

BR CHOICE \$335.5M Public Private Investment

\$13.6M People | \$92.5M Housing | \$31 Education | \$110.5M Workforce Training
\$14.4 M Neighborhood | \$66M Transportation | \$7.5 Health/Wellness

The **East Fairfield - Smiley Heights - Melrose East** neighborhood was once a thriving working-class center of activity, the community grew around Baton Rouge's regional, premier Bon Marche and Cortana Mall shopping districts. In recent decades this once bustling neighborhood suffered from intense competition from the downtown business district and newer commercial centers. The regional shopping district began a steady downward spiral losing businesses and customers; as a result, the neighborhood's retail, commercial and residential sectors showed significant signs of disinvestment and abandonment. Without these neighborhood services and conveniences, able-bodied residents and business owners moved out of the area leaving high vacancy, buildings in disrepair and blighted lots. Today, the neighborhood has a poverty rate of nearly 60 percent (71 percent of the individuals living in poverty are children) a violent crime rate that is three-times as high as the City's rate, a vacancy rate of 18 percent, a failing elementary and middle school, and a severely distressed public housing site that has \$16.5M in critical capital needs.

However, there has been a dramatic shift - with strategic planning initiatives and the direction of targeted public and private investments, this disenfranchised neighborhood is at a turning point socially and economically.

A recent neighborhood market study indicates that this will be a **Community of Choice by 2030**, with the attraction of **3,500 new households** and the creation **20,000 new jobs**.

The City of Baton Rouge/East Baton Rouge Parish, East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority and the East Baton Rouge Parish Housing Authority, have coalesced over **60** neighborhood, local, state and federal partners to transform the **East Fairfield - Smiley Heights - Melrose East** community into an **Urban Creative Village**. This community-driven transformation plan capitalizes on the neighborhood's central location by directing public and private investments to return abandoned properties to productive use, improving connectivity to essential assets and job centers and introducing a mix of housing and retail/commercial uses to restore neighborhood vibrancy.

\$335.5M in social and economic investments are invested or planned for the **East Fairfield - Smiley Heights - Melrose East** neighborhood. The BR Team sees this as just the beginning of this significant transformation opportunity. Investments include **\$13.6M** in human capital investments, **\$92.5M** in Housing, **\$31M** in Education, **\$110M** in Workforce-Training, **\$14.4M** in Neighborhood, **\$66M** in Transportation and **\$7.5M** in Health Wellness. These investments are estimated to result in over **\$1 Billion in economic impact** in the direct, indirect and induced levels of the local and state economy.

The BR Choice Transformation Initiative is comprehensive and reflects the community's spirit with a focus on **Resiliency, Innovation and Placemaking**.

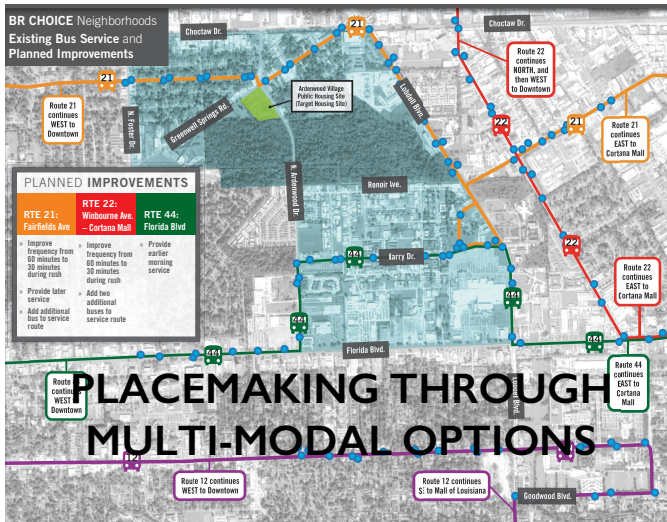


\$87.6M for **550** new mixed-income energy-efficient apartments and single-family homes are planned; **\$6M** invested in a **248**-apartment community that has recently tripled in appraised value. **200-acre** mixed-use development master plan is in the process of being implemented incorporating designated community spaces and activity districts.

\$11M YMCA Early Childhood and Women's Development Center will be under construction in 2019. **\$31M** for two new recently opened neighborhood schools, Collegiate Academies and IDEA Bridge Academy College Prep. A **Multi-Million** Every Student Succeeds Act commitment from EBR Parish Schools for Melrose Elementary/Capitol Middle. **\$3.4M** new Eden Park Branch Library.

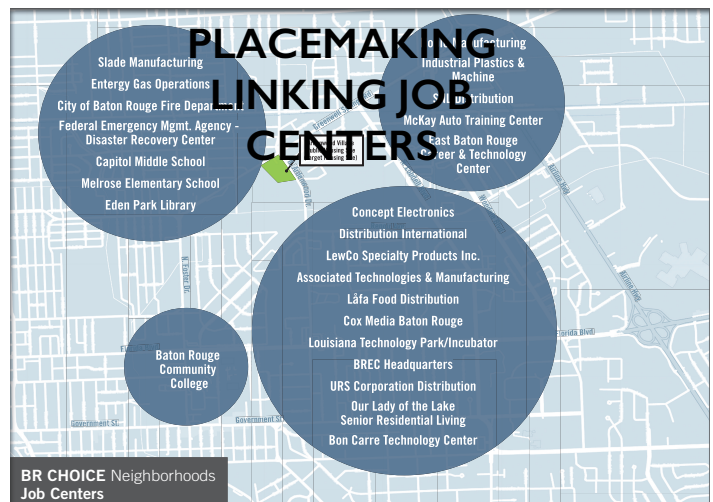


In summer of 2018, three learning centers serving as a constellation that make up Baton Rouge's **Innovation/Workforce Development Campus**, changed the future of residents of East Fairfield-Smiley Heights-Melrose East by offering incredible new learning opportunities. The campus includes: **\$17M** EBR Schools Career Technology Education Center, **\$25M** McKay Auto Training Center and the **\$6.5M** Baton Rouge Community College Automotive Collision Center. Investments of **\$41.5M** for a High-Tech Start-Up Business Incubator converted through adaptive reuse in one of the neighborhood's abandoned malls.



In late 2018, the City anticipates approval of a **\$15M** new Ardenwood-Lobdell Multi-Modal east/west Connector, **\$48M** in corridor improvements along Florida Boulevard, **\$3M** for a rapid bus transit study with three new added bus stops in the neighborhood. Having multiple transportation options will give **East Fairfield - Smiley Heights - Melrose East** residents access to critical assets, like job, education and community centers. The City has also invested over **\$7.5M** in neighborhood health and wellness facilities, parks and programming.

The **East Fairfield - Smiley Heights - Melrose East** neighborhood has a burgeoning creative population of artists and cultural historians that are drawn to this community since it serves as an innate **Outdoor Art Gallery of over 24 murals and streets named after post-impressionist painters.** The Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge is leading grass roots neighborhood organizations to integrate art into rebuilding the community, to enhance civic engagement, reduce crime, stimulate economic growth, eradicate blight and establish the cultural identity of the area.



Long-established creative assets provide over **\$1M** in programs: Red Stick Arts Project, Chorum Hall Live Jazz Music and Theater Baton Rouge. The BR Choice Transformation initiative will build on the neighborhood's organic creative community, by incorporating: **Sculpture Installations** throughout the neighborhood, **Community Mural Events** using art as a social revitalization tool, connecting neighborhood assets through **Visual Wayfinding art elements** and linking tactically placed **Vegetable/Flower Gardens** to unite art with nutrition and wellness.