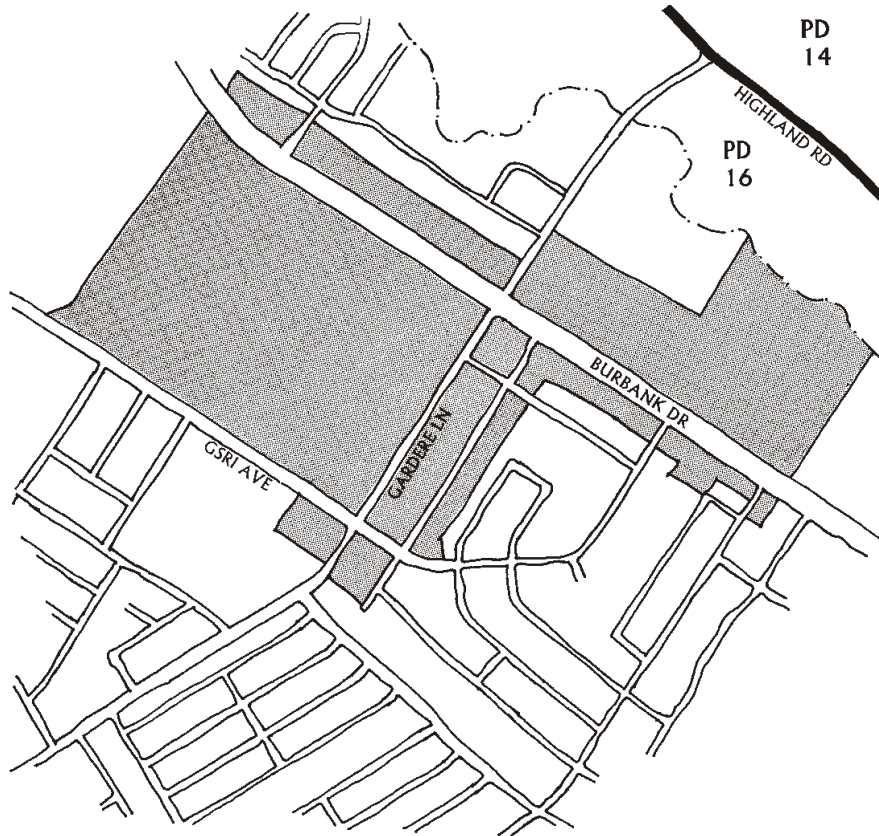


GROWTH CENTER COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS REPORT



GROWTH CENTER 2

PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

CITY OF BATON ROUGE/ PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE

May 29, 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 higher intensity uses such as shopping, services, offices, public facilities, medium and high density residential development, cultural, entertainment and recreational activities. Growth Centers have existing or planned infrastructure to accommodate future growth. Potential methods for guiding growth and development in Growth Centers include performance standards, urban design guidelines and growth management techniques.

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 2 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 2.

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 2. Effective October 27, 2002, Route 47- Highland serves the Growth Center.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Amenities

The transportation corridors in the Growth Center are busy main roads with no pedestrian amenities. The City-Parish Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan features prioritized bike routes on Lee Drive from Whitehaven Street through the Growth Center to Nicholson Drive.

Major Street Plan

The Major Street Plan for Growth Center 2 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 2 contains streets which are included in the Major Street Plan- Burbank Drive, GSRI Avenue and Gardere Lane. GSRI Avenue is classified on the Major Street Plan as “completed” or “programmed.” Burbank Drive and Gardere Lane are classified as “roads that require additional pavement and/or right-of-way.”

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 2 Current Capital Improvement Projects

Program	Year	Improvement Type	Status
Burbank Dr. (LA 42)	2003-2007	Bluebonnet Boulevard to Lee Drive- Widening	Programmed

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

including areas where development 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 2 are Vacant, Commercial, Office and Public-Semi-Public. Commercial land use is concentrated along Burbank Drive and Gardere Lane. Large Vacant parcels are located between Burbank Drive and GSRI Avenue to the North of Gardere Lane. Office is concentrated along Seabord Drive. Low Density Residential, Industrial, and Transportation, Communication and Utilities are also present in the Growth Center.

The current (2003) approximate percentages of existing land use in Growth Center 2, are as follows:

Existing Land Use Category	Estimated percentage of Existing Land Use
Vacant	75%
Commercial	11%
Public/ Semi-Public	6%
Office	4%
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	2%
Low Density Residential	1%
Industrial	1%
Total	100%

Zoning

The existing zoning in Growth Center 2 is a mix of Rural, LC3 (Light Commercial), C1 (Light Commercial), CAB1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage 1), CAB2 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage 2), LC3 (Light Commercial), A3.3 (Limited Residential), C2 (Heavy Commercial), M1 (Light Industrial), HC1 (Heavy Commercial) and B (Off Street Parking).

There have been four (4) requests for rezoning in Growth Center 2 since 1998. All four of these cases were approved. Three (3) cases involved zoning changes from Rural to C2, HC1, and A3.3. The fourth zoning case involved changing lots from B and C1 to LC3.

The current (2003) approximate percentages of Zoning in Growth Center 2, are as follows:

Zoning Classification	Estimated percentage of Zoning
Rural	55%
C1 (Light Commercial)	15%
C2 (Heavy Commercial)	8%
CAB2 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage 2)	6%
CAB1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage 1)	5%
LC3 (Light Commercial)	5%
A3.3 (High Density Residential)	3%
M1 (Industrial)	1%
HC1 (Heavy Commercial)	>1%
B (Off Street Parking)	>1%
Total	100%

Horizon Plan

The predominant Horizon land uses in Growth Center 2 are Low Density Residential, Light Commercial, and High Density Residential. The Low Density Residential is concentrated along Gardere Lane between Burbank Drive and GSRI Avenue. Light Commercial is concentrated along Gardere Lane and Burbank Drive.

High Density Residential is concentrated on both sides of Gardere Lane north of Burbank Drive. Other Horizon land uses present in the Growth Center are Planned Unit Development, Neighborhood Office, Heavy Commercial, Industrial, and General Office.

The current (2003) Horizon Plan land use in Growth Center 2, is as follows:

Horizon Plan Land Use Category	Estimated percentage of Horizon Plan Land Use
Low Density Residential	50%
Light Commercial	25%
Planned Unit Development	13%
High Density Residential	5%
Neighborhood Office	4%
Heavy Commercial	1%
General Office	1%
Industrial	1%
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

Bayou Fountain is the northeast boundary of the Growth Center. The north boundary is Bayou Fountain. The south boundary is GSRI Avenue and multifamily residential housing. The east and west are bounded by single family housing and hardwood forest. There are large plowed fields in the southwest and pastures in the northwest. There are also vacant lots north and southwest of Burbank Drive.

DESIGN

Landscape Character

There is a landscaped median in the Growth Center on GSRI Avenue east of Gardere Lane. There is a wide right-of-way available for planting on either side of Burbank Drive. There are few street trees within the Growth Center.

Architectural Character

There are simplified-style brick and metal commercial buildings in the Growth Center. Single story commercial and two story apartment buildings are also predominant in the Growth Center. There is a relatively uniform building line along streets.

Signage Character

Billboards and multiple signs are prevalent in the Growth Center with the heaviest concentration along Gardere Lane.

Unique Features

A unique feature is the building style of The French Quarter shopping center. There are vacant fields with multifamily buildings along edge. The Growth Center has a mixture of industrial, commercial, professional and residential uses in neighborhoods.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to Census 2000, racial composition in the area is approximately 37 percent (37%) white, 59 percent (59%) African American and three percent (3%) Asian. This differs significantly from 1990 figures, which show a population comprised of 59 percent (59%) white, 38 percent (38%) African American and three percent (3%) Asian.

The average household income, \$29,654 (\$22,870 in 1990), is lower than the parishwide average of \$37,224. The percentage of residents 25 years or older in and around this Growth Center that have earned a high school diploma has decreased from 93 percent (93%) in 1990 to 85 percent (85%) in 2000. The percentage of residents with bachelor degrees has also decreased from 43 percent (43%) in 1990 to 33 percent (33%) in 2000.

Growth Center 2 Demographic Information Census Tracts (Block Groups):		
	1990	2000
Population Population by Race:	100%	100%
White	59	37
Black	38	59
Other	3	3
Median Family Income	\$22,870	\$29,654
Educational Attainment <i>Those 25 years and older</i>		
High School	93%	85%
Bachelor's Degree	43%	33%
Housing Units		
Total	4,244	4,808
Owner-Occupied	27%	35%
Not Owner-Occupied	73%	65%
Median Value Owner Occupied Unit	\$57,675	\$103,400
Mean Travel Time to Work	19.0 minutes	23.7 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.