

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



SCOTLANDVILLE COMMUNITY

STRATEGIC

PLAN

Executive Summary

A Community of Opportunity

MAY 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Vision Statement

The future of Scotlandville is lively, welcoming, and well-connected. The community attracts new residents and businesses and improves connections to the university and neighboring areas. Scotlandville is known for its unique mix of quality housing choices, strong locally owned businesses, effective transportation, and safe and healthy options for walking and biking. The Scotlandville Community thrives as a sustainable mixed-use neighborhood that reflects the culture and community of the past, while offering new housing and jobs for existing and new residents.

Background and Purpose of the Plan

In October 2019, Southern University System Foundation initiated the development of a Southern University Strategic Campus Master Plan (Campus Plan) and Scotlandville Community Strategic Plan (Community Plan). The Campus Plan focuses on improvements to Southern University's physical campus, while the Community Plan focuses on the Scotlandville Community, which surrounds Southern University's main campus.

The purpose of this Community Plan is to strengthen connections between the University and the Scotlandville community with the goal of creating a vibrant mixed-use university neighborhood that provides housing and services to current and future residents, students, faculty, and staff. This Community Plan enhances campus-community partnerships and provides strategies, recommendations, and actions to catalyze revitalization of the Scotlandville Community, with the understanding that the businesses, services, and amenities provided within the community bear a significant impact on the Southern University student and faculty experience.

Scotlandville is an historic African American suburb that has seen disinvestment for decades. Today the area's challenges include its food desert, economic deterioration, limited housing availability and affordability, and a lack of multimodal transportation. This Community Plan engaged residents, students, and stakeholders to develop a Community Vision, goals, and strategies to revitalize the Scotlandville community, improve campus-community connections, provide a framework to spur housing and mixed-use development that supports the University and nearby neighborhoods, create a multimodal transportation system and improved access flow between the university and the community.

The guiding principles established by Scotlandville residents and stakeholders, in any order, are to

- + **Strengthen community connections** with Southern University; create business and residential opportunities for students and graduates;
- + **Implement community-wide beautification programs** and expand community gathering spaces;
- + **Support residential reinvestment and rehabilitations** and provide financial and technical assistance;
- + **Enhance corridors** along Scotland Avenue, Scenic Highway, Mills Avenue, and Harding Boulevard to be more walkable and aesthetically pleasing;
- + **Focus on retail and commercial uses that serve the neighborhood and university** with emphasis on a grocery store and entrepreneurial businesses;
- + **Foster a cohesive, supportive business environment**;
- + **Improve entrances, gateways, and connections** between Southern University and the community;
- + **Prioritize public infrastructure improvements** to catalyze infill and create a walkable community;
- + **Implement projects and programs that support a healthy lifestyle**, including access to healthy foods and fresh produce and that promote physical activity and safe recreation;
- + **Shape key catalytic development sites** such as mixed-use centers **with mixed-income housing**.
- + **Promote and preserve Scotlandville's cultural identity** in all decision making; and
- + **Be a regional showcase for climate resiliency and sustainable development practices**.

Key Challenges, Vision and Recommendations

The Plan addresses five key challenges which are translated into aspirational vision statements describing the desired future, goals, strategies and actions.

1. Thriving Community

Vision: *Scotlandville is a vibrant mixed-use community that provides housing, services, and shopping for existing and new residents, as well as Southern University students, faculty, and staff. Residents are skilled and participate fully in the community's economic expansion.*

- + **Goal 1** Increase educational and workforce training opportunities
- + **Goal 2** Increase opportunities for commercial and residential development

2. Welcoming Neighborhood

Vision: *Housing in Scotlandville is attractive and affordable to households in different stages of life and at varying income levels. There are multiple housing types available and few housing vacancies.*

- + **Goal 1** Encourage a greater variety of housing types that accommodate a broad range of community residents
- + **Goal 2** Address vacant properties and bring them back onto the market
- + **Goal 3** Provide programs and incentives that assist residents with homeownership and neighborhood improvement

3. Community Image and Beautification

Vision: *Scotlandville is visually appealing, attracts businesses, and is known throughout the region for its community pride and quality of life for all Scotlandville residents.*

- + **Goal 1** Implement public art and streetscape improvements to improve the overall look and feel of the community
- + **Goal 2** Improve the look of commercial roads and facilitate safe walking and biking
- + **Goal 3** Improve the public perception of Scotlandville

4. Healthy Community

Vision: *Scotlandville embraces healthy, sustainable practices in all aspects of community life and is a showcase for creating healthy communities.*

- + **Goal 1** Provide projects and programs to reduce food insecurity in Scotlandville
- + **Goal 2** Incentivize green development practices that are sensitive to and reduce negative environmental impacts as Scotlandville undergoes revitalization
- + **Goal 3** Improve the built environment to address root causes of health disparities facing Scotlandville

5. Connecting Scotlandville, Southern University and Beyond

Vision: *Scotlandville and Southern University are aligned and successful in celebrating and honoring their University's and community's rich culture, strengthening the sense of place of North Baton Rouge, which attracts national and international resources to the University and community. Scotlandville and Southern University are physically and programmatically connected to each other, and they are connected to major corridors, downtown, and the region.*

- + **Goal 1** Highlight historic and cultural spaces within Scotlandville
- + **Goal 2** Create partnerships and opportunities for community-university engagement



Summer camp attendees at Jewel J. Newman Community Center touring the model garden at Southern University Ag Center.

Sub-District Recommendations

In addition to the overall, community-wide strategies proposed for Scotlandville, this Plan establishes sub-districts for the area immediately surrounding Southern University. The sub-districts characterize the different uses that exist within these areas and help focus and target strategies to realize the community vision and catalyze redevelopment. The established sub-districts include **Mixed-Use Corridor**, **University Corridor**, **Neighborhood Infill and Stabilization**, **Neighborhood Preservation** and **Neighborhood Mixed-Use**.

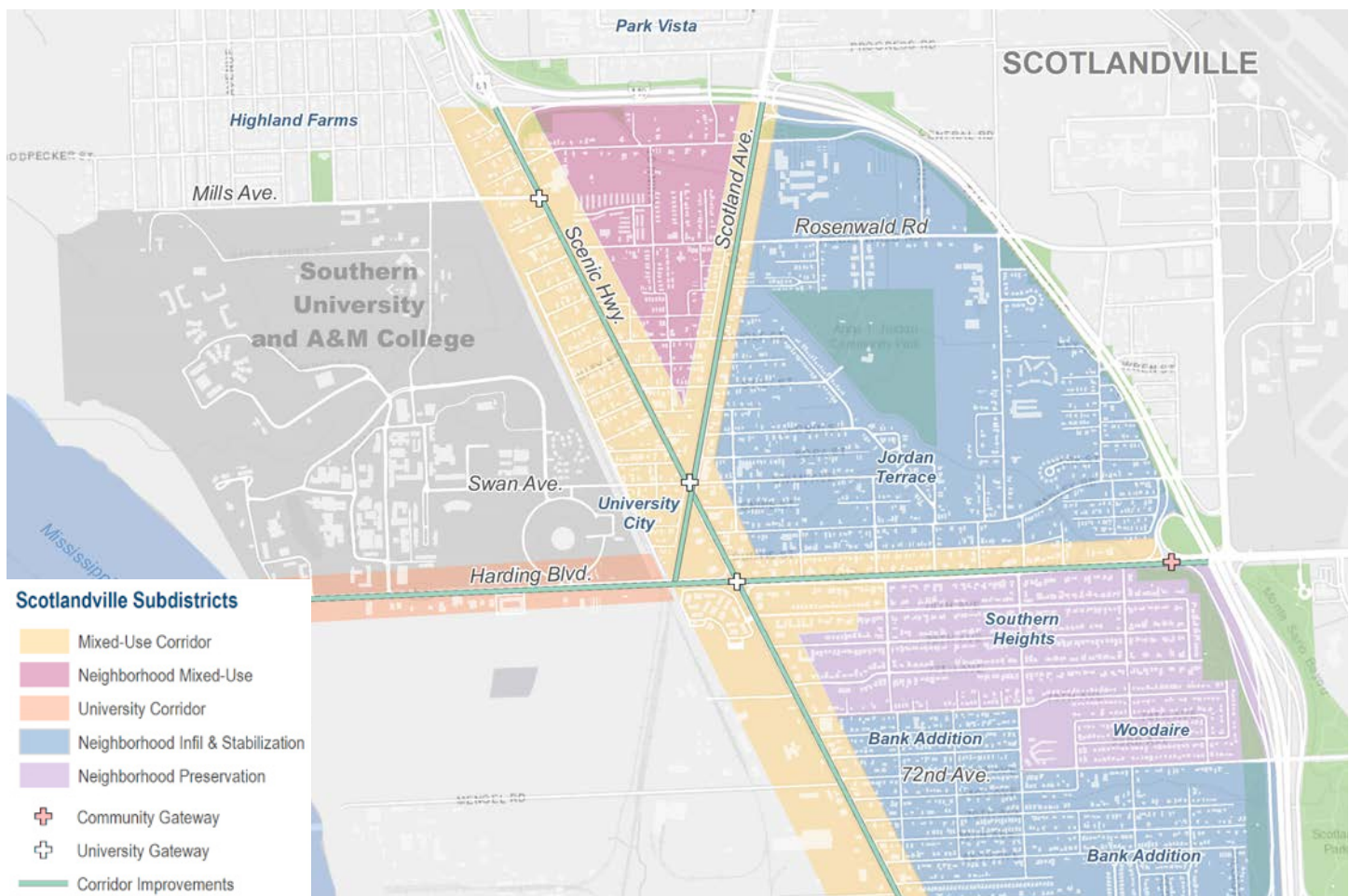
Mixed-Use Corridor Vision

Mixed-use corridors are walkable, pedestrian friendly streets, with a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses and buildings that add to the character of the area. Uses are compatible with adjacent residential uses, working together to create a harmonious streetscape and community. The mixed-use corridors attract residents who wish to live and work within walking distance of a wide variety of services.

PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

1. **Strategically invest in commercial projects to catalyze community development**—for example, incentivize a family-friendly restaurant to serve the community and Southern University students, faculty, and staff.
2. **Identify potential sites** along Swan Avenue, Harding Boulevard, and Scotland Avenue for multifamily housing development.
3. **Work with the city and state departments of transportation to reduce highway speeds** along the mixed-use corridors to improve walking and biking safety.

Proposed Sub-Districts





4. Redevelop vacant buildings and lots within the mixed-use corridor with a variety of commercial and multi-family residential uses.

5. Implement a facade improvement program along the mixed-use corridor.

6. Amend Character Areas in the East Baton Rouge City-Parish Unified Development Code to require minimal walkability requirements that create a sense of place, continuity and uniformity along walkable mixed-use corridors. Additional Walkable Character Area amendments could include

- + Aligning frontages of building facades;
- + Bringing buildings up to the street;
- + Requiring display windows and doors along street frontages;
- + Placing parking at the side or rear of buildings; and
- + Pedestrian-level display windows, signage, lighting and street trees.

7. Initiate a new mixed use zoning district that promotes desired development and eliminates the potential for new heavy commercial or industrial uses along these corridors. Alternatively, amend the Unified Development Code so that existing commercial districts that allow mixed-use development require incompatible commercial and industrial uses—such as tire sales, outdoor storage, etc.—to obtain conditional use permits.

8. Consider implementing a Pink Zone program to simplify zoning and building codes so projects in the Scotlandville area (and other struggling

redevelopment districts) can get going more quickly by making the bureaucratic red tape so light it looks pink. This process would devise tools so that redevelopment takes less time and the resources needed for compliance are reduced. The goal is not to eliminate zoning and development requirements but to ease some of the constraints faced by new projects, like minimum-parking requirements. Health and safety reviews such as environmental impacts and neighborhood adjacency reviews would continue to be required in pink zones.

9. Expand Build Baton Rouge land acquisition program in Scotlandville to provide developable sites for local entrepreneurs.

University Corridor Vision

The University Corridor is a walkable gathering area with a mix of university- and community-serving retail, service, commercial and residential uses that together create a thriving center where students, faculty and staff can find food, restaurants, shops and services needed for daily living. Reinvestment in this corridor also serves as a catalyst for further community development.

PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

- 1. Acquire existing properties along Harding Boulevard** to develop projects that serve Southern University and the community.
- 2. Implement streetscape improvements in the University District** including wide sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, signage, bike lanes and other pedestrian and beautification amenities.



3. **Partner with state and federal agencies** to establish a Business Recovery Center, Business Incubator, and Culinary Arts Degree and Training Facility that includes an instructional restaurant and banquet flex space.
4. **Establish incentives to attract a boutique hotel** in this area to serve the university and community.
5. **Develop mixed-use housing** for students, faculty, staff and residents.

Neighborhood Infill and Stabilization Vision

All Scotlandville neighborhoods are inviting and well maintained with new compatible housing and enhanced neighborhood services improving the quality of life for existing and new residents. Neighborhoods have a strong identity which increases pride and engenders a feeling of commitment to the area's future.

PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

1. **Improve the neighborhood image by highlighting the historic and cultural heritage of the community** to demonstrate the area's importance. Continuing the redevelopment of vacant parcels and existing structures and the replacement of dilapidated retail, commercial and residential buildings will emphasize the area's reinvestment trend.
2. **Work with the school district and Southern University to support student learning and preparedness** for educational and work training opportunities.
3. **Make improvements to create a stronger neighborhood identity** and sense of place by design features such as
 - + Neighborhood gateway and entrance treatments;
 - + Internal neighborhood identification, such as banners, distinctive street signage;
 - + Consistent landscape themes and streetscape; and
 - + Street sign-toppers or yard-flag programs to promote neighborhood cohesiveness.
4. **Identify and inventory existing substandard housing units.** Support the repair, upgrade or replacement of structures. Encourage collaboration of nonprofit maintenance and rehabilitation programs. Continue to coordinate services with City-Parish funded programs to maximize the efficiency and visible impact of the neighborhoods.
5. **Work with Build Baton Rouge to increase its acquisition of properties for the land bank in Scotlandville** and create a partnership between Build Baton Rouge and the Scotlandville CDC to evaluate, design, and implement a residential land bank for eligible properties in Scotlandville.
6. **Develop a compliance store to assist homeowners with addressing repairs and code-compliance issues.** Operated by nonprofit and for-profit entities, religious institutions, neighborhood and civic associations, and government agencies, compliance stores maintain stocks of supplies and tools donated by local retailers. Individual residents can borrow, rent or purchase supplies to bring their homes into code compliance. The following steps are key to initiating the program
 - + Allocate or explore options to find a space to store supplies and tools;



- + Contact local retailers and seek donations for supplies and tools;
 - + Incentivize neighborhood associations, youth groups, and residents of the community to utilize the supplies and tools in the store; and
 - + Organize and conduct workshops to teach home repair techniques.
7. **Recruit volunteers** from neighborhood residents, religious institutions, community organizations, and corporations to implement fix-up, paint-up, or clean-up campaigns and corporate repair projects to repair homes occupied by elderly, disabled and indigent.
 8. **Implement a Youth Build and Repair Program** in conjunction with local schools to teach young people how to build new homes and repair older ones. HUD has previously offered competitive grants to cities and non-profit organizations to help high-risk youth aged 16-24 to develop housing construction job skills and to complete their high school education. These efforts can also be funded by industry, trade organizations, high schools and trade schools.
 9. **Organize Adopt-a-Block campaigns** to complement LA DOTD's statewide Adopt-a-Road program where neighborhood groups, residents, scout troops, and businesses adopt key vistas and intersections to maintain and implement beautification projects, such as flower and shrub plantings.
 10. **Verify that adequate zoning is in place** for desired development.
 11. **Expedite development review** to reduce review time and costs.

Neighborhood Preservation Vision

These areas continue to provide stable housing and amenities with infrastructure improvements, compatible infill and supporting services to build on the existing neighborhood amenities.

PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

1. **Encourage neighborhood groups and organizations to register with the East Baton Rouge Neighborhood Registry** to promote neighborhood preservation and improvement. Currently registered neighborhoods include Southern Heights, Park Vista, and Perry Place.
2. **Preserve and enhance neighborhood identity.** Reinforce and preserve neighborhood character and a strong sense of place.
3. **Promote energy efficient housing and rehabilitation of existing housing stock.**
4. **Incorporate artistic elements** and support cultural events on a neighborhood scale to reinforce neighborhood character and identity.
5. **Incorporate pedestrian oriented elements**, including sidewalks, street trees, pedestrian scale lighting, signage, and embedded art into rights of way and transportation networks.
6. **Review development applications within neighborhoods for compatibility** with the character of existing neighborhoods.
7. **Promote housing compatibility among adjacent residential areas** by encouraging complementary design techniques and development standards.



Neighborhood Mixed-Use Vision

Neighborhood Mixed-Use Districts are walkable and connected to the larger community. This self-sustaining community has a mix of housing types, including two- and three-story ground floor commercial and residential buildings, townhomes, apartments, and small-lot, single-family housing as well as a mix of religious, non-profit, retail, office and light commercial uses. Businesses and organizations support surrounding residential households with community services needed for everyday life.

Many of the action items listed in the Neighborhood Infill and Stabilization sub-district (on pages five and six) apply to this area as well.

PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

1. **Work with the City-Parish to provide incentives for developers to build affordable mixed-income housing** in areas in need of public intervention to spur development. Potential incentives include:
 - + Cost participation funding for infrastructure to support development of affordable single-family housing within new mixed-income subdivisions of 50 or more units;
 - + Use of Section 108 loan funding to participate in the cost of onsite infrastructure normally paid for by the developer; and
 - + Provide rebates for platting, zoning, and permitting.
2. **Encourage redevelopment of underutilized and vacant properties for interim uses.** Interim land uses can help improve neighborhood image and increase

activity by activating underutilized landmarks and vacant properties in poor condition. While waiting for market conditions to improve and for desired development opportunities to become a reality, owners redevelop their properties by making interim improvements with minimal investment to attract increased client traffic. Land uses such as outdoor markets, festival spaces, community gardens, and well-maintained open space areas can quickly retrofit existing buildings and transform vacant lots into business opportunities.

3. **Target the area for infrastructure improvements** to support future mixed-use development.

Implementation Plan

The following matrix serves as a checklist to monitor ongoing implementation of the Plan's recommendations. The matrix provides the Plan's strategies, the timeframe to be completed and the partners that should be involved in implementation of the recommended strategy. The timeframes are divided into **short term** (1-2 years), **medium term** (3-5 years), **long term** (5 or more years) and **ongoing**, where no time limit is attached to strategy, but it should be incorporated moving forward.

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERS
1. Thriving Community			
Goal 1 Increase educational and workforce training opportunities			
Strategy 1.1 (actions on page 26)	Increase community enrollment and participation in business development and entrepreneurship programs offered by Southern University.	Long term	» Southern University » EDA University Center at Southern University » Southern University Small Business Incubator » Scotlandville Magnet High School » Scotlandville Middle Pre-Engineering Academy
Strategy 1.2 (actions on page 26-27)	Increase opportunities for residents and local business owners to have access to technical assistance, resources, and information for business development	Long term	» BRNEDD » Louisiana Economic Development Office » Capital Region Planning Commission » Economic Development Administration Regional Office
Strategy 1.3 (actions on page 27)	Develop a community commercial kitchen and culinary training program	Long term	» Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center » Louisiana Community and Technical College System » BRNEDD
Goal 2 Increase opportunities for commercial and residential development			
Strategy 2.1 (actions on page 27)	Identify priority sites for catalytic development	Short term	» BRNEDD » Baton Rouge Brownfields Program » Build Baton Rouge » Local developers
Strategy 2.2 (actions on page 28)	Streamline the commercial and residential development process	Medium term	» Baton Rouge Department of Development » Baton Rouge Planning Commission

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERS
Strategy 2.3 (actions on page 28)	Encourage partnerships to expand resources and opportunities for development	Medium term	» BRAC » BRNEDD » Louisiana Department of Economic Development » Southern University College of Business » Louisiana State University College of Business » Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport » Baton Rouge Community College » Local economic development nonprofit organizations
Strategy 2.4 (actions on page 28)	Develop a Scotlandville Business Improvement District (BID) around major corridors (Scenic Highway, Scotland Avenue, and Harding Boulevard)	Medium term	» EBR City-Parish Planning Commission » Metro council » Build Baton Rouge

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERS
2. Welcoming Neighborhoods			
Goal 1 Increase the variety of housing types in Scotlandville to accommodate a broad range of community residents			
Strategy 1.1 (actions on page 29-30)	Encourage mixed-use developments that provide commercial and residential uses for people with varying income levels	medium term	» Build Baton Rouge » EBR Planning Commission » EBR Department of Development » Local community developers
Strategy 1.2 (actions on page 31)	Support residential infill development with the five-year goal of achieving 300 new units by 2026 and an additional 200 infill units by 2031	medium term	» Local developers » EBR City-Parish Department of Economic Development » Local nonprofits and neighborhood groups
Strategy 1.3 (actions on page 32)	Continue providing housing for seniors	long term	» EBR Office of Community Development
Goal 2 Address vacant properties and bring them back onto the market			
Strategy 2.1 (actions on page 33)	Incentivize redevelopment of vacant properties	medium term	» Build Baton Rouge » EBR Department of Development » Community groups, nonprofits and area businesses

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME	PARTNERS
Strategy 2.2 (actions on page 33-34)	Adaptively reuse vacant buildings	medium term	» BRNEDD » EBR Brownfields Program » EBR Planning Commission » EBR Department of Development
Goal 3 Provide programs and incentives that assist residents with homeownership and neighborhood improvement			
Strategy 3.1 (actions on page 34)	Provide modular housing	long term	» Scotlandville Community Development Corporation
Strategy 3.2 (actions on page 34-35)	Strengthen and expand home improvement and neighborhood investment initiatives	medium term	» EBR Office of Community Development » Scotlandville residents » Nonprofits, religious institutions, neighborhood and civic associations » Scotlandville schools

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS
3. Community Image and Beautification			
Goal 1 Implement public art and streetscape improvements to improve the overall look and feel of the community			
Strategy 1.1 (actions on page 37)	Develop and implement a commercial façade improvement program	short term	» BRNEDD » Build Baton Rouge
Strategy 1.2 (actions on page 37)	Place community gateways and signage at key locations throughout Scotlandville	short term	» EBR Planning Commission » Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge » BRNEDD » Southern University » Scotlandville community stakeholders » Local artists
Strategy 1.3 (actions on page 39)	Implement the Harding Boulevard Beautification Program	medium term	» Scotlandville Community Development Corporation » ExxonMobil » Southern University » The Human Jukebox Alumni Association » Scotlandville community stakeholders
Strategy 1.4 (actions on page 39)	Place public art and improve public spaces throughout Scotlandville	medium term	» Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS
Strategy 1.5 (actions on page 40)	Initiate a community branding campaign	medium term	» Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge » Local artists » Scotlandville stakeholders: businesses, students, and residents
Goal 2 Improve the look of commercial roads and facilitate safe walking and biking			
Strategy 2.1 (actions on page 40-41)	Incorporate aesthetic design standards in infrastructure improvements	long term	» East Baton Rouge City-Parish Public Works Department » BRAC
Strategy 2.2 (actions on page 44)	Infill commercial corridors with street-oriented buildings and implement streetscape design guidelines for Scotland Avenue, Scenic Highway and Swan Avenue to promote walkability and safety	long term	» EBR Planning Commission
Strategy 2.3 (actions on page 44-45)	Implement a proactive targeted commercial code enforcement program	medium term	» EBR Department of Development » EBR Planning Commission » Community and neighborhood groups
Goal 3 Improve the public perception of Scotlandville			
Strategy 3.1 (actions on page 46)	Improve community safety	ongoing	» EBR City-Parish Police Department » Southern University
Strategy 3.2 (actions on page 47)	Reduce community blight	long term	» EBR City-Parish » Build Baton Rouge » EBR Department of Development
Strategy 3.3 (actions on page 47)	Provide voluntary clean-up opportunities	medium term	» EBR City-Parish Department of Environmental Services » Scotlandville Community Development Corporation » Local neighborhood groups

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS
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4. Healthy Community

Goal 1 Provide projects and programs to reduce food insecurity in Scotlandville

Strategy 1.1 (actions on page 49)	Develop a framework to provide fresh food to Scotlandville residents	short term	» Scotlandville CDC » BRNEDD
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RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS
Strategy 1.2 (actions on page 49)	Work with Southern University to develop a community farmers' market	short term	» Southern University Agricultural Center, Director of Advancement » District 2 Council Person » Scotlandville Community stakeholders
Strategy 1.3 (actions on page 50)	Implement a community garden and community composting	medium term	» Southern University Agricultural Center » Community residents and organizations
Goal 2 Incentivize green development practices that are sensitive to and reduce negative environmental impacts as Scotlandville undergoes revitalization			
Strategy 2.1 (actions on page 50)	Incorporate green design practices in public and private development	ongoing	» Home Builders Association of Greater Baton Rouge » EBR Planning Commission » EBR Development Department
Strategy 2.2 (actions on page 51)	Implement a rooftop solar program for Scotlandville residents	long term	» EBR Office of Community Development » EBR Planning Commission
Strategy 2.3 (actions on page 51)	Increase the tree canopy in Scotlandville	medium term	» Baton Rouge Green » Southern University » Scotlandville students and residents » BREC, DOTD, EBR City-Parish (depending on tree location)
Strategy 2.4 (actions on page 60)	Address visual and air impacts from industrial uses	ongoing	» Partnership between industry » EBR Environmental Services » Community representatives
Goal 3 Improve the built environment to address root causes of health disparities facing Scotlandville			
Strategy 3.1 (actions on page 60)	Increase comfort and safety while walking and biking throughout Scotlandville	medium term	» EBR Dept. of Transportation » BREC » Bicycle advocacy groups » Gotcha Bikes bike-share program
Strategy 3.2 (actions on page 61)	Provide well-maintained active recreational areas and gathering spaces for all ages	ongoing	» BREC » District 2 Council Person » Southern University » SCDC
Strategy 3.3 (actions on page 62)	Maintain existing community infrastructure	ongoing	» Scotlandville residents » Business owners in Scotlandville » LA DOTD » EBR City-Parish Department of Public Works » Keep Louisiana Beautiful » EBR City-Parish Department of Environmental Services

RECOMMENDATION	DESCRIPTION	TIMING	PARTNERS
5. Connecting Scottdale, Southern University and Beyond			
Goal 1: Highlight historic and cultural spaces within Scottdale			
Strategy 1.1 (actions on page 63)	Improve community access to the Mississippi River Bluff with a historic and cultural trail	short term	» Southern University » Community stakeholders » Visit Baton Rouge
Strategy 1.2 (actions on page 64)	Highlight Scottdale's historical significance	medium term	» Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge » Scottdale East Branch Library » Local community organizations » Scottdale residents and stakeholders
Strategy 1.3 (actions on page 64)	Improve and expand the Scottdale Plaza	short term	» District 2 Council Person » Build Baton Rouge » Southern University
Strategy 1.4 (actions on page 65)	Create a Scottdale Cultural District	ongoing	» District 2 Council Person » Southern University » Local business owners » Community stakeholders
Goal 2: Create partnerships and opportunities for community-university engagement			
Strategy 2.1 (actions on page 65)	Increase opportunities for Southern University students and faculty to participate in and support Scottdale educational, business and training programs	medium term	» Southern University College of Business » Southern University Office of Student Leadership and Community Engagement
Strategy 2.2 (actions on page 66)	Improve physical connections between Southern University and Scottdale	long term	» Southern University » EBR Department of Transportation » BRNEDD » Community representatives