

GROWTH CENTER COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS REPORT



GROWTH CENTER 12

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

Jones Creek Regional Branch Library
6222 Jones Creek Road
February 1, 2005

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 12 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 12.

TRANSPORTATION

Public Transportation

The Capital Area Transit System (CATS) operates public bus routes throughout areas of the City-Parish. CATS has no bus routes that service the Growth Center 12 area.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Amenities

The Growth Center includes unconnected sidewalks between businesses and residential. There are no sidewalks along O’Neal Lane. The Baton Rouge Bike Map classifies Jones Creek Road, O’Neal Lane and George O’Neal Road as “Low Ease of Use”. Coursey Boulevard is classified as “Moderate Ease of Use”.

Major Street Plan

The Major Street Plan for Growth Center 12 specifies roadway lanes, pavement width and right-of-way standards for all Major Streets in the Growth Center. Coursey Boulevard, Jones Creek Road, George O’Neal Road and O’Neal Lane are designated major streets within the Growth Center. Coursey Boulevard, Jones Creek Road, George O’Neal Road and O’Neal Lane are designated completed or programmed on the Major Street Plan.

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 12 Current Capital Improvement Projects

Program	Improvement Type	Status
O’Neal Lane (George O’Neal Road to South Harrells Ferry Road)	Capital Improvements Program- Street and Intersection Improvements	Projects Completed- Topographic Complete
George O’Neal Road (Jones Creek Road to O’Neal Lane)	Transportation Improvements Program- Street Improvements	Under Construction- 15% Complete
Jones Creek Road (Tiger Bend Road to Coursey Blvd.)	Federal Aid Projects- Street and Intersection Improvements	Project Under Design- Public Hearing July 13

LAND USE

Horizon Plan Land Use Categories

Residential Estate/ Agriculture (RE/A)

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 (I)

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

Public/Semi-Public (PSP)

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

Transportation, Communication and Utilities (TCU)

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

Recreation (R)

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

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

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 is a mix of Commercial, Office, High Density Residential, Low Density Residential, and Vacant.

The current (2005) approximate percentages of existing land use in Growth Center 12 are as follows:

Existing Land Use	Estimated percentage of existing land use
Commercial	47%
Vacant	30%
High Density Residential	13%
Office	5%
Low Density Residential	5%
Total	100%

Zoning

The Existing Zoning for Growth Center 12 is a mix of C2 (Heavy Commercial), HC1 (Heavy Commercial- One), C1 (Light Commercial), C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- restaurant), B (Off-Street Parking), A2.6 (Medium Density Residential), A1 (Low Density Residential) and Rural.

There have been five (5) requests for rezoning in Growth Center 12 since 2000. Two requests were from Rural to HC1 (Heavy Commercial- One). One rezoning request was from Rural to LC2 (Light Commercial- Two). One rezoning request was from Rural to C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage-restaurant). One rezoning request was from C2 (Heavy Commercial) to C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- restaurant). All five (5) rezoning requests were approved.

The current (2005) approximate percentages of Zoning in Growth Center 12 are as follows:

Zoning	Estimated percentage of existing zoning
C2 (Heavy Commercial)	55%
Rural	30%
C1 (Light Commercial)	9%
HC1 (Heavy Commercial- One)	2%
A2.6 (Zero Lot Line Residential)	2%
C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- Restaurant)	1%
A1 (Low Density Residential)	>1%
B (Off-Street Parking)	>1%
Total	100%

Horizon Plan

The Horizon Plan Land Use for Growth Center 12 includes a mix of Planned Unit Development, Heavy Commercial, and Light Commercial. The northwest corner of the Jones Creek Road and Coursey Boulevard intersection is designated Planned Unit Development. The southern section of the Jones Creek Road and Coursey Boulevard intersection is designated Heavy Commercial.

The current (2005) Horizon Plan land use in Growth Center 12, is as follows:

Horizon Plan Land Use	Estimated percentage of Horizon Plan Land Use
Planned Unit Development	41%
Light Commercial	41%
Heavy Commercial	18%
Total	100%

ENVIRONMENT

Conservation Areas

The Horizon Plan identifies potential Conservation Areas for the City-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

Jones Creek is located north of the Growth Center. Large vacant parcels are located along Jones Creek north of Coursey Boulevard.

DESIGN

Landscape Character

Landscaping is minimal along Jones Creek. Coursey Boulevard features landscaped parking areas and a green median. The Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market features a landscaped streetscape along Coursey Boulevard.

Architectural Character

Growth Center 12 has a mixture of architectural qualities. Setbacks vary throughout the Growth Center. Coursey Boulevard features commercial shopping centers with similar setbacks and architectural styles.

Signage Character

Signs throughout Growth Center 12 vary in size, materials and design. The heaviest concentration of signage is at the Coursey Boulevard and Jones Creek Road intersection.

Unique Features

A unique feature of the Growth Center is opportunity for pedestrian connectivity between businesses and the residential subdivisions. Landmarks in the area include Georges, The Grand Cinema and the Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Growth Center 12 Demographic Information Census Tracts (Block Groups):		
	1990	2000
Population		
Population by Race		
White	93%	94%
Black	5%	4%
Other	2%	2%
Median Family Income	\$50,228	\$73,393
Educational Attainment		
Those 25 years and older		
High School	96%	97%
Bachelor Degree	45%	46%
Housing Units		
Total	2,999	3,787
Owner-Occupied	68%	80%
Not Owner-Occupied	32%	20%
Median Value Owner Occupied Unit	\$96,250	\$130,200
Mean Travel Time to Work	24 minutes	24 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.