

March
2022

Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub

Business Plan

Prepared For:

Port of Delcambre

Prepared By:

Vermilion Marketing & Opinion Research



TABLE of CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Mission	4
Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub Concept	4
Business Goals of the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub	5
Location of the Seafood Hub	6
Seafood Hub Process	6
Management	7
Partner Organizations	9
Markets to Be Served – Current & Potential	9
Demographics	9
Market Estimate – Consumers & Market Forecast	15
Overview of Strategy	16
Operations & Facility Development	16
Marketing and Sales	18
Food Safety	21
Conclusion	22
Appendix	24

Introduction

In 2019-2020 the Louisiana seafood supply chain was evaluated in two U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Economic Development Office funded studies and conducted by the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and the Meridian Institute. The first study titled “Community Economic Development in Rural Coastal Acadiana Parishes: An In-Depth Review of the Vermilion, St. Mary, and Iberia Parish Seafood Supply Chain (2019)¹” specifically calls for the evaluation and establishment of seafood aggregation points along the central coast (Vermilion, St. Mary and Iberia Parishes). The same research team completed the second study titled “An Economic Development Strategy for Louisiana’s Coastal Seafood Industry (2021)². These studies recommended that the Vermilion, Iberia, and St. Mary Parish region of the coast establish an aggregation point where supply for multiple small producers can be collected, stored, and distributed out of the region.

The Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub Planning Study by the Twin Parish Port District (Port of Delcambre) stems from the evaluation of the Louisiana seafood supply chain. In turn, the feasibility study of the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub showed that the project was feasible and could more than double the Twin Parish Port’s monthly sales of seafood with as little as a 3% market penetration. The location of the Seafood Hub sits on Highway 14 and will benefit from traffic along this east-west corridor and it is very close to Highway 339 which runs north and provides access to markets in southern Lafayette Parish.

The Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub will be roughly 4,500 SF and will include adequate parking and a drive-thru window. Located on Highway 14 near the ballparks in Erath, it is expected that

¹ Community Economic Development in Rural Coastal Acadiana Parishes: An In-Depth Review of the Vermilion, St. Mary, and Iberia Parish Seafood Supply Chain (2019) -
<https://business.louisiana.edu/sites/business/files/Community%20Economic%20Development%20in%20Rural%20Coastal%20Acadiana%20Parishes%20-%20An%20In-Depth%20Review%20of%20the%20Vermilion%20St%20Mary%20and%20Iberia%20Parish%20Seafood%20Supply%20Chains.pdf>

² An Economic Development Strategy for Louisiana’s Coastal Seafood Industry (2021) -
<https://business.louisiana.edu/sites/business/files/ULL-MERIDIAN-FinalReport-010421-ONLINE.pdf>

The Hub will benefit from improvements and investments being made in the ballparks. The Hub will include the following spaces:

- Retail space
- Commercial kitchen space
- Demonstration space
- Processing space
- Refrigerated space
- Freezer space

In the following sections, this business plan will provide insight into the Seafood Hub's mission, overall concept, goals and processes, management and personnel, and a market forecast. The business plan concludes with an evaluation of strategy to get the Seafood Hub open and for marketing the Seafood Hub's operation.

Mission

The mission of the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub is to connect business owners to resources, producers to markets, and markets to consumers for improved quality of life.

Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub Concept

The Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub, operated by the Port of Delcambre, addresses the supply chain gaps identified in the two USDA studies and improves the ability of fishermen, processors, and distributors to compete against foreign imported seafood and to respond to economic impacts of COVID-19. The Seafood Hub will house a commissary kitchen, cold storage, packing and shipping and instruction and training space. The facility will be located in Vermilion Parish and developed by the Twin Parish Port District (Port of Delcambre).

The Seafood Hub will address strategic issues in the shipping of products out of Acadiana by providing space where supply can be aggregated, and larger shipments can be made.

Additionally, the retail space in the Seafood Hub will provide access of locally sourced seafood,

meat, cheese, produce, and value-added to consumers and restaurant buyers. The Seafood Hub will also be a location where producers can learn, experiment, and develop value-added products in the kitchen space. The kitchen will also be used to host cooking demos and food tours that are seeking to experience the regional culture of Acadiana.

The Seafood Hub will serve and support not only the seafood industry but also other agriculture and value-added food producers. The Hub will create exposure for local products and will enhance the economic viability of local food products in the Acadiana region. Through its efforts, the Seafood Hub will help to strengthen the local economy and will help meet the growing need for locally produced seafood and food in Acadiana by connecting fishermen and farmers directly to consumers, restaurants, institutions, and other buyers.

Business Goals of the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub

The Seafood Hub is a multipurpose entity and as such, seeks to increase food production, sales, tourism, and business development. The Seafood Hub will:

- Connect local fishermen, farmers, and value-added food producer to local and regional consumers, retailers, and restaurants through retail and online outlets.
- Expand the Louisiana Direct Seafood online platform to include more locally sourced products.
- Enhance the capabilities of the Louisiana Direct Seafood online platform to improve its shipping, pricing, and promotions programs.
- Through an improved shipping program, increase the sales volume of the Louisiana Direct Seafood program.
- Improve the distribution capacity and capabilities of the region's food producers by providing an inventory aggregation point (cold storage & retail) and to connect with retail customers in Vermilion, Iberia, and Lafayette Parishes.
- Improve the distribution capacity and capabilities of the region's food producers by coordinating and establishing shipping programs transportation companies that can move products to local, regional, and national markets.

- Establish operating guidelines for the shared kitchen space.
- Leverage the Seafood Hub in creating experiences for tourists visiting the Acadiana region.

Location of the Seafood Hub

The Seafood Hub will be located on Highway 14 in the town of Erath, LA. The building will be constructed on a piece of property that has frontage on Highway 14 and is in close proximity to the Erath baseball complex. The Seafood Hub is being constructed in a way that additional facilities/businesses can be constructed on adjacent parcels.

Seafood Hub Process

The Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub will utilize the follow steps to layout its operations process and its process for engaging fishers, farmers, and value-added food producers.

- The Seafood Hub Manager is responsible for establishing an equitable, accessible in-store and online retail program. This program could feature a variety of seafood, agricultural, and value-added food products.
- The Seafood Hub Manager will assist producers with a variety of tasks that are needed to get their food items into the Seafood Hub retail program. These may include processing regulations, packaging regulations, inventory management, and pricing.
- Sellers - Fishers, farmers, and value-added food producers fill out a “Seller’s Application” for the Seafood Hub, request the creation of a retail, online, hybrid (retail & online) account, and provide the necessary documentation to the Seafood Hub Manager.
- Shippers – Fishers, farmers, and value-added food producers fill out a “Shipper’s Application” for the Seafood Hub, request the creation of an online shipper, cold storage, hybrid (online shipper & storage) account, and provide the necessary documentation to the Seafood Hub Manager.
- The Seafood Hub Manager will activate each seller’s and shipper’s account.

- Fishers, farmers, and value-added food producers are responsible for maintaining in-store inventory, for inputting and updating their own online inventory, and setting unit size and pricing for each item.
- Consumers and restaurant buyers can shop and purchase product through the Seafood Hub retail store during established business hours.
- Consumers and restaurant buyers browse online from multiple fishers, farmers, and value-added food producers. Through Louisiana Direct Seafood, buyers can learn about the producer and compare products.
- Consumers and restaurant buyers can shop and place orders online 24/7 through the Louisiana Direct Seafood online store.
- The Seafood Hub Manager will aggregate online orders at least twice per week. Based on these dates, a shipping schedule will be established and shared with each online customer.
- Transactions/purchases will take place either online or in the retail store. In the case of an institutional or restaurant buyer, the Seafood Hub Manager will be responsible for establishing credit terms, purchase orders, invoicing, etc.
- The Seafood Hub will host fisher, farmer, and value-added food producer “meet and greet” events to create exposure for the producers and for the Seafood Hub.
- The Seafood Hub will market to and engage with local and out of state tour operators who are arranging cultural experiences for tourists.
- The Seafood Hub Manager will establish guidelines for reserving, operating, and cleaning the rentable, shared kitchen space.
- The Seafood Hub will host and coordinate an annual meeting with participating producers to gain insight into what is working and what needs to be improved.

Management

The Port of Delcambre will select a third-party operator to run the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub. This Operator will oversee and provide the services discussed in the Seafood Hub Process. The Port Commission will maintain oversight while the third-party will operate The Hub and the

Delcambre and Louisiana Direct Seafood Programs. As such, the Operator will lease the facility from the Twin Parish Port Commission and will enter into an agreement with the Port that addresses at a minimum the rights and operating expectations of the Direct Seafood Programs, engagement and inclusion of fishermen and product in retail space and on website, minimum marketing efforts and budgets, service expectations, and programming for fishermen.

In order to find success, the Seafood Hub must operate as a gathering point for seafood that is produced across the Louisiana Coast. As such, The Hub should be open and inclusive, rather than exclusive to select fishermen. The third-party operator needs to focus on creating a diverse product line that encourages the development of new products and facilitates the growth of the industry. Additionally, the Seafood Hub should also be open to agricultural and value-added food producers beyond seafood. The Twin Parish Port Commission seeks to include farmers and chefs that produce vegetables, non-seafood value-added food products, beverages, etc. in the retail store and other service areas offered through the Seafood Hub.

The Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub will be roughly 4,500 SF and will include adequate parking and a drive-thru window. Located on Highway 14 near the ballparks in Erath, it is expected that The Hub will benefit from improvements and investments being made in the ballparks. The Hub will include the following spaces:

- Retail space
- Commercial kitchen space
- Demonstration space
- Processing space
- Refrigerated space
- Freezer space

The technical characteristics and specifications of the required plant and equipment will be made in conjunction with the third-party operator.

Partner Organizations

- Louisiana State University, AgCenter
- Louisiana Sea Grant
- Iberia Industrial Development Foundation
- Vermilion Economic Development Alliance
- Small Business Development Center – University of Louisiana, Lafayette

Markets to Be Served – Current & Potential

The market for the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub was detailed in its Feasibility Study and the market potential is also presented here.

Demographics

Understanding the market for the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub requires a stratification of potential customers relative to their proximity to the market. While the market will be located in Erath, LA, it is within a 15 mile drive of 8 other cities, towns, and villages (Abbeville, Kaplan, Maurice, Milton, Lafayette, Broussard, Youngsville, and New Iberia). These municipalities lie in a 4 parish region that has a population of 423,217 people. However, Lafayette Parish accounts for over 50% of the region's population and only its southern region is within a 15 mile drive from Erath. A detailed profile of city, parish, and regional demographics is provided in the Appendix.

Of particular interest to the feasibility of the Seafood Hub are people who work or commute to work within the immediate Erath/Delcambre area, within the Highway 14 corridor (Kaplan – Erath – Delcambre – New Iberia), and within the southern Lafayette Parish/Highway 14 region. The evaluation of people who work or commute to work in the vicinity of the Seafood Hub will provide insight into the number of people seeking food to prepare and/or food that is ready to eat during the work week. This analysis also shows the direction in which people commute to and from work. This helps to understand traffic patterns and provides insight into the type of

marketing that is needed to reach people in different areas. Each of these regions are profiled below.

As shown in Figure 1.1, the population immediately adjacent to the Seafood Hub in Erath and Delcambre has 2,246 employed people. Of this population, 130 of them remain in the Erath and Delcambre for work and 2,116 of them leave the area for work each day. Additionally, 448 people commute to Erath/Delcambre for employment.

Figure 1.1 – Commute Patterns & Living Location - Erath/Delcambre Region

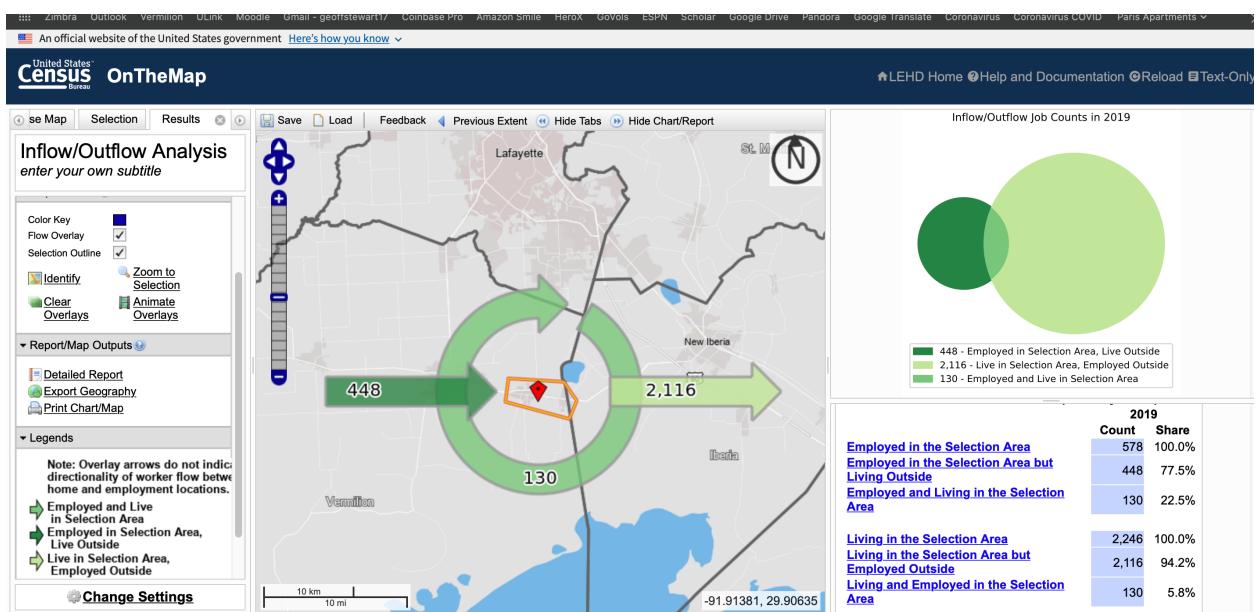


Figure 1.2 shows that 31.3% of the people in Erath/Delcambre commute less than 10 miles (majority towards Abbeville), 44.5% travel 10-24 miles (majority towards Lafayette & New Iberia), and 18.8% travel 50 or more miles to work. Figure 1.3 shows that of those working in Erath/Delcambre, 60.9% come from within 10 miles, 20.5% come from 10-24 miles of the region (majority from Lafayette region), and 12.5% come to the region from 50 or more miles away. Putting these commute patterns in perspective, the location of the Seafood Hub on Highway 14 is conveniently located on or near major road arteries which move 2,694 people in and out of the immediate area on a daily basis for work.

Figure 1.2 – Commute Patterns Home to Work - Erath/Delcambre Region

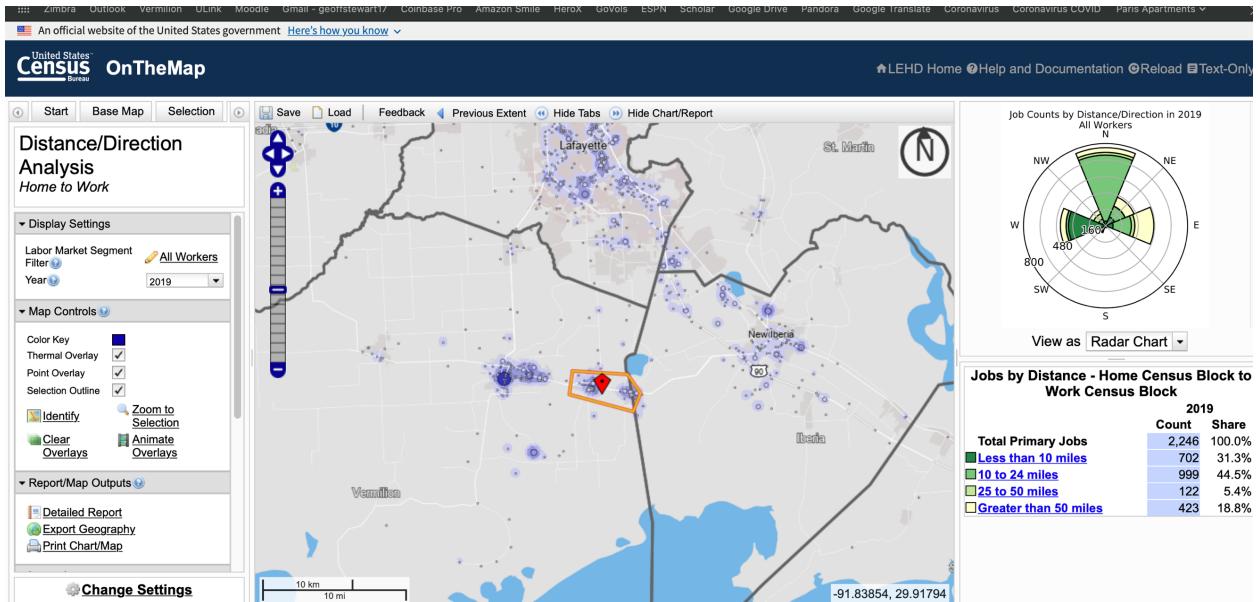
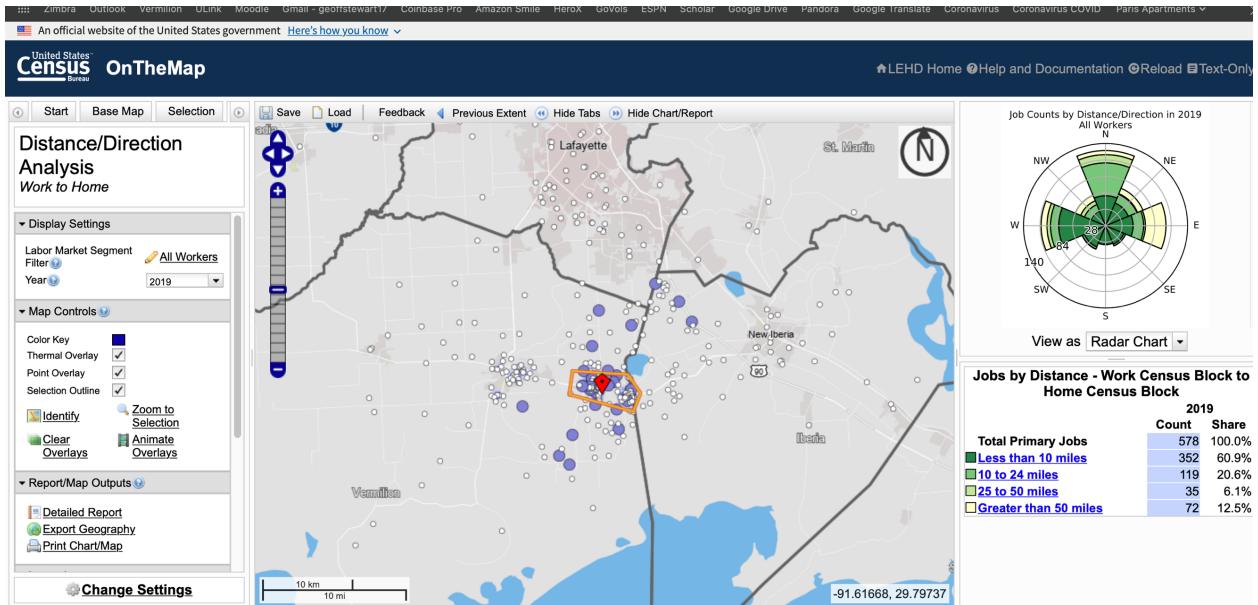


Figure 1.3 – Commute Patterns Work to Home - Erath/Delcambre Region



The second analysis area includes Erath/Delcambre and follows Highway 14 east and west out of Erath/Delcambre to capture other population centers in Kaplan, Abbeville, and New Iberia.

Additionally, the analysis region also follows Highway 339 north to the Vermilion Parish line to capture a region that has a growing residential population. As shown in Figure 2.1, the

population within the “Highway 14 Corridor” has 30,647 employed people living in the region. Of this population, 10,411 of them remain in the Highway 14 Corridor for work and 20,236 of them leave the area for work. Additionally, 16,752 people commute to the Highway 14 Corridor for employment.

Figure 2.1 - Commute Patterns & Living Locations - Highway 14 Corridor

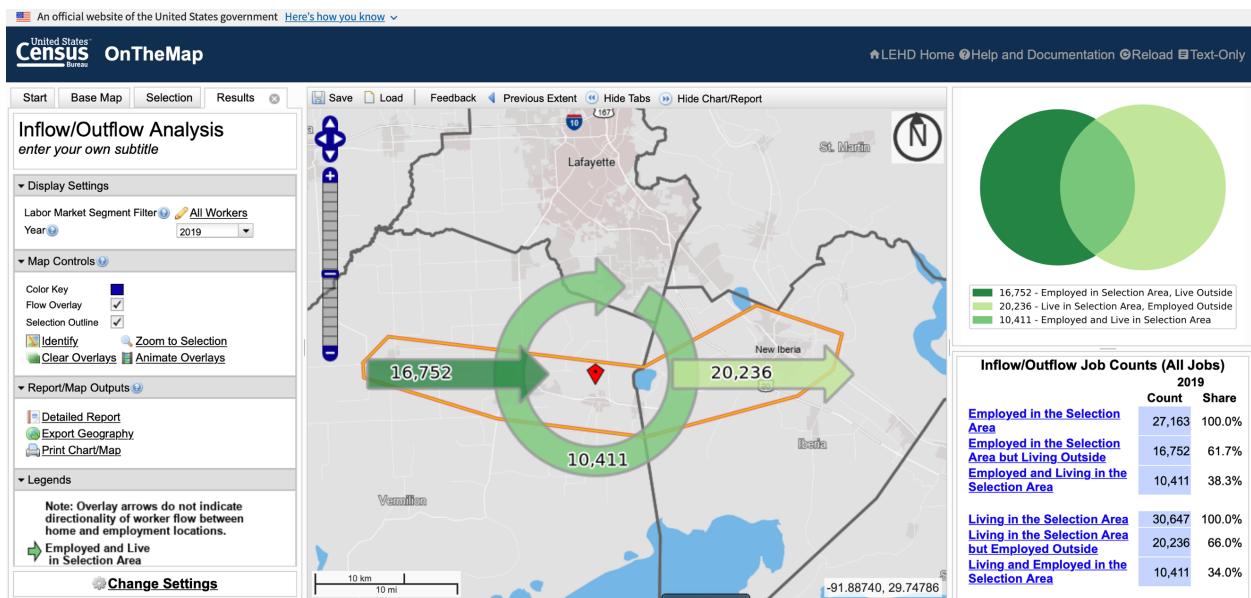


Figure 2.2 shows that 39.7% of the people in the corridor commute less than 10 miles and 34.7% travel 10-24 miles. Interestingly, 19.5% commute 50 or more miles to work. Figure 2.3 shows that of those working in the corridor, 50.1% come from within 10 miles, 26.3% travel 10-24 miles of the region and 15.8% come from 50 or more miles away. Putting these commute patterns in perspective, the location of the Seafood Hub on Highway 14 in Erath is centrally located on a state highway and within 10 miles of Highways 167 and 339 which facilitate traffic north/south to and from Lafayette and it is within 10 miles of Highway 90 which has limited access entry and connects Lafayette to New Orleans. In conclusion, the Seafood Hub is centrally located on or near major road arteries which move 47,399 people in and out of the corridor on a daily basis for work.

Figure 2.2 - Commute Patterns Home to Work - Highway 14 Corridor

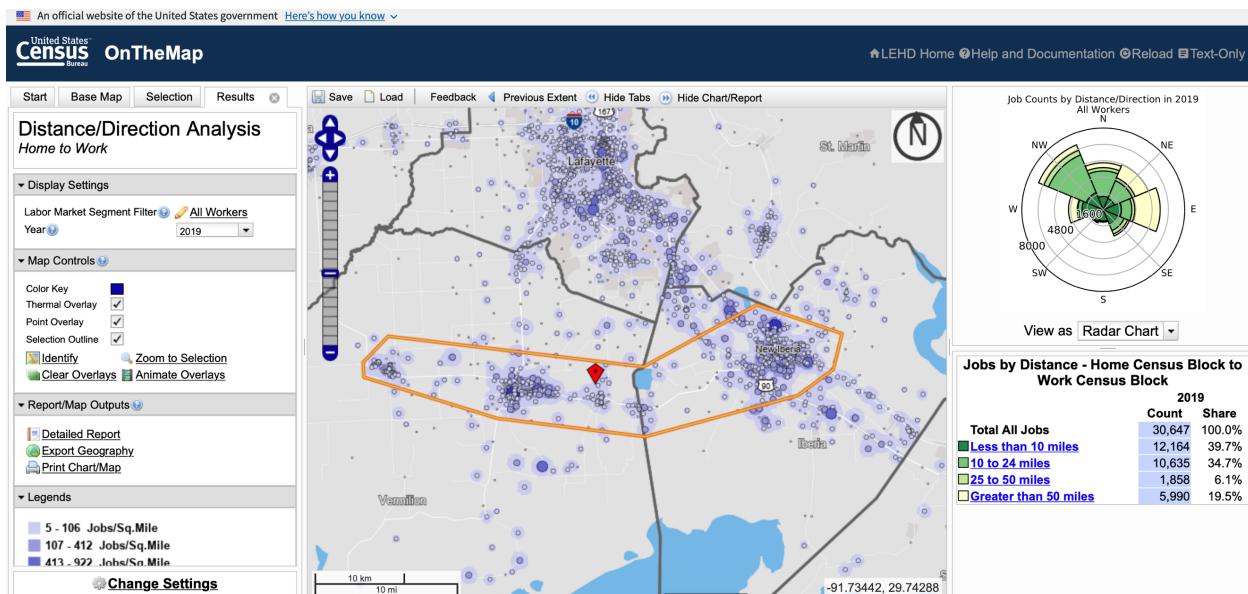
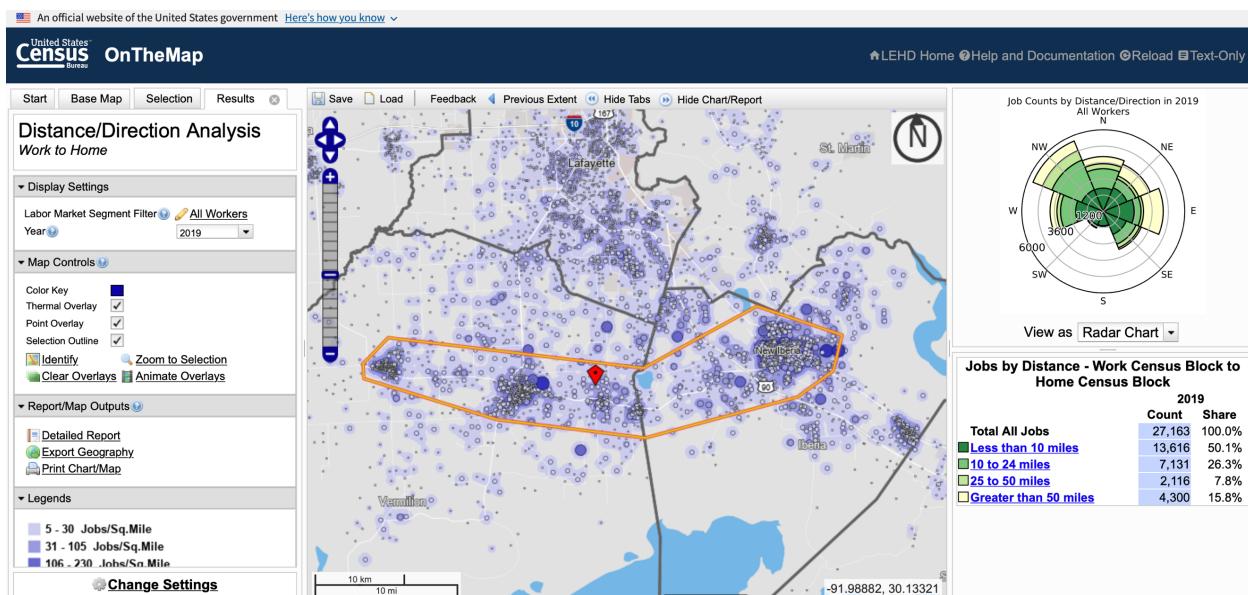


Figure 2.3 - Commute Patterns Work to Home - Highway 14 Corridor



The third and final analysis area seeks to understand the commute patterns of people who live north of the Seafood Hub (Erath/Delcambre) and north of the Highway 14 Corridor. This analysis captures people who live in Maurice, Youngsville, Broussard, and southern Lafayette (all within 15 miles of the Seafood Hub). As shown in Figure 2.1, the population within the “Northern District” has 32,411 employed people living in the region. Of this population, 5,896

of them remain in the Northern District for work and 26,515 of them leave the area for work. Additionally, 21,086 people commute to the Northern District for employment.

Figure 3.1 - Commute Patterns & Living Locations – Northern District

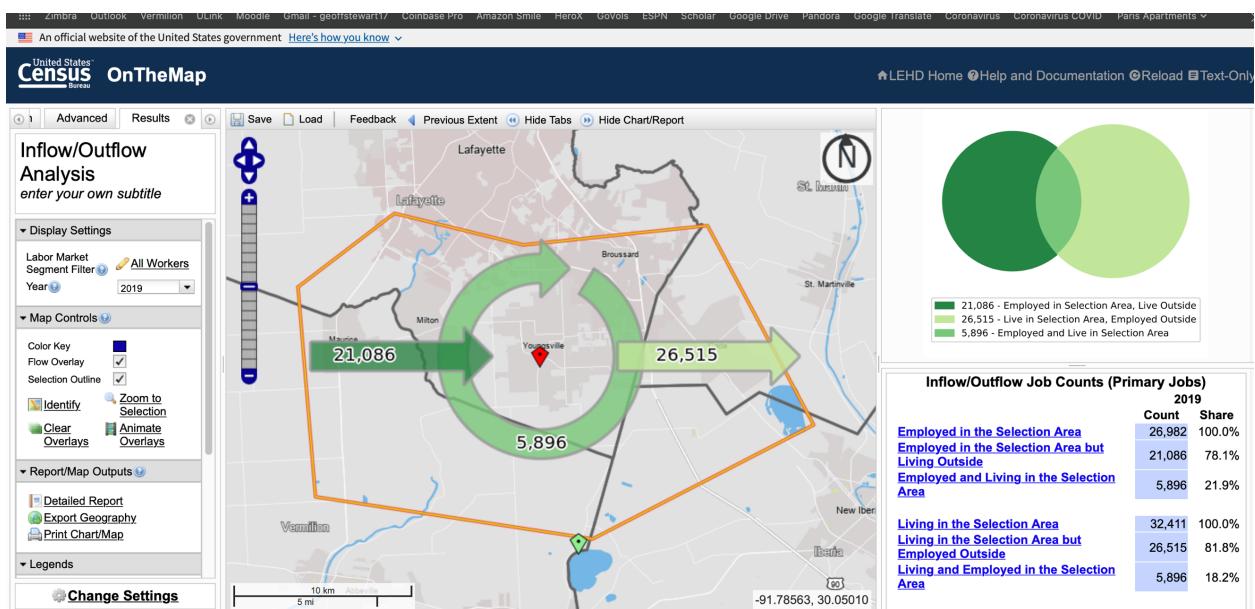
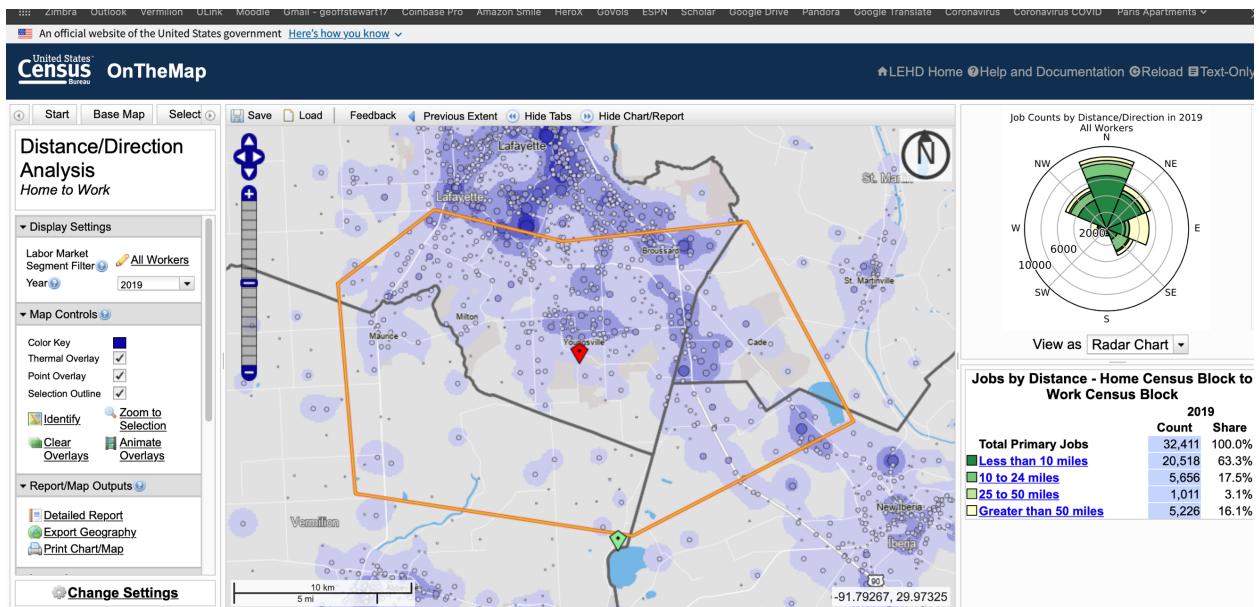


Figure 3.2 shows that 63.3% of the people in the corridor commute less than 10 miles, 17.5% travel 10-24 miles, and 16.1% commute 50 or more miles to work. Since this region is north of the Seafood Hub's Highway 14 location, commuters to this region are not likely to cross the Seafood Hub in their traffic patterns as they are primarily traveling from areas north of the Northern District. This traffic pattern therefore moves these commuters north or away from the Seafood Hub after work.

Considering the 32,411 workers who live in the Northern District, the location of the Seafood Hub is within 15 miles of a population center that has 14 times the employed works as the immediately adjacent region of Erath/Delcambre (2,246). While the potential to reach people in the Northern District is possible, the Seafood Hub must recognize that it has to convince people to move in a different direction (south) than their normal commute pattern. This inevitably creates the strategic need for a marketing “call to action” and “value proposition” that can motivate consumers to travel to The Hub outside of their daily commute time.

Figure 3.2 - Commute Patterns Home to Work – Northern District



Market Estimate – Consumers & Market Forecast

Table 1 summarizes the previous three analysis areas and the employed population. The analysis areas begin with the Seafood Hub's immediate location in Erath/Delcambre. Next, the Highway 14 Corridor (which includes Erath/Delcambre) provides insight into the population centers within Vermilion Parish and in New Iberia. Finally, the Northern District includes the employed population that resides within 15 miles north of the Highway 14 corridor and primarily commute to areas north of the Highway 14 corridor.

Table 1 – Summary of Employed Population by Geographic Area

Analysis Area	Employed & Living in Area	Employed & Living Outside the Area	1% Market Penetration of Living In Area	3% Market Penetration of Living In Area	5% Market Penetration of Living In Area
Erath/ Delcambre	2,246	448	22.46	67.38	112.3
Highway 14 Corridor	30,647	16,752	306.47	919.41	1,532.35
Northern District	32,411	21,086	324.11	972.33	1620.55
Combined Hwy 14 & Northern District	63,058	37,838	630.58	1,891.74	3,152.9

The combined areas of the Highway 14 Corridor and the Northern District show that there are 63,058 employed people living within 15 miles of the Seafood Hub's location. A market penetration of 1% generates 630.58 customers who are employed. If the Seafood Hub can create a market penetration of 3%, the Hub will have 1,891.74 customers who are employed. Lastly, a market penetration of 5% would enable the Hub to do business with 3,152.9 employed customers.

The Port of Delcambre's current efforts to facilitate the sales of seafood includes the Louisiana Direct Seafood website, Moncus Park Farmer's Market, Gonsoulin Land & Cattle, and Broussard Commons market. Across these four outlets, approximately 880 orders are processed monthly.

Based on a conservative, 3% market penetration of the market within 15 miles of The Hub and assuming only 1 transaction/customer in a month, The Seafood Hub has the potential to generate 1,891 monthly orders. Obtaining a 3% market penetration would more than double the number of monthly seafood sales coming out of our region.

Overview of Strategy

The strategy for the development and opening of the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub is established by looking at tasks that need to be addressed in opening and operating the facility and by identifying strategies for marketing sales activities. Each of these are detailed below.

Operations & Facility Development

- Third-Party Operator: The Port Commission will solicit and select a third-party operator to assist in the final design, outfitting, and operations of the Seafood Hub.
- Personnel: The Seafood Hub, managed by the third-party operator, will hire a manager to oversee general operations, secure producers for the retail and online stores, maintain efficiency in the cold storage facility, manage the shared kitchen schedule, build out the shipping program, market all services provided, and maintain accounting and finances of the operation. The Manager will also be responsible for maintaining a

staff that will ensure the Seafood Hub is open to the public during establishing hours of operation.

- Purchase and Install Commercial Kitchen Equipment: The kitchen should be equipped to facilitate the success of a small value-added food producer. Besides the requisite cooking and refrigeration equipment needed, machinery for the packaging and labeling of items is needed to help get product ready for market.
- Purchase and Installation of Cold Storage: While the entire facility is only 4,500 SF, maximizing cold storage space is encouraged. There is a shortage of cold storage space in Acadiana and the Seafood Hub is poised to become a desired option in cold storage.
- Purchase Retail Store Refrigerators/Freezers, Fixtures, and Point of Sale Systems: The retail portion of the Seafood Hub should be outfitted with equipment that creates a positive, engaging experience for the customers. As such, equipment must be functional while facilitating the effective display of products. Fixtures for dry goods like, fish fry, pots, cooking tools, etc. should also be chosen with the customer experience in mind.
 - The point of sale systems for the drive thru and in-store counter should include functionality that helps the Operator manage inventory, create product barcodes, price and change prices, and monitor the health of the Seafood Hub through business operation dashboards. Additionally, menus for the drive thru point of purchase should be considered and designed to be easy to use and change.
- Hazard and Critical Control Point (HACCP) planning for kitchen, cold storage, and aggregation sites: Based on national standards, the operator is responsible for developing HACCP Plans for all appropriate areas including the kitchen, cold-storage, and aggregation points.
- Development of a food safety operating manual: All documents and trainings related to food safety will be completed by fishers, farmers, and value-added food producers with the help of the Seafood Hub manager.

- Transition Delcambre and Louisiana Direct Seafood websites to the Operator: As the Operator of the Seafood Hub, the Port of Delcambre will transfer operations of the Delcambre and Louisiana Direct Seafood websites to the Operator. The Port of Delcambre will maintain ownership and control of the websites. As such, the Port will transfer operations to the Operator as part of the Operating Agreement.
 - The Operator is charged with expanding the product selection on the website and with establishing a shipping program that will reduce the shipping cost associated with frozen seafood and other food products.
- Develop a training manual or course for fishers, farmers, and value-added food producers: The Seafood Hub needs to engage, encourage, and educate producers on how to create new opportunities by doing business through the Seafood Hub.
- Exterior Signage and Lighting: The Seafood Hub will be set back from Highway 14 and will require eye-catching signage to grab the attention of travelers. In particular, a digital board that can show a “catch of the day,” “fresh catch,” “guest appearances,” etc. should be part of the overall outdoor signage strategy.

Marketing and Sales

While seafood is a staple on menus and family tables, access to and availability of locally sourced seafood is a challenge within Acadiana. Delcambre is known for fresh seafood, but it is location where people go for the monthly Seafood and Farmers Market or for meet-ups with fishermen at the docks. The Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub is poised to improve the sales of locally produced seafood, agricultural, and value-added food products by providing consistent supply of products in the retail store and in the online store. Additionally, the Seafood Hub is positioned to serve as a catalyst for engaging more producers in developing value-added products and for increasing the diversity and selection of products that are available in the market. As an aggregation point, the Seafood Hub becomes a place where buyers (consumer and businesses) gain access to products from multiple producers in a single retail or online outlet. Without the Seafood Hub, these customers would have to make separate trips to each individual producer to procure product.

The third-party operator will be responsible for the marketing of the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub and for the in-store and online sales activity. Marketing is a critical strategic area because the Seafood Hub needs to create awareness in the market and needs to position its brand as a trusted, local outlet for the best, locally sourced seafood and value-added food products. To establish this position, it is imperative that the Operator build a strong network of producers and establish a consistent supply of in-demand items like shrimp throughout the year and seasonal items when they are available. Having product in stock is critical to the Seafood Hub's ability to make promises to customers through various marketing communications.

Specific marketing tactics are detailed below:

- Branding
 - The Port of Delcambre has developed a logo for the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub.



- The logo reflects the seafood of the local area while also featuring agriculture products like beef and vegetables.
- The inclusion of products beyond seafood reinforces that the Seafood Hub is open to agriculture and value-added food products.
- Advertising – Paid for advertising is needed to effectively reach customers along the Highway 14 corridor and in southern Lafayette Parish. The Port of Delcambre is currently running advertisements in The Acadiana Advocate newspaper for the Louisiana Direct Seafood online program. Under the operation of this third-party

provider, this type of advertising is expected to continue and expanded to feature the Seafood Hub's retail store location.

- Online and Regional Newspapers – Advertising in The Acadiana Advocate is effective in reaching a regional audience across Lafayette Parish and Acadiana. Additionally, advertising in the Abbeville Meridional, Kaplan Herald, and the Daily Iberian will provide local coverage within the Highway 14 corridor. The Abbeville and Kaplan papers are part of the Louisiana State Newspapers³ organization and may provide an opportunity the Seafood Hub to receive better pricing in exchange for purchase advertising spots in multiple markets. The other 11 markets in the Louisiana State Newspapers organization may also offer outlets for promoting the online store or pre-purchase and pickup service.
- Social Media – Paid promotion of social media posts will enable the Seafood Hub to expose impactful content to targeted audiences in the Highway 14 corridor and southern Lafayette Parish. Additionally, markets outside of the local can be targeted to purchase through Louisiana Direct Seafood.
- Public Relations
 - Create press releases to announce new products and to tell the story of its producer.
 - Develop relationships with local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations; leverage relationships in creating publicity for the Seafood Hub and for producers who prepare product and/or sell through the Seafood Hub.
- Direct Marketing – As part of the operating agreement, the third-party operator should receive the customer database from Louisiana Direct Seafood. Additionally, the point of sale system in the retail location should be used to capture contact information from in-store customers. The maintenance of this database provides the Seafood Hub with contact information that can be leveraged in an email marketing campaign. Leveraging an email marketing service, like Mail Chimp, etc., the Seafood Hub should establish weekly and monthly newsletters that can be delivered directly to existing customers.

³ <https://www.louisianastatenewspapers.com>

- Event Marketing – Events provide a venue for customers to engage and to co-create value with the Seafood Hub. Customers in today’s market are looking for authentic experiences, value the culture of the local region, and have a keen interest in knowing where their food comes from. With respect to locally sourced products, customers want to know who produced the seafood, agricultural, or value-added food product. The fisher’s or farmer’s story and how they get product to market is interesting and of great value to customers. Some events that can be leveraged to market the Seafood Hub include but are not limited to:
 - Tour Operators – Cooking demonstrations and/or classes can be arranged directly with tour operators that arrange cultural experiences for tourists. The Cajun Food Tours⁴ is an example of an operator that can be engaged to establish a program at the Seafood Hub during their tours.
 - Meet and Greets with Fishers, Farmers, and other Producers – In today’s experienced based economy, customers want to connect with those who produce the items they purchase. In the case of the Seafood Hub, events can be used to bring producer and customers together and to facilitate the purchase of product.
 - Information and Education Events – While the Seafood Hub will serve as an aggregation point for supply (retail and cold storage), the Hub can also bring the industry together for seminars, workshops, or other industry events. For example, the Seafood Hub can use events like “Innovations in Processing & Packaging” to educate small processors while exposing them to the Seafood Hub and its’ capability for helping them sell product.

Food Safety

The Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub will maintain the highest food safety standards to ensure product quality, safety, and customer confidence. The Seafood Hub will operate by and uphold

⁴ <https://www.cajunfoodtours.com>

all applicable federal, state, and local regulations. Included is maintaining the requisite licenses from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF), Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), and Louisiana Department of Health (LDH). All sellers must abide by LDAF, LDWF, and LDH regulations and maintain quality production standards that comply with current county, state, and federal food safety requirements for each product category. The operator of the Seafood Hub and all Sellers must also maintain liability insurance. The Seafood Hub will develop and abide by a HACCP plan for logistics and food safety. The Seafood Hub's kitchen/processing space, aggregation sites, and cold storage will be operated and maintained according to the HACCP plans. The Seafood Hub will work closely with all relevant Louisiana State Agencies to ensure that information about food safety-related programs, regulations, and educational opportunities are available to participating fishers, farmers, and value-added food producers.

Conclusion

The feasibility study of the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub showed that the project was feasible and could more than double the Twin Parish Port's monthly sales of seafood with as little as a 3% market penetration. The location of the Seafood Hub sits on Highway 14 and will benefit from traffic along this east-west corridor and it is very close to Highway 339 which runs north and provides access to markets in southern Lafayette Parish.

The Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub will be roughly 4,500 SF and will include adequate parking and a drive-thru window. Located on Highway 14 near the ballparks in Erath, it is expected that The Hub will benefit from improvements and investments being made in the ballparks. The Hub will include the following spaces:

- Retail space
- Commercial kitchen space
- Demonstration space
- Processing space
- Refrigerated space

- Freezer space

To achieve the 3% market penetration goal, this business plan lays out goals that orient the Seafood Hub towards establishing relationships with producers, focus on the expansion of Louisiana Direct Seafood, establish retail operations for local sales, address shipping challenges by creating a shipping program for local producers, establish guidelines for the shared kitchen space, and leverage the hub to create experiences for tourists visiting the area. Suggestions for establishing the process by with the Seafood Hub will operate are also included.

From a strategy perspective, the business plan focuses on activities needed to establish and open the Seafood Hub and to effectively market and sell product through the Seafood Hub's retail location and the Louisiana Direct Seafood website. With respect to opening the Seafood Hub, the major initiative that has to be undertaken is the solicitation and selection of an Operator to run the Acadiana Regional Seafood Hub. The selection of the Operator will then provide the Port of Delcambre a partner with whom they can design the various spaces and begin procuring the requisite equipment. The marketing of the Seafood Hub will leverage traditional communications tools like press releases, advertising, and direct marketing. All three of these modes rely on the creation of content that can featured in newspapers and also on social media. Event marketing is the final strategic marketing tool and provides room for creativity. Customers are interested in the source of their food and how it gets to market. Thus, events that bring customers and producers together provide an opportunity for the Seafood Lab to connect fishers, farmers, and value-added food producers with customers. It is through these types of events that the Seafood Hub can facilitate the success of producers and ultimately drive the growth of the regional seafood industry.

Appendix

About Vermilion Marketing & Opinion Research

Vermilion Marketing & Opinion Research is a boutique marketing research and strategy firm located in Lafayette, LA. Vermilion Marketing is led by Geoffrey Stewart, Ph.D. and Anjanette Guidry Stewart. Dr. Stewart has over 20 years of marketing and economic development experience. Mrs. Stewart has extensive experience in supply chain management, global sourcing, and procurement. Vermilion's clients have include private sector businesses, non-profit organizations, communities (cities and parishes), and economic development agencies. Vermilion Marketing is located in Lafayette, LA.