to the Piney Woods also puts it at risk for wildfire events. These types of disasters necessitate being conscious of the built environment and how it interacts with the surrounding landscape. The policies and land use practices that are adopted can mitigate destruction before it occurs by keeping development out of harm's way.

FLOODING

The Federal Emergency Management Agency maps and runs risk analysis for the potential flooding of the community. Unfortunately, Jefferson's flood maps have not been updated since 1982 and had to be digitized. Refer to Chapter 3 for Flood plain map.

WILDFIRE

The Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (WRAP) provides several different wildfire assessment tools for the entire state of Texas, however, the one being shown here is the Wildfire Ignition Density, which is defined as "the likelihood of a wildfire starting based on historical ignition patterns" . While the environment around Jefferson has a decent amount of water which lessens the comprehensive risk, the thick tree canopy of the Piney Woods poses a larger ignition risk and therefore raises the risk of wildfires within the community as a whole.

Recent History of Previous Natural Disasters in Marion County		
1	April 22 -29, 1966	Flood
2	May 12, 1966	Flood
3	April 23, 1989	Flood
4	May 19, 1989	Severe Storm
5	February 23, 1996	Fire
6	August 26, 1998	Severe Storm
7	September 1, 1999	Fire
8	January 8, 2001	Severe Ice Storm
9	September 2, 2005	Hurricane Katrina
10	September 21 - 24, 2005	Huricane Rita
11	January 11, 2006	Fire
12	September 13, 2008	Huricane Ike
13	July 1, 2011	Fire
14	September 6, 2011	Fire, Break Creek Fire
15	September 9, 2011	Fire
16	March 19, 2016	Flood
17	August 24, 2020	Huricane (Tropical Storms Marco and Laura)
18	February 14, 2021	Severe Ice Storm
19	February 19, 2021	Severe Ice Storm
20	June 16, 2023	Severe Storm

Table 7.4: History of natural disasters in Jefferson.
Compiled from FEMA.gov and ClimateTexas.tamu.edu[2]
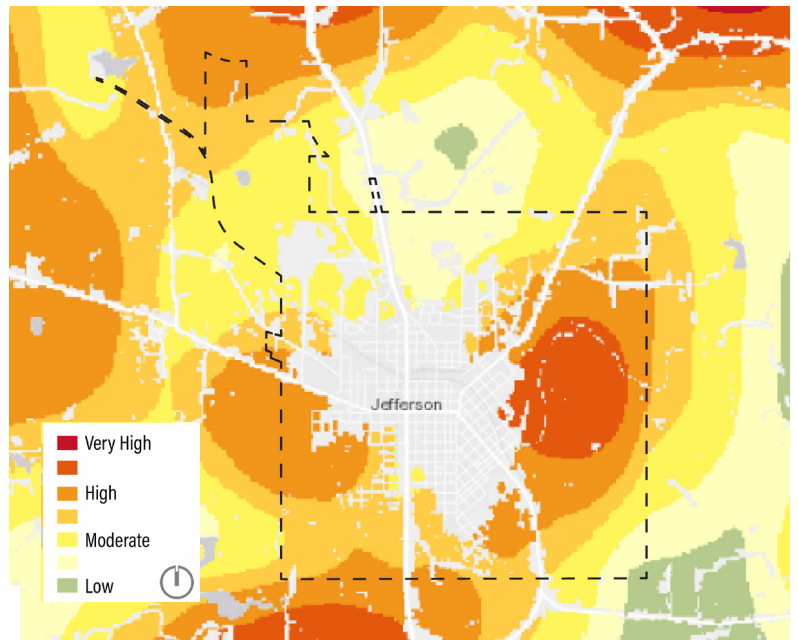
Figure 7.3. Wildfire Ignition Density Map

Public Feedback

Jefferson's beautiful surroundings and proximity to nature were commonly brought up as positive things that residents liked about living here. They also understand the complex balance of living so close to water and wetlands, and also brought up concerns about flooding and drainage. Even so, there is a desire to have more activities and programs centered around recreation and organized sports that get people out of the house and into nature.

Activities and Facilities Desired by Residents

- Additional Walking/Jogging Trails
- Multi-Purpose Building
- Swimming Pool
- Amphitheatre
- Covered basketball courts
- Additional picnic tables
- Tennis courts
- New Pavilion space

Figure 7.4: Community engagement event in Jefferson. (Source: Jeewasmi Thapa)

PROTECTING PARKS AND NATURAL SPACES

During public feedback, residents emphasized how much they like walking on Jefferson's trails and that they would like more options for trails and recreation activities. They also commented on Jefferson's existing parks and natural spaces and how they are an asset to the community. A variety of activities and facilities were also suggested to increase the variety of what is available in the area. Residents emphasized how beautiful the natural areas are in and around Jefferson, and were proud of being near the only naturally formed lake in the state, Caddo Lake.

- Nice parks and green spaces
- Only natural lake in Texas
- Lots of Greenery; beautiful area
- Wildlife abundance

NATURAL HAZARDS AND RESILIENCE

Residents identified flooding as a consistent issue for Jefferson. It is typically ignored outside of downtown, yet there are areas, specifically on County Road 3212, that reglarly flood. Ditches and culverts need to be cleaned out, as part of water management, since stand ing water can also cause mosquito problems.

- pest control, mosquitos are a serious issue due to the environment
- CR3212 flooding; school buses can't get down
- (Need) Flooding shelter and response plan
- Flooding/drainage is still a problem, especially from Lake O' the Pines overflow
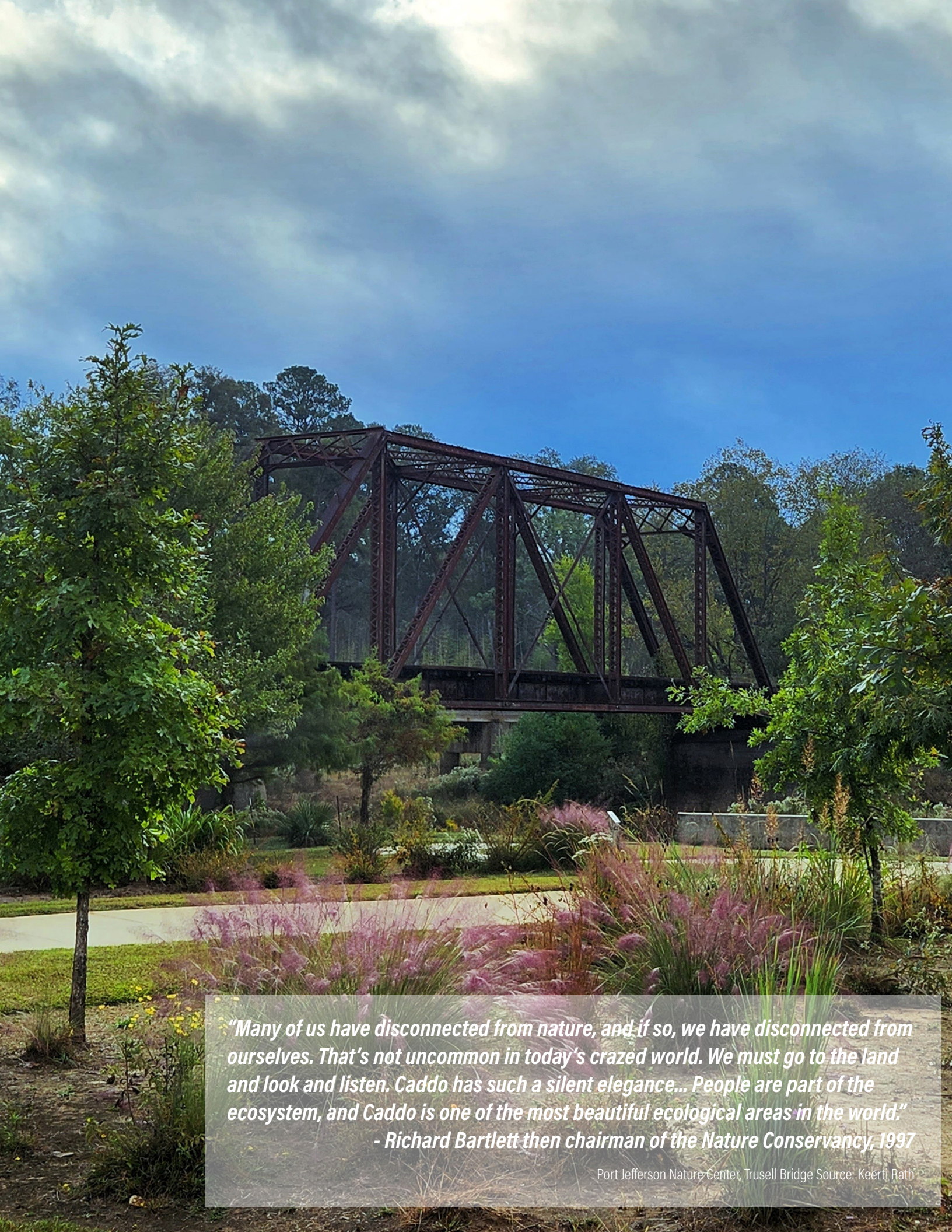
"Many of us have disconnected from nature, and if so, we have disconnected from ourselves. That's not uncommon in today's crazed world. We must go to the land and look and listen. Caddo has such a silent elegance... People are part of the ecosystem, and Caddo is one of the most beautiful ecological areas in the world."
- Richard Bartlett then chairman of the Nature Conservancy, 1997

Port Jefferson Nature Center, Trusell Bridge Source: Keerti Rath

Moving Forward

Protecting and incorporating natural areas into the urban fabric creates places for residents to play, relax, and come together. Identifying areas to stitch together a web of parks, paths, and recreational activities can connect neighborhoods with amenities, providing safe access for pedestrians to move throughout the city. It also gives the city the ability to use areas that are not ideal for the construction of homes or businesses while still providing a positive resource to residents and visitors. By embracing the natural world that surrounds Jefferson, the city can create a safe and healthy place for residents to call home.

PROTECTING PARKS AND NATURAL SPACES

1 *Enhance and preserve parks and natural spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy.*

PARKS AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES PLANNING

1.1: Develop the mechanism to plan, acquire, develop, and maintain parks and outdoor recreation facilities.

To most effectively develop the network of parkspaces the city will need not only to have a method to acquire desirable lots that can be made into public land, but also a system in place to coordinate these purchases and park development. Establishing a parks board can help the organization accomplish the city's goals and reflect citizen interests and needs. They can also collaborate with outside organizations to connect existing or future areas into the system to most effectively create a safe and continuous network.

Action Items:

- Establish a Parks Board to oversee the development and operation of parks facilities and programs.
- Include parks maintenance and development in the City budget.
- Develop a parks master plan with a long-term program for land acquisition and park development.
- Adopt design standards for trails, parks, park equipment, facilities, and signage to have a unified, standardized system of parks.
- Write and adopt a parkland dedication ordinance within the city code to supplements new and existing parkland facilities by requiring new residential development to dedicate parkland or provide a fee-in-lieu.

- Coordinate planning, construction, and maintenance with the school district for more efficient use of resources.
- Establish shared use agreements between the ISD and City to help fund development, operation, and maintenance of shared facilities.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE

1.2: Maintain existing parks and open spaces to provide high-quality facilities.

Having the land on hand will set the base, but creating places that the community can embrace will require continuous and regular care and maintenance, as well as regular updates to the amenities that are offered as needs change.

Action Items:

- Create maintenance schedules for the current parkspace and regularly update inventory of existing parks, conditions, available recreational amenities, and cost.
- Implement a rotating maintenance schedule across all parks to ensure equal resource distribution.
- Improve the nature trail boardwalk on the Big Cypress Bayou at Port Jefferson History and Nature Center.
- Renovate and modernize current boat ramp facilities and the surrounding greenspace with lighting and Wi-Fi.
- Use volunteer labor, donated materials, or other local resources to make improvements to city parks.
- Include historic cemeteries in the City maintenance schedule to preserve status.
- Include gateways in landscaping inventory and maintenance schedule.
- Improve existing playground equipment to meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission standards.

PROGRAMMING AND AMENITIES

1.3: Improve park programming and amenities to support the overall health and well-being of all residents.

Residents of Jefferson have indicated that they want more opportunities to participate in activities and programs that get them back out into nature. By providing more park programming and amenities, the city can help residents achieve healthy habits that will improve their physical and mental health, as well as increase community bonds.

Action Items:

- Develop more programming for physical activity, including pedestrian infrastructure for walking and jogging.
- Improve park lighting to increase safety during evening hours.
- Incorporate historical markers and educational signs into parks to highlight local history and culture.
- Add benches, picnic tables, and a shelter for large gatherings, reunions, and outdoor events.
- Display art by local or regional artists by incorporating sculptures and murals into the park design.
- Construct public restrooms for West Side Park.
- Restore Cedar Grove cemetery and repair roads, flagpole, fence, and drainage.
- Explore adding splash pads, skating rink, basketball court, and other recreational amenities for kid's and youth.
- Add an amphitheater in Port Jefferson History and Nature Center as a transition space where the central business district overlooks the bayou.
- Continue collaborating with Jefferson ISD to provide school facilities for public use during non-school hours.
- Partner wtih local fitness providers to host fitness classes and session at parks.

NEW RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

1.4: Expand the network of parks and open spaces to ensure that all residents have equal access to parks and natural spaces.

Within Jefferson, there are approximately **34.65 Acres** that have development potential. While considering each site, they should also be evaluated to become parks or managed open spaces. Strategic placement of greenspace can help to mitigate runoff that would occur from concrete and asphalt paving, and also limit the number of structures built in flood prone areas. Evaluation of available greenspace should also include an assessment of the site's potential historical significance, where constructing a new building or structure might be inappropriate. Finding ways to incorporate these places into the story of Jefferson may be more meaningful as an open area or park that residents and visitors can explore.

Action Items:

- Develop adequate parks and recreational spaces in all neighborhoods, including Froggtown, Howell Town, and Sand Town.
- Work with ISD to determine additional sports facilities development in school campuses as a joint City/School project.
- Utilize vacant properties to develop parklets and pocket parks, expanding small parks in neighborhoods beyond downtown.
- Develop a central community garden for residents to grow foods and flowers for consumption.
- Develop universal design playgrounds and facilities that can be utilized by residents of all abilities.
- Set paths along pocket parks, new parks and cemeteries to provide neighborhood access to the network
- Acquire space to create trails connecting points of interests including the downtown, Lions Club Park, Westside Park, the three school campuses, and Oakwood Cemetery
- Use railroad right-of-way and utility easements for designated open space or trail systems
- Leverage National Park Service's like the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to develop and improve local park trails.
- Increase access to water providing additional boat ramps and fishing piers.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

1.5: Promote a regional network of spaces and programs to preserve and enhance the distinctive charm and beauty of East Texas.

East Texas is a vibrant and unique region, with a history that Jefferson helps to tell. By connecting with other cities and attractions in the region, residents and visitors can learn more about how Jefferson fits into the broader context of Texas and United States history, and the ecoregion that it is within.

Action Items:

- Collaborate with neighboring towns, Marion County, COG, community groups, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to create regional trail networks connecting Jefferson with Caddo Lake and Lake O' Pines.
- Establish themed trails that interconnect different parks, water bodies, and natural spaces throughout the region.
- Develop eco-friendly visitor infrastructure such as eco-lodges, camping sites, or picnic areas that blend into the natural surroundings.
- Partner with regional organizations to develop bird-watching tours and other nature-based experiences, showcasing the unique ecological assets of the East Texas region.
- Explore more opportunities to increase access to the water on Big Cypress Bayou, Black Cypress Bayou and Caddo Lake.

Themed Trails, Brownsville, TX

Themed trails can be an innovative way of interconnecting places throughout a region. The Historic Battlefield Trail in Brownsville, TX provides a 10-mile connection between the city and the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Park, where the first major battle of the Mexican American War took place in 1846. In addition to promoting the area's history through its connection to the battlefield, the trail provides walking and biking connections for residents throughout the city. Built after the city purchased an abandoned railroad in 1999, the trail connects to the larger regional Caracara Trails network which aims to connect residents to nonmotorized transportation throughout the Lower Rio Grande Valley.[4]

Figure 7.5: Art installation "Windows into History" at Port Jefferson Nature Center

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

2 *Promote community-wide environmental stewardship to protect Jefferson's natural assets.*

- Involve local service groups, garden clubs, and the Extension Service in citywide beautification and landscaping for downtown pocket parks, clean-up campaigns, and maintenance of existing park areas.
- Institute a "Keep Jefferson Beautiful" Fall/Spring Cleanup Day.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

2.1: Actively engage the community for inclusive and vibrant parks and open spaces.

While the city is creating more public and community spaces for residents to enjoy, actively pursuing the involvement of residents in how these sites are chosen and designed will help to incorporate them into the fabric of Jefferson's daily life and culture. They will also reflect the local creativity of adjacent residents and allow for unique experiences at each site.

Action Items:

- Assess the needs of Jefferson's residents on a regular basis through surveys, town meetings, or other means.
- Plan to engage the community in the planning, management, and usage of parks and natural spaces
- Engage with stakeholders to represent youth interest in parks programming, include school personnel, parents, youth, and youth-oriented organizations.
- Publicize the proposed open space and trail system to generate citizen support and awareness of the need to acquire easements/land in the designated areas
- Work with ISD, community organizations, and clubs to integrate community activities in existing and new parks, including community festivals, youth programming, general recreation activities, and meeting space for local organizations.
- Promote community health through regular outdoor fitness programs and workshops in parks.
- Develop community gardens in parks to promote healthy eating and community engagement.
- Develop a "Friends of the Park" program to encourage local volunteer participation in park maintenance and programs.

COLLABORATIVE FUNDING

2.2: Foster collaborative partnerships to support funding for parks and natural spaces.

As Jefferson expands its park network, there will be a variety of methods to maintain and fund those projects. Connecting local businesses to the process can provide a new avenue of development and local pride in protecting the beautiful greenspaces that make Jefferson such a nice place to live and visit.

Action Items:

- Establish a park endowment fund supported by local businesses, grants, and donations that could be used for maintenance and operations.
- Partner with local businesses for park sponsorship and co-promotion.
- Identify park spaces that can be rented for community events to generate revenue.
- Consider leasing open space to wireless providers and use lease revenues and fees for parks improvements
- Set up the mechanism, such as a new or existing non-profit organization, for acquiring land as it becomes available in the designated open space areas.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE

2.3: Implement sustainable practices and environmental conservation initiatives.

Jefferson can foster a sustainable and environmentally conscious community by promoting and implementing practices that preserve natural resources and enhance local ecosystems. By promoting the use of native plants and trees, establishing organic waste management, and implementing rainwater harvesting systems, the community can engage residents in biodiversity preservation and build environmental stewardship.

Action Items:

- Incorporate native plants and low-maintenance landscaping in public space and promote their use in residential areas.
- Create gardening programs that focus on native plants to preserve the local biodiversity and habitats.
- Establish a composting program in parks to promote organic waste management.
- Implement rainwater harvesting systems and and drought-tolerant landscaping in municipal facilities
- Create a tree planting program to include residents in the greenspace development process
- Increase tree planting along school buildings and public buildings.
- Collaborate with local environmental groups, schools, or businesses to organize local wildlife festival, a conservation day, or a native plant sale events.
- Work with local experts or naturalists to provide educational materials or guided tours.
- Connect with Texas A&M Forest Service urban foresters to help train local tree workers, set quality standards for tree planting and care and learn about sustainable management of trees.
- Work with the Collins Academy, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to host small landowner workshops.
- Partner with Marion-Cass Soil and Water Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to connect with resources and programs for water, soil, and habitat conservation.

Park Revenue, Upland, CA

The city of Upland, California generates a significant amount of revenue from its parks. Together, Memorial Park, San Antonio Park, and Magnolia Park bring in over $340,000 annually. The bulk of this revenue comes from leases for cell towers, while a portion of one park is also leased to a nearby hospital for parking. In a city where finances are a priority concern, these leases have enabled the parks to survive as a community resource while generating needed revenue. Whereas the city was once considering selling one of the parks to a nearby hospital for revenue, voters rejected this idea in 2020. In 2022, the city decided to allocate funds generated from the parks for maintenance and improvements at the parks themselves. The city now has additional plans to add amenities, lighting, and security at the three parks.[5]

Figure 7.6: Lifesized Stage Coach Art installation by Collin Academy

HAZARD MITIGATION AND MANAGEMENT

3 *Strengthen the community's resilience to protect the community from hazards risks.*

FLOODPLAIN REGULATIONS

3.1: Update local policies and regulations, programs, and partnerships for effective emergency management and flood mitigation.

Responding quickly and effectively can help set a community up for recovery and a return to normalcy after a disaster. Ensuring that all community partners are up-to-date on best practices and procedures will help to keep Jefferson safe and moving forward after severe weather or other emergency event.

Action Items:

- Work with the Marion County to update the County Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and adopt floodplain regulations based on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps.
- Connect with FEMA Region 6 to request NFIP FIRM map update to revise the regulatory floodplain map in Jefferson.
- Explore FEMA's Estimated Base Flood Elevation Viewer tool to review available Base Level Engineering Data.
- Stay updated on FEMA's Risk MAP project in Marion County.
- Implement a permitting process that requires all new developments, redevelopments, and substantial improvements in designated flood-prone areas to obtain a permit.
- Create appropriate ordinances and zoning to prevent development on floodplain, environmentally sensitive ecosystems and nature corridors.
- Utilize the FEMA CodeMaster design tool to incorporate flood resistance into the city code.
- Adopt stronger building codes, such as the latest SmartHome America's FORTIFIED Standard and the International Building Codes.
- Collaborate with Texas Department of Emergency Management to apply for FEMA's Flood Mitigation Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

STAFF CAPACITY AND EXPERTISE

3.2: Enhance city staff's capacity and expertise in hazard mitigation and emergency management through targeted training and development programs.

When an emergency occurs, it is imperative that the people responsible for helping everyone get through it are confident and prepared to do what needs to be done. Providing regular and specialized training in disaster management and preparedness ensures that city staff and partners are able to act quickly when they are called to do so.

Action Items:

- Connect with FEMA to get the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Training program.
- Continue working with Texas Water Development Board's East Texas Region Flood Outreach Specialist to get support for floodplain management.
- Develop a succession and training plan for the Floodplain Administrator role to ensure there is continuity for the role.
- Train city staff to become a building official or inspector to inspect compliance with floodplain management regulations.
- Organize cross-training sessions with local emergency services, including the fire department, police department, EMS, and the County EMC to broaden understanding and cooperation between these critical teams.
- Work with the County EMC, police department, fire department, EMS, and ISD to develop and maintain comprehensive emergency response plans.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

3.3: Optimize stormwater management for enhanced runoff control and effective drainage.

Protecting development from the worst of flooding and stormwater damage will help to mitigate property damage or complete loss by redirecting waters into safer discharge areas. Creating and maintaining a comprehensive system of stormwater drainage will help to keep the buildings and residents safe.

Action Items:

- Conduct a comprehensive study on stormwater runoff and the current drainage system to identify areas for improvement.
- Create and maintain an inventory of culverts and drainage ditches, including their current condition and any maintenance needs.
- Implement a regular maintenance schedule for culverts and drainage ditches to ensure they are cleared before and after rainy periods
- Include retention and detention ponds in the schedule for maintenance of the culverts and ditches for erosion and sediment control.

NATURAL SYSTEMS PROTECTION

3.4: Mitigating hazards through natural processes

Creating drains and sewers is not the only way to handle excess water. Integrating and embracing the natural world's various methods of drainage and absorption can be a low-cost and aesthetically pleasing way to use open spaces for flood mitigation and protection.

Action Items:

- Conduct studies on floodplains and drainage ways to identify opportunities for restoration and potential locations for a designated open space and/or trail system.
- Consider conservation easements to protect valuable natural areas from development.
- Explore the feasibility for the city to participate in buyouts to acquires areas prone to floodings
- Integrate green infrastructure approaches, such as rain garden, bio-swales, or vegetation buffers, in public facilities to manage stormwater and flooding.
- Collaborate with local fire departments to identify high-risk areas and implement proactive measures such as creating firebreaks or conducting controlled burns.
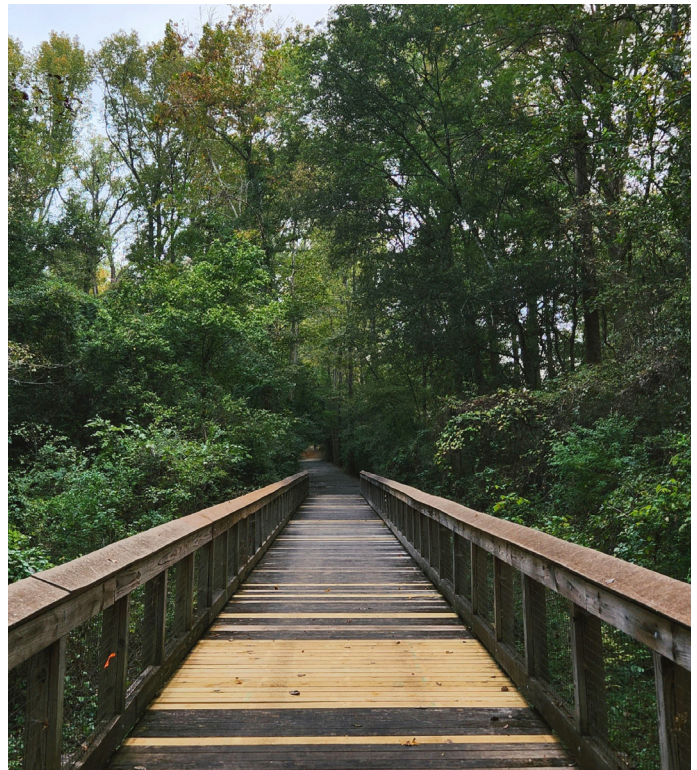
Figure 7.7: Port Jefferson History & Nature Center Trail (Source: Keerti Rath)

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP

3.6: Implement proactive environmental cleanup strategies to mitigate environmental and public health risks.

One way to manage the potential debris or obstruction that can occur during emergency events is to regularly clean and maintain water bodies and fields to lessen the number of loose branches or trash that may build up. It also helps to keep those areas safe and beautiful for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Action Items:

- Implement a regular cleanup schedule to clear creeks and other water bodies of debris that could obstruct flow during flood events.
- Regularly clear standing water bodies to prevent mosquito breeding.
- Create an insect and pest prevention plan in partnership with local environmental agencies.
- Clear downed trees and large brush on a regular basis to reduce the amount of potential fuel for wildfires, particularly in the north east and south east wooded parts of the city.
- Regularly implement a trimming program to reduce the potential for trees and branches to damage power lines
- Establish a collaborative relationship with the Nature Conservancy to stay informed about their Sustainable Rivers Program and explore opportunities for partnership

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

3.7: Promote community-wide hazard preparedness and risk awareness through comprehensive education initiatives and effective communication strategies.

While it is imperative that city staff and partners know what to do in an emergency, it is also important to ensure that residents and those who regularly deal with visitors know how to respond during emergencies. This not only will help to keep them safe, but also help to organize recovery efforts afterward when everyone knows where to go, who to contact, and what to do during and after a disaster.

Action Items:

- Establish communication systems and protocols to effectively disseminate hazard-related information to residents, stakeholders, and visitors.
- Conduct regular emergency drills, exercises, and public awareness campaigns to educate the community about emergency procedures and preparedness measures.
- Work with ISD and other community organizations to organize public education programs on preparedness.
- Conduct educational outreach programs to raise awareness about hazard risks and resilience-building practices.
- Encourage residents to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program, or similar insurance programs, to help mitigate financial losses from flooding.
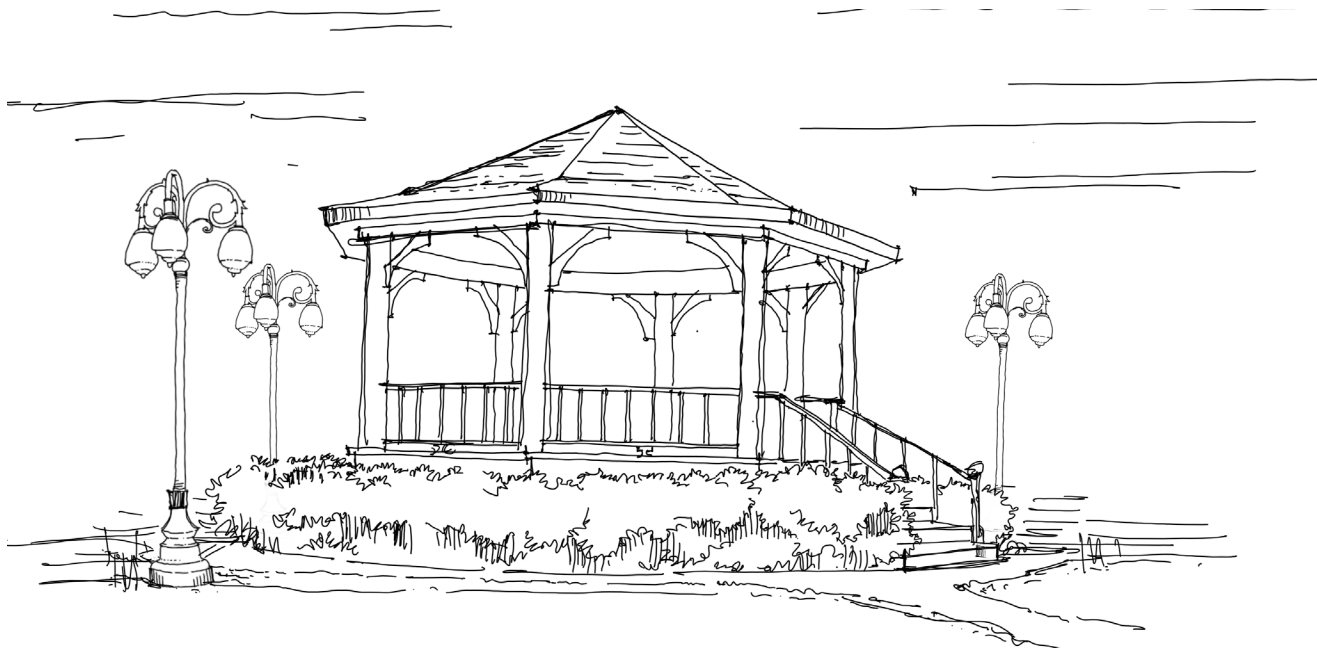
RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CONNECT WITH :

- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Marion-Cass Soil and Water Conservation District
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Texas A&M Forest Service
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
- The Nature Conservancy
- FEMA Region 6
- Texas Water Development Board's East Texas Region
- SmartHome America
- Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM)
- Texas Emergency Extension Service (TEEx)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

PARTNERS TO INCLUDE

- Marion County
- Jefferson ISD
- Jefferson Economic Development Corporation
- Marion County Chamber of Commerce
- Churches and faith-based organizations
- Jefferson Volunteer Fire Department
- Jefferson Police Department
- Emergency Medical Services
- Collins Academy

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CHAPTER 8

Reliable Infrastructure

A well-maintained and adequate infrastructure is essential for keeping a city running. Critical infrastructure, such as the road network, utility services, water, sewer, and communication services, enhances the quality of life for residents and supports the needs of businesses and visitors. In Jefferson, there is a need to update and maintain these systems. While transportation improvements are often the most visible and frequently discussed, other essential systems like utilities and broadband access are equally important. This chapter explores how the city can improve these infrastructure and services to better support the community.

Current Conditions

TRANSPORTATION

Roads are one of the most used and visible infrastructures and are vital to a city's functioning and activities. Other types of transportation infrastructure are less obvious, such as pedestrian modes and paths for small electric vehicles such as golf carts and scooters. Together, these infrastructures form a complete transportation network and facilitate community connection, access to services, and economic development. The City of Jefferson has 75.6 miles of streets in their street system.

Building Foot Print
— Local Roads
Road Classification
— Major Collector
— Minor Arterial
— Principal Arterial
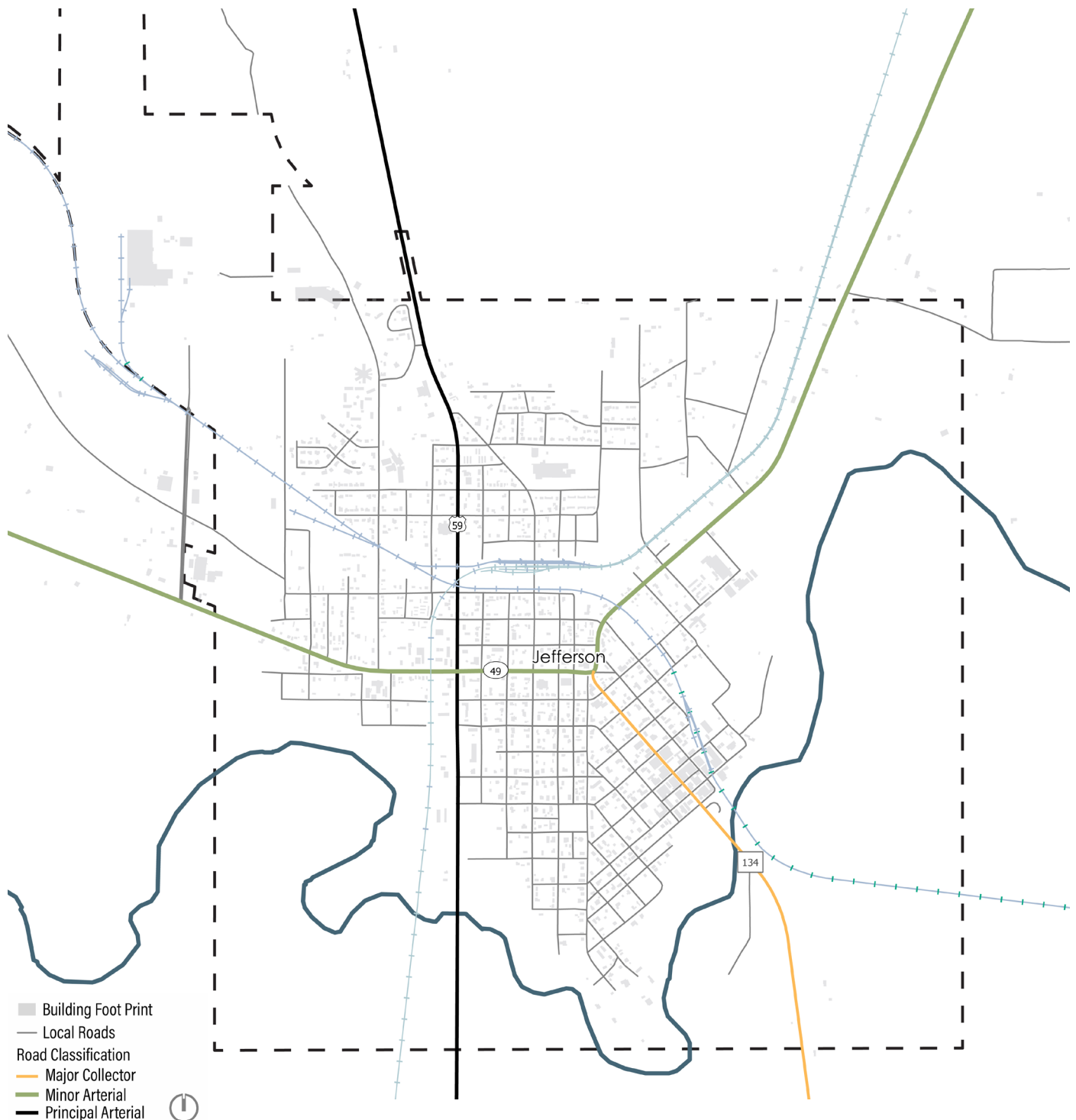
Figure 8.1: Road Functional Classification in Jefferson Texas

Road Classifications

Road classification definitions are determined by the U.S. Department of Transportation and cover the roadbed size, expected speed limits, and the road's intended purpose in the system network. Figure 8.1 shows the current roadway classifications in Jefferson, provided by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). It does not cover pedestrian facilities, or modes that are not personal or commercial vehicles.

Principal Arterial - Principal arterials are highways that support the Interstate System, with speed limits usually between 50 and 70 mph. Their primary purpose is to move traffic quickly rather than to provide access to nearby land. An example in Jefferson is US 59.

Minor Arterial - Minor Arterials provide service for trips of moderate length, serve smaller geographic areas, and offer connectivity to major arterials. An example of a minor arterial roadway in Jefferson is SH 49.

Major Collector - Collectors are major and minor roads that connect local roads with arterials. They offer a balance between mobility and land access, with speed limits usually between 35 and 55 mph. An example of a major collector roadway in Jefferson is FM 134.

Local Road - Local roads are the most common type of road, providing access to homes, businesses, farms, and other local areas. Their speed limits are usually between 20 and 45 mph. Roads not classified as arterials or collectors are considered local roads.

Road Conditions

According to a development capacity survey completed by Schaumburg & Polk, Inc. in 2019, there are several streets in Jefferson considered to be in poor condition. This means that the surface condition and the structural integrity of the roadbed are in need of repair or replacement.

SPI Planning and Capacity Study (2019)

In 2019, the City of Jefferson contracted Shaumburg & Polk, Inc. (SPI) to perform a planning capacity study. In the study, they covered the water, sewer, and road systems as well as an assessment of the city's greenspaces and recreational facilities. The report includes suggested schedules for infrastructure maintenance and estimated costs for improvements. Aspects of the study have been incorporated into this comprehensive plan.

Figure 8.2: Port Jefferson Outpost, N Polk St, Jefferson, TX.

Figure 8.3: Exisitng Street Condition Map

Legend:
- Building Foot Print
- Major Roads
- Poor
- Fair
- Good

Pedestrian Infrastructure

Jefferson has many factors in its favor for walkability and pedestrian safety. There is a relatively low traffic volume, and the relatively small size of the city's footprint means that most places are accessible within 20 minutes on foot. At the moment though, the sidewalk infrastructure and other pedestrian facilities are not complete and are in need of maintenance and completion along major thoroughfares like Martin Luther King Jr Drive.

Traffic Safety

TXDOT provides data on where crashes and other accidents occur on public roadways. The data shows the highest crash density is at the intersection of SH 49 and US 59, significantly over other hotspots in the city. Many of the hotspots are at intersections, indicating a need to reevaluate how they are designed or regulated. There are also hotspots at the intersection by Jefferson High School and Jefferson Primary School, and will require working with JISD to ensure safety for students and drivers in the area.

Building Foot Print
Local Roads
TxDOT Bike Tourism Trail
Existing Sidewalks
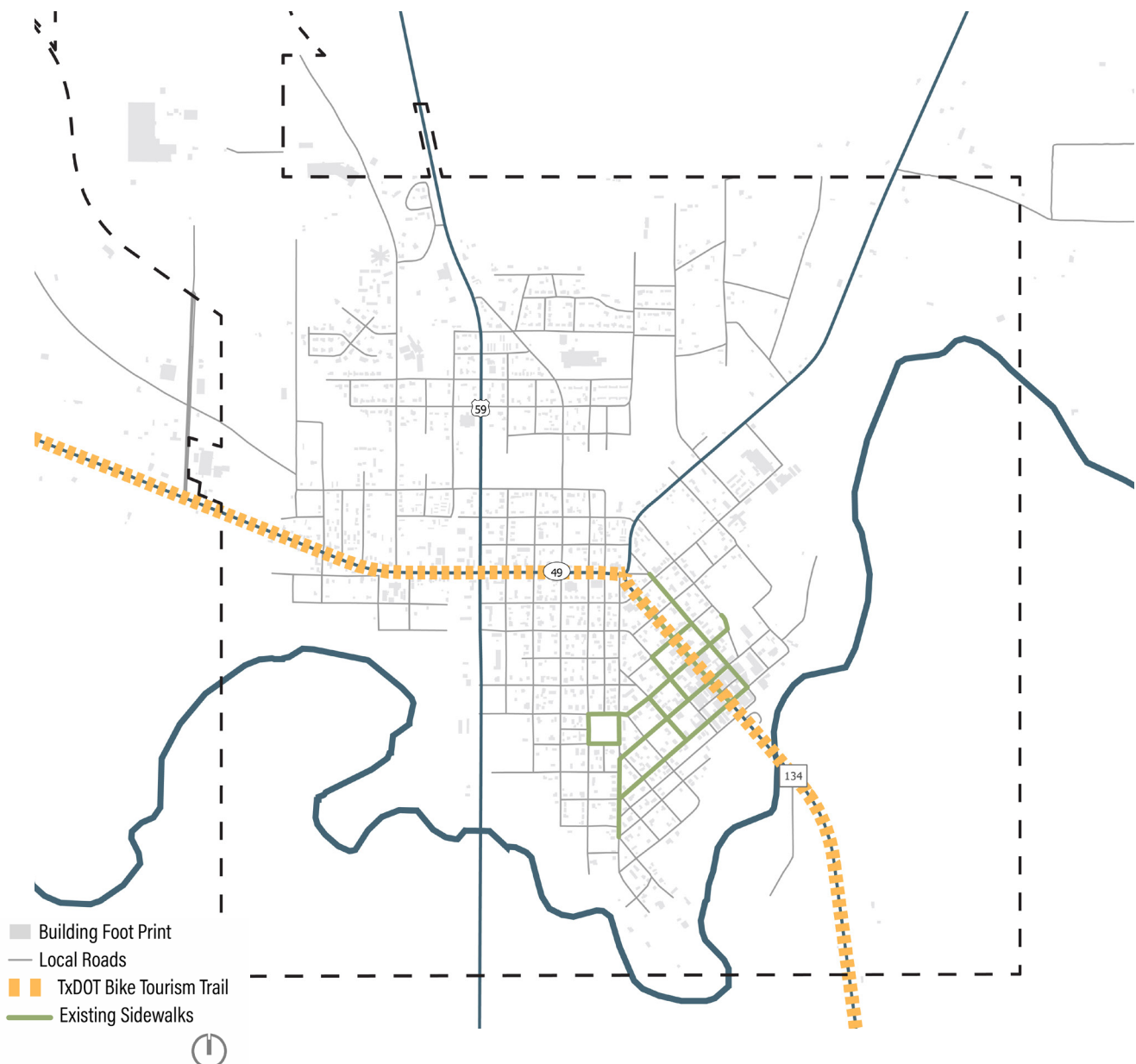
Figure 8.4: Exisitng Sidewalk Map

TXDOT PROJECTS

Jefferson and Marion County fall within the Atlanta TXDOT district. In 2023-2024, the only TXDOT projects that are active in Jefferson are short-term maintenance and safety improvements, see Figure 8.5 and Table 8.1.

Figure 8.5: Current and Upcoming Projects in Jefferson

US 59 to US 69 Conversion

"As part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, the I-69 System is being developed through a series of incremental upgrades and relief route projects to bring highways up to interstate standards. The process of updating highways to interstate standards will be a decades-long process. When completed, the I-69 system will extend through Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, and Michigan providing a new continuous interstate corridor connecting Mexico, the United States, and Canada." - Texas Department of Transportation website

For Jefferson, the I-69 system will see the current I-59, upgraded or rerouted to accommodate increased freight traffic. At this time, TxDOT has not released its plan for the section within Jefferson and has not indicated that any I-69 upgrades are to begin within Marion County for the next 10 years.

Project Area	Project Status	Description
SH-49, from FM-729 to FM-881	Construction begins within the next 4 years	Overlay: Adding a layer of asphalt or concrete to a road to address minor cracks and potholes
US-49, FM-134 to 0.629 miles west of SH-43	Underway or begins soon	Safety Improvements: edge and centerline markings
US-59, SH-49 to 0.9 miles north of SH-49	Underway or begins soon	Overlay: Adding a layer of asphalt or concrete to a road to address minor cracks and potholes
US-59, 2 miles north of SH-49	Underway or begins soon	Seal Coat
FM-134, 0.5 miles north of FM 2208 to 0.5 miles south of FM-2208	Construction begins within the next 4 years	Safety Improvements: Illumination/Street lighting
FM-134, FM-2208 to Harrison County Line	Underway or begins soon	Seal Coat

Table 8.1: Current and Upcoming Projects in Jefferson

WATER AND SEWER

In Jefferson, the water infrastructure is expansive, but aging. According to the capacity survey from Schaumburg & Polk, Inc., a majority of the water pipes in the city are over 25 years old and in need of repairs or replacement. The center of the city has seen replacements recently but the northern half of the city, in particular, needs attention. There is also a pipe laid west of US 59 in the Froggtown area. To properly support future development, repairs, and improvements will need to be made in the water system. Similarly, the wastewater system needs improvement due to overall age and condition in much the same areas as the potable water.
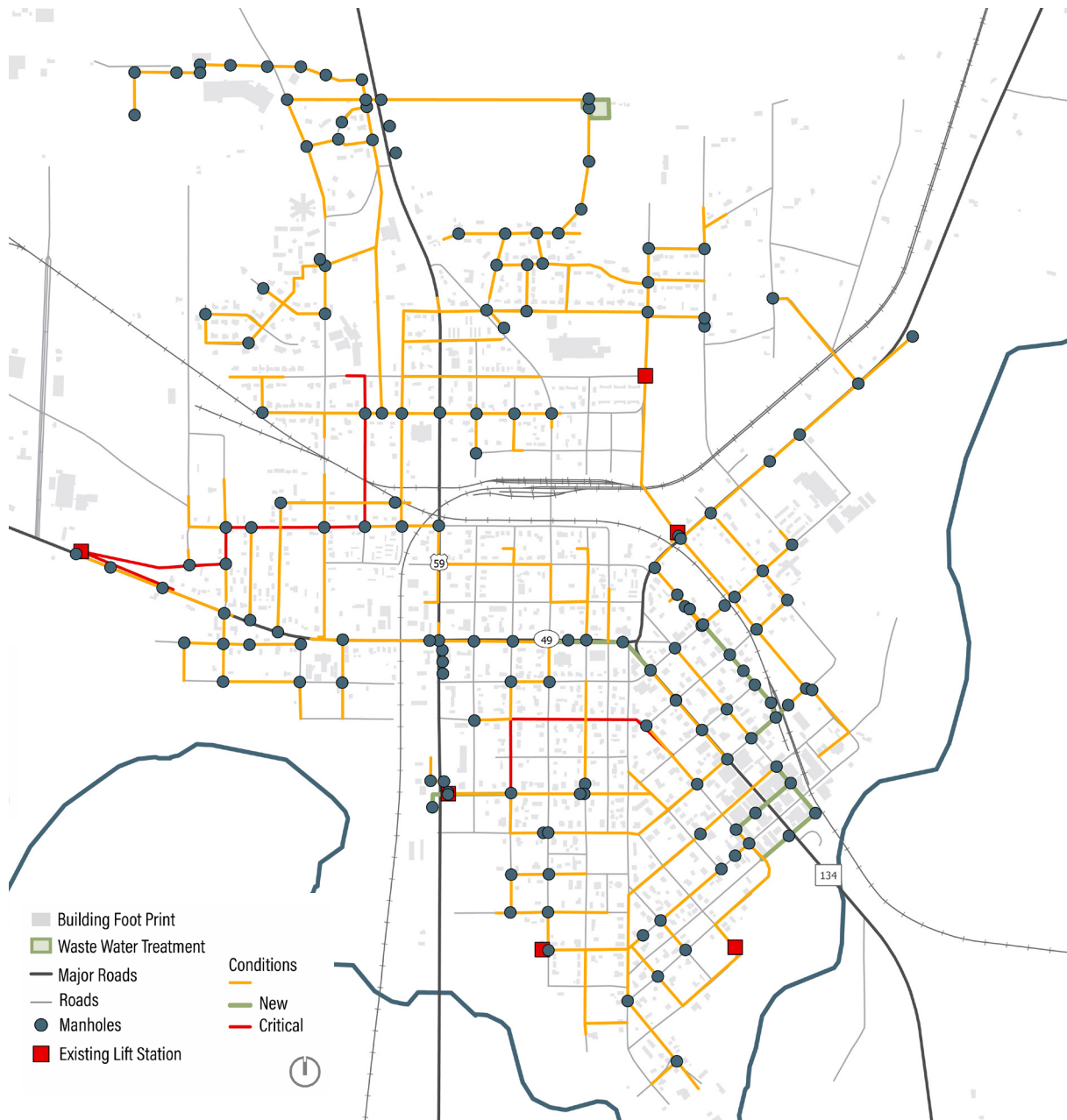
Figure 8.6: Current Coverage Map

BROADBAND AND ENERGY

Like many rural and exurban areas, broadband internet is not fully accessible in Jefferson and Marion County. Connecting residents to broadband services in their homes or public areas is important for accessing various services and programs that are available, such as bill payments, telehealth services, and employment opportunities. According to the 5-Year American Community Survey in 2022, 78.3% of residents had broadband, compared to the state average of 91.5%. Additionally, 32.3% of residents claimed to only have a cellular data plan with no other broadband plan, whereas only 12.5% of the entire state population has only a cellular plan.

ETCOG Broadband Study and Action Plan

In 2023, the East Texas Council of Governments released a Broadband Study and Action Plan for each of the 14 counties in the membership area. In all, the COG identifies 65 projects in the 14-county region, each consisting mostly of last-mile broadband improvements.

In collaboration with a local government task force, the East Texas Regional Broadband Initiative, Design Nine Broadband Partners, and TDC2 (a consulting, engineering, and broadband construction firm) the Marion County component of the broadband plan provides a framework for expanding broadband access in the county. Additional analysis in the plan includes an overview of current broadband technology, broadband construction, expansion, and repair guidelines, along with funding resources.
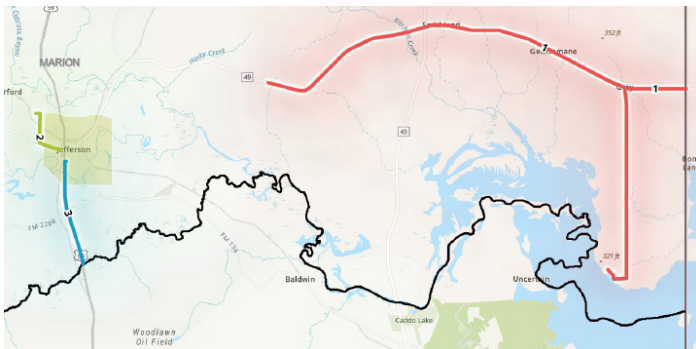
Figure 8.7: Broadband Projects Identified by the ETCOG Marion County Broadband Study and Action Plan
(Source: https://go.etcog.org/ETCOGBroadbandInitiative)

The plan identifies six high-priority broadband projects and identifies next steps for completing these. According to the plan, most of the city of Jefferson is underserved by broadband providers (or lacking in a 25/3 Mbps internet speed). The projects identified in the plan include a business development stretch along Hwy 49 running east and south from Jefferson toward the Louisiana state line, a West Fraser business development project, an additional business development stretch running south from Jefferson, a project serving Cypress airport south of Jefferson, and a project serving residential development near Bayou Run east of Jefferson.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Avoiding Maintenance Creep - Keeping infrastructure in good order takes time and resources that can feel burdensome when there are other projects that require funding. Even so, putting off maintenance can compound both the severity of the issues in need of addressing and the associated costs of repairing them. Following a maintenance plan and schedule can help to tackle large issues in smaller pieces, and avoid problems in the future.

Supporting Development - When encouraging developers and business owners to operate on existing infrastructure, ensuring that it will meet their needs and not burden their neighbors is vital. Including upgrades and improvements in the redevelopment and development process either with or for a new development will help new and existing businesses to operate consistently.

Public Feedback

While public comments were being collected, residents identified areas and concepts that they would like to see improved for Jefferson's various infrastructure systems. Roads and sidewalk improvements were the most common comments for infrastructure, particularly improvements that would make areas around schools safer. Water, sewer, and broadband access were identified as lacking coverage or stability. Various aspects of civic infrastructure and city management, such as recycling and waste management were also identified as things that residents wanted more opportunities to take advantage of.

TRANSPORTATION

Road maintenance and safety are issues that residents would like to see addressed, particularly around schools and in downtown areas. Lighting, sidewalks, and better routing for high-traffic times around trains and schools would be preferred.

- Street signs not placed properly or nonexistent
- lack of street lighting
- trains divert other traffic to neighborhoods
- For safety, there needs to be a sidewalk between the elementary school and the high school. Children are walking down basically a one-lane road with buses and cars passing.

WATER AND SEWER

There are areas of Jefferson that do not have reliable water and sewer coverage, and the system is old and in need of repair. There are also areas where sewage backs up and is ex posed to the surface. The residents would like to see this system updated before it gets meaningfully expanded.

- Froggtown - improving drainage with city
- No sewer available on the property
- Need to extend sewer

BROADBAND

Internet access and coverage are not entirely universal for Jefferson or the surrounding area. With many of the current services and programs being operated online, from public to private sectors, more needs to be done to expand the options and services that are available to residents.

- We need reliable rural internet options.
- Internet--when it comes to the citizens who live outside of city limits and have to get satellite internet for service… and it's still slow.

CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Residents would like to see more options that allow them to dispose of waste and rubbish in environmentally friendly ways. Connecting with waste management services or providing a local recycling service would help residents fulfill this goal. Additionally, residents would like for city hall and the fire station to be rehoused in more adequate facilities.

- There is no recycling available in our county. The closest available is in Marshall.
- Having some bins here in town would be great, especially for glass. Harrison County does not recycle glass which is probably the most used product in Jefferson due to our affinity for wine and bottled beers.
- City Hall needs moving or demolition
- The fire station needs to be relocated to the existing lot on Broadway

"Village planning, whether original or continuous, is the foresighted application of ordinary business methods in making public and private improvements, so that physical development will go hand in hand with social and industrial progress. IIt is not just a new way of spending money. It is the application of good business principles to the necessary spending of money; the spending of a little today that a much greater amount maybe saved later. It is real conservation of public property and genuine economy of public funds."
- Rural Planning: The Village, USDA Farmers' Bulletin No. 1441 (rev. 1935)

Moving Forward

As Jefferson looks towards completing the goals it sets for itself in its economy, health and safety, and sustainability, it will need to have the infrastructure in place to meet those new and changing demands. These improvements to the built systems that support daily life and stability will keep residents safer and businesses and services more accessible. When residents can confidently rely on the infrastructure they need to accomplish their day-to-day routines and their larger goals, they can better support themselves and thrive in their community.

TRANSPORTATION

1 *Create and maintain roads and policies that ensure safety for all road users.*

ROAD MAINTENANCE

1.1: Improve and maintain the current road system.

Providing safe roads is not only the quality of the road surface but also signage and lighting that allows travelers to assess where they are quickly. Ensuring roads are properly maintained also lessens the risk of vehicle damage from potholes or loose debris.

Action Items:

- Resurface roads that have potholes and damage
- Create and implement a regular maintenance schedule for roads and paths to ensure continued quality and safety.
- Improve street lighting for cars and pedestrians
- Create wayfinding signage for all roads and paths
- Create gateway plan for visitor wayfinding at major access points, including Hw 59, Hwy 49, and S Polk St.

ROAD CAPACITY

1.2: Improve traffic flow in high-traffic areas.

While overall traffic is low in Jefferson, there are still areas that become congested and result in bottlenecks and dangerous intersections. By modifying road designs and policies, these issues can be lessened and mitigated. This will likely require working with outside organizations like TXDOT and the railroads in order to successfully achieve the desired traffic flow.

Action Items:

- Implement the recommendation in the Planning & Capacity Building Study for road improvements (Table 8.2).
- Connect roads, such as Haywood St and Bulldog Dr, to increase routing options and reduce congestion.
- Conduct a feasibility study for creating an under/overpass to bypass the train tracks on US 59 at Turtle Street.
- Coordinate with TXDOT on planned projects, such as the IH-69 conversion.

Project Location	Limits	Length (LF)	Paving Width	Phase
Watson	Sedberry to Laverne	1,125	20'	1
Dixon St	Walcott St. to S. Line St.	1,825	18'	1
Dallas St.	S. Line St. to Vale St	1,525	15'	1
Lake St.	S. Line St. to Marshall St.	1,150	20'	2
Vale St.	Line to Henderson	950	20'	2
Marshall St.	Line to Camp	1,600	15'	2
Taylor	S. Friou St. to Main	750	15'	2
S. Bridge	Bonham St. to Jefferson	1,500	20'	3
Elizabeth	Walcott St. to St. John	2,000	20'	3
Webster	Owen St. to N. Main St.	1,100	20'	3
Sedberry	Sedberry	1,100	20'	3

Table 8.2: Planning & Capacity Building Study Street Improvement 10-year Recommendations

ROAD SAFETY

1.3: Use traffic calming techniques and partnerships to improve safety for all road users and improve experience for properties adjacent to thoroughfares.

Road safety is a balance of road design and the desire of drivers to get to their destinations as quickly as possible. Often, roads are designed to be wide and straight, which encourages faster speeds and does not require as much driver attention to navigate. These faster speeds and lack of impediments can make individuals who are outside of cars on the road feel unsafe or in genuine danger. Modifying the roadway to be more complex and narrower can make drivers slow down to comfortably navigate, and also encourage looking to the side of the road for potential pedestrians or other vehicles. The term for this type of road modification is called traffic calming, and there are many methods that can be implemented to achieve the desired speed and attention goals.

Action Items:

- Lower speed limits around pedestrian-heavy areas.
- Adjust design guidelines that encourage more careful driving, such as curb extensions and pedestrian medians.
- Work with the railroad to establish a quiet zone in Jefferson.

Examples of Traffic Calming Techniques

For example, a chicane, or a series of alternating blocks that cause the lane to wind back and forth requires a driver to slow to comfortably pass. At corners, a curb bulb or extension sharpens turns, forcing drivers to slow down in order to make them safely. It also provides pedestrians with additional space that is more visible to drivers, allowing them to be seen around parked cars or other sidewalk furniture. Implementation of traffic calming designs can be done in commercial or residential areas and is helpful for encouraging walkability.

Chicane
Chicanes slow drivers by alternating parking or curb extensions along the
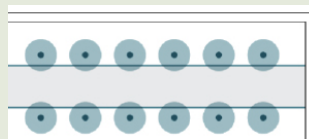
Street Trees
Trees narrow a driver's visual field and

MULTIMODAL ACCESS

1.4: Expand and improve multimodal access in Jefferson.

As the city looks to improve walkability, identifying areas that are in need of updated or complete pedestrian facilities will be vital for connecting residents to the services and amenities that they need. Additionally, expanding the current network will help to connect all areas so that residents can get where they want to go safely and efficiently. As part of this network expansion, Jefferson can also take advantage of currently undeveloped and unused land, like the old railroad trestle, which can be redesigned and used as a biking and walking trail.

Action Items:

- Complete and expand sidewalk network, including on S Walcott St, S Line St, W Camp St, N Walnut St, Watson St, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.
- Add bike lanes to appropriate roads.
- Create multimodal paths for pedestrians and golf carts.
- Assist local businesses with adding new bike infrastructure to their properties.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

1.5: Implement a Safe Routes to School program with JISD.

"Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is an approach that promotes walking and bicycling to school through infrastructure improvements, enforcement, tools, safety education, and incentives to encourage walking and bicycling to school. Nationally, 10%–14% of car trips during morning rush hour are for school travel. SRTS initiatives improve safety and levels of physical activity for students. SRTS programs can be implemented by a department of transportation, metropolitan planning organization, local government, school district, or even a school."

- U.S. Department of Transportation

Action Items:

- Create pedestrian routes that connect neighborhoods to all schools in Jefferson.
- Educate students and parents on pedestrian safety practices.
- Create an incentive program for students to encourage walking and biking to school.

Combining mixed-use trails and greenspace

Parks distributed throughout a community provide not only recreation space, but can also act as a way to connect different areas with paths and trails. These paths can be used to link existing green spaces and areas of interest with new or extended path networks that allow residents and visitors to wander the city in safety. Developing trails that permit multiple modes of transportation, such as biking, walking, and golf carts, provide greater accessibility for all residents and visitors.

Figure 8.8: Red Bus Cupcakes, Jefferson, TX

GOLF CART SAFETY

1.6: Regulate golf carts to ensure safe usage.

Golf carts and similar personal vehicles are a great way to travel more sustainably and conveniently and also are safer for pedestrians due to their lower speeds and weights compared to average motor vehicles. Making sure the carts are being used on the appropriate roads and being driven by trained drivers is important for ensuring that they are being operated safely for all road users.

Action Items:

- Create signs and maps of approved golf cart paths and routes.
- Implement a registration system for carts and drivers, including rentals.
- Determine an appropriate battery/vehicle size that can be used on multimodal paths and surface roads.
- Create designated golf cart parking in commercial areas.

Peachtree City, GA: Golf Cart Network

Peachtree City, GA has a large golfing and recreation community that caters to locals and visitors alike. The city was chartered in 1959 as multiple subdivisions that were linked by walking paths, laying the groundwork for the multimodal network they enjoy today. For residents looking for quick easy ways to get around town, the ubiquitous golf carts became the mode of choice. Over the years, the city has grown and expanded its network, accommodating for slightly wider paths that can meet the needs of all types of golf carts, scooters, bikes, and walkers. The network interacts and diverges from streets to make getting around safe and convenient for non-motor-vehicle road users. Part of the success of this system is the ordinances and regulations that control what paths golf carts are allowed to use, the process for registering the carts, and the licensing for drivers as young as 14 years old to be able to drive them. Special parking is also made available, and due to the compact size of the carts, can accommodate much larger quantities of vehicles than typical parking can for regularly-sized cars and trucks.

WATER AND SEWER

2 *Provide clean, safe, and reliable water and wastewater service to residents, visitors, and businesses*

MAINTENANCE

2.1: Develop a system to update and maintain a complete water and sewer system.

In order to support and maintain future development, the city-provided utilities need to be able to handle new and existing properties safely. Following an action plan helps to organize funds and the various parties involved in keeping the system up-to-date and functioning.

Action Items:

- Assess the current conditions of the water and wastewater system and identify gaps and maintenance needs.
- Develop and adopt a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan that includes water and sewage projects.
- Secure funding, both internal and external, for water and sewage system improvements.
- Work with ETCOG to apply to the TWDB for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds which provide low-interest and forgivable loans for water and sewer infrastructure.
- Assess progress regularly and update the Capital Improvement Plan annually.

INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE

2.2: Strengthen and modernize water and wastewater infrastructure

As Jefferson encourages new developments, the water and wastewater systems will need to be updated and improved in order to properly support the additional stress on the system while continuing to provide service to existing properties.

Action Items:

- Upgrade pipe capacity to ensure full coverage of Jefferson as outlined in the 2021 Planning and Building Capacity Study (Tables 8.3-8.5)
- Prioritize areas with limited or no water access in the current system.
- Meet the minimum capacity standards as outlined in 290.45 of Title 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 290 – Public Drinking Water.
- Upgrade the drainage system as outlined in the 2021 Planning and Building Capacity Study, with special attention to flood-prone areas. (Table 8.6-8.8)
- Floodproof critical infrastructure such as water pumps, lift stations, and water plants with submersible pumps and weather-proofed lift stations.

Project Location	Limits
E Watson	N Main to Friou
N Friou Street	E. Watson to E. Broadway
Elizabeth	N. Friou to N. Walcott
W. Austin Street	S. Soda Street to S. Line Street
E Henderson	Washington to N. Market Street

Table 8.3: Phase 1 of Recommended Waterline Improvements

Project Location	Limits
Polk Street	Austin Street to S. Line Street
Soda Street	Orleans to End of Soda Street
W. Bateman Alley	N. Vale Street to N. Market Street
W. Lafayette	N. Polk Street to N. Vale Street
Austin Alley	Walnut to Dallas Street to Washington
Washington Street	Austin Alley/Washington to St. John

Table 8.4: Phase 2 of Recommended Waterline Improvements

Project Location	Limits
Old Colony Rd	NETMUD Pump Station to Haywood St
E. Clay	N. Main St. to St. John
N. Bridge St	E. Clay to E. Broadway
N. Friou	E. Walker St. to E. Broadway
S. Line St.	EST on Camp St. to E. Walker St
Houston St.	Common St. to S. Line St.

Table 8.5: Phase 3 of Recommended Waterline Improvements

Project Location	Limits
Blackburn Lift Station	Blackburn Lift Station Rehab
Plantation Lift Station	Plantation Lift Station Rehab
Marshall Lift Station	Marshall Lift Station Rehab
Sandtown Lift Station	Sandtown Lift Station Rehab
HWY 49 West Lift Station	HWY 49 West Lift Station Rehab
Cemetery Lift Station	Cemetery Lift Station Rehab
N. Polk St	W. Bonham St. to E. Henderson S
N. Broadway St.	Alley St. to Crawford St
N. Soda St.	Bonham St. to Saint Anne St.

Table 8.6: Phase 1 of Recommended Sewer Improvements

Project Location	Limits
Walnut St.	E. Bonham St. to E. Dallas St
S. Friou St.	E. Delta St. to E. Walker St.
E. Walker St.	S. Friou St. to S. Line St.
N. Vale St.	S. Line St. to Lift Station 1
SH 49 W. (TxDOT ROW)	Black Cypress St. to Lift Station 1

Table 8.7: Phase 2 of Recommended Sewer Improvements

Project Location	Limits
Lee St.	SH 49 W. to Black Cypress St.
Black Cypress St.	Lee St. to W. Watson St.
W. Watson St.	Black Cypress St. to N. Willard St.
N. Willard St.	W. Watson St. to W. Harrison St.
Walnut St.	E. Dallas St. to E. Bonham St.

Table 8.8: Phase 3 of Recommended Sewer Improvements

As part of the Texas Administrative Code, Texas Commision on Environmental Quality sets forth Minimum Water System Capacity Requirements for public drinking water systems in the state. These standards set forth a minimum water pressure and storage capacity, along with a water treatment protocol. The code also sets minimum requirements for fire safety and emergency preparedness, including mandatory reviews of an emergency preparedness plan every three years and additional reviews after specific conditions occur in a utility district. The code also includes separate requirements for community water systems, governing surface and groundwater systems.

SYSTEM CAPACITY

2.3: Ensure new developments are built with sufficient and high-quality water and sewer infrastructure

New developments may prefer or require being placed further away from the current water lines and require new pipes to be laid. Establishing regulations and requirements that ensure adequate coverage and support will help to maintain the quality and longevity of the system.

Action Items:

- Create standard engineering drawings showing the placement, depth, and location of utilities within utility easements to add to the design guidelines, including preferred materials or other specifications that the City uses for water and sewer lines.
- Amend the subdivision regulations to require developers to provide a performance bond (guaranteeing project completion) and maintenance bond for new developments.
- Develop and officially adopt a water conservation and drought contingency plan.
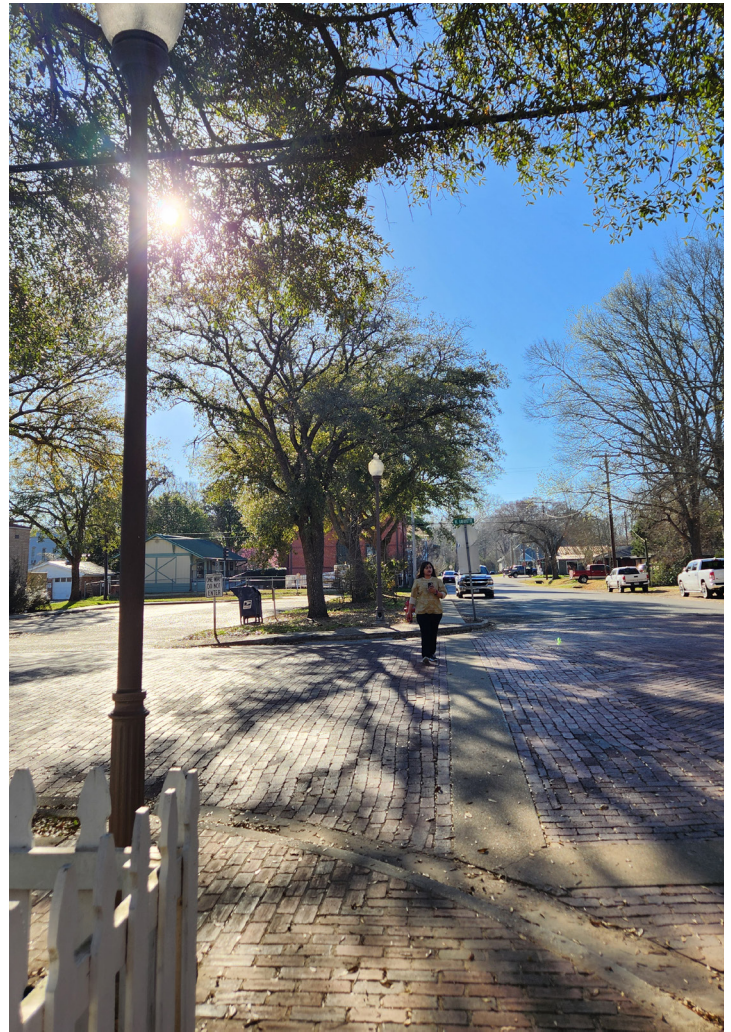
Figure 8.9: N Market St, Jefferson, TX

BROADBAND AND TELECOMMUNICATION ACCESS

3 *Ensure comprehensive telecommunication and broadband coverage for all residents of the City of Jefferson.*

COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION

3.1: Achieve universal telecommunication and broadband access with enhanced quality and reliability of internet services.

Access to broadband internet and other telecommunication services is essential for interacting with other community members, services, and necessary amenities. Additionally, education and work opportunities are being provided or supported by online features that require reliable access. Improving connectivity and education on using the internet safely can help to increase access to these services.

Action Items:

- Work with Marion County to apply for Texas Broadband Development Office & BEAD Program for grants and financial incentives to expand broadband access
- Partner with internet service providers (ISPs) to map current coverage gaps and prioritize expansion in underserved areas.
- Work with providers to upgrade existing infrastructure for broadband and cellular networks to ensure higher speeds, better reliability, and wider coverage.
- Secure financing using programs like USDA Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees for broadband expansion

AFFORDABLE AND EQUITABLE SERVICE

3.2: Promote programs that support affordable and equitable access to telecommunications

Even as telecommunications are so important for everyday activities, access to them can be impacted by their cost and service areas. Connecting residents and businesses with programs and services that make broadband access more affordable is one way that the City can support equitable access.

Action Items:

- Provide residents with information on programs like the FCC Affordable Connectivity Program and Lifeline Program that provide discounts on internet and telephone services to eligible households.
- Apply to USDA Community Connect grants to connect residents, businesses, and community facilities in areas lacking sufficient broadband speed.
- Partner with healthcare providers to leverage the FCC Rural Health Care Program.
- Promote USDA Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grants to develop telecommunication infrastructure for distance learning and telemedicine.

DIGITAL LITERACY

3.3: Foster digital literacy and digital skills education

Technology advances swiftly in the 21st century, and new methods of computers, phones, and other devices and services arise frequently. Providing access to educational opportunities that train and give experience with new technologies helps not only to improve general knowledge but also to help less experienced users protect themselves online and over the phone.

Action Items:

- Collaborate with Texas Workforce Commission Adult Education and Literacy program to provide digital literacy training for adult learners.
- Partner with local libraries, schools, and community centers to offer digital literacy training and workshops.

CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

4 *Elevate city infrastructure and community services to meet current and future community needs.*

CIVIC BUILDINGS

4.1: Identify and right-size city buildings for desired uses.

To promote efficient city operations, the buildings they happen in need to fulfill their functions with ease and at an appropriate scale. Choosing the appropriate facilities will help to right-size the civic footprint and operational costs associated with building maintenance.

Action Items:

- Conduct a comprehensive audit of existing city buildings to determine how to right-size or repurpose them.
- Assess and determine combinations or groupings of services in city buildings to minimize construction needs.
- Establish disaster response facilities in all new and existing government buildings.
- Use the community's comments and land suitability analysis to select a new site for city hall.
- Rehabilitate or redevelop the old city hall site.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

4.2: Transition civic buildings to sustainable energy sources and promote energy efficiency in the community.

Promoting energy efficiency through example not only encourages a more sustainable system but also allows the City to take advantage of lower annual energy costs, which can free up future funds to allocate to other projects. It also allows the City to demonstrate to business and property owners the process for energy efficiency projects that they can implement.

Action Items:

- Install solar panels on the roofs of civic buildings to harness renewable energy.
- Upgrade windows in existing buildings to more energy-efficient types.
- Launch an education campaign to inform residents and businesses about best practices for increasing energy efficiency..
- Facilitate connections for residents with state and federal energy conservation programs.

Civic Buildings

Warren Woods School District in Michigan recently launched a transformative sustainability initiative for its school buildings. By reducing water and power consumption, the project aims to save money and contribute to the fiscal soundness of the district. Leveraging funding from the federal Inflation Reduction Act, the project, which was led by Ameresco consultants, includes the installation of LED lighting, water-saving plumbing fixtures, and a new sustainable HVAC system. The project also utilizes geothermal energy, along with sustainable roofing and solar systems in its makeover of all school buildings in the district.

PUBLIC UTILITIES AND SERVICES

4.3: Ensure equitable access to essential public utilities and services for all residents.

Public utilities help to ensure service for residents to rely on. Providing resources that educate and inform residents on what services are available and how to access them can help all members of the community by mitigating rubbish and maintaining constant service.

Action Items:

- Identify and connect residents outside the current water and sewer service areas.
- Partner with a solid waste management company to extend comprehensive service to all properties within the ETJ.
- Develop a municipal regular trash pick-up service to meet community needs.

CITY OPERATIONS

4.4: Strengthen city governance and enhance operational efficiency for effective service delivery.

For city operations, having the people available to tackle issues affecting the community is the first step towards getting them handled. Having teams that can begin and complete tasks before their tenure ends can also help to see projects completed in a timely manner.

Action Items:

- Hire a part-time building official for permits and safety inspections.
- Consider extending the terms of the mayor and city council for better continuity and stability in governance.
- Appoint a city administrator to lead administrative operations.

RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS TO CONNECT WITH :

- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- Texas Broadband Development Office
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
- National Rural Water Association
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- Texas Water Development Board
- US Economic Development Administration
- Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM)
- Texas Emergency Extension Service (TEEx)
- Texas Municipal League

PARTNERS TO INCLUDE

- Property Owners
- Developers
- Industries
- Electricity providers
- Entergy Texas
- Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT)
- Public Safety
- Fire Departments
- Liberty County Building Maintenance Department
- Telecommunications providers
- East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG)
- Texas Department of Transportation
- Atlanta District Office
- Jefferson ISD
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
- Keep Texas Recycling (KTR) Program
- Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)
- East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG)
- East Texas Economic Development District (ETEDD)
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) North East Texas Regional Water Planning Area (Region D)

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CHAPTER 9

Implementation

The Comprehensive Plan and its goals, objectives, and action items embody Jefferson's vision for the future. To realize this vision, implementation must be an organized and deliberate process that aligns with the community's needs, opportunities, and ongoing initiatives.

These recommendations are more than a list of tasks; they outline a coordinated process involving various community leaders to achieve the stated goals and objectives, enhancing Jefferson's overall quality of life.

This Comprehensive Plan is designed to be a 'living document,' regularly reviewed and updated. The Implementation Table outlines recommended policy changes, goals, objectives, and actions, along with a timeline and responsible parties. It also identifies potential funding sources, including grants. Continuous evaluation and monitoring are essential to maintain the plan's relevance and effectiveness.

Plan Maintenance

Stakeholders and those responsible for specific action items must ensure these tasks are completed to benefit the community. The city can amend the Comprehensive Plan to respond to changing conditions or community needs, improve or clarify content, or incorporate other plans and documents. To monitor Jefferson's progress, the Implementation Table categorizes action steps as follows:

- Short-term: 0 - 5 years
- Medium-term: 5 - 10 years
- Long-term: 10 - 20 years
- Continuous: Ongoing

Action Types

- Capital Project Program: Significant investments in city assets included in the capital improvement program (CIP), such as infrastructure, drainage improvements, park facilities, and public buildings.
- Regulation or Standard: Local policies adopted as part of development regulations and city standards.
- Partnership or Collaboration: Actions requiring coordination with other agencies, organizations, or companies, fostering partnerships and resilience.
- More Targeted Planning: Additional studies, plans, and reports for detailed analysis or specific solutions.

Action Leaders

Identifying action leaders for specific tasks helps maintain transparency and consistency across departments and organizations, ensuring coordinated efforts to improve the community.

Funding Sources & Partnerships

Jefferson can access various internal and external funding sources to achieve its goals. Internal resources include taxes and fees, while external resources may involve public-private partnerships with developers. Funding recommendations and partnership opportunities are detailed at the end of the chapter.

Plan Evaluation and Update

To ensure the Comprehensive Plan remains relevant and effective, it is recommended that the city undertake regular evaluations and updates. Every 5 years, the city should compile community feedback to conduct a plan evaluation report. This report would keep the city council, staff, and citizens informed of progress, and identify any gaps or areas needing attention. If significant changes are needed, a plan amendment should be drafted and presented to the community. Every 10 years, the city should review community input from the past decade and conduct engagement activities to assess changes since the plan's implementation. This comprehensive evaluation would guide updates to the Comprehensive Plan, ensuring it adapts to the community's evolving vision and goals. By identifying action items as key strategies, Jefferson can better budget and plan for community services, infrastructure, and other essential resources. These regular reviews will help the city remain responsive to changing conditions.

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
GOAL 3.1 Strengthen Jefferson's assets and promote responsible growth that aligns with community character.												
Objective 3.1.1 Update development regulations to reflect the city's development goals, maintain community standards and address community needs.	Amend the current Zoning Ordinance which would provide land-use controls that regulate the future growth, character, and land-use patterns of Jefferson.	3.1.1.1	X						X			
	Create floodplain ordinances and develop floodplain overlay to limit and control types of development in and around the floodplain. *Refer to Chapter 7: Harmony with Nature, Goal 7.3.*	3.1.1.2		X					X			
	Review permitting process to make sure it is clear and streamlined.	3.1.1.3		X					X			
	Create a packet for codes related to development for existing and new developers to provide clear and accessible information on the code of ordinances and permitting process.	3.1.1.4			X			X				
	Create the position of Code Enforcement Officer for enforcement of existing ordinances, ensuring buildings and properties compliant, and imposing penalties for noncompliance.	3.1.1.5		X						X		
	Perform regular check-ins with the community to ensure expectations for development patterns are being met.	3.1.1.7			X				X			
Objective 3.1.2 Enhance Jefferson's historic and cultural assets to create vibrant spaces that reflect the community's identity.	Establish a historic district in the downtown area to help maintain the sense of place of Jefferson.	3.1.2.1	X								X	
	Identify key landmarks and areas in Froggtown, Howell Town, and Sand Town to preserve the historic character of the neighborhoods and to create spaces that bring the community together.	3.1.2.2		X	X			X				
	Create and implement wayfinding and signage on major corridors, creating gateways, and connecting to landmarks throughout Jefferson.	3.1.2.3		X			X					
	Identify key areas for public arts, highlighting each neighborhood, historic district, and the gateways.	3.1.2.4		X								X
	Implement adaptive reuse strategies to maintain the community character while renovating and updating historical structures for new purposes.	3.1.2.5			X		X	X				
	Refer to Chapter 4: Celebration of History and Culture.											
Objective 3.1.3 Cultivate green spaces and promote protection of the natural spaces.	Ensure parks and conservation spaces are part of the zoning ordinances to continue protection.	3.1.3.1		X					X			
	Collaborate with land owners to designate specific areas along the bayou for recreational use and natural space protection, utilizing a combination of public and currently private lands	3.1.3.2			X		X			X		

Objectives	Action Items	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
		On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
GOAL 3.1 Strengthen Jefferson's assets and promote responsible growth that aligns with community character.											
	3.1.3.3 Identify empty or condemned lots that can be converted into greenspace, prioritizing areas in or near the Floodplain			X						X	
	3.1.3.4 Identify specific currently utilized or underutilized sites for the creation of pocket parks within the city limits		X							X	
	3.1.3.5 Designated green space in neighborhoods to be parkspace for equitable access to park spaces for all neighborhoods.			X			X				
	3.1.3.6 Implement an integrated downtown and nature center trail network that connects key landmarks and natural assets with a trail system.			X		X					
	3.1.3.7 Identify and activate local civic groups willing and able to participate in stewardship		X						X		
	Refer to Chapter 7: Harmony with Nature.										
GOAL 3.2 Promote housing diversity and expand housing choice.											
Objective 3.2.1 Increase housing options for service workers, families, first-time home-buyers, and persons with various income levels in Jefferson.	3.2.1.1 Create housing design guidelines that enable more varied lot layouts.			X				X			
	3.2.1.2 Work with developers and relevant stakeholders to ensure the financial feasibility of design guidelines.		X						X		
	3.2.1.3 Offer incentives and breaks for local developers to provide additional affordable units.			X			X				
	3.2.1.4 Consider establishing a land acquisition fund for a community land trust.				X		X				
	3.2.1.5 Develop a partnership with the lumber industries in Marion County to explore ways to increase high-quality, affordable housing using local materials.				X				X		
	3.2.1.6 Make sure the updated zoning code encourages and allows a variety of housing, including modular and cluster home development, duplexes, triplexes, and townhouses.		X					X			
	3.2.1.7 Recruit home builders and developers to build in Jefferson.		X						X		
	3.2.1.8 Regularly review housing policies and practices to comply with the Fair Housing Act.	X						X			
	3.2.1.9 Amend the zoning ordinance to include specific provisions for manufactured home parks.		X					X			
	3.2.1.10 Explore a licensing permit system for short-term rentals to balance resident needs with tourism interests.			X				X			
	Refer to Chapter 5: Multigenerational Community, Goal 5.2.										

Objectives		Action Items	Timeframe					Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
GOAL 3.1 Strengthen Jefferson's assets and promote responsible growth that aligns with community character.												
Objective 3.2.2 Promote mixed-use in downtown and other areas to increase housing options.	3.2.2.1	Create inventory for buildings in downtown with potential second-story lofts.		X							X	
	3.2.2.2	Consult property owners about issues barring vertical mixed-use conversions.		X						X		
	3.2.2.3	Establish repository of potential partners to help with redevelopment such as local developers, contractors, real estate agents, etc.		X						X		
	3.2.2.4	Review zoning ordinance to allow mixed-use development that combines residential and commercial units (retail stores that can convert to offices or offices that can convert to residential space) allowing small shops in residential neighborhoods.			X				X			
Objective 3.2.3 Promote housing through infill opportunities.	3.2.3.1	Identify lots that are available within the city for infill development.			X						X	
	3.2.3.2	Create an ordinance that outlines the system through which the city acquires condemned or dilapidated properties.			X				X			
	3.2.3.2	Allocate budget to demolish and clear acquired properties safely.				X	X					
	3.2.3.3	Make these properties available to developers willing to create desirable high-quality starter homes or a variety of housing.				X				X		
GOAL 3.3 Create economically thriving commercial areas and continue to support a vibrant downtown.												
Objective 3.3.1 Attract businesses in high-potential areas away from the flood plain.	3.2.1.1	Amend zoning ordinances to relocate the current enterprise zone in the floodplain to discourage business development in risk areas.		X					X			
	3.2.1.2	Inventory priority areas for development and identify infrastructure needs.		X							X	
	3.2.1.3	Create an incentive program (such as providing TIFs and low-interest loans) to encourage the creation of particular types or developments in priority areas.			X			X				
	3.2.1.4	Encourage commercial development in areas adjacent to downtown or along major thoroughfares such as US-59 and TX-49 using the amended Zoning Ordinance as the mechanism for growth.				X			X			
	3.2.1.5	Delineate industrial park location north of TX-49 to encourage industrial growth.			X				X			
	3.2.1.6	Create an inventory of existing industries and properties within the industrial park boundary.		X							X	
	3.2.1.7	Advertise the intersection of US-59 and TX-49 and the intersection of Polk St and TX-49 as development-ready to guide interested businesses and developers to these areas of commercial concentration.		X				X				

Chapter 3: Thriving Neighborhoods and Vibrant Places

Objectives		Action Items	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
GOAL 3.1 Strengthen Jefferson's assets and promote responsible growth that aligns with community character.												
	3.2.1.8	Prioritize infrastructure development in neighborhoods beyond the downtown core. *Refer to Chapter 8: Reliable Infrastructure.*		X							X	
	3.2.1.9	Work with Brookshire's and other property owners/businesses in ETJ to partner with them in developing safely and bringing necessary services.			X					X		
Objective 3.2.2 Maintain downtown as a hub for tourism and businesses.	3.2.2.1	Establish a Downtown Jefferson Committee whose focus would identify improvements to reinforce the downtown character, prioritize the list of improvements, and develop a plan for implementation.	X							X		
	3.2.2.2	Identify buildings that can be redeveloped for new uses.		X							X	
	3.2.2.3	Create funds for businesses to access repairs and remodeling that align with the historic overlay.			X			X				
	3.2.2.4	Initiate public meeting campaigns to collaborate with local business owners to identify issues and facilitate growth.			X					X		
	3.2.2.5	Become a Texas Main Streets program member through the Texas Historical Commission.		X						X		

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation/Standard	Partnership/Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
GOAL 4.1 Preserve and tell the histories of the various groups that have called Jefferson home												
Objective 4.1.1 Strengthen regulatory measures and processes to safeguard, protect, and maintain Jefferson's historical districts and notable structures.	Establish a Historic Review Board to oversee proposed changes and construction in the historic district.	4.1.1.1		X				X				
	Adopt a Historic Preservation District Ordinance that protects and preserves the Jefferson Historic District.	4.1.1.2		X					X			
	Identify neighborhoods where a preservation overlay zoning district is desirable.	4.1.1.3			X				X			
	Create design standards for identified neighborhoods that align with the historic character of Jefferson.	4.1.1.4			X				X			
	Plan for the maintenance and care of unique historical assets; such as the Jefferson Railroad Bridge, Jay Gould Railroad Car, and historic cemeteries.	4.1.1.5	X				X					
	Consider applying to the Certified Local Government Program to expand resources available to the community.	4.1.1.6		X				X				
	Regularly consult with the public about planned preservation projects to get their feedback and inputs.	4.1.1.7	X							X		
Objective 4.1.2 Engage local residents and stakeholders in preservation efforts.	Collaborate with historical societies and property owners to share best preservation practices.	4.1.2.1		X						X		
	Create a booklet and online page with resources to assist community members through local, state, and federal historic preservation programs.	4.1.2.2			X					X		
	Create a volunteer research group to help with background research and documentation for applications.	4.1.2.3			X					X		
	Organize historic preservation workshops that address resources, how to maintain and rehabilitate historic properties by connecting with organizations like the Texas Historical Commission and the National Alliance of Preservation Commission.	4.1.2.4			X			X				
	Create resources to encourage owners of historic properties to undertake necessary repairs and weatherproofing upgrades to ensure historic properties are safe and protected from natural hazards.	4.1.2.5			X					X		
	Provide workshops and training programs for local contractors and craftsmen on best practices for retrofitting and repairing historic buildings.	4.1.2.6			X			X				
	Initiate programs where community members can volunteer their time and skills to preservation projects, including hands-on restoration work to research and archival tasks.	4.1.2.7			X			X		X		

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation/ Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
	Publicly acknowledge individuals, groups, and businesses that contribute significantly to preservation efforts through an annual award ceremony or features in local media.	4.1.2.8		X				X		X		
	Establish an 'Adopt a Monument' program, encouraging local businesses and residents to take an active role in maintaining and preserving historic sites.	4.1.2.9			X			X				
Objective 4.1.3 Fully incorporate the history from underrepresented groups in Jefferson's narrative	Create a historical subcommittee that focuses on the historical resources from minority communities.	4.1.3.1		X						X		
	Recruit members of the target communities to fill the committee.	4.1.3.2		X						X		
	Collaborate with the Historic Jefferson Foundation and Jefferson Historical Museum to curate and showcase exhibits that focus on lesser-known historical narratives of Jefferson.	4.1.3.3			X					X		
	Collaborate with the Freedom Colonies Program to research the history of African-American settlement in and around Jefferson.	4.1.3.4		X						X		
	Work with local historians and the Jefferson Opera House Theater Players to bring lesser-known historical perspectives to life.	4.1.3.5			X					X		
	Explore developing a African-American Museum.	4.1.3.6			X		X					
	Connect with Preservation Texas to get support for endangered sites. Preservation Texas provides advocacy support, publicity, connections to professional resources and assistance in fostering and building community partnerships.	4.1.3.7		X				X		X		
	Apply to National Park Service's Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants program to stabilize and restore African-American historic buildings.	4.1.3.8			X			X			X	
Objective 4.1.4 Maintain a repository for historic documents and artifacts that can be accessed by the public for historical interpretation.	Identify a site where a repository can be built or an existing building that can be modified to become a repository.	4.1.4.1		X			X					
	Create a history committee to investigate, gather, and organize historical information and artifacts, including individuals familiar with non-profit organizations and/or historical preservation to lead the project.	4.1.4.2			X					X		
	Hire a director and registrar for the repository.	4.1.4.3				X	X					
	Collect materials and artifacts with community assistance and under the guidance of the repository director and history committee.	4.1.4.4			X			X		X		
	Contract with a company familiar with archival storage to create or modify selected buildings.	4.1.4.5				X	X					
	Reach out to members of the community to request documents, media, and artifacts.	4.1.4.6			X			X		X		

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation/ Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
Objective 4.1.5 Promote sustainable practices and disaster resiliency for Jefferson's historic properties.	Develop a digital archiving system for documents and artifacts and digitize existing physical resources.	4.1.4.7		X				X				
	Conduct risk assessments of historic properties to understand their vulnerabilities to natural disasters.	4.1.5.1		X								
	Develop a disaster preparedness plan, outlining steps to protect historic properties in the event of a disaster.	4.1.5.2			X						X	
	Host workshops to educate property owners on disaster preparedness and building resilience.	4.1.5.3		X				X		X		
	Create resources to encourage owners of historic properties to undertake necessary repairs and waterproofing upgrades.	4.1.5.4			X			X				
	Conduct workshops to educate property owners about sustainability and energy efficiency in historic preservation.	4.1.5.5		X				X		X		
	Partner with the Texas Historical Commission to incorporate the use of the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program for owners who are retrofitting and upgrading their historic properties.	4.1.5.6			X			X		X		
	Encourage the use of sustainable and locally-sourced materials for retrofitting and upgrading projects, to further enhance the sustainability of these efforts.	4.1.5.7			X			X				
	Source labor and skills locally to retrofit and upgrade historic structures.	4.1.5.8			X			X				
GOAL 4.2 Increase historical and cultural programs, activities, and events in and around Jefferson.												
Objective 4.2.1 Increase outreach to residents to encourage community involvement in cultural and historic activities.	In partnership with the City Tourism Board, craft targeted marketing strategies that promote Jefferson's unique historical and cultural attributes.	4.2.1.1	X					X		X		
	Create a comprehensive digital marketing plan to amplify Jefferson's online visibility.	4.2.1.2		X				X				
	Prioritize making the city websites and travel and tourism websites friendly to mobile devices.	4.2.1.3		X				X				
	Partner with the Historic Jefferson Foundation, local historians, and artists to develop educational materials and programs about Jefferson's unique history.	4.2.1.4	X							X		
	Partner with the Marion County Chamber of Commerce to engage local businesses in sponsoring and supporting preservation initiatives and events.	4.2.1.5		X						X		

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation/Standard	Partnership/Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
Objective 4.2.2 Develop and enhance additional programming and events that showcase Jefferson's history and enhance the sense of place.	Develop and promote guided tours of the historic district, highlighting key architectural, historical, and cultural sites.	4.2.2.1	X					X				
	Collaborate with the Jefferson Historical Museum and local art galleries to create rotating exhibits and interactive events that celebrate Jefferson's history and culture.	4.2.2.2		X				X		X		
	Establish strategic partnerships with local businesses and nonprofits to co-host cultural events and programs.	4.2.2.3		X				X		X		
	Collaborate with the Jefferson Historical Museum on public lecture series, workshops, and other events to increase public awareness of Jefferson's past, riverport history and Victorian architecture.	4.2.2.4			X			X		X		
	Develop a series of public art installations in collaboration with local artists and JISD students.	4.2.2.6		X				X		X		
	Launch a local scavenger hunt program for showcase Jefferson's art and murals.	4.2.2.7			X			X				
	Use vacant spaces in downtown and other neighborhoods as pop-up activation and programming showcasing Jefferson's history and culture.	4.2.2.8		X				X				
	Collaborate with the Jefferson Opera House Theater Players and Jefferson Playhouse, and other local organizations to develop additional plays that tell stories from Jefferson's past.	4.2.2.9		X						X		
	Invest in Community Center to accommodate local performing arts.	4.2.2.10				X	X			X		

Objectives	Action Items	On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties
GOAL 5.1 Promote community health and wellness by providing services to meet the needs of our community's aging population and encourage young families in the region.											
Objective 5.1.1 Expand the capacity of healthcare services and facilities in Jefferson.	5.1.1.1 Establish telemedicine and online health education service through USDA Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants and FCC's Rural Health Care Program.		X				X		X		
	5.1.1.2 Advocate for the establishment of a county hospital and emergency care center equipped with ambulance services.			X		X			X		
	5.1.1.3 Incentivize the establishment of pharmacies in the community.		X				X				
	5.1.1.4 Reach out to Community Health Core to establish a primary care clinic in Jefferson to address mental health needs.		X						X		
	5.1.1.5 Establish a Community Paramedicine Programs that allows EMS clinicians such as emergency medical technicians and paramedics to provide primary health care and preventive services.			X			X		X		
	5.1.1.6 Consider creating a medical district and create tax incentive program to support new private medical facilities within the medical district.				X		X				
	5.1.1.7 Attract health professionals to Jefferson through recruitment to increase the availability of services.		X				X		X		
Objective 5.1.2 Support public health awareness to encourage positive health behaviors.	5.1.2.1 Create a working group of local community organizations, social service providers, and health care providers in the area to assess community health needs.		X						X		
	5.1.2.2 Create a wellness outreach programs that provide education about preventive healthcare, nutrition, and chronic disease management.		X				X				
	5.1.2.3 Look into the Community Health Worker and Health Support Worker Training Program to train and employ community health workers who understand the health needs of the community.			X			X			X	
	5.1.2.4 Create an aging-in-place resource hub for residents and caretakers to learn more about aging-in-place and the resources and services available to do it safely			X			X				
	5.1.2.5 Partner with an existing university health system to develop services.		X						X		
Objective 5.1.3 Promote accessibility and consumption of healthy foods by fostering a locally-sourced food economy.	5.1.3.1 Establish a local grocery co-op to set up locations in underserved areas of Jefferson.			X			X		X		
	5.1.3.2 Support the farmer's market to connect residents with food.		X				X		X		
	5.1.3.3 Develop community gardens and food forests at key points like schools, parks, open lots, and other suitable locations to grow food for consumption.			X		X					

Objectives		Action Items	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
	5.1.3.4	Create a regular gardener resource event to help connect new gardeners with resources.		X				X		X		
	5.1.3.5	Collaborate with Brookshires to improve access to healthy food in the community.		X						X		
Objective 5.1.4 Increase transportation options to improve access to nutritious food and health service.	5.1.4.1	Work with ETCOG to increase availability of Go Bus within and around Jefferson.		X						X		
	5.1.4.2	Improve communication and outreach to human service agencies and residents on available services, such as paratransit service.		X				X		X		
	5.1.4.3	Amend the ordinance to allow ride-share services to operate in Jefferson.		X					X			
GOAL 5.2 Enhance the supply of affordable housing and quality of neighborhoods to meet the community's housing needs effectively.												
Objective 5.2.1 Support affordable housing development and rehabilitation	5.2.1.1	Conduct a housing assessment to identify weaknesses in the local housing market, informing future strategies and interventions.		X				X			X	
	5.2.1.2	Apply for the Texas HOME Investment Program to support a variety of activities including Homebuyer Assistance with New Construction and Single-Family Development.		X				X				
	5.2.1.3	Promote and work with developers/builders/contractors for new construction, or renovation projects using HOME funding.			X			X		X		
	5.2.1.4	Connect property owners and developers to ETxADRC's Housing Navigator program to bring additional housing stock into the area.		X						X		
	5.2.1.5	Adopt a Cooperative Code Enforcement system that works with homeowners to get them up to code.			X				X			
	5.2.2.2	Coordinate city and county services that can work on relevant code-related tasks for faster response time.		X						X		
	5.2.2.3	Create program for residents to request proactive assistance with at-risk property.			X			X				
	5.2.2.4	Develop volunteer program to provide assistance for low-cost maintenance and preventative upkeep of low-income housing.			X			X				
	5.2.2.5	Provide information to residents on the USDA Rural Development's Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants Program.		X						X		
Objective 5.2.3 Educate and connect residents with housing resources	5.2.3.1	Collaborate with nonprofits and government agencies to gain insights on available resources and support in promotion and outreach.		X						X		
	5.2.3.2	Hold Fair Housing Open House meetings that inform the community on available affordable housing resources.			X			X				

Objectives		Action Items	On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties
				Timeframe					Action Type			
	5.2.3.3	Create education campaign that connects residents with rent and mortgage payment assistance.			X			X				
	5.2.3.4	Create education campaign to connects residents with resources to assist in purchasing their first home.			X			X				
	5.2.3.5	Connect residents and developers to the ETxADRC Housing Navigator Programs to provide information on available affordable housing in the region.		X						X		
GOAL 5.3 Develop and promote a range of community facilities, support services, and age-appropriate activities for all residents												
Objective 5.3.1 Expand youth and children opportunities to promote social skills, relationship building, learning, and preparation for productive lives.	5.3.1.1	Convene a Youth Development Working Group, made up of organizations that pledge to support youth development.		X				X		X		
	5.3.1.2	Recruit a program coordinator to organize daily activities and recruitment efforts.				X	X					
	5.3.1.3	Develop youth recreation and educational programs, including recreation, instruction, life skills, etc through the Marion County Community Center.			X			X				
	5.3.1.4	Increase additional programming in the Summer and Winter to encourage youth activity in town.			X			X				
	5.3.1.5	Work with community groups to establish a local clubs like Boys and Girls Club and sports leagues to keep youth engaged.		X						X		
	5.3.1.6	Create an event center for youth activities and programming.				X	X					
Objective 5.3.2 Maintain and enhance current community facilities and spaces where residents gather.	5.3.2.1	Create a parks and recreation department to oversee and maintain green spaces and community facilities.			X		X	X				
	5.3.2.2	Improve the facilities and operations of the Marion County Community Center.		X						X	X	
	5.3.2.3	Assess the use of Tourism Center and explore ways to expand the programming for community use.		X				X			X	
	5.3.2.4	Work with ISD to explore developing the Jefferson Primary School facility for community use, catering to both children and adults.			X					X		
	5.3.2.5	Ensure that all community facilities are ADA compliant and accessible to individuals with disabilities.		X					X			
Objective 5.3.3 Expand recreation spaces that provide opportunities for residents to relax, play, and enjoy	5.3.3.1	Identify and convert land within neighborhoods into park spaces with playgrounds and splash pads.			X		X				X	
	5.3.3.2	Build an indoor recreation center for activities in underserved areas of Jefferson.				X	X					

Objectives	#	Action Items	On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties
and enjoy.	5.3.3.3	Collaborate with the school district to provide sports fields and facilities for community sports leagues to serve the whole community.		X				X		X		
	5.3.3.4	Invest in public facilities such as a swimming pool, dog park, theater/auditorium space, information center for local residents, and more public restrooms.			X		X					
	5.3.3.5	Work with JEDCO and the county in jointly recruiting private recreation development, such as a bowling alley, skating rink, or miniature golf course, in or near Jefferson.				X				X		
Objective 5.3.4 Strengthen community resources and social support services	5.3.4.1	Develop a program to match volunteers with community needs, fostering a culture of community service.			X			X				
	5.3.4.2	Create a central hub where residents can access various services, including counseling, legal aid, and financial advice.			X			X				
	5.3.4.3	Implement services tailored to seniors, such as health screenings, social activities, and transportation assistance.			X			X				
	5.3.4.4	Establish community donation resource center to assist members of the community with accessing items, such as a "community closet".			X			X				
GOAL 5.4 Promote community-forward safety and security												
Objective 5.4.1 Ensure a prepared police force	5.4.1.1	Create schedule for training to meet state and federal requirements.		X				X				
	5.4.1.2	Determine what equipment is missing from the current inventory that is appropriate for policing a town of 2,000.		X							X	
	5.4.1.3	Prioritize equipment for purchase to ensure minimum needs are met first.		X			X					
	5.4.1.4	Create collaboration with law enforcement and health service providers to strengthen mental health crisis response.			X			X		X		
Objective 5.4.2 Establish a professional fire department to serve Jefferson and the surrounding area.	5.4.2.1	Hire a full-time staff for the Fire Department.				X						
	5.4.2.3	Convert an existing building to be a short-term or permanent fire station.			X		X					
	5.4.2.4	Establish appropriate annual or regular training for firefighters.		X				X				
Objective 5.4.3 Create facilities and programming to be fully prepared for emergency response	5.4.3.1	Invest in a county tornado shelter and identify an existing community center that could serve as this and that meets multiple community goals.			X		X					
	5.4.3.2	Expand emergency capacity at the Marion County Community Center and other community facilities.		X			X			X		
	5.4.3.3	Look into establishing an an Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for the city.				X	X					

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
	5.4.3.4	Create programming for schools and community center to inform population of disaster plans .		X				X		X		
	5.4.3.5	Identify high-risk households that may need additional assistance during disasters.		X							X	
	5.4.3.6	Publish and distribute map of disaster centers, evacuation routes, and high priority buildings in Jefferson.			X			X				
	5.4.3.7	Ensure schools feel safe for students and parents by auditing the current safety protocols for the different campuses and identify any safety gaps.			X			X			X	
	5.4.3.8	Identify locations that are vulnerable to heat and establish areas for a cooling center			X		X				X	
Objective 5.4.4 Create and operate animal control services in Jefferson.	5.4.4.1	Establish an animal control office in Jefferson and enforce.										
	5.4.4.2	Create and enforce stray animal ordinances.			X		X					
	5.4.4.3	Provide support to the current volunteer community that cares for and rehomes animals with no permanent caretakers		X				X		X		

Objectives	Action Items	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
		On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
GOAL 6.1 Enhance educational pathways, skill training, and diversify career opportunities available in Jefferson.											
Objective 6.1.1 Promote programs to help children and youths build skills and stay engaged in the community.	6.1.1.1 Work with ISD to establish educational programs centered around "real world education", such as apprenticeship programs or skills-based learning opportunities.		X				X		X		
	6.1.1.2 Connect with Department of Labor to create a YouthBuild program, which provides job training and education for people within the ages of 16 and 24 who left school without a secondary diploma.			X			X		X		
	6.1.1.3 Design a summer program that aligns youth with city department projects for real-world insight and experience in various initiatives within and outside local government.			X			X				
	6.1.1.4 Collaborate with ISD to create a volunteer program for high school and middle school students to engage in local volunteer opportunities and gain diverse experiences.		X				X		X		
	6.1.1.5 Partner with religious and social organizations to pair students with volunteer activities run through those organizations.		X				X		X		
	6.1.1.6 Develop a scholarship program sponsored by local investors for students seeking education beyond high school.			X			X		X		
	6.1.1.7 Organize annual outreach programs with students to learn what types of industries they are interested in working in in order to target appropriate local businesses.		X				X		X		
	6.1.1.8 Conduct events to promote existing youth resources in Jefferson, including FFA and 4-H programs.		X				X				
Objective 6.1.2 Broaden the range of educational opportunities and trainings to elevate workforce competency.	6.1.2.1 Partner with ISD, Panola College, Kilgore College, and other regional educational institutions to expand courses and career trainings offered in Jefferson.			X					X		
	6.1.2.2 Work with Texas Tech Office of Continuing and Professional Education to promote and expand existing course offered at the Jeffersonian Institute		X				X		X		
	6.1.2.3 Facilitate partnerships with local educational institutions and industries to offer specialized courses, ensuring a skilled workforce that meets the industry's needs, including manufacturing.			X			X		X		
	6.1.2.4 Develop adult-learning programs to bolster job skills by providing classes to help with reading, math, writing, and computer skills			X			X				
	6.1.2.5 Encourage employers to participate in On-The-Job training programs			X					X		
	6.1.2.6 Develop a "grow our own" program for industries seeking skilled employment in the community.			X			X				

Objectives		Action Items	On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties
	6.1.2.7	Foster partnerships with technical schools, and vocational programs in the region to provide training for students in retrofitting and upgrading historic buildings, providing a new generation of skilled workers for these tasks.				X		X		X		
	6.1.2.8	Partner with the Rural Medicine Program at Texas A&M University to increase education and awareness in high school about opportunities in medicine and attract students to pursue a healthcare career tract.				X		X		X		
Objective 6.1.3 Develop programs to help residents find well-paying and meaningful work in the community.	6.1.3.1	Create a local workforce development board to assist in bringing new programs and partnerships.		X				X		X		
	6.1.3.2	Develop recruitment events and career fairs to connect existing employers to workers.			X			X				
	6.1.3.3	Partner with Workforce Solutions and Texas Workforce Commission to connect job-seekers trying to move into new industries with education and financial resources		X						X		
	6.1.3.4	Connect with private and public sectors in surrounding cities and counties to promote information on available job opportunities in diverse fields and various industries in the region.			X			X		X		
	6.1.3.5	Promote the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for expenses such as work subsidies, education and training, and transportation for the employed persons.		X						X		
	6.1.3.6	Establish teacher incentive programs to attract and retain teachers.			X			X				

GOAL 6.2 Empower local businesses and foster new business development and innovation in Jefferson.

Objectives		Action Items	On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties
Objective 6.2.1 Support local businesses to ensure they remain part of the market and further their growth	6.2.1.1	Work with JEDCO and Marion County Chamber of Commerce to conduct a business retention and expansion (BR&E) program.	X	X				X		X		
	6.2.1.2	Create and maintain a business database of existing businesses.		X				X				
	6.2.1.3	Develop visitation programs to connect with existing businesses.		X				X				
	6.2.1.4	Organize industry or business recognition programs with appreciation dinner and certificates.		X				X				
	6.2.1.5	Encourage small businesses to participate in community events (sponsor, buy advertisement and promotion spots, etc)		X				X		X		
	6.2.1.6	Create "buy local" campaign and encourage local purchasing of goods and services and participation in the local farmer's market		X				X				
	6.2.1.7	Plan and implement farmers' market and other local events by identifying locations in different neighborhoods.		X				X				

Objectives	Action Items	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
		On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
	6.2.1.8 Partner with Texas Friendly Hospitality Customer Service Workshop to organize trainings to help current business owners develop and learn new strategies and skills to improve their business			X					X		
Objective 6.2.2 Promote new talent and entrepreneurs to help create and start new businesses	6.2.2.1 Create mentorship programs to pair experienced business owners with startups to help new entrepreneurs better understands the challenges and needs of running a businesses			X			X		X		
	6.2.2.2 Develop a incubator and entrepreneurship center with coworking rental space, internet access, conference room, and management support to help start-ups and new ventures.				X	X	X				
	6.2.2.3 Allow the establishment of home-based business in the city ordinance and zoning code		X					X			
	6.2.2.4 Provide tax and business consultation and classes for new business owners			X			X				
	6.2.2.5 Connect with organizations like SCORE mentoring network, SBA SBDC for business and managerial enhancement programs for local business owners		X				X		X		
Objective 6.2.3 Attract a commercial and small industrial development which are compatible with Jefferson's character and serves the community's needs	6.2.3.1 Perform retail and service business mix analysis or retail gap analysis to identify market potential		X				X			X	
	6.2.3.2 Create an online database of available sites and buildings including available infrastructure, acreage of land, building square footage, lease price and conditions, minimum and maximum lease spaces.		X				X				
	6.2.3.3 Develop resources with community profile, data on available buildings, developable sites, infrastructure, and potential incentives to attract new businesses.		X				X				
	6.2.3.4 Incentivize businesses that will develop family and youth oriented businesses (community needs - movie theaters, mini golf, arcades, skating rinks, and bowling alleys, arcade) or other in-person activities to support our community's youth development goal.			X			X				
	6.2.3.5 Proactively reach out to fresh food and health related businesses to serve the needs of the community's residents.			X			X		X		
	6.2.3.6 Identify and target emerging industries that could utilize the remoteness of Jefferson.		X				X				
	6.2.3.7 Encourage new businesses to consider high economic development opportunity areas including areas along US 59 and SH 49 and (land use map) first when choosing a location				X				X		

GOAL 6.3 Elevate Jefferson as a dynamic tourism hub for ecotourism, cultural experiences, and business events.

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
Objective 6.3.1 Strengthen regional collaboration to establish the Jefferson and the region as a thriving ecotourism hub and cultural destination	6.3.1.1	Partner with neighboring towns, Marion County, COG, community groups, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to create a joint marketing initiatives to promote the region.		X						X		
	6.3.1.2	Engage with regional Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Councils (EDCs) to synchronize tourism efforts and create a cohesive regional identity		X						X		
	6.3.1.3	Work with the Chamber of Commerces and EDCs in the region to develop packaged tours and shared transportation options.								X		
Objective 6.3.2 Enhance the tourism experience to encourage visitors to stay longer in the region.	6.3.2.1	Develop or participate in themed "trails" that have travellers move from place to place based on a set theme, like whiskey, wine, or food			X		X					
	6.3.2.2	Design both printable and digital maps showing trail routes, historical markers, and landmarks.		X				X				
	6.3.2.3	Distribute map resources to tourism agencies and promote its use to both residents and visitors		X				X		X		
	6.3.2.4	Install seatings and signage such as arrows pointing in the direction of the trail or can include more detailed information such as mileage to other trails, towns or attractions.			X		X					
	6.3.2.5	Connect with Texas Travel Alliance for educational resources and networking.		X						X		
	6.3.2.6	Promote activities and events as multi-day activities as part of extended-stay experiences to attract tourists.		X				X				
	6.3.2.7	Regularly update the historic landmarks, heritage sites, attractions, and events in Jefferson in the Texas Time Travel Website to showcase all the heritage and historic sites in the Forest Trail Region of the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Heritage Trails Program.		X				X				
	6.3.2.8	Engage local community members as guides, educators, or stewards of the land.			X			X				
	6.3.2.9	Develop a public private partnership to support eco-tourism and rental equipment facility for items such as kayaks, bicycles, fishing equipment, etc.			X			X		X		
Objective 6.3.3 Broaden economic opportunities through creative industry opportunities	6.3.3.1	Encourage and incentivize hotels and local businesses to upgrade their facilities with multifunctional spaces for meetings and coworking areas designed to attract corporate retreats and conferences.				X				X		

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
and business tourism.	6.3.3.2	Develop packages that combine local attractions with team-building activities, wellness programs, or corporate training workshops.			X			X		X		
	6.3.3.3	Connect with the Texas Film Commission to designate Jefferson as a Film-Friendly City, attracting filmmakers and media exposure that further boosts tourism.			X			X		X		
	6.3.3.4	Organize and host film festivals, art fairs, music festivals, or other events that celebrate creative works, attracting visitors and industry professionals from beyond the local community.			X			X				
	6.3.3.5	Engage with the Texas Music Office to pursue the "Music Friendly Community" certification, demonstrating the community's commitment to supporting the music industry.			X			X		X		
	6.3.3.6	Utilize the "Music Friendly Community" designation to attract music professionals, events, and businesses to the area, leveraging the certification in marketing materials and promotional efforts.				X		X				

Objectives		Action Items	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
GOAL 7.1 Enhance and preserve parks and natural spaces for residents and visitors.												
Objective 7.1.1 Develop the mechanism to plan, acquire, develop, and maintain parks and outdoor recreation facilities.	7.1.1.1	Establish a Parks Board to oversee the development and operation of parks facilities and programs.		X						X	X	
	7.1.1.2	Include parks maintenance and development in the City budget.	X				X					
	7.1.1.3	Develop a parks master plan with a long-term program for land acquisition and park development.			X				X			
	7.1.1.4	Adopt design standards for trails, parks, park equipment, facilities, and signage to have a unified, standardized system of parks.		X					X			
	7.1.1.5	Write and adopt a parkland dedication ordinance within the city code to supplements new and existing parkland facilities by requiring new residential development to dedicate parkland or provide a fee-in-lieu.			X				X			
	7.1.1.6	Establish shared use agreements between the ISD and City to help fund development, operation, and maintenance of shared facilities.		X						X		
Objective 7.1.2 Maintain existing parks and open spaces to provide high quality facilities.	7.1.2.1	Create maintenance schedules for the current parkspace and regularly update inventory of existing parks, conditions, available recreational amenities, and cost.	X					X				
	7.1.2.2	Implement a rotating maintenance schedule across all parks to ensure equal resource distribution.	X					X				
	7.1.2.3	Improve the nature trail boardwalk on the Big Cypress Bayou at Port Jefferson History and Nature Center.		X			X			X		
	7.1.2.4	Renovate and modernize current boat ramp facilities and the surrounding greenspace with lighting and Wi-Fi.		X			X					
	7.1.2.5	Use volunteer labor, donated materials, or other local resources to make improvements to city parks.			X			X		X		
	7.1.2.6	Include historic cemeteries in the City maintenance schedule to preserve status.										
	7.1.2.7	Include gateways in landscaping inventory and maintenance schedule.		X				X				
	7.1.2.8	Improve existing playground equipment to meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission standards.		X					X			
Objective 7.1.3 Improve park programming and amenities to support the overall health and...	7.1.3.1	Develop more programming for physical activity, including pedestrian infrastructure for walking and jogging.			X		X	X				
	7.1.3.2	Improve park lighting to increase safety during evening hours.		X			X					

Objectives		Action Items	Timeframe					Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
overall health and well-being of all residents	7.1.3.3	Incorporate historical markers and educational signs into parks to highlight local history and culture.		X			X					
	7.1.3.4	Add benches, picnic tables, and a shelter for large gatherings, reunions, and outdoor events.			X		X					
	7.1.3.5	Display art by local or regional artists by incorporating sculptures and murals into the park design.			X			X				
	7.1.3.6	Construct public restrooms for West Side Park and Lion's Park.			X		X					
	7.1.3.7	Restore Cedar Grove cemetery and repair roads, flagpole, fence, and drainage.		X			X					
	7.1.3.8	Explore adding splash pads, skating rink, basketball court, and other recreational amenities for kids and youth.				X	X	X				
	7.1.3.9	Add an amphitheater in Port Jefferson History and Nature Center as a transition space where the central business district overlooks the bayou.				X	X			X		
	7.1.3.10	Continue collaborating with Jefferson ISD to provide school facilities for public use during non-school hours.	X							X		
	7.1.3.11	Partner with local fitness providers to host fitness classes and session at parks.		X				X		X		
Objective 7.1.4 Expand network of parks and open spaces to ensure that all residents have equal access to parks and natural spaces	7.1.4.1	Develop adequate parks and recreational spaces in all neighborhoods, including Froggtown, Howell Town and Sand Town.				X	X					
	7.1.4.2	Work with ISD to determine additional sports facilities development in school campuses as a joint City/School project.				X	X					
	7.1.4.3	Develop universal design playgrounds and facilities that can be utilized by residents of all abilities.			X		X	X				
	7.1.4.4	Set paths along pocket parks, new parks and cemeteries to provide neighborhood access to the network and increase trail visibility.			X		X					
	7.1.4.5	Acquire space to create trails connecting points of interests including the downtown, Lions Club Park, Westside Park, the three school campuses, and Oakwood Cemetery.			X		X					
	7.1.4.6	Use railroad right-of-way and utility easements for designated open space or trail systems.			X		X					

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
	Support Collins Academy by extending and maintaining the trail system in Port Jefferson History and Nature Center by including the trail system in city parks maintenance schedule and budget.	7.1.4.7		X			X			X		
	Leverage National Park Service's like the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to develop and improve local park trails.	7.1.4.8			X			X		X		
	Increase access to water providing additional boat ramps and fishing piers.	7.1.4.9				X	X					
Objective 7.1.5 Promote regional network of spaces and programs to preserve and enhance the distinctive charm and beauty of East Texas	Collaborate with neighboring towns, Marion County, COG, community groups, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to create regional trail networks connecting Jefferson with Caddo Lake and Lake O' Pines.	7.1.5.1				X	X			X		
	Establish themed trails that interconnect different parks, water bodies, and natural spaces throughout the region.	7.1.5.2				X	X					
	Develop eco-friendly visitor infrastructure such as eco-lodges, camping sites, or picnic areas that blend into the natural surroundings.	7.1.5.3				X	X					
	Partner with the Collins Academy to implement new bird watching programs in Port Jefferson History and Nature Center.	7.1.5.4		X				X		X		
	Partner with regional organizations to develop other nature-based experiences, showcasing the unique ecological assets of the East Texas region.	7.1.5.5			X			X		X		
	Explore more opportunities to increase access to the water on Big Cypress Bayou, Black Cypress Bayou and Caddo Lake. Offer partnership with local clubs like a kayak club	7.1.5.6			X			X		X		
GOAL 7.2 Promote community-wide environmental stewardship to protect Jefferson's natural assets.												
Objective 7.2.1 Actively engage the community for inclusive and vibrant parks and open spaces.	Assess the needs of Jefferson's residents on a regular basis through surveys, town meetings, or other means.	7.2.1.1	X								X	
	Plan to engage the community in the planning, management, and usage of parks and natural spaces	7.2.1.2	X								X	
	Engage with stakeholders to represent youth interest in parks programming, include school personnel, parents, youth, and youth-oriented organizations.	7.2.1.3	X							X	X	
	Publicize the proposed open space and trail system to generate citizen support and awareness of the need to acquire easements/land in the designated areas	7.2.1.4		X				X				

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
	7.2.1.5	Work with ISD, community organizations, and clubs to integrate community activities in existing and new parks, including community festivals, youth programming, general recreation activities, and meeting space for local organizations.		X						X		
	7.2.1.6	Promote community health through regular outdoor fitness programs and workshops in parks.		X				X				
	7.2.1.7	Develop community gardens in parks to promote healthy eating and community engagement.			X			X				
	7.2.1.8	Develop a "Friends of the Park" program to encourage local volunteer participation in park maintenance and programs.			X			X		X		
	7.2.1.9	Involve local service groups, garden clubs, and the Extension Service in citywide beautification and landscaping for downtown pocket parks, clean-up campaigns, and maintenance of existing park areas.		X						X		
	7.2.1.10	Institute a "Keep Jefferson Beautiful" Fall/Spring Cleanup Day.		X				X				
Objective 7.2.2 Foster collaborative partnerships to support funding for parks and natural spaces	7.2.2.1	Establish a park endowment fund supported by local businesses, grants, and donations that could be used for maintenance and operations.			X			X		X		
	7.2.2.2	Partner with local businesses for park sponsorship and co-promotion.		X						X		
	7.2.2.3	Identify park spaces that can be rented for community events to generate revenue.			X			X				
	7.2.2.4	Consider leasing city owned open space and use lease revenues and fees for parks improvements			X			X				
	7.2.2.5	Set up the mechanism, such as a new or existing non-profit organization, for acquiring land as it becomes available in the designated open space areas.				X		X			X	
Objective 7.2.3 Implement sustainable practices and environmental conservation initiatives	7.2.3.1	Incorporate native plants and low-maintenance landscaping in public space and promote their use in residential areas.		X				X				
	7.2.3.2	Create gardening programs that focus on native plants to preserve the local biodiversity and habitats.		X				X		X		
	7.2.3.3	Establish a composting and recycling program in parks to promote organic waste management.		X				X				
	7.2.3.4	Increase education on water conservation and implement rainwater harvesting systems and and drought-tolerant landscaping in municipal facilities		X				X		X		

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
	Create a tree planting program to include residents in the greenspace development process	7.2.3.5		X				X				
	Increase tree planting along school buildings and public buildings.	7.2.3.6			X		X	X				
	Collaborate with local environmental groups, schools, or businesses to organize local wildlife festival, a conservation day, or a native plant sale events.	7.2.3.7		X						X		
	Work with local experts or naturalists to provide educational materials or guided tours.	7.2.3.8			X			X		X		
	Connect with Texas A&M Forest Service urban foresters to help train local tree workers, set quality standards for tree planting and care and learn about sustainable management of trees.	7.2.3.9			X			X		X		
	Work with the Collins Academy, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to host small landowner workshops.	7.2.3.10			X			X		X		
	Partner with Marion-Cass Soil and Water Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to connect with resources and programs for water, soil, and habitat conservation.	7.2.3.11			X					X		
GOAL 7.3 Strengthen the community's resilience to protect the community from hazard risks.												
Objective 7.3.1 Update local policies and regulations for effective flood mitigation	Work with the Marion County to update the County Hazard Mitigation Plan	7.3.1.1	X							X	X	
	Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and adopt floodplain regulations based on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps.	7.3.1.2	X						X			
	Connect with FEMA Region 6 to request NFIP FIRM map update to revise the regulatory floodplain map in Jefferson.	7.3.1.3		X					X	X		
	Explore FEMA's Estimated Base Flood Elevation Viewer tool to review available Base Level Engineering Data.	7.3.1.4		X							X	
	Stay updated on FEMA's Risk MAP project in Marion County.	7.3.1.5		X							X	
	Implement a permitting process that require all new developments, redevelopments, and substantial improvements in designated flood-prone areas to obtain a permit.	7.3.1.6		X					X			
	Create appropriate ordinances and zoning to prevent development on floodplain, environmentally sensitive ecosystems and nature corridors.	7.3.1.7		X					X			

Objectives	ID	Action Items	On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties
	7.3.1.8	Utilize the FEMA CodeMaster design tool to incorporate flood resistance into the city code.		X					X			
	7.3.1.9	Adopt stronger building codes, such as the latest SmartHome America's FORTIFIED Standard and the International Building Codes.			X				X			
	7.3.1.10	Collaborate with Texas Department of Emergency Management to apply for FEMA's Flood Mitigation Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.		X						X	X	
Objective 7.3.2 Increase city staff's capacity and expertise in hazard mitigation and emergency management through targeted training and development programs.	7.3.2.1	Connect with FEMA to get the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Training program.		X				X		X		
	7.3.2.2	Continue working with Texas Water Development Board's East Texas Region Flood Outreach Specialist to get support for floodplain management.		X					X	X		
	7.3.2.3	Develop a succession and training plan for the Floodplain Administrator role to ensure there is continuity for the role.		X				X				
	7.3.2.4	Train city staff to become a building official or inspector to inspect compliance with floodplain management regulations.		X				X				
	7.3.2.5	Organize cross-training sessions with local emergency services, including the fire department, police department, EMS, and the County EMC to broaden understanding and cooperation between these critical teams.			X			X				
	7.3.2.6	Work with the County EMC, police department, fire department, EMS, and ISD to develop and maintain comprehensive emergency response plans.		X				X			X	
Objective 7.3.3 Optimize stormwater management for enhanced runoff control and effective drainage	7.3.3.1	Conduct a comprehensive study on stormwater runoff and the current drainage system to identify areas for improvement.		X							X	
	7.3.3.2	Create and maintain an inventory of culverts and drainage ditches, including their current condition and any maintenance needs.		X							X	
	7.3.3.3	Implement a regular maintenance schedule for culverts and drainage ditches to ensure they are cleared before and after rainy periods.	X				X	X				
	7.3.3.4	Include retention and detention ponds in the schedule for maintenance of the culverts and ditches for erosion and sediment control.		X				X				

Objectives		Action Items	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
Objective 7.3.4 Utilize natural processes for hazard mitigation	7.3.4.1	Conduct studies on floodplains and drainage ways to identify opportunities for restoration and potential locations for a designated open space and/or trail system.			X						X	
	7.3.4.2	Consider conservation easements to protect valuable natural areas from development.				X		X				
	7.3.4.3	Explore the feasibility for the city to participate in buyouts to acquires areas prone to floods			X						X	
	7.3.4.4	Integrate green infrastructure approaches, such as rain garden, bioswales, or vegetation buffers, in public facilities to manage stormwater and flooding.			X							
	7.3.4.5	Collaborate with local fire departments to identify high-risk areas and implement proactive measures such as creating firebreaks or conducting controlled burns.		X				X			X	
Objective 7.3.5 Implement proactive cleanup strategies to mitigate environmental and public health risks	7.3.5.1	Implement a regular cleanup schedule to clear creeks and other water bodies of debris that could obstruct flow during flood events.	X					X				
	7.3.5.2	Regularly clear standing water bodies to prevent mosquito breeding.	X					X				
	7.3.5.3	Create an insect and pest prevention plan in partnership with local environmental agencies.		X							X	
	7.3.5.4	Clear downed trees and large brush on a regular basis to reduce the amount of potential fuel for wildfires, particularly in the north east and south east wooded parts of the city.	X					X				
	7.3.5.5	Regularly implement a trimming program to reduce the potential for trees and branches to damage	X					X				
	7.3.5.6	Establish a collaborative relationship with the Nature Conservancy to stay informed about their Sustainable Rivers Program and explore opportunities for partnership		X						X		
Objective 7.3.6 Promote community-wide hazard preparedness and risk awareness through comprehensive education initiatives and effective communication strategies	7.3.6.1	Establish communication systems and protocols to effectively disseminate hazard-related information to residents, stakeholders, and visitors.	X					X				
	7.3.6.2	Conduct regular emergency drills, exercises, and public awareness campaigns to educate the community about emergency procedures and preparedness measures.		X						X		
	7.3.6.3	Work with ISD and other community organizations to organize public education programs on preparedness.		X				X				

Objectives		Action Items	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
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	7.3.6.4	Conduct educational outreach programs to raise awareness about hazard risks and resilience-building practices.		X				X				
	7.3.6.5	Encourage residents to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program, or similar insurance programs, to help mitigate financial losses from flooding.		X				X				

Objectives		Action Items	Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
GOAL 8.1 Create and maintain roads and policies that ensure safety for all road-users.												
Objective 8.1.1 Improve and maintain the current road system.	8.1.1.1	Create and implement a regular maintenance schedule for roads and paths to ensure continued quality and safety.	X				X	X				
	8.1.1.2	Resurface roads that have potholes and damage	X				X					
	8.1.1.3	Create wayfinding signage for all roads and paths		X			X					
	8.1.1.4	Improve street lighting for cars and pedestrians		X							X	
	8.1.1.5	Create gateway plan for visitor wayfinding at major access points, including Hwy 59, Hwy 49, and S Polk St to promote tourism			X		X					
Objective 8.1.2 Improve traffic flow in high-traffic areas.	8.1.2.1	Implement the recommendation in the Planning & Capacity Building Study for road improvements (Table 8.2).			X		X					
	8.1.2.2	Connect roads, such as Haywood St and Bulldog Dr, to increase routing options and reduce congestion.			X		X					
	8.1.2.3	Conduct feasibility study for creating an under/overpass to bypass the train tracks on US 59 at Turtle Street.			X						X	
	8.1.2.4	Coordinate with TXDOT on planned projects, such as the IH-69 conversion.	X							X		
Objective 8.1.3 Use traffic calming techniques and partnerships to improve safety for all road users.	8.1.3.1	Lower speed limits around pedestrian-heavy areas		X				X				
	8.1.3.2	Adjust design guidelines that encourage more careful driving, such as curb extensions and pedestrian medians.			X				X			
	8.1.3.3	Work with the railroad to establish a quiet zone in Jefferson.			X			X		X		
Objective 8.1.4 Expand and improve multimodal access in Jefferson.	8.1.4.1	Complete and expand sidewalk network, including on S Walcott St, S Line St, W Camp St, N Walnut St, Watson St, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.			X		X					
	8.1.4.2	Add bike lanes to appropriate roads				X	X					
	8.1.4.3	Create multimodal paths for pedestrians, bicycles, and golf carts				X	X					
	8.1.4.4	Assist local businesses with adding new bike infrastructure to their properties				X				X		
Objective 8.1.5 Implement a Safe Routes to School	8.1.5.1	Create pedestrian routes that connect neighborhoods to schools			X		X					
	8.1.5.2	Educate students and parents on pedestrian safety practices		X				X				
Objective 8.1.6 Regulate golf carts to ensure safe usage.	8.1.6.1	Create signs and maps of approved golf cart paths and routes.			X			X				
	8.1.6.2	Implement a registration system for carts and drivers, including rentals.		X					X			

Objectives	#	Action Items	On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties
	8.1.6.3	Determine an appropriate battery/vehicle size that can be used on multimodal paths and surface roads.			X				X			
	8.1.6.4	Create designated golf cart parking in commercial areas.			X			X		X		
GOAL 8.2 Provide clean, safe, and reliable water and wastewater service to residents, visitors, and businesses												
Objective 8.2.1 Develop a system to update and maintain complete water and sewer system.	8.2.1.1	Assess the current conditions of the water and wastewater system and identify gaps and maintenance needs.		X				X			X	
	8.2.1.2	Develop and adopt a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan that includes water and sewage projects.	X				X					
	8.2.1.3	Secure funding, both internal and external, for water and sewage system improvements.	X					X				
	8.2.1.4	Work with ETCOG to apply to the TWDB for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds which provide low interest and forgivable loans for water and sewer infrastructure.		X						X		
	8.2.1.5	Assess progress regularly and update the Capital Improvement Plan annually.	X				X					
Objective 8.2.2 Strengthen and modernize water and wastewater infrastructure	8.2.2.1	Upgrade pipe capacity to ensure full coverage of Jefferson as outlined in the 2021 Planning and Building Capacity Study (Table #)			X		X					
	8.2.2.2	Prioritize areas with limited or no water access in the current system.	X					X				
	8.2.2.3	Meet the minimum capacity standards as outlined in §290.45 of Title 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 290 – Public Drinking Water.		X			X		X			
	8.2.2.4	Upgrade the drainage system as outlined in the 2021 Planning and Building Capacity Study, with special attention to flood-prone areas.			X		X					
	8.2.2.5	Flood Proof critical infrastructure such as water pumps, lift stations, and water plants with submersible pumps and weatherproofed lift stations.		X			X					
Objective 8.2.3 Ensure new development are built with sufficient and high quality water and sewer infrastructure	8.2.3.1	Create standard engineering drawings showing the placement, depth, and location of utilities within utility easements to add to the design guidelines, include preferred materials or other specifications that the City uses for water and sewer lines.			X				X			
	8.2.3.2	Amend the subdivision regulations to require developers to provide a performance bond (guaranteeing project completion) and maintenance bond for new developments.			X				X			
	8.2.3.3	Develop and officially adopt a water conservation and drought contingency plan.			X						X	

Objectives	Action Items	On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	Responsible Parties
			Timeframe			Action Type					
GOAL 8.3 Ensure comprehensive telecommunication and broadband coverage for all residents of the City of Jefferson.											
Objective 8.3.1 Achieve universal telecommunication and broadband access with enhanced quality and reliability of internet services.	8.3.1.1 Work with Marion County to apply for Texas Broadband Development Office & BEAD Program for grants and financial incentives to expand broadband access		X						X		
	8.3.1.2 Partner with internet service providers (ISPs) to map current coverage gaps and prioritize expansion in underserved areas.		X						X		
	8.3.1.3 Work with providers to upgrade existing infrastructure for broadband and cellular networks to ensure higher speeds, better reliability, and wider coverage.			X					X		
	8.3.1.4 Secure financing using programs like USDA Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees for broadband expansion			X			X		X		
Objective 8.3.2 Promote programs that support affordable and equitable access to telecommunications	8.3.2.1 Provide residents with information on programs like the FCC Affordable Connectivity Program and Lifeline Program that provide discounts on internet and telephone services to eligible households.		X				X		X		
	8.3.2.2 Apply to USDA Community Connect grants to connect residents, businesses, and community facilities in areas lacking sufficient broadband speed.			X			X				
	8.3.2.3 Partner with healthcare providers to leverage the FCC Rural Health Care Program.			X			X		X		
	8.3.2.4 Promote USDA Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grants to develop telecommunication infrastructure for distance learning and telemedicine.		X						X		
Objective 8.3.3 Foster digital literacy and digital skills education	8.3.3.1 Collaborate with Texas Workforce Commission Adult Education and Literacy program to provide digital literacy training for adult learners.		X				X		X		
	8.3.3.2 Partner with local libraries, schools, and community centers to offer digital literacy training and workshops.		X				X		X		
GOAL 8.4 Elevate city infrastructure and community services to meet current and future community needs.											
Objective 8.4.1 Identify and right-size city buildings for desired uses.	8.4.1.1 Conduct a comprehensive audit of existing city buildings to determine how to right-size or repurpose them.		X				X			X	
	8.4.1.2 Assess and determine combinations or groupings of services in city buildings to minimize construction needs.		X							X	
	8.4.1.3 Establish disaster response facilities in all new and existing government buildings.			X		X					
	8.4.1.4 Use the community's comments and land suitability analysis to select a new site for city hall.			X		X					

Objectives	Action Items		Timeframe				Action Type					Responsible Parties
			On-Going	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term	Capital Project	Program	Regulation or Standard	Partnership/ Collaboration	Targeted Planning	
	Rehabilitate or redevelop the old city hall site.	8.4.1.5			X		X					
Objective 8.4.2 Transition civic buildings to sustainable energy sources and promote energy efficiency in the community.	Install solar panels on the roofs of civic buildings to harness renewable energy.	8.4.2.1			X		X					
	Upgrade windows in existing buildings to more energy-efficient types.	8.4.2.2			X		X					
	Launch an education campaign to inform residents and businesses about best practices for increasing energy efficiency..	8.4.2.3		X				X				
	Facilitate connections for residents with state and federal energy conservation programs.	8.4.2.4			X			X		X		
Objective 8.4.3 Ensure equitable access to essential public utilities and services for all residents.	Identify and connect residents outside the current water and sewer service areas.	8.4.3.1		X			X					
	Partner with a solid waste management company to extend comprehensive service to all properties within the ETJ.	8.4.3.2		X			X			X		
	Develop a municipal regular trash pick-up service to meet community need.	8.4.3.3		X			X	X				
Objective 8.4.4 Strengthen city governance and enhance operational efficiency for effective service delivery.	Hire a part-time building official for permits and safety inspections.	8.4.4.1		X			X					
	Consider extending the terms of the mayor and city council for better continuity and stability in governance.	8.4.4.2		X				X				
	Appoint a city administrator to lead administrative operations.	8.4.4.3		X				X				