

Lafayette IN a Century (LINC) Designated Neighborhood No. 13 La Place Neighborhood Plan

1.0 Introduction

LINC Designated Neighborhood Plan #13 (La Place) is part of the neighborhood planning effort affected by the I-49 Connector Corridor Action Plan. Neighborhood planning is also a goal of the comprehensive plan for Lafayette Parish. The La Place neighborhood is a historically significant area north and adjacent to downtown Lafayette, bounded by Congress Street to the south, West University Avenue to the west, and a Southern Pacific Railroad line to the north and east.

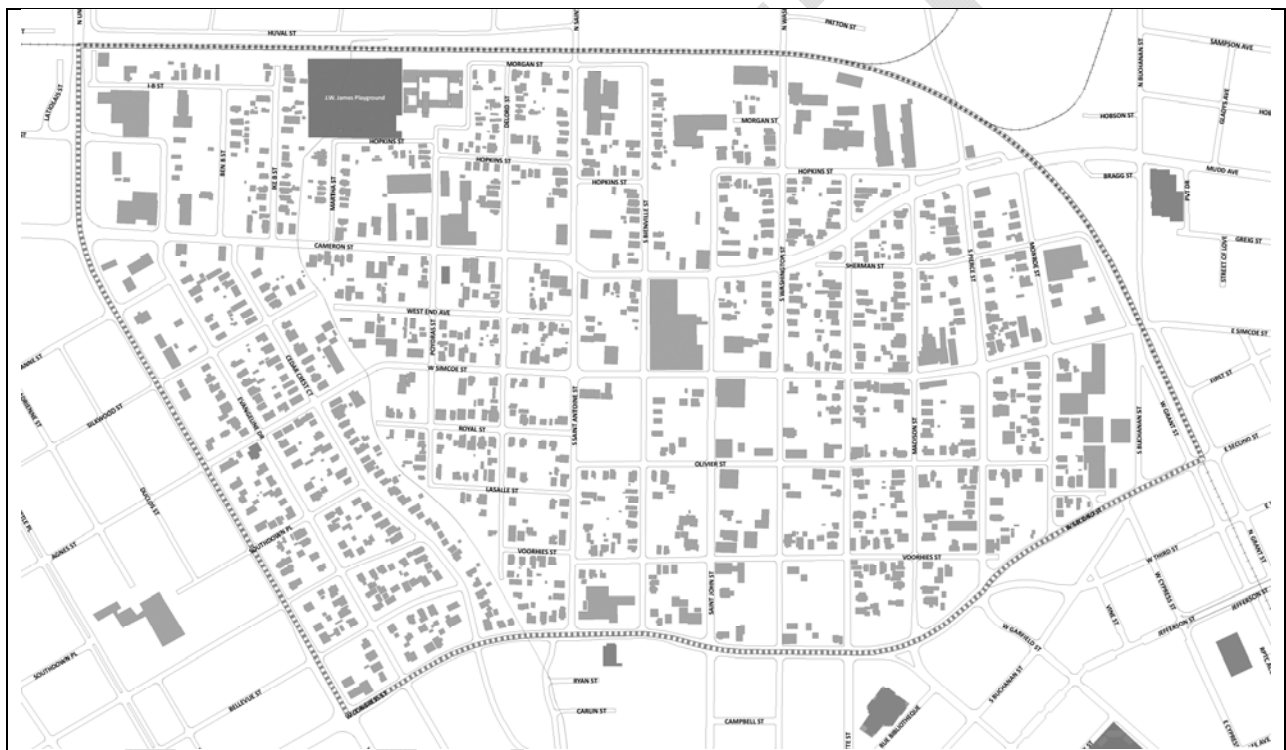


Figure 1 – La Place Neighborhood Planning Area

1.1 Vision Statement

The vision of the neighborhood plan is to build upon local neighborhood traditions, to identify, respect and maintain positive features that exist in the area, and to suggest enhancements to quality of life and work in the neighborhood without disrupting those positive features. Ultimately, the plan represents a design for the future of this vital area of Lafayette that reflects the ideas and the vision of residents and business owners in the neighborhood.

Vision

The La Place Coterie, working with its residents and businesses, is deeply committed to revitalizing, sustaining and preserving the unique architecture, culture and history of Lafayette. The neighborhood includes one of the oldest planned and developed neighborhoods in the City of Lafayette called Mills Addition, which was platted in 1876. Other historic areas include: Fightingville, Four Corners, Hopkins Addition, La Place des Creoles, Promised Land, West End Heights, St. Antoine, and The Block. This is a geographic area within walking distance of downtown, with an illustrious past, an exciting present and a vibrant future.

The fabric of this neighborhood is one of a widely diverse makeup, composed of families, professionals, artists, musicians, elders and well-established, long-running businesses. This area is prime for revitalization from within, having ample opportunities for public spaces, new housing opportunities, recreational facilities, museums, historic districts, art galleries and commercial development.

The La Place Coterie members are deeply proud to call this neighborhood home and are brimming with promise at what the culmination of their efforts will bring to this unique place. The vision for this neighborhood by the year 2020 is one of a safe and walkable community embodying mixed-use developments, community gardens, a farmers market, artists' studios, thriving businesses, an urban landscape and streetscape, **a diversity of housing options**, as well as an area for performance space for our dense influx of creatives living and working in the area.

This neighborhood has everything it takes to be a model of urban success: the people have soul, the culture has substance, the history is rich, the buildings house stories of many great generations, the accessibility to downtown is enviable, and last, but not least, the will and determination are rivaled by none. It's here, happening, moving and re-inventing itself. It is Right Now. How successful will the future be for the neighborhood? The La Place Coterie hopes to provide a positive direction through the neighborhood plan.

Goals

1. **Neighborhood Identity & Character** – Positively impact the La Place neighborhood's identity, character, and historical value.
2. **Heritage** – Highlight the historical aspects of the neighborhood through the preservation of significant buildings, districts, corridors and places
3. **Housing** – Ensure housing affordability and housing choice.
4. **Public Realm** – Strengthen alternative transportation modes to create a safe environment for the pedestrian and vehicular traffic within the neighborhood and connections outside.
5. **Open Space & Recreation** – Improve and enhance the quality and extent of both passive and active recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.
6. **Economic Development** – Increase neighborhood amenities to ensure accessibility to residents' daily needs and job opportunities.
7. **Neighborhood Safety** – Improve neighborhood safety through crime reduction.
8. **Code Enforcement** – Coordinate efforts to improve building and property standards.

1. NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY & CHARACTER

Positively impact the La Place neighborhood's identity, character, and historical value.

1.1. Improve neighborhood appearance and overall cleanliness by partnering with other community organizations, interested businesses, and individuals to identify and schedule regular beautification and maintenance activities.

1.1.1. Establish a community-led beautification program **CATALYST PROJECT**

1.1.2. Pursue Public Art Project

1.2. Develop strategies for rezoning that promotes businesses and development that are sensitive to the neighborhood's identity and cultural environment

1.2.1. Designate performance based zoning districts following the LINC Land Use Framework

1.2.2. Develop parking standards that encourage denser development in some areas while also providing adequate parking

1.2.3. Consider the development of shared parking areas in business areas.

1.3. Enhance neighborhood identity and character by creating inviting gateways at major intersections to the neighborhood

1.1.1. Neighborhood Gateway locations – St John and Congress, Pierce and Congress, Simcoe and University, St Antoine and Congress, Pierce and Cameron, Cameron and University, La Place des Creoles

1.1.2. Develop a distinct design for gateway signage/elements that is consistent with the community character and neighborhood.

1.1.3. Improve the existing La Place des Creoles intersection

1.1.4. Work with affected jurisdictions and property owners to secure approval to install gateway signage/elements at identified locations.

1.1.5. Identify community-led actions to initiate neighborhood gateways – e.g., tree plantings, landscaping, etc. **CATALYST PROJECT**

1.1.6. Secure funding to construct neighborhood gateways.

1.4. Consolidate scattered neighborhood commercial uses in the residential blocks into mixed-use corridors and neighborhood nodes

- 1.4.1. Oversee the development of a nodal development plan for the area around the University Avenue and Cameron Street intersection (Four Corners)
- 1.4.2. The corridors of Simcoe Street, Congress Street, Pierce Street, University Avenue, Cameron Street are targeted for increased densities and mixed use developments following the LINC Land Use Framework
- 1.4.3. The cultural and historical heart of the neighborhood is at the intersection of Simcoe and St John Streets and should be developed as a mixed-use node.
- 1.4.4. Designate mixed-use districts at neighborhood nodes following the LINC Land Use Framework
- 1.4.5. Pursue a comprehensive approach to increase parking opportunities – on-street parking, shared parking areas.

1.5. Improve pedestrian safety through improved lighting and enhanced sidewalks/streetscape conditions.

- 1.5.1. Streets designated for streetscapes – Congress Street, St John Street, Pierce Street, Cameron Street, Simcoe Street, University Avenue
- 1.5.2. Develop a distinct design for streetscape elements that are consistent with the community character and neighborhood desire.
- 1.5.3. Work with affected jurisdictions and property owners to secure approval to install streetscape elements at identified locations.
- 1.5.4. Identify community-led actions to initiate streetscapes – e.g., tree plantings, landscaping, etc. **CATALYST PROJECT**
- 1.5.5. Secure funding to construct streetscapes.
- 1.5.6. Identify sidewalk network gaps, sidewalks in need of repair, and complete a pedestrian network according to neighborhood priorities.
- 1.5.7. Study and improve the safety of pedestrian crossings at problem intersections in the neighborhood.
- 1.5.8. Improving street lighting where it is inadequate, such as the cemetery and park.

1.6. Improve neighborhood appearance by promoting landscaping, maintenance, Adopt-a-Block Street campaigns, and litter control.

- 1.6.1. Utilize the City’s neighborhood clean-up program which allows one curb-side clean up per neighborhood per year
- 1.6.2. Organize regular neighborhood cleanups **CATALYST PROJECT**
- 1.6.3. Identify location of public trash cans and maintenance program for trash pick up
- 1.6.4. Obtain approval from City for installing public trash cans
- 1.6.5. Secure funding to install public trash cans at strategic locations.
- 1.6.6. Develop an Adopt-a-Block street campaign
- 1.6.7. Encourage rain gardens to deal with drainage issues.
- 1.6.8. Develop a landscaping plan that includes a suggested list of landscaping materials and plantings for improving the aesthetic character of select locations in the neighborhood.

2. HERITAGE

Highlight the historical aspects of the neighborhood through the preservation and utilization of significant buildings, districts, corridors and places

2.1. Preserve and identify historic elements in the La Place neighborhood

- 2.1.1. Identify historic sites for designation by the Lafayette Preservation Commission.
- 2.1.2. Inventory “heritage” sites – buildings, locations important to the neighborhood.
- 2.1.3. Establish a regulatory and administrative framework to preserve La Place “heritage” sites

2.2. Promote awareness of neighborhood history

- 2.2.1. Develop historical walking tour – maps, web-based
- 2.2.2. Develop historical marker design elements for specific locations
- 2.2.3. Obtain approval from City for historical and heritage markers
- 2.2.4. Secure funding to create heritage markers
- 2.2.5. Place historical street signs that distinguish neighborhood districts

2.3. Establish a historical/heritage museum

- 2.3.1. Determine a location and building to house a museum focused on the neighborhood.
- 2.3.2. Secure funding to support and maintain a historical/heritage museum
- 2.3.3. Establish a governing or advisory board to administer and manage a neighborhood historical or heritage museum.

3. HOUSING

Ensure housing affordability and housing choice.

3.1. Identify strategies to prevent foreclosures and adjudicated occupied housing in the neighborhood.

- 3.1.1. Coordinate formally with City departments and responsible agencies to assist “troubled housing (foreclosure/adjudication) within the neighborhood.
- 3.1.2. Secure funding (revolving) to assist occupied foreclosure/adjudicated properties.
- 3.1.3. Assign “Neighborhood Advisors” to help prevent owner occupied foreclosures and adjudications.

3.2. Prevent deterioration of existing housing stock and encourage housing rehabilitation and reuse.

- 3.1.1. Encourage residents to improve, where needed, the appearance and structural quality of their homes
- 3.1.2. Form a beautification committee that periodically recognizes and rewards well groomed/attractive properties
- 3.1.3. Develop a community-led housing rehabilitation project in collaboration with City, businesses, and community groups **CATALYST PROJECT**
- 3.1.4. Designate a local non-profit entity to administer a tool library that would lend tools to neighborhood residents for property improvements **CATALYST PROJECT**

3.2. Redevelop vacant lots into compatibly scaled developments

- 3.2.1. Work with Lafayette Land Revitalization Authority or its alternative in identifying vacant and adjudicated lots targeted for redevelopment

- 3.2.2. Develop a “Lot Next Door” program to encouraging and assist neighboring property owners to acquire adjacent vacant lots.
- 3.2.3. Identify vacant lots that could be developed into public spaces for community parks – public plazas, community gardens, playgrounds, greenways, etc. **CATALYST PROJECT**

3.3. Expand housing opportunities and allow for flexibility in residential development and promote affordable quality housing, a range of housing options, and a suitable living environment for all residents.

- 3.3.1. Identify (list) and coordinate with current applicable local housing finance programs to service the neighborhood.
- 3.3.2. Develop an incentive program to encourage new residential owner occupied housing in the neighborhood.
- 3.3.3. Coordinate with the La Place Neighborhood Coterie Advisors to assist and review owner occupied housing opportunities.

4. PUBLIC REALM

Strengthen alternative transportation modes to create a safe environment for the pedestrian within the neighborhood and connections outside.

4.1. Improve pedestrian safety through improved lighting and enhanced sidewalks/streetscape conditions.

- 4.1.1. Streets designated for streetscapes – Congress Street, St John Street, Pierce Street, Cameron Street, Simcoe Street, University Avenue
- 4.1.2. Develop a standard design for streetscape elements that is consistent with the community character and neighborhood desire.
- 4.1.3. Work with affected jurisdictions and property owners to secure approval to install streetscape elements at identified locations.
- 4.1.4. Identify community-led actions to initiate streetscapes – e.g., tree plantings, landscaping, etc. **CATALYST PROJECT**
- 4.1.5. Secure funding to construct designated streetscapes.
- 4.1.6. Identify a Pedestrian Plan for sidewalks with a complete network according to neighborhood priorities.

4.1.7. Study and improve the safety of pedestrian crossings at problem intersections in the neighborhood.

4.2. Implement a complete streets program that improves pedestrian and bicycle access and safety by adding sidewalks and bike lanes and improving access to major centers of neighborhood activity.

4.2.1. Review Lafayette MPO Bikeway Plan and designate shared streets, multi-use sidewalks, and bikepaths

4.2.2. Identify location of pedestrian crossing improvements – downtown crossings, University Avenue, Four Corners, Congress Street and Cameron Street.

4.2.3. Work with Lafayette Parish School Board and City to identify Safe Route to Schools grant locations.

4.2.4. Implement traffic calming measures where needed.

4.2.5. Consider the redirection of traffic patterns in the neighborhood to reduce cut through traffic on residential streets.

4.2.6. Provide additional bus stop shelters and improved loading/offloading areas at critical intersections.

4.2.7. Consider roundabouts at critical intersections – e.g., St Antoine & Cameron

4.3. Develop a drainage improvement plan for the neighborhood

4.3.1. Develop and maintain a current inventory (list) of drainage problems in the neighborhood.

4.3.2. Identify drainage ways that may support additional alternative uses including but not limited to bikeways, pedestrian ways and passive public spaces.

4.3.3. Support measures that will serve to improve the drainage system in flood prone areas as identified in the Plan and encourage opportunities to percolate rainwater into the ground and/or improve stormwater retention in appropriate areas.

4.3.4. Encourage and plan for rain gardens, where appropriate, to manage drainage problem areas.

4.3.5. Coordinate with the City to develop neighborhood stormwater management techniques at identified (listed) problem areas within the neighborhood.

5. OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

Improve and enhance the quality and extent of both passive and active recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.

5.1. Develop and improve recreation programs and facilities that are most desired by neighborhood residents.

- 5.1.1. Conduct a regularly scheduled (every two years) neighborhood interest survey on needed recreation programs and facilities.
- 5.1.2. Identify (list) both current and needed recreational opportunities to serve neighborhood youth.
- 5.1.3. Ensure that all park and recreation facilities are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- 5.1.4. Identify and establish a neighborhood public recreational space for adults.

5.2. Enhance JW James Park

- 5.2.1. Develop a short and long range park plan for JW James Park.
- 5.2.2. A park plan should provide for new pedestrian park amenities, such as pathways, benches, picnic shelters, gazebo, restrooms, etc.
- 5.2.3. Establish a schedule of community events to be held at the park.

5.3. Establish pocket parks and community gardens

- 5.3.1. Identify (list) locations that could potentially be used for neighborhood parks – community gardens, public plazas, playgrounds, linear parks.
- 5.3.2. Prepare and maintain a current list of neighborhood groups, individuals, institutions interested in the “Community Roots” (urban agriculture) program. **CATALYST PROJECT**
- 5.3.3. Develop a pedestrian way from Simcoe Street to Rosa Parks Transportation Center (Simcoe Street Plan)
- 5.3.4. Develop a linear park along and adjacent to coulee between JW James Park and Congress Street.

6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Increase neighborhood amenities to ensure accessibility to residents' daily needs and job opportunities.

6.1. Improve existing neighborhood businesses

- 6.1.1. Identify (list) and maintain a current inventory of existing businesses within the neighborhood.
- 6.1.2. Every two years conduct a survey of the listed neighborhood business owners/managers to determine needs and problems.
- 6.1.3. Secure funding resources to assist neighborhood business owners with structure improvement loans on their properties in conformity with the neighborhood plan.
- 6.1.4. Develop a La Place business marketing plan for the neighborhood.
- 6.1.5. Facilitate two business education and assistance workshops within the neighborhood every six months for new and existing business owners and entrepreneurs coordinated with business organizations in the area.

6.2. Attract new business into the neighborhood

- 6.2.1. Establish a cultural district for the neighborhood.
- 6.2.2. Formation of a team of business owners to advise on the redevelopment/improvement of the targeted neighborhood business districts
- 6.2.3. Prepare a “business evaluation plan” for the neighborhood identifying best potential business needs and opportunities.
- 6.2.4. Review the “business evaluation plan” for updating every three years.
- 6.2.5. Identify financial incentives and other means of fostering redevelopment within specific neighborhood areas for commercial redevelopment.
- 6.2.6. Encourage light and environmentally clean industrial development/redevelopment in areas compatible with the surrounding context.
- 6.2.7. Establish a supermarket, farmer’s market, and/or an open air market within the neighborhood.

7. NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

Improve neighborhood safety through crime reduction.

7.1. Maintain a Neighborhood Watch Program to increase eyes on the street.

7.2. Create a safe environment through the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies

7.2.1. Perform a CPTED audit of the neighborhood – parks, crime areas, etc.

7.2.2. Encourage residents to request a CPTED review of their properties or to use a CPTED checklist.

7.2.3. Educate merchants on CPTED strategies and provide on-site CPTED reviews by City staff upon request of property owners.

7.3. Institute I-49 Connector Neighborhood Security Program coordinated with the Lafayette City Police Department and neighborhood residents and business owners.

7.3.1. Secure funding for a “walking or segway beat officers” in the neighborhood.

7.3.2. Coordinate with the Lafayette City Police Department on the I-49 Connector Neighborhood Security Program.

7.3.3. Identify (list) neighborhood locations in need of security cameras.

7.4. Public Lighting

7.4.1. Prepare and maintain a neighborhood public lighting need plan for the La Place neighborhood.

7.4.2. Secure funding for the public lighting plan implementation.

7.4.3. Coordinate public lighting in the neighborhood between the Lafayette Utilities System (LUS) and city departments (Public Works, Planning, and Community Development).

8. CODE ENFORCEMENT

Coordinate efforts to improve building and property standards.

8.1. Enforce building, health and public safety codes

- 8.1.1.** Annually review unlawful outdoor storage, illegal parking of recreational vehicles, boats, junk cars, and commercial vehicles within the neighborhood and prepare a specific list of problem locations/sites.
- 8.1.2.** Identify (list) unoccupied buildings/properties within the neighborhood every two years.
- 8.1.3.** Distribute citizen booklets periodically detailing compliance guidelines, enforcement procedures, and available technical and financial housing rehabilitation services

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