



# HBCU-CDFI

ECONOMIC MOBILITY STRATEGY GUIDE

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HOPE ENTERPRISE CORPORATION  
2019

Hope Enterprise Corporation  
4 Old River Place  
Jackson, MS 39202

Design by Mallory Shields

# HBCU-CDFI

## ECONOMIC MOBILITY STRATEGY GUIDE

How can CDFIs and HBCUs collaborate to augment and leverage the position of HBCUs as anchor institutions to increase economic mobility in low-income communities?

Alex Lawson, Ed Sivak, Rachel Harmon, and Bill Bynum

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## HOPE ENTERPRISE CORPORATION

HOPE (Hope Enterprise Corporation, Hope Credit Union and Hope Policy Institute) provides affordable financial services; leverages private, public and philanthropic resources; and engages in policy analysis to fulfill its mission of strengthening communities, building assets, and improving lives in economically distressed parts of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. Since 1994, HOPE has generated over \$2 billion in financing that has benefitted more than one million people in one of the nation's most impoverished regions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are located in the South in areas facing severe levels of economic distress. The high levels of disinvestment in these areas make them prime locations to foster natural alliances between HBCUs and Community Development Financial Institutions. Given their embeddedness in these communities, HBCUs are uniquely positioned to not only promote economic mobility among their students, but to serve as critical anchors of development in their surrounding neighborhoods. Likewise, CDFIs are experts at the import and deployment of financial resources to advance ownership and agency among individuals and communities.

The HBCU-CDFI Economic Mobility Guide outlines the key outcomes of a strategic collaboration undertaken to answer the question – how can Community Development Financial Institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities collaborate to augment and leverage the position of HBCUs as anchor institutions to increase economic mobility in low-income communities? To answer the question, Hope Enterprise Corporation / Hope Credit Union (HOPE), a regional CDFI working in the Deep South, came together with Jackson State University – an urban HBCU – and Mississippi Valley State University – a rural HBCU located in the Mississippi Delta – to identify priorities and develop plans to address neighborhood conditions associated with persistent and concentrated poverty.

Through surveys, analysis of secondary data sources, public meetings and focus groups, HOPE, the two HBCUs and local people identified the critical needs, potential development opportunities and common goals of the surrounding community. Following months of working together, the HBCU-CDFI Economic Mobility Team drew from the research findings to develop a number of specific projects designed to improve substantially conditions in communities adjacent to the universities. During the project development phase, team leaders placed an emphasis on prioritizing projects aligned with the core competencies of CDFIs: housing, health and fresh food access, entrepreneurship and jobs, and community infrastructure.

The table below provides an overview of the proposed projects emerging from the HBCU-CDFI Economic Mobility Initiative.

**Table 1: West Jackson and Itta Bena Proposed Projects**

Community Development Priority Projects WEST JACKSON & JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY			
Area of Need	Strategy	CDFI/HBCU Collaboration Activities	Impact
Affordable Housing for JSU Faculty, Staff and Students	Convene a roundtable of developers, City Planning Dept. and University liaisons to create a sustainable plan for converting this land to green space, affordable housing units and mixed-use development	In partnership with local developers, JSU identifies locations for development; HOPE leverages tax credit programs, community development loan funds and municipal-controlled grants to finance new construction and rehabilitation	More residents and businesses living and locating in West Jackson
	Blight elimination surrounding the campus	HOPE works with the City Planning Department and the state housing finance authority to access Blight Elimination Grants	Increased ownership and agency among local residents
	Rehab older housing stock	JSU identifies potential homeowners, HOPE provides flexible mortgage financing to facilitate home purchase	
Business Development	Establish West Jackson Chamber of Commerce and Innovation District	JSU convenes local business owners, Neighborhood Association and city leaders to lay foundation for innovation district	Increased minority-business ownership
	Expand access to capital	HOPE provides loan capital for small and emerging minority-owned businesses as well as community & economic development financing for larger scale projects	Job creation / retention Increased revenue / investment from businesses in West Jackson Community
Health and Fresh Food Access	Engage in public / private healthy food financing strategies to increase access to grocery stores that sell fresh produce	JSU, in partnership with local leaders, suggests potential sites for a grocery store	Increased access to fresh food and improved health outcomes
		HOPE, in partnership with national healthy food financing networks, pursues federal grants and technical assistance to advance grocery store development	
		As operator is identified, HOPE to provide financing through healthy food financing program	Job creation / retention
Community Development Priority Projects ITTA BENA & MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY			
Area of Need	Strategy	CDFI/HBCU Collaboration Activities	Impact
Affordable Housing for MVSU Faculty and Staff	Conduct an analysis and renovate the 109 on-campus homes owned by MVSU	HOPE and MVSU collaborate on securing of grant funding from CDAC to fund feasibility study; HOPE to support effort to secure HOME Funds and additional financing for renovation of homes	Attract and retain faculty / staff at MVSU
	Blight Elimination and Single Family Housing Strategy in Itta Bena	HOPE works with the state housing finance authority to access Blight Elimination Grants	Increased ownership and agency among local residents
Utility Infrastructure	Commission technical and business review of existing utilities and market study for the solar farm's viability	HOPE and MVSU to collaborate on securing of funding from local foundations; CDAC, regional utility, Clean Energy Grants to fund review and implementation	Improved Infrastructure and quality of life, and attract/retain businesses and residents
	Increase access to high-speed internet		Savings to local residents on utility bills
Main Street Development	Conduct market study for mixed use development along Main Street	HOPE and MVSU to partner on securing funding for market study	Identification of mixed-use development opportunities
Health and Fresh Food Access	Engage in public / private healthy food financing strategies to increase access to grocery stores, farmer's markets, and community gardens that sell fresh produce	HOPE, in partnership with national healthy food financing networks, pursues federal grants and technical assistance to advance grocery store prototype for small towns	Increased access to fresh food and improved health outcomes
		As operator is identified, HOPE to provide financing through healthy food financing program	Job creation / retention

With priorities identified, HOPE and the HBCUs will next move to the implementation phase of the initiative where the institutions will collectively work to attract investment, advocate for resources, continue planning and engagement and ultimately move towards joint implementation of the projects.

In addition to the projects identified above, the HBCU-CDFI Economic Mobility Team identified several lessons learned for other entities considering the replication of this project including:

*Dedicate time to learn the history of the people engaged in neighborhood development*

CDFIs looking to work in low-income neighborhoods in partnership with an HBCU anchor institution must take the time to understand the history of past neighborhood development activities and to build trust with local people.

*HBCUs bring diverse levels of capacity to community development*

Though the level of resources – human and financial – that the universities were able to offer to the project varied, both universities were entrepreneurial in the approaches taken to staff the community and economic development activities. JSU benefits from the presence of The Center for University-Based Development (CUBD) – an office dedicated to the development of the one-mile area around the JSU main campus. While MVSU does not have an office similar to JSU's CUBD, the project benefitted significantly from the local knowledge provided by the leader of the development office.

*Relationship building is key to success for CDFIs and HBCUs*

CDFIs looking to partner with HBCUs should engage in the intentional work to build meaningful relationships with university leadership and project leaders. Early buy-in from university presidents and trust earned from previous work with university stakeholders dedicated to manage the project were critical factors associated with efforts to keep the project on track and progressing.

*Recognize unique value of every community and ground work in resident leaders*

Leadership will look different in each community. Larger communities can absorb the shock of leadership transition more easily than smaller communities due to the existence of community bridge organizations.

*Cater engagement to marginalized members of the community*

Care should be exercised to ensure a diverse and representative cross section of the community is aware, invited and able to participate in the community engagement work associated with identifying strategic priorities for development. Inclusive community engagement recognizes the need to accommodate work schedules and to provide quality child care.

*Catalyst funds can prove to be a useful tool when managed well*

In both communities, HOPE provided small grants to local neighborhood groups to bridge the gap between planning and implementation of large-scale projects. When using catalyst funds, the goals of the catalyst funds should be streamlined and focused.

*CDFIs will need to navigate competing priorities*

At times, the priorities of communities and HBCUs may not align. For example, community residents may desire homeownership strategies, whereas a university may seek out opportunities to develop affordable rental housing for students. CDFIs can manage potential competing interests by pursuing a diverse set of development finance strategies that accomplish multiple goals.

Beyond the projects and lessons learned, the guide also offers several tools for community development practitioners to access, review and adapt for replication around the country. In the appendices of the document, readers will find budgets, project management guidance and schedules, agendas, MOU templates, Consultant RFP templates and surveys.







# INTRODUCTION

Significant research led by Opportunity Insights has revealed that upward mobility prospects for children born today are significantly lower than the mobility prospects of their parents and grandparents. Much of this research over the last several years has focused on the geography of economic mobility. Using census and tax data, the research unequivocally shows that upward mobility rates in the Deep South are among the lowest in the country, particularly in communities with high concentrations of people of color.

HBCUs are among the few large institutions nested within these economically distressed communities across the American South. As anchor institutions, HBCUs are uniquely positioned to attract resources and influence mobility outcomes beyond the boundaries of their central campus. CDFIs are financial institutions with track records of investment in affordable housing, small business development and community facilities in high-poverty areas that can serve as catalytic partners in this work.

Included in that track record is the HOPE Small Town Partnership, a model on which the HBCU-CDFI Economic Mobility Initiative was based. The Small Town Partnership is a coalition of seven small towns in rural Mississippi, including five in the Mississippi Delta, working with a CDFI to provide strategic and focused community and economic development training and technical assistance. Much like HBCU communities, these small rural communities are constrained by inadequate revenue, staff, and economic expertise and, as a result, have limited capacity to advance their development goals.

The Small Town Partnership process is grounded in an analysis of trends in population, housing, educational and economic opportunity, and rigorous community engagement. HOPE worked with these communities to develop strategic plans focused on each town's development priorities and to identify the resources needed to implement related projects. HOPE continues to work closely with the towns' leadership, including elected officials like mayors and county supervisors; community organizers and partners; and a regional research partner to explore and identify each community's greatest needs and opportunities.

The HBCU CDFI Economic Mobility Guide builds on the proven success of the HBCU-CDFI partnership as seen in the HOPE Small Town Partnership and draws on the experience of two HBCUs (Jackson State University, an urban HBCU, and Mississippi Valley State University, a rural HBCU). The guide documents how the two universities worked closely with a CDFI to advance community development priorities. Ultimately, the guide serves as a tool for HBCUs and CDFIs to consider as they work to build opportunity ladders in communities of economic distress surrounding the colleges.

# SECTION ONE

# BACKGROUND

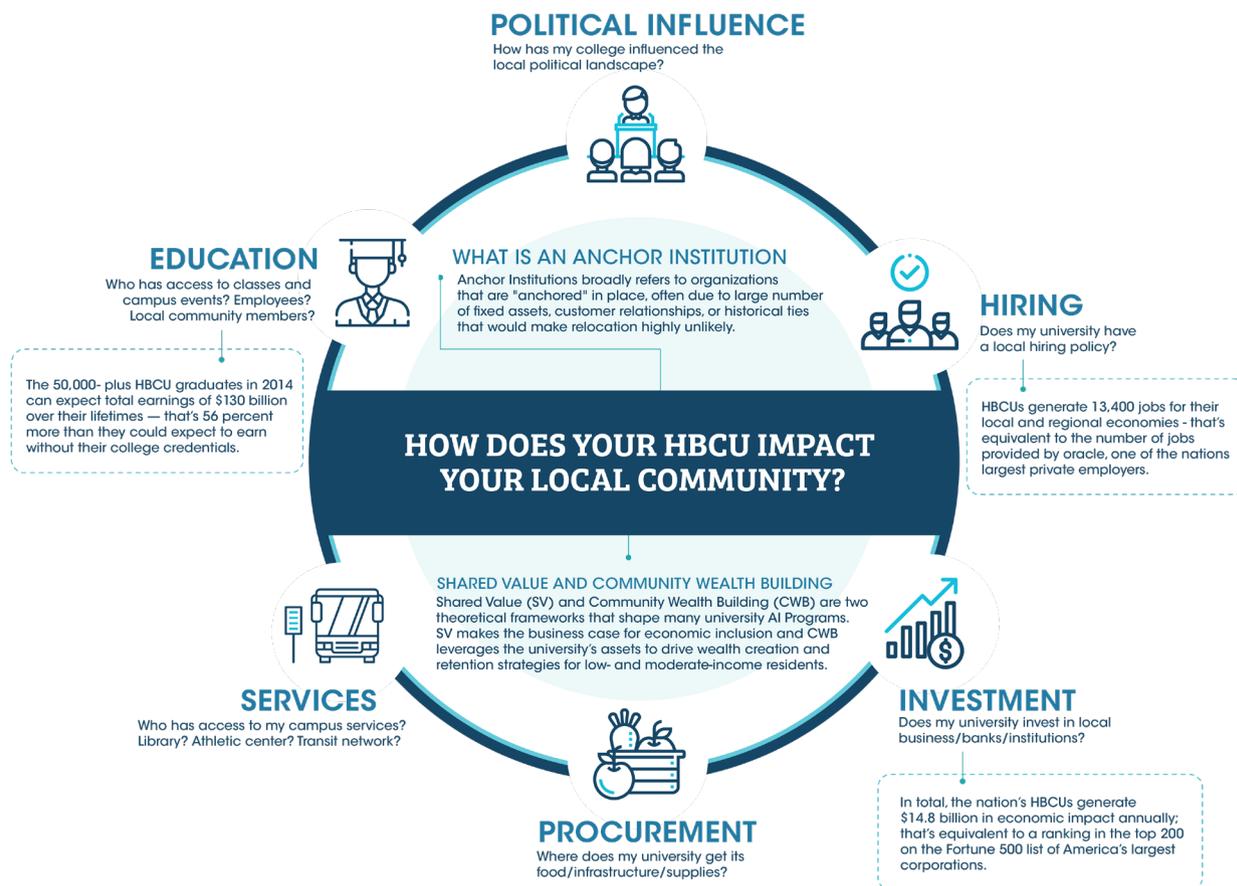
## ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS

The term “anchor institutions” broadly refers to organizations that are “anchored” in place, often due to a large number of fixed assets, customer relationships, or historical ties that would make relocation highly unlikely (Zuckerman, 2013). As a result of this physical tie to place, these institutions are valuable contributors to local economic activity, offering a stable economic presence even if the neighborhoods that surround the anchor experience economic distress (Ehlenz, 2015). While some economic development experts define the term broadly to include any large employer, a subfield has emerged which looks particularly at how universities and hospitals can operate as anchor institutions.

The interest in leveraging universities and hospitals for inclusive growth or community and economic development was spurred, in part, by the national attention garnered by the University of Pennsylvania’s work to revitalize the University City neighborhood of West Philadelphia in the 1990s and the Cleveland Foundation’s work in the Greater University Circle neighborhoods in Cleveland, Ohio, in the early 2000s. The University of Pennsylvania invested over half a billion dollars over 15 years in community economic development-related investments in the neighborhoods surrounding its campus. This included an intentional effort to increase procurement from local and minority-owned businesses that saw spending increase from just \$800,000 to almost \$100 million (Zuckerman, 2013) (Ehlenz, 2015). In Cleveland, the local community foundation brought together universities, hospitals, and museums that all bordered the same neighborhood to make collective investments in revitalizing the area and improving economic outcomes for local residents.

More recently, the Carolina Small Business Development Fund (CSBDF) developed a partnership with Shaw University to create an Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center in the Southeast Raleigh neighborhood that has long struggled with economic distress. In a report published on CSBDF’s website, the two organizations detail how the new center provides a space for training, events, co-working, incubation, and creativity that serves the campus and the community.

While the contribution of anchor institutions is often cited by economic developers, in more recent years, policymakers, researchers, and local leaders have asked whether these institutions can become drivers of economic inclusion. That is, whether the economic power of these institutions can support access to economic opportunity for residents of low- and moderate-income or distressed communities. The leadership of anchor inclusion strategies varies. In some instances, the anchors themselves are the driving force, while in others a public official, such as a mayor, or a local philanthropy act as a convener and catalyst for bringing the anchor together with the community to address a local economic challenge (Kleiman, 2015) (Pease, 2017). The following infographic identifies ways that HBCUs can engage with their communities to identify solutions that promote broadly shared economic progress. The chart incorporates elements from similar projects of the Roosevelt Institute and the United Negro College Fund (Roosevelt, 2015) (UNCF, 2017).



There are two main theoretical frameworks that have helped shape many university- or hospital-based anchor institution programs:

- **SHARED VALUE:** This approach focuses on making a business case for economic inclusion to the anchor institution. To do that, the advocates often work with the anchor to identify some business pain points that an economic inclusion approach could help solve (ICIC, 2011).
- **COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING:** This approach focuses on local residents in low- and moderate-income communities. It tries to drive wealth creation and retention strategies for local residents and local communities by leveraging the anchor institution's assets (Democracy Collaborative, 2018).

Shared value and community wealth building are not mutually exclusive, and anchor institution programs may mix elements of the two to identify activities that can both attract investments by the anchors while also supporting the priorities of local residents.

The value brought by anchor institutions to communities often manifests itself through purchasing, employment, investment, and community infrastructure development. Purchasing involves the support of local small businesses and entrepreneurs through supply chain management. This can promote wealth building amongst historically disadvantaged communities by supporting small business development, as well as supporting employment access for individuals who cannot easily enter into the labor force. Employment focuses on creating more intentional employment pipelines in distressed communities and establishing career pathways for lower-wage employees to gain the skills needed to access higher-wage jobs over time. Investment works to direct the anchor's financial resources to address capital and credit shortages in underserved communities or manage the anchor's real estate portfolio to support affordable housing or economic revitalization goals in communities. Community

infrastructure leverages the institution’s knowledge or physical assets to address resident needs. For universities, this can sometimes link to service learning objectives and relate to the deployment of student volunteers in community-based organizations. It can also help secure new sources of funding for the institution or its faculty, including contracts from local government or foundations. The institution might also offer in-kind resources to the community, such as opening its own buildings or equipment for community use.

The pursuit of partnerships between HBCUs as anchor institutions and CDFIs charged with missions to deploy capital in economically distressed areas warrants exploration given the challenges facing many communities surrounding HBCUs. On average, the poverty rate for the census tracts surrounding HBCUs is 31.3 percent, according to calculations conducted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. This level of poverty qualifies the census tracts as “severely distressed” by the U.S. Treasury CDFI Fund – making the tracts a top priority for the deployment of CDFI Fund awards and tax credits. Additionally, these census tracts are potentially located in areas that can attract private capital through the Community Reinvestment Act to support small business development and homeownership. Through collaboration, the two sets of institutions can leverage their strengths as both anchors (the HBCUs) and conduits of public/private capital (CDFIs) to improve the economic conditions in areas with deep investment needs.

## HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AS ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS IN COMMUNITIES OF ECONOMIC DISTRESS

HBCUs are a diverse set of institutions which share a common origin in seeking to provide education and access to employment for ex-slaves and their descendants. The illiteracy rate for African Americans was 95 percent at the end of the Civil War; however, the HBCUs’ deliberate focus on reading and writing helped raise the literacy rate of African Americans to 70 percent by 1915.

Today, HBCUs continue the trend of propelling students to higher levels of economic mobility. Researchers using the Opportunity Insights data found that the rate of students who move from the bottom two quintiles to the top two income quintiles was twice as high at HBCUs relative to Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) (Reeves, 2017). In fact, 85 percent of the HBCUs from whom data was collected have a higher than average mobility score. Though HBCUs represent fewer than 3 percent of American colleges and universities, they enroll 10 percent of all African American students and produce 17 percent of all African American graduates while disproportionately enrolling low-income, first-generation and academically underprepared colleges students.

HBCUs also continue to serve as critical anchors of employment. In Mississippi, for example, HBCUs contributed \$774 million in total economic impact through direct spending by faculty, employees, academic programs, operations, and students. Additionally, HBCUs employed 7,775 individuals. For each job created by an HBCU, 1.2 jobs were created in the community due to HBCU-related spending.

At the same time, the communities surrounding HBCUs and PWIs face very different sets of economic circumstances. Table 1 illustrates the disparities.

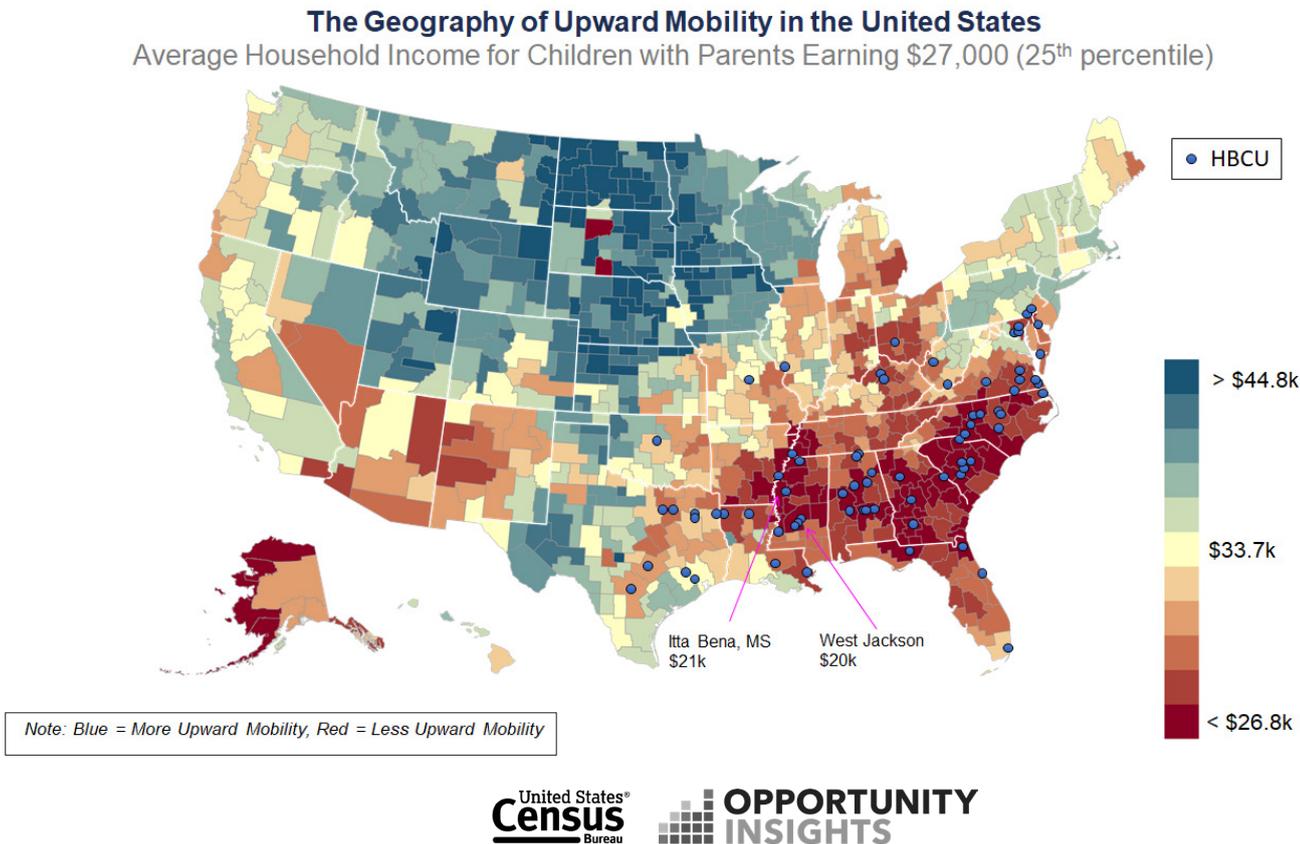
**Table 2: Profile of Neighborhoods for HBCUs vs. PWIs**

	Poverty Rate	Median Household Income	Labor Force Participation	Unemployment Rate	Share of Minority Residents
<b>HBCU</b>	31.3%	\$37,380	50.3%	14.0%	76.5%
<b>PWI</b>	18.9%	\$58,450	57.9%	7.0%	28.2%

**Source:** Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta calculations based on IPEDS, 2017, U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017 5-year estimates, tables: S1701, S2301, DP05, B19013  
**Note:** All numbers are weighted averages of 4-year, not-for-profit institutions.

Notably, nearly all HBCUs are located in communities across the South and the majority of these communities face high levels of economic distress. The average poverty rate for census tracts surrounding HBCUs is over 30 percent, and unemployment rates are twice the rate for census tracts surrounding PWIs. The communities surrounding Jackson State University and Mississippi Valley State University, for example, the two HBCUs profiled in this guide, far exceed the national poverty rates at 47 percent and 39 percent, respectively. Figure 1 overlays the location of HBCUs nationwide with data from Opportunity Insights that highlights the likelihood that a child born in the bottom quintile of earners will move into the top 20 percent as an adult. The map confirms that most HBCUs are located in communities with the lowest levels of mobility in America.

*Figure 1: Economic mobility characteristics of HBCU communities*



Recognizing the pivotal role HBCUs can play in community development, the Department of Housing and Urban Development once offered grants for HBCUs to address the community development needs of their localities. Last funded in 2010, these modest grants of \$100,000 - \$800,000 spurred community-university partnerships in the areas of student volunteerism, small business incubation, and housing. HBCUs continue to extend their resources to their surrounding communities in the absence of direct government assistance for community-university partnerships, with some forming their own Community Development Corporations (CDCs).

Increased competition with PWIs and systemic underinvestment by public authorities and philanthropy force many HBCUs to focus a significant amount of their resources on improving conditions within their campus borders, compromising their ability to leverage more of their resources as an anchor institution for community development. If equipped with the proper resources, HBCUs can extend their economic mobility expertise to the surrounding communities, drastically changing these conditions.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AS CATALYTIC PARTNERS FOR UPWARD ECONOMIC MOBILITY

CDFIs are federally certified entities with a mission to address the financial needs of people and places neglected by traditional financial institutions. Approximately 1,200 public and nonprofit loan funds, regulated banks and credit unions, micro-business development organizations, and financial technology companies comprise this group of CDFIs. Through various business models and in nearly every geographic area of the United States, CDFIs are committed to ensuring that at least 60 percent of their financing activities are in low-income, high-unemployment areas or benefit an underserved target market.

CDFIs strengthen pathways for upward economic mobility in low-income communities through deposit and wealth-building accounts, home mortgages, capital for small business owners, and by financing projects that strengthen essential community infrastructures such as jobs, health care, education, access to healthy food, and affordable housing. Managing more than \$150 billion since 1996, CDFIs have proven to be a critical tool to attract and deliver much-needed financial services and investments in low-income and distressed communities. Impacts associated with investments made by CDFIs include the creation or support of 1.35 million jobs, 2 million housing units, and 321,600 small businesses/microenterprises. Additionally, the vast majority of CDFI investments benefit low-income people of color (Opportunity Finance Network, 2019).

In recognition of the large role that HBCUs play as anchor institutions for students, families, and communities that experience a high level of neglect and disinvestment, CDFIs and HBCUs are compatible partners in the effort to provide much-deserved investment in the communities surrounding these universities. CDFIs have a history of expertly linking community planning strategies with creative capital deployment methods to meet the development needs of distressed communities. This uniquely positions CDFIs to leverage resources (financial, development partners, etc.) and work with HBCUs to catalyze upward economic mobility in their communities.

### SECTION TWO

## STRATEGIES FOR COLLABORATION

The HBCU-CDFI Economic Mobility Strategy Guide draws upon several key frameworks, highlighted earlier, to develop an approach for promoting economic mobility that employs the strength and strategic importance of HBCUs as anchor institutions in partnerships with CDFIs. Over 13 months of work, Hope Enterprise Corporation/Hope Credit Union (HOPE), a CDFI based in Jackson, Mississippi, and serving the Deep South states of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee, piloted collaborations with two HBCUs to answer the question: **“How can CDFIs and HBCUs collaborate to augment and leverage the position of HBCUs as anchor institutions to increase economic mobility in low-income communities?”**

The two HBCUs selected for the pilot projects included Jackson State University, an HBCU located in the heart of Jackson, Mississippi, and Mississippi Valley State University, an HBCU located in the rural Mississippi Delta. Both HBCUs are surrounded by communities encountering significant economic distress.

Table 2 provides a snapshot of local conditions in West Jackson, the area encompassing Jackson State University relative to the city, state, and country. Table 3 provides similar information for Itta Bena, Mississippi, a small town of 1,800 residents where MVSU is located.

**Table 3: Socio-Economic Conditions In West Jackson, Mississippi (JSU)**

	West Jackson	Jackson	Mississippi	United States
<b>Economic Mobility Rate</b> (percent of low-income children who grow up and move into top-income quintile)	2.7%	5.9%	8.8%	9.9%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$27,253	\$39,004	\$43,529	\$60,336
<b>Percent Non-Hispanic African American</b>	95.8%	84.2%	37.9%	12.3%
<b>Poverty Rate</b>	37.5%	23.8%	19.8%	13.4%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	17.0%	12.6%	7.0%	5.3%
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>	48.3%	63.7%	56.5%	63.2%
<b>Educational Attainment</b> (percent with at least a high school degree among those 25 years and older)	77.2%	84.3%	86.1%	90.9%
<b>Homeownership Rate</b>	37.4%	49.3%	49.1%	62.8%
<b>Family Structure</b> (percent of female-headed households, no husband present)	28.8%	25.2%	16.4%	12.4%
<b>Unbanked and Underbanked</b>	37.4%	37.4%	38.3%	25.2%
<b>Quality of Life/Health</b> (percent of adults who consider themselves to be in poor or fair health)	22%	22%	22%	17%

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey: 2017 one-year estimates for Jackson, Mississippi, and United States; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey: 2013-2017 five-year estimates for West Jackson; Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (unbanked and underbanked data by county, state and Country); Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings 2017 (Quality of Life/Health).

**Table 4: Socio-Economic Conditions In Itta Bena, Mississippi (MVSU)**

	Itta Bena	Mississippi	United States
<b>Economic Mobility Rate</b> (percent of low-income children who grow up and move into top-income quintile)	4.0%	8.8%	9.9%
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$19,399	\$43,529	\$60,336
<b>Percent Non-Hispanic African American</b>	93.3%	37.9%	12.3%
<b>Poverty Rate</b>	43.5%	19.8%	13.4%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	25.7%	7.0%	5.3%
<b>Labor Force Participation Rate</b>	46%	56.5%	63.2%
<b>Educational Attainment</b> (percent with at least a high school degree among those 25 years and older)	76.6%	86.1%	90.9%
<b>Homeownership Rate</b>	42.3%	49.1%	62.8%
<b>Family Structure</b> (percent of female-headed households, no husband present)	43.2%	16.4%	12.4%
<b>Unbanked and Underbanked</b>	43.9%	38.3%	25.2%
<b>Quality of Life/Health</b> (percentage of adults who consider themselves to be in poor or fair health)	31%	22%	17%

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey: 2017 one-year estimates; Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (unbanked and underbanked data by county, state and country); Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings 2017 (Quality of Life/Health).

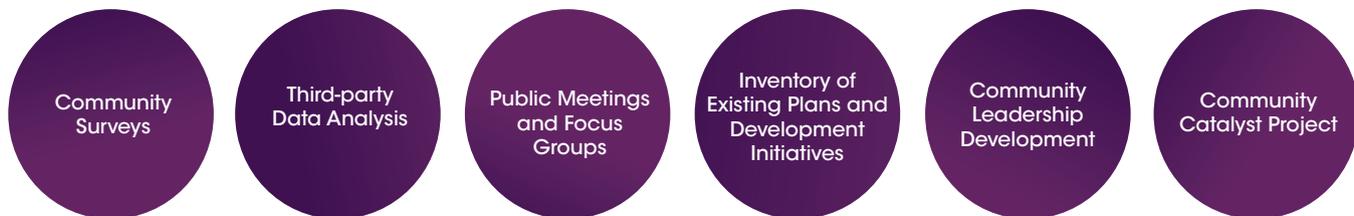
In addition to close collaboration with the HBCUs, HOPE also partnered with Duvall Decker Architects, a firm with significant community planning experience, and Peyton Strategies, a minority-owned firm specializing in community engagement. The two organizations worked closely with local people to identify strategic development priorities and ultimately craft plans for community and economic development projects. Plans for West Jackson and Itta Bena follow this section which outlines the approach taken to develop the plans.

## GENERAL APPROACH AND TIMELINE

### Phase I: Collaborative Research & Analysis (November 2017 – June 2018)

The two pilot projects took place over the course of 13 months from November 2017 to December 2018 and consisted of two primary phases: Collaborative Research & Analysis and Community & Economic Development Project Development.

Grounded in the principles of shared value and the development of community assets, the HBCUs, community residents and project allies worked together to research and analyze the critical needs and deficiencies, potential opportunities, and overlapping goals of the communities and campuses to identify interventions that could produce positive community and economic development outcomes. Activities included:



From the data review, community and institutional profiles were created and reviewed alongside previous community plans. The existing physical conditions of the campus and surrounding communities were documented and compared to the expected growth outlined in previous master plans.

The collaborative also sought the opinions and viewpoints of community residents and university stakeholders directly through focus groups and surveys. The focus group meetings were community-specific and included:

1. An introduction of community/city and university leadership.
2. The identification of community and economic development priorities.
3. A presentation of project recommendations by community residents.
4. A commitment to financial investment by the CDFI.

Following the focus groups, two surveys were conducted to draw out additional themes beyond the dialogues – one for the university stakeholders and one for the community residents. The surveys were used to provide another vehicle for local people to identify development priorities for their neighborhood or small town. Sample surveys are available for review in the report appendix.

One need identified during the research and analysis phase of the projects included leadership development. In response to the need, seven individuals were invited to attend a Regional Community Leadership Institute (CLI) co-hosted by NeighborWorks America and HOPE in Greenville, Mississippi. The CLI aimed to strengthen the voices and skills of community, resident, and volunteer leaders by sharing best practices and solutions to challenges in low- and moderate-income communities. The participants attended community development courses and worked in teams to develop action plans for making positive changes in their communities.

One final aspect of the Collaborative Research & Analysis phase included the funding of 11 catalyst projects in amounts ranging from \$1,000 - \$2,000. The catalyst projects enhanced buy-in from local residents and provided a platform for newly trained leaders to apply lessons learned from the Community Leadership Institute. Groups in both communities were invited to submit proposals for capacity-enhancing materials or exercises that would bring together the campus and residents of at least one neighborhood association or community group. A list of catalyst projects is outlined below:

Table 5: Community Catalyst Projects

NAME	DESCRIPTION
<b>Harden, Mack, Shirley Community House</b> \$2,000	Neighborhood association members will work with JSU students to create an online presence for a community house that will host meetings, tutoring sessions and addiction programming.
<b>Poindexter Park Community Pride Initiative</b> \$2,000	Community residents will partner with JSU students to engage in a community clean-up program and start an effort to identify and preserve historic materials in the park.
<b>Project Green Clean</b> \$2,000	Neighborhood association members will host a cleanup of blighted properties using volunteer lawn services from JSU students.
<b>Capitol-Rose Education for All Model</b> \$2,000	Local residents will work with JSU faculty and students to revitalize a block surrounding a dilapidated property that will be restored and used for educational purposes.
<b>Power of Play</b> \$2,000	Residents from multiple neighborhood associations will develop a sports program at a local elementary school with support from the JSU Athletics Department.
<b>Poindexter Park Intergenerational Exchange</b> \$2,000	A neighborhood association will partner with the JSU Art Gallery and School of Business to develop an intergenerational program where the elderly will work with the youth to teach life skills courses, establish a creative arts festival and start a cultural business incubator at a local park.
<b>West Jackson Chamber of Commerce</b> \$1,000	Residents from across West Jackson will collaborate with the JSU College of Business, Small Business Development Center, and Community Engagement to provide technical support to new and existing businesses in West Jackson.
<b>West Jackson Innovation District</b> \$1,000	Several neighborhood associations will join JSU in its redevelopment efforts to propose a strategic plan that focuses on knowledge-based industries, including research, an urban residential district, new retail opportunities, and recreational venues.
<b>Milton Chambliss Murals</b> \$2,000	A local business owner will paint a mural on the wall of a historical, vacant building on the campus of JSU.
<b>West Jackson Porch Fest</b> \$2,000	<b>Awarded at the Greenville, Mississippi CLI</b> JSU CUBD and West Jackson residents will plan a series of free family-friendly community celebrations featuring local musical talent and West Jackson businesses.
<b>Itta Bena City Hall Murals</b> \$2,000	<b>Awarded at the Greenville, Mississippi CLI</b> City residents collaborated with students in the Art program at MVSU to create four murals to be painted on the exterior walls of City Hall. Each mural will represent an important, historical aspect of the campus and community.

## Phase II: Community & Economic Development Project Development (July 2018 – December 2018)

At the conclusion of the research and analysis phase, the HOPE team joined team members from both universities and Duvall Decker to develop strategic plans to embark on the next steps to execute the priority projects. The projects proposed were grouped into five themes: Housing, Health and Fresh Food Access, Entrepreneurship and Jobs, Preservation and Environment, and Community Infrastructure. For each compatible recommendation, the partners created a funding strategy, analyzed the potential impact of the project, and identified potential partners to execute the project plan.

Community Development Priority Projects WEST JACKSON & JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY			
Area of Need	Strategy	CDFI/HBCU Collaboration Activities	Impact
<b>Affordable Housing for JSU Faculty, Staff and Students</b>	Convene a roundtable of developers, City Planning Dept. and University liaisons to create a sustainable plan for converting this land to green space, affordable housing units and mixed-use development	In partnership with local developers, JSU identifies locations for development; HOPE leverages tax credit programs, community development loan funds and municipal controlled grants to finance new construction and rehabilitation	More residents and businesses living and locating in West Jackson
	Blight elimination surrounding the campus	HOPE works with the City Planning Department and the state housing finance authority to access Blight Elimination Grants	Increased ownership and agency among local residents
	Rehab older housing stock	JSU identifies potential homeowners, HOPE provides flexible mortgage financing to facilitate home purchase	
<b>Business Development</b>	Establish West Jackson Chamber of Commerce and Innovation District	JSU convenes local business owners, Neighborhood Association and city leaders to lay foundation for innovation district	Increased minority business ownership
	Expand access to capital	HOPE provides loan capital for small and emerging minority-owned businesses as well as community & economic development financing for larger scale projects	Job creation / retention Increased revenue / investment from businesses in West Jackson Community
<b>Health and Fresh Food Access</b>	Engage in public / private healthy food financing strategies to increase access to grocery stores that sell fresh produce	JSU, in partnership with local leaders, suggests potential sites for a grocery store	Increased access to fresh food and improved health outcomes
		HOPE, in partnership with national healthy food financing networks, pursues federal grants and technical assistance to advance grocery store development	
		As operator is identified, HOPE to provide financing through healthy food financing program	Job creation / retention

**Community Development Priority Projects  
ITTA BENA & MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY**

Area of Need	Strategy	CDFI/HBCU Collaboration Activities	Impact
<b>Affordable Housing for MVSU Faculty and Staff</b>	Conduct an analysis and renovate the 109 on-campus homes owned by MVSU	HOPE and MVSU collaborate on securing of grant funding from CDAC to fund feasibility study; HOPE to support effort to secure HOME Funds and additional financing for renovation of homes	Attract and retain faculty / staff at MVSU
	Blight Elimination and Single Family Housing Strategy in Itta Bena	HOPE works with the state housing finance authority to access Blight Elimination Grants	Increased ownership and agency among local residents
<b>Utility Infrastructure</b>	Commission technical and business review of existing utilities and market study for the solar farm's viability	HOPE and MVSU to collaborate on securing of funding from local foundations, CDAC, regional utility, Clean Energy Grants to fund review and implementation	Improved Infrastructure and quality of life, and attract/retain businesses and residents
	Increase access to high-speed internet		Savings to local residents on utility bills
<b>Main Street Development</b>	Conduct market study for mixed use development along Main Street	HOPE and MVSU to partner on securing funding for market study	Identification of mixed-use development opportunities
<b>Health and Fresh Food Access</b>	Engage in public / private healthy food financing strategies to increase access to grocery stores, farmer's markets, and community gardens that sell fresh produce	HOPE, in partnership with national healthy food financing networks, pursues federal grants and technical assistance to advance grocery store prototype for small towns	Increased access to fresh food and improved health outcomes
		As operator is identified, HOPE to provide financing through healthy food financing program	Job creation / retention

A more detailed set of project recommendations and compilations of the research and analysis for the two pilot projects are outlined in the final strategic plans found in the next section.

SECTION THREE

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARIES AND STRATEGIC PLANS

WEST JACKSON, MS AND JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY

## SECTION CONTENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

## JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY + WEST JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Jackson State University and the community of West Jackson share not only geographical space but also many common goals. They face many of the same issues, deal with shared challenges, and face similar circumstances that have been continuously problematic for decades. The purpose of the planning is to discover the details of the shared goals, challenges, and circumstances in order to create a shared vision and strategies and implement positive change that benefits both the university and the community. The planning process begins by listening to the community and the university and identifying their goals and challenges individually. These are then moved forward as a formative strategy that seeks to build bridges between the university and the community. Successful implementation of these strategies must recognize that the university and community are inextricably linked. Positive change can only be made real through a shared vision and shared strategies.

### THE PLANNING TEAM

- The Communities of West Jackson
- Residents and Participants from West Jackson
  - o Public Meeting Attendees
  - o Survey Respondents
  - o Interview Participants
- Jackson State University
- Hope Enterprise Corporation and Hope Credit Union
- Duvall Decker Architects and Planners
- Peyton Strategies, LLC
- D.L Johnson Consultant, LLC

# WEST JACKSON

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

Like many inner-city communities in the South, West Jackson’s population is shrinking. Many factors have contributed to this, including the flight of residents and businesses to neighboring suburban communities over the past three decades. With a shrinking population and a shrinking need for services and entertainment, West Jackson businesses have also been closing.

### AGE AND GENDER

The total population of West Jackson is 13,890 people. The largest age group represented in West Jackson are those aged 15-19 years (11.2 percent), and those aged 20-24 years (9.7 percent). The population under 5 years is 5.7 percent of the population and represents 729 persons. The population entering retirement, those 55 years and older, represents 2,690 persons or 19.4 percent of the total population. The female population is 51.8 percent. The male population is 48.2 percent.

### POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD STATUS

West Jackson has 4,388 households. (Households can include one or more families and one or more families can reside in one housing unit). Of the 4,388 households, there are 2,487 families and 2,384 non-families. Of the 2,487 family households, single females head 1,366, single males head 326, and 795 are headed by married couples.

### EDUCATION CHARACTERISTICS

West Jackson is a part of the Jackson Public School System. Pecan Park Elementary, Barr Elementary, Isable Elementary, George Elementary, Hardy Middle, Blackburn Middle, Lanier High, Provine High, and Jim Hill High all reside within the study area. Each year, these schools receive a grade from the Mississippi Department of Education. Their grades for the 2016-2017 school Year are as follows:

Pecan Park Elementary	C	George Elementary	D	Lanier High	D
Barr Elementary	B	Hardy Middle	F	Provine High	C
Isable Elementary	B	Blackburn Middle	F	Jim Hill High	D

Educational attainment within West Jackson shows that 31 percent of the population has not graduated high school. Of the 69 percent of the population that has a high school diploma, 64 percent have gone on to attain at least some college education (44 percent of the overall population of West Jackson). Of those who have attained some college education, around 36 percent attained a bachelor's degree or higher (16 percent of the overall population of West Jackson).

**GOVERNMENT**

West Jackson falls under the governance of the City of Jackson. The City of Jackson operates under the mayor-council form of government with a full-time mayor elected at-large and one part-time council member elected from each of the seven wards. West Jackson falls primarily within Ward 5 (Councilman Charles H. Tillman), but a small portion of the study area to the east falls within Ward 3 (Councilman Kenneth Stokes).

Current elected leadership is as follows:

- Mayor: The Honorable Chokwe Antar Lumumba, Esq.
- City Clerk: Ms. Kristi Moore
- City Council:
  - o Ward 1: Councilman Ashby Foote
  - o Ward 2: Councilman Melvin Priester, Jr.
  - o Ward 3: Councilman Kenneth Stokes
  - o Ward 4: Councilman De'Keither Stamps
  - o Ward 5: Councilman Charles H. Tillman
  - o Ward 6: Councilman Aaron Banks
  - o Ward 7: Councilwoman Virgi Lindsay

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

West Jackson is home to a number of neighborhood associations registered with the City of Jackson. They work year-round in varying capacities to improve the state of West Jackson. The importance of their efforts cannot be overstated, and their continuing diligence is the greatest asset in the community. Listed below are the primary organizations who drive the community:

- Battlefield Park
- Capitol Neighbors
- Colonial Heights
- Cooperative Community of New West Jackson
- Dalton-Deer Park
- Friends of West Jackson
- Hemingway Circle Block Club
- Jayne Avenue Community Association
- Lynch Street Sub #1
- Matthews East
- Pecan Park
- Rolling Hills
- Sylvan Glenn
- University Park
- Washington Addition
- West Central Jackson Improvement Association
- Zoo Area Progressive Partnership

**HEALTH CARE**

West Jackson has limited access to health service locations within the planning area; however, access to other hospitals within the Jackson area is available. Only two publicly accessible health care facilities were identified within the planning area: The Central Mississippi Health Services Clinic and the Mission First Medical and Dental Clinic. Jackson State University operates a medical clinic on campus; however, access to services is limited to students and faculty.

Four large medical systems are located within four miles of the planning area: The Central Mississippi Medical Center, The Baptist Health System, The University of Mississippi Medical Center, and St. Dominic Hospital. Additionally, the Jackson V.A. Medical Center is located within this area, but it is only accessible to veterans and the families of veterans with service-related medical conditions and disabilities.

### **NATURAL FEATURES**

The study area comprises approximately 5.46 square miles of urban land within the Jackson, Mississippi, metropolitan area. The land is primarily urban with several creeks that are connected to the Pearl River running through the area. The creeks, combined with topographically low-lying areas, place approximately 1.38 square miles, or 25.3 percent of the planning area, into FEMA-identified high-risk floodplains.

### **LAND USE**

The majority of the planning area falls within residential zoning classifications by the City of Jackson. The majority of the residentially zoned area falls into single-family housing designations, with some multifamily housing designations being allowed primarily in the central and southern areas of the planning area. A large portion of the area also falls under special use district zoning; this includes the majority of the campus of Jackson State University. Some commercially zoned land also falls within the planning area, the largest use falling under C-1 zoning, with some falling into C-2 or C-3 zoning. Industrial zoning exists within the planning area as well but falls primarily along the rail lines to the northern boundary of the planning area.

## **JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY**

### *INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE*

Jackson State University is a four-year university steeped in history and designated as a high research activity university by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. According to the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) 2016-2017 Academic Report Card, the total enrollment of Jackson State University was 11,155 students. Of those, 75.5 percent (8,422 students) were undergraduates, while 24.5 percent (2,733 students) were graduate students. The average ACT score for freshmen was 19.2, compared to a Mississippi IHL average of 23.3. Only 39.7 percent of students graduated within six years, compared to 52.1 percent among all Mississippi IHL schools. Undergraduate tuition at JSU was \$6,602, slightly higher than the state system average of \$6,411. The university distributes a slightly higher-than-average amount of scholarship and financial aid dollars at \$46.5 million compared to a systemwide average of \$45.7 million. Seventy-nine percent of JSU students received financial aid, and 66 percent received Pell grants, compared to only 42 percent of students receiving Pell grants system-wide.

JSU's undergraduate student body is comprised of 60 percent African American women, 31 percent African American men, totaling 92 percent African American. Fifty percent of the remaining students are of other or unknown race/ethnicity, and the rest are primarily white men and women, with a small proportion of Hispanic men and women.

Jackson State University's net assets are relatively high, at \$95 million, compared to a median of \$90.8 million for other public HBCUs, and \$80 million for public non-HBCUs. When comparing per-student net assets, however, JSU rated below others at \$11,305 per student, compared to a median of \$29,202 per student at other public HBCUs, \$17,112 per student at public non-HBCUs, and \$43,583 per student at private non-HBCUs.

Jackson State University's endowment is higher than the median when compared to HBCUs (\$16.8 million vs. \$11.9 million), but lower than the median for public non-HBCUs (\$21.6 million). When looking at the per-student endowment, JSU falls significantly below the median at \$1,949 per student, compared to \$3,637 per student for HBCUs, \$4,154 per student for public non-HBCUs, and \$15,055 per student for private non-HBCUs.

Despite the university's need for additional resources, the faculty, staff, and students contribute greatly to the larger West Jackson community in many ways. The most prominent form of community engagement can be found in the Center for University-Based Development (CUBD). CUBD started as an initiative to promote education, enterprise, employment, and exercise in the 5.4-square-mile area around the JSU main campus. The E-City, as it was called, was to be a holistic approach to community revitalization and economic development by utilizing technology-enhanced learning, targeting technology-based jobs and businesses, and equipping homeowners with technology. As the university's leadership changed, and thus its strategic focus area, so did the role of CUBD. Nevertheless, its mission remains the same.

Today, CUBD has limited resources and staff but continues to assist with the redevelopment of the one-mile area around the Jackson State University main campus by building relationships with neighborhood associations and working to influence development decisions affecting the area around the university. The center's 2018 initiatives and events include the publication and maintenance of the West Jackson blog featuring local businesses and news affecting the area's residents, the planning and execution of JSU's annual Crop Drop where more than 20,000 pounds of free sweet potatoes and watermelons are given to the community, and the placement of free libraries throughout the West Jackson community.

## **EXISTING PLANNING EFFORTS**

### *WEST JACKSON PLANNING GUIDEBOOK, 2014*

Completed by Duvall Decker Architects in 2014, the West Jackson Planning Guidebook was the result of two years of community engagement efforts, culminating in a living document intended as a planning resource for the community of West Jackson. The document evolved from a process of community-based research and analysis and developed organically as the community voiced ideas, challenges, and aspirations.

The document, divided into three parts, reflects the planning process.

#### **CONTEXT**

Overviews and mapping of demographics of the planning area provide strong contextual framing for the planning process. The history and context of the planning area gives a background to the community and establishes a foundation for building community engagement.

#### **COMMUNITY CHALLENGES AND ANALYSIS**

Community-identified issues are highlighted in detailed research and analysis. Building conditions in West Jackson were thoroughly analyzed from vacant properties to highly deteriorated properties to those warranting demolition. This study revealed an extremely high rate of vacancy and abandonment of parcels in the planning area and the effect that has had on property values in the neighborhood as a whole. It was also observed that Jackson State University is a large holder of those properties. Education was identified as a key issue, with a large number of public K-12 schools in West Jackson being at or near failing. The impact of homelessness was highlighted, both from the perspective of understanding how difficult conditions are for the homeless in West Jackson, and understanding how the concentration of the homeless in one area impacts the rest of the community. The concentrated poverty in West Jackson was identified as one of the issues of greatest impact in the planning area.

#### **INITIATIVES AND INTERVENTIONS**

The study concluded with three overall initiatives and 10 specific interventions. The initiatives included boosting the economy by promoting new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities; promoting healthy lending practices; promoting mixed-use development; promoting neighborhood safety and security; improving the physical condition of the area; decreasing the number of vacant and abandoned properties; investing in youth programs and education; offering programming at parks; promoting access to healthy food and encouraging green space.

### *JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY (DALE AND ASSOCIATES) MASTER PLAN, 2015*

A 2015 Master Plan commissioned by Jackson State University and completed by Dale Partners sought to greatly increase the scale and capacity of the university. A written plan was provided along with the graphic master plan. A close analysis reveals several key consequences, goals, and strategies not immediately apparent within the plan as presented.

#### **PLAN ANALYSIS**

The 2015 plan is almost entirely inward focused on the bolstering of the campus for the use of the students and faculty of Jackson State University.

The plan goes to great lengths to identify the needs for expansion not only of academic facilities but of housing and recreational facilities to meet expected growth.

Parking and open green space are generously allotted along the perimeters of the campus to act as a buffer zone to impose a wider physical separation from West Jackson.

Analysis of the plan reveals that it would result in the demolition and removal of 178 homes over 160 acres along with nearly three dozen commercial buildings.

The majority of the proposed demolition is concentrated in areas bordering the university, particularly in areas of high poverty, with the vast majority of the acquisition and demolition resulting in parking and buffer areas.

The plan indicates the demolition of nearly all of the historic Lynch Street Corridor. Of the 178 homes demolished, 121 of them are for parking and buffer alone (68 percent), with the remainder for a new sports complex, and a few for the expansion of student housing.

Analytically, the 2015 Master Plan implies more separation than engagement.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*GENERATING DIALOGUE, FINDING CONNECTIONS, SEEKING JOINT SOLUTIONS*

### *STRATEGIES AND GOALS*

Jackson State University and the neighborhoods of West Jackson both have previously completed master plans. The JSU Master Plan was completed several years ago as a physical campus plan locating existing buildings and future buildings. Its major features included plans for new academic and residential developments and a major sports stadium. The plan illustrates the desire for the acquisition of additional lands around the campus to the north, south and west primarily for parking and a major development effort along the parkway to the east toward downtown Jackson. What is significant is that like many other institutional master plans, the proposals to fulfill needs have been developed internal to the institution and on its land or nearby land. It is natural for an institution with a distinct mission to remain internally focused.

The strategy demonstrated in this master plan, developed under previous administrations, reflects a long history of JSU responding to resource constraints by focusing its institutional capacity and strategic ability on community engagement in lieu of community development as a means of improving and maintaining a connection to the larger West Jackson community. While there have been important exceptions to this observation, such as the development of a mixed-use building near the east entrance of the campus on Lynch Street, and the establishment of the Center for University Based Development (CUBD) to promote community development, these efforts have not resulted in a sustained program for reviving the surrounding neighborhoods. It is important to note that, largely because of past planning efforts to purchase more residential land around campus (the "Quick Take" program),

and the planning for the new stadium on partially privately owned land, JSU has been seen by some as lacking sensitivity to the needs and issues of local residents. While JSU has worked hard to overcome these perceptions and has gained much goodwill through the work of the CUBD team, pockets of mistrust remain within the community.

We believe the will to make a larger inclusive university-neighborhood-based third community must come from the president and his leadership team. JSU's new President, Dr. William Bynum Jr., believes that this kind of urban university-neighborhood community can be achieved in Jackson, Mississippi. In our meetings with the new administration, we have observed a clear turning point of perspective toward this kind of mutually beneficial third community.

It is important to note that President Bynum moved to JSU from MVSU. At MVSU he oversaw the development of the new University Strategic Plan which boldly focuses on the university as a "catalyst for revitalization of the Delta" and a "town square for the Delta." It aims to develop a connection between the university and local communities outside of its own boundaries. These goals have focused the university on community engagement and community projects. Dr. Bynum has recently initiated the creation of a similar universitywide strategic planning effort at JSU.

While a physical master plan is required for accreditation and is concerned with imagining the future quality of the campus environment and its facilities, the underlying goal is to plan for campus real estate developments and to provide the groundwork for seeking state and private funding. The strategic plan is an institutional tool that is developed from the voices of the administration, faculty, staff, and students. It is a mature expression of the desire for educational leadership and partnership with its surrounding communities. It is important for any public anchor institution to serve its mission of education. Dr. Bynum's plan, however, goes further in recognizing that the institution is not an island and that a great education should include community-minded graduates.

The West Jackson master plan completed in 2013 and 2014, titled the "Guidebook," is a more strategic document designed to identify beginning initiatives that are most important to the community, achievable in a short term, that would facilitate future community investment and development. The Guidebook was the result of an extensive grassroots planning process that started with community meetings with each stakeholder group. Meetings were held with each neighborhood association, major institutions including JSU, Jackson Public Schools, the Jackson Zoo, churches, businesses, nonprofits including the Boys and Girls Club, and groups serving the homeless.

At the first public meeting in March 2013, residents were asked to describe the biggest challenges in the community and what they would like to see included in the study. Homelessness, vacant and overgrown lots, dilapidated and abandoned houses, and education were major concerns. While the planning work touched on many other issues, these four issues led the research phase of the project. It is also important to note that community challenges are never single-variable problems. Any given liability is the result of many factors. Often planning work fails because of the tendency to propose single solutions for singled-out problems. The issues inhibiting West Jackson's growth are complex and varied. The initiatives and interventions in the Guidebook are, by design, multifaceted and intended to be used by anyone or any group in the West Jackson community.

JSU's past, and more importantly, future planning and the West Jackson Guidebook express the desire of both communities to build a healthy future. The two communities have not always agreed on what that future community would look like, but both are committed to working together. JSU's new direction will find a welcoming and well-prepared partner in the neighborhood associations and residents of West Jackson. Both JSU and the residents of West Jackson are experienced. In fact, West Jackson residents are plan weary. There have been many studies and master plans completed in West Jackson. Many have resulted in no action or accomplishments. The residents are tired of coming to meetings to brainstorm and seeing no results. This is a common issue for inner-city communities with areas of persistent poverty. The abandonment of the inner-city for the suburbs has left many cities with the same kinds of social, criminal, education, and physical condition issues as West Jackson. Planners and municipalities have been working on how best to revitalize these communities for many years, but the reality is that plans alone cannot solve the issues. In order for any planning effort to be successful, especially in troubled communities, leadership sustained over a long period of time and sustained work to implement the initiatives and interventions are required.

The community engagement effort undertaken in 2018 capitalized on the strengths of JSU and the West Jackson neighborhood. JSU has planning experience and capacity in the CUBD staff and works closely with the neighborhood associations and businesses. The West Jackson residents are also experienced in their own right. What was therefore required for this effort was to design a joint community engagement plan that brought JSU's constituent representatives together with the West Jackson citizens and leadership in order to identify specific projects that they could pursue.

The focus had to be on the identification and development of the needed leadership required for success. A new planning process was intentionally avoided. In its place we proposed a series of four workshop-format meetings titled "Community Action Forums" to help cultivate leadership and identify projects. A curriculum was developed starting with project identification, process training, project planning, resource identification, and defining a plan for implementation.

A survey was designed to test the themes for projects proposed at Community Action Forum project proposals and ensure that those projects did, in fact, represent the larger community's interests. When the results were finalized and verified, the planning team presented the action priorities to both JSU and the West Jackson residents.

## COMMUNITY ACTION FORUMS

Jackson State University and West Jackson community leaders held a series of Community Action Forums designed to both build leadership and execution capacity within the community and to identify major and minor projects for implementation within the communities. The forums took place on four Tuesdays in May and June of 2018. The first was held on JSU's campus, and the following three were held in an event space at the border of West Jackson and JSU. Present were community leaders invited through JSU's Center for University Based Development and the West Central Jackson Improvement Association. Most community attendees were associated with one or more of the many neighborhood organizations under the West Central Jackson Improvement Association.

### **Jackson State University Leadership:**

- Dr. William B. Bynum, *University President*
- Kimberly Hilliard, *Center for University Based Development*
- Heather Wilcox, *Center for University Based Development*
- Carol Frazier, *Center for University Based Development*

### **Hope Enterprise Corporation, Credit Union:**

- Bill Bynum, *CEO*
- Phil Eide, *Senior Vice President for Community & Economic Development*
- Alex Lawson, *Corporate Project Manager*
- Rachel Harmon, *Policy Fellow*

### **Duvall Decker Architects, P.A.:**

- Roy Decker, *AIA, APA*
- Kevin Patrick Jeffers, *Assoc. AIA, APA*

The Community Action Forums were organized in four sessions over a four-week period:

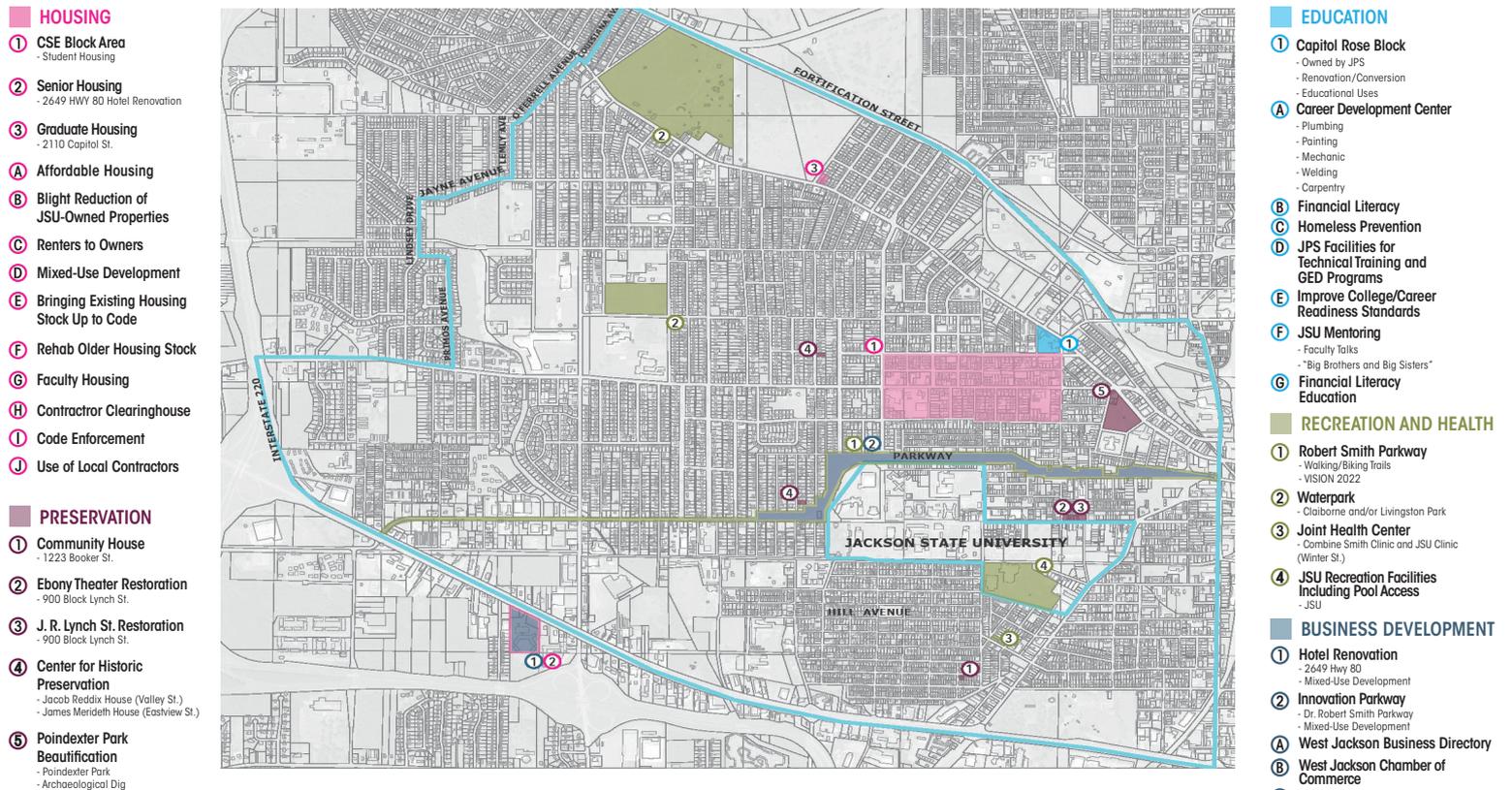
- Introductions of leadership, explanation of goals, and an initial charrette to identify key themes.
- Planning resource and process presentation and small-group table-discussions, with teams grouped by key issues.
- Development of projects with assistance of planning team members.
- Presentation of projects.

Out of the four-week session, many projects and several key themes were identified.

Table 6: Jackson Proposed Projects

HOUSING A	HOUSING B	EDUCATION A	EDUCATION B	BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	RECREATION AND HEALTH	PRESERVATION
Large Projects	Large Projects	Large Projects	Large Projects	Large Projects	Large Projects	Large Projects
<b>Affordable Housing</b> <b>Blight Reduction of JSU-Owned Properties</b> <b>Senior Housing</b> -2649 Hwy. 80 Hotel Renovation <b>Renters to Owners</b> <b>Graduate Housing</b> -2110 Capitol St. <b>Mixed-Use Development</b>	<b>Rehab Older Housing Stock</b> <b>Faculty Housing</b> <b>CSE Block Area</b> -Student Housing <b>Contractor Clearinghouse</b>	<b>Career Development Center</b> - Plumbing - Painting - Mechanic - Welding - Carpentry	<b>Capitol, Rose Block</b> - Owned by JPS - Renovation/ Conversion - Educational Uses <b>JPS Facilities for Technical Training and GED Programs</b> <b>Improve College/ Career Readiness Standards</b>	<b>Hotel Renovation</b> - 2649 Hwy. 80 - Mixed-Use Development <b>Innovation Parkway</b> - Dr. Robert Smith Parkway - Mixed-Use Development	<b>Robert Smith Parkway</b> - Walking/ Biking Trails <b>Vision 2022</b> - Regional Walking / Biking Trails <b>Waterpark</b> - Claiborne and /or Livingston Park <b>Joint Health Center</b> - Combine Smith Clinic and JSU Clinic (Winter Street)	<b>Community House</b> -1223 Booker St. <b>Ebony Theater Restoration</b> -900 Block Lynch Street <b>J.R. Lynch St. Restoration</b> -900 Block Lynch Street <b>Center for Historic Preservation</b> -Jacob Reddix House (Valley Street) -James Meredith House (Eastview Street)
Small Projects	Small Projects	Small Projects	Small Projects	Small Projects	Small Projects	Small Projects
<b>Bringing Existing Housing Stock Up to Code</b>	<b>Code Enforcement</b> <b>Use of Local Contractors</b>	<b>Financial Literacy</b> <b>Homeless Prevention</b>	<b>JSU Mentoring</b> - Faculty Talks - "Big Brothers and Big Sisters" <b>Financial Literacy Education</b>	<b>West Jackson Business Directory</b> <b>West Jackson Chamber of Commerce</b> <b>Conservation Grants/ Ecology Incentives</b>	<b>JSU Recreation Facilities Including Pool Access</b> -JSU	<b>Poindexter Park Beautification</b> -Poindexter Park -Archaeological Dig

Figure 2: Map of West Jackson Proposed Projects



## PRESENTATION TO SENIOR UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

On August 14, 2018, the planning team met with the senior administrators of Jackson State University to discuss the outcomes of the community engagement and planning process. During this meeting, President Bynum was presented analysis of previous planning efforts and the project priorities identified by the planning team. President Bynum expressed full support and an ongoing commitment to the planning effort. He also reiterated a commitment to bridging the gap with the community of West Jackson.

President Bynum laid out five strategic goals:

### 1. Students

The JSU administration seeks to improve student success, retention, graduation rates, and diversity on campus.

### 2. Academic Research

JSU will utilize its position as “Mississippi’s Urban University” to progress new research opportunities. It aims to increase its research capacities through partnerships in downtown Jackson, and through internal growth in order to become a top-level research institution.

### 3. Athletic Prowess

The university aims to improve athletic programs through better scholarship funding and fundraising. It seeks to build a new stadium as close to downtown as possible.

### 4. Campus Aesthetics

The future of the campus is envisioned as a more beautiful, walkable, and sustainable place, with a large increase of student housing on campus.

### 5. Campus Culture

The president aims to inspire “True Tiger Pride” by enhancing the local community through a greater footprint of positive influence within the community. The university’s stated aim is to become a “Pillar Anchor Institution” within the city. It is targeting future growth toward a greater connectivity to downtown Jackson and to bolster off-campus housing options for upperclassmen. He indicated that as a part of this goal, the university plans to sell off its presently owned lots that are of no use to this strategy. The university noted that it intends to offer these properties to residents of West Jackson first, in order to focus on properties that would contribute to moving toward downtown.

## SURVEY RESULTS

### JSU SURVEY FINDINGS

A survey was conducted within the JSU community in the fall of 2018.

The survey was comprised of 225 members of the university including 93 percent students, 2 percent faculty, and 3 percent staff.

80 percent of those surveyed live off-campus, with only 7 percent currently living in West Jackson. 54 percent indicated an openness to living in West Jackson if affordable housing were available, with over one-third indicating a positive likelihood.

54 percent indicated interest in smaller units, with 89 percent looking to rent. Only 15 percent indicated an interest in on-campus housing, and only 11 percent indicated a desire to purchase a home.

75 percent of those surveyed indicated a desire for an expanded university transportation system, with 57 percent expressing an interest in utilizing it for attending off-campus events.

Overall the JSU community expressed a high demand for off-campus housing, particularly smaller units for rent. They also showed a desire for a more robust transportation system, for not only events, but also for shopping, educational programs, and commuting. A desire for mixed-use development, grocery stores, and entertainment venues was common in those surveyed. There was a clearly expressed need for more green space and access to fresh foods. New street lights and the cooperation of JSU Police with the Jackson Police Department were indicated

as the most important safety issues, with the demolition of dilapidated homes following slightly. Cleaning up the streets and vacant lots and demolishing dilapidated structures were indicated as being the most effective means for improving the appearance of the surrounding community. Social media was by far the most chosen means of communication by the JSU community.

### **WEST JACKSON SURVEY FINDINGS**

A survey was conducted within the West Jackson community in the fall of 2018.

The survey was comprised of 113 members of the West Jackson community.

61 percent believe that single-family housing for purchase is best for West Jackson, with 20 percent supporting apartments for rent, and 18 percent supporting single-family housing for rent.

58 percent believe that families should be the target population for housing, and 29 percent supporting housing for the JSU community.

75 percent indicated that they currently utilize JSU's campus and facilities, with 30 percent engaging for entertainment, 27 percent for professional development, and 18 percent for recreation.

The West Jackson community, in contrast to the JSU community, showed a greater desire for single-family housing for purchase. This would seem to contradict the desires of the JSU community to live in West Jackson, as small apartments and townhomes for rent are much more aligned with the market needs of JSU. Furthermore, the West Jackson survey respondents seem to have little interest in integrating housing for the JSU community, rather targeting families as the most desirable. The survey also indicated a very high percentage of the population already utilizes JSU facilities. There is a clear desire by the community for job and vocational training, as well as GED programs. This aligns very well with the JSU survey.

The community's desire to promote historic preservation in West Jackson indicates focused efforts to repair historic buildings, collect oral histories, and promote the existing strengths of the neighborhood. The community strongly supports the creation of a West Jackson Chamber of Commerce, as well a partnership with JSU's College of Business for entrepreneurial training. West Jackson aligns with the JSU community in its desire for more green space and better access to fresh foods; however, there is a much greater desire by the West Jackson community to have access to JSU-owned sports and recreation facilities. West Jackson also aligns with the JSU community in regards to public safety in its desire for new and repaired street lights and the cooperative effort of JPD and the JSU Police Department, but it showed a much greater desire for a Citizen Watch Program. The JSU and West Jackson communities also align very closely in their views of improving the appearance of West Jackson, by cleaning up litter, demolishing dilapidated buildings, and clearing vacant lots.



## ANALYSIS + DESIGN PLANNING

### *BUILDING BRIDGES FROM UNIVERSITY TO COMMUNITY AND FROM COMMUNITY TO UNIVERSITY*

Many projects were proposed and developed during the Community Action Forum workshop meetings. Hope Credit Union, in support of the process and to incentivize small projects to move forward, agreed to award seed funds to some of the teams. At the conclusion of the process, teams competed for the seed funds by writing formal proposals. Hope is funding a number of the teams which will allow the support needed to begin implementation.

Overall, the projects proposed and developed were grouped into five themes: Housing, Education, Business Development, Recreation and Health, and Historic Preservation. Within each theme, multiple teams proposed projects. Teams were encouraged to develop large long-term projects and small fast projects that could be accomplished with minimal resources. Since community planning and transformation is a slow process, it is always important to have a track record of results. Small-scale projects are achievable, can be accomplished in a much shorter time frame, and help build and maintain momentum for the larger projects.

The following list of projects is the result of this grassroots planning process, including the research of each community, a review of the existing plans, the Community Action Forum, surveys and individual interviews.

### *HOUSING ACTION PLAN*

#### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

JSU plans to increase student housing on campus from 2,600 to 4,000 beds. This represents an opportunity for West Jackson to also develop and offer off-campus options. The market for student, faculty and staff housing tends to be rental and small units. During the Community Action Forums, many groups were interested in housing development projects. Many see the potential market opportunity and the community benefit of increasing the population of the neighborhood streets. It is interesting to note that in the survey of West Jackson residents, there was a preference for family-owned housing and in the JSU survey there was a desire for off-campus rental. This difference is common but will require an ongoing educational effort for each to see the merits of a community of greater diversity of housing typologies and residents.

#### **BLIGHT REDUCTION OF JSU-OWNED PROPERTIES**

JSU and the State of Mississippi are the largest landowners of dilapidated homes and vacant lots in West Jackson. JSU plans on divesting itself of many of its lots and homes. Its plan includes selling them to existing residents and housing developers for new homes. We recommend prior to selling the land and homes that JSU complete a planning study and include requirements that the lots be developed within one year. This will avoid the lots remaining derelict and underutilized.

#### **SENIOR HOUSING**

An abandoned and dilapidated hotel complex on the south end of the planning district was identified as a major liability that could be turned into an asset. A thorough proposal was developed to renovate it into a senior housing facility. The former hotel, located on Highway 80, would require substantial work to fulfill this use; however, this project would have a double effect within the community. First, it would fulfill a need for senior living in a community where many elderly people are living in sub-standard conditions and without easy access to even the most basic medical care. Secondly, it would have the effect of rejuvenating the image of the area by transforming an abandoned and blighted property into an inhabited, useful space.

#### **STUDENT AND FACULTY HOUSING**

Several proposals aim to fill the need for student housing in the area. The Center for Social Entrepreneurship is notable for the specificity and scope by which it aims to create an "academic village" or "iVillage" within the heart of West Jackson, just to the north of campus. Incorporating students into the community would have a plethora of positive effects within the community, particularly economically; however, the survey of West Jackson residents does not reflect support for this strategy. As noted above, this difference will have to be addressed for these kinds of projects to find community support.

### **MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT**

The desire for furthering mixed-use development within the area was reflected in several proposed plans. The idea of generating multiple-use spaces, buildings, and areas within West Jackson is particularly appealing because it solves two major problems prevalent in many communities — a lack of walkable commercial and retail space and a large separation in distance of residents from where they work, shop, eat, and seek entertainment. This type of development within West Jackson would not only keep more money in the local economy but would also potentially attract additional markets from outside.

### **REHABILITATING OLDER HOUSING STOCK**

A large number of the homes in West Jackson are in disrepair. This has a vast negative effect on community pride and the perception of the place. Strategically cleaning and rehabilitating existing homes in the area would have a far-reaching benefit to the community. There is much work to be done, but by beginning with a few strategic properties, the livability of West Jackson as well as its perception by its own residents and by the outside could be greatly improved over time.

### **CONTRACTOR CLEARINGHOUSE**

A lot of the work that needs to be done in West Jackson could be done by workers and contractors in West Jackson. One proposal suggested the development of a list of contractors and a location where projects could be made accessible on a locally preferred basis. This would have the effect of keeping more money within West Jackson as it develops and would reinstate a strong sense of community pride and independence within the community.

## *EDUCATION: ACTION PLAN*

West Jackson and the areas around JSU face from high unemployment rates. There are many able workers who need training and education to rejoin the workforce. JSU, as an educational institution, has the ability to target these potential candidates and link them with programs and training to support their need and desire to work. This would be both a community outreach program and a campus curriculum issue. To aid in the success of these kinds of programs, many schools create off-campus satellite classrooms or facilities. The Capitol and Rose block of buildings could be a great candidate.

### **CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

One prominent education theme was the need for career and vocational training. Many of those who are out of the workforce could increase their employment potential greatly with such educational opportunities. JSU students and faculty could fulfill this educational role, benefitting students by providing them the opportunity for real-world and hands-on experience in education.

### **CAPITOL STREET AND ROSE AVENUE BLOCK**

The Viola Lake House is a state-recognized historic place. It is a complex of several buildings owned by Jackson Public Schools but held under trust by the city. The bequest of the property requires that it be used for educational purposes. The planning team investigated the property and prepared initial estimates of the costs involved in reviving the house and the block. Although the historically relevant building would require a great deal of investment to rehabilitate, it would serve as an iconic and prominent entrance-piece into the neighborhood. Additionally, it would have great potential as a center for education at many age-levels, given the nature of the complex of buildings.

## *BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: ACTION PLAN*

The goal to expand businesses in West Jackson is both a strategy to increase the economy and to create jobs. With more people working in the area, many will likely shop and seek housing. With the expansion of businesses and residents there will be a need for services, recreation and entertainment. To start the process, the Business Development group wisely proposed getting organized with a directory and the creation of a West Jackson Chamber of Commerce. The development of the parkway as an innovation zone is a strong and bold proposal. It will require planning, design, and market studies. This is a good example of how the JSU and the West Jackson Guidebook can align. One of the interventions in that study included rezoning all of the parkway's oversized right-of-way buffers to allow for mixed-use development.

### **INNOVATION PARKWAY**

The idea to redevelop the large buffer zone surrounding the Dr. Robert Smith Parkway into a zone for entrepreneurial activity, with mixed-use zoning allowing for housing and other business types, would be a great step for the community and the university. As a joint venture, the university would gain a great resource in the generation of opportunities for students and graduates alike. It would also bolster the West Jackson community by improving access to services and the creation of new service-sector jobs. This falls in line with the administration's goal of expanding its zone of influence and its goal of greater connectivity to downtown as indicated in the West Jackson Guidebook.

### **WEST JACKSON BUSINESS DIRECTORY**

A directory for small businesses located in West Jackson would generate a repository of local goods and services that could be utilized by JSU to fulfill its internal needs. It would also have the benefit of connecting existing businesses and entrepreneurs within West Jackson, allowing the internal economy of the area to develop interdependent strategies that would benefit the overall economy of the area.

### **WEST JACKSON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

A West Jackson Chamber of Commerce, either independent or as a chapter of the Jackson Chamber of Commerce, would allow the local businesses of West Jackson to work together to improve the economic position of West Jackson as a whole. By working together, West Jackson's businesses could achieve greater economic results in both long and short terms.

## *RECREATION AND HEALTH: ACTION PLAN*

The promotion of West Jackson as a bike-friendly, pedestrian-friendly place is in concert with the JSU plan for beautification and expansion of recreational opportunities on campus. Linking the campus to the neighborhoods with pedestrian and bike paths would promote a healthier community. Linking both the West Jackson residents and faculty, staff and students with recreation opportunities on campus and off would directly serve and benefit both. The West Jackson Guidebook calls for a complete streets renovation to the Parkway to link the campus with downtown Jackson.

### **DR. ROBERT SMITH PARKWAY**

With the development of the Parkway into an innovation district with mixed-use development, there would be a great opportunity to create a walkable, bike-able community. By developing the area in such a way as to include pedestrian paths and bicycle paths connecting the university, West Jackson, and downtown, this corridor could become an immense asset in creating a healthier community.

### **JOINT HEALTH CENTER**

The proposal to combine efforts in health care in West Jackson would be of immense benefit to the community. There are currently very few medical options in the planning area, and by combining the current nonprofit clinic with JSU's medical services, greater community health outcomes could be achieved.

## *HISTORIC PRESERVATION: ACTION PLAN*

West Jackson has a rich and important history. There are structures that could be preserved that would attract visitors and increase community pride. Several projects were proposed that would advance this cause and perhaps lead to further-reaching projects. The JSU History Department could play an important role by adding research and documentation of historical events and places.

### **COMMUNITY HOUSE**

The idea to rehabilitate and designate a historic home in the southeastern portion of the planning area as a community building would serve two important purposes: to preserve a historic home and to put it to use as a center of the neighborhood. Such a project would require significant backing and a strategic plan for having the home designated as a historic place. However, with the support of JSU, this could be possible. Once designated, tax credit incentives could be leveraged to see the project to completion with additional financial backing.

## **EBONY THEATER AND LYNCH STREET RESTORATION**

The 900 block of Lynch Street is of major significance to the Civil Rights Movement as well as to African American music and literature history. The Ebony Theater, once a beautiful building, is in a state of disrepair, currently boarded up and with major structural damage. It is owned by JSU, and any plan to restore this significant piece of history would have to begin with JSU either selling the property or restoring it.

## **CENTER FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

A center for historic preservation in West Jackson would be a great asset to preservation efforts in the neighborhood. There are many buildings and locations within the area of great historic significance, and establishing a central organization to promote the preservation and documentation of these facilitate a concentrated effort. This effort could be backed and supported by JSU's History Department to the benefit of both JSU's primary research initiatives and the preservation of the community's existing assets.

## **CONCLUSION**

In order to create a successful a partnership between JSU and West Jackson, a dedicated effort is needed to build and maintain projects, promote educational programs and expand and maintain a communication strategy. Housing and Historic Preservation developments and renovations will require investment partners and leadership. Education and Health and Wellness programs that involve and serve the community will require a top executive-level administrator to link the efforts of CUBD with the academic departments and recreation facilities. JSU is an urban university with a planning school, and a business and social work program. Curriculum exists for these programs to engage the communities with research, services, and educational offerings. The Business Development projects will require leadership and follow through. The West Jackson Chamber of Commerce and Business Directory projects could take advantage of the resources already in place at the Jackson Chamber of Commerce. They could help build a chapter specific to West Jackson. The larger projects will require planning, design, market studies, and investment partners.

One of the most challenging aspects of a large urban community is that it is not one community, it is not two. West Jackson is made up of 10 to 12 neighborhood associations and JSU. Each has interests and priorities. In addition, there are churches, businesses, parks, and nonprofits. The City of Jackson is already a leader and has planning resources and funds for improvements. The question is who will lead, build, and maintain the vision and consensus for a revived community. We propose that in this complex and diverse community, JSU should become the leader and be responsible for all planning and coordinating the implementation of the area's revival and development efforts. In order to provide this kind of leadership, JSU will have to re-think its current master plan, allow this new administration to build bridges and opportunities for the growth of a third community that will benefit all. Resources will have to be identified, partners recruited, coursework developed, and grants and funds sought. We believe that JSU could lead the effort and seek many partnerships in the community for this work and future projects. Early projects will have to be subsidized, but as momentum grows, the private market place will take over and both communities will grow and benefit from the work. A focused JSU leadership, working in partnership with the community of West Jackson, and a clear and consistent communication plan will sustain and guide the effort.

Communities are always built from the common need and a commitment of a group of people working together over time. The central difficulty in building a common community in and around an anchor institution like JSU and West Jackson is that each have very different missions and challenges. It takes a formal, concerted effort to work together to build the bridges that will make both communities stronger. It is, perhaps, most important to note that the difficulties and challenges that each face can be overcome more resiliently and robustly by building an interdependent and overlapping third community.



## SECTION FOUR

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARIES AND STRATEGIC PLANS

ITTA BENA, MS AND MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

## SECTION CONTENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

## MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY + ITTA BENA, MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Valley State University and the community of Itta Bena share not only geographical space but also many common goals. They face many of the same issues, deal with shared challenges, and face similar circumstances that have been continuously problematic for decades. The planning process undertaken is intended to discover, in detail, those shared goals, challenges, and circumstances in order to create a shared vision and strategies to implement positive change benefitting both the university and the community. The planning process begins by listening to the community and the university and identifying their goals and challenges individually. These are then moved forward as a formative strategy that seeks to build bridges between the university and the community. In implementing these strategies, it is imperative to recognize the reciprocal roles that the community and university play amongst each other. The two entities are inextricably linked. It is through a shared vision, and shared strategies, that positive progress can be made real.

### The Planning Team

- The Community of Itta Bena, Mississippi
- Residents and Participants from Itta Bena
  - Public Meeting Attendees
  - Survey Respondents
  - Interview Participants
- Mississippi Valley State University
- Hope Enterprise Corporation and Hope Credit Union
- Duvall Decker Architects and Planners
- Peyton Strategies, LLC
- D.L. Johnson Consultant, LLC

## ITTA BENA

### COMMUNITY PROFILE

Like many agricultural towns in the Mississippi Delta, Itta Bena's population is shrinking. Due to advancements in mechanized farming and the overtaking of farmlands by large corporations, there are fewer and fewer agricultural jobs. Services for these larger farm businesses are no longer provided in small towns but are in centralized locations and larger cities. With a shrinking population and a shrinking need for services and entertainment, Itta Bena's businesses have also been closing. At the height of its growth period in 1980, the population was 2,904. Since the 1990 Census, Itta Bena's population has declined by 30 percent. The population in 2010 was 2,049 persons, and it is forecasted to continue to decline 19 percent by 2040, reaching its lowest population count (1,670) since 1950.

Itta Bena's population is largely African American at 89.5 percent of the population, or 1,833 residents. The white population is 10.1 percent, or 207 residents, with the remainder identified as other races. By comparison the state of Mississippi population is approximately 59.17 percent white, 37.36 percent African American, and 3.5 percent other races that include American Indian, Asian and others.

### AGE AND GENDER

The median age in Itta Bena is 33.8 years old. This figure is substantially young when compared to the state of Mississippi (36). The largest age group represented in Itta Bena are those aged 15-19, followed by those aged 45-49 years. The population under 5 is 6 percent of the population and represents 133 persons. The population entering or in retirement, those 55 and older, represents 564 persons or 27.5 percent of the total population. The female population is 53.1 percent. The male population is 46.9 percent.

### POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD STATUS

Itta Bena has 749 households. (Households can include one or more families and one or more families can reside in one housing unit). Of the 749 households, there are 485 families and 264 non-families. Of the 485 family households, single females head 276, single males head 50, and 159 are headed by married couples.

There are 820 housing units in Itta Bena. More than 80 percent, or 680 units, are single-family houses on individual lots. There are about 140 duplex and apartment units in the community. More than 66 percent are more than 40 years old. Eighty-six percent are more than 17 years old. While there are many homes in good condition, there are many more in desperate need of maintenance repair and modernization. There are also approximately 70 vacant units and many vacant lots within the town limits. Of the homes inhabited, there is a high number of rental units (47.5 percent) and conversely a relatively low number of homeowners (52.5 percent).

There are relatively new homes in the subdivisions to the west of Itta Bena. These subdivisions are not in the city limits but utilize city services and utilities; the city does not receive tax revenue for these properties.

*EDUCATION CHARACTERISTICS*

Itta Bena is a part of the Leflore County School District. Leflore County Elementary, which serves K-6 students, and Leflore County High School are located south of town on Lakeside Drive. There are approximately 435 students that attend Leflore County Elementary and 325 who attend the high school. In 2016 MDE graded Leflore County Schools as a "D" level program. According to MDE, a "D" Rating means that Reading, Mathematics, and Science proficiency rates are below the state median for the given year. Reading or Mathematics growth in the all student groups is below the state median for the given year. The lowest 25 percent subgroup did not earn at least 50 points in the Reading or Mathematics growth component.

In 2015 almost 3 in 4 adults (74.2 percent) had at least a high school diploma or GED while nearly 1 in 5 adults (16.5 percent) held a bachelor or higher degree. More than 25 percent of those 18 and older had less than a high school diploma while 25.2 percent had some college and/or an associate degree.

Educational attainment varied by race and Hispanic origin. Whites were more likely than blacks to attain a bachelor's degree or higher. There were 23.5 percent of whites with a bachelor's degree and 15.9 percent of blacks. Ninety-four percent of whites held a high school diploma or higher while 72.5 percent of blacks finished high school.

Mississippi Valley State University, a comprehensive state university and one of Mississippi's six Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), is less than two miles north of downtown Itta Bena. The university offers a full range of majors and degrees from associate- through master-level coursework.

*GOVERNMENT*

The City of Itta Bena operates under a Mayor-Alderman form of government. Of Mississippi's 300 municipalities, over 95 percent have opted for the Mayor-Board of Aldermen form of government. In this form of governmental structure, there is typically a mayor and either five or seven aldermen, depending on population. A municipality with a population of less than 10,000 has five aldermen; a municipality with a population of 10,000 or more has seven aldermen.

Current elected officials:

Mayor	Jimmy Dean (J.D.) Brasel
Aldерwoman-at-large	Mildred Miller
Ward 1 Alderwoman	Joann Purnell
Ward 2 Alderman	Johnny Mae Riley
Ward 3 Alderman	Darrick Hart
Ward 4 Alderman	Reginald Freeman

*HEALTH CARE*

Itta Bena is served by the Greenwood-Leflore Hospital which is located 10 miles east of the City of Itta Bena. A publicly-owned 208-bed facility, the Greenwood Leflore Hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. It provides general care, endoscopy, general surgery, neurosurgery, and orthopedic care. The hospital employs 990 people, making it the largest employer in Leflore County.

## NATURAL FEATURES

Like most cities in the Mississippi Delta region, Itta Bena is relatively flat and surrounded by farmland. Along its eastern border lies its most unique natural feature, the 19-mile Roebuck Lake. Roebuck Lake is a long, thin, and sinuous abandoned watercourse of the Yalobusha River. It is a very popular fishing and water recreation destination in the Delta.

## LAND USE

Itta Bena is a small town with a historic Main Street and a traditional town grid and zoning regulations. Commercial uses line Humphreys Street, where historic buildings remember a once thriving main street. The path of the Old Southern Railroad or later the Columbus and Greenville Railroad moved through town from east to west between Humphreys and Front Street. Highway 82, which is a major east-west thoroughfare, passes 1.5 miles to the north connecting Itta Bena with Greenville to the west and Greenwood, Starkville and Columbus to the east. The city owns approximately 340 acres of land on its norther boarder stretching to Highway 82 which is zoned for industrial use.

## INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

Like many communities in the Delta, Itta Bena has a community population that exhibits low wages and high unemployment. Nearly half (43.6 percent) of the population lives below the poverty level and 58.5 percent earn less than \$25,000 per year. The current (2017) unemployment rate is nearly 31.4 percent. This is substantially higher than Leflore County at 6.3 percent and Mississippi at 4.9 percent. The median household income is \$21,792. This is less than half the median income for Mississippi at \$40,593.

## MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

### INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

According to the Mississippi Institutions for Higher Learning 2014-2015 Academic Report Card, the total enrollment of Mississippi Valley State University was 2,570 students. Of those, 84.6 percent (2,175 students) were undergraduates, while 15.4 percent (395 students) were graduate students. The average ACT score for freshmen was 17.4, compared to a Mississippi IHL Average of 22.8. Only 26 percent of students graduated within six years, compared to almost 50 percent among all Mississippi IHL schools. Undergraduate tuition at MVSU was \$5,916, slightly lower than the state system average of \$6,411. The university distributed a much lower-than-average amount of scholarships and financial aid at \$11.1 million compared to a systemwide average of \$45.7 million. Eighty-five percent of MVSU students received financial aid, and 72 percent received Pell Grants, compared to only 42 percent of students receiving Pell grants systemwide.

MVSU's undergraduate student body is comprised of 37 percent African American men, 54 percent African American women, totaling 91 percent African American. More than half of the remaining percentage of students are of other or unknown race / ethnicity, and the rest are primarily white men and women, with a small proportion of Hispanic men and women.

Mississippi Valley State University's net assets are relatively low, at \$63.4 million, compared to a median of \$90.8 million for other public HBCUs, and \$80 million for public non-HBCUs. When comparing per-student net assets, MVSU rated higher others at \$30,357, compared to a median of \$29,202 at other public HBCUs, and \$17,112 at public non-HBCUs.

Mississippi Valley State University's Endowment was much lower than the median when compared to HBCUs (\$1.6 million vs. \$11.9 million), and extremely lower than the median for public non-HBCUs (\$21.6 million). When looking at the per-student endowment, MVSU falls well behind the median at only \$756, compared to \$3,637 for HBCUs, \$4,154 for public non-HBCUs, and \$15,055 for private non-HBCUs.

## EXISTING PLANNING EFFORTS

### ITTA BENA SMALL TOWN PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN, 2017

Since 2017 HOPE Enterprise Corporation and HOPE Credit Union have conducted a large-scale planning effort in seven small towns across Mississippi. In conjunction with Duvall Decker Architects, The Small Towns Partnership project worked directly with communities with a multivalent approach to community outreach and engagement in order to identify the specific challenges facing each of these rural communities. The team developed strategic plans that address those challenges and promote economic and social growth.

The 2017 plan for Itta Bena is divided into three parts: Research, Analysis, and Strategic Planning. The first two sections of the text document and analyze in great detail specific data regarding population statistics, history, economic statistics, geographical information, land use, and community engagement. The final section distills the information and analysis of the previous two sections into a set of strategic planning proposals. A brief summary of the planning proposals is below.

#### 1. ELECTRIC POWER AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

##### *Water, Sewer, Streets, Sidewalks, Lighting, Internet Access and Electric Power*

The public infrastructure in Itta Bena is in poor condition. This is one of the hardest realities of a shrinking population and tax base. Funds for improvements are scarce, and the city is forced to try to keep up with an ever-growing list of maintenance projects to keep the tired systems operational.

It is recommended that each system - Water, Sewer, Streets, Sidewalks, Lighting, Internet Access and Electric Power - be evaluated by appropriate professional engineers to develop a plan outlining a critical path-phased plan for repair, upgrade and replacement. This may be a 10- or 20-year plan where in the first few years only the most critical functional improvements are accomplished. Once the systems are stable, it is recommended to focus all efforts in the center of town and work outward. This focus will transform the small downtown area which will build pride, hope, economic development opportunity, and momentum. Without stable public infrastructure and services, community growth will always be handicapped.

While all the infrastructure systems are important to a livable community, the electric power utility system in Itta Bena is now most critical. The option of Delta Electric or Entergy taking over the system and making all the improvements was investigated. For regulatory and financial reasons, this kind of partnership is not feasible. An experienced electric utility engineer, Dexter Davis, was asked to provide a preliminary evaluation and report.

It is recommended to follow up on Davis' report with an engineer's strategic plan and cost estimates for replacement and upgrade of the system. It is also recommended that a business process evaluation be conducted of the billing and accounting systems for the utility company to provide a plan for modernization to ensure all revenue is received.

- 1) Commission a qualified utility engineer to design a plan for the upgrade of the electric utility system.
- 2) Commission a qualified utility professional to evaluate the billing system and recommend an efficient accounting/billing system and process.
- 3) Seek and secure funding for the incremental implementation of the physical network and account systems.
- 4) Engage a planning professional with civil and electrical engineering support to evaluate water, sewer, street lighting, streets, and sidewalks.
- 5) Seek and secure funding for the evaluation of the other infrastructure systems and their incremental repair and replacement.

## **2. ENTREPRENEURISM AND MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT**

### *Grocery, Restaurant, Pharmacy, Services, Entertainment, and an Entrepreneur Incubator*

In a small town and market, sometimes it makes sense to combine business ventures into one space. With shared space and a cooperative agreement, a group of uses can share overhead costs and benefit each other with cross traffic. Many residents expressed interest in starting up businesses, using their cooking skills, and needing space for craft or club meetings. An existing vacant storefront could be minimally renovated to provide a common space for this kind of hub.

This could be a place for residents to shop, pick up food deliveries as part of a wider regional food distribution system, or a small grocery co-op. It could include a small kitchen and become a café or small restaurant. It could be used for community meetings or other business ventures. It would be social and promote some fledgling economic activity in the downtown area. It could also serve as a downtown satellite classroom for MVSU and help link its curriculum to the life-long learning needs of the residents.

- 1) Determine optimal location for mixed-use facility (Big Star building is best location)
- 2) Create facility development plan
- 3) Recruit tenants, including MVSU
- 4) Raise financing for facility development
- 5) Develop facility
- 6) Lease space

## **3. POPULATION HEALTH AND FRESH FOOD**

The residents of Itta Bena have expressed a strong desire to improve the health of their community by improving health care access, bringing a grocery and pharmacy back to town, improving recreation and exercise facilities, and building opportunities for health/nutritional education and social interaction. This is an ongoing process that involves all aspects of the community but is a basic quality of life issue for any livable community.

- 1) Engage a population health specialist to assess community health risks.
- 2) Continue to expand access to fresh food. Reevaluate the recommendations in the “Local Places, Local Foods” report.
- 3) Consider developing the Big Star building as a healthy restaurant, grocery, and education center.
- 4) Expand exercise opportunities – link a walking trail in the center of town with Big Star building and the grocery.
- 5) Explore curriculum opportunities with MVSU.
- 6) Approach University of Mississippi Medical Center to negotiate agreement for a telehealth site.

## **4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND A SOLAR FARM**

Itta Bena has many challenges and ultimately needs financing to tackle some of the most difficult issues such as the electric power utility system and other infrastructure improvements. As part of the planning process, an asset was identified in the industrial-zoned land to the north of the city. It is unlikely that the land will attract a manufacturing plant, but it could support a new alternative energy production development. It meets all the criteria for a large solar farm. Itta Bena could realize ongoing streams of income from one or more of the following sources: a ground lease, direct share of electric sale proceeds, and increased tax revenue. If the power generated was also used to service the city’s electric demand, residents and businesses could see a reduction in their utility costs.

The scope of the project would depend on its feasibility, the value of the electric power in the market, the financing cost and structure, and return on investment. The project could start small but grow into a very large producer of energy. If 10 acres produces one megawatt, the 300-acre site could ultimately support a 30-megawatt production development. (For scale, one megawatt will power about 164 - 200 homes, depending on the location and solar access).

Given the very poor condition of Itta Bena’s electric utility system, this alternative energy development offers both the potential for less expensive energy and a source of income to back the upgrades and replacement of the electric infrastructure for the entire town.

- 1) Engage a solar developer such as Light Wave Solar to complete a full feasibility study.
- 2) Explore the regulatory and potential legal structures for Itta Bena to participate in a public-private effort for electric production.
- 3) Complete a financial analysis of how the solar farm could benefit other infrastructure needs and create a long-term prioritized plan.

## 5. HOUSING INFILL

### *Small, affordable downtown units - prioritizing senior and student rental housing*

The initial market for renovated or new infill housing appears to be seniors, young families, single residents, and students. This market group shares some characteristics that would affect the type and costs of new homes or a rental housing project in Itta Bena. These markets are characterized by modest and/or fixed incomes and limited means for a mortgage or rental payments. Many cannot afford large homes or the utility and maintenance costs that they find in the current housing stock. They do not want large units. Many residents expressed an interest in small houses and yards. They want to own a home or live in a rental unit and want to be part of a small walkable town.

Efforts for new housing in the near future should strive for two goals:

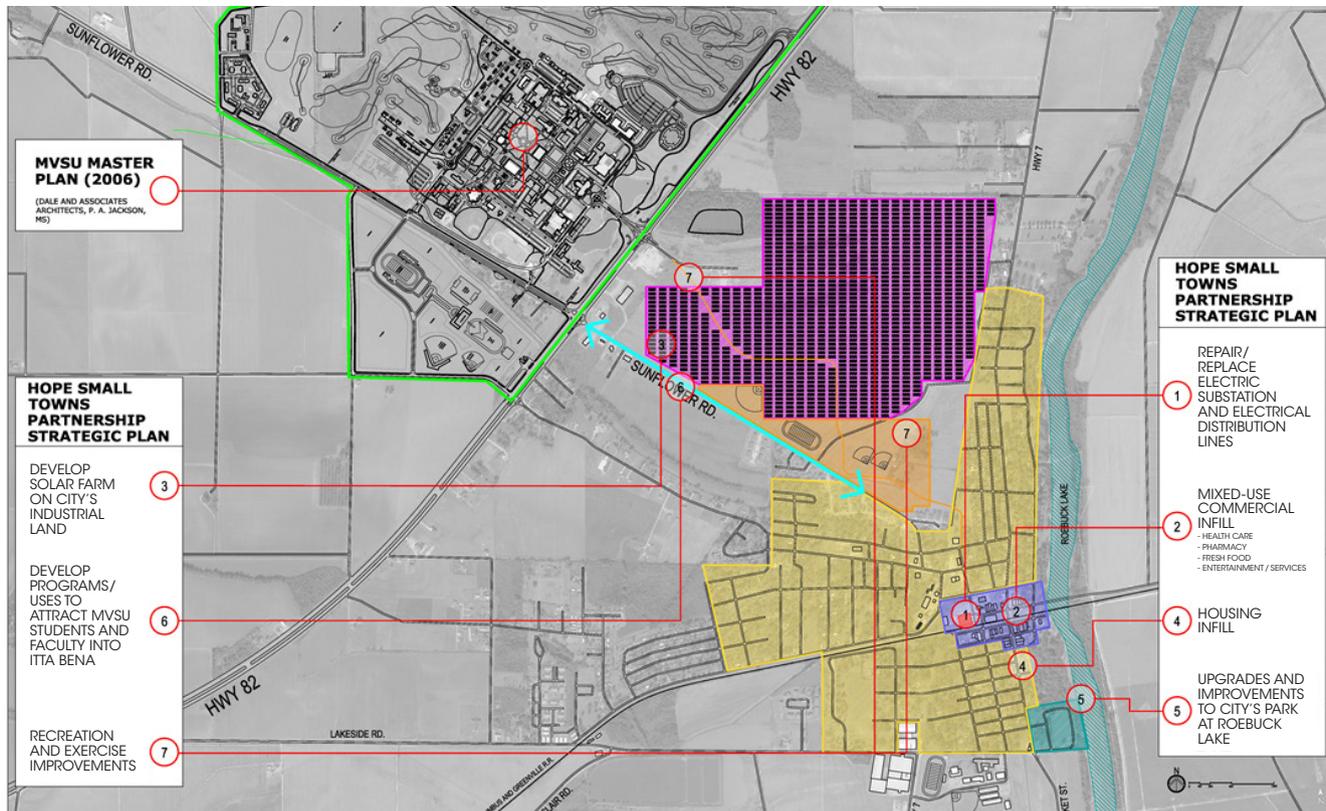
- 1) Build or renovate, starting as close to downtown as possible. There are many empty lots and some dilapidated homes in this area. Remove the blight and empty spaces and add new homes. Repair and add new sidewalks and lighting with each house project. Incrementally improve the downtown core and infrastructure. Build back a walkable small town.
- 2) Increase density. Change the settlement pattern from one 1,800-2,000 square-foot house on a lot to two or three smaller units. Increase the density of the development pattern to increase the number of people living near downtown. While many people assume that the tradition of a single home on a lot is desirable, it is not now economically viable for most people in a small town. The tradition should not be an impediment to the population living in good, safe, healthy housing or for affordable housing to be able to play its part in a revival of a community. This kind of housing strategy can be more market sensitive and more effective in helping a community grow. Later, as the market matures and attracts younger and larger families, the house types, sizes, and settlement land density could adjust and offer other options.
  1. Identify residential lots available for development
  2. Identify infrastructure improvements
  3. Design development mortgage
  4. Fully develop infill-housing product
  5. Identify developers and contractors with capacity to complete single-family development
  6. Identify individuals and families interested in and qualified to purchase and develop lots with the assistance of a program

## 6. RECREATION

### *Exercise, Recreation, Tourism*

- 1) Explore creation of a Community Recreation Board
- 2) Identify improvements and expansions to existing recreation space
- 3) Determine location for playground for smaller children
- 4) Acquire funding for playground and acquire location
- 5) Repair existing sports fields
- 6) Design improvements to Roebuck Park including repair of the dock
- 7) Develop a walking trail that starts and stops in the center of the community; repair sidewalks
- 8) Expand pavilion at the city park

Figure 3: HOPE Small Town Partnership Strategic Plan, 2017



### MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY 2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN, 2018

In 2018, Mississippi Valley State University produced an updated written strategic plan, outlining the goals and priorities of the university over the next four years. Many of the goals are internally focused on academic performance, student body growth, and operations. Within the set of priorities, engagement with and the development of the local communities is a high priority. An excerpt of the university's written goals is below.

#### 1. ONE TEAM: UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY WORKING TOGETHER

##### A. STRATEGIC GOAL 4: POSITION THE UNIVERSITY AS A CATALYST FOR REVITALIZATION IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA

###### i. PRIORITY 1: Embrace the niche of service to the underserved and underprepared

- Increase the number and preparedness of elementary education graduates
- Increase the number and preparedness of special education graduates
- Reevaluate the early childhood education program and redesign based upon best practices
- Increase the Praxis II pass rate
- Identify loan forgiveness programs for graduating teachers within local schools
- Increase formal recruiting of local students starting in elementary school
- Increase teacher training activities and opportunities for continuing education credits throughout the Delta
- Develop a parenting academy for parents of school-aged children
- Expand non-credit bearing educational and life-enhancement opportunities

###### ii. PRIORITY 2: Establish the reputation as a social change agent in the Mississippi Delta

- Establish a Delta think-tank with participation from educators, government officials, business leaders, community leaders, students, and citizens
- Develop, collaboratively, a Racial Reconciliation in the Mississippi Delta initiative
- Research, preserve, share, and celebrate the richness of the Mississippi Delta through the development of a research and cultural repository
- Conduct regular financial training seminars in collaboration with local companies
- Develop a minor and institute on entrepreneurialism in the Mississippi Delta

- Help transform Itta Bena into a true college town
  - Work with foundations and educational institutions to create tangible change in regards to quality-of-life indicators in disadvantaged communities across the Delta
- iii. PRIORITY 3:** Introduce the outside world to students and residents of the Delta
- Develop a regular dialogue series that engages participants in intellectual conversations about state, national, and international issues
  - Increase travel opportunities for students within and outside state
  - Enhance and expand the study abroad program
  - Develop opportunities for students to engage in research studies in areas outside the state of Mississippi
  - Invite performers from around the country and the world to offer shows at MVSU or in the community
  - Expand the international festivities at the university
  - Establish incentives to encourage faculty to introduce multiple cultures into their classrooms
- iv. PRIORITY 4:** Provide direct support and intervention to address the health crisis in this region
- Offer health fairs on campus and in the community multiple times per year
  - Establish a V-Fit program at Walmart to provide healthy food and health-related information
  - Establish an institutional health and wellness program to include screenings, lifestyle education, and health-related initiatives like the “Biggest Loser”
  - Establish walking paths across the campus to encourage students, faculty, and staff to exercise
  - Provide healthy food choices for students living on campus
  - Develop a greenhouse to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to members of the community
  - Establish a support system for students who are pregnant or who are already mothers
  - Expand research in the Natural Sciences Department on issues of health and wellness
  - Collaborate with businesses and nonprofits focused on improving health outcomes in the Delta

**B. STRATEGIC GOAL 5: OPERATE AS THE PUBLIC SQUARE OF THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA**

- i. PRIORITY 1:** Engage in direct outreach to regional communities
- Convene regular town hall meetings and community listening sessions
  - Connect with local governments and businesses to bring community events onto the campus
  - Expand and redesign high school days based upon best practices
  - Develop on-campus educational programming with the local K-12 institutions and pre-K facilities
  - Increase the number of academic and recreational camps available to pre-primary, primary, and secondary students
  - Offer campus sports facilities and performing arts facilities to the local communities
  - Enhance and strengthen the MVSU Child Development Center, based on best practices, in order to turn it into a model and learning laboratory
- ii. PRIORITY 2:** Usher the renaissance into the communities of the Mississippi Delta
- Establish and enhance formal connections between academic departments and high schools
  - Expand opportunities for GED and ACT preparation in the Delta
  - Establish a homework hotline and tutors on-the-road program
  - Adopt local schools and community teams
  - Partner with local businesses to establish greater internship opportunities for students
  - Increase the number of employees serving on community committees throughout the region
  - Develop a partnership with the Foundation of the Mid-South

**2. ONE VALLEY: DEMONSTRATING SCHOOL PRIDE AND SPIRITUALITY THAT IS SECOND TO NONE**

**A. STRATEGIC GOAL 6: FOSTER A CULTURE OF INSTITUTIONAL PRIDE**

- i. PRIORITY 1:** Deliver a comprehensive, authentic collegiate experience to students
- Establish a shopping area on campus that caters to students
  - Expand eating opportunities to include healthy restaurants
- ii. PRIORITY 2:** Enhance the public image of the university
- Increase the amount of volunteerism into local communities by MVSU employees and students
- iii. PRIORITY 3:** Develop a climate of connectedness and collaboration
- Leverage support from the community

Several key themes and objectives arise in this document, outlining a clear goal of establishing a tangible connection to Itta Bena. Not only is it clearly stated that stronger ties into the community need to be established, but also stronger ties from the community into the campus. Other specific campus needs identifiable within this text, although not stated as such, could be resolved in collaboration with those same needs identified in Itta Bena, such as housing.



## PLAN ANALYSIS

It is apparent in the plan that the expansion of the campus takes advantage of a large amount of underutilized land surrounding the current footprint. A large proportion of the area of the master plan is devoted to athletic and recreational facilities, including new sports stadiums and an 18-hole golf course. The plan relies on some amount of land acquisition to the south of Sunflower Road; however, the university's expansion remains on the west side of Highway 82, immediately across the street from the city limits of Itta Bena. A great deal of expansion is proposed for one- and two-story housing units, potentially targeting faculty, staff, upperclassmen, and graduate students. This also expresses an apparent need for this category of housing by the campus. The development of a pedestrian shopping mall indicates a lack of nearby shopping potential for students. The proposed extensive walking and biking trails seem to be relatively open to the public given their integration into the road system - a feature that would benefit the community greatly. Although a relatively large area of the master plan is dedicated to parking, it is decentralized such that it promotes walking and biking as primary means of transport around the campus.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### *GENERATING DIALOGUE, FINDING CONNECTIONS, SEEKING JOINT SOLUTIONS*

#### *STRATEGIES AND GOALS*

Mississippi Valley State University and the City of Itta Bena both have previously completed master plans. The MVSU "Master Plan" was a physical campus plan locating existing buildings and future buildings. Its major features included an expansion of campus for enlarged sports facilities to the west and new faculty and student housing and shopping and retail support spaces. What is significant is that like many other institutional master plans, the proposals to fill perceived and real needs have been developed internal to the institution and on its land or nearby land. It is natural for an institution with a distinct mission to remain internally focused. By contrast to the physical master plan, MVSU also developed an institutional strategic plan, which boldly focuses on the university as a "catalyst for revitalization of the Delta" and a "town square for the Delta." It aims to develop a connection between the university and local communities outside of its own boundaries. The gap between the strategic plan and the master plan is common with anchor institutions like MVSU. A physical master plan is required for accreditation and is concerned with imagining the future quality of the campus environment and its facilities. The underlying goal is to plan the campus real estate developments and to provide the groundwork for seeking state and private funding. The strategic plan is an institutional tool that is developed from the voices of the administration, faculty, staff, and students. It is a mature expression of the desire for educational leadership and partnership with its surrounding communities. It is important for any public anchor institution to serve its mission of education. This plan, however, goes further in recognizing that the institution is not an island and that a great education would include community-minded graduates.

The Itta Bena Master Plan is a strategic document designed to identify beginning initiatives that are most important for the community, achievable in the short term, and intended to facilitate future community investment and development. Itta Bena, like many small towns in the Delta, has experienced population and business loss. The tax revenue for support services and maintenance has been slowly shrinking. The plan proposes to commission the engineering and market studies to develop a utility upgrade system, as well as to begin developing programs, activities, and housing initiatives to connect with MVSU students, faculty, and staff.

In both plans, both communities expressed the desire to build connections that would benefit each other. What was required to move past the declarations of intentions and on to actionable plans was to design a joint community engagement plan that brought the MVSU constituents' representatives together with the Itta Bena citizens and leadership to brainstorm themes and specific projects that they could jointly pursue. Additionally, in order to be sure that the "focus" group meeting (The Community Leadership Summit), results did, in fact, represent the larger community's interests, a survey was designed to test the themes for projects. When the results were finalized and verified, the planning team presented the action priorities to both the MVSU and Itta Bena senior administrations.

## COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

On April 23, 2018, a Community-University Leadership Summit was held in the Business Incubator Building at the borderline between Itta Bena's city limits and Mississippi Valley State University's campus. The meeting was funded and organized by Hope Enterprise Corporation in conjunction with university and community Leadership. Duvall Decker, represented by Roy Decker and Kevin Patrick Jeffers, led a group of nearly 40 resident representatives from the community and the university in mixed groups to establish priority issues and to discuss key ideas on new services, activities, events, obstacles, and immediate opportunities that the university and the campus could work toward solving together. Among the leadership facilitating and/ or participating in the summit were:

<b>Mississippi Valley State University Leadership:</b>	- Dr. Jerryl Briggs, <i>University President</i> - Jannette Adams, <i>Senior Development Officer</i>
<b>Itta Bena Leadership:</b>	- Former Mayor Thelma Collins - Alderwoman Joann Purnell - Alderman Reginald Freeman - Alderman Darrick Hart
<b>Hope Enterprise Corporation, Credit Union:</b>	- Bill Bynum, <i>President</i> - Dee Jones, <i>Vice President Community and Economic Development</i> - Phil Eide, <i>Senior Vice President for Community and Economic Development</i> - Thaddeus Fairley, <i>Program Officer</i> - Rachel Harmon, <i>Policy Fellow</i>
<b>Delta Design Build:</b>	- Michelle Stadelman, <i>Rose Architectural Fellow</i>
<b>Duvall Decker Architects, P.A.:</b>	- Roy Decker, <i>AIA, APA</i> - Kevin Patrick Jeffers, <i>Assoc. AIA, APA</i>

The meeting was organized in three primary parts:

1. Introductions of leadership and explanation of goals and materials.
2. Small group table discussions of prompts and broken down into timed intervals.
3. A large group discussion in which the overall consensus of each table on each theme was discussed amongst the entire group.

The prompts were as follows:

1. List many ideas for new community-campus activities, services, or events.
2. List obstacles to making a great college-town / town-college community.
3. What is the "low-hanging fruit"? What can we do now?
4. Group headline for MVSU/ Itta Bena Community Partnership.

### OUTCOMES

Out of the initial small-group brainstorming session, each table pinned up their written responses on large sheets in front of the entire group, and common themes were discussed and identified.

The major themes that emerged are summarized in the following table:

**Table 7: Itta Bena Proposed Projects**

**MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY - ITTA BENA, MISSISSIPPI  
COMMUNITY - UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**

SUMMARY OF COMMON THEMES:			
1. List any ideas for new community-campus activities, services, or events.		3. What is the “low-hanging fruit?” What can we do now?	
<b>HOUSING</b> - Students - Elderly	<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b> - For students & residents - Utilize MVSU’s Arts Programs	<b>COMMUNICATION</b> - Improve and foster lines of communication between MVSU and Itta Bena residents, students, administration, and government - Generate Joint-Calendar and Joint-Newsletter	<b>EDUCATION INITIATIVES</b> - Create opportunities for student-volunteers to mentor youth
<b>EDUCATION</b> - Financial literacy - Youth mentorship - Life skills - Professional development - Adult education	<b>TRANSPORTATION</b> - Students - Elderly	<b>COMMUNITY PRIDE</b> - Community Clean-Up Day - Yard-of-the-Month Award - MVSU student-volunteers to assist with city beautification and clean-up - Foster a joint identity	<b>RECREATION</b> - Improve recreational facilities for students, youth, and residents
	<b>COMBINED EVENTS</b> - MVSU events hosted in Itta Bena - Collective festivals involving both		
2. List obstacles to making a great college-town / town-college community.		4. Group Headline for MVSU/ Itta Bena Community Partnership:	
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b> - Electrical grid - Sidewalks and lighting - City cleanliness	<b>LEADERSHIP COOPERATION</b> - Lack of institutional and governmental inter-cooperation and communication - Lack of a shared vision	“MVSU / ITTA BENA GROWING TOGETHER”	“ITTA BENA AND VALLEY: BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW!”
<b>“THE INVISIBLE WALL”</b> - Lack of awareness between Itta Bena and MVSU - Physical separation - Lack of transportation or walkable connection - Lack of reasons to go between	<b>RESOURCES</b> - Lack of financial resources - Lack of employment opportunities	“MVSU/ IBM MOVING FORWARD”	“SUSTAINING TOGETHER”
	<b>TRUST</b> - Legacy of distrust and anxieties between MVSU and Itta Bena - Fear of the other	“MVSU & ITTA BENA MOVING TOWARD A GREAT COLLEGE TOWN”	“MVSU HAS MAJOR ENROLLMENT INCREASE RESULTING IN SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC BENEFIT FOR ITTA BENA”

**FINDINGS**

**1. Infrastructure**

Many participants indicated that a major hurdle to any development was basic infrastructure. Frequent water drainage, the conditions of sidewalks and roads, high-speed internet access and even a functional power grid were seen as needing great improvements to move forward.

**2. Housing**

Housing was expressed as a point for improvement within the community, particularly for the elderly, who often find themselves trapped in sub-standard housing. Blight elimination and general housing rehabilitation were identified as major positive steps to making the community more appealing and habitable. Additionally, the desire for student and faculty housing within the community was expressed as a way to bring life back into downtown Itta Bena.

**3. Education**

Educational opportunities, particularly those focusing on financial literacy, lifestyle skills, and the arts, were highlighted by the group as being a tremendous opportunity that the university could leverage within the community.

**4. Entertainment**

A very common theme amongst both residents of Itta Bena and the MVSU community was the need for local entertainment opportunities. Proposed ideas included on-campus activities and music festivals in downtown Itta Bena. It was also suggested that the highly acclaimed music department of MVSU could be more engaged in downtown if a venue were made available for performances.

## 5. Transportation

A large number of Itta Bena residents expressed the difficulties stemming from a lack of transit options in Itta Bena, particularly for the elderly. Many lack access to grocery stores and pharmacies among other things. It was suggested that the MVSU transportation system could expand its services to Itta Bena residents in order to give them greater access.

## 6. Recreation and Access to Healthy Food

For residents who do not drive or drive only short distances, the lack of locally available fresh food is the most difficult barrier to healthy food choices. The nearest full-service grocery store is in Greenwood, MS (12 miles away). Many residents expressed interest in a new restaurant, one that perhaps some of the local retired cooks could help operate. This kind of establishment would serve the community by providing access to fresh food, creating a social meeting place, creating jobs, and by helping, if even incrementally, grow the economy. A co-op restaurant, combined with a grocery store, as suggested in the Local Foods report, could be a starting point for improved access to fresh food in Itta Bena.

## 7. Communication

The most cited point for improvement for both Itta Bena and MVSU was communication. Many residents, students, and faculty alike commented on the "Invisible Wall" that divides the community from the university. The improvement of communication and trust between the community and the university was noted as a critical feature in moving forward and growing together.

### *PRESENTATION TO SENIOR UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP*

On September 12, 2018, the planning team met with the senior administrators of Mississippi Valley State University to discuss the outcomes of the community engagement and planning process. During this meeting, President Briggs was presented analysis of previous planning efforts and the project priorities identified by the planning team. President Briggs expressed full support and commitment to the planning efforts and to bridging the gap with the community of Itta Bena.

### *SURVEY RESULTS*

#### **MVSU SURVEY FINDINGS**

The survey was comprised of 176 members of the university including 51 percent staff, 25 percent faculty, and 23 percent students.

42 percent indicated that they visit Itta Bena every day, which may in part be due to the perception that MVSU is in Itta Bena.

One-third indicated that they would be either likely or very likely to choose a home in Itta Bena.

Slightly over half (51 percent) indicated that they would not choose to live in Itta Bena.

38 percent Indicated interest in homes for purchase, while 44 percent indicated interest in smaller units or for rentals.

Over two-thirds Indicated an interest in using an expanded campus transportation system, with 42 percent indicating that they would use it for attending off-campus events, and 39 percent indicating that they would utilize it for commuting to campus.

78 percent indicated a likelihood of attending events in Itta Bena, with 56 percent indicating interest in concerts or festivals.

73 percent of those surveyed indicated that they currently live off-campus.

## ANALYSIS + DESIGN PLANNING

### *BUILDING BRIDGES FROM UNIVERSITY TO COMMUNITY AND FROM COMMUNITY TO UNIVERSITY*

The goal of this planning effort is to research university and local communities and identify potential bridge projects that could be jointly or independently pursued that would benefit both. The community engagement process was designed to listen to both communities, identify consensus goals and confirm priorities that could jointly or independently be undertaken. The deeper goal is to help build a healthier community, (institution and municipal), support economic development and in particular serve to elevate the economic strength of private citizens living in proximity to an anchor institution.

At the conclusion of the Community University Leadership Summit there was broad agreement that both Itta Bena and MVSU would benefit by working together. The group promoted common themes of areas where the two could work together. In addition to several specific projects that could be immediately pursued, they all left the meeting committed to work together. Of most importance, they agreed to improve communication between the two communities, focusing on events and opportunities that would benefit both. All agreed they needed to commit to follow through and to building trust.

The following list of projects is the result of this grassroots planning process including the research of each community, a review of the existing plans, the community summit, surveys and individual interviews.

### *INFRASTRUCTURE: ACTION PLAN*

#### **ELECTRICAL GRID (RESEARCH UNDERWAY)**

Improvements and rebuilding Itta Bena's electrical grid is the highest priority for the city but also for the partnership. New development of all kinds will depend on stable and reliable power. Itta Bena is in the process of commissioning both a technical and business review of its existing utilities and a market study for the solar farm's viability.

#### **MVSU CLEAN ENERGY GRANT (UNDERWAY)**

MVSU could be a partner with Itta Bena on its efforts to develop a solar farm on its industrial land.

#### **ROADS AND SIDEWALKS**

Along with the improvements needed with Itta Bena's utilities, the roads and sidewalks all need replacement. We recommend this effort be expanded from just repair of existing conditions to include a multimodal plan to provide paths, bike lanes, pedestrian sidewalks and lighting to connect the campus and the city.

#### **DOWNTOWN PARK**

As part of the work to improve the safety, usability and appearance of downtown Itta Bena, many residents noted that if the park in the center of town could be redesigned for a festival or event space it could be used for concerts or a farmer's market that would serve both the residents and MVSU community.

#### **INTERNET**

Itta Bena could enhance its ability to attract students, faculty and staff if it, as a community, was supported by fiber to the home, and fast internet access. MVSU is currently slated to be connected to the state-owned fiber optic network. This connection in the area could be harnessed to provide such connectivity into Itta Bena.

### *EVENTS AND CONCERTS IN DOWNTOWN ITTA BENA: ACTION PLAN*

#### **UTILIZE MVSU'S MUSIC PROGRAM (PILOT PROGRAMS UNDERWAY)**

MVSU has talented teachers and musicians on its faculty. We recommend a broad educational and entertainment outreach program be explored with Itta Bena. A start would be to schedule once-a-week performance of some of the faculty and students in a pop-up up coffee shop in downtown Itta Bena. Promote the events both on the campus and to the residents. This kind of program could be expanded to teaching classes in downtown Itta Bena, offering entrepreneur educational opportunities to residents, thus using Itta Bena as a case study community for the business school and other departments. The more connections between the community and the more activity that can be developed the more it will become natural for other events and business to grow.

## **LEVERAGE THE INHERENT LEGITIMACY OF ITTA BENA AS A HISTORICAL BIRTHPLACE OF AMERICAN MUSIC**

Itta Bena has musical story to tell. The MVSU Music and History Departments could assist with research and help develop the materials that could support a marketing campaign. Itta Bena could then develop signage, brochures and perhaps a coffee house/visitor center to host events and serve visitors.

### *HOUSING: ACTION PLAN*

#### **MIXED-USE HOUSING IN RENOVATED DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS: MVSU STUDENTS**

MVSU expresses a housing need for students, faculty and staff. Rather than locating all new housing on campus as contemplated by the master plan, some could be developed with the City of Itta Bena. The residents of Itta Bena have expressed a desire to increase its population and attract the MVSU community as residents. There appears to be a market for small apartments for students, which we believe would grow with downtown events, music, internet and infrastructure improvements. Since many students commute, the housing choices would have to be economically viable. A formal market study should be developed to determine the housing costs and then, in turn, guide the development investments.

#### **RENOVATING HOUSING STOCK FOR PURCHASE: MVSU FACULTY STAFF**

We recommend that all housing efforts be located as close to the downtown center as possible. Renovations of existing homes would be the best and most economical start for a housing revival program in Itta Bena.

#### **NEW RENTAL APARTMENTS: MVSU STUDENTS FACULTY AND STAFF**

Apartments on the second floors of downtown buildings would be the best place to start to develop. This kind of housing would attract students, faculty and staff and would help activate the downtown buildings. New residents living in downtown and nearby would help support the need for new retail and needed services for the entire community. Rather than building apartments on campus, MVSU could be an investment partner in the renovation of downtown buildings.

### *TRANSPORTATION: ACTION PLAN*

#### **SHUTTLE FOR STUDENTS AND RESIDENTS TO AND FROM CAMPUS TO ITTA BENA**

Both residents and students expressed interest in an expanded transportation system between town and campus. To aid in the ease of connection, the current shuttle system could have a regular schedule route that includes Itta Bena. This would provide connectivity for student and faculty to housing, food, and entertainment in downtown Itta Bena, and additionally provide access for the community to MVSU's on-campus resources.

#### **USE FOR ELDERLY AND TRANSPORTATION LACKING TO GREENWOOD**

In addition, Itta Bena seniors expressed a need for public transportation to Greenwood for food and prescription pickups. An expansion of the transportation network operated by MVSU could go further than the campus-town model to provide transportation access to the elderly and those who lack transportation options to and from Greenwood. This access would greatly improve the livelihoods of those residents by giving them access to medical care, fresh groceries, and pharmacies, amenities which are difficult, at best, to access from Itta Bena.

### *EDUCATION: ACTION PLAN*

#### **FAMILY AND LIFE EDUCATION IN BRAZIL CENTER**

MVSU could partner with Itta Bena in utilizing available space currently under renovation in Itta Bena's Brazil Community Center. This partnership could provide an immense asset to both community residents and MVSU students. By creating life-skills education courses for residents, as well as curricula ranging from financial literacy to the arts, students from all departments would have the opportunity to learn hands-on skills in public service and communication, and residents would reap the benefits of new knowledge and skills.

## COMMUNITY PRIDE: ACTION PLAN

### MURALS

Partnering with MVSU's arts program to design and install one or more murals celebrating the rich culture of the Delta, Itta Bena, its history, and reflections upon those could bring a vital signifier of culture to the image of Itta Bena itself. This very visible presence of an art culture could help catalyze the productive capacities of the arts within Itta Bena and provide new outlets for talented young artists at the university.

### SIGNAGE

Designing and installing new signage, branding, and wayfinding in the downtown Itta Bena that pays homage to its history and place would vastly improve the image of downtown, as well as reinforce a cohesive physical environment within the downtown district. This could help further reinforce and bring to the surface the visual identity of the community and its ties to MVSU.

### RENOVATED STOREFRONTS DOWNTOWN

Rehabilitating, renovating, and reinhabiting the downtown district of Itta Bena is a critical step in moving the city forward. By first rehabilitating and simply cleaning up the storefronts to improve the image of the downtown district, an immediate impact would be seen as visible progress in the community. As the downtown begins to find new occupants, both businesses and residents, storefront locations will become prime real estate for renovation and reinhabitation. By starting with small steps, and moving toward larger steps, downtown Itta Bena could become a central point for life, business, entertainment, and community.

## FRESH FOOD ACCESS: ACTION PLAN

### REOPEN GROCERY IN ITTA BENA

Access to fresh food is a basic need of any healthy community. With new residents it is possible to seek a grocery partner to reopen the Itta Bena Grocery. We recommend a hybrid store that includes a restaurant and maybe entertainment. A multifaceted business model would help build a broader group of patrons and a stronger business.

## CONCLUSION

In order to create a successful partnership between MVSU and Itta Bena, a dedicated effort to build and maintain specific projects, educational programs, and planned events will be crucial. Housing developments and renovations will require investment partners and focused leadership working in partnership and a clear and consistent communication plan to sustain and guide the effort. We recommend that MVSU dedicate a top executive-level administrator to lead the effort from campus, and that the mayor of Itta Bena represent the community in this partnership. Both will need a support team, a master plan, and a management structure to maintain communication on planning and projects. Resources will have to be identified, partners recruited, coursework developed, and grants and funds sought. We believe if a partnership is established the work and projects can start small and build. Early projects will have to be subsidized, but as momentum grows the private marketplace will take over and both communities will grow and benefit from the work.

Communities are always built from the common need and a commitment of a group of people working together over time. The central difficulty in building consensus in and around an anchor institution like MVSU and a community like Itta Bena is that each have very different missions and challenges. It takes a formal concerted effort to work together to build the bridges that will make both communities stronger. It is, perhaps, most important to note that the difficulties and challenges that each face can be overcome more resiliently and robustly by building an interdependent and overlapping third community.

## SECTION FIVE

# LESSONS LEARNED

After 13 months of planning and the completion of two strategic plans, several lessons were learned to assist in replication. Key lessons learned throughout the process are outlined below.

### Dedicate time to learn the history of the people engaged in neighborhood development

CDFIs looking to work in low-income neighborhoods in partnership with an HBCU anchor institution must take the time to understand the history of past neighborhood development activities and to build trust with local people. Furthermore, CDFIs must be prepared to commit to the relationship building phase of the work – it cannot be rushed – and also require a similar level of commitment from any front-facing contracted partners working in the community. Working with people from the community who understood the needs and history surrounding local conditions was a critical part of building trust within the community.

### HBCUs bring diverse levels of capacity to community development

Though the level of resources – human and financial – that the universities were able to offer to the project varied, both universities were entrepreneurial in the approaches taken to staff the community and economic development activities. JSU benefited from the presence of The Center for University-Based Development (CUBD) – an office dedicated to the development of the one-mile area around the JSU main campus. The CUBD staff built and maintained relationships with neighborhood leaders and worked to ensure the voices of local people influence university development decisions affecting the surrounding communities. One activity coordinated by CUBD includes the selling of university-owned property back to the community residents for the development of businesses and the promotion of homeownership.

While MVSU did not have an office similar to JSU's CUBD, the project benefitted significantly from the local knowledge provided by the leader of the development office. Through the office, the campus maintained a focus on financial inclusion and community development. The organization worked closely with national organizations to improve the housing stock, energy efficiency, and community infrastructure in the area.

### Relationship building is key to success for CDFIs and HBCUs

CDFIs looking to partner with HBCUs should engage in the intentional work to build meaningful relationships with university leadership and project leaders. Early buy-in from university presidents and trust earned from previous work with university stakeholders managing the project were critical factors associated with efforts to keep the project on track and progressing. The realization of the large-scale projects identified in the strategic plans will hinge on the maintenance of the genuine relationships built at both the university and among local people.

### Recognize unique value of every community and ground work in resident leaders

Leadership will look different in each community and local people understand best the needs of their community. When transition occurs, larger communities can absorb the shock of leadership transition more easily than smaller communities due to the existence of community bridge organizations. The establishment of bridge organizations in smaller communities and grounding work in the community residents, which is less likely to change, can add a stabilizing force for development projects during transitions and unexpected changes.

### Cater engagement to marginalized members of the community

Care should be exercised to ensure a diverse and representative cross section of the community is aware, invited and able to participate in the community engagement work associated with identifying strategic priorities for development. Inclusive community engagement recognizes the need to accommodate work schedules and to

provide quality child care. Any initiative that hopes to meaningfully engage the community must cater all of its actions to the marginalized and resource deprived members of that community to ensure that all voices are valued and included in the process.

### Catalyst funds can prove to be a useful tool when managed well

The catalyst funds proved to be a useful tool to bridge the gap between planning and implementation. In Itta Bena, the community catalyst project was developed over several weeks with input from community development professionals and residents of the community. Specific time was dedicated to arriving at consensus around the project – a series of murals to be painted on the walls of city hall depicting life on campus and in the community.

Conversely, in Jackson, catalyst projects were rolled out simultaneously with the discussion of the strategic plan. On one hand, a number of projects emerged. On the other hand, focus on the catalyst funds distracted participants from the work needed to complete the strategic plans. In some instances, small groups did not have the prerequisite paperwork (W-9 forms for tax purposes) to access the funds which proved to be a barrier to the overall project's progress.

To overcome the barriers, the goals of the catalyst funds should be streamlined and focused. Effective goals could include to serve as a tool to build good will or to bridge the gap between the planning and implementation phases of the plans.

### CDFIs will need to navigate competing priorities

Nowhere were the competing needs of the universities and the community more disparate than on matters of affordable housing. In the case of MVSU, the university made recommendations to renovate existing buildings on its campus for faculty housing. The recommendation was made even though the town of Itta Bena would benefit from the development of its aging housing stock. Likewise, in Jackson, the university suggested strategies to increase the supply of affordable, high quality rental properties in the nearby community. Meanwhile, residents of the neighborhood, frustrated with the blight caused by absentee landlords, were much more interested in an increase in homeownership.

CDFIs can manage potential competing interests by pursuing a diverse set of development finance strategies that accomplish multiple goals. For example, homeownership strategies can be supported by mortgage products that eliminate down payment and credit score hurdles. Affordable rental strategies can be developed by CDFIs with a background in LIHTC / mixed used development. In the end, the campus and the community benefit from the overall effects of additional investment.

## CONCLUSION

Nearly all HBCUs are located in neighborhoods in the South and, the majority of the neighborhoods face severe levels of economic distress. The high levels of disinvestment make the areas prime locations to foster natural alliances between HBCUs as anchor institutions, and CDFIs, experts at the import and deployment of financial resources to advance ownership and agency among individuals and communities. With this premise in mind, the HBCU-CDFI Economic Mobility initiative sought to answer the question – how can CDFIs and HBCUs collaborate to augment and leverage the position of HBCUs as anchor institutions to increase economic mobility in low-income communities? Through a robust planning process undertaken by Jackson State University, Mississippi Valley State University, HOPE and local residents, the parties identified several community development priorities. Specifically, affordable housing, business development, and the growth of healthy food financing options emerged as key areas of focus. With the planning process complete, the institutions will turn toward the next phase of the initiative to bring the projects to fruition.



# APPENDICES

## SECTION CONTENTS

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## APPENDIX A: BUDGET

### Source of Funds

Type	Amount
Foundation Grants	\$266,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$266,000</b>

### Use of Funds

Type	Amount
Personnel	\$67,450
Travel	\$13,000
Consultants	\$154,000
Indirect Costs / Office Expenses	\$15,550
Community Seed Funding	\$16,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$266,000</b>

HOPE invested in significant relationship and partnership development to achieve the deep embeddedness in communities that is needed to fulfill the vision of this initiative. This is reflected in the budget, which allocates the lion's share of the request to personnel, travel and contractual services. These expenses are critical to the success of this work as detailed below.

#### PERSONNEL

Successful coalition and capacity building requires significant investment of time and energy. Throughout the one-year process, four members of HOPE's Community and Economic Development team dedicated between 10 percent and 35 percent of their time to this initiative. These staff members were responsible for building relationships with partners and community members, facilitating steps in the aforementioned process as appropriate, and providing relevant subject matter expertise. Time from a policy analyst (at 20 percent) and a corporate project manager (at 20 percent) was allocated to this work to provide project management and data analysis support.

#### TRAVEL

The implementation and dissemination reach of this initiative spans the full American South with an emphasis on the Deep South states – Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. We expect team members to travel often to disseminate the guide and build partnerships with other CDFIs and HBCUs. Our budget estimates 75 days of travel and 35 overnight stays during the 12-month period, with associated costs of per diems (\$54/day) and hotel rooms (\$150/night on average). This budget also forecasts car travel of 28 roundtrips within an average 250-mile radius of HOPE's headquarters in Jackson, Mississippi (i.e. roughly 500 miles per each of 28 roundtrips). This radius covers the majority of the five-state region.

#### CONSULTANTS

The budget includes:

- Cost of HBCU-CDAC's work to deepen partnerships with HBCUs in the region; engaging and coordinating two HBCUs and their neighboring communities in the process of this initiative; and actively promoting the initiative's learnings across the broader HBCU network
- Fee of a consultant who will bring facilitation expertise to the community meetings and other feedback activities within this process and then analyze the qualitative data received, identifying strategies for development
- Fee of a to-be-hired consultant who will synthesize the experience of this initiative in a strategy guide that surfaces best practices, recommended next steps for community and economic development in the Deep South, and replicable strategies and resources other HBCUs can leverage in facilitating projects in their own communities.

**INDIRECT COST RATE**

The indirect cost rate is primarily comprised of pro-rated salaries and benefits for HOPE team members projected to spend portions of their time on this initiative. This includes subject matter experts and back office staff needed to lead and support the work, such as HOPE’s Executive Team, and its Accounting Team for managing the grant budget and expenses.

A small percent is comprised of daily operating expenses like printing, copying, telecommunications, utilities, facility mortgage and maintenance. These have been pro-rated to the time each full-time employee is projected to spend on this initiative.

**CATALYST PROJECTS**

As larger projects generated from the collaborative research and analysis phases of the two case studies, HOPE worked with local leaders to identify and structure smaller projects that address pressing community needs. By demonstrating tangible progress on local priorities, these catalyst projects sustain momentum and morale by countering the widely held skepticism associated with previous planning efforts that produced limited results. \$16,000 in support for these projects was provided by two foundations through the HOPE Community Catalyst Fund – a pool of capital to support similar projects in small communities throughout HOPE’s footprint.

**APPENDIX B: PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOOLS**

*JSU / WEST JACKSON FORUM AGENDAS*

**FORUM 1 AGENDA**  
05/22/18 | 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

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- 1. GRASSROOTS PLANNING (2 hours)**
  - a. Greetings and Dinner (20 min.)
  - b. Introductions (10 min.)
    - i. President Bill Bynum (HOPE)
    - President Dr. William B. Bynum (JSU)
  - c. Planning and Implementation (10 min.)
    - i. The Goals of the 4-Part Workshop
  - d. Group Brainstorming (30 min.)
    - i. The Importance of Grassroots Planning
  - e. Group Conversation (30 min.)
  - f. Identification of Group Projects and Teams (10 min.)
  - g. Review and Preparation for Next Meeting (Homework) (10 min.)

**FORUM 2 AGENDA**  
05/29/18 | 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

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- 2. IMPLEMENTATION: FIRST STEPS (2 hours)**
  - a. Greetings and Dinner (20 min.)
  - b. Group Work (20 min.)
    - i. Identify the Implementation Steps
    - ii. Identify the Obstacles
    - iii. Develop a Plan for Implementation
  - c. Planning as a Tool: The Power of Information (30 min.)
    - i. Long-Term Consensus
    - ii. Demographics
    - iii. Major Community Quality Factors
      - 1. Education/Schools
      - 2. Safety
      - 3. Recreation
      - 4. Jobs
      - 5. The Importance of Diversity
  - d. Group Conversation (20 min.)
    - i. Review of Implementation Tools
      - 1. Partnerships
      - 2. Funding
      - 3. Volunteers
      - 4. Investments
      - 5. Grants
      - 6. Development Incentives
      - 7. Debt/P&L Programs
  - e. Team Presentation (30 min.)
    - i. Projects and Plans Open Discussion

### FORUM 3 AGENDA

06/05/18 | 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

3. **COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL POWER (2 hours)**
  - a. Greetings and Dinner (20 min.)
  - b. Review of Local, City, and State Groups, Agencies and Departments (20 min.)
    - i. Their Role in Community Revitalization and How to Build Partnerships
  - c. Community Synergy (20 min.)
    - i. Projects That Build a Wake of Interest or Value Beyond Themselves
  - d. Midtown Case-Study (30 min.)
    - i. Beginnings
    - ii. Ongoing Work
    - iii. Results
  - e. Review of Project Planning Components (30 min.)
    - i. Research
    - ii. Voice of Community
    - iii. Identify Projects with Synergy
    - iv. Opportunities and Obstacles
    - v. Resource Building
    - vi. Partnership Building
    - vii. Implementation Steps

### FORUM 4 AGENDA

05/22/18 | 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

4. **COMMUNITY AND POLITICAL POWER (2 hours)**
  - a. Greetings and Dinner (20 min.)
  - b. Review of Team Projects (60 min.)
  - c. Group Conversation (40 min.)
    - i. Next Steps
    - ii. Plan Ongoing Support

## MVSU / ITTA BENA SUMMIT AGENDA COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

### AGENDA

1. Mingling and Snacking
2. Introduction and Welcome
3. Leadership Introductions
  - Bill Bynum, CEO of HOPE
  - Dr. Jerryl Brigs, President of MVSU, City of Itta Bena
4. Background of the HBCU Project
5. Small Group Discussions
6. Large Group Discussion
7. Closing and Thank You

*UNIVERSITY PARTNER MOU TEMPLATE*  
**HBCU DEVELOPMENT FINANCE RESEARCH AND ACTION INITIATIVE**  
**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

This **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING** is made this 21 day of November, 2017, and effective as of the 21 day of November, 2017, by and between **HOPE ENTERPRISE CORPORATION**, a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Mississippi ("HOPE") and **JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY**, a state-supported, historically black college and university ("HBCU") existing under the laws of the State of Mississippi ("JSU") (collectively, the "Parties").

RECITALS

**WHEREAS**, many HBCUs in HOPE's five-state market suffer from a severe lack of resources, declining tax revenue, and increasing difficulty in attracting private, federal or state investments; These communities also struggle to retain quality and experienced young people or professionals; Many promising residents have taken their talents and tax dollars to more prosperous areas; This outflow creates a significant challenge for facilitating community and economic development goals; and HBCUs often do not have adequate resources or capacity needed to advance their economic development, housing, or other community development goals.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in consideration of the foregoing, the Parties agree as follows:

**I. AGREEMENT.**

**A. Guiding Principles.**

The guiding principles of the Parties' HBCU Development Finance Research and Action Initiative efforts shall be the following:

- Collect and analyze data on the community economic development needs of two HBCUs and their surrounding communities, one in an urban area and one in a rural area
- Convene community stakeholders to discuss and refine these quantitative findings and identify priorities for community and economic development projects, and
- Develop a strategy guide that details best practices in facilitating community and economic development and replicable strategies and resources that other HBCUs can use in pursuing development projects.

The execution of these guiding principles includes, but is not limited to the following activities:

- Inventory existing community strategic plans and ongoing development initiatives for the purpose of leveraging these efforts as appropriate
- Demographic research: Collecting and synthesizing data on population by race, age, poverty, employment, education achievement, election history, etc. – and history of place; led by the FRB of Atlanta, reviewed by all partners
- Community tours: Informal site visits to identify assets, opportunities, and challenges, attended by community leaders, local partner organizations, and others; coordinated by the local HBCU and HBCU-CDAC, attended by all partners
- Public meetings: Forum for HBCU students, alumni, faculty and staff; neighboring residents and other community stakeholders such as faith-based and community groups, philanthropic leaders, state and local policymakers, and community development banks and credit unions to share their experience, feedback and vision for the community, with the explicit goal of identifying development priorities; coordinated by a to-be-hired consultant with support from the local HBCU and HBCU-CDAC, attended by all partners
- Community surveys: Survey designed using data gleaned from the demographic research and public meetings, and conducted among a representative sample of the population to identify and prioritize development projects; coordinated by a consultant with support from the local HBCU, HBCU-CDAC, and HOPE, reviewed by all partners

- Analysis meetings: Meeting where partners convene to review and analyze data collected through concluded activities and to identify next steps in the planning and implementation process; coordinated by HOPE, attended by all partners
- Additional research: Completion of any additional research needed; for example, feasibility study for proposed grocery store, business plan for new health clinic, etc.; coordinated by the FRB of Atlanta and HOPE, reviewed by all partners
- Community work session: Forum for aforementioned stakeholders (see Activity No. 3) where partners share progress and solicit feedback on whether their community's needs and goals have been accurately captured; coordinated by a consultant with support from the local HBCU and HBCU-CDAC, attended by all partners
- Final document production: Publication of strategy guide that synthesizes process to-date, documents best practices that emerged, and identifies replicable strategies and resources for HBCUs facilitating community and economic development; coordinated by a consultant with support from HOPE, reviewed by all partners

The process for implementing and accomplishing these goals is set forth below.

## **B. Structure**

### **1. Source of Funds**

The Parties intend to allocate, subject to the availability of private funds and appropriation of federal funds, funds sufficient to carry out the activities described in this Agreement. It is anticipated that HOPE will earn income on a contract or fee-for-service basis for conducting many of its activities.

Institutional donor will commit \$250,000 toward the research and strategy guide.

### **2. Responsibilities of The Parties**

As may be further defined in subsequent agreements or contracts, the Parties are expected to assume the following roles, in close consultation with one another:

- To foster economic mobility by increasing the level of community and economic development capacity and investment in economically distressed communities in the Deep South, enabling communities and their residents to better address roadblocks to success. Over the long term, as a result of this Initiative, we expect more HBCUs and their respective communities to have more opportunities to achieve collaborative community and economic development.

HOPE will:

- Provide training and assistance to enhance the HBCU strategic plan, which will include identifying and analyzing JSU's assets, liabilities, opportunities, and priority community and economic development initiatives;
- Work with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta to collect and analyze data relating to community and economic development, development finance, education and workforce development, health and health care, and housing regarding JSU;
- Partner with JSU to complete interviews of community leaders and other key partners;
- Provide support in completing the final strategic guide product;
- Expand the capacity of JSU to carry out, facilitate or recruit priority economic development projects, community facilities and/or affordable housing developments;
- Provide technical assistance to JSU leadership and staff regarding implementation of priority projects as identified in the strategic plan as well as how to facilitate development and attract investments to their communities;

- Introduce and connect JSU staff with potential developers, funding and financing contacts within and outside the State;
- Assist JSU leadership and staff in completing predevelopment requirements for housing, community facilities, or community and economic development projects.

JSU will:

- Commit the time and effort necessary to contribute to the strategic guide process;
- Schedule and attend meetings with HOPE staff;
- Provide information on history of both the community and past economic development projects in the town;
- Commit to building the capacity to implement priority economic development projects with HOPE's guidance;
- Consider partnership opportunities that will allow pursuit of economic development projects;
- Commit to pursuing active implementation of projects as identified in the strategic guide, authored by HOPE, the HBCU Community Development Action Coalition (HBCU-CDAC), and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

### **3. Communications; Reporting; Evaluation**

The Parties agree that they will each inform the other about funding proposals and media releases related to the Operations, in advance of submitting those. The advance period should be long enough to allow for comment from the other Parties. The advance notice is intended to allow for coordination, to minimize competition between Parties, and to ensure that the roles and responsibilities outlined above are followed.

#### **II. TERM.**

This MOU shall be effective as of November 21, 2017, and continue for a period of 14 months. This MOU may be extended beyond the initial 24 months, with the agreement of all the parties, however, the parties expect that the operations should be initially proven by the end of the 14-month period and institutionalized whereby an extension of this MOU would not be necessary.

#### **III. NOTICES.**

Any notices under or in this Memorandum of Understanding shall be in writing, and shall be deemed to be delivered when hand-delivered, delivered by overnight courier, delivered by certified mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested (or when delivery is refused), or by telefax, unless such address is changed by written notice hereunder:

If to HOPE:

Hope Enterprise Corporation  
 4 Old River Place  
 Jackson, MS 39202  
 Telephone: 601-944-4152  
 Fax: 601-944-0808  
 Attention: Bill Bynum, CEO

If to JSU:

Jackson State University  
 1400 John R. Lynch Street  
 Jackson, MS 39217  
 Telephone: 601-979-2323  
 Fax: 601-979-2948  
 Attention: Dr. William Bynum, President

**IV. AMENDMENT.**

This Memorandum of Understanding, or any part hereof, may be amended from time to time only by a written instrument executed by the Parties.

**V. ASSIGNMENT.**

This Memorandum of Understanding may not be assigned by any Party without the prior written approval of the other Parties.

**VI. INDEMNIFICATION.**

Each Party hereto, intending to be legally bound, hereby expressly agrees and covenants to hold harmless and indemnify the other Party, its directors, officers, agents and employees from and against any and all costs, liability, demands, claims, damage and expenses of any nature (including, without limitation, indebtedness, penalties, fines, legal fees) incurred in connection with this Memorandum of Understanding, or that arise out of any act of omission of the other Party or of any of its employees or agents.

**VII. GOVERNING LAW.**

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be construed under and governed by the laws of the State of Mississippi without reference to its conflict of law rules.

**VIII. TERMINATION; WITHDRAWAL.**

This Memorandum of Understanding may be terminated early only by mutual consent of the Parties. A Party may withdraw as a Party under this Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to the delivery of a ninety (90) day written notice to the other Party so that such other Party can take necessary measures to address items including but not limited to marketing, communications, evaluation and financing of projects.

**IX. RELATIONSHIP OF THE PARTIES.**

Except as otherwise provided herein, no Party is an agent of the other Party. No Party has the right or authority to bind the other Party through its actions or any other agreements or communications. Nothing in this MOU shall prevent the Parties from engaging in other activities and partnering with other entities. The Parties agree, however, that they will work exclusively with each other regarding the tasks and matters described in this MOU.

**X. PARTIES BOUND.**

The terms and provisions of this Memorandum of Understanding shall be binding upon the parties hereto, their legal representatives, successors and assigns.

**WITNESS** our hands and seals, all as of the date first written above.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY, a state-supported,  
historically black college and university

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Dr. William Bynum

Title: President

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_

HOPE ENTERPRISE CORPORATION,  
a Mississippi nonprofit corporation

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: William Bynum

Title: Chief Executive Officer

**Request for Proposal**

**Date:** December 20, 2017  
**To:** Prospective Consultant for HBCU Development Finance Research and Action Initiative  
**Re:** Request for Proposal for HBCU Development Finance Research and Action Initiative Services  
**Due Date:** January 5, 2018

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**HOPE BACKGROUND & MISSION**

HOPE (Hope Enterprise Corporation and Hope Credit Union) is a community development financial institution (CDFI), community development intermediary, and policy institute that provides affordable financial services; leverages private, public and philanthropic resources; and engages in policy analysis in order to fulfill its mission of strengthening communities, building assets, and improving lives in economically distressed parts of the Mid-South. Since 1994, HOPE has generated over \$2 billion in financing and related services for the unbanked and underbanked, entrepreneurs, homeowners, nonprofit organizations, health care providers and other community development purposes. Collectively, these projects have benefited more than 1 million individuals throughout Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

**HBCU DEVELOPMENT FINANCE RESEARCH & ACTION INITIATIVE PROPOSAL**

The HBCU Development Finance Research and Action Initiative is a joint venture between the HBCU-Community Development Action Coalition (HBCU-CDAC), the Federal Reserve Bank (FRB) of Atlanta and HOPE to conduct research that buttresses the ability of Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) to undertake community and economic development projects that foster economic mobility.

The initiative will build the capacity of HBCUs, local residents, public officials, economic development practitioners and other allied parties to advance catalytic projects that strengthen economic mobility pathways, with a primary focus on low-income people of color.

The principal partners will collect and analyze data to assess community and economic development needs and opportunities for two Deep South HBCUs, Jackson State University and Mississippi Valley State University, and their surrounding communities – one in an urban area and one in a rural area; gathering input from area residents, government officials, other stakeholders and prospective allies through surveys, public meetings and convenings. Key outputs will include the identification and prioritization of community and economic development projects; and the development of a strategy guide that details lessons, best practices and resources identified through this process that can be used by other HBCUs seeking to engage in similar efforts. Through this work, the initiative will cultivate a collaborative, generative network of partners for HBCU- centered community and economic development activities.

The strategy guide will identify replicable strategies and consistent resources that fortify the position of HBCUs as anchor institutions that drive community development and economic growth. This publication will be distributed widely by the partners of this initiative, ultimately enhancing the capacity of HBCUs as catalysts for increased economic mobility in distressed communities.

## SCOPE OF WORK

If chosen, the company shall be responsible for the following items:

1. A start date no later than January 15, 2018.
2. Complete review of the current community strategic plans in West Jackson and Itta Bena, alongside the strategic plans of the respective HBCUs, to identify common goals and opportunities for collaboration.
3. Participate with HOPE in meetings with the HBCUs to discuss existing community plans and to learn about the HBCU's current strategies, initiatives and priorities, which may provide opportunities for involvement by community residents and which may provide opportunities for the HBCUs to increase investment in their surrounding communities.
4. In collaboration with HOPE, the HBCUs, and other partners, participate in community outreach with the goal of identifying community and economic development projects that foster economic mobility. Contribute to:
  - Community meetings, surveys, and interviews focused on community needs and strategies for HBCU investment
  - HBCU meetings, surveys, and interviews focused on faculty, staff, and students for identifying opportunities for HBCU investment
5. Assist in development of a planning strategic matrix that identifies and prioritizes community projects/initiatives, anticipated economic benefits, associated level of effort and cost to implement, and length of time to complete. Projects/Initiatives should be economically feasible and operationally sustainable and will contribute to economic opportunity, job creation, and/or critical services being provided to community residents. These projects/initiatives must be collaborations between HBCUs and their surrounding communities.
6. Develop a new, unified strategic plan that acts as an integrated HBCU and community strategic plan and highlights the role of HOPE in community and economic development work alongside the HBCUs and their surrounding areas. Plans should:
  - Highlight each community's and HBCU's history and unique characteristics
  - Focus on the role that CDFIs play in building the capacity of the HBCUs and their surrounding communities to identify and complete the projects/initiatives
  - Prioritize at least 3 community and economic development projects/initiatives, including proposed locations, size/scope, partners, and budgets as well as an overall planning strategic matrix
  - Be of high quality and assist in securing investments to advance the projects/initiatives identified in the strategic plans
  - Be based on a consensus built through continuous consultation with partners and the communities
7. All work will be conducted in close partnership with HOPE, HBCUs, and other program partners and should utilize research and analysis conducted by the HOPE and the Federal Reserve Bank.

## WRITTEN PROPOSALS SHALL CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING MINIMUM INFORMATION:

1. Resumes or relevant experience for all members of the project team.
2. Description of the strategy and approach for delivering the outcomes described.
3. List of any subcontractors, if applicable, you plan to use in delivering the Scope of Work described here.
4. Three references of clients for whom you have provided strategic development planning services similar to those described in this Scope of Work.
5. Detailed summary of the fees.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. **Qualifications:** Documentation providing an overview of the company, including a summary of the duties that will be provided if selected. Does your company have the resources to efficiently write these strategic plans?
2. **Experience:** Demonstrated, applicable experience. Does your company have sufficient experience to demonstrate that they can effectively work in traditionally underserved and resource constrained communities? Does your company have sufficient experience to demonstrate that they can effectively write unified strategic plans that align community and the local, respective HBCU's priorities?
3. **Performance:** Discuss your company's approach to complete thorough and timely written strategic plans, based on the timeline in the Schedule section. Does your company have the staff and time to efficiently write these strategic plans?

## SCHEDULE

DATE	TASK
01/05/2018	SOW response deadline
01/10/2018	Selection process complete
01/25/2018	Background and initial analysis
02/28/2018	Initial outline of community plans
03/31/2018	Final outline of community plans
04/30/2018	Community inventory of Itta Bena and West Jackson <i>(that includes meetings, surveys, and interviews)</i>
05/15/2018	Share initial community findings
06/30/2018	Share final community findings, first draft of community plans
07/30/2018	Second draft of community plans
08/30/2018	Final community plans

## SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Proposals will be received until 5:00 pm CT on January 5, 2018. Proposal submissions and questions regarding this SOW should be submitted via email to Kayla Baker, Executive Project Manager, at [kayla.baker@hope-ec.org](mailto:kayla.baker@hope-ec.org). For proposals, use PROPOSAL FOR HBCU CONSULTING SERVICES in the subject line.

HOPE reserves the right to accept or reject any and all responses at its sole discretion and to waive any informalities or irregularities. HOPE also reserves the right to award the project based on qualifications. There is no expressed or implied obligation for HOPE to reimburse responding firms or individuals for any expenses incurred in preparing responses to this request. Completion and submission of a request for proposal does not constitute a commitment for assistance.

Solicited companies declining this request should send a notification to the email address above.

HOPE is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



PROJECT SCHEDULE

PHASE	1	2	3
DESCRIPTION	Background Research	Analysis	Community Building
START MONTH /YEAR	November 2017	March 2018	March 2018
END MONTH /YEAR	February 2018	June 2018	September 2018
HOPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy led</li> <li>• Demographic research</li> <li>• Literature review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy led</li> <li>• Initial findings based on background research</li> <li>• Final findings based on data and community building: tours, public meetings, and surveys</li> <li>• Strategy Guide outline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize Community Building Teams for each campus</li> <li>• Start interpreting the quantitative (data analysis) and qualitative (community building activities) data</li> </ul>
CONSULTANT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RFP/Selection process for Consultant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing plans</li> <li>• Review and synthesize initial HOPE and FRB findings</li> <li>• Provide feedback</li> <li>• Begin outlines for all Plan additions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in Community Building Team</li> <li>• Develop appropriate community engagement strategies for each community in consultation with partner group</li> </ul>
JSU/MVSU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial meetings/role discussions</li> <li>• Provide inventory of existing plans and initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review/provide feedback on initial findings</li> <li>• Share relevant data from the university</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in Community Building Team</li> <li>• Help identify community liaisons and provide feedback on best community engagement strategies</li> </ul>
CDAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial meetings/role discussions</li> <li>• Inventory of existing plans and initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review existing plans</li> <li>• Review/provide feedback on initial findings</li> <li>• Begin dissemination strategy outline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in Community Building Team</li> <li>• Review/provide feedback on initial findings</li> </ul>
FRB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist the policy team in identifying relevant data for background research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a literature review on anchor institution strategies, with a particular focus on universities in the Southeast, HBCUs, and collaborative anchor institution strategies</li> <li>• Develop a quantitative research deck focused on MVSU and JSU relative to other HBCUs and PWIs</li> <li>• Develop a graphic of HBCUs throughout the country and economic standing of the communities surrounding them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Where possible) provide guidance on interpreting the qualitative findings of the community-building process</li> </ul>

	4	5	6	7
	Interpretation	Writing	Presentation & Dissemination	Execution
	July 2018	November 2019	April 2019	January 2019
	October 2018	March 2019	August 2019	TBD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine/Present findings and recommendations to HBCU DRFA team</li> <li>Provide feedback to Consultant - Planner and FRB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize all process documentation</li> <li>Write and finalize Strategy Guide</li> <li>Finalize/Initiate dissemination strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funders</li> <li>Board</li> <li>Conferences/Networks</li> <li>Website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CED led</li> <li>Finalize/Initiate priority projects</li> <li>Additional reports and presentations once outcomes achieved</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine/Present findings and recommendations (including prioritization matrix) to HOPE</li> <li>Begin developing community plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share initial findings with Community Building Team</li> <li>Complete updated, comprehensive community plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in Community meetings, where necessary</li> <li>Assist with the execution of projects/initiatives, where necessary (separate contract will be needed)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist with the execution of projects/initiatives, where necessary (separate contract will be needed)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide feedback and guidance on interpreting the findings of the community engagement process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide feedback and guidance in developing the community plans and strategy guide</li> <li>Assist in gathering input and feedback from community and university members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University</li> <li>Alumni</li> <li>Students</li> <li>Faculty/Relevant Coursework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue Community meetings, where necessary</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide feedback and guidance on interpreting the findings of the community engagement process</li> <li>Assist in the prioritization of actionable projects/initiatives and in identifying relevant projects at other HBCUs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize dissemination strategy</li> <li>Provide feedback and guidance in developing community plans and strategy guide</li> <li>Assist in contextualizing the project relative to other comm dev projects at HBCUs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HBCUs</li> <li>Funders</li> <li>Board</li> <li>Conferences / Networks</li> <li>Website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue Community meetings</li> <li>Additional reports and presentations once outcomes achieved</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine/Present findings and recommendations to HOPE, based on the quantitative and qualitative information gathered through the research and community building processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalize digital dissemination strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conferences / Networks</li> <li>Website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional reports and presentations once outcomes achieved</li> </ul>

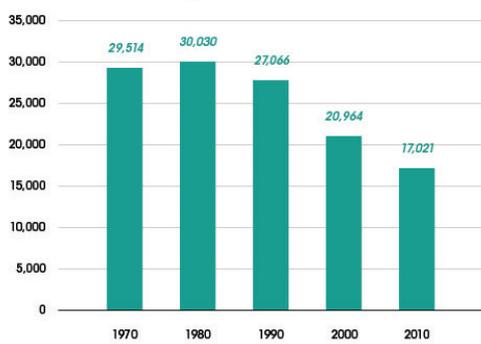
## APPENDIX C

# RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND TEMPLATES

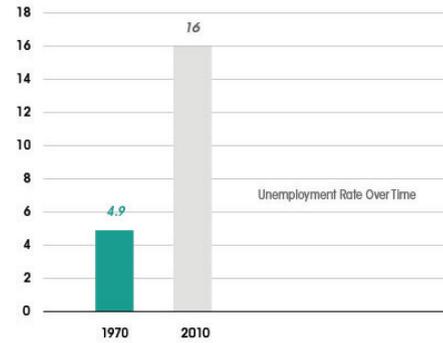
## INITIAL DATA ANALYSIS

### Demographic Shifts in West Jackson

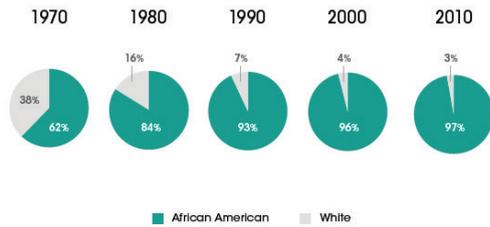
**Figure 4:** Change in Population



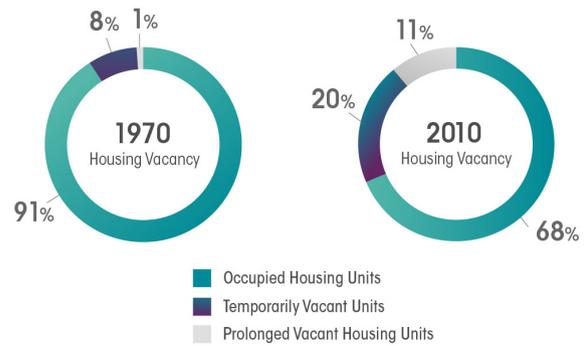
**Figure 7:** Change in Unemployment Rate



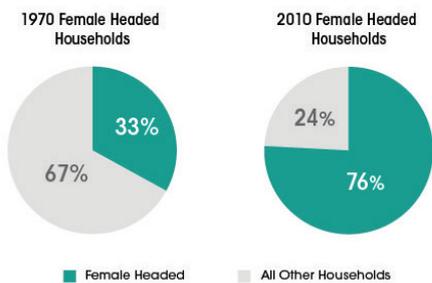
**Figure 5:** Change in Racial Composition



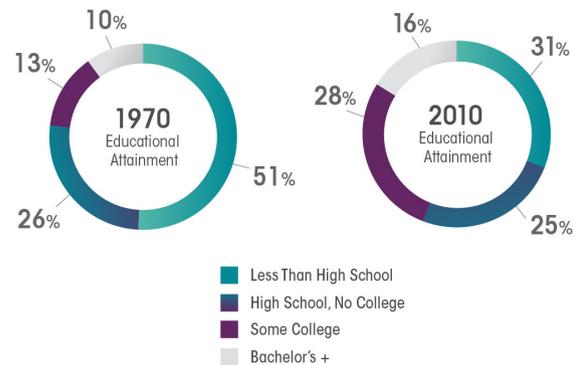
**Figure 8:** Changes in Housing Vacancy Rate



**Figure 6:** Change in Family Structure

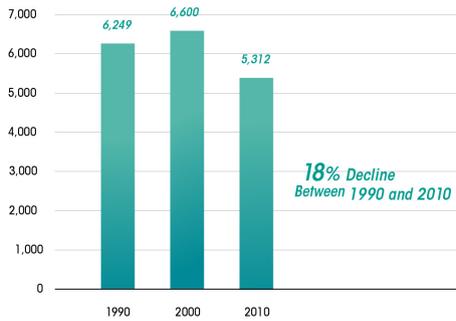


**Figure 9:** Changes in Educational Attainment

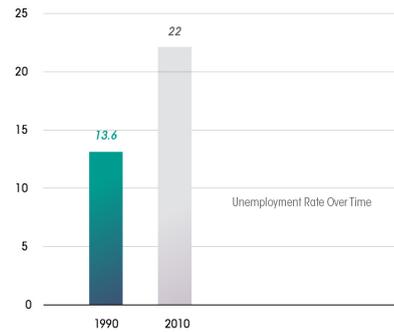


## Demographic Shifts in Itta Bena

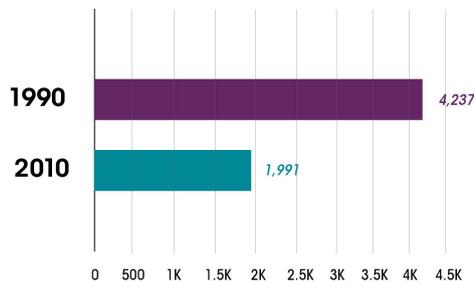
**Figure 10: Itta Bena Population Decline**



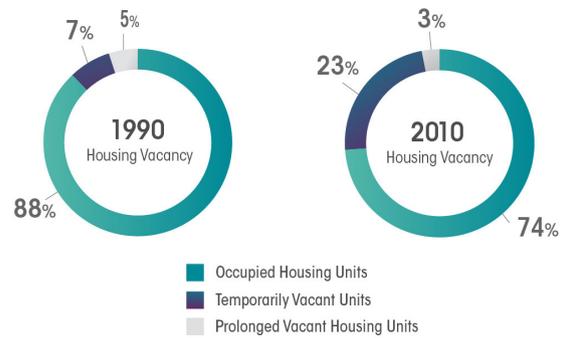
**Figure 14: Changes in Unemployment Rate**



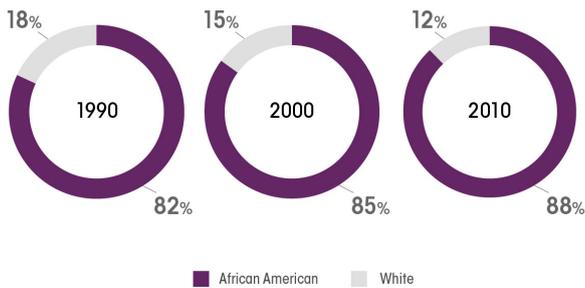
**Figure 11: Change in Homeownership Rate**



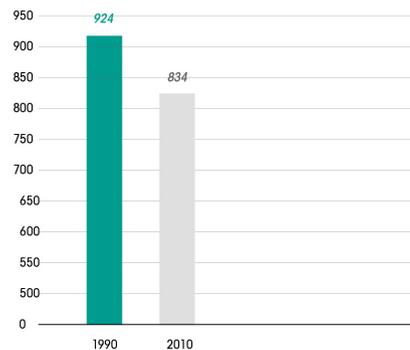
**Figure 15: Housing Vacancy in Itta Bena**



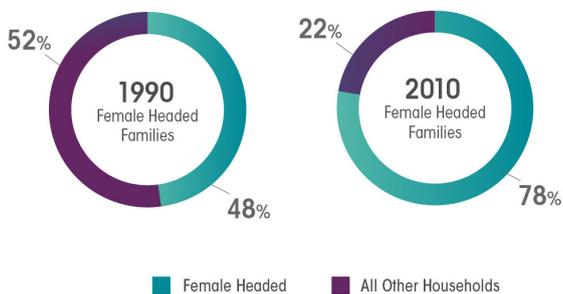
**Figure 12: Racial Isolation**



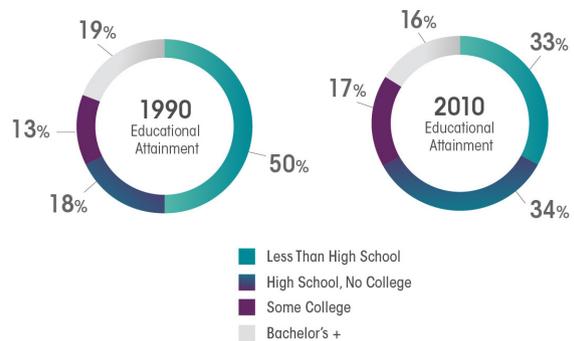
**Figure 16: Homeownership in Itta Bena**



**Figure 13: Change in Family Structure**



**Figure 17: Changes in Educational Attainment**



# JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY + WEST JACKSON MISSISSIPPI

(JSU SURVEY INSTRUMENT)

PROJECT: HBCU – CDFI Economic Mobility Initiative  
PROJECT NO.: 1801

## JSU SURVEY INSTRUMENT

### A. HOUSING

1. If affordable housing was available in West Jackson, how likely would you consider choosing it as a home?
1. Likely \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Maybe \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
2. What type/location would be most desirable?
1. Apartment Near Center of West Jackson \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Apartment Near the Edge of West Jackson \_\_\_\_\_
  3. House/ Duplex Near Center of West Jackson \_\_\_\_\_
  4. House/ Duplex Near Edge of West Jackson \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### B. EDUCATION

3. Rank the following educational opportunities at in West Jackson that you believe would most benefit the educational experience at JSU:
1. Business Mentorship \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Arts/ Music Education \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Life Skills Education \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Financial Literacy \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Entrepreneurship Mentoring \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Teaching, Tutoring, or Institutional Experience \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### C. TRANSPORTATION

4. If campus transportation could be expanded off campus, would you use it for:
1. Attending Events \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Shopping \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Commuting to Off-Campus Home \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Would Not Use \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### D. ENTERTAINMENT

5. Would you attend concerts, picnics and/ or festivals in West Jackson Parks or a Storefront Café?
1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Maybe \_\_\_\_\_
  3. No \_\_\_\_\_

### E. RECREATION

6. Would you participate in West Jackson-sponsored recreation opportunities?
1. 5K Run \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Fishing Tournament \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Sports League(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### F. COMMUNICATION

7. Rank the following communication formats to best keep you informed about off-campus events:
1. Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Social Media \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Posted Flyers \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Radio \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### G. ABOUT YOU

8. Please provide us with some basic information about yourself:
- JSU
- Student \_\_\_\_\_
- Faculty \_\_\_\_\_
- Staff \_\_\_\_\_
- Age \_\_\_\_\_
- Race \_\_\_\_\_
- Live:
- On campus \_\_\_\_\_
- In West Jackson \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Drive to Campus \_\_\_\_\_
- Visit West Jackson:
- Frequently \_\_\_\_\_
- Occasionally \_\_\_\_\_
- Never \_\_\_\_\_
9. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, or in future planning committees and initiatives?
1. No \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. If Yes, Would you be willing to provide contact information and how best to get into contact with you?  
Do you agree to be contacted? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Best Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

**JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY + WEST JACKSON MISSISSIPPI**  
(WEST JACKSON SURVEY INSTRUMENT)

PROJECT: HBCU – CDFI Economic Mobility Initiative  
PROJECT NO.: 1801

**WEST JACKSON SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

**A. HOUSING**

1. What type of housing do you believe would best serve the growth of your community?
  1. Student/ Faculty \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Affordable Family \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Elderly \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where is the best location for new housing?
  1. Near Jackson State University \_\_\_\_\_
  2. In existing Neighborhoods \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. EDUCATION**

3. Rank the following educational resources at JSU you believe would be most valuable to West Jackson residents:
  1. Business Education \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Arts/ Music Education \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Financial Literacy \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Entrepreneurship Mentoring \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Library \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Vocational / Job Skills \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Mentoring and Tutoring \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Rank the following education and training needs you believe would be most valuable to West Jackson residents:
  1. Job Training \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Vocational Training \_\_\_\_\_
  3. GED Programs \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Financial Literacy \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Entrepreneurial Training \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Business Education \_\_\_\_\_
  7. Arts/ Entertainment Tutoring \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**C. PRESERVATION / COMMUNITY PRIDE**

5. Rank the following historic / preservation opportunities in West Jackson:
  1. Repairing / Renovating Historic Structures \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Documenting The Oral Histories of Long-Time Residents \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Promoting the West Jackson Brand \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Promote the Strengths of West Jackson (i.e. JSU, The Zoo, Churches) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**D. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

6. Rank the most beneficial opportunities to promote new business in West Jackson:
  1. Create West Jackson Chamber of Commerce \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Develop a Business Training Incubator \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Partner with the JSU College of Business for Entrepreneurial Training \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Promote Pop-Up Restaurants and other Small Businesses \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**E. RECREATION / HEALTH**

7. Would you participate in on campus recreation, exercise, events, or facilities?
  1. Gym Facilities \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Exercise Class \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Intramural Sports \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**F. RECREATION / HEALTH**

8. Rank the following improvements for West Jackson:
  1. Develop More Green Space, Playgrounds, and Sports Facilities \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Clean Up Poindexter Park \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Develop Bike / Walking Paths \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Improve Access to Healthy / Fresh Food \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Increase Access to JSU Sports and Recreation Facilities \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Provide a Rapid Re-Housing and Services Facility to Support the Homeless \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**G. PUBLIC SAFETY / CODE ENFORCEMENT**

9. Rank the following issues most critical for public safety in West Jackson:
  1. Fix Street Lights \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Develop Working Partnership with JPD and JSU Campus Police \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Building / Property Code Enforcement \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Clean Vacant Lots \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Demolish Dilapidated Structures (Blight Removal) \_\_\_\_\_
  6. Create Citizen Watch Program \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**H. COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION**

10. Rank the following strategies for improving the function and appearance of West Jackson:
  1. Provide Coordinated Signage \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Clean Up Litter on Roads and Empty Lots \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Building / Property Code Enforcement \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Enforce Building Codes and Clean Up Vacant Lots \_\_\_\_\_
  5. Demolish Dilapidated Homes \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. ABOUT YOU**

11. Please provide us with some basic information about yourself:

- Resident \_\_\_\_\_
- Employed \_\_\_\_\_  
By JSU \_\_\_\_\_
- Student \_\_\_\_\_
- Age \_\_\_\_\_
- Race \_\_\_\_\_
- Live: \_\_\_\_\_  
Near In West Jackson \_\_\_\_\_
- Near JSU \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Drive to Work \_\_\_\_\_
- Utilize JSU Campus for: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lectures \_\_\_\_\_
- Entertainment \_\_\_\_\_
- Recreation or Exercise \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, or in future planning committees and initiatives?

1. No \_\_\_\_\_
- a. If Yes, Would you be willing to provide contact information and how best to get into contact with you?  
Do you agree to be contacted? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Best Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY + ITTA BENA, MISSISSIPPI  
(MVSU SURVEY INSTRUMENT)

PROJECT: HBCU – CDFI Economic Mobility Initiative  
PROJECT NO.: 1801

MVSU SURVEY INSTRUMENT

1. How often do you visit the city of Itta Bena?
- 1. Every day \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. A few times a week \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. About once a week \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. A few times a month \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5. Once a month \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6. Less than once a month \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7. Never \_\_\_\_\_

**A. HOUSING**

2. If affordable housing was available in the city of Itta Bena, how likely would you consider choosing it as a home?
- 1. Very unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Neither likely nor unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. Likely \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5. Very likely \_\_\_\_\_
3. If you were interested in living in the city of Itta Bena, what type of housing would be most desirable?
- 1. Apartment \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Townhouse \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. House for Rent \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. House for Purchase \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5. Not interested in living in the city of Itta Bena \_\_\_\_\_

**C. TRANSPORTATION**

4. If campus transportation could be expanded off campus, would you use it for:
- 1. Attending Off Campus Events \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Shopping \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Commuting to Off-Campus Home \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. Educational Programs (*Teaching, Tutoring, etc.*) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5. Would Not Use \_\_\_\_\_

**D. ENTERTAINMENT**

5. How likely would you attend events, festivals and/or recreational activities located in the city of Itta Bena?
- 1. Very unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Neither likely nor unlikely \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. Likely \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5. Very likely \_\_\_\_\_

**E. RECREATION**

6. Which of the following would you most likely attend if it was held in the city of Itta Bena?
- 1. 5K Run \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Fishing Tournament \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Sports League(s) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. Concerts & Festivals \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**F. COMMUNICATION**

7. Rank the following communication formats to best keep you informed about off-campus events. (1 being the preferred method and 5 being the least preferred)
- 1. Newspaper \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. Social Media \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. Posted Flyers \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4. Radio \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**G. ABOUT YOU**

8. Please provide us with some basic information about yourself:
- MVSU
    - Student \_\_\_\_\_
    - Faculty \_\_\_\_\_
    - Staff \_\_\_\_\_
  - Age \_\_\_\_\_
  - Race \_\_\_\_\_
  - Live:
    - On campus \_\_\_\_\_
    - Itta Bena \_\_\_\_\_
    - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, or in future planning committees and initiatives?
- 1. No \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. If Yes, Would you be willing to provide contact information and how best to get into contact with you?  
Do you agree to be contacted? Y \_\_\_ N \_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Best Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

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