

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

The Lake Charles Waterfront is the region's largest, untapped asset for quality of life and economic development.

OVERVIEW

Project Description

The region's waterfronts are an untapped asset for quality of life and economic development. Exciting new projects like the Port Wonder Children's Museum and Nature Center, Lake Area Adventures, and a new Crying Eagle Brewery restaurant will activate the Lake Charles lakefront. The city of Lake Charles economic incentives help to make future investments attractive. Making a transformative, public investment in a continuous, public edge from the Lake Charles Civic Center, across the new I-10 bridge, to Westlake would connect over 5 miles of pedestrian promenades with vibrant restaurants, recreation, and entertainment activating the waterfront. A strong and activated waterfront can help contribute to additional organic growth along the I-10 corridor and North Lake Charles.

HIGH
priority



5-10
years



\$350
million





WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CALCASIEU PARISH?

For years, the Lake Charles and Calcasieu River waterfronts have been discussed as opportunities for economic development and improving quality of life, but they remain underutilized. With the excitement around Port Wonder, Crying Eagle Brewery, Paul's Rib Shack, Lake Area Adventures, and the new Calcasieu River Bridge, now is the time to invest. A new, pedestrian-friendly waterfront edge will attract new restaurants, shops, and recreation.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CAMERON PARISH?

Cameron Parish is pursuing development along its bayous, lakes, and coastline that will enhance quality of life and economic development. Waterfront development in Calcasieu Parish will also encourage and lay the groundwork for increasing ecotourism in Cameron by creating a gateway to water-based recreation and transportation for the region.



WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Additional waterfront development would build on the new and upcoming investments like Port Wonder and Crying Eagle.
- This project would bring back the tradition of waterfront recreation and water-based transportation and could connect over 5 miles of pedestrian and biking paths from Downtown Lake Charles to Westlake, Horseshoe Casino, and beyond.
- Exploring other opportunities for development across the region's waterfronts would promote economic development in both Calcasieu and Cameron parishes.
- Waterfront development has proven to be successful all over the country from a local and tourism standpoint, and can provide a long-term economic boost to all surrounding areas.

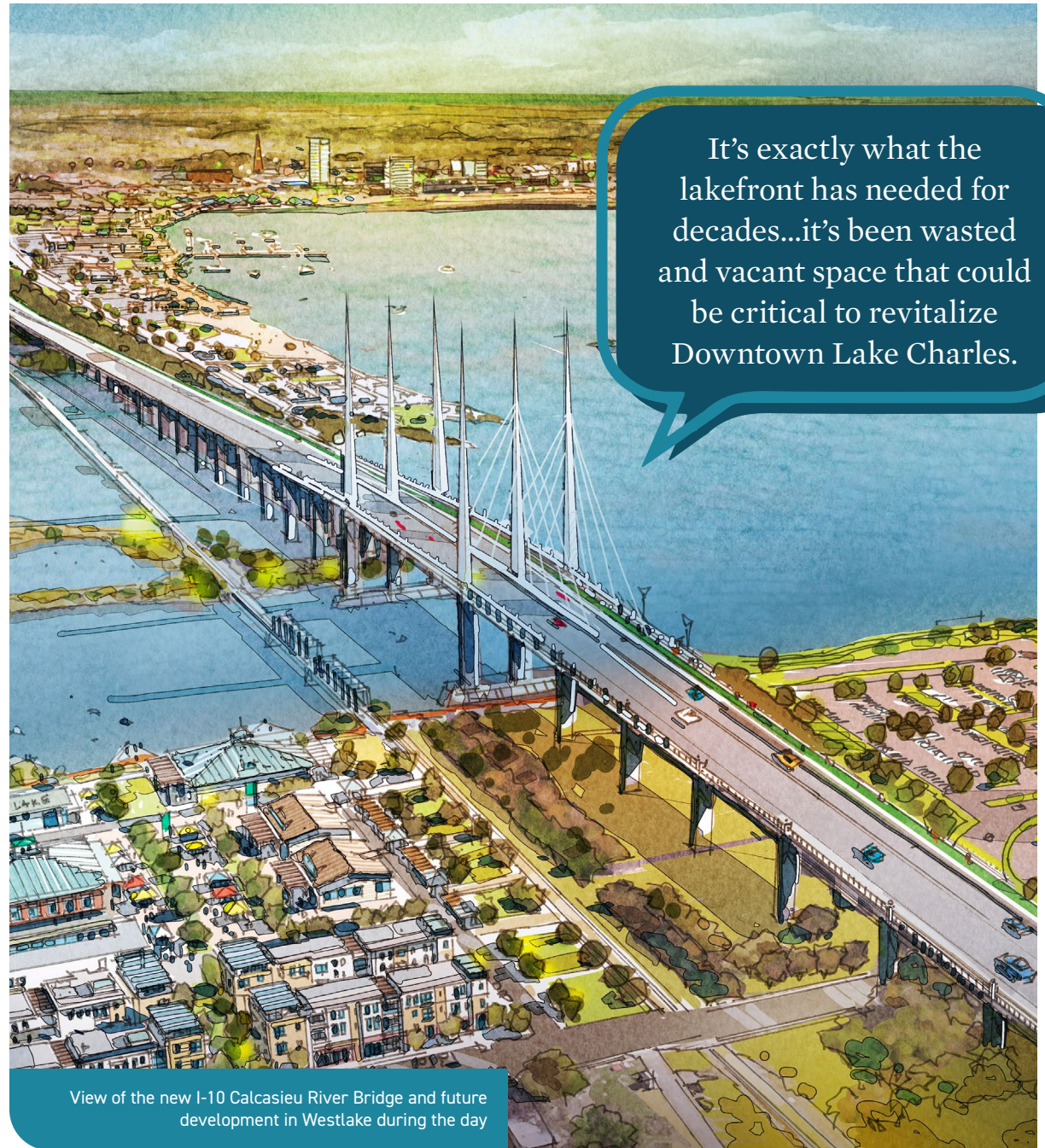
PLAN TOPIC AREAS

Plan Topics

Waterfront Development focuses on growth in Community Planning, Housing, Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Natural and Cultural Resources. An enhanced Lake Charles waterfront would:

Community Planning

- **Improve bike and pedestrian connectivity.**
Cities across the country with vibrant, activated waterfronts have thrived because of the



presence of a continuous, public edge along the water. For Westlake and Lake Charles, this public investment is possible from the Lake Charles Civic Center, across the new I-10 bridge, to Westlake, which would connect over 5 miles of pedestrian promenades and bike trails.

- **Offer more opportunities for family and youth.** Providing diverse recreation and restaurant amenities is critical in activating the waterfront and making it accessible to all people. Current developments, including the Crying Eagle Brewery, Port Wonder Children's Museum and Science Center, and Lake Area Adventures, along with future mixed-use development opportunities, will provide an abundance of amenities for families and children to engage with.
- **Set the standard for waterfront development in the region.** To have successful waterfront development, the first step is to create a continuous, public edge to the water where developments can plug and play into the existing public investment, such as Port Wonder and the rehabilitation of the City-owned parking garage. Detailed development standards will be outlined with aesthetic and programmatic requirements, while ensuring that the investment in the Lake Charles waterfront will set the stage for all future waterfront development in the area.

Housing

- **Diversify housing types, while providing opportunities for residents interested in Downtown and lakefront living.** One of the greatest needs of the region is a diversity in affordable housing options. Paired with the growing interest in Downtown living, the Lake Charles Waterfront is a great location to provide quality housing options, with access to the lake.

Economic Development

- **Activate and connect the waterfront.** Today, Lake Charles and Westlake remain largely disconnected because of the barrier created by two major bodies of water — Lake Charles and the Calcasieu River. In partnership with the design and construction of the new I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge, this gap could be bridged through the implementation of nearly 5 miles of walking and biking paths from the Horseshoe Casino, across the bridge, to the waterfront, and over to the Civic Center.
- **Create an attraction with entertainment, shopping, and restaurant amenities.** For decades, the Lake Charles Waterfront has been considered one of the region's largest, untapped resources, primed for economic development. With the current development of Crying Eagle Brewery, Port Wonder, Lake Area Adventures, and Paul's Rib Shack, momentum for economic investment on the waterfront is growing. Water taxis could provide a new form of connectivity to economic growth as well as a source of entertainment in themselves. The time is ideal to capitalize on these investments and expand opportunities to include new restaurants and entertainment that will continue to attract residents and tourists to Lake Charles.

Infrastructure

- **Improve the I-10 corridor, both through enhancements to the Calcasieu River Bridge and improved aesthetics along I-10 through the Downtown Lake Charles waterfront area.**
- **Strengthen and protect the shoreline and promote flood control to protect waterfront investment.** With the current investments along the waterfront, and all proposed future development opportunities, it is vital that these assets are protected. Several of the flood reduction and prevention measures explored in the Coastal Flood Risk Reduction project can be explored here, including: living shorelines, beach protection, breakwaters, and rock revetment.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- **Enhance outdoor recreational amenities and expand existing cultural assets and investments.**
- **Promote regional identity for accessible, activated waterfronts.** The Lake Charles Waterfront is not only an amenity for current and future residents of SWLA, but also an ideal tourist stop along the I-10 corridor between Houston and New Orleans. With enhanced amenities, entertainment, and dining, the waterfront will encourage travelers to stop in Lake Charles and Westlake.
- **Create a gateway to ecotourism in the region.** Southwest Louisiana is already known for its beautiful nature and access to the outdoors; however, there are opportunities to further this identity and support an interconnected system of paths and natural areas to build a robust ecotourism network.

ACTION STEPS

Conference Hotel

The Lake Charles Civic Center is located in the heart of Downtown Lake Charles and serves as the eastern anchor in waterfront development. With over 83,000 square feet of leaseable space and four major event spaces — James E. Sudduth Memorial Coliseum, Rosa Hart Theater, Exhibition Hall, and Arcade Amphitheater — the Lake Charles Civic Center is able to host a wide variety of events each year. These events attract tourists from all across the country, and therefore, put a demand on the local hotel market.

1 Create a Parcel Adjacent to the Civic Center for a Conference Hotel

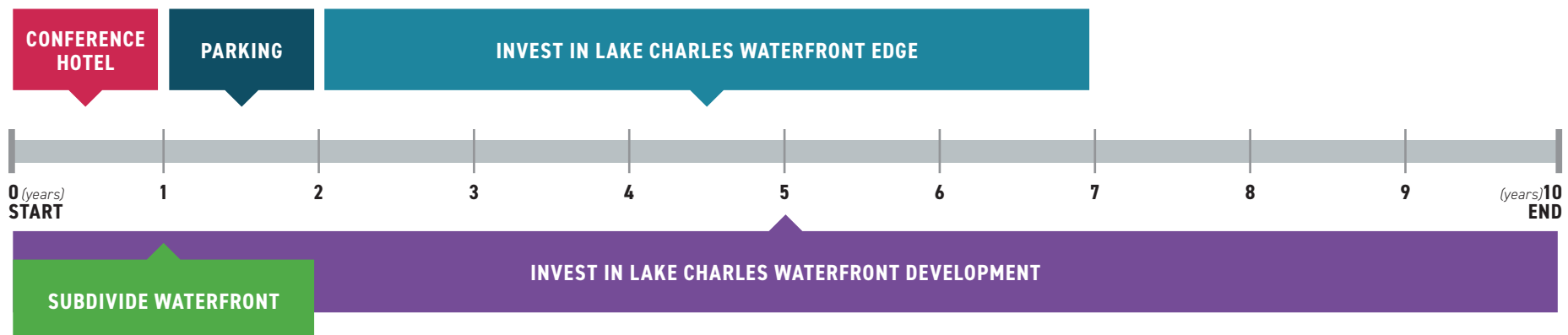
Convention centers are intended to provide economic development opportunities for local communities through ongoing public investment; however, they cannot do this work alone. Hotels located adjacent to convention center facilities serve as opportunities to bolster the work of the convention center, draw in additional local, regional, and national events, and thus generate greater revenue for the hosting community. The land surrounding the Lake Charles Civic Center is

Waterfront Development

Action Steps

- 1 Create a parcel ideally sited for the development of a conference hotel, adjacent to the Civic Center
- 2 Build structured parking to replace surface parking, or provide funding to developers to incorporate replacement parking into the development of adjacent blocks
- 3 Make a public investment in an enhanced, continuous public waterfront from the Lake Charles Civic Center, across the new I-10 bridge, to the Westlake waterfront
- 4 Subdivide the waterfront to create discrete development parcels, totaling ~50 acres of developable land
- 5 RFP development parcels with specific requirements for private developers to propose and build new restaurants, recreation, and entertainment uses, and mixed-use with housing

Pursue waterfront development in areas of Calcasieu Parish outside of Lake Charles and in Cameron Parish



a perfect opportunity to explore the development of a conference center hotel. Requiring approximately five acres of land, the proposed Conference Center Hotel could be attached to the existing civic center, or located on a property adjacent to it.



Potential Redevelopment Concept for the Lake Charles Civic Center Area

Parking

There is an abundance of parking available for visitors to Downtown Lake Charles and the waterfront today. However, much of that parking is taking up valuable land that could be used for the creation and development of an amenitized waterfront.

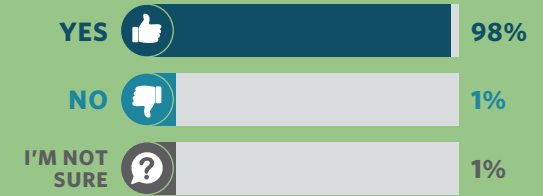
2 Build Structured Parking or Provide Incentives to Developers for Replacement Parking in Future Development

As development parcels along the Lake Charles Waterfront and around the Civic Center are identified, the existing parking that is available today will need to be reallocated and redistributed to accommodate for new development. The City of Lake Charles, in partnership with identified developers for waterfront development, can work together to develop parking strategies to adequately supply new amenities.

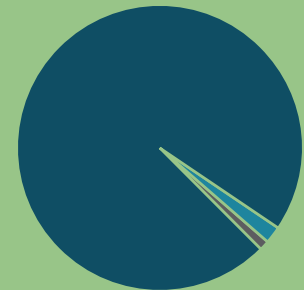
Having more local attractions would be fantastic.

HIGHLIGHTING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

I would visit this project



I think this project will benefit SWLA.



A Good Example

DETROIT RIVERFRONT PARK

- The Riverfront Park was spearheaded by a non-profit, Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, in 2003
- Initially, \$200 million was invested: \$35M from GM, \$50M from the Kresge Foundation, and \$110M in philanthropic contributions
- This initial investment spurred \$2 billion in public/private development
- Each year, \$43.7M is spent by tourists, with \$14.5M going back to the City of Detroit in tax revenues
- Annually, there are over 3.5 million visitors



Creation of a continuous public edge along the Detroit River



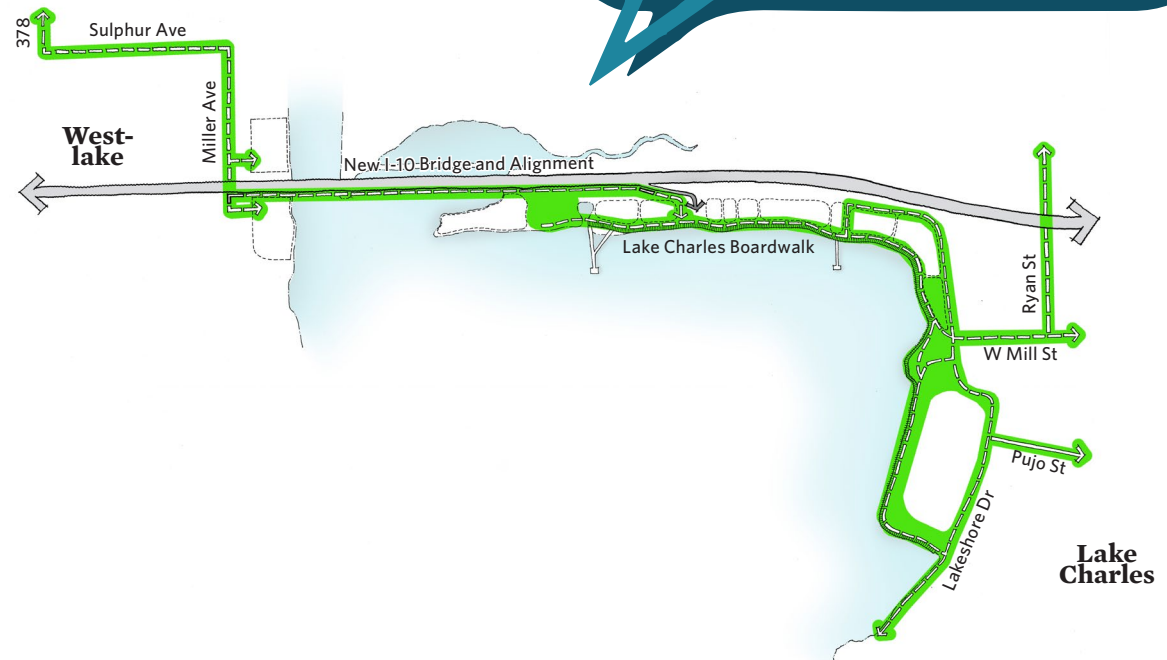
Access for Recreational Activities

Invest in Lake Charles Waterfront Edge

Currently, as waterfront development occurs in Westlake and Lake Charles, individual development entities are responsible for incorporating water's edge access into their developments, if any. The result is a fragmented boardwalk that does not unify the waterfront.

3 Make a Public Investment in an Enhanced, Continuous Public Waterfront from Westlake to Lake Charles

Prior to identifying any further development of the Lake Charles waterfront, it is imperative that a public investment is made to create a connected public edge from the Lake Charles Civic Center, across the new I-10 bridge, and to the Westlake waterfront. Upon completion, a connected Lake Charles waterfront would provide residents and tourists with access to nearly 5 miles of connected pedestrian and bike trails.



The waterfront should connect to a future maritime training campus on the Calcasieu River at the end of Ryan Street. For more information, reference the Economic Development Plan Recommendations.

I like that this project brings life to the lake of "Lake Charles." Being that it can be seen from the interstate, it will create a tourist stop for many passing through, as well as a place for locals to enjoy our wonderful lake.



Concept sketch of the new I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge at night (looking towards the Lake Charles Waterfront from Westlake)

Projects Happening Outside of Just Imagine SWLA COORDINATING WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT WITH THE NEW CALCASIEU RIVER BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION AND INTERSTATE REALIGNMENT

For the last several years, the Louisiana Department of Transportation (LADOTD) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in coordination with the City of Lake Charles, the Town of Westlake, Calcasieu Parish, and a local I-10 Task Force have been working to prepare for the demolition and replacement of the I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge. The construction of the New Calcasieu River Bridge, along with the associated realignment of I-10 from the I-10/I-210 west interchange to the Ryan Street exit ramp, will greatly impact the accessibility and activation of the Lake Charles Waterfront.

The Just Imagine SWLA Partners and members of the I-10 Task Force are working with LADOTD staff to ensure that the design and construction of the bridge can meet both FHWA standards, while also optimizing access to the waterfront and the businesses who will locate there as a part of the redevelopment.

Anticipated Timeline for the Design and Construction:

- Fall 2022: Public Hearing — DOTD will hold public hearings to gather feedback on the Alternative 5G Design
- Fall 2022 to Early Spring 2023: Selection Process — P3 team selection and negotiation
- Late Spring/Early Summer 2023: Final Design — Selected team will prepare final design



Left
Conceptual Image
of the preliminary
design for the
new Calcasieu
River Bridge



Potential Partners

- City of Lake Charles
- Visit Lake Charles
- Private developers and investors
- Cameron Parish
- City of Westlake
- Calcasieu Parish



Potential Funding Sources

- Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (competitive grants)
- City of Lake Charles General Fund
- Grants that have planning as eligible uses
- Lakefront Economic Development District funds as projects are built
- Private developers and investors
- Restore LA Small Business Loan and Grant Program
- Louisiana Economic Development (LED) incentives for job creation
- USDA grants
- EDA grants

Subdivide Waterfront

Previous proposals for the Lake Charles Waterfront have recommended that the area is developed in its entirety by one developer. Due to the size and complex nature of waterfront development, this type of single-developer approach has not been successful.

4 Subdivide the Waterfront to Create Discrete Development Parcels

In order to create a more manageable scale of waterfront development, subdividing the Lake Charles waterfront would increase and potentially expedite development. Once subdivided, there would be approximately 50 acres of developable land across Westlake, the Lake Charles Waterfront, and the Civic Center that would be more attractive to all types of investors, both large and small.

Invest in Lake Charles Waterfront Development

As a public investment in the waterfront is underway and once the area has been replatted to account for the subdivided waterfront and new development sites, investment in the Lake Charles waterfront can begin.

5 RFP Development Parcels for New Restaurants, Recreation, Entertainment, and Mixed-Use Housing

An RFP is a Request for Proposal, which announces a project, describes the project parameters and expectations, and solicits bids from qualified designers, contractors, and professionals to compete for the project. With each RFP for waterfront development in Westlake and Lake Charles, there should be a series of guiding principles and requirements to determine what is and is not allowed, including: types of amenities, parking requirements, and development aesthetics. This will allow for a cohesive and visually pleasing waterfront development, while still promoting a diversity of amenities.



It would bring much needed development to not only a great waterfront area not many cities have access to, but a good picture of Lake Charles for anyone traveling over the I-10 bridge.

IDENTIFIED AND POTENTIAL WATERFRONT IMPROVEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

A Good Example

SAN ANTONIO RIVERWALK

- The San Antonio Riverwalk is a 15-mile loop, with water access and activities, stormwater management features, and an activated public space with festive restaurants, bars, shops, and hotels
- With over 11.5 million visitors each year, the Riverwalk is a popular tourist destination
- In 1938, \$430,000 was invested: \$75,000 from the City of San Antonio and \$355,000 from FDR's Works Progress Administration
- Each year, the Riverwalk nets \$1.3 billion, with an average of \$315 million in hotel business annually



Lush vegetation and easy access to public open spaces



Barrier-free water's edge treatment



IMPLEMENTATION

Economic Impact and Return on Investment

The Lake Charles Waterfront has been an underutilized, but well-revered community asset to Calcasieu Parish and the region for decades. Through its proximity both locally to Downtown Lake Charles and regionally along the I-10 corridor, this untapped water's edge is prime for investment. As the first priority for maximizing long-run growth and economic diversification, seeing the completion of the I-10 corridor improvements and new construction of the Calcasieu River Bridge will propel forward the long-awaited desire for an activated Lake Charles Waterfront. By focusing on industries with significant potential for future job growth — hospitality, tourism, and water transportation — the Lake Charles Waterfront sets the stage for optimizing economic impact and catalyzing ideal development opportunities for Downtown Lake Charles and Westlake.

Looking Beyond the Lake Charles Waterfront and Exploring Opportunities in the Region

To implement cohesive and vibrant waterfront developments, it is important to begin with one, continuous public waterfront edge. Whether this be at the scale of the Lake Charles waterfront, from the Civic Center to Westlake, or along a smaller stretch of any water body in Cameron Parish, a consistent edge for development to plug into is vital. This establishes a framework with long-term benefits for thriving and active waterfronts. While the Lake Charles waterfront is the first use-case for this region, it will set a precedent and standard for any future waterfront development opportunities explored across all of Southwest Louisiana.



IMPLEMENTATION

| HOW? (ACTION STEPS) | COST | TIME FRAME | POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES | LEAD ENTITY | SUPPORTING PARTNERS/ENTITIES |
|--|--|---------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Subdivide to create discrete development parcels, totaling ~50 acres of developable land | Planning and engineering consultant fees, staff time | 1 to 2 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Fund Grants that have planning as eligible uses | City of Lake Charles | Visit Lake Charles |
| Build structured parking to replace surface parking or provide funding to developers to incorporate replacement parking into the development of adjacent blocks | \$7 million | 2 to 5 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDA Grants | City of Lake Charles | Visit Lake Charles |
| Make a public investment in an enhanced, continuous public waterfront from the Lake Charles Civic Center, across the new I-10 bridge, to the Westlake Waterfront | \$5-\$10 million Infrastructure Costs | 2 to 5 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (competitive grants) | City of Lake Charles | Visit Lake Charles Calcasieu Parish City of Westlake |
| Create a parcel ideally sited for the development of a conference hotel, adjacent to the Civic Center | \$50 million | 0 to 1 year | | City of Lake Charles | Visit Lake Charles |
| Use a public, request for proposal (RFP) and selection process to identify developers for individual parcels and articulate requirements for new restaurants, recreation, and entertainment uses, and mixed-use with housing | \$250+ million | 5 to 10 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lakefront Economic Development District funds as projects are built Private investors and developers Restore LA Small Business Loan and Grant Program Economic development component of the CDBG-DR | City of Lake Charles | Visit Lake Charles |
| Pursue waterfront development in areas of Calcasieu Parish outside of Lake Charles, and in Cameron Parish | TBD | 2 to 10 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> USDA grants | Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes | Private investors and developers Visit Lake Charles |