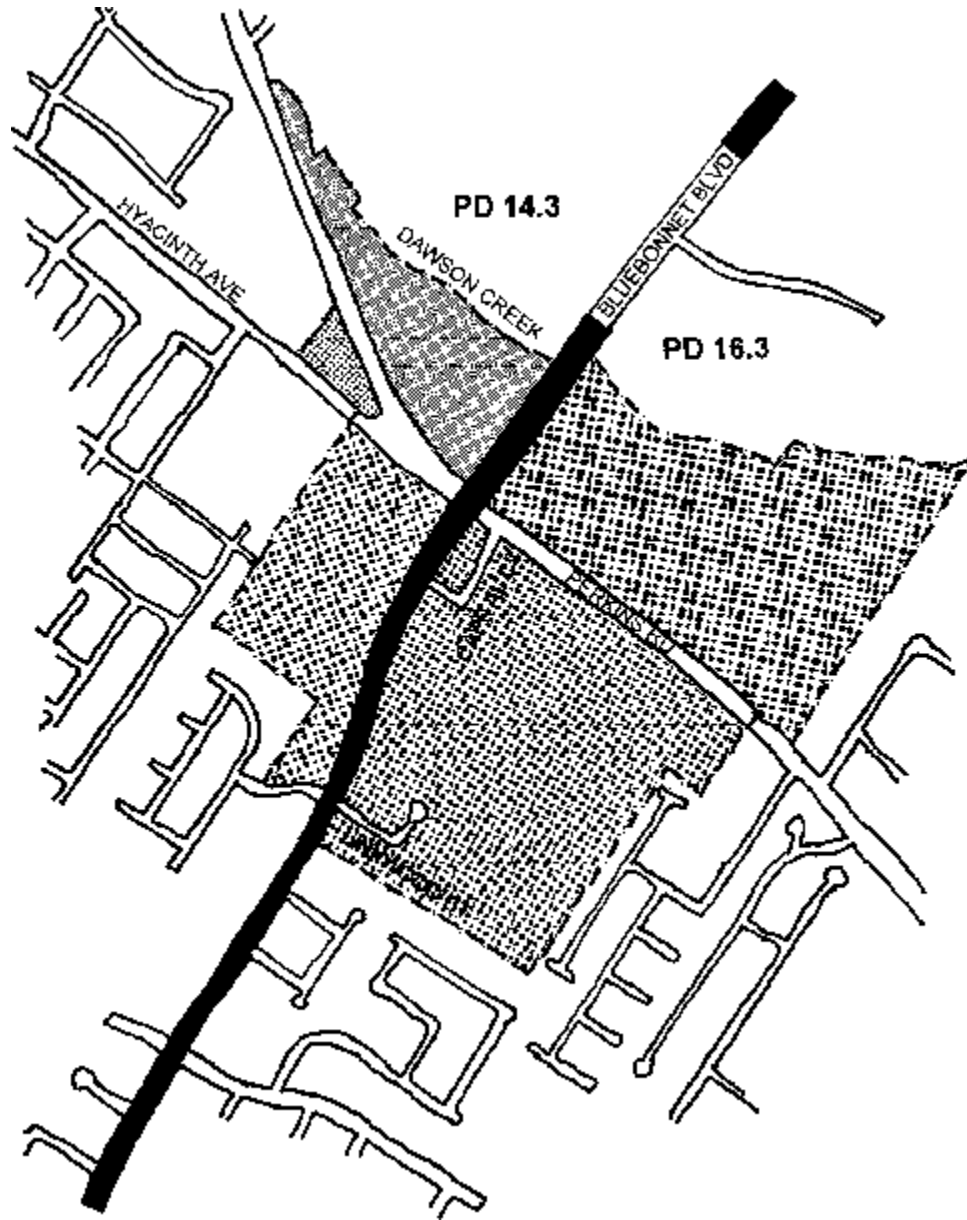


GROWTH CENTER COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS REPORT



GROWTH CENTER 4

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

August 12, 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 4 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 4.

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 4. Route 57- Sherwood/ Siegen and Route 17- Bluebonnet serve the Growth Center.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Amenities

The transportation corridors in the Growth Center are busy main roads with limited pedestrian amenities. There are no pedestrian crosswalks or walk signals within Growth Center 4. The City-Parish Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan features prioritized bike routes along Perkins Lane through the Growth Center and along Perkins Road and Bluebonnet Boulevard.

Major Street Plan

The Major Street Plan for Growth Center 4 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 4 contains streets that are included in the Major Street Plan- Perkins Road and Bluebonnet Boulevard. Perkins Road is classified on the Major Street Plan as additional pavement and/or right-of-way required. Bluebonnet Boulevard 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 4 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 existing land use is a mix of Vacant, Commercial, Public/Semi-Public, High Density Residential, Office, Low Density Residential, and Transportation, Communication and Utilities.

The current (2003) approximate percentages of existing land use in Growth Center 4, are as follows:

Existing Land Use Category	Estimated percentage of Existing Land Use
Vacant	35%
Commercial	20%
High Density Residential	16%
Public/Semi-Public	15%
Office	9%
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	3%
Low Density Residential	2%
Total	100%

Zoning

The existing zoning is a mix of C2 (Heavy Commercial), CAB1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- restaurant), C1 (Light Commercial), LC3 (Light Commercial), A5 (High Rise Apartment), A3.1 (Limited Residential), B (Off Street Parking), CAB2 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- bars and lounges), and A1 (Single Family Residential).

There have been three (3) requests for rezoning in Growth Center 4 since 1998. All three (3) cases were rezoned from A1 (Low Density Residential), A3.1 (Medium Density Residential) or B (Transition) to LC3 (Light Commercial 3). All three (3) requests for rezoning were approved.

The current (2003) approximate percentages of Zoning in Growth Center 4 are as follows:

Zoning Classification	Estimated percentage of Zoning
C2 (Heavy Commercial)	71%
C1 (Light Commercial)	7%
LC3 (Light Commercial 3)	4%
A5 (High Rise Apartment)	4%
B (Transition)	3%
A1 (Low Density Residential)	3%
A3.1 (Limited Residential)	3%
CAB1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage)	2%
CAB2 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage)	2%
A2.6 (Zero Lot Line Residential)	1%
Total	100%

Horizon Plan

The Horizon land uses in Growth Center 4 are Planned Unit Development, Public/Semi-Public, Light Commercial, High Density Residential, Commercial Warehousing, Low Density Residential and Transportation, Communication and Utilities. A designated Planned Unit Development is located on the northeast corner of Bluebonnet Boulevard and Perkins Road. Light Commercial is concentrated along Bluebonnet Boulevard and Perkins Road.

The current (2003) Horizon Plan land use in Growth Center 4, is as follows:

Horizon Plan Land Use Category	Estimated percentage of Horizon Plan Land Use
Light Commercial	35%
Planned Unit Development	24%
Public/Semi-Public	20%
High Density Residential	15%
Commercial Warehousing	3%
Low Density Residential	2%
Transportation, Communication and Utilities	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

Dawson Creek is the northern boundary of the Growth Center. Bluebonnet Swamp is located to the southwest of Growth Center 4. There are small wetland areas along Bluebonnet Boulevard, and stands of mature trees within the Growth Center.

DESIGN

Landscape Character

There are minimally landscaped parking lots with a landscape median along Bluebonnet Boulevard south of Perkins Road. The tree canopy is recessed from the edge of Perkins Road and cleared in the northeast section, and there are large established trees present in the Growth Center.

Architectural Character

Growth Center 4 features staggered building lines along streets and strip malls. There are stucco, wood and brick commercial and professional buildings interspersed with acadian-influenced architecture such as Bluebonnet Village and the office buildings south of Capital Court on Bluebonnet Boulevard.

Signage Character

There are billboards, temporary signs, and permanent signs in Growth Center 4 with the heaviest concentration around Perkins Road at Bluebonnet Boulevard.

Unique Features

A standpipe water tower, a United States Postal Service Post Office and General Mail Facility, and a television station facility are located in the Growth Center.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Growth Center 4 Demographic Information Census Tracts (Block Groups):		
	1990	2000
Population		
Population by Race	100%	100%
White	73%	70%
Black	24%	25%
Other	2%	3%
Median Family Income	\$43,094	\$55,784
Educational Attainment Those 25 years and older		
High School	93%	93%
Bachelor Degree	50%	53%
Housing Units		
Total	3,859	6,378
Owner-Occupied	69%	71%
Not Owner-Occupied	31%	29%
Median Value Owner Occupied Unit	\$82,089	\$125,080
Mean Travel Time to Work	20 minutes	20 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.