The Economy of Plank Road

Employment

Approximately 15,000 people work in the Plank Road Corridor (including employees at Southern University and ExxonMobil). Of these, over 13,700 (91%) commute in from outside the Corridor. Meanwhile, over 17,000 Corridor residents leave the area to commute to work.

The presence of large industrial employers ExxonMobil, Albemarle Corp, and Rhodia makes the manufacturing sector the largest employer in the Corridor, supplying over 4,000 jobs (27%).

Wage data reveals that nearly 6 of 10 workers in the Study Area earn more than $40,000 per year - approximately a living wage for a two-adult household.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>4,027</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1,992</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1,599</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare and Social Assistance</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wage Range</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1,250 per month or less</td>
<td>2,824</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,251 - $3,333 per month</td>
<td>3,407</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $3,333 per month</td>
<td>8,766</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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Employers
- Manufacturing
- Personal care
- Food and beverages
- Grocery store
- Cars, car parts, repair, and maintenance

Job Count
- 1 - 15
- 16 - 50
- 51 - 120
- 125 - 500
- 501 - 1300

Source: Esri Business Analyst
Retail Spending and Supply

Retail market data suggests that some Plank Road businesses attract customers from a wide area, while many residents spend money outside the Corridor to purchase other goods and services.

Retail surplus describes a condition where sales of a good or service within an area exceed the demand generated by area residents. This means retailers must either be attractive enough to bring in consumers from outside of the Corridor—for example, have an established presence in the way Tony’s Seafood does—or be convenient to through-traffic—as in the case of gasoline stations. Consumers of surplus goods and services may include regular commuters, such as Corridor workers or churchgoers, or people who come to the Corridor specifically to shop.

Top 5 industries with retail leakages

1. General Merchandise Stores (includes dollar stores)
2. Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores
3. Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers
4. Miscellaneous Store Retailers (includes specialized merchandise such as florists, office supplies, gift, novelty, etc.)
5. Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores

Top 5 industries with retail surpluses

1. Food & Beverage Stores
2. Gasoline Stations
3. Health & Personal Care Stores
4. Food Services & Drinking Places
5. Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Retail MarketPlace Profile, data from 2017.
Commercial and Industrial Vacancy and Lease Rates

In 2018, shopping centers in the Baton Rouge area had a vacancy rate of 8.8%. This is lower than the national average of 10%, but the area continues to see a decline in retail shopping spaces, as seen in shopping centers such as Cortana Mall and Mall of Louisiana. At the same time, the Plank Road Corridor has a relatively low lease rate of $11.68 per square foot, about half the lease rate of $22 per square foot in the Baton Rouge area. The low lease rate can be an attractive factor for locally-owned and start-up retailers, and investment by the Parish on Plank Road may provide a greater incentive for developers and retailers to move into the area and signal that the area is prime for investments.

The industrial sector in the Plank Road Corridor is performing well, and the average vacancy rate for industrial spaces in the Baton Rouge area is at a low 5.7%. Lease rates in the Plank Road Corridor is comparable to lease rates in the Baton Rouge area as well, at $8.53 per square foot of industrial space and $9 per square foot, respectively.

Many of the largest leakages such as books, music, and gifts may be met by online retailers, meaning that even if a brick and mortar retailer were to move into the Corridor, consumers in the area may continue to shop online rather than in local stores. However, while the digital age has allowed consumers to buy in ways which are divorced from geographic limitations, Baton Rouge continues have a significant digital divide. According 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 40% of residents in the Plank Road Corridor study area do not have an internet subscription or a cellular data plan. In 2018, it is estimated that just 22.6% of adult residents in the area made a personal purchase using the Internet (Business Analyst, "Electronics and Internet Market Potential," data from 2018). The digital divide in East Baton Rouge Parish—and its acute manifestation in the Plank Road Corridor study area—should be addressed as an equity issue, as it not only affects residents’ ability to purchase goods and services, but hinders their access to vital resources such as online education and training, job search boards, and assistance programs. While the landscape of retail is in fact changing throughout the Parish, stakeholders should continue to search ways to meet the needs of all residents, including those without access to the Internet.

2 Elfin Realty, based on properties for lease in the area.
Existing Land use and architecture

Plank Road is primarily a commercial corridor with a wide range of food, retail, and service businesses. A few single family homes, light industrial, office, and institutional uses, as well as vacant land and buildings, are scattered throughout. Beyond the commercial frontage, most land within the Corridor is low-density residential neighborhoods comprised of single family homes on small lots, dotted with multifamily apartment buildings and neighborhood-serving uses such as schools and small parks.

Commercial buildings are predominantly 1-story structures, with a few 2-stories. Buildings are typically stand-alone, small business entities yielding a unique scale and rhythm to the streetscape. The majority of newer, generic strip centers are towards the north end of Plank Rd.

Many Plank Road buildings are aligned to the adjacent east-west streets yielding a non-parallel orientation to the diagonal Plank Road. Most parcels fronting Plank Road are small, and typically range from 1/10 to ¼ acre, and extend just 100’ to 150’ from the thoroughfare. These small sizes make it difficult to attract larger tenants that can shoulder the cost of new construction or renovation of existing properties.

Building paint colors are often a bold primary or secondary tones, yielding a visually vibrant character, and should be encouraged on new and restored properties.

The older and more traditional buildings are predominately on the southern and middle portion of Plank Road, with newer development towards the north. Older south end areas have a more historic architectural character, with a few blocks of modest traditional storefront structures forming a good streetscape scale. The older structures are typically closer to the street, providing a positive streetscape scale.

These more historic blocks have the potential to become more walkable areas with sensitive infill development that compliments the storefront structures. Many of the older structures, several in significant disrepair, would benefit from building restoration and façade enhancements.

Historic Building Stock

Numerous buildings have qualities that include strong street presence, good craftsmanship, visual interest, and historical value. To ensure a future with a rich urban character that values its historic and landmark structures, architectural assets with these special qualities can be preserved and even repurposed for the lasting value of the Plank Road Corridor and surrounding neighborhoods.

The most apparent architectural assets along Plank Road exist between Scenic Highway and Hollywood Street. This area has been enlarged on the following pages to show the locations of the selected buildings.
Location of Select Architectural Assets
Architectural Assets in the Southern Portion of the Plank Road Corridor

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Imagine Plank Road  
Plan for Equitable Development

Architectural Assets in the Northern Portion of the Plank Road Corridor
Preservation of these early building types would honor local architectural history, inform future development patterns, and strengthen positive perceptions of Plank Road's unique qualities.

Two buildings have the traditional treatment of a building name integrated into the façade, which could be further highlighted to honor the history.

- Paul Lombardo 1929, at 1760 Plank Rd.
- Roppoloville 1930 Accardo-Roppolo Gen. Merchandise, at 3968 Plank Rd.

**Existing Building Uses**

The following sheets provide a representative survey of existing uses in categorical groupings:

- **GENERAL COMMERCIAL**: Ranging from chain stores to specialty product shops to the large Delmont Village center.
- **AUTO CARE**: With 20+ such businesses along Plank, these form a significant streetscape image of entrepreneurial activity.
- **MARKETS**: With ease of parking proximity, these provide a great deal of the grocery offerings. More healthy food sources need to be integrated.
- **SPECIALTY FOOD**: In addition to the more generic fast food chains, Plank Rd. offers more diverse flavor with these local food outlets.
- **FINANCIAL SERVICE**: Ranging from bail bonds to tax & insurance services to a good range of branch banks.
- **WORSHIP / ASSEMBLY**: These many facilities provide for the important social & spiritual aspects of community life.
- **HEALTH & WELLNESS**: A range of service providers to meet the healthcare & fitness needs of the community.
- **CLUBS**: Ranging from sports bar to lounges to juke joints.
- **RESIDENTIAL**: Minimal residential directly on Plank, from single family to work/live. Additional housing diversity could enhance Plank Road's street life and vitality.

Not directly on Plank Road, but a strong component of community services are the following facilities & amenities:

- Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School
- Charles R. Kelly Community Center
- Delmont Gardens Branch Library
- BREC Longfellow Park (improved)
- BREC Evangeline Park (unimproved)

In addition, 3 distinct architectural styles are unique assets along Plank Road. Such historical structures provide valuable character worthy of further enhancement and revitalization.

- **TRADITIONAL STOREFRONT**: Some with awnings and stepped or arched parapet features
- **MODERN MOVEMENT**: Unadorned, straight-edged styling indicative of early modern architecture
- **ART DECO / ART MODERNE**: Decorative features could be enhanced with paint treatments
Building Types

Traditional Storefront

Modern Movement

Art Deco / Art Moderne

Traditional Storefronts of Ropoloville & adjacent building with property lines showing infill opportunities
GENERAL COMMERCIAL

Dollar General  1931
Delmont Village  5151
Family Dollar  3887
CVS Pharmacy  2520
Hollywood Jewelers  5455
Sherwin-Williams  5613
Kelly’s Meat Market  7744
Hair Crown Beauty Supply  6112
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auto Zone</td>
<td>2344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers Auto</td>
<td>2701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Tires</td>
<td>4360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft &amp; Task</td>
<td>3611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Reilly Auto Parts</td>
<td>5947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance Auto Parts</td>
<td>4767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J &amp; J’s Inspection</td>
<td>6710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C. Auto</td>
<td>7474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MARKETS

Ann's Grocery  2004

Carlin's Food Mart  2944

Johnny Jr. Groc.  3401

City Food Mart  4865

Uncle Moe's Food Mart  5557

Premier Grocery  3916

Plank Road Market  5686

EZ Pak N Serve  3800
SPECIALTY FOOD

Tony's Seafood  5215

Roul's Deli   5230

Hook Fish Chicken   6035

LA Fish Fry Products   5267

Jack's Seafood   5467

Wing's N More   4506

Krispy Kreme   5504
FINANCIAL SERVICES

Capital One Bank  5175
Chase Bank  7979
Region's Bank   5959
Central Credit Inc.   4303
Ace Loans  5949
General Insurance  5930
Teacher's Credit Union   4836
Hancock Whitney Bank  2700
WORSHIP / ASSEMBLY

Harvest Time Fellowship  4817
Resurrection Life Church   4261
Muhammad Mosque   2600
Promised Land Baptist Church   7234

The Renaissance Center  2783
Fruit of the Spirit Ministries  3338

St. Gerard Catholic Church  5354
WORSHIP / ASSEMBLY

Praise Temple Church 6268

Living Word Restoration Ministries 6767

Ambassadors for Christ Evangelistic Ministries 3019

Faith City International Ministries 3680

Rhema Christian Center 7850

Redeeming Love Ministries 4226
HEALTH & WELLNESS

Delmont Patient + Urgent Care Clinic  5420

Health Smiles  5842

LA Health & Injury Centers  2832

Plank Road Animal Hospital  7660

planet fitness

just Kids DENTAL

Kid-Med-North

PEDIATRIC CLINIC

DENTIST

Affordable Dental Care

GEAUXCHIRO

CHIROPRACTIC & HEALTH
CLUBS

Charcoal Lounge / Ooh Da Sports Bar  4886

Club Raggs  2605

Club La Fete  3505

Sugar Bear Juke Joint  3827

Romeo's Old School Bar  4115

Club Mareco's  5035
Signage Character along Plank Road

**Signage: Site**

In contrast to more generic contemporary site signage styles, Plank Road features a range of unique signs in three basic categories:

- **Special Shapes:** Signage that stands out from the more typical rectangular shape.
- **Graphic Style:** Signage incorporating representational images, or hand-painted.
- **Pricing Info:** Signage featuring detailed services & pricing information.

Promoting this theme of specialty signage will help strengthen the unique visual character of Plank Road. There are many abandoned signs in disrepair that detract from the Corridor image. In addition, standard billboards are in small number and would best be limited to lessen their further visual clutter.

**Signage: Building**

In contrast to more generic contemporary building signage styles, certain Plank Road buildings feature a range of unique signs in two basic categories. Promoting this theme of specialty signage will help strengthen a unique visual character and cultural expression of Plank Road.

- **Hand Painted:** Graphically distinct signage hand-painted directly on the building façade, yielding a personalized quality.\(^3\)
- **Collaged Images:** Signage with a cluster of similar images, for food service, auto care or beauty products. Some facades are almost completely covered in multiple signs.

**Signage: Mural**

Plank Road features a range of art murals incorporated into commercial signage, that animates facades and adjacent spaces. In addition to the hand-painted building signage, these cultural artifacts add a creative, funky flavor unique to the district. Preserving and promoting this theme of streetscape artwork further strengthens the creative expression and cultural character of the Corridor.

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\(^3\) For the purposes of regulation, Section 16.5.10.B.1.b provides that material painted directly on a wall is not considered a sign.
SIGNAGE: BUILDING

- Doc's Wash & Dry
- Professional Hair Care Studio
- Tattoo
- Truly Blessed Auto
- Buckle's Hair Dynasty
- Imagine Plank Road Plan for Equitable Development
SIGNAGE: ART MURAL
SIGNAGE: ART MURAL

- "Pig Out! Meat Master BBQ"
- "Meat" sign with a cow
- "Meat Grocery"
- "Roul's Deli"
- "Daughters" sign with "Diaper Cakes" and "Candy Cakes"
- "3320 Plank Rd. Call 225-614-4257"
Zoning along Plank Road

Imagine Plank Road  Plan for Equitable Development
Zoning Synopsis

Zoning Maximum Development Diagrams

C1  
LIGHT COMMERCIAL

BUILDABLE AREA
HEIGHT LIMIT: 45' - 4"
RESIDENTIAL UNITS PER ACRE: 29.3

SINGLE LOT

1 ACRE DENSITY EXAMPLE
Note: Up to four stories are allowed in the C1 zoning districts

C2  
HEAVY COMMERCIAL

BUILDABLE AREA
UNLIMITED HEIGHT
RESIDENTIAL UNITS PER ACRE: 29.3

SINGLE LOT

1 ACRE DENSITY EXAMPLE

M1  
LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

BUILDABLE AREA
UNLIMITED HEIGHT
RESIDENTIAL UNITS PER ACRE: NONE

SINGLE LOT

1 ACRE DENSITY EXAMPLE

Imagine Plank Road  Plan for Equitable Development
Baton Rouge Unified Development Code: Chapter 8 - Zoning Districts, Appendix F - Height and Yard Requirements by Zoning Districts

**A2**  
**SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL**  
BUILDABLE AREA  
HEIGHT LIMIT: 35' - 2.5"  
RESIDENTIAL UNITS PER ACRE: 5.8  
1 ACRE DENSITY EXAMPLE

**A3**  
**LIMITED RESIDENTIAL**  
BUILDABLE AREA  
HEIGHT LIMIT: 35' - 2.5"  
RESIDENTIAL UNITS PER ACRE: 11.5  
1 ACRE DENSITY EXAMPLE

**A4**  
**GENERAL RESIDENTIAL**  
BUILDABLE AREA  
HEIGHT LIMIT: 45' - 4"  
RESIDENTIAL UNITS PER ACRE: 43.6  
1 ACRE DENSITY EXAMPLE

Note: Up to four stories are allowed in the A4 zoning district.
Landscape Buffer Requirement Diagrams

**L2 Requirements:**
- 3' tall continuous evergreen vegetative screen, or a wall, fence or berm
- Class A tree per 40 linear feet, or Class B tree per 20 linear feet

**L3 Requirements:**
- 6' tall continuous evergreen vegetative screen, or a wall, fence or berm
- Class A tree per 40 linear feet, or Class B tree per 20 linear feet

**L4 Requirements:**
- 6' tall continuous masonry wall
- 6' tall shrub per 7 linear feet of wall to be located on the existing development side of the wall (access to this buffer area to be provided in the wall design)
- Class A tree per 40 linear feet, or Class B tree per 20 linear feet, or Class C tree per 15 linear feet

---

**Tree Classification Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trunk Classification</th>
<th>Class &quot;A&quot; Trees</th>
<th>Class &quot;B&quot; Trees</th>
<th>Class &quot;C&quot; Trees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single Trunk</td>
<td>2&quot; / 8' / 40'+</td>
<td>1.5&quot; / 8' / 20'+</td>
<td>1.5&quot; / 5' / 10'+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi Trunk</td>
<td>1.5&quot; / 10' / 40'+</td>
<td>1&quot; / 8' / 20'+</td>
<td>1&quot; / 5' / 10'+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Baton Rouge Unified Development Code: Chapter 18 - Landscape and Trees
These are a sampling of abutting uses in the Plank Road Corridor; some situations may be omitted. Where same uses are abutting, no landscape buffer is required. Only the owner of a developing property abutting an existing developed property is required to provide a buffer (Sec 18.3.3.B.1). Double buffers are never required.

Baton Rouge Unified Development Code: Chapter 18 - Landscape and Trees
Park Access

The majority of the study area around Plank Road is within a ten minute walk of a park, however several large areas do not have access to a neighborhood or community park.

Monte Santo Bayou Park is the only park that can be accessed directly from Plank Road. Most parks are several blocks from Plank Road without clear, safe connections along streets to connect people from Plank Road to the park.

The parks around Plank Road vary greatly in scale from under an acre to over 100 acres, from regional destination parks to small neighborhood parks.

No matter the scale, most parks have the same amenities, namely basketball courts, multi-use fields, playgrounds, and rec centers.

Eight parks are within a 1/2 mile of Plank Road and another ten parks are within the study area. BREC, the agency that maintains and operates the parks within East Baton Rouge Parish, is currently investing in improvements for existing parks, addressing changes in park programming, and providing a new greenway trail connecting Scotlandville to Downtown.
Park Access

Imagine Plank Road  Plan for Equitable Development

0.5 Miles

10 minute walk to park
Areas within a 10 minute walk
## PLANK ROAD - PARK PROXIMITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Distance to Plank Rd</th>
<th>Amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scotlandville Parkway Park</td>
<td>110 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground, walking, biking trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monte Sano Park</td>
<td>54 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground, rec center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longfellow Park</td>
<td>11 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground, rec center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangeline Street Park</td>
<td>8 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground, walking track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerr Warren Playground</td>
<td>5 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground, rec center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acadian Thruway Park*</td>
<td>0.6 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Basketball court, playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison Avenue Park</td>
<td>1 acre</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Basketball court, playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pawnee Street Park</td>
<td>0.8 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Basketball court, picnic tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna T. Jordan Community Park</td>
<td>40 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground, walking track, rec center, fitness center, pavilions, swimming pool, tennis courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooper Road Park</td>
<td>223 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, tennis courts, playground, rec center, mountain biking trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadillac Street Park</td>
<td>6 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground, rec center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortune Addition Park</td>
<td>10 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Drive Park</td>
<td>6 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Brookstown Park</td>
<td>5 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Tennis courts, playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Brookstown Park</td>
<td>1 acre</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Playground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howell Community Park*</td>
<td>114 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Multi-purpose field, basketball court, playground, walking track, rec center, picnic pavilions, swimming pool, tennis courts, softball field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfair Park</td>
<td>1 acre</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Rec center, playground, tennis courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gus Young Park</td>
<td>4 acres</td>
<td>miles</td>
<td>Rec center, basketball courts, playground, tennis courts, walking track</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>