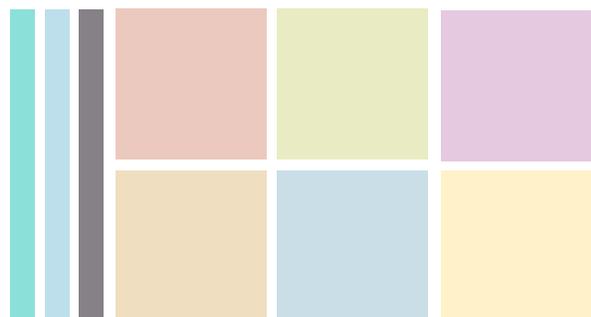


port lavaca COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



APPENDIX, EXISTING CITY REPORT

DRAFT 12-30-2025
PORT LAVACA, TEXAS
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Appendix A

THE EXISTING CITY

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WHAT IS THE EXISTING CITY REPORT?

The Existing City Report serves as an appendix to the Comprehensive Plan, offering background information and analysis on Port Lavaca in its current state. The material in this section is organized into a series of standalone technical memoranda that have been compiled into one cohesive document. Together, these memoranda provide a detailed overview of existing conditions across key categories, including housing, development regulations, public services, utility infrastructure, land use, parks and recreation, community character, and transportation. Supporting tables, maps, and imagery accompany the analysis to further illustrate Port Lavaca's current conditions and provide a clear reference for decision-makers. In addition to documenting present circumstances, the Existing City Report establishes a baseline for future planning efforts. By consolidating technical data and contextual insights, it enables the City to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities that will inform long-range strategies. This appendix is intended not only as a record of Port Lavaca's current environment, but also as a foundation for guiding growth, investment, and policy decisions in the years ahead.



REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

ABOUT CITY REGULATIONS

The regulatory review for Port Lavaca’s Comprehensive Plan includes an analysis of existing regulations, development controls, and enforcement mechanisms. The purpose of this assessment is to provide a high-level analysis of existing land use, subdivision, and other land development-related regulations for the City of Port Lavaca, to identify areas within the Code of Ordinances that may require strengthening, additions, or adjustments to ensure safe, high-quality, desired, and strategic development.

Port Lavaca’s current Code of Ordinances (COO.) was adopted in 2021 and has been periodically updated since. A comprehensive review of all chapters in the Code is not provided in this critique; instead, a high-level summary of key regulations is presented, based on Comprehensive Plan elements and future recommendations, which is accompanied by a table that outlines what is included in the Code, what is not, and any gaps that may require attention.

The Regulatory Review is divided into the following sections:

- Table Overview
- Authorities
- Thoroughfare and Street Standards
- Building Regulations
- Subdivision Design Criteria
- Land Use Regulations
- Utilities
- Environmental and Regulatory Enactments
- Miscellaneous Standards

TABLE OVERVIEW

The table, Figure 1A, *Code of Ordinance Checklist in Port Lavaca*, highlights that while Port Lavaca’s Code of Ordinances establishes baseline regulations for zoning, building, and property maintenance, several provisions commonly adopted in other Texas communities are absent. For example, Chapter 12 (Buildings and Building Regulations) and Chapter 42 (Subdivisions and Land Development) provide the framework for construction and land use, yet do not include Water and Sewer Impact Fees or a dedicated ordinance for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

Similarly, the City has not adopted Complete Streets policies, arts and cultural ordinances, or wetland preservation standards. In addition, Port Lavaca lacks Dark Sky regulations, which are increasingly used in other municipalities to reduce light pollution and protect night skies.

Together, these gaps illustrate areas where Port Lavaca’s regulatory framework could be expanded to align with broader planning practices across Texas. Strengthening ordinances in these categories would support long-term goals for sustainability, housing diversity, infrastructure

Figure 1A, Code of Ordinance Checklist in Port Lavaca

Code Does Exist	Partial or Incomplete Code	No Existing Code	CODE	Code Does Exist	Partial or Incomplete Code	No Existing Code	CODE
LAND USE AND CONSTRUCTION				ENVIRONMENT			
X			Commercial Sidewalk Requirements	X			Tree Planting Requirements
X			Residential Sidewalk Requirements		X		Tree Destruction Permits / Regulations
X			Commercial Landscaping / Plan Requirements	X			Low-Impact Development Applications / Standards
	X		Residential Landscaping / Plan Requirements	X			Solar Generation Requirements / Standards
X			Lighting Standards / Requirements			X	Wind Generation Requirements / Standards
X			Sign and Display Standards / Regulations		X		Battery / Lithium Facility Requirements
X			Residential Mowing and Junk Requirements	X			Natural Gas/Fuel Storage and Transport
X			Brewery, Brew Pub, and Distillery Allowances			X	Electric Vehicle Charging Station Standards
		X	Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) Code			X	Energy Efficiency Standards
X			Animal Husbandry in City (fowl, pigs, dogs, etc.)	X			Industrial Waste Discharge Regulations
	X		Warehousing Standards	X			Flood Damage Prevention Standards
	X		Consolidated Permitting Step-By-Step Manual			X	Drought Contingency Plan
MOBILITY						X	Railroad Quiet Zones
X			Thoroughfare Classifications (Cross-sections)		X		Emissions / Particulate Emissions Regulations
X			Sidewalk Standards (4')	X			Private Electrical Generator Standards
X			Crosswalk Standards			X	Dark Sky Ordinance
	X		Trail / Path Standards	X			Septic Tank and Release Standards
X			Commercial Truck Routes		X		RV Wastewater Elimination System Standards
	X		Bicycle / E-Bike Regulations		X		Lead+Copper Pipe Compliance / Review Program
	X		Scooter / Golf Cart / Horse / Micro-mobility			X	Light Trespass / DarkSky Ordinance
X			Recreational Vehicle Resorts and Park Regulations	ORDINANCES, PROCESSES, AND FUNDS			
		X	Heliport and Airplane Regulations		X		Emergency Evacuation Plans / Policies / Rules
		X	Drone and Air Delivery Regulations	X			Hotel Occupancy Tax Ordinance
X			Mobile Food Unit Requirements / Permitting			X	Percent For the Arts Ordinance
		X	Thoroughfare Impact Fees			X	Complete Streets Ordinance
X			Access Management Standards	X			Right-of-Way Management Ordinance
PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES						X	Tree Preservation Ordinance
		X	Water and Sewer Impact Fees			X	Wetland Preservation/Protection Ordinance
x			Water Conservation Methods		X		Historical Preservation Ordinance
X			HOA - New PUD Requirement	X			Parkland/Common Area Requirements Dedication
X			Wastewater Collection and Design Requirements	X			Annexation Standards and Processes
X			Waterline Distribution Design Requirements			X	Sidewalk Fund
X			Storm Drainage Design Requirements	X			Development Review Committee - Building Permits Review between Departments
X			Dumpster and Shared/Public Trash Requirements		X		Thoroughfare Reconstruction Schedule
X			Curb and Gutter Requirements	X			Utilities Replacement Program
X			Open-Ditch Drainage Requirements	X			Capital Improvement Plan
X			Water and Sewer Line Extension Requirements	X			Utilities Impact Fees (Extension services)
X			Fire Prevention and Protected Regulations		X		Code of Ordinances: Frequently Asked Questions and Public Summary documents
X			Mowing and Landscaping Standards				

AUTHORITIES

Roadway Authority

Thoroughfares and roadways in Port Lavaca are owned and maintained by multiple public entities. United States Highways, such as US 87, are operated by the U.S. Department of Transportation. State Highways, including SH 35, are operated by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Farm to Market FM roads, and roadways with Port Lavaca's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) are operated by Calhoun County. The majority of thoroughfares within Port Lavaca, such as local residential streets, and arterial thoroughfares including Austin Street, Virginia Street, Village Drive, and Half League Road, are operated and maintained by the City of Port Lavaca's Public Works Department.

Fire Department Protection

The City of Port Lavaca operates its own city fire department which includes two fire stations. The City Department services the entire County along with residents in City Limits. In addition to fire suppression, the Department is tasked with any hazardous materials response, water rescues, vehicle accidents, and fire code building inspections. Four other fire departments service Calhoun County. The Point Comfort Volunteer Fire Department is located east of Lavaca Bay in Point Comfort. The Olivia-Port Alto Volunteer Fire Department is located east of Point Comfort. The Port O'Connor Volunteer Fire Department is located in southern Calhoun County in Port O'Connor. The Seadrift Volunteer Fire Department is located in western Calhoun County in Seadrift.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Calhoun County has an Emergency Medical Services Department which operates within the county, City of Port Lavaca, and Port Lavaca's ETJ. The department is tasked with ambulance and medical service dispatch and transportation. The City of Port Lavaca does not operate its own EMS department or services.

Police Department Services

The City of Port Lavaca operates its own municipal Police Department, servicing only within City Limits (unless additional help is needed in the County). The Department is tasked with crime dispatch services, a patrol division, criminal investigations, citizen compliance and complaints, and records keeping. Calhoun County Sheriff's Office, located within Port Lavaca, services the entire county of Calhoun County including Port Lavaca's ETJ.

COO Chapter 2, Administration

Port Lavaca has eleven City Departments, which are tasked with the operations and services of specific City-related operations. Administrative city departments include, the City Manager's office, City Secretary, Finance Department, Human Resources Department, Utilities Billing Department, and Development Services Department. Emergency services departments include the Fire Department, Police Department, and Animal Control Department. One infrastructure department includes the Public Works Department. Notably, the Public Works Department is tasked with handling all public infrastructure, including streets, drainage, water storage and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, public parks maintenance (including Lighthouse Beach RV Park) and maintaining city harbors.

Boards and Commissions

In addition to the Municipal Departments, Port Lavaca has a City Council comprised of five council members, plus the City's Mayor. The City also has a number of boards and commissions tasked with providing guidance to the City Council regarding proposals, plans, and other operations. Commissions/boards currently in Port Lavaca include the Port Commission Board, Parks Board, and Planning Board.

THOROUGHFARE AND STREET STANDARDS

Chapter 40, Streets, Sidewalks, and Other Public Spaces

Chapter 40 provides brief descriptions and summaries of illegal activities involving public spaces and infrastructure. Such regulations include the prohibition of tampering and altering electrical lines and telephone wires, removal/altering of building electrical wires, and the building of temporary driveways during roadway construction and route alteration.

Chapter 48, Traffic and Vehicles

Article 1, In General, defines broad illegal vehicle behaviors (such as speeding, skidding, and improper braking) and outlines police authority to stop, fine, or impound vehicles. It also establishes the City Council's authority over traffic signals and signage, as well as the authority to create and enforce designated Safety Zones around schools, civic buildings, and parks.

Article 2, Parking, Stopping, and Standing, provides regulations regarding the authority of police and enforce parking requirements, along with such requirements. Regulations in Article 2 include places where parking is prohibited, the authority of establishing bus stops, illegal nighttime parking on streets designated by the City Council and signed, fire lane requirements and enforcement, off-street parking (locations and time allowances), and off-street loading (blocking and time allowances).

Article 3, Reserved, is a blank reserved section meant for future additions / revisions to the Code.

Article 4, Truck Routes, established specific streets where large trucks are and are not allowed to travel. Large trucks are considered any vehicle with two axels or ore, a truck with a bed longer than 12 feet, or any truck tractor, trailer, semitrailer, or vehicle designated for property transportation that exceeds a eight of 12,000 pounds. Designated truck routes are included in the Thoroughfare Classifications Map on page X, and are as follows:

- All of SH 35 within the city limits
- US 87 from northern city limits to Alcoa Drive
- FM 1090 from SH 35 North
- SH 238 from Alcoa Drive South
- All of FM 3084 within the city limits.

Roadways where truck traffic is restricted include:

- US 87 from Alcoa Drive South to Commerce Street
- FM 1090 from SH 35 South
- SH 238 from SH 35 South to Alcoa Drive

Additional regulations include the operation and storage of large trucks. It is illegal to park a tractor trailer or recreational vehicles on a public street for more than 72 hours. It is illegal to park a large truck on any public street for any amount of time, except for the purposes of load and unloading. School buses, public utilities trucks, City vehicles, emergency vehicles, and other public entity and government vehicles are exempt from the provisions in Chapter 48.

Article 5, Parades, provides regulations, permits, and legal descriptions of public parades on city streets. Public parades on city streets require a permit from City Council if it is within the Downtown or a permit from the City Finance Director if the parade is outside of Downtown. Permit submitters are required to provide information about the type of parade, times of operations, routings, clean-ups, and other relevant information.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

Chapter 12, Buildings and Building Regulations

Article 1, In General, provides authorities to the City Building Official to enact plan review fees and charges.

Article 2, Building Trade Codes, requires all buildings to be in compliance with multiple international and national codes, such as, but not exclusively, the 2021 International Building Code, 2021 International Energy Conservation Code, 2021 International Fire Code, and 2020 National Electrical Code. In addition, Article Two provides requirements and penalties for work without plan submittals or permits and work without licenses contractors.

Lastly, building setbacks and fence requirements are included within Sections 24 and 25 of Article Two. A table of listed subdivisions (mainly residential) is provided, which each have their own setback requirements, and are generally as follows:

- Front Building Setback Lines range from 20 to 40 feet, with typical setbacks falling between 25 to 30 feet
- Front Maximum Setback Lines (behind building line) are 10 to 40 feet, with setbacks typically around 25 feet.
- Interior Lot Boundary Lines range from 5 to 25 feet, with most lots using a standard five-foot setback.
- Rear Lot Boundary Lines range from 5 to 50 feet, with a typical Boundary Line of 25 feet for detached structure and 5 feet for attached structures.
- Corner Lot Lines range from 7.5 to 15 feet, with a typical Corner Lot Line ranging from 10 to 15 feet.
- Accessory Building (behind front setback line) Lines range from three to 50 feet, but typically require 40 feet from setback line and three to six feet from an interiors lot line.

The Original Townsite or existing subdivisions that are not listed must comply with the following setback requirements:

- Front Setback Lines minimums are set at 15 feet.
- Corner lots have minimum 10 foot setback on the side street.
- Rear Setback Lines are set at five feet from utility easements and rear lot lines.
- Side Setback Lines are set at five feet from utility easements and rear lot lines, with 10 feet required for corner lots.
- Commercial lots may request variances, but must remain five feet from the edge of a utility easement.
- Concrete flat work used for driveways or sidewalks cannot be installed closer than 12 inches from the neighboring property line.

Fence requirements are as follows:

- Front setback line fences are to be no taller than three feet.
- Side and rear setback line fences are allowed, but no height specifications are provided.
- Side and rear setback line fences are allowed, but no height specifications are provided.
- Fences and landscaping (vegetation) cannot block or obstruct the view of people leaving a driveway or obstruct corner views of oncoming traffic.
- Permits are required for fence installation.

Article 3, Flood Damage Prevention, provides a set of regulations to prevent and reduce property damage and property loss within flood hazard areas. The article also includes the roles and responsibility of the City Floodplain Administrator, required permits and variance procedures, regulations and inclusions are as follows:

- All uses vulnerable to floods, including facilities which serve such uses, are to be protected against flood damage at the time of initial construction
- Restrict or prohibit uses within Flood Hazard Zones that are dangerous to health, safety, or property in times of flood
- A floodplain development permit shall be required
- No structure or land shall hereafter be located, altered, or have its use changed, within the Flood Hazard Zone, without full compliance of Article 3
- All residential construction must be elevated above base flood level
- Commercial structures are not required to be elevated above base flood level, but must have watertight and flood resistant walls and protections
- All manufactures homes and manufactures home parks, must be elevated above base flood level
- All manufactures homes and manufactures home park structures must be anchored to the ground, in compliance of State/National standards

Figure A2, Street Dimensions Standardization Table

Street/ Pavement Type	Min. ROW width	Min. Pavement width	Crown (parabolic)	Pavement Design
Arterial	The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)'s Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets (2018) and other AASHTO standards for street pavement design.			
Collector	60 feet	40 feet	Three percent cross slope until 6.0 inches, then two percent cross slope	Provide for a minimum structural number of 3.0 using the coefficients listed in the table contained in subsection (f)(5) of this section.
Local Collector	60 feet	36 feet	9.0 inches	Provide for a minimum structural number of 2.66 using the coefficients listed in the table contained in subsection (f)(5) of this section
Local	55 feet	28 feet	7.0 inches	
Alleys	Alleys are not permitted except under special circumstances when recommended by the city engineer and authorized by the planning commission			

- Recreational vehicles, not anchored, are limited to a single constant location for no more than 180 consecutive days
- All subdivision proposals including the placement of manufactured home parks and subdivisions must include drainage infrastructure to reduce flood damage to property and infrastructure
- All new construction and substantial improvements shall be elevated on pilings and columns if located with a coastal high hazard area (Zones V1-3, Ve, and/or V), above base flood level

Article 4, Substandard Buildings outlines the conditions the City considers unsafe or unfit for occupancy, including both structural deficiencies and failures in basic utilities. A building may be deemed substandard if it lacks required electricity or running water, has an inadequate kitchen or bathroom, suffers from poor drainage, or shows signs of infestation. Additional indicators include dead tree limbs or overgrown vegetation, faulty foundations, inadequate roof or ceiling support, bulging walls or chimneys, hazardous plumbing, insufficient exits, weak floor supports, or unsecured openings, among other hazards. Article 4 also provides the authorities, duties, inspection details, and role of the City's Building Official and City's authority to condemn structures as uninhabitable (notice process, abatement process, and lien processes).

SUBDIVISION DESIGN CRITERIA

Chapter 42, Subdivisions and Plats

Chapter 42, Article One, In General, provides descriptions of terminology used in Chapter 42 (such as plats, drawings, submittals, setbacks, etc..) and the responsibilities of the City Engineer and City Council.

Chapter 42, Articles Two through Five, Preliminary Plat Requirements, Construction Plan Requirements, Final Plat Requirements, and Replat Requirements, describe the required documents, sheets, processes, and meetings for all new proposed development. Article 7 describes these same processes for multifamily housing. Required elements in plat and plan requirements includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- An outline of any deed restrictions and covenants
- A scale and legend on all maps and diagrams
- Setbacks and lot lines
- Surveyors' details including topography, wetlands, and sub-grade utilities
- Number and area dimensions of living units, parking areas, entry and exit points, area of street pavement, and net area

All submittals are required to be review by the City Engineer, and all Final Plats are subject to City Council approval.

Chapter 42, Article Six, Design Standards, includes design and placement requirements for lots, streets and alleys, utilities easements, pedestrian easements, water and sanitary systems, storm sewer systems, and site grading. A description of requirements, per section topic, are as follows:

Lots

- Lots with City sewer must be 5,500 square feet total with a street frontage of 50 feet
- Lots without City sewer must meet Texas Department of Water Resources for Septic Tank Systems standards
- Corner lots shall be at least 70 feet wide
- Where practicable side lot lines shall be substantially at right angles to the right-of-way line of the street
- The width for lots restricted by the deed restrictions for manufactured home use may be reduced to a minimum of 40 feet
- Minimum front building setback lines shall be 25 feet, including all road frontages for corner lots
- Minimum rear setback lines shall be 15 feet from the centerline of a utility easement or no less than five feet in cases where no easement exists
- Minimum side setback lines shall be five feet, except for corner lots that require a 25-foot side setback
- Lots with a commercial land use, shall not require building setbacks. It shall be understood that any construction on such lots shall conform to Chapter 12, Buildings and Building Regulations

Streets and Alleys

- Street classifications are as follows: Arterial, Collector, Local, Marginal Access
- Street naming conventions are included.
- Figure A2, *Street Dimensions Standardization Table*, left page, provides the standard dimensions and design standards.
- No street or gutter grade shall have a street grade less than 0.2 percent
- Curbs and Gutters: The soil in an area 12 inches behind the curb shall be compacted in six-inch lifts to 90 percent modified proctor to the depth of the flexible base or subgrade Utility Easements
- Each block, that does not contain an alley, shall have a utility easement at the rear of all lots reserved for use by all public utilities for service and main lines, conduits, manholes, meters, equipment, and maintenance procedures. These easements shall be a minimum 15 feet in width, taking footage from each lot where the rear of

two lots abut each other

Pedestrian Easements

- 10 feet minimum width of a pedestrian easement (sidewalks, trails, paths)
- Four feet pavement width minimum for all pedestrian pavements

Water Systems

- No street or gutter grade shall have a street grade less than 0.2 percent
- Curbs and Gutters: The soil in an area 12 inches behind the curb shall be compacted in six-inch lifts to 90 percent modified proctor to the depth of the flexible base or subgrade Utility Easements
- Each block, that does not contain an alley, shall have a utility easement at the rear of all lots reserved for use by all public utilities for service and main lines, conduits, manholes, meters, equipment, and maintenance procedures. These easements shall be a minimum 15 feet in width, taking footage from each lot where the rear of two lots abut each other

Sanitary Sewer Systems

- Utilize all standards within the Texas Administrative Code chapter 317 entitled Design Criteria for Sewerage Systems
- Manholes shall be spaced no more than 500 feet apart

Storm Sewer Systems

- Storm sewer systems are to be designed in accordance with the Storm Drainage Design Manual for the City of Port Lavaca, Texas, and the latest edition of the Texas State Department of Highways and Public Transportation's Standard Specifications for Construction of Highways, Streets, and Bridges

Site Grading

- Site grading designs and specifications are detailed within the Storm Drainage Design Manual for the City of Port Lavaca, Texas.

Multifamily Dwellings (Article Seven, Section 1)

- Construction of Multi-family dwellings of four or less units can be approved by the Building Inspections Department
- Construction of Multi-family dwellings of five or more units must be approved by the City Planning Board
- Floor to Area Ratio (FAR) must not exceed 1:2 (The maximum square feet of livable floor space per acre shall not exceed 50 percent of the lot size)
- Multi-family structures with two to four units per building must maintain a distance between buildings of 10 feet

with maximum 24-inch overhang

- Multi-family structures with five or more units per building must maintain a distance between buildings of 16 feet with maximum 36-inch overhang

Townhouses Specifications (Article 7, section 2)

- Maximum of 18 dwelling units per acre
- Units must average at least 2,500 square feet per unit
- No less than 80 percent of the townhouse lots in a project shall be a minimum 20 feet wide
- The coverage of a project shall not exceed 55 percent of the total site area
- Each lot shall contain a private yard with not less than 300 square feet of area
- An outdoor patio cannot cover more than 25 percent of the private yard area
- At least 7.5 feet of side yard shall be provided at the side property line of any townhouse project
- A wall or solid fence not less than five feet in height shall be required on side lot lines where the required private yard adjoins such lot lines
- No townhouse group shall exceed 200 feet in length
- No driveway located in the front yard of a townhouse lot shall exceed a 20-foot width

Patio Homes Specifications (Article 7, section 3)

- Lot coverage and area requirements are the same as Townhouse standards (above)
- Required separate utility meters for each patio home

Commercial Development Specifications (Article 7, section 4)

- The sidewalk must be a minimum of five feet wide.
- There are no building setbacks stipulated for commercial development.
- Landscape plans are required for all Commercial development. This includes protecting root zones of trees with barricades, irrigation designs, maintaining visible intersection sightlines, and a minimum of ten percent of the total building site devoted to landscaping, and at least one tree shall be provided per 800 square feet of landscaped area required.
- Street trees are required for all commercial development to be planted at regular intervals along a street's right-of-way; street trees shall be spaced 60 feet on center.

Dumpster Screening

- All dumpsters must be screened and buffered with a fenced or walled enclosure, including a gate and bollards, and the wall/fence height must fully screen the dumpsters height

LAND USE REGULATIONS

Chapter 26, Manufactured Housing and Recreational Vehicles

Manufactured housing, located outside of a manufactured home park, is allowed continued City water and waste services as long as the structure is considered and remains habitable (plumbing, electrical, repairs). Placement permits are required for all new manufactured homes within or outside City Limits when the manufactured home will be connected to the City's water and sewer system.

All manufactured housing subdivisions fall under and must comply with Chapter 42, Subdivisions and Plats.

All manufactured housing parks must receive a license from the City to remain in operation / remain habitable.

All manufactured housing park licenses expire on December 30th of every year. Any new manufactured housing park must be approved by City Council and adhere to the *City of Port Lavaca Future Land Use Plan*. Each manufactured house park lot must be supplied with water, sewer, electrical, (natural gas if applicable,) telephone, and other services; all required to be underground.

Manufactured homes are required to be connected to City water, but sewer collection and treatment can be either public (City) or private.

Spatial / Dimension Requirements:

- No dwelling shall exceed one story
- Minimum lot size of 50 feet by 120 feet
- A manufactured housing subdivision must have at least a two car driveway surfaced with a hard, dustless material
- All spaces shall be within 300 feet of an approved fire hydrant
- Any dead-end accessways in excess of 50 feet in length shall terminate in a cul-de-sac
- Manufactured housing units shall be 25 feet from any public roadway
- Required setbacks include 20 between housing units, 25 feet between the front of the house and the accessway, and 10 feet rear setback

All occupied recreational vehicles must be installed in licensed recreational vehicles parks or manufactured housing parks.

All recreational vehicle parks (RV parks) must receive a license from the City to remain in operation / remain habitable. All manufactured housing park licenses expire on September 30th of every year. RV parks are required to be inspected annually by the city for code compliance. A site development plan is required for all new RV park

proposals (including lot layouts, utility alignments, lighting signage, access and drive locations, etc.). RV parks can only be located within areas designated within the City of Port Lavaca Future Land Use Plan. A barrier or opaque fence is required on all side and rear property lines, while a landscaped buffer is required in the front property line (abutting a street).

Spatial / Dimension Requirements:

- One parking spot (10 by 20 feet) for each RV site is required
- All internal streets and drives must be at least 24 feet in width
- All streets must be paved with concrete or asphalt
- Dead-end streets are not allowed
- Each RV site must have a minimum area of 1,750 square feet and be at least 25 feet in width
- All sites must allow for a minimum of 10 feet between recreational vehicles

There is no mention of wastewater disposal and treatment of brown/black water within recreational vehicle parks within Chapter 26.

Chapter 32, Parks and Recreation

Chapter 32 lays out the responsibilities and duties of the Parks and Recreation Board, legal descriptions of existing parkland designated parcels, legal and illegal activities within parks, rules regarding specific park facilities (splash pads and skate parks), and overnight camping regulations (fires, cabana use, and tent locations).

UTILITIES

Chapter 50, Utilities

Chapter 50, Article One, In General, is a reserved section for future amendments and additions.

Chapter 50, Article Two, Water, provides regulations and standards regarding cross-connection controls, to prevent backflows, ensure safe non-hazardous connections, ensure fire hydrant operability, and maintain Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) compliance of irrigation systems. In addition, Article Two provides regulations and rules to prevent tampering with fire hydrants, falsified water usage, tampering water meters, and described the right of the City to replace and plan for water line replacement and upgrades. Lastly, Article Two includes descriptions of fees, inspections, and permit requirements for utilities servicing, including water wells, drilling, payment of water services, overdue penalties, and failure of compliance.

Chapter 50, Article Three, Sewers, similar to Article Two, provides regulations and standards regarding the connection, unauthorized use, fee's servicing inspections, and city authorities regarding sewer services, billing, and penalties.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY ENACTMENTS

Chapter 54, Waterways

Article 1, In General, describes that the City has waterway authorities over all waterways and standing water within the city Limits and ETJ.

Article 2, Port Commission, provides the legal framework behind the Prot Commission, including their roles, limitations, authorities, meeting times, and terms. The roles of the Port Commission is a body consisting of five to seven members, to provide recommendations to the city Manager regarding the use and planning processes for City ports, wharfs, and docks, as well as the improvements and budgets regarding the ports.

Article 3, Sunken Vessels, provides a short description of illegal maintenance and removal of sunken vessels. Regulations include the required removal of a sunken or partially sunken vessel within five days of the violation, and fees/penalty power granted to the Port Commission if this does not occur. The goal of this Article to prevent future water-based accidents and maintain clear and clean routes of navigation.

Article 4, Fishing, describes that it is illegal for anyone to fish for any type of Sealife within City High Dock areas, which includes the Lynn Bayou Turning Basin. The locational description included for the City High Dock areas is unclear within the Code.

Chapter 38, Solid Waste

Chapter 38, Solid Waste, provides rules, regulations, authorities, and penalties regarding garbage collection and disposal, burning of materials, and unauthorized handling of garbage and trash. Generally, rules include regulations for the placement of garbage cans, prohibitions of trash dumping, owner responsibilities for removing and placement of trash cans, what trash is not permitted to be serviced, and the garbage payment and rate systems.

MISCELLANEOUS STANDARDS

Chapter 6, Alcoholic Beverages

Chapter Six makes it illegal for anyone to consume, use, sell, or store alcoholic beverages on City property. Locational exemptions include Wilson Sports Complex City Park, the Bayfront property out of Patent Tract, the Bauer Community Center Tract, and the Nautical Landings Marina Building and deck area.

Chapter 10, Animals

Chapter 10 establishes rules to protect public health, safety, and welfare while ensuring humane treatment of animals. The ordinance requires dogs and cats to be licensed and vaccinated against rabies, empowers the Animal Control Department to enforce laws and manage stray or nuisance animals, and sets strict standards for the confinement of dangerous or vicious animals. Livestock and exotic animals are generally restricted within city limits, except in designated agricultural areas or by special permit, and owners must prevent nuisances such as excessive noise, roaming, or unsanitary conditions. The code also prohibits cruelty and neglect, aligning with state law, and provides procedures for impoundment, redemption, and adoption of animals.

Chapter 34, Peddlers, Solicitors, Itinerants Vendors, Garage Sales, and Mobile Food Units

Chapter 34 is intended to provide formality for retail and commercial sales of products and services. Key regulations included are as follows:

- It is unlawful for any solicitor to go from house-to-house selling or offering goods and services of any kind.
- A permit is required for itinerant vendors or transient vendors to sell and market goods and services.
- It is unlawful for a person to shout, block public rights-of-way, or use noise equipment to sell or market goods and services.
- Mobile Food Units (food trucks) can only be places on private property, with written property owner permission, only on lands zoned or identified in the Future Land Use Map for commercial purposes.
- Temporary connections to potable water are prohibited for mobile food units.
- All mobile food units are subject to inspection by the City

of Port Lavaca fire department for compliance.

- All mobile food units are required to obtain a City permit for operation.

Chapter 44, Taxation, Article 3+4, Hotel Occupancy Tax

- A Hotel Occupancy Tax set at 7 percent to be used for improving tourism and visitor-based locations within the community.
- Article 4, simply states: “There is hereby adopted an additional 0.5 percent sales and use tax within the city to be used to reduce the property tax rate.”

SUMMARY OF KEY MISSING REGULATIONS, STANDARDS, CODE, AND STATEMENTS

- There is no mention of wastewater disposal and treatment of brown/black water within recreational vehicle parks within Chapter 26.
- There are no parkland or public space requirements for residential subdivisions, recreational vehicle parks, or manufactured home parks.
- The locational description included for the City High Dock areas is unclear within Chapter 54, Waterways, Article Three, Fishing.
- Side and rear setback line fences are allowed, but no height specifications are provided in Chapter 12, Buildings and Building Regulations, Article 2, Building Trade Code, Section 12, Fences.
- Article 3, Flood Damage Prevention, Article 3, Flood Damage Prevention, provides multiple regulations that state that new construction / structures must be above “base flood elevation”, but does not explicitly state an exact standard for how far above base flood elevation (i.e., one- or two-foot above base flood elevation.)
- Chapter 34, Peddlers, Solicitors, Itinerants Vendors, Garage Sales, and Mobile Food Units, does not include regulations regarding the dumping, storage, or release of liquids or gases from the vehicle (beyond general trash can requirements). This can pertain to emissions, grill smoke, used oils, grey or black water, and other potential contaminants.
- There is no mention of room rentals, boarding houses, or

relational/marital requirements for housing occupancy within the Port Lavaca Code of Ordinances; However, Texas Property Code, Section 92.010 - Occupancy Limits states that a landlord may allow a maximum of three adult tenants per bedroom in a dwelling.

- Minimal design regulations and requirements are provided for commercial structures. Parking lot dimensions, drainage, and landscaping is detailed, but building heights, setbacks, form/function, and other structural dimensions are not included. This allows for adaptable commercial designs to be proposed, thus leaving room for developer friendly proposals, but also limits the predictability and assurance of quality of commercial structures.



UTILITIES INFRASTRUCTURE

INTRODUCTION

Utilities are fundamental to the growth, resilience, and sustainability of the City of Port Lavaca, and provide essential services that support residential, commercial, and industrial activity across the community. The city's utility infrastructure spans three core sectors: potable water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater management. Together, these systems ensure the reliable delivery of clean drinking water, the safe treatment of wastewater, and the effective management of stormwater, which forms the backbone of Port Lavaca's public health, environmental protection, and long-term growth and development strategy.

The potable water system is primarily dependent on imported raw water, as access to groundwater wells within city limits is limited. Raw water is purchased from the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA) and treated locally for municipal and commercial use. Aging infrastructure within the system is currently being addressed through planned upgrades aimed at improving reliability, expanding capacity, to ensure long-term sustainability.

Port Lavaca's sanitary sewer system is a vital component of its public infrastructure, and has been designed to serve thousands of residential and commercial connections. The system includes an extensive network of sewer lines, lift stations, and a centralized wastewater treatment plant with a capacity of two million gallons per day (GPD). Managed by the city's Wastewater Department, the system is maintained through routine operations, regulatory oversight, and targeted improvements to ensure compliance with state and federal standards. As the city continues to grow, proactive monitoring and investment in the sewer system remain essential to meeting future demands and minimizing environmental impacts.

Stormwater management is an increasingly critical concern for Port Lavaca, where coastal geography, flat terrain, and aging infrastructure heighten the risk of flooding during major rain events. The city's proximity to Lavaca Bay and regional waterways such as Lynn's Bayou makes it particularly vulnerable to stormwater bottlenecks, which can result in widespread inundation when runoff is unable to drain effectively. In response to recent flooding, the city is acquiring land for the construction of a stormwater detention pond and is working with Clean Coast Texas to draft a new ordinance focused on improving drainage standards, floodplain management, and development regulations. These efforts reflect Port Lavaca's broader commitment to integrating green stormwater infrastructure, enhancing resilience, and protecting both public safety and environmental quality.

Key Takeaways

- Utilities infrastructure consists of three core sectors: potable water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater management.
- Potable water relies on imported raw water from GBRA; upgrades are planned to improve reliability and capacity.
- Sanitary sewer system serves thousands of connections, includes a two-million GPD treatment plant, and requires ongoing investment.
- Stormwater management is critical due to coastal geography and flood risks; the preparation of new stormwater detention policies and ordinances are currently in progress.
- Green infrastructure and resilience are priorities to protect public safety and environmental quality.

Port Lavaca Water Tower
Source: Baxter & Woodman



POTABLE WATER

The City of Port Lavaca's potable water system plays a vital role in supporting community infrastructure by delivering a consistent supply of clean, safe drinking water to residents, businesses, and future developments. The system relies on a combination of imported raw water, limited groundwater wells, wastewater treatment facility, and two above ground water storage facilities (illustrated in Map 1, *Potable Water Facilities*). Because groundwater access within the city limits is restricted, the city depends heavily on purchased raw water for both municipal and industrial use. This water is treated locally before being distributed throughout the community.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan's Community Snapshot provides an overview of Port Lavaca's current water infrastructure, including its distribution networks, storage capacity, and treatment processes. It also assesses system condition and capacity, outlines planned capital improvements, and highlights key challenges and opportunities involved in maintaining and upgrading the water supply to meet the needs of a growing population. Importantly, the system also supports fire suppression capacity, ensuring adequate water pressure and storage for emergency response.

Facilities and Distribution

Raw water is supplied by the GBRA and treated by Undine Texas, LLC. Undine recently acquired the water treatment plant from GBRA and now operates the facility located on Hwy 316. This plant serves as the primary source of potable water for Port Lavaca. Once treated, water is distributed through the city's network to homes, businesses, and critical services, including fire hydrants and suppression systems.

Condition

The existing water treatment plant's mechanical and electrical systems are nearing the end of their service life, prompting the need for modernization. Aging infrastructure poses risks to operational reliability and efficiency, making upgrades essential to maintain service standards, meet future demand, and ensure adequate fire suppression capacity. There are fire hydrants throughout the city, although there are no fire hydrants for the homes on the south side of Smith Road, as depicted in Map 1, *Potable Water Facilities*.

Capacity

The current treatment capacity of the plant is two million gallons per day (MGD). A major upgrade is underway to double capacity to four MGD, ensuring the system can accommodate population growth, industrial expansion, stricter regulatory requirements, and the water demands for firefighting. The expansion will retain the plant's compact footprint while significantly increasing its processing capabilities.

Capital Improvement Projects

Future Capital Improvement Projects should include the following infrastructure upgrades:

- Centralized instrumentation and control systems for more efficient operations
- Enhanced treatment processes, including phosphorus removal and reduced sludge production
- Upgraded infrastructure to improve reliability and reduce operational downtime
- Expanded storage and distribution capacity to strengthen fire suppression capabilities

To support this effort, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) approved \$39.3 million in financial assistance through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which could save the City approximately \$12 million over the life of the loan. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$70 million, meaning an additional \$30 million in funding will be required to complete construction and commissioning. Once finished, the upgraded facility will significantly enhance Port Lavaca's ability to deliver safe, reliable potable water, improve system resilience, and support long-term community growth.

Key Takeaways

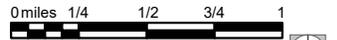
- Potable water system is essential for residents, businesses, industry, and fire suppression.
- Raw water supply comes from GBRA and is treated locally by Undine Texas, LLC.
- Aging infrastructure requires modernization to maintain reliability and emergency readiness
- Capacity expansion from two MGD to four MGD will meet growth, regulatory, and firefighting needs.
- Capital improvements include advanced controls, enhanced treatment, and expanded storage/distribution.

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

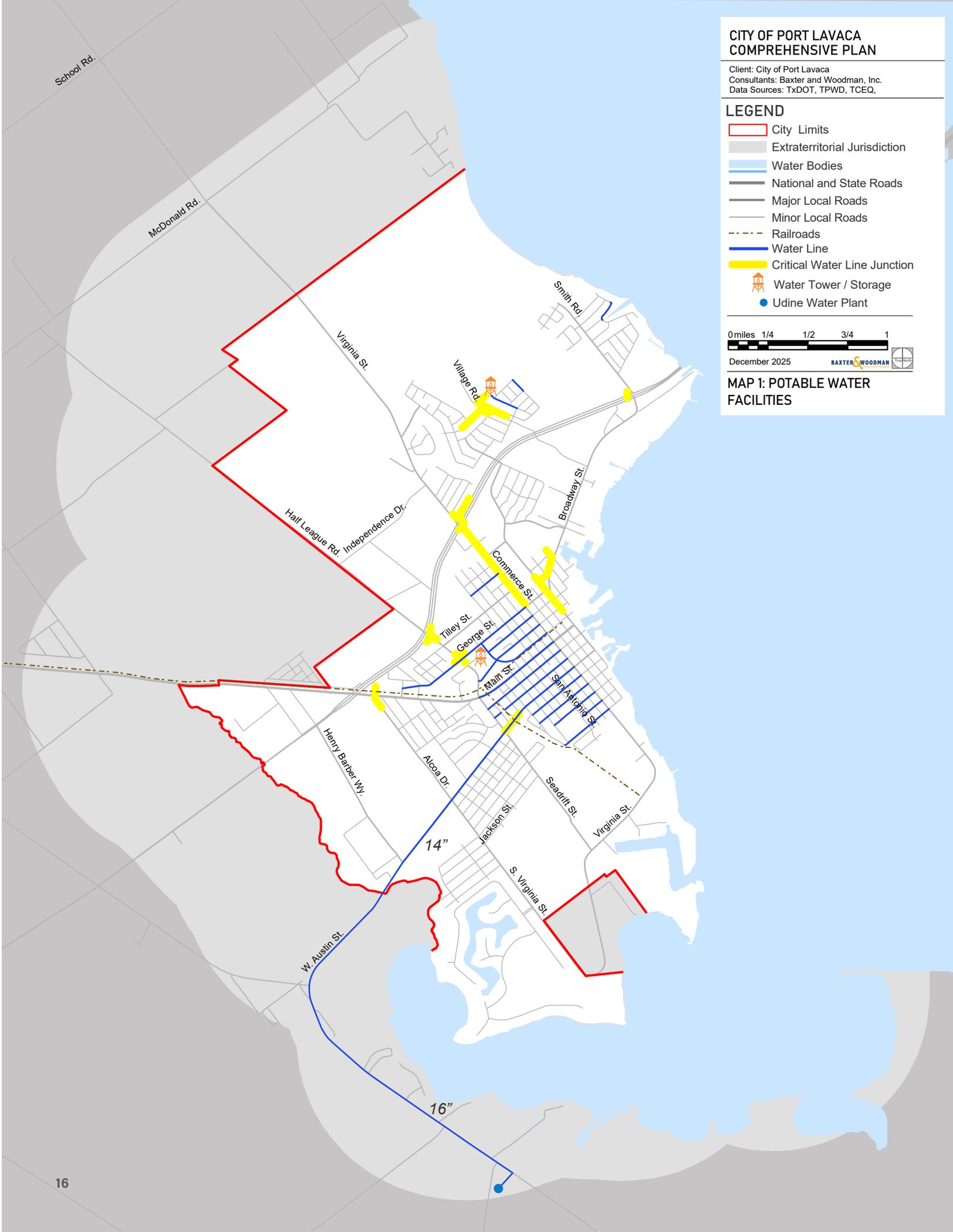
LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Water Line
- Critical Water Line Junction
- 🏠 Water Tower / Storage
- Udine Water Plant



December 2025 **BAXTER & WOODMAN**

MAP 1: POTABLE WATER FACILITIES



SANITARY SEWER

The City of Port Lavaca's sanitary sewer system is a critical component of its public infrastructure, serving approximately 3,840 sewer connections across the community. The system includes roughly 40 miles of sewer lines and is supported by a wastewater treatment plant, located near Lynn's Bayou, that processes up to two million gallons of wastewater per day (GPD). The city is responsible for maintaining and upgrading this system, including main line repairs, sewer line cleaning, and installation of new sewage taps. Recent upgrades and testing efforts aim to improve efficiency, meet Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) compliance standards, and prepare the system for future growth.

Facilities and Distribution

Port Lavaca's sanitary sewer system is supported by 20 lift stations, depicted in Map 2, *Sewer Infrastructure*, that serve neighborhoods across the city, which help to transmit wastewater through the network. While most homes are connected to centralized sewer lines, some rely on grinder septic systems, which require regular maintenance.

A grinder septic system uses a pump to break down solid waste into a slurry before sending it into a septic tank or sewer line. These systems are typically installed where gravity flow is not possible, such as homes located below the main sewer line or on uneven terrain. The grinder pump allows waste to be transported efficiently through small-diameter pipes over long distances or uphill.

Advantages of Grinder Septic Systems

- Enable installation in challenging terrain
- Function effectively where gravity flow isn't possible (e.g., homes below sewer lines or on hills)
- Transport waste efficiently by converting solids into slurry for pumping through small pipes
- Save space by requiring smaller pipes, which can reduce installation costs
- Handle household wastewater reliably, even during peak usage

Disadvantages of Grinder Septic Systems

- Higher initial installation costs compared to gravity-fed systems
- Greater maintenance needs; pumps require regular servicing and can fail if non-flushable items are introduced
- Dependence on electricity; power outages can cause backups
- Higher repair and replacement costs than traditional systems

Because of these limitations, the City is considering an ordinance to prohibit new grinder systems, ensuring more efficient management of future sewage flow.

Condition

The existing Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, which monitors and controls equipment such as pumps, valves, and meters, is outdated and failing. This system is vital for detecting leaks, overflows, and equipment malfunctions in real time. Its automated functions also help reduce operational costs and anticipate maintenance needs. An upgrade to the SCADA system is being explored as part of broader plant improvements.

Additionally, the city recently conducted smoke testing to identify Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) issues, a term used to describe a condition where unwanted (storm) water enters the system through cracks or faulty connections, and is consequently treated; which increases the gross volume of treated wastewater, thus reducing the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant to serve additional volumes resulting from growth. This testing revealed defective manholes in specific neighborhoods. The city's code enforcement officer worked directly with residents to resolve these issues, resulting in a significant reduction in infiltration and improved treatment efficiency.

Capacity

The sanitary sewer system typically handles daily flows ranging from 1.1 to two MGD, occasionally exceeding this range during peak conditions. The current treatment plant is designed to accommodate this volume, but future growth and increased demand may require expanded capacity.

Capital Improvements

To meet regulatory standards and prepare for future demand, the city is planning upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant, including:

- Expansion of treatment capacity
- Modernization of mechanical and electrical systems
- Replacement of the failing SCADA system

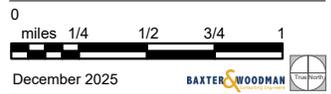
These improvements are designed to enhance system reliability, reduce operational downtime, and ensure compliance with TCEQ regulations. Continued investment in infrastructure will be essential to support Port Lavaca's long-term growth and environmental sustainability.

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Client: City of Port Lavaca
Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Streams, Channels, and Drainage Ditches
- Sewer Lines
- Water Treatment Plant
- Manhole Covers
- Lift Station



MAP 2: SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE



STORM WATER AND DRAINAGE

Storm Water Management System

Port Lavaca's coastal location and flat topography make it particularly vulnerable to both inland and coastal flooding. As climate variability increases, so too, does the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, the city faces growing challenges in managing stormwater and protecting its residents and infrastructure. This section outlines Port Lavaca's current approach to floodplain management, identifies areas of concern, and highlights ongoing efforts to improve stormwater systems and development practices. Currently, there are available maps depicting existing stormwater infrastructure. Map 3, *Floodplains and Drainage Infrastructure*, depicts mapped floodplains, bodies of water, and areas where drainage has been improved.

Floodplain Management

The City of Port Lavaca is actively working to strengthen its floodplain management program. In collaboration with Clean Coast Texas, the city is developing a comprehensive stormwater ordinance aimed at improving floodplain oversight, regulating development in flood-prone areas, and promoting low-impact development (LID) techniques such as bioswales, permeable pavement, and rain gardens. These strategies are designed to reduce runoff, enhance infiltration, and minimize flood risks while supporting environmental sustainability.

Flooding within the City of Port Lavaca

During heavy rain events, stormwater in Port Lavaca is often blocked from draining efficiently into Lavaca Bay, which creates a bottleneck that can lead to localized flooding. A recent rare storm event exemplified this worst-case scenario, which resulted in widespread inundation across the city. In response, the City of Port Lavaca is actively pursuing the acquisition of property to construct additional stormwater detention facilities, which will help temporarily store excess runoff and reduce peak flow rates during future storms.

Storm Water Detention and Retention Facilities

To address stormwater challenges, Port Lavaca is pursuing the acquisition of property for a stormwater detention pond, which will temporarily store excess runoff and reduce peak flow rates during major storms. In addition to detention ponds, the city is evaluating the feasibility of retention basins and other green infrastructure solutions to manage runoff more sustainably. These facilities are intended to complement existing drainage systems and reduce the impact of future rain events.

Development Regulations

The city's Flood Damage Prevention regulations, outlined in its Code of Ordinances, require new construction within designated flood zones to meet elevation and permitting standards. This will help to mitigate risk and ensure long-term resilience.

Regional Waterways

Port Lavaca's proximity to Lavaca Bay, Lynn's Bayou, and Little Chocolate Bayou increases its exposure to both coastal and inland flooding. These regional waterways play a significant role in the city's drainage patterns and flood risk profile. Their influence reinforces the importance of coordinated floodplain management and infrastructure planning across jurisdictional boundaries. These drainage channels have been consistently challenged during heavy storms, and Hurricane Harvey further emphasized the issues. Additionally, many sections of the four major drainage channels indicate they need to be expanded or have new diversion paths directed away to appropriate drainage spots. Additionally, there are segments of some drainage channels where vegetation needs to be removed to increase stormwater flow and prevent water from pooling and stagnating. Proposed drainage improvements are depicted in Map 3, *Floodplains and Drainage Infrastructure*.

Conclusion

Port Lavaca's evolving approach to stormwater management reflects a growing commitment to resilience, sustainability, and public safety. Through targeted infrastructure investments, strategic partnerships, and forward-looking development regulations, the city is actively addressing the challenges posed by coastal and inland flooding. As climate variability continues to intensify storm events, these efforts will be essential in protecting neighborhoods, preserving water quality, and ensuring the long-term health of the community's built and natural environments.



Drainage Ditch along La Salle Boulevard in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

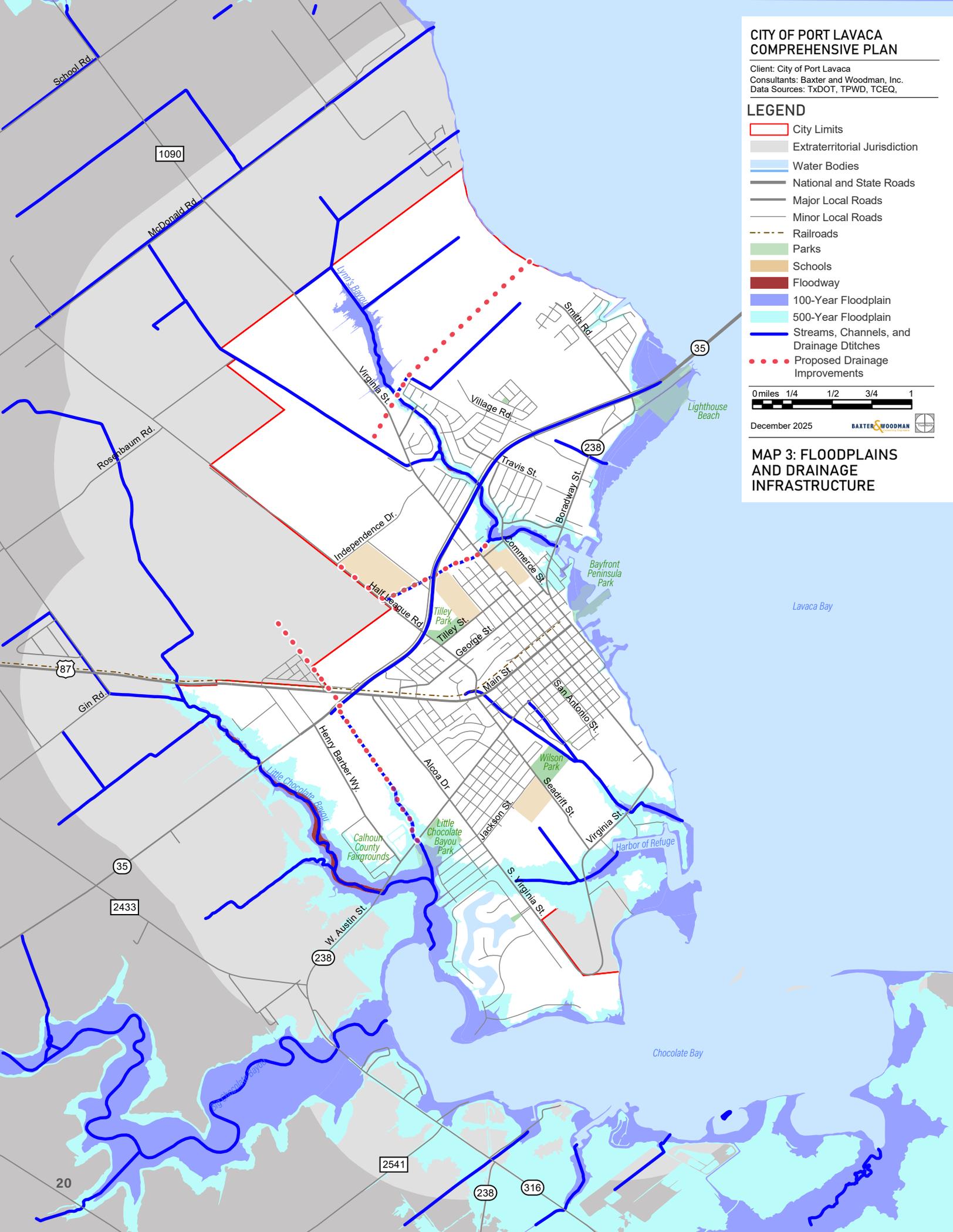
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Parks
- Schools
- Floodway
- 100-Year Floodplain
- 500-Year Floodplain
- Streams, Channels, and Drainage Ditches
- Proposed Drainage Improvements

0 miles 1/4 1/2 3/4 1

December 2025



MAP 3: FLOODPLAINS AND DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE





EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

ROADWAY AND PORT AUTHORITIES

Thoroughfares

Thoroughfares within the City of Port Lavaca and its ETJ, as depicted in Map 4, *Functional Classification and Jurisdiction*, are operated and maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Calhoun County, and the City of Port Lavaca. Each entity plays a role in planning roadway improvements, expansions, and alignments to support safe and efficient mobility. As outlined in the city's proposed Thoroughfare Plan (refer to The Future City report, page XX), coordinated efforts between Port Lavaca, TxDOT, and Calhoun County are essential to accommodate new residential and commercial development.

Port Lavaca owns, operates, and maintains most thoroughfares within its municipal boundaries, while Calhoun County oversees roads outside the city limits. Where thoroughfares cross jurisdictional boundaries, maintenance responsibilities are typically assigned to the County. TxDOT manages major arterial routes entering and passing through Port Lavaca, including SH 35, which serves as a key corridor for regional connectivity. TxDOT also administers US 87, which originates in Port Lavaca and extends northward, through Lubbock, and ultimately into New Mexico, at Clayton. As depicted on Map 4, *Functional Classification and Jurisdiction*, entitled Main Street, SH 35 extends through Downtown Port Lavaca to Nautical Harbor on the coast. TxDOT routes such as FM 1090, FM 616, and FM 2433 intersect with local streets and provide access to surrounding communities like Point Comfort, Seadrift, and Victoria. As Port Lavaca continues to grow, the city will need to ensure safe and convenient access for all users including motorists, pedestrians, and freight carriers, particularly along key corridors such as SH 35 and US 87, which connects Downtown Port Lavaca to Lavaca Bay and the broader Gulf Coast region. Coordination with TxDOT will remain critical for managing traffic signals, pavement conditions, signage, and future roadway enhancements.

Railroads

Port Lavaca's current railroad infrastructure is limited but remains active, primarily serving industrial freight operations through the Point Comfort and Northern Railway (PCN) line. This short-line railroad facilitates the movement of raw materials and manufactured goods to and from the Port of Port Lavaca. The PCN runs approximately 14 miles between Point Comfort and Lolita, Texas, where it connects to the broader national freight network via Union Pacific. There is no passenger rail service, and current rail operations are focused exclusively on supporting local industry and regional logistics.

Calhoun Port Authority

The Calhoun Port Authority serves a vital role for the Texas mid-coast region's access to worldwide markets. The port supports Texas chemical manufacturing industries and the Calhoun County economy. The Port Authority also manages port operations, harbors, and related infrastructure including the Matagorda Ship Channel, the alignment of which passes between the Mainland and Matagorda island and provides direct access to and from the Gulf and Lavaca Bay.

Key Takeaways:

- Thoroughfares are managed jointly by Port Lavaca, Calhoun County, and TxDOT.
- SH 35 and US 87 are important corridors that provide is the key corridor for regional connectivity and future growth.
- Coordination with TxDOT is critical for roadway improvements and safe access.
- Rail service is freight-only, via the Point Comfort and Northern Railway (PCN), and provides no passenger service.
- The Calhoun Port Authority drives regional trade and helps support local industries.

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

-  City Limits
-  Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
-  Water Bodies
-  Railroads
-  Parks
-  Schools

Functional Classification

-  Principal Arterial Thoroughfare
-  Minor Arterial Thoroughfare
-  Major Collector Thoroughfare
-  Minor Collector Thoroughfare
-  Local Thoroughfare

Jurisdiction

-  City of Port Lavaca
-  Calhoun County
-  TxDOT / USDOT



December 2025



MAP 4: FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION AND JURISDICTION



ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT)

Context

Thoroughfares with the highest functional classifications, such as interstates, freeways, or major arterials, or those owned and operated by state entities like TxDOT and the Calhoun County Road and Bridge Department, typically record the highest Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts. AADT measures the number of vehicles traveling along a specific roadway segment, with data collected from the City of Port Lavaca, the Calhoun County Road and Bridge Department, and TxDOT in 2022 and 2023. As depicted in Map 5, *Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts (AADT)*, thoroughfares under TxDOT’s jurisdiction consistently have the highest traffic counts, while those managed by the City of Port Lavaca typically experience lower daily volumes. It should be noted that while AADT provides a useful baseline for thoroughfare planning, it does not capture seasonal tourism peaks or freight surges tied to port activity.

Traffic Volumes on TxDOT and County Thoroughfares

SH 35 experiences the most daily traffic out of all thoroughfares in Port Lavaca, followed by SH 238 / W. Austin Street. SH 238 / W. Austin Street links several southern communities (i.e., Alamo Beach, Magnolia Beach, Indianola) to Port Lavaca, which is where residents of these smaller communities come to buy groceries. As regional development expands and employment opportunities grow, traffic along these corridors is expected to increase. There was no traffic data for US 87, but it is the main route between Port Lavaca and Victoria, where a large number of Port Lavaca employees live. FM 1090 on the north end of the ETJ experiences 3,000–5,000 vehicles daily, as it extends southward and connects with Virginia Street, ultimately intersecting SH 35 near downtown. While gaps in traffic count data leave an incomplete picture, these corridors clearly serve as primary routes through the city.

Traffic Volumes on Port Lavaca Thoroughfares

Henry Barber Way, a major collector, carries 2,000–3,000 vehicles per day, and is supported by its connection to SH 238 and SH 35. Other collectors include Alcoa Drive (3,000–5,000 vehicles per day), George Street and Tilley Street (1,000–2,000 vehicles per day), and Seadrift Street (200–500 vehicles per day).

Key Takeaways

- TxDOT and County-managed roads consistently carry the highest traffic volumes; City-maintained streets see lower counts.
- SH 35 has the highest daily traffic, followed by SH 238 / W. Austin Street.
- FM 1090 also functions as a key connector into downtown, while City-maintained collectors such as Henry Barber Way and Alcoa Drive carry moderate traffic, and smaller streets like George, Tilley, and Seadrift see lighter volumes.



FM 1090 Road sign in Downtown
Source: Baxter and Woodman

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Parks
- Schools

Existing AADT (2022 to 2024)

- 0 to 249
- 250 to 499
- 500 to 999
- 1,000 to 1,999
- 2,000 to 2,999
- 3,000 to 4,999
- 5,000 to 9,999
- 10,000 to 14,999
- 15,000 and over

0 miles 1/4 1/2 3/4 1

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MAP 5: AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS (AADT)



CRASH DATA

Map 6, *Crashes 2018-2025*, depicts all crash occurrences (vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian), including fatalities, in Port Lavaca and the surrounding ETJ from January 1, 2018 to October 5th, 2025. Data was collected from the TxDOT crash database which compiles state, county, and local crash data.

Of the 1,495 recorded incidents, 99 percent were vehicle-related, while bicyclist- and pedestrian-related accidents accounted for one percent (1%) of the remaining crashes. Notably, a trend in serious injury and fatality crashes happen along SH 316 and into SH 238. Crash hot-spots, where crashes occur most frequently, are at intersections along SH 6 and SH 35.

Crash Trends

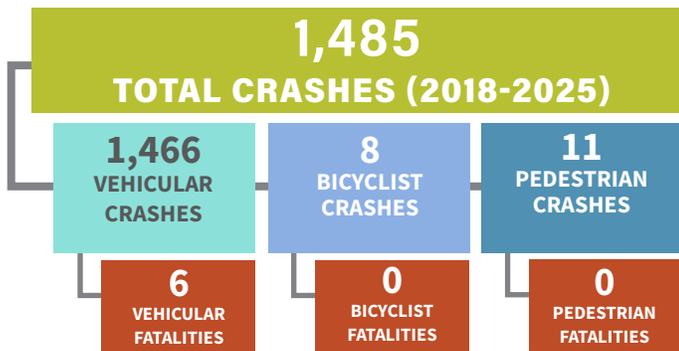
Since 2018, as referenced in Figure 3A, *Crash Breakdown (2018-2025)*, the City of Port Lavaca has had six crashes resulting in fatality; which accounts for 0.4 percent of total

crashes. All six crashes involving a fatality were vehicular crashes and occurred during dry conditions. Notably, five out of the six fatal crashes occurred at night (on both lighted and unlighted roads) with the sixth crash involving a fatality occurring during daylight hours. Alcohol, speed, and fatigue played a role in most of these crashes. The majority of crashes occurred at signalized intersections. The number of crashes has decreased annually since 2021. Crashes also tend to occur more during rush hour traffic.

Key Takeaways

- 99 percent of crashes involve vehicles only.
- The primary cause for all crashes is Driver Inattention.
- The majority of crashes happen during afternoon rush hour when traffic is at its peak.
- Intersections are the most common crash locations, indicating points of conflict.
- Fatal crashes are rare, but when they do occur, factors such as alcohol, speed, or fatigue appear to be the cause.

Figure 3A, *Crash Breakdown (2018-2025)*



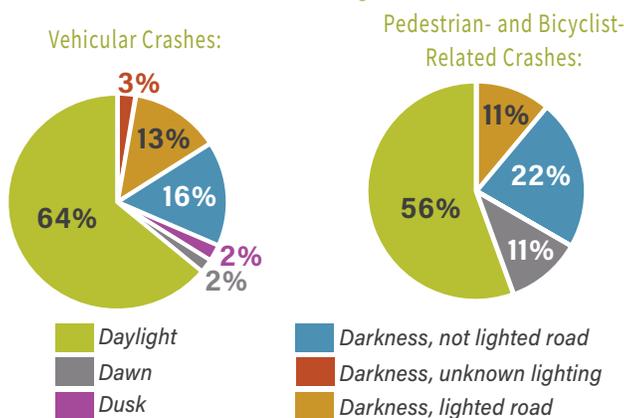
Primary Cause of Vehicular Crashes:

- #1 Driver Inattention
- #2 Slowing/Stopping - For Officer, Flagman, or Traffic
- #3 Failed to Control Speed
- #4 Disregard Stop and Go Signal / Stop Sign or Light
- #5 Had Been Drinking / Under the Influence

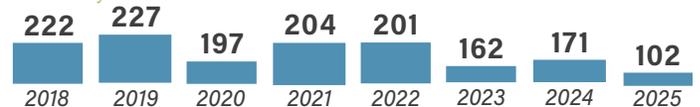
Primary Cause of Pedestrian and Bicyclist Crashes:

- #1 Driver Inattention
- #2 Pedestrian Failed to Yield Right-of-Way to Vehicle
- #3 Driver Disregarded Stop and Go Signal / Stop Sign or Light
- #4 Driver Failed to Yield Right-of-Way to Pedestrian

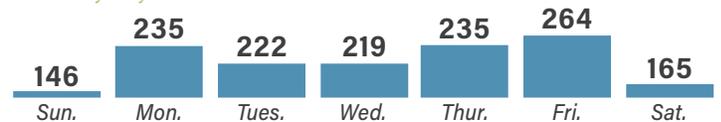
Crashes Based on the Amount of Light:



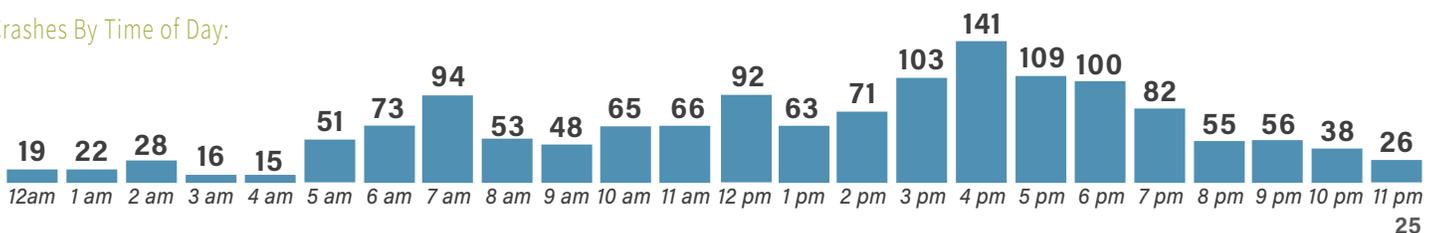
Crashes By Year:



Crashes By Day of Week:



Crashes By Time of Day:



CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Parks
- Schools

Vehicular Crashes

- Not Injured / Unknown
- Possible Injury
- Suspected Minor Injury
- Suspected Serious Injury
- Fatality

Pedestrian-Related Crashes

- Not Injured / Unknown
- Possible Injury
- Suspected Minor Injury
- Suspected Serious Injury
- Fatality

Cyclist-Related Crashes

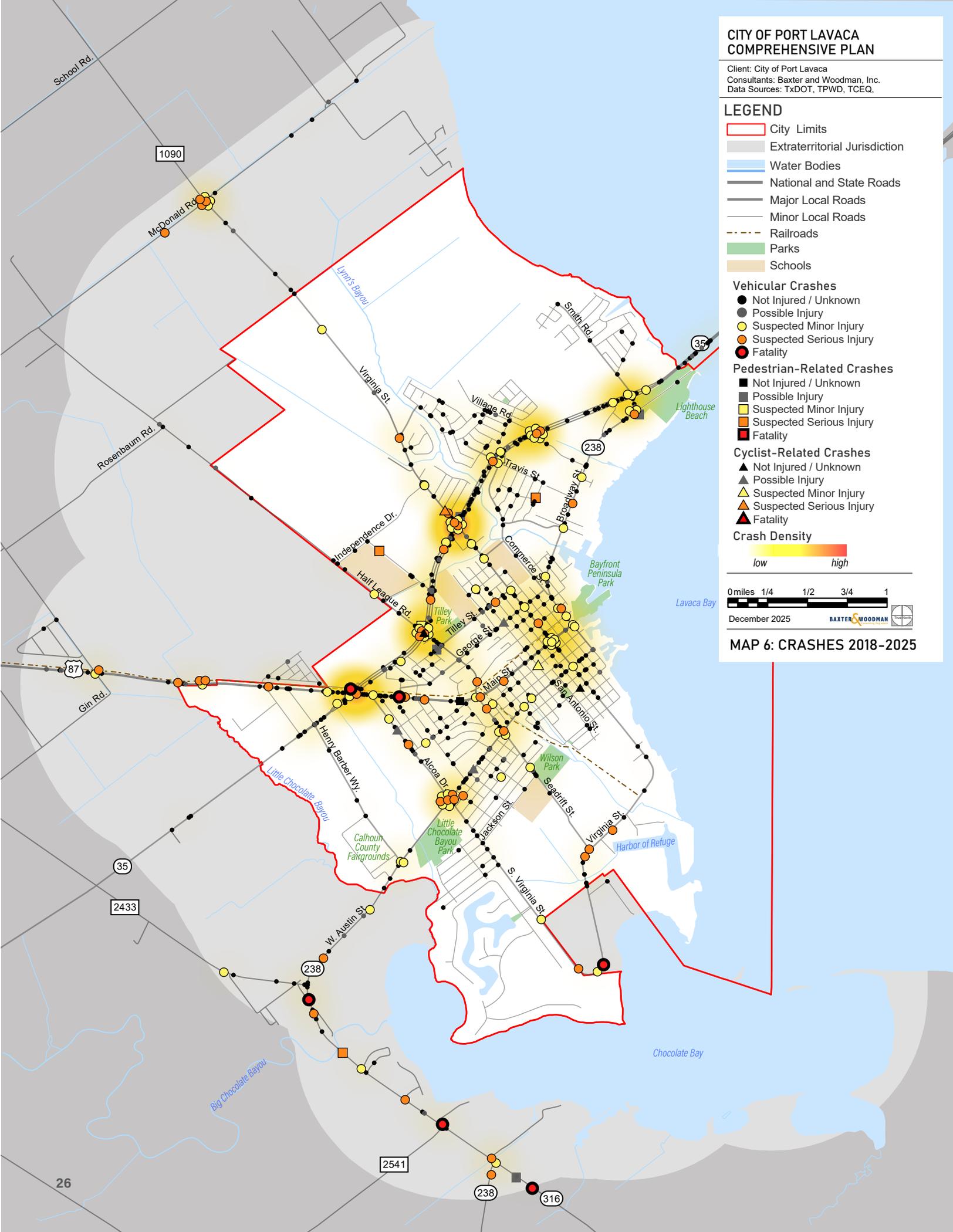
- Not Injured / Unknown
- Possible Injury
- Suspected Minor Injury
- Suspected Serious Injury
- Fatality

Crash Density



December 2025 BAKTER & WOODMAN

MAP 6: CRASHES 2018-2025





ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Context

Active transportation refers to non-motorized, human-powered travel such as walking, bicycling, skateboarding, and other mobility devices. These modes are best suited for short trips and help reduce reliance on vehicles, which eases congestion and improves public health. In Port Lavaca, active transportation typically occurs on sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, multi-use paths, and within greenspaces. To be effective, infrastructure should provide safe, comfortable, and connected routes between neighborhoods and key destinations, accommodating users of all ages and abilities. Currently, Port Lavaca does not have bikeshare programs or ordinances for micromobility options such as electric bikes, scooters, or golf carts.



Bike lane on Smith Road in the process of being striped
Source: City of Port Lavaca

Planning should consider:

- Health and safety: Ensure well-lit sidewalks, protected bike lanes, safe crossings, and traffic calming to reduce accidents and encourage use.
- Personal mobility needs: Design routes that accommodate wheelchairs, strollers, and other mobility devices.
- Demand by location: Prioritize areas near schools, parks, shopping, and employment centers.
- Quality of life: Provide equitable access to recreation, services, and daily destinations.

Groups that benefit most from improved access include:

- *Students* - safer routes to walk or bike to school
- *Local residents* - pedestrian connections to parks, grocery stores, restaurants, and daily destinations.
- *Retirees and seniors* - safe routes to medical appointments, family visits, and recreation.

Active transportation also plays a key role in reducing traffic. According to the U.S. Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, about 45 percent of vehicle trips in the

U.S. between 2018 and 2022 were under three miles, and 28 percent were less than one mile. With safe and convenient alternatives, many residents may choose to walk or bike for shorter trips instead of driving, helping to reduce strain on local roadways as well as provide more opportunities for physical activity.

Sidewalk Connectivity

Sidewalks, referenced in Map 7, *Active Transportation Facilities*, are most prevalent along major TxDOT roadways but are limited in older residential areas. Newer residential subdivisions typically include sidewalks constructed along new streets. This can lead to short, sporadic gaps in the sidewalk network on properties where there is not a home built yet. The City has identified a strong need to expand sidewalk connections, particularly linking existing sidewalks to major origin-destination routes. For example, proposed five-foot-wide sidewalks between Austin Street and Jackson Street would connect residents to Jackson Roosevelt Elementary and Wilson Park. Additional sidewalks along SH 35 have also been prioritized to improve access to parks and schools on the north side of the city.

Proposed Bike and Shared-use Facilities

Existing bike infrastructure, depicted in Map 7, *Active Transportation Facilities*, in the city includes the painted bike lanes on Smith Road installed during the summer of 2025. This update also included the addition of new sidewalks. Future proposals call for additional bike lanes or multiuse paths, including a connection along SH 238 to link neighborhoods with Downtown Port Lavaca.

Key Takeaways

- Active transportation helps reduce vehicle reliance, traffic congestion, and improves public health.
- The City currently lacks bikeshare programs and micromobility ordinances (e-bikes, scooters, golf carts).
- With safe alternatives, many residents could shift short trips to walking or biking, reducing roadway strain.



Construction on Smith Road to add sidewalks and bike lanes.
Source: City of Port Lavaca

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

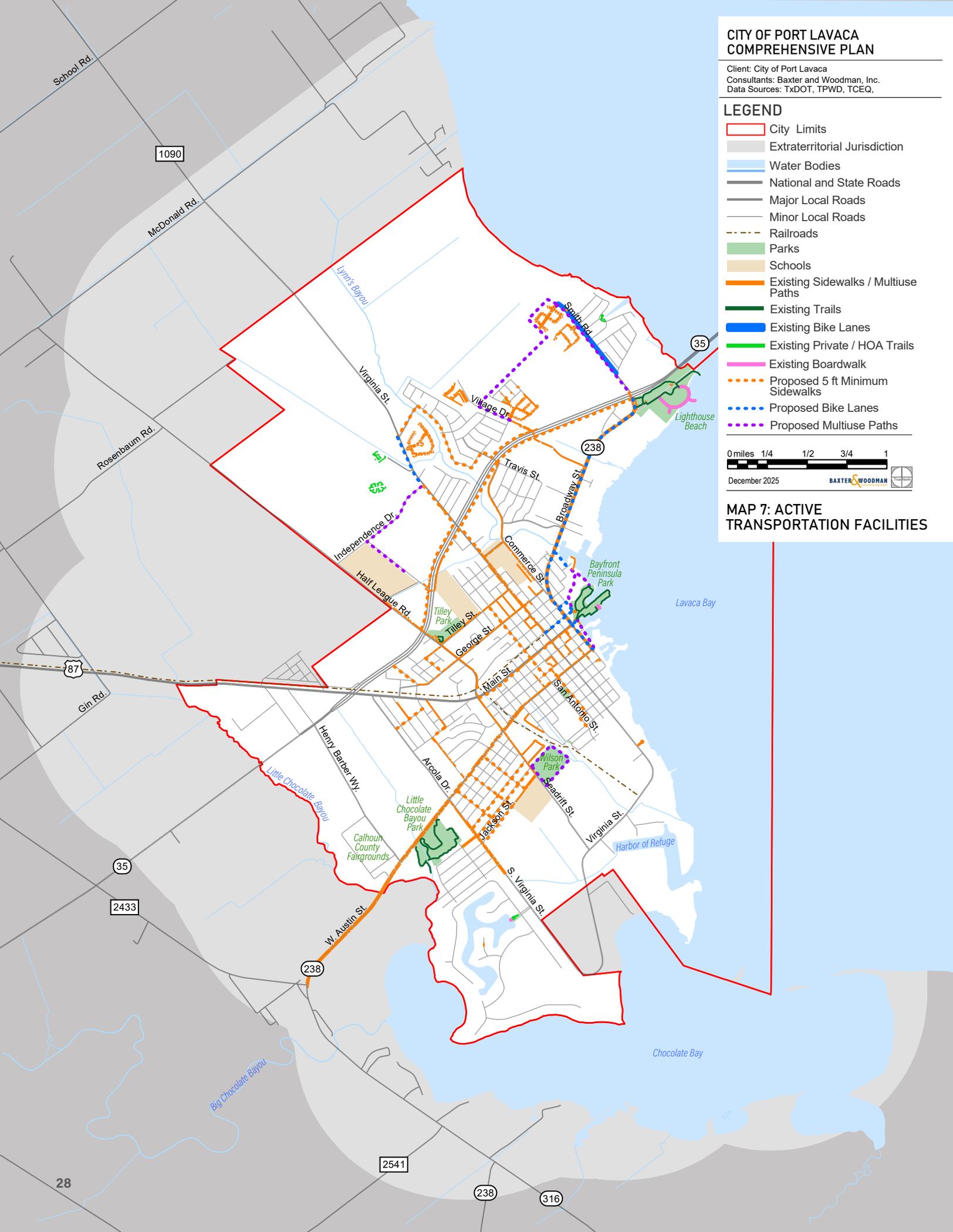
Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Parks
- Schools
- Existing Sidewalks / Multiuse Paths
- Existing Trails
- Existing Bike Lanes
- Existing Private / HOA Trails
- Existing Boardwalk
- Proposed 5 ft Minimum Sidewalks
- Proposed Bike Lanes
- Proposed Multiuse Paths



MAP 7: ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES



EXISTING LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

WHAT IS LAND USE PLANNING?

Land use describes how a parcel of land is utilized by people, whether for farming, housing, commerce, or community needs. Land use planning plays a vital role in shaping how communities grow and function. This type of planning organizes parcels into dedicated uses, such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and parks and open space to shape a municipality based on their long-term goals and community priorities. Effective land use planning helps manage growth efficiently, supports economic development, protects environmental resources, and enhances quality of life by guiding what can be built near homes, schools, and parks.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS IN PORT LAVACA

Port Lavaca’s Planning Area, calculated in Figure 4A, covers roughly 19.16 square miles (12,259.79 acres) encompassing both the city limits (8.82 square miles) and its one-mile-wide (10.76 square miles) ETJ. Port Lavaca has no established zoning ordinance, and so the city’s current land use reflects organic as well as sporadic growth. This element uses five broad designations to characterize and characterize land use in Port Lavaca, which are illustrated in Map 8, *Existing Land Use*, with several of these designations further subdivided, based on density and level of intensity. These five broad designations are:

- Agricultural / Undeveloped
- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public / Institutional
- Parks / Open space

Figure 4A, Existing Land Use in City Limits and ETJ

Existing Land Use	City of Port Lavaca Only Acres	Number of Parcels	ETJ Only Acres	Number of Parcels	Total Acres	Total Square Miles	Percentage of Planning Area
Agricultural / Undeveloped	2,185.09	54	4,856.60	118	7,041.69	11.00	57.44
Vacant Lands	1,298.88	642	1,146.93	335	2,445.81	3.82	19.95
Parks and Open Space	69.74	18	163.58	10	233.32	0.36	1.90
General Commercial	146.18	197	29.91	22	176.09	0.28	1.44
Neighborhood Commercial	36.51	86	0	0	36.51	0.06	0.30
Regional Commercial	137.27	41	0	0	137.27	0.21	1.12
Central Business District	18.13	71	0	0	18.13	0.03	0.15
Light Industrial	109.32	96	54.78	25	164.10	0.26	1.34
Heavy Industrial	29.65	4	39.15	3	68.79	0.11	0.56
Public /Institutional	304.65	81	16.29	5	320.94	0.50	2.62
Utilities Infrastructure	19.21	12	137.13	2	156.35	0.24	1.28
Single Family Attached	19.68	46	0.34	1	20.02	0.03	0.16
Single Family Detached	821.04	3304	415.04	367	1,236.09	1.93	10.08
Multi-Family Residential	50.23	32	0	0	50.23	0.08	0.41
Manufactured Homes	86.50	309	22.10	56	108.61	0.17	0.89
Recreation Vehicle	41.10	9	4.75	3	45.85	0.07	0.37
TOTAL	5,373.19		6,886.61		12,259.79	19.16	100

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ,

LEGEND

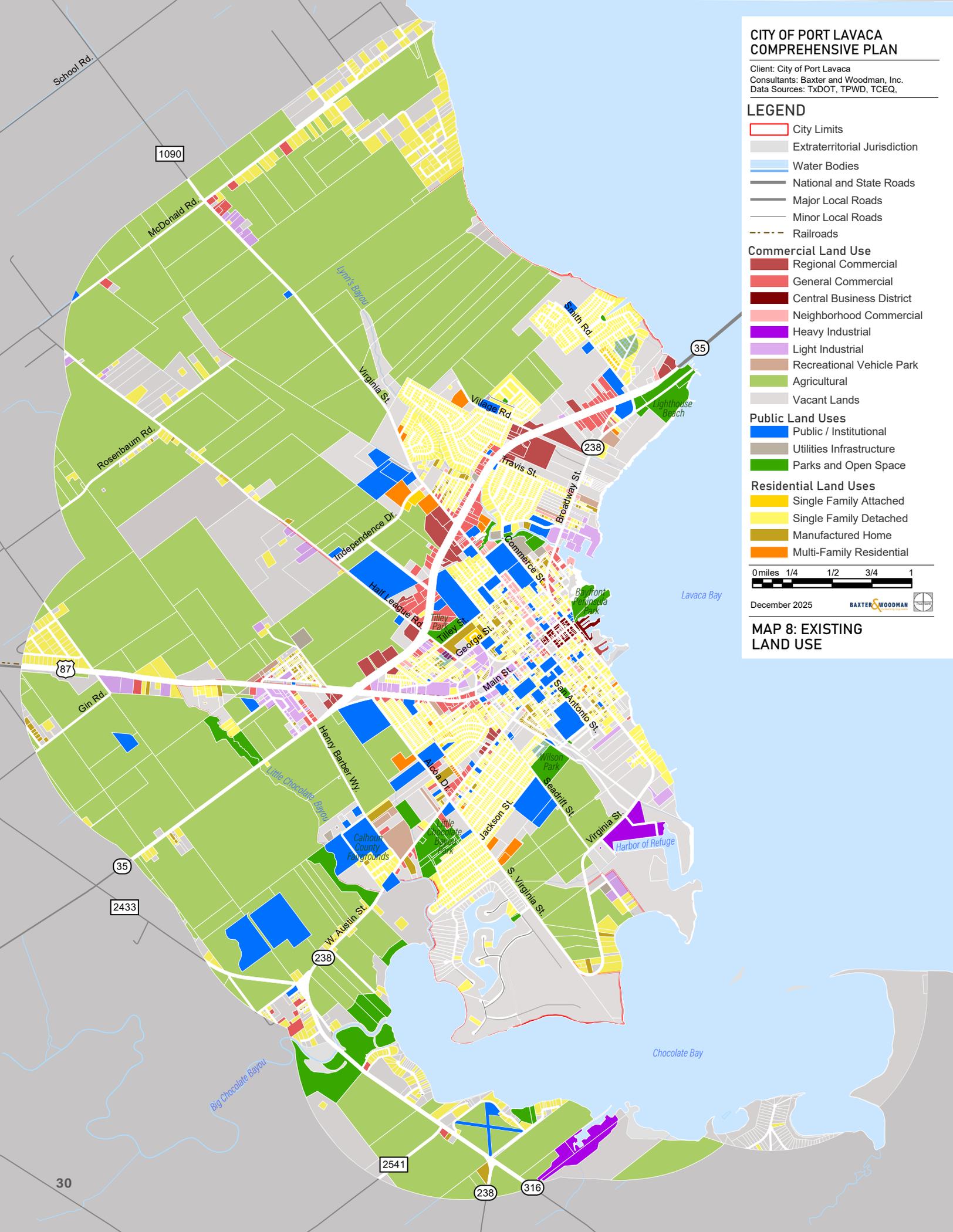
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Commercial Land Use**
- Regional Commercial
- General Commercial
- Central Business District
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Heavy Industrial
- Light Industrial
- Recreational Vehicle Park
- Agricultural
- Vacant Lands
- Public Land Uses**
- Public / Institutional
- Utilities Infrastructure
- Parks and Open Space
- Residential Land Uses**
- Single Family Attached
- Single Family Detached
- Manufactured Home
- Multi-Family Residential



December 2025



MAP 8: EXISTING LAND USE



LAND USE DESIGNATION TYPES

The dominant land use categories are Agricultural/Undeveloped Lands, Vacant Lands, and Residential, which together make up the majority of the Planning Area. Notably 20 percent of the land area is vacant, while other land uses each account for less than five percent of the total area. Port Lavaca's housing stock is about 85 percent detached single family homes, often organized in residential subdivisions. Manufactured homes are present in some neighborhoods alongside detached homes. North of SH 35, there are apartment buildings and attached single-family units, while South Virginia Street and areas south of Downtown contain scattered multi-family dwellings.

Commercial businesses are predominantly located along SH 35 with some additional clusters dispersed throughout the city. Industrial land is located on the far south side near the Harbor of Refuge. The ETJ remains largely rural, with most vacant land and scattered clusters of homes and businesses along major thoroughfares. Notably, half of the city's vacant land lies within municipal boundaries, including Downtown, residential areas in north and south Port Lavaca, and formerly industrial sites along Lavaca Bay. These vacancies highlight opportunities to expand residential and commercial development, and community amenities, to improve economic opportunities and enhance resident's quality of life.

■ Agricultural / Undeveloped (57%)

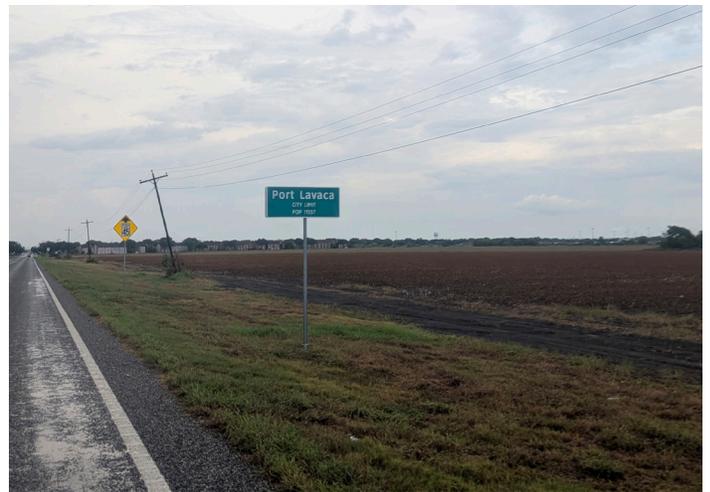
Agricultural and undeveloped lands encompass large tracts of open space, agricultural fields, and natural landscapes. Property types include farms, ranches and pastures, orchards, and undeveloped parcels of land. These areas primarily support agricultural purposes, including farming activities, livestock grazing, and horticulture, with farms focusing primarily on growing crops and ranches emphasizing the raising and herding of livestock.

Development Types:

- Farms
- Ranches and Pastures
- Orchards
- Undeveloped parcels

Characteristics:

- Large tracts of open space and natural landscapes
- Primarily used for farming, livestock grazing, and crop production



Agricultural property in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Vacant lands (20%) are typically smaller parcels without agricultural activities or built structures. These lands are likely to be developed based on surrounding development land types and future land use designations.

■ Residential Land Use (12%)

A diverse and appealing residential housing stock is essential for attracting residents to areas like Port Lavaca, where living options must align with varying life stages, from young professionals to retirees. Housing isn't just about shelter; it's the bedrock of local economic growth. Residential land uses exist in the context of urban, rural, and suburban. As businesses expand, they rely on a steady supply of workers, and those workers need places to live. Port Lavaca's residents drive demand for goods and services, which influences new economic growth.

Urban

Residential dwellings in an urban context, such as downtown, can be drastically different housing types from single family detached to single-attached or multi-family and multistory dwellings. Lots in urban environments can have smaller setbacks compared to suburban and rural lots. Generally housing units are more compact or their footprint is spread out over multiple floors because they have smaller parcels to build on.



Single Family Detached housing within Port Lavaca's "Urban" core
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Suburban

The Suburban land use classification applies to current and future residential developments and includes both detached single-family homes and attached residential housing units like townhomes and apartments. These areas generally attract families and residents seeking space, affordability, and accessibility to the urban core. These homes typically have larger lot sizes larger than urban homes, but smaller than rural homes; as well as accommodations for automobiles. Multi-family homes like apartments typically have fewer stories and units but compensate by having larger floor plans.

Suburban developments are smaller communities typically located on the outskirts of the city, sometimes between the urban and rural boundaries. Many suburban neighborhoods are organized as subdivisions, some supported by a homeowner's association (HOA) that pays for shared amenities like pools, clubhouses, and playgrounds. Residents here often commute to jobs in the city center or to employers in neighboring suburbs. Proximity to grocery stores and other conveniences can vary by subdivision but typically require driving from one's home to the destination.

Rural / Ranch

The Rural land use classification applies to parcels that currently exhibit, and are expected to retain, a distinctly rural character throughout this planning period. These areas are marked by generous open space and low-density activities, such as farming, ranching, large-lot residential development, and semi-natural landscapes. Appropriate land uses for these areas are agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and public/institutional uses. These characteristics are typically found on the outskirts of the city and within the City's ETJ. In the context of Port Lavaca, a little over half of the Planning Area is identified as Agricultural or Undeveloped.

To preserve their rural nature, development in these zones should follow guidelines such as:

- Applying substantial setbacks
- Designing thoroughfares with rural design features (like open drainage ditches, absence of sidewalks, and no curb-and-gutter treatments)

Business expansion requires a steady supply of workers, and those workers require places to live. Port Lavaca's residents drive demand for goods and services, which creates a thriving marketplace. A robust housing supply helps to accommodate this customer base, supporting not only business retention but fueling future expansion.



Suburban single family homes in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Suburban Single Family Detached homes in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Rural single family detached homes in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Rural single family detached homes in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Single Family Detached (10%)

A single-family detached home typically consists of a single one- or two-story housing unit located on its own parcel of land. It is not physically connected to other units and is designed for use by a single household. Single family detached residential parcels typically feature a private yard, a driveway, and a front or side facing garage. This type of housing varies depending on the rural, suburban context. For example, in a rural context a home may have a larger setback from the street frontage, garages may be detached, and the home may take on a character of a rural farmstead. In a suburban context houses are setback generally enough from the street frontage to accommodate at least one car parking in the driveway, outside of the garage (30 to 50 ft.); and located within subdivisions or planned unit development. Lot sizes vary from one-quarter to one-half acre. As will be discussed, a single family detached home in a more urban context, such as downtown, will likely have a cottage style with minimal street setbacks, rear garages, front porches, and are generally closer to other housing structures.

Development types:

- Many different styles (Ranch, Craftsman, Farmhouse, Modern, etc.)

Characteristics:

- Private yard space
- Garage/car port may be integrated into the façade of the house, detached, or located to the rear of the dwelling
- Lower number of units per acre: two to 14 dwelling units per acre

Siting Criteria:

- Ensure easy access to utilities and road network
- Meet lot and setback requirements outlined in the city's subdivision regulations and other development standards



Single family detached home in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Single Family Attached (0.2%)

Single-family-attached homes are residential units that share at least one exterior wall with a neighboring residential unit. This configuration enables greater housing density while maintaining a focus on single-household occupancy. These homes commonly take the form of duplexes (two homes), triplexes (three homes), quadraplexes (four homes), and townhomes, among other residential configurations. Due to their typically lower cost compared to detached single-family dwellings, they are often considered attractive options for first-time homebuyers or those seeking more affordable options. Additionally, they serve as a vital component of “Missing Middle Housing,” a category of housing that bridges the gap between single-family homes and large apartment complexes, providing increased densities while maintaining preexisting neighborhood and community character, and addressing the lifecycle needs of a diverse and growing population.

Development Types:

- Duplex, triplex, quadraplex
- Townhomes

Characteristics:

- Shares at least one exterior wall with neighboring unit
- Suburban Density: two to 10 units per acre
- Shared off-street parking (i.e., driveway and parking garage)
- Individual front doors integrated into a uniform and symmetrical facade



Single family attached housing in Port Lavaca.
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Siting Criteria:

- Proximity to mixed use amenities to ensure walkability

Multi-Family (0.4%)

Multi-family dwellings are residential buildings that contain four or more housing units, organized around central amenities (i.e., swimming pool, picnic areas) with surface or structured parking areas around the perimeter and residential units arranged on multiple floors. Units are typically accessed via shared hallways, elevators, or staircases. Rentable units are commonly referred to as “apartments,” while owner-occupied units may be classified as “condominiums” or “cooperatives.” These structures frequently include shared amenities, such as common entryways, parking areas, laundry facilities, and recreational spaces. Designed to support higher residential density, multi-family housing is most often found in urban and suburban environments where space is at a premium. Depending on community character and subdivision regulations, building layouts can range from low-rise (1-2 stories), mid-rise (3-4 stories), or high-rise (5 stories or higher) configurations.

Development Types:

- Apartments (mid-rise, high-rise apartments)
- Condominiums
- Mixed-use Developments
- Student housing
- Age-restricted communities

Characteristics:

- Four or more housing units arranged across multiple stories
- Access via shared hallway, elevator, or staircase
- Typically include shared laundry and recreational amenities



Villas at Independence in Port Lavaca.
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Apartments in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Manufactured Housing (0.9%)

Manufactured homes are prefabricated homes built in a factory that are then shipped to the site and installed. Efficient fabrication and inexpensive building materials make manufactured homes affordable for low to moderate income homebuyers. Their efficient production process results makes them affordable for more potential homebuyers. These units can be installed on leased land, private lots, or within designated manufactured home “parks,” which also include interior vehicular circulation, driveways, and other site amenities.

Development Types:

- Single, double, triple-wide prefabricated homes

Characteristics:

- Factory built construction
- Must meet federal safety and construction standards
- Permanent or semi-permanent installation

Siting criteria:

- Lot size and setback requirements
- Access to utilities



Manufactured homes at Park Plaza Mobile Home Park in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Recreational Vehicle, (RV) Parks (0.4%)

Similar to manufactured home parks, RV parks are designated areas where RVs can park and utilize amenities provided by the park. RV parks have different length-of-stay options ranging from overnight, seasonal, or long-term. These spaces can provide security for RVs as well as create a sense of community among travelers.

Development Types:

- Destination or seasonal parks
- Temporary or semi-permanent living

Characteristics:

- Parking surface area that can accommodate various sizes of RVs
- Back-in or pull-through sites
- Utility hookups for potable water, sanitary sewer (grey / black water on-site or dump station), electricity, and cable
- Presence of recreational amenities (including pools, playgrounds, and trails), restrooms, and open spaces

Siting Characteristics:

- Easy access to highways or major roads
- Access to water, sewer, and other necessary facilities



RV Park in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Commercial Business Types (5%)

Commercial businesses aren't a one-size-fits-all concept. In land use planning, they generally fall into two primary categories: retail and services.

Retail

These businesses focus on selling goods and commodities directly to the public. The customer shopping experience within the business is central to their operation. Retail generates high vehicle traffic, which makes access and visibility critical factors that influence the location of retail uses.

Services

Service-oriented businesses offer a broad array of professional services including law, healthcare, banking, consulting, real estate, and more. Unlike retail establishments, these businesses usually involve less in-person interaction with customers, as many services can be accessed remotely. When selecting a location, convenience for patrons is a primary consideration

Regional Commercial (1%)

Regional commercial landuses host larger, big-box (50,000 sq. ft or more) anchor stores in a shopping center with smaller commercial/retail businesses. This diverse mix of retail usually includes national and international franchises alongside smaller businesses and services. Their primary function is to anchor larger supermarket and commercial chains with enough parking either through expansive lots or structured parking.

Development Types:

- Anchor big box stores
- Satellite retailers, services, and restaurants
- Entertainment venues, such as movie theaters and arcades



Calhoun Plaza with anchor stores.
Source: Baxter & Woodman

General Commercial (1%)

General commercial land uses are hubs that host a diverse mix of retail, dining, and entertainment establishments serving both local residents and visitors. These areas typically include property types such as strip malls, shopping centers, and restaurants. Their primary function is to offer a wide range of goods and services that contribute to a community's economic vitality and draw consumers from beyond the immediate vicinity. Common characteristics of general commercial land use designations include expansive surface parking areas, significant traffic volumes, and location along major thoroughfares and intersections.

Development Types:

- Shopping centers/strip malls
- Restaurants with high customer capacity, full-service kitchens, and equipped to handle large quantities of food

Characteristics:

- Large parking lots and high traffic volumes
- Serves local and regional community
- Located along major thoroughfares

Siting Criteria:

- Greater accessibility (located along major roads, public transit, parking)
- Proximity to residential neighborhoods, employment hubs, and areas with strong retail demand
- Sites with existing utilities and roadway capacity to support a new business
- Compatibility with surrounding land uses
- Compliance with noise, signage, and lighting regulations.



Retail and restaurant chains along north SH 35
Source: Baxter & Woodman



Retail and restaurant chains along north SH 35
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Neighborhood Commercial (0.3%)

Neighborhood commercial land uses, either small-scale, individual units, or aggregated in clusters (strip centers), are designed to serve the everyday needs of nearby residents. Examples of these types of businesses include small convenience grocery stores, coffee shops, pharmacies, hair salons/barber shops, and laundromats.

Development Types:

- Small-scale retail
- Service oriented retail

Characteristics:

- On-street and off-street parking options
- Accessible and convenient for nearby residents

Siting Criteria:

- Close proximity to neighborhoods and other population centers
- Typically one-half-acre or smaller
- Pedestrian and bike access is preferable



Lavaca BBQ on North Virginia Street
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Neighborhood commercial businesses along North Virginia Street
Source: Baxter & Woodman

Central Business District (0.2%)

The Downtown or Central Business District (CBD) serves as the commercial and cultural core of Port Lavaca. It features a blend of historic architecture, professional offices, boutique retail shops, dining establishments, and cultural venues. This district functions as the city's central hub for business, government, and community life. CBDs can also be great places to host community events and social gatherings; and is typically considered the community's "living room," the space where local residents bring out-of-town guests and visiting family members.

Development Types:

- Historic buildings
- Local restaurants and boutique shops
- Cultural institutions

Characteristics:

- Commercial and cultural hub
- Vibrant atmosphere and diverse architecture
- Center for business, government, and social activities
- Minimal setbacks from the street; wide sidewalks, suitable for petite dining; on-street parking
- Off-street parking to the rear of buildings or in a centrally-located parking structure

Siting Criteria:

- Positioned in the historical city center
- High density development
- High land value
- Location of corporate business headquarters, banks, and hotels
- Mixed-use development that may include residential, often on upper floors
- Regulations on building height, signage, and land use to manage congestion



Downtown Port Lavaca, Main Street businesses
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Downtown Port Lavaca, Virginia Street businesses
Source: Baxter and Woodman



Downtown Port Lavaca, Main Street businesses
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Industrial (2%)

Industrial land uses play a vital role in shaping Port Lavaca's future. Local industry generates employment, which attracts new residents to the city. In turn, this growing population fuels the demand for housing and creates a thriving market for commercial development. Beyond serving as economic engines, industry also contributes significantly to the city's tax base, funding essential government services and infrastructure.

Industrial areas often have the highest utility needs compared to other land uses. As such, planning for these zones takes into account several key factors:

- Ensuring existing businesses have space to expand their operations.
- Mitigating the impacts of environmental nuisance (e.g., noise, odor, particulate emissions and traffic conflicts with nonindustrial land uses).
- Supporting employee commuting and facilitating multi-modal connections for importing and exporting raw and finished materials.
- Providing high-quality municipal services with consistent supply and infrastructure readiness



Industrial business in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

To support thoughtful planning and land use, two subcategories- Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial- are used to differentiate the level and intensity of industrial activities in the area. This distinction helps guide land use decisions and infrastructure investment based on operational demands and potential impacts.

Light Industrial (1%)

The light industrial land use designation is characterized by fabrication operations, finished product warehousing and distribution. Unlike heavy industry, light industrial activities produce minimal environmental nuisance, such as air and noise pollution, light trespass, and vibration. Examples of light industrial businesses currently in Port Lavaca include concrete suppliers, construction/farm equipment rental, and assembly plants. While business parks do not currently exist in Port Lavaca, they can be useful for housing multiple commercial enterprises in one complex. Business parks typically host office buildings, light industrial facilities, and warehouses and provide amenities like controlled access, parking, conference areas, and sometimes cafeteria or recreational areas. Existing light industrial businesses in Port Lavaca could be integrated into these business parks to share amenities, network, and create a cleaner image for the city.

Development Types:

- Large equipment rental
- Assembly plants
- Light manufacturing- machinery is used to perform tasks like cutting, shape, and assembling components
- Storage and warehousing facilities

Characteristics:

- Produces minimal pollution and noise
- Compatible with adjacent commercial/residential land uses

Siting Criteria:

- Located away from homes or have buffers to create space between homes
- Low-impact operations
- Access to utilities, freight routes, and parking
- Standard business hours and regulations on safety and aesthetics to reduce disruption to surrounding area



Port Lavaca Warehouse
Source: Republic Commercial Land and Brokerage (placeholder)

Heavy Industrial (0.6%)

Heavy industrial areas are designated for more intensive industrial activities that have high land and infrastructure requirements. Property types for this land use include factories, processing plants, and heavy manufacturing of raw materials. Due to the risk of environmental pollution associated with industrial operations, heavy industrial land use designations are typically not compatible with and are located far from residential and commercial areas to minimize environmental and public health impacts. Historically, heavy industrial uses in the Calhoun County have included petroleum manufacturing, such as in Formosa Plastics in nearby Point Comfort. The purpose of heavy industrial is to support the production and refinement of raw materials and energy at high capacity which, in turn, supports regional and national economic activity.

Development Types:

- Factories and processing plants
- Sand and gravel open pit mining operations
- Oil refineries
- Transportation and logistics facilities

Characteristics:

- High land and infrastructure requirements
- High environmental impact
- Employs a large number of people

Siting Criteria:

- Remote location
- Suitable for heavy industrial activities; large site and flexible design.
- Robust access to freight routes, utilities, and rail or port facilities
- Ability to institute restricted access and safety buffers



Formosa petrochemical plant in Point Comfort (placeholder)
Source: Julie Demansky

Public / Institutional (3%)

This land use designation includes properties dedicated to government operations, education, healthcare, and community services. Examples include municipal governmental facilities, public libraries, schools, hospitals, churches, and community centers. Their primary role is to deliver essential services and resources that support residents' needs. By fostering access to knowledge, health, and civic engagement, these areas play a crucial role in enhancing the well-being and cohesion of the community.

Development Types:

- Government buildings including city hall, libraries
- Schools
- Hospitals, community centers, nursing facilities

Characteristics:

- Provides essential services for residents
- Supports education, community well-being, and functionality.

Siting Criteria:

- Easy access for public to access
- Compatible with nearby land uses
- Suitable land size and access to infrastructure
- Safe and secure areas
- Prioritizes area with greatest public need



Port Lavaca Police Department
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Parks and Open Space (2%)

Parks and Open Space land use designation is intended to preserve natural landscapes while offering recreational opportunities that promote public health, community engagement, and environmental sustainability. Facilities within these land uses are publicly accessible and designed to support leisure, physical activity, and social interaction. Beyond their visual appeal, these spaces provide critical environmental benefits including helping to manage stormwater runoff, mitigating urban heat island effects, and protecting native habitats and species. Their role in enhancing both ecological and community well-being makes parks essential infrastructure within a community.

Development Types:

- Public parks, nature reserves, greenbelts
- Playgrounds, sports fields, walking/biking trails, community gardens

Characteristics:

- Promotes outdoor recreation through public facilities
- Enhances quality of life
- Positive environmental impacts
- Highly programmed spaces in urban context.
- Passive/unprogrammed natural spaces are predominant in rural parks

Siting Criteria:

- Accessible and connected to neighborhoods for all ages
- Supports biodiversity and native habitat restoration
- Suitable for stormwater management in flood-prone areas

- Prioritizes underserved neighborhoods lacking parks or with high impervious surfaces
- Adequate land availability and compatibility with community
- Preserves landmarks and significant landscapes



Port Lavaca wetlands
Source: Baxter and Woodman

PUBLIC LANDS, FACILITIES, AND SERVICES

Public lands, facilities, and services are foundational to a city's livability and long-term resilience. They provide residents with access to recreational spaces, educational resources, and vital public services that support daily life. From parks and libraries to community centers and public safety buildings, these shared assets promote health, social connection, equity, and economic vitality. Thoughtful investment and ongoing maintenance help cities strengthen their identity, protect environmental resources, and foster inclusive environments where all residents can thrive. To ensure equitable access, every neighborhood should be reasonably served by community spaces such as schools, parks, and libraries. City offices and facilities should be centrally located and easily accessible to improve operational efficiency and convenience for residents. Emergency response services, which include fire stations, police departments, and emergency medical services (EMS), should be strategically distributed throughout the community to ensure rapid response times. This not only enhances public safety but can also influence insurance rates for both the city and its residents. Port Lavaca's stock of lands, facilities, and services are referenced in Map 9, *Public Lands*.

City and County Offices and Services

The City of Port Lavaca is home to a variety of City and Calhoun County government buildings. Port Lavaca's major hub for municipal and county services is located near Downtown, between Mahan Street and Austin Street. Services in this zone include City Hall, Department of Public Works, the Police Department, County Courthouse, Museum, and Library. Outside of this cluster of governmental buildings, there are two fire stations, serving the north and south side of the City. Port Lavaca Animal Control and Calhoun County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are both located next to the Calhoun County Fairgrounds on the west side of Henry Barber Way. The Bauer Community Center is located next to Lighthouse Beach Park along SH 238. Additional city owned land is located along the coast next to Lighthouse Beach Park, surrounding Bayfront Peninsula Park, and along the Harbor of Refuge.

Calhoun County Independent School District

Calhoun County Independent School District (CCISD) provides K-12 education for several regional municipalities including Port Lavaca, Point Comfort, Port O'Connor, Magnolia Beach, and Seadrift. Within Port Lavaca, there are five CCISD school properties: Calhoun High School, Hope High School, Travis Middle School, HJM Elementary, and Jackson Roosevelt Elementary; and an additional property for Port Lavaca Special Services.

Other Public Lands and Institutions

Other institutions within Port Lavaca City Limits are religious institutions which are scattered throughout the city, and a small presence of daycares, nonprofit buildings, private schools, including the Our Lady Of The Gulf Catholic School.

Health Services

Memorial Medical Center is the local hospital in Port Lavaca. The medical campus includes a 24-Hour Emergency Room and Heliport. Additional medical clinics and services including dentists, physical therapy clinics, and a chiropractor. These additional health providers are present and generally congregate around the North Central portion of the city. NextCare Urgent Care, located along SH 35 north of Half League Road, provides urgent care services to the area. Calhoun County EMS provides ambulance services up to throughout Calhoun County.



Memorial Medical Center campus
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Senior Facilities

There are also two Nursing and Rehabilitation facilities north of SH 35. Lavaca Bay Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is on Virginia Street and Port Lavaca Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is on Village Road. Trinity Shores of Port Lavaca is an assisted living facility located just north of Lavaca Bay Nursing. The non-profit Calhoun County Senior Citizens Association -located at Austin Street and Alcola Drive- also helps ensure that the local senior community has access to transportation, meals, fitness, and companionship.

Public Facilities Key

Calhoun County (CCISD) Property

- 1 Calhoun High School
- 2 HJM Elementary
- 3 Hope High School
- 4 Jackson Roosevelt Elementary School
- 5 Travis Middle School

City, County, State Facilities

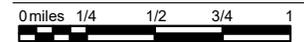
- 6 Port Lavaca Fire Department
- 7 Port Lavaca Fire Station
- 8 Port Lavaca City Hall
- 8 Port Lavaca Finance Office
- 8 Port Lavaca Building Department
- 8 Port Lavaca Police Department
- 9 Calhoun County Emergency Medical Services
- 10 Calhoun County Library
- 11 Calhoun County Courthouse
- 11 Calhoun County Tax Assessor
- 11 Calhoun County Jail
- 12 Calhoun County Museum
- 12 Texas Department of Public Safety
- 13 Calhoun County Appraisal District
- 13 Calhoun County Emergency Communications District
- 14 Texas General Land Office
- 15 Bauer Community Center
- 16 Port Lavaca Maintenance Facility
- 17 United States Postal Service
- 18 Port Lavaca Public Works

CITY OF PORT LAVACA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Client: City of Port Lavaca
 Consultants: Baxter and Woodman, Inc.
 Data Sources: TxDOT, TPWD, TCEQ.

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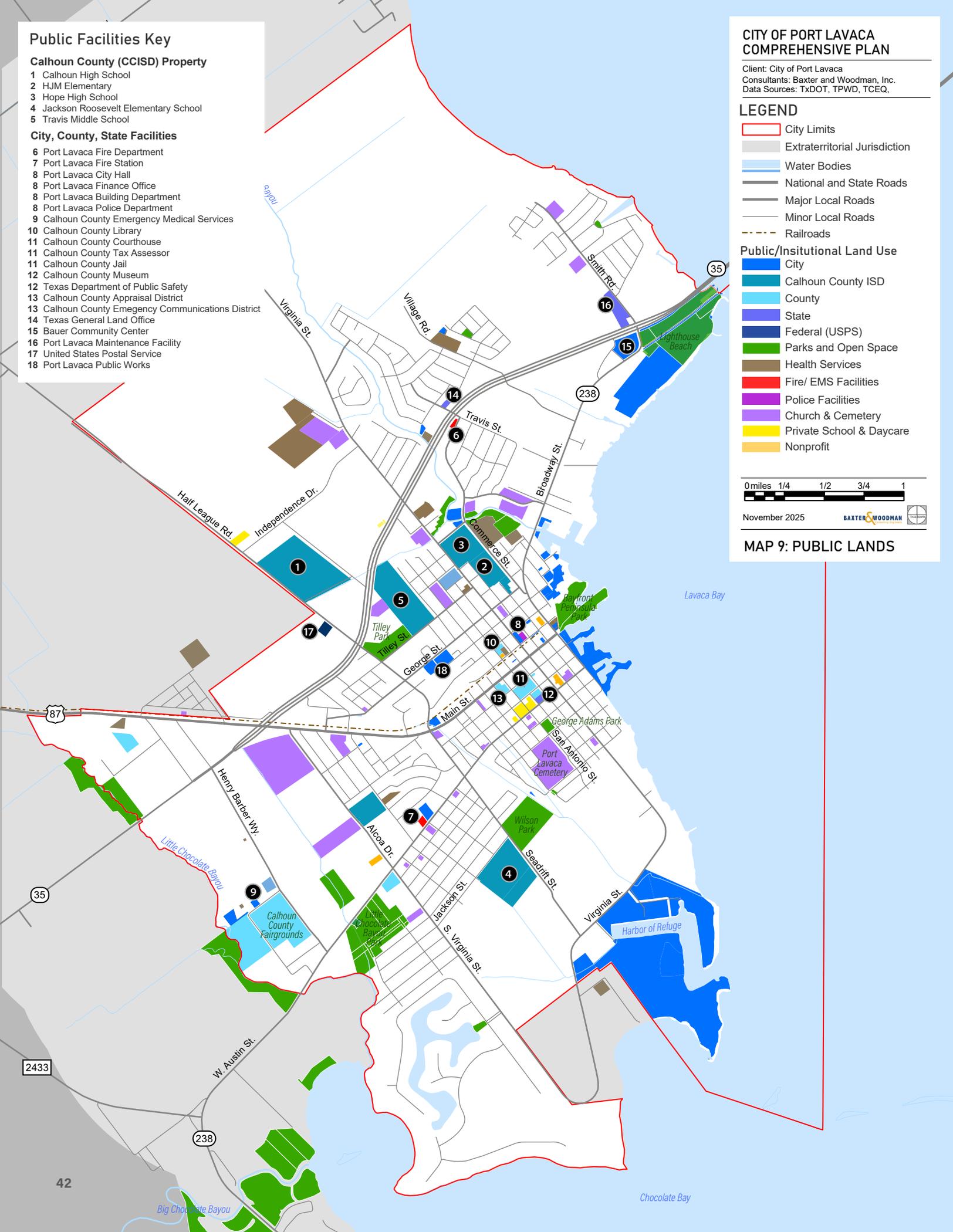
- City Limits
 - Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
 - Water Bodies
 - National and State Roads
 - Major Local Roads
 - Minor Local Roads
 - Railroads
- ### Public/Institutional Land Use
- City
 - Calhoun County ISD
 - County
 - State
 - Federal (USPS)
 - Parks and Open Space
 - Health Services
 - Fire/ EMS Facilities
 - Police Facilities
 - Church & Cemetery
 - Private School & Daycare
 - Nonprofit



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MAP 9: PUBLIC LANDS



HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The housing stock in Port Lavaca reflects a mix of residential types (depicted in Map 10, *Housing Typology and Developments*) shaped by the city’s coastal location, economic history, and evolving community needs. This section provides an in-depth analysis of housing typology, physical conditions, and market characteristics within the City of Port Lavaca and its surrounding planning area. It explores the range of housing types, price points, and structural features, while also identifying key trends that influence affordability, demand, and neighborhood stability.

The methodology used to compile this data includes correspondence with local realtors, site visits, and analysis of U.S. Census housing data. These sources offer insight into the age and condition of the existing housing stock (depicted in Figure 5A, *Existing Housing Typologies in Port Lavaca and ETJ*), buyer preferences, and current market dynamics. Together, this information presents a comprehensive snapshot of Port Lavaca’s residential landscape and serves as a foundation for



Single-Family Detached



Single-Family Attached



Multi-Family



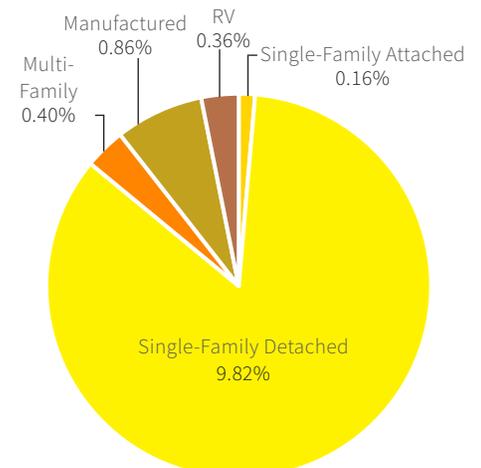
Manufactured Home



Recreational Vehicle

Figure 5A, Existing Housing Typologies in Port Lavaca Local and ETJ

Housing Typology	Number of Units	Acres	Percentage of Port Lavaca's Land Use (%)
Single-Family Detached	3,671	1,236.09	9.82
Single-Family Attached	47	20.02	0.16
Multi-Family	32	50.23	0.40
Manufactured Homes	365	108.61	0.86
Recreational Vehicle	12	45.85	0.36
TOTAL	4,127	1,460.80	11.61



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- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- National and State Roads
- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads

- ### Residential Land Uses
- Single Family Attached
 - Single Family Detached
 - Manufactured Home
 - Multi-Family Residential

- ### New and Historic Neighborhoods
- New Developments
 - Historic Neighborhood



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MAP 10: HOUSING TYPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENTS



Housing Types

Port Lavaca’s housing stock is relatively limited in diversity, with most residential options concentrated in traditional single-family homes. This section provides an overview of the primary housing typologies found within the city and its planning area, including single-family detached and attached homes, multi-family dwellings, manufactured homes, and recreational vehicle (RV) parks. Each typology is described in terms of its physical characteristics, development patterns, and siting criteria.

Single Family Detached Homes

Single-family homes in Port Lavaca are stand-alone residences typically characterized by private yards and may have a garage or carport. These homes generally range in price from 75,000 to 150,000 for older homes with newer homes selling in the lower \$300,000. The overall median price for single-family homes is around \$166,000. These dwellings typically fall between 1,200 and 2,500 square feet, situated on lots ranging from 0.25 to 0.5 acres. Most homes feature three to four bedrooms and two to three bathrooms, and are commonly built as one- or two-story structures.

Based on HAR listings, typical monthly costs for single-family detached homes, which include mortgage, property taxes, and insurance, are estimated to range from \$1,100 to \$1,600, depending on the purchase price and financing terms.



Single family style home
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Manufactured Homes

Manufactured homes are a more affordable housing option, with prices ranging from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and an average price of \$150,000. Rentals in Port Lavaca are around \$400 to \$800 per month. Prefabricated homes typically offer 1,000 to 1,500 sq ft of living space, situated on 0.1 to 0.5 acres of land. Manufactured homes typically have two to three bedrooms and two bathrooms, with single-story layouts. Port Lavaca manufactured homes exist within Mobile Home Parks or amongst single family homes in residential areas.

Townhomes

Townhomes, or multi-family units with shared walls but separate entrances, are more compact than single-family homes but offer individual ownership. Generally, these styles of homes have two to three bedrooms and three to four bathrooms. Rent for units in a newer building ranges around \$1,000 to \$1,500, and whole buildings

Duplexes

Duplexes are a versatile housing option with prices around 200,000 to 250,000 for both units combined. These properties typically offer between 2,000 and 3,000 sq ft of living space and are situated on lots ranging from 0.1 to 0.25 acres. Each unit generally features two to three bedrooms and one to two bathrooms, designed to accommodate families or tenants seeking independent living arrangements within a shared structure. Monthly rents for duplexes are between \$1,000 and \$1,500.



Duplex in Port Lavaca
Source: Zillow (placeholder)

Multi-family Residential / Apartments

Multi-family residential properties in Port Lavaca primarily consist of apartment complexes, which provide rental housing options with shared amenities. Rental rates typically range from \$800 to \$1,500 per month, offering affordability for a variety of households. Most available apartments are located in older buildings.



Apartment building in Port Lavaca
Source: Zillow (placeholder)

Housing Conditions

Site visits across Port Lavaca reveal a wide range of physical housing conditions that reflect both environmental vulnerability and economic challenges. A noticeable number of homes have boarded-up windows, though it was often unclear whether these were installed for storm preparedness, to secure vacant properties, or to cover broken windows. Regardless of the reason, these visual cues contribute to a perception of neglect or crime, which can deter potential homebuyers and reinforce stigmas about specific neighborhoods.



Home in Port Lavaca with boarded up windows
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Beyond boarded windows, many homes exhibited visible signs of deterioration, including peeling paint, damaged siding, sagging roofs, and other structural deficiencies. These conditions suggest deferred maintenance, likely stemming from limited household income, aging ownership, or absentee landlords. Port Lavaca's aging housing inventory, much of which was built between the 1950s and 1980s, increases the likelihood of future structural issues and costly repairs. Without intervention, the number of homes in disrepair is likely to grow. The city also has a significant stock of manufactured homes, which are particularly vulnerable to coastal weather conditions. Exposure to high winds, salt air corrosion, and flooding accelerates wear and tear, which underscores the need for resilient housing solutions.



Older manufactured homes
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Addressing these challenges will require a coordinated approach that includes housing rehabilitation programs, code enforcement, and community investment. Strategic partnerships with organizations like Clean Coast Texas, along with targeted use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), could help property owners fund repairs, improve curb appeal, and restore neighborhood confidence.

Market Characteristics:

According to data from local realtors and census housing surveys, Port Lavaca is currently facing a housing shortage. This imbalance is driving up prices for more desirable homes and pushing residents seeking affordable options toward neighboring communities like Victoria. Realtors report that most buyers are searching for homes in the low \$300,000 range, but the existing housing stock offers limited inventory at that price point. The average rent for a three bedroom home in Port Lavaca is around \$1,900

There is a strong demand for both starter homes for permanent residents and temporary housing for contract workers, especially those employed in the region's industrial and coastal sectors. Expanding the supply of new homes would help balance the market, provide more options for buyers, and support workforce stability

Conclusion

Port Lavaca's housing landscape presents a complex mix of challenges and opportunities that are central to shaping the city's future growth and livability. A growing housing shortage is driving up prices and limiting access to affordable options, particularly for first-time buyers and lower-income households. Addressing these dual pressures will require a coordinated strategy that combines housing rehabilitation, code enforcement, and new residential development. By investing in both the preservation of existing homes and the development of new housing options, Port Lavaca can foster a more inclusive, resilient, and economically vibrant community.

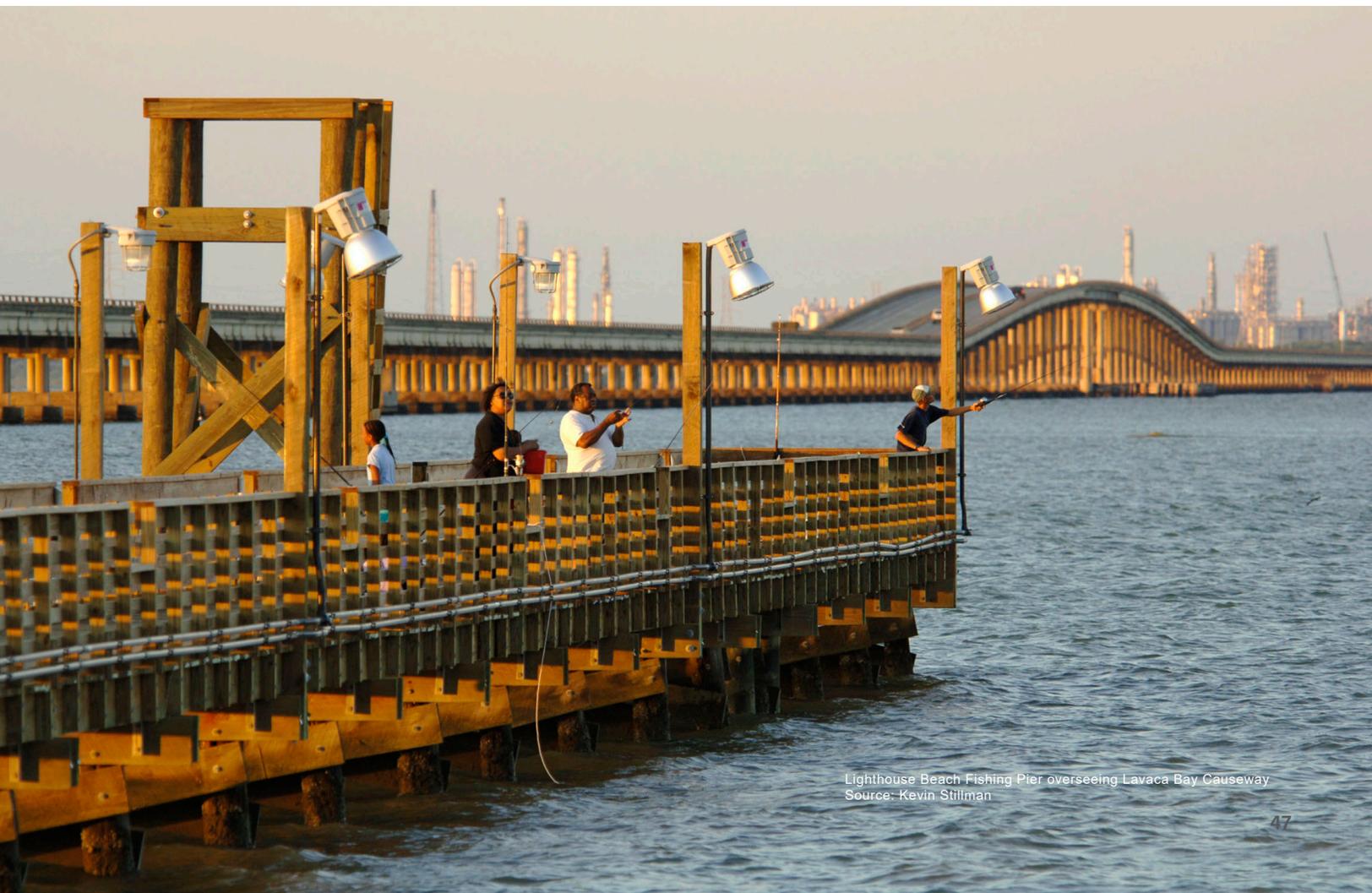
RESILIENCE

What is a Resilient City?

The Resilient Cities Network defines Urban Resilience as, “the capacity of a city’s systems, businesses, institutions, communities, and individuals to survive, adapt, and thrive, no matter what chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.” Acute shocks include sudden natural disasters like weather events; and chronic stresses include long-term factors like aging infrastructure, economic instability, drought, and factors related to climate change, like sea level rise. This allows for cities not only to “bounce back” but also plan and build strong and flexible municipal systems, communities, and environments that can thrive and evolve to face new challenges. This involves strengthening infrastructure, diversifying economies, ensuring vulnerable populations are protected and supported. Resiliency is especially important for coastal cities like Port Lavaca, where threats such as sea level rise and extreme weather events pose increasing risks to life and property. By factoring-in resilience into shaping land use, transportation, environmental policies and emergency management, cities can reduce long-term costs related to disaster recovery efforts, maintenance, insurance premiums, energy costs, and economic disruption.

The Climate Resiliency Report, prepared by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Allstate, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, utilized models that simulated disasters to see impacts on economic losses due to job loss, population decline, and economic activity. The models found that every dollar spent on preparing for disasters saves seven dollars in economic costs for the community. The results also noted that investments in resilience and preparedness can benefit communities by creating more jobs and encouraging community growth. So, while a city can still encounter loss during a major event, strengthening the city can at least reduce the number of losses and make it easier to get back on track.

The first step in building a resilient city is looking at its capacities and underlying risk factors. This emphasizes where priorities should be shifted to in order to protect the community, economy, and infrastructure. Adopting zoning, land-use practices, and building codes can prevent or reduce the amount of damage or disruption after a major event.



Lighthouse Beach Fishing Pier overseeing Lavaca Bay Causeway
Source: Kevin Stillman

Port Lavaca's Resilience Challenges

Port Lavaca faces several localized risk factors that heighten its vulnerability to climate-related impacts and infrastructure stress. Aging infrastructure, particularly water and wastewater systems, poses long-term reliability and service challenges. Residential areas that utilize septic systems are vulnerable to groundwater contamination if the area floods or there is a system failure. Coastal properties and infrastructure are also at risk from flooding, especially from storm surge. Damage to these areas can be a public safety concern. Redfish Retreat is at even more elevated risk as the entire neighborhood is on septic and located partially in the 500-year flood plain. Risks like these can be addressed through targeted investment for updated infrastructure, improved home-building policies, and environmental restoration of coastal and wetlands.

Hazard mitigation is a proactive approach to reducing the long-term risks posed by natural disasters and climate-related events. For Port Lavaca, this means identifying vulnerabilities in advance and investing in strategies that lessen the impact of flooding, storm surge, and infrastructure failure. Effective hazard mitigation not only protects lives and property but also lowers recovery costs and strengthens community resilience.

Key actions for Port Lavaca include:

- Managing floodplains
- Upgrading infrastructure
- Restoring coastal and wetland buffers
- Enforcing resilient building codes
- Integrating emergency preparedness

These proactive measures provide a framework for addressing Port Lavaca's most pressing vulnerabilities, beginning with its aging infrastructure.

Aging Infrastructure

Aging infrastructure is at an increased risk of failure because it is more prone to breaking down, especially when subjected to extreme wind and water inundation. These failures lead to a disruption in services which can cut off essential services, endanger public health and safety, and delay emergency response times. Old, outdated infrastructure also may not meet current standards to meet capacity for current demands and may not be compatible with current and future technology. Updated infrastructure should also consider if the location of the trunk and network is ideal and if these facilities need to be above or below ground.

Stormwater Management Systems

Effective stormwater management is essential for strengthening urban resilience and protecting communities from flooding. In Port Lavaca, which serves as a primary flow destination for the county, insufficient system capacity can quickly overwhelm infrastructure and inundate the city. To reduce these risks, culverts must be kept clear of debris through regular cleanouts to ensure water can flow, utilize gravity-driven pumps when possible because they do not require fuel, expand channels or improve grading to optimize water flow. Green stormwater techniques employ nature-based solutions, such as expanding native vegetation and creating permeable spaces, to help water directly absorb into the ground. Existing parkland and stormwater drainage are depicted in Map 11, *Parks and Green Space*. Beyond stormwater, wastewater and septic systems also present long-term challenges for resilience.



Houston Power Lines
Source: Houston Chronicle



Stormdrain in San Antonio, TX
Source: Joint Base San Antonio

Prevalence of Homes on Septic

For example, in the Redfish Retreat residential subdivision, all homes rely on septic systems and the subdivision is largely vacant. This area is a missed opportunity for preservation of wetlands since that area is low-lying and partially in a mapped flood zone, and the developer was not required to provide a connection to the main sewer network. While the septic tanks do have an alarm system and contingency space if they reach a minimum capacity, these systems are not sustainable in the long term because the septic tanks need to be managed independently from the main sewer network.

Impact of Sea Level Rise on Coastal Property and Infrastructure

The slightest rise in sea level can cause storm surge to travel further inland during a storm. Much of Port Lavaca's heavy industrial properties are located on the coast along Lavaca Bay. These brownfield areas could contaminate groundwater and other bodies of water if there were a major flooding event. Additionally, roads, docks, and utilities along the coast could be compromised by repeated saltwater exposure and flooding.

Older Structures and Land Uses

Older homes and buildings may not meet modern building codes for winds and flooding, which makes them more susceptible to damage. Older buildings are also less energy efficient. Retrofitting these buildings can preserve historical and culturally significant buildings for the future and maintain community identity. Newer, manufactured home sites can be more resilient than traditionally built homes, while older manufactured or mobile homes may be more at risk.



Blue Building in Port Lavaca
Source: Baxter and Woodman

Season and Climatic Events

The *Calhoun County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan* identifies several seasonal and climatic events as potential risks for Calhoun County, Texas:

Hurricanes: The region faces at least one hurricane threat each year. Tropical systems bring heavy rainfall, high winds, storm surge, and can spawn tornadoes.

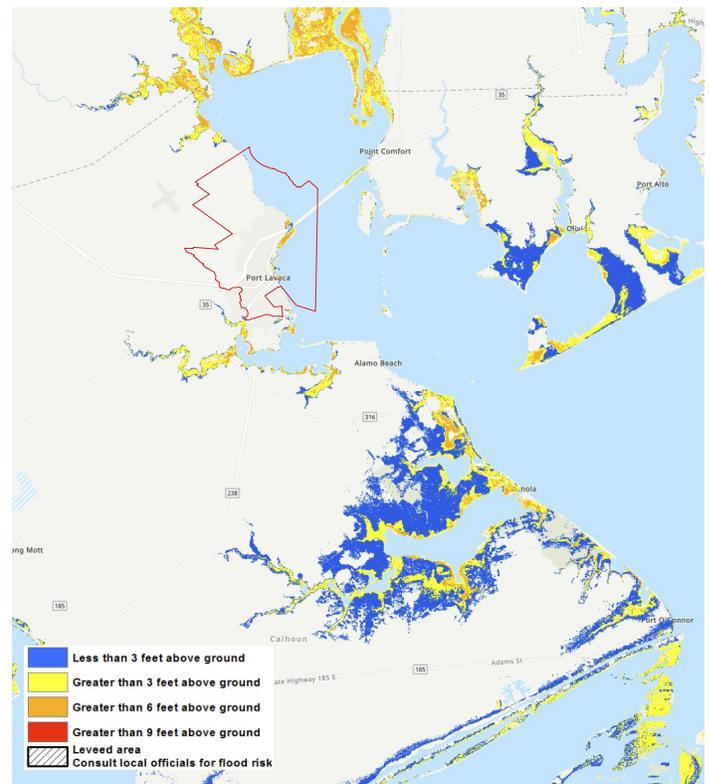
Extreme Heat: Excessive summer heat events are likely to occur annually. Extreme heat poses risks to human health and can damage agriculture and infrastructure.

Droughts: According to the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDS), current conditions in Port Lavaca are classified as “Abnormally Dry,” signaling a potential risk for future drought.

Wildfires: The probability of wildfires increases during drought and extreme heat. The U.S. Forest Service identifies a moderate wildfire risk in Port Lavaca, with surrounding Calhoun County facing higher risk. Beyond property damage, wildfire smoke can infiltrate homes, causing additional losses and health hazards.

Wind Storms:

Severe windstorms are common in Port Lavaca and neighboring communities such as Seadrift and Point Comfort. Calhoun County has a 77 percent chance of experiencing a severe windstorm each year.



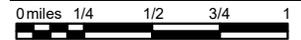
Storm surge risk map
Source: National Hurricane Center, Texas Parks & Wildlife

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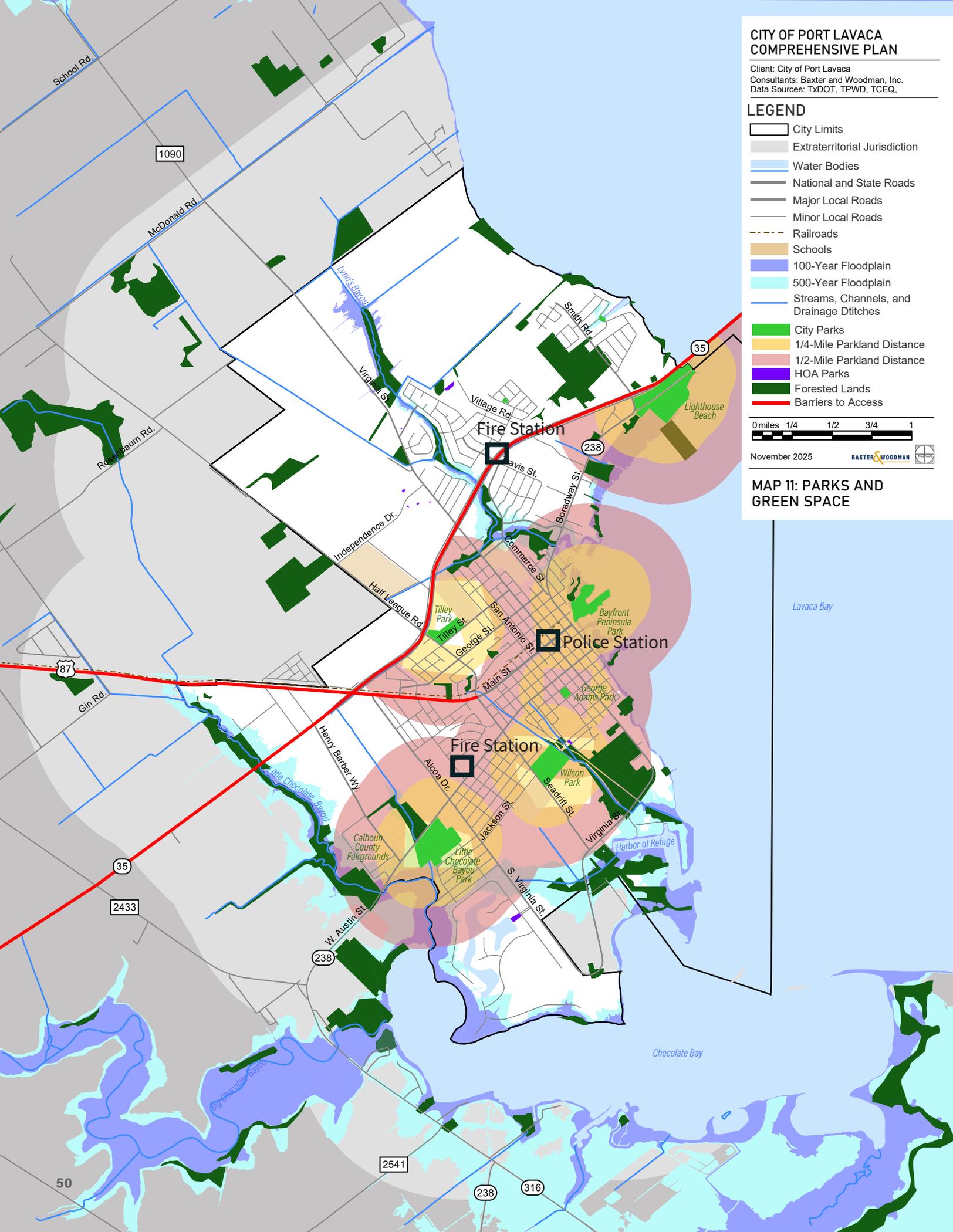
-  City Limits
-  Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
-  Water Bodies
-  National and State Roads
-  Major Local Roads
-  Minor Local Roads
-  Railroads
-  Schools
-  100-Year Floodplain
-  500-Year Floodplain
-  Streams, Channels, and Drainage Ditches
-  City Parks
-  1/4-Mile Parkland Distance
-  1/2-Mile Parkland Distance
-  HOA Parks
-  Forested Lands
-  Barriers to Access



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MAP 11: PARKS AND GREEN SPACE



ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

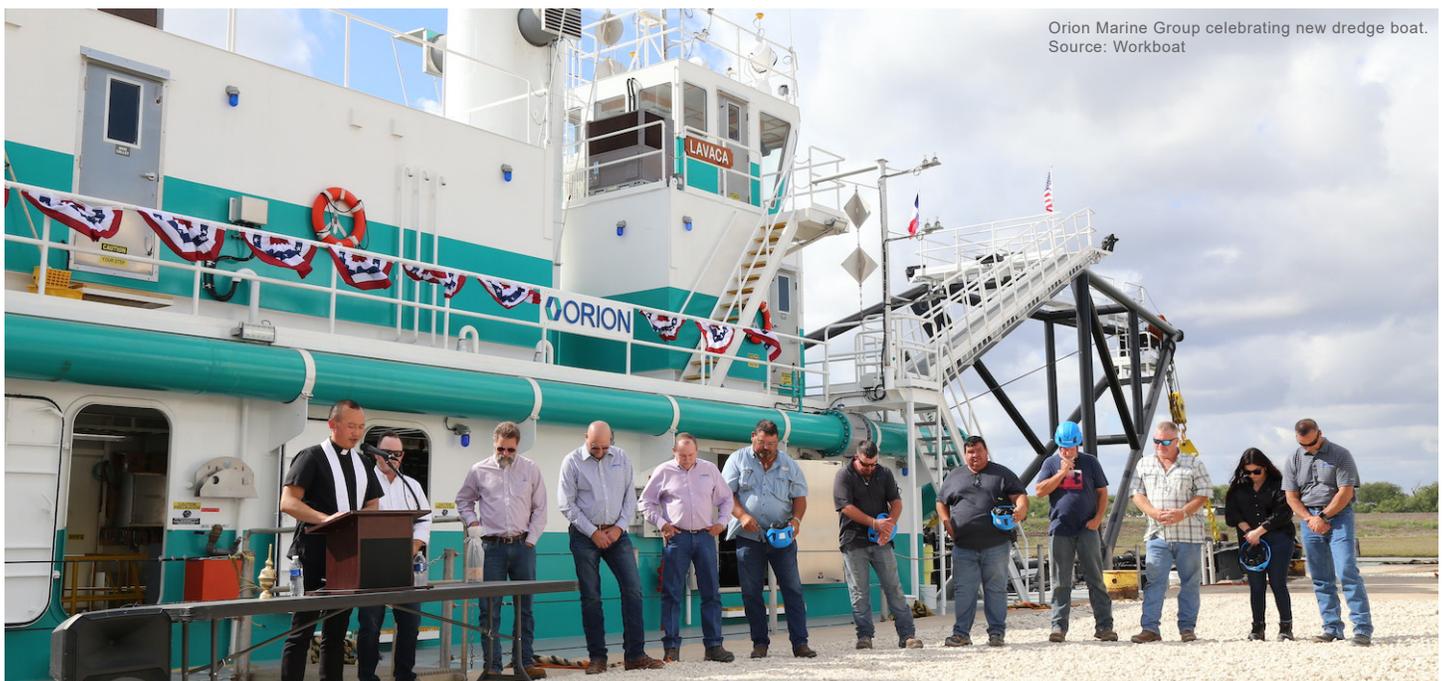
Port Lavaca’s workforce is shaped by a blend of heavy industry, public service, and essential community providers. The city’s position on the Texas Gulf Coast has attracted large petrochemical and plastics manufacturers that anchor the regional economy, while schools, healthcare facilities, and local government ensure stability and everyday support for residents. Retail and marine construction further diversify employment opportunities, reflecting both Port Lavaca’s industrial strength and its role as a service hub for Calhoun County.

MAJOR EMPLOYERS

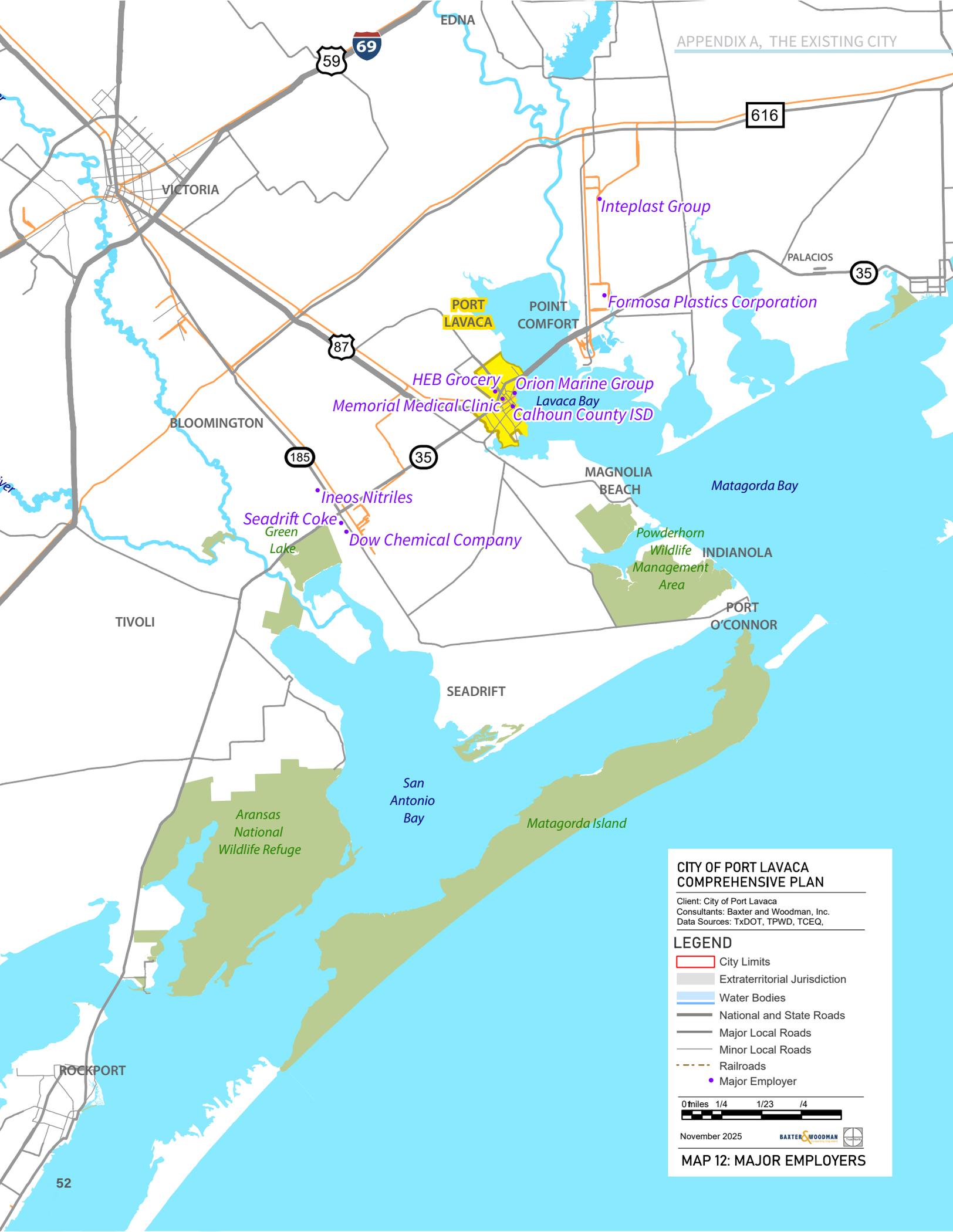
Port Lavaca’s economy is anchored by large petrochemical and plastics manufacturers (Formosa, Inteplast, Dow, Seadrift Coke, INEOS), which dominate industrial employment. These are balanced by public sector employers like Calhoun County ISD and county government, as well as essential services such as healthcare (Memorial Medical) and retail (HEB Grocery). Orion Marine Group adds strength in coastal and port-related construction. Together, these employers reflect a mix of heavy industry, public service, healthcare, and retail, shaping the workforce and economic resilience of the region. Formosa, Inteplast, and Dow Chemical employ the largest number of people, as referenced in Figure 6A, *Major Employers and Approximate Number of Employees*. The locations of major employers are depicted in Map 12, *Major Employers*.

Figure 6A, Major Employers and Approximate Number of Employees

Major Employers	Approximate number of Employees locally	Employer description
Formosa Plastics	2,800	Petrochemical plant
Inteplast Group	1,777	Plastics facility
Dow Chemical	1,400	Chemical producer
Seadrift Coke	153	Petroleum coke producer
INEOS Nitriles	141	Industrial chemicals facility
Calhoun County ISD	584	School district
Memorial Medical Center	200	Community hospital
H-E-B Grocery	100-150	Big box grocer
Orion Marine Group	Unknown	Marine construction



Orion Marine Group celebrating new dredge boat. Source: Workboat

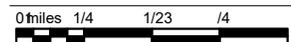


**CITY OF PORT LAVACA
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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- City Limits
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- Major Local Roads
- Minor Local Roads
- Railroads
- Major Employer



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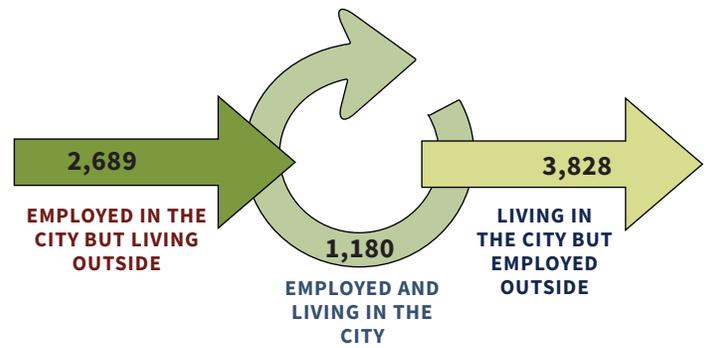
MAP 12: MAJOR EMPLOYERS

INFLOW AND OUTFLOW

Between 2018 and 2022, Port Lavaca experienced notable shifts in its employment and commuting patterns. In 2018, 2,569 people were employed in Port Lavaca but lived outside the city, while 1,318 residents both lived and worked locally. At the same time, 4,204 residents commuted to jobs outside of Port Lavaca. By 2022, illustrated in Figure 25, *2022 Employment Flow*, the number of non-resident workers employed in the city had grown slightly to 2,689, reflecting a modest increase in inbound commuting. However, the number of residents who both lived and worked in Port Lavaca declined to 1,180, suggesting fewer local employment opportunities or a mismatch between available jobs and resident skill sets. Outbound commuting also decreased, with 3,828 residents traveling outside the city for work, a drop of 376 compared to 2018.

Taken together, these trends indicate that Port Lavaca’s economy is becoming more reliant on workers from outside the city, while local residents are less engaged in the city’s job base. The slight rise in inbound workers points to employment growth that attracts non-residents, but the decline in resident employment highlights challenges in retaining local talent. Meanwhile, the reduction in outbound commuters suggests that some residents may be finding work closer to home or that the overall workforce is shrinking. These dynamics underscore the importance of aligning local job opportunities with resident needs to strengthen Port Lavaca’s economic resilience.

Figure 25, 2022 Employment Flow



Socioeconomic Context: Southside Census Tract

Despite the strength of Port Lavaca’s industrial economy, disparities exist within the city. The census tract located on the southside of Port Lavaca is classified as low income, reflecting challenges in household earnings and access to opportunity. Residents in this area often face limited job mobility, with fewer connections to the higher-paying industrial positions that dominate the county’s employment base. This classification underscores the uneven distribution of economic benefits across the city, where industrial growth has not fully translated into local prosperity. Addressing these disparities through workforce development, targeted investment, and improved access to education and training remains critical to ensuring that Port Lavaca’s economic growth is inclusive and sustainable.

Key Findings

- The largest employers are in the chemical and plastics industries.
- The number of employees living in Port Lavaca has decreased, but the number of commuters into the city increased.
- Expanding employment opportunities, combined with improvements to local housing stock, could encourage more residents to live locally.
- Improving employer diversity may also help alleviate poverty in Port Lavaca's south side.

NORTH

35
TEXAS



NORTH



SOUTH



O'Reilly
AUTO PARTS