

Greauxing Resilience at Home

City of Donaldsonville, Louisiana:
Donaldsonville Strategic Plan 2020–2025



GEORGETOWN CLIMATE CENTER

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

Louisiana is one of the hardest-hit areas in the United States as extreme weather events and regular flooding become more frequent and intense.¹ These challenges often fall “first and worst” on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color or “BIPOC” and low-income communities.² This is especially true in the U.S. Gulf Coast region and the state of Louisiana.

Over time, these challenges are being exacerbated by population increases and transitions as climate and non-climate drivers (e.g., people moving out of urban centers into more rural areas) influence where people choose — or are able — to live.

In southeast Louisiana, resilient, affordable housing initiatives are critical to ensuring equitable adaptation that takes into consideration the myriad overlapping challenges facing all Louisianans, but especially those living in communities that have long borne a disproportionate burden of risk.

Over a two-year period between fall 2020 and spring 2022, **Capital Region Planning Commission** and **Georgetown Climate Center** partnered with dozens of people from government, private, and nonprofit sectors and community stakeholders in Region Seven of the **Louisiana Watershed Initiative**.³ The result of that partnership effort is **Greaxing Resilience at Home: A Regional Vision**⁴ (Regional Vision), a resource to inform Region Seven’s ongoing work to increase community resilience by promoting affordable housing and nature-based solutions.

Regional and local governments in Region Seven can use the Regional Vision to identify potential legal, planning, and policy tools and projects to increase the affordability and availability of housing and the use of nature-based solutions. In addition, the Regional Vision offers insights for policymakers across Louisiana, throughout the Gulf Coast region, and nationally.

This report is composed of 24 individual case studies developed by Georgetown Climate Center to support the Regional Vision. These case studies describe best and emerging practices, tools, and examples from Louisiana and other U.S. jurisdictions to make progress on these complex and challenging issues. These case studies are intended to provide transferable lessons and ideas for regional and local governments addressing housing and mitigating flood risk as integrated parts of comprehensive community resilience strategies. Collectively, these case studies present a suite, although not an exhaustive list of tools and approaches that can be used to facilitate any of these efforts.

1 STATE OF LA., LOUISIANA CLIMATE ACTION PLAN: CLIMATE INITIATIVES TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR 15–16 (Feb. 2022), available at <https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/CCI-Task-force/CAP/ClimateActionPlanFinal.pdf>.

2 See *id.* at 15–17.

3 The Louisiana Watershed Initiative is an effort to create a paradigm shift in floodplain management towards a strategy that approaches flood risk reduction from a nature-based solutions and land-use-based approach. A part of this approach includes identifying eight separate regional watershed management areas to assist in achieving cross-jurisdictional activities.

Region Seven is one of these eight watershed regions. Region Seven encompasses the upper part of the toe of Louisiana’s boot. It spans eastward from the Mississippi River near Baton Rouge across the Northshore (i.e., north of Lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas) to Mississippi and along the Mississippi River to the Bonnet Carré Spillway. The region includes 13 parishes and 45 incorporated municipalities.

4 To reflect their connection to Louisiana’s cultural heritage, the project team and members of Region Seven that participated in this process chose to use the word “Greax,” a French-inspired phonetic spelling of the word “Grow,” to brand this product.

Where possible, all the case studies share a consistent organizational format to allow easier cross-comparison of tools, processes, and takeaways:

- The **Background** section introduces the regional and local context (e.g., location, demographics) for each case study, including the following facing each jurisdiction: extreme weather risks, housing and environmental challenges, and development pressures.
- The **Housing** section focuses on the legal, planning, and policy tools and projects that have been designed and implemented to support the growth and preservation of housing affordability and availability.
- The **Environment** section highlights how vulnerable habitats like floodplains and other open spaces are being restored, conserved, and protected as a part of comprehensive resilience strategies to provide important ecosystem and community benefits like reducing flood risk and creating community assets, such as parks and trails.
- The **Community Engagement** section summarizes how governments have provided different types of public engagement opportunities and how affected residents have contributed to these planning and decisionmaking processes.
- The **Funding** section identifies how the programs, plans, and projects discussed have been funded by federal, state, and local government and private and nongovernmental sources.
- The **Next Steps** section captures the anticipated future actions that featured case study jurisdictions may take in implementing these tools and strategies.
- The **Considerations and Lessons Learned** section concludes with the primary takeaways from each example that other regional and local policymakers and communities may consider when developing or implementing their own housing and resilience strategies using these legal, planning, and policy tools.

A few additional notes about the case studies:

- **The case studies selected prioritize relatable and scalable models from places similar to Louisiana:** Wherever possible, Georgetown Climate Center aimed to acknowledge and lift up the work of jurisdictions and nongovernmental actors in Region Seven and neighboring watershed regions to inspire peer-to-peer sharing and actions from as close to home as possible. These resources are drawn from 12 states, with an emphasis on regions and local areas in the Gulf and Mid-Atlantic: Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Examples and lessons drawn from these regions are easiest to apply to a Louisianan context because they feature similar geography or analogous impacts from flooding and other climate effects.
- **There are no perfect, “one-size-fits-all” solutions:** While the case studies and resource entries informing the Region Vision are instructive for Region Seven and beyond, none of them are “perfect” examples of how to solve these complex and challenging issues. Georgetown Climate Center found no single case study or resource that provides a point-for-point or model for what Region Seven is trying to accomplish. No other jurisdiction identified is currently trying to integrate housing, flooding, equity, resilience, and population changes together in a single plan, ordinance, or policy. However, some jurisdictions are moving in that direction, or are making progress on discrete elements of what will eventually become a more holistic strategy. Therefore, this report and the Regional Vision draw analogous connections and recommendations that can be combined to facilitate more comprehensive planning and land-use efforts.

The case studies in this report were informed by interviews with practitioners and community leaders in charge of designing and overseeing this work. No statements or opinions, however, should be attributed to any individual or organization included in the *Acknowledgements* section of this report.

It is also important to note that the examples described in each case study are ongoing and the content included in this report is current as of spring 2022. For future updates about these and other case studies and the Regional Vision, please visit [Greaxing Resilience at Home: A Regional Vision](#) and Georgetown Climate Center’s [Adaptation Clearinghouse](#).

City of Donaldsonville, Louisiana

Donaldsonville Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Donaldsonville, Louisiana has developed a strategic plan for 2020–2025, which identifies eight strategic priorities to revitalize the city by fostering business development and increasing the city’s standard of living. Among other strategic priorities, the plan addresses: (1) Economic Development; (2) Workforce Development, Job Creation, and Training; (7) Housing, RV Parks, Campgrounds, Mobile or Manufactured Homes; and (8) Infrastructure Revitalization and New Development. Noteworthy recommendations include updating zoning ordinances, launching the Donaldson FIRST program for workforce development, updating aging infrastructure, enhancing mobility and resident’s connectivity to city centers and amenities, and growing green space.

The plan was developed through a robust community engagement process that leveraged external support to supplement and expand limited government staff and resources.

This plan can serve as an example of how regional and local planners and policymakers in smaller or rural jurisdictions can set and then implement an overarching vision across multiple sectors to address local challenges and increase overall social resilience in a coordinated way. Due to the intersectional nature of this plan, the recommended objectives also have implications on affordable housing and green space efforts, which are especially highlighted.

BACKGROUND

The City of Donaldsonville is located in Ascension Parish along the west bank of the Mississippi River, between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Donaldsonville is a historic city, known as the first incorporated city in the United States to elect an African-American citizen, Pierre Caliste Landry, to serve as mayor.¹ The city prides itself on its historic origins and works to keep this legacy alive through historic preservation that supports a tourism industry.

In 2019, Donaldsonville had a population of roughly 8,200 residents and the average age is 39.8.² According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2019, the median household income was \$25,551 with

¹ *Discover Donaldsonville*, CITY OF DONALDSONVILLE, LA., <https://www.donaldsonville-la.gov/discover-donaldsonville> (last visited Jan. 4, 2022).

² *Donaldsonville, LA*, DATA USA, <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/donaldsonville-la> (last visited Jan. 4, 2022).

38.5 percent of the population living in poverty.³ In 2019, 3,000 people were employed within Donaldsonville, and the primary industries were retail trade, health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and transportation.⁴ Approximately 75 percent of the population is Black, 21 percent is white, and 1.6 percent is Hispanic or Latinx.⁵

Some of the city's ongoing challenges include a high rate of poverty, aging infrastructure, and low business growth and development.

OVERVIEW OF DONALDSONVILLE STRATEGIC PLAN 2020–2025

The 2020–2025 Donaldsonville Strategic Plan was created with the goal of increasing business development, addressing current infrastructure issues, and decreasing the city's poverty level. While this plan includes priorities dedicated to city-wide growth and development, it also includes components necessary to address individual- and community-scale resilience through economic and workforce development, housing, and infrastructure revitalization.

The city developed previous types and iterations of plans; however, few addressed the city's infrastructure challenges or conducted adequate stakeholder engagement and were ultimately too aspirational to be implemented in full. By comparison, this 2020–2025 Strategic Plan aims to identify more realistic and immediate priorities and initiatives to effectively revitalize the city.

The development of the Strategic Plan began in 2018 with the completion of a core needs assessment in collaboration with community stakeholders, governing bodies, and regulatory authorities. This assessment reported on the city's Economic Scorecard performance indicators and on the city's completed, ongoing, and planned projects. Upon completion, the results of the assessment were brought before a steering committee for review and condensed into strategic priorities for further community input and feedback. The following eight strategic priorities were chosen:

1. Economic Development
2. Workforce Development, Job Creation, and Training
3. Health, Wellness, and Recreation
4. Safety, Security, Social, and Criminal Justice

³ *QuickFacts: Donaldsonville City, Louisiana, U.S.* CENSUS BUREAU, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/donaldsonvillecitylouisiana> (last visited Jan. 4, 2022).

⁴ *Donaldsonville, LA*, DATA USA, <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/donaldsonville-la> (last visited Jan. 4, 2022).

⁵ *QuickFacts: Donaldsonville City, Louisiana, U.S.* CENSUS BUREAU, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/donaldsonvillecitylouisiana> (last visited Jan. 4, 2022).

5. Blighted and Abandoned Properties
6. Education, Co- and Extracurricular Activities
7. Housing, RV Parks, Campgrounds, Mobile, or Manufactured Homes
8. Infrastructure Revitalization and New Development

Under each strategic priority is a list of 15–30 achievable and quantifiable objectives.⁶ A committee of community stakeholders has been formed for each of the eight strategic priorities and are accepting volunteers to take part in the oversight, planning, and execution of the objectives within each strategic priority.

In order to address the plan's implications on affordable housing and climate change adaptation and resilience, the rest of this entry explores strategic priorities 1, 2, 7, and 8 in more depth.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Priority 1 on Economic Development includes 25 objectives that seek to increase economic activity in Donaldsonville by attracting new businesses, protecting existing businesses, and supporting workers, community members, and the environment.⁷ These specific recommendations cover creating jobs, eliminating service deserts, and developing commercial zoning ordinances, establishing financial assistance for development and disaster recovery, ensuring the protection of homeowner interests, green spaces, and flood zones, and supporting local organizations and nonprofit tourism partners.

The city recommends conducting an annual business survey,⁸ a land-use survey, and an analysis of current zoning ordinances to better understand the scope of economic and service needs in Donaldsonville. Specific metrics for economic development include creating five new businesses each year, increasing sales tax dollars by 45 percent annually, retaining 85 percent of current small businesses, helping five people graduate annually from small business and entrepreneurship training courses, and reducing unemployment by two percent each year.⁹

In recent years, several new business strips have been developed to increase economic activity in Donaldsonville; however, the issue of greater community connectivity remains. As there is no public transportation and little pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure in Donaldsonville, access between residential and commercial districts is extremely limited for residents without personal

⁶ CITY OF DONALDSONVILLE, LA., 2020–2024 STRATEGIC PLAN (2020), available at https://www.donaldsonville-la.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf491/f/uploads/2021_2025_strategic_plan_0.pdf.

⁷ *Id.* at 1.

⁸ *Annual Business Survey*, CITY OF DONALDSONVILLE, LA., <https://www.donaldsonville-la.gov/economic-development/webforms/annual-business-survey> (last visited Jan. 4, 2022).

⁹ CITY OF DONALDSONVILLE, LA., 2020–2024 STRATEGIC PLAN 1 (2020), available at https://www.donaldsonville-la.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf491/f/uploads/2021_2025_strategic_plan_0.pdf.

vehicles, hindering job opportunities and economic activity. As such, an important economic development priority for the City of Donaldsonville is to increase physical access to healthcare, jobs, food, services, and housing, especially for pedestrians, cyclists, and underserved communities. Several strategies to increase connectivity include building new and improved sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, and promoting mixed-use development.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, JOB CREATION, AND TRAINING

Strategic Priority 2 on Workforce Development, Job Creation, and Training includes 19 objectives with the goals of reducing unemployment and increasing apprenticeship, internship, and job placement programs, centered around the launch of the Donaldsonville FIRST (Family, Innovation, Resources, Sustainability, Together) Program.¹⁰ The FIRST program is a multiple pathway “community hub” pilot program with the goals of:

- Improving family lives by increasing basic literacy skills and physical and mental health through organized activities (such as the existing summer enrichment program)
- Providing access and referrals to families for:
 - Food
 - Housing
 - Mental health counseling
 - Teen pregnancy prevention
 - Drug abuse and domestic violence prevention
 - Chronic health problems
- Improving workforce readiness through:
 - Career fairs
 - Mentoring
 - Internship
 - Expungement assistance

¹⁰ *Donaldsonville First Program*, CITY OF DONALDSONVILLE, LA., <https://www.donaldsonville-la.gov/donaldsonville-first-program> (last visited Jan. 4, 2022); CITY OF DONALDSONVILLE, LA., 2020–2024 STRATEGIC PLAN 5 (2020), available at https://www.donaldsonville-la.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf491/f/uploads/2021_2025_strategic_plan_0.pdf.

- Job placement assistance
- Offering youth opportunities for success and innovation through:
 - Community service and leadership projects
 - College test preparation assistance
 - Financial aid counseling assistance
 - College application assistance (guided by the existing Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council)

This strategic priority places a strong emphasis on partnership building with local organizations, businesses, and community colleges, public and private schools through the Donaldsonville FIRST program.

Other workforce development priorities not covered in the Donaldsonville FIRST Program include objectives such as writing grants to improve wireless and broadband connectivity and hot spots throughout the city, to reduce total unemployment by two percent, and increase job placement opportunities by 30 percent.

These efforts to foster workforce development and job creation and training are important and relevant as they increase capacity for individual and community resilience. Increased resilience helps to mitigate the impacts from climate change-related disasters such as hurricanes and other financial and social catalysts.

HOUSING, RV PARKS, CAMPGROUNDS, MOBILE OR MANUFACTURED HOMES

Strategic Priority 7 on Housing includes 18 specific objectives to review appropriate zoning and ordinances for mobile and manufactured housing, and to implement regulations for affordable, subsidized, and rental housing.¹¹ These objectives include clarifying existing zoning regulations; developing new ordinances for mobile and manufactured homes to improve maintenance and code enforcement, and regulations on short-term and commercial rentals in residentially zoned structures; creating “tourism-based” RV parks and campgrounds; and ensuring community participation in decisions on mobile home or RV park setback and spacing requirements.

These recommended housing initiatives can strive to increase housing security, overall structural safety, economic activity, and mechanisms to foster resilience without displacing current residents. By developing and enforcing codes specific to mobile and manufactured homes, a better system of accountability is created, ensuring that all homes and residents are safe in the face of climate

¹¹ CITY OF DONALDSONVILLE, LA., 2020–2024 STRATEGIC PLAN 17 (2020), available at https://www.donaldsonville-la.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf491/f/uploads/2021_2025_strategic_plan_0.pdf.

change impacts. Mobile and manufactured homes are often stigmatized or face different permitting and enforcement barriers in communities compared to traditional “stick built” housing options. Regulations for short-term rentals and affordable housing combat resident displacement as the city undergoes economic changes, and fostering tourism in RV parks and campgrounds increases economic activity to support community capacity and resilience to the effects of climate change.

Several new affordable housing complexes are being planned and developed in Donaldsonville, providing units for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households. One example is the reuse of the B. Lemann & Brothers Inc. building in downtown Donaldsonville. This building was constructed in the 1870s and designated as a historic building by the National Parks Service in the 1980s.¹² This building is being redeveloped to include 42 units of artist-preferred housing and 7,600 square feet of commercial space.¹³ Construction is expected to be completed in early summer 2022.¹⁴

Finally, the city is also making an effort to increase the amount of housing available to specifically middle-income households, senior living, and promoting more duplex communities. Securing adequate, affordable, and safe housing for all residents is one step towards building greater community resilience.

The need for affordable housing opportunities across all income levels may become particularly acute in the future if Donaldsonville experiences population growth and transitions in response to flooding in other areas of Ascension Parish and southwest Louisiana. As Louisiana faces more frequent and intense disaster and flooding events, increased water and damage exacerbated by climate may cause some people to move voluntarily — and force others — to move to safer areas, like Donaldsonville.

INFRASTRUCTURE REVITALIZATION, NEW DEVELOPMENT

Strategic Priority 8 on Infrastructure and Development includes 28 objectives that cover projects such as developing a funding strategy for a new natural gas system, implementing the city Sanitary Sewer Revitalization Plan, updating city transportation infrastructure, supporting first responders

¹² U.S. Dep’t of the Interior Heritage Conservation & Recreation Serv., National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form (1982), *available at* <https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/6067c863-38d6-44f9-a110-9c621a2ddca0>.

¹³ Donaldsonville’s historic Lemann building redevelopment underway, DONALDSONVILLE CHIEF (Apr. 14, 2021), <https://www.donaldsonvillechief.com/story/news/2021/04/14/redevelopment-project-begins-lemann-building-donaldsonville/7203380002/>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

and firefighting capacity, increasing general city-wide accessibility, and increasing accessible green spaces.¹⁵

Within these broader objectives, specific recommendations include implementing the city's Sanitary Sewer Revitalization Plan, while also creating a new Expansion Program to incorporate new development and annexed residential and commercial spaces. Additionally, through the plan, the city recommends investing in a new road improvement project to identify and repair roadways, shoulders, and culverts, while also developing a walk and bike path to improve community connectivity. The city recommends forming collaborative partnerships with statewide and regional government organizations and joining the Metropolitan Planning Organization for Transportation Planning and MOVE 2046 Inclusion to better provide safe and improved drainage, utility, transportation, and other municipal infrastructure.

Continued and planned maintenance on existing infrastructure is necessary to respond to the effects of flooding and heat, while also expanding and collaborating to develop and implement new resilient infrastructure. The city also recommends purchasing new equipment to better meet the changing needs of the landscape and upkeep of streets and parks.

Green space creation and revitalization combine opportunities for recreation and fitness with environmental protection and nature-based climate resilience solutions. Donaldsonville City parks are managed by Ascension Parish. In recent years, several parks, including the Crescent Park, have been renovated for musical and cultural events. A river walk and a walking tour have been established. In 2018, the City of Donaldsonville received a grant from Prevoist Memorial Hospital to join the National Fitness Campaign and construct an outdoor fitness court to encourage the use of green spaces and improve resident health.

Flooding is not a significant threat in Donaldsonville as the city is located on the west bank of the Mississippi in an area that typically and historically has not experienced large-scale flooding. In the event of heavy precipitation, however, the downtown area may flood due to aging stormwater drainage infrastructure.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This plan has been and continues to be informed by significant community engagement. During the initial outreach and planning process in 2019, the City of Donaldsonville began holding community meetings in each of the city's voting districts and disseminated surveys. Little feedback was received from these efforts as they did not adequately establish trust between many residents and the city government. In addition, many residents did not fully understand what subjects were going to be discussed at these meetings and surveys.

¹⁵ CITY OF DONALDSONVILLE, LA., 2020–2024 STRATEGIC PLAN 21 (2020), available at https://www.donaldsonville-la.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf491/f/uploads/2021_2025_strategic_plan_0.pdf.

Recognizing these barriers to participation, the City of Donaldsonville switched engagement tactics, instead holding face-to-face community charrettes to workshop and analyze the plan's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These charrettes were held in public and community-based locations such as churches, public libraries, and government housing authorities — never in government-owned facilities — and were considerably more successful and constructive, drawing crowds of 25–30 residents at each meeting.

While the coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic impacted progress on the strategic plan, it did not stop the city's efforts. Community review and feedback sessions are now being conducted through community presentations, town halls, partner stakeholder meetings, and media promotion to solicit further input from community members, leaders, and collaborative partners to develop strategies for plan implementation and to evaluate outcomes. In addition, the city is identifying and coordinating with community ambassadors and strategic priority-specific stakeholder groups composed of governmental organizations and outside partners — such as the school board, the fire department, and local organizations — to develop implementation plans and track progress.

The city's plan recommendations emphasize partnerships with local organizations, schools, businesses, and neighboring communities as a way to tailor the plan's objectives to the needs of the community and to benefit from shared knowledge and collaboration. The city frequently delivers updates about the status of the plan online and at city council meetings.

FUNDING

Historic preservation tax credits have contributed funding to the downtown revitalization efforts in Donaldsonville, as many buildings dating back to the nineteenth century are now being converted into mixed-use commercial and residential developments.

Donaldsonville is a participating city in [Main Street America](#) and the state chapter [Louisiana Main Street](#), an organization and movement dedicated to “preservation-based economic development and community revitalization across the country.”¹⁶ This organization has been integral in funding and assisting the revitalization of Donaldsonville.

Over time, the city will evaluate other sources of public and private funding to implement specific projects identified in the strategic plan.

NEXT STEPS

While stakeholder groups for each strategic priority are already gathering to set implementation plans and track the plan's progress, several initiatives have already been accomplished since they

¹⁶ See MAIN ST. AMERICA, <https://www.mainstreet.org/mainstreetamerica/themovement> (last visited Jan. 4, 2022); LOUISIANA MAIN ST., <https://www.crt.state.la.us/cultural-development/historic-preservation/main-street/> (last visited Jan. 4, 2022).

fell under operational plans and actions the city was already undertaking. These initiatives include efforts to increase the affordable housing stock, total economic activity, and green space in the city of Donaldsonville. As the plan moves forward, some priority next steps may include:

- Rebuilding the city's recreation center downtown;
- Including fitness features in the Donaldsonville walking tour;
- Incorporating green space into all city initiatives;
- Increase economic development downtown;
- Increase bike and pedestrian connectivity between residential and commercial districts; and
- Continue to develop affordable housing units for low-, moderate-, and middle- income households.

CONSIDERATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The Donaldsonville Strategic Plan is an example of a proactive, comprehensive planning approach that cuts across many different sectors and indirectly contemplates holistic resilience from many different directions. A strategic or non-legally required plan, like Donaldsonville's, that complements and helps to implement other local or legally mandated plans, like comprehensive plans, can be used to refine and act on community priorities and needs. This is particularly important in places considering significant revitalization efforts and the need for new investments in key assets like housing and infrastructure.

In the plan, the city explicitly identifies housing, and green space as priorities for Donaldsonville. However, these strategic priorities are centered in a more cohesive vision that underscores multiple human needs around workforce and economic development, infrastructure revitalization, and resident health and wellness — all of which are needed to build both individual and community-level resilience.

Further, this plan is an example of how a small rural community was capable of developing a plan with limited staff by leveraging the time and support of external volunteers. The plan is a strong example of a public, transparent, and robust engagement strategy to develop, implement, and continually improve the plan.

In addition, it is very important for community engagement to take place in public and community-based locations in which residents are comfortable and are able to understand government officials. This plan is a good example of how local governments can change community engagement tactics in response to little or negative feedback from residents to produce more community-driven and meaningful outcomes.

Participation in state and national programs, such as [Louisiana Main Street and Main Street America](#), was integral in implementing parts of the strategic plan because of the technical support,

connections, and resources that the program provided the City of Donaldsonville.¹⁷ Other local policymakers in rural areas or with historic downtowns might similarly consider evaluating the Main Street America program — or state analogs. This can enable local governments to capitalize on different opportunities to revitalize downtown areas and give them new life as community centers that promote mixed-use development and options for resident connectivity.

¹⁷ *Main Street America*, MAIN ST. AMERICA, <https://www.mainstreet.org/home> (last visited Jan. 4, 2022).