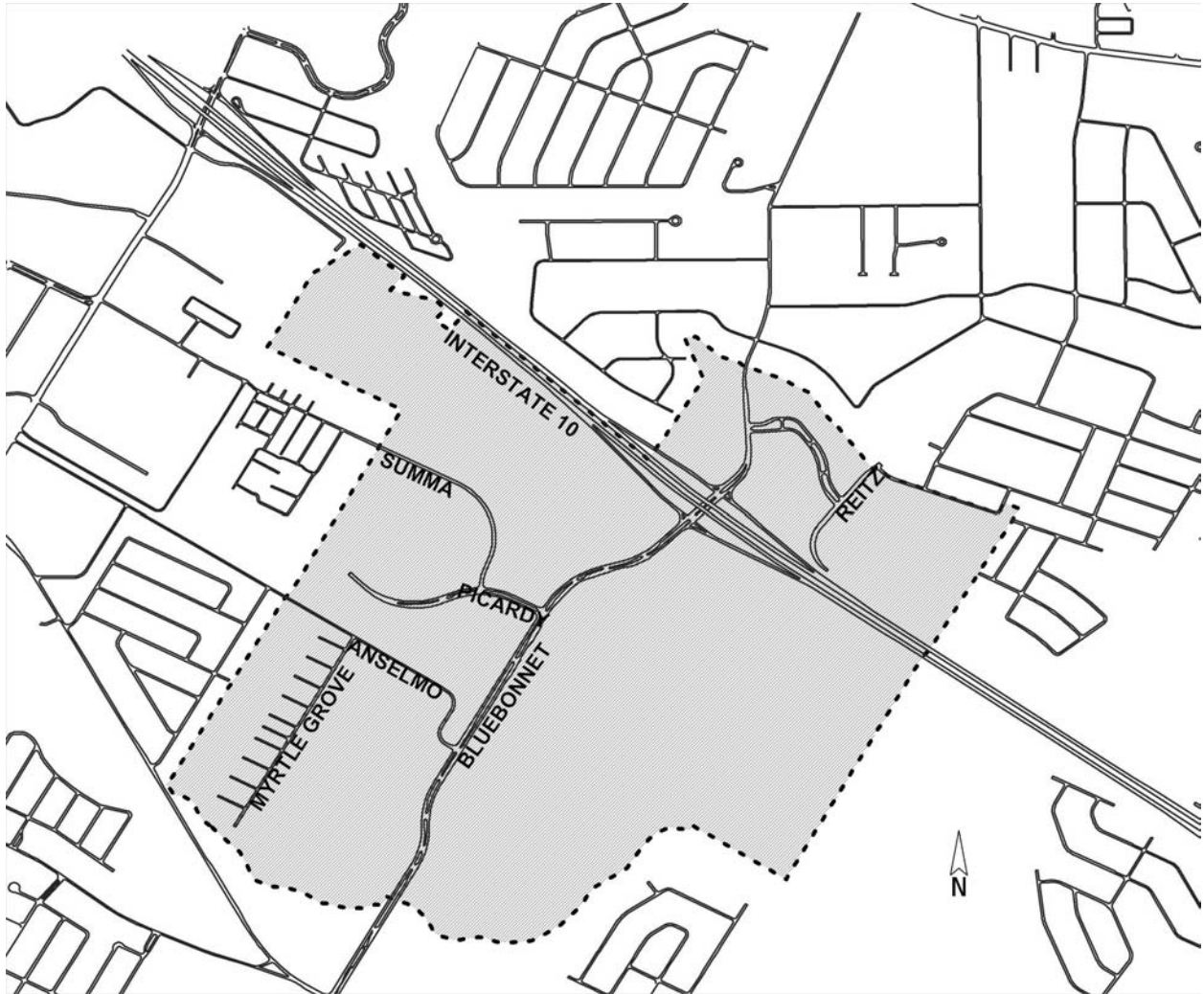


GROWTH CENTER COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS REPORT



GROWTH CENTER 6

PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF BATON ROUGE/ PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

February 10, 2004
Bluebonnet Regional Branch Library
9200 Bluebonnet Boulevard

The Horizon Plan, with the support of the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council, advocates the implementation of community planning in the designated Growth Centers of the Parish. This community planning initiative began in 2003 and will continue through 2007.

It is important that the Horizon Plan continues to reflect the vision that City-Parish residents have for their Parish while responding to current development conditions in the City-Parish. The Horizon Plan identifies a comprehensive plan for the orderly growth of the Parish by identifying where particular land use categories are appropriate. This Community Planning process in the designated Growth Centers involves a study of Horizon Plan land use categories and elements of community design, with the intention of increasing citizen participation in identifying the issues of concerns about growth and design in the Parish. This Community Planning in the Growth Centers involves no change or recommendations for change of zoning districts or the allowable uses within them.

WHAT IS A GROWTH CENTER?

Growth Centers are areas of concentrated activity such as retail, office, public facilities, a range of residential development, cultural, and recreational activities linked with a variety of transportation choices such as vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian.

Regional Growth Centers include regional shopping centers, institutions, high-density office and residential complexes, medical centers and other major activities serving the entire parish.

Community Growth Centers include community shopping centers, medium to high-density office and residential complexes, public and recreational facilities and similar activities serving community areas.

Growth Center 6 is a *Regional* Growth Center.

WHEN WERE GROWTH CENTERS DESIGNATED?

Growth Centers were originally designated in the 1992 Horizon Plan. The Planning Commission studied these areas in more detail for the first update of the Horizon Plan 1992-1997, and exact boundaries were delineated for each Growth Center. For the second update of the Horizon Plan, 1998-2002, these boundaries were studied and amended or re-affirmed with input from the community during the Neighborhood/Subarea Planning Process.

GROWTH CENTER PUBLIC MEETINGS

The purpose of the public meetings is to give residents, patrons, and business owners an opportunity to participate in planning for their Community or Regional Growth Center. Elements to be studied in each Growth Center include **transportation, land use, environmental features, and design**. Topics for discussion at the meetings include Horizon Plan land use, bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities, landscape improvements, and possible design guidelines for future construction in Growth Centers.

Growth Center Elements

A variety of elements work together to create the daily experience of living, working, eating, and shopping within the Growth Center. The elements have been identified for the purpose of this report as transportation, land use, environment, and design. Details contained within these elements include roads, sidewalks, shopping, services, architectural features, and natural resources. Following is a brief inventory of elements in Growth Center 6.

TRANSPORTATION

Public Transportation

The Capital Transportation Corporation Route 17-Bluebonnet bus line services the Growth Center.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Amenities

The pedestrian amenities are isolated and the bus stops are unsheltered. There is a vehicular bridge connecting the Mall of Louisiana with other retail outlets across Ward's Creek. There are no bike path connections in the Growth Center.

Major Street Plan

Bluebonnet Boulevard, Picardy Avenue and Summa Avenue are major streets in the area. Bluebonnet Boulevard, Picardy Avenue and Summa Avenue are classified as completed or programmed. Essen Park and Midway Boulevard are classified as future pavement and right-of-way required.

Capital Improvement Program

The City-Parish Capital Improvements Program contains Capital Improvement Projects, Transportation Improvement Programs, Community Development Projects and Federal Aid Projects that are either currently under construction, under design or complete.

Growth Center 6 Current Capital Improvement Projects

Program	Year	Improvement Type	Status
Bluebonnet Road Realignment- I-10 to Airline	1997- 2002	New 5-lane Roadway	Completed
I-10 Frontage Roads- Bluebonnet Boulevard to Siegen Lane	2003- 2007	New Road	Acquiring R/W
Picardy Avenue Extension- Picardy Avenue to Bluebonnet Boulevard	2003- 2007	New Road	Under Design

LAND USE

Horizon Plan Land Use Categories

Residential Estate/ Agriculture

Includes areas of rural character, agricultural lands, significant natural areas and single-family residential uses.

Low Density Residential (LDR)

Includes areas where single-family detached housing will be the predominant land use.

Medium Density Residential (MDR)

Includes areas where small single family, two family and multi-family housing of a spacious character, and garden and town homes will be predominant.

High Density Residential (HDR)

Includes areas where multi-family housing, high-rise housing structures and very small, tightly spaced single-family housing will be predominant.

Neighborhood Office (NO)

Includes areas of small offices, professional offices and personal services to serve the needs of surrounding residential areas.

General Office (GO)

Includes areas where large or multi-storied professional, general administrative or non-retail sales offices are located.

Neighborhood Commercial (NC)

Includes areas of small retail stores, such as corner groceries, cafes and drugstores, to serve the needs of surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Light Commercial (LC)

Includes a variety of commercial and miscellaneous service activities generally serving a wide area and located primarily along existing major thoroughfares.

Heavy Commercial (HC)

Includes a variety of commercial and miscellaneous service activities, such as hotels, shopping malls and department stores, which are relatively large in size, generate a large volume of traffic or impact large areas of land and existing development.

Commercial Warehousing (CW)

Includes facilities characterized by extensive warehousing and frequent heavy trucking activity, but not involved in manufacturing or production.

Industrial

Includes areas where manufacturing, chemicals, refining, warehousing, open storage and similar industrial facilities will be the predominate uses.

Public/Semi-Public

Includes areas where government, educational, religious, and charitable uses will be the primary land use activities.

Transportation, Communication and Utilities

Includes areas where railroad, trucking, aviation, ports, automobile parking, communication and utility facilities will be dominant.

Recreation

Includes parks, recreational activities, amusements, group camps, cultural activities, and public assembly facilities.

Planned Unit Development

Includes areas where developments under the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions of the Unified Development Code have been approved by the Planning Commission. Development in these areas will follow a unified site design plan for a mix of compatible land uses, clustering of buildings, increased densities and common open space.

LAND USE ANALYSIS

Existing Land Use

The existing land use for Growth Center 6 includes a mixture of Vacant; Commercial; Public/Semi-public; Transportation, Communication, and Utilities; and Low, and Medium Density Residential.

The current (2004) approximate percentages of existing land use in Growth Center 6 are as follows:

Existing Land Use	Estimated percentage of existing land use
Vacant	34%
Commercial	29%
Public/ Semi-Public	22%
Office	13%
Low Density Residential	1%
Medium Density Residential	>1%
Transportation, Communication, and Utilities	>1%
Total	100%

Zoning

The existing zoning in Growth Center 6 includes a mixture of C2 (Heavy Commercial), C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- restaurant), C1 (Light Commercial), A1 (Single Family Residential), A3.1 (Limited Residential), B1 (Transition), B (Off Street Parking), C-AB-2 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- bars and lounges), and HC2 (Heavy Commercial).

There have been 12 requests for rezoning in Growth Center 6 since 1994. Five (5) of the requests were rezoning from C2 (Heavy Commercial) to C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage). Two (2) requests were from A1 (Single Family Residential) to C2 (Heavy Commercial). Three (3) of the requests were from A1 (Single Family Residential) to HC2 (Heavy Commercial 2), SPUD (Small Planned Unit Development) and A2.7 (Single Family Residential). Two (2) requests were rezoning from C2 (Heavy Commercial) to HC2 (Heavy Commercial 2) and C-AB-2 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage). Of the 12 requests for rezoning since 1994, all 12 were approved.

The current (2004) approximate percentages of Zoning in Growth Center 6 are as follows:

Zoning	Estimated percentage of existing zoning
C2 (Heavy Commercial)	65%
HC2 (Heavy Commercial)	9%
C1 (Light Commercial)	6%
B1 (Transition)	6%
A1 (Single Family Residential)	4%
C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- Restaurant)	4%
C-AB-2 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- Bars and lounges)	2%
A2.6 (Zero Lot Line Residential)	2%
A3.1 (Limited Residential)	2%
Total	100%

Horizon Plan

The Horizon Plan land use for Growth Center 6 includes a mixture of General Office, Heavy Commercial, Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Commercial Warehousing, and Planned Unit Development land use.

The current (2004) Horizon Plan land use in Growth Center 6, is as follows:

Horizon Plan Land Use	Estimated percentage of Horizon Plan Land Use
General Office	39%
Heavy Commercial	32%
Planned Unit Development	16%
Commercial Warehousing	7%
Medium Density Residential	4%
Low Density Residential	2%
Total	100%

ENVIRONMENT

Conservation Areas

The Horizon Plan identifies potential Conservation Areas for the Parish as areas generally associated with bottomland hardwood forests, upland or flatland forests and areas of frequent flooding within the 100-year flood plain. There are no Conservation Areas in the Growth Center.

Water and Natural Area Associations

Dawson Creek is the southern boundary of Growth Center 6. Ward's Creek is located inside the Growth Center near the eastern boundary.

DESIGN

Landscape Character

The roads generally have wide right-of-ways for landscape plantings. North of the interstate there is bottomland hardwood forest near the medical buildings. There are planter medians along Bluebonnet Boulevard and Blue Cross Parkway.

Architectural Character

There is a stucco Spanish influence to the area north of Interstate 10. In the northwest area, there are postmodern Georgian style medical buildings and colored brick. The Mall of Louisiana and surrounding outparcels have an individual, large-scale character that dominates the center of the Growth Center.

Signage Character

The heaviest concentration of signage is on Bluebonnet Boulevard between the Kansas City Southern Railroad tracks and Interstate 10. Billboards, temporary signs, and variable-sized permanent signs are located throughout the Growth Center.

Unique Features

The Mall of Louisiana, Jimmy Swaggart Ministries and the Baton Rouge Advocate's main distribution center are located in the Growth Center.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Growth Center 6 Demographic Information Census Tracts (Block Groups):		
	1990	2000
Population		
Population by Race		
White	84%	78%
Black	14%	19%
Other	1%	2%
Median Family Income	\$37,837	\$46,463
Educational Attainment		
Those 25 years and older		
High School	92%	92%
Bachelor Degree	40%	44%
Housing Units		
Total	4,821	6,323
Owner-Occupied	61%	63%
Not Owner-Occupied	39%	37%
Median Value Owner Occupied Unit	\$76,600	\$113,827
Mean Travel Time to Work	19 minutes	21 minutes

Source: US Dept. of Commerce, 1990 Census of Population and Housing; 2000 Census of Population and Housing

Design Tools Available for Growth Centers

Driven by an interest in quality of life in their communities, the citizens of Baton Rouge called upon the City-Parish Government in the 1992 Horizon Plan to establish a system for designation of urban design districts or corridors within the parish.

The Planning Commission can provide additional information regarding tools and features available for those interested in a community design program for their Growth Center. Community design programs, including urban design overlays and guidelines, are an effective way for local citizens to create and maintain built environments that satisfy both individual and community needs.

Urban Design Overlay District

Urban Design Overlay District refers to a traditional overlay ordinance that does NOT change the underlying zoning category, i.e. all permitted uses remain the same, but rather imposes additional requirements relating to concerns such as green space, landscape, and architectural features.

The purpose of an Urban Design Overlay District is to provide requirements or incentives intended both to protect a specific resource or area and encourage development to a desired standard of aesthetic quality.

Features of an Urban Design Overlay District may include:

landscape buffers
building articulation
parking
building materials
lighting
signage
bicycle/pedestrian design

Model Process to Establish an Urban Design Overlay

- ✓ Form a committee composed of Metro Council representatives from the area, residents, property owners, business owners, developers, architects, engineers, landscape architects, planners, and other interested parties.
- ✓ Define the purpose of the proposed Urban Design Overlay
- ✓ Identify the area to be covered by the proposed Urban Design Overlay
- ✓ Specify the boundaries of the proposed Urban Design Overlay
- ✓ Establish specific requirements of the proposed Urban Design Overlay
- ✓ Proposed Urban Design Overlay is presented to Planning Commission
- ✓ Proposed Urban Design Overlay is presented to the Metropolitan Council

Additional information regarding Growth Centers and Urban Design is available from the Planning Commission at 225-389-3144 or from the website www.brgov.com/dept/planning.