

Strategy Update

CITY OF LUVERNE STRATEGIC PLAN, 2023 TO 2028

Luverne - Friendliest City in the South

Small town southern charm with a big vision.

Live here. Learn Here. Work here. Play here.

Visit here. Invest here.

Stay here.

Mission:

Function as the Crenshaw County center for economics and government, promoting and improving quality of life while enhancing our sense of community.

Acknowledgments

The City of Luverne is grateful to the many citizens who took time to attend and contribute to the strategic planning workshop, and to review and comment on drafts of this plan. Your involvement is critical to the continued success of our city. This strategic plan will help direct our City's actions and efforts by creating a shared vision, defining our priorities, and establishing communitywide goals. We, the City of Luverne, cannot do those things without the input of our citizens. We are looking forward to seeing your many ideas and suggestions become reality. ***Together, we can make great things happen!***

Additional copies of the Luverne Strategic Plan are available at the Luverne City Hall:

22 East Fifth Street
Luverne, AL 36049
334-335-374

Or, you can visit www.luverne.org.

The Luverne Strategic Plan was developed with assistance from the South Central Alabama Development Commission.



5900 Carmichael Place | Montgomery, AL 36117
334-244-6903 | scadc.net



Parade lights in Downtown Luverne bring a sense of enchantment to the city for both residents and travelers. The lights focus attention on this thoroughfare and designate it as a special place for shopping, eating and communing with neighbors. The downtown lights also minimize the effect of closed stores and doors at night.

The Luverne Planning Process

In the Spring of 2019, the City of Luverne adopted its first strategic plan that was developed by engaging citizens in defining a direction for the City's growth and development. The completed plan helped prioritize local improvements and the allocation of funds over the three to five year time frame. And, it revealed how businesses and citizens could effectively plug-in to the improvement process.

Four years later, in the Spring of 2023, citizens of Luverne came together again to update the Luverne Strategic Plan, as part of the city's Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) program. Citizens reviewed and updated Luverne's unique features, its strengths and opportunities, along with its weaknesses and barriers to future desired outcomes. Citizens also reviewed all initiatives, strategies and actions. The review indicated that Luverne's vision and mission statements remained relevant and would continue for the next three to five years. The review also showed that the City of Luverne has accomplished two of the 13 strategies, with the development of a sports complex underway and the expansion and promotion of workforce development efforts and opportunities. New tasks were developed, however, to continue these efforts. Additionally, the City of Luverne has made considerable progress and has on-going efforts in another five of the strategies proposed in the first strategic plan. One strategy regarding promotion of the Crenshaw County Lake was deleted since the maintenance and programming of the facility was transferred back to the State of Alabama. ***In summary, eight of the original 13 strategies have been completed, eliminated or have ongoing efforts in place.***

There are, however, five strategies that have not yet been effectively addressed along with the addition of one new strategy. Those areas that have not been given full attention include: gateway development; wayfinding system; central point of information for events and tourism; development of the tourism industry; increasing housing opportunities; and retain and assist existing industries and businesses (new).

In the 2023 update of the Luverne Strategic Plan, citizens reaffirmed the four existing initiatives and added three new strategies: one in Tourism and Promotion and two in Quality of Life. Further, the action plan resulted in a total of 44 tasks, of which nine are ongoing efforts and 15 tasks are new. The updated strategic plan continues to focus on U.S. Highway 331 corridor improvements, industrial and business growth, and tourism and promotion but also places more emphasis on quality of life improvements through the provision of essential services, education, housing and healthcare.

Each of the task items have been assigned a priority level of immediate, one year, one to two years, and two to five years. As the citizens of Luverne complete tasks from the previous strategic plan, the number of tasks that are now of immediate importance or need to be accomplished within one year has grown. It is clearly evident that the City of Luverne is going through the hard process of developing and putting systems in place for long-term improvements. It is expected that once the initial mechanisms are established, many of these tasks will become maintenance items that will remain important but not critical.

Strategic Planning Considerations

A postcard scene is an attribute of which the City of Luverne is particularly proud, or a feature that helps define the character of the city. These features should be preserved to all extents possible. An asset is a feature or quality of Luverne that is good or valuable in its current or natural state. Liabilities exhibit qualities that detract from the desired use or work to the disadvantage of the desired development. An opportunity is a feature, or group of features that has the potential to become an asset, but as of yet, is not realizing its full potential. And finally, a barrier is a factor that limits or regulates what can be done in an area.

Postcard Scenes and Local Highlights

- Alabama Registry Signage
- AMEA Solar Project / Downtown EV Charging Stations
- Downtown Lights
- THE Friendliest City
- Corner Clock
- Christmas Parade
- Corner with Church Steeples
- Crenshaw County Courthouse
- Crenshaw County Lake
- Crenshaw County Training Center
- DEI Center
- Food Destination
- Glen Daniel Stadium
- Historical Museum
- Historic District – Residential and Commercial
- Industrial Park
- Library
- Luverne Mural
- Peanut Boil
- Pepsi Cola and Mural
- Recreation Park
- Rodeo
- Runway Venue
- School Systems
- Sister Schubert’s
- Spring / Natural Resources
- St. John Missionary Baptist Church
- Veterans Park

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Barriers

Assets

Services and Facilities

- Airport
- Excellent city services
- Emergency services
- Traffic coordination
- Emergency management agency
- Low utility rates at minimum taxation
- Fiber to home and business

Cultural

- Dining diversity
- Friendliest City
- Cultural diversity
- Location
- Citizens

Recreation

- City recreation programs
- Golf Course
- Rodeo
- Natural resources
- Hunting and fishing
- Fastest/shortest route to the beach

Resources

- Library
- Healthcare
- Dialysis Center
- Hospital, south wing for mental health
- Children’s mental healthcare
- Nursing home
- Assisted living

Education

- LBW Campus
- School systems – public and private
- Career Academy

Economic

- Available property
- Jobs
- Local businesses
- Existing local industries
- Location
- US Hwy. 331 corridor

Weaknesses

- Perceived lack of downtown parking
- Downtown vacancies
- Litter
- Animal control
- Worker retention
- Work ethic
- Retention of young workers / youth
- Lack of retail
- Small population base – doesn’t attract retail
- Aging infrastructure
- Lack of mid-range housing
- Communications
- Negative social media
- Lack of entertainment
- Cultural disparity-coming together
- Abandoned houses / Property maintenance
- Debris, trash pickup

- Lack of enforcement of nuisance ordinance
- Lack of recreational activities beyond organized sports

Opportunities

- Industrial growth – Sister Schubert’s potential
- High speed data connectivity
- Channel traffic through Luverne
- Population growth
- Tourism—natural resources, historic
- Downtown development
- Historical recognition
- Promotion and advertising
- Social media presence
- Personal service

- Expansion of recreation and arts programs
- Lodging/Camping

Barriers

- Infrastructural limits to industrial growth
- Lack of housing, affordable housing
- Expansion of data connectivity in rural areas
- Accommodations
- Funding renovations
- Business hours
- Lack of a central point of information
- Local support for retail/big box retail
- Media scarcity
- Perception of local products as inferior quality



Downtown Luverne improvements include murals, streetscaping, parade lights, pedestrian-scale street lights and Main Street banners.

Luverne Strategic Plan Framework

Vision: Luverne – Friendliest City in the South:
Small town southern charm with a big vision.
Live here. Work here. Play here. Visit here. Invest here. Stay here.

Mission: Function as the Crenshaw County center for economics and government, promoting and improving quality of life while enhancing our sense of community.

Initiatives and Strategies:

Initiative: U.S. Highway 331 Corridor Improvements

- Strategies:**
1. Continue making aesthetic improvements along U.S. Highway 331 corridor (Forest Avenue) from 6th Street to Crenshaw Community Hospital.
 2. Maintain attractive gateways that signal arrival to Luverne, or districts within Luverne.
 3. Develop a wayfinding system that guides travelers through and around Luverne.

Initiative: Industrial and Business Growth

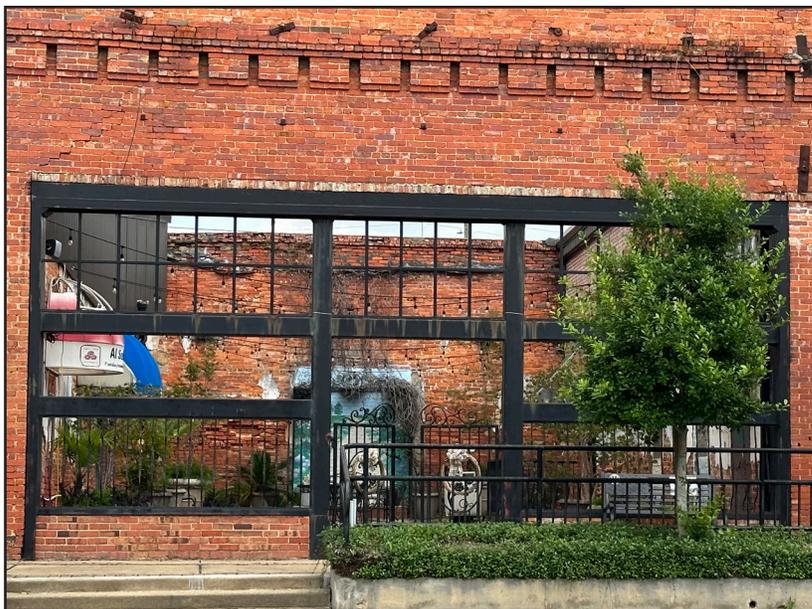
- Strategies:**
1. Ensure that adequate and quality infrastructure is available to support industry and businesses.
 2. Promote and recruit new industry and businesses.
 3. Retain and assist existing industries and businesses.

Initiative: Tourism and Promotion

- Strategies:**
1. Create an organized and systematic approach to tourism and tourism efforts.
 2. Develop a central point of information (one-stop shop) for information and calendar of events.

Initiative: Quality of Life

- Strategies:**
1. Provide essential services and facilities for all Luverne residents.
 2. Elevate quality of life with exceptional educational, recreational and occupational opportunities.



Initiative: U.S. Highway 331 Corridor Improvements

1. Continue making aesthetic improvements along the U.S. Highway 331 corridor (Forest Avenue) from 6th Street to Crenshaw Community Hospital.		Success Indicator	Barriers to Success	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in place • Increase in property values • Interest from developers • Improved image • US Highway 331 four-laned • Increased tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Priority within ALDOT 	
Tasks			Time Frame	Responsible
1	Develop a U.S. Highway 331 Corridor Improvement Plan.		Immediate	Luverne Planning Commission, Garden Club
2	Research funding options for corridor improvements.		1 Year	
3	Engage partners for implementation of corridor improvements.		1 Year	
4	Fully invest in and engage the Luverne Main Street Program / ACE Program.		1 to 2 Years	
5	Four-Lane US Highway 331 from Luverne to Highland Home.		3 to 5 Years	ALDOT
2. Maintain attractive gateways that signal arrival to Luverne, or to districts within the city.		Success Indicator	Barriers to Success	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsors secured • Gateways improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • ALDOT/Federal restrictions 	
Tasks			Time Frame	Responsible
1	Investigate federal and state regulations for requirements and allowances on right-of-way for gateway improvements.		Immediate	Luverne Planning Commission, Garden Club
2	Inventory property and property owners within gateway areas.		1 Year	
3	Build a sponsor campaign to assist with funding of gateway improvements.		1 to 2 Years	
3. Develop a wayfinding system that guides travelers through and around Luverne.		Success Indicator	Barriers to Success	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding system in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Land/Location • Parking at site 	
Tasks			Time Frame	Responsible
1	Search for funding sources to develop a wayfinding system.		Immediate	Luverne Planning Commission
2	Advertise an RFP for design and development of a wayfinding system that clearly outlines the level of detail desired.		1 to 2 Years	
3	Implement the wayfinding system plan.		3 to 5 Years	



Initiative: Industrial and Business Growth

1. Ensure that adequate and quality infrastructure is available to support industry and businesses.		Success Indicator	Barriers to Success	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure improvements in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding 	
Tasks			Time Frame	Responsible
1	Compile internal assessment of all infrastructure adequacy and prioritize needs.		Immediate	City of Luverne Department Heads: Engineering, Electrical, Water, Sewer
2	Identify all potential issues with the Alabama Department of Transportation for infrastructure improvements within state and federal right-of-way.		Immediate	
3	Seek grants and secure funding for infrastructure improvements.		1 Year	
4	Complete construction of a supplemental electrical substation to fully serve industry without interruptions and better meet residential needs.		Immediate	
5	Upgrade water and sewer service lines in downtown Luverne.		1 to 2 Years	
6	Upgrade data connections to support existing and future industry.		1 to 2 Years	

2. Promote and recruit new industry and businesses.		Success Indicator	Barriers to Success	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New businesses locating in Luverne • New industry and/or industrial expansions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Needed infrastructure improvements • Availability of reliable and skilled workforce 	
Tasks			Time Frame	Responsible
1	Continue to maintain inventory of existing sites and potential opportunities for both industrial and commercial development.		1 Year	CCEIDA, Luverne Industrial Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce
2	Revamp City website and include linkages to local and state business and industry websites.		Immediate	
3	Maintain current industrial promotion and recruitment efforts and expand/increase efforts as possible.		1 Year	
4	Promote and encourage entrepreneurial programs, such as the Troy University Idea Bank, for new locally-owned businesses.		1 to 2 Years	

3. Retain and assist existing industry and businesses.		Success Indicator	Barriers to Success	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local industry and businesses expansion • Financially stable industries and businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of reliable and skilled workforce 	
Tasks			Time Frame	Responsible
1	Continue volunteer mentoring program to help students navigate work and career pathways.		Immediate	CCEIDA, Luverne Industrial Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce
2	Cultivate an environment that values existing industry and continually checks on what specific industries may need to remain successful.		1 Year	
3	Encourage a worker retention to minimize dependency on temporary employment and build local labor pool.		1 Year	
4	Continued <i>Shop Local</i> campaigns -- promote who is offering what.		1 Year	
5	Investigate and offer "Customer Retention 101" training.		2 years	
6	Instigate positive social media sharing and reviews of local industry events and needs, and local business products.		Immediate	

Initiative: Tourism and Promotion

1. Create an organized and systematic approach to tourism and tourism efforts.		Success Indicator	Barriers to Success	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination • Personnel 	
Tasks			Time Frame	Responsible
1	Partner with Wiregrass RC&D to improve the Chamber of Commerce as the face of Luverne and Crenshaw County.		Immediate	City Council, Chamber, Main Street, Historical Society, Recreation Department
2	Enact a municipal lodging tax.		Immediate	
3	Inventory types of tourism available in Luverne, and outline what is included in each, along with potential resources.		1 Year	
4	Develop a marketing and promotion plan to attract tourism.		1 to 2 Years	
5	Recruit citizen participation in tourism efforts and create a Tourism 101 class to promote tourism methodology, including hospitality training.		3 Year	

2. Develop a calendar of events and a central point of information (one-stop shop).		Success Indicator	Barriers to Success	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word gets out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel 	
Tasks			Time Frame	Responsible
1	Develop a calendar for year-round tourism and visitation.		1 Year	Chamber of Commerce
2	Designate a primary contact for events and local information.		1 Year	
3	Develop a combination tourism and city street map.		1 Year	

Initiative: Quality of Life

1. Provide essential services and facilities to all Luverne residents.		Success Indicator	Barriers to Success	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic services at each household • Adequate healthcare at home • Safe and adequate housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure funding • Hospital funding • Availability of land • Building costs 	
Tasks			Time Frame	Responsible
1	Ensure that all households have clean and adequate water, sewer, and power services.		1 to 2 Years	City of Luverne Department Heads: Engineering, Electrical, Water, Sewer; Hospital Board
2	Continue to promote and support healthcare resources.		Immediate	
3	Recruit healthcare providers, as needed.		2 to 3 Years	
4	Look for means to increase housing opportunities.		Immediate	

2. Elevate quality of life with exceptional educational, recreational and occupational opportunities.		Success Indicator	Barriers to Success	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduated leadership class • Skilled labor force • Completed sportsplex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and involvement 	
Tasks			Time Frame	Responsible
1	Develop and maintain a citywide leadership program.		Immediate	Chamber; City of Luverne Recreation Department; Grow Southeast; Boards of Education
2	Continue workforce development efforts and opportunities.		Immediate	
3	Support other initiatives in educational improvement efforts.		1 Year	
4	Promote LBW adult education opportunities.		Immediate	
5	Complete construction of sportsplex facility.		1 to 2 Years	

Luverne Strategic Plan Implementation List 2023 to 2028

Time Line	Status	TASKS	US 331	Ind & Bus	Tourism	QOL
		<i>Tasks below are listed by priority status to provide a quick check list and next step reference guide. Refer to the task as it appears in the initiative and strategy section for full understanding. Tasks in italics are ongoing.</i>				
IMMEDIATE PRIORITY	1	Develop a U.S. Highway 331 Corridor Improvement Plan.	X			
	2	Investigate federal and state requirements on right-of-way for gateway improvements.	X			
	3	Search for funding sources to develop a wayfinding system.	X			
	4	<i>Complete construction of a supplemental electrical substation.</i>		X		
	5	<i>Compile internal assessment of all infrastructure adequacy and prioritize needs.</i>		X		
	6	Identify potential issues with the ALDOT for infrastructure improvements within ROW.		X		
	7	<i>Revamp City website and include links to local and state business and industry websites.</i>		X		
	8	Volunteer mentoring program to help students navigate work and career pathways.		X		
	9	Positive social media sharing and reviews of local industry and local business products.		X		
	10	Reorganize the Chamber of Commerce as the face of Luverne.			X	
	11	Enact a municipal lodging tax.			X	
	12	<i>Continue to promote and support healthcare resources.</i>				X
	13	Look for means to increase housing opportunities.				X
	14	Develop and maintain a citywide leadership program.				X
	15	Continue workforce development efforts and opportunities.				X
	16	Promote LBW adult education opportunities.				X
1 YEAR	17	<i>Research funding options for corridor improvements.</i>	X			
	18	Engage partners for implementation of corridor improvements.	X			
	19	Inventory property and property owners within gateway areas.	X			
	20	Maintain inventory of existing sites and potential opportunities for development.		X		
	21	<i>Maintain current industrial promotion and recruitment efforts.</i>		X		
	22	Cultivate an environment that values existing industry and continually checks on needs.		X		
	23	Encourage worker retention; build local labor pool.		X		
	24	Continued <i>Shop Local</i> campaigns -- promote who is offering what.		X		
	25	Inventory tourism in Luverne; outline what is included in each and potential resources.			X	
	26	Develop a calendar for year-round tourism and visitation.			X	
	27	Designate a primary contact for events and local information.			X	
	28	Develop a combination tourism and city street map.			X	
	29	Support other initiatives in educational improvement efforts.				X
1 - 2 YEARS	30	<i>Fully invest in and engage the Luverne Main Street Program.</i>	X			
	31	Build a sponsor campaign to assist with funding of gateway improvements.	X			
	32	Advertise an RFP for design and development of a wayfinding system	X			
	33	Seek grants and secure funding for infrastructure improvements.		X		
	34	<i>Upgrade water and sewer service lines in downtown Luverne.</i>		X		
	35	<i>Upgrade data connections to support existing and future industry.</i>		X		
	36	Promote and encourage entrepreneurial programs.		X		
	37	Develop a marketing and promotion plan to attract tourism.			X	
	38	Ensure that all households have clean and adequate water, sewer, and power services.				X
	39	Complete construction of sportsplex facility.				X
2 - 5 YEARS	40	Investigate and offer "Customer Retention 101" training.		X		
	41	Recruit healthcare providers, as needed.				X
	42	Recruit citizen participation in tourism efforts and create a Tourism 101 class.			X	
	43	Four-Lane US Highway 331 from Luverne to Highland Home.	X			
	44	Implement the wayfinding system plan.	X			