

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a landscape. The left bank is covered in dense forest with trees showing autumn colors in shades of green, yellow, and orange. The right bank is dominated by tall, dry, greyish-brown grasses. The river itself is a narrow, calm channel of water. A dark grey semi-transparent box is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image, containing the main title. A thin yellow horizontal line is positioned above the title box.

COMMUNITY MASTER PLANNING AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR THE Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement

A dark red rectangular box containing the text 'PHASE 2 REPORT' in white, bold, uppercase letters. A thin yellow horizontal line is positioned above this box.

PHASE 2 REPORT

JULY 2021

**COMMUNITY MASTER PLANNING
AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR THE**
Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement

PHASE 2 REPORT

2018 - 2020

This document covers Phase 2 of the Resettlement. It is possible that some aspects of this plan have since changed. Visit IsleDeJeanCharles.la.gov for updates.

Project Team

Led by the Louisiana Office of Community Development, the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement team developed a design in concert with an extensive community engagement campaign to provide an integrated approach in the first federally funded community resettlement in the United States.

Funder

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



Project Lead State of Louisiana
Louisiana Office of Community Development



Team Members

- CSRS**, Prime Consultant and Lead Engineer
- Waggoner & Ball**, Design Lead and Traditional Architecture
- OLIN**, Lead Landscape Architecture and Planning
- Center for Planning Excellence**, Outreach and Engagement
- APTIM**, Sustainability Lead and Solar Development
- HR&A**, Economic Strategy Development
- SGD Urban Solutions**, CDBG Compliance Lead
- Kyle Whyte**, American Indian Advisor
- GeoEngineers**, Geotechnical Lead

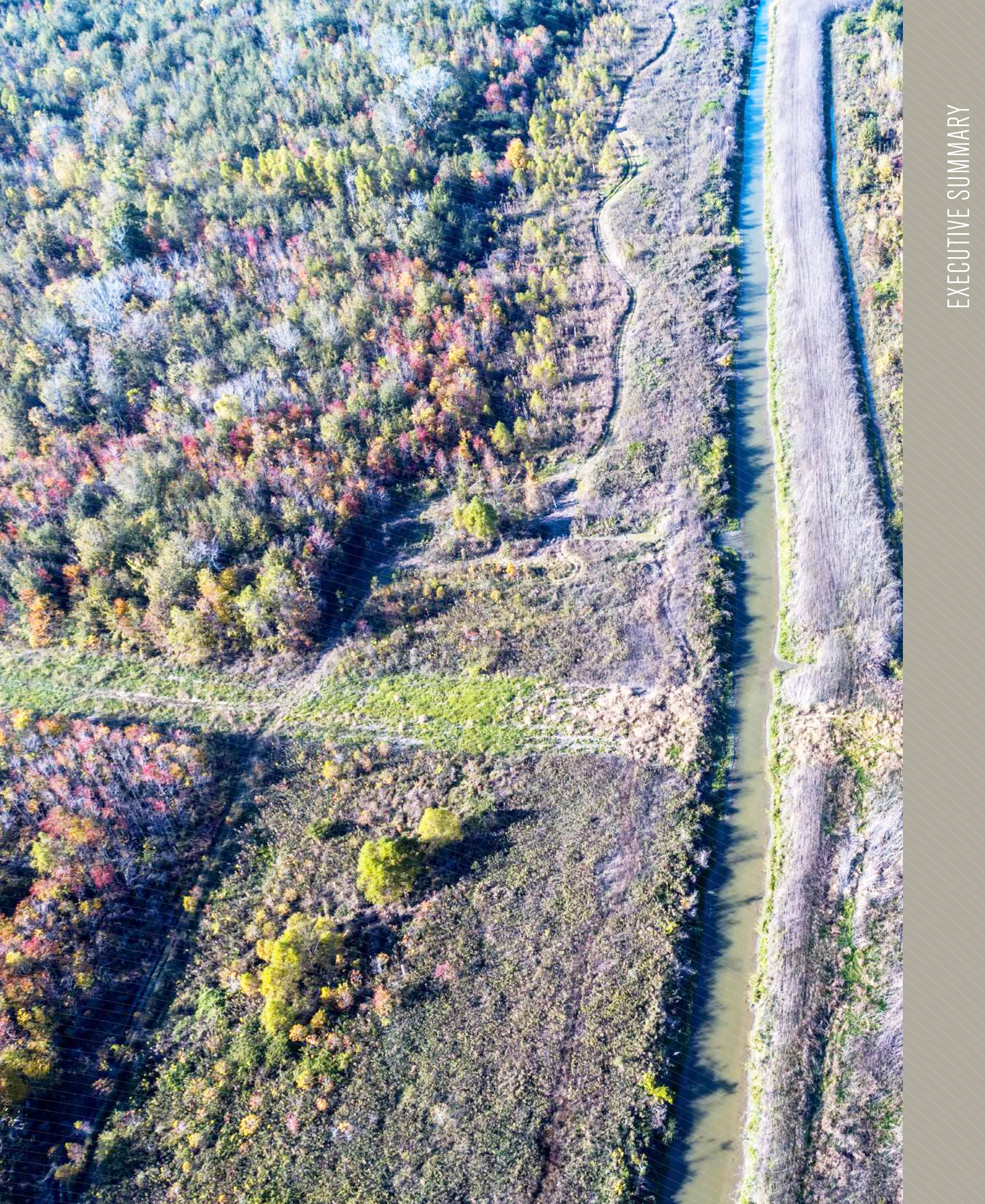


Other Partners

Pan American Engineers, Fishman Haygood, Anthony Oliver-Smith, Pamela Jenkins, Thomas Strategies, Compass Group, Louisiana Land Trust, Bryant Hammett and Associates, FTN Associates, Ramboll, Franklin and Associates, Terrebonne Parish Officials and Affiliates

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ISLE DE JEAN CHARLES RESETTLEMENT

The Multifaceted View

Imperiled on the front lines of coastal erosion and rising seas, the bayou region of south Louisiana is home to diverse peoples and cultures. The residents of Isle de Jean Charles—a population of predominantly American Indian ancestry—live in this region, on an island that is rapidly disappearing into the Gulf of Mexico.

Once encompassing more than 22,000 acres, only 320 acres of Isle de Jean Charles remain. The sole connecting road to the mainland—Island Road, built in 1953—is often impassable due to high winds, tides, sea level rise or storm surge.

This effectively blocks residents from access to essential goods and services.

The land where island residents and their families once hunted, trapped, grazed animals and farmed is now open water. Unfortunately, the challenges of restoring or preserving the island's landmass are insurmountable. This reality presents a unique challenge — resettling the community as a group to a new home.

Through this master plan, The New Isle has been designed to offer a prosperous and sustainable future to the people of Isle de Jean Charles while preserving its rich culture. In response, a dedicated team of state and local officials, planners,

engineers, architects and policymakers collaborated with current and former island residents to develop a program for the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement.

Even with this focused effort, the Resettlement emerges as a complex process, involving a wide range of cultural, social, environmental, economic, institutional and political factors. As with any inclusive effort, all stakeholders bring unique values and perspectives to the table, which often complicates consensus-

based decision-making. Therefore, the Resettlement cannot be driven solely by economic and operational objectives, but must incorporate a comprehensive, holistic and adaptive approach.

RESETTLEMENT FUNDING

HUD Awards CBDG Funding

In January 2016, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded Louisiana \$48,379,249 in Community Development Block Grant funds for the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement. The grant was part of the state's successful application to the National Disaster Resilience Competition.¹

With Resettlement funding in place, Louisiana can proceed with a structured and voluntary retreat from Isle de Jean Charles that is thoughtful and equitable, while maximizing opportunities for current and past island residents.

RESETTLEMENT MISSION

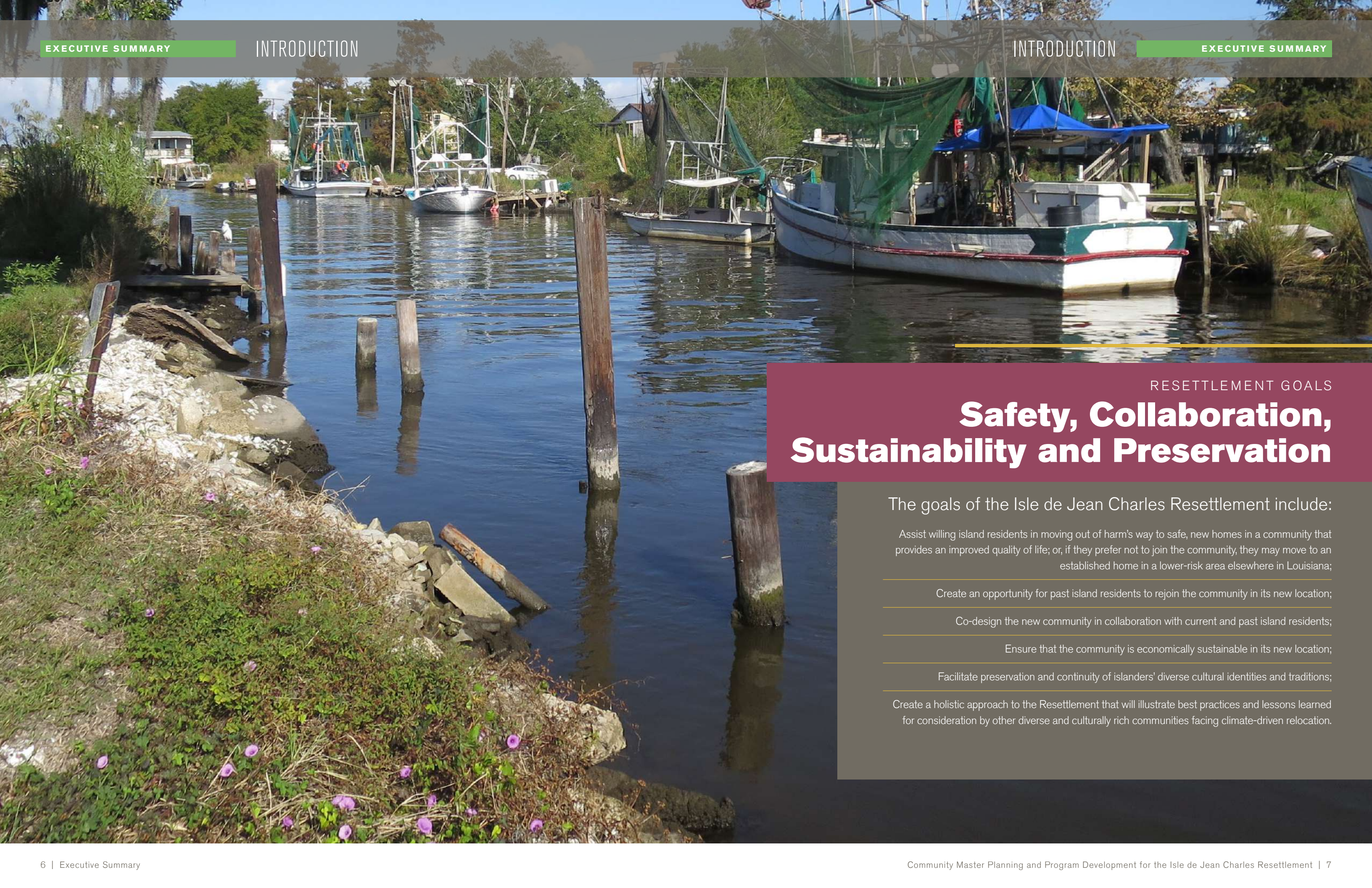
Holistic Approach to Relocation

From the outset, the state's expressed purpose has been to provide all current, permanent residents with relocation options that reflect their values. In keeping with this goal and mindful of the dire environmental conditions faced by island residents, the intended primary beneficiaries of the Resettlement are current, permanent residents of the island and former island resident households displaced since Aug. 28, 2012.² The Resettlement team is committed to implementing the relocation process in a manner that emphasizes residents' self-determination.

Guided by an understanding of their expressed priorities, needs and concerns, the new settlement is planned to reflect the Isle de Jean Charles community's values, cultural affiliations and economic objectives. With resilience in mind, the Resettlement will incorporate sustainable materials and practices conducive to residents' future safety and stewardship of natural resources. Moreover, as the Resettlement effort progresses over time, the plan calls for future on-site generated revenue and capital investment to contribute to the new site's long-term sustainability, specifically as the community's commercial corridor is established. Finally, in addition to serving the needs of the island residents, the plan's holistic approach illustrates best practices and lessons learned that may be applied in the future resettlement of other diverse and culturally rich communities facing climate-driven relocation.

¹ United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. "HUD Awards \$1 Billion Through National Disaster Resilience Competition." Last modified Jan. 29, 2016. https://www.hudexchange.info/news/hud-awards-1-billion-through-national-disaster-resilience-competition/Grantee_profiles: <https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/NDRCGRANTPROF.PDF>

² This date marks Hurricane Isaac's landfall, which qualified the Resettlement project for funding through HUD's National Disaster Resilience Competition.



RESETTLEMENT GOALS

Safety, Collaboration, Sustainability and Preservation

The goals of the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement include:

Assist willing island residents in moving out of harm's way to safe, new homes in a community that provides an improved quality of life; or, if they prefer not to join the community, they may move to an established home in a lower-risk area elsewhere in Louisiana;

Create an opportunity for past island residents to rejoin the community in its new location;

Co-design the new community in collaboration with current and past island residents;

Ensure that the community is economically sustainable in its new location;

Facilitate preservation and continuity of islanders' diverse cultural identities and traditions;

Create a holistic approach to the Resettlement that will illustrate best practices and lessons learned for consideration by other diverse and culturally rich communities facing climate-driven relocation.

RESETTLEMENT: A PEOPLE-DRIVEN APPROACH

The Current Population of Isle de Jean Charles

After the NDRC grant was announced, the state conducted a census of island residents. This was the first foray into what would eventually become an extensive, on-the-ground outreach and engagement effort, which also documented the island's infrastructure. During this initial effort, the team made contact with the island's residents, forming relationships with many. Outreach and engagement efforts also included past island residents.

Through this extensive process, the state documented the island's diverse nature. Some residents speak of ties to the Biloxi-Chitimacha Confederation of Muskogees while others speak of ties to the United Houma Nation. Some speak of ties to both tribes, and still others claim no tribal affiliation at all. Reflective of this on-the-ground reality, the Resettlement effort is not tied to any particular tribe, race or belief system.

The outreach team also noted that many former island residents moved inland following repeated disaster events, seeking safety and economic opportunity elsewhere. Hence, in addition to resettling current residents, the program is designed to give former residents an opportunity to rejoin the community in its new location. However, participation in the Resettlement is entirely voluntary; the state will not force anyone to leave the island, but is committed to an inclusive process allowing residents license to make decisions in their own personal best interest, free from fear or favor. The state continues to maintain a regular presence on the island, building relationships with residents, providing information and gathering input as the Resettlement effort progresses.

RESETTLEMENT TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Optional Relocation Assistance Program

Nearly 20 island families are living in upland rental units off the island while the new community is under development. These families represent about half of the island's 2016 population. However, some residents have opted to remain on the island until the new community is ready for move-in, while others may ultimately choose not to leave the island at all.

See the Plan Development Section for more on the Optional Relocation Assistance Program



RESETTLEMENT CONTEXT

Isle de Jean Charles: An American Indian Community

In 1979, the Houma Alliance and the Houma Tribe merged into the United Houma Nation forming a not-for-profit organization. In 1981, the UHN joined the Intertribal Council of Louisiana, which guides Louisiana government in matters concerning American Indians. In 1985, the United Houma Nation, which included some of Isle de Jean Charles' residents, filed its first petition for federal recognition. The petition was denied in 1994, and UHN filed a rebuttal in 1996.

Following the Bureau of Indian Affairs' denial of the UHN's petition for federal recognition in 1994, some members withdrew from the UHN and organized as two different tribes, the Biloxi-Chitimacha Confederation of Muskogees, Inc. and the Pointe-au-Chien Tribe, each filing separate petitions for federal recognition. Both petitions were subsequently denied in 2008. Following this denial, in 2015, the U.S. Department of the Interior published new guidelines for federal recognition. All three tribes are now seeking federal recognition under the revised regulations.

Some U.S. states have established legal processes to evaluate and recognize American Indian tribes and organizations that are not federally recognized, in order to provide aid or assistance to members of those groups. These processes vary across states and there is no official registry of state-recognized tribes. In 2004, the Louisiana Legislature acknowledged the Indian ancestry of members of the Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe; and the Isle de Jean Charles Band, the Bayou Lafourche Band, and the Grand Caillou/Dulac Band of the BCCM (referred to in the resolution as the "BCCM tribes") "for the sole purpose of qualifying for Indian education and health care benefits due these American Indian citizens" (SCR 105).

RESETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT

A Three Phase Initiative

PHASE I: Data Gathering and Engagement (June 2016 – November 2016)

Phase I included initial outreach to and engagement with current island residents, as well as a preliminary land use and infrastructure survey of the island. The team's interactions with residents provided insight into residents' priorities and revealed additional complexities to be addressed during subsequent phases. The team learned that residents' values include privacy, seclusion, access to water, safety, flood protection, continued access to the island and maintaining and strengthening cultural identity. However, values vary widely from individual to individual—there is no single, homogeneous set of community priorities shared by all island residents. The program team continues to build relationships with each island resident to ensure this diversity of values and priorities is well represented in the development of a new community for Isle de Jean Charles.

A final report on Phase I can be found at IsledeJeanCharles.la.gov

PHASE II: Site Selection, Acquisition and Master Planning (December 2016 – February 2019)

Understanding and reflecting residents' needs and their vision for their future community is the Resettlement's highest priority. To this end, a series of public meetings and one-on-one conversations have taken place throughout the Resettlement process to ensure island residents have ongoing engagement with team members and the effort as a whole.

- **December 2016 – June 2017:** The state conducted an exhaustive site evaluation process throughout Terrebonne Parish. In May 2017, the state provided island residents an opportunity to visit potential sites for the new community.
- **July 2017 – December 2017:** In July 2017, the Resettlement team hosted its third community meeting to discuss pros and cons of various tracts of land and to document residents' preferences via a site preference survey. Concurrently, a selection committee, including representatives from the island community, chose a consultant team to develop the new community's master plan. The selected team was then introduced at the fourth community meeting in December 2017, and team members began to work with current and former island residents to solidify design plans and programming for the new Isle de Jean Charles community, including plans for a structured retreat from the island.
- **January 2018 – September 2018:** A steering committee comprising island residents and various island community stakeholders—including representatives from both the BCCM and the UHN—convened six times throughout the master planning process. The steering committee serves as an advisory board and liaison between the state and the island community. The state held three design workshops in which planners, architects and current and former residents explored multiple design options that best expressed the values and priorities of the community. A separate academic advisory committee provides guidance to the planning team. The academic advisory committee includes local and national scholars who understand the environment and cultures of the region, as well as the complexities of resettlement processes.
- **March 2018:** The state placed a purchase option on the property preferred by a majority of island residents in the site preference survey.
- **December 2018:** Following completion of site due diligence, including federally required environmental reviews, the Louisiana Land Trust completed the purchase of the selected property on the state's behalf and as the new community's development partner.
- **February 2019:** The Resettlement's Master Plan receives unanimous approval from the Terrebonne Parish Planning Commission.

PHASE III: The New Isle Development and Construction (May 2020 - September 2022)

During Phase III, the state and LLT partnered to implement the master plan created during Phase II. Phase III will consist of completing all required environmental reviews, finalizing site design work, acquiring permits, laying infrastructure, constructing housing, initiating business development activities, launching workforce training programs and assisting residents moving into the new community.

POST-DEVELOPMENT: Living in the New Community

Eligible families that participate in the Resettlement will enter into a forgivable mortgage on property they own in the new community. One-fifth of the mortgage will be forgiven each year over the course of five years, during which time no payments are required, provided the resident maintains primary residency and required insurance. After five years, the resident will own the new property in full, provided these requirements have been met.



RESETTLEMENT CONSTRAINTS

Compliance with Federal Laws and Funding Requirements

As the Resettlement is federally funded, the program is subject to a vast and complex body of regulations and laws. Two federal requirements are particularly relevant to the program design: cost reasonableness and compliance with the Fair Housing Act.

Cost Reasonableness: Continued Use of Island Property

As required by HUD, costs paid with CDBG funds must be necessary and reasonable³ to carry out the grant's objectives. The state's application argued that high-risk conditions on the island make it unsafe for habitation—a position HUD agreed with in awarding the grant. It is neither necessary nor reasonable to use federal funds to relocate families from high-risk properties, only to allow those families to return to those high-risk properties as permanent residents in the future. Not only would this place them in harm's way, it would also create a potential need for future federal disaster assistance.

That said, the island holds an important sense of place for its current and former residents. As detailed in the state's application to HUD, it is critical to allow property owners continued access to the island for ceremonial, cultural, historical and recreational purposes. Therefore, in order to comply with HUD requirements and respect the desires of islanders, the state created an approach that allows owners continued access to their island properties. This approach allows existing on-island structures to remain intact while ensuring those properties are not used as residences or are redeveloped. This is an innovative solution and a significant departure from traditional HUD-funded relocation programs, which require properties to be bought out and cleared, to be left as open space permanently.

To achieve these goals, Resettlement participants must agree to only use their on-island properties for nonresidential purposes as a condition of receiving a new home in the new community. Under this agreement, Resettlement participants may use their on-island properties for recreational, cultural, or historical purposes. Former and current island residents who do not own island property will enter into a personal grant agreement that limits their use of any island property to nonresidential purposes.

The Fair Housing Act

In addition to cost reasonableness requirements, the Resettlement must also comply with the federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal for public or private housing developments to discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status or national origin. Therefore, the program is open to all permanent, primary residents of the island, and in later phases to past residents of the island, regardless of tribal affiliation, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status or disability.

³ 2 CFR 200.403, 2 CFR 200.404

RESETTLEMENT STATUS

Anticipated Events

The Resettlement's formal application process launched in March 2019. Resettlement team members will host a series of outreach events to provide additional information and answer questions as the intake period remains open. Construction on civil infrastructure began in May, with first homes expected to be completed and move in-ready in 2021.

For updates, visit www.IsleDeJeanCharles.la.gov



HEART OF THE RESETTLEMENT

The 'Long Goodbye'

The Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement is a process filled with both relief and uncertainty for islanders. Most know they should move; but for many, this move will take them away from all they have ever known. Several residents have expressed concern about the distance between the new community and the island. In interviews with the Resettlement team, island residents revealed they see Isle de Jean Charles as a place of security and isolation.

Islanders embrace their rural setting—and the quiet and tranquility that comes with it. The island is a place where residents know each other and their common history, and is a place where both independence and care for neighbors and family are core values. Despite the challenges that come with island life, residents there are well acclimated. They are resilient and ingenious “do-it-yourself” individuals who repair their own houses and fix their own cars, heaters and pipes. They know how to prepare for storms and how to recover afterward. Some of these skills are transferable to the new community, but others may be lost. As one islander said, “I have never fished in fresh water; I have only fished in salt water.” He went on to describe how he views the difference and the magnitude of change it requires.

Although the new community is only 40 miles north, in many ways, it is perceived as a world away. Parting from the island will be a transformative process, as individuals and families adapt in significant ways. The Resettlement team will continue to work closely with the community to facilitate and respect this 'long goodbye,' and the loss the Resettlement signifies. The team will also continue to work with residents to identify new opportunities that come with the move, new connections and a new sense of peace and security to be found in a new home.



ISLE DE JEAN CHARLES RESETTLEMENT

The Landscape In Context

For generations, Louisiana's land and water sustained the cultures and livelihoods of Louisiana residents. This is a landscape that many consider to be an integral part of their lives, intricately and inseparably stitched throughout many aspects of their existence. Yet, the landscape is shifting, and as an adaptive response, so are Louisiana's residents. These changes are not simply a response to the tropical storms frequenting the region, but also to the ever-present concerns of erosion, subsidence, and flooding leaving their mark along the coast and increasingly encroaching inland. The intensifying frequency of water-related disaster events leaves people without homes, and healthcare facilities, disrupted cultural norms, economic disinvestment, and a breaking down of social networks. Individuals, families, and local governments are thinking seriously about how to respond by retrofitting, reshaping, and resettling communities to ensure a safer and more sustainable future.

A seminal undertaking in adaptation on Louisiana's Gulf Coast is the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement – from the receding edge of the state's coast to a new property 40 miles inland. In the past two years, island residents, stakeholders from the broader island and Terrebonne Parish communities and a diverse project team contributed to the development of this unprecedented Master Plan for the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement.

Incorporating a broad range of stakeholders and expertise, Louisiana is creating a new framework for climate adaptation, ultimately serving to inform other regions with similar challenges. The following section will outline the objectives, metrics, principles and goals guiding this resettlement master plan, the team members and experts who participated, and the processes helping to bring this master planning phase to fruition and conclusion.

NATIONAL DISASTER RESILIENCE

HUD's Regulatory Framework

The primary objectives of the Community Development Block Grant – National Disaster Resilience Program are to provide decent housing and suitable living environments, and to expand economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income. These objectives are achieved by ensuring that each funded activity meets one of three named National Objectives – benefiting LMI persons; preventing or eliminating slums or blight; or meeting urgent needs in the community. *The Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement Permanent Relocation and Housing Incentive Program will serve LMI persons and meet urgent need National Objectives as defined below.*

Low to Moderate Income National Objective

Activities which benefit households whose total annual gross income does not exceed 80% of Area Median Income adjusted for family size. HUD guidelines for adjusted gross income are below:

- **Very Low:** Household's annual income is up to 30% of the area median income, as determined by HUD, adjusted for family size;
- **Low:** Household's annual income is between 31% and 50% of the area median family income, as determined by HUD, adjusted for family size;
- **Moderate:** Household's annual income is between 51% and 80% of the area median family income, as determined by HUD, adjusted for family size.

Urgent Need, UN, National Objective

An urgent need that exists because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to health/welfare of a community, the existing conditions are recent or recently became urgent (typically within 18 months) and the recipients cannot finance the activities on their own because other funding sources are not available. Every household assisted under this program will meet one of these national objectives in the following ways:

- **Low to Moderate Income Housing (direct benefit)** – if the household to be assisted is LMI and is occupying replacement housing.
- **Urgent Need (direct benefit)** – if the activity addresses the serious threat to community welfare following the disaster and the household assisted is above 80% AMI.

SETTING A NEW STANDARD

Resettlement Metrics and Goals

Resettlement Metrics

Given the complex nature of resettlement, this process cannot be evaluated by a simple cost-benefit analysis. From the outset, the following metrics and goals established a unique rubric by which the resettlement is guided:

- **Resilience Value:** (1) reduction of expected property damages due to future disasters; (2) reduction of expected casualties from future disasters; (3) value of reduced displacement caused by future disasters.
- **Environmental Value:** (1) reduced energy use; (2) reduced stormwater runoff; (3) wetlands restoration and reforestation.
- **Social Value:** (1) benefit to low- and moderate-income persons and/or households; (2) improved living environment; (3) greater housing affordability.
- **Economic Revitalization Benefit:** (1) direct effects on local or regional economy; (2) value of property.

Goals of the Isle De Jean Charles Resettlement

- Assist willing island residents in moving out of harm's way to safe, new homes in a community that provides an improved quality of life; or, if they prefer not to join the community, they may move to an established home in a lower-risk area in Louisiana.
- Collaborate with current and past island residents on the design of the new community.
- Ensure that the community is economically sustainable in its new location.
- Facilitate preservation and continuity of islanders' diverse cultural identities and traditions.
- Create a holistic approach to the resettlement that will illustrate best practices and lessons learned for consideration by other diverse and culturally rich communities facing climate-driven relocation



Dr. Anthony Oliver-Smith is a Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Florida. The Society of Applied Anthropology awarded him the Bronislaw Malinowski Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his efforts to understand and serve the needs of the world's societies, actively pursuing the goal of solving human problems via his work in disaster studies and resettlements. He is the author, co-author or editor of nearly 100 publications and is one of the world's leading experts on resettlement and relocation. Based on his experiences and research on resettlements he composed the following Principles of Resettlement. These 10 principles are used as a guide in the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement. As such, this resettlement, just as with all resettlements, is unique and comes with a context-dependent and location-specific set of circumstances.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

10 Resettlement Principles

1. The resettlement effect is defined as the **“loss of physical and non-physical assets, including homes, communities, productive land, income-earning assets and sources, subsistence, resources, cultural sites, social structures, networks and ties, cultural identity and mutual health mechanisms”** (Downing and Garcia-Downing 2009).
2. **The negative consequences of involuntary displacements extend far beyond the loss of land.** Understanding what happens when people are involuntarily displaced begins with culture as a set of constructs and rules for constructing the world, interpreting it and adapting to it (Downing and Garcia-Downing 2009).
3. Removing people from their known environments separates them from the material and cultural resource base upon which they have depended for life as individuals and as communities. **A sense of place plays an important role in individual and collective identity formation, in the way time and history are encoded and contextualized, and in interpersonal, community and intercultural relations** (Oliver-Smith 2005). Removal from one's place, one of the most basic physical dimensions of life, can be a form of removal from life, from that complex in which space, kin relations, local communities, cosmology and tradition are encoded and linked. Involuntary resettlement may break a community's social geometry; that is, the bonds that in ordinary culture are continually re-created by socially constructed time, space and personages (Downing and Downing 2009), thus drastically destabilizing affected communities by threatening or rendering culture meaningless. Social life may become chaotic, uncertain, and unpredictable.
4. The **separation or fragmentation of community** that frequently accompanies uprooting may cause stress and suffering (Scudder 2009). Lives are disrupted, social relationships may be broken, social and economic assets lost, leaders diminished, people falling ill and dying prematurely, and the capacity of a community's resilience to withstand the normal range of environmental and social forces of their society diminished.
5. The **design, materials and construction of resettlement projects are often more expressive of goals of economic efficiency and elite perceptions of the poor and minorities than the needs of the displaced.** In the long run such misguided projects actually cost more because the settlements and houses are abandoned or destroyed and the social disarticulation they foster undermines the productivity and self-sufficiency of the group. The built environment in which we live is both expressive of and shapes our social relations. Material reconstruction can both support and express social reconstitution. Material reconstruction can be a confirmation of social reconstitution. It can also undermine the process severely and very frequently has (Oliver-Smith 1991; 2005).
6. **Productive activities are disrupted.** Resources, such as land or jobs, are either rendered irrelevant or disappear. A significant cost of resettlement may be the loss of livelihood possibilities or employment in the resettlement process or, if such opportunities are not available, at the new site. Involuntary resettlement frequently diminishes the economic organizational capacity of a group. The loss of livelihood is frequently responsible for the abandonment of resettlement communities (Cernea 1997).
7. **Cultural transmission and socialization activities become difficult to sustain** given that what is being taught and learned is disarticulated from the present situation. Social arrangements that allow sharing of common goods become insignificant because the common resource is disappearing or gone. Involuntary displacement directly threatens

a people's agreements on the social geometry – their temporal, spatial and social arrangements (Downing and Garcia-Downing 2009).

8. **Negative health impacts on the resettled population are a consistent outcome of many resettlement projects,** especially vulnerable groups including children, women and the elderly (Kedia 2009). The elderly in particular are vulnerable in resettlement and frequently suffer high rates of mortality in the aftermath of resettlement, a phenomenon that is often referred to as “dying of a broken heart.”
9. **Resettled populations frequently suffer a loss in social and political power.** Removed from their local context, they are at a disadvantage in seeking resources in a new or different system of political organization and power relationships. Moreover, if relocated into existing communities, they are at a further disadvantage in their relations with host populations who may resent their arrival, as well as the competition for resources (Cernea 1997; Scudder 2005).
10. **Authentic participation is consistent with the emphasis on the recognition and restoration of the rights of affected people.** Resettlement projects that impose heavy costs are often characterized by policies that depend very little on consultation with the affected population. The previously mentioned problems derive from a lack of consultation with, and participation by the affected people. This lack of participation is generally due to a disparagement of local knowledge and culture on the part of policy makers and planners. Affected people are generally not considered by elites to have the social and cultural tools necessary for executive or even advisory forms of decision making, planning, and execution that pertain to resettlement projects (Oliver-Smith 1991).



The task facing uprooted peoples and those who would support and assist them is to reconstruct self, family and community, both in the form of material structures and processes and in their social and cultural expressions. The most pressing need at this juncture is to achieve a greater balance between addressing the material needs of displaced communities and acting in a way that supports, rather than undermines their struggle to reconstitute the social bases of their communities. The wreckage from uprooted communities around the world is as much due to poor policy as it is to the many forms of uprooting and violence to which they have been subjected (Oliver-Smith 2005). Resettlement projects must be developed that enable people to materially sustain themselves while they begin the process of social reconstruction. Resettlement projects must be designed to advance, rather than impede, the process of community reconstitution.

THE RESETTLEMENT TEAM

Diverse Perspectives, Expertise

Execution of a complex and multifaceted community-scale resettlement requires input from many different branches of government as well as public and private sector actors with expertise in such disparate fields as stormwater management, equitable development and conflict mediation. Over the course of Phase II, team members attempted an integrated coordination of activities in order to plan a resettlement that is thoughtful and equitable, with built-in flexibility, and maximize opportunities for current and past island residents.

FUNDING PARTNER

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Following its administration of the National Disaster Resilience Competition in 2015, HUD works closely with grantees to ensure all programs and policies comply with CDBG rules, regulations and applicable laws, including the Fair Housing Act. HUD monitors its CDBG-NDR grantees in person at least twice annually, augmenting these visits with regular technical assistance conducted both in person and remotely.

GRANTEE & PROJECT LEAD

Louisiana Office of Community Development

The Louisiana Office of Community Development works to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Louisiana via provision of decent, safe and sanitary housing opportunities, improved living environments and expanded opportunities for low and moderate income households. OCD is the resettlement project's lead and worked to reconcile the concerns of members of the IDJC community and federal HUD regulations. OCD lawyers, planners, social scientists and policy makers worked through several iterations of policies in conjunction with other team members and stakeholders in workshops, meetings and conference calls to provide viable options to ensure the safety and sustainability of members of the Isle de Jean Charles community.

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

Louisiana Housing Corporation

The Louisiana Housing Corporation works to ensure that every Louisiana resident is granted an opportunity to obtain safe, affordable, energy-efficient housing. LHC administers federal and state funds through programs designed to advance the development of energy efficient and affordable housing for working families, drives overall housing policy for Louisiana and oversees the state's Disaster Housing Task Force. LHC implemented the Optional Relocation Assistance program housed within the larger Resettlement Program.

Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government

Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government provides local government services in Terrebonne Parish, where Isle de Jean Charles and the new community are located. Local government officials assisted OCD in a variety of regulatory issues pertaining to the newly planned development, such as required permitting and planning approvals.



PHASE II PLANNING CONSULTANT TEAM

To execute a project of this magnitude, the Louisiana Office of Community Development engaged a highly qualified team of experts. Led by a Louisiana-based engineering firm, the team was made of eight companies with specific roles to deliver the first resettlement master plan.

CSRS, Prime Consultant, Project Manager and Civil Engineer Lead

Waggoner & Ball, Design & Architecture Lead

OLIN, Landscape Architecture Lead

Center for Planning Excellence, Outreach and Engagement Lead

APTIM, Sustainability Lead and Solar Development Lead

HR&A, Economic Analysis Lead

SGD Urban Solutions, CDBG Compliance Lead

GeoEngineers, Geotechnical Investigation Lead

ADDITIONAL PHASE II SUPPORT

Louisiana Land Trust, Development Lead

Pan American Engineers, Lead Grant Manager and Development Advisor

Fishman Haygood, Legal Counsel

Thomas Strategies, Community Governance & Housing Policy Advisor

Compass Group, Community Governance & Housing Policy Advisor

Bryant Hammett and Associates and FTN, Stormwater Modeling Lead

Ramboll, Environmental Assessment Lead

CASE MANAGERS

With the resettlement advancing forward in Phase II, case managers are assisting families applying to the Program and the process of creating a new home and new life in a new environment.

Franklin & Associates, Case Management Program Lead

Start Corporation, Optional Relocation Assistance Lead

SOCIAL SCIENTISTS

With the vast social complexities raised by this resettlement, social scientists are essential in helping to learn and understand about the issues which can and will affect the resettlement's ultimate success. In the Master Planning effort, the planning team has focused on several specific subject areas, including American Indian affairs, social marginalization and the interactions between project team members and members of the Isle de Jean Charles community.

Dr. Pam Jenkins, Professor Emerita, University of New Orleans, Facilitation Specialist

Dr. Anthony Oliver-Smith, Professor Emeritus, University of Florida, Resettlement Specialist

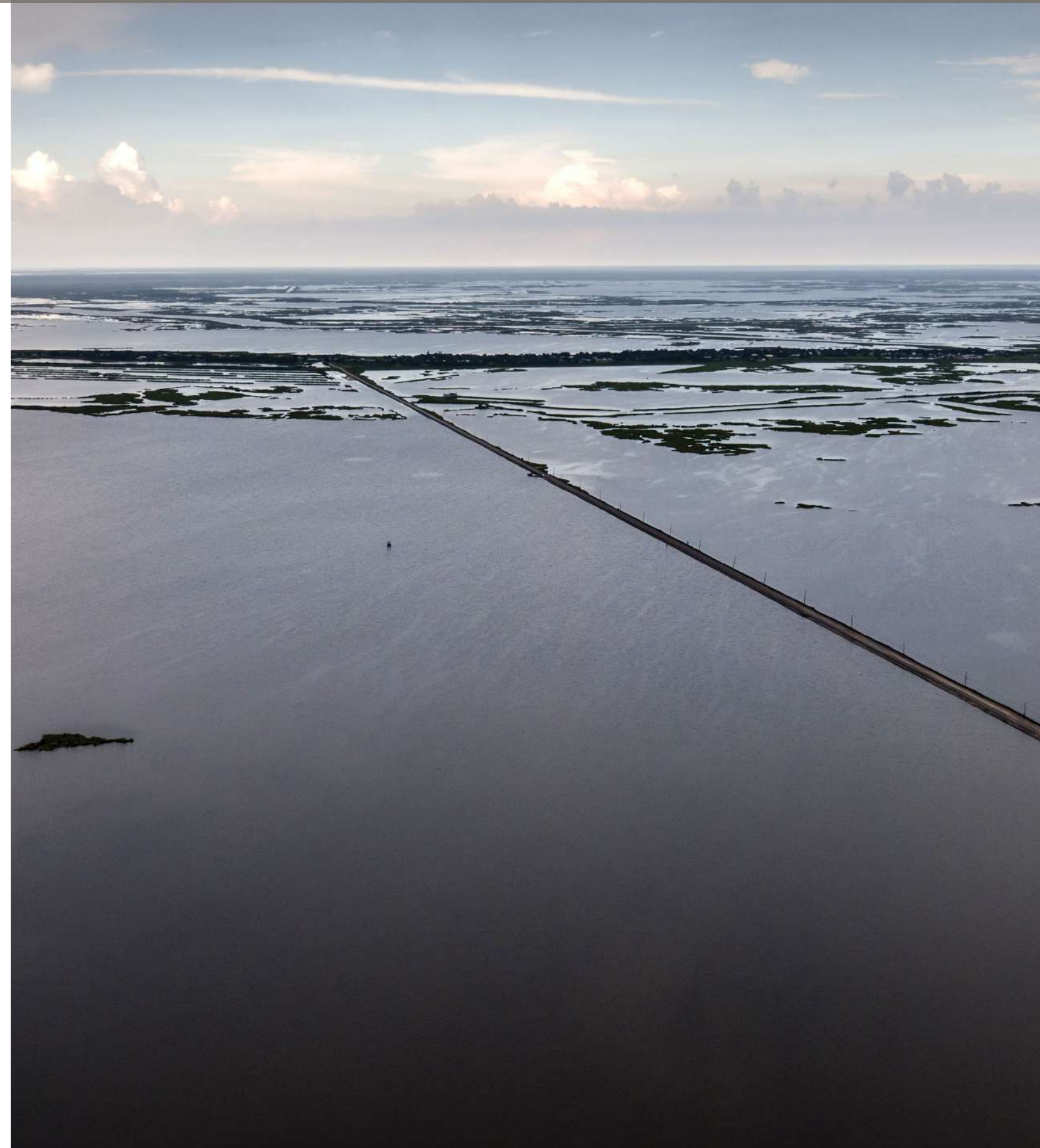
Dr. Kyle Powys Whyte, Professor, Michigan State, American Indian Adviser

COMMUNICATIONS

Such a complex program also requires using a variety of tools to ensure information is shared and accessed. Throughout the resettlement process, in-person meetings, one-on-one interviews, community meetings, phone and text messages, flyers, social media and public meetings proved to be effective tools that open channels for exchanging information. Different team members specialized in community knowledge, marketing, communication, mediation and public relations.

Office of Community Development, Communication Team

Emergent Method, Communication



APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Project Management

Organizational Structure

The team's organizational structure evolved alongside the scope of work for Phase II. On a day-to-day basis, the planning team, under OCD's direction, utilized a single point of contact to liaise between OCD and the broader planning team. This point of contact worked closely with OCD to serve as a hub connecting subject matter experts across disciplines to the broader scope of work, creating a feedback loop to keep the team informed of decisions and changing conditions.

Additionally, the Master Planning effort included a leadership team representing various disciplines (ex: Lead Architect). This leadership team was comprising several separate, but interconnected, working groups providing overall design, planning and outreach direction for the effort. These working groups had access to a shared pool of resources, including subject matter experts, and technical and administrative support. These diverse components of the planning team were wrapped in administrative support functions to ensure the quality of deliverables, as well as on-time and on-budget project delivery.

Finally, the Master Planning effort was guided by a volunteer steering committee comprising nine members, including five island residents, working alongside OCD to inform and facilitate policy and programmatic decisions. As the Master Planning effort progressed and decisions were made, especially those regarding implementation and specifically policies relative to future on-island land use, the structure of the meetings also changed to continue to meet the needs of the Master Planning effort.

Daily Operations

Managing the day-to-day operations of the IDJC Resettlement required the versatility and flexibility to collaborate with a variety of stakeholders and team members as well as the diligence to orchestrate a large team executing complex tasks against a finite budget and schedule.

The paragraphs that follow highlight several systems and tools that the project team employed over the course of Phase II to ensure successful project delivery.

Scheduling and Document Organization

From the onset of Phase II, the team operated using a master schedule which laid out the order of work and the estimated dates on which the team would begin and complete major elements of work. The master schedule was housed, shared and updated using TeamGantt, a collaborative, online scheduling program. Each major work element in TeamGantt included individual tasks with durations and milestones, as well as the person responsible for completing those task(s). Persons responsible were notified through TeamGantt as schedule deadlines approached.

Additionally, the team utilized another web-based tool, Trello, to help organize and manage workflows, communication and information into concise and comprehensive lists using the Kanban system of project and task management. Each major work element had an established workflow in Trello, with individual actions, responsible team members, and deadlines identified. Trello was linked to a file share system containing related project information.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Process and Coordination

WEEKLY TEAM MEETINGS

Constant, consistent communication was key to the successful completion of this Master Plan as well as keeping team members apprised of changes and updates in the resettlement process as a whole. The team participated in weekly Monday morning meetings – sometimes in person, often by webinar – to provide status updates on various work elements and tasks, as well as to discuss the order of work for the week and any decisions and/or resources required to perform the work.

REAL ESTATE POLICY

Throughout much of Phase II, a subset of the larger team convened regularly to develop programmatic and legal issues associated with real estate management, including the site for the new community and properties on the island. These calls usually included OCD staff, outside legal counsel, project managers and subject matter experts.

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

In addition to the Monday morning team meetings, there was a weekly call/webinar focusing on planning and design. These calls involved a smaller group and provided opportunities for the designers to share and collaborate on design solutions and receive decisions they needed to move forward with planning and design.

SOCIAL SCIENTIST INPUT

Each week the social scientists held calls to discuss the social, political, cultural and socio-environmental aspects of the program's process. Tasks and discussions ranged from translating technical concepts into digestible formats, solutions for dispelling rumors and misinformation, discussions of recently published academic articles pertaining to aspects of the resettlement, and ultimately working to ensure that IDJC residents have the ability to relocate in a manner that is holistically supportive.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

In order to stay on-task and within budget, CSRS met with OCD monthly to review its contractual budget and deliverables schedule.

MEETING RUN-THROUGHS

As a means of ensuring quality and consistency, team members also held "dry run" meetings prior to any community meeting or presentation. During these meetings, the team would rehearse talking points and review presentations and materials to be provided during community meetings.

COST CONSIDERATIONS

Designing to Budget

Starting with the end in mind, the master planning process provided the team its first opportunity to develop a detailed and actionable forecast of anticipated construction costs. This cost estimate provided the necessary information to assess available resources to fund The New Isle's first development phase. Available Funds for Construction, also known as AFC, provides vital insight informing the final design and reasonable expectations for what can be constructed in the first phase of development, mindful that The New Isle is intended to allow for additional development to occur in subsequent phases over a longer period of time.

The table outlines the program's projected budget through the first phase of development, including costs associated with site acquisition and construction. Refined cost estimates will be informed by future construction bids.

DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
Planning & Conceptual Design	\$2,145,690
Site Investigation & Due Diligence	\$365,192
Evergreen Site Acquisition	\$11,700,000
Interim Housing Assistance & Case Work	\$1,806,608
Grant Administration	\$363,779
Program Management	\$645,000
Communications & Reporting	\$209,215
Legal Services	\$309,451
Design, Permitting & Studies	\$2,945,100
Relocation Assistance	\$160,170
Evergreen Site Maintenance	\$24,000
Workforce Development	\$300,000
Non-Residential & Infrastructure Construction	\$16,896,400
Off-Site Relocation (Option D)	\$1,600,000
Residential Construction	\$7,405,300
Economic Development	\$1,500,000
Unprogrammed	\$3,344
TOTAL	\$48,379,249

As of March 2020

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Master Planning Timeline

Steering Committee Meetings

During Phase II, a steering committee, comprising five current island residents, the state's Indian Affairs Director, a representative of Terrebonne Parish government and a representative from each of the two American Indian tribes with whom island residents identify, was established to guide and inform the Master Planning process, review materials, make recommendations and provide continued local cultural and contextual insight to the process. Steering committee meetings also provided an additional platform for project team members to provide detailed, concrete and transparent information on the project's progress.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee included:

- Inform and advise the Master Planning process;
- Provide local cultural insight;
- Review materials;
- Liaise between the planning team and the IDJC community;
- Meet monthly or as needed throughout process;
- Attend all community meetings.

Community Calls

Led by both planning team and steering committee members, community calls were used at various times throughout Phase II as a way to convene larger meetings without the logistical challenges of in-person meetings. Community calls served as a medium to share ideas, thoughts and information as well as to solicit additional feedback from current and former island residents as well as other project stakeholders.

When Steering Committee meetings commenced, community calls were held the day following each Steering Committee meeting. The call was scheduled in the evening to incentivize maximal participation and all parties were encouraged to participate. In these calls, the planning team and steering committee shared updates and answered questions from participants.

Academic Advisory Committee Meetings

The Academic Advisory Committee was convened to guide and advise the planning team in developing and using best practices. Members of the 10 person committee were selected to bring a broad range of expertise and oversight to the project. Areas of expertise include, but are not limited to, cultural and socioeconomic considerations, climate related migration, equitable adaptation and innovative community planning.



Weekly Island Visits

About once a week, a team member travels to the island to visit with residents. The visits serve to inform questions of how the identities of residents, interconnected and contingent on social relations, sense of, and attachment to place are linked to the decision-making process of relocating and resettling. These visits vary from week to week, but often involve opportunities to learn about island life and its uncertainties from residents themselves. This includes learning about the island's only road flooding on a regular basis and the stress and anxiety at the onset of hurricane season. On other occasions, team members answered islanders' questions, or discussed the island as it existed in the past. The goal of these visits include attempting to thoroughly understand residents' concerns, ensuring that residents fully understand the options available to them and working with islanders to achieve a positive outcome for each individual.

The island holds an important sense of place and residents feel a deep attachment to it. Highlighting these aspects of the migratory experience are vital to inform the resettlement process and can only be learned from talking to islanders themselves. These aspects of resettlement are also often overlooked in studies on human migration (Barrios 2014). Parting from the island will be a transformative process, as individuals and families adapt in significant ways. The vast majority of island residents are multi-generational inhabitants, deeply attuned to the surrounding biophysical changes. For many, the intangible connection to place – feelings of belonging, lifestyle, family connections, and culture – tethers residents to their land and homes. Yet, they know the landscape is changing and their land is disappearing. Residents are in the process of developing an understanding of what this may mean for their personal identities, social networks and collective culture into the future.

Meetings with 'Receiver' Community

In February 2019, the planning team hosted an open house in Schriever specifically oriented for the 'receiver' community. Leading up to the open house, team members went door to door around the community property and facilitated discussion, providing local residents an opportunity to provide input on The New Isle development. Discussions centered largely on water management, utilities, future neighbors and property values.



Community engagement in Phase II builds from several small and large-scale meetings conducted in Phase I between June and November of 2016. A final report for Phase I can be found at: <http://IsleDeJeanCharles.la.gov/sites/default/files/public/IDJC-Final-Report-Update.pdf>. An initial planning meeting, two community meetings conducted with island residents and the broader IDJC community, and interviews with each island household established a baseline understanding of the extent to which island residents had been involved in previous resettlement planning, how they hoped to be involved in the future, and what they considered to be key elements of the project.

PHASE 1

Community Meeting 1: August 6, 2016

OCD hosted a community meeting at the Montegut Recreation Center. The purpose of the meeting was to meet and engage with current and previous island residents to understand their wants, needs and perspectives.

Community Calls: Spring 2017

OCD hosted six conference calls during this timeframe for discussions with the broader IDJC community. OCD mailed and delivered all island residents updated Q&As and a 2-page resettlement status report to also provide information in writing.

Community Meeting 2: October 8, 2016

The purpose of this meeting was threefold: to report back to the community on progress since the August 2016 meeting, to answer questions that residents asked during the team's visits to the island, and to begin the process of site selection through a table activity indicating geographic preference. Nominations were also held for residents to participate on the IDJC Master Planning Group scoring committee.

Weekly Visits: May 2017–Present

Weekly visits to Isle de Jean Charles are opportunities to share updates about resettlement developments, answer questions and learn more about residents' personal concerns. The needs and perceptions of the resettlement expressed by residents help to inform intermediate steps to be taken throughout the resettlement process.

Community Visit to Potential Sites: May 25, 2017

In May 2017, project team members and island residents visited three potential new community sites in Terrebonne Parish. Information shown and distributed on the site visit included highlights of all three sites' size and location in respect to one another and a map to display the flood risk for each site during a 100-year flood event. The presentation boards also displayed aerial satellite images of each individual site and a wetland inventory map. Following this visit, the project team distributed a site preference survey and residents indicated which site and site configuration they most preferred.

Opening of Optional Relocation Assistance Program: July 2017

OCD introduced the Optional Relocation Assistance Program to assist island residents wanting to move to a safer place prior to completion of the new community. The ORA program will be in operation until new homes are built or purchased.

PHASE II

Community Meeting 3: July 1, 2017

The objectives of this community meeting were: 1) to provide information and answer questions about potential resettlement sites and the site selection process; 2) to work towards a consensus on residential preference of site selection; and 3) to launch the newly-established Optional Relocation Assistance Program. Eighty-one people attended Community Meeting 3, including current and former IDJC residents, several news outlets, representatives from local NGOs, and leadership of the IDJC Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Tribe and the United Houma Nation. Attendees reviewed maps of the proposed potential resettlement sites and their configurations. Unfortunately, not every resident was able to attend the meeting and/or submit their surveys. Therefore, a consensus on which site to choose could not be reached at that time. There was, however, a robust discussion with many current residents and other meeting attendees asking questions and weighing in on the potential sites.

Community Meeting 4: December 9, 2017

Held at the Isle de Jean Charles fire station, this meeting was a platform to share with the nearly 80 attendees about progress on site selection and policy development. Community members had an opportunity to offer feedback on individual residences in the new site, criteria for the property design, and guiding principles for the new community. Contact information of potential beneficiaries and further information on the ORA program were also exchanged. Take-aways from this meeting include learning more about the residents' thoughts surrounding the island's future, the need for assurances for maintaining island properties, thinking about the need to consider short and long term development, and greater awareness of how those affected are anxious that the resettlement appears to be moving slowly. Next steps following this meeting included founding the steering committee, determining island ownership options with HUD, gathering together specifics of design preferences, and planning a community workshop for site development.

Inaugural Steering Committee Meeting: January 29, 2018

The first steering committee meeting focused on the goals of the resettlement process, discussion of steering committee roles and responsibilities, and review of overarching options available to members of the island community. Next steps included development of a fact sheet for community members including projected living expenses for those opting to move to the new community, more details about options for island residents who moved away prior to Hurricane Isaac, a presentation of the project's overall budget, and a delineation of potential community governance models. The second half of each steering committee meeting presentation was followed by a larger group discussion.

Inaugural Academic Advisory Committee: February 21, 2018

This first meeting allowed for members to introduce themselves and discuss their roles, expectations and responsibilities. They received an overview of the project as well as a presentation on the 10 guiding principles of resettlement. An overall background and overview of the IDJC resettlement was presented by the project team, followed by a larger discussion on the effort.

Steering Committee Meeting 2: February 26, 2018

Held in Pointe-aux-Chenes, the project team provided updates on recent expenditures for the resettlement project and laid out the frameworks of both old and new HUD CDBG guidelines relevant to the IDJC resettlement process.

Enter into Option on the Evergreen Property: March 5, 2018

The state entered into an Option-to-Purchase Agreement with the owners of the new community site preferred by island residents. The negotiated purchase price was \$11.7 million. This triggered an initial due diligence period during which the state obtained environmental clearances before choosing to execute the option and purchase the property. The initial option period was 210 calendar days, for a cost of \$150,000. Regulatory clearances were not completed within 210 days, and the option period was extended another 90 days, for a sum of \$25,000. The costs associated with the option and extensions were credited toward the final purchase price.

Interviews with island residents and participants in the ORA Program: Summer 2018

Interviews were conducted with island residents and households enrolled in the ORA Program to garner input about home design and gauge interest in moving to the new site after its development. The interviews also provided oral accounts of the island's past. Finally, residents outlined concerns and ideas for the resettlement process. Initial interviews were structured and follow-up interviews were often more unstructured as informed by the preliminary interviews.

Academic Advisory Committee Meeting 2: May 24, 2018

The second meeting allowed for members to delve deeper into the cultural and historical complexities of the island.

Steering Committee Meeting 3: July 23, 2018

The project team shared information with members on the resettlement's planning progress, updates on recent expenditures, eligibility requirements to be housed in the new community, answers to questions brought up in previous meetings, options for future design workshops, and frameworks for program policies guiding the resettlement.

Community Meeting 5/Design Workshop 1: May 4 - 5, 2018

This weekend design workshop consisted of a day and a half of interviews with island residents on design aspects of the new site and included a Sunday open house for members of the public to provide their input. Topics discussed were 'your land,' 'your home,' 'your community' and 'your economy.' Through the interviews and open house, project team members heard about community members' preference for seclusion, self-sufficiency, access to water and marshes, workspaces near the home, economic opportunities and reduced energy use. The site plans evolved following this workshop and incorporated this new feedback from community members.

Steering Committee Meeting 4: May 21, 2018

Held at the Pointe-aux-Chenes fire station, this meeting focused on mortgage parameters regarding new community and on-island property, as well as the nonprofit management model for public spaces in the new community. Options A, B, C and D for program assistance were also discussed. The design team also shared take aways from Design Workshop 1, including desires for individual homes, properties, public spaces and commercial development.

Design Workshop 2: June 29, 2018

Conducted by project team members, two workshops were held on June 2 in two different locations. The morning workshop was conducted on the island and the afternoon workshop was held in Houma to accommodate residents living in housing furnished through the ORA program. It was an opportunity for the design team to learn more about community design priorities for the resettlement.

Community Calls: Summer and Fall 2018

The project team held conference calls to update the broader circle of project stakeholders regarding issues discussed in Steering Committee meetings, and address concerns or questions raised on the calls.

Steering Committee Meeting 5: July 23, 2018

This Steering Committee meeting provided an opportunity to discuss residential design concepts, findings from geological investigations and topographical surveys on the Evergreen site and preliminary findings from the market study informing economic development in the new community.

Academic Advisory Committee Meeting 3: August 23, 2018

At this meeting, project team members solicited suggestions from the academic committee on three different policy issues. First, they discussed projected costs of living for residents moving to the new site and looked for ways to offset increased expenses. Second, they reviewed the mortgage that would protect island residents' continued use of on-island property. Third, they considered ideas about constituting the new community as a 501(c)(3) responsible for property management and community governance after residents move into their new homes.

Steering Committee Meeting 6: September 23, 2018

At the sixth Steering Committee meeting, members had questions about mortgages and mechanisms within the new community designed to generate revenue and defray costs of living for residents. Members asked for complete copies of policy documents and requested legal counsel for those who would be making decisions about whether or not to move.

UHN and BCCM Tribal Council Meetings: October 8, 2018

Members of the resettlement team met separately with members of the BCCM and UHN tribal councils to address concerns they had for island tribal members who may choose to participate in the resettlement. Additional discussion focused on development of working agreements and schedules and standards for communication moving forward.

Purchase of Evergreen Property: December 28, 2018

The Louisiana Land Trust, on behalf of the state, purchased the Evergreen site, 508 acres of farmland near Schriever in Terrebonne Parish, to serve as the resettlement site for the residents of Isle de Jean Charles. The site selection involved extensive research, including more than 20 separate site evaluations, technical analysis and input from island residents and other potential resettlement participants, who overwhelmingly preferred this site. The state had previously received environmental clearance for the acquisition under the regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.



Academic Advisory Committee Meeting: January 14, 2019

In this meeting, members met in New Orleans to discuss the property purchase. Members additionally discussed findings from interviews conducted with the project team to inform the 'lessons learned' process evaluation of Phase II. The group also discussed ways to continue communication with members of BCCM and UHN tribal leadership.

Site Plan Submitted to Terrebonne Parish Planning Commission: February 4, 2019

Following extensive information gathering from the Isle de Jean Charles community and thorough due diligence on the Evergreen site, the design team submitted 35% design plans for the new community development to the Terrebonne Parish Planning Commission.

Receiving Community Open House: February 19, 2019

Following a week of door-to-door visits to about 100 households, the resettlement team hosted an open house for neighbors in the vicinity of the Evergreen site. More than 70 community members attended. The project team presented a quick overview of the resettlement program and more details about the planning of the resettlement community as well as addressed questions and concerns from neighbors regarding the development.

Planning Commission Public Hearing: February 21, 2019

The Master Plan for the new Isle de Jean Charles community development near Schriever received unanimous approval from the Terrebonne Parish Planning Commission.

Option A/D Open House: March 9, 2019

After finalizing policies for Options A and D, program participation for island residents and those displaced since Hurricane Isaac, the project team invited eligible families to an open house at the Pointe-aux-Chenes fire station. The team presented key elements of resettlement options, policy and design. Community members asked questions about eligibility, land tenure, drainage and building design.

Receiving Community Site Visits and Drainage Discussions: Summer 2019

The project team toured the Evergreen site with receiving community residents. The team also hosted a meeting at Terrebonne's North Branch Library to present information regarding projected stormwater runoff following the new site's development. This information illustrated that runoff would be reduced about 30-40% after the new community is developed.

Community Meeting 6: On November 21, 2019

OCD held a community meeting for Option B applicants and eligible participants. OCD updated participants that it would no longer be required for homeowners participating in the resettlement to place a mortgage on their island property. This prompted a lengthy and robust discussion. OCD reviewed the updated timeline, site plan and available Option A floor plans with meeting participants. Program policies and legal documents, such as the Homeowners Assistance Agreement were provided for participants to review on their own or with attorneys from Southeast Louisiana Legal Services at that time or to make an appointment for related free legal services. Finally, residents chose the names of the new community's streets as well its new name: "The New Isle."



APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Outreach and Engagement

Listening

Developing meaningful, trusting relationships with the Isle de Jean Charles community required a nuanced understanding of the various individuals, households and constituencies making up the community, so that necessary information can be shared using the most appropriate and effective means possible. Transparency, trust and collaboration between the community and the resettlement team are critical to the program's success. Prioritizing these traits as well as inclusiveness, accountability and accessibility are essential tools for collaboration with residents in purposeful and effective ways. The following section outlines the various methods and processes by which outreach and engagement goals were achieved. The outreach team:

- Developed outreach materials, dissemination methods and engagement activities tailored to target audiences;
- Ensured that residents had access to up-to-date, high-quality information enabling them to provide meaningful input and to make decisions about their participation in the resettlement process;
- Facilitated robust, community-driven collaboration on the design of the resettlement site;
- Ensured that outreach and engagement efforts were characterized by inclusiveness, transparency, accessibility, accuracy and timeliness;
- Produced materials to keep the public informed of progress and major milestones.

The importance of outreach and engagement to the overall success of the resettlement cannot be overstated. Even in ideal circumstances, the resettlement is challenging due to the complexity of the issues involved and the unprecedented nature of much of the work required. Without an informed community and subsequent support from many different stakeholders, success will be unlikely. Therefore, it is critical that island residents, the broader IDJC community and the general public be thoroughly informed and engaged in guiding the resettlement process and shaping its end results.

Resettlements are always location-specific and context-dependent. Because of this, and within the context of a unique set of circumstances that are socially, environmentally and legally complex, neither the Isle de Jean Charles community nor the state would be best served by a traditional planning approach to outreach and engagement in achieving desired outcomes for the people of Isle de Jean Charles.

Because the history of the island and its people is long and complex, because of the multitude of ways the island's residents have been affected by the prospect of resettlement in recent years, and because of the many studies, stories, reports and documentaries about the island and its people, connecting with the island's residents and the broader IDJC community requires extraordinary effort and dedication to cultivating a high level of mutual understanding.

Storytelling is a central part of how we understand our own lives and the lives of others. Storytelling allows for individual and collective expression of a broad and complex series of events, experiences, perspectives, emotions and relationships that occur and evolve over time. The resettlement team has sought out and documented the stories of the island's residents to better understand their experiences and perspectives.

The resettlement process is sensitive and, in many ways, unprecedented. Further, the success of this resettlement depends heavily upon the effectiveness of outreach and engagement efforts. Therefore, it is essential to have a dynamic feedback and evaluation process in place that will allow the project team to monitor the effectiveness of their efforts incrementally based on outcomes and ongoing feedback from residents and community members, and to make course corrections if and when needed.

STEERING COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

Major Topics and Agenda Items

Significant Findings

With a commitment to transparency, the project team worked with Steering Committee members to shape all aspects of the resettlement’s planning effort. The first three meetings focused on CDBG-NDR grant parameters and the island’s continued access. At the fourth meeting, the focus shifted to concentrate efforts on the new community’s design. The fifth and sixth meetings were important venues for discussing concerns and barriers for prospective residents of the new community, as well as continued refinement of the new community’s design and governance models. Below are key take aways gleaned from the Steering Committee meeting series:

- Desire not to relocate the on-island cemetery
- Need for future access to the island and commitment to maintain current property ownership
- Sizing of lots within the new community to mimic space and form of original island
- Infusion of cultural and historical attributes of the island within the new community’s design
- Importance of generating sources of revenue in the new community to offset cost of living for residents

Steering Committee Meeting 3

April 16, 2018

- Review current budget
- Questions and answers from Steering Committee Meeting 2
- New community ownership model
- Housing assistance groups
- Design workshop input

Steering Committee Meeting 4

May 21, 2018

- Review current budget
- Questions and answers from Steering Committee Meeting 3
- New community ownership model
- Housing assistance groups
- Design workshop input
- New community conceptual design

Steering Committee Meeting 5

July 23, 2018

- Site development timeline
- Design
- File sharing access
- Current project budget
- Steering Committee Meeting 4 updates

Steering Committee Meeting 6

September 24, 2018

- Current project budget
- Development timeline
- Program update
- BCCM design letter
- EPA grant
- File sharing access

Steering Committee Meeting 1

January 29, 2018

- Welcome and introductions
- Resettlement goals
- Roles and responsibilities
- Resettlement program options and questions

Steering Committee Meeting 2

February 26, 2018

- Review current budget
- How can grant funds be used on the island?
- Questions and answers from Steering Committee Meeting 1
- Discuss ownership options for the island and new community
- Define Option B eligibility parameters



PROGRAM GUIDELINES & PARAMETERS

Eligibility Requirements for Prospective Program Participants

Policies

Several policy documents were drafted over the course of Phase II with input from the Resettlement's Steering Committee. These documents outline different aspects of the program, including Options A-D dealing with real estate disposition within the new community as well as an option for eligible applicants to receive housing apart from settling in the new community. Of particular note, in a departure from past CDBG-funded programs, participation in the resettlement is not contingent upon a buyout. In other words, no one must give up their island home or property to receive assistance through the resettlement. This was enacted in order for property owners to have continued access to the island for as long as possible for ceremonial, cultural, historical and recreational purposes.



MEETING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

Optional Relocation Assistance Program

Programs

The Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement Optional Relocation Assistance Program is a needs-based, voluntary program intended to help fulfill two main goals of the overarching IDJC Resettlement Program: “the provision of housing, for all income groups, that is disaster-resistant, including optional relocation” and to “minimize displacement of persons or entities, and assist any persons or entities displaced.” The Program was launched in July 2017 in response to concerns expressed by a number of island residents during Phase I discussions. The concerns included anxiety surrounding Island Road flooding, access to medical care, ability to attend school or work due to road flooding, hurricane season and other distresses. Through this program, any current, primary IDJC residents and IDJC households displaced since August 28, 2012, and who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, were eligible for interim housing in a safer location within Terrebonne Parish.

The ORA program is administered by the Louisiana Housing Corporation in conjunction with the Office of Community Development and Start Corporation, a 501(c)(3) providing supportive housing, case management and residential services.

Participants in the ORA Program must renew and be re-evaluated for eligibility every 12 months. The benefits of the program are offered for a maximum of 42 months. House selection and maximum rent eligibility is determined by size of household per HUD regulations. Households could also receive financial assistance for moving, with levels of assistance also determined by number of persons within the household. Maximum rental assistance was set at 110% of fair market rent, recalibrated each year to market values.

National Objectives

As an integral part of regulations governing the CDBG-NDR funds awarded to the state for the IDJC resettlement, the ORA Program is designed to give island residents an opportunity to move off the island to a higher, drier, safer location while the new community is under development. The ORA Program meets two of the three national objectives of CDBG-NDR funds – benefiting low- and moderate-income persons and meeting an urgent need.

Between the start of the program in July 2017 and March 2019, 20 households chose to move into pre-existing homes in Terrebonne Parish. The Program will remain open until residents begin moving into their new homes within the community.

MEETING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS (OPTIONS A & D)

Permanent Relocation and Housing Incentive Program

Future Uses of On-Island Property

Since the resettlement is federally funded with CDBG funds allocated from HUD, it is subject to a specific set of laws and rules. The state's application argued that high-risk conditions on the island make it unsafe for habitation—a position HUD agreed with in awarding the grant to the state. It is neither necessary nor reasonable to use federal funds to relocate families from high-risk properties, only to have those families return to those high-risk properties for residential purposes in the future. Not only would this place them in harm's way, it would also create a potential need for more disaster recovery funding in the future.

That said, the island holds an important sense of place for its current and former residents. As such, it is critical to allow property owners continued access to the island for ceremonial, cultural, historical and recreational purposes. Therefore, in order to comply with HUD requirements and respect the desires of the islanders, the state has created an approach that allows owners continued ownership of and access to their island properties. This approach allows existing structures to remain intact while ensuring the properties are not used for residential purposes or future redevelopment. This is an innovative solution and a significant departure from traditional HUD-funded relocation programs, which require vacated land to become permanent open space.

To participate in the resettlement, individuals with an ownership interest in an on-island property must agree to certain terms contained within their mortgage agreement attached to their new community property. This legal commitment will allow program participants continued use of the on-island property for nonresidential purposes. The mortgage is nonpayable except in cases of default, and remains in effect until it is fully forgiven after a five-year compliance period.



The mortgage for the new home will require participants to agree to the following restrictions related to on-island property:

- On-island property will only be used for ceremonial, cultural, historical and recreational purposes (i.e., as a camp).
- "Recreational use" means use of property for fishing, camping, hiking, sightseeing, boating or other outdoor recreational purposes. Recreational use shall include use of property as a personal, non-commercial "camp" or as a "fishing camp" as those terms are defined in the building codes and ordinances for Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana.
- Participants will not rent or lease on-island property.
- Participants will not convey, dispose of, sell or otherwise transfer on-island property to any person or entity.
- Participants will not make or permit any major repairs, renovations or improvements to the property.

If a participating owner defaults on the mortgage or fails to comply with the terms agreed to within the mortgage and does not remedy the default within the allowable period, the state or its designee may pursue foreclosure of the participant's home and property within the new community. All program participants, including former and current island residents who do not have an ownership interest in on-island property, must enter into a personal grant agreement that limits their current or future use of any island property that he or she may later obtain an ownership interest in to nonresidential purposes only.

Primary objective for on-island properties:

- Prevent demolition of the on-island property
- Provide continued ownership and use of on-island properties for recreational, cultural and historical purposes (i.e., as camps)
- Prevent on-island property (of program participants) from being used as primary residences or being further developed



MEETING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS (OPTION A)

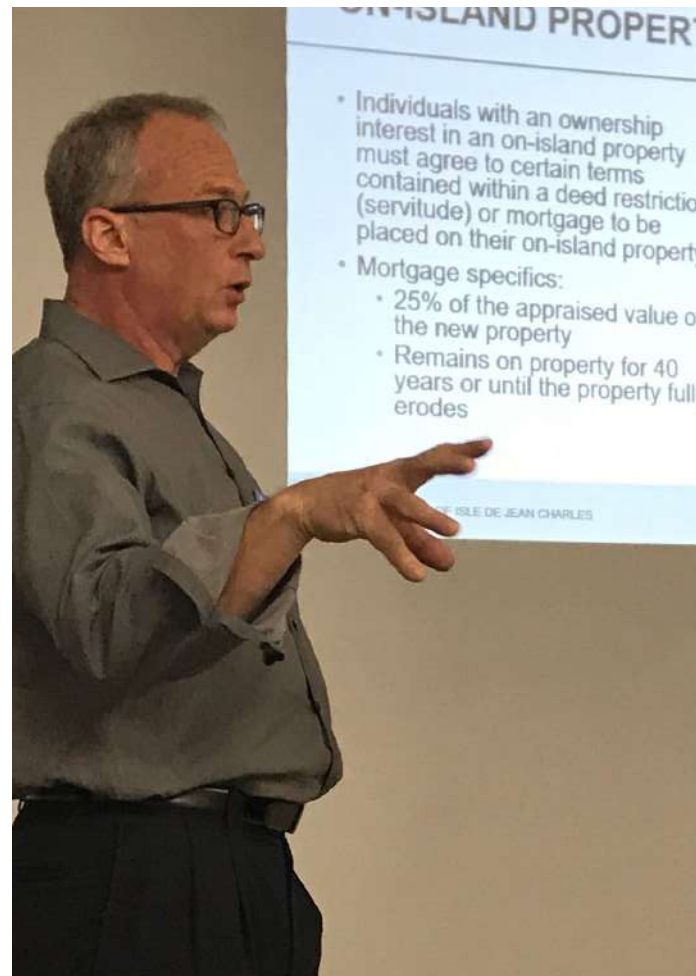
Additional Requirements Within the New Community

To participate in the resettlement, individuals with an ownership interest in an on-island property must agree to certain terms. Individuals who choose to participate in the program by moving into the newly developed IDJC community (Option A) will sign a grant agreement, and a mortgage to secure the grant agreement will be placed on the new home.

The mortgage contains the following terms and conditions regarding property within the new community:

- The mortgage will be valued at 100% of the appraised value of the new community property.
- The mortgage will carry zero interest.
- The mortgage will be forgiven at a rate of 20% (1/5) per year until the obligation is met.
- The participant is required to occupy the home as his or her primary residence for at least five years.
- Homeowner(s) must move into and make these homes their primary residences within 60 days of closing.
- Homeowner(s) must keep property taxes current and maintain both homeowners and flood insurance on the new homes as part of the mortgage requirements.
- Homeowner(s) will not be required to make any payments if they comply with program requirements.

If the new home is transferred via cash sale prior to conclusion of the 5-year occupancy period, the balance of the unforgiven portion of the mortgage will be due and payable at time of closing. The balance of the mortgage is forgiven in the event of the death(s) of all awarded homeowners.



AN ALTERNATIVE OPTION (OPTION D)

Existing Home in Louisiana

Individuals who choose to purchase a qualifying home in Louisiana, outside of the currently recognized 100-year floodplain, but apart from the newly developed IDJC community (Option D), will sign a grant agreement and a mortgage securing the grant agreement that will be placed on the home.

The mortgage on Option D property will contain the following terms:

- The mortgage will be valued at 100% of the appraised value of the property.
- The mortgage will carry zero interest.
- Homeowner(s) will not be required to make any payments if they comply with program requirements.
- The mortgage will be forgiven at a rate of 20% (1/5) per year until the obligation is met.
- The participant is required to occupy the home as his or her primary residence for at least five years.
- Homeowner(s) must move into and make these homes their primary residence within 60 days of closing.
- Homeowner(s) must keep property taxes current and maintain both homeowners and flood insurance on the new homes as part of the mortgage requirements.

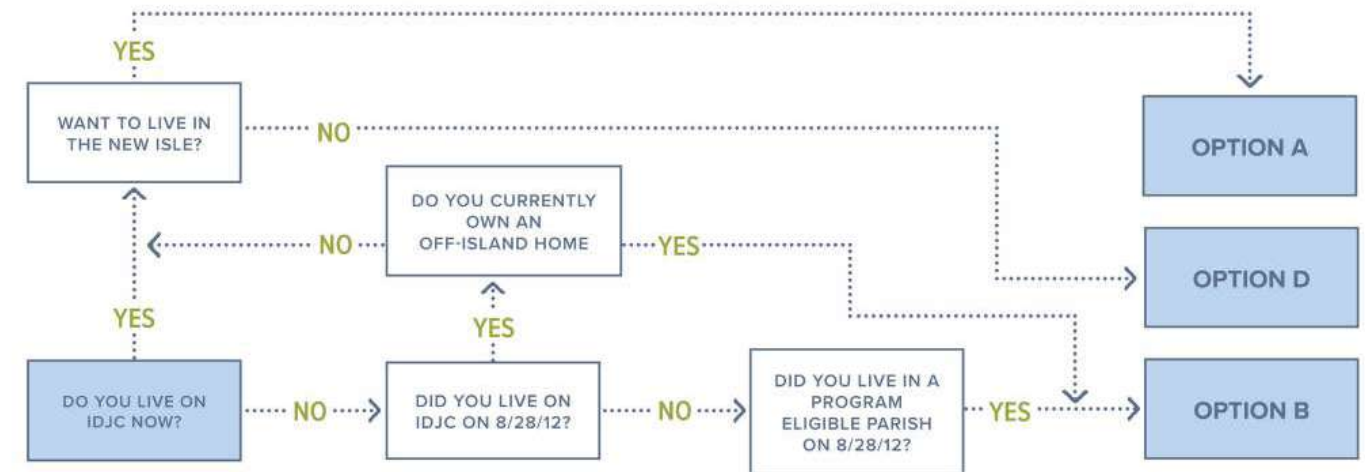
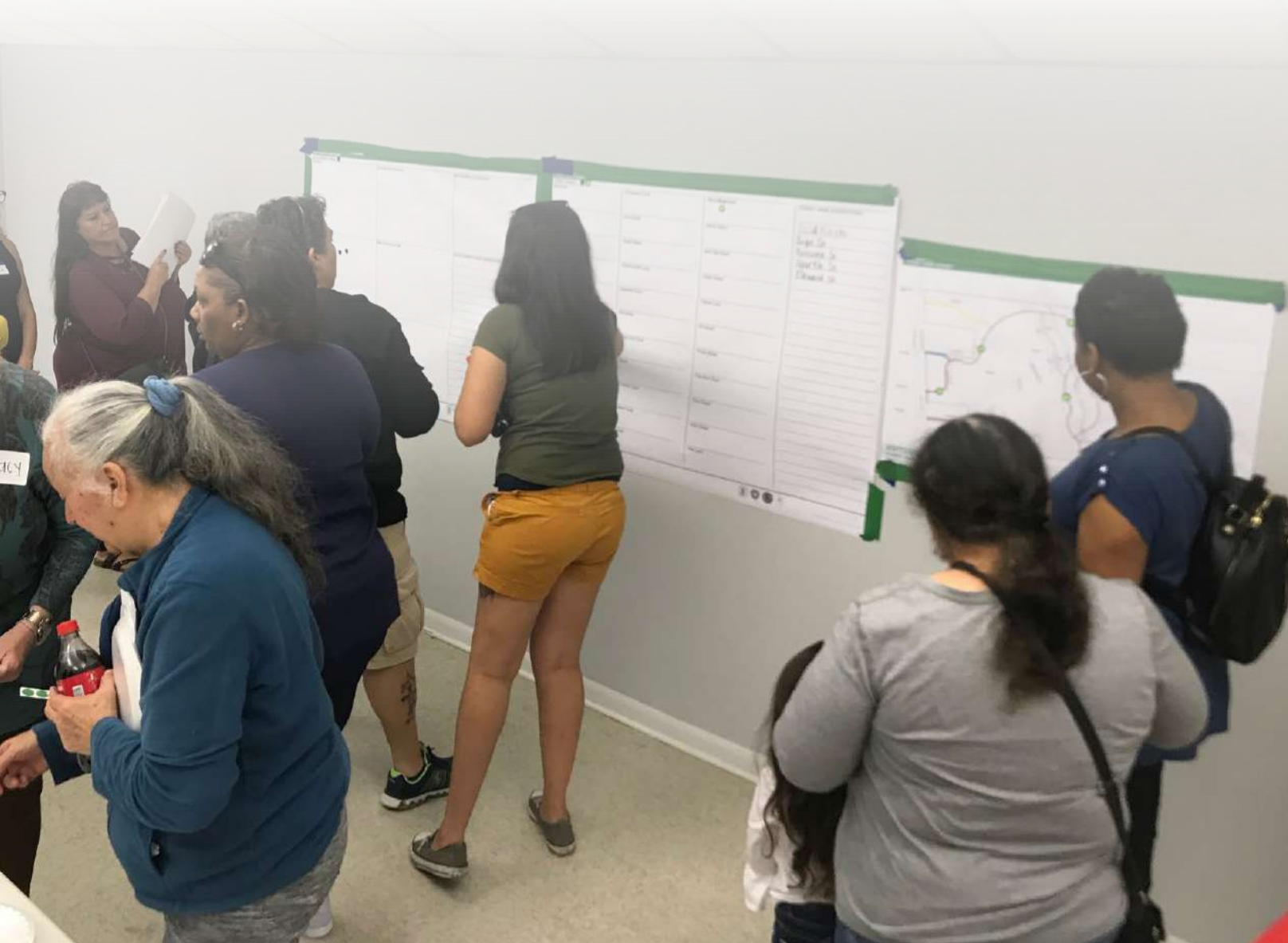
If the replacement home is transferred via cash sale prior to conclusion of the 5-year occupancy period, the balance of the unforgiven portion of the mortgage will be due and payable at time of closing. The balance of the mortgage is forgiven in the event of the death(s) of all awarded homeowners.

THIS IS ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE REQUIREMENTS.

OPTION B

An Option Open to Past Island Residents

Placement within the new community is first available to residents currently living on the island and those displaced since Hurricane Isaac's landfall in 2012 who do not own an off-island home (Option A). The state also anticipates that former permanent island residents displaced before Hurricane Isaac will be able to rejoin the IDJC community at the new site, if they lived in a federally-declared disaster parish at the time of Hurricane Isaac (Option B). If properties remain in the new community after all eligible Option A and Option B participants are exhausted, properties will be disposed of in a manner consistent with CDBG requirements while taking community needs into consideration (Option C).



A NEW HOME IN THE NEW ISLE	AN EXISTING HOME IN LOUISIANA	AN IMPROVED LOT IN THE NEW ISLE
<p>AVAILABLE BENEFIT</p> <p>Eligible households will receive a new home built at the resettlement site.</p>	<p>AVAILABLE BENEFIT</p> <p>Eligible households will receive funding toward an existing home within Louisiana that meets program standards, is located outside the currently recognized 100-year floodplain and is separate from the resettlement site.</p>	<p>AVAILABLE BENEFIT</p> <p>Eligible households will receive an improved lot within the resettlement site that is ready for construction. The program will support residents in identifying potential financing options—as needed—to build a home on the resettlement site.</p>
<p>ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</p> <p>Current permanent, primary residents on the island.</p> <p>— or —</p> <p>Past permanent, primary residents who lived on the island on Aug. 28, 2012 (Hurricane Isaac), have been displaced since that time and do not currently own an off-island home.</p>	<p>ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</p> <p>Current permanent, primary residents on the island.</p> <p>— or —</p> <p>Past permanent, primary residents who lived on the island on Aug. 28, 2012 (Hurricane Isaac), have been displaced since that time and do not currently own an off-island home.</p>	<p>ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</p> <p>Past permanent, primary residents who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were displaced from the island before Aug. 28, 2012 (Hurricane Isaac), and lived in a program eligible parish at the time of the storm. • Were displaced on or after Aug. 28, 2012, and currently owns an off-island home. • Lived in a program eligible parish on Aug. 28, 2012, and lived on the island after that time. <p>In addition, Option B participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must demonstrate financial ability to build a new home at the resettlement site. The program will support participants in identifying potential financing options. • Will be prioritized based on when they lived on the island.

ANOTHER VOICE

Project Guidance

Participate in the Planning Process

Starting the summer of 2018, Dr. Whyte joined the Phase II planning team. He participated in Project updates calls monthly and personally made two site visits. During both visits, he met at length with project personnel to advise on the best practices for engaging the two state-recognized tribal entities with which island residents identify, the IDJC Band of Biloxi, Choctaw and Chitimacha Indians (BCCM Tribe) and the United Houma Nation, UHN.

Provide Guidance

One of the key facets was to provide guidance on best practices for how the IDJC Resettlement Project and the two state-recognized tribal entities would participate. He worked to curate historical, legal and other documents for the project team that would help them better understand some of the background information about the two tribes. The background information included the tribes' histories, cultures, organizational statuses and records of interactions regarding the topic of island resettlement.

Facilitate Meetings

Dr. Whyte communicated regularly with the two steering committee members representing the BCCM and UHN tribes (Comardelle and Chaisson) and with different combinations of the leadership of both tribes. Throughout these communications, he learned about the significance of the resettlement project for the future plans of both tribes.

During his communications with the steering committee members and tribal leaders, five topics stood out as ones that could be part of a framework to support greater communication between the tribes and IDJC resettlement project.

The framework would advance the Project's commitment to regular communication with the tribes. The framework incorporates the resettlement goals established early in the process, including the goal to facilitate preservation and continuity of islanders' diverse cultural identities and traditions.

Framework Topics:

1. Economic flourishing and good health for the residents (now and into the future);
2. How the design of the new community protects the continuance of tribal cultures;
3. Tribal leadership advice on how best to form and implement the governance structure of the new community;
4. Key issues to be addressed by the environmental and archaeological assessments of the new community's lands/waters; and
5. What happens to the island itself after the resettlement process is complete.



Kyle Powys Whyte, PhD

The Timnick Chair in the Humanities and a professor in the departments of Philosophy and Community Sustainability at Michigan State University. Dr. Whyte's research addresses moral and political issues concerning climate policy and Indigenous peoples and the ethics of cooperative relationships between Indigenous peoples and science organizations. Certificated by the United Nations Institute of Training and Research, Dr. Whyte is trained in Conflict Prevention and Peacemaking Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives.

In-Person Meetings

In October 2018 Dr. Whyte organized an in-person meeting with each tribe, and key members of the project team. Both tribes informed and agreed to the agendas for the meeting in advance. Two major goals of the meetings were to create a dialogue between the project team and both tribes and to investigate whether initial working agreements were possible that would set a schedule and standards of communication moving forward. The meetings resulted in feedback from the tribes about what communication they expected from the project team and how the tribes would follow through in the future in their interactions with the project team.

Next Steps

Dr. Whyte concluded that the project team's commitment to cooperate with the two tribes seeks to fulfill Louisiana's policy toward state-recognized tribes. Going forward, key staff will determine exactly how to communicate with both tribal entities during the implementation of Phase III.





SITE SELECTION & ANALYSIS

Starting With the Land

Just as it is essential to fully understand the needs of IDJC community members, it is critical to understand the possibilities and constraints of The New Isle site. In the design and development of the new community, the resettlement team undertook a rigorous analysis of the site and the environmental and economic conditions that influence its potential use. The site offers a diverse set of development opportunities that may provide economic value and contribute to the new residents' quality of life in significant ways.

The new community will be much more than simply a residential neighborhood. Beyond providing a higher, drier and safer homeland, the new community must also become a cultural beacon reuniting families and friends previously displaced from the island. As a physical development, the new community will feature low-impact development techniques, facilitate revenue-generating opportunities benefitting the community, provide access to vital services, and enhance current and future employment opportunities for residents. In short, it will be a holistic community development.

The site analysis included a rigorous assessment of the natural environment and how the land has been altered over time. This laid the foundation for how historical site features and functions of existing natural areas and waterways can be maximized in support of the new development. The site analysis also contemplated future community uses, such as access and drive times to vital services, adjacent uses, utilities, topography, floodplains, soils analysis and transportation access, among others.

To complement the site analysis, the market analysis delved into the economic conditions that influence the site's development possibilities. This included an analysis of regional trends in housing and commercial real estate, employment changes, population and demographic changes, and the macroeconomic trends that influence the area. As the market analysis found, elevated homes with lower flood risk and located within walking distance of amenities are ideal, and exemplify the type of adaptive lifestyle the new community seeks to embody.

SITE SELECTION

Location, Location, Location

Data Gathering

(June 2016 – November 2017)

During the site selection phase, the team gathered information on more than 20 parcels throughout Terrebonne Parish and several tracts in lower Lafourche Parish. The team then conducted site tours with Isle de Jean Charles stakeholders and residents. Suitable tracts were presented to the residents at Community Meeting 3 and a site preference survey was conducted for residents to voice their opinion on which site should be acquired.

As a result of the site evaluations and technical analysis, island residents' input and the site preference survey, consensus was reached to move forward with a real estate option to purchase the Evergreen Site (508 acres in Terrebonne Parish on the east side of La. Hwy. 24.) The option to purchase was subject to and contingent upon securing environmental clearance for proposed development work on the selected site under the regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The Evergreen Site was originally offered as a single large acreage tract with two parcels, including a 570-acre tract to the east of La. Hwy. 24, along with a 119-acre parcel located to the west of La. Hwy. 24. The project team decided that the acreage to the west of La. Hwy. 24, the 119-acre tract, was not needed for the resettlement. Subsequent to this decision, the team negotiated the potential purchase of a third 508-acre configuration.

Following the conclusion of this negotiation, the team commissioned appraisals and surveys, and contacted tenants on the Evergreen site in accordance with Uniform Relocation Act guidelines.



Preference Surveys

(June 2017 – February 2018)

Community Meeting 3 focused on the pros and cons of the potential tracts and engaged the residents of the island in a site preference survey. Presentation boards provided information on each of the various sites' location, size, appraised value, asking price, elevation, flood risk and available utilities. This information gave meeting attendees a base of information with which they could deliberate which tract would make the best site for a viable and resilient resettled community.

After an initial presentation, residents reviewed in detail the presentation boards, as well as handouts, and they conversed amongst themselves in an effort to build consensus and completed prepared site preference survey forms. To gauge the interest for each of the suitable sites, site preference surveys were handed out to island residents before and after Community Meeting 3. Many of the residents did not complete the preference survey prior to the meeting, so OCD continued to collect site preference surveys from all forty households on Isle de Jean Charles for two weeks after the meeting to determine which site island residents most preferred.

As a result of this effort, 36 of the of the 40 household surveys were returned to the resettlement team. The preference surveys required the Isle de Jean Charles residents to rank their most preferred sites from 1 to 5, with 1 being their first choice and 5 being their last choice. The residents' preference surveys showed a clear preference for one of the Evergreen Site configurations. Nineteen residents' surveys selected Evergreen Site Configuration-A as their first choice and nine surveys selected it as their second choice. Nine residents' surveys selected Evergreen Site Configuration-B as their first choice with eighteen residents selecting it as their second choice.



DUE DILIGENCE

Starting from the Ground Up

Early in the planning and design process for the new community, a desktop due diligence assessment of the Evergreen Site was performed. The assessment provided an overview of existing site conditions, adjacent off-site context, and potential land use and development considerations. The information presented in the assessment was gathered from available online resources, the previous property owner, on-site reconnaissance and existing Terrebonne Parish development regulations.

In addition to the desktop assessment, the team made additional visits to the new community site to observe the site during different situations and collect additional on-site data.

Site analysis activities performed by the team included:

Terrebonne Parish subdivision regulations

Boundary and topographic survey

Phase I Environmental Site Assessment

Cultural resource survey

Geotechnical analysis

Wetland delineation

Stormwater modeling

Complete reports can be found at www.IsleDeJeanCharles.la.gov

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

A Higher and Drier Home

The new community site is located along La. Hwy. 24 in northern Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana, and encompasses about 508 acres located between Thibodaux in Lafourche Parish and Houma in Terrebonne Parish. The site is within 10-to-15 miles of most services and amenities.

The topography of the site is fairly flat, with an average slope of 1.5%. The site's highest point has an elevation of 14 feet above sea level and is located in the northwest corner, near La. Hwy. 24 and Bayou Terrebonne. The lowest point is on the eastern edge of the property near South Waterplant Road and has an elevation of five feet. There are three existing main water features within the new community site: Bayou St. Louis, Bayou Blue and approximately 91 acres of jurisdictional wetlands. Bayous St. Louis and Blue traverse the site from north to south, while the wetlands generally hug Bayou St. Louis, located near the center of the site.

The new community site has been used for agricultural purposes since its first recorded development in the 1800s. Adjacent and nearby land uses include agricultural, single-family residential, commercial, light industrial and institutional.

No Recognized Environmental Conditions were discovered during the Phase I ESA. An associated Cultural Resources Investigation recorded four areas containing potential cultural remains. As such, the resettlement team opted to avoid disturbance of those areas, as reflected in the new community's master site plan.

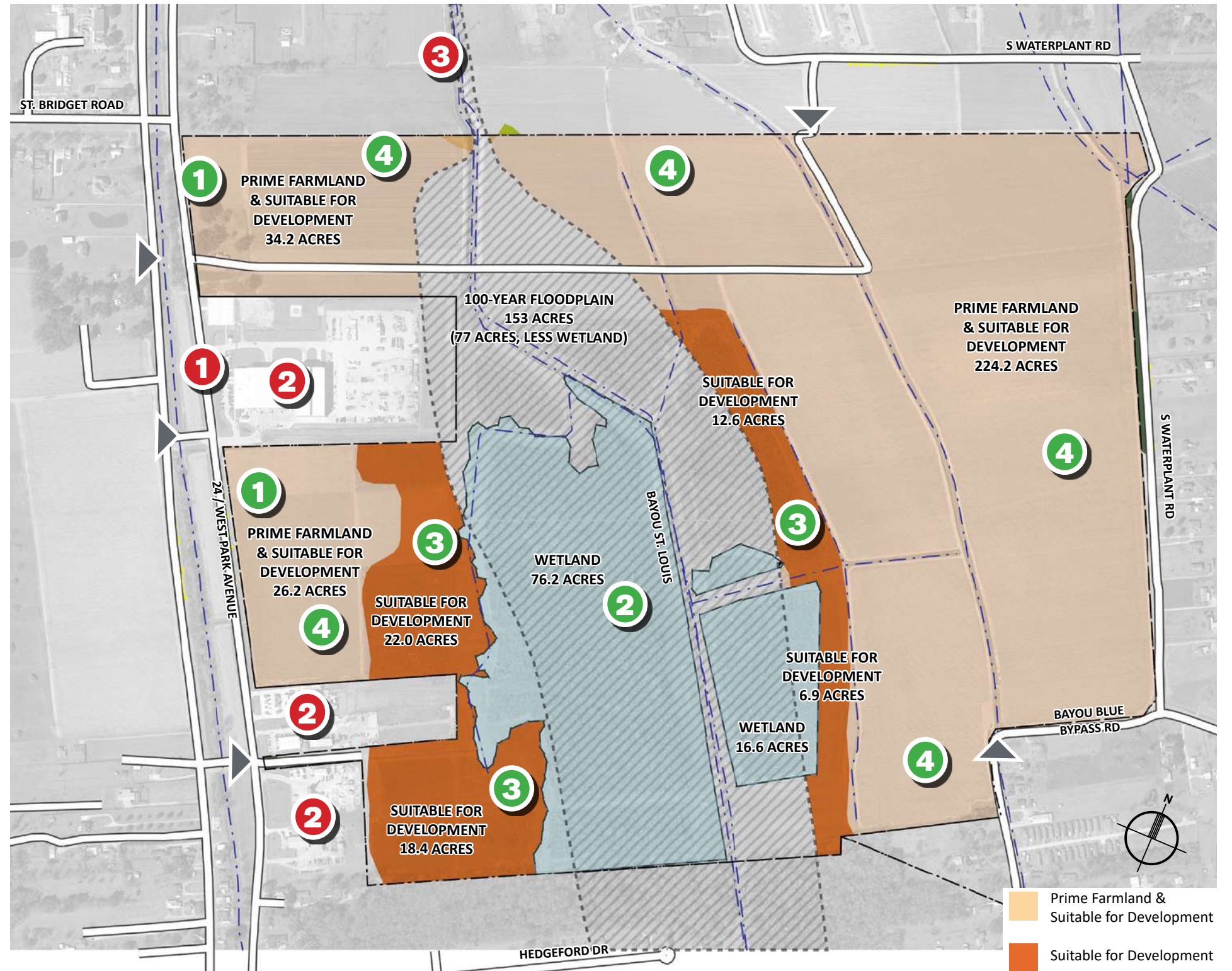
ACCESSING DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Maximizing Opportunity

- 1** The areas along La. Hwy. 24/West Park Avenue provide the best options for commercial development with frontage on a major roadway between Thibodaux and Houma. There are existing industrial/commercial buildings adjacent to the new site. It may be possible to purchase additional land along La. Hwy. 24 in the median between the northbound road and Bayou Terrebonne.
- 2** The existing wetland area within the project site is currently wooded with young (10 to 20-year) tree growth. This area is secluded from development along West Park Avenue and is buffered in certain locations by surrounding sugar cane fields. The mature sugar cane provides a visual and noise buffer adding to the sense of seclusion. In addition, the wetland area is adjacent to Bayou St. Louis where most of the site drainage discharges to the south.
- 3** Areas adjacent to the existing wetland area, outside the 100-year flood plain, and buffered by the existing agricultural fields of sugar cane provide potential areas for secluded development.
- 4** The existing agricultural farmland has been in agriculture use for the past 200 years. The fertile soil continues to produce beneficial sugar cane crops. This area is also suitable for development as it is outside the 100-year flood plain, existing wetlands, and is adjacent to existing roadways and utilities. The farmland provides a buffer for the internal suite from the commercial road frontage along West Park Avenue and the residential development along South Waterplant Road.

Items of Note:

- 1** La. Hwy. 24/West Park Avenue is a major thoroughfare between Thibodaux and Houma. Business and commuter traffic provides activity for commercial and industrial areas, but could be dangerous for residential areas. The roadway also creates constant noise that can be heard from the site.
- 2** Existing light-industrial development is not compatible with current and future adjacent residential uses.
- 3** Existing large cell tower can be seen from everywhere on site.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mapping Market Trends

One of the goals of the Resettlement is to create a model that is scalable, transferable and supportive of cultural and social networks. As such, one goal of the Master Planning phase is to plan for the full buildout of the development to generate revenue that will support and sustain the new community. Through the planning process, the team identified revenue generating opportunities through real estate development and steering committee recommendations consistent with community goals.

Market Scan

To begin the market feasibility analysis, the team looked at site context, demographic trends and the local residential and retail markets. The review of site context and demographic trends revealed that the new community site is well-positioned for commercial development due to its location along the growing La. Hwy. 24 corridor.

The residential market analysis found that walkable single-family residential and subsidized multi-family residential development on high ground may be feasible on the site. The retail analysis showed a moderately strong retail market and that the new community could target unmet demand for retail by creating a vibrant neighborhood waypoint featuring central green space, local restaurants, and convenience goods.

Potential Site Use Assessment

As the master plan for the new community began to take shape, the team evaluated the potential uses under consideration using four criteria: Physical Conditions, Market Potential, Financial Feasibility and Community/Mission. The wide range of potential uses were grouped into three categories: Agricultural and Natural Resources, Community and Cultural Amenities, and Commercial Real Estate uses. The assessment found that the following potential uses had medium to high feasibility potential:

POTENTIAL USES
▪ Single-family residential
▪ Assisted living facility
▪ Neighborhood retail (collection of small footprint stores to serve residents and employees in the surrounding community and drive through traffic)
▪ Light warehouse and business incubator
▪ Light manufacturing maker space
▪ RV and boat storage

POTENTIAL USES
▪ Sugar cane farm
▪ Native plant nursery
▪ Organic/"boutique" aquaculture
▪ Solar farm
▪ Farmers market
▪ Amphitheater
▪ Museum/cultural facility

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

How Can We Generate Revenue?

Understanding the Trends

The team used the information from the Potential Uses Assessment to further develop a site plan for the new community, which included specific uses with parking, required square footage and unit counts. From the draft plan, the team developed revenue estimates for each use which showed that the new community has the potential to generate more than \$400,000 in revenue using a ground lease structure. A revenue estimating model was created to help guide the master plan process. Potential revenue varies based on grant funding availability.

The table below outlines the potential revenue sources and acres recommended:

USE	SITE PLAN ALLOCATION (BUILDING SF)	DRAFT SITE PLAN ALLOCATION (ACREAGE)*	PARCELS	ANNUAL REVENUE ESTIMATE	TOTAL ANNUAL REVENUE
Assisted Living	72,000	4.4 acres	1	\$9,750 per acre	\$43,000
Light Manufacturing	87,000	7.65 acres	2	\$4,000 per acre	\$31,000
Regional Retail	40,000	4.6 acres	1	\$11,370 per acre	\$52,000
Local Retail	30,000	3.46 acres	1	\$5,685 per acre	\$20,200
Plant Nursery	N/A	15 acres	1	\$180 per acre	\$3,000
Market	7,500	1 acre	1	\$8 per sq ft	\$60,000
RV/Boat Storage	46,000	70 units	1	\$200 per month	\$168,000
Solar Farm	N/A	25 acres	1	N/A	\$300,000
Potential Total Revenue					\$677,000

* Conversion of building square footage estimates to land acreage is based on average building density by use in the Houma-Thibodaux market. Land acreage in this model is used for the purposes of valuing net revenue for each use, but may differ from actual acreage.



ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS

Subsidizing Living Expenses

To completely understand all potential impacts on residents' living expenses, the project team interviewed islanders to establish a baseline understanding of living expenses on the island, for comparison with those expected in The New Isle community. The exercise was intended to inform both the residents who may be interested in moving to the new community and the project team to estimate revenue-generating needs in the new community.

Many island residents live on limited incomes and budgets. Given current island conditions, many island residents do not carry homeowner's or flood insurance policies, and many properties fall under the Homestead Exemption property tax threshold and are not required to pay annual property taxes. Most homes on the island do not carry a mortgage, and insurance coverage is not mandated.

However, once relocated to the new community, residents will be required to hold both a general liability home and flood policy for a minimum of five years. This requirement is imposed by the state, and is intended to ensure the public's investment in the new community is protected. As new community homes will be located outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area and building materials have been selected to maximize durability, insurance premiums in the new community are expected to be economical.

As for property taxes, the new homes together with the individual parcels are expected to be assessed for more than \$250,000. Therefore, when homestead exemptions are transferred to the new community, the estimated property taxes would be \$1,700 dollars annually. The table below outlines the estimated new community living expenses based on a \$250,000 home:

EXPENSE	MONTHLY COST	ANNUAL COST
Home Insurance	\$67	\$800
Flood Insurance	\$41	\$500
Property Taxes	\$142	\$1,700
TOTALS	\$250 +/-	\$3,000 +/-

PROPERTY TAXES:

2018 Estimates

The project team visited the Terrebonne Parish Assessor's website and entered the home evaluation within the tax estimator calculator. The unofficial estimate is used for planning purposes only. Homestead exemption was applied to the estimate.

HOME INSURANCE:

2018 Quote

Average home insurance premiums vary depending on the provider. The project team solicited actual insurance quotes from accredited insurance providers. The providers supplied quotes for residential structure coverage and included additional coverage for small structures. The deductible was set for 1% of the home value.

FLOOD INSURANCE:

2018 Quote

Homes within the new community will be located outside of the SFHA (100-year floodplain). Therefore, the project team solicited actual insurance quotes from accredited insurance providers. The providers supplied quotes for residential structures coverage and an additional \$80,000 for contents.

LIVING IN THE NEW ISLE

Controlling Living Costs

Resident interviews and steering committee discussions not only confirmed the additional expenses projected for the new community, but identified areas of cost savings and where improved conditions are likely to be provided. For example, homes at the new community will be built to a higher efficiency standard and will include natural gas. Years ago, natural gas service was removed from the island and forced the residents to use more electricity. Therefore cost savings are expected in the form of a lower monthly electricity bill. Some may see more than 50% reductions in cost during the hot summer and cold winter months.

ELECTRIC:

Past Entergy Bill

To determine the average monthly electric bill, the project team gathered actual Entergy data from a South Waterplant Road and island resident. The monthly cost will vary depending on weather conditions. The home designs will concentrate on efficiency best practices to combat cost.

CONSOLIDATED WATERWORKS:

Past District Number 1 Bill

The average monthly water, sewer and solid waste bill was determined by the project team after gathering actual Consolidated Waterworks data from a Houma resident. The charges also include Louisiana Department of Health and mosquito fees.

KEY MILESTONE

Evergreen Site Acquired

On December 27, 2018, the Louisiana Land Trust on behalf of the state purchased 508 acres of farmland, known as the Evergreen site, in Schriever, Louisiana. The purchase price was \$11.7 million dollars. The site is located about 40 miles north of the island.

How the State Purchased the Property

The LLT is a nonprofit organization formed to manage the properties that have been purchased by the state under the Road Home Program as part of the ongoing recovery effort from the damage caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

The Louisiana Road Home Corporation Act became effective June 29, 2006, under Senate Bill 445. This act created a nonprofit corporation whose mission is “to finance, own, lease as lessee or lessor, sell, exchange, donate or otherwise hold or transfer a property interest in housing stock damaged by Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita.” This act gave the Road Home Corporation, now known as the LLT, broad powers to receive and dispose of the properties, to accept funds “from any sources” to borrow against these properties and to obtain payment for these obligations and to “enter into any and all agreements” necessary to carry out its mission. This would be done under the guidelines “set forth by the Louisiana Recovery Authority” and governed by a seven-member board of directors.

“TODAY MARKS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE”

“We are one step closer to assisting those residents interested in moving out of harm’s way and into a new community that will provide an improved quality of life,” Pat Forbes, executive director of the Office of Community Development, said. “We look forward to building the community, improving economic opportunities for its residents, facilitating preservation and revitalization of the islanders’ diverse cultural identities and traditions, and establishing a model of successful resettlement that can be replicated elsewhere.”



LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT

New Isle Community Governance

Louisiana Land Trust

The LLT owns the undeveloped land at the new community site. As such, it is the new community’s de facto developer and is responsible for setting up legal mechanisms for future community structure and governance, including disposition of residential and commercial property. The LLT entity may evolve in its role as a developer as the project progresses. As residential properties are transferred to New Isle residents, elements of community governance are expected to be more specifically determined by an association board and a to-be-constituted architectural review committee, as established by the community charter.

New Community Nonprofit Entity

The new community entity will be established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit as the overarching community governance entity, with its responsibilities to include the authority to transfer ownership of completed residential and nonresidential properties to participating owners, overseeing continued development, collecting assessments and establishing, operating, sponsoring and promoting services, programs and activities in support of New Isle residents and other New Isle stakeholders.

Neighborhood/Homeowners’ Association

Each New Isle resident will receive fee simple title to their homesites. Also, each resident will have the option to participate in the administration of the community through a community organization membership and through service in various committee and leadership roles. If residents choose to implement it, this organization may be established as the entity responsible for management, maintenance, operation and control of the common areas within the residential section of the development.

Non Residential Owners Association

The NOA will be established to maintain responsibility for preserving, protecting and enhancing the nonresidential areas of The New Isle community. All commercial landowners (and potentially lessors) within The New Isle community will be members of the NOA. The duties and activities of the NOA will be primarily carried out through a board of directors, acting on behalf of the members. During the development period, the NOA board shall be composed of an LLT-appointed representative and other elected commercial landowners with the board’s size, terms and other duties outlined in NOA bylaws. Upon the cessation of this period, NOA board membership would transition to a fully commercial owner-composed board.

Other Designated Entities

Portions of The New Isle community may be developed through the establishment of special districts or other land use designations and other forms of ownership feasible under federal, state and local laws and desired by The New Isle community. This may include the creation of additional governing entities or associations.

Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government

Terrebonne Parish is the jurisdiction in which the new community is located. Terrebonne Parish will serve as the owner of all infrastructure improvements within the dedicated right-of-way. These items include streets, drainage improvements and sewer enhancements. Details of the Parish’s involvement with The New Isle community governance structure will be defined in the future finalized Governing Documents.



THE NEW ISLE

ISLE DE JEAN CHARLES RESETTLEMENT

Imagining a New Home

The extensive engagement and robust analysis used throughout the master planning process provided the foundation necessary to design the new community — The New Isle. The master plan for the new community was designed for growth and resilience while honoring the traditions of the past. Co-designed with residents, The New Isle's plan features the following principles: 1) all housing built outside the 500-year floodplain; 2) both the site and housing design support a multi-generational community; 3) the site demonstrates responsible stewardship of water and natural resources; 4) housing designed to be durable for at least 50 years; 5) the site and structures support community health and productivity. Beyond these overarching principles, each detail of the design from hydrology to housing, from community facilities to commercial sites, was scrutinized to support outcomes for residents to not just survive, but thrive.

One primary design challenge revolved around a key question: What attributes from Isle de Jean Charles can be preserved, transferred or re-created within The New Isle? To address this, The New Isle's design speaks to the characteristics and quality of life on Isle de Jean Charles, seeking to emulate island attributes most valued by residents. Like the island, The New Isle is designed for water to flow through the site and be accessible throughout. The "braided" pattern of housing in the neighborhood will offer a mixture of communal living and the privacy of rural life, evoking the linear arrangement of the island. Nature will be close at hand even while access to amenities and services will be more convenient.

The new community is designed for environmental sustainability and economic viability. Energy-efficient and low impact designs and materials are incorporated throughout the site and homes. Commercial sites are integrated into the master plan to provide community revenue and access to services and employment opportunities. The new community is designed to be a combination of an attractive place to live and support a livelihood. This design represents the community's vision for a safe, cohesive and lasting future.

DESIGN TEAM INTRODUCTION

Community Meeting Four

As part of continued community engagement associated with the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement, the Office of Community Development and its partners held a series of community meetings centered around co-designing the new community. On December 9, 2017, Community Meeting 4 introduced the design team for Phase II of the program. The meeting was conducted at the on-island fire station and about 80 participants attended. The meeting structure was an open house format, wherein the team presented an update on the acquisition of the Evergreen site, as well as an overview and analysis of the Evergreen site and an overview of the role of climate and culture in the design approach. Community Meeting Four was developed with the following goals:

- Distribute communication and materials, discuss methods for design process and receive feedback through tailored activities
- Empower residents to guide key decision points and planned milestones
- Facilitate robust, community-driven collaboration on the design of The New Isle
- Ensure outreach and engagement efforts are characterized by inclusiveness, transparency, accessibility, accuracy and timeliness
- Keep the general public informed of project progress

Following presentations, participants were given the opportunity to visit five open house stations centered around important resettlement topics. Key takeaways from each station are listed below in the format with participant responses.

STATION 1: VISUAL PREFERENCE HELP GATHER INPUT ON HOMES AND HOUSING DENSITY IN THE NEW COMMUNITY

What participants said:

- Preference of porches and outdoor living spaces
- Do not want to be too close to their neighbors, but close enough to see them
- Preference of elevated homes, but getting upstairs is difficult for some
- Do not want to feel like a subdivision
- Want a buffer between homes and existing, surrounding developments
- Not ready to discuss the neighborhood design

STATION 2: SITE ANALYSIS FOR NEW COMMUNITY SHARE EXISTING INFORMATION ABOUT THE POTENTIAL USES OF THE EVERGREEN SITE

What participants said:

- Most were familiar with the new site and had attended the OCD-led tour or visited on their own
- Interested in ownership structure of the new community
- Want a grocery store in the community or nearby
- Amenities and services are much closer to the new community as compared to the island
- Want a peaceful location for homes, and to be near water



STATION 3: GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RESETTLEMENT

UNDERSTAND WHAT CURRENT AND FORMER ISLAND RESIDENTS VALUE ABOUT THE ISLAND COMMUNITY AND WISH TO CONTINUE IN THE NEW COMMUNITY

What participants said:

- Want access to the island if they move to the new community
- Need to know what is happening to their island home before they decide to move
- Concerned about title issues; many do not own both land and home on island
- Would like a garden at the new community
- Want a place for kids to play outside at the new community

STATION 5: OPTIONAL RELOCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

ENSURE THAT PAST AND PRESENT ISLAND RESIDENTS ARE OUT OF HARM'S WAY BY EDUCATING THEM ABOUT THE VOLUNTARY PROGRAM

What participants said:

- Many are interested in temporary, safer housing inland
- Concerned they could not go back to home on the island if resettlement program fails
- Some residents are interested in resettling, but only want to move once and will wait for the new community to be built

STATION 4: FORMER RESIDENT CONTACT INFORMATION

COLLECT FORMER ISLAND RESIDENTS' CONTACT INFORMATION WITH THE GOAL OF ACQUAINTING THEM WITH RESETTLEMENT MATERIALS SO THEY CAN DECIDE IF THEY WANT TO PARTICIPATE

What participants said:

- Most people who have left the island are in Bourg, Thibodaux, Houma or another nearby town, though some have moved out of state
- Most participants know people who have moved off of the island, but are hesitant to provide contact information until more information is provided, and they know that the program will be successful

NEXT STEPS

BASED ON THE INFORMATION SHARED AND FEEDBACK GATHERED AT COMMUNITY MEETING 4, THE TEAM IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING ACTION ITEMS:

- Begin meeting with the steering committee on a regular basis
- Explore ownership structure of the island and new community with steering committee and HUD
- Conduct individual interviews with all island residents and steering committee members to determine preferences in designing new community and interest in moving off the island
- Conduct community design workshops to further determine preferences used to design the new community



ELEMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Designing with the End in Mind

The design process was grounded in observation, dialogue, listening, and iteration. Designers took inspiration from islanders and worked to integrate the island's culture and natural beauty into The New Isle's design. The process was cross-disciplinary, with designers working in close collaboration with the team's hydrological and geotechnical engineers, real estate and market analysts, parish planning representatives, state agencies, and sustainability experts. Throughout, the design team consulted Terrebonne Parish planning officials to meet local regulations and for guidance on operations and maintenance considerations.

Early in the process, the initial analysis identified zones best suited for potential types of activities. High-visibility areas along La. Hwy. 24 were targeted for commercial development, the wetlands at the heart of the site were left protected and undisturbed, and the more secluded high ground along Bayou Blue was targeted for residential development. Multiple types of community spaces, including an event ground, a community gathering building, and parks and fields were test fit at locations across the site.

Within this framework, information gathered at a community design workshop in May 2018 centered on four primary design themes: Your Land, Your Economy, Your Community, and Your Home. This information became the basis for two additional design charrettes held amongst the design team to create initial strategies and prototypes. These ideas were then presented to and discussed with residents at an on-island design workshop in late June 2018. Weekly design team calls progressed the design over the course of the project and often included representatives from the parish, state, and other project team consultants. All design developments were shared and discussed at the regularly scheduled steering committee meetings.

Commercial Corridor Design

In considering the commercial corridor, emphasis was put on taking advantage of high value highway frontage, while designing road layouts to reduce public access to the more private parts of the site. The design team incorporated the findings from the market analysis to explore types of retail opportunities that were both potentially profitable within the regional marketplace and compatible with the new community's intended character. Commercial programs of various size and type were studied in multiple configurations on the site to: 1) take advantage of site assets, such as highway visibility and character elements like the historic live oaks in the northwest corner; 2) minimize noise, light, and activity impacts on the residential development through viewshed design and landscape buffers; and 3) provide connectivity for residents to benefit from commercial amenities, whether through recreation, service provision, or employment.

Common Area Design

The design team observed that strong community connections on the island are maintained through gatherings at and outside individual homes. In addition to providing gathering spaces in and around each home, the integration of easily accessible recreational spaces and "pocket parks" were key design factors. The requirement for a natural park space within five minutes' walk of each home led to the creation of parks along Bayou Blue that define the shape of residential "petals." Playgrounds, pavilions, open fields, and gardens can be located here. The team also studied ways to use community spaces to separate the residential area from commercial development. The roundabout, the new retention ponds, and a community building for meeting and gathering all serve this purpose. All proposed community spaces and buildings were discussed with the parish to understand how, while prioritizing new community residents, they can also serve a wider public benefit in the neighboring areas.

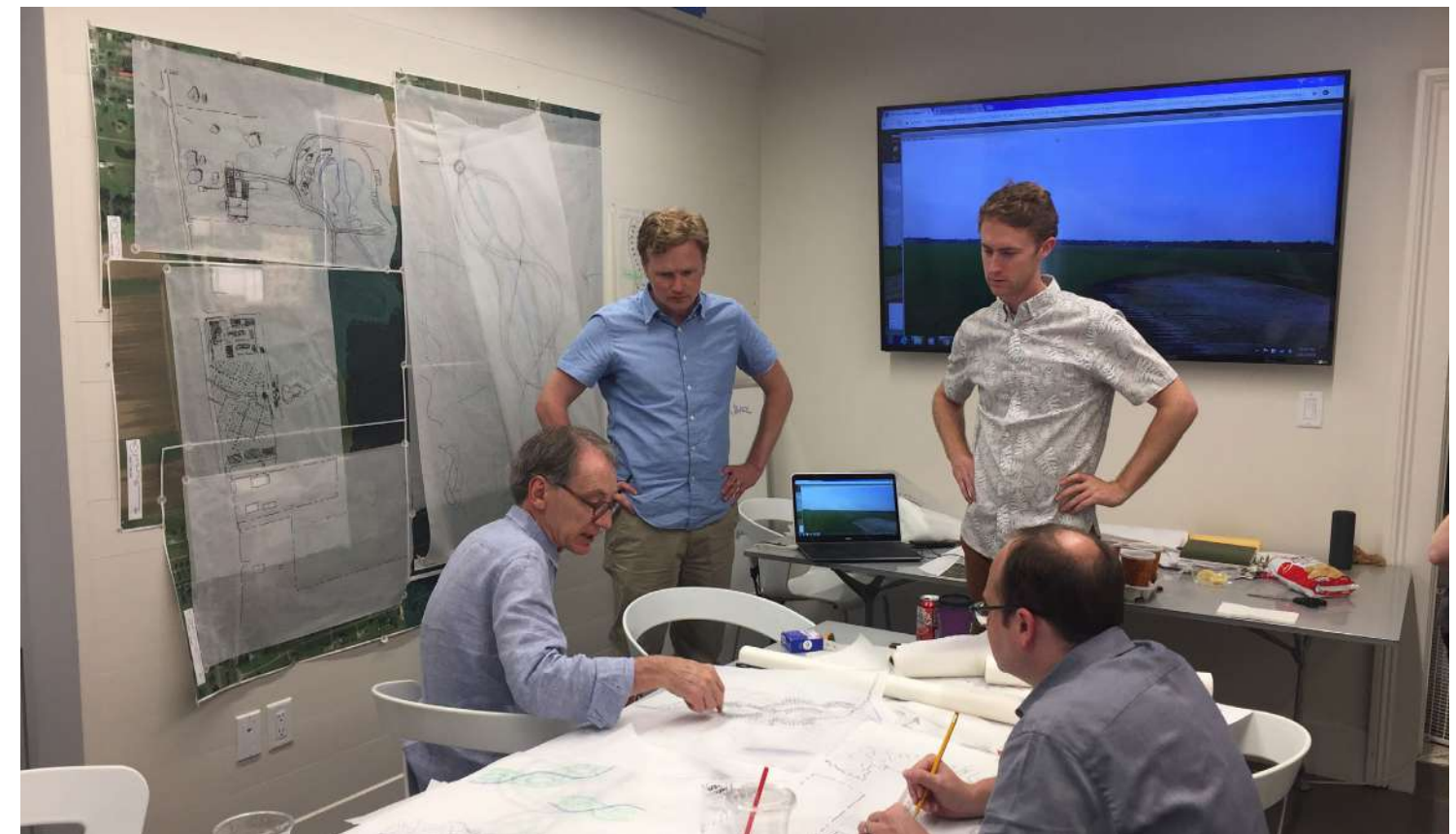
Residential Area Design

Fifteen original housing unit types were developed based on residents' preferences and feedback. These layouts varied in shape and size, from one to four bedrooms, based on the dimensions and materials the design team observed on the island and in the surrounding southeastern Louisiana context. Options for elevating the homes eight feet or more—as seen on the island—were studied, but ultimately discarded based on conversations with residents. The design team heard that residents preferred to live off the ground, as is historically typical and climatically appropriate in the region, but low enough to stay connected to the landscape and outdoor spaces. The best features of the 15 house types were identified, refined, and combined into four types, each of which can be altered to accommodate multiple sizes and configurations that allow adaptation over time.

The possibility for indoor/outdoor living is a key principle for each home. Porches and overhangs and adjacent covered parking areas can be used for gatherings. Houses are raised in pier-and-beam style three feet off the ground, allowing each home to maintain its connection to the ground and landscape. Additionally, Americans with Disabilities Act compliant floorplans were created for each unit type.

General Site Considerations

Residents emphasized the need to maintain access to nature from every lot, ensuring privacy from surrounding properties, but connectivity to recreation and services. Residential lot patterns were designed to create privacy from neighbors, but family members and close relations can choose to create clusters of homes. Varied setbacks allow for varied degrees of privacy from neighbors. Deeper street setbacks than typical developments make space for water collection and natural landscape buffers at the front. The alternating petal layout creates clusters of homes to give a sense of community. The plan is adaptable to adjust to future design phases.



COMMUNITY-DRIVEN COLLABORATION

Design Workshop One

Design workshops provided opportunities for the design team to work with former and current island residents in envisioning The New Isle. The ability to pique residents' interests while exploring a set of ideas allowed for space to craft a shared vision. This approach was driven by the project-wide commitment to openness, transparency and collaboration.

Community Meeting Five/Design Workshop One was held at the Pointe-aux-Chenes Fire Station on May 4 and 5, 2018. Sixty-seven participants shared their ideas for design within The New Isle. To facilitate this ideation, the team brought a scaled model of the Evergreen site, illustrating the site's topography. The model was used as a tool to experiment with various development scenarios. The workshop was broken into four key stations: Your Land, Your Home, Your Community and Your Economy.



STATION 1: YOUR LAND

Team members displayed photos and a drone video of The New Isle site to spur conversations with participants about the site's geography, size, hydrology, elevation and flora and fauna. They also showed illustrations of potential locations for commercial and residential developments based on site access, elevation and wetland locations. Another drone video of the island was used to provide a comparison.

What participants said:

- Familiar with The New Isle site, but did not realize how much bigger it is than the island
- Desire to preserve wetlands as a buffer from the highway and commercial development
- Preference of homes on the back part of the site, maintain privacy and provide limited access
- Want water to be incorporated into development

STATION 2: YOUR HOME

Team members gathered input about the form and function of participants' future homes. Team members showed photos of both current island homes and example homes so that participants could pinpoint exactly what they preferred or disliked. The team also asked participants how they use the spaces in and around their homes and how they would like to use similar spaces in The New Isle.

What participants said:

- Want covered outdoor space and wraparound porches to use in different times of day
- Preference for homes elevated 3-4 feet
- Want sheds and carports for tools, cars, boats, and storage
- Preference for metal roofs
- Want option to expand homes as needed
- Want homes to be close enough to check on each other, yet also private



STATION 3: YOUR COMMUNITY

This station allowed residents to outline the shared features and facilities they wanted in The New Isle. Team members used pictures of streets, stormwater features, recreational facilities, various sizes and types of gathering spaces, gardens, fences and vegetation as tools to gather participants' preferences and record their input.

What participants said:

- Want places to fix boats, cars, lawnmowers and small machines
- Need various spaces for gathering and cooking at different scales
- Want recreational spaces for sports, hiking, fishing, indoor gym, pool, playground and place to play horseshoes
- Want green space for community and individual gardens with parks full of trees
- Interest in multi-use paths to exercise and socialize
- Mixed interest in bringing back powwows

STATION 4: YOUR ECONOMY

At this station, residents were asked to provide input about commercial activities and discuss the market study conducted for the new site's location as well as converse about spaces future residents can use to build, craft, sew or weave for personal economic benefit. Team members explained how dedicating a portion of The New Isle for economic development could offset residents' expenses. Team members also received feedback on access to services and their compatibility with the new community.

What participants said:

- Need revenue streams, jobs and training to offset expenses
- Interest in light manufacturing job opportunities
- Interest in outdoor family dining, seafood or farmers' market, retail area, grocery store, hardware and an outdoor store
- Excited about the concept of a commercial kitchen

Design principles guided by residents' priorities:

Elevate housing outside the "500-year" floodplain

Design with the intent to support a multi-generational community

Be a responsible steward of water

Build secure housing designed to last for 50+ years

Support community health and productivity through design elements

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN COLLABORATION

Design Workshop Two

On June 2, 2018, two workshops were held in different locations. The morning workshop was conducted on the island and the afternoon workshop was held in Houma to accommodate residents living in housing furnished through the ORA program. It was an opportunity to learn more about community design priorities and allow the design team to engage with the participants on preliminary drawings and models.



CASE STUDY

LaHouse Resource Center

Located on the Louisiana State University campus, LaHouse Home and Landscape Resource Center is “a research-based showcase of solutions to shape your future with homes that offer more comfort, durability, value, convenience, environmental quality, safety and better health with less energy, water, pollution, waste, damage and loss.” The house and site are designed as a showcase of resilient design, construction and landscaping techniques. Exhibits, cutaway reveals, educational features and signage provide a comprehensive demonstration of a safe, sustainable and healthy home in Louisiana’s hot, humid and wet climate. Designing a home in Louisiana’s coastal area also means designing for hurricanes and fluvial and pluvial flooding. The home demonstrates hazard resistance design measures for hurricane resistance up to 130 mph winds. The design team used the LaHouse facility as an inspirational resource informing the design of The New Isle.



RESILIENCE STANDARDS

Building Climate-Ready Homes

Homes in The New Isle were designed for resilience to environmental hazards and for long-term sustainability for its residents. Each home is sited outside the elevation of the "500-year" floodplain, and designed with raised floor construction, reducing the chance of property loss should flooding occur in the area. Further, the program adopted two standards for resilient design: the FORTIFIED Gold standard developed by the Institute for Business and Home Safety and ENERGY STAR Certified Home standard, a program of the U.S. Department of Energy. These programs, taken together, represent a verifiable approach to building homes that exceed building code to better resist future high wind events while offering immediate monthly savings to homeowners through energy efficiency.

Homes are designed for high energy efficiency exceeding the U.S. Department of Energy’s ENERGY STAR Certified Home standard. ENERGY STAR focuses on design and construction methods that reduce energy consumption, conserve water and promote healthy indoor air quality. These homes are more energy-efficient than standard new homes built to Louisiana’s residential code and conform with energy requirements included in the 2009 International Residential Code. They also include additional energy-saving features that typically make them 20–30% more efficient than non-certified homes. All certified homes feature premium insulation, high-performance windows, a sealed building envelope, high efficiency HVAC systems and ENERGY STAR qualified appliances—all verified by an independent, third-party rater. Each ENERGY STAR-certified home can keep 3,700 lbs of greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere each year while reducing monthly utility bills for residents.

Homes will also be constructed to the FORTIFIED Gold standard for resilience against high winds and damaging rain associated with tropical weather. The program provides laboratory-tested and field-proven approaches which ensure the roof stays on and water stays out during a high wind event. The New Isle’s home designs include a sealed roof deck, sheathing attachments exceeding local building requirements and high wind rated roof coverings. Gable ends and roof vents are strengthened to prevent water intrusion and attic ventilation system failure. Walls, windows and doors are designed to provide resistance to wind pressure and impact from windborne debris. Finally, homes are designed with engineered, continuous load path connections that tie the building together, keeping the roof connected to the walls and the walls tied into the foundation.



FROM CO-DESIGN TO CONCEPT

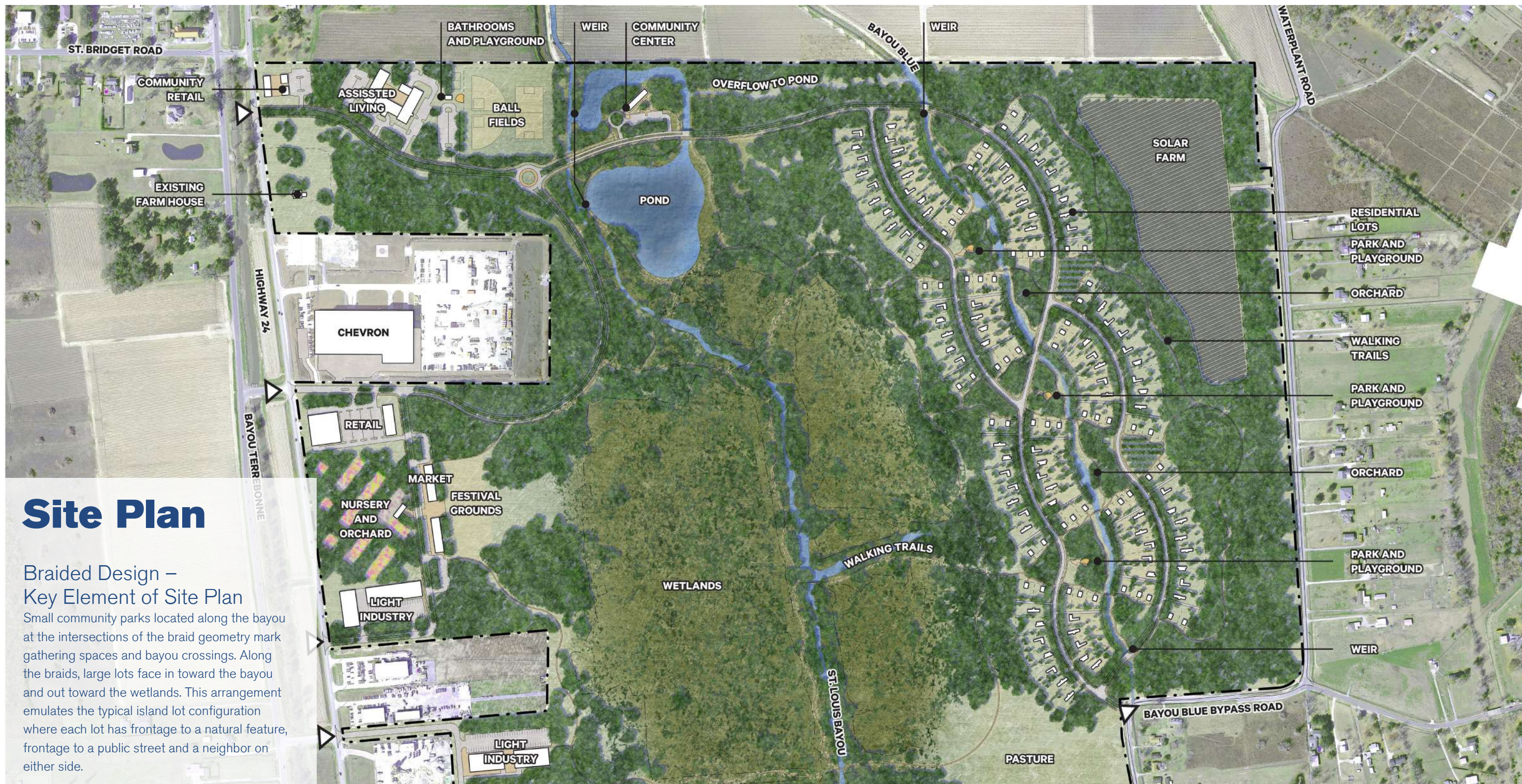
Unveiling The New Isle

As part of the master planning effort, the design team partnered with the island community to create a design vision for The New Isle. This vision includes parcel layouts, illustrations showing the spatial relationships between structures and streets, circulation patterns connecting various sections of the development and most importantly, elements directly inspired by social and cultural aspects of the island itself.

For the purposes of this master plan, and based on the Terrebonne Parish-approved master site plan, preliminary civil plans were developed to 35% completion. Architectural floor plans, elevations and typical building sections were also developed for each building type to 15% completion.

This section consists of a series of drawings and renderings outlining the intended look, feel and function of The New Isle. The overall site plan illustrates uses and planned structures across the entire 508-acre parcel. Renderings illustrate key areas of the development to further highlight design intent and encourage continued dialogue with residents and stakeholders.





Site Plan

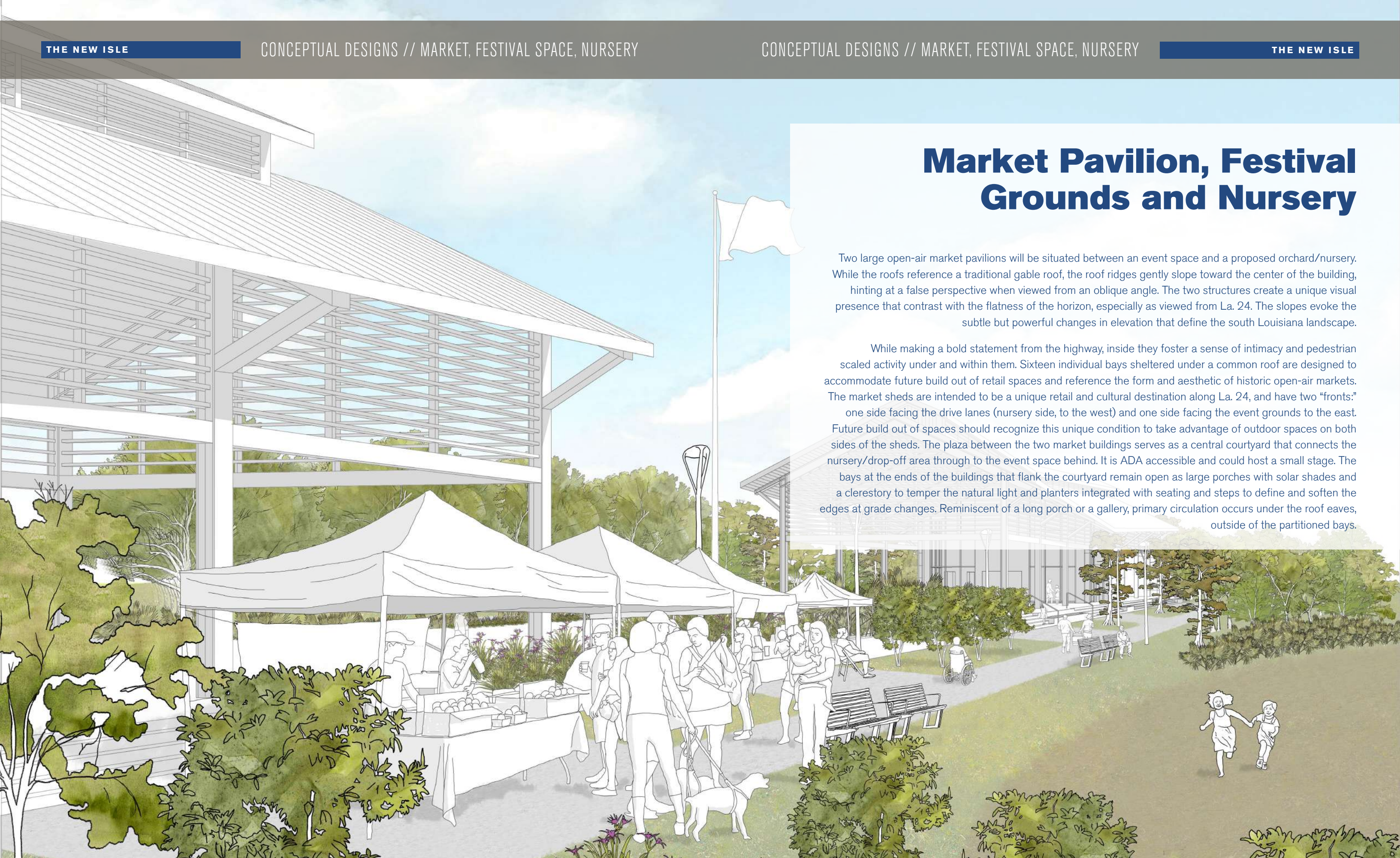
Braided Design – Key Element of Site Plan

Small community parks located along the bayou at the intersections of the braid geometry mark gathering spaces and bayou crossings. Along the braids, large lots face in toward the bayou and out toward the wetlands. This arrangement emulates the typical island lot configuration where each lot has frontage to a natural feature, frontage to a public street and a neighbor on either side.

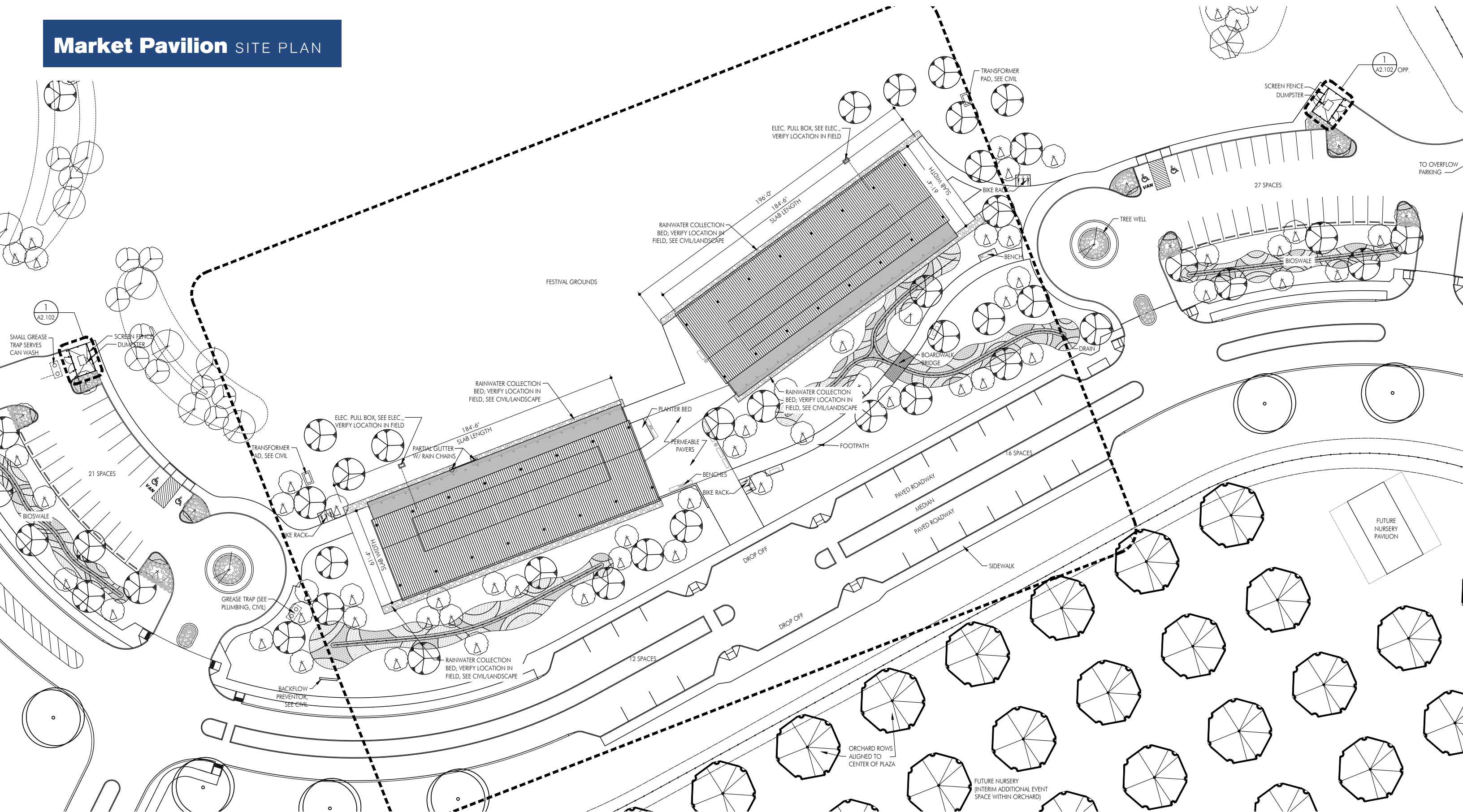
Market Pavilion, Festival Grounds and Nursery

Two large open-air market pavilions will be situated between an event space and a proposed orchard/nursery. While the roofs reference a traditional gable roof, the roof ridges gently slope toward the center of the building, hinting at a false perspective when viewed from an oblique angle. The two structures create a unique visual presence that contrast with the flatness of the horizon, especially as viewed from La. 24. The slopes evoke the subtle but powerful changes in elevation that define the south Louisiana landscape.

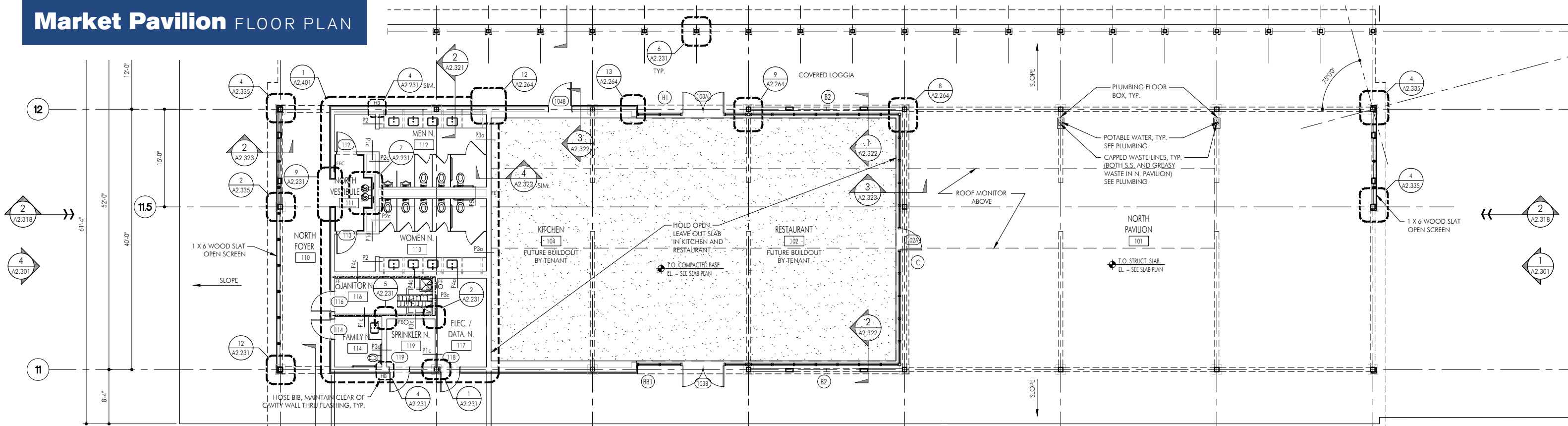
While making a bold statement from the highway, inside they foster a sense of intimacy and pedestrian scaled activity under and within them. Sixteen individual bays sheltered under a common roof are designed to accommodate future build out of retail spaces and reference the form and aesthetic of historic open-air markets. The market sheds are intended to be a unique retail and cultural destination along La. 24, and have two "fronts:" one side facing the drive lanes (nursery side, to the west) and one side facing the event grounds to the east. Future build out of spaces should recognize this unique condition to take advantage of outdoor spaces on both sides of the sheds. The plaza between the two market buildings serves as a central courtyard that connects the nursery/drop-off area through to the event space behind. It is ADA accessible and could host a small stage. The bays at the ends of the buildings that flank the courtyard remain open as large porches with solar shades and a clerestory to temper the natural light and planters integrated with seating and steps to define and soften the edges at grade changes. Reminiscent of a long porch or a gallery, primary circulation occurs under the roof eaves, outside of the partitioned bays.



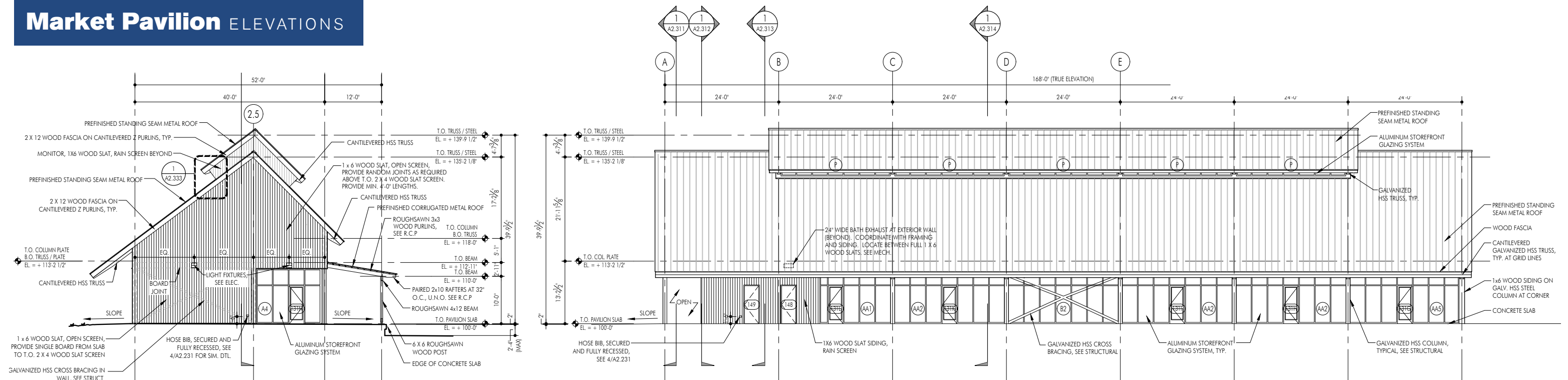
Market Pavilion SITE PLAN



Market Pavilion FLOOR PLAN



Market Pavilion ELEVATIONS



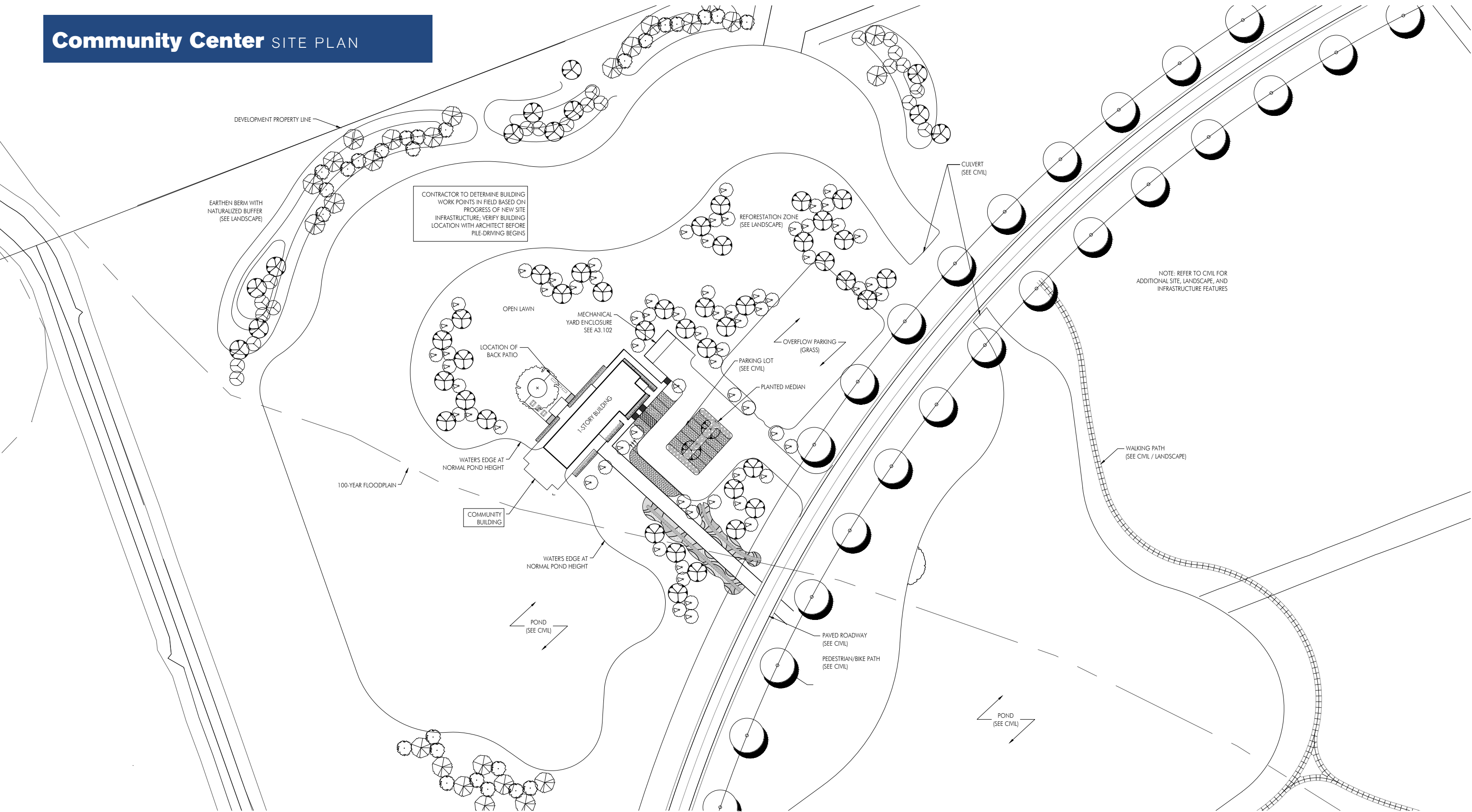
Community Center

The Community Center is located at a pivot point between residences along Bayou Blue and the commercial corridor along La. 24, and is also incorporated as part of the site's hydrologic system. The structure is situated on an island within an excavated lake between two ridges. It acts as a signal to visitors that they have entered the community's interior. The building and surrounding landscape is a place for residents and visitors to enjoy as a recreational and educational space.

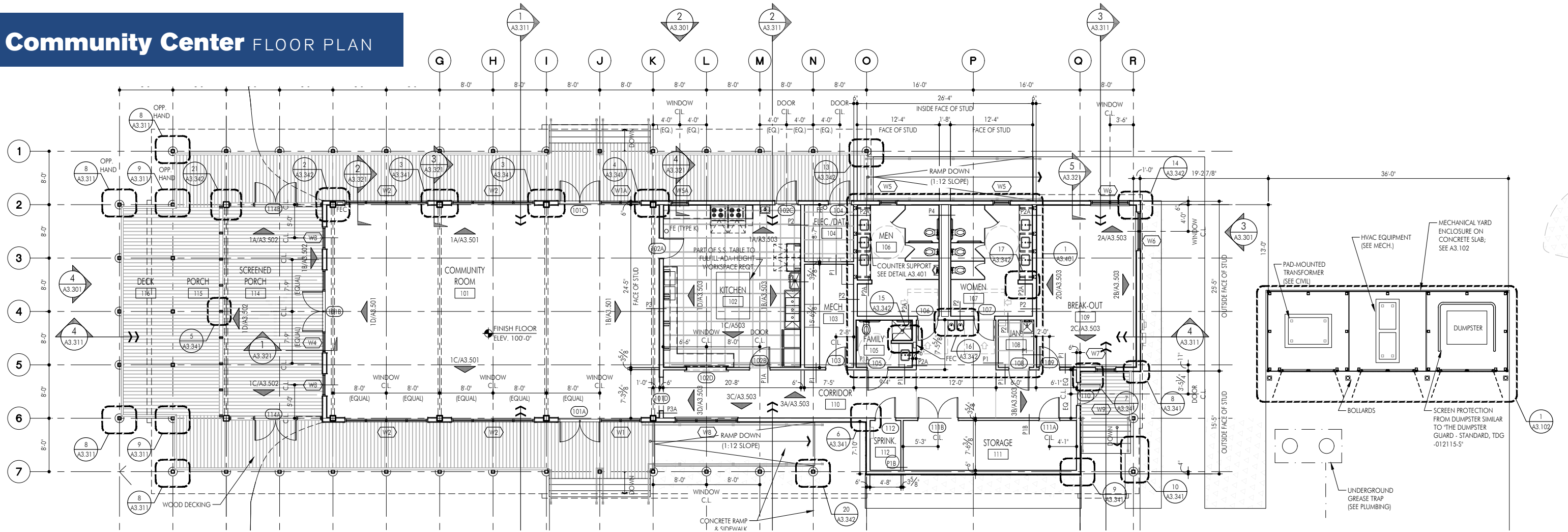
The interior of the Community Center is based on a fellowship hall model, including a large multi-functional space, a commercial-grade community kitchen and enough restrooms to host larger community gatherings. A conference room for smaller meetings or gatherings could also be considered for development, along with office spaces. The programming for the community building is broadly based on needs and desires established in dialogue with islanders and will continue to be refined based on continued deliberation with The New Isle's future residents.



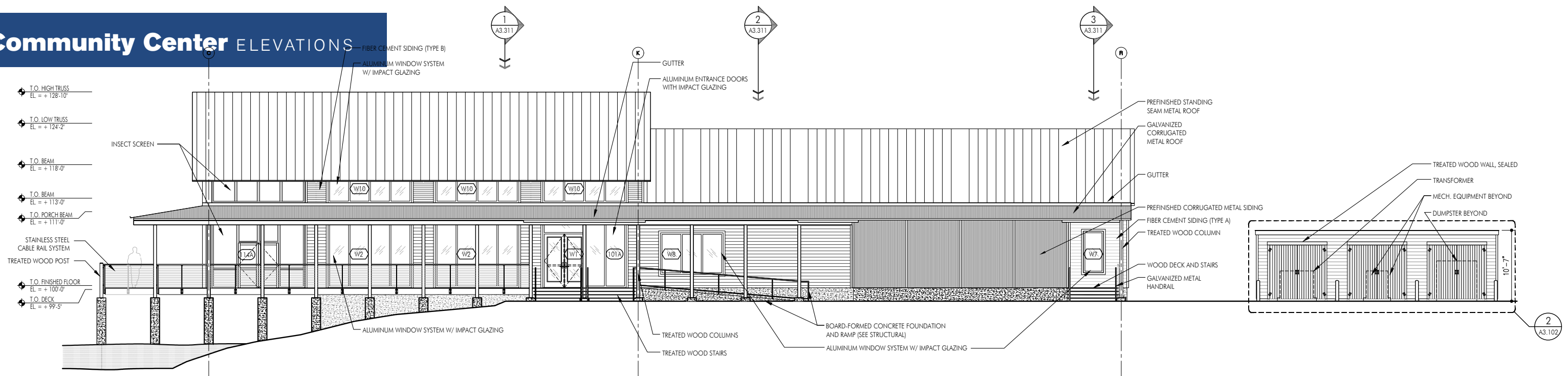
Community Center SITE PLAN



Community Center FLOOR PLAN



Community Center ELEVATIONS



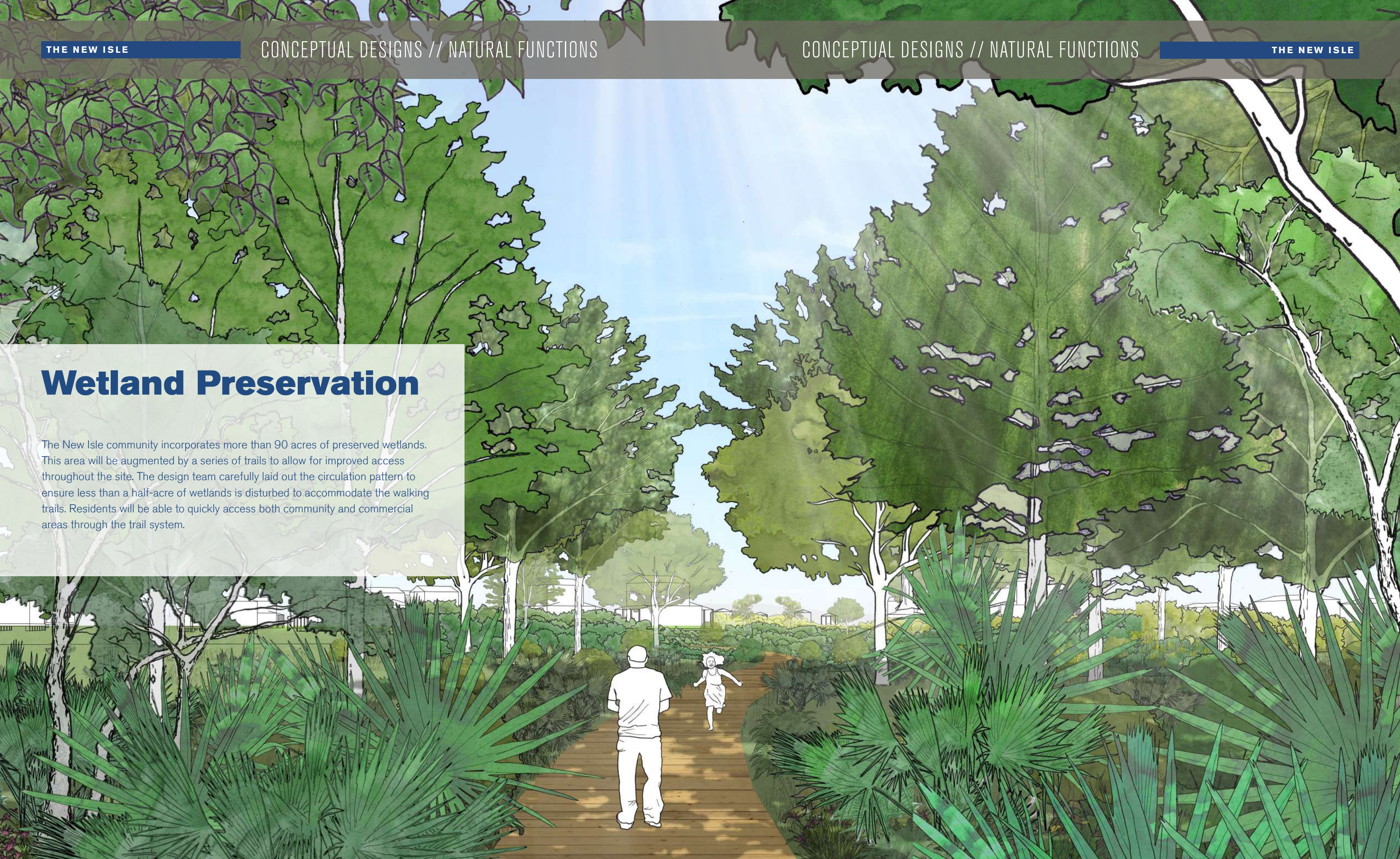
Walking Trails

The Community Center sits along a series of trails, linked to newly created water bodies—detention ponds along Bayou St. Louis—and undisturbed historic natural wetlands at the site's center, known as the "green heart." The pond and trails surrounding the developed area provide an instructive site for an ethnobotany trail and culturally significant regional flora, which can be developed in partnership with residents over time. The ponds will be stocked with fish to encourage recreational use.



Wetland Preservation

The New Isle community incorporates more than 90 acres of preserved wetlands. This area will be augmented by a series of trails to allow for improved access throughout the site. The design team carefully laid out the circulation pattern to ensure less than a half-acre of wetlands is disturbed to accommodate the walking trails. Residents will be able to quickly access both community and commercial areas through the trail system.



Pocket Parks and Playground

Small community parks located along Bayou Blue at the intersections of the braid geometry mark potential community gathering spaces and bayou crossings. A 'pocket park' refers to a smaller type of park meant to provide access to nature at a scale most appropriate for those who live within walking distance of the park.

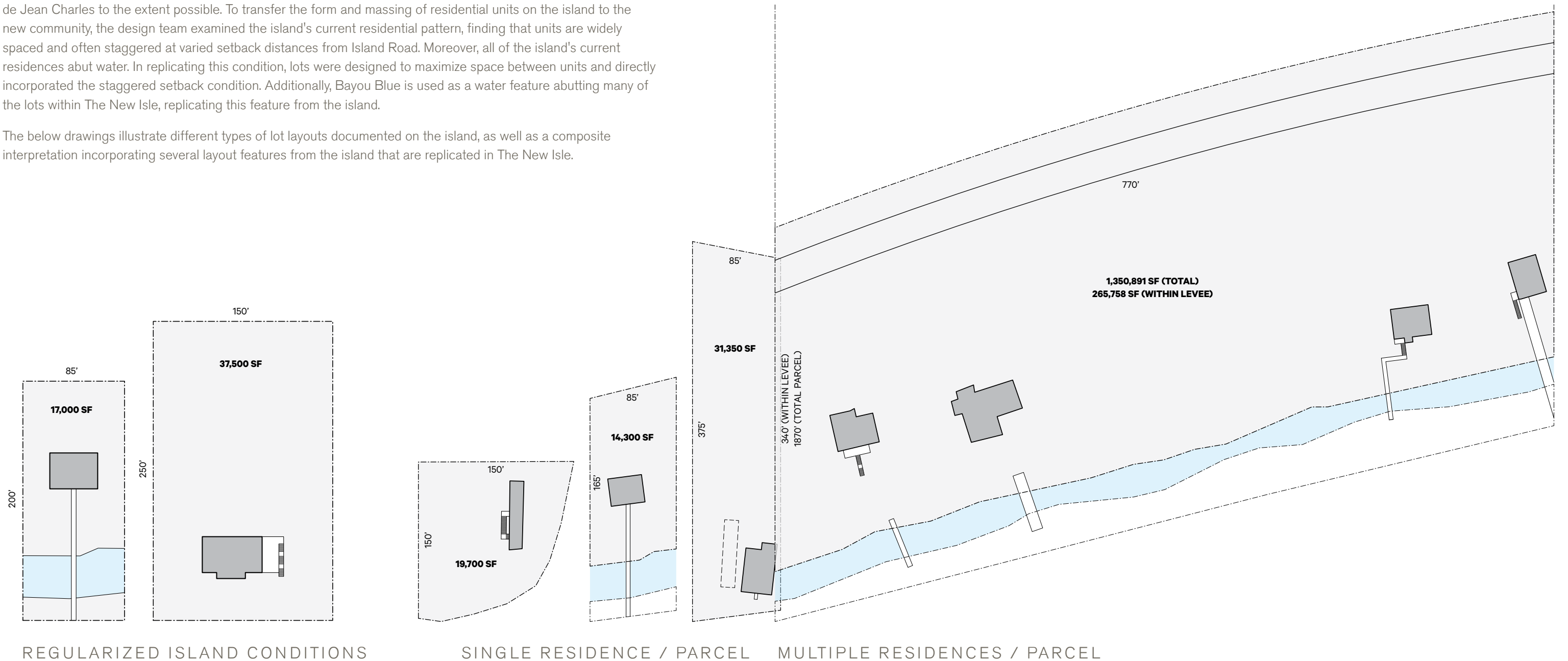


TAKING QUEUES FROM THE ISLAND

Residential Lot Configurations

Islanders emphasized to the design team their goal for The New Isle to replicate the look, feel and function of Isle de Jean Charles to the extent possible. To transfer the form and massing of residential units on the island to the new community, the design team examined the island's current residential pattern, finding that units are widely spaced and often staggered at varied setback distances from Island Road. Moreover, all of the island's current residences abut water. In replicating this condition, lots were designed to maximize space between units and directly incorporated the staggered setback condition. Additionally, Bayou Blue is used as a water feature abutting many of the lots within The New Isle, replicating this feature from the island.

The below drawings illustrate different types of lot layouts documented on the island, as well as a composite interpretation incorporating several layout features from the island that are replicated in The New Isle.

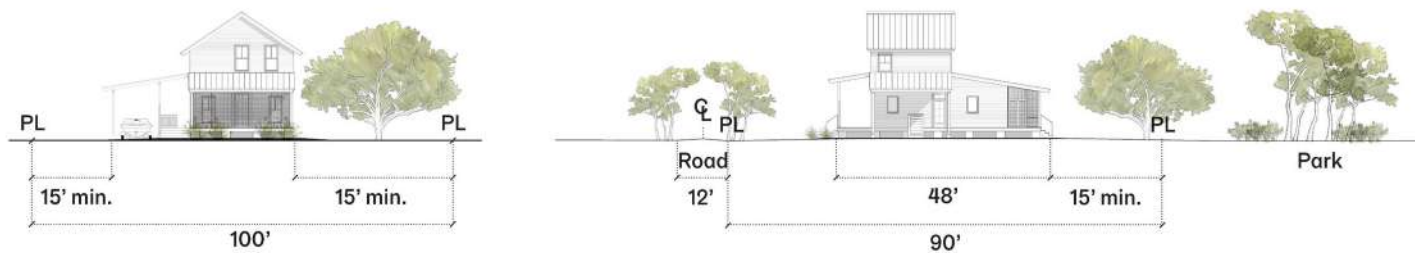
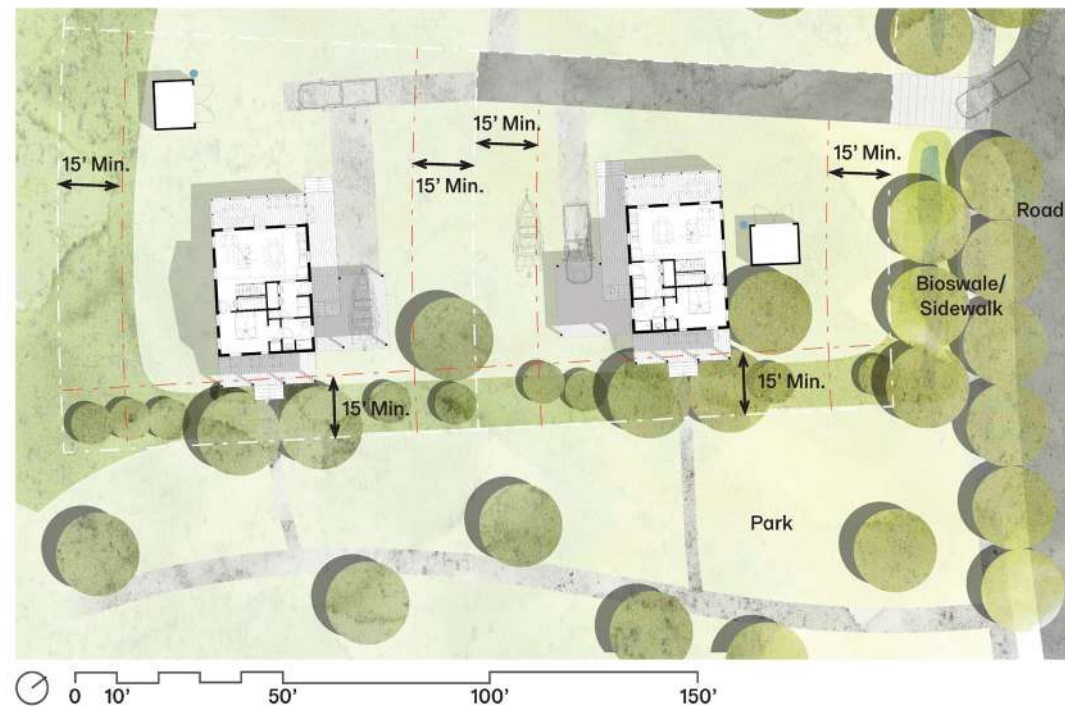


ONE BEDROOM HOMES

"Cottage-Style" Home Design

The one bedroom home, based on a "cottage" type, is the most compact of the four housing typologies developed. The basic one bedroom configuration has an open plan kitchen, living and dining space facing the front, with a bedroom and ADA-compliant bathroom in the back. Porches span the full width of the home in the front and back, and the front porch is fully screened. The carport is shed-style adjacent to a side door with direct access to the bathroom, laundry and kitchen. Optional ramp configurations are provided on the side of the home connected to the carport and front porch to ensure both ramp and able-bodied users can follow the same path of entry into the home.

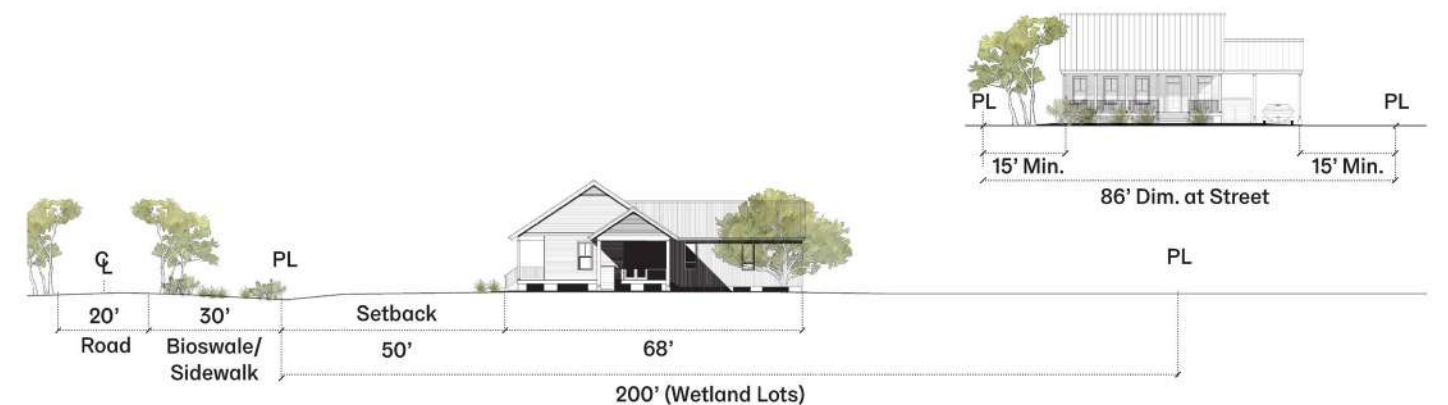
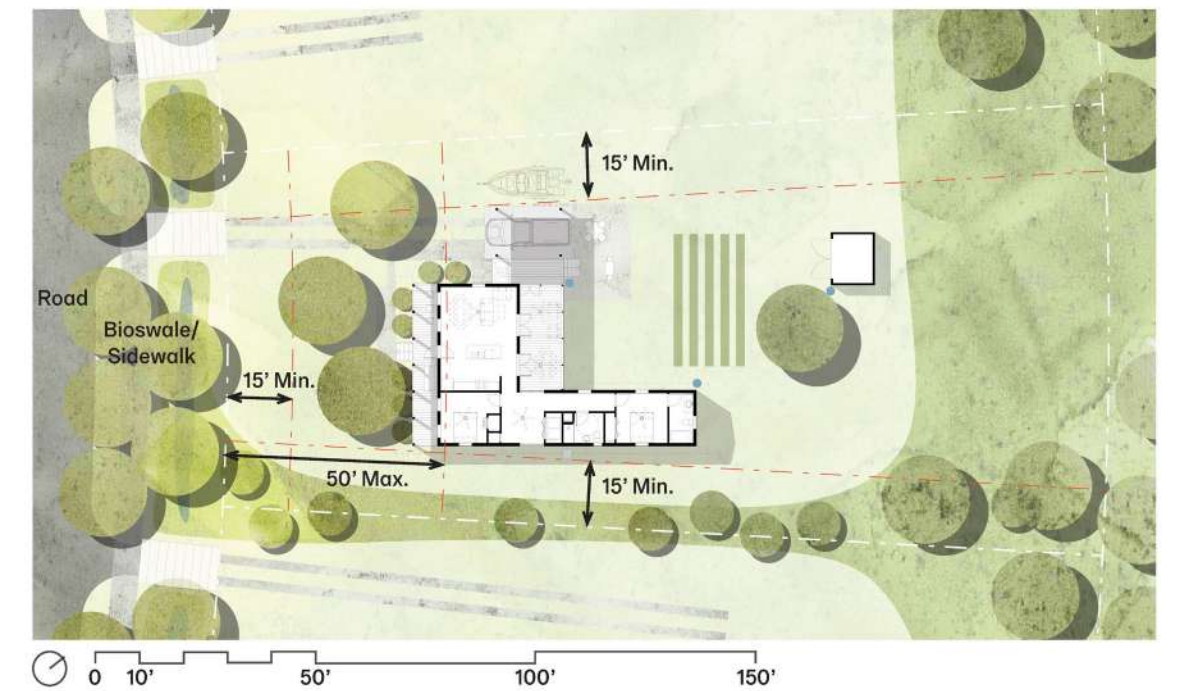
The one bedroom is designed for the community's park-facing lots, and is also an option for lots facing Bayou Blue. One bedroom lots are not recommended for outer petal locations, which are scaled for wider homes. Ultimately, after additional consultations with the island community, it is not anticipated that one bedroom designs will be constructed in the community's initial phase of development.



TWO- TO FOUR-BEDROOM HOMES

Traditional Louisiana Feel

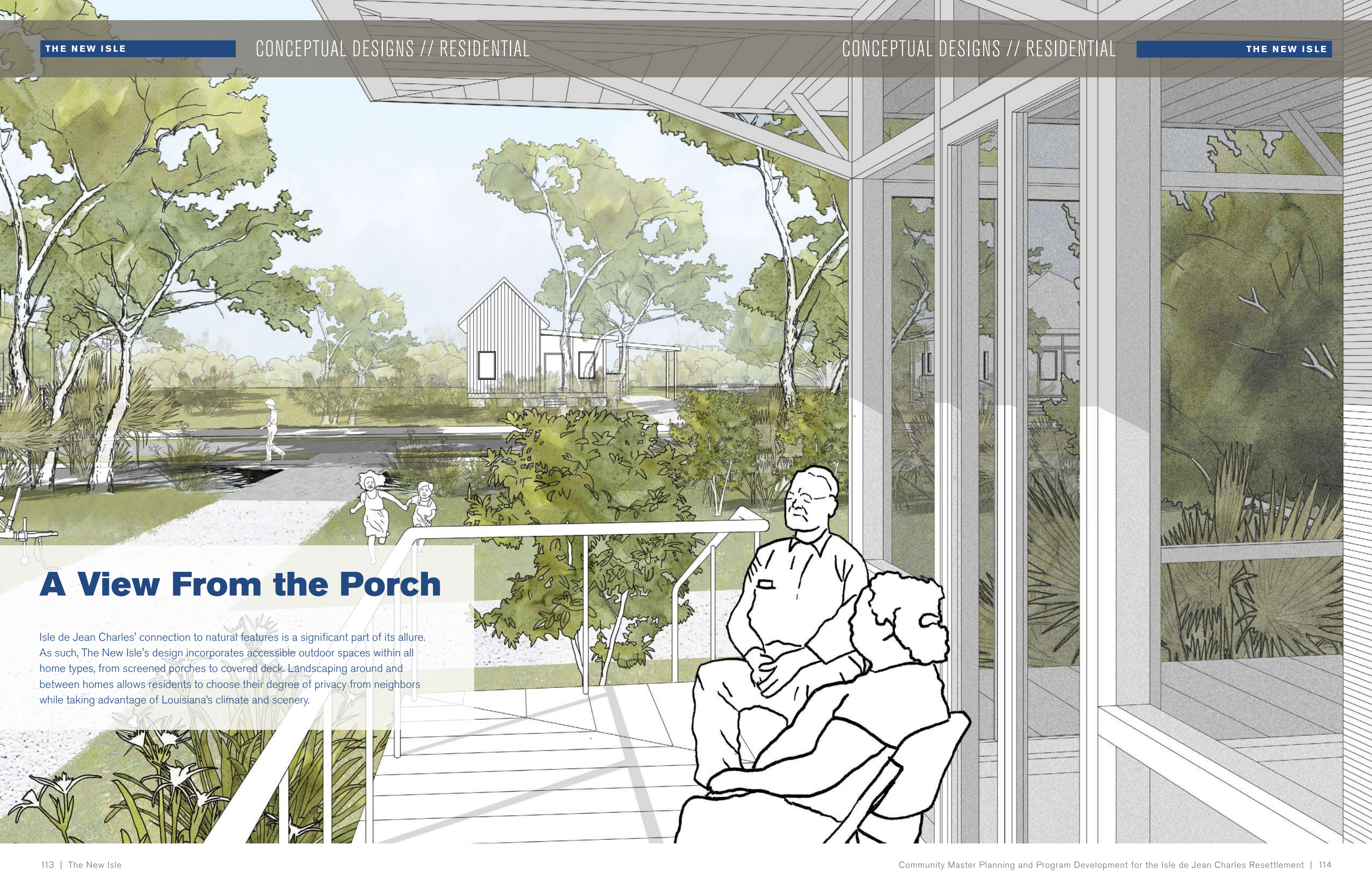
These home designs have larger footprints and a recognizable vernacular character. They take direct inspiration from historic homes in the immediate vicinity of The New Isle, using a simple gable roof with a slope toward the street, and a covered porch across the full width of the front façade. The floorplan is shaped like an "L," with the short base facing the street. Like a traditional southeast Louisiana home, rooms can be added on to the back—the long side of the L—as its occupants' needs change over time. The kitchen, living and dining rooms are configured in an open plan, and connect to porches on both sides—a covered porch to the front, and a large screened porch to the back. This screened porch connects to the carport. This arrangement of the living/dining room, screened porch and covered carport provides a series of spaces for flexible indoor/outdoor uses. A flexible use space behind the kitchen also has a visual connection to the back screened porch. These floorplans are most appropriate for the larger outer petal lots.



Life Along Bayou Blue

The New Isle incorporates four basic home designs, each with multiple spatial and material options to grow and adapt. The range of typologies provides residents choices based on their individual needs. The variety is also intended to create a character reminiscent of the island, where there is no dominant housing design pattern. The size and shape of home types paired with the size and shape of lots provides for a spacing condition interacting with Bayou Blue.





A View From the Porch

Isle de Jean Charles' connection to natural features is a significant part of its allure. As such, The New Isle's design incorporates accessible outdoor spaces within all home types, from screened porches to covered deck. Landscaping around and between homes allows residents to choose their degree of privacy from neighbors while taking advantage of Louisiana's climate and scenery.

Nature as a Cultural Driver

On Isle de Jean Charles, the wetlands, the houses, the space under the houses, the road and the bayou shape the way people relate to their surroundings and to each other. The New Isle's design aims to re-create these spaces and hopefully foster relationships as they do on the island. Each house has a front porch facing the street as a threshold between the house and the road and a back porch facing a natural feature. Since the houses are not elevated as high as many on the island, the usable space underneath island houses is replaced by the front and back porches and oversized carports in The New Isle. Additionally, all houses will have an exterior utility sink near the carport to accommodate outdoor activities.

In The New Isle's design, careful consideration was given to the relationship between indoor and outdoor living spaces, both open and covered. Daily life on the island occurs outside the home as much as inside it, and many residents expressed a desire to open their new homes to natural ventilation as much as possible. Social spaces within and around each home provide for this lifestyle, with due consideration for privacy and the possibility for clustering friends and relatives near each other where desired.

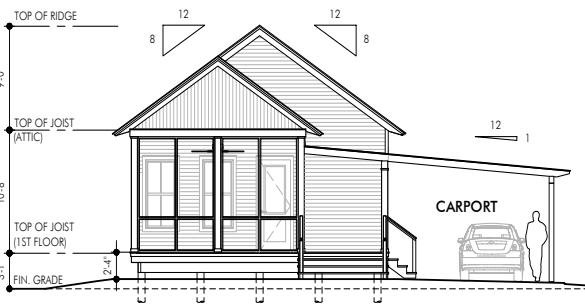


SIX HOUSING OPTIONS

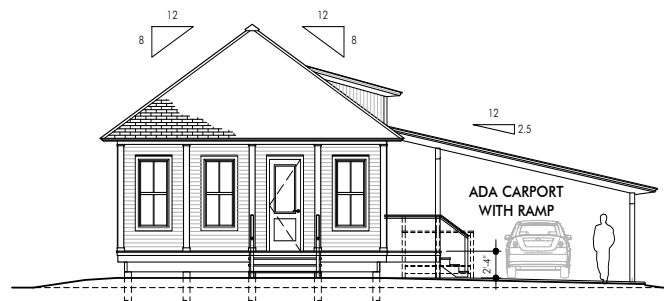
Where Form Meets Function

Based on extensive input from The New Isle's future residents, conceptual housing unit designs were refined into the six unit options illustrated below and in the following pages for the first development phase. The homes to be developed in the first phase range from two bedrooms to four bedrooms, and feature "flex space" that can be enclosed and converted to an additional bedroom in the future, based on a resident's particular needs. The raised floors will have flood-hardy, moisture-controlled subfloor insulation system — important in this climate to prevent decay and buckled flooring, as well as enhanced flood resilience.

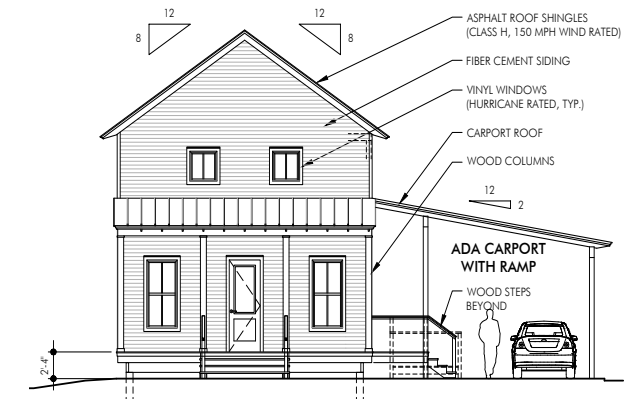
FLOORPLAN	BEDROOM COUNT	STORIES	GROSS UNDER BEAM FLOOR AREA
Option 1	2	1	2,450 s.f.
Option 2	2	1	2,104 s.f.
Option 3	3	2	2,460 s.f.
Option 4	3	1	2,168 s.f.
Option 5	2	1	2,200 s.f.
Option 6	4	2	2,965 s.f.



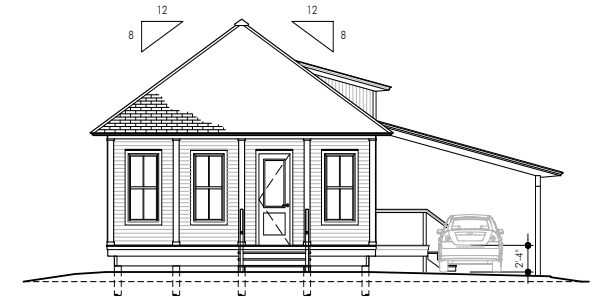
Option 1: Two Bedrooms
 1-Story Linear Scheme with Screened Front Porch, Open Side Gallery and Covered Carport; ADA Adaptable with Minor Revisions
 (Gross Under Beam Floor Area = 2,450 s.f.)



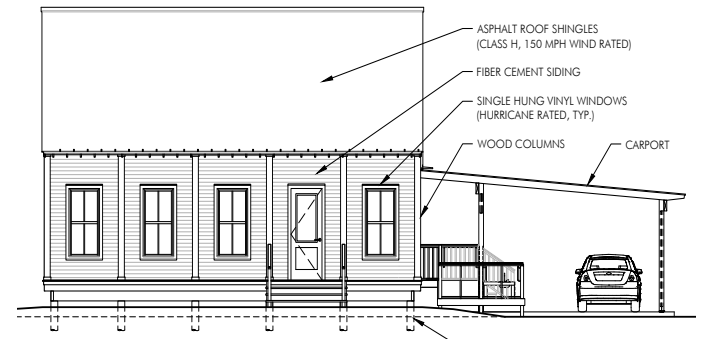
Option 2 ADA: Two Bedrooms
 1-Story Linear "Bar" Scheme with Open Front Porch, Screened Rear Porch and Covered Carport; ADA Adaptable with Minor Revisions
 (Gross Under Beam Floor Area = 2,104 s.f.)



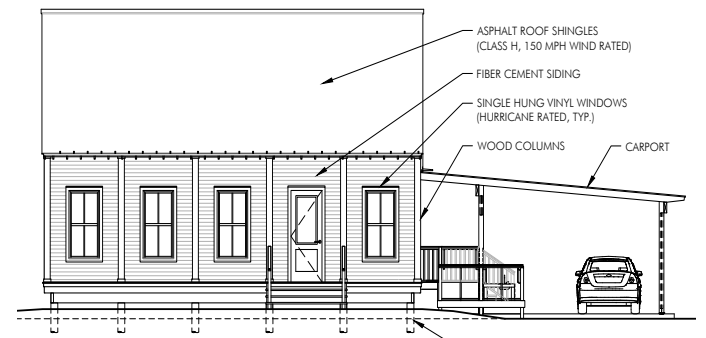
Option 3: Three Bedrooms
 2-Story Cottage with Open Porch, Screened Porch and Covered Carport; ADA Adaptable with Minor Revisions
 (Gross Under Beam Floor Area = 2,460 s.f.)



Option 4: Three Bedrooms
 1-Story Linear "Bar" Scheme with Open Front Porch, Screened Rear Porch and Covered Carport; ADA Adaptable with Minor Revisions
 (Gross Under Beam Floor Area = 2,168 s.f.)



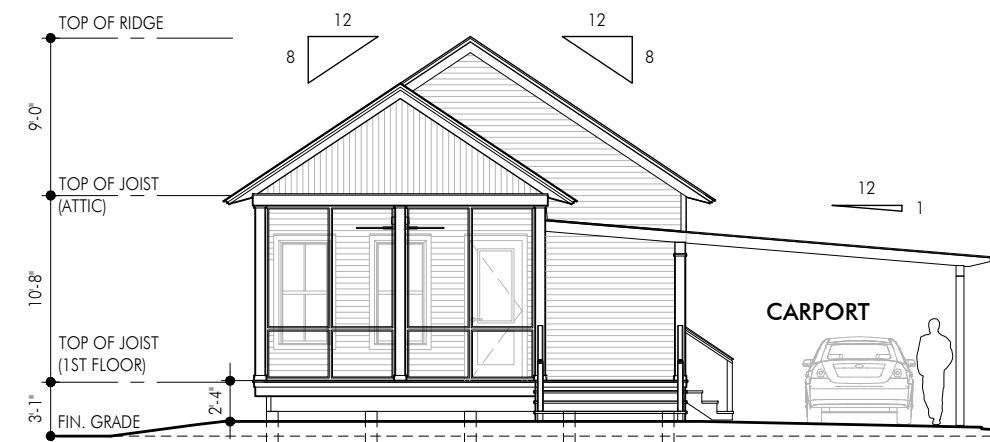
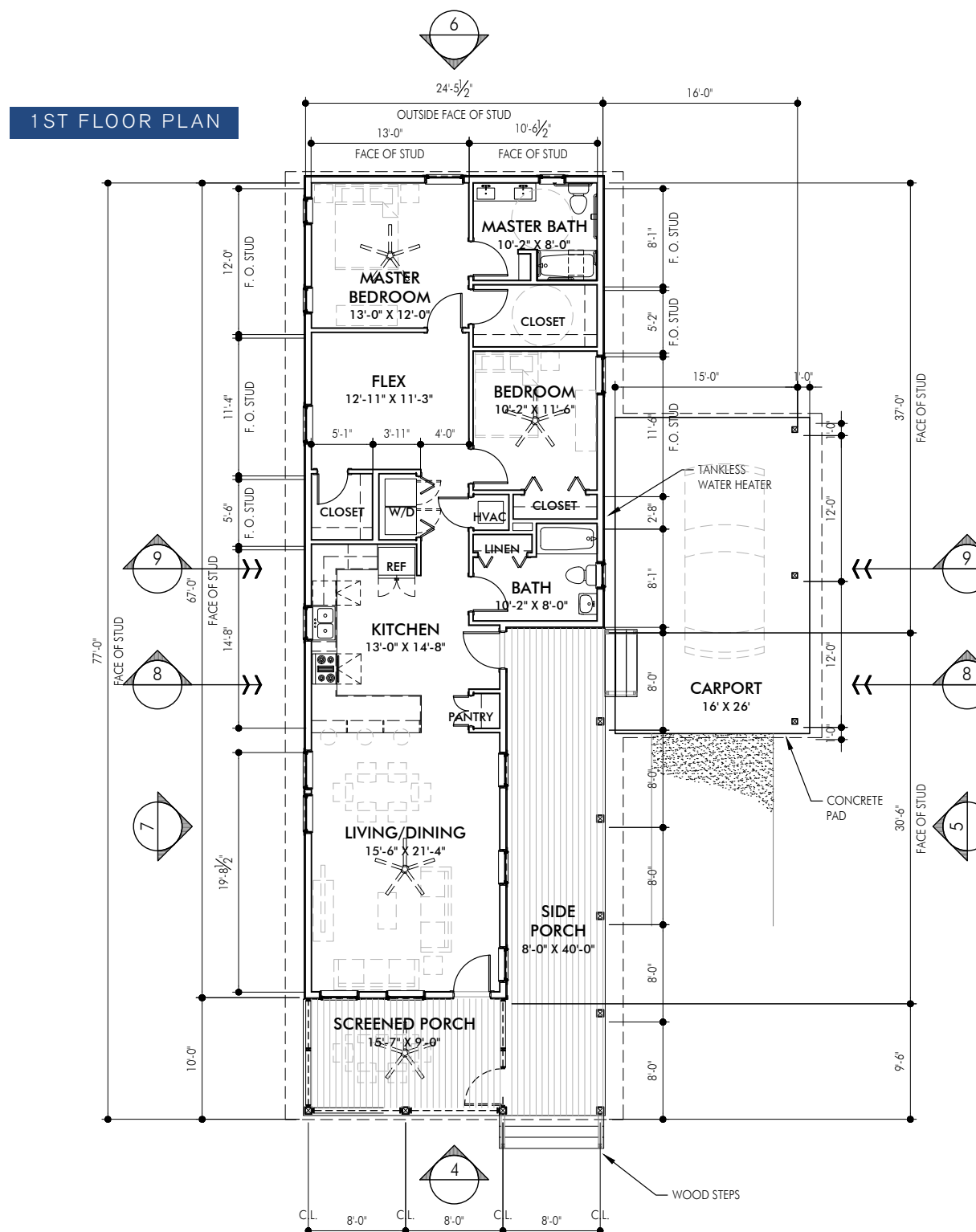
Option 5: Two Bedrooms
 1-Story Acadian Cottage with Open Front Porch, Screened Rear Porch and Covered Carport; ADA Adaptable; Unfinished Attic Allows for Future Buildout of 2nd Floor
 (Gross Under Beam Floor Area = 2,200 s.f.)



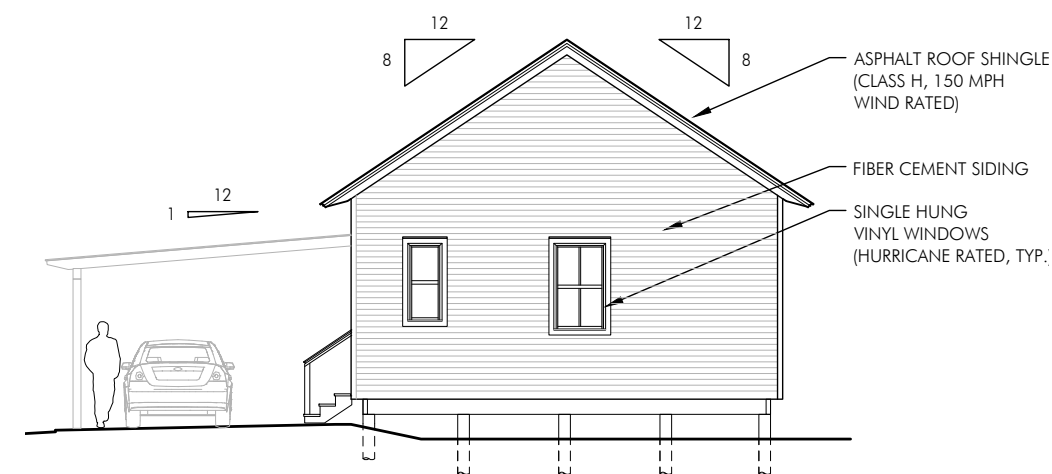
Option 6: Four Bedrooms
 2-Story Acadian Cottage with Open Front Porch, Screened Rear Porch and Covered Carport; ADA Adaptable with Minor Revisions
 (Gross Under Beam Floor Area = 2,965 s.f.)

FLOOR PLAN

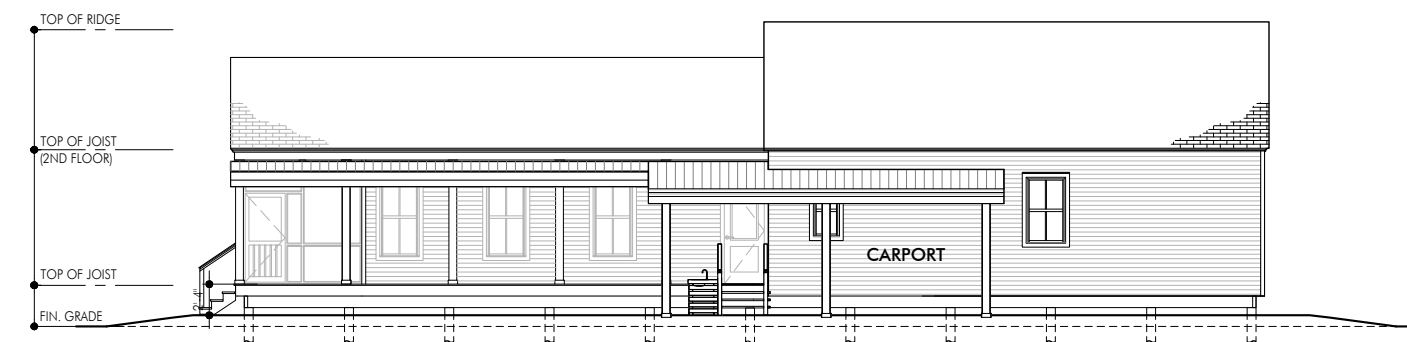
Option 1: Two Bedrooms



FRONT ELEVATION



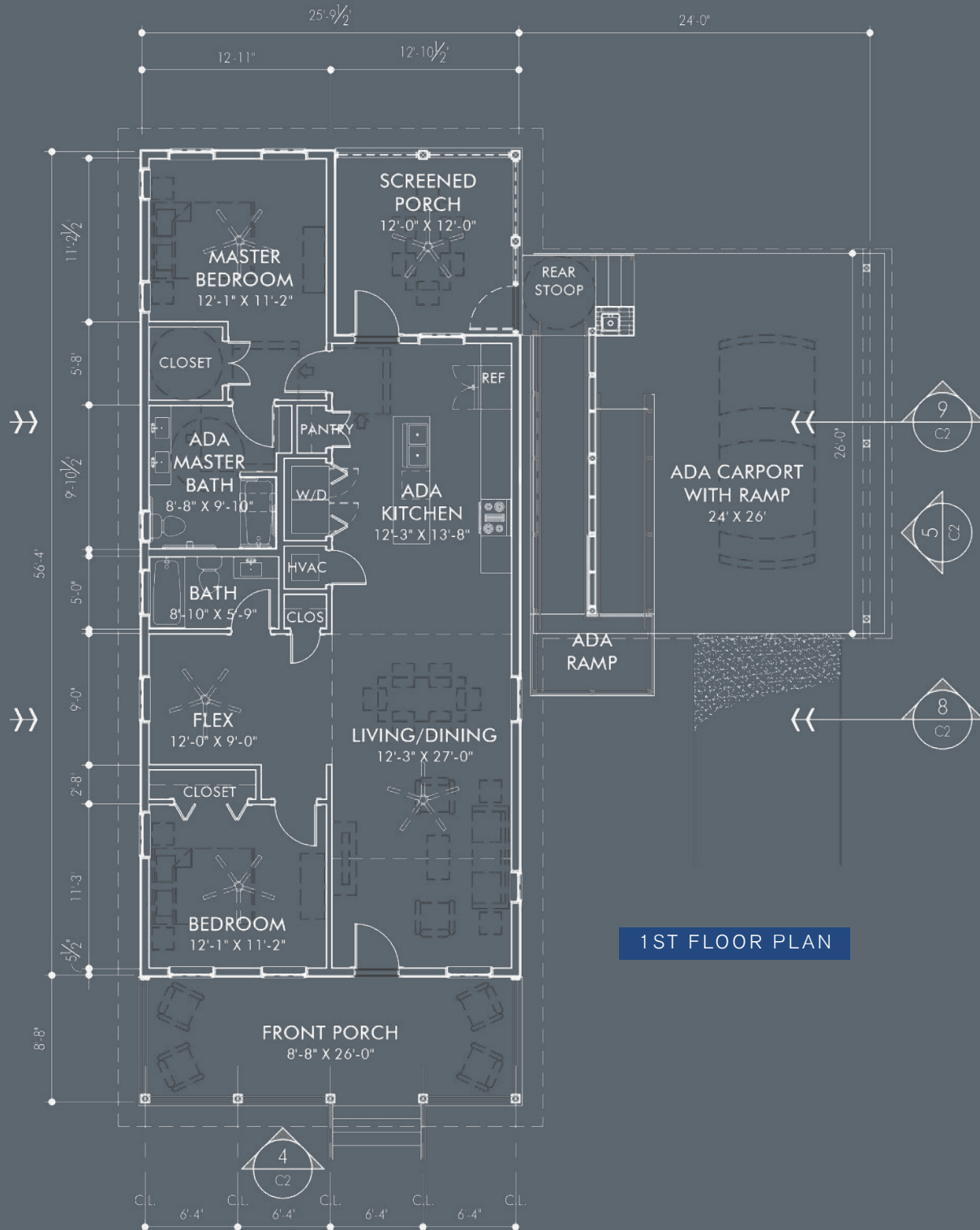
REAR ELEVATION



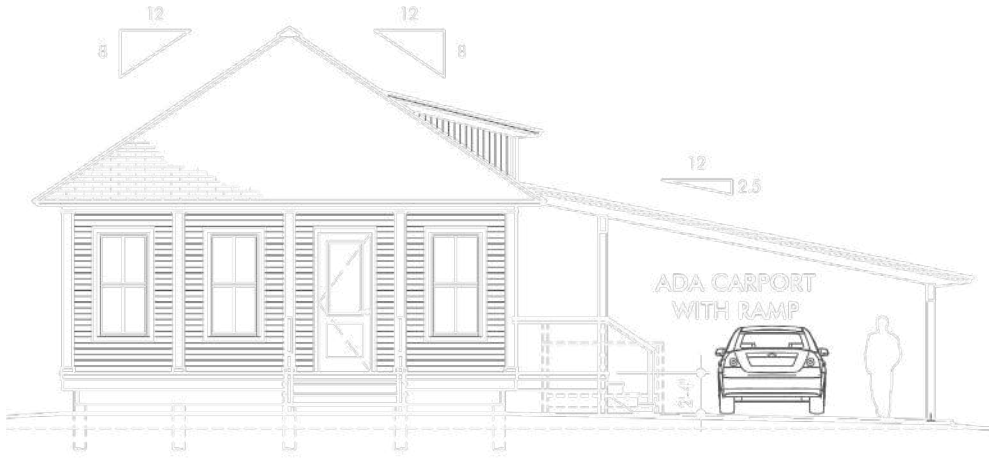
RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION

FLOOR PLAN

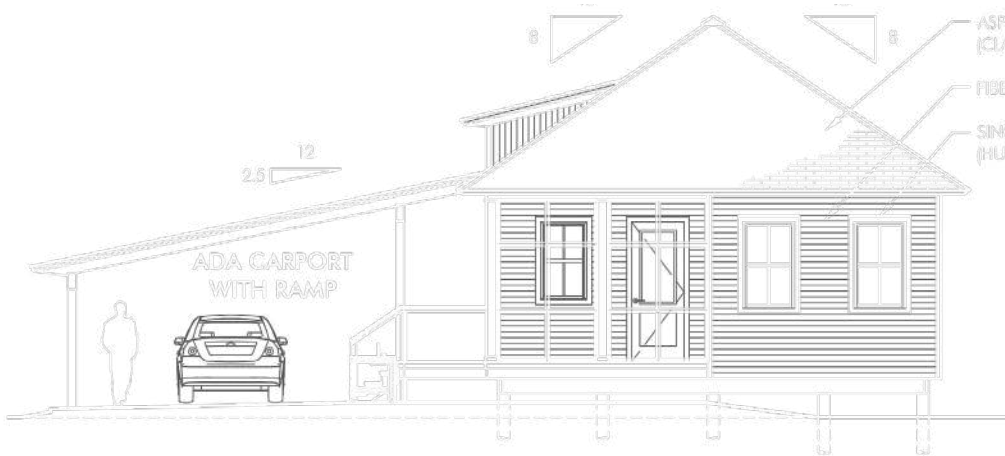
Option 2 ADA: Two Bedrooms



1ST FLOOR PLAN



FRONT ELEVATION



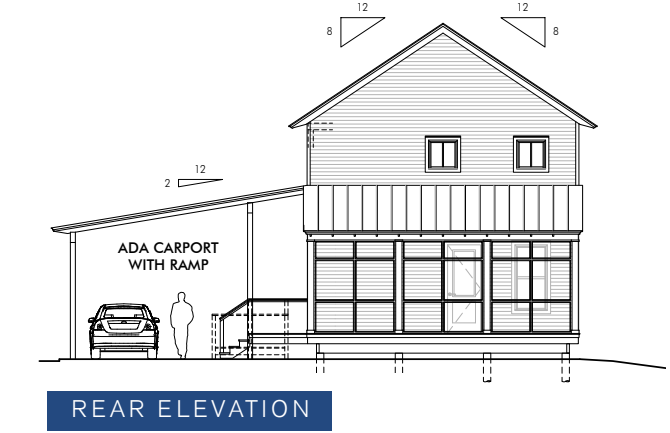
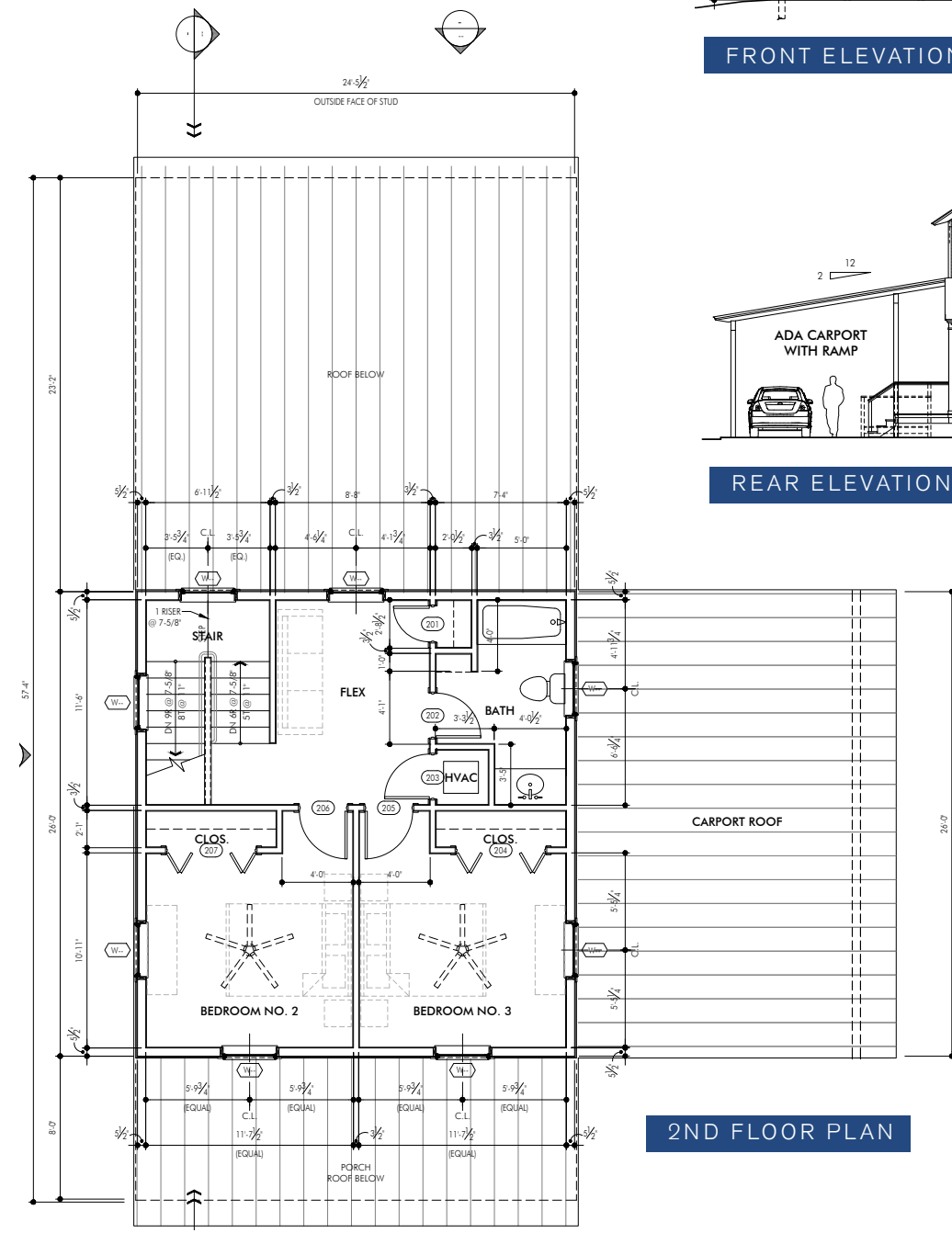
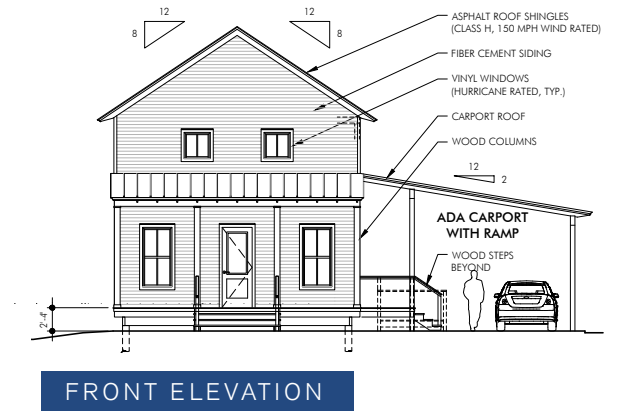
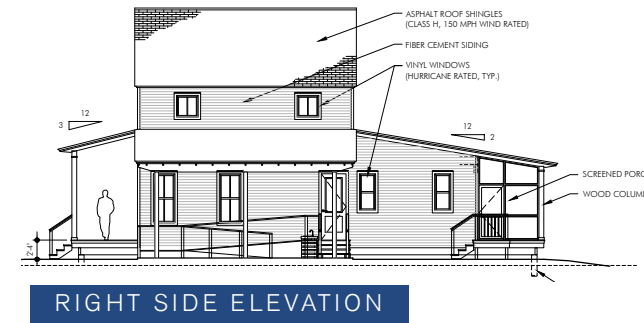
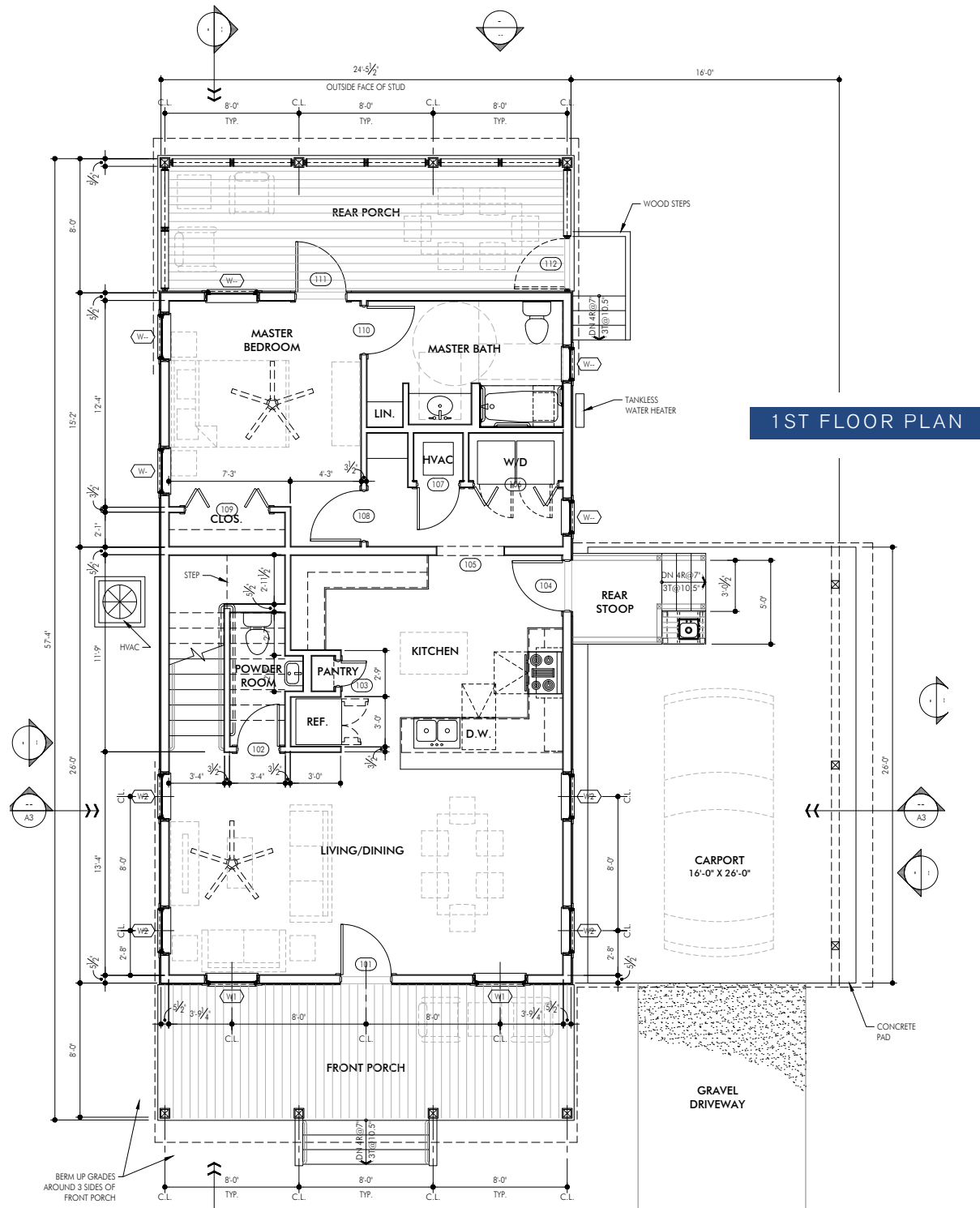
REAR ELEVATION



RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION

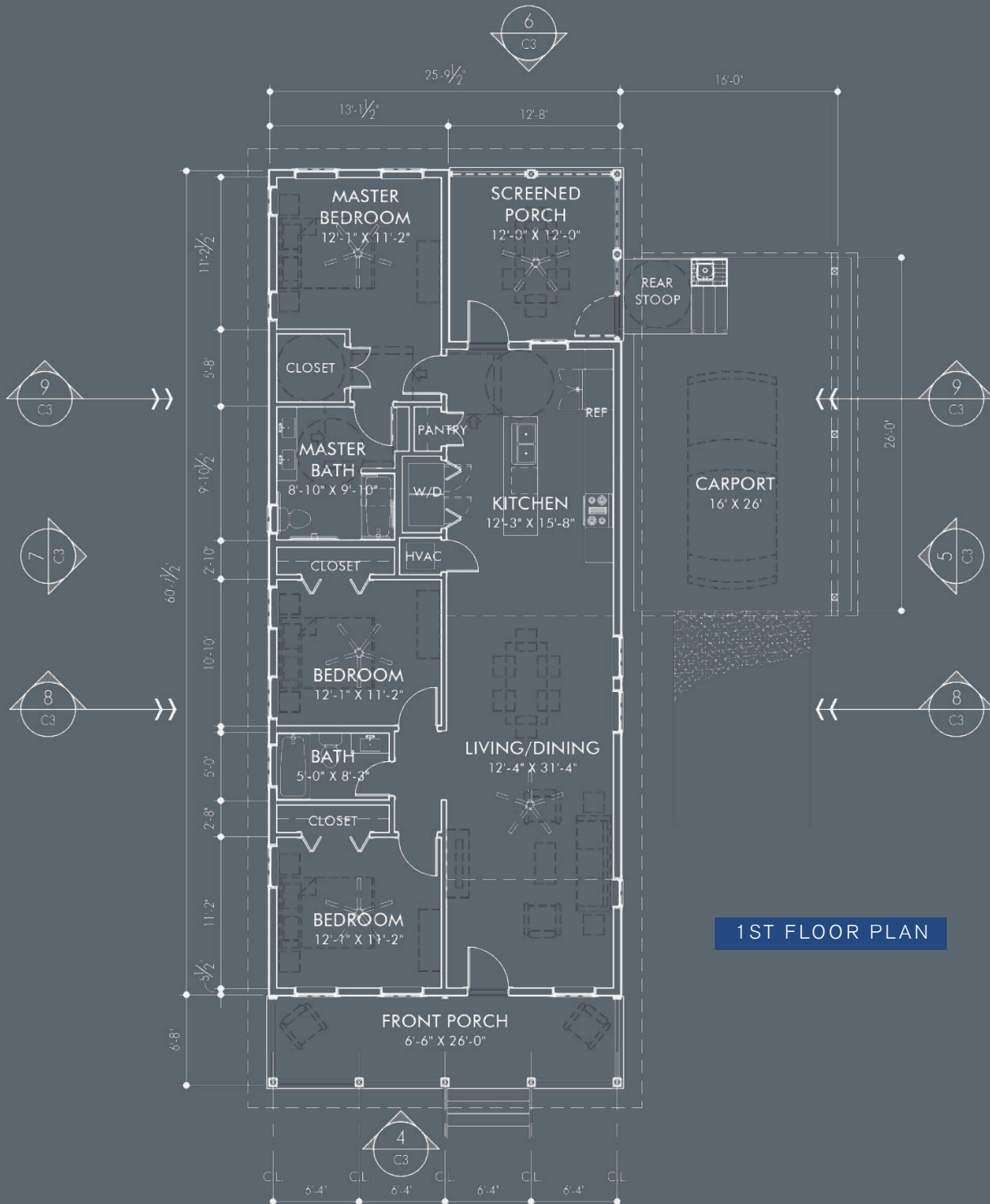
FLOOR PLAN

Option 3: Three Bedrooms



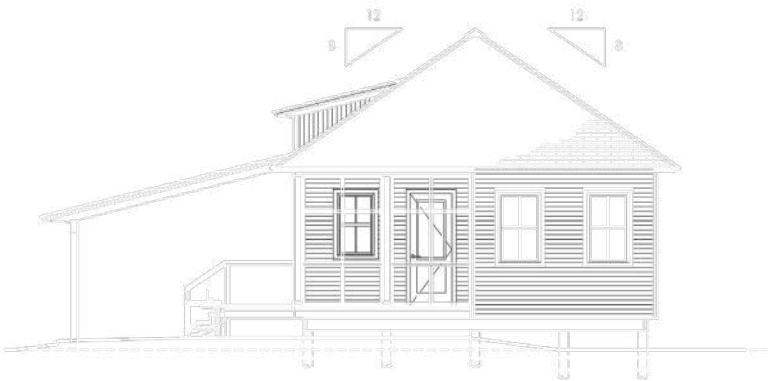
FLOOR PLAN

Option 4: Three Bedrooms





FRONT ELEVATION



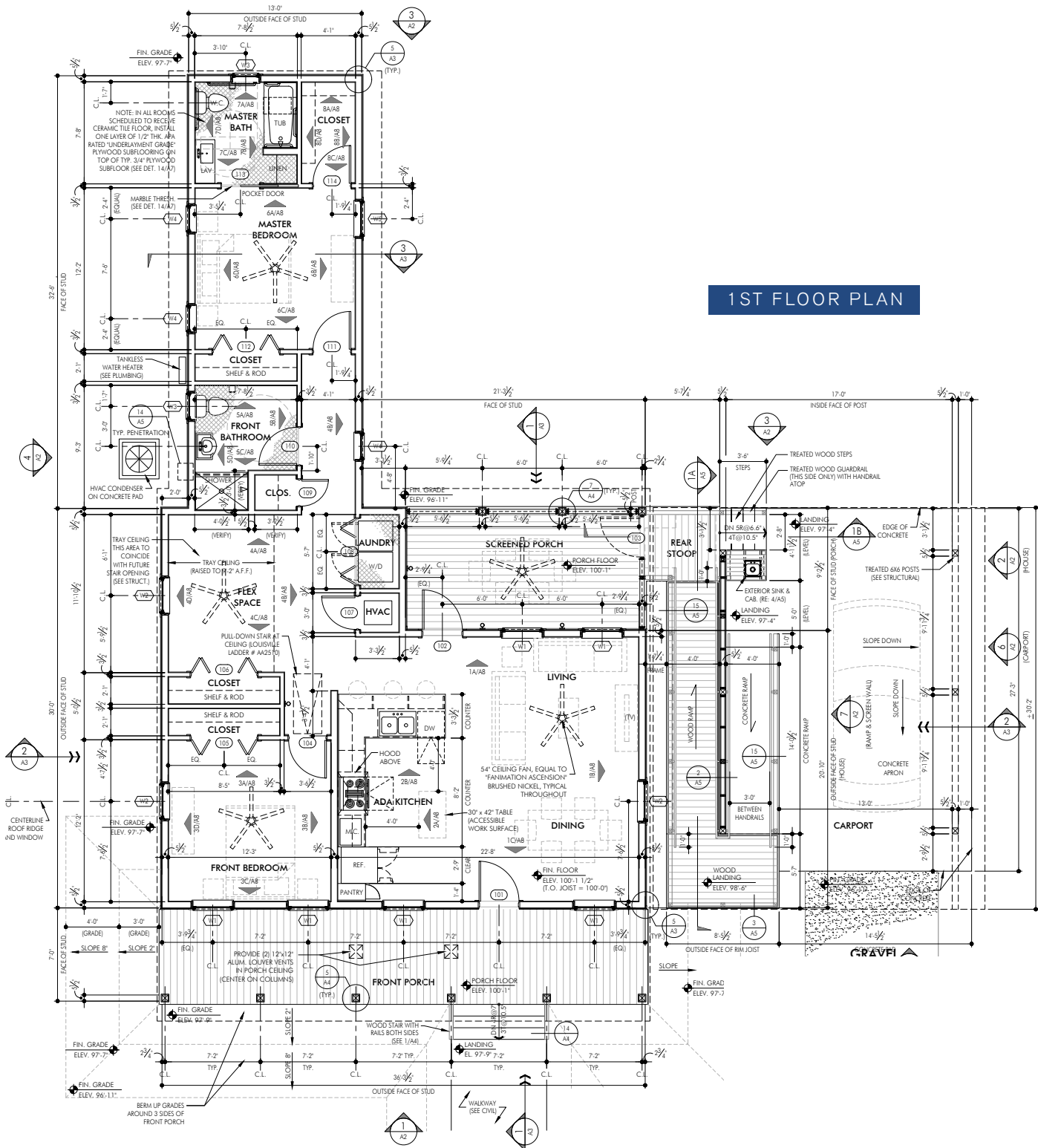
REAR ELEVATION



RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION

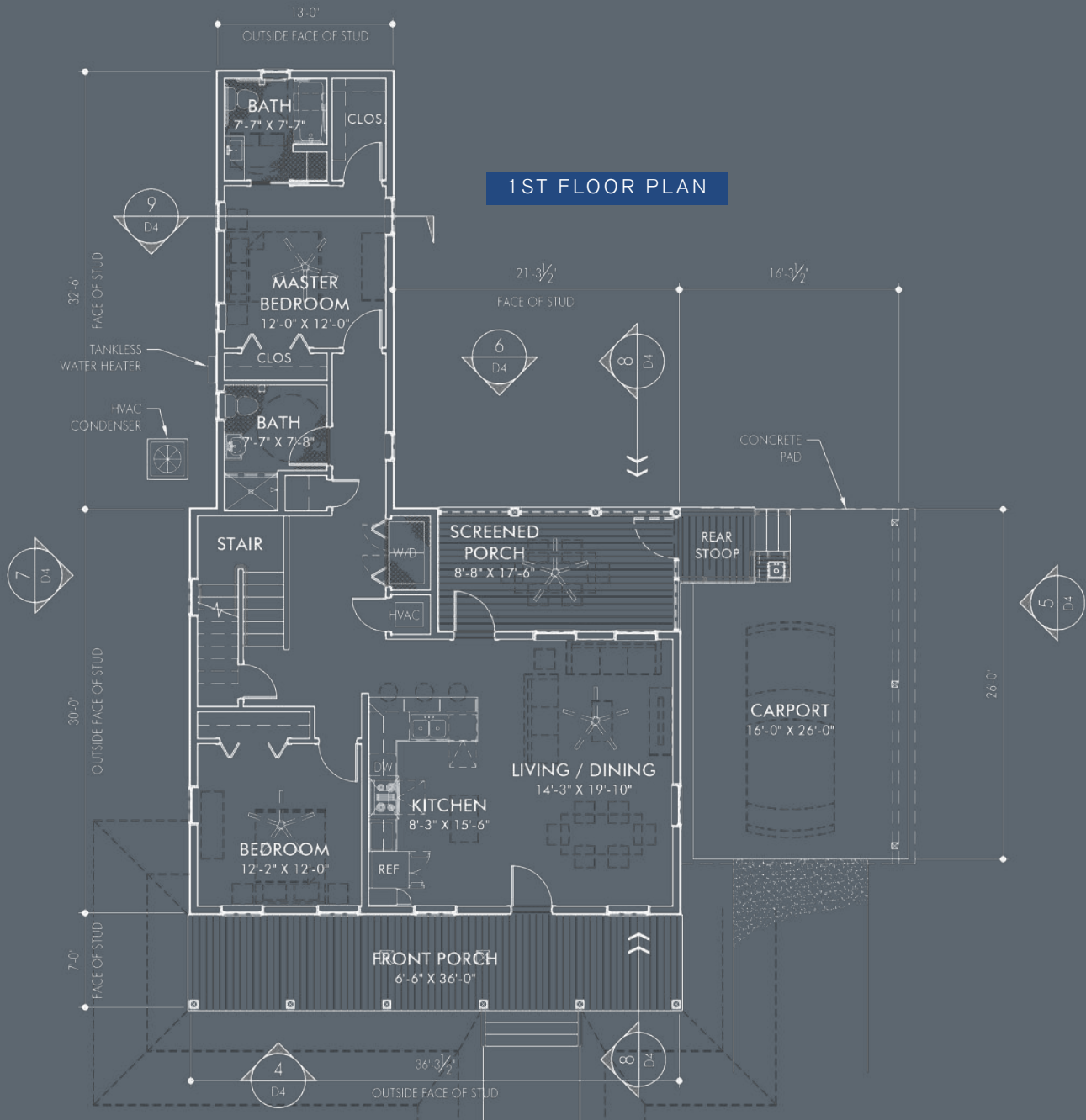
FLOOR PLAN

Option 5: Two Bedrooms



FLOOR PLAN

Option 6: Four Bedrooms





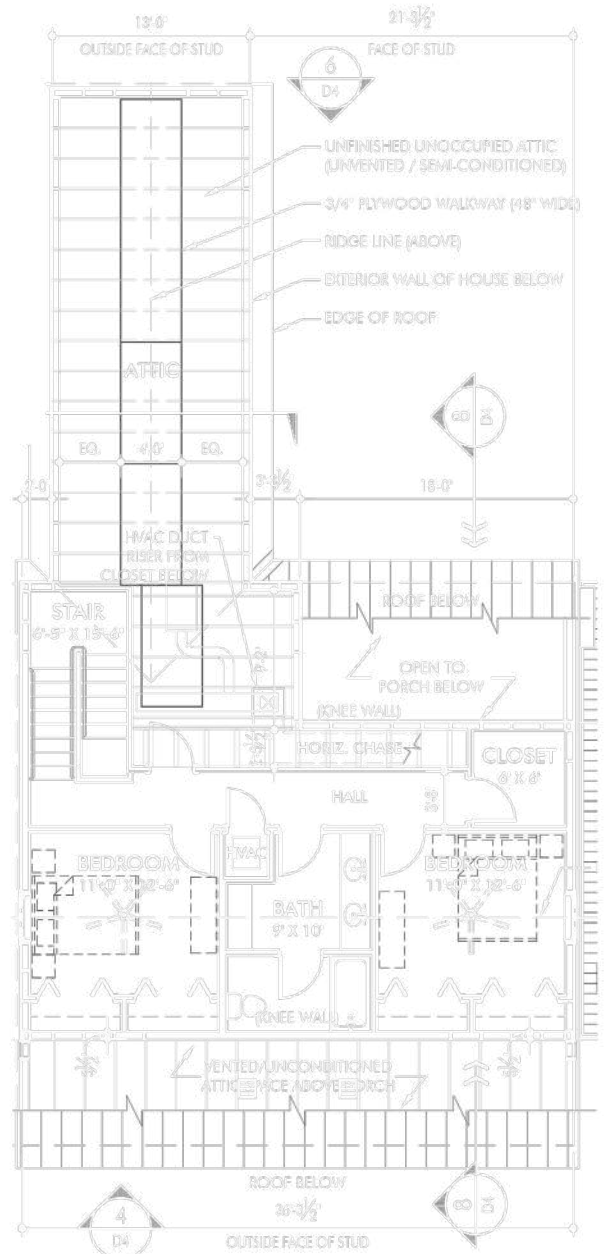
FRONT ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION



RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION



2ND FLOOR PLAN

IMPROVING RUNOFF CONDITIONS

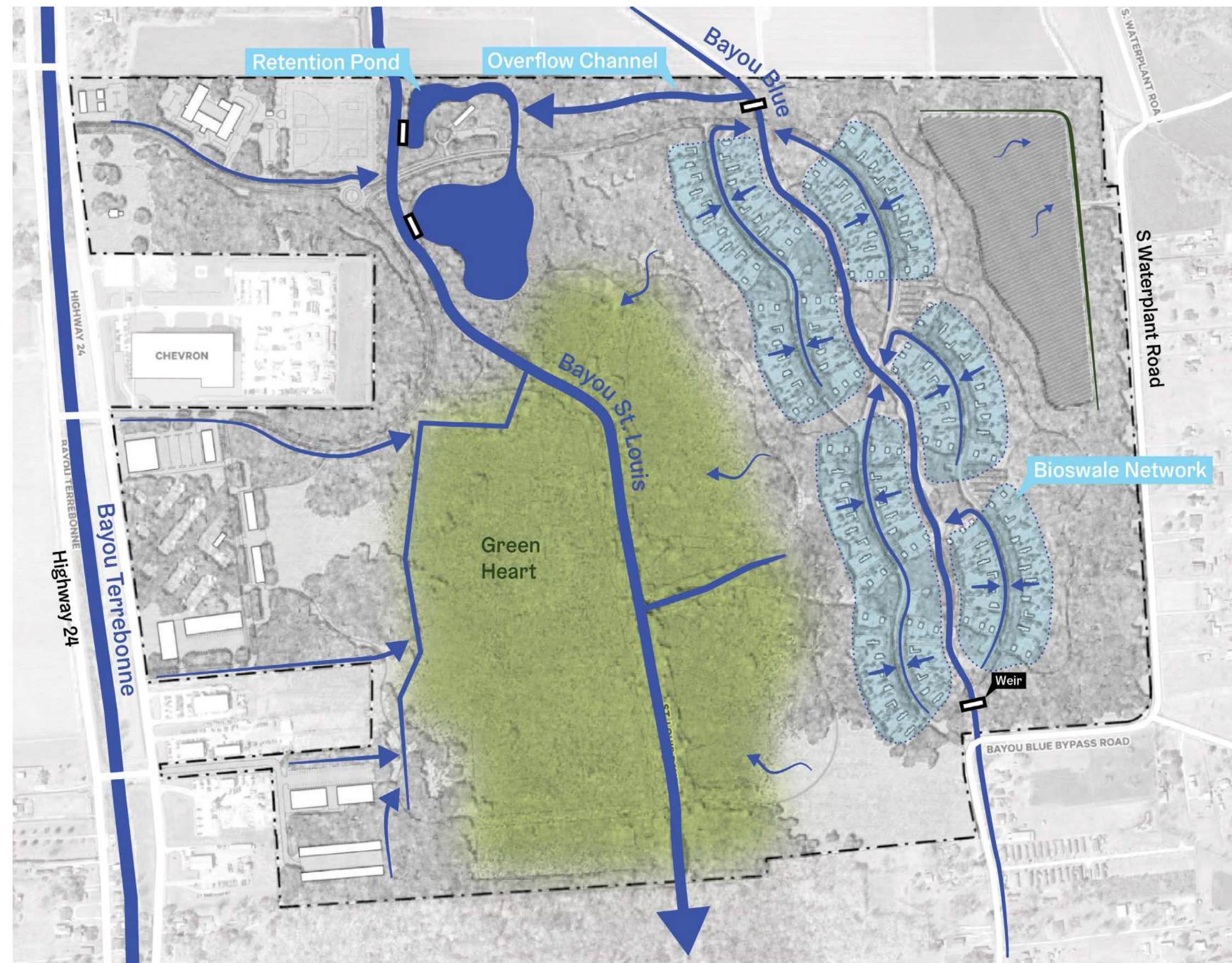
Living with Water

The New Isle's design highlights the strong connections between culture, ecology and water. The lake will be stocked with fish and can be a recreational amenity and detainage basin. During a storm, water from the community will flow through bioswales into Bayou Blue. Excess water in the bayou will overflow through a riparian forest into the lake. The lake is connected to the parish's forced drainage system through a side-saddle weir to Bayou St. Louis. This lateral connection allows for unimpeded flow in Bayou St. Louis, minimizing any adverse impact from water storage within the lake, while functioning to absorb and store water from the parish system in the event of high flows.

PROPOSED WATER FEATURE DESIGN CONCEPT

ADVANTAGES OF PLANNED BAYOU-POND CONFIGURATION:

- Capture runoff from commercial areas along La. 24 and residential lots
- No effects to the upstream flood elevations
- Prevents the pond from draining during low or no flow periods
- Allow any sediment bed load to bypass the pond but still let inflow/outflow from/to the bayou when the flow in the bayou was sufficient to raise the bayou water levels above the crest of the weir.
- Allow a storm's first flush of water from the upstream Devil's Swamp area that could be anoxic to pass on downstream, water that might otherwise cause fish kills in the pond
- Reduce runoff from west to east toward South Waterplant Road





TERREBONNE PARISH DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
Exceeding Standards

The new community is considered a major subdivision as defined by Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government, necessitating the project receive approval through the Terrebonne Parish Planning Commission, and ultimately, Parish Council. This process requires the submission of conceptual, preliminary and engineering plans, the construction of physical improvements, and the submission of a final survey plat. The approval process will require multiple stages of approval before final sign-off.

On Feb. 21, 2019, The New Isle's master plan was unanimously approved by the parish Planning Commission. The team also presented and received unanimous approval for conceptual and preliminary engineering plans. At this stage, these approvals ensure lot layouts, lot sizes and street designs meet parish standards. Once final engineering drawings were completed, the team received a second engineering approval in January 2020, clearing the path for construction to begin.

During construction, the team will work closely with the parish to ensure The New Isle is implemented according to the approved drawings. The last step before final approval will be a presentation to the Terrebonne Parish Council.

Terrebonne Planning Commission Requirements:
 Municipal Code 24.5.3.1

Master Plan: To show improvements necessary for development, i.e., drainage, sewer, utilities and transportation.

Conceptual Engineering Drawings: Proposed land use, in particular the subdivision of undeveloped land.

Preliminary Engineering Drawings: Layout and configuration of lots, streets, easements and geometric relationships with existing streets and easements which may join or cross the proposed subdivision.

100% Engineering Drawings: The purpose of the engineering approval phase is to consider the engineering plans of the proposed subdivision.

Construction Inspections: The final acceptance consists of the subdivision as constructed and the submission of engineering certification to the commission.

Final survey plat: Stamped and signed plans by a professional engineer licensed in Louisiana depicting all improvements.





THE ISLE DE JEAN CHARLES RESETTLEMENT

Reimagining the Island

Throughout this Master Plan, Isle de Jean Charles has been described as a reference point guiding design principles within The New Isle community, a sacred location for a population beleaguered by generations of environmental breakdowns and significant climate-related impacts. For those with whom the resettlement team has partnered over a multiyear period to develop the project effort, Isle de Jean Charles is a historical, spiritual and physical homeland.

As described in previous sections, the resettlement team has used every resource to develop a plan for The New Isle that transplants the essence of Isle de Jean Charles in those ways that are possible. But, as any island resident would affirm, there is no substitute for Isle de Jean Charles, no matter what the New Isle becomes in the future or how broadly successful, or unsuccessful, the resettlement effort may prove to be in the years to come. Isle de Jean Charles is one such sacred place.

It is in this vein that the final section of this Master Plan has been dedicated to the island, to Isle de Jean Charles. In working with the people of Isle de Jean Charles, the resettlement team heard a common refrain — to leave the island untouched and at peace, and to allow for its people to use it as long as time and nature may allow. Therefore, the concepts and ideas captured within the following section will not be acted upon through the course of this resettlement effort, allowing for the island to experience a long goodbye through continued use. Rather, this section is intended to serve as a starting point for whenever nature does take its final toll, and the island will be forced into its final incarnation.

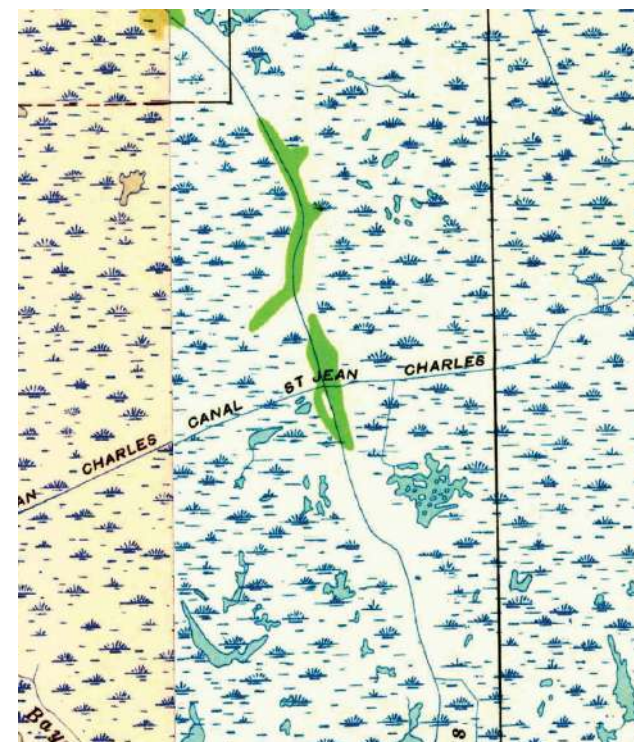


THE CLIMATE CRISIS UP CLOSE

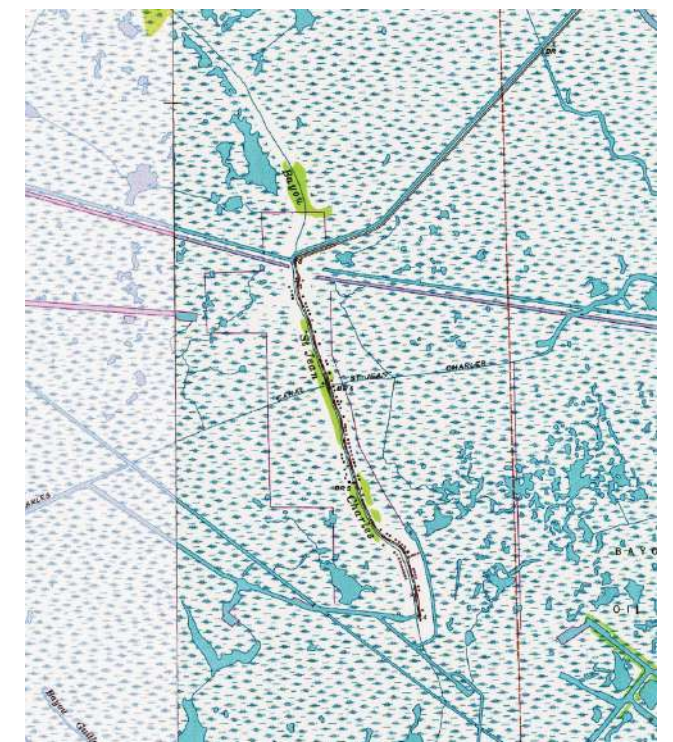
Forces of Change

As part of the resettlement team's analysis envisioning potential future uses for the island, the team took a historical approach to document how the island's land mass had deteriorated for decades leading up to the resettlement effort. The maps illustrated on the adjacent page outline the first documented incursions to the island's land structure from the 1930s and illustrate the rapid environmental degradation occurring thereafter.

The island represents a tragic illustration of a 'worst case scenario' in Louisiana, by which the dual forces of global sea level rise and coastal land loss have resulted in a dramatic shrinking of the island's landmass.



1939 - 1941
First canals are dredged for navigation.



1963 - 1980
Dredging of canals for oil and gas extraction and pipelines. Island Road established on spoil bank.

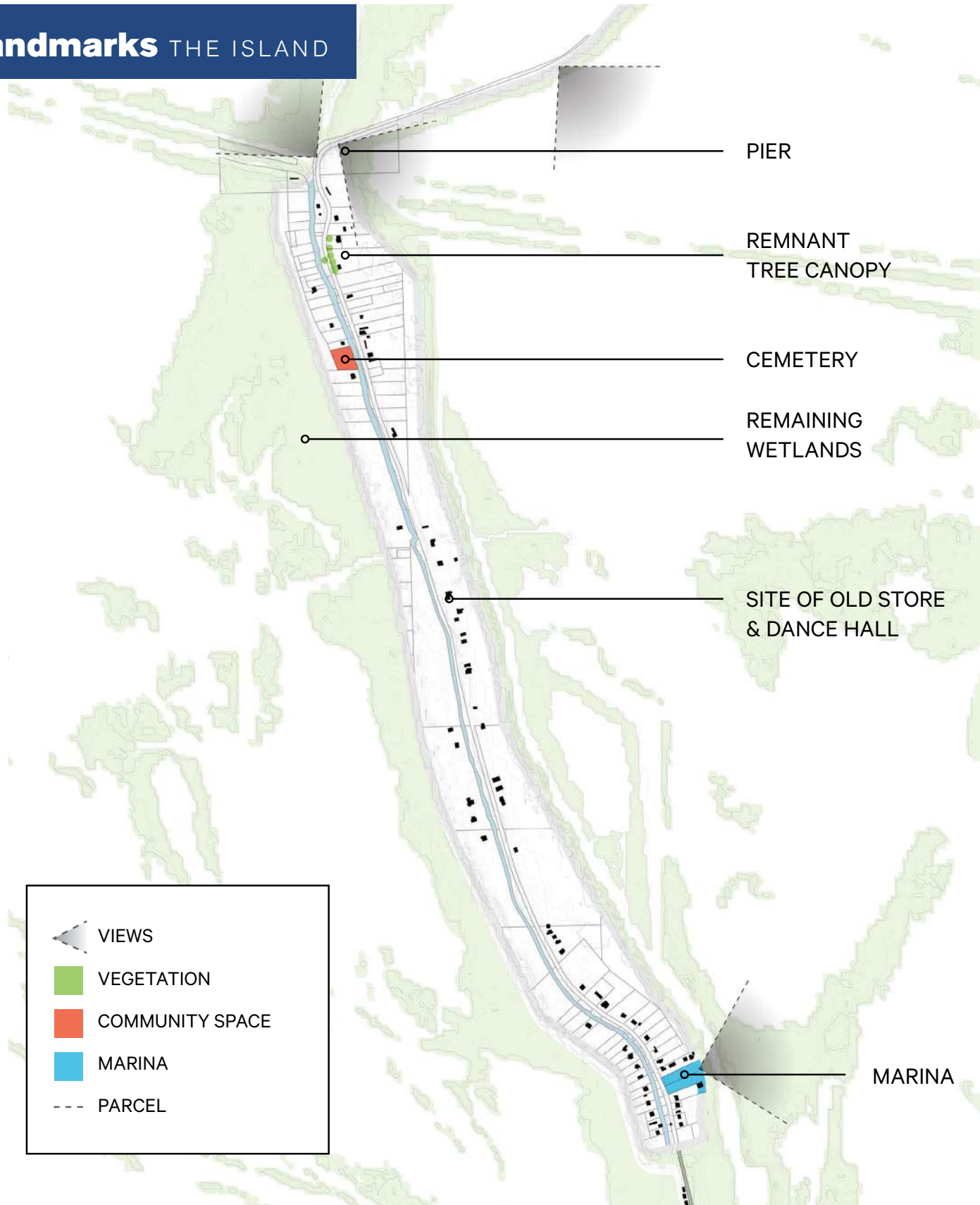


1994 - 1998
Extensive wetland loss. Continued dredging of canals for oil and gas extraction and pipelines.



2018
Extreme wetland loss. Island surrounded by levee.

Landmarks THE ISLAND



DOCUMENTING THE GEOGRAPHY

Can Landmarks Be Saved?

ANALYSIS

- Island context has historic cultural connections, a close knit community environment and significant natural amenities.
- Community Assets include existing site/structures and historic sites
- Large parcels at the center of the island hold multiple structures.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Resident connections to the island should be recognized and preserved.
- Peaceful natural and scenic characteristics should be benchmarks for establishment of new community.
- Environment that promotes community cohesion should be a benchmark of the new community.

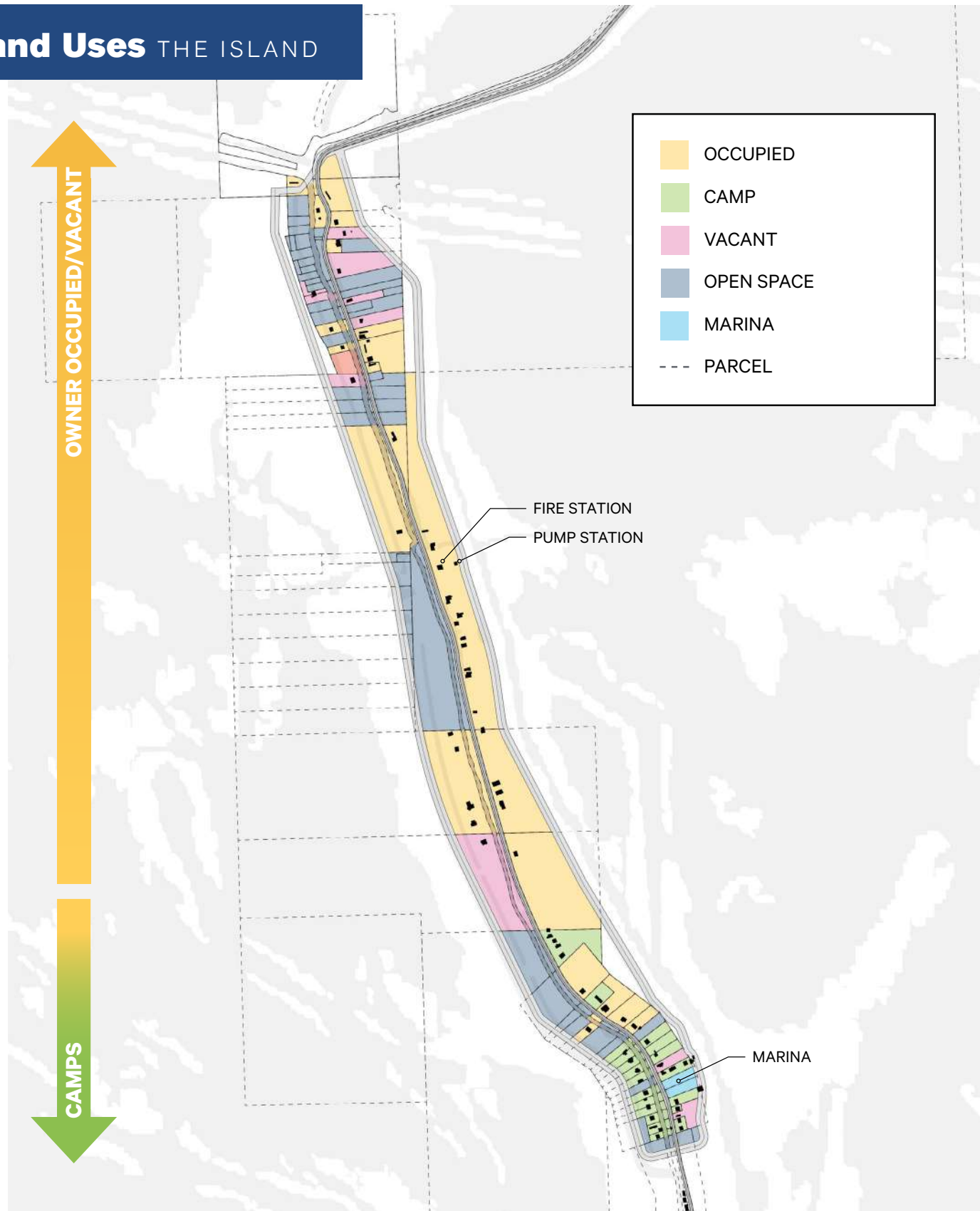
THE ISLAND'S ANCESTRAL HISTORY

Leaving the Cemetery at Rest

The Isle de Jean Charles cemetery is the resting place for many of the island residents' family members. Queries on what, if anything, would happen to it after the resettlement emerged in Phase I. In Phase II, OCD explored two possible options with the local experts (residents) and state experts (archaeologists). We could move burials sites to a possible new cemetery located in the new community or keep it in place the way it is. Several archaeologists provided information as to what relocating the cemetery to the new community would entail. With residents reporting that there were anywhere from 50-200 burial sites and unknown impacts from the water table, archaeologists estimated the cost to be a minimum of \$15,000 to move each burial site.

They also noted that it was nearly impossible to provide accurate estimates of timeframes and costs. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which gives the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, interested parties and the public the chance to weigh in on these matters before a final decision is made, would also need to be engaged. Archaeologists did not make recommendations as to how to proceed, rather they stressed that in this case the best way to preserve the cemetery would be to leave it in place, a statement with which most residents and family members of those buried there agreed. As such, the cemetery remains as is.

Land Uses THE ISLAND



AWAITING THE INEVITABLE

After 'The Storm' Strikes

As the resettlement team has progressed through the project's planning effort, one of the overarching fears that has led to increased urgency has involved the possibility that a significant tropical surge event could render the island either completely submerged or otherwise inaccessible for a lengthy period as The New Isle is still under development. Thankfully, no such event has occurred as of this plan's publication, but it is likely that such a significant event will one day take place. Based on this reality, the resettlement team took a practical approach in thinking through the most appropriate steps to take in decommissioning the island following a catastrophic tropical surge event.



PHASE 1

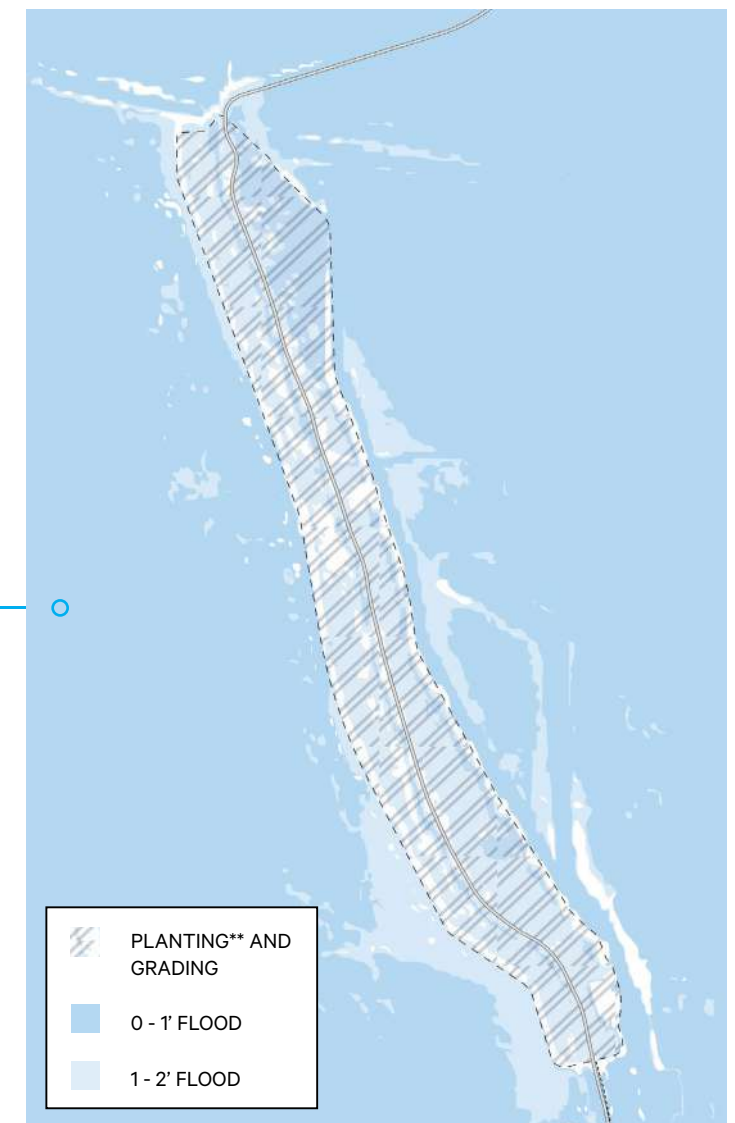
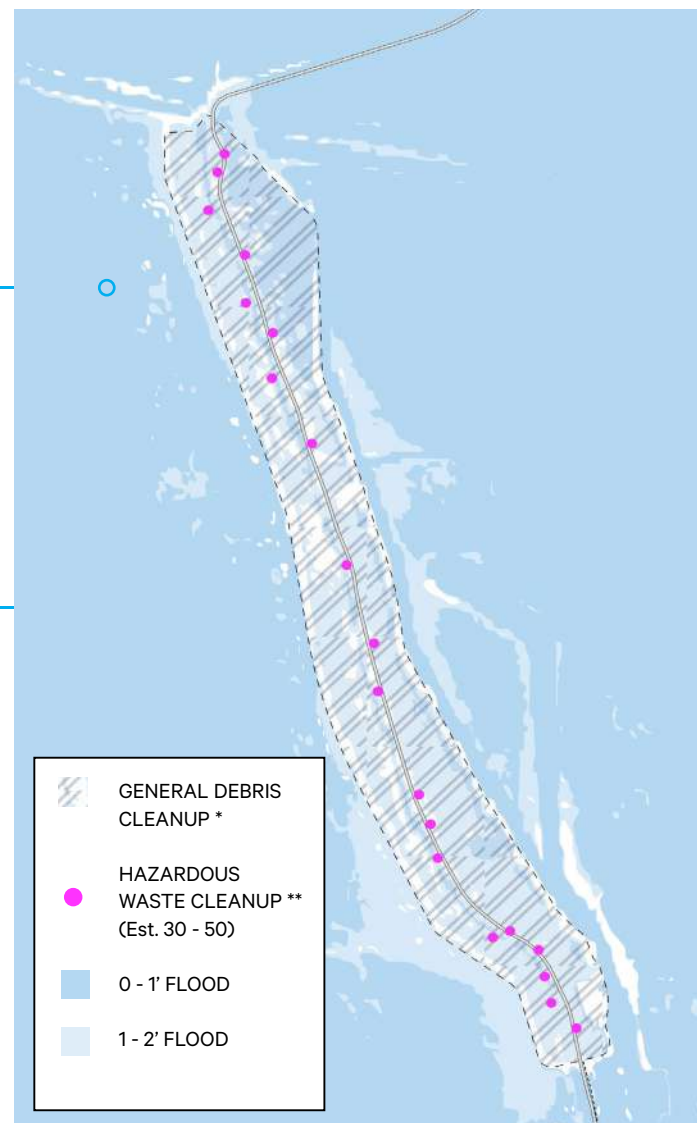
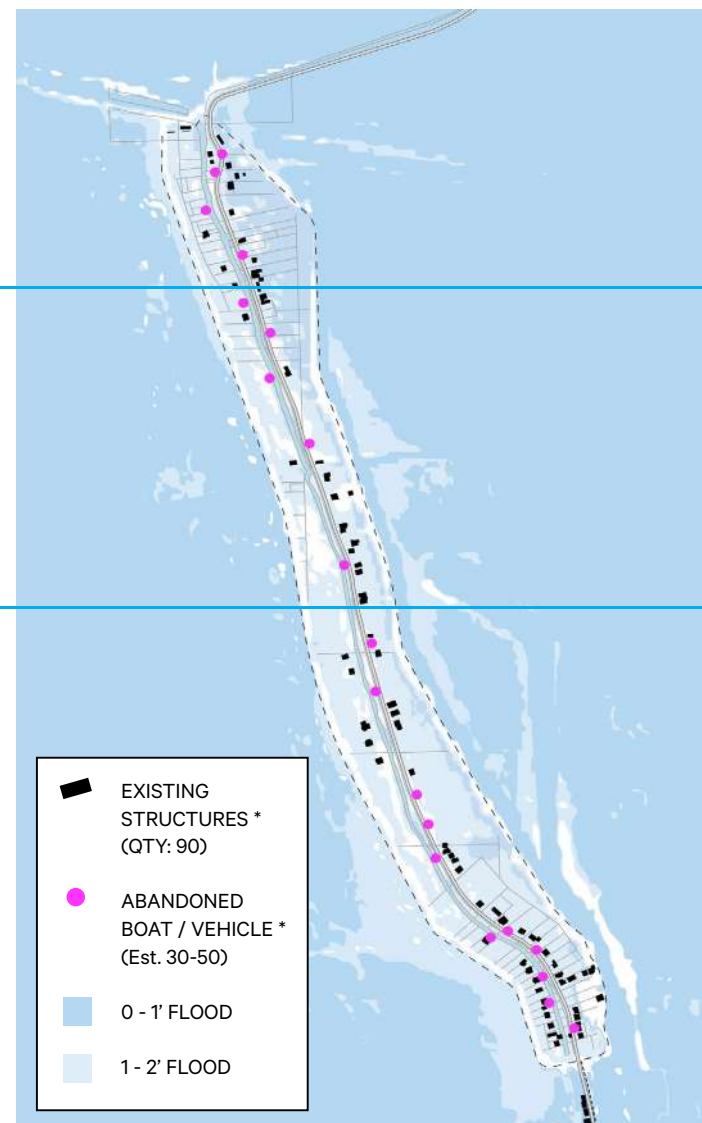
Demolition and salvage. Road and utility service end.

PHASE 2

Site remediation where required. Assume levee is broken to permit open flow. Island interior potentially declared 'state water bottom.' Assume all structures are uninhabitable.

PHASE 3

Site stabilization. Nature-based management of island uses.

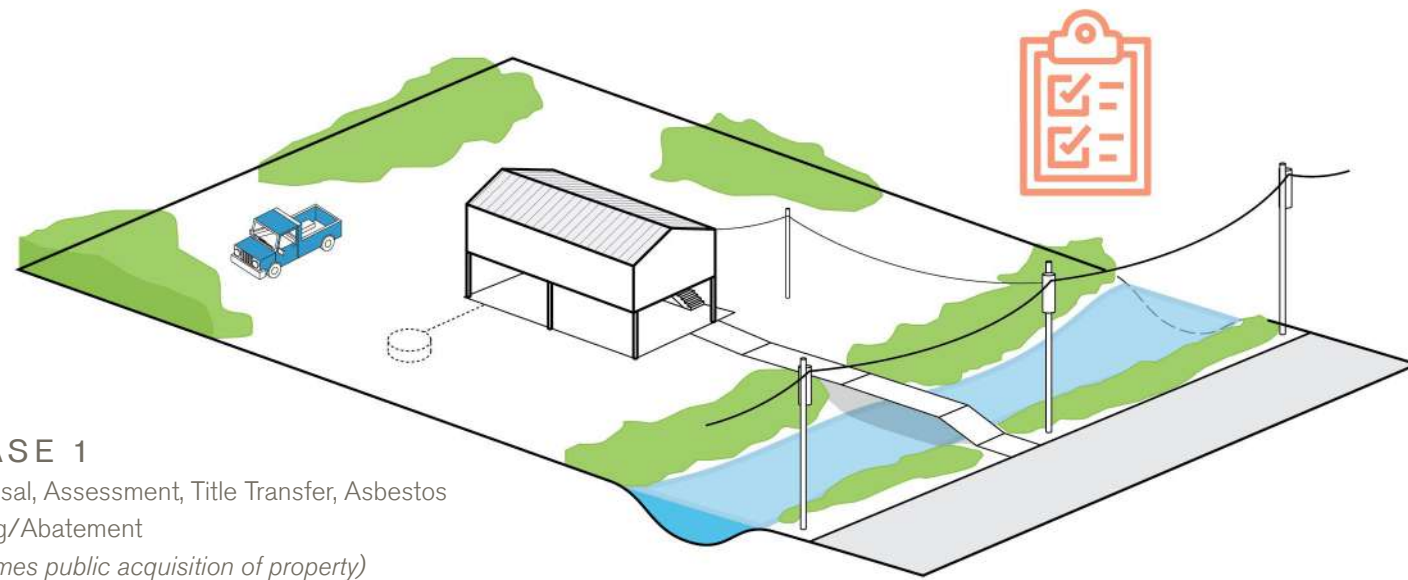


RESIDENTIAL REMEDIATION

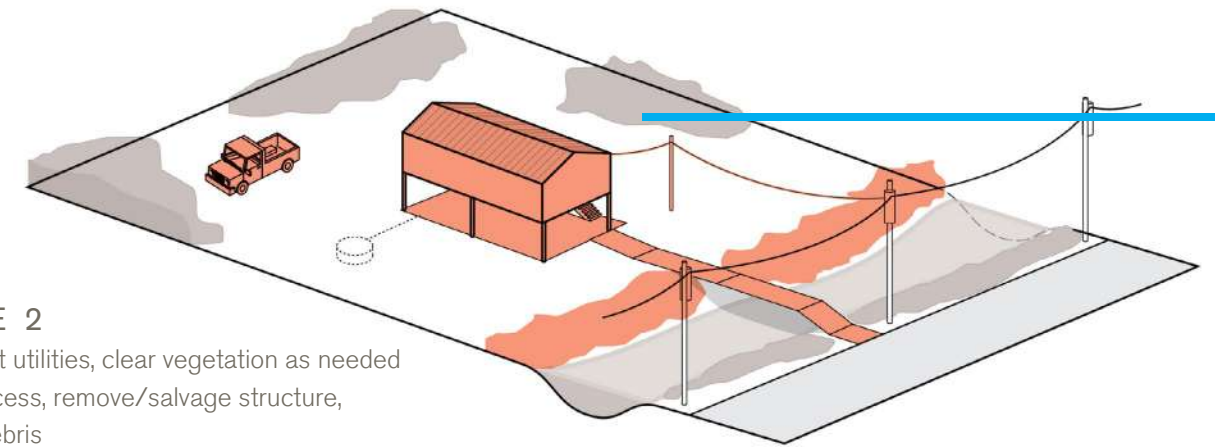
Returning Land to Nature

In considering an eventual decommissioning of the island's built environment, the resettlement team developed a phased approach in returning the island's residential parcels to nature. This approach contemplates environmental remediation as a core component and outcome, while also removing items from parcels that could potentially become debris or otherwise hazardous waste when severe weather events do occur. Most of all, the approach reflects an attempt to eventually leave the island itself at a state of rest, respecting the peace and tranquility island residents expressed as key characteristics of the island's essence and history.

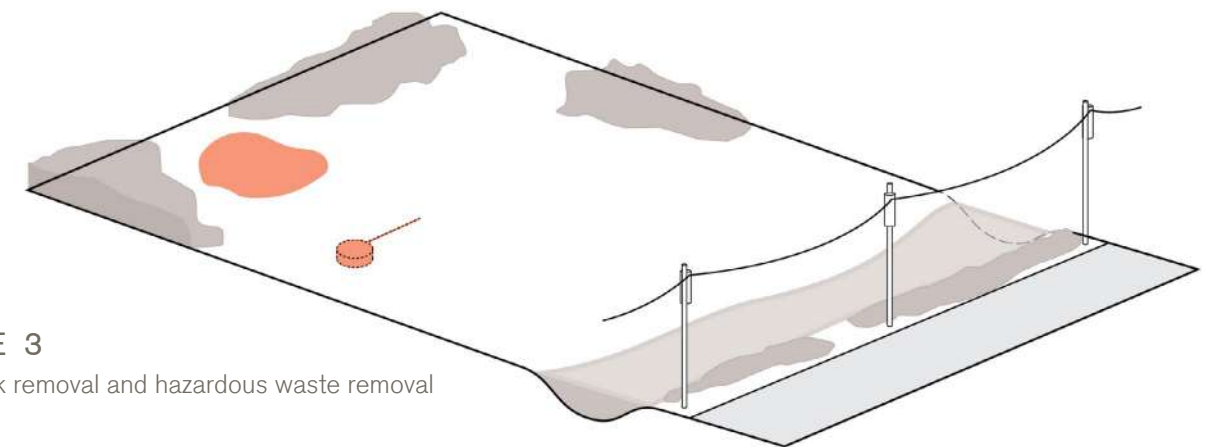
The accompanying drawings illustrate a potential four-phase process to decommissioning residential parcels, beginning with initial assessments of the property's condition and economic value and ending with plantings of flowers, shrubs, trees and encourage other wildlife indigenous to the island, leaving the parcel in a natural state.



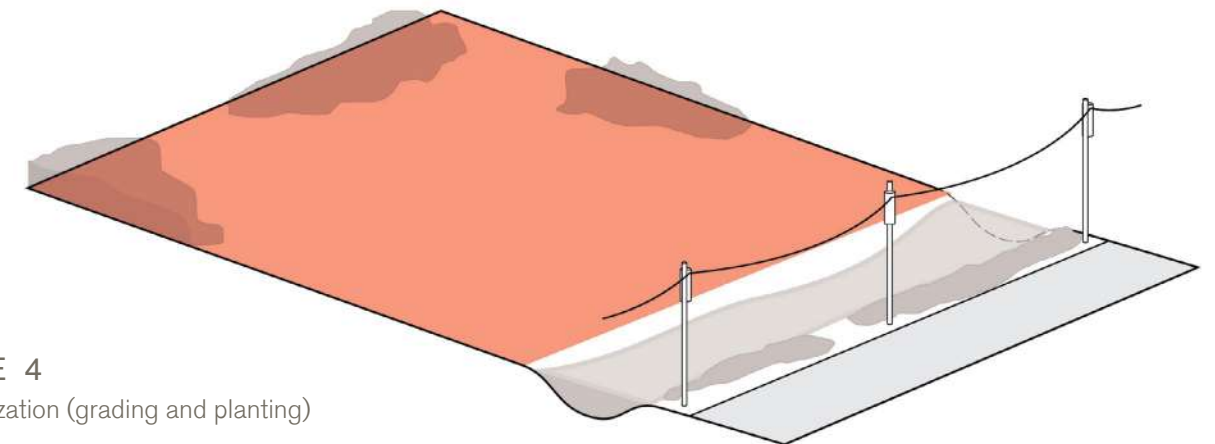
PHASE 1
Appraisal, Assessment, Title Transfer, Asbestos Testing/Abatement
(Assumes public acquisition of property)



PHASE 2
Disconnect utilities, clear vegetation as needed for site access, remove/salvage structure, bridges, debris



PHASE 3
Septic tank removal and hazardous waste removal



PHASE 4
Site stabilization (grading and planting)

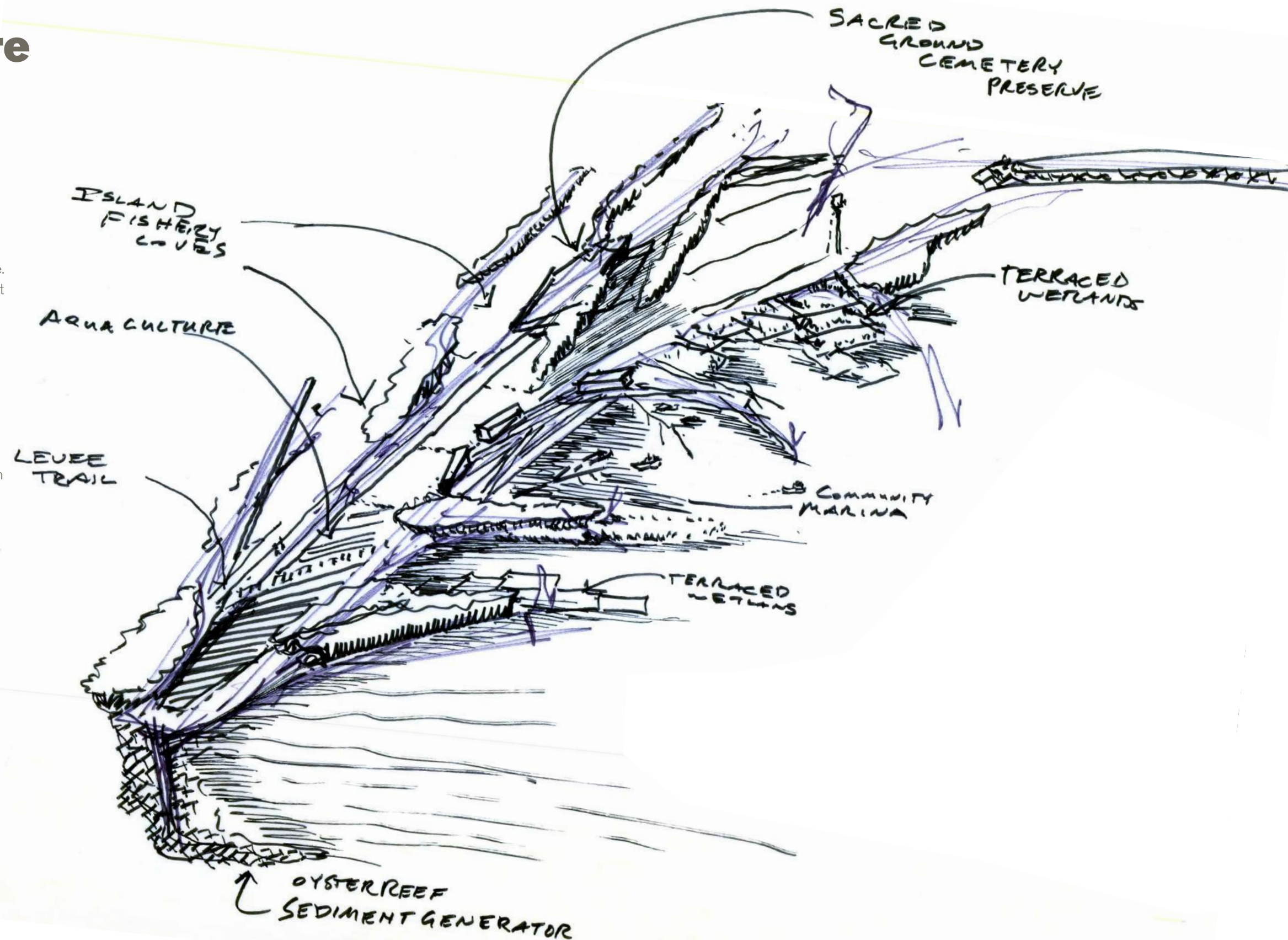
FIVE IDEAS FOR REBIRTH

Imagining the Future

The resettlement effort is predicated on a simple — yet tragic — reality that Isle de Jean Charles is unsafe for permanent residents, and in the future, environmental conditions are expected to continue to degrade, causing even more dire consequences for island inhabitants. Therefore, any effort to envision how the island might be used in the future — its highest and best uses — must contemplate transformations that limit development and take into account the real potential for loss of life and property, but also must pay homage to the island's rich history and culture. In short, can the island be preserved for future use and enjoyment without introducing additional risk?

The resettlement team contemplated this question and ultimately developed five proposals that may provide insight into the future as to how the island may be transformed. It is important to note these are not proposals for any immediate change to the island, but should rather be viewed through a longer-term, forward-thinking lens.

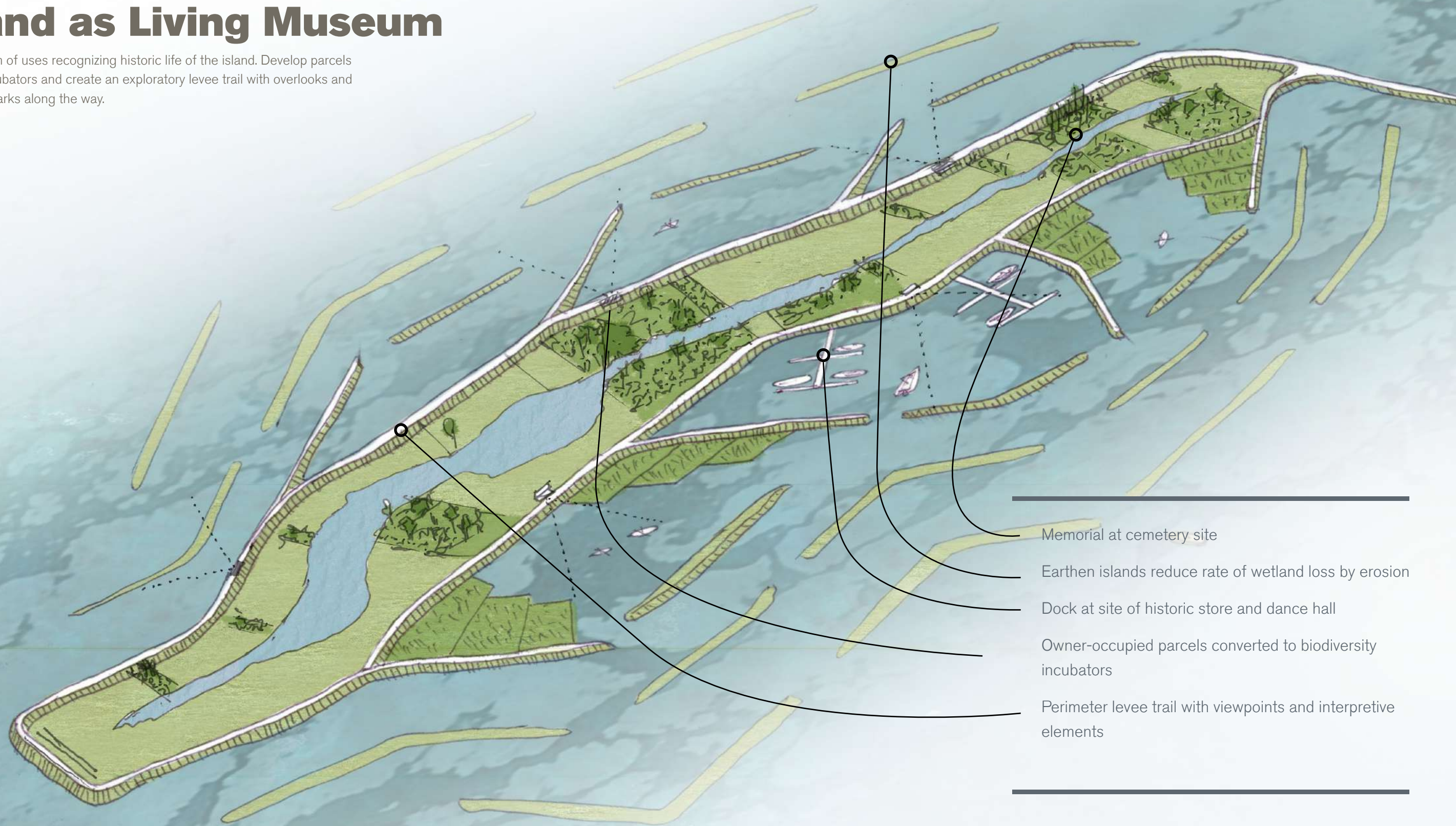
The following pages highlight five separate concepts for how Isle de Jean Charles could experience rebirth in a future in which it is no longer home to primary residents or permanent, habitable structures and is no longer connected to the mainland via Island Road.



IDEA #1

Island as Living Museum

Develop a program of uses recognizing historic life of the island. Develop parcels as biodiversity incubators and create an exploratory levee trail with overlooks and interpretive landmarks along the way.

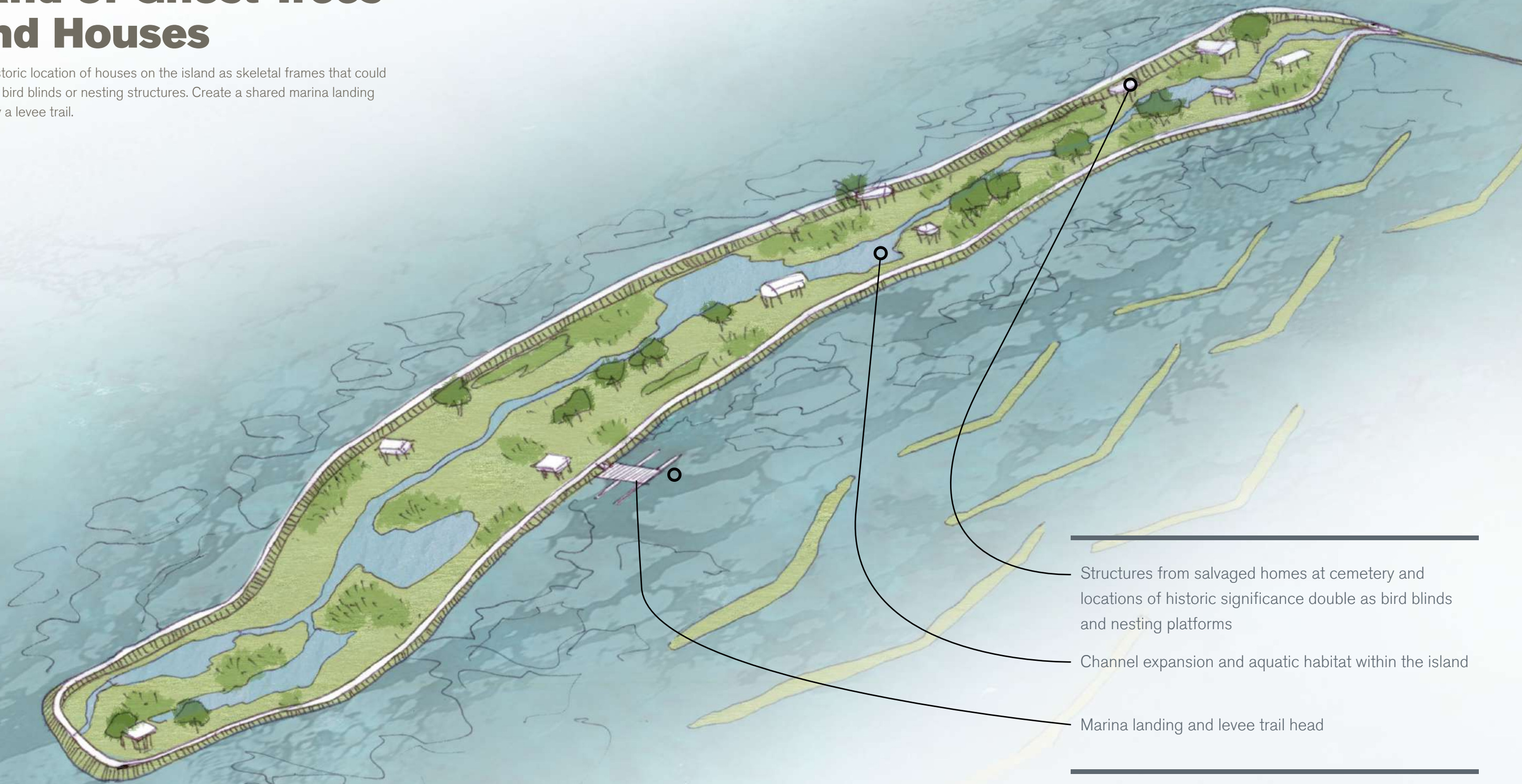


- Memorial at cemetery site
- Earthen islands reduce rate of wetland loss by erosion
- Dock at site of historic store and dance hall
- Owner-occupied parcels converted to biodiversity incubators
- Perimeter levee trail with viewpoints and interpretive elements

IDEA #2

Land of Ghost Trees and Houses

Recall the historic location of houses on the island as skeletal frames that could also serve as bird blinds or nesting structures. Create a shared marina landing connected by a levee trail.

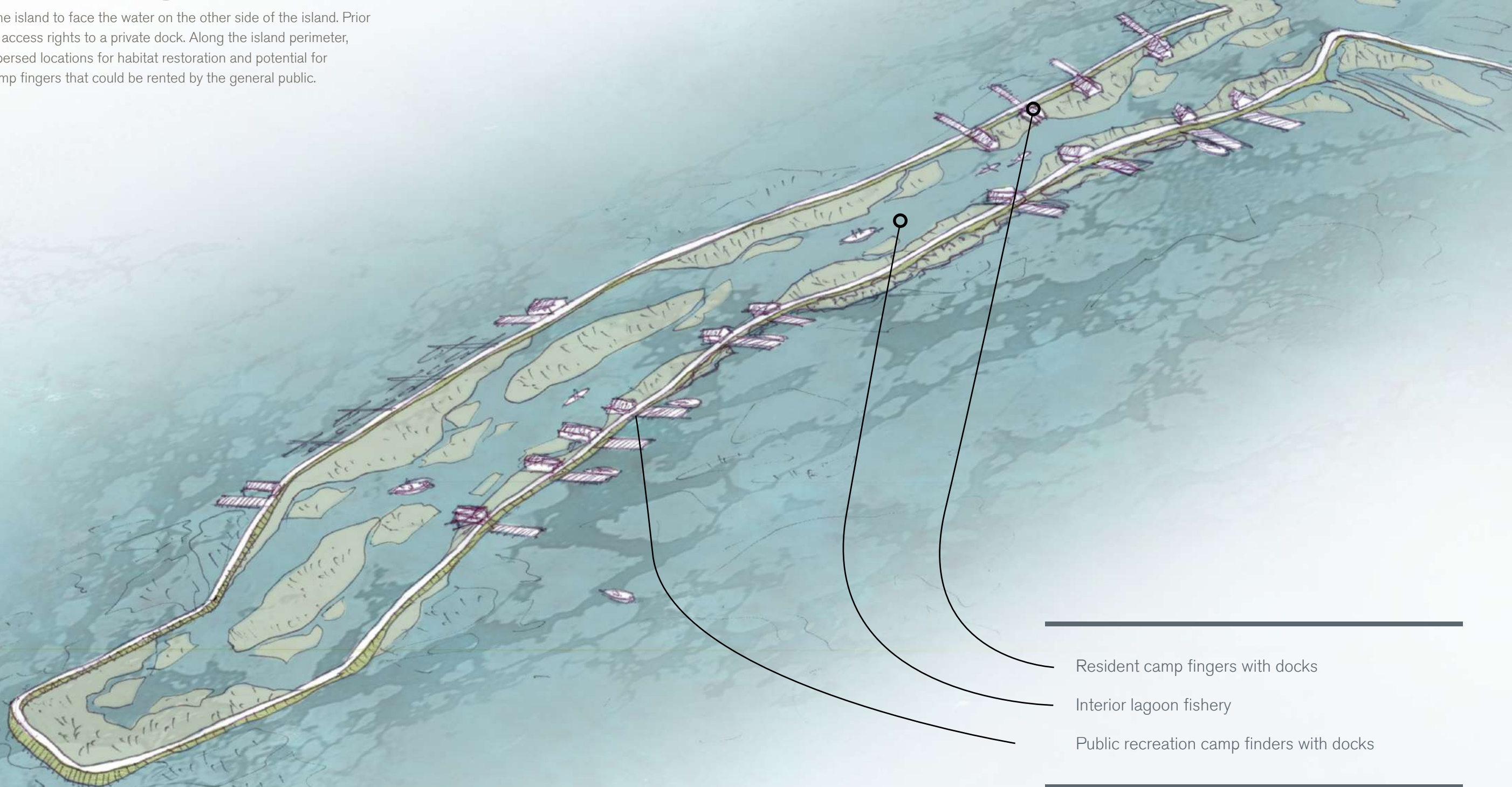


- Structures from salvaged homes at cemetery and locations of historic significance double as bird blinds and nesting platforms
- Channel expansion and aquatic habitat within the island
- Marina landing and levee trail head

IDEA #3

Coastal Fingers

Invert the parcels of the island to face the water on the other side of the island. Prior residents could retain access rights to a private dock. Along the island perimeter, there would be interspersed locations for habitat restoration and potential for separate dock and camp fingers that could be rented by the general public.

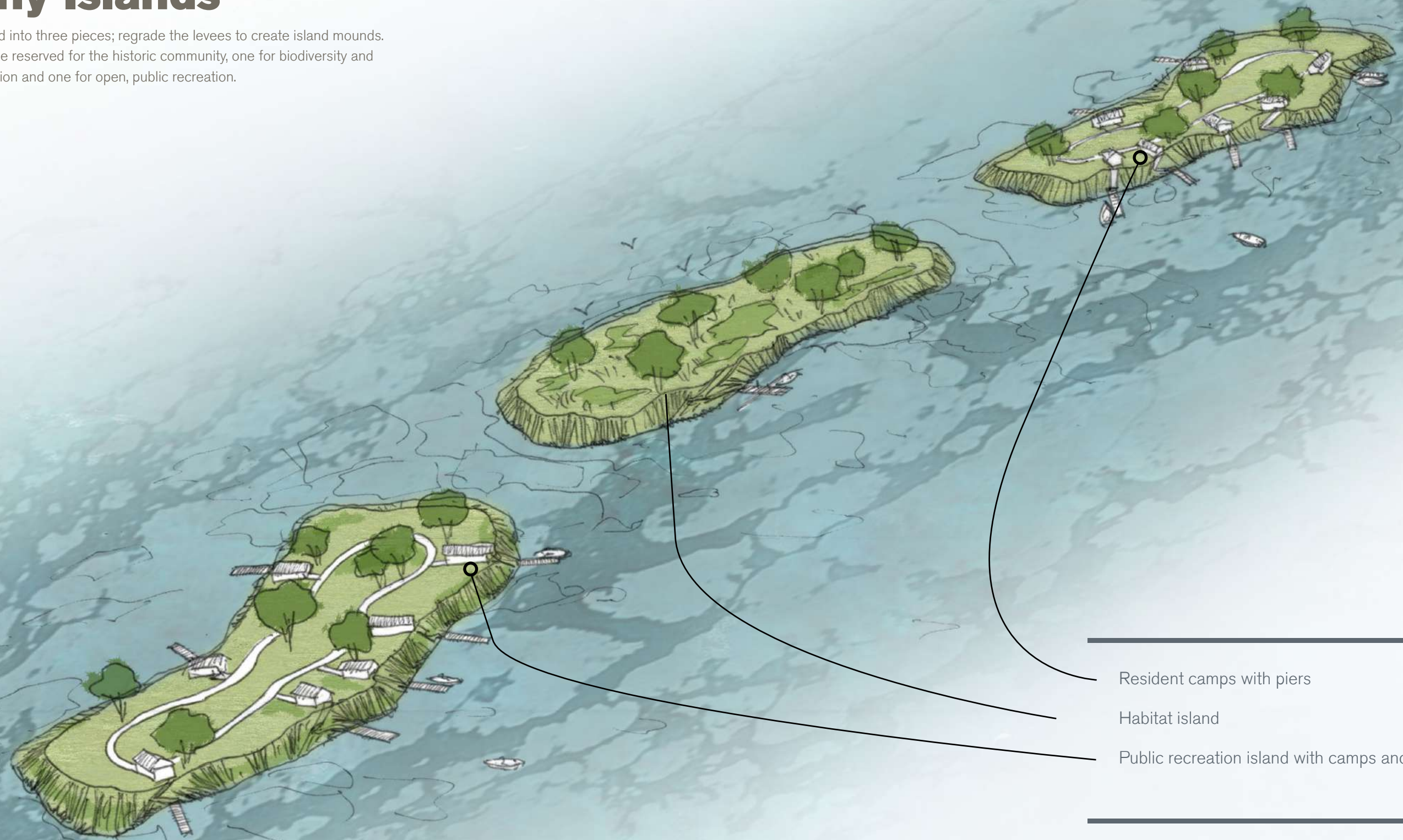


- Resident camp fingers with docks
- Interior lagoon fishery
- Public recreation camp fingers with docks

IDEA #4

Many Islands

Break up the island into three pieces; regrade the levees to create island mounds. One island could be reserved for the historic community, one for biodiversity and ecological restoration and one for open, public recreation.

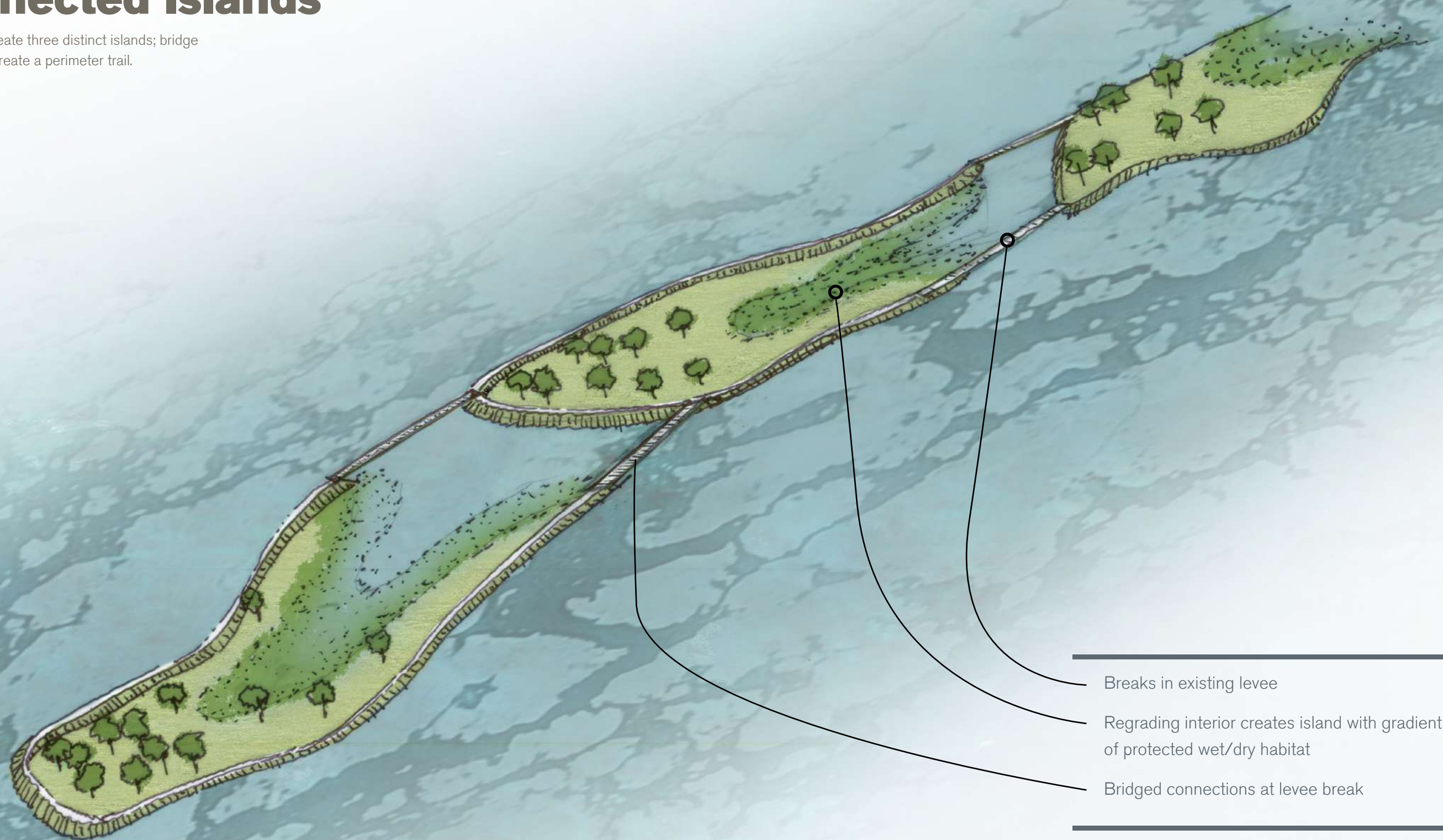


- Resident camps with piers
- Habitat island
- Public recreation island with camps and boat access

IDEA #5

Connected Islands

Break the levee to create three distinct islands; bridge remaining levees to create a perimeter trail.



Breaks in existing levee

Regrading interior creates island with gradient of protected wet/dry habitat

Bridged connections at levee break



LESSONS LEARNED IN THE EVOLVING FIELD
OF CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Practitioner Reflections

The Isle de Jean Charles (IDJC) resettlement has thus far resulted in positive steps forward and yielded important lessons on community resettlement processes and outcomes. This Resettlement is designed to serve current and former residents of Isle de Jean Charles, but as a secondary goal it is designed to contribute toward creating a proactive climate-based resettlement framework guiding other communities facing similar challenges now and in the future.

As the effects of climate change become more pervasive and severe, it is increasingly crucial that practitioners gather and share knowledge on how to plan for community-scale resettlements.

The complicated history of the people of Isle de Jean Charles and the unique demands of contemporary geographic and governmental landscapes dramatically shape this resettlement process, creating manifold learning opportunities. It warrants mentioning that while the IDJC Resettlement is complex and multifaceted, the reality is that all resettlements will come with unique historical contexts and social challenges. Resettlements will never be well served by a 'one size fits all' approach. This document highlights lessons learned leading to greater insight and understanding that may be applicable in future resettlement scenarios. Toward this goal, this section provides a review of this Resettlement's organizational structure and budgetary framework. It documents how the structure and frameworks affected this Resettlement's subject population through the various stages of design and planning. As a long-term outcome, this document is intended to inform global knowledge and policy, national policy, legislation and practice and local wellbeing applicable to future community resettlement efforts.

In 2016, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the State of Louisiana \$92,629,249 to underwrite innovative community-level adaptations to climate change in southeast Louisiana. \$48,379,249 was allocated for the design and implementation of a community resettlement for current and past residents of Isle de Jean Charles. The first 18 months, Phase I, focused on initial outreach to and engagement with current island residents, as well as a preliminary land use and infrastructure survey of the island. The program team's interactions with residents provided insight into residents' priorities and revealed additional complexities to be addressed during subsequent phases.

During this initial phase, the state-led team uncovered two core subjects that would influence the Resettlement's future direction. First, through Phase I's outreach and engagement effort, the team learned of various tribal allegiances held by island residents who, depending upon the individual, identify as tribal members of the United Houma Nation (UHN), the Isle de Jean Charles Band of the Biloxi-Chitimacha Confederation of Muskogees (BCCM), both, or neither. Second, the team became aware of the varying levels of communication between BCCM tribal leadership, tribe members, and island residents during the time BCCM tribal leadership worked with the state prior to submitting the final application for the HUD grant. More broadly, this reflected disconnects between tribal leadership and island residents during previous resettlement planning efforts. In the past, prior to the awarding of this grant, plans for resettlements of tribally-affiliated coastal residents, including those on Isle de Jean Charles, replete with homes, health facilities, meeting and educational spaces, and agricultural projects, were drafted and discussed by various Louisiana tribes.

Following Phase I's conclusion, in the fall of 2017, a selection committee including an island resident and a representative of the BCCM tribe's leadership, chose CSRS, an architecture and engineering firm, to develop and implement the Resettlement's Phase II, encompassing site selection, acquisition, and master planning. As the Phase II team conducted a contemporaneously interrelated process of site selection, design, and policy development, the diverse histories and cultures of various stakeholder groups continued to exert pressure on the community resettlement process.

The below analysis is an interim reflection based on practioners' reactions and reflections on the ongoing community resettlement process encompassing Phases I and II of the Resettlement. It is important to note that even after the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement is complete, the long-term effects of its implementation will unfold over decades to come. As such, opportunities for continued evaluation, reflection, and learning will continue to present themselves in the future.

HOW INFORMATION WAS GATHERED

Data and Methodology

Due to the human complexities involved in a community resettlement, qualitative methods are most appropriate for evaluation and research purposes. The strength of qualitative research lies in its capacity to offer methods that can document both multifaceted and multilayered explanations of how people experience a given condition or issue (Creswell 2005). They offer tools to gather geographically specific experiences and ideas from the perspectives of participants (Longhurst 2010). Qualitative methods are most effective in recognizing intangible elements of complex realities that may not otherwise be easily identifiable. These elements can include social norms, perceptions of ones' role in a community, on a co-working team or in the household, socioeconomic gradations, gender roles, and the thought processes of making a decision to participate in a community resettlement—a decision that for many is one of the most difficult they will ever face.

In compiling data for this section, research methods included ethnographically based participant observation, semi-structured interviews, informal interviews and conversations, a focus group and content analysis of interviews, survey questionnaires, and media articles. Secondary materials were used to provide context and depth. Data was collected from current and former island residents, team members, internal and external documents, and meeting minutes. Three social scientists worked on Phase II of the Resettlement and contributed heavily to this lessons learned section.

Seventeen Resettlement team members, including state and consultant team leadership, participated in surveys about their views on the Resettlement's progress, observed unforeseen events, needs for change, challenges of complexity, and effects on future work. Based on the information gained through that survey, a focus group was held with eight team members to more deeply probe the following issues: the definition of success, community engagement and participation, the rules and norms of agencies involved in the Resettlement, issues of power and accountability in program operation, and questions of fairness in program design, operation and goals. Informal discussions with individual team members were also held, especially for purposes of clarification of specific issues of lessons learned in the process of moving the Resettlement forward.

There are various limitations inherent to this research effort, including data that has not yet been collected or analyzed. Nonetheless, there was enough categorized data to provide a working analysis of these initial lessons learned. While HUD regulations and policies are mentioned throughout this document, no representative from HUD was interviewed. In other cases, members of the team did not fill out the questionnaire or were unable to participate in the focus group.



LESSON #1

Invest in Community-Based Knowledge and Local History

The desired outcome of the IDJC Resettlement is to develop a safe and sustainable living environment for current and former residents of Isle de Jean Charles while also facilitating continuity of island culture and values. The team recognized from the start that Isle de Jean Charles residents, who are the primary beneficiaries, and others that will be affected by the resettlement will have a greater range of benefits should they actively participate in the process. Meaningful, transparent community engagement is a core value of this Resettlement and understanding and reflecting residents' needs and vision for their future community has been upheld as the Resettlement's highest priority. Designing and implementing processes and practices that facilitated residents' full participation in that role has proven to be a more challenging endeavor.

An important first step in developing effective processes and practices for resident outreach and engagement was developing a nuanced understanding of who the residents are—their values, cultural norms, concerns, strengths, needs, hopes, and aspirations. Equally important is the recognition that communities—whether tight knit, linked only by geographic proximity, or something in between—are not homogenous (Cannon 2014).

A basic lesson to draw from these complications encompasses two different, albeit related, features of resettlement. First, the homogeneity of a population can never be assumed. Second, this heterogeneity makes it critical to understand the historical context and intertwining of identity and of the people and places undergoing resettlement, embedded power dynamics and politics, as well as a greater consideration of how to assess the positive and negative effects of resettlement on its participants and how negative effects could be mitigated.

The importance of having a deep understanding of the range of dynamics that define a community—cultural affiliations, economic drivers, divisions, disparities, histories and allegiances—cannot be overstated. Communities are often divided by ethnicity, class, race, religion and many other differing identities and interests. This can often lead to conflicting positions on a range of issues and on factors germane to community resettlement in particular. The more nuanced the team's understanding of complex community dynamics and the histories shaping those dynamics, the more effective the team will be in facilitating an inclusive process that results in shared ownership and equitable outcomes (Oliver-Smith 2010).

Sense of Place

For Isle de Jean Charles and other places where land is disappearing or becoming uninhabitable, practitioners should not lose sight of the ambivalence with which resettlement is viewed by many of those affected (Tadgell, Doberstein, and Mortsch 2017). While the IDJC Resettlement may be seen by some as necessary and helpful, it also represents loss and a threat to a way of life. The feelings, memories, ideas, values and meanings associated with everyday life in a specific place become a dimension of a person's or a group's identity. Place provides a profound framework for both individual and cultural identity, particularly among indigenous groups and is important in the formation and maintenance of individual and collective identities (Mayheart Dardar 2008). The numerous photographs celebrating events and people on the walls of many on-island homes are testament to this.

Through this Resettlement's outreach and engagement efforts, the team developed a heightened awareness of the losses that islanders will experience in resettlement and have learned that it is critical to understand that, as one interviewee noted, "people [are] mourning, who maybe don't know how to react/respond to the tough circumstances." There will be both material and psychosocial losses, closely entwined with the physical landscape and their associated social and cultural meanings (Oliver-Smith 2010).

The team has noted, for example, that on-island homes represent much more than a shelter from the elements for their occupants. For islanders, much of residents' social and cultural life is embedded and is itself invested with deep significance and feeling. This intangible value was brought up by many islanders. One team member, in questioning the location where the new community is to be built, stated: "I think the site is too far from the island." Ecological conditions, which help define culture, are vastly different at the new location. For example, there are no salt water marshes nearby and the site has limited water features compared to the island.

Governance

Prior to this Resettlement effort, the state was generally a remote presence in the lives of island residents, as it often is for marginalized, low-income communities (Oliver-Smith 2001). Through research, outreach, and engagement, the Resettlement team learned that many island residents were unaccustomed to, and perhaps uncomfortable with, working in such close contact with state government institutions, and the accompanying regulations and requirements that come with public resources. There are no schools on the island and no permanent police presence. The only official government institution on the island is a small fire station. There are no institutions on the island offering on-site public services. Social issues on the island are often dealt with informally via kinship obligations, local associations, and other social networks. Residents who choose to join the new community will be thrust into a much more formal system of governance, replete with fully legislated rights and obligations, and subject to a wide variety of formal enforcement and compliance procedures. The transition from a fairly informal governance system to a more formal system of regulation administered largely by strangers can be traumatic (Scott 1998), and particularly for those who are resettling (Oliver-Smith 1991). Thus, the IDJC Resettlement team should be attentive to how those affected are coping with reconfigured relationships with government operations and functionaries.



Personal and Public Health

While it is generally understood that many island residents have insufficient means to resettle on their own without government support, as one team member pointed out, “more extensive research should be conducted about the resident beneficiaries at a case management level as soon as a project like this is identified.” As such, while the team is acting to mitigate the risks of novel financial, legal, social, and health exposures, it does so without a comprehensive awareness of the needs and assets of individuals and the population. While the state employs a social scientist who maintains regular communication with residents from the island and is generally aware of the health concerns of individuals, lack of specific and actionable information obtained with clear oral or written consent has inhibited the provision of services both for individuals and the community. To the extent possible, the team has worked to offer assistance such as case management, behavioral health, primary health, and transportation as has been necessary. In the future, personal health considerations should be a more primary consideration in resettlement programs as the process of changing environments can induce stress and may exacerbate past health issues or precipitate new ones (MacPherson and Gushulak 2001; McMichael et al. 2012). Additionally, documentation of long-term health can be a valuable metric to gauge the extent to which a resettlement has improved participants quality of life (Schawedtle et al. 2018).

Thus, if the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement is to be considered successful, it will require that a wide variety of other needs be addressed in addition to moving residents to the new community. These needs include those often experienced in low-income and marginalized communities, such as access to disability and other social services, legal services, treatment for mental health, job training, and financial assistance. Though many of the affected individuals have demonstrated impressive personal resilience while living through the effects of major storms, environmental degradation, financial losses, chronic illness, political conflicts, inequities and disenfranchisement, social workers and other professionals need to be available throughout the entire process to offer case management and help residents meet their social, health, and economic and spiritual needs that may be heightened by the stress of the resettlement process. As one team member suggested, we need “to do as much of that as possible because of their weakened health . . . and the transition that’s taking place in their lives, [so] that they get the spiritual and emotional nourishment they need through the process.”

LESSON #2

Emphasize Co-Design Process

Site Planning

In the case of the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement, the architectural and landscape design teams addressed the challenge of allowing local knowledge to penetrate professional boundaries. The team worked alongside island residents to ensure that social and cultural values of the island informed their work and ultimately the structures and spaces built within the new community. A designer and a social scientist paired up to interview each household about what was special to them about the island, how they wanted to spatially interact with others in the new community, and how they understood the relationships between their island and their personal identity. Data was catalogued and incorporated into the design of the new community as well as the policy framework for the resettlement. Designs were then shared with residents at small group meetings

of two to three households at a time during which the team could answer all questions as thoroughly as possible and gather individual input to then incorporate into design revisions. This approach facilitated an ongoing, iterative process highlighted by weekly visits to the island, during which several rounds of revisions were shared with residents until consensus was achieved.

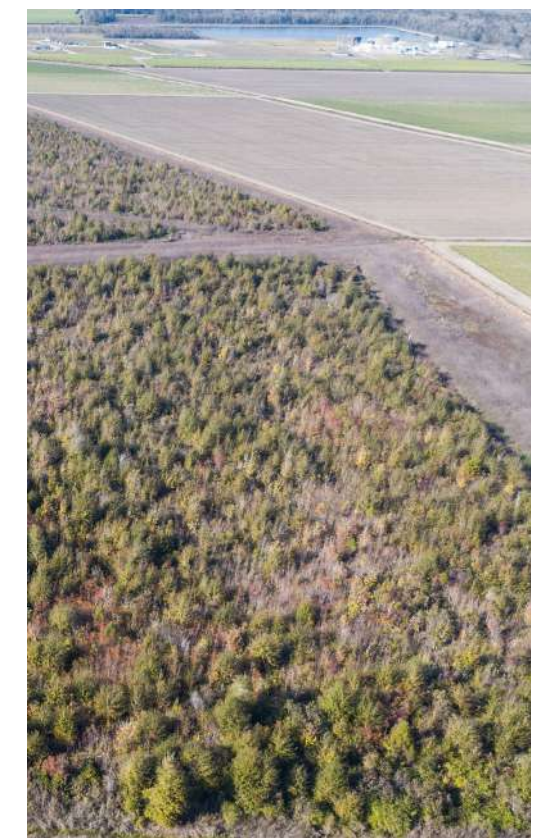
Economic Planning

A lack of economic planning has been a frequent failure of resettlement projects, regardless of cause (Cernea 2004). The emphasis on infrastructure and housing has often led planners and decision-makers to consider a project completed when those elements of a resettlement are finished (Tortajada, Altinbilek and Biswas 2012), leaving a resettled population often distant from natural resources, employment, or clientele (Cernea 1995). Without these resources, people become impoverished in a community that has no means of supporting itself, and therefore, is often doomed to exist on perpetual government support, or failure and abandonment (Oliver-Smith 1991). Since island residents are predominantly low-income, the team recognizes the need to develop revenue sources and employment opportunities at the new site. One of the primary concerns behind these initiatives is the lack of capacity of islanders to meet new expenses incurred in residing in the new community, specifically higher property taxes and required flood and homeowner’s insurance. It is feared that these new expenses will strain the incomes of many island residents, leading to loss of services and/or the loss of the new homes for lack of tax payments, and thus bring about a second displacement and even greater impoverishment. Due to these concerns, program policies allow for possible exceptions to the primary residence requirements provided on a case-by-case basis arising from hardship beyond the homeowner’s control.

Various enterprises, including a recreational vehicle park, a solar energy farm, and an assisted living facility were investigated for their potential of creating income streams for the new community. In this regard, the team has learned from the knowledge base of the field, understanding that in order to succeed, the economic viability of the new community is a priority. The initiatives are innovative, but outcomes are still uncertain.

AS ONE SURVEY RESPONDENT PUT IT

“The economic model for the new residents is complicated and feels like a structural challenge that needs to be addressed outside of the team for future relocation efforts. It’s not entirely clear that these residents will be able to afford living at their new properties, or when/if revenue generation meets the financial goals of the project how we ensure residents have been provided with an environmentally and financially stable community.”





LESSON #3

Manage Lines of Communication

The success of a resettlement can be influenced by many audiences—not just the residents themselves. National and local media, state and local politicians, and neighbors of the new community all have influence over resettlement outcomes (Nilsoon 2010). Each audience seeks different information and all need to be engaged continuously throughout the resettlement process. Messaging and information must be consistent across platforms but tailored to meet specific needs and interests of each audience. The team anticipated and prepared for much of this; however, as with described outreach efforts, allocating more time and expertise to the communications function would have enabled the team to deal with emergent challenges more effectively and likely would have avoided some challenges altogether through a more robust, pro-active and pre-emptive external communications strategy.

The team's prior research and training warned that most people facing resettlement experience considerable difficulty in their discussions with public or private sector representatives due to real and perceived imbalances of power. Since, as is the case of many residents of Isle de Jean Charles, people facing resettlement are often economically and socially disenfranchised, most have had little power to influence what happens beyond the confines of their own homes or communities due to a lack of economic, social and political capital (Cernea 1998). Processes that do not empower affected populations, do not create meaningful ways to share power, do not increase residents' understanding and control over the process, or fail to provide them with important roles in design and implementation ignite anger and resistance and are unlikely to succeed (Cannon 2014; Cernea 1997). The IDJC Resettlement team recognized this need and responded with design workshops, interviews, and a variety of engagement activities including public meetings and individual outreach, much of which had positive results.

One-on-One Relationship Building

The team noted that one-on-one outreach and engagement, carried out through weekly visits to the island, has been most effective in cultivating relationships, facilitating a two-way exchange of information, and building some degree of trust in the resettlement process among residents.

Since mid-2017, a team member has made weekly visits to the island and/or the homes of Optional Relocation Assistance (ORA) participants. The visits serve to inform questions of how the identities of residents, interconnected and contingent on social relations, sense of, and attachment to place are linked to the decision-making process of relocating and resettling. These visits vary from week to week, at times involving learning more from residents about living with uncertainties, i.e., the road to the island flooding regularly, the stress and anxiety for some at the onset of hurricane season; other times, answering questions, or imagining the island as it was fifty years ago. The goals of these visits include attempts to thoroughly understand residents' concerns; ensure that residents fully understand the options available to them; and work with them to achieve a positive outcome for each individual. Residents participate as fully as they wish.

The island holds an important sense of place and residents feel a deep attachment to it. Highlighting these sides of the migratory experience are vital for understanding migratory processes and can only be found in talking to the residents themselves. They are also often overlooked in studies on human migration (Barrios 2014). Parting from the island will be a transformative process, as individuals and families adapt in significant ways. The vast majority of island residents are multi-generational inhabitants, deeply attuned to the surrounding biophysical changes. For many, the intangible connection to place—feelings of belonging, lifestyle, family connections, and culture—tethers residents to their land and homes. Yet, they know the landscape is changing, the land is leaving them and they are in the process of understanding what this means for the transformations occurring to their identities and the liminal spaces between. An open line of communication between the team and residents has greatly enhanced flexibility and responsiveness of the program and design outcomes.

This analysis additionally proposes the program would have benefitted if it had created an on-island field station as a resource center. This likely would have strengthened the process significantly as a field station on the island with a team representative in residence who would be available on a daily basis to serve as a consistent source of information for all residents. For island residents undergoing the tension and trauma often associated with resettlement, the planning stage of the process can be particularly stressful. Having a person from the team on site would have provided a more continuous level of communication throughout and may have provided an outlet to alleviate tension, trauma, and stress for island residents. Though originally proposed at the beginning of Phase II, the field station idea was ultimately not feasible within the established budget and would also have proved to be logistically and geographically challenging.

Information Dissemination

Bi-weekly calls with the IDJC community, community meetings, and a resident-led steering committee also provided multiple avenues for community participation and influence. Providing a range of opportunities for engagement that could accommodate different dispositions, schedules, and levels of interest is important to make the engagement process as equitable as possible (Tadgell, Doberstein, and Mortsch 2017). This range of outreach and engagement is recommended by others with experience in community resettlements as a way to reach the broadest audience possible (Correa et al. 2011). However, some of the efforts within this resettlement, such as the bi-weekly calls, were not effective. The bi-weekly calls were often shaped by one-way communication, which can reinforce, rather than dismantle, power dynamics that breed distrust of government within marginalized groups (Cernea 1997; Hardy et al. 1998).

Likewise, capacity building for the residents was also recommended to empower them to participate in the process more effectively and with greater agency. Training in governance and communication skills may have supported residents' efforts to run meetings, build consensus, and cultivate trust amongst themselves as well as with the team and neighbors of the new community. In the words of one team member, "I think capacity building with them would have helped their power ... the power they actually have to influence this whole process is tremendous, and I think many of them don't know how to act on that."

As the earlier examples suggest, effective outreach and engagement is expensive, time consuming and yet, essential. The biggest limitations and challenges regarding the community engagement process were time, money, and understanding. Various constraints did not allow for the full breadth of training, relationship-building and ongoing engagement that would have best served the process. Similarly, the budget did not fully support the kind of specialized expertise, intensive training, and high-touch outreach strategies that may have better served the residents. In the words of team members, “[b]ased on this experience I would strongly advocate for acknowledgement of an iterative work plan in budgeting and resource planning for future work,” and, “I feel we have learned that the socialization aspects need to be prioritized in the budget.”

These funding challenges are not unique to this Resettlement, but perhaps this experience can contribute to changing the trend. The shortage of resources allocated to social research and outreach activities are a reflection of the tensions between so-called indirect costs having to do with social issues and actual building costs. This tension has been evident in virtually every resettlement, regardless of cost, on record, and is the result of resettlements generally being seen as infrastructure projects with a social component rather than as social projects with an infrastructure component (Price 2009).

Communicating with Sensitivity

Effective communication is key to building trust and relationships with all those affected by the resettlement process (Tadgell, Doberstein, and Mortsch 2017). Transparent, timely, culturally sensitive and accessible communications should have been better prioritized throughout the process and be informed by a deeper understanding of community. And, as was the case with outreach—understanding the importance of a particular function and being able to effectively apply that knowledge are different undertakings. In the case of the IDJC Resettlement, the team faced a general distrust of government from island residents—understandable, given the lengthy history of abuse and neglect suffered by American Indians at the hands of the government. The narrative that the state was seeking to take away land that rightfully belongs to island residents—American Indian land—is an incredibly powerful narrative and continues to pervade many aspect of this Resettlement effort.

In order to cultivate this depth of understanding, Resettlement team members participated in workshops and training to address major aspects and challenges of resettlement. It is recommended that team member training include not only lectures, but also simulation scenarios, small and large group discussions, practical exercises, and role playing with feedback. Further, while the training team members initially went through was helpful, it became clear that more was needed. More extensive training at the outset may benefit all parties and the process as a whole.

Managing External and Mass Media

The team also found itself ensnared in long-standing disputes among different factions of former and current island residents—disputes that quickly drew the attention of national media, who then did not fully depict the situation accurately. This served to provide traction to several erroneous narratives. One survey respondent remarked that, “the external complexities, i.e. the different tribes involved, the culture of the residents and their distrust of the outside world, the competing academic and political agendas, have proved to be a challenge in terms of messaging.” The often contentious nature of climate-driven resettlement in general compounded with conflicts specific to Isle de Jean Charles, in particular, highlight the need both to take a proactive approach to messaging and media relations and to be prepared to navigate many, often conflicting, layers of interest and information in communications with a variety of stakeholders to build trust in the Resettlement process.

Particularly for high-profile cases like the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement, media accounts can be influential drivers of project outcomes. Media is crucial for informing the larger public of the design, goals and progress throughout the process. A major lesson to be drawn from this Resettlement speaks to the need to establish at the outset an accurate and clear portrayal

of the Resettlement’s origin, funding, goals, and, as the program develops, both the challenges and the progress as it is depicted in both print and visual media. As one survey respondent noted, “I would be prepared to get out in front of the media prior to launching the project and stay out ahead.” Along the same vein, another notes how, “efforts to re-set the narrative have been moderately successful, that said, content produced in the digital world doesn’t go away and remains available to researchers, the casual reader, etc. I believe as the Resettlement project progresses, and tangible results are achieved, the less relevant this erroneous content becomes.” Hopefully, expedited preparation of policy and messages can better inform both the residents and the general public and help to align expectations to improve outcomes for those affected by the Resettlement.

Developing Community Partnerships

Particularly in cases where American Indian and historically-disadvantaged communities are involved, it is important that the state identify capable entities who have credibility as ‘honest brokers’ with these communities to minimize distrust and keep the process moving forward. In an ideal scenario, the Resettlement team would have partnered with a community-based organization or a nonprofit that had previously developed trust and rapport with those being resettled, likely assisting in bridging existing gaps in trust as well as information dissemination.

One important and effective step the team took to address persistent issues of trust and understanding was to bring on an American Indian cultural advisor with experience and training from the United Nations on mediation with indigenous groups. This additional expertise proved invaluable for improving facilitation and brokering shared understanding and agreement. Retaining a culturally competent mediator should be considered an essential element of future teams engaging any minority ethnic group.

The Resettlement would have also benefitted from partnerships with organizations with backgrounds in social work at an earlier date. The social component of a resettlement effort supports the need for robust social work capacity and expertise as part of the core project team (Simich, Beiser and Mawani 2003). As mentioned earlier, challenges of climate-driven resettlement are often complicated by vulnerabilities of residents. In the case of Isle de Jean Charles, migrations began decades ago, with individuals and families leaving one by one, often in greater numbers after severe disaster events. As is often the case with resettling populations, those with fewer resources and more extreme vulnerability, including the elderly, people with chronic illnesses, and adults with disabilities, make up the majority of individuals and households to be resettled. The team has discovered that their charge to meet the primary goal—resettlement to a higher, drier, and safer location—is inextricable from the array of other needs affecting the residents’ daily lives.

Facilitating Internal Communication

Internal communications are also critical to the success of an undertaking of the scope, complexity, and sensitivity of the IDJC Resettlement. In Phase II, the planning team was comprised of 16 firms with individual team members working within several different teams moving various elements of the Resettlement forward simultaneously. Effective program management, supported by well-orchestrated internal communications is essential to managing the many moving parts and complexities of the process. As one survey respondent noted, “I would suggest that greater communication at every level of the sponsoring organization with consensus on the overall goals and objectives from the outset is imperative. A single message describing the organization’s intentions that provides as much information as exists about the program should be outlined early on, not only for the benefit of the resident beneficiaries, but of the Resettlement team so that their path forward can be made as clear as possible.” Another commented that, “[t]he project’s complexity reinforces the criticality of open, consistent, and clear communications among advisers and between federal, state, and community partners.” This is especially relevant to such an undertaking that is largely unprecedented and subject to many contingencies, requiring swift and strategic internal consultation. The team set up platforms for online record keeping and document and data sharing and conducted weekly check-in calls—both were reported by team members to be essential for effective team coordination.



LESSON #4

Build Administrative Capacity

Administrative capacity has been an ongoing issue within the IDJC resettlement. Rules and regulations from HUD regarding timelines and use of resources led to unintended consequences that negatively impacted the process. Yet, HUD seemingly had limited ability to make course corrections as needed. The most vexing example is prolonged conversation based on the “give a house to get a house” premise. This premise raised serious fears and concerns amongst residents regarding the fate of their island as a place of deep historic and cultural significance. HUD was able to provide some leeway on the issue (See IDJC Resettlement Program Policies), but these and other regulations regarding resettlement contending with property must be reconsidered and rendered more flexible to adequately deal with places that are culturally important to affected peoples.

Because a community-scale resettlement has never been undertaken using CDBG funding, the state created new policies and procedures to govern the resettlement under CDBG funding parameters, resulting in a variety of structural and organizational difficulties around decision-making and disbursement of funds. One survey respondent asserted that the state had very little time to “...understand just how hard and complex of a process it would be to deviate from that initial negotiation to a place where we can be flexible and creative and supply the resources legitimately demanded by the project.” The state therefore had to organize a compatible management structure to accommodate this new, complex undertaking dealing with a dynamic, in many ways unpredictable, situation that required flexibility, imagination and efficiency in supplying the needed resources required by the people and the process.

Timeline

One element of the process that added additional stress to the planning stage effort was the timing and juxtaposition of simultaneously designing the new community and creating the policies and procedures regarding the resettlement. The resettlement’s timeline includes a congressionally-mandated deadline to expend funds prior to the end of September 2023. This timeline required that the overall design and policy development occur simultaneously after the initial outreach phase. A team member described this “timeline [that] is much more compressed compared to the amount of work that has to be done; not enough money for the planning; ill-defined scope made it difficult to accomplish assigned tasks in a timely manner.”

Without adequate time for a truly iterative process by which program plans and policies would be developed incrementally with community feedback, community members would go for long periods of time without feeling like progress was being made on their questions regarding plans and policies (e.g. what their financial obligations would be, whether they would own both the new home and the lot, and what would happen to their island homes). This perceived lack of progress until the later stages of the outreach process caused frustration for both the residents and the team members conducting outreach. Further, the inability of team members to provide these key pieces of information was sometimes interpreted as unwillingness and disingenuousness, already affecting the fragile trust that had been built to that point. In continuing this resettlement and planning others, the “the important technical project delivery side needs to be paired with the outreach and engagement work.” Moreover, the timeline for this work needs to be clearly explained internally and externally so that, as surmised by a survey respondent, “[t]he critical path for making both community decisions and project development needs to be understood so that assumptions are minimized, and certainty is maximized.”



Budgeting

The complexity of resettlements and their ever-changing dynamics over time make developing anticipatory budgets particularly challenging. Further, with a government-funded resettlement, hard deadlines for distribution and expenditure of funds take precedence over pacing and sequencing that would have better served the Isle de Jean Charles resettlement process and island residents. One survey response explains, “[t]he major challenge is managing a large team with a finite budget through the execution of a complex and fluid project that regularly presents new and (sometimes) unexpected challenges/opportunities.” For example, the design and program development process occurred in parallel, at times creating serious confusion, doubt and mistrust among residents who felt deeply uncomfortable participating in a design process without yet knowing who would be eligible to move to the new community and what the terms would be. This constituted a major setback for the trust that had been built between the team and the residents and for the IDJC resettlement process as a whole.

Budgets should also reflect the true costs of outreach, communications and social supports needed to achieve the best outcome for affected residents. Too often, these types of expenditures are regarded as secondary and allocations fall short of what is needed. As one team member noted, “[t]he complexity has created a need for structure which at times has limited iterative processes. Structure should be fluid enough to allow more adaptation and recursive feedback loops. Objectives such as master planning inherently privilege a fixed state and a linear process and limits the ability for growth and adaptation.” When budgeting and planning climate change driven resettlements, the socially-complex nature of such enterprises calls for a large degree of funding flexibility that can be available in the case of unforeseen problems. Greater government flexibility on budgeting and distribution of funds will help to manage unanticipated difficulties that are inevitably part of the resettlement process. In short, the complexity of resettlement projects and their dynamics over time make developing anticipatory budgets particularly challenging.

Public-Private Sector Cooperation

In addition, the team learned that problems may arise between government funding schedules and actual operational realities in the private sector. Again, reflective of traditional planning priorities, unanticipated expenditures can emerge in one aspect of a project which may create a shortfall in funding for another aspect. “The problem will be difficult to solve at this stage since complex coordination—and the time it takes for meetings and pre-meeting production—is largely excluded from the project budget. I believe the team is under-resourced for the level of ambition for the project, and political pressure dictates that results must be produced faster and faster, for less.” If such a problem occurs in the private sector, a developer can simply halt the project until sufficient funding for continuing is secured. However, with a government-funded resettlement, in which difficulties and delays may occur, hard deadlines for distribution and expenditure of funds preclude shutting down the project temporarily, with the continuation of funding, thus creating serious shortfalls for other sections of the resettlement and perhaps endangering the entire undertaking.

Assessment and Evaluation

Evaluation metrics should also be flexible, based on an understanding that best practices, benchmarks, indicators and other means of standardized measurement do not yet exist for the resettlement field, a field that is new, volatile, and divergent. Team members were often frustrated by unclear evaluation requirements and metrics that seemed irrelevant to the goals and milestones of the resettlement.

Of the evaluations that were completed, qualitative metrics were found by some to allow for a richer assessment of what is working, what is valued, and what can work in the future. As noted by one team member, “[A]s we contemplate the future of climate reality, we have to begin to develop a better understanding of the fact that none of the appropriate interventions can exist in the isolated worlds of industrial terms like mitigation, structural risk reduction, restoration and the like,” and that our metrics for evaluation will also need to expand.

As all of these lessons and reflections indicate, perhaps the only thing that can be counted upon in a resettlement project is that it will be full of contingencies, shifts, twists, turns and surprises. Knowing this, every step of the process—from budget and timeline to planning and practice—should be designed to accommodate changes as needed for the ultimate good for the resettlement process and the residents it serves. Feedback from team members and IDJC community members reflect this concern. One survey response stated, “Even with the somewhat rigid contractual parameters, providing as much flexibility to the team as possible has seemed to best mediate the challenges. You can just only be so flexible with a set budget and timeline.” Another noted that, “the structure should be fluid enough to allow more adaptation and recursive feedback loops.” This continued need for flexibility will remain germane to Phase III of the resettlement.

IN SUMMATION

Complex Effort, Mixed Results

In working with Isle de Jean Charles' residents, team members have gained a deeper appreciation of the importance that environment and place have in the lives of those who are connected to the island. The losses that people will experience in the Resettlement are both social and material losses. These losses are interconnected, as the landscape and physical environment are imbued with profound social and cultural meaning. The loss of objects significant to the island's history and cultural heritage constitutes the loss of a sense of identity through time.

All of the team members who responded indicated the IDJC Resettlement is far more complex than anything they have worked on before. Many residents reiterated that the decision-making process is emotional and difficult for them as well. The levels of complexity, underpinned by historical disenfranchisement of native populations, diverse interests and priorities among island residents, the range of concerns residents contend with on a daily basis, layers of government regulations and the disparate public narratives are all factors in contributing to the layers of complexity in this Resettlement.

For many reasons, the first two phases of the IDJC Resettlement have been challenging, characterized by setbacks as well as successes. The team has continually worked to broaden its capacity to address the increasingly urgent need to reduce the risks and losses inflicted by disasters and climate change on an exposed and vulnerable population. They have been called upon to examine their own assumptions about the application of their knowledge and skills in support of people facing such threats to their material and social well-being. What they have learned and hope to convey to other interested parties is that this complex process encompassing such a wide range of cultural, social, environmental, economic, institutional and political factors, requires a comprehensive, holistic and open-ended approach, rather than a purely economic or operational perspective. Above all, it requires compassion, empathy and humility.

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