



PLAQUEMINES PARISH ROUND 2 MEETINGS SUMMARY



ROUND 2 MEETINGS OVERVIEW

The second round of LA SAFE meetings focused on conversations at the community scale. The team held twenty-one meetings in nineteen towns and cities across the coast. Residents at the first round of meetings chose the round 2 meeting locations. In Plaquemines Parish, meetings were held in Buras, Belle Chasse, and Davant. Meeting at this level allowed the team to present a more in-depth view of the trends in each community, and to gather input at the community level. Three meetings were held in Buras to accommodate languages in the community: English, Vietnamese, and Khmer (Cambodian).

In this series of community meetings, residents pinpointed challenges, proposed solutions, and collectively described a future across different types of environments and different levels of risk. The project team combined the residents' ideas and mapped their proposed strategies. The community recommendations will form the basis for the projects, programs, and policies that LA SAFE pursues going forward. The project team will review the ideas, and take into consideration current and future environmental risk, as well as best practices in planning.

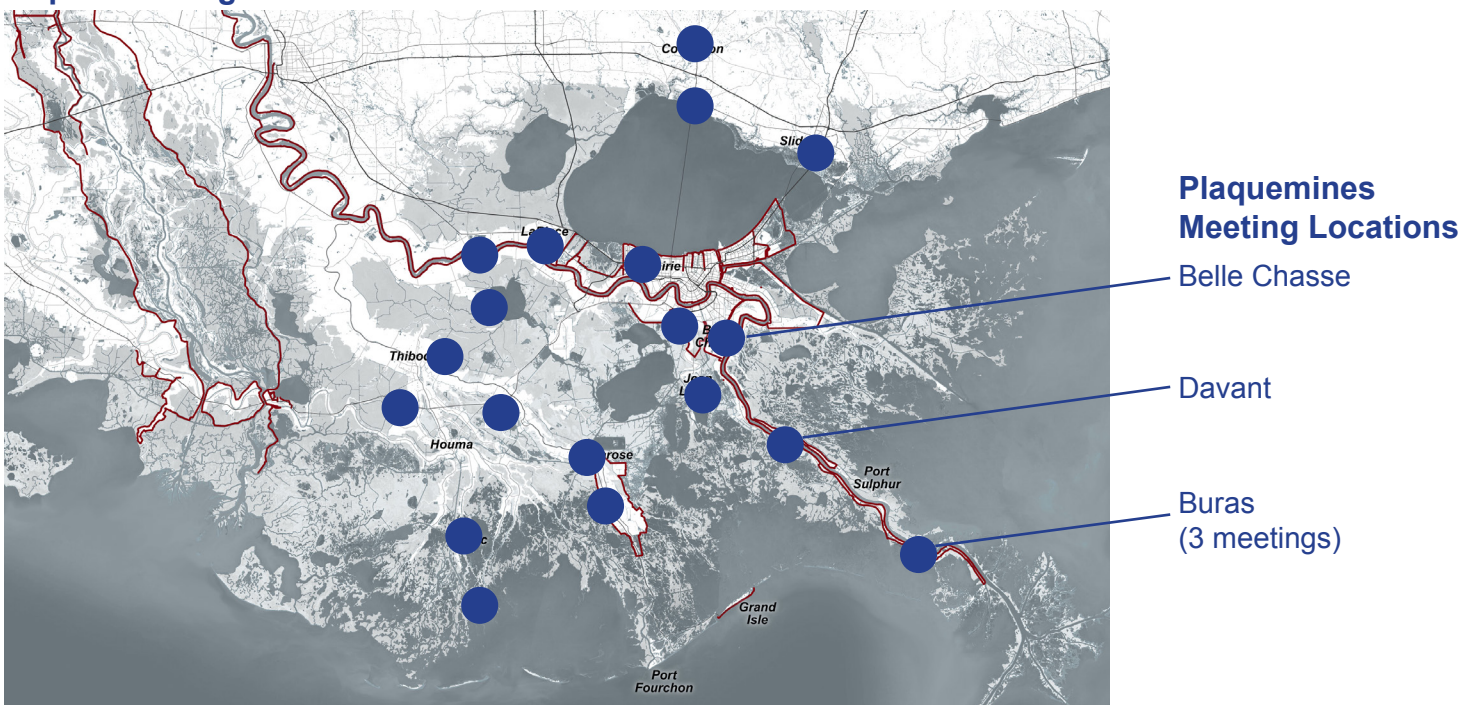


Residents and table host at the Buras (Cambodian) Meeting



Residents at the Davant Meeting

Map of Meeting Locations



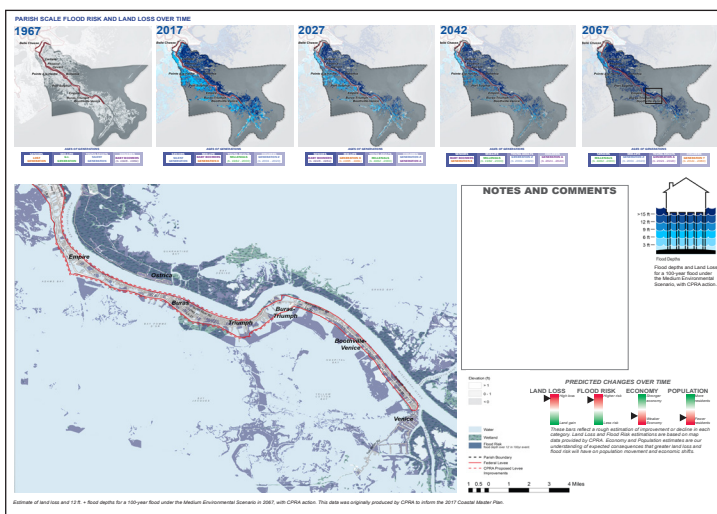
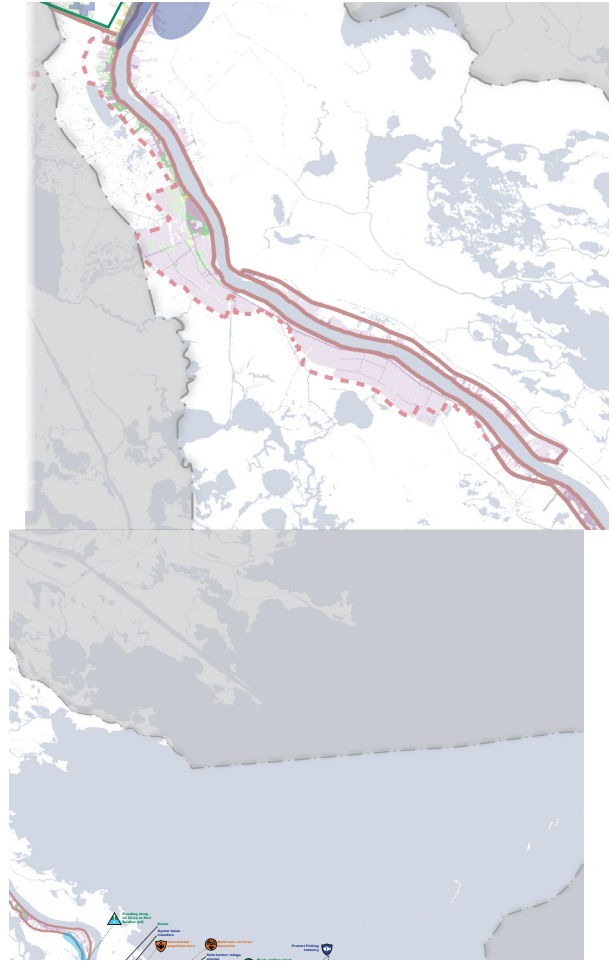
ACTIVITY: MAPPING STRATEGIES

The activity included a large table map of the community, which depicted the 2067 flood risk, and a set of question cards. Residents chose one card from each color category (shown on the right), and discussed a set of questions on the back. A table host facilitated the conversation, and a table scribe recorded it.

Each card had questions that related to three time periods:

- 1. Short Term (10 years):** current needs and opportunities.
- 2. Medium Term (20 years):** ways the community can adapt over time to a changing environment, economy, and population.
- 3. Long Term (50 years):** the long-term vision for the parish.

Each card prompted residents to write and draw on their maps to show areas in need, or areas with potential for growth. The table hosts encouraged the residents to write, draw, and point out where potential projects and programs would be most successful.



Activity Map used for the Buras Meetings

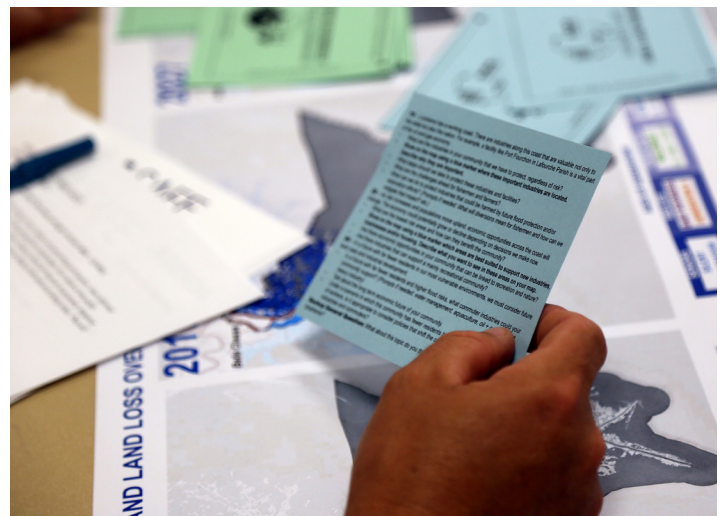
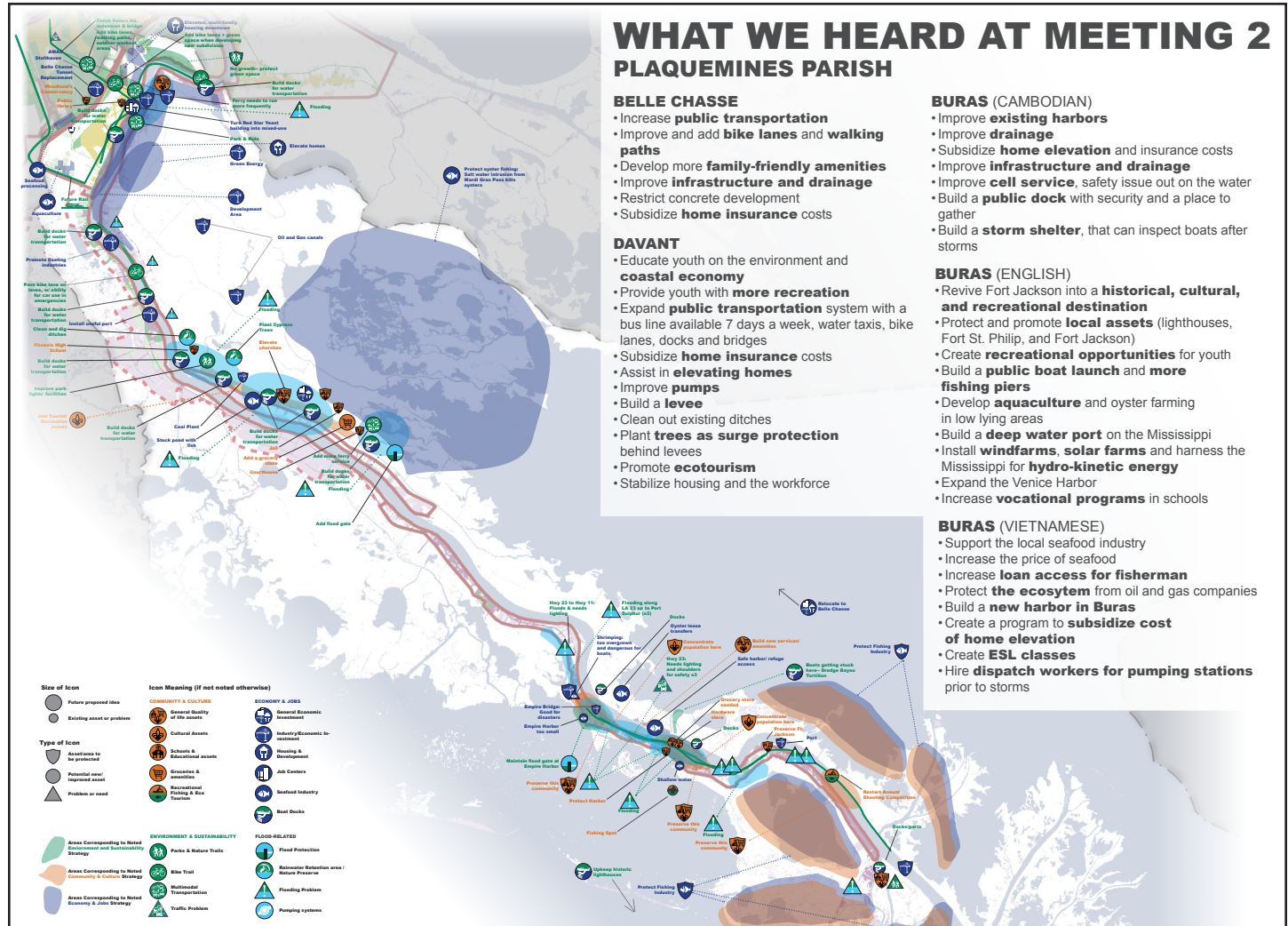


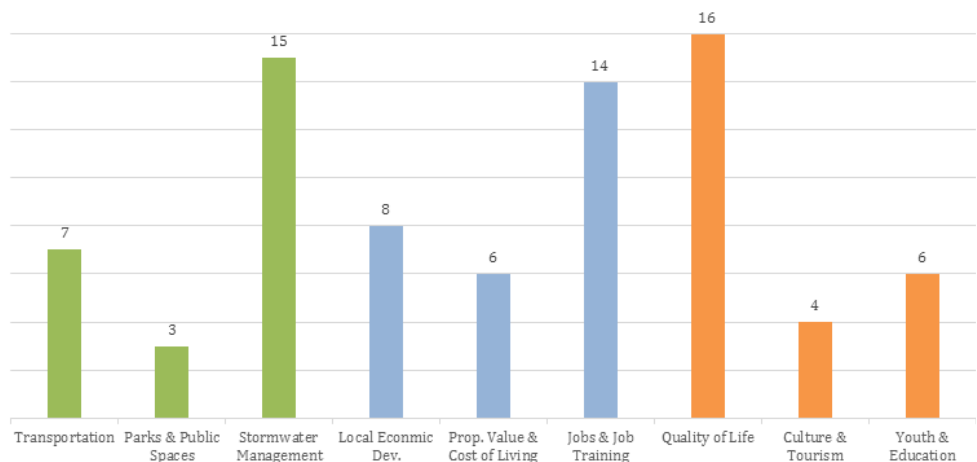
Table host reading questions from an Economy & Jobs card

MEETING RESULTS

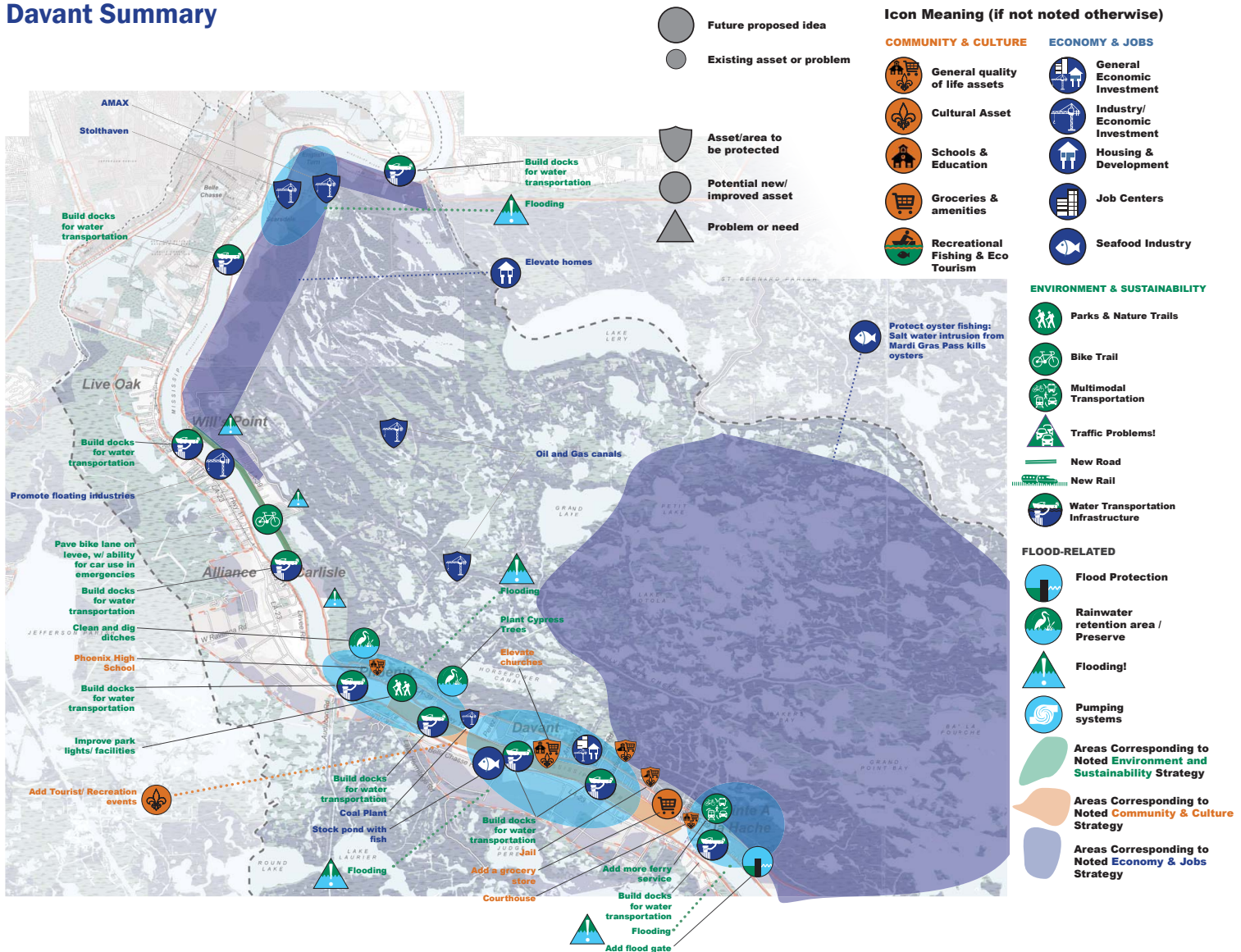
The following pages show what residents added to the maps and contain summaries of the discussions from each of the meetings in Plaquemines Parish. The map below includes the results from each meeting. A larger version of this is available at LASAFE.la.gov.



Each table group chose one card from each of the three categories. In Plaquemines Parish, residents chose Quality of Life, Stormwater Management, and Jobs & Job Training the most frequently.



Davant Summary



Davant residents described a shortage of resources and opportunities in their area, including transportation, recreation, jobs, healthcare, stores, and flood protection. They underlined the lack of investment on the east bank, and envisioned improvements for the area.

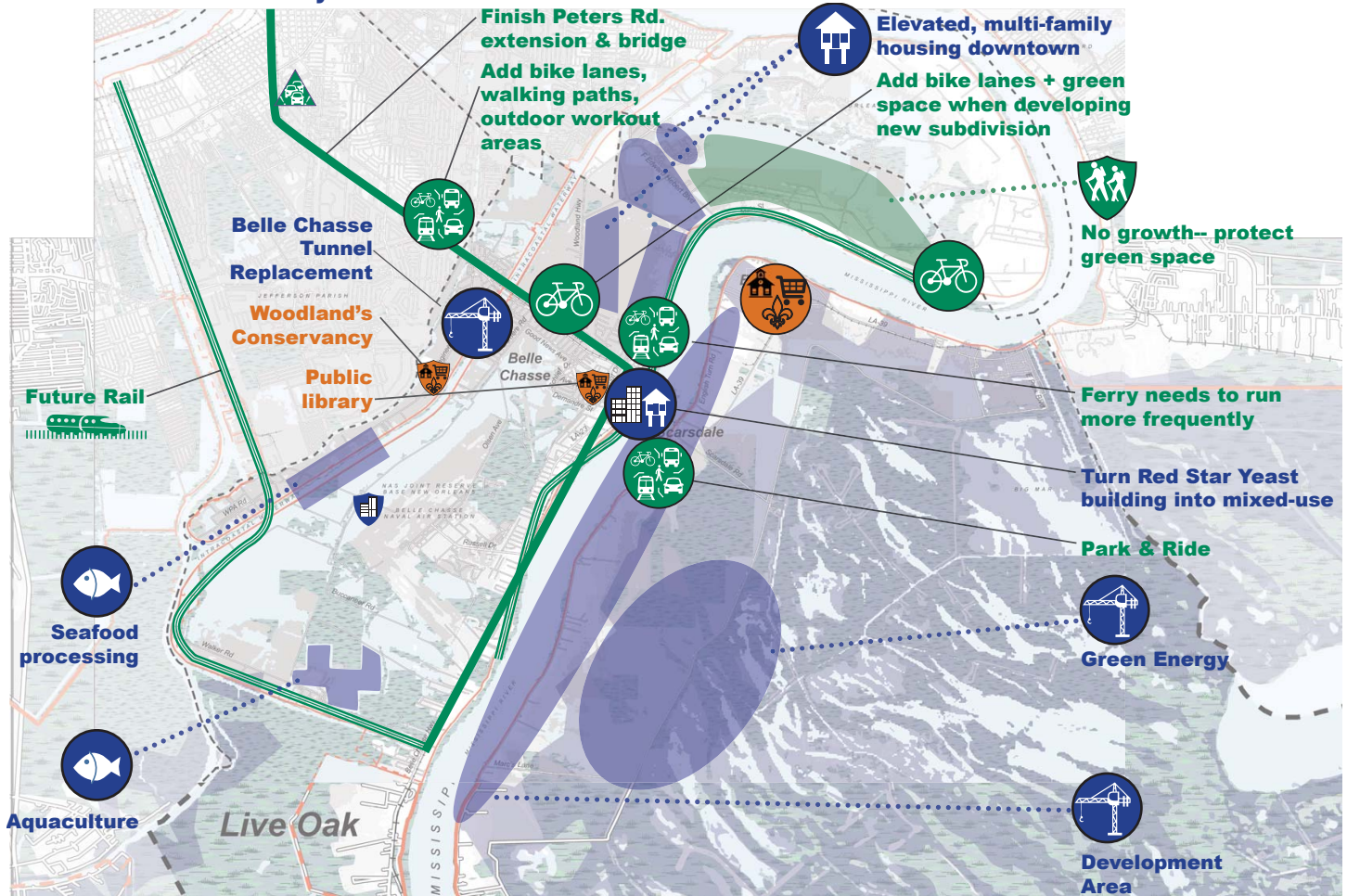
Echoing others around the coast, the participants recommended that the education system engage more closely with the environment and coastal economy, providing pathways to employment and focusing on STEM curriculum. Residents also asked for more opportunities for young people, including recreational activities, job opportunities, and places to socialize.

Participants stated that the parish should expand the public transportation system, with bus service available 7 days a week (rather than 5), and a second, faster ferry to reduce wait times. They imagined a future with water taxis and bike lanes, as well as more rest stops, docks, and bridges.

Residents pointed out that high flood risk keeps new investment away and pushes residents out. Participants also discussed the need for lower insurance rates and/or government grants to elevate. They also emphasized other methods to protect from flooding during storms, including improving pumps, building a levee, cleaning out ditches, creating a barrier behind the levee, and planting trees as surge protection. Residents also revealed that blighted properties left behind by relocated populations are becoming a problem. They further expressed that existing parks are falling into muddy disrepair.

Residents saw hope in the potential to increase the water economy, recreation, and eco-tourism in the area, describing fishing rodeos, the bayou paddle festival, bus tours, fishing, oil and gas, coastal restoration, green energy, and wildlife attractions. They emphasized that these opportunities rest on the ability to stabilize housing and the workforce and to ensure transportation access to crucial amenities.

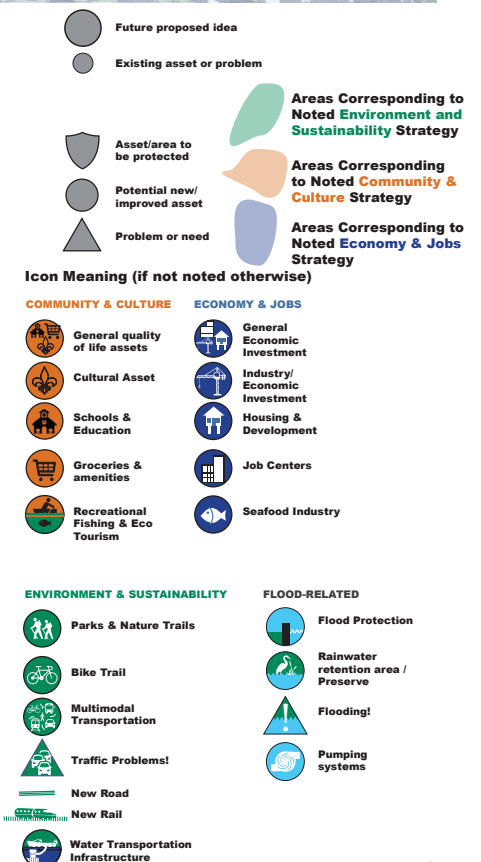
Belle Chasse Summary



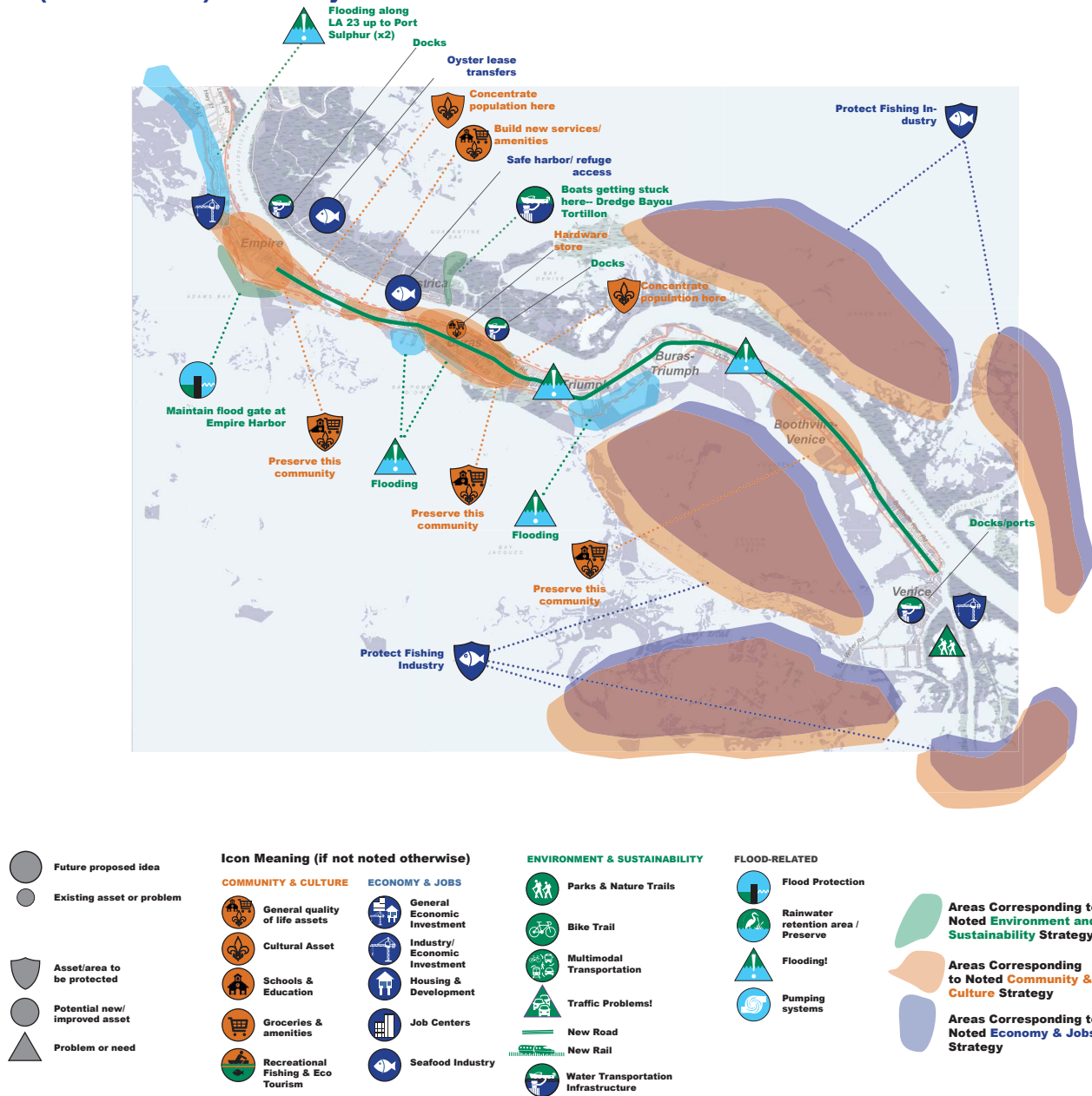
At the Belle Chasse meeting, residents envisioned a future with multiple forms of transportation, more amenities, increased entertainment, and additional outdoor recreation opportunities, especially for youth. Participants recommended bike lanes and walking paths the most frequently, but also discussed road improvements, increased public transit, ferry service, and bridge and tunnel replacement. Some residents cited the need for youth transportation to recreational opportunities. Participants suggested increased amenities such as bowling alleys, a college, restaurants, and gas stations.

The residents envisioned an education pipeline that connects and prepares students to innovate and develop in the sectors of coastal restoration, agriculture, aquaculture, and the fishing industry.

Participants also described the need to improve drainage. They listed numerous causes of flooding, including unmaintained drainage ditches, too much concrete, not enough plants, and outdated pumping stations. The residents further pointed out that the high and increasing cost of insurance is a burden, and causes insecurity in the housing market. Some residents were worried that they could not sell their homes if they wanted to.



Buras (Vietnamese) Summary

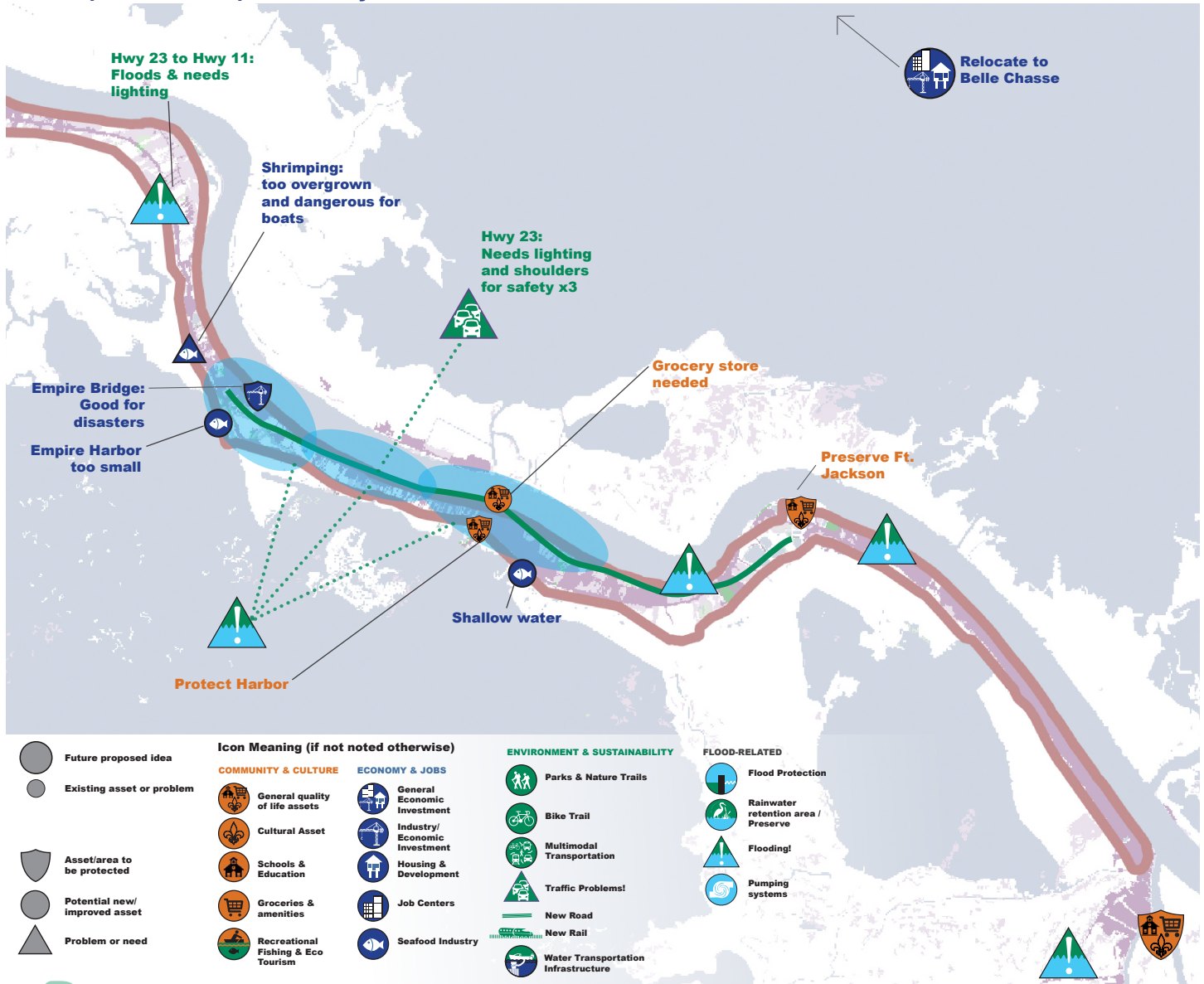


Residents at the Buras Vietnamese language meeting emphasized the needs of the fishing community. The most common ideas were to preserve and support the fishing industry, promote local seafood, increase the price of seafood, protect docks, increase loan access for fishermen, restrict imports, and protect the ecosystem from oil and gas pollution. Several participants suggested building a new safe harbor in Buras/Triumph or expanding the existing harbor in Empire.

Residents also emphasized issues with flooding and high costs of living. Over half of the comments about property value and the cost of living centered on the desire for programs to subsidize home elevation. Participants said that they are experiencing an unusually high cost of living at the same time as unusually low shrimp prices, which they attribute to low-quality imports.

Many cited flooding issues and advocated for more dredging, diversions, and levees. One resident expressed the need to dispatch workers to the pumping stations prior to rain events to begin pumping sooner than they do presently. Participants also discussed education and youth opportunities, specifically the need for ESL classes.

Buras (Cambodian) Summary

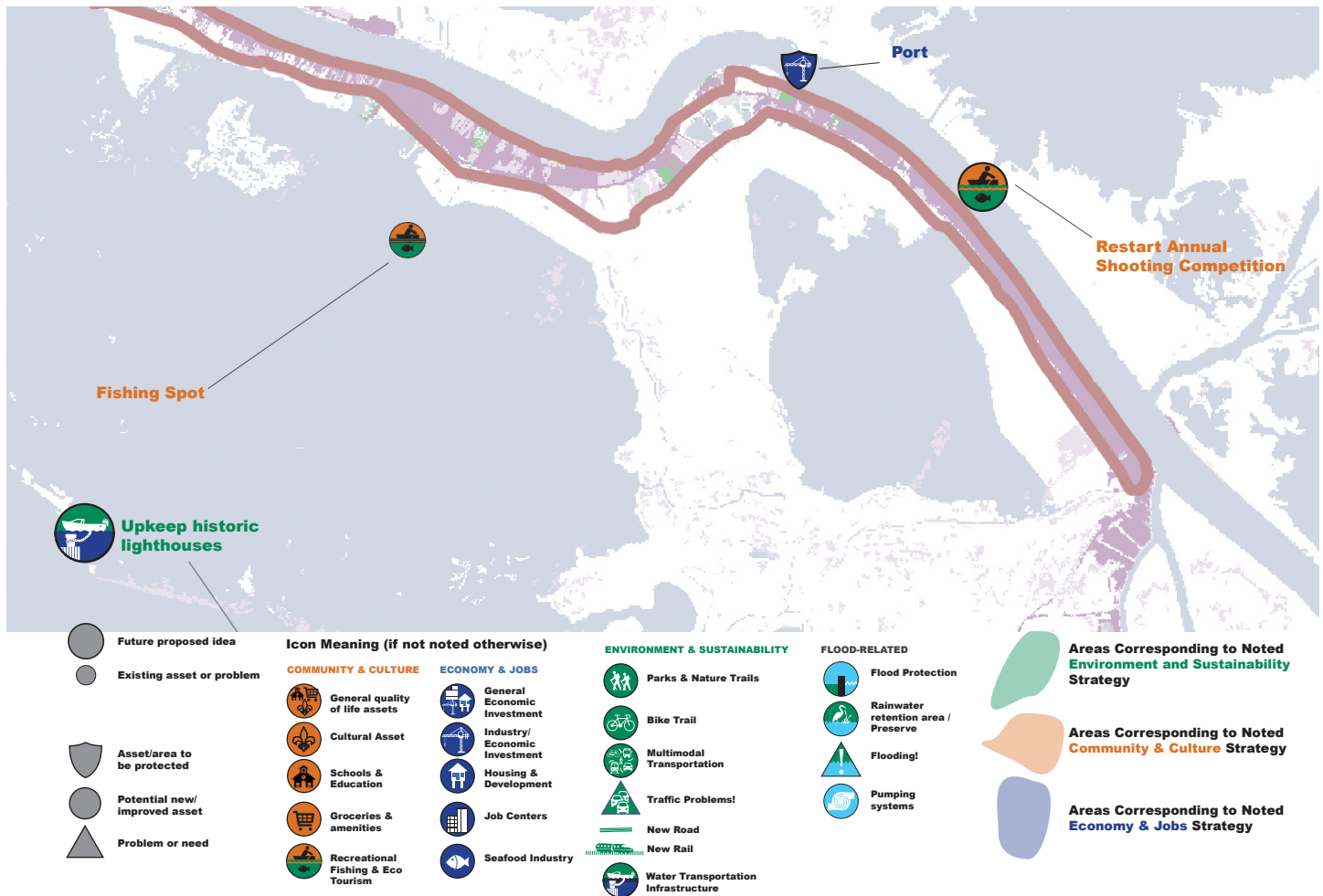


The Cambodian speaking Buras community echoed many of the same ideas as the Vietnamese community: build or improve safe harbors, improve drainage, subsidize home elevations and insurance, support local seafood, and improve education and infrastructure.

However, residents also discussed the need for public docking, and harbors with amenities like greater security and a café to gather. They expressed the need for a storm shelter and for a service that would inspect boats after a storm. Participants also stressed the need for environmental education. They described very poor sewage that backs up. Residents recommended better cell service, as lack of service can be a safety issue out on the water.

In sum, the community is struggling to make ends meet, stuck between low seafood prices and high flood insurance costs, with utilities that are deficient, amenities that are too far away, and not enough resources or room for their boats to dock. The residents asked for a stronger safety net for themselves and for more opportunities for their children.

Buras (English) Summary



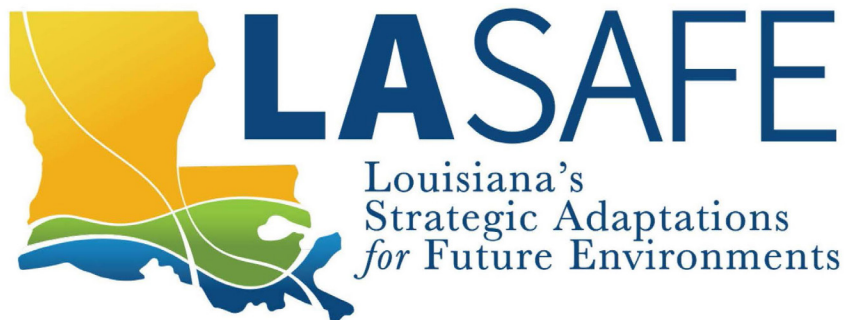
At the Buras English-speaking meeting, a handful of participants gathered around three tables that were pushed together to create one large conversation. Residents here spoke most about culture and tourism. They discussed the potential to revive Fort Jackson into an historical, cultural, and recreational destination, that can host festivals, events, sports, and field trips. Participants also cited three historic lighthouses and Fort St. Philip as important assets to protect, recommending the relocation of lighthouses inland to protect them from land loss. Residents expressed that the Crawfish and Orange Festivals continue to dwindle in crowd size and sponsorships. They recommended increasing attendance to these kinds of events, and creating recreational options like ATV/dirt bike courses, turkey shoots, horseback riding, and sports complexes. The participants also discussed the need for a public boat launch (there are none currently) to support ecotourism, as well as more fishing piers.

Related to jobs and the economy, the group focused on the water economy and renewable energy. Residents discussed the potential to develop aquaculture and oyster harvesting farms within the levee system, in the lowest lying areas. They also expressed the need for a deep water port on the Mississippi River, the installation of wind and solar farms, and harnessing the Mississippi for hydrokinetic energy. The participants advocated for the expansion of Venice Harbor, which does not currently cater to the needs of boat owners. They also emphasized the need for more trade school programs, adult education, and a curriculum that incorporates sustainable practices.

Residents also saw the lack of sustainability in their current situation. One said, “if we don’t have so many years left before erosion takes it, we should at least have things to enjoy while we have it.”

NEXT STEPS

After the second round of LA SAFE meetings, the project team reviewed all of the results and conducted outreach with key stakeholders. The team designed the activities and questions for the third round of meetings based on the projects, programs, and policy recommendations from this round.



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