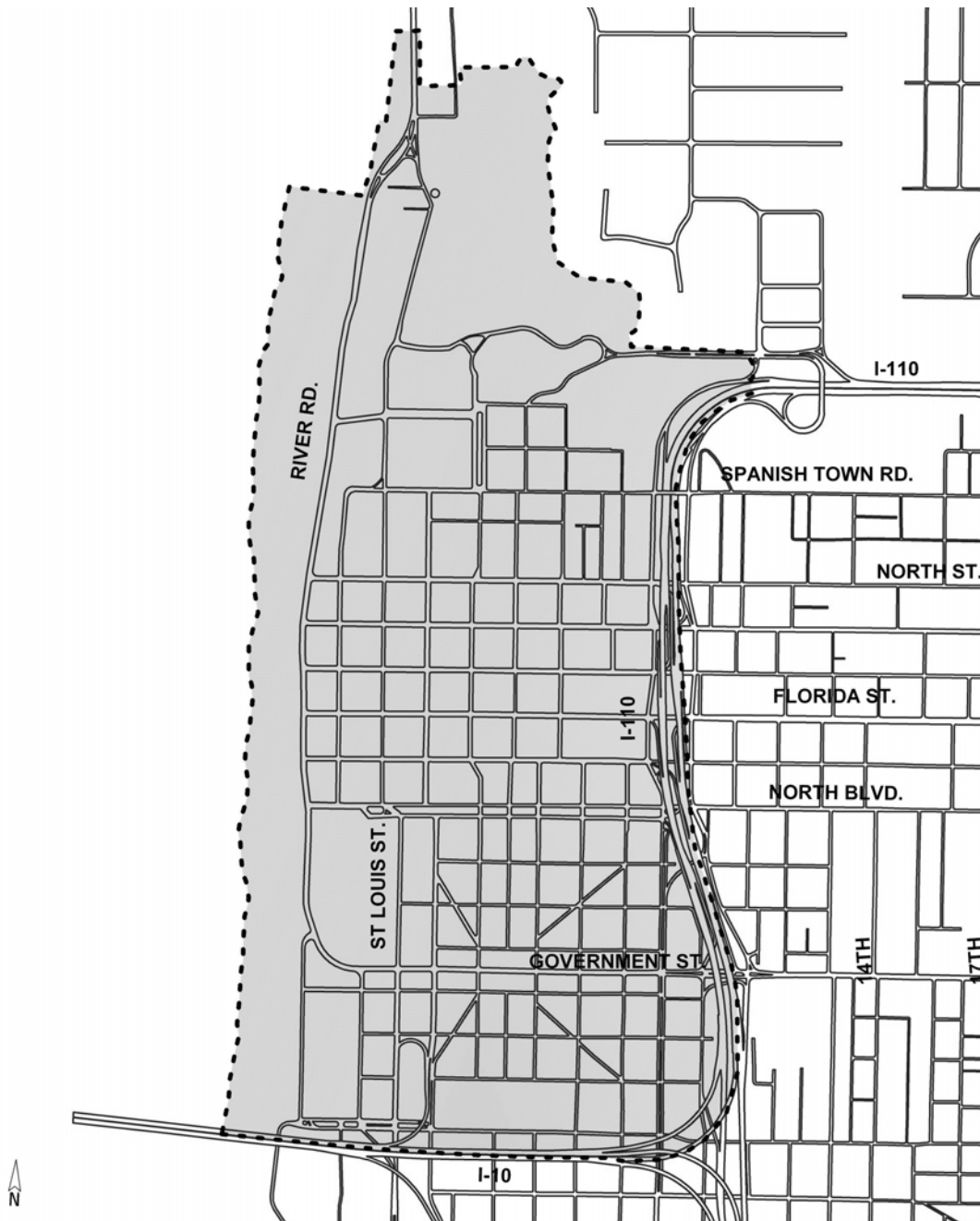


# GROWTH CENTER COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS REPORT



## GROWTH CENTER 15

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

Metropolitan Council Chambers  
222 St. Louis Street, Room 348  
June 14, 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 15 is the *Major Regional* Growth Center for East Baton Rouge Parish.

### **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 15.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Public Transportation

The Capital Area Transit System (CATS) operates public bus routes throughout areas of the City-Parish. Route 9- Thomas Delpit, Route 14- Downtown, and Route 16- Capitol Park Trolley serve Growth Center 15.

### Bicycle/Pedestrian Amenities

Growth Center 15 has connected sidewalks throughout the area. Intersections have delineated crosswalks and pedestrian traffic signals.

### Major Street Plan

The Major Street Plan for Growth Center 15 specifies roadway lanes, pavement width and right-of-way standards for all Major Streets in the Growth Center. St. Charles, St. Phillip, St. Ferdinand, St. Louis, Spanish Town Road, State Capitol Drive, North Street, Main Street, Laurel Street, Florida Street, Convention Street, North Boulevard, Government Street, River Road, Lafayette Street, Fourth Street, and Fifth Street are designated major streets within the Growth Center.

St. Charles, St. Phillip, St. Ferdinand, St. Louis, North Street, Main Street, Laurel Street, Florida Street, Convention Street, North Boulevard, Government Street, River Road, and Fifth Street are designated completed or programmed. Spanish Town Road, Fourth Street, Lafayette Street and State Capitol Drive are designated additional pavement and/or right-of-way required 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 15 Current Capital Improvement Projects

Program	Improvement Type	Status
River Road Bicycle Path	Federal Aid Project	Under Construction
I-10 Mississippi River Bridge Decorative Lighting	State Project	Completed

8/13/04

## 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, public/ semi-public, recreation, multi-family residential, and single family residential.

The current (2005) approximate percentages of existing land use in Growth Center 15 are as follows:

<b>Existing Land Use</b>	<b>Estimated percentage of existing land use</b>
Public/ Semi-Public	35%
Commercial	22%
Vacant	10%
Medium Density Residential	12%
Office	8%
Low Density Residential	5%
Recreation	5%
High Density Residential	1%
Industrial	1%
Transportation, Communications and Utilities	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Zoning

The Existing Zoning for Growth Center 15 is a mix of C5 (Business District), CG (Commercial Gaming), C2 (Heavy Commercial), C1 (Light Commercial), C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage-Restaurant), B1 (Transition), A5 (High Rise Apartment), A4 (General Residential), GU (Government Use) and M2 (Heavy Industrial).

There have been two (2) requests for rezoning in Growth Center 15 since 2000. These requests were from A4 (General Residential) to NO (Neighborhood Office) and A2.6 (Zero Lot Line Residential). These two rezoning requests were approved.

The current (2005) approximate percentages of Zoning in Growth Center 15 are as follows:

<b>Zoning</b>	<b>Estimated percentage of existing zoning</b>
A4 (General Residential)	32%
C5 (Business District)	25%
C2 (Heavy Commercial)	13%
B1 (Transition)	10%
M1 (Industrial)	4%
C1 (Light Commercial)	3%
GU (Government Use)	3%
M2 (Heavy Industrial)	2%
C-AB-2 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- Bars and Lounges)	2%
A1 (Single Family Residential)	1%
A5 (High Rise Residential)	1%
B (Off Street Parking)	>1%
NO (Neighborhood Office)	>1%
C-AB-1 (Commercial Alcoholic Beverage- Restaurants)	>1%
A3.1 (Limited Residential)	>1%
CG (Commercial Gaming)	>1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Horizon Plan

The Horizon Plan Land Use for Growth Center 15 includes a mix of Public/ Semi-Public, Heavy Commercial, Light Commercial, General Office, Neighborhood Office, Recreation, High Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and Industrial.

The current (2005) Horizon Plan land use in Growth Center 15 is as follows:

<b>Horizon Plan Land Use</b>	<b>Estimated percentage of Horizon Plan Land Use</b>
Public/ Semi-Public	40%
Medium Density Residential	21%
Heavy Commercial	18%
Neighborhood Office	5%
Recreation	5%
Light Commercial	5%
Industrial	2%
Neighborhood Commercial	1%
General Office	1%
High Density Residential	1%
Transportation, Communications and Utilities	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **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. A conservation area is located in Growth Center 14 on the Summit Hospital property.

### **Water and Natural Area Associations**

The Mississippi River is the western boundary of Growth Center 15. Capitol Lake is the northern boundary of Growth Center 15.

## **DESIGN**

### **Landscape Character**

Expansive, unlandscaped, surface parking lots occupy much of the Central Business District. Park-like settings are located along North Boulevard, Riverfront Plaza, and the State Capitol. Beauregard Town and Spanish Town feature mature trees.

### **Architectural Character**

Growth Center 15 includes a mix of historic and modern architectural styles. Spanish Town and Beauregard Town are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### **Signage Character**

Private business and office signs in Growth Center 15 are predominately wall mounted signs. Street signs and directional signs vary in materials, type and size.

### **Unique Features**

The State Capitol Complex, River Center, Shaw Center for the Arts, Louisiana Art and Science Museum, Old State Capitol, and Third Street are unique features in Growth Center 15.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

<b>Growth Center 15 Demographic Information Census Tracts (Block Groups):</b>		
	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Population</b>		
Population by Race		
White	57%	68%
Black	40%	29%
Other	1%	1%
Median Family Income	\$14,400	\$25,944
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
Those 25 years and older		
High School	76%	86%
Bachelor Degree	30%	69%
<b>Housing Units</b>		
Total	1,289	1,240
Owner-Occupied	16%	19%
Not Owner-Occupied	84%	81%
Median Value Owner Occupied Unit	\$53,150	\$81,700
Mean Travel Time to Work	17.7 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).