

Introduction

Many people today feel that the American community is a good place to live, but it is not reaching its full potential. There are issues of growth and development, of obsolete and inefficient street systems, of aging structures and spreading blight in urban and rural areas, to say nothing about tight municipal budgets and cutbacks in municipal services. The importance of these issues vary from place to place. Populations soar in one section while stagnating or declining in another. In one way or another there is cause to be informed and actively involved in shaping the future of the American community.



Planning can mean many different things to different people. Until recently, planning activities often have been sheltered as the exclusive province of the professionals, and understood, although not always in agreement, only by professionals. But as the public has become more aware of the troubles of the community - the need to rebuild neighborhoods, to plan new towns and to redesign old ones - more and more citizens find themselves appointed to local planning commissions or elected to public office where planning decisions are being made.

To make realistic and knowledgeable decisions requires planning concepts that are understood by professionals, public officials, and citizens alike. Upon these decisions depends the future of the American city.

There is no question that America will continue to grow. The pertinent question is “How will America grow?” Until recently the answer might have been: “The way it always has.” We assumed “business as usual” was O.K. and that growth and development of the land were good things. We gave little thought to the process or the effects. We saw no need for a policy about how our land was used and its relationship to the quality of our lives.

But attitudes have begun to change. Words such as “sprawl,” “ribbon development,” “sewer moratoria,” “no growth,” and “planned growth” have recently entered our everyday vocabulary; many now question our non-policy and its unanticipated, costly results. Must growth mean ugly ribbon development along our highways? Unsightly suburban and exurban sprawl? Deteriorating central cities? Polluted air and unsafe drinking water? The answers to these questions can be a resounding “No.” But such an answer will not just happen. It will require careful consideration of causes, effects, and alternatives. It will require action and reaction. It will require decisions. But these things can happen. Citizens can help make them happen by participating more actively in the process of guiding growth and developments, not only in the communities where they dwell but in the nation where we all live. Under our basic democratic concept, all persons affected by a governmental decision have a voice in making that decision.

Regardless of residence, occupation, or lifestyle, each American has a stake in the quality of the growth and in where it should take place.

The logical, democratic format for protecting this stake is in the context of land-use planning. Since land is the basic resource on which human activity ultimately depends, planning its wise use is the best tool to aid citizens to guide growth toward achieving economic benefits and protecting environmental quality.

There are many competing and contradictory interests in land use. People tend to focus on specific controversial local issues - such as the location of a highway or power plant - with the result that the broad concept of comprehensive planning is overlooked. A carefully planned program of preventive medicine will serve communities and States far better than the “band-aid” approach of the past. When we recognize that our land is a finite resource and not a mere commodity, we then realize that there must be a strong public interest in fostering proper land use.

To put the issue in perspective is to face facts squarely and openly. Land-use planning for better growth does require more public intervention in the way we use our land. It does require us to plan ahead on a community-wide basis and on regional or State levels. It does require changing the traditional “commodity” attitude toward the land itself. None of these changes are so drastic as to warrant the totally negative attitude to land use adopted by many of its opponents. If each individual is concerned solely about his own property, rational solutions become virtually impossible.

The History of Planning

City planning of one sort or another actually predates the revolution. Colonial towns had carefully laid out streets and on a grander scale there was a formal plan for the new capital city of Washington, D.C.



With 19th century industrialization and millions of immigrants coming to American cities, the old tradition of retaining ties to the land disappeared with tenement housing and the opportunity to make quick profits.

The 19th century planners worked on two main city problems: housing and parks. The crowded and unsanitary tenements of the city caused disease and crime. The lack of open green space and parks in cities in part caused poor health, both mental and physical. The planners and reformers tried to get better housing with adequate light and air, as well as provision of spaces for outdoor recreation in the cities.

The Columbia Exposition of 1893 in Chicago sparked a renewed interest in pure urban design which is the arrangement of structures and spaces. The “City Beautiful Movement” around the turn of the century made “planning” equal “beautification.” Civic pride demanded that every city create a plan for spacious boulevards and monumental public buildings. The grand civic centers of many large cities date from this period.



A new movement in planning, the zoning movement, began in New York City in 1916 with the passage of the first zoning ordinance. Soon hundreds of American cities followed suit. Zoning was thought to be a method of protecting residential neighborhoods from the factories, slaughterhouses, and other unpleasant land uses.

Preservation of property values and the status quo in general were the real reasons behind the popularity of zoning.

The Great Depression revived interest in the potential planning had for attacking social problems. Housing reformers once again became important in the planning movement. Preservation of the status quo became less important in the face of massive unemployment and social changes. At this time, new ideas of planning emerged. The notion emerged that planning is a staff aid to the executive branch of government, not only at the local level, but also at the state and federal level. Planning was seen as a method of increasing the efficiency of government and improving the ability of decision makers to make the proper decision under any given circumstances.

More recently there has been growing concern over man’s relationship to the natural world. The quality of life in our cities and towns is related to the quality of our natural environment. Planning is a method of ensuring that population and economic growth do not exceed the capacity of our resources to support them.

HORIZON

Adopted in 1992, the Horizon Plan is the 20-year “Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan” for the City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge. The plan acts as a “blueprint for the future” by serving as a guide for officials making decisions about land use and development within the City-Parish. The Horizon Plan’s primary emphasis is to identify major issues that will influence future growth, to decide the actions necessary to address these issues, and to propose specific strategies that will help the City-Parish target its resources in the most efficient manner.

The Horizon Plan is structured into twelve reports: A Horizon Plan Summary; the Horizon Plan Final Plan Report; seven Plan Elements; and three Special Reports. The Horizon Plan Summary provides a brief overview of the Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan and is made available to the public. The Final Plan Report offers a more concise narrative on the overall Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan for the future of the City-Parish. The Plan Elements are individual technical reports that address existing conditions and issues. The Elements are further divided into Goals, Objectives, Policies and Action Items.

Goals are broad and general statements of desired future conditions which aid and guide the decision-making process. Goals are intended to identify the basic type of urban environment that is desired by a majority of citizens in the community.

Objectives are specific statements about future conditions or results which should be achieved in order to attain the goals which have been set. Objectives are worded so that their achievement can be measured.

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

Action Items serve as strategies for implementation of the comprehensive plan. Action Items are assigned to various City-Parish Lead Agencies which use them as a method for addressing the Goals, Objectives and Policies of the Horizon Plan.

The seven Elements of the Horizon Plan are: 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.

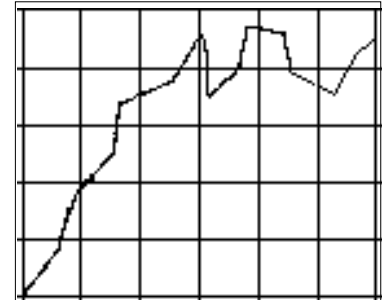
The Horizon Plan also contains three Special Reports which describe implementation aspects for specific portions of the Horizon Plan. The Special Reports are: the Capital Finance and Capital Improvements Program, which addresses the financial implementation of the Plan; the Plan Amendment Process, which outlines methods for updating and amending the Horizon Plan; and the Transition Rules, which examines how projects which provides the mechanisms by which existing development would be included in future development and implemented into the Final Plan.

The Planning Process

Planning is a process. In other words, planning consists of a lot of steps which aim toward a goal. The steps include the making of a plan for the future of the community. When adopted, this plan becomes official policy on the subject of development. In general, the goal of the plan is to improve the physical as well as economic and social environment of the community. To describe the process of planning, let us discuss eight steps.

1 Describe Present and Future Community Conditions

The first step in the planning process is to inventory the community the plan will affect. Such a survey will include a review of basic geographic, demographic and economic conditions. A good plan makes use of the existing resources of the community. Describing the present and future conditions of the community allow a plan to promote the area's strengths while accounting for potential problems.



Some additional questions useful in the assessment of present and future community conditions may be: What is the size of the population and how is it changing over time? How many persons in the community have jobs? What types of housing exist in the community? How many parks and recreation sites are located within the community? What types of open space exist in the community? What kinds of trips do people make and what is the destination and purpose? What services does the local government provide? What style is the urban design? What information on the pattern of present land uses is important in order to predict the extent and location of future uses? How well is an urban community adapted to its natural setting?

The Horizon Plan describes Baton Rouge in terms of demographics, economics and geography. The demographic and economic information was gathered from the 1990 Census. The Horizon Plan also surveyed the types of existing land use, as well as transportation networks.

Much like the Horizon Plan itself, this information is constantly updated. The Economic and Demographic Research Section of the Planning Commission is responsible for providing up-to-date information about Baton Rouge and its residents.

2 Identify Issues and Problems

Knowing the present and likely future conditions in the community, we can identify issues and problems facing us. It would be helpful to define our terms. An issue is a point of public debate or controversy. Many times conditions in the community stimulate controversy and thus raise issues about what ought to be done. A problem can be defined as a gap between reality and our goals. We need to clarify those goals in order to fully recognize problems facing us. Therefore, the next step of goal interpretation might well be carried out at the same time as this step of issue and problem identification.

The Horizon Plan formed with the input of citizens through a series of neighborhood planning meetings in 1989 and 1990. The first phase of the meeting process allowed for citizens to identify and prioritize the needs for the 16 Planning Districts of the Parish. The second phase of the meeting process allowed for the review and discussion of the 16 district plans and to make suggestions for the draft final plans. In December, 1990, the draft final plan was submitted to the Horizon Plan Steering Committee for review and approval. All modifications to the plan were approved by March 1991.



Public input is a key component to identify issues and resolve problems.

3 Study Alternative Actions

To each problem or issue identified, there are likely to be several actions which aim to solve the problem or otherwise help us reach our goals. Each possible action should be evaluated according to a number of criteria, including the following:



Appropriateness - does the action attack the problem at hand?

Feasibility - is it possible to institute the action?

Efficiency - does the action give the best results per dollar spent on it?

Effect on other problems and goals- will the action indirectly be in conflict with other problem solutions or with other goals?

For example, let us consider the case of a medium-size city growing rapidly at the periphery. The citizens determine that among their goals is the creation of a lively downtown center. Yet retail sales as well as resident population in the downtown area are dropping. Major retail stores are moving to modern shopping centers on the outskirts of town. Clearly a problem exists, measured by the gap between goals and reality.

A number of approaches to this problem can be considered. One might be to encourage the building of large new housing near downtown to provide a market for downtown retail sales. A second might be to build downtown parking garages with free parking for suburban shoppers. Another might be to encourage shoppers with convenient and low-priced bus service from outlying locations. Each alternative action must be considered according to various criteria such as feasibility, efficiency, economy and effect on other goals.

The Horizon Plan considered four alternatives: doing nothing, concentrating entirely on in-fill redevelopment, concentrating growth along major transportation routes, and promoting development in Growth Centers. From these alternatives, the Preferred Growth Scenario was developed. The Preferred Growth Scenario combines the best of the in-fill and Growth Center options. The Horizon Plan thus designates several areas throughout the parish as Growth Centers where development is encouraged, but also recognizes downtown Baton Rouge as *the* Regional Growth Center for the parish.

4 Study Community Resources



Before a plan is prepared, we must consider what the community has to work with in attacking its problems and aiming toward its goals. What factors will help put a plan into effect? Three types of resources can help. One type is physical resources. A plan must be cleared that will take advantage of the physical setting and character of the community. A second type is community resources. What is the public's attitude toward planning and community improvement? The attitude of community leaders? How can public support for the planning function be generated? Finally, and of no little importance, are financial resources. Making plans costs money. So does implementing plans. Without a continuing financial commitment, planning either will not occur at all or will be fruitless.

While the Horizon Plan studied several resources of the community (physical, economical, etc) there was one primary resource more important than all the others: the citizens of Baton Rouge. The Horizon Plan was created at the grass roots level through citizen input and public meetings. This bottom up approach continues today with the Subarea/ Neighborhood Planning Process that seeks to engage the public in planning out what they want for the future.

5 Prepare the General Plan



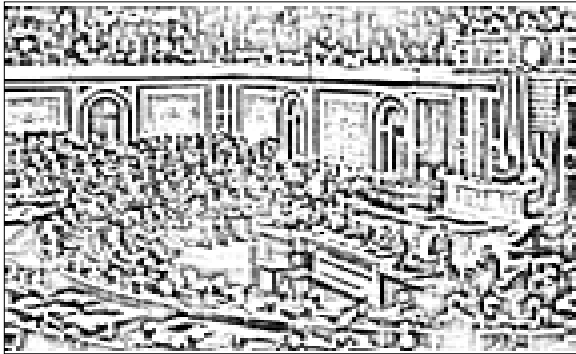
The general plan attempts to tie together the steps that have gone before. The general plan is a document which contains the major policies of a unit of government with respect to future physical development and future economic and social conditions. Included in the plan is a map showing the desired pattern of development plus a statement of policies aimed at reaching that pattern. The relationship of policies to community goals is explained.

The Horizon Plan was developed from a grass roots effort. This process was led by a citizens group and The Chamber of Commerce which resulted in the Metropolitan Council placing a new plan on the ballot.

The citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish and the City of Baton Rouge, also recognizing the need for a new comprehensive plan, approved the Metropolitan Council's recommendation and voted for the amendment of the Plan of Government to include comprehensive planning on April 16, 1988. The passage of the referendum directed the City-Parish Planning Commission, the Mayor-President and Metropolitan Council to prepare and adopt a new comprehensive plan.

Consultants were hired in April of 1989 to prepare the plan, under the direction of the Mayor-President, the Metropolitan Council and the Planning Commission. A Horizon Plan Steering Committee was organized in June 1989 to act as an oversight policy advisory committee. The following month, seven Resource Committees were formed to examine specific elements of the plan. The Resource Committees consisted of technical experts, agency representatives and interested citizens.

6 Adopt the Plan



A general plan is worth no more than the paper it is printed on unless it is official. Unless the plan is formally adopted by the community's decision-makers, it has no effect. As defined here, the plan includes policies related to physical development, and policies are expressed by the city council, board of supervisors, or whatever form the elected governing body takes.

The Horizon Plan was originally drafted and then adopted as a means to focus the shared political and social contract of Baton Rouge as a community with a vision of a livable and economically viable community entering the 21st century.

Throughout 1991, nearly one hundred public meetings were held by both the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council to refine the draft final plan. The Horizon Plan was adopted by the Metropolitan Council on January 7, 1992, and became effective April 1, 1992, as the new comprehensive land use and development plan for the City-Parish.

7 Implement the Plan

Formal adoption of a general plan is by no means the end of the planning process. In a sense, the most important part of the process lies ahead, for now the plan must be put into effect. Now the plan will begin to affect physical development decisions, both public and private, that are continually made in a community.

A number of tools exist to implement a plan. Among these are:

LAND USE CONTROLS

Zoning Zoning is a means of ensuring that various land uses are properly located with respect to each other and that adequate space is available to each. Broadly speaking, the measuring stick for determining what is "proper" and "adequate" is the general plan. The plan provides the justification for allowing or prohibiting various land uses.



The legal basis for zoning is the police power of the state and its political subdivisions. Under the police power, a unit of government may adopt regulations for the purpose of protecting the health, safety, morals and general welfare of the public. Apart from this constitutional basis is the statutory basis which results from a state legislature adopting a law allowing zoning regulations at the state or local level.

As noted earlier, zoning became popular some years before the use of the general plan did. This was because the real, if unexpressed, purpose of zoning was to protect property values. In particular, residential property values were to be protected against conflicting land uses, such as industrial uses. Nowadays, zoning is used to implement various policies related to health, safety, morals or general welfare as expressed in the general plan. These policies may or may not be closely related to protection of property values. Zoning has been used to control development in historic areas, flood plains and airport districts and to control billboards and aesthetics. These are merely a few of the non-traditional uses of zoning.

Technically, zoning is the division of a city, county or other unit of government into districts. Within each district four factors generally are regulated:

- The height and bulk of structures.
- The proportion of a lot that may be built upon.
- The density of population.
- The use of buildings and land for residential, commercial, industrial or other purposes.

These regulations are described expressed in a zoning ordinance which is adopted by the governing body. The ordinance generally consists of a map showing the districts themselves and a list of regulations detailing what is or is not permitted in various districts.

Enforcement of the ordinance is accomplished usually by two bodies. One is the building inspector or other officer who checks proposed developments against the zoning ordinance. The second body is the board of adjustment which hears appeals against decisions of the inspector and issues variances.

Subdivision Regulations The subdivision of land is the division of a parcel into two or more lots for the purpose of sale or development. Subdivision regulations control this process of converting acreage into building sites. Regulations focus on both the arrangement of streets and spaces and the standard which improvements must meet.



The constitutional basis of subdivision regulations is the police power of the state. As with the zoning power, an enabling act is required setting out the bounds within which the local government can act. Enforcement of such regulations usually takes several forms. Before a plat (subdivision map) is recorded with the county recorder, it must be approved by the planning commission. The commission measures each proposed subdivision against the existing subdivision regulations.

A land developer may be prohibited from selling his lots or obtaining building permits for improvements without plat approval. Often regulations allow a city or town to approve subdivisions outside the incorporated area but within a distance of a few miles. This extraterritorial jurisdiction allows a town to ensure that territory likely to be annexed will meet existing standards of development.

As a method of implementing the general plan, subdivision regulations must of course conform to all general plan policies affecting development. Furthermore, regulations should conform to zoning ordinance provisions which may overlap, such as those dealing with minimum lot size. If a capital improvement plan for installations of streets and sewers exists, it should be coordinated with the subdivision regulations. If an official map (a device for specifying the future location of streets and other improvements) exists, it too should be consistent with subdivision regulations. Finally, health regulations affecting such things as septic tank usage and other governmental policies must be in line with subdivision regulations.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SPENDING AND PROGRAMMING



A capital improvement is a major non-recurring expenditure of funds. Structures, roads, landscaping and other physical facilities are classed as capital improvements.

Capital improvement programming is the process of scheduling spending on improvements over a period of years beyond the next budgetary year. Steps in the process can be summarized:

Inventory A list of potential capital improvements is prepared together with a cost estimate for each.

Priorities The projects are tentatively listed in order of importance.

Financing The feasibility of financing the various projects is studied. Alternatives such as bond issues are explored.



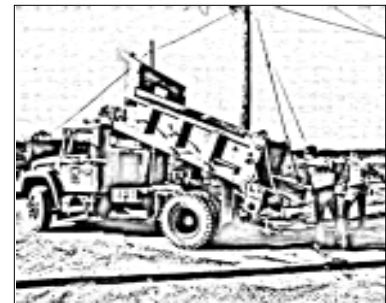
Five-Year Program A final list of projects arranged according to priority is made. A schedule of projects for a specific period (such as five years) is selected. An initial group of projects is often made a part of the coming year's budget.

Review and Application After public review, the five-year program and the coming year's budget is formally adopted by the governing body. An annual update of the five-year program is undertaken so that at all times the program extends five years into the future.

This programming process may be primarily the responsibility of the finance department or other agency within the government rather than the planning agency. In any event, the planning agency should be involved in order to insure that projects are consistent with policies expressed in the general plan and elsewhere.

REDEVELOPMENT

Urban redevelopment provides a way of assembling tracts of land in different ownership in order to allow new public or private development. In this way, a city or town government can directly implement some of its general plan policies.



OTHER MEASURES

Several other steps may be taken to implement the policies of the general plan. Among these are:

A demonstration project This can act as a catalyst in making plans become a reality. For instance, a city-funded park or community center can stimulate private investment in a redevelopment area.

Persuasion and information A general plan may have considerable impact merely because it exists and its existence is well known in the community. The policies contained in the plan may affect many private development decisions. In order for that to happen the plan must be publicized, and it must be readable, sensible and up-to-date.

Incentives Some local governments have experimented with positive incentives to encourage private developments in line with public policies. Tax concessions may attract desired industry, although questions of equity are raised by giving tax reductions to some but not all. Bonuses in the form of added allowable building height or bulk (and thus added floor space) may encourage developers to provide amenities such as public open space.



Once a comprehensive or master plan has presented the existing conditions, the needs assessment and a community's desires for the future, generally it then poses a set of goals and objectives. As a rule, these goals and objectives are followed by an implementation schedule or program. The master plan also includes action oriented elements as the planning process culminates.

The goals and objectives of the master plan represent the community's vision and values. They may also be presented as vision statements or policy recommendations. Once established, a schedule for achieving them must be set and assigning responsibility to the appropriate individual or organization for accomplishment must be made.

In order to evaluate the progress towards implementation of a plan, a monitoring mechanism or structure must be in place. This can be achieved through the local governing authority, planning commission or through an implementation committee.

The Horizon Plan's efforts were initially guided by the Horizon Plan Implementation Committee (HPIC), which was established in 1993 by the Metropolitan Council to guide management and implementation of the Horizon Plan. During its tenure, the HPIC worked to ensure that the broadest possible input and coordination among all levels of government would occur. The HPIC included members from both the administrative and legislative branches of government and the public. The Committee was charged with the responsibility of reviewing and evaluating the Horizon Plan and, when necessary, making recommendations for Plan revisions to the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council.

Furthermore, the Horizon Plan is implemented through a series of action items that seek to promote certain goals (*See Horizon Plan Organization Chart on page 15*). Currently there are 288 Action Items (strategies) to implement the Horizon Plan. In addition to ongoing projects each year a new work program is developed to forward implementation. There are thirty-four Lead Agencies participating in the implementation of the Horizon Plan which include state and local governments, nonprofit organizations and private utility companies. The Advance Planning Division is responsible for the coordination of this work program. In addition, the Planning Commission is the lead agency for 77 Action Items for Elements ranging from Land Use to Transportation to Public Services.

8 Review and Update the Plan

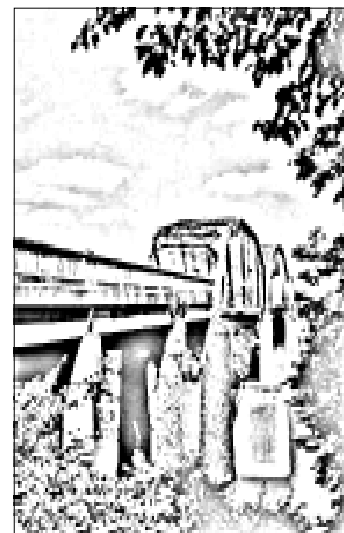
Finally, the general plan must not be a static document. Over time, the need for changes in the plan may become obvious. Experience in enforcing regulations and otherwise trying to put the plan into effect may suggest changes in implementation techniques. Public reaction to the plan and its enforcement may become more vocal and more useful after the plan is adopted and its effect is known.



Reviewing and updating the plan should go on continuously. This does not mean the plan should be amended every time a change in the land use occurs. The general plan must remain a long-range document. But major events and changes in policy must be reflected in the plan. A formal review of the general plan should take place regularly, perhaps every five years. At this point each step in the planning process should be repeated beginning with goal interpretation.






Public feedback is crucial to the review and update process. The citizens must know what is happening in their community and they must be given the opportunity to express their concerns and opinions. Not only does public feedback make for a more democratic planning process, it also makes for better results. Citizens often have insights about their neighborhood that might be missed. Providing for open lines of communication between the decision-makers and the public is a key part of the planning process.

The Horizon Plan calls for major updates every five years to review the achievements, strengths and weaknesses of the City-Parish efforts to implement the Goals and Objectives of the Plan. Annual Year-End, Mid-Year Evaluation, and Monthly Appraisal Reports also are prepared to systematically assess the effectiveness of the Plan's Goals and Objectives.



Horizon Plan Organization

The Horizon Plan is organized into seven broad planning categories or Elements. Each Element is then arranged into Goals which are general statements of desired future conditions. The Goals aid and guide the decision-making process. Finally, Action Items are the specific strategies that are followed to bring about the conditions stated in the goals. Below are the seven Elements, some sample goals, and an action item related to each goal.

ELEMENTS	GOALS	ACTION ITEMS
Land Use	 LU2 Promote development and redevelopment within the urbanized area.	 LU2.F Information Brochure. Publish and distribute a brochure updated on an annual basis, to provide a readily available source of information on the growth and development of the parish.
Transportation	 T4 Development should include off-street parking to accommodate projected parking needs.	 T4.E Downtown Parking Mgt. Develop a parking management strategy for Downtown Baton Rouge to promote utilization of park-and-ride facilities, ride-sharing and public transit.
Wastewater, Solid Waste and Drainage	 SW1 Collect and dispose of all solid waste generated in the city and parish in an efficient and pleasing manner which does not harm the environment nor detract from the quality of life of the citizenry.	 S.1 Recycling Program. Implement a parishwide recycling program utilizing the recommendations of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.
Conservation and Environmental Resources	 E1 Achieve and maintain air quality as good as or better than National Ambient Air Quality Standards.	 E1.B Evaluate Multi-transport. Evaluate the performance of existing programs and alternative for promoting ride-sharing, van pooling, and use of public transportation to identify and recommend improvements.
Recreation and Open Space	 R3 Place a high priority on the visual and environmental aspects of park design.	 R3.E Landscape Regulations. Conduct periodic reviews and evaluations of the landscape regulations within the Unified Development Code, and propose revisions to the landscaping standards as necessary.
Housing	 H1 Promote affordable housing.	 H1.C "Benevolent Deposit." Maintain a "Benevolent Deposit" program in which the City-Parish, corporations, foundations, and other interested parties deposit funds in a participating bank which can be used to rehabilitate or construct affordable housing.
Public Services, Public Businesses and Health and Human Services	 PB1 Provide for an orderly and comprehensive planning process for siting and development of public buildings.	 PS1.A GIS. Develop a parishwide Geographic Information System (GIS) for computerized mapping and database management of all public services information (planning, permits, inspections, public safety, assessments, administration, transportation, health and human services, etc.) to allow for inter-agency cooperation, coordination, and efficiency.

The Horizon Plan anticipated that unforeseen and changing conditions and economics would affect the success of the Plan and that a regular monitoring would be necessary in order for the Plan to meet current and future needs. As land use data is updated to identify new development activity, demographic data, economic analyses and assumptions also will evolve. These factors need to be recognized and incorporated to keep the Horizon Plan pertinent. The importance of citizen participation in the Plan's implementation also has been recognized as necessary if the Plan is to remain an effective, dynamic document. A regular series of Public Meetings on a Planning District basis has allowed for a continuing public role in the evolution of the Horizon Plan while providing the Planning Commission Staff added insight into the concerns of the community.

During the update process, the Goals and Objectives of the Horizon Plan were evaluated for their continued relevance and appropriateness in serving the comprehensive preferred growth scenario as described in the Horizon Plan. The Staff of the Planning Commission first analyzed the individual Goals and Objectives for each Element for their current relevance, and made recommendations for changes where appropriate. It was determined that the Goals and Objectives for each Element remain important and pertinent to the current growth patterns of the City-Parish as well as the vision of Baton Rouge as originally expressed in the Horizon Plan. These comments were forwarded to the Lead Agencies for input, and a consensus was reached before presentation of the findings and recommendations to the Horizon Plan Implementation Committee for its input, the Planning Commission for its review and recommendations, and the Metropolitan Council for its deliberation and approval.



The City-Parish Planning Commission has gone to great lengths to encourage public participation. As part of our Public Information Program, the Planning Commission has produced a series of Information Bulletins about various planning topics; an Annual Report detailing the accomplishments of the year; a quarterly newsletter, *The Planning News*; and publishes a web site that contains about the Planning Commission as well as land

development regulations and applications, and other planning related information such as the Official Street Name and Subdivision Lists.

The Horizon Plan requires public participation throughout the plan implementation process. The Planning Commission uses a variety of means to ensure public input. These efforts include the distribution of a Neighborhood Survey to civic organizations listed on our Neighborhood Registry. This survey is also available at public libraries and can be submitted electronically over the internet. Also, as part of the Subarea/Neighborhood Planning Process, public meetings are held in the community to solicit citizen responses to changes in the Horizon Plan '2010 Land Use Plan' and the location of infrastructure improvements.



Public meetings provide an excellent forum for citizen feedback.

Glossary

The understanding of the following terms will be most useful in understanding and participating in the comprehensive planning process.

AESTHETIC ZONING - The regulation of building design and site developments in the interest of appearance.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTROL - Regulations and procedures requiring structures to be suitable, harmonious, and in keeping with the general appearance, historical character, or style of their surrounding area.

BONUSES (ALSO KNOWN AS INCENTIVE ZONING) - The awarding of bonus credits to a development in the form of allowing more intensive use of the land if such public benefits as greater than the minimum open spaces are preserved, special provisions for low and moderate income housing are made, or public plazas and courts are provided at ground level.

BUFFER ZONE - A strip of land created to separate and protect one type of land use from another; for example, as a screen of planting or fencing to insulate the surroundings from the noise, smoke, or visual aspects of an industrial zone or junk yard.

BUILDING AREA - The total square footage of a lot covered by a building measured on a horizontal plane at mean grade level, exclusive of uncovered porches, terraces, and steps.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMING - The process of scheduling spending on capital improvements over a period of years beyond the next budgetary year.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT SPENDING - A major non-recurring expenditure of funds.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES - Public or privately owned facilities used by the public, such as streets, schools, libraries, parks, and playgrounds; also facilities owned and operated by non-profit private agencies such as churches, settlement houses, and neighborhood associations.

CONDITIONAL USE - A land use allowed by the zoning ordinance only when specified conditions are met. The term special exception has a similar meaning.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT - A tool for acquiring open space with less than full-fee purchase; the public agency buys only certain specific rights from the owner. These may be positive rights, giving the public rights to hunt, fish, hike, or ride over the land, or they may be restricted rights limiting the uses to which the owner may put his land in the future. Scenic easements allow the public agency to use the owner's land for scenic enhancement such as roadside landscaping and vistapoint preservation.

DEDICATION - A turning over of private land for a public use by an owner or developer, and its acceptance for such use by the governmental agency in charge of the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses are often made conditions for the approval of a developments by a planning commission.

DEDICATION, PAYMENT IN LIEU OF - Cash payments required as a substitute for a dedication of land by an owner or developer, usually at so many dollars per lot. This overcomes the two principal problems of land-dedication requirements by applying the exactions on development more equitably and by allowing purchase of sites at the best locations rather than merely in places where the development is large enough to be required to dedicate a school or park. (This is not legal in all states.)

DENSITY TRANSFER - A technique of retaining open space by concentrating residential densities, usually in compact areas adjacent to existing urbanization and utilities, with outlying areas being left open, so that the residential density of the entire community will average out at the same number of dwelling units as if the community were developed from end to end with large lots. A variation of this involves allowing density transfers by private developers who buy the development rights of outlying properties that are publicly desirable for open space and adding the additional density to the base number of units permitted in the zone in which they propose to develop.

EMINENT DOMAIN - The right of a government to make a taking of private property for public use of benefit upon payment of just compensation to the owner. The terms “eminent domain” and “condemnation” are often used interchangeably, although condemnation may also mean demolition by public authority of an unsafe structure where no compensation is paid to the owner and the condemned property does not become public land. “Inverse condemnation” is a condition in which the governmental use of police power to regulate the use of land is so severe that it represents a de facto taking of private property for public benefit or use without just compensation.

ENVIRONMENT - The background against which living processes are carried out. Or, the whole collection of conditions and forces that influence an organism, including other organisms. The natural environment consists of land, air, water, living creatures and other natural conditions and forces. The man-made environment consists of buildings and structures for which man is responsible. The social environment consists of ideas, beliefs and other aspects of human culture. The urban environment is a mixture of these three.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT - An assessment of a proposed project or activity to determine whether it will have significant environmental effects on the natural and man-made environments.

EXCEPTION (ALSO KNOWN AS VARIANCE) - The official provision of an exemption from compliance with the terms or conditions of a building or zoning regulation by a local board or administrator vested with the power to authorize it. It is usually granted if there are practical difficulties in meeting the existing requirements literally, or if the deviation or exception would not have a detrimental impact on adjacent properties or affect substantial impact on adjacent properties or affect substantial compliance with the regulations.

EXTERNALITIES, SIDE EFFECTS, SPILLOVERS, REPERCUSSION EFFECTS - The impacts on others than the direct beneficiaries or targets of a course of action. Externalities may be local or widespread and may be fiscal, environmental, social, or all three. Much of the recent environmental impact legislation is based on increased understanding of the spillovers of development processes on a community’s natural and human environment.

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION - The power of a city to review or approve subdivision activity outside the city limits.

FLOOR AREA RATIO - A formula for determining permitted building volume as a multiple of the area of the lot. For example, a ratio of six on a 10,000 square foot lot would allow a twelve-story building with 5,000 square feet on each floor or a variety of similar combinations as long as the total floor area did not exceed 60,000 square feet. Some zoning ordinances offer an incentive in the form of a higher Floor Area Ratio in order to reduce site coverage and thus encourage provision of plazas and other open spaces on the ground level. (Formula—Total Building Square Footage/ Total Lot Square Footage = Floor Area Ratio)

GENERAL PLAN - An official document containing goals and objectives for future development and policies designed to reach those goals and objectives. Sometimes called “Comprehensive Plan,” or “Master Plan.”

GOAL - The future toward which action is directed.

HIGHEST AND BEST USE - The use of land in such a way that its development will bring maximum profit to the owner. It’s a theoretical real estate concept that does not take into account the externalities from such a use of land.

IMPLEMENTATION - The process of carrying out the policies in the comprehensive plan.

IMPROVED LAND - Raw land that has been improved with basic facilities such as roads, sewers, water lines, and other public infrastructure facilities in preparation for meeting development standards.

ISSUE - A point of public debate or controversy.

LAND USE CONTROLS - Regulations governing how land is to be used in order to implement the general plan. The major controls are subdivision regulation and zoning.

LAND USE PLAN - A basic element of a comprehensive plan, it designates the future use of reuse of the land within a given jurisdiction's planning area, and the policies and reasoning used in arriving at the decisions in the plan. The land-use plan serves as a guide to official decisions in regard to the distribution and intensity of private development, as well as public decisions on the location of future public facilities and open space. It is also a basic guide to the structuring of zoning and subdivision controls, urban renewal, and capital improvement programs.

LEAPFROG DEVELOPMENT - Development that occurs well beyond the existing limits of urban development and thus leaves intervening vacant land behind. This bypassing of the next-in-line lands at the urban fringe results in the haphazard shotgun pattern of urbanization known as "sprawl."

MORATORIUM - In planning, a freeze on all new development pending the completion and adoption of a comprehensive plan. In recent years building moratoriums have also been instituted by water and sewer agencies when sewage treatment facilities are inadequate or when water shortages are threatened.

MUNICIPALITY - An incorporated city or town.

NEIGHBORHOOD - The smallest subarea in city planning, defined as a residential area whose residents have public facilities and social institutions in common, generally within walking distance of their homes.

NONCONFORMING USE - A structure or use that is not permitted by its present district's zoning regulations. If it was established after the enactment of the ordinance, it is illegal and may be abated, but if it existed before the regulations, it is a legal nonconforming use and may continue, although a new or different nonconforming use may not replace it.

OBJECTIVE - An intermediate step on the path to reaching a goal.

OFFICIAL MAP - A map giving notice to private landowners of where future streets and other public improvements are to be located.

OPEN SPACE - That part of the countryside which has not been developed and which is desirable for preservation in its natural state for ecological, historical, or recreational purposes, or in its cultivated state to preserve agricultural, forest, or urban greenbelt areas.

PEAK HOUR - For any given highway, the sixty-minute period of the day during which it carries its highest volume of traffic. Usually this occurs during morning or evening rush, when the majority of people attempt to get to or from work.



PERFORMANCE STANDARDS - Zoning regulations providing specific criteria limiting the operations of certain industries, land uses, and buildings to acceptable levels of noise, air pollution, emissions, odors, vibration, dust, dirt, glare, heat, fire hazards, wastes, traffic generation, and visual impact. This type of zoning may not bar an industry or use by specified type, but admits any use that can meet the particular standards of operation set for admission. Instead of classifying industries in districts under the headings "light," "heavy," or "unrestricted," it establishes measurable technical standards and classifies the industries in terms of their probable environmental impact. Terms such as "limited," "substantial," and "objectionable" determine the overall acceptability rating of a particular use.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) - A self-contained development, often with a mixture of housing types and densities, in which the subdivision and zoning controls are applied to the project as a whole rather than to individual lots as in most subdivisions. Therefore, densities are calculated for the entire development, usually permitting a trade-off between clustering of houses and provision of common open space.

PLAT - A map of a subdivision

POLICE POWER - The inherent right of a government to restrict an individual's conduct or his use of his property in order to protect the health, safety, welfare, and morals of the community.

POLICY - A guide to action.

RESTRICTIVE COVENANT - An agreement limiting the use of land and running with the land (remaining in force regardless of ownership).

SITE PLAN REVIEW - Planning agency consideration of the physical arrangement of a proposed land use.

SPECIAL DISTRICT - A unit of local government with a limited purpose rather than general powers.

SUBDIVISION - The division of a parcel of land into two or more lots for the purposes of sale or development.

SUBDIVISION REGULATION - A local ordinance controlling the subdivision of land and the improvements made to subdivided land.

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT - Federally aided local action to replace blighted structures on private land.

URBAN PLANNING - The establishment of goals and policies affecting future physical, social and economic development.

ZONING - The division of a city or county into districts for the purposes of regulating the use of land, the size of structures, and the density of population. Accomplished through the passage of a zoning ordinance.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR - A municipal or county employee responsible for enforcement of the zoning ordinance.