



What Is Zoning?

Introduction

Zoning is permitted within the home-rule power of the City-Parish as granted by the State of Louisiana. The land use and development of land are regulated through the classification of the Parish into various districts with permitted uses for each district. Zoning affects several aspects of development within each district, including intensity of development, height and bulk of development, required lot and yard sizes, and parking requirements. Zoning may also establish standards for noise, signs and landscaping.

Zoning in East Baton Rouge Parish

The East Baton Rouge Parish Zoning Ordinance was first adopted by the Parish governing authority in 1958. Since then, it has been updated and amended to keep pace with community growth and changing standards in design. In 1996, the Zoning Ordinance was incorporated into the Unified Development Code (UDC) -- a single document that is a consolidation of all of the Parish regulations and ordinances related to land use and development. The UDC is effective throughout the Parish, except within the city limits of Baker and Zachary, which have their own zoning regulations.

Title 7, Chapter 3 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge establishes zoning regulations in the following manner:

“This chapter is an ordinance dividing the City-Parish into districts and within the districts regulating and restricting the height, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures; the size of yards, courts and other open spaces; the density of population; and the location and use of buildings, structures and land for trade, industry, residence and other purposes; establishing a board of adjustment and prescribing its powers and duties; providing penalties for the violation of the chapter and repealing all ordinances in conflict herewith.

The Zoning regulations and districts as herein established have been made in accordance with a comprehensive plan for the purpose of promoting health, safety, morals and the general welfare of the community. They have been designed to lessen congestion in the streets; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements. They have been made with reasonable consideration among other things, to the character of the district, and its peculiar

suitability for the particular uses; and with a view of conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout the community.”

Zoning Administration

Zoning, as an ordinance, is the providence of the local governing authority. Metropolitan Council actions reflect recommendations of the Planning Commission and the Office of the Planning Commission. The Unified Development Code describes permitted uses by zoning district. The Office of the Planning Commission maintains maps of the City and Parish as part of the electronic Geographic Information System (GIS), indicating the current official zoning on each parcel of land. These maps are available to the public on the World Wide Web at the Planning Commission Parcel Finder Website, located online at <http://gis.brgov.com/maps/>. Customized zoning maps can be produced by the CPPC GIS Division upon request.

When requesting zoning information on specific parcels of land, it is best to determine the street location and nearest intersecting streets, as well as the legal description of the property. This legal description may include a lot or tract number, square number and subdivision or property description name. Occasionally, a written “zoning verification” is needed. Verifications, zoning maps, copies of the UDC and other documents may be obtained from the Resource Center in the Office of the Planning Commission.

Rezoning

Recognizing that community growth over time often changes the character and needs of any community, the UDC allows requests for zoning changes when the existing zoning no longer allows reasonable use. Once a month the Planning Commission, which also constitutes the “Zoning Commission,” holds a public hearing and considers such requests. Rezoning changes are not a simple matter. Two public hearings, one conducted by the Planning Commission and a second by the Metropolitan Council, are required before a zoning change takes place. The rezoning process, barring any complications, normally takes about 60 to 90 days from application to final decision.

Persons requesting a change in zoning are encouraged to visit the Office of the Planning Commission and obtain a rezoning application. Upon the visit, it may be helpful to discuss the proposed zoning change with a member of the planning staff. A completed rezoning application and any required fees must be submitted before the staff may accept the application for a zoning change. Also, determination should be made as to the consistency of the proposed zoning change with the Horizon Plan. The Horizon Plan is a future land use plan

