



Housing Element

The Horizon Plan was adopted by the Metropolitan Council in 1992 as the comprehensive land use and development plan for City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish. The plan includes numerous Goals, Objectives and Policies within seven different areas of emphasis, called "elements."

The Horizon Plan includes the following seven elements: Land Use; Transportation; Wastewater, Solid Waste and Drainage; Conservation and Environmental Resources; Recreation and Open Space; Housing; and Public Services, Public Buildings, and Health and Human Services. This Information Bulletin examines the Housing Element of the Horizon Plan.

The purpose of the Horizon Plan's Housing Element is to provide recommendations that will enhance the development of an effective housing plan through the year 2010, and which will be compatible with the area's land use patterns and other aspects of area development. The housing goals and objectives, as well as the housing issues identified by the citizens and public officials, were used as the framework for developing recommendations for implementation actions.

Development of the Housing Element involved an extensive public participation process to obtain information for the citizens, City-Parish officials, and state and federal agencies. The public participation process ensured the development of a responsive program which maintained consistency with goals and values of the community.

Two neighborhood planning meetings were held in each of the sixteen planning districts established for the Horizon Plan. These meetings provided an opportunity for citizens to state their concerns and identify issues relating to housing in their district, as well as parish wide. The housing issues identified at the neighborhood planning meetings, and at Housing Resource Committee meetings, provided the basis for formulating the goals, objectives and recommendations of the Horizon Plan Housing Element.

As part of the 2007 Horizon Plan Five-Year Update, the Goals, Objectives, and Action Items for the Housing Element were extensively updated.



Goals, Objectives and Action Items

Goals are broad and general statements of desired future conditions that aid and guide the decision-making process. Objectives are specific statements about future conditions or results that should be achieved in order to attain the Goals that have been set. Objectives are worded so that their achievement can be measured.

Action Items are specific recommendations, plans and standards that are used in making decisions about future actions and programs. Action Items become the specific guidelines for implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

The overriding principle governing the Housing Element of the Horizon Plan is to:

"Enable all persons of every race, color, sex, age, handicap, national origin, religion, familial status, and socioeconomic group to have safe, sanitary, and decent housing in suitable living environment."

The following Goals address specific issues within the greater Housing Element:

- Goal H1:* Promote affordable housing.
- Goal H2:* Promote redevelopment of existing neighborhoods.
- Goal H3:* Promote decent and affordable housing which will accommodate those persons with special needs.
- Goal H4:* Acknowledge the neighborhood unit as the primary building block of the community and promote its preservation and proper creation.
- Goal H5:* Promote neighborhood participation in making decisions which affect the quality of life.
- Goal H6:* Promote the development and maintenance of a healthy, safe, enjoyable, and economically secure community.

Action Items

Action Items serve as strategies for implementation of the com-

prehensive plan. They are assigned to various City-Parish Lead Agencies that use them as a method for addressing the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Horizon Plan.

There are 24 Action Items within the Housing Element which are grouped into five categories. To give an illustration, an example from each category is listed below along with the number Action Items within each category and the Lead Agencies responsible for them.

1. Affordable Housing

5 Action Items

- Lead Agencies: Planning Commission, Mayor-President, Office of Community Development, CAN DO, Division of Human Development and Services, Redevelopment Authority
- *H1.A: Mayor Task Force* Adopt, implement, and periodically evaluate a strategy to identify public and private solutions for affordable housing in E.B.R. Parish. Consult representatives from the community, including directors of local housing agencies, presidents of banks and corporations, Director of Louisiana Housing Finance Agency, representatives of local nonprofit housing-related organizations, other lending agencies, Realtors, developers, design professionals, contractors, and materials vendors to assist in the implementation of this strategy. Develop a report of this strategy, distribute to housing stakeholders, and make available to the public. Develop a schedule for evaluation of this strategy. Develop reports of the findings of evaluations of the strategy, distribute to housing stakeholders, and make available to the public.
- *H1.A: Neigh. Co-ord.* Provide oversight of Neighborhood Coordination Activities:
 - 1) Direct a centralized clearinghouse for programs and activities that impact neighborhoods;
 - 2) Improve communications between City-Parish and neighborhood associations, as well as oversee the formation of new associations;
 - 3) Promote educational workshops on the maintenance and care of housing, including low-cost techniques for maintenance and repair using neighborhood organizations, volunteer groups, construction industry, lending agencies, etc. where possible;
 - 4) Facilitate and coordinate grant applications from housing-related agencies;
 - 5) Coordinate the provision of client counseling to first-time home owners to insure timely payment of notes, maintenance of structures, and fulfillment of loan requirements; and
 - 6) Coordinate with private efforts and other public agencies to develop affordable housing as well as other neighborhood improvements.

2. Redevelopment of Existing Neighborhoods

- 5 Action Items
- Lead Agencies: Department of Public Works, Office of the Mayor-President, Office of Community Development, Redevelopment Authority, Planning Commission.

- *H2.B: Speed Condemnation* Develop improved procedures to speed up condemnation of abandoned property and provide adequate funding for condemnation and demolition of dilapidated and dangerous properties.

3. Housing for Persons with Special Needs

- 1 Action Item
- Lead Agencies: Office of the Mayor-President, Office of Community Development
- *H3.A: Special Housing* Coordinate efforts to provide adequate and appropriate housing for vulnerable populations.

4. Conservation, Preservation, and Proper Creation of Neighborhoods

- 4 Action Items
- Lead Agencies: Planning Commission, Office of the Mayor-President, Department of Public Works, Police Department
- *H4.D: New Zoning and Subdivision Regulations* Provide adequate staffing in the Office of the Planning Commission to administer new or modified regulations for zoning and subdivision development resulting from Horizon Plan.
- *H4.E: GIS* Maintain an ongoing and readily retrievable computerized database of characteristics and numbers of dwelling units i.e., demolition, new, renovated, etc. This information should be identified within census tracts to determine available housing stock and housing needs. Provide for coordination with other City-Parish departments that should be computerized (transportation, administration, planning, licensing, assessments, permitting, inspection, public safety, health and human services, etc.).

5. Neighborhood Participation

- 1 Action Item
- 5 Lead Agencies: Department of Public Works, Office of the Mayor-President, Planning Commission, Office of Community Development
- *H5.A: Neigh. Develop. & Assoc.* Strengthening of Neighborhood Associations. See Actions H1.B and H4.D. (Policy H5.1.A, H5.1.C)
- *H6.A: Regulations* Bring the UDC and other regulatory documents into compliance with the Horizon Plan policies and Smart Growth principles.

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