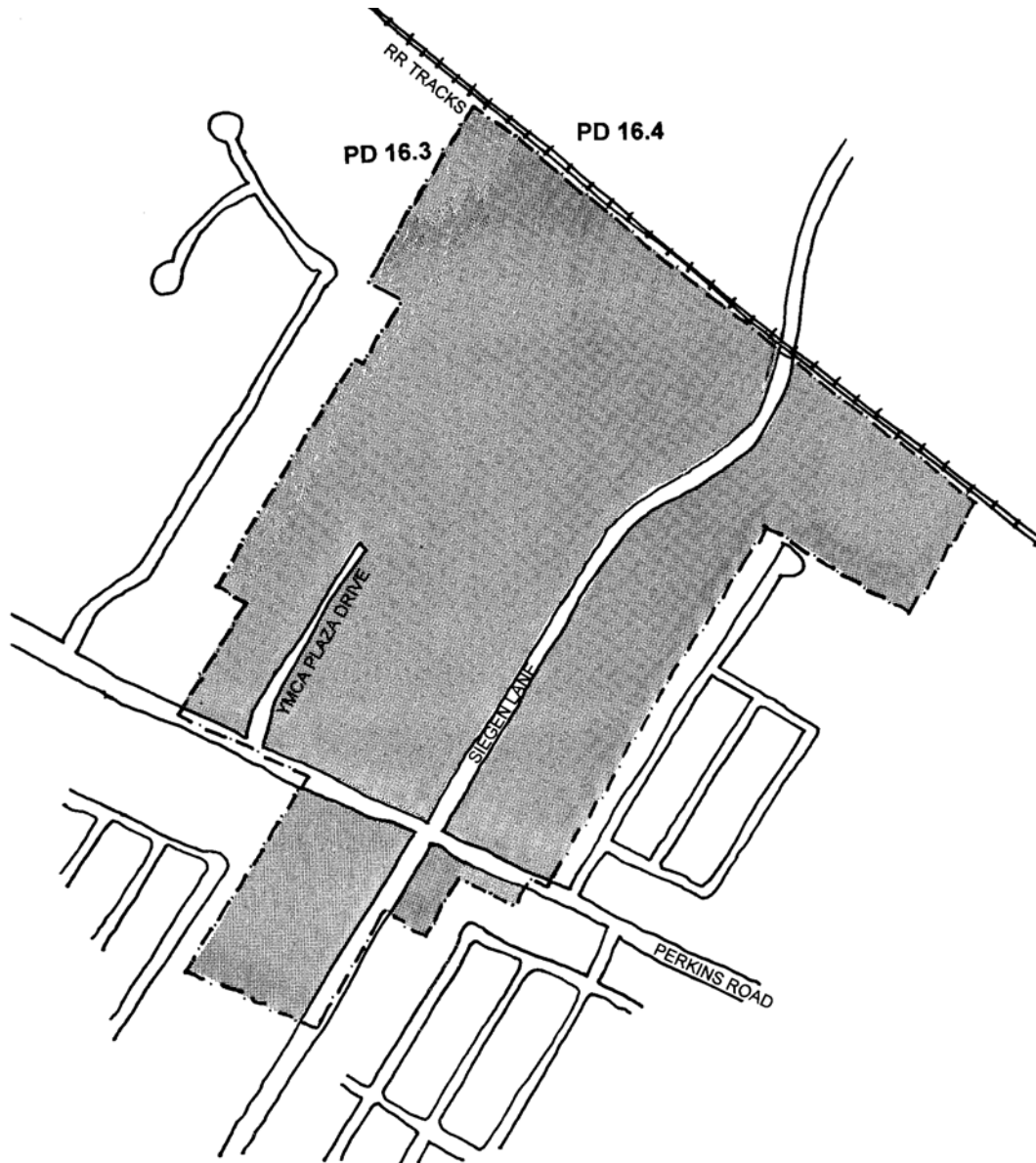


GROWTH CENTER COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS REPORT



GROWTH CENTER 3

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

July 15, 2003
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 3 is a *community* 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 3.

TRANSPORTATION

Public Transportation

The Capital Transportation Corporation (CTC) operates public bus routes throughout areas of the City/Parish. A CTC bus route does run through Growth Center 3. Effective May 18, 2003, Route 57-Sherwood/ Siegen serves the Growth Center.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Amenities

The transportation corridors in the Growth Center are busy main roads with some pedestrian amenities. The City-Parish Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan features prioritized bike routes along Perkins Lane through the Growth Center and along Siegen Lane from Interstate 10 to Perkins Road.

Major Street Plan

The Major Street Plan for Growth Center 3 specifies roadway lanes, pavement width and right-of-way standards for all Major Streets in the Growth Center. According to the Major Street Plan, Growth Center 3 contains streets that are included in the Major Street Plan- Perkins Road and Siegen Lane. Perkins Road is classified on the Major Street Plan as additional pavement and/or right-of-way required. Siegen Lane is classified as completed or programmed.

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 3 Current Capital Improvement Projects

Program	Year	Improvement Type	Status
Perkins Road- Essen Lane to Siegen Lane	2002-2007	Roadway Widening to 5-lanes	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 predominate existing land uses in Growth Center 3 are Commercial, Office, and Public/Semi-Public. Commercial is concentrated along Siegen Lane. Office is concentrated along YMCA Plaza Drive. The Public/Semi-Public is a large YMCA facility at the end of YMCA Plaza Drive. Low Density Residential, High Density Residential, Recreation and Vacant are also present in the Growth Center.

The current (2003) approximate percentages of existing land use in Growth Center 3, are as follows:

Existing Land Use Category	Estimated percentage of Existing Land Use
Public/ Semi-Public	27%
Commercial	24%
Office	17%
Low Density Residential	11%
Recreation	10%
Vacant	7%
High Density Residential	4%
Total	100%

Zoning

The existing zoning is a mix of C1 (Light Commercial), C2 (Heavy Commercial), LC1 (Light Commercial), CAB1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage), A3.3 (Medium Density Residential), A4 (High Density Residential), B1 (Transition), A1 (Low Density Residential), and Rural.

There have been eight (8) requests for rezoning in Growth Center 3 since 1998. Two cases were rezoning from Rural to C2 (Heavy Commercial). One case was rezoning from Rural to LC1 (Light Commercial 1). Two cases were rezoning from C1 (Light Commercial) to C2 (Heavy Commercial). Two cases were rezoning from A1 (Low Density Residential) to A3.3 (Medium Density Residential), B1 (Transition), and C1 (Light Commercial). And one case was rezoning from B (Off-Street Parking) and B1 (Transition) to C1 (Light Commercial). All eight (8) requests for rezoning were approved.

The current (2003) approximate percentages of Zoning in Growth Center 3, are as follows:

Zoning Classification	Estimated percentage of Zoning
A1 (Low Density Residential)	32%
C2 (Heavy Commercial)	22%
C1 (Light Commercial)	16%
Rural	15%
A4 (High Density Residential)	4%
B1 (Transition)	4%
A3.3 (High Density Residential)	3%
CAB1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage 1)	3%
LC1 (Light Commercial)	1%
Total	100%

Horizon Plan

The Horizon land uses in Growth Center 3 are Heavy Commercial, Light Commercial, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, General Office, and Public/Semi-Public. Heavy Commercial is concentrated at the intersection on Siegen Lane with Perkins Road. General Office is concentrated along YMCA Plaza Drive.

The current (2003) Horizon Plan land use in Growth Center 3, is as follows:

Horizon Plan Land Use Category	Estimated percentage of Horizon Plan Land Use
Heavy Commercial	28%
Public/Semi Public	23%
Light Commercial	22%
Medium Density Residential	11%
General Office	9%
High Density Residential	4%
Neighborhood Office	3%
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

A drainage channel is located along YMCA Plaza Drive to Wards Creek.

DESIGN

Landscape Character

Landscaping is minimal throughout the commercial parking lots in Growth Center 3. The right-of-way for planting is narrow along Perkins Road and wider along Siegen Lane. The tree canopy is recessed from the edge of the road.

Architectural Character

Growth Center 3 has a staggered building line along streets. There are several acadian-influenced office buildings on YMCA Plaza Drive. A large, columned plantation-style residence adjacent to YMCA Plaza Drive serves as an architectural landmark. Apartment and commercial structures include a variety of building materials such as stucco, metal and brick.

Signage Character

There are billboards and temporary signs in the Growth Center. The permanent signs vary in size and design with heaviest concentration along Siegen north of Perkins.

Unique Features

There is a YMCA recreation facility and a driving range in Growth Center 3.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to Census 2000, the racial composition of Growth Center 3 is approximately 79 percent (79%) white, 15 percent (15%) African American and three percent (3%) Asian. This differs slightly from 1990 figures, which show a population comprised of 84 percent (84%) white, 13 percent (13%) African American and two percent (2%) Asian. The average household income, \$66,567 (\$49,098 in 1990), is considerably higher than the parish-wide average of \$37,224. Approximately 96 percent (96%) of residents 25 years or older in and around this growth center have earned a high school diploma. Approximately 50 percent (50%) of area residents have earned a bachelor degree. These education percentages have shown no change since 1990.

The total number of housing units in this area has increased from 4,534 in 1990 to 5,986 in 2000. Nearly 80 percent (95 percent in 1990) of units are owner-occupied. The vacancy rate in this area is lower than the parish-wide average of seven and a half percent (7.5%) and has decreased from five percent (5%) in 1990 to just below four percent (4%) in 2000. Since 1990, the median value of houses in and around Growth Center 3 has increased from \$91,400 to \$144,013. Mean travel time to work has remained at approximately 20.5 minutes since 1990.

Growth Center 3 Demographic Information Census Tracts (Block Groups):		
	1990	2000
Population		
Population by Race	100%	100%
White	84%	79%
Black	13%	15%
Other	2%	3%
Median Family Income	\$49,098	\$66,578
Educational Attainment Those 25 years and older		
High School	96%	96%
Bachelor Degree	50%	50%
Housing Units		
Total	4,534	5,986
Owner-Occupied	95%	80%
Not Owner-Occupied	5%	20%
Median Value Owner Occupied Unit	\$91,400	\$144,053
Mean Travel Time to Work	20.5 minutes	20.5 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.