

BAYOU VERMILION DISTRICT

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & GOAL SETTING



SCAPE



CENTER for
PLANNING
EXCELLENCE

JUNE 2024

ABOUT THE BAYOU VERMILION DISTRICT

The Bayou Vermilion District (BVD) was established by the Louisiana State Legislature in 1984 as the agency responsible for the health of the Bayou Vermilion as a recreational, cultural, and economic asset in Lafayette Parish.

Today, the BVD directly monitors and maintains the Bayou Vermilion within Lafayette Parish, removing hundreds of cubic yards of debris and trash from the river annually. It also chairs a cross-agency Water Quality Task Force and conducts regular water quality testing and reporting. It maintains boat and kayak launches along the Bayou throughout Lafayette Parish, and encourages recreational uses of the Bayou through programming, lessons, and equipment rentals.

In support of its cultural and economic development mission, the BVD in 1990 established Vermilionville, a one-of-a-kind living history museum on the banks of the Bayou that celebrates the history and culture of the Native American, Creole, Acadian, and African peoples in the Attakapas

region through the end of the 1800s. Today, Vermilionville draws more than 40,000 visitors annually and is the base of the BVD's operations.

JURISDICTION & MISSION

In its establishing legislation*, the State of Louisiana charged the Bayou Vermilion District with:

1. Improving the water quality of and beautifying Bayou Vermilion in the parish of Lafayette in an effort to promote the Bayou as a recreational and cultural asset.
2. Creating and controlling a new type of viable economic development adjacent to Bayou Vermilion so as to provide a diversified economic base for the city and parish of Lafayette.
3. Doing any and all other acts which would enhance the general condition of Bayou Vermilion.

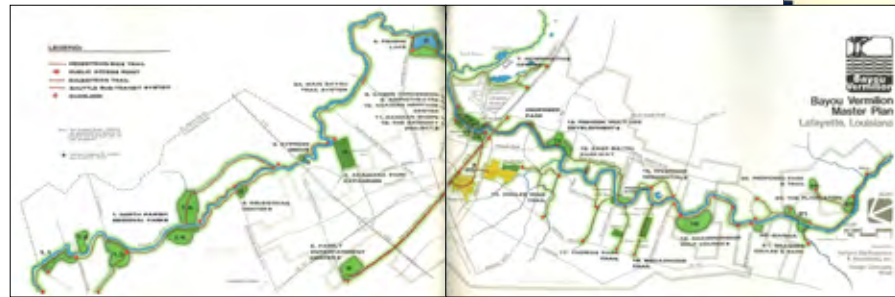
*(Louisiana Revised Statues 33:9202)



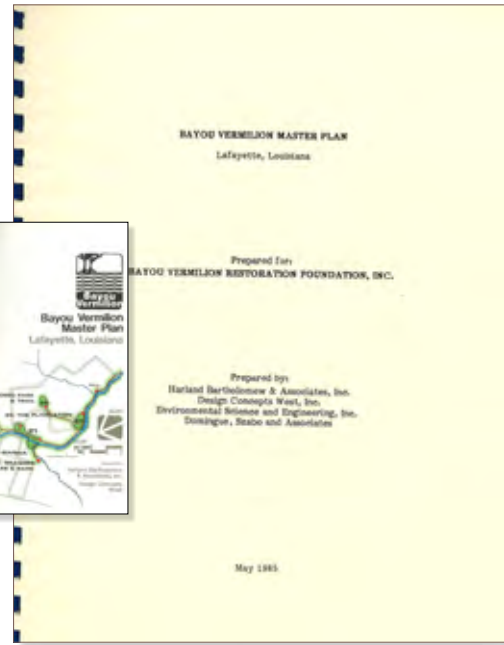
A NEED FOR NEW PLANNING

Over the last 40 years, the nature of the challenges and opportunities facing the BVD has changed. Development and sprawl have reshaped the Vermilion Watershed, especially in the southern half of Lafayette Parish. Contamination from non-point sources has brought the Bayou's water quality to a crisis point. While some areas of the parish have boomed, others have been subject to disinvestment. Public access to the Bayou is scarce. A changing climate is upending historic drainage and weather patterns. These challenges require a new focus and vision for the Bayou and new planning to guide the Bayou Vermilion District over the next 40 years.

1984
Bayou Vermilion District established by the Louisiana State Legislature, followed by release of the first and only Bayou Vermilion Master Plan in 1985



The original 1985 Bayou Vermilion District Master Plan



1987
I-49 Lafayette Connector Project authorized by U.S. Congress

1990
The Bayou Vermilion District opens the Vermilionville Living History Museum and Folklife Park



1996
Lafayette voters approve the consolidation of the Lafayette city and parish governments



2016
Record rainfall causes severe flooding across southern Louisiana, damaging more than 1,500 homes and businesses in Lafayette and raising Bayou Vermilion to its highest crest since the 1940s

2005
Hurricanes Katrina + Rita

2015
I-49 Connector planning resumes

2006
Population of Lafayette Parish surpasses 200,000



2021
Plans to redevelop Trappey Cannery announced

2024
Bayou Vermilion District prepares to embark on a new master planning process

2020
Hurricane Laura

2021
Hurricane Ida

2022
Moncus Park opens

2064
?

2020
The COVID-19 pandemic brings the world to a halt



CONVENING STAKEHOLDERS

On May 9, 2024 the Bayou Vermilion District gathered stakeholders representing community organizations, governmental agencies, non-profits, business leaders, culture bearers, and BVD leadership and staff to discuss the past, present, and future of the Bayou Vermilion District. Over the course of the day, stakeholders shared their aspirations for both the Bayou and the Bayou Vermilion District, identified challenges and opportunities, and articulated priorities and partnerships that should be reflected in a future master planning process.

Several themes emerged across discussion groups at the May 9 workshop:

- Addressing water quality impairment from non-point sources is a high priority, as well as a considerable challenge.
- The Bayou and the Bayou Vermilion District are overlooked and under-appreciated resources.

- There is a desire for connected, accessible, and equitable recreational and cultural facilities across Lafayette Parish.
- There are opportunities to celebrate the region's history and culture along the full length of the Bayou.
- The BVD should have a greater role in guiding development, planning, and enforcement decisions that impact the Bayou.
- There is a desire to forge stronger connections between the residents of Lafayette, the Bayou Vermilion District, and the Bayou itself.

Collectively, these themes point to a vision of a healthy, visible, accessible, living Bayou Vermilion for all to enjoy and benefit from. Attendees highlighted opportunities for the Bayou Vermilion District to achieve this vision through advocacy, investment, protections, education and awareness, and developing a stronger bond between residents of Lafayette and the Bayou itself.

DRAFT VISION FRAMEWORK

OUR VISION: BAYOU VERMILION WILL BE...

A HEALTHY BAYOU

A VISIBLE BAYOU

AN ACCESSIBLE BAYOU

A LIVING BAYOU

A BAYOU FOR ALL

TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE BAYOU VERMILION DISTRICT WILL...

ADVOCATE FOR THE BAYOU

Work with agencies, stakeholders, and communities across the watershed to advance BVD's vision for the Bayou.

PROTECT THE BAYOU

Use all tools at its disposal to safeguard the bayou and its tributaries from pollution and degradation.

BRING PEOPLE TO THE BAYOU

Expand opportunities to gather, recreate, celebrate, play, and learn along the Bayou.

INVEST IN THE BAYOU

Conserve, restore, and repair ecological and human systems, expand opportunities to engage with the Bayou, and catalyze economic development.

TELL THE BAYOU'S STORIES

Uplift the Bayou's unique cultures, ecologies, and histories and raise awareness of the issues affecting the Bayou today and in the future.



→ BUILD BAYOU CULTURE

THROUGH ACTIONS THAT SUPPORT A HEALTHY, VISIBLE, ACCESSIBLE, LIVING BAYOU VERMILION FOR ALL.



"We need more access"

"Inspire the next generation"

"We want development with the river at its core"



"We need to encourage care and ownership"



"A bayou for everyone"

"We want a future where the community is connected to the river in a cultural and recreational way that does not exist today"



"In 40 years, people will be swimming in the river"

"Create connections from the community to the river"



"Parks need to be improved with an equity focus"

"We need more education and awareness"

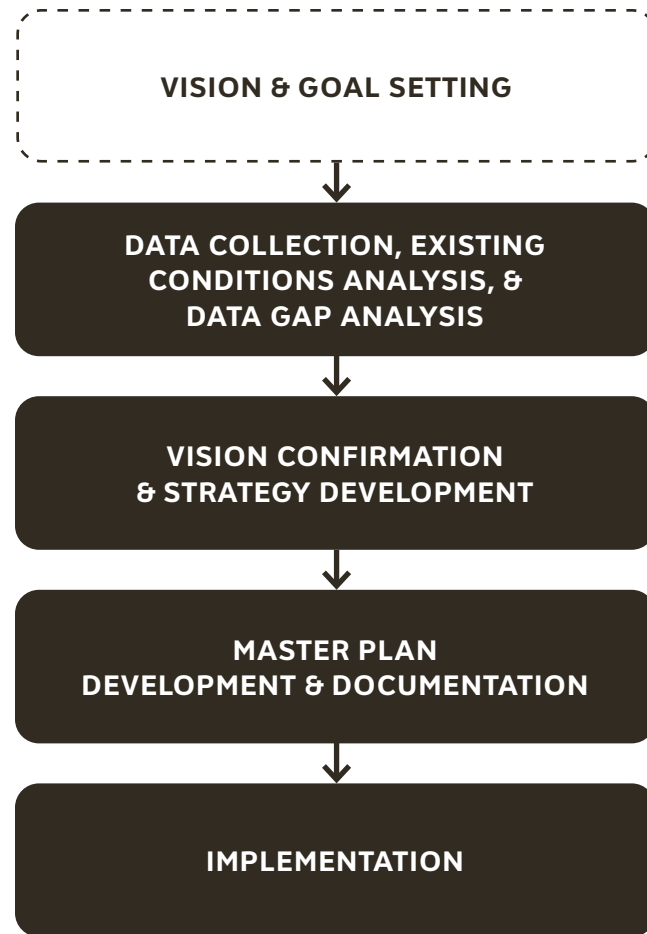


PLANNING PROCESS AND NEXT STEPS

The stakeholder engagement workshop documented here represents an important first step toward a new Master Plan for the Bayou Vermilion District. The development of such a plan will require a fully-fledged community-driven planning process. Such a process will:

- Verify and expand on the work described in this document.
- Engage residents of Lafayette to articulate a common vision for the Bayou and the Bayou Vermilion District.
- Identify and analyze existing conditions, data availability, and knowledge gaps.
- Identify and analyze various strategies, scenarios, and alternatives for achieving the plan goals and objectives.
- Develop a cohesive suite of implementable policies, programs, projects, and strategies to guide current and future leadership of the Bayou Vermilion District.

To learn more about the Bayou Vermilion District and get involved, scan the QR code or visit bayouvermiliondistrict.org.



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STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

- Aeve Abington-Pitre, Ed.D.**
University of Louisiana Lafayette
- Chris Adams**
Louisiana Central
- India Ambeau**
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- Dr. Barry Ancelet**
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- Tina Shelvin Bingham**
Lafayette Habitat for Humanity
McComb-Veazey Neighborhood Coterie
- Roxanne Bourque, Ph.D.**
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- Stephen Broussard**
Executive Director, Bayou Vermilion District
- Whitney Broussard, Ph.D.**
Freese & Nichols
- Jenee Dansdill**
Bluewing Civil Consulting
- Brittany Deal**
Lafayette Economic Development Authority
- Dave Dixon**
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