

# GROWTH CENTER COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS REPORT



## GROWTH CENTER 9

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

June 9, 2004  
Baton Rouge Center for Visual and Performing Arts  
2040 South Acadian Thruway

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 9 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 9.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Public Transportation**

The Capital Transportation Corporation (CTC) operates public bus routes throughout areas of the City/Parish. Capital Transportation Corporation Bus Route 17- Bluebonnet and Route 5- College Drive serve the area.

### **Bicycle/Pedestrian Amenities**

There are unconnected sidewalks in Growth Center 9, and no delineated pedestrian crosswalks or signals. The Growth Center presently has no bike path lanes or connections.

### **Major Street Plan**

The Major Street Plan for Growth Center 9 specifies roadway lanes, pavement width and right-of-way standards for all Major Streets in the Growth Center. Acadian Thruway and Perkins Road are designated major streets in the Growth Center. Perkins Road is classified as completed or programmed. Acadian Thruway is classified as completed or programmed and additional pavement and/or 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 9 Current Capital Improvement Projects**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Improvement Type</b>	<b>Status</b>
I-10 Sound walls (Acadian to I-12)	Sound walls	Complete

## 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 is a mix of Commercial, Office, and Medium Density Residential. The commercial is concentrated along Perkins Road and Acadian Thruway. The majority of the office use is located along Perkins Road north of Interstate 10. Commercial land use is concentrated along Perkins Road.

The current (2004) approximate percentages of existing land use in Growth Center 9 are as follows:

<b>Existing Land Use</b>	<b>Estimated percentage of existing land use</b>
Commercial	69%
Office	14%
Low Density Residential	5%
Vacant	4%
Medium Density Residential	3%
Transportation, Communications and Utilities	2%
Industrial	2%
High Density Residential	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Zoning

The Existing Zoning for Growth Center 9 is a mix of A1 (Single Family Residential), C1 (Light Commercial), LC3 (Light Commercial Three District), C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage-Restaurant), C2 (Heavy Commercial), C-AB-2 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage-bars & lounges) and M1 (Light Industrial).

There have been two (2) requests for rezoning in Growth Center 9 since 1999. One request was from C1 (Light Commercial) to C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- restaurant). One request was from C1 (Light Commercial) to LC3 (Light Commercial Three). Both of these rezoning requests were approved.

The current (2004) approximate percentages of Zoning in Growth Center 9 are as follows:

<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Estimated percentage of existing zoning</b>
C2 (Heavy Commercial)	50%
C1 (Light Commercial)	32%
M1 (Light Industrial)	8%
C-AB-2 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- Bar or lounge)	5%
A1 (Single Family Residential)	2%
C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- Restaurant)	2%
LC 3 (Light Commercial Three)	>1%
A4 (High Rise Residential)	>1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Horizon Plan

The Horizon Plan Land Use for Growth Center 9 includes a mix Light Commercial; Heavy Commercial; Neighborhood Commercial; General Office; Low Density Residential and Medium Density residential. Light Commercial and Neighborhood Commercial land uses are concentrated along Perkins Road. Heavy Commercial and Office land uses are concentrated along Acadian Thruway north of the Louisiana Arkansas Railroad tracks.

The current (2004) Horizon Plan land use in Growth Center 9, is as follows:

<b>Horizon Plan Land Use</b>	<b>Estimated percentage of Horizon Plan Land Use</b>
Light Commercial	72%
Heavy Commercial	12%
General Office	9%
Neighborhood Commercial	4%
Low Density Residential	2%
Medium Density Residential	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **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**

Open space along Dawson Creek could be enhanced or protected.

## **DESIGN**

### **Landscape Character**

The landscape character is inconsistent in the Growth Center. There are large parking lots with no landscaping at the intersection of Acadian Thruway with Perkins Road. Acadia Trace office building has mature trees on Acadian Thruway.

### **Architectural Character**

The Perkins Road Historic Merchants District has similar architectural style, setbacks, and building height. The large-scale commercial developments at the intersection of Perkins Road with Acadian Thruway have large setbacks and parking lots. These older commercial centers are an opportunity for redevelopment. Franchise commercial businesses are also located in the Growth Center along Acadian Thruway near Interstate 10.

### **Signage Character**

Billboards are prevalent on Acadian Thruway along Interstate 10. Signs throughout the Growth Center vary in size, materials and design.

### **Unique Features**

A unique feature in Growth Center 9 is the Perkins Road Historic Merchants District because of the variety of services, locally owned businesses and historic character.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

<b>Growth Center 9 Demographic Information Census Tracts (Block Groups):</b>		
	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Population</b>		
Population by Race		
White	79%	81%
Black	21%	18%
Other	1%	1%
Median Family Income	\$33,406	\$47,166
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
Those 25 years and older		
High School	88%	92%
Bachelor Degree	49%	54%
<b>Housing Units</b>		
Total	4,308	4,349
Owner-Occupied	66%	70%
Not Owner-Occupied	33%	30%
Median Value Owner Occupied Unit	\$77,144	\$126,311
Mean Travel Time to Work	15.7 minutes	17.2 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](http://www.brgov.com/dept/planning).