



*“Honoring our heritage...  
Planning our future”*



## Zachary Louisiana



### *Comprehensive Plan*



KENDIG KEAST  
COLLABORATIVE



Zachary Louisiana



*“Honoring our heritage...*

*Planning our future”*





# Zachary Louisiana



KENDIG KEAST  
COLLABORATIVE







May 12, 2010

The Honorable Mayor Henry J. Martinez  
City of Zachary  
P.O. Box 310  
Zachary, Louisiana 70791

Dear Mayor Martinez:

We are pleased to submit the final Zachary Comprehensive Plan as adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission on April 5, 2010. This final plan document represents the devotion of your staff and an investment of countless hours of document review and meetings by the Citizens' Delegation, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council, and many others over the course of the last three years. Your fine leadership and their commitment will set the course for the bright future of Zachary.

This new plan confronts the key challenges and opportunities Zachary will face over the next several decades, from infrastructure and public service needs to economic development, housing and neighborhood integrity, growth management, mobility, parks and greenways, community character, and other quality of life amenities. The plan outlines the City's goals and objectives but more importantly, lays the groundwork as to the steps and actions to achieve what the community envisions in its future. The City's foresight and preparedness was highlighted by your keen recognition of the need to first, adopt interim standards and secondly, rewrite the land development codes to ensure quality, sustainable development. For this we applaud you and all those who worked ever so diligently to see this plan - and it's implementing regulations - to fruition. We especially recognize your staff for their role in shaping the long-range and strategic outlook for Zachary as their input and guidance was highly valued.

With various plan implementation efforts already under way, we urge the City and community members to sustain their commitment to well-managed growth, environmental responsibility, redevelopment and enhancement of Downtown, improved neighborhood integrity, and prosperity and economic opportunity.

On behalf of Kendig Keast Collaborative, we sincerely appreciated the opportunity to lend our professional skills and experience to this Comprehensive Plan. We look forward to seeing the continued growth and enhancement of Zachary in the years ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Bret C. Keast, AICP  
President







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Chapter One

# Introduction & Community Profile

**T**hrough this master plan, Zachary may determine how best to accommodate and manage its projected growth, as well as any redevelopment of its older neighborhoods or commercial and industrial areas. Like most, this master plan is aimed at ensuring that ongoing development and redevelopment will proceed in an orderly, well-planned manner so that public facilities and services may keep pace and residents' quality of life will be preserved. Significantly, by clarifying and stating the City's intentions regarding the area's physical development and infrastructure investment, this plan also creates an increased level of certainty for residents, landowners, developers, and investors.

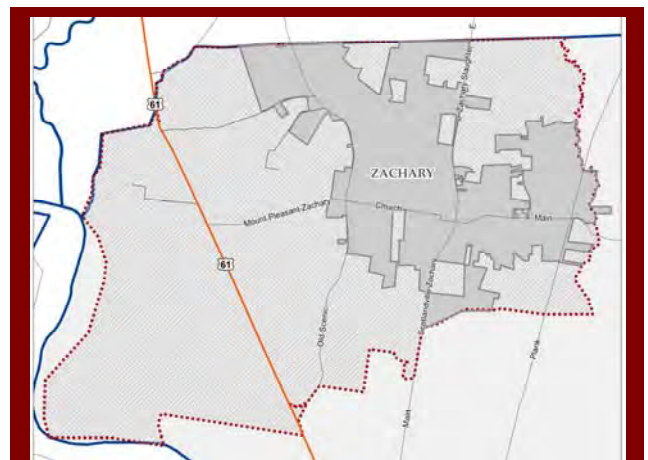
## Purpose of this Master Plan

This master plan is an important policy document because it:

- ◆ Lays out a broad, long-term vision with associated goals and recommendations regarding future growth and enhancement of the community;
- ◆ Considers the entire geographic area of the community, as displayed in **Map 1.1, Study Area**, including the future growth areas where urbanization is expected and intended to occur; and
- ◆ Assesses near- and longer-term needs and desires across a variety of inter-related topics that represent the key "building blocks" of Zachary (such as land use, growth management, mobility, housing and neighborhoods, economic development, parks and recreation, utility infrastructure, and public facilities and services).

## Use of this Plan

As a public document to be adopted by the governing body, this master plan is designed to transform Zachary into a cohesive, unified community. However, it is important to understand that this plan in and of itself is incapable of accomplishing the vision articulated by this plan. Rather, the City must be proactive in the amendment of its regulations and formulation of complimentary policies and programs to achieve what is envisioned by the community and its residents and stakeholders.



**Map 1.1, Study Area**

As illustrated above, this master plan addresses the current City limits, as well as a defined zone of influence that coincides with the school district boundaries. This area supersedes the one and one-half mile Zone of Influence agreed to by and between East Baton Rouge Parish and the City.

**Planning is...**

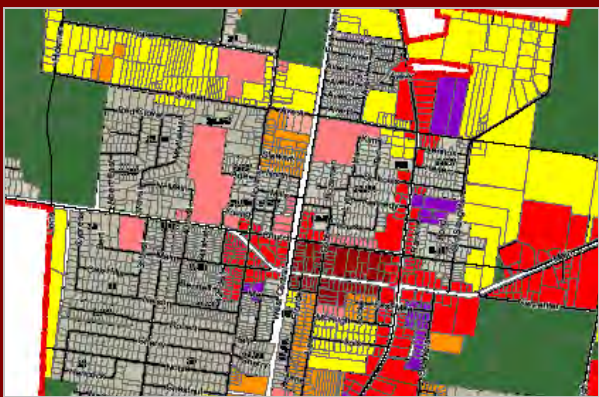
the process of identifying issues and needs, establishing goals and objectives, and determining the most effective means by which these ends may be achieved.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

This plan is a guidance document for City officials and staff, who make decisions on a continuing basis to determine future growth directions and the fiscal health and character of the community. These decisions are carried out through:

- ◆ targeted programs and expenditures prioritized through the City's annual budget process, including routine, but essential, functions such as code enforcement;
- ◆ major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and related bond initiatives;
- ◆ new and amended City ordinances and regulations closely linked to the master plan objectives (and associated review and approval procedures in the case of subdivisions and zoning matters);
- ◆ departmental work plans;
- ◆ the pursuit of external funding to supplement local budgets and/or expedite certain projects; and
- ◆ initiatives pursued in conjunction with other public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes neither may accomplish alone.

Despite these avenues for action, this plan should not be considered a "cure all" for every problem. On one hand, this plan focuses on the responsibilities of the City in its physical planning, where it has or may have a direct role. As a vision and policy statement, it must remain general. While this plan may not touch on every individual issue, it is meant to motivate concerted efforts to move the community toward action and achievement of its stated goals and vision.

**Master Plan Implementation**







Future developments must follow the vision expressed by this plan. The responsibility for implementation rests, in part, on the subdivision standards and zoning requirements (zoning map reflected above).

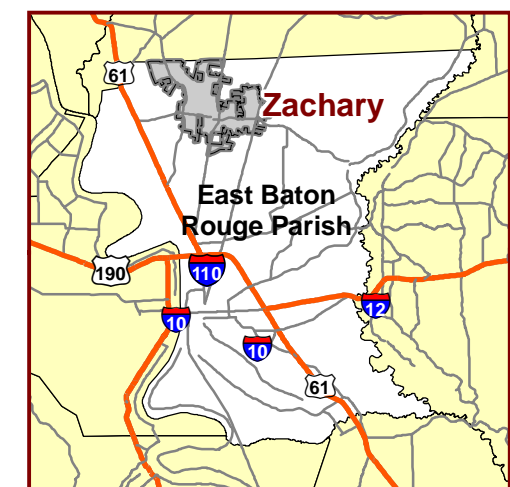
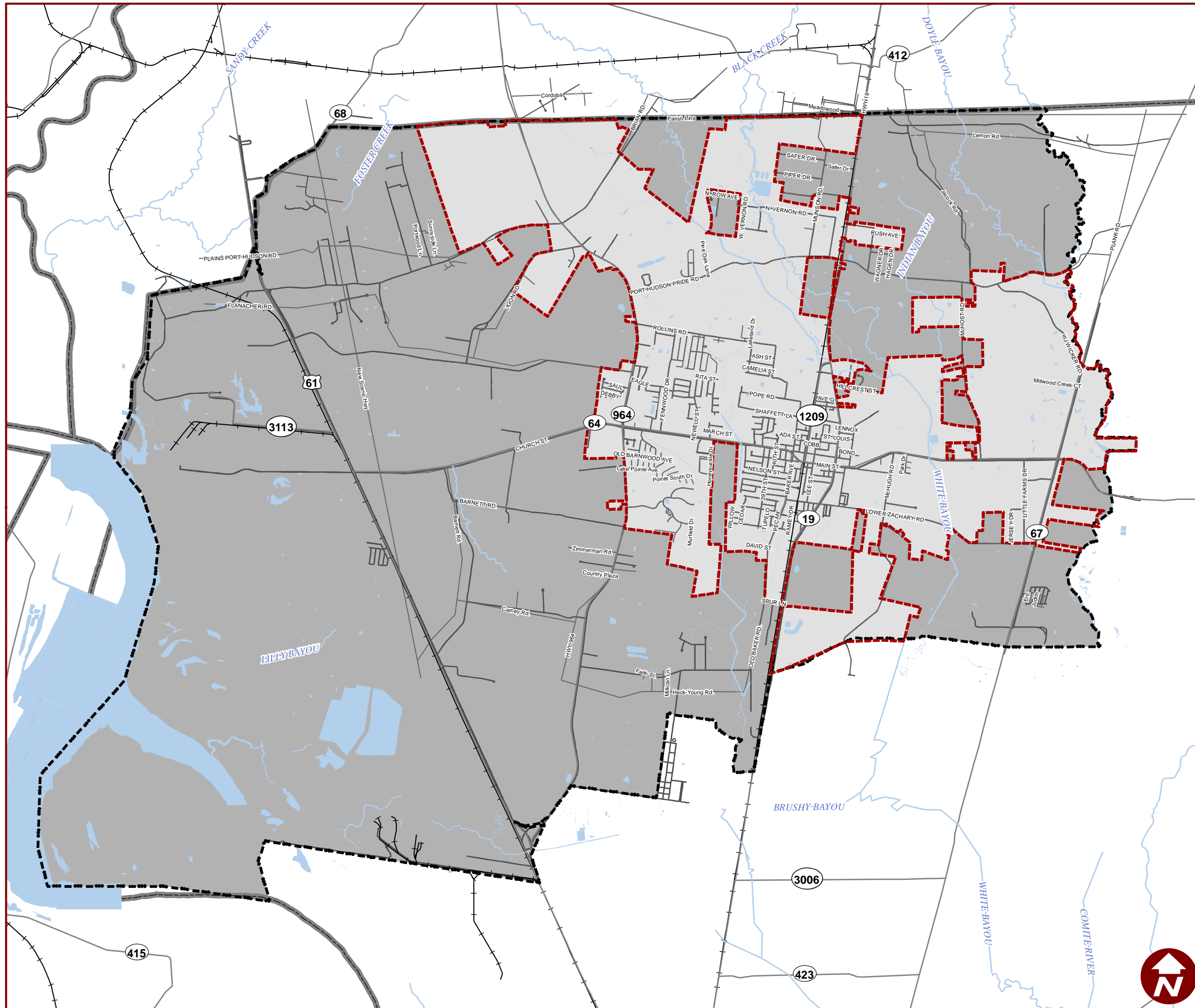
It is important to relate the function of this plan to the implementing regulations. This plan establishes the overall policies for future land use and growth patterns, protection areas, community character, roads and utilities, parks and open space, economic development, and other aspects of community growth and enhancement. The City's zoning ordinance and map implement this plan in terms of specific land uses and building and site development standards. Further, the subdivision regulations establish standards to conform to the plan for the future subdivision of land, layout of streets and building sites, and the design and construction of roads, water and sewer lines, storm drainage, and other infrastructure.



# Map 1.1

## Study Area

-  Corporate Limits
-  Proposed Zone of Influence
-  East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary
-  Major Water Bodies
-  Streams
-  Railroads



0 0.5 1 2 Miles



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Adopted April 5, 2010

## Planning Authority

### State Support for Community Planning

Municipalities in Louisiana are directed by state law to prepare and maintain a master plan. Specifically, Title 33, Section 102 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes provides that a municipal planning commission shall create a master plan,<sup>1</sup> which they may *“from time to time adopt and publish a part or parts thereof, any such part to cover one or more major sections or divisions of the municipality, or one or more of the aforesaid or other functional matters to be included in the plan. The Commission may from time to time amend, extend, or add*

#### Local Government Planning

The success of this plan will rely, in part, on its means of integration with the operations of the City, including its programs for planning, policy governance, and capital planning and budgeting.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

*to the plan.”* Completing this plan brings the City into compliance.

### Why Plan?

*This plan will allow the City to pro-actively manage its growth directions and future character rather than reacting to development proposals on an incremental, case-by-case basis without adequate and necessary consideration of the broader community vision. This plan must go beyond general and lofty goals. While everybody may agree, progress will only occur if the plan establishes a policy framework and provides guidance as to the implementation steps necessary to achieve success.*

The process required to update this master plan may prove more valuable than the plan itself since the document is simply a snapshot in time. The planning process involved major community decisions about how much and where growth should occur, the pattern and character of future development, and whether the community can afford to provide the necessary public services and facilities to support this growth. This led to pivotal discussions about what is "best" for the community and how everything from taxes to "quality of life" will be affected.

This long-range planning process provided an opportunity for the City's elected and appointed officials to step back from pressing, day-to-day issues and clarify their ideas on the kind of community they are trying to create. Through the plan development process, they looked broadly at programs for neighborhoods, housing, economic development, and provision of public infrastructure and how these concerns relate to one another. This master plan represents a "big picture" of the City – one that can be related to the trends and interests of the broader region, as well as the State of Louisiana.



Local planning is often the most direct and efficient way to involve members of the general public in describing the community they want. The planning process provided a rare opportunity for two-way communication between citizens and local government officials as to their vision of the community and how they would like to see it be achieved.

<sup>1</sup> LA Revised Statutes 33: 106, Subpart A, General powers and duties, (Subsection 2) “A municipal planning commission shall make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality.”

This plan presents a series of goals and policies that will guide the City in administering its development regulations; determining the location, financing, and timing of public improvements; and directing reinvestment and redevelopment efforts. It also provides a means for coordinating the work programs of each department of the City.

In brief, reasons why this plan are important include:

- ◆ Ensure adequate facilities to meet the demands of future growth and development.
- ◆ Develop an efficient growth pattern that reflects the small-town values of community residents.
- ◆ Allow for long-term protection and enhancement of environmental resources.
- ◆ Sustain the local heritage and culture.
- ◆ Involve citizens in the decision-making process as to its vision for ongoing development.
- ◆ Secure the long-term interests of fiscal health and sustainability.

## Our Vision

The City seeks to balance future growth and maintain its “small-town character.” The natural environment plays a significant role in shaping the character due to an abundance of trees and water courses. Resident priorities are summarized as “family-first.” This commitment to values may be borne in a variety of ways. For instance, recreation, especially for youth, must be a focus to bring the community together at all age levels. Also, future generations must be able to reside in the community as both young and mature adults. This means that the City must be diligent in its pursuit of economic development opportunities and quality, affordable housing for its current and future citizens. More specifically:

### ✓ **Families First!**

Zachary is a “family-first” community and with good reason since most households are larger, younger families that were attracted by the special quality of life. Parks and open space opportunities should target all age levels so that whole families can enjoy the outdoors. The highly regarded school system is an asset that must be nurtured and protected. The pattern and timing of new development must be well-planned and closely coordinated with the capital plan of the school district. Pedestrian mobility systems must support walking and biking to school and for recreational purposes.

### ✓ **Planned and Fiscally Responsible Growth**

Residents enjoy their small-town environment and are proud that their community is prosperous and growing. However, they want growth to support future infrastructure systems and to be well managed and in character with their historical development patterns. In other words, the community desires to preserve its culture, charm, and cherished way of life.

### ✓ **Connectivity and Universal Access**

Closely related to the vision of incremental, contiguous growth is the desire to maintain a high degree of multi-modal connectivity. The continuity of the street system must be a priority, requiring connections within and between neighborhoods. A pedestrian and trail network must be developed comprehensively, tying together neighborhoods, schools, and parks.

### ✓ **Environmental Quality**

Residents value the quality of the natural environment and want to preserve and protect it. Natural areas, surrounding farmland, and waterway and bayou protection are important. The City must maintain its commitment to the preservation of open spaces and protection of its sensitive natural resources.

### ✓ **Live Local, Work Local**

The creation of good jobs for the next generation is a basic and essential need for the community’s long-term vitality and sustainability. The City envisions development and expansion of its job base so that residents can live and work in Zachary. The economic development strategy must build upon the medical center expansion, business park and industrial development, and downtown reinvestment and expansion.



Adopted April 5, 2010

- ✓ **Downtown**  
Redevelopment of vacant or underutilized Downtown buildings is envisioned. This will be supported by infill development and redevelopment, as well as expanding the Downtown boundaries to create a stronger connection to the Historic Village. The community supports the concept of a mixed use “village center” as a vibrant business and government core and a hub of activity. A stronger sense of “place” is needed to create an image of Downtown as a destination, rather than a connector between home and work.
- ✓ **Housing**  
There is a strong demand for additional housing and creation of new neighborhoods. The City envisions an increased range of housing options to support the needs of all residents. Affordable housing is a significant need, thereby expanding mixed-income and a diversity of neighborhoods. A focus must be to create integrated and fully functional neighborhoods as opposed to “typical” subdivisions and housing developments.
- ✓ **Nonresidential Development**  
As growth occurs, nonresidential development must provide a better balance of jobs to housing and generate sufficient tax revenue to support and sustain its requisite services. New development must contribute aesthetic value and enhance the character of the community without detracting from the appearance of the natural and built environments. It must also be located and arranged in a compatible and sensitive manner with its surrounding environment.
- ✓ **Regional Role and Coordination**  
Zachary recognizes its close economic and functional relationship to Baton Rouge and the challenge presented by separate governmental jurisdictions. The City envisions strengthening its ties with improved public transportation and better intergovernmental coordination to the benefit of both – and all.

## Demographic Profile

Zachary is presently a freestanding community that has evolved into a developing hub of residential and increasingly emerging economic activity. While its historical past continues to be embraced and celebrated today, this master plan offers an opportunity for the community to remember its past but, more importantly, envision its future. While future actions may depart from their previous course, the success of the City in achieving its vision will largely depend on its past and why it is called home by nearly 14,000 persons.<sup>2</sup>

Zachary is optimistic about what lies ahead. In planning for its future, it faces the challenges of preserving its quality education systems; bolstering and sustaining economic growth; accommodating the myriad of requirements for both young and aging populations; and balancing the demands on its fiscal resources to maintain, expand, and improve its infrastructure systems. Before looking into the future, though, it is essential to consider both present conditions and historic and future trends through a demographic/socioeconomic assessment. The corresponding table and figures are provided by **Appendix A, Demographic Assessment.**

This section and the appendix of tabulations and illustrations offer a summary-level introduction to document existing socioeconomic conditions and demographic characteristics pertaining to the population; age, gender, and educational attainment; income, employment, and labor force statistics; and housing tenure and affordability.

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census estimate, 2006

**Planning for Change**

Population projections are important to this long-range planning process. Among others, their purpose is to:

- ◆ Evaluate a range of future scenarios enabling Zachary to identify the internal and external factors that may contribute to its rate of population increase;
- ◆ Adequately determine and quantify the demands that will be placed on public facilities and services;
- ◆ Allow advanced planning to effectively guide development by coordinating the timely provision and phasing of adequate infrastructure; and
- ◆ Create a strategy to seize opportunities and overcome foreseen challenges.

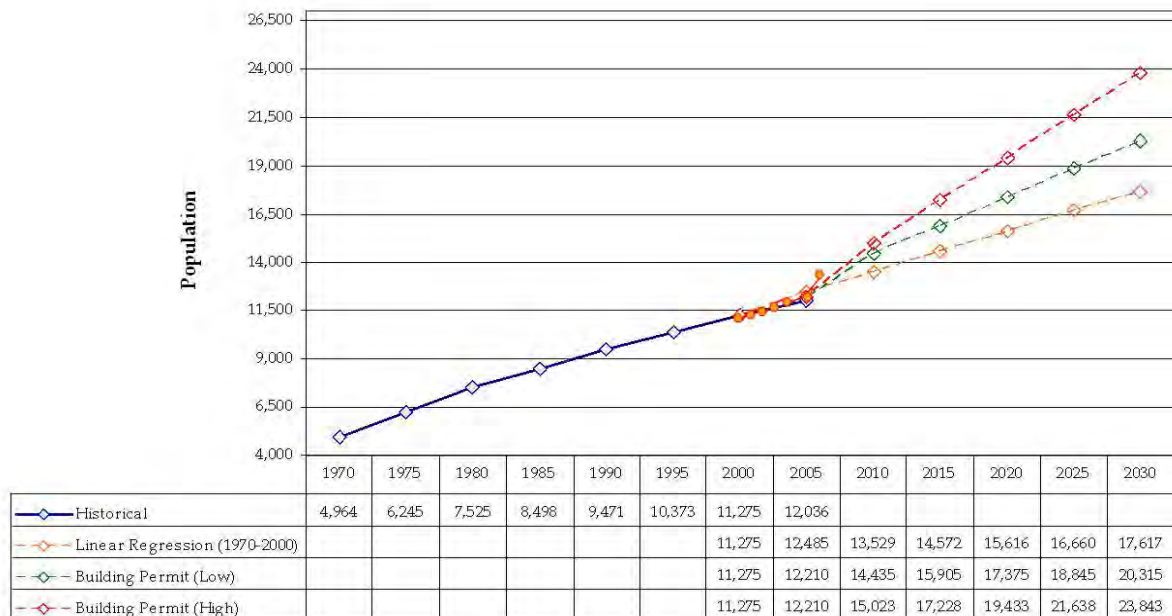
**Population**

An important component of this assessment is the Year 2030 projected population, which is referenced throughout the document to forecast future facility demands and infrastructure capacity needs. An understanding of existing population characteristics and future demands is essential to determine the anticipated growth and resulting demands on the City and its provision of municipal facilities and public services.

*Population – Leads Regional and State Growth*

The 2000 Census of 11,275 persons illustrates a modest population increase (1.76 percent annually) since 1990. Future population growth, however, is expected to continue at a greater pace than the years since 1970. As displayed in **Figure 1.1, Population Projections**, the 2030 forecast predicts a population ranging between 17,617 and 23,843 persons. Based on the trend since 2000, the consensus estimate of the population in the Year 2030 is at the top of the projected range - 23,843 persons.

Figure 1.1, Population Projections



U.S. Census Population Estimates (2000-2005)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
	11,275	11,436	11,574	11,711	12,008	12,210	13,259

Zachary has a strong rate of growth that has traditionally been in the range of 1.7 to 2.0 percent annually. An increased rate of growth since 2000 is indicated in the Census estimates, as well as the building permit activity.

Adopted April 5, 2010

*Population Getting Older – Baby Boomer Generation Retires*

Overall patterns of age indicate a similar population in Zachary (a median age of 34.4 years in 2000) to the rest of the United States. As far as national trends, however, there will be a need to accommodate the “graying” of the population as the Baby Boomers age toward retirement. The aging population will have housing, employment, health care, and transportation implications that are addressed in this plan.

*Population Composed of Families – Higher Number of Four or More Person Households*



The reputation of the school district and the attractiveness of the area are expected to continue to draw more residents to Zachary. This will create a demand for more parks and open spaces, among other public facilities.

Zachary has an average household size of 3.26 persons. It has a smaller percentage (67.6 percent) of persons living in one- to three-person units and, consequently, a higher percentage of persons living in four- to seven-person households (32.5 percent).

The impact of larger households relates to plan provisions for more and closer parks, a variety of housing sizes and options, and increased parking demands, among others. More “family households” indicates a need for more family-targeted infrastructure: additional parks and open spaces, safe walking and biking options, and social facilities and services.

*Median Household Incomes Increase – Steadily Moving Upwards*

Historically, income levels reflect a steady upwards trend. The U.S. Census in 1990 and 2000 indicated that median household earnings rose from \$31,989 (1989 dollars) to \$49,685 (1999 dollars). This average annual rate of 4.5 percent indicates improving economic conditions and also indicates increased wages compared to Louisiana and U.S. median household incomes. It is expected that the median household

income will continue to steadily grow consistent with historical and recent trends, particularly in light of the impending new growth and development.

*Housing Units - Amount of Housing Units Increases while Options Remain the Same*

The number of housing units outpaced the population gain between 1990 and 2000, increasing from 3,320 to 4,076 units. This trend is, in part, a result of household size, which decreased from 3.02 to 2.88 persons per household over the same period. Therefore, the reduction in household size creates what amounts to an artificial increase in the number of housing units caused by a fewer number of residents per household. Furthermore, the predominant housing type created between 1990 and 2000 was detached, single-family homes. While new residential development offers more housing units to buyers, housing options are shrinking as detached, single-family homes now comprise 77.1 percent of the units (2000), compared to 73.0 percent in 1990. A balance must be achieved between more detached, single-family homes and maintaining a diverse assortment of housing options.



**Life Cycle Housing Options**

The townhomes in this picture represent the concept of life cycle housing. These units range in size from 1,100 to 1,400 SF and sold for \$99,000 to \$120,000 per unit. They may be used by a single resident, newlyweds, or empty nesters. Families require different housing options as they move from a smaller, starter home or even downsize years later. Creating a variety of housing options will allow families to remain in Zachary for years to come.

Source: Plum Creek, TX



### Historical Timeline

Key dates in Zachary's history:

**1883:** The City was named after Darel Zachary, a successful farmer who sold his 160 acres of land for \$1 per acre after the Illinois Central Railroad was built through his land.

**1885:** First post office opened.

**1889:** City was incorporated.

**1914:** Population: 419 persons.

**1960:** Lane Memorial opened as a 40-bed, non-profit hospital. It is now known as Lane Regional Medical Center and has 137 beds.

**1968:** The Georgia Pacific Port Hudson Operations plant opened as a single line bleach kraft pulp mill.

**1975:** Bennett's Water Ski School becomes part of the community, bringing an annual waterskiing event that draws competitors and fans from around the world.

**1980:** Population: 7,525 persons.

**1989:** The Louisiana Transportation Infrastructure Model for Economic Development (TIMED) program is created as the largest transportation program in history. The John James Audubon Bridge is proposed as a new Mississippi Bridge while U.S. Hwy. 61 is being renovated.

**1992:** The Foundation Assisting Zachary Education (FAZE) was formed to collect funds for the purchase of educational supplies and equipment for all Zachary schools.

**1994:** The main station for the Fire/Rescue Department was built next to City Hall and the Police Department.

**1996:** The Zachary House was entered in the Progressive Architecture Awards.

**1997:** The Zachary School District became independent of East Baton Rouge Parish.

**2000:** Population: 11,275 persons.

**2003:** Court approved final settlement agreement, ends 47-year old desegregation case with East Baton Rouge Parish Schools.

**2004:** The Zachary School District unveiled a 5-Year Strategic Plan for the Future of Zachary Schools.

**2004:** The Georgia Pacific Plant earned the "Business of the Year" award from the Greater Baton Rouge Business Report.

**2006:** Population: 14,295 persons.

**2007:** Development of the City's first Comprehensive Plan.

## Plan Development

To facilitate the process of updating this master plan, in early 2007, the City engaged Kendig Keast Collaborative, urban planning consultants, and appointed a broadly-representative master plan advisory committee (known as the Citizens' Delegation) to work with City officials, staff, residents, and the consultants. Over the course of a two-year period, a variety of public outreach and involvement activities were conducted, background studies completed, and individual elements of the plan were drafted, reviewed, and refined to produce this document. This plan contains and is organized in the following manner:

*Chapter 1, Introduction & Community Profile*, explains the purpose and value of this plan and its public process, establishes the authority and planning jurisdiction of the City, and outlines the key factors and trends present and considered in the plan development process. This chapter also documents the public participation activities that led to the formation of the vision statement and the corresponding goals and policies contained in the subsequent chapters.

*Chapter 2, Community Character & Housing*, provides a vision for the future physical development of Zachary and its preferred growth areas. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the necessary policy guidance that will enable sound decision making about the compatibility and appropriateness of individual developments within the context of the larger community. The land use plan serves as the City's policy for directing the type, scale, and character of ongoing development. It also assists in managing future growth, preserving valued areas, and protecting the integrity of neighborhoods, while safeguarding the community image and aesthetics. Also included is an assessment of housing availability and affordability with policies and strategies for diversifying the housing stock and sustaining affordability.

*Chapter 3, Growth Management*, includes an assessment of the City's utility infrastructure and public service capacities for current needs and future population demands. It outlines policies as to the intended pattern and timing of development to ensure efficient land and infrastructure utilization, orderly extension of public

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services, and achievement of a desired urban form and character. Strategies and implementation methods are outlined and recommended.

*Chapter 4, Thoroughfares & Public Transit*, addresses community-wide mobility needs on all levels, from sidewalks and trails to local streets, neighborhood collectors, arterial roadways, and highways, as well as public transit. This chapter includes the Thoroughfare Plan for the orderly development of a comprehensive street network. The transportation plan guides the preservation of rights-of-way and the improvement and extension of the street network. Implementation measures are incorporated by identifying subdivision ordinance standards that can be updated to ensure that adequate transportation facilities are present in new development. The chapter also recommends increased transit service and complementary infrastructure improvements.

*Chapter 5, Community Resources*, focuses on the conservation of natural resources that are important to the economic health, quality of life, and long-term sustainability of Zachary. It includes an assessment of the area's land, water, and air resources, as well as its wildlife habitat, prime agricultural lands, and significant natural vegetation. Policies are considered to ensure sensitive planning and development practices, as well as for the protection of life and property from the occurrence of natural events.

The chapter also includes analyses of areas, sites, and structures of historical, architectural, and scenic significance, with a particular emphasis on Downtown and the Historic Village. It provides recommendations for maintaining the integrity of historic areas and structures, including the formation of historical and garden districts, and the creation of preservation standards and review processes.

*Chapter 6, Parks, Recreation, & Open Space*, provides an inventory of existing parks and recreational resources leading to an analysis of existing conditions and an assessment of both current deficiencies and future needs. A service analysis is included to evaluate the locations of existing areas and facilities relative to the existing and planned pattern of development. A plan for improving deficient areas and providing facilities concurrent with new development is coordinated with the land use and growth plan.

*Chapter 7, Economic Development*, provides a set of strategies to strengthen and diversify the economy and bolster the community's competitive position within the Baton Rouge metropolitan region. The plan includes recommendations with a view toward establishing an environment that fosters long-term economic sustainability and vitality. Focal points include the need for:

- ◆ increased investment and commercial redevelopment in Downtown to stimulate activity and establish an economically viable community center;
- ◆ development of new, modern business sites to attract outside investment and provide additional employment opportunities; and
- ◆ creative and effective marketing and communications to promote new business, but also brace and highlight the community's quality of life and highly-ranked school system.

The plan outlines ways to retain existing businesses and to provide the means for meeting the talent and labor needs of employers. This chapter is integrated with the rest of the plan by highlighting the importance to economic development of adequate facilities and services, available and affordable housing, and a sustainable living environment.

**Choices and Priorities**

For the plan to be effective, community issues must be researched and analyzed, solutions and alternatives evaluated, and a realistic and feasible plan of action put in place to overcome the problem. The evaluation of alternatives for resolving issues – and the selection of one or more strategies that are both reasonable and acceptable – is an essential element of the community planning process.

*Chapter 8, Implementation*, utilizes the recommendations of the preceding chapters to develop an overall strategy for executing this plan, particularly for the highest-priority initiatives that are first on the community's action agenda. Specific tasks are cited and accompanied by agency assignments and timeframes. Also outlined is an organizational structure necessary to implement the plan, including roles and responsibilities and a process for annual and periodic appraisals and plan amendments.



Chapter Two

# Community Character & Housing

**T**hrough the public involvement process, residents shared their concerns and expressed their visions as to how they would like to see Zachary develop in the coming years. They articulated their desires to see the integrity of neighborhoods maintained and the development of new, sustainable, and mixed-use neighborhoods; provision of quality, affordable housing; preservation of open space and environmental resources; enhancement of the historic downtown and the original town neighborhoods; and attractive and functional street corridors. The goal of this element is to translate these values into strategies to achieve tangible results and the preferred development outcomes. This may be accomplished through a series of initiatives, ordinances, and projects, as well as through implementation of the Future Land Use Plan, which portrays the intended future pattern and character of development.

## Purpose

The purpose of this element is to establish policy guidance to enable the City to plan effectively for future development and redevelopment. Sound planning is essential to ensure the community is prepared for the anticipated growth, can adequately serve it with public facilities and services, and can manage its impacts on land use compatibility and preservation of community character.

The concepts of land use and community character are integral to other components of this master plan. For instance, the transportation network provides access to land, which influences the type and density of development. The provision or lack of utilities may determine the amount, location, and timing of development. Design impacts community aesthetics and the perceptions of residents and those considering investment in the community. Proximity to public facilities can impact public health and safety at specific locations and, as a result, impact the development potential of an area.

## Community Character

The concept of community character relates to the use of land, but, more importantly, translates the design characteristics that influence the “look and feel” of development. Instead of simply referring to the use of land, such as single-family residential, a determination of an area’s character more distinctly defines the intensity of development and the dimensional attributes that contribute to its pattern, form, and scale. For instance, a neighborhood with a regular pattern of lots, street grid, and garage access via alleys has a different character than a subdivision with



The Historic Village contributes to the unique character of Zachary.

curvilinear streets and cul-de-sac lots with street-facing garages, even though the use of both is single-family residential. Therefore, the use of character districts will better portray the intended outcomes of development while giving assurance to neighboring property owners and allowing a better understanding of the associated impacts due to the pattern and intensity of development. Today, Zachary's character is defined by its neighborhoods, open spaces, creeks and streams, and woodlands. To preserve this character, this plan sets forth the policies and standards for development and redevelopment. This warrants amendments to the zoning and subdivision ordinances to ensure development occurs in a manner that is consistent with the directions of this plan and the vision of the community.

## Development Policies

This plan provides a policy framework to guide development and redevelopment in a manner that will contribute to the community's character, its economic well-being, environmental sensitivity, and livability. Well-managed and orderly development also leads to more effective use of public funds to provide adequate public services and needed capital improvements.

The following policy statements indicate the City's intentions for managing its future growth and development. These policies reflect the vision of the community and its desired land use pattern. They serve to guide the decision making of the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council as they implement this plan.

1. Development will not occur within the 100-year floodplain unless there is compliance with stringent management practices to maintain adequate capacity for storage and conveyance of flood waters.
2. Development will be encouraged to occur in locations where adequate public services and utility capacities are available or may be efficiently provided.
3. To the extent practicable, development will be directed toward vacant, infill tracts and properties that are contiguous to existing development before extending infrastructure and public service areas to serve outlying areas.
4. Development will occur in harmony with the natural environment through sensitive land planning, sustainable design, and responsible development practices.
5. Sufficient open space will be set aside within all developments to protect sensitive resources, buffer adjacent areas, create linear connections, and provide for the recreational needs of residents.
6. Development will provide appropriate transitions and buffering between areas of differing intensities and character. Such transitions and buffering will observe and account for the different intensities through their design.



Buffering of visually obtrusive and intensive uses must be sufficiently dense to accomplish the intended effect, including a variety of plant types and materials, as well as fences, walls, and earthen berms.

7. Mixed-use development will be encouraged where the property is under common ownership and/or where the uses are integrated within a planned environment.
8. Neighborhoods will be designed to include a variety of housing types and living options provided there are design measures and standards to ensure their compatibility and visual cohesiveness.
9. Neighborhoods will be walkable through the provision of sidewalks, trails, and pedestrian access ways, as well as by integrating mixed-use.
10. Redevelopment and new development on infill parcels will maintain compatibility with existing uses and the prevailing character of the area.
11. Areas of historic value will be maintained and enhanced in accordance with preservation guidelines and sensitive development standards.
12. Attached housing will be integrated within planned developments where there are design controls and adequate provisions for transitions and buffering.
13. Assembly uses such as churches, schools, and institutions will be appropriately located on adequately sized parcels with sufficient space for off-street parking and accessory activities. Such uses will be located to minimize any adverse impacts on adjacent properties and thoroughfares.
14. Commercial development will be integrated within mixed-use developments or concentrated in nodes at major intersections, rather than placed linearly along major roads.
15. Small-scale, suburban commercial development may be integrated within neighborhoods or located at collector street intersections at the edge of neighborhoods, provided there are design controls as to their use, scale, and appearance.
16. Industrial uses and activities will be located a sufficient distance from low-density residential areas and on sites with immediate access to a collector or arterial roadway. To the extent practicable, these uses will be conducted within enclosed structures or their outdoor activities and storage will be properly screened from public view.
17. Low-intensity industrial and higher intensity commercial uses will occur in business park settings with good site and building standards.
18. Particular emphasis should be given to the enhancement of community entrances.
19. Lands along the Comite River, area bayous, and their riparian edges will be protected from the encroachment of development through open space preservation, good design, and sound engineering practices.
20. Wellhead protection areas, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive or valuable areas should be reserved as natural areas.
21. "Greenbelt" preserves will be provided for wildlife and recreation, whenever possible, and used as open space buffers between land uses and to facilitate development of linear walkways and trails.

## Issues and Opportunities

The focus areas summarized below are based on the input received from small group interviews and facilitated break-out sessions held during a Citizens' Congress. Participants' comments formed these issue statements, which are the foundation of the corresponding goals and recommendations.



## Sustaining Small-Town Character

Until recently, Zachary has consisted mainly of a compact network of neighborhoods situated near the crossroads of LA 64 and LA 19. Due to its celebrated, first-class school system and its location within the Baton Rouge metropolitan area (as well as an influx of residents following Hurricane Rita in September



Residents articulated their desires for the future of the community at a Citizens' Congress at the plan's outset.

2005), the development of new subdivisions is rapidly changing this once rural landscape. While new development affords the benefits of an increased tax base and the ability to improve services, it is also altering the character of the community. To ensure that development reflects the quality outcomes envisioned by residents, Zachary must take a proactive stance to maintain the qualities it most values. Otherwise, the desired small-town character will give way to becoming a bustling edge city. The early signs of this transition are already appearing.

Through the course of community input, it became clear that residents are willing to embrace growth as long as it does not compromise their quality of life. Citizens treasure the features that make

Zachary an attractive living environment, those being: a generally compact community form, mostly smaller-scale development, significant open space, highly livable neighborhoods, an historic downtown, and separation from the metropolitan area by the surrounding rural landscape, among others. Any alteration of these assets may compromise the City's character without good planning and preparedness.

### GOALS

- ▶ Maintain a compact community form and definition to the community
- ▶ Preserve the highly valued small-town, rural character
- ▶ Sustain open spaces and natural resource features
- ▶ Protect neighborhood integrity and the value and enjoyment of property owners

### Recommendations

1. Restructure the zoning districts to base them on the character of development rather than their permitted uses and minimum lot dimensions. The current districts do not define an intended development character due to a broad range of permitted uses with varying intensities and scales, allowing the use of less intensive districts in each subsequent district (referred to as cumulative zoning) and the use of minimum lot size as a means for determining development density. Rather, the districts must reflect a development intensity measured by density and open space together with other design standards. This will allow different development types without changing the character, which adds flexibility and provides assurance for appropriate transitioning between uses. (Refer to the section entitled "*District Specifications and Proposed Changes*" for more information.)

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2. Define the future development character of vacant properties adjacent to existing neighborhoods through the classifications reflected on the Future Land Use Plan (see *Map 2.2, Future Land Use Plan*). Where uses of varying intensities abut one another, use transition standards such as bufferyards and increased separation requirements to ensure protection.
3. Incorporate bufferyard standards into the zoning ordinance where the required opacity varies according to the intensities of adjacent uses. Allow for the use of different combinations of bufferyard widths, vegetation types and densities, berms, and walls or fences to allow flexibility.
4. Amend the subdivision regulations to include standards for development clustering. Corresponding density bonuses should be integrated into the zoning ordinance to make these an attractive alternative to large-lot subdivisions. This development form enhances rural character while protecting resources and offering increased open space.
5. Permit planned developments as a matter of right subject to density and design standards. Provide for density bonuses to encourage this development type. This would result in integrated neighborhoods versus dispersed, scattered subdivisions and isolated housing complexes.
6. Create mixed-use allowances and incentives within planned developments to enable the development of internal, neighborhood-scaled commercial centers. This promotes improved convenience and accessibility while reducing travel demands and easing traffic congestion, among other advantages.
7. Allow for an increase in density within a distance of 400 feet from major roads to stimulate residential development. This helps offset higher land costs along major streets.

A bufferyard standard may be met in a number of ways, as displayed in this example. It may be a wide yard with limited plant units or a narrow yard with liberal plantings, all meeting the required performance standard.

- Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative



Context sensitive architecture may allow a mixed commercial use to be integrated into a neighborhood environment.  
- Source: City of Valparaiso, IN

Coupled with the allowance of density increases must be standards for marginal access streets and streetscape buffering.

8. Identify suitable locations for large-scale commercial centers with applicable development standards to mitigate their impacts on adjacent properties and, particularly, community character. Adopt regulations that address building scale and related design measures to give the appearance of a complex of smaller stores rather than a single big-box retailer. This will create a scale that is consistent with and more suitable for the character of Zachary, while also being less imposing on the landscape.

### Giving Identity to the Historic Downtown

Residents identify with Downtown and the Historic Village and would like to see them preserved and improved. However, as traffic volumes increase along Main Street and new commercial areas impose competing markets, they see an erosion of its traditional role and identity. Downtown property owners and tenants articulated this perspective as access to their businesses is becoming increasingly difficult due to high traffic volumes, speeds, and congestion. Therefore, Zachary must make a deliberate choice as to the revival and redevelopment of its Downtown or, alternatively, to create a new town center in another location. There was both optimism and concern voiced at the community meetings, with a general preference to see Downtown preserved.

To help sustain and enlarge the Historic Downtown, there is an opportunity to enhance the presence of City government. As the City grows, the City administration must keep pace, meaning that additional staff and facilities will be needed. A new municipal complex could help stabilize Downtown and serve as a catalyst for redevelopment. Its design could reinforce the historic character and set the stage for an improved district identity. This and other redevelopment initiatives may warrant near-term action to secure a site that is in the City's best long-term interests.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Enhance the urban character of development within the immediate Downtown area
- ▶ Enact preservation standards to sustain the historic integrity of significant buildings
- ▶ Maintain local government presence to anchor Downtown business activity
- ▶ Overcome existing constraints for existing businesses and new development opportunities
- ▶ Improve the pedestrian friendliness of the Historic Downtown

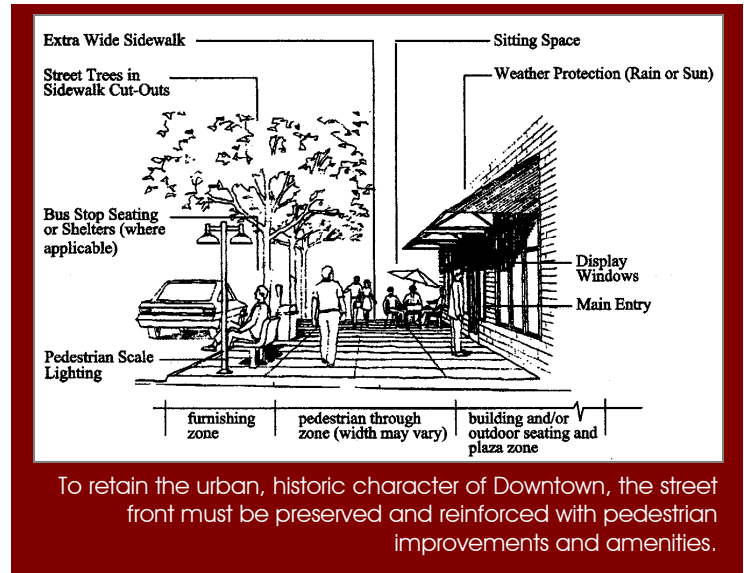
#### Recommendations

1. Create an Urban Commercial district to preserve an urban character, including requirements such as zero front and side yard setbacks; provision for vertical mixed-use; and building form standards relating to building scale and massing, building exteriors, site lighting, and signs and awnings. There should be a mixture of commercial and upper-floor residential uses. Some uses now permitted in the "C" Commercial district should be excluded, including drive-in restaurants, motor vehicle repair, car sales, and outdoor animal boarding facilities and kennels.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 90-150. Use of premises (14), C-Commercial Districts



2. Create historic preservation standards for the Urban Commercial district encompassing Downtown and the Historic Village that establishes criteria for development, reconstruction, and additions to buildings within the boundaries of the district. A certificate of appropriateness should be reviewed by a qualified board and issued, subject to conformance with the standards, to ensure the historic integrity of individual buildings within the district. The provisions must also address prohibited and allowable demolitions.
3. Prepare a Downtown Master Plan to address the physical enhancements to the district. The plan should identify the recommended land uses and the layout and form of development/redevelopment, along with improvements relating to streets and parking areas, vehicular and pedestrian access and circulation, streetscaping and amenities, signage, lighting, and infrastructure upgrades. It should establish implementation priorities and identify possible funding sources and financing options.
4. Assess the constraints to redevelopment and the effective use of Downtown properties and buildings. Such factors as land and building ownership, traffic and pedestrian circulation, parking, building sizes, building code issues (such as ADA accessibility), lease rates, and other contributing factors should be addressed in the master plan.
5. Initiate a preliminary facility planning study to determine the future needs for the City's administrative space and evaluate options for creating a central municipal complex in Downtown. If additional property is needed, seek to secure it in the near term, which may include right-of-way or easement vacation to assemble sufficient land.
6. Research the potential for developing a traditional, pedestrian-oriented main street on the property between Main Street and Church Street stretching from LA 19 to Lee Street. The limits of this area could be expanded to

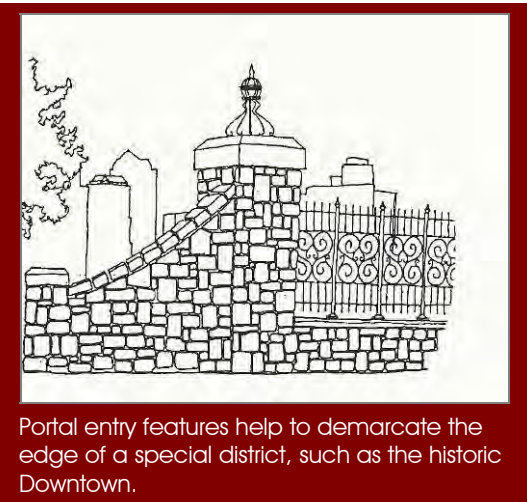


The last remaining vacant property near Downtown offers a potential to create a traditional "Main Street" environment. This could serve as a community gathering place, as well as a mixed-use economic center for the greater Zachary area.



encompass potential redevelopment areas or incorporate existing properties. For instance, it could extend to the north side of Church Street to allow development adjacent to the street. This is a sizeable tract that offers potential for expanding and strengthening the Historic Downtown.

7. Prepare a fringe area plan for the neighborhoods and transitional areas immediately adjacent to and around the Historic Downtown to identify measures to secure their integrity. An area-wide access and parking plan is needed, as is a buffering plan, to provide an appropriate transition between the Historic Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
8. Seek to improve housing and general neighborhood conditions in the areas adjacent to Downtown through infrastructure reinvestment, housing rehabilitation, infill development, and preparation of neighborhood plans and homeowners' associations.



Portal entry features help to demarcate the edge of a special district, such as the historic Downtown.

9. Create portal entry enhancements to form a sense of arrival into the Historic Downtown. Currently, there are no physical features to distinguish Downtown from other areas of the community so it blends into the fabric, rather than emerging as a "place" within the larger community.
10. Use design elements and unifying treatments to demarcate the boundaries of the Historic Downtown. This may include unique streetscaping, signage, lighting, monumentation, or other features.
11. Partner with LaDOTD to conduct a mobility study to evaluate alternative alignments for an LA 64 bypass. The purpose of the study is to identify the warrant and feasibility for traffic relief routes – possibly including other arterial or collector road design options and improvements – to alleviate constrained

conditions through Downtown. Subsequently, identify the route on the Thoroughfare Plan and secure rights-of-way concurrent with development.

12. Coordinate with LaDOTD to identify rights-of-way enhancements for LA 64, including the street cross section, traffic control devices (signs and signals), pedestrian improvements (sidewalks, crosswalks, way-finding, pedestrian-actuated signals, curb cuts, and ADA accessibility), and property access (driveway location, number, width, and design).

### Enhancing the Community Environs

The appearance of Zachary is the single most evident glimpse of its economic vitality, government proactiveness, and civic pride. The initial impression is formed by the quality of development, property upkeep, condition of public facilities, amount and quality of public spaces, and the design of roadways and other public buildings and infrastructure. Visual appeal reinforces the quality of life for those who reside in Zachary, as well as for those making investment decisions.

The City has a window of opportunity to enact policies and standards that influence the quality of its natural and built environments. Without a plan and development standards to accentuate corridors, districts, neighborhoods, and open spaces, there will be a sense of "sameness" in the community with little to distinguish it from the surrounding Parish or other communities. This concern was voiced by residents as to the auto-oriented nature of recent development. Instead, they would like to preserve the uniqueness of Zachary and exploit its assets. The character of development will determine the community's image and its attractiveness as a place to live and work.

GOALS

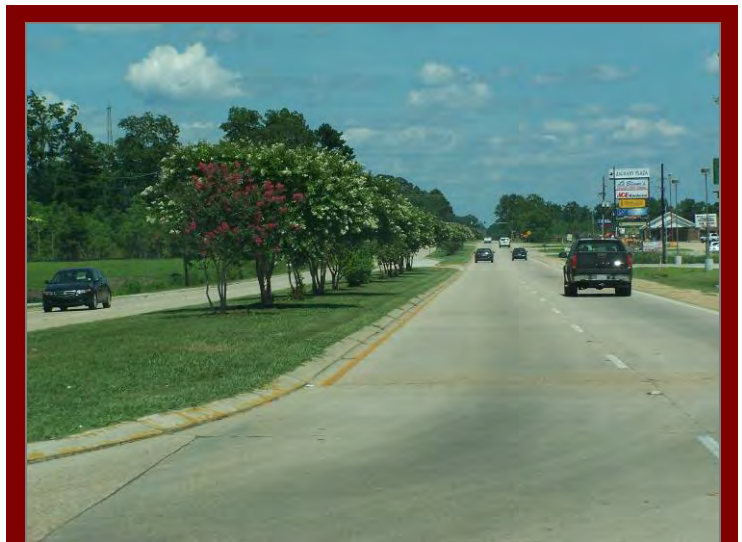
- ▶ Form distinct gateways and points of entry to the community and special districts
- ▶ Enhance the streetscape through increased open space, landscaping, and improved design standards
- ▶ Encourage innovativeness in neighborhood design
- ▶ Preserve the natural landscape and urban tree cover
- ▶ Integrate urban design into public improvement projects
- ▶ Establish higher standards in the design of public buildings and infrastructure

Recommendations**Gateways and Entrances**

1. Consider the design and phased construction of signature gateways in the following locations:
  - LA 19 at the southern and northern City limits;
  - LA 64 at the eastern and western City limits;
  - The intersection of Plank Road and LA 64;
  - Plank Road at the northern and southern City limits; and
  - Reserved locations along LA 61 (as the City grows westward).

The City should consider two gateway treatment standards with more significant monuments, landscaping, and lighting at the locations with the greatest visibility. These may be constructed by the City or sponsored by and coordinated with the adjacent development.

2. Integrate gateway and other streetscape enhancements (lighting, signage, landscaping, street furniture, paths, land forms, etc.) into capital improvement projects. Enhancements may include pavement colors and patterns at intersections, crosswalk textures (particularly in pedestrian environments), ornamental street fixtures (signal poles and mast arms), unique signage, green space, land contouring, street trees, and pedestrian paths and amenities. Coordination with LaDOTD will be required for state routes.
3. Coordinate with LaDOTD to construct a raised median at each of the community entrances, which may be used for landscaping, green space, and gateways and monuments, as well as for the purpose of better managing access. Also, coordinate with LaDOTD to install special paving treatments (tinted or textured concrete) at the community gateways and entry points.
4. Initiate redevelopment and enhancement projects at the community entrances, including public infrastructure improvements and strict enforcement of code violations. The City may consider grants or low interest loans for qualifying private enhancement projects.



Landscaped medians like those along LA 64/Church Street are functional for traffic management while also enhancing the visual environment.

### Corridor Enhancement

5. Prepare corridor and small area plans focusing on enhancements along the City's major roadways.
6. Adopt design standards along each of the City's major roadways. Standards should regulate the building size, roof, and skyline; materials and design elements; loading and storage placement and screening; open space and streetscape areas; landscaping; and signage. Industrial district standards should differentiate between exterior (those with street frontage and visible to the public) and interior (those shielded or screened from public view via building orientation, location, or design) elevations. Truck loading and exterior storage areas must be effectively screened and buffered.

### Sign Control

7. Amend the sign ordinance to require monument versus pole signs. Establish the allowable types of signage, the total permissible sign face area, and the allowable numbers and locations of signs per site. The ordinance should specify the types of signs that are allowed without a permit, such as government signs, private traffic control signs, and utility and hazard signs, among others. In addition, it should specify prohibited signs, including motion, illuminated, and portable signs. A master sign plan should be required for multiple tenant buildings, planned development, and large subdivisions, requiring plan submittal and approval prior to permitting and construction. Other provisions such as site visibility, maintenance, and handling of abandoned, damaged, and discontinued signs should be addressed.
8. Consider amortization provisions for nonconforming signs requiring their removal after a specified period of time. A study would be necessary to identify the number of affected signs and to establish a reasonable period for requiring their conformance with the new sign code.

### Neighborhood Character

9. Incorporate anti-monotony regulations for future single-family development into the zoning ordinance. The standards require a minimum separation between similar houses and require a variety of floor plans, façade treatments, and other dimensional requirements (height, roof type, material types, and garage placement).



Anti-monotony regulations manage the scale and form of the building elevations for similar floor plans that are in close proximity to one another so as to preserve neighborhood character.

10. Amend the subdivision regulations to require a street bufferyard for neighborhoods adjacent to collector and arterial streets. The width of the bufferyard should be commensurate with the intensity of development.
11. Require street trees in all new subdivisions (coordinated with utility placement). These trees are in addition to those required per lot and for open spaces and parking lots associated with high-density development.
12. Adopt fencing standards. The location, type, materials, and design of subdivision fencing should be approved concurrent with the plat. In the case of a larger tract, the exterior fencing

adjacent to collector and arterial streets should be uniform. The fencing should be constructed by the subdivider at the time of development and should be of consistent type and design around the perimeter of the subdivision and adjacent to any public street right-of-way. Along arterial roadways,

the fencing should have decorative support columns and horizontal relief. Its proximity to the right-of-way should allow sufficient space for the required street bufferyard.

### Ordinance Amendments

13. Amend the zoning ordinance as follows:

- Establish a minimum open space ratio (OSR) within residential development and landscape surface ratio (LSR) within nonresidential development. The ratios will vary according to the character of the district. These areas will provide visual buffering and shade, accommodate recreational amenities, and provide needed space for stormwater detention. (Refer to the section entitled “*District Specifications and Proposed Changes*” for more information.)
- Require screening along all parking and vehicular use areas that have frontage on public street rights-of-way and major entrance drives. The screening may include shrubbery, earthen berms, walls, or a combination thereof.
- Convert the existing provision for maximum land coverage ratios<sup>2</sup> to floor area ratios (FAR) to better control building bulk and scale, as well as neighborhood and commercial district character.
- Require dedication of a triangular open space easement at street intersections with arterial streets. This area must be landscaped and maintained as open space, with provisions for site distance visibility.
- Establish minimum parking lot setback requirements to form a streetscape green adjacent to street rights-of-way. The setback must be sufficient in width (minimum five to eight feet) to accommodate monument signs, trees, and parking lot screening. The width should vary according to the intended character.
- Establish requirements for bioswales within parking areas with specifications for canopy trees, shrubbery, and groundcover.
- Require stored materials to be screened from public view. Furthermore, specify the size of area that may be used for the display of outdoor merchandise, the manner of enclosure, and other applicable requirements.
- Adopt tree preservation standards for trees in excess of an eight inch diameter. Establish equivalency provisions for trees that cannot be preserved during construction, thereby requiring an equivalent – or greater – caliper of newly planted trees. Require tree root protection during construction, including fencing the drip line and restrictions on grade changes, material stacking and disposal, and construction activity.



An example of a “build-to” line is exhibited by McDonald’s along LA 64/Zachary-Deerford Road, which is liberally landscaped and contributes to a pleasant street environment.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 90-125. Zoning Schedule, Chapter 90, Zoning.



## Existing Land Use Inventory and Character Designations

Reflected in **Map 2.1, Existing Land Use Character**, is the current use and character of land in and around Zachary. The land use and character types are described in **Appendix B, Types of Land Character**, and depicted on the map. The classifications include:

- ◆ Vacant and Undeveloped
- ◆ Estate Residential
- ◆ Suburban Residential
- ◆ Auto-Urban Residential
- ◆ Auto-Urban Commercial
- ◆ Urban Commercial
- ◆ Industrial
- ◆ Public and Institutional
- ◆ Parks and Recreation

## Future Land Use Plan and Policies

The essence of land use planning is the recognition that Zachary can determine where growth will occur and what character this new development will reflect. Through active community support, this plan will ensure that development meets certain standards and contributes to achieving the desired community character.

As a guide for land development and public improvements, the plan depicted by **Map 2.2, Future Land Use Plan**, establishes the City's policies regarding how and where it will grow during the 20-year horizon of this plan. The policies encapsulated by this plan are the basis for the City's development ordinances to implement the plan.

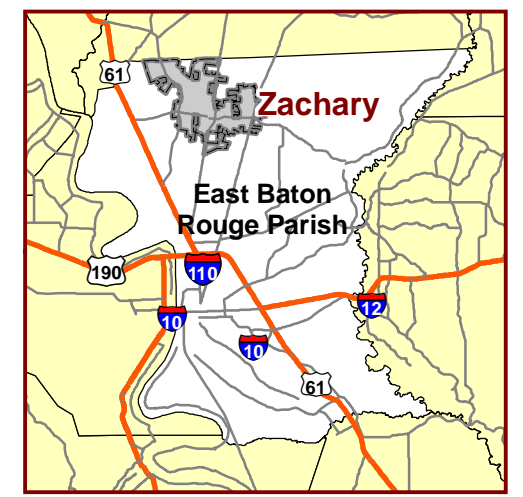
## District Specifications and Proposed Changes

Currently, the City is divided into 23 zoning districts as follows:

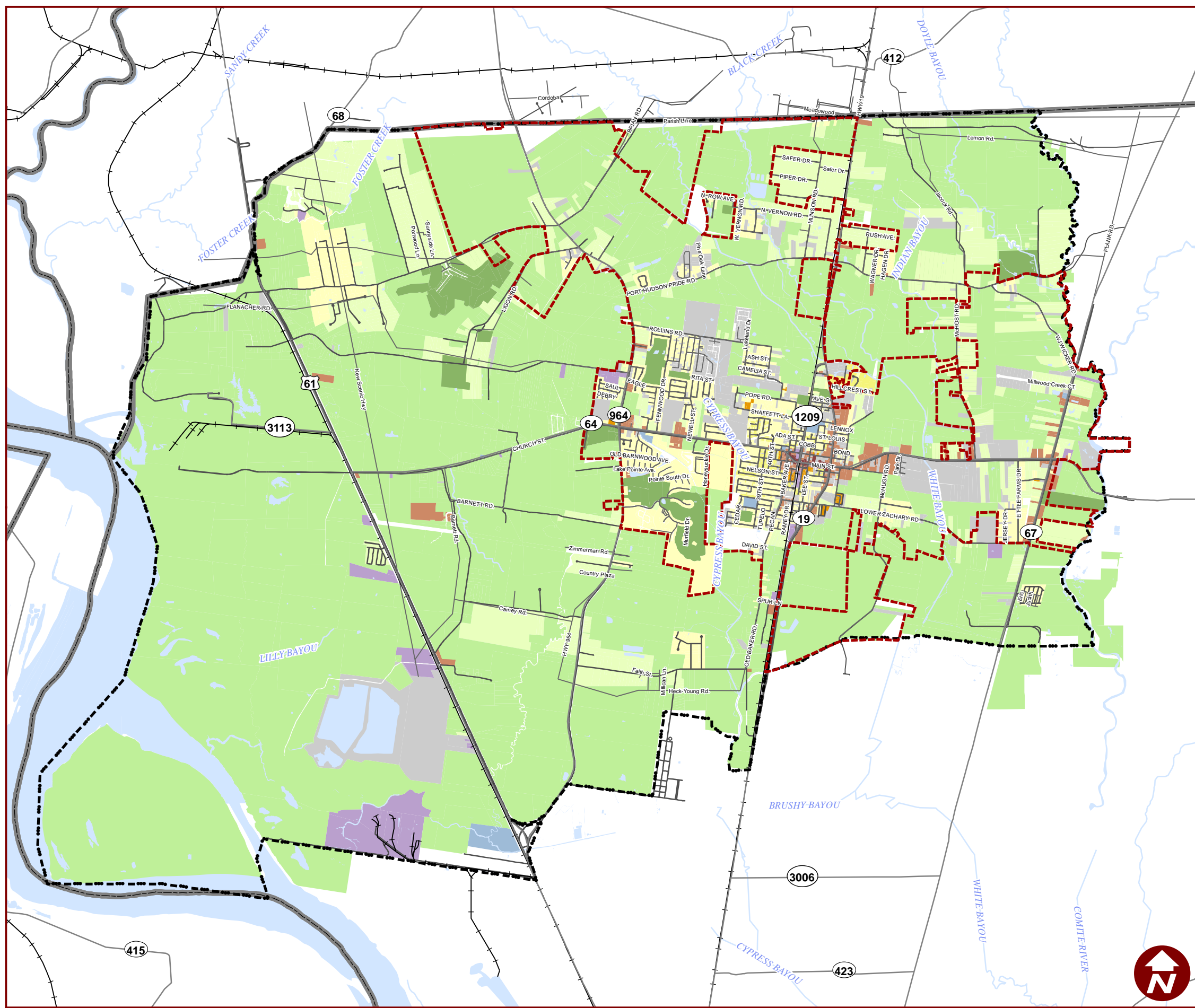
- ◆ Three single-family conventional housing districts (R-10, R-5, and R-4a);
- ◆ One district that allows modular homes (M);
- ◆ Five residential districts that allow both conventional and non-conventional housing (R-4b, R-4c, R-3, S-20, and S-10);
- ◆ Three multiple-family districts including duplexes (R-2), townhomes (R-1), and multiple dwellings (R-A);
- ◆ A light commercial and office district (B-1), which allows single- and two-family dwellings;
- ◆ An office and services district (B-2) that restricts residential use;
- ◆ A light commercial district (C-1) that allows the uses in the B-1 and B-2 districts and restricts buildings to less than 10,000 square feet;
- ◆ A medium commercial district (C-2) that restricts building size to 30,000 square feet and allows all uses in the C-1 district, which, in turn, allows single- and two-family dwellings and light commercial (offices and services) uses;
- ◆ A heavy commercial district allowing buildings to exceed 30,000 square feet (with no stated maximum), which permits all uses in the C-2 district. This district also permits single- and two-family dwellings and light and medium commercial uses;

# Map 2.1 Existing Land Use Character

- Vacant
- Agricultural and Rural
- Estate
- Suburban
- Auto-Urban Single Family
- Auto-Urban Multi-Family
- Urban Residential
- Auto-Urban Commercial
- Urban Commercial
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional
- Parks and Recreation
- Corporate Limits
- Proposed Zone of Influence
- East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary
- Major Water Bodies
- Streams
- Railroads



0 0.5 1 2 Miles



















# Map 2.2

## Future Land Use Plan







### Future Land Use

-  Agriculture & Forestry (AF)
-  Neighborhood Conservation (NC)
-  Estate Residential (RE)
-  Suburban Residential (RS)
-  Urban Residential (RU)
-  Commercial Suburban (CS)
-  Commercial General (CG)
-  Urban Center (UC)
-  Business Park (BP)
-  Industrial (I)
-  Public (P)
-  Parks & Recreation (PR)









### Floodplain

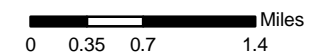
-  100-Year Floodplain
-  500-Year Floodplain

### Thoroughfare Plan

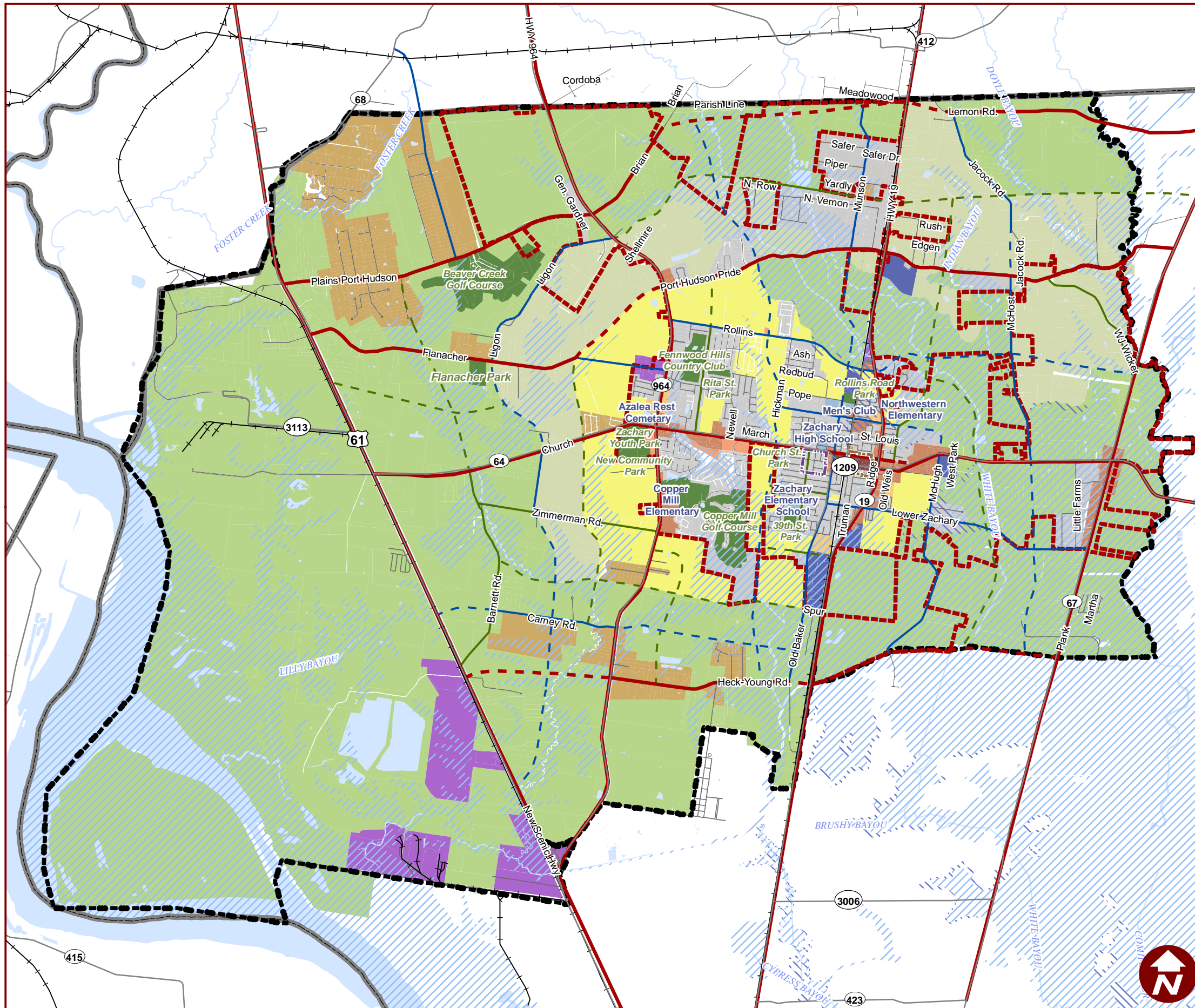
-  Principal Arterial
-  Principal Arterial, Planned
-  Minor Arterial
-  Minor Arterial, Planned
-  Collector
-  Collector, Planned

### Boundaries, Water, & Infrastructure

-  Corporate Limits
-  Proposed Zone of Influence
-  East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary
-  Garden District
-  Historic District
-  Major Water Bodies
-  Streams
-  Railroad



"Honoring our heritage...  
Planning our future"



Adopted April 5, 2010

- ◆ Three commercial districts (C-AB-1, C-AB-2, and C-AB-3) for wholesale and commercial package sale and storage of alcoholic beverages, consumption on premises, and bars and lounges, respectively;
- ◆ A highway district (H) allowing any use permitted in the commercial districts (including single- and two-family dwellings), as well as individual, occupied house trailers;
- ◆ Three highway districts (H-AB-1, H-AB-2, and H-AB-3) for wholesale and commercial package sale and storage of alcoholic beverages, consumption on premises, and bars and lounges, respectively; and
- ◆ One light industrial district (L) that permits any use permitted in the Highway district (which allows all commercial uses and single- and two-family dwellings).

While the current zoning ordinance establishes minimum residential lot sizes, there is no relationship to development character due to the breadth of uses and intensities allowed within each of the districts. There is a limited relationship to the intended character within the recently amended<sup>3</sup> commercial districts due to the limitation of building size, although there is no other specification as to the floor area ratio (FAR), landscape surface ratio (LSR), or other design standards to assure development character.

Displayed in **Table 2.1, Residential Land Use Districts** and **Table 2.2, Nonresidential Land Use Districts**, are the districts (left column) that relate to the designations on the future land use plan and the

Table 2.1 Residential Land Use Districts

District	Development Type	Average Lot Area	Minimum Open Space	Gross Density
Estate Residential (RE)	Single-Family Detached	3 ac.	0%	0.30
	Single-Family Detached Cluster	1 ac.	50%	0.42
	Conservation Subdivision	0.5 ac.	65%	0.57
	Preservation Subdivision	0.33 ac.	75%	0.57
	Mixed Housing Neighborhood	10,000 sf.	80%	0.62
Suburban Residential (RS)	Single-Family Detached	12,000 sf.	10%	2.01
	Single-Family Detached Cluster	8,000 sf.	25%	2.32
	Conservation Subdivision	7,200 sf.	30%	2.46
	Preservation Subdivision	6,000 sf.	35%	2.47
	Mixed-Housing Neighborhood	5,000 sf.	45%	2.70
	TND (mixed use, mixed housing)	-	20%	3.60
	Manufactured Home Park or Subdivision	6,000 sf.	40%	2.54
Urban Residential (RU)	Single-Family	5,000 sf.	10%	4.09
	Attached Single-Family	2,600 sf.	20%	7.68
	Multi-family	-	20%	15.67
	TND (mixed use, mixed housing)	2,200 sf.	20%	6.33
	Manufactured Home Park or Subdivision	6,000 sf.	30%	2.97
Neighborhood Conservation	All Residential	-	-	-
Agriculture & Forestry (AF)	Single-Family Detached	10 ac.	0%	0.09
	Single-Family Detached Cluster	5 ac.	40%	0.10
	Conservation Subdivision	1 ac.	60%	0.34
	Preservation Subdivision	0.5 ac.	75%	0.39

<sup>3</sup> Ordinance 2006-33, Changes in C-Commercial Zoning District Classification, Amending Section 90-150.



Table 2.2 Nonresidential Land Use Districts

District	Development Type	Minimum Parcel Size	Minimum Landscape Surface
Suburban Commercial (CS)	Commercial Retail/Service/Restaurant	20,000 s.f.	0.35
	Office	20,000 s.f.	0.45
	Mixed Use	2 ac.	0.30
	All Other Nonresidential Uses	20,000 s.f.	0.50
General Commercial (CG)	Commercial Retail/Services	20,000 s.f.	0.15
	Mixed Use	2 ac.	0.15
	Vehicle Sales, Rental, and Service	5 ac.	0.15
	Office/Commercial Lodging/ Other Uses	40,000 s.f.	0.20
Urban Commercial (UC)	Commercial Retail/Services	5,000 s.f.	0.00
	Mixed Use (< 50% residential floor area)	20,000 s.f.	0.00
	Mixed Use (> 50% residential floor area)	20,000 s.f.	0.15
	Office/Other Nonresidential Uses	10,000 s.f.	0.00
Business Park (BP)	Commercial Retail/Restaurant	1 ac.	0.25
	Office/Mixed Use	1 ac.	0.30
	Industrial (Abut Other Districts)	1 ac.	0.30
	Industrial (Do Not Abut Other Districts)	1 ac.	0.20
	Warehouse	1 ac.	0.15
	All Other Nonresidential Uses	1 ac.	0.30
Industrial (I)	Commercial Retail/Restaurant	40,000 s.f.	0.20
	Industrial (Abut Other Districts)	40,000 s.f.	0.25
	Industrial (Do Not Abut Other Districts)	20,000 s.f.	0.10
	All Other Nonresidential Uses	20,000 s.f.	0.20

recommended amendments to the zoning ordinance and map. The second column represents the development types within each district. For instance, within the *Suburban Residential* district, there are seven development types ranging from larger single-family lots (12,000 square feet) to conservation and preservation subdivisions, to mixed-housing neighborhoods and traditional neighborhood development (TND) that allow smaller lots but have higher percentages of open space. Also within this district, manufactured home parks and subdivisions would be permitted subject to compatibility and design standards. (*Note: Within the Unified Development Code, there are also provisions for institutional residential and residential eldercare facilities.*) The use of increased open space corresponds with smaller lot sizes, which maintains comparable densities ranging from 2.01 to 3.60 dwelling units per acre.

A conventional land use classification system, such as that currently employed by the City, considers the various development options to be incompatible. Within the proposed land use system, these development types may co-exist in a compatible manner. The corresponding increases in required open space, bufferyard requirements within and between development types within the same and abutting districts, and limited or conditional use standards help to ensure compatibility and quality outcomes.

The minimum or average lot size, minimum amount of open space (residential uses) or landscape surface (nonresidential uses) and allowable dwelling units per acre (residential uses) or floor area (nonresidential

uses) are enumerated for each development option in *Table 2.1, Land Use Districts*. Each development option preserved the character of the district through the applicable performance criteria. This approach is beneficial because it better defines uses according to their relevant impacts and increases development flexibility within the individual districts.

Existing residential neighborhoods are reflected on the Future Land Use Plan as Neighborhood Conservation (NC). Within the Unified Development Code are corresponding descriptions as to the prevailing lot size and other criteria. The purpose of this district is to establish standards consistent with those at the time of development so that nonconforming situations are not unnecessarily created.

## Implementation: Prudent Use of Development Regulations

Communities that are successful in achieving their vision are those that have established a unified vision, formed consensus, and are committed to action. Without this resolve, plans may be ineffective and lack the support necessary to realize the community's stated goals and objectives. Therefore, in order to achieve desirable development outcomes, there must be a firm commitment to abide by the policies and recommendations of this plan.

The goals, policies, and recommended actions are intended to provide guidance to achieve the preferred type, pattern, and density of future development, as well as the envisioned character of the community. As conditions change over time, the plan will require periodic review and amendment to continue to reflect the City's economic development objectives, growth policies and regulations, and other long-range planning considerations.

Directly associated with the implementation of this plan is the enactment of appropriate incentives, standards, and regulations to ensure compliance with the City's policies and overall community vision. While regulations impose certain restrictions on the use of land, in the interest of all persons and the community as a whole, they are an essential component for realizing many of the values and priorities expressed by individuals and groups during this planning process. Regulations that are enacted must be reasonable, fair, and equally applied. There must also be diligence in their enforcement so as to "maintain a level playing field" and protect the interests of all persons and not just those who are nearby or adjacent to the use.

There are a variety of methods available to enact control and, thus, manage development in a responsible manner. The approach taken is fully in the hands of the community and its leadership. While there are traditional means that are common among other communities, there are also creative variations that can be customized to address the specific issues and desired outcomes of a particular community. The content of this chapter establishes a firm foundation and policy framework to support whichever implementation strategy the community chooses to pursue.

## Housing Needs and Plan

### Introduction

As Zachary develops, its housing and neighborhoods will continue to grow. This requires the City to keep pace with an ever-changing demand for housing. While the development of new residences will be met by the market, the community's challenge will be to sustain the integrity of its neighborhoods and the quality of its existing older housing stock. Having a diverse stock of housing is instrumental in offering choice and providing for the individual needs of all households.



Maintaining the quality conditions of housing and integrity of well-established neighborhoods is a priority for the community.

The purpose of this section is to ensure the City meets its future housing needs. This is accomplished by providing access to safe, quality, and affordable housing within livable, attractive neighborhood environments. Furthermore, the types of housing, their arrangement and design, and integration of open space and amenities contribute to the quality appearance and character of the community. The City's economic health relies, in part, on its ability to preserve its well-established neighborhoods while planning for the development of new living environments that meet the physical, social, and economic needs of its residents.

### Housing Conditions Summary

In planning for its future, Zachary faces the challenges of sustaining its existing neighborhoods, creating housing options for its residents, and balancing the fiscal demands of new neighborhoods. However, it is first important to consider existing housing conditions. A set of charts and analysis may be found in *Appendix A, Demographic Assessment*.

In short, the housing situation demonstrates signs of robust growth and strong demand for quality neighborhoods. Statistical housing highlights and trends from the U.S. Census include:

- ◆ The amount of recent platting and development activity has spurred a housing boom.
- ◆ The vacancy rate was 5.9 percent in 2000 and remains low with approximately 120 vacancies City-wide. This is on the low end of a healthy range of vacancy of five to eight percent. According to local realtors, Zachary is one of the most active housing markets in the region.
- ◆ Housing resale prices are typically around \$100 per square foot in the older areas, while new construction prices range from \$130 to \$150 per square foot.
- ◆ The existing housing stock is primarily composed of detached, single-family units with small percentages of attached housing and manufactured homes.
- ◆ The predominant housing tenure is owner-occupied units.
- ◆ Comparing the median income and median housing prices indicates a sound affordability index, meaning that home ownership is attainable for the median household earnings.

- ◆ Recent increases in home prices and larger executive homes have caused a recent dip in the affordability index.
- ◆ A majority of the housing units have been built since 1980.

### Quality Development and Livable Neighborhoods

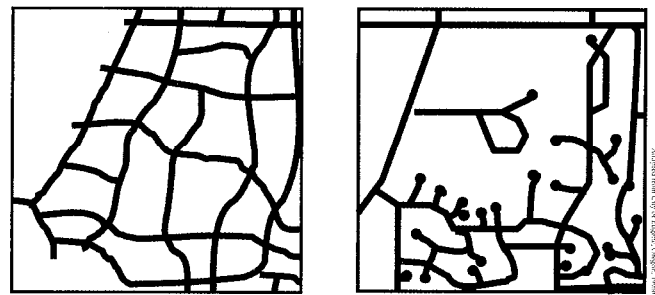
Providing quality housing and neighborhoods is fundamental to create a desirable place to live. In fact, residents supported this premise through their articulated desires for attractive, pedestrian-friendly, and well-connected neighborhoods. Comments related to housing and neighborhoods were voiced at the public meetings. The cause of their concerns is the existing neighborhood conditions, which were described as “monotonous,” “sparsely landscaped,” “lacking open space,” “poorly drained,” and facing “transportation issues.” A troubling trend is the development of stand-alone subdivisions rather than dynamic, mixed-use neighborhoods that are walkable, connected, and community destinations.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Provide for good access and connections within and between neighborhoods
- ▶ Promote walkability through compact development patterns and pedestrian infrastructure
- ▶ Integrate public open spaces and gathering areas in the design of neighborhoods

#### Recommendations

1. Establish requirements concerning gated communities that address fire access, perimeter landscaping, roadway continuity, and pedestrian connections between abutting neighborhoods and to nearby schools and parks. Requirements should ensure:
  - Private subdivisions do not interfere with community-wide circulation patterns.
  - Private development does not obstruct any planned pedestrian circulation system or access to any public park or school.
  - Where there are subdivisions with stub streets that can be connected so that circulation can occur, a private road should not be permitted.
2. Incorporate street layout and design standards into the subdivision regulations to accomplish traffic calming objectives without creating discontinuous streets. Standards may include collector street offsets or jogs, curves, and narrowed street sections. On-street parking also serves to slow traffic.
3. Require interconnection of local and collector streets to adjacent developments to ensure continuity of the street system.
4. Require pedestrian routes between adjacent neighborhoods and land uses. This is particularly important where natural features, such as the proposed canal project, make it impractical to connect streets.
5. Discourage subdivision design that facilitates cut-through traffic, increased traffic volumes, and speeding.



A highly connective street network avoids the “one-in and one-out” subdivision issue. With appropriate design standards, the planning of subdivisions can include specific strategies for expanding road connections in the future.





Public access easements contribute to pedestrian friendliness and provide much needed connections.

6. Require sidewalks in all neighborhoods (see *Chapter 4, Thoroughfare & Public Transit*). As an alternative, off-street trails may be used in-lieu of sidewalks as long as there is a comprehensive network and adequate linkage within and through the neighborhood, providing connection to adjacent neighborhoods and the surrounding area.
7. At the time of platting, require public access easements to provide for direct linkages between developments and to trails, parks, schools, and nearby convenience areas.

### Maintenance and Appearance of Existing Neighborhoods

Zachary's housing stock is relatively new due to the amount of recent residential construction. However, the community must remain cognizant of the older housing stock as rehabilitation and reinvestment will become increasingly important to sustain the integrity of the original town neighborhoods. Code enforcement and both property and building maintenance will remain important components in combating neighborhood decline.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Reinvest in the older, well-established neighborhoods to preserve their integrity
- ▶ Proactively enforce the City's codes to remove blighting influences
- ▶ Empower the formation of neighborhood associations and their self-policing through covenants, conditions, and restrictions
- ▶ Facilitate a neighborhood planning program to identify and prioritize improvement and enhancements projects

#### Recommendations

1. Adopt and enforce provisions that reduce blighting influences on neighborhoods, including:
  - Parking on unpaved surfaces.
  - Storage of commercial vehicles, recreational vehicles, utility trailers, and other vehicles.
  - Removal of junk, abandoned vehicles and other derelict items from yards and driveways.
  - The location, size, and setbacks of accessory buildings.
2. Create a neighborhood planning program to work with homeowners and neighborhood organizations. This may be in tandem with neighborhood beautification efforts. The program should assist homeowners with the following:
  - Establishment and enforcement of deed restrictions.
  - Clean-up and beautification efforts.
  - Identification of infrastructure improvements (e.g. streets, sidewalks, street lighting, drainage, etc.).
  - Development options for vacant infill tracts or redevelopment alternatives and strategies.
  - Enforcement of property maintenance codes.

3. Promote neighborhood pride and stimulate resident involvement in improvement activities, including:
  - o Seasonal “clean up, fix up” events.
  - o “Neighborhood Pride” days focusing on beautification.
  - o Annual “amnesty pickup” of large refuse items with the assistance of City crews and volunteers.
4. Seek the participation of churches, civic organizations, schools, and businesses in neighborhood improvement and revitalization efforts. The Beautification Committee may act as a leader in organizing other neighborhood groups to take action in clean-up efforts.
5. Conduct annual inspections for conformance with City ordinances, particularly including nonconforming businesses, structures, and uses. Issue an amnesty notice for correction of the violation. Subsequently, issue a citation for failure to correct the unlawful activity.
6. Form a capital investment program focused on infrastructure improvements within target neighborhoods. The purpose of this program is to provide a dedicated source of annual funding for use in making neighborhood improvements and leveraging private reinvestment through rehabilitation, redevelopment, and/or infill development.
7. Create a pro-active program for handling the condemnation, demolition, and rehabilitation of substandard structures and underdeveloped property. Revise local health, building, and development codes to streamline the process for addressing unsafe or dilapidated structures and other health and safety risks such as inoperable vehicles, weeds and heavy trash, overgrown sites, and run-down structures used for criminal activity.



Demand for rental property remains high in Zachary. Current real estate trends indicate a high level of demand and lack of sufficient rental resources in Zachary. It was pointed out at public meetings that the real demand is for *quality* rental units. Residents described high quality developments as “extensive landscaping,” “good parking lot design,” “attractive building materials,” “maintenance and upkeep,” and “walkable to other destinations.”

### Affordable Housing

Affordable housing options leads to a higher quality of life. In general, as more affordable housing options are supplied, a greater number of residents are able to live in Zachary and work nearby. In addition to the distress it causes families who cannot easily find a place to live, lack of affordable housing is considered to have negative effects on a community's overall health. The City recognizes the need to ensure that all of Zachary's residents enjoy access to quality and affordable housing within livable and attractive environments. Maintaining livability in light of recent growth will require creativity and a willingness to coordinate efforts. The qualities that make Zachary an attractive place to live are also making Zachary an expensive place to live. Increasing housing prices creates obstacles for low-income households and threatens to push residents to unsatisfactory housing options. The inability to find housing locally poses a hardship for households seeking an affordable home and employers seeking employees.

Affordable housing opportunities encourage economic development. A diversity of housing opportunities in a community promotes a mixture of people with different skills, needs, etc. Additionally, a variety of housing opportunities provides an assortment of jobs. As in any community, people need to live near their jobs in order to keep commutes short while not exceeding their monthly

budget. Providing affordable housing options near employment opportunities will have a positive effect on the economic well-being for individual residents, families, and the entire community. For example, lack of affordable housing can make low-cost labor scarce and increase demands on transportation systems as workers travel longer distances between jobs and areas with affordable housing. Planning for an available supply of affordable housing ensures that communities retain economic growth opportunities and maintain a high quality of living.

Table 2.3, Zachary Housing Affordability

Percent of Median Income	Household Income	Affordable Mortgage Payment
180	\$ 89,404.20	\$ 2,235.12
150	\$ 74,503.50	\$ 1,862.60
130	\$ 64,569.70	\$ 1,614.25
<b>100</b>	<b>\$ 49,669.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,241.73</b>
80	\$ 39,735.20	\$ 993.39
50	\$ 24,834.50	\$ 620.87
30	\$ 14,900.70	\$ 372.52

Affordability is traditionally conceptualized as the percentage of income devoted to housing costs. Generally, housing is considered affordable if no more than 30 percent of household income is devoted to housing costs. As depicted in **Table 2.3, Zachary Housing Affordability**, \$1,241.73 per month is an affordable mortgage payment for a median household income of \$49,669.00 (the median household income in Zachary according to the 2000 Census). For households earning 30 percent of the median income, affordable housing means a monthly mortgage payment of \$372.52.

Given the affordable housing unit prices listed above, does the current stock of housing units provide affordable options? The affordable mortgage amount of \$1,241.73 is well above the median mortgage payment of \$930 in Zachary. Additionally, the median gross rent is \$376, showing that rental units are generally unaffordable for households earning 30 percent of the median income. Furthermore, in recent years, growth in Zachary has been due to residents that were driven from coastal regions and in need of affordable housing solutions. This recent migration increases the affordable housing demands of the community, especially rental housing options. Affordable housing options are a valued economic development asset and provide essential opportunities for residents. By committing to provide opportunities for excellence in living, Zachary must provide adequate affordable housing options.

The housing stock of Zachary is moderately diverse although it is dominated by single-family homes. In 2000, a majority (77.1 percent) of all units were single-family homes detached. In a distant second, 12.0 percent of housing units are mobile homes. Multi-family units are 9.4 percent. This is a needed housing type for affordability. Residents voiced concern at public meetings about the lack of quality rental apartments. Lack of available housing opportunities is forcing many workforce households to live a considerable distance from their jobs. As supply fails to meet the available housing demand, low and moderate income households often struggle to find and secure housing that is affordable.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Ensure that affordable housing programs provide housing for all income groups
- ▶ Preserving existing affordable housing options
- ▶ City collaboration with affordable housing developers in the development process

#### Recommendations

1. Encourage redevelopment in target areas through the tax abatement program that rewards infill redevelopment in low-income neighborhoods.

2. Establish an average, rather than minimum, lot size whereby lot sizes are required to vary in width, with a certain percentage being narrower and the remaining being wider than the average. This approach allows a variety of housing styles.
3. Allow flexible site design options that permit alternative treatment of utilities and infrastructure. There can be cost savings to development from flexible site design and cluster development techniques, which translate into reduced lot and house prices (e.g., reduced linear feet of street, pipe, sidewalk; fewer street lights, fire hydrants; reduced stormwater management needs; etc.).
4. Provide a density bonus to offset the affordable housing requirement to avoid significantly affecting the feasibility of the residential development. Density bonuses are a type of housing production program where projects are granted additional residential density over and above the maximum limit allowed by existing zoning, with the condition that the additional housing is restricted to occupancy by a certain target group and that the units remain affordable over time and multiple resale of the property.
5. Coordinate a housing program with the economic development program by working with the Zachary Chamber of Commerce and Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce to identify the profile of workers in the targeted industries in order to provide appropriate housing choices.
6. Devote grant-writing personnel to seek financial support to City programs, as well as nonprofit organizations assisting lower- and moderate-income seniors, disabled persons, and other residents in finding affordable housing through home sharing and other activities, as appropriate. For instance, the area south of Highway 64, within the corporate limits of the City of Zachary, will be eligible for USDA Rural Development single-family housing financing.





## Chapter Three

# Growth Management

The concept of “growth management” is multi-faceted. It involves the City’s ability to provide adequate public infrastructure and municipal services to support existing development while programming the capital needs for continuing growth. It also involves the formulation of policy as to the direction and amount of future development to support the projected growth during the horizon of this plan. Also of importance is the capability for providing police and fire protection services in a fiscally responsible manner. Lastly, of significant consideration for this community is the best long-term interests of the defined zone of influence relating to the type, pattern, and extent of ongoing development.

Zachary has long been a small bedroom community on the outskirts of the Baton Rouge metropolitan area; that is, until receiving the distinction as having the highest-rated school district in Louisiana, together with the unfortunate incidences of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. These occurrences continue to bring significant change to the community as the amount and pattern of development is quickly altering the community character. This brought about and, in fact, heightens the timing and importance of this plan. Through this plan, the City must position itself to proactively respond to the impending development to ensure growth occurs in a logical and responsible manner.

As the extent of Zachary’s urbanized area expands, the City must consider the practical and fiscal implications of extending its facilities, services, and authority over a broader area. While there are benefits to an increased tax base as a result of markets created by added rooftops, there may equally be detriments to the livability that will forever alter the community. For this and many other reasons, it is essential for the community to seize its economic opportunities while, at the same time, establishing effective measures to retain its cherished quality of life.

Over the course of the last three plus decades, the City has experienced a stable rate of growth, averaging between 1.7 and 2.0 percent annually. The analysis reflected in the demographic profile of *Chapter 1, Introduction & Community Profile*, supports the premise that this rate of growth will continue and likely increase during the next two decades. From an economic perspective, the increase in population and corresponding employment growth is a positive indicator of the City’s economic competitiveness and vitality. A continuation of this economic growth is – and must remain – a primary goal of the community. (Refer to *Chapter 7, Economic Development*, for information as to the City’s strategies for seizing its economic opportunities and the means and directions recommended by this plan.)

A question before this community is not only how to attract and sustain economic development, but how to maximize its net fiscal benefits. The pattern of growth and efficiency of service provision are contributing factors, among others. As displayed in *Map 2.1, Existing Land Use*, there is a large expanse of property already within the corporate limits. The expansion of the City limits was brought about by peripheral development requests and the City’s intent for managing its growth. Until recently, the City was largely of a contiguous form bordered roughly by Rollins Road on the north, LA 965 to the west,



"Without a proactive stance to ensure that development occurs in a logical and sequential pattern, it will continue to be driven solely by market forces, which does not necessarily occur in a manner that can be efficiently served with adequate public facilities and services."

- Kendig Keast Collaborative

McHugh Road to the east, and the City limits to the south. Much of the newer development, however, is occurring around the fringes of the City, some within, but mostly outside, the City limits. Continuing this pattern of expanding the boundaries upon request will eventually strain the fiscal resources of the community; that is, without the policies and firm directions of this plan.

## Purpose

The purpose of this chapter on growth management is to:

- ◆ identify and recommend policies and strategies for managing the community's long-term growth and character;
- ◆ ensure efficient provision of adequate public infrastructure and municipal services;
- ◆ grow in a manner that is both responsible and sustainable; and
- ◆ achieve long-term fiscal health.

The City must be in a position to respond to its increasing service demands and delineate the areas it is prepared to serve to avoid a sprawling, unsustainable pattern of development beyond the City limits and throughout its zone of influence.

## Sprawl and its Implications

Sprawl is defined as an inefficient consumption of land, which spreads from urban areas to undeveloped rural land, resulting in an inefficient use of infrastructure. Sprawl is marketable because it commonly equates to larger lots and lower home prices within an attractive rural setting. From the community's perspective, however, it is short-sighted and may be of long-term consequence without adequate plans and policies. Too often, little thought is given to the cumulative impacts of development until it has occurred and the impacts are fully realized.

While growth will continue to bring economic opportunity and gain, without adequate foresight and preparedness it will involve long-term consequences, which may include, among others:

- ◆ Erosion of a clearly defined edge to the community, leading to a loss of physical identity.
- ◆ Degradation of significant environmental resources within and around Zachary, including its expanses of floodplain and corresponding wetlands, habitats, and heavily vegetated areas.
- ◆ Overwhelmed public infrastructure, such as increased traffic volumes on narrow, substandard roadways; inadequate water and wastewater systems; and an expanded service area requiring substantial investments for adequate provision of police and fire protection services.
- ◆ Premature and unplanned shifts in traffic patterns causing undue congestion and environmental impacts as development occurs in an uncoordinated fashion before adequate road infrastructure is in place.
- ◆ A burdening of public facilities such as parks, libraries, and particularly schools that are not of a quantity, suitable size, or equipped to handle the added demands.
- ◆ A lack of coordinated planning between individual developments – particularly

### STATISTICS ON THE SPRAWLING OF AMERICA

Over a 20-year period, the 100 largest urbanized areas sprawled out over an additional 14,545 square miles. That was more than nine million acres of natural habitats, farmland, and other rural space that were covered over by the asphalt, buildings, and subdivisions of suburbia.

between the City and Parish – leading to a discontinuous and disjointed street system and an inability to plan for linear linkages and greenways.

- ◆ The provision of private streets and package treatment plants, for which the burden will likely shift to the City in future years without the requisite funding to pay for it.
- ◆ Cumulative impacts on the natural environment due to stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution of the Comite River, Doyle’s Bayou, White Bayou, Cypress Bayou, and other area tributaries and watercourses, as well as possible contamination of source drinking water.
- ◆ Inefficient provision of services meaning a larger investment in infrastructure systems with fewer than the optimal number of connections to pay for it, thereby leading to increased bonding and taxes.
- ◆ Increased air pollution as vehicles traverse longer distances to reach places of work, shopping, services, education, recreation, and entertainment that are not within close proximity or a convenient distance to new, rural development. This means that more public dollars must be expended on road building, expansion, maintenance, street lighting, and traffic enforcement.
- ◆ Declining rural character and agricultural operations as formerly large, contiguous farms are broken up by scattered development and the proliferation of “exurban,” large-lot acreages.
- ◆ Continued disinvestment in the historic original town area as new development attracts and creates a market for new commercial development in nearer proximity to its customer base – along major roadways and on the fringe of the community – a distance from the commercial core. This leads to an erosion of the existing tax base, often leaving vacant buildings and storefronts behind. The first indications of this are now occurring at the intersection of LA 964 and LA 64.

## Issues and Opportunities

The issues summarized below are based on the input received from small group interviews in May 2007 and facilitated break-out sessions held during the Citizens’ Congress in June 2007, as well as the objective review and research of the Consultant Team.<sup>1</sup> These issue statements are the foundation of the corresponding goals and action recommendations.

### Contiguous Pattern of Development

The community form is mostly contiguous, although by way of development requests and subdivisions developing within the rural areas of the Parish, there are increased signs of scattered development. As displayed in **Map 3.1, Peripheral Development**,<sup>2</sup> there are several subdivisions that are within or abutting the City’s one and one-half mile zone of influence.<sup>3</sup> This, together with those that are developing or proposed to develop adjacent to the City limits, causes concern as to the efficient provision of adequate infrastructure.

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<sup>1</sup> Kendig Keast Collaborative and TIP Strategies, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Map of Subdivisions, East Baton Rouge Parish Planning Commission

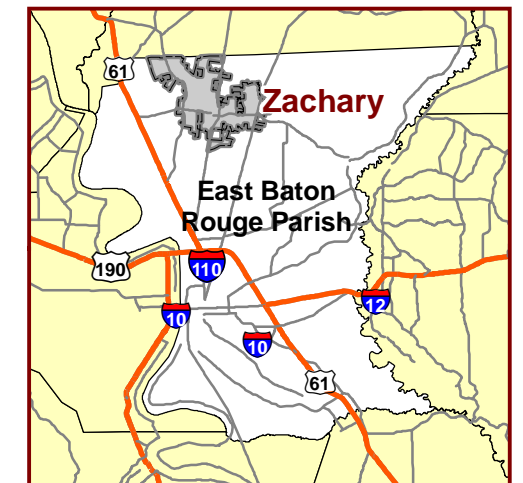
<sup>3</sup> A zone of influence map was discovered through plan reconnaissance although there does not appear to be any corresponding agreement between the City and Parish. It is in the City’s interest to extend their area of influence to coincide with the school district boundaries, which is denoted on the plan maps.



# Map 3.1 Peripheral Development

- ★ Parish Subdivisions
- ⬢ Corporate Limits
- ⬢ Proposed Zone of Influence
- ⬢ East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary
- Major Water Bodies
- Streams
- Railroads

Subdivision	Date
1 Zachary Road Acres	2/17/1954
2 Lutschg	6/6/1958
3 Hillside Farms	1/7/1970
4 Pleasant Park	8/25/1983
5 Beaver Creek on the Plains	10/11/2002
6 Pecan hills	7/16/2005
7 High Plains Crossing	5/10/2005
8 Country Plaza	4/12/1976
9 Meadow Glen	7/30/1984
10 Abundance Place	1/6/1978
11 Griffin Place	10/8/1991
12 College Acres	11/24/2024
13 Castle Place	5/30/1986
14 Deer Park	2/28/1983
15 Watson Farms	6/2/1980
16 Fiesta Homes	11/14/1969
17 Blackwater Estates	4/15/1969
18 Blackwater Road Acres	8/6/1985
19 Gills Park	12/6/1991
20 Northbaker Park	11/30/1978
21 Comite Acres	8/3/1976



0 0.5 1 2 Miles



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Goals

- ▶ Maintain a compact, efficient community form
- ▶ Development coordinated to occur with the timely provision of public facilities and services
- ▶ Well-managed development activities within the City's defined "zone of influence"
- ▶ Intergovernmental coordination to facilitate orderly and fiscally sustainable growth

Currently, roughly 34 percent of the corporate limits are developed. Vacant, undeveloped land accounts for 12 percent and land classified as agricultural and rural amounts to 54 percent of the corporate limits. Generally, there are an equal number of vacant acres to that now residentially developed. In simple terms, this suggests that the City could easily double its population without requiring annexation.

Given the limitations of State law pertaining to the process by which the City may annex territory "lying contiguous and adjacent to"<sup>4</sup> its corporate limits, developing in a contiguous form is difficult. This is so because the extension of corporate limits must come by way of petition on behalf of "one-third in number and value of the bona fide owners of any lots or land," followed by elections, first by those subject to annexation and second by the community residents.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, there must be reasons for which those outside the corporate limits are interested in being annexed. This is generally to access municipal infrastructure systems and public services such as water and gas utilities, municipal police and fire services (with an acceptable fire insurance rating), and solid waste collection, among others. Without these added benefits, or in the case of those outside the City limits who are already receiving water and gas services from the City, there are few reasons for annexation. Effectively, this enables an inefficient development pattern and contributes to a pattern of sprawl.

For growth management purposes, it is most appropriate and feasible to direct development to areas within the corporate limits where the City has regulatory control. Given the amount of development in the Parish, however, the City must act in its best interest – and those of the Zachary School District – to establish firm policies and an approach for managing the type and pattern of development in its proposed zone of influence.<sup>6</sup>

Recommendations

1. Designate the intended land use character on the Future Land Use Plan and corresponding zoning map for the preferred growth areas. This allows development more readily in the preferred growth areas since they are effectively pre-zoned.
2. Prepare a five-year capital improvement program (CIP) to identify capital project expenditures. For the preferred growth areas the candidate projects must be consistent with the policies of this plan.
3. Adhere to the overall growth policy as follows:

*The City will grow in a fiscally sustainable manner by maximizing efficiencies in the provision of municipal facilities and services, evaluating and making decisions according to the fiscal benefits*

<sup>4</sup> Subpart B, Extension of Corporate Limits of Municipality by Means of Petition and Election, RS 33:151

<sup>5</sup> To enlarge or contract the corporate limits requires a petition with the assent of a majority of the registered voters and a majority in number of resident property owners, as well as 25 percent in value of the property of the resident property owners.

<sup>6</sup> The proposed zone of influence coincides with the school district boundaries.

*and consequences of growth, and deliberately developing toward a contiguous, compact community form.*

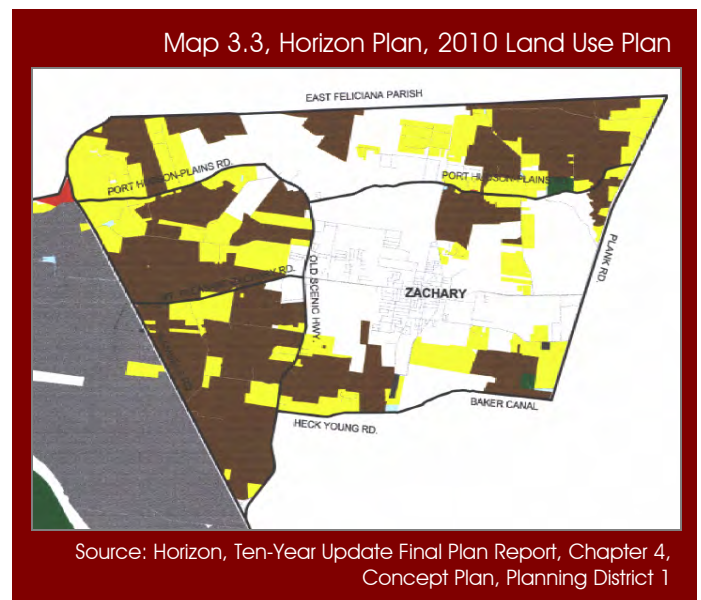
4. Develop a fiscal impact assessment to quantify the benefits or fiscal consequences of development. Essentially, the model should determine whether there will be sufficient revenues generated by development to offset the costs of providing adequate infrastructure and municipal services.
5. Coordinate with East Baton Rouge Parish to re-align the zone of influence to coincide with the boundaries of the Zachary School District, as displayed by **Map 3.2, Proposed Zone of Influence**. Seek to acquire the authority for development approval in this area, consistent with a joint City-Parish land use and transportation plan.
6. Assess the quantified impacts and policy implications of the proposed zone of influence.<sup>7</sup> An essential prerequisite is to assess the capacity requirements to support the water and sewer demands of the added area, as well as the accompanying demands for police and fire protection services. Seek to collaborate with other providers to create service and no-service agreements, consistent with the policies of this plan and the growth management objectives of the City.
7. Amend the zoning ordinance to include an Agriculture & Forestry (AF) district for areas of the City limits where there is not readily available or adequate infrastructure. The areas are outside of the preferred growth areas. The purpose of this district is to limit urban development until which time as adequate infrastructure is available. Residential use in this district would be limited to large acreages or cluster development.

### Methods of Growth Containment

Given the nuances of State law there are limitations for managing growth. The City's zoning and subdivision authority may be exercised only within the City limits, leaving the areas outside the City to the jurisdiction of the Parish. As exhibited by *Map 3.1, Peripheral Development*, there are numerous subdivisions and developments outside of the City limits that benefit by their location within the Zachary School District yet are beyond the jurisdiction – and authority – of the City.

As displayed in **Map 3.3, Horizon Plan, 2010 Land Use Plan**, the land adjacent to the City is all designated Residential Estate/Agriculture (brown) and Low and Medium Density Residential (yellow). These land use designations allow development with little respect to their infrastructure demands or the capacities to support them. As such, unfortunately, they contribute to an ill-advised pattern of growth.








Much of the area around Zachary is zoned "Rural," which, depending on the land use designation, permits low-density residential development on one- (Parish

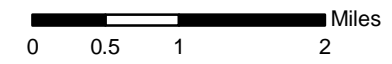
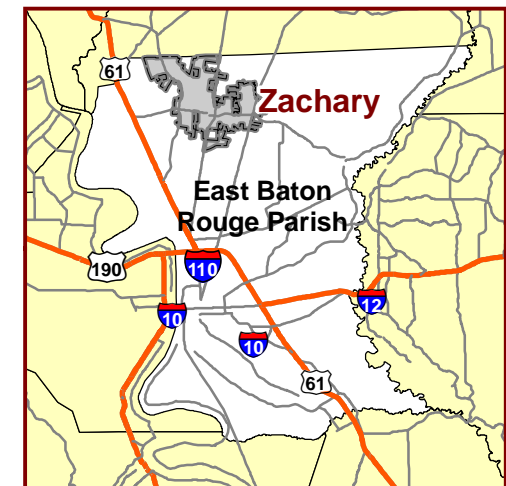
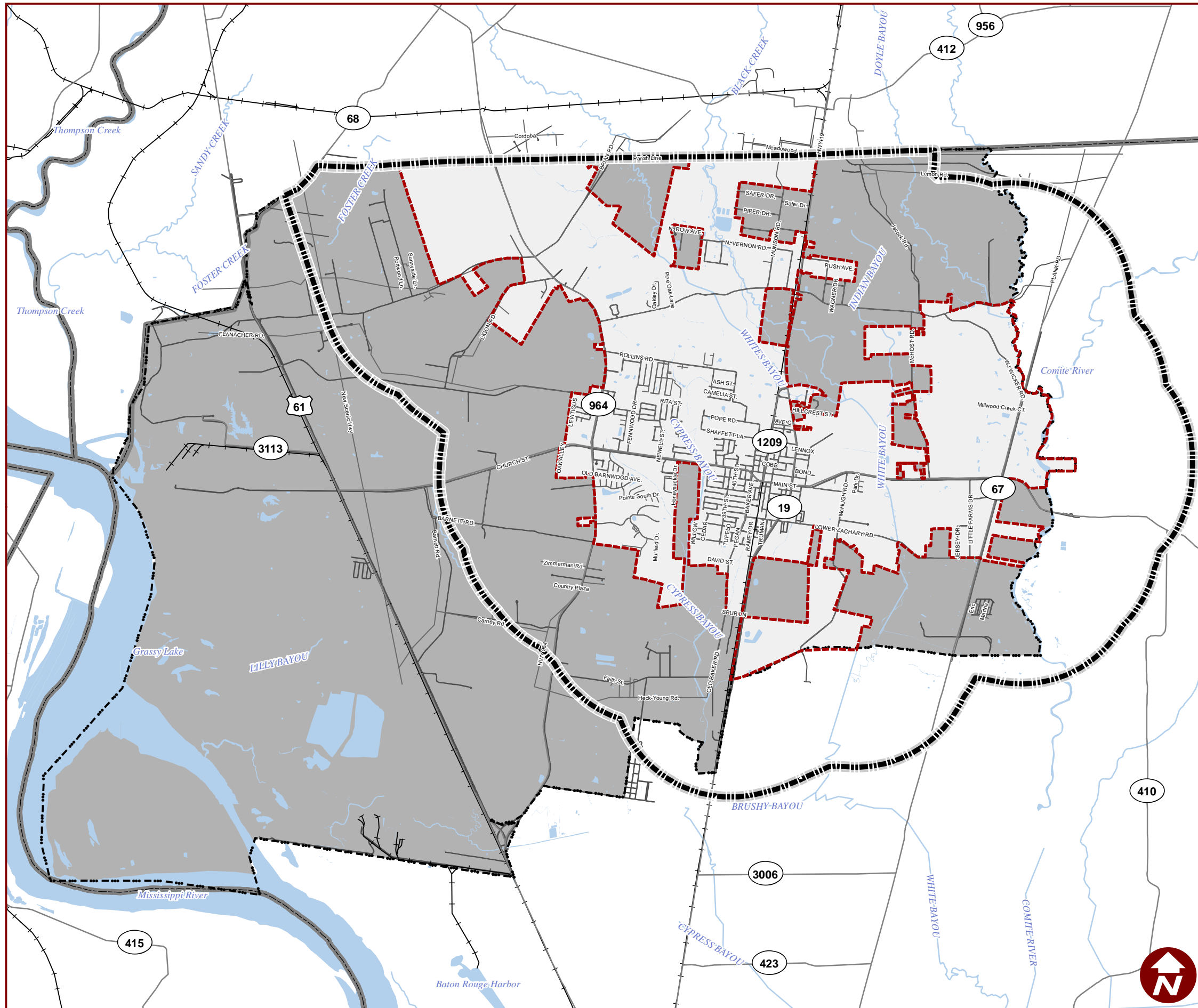



<sup>7</sup> "Where the corporate limits of municipalities have been extended or enlarged as hereinabove provided, the annexed territory, the inhabitants thereof, and the owners of property therein shall enjoy as to themselves and their property all the rights, immunities, and privileges granted and enjoyed by the citizens of the municipality to which the territory has been annexed. LA Revised Statutes 33:179




# Map 3.2 Proposed Zone of Influence

-  1.5 mile City/Parish Zone of Influence
-  Railroads
-  East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary
-  Major Water Bodies
-  Streams
-  Corporate Limits
-  Proposed Zone of Influence





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zoning - A1), two- (A2), and three-acre (A2.7) lots. Areas that are shown in brown on **Map 3.4, Parish Zoning**, and also zoned "Rural" require one-acre lots, or may be clustered at 4.1 units per acre. Therefore, given the current Parish land use plan and zoning, the area enveloping the City may be developed at auto-urban and suburban densities, with no required public infrastructure systems. Commercial and industrial development designated by deed restriction or plat notation is also permitted, without any apparent nonconforming use provisions for their eventual discontinuance. There are a few required performance measures for pre-existing uses that are intended to minimize nuisances.<sup>8</sup>

The developments around the periphery of the City are allowed to have individual water supplies and sewage disposal units,<sup>9</sup> in many cases, draining the effluent to open ditches. The use of privately-owned and maintained systems for wastewater treatment is an approach that has often failed in other areas. Further, they exacerbate the problem of uncontrolled growth. In addition to the utility allowances there are no requirements relating to the capacity of Parish roadways accessed by these developments.

There are several strategic approaches for managing development, including:

- ◆ Strict adherence to a growth policy providing that municipal services, such as, but not limited to, water and gas utilities, will not be provided outside the City limits (subject to the criteria of Recommendation No. 5 below).
- ◆ Annexation either by petition and election of property owners or by petition and ordinance and provided:
  - Zoning of the property as Agriculture and Forestry (AF); or
  - Zoning to another district subject to compliance with the City's annexation and utility policies and conformance with the Unified Development Code.
- ◆ A policy requiring annexation as a condition of development and provided:
  - adequate capacity of the City's distribution and collection systems and treatment plans;
  - extension of municipal services to and through the subject property at the developer's expense; and
  - provision for an agreement to offset by way of exaction the City's requisite expenses associated with compliance with LA Revised Statutes 33:179 (annexed territory enjoys all rights, immunities, and privileges enjoyed by the municipality to which the territory has been annexed, e.g. police and fire services and response times).
- ◆ Negotiating non-annexation agreements with property owners subject to compliance with the City's annexation and utility policies and conformance with the Unified Development Code.
- ◆ Collaborate with the City-Parish Planning Commission in the development of a regional development plan, as provided for by law, to ensure harmony of this master plan.<sup>10</sup>

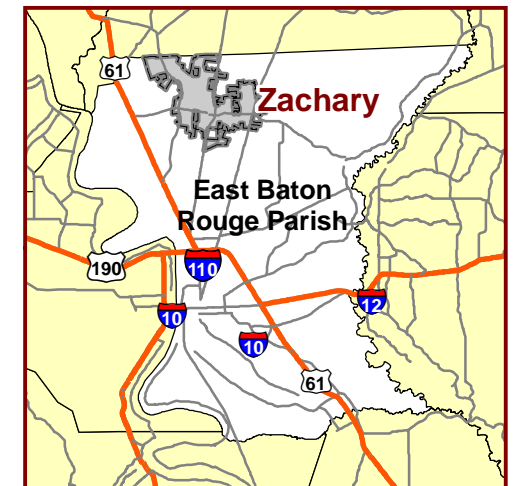
<sup>8</sup> Section 8.213, R Rural District, re: bufferyards and increased setback with a wall or solid fence between and adjacent to certain defined districts

<sup>9</sup> Chapter 14, Utilities, City-Parish Planning Commission Unified Development Code

<sup>10</sup> "In preparing the regional development plan, the planning commission shall take account of and shall seek to harmonize the planning activities of federal, state, parish, municipal or other local agencies within the area. In preparing such plan...the regional planning commission may seek the cooperation and advice of the division of administration, of other appropriate departments, agencies and instrumentalities of federal, state, and local government. LA Revised Statutes 33:135, General powers and duties. Furthermore, as it relates to annexing vacant land contiguous to the City limits, the parish council and city council "may establish operating agreements to govern annexation procedures and/or other matters related to growth management issues between and among themselves." LA Revised Statutes 33:172(F)(3)(a)

# Map 3.4 Parish Zoning

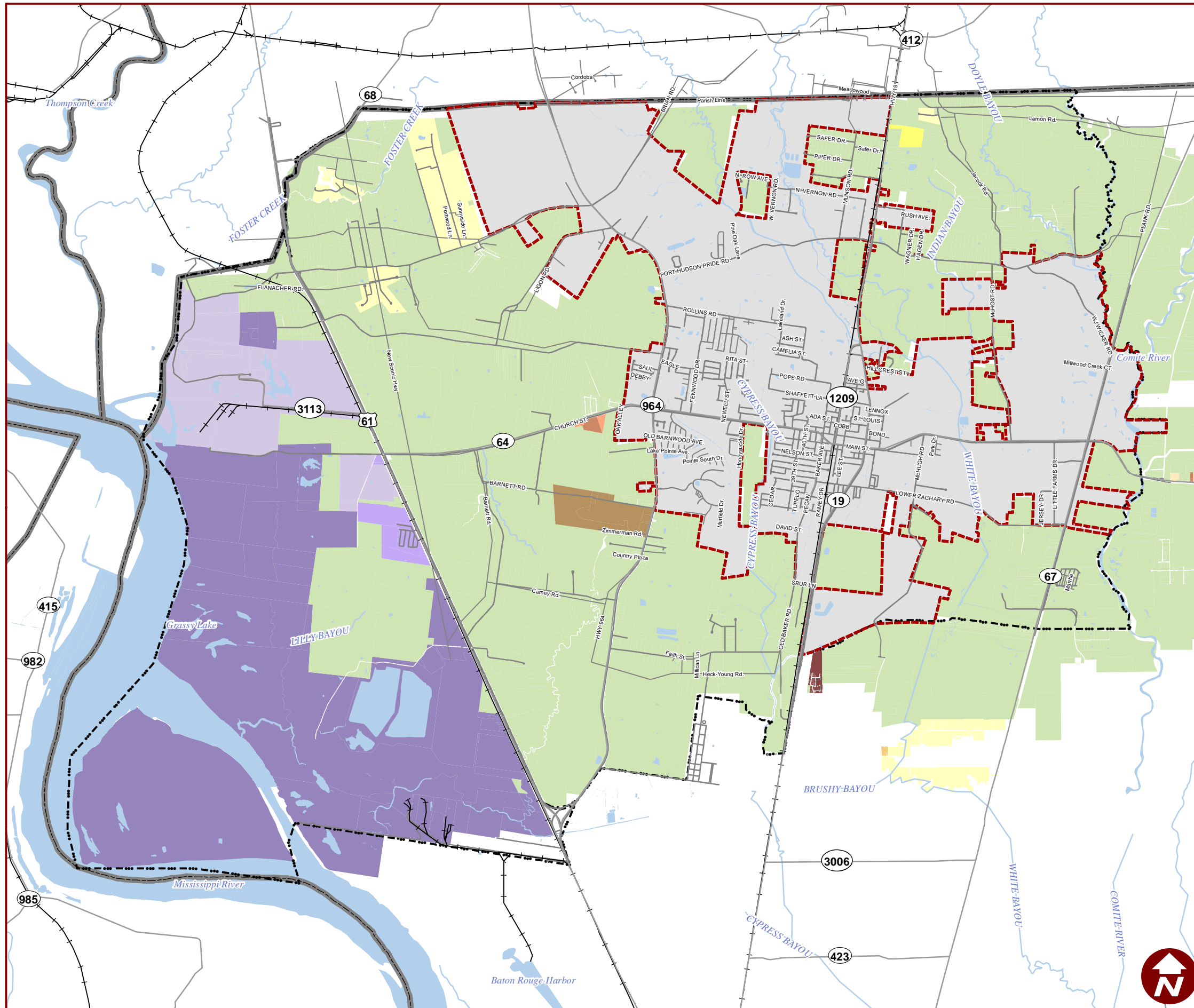
- A1 - Single-Family Residential
- A2.7 - Single-Family Residential
- B1 - Transition District
- NC - Neighborhood Commercial
- C2 - Heavy Commercial
- IA - Industry
- M1 - Light Industry
- M2 - Heavy Industry
- R - Rural
- SPUD - Small Planned Unit Development
- PUD - Planned Unit Development
- Corporate Limits
- East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary
- Major Water Bodies
- Streams



0 0.5 1 2 Miles



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- ◆ Negotiating an intergovernmental agreement with the City-Parish Planning Commission, including:
  - Re-definition of the current one and one-half mile zone of influence to that included in this plan, which matches the Zachary School District boundaries; and
  - Authority to review and approve development proposals either independently or jointly with the City-Parish Planning Commission, subject to development of a joint land use and transportation plan and adoption of joint land development regulations and design specifications; or
  - Amendment of the Horizon Plan and zoning map in a manner that supports and is in concert with the City's growth and development policies.

Based on the projections outlined in *Chapter 1, Introduction & Community Profile*, it is estimated that an additional 4,700 acres will be developed, assuming similar densities to those today. With an added 20 percent for market flexibility, a total of 5,640 acres will be consumed by 2030. There is more than sufficient land within the City limits to accommodate the expected growth during the horizon of this Plan.

#### Goals

- ▶ Imposition of the City's zoning and subdivision authority to manage the standard of development
- ▶ Harmony of the City-Parish land use plan and zoning with the City's vision for its zone of influence
- ▶ Preservation of the rural character around the periphery of the urbanized and urbanizing area
- ▶ Improved standards for provision of adequate facilities and sustainable public facilities
- ▶ Urbanized development directed to occur within a defined growth area

#### Recommendations

1. In accordance with State law concerning a regional development plan, request the City-Parish Planning Commission to:
  - Enact an Agriculture district with a minimum lot size of 20 acres as a means for managing the pattern of growth within the City's proposed zone of influence. So as not to "down-zone" the owners of land who are currently zoned for higher density (generally one-, two-, and three-acre lots), encourage the City-Parish Planning Commission to require development clustering, with density bonuses for higher ratios of open space. This is particularly important for the interim period before the City prepares an annexation study and initiates an annexation program; and either:
    - Re-designate the 2010 Land Use Plan and, subsequently, rezone the area within the City's proposed zone of influence for agricultural development, until which time that adequate public facilities and services – as opposed to private water and wastewater systems – are available and may be efficiently provided; or
    - Collaborate with the City to prepare joint City-Parish land use and infrastructure plans, plus adopt joint implementing regulations for the portion of the proposed zone of influence that overlaps the jurisdiction of the Parish.
2. Amend the zoning ordinance to include an Agriculture & Forestry (AF) district for areas that are newly annexed and outside of the preferred growth areas. Upon inclusion in the preferred growth areas, re-designate the zoning according to the appropriate district reflected on the Future Land Use Plan.
3. Adopt a utility extension policy subject to the following criteria:
  - The subject parcel is within a preferred growth area and will not create obstacles to successful implementation of a suitable roadway network consistent with the City's Thoroughfare Plan.

- The land is proposed for annexation and abuts the City's existing utility service areas and can be immediately and efficiently served – or readily served with manageable and affordable capital improvements.
- The land can be adequately served by and funded for municipal police, fire, and emergency medical services, and the City can readily assume the fiscal responsibility for the maintenance of existing roads, street lights, parks, and any publicly-owned facility, for which the fee structure will net a fiscal benefit to the City.
- All public improvements necessary to serve the area proposed for service extension will be constructed and financed in accordance with City standards and policies.
- There is sufficient capacity of the infrastructure systems, i.e. roads and utilities, to accommodate the added development.
- There is a written finding on behalf of the Zachary School District that there are or are planned to be requisite capacities of school facilities to accommodate the added enrollment.
- As determined by the City, the actual fiscal impact of expanding the incorporated area and then providing basic services, maintaining public facilities, and making other necessary public improvements is favorable and sufficiently offsets the associated costs to the City, both near- and long-term.

#### SAVES (Strategic Analysis: Vision Evaluation System)

Coinciding with this plan is a land use model known as SAVES. This planning tool quantifies the impacts of different land use and growth scenarios to aid in decision making. For instance, the preferred growth areas are located to optimize the efficient provision of services.

4. Amend the SAVES impact model to incorporate the school enrollment zones (elementary, middle, and high school), thereby allowing quantification of the impacts, by enrollment zone, concerning the number of school-age children and required additional classrooms. (Coordination with the school district will be required to calibrate the model.) This will allow the City and School District to evaluate the warrant for and feasibility of development in the context of its impacts on the District. It may also serve as a basis for calculating fair-share impact fees for school facilities, as applicable.
5. Require as a condition for providing municipal utilities, in those cases that adhere to the utility extension criteria above, mandatory development clustering and fulfillment of ordinance requirements for provision of adequate facilities and services.
6. Establish capacity thresholds beyond which proposed development will exceed the limits for adequate facility and service provision.
7. Consider the establishment and imposition of impact fees to ensure new development pays its fair share for drainage, roadways, water and sewer infrastructure, and police and fire protection services that become necessary as a result of such development. The principles of fiscal responsibility and stewardship upon which this plan is based support adoption, provided that they comply with the law in that:
  - they are fair and proportionate to the demands created by the new development;
  - they are used for projects that serve new development; and
  - they are used in a timely manner.

### Strategic Annexation

There are both practical and significant policy issues associated with peripheral development. Perhaps the most significant is the inability of Zachary to promote orderly growth in an area for which it has no jurisdiction. Also, the City is limited from expanding its tax base in line with the increasing demands for use of its facilities and services. This is important since those outside the City benefit from access to the



City's parks, libraries, community centers, and, in some instances, City water and gas services, but do not share in the burden associated with constructing and maintaining them. A haphazard pattern of development stretches the City's limited resources and increases its costs for providing services, while burdening the capacities of infrastructure systems.

The areas around the City will most likely continue to develop. This is due to the Parish's current plan, development regulations, and utility policies. It is exacerbated by the City's practice of providing water and gas services to subdivisions outside the City limits. Continuation of this development pattern will slowly impair the small-town character in Zachary and inflict the consequences outlined earlier in this chapter.

There are reasons for annexation other than to accommodate development. Under current circumstances, annexation may be a viable strategy to contain the City's growth and exert control over the zone of influence. Otherwise, development will likely continue in an uncoordinated manner. Therefore, strategic annexation is in the near-term interests of the City before these areas develop. This is particularly important as State law requires concurrence of a certain percentage of residents in order to annex. Therefore, more residents may limit the likelihood of annexation.

State law requires the concurrence of property owners that are the subject of annexation, with the exception of when there are no resident property owners nor registered voters residing in the area, which then requires approval of the Parish. A simple majority of resident owners and registered voters and 25 percent in value of the subject property is required to extend the corporate limits by petition and ordinance. Comparatively, by petition and election, one-third in number and value of the owners of land lying contiguous and adjacent to the corporate limits must concur with annexation. It follows then, that the City's annexation strategy should identify and seek to annex land in the following order:

1. Land for which there are no resident property owners or registered voters residing in the subject area, provided there is concurrence on behalf of the Parish.<sup>11</sup> As there is State law requiring rights, immunities, and privileges of those being annexed comparable to those within the municipality, Zachary may be in a better position to provide such accommodations than the Parish. For this reason, the Parish may be inclined to concur.
2. Annexation to enlarge the boundaries of the City by petition and ordinance; and
3. Annexation to extend the corporate limits of land lying contiguous and adjacent to the City by petition and election.

In either of the latter two instances, the City must offer advantages for annexation of land within Parish jurisdiction, e.g. fire insurance rates.

The City should implement a proactive annexation program, which would enable the ability to determine the appropriateness and timing of development, coordinate concurrent provision of adequate facilities and services, and decide the preferred pattern and character of development. The priorities should be as follows:

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<sup>11</sup> "No ordinance annexing vacant property across parish boundaries shall be valid unless it has first been approved by the parish governing authority of the area to be annexed." RS 33:172A(c)

1. Areas within the “preferred growth areas.”
2. “Enclave” areas that are “at least ninety percent of the boundary of the area to be annexed in common to the boundary of the municipality.”<sup>12</sup>
3. Areas immediately adjacent to or for which access is taken from a major highway corridor or Parish roadway, particularly including:
  - LA 19 to the south and, to a lesser extent, north;
  - On the west side of LA 964 stretching south from the City limits to the zone of influence;
  - LA 67 to the south and, to a lesser extent, north;
  - LA 64 to the west to the zone of influence; and
  - Along US-61 leading to the new Mississippi River crossing near St. Francisville.
4. Prime development areas that are outside of the flood prone areas and within one-quarter to one-half mile of an improved State or Parish roadway.
5. All remaining areas of the proposed zone of influence, coinciding with the boundaries of the Zachary School District.

#### Goals

- ▶ Expansion of the corporate limits concurrent with the provision of infrastructure
- ▶ Fiscally responsible provision of infrastructure and public services
- ▶ Adherence to a responsible policy for growth management
- ▶ Preservation of a freestanding community state
- ▶ Deliberate annexation to secure the City's long-term planning interests

#### Recommendations

1. Conduct studies periodically to identify and monitor prime growth areas within the zone of influence, particularly adjacent to major transportation corridors where the City's land use management capabilities are most needed. These studies should consider anticipated infrastructure improvements that may create an opportunity or demand for urban development, such as the new Mississippi River crossing and the proposed diversion canal.
2. Conduct an annexation study to identify properties within the zone of influence that fulfill the criteria stated above. Subsequently, prepare an annexation plan to identify specific properties for incorporation based on research as to the available utilities and infrastructure and existing land use in the area. It should include a service plan identifying the requisite provision of utility infrastructure, as well as public services, i.e. fire and police protection, emergency medical services, waste collection, etc. The analysis must also address the impacts and necessary improvements for parks and recreation areas, library, schools, and administrative office space and staffing.
3. In accordance with State law concerning the annexation of vacant land contiguous to the City limits, adopt a written resolution expressing the intent to annex these described lands, with a certified copy of the resolution submitted to the Parish Council. Such statement of intent may be for the purpose of establishing “operating agreements to govern annexation procedures and/or other matters related to growth management issues between and among”<sup>13</sup> the City and Parish.
4. Proceed with annexation procedures for contiguous areas that have “at least ninety percent of the boundary of the area to be annexed in common to the boundary of the municipality.”<sup>14</sup> These

<sup>12</sup> LA Revised Statutes 33:172(C)

<sup>13</sup> LA Revised Statutes 33:172(f)(3)(a)

<sup>14</sup> LA Revised Statutes 33:172(C)

“enclave” areas are naturally subject to annexation for the purpose of developing in a logical, contiguous manner.

5. As a condition of annexation, request a written waiver of the State-required, six-month waiting period to allow a zoning designation different than that assigned by the City-Parish Planning Commission.<sup>15</sup> Alternatively, six months after the annexation of land or, in the case of a property owner application for rezoning within the minimum six-month period after annexation, amend the zoning classification to the Agriculture & Forestry (AF) district or consistent with the Future Land Use and Growth Plan.
6. Strengthen the City’s nonconforming regulations to establish ordinance provisions applying to the discontinuance of pre-existing uses given certain criteria and standards. This is to enable the City to eliminate nuisance-bearing uses that exist prior to annexation.
7. Amend the Future Land Use and Growth Plan to determine the appropriate designation concurrent with any changes to the growth boundaries or areas subject to annexation.

### Achieving an Efficient Development Form

Growing smart means to grow in a contiguous pattern with provision for infill development on vacant or underutilized parcels, as well as redevelopment of obsolete uses and buildings. The purpose of a compact development pattern is to grow in a logical and efficient manner, which helps to combat the impacts of sprawl. While the City itself has not experienced a significant amount of sprawl, there are signs of this in the adjacent areas (see *Map 3.1, Peripheral Development*) and a number of development inquiries in the peripheral areas that, if not well managed, would establish this pattern. For this reason, it is timely and important for the community to establish its growth and development policies as a means to realize a fiscally responsible and well-managed pattern of future development.








Haphazard growth is highly inefficient. Costs associated with the provision of both capital and social infrastructure are much higher than they are for more contiguous patterns of development. This is particularly relevant when the community is confronted by limited resources and increasing demands for services. In addition to its fiscal consequences, sprawl often degrades environmental resources by prematurely committing rural areas to the impacts of urban development. Phased and orderly growth mitigates this situation by comprehensively addressing the impacts of development on the natural systems. Piecemeal and sporadic development is detrimental to any type of comprehensive framework.

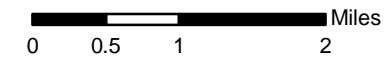
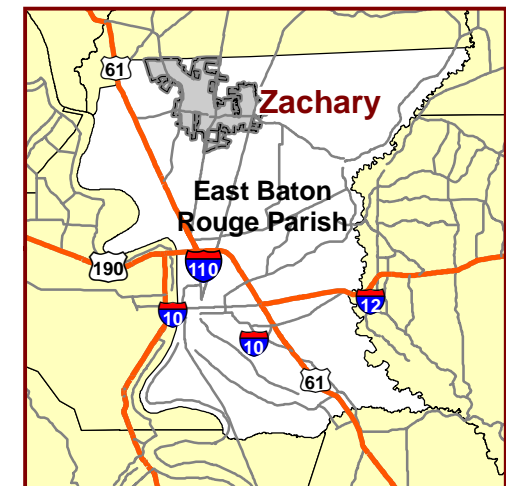
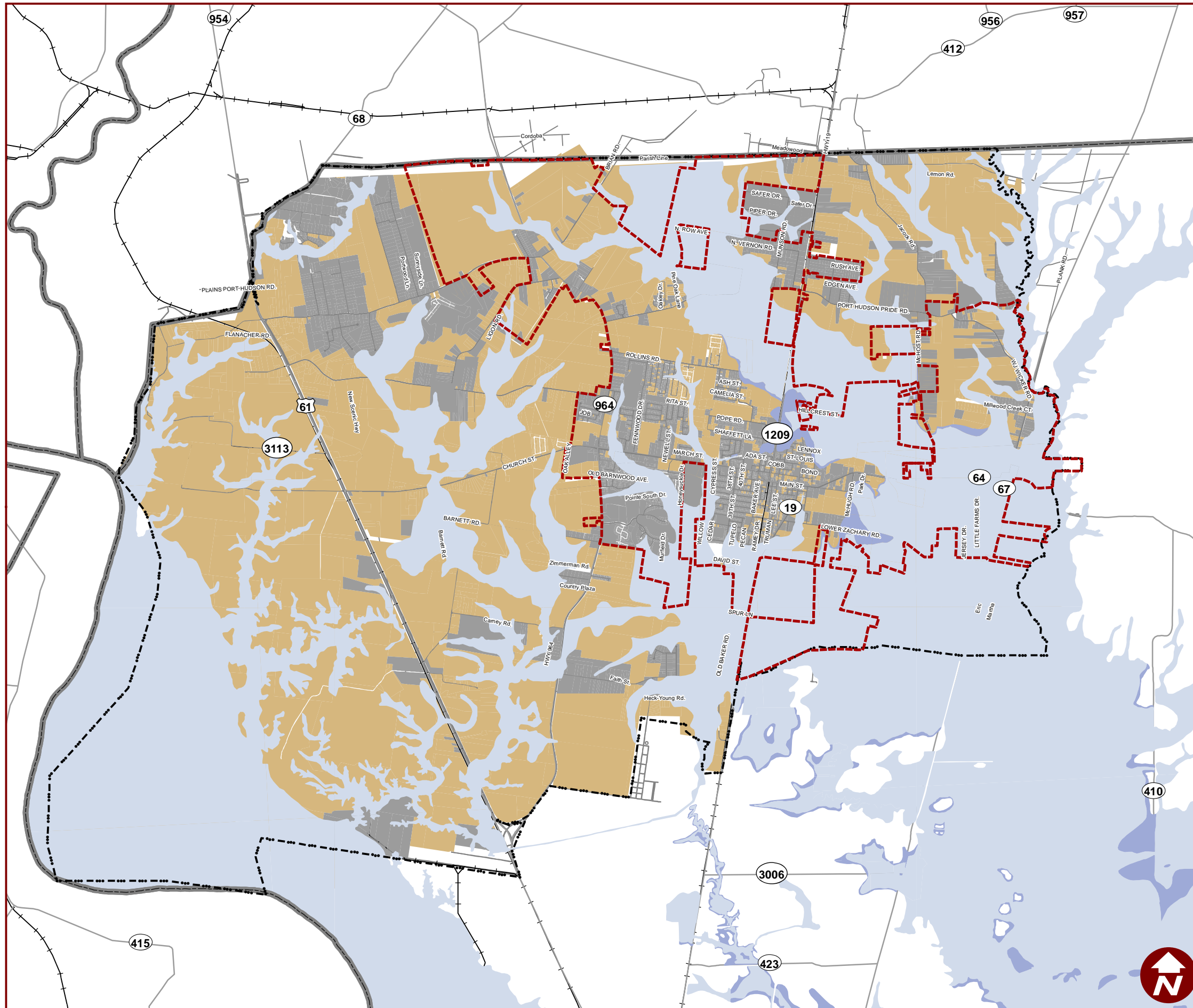
As illustrated by **Map 3.5, Developable Areas**, there are large expanses of developable land both within and adjacent to the City limits. Some of these areas are more serviceable than others, meaning there are utilities (water, gas, and wastewater) and services (police and fire protection) that are readily available and which may be fiscally prudent to provide. In these instances, where there are sufficient capacities, utilities may be extended and services may be offered in a timely and efficient manner. The areas that are feasible to provide facilities and services are those that are the “preferred development areas.” In other cases, where there are development constraints (e.g. land within the floodplain, utilities are unavailable, and/or there is insufficient capacity to serve new development), there must be policies as to the timing and availability of adequate facilities and services. These areas are “reserved” for future growth to occur when there are facilities and services available or other prudent agreements are made and accepted by the City.

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<sup>15</sup> LA Revised Statutes 33:4725.1, Zoning of annexed property

# Map 3.5 Developable Areas

-  Developable Area
-  Developed Area
-  100-Year Floodplain
-  500-Year Floodplain
-  Corporate Limits
-  Proposed Zone of Influence
-  East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary




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Exhibited by **Map 3.6, Utility Services Areas**, are the effective service areas of the City's water and gas distribution lines and wastewater collection lines. For general planning purposes, there is a one-quarter mile buffer adjacent to each line to reflect its service reach. This map illustrates the areas for which the City already has available infrastructure to serve new development, provided there is sufficient line and treatment capacity available. Generally, there are water, gas, and wastewater lines within the main body of the City. Water lines extending to the east, gas lines extend to the west, and both water and gas lines extend to the southwest. Some of the service areas are within the current City limits, whereas others encompass unincorporated areas of the proposed zone of influence.

Based upon the availability of utility infrastructure, there is a logical sequencing of future development with priorities in descending order based on:

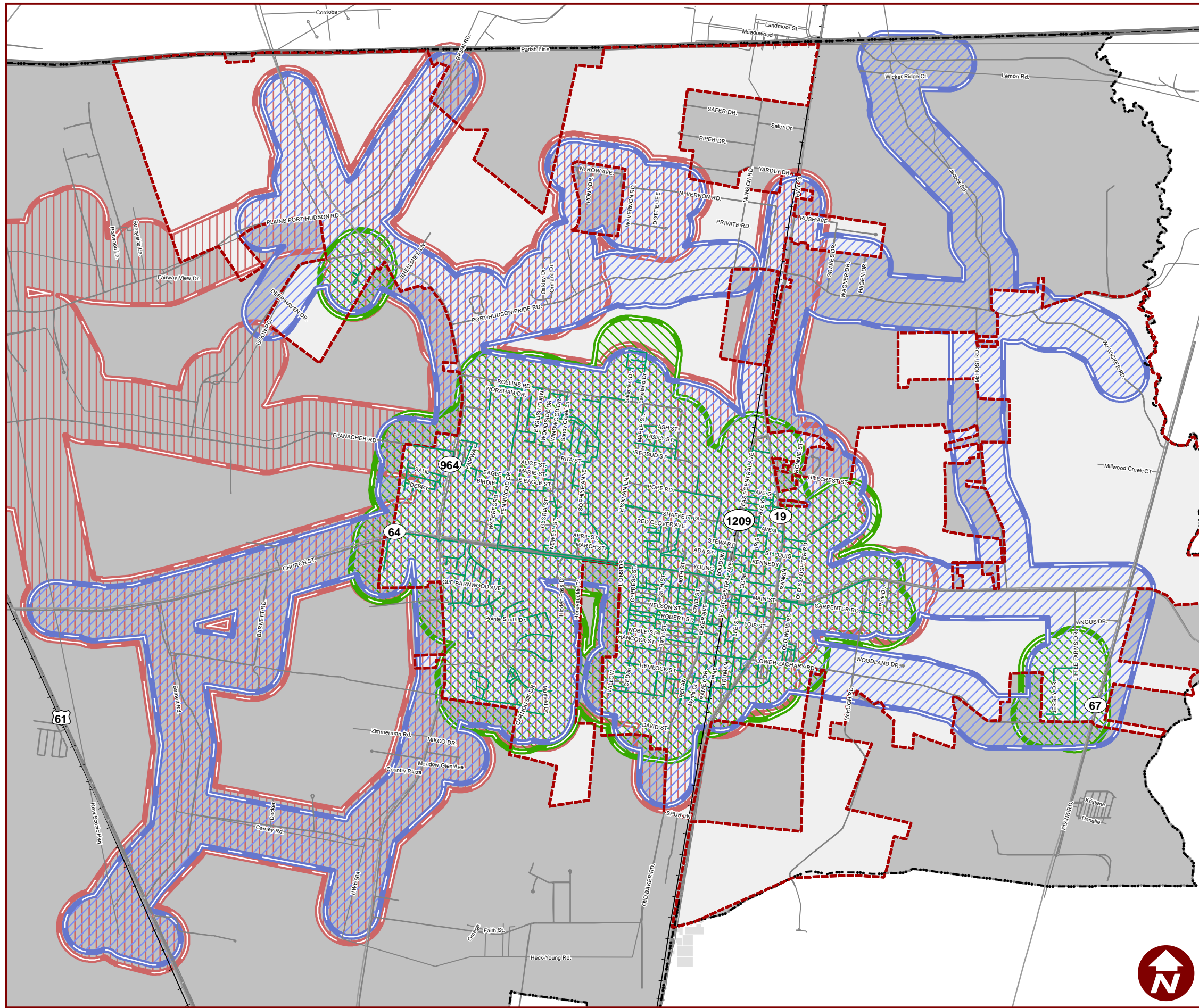
1. Areas that are within the current City limits where:
  - there is water, wastewater, and gas infrastructure available; or
  - there is water and gas infrastructure available, but the areas are not within the reach of the current wastewater infrastructure, thereby requiring extension.
2. Areas that are outside of the current City limits and within the proposed zone of influence where:
  - a. there is water and gas infrastructure available; or
  - b. there is water or gas infrastructure available; or
  - c. there is water or gas available, but the area is constrained by the extents of the 100-year floodplain.

Given the above considerations as to the availability of utilities and whether the areas are within the current City limits or the proposed zone of influence, the timing of proposed future development is reflected in **Map 3.7, Growth Sequencing Plan**. This map reflects five phases of future development, which correspond with the above considerations. These are further organized to include the following:








- ◆ The *Preferred Growth Area* includes 1(a), 1(b), and 2(a) above, which includes those areas within the City limits or immediately adjacent to the City limits (within the proposed zone of influence) where there are utilities (water, gas, and some wastewater) available (or readily available). The priorities as to the timing of development are as listed above.
- ◆ The *Reserved Growth Area* includes 2(b) and 2(c) above. These areas have limited availability of water and gas infrastructure, do not have wastewater service, and, in the case of 2(c), are constrained by the 100-year floodplain. These areas are reserved until which time as adequate infrastructure and services are made available.

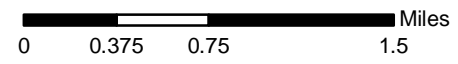
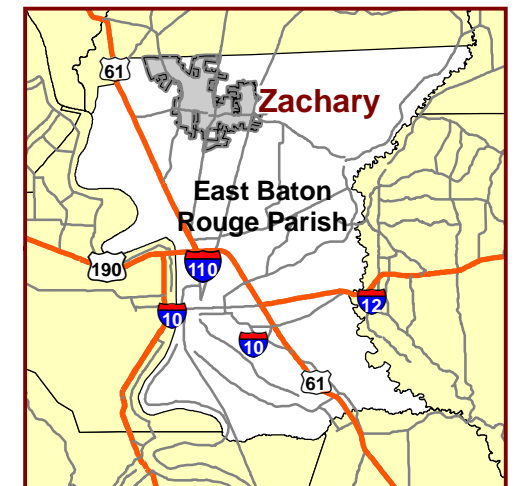
In some instances, there may be development requests for which facilities and infrastructure are proposed to be extended without City participation. Irrespective of the means of providing service, there remain long-term implications for the City and its pattern of growth. Therefore, if development is proposed within the secondary or tertiary portions of the preferred growth area or in the reserved growth area, the City may consider the following principles to guide their decisions:



1. The decision to provide municipal services will include, among others, the location of the subject development relative to:
  - existing development; and
  - the area of existing utility services; and
  - the City limits.
2. Capital infrastructure will be directed to support a logical sequencing of development. Generally, growth will be encouraged in the following order of priority:



# Map 3.6 Utility Service Areas

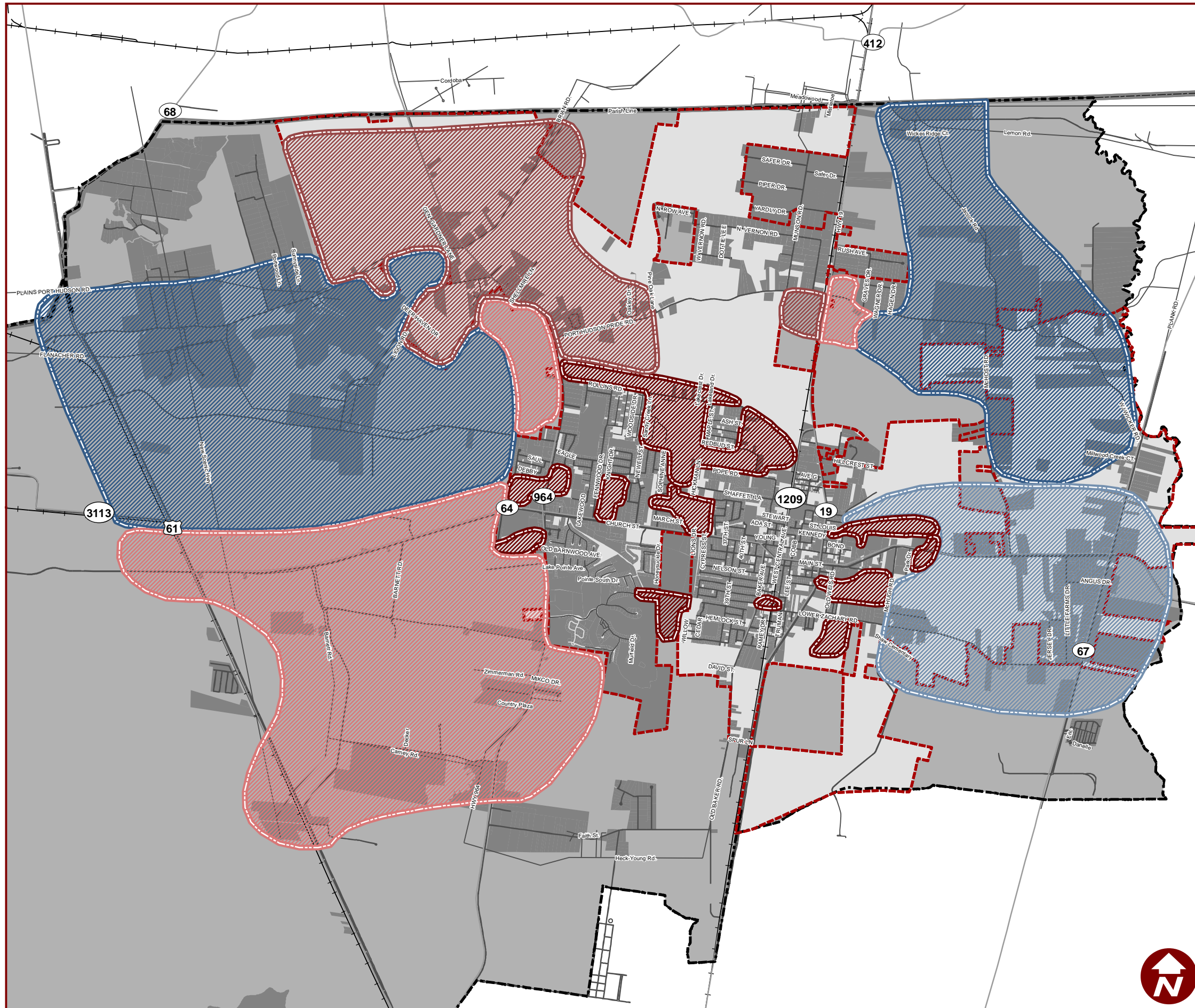
-  Sewer\_Pipe
-  Water Coverage
-  Sewer Coverage
-  Gas Coverage
-  East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary
-  Corporate Limits
-  Proposed Zone of Influence




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# Map 3.7 Growth Sequencing Plan



### Preferred Growth Areas

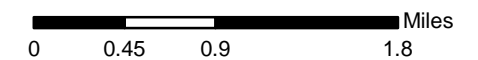
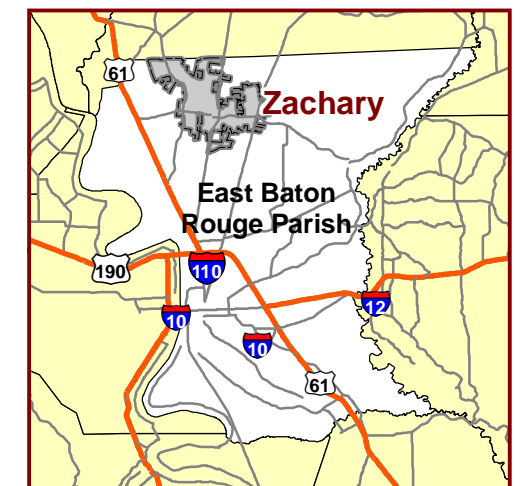
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

### Reserved Growth Areas

- Primary
- Secondary

### Boundaries & Infrastructure

- Corporate Limits
- Proposed Zone of Influence
- East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary
- Developed Area



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- areas with existing infrastructure and service capacity;
  - areas that can readily and efficiently be served with adequate infrastructure and for which adequate capacity exists or is scheduled in the capital improvement program;
  - areas that may be feasible to extend facilities and services via development agreements and provide a net fiscal benefit to the City; and
  - areas that are less efficient to serve with public infrastructure and municipal services.
3. Properties within the *Preferred Growth Area* shall first be annexed into the City limits before development occurs and facilities and services are provided.
  4. Properties within the *Reserved Growth Area* should be considered for annexation provided:
    - they remain within the reserved growth area; and
    - they are zoned Agriculture & Forestry (AF) until which time as they may be feasible for development.
  5. The *Reserved Growth Area* will have rural levels of services. Development that exceeds a rural level of service is not permitted.
  6. Development will strictly adhere to:
    - the policies of this plan, as may be amended from time to time; and
    - the requirements and standards of the City's land development regulations.
  7. Urban infrastructure improvements and public services will be extended first to the primary *Preferred Growth Area* and subsequently to the secondary and tertiary areas. They shall not be extended to serve the *Reserved Growth Areas* without a plan amendment to re-designate the area, as applicable and appropriate, to a preferred area.
  8. The City will seek to employ best management practices for the purposes of conservation as a means to maximize the efficient use of its resources.
  9. Development may occur within the *Reserved Growth Area* provided it is clustered and does not exceed the densities set forth by this General Plan.
  10. Sensitive resources including floodplains, wetlands, riparian areas along stream channels, hillsides, and valued view sheds will be protected and preserved within all areas.

In coordination with the above utility extension policies and annexation priority areas, it is advised to proceed with the annexation of the proposed zone of influence. The City is interested in annexing this area (see *Map 3.2, Proposed Zone of Influence*) to protect its best long-term interests, as well as those of the Zachary School District. This area generally extends west to the Mississippi River encompassing the S.R. 61 corridor. It largely aligns with the one and one-half mile zone of influence to the south, east, and northeast. The East Baton Rouge-East Feliciana Parish boundary establishes the northern boundary. This plan advocates the annexation of this area provided:

1. Annexation occurs in compliance with the policies of this plan.
2. The long-term pattern of growth is managed in a fiscally responsible manner, meaning that annexation will provide a net fiscal benefit to the City or there is a determination by the City Council that annexation is warranted and prudent for strategic reasons.
3. To maximize the use and efficiency of existing City infrastructure, growth will be directed toward parcels where there is – or may be – readily available utilities.
4. Future growth is coordinated with the provision of municipal infrastructure and public service investments such that the pattern and timing of development will be sustainable for the City over the long term, both fiscally and from a service capacity standpoint.
5. The City will consider the use of fiscal impact analyses to assess the projected costs of providing services and weigh them against the anticipated revenues of each annexation proposal, whether initiated by the City or a property owner. Fiscal impacts will be assessed on a multi-year timeframe,



recognizing that first-year costs may exceed revenues because of up-front service extension costs and capital expenditures, as well as the lag time before initial collection of taxes and fees.

6. Regulatory provisions are in place prior to or concurrent with annexation to effectively control the timing of development, the requisite extension of public facilities, and the quality character of development.

#### Goals

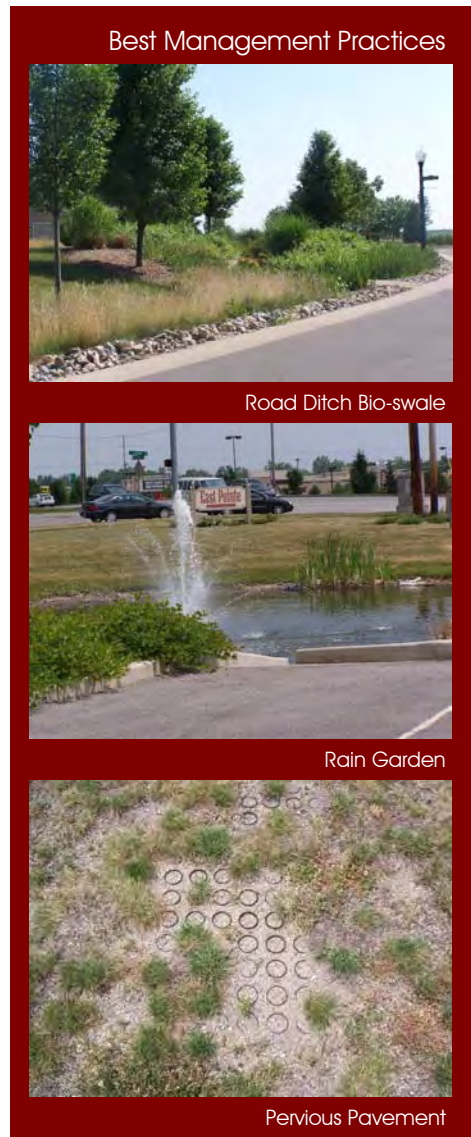
- ▶ Promotion of responsible, well-managed development via adopted policies and regulations
- ▶ A progressive, outward pattern of development sequenced in accordance with infrastructure availability
- ▶ Innovative land development techniques to protect sensitive areas
- ▶ Flexible development options allowing streamlined development
- ▶ Allowances and incentives for infill development and redevelopment

#### Recommendations

1. Conduct necessary studies concerning available facilities and capacities and the requirements for provision of services to clearly define the boundaries of the *Preferred Growth Areas*. The areas reflected in *Map 3.7, Growth Sequencing Plan*, are generalized based on their proximity to water, gas, and wastewater services.
2. Establish decision criteria to guide requested deviations of the *Preferred Growth Areas* boundaries, including, among others:
  - the boundaries may be altered if there is a showing of a net fiscal benefit to the City, meaning sufficient revenue to offset the required expenditures for extending infrastructure and municipal services;
  - The boundaries may be amended if there is an equivalent area of contraction; and
  - All required public infrastructure facilities will be installed at the expense of private development, and there is a showing that the infrastructure fulfills the City's adequate facility requirements.
  - Zachary may benefit from annexing adjacent lands beyond existing city limits, in the near future, for purposes of economic development and to ensure quality development in the school district service area.
3. Consider annexation petitions of property owners within the *Preferred Growth Areas*, with due regard as to their designation as primary, secondary, and tertiary areas.
4. Amend the land development regulations to incorporate a streamlined approval process for compliant infill and redevelopment applications. Paramount to an expedited review process is clearly written standards to ensure compatibility with the context of the surrounding neighborhood environs.
5. Create incentives such as permit streamlining, fee waivers or deferral, and infrastructure cost-sharing for builders and organizations that provide infill construction on vacant parcels in a manner that complements the surrounding neighborhood.
6. Establish design guidelines that address building materials, roof pitch, façade treatment, appurtenances, proportional dimensions, and other elements to ensure that new infill and rehabilitated units maintain the neighborhood character.
7. Designate the areas adjacent to the floodplain as Suburban Residential, which allows greater variability as to the provision of open space and management of stormwater by natural means. The

preferred method of stormwater management is to retain the area of floodplain as open space and to de-channelize the stream.

8. Incorporate provisions into the City’s floodplain standards restricting fill within a special flood hazard area unless the effect on water storage and water quality is fully mitigated with compensatory storage.
9. Amend the subdivision regulations requiring the following design hierarchy of drainage plans:
  - minimize impervious surfaces;
  - attenuate flows by use of open, vegetated swales and natural depressions in common areas, and preserve existing natural stream channels;
  - infiltrate runoff on-site;
  - provide stormwater retention structures;
  - provide stormwater detention structures;
  - provide velocity dissipation structures or channel design; and
  - construct storm sewers.
10. To achieve the recommendation for “low impact development” outlined in *Chapter 2, Community Character & Housing*, incorporate improved stormwater standards into the subdivision regulations, as follows:
  - Avoidance: Cluster and planned development; protective measures for floodplains, drainageways, and wetland resource protection; and positive surface drainage are avoidance techniques. Conventional residential subdivisions that do not use cluster or planned options should contribute to regional stormwater facilities.
  - Minimization: Minimizing the impacts of connected impervious surfaces may be accomplished by water gardens, rain barrels or cisterns, pervious pavement, vegetated swales (bioswales), swale blocks, and green roofs.
  - Mitigation: Mitigation is required prior to discharging stormwater into a stream or watercourse, the extent of which relies on the degree of avoidance and mitigation techniques used. Best management practices (BMPs) include: retention with vegetative uptake, wet basins, wetland basins, and dry basins.



### Upgrading Public Safety Services

New development will create an increased demand for public safety services. To keep pace, the City must commit to gradual expansion of its Police and Fire Departments and invest in new facilities, equipment, and staffing to ensure adequate service capabilities, responsiveness, and geographic coverage in coming years. Comparisons against national benchmarks confirm ongoing staffing needs for both police and fire services.

#### Police Services

The Police Department operates out of its headquarters located at 4510 Main Street. The facility consists of administrative offices for the Chief, Deputy Chief, and detectives; a property/evidence room; two holding cells; a reception/secretarial area; and the court room. The Department's training officer shares space in the evidence room, for which future space is needed to create a usable classroom setting for officer training activities. Upon relocation of the Zachary School Board to their new facility, the current City Hall annex could offer suitable space for the Municipal Court. This would, in turn, free up much needed space in the police headquarters that may be used for a training classroom, juvenile office, and other offices and on-site storage.

The Department currently has 30 commissioned, full-time officers, 10 dispatchers, and 20 reserve officers. There are two secretaries, one of whom is a commissioned officer and the other a records clerk. The service area is now the City limits, although there is a future potential for a mutual response agreement for the Zachary officers to respond to incidents throughout the northern part of the Parish. As the community continues to grow, the Department sees the need for officers devoted to juveniles, crimes against the elderly, and identity theft, which would necessitate additional office and ancillary space. Other needs of the Department include housing for its K-9 unit, a City-owned and managed shooting range (versus using the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office range), and a west side substation. With the main station located on the east side of the railroad tracks, a new substation would reduce response times and provide added space for increased staffing.

The Department will need to continually upgrade its vehicle fleet, particularly equipping each of its vehicles with laptop computers, radars, and cameras. There is one equipped vehicle per shift being used at this time. A special response unit may also be needed to adequately respond to special instances of crime in the City.

Table 3.1, Police Officer Staffing Needs

Year	Population	Officers per 1,000 persons	Officers	Additional Officers Needed
2000	11,275	2.4	27	--
2005	12,210		29	--
2010	15,023		36	6
2015	17,228		41	11
2020	19,433		47	17
2025	21,638		52	22
2030	23,843		57	27

Source: Crime in the United States, Uniform Crime Reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Kendig Keast Collaborative

A survey conducted by the FBI of cities with a population between 10,000 and 24,999 showed an average of 2.4 full-time law enforcement officers per 1,000 citizens (Crime in the United States 2002, Uniform Crime Reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation). Based on a current population estimate of 13,900 persons, the Zachary Police Department should have 33 full-time law enforcement officers. Therefore, based on the staffing of 30 commissioned officers, the City

presently needs three more officers. To maintain this standard to meet increasing future service demands, the City will need to follow through with the necessary budget resources to hire additional employees concurrent with population growth. As displayed in **Table 3.1, Police Officer Staffing Needs**, the City will need a total of 57 officers to support a 2030 population of 23,843 persons, meaning the Department will need to nearly double (27 additional officers) its current staffing.

Adopted April 5, 2010

Fire Protection Services

The main station for the Zachary Fire/Rescue Department was built in 1994 and it is located at 4525 Main Street, across the street from City Hall and the Police Department. This station is the main station for the department, which houses the administration, fire training, fire suppression, and a Parish-manned Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance. The Department operates a second station located at 2250 East Flonacher Road (Station 82). Per shift, the main station is manned by an Assistant Chief, Captain, and two firefighters, while Station 82 is manned by a Captain and two firefighters.

The Fire Department presently consists of 22 full-time employees, including a Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief, three Assistant Chiefs, six Captains, 10 career firefighter operators, and 20 volunteer firefighters. The department recently created a pilot program for volunteers allowing them to serve a 12- or 24-hour shift, allowing them to have an extra firefighter during the daytime hours or two or three additional firefighters at night. The service area for the Department is the City limits and the outlying areas of the Parish, extending west to the Mississippi River, north to the Parish line, east to the Comite River, south to Irene Road (abutting the Alsen/St. Irma Lee Fire District), south along Plank Road (abutting the Brownsfield Fire Department), and south along LA 19 to the Baker Fire Department. The area outside the City limits will be serviced by the new Fire District No. 1, relieving the City from providing services within an expanded area without requisite funding. The Department has a mutual response agreement with East Baton Rouge Parish, including each of the districts within the Parish.

The Department is equipped with five fire engines, two service units, one Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulance, one grass fire truck, one hose tender, one tanker, a 16-foot rescue boat, one truck for an Assistant Chief, and vehicles for the Chief and Deputy Chief. An identified need is for a ladder truck, which will necessitate additional personnel to operate it. The City continues to evaluate future plans for possible locations of additional stations to the east, north, and northwest part of the City. There is also discussion of and a desire to operate an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance with in-house paramedic firefighters rather than relying on the East Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Medical Service (EMS) to transport and operate this service.

Since 1995, the Department’s emergency call volume has increased from 939 calls to a high of 1,807 calls in 2006. Thus far in 2007, the Department has responded to 1,026 calls, putting it on pace for a similar call volume to that of last year.

The Department has an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 2 within the City and 4 within the outlying areas. ISO bases its rating on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being the best and 10 being considered

Insurance Services Office (ISO) collects information on public fire protection and analyzes the data using a Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS). ISO assigns a Public Protection Classification (PPC) from 1 to 10. Class 1 represents the best public protection and Class 10 indicates less than the minimum recognized protection.

By classifying a community's ability to suppress fires, ISO helps communities evaluate their public fire protection services. The program provides an objective, country-wide standard that helps fire departments in planning and budgeting for facilities, equipment, and training. And by securing lower fire insurance premiums for communities with better public protection, the PPC program provides incentives and rewards for communities that choose to improve their firefighting services.

Factor	Percentage
Water supply	40%
Equipment	26%
Personnel	15%
Alarm and dispatch	10%
Training	9%



unprotected. To receive this rating, the Fire Department is evaluated on the quality of fire equipment and personnel, water availability, and proper communications, among other specific criteria. There is concern with the formation of Fire District No. 1 that the fire insurance rating of residents within the outlying

areas will increase from the City's ISO rating of 4 to a rating possibly as high as a 10. If this occurs, it is likely that there will be increased pressure for the City to annex these areas to seize a lower insurance rating.

Table 3.2, Fire Department Staffing Needs

Year	Population	Firefighters per 1,000 persons	Firefighters	Additional Career Firefighters Needed	Additional Volunteer Firefighters Needed <sup>1</sup>
2000	11,275	1.6	18	--	--
2005	12,210		20	--	--
2010	15,023		24	2	2
2015	17,228		28	6	5
2020	19,433		31	9	8
2025	21,638		35	13	11
2030	23,843		38	16	15

<sup>1</sup> Assumes an equal proportion to the current ratio of career to volunteer firefighters  
 Source: National Fire Protection Association (NFPA); Kendig Keast Collaborative

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) publishes data on career and volunteer firefighters across the nation. NFPA conducted a survey of fire departments for U.S. fire experience. The survey includes data pertaining to a ratio of career

firefighters per 1,000 inhabitants. These rates are based on data reported by the NFPA and do not reflect recommended rates or a defined fire protection standard. However, they do provide information for comparisons with fire departments in similar sized communities. According to the survey of fire departments protecting a population of 25,000 and 49,999 residents, which is within the range of estimated population within the Department's service area, the median ratio of career fire fighters (those who work 52 to 60 hours per week) per 1,000 people was 1.60. Based on an estimated current population of 13,900 persons, Zachary should have 22 career firefighters, which is consistent with their current staffing. As displayed in **Table 3.2, Fire Department Staffing Needs**, a population of 23,843 in 2030 will require a total of 38 firefighters, equating to 16 additional career and 15 additional volunteer firefighters. This assumes a consistent proportion of career to volunteer firefighters to that of today. It is important to note, however, that the rates may differ due to variations in local circumstances and fire protection policies.

Goals

- ▶ Reliable, cost-effective public safety services that assure the security of residents and businesses
- ▶ Provision of adequate space, equipment, training, and funding to sustain quality safety services
- ▶ Increased staffing commensurate with greater service demands and service areas
- ▶ Expanded range of services and specialties to fulfill the public safety mission
- ▶ New stations and sub-stations to improve response times and ISO ratings

Recommendations

1. Continue a gradual, phased expansion of Zachary Police Department and Fire Department staffing in a way that is affordable to the City, but also is responsive to any shorter-term crime, public safety, and property protection concerns.

2. Anticipate and be prepared to address any Police Department facility and/or equipment needs that are necessitated by increased staffing. The department's existing space is becoming increasingly constrained, which may be improved by expanding to the City Hall annex that is being vacated by the Zachary School Board. Current needs identified include: training classroom; officers and offices for specialty services such as juveniles, crimes against the elderly, and identity theft; City-owned shooting range; a west side substation; and fully equipped units with radar, cameras, and mobile computers.
3. Periodically monitor future needs for additional fire station sites or upgrades to existing stations in order to sustain and improve levels of service, especially as development continues and land use patterns shift over time. The Department has identified the following needs: ladder truck and associated personnel, Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance and in-house paramedic firefighters, and any future stations and associated staffing and equipment.
4. Explore the technical requirements and potential cost of incorporating additional technology tools into fire and police practices (e.g., having access to City mapping information, via on board laptops, while en route to a fire or crime incident to view the layout and conditions of the subject property and surrounding properties, as well as fire hydrant locations and pressure in the area).
5. Continue to pursue improvement of the City's Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings within and outside of the City. Lowering the ISO rating results in reduced insurance rates in addition to the benefits of improved response and, thus, the protection of life and property. Consideration should be given to capital projects that help to improve the ratings, including increased fire flows, looped water systems, new hydrants, and a generally improved water supply.
6. Periodically conduct a utility impact and rate study to determine the requisite fees to fully offset the assignable costs associated with providing municipal facilities and services across an expanded service area. In the case of fire protection services within areas outside of the City limits, whether within or outside of the planned Fire District No. 1, establish a rate structure that fairly compensates the City for provision of these services and the associated costs for maintaining an ISO 4 rating.

### Community Form: State and Scale

Zachary is a freestanding community by way of its separation from other communities and the surrounding rural character. It has a naturally identifiable edge that forms an identity of the community. This is quite different from a composite community which occurs when communities grow together no clear edges and a blurred individual identity.

Zachary's freestanding status is threatened by development occurring around the edges of the City limits. There are now several subdivisions that have sprung up around the fringes of the community. This pattern will eventually blur the

The current freestanding form (top illustration) of Zachary is at risk of blending with the exurban areas of Baton Rouge to become a composite community (bottom illustration) without distinctiveness between communities. Land use and growth policy decisions must be established to defend the community's character and identity.



edge of Zachary leaving only a welcome sign to distinguish it from the larger Baton Rouge area. Without proactive planning to avoid such inevitable occurrence, the community's identity will further erode over time.

Creating a permanent identifiable edge through clearly defined gateway improvements, preservation of permanent open space, and strict protection of the rural character will collectively form an "edge," thereby giving Zachary form and definition. Sporadic development stretching outside of the City limits blurs the entrance and sense of arrival into the community. Controlling both the pattern and type of development in these areas will help to form a positive first impression and signify a formal entrance into the community.

While the City does not have control over the land use and growth policies of the Parish, it has the discretion of forming its own definitive boundary, thereby allowing it to maintain a freestanding community form. Doing so will require the near-term policy and regulatory decisions advocated by this plan to define the limits of urban growth.

## Chapter Four

## Thoroughfares & Public Transit

**A**lthough traveling by car is the predominant form of mobility in Zachary today, planning for the future must account for an interconnected system of streets, sidewalks, and bikeways and pathways with both near- and long-term planning to accommodate high capacity transit. Incremental development of the system in accordance with a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation plan will lead to efficient movement of people and goods within Zachary and throughout the metropolitan area.

The focus of this chapter is five-fold, addressing:

1. **Thoroughfare development.** Preservation of rights-of-way concurrent with development is a priority to ensure an adequate street network. This includes development both within the City, as well as within the zone of influence. It also includes the development of “complete streets” meaning their suitability for all modes of transportation – walking, bicycling, transit, and vehicular movement.
2. **Traffic management.** In order to provide for an efficient movement of vehicles, the traffic carrying capacities of area roadways must be preserved. This relates to the use of land adjacent to the City’s corridors, as well as their means of access. It also relates to the design of roadways.
3. **Pedestrian mobility.** There must be an increased emphasis on pedestrian improvements to safeguard the community’s small-town feel and quality of life. This includes sidewalks along area roadways, safe and accessible crossings, and provisions for on-street bike lanes and off-street trails and pathways.
4. **Corridor appearance.** The community’s corridors offer an opportunity to establish a positive first impression of Zachary. The design and appearance of the roadway, as well as the properties that abut it, are of essential importance to enhance community aesthetics and contribute to a quality visual environment.
5. **High capacity transit.** As the community continues to grow and the need for alternative transportation increases, provisions must be made for expansion of public transit. This may involve expanded bus routes or may potentially include a fixed investment.

A current challenge in Zachary is its limited thoroughfare network. Although this is common for small, growing communities, the adequacy of the transportation system is essential for the community to be economically healthy and sustainable. Presently, for instance, the crossroads of LA 19 and LA 64 are becoming increasingly problematic as development occurs and traffic volumes increase. As a result, the level of service is deteriorating and travelers are encountering congested conditions or choosing alternative routes. In some areas, this has caused “cut-through” traffic, thereby increasing traffic volumes on local streets that are not designed for it. Among other options, such as Transportation System Management (TSM) measures, resolution may warrant reconfiguration of existing streets and traffic flows coupled with expansion of the road network. These and other mobility solutions are presented in this chapter.





Bicycling and walking are vital components of the transportation system. However, due to noncontiguous development, segregating land uses, and rural, “non-curb” street sections, the existing pedestrian system is discontinuous and largely dysfunctional. Provisions for improving the pedestrian infrastructure are outlined in this chapter. Additionally, the relationship between use patterns and walkability is explored, with corresponding recommendations.

This chapter is coordinated with each of the other elements of this plan. For instance, the transportation system has a strong influence on the pattern and timing of development and, thus, warrants coordination with the land use and growth policies. In turn, the future land use plan and policies outlined in *Chapter 2, Community Character & Housing*, help determine the necessary infrastructure to meet the future mobility needs. The transportation system is vital to the movement of goods, thereby having direct influence on the community’s economic development (see *Chapter 7, Economic Development*). Businesses seeking to locate or expand are interested in the access to and within the community and, in the case of a major industry, proximity to the regional and state-wide roadway system. Transportation arteries provide opportunities for linear connections via sidewalks and trails, which complement the parks and recreation system (see *Chapter 6, Parks, Recreation, & Open Space*). The location, design, and capacity of roadways also determine the type and character of development. At this early stage of its development, Zachary has an opportunity to establish a highly functional street system that contributes to its small-town character and quality of life.

## Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to plan for the long-range transportation needs of the community. This involves the preservation of rights-of-way for thoroughfare system development, as well as coordinating improvements and initiatives for all other modes of transportation. This chapter addresses the means for developing an adequate street network to collect, distribute, and convey traffic within and through the community, while also providing for development of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, public transportation, and systems for goods movement.

## Issues and Opportunities

This chapter focuses on the issues that must be addressed for the community to achieve its vision for the future transportation system. The origination of these issues was through the input of community residents during the early stages of the plan development process. These comments were supplemented by the observations and professional research of City staff and the consultants.

## Thoroughfare Development

The basic transportation system is formed by a network of streets, each having a different functional role and designed traffic carrying capacity. Each street segment contributes to the interconnectivity of the network. Without a continuous system, there are unnecessary interruptions that divert traffic movements onto streets that are not designed to carry an increased volume, thus becoming congested and unsafe. For a network to operate efficiently, it is essential for there to be a hierarchical system including highways (such as LA 19, LA 64, and LA 964), arterial streets (like Lower Zachary Road and Pride-Port Hudson Road), collector roadways (including, among others, 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Fennwood Drive), and local residential streets. Each link in the system is intended to function according to its design capacity, in effect, distributing traffic from the lowest (e.g. local streets) to the highest (arterial streets and highways)

Adopted April 5, 2010

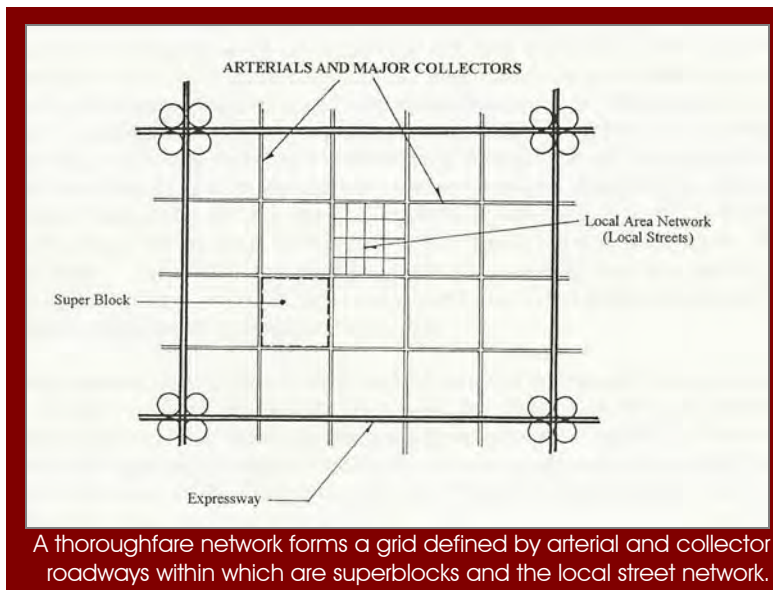
functional classification. Connectivity is essential for providing an efficient, safe, and convenient roadway network.

An optimum street network has an arterial street spaced roughly each mile, thereby forming a neighborhood superblock. Within the superblock, collector roadways should be spaced at one-half mile intervals in each direction. Since development has happened incrementally and without a general plan, the best example of this is Fennwood Drive. Without the guidance of a thoroughfare plan, the street network is typically constructed in a piecemeal fashion resulting in a pattern of discontinuous and disconnected streets. Therefore, a primary purpose of this plan is to

avoid these circumstances in the developing areas of the City and the zone of influence. Subdivision regulations that stipulate design criteria are necessary to accomplish an efficient street network.

The amount of development within and adjacent to the City strongly warrants the development and implementation of a Thoroughfare Plan. The 2006 Major Street Plan set forth in the Parish's Horizon Plan suits the needs of a rural parish. However, it is not sufficient, in and of itself, to meet the long-range needs of the development pattern emerging adjacent to Zachary. The City's Thoroughfare Plan must, therefore, extend to encompass its zone of influence and must be designed to ensure the dedication of adequate rights-of-way concurrent with development. Over time, a complete grid of thoroughfares is needed to provide an efficient local system that may be integrated into the larger metropolitan transportation plan.

At the time of land subdivision, the City must ensure conformance with the Thoroughfare Plan and compliance of the street and lot layout consistent with the subdivision design standards. The subdivision regulations must, therefore, have definitive rules relating to street continuity, rights-of-way and pavement cross sections, intersections and street offsets, lot access, medians and entranceways, traffic calming, and provisions regarding cul-de-sacs and alleys, among others. It is imperative for each subdivision to provide connection to the adjacent land as a means for continuing development of the street pattern established by the Thoroughfare Plan. Whether the development is small or large or constructed in one or more phases, it must adequately tie into to the planned roadway network.



#### GOALS

- ▶ Preservation of rights-of-way in advance of ensuing development
- ▶ Appropriate functional classification of the street system to achieve adequate mobility
- ▶ Maximized continuity of the roadway network to form an interconnected system of streets
- ▶ Improved traffic distribution within and between neighborhoods
- ▶ Adequate provision of transportation infrastructure concurrent with development/redevelopment

### Recommendations

1. Adopt the Thoroughfare Plan (see *Map 4.1, Thoroughfare Plan*) and the following policies by ordinance, thereby mandating conformance.
2. Amend the subdivision regulations to incorporate the recommended street cross sections and pavement widths for adherence in all developments. Where there are unavoidable or peculiar circumstances that are not brought about by the subdivider, the City may allow an exception provided it is the minimum variation needed to abide by the standards. An impact study may be required to assess the impacts on the surrounding street system – and neighborhoods – and evaluate viable and warranted alternatives.
3. As a complement to the Thoroughfare Plan, the functional classifications are reflected in **Table 4.1, Functional Classification**, coupled with the following policies and design criteria:

Table 4.1, Functional Classification

Criterion	Freeway (Bypass)	Principal Arterial	Minor Arterial	Collector	Local Street
Functional Role	Entirely through traffic movement with no direct access to property.	Mobility is primary; access is secondary. Connects Freeways and other Arterials.	Connects Freeways, Principal Arterials, and lower classification roadways. Access is secondary.	Collects traffic destined for the Arterial network. Connects Arterials to Local Streets. Also land access.	Access is primary. Little through movement.
Roadway Continuity	Inter-city, regional, and interstate	Connects Freeways to lower classification roadways. Connects major activity centers.	Connects Freeways and Principal Arterials to lower classification roadways.	Continuous between Arterials. May extend across Arterials.	Discontinuous. Connects to Collectors.
Roadway Length	Usually more than 5 miles	Usually more than 5 miles	Usually more than 3 miles	Varies from roughly one-half mile to 2 miles	Generally less than 1 mile
Traffic Volumes (VPD = vehicles per day)	40,000+ VPD	20,000 to 60,000 VPD	5,000 to 30,000 VPD	1,000 to 15,000 VPD	100 to 5,000 VPD
Desirable Spacing	5 miles or more	2 miles or more	Generally one-half to 2 miles	Generally one-quarter to one-half mile	Varies with block length (at least 125 feet between)
Posted Speed	55 to 70 mph	40 to 55 mph	30 to 45 mph	30 to 35 mph	20 to 30 mph
Access	Controlled access. Grade separated interchanges and frontage/service roads.	Intersects with Freeways, Arterials, Collectors, and Local Streets. Restricted driveway access.	Intersects with Freeways, Arterials, Collectors, and Local Streets. Restricted driveway access.	Intersects with Arterials and Local Streets. Driveways limited.	Intersects with Collectors and Arterials. Driveways permitted.
On-Street Parking	Prohibited	Restricted	Restricted	Normally permitted	Permitted
Community Relationship	Defines neighborhood boundaries	Defines neighborhood boundaries	Defines and traverses neighborhood boundaries	Internal and traverses neighborhood boundaries	Internal
Through Truck Routes	Yes	Yes	Permitted	No	No
Bikeways	No	Limited	Permitted	Yes	Yes
Sidewalks	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

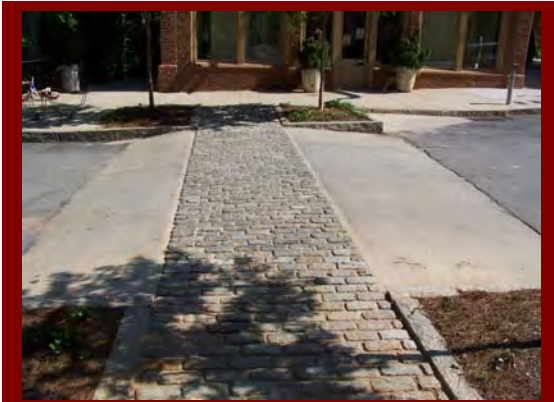
#### a. Arterials

- i. Access of arterials by higher intensity land uses should be limited to the maximum practicable extent by way of cross- and joint-access agreements and marginal access roads.
- ii. Access points should be no less than 120 feet from street intersections.

- iii. A depressed median (for use as a bio-swale to remove silt and pollution from surface runoff) should be included in the cross section of new arterial streets where the abutting property is not yet fully developed. For developed and developing areas, an access study may be prepared to determine its warrant and feasibility.
  - iv. Access points should be aligned with existing and/or planned median breaks and access points across the street.
  - v. Local streets should not access principal arterial roadways. Rather, they should access a collector roadway or a marginal access road so as to minimize the impedance of traffic and maximize the traffic carrying capacity of the arterial street.
  - vi. Residential driveway access should be prohibited from connecting to an arterial street.
  - vii. Collector roadways should maintain a spacing of approximately one-half mile for which the intersection with an arterial street may be signalized.
  - viii. Acceleration and deceleration lanes, as warranted by a traffic impact assessment, should be provided at intersections (such as driveways to major land uses) to facilitate safe turning movements.
  - ix. Parking should not be permitted on arterial streets.
  - x. Signal warrant studies should be periodically conducted to determine the locations of signalized intersections.
  - xi. Pedestrian crossing improvements should be limited to signalized intersections. Such improvements should include crosswalk delineation via reflective paint or pavement texturing, American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements (curb cuts and ramps), pedestrian and bicycle actuated signals, and advance pavement markings and signage. A pedestrian tunnel or bridge may be warranted at high pedestrian crossing locations, particularly at the time of right-of-way acquisition, design, and construction of new arterials.
  - xii. An eight-foot sidewalk or trail section should be incorporated on one side of all arterial streets.
- b. Collector and Local Streets
- i. Collector streets should be spaced at roughly one-half mile intervals. In certain instances, minor collectors may be warranted for spacing at one-quarter mile intervals.
  - ii. Collector streets should cross bayous and other barriers to provide for network continuity.
  - iii. Collector roadways should not be designated as truck routes unless special precautions are taken with respect to design (curb return radii, minimum tangent lengths between reverse curves, construction specifications, etc.) and the abutting land use.
  - iv. Driveways should not access collector streets. Rather, they should access local streets which then intersect collector streets.
  - v. Collectors should extend continuously between arterial streets.







Speed tables may be used effectively to "calm" traffic while also serving as an amenity.

vi. Traffic calming improvements may be used to slow traffic along continuous sections of collector roadways, as well as in locations around and adjacent to schools, parks, and public open spaces and buildings.

4. Amend the subdivision regulations as follows:

a. Clarify the current provisions relating to the circumstances when *"new subdivisions shall make provision for the continuation of the principal existing streets in adjoining areas."*<sup>1</sup> Essentially, all subdivisions should make provisions for continuing their streets to the adjacent development to avoid enclave neighborhoods with limited points of ingress/egress. Further, remove the statement indicating that *"Local streets in new subdivisions do not have*

*to be connected to existing local streets. In gated subdivisions, connection of local streets to existing streets is not required."*<sup>2</sup>

- b. Specify the required right-of-way and pavement widths of each street classification, as outlined in "Roadway Classifications" later in this chapter. Establish conditions for which additional right-of-way or street width may be required or narrowed.
- c. Require that private subdivisions shall not terminate an existing or planned collector or arterial street. Alternatively, a private subdivision may propose realignment of a collector or arterial street provided its function and intent are preserved.
- d. Authorize the requirement of a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) for traffic conditions that exceed a certain traffic generation threshold or specified development conditions. Such study would be required prior to the acceptance of an application for land subdivision or development. The study

outcome would determine the warrant for on-site and off-site improvements such as traffic signals, geometric intersection improvements, turn lanes, right-in/right-out access points, and acceleration/deceleration lanes, among others.

- e. Include provisions for preparation of a local circulation plan by the City (or a City selected consultant). The circulation plan would identify the desired collector streets within a superblock, areas for marginal access streets or reverse frontage roads, and preferred intersection locations, for which compliance

Street connectivity standards include the following features, which must remain flexible to accommodate specific conditions:

- Average local street intersection spacing to be 300-400 feet.
- Maximum local street intersection spacing of about 600 feet.
- Maximum intersection spacing for arterial streets of 1,000 feet.
- Maximum spacing between pedestrian/bicycle connections of 350 feet (that is, mid-block paths).
- Street pavement widths of 24-36 feet.
- Maximum block size of 5 to 12 acres.
- Limited cul-de-sacs (for example, 20 percent of streets).
- Maximum length of cul-de-sacs of 400 feet.
- Limited gated communities and other restricted access roads.
- Rewards for developments with a high connectivity index.
- Favor for pedestrian and cycling connections.
- Connected street "stubs;" that is, streets that are initially cul-de-sacs, but can be connected when adjacent parcels are developed in the future.

Source: Roadway Connectivity, Creating More Connected Roadway and Pathway Networks, Victoria Transport Policy Institute

<sup>1</sup> Sec. 74-40, Location of new streets in relation to existing and proposed streets, (b) Chapter 74, Subdivisions.

<sup>2</sup> Sec. 74-40, Location of new streets in relation to existing and proposed streets, (d) Chapter 74, Subdivisions.

- would be required of development. The circulation plan would be based on the policies of this plan and the Thoroughfare Plan.
- f. Consider restrictions on curvilinear, discontinuous streets, dead-ends, and cul-de-sacs by requiring a measure of street continuity and points of access.
  - g. Allow for varying residential street widths whereby the pavement width and other design requirements (e.g. parking lanes, curb width, parkways, and sidewalks) are functions of the number of dwelling units served (determined by the units' average frontages). This approach is for local streets and is not applicable to collector or arterial streets.
5. Make a formal request of the City-Parish Planning and Zoning Commission to adopt the City's Thoroughfare Plan and integrate it into the Parish's Major Street Plan. This would help to ensure the preservation of rights-of-way concurrent with land subdivision development, particularly during the intervening years before the City proceeds in its growth management program (refer to *Chapter 3, Growth Management*).
  6. Actively participate in the meetings of the Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC) to represent the interests of Zachary pertaining to the metropolitan transportation plan and the transportation improvement program (TIP). This is relevant to the decision with respect to the alignment of the proposed bypass and other improvements that may affect the City's Thoroughfare Plan. Additionally, this agency is responsible for channeling Federal and State funds for transportation projects throughout their 11-parish region.
  7. Provide the City's adopted future land use plan (refer to *Chapter 2, Community Character & Housing*) to the CRPC for its incorporation into the urban area transportation model. This may be used in preparing the land use assumptions required for the transportation model.
  8. Through the subdivision development process, ensure that designated thoroughfares are extended, as appropriate and warranted, including, but not limited to, Fennwood Drive to the north of Rollins Road to Pride-Port Hudson Road, Old Barnwood Avenue and/or Lake Pointe Avenue west across LA 964 and Noble Street west of Cypress Street connecting to the planned north-south minor arterial.

*Transportation improvement program (TIP) means a staged, multi-year, intermodal program of transportation projects covering a metropolitan planning area that is consistent with the metropolitan transportation plan.*

## Traffic Management

Essential to managing traffic is preserving the capacities of arterial and collector streets. The capacity and, hence, level of service is affected by the following:

- ◆ number of access points (streets and driveways);
- ◆ impedance of traffic flow by vehicles entering and exiting properties;
- ◆ number of intersections;
- ◆ lane width;
- ◆ synchronization of traffic control devices;
- ◆ allowance for deceleration and/or acceleration at ingress/egress points; and
- ◆ the presence or void of a center turn lane or median.

Of specific relevance is managing access along the community's arterial streets. Rollins Road, for instance, has homes with individual driveways accessing what will become a principal arterial street. This occurrence increases the number of conflict points and causes concern for safety, slows travel speeds, and constrains the function and capacity of this roadway. To maximize the efficiency of traffic movement,

### Access Management

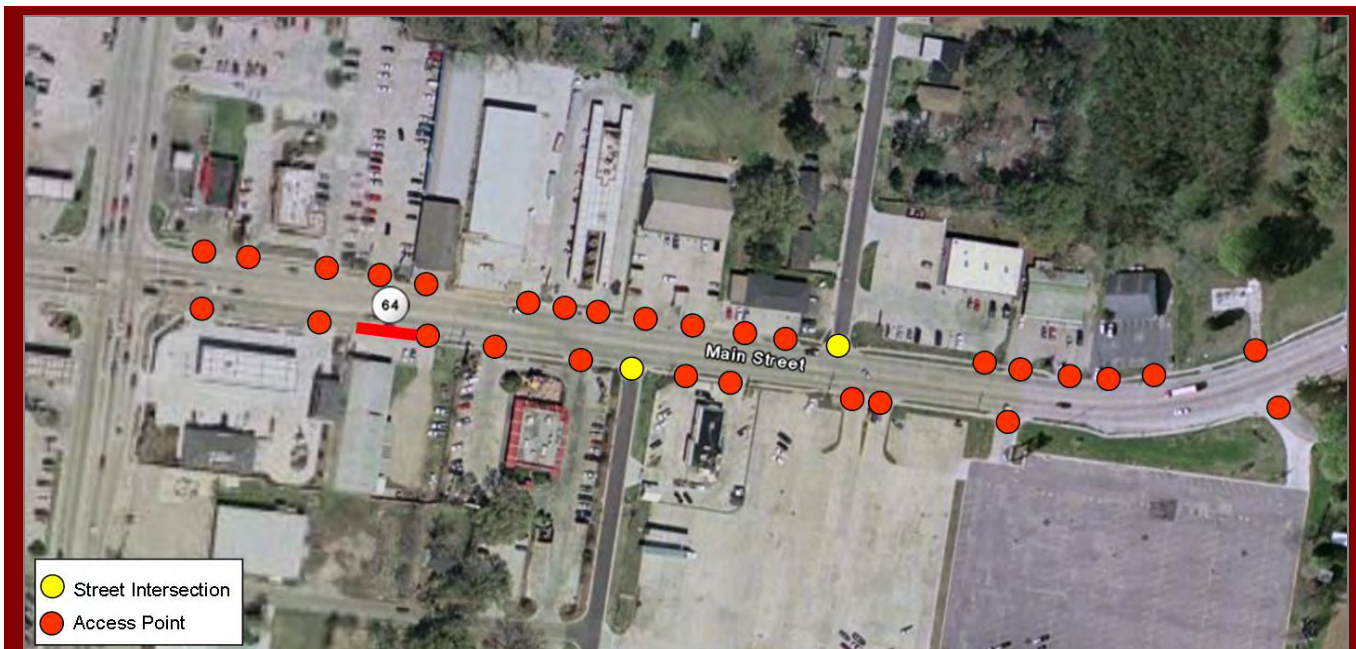
Research indicates that a well-designed and effectively administered access management plan can result in the following tangible benefits:

- Accident and crash rates are reduced.
- Roadway capacity and the useful life of transportation facilities are prolonged.
- Travel time and congestion are decreased.
- Better coordination between access and land use is accomplished.
- Economic activity is enhanced by a safe and efficient transportation system.
- Urban design and transportation objectives are reconciled.
- The character and livability of the community is preserved through the coordination of land use and transportation.

these situations should be avoided in the future. Solutions may include marginal access streets, reverse frontage roads, shared driveways and cross access agreements, and street medians.

The pattern of land use adjacent to commercial corridors greatly affects its operating efficiency. The prevailing strip commercial pattern along LA 64 to the east of LA 19, for instance, causes congested conditions for several reasons. First, this is the only cross-town roadway, meaning that all traffic must pass through this area to access LA 19 or LA 67. Second, the volume of traffic destined for this business area, together with the through traffic, impedes flows due to lane changes, left turn movements, and the number of driveways. Driveways represent the potential for

vehicle conflict points. Adequate spacing of driveways allows drivers to react to one intersection at a time and reduces the potential for conflict. Other problems may include the driveway turning radius, which requires entering and exiting vehicles to slow or turn wide to complete their maneuver, creating potential blockages and conflicts. Similarly, a minimum distance between an intersection and a driveway is necessary to traffic flow disruptions and potential collisions caused by vehicles entering or exiting driveways.



Access control along LA 64 is an example of Transportation Systems Management (TSM) that would increase volume and, hence, improve level of service and enhance travel safety.



Adopted April 5, 2010

A more efficient development pattern includes, at a minimum, commercial areas that are arranged in nodes at major intersections, rather than placed along the frontage of each arterial street. The preferred pattern is one where there is a mixture of uses within a unified development, such as a planned development or a traditional neighborhood development. This development type allows for many conveniences to occur within the neighborhood, thereby lessening the number of external vehicle trips. These patterns allow the roadway system to be adequately designed for higher volumes of traffic, including provisions for adequate rights-of-way and pavement widths, traffic signalization, better managed points of ingress and egress, medians and turn lanes, acceleration/deceleration lanes, and marginal access or reverse frontage lanes. These patterns are discussed in greater detail in *Chapter 2, Community Character & Housing*.



Traffic generally operates and flows to the areas of least resistance. This is to say that vehicles will naturally be channeled to corridors that are more direct or reduce travel time. This is not optimal unless the roadway system is adequately designed to accommodate it. As a result, there is traffic that “cuts through” neighborhoods to avoid congested routes. In Zachary, the street system is not yet capable or designed to accommodate increased traffic. This causes complaints of neighborhood traffic, excessive speeds, and a concern for safety. The use of traffic calming improvements helps to slow or divert traffic, making a better situation until the thoroughfare system can be sufficiently developed.

Congestion in Downtown is due, in part, to the limited thoroughfare network, as well as highly constrained rights-of-way (particularly along Main Street immediately west of LA 19) and conflicting traffic movements. There is a high volume of traffic along Main Street, particularly during peak periods, which queues at the intersection with LA 19, extending in each direction and blocking business driveways. Therefore, movements in and out of parking areas are difficult. The situation is exploited by the desire to optimize traffic flows and speeds. Among the solutions for the congestion in Downtown are a one-way pair extending along Church Street and Main Street and connecting at each end. Over the longer term, continued development of the thoroughfare network will provide alternate routes to help alleviate the high trip volumes along Main Street. A solution outlined in *Chapter 2, Community Character & Housing*, is to re-assess the orientation of Downtown and evaluate other development or redevelopment schemes (refer to *Chapter 2, Community Character & Housing* for more information).

#### GOALS

- ▶ Preserving the traffic carrying capacities of collector and arterial roadways
- ▶ Managing property access to improve level of service, reduce congestion, and enhance safety
- ▶ Coordinating land use and transportation objectives
- ▶ Effectively managing traffic volumes and speeds within neighborhoods and safety sensitive areas
- ▶ Coordinating among intergovernmental agencies



Recommendations

1. Coordinate with LaDOTD and the CRPC to request the following:
  - a. Traffic engineering and design studies along LA 19, LA 64 (particularly east of LA 19), and LA 964 to identify improvements such as driveway consolidation and cross access easements, increased driveway turning radii, signalization, acceleration/deceleration lanes, turn lanes, and the warrant for medians, where applicable. Subsequently, require the dedication of additional rights-of-way, where needed, to accommodate medians and turn lanes as warranted.
  - b. A design options study for Main Street from LA 19 west to Rollins Road. The purpose of this study is to identify access and intersection improvements, geometric design alterations, signage and signalization improvements, and pedestrian enhancements to improve traffic operating and safety conditions.
  - c. Participate in CRPC meetings to request prioritization and placement in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) a one-way pair along Church Street and Main Street or alternatively, a cross-town reliever route to improve the level of service on Main Street.
2. Amend the subdivision regulations as follows:
  - a. Incorporate access standards to restrict the number, location (distance from intersections and property lines), spacing, and alignment of driveways, street intersections, medians and median openings, marginal access roads, and turn lanes.
  - b. Establish standards for a maximum width and minimum turning radii of driveways based on use classifications.
  - c. Prohibit residential access to arterial streets. Also, restrict access on collector streets by requiring that lots take access to local streets, parallel streets, or alleys.
  - d. Require marginal access roads along all frontages abutting arterial and collector streets to minimize the number of access points. The number of residential streets intersecting arterial streets should be limited.
  - e. Require shared driveways and cross access easements/agreements between abutting properties adjacent to collector and arterial streets.
  - f. Establish vehicle stacking requirements for drive-through uses to ensure sufficient on-site circulation to avoid queues that interfere with other traffic movements.
  - g. Establish standards for the use of traffic calming improvements along continuous, relatively straight streets (for a distance of 500 feet or more) carrying volumes greater than 100 vehicles per peak hour, when actual speeds exceed posted limits, and/or when the street is adjacent to a school, park, or public building.
3. Evaluate the feasibility of reverse frontage roads for areas planned for commercial or mixed use development.

**Traffic Calming** involves changes in street alignment, installation of barriers, and other physical measures to reduce traffic speeds and/or cut-through volumes in the interest of street safety, livability, and other public purposes.



Speed Hump



Roundabout



Narrowed Entrance



Street Closure



Choker

Adopted April 5, 2010

- 4. Add boulevards and parkways to the street cross sections. Their purpose is both functional, by way of improved traffic management, and aesthetic.
- 5. Periodically conduct signal warrant and signal timing studies as area travel volumes increase with new development.
- 6. Install pedestrian and bicycle actuated traffic signals at arterial and collector street intersections, particularly in Downtown and near schools, parks, and public buildings.
- 7. Require performance of traffic calming studies where there are warranted conditions. A study must identify both alternative and recommended improvements given site-specific conditions.



Pedestrian Mobility

A transportation system is not complete unless it meets the needs of all travelers. This is to say that “complete streets” are designed equally for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians. This was acknowledged by comments received through the public input process regarding the need for sidewalks within and between neighborhoods, a desire for a City-wide trail system, and concerns for the safety of pedestrians. Generally, there is a desire to enhance the street, sidewalk, and trail systems for increased use by pedestrians and bicyclists.

A comprehensive and well-connected pedestrian network will be formed over time as each development contributes its requisite improvements. The subdivision regulations require sidewalks on both sides of all streets. Currently, trails are not required. To compliment the pedestrian improvements constructed concurrent with development, the City’s role is to provide for pedestrian improvements along its arterial streets, as well as pedestrian-actuated signals, crosswalk signage and pavement markings, and curb cuts and median breaks. To abide by the premise of “complete streets,” the pedestrian system must not be overlooked in the capital funding program.

*Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street.*

Source:  
www.completestreets.org

Due to the requirement that “sidewalks shall be provided by the property owner or developer along both sides of all streets,” most of the newer neighborhoods and commercial areas have sidewalks.<sup>3</sup> However, at this stage of development, they do not yet extend between neighborhoods and connect to other areas. There are also significant barriers to their use including major streets and bayou crossings, as well as few improvements such as warning lights at crossing locations and a lack of American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements in the well-established neighborhoods. These and other considerations must

<sup>3</sup> Sec. 74-46, Street and sidewalk improvement standards (f) Sidewalks, Chapter 74, Subdivisions

become a priority to encourage a higher propensity of pedestrian use. Additionally, sidewalks are integral as connections between community trails.



Non-urban street; no sidewalks.



Discontinuous sidewalks are common, yet problematic for community walkability.

In many of the well-established neighborhoods, there are no sidewalks or their conditions have deteriorated. Their repair or replacement is both costly (in light of the demands for other infrastructure), and there is a common question as to whose responsibility it is to repair: the City, neighborhood association, or individual property owner. Furthermore, where there are missing sidewalks, there are usually obstacles (trees, light poles, utility boxes, etc.) and concerns of homeowners as to the disturbance of their yard. These improvements are necessary, though, if Zachary is to have a good pedestrian system.

Without pre-planning for trails, they are highly difficult to retrofit following development. At this early stage of development, Zachary has the opportunity to begin the process of creating a City-wide trail system as development occurs. However, it must occur in accordance with a trail master plan, as well as modification of the subdivision regulations to require trails. Currently, there is a loosely connected network of sidewalks, trails within City parks, unofficial bike lanes, and roadway shoulders that do not form a complete network. Completion of a pedestrian and trail network is made difficult by insufficient or costly acquisition of rights-of-way and design constraints where there are limited – or cost-prohibitive – options for connection.

#### GOALS

- ▶ An interconnected, City-wide network of trails, greenways, and pedestrian linkages
- ▶ Development of multi-functional public street corridors
- ▶ Improved pedestrian infrastructure systems
- ▶ Increased connectivity within and between neighborhoods
- ▶ Enhanced pedestrian safety

#### Recommendations

1. Conduct a sidewalk inventory to denote the presence of sidewalks. Document the locations of and needs for handicap ramps and curb cuts. Also, identify segments that are in poor condition or unfit for safe use, as well as barriers to connectivity.
2. Prepare a need assessment to determine necessary improvements to connect existing sidewalks. Improvements may include trail/sidewalk connectors, intersection or street crossing projects, and improved signage.
3. Prepare a five-year capital improvement program (CIP) including priority projects in Downtown and the areas around schools, parks, and public buildings. Earmark a specific amount to be budgeted



annually for sidewalk improvement and construction. Alternatively, consider an improvement district where the costs are apportioned to individual property owners.

4. Prepare a Safe Sidewalks Program to identify improvement projects in proximity to schools, public buildings, and other areas prone to pedestrian use. Funding may be sought through the Louisiana Safe Routes to School program.
5. Amend the subdivision regulations as follows:
  - a. Increase the minimum width of sidewalks to five feet.<sup>4</sup> Specify the circumstances when sidewalks are required on site in commercial, industrial, public, institutional, and multi-family areas.
  - b. Require mid-block public access easements when a block length exceeds 750 feet.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, require easements at the ends of cul-de-sacs to improve pedestrian connectivity. Easements should be a minimum width of 10 feet, improved with a five-foot wide sidewalk or trail.
  - c. Amend the roadway cross sections and design and construction standards for all street improvement projects to incorporate an eight-foot wide sidewalk/trail on one side of all arterial roadways. Culvert crossings and bridges must be designed accordingly. Other design considerations include minimum bridge clearance for trail underpasses and bridge approach and interchange design standards.
  - d. Establish provisions requiring sidewalk systems in all subdivisions to connect to adjacent subdivisions and to existing and proposed future trails. Subdivisions with an average lot size of one acre or more may include trails in lieu of sidewalks, subject to prescribed standards and requirements. Trails within private subdivisions that tie into the City's proposed trail system shall be open to the public.
  - e. Require bicycle racks at office and retail developments exceeding 15,000 square feet and businesses employing more than 10 persons.
6. Use density bonuses to offset land dedication requirements for open space and greenway corridors. The allowable densities should be equivalent or higher than that of the base density of the district. This is also useful to protect resource areas that offer an appealing setting for nature paths.
7. Solicit the involvement of local interest groups and other agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions to provide funding assistance or in-kind services to construct trails and nature walks. Projects constructed without Federal funds offer greater flexibility in the standards of construction.
8. Where warranted, install medians within the rights-of-way of arterial roadways, particularly near public parks and buildings, for use as a pedestrian refuge to shorten the unprotected distance across



On-site pedestrian ways are an important part of site design (shown: grocery store).



Public access easements improve pedestrian connectivity within and between developments and to public spaces.

<sup>4</sup> Sec. 74-46, Street and sidewalk improvement standards (f), Chapter 74, Subdivisions

<sup>5</sup> Sec. 74-36, Blocks provide that "the commission may require a gravel crosswalk near the center of the block with a minimum right-of-way of ten feet where the nearest portion of the block is within 1,500 feet of an existing school."



wide roadways. Consider pedestrian bridges or tunnels to overcome barriers, such as each of the major arteries (LA 19, 64, 964, and 61).

### Corridor Appearance

The conditions along Zachary's corridors are significant to community appearance. The State routes are each highly traveled by those who travel them daily and those who are introduced to the community by its roadways. The appearance of corridors is characterized (with few exceptions) by large setbacks, expanses of parking adjacent to the street, limited green space and landscaping, multiple access points, a

proliferation of signage, and widely varying building styles and materials. Achieving enhanced corridor environments will involve new policies and standards. New standards for landscaping, for instance, will help, but will not fully improve the corridor environs without addressing a host of other factors. Rather, a comprehensive program must be designed to achieve the desired outcomes.

There are separate, yet related, components to improve corridor appearance. This chapter expresses what may be accomplished within the right-of-way (controlled by the City, Parish, or LaDOTD). Strategies to enhance development adjacent to the street is addressed in *Chapter 2, Community Character & Housing*. The contributing factors within the right-of-way include the pavement cross section

(undivided or divided), drainage design (ditch or curb-and-gutter), and surface type (asphalt or concrete). The amount of green space and natural landscape are significant to visual appeal, both of which soften the roadway environs. High Street is an example where the tree canopy and amount of green space positively affects the aesthetic of the street environment.



The roadway environs are within the purview of the public sector as to their design, appearance, and maintenance.

#### GOALS

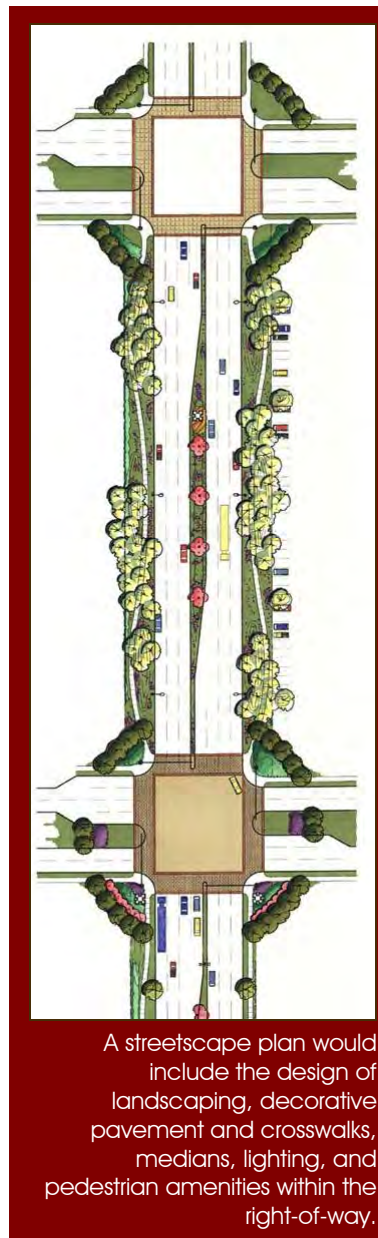
- ▶ Leveraging the design of roadways for enhancing community design
- ▶ Enhancing the appearance of the street environment
- ▶ Maximizing the aesthetic utility of the public rights-of-way
- ▶ Increasing green space within and adjacent to road corridors

#### Recommendations

1. Adopt fencing standards for subdivisions and individual properties including standards for their location, type, materials, and design and the method of construction. Uniform fencing should be installed by the subdivider at the time of development and should be of consistent type and design around the perimeter of the subdivision and adjacent to public rights-of-way. Along arterial streets, fencing should have decorative columns and horizontal relief. Its proximity to the right-of-way must allow for a street bufferyard.
2. Require neighborhood associations to be responsible for the repair or replacement of subdivision fencing, consistent with City standards. For all others, explore requiring a land title provision notifying the owner as to the City's fencing standards.

Adopted April 5, 2010

3. Require a perimeter buffer adjacent to all collector and arterial streets. There must be maintenance agreements and guarantees on behalf of the subdivider and/or neighborhood association.
4. Acquire triangular areas at intersections for public open space. Also, accept land dedication of excess rights-of-way, vacated easements, and other non-developable parcels for use as public open space. Consider assigning the land to a public land trust or conservation authority.
5. Coordinate the alignment of arterial and collector streets to protect and preserve stands of trees and the nature-scape adjacent to the street right-of-way.
6. Prepare corridor streetscape plans for LA 19, LA 64, LA 964, and LA 67. Design principles for their design may include, among other provisions:
  - a. Raised or depressed medians, which create space for drainage, grass, groundcover, trees, public signage, gateway treatments, and other amenities.
  - b. Street trees within the median and the outer streetscape areas (in agreement with LaDOTD). The species of street trees must be carefully selected to include those that are tolerant of the environment. The City could incorporate xeriscaping to be natural in appearance, environmentally sustainable, and requiring little maintenance.
  - c. A parkway adjacent to the curb creating an edge between the public and private realms and providing green space adjacent to the street.
  - d. Limiting the number, width, and location of driveways, consolidating driveways, and installing curb cuts and patterned crosswalks to create a more appealing pedestrian environment.
  - e. Decorative street lamps that vary in height, yet are consistent in style. The use of banners affixed to the lampposts, as seen in the Downtown area, allows the community to personalize itself.
  - f. Undergrounding utilities or relocating them away from the corridors.
  - g. Use of decorative signal poles and mast arms.
  - h. Consolidation of traffic signs onto single poles and reducing the number of signs adjacent to the right-of-way.
7. Organize a public education campaign to promote improved property maintenance and compliance with City codes, along with an annual amnesty program for violators. Volunteer to assist property owners in identifying violations and conforming solutions.



### High Capacity Transit

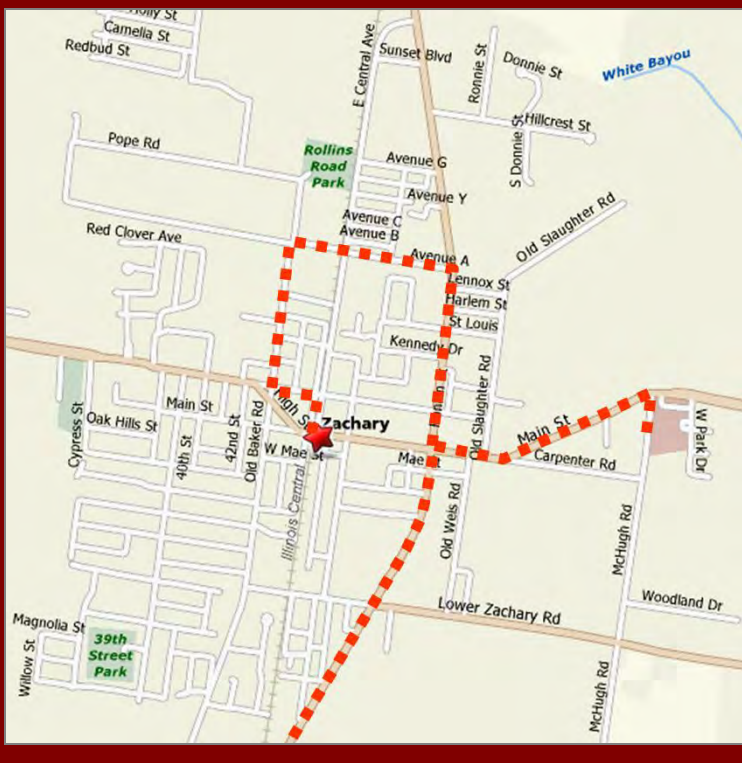
Public transit complements and contributes to an efficient transportation system. The location of Zachary and the unfolding pattern of development will influence the value and feasibility of public transportation services. The propensity for transit use is directly related to the compactness and density of development. Therefore, to embrace the demand and warrant for increased service, the pattern and form of development are highly relevant.

Under present conditions, though, development is occurring at the edges of the community and in the surrounding areas of the Parish. This pattern is not conducive to transit use. Therefore, the focus is within

the original town area where transit use may be improved by more compact, transit-supportive development, improved infrastructure for walking and bicycling, and creation of transit options and destinations.

Among the mobility issues cited by residents, there is a growing desire for better transit service. Of significance is the limited routes and number of stops, travel time and the required transfer at the Capital Area Transit System (CATS) terminal, limited or no service on weekends, and bus stop improvement needs. Presently, 88 percent of trips to work are by single occupant vehicles, with less than one percent via public transportation. The trip purpose for those using public transit is for medical, shopping, and social service reasons. Unfortunately, the amount of State and Federal funding support is decreasing, presenting a challenge to Zachary and the Capital Area to grow its services and fulfill the needs of the community and region. For this and other reasons, the community must plan for an efficient pattern of growth that is supportive of transit service.

Figure 4.1, Transit Route



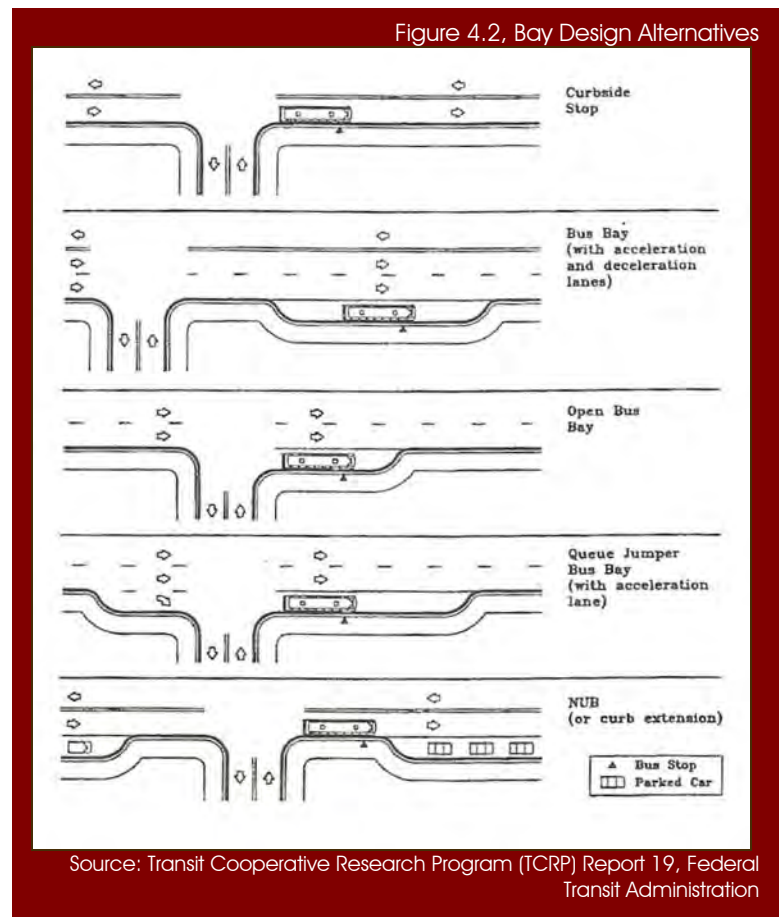
Currently, CATS operates a fixed route service that provides public transportation for Zachary residents. It operates from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a stop at Lane Hospital every 40 to 60 minutes. The route enters the City on LA 19, travels along Main Street to Lane Hospital, and then completes a loop through the original town area, as displayed in **Figure 4.1, Transit Route**. The route connects to the main transit terminal in Downtown Baton Rouge (at Florida and 22<sup>nd</sup>), where riders may transfer to one of the other routes. The fare is \$1.75 for adults and \$0.35 for senior citizens, persons with disabilities or a Medicare card, and students. Children under five years are free. There is also CATS On-Demand, dial-a-ride service for disabled persons with advanced certification. The origin and destination of the requested demand-response trip must be within three-quarter mile of a fixed route.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Increased mobility for transit dependent persons
- ▶ Expanded transit services, routes, and hours concurrent with community growth
- ▶ Improved site design to better facilitate transit access and safe usage
- ▶ Land use and growth patterns that are transit supportive
- ▶ Enhanced capital improvements for public transportation

### Recommendations

1. Collaborate with the Capital Area Transit System to regularly evaluate the performance of the fixed route service, identify modifications or potential new routes, research coordinative opportunities with other transportation providers, assess the long-term feasibility of commuter service, identify infrastructure improvement needs, and recommend revenue options and funding needs and strategies.
2. Execute an advertising and marketing campaign to inform the public as to the transit services and schedules available in Zachary.
3. Consider increased financial support for broader coverage and hours of operation beyond 8:00 p.m. Consider partnering with Lane Hospital to sponsor, market, and advertise at transit stops (subject to City sign standards).
4. Facilitate regular meetings with CATS, Lane Hospital, LaDOTD, and other transportation providers to identify opportunities for coordination of service. Consider an interagency agreement with the Parish, area cities and school districts, Louisiana State University (LSU), Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC), Southern University, and others for joint vehicle maintenance and procurement and driver training.
5. Participate in a study to investigate the feasibility of commuter service. Conduct an intercept survey to solicit information as to commuter trip purpose, origin and destination, and other factors. Utilize the survey to target market the area and potential users for use of a commuter service.
6. Establish a ride-share program to aid in matching carpoolers. Seek Job Access and Reverse Commute Funding for the program.
7. Identify locations for transit-oriented street improvements such as adjacent to Downtown and Lane Hospital, including:
  - a. special left turn lane signal phases at intersections;
  - b. preferential signal timing to aid bus travel time;
  - c. initiation of parking regulations to clear the curb lane for bus operations, particularly at high volume transit stop locations and during peak travel periods;
  - d. improved identification of bus stop locations and installation of no parking signs; and
  - e. pavement markings at transit stops.
8. Evaluate locations for bus pull-out bays to separate the street travel lanes from passenger boarding and alighting areas. Displayed in **Figure 4.2, Bay Design Alternatives**, are the various types of bays applicable for different situations.







Permanent bus stop improvements would reflect a commitment to transit ridership.

9. Solicit the involvement of the arts community to design custom transit shelters that relate to the history and identity of Zachary.
10. Prepare site design guidelines for pedestrian access to transit stop locations.
11. Within street improvement projects along bus routes, incorporate design provisions relating to sidewalks; curb cuts and handicap accessible ramps; non-slip surfaces; marked, signed, and/or signaled pedestrian crossings; prevention of obstructions for wheelchair access; and installation of pedestrian actuated traffic signals.

## Thoroughfare Planning: Classifications and Standards

Thoroughfare planning is a process to assure development of an efficient street system to meet future travel needs. The objective of a Thoroughfare Plan is to ensure that adequate right-of-way is preserved on appropriate alignments and of sufficient width to allow the orderly and efficient improvement of the street system. Shown in **Map 4.1, Thoroughfare Plan**, are the alignments for planned thoroughfares that must be considered in the platting of subdivisions, dedication of rights-of-way, and construction of roadways within the City's planning area. The actual alignments may vary from those represented on the plan depending on the design and layout of development. Requirements for rights-of-way dedication and construction of street improvements apply to all subdivisions of land.

The street classifications represented on the thoroughfare plan denotes the right-of-way requirements and the street cross section. In some instances, like Rollins Road, an existing road may require additional right-of-way to fulfill its functional role. In other cases, certain streets may not be widened due to design constraints and right-of-way limitations. In this instance, the plan designation signifies its traffic-handling role and the importance of maintaining it in good condition to maximize its traffic capacity. These decisions will be made by the City using the thoroughfare plan as guidance.

The thoroughfare plan does not show future local streets because their function is to provide property access and their alignments will vary depending on the land development plan. Local street alignment should be determined as part of the subdivision development process. Of particular importance is their intersection with collector and arterial streets, continuity and efficiency of design, means of calming traffic, and their role in conveying local traffic and accommodating pedestrians.

Although not shown in all locations, collector streets serve an essential function in the street system. Their alignments will depend on the surrounding street system and the layout and density of development, but must be continuous and adequately spaced to distribute traffic to the arterial streets. The locations of collector streets will be determined during the subdivision review process.














Policies of the thoroughfare plan are as follows:

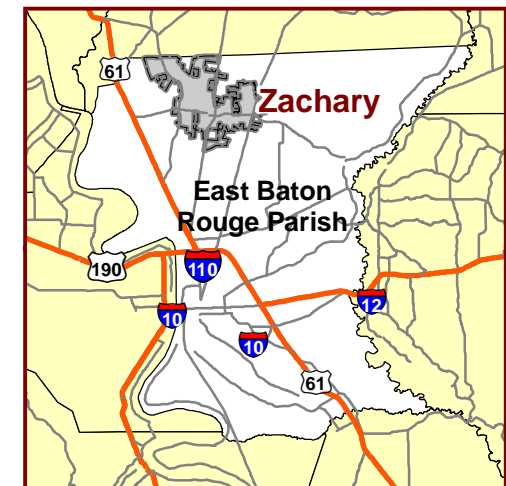
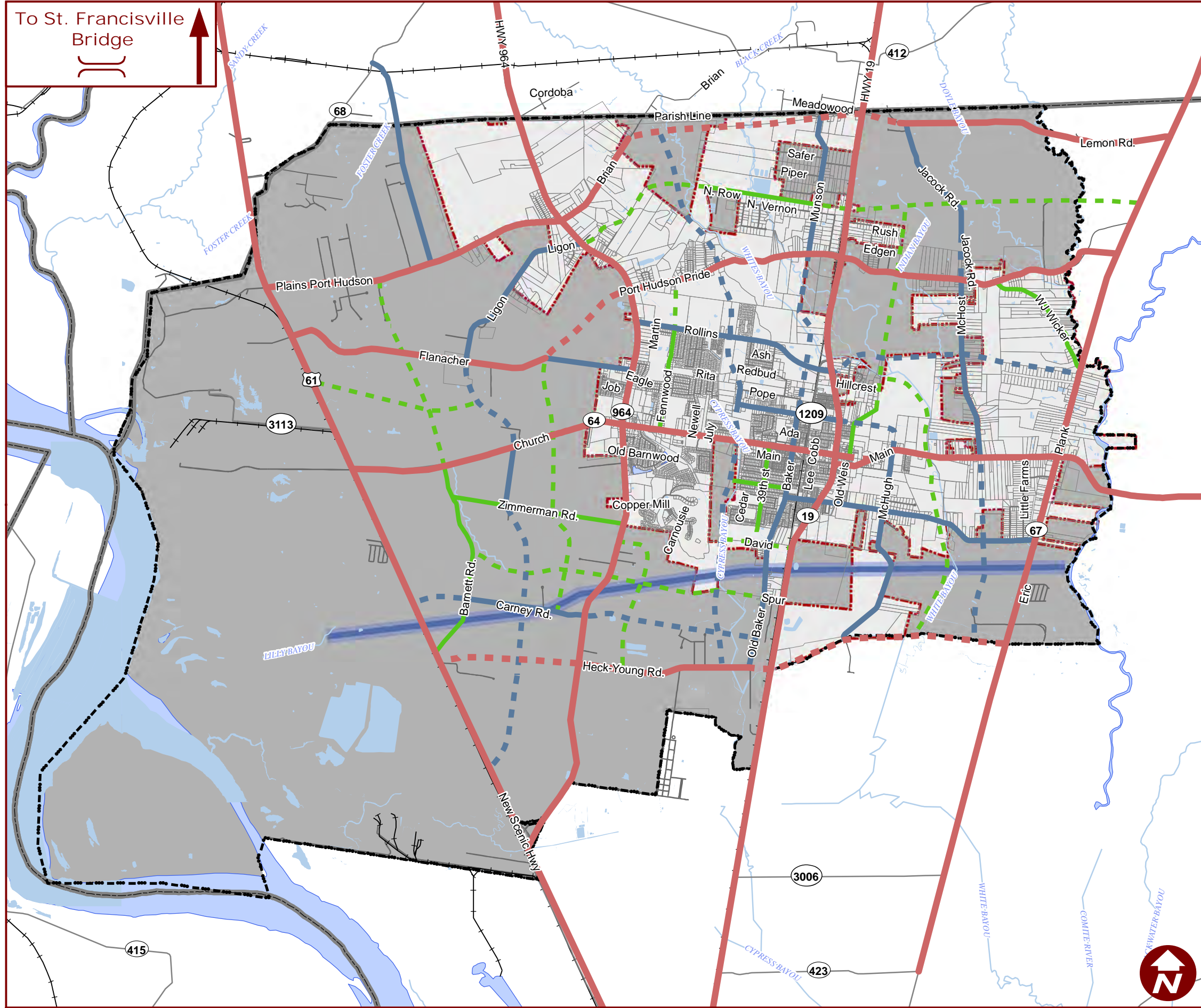
- ♦ Review of preliminary plans and final plats for proposed subdivisions (in accordance with the subdivision regulations) must be in compliance with the thoroughfare plan to ensure consistency and the availability of sufficient rights-of-way for the general alignments shown on the plan.

To St. Francisville Bridge

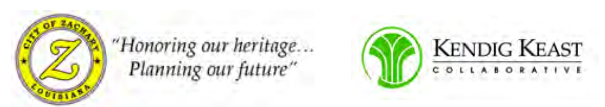


# Map 4.1 Thoroughfare Plan

-  Principal Arterial
-  Principal Arterial, Planned
-  Minor Arterial
-  Minor Arterial, Planned
-  Collector
-  Collector, Planned
-  Future Diversion Canal
-  Corporate Limits
-  Proposed Zone of Influence
-  East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary
-  Major Water Bodies
-  Streams
-  Railroads

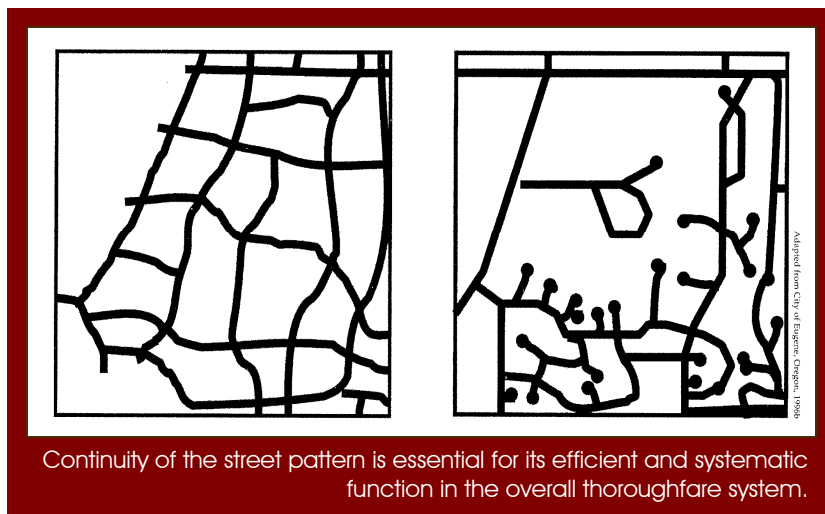


0 0.45 0.9 1.8 Miles



Adopted April 5, 2010

- ◆ The general location and alignment of thoroughfares must be in conformance with the thoroughfare plan. The alignments are approximate pending subdivision and engineering design. Major changes in alignments that are inconsistent with the plan require approval of the Planning and Zoning Commission through a public hearing process. A major change includes any proposal that adds or deletes a thoroughfare designation or changes the alignment of thoroughfares that would affect adjacent lands.
- ◆ Variances from the thoroughfare plan must warrant substantial evidence in support of an amendment and show how an alternative plan will provide improved circulation and an equal or improved level of service on all affected roadways.
- ◆ The necessary rights-of-way reflected by the street classification and corresponding cross section in the subdivisions regulations must be dedicated at the time of final platting. Properties proposed for subdivision that include or are adjacent to an existing thoroughfare with insufficient right-of-way must dedicate land to compensate for the deficiency.
- ◆ Existing streets adjacent to land proposed for subdivision must be continued into or through the development to meet the continuity objectives of the thoroughfare plan. The arrangement of streets in new subdivisions must make provision for continuing the existing arterial and collector streets in the adjacent areas.
- ◆ Landowners are responsible for the dedication of rights-of-way and may be responsible for constructing sections of roadways located within or adjacent to their property.
- ◆ The total width of street rights-of-way must be dedicated at the time of development. The dedication of one-half of the required right-of-way must not be accepted unless the other one-half already exists or there is a plat on file for the adjacent land or parcel.
- ◆ Collector streets must traverse adjacent neighborhoods to provide access and circulation both within and between neighborhoods. Collectors should connect arterial streets, rather than allowing development to have an independent street system with no other points of ingress/egress other than a single access point.
- ◆ Collectors must connect arterial streets with other collectors and local streets. Their continuity is essential for their function of distributing traffic within the street system.
- ◆ The denotation of a future thoroughfare on the plan does not represent a commitment to a specific timeframe or the responsibility for construction.
- ◆ The alignments of local streets are dependent upon land development plans and are not set forth by the thoroughfare plan. Their design is subject to the subdivision review process.



### Roadway Classifications

The City's streets are grouped into functional classes according to their role for traffic movement and land access. Characteristics of each functional class differ to meet the corridor's intended purpose. The



functional classification system includes principal and minor arterials, collectors, and local streets. Alleys and marginal access streets are a function of service and property access and are not reflected in the classification system. A description of each street classification is provided below.

### **Local Streets**

Local streets allow direct access to properties. They are intended to carry traffic to collector streets and are designed for slower speeds. The use of geometric design, traffic control devices, and traffic calming improvements are important to manage traffic speeds and secure safe neighborhood environments.

There are now two standards for local streets, including one with and one without curb and gutter. Curb and gutter streets are presently required to be 22 feet in width and centered within 50 feet of right-of-way. An additional dedication of five feet on each side is required on each side of the right-of-way for sidewalks, which is part of the street right-of-way. Local streets without curb and gutter may be 20 feet wide and within 60 feet of right-of-way (or servitude), also with the same five feet on either side for sidewalks. The greater width of right-of-way is to accommodate adequate slopes for drainage purposes.

While the rights-of-way for the two cross sections are acceptable, it is proposed that the pavement widths be expanded from 22 feet to 26 feet for curb and gutter streets and from 20 feet to 24 feet for local streets without curb and gutter. Travel lanes that are 12 feet in width would be sufficiently designed to carry immediate local traffic and better accommodate fire apparatus.

The current standards apply universally and, thus, do not account for where less right-of-way and pavement width may be acceptable due to larger lot sizes, lower density, and fewer trips generated. As a result, there is more pavement width than necessary in some cases, which adds to development costs, reduces development efficiency, causes higher travel speeds, and results in increased stormwater runoff. Therefore, this plan proposes alternative street cross sections where such pavement width is not warranted.

### **Collector Streets**

Subdivision street layout plans, whether for residential or nonresidential districts, must include provision for collector streets to provide efficient traffic circulation. Collectors are designed to carry higher traffic volumes, thereby requiring a wider street section. Also, added lanes may be necessary at intersections with arterial streets to provide adequate capacity for through traffic and turning movements.

The current standards indicate a right-of-way width of 50 feet, with an increase to 60 feet for collector streets in "business, commercial, and industrial zoning districts." A provision of the current regulations allows for a major street requiring an increased right-of-way of 80 feet. In all cases, the pavement width is 27 feet. It is recommended that the regulations specify definitive standards for the rights-of-way and pavement widths of collector streets dependent upon the projected traffic volume.

The thoroughfare plan designates the locations of collector streets. Their future classification as a major and minor collector is distinguished by the volume of traffic (determined at the time of subdivision). A major collector is designed for 7,500 to 15,000 vehicles per day (VPD), requiring a pavement width of 36 feet. A minor collector is for up to 7,500 VPD, allowing a reduced pavement width of 32 feet.



An alternate for rural development is a street section without sidewalks or curb and gutter. This permits development to maintain a rural character where drainage is handled without curb and gutter. In this type of development, the pavement width may be reduced to 28 feet, while the right-of-way requirement would remain at 60 feet to accommodate ditches.

**Arterial Streets**

Arterial streets form an interconnected network for broad movement of traffic. They commonly represent five to 10 percent of the total street network, but accommodate 30 to 40 percent of the travel volume. Since traffic movement is their primary function, access management is essential to avoid traffic congestion. Intersections with other streets and driveways should limit speed differentials to no more than 15 miles per hour.

The cross section of arterial streets may vary from multi-lane to two-lane roads in the developing fringe areas where traffic volumes do not yet warrant more travel lanes. Functional classification is not dependent on the existing number of lanes since the functional role served by a roadway typically remains constant over time, while the street section is improved to accommodate increasing traffic volumes. Thus, lower-volume roadways that are continuous over long distances may function as arterials in the rural fringe areas.

The current standard for arterial streets is as follows:

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Principal Arterial (Boulevard)</u>	<u>Minor Arterial (Undivided)</u>
Right-of-way	100'	70'
Pavement width	44'	27'
Lane width	11'	11' to 12'
Moving lanes	4	2
Median	30'	0'

This plan proposes to increase the right-of-way width of the principal arterials from 100 feet to 120 feet, allowing future widening and intersection improvements, as well as providing for underground utilities, an eight-foot trail section, and an increased green space. A wider right-of-way also allows design flexibility to accommodate nature features. The lane width would be increased to 12 feet for a total pavement width of 48 feet. A minor arterial street section is proposed to increase to 100 feet, with an undivided pavement width of 36 feet.

**Plan Implementation**

Implementation of thoroughfare system improvements occurs in stages over time as the City grows and builds toward the system reflected by the thoroughfare plan. Individual thoroughfare improvements may be constructed by a variety of implementing agencies, including the City, East Baton Rouge Parish, and/or the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD), as well as private landowners for roadways within or adjacent to their property. Road construction can be implemented by individual entities or in partnership, as is the case for construction of roads that are identified in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) of the Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC).

In the administration of the Thoroughfare Plan, special cases will arise where physical conditions and development constraints in certain areas conflict with the need for widening of designated thoroughfares to the planned right-of-way width and roadway cross section. Such circumstances require a degree of flexibility in the implementation of the plan. Acceptable minimum design criteria and special roadway cross sections may have to be applied in constrained areas where existing conditions limit the ability to meet desirable standards. Special roadway cross sections should be determined on a case-by-case basis when a unique design is necessary, and these exceptions should be subject to approval by the Department of Public Works. Otherwise, standard roadway cross sections should be used in all developing areas and, whenever possible, in existing developed areas.

The City, Parish, and LaDOTD, as well as residents, landowners, and subdividers, can utilize the thoroughfare plan to make decisions relating to planning, coordination, and programming of future development and transportation improvements. Review of preliminary and final plats for proposed subdivisions in accordance with the City's subdivision regulations should include consideration of compliance with the thoroughfare plan in order to ensure consistency and availability of sufficient rights-of-way for the general roadway alignments shown on the plan. It is of particular importance to provide for continuous roadways and through connections between developments to ensure mobility. By identifying thoroughfare locations where rights-of-way are needed, landowners and subdividers can consider the roadways in their subdivision planning, dedication of public rights-of-way, and provision of setbacks for new buildings, utility lines, and other improvements located along the right-of-way for existing or planned thoroughfares.

Chapter Five

# Community Resources

This chapter addresses the preservation of the community’s historic and environmental resources. According to residents who participated in this plan, protecting the long-term integrity of the Historic Village, other locally significant structures and areas, and the community’s natural setting is essential to its character and livability. The focus of this chapter is on the policies and practices necessary to sustain the community’s highly valued resources.

An increasing attraction to Zachary is its history, which may be viewed through its Historic Village and the many historic residences. A heritage tourist may engage in a multi-faceted cultural visit, beginning in Downtown with the viewing of its historic buildings and continuing to the Historic Village and Annison Plantation. As an emerging opportunity, Zachary should continue to strengthen its identity as a historic and cultural destination through ongoing preservation efforts, infrastructure improvements (streetscaping, parking, signage, gateways, etc.), beautification, and marketing.

The environmental focus of this chapter is to protect the land, water, and air resources that shape the physical form of the City. There are a number of environmental resources in the community including lands along the bayous and drainage ways, floodplains and wetlands, and woodlands, each serving a vital resource function and proving natural amenities that warrant protection. This chapter reflects the City’s commitment to preserve its natural resources through policies aimed at maximizing resource protection through good land planning and sustainable development practices.

## Purpose

The community’s historic buildings and districts and its environmental resources are amenities that warrant protection, preservation, and enhancement. Therefore, this chapter presents strategies for preserving historic resources through ordinances, improvements and aesthetic enhancements, and additional programming. Likewise, there are a myriad of environmental resources that contribute significantly to the character and development pattern of the community. These environmental resources require preservation through ordinance amendments, strengthened policies, best management practices, and effective implementation.



## Issues and Opportunities

This chapter focuses on the issues that must be addressed for the community to achieve its vision for preserving its historic and environmental resources. The origin of these issues was the commentary of residents during the early stages of this plan development process. These comments were supplemented by the observations and insights of City staff, the Citizens' Delegation, and consultants.

### Strengthening the Historic Identity of Downtown

Historic preservation will become increasingly important as the City and its housing and buildings age over time, as is evident in the original town area. Zachary has a collection of older housing and building stock that reflects multiple periods of history. This assortment of older buildings and styles creates a sense of historic character that creates a 'living history' of the past. Businesses and homes characterize a majority of the historical areas – a reflection of how these areas are still functional and an integral part of the community.

An initial step has been taken to survey individual structures and define the nature and boundaries of a historical district and a separate garden district, as displayed in **Map 5.1, Garden and Historic Districts**. This is a good first step toward delineating the special districts and seeking their designation on the National Register of Historic Places or as a locally significant historic district. These designations open opportunities for state and federal grant assistance, foundation funding, and increased regulatory oversight. As the process of district creation unfolds, property and business owners and other stakeholders should be engaged as advocates for preservation and reinvestment.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Identify historical contributing and non-contributing buildings
- ▶ Designate specific areas as local, state, or nationally registered historical districts
- ▶ Prepare design guidelines or standards to guide redevelopment and preservation efforts
- ▶ Create a façade rehabilitation program for historic buildings
- ▶ Form a Business Improvement District (BID) to sponsor infrastructure and streetscape projects
- ▶ Program events to support businesses in the historical district
- ▶ Mitigate barriers to pedestrian and bicycling access to and within the historic district
- ▶ Increased transportation options for visitors and residents to access the historical district







#### Recommendations

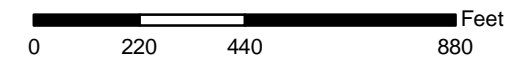
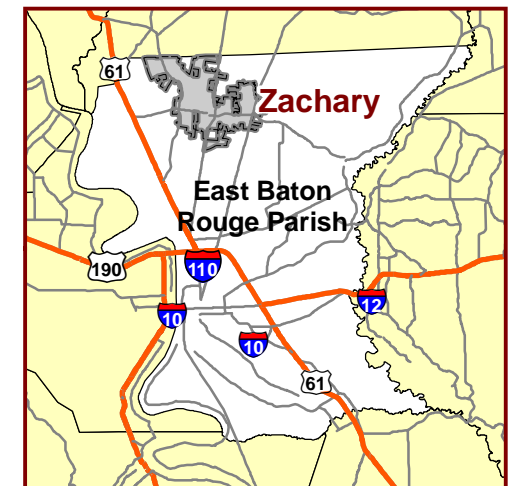
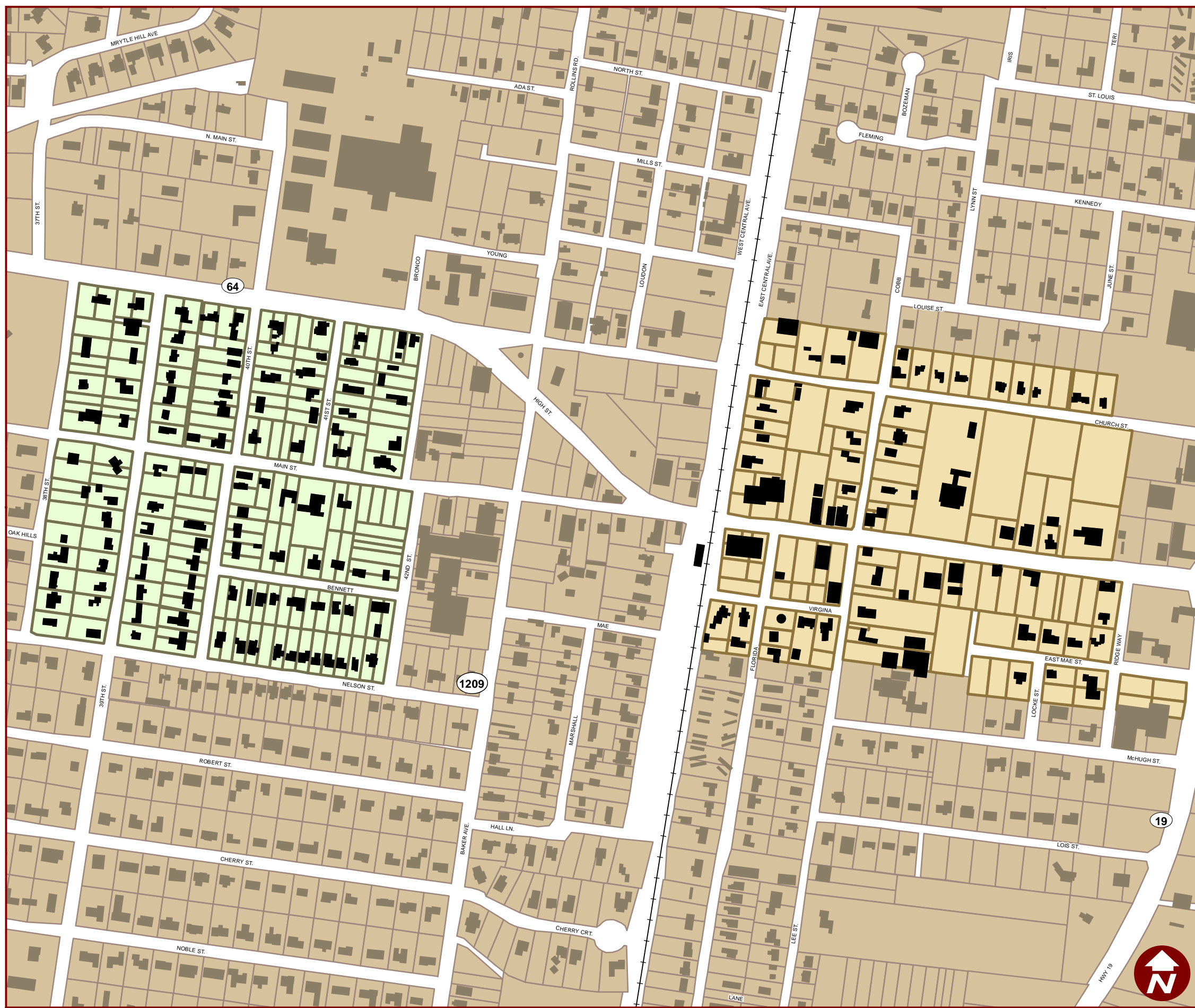
1. Evaluate the warrant for designation of Downtown as a federal and/or state registered historic district. Criteria for national historic districts include areas:
  - a. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
  - b. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
  - c. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or



# Map 5.1

## Garden & Historic Districts

-  Garden District
-  Historic District
-  Buildings in Historic District
-  Buildings
-  Parcels
-  Railroads



"Honoring our heritage...  
Planning our future"



- d. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.<sup>1</sup>
- 2. Designate local historical districts with boundaries that include the contributing buildings identified in a historical survey. Contributing buildings are those that give the historic district a special character. This local district may allow for special design review guidelines and procedures. These guidelines should be unique to the historic and garden districts to preserve their individual historic integrities.
- 3. Draft design guidelines or standards for development, redevelopment, and any structurally significant modifications within the two districts. These guidelines, however, should allow sufficient flexibility to permit updating of buildings for fire safety and energy efficiency improvements while retaining their historic integrity.
- 4. Utilize federal, state, or local financial assistance to create a façade rehabilitation program that would help property owners make historically significant improvements to their buildings. This program may involve, but is not limited to, low-interest loans, grants, design assistance, and/or an expedited approval for façade or sign improvements. A successful pilot project can aid in promoting this type of assistance and serve as a model to be followed by other property owners. Such projects should be promoted in press notices and marketing materials.
- 5. Offer incentives for historically conforming development and/or redevelopment in the historic and garden districts including exemption of building permit fees, grants, and waivers of standards related to setbacks, parking, and other constraining provisions.
- 6. Create a Business Improvement District (BID) to facilitate public improvement projects in a downtown historic district. This district would need to be supported and led by Downtown land and business owners. Once a majority of the property owners have agreed to self-imposed fees and restrictions, the City should consider partnering with the BID Board to prepare a plan and identify

**Drehl Place Historic District**  
 (added 1997 - East Baton Rouge County - #97001422)  
 Also known as **See also: Sanders House**  
 Roughly bounded by Government, 22nd, Myrtle, and St. Rose Sts., Baton Rouge  
 (370 acres, 87 buildings, 2 objects)

Historic Significance: Event, Architecture/Engineering  
 Architectural Style: Tudor Revival, Bungalow/Craftsman, Classical Revival  
 Area of Significance: Community Planning And Development, Architecture  
 Period of Significance: 1900-1924, 1925-1949

Owner: **Private**  
 Historic Function: Domestic  
 Historic Sub-function: Single Dwelling  
 Current Function: Domestic

There are nine historic districts in East Baton Rouge Parish including Drehl Place as listed in the above database.

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) represent an entrepreneurial approach on behalf of downtown leaders or participating businesses to proactively address their business area. Benefits of BIDs include:

1. protecting and enhancing public spaces through the deployment of "security teams" or "ambassadors;"
2. initiating services not provided by public agencies such as sidewalk cleaning, marketing, promotions, business retention, and recruitment;
3. advocating on behalf of downtown businesses, allowing them to communicate a unified vision/message to aid the district's revitalization;
4. creating cooperation among competitive businesses, which allows them to engage in activities that they would not be able to do on their own;
5. generating financing for capital improvements for more attractive streetscapes; and
6. researching and planning services such as collecting and analyzing economic and demographic data, monitoring progress, setting and revising strategic goals, and developing multi-year redevelopment programs.

Source: Department of City & Regional Planning  
 UNC-Chapel Hill, April 19, 1999

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Register of Historic Places, U.S. Department of Interior

prioritized improvement projects. The City should also consider matching the contributions of the BID.

7. Motivate shoppers to patronize the Downtown historical district through programming designed to draw residents and visitors to special events and activities. Special events would help create business activity in the district, thereby contributing to its economic viability.
8. Enhance the availability of the historic Downtown to visitors and residents by offering better connections and improved walkability. As recommended in *Chapter 4, Throughfares & Public Transit*, limitations in pedestrian access and amenities negatively impact the district’s accessibility and appearance. This not only affects the number of visitors, but also diminishes financial gains for area businesses. Potential gateways and streetscaping improvement sites are illustrated in **Map 5.2, Historic Village and Downtown Streetscaping**.
9. Improve transportation access to Downtown and the Historic Village through improved visitor parking and a bus drop-off area.

### Historic Village



The Annison Plantation site offers opportunities to create an historical experience that focuses on a different era of Zachary than the Downtown.

Efforts on behalf of the City (Historic Village) and Zachary Historical Association foster an attitude of acceptance and celebration of the historic legacy in Zachary. The Historic Village, situated at the corners of Florida and Virginia Streets, was constructed to keep the history of Zachary alive. With three renovated turn-of-the-century homes – Miss Sis’s Magic House, The Allison Agricultural & Rural Life Center, and the McHugh House – the Village serves as an attraction and educational center for residents and visitors of Zachary. Further enhancement and expansion of this area are important in the City’s continuing preservation efforts. Expansion may occur through improvement of physical spaces, such as historic buildings, landscaping, gateway and way-finding signage, heritage trail opportunities, and the recently acquired Annison Plantation.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Program historic preservation activities at the Historic Village
- ▶ Improve and maintain the Historic Village
- ▶ Improve the amenities at the Annison Plantation

#### Recommendations

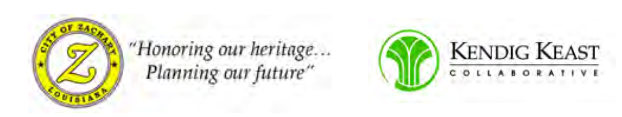
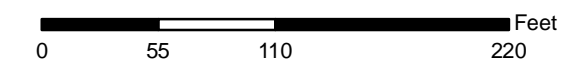
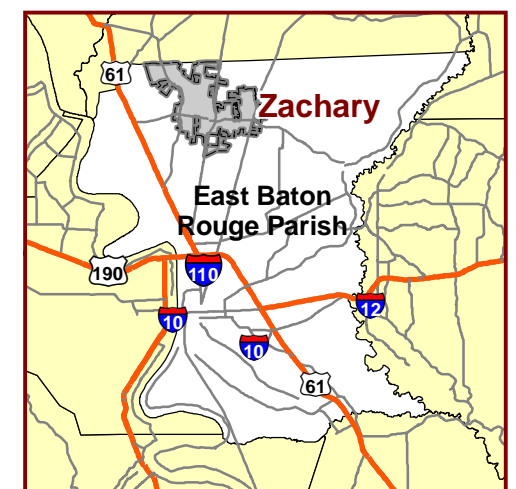
1. Continue to support the efforts of the Historic Village. This project involves historic preservation of buildings and districts, but also offers cultural education for students and adult visitors through guided tours and programs. The success of this program should be encouraged as it can increase the vitality of Downtown and serve as a model for local preservation efforts.
2. Improve the existing land and buildings in partnership with local private and public entities. The initial success of the Historic Village lends itself to further investment. One improvement would be building and landscape maintenance and the provision of dedicated parking. Other area-wide



# Map 5.2 Historic Village and Downtown Streetscaping



- Downtown Gateway
- Streetscape Opportunity
- Historic District
- Parcel
- Buildings
- Buildings in Historic District
- Major Water Bodies
- Streams
- Railroads



"Honoring our heritage...  
Planning our future"



improvements may include the addition of street trees, landscaping, benches, wayfinding signage, and intersection improvements.

3. Establish a facility improvement plan for the Annison Plantation. This site focuses on the oldest historical period in Zachary – the Pre-Civil War era. It should be a site of cultural learning for school-age children and visitors, in addition to gatherings and outdoor enjoyment. Opportunities for mid- to large-scale meeting spaces, such as a barn or covered outdoor gathering area, should be explored. Other potential improvements include the cemetery, extending trails to nearby neighborhoods, providing additional parking, and installing appropriately designed amenities.

## Environmental Resources

There are a number of natural resources within and around Zachary that provide a scenic setting. These resources include a vast network of bayous and stream courses, ponds and wetlands, floodplains and their riparian areas, densely vegetated areas, and the farms and pastures that envelope the City. These areas are sensitive to urban development, yet they may be used to fulfill the community's objectives of environmental protection, resource management, and natural stormwater runoff.

During the public involvement process residents spoke of Zachary as a community whose character is shaped by its natural environment and resources. There were also many comments made regarding the desire for more green space integrated as an amenity into new developments. In addition to the preservation of green space and the physical landscape, there is a need to promote air quality improvements and energy efficient building design in the community. Through good land planning and responsible development practices, resources can be preserved and effectively integrated into developments without compromising private interests.

## Sensitivity to the Environment and Resource Conservation

There are areas interspersed throughout Zachary that possess valuable natural resources warranting protection. Lands along the Comite River, adjacent to each of the bayous, along drainageways, and within floodplain areas and wetlands offer opportunities for resource conservation and land preservation. While these areas are sensitive to development, they may be used to fulfill other objectives including environmental protection, resource management, and natural stormwater runoff.

Residents spoke of Zachary as a community that is unique and attractive. There were many comments regarding the desire for more green space integrated as an amenity into development. This objective may be achieved by adopting sound environmental conservation and responsible land development practices. Sensitive areas along the bayous and within the floodplain and wetlands may be incorporated in developments amenities, while sustaining their resource function. Doing so requires a regulatory system that balances development efficiency and resource protection. Responsible land planning practices will preserve resources and effectively integrate them into development without compromising private interests.

**GOALS**

- ▶ Promote infill development to avoid premature, peripheral growth and disturbance of rural lands
- ▶ Reuse vacant and underutilized buildings and sites
- ▶ Cluster to preserve open space and retain resource functions
- ▶ Develop mixed-use projects to improve accessibility and connectivity
- ▶ Encourage natural stormwater management systems
- ▶ Adopt near- and long-term energy conservation strategies

**Recommendations**

1. Adopt (construction and post-construction) Best Management Practices (BMPs) to help reduce pollutants from entering local bayous, drainage courses, and stormwater systems, while also controlling erosion and sedimentation. This will result in better functioning stormwater systems, improved water quality, sustained habitats, and reduced flooding.
2. Increase the maintenance of the stormwater system to allow for an efficiently functioning series of stormwater drains and collection areas. Lack of precautionary measures result in flooding during peak storm events.
3. Adopt standards to require stormwater management systems that reduce the level of runoff equal to that of pre-development levels. For infill and redevelopment projects, adopt alternative standards for achieving acceptable post-development runoff levels.
4. Prepare a City-wide master drainage plan as a policy guide for subdivision review and development.
5. Incorporate provisions into the zoning and subdivision ordinances for low impact development practices. This approach uses site design techniques to store, infiltrate, evaporate, and detain runoff,

which address runoff volume, frequency, and water quality. Examples of site design elements include on-lot micro-storage, functional landscaping, open drainage swales, reduced imperviousness, minimal grades, and depression storage.

6. Require the use of bio-swales in parking lots and along roadways to collect and hold stormwater, enhance recharge rates, and improve water quality.
7. Use bio-retention areas or rain gardens to collect rainwater after storms and divert it from the stormwater system. For instance, runoff from parking areas can channel water into constructed wetlands or native planting areas. Identify sites for potential bio-retention areas that can assist the storm drains in removing water from the roads. These sites might also be effective in reducing the need for stormwater system extensions into difficult to reach locations, sensitive areas, or sites that have high engineering costs.

**GOALS OF LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)**

The primary goal of LID is to mimic pre-development site hydrology by using site design techniques that store, infiltrate, evaporate, and detain runoff. These techniques help to address runoff volume and frequency and quality of receiving waters and ensure groundwater recharge. Goals include:

- ◆ Develop the full potential of environmentally sensitive site planning and design;
- ◆ Provide economic incentives that encourage environmentally sensitive development;
- ◆ Reduce construction and maintenance costs of stormwater and transportation infrastructure;
- ◆ Introduce new concepts for stormwater management such as micromanagement and multifunctional landscaping;
- ◆ Encourage flexible regulations that allow for innovative engineering and site planning; and
- ◆ Encourage public education and participation in environmental protection.

Source: Growing Smarter: Guidelines for Low Impact Development in the Pontchartrain Basin

8. Consider the design of new municipal buildings as pilot projects for innovative rainwater capture and treatment techniques. Use interpretive displays to educate residents about the science and benefits of such conservation efforts.
9. Incorporate incentives by way of expedited approval, local tax credits, or other alternatives for integrating water runoff reduction practices in land development. This is particularly applicable for high-density residential and “big box” development that have higher ratios of impervious surfaces.
10. Adopt tree preservation and landscaping requirements to increase the level of urban tree cover.
11. Explore the feasibility of using “green design” standards or LEED<sup>2</sup> certification for municipal projects. Consider phasing in incentives for integrating conservation practices into private development projects. Louisiana’s 2007 Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) establishes tax credits for buildings incorporating “green design” standards.
12. Adopt resource protection standards to preserve stands of vegetation and other environmentally-sensitive lands. Coupled with the protection standards should be provisions for development clustering to reward the preservation of open space with density bonuses.
13. Seek to acquire, by way of conservation easements or by fee simple acquisition, highly sensitive lands and conservation sites. These areas may include land along the bayous, drainage canals, within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defined floodway, wetland and wildlife habitat areas, or historically or culturally significant sites.
14. Organize a land-bank program where property owners may deed their undevelopable land to the “bank” for long-term conservation and protection, with tax benefits and offsetting zoning incentives for transferring development density to the developable portions of their land.

#### Example of Possible Points for LEED-NC Qualification

The sections are: Sustainable Sites, Water Efficiency, Energy and Atmosphere, Materials and Resources, Indoor Environmental Quality, and Innovation and Design Process. Each section addresses a different aspect of sustainable buildings. Examples of some of the requirements under selected sections are provided below:

- *Sustainable Sites*: Brownfield Redevelopment
- *Water Efficiency*: Water use reduction – 20% reduction
- *Energy and Atmosphere*: Optimize energy performance - Points granted by percent reduced.
- *Materials and Resources*: Construction waste management - Divert 50% from disposal
- *Indoor Environmental Quality*: Low-emitting materials - Paints, adhesives, carpets, etc.
- *Innovation and Design Process*: This section allows for developer innovation. The developer is required to provide a description and justification for the specific measure they selected.

Source: Louisiana Developer Green Building Guide (Global Green USA)

### Protection of Natural Amenities

There are a variety of areas throughout and around Zachary that serve as important natural resources necessitating environmental protection. Lands along the Comite River, Copper Mill Bayou, Cypress Bayou, White Bayou, and within the floodplain areas (mainly through the northern and eastern sides of town) offer unique opportunities for resource conservation and land preservation.

Restoring and protecting natural areas can act as a catalyst for economic development and provide for recreation and attractive amenities for the community while also being used for stormwater management. Therefore, these areas should be protected from encroachment or removal by development.

<sup>2</sup> LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings.

### GOALS

- ▶ Use the development regulations and standards to ensure environmentally-sensitive planning and development
- ▶ Adopt "eco-friendly" practices in parks and open space planning and maintenance programs
- ▶ Preserve open space to enhance livability, aesthetic quality, and natural beauty
- ▶ Sustain and improve the quality condition and attractive appearance of public spaces
- ▶ Conserve natural resources through parkland acquisition, open space preservation, and environmentally-sensitive planning

### Recommendations

1. Incorporate into the City's development standards provisions for resource protection. The resource area may be preserved in its native state, managed by a local conservancy, or dedicated to the City as permanent passive open space or active recreation space. A density bonus may offset and act as an incentive by allowing an increase in the overall development yield. The City must establish clear criteria for land dedications to avoid impractical sites with limited value for public use.
2. The new Unified Development Code (UDC) should include stormwater management provisions that address not only safe and effective conveyance of storm drainage, but also requirements to maintain the quality of area streams and aquifers by reducing or eliminating pollutants in stormwater runoff. Strategies include avoidance, minimization, and mitigation. Avoidance techniques may include cluster development; floodplain, drainageway, and wetland resource protection standards; and positive surface drainage in natural channels. Minimization techniques may include water gardens, rain barrels or cisterns, pervious pavement, vegetated swales, riparian buffers, swale blocks, and curbs without storm sewers. Mitigation measures are necessary where adverse impacts cannot be avoided or minimized.
3. Establish standards and procedures for park maintenance to eliminate adverse risks to the quality of adjacent streams and water bodies by way of "no-mow" zones, staged mowing heights in accordance with distances from the channel edge, prudent and well-supervised application of pesticide and herbicide products, and other minimization techniques.
4. Establish development incentives, such as reduced street widths and increased density, to encourage dedication of open space easements adjacent to collector and arterial street rights-of-way, along creeks and drainageways, and within major developments.
5. Incorporate open space at each of the community entrances and in other areas, and acquire land for permanent open space along LA 19 and LA 64 to visually enhance these corridors and promote regional recognition.
6. Acquire excess rights-of-way, vacated alleys and easements, areas beneath overhead power lines, irregularly-shaped parcels, and other non-developable tracts for utilization as public open space, plazas, and gardens.
7. Seek to acquire highly sensitive lands and conservation sites to preserve as public open space or recreation areas.

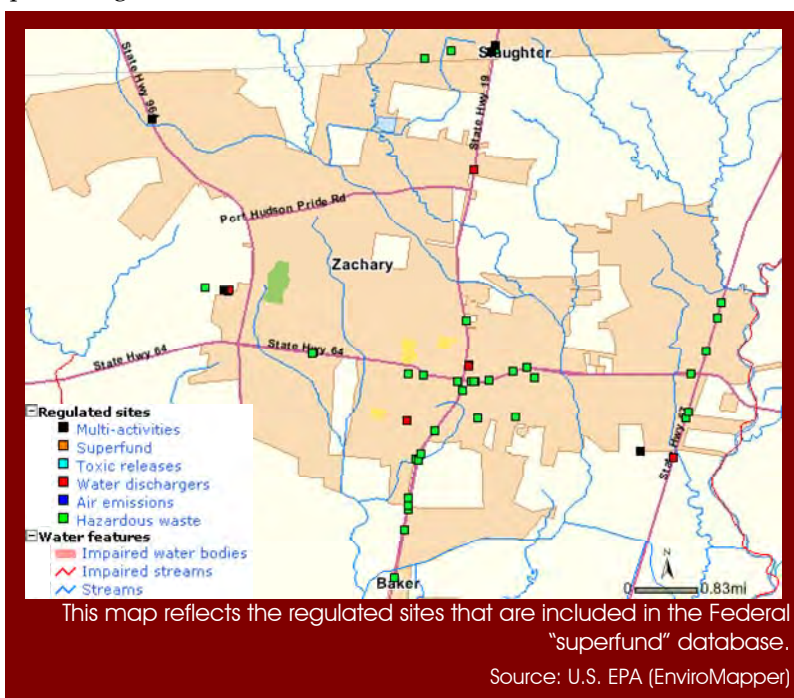


Adopted April 5, 2010

8. Acquire conservation easements along the Comite River, Cypress Bayou, White Bayou, Doyle Bayou, and other sensitive lands to protect these valuable natural resources from encroaching development and to utilize otherwise unusable lands.
9. Identify the boundaries of the regulatory floodways and consider acquisition of a riparian buffer area through fee-simple or conservation easement methods.
10. Identify areas of repetitive structure flooding where mitigation activities may result in publicly owned open space.
11. Amend the subdivision regulations to allow the use of conservation, preservation, and clustering subdivision techniques, which allow flexibility in lot size, setbacks, and other area standards as an incentive for an increase in open space, preservation of natural areas, and set-asides for wetlands and other sensitive habitat areas.
12. Preserve the environmental quality of the Comite River, Cypress Bayou, White Bayou, and Doyle Bayou, as well as area lakes and water bodies, by protecting valuable open space and habitats, improving drainage and water quality, and providing sensitive eco-recreational facilities.
13. Enforce sound floodplain management practices to maintain the water carrying capacity of drainageways, channels, and floodplain areas.

### Land Pollution and Waste Management

Land pollution has lasting effects on the environment in the form of soil and water contamination that may extend well beyond the boundaries of a polluted site. Leakage of hazardous material into the soil may cause local ground contamination that prohibits the site from being used for residential purposes or may be infeasible for redevelopment due to the cost of required cleanup. This same contamination may also spread to the groundwater system or an above ground stream and extend great distances resulting in widespread effects that are difficult to remediate and expensive to resolve. Typical examples of contaminated sites include old gas stations, chemical factories, petroleum refineries, waste facilities, rail yards, and junk yards, among others. Brownfields include currently operating waste facilities such as recycling plants, waste transfer stations, and municipal and private landfills.



#### GOALS

- ▶ Create a brownfields inventory that covers the proposed zone of influence
- ▶ Collaborate with local operating agencies and state officials for responsible waste management
- ▶ Promote recycling and increasing the percentage of recycled materials recovery
- ▶ Protect the groundwater from contamination sources

Any improvement to the conditions or infrastructure for walking, biking, or transit is an improvement for air quality. These transportation options could all be listed as congestion mitigation and air quality improvements. These strategies and innovations represent the ability to "think regionally and act locally."

Source: US EPA

Recommendations

1. Create a brownfield inventory to establish a searchable listing of properties that are known to or potentially contain soil contamination through environmental testing (or those already included on the EPA brownfields list). The inventory should include a parcel map with brownfields sites identified and a corresponding database with information about the type of contamination.
2. Forge a collaborative effort in the planning of new or expanded waste facilities for recycling or trash disposal. Planning efforts should focus on site design, transportation connections to the sites (truck routes), avoiding potential leachate contamination, and operating nuisances (noise, odor, and lighting).

3. Expand the recycling program (and trash pick up) concurrent with community growth. Consider expanding the current curb-side recycling program to include niche markets that may not be participating as heavily as a typical residential home, such as businesses and apartment buildings.
4. Expand the recycling program to all community buildings and public places.

Air Quality

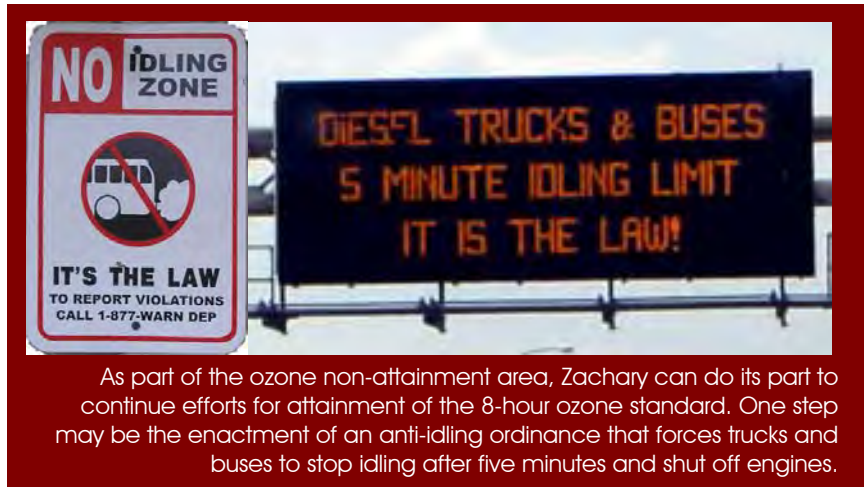
Zachary is situated in an ozone attainment airshed – the five-parish Baton Rouge metropolitan area – which avoids the federal red tape associated with economic development in nonattainment areas. Under the previous one-hour ozone standard, the Baton Rouge ozone non-attainment area was recently ruled as being in “attainment” in February 2010. Previously, the Baton Rouge area did meet the one-hour standard, which can bring economic development penalties in the form of the Section 185 fee program. However, the recent change to attainment status bodes well for air quality and future development prospects. As part of the broader airshed, Zachary can do its part to continue efforts for attainment of the newly instituted 8-hour ozone standard.

GOALS

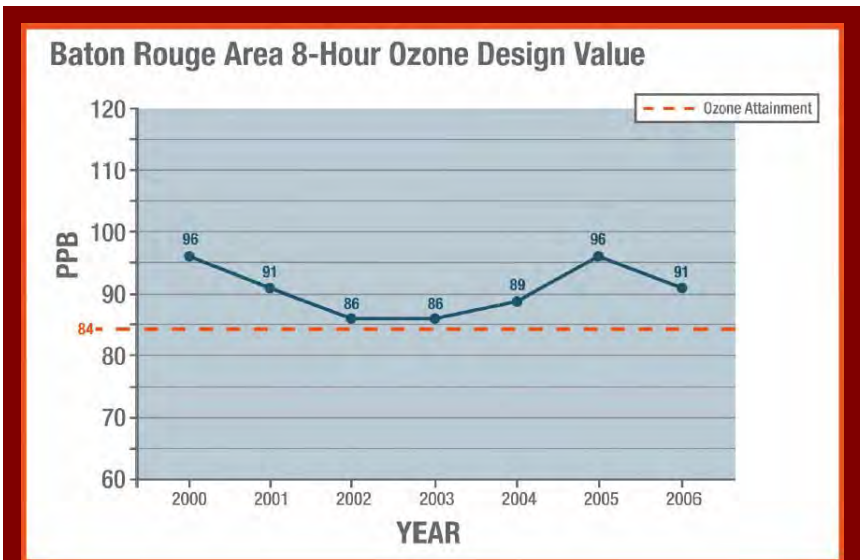
- ▶ Develop a street tree planting program together with ordinance provisions for tree and open space preservation and landscaping
- ▶ Collaborate with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 to monitor air quality in the region
- ▶ Implement the alternative transportation strategies identified in *Chapter 4, Thoroughfares & Public Transit*

Recommendations

1. Require the planting of street trees to assist in the improvement and management of air quality levels, and to help mitigate the effects of urbanization. In addition to cleaning the air, street trees improve property values, enhance community aesthetics, reduce the urban heat island effect, provide wildlife habitat, are proven to reduce vehicle speeds in neighborhoods, create an appealing pedestrian environment, and soften the urban environment. Preserving trees on individual sites during development may be achieved by mandating that larger trees are preserved and those removed are replanted. Enhanced landscaping requirements for new developments can also contribute to preserving trees and green space while making development attractive.
2. Coordinate with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and U.S. EPA Region 6, to monitor the air quality and stay alert as to any changing air quality conditions. The physical health of Zachary residents requires that adequate air quality be maintained. Additionally, there are many negative economic implications to "serious" or "severe" non-attainment areas that should be avoided, such as limitations on industrial development and expensive remediation planning.
3. Seek alternative transportation solutions to be enacted at the local and regional levels to preserve air quality. Transportation impacts represent some of the largest contributions to poor air quality, with up to 40 percent of the pollution levels resulting from nonpoint source transportation causes. As highway and air transportation connections increase in the region, such as the proposed Baton Rouge Loop, there will likely be subsequent deterioration in air quality.



As part of the ozone non-attainment area, Zachary can do its part to continue efforts for attainment of the 8-hour ozone standard. One step may be the enactment of an anti-idling ordinance that forces trucks and buses to stop idling after five minutes and shut off engines.



Exposures to ozone can:

- Reduce lung function, making it more difficult for people to breathe as deeply and vigorously as normal;
- Irritate the airways, causing coughing, sore or scratchy throat, pain when taking a deep breath and shortness of breath;
- Increase frequency of asthma attacks;
- Inflammate and damage the lining of the lung;
- Increase susceptibility to respiratory infection; and
- Aggravate chronic lung diseases such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis.

Source: US EPA and Louisiana DEQ





The City of Frisco, Texas recently built a joint City Hall and Library that features green design concepts.

4. Reduce congestion at local intersections by coordinating traffic signals so traffic flows are smooth. Many of the existing lights are not timed properly or do not allow adequate left turn time. The resulting traffic tie-ups create congestion that increases delays. Since the City does not have control over the timing and installation of lights, it is important that the City works with the Parish and LaDOTD in addressing this situation.

## Energy and Building Efficiency

Energy usage affects the environment through the production of energy by traditional fossil fuel sources, development of new energy infrastructure, and exploitation of natural resources to recover new sources of raw fossil fuels. Much of this energy usage is involved with transportation, but there is a large amount in the everyday operation of buildings. The energy usage of buildings can be reduced through better design and conservation practices. The City should mandate that municipal projects meet building energy efficiency standards and provide incentives to encourage an improved energy efficiency of residences

### GOALS

- ▶ Increase energy efficiency through better design of development projects
- ▶ Reduce municipal energy usage by 10 percent or more

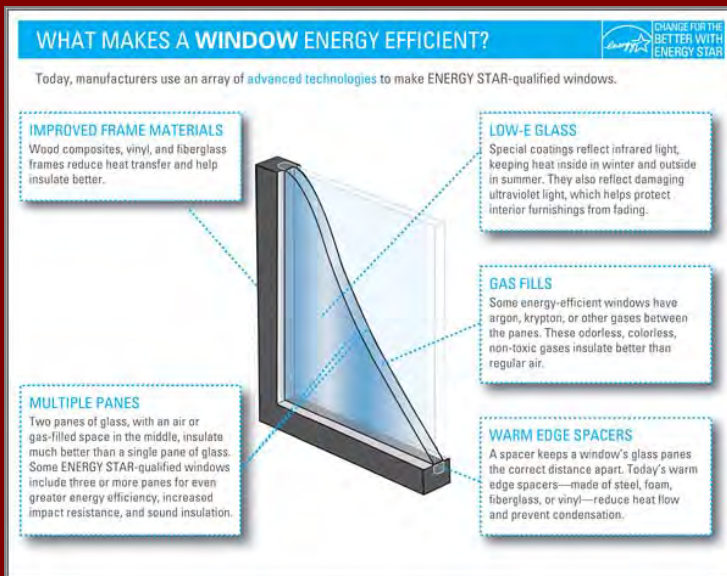
and commercial buildings.

### Recommendations

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of the 2007 International Building Code in regards to building energy

efficiency. This new code, which went into effect on January 1, 2007, incorporates energy efficiency standards into the Zachary building code for the first time. While judging its effectiveness, the City can encourage higher levels of energy and water efficiency through voluntary practices in both site and building design.

2. Create a city-wide energy task force. Existing municipal facilities could benefit from a task force that meets monthly to identify energy saving measures. Initial efforts could focus on building lighting, street lights, building heating/cooling, and water usage.
3. Adopt a long-term energy strategy to include an energy plan that enumerates reduction goals based on the current energy usage. A modest reduction of 10 percent in building energy usage is



Although most energy-efficiency measures will pay for themselves over a few years, tax rebates exist that will create a small immediate payback. The Home Energy Rebate Program offers a rebate of up to \$2,000 to Louisiana homeowners that build or retrofit their homes to achieve a high level of energy efficiency. This program, as well as the home energy loan program, is administered by the Department of Natural Resources. There are tax credits on federal taxes for buying hybrid and energy-efficient cars, putting in energy-saving windows and doors, and buying Energy Star appliances.



achievable under such a plan. The first step is to undertake an energy audit in conjunction with Intergy. The results of that audit should give rise to municipal policies aimed at electricity reduction solutions that save money while benefiting the environment.



Chapter Six

# Parks, Recreation, & Open Space

Providing safe and accessible parks and recreational opportunities helps to improve quality of life. In addition, public open space helps define and connect neighborhoods and improve the recreation possibilities for all residents. This chapter guides decisions regarding the improvement of existing parks and ongoing development of new facilities and spaces, commensurate with changes in the future population, demographics, and development patterns.

In general, Zachary has an adequate amount of parks and recreation spaces to meet existing needs, but requires additional maintenance and funding to keep pace with its expected future population growth. This plan focuses on:

- ◆ Enhancing the park system based on the needs and desires of residents through their participation and input;
- ◆ Continually improving and expanding facilities and programs;
- ◆ Promoting safe and enjoyable open space environments;
- ◆ Providing a wide range of opportunities accessible to all persons;
- ◆ Protecting and integrating natural resources into the design of parks; and
- ◆ Developing an organizational structure and administrative capacity to provide proper maintenance and effective facility and program management.



## Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to plan for the short- and long-term needs of the community. It forms policy directions pertaining to the placement of parks and recreational amenities within the City and its future growth area, the classifications of parks and types of facilities needed, and the methods by which enhancements and improvements may be funded. The chapter identifies the challenges, opportunities, and needs for improving the local park system.

There are several reasons why this chapter is important:

- ◆ Invest in the community's livability and quality of life, which contributes to its economic development and attractiveness as a place to live and conduct business;
- ◆ Improve the quality and appearance of public spaces to form a positive and desirable image of Zachary for residents, visitors, and investors;
- ◆ Provide areas and facilities for citizens of all ages to meet their active and leisure recreation needs;
- ◆ Contribute to a healthy community life by enabling residents to use parks and trails for sport and exercise;
- ◆ Satisfy the interests of local recreation leagues and activity groups who use facilities for athletic events and social interaction;
- ◆ Improve the safety and utilization of parks by making necessary improvements and desired enhancements;
- ◆ Form decision-making criteria for acquiring and developing new parks, including their type, design, location, spacing, and methods of financing;
- ◆ Provide adequate areas and facilities within close proximity to all persons, including a diverse range of parks to meet the individual needs of citizens; and
- ◆ Preserve valued open space and other sensitive lands for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

## Issues and Opportunities

This chapter is designed to ensure that Zachary “catches up” on its deficiencies in providing parks and recreation areas and facilities. The community’s two priority issues are:

1. enhance the current parks to meet (or exceed) a minimum standard of quality and maintenance; and
2. add new neighborhood and community parks and greenways and linkages commensurate with future development.

New Community Park



Located near an existing wetland, New Community Park (located adjacent to the Zachary Youth Park) will provide increased recreational opportunities for residents.

## Coordination and Intergovernmental Cooperation

As one of the fastest growing cities in the region, Zachary will inevitably see an increased demand for recreational programs and facilities. To meet this increasing demand, the City would benefit by joint acquisition, development, and ongoing maintenance of public spaces to stretch its local resources for the development and redevelopment of its parks. Coordination and collaboration among agencies (such as with the school district, the East Baton Rouge Parish Parks and Recreation Commission (BREC), and other local agencies and organizations) would mutually benefit all interests because it eases the burden of tax dollars and, at the same time, allows a pooling of resources to enhance the quality of areas and facilities.

Collaboration requires effective communication and coordination among stakeholders. Through agreements created between public/semi-public agencies, as well as partnerships with the private sector, the parks and recreation system benefits in its quality while better meeting the needs of users. Joint acquisition, construction,



operation, and maintenance allow efficient use of public dollars while ensuring that park facilities are well coordinated and connected.

Unfortunately, funding for parks is often secondary to that of the utility infrastructure (e.g., water, wastewater, and drainage systems) and safety sensitive services (i.e., police and fire protection). However, parks are an equally important part of the public infrastructure system. Therefore, identifying a dedicated funding source, such as a parks and recreation district,<sup>1</sup> and effectively leveraging state and federal grants and private foundations funds will be increasingly important to develop and sustain an inheritable parks and recreation system.

Coordination and collaboration among agencies is of mutual benefit to all interests. It eases the burden on public tax dollars and enhances the quality of areas and facilities.

#### GOALS

- ▶ A park system that is coordinated and managed by Zachary officials and staff
- ▶ Provision of public information regarding the availability of parks and recreational programs
- ▶ Cooperation to address the area's recreational needs and environmental conservation priorities

#### Recommendations

1. Continue to support and develop the Zachary Parks and Recreation Department to oversee the development and maintenance of parks while coordinating with other organizations such as BREC.
2. As part of a City-wide website, create a "parks and recreation" section. This should provide information as to upcoming events and programs, park locations and hours, volunteer opportunities, and links to related regional and state-wide sites.
3. In collaboration with BREC, create up-to-date park maps to identify current facilities and planned future improvements. Public access to these maps will prove helpful for users of the park system.
4. Develop agreements with BREC and the Zachary Community School District for the joint acquisition of land, improvements, and maintenance of facilities, as well as the use and management of areas and buildings.
5. Establish a Parks and Beautification Board with representation from BREC. The Board would serve an advisory role to the Parks and Recreation Department and help to guide the direction of park policies and decisions. The Board would also be involved in studying park and recreation issues and identifying needs and possible solutions.
6. Establish programs for lease/purchase, tax incentives, and provision of public maintenance to entice private sector participation in the construction of new parks.
7. Establish cooperative agreements with developers and landowners to develop parkland in new neighborhoods, which may be privately owned and maintained or dedicated to the City.
8. Encourage private sector participation in providing parks and public open space by permitting land development practices such as development



<sup>1</sup> Zachary's power to add and develop parks is part of its "home rule" power, which is provided in Article 6, Section 5 of the Louisiana Constitution.

clustering. Create incentives that will result in an efficient utilization of land and provide greater opportunities for the enjoyment of open space and preservation of the natural environment.

9. Establish alliances with local churches and other institutions for use of their lands and facilities (as available) in exchange for monetary contributions and City-funded improvements.
10. Facilitate park planning and design charrettes in the design and development of parks within their respective neighborhoods.

### Balanced, Convenient, and Accessible Parks

A good system of parks creates a balance of recreation areas and public spaces across the community. In doing so, *all* residents have equal access to public spaces and recreational areas to meet their active and passive recreational needs. These parks and open spaces must be located and designed to complement the surrounding neighborhoods by way of their accessibility, arrangement, and appropriateness of equipment and facilities to match the needs of their users.

A *system* of parks offers diversity ranging from larger-scale facilities serving persons within the broader region (within a one-hour driving distance) to community-wide facilities (generally serving a one-mile area) and those that serve immediate and nearby neighborhoods. A range of spaces and activities should provide a combination of indoor and outdoor facilities, as well as an adequate assortment of activity types (both passive and active) to meet the individual and collective needs of residents.

#### GOALS

- ▶ A balanced and wide variety of public parks, recreational areas, and open space in near proximity to all residents
- ▶ Investment and reinvestment in the parks and recreation system to raise its level of quality
- ▶ An even distribution of parks and recreation facilities throughout the community
- ▶ Adequate funding and resources – on par with similar-sized communities – to perform ongoing maintenance and construct needed improvements

#### Recommendations

1. Support and carry out an aggressive park and facility maintenance program. The program must first conduct a physical condition assessment (to be repeated annually) to identify and log all necessary maintenance items, including repair of broken equipment, identification of unsafe conditions and remedies for correction, and items warranting more significant capital expenditures. Cost estimates should be compiled and integrated into an annual work program and capital improvements program.
2. Create an operation and management plan for the development of new facilities and delivery of park services and recreational programs, including a maintenance plan with scheduling and personnel tracking. Work directly with BREC to establish priority improvements and a strategic implementation program with annual targets and objectives.
3. Develop a new community park serving the recreational needs on the east side of Downtown.
4. Monitor opportunities to acquire desirable tracts that are favorably situated in new growth areas for future park development. It is particularly important to target potential purchases before area land prices escalate with oncoming urbanization.

Adopted April 5, 2010

5. Address the needs of youth sports and athletic leagues for the provision of adequate fields and facilities to support the desired level of recreational activity and offerings.
6. Expand the range of facilities available to include those that provide an added attraction, such as family picnic shelters/areas, walking and biking trails, indoor fitness and exercise facilities, play areas, natural areas/conservation parks, swimming pools/splash pads, cultural or neighborhood center, and other types of activity areas per the preferences of community residents.
7. Establish additional funding sources to facilitate park planning and recreational programming improvements.
8. Establish a “Friends-of-the-Park” program to solicit neighborhood involvement to enhance and police public parks.
9. Perform regular safety inspections to identify potentially harmful or dangerous conditions and create an itemized list of repairs and improvements.
10. Add overhead and walkway bollard lighting in each of the neighborhood and community parks to enhance early morning/evening use and to promote park safety.
11. Improve accessibility for disabled and handicapped users by adding sidewalk curb cuts and ramps, wheelchair accessible sidewalks and trails, and providing other accessible facilities and equipment.
12. Replace or construct new park signs that are uniform in appearance with maintenance-free landscaping or xeriscape plant materials around the base.

#### Available Funding Techniques:

- ◆ Current revenue
- ◆ Reserve funds
- ◆ Enterprise and revenue funds
- ◆ General obligation bonds
- ◆ Lease-purchase
- ◆ Eminent domain
- ◆ Authorities and special districts
- ◆ Sales tax
- ◆ User fees
- ◆ In-kind services and volunteer participation
- ◆ State and federal assistance
- ◆ Land donation
- ◆ Trust fund
- ◆ Private financing
- ◆ Land dedication
- ◆ Fee-in-lieu of development
- ◆ Tax deferral
- ◆ Tax reductions

### Preservation of “Green Ribbons”

An essential element of a parks and recreation system is greenbelts and linear linkages that tie together – like ribbons – the community’s neighborhoods, parks, schools, and other public spaces. There are multiple opportunities for creating pedestrian linkages and off-street trails between community attractions. Excess rights-of-way along streets, alleys, bayous, and railroads; utility and drainage easements; and wide shoulder lanes along rural roadways are ideal to create such linkages. These would help interconnect the system of City and Parish public spaces, as well as neighborhoods throughout the community.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Develop a comprehensive community trail network
- ▶ Build an interconnected system of multi-purpose paths, trails, lanes, and routes that are accessible, convenient, and connect to neighborhoods, parks, schools, workplaces, and other destinations
- ▶ Promote gradual expansion of a City-wide trail and bikeway network

#### Recommendations

1. Extend the trail network to connect the City and provide access to outlying open space resources (refer to *Map 6.3, System Plan*).



Recreation opportunities connected to adjacent uses, such as this walking path near the Lane Regional Hospital, provide opportunities to enjoy a safe, outdoor environment. Creating more of these opportunities will help to connect places throughout Zachary.

Source: KKC Photos

2. Utilize rights-of-way, easements, natural drainage courses, and natural trails to link the City's parks and recreation areas.
3. Adopt a policy for the conversion and use of floodways and drainage channels, railroad corridors, and other rights-of-way and easements as trails and connections.
4. Regularly submit applications for Federal grants through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (SAFE-TEA), the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program, and other available programs to leverage funds for bikeway and trail planning and development.
5. Require sidewalk and trail locations to be shown on preliminary plats to allow pre-development review and post-construction inspection of plan conformance.

6. Create a sidewalk improvement program to repair, replace, or install new sidewalks (or trails in the case of rural street sections) in high pedestrian use areas, thereby providing safe walking connections to segments of the community trail system.

#### Tammany Trace Bike Trail



The Tammany Trail system provides a safe, scenic trail that connects urban, suburban, and rural terrains. This 31-mile asphalt trail and parallel equestrian trail connects five communities. Users can use this trail on foot, skates, bicycles, and horses. Providing a complete trail network for Zachary would create additional recreation opportunities by linking neighborhoods, parks, schools, and commercial areas.

Source: <http://www.tammanytrace.org/>

7. In coordination with BREC, develop greenways along each of the creeks, floodways and drainage ways, and other flood-prone areas, as well as forested corridors within the City and its growth area. These areas may be used for trails that tie the community together.
8. Coordinate with East Baton Rouge Parish and/or the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development to install shared right-of-way signage and provide adequate road shoulders along rural roadways to accommodate avid cyclists.
9. Amend the subdivision regulations to require pedestrian easements in appropriate mid-block locations between lots (or at the end of cul-de-sacs and elsewhere) to allow access to existing or planned parks and trails. This must be integrated as part of the plat review and approval process, which will require designation of park and school sites and identification of sidewalk locations and any planned internal trails within the development.
10. Amend the street cross sections in the subdivision ordinance to include provisions for trails and bikeways. These facilities should be included in new road projects and reconstruction projects, where feasible and acceptable.



## Needs Assessment

To assess the level of adequacy of the existing parks and recreation system, it is necessary to evaluate the supply of parks and relate them to facility standards to gauge their level of service. In addition, it is necessary to consider the increase in projected population, forecast future needs, and identify both current and forthcoming deficiencies.

The assessment of need for neighborhood and community parks varies according to their purpose and use. Community parks are intended to function on a large-scale basis, serving the parks and recreation needs of the entire community. They are typically 10 acres or larger in size and include facilities for area-wide activities and assembly events, such as picnic areas, walking/jogging trails, ball fields, and other larger-scale activities. Ensuring adequate and equitable recreation and leisure opportunity for all citizens is the objective of community parks.



A high priority of the park system is the maintenance of grounds and facilities.

Source: KKC Photos

The use of neighborhood parks is intended for the residents of adjacent and nearby neighborhoods. Here, the focus is on safety, accessibility, and proximity. Complete coverage of all neighborhoods is not necessary for neighborhood parks; rather, it is more important to have a well-distributed system to serve the needs of nearby residents. An acceptable walking distance to neighborhood parks is up to eight blocks.

## Resources vs. Needs

A combination of standards and user demands was utilized to evaluate the need for parks and recreational facilities. User demands were identified through the input of key persons who participated in stakeholder interviews and attended the Citizens' Congress.<sup>2</sup> Utilizing national standards, the acreage of parks and recreation areas needed currently

Table 6.1, Recommended Area Standards

Classification	Standard	Low	High	Recommended
Play Lot	0.25 to 0.5 acre/1,000 persons	3.51	7.03	5.27
		5.96	11.92	8.94
Neighborhood Park	1 to 3 acres/1,000 persons	14.00	42.17	28.11
		23.84	71.54	47.66
Community Park	3 to 5 acres/1,000 persons	42.17	70.28	56.22
		71.54	119.25	95.40
Total		59.74	119.48	89.68
		101.34	202.71	152.00

NOTES: The acreages are based on a Year 2007 estimated population of 14,055 persons. The future acreage needs are based on a Year 2030 population projection of 23,843 persons.

Table 6.2, Current and Future Park Demands

Classification	Existing Supply	Acres Needed		(Surplus)/Deficiency	
		Current	Year 2030	Current	Year 2030
Play Lot	0.50	5.27	8.94	4.77	8.44
Neighborhood Park	47.50	28.11	47.66	(19.39)	0.16
Community Park	355.80	56.22	95.40	(299.58)	(260.40)
Total	403.80	89.68	152.00	(314.20)	(251.80)

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

<sup>2</sup> This also included the results of the *Community Attitude & Interest Citizen Survey*.

and in the Year 2030 is displayed in **Table 6.1, Recommended Area Standards** and **Table 6.2, Current and Future Park Demands**. The need for additional parks and recreation acreage is determined by applying the recommended standards to the existing and projected future populations.

**Current Needs** - As shown in *Table 6.1, Recommended Area Standards*, the standards range on a basis of 1,000 persons. Based upon a 2007 U.S. Census population estimate of 14,055 persons, the total acreage currently needed ranges from 60 to approximately 119 acres of play lots, neighborhood parks, and community parks. The recommended standard is a total of roughly 90 acres. Assuming a Year 2030 population of 23,843 persons, the total recommended need is 152 acres. This includes 5.27 acres of play lots, 28.11 acres of neighborhood parks, and 56.22 acres of community parks.

Presently, together, the City and BREC maintain roughly 404 acres of parks and recreation areas, plus an additional 643 acres of special use areas and facilities. Since the latter sites are not utilized by all persons on a daily basis, they are not included for the purpose of this analysis. As displayed in *Table 6.2, Current and Future Park Demands*, overall there is more than sufficient parkland to meet the needs by the Year 2030. The most significant need is in the provision of small play lots where an additional 8.44 acres will be needed.

#### What is BREC?

The Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge operates public park and recreation facilities and programs throughout East Baton Rouge Parish. As a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) BREC has been recognized as one of America's premier recreation and park departments. BREC maintains 184 parks that offer a wide variety of facilities and activities.

BREC was created by a State Legislature Act in 1946 as an independent body whose sole purpose is to develop, maintain, and operate public parks and recreational facilities for all people in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Money for financing land purchases, construction of facilities, maintenance, and operation of activities is obtained by taxes as voted by the citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish and from income from facilities, concessions, and programs. Other funds come from local governmental agencies and the Federal Government.

Source: [www.brec.org](http://www.brec.org)















## Parks Service Areas

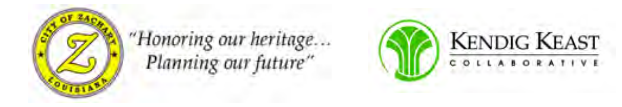
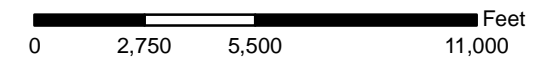
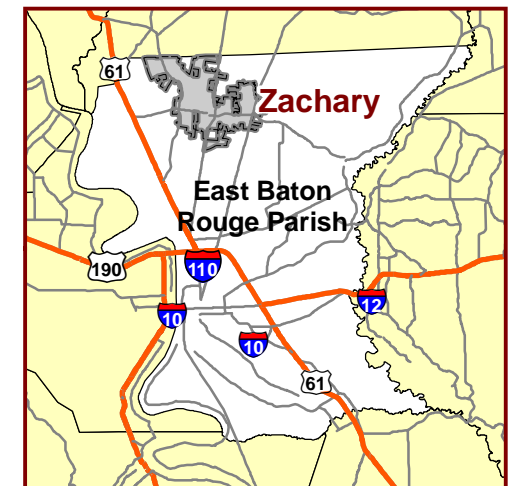
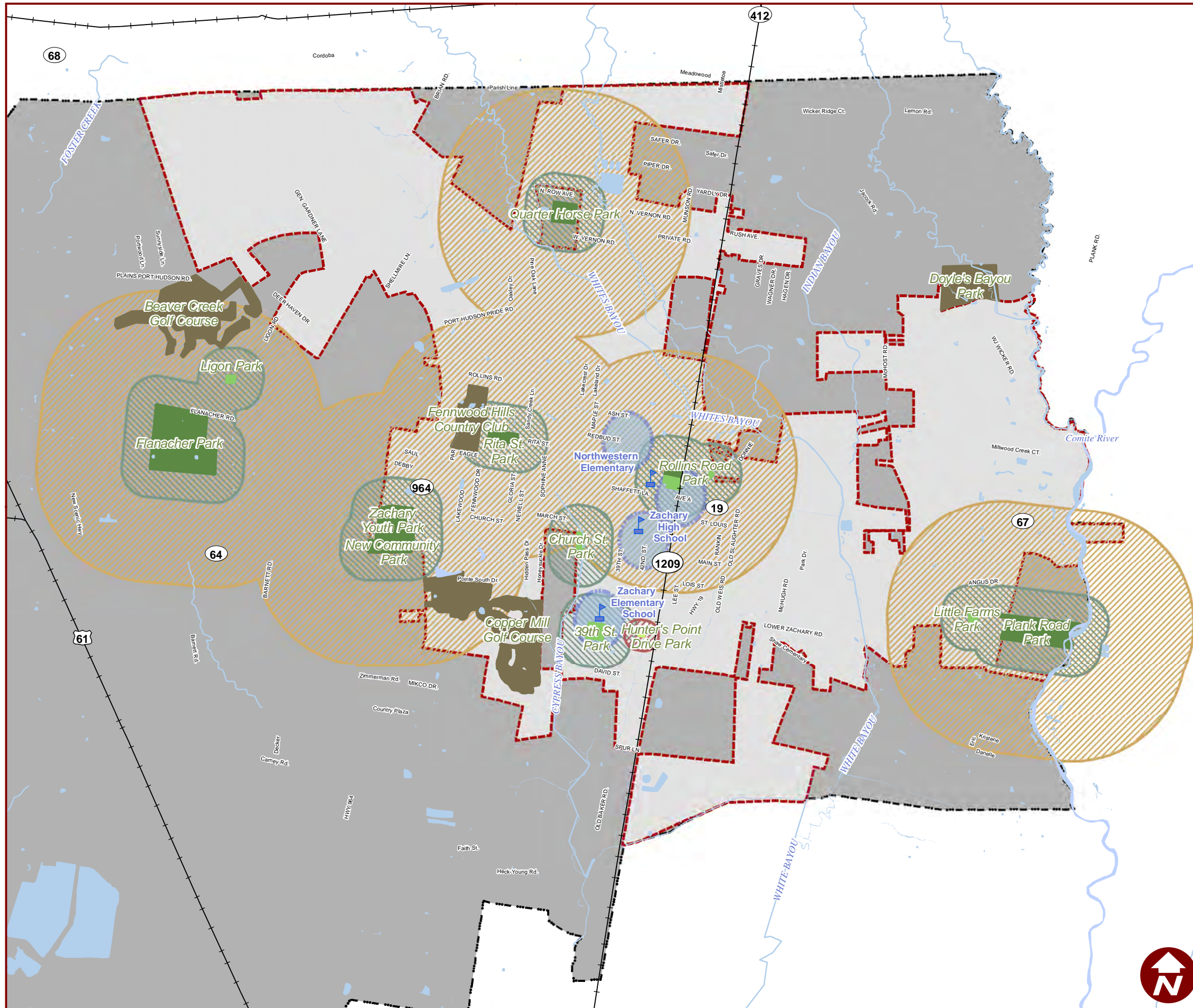
Evaluating service areas is an effective means of determining if the parks are well located relative to their users. This analysis allows identification of those areas of the community that have sufficient park areas available and, more importantly, those that are in need of parks and recreation areas and facilities. Findings of the service area analysis include:

- ◆ **Community parks** have a primary service area of one mile, meaning that a majority of persons utilizing these area-wide parks generally reside within this area. As illustrated by **Map 6.1, Park Service Areas**, while there are five community parks, due to the location of New Community Park immediately adjacent to the Zachary Youth Park, effectively, there are four service areas. Unfortunately, the service areas of these parks serve relatively undeveloped areas, those outside the City limits, and the western-most neighborhoods in the City. The developed area of the City is, therefore, not sufficiently served by community parks. As a result, there is a need for more community parks even though, according to standards, there is a sufficient acreage of parks to meet the 20-year needs.
- ◆ **Neighborhood parks** are intended to provide residents with ample opportunity for both passive and semi-active recreation activity within close proximity to their home. Whereas community parks are designed for large-scale, area-wide events and activities, neighborhood parks are intended to meet the daily recreation needs of nearby residents. The level of activity is limited due to the size and location of these parks and the equipment and facilities available. Neighborhood parks should be



# Map 6.1 Park Service Areas

-  Mini Park
-  Neighborhood Park
-  Community Park
-  Special Use Areas and Facilities
-  Schools
-  School Service Areas
-  Community Park Service Area (1 mi.)
-  Neighborhood Park Service Area (1/4 mi.)
-  Play Lot Park Service Area (1/8 mi.)
-  Corporate Limits
-  Proposed Zone of Influence
-  Major Water Bodies
-  Streams
-  Railroads





within a short walking distance for the residents of one or more neighborhoods, thereby encouraging use and promoting convenience, ease of access, and walking safety for neighborhood children. Illustrated by *Map 6.1, Park Service Areas*, are the one-quarter mile service areas of the six neighborhood parks. The intent is to have well-distributed and evenly spaced neighborhood parks proximate to the residentially developed areas. Between the neighborhood parks and school grounds, there is good coverage except for the areas closest to the intersection of Main Street and Central Avenue.

As the community grows, achieving a system of neighborhood and community parks that is uniformly distributed may be accomplished in several ways, including pre-development acquisition by the City or BREC, dedication requirements concurrent with subdivision approval, public/private partnerships, and other strategies. While the provision of community parks is generally agreed to be the responsibility of the government entity, the responsibility for neighborhood parks generally lies with private development. Requiring the dedication of parkland concurrent with a final plat is a sound method to assure adequate park areas consistent with the demand and impact placed on the public parks system by new development.



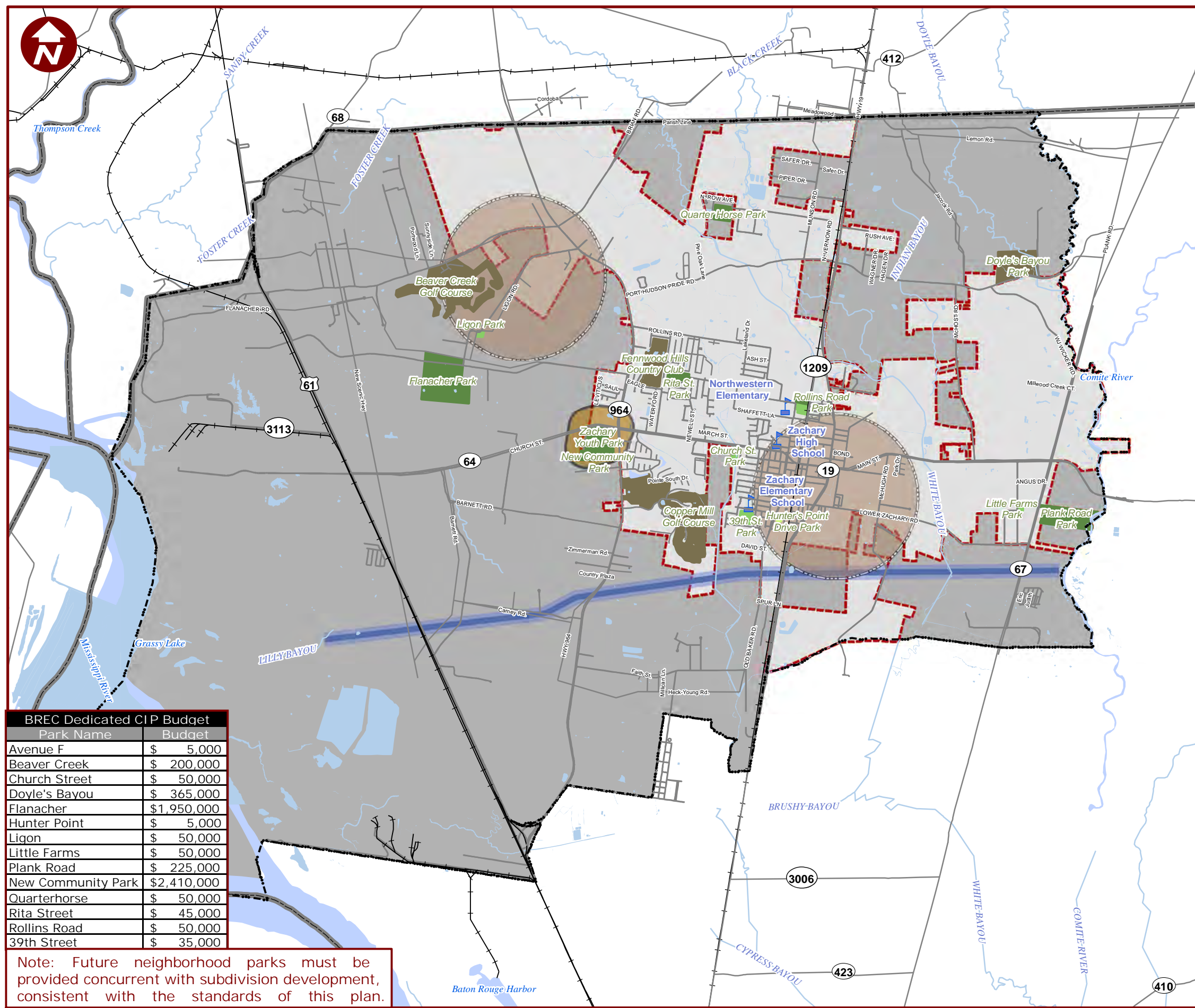
## Summary of Needs

The priorities to enhance and improve the park system include:

- ◆ Although the overall acreage meets standards, there remains a community park need in the Central City area. Acceptance of land donation, dedication, or land acquisition should be considered in the near term while there is undeveloped land in this area.
- ◆ Four new neighborhood parks are needed within the Central City area to improve existing deficiencies, as shown by **Map 6.2, System Plan**. If coordinated with the above recommended new community park, the number of new neighborhood parks may be reduced to three since the community park would also meet the nearby neighborhood needs.
- ◆ With exception of the above recommended needs, the overall acreage of parks is sufficient to meet the Year 2030 needs. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on development of unimproved parks and enhancement or revitalization of existing parks.
- ◆ Further development of year-round recreational programs (indoor and outdoor) will be needed with the increasing demands of a growing population. This will require new recreation centers and eventually, a multi-purpose activity complex.
- ◆ At this early point in the City's growth, it is essential to create standards and require land set-asides for development of a greenway system. This will facilitate development of a City-wide trail network concurrent with new development.



# Map 6.2 System Plan





- Parks & Schools**
- Mini Park
  - Neighborhood Park
  - Community Park
  - Special Use Areas and Facilities
  - Schools
- Park Need Areas**
- Neighborhood Park Need Area (1/4 mi.)
  - Community Park Need Area (1 mi.)
- Boundaries, Water, & Infrastructure**
- Future Diversion Canal
  - Corporate Limits
  - Proposed Zone of Influence
  - Parish Boundary
  - Major Water Bodies
  - ~ Streams
  - +— Railroads

BREC Dedicated CIP Budget	
Park Name	Budget
Avenue F	\$ 5,000
Beaver Creek	\$ 200,000
Church Street	\$ 50,000
Doyle's Bayou	\$ 365,000
Flanacher	\$1,950,000
Hunter Point	\$ 5,000
Ligon	\$ 50,000
Little Farms	\$ 50,000
Plank Road	\$ 225,000
New Community Park	\$2,410,000
Quarterhorse	\$ 50,000
Rita Street	\$ 45,000
Rollins Road	\$ 50,000
39th Street	\$ 35,000

Note: Future neighborhood parks must be provided concurrent with subdivision development, consistent with the standards of this plan.

0 0.45 0.9 1.8 Miles

- ◆ Increased funding support is warranted for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of parks. A dedicated funding source is needed for ongoing park development and system expansion.
- ◆ During the horizon of this plan, a full-time position will be necessary to oversee recreational programs, park construction and maintenance, and trail system development. In the interim, this may be handled by forming a Parks Board that is supported by staff.

## Park Classifications

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines to establish criteria for the provision of parks and recreation facilities and open space. These standards serve as a guide for the ongoing development of the City's parks and recreation system. Given the desires expressed by residents and the rate of growth, continued development and enhancement will be necessary to meet the needs and expectations of the community.

While standards are useful, it is important that they "fit the community" given such considerations as participation trends, user characteristics, demographics, climate, natural environment, and other factors. Leisure and recreation values are unique in Zachary, meaning that the standards must be balanced by the input received from residents throughout the plan implementation process.

A variety of types and sizes of parks and recreation facilities and activities are recommended to satisfy the diverse interests of the population, to ensure adequate and equal opportunities for all persons, and to encourage use by all ages. The classifications of parks, their roles, and typical facilities and improvements follow.

### Play lot

Play lots are intended for limited activity by immediately adjacent residents, such as those who are within apartment complexes and urban, densely populated subdivisions. There are no specific criteria to guide their development, although they should have facilities to meet the needs of children and their parents. The notable features that distinguish a play lot from a neighborhood park are its considerably smaller size, fewer and smaller-scaled facilities, and their location within dense residential settings.

Park and recreation opportunities promote the health of residents, provide activities for residents of all ages, and preserve natural environments. They also play a role in attracting visitors to the community, thus promoting local tourism and economic development.

Play lots are intended to provide a play area within a very short walking distance of residents within an apartment complex, manufactured home subdivision, or urban neighborhood. They are not intended to mitigate the need for nearby parks. Instead, their purpose is to supplement neighborhood parks, particularly in the development types described above.

### Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide facilities that conveniently accommodate use by surrounding neighborhoods – typically within a distance of four to eight blocks. Ease of access from neighborhoods, central location, and pedestrian/bicycle linkages are key considerations of nearby neighborhood parks. They should be designed to accommodate the needs of all ages and, therefore, should have a blend of passive and active facilities.



Neighborhood parks are intended to provide residents ample opportunities for passive (walking, picnicking, nature viewing, etc.) and semi-active (playground, open play fields, game tables, etc.) recreation activity. As displayed by the **Figure 6.1, Typical Neighborhood Park**, the designed level of activity is limited because of the size and location of these parks and the equipment and facilities available.

The size of neighborhood parks varies according to the availability of property, method and timing of acquisition, and intended use. One or two vacant lots or several acres may both adequately serve the needs of a neighborhood if they are evenly distributed and there are sufficient facilities available. National standards recommend a minimum neighborhood park size of five acres. Due to the intended purpose and use of neighborhood parks, their location and proximity to and within neighborhoods is more important than their size.

The minimum size of a neighborhood park should be five acres, with a standard of one acre per 1,000 residents. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

- ◆ Benches
- ◆ Picnic tables with shelters
- ◆ Barbecue pits/grills
- ◆ Sidewalks and/or a natural walking trail
- ◆ Shade trees and landscaping
- ◆ Drinking fountain(s)
- ◆ Security lighting
- ◆ Multi-purpose open play area and play courts
- ◆ Playground equipment and/or a playscape (up to 25 children)
- ◆ Perimeter fencing or landscaping
- ◆ Restrooms with on- or off-street parking
- ◆ Dog walking area
- ◆ Trash receptacles
- ◆ Curb cuts and crosswalks

Figure 6.1, Typical Neighborhood Park



Neighborhood parks should be within short walking distances (1/2 mile or less) for the residents of one or more neighborhoods, thereby encouraging use and promoting convenience, ease of access, and walking safety for neighborhood children. Whenever possible, they should be located away from busy arterial streets and should not require any busy street crossings for access from their constituent neighborhoods.

Zachary Youth Park



The signage provided at this community park creates a distinctive gateway welcoming users to this park. Other parks could benefit from similar enhancements.

Source: KKC Photo

## Community Parks

Community parks serve the parks and recreation needs of an entire community. They are larger in size and include facilities and improvements for area-wide activities and assembly events, such as large picnic shelters, walking/jogging trails, athletic fields and courts, and other larger-scale activities. It is essential

that adequate off-street parking be provided, particularly for organized sporting events and tournaments. Community parks should be located adjacent and connected to a greenway to provide linear linkage to other areas of the community.

In Zachary, the community parks should serve as focal points for civic gatherings and organized recreational programs, special events, and sports league play. Further, they may also become major landmarks within the community; a symbol that enhances community identity and is beloved by residents.

National standards recommend a minimum community park size of 10 acres. Those with athletic field complexes for organized sports, though, may be as large as 40 or more acres, as shown in **Figure 6.2, Typical Community Park**. In acreage terms, the standard is five acres per 1,000 persons. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

Figure 6.2, Typical Community Park



Community parks should be centrally located for convenience to all residents. It should have direct access to a collector or arterial street in order to handle special event traffic while avoiding neighborhood disruption. Community parks should include adequate off-street parking. The "ideal" service radius of a community park is one mile. A community park located in or near a residential area usually serves a secondary role as a neighborhood park.

- ◆ Picnic tables with shelters
- ◆ Barbecue pits/grills
- ◆ Sidewalks and/or a natural walking trail
- ◆ Biking trails
- ◆ Shade trees and native landscaping
- ◆ Drinking fountains
- ◆ Security lighting
- ◆ Multi-purpose open play areas
- ◆ Multi-purpose courts
- ◆ Playground equipment and playscapes (up to 50 children)
- ◆ Bicycle racks
- ◆ Perimeter fencing or landscaping
- ◆ Street signs indicating "children at play"
- ◆ Benches
- ◆ Trash receptacles and enclosures
- ◆ Curb cuts and crosswalks
- ◆ Tennis courts



Adopted April 5, 2010

- ◆ Basketball courts
- ◆ Softball and little league fields with bleachers
- ◆ Soccer/football fields with goals and goal posts
- ◆ Field house
- ◆ Sand volleyball courts
- ◆ Swimming pool or spray park
- ◆ Covered pavilions
- ◆ Performance stage (optional)
- ◆ Restrooms and locker room
- ◆ Fencing for ball fields and athletic courts
- ◆ Concrete surface for a general play area
- ◆ Off-street parking

A comprehensive and integrated system of parks and recreational opportunities that respond to the needs and desires of local residents contribute to livable communities.

## Facility Standards

As parks and recreational opportunities are evaluated for acquisition, development, or redevelopment, it is important for the City to have a standardized list of facilities and equipment desired for each type of park (as outlined in the preceding section) to assess the development feasibility of each site. There are important considerations in designing parks including the size, shape, and orientation of the site; pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular access and parking; adjoining land uses; development constraints, such as grades, drainage, and flooding; environmental impacts; and the anticipated uses of the park. In assessing the feasibility of a site, each is important.

Table 6.3 - Facility Development Standards

Classification	Use	Service Area	Desirable Size	Acres/1,000 Population	Desirable Site Characteristics
Playlot	Small areas intended primarily for the use of children (toddlers - age 9) containing play equipment, swings, slides, sandboxes, and benches.	Less than 1/4 mile radius.	1,000 square feet - 1 acre	0.25 - 0.50 acres	Within neighborhoods and close to apartments, townhouses, or housing for the elderly.
Neighborhood Park	Landsaped natural park of limited size primarily for passive recreational needs of all ages but with designated active areas. Provides scenic and aesthetic value including open lawn space, small picnic areas, nature walks, and areas for court games, if not provided nearby.	1/4 to 1/2 mile radius (Serves one or more neighborhoods).	3-5 acres	1-3 acres	Should be located in the center of a single larger or several smaller neighborhoods.
Community Park	A large natural and /or landscaped area to provide an escape from City congestion without traveling a large distance. Provides both intensive and passive uses. Typical facilities include swimming pool, picnic areas, paths, game courts, gardens, natural areas, pavilions, ample parking, and restrooms.	1 to 2 miles (serves large segments of the population)	10+ acres	3 - 5 acres	Designed to accommodate a large number of people and a wide variety of activities.

Source: Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.

Displayed in **Table 6.3, Facility Development Standards**, are the standards for each classification of park, which may be used to determine the locations, size, and other characteristics of future parks.

## Inventory

The park system provides a variety of recreational opportunities. The majority of parks are owned and maintained by BREC.

Table 6.4, Existing Parks

Park Name	Acreage	Status
<b>Playlots</b>		
Avenue F Park (BREC)	0.3	Developed
Hunter Point Park (BREC)	0.2	Developed
<b>Sub-Total</b>	0.5	
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>		
Church St. Park (BREC)	7.1	Developed
Ligon Park (BREC)	2.7	Developed
Little Farms Park (BREC)	2.3	Developed
Rita Street Park (BREC)	12.9	Developed
Rollins Road Park (BREC)	10.5	Developed
39th Street Park (BREC)	12.0	Developed
<b>Sub-Total</b>	47.5	
<b>Community Parks</b>		
Flanacher Park (BREC)	175.0	Undeveloped
New Community Park (BREC)	43.0	Undeveloped
Zachary Youth Park (City)	33.8	Developed
Plank Road Park (BREC)	82.1	Developed
Quarterhorse Park (BREC)	21.9	Undeveloped
<b>Sub-Total</b>	355.8	
<b>Special Use Areas and Facilities</b>		
Doyle's Bayou Park BREC	97.0	Developed
Beaver Creek Golf Course BREC	200.0	Developed
Fennwood Hills Country Club	72.7	Developed
Copper Mill Golf Course	273.6	Developed
<b>Sub-Total</b>	643.3	
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>1047.1</b>	

The locations of the parks and recreation facilities are displayed in **Map 6.3, Parks Inventory**. A summary of these facilities is provided in **Table 6.4, Existing Parks**, which includes their size, classification, ownership, and improvement status. Descriptions of the individual parks follow.

### Playlots

- ♦ **Avenue F:** Located near Avenue L, this playlot provides open space immediately north of Downtown within a residential neighborhood.
- ♦ **Hunter Point:** Owned and maintained by BREC, Hunter Point is a playlot located south of LA 64 and west of LA 19 within a neighborhood.

### Community Parks











Zachary has five community parks totaling 355.8 acres. However, as indicated in **Table 6.4, Existing Parks**, three of the parks totaling 239.9 acres are not yet developed. Other than New Community Park, which adjoins Zachary Youth Park, the other two undeveloped community parks will serve the future needs of residents as their service areas develop. The timing of their development is reliant upon the event of development that occurs in proximity to these properties. Generally, they should be developed when 50 percent of their service areas are built out. The community parks are as follows:

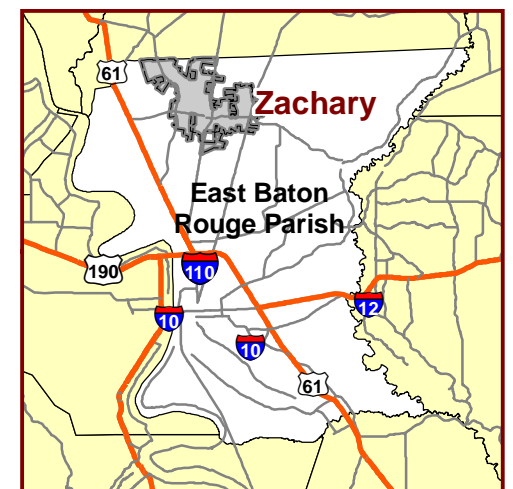
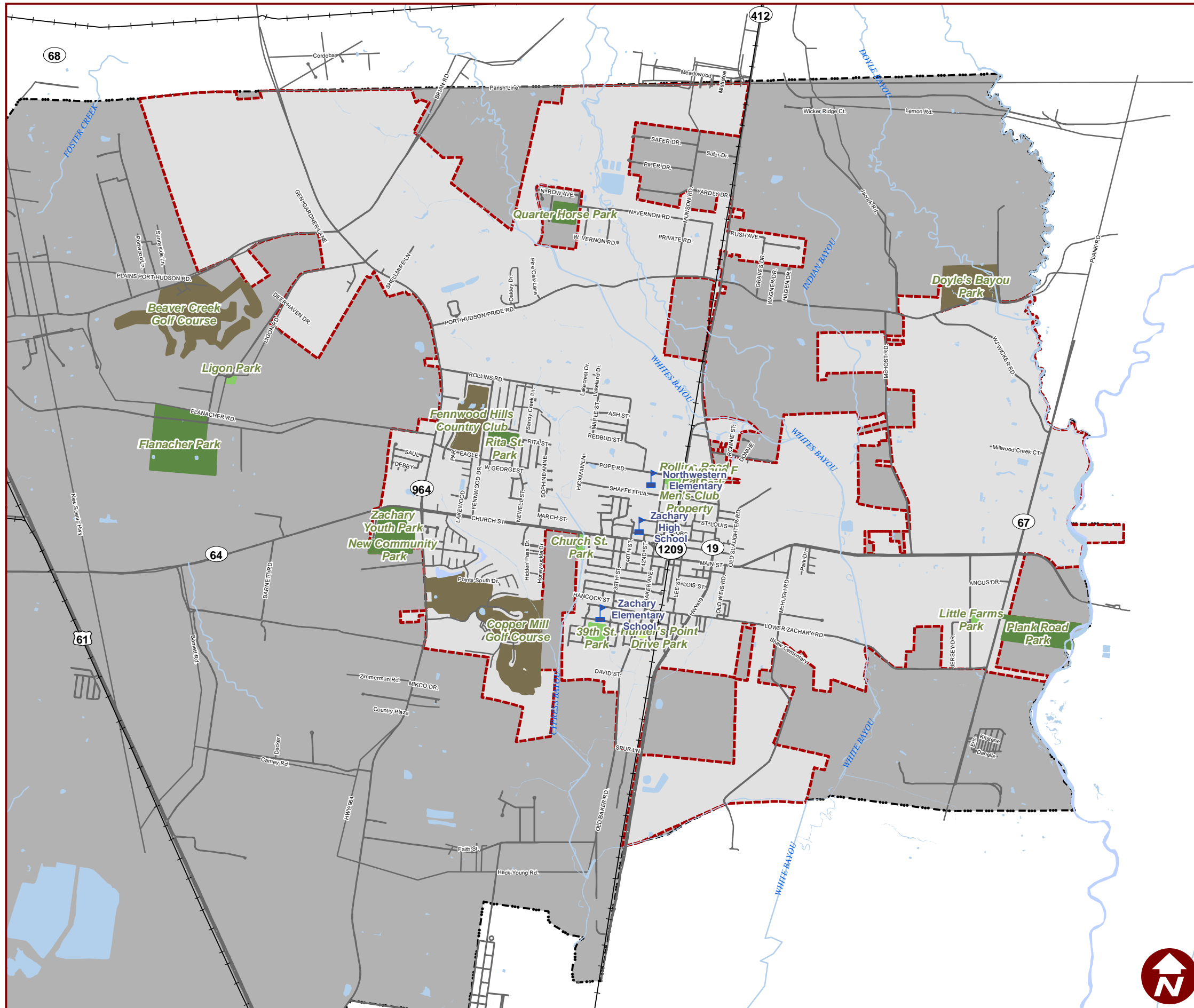
- ♦ **Flanacher:** This undeveloped park is the largest park near Zachary. It is located approximately

one mile west along Flanacher Road. With a dedicated budget of \$1,950,000, BREC plans to develop this park into a premiere recreational area for Zachary. Plans for this site envision a mix of active and passive activities (e.g., ball fields, soccer fields, nature trails, etc.), as well as a large conservation area.

- ♦ **New Community Park:** Proposed by BREC, this \$2.4 million project will expand Zachary Youth Park and allow for increased facilities and activities. The new park will extend opportunities for community-wide activities, as well as provide natural features.

# Map 6.3 Parks Inventory

-  Mini Park
-  Neighborhood Park
-  Community Park
-  Special Use Areas and Facilities
-  Schools
-  Corporate Limits
-  Proposed Zone of Influence
-  Major Water Bodies
-  Streams
-  Railroads



"Honoring our heritage...  
Planning our future"



- ◆ **Zachary Youth Park:** This park is the only one owned by the City. Therefore, it serves a primary recreational space for the community with nine baseball/softball fields. The park provides convenient access and parking. With the development of the adjacent New Community Park, this location will continue to serve as a primary source of outdoor recreation in the community.
- ◆ **Plank Road:** Plank Road Park is 82.1 acres located just outside the City limits (along LA 67) on the east side of Zachary. This park has three ball fields, an indoor recreation facility, and ample parking. With a working budget of \$225,000, this park provides recreational opportunities for the underserved east side of town. This site is in need of maintenance to make it a fully utilized site.
- ◆ **Quarterhorse:** This 21.9 acre undeveloped park is on the north side of town along N. Vernon Road. This space provides recreational opportunities for a relatively small portion of the population, but will play a larger role as the City develops northward.

### Neighborhood Parks

There are six neighborhood parks totaling 47.5 acres, as shown by *Map 6.1, Park Inventory*. The concentration is generally near Downtown, as well as the developed areas of the community. Descriptions of these parks include:

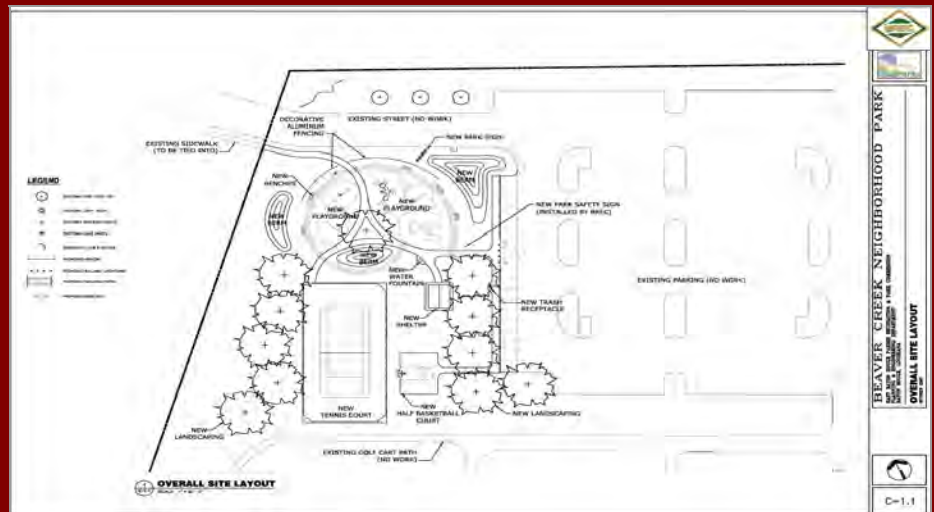
- ◆ **Church Street:** This 7.1-acre park is located along LA 64 just west of Downtown. With a relatively new skate park and baseball field, this park provides outdoor activities for residents.
- ◆ **Ligon:** This park is 2.7 acres and located outside the City limits to the west. It has one ball field, restrooms, play equipment, and parking.
- ◆ **Little Farms:** This park is 2.3 acres and located on the east side of Zachary.
- ◆ **Rita Street:** Located near the Fennwood Hills Country Club, this park provides two ball fields and other recreation opportunities. While there is available parking, there are accessibility issues due to its location.
- ◆ **Rollins Road:** Located just north of Downtown, this park is generally an open area with one ball field.
- ◆ **39<sup>th</sup> Street:** Located near the corner of Hemlock and 39<sup>th</sup> Street, this park includes a ball field and tennis courts. Its location and accessibility to the surrounding community are issues to be resolved.

### Special Use Areas and Facilities

- ◆ **Doyle's Bayou:** Located just outside the City limits on the northeast corner of Zachary, this special use park is 97 acres and was originally developed as soccer fields. Recent plans by BREC show this space being converted to a natural conservation area. The shortage of adequate soccer fields and the loss of these fields warrants a plan for their replacement.
- ◆ **Beaver Creek Golf Course and Future Neighborhood Park:** Located outside of the City limits, this golf course is owned and operated by BREC. Plans for the development of this space call for a new neighborhood park (as reflected in **Figure 6.3, Beaver Creek Neighborhood Park Site Plan**). With a \$200,000 budget for this site, this is a focus of BREC's improvement priorities.



Figure 6.3, Beaver Creek Neighborhood Park Site Plan



Source: BREC website: [www.brec.org](http://www.brec.org)

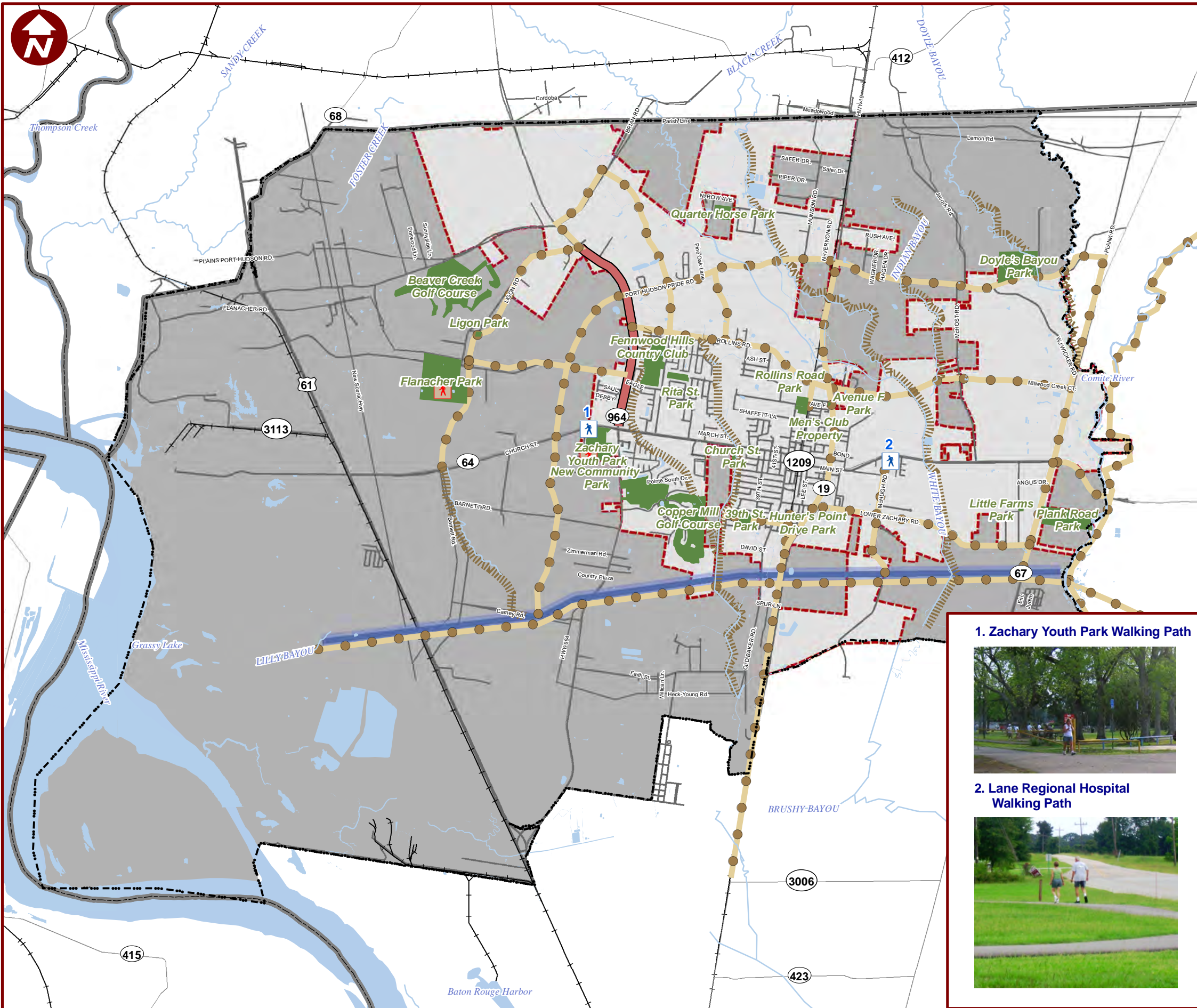
- ◆ **Fennwood Hills Country Club:** This private course is located on the west side near Fennwood and Worsham Dr. and is surrounded by a residential community.
- ◆ **Copper Mills Golf Course:** This private golf community is the largest of the special use facilities. It, too, is nestled within a master planned community.

## Trails and Greenways

Currently, there are few trails in Zachary. Other than a sidewalk along LA 964, the Zachary Youth Park walking path, and the Lane Regional Hospital walking path, there are no other trail segments. However, given the number of bayous and drainage canals, there are abundant opportunities for developing a system. This would create important linkages between neighborhoods, parks, and schools, while also creating new sources of recreation for the community. A conceptual community-wide trail system is illustrated on **Map 6.4, Proposed Trail Network**. These proposed trails are also included in BREC's "Capital Areas Pathway Project."

## Joint Use of School Facilities

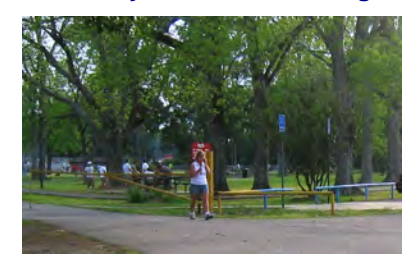
School playgrounds, athletic fields, and courts contribute to the community's recreational inventory, which helps to meet the local demands. If open and fully accessible to the public, they enhance the availability and service area coverage of neighborhood parks within the City. Sharing these public resources also facilitates cost efficiency and minimizes duplication of public areas and facilities. Therefore, it is recommended that the City, school district, and other local entities and agencies formalize reciprocal agreements for jointly purchasing, developing, and maintaining parks, open spaces, and indoor facilities.



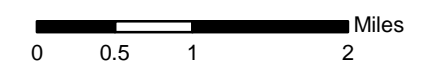
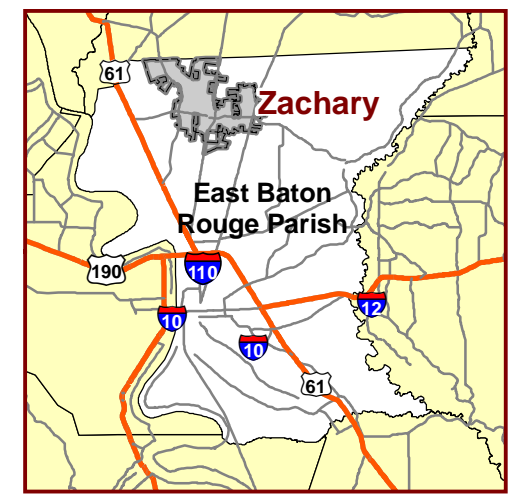
# Map 6.4 Proposed Trail Network

- Existing Trails & Parks**
- Existing Walking Trails
  - Parks
- Future Trails**
- Proposed Trails
  - Potential Path Improvements
  - Nature Trails
  - Proposed Multi-Use Trail
- Boundaries, Water, & Infrastructure**
- Future Diversion Canal
  - Corporate Limits
  - Proposed Zone of Influence
  - East Baton Rouge Parish Boundary
  - Major Water Bodies
  - Streams
  - Railroads

1. Zachary Youth Park Walking Path



2. Lane Regional Hospital Walking Path





## Chapter Seven

# Economic Development

Reaching a consensus for a common understanding of economic development principles is a critical first step in creating attainable goals and strategies for the City of Zachary. One standard for local economic development is the acknowledgement of the importance for collaboration and partnership. This is of particular significance in a suburban market like Zachary, whose local economic conditions are largely a result of wider metropolitan and regional trends. For example, the likely emergence of Baton Rouge as the leading regional economic growth center for the central Gulf Coast will dramatically increase the probability that ongoing development pressures in Zachary will continue or increase. The effectiveness of economic development policy decisions and efforts in Zachary should, therefore, be judged by how the community positions itself within the greater regional economy. Policy decisions will then generate a positive response from private investors to diversify the tax base and increase job opportunities, while at the same time promoting community character and image, talent attraction and development, and Zachary's overall long-term economic sustainability.

Over the long-term, Baton Rouge will likely emerge as the leading economic growth center for the central Gulf Coast. As result, Zachary can expect growth pressures to continue.

## Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the City guidance for the pursuit of strategic opportunities leading to sustainable economic vitality, as well as a diversified tax base, over the next several years. Some issues, however, that have an indirect impact – but lie beyond the direct responsibility of the City – are also raised in this chapter. In other words, the impact of decisions made outside the community may have both negative and positive effects on not only Zachary's economic development goals, but also its quality of life and community character. One such example is the potential placement of a new Interstate 10 bypass within close proximity of the community. A decision in favor of an alignment between Zachary and Baker would have enormous consequences on the long-term development of the community. The local community's response to this alignment would strongly influence Zachary's business recruitment prospects and development pattern. Similarly, many of Zachary's business recruitment and target industry prospects will largely be the result of efforts by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce or other state-wide and regional economic development organizations. This is all to say that the City of Zachary, first and foremost, should develop strong working relationships with local and regional partners in both the public and private sectors to ensure that the community can enlist the support of allies in achieving its overall economic development goals.

This chapter is divided into three sections:

- ◆ Issues and opportunities to leverage Zachary's competitive advantages for diversifying its tax base and creating employment opportunities for its citizens.
- ◆ Assessment of trends affecting economic development opportunities in Zachary; and

- ◆ Presentation of target sectors for Zachary, including a definition for each and the rationale for its selection.

## Issues and Opportunities

The following goals and recommended actions were formulated to specifically address the key economic challenges and opportunities in Zachary, which were identified through the preceding, local input, and the consultant's expertise. Meeting these economic development goals will reposition Zachary as the northern anchor for the Baton Rouge region, setting it on a course for long-term economic growth, vitality, and a high quality of life.

Promoting desired businesses and maximizing strategic opportunities requires a proactive, systematic, and coordinated economic development program.

### Promoting the Importance of Economic Development

Despite strong population growth trends in the Zachary area since 2000, the development of the community's business sector has lagged. This situation is not unique and is, in fact, a recognized development pattern common to rapidly growing suburban communities throughout the country. If Zachary continues to follow this suburban development pattern, the next stage in the City's growth will result in an influx of national retail and restaurant chains. Already, the City has seen an initial wave with the arrival of Chili's and Home Depot. Zachary's growth, however, has been led primarily by the continued development of new subdivisions. While chains contribute greatly to the local tax base, suburban "big box" development runs counter to the vision proposed by local residents. Managing these conflicting trends and desires will be of the utmost importance if Zachary is to become the city that residents envision: a freestanding community with a balanced local economy.

While cities can utilize a number of tools to influence development patterns (e.g., infrastructure improvements, zoning, etc.), promoting desired businesses and maximizing strategic opportunities requires a proactive, systematic, and coordinated economic development program. The key for Zachary's long-term success will be balancing the desires of local residents to maintain its community character, while also promoting new businesses that will enhance and diversify the tax base to fund needed infrastructure improvements and municipal services.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Develop a professional economic development program
- ▶ Establish strong working partnerships with local and regional allies to promote economic development
- ▶ Become a recognized leader in economic development within the region

#### Recommendations

1. Consider various options for enhancing and expanding economic development efforts. Currently, the City relies largely on its Chamber and the regional Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce. The Zachary Chamber is presently operating under severe budgetary constraints and, therefore, has insufficient resources to conduct a high quality, full-service, and professional economic development program. The Baton Rouge Area Chamber, on the other hand, is a well-established program whose mission is to serve the entire parish. This regional mission, however, inevitably limits its degree of focus on Zachary and the attention the community needs for its economic development efforts. This



is not to say that Zachary should discontinue its existing relationship with the regional Chamber. Only the Baton Rouge Chamber has the name recognition and resources to properly promote economic development to a wide, national audience. Zachary should expand on its relationship with the Baton Rouge Chamber. At the same time, the community should consider establishing a local program to act as a partner with the regional Chamber and promote local economic development interests. Without a local program, the City will face considerable difficulties in completing many of the recommendations of this chapter. The community has at least three options for enhancing local efforts: 1) provide funding for the Baton Rouge Chamber to establish an office in Zachary; 2) establish an in-house economic development staff position within the City; or 3) increase funding to the Zachary Chamber to enable it to hire a certified economic development officer and perform necessary functions.

2. Develop a formal incentives policy that is carefully crafted in a transparent manner to ensure net fiscal, economic, and social benefits to Zachary taxpayers. The following principles should be considered: 1) the targeted investment would not occur without the incentive; and 2) the investment should generate new economic activity instead of displacing existing businesses. When creating an incentives deal for a particular prospect, the following items should be included: 1) a statement demonstrating how the proposed incentive relates to broader economic development strategies; 2) a formal cost/benefit estimate weighing the estimated direct/indirect benefits (e.g., tax base enhancement, increase in retail sales, increase in wage rates, etc.) to the incentive costs (e.g., tax abatements, training subsidies, infrastructure improvements, etc.) associated with a particular deal; and 3) a “clawback” agreement that guarantees the recovery of incentives funds if the firm makes fewer hires or investment expenditures are less than promised.
3. Strengthen Zachary’s leadership base and deepen the business community’s involvement in economic development. Promoting and retaining leadership is a long-term, but invaluable, component to economic development. Without committed leaders, economic development practitioners often find themselves lacking the necessary public and political support to undertake needed initiatives. Local leaders can assist in advocating for the improvement of a local business climate and can also be effective in marketing Zachary in the course of their business-related interactions. One method for raising awareness of economic development issues and building support among Zachary’s leadership and citizenry is through the establishment of an annual event to keep business leaders and citizens informed of specific economic opportunities and challenges. This event could include information regarding key economic trends and business climate issues (e.g., taxation, initiatives, business announcements, etc.), serve as a rally to build support for specific initiatives, and provide a forum for celebrating successes.
4. Enhance and expand leadership training programs and networking opportunities, especially those that help identify and prepare young professional adults for future positions of leadership. This will be increasingly important as the community continues to draw young families to the City. Initiating young professionals early about the City’s direction and goals and increasing their involvement in the community will result in greater support and understanding of Zachary’s long-term economic development goals.

Without committed leaders, economic development practitioners often find themselves lacking the necessary public and private support to undertake needed initiatives.

## Stimulating Activity in Downtown

The redevelopment and revitalization of Downtown should be considered one of the best opportunities to retain and enhance identity as a distinct community within the rapidly sprawling northern East Baton Rouge Parish. By committing to a more compact urban form, Zachary can influence development patterns toward the City's center and away from unincorporated areas surrounding the community. At the same time, focusing economic activity in the Downtown area will also bring a unique opportunity to develop a stronger sense of place. This goal also has clear economic development value. The value this brings to economic development is that it clearly communicates to both businesses and investors that the City is devoted to excellence.

The City should encourage the establishment of a new vision for its historic area that embraces the following principles: 1) redeveloping underutilized and vacant properties and buildings; 2) upgrading the overall appearance of the Downtown area; 3) protecting the significant private and public investments that have already occurred in the Downtown area over the years; 4) increasing retail, dining, entertainment, housing, and professional office options; and 5) and assuring that the Downtown's position as a primary hub for civic life will be maintained and enhanced.

### GOALS

- ▶ Develop a vision for Downtown as the established hub for civic, social, and economic life
- ▶ Develop a retail recruitment strategy for Downtown
- ▶ Redevelop strategic intersections and sites throughout Downtown and the surrounding area
- ▶ Promote a Downtown location for any proposed new transit facilities

### Recommendations

1. Establish a Downtown Zachary Task Force (comprised of the Zachary Chamber, major Downtown property owners, Downtown businesses, local public officials, City staff, and other local allies). The purpose of the Task Force should be to establish a vision for Downtown as a viable economic center for the City and surrounding area, identify potential funding sources for revitalization efforts, and promote public and private investment in the Downtown area. Proposed strategies for raising awareness of Downtown include:
  - a. Developing a retail strategy to assist existing businesses and to promote the attraction of new retail establishments in Downtown. Consideration should be given to hiring a Downtown retail consultant to assist in crafting this strategy.
  - b. Assisting in establishing new special events and supporting existing ones, such as ZFest, to bring activity Downtown (e.g. outdoor festivals, live music, outdoor movies, farmers market, craft fairs, etc.).
  - c. Promoting the redevelopment of strategic sites and key intersections in and around the Downtown area. The Task Force and key allies should work with both public and private property owners to identify, inventory, and prioritize sites at highly visible or strategic locations suitable for redevelopment (e.g., the intersection of LA 19 and LA 64).
  - d. Creating an information packet, including an inventory of priority sites, to provide to commercial brokers, retail site consultants, and franchises seeking locations. Working with the Zachary Chamber and the City to develop marketing materials that promote Downtown as a destination for specialty retail and dining. These materials should be distributed locally and regionally to

- both developers and franchise owners seeking a new location in the Zachary area. Include redevelopment opportunity sites in all marketing materials for Zachary.
- e. Over the long term, encouraging the establishment of a Downtown market space in either an existing or new building to assist local start-up retailers, locally made arts and crafts dealers, and locally grown agricultural products.
2. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a tax increment finance district for Downtown Zachary to develop a mechanism for increasing funding of public improvements in Downtown and making it more attractive to private investors.
  3. Over the long term, consider the development of a joint-use facility or complex occupied by Zachary public sector entities and strategic partners (e.g., new city hall, police station, parish annex office, Zachary Community Schools, etc.) in Downtown. As the community and surrounding area continue to grow, the City, as well as other public sectors entities, will inevitably need to increase staff and space beyond their current uses. The development of a municipal complex would provide a unique opportunity to anchor the Downtown with a significant employment center. This, in turn, would have the effect of intensifying pedestrian traffic in and around the facility and generating increased demand for retail and dining options on adjacent properties. City-owned sites in Downtown should be at the top of the list for consideration.
  4. Promote the development of a light rail or commuter rail station in Downtown Zachary. While it would not be feasible to lead the development of a regional commuter transit system, the City should be ready to respond positively as a willing partner if such a system were to be developed within the Baton Rouge region. Two recent planning documents for Baton Rouge cite the need for the development of such a system. 1) Plan Baton Rouge (2004), a program of the Center for Planning Excellence, cites the potential for the development of a light rail station in Zachary. 2) The Baton Rouge Metropolitan Area Transportation Plan Update (2006) states that “the long range vision for CATS to develop into a regional transportation authority that will operate bus, busways, light rail, park-and-ride facilities, van pools, demand response, and special programs is well on tract.” Nationally, the location of light rail stations are increasingly being viewed as a catalyst for the development of villages in both urban and suburban real estate markets.

#### **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District:**

TIFs are tools that use future gains in taxes to finance the public improvements in targeted zones. When the public improvement is completed, there is an assumed increase in the value of surrounding real estate and often new investment (new or rehabilitated buildings, for example). This increased site value and investment creates more taxable property, which increases tax revenues, which are the “tax increment.” TIFs dedicate that increased revenue to finance debt issued to pay for the project. TIFs are generally designed to channel funding toward improvements in distressed or underdeveloped areas where development would not otherwise occur.

### **Retaining and Expanding Local Business**

Many judge industrial recruitment as the most important aspect of economic development. However, additional opportunities for cultivating economic growth and vitality can lie closer to home. “Economic gardening” is the most overlooked – but often most important – economic development activity. In other words, ensuring the continued prosperity and survival of local employers is crucial to sustaining a healthy economy.

An awareness of existing local businesses’ needs for remaining competitive in their respective industries is essential. In other words, Zachary and the area’s leadership must remain vigilant and responsive to the various issues that affect the profitability and competitiveness of existing employers. Therefore, the City and its economic development partners should build awareness of the needs that existing employers

have and assist to develop policies and mechanisms to support local business and industry. Existing local companies are, by far, the largest and most reliable source for creating new jobs. The fact that the area has recently experienced the shutdown of one major industrial employer only heightens the importance for area economic development interests in understanding how local issues affect the competitiveness of area employers.

At the same time, leveraging existing resources among the local business community – including innovation, knowledge, research, finances, and business and social networks – and matching those resources with opportunities should not be overlooked. The presence of the major employers in the area, as well as the community's proximity to Baton Rouge, should be treated as unique and primary assets for fostering and enhancing a culture of entrepreneurship.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Support the retention and expansion of existing businesses
- ▶ Encourage entrepreneurship and small business creation
- ▶ Develop policies and programs in support of local business

#### Recommendations

1. Establish a formal business retention and expansion program fortified with clear policies and activities to support local employers. Activities should include, at a minimum:
  - a. Maintain an inventory of existing business to 1) ensure an understanding of types of businesses in the community and 2) keep tabs on expansions and layoffs.
  - b. Call on existing employers on a periodic basis to 1) achieve a better understanding of their ongoing challenges and 2) uncover potential opportunities for local expansions.
  - c. Act as a liaison between area workforce development providers and local businesses to ensure their awareness of area resources and communicate the needs of area employers to workforce development providers.
  - d. Work with area taxing jurisdictions to establish formal incentives policies targeted toward local businesses, as well as outside prospects.
  - e. Make sure that local businesses and industries remain aware of any technical and financial assistance programs that are available.
2. Establish an entrepreneurship program to facilitate local business start-up activity. One way for jumpstarting this effort would be the development of an Entrepreneur's Forum where individuals can network and discuss key issues relevant to their efforts. This forum should be lead by the Zachary Chamber with assistance from the local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and meet with current and potential entrepreneurs in the area to better understand issues affecting their business decisions and provide networking opportunities for area professionals and emerging entrepreneurs. The Chamber should consider itself as an advocate for local entrepreneurs and act as a liaison between them and area governments by facilitating in the provision of local government assistance and helping address issues and challenges. The Chamber is also encouraged to consider sponsoring an annual awards program for area entrepreneurs and small businesses for the most innovative and creative concepts and products.



## Leveraging and Expanding Educational and Workforce Development Assets

The importance of educational institutions and workforce training resources cannot be overstated. Employers must be assured access to trainable workers. At the same time, young adults, families with children, and even retirees are all drawn to locations that offer access to educational opportunities. As a result, it is imperative that the City and area partners remain supportive of Zachary Community Schools.

Area leaders should continue to strive for excellence in education, as well as workforce training programs, to meet long-term economic development goals. This is especially important if Zachary is to emerge as a business anchor for the northern Baton Rouge region. For this to be achieved, Zachary must be an attractive destination for regional talent, which would help the area retain existing employers and attract new industry.

### GOALS

- ▶ Solidify and promote Zachary's status as a community that offers excellence in public education
- ▶ Establish workforce development and other training programs to meet the needs of existing area employers
- ▶ Position Zachary as a site for a future community college campus

### Recommendations

1. Continue to support and promote excellence in the public schools by coordinating City services and infrastructure in support of school facility expansions. In addition, the City and Chamber should continue to promote Zachary's public schools as part of the community's overall economic development marketing efforts. Prior to doing this, the City and Chamber should meet with area school officials to establish a coordinated marketing message, as well as offer assistance in the creation of new marketing materials for Zachary Community Schools.
2. Assist in the facilitation of an annual Zachary Workforce Development Summit to: 1) better understand the labor force availability, talent assets, and training capabilities available for potential employers; and 2) maintain and solidify existing cooperative relationships between Louisiana Workforce Commission, Baton Rouge Area Chamber, Zachary Chamber, the school district, Baton Rouge Community College, and the business community. The primary purpose for this summit is to ensure that area businesses are made aware of any potential workforce development incentives (i.e., customized training incentives, tuition reimbursable tax credits, etc.) that are available to Louisiana businesses and that area training programs continue to match business needs in Zachary.
3. Encourage Zachary Community Schools and the Baton Rouge Community College to consider supporting the establishment of new or the expansion of existing internship/apprenticeship programs (if a demonstrated need is determined through a workforce development conference) that aid in the placement of vocational/technology students with area employers.
4. Assist in the promotion and establishment of a branch campus of Baton Rouge Community College. Specific training and educational programs should be closely considered at the proposed branch, including nursing programs in conjunction with Lane Memorial Hospital, as well as other workforce development training programs. It is recommended the City open a dialogue with potential partners, including Baton Rouge Community College, Georgia Pacific, ExxonMobil, Zachary Community Schools, and Lane Memorial Hospital, to gauge their interest in collaboratively supporting the establishment of a branch campus in Zachary. The City and supporting businesses, however, should recognize that the establishment of a full-fledged branch campus may require a sustained, long-term

effort. In the interim, consideration should be given to identifying an underutilized building to serve as a potential workforce training site.

### Providing Adequate Sites and Infrastructure

Zachary is in an enviable position of being “in the path of growth” of one the largest and fastest growing metropolitan regions along the Central Gulf Coast. To this point, however, a majority of Zachary’s and the area’s growth has been limited to residential development. While the area is fortunate to be a prime location for new neighborhoods, providing services to support residential needs is a difficult proposition for communities with a limited tax base. In addition, balancing the need for commercial sites with the desire of residents to protect their investments from incompatible uses is also a challenge.

Zachary is well-positioned to become the northern business anchor of the Baton Rouge MSA.

Already Zachary is beginning to reap the rewards of its location and strong population growth. Evidence for this includes the recent and ongoing Lane Memorial expansions, as well as the potential for a new mixed-use development on the western fringes of the City. Clearly, Zachary is well-positioned to become the northern business anchor of the Baton Rouge MSA.

These significant developments alone, however, will not be sufficient to carry out that vision. One of the most critical efforts will be to ensure that adequate sites for business and industrial development are available in the face of rapidly increasing residential growth. Developing a mechanism for identifying and retaining strategic sites will help Zachary develop a balanced, sustainable economy and tax base. Therefore, the City must determine the feasibility of developing a modern business park to stimulate employment growth. In addition, the City should consider working with East Baton Rouge Parish and the Baton Rouge Area Chamber to identify and promote additional sites outside the City. Developing a business park, however, can be a costly venture. As a result, the City must carefully weigh various options for the timing and location of a business park. Entering into a public/private partnership with a developer presents a potential option for lowering the financial burden on local tax payers.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Develop a modern, fully serviced business park to promote the creation of primary job opportunities
- ▶ Develop a collaborative, working relationship with the Baton Rouge Area Chamber and East Baton Rouge Parish to promote other sites for private development within the area

### Recommendations

1. The City should play an active role in the development of a business park within its jurisdiction or zone of influence. One means for accomplishing this would be the development of City-owned sites for new and/or expanding businesses in Zachary. It is recommended that a Business and Industrial Sites Task Force be established and comprised of relevant City officials and staff, area business leaders, the Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce, property owners, local residents, and neighborhood associations to gauge and build support for the need for new business sites in Zachary. The Task Force should assist in determining the desirability and feasibility of the various options for the development of business sites with consideration for the growth and development policies of this plan and management and ownership of the site(s) (i.e., City-owned and developed, a public-private partnership, privately developed and managed, etc.). Once these issues have been resolved, the Task

Force should identify appropriate sites for the development of a new business park in Zachary. This evaluation process should include, at a minimum, infrastructure availability at each site, including electricity, natural gas, water/wastewater, road, and telecommunications.

2. Zachary should open a dialogue with the Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce and East Baton Rouge Parish to develop a working relationship and understanding for the appropriate development of business and industrial sites beyond the City limits. This is strongly encouraged for two primary reasons. 1) A recent study entitled “Pursuing Excellence in Business Development,” commissioned for the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, found that a critical shortage of suitable business sites exists in the Parish. Specifically, the report stated “East Baton Rouge Parish must invest in new product, and specifically greenfield site development and industrial parks with all infrastructure for potential corporate investment.” This opinion was echoed in conversations with the Baton Rouge Area Chamber and highlights the strategic importance of available land in the Zachary area, specifically sites along U.S. 61. The vitality of such sites will directly influence the economic conditions in Zachary and employment opportunities for its citizens. 2) The second reason that the City should be involved in these decisions is to ensure that local preferences are taken into consideration. In other words, the City should insert its involvement to demonstrate the community is a reliable economic development partner and as a defensive measure to protect its quality of life and community character.

### Raising an Awareness of Opportunities

As with all successful marketing, it is critical to identify target audiences and focus efforts on them. The primary target audiences for Zachary should be: 1) local and regional business leaders who can influence business location and other investment decisions; 2) key allies, such as state and regional economic development organizations; 3) members of the region’s various media; and 4) decision makers at companies within the target industries.

The most important target audience should be the people and businesses who are already invested (either financially or emotionally) in the community. They are also who represent Zachary on a daily basis in their business and personal interactions –regionally, nationally, and internationally. A sustained internal marketing campaign should be undertaken to generate and promote a positive image of Zachary. Making sure that existing residents and local business leaders have a positive image of the community is critical to the success of any external campaign as these are the people who can best tell the “Zachary story” to the outside world.

Zachary must set itself apart from the competition throughout the region. The most effective marketing strategies are those that promote specific initiatives and opportunities. In other words, the various target audiences must be swayed by the message that their interests can be maximized by investing social and economic capital in Zachary. Specific initiatives or projects that could be considered for highlighting include: redevelopment opportunities in Downtown; properties along U.S. 61; and a potential future business park.

#### GOALS

- ▶ Position Zachary as the anchor for the northern Baton Rouge region
- ▶ Obtain support for economic development among Zachary’s residents and leadership
- ▶ Heighten awareness of Zachary throughout Louisiana as an excellent business location with a high quality of life

### Recommendations

1. Build consensus for a primary theme/message for marketing Zachary. Marketing themes and messages should be intrinsically linked to the vision the community has adopted. This Plan recommends the following economic development vision statement: *Zachary will be the northern anchor of the Baton Rouge region, providing opportunities for excellence in living, education, healthcare, business, shopping, and recreation.* If the City and its economic development allies determine this is a suitable economic development vision, it is recommended that consideration be given to the development of a branding/image theme that supports this vision statement and promotes Zachary and the surrounding area's key economic development assets and amenities. Once an economic development theme/message has been chosen, it should be incorporated within current and future marketing materials for the City and Chamber.
2. The City and Chamber should focus their marketing efforts on promoting and enhancing Zachary's image, primarily in the Baton Rouge area. Assets such as the school district, proximity to Baton Rouge, existing area businesses, Downtown Zachary, and distinct development opportunities should be promoted. The primary goal for these marketing efforts is to raise awareness of Zachary as a community focused on high-quality developments that offers a favorable business climate. While perceptions of Zachary in the Baton Rouge region are largely positive, the prevailing image appears to be that the community is somewhat isolated and "out-of-the-way." Marketing efforts should be devoted to altering this regional perception.
3. The City and its target sector marketing efforts should be closely coordinated with the efforts of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce. This recommendation is the result of both pragmatic and strategic decisions. Successful national target sector marketing requires a significant budget and is often aided by established name recognition. While Zachary is known in the region for its excellent schools, awareness of the community outside the State is low. Overcoming this lack of awareness would be too costly and time consuming for the City to accomplish. This makes sense from a strategic perspective in that the City's long-term success will largely be the result of external influences from Baton Rouge. In other words, Zachary's economic development successes hinge on the achievements of regional economic development efforts. Establishing a reputation as a reliable partner in regional economic development will be essential for Zachary in diversifying its economy through quality developments and higher-wage businesses.

### Overview of Conditions

Zachary has historically been viewed as a rural community with a high quality of life. At the same time, the presence of major industrial employers in the northern parish, such as Georgia Pacific and ExxonMobil, has provided job opportunities for local residents. Its image as a small, isolated community lying on the fringes of a larger metropolitan area is, however, no longer the case. Already, the community

Protecting Zachary's quality of life, promoting the prosperity of its citizens, and diversifying the tax base will be the community's greatest challenges in the coming years.

is experiencing intensifying suburbanization pressures as new developments spread north. Zachary's high-quality public schools and its proximity to Baton Rouge have contributed considerably to its attractiveness to new residents. An assessment of the region's economic and demographic trends reveals that the Baton Rouge metropolitan area is well-positioned over the long-term to become the leading economic

growth center in the State. Given an expanding area-wide recognition of Zachary's quality of life attributes, it is likely that the community will experience continued growth.



Zachary's political and business leadership must recognize that the City lies directly in the path of growth – bringing with it both great opportunities and challenges. Future expansions in retail and housing are obvious opportunities. Ongoing and potential infrastructure improvements, such as the new Audubon Bridge and the I-10 loop, will continue to present opportunities, as well as challenges. Protecting its quality of life, promoting the prosperity of its citizens, and diversifying the tax base will be the greatest challenges in the coming years. In other words, balancing business expansion and attraction opportunities, a need for a diversified and sustainable tax base, and the desire for an enhanced quality of life will determine the success of Zachary's long-term economic development efforts.

### Recommended Policies

Economic development goals, strategies, and actions must be driven by a clear vision. While conceptually this makes sense, the more practical value of a vision is in directing community resources. As a result, successful vision statements are bold and provide clear direction for economic development efforts and can be supported by realistic goals and strategies. The following vision achieves these objectives:

*Zachary will be the northern anchor of the Baton Rouge region, providing opportunities for excellence in living, education, healthcare, business, shopping, and recreation.*

This statement presents a clear focus for Zachary's economic development efforts: diversifying the tax base, while at the same time continuing to support and enhance the area's already strong quality of life amenities. Due to its strategic location, Zachary can also reposition itself as an emerging center for activity on the northern side of the Baton Rouge region.

This vision, however, can only be fulfilled if appropriate and realistic goals and strategies are established. Diversifying the tax base must continue to be a principle goal for long-term economic sustainability due to the ongoing need to fund important infrastructure improvements and provide critical public services. Achieving this goal will require economic development efforts that help shift the burden of property taxes from the homeowner to a more balanced tax base with greater contributions from business and industrial enterprises. At the same time, Zachary cannot afford to lose focus of the qualities that have made it so desirable for both long-term residents and newcomers: quality neighborhood environments served by exceptional public schools.

This chapter provides an array of strategies for enhancing the business climate and diversifying the tax base. It includes both traditional and non-traditional recommendations with a view toward establishing an environment that fosters long-term economic sustainability and vitality. Each strategy is coupled with the objective of improving Zachary's long-term economic vitality and livability. Finally, this chapter is integrated with the rest of the plan by highlighting the importance of growth management and preserving community character.

The following goals will support the economic development vision, provide a strong framework for strategies and actions, and reflect the desire of its citizens to enhance the community's quality of life:

- ◆ Promoting the importance of economic development
- ◆ Stimulating activity in Downtown
- ◆ Retaining and expanding local business
- ◆ Leveraging local and regional educational and workforce development assets

- ◆ Providing adequate sites and infrastructure
- ◆ Raising an awareness of opportunities

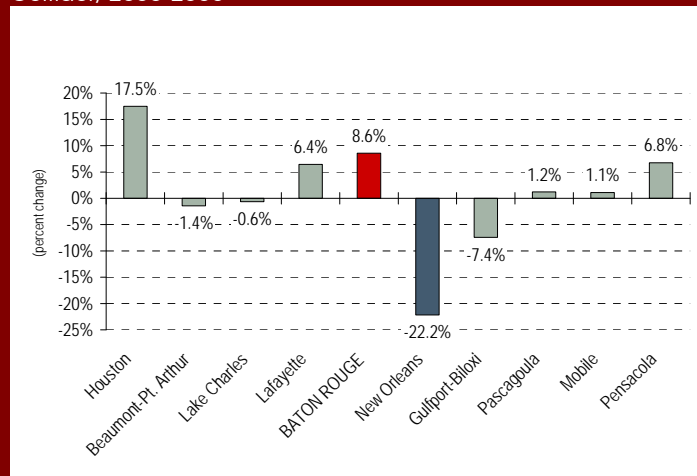
The following target sectors were determined to represent the best (both long- and short-term) opportunities for expanding business within Zachary and the surrounding area:

- ◆ Healthcare Services
- ◆ Retail and Leisure
- ◆ Professional Services
- ◆ Machinery/Specialty Machining
- ◆ Advanced Materials

### Assessment: Demographic and Economic Trends

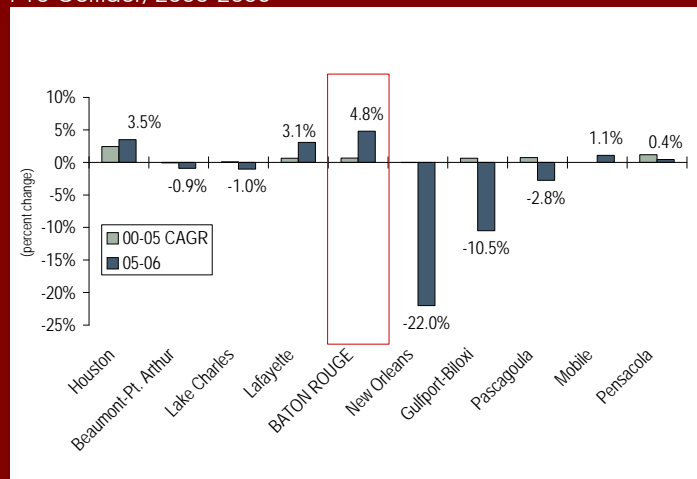
To understand the opportunities available, an assessment of the area’s demographic and economic trends was conducted. The purpose of the assessment was to identify Zachary’s unique economic strengths and

Figure 7.1, Population Change in Metro Areas along I-10 Corridor, 2000-2006



Source: U.S. Census

Figure 7.2, Population Comparison between Metro Areas along I-10 Corridor, 2000-2006



Source: U.S. Census

weaknesses in the context of the regional and national economies. The assessment team relies on the most current and accurate data sources (proprietary and public) covering these attributes that most clearly demonstrate Zachary’s recent economic performance in relation to the broader region. This quantitative analysis includes a review of existing economic and demographic data, such as population and employment growth and distribution, and labor conditions in Zachary, East Baton Rouge Parish, and the surrounding metropolitan region, which was supplemented by the following activities to form the recommendations:

- ◆ Tours of Zachary area sites to better understand the community’s economic development product from a real estate standpoint, and
- ◆ Focus group meetings and interviews with area residents, business leaders, and economic development experts to help establish priorities for appropriate goals and objectives.

### Regional Population

#### Trends

The last few years have brought a dramatic shift in the central Gulf Coast region’s population (defined here as the I-10 corridor from Houston to Pensacola). From 2000 to 2006, the region’s largest metropolitan statistical area (MSA), Houston, experienced a 17.5 percent population increase,

while the second largest, New Orleans, saw a dramatic 22.2 percent decrease. At the same time, the Baton Rouge MSA welcomed an 8.6 percent population growth rate as displayed in **Figure 7.1, Population Change in Metro Areas along I-10 Corridor, 2000-2006**. These population shifts are undoubtedly related to the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but underlying regional trends had already influenced growth patterns throughout the central Gulf Coast region. **Figure 7.2, Population Comparison between Metro Areas along I-10 Corridor, 2000-2006**, indicates that only the Houston MSA was experiencing at least moderate population growth from 2000 to 2005 with a 2.5 percent compounded annual growth rate (CAGR). The Baton Rouge and Pensacola MSAs rounded out the top three fastest growing MSAs, each experiencing a 0.7 percent annual increase in population. During the two hurricanes, however, Baton Rouge’s population grew 4.8 percent, making it the fastest growing MSA along the central Gulf Coast from 2005 to 2006.

Strategic Implications

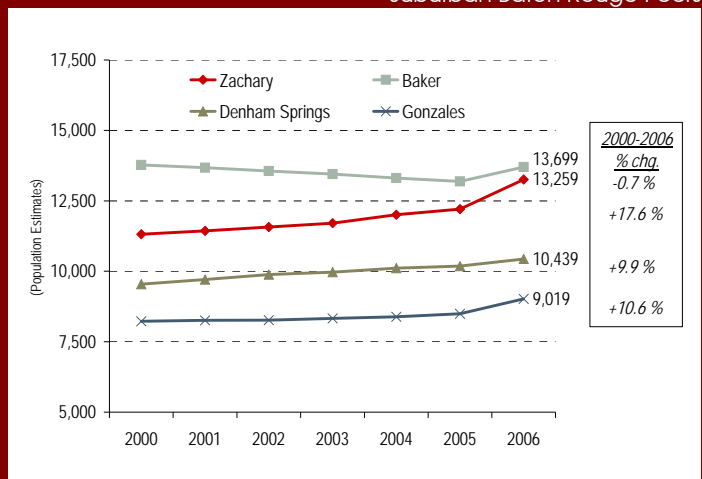
Understanding wider regional population trends provides the necessary context for determining aspects of local growth potential. The effects of hurricanes in recent years have been appreciable: slower population growth in communities located within close proximity of the coast. The impact of the hurricanes appears to be that both individuals and businesses are reconsidering potential relocation decisions to coastal and near-coastal communities. But recovery efforts along the coast are still underway. It may, therefore, be too soon to definitively determine long-term impacts; however, substantial barriers to entry are being erected (e.g., higher insurance rates). These trends appear to favor cities like Baton Rouge and Zachary that are located far enough away from the coast to avoid immediate danger of coastal flooding and that offer an excellent infrastructure network that enables them to serve as economic centers for the wider region. As a result, future economic growth prospects for the entire Baton Rouge MSA appear favorable over the long term if the metropolitan area is able to position itself as a population growth center. If this is achieved, then Zachary will likely become a leading destination for new residents.

**Local Population**

Trends

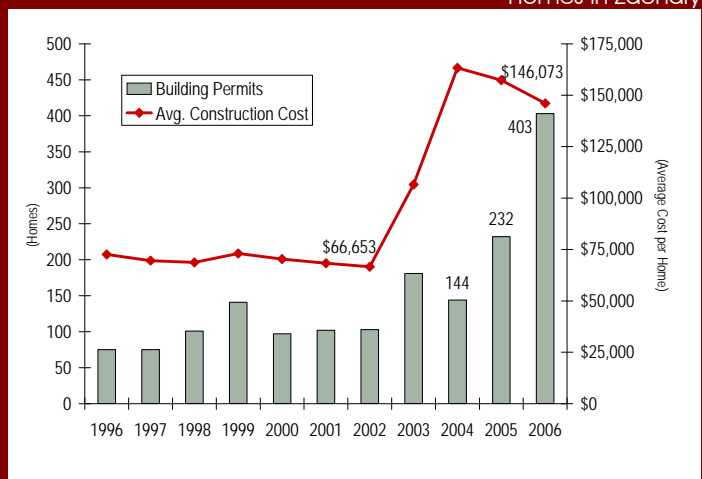
Zachary ranks second in population size among the four largest suburban communities in East

Figure 7.3, Population Growth, Mid-Year Estimates 2000-2006, Suburban Baton Rouge Peers



Source: U.S. Census

Figure 7.4, Single-Family Building Permits 1996-2006, New Homes in Zachary

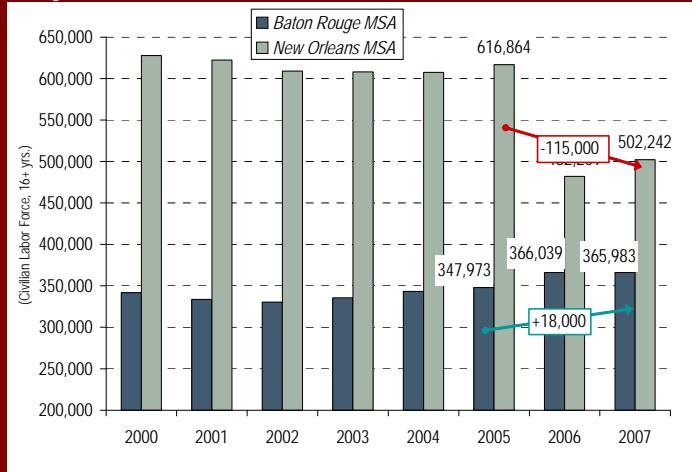


Source: U.S. Census

Baton Rouge Parish. From 2000 to 2006, Zachary added 1,984 new residents, a 17.6 percent increase as shown in **Figure 7.3, Population Growth, Mid-Year Estimates 2000-2006, Suburban Baton Rouge Peers**. Zachary's growth rate during this period made it the second fastest growing city in the state with a population of 10,000 persons. At the same time, it gained more residents than all but three cities in Louisiana, regardless of size. While Zachary remains the second largest community in the parish, its growth curve steepened in 2006, enabling it to nearly match Baker in overall size. These data indicate that Zachary will soon become the most populous of Baton Rouge's four major suburbs. Clear evidence of this rapid population growth can be seen through the rise in single-family building permits, exhibited in **Figure 7.4, Single-Family Building Permits, 1996-2006, New Homes in Zachary**. Throughout the late 1990s and into 2002, the number of single-family permits in Zachary remained nearly constant. In 2003, however, the number of permits began to increase greatly. By 2006, single-family permit activity in Zachary had increased fourfold from previous years, while the average permit value more than doubled.

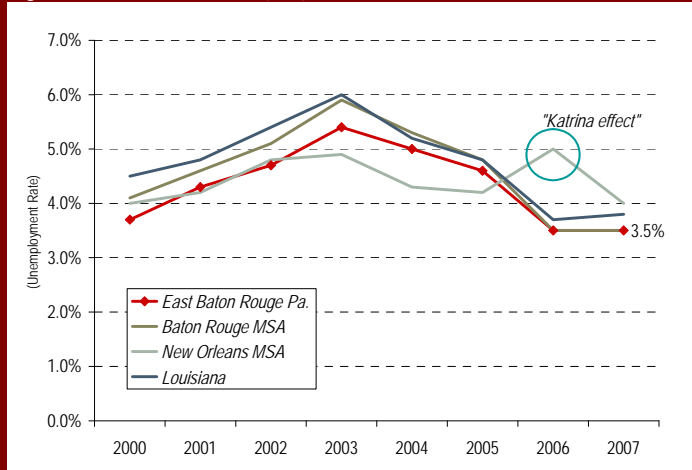
Strategic Implications

Figure 7.5, Change in Regional Labor Force 2000-2007, Baton Rouge and New Orleans Metro Areas



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Figure 7.6, March Unemployment Rates, 2000-2007



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Recent trends indicate that Zachary is evolving into a leading suburban destination. Given the timing of recent accelerations in both building permits and population growth, it is likely that the founding of Zachary Community Schools has played a significant role. This, coupled with the potential for the Baton Rouge MSA emerging as a leading economic center along the central Gulf Coast, the possibility exists that growth pressures in Zachary could further accumulate. As a result, it will become increasingly important for the community to plan for the future to protect and enhance its character and livability while, at the same time, diversifying its tax base to finance necessary infrastructure improvements.

Regional and Local Labor

Trends

**Figure 7.5, Change in Regional Labor Force 2000-2007, Baton Rouge and New Orleans Metro Areas**, reveals that, in leading up to 2005, little change occurred in the labor markets for Southeastern Louisiana's two urban areas: New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Hurricane Katrina, however, caused a 28 percent decline in New Orleans' labor force from 2005 to 2006. Only a small portion of those New Orleans workers remained within the wider region, and Baton Rouge only experienced a five percent increase in its labor pool. As a result, the combined labor force of New Orleans and Baton



Rouge was nearly 100,000 less in March 2007 than in March 2005. The departure of workers and those seeking work has forced down unemployment rates in both cities. For example, East Baton Rouge Parish’s unemployment rate stood at 3.5 percent in March 2007, as shown in **Figure 7.6, March Unemployment Rates, 2000-2007**, it’s lowest March unemployment rate since 1999.

Strategic Implications

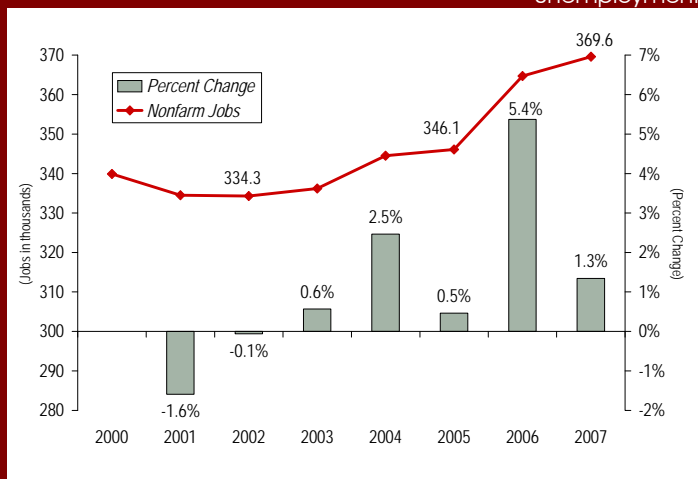
These data indicate that labor availability may become a long-term issue for Southeast Louisiana. It is also likely that, in the near future, labor shortages might become the norm across the nation as the “baby boom” generation begins to exit the workforce. As a result, competition for skilled workers and young talent will intensify and employers across the country will find it increasingly difficult to replace retirees. Consequently, Southeast Louisiana Communities like Zachary should focus on assising employers to create higher paying jobs to attract workers from outside the region. At the same time, Zachary and other communities need to place increasing focus on improving community character to be more attractive to potential residents. Zachary and Southeast Louisiana communities should, therefore, emphasize the retention and development of skilled workers. Zachary is fortunate that it can call upon its high quality of life with its excellent schools and new neighborhoods to make it an attractive choice for new residents and workers.

**Metro Area Employment**

Trends

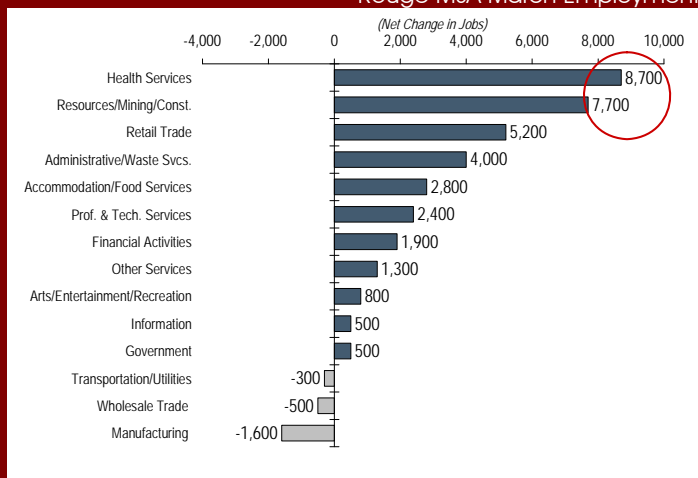
Since 2003, the Baton Rouge MSA has added over 33,000 new jobs, representing a 9.9 percent increase as reflected in **Figure 7.7, Baton Rouge MSA Employment 2000-2007, March Unemployment**. This recovery from the last recession arrived in two bursts of job creation: 2004 and 2006. Nearly 50 percent of the new jobs

Figure 7.7, Baton Rouge MSA Employment 2000-2007, March Unemployment



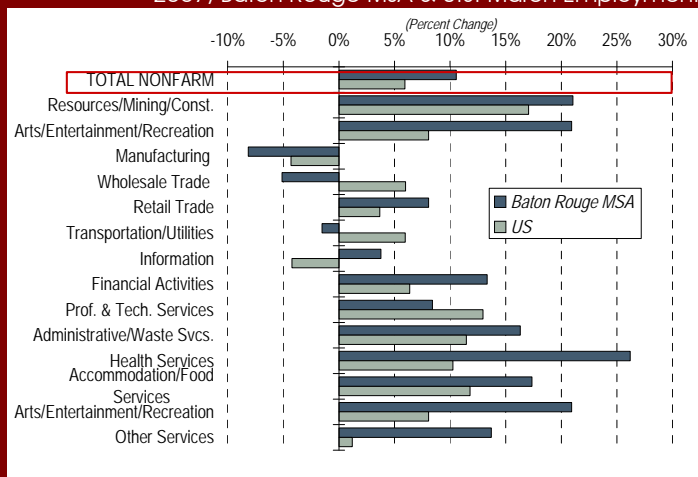
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Figure 7.8, Employment Change by Sector 2003-2007, Baton Rouge MSA March Employment



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

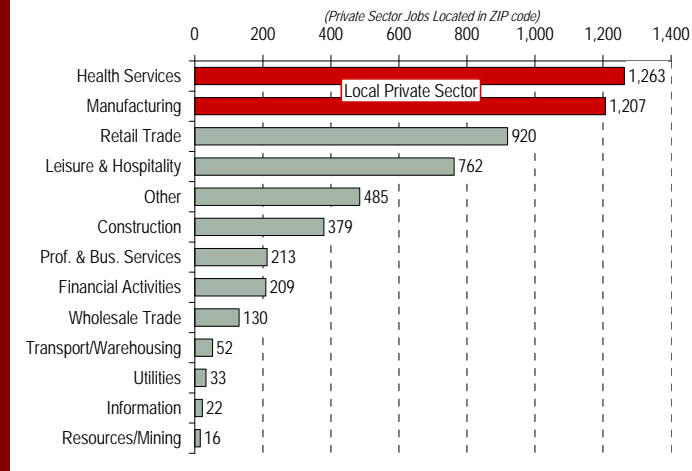
Figure 7.9, Employment Growth Comparison by Sector, 2003-2007, Baton Rouge MSA & U.S. March Employment



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

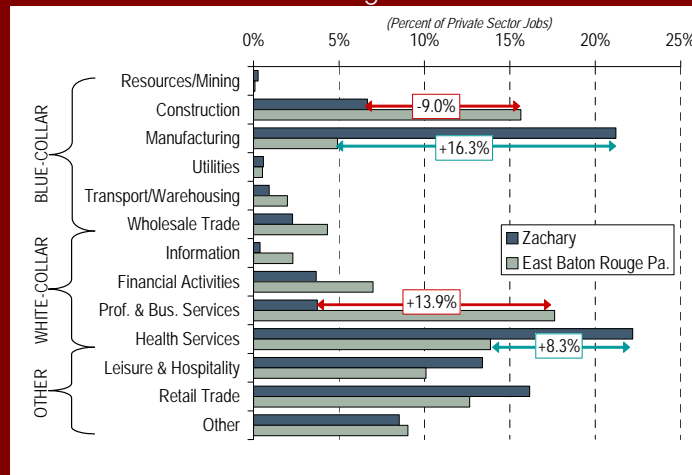
were created within Health Services and Resources/Mining/Construction, as shown in **Figure 7.8, Employment Change by Sector 2003-2007, Baton Rouge MSA March Employment**. Other strong employment generators included Retail Trade and Administrative/Waste Services. Other traditionally blue-collar sectors (aside from Resources/Mining/Construction) experienced net decreases in employment from 2003-2006. For example, the number of manufacturing jobs in the metro area declined by 1,600 during this period. A comparison of job growth rates between the Baton Rouge MSA and the nation by industry sector (See **Figure 7.9, Employment Growth Comparison by Sector, 2003-2007, Baton Rouge MSA & U.S. March Employment**) reveals that the region’s job losses in Manufacturing were comparable to national trends. Overall, the metro area’s non-farm job base increased 10.6 percent, nearly doubling job growth nationally. In terms of growth rate, the Baton Rouge area’s strongest employment sectors were Health Services, Resources/Mining/Construction, and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; however, growth was widespread throughout the economy. In fact, all but four sectors (Professional and Technical Services, Transportation and Utilities, Wholesale Trade, and Manufacturing) outpaced national growth rates.

Figure 7.10, Zachary Employment Sector 2005, Zip Code 70791



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and TIP Strategies

Figure 7.11, Employment Distribution Comparison 2005, Zip Code 70791 and East Baton Rouge



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and TIP Strategies

Strategic Implications

Metro area employment conditions have improved dramatically in recent years, led by growth in a number of sectors including Retail Trade and Resources/Mining/Construction. Other traditionally blue-collar industries, however, have seen declines. This would indicate that the Baton Rouge economy is in a period of transition, moving toward a more services-oriented economy. These trends will directly impact Zachary’s employment growth and tax diversification prospects.

Local Employment

Trends

A plurality of local private sector jobs – as represented by the Zip code in which Zachary is located – is in two industries: Health Services and Manufacturing, as displayed in **Figure 7.10, Zachary Employment Sector 2005, Zip Code 70791**. Other leading employment sectors are Retail Trade and Leisure and Hospitality. Together, these four industries represent nearly three-quarters of all private sector jobs in the Zachary area. A comparison of Zachary’s employment distribution with that of East Baton Rouge Parish, shown in **Figure 7.11, Employment Distribution Comparison 2005, Zip Code 70791 and East Baton Rouge**, reveals that that the local area’s job picture largely reflects the Parish’s, except within four industry sectors. Locally, Manufacturing and

Health Services is several percentage points higher than throughout the Parish. At the same time, the share of jobs in Construction and Professional and Business Services lag sharply behind the surrounding area.

### Strategic Implications

An apparent contradiction exists within Zachary, especially in terms of the concentration of manufacturing and other blue-collar jobs located within the Zachary area (as defined by its Zip code) versus trends indicating the community is becoming a higher income suburb to Baton Rouge. On the other hand, the concentration of healthcare-related jobs in Zachary would appear to complement the suburbanization trends and may present an opportunity that can be leveraged for economic development in the community. Given these trends, local economic development activities should focus on assisting in the stimulation and maturation of the local services sector, including financial and professional and business services, as a means for bringing higher paying jobs to the area. While an initial step might be to aim toward firms that meet local market demand, Zachary could position itself over the long term in garnering interest from corporate business service firms who work in a wider, regional market. In order to accomplish this, Zachary must improve to identify and develop a “prestige” site with high visibility that could eventually attract investment. This should, however, be considered a long-term economic development goal.

## Target Sectors

It is recommended that Zachary pursue the following target sectors, as they present the best opportunities for business retention, expansion, and attraction activities to the area. These industries were selected for their ability to serve a dual purpose: 1) to bolster and diversify the area’s economy over the short term by taking advantage of existing assets and 2) to provide a pathway to sustained economic growth over the long term. In addition, community character factors were heavily weighed against mere job growth goals due to the stated desire of residents to maintain and enhance the community’s quality of life. As a result, several target sectors can be seen as non-traditional economic activities more than as “basic” or “primary” industries.

- ◆ Healthcare Services
- ◆ Retail and Leisure (Downtown)
- ◆ Professional Services (locally serving)
- ◆ Machinery/Specialty Machining
- ◆ Advanced Materials

### Healthcare Services

Access to healthcare, both primary care and emergency care, is viewed as a quality of life issue for residents and an economic issue for communities. The presence of healthcare facilities is also seen as key in location decisions for most industries. While access to healthcare is an important factor in corporate location decisions (67.2 percent of respondents in Area Development’s annual corporate survey rated health facilities as “important” or “very important” in 2002 – up from 65.3 percent in 2001), it is less critical

This sector includes establishments providing health care for individuals, including ambulatory health care services and hospitals. The services provided by establishments in this sector are delivered by trained professionals. All industries in the sector share this commonality of process; namely, labor inputs of health practitioners with requisite expertise. Many of the industries in the sector are defined based on the educational degree held by the practitioners included in the industry.

than other business-related factors such as availability of skilled labor (90.9 percent) and highway accessibility (86.6 percent).

With the continued loss of manufacturing jobs, once the most critical driver in local economic development, communities are becoming increasingly reliant on the healthcare industry as a source of employment and tax revenue. Growth in the U.S. healthcare sector is largely driven by two major factors: population growth and an aging population. As the baby boom generation approaches retirement age, a larger share of all consumer spending in the nation is being spent on healthcare related expenses. In addition, healthcare includes many occupations that offer relatively high wages and abundant career-ladder opportunities.

### Rationale and Considerations

1. Planned expansions at Lane Memorial Hospital and the positioning of Zachary as the northern healthcare hub for the Baton Rouge region.
2. Strong regional population growth and local affluence.
3. High-quality housing and schools, making it a more desirable location for healthcare professionals.
4. More office space, especially Class A and B, will be needed in the Zachary area for it to capture additional growth from this sector, especially among specialty clinics and providers.
5. The establishment of a nursing program through the development of a Zachary satellite of Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC).

### Potential Niches

1. Specialty clinics.
2. Medical and diagnostic labs.
3. Allied health.
4. Fitness, nutrition, and wellness clinics/facilities.

The retail trade sector comprises establishments engaged in retailing merchandise, generally without transformation, and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise.

The leisure sector includes a wide range of establishments that operate facilities or provide services to meet varied cultural, entertainment, and recreational interests of their patrons. This sector comprises 1) establishments that are involved in producing, promoting, or participating in live performances, events, or exhibits intended for public viewing; 2) establishments that preserve and exhibit objects and sites of historical, cultural, or educational interest; and 3) establishments that operate facilities or provide services that enable patrons to participate in recreational activities or pursue amusement, hobby, and leisure-time interests.

### Retail and Leisure

The retail trade and leisure sectors have been among the leading national job creators during the last several years, driven by increased consumer spending and population growth, especially in locations with natural and/or man-made amenities. While these industries are not known for offering high wage jobs, they remain important to local government for their contributions to sales.

In addition, retail and leisure are increasingly being viewed as amenities that a community cannot do without. When searching for a new home, potential

residents (both singles and families) strongly take the available shopping amenities into consideration. As a result, employers – who are interested in retaining and recruiting workers – have come to realize the importance of retail and leisure assets.



Retail and leisure amenities also strongly influence the attraction of visitors and, eventually, retirees. Increasingly, communities are coming to realize the potential for linking these two groups. Over time, a tourist who frequently visits a place begins to adopt a notion of brand loyalty for that community or destination which can, in turn, strongly influence retirement location decisions. Today's retirees are much more affluent than past generations and are more likely to increase consumer spending in the area, especially increasing demand for the region's healthcare economy. The leading edge of baby boomers is set to retire soon, but analysts expect the nature of their retirement to be distinctly advantageous as they are anticipated to be more active community participants and more likely to start up new business enterprises.

### Rationale and Considerations

1. Solidify existing status as a retail trade center for the northern tier of the Baton Rouge MSA and outlying rural areas.
2. Establish downtown Zachary's status to position it as a destination for entertainment and shopping.
3. High-end retail and leisure amenities help draw skilled talent to support target sectors, especially in upper wage occupations in sectors such as healthcare, professional, and business services.
4. Increase visibility and enhance image of Zachary as a destination.
5. Enhance small business and assistance programs for existing independent retailers and area residents who might be interested in opening an establishment.

### Potential Niches

1. Boutique clothing and full-service dining in Downtown.
2. Movie theatre.
3. Hotels/motels/bed and breakfast establishments.
4. Outdoor recreation and entertainment venues, including bike paths and hiking/jogging trails, especially near the Comite River or the diversion canal.

### Professional Services (locally serving)

Professional service companies often form the backbone of a community's business community. Often, these are small offices filling the needs and demands of the local community. While these small businesses are often perceived as simply "mom and pop" companies, they can play a critical role in developing a business climate that is conducive to entrepreneurship.

This broad services sector includes firms that provide services to companies and individuals. It includes legal, accounting, real estate, financial planning, insurance, and banking. Many establishments within this sector are small start-up enterprises and serve a local, rather than regional or national, market.

Many consider business recruitment to be the most important role for the economic development practitioner. Other avenues for economic growth and vitality, however, are just as essential – especially in communities that are lacking some of the key attributes that site selectors and recruitment prospects are seeking. In most communities, plentiful economic development opportunities lie closer to home if properly cultivated. "Economic gardening" is the most overlooked – and often most important – process for stimulating local growth and vitality. Promoting entrepreneurship involves leveraging existing resources in the local business sector – including innovation, financing, know-how, and business and social networks – and matching those resources with investment opportunities. In essence, it should be a critical component of any business retention and expansion program.

Suburban markets are increasingly being seen as viable places to do business, especially among professional service companies. Strong population growth provides the critical mass that these locally serving businesses need to succeed. In addition, office developers across the country increasingly have suburbs in their sights. Also, small businesses often prefer to be in emerging suburban markets because they are closer to home and are able to garner greater attention – and gratitude – from the local jurisdiction, as well as their new patrons. Finally, the spread of the nation’s telecommunications infrastructure, especially broadband services, has enabled small businesses in smaller towns to compete with their urban competitors.

### Rationale and Considerations

1. Fill in gaps in the local economy to serve local demand for professional and business services.
2. Potential for growth and local economic diversification, especially among upper wage professional positions.
3. Opportunities for local entrepreneurs and start-up businesses.
4. Begin to set the stage for higher-end office development and professional and business activities and assist in establishing Zachary as the employment center for the northern Baton Rouge metropolitan region.
5. Promote smaller office developments throughout Zachary, but particularly in the Downtown area and sites in close proximity to Lane Memorial.
6. Difficulty in marketing to this broad sector according to traditional economic development practices.

### Potential Niches

1. Legal services.
2. Architecture and real estate.
3. Accounting and other financial services.
4. Engineering services.
5. Entrepreneurship.

The machinery industry includes companies that manufacture or distribute equipment, machinery, and/or related components, including agriculture, construction, and mining machinery; industrial machinery; material handling equipment; and other general purpose machinery.

The specialty machining industry comprises establishments, known as machine shops, primarily engaged in machining metal parts on a job or order basis. Generally, machine shop jobs are low volume, using machine tools such as lathes (including computer numerically controlled), automatic screw machines, and machines for boring, grinding, and milling.

### Machinery/Specialty Machining

The location of machinery manufacturers and specialty machiners (machine shops) is highly dependent on the industries they are servicing. As a result, they tend to cluster in close proximity to these end-users. For example, regions with a strong presence in the oil and gas industry (as in the Central Gulf Coast) will typically serve as a location for machine shops that custom produce exploration and other mining-related equipment. Employment trends within specialty machining are typically strongly influenced by the health of its customer base. In other words, during times of high oil prices, exploration activity increases, resulting in greater demand for machining orders. As a

result, employment levels are often cyclical in nature. Additionally, machine shops are increasingly incorporating technology in their production, which requires a more highly skilled, experienced, and technologically savvy worker. As a result, U.S. machinery manufacturers are very competitive in

international markets. For example, U.S. suppliers for oil and gas machinery and equipment are active in virtually all upstream petroleum markets, and U.S. technology and quality are considered among the best available in most product categories.

### Rationale and Considerations

1. Proximity to Baton Rouge's petrochemical complex and other industrial employers, such as Georgia Pacific.
2. Availability of highly skilled workforce, both locally and regionally.
3. Potential to support existing industrial employers in the region.
4. Ongoing construction and industrial expansions may provide opportunities for increased demand for new business.
5. The expansion of technical training programs through Zachary Community Schools and the establishment of a Zachary satellite of Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC).
6. Consideration of the development of a modern business park to site new employers in this sector.

### Potential Niches

1. Machine shops serving the region's petrochemical complex and oil and gas industries.
2. Construction and mining machinery.

### Advanced Materials

Materials have played an important role throughout history in the development of the world's economy, from the Stone Age to the Plastics Age. Recent progress in technology research has ushered in the beginning of a new era: the age of Advanced Materials. This new era cannot, however, be defined by the use of a single material, but rather in the conception and diffusion of a vast array of materials. To underscore the significance of this new period, the U.S. Department of Commerce has identified advanced materials as one of five emerging technologies America must master to remain competitive in the world marketplace.

"Advanced materials" is a diverse collection of industries that encompasses materials, technologies, specialty materials, performance materials, engineered materials, composite materials, and smart material systems. Strength, durability, and even superconductivity are hallmarks of the products from these industries. Applications range from military to consumer products to bioscience. The building blocks of this industry include: engineered polymers, resins, and specialty chemicals; advanced fibers and specialty adhesives; structural ceramics and composites; metal composites, powder metals, and high temperature alloys; and surface engineering, electronics, and nanotechnology.

Based largely on increasing knowledge and understanding of the microscopic properties of matter and on the mastery of new industrial reproduction processes, innovations enable different materials to be combined and customized with new properties to make new alloys or composites. The growth in possibilities has not only been an impetus for changes in downstream products and services, but also in the innovation of upstream materials. In other words, under the old industrial model, designers and engineers were limited in the development of products by the materials available to them. Today, new materials can be developed and customized to fit the demands of specific technical needs. For example, requirements of the microelectronics industry have led to the development of a vast supplier network for semiconductive and photosensitive materials, high-purity chemicals, and new ceramics and resins.

The advanced materials industry is composed of products with considerable “value-add,” meaning the profit gained from altering materials that are less refined into a more profitable product is substantial. This industry can be generally characterized as follows:

- ◆ Tailored or engineered to fit very specific requirements in specific applications,
- ◆ Market segments are generally small and niche oriented,
- ◆ Profit margins are high and prices are generally set in relation to the value provided to the final end-user and less with regard to what competitors charge, and
- ◆ Value is provided to the end-user by providing a technological edge or greater efficiency.

#### Rationale and Considerations

1. Proximity to Baton Rouge’s petrochemical complex, allowing access to multiple suppliers of raw materials.
2. Access to ongoing research in advanced materials and nanotechnology at Louisiana State University.
3. High quality of life (schools and housing) in Zachary, making it attractive for research and development activities and their employees.
4. Availability of highly skilled workforce, both locally and regionally, with knowledge of materials sciences.
5. Potential to influence other targets, especially healthcare (R&D and testing), and support existing industrial employers in the region.
6. The expansion of the River Bend plant may present opportunities for the development and fabrication of advanced building composites as a result of construction activities.
7. Consideration of the development of a modern business park to site potential recruits.

#### Potential Niches

1. Advanced polymeric materials.
2. Composites.
3. Advanced building materials.
4. Research, development, and testing.



## Chapter Eight

# Implementation

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*"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."*<sup>1</sup>

- Thomas A. Edison

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This plan sets forth a vision as to how Zachary should develop over the next 20 years – and beyond. With the vision in place, the community must now direct its attention and resources toward plan implementation. Each of the goals, policies, and recommended action statements identified throughout this plan must be turned into specific programs, initiatives, and/or new standards. This element establishes priorities and sets forth a process to ensure the plan is implemented and kept current over time.

The comprehensive plan should be a “living document,” that is, a document that is frequently referred to for guidance in decision-making with regard to land development and public investments in infrastructure and services. It is in that context that this is the Chapter that breathes life into the rest of the Comprehensive Plan, by setting out a practical, prioritized, and sequenced implementation program. The key objective of this chapter is to integrate the different elements of the plan together in such a way as to provide a clear path for sound decision-making.

Implementation is not just about a list of action items. It is a challenging process that will require the commitment of the City’s elected and appointed officials, staff, residents, business owners, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD), Zachary Community School District, Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC), Baton Rouge Area and Zachary Chambers of Commerce, environmental organizations, and other organizations and individuals who will serve as champions of the plan.

## Purpose

Implementation is an essential step in the plan development process. It requires the commitment of the City’s leadership, including the Mayor and City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, other City boards and commissions, and City staff. It is also necessary for there to be close coordination with and joint commitment with each of the above described agencies and organizations that significantly influence Zachary and its growth.

Each chapter of this plan outlines specific issues to be addressed to achieve what is envisioned by community residents. In response are a large number of recommended actions that relate to regulatory changes, programmatic initiatives, and capital projects. While these recommendations are comprehensive and intended to be accomplished over the 20-year horizon of this plan, near-term strategies must be put in place to take the first step toward implementation. These strategies must be prioritized, with decisions as to the sequencing of activities, the capacity to fulfill each initiative, and the ability to obligate the necessary funding. Those deemed as top priorities and viewed as feasible in the short-term are placed in a five-year action plan. In addition to implementing these targeted strategies, the broader policies set



forth by the plan text and maps may be used in making decisions related to the physical and economic development of the community.

The purpose of this chapter is to integrate the elements of the plan to provide a clear path for sound decision making. This chapter outlines the organizational structure necessary to implement the plan, strategic directions and priorities for implementation, and a process for regular evaluation and appraisal of the plan to ensure it is kept relevant and viable.

## Responsibility for Implementation

Simply setting out an implementation framework in this Chapter is not enough to ensure that the action items of this plan will be carried out. These action items should be consulted frequently, and should be widely used by decision-makers as a basis for decisions regarding:

- ◆ The timing and availability of infrastructure improvements;
- ◆ City-initiated and owner-initiated annexations;
- ◆ Proposed development and redevelopment applications;
- ◆ Special use permits;
- ◆ Zone change requests;
- ◆ Expansion of public facilities, services, and programs;
- ◆ Annual capital budgeting;
- ◆ Zoning and subdivision code re-writes and amendments;
- ◆ Intergovernmental coordination and agreements; and
- ◆ Operations, capital improvements, and programming related to individual City departments.

To be successful, the City must utilize this plan on a daily basis, and it must be integrated into ongoing governmental practices and programs. The recommendations must be referenced often and widely used to make decisions pertaining to the timing and availability of infrastructure improvements; proposed development applications; zone change requests; expansion of public facilities, services, and programs; and annual capital budgeting, among other considerations.

Each Council member, staff person, and member of boards, commissions, and committees has an obligation to use this plan in guiding their decisions. The plan is designed to guide the growth and economic development of the community. It is intended to guide staff – of all departments – in managing their individual activities, annual work programs, and capital projects.

The primary means of implementation include:

1. *Preparation of new land development regulations to ensure a quality and character of development that reflects the community's vision.* The revision of the zoning and subdivision ordinances will improve land use compatibility, conserve natural resources and open space, preserve the character and integrity of neighborhoods and other valued areas, improve the efficiency of facility and service provision, and contribute to a fiscally responsible pattern of urban growth.
2. *Formation of policies by City staff, Planning and Zoning Commission, and the directions of the City Council.* As new development is proposed, staff and the City's advisory boards, together with the City Council, must abide by the policies and recommendations of this plan. The text of this plan, coupled with the land use, growth, and thoroughfare plans, provide the requisite guidance for achieving that envisioned by the residents and stakeholders of this community.

3. *Regular updates to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifying capital projects for street infrastructure; water, wastewater, and drainage improvements; park, trail, and recreation facility provisions; and other public buildings and municipal services.* These capital improvements must be coordinated with the objectives of this plan and implemented consistent with the future land use and growth plans, thoroughfare plan, parks and recreation system plan, and other relevant plans and policies.
4. *Identification and implementation of special projects, programs, and initiatives to achieve organizational, programmatic, and/or developmental objectives.* These may include further studies, detailed area plans, such as individual neighborhood and/or special district plans, or initiating or expanding upon key City programs. These tend to be ministerial in function, which may support or influence physical improvements or enhancements, but themselves focus on community betterment.

### Implementation Strategies

Shown in **Table 7.1, Summary Action Plan** is the key near-term strategies for implementing this plan. Additional detail may be found within the respective plan chapters. These strategies highlight the steps to be taken by the City, often in coordination with other jurisdictions, organizations, or agencies. This tabulation is designed to be kept up-to-date and used on an ongoing basis as part of the regular review process. Each year, the projects that are substantially complete should be removed, with the corresponding years advanced one year and a fifth year of programmed actions added. In this way, this action plan may keep the City Council apprised as to the progress of implementation.

<b>Table 7.1 Summary Action Plan</b>	
<b>Action Agenda</b>	<b>Primary Action Items</b>
	<b>Priority No. 1</b>
	Amend the land development regulations including the zoning, sign, and landscaping ordinances and the subdivision regulations.
	<b>Priority No. 2A</b>
	Prepare a fiscal impact model to gauge the feasibility and implications for public finances of new development and annexation activity in the Preferred Growth Areas.
	<b>Priority No. 2B</b>
	Conduct an annexation study to include a facility needs assessment for the preferred growth areas. The needs evaluation should include provision of municipal services and facilities as well as utility capacity requirements.
	<b>Priority No. 2C</b>
	Adopt a utility extension policy subject to the criteria of this plan. Subsequently commission an impact fee study.
	<b>Priority No. 2D</b>
Negotiate an Intergovernmental agreement with EBRP to realign the Zone of Influence, conduct joint development review, and/or amend the Horizon Plan consistent with this plan.	
<b>Priority No. 3A</b>	
Enhance local economic development efforts through a commitment for increased funding, in accordance with the recommendation of Chapter 7, Economic Development.	
<b>Priority No. 3B</b>	
Develop a formal economic development incentives policy.	

**Table 7.1  
Summary Action Plan**

<b>Priority No. 3C</b>
Identify and acquire land for a business park.
<b>Priority No. 4A</b>
Prepare a Downtown Master Plan including a preliminary municipal facility plan and land acquisition strategy, fringe area plan, and urban form study.
<b>Priority No. 4B</b>
Prepare a historic preservation plan for the historic and garden districts including preservation guidelines and construction standards.
<b>Priority No. 4C</b>
Study the warrant for designation of Downtown as a registered historic district. As warranted, designate a Downtown Historic District.
<b>Priority No. 4D</b>
Create a Business Improvement District (BID) for Downtown improvement projects.
<b>Priority No. 5</b>
Prepare a master drainage study and plan.
<b>Priority No. 6A</b>
Prepare traffic engineering and design study for LA 64 to identify Transportation Systems Management (TSM) improvements.
<b>Priority No. 6B</b>
Construct Transportation System Management (TSM) improvements along LA 64.
<b>Priority No. 7A</b>
Commission a corridor design study and plan for gateway treatments and streetscape enhancements along LA 19 South and LA 64 West.
<b>Priority No. 7B</b>
Construct gateway and roadway enhancement improvements along LA 19 South.
<b>Priority No. 8A</b>
Commission a pedestrian mobility study and plan to prepare a comprehensive network of trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes.
<b>Priority No. 8B</b>
Construct the priority pedestrian mobility improvements.
<b>Priority No. 9</b>
Commission a mobility study to investigate design options and alternative alignments for a LA 64 bypass.
<b>Priority No. 11</b>
Negotiate agreements with BREC and the Zachary Community School District for joint acquisition, development, and maintenance of park spaces.



**Table 7.1  
Summary Action Plan**

<b>Priority No. 12A</b>
Acquire land for construction of a new community park east of Downtown.
<b>Priority No. 12B</b>
Design and construct a community park east of Downtown.
<b>Priority 13</b>
Adopt a policy requiring LEED construction of municipal buildings and facilities.

## Plan Administration

During the development of the plan, community leaders in government, business, civic groups, and others came together to inform the planning process. These leaders, and new ones to emerge over the horizon of this plan, must maintain their commitment to the ongoing implementation of the plan's policies – and the periodic updating of the plan to adapt to changing conditions or unforeseen events.

## Education and Training

Comprehensive plans are relatively general in nature, but they are still complex policy documents that account for interrelationships among various policy choices. As such, educating decision-makers and administrators about plan implementation is an important first step after plan adoption. As the principal groups that will implement the plan, the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and City department heads should all be “on the same page” with regard to priorities, responsibilities, and interpretations. Consequently, an education initiative should be undertaken immediately after plan adoption, which should include:

- ◆ A discussion of the individual roles and responsibilities of the Council, Commission, Board, or individual staff members.
- ◆ A thorough overview of the entire Comprehensive Plan, with emphasis on the parts of the plan that relate to each individual group.
- ◆ Implementation tasking and priority setting, with allow each group to establish a one-year and three-year implementation agenda.
- ◆ Facilitation of a mock meeting in which the use of the plan and its policies and recommendations is illustrated.
- ◆ A question and answer session.

## Role Definition

As the elected officials, the City Council will assume the lead role in implementing this plan. Their chief responsibility is to decide and establish the priorities and timeframes by which each action will be initiated and completed. In conjunction with the Mayor, they must manage the coordination among the various groups responsible for carrying out the plan's recommendations. Lastly, they are also responsible for the funding commitments required, whether it involves capital outlay, budget for expanded services, additional staffing, further studies, or programmatic or procedural changes.

The City Council will take the lead in the following general areas:

- ◆ Act as a “champion” of the plan.
- ◆ Adopt and amend the plan by resolution, after recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- ◆ Adopt new land development regulations to implement the plan.
- ◆ Rezone property proactively.
- ◆ Approve interlocal agreements that implement the plan.
- ◆ Establish the overall action priorities and timeframes by which each action item of the plan will be initiated and completed.
- ◆ Consider and set the funding commitments that will be required.
- ◆ Offer final approval of projects and activities and the associated costs during the budget process, keeping in mind the need for consistency with the plan and its policies.
- ◆ Provide policy direction to the Planning and Zoning Commission and staff.

The Planning and Zoning Commission will take the lead in the following general areas:

- ◆ Host the education initiative described in the Education and Training section above.
- ◆ Periodically obtain public input to keep the plan up to date, using citizen meetings, hearings, surveys, or other methods, to obtain advice on the planning process, plan, and implementation.
- ◆ After holding one or more public hearings to discuss potential recommendations, make recommendations to the City Council with regard to plan updates and plan amendments.

All departments are responsible for administering this plan, specifically as it relates to their function within the organization. Many departments were involved in the plan development process and are, therefore, familiar with its content and outcomes. They must now be enrolled as implementers to ensure their budgets and annual work programs are in line with the plan.

City Staff will take the lead in the following general areas:

- ◆ Manage day to day implementation of the plan.
- ◆ Support and implement capital improvements planning efforts.
- ◆ Manage the development of new land development regulations.
- ◆ Conduct studies and develop additional plans.
- ◆ Review applications for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan when required by the Idaho Statutes or the City’s land development regulations.
- ◆ Negotiate the specifics of interlocal agreements.
- ◆ Administer collaborative programs and ensure open channels of communication with implementation partners.

### Plan Implementation Board

While the Planning and Zoning Commission will play a critical role in implementing the plan, it cannot expend all of its efforts toward ensuring continued implementation of the plan. As such, a Plan Implementation Board should be appointed by City Council with the purpose of assisting the Planning and Zoning Commission and ensuring that programs and activities are carried out to implement the plan.

The Board's role is to refine and prioritize the implementation plan and initiate action over the short term on the basis of annual work programs and five-year projected timeframes.

It is recommended that the Citizens' Delegation continue to function in a new role and serve as the Plan Implementation Board, along with other members of the community (as deemed necessary). The Citizens' Delegation was instrumental in developing the plan and is familiar with its policies and recommended strategies. Having the members of the committee continue in this capacity will bring continuity and consistency to the planning process and will allow for an effective transition into plan implementation.

Responsibilities of the Board would include the following:

1. Refine the strategies outlined in the plan and identify specific actions beyond the information provided in this general plan.
2. Determine methods or programs to be used to implement the proposed actions, specifically identifying which agencies and/or departments will be responsible for their implementation, coordinating with City staff to estimate costs and identify proposed sources of funding, and establishing timeframes in which the recommended actions will be accomplished.
3. Prepare and present to the Planning and Zoning Commission a recommended list of programs and actions to be implemented annually, as well as a prioritized list to be implemented over a five-year period.

A similar role might be supported by the Louisiana Development Ready Community (LDRC) Steering Committee, which has already met to establish goals and actions for the near future. Many of these actions overlap with the priorities from the overall Plan and will enable a series of quick successes. Draft goals include:

- 1. Organize Economic Development Committee**
  - a. Create a partnership with City and Chamber strengthening the connection between the two entities.
  - b. Hire an Economic Development Director.
  - c. Work with the City and Parish to develop a plan to expand the city limits.
  - d. Identify Development Ready Sites within the existing City limits and beyond.
- 2. Infrastructure Enhancement**
  - a. Advocate for projects leading to the improvement of current highways and development of new corridors and research opportunities for funding.
  - b. Review solutions for waste water disposal and explore opportunities for funding.
- 3. Revitalize Downtown**
  - a. Identify the "center of Zachary" and explore opportunities of creating plans for infill development and investment.
- 4. Improve Intergovernmental Relationships**
  - a. Enhance political and business relationships between Baton Rouge and Zachary.
  - b. Participate in the process and develop relationship between Zachary and city parish planning department.
  - c. Continue building relationships with BREC.
- 5. Market Zachary in the Region and Beyond**
  - a. Establish and maintain a Website.
  - b. Develop and establish a demographic database.
  - c. Work with BRAC to market Zachary both regionally and nationally

- d. Work with BRAC to market Zachary both regionally and nationally.
  - e. Develop Zachary's Community Brand.
- 6. Leadership Development**
- a. Identify and enhance existing leadership development programs.
  - b. Create a young leaders initiative targeting professionals ages 25-40, with a purpose of connecting them with one another and existing leaders in the community.
  - c. Identify local resources, as LSU, who could assist in leadership development and schedule meetings or workshops to discuss possibilities.

## Plan Amendment

This plan must remain flexible and allow for adjustment to change over time. Shifts in political, economic, physical, and social conditions and other unforeseen circumstances will influence the priorities of the community. As growth continues, new issues will emerge, while others may no longer be relevant. Some action statements may become less practical, while other plausible solutions will arise. To ensure that it continues to reflect the vision and remains relevant and viable over time, the plan must be revisited on a routine basis, with regular amendments and warranted updates.

Revisions to the plan are two-fold: minor plan amendments should occur bi-annually and more significant updates handled every five years. Minor amendments may include revisions to the land use and growth plan or thoroughfare plan as the development pattern unfolds. Major updates will involve reviewing the base conditions and growth trends; re-evaluating the goals, policies, and recommendations; and formulating new ones in response to changing needs and priorities.

## Annual Progress Report

A progress report should be prepared annually by the Planning and Zoning Commission, with the assistance of the Plan Administrator, and presented to the Mayor and City Council. This ensures that the plan is regularly reviewed and modifications are identified for the minor plan amendment process. Ongoing monitoring of plan consistency with the City's ordinances must be an essential part of this effort.

The Annual Progress Report should include:

- ◆ Significant actions and accomplishments during the past year, including the status of implementation for each programmed task.
- ◆ Implementation constraints, including those encountered in administering the plan and its policies.
- ◆ Proposed amendments that have come forward during the course of the year, which may include revisions to the plan maps, or other recommendations, policies, or text changes.
- ◆ Recommendations for needed actions, programs, and procedures to be developed and implemented in the forthcoming year, including a recommendation of projects to be included in the CIP, programs and initiatives to be funded, and priority coordination needs with public and private implementation partners.

## Bi-annual Amendment Process

Plan amendments should occur on a bi-annual basis, allowing proposed changes to be considered concurrently so that the cumulative effect may be understood. The proposed amendment must be



consistent with the goals and policies set forth in the plan. Careful consideration should also be given to guard against site-specific plan changes that could negatively impact adjacent areas and uses or detract from the overall vision and character of the area. Factors that should be considered include:

- ◆ Consistency with the goals and policies of the plan.
- ◆ Adherence with the future land use, growth, thoroughfare, and parks and trails plans.
- ◆ Compatibility with the surrounding area.
- ◆ Impacts on infrastructure provision.
- ◆ Impact on the ability to provide, fund, and maintain adequate services.
- ◆ Impact on environmentally sensitive and natural areas.
- ◆ Contribution to the vision of the plan and character of the community.

### Five-Year Update/Evaluation and Appraisal Report

An evaluation and appraisal report should be prepared every five years. This report should be prepared by the Plan Administrator, with input from various City departments, Planning and Zoning Commission, and other boards and committees. The report involves evaluating the existing plan and assessing how successful it has been in implementing the vision and goals. The purpose is to identify the successes and shortcomings of the plan, look at what has changed, and make recommendations on how the plan should be modified. The report should review baseline conditions and assumptions about trends and growth indicators, and it should evaluate implementation potential and/or obstacles related to any unmet goals, policies, and recommendations. The result of the evaluation report will be a revised master plan.

More specifically, the report should identify and evaluate the following:

1. Summary of plan amendments and major actions undertaken over the last five years.
2. Major issues in the community and how these issues have changed over time.
3. Changes in the assumptions, trends, and base studies including the following:
  - a. The rate at which growth is occurring relative to the projections put forward in the plan.
  - b. Shifts in demographics and other growth trends.
  - c. The area of urban land that is designated and zoned and its capacity to meet projected demands.
  - d. City-wide attitudes and whether changes necessitate amendments to the vision and goals.
  - e. Other changes in the political, social, economic, or environmental conditions that dictate a need for plan amendment.
4. Ability of the plan to continue to successfully implement the vision.
  - a. Individual statements or sections of the plan must be reviewed and rewritten to ensure that the plan provides sufficient information and direction to achieve the intended outcome.
  - b. Conflicts between goals and policies that have been discovered in the implementation and administration of the plan must be resolved.
  - c. The action agenda should be reviewed and major actions accomplished should be highlighted. Those not accomplished should be re-evaluated to ensure their relevancy and/or to revise them appropriately.
  - d. The timeframes for implementing the individual actions should be re-evaluated. Some actions may emerge as a higher priority given new or changed circumstances, while others may become less important.
  - e. Based upon organizational, programmatic, and procedural factors, as well as the status of previously assigned tasks, the implementation task assignments must be reviewed and altered to ensure timely accomplishment.

- f. Changes in laws, procedures, and missions may impact the ability to achieve the goals. The plan review must assess these changes and their impacts on the success of implementation, leading to any suggested revisions in strategies or priorities.

Appendix A

# Community Profile

Table A.1 – Historic Population Change (1960-2000)

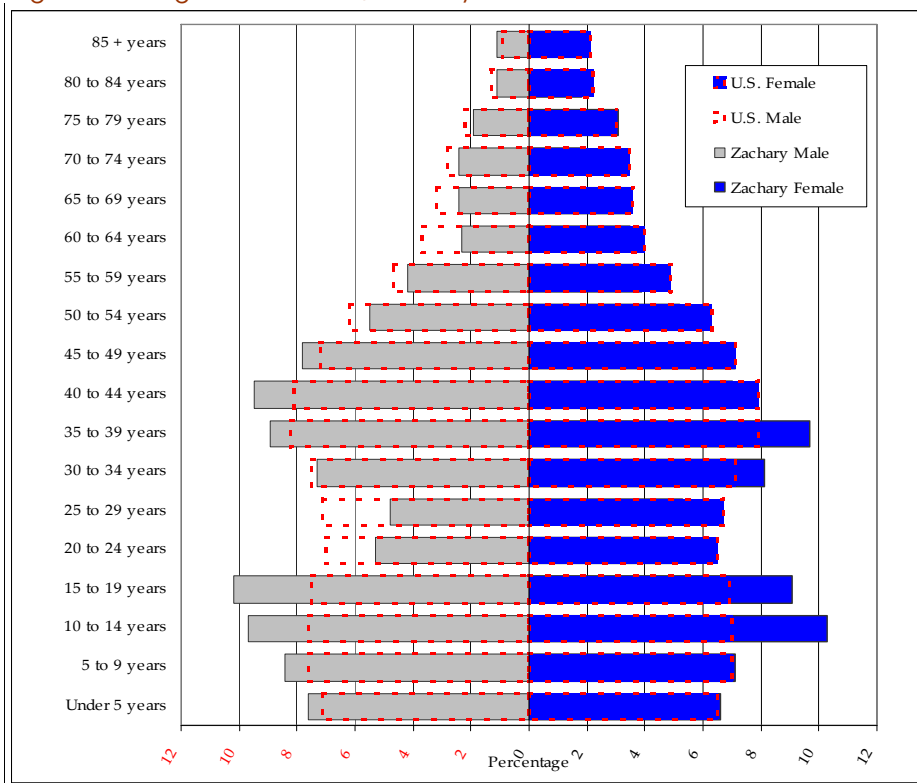
YEAR	Zachary	% Change	Louisiana	% Change
1960	3,268	-	3,260,600	-
1970	4,964	34.2%	3,641,306	10.5%
1980	7,525	34.0%	4,205,900	13.4%
1990	9,471	20.5%	4,219,973	0.3%
2000	11,275	16.0%	4,468,976	5.6%

U.S. Census 1950-2000

### Historic Population

- Over 8,000 persons became residents of Zachary from 1960 to 2000.
- Zachary experienced a population increase of 1,804 persons from 1990 to 2000, a 16 percent increase.
- Zachary has experienced a much larger average increase in population (26.2 percent) than the State (7.5 percent) every decade since 1960.

Figure A.1 – Age and Gender, Zachary



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile



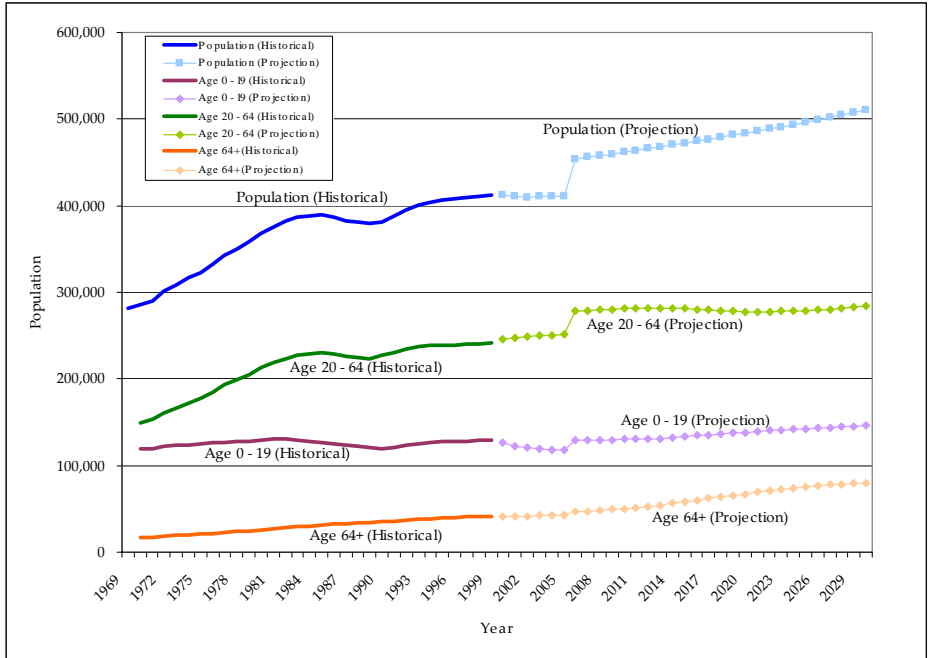
### Age and Gender

- Zachary has a higher percentage of younger residents, ages 5 to 19 years, than the national average, specifically teenagers, than the national average. It also has a larger percentage of middle-aged adults.
- The 20-24 and 25-29 age cohorts are below the national average, meaning that a large percentage leave after high school and contribute to those located in Zachary in their 30's and 40's.
- Persons 50 years and older represent a smaller percentage of the population than national averages.
- The most significant age cohorts in Zachary, compared to national averages, are persons aged 35 to 49 years, which largely represents young families and first-time home buyers.

**Historic and Forecasted Population**

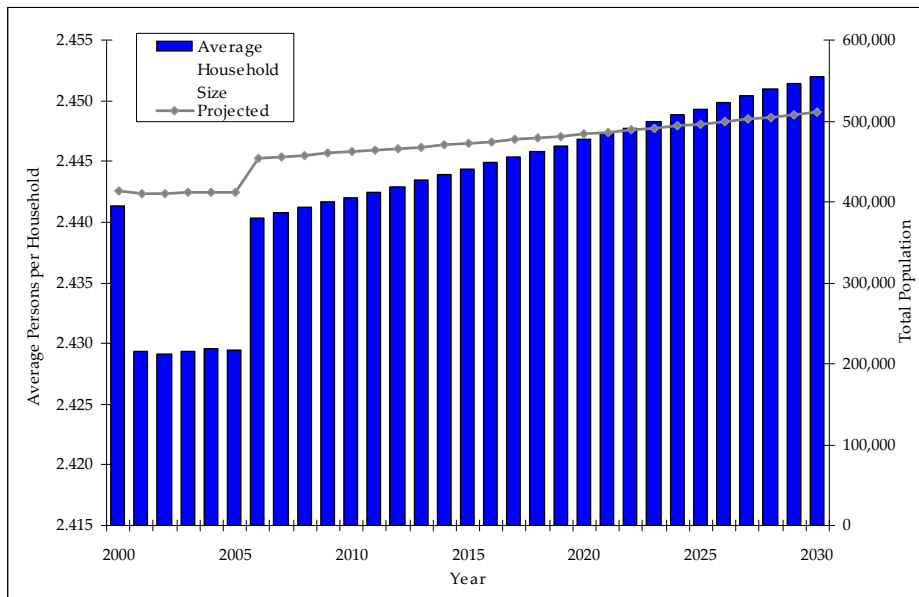
- The older age cohorts are projected to experience the greatest increase, which will likely result in an increase in the median age over time.
- The expected “graying of the population will influence the demands for housing and health services, among others, while lessening school-related impacts.
- Due to a similar rate of growth for school-age children in the Parish, there is likely to be an increased demand in Zachary schools due to its high rating.

Figure A.2 – Historic and Forecasted Population by Age, East Baton Rouge Parish



Woods and Poole Economic, Inc. (2006)

Figure A.3 – Projected Population and Household Size, East Baton Rouge Parish



Woods and Poole Economic, Inc. (2006)

**Projected Population and Households**

- In the Year 2000 there was a population of 412,770 persons and a total of 169,073 household units in the East Baton Rouge Parish, adding to 2.44 persons per household.
- A similar household size is presented for the Year 2030 (2.45 persons), leading to increases in population and households of 97,988 persons and 39,227 units, respectively.
- The projected annual increase in population for East Baton Rouge Parish is 23.7 percent.

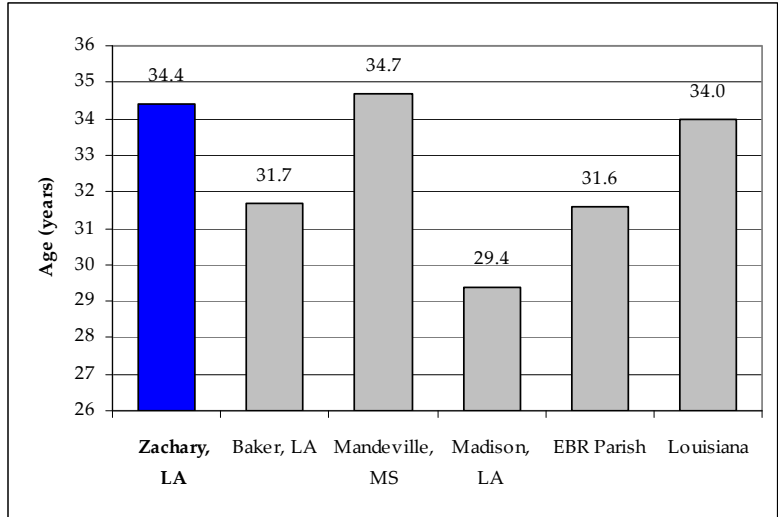


**Median Age**

- The median age in Zachary is 34.4 years, which is comparable to the State.
- Baker (31.7 years), Madison (29.4 years), and the East Baton Rouge Parish (31.6 years) exhibit a younger median age.

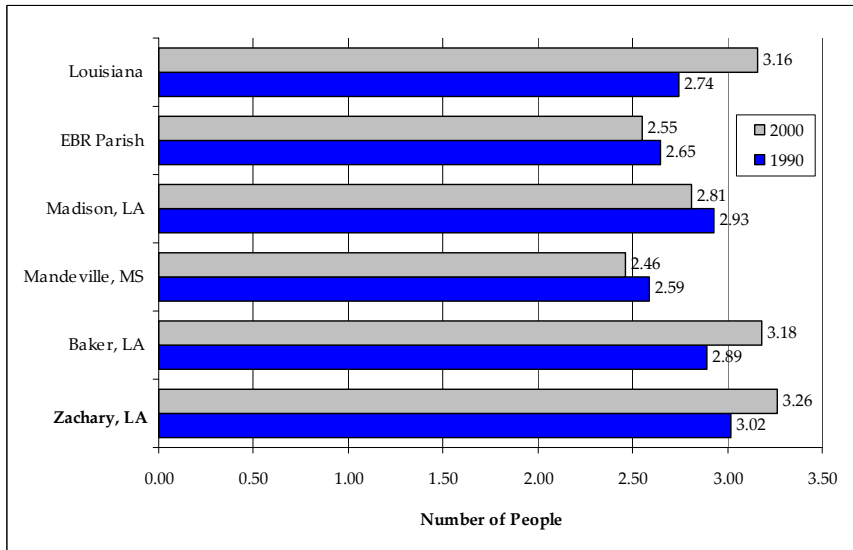


Figure A.4 – Median Age



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

Figure A.5 – Household Size

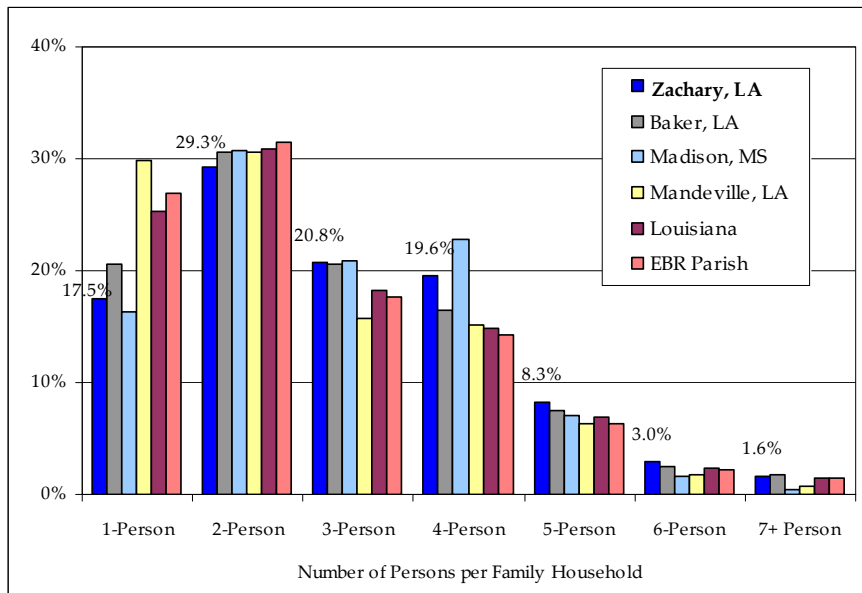


U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

**Household Size**

- The average household size in Zachary is 3.26 persons, which is high compared to the State, Parish, and each of the peer cities. This may be due, in part, to a larger family size as well as the high proportion of children 19 and younger (See Figure A.1 – Age and Gender).

Figure A.6 – Family Households



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

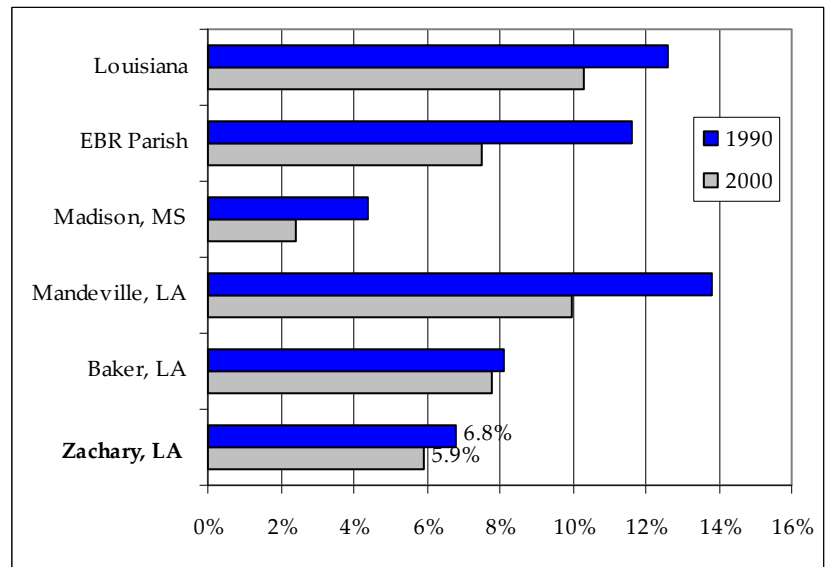
**Family Households**

- Comparatively, Zachary has a smaller percentage (67.6 percent) of persons living in one to three person units than the State (74.4 percent), Parish (76.0 percent), and the comparison cities. Consequently, Zachary has a higher percentage of persons living in four to seven-person households (32.5 percent), which increases the average household size.
- This statistic relates to home and lot size to accommodate more persons and vehicles per person.

**Housing Unit Vacancy Analysis**

- In both 1990 and 2000, Zachary had relatively low vacancy rates compared to the State, Parish, and its peer cities.
- As expected, due to the increasing demand for new home construction, there is a low vacancy rate in Zachary. A healthy vacancy rate that allows for housing availability and market flexibility is 8 to 10 percent.
- A trend of home construction will likely continue until the vacancy rate approaches 9 to 10 percent.

Figure A.7 – Housing Unit Vacancy

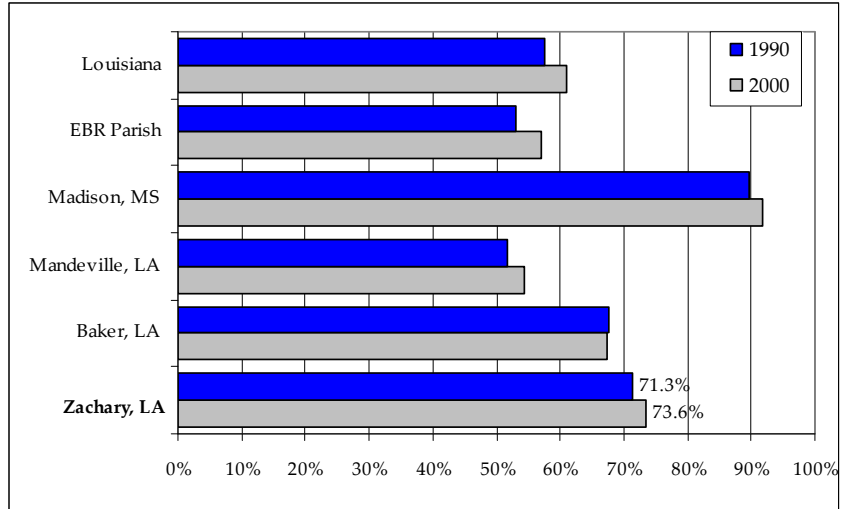


U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

Figure A.8 – Owner Occupied Units

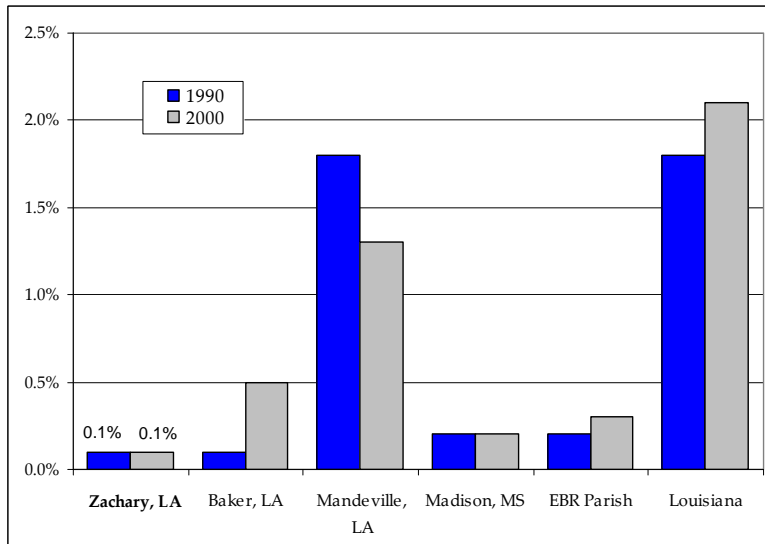
**Household Tenure**

- 73.6 percent of Zachary's housing units were owner-occupied in 2000, exceeding the State's average of 60.9 percent.
- Comparatively, Zachary has a healthy rate of owner occupancy, which contributes to a stable tax base and maintained neighborhood integrity.
- Zachary had a 3.1 percent increase in owner occupancy between 1990 and 2000, which is lower than the 5.4 percent state-wide increase.



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

Figure A.9 – Seasonal Units



U.S. Census 1990-2000 Comparison

**Seasonal Units**

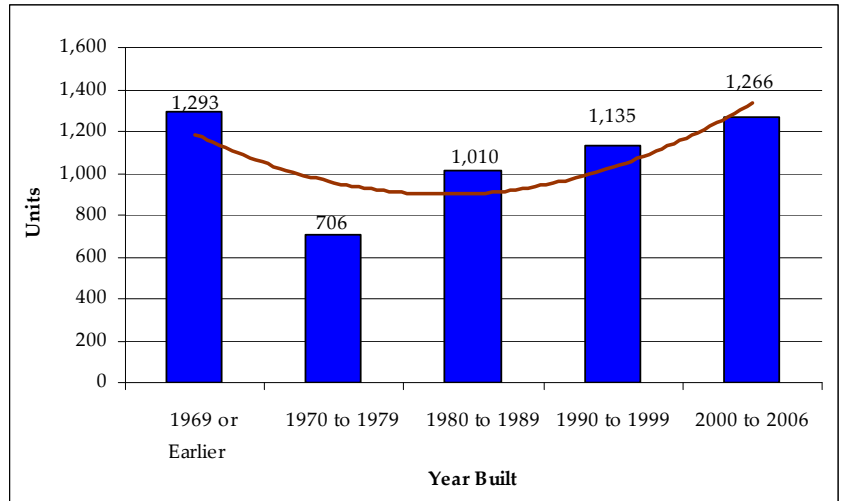
- Only 0.1 percent of Zachary's housing units (1990 and 2000) are seasonal; well below the state's average of 2.1 percent in 2000.
- While seasonal units contribute to the economy, a stable and balanced supply of workforce housing is important to maintain values and quality of life.

**Housing Age, Zachary**

- 55.6 percent of the housing in Zachary was built before 1990.
- There has been a steady increase in home construction, since 1970, due to the increase in population.

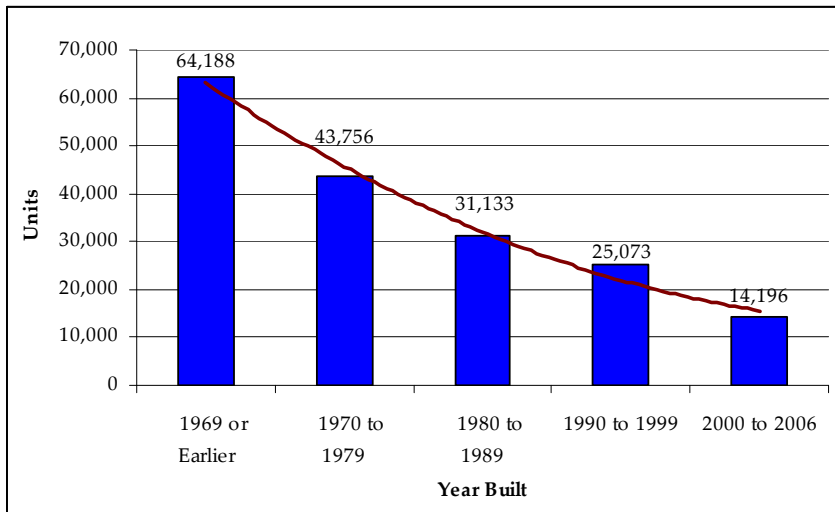


Figure A.10 – Year Structure Built, Zachary



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

Figure A.11 – Year Structure Built, East Baton Rouge Parish



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

**Housing Age, East Baton Rouge Parish**

- Almost 78 percent of housing in the parish was built before 1990.
- There has been a steady decline in home construction in the parish. From 1990 to 1999 there was an average of 2,507 homes built per year. From 2000 to 2006 it has reduced to 2,366 homes per year.



### Housing Affordability

- Zachary's affordability index estimate is 1.34, meaning that the median income household earns more than enough to buy the median-priced house.
- 1,241.73 per month is an affordable mortgage payment for the City's median household income of \$49,669.
- Louisiana's index estimate is 1.00, so the median family income is exactly equal to the income a conventional lender would require for the family to purchase the median priced house.

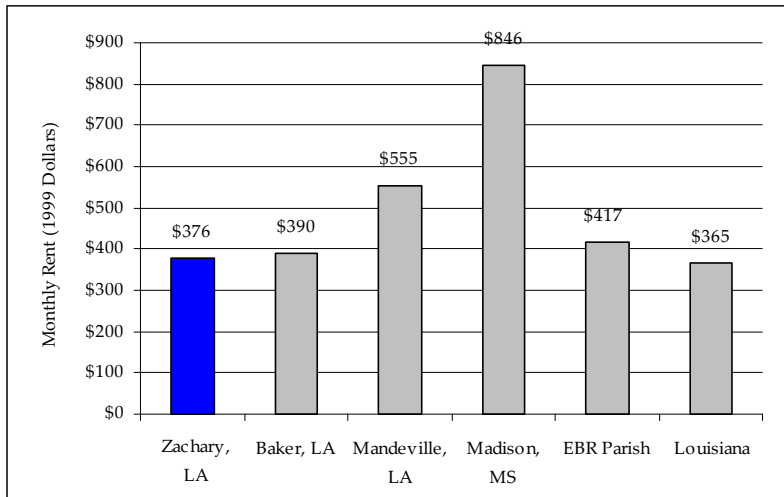
Table A.2 – Housing Affordability Index Estimates

	Zachary, LA	Baker, LA	Mandeville, LA	Madison, MS	EBR Parish	Louisiana
Median Monthly Mortgage	\$930	\$696	\$1,224	\$1,124	\$876	\$816
Median Household Income	\$49,669	\$35,151	\$52,500	\$71,266	\$47,480	\$32,566
2000 Affordability Index Estimates	1.34	1.26	1.07	1.59	1.36	1.00

U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile



Figure A.12 – Median Gross Rent



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

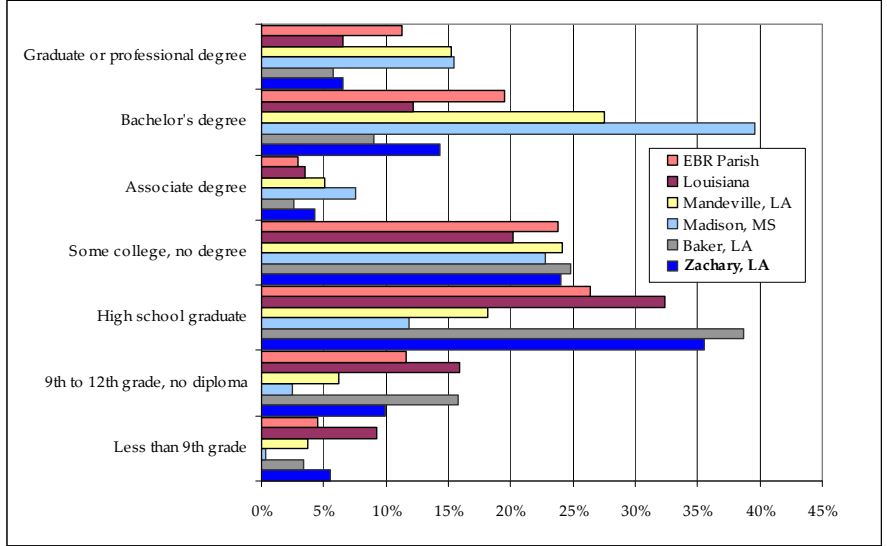
### Median Monthly Rent

- Zachary's median gross rent is \$376 per month; similar to Baker (\$390) and the state average (\$365), and lower than Mandeville (\$555) and Madison (\$846).
- A relatively low median gross rent aids in community affordability, which supports the housing needs of the workforce.
- The median gross rent amount signals the size and age of affordable units, which should be monitored to meet community needs.

Figure A.13 – Educational Attainment

**Educational Attainment**

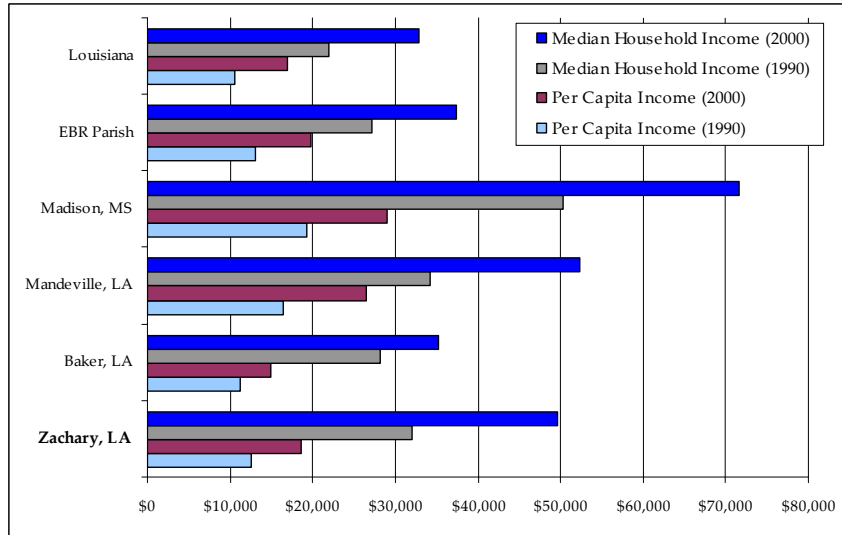
- Zachary has a higher percentage of its population with some college, no degree and less education than its comparison cities and hence, a lower percentage with an associate degree or higher.
- In all levels of education Zachary is better than the State average, including a similar percentage of population with less than a high school degree and a higher percentage with at least a high school diploma.
- Economic development objectives and initiatives should focus on increasing the educational attainment of the population.



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile



Figure A.14 - Income



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

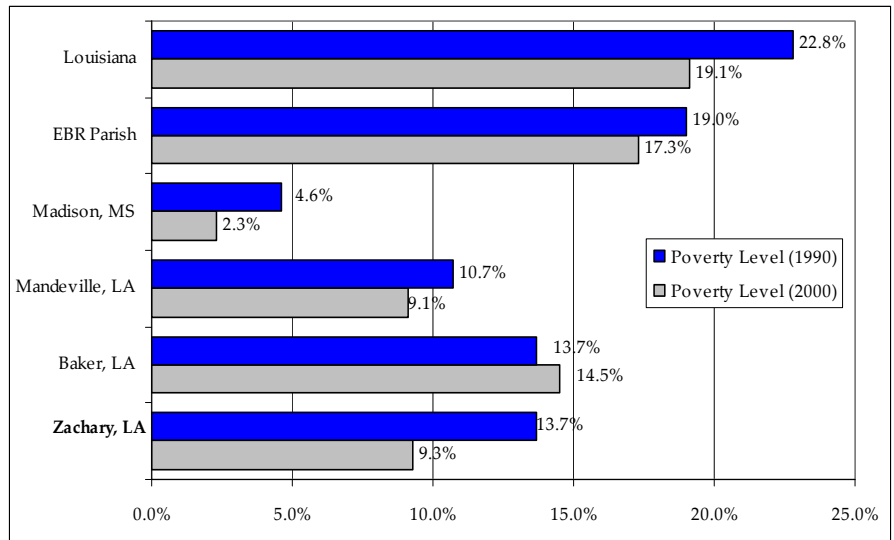
**Income Comparison**

- Zachary's per capita and median household incomes exceed Baker, are favorable to that of the State, but fall below that of Madison and Mandeville.
- The percent change of Zachary's median household income from 1990 to 2000 is 55.3%, which exceeds the State, Parish, and all comparison cities.
- Zachary's change in per capita income is 48.3%, which only exceeds the City of Baker (33.6%).

Figure A.15 - Poverty

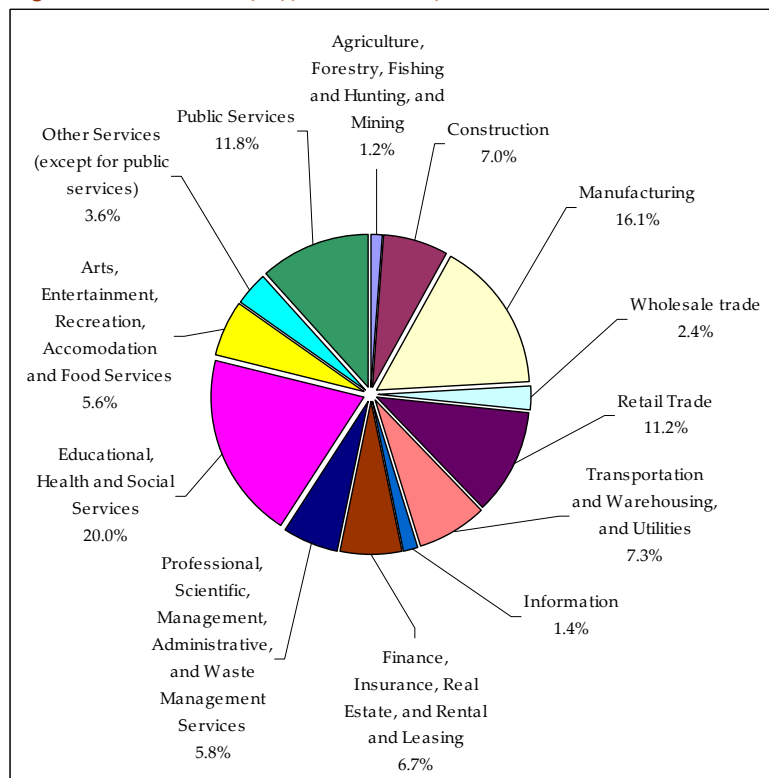
**Poverty**

- With a 9.3% poverty level, Zachary is well below Louisiana's average of 19.1%.
- As the community grows and new homes are constructed the poverty rate is likely to decrease.
- Between 1990 and 2000, the poverty rate has decreased 32.1 percent. The only comparison to experience a greater decrease is Madison (50%).



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

Figure A.16 – Industry Types, Zachary



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

**Industry Sector Types**

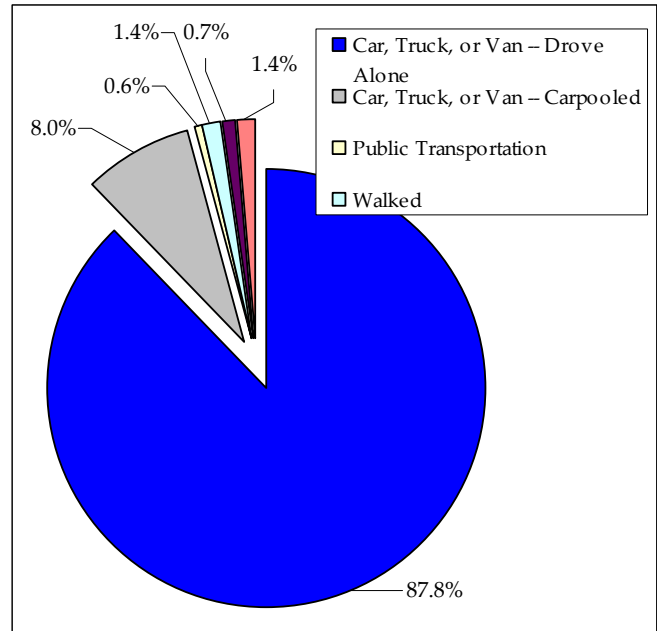
- Most of Zachary's workforce draws its paycheck from the Education, Health and Social Services (20%) and Manufacturing Industries (16.1%).
- Public Services and Retail Trade add an additional 23% combined.
- To increase the work base and offer more employment opportunities, the economic development strategy must focus on rezoning and attracting higher wage employers, including Manufacturing; Information; Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing; and Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services.



**Transportation Mode Share**

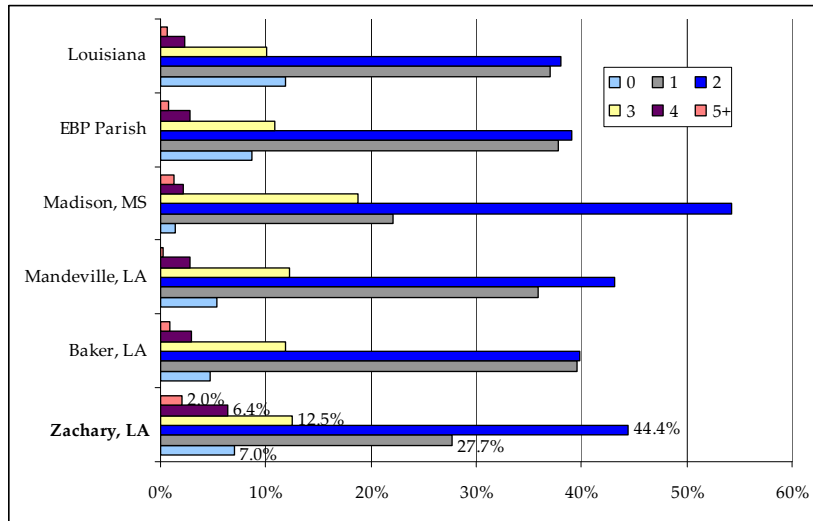
- Most Zachary residents (95.7%) commute to work in a car, truck, or van, with 87.8% driving alone; well above the national average of 75.7%.
- Only 0.6% of residents commute to work via public transportation, indicating a lack of public transportation available to consumers (2.4% of Louisiana residents use public transportation).
- Only 1.4 percent walk to work, meaning there are great opportunities to increase employment within the community and encourage mixed use environments.
- It is expected that the percentage of those who work at home will increase, thereby receiving amendable land use revisions and zoning allowances.

Figure A.17 – Transportation to Work, Zachary



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

Figure A.18 – Vehicles per Household



U.S. Census 2000: Summary Profile

**Vehicles per Household**

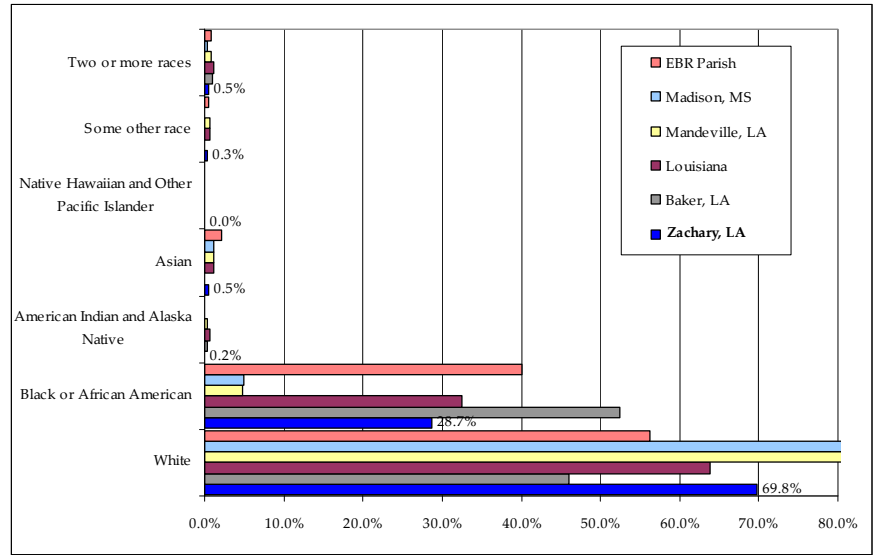
- The average number of vehicles per household is average compared to the State, Parish, and peer cities from 0 to 3 cars. Zachary contains a larger percentage of 4- car (6.4 percent) and 5-car households (2.0 percent).
- Zachary averages 1.9 cars per household; Madison has the only higher average (2.0 cars).



**Race Comparison**

- In Zachary, 69.8 percent of the population is classified as "White", which is higher than the State average (63.9 percent).
- The second largest race is "Black or African American" contributing nearly 29 percent of the population in Zachary (and 32.5 percent in Louisiana).
- Each of the other census-designated races together amount to 1.5 percent of the population in Zachary.

Figure A.19 – Race Comparison



U.S. Census 2000: Detailed Race Profile



Adopted April 5, 2010

Appendix B

# Types of Land Character

Zachary has identified its desired future vision as an economically balanced, highly attractive, family-oriented, suburban community composed of a variety of highly livable neighborhoods. To implement this vision, a means of converting this statement of future intent into land use policies and development regulations must be formed. A community character analysis was used to characterize the existing development and to document the land use patterns and design elements that form the character of individual developments and the community as a whole.

This approach allows the formulation of standards to achieve the desired community character. Each of the community character types described below is present in Zachary with varying degrees of significance. The more readily identifiable are the:

- ◆ Urban character in Downtown, which is significantly interrupted by the state highway but remains as the City’s core;
- ◆ Auto-urban nature of commercial development along each of the major corridors;
- ◆ Industrial uses along the railroad, developing along LA 67/Plank Road, and, to a certain extent, along the entrance ways of LA 64;
- ◆ Auto-urban neighborhoods in the well established areas of the community, with small to moderately sizes lots and homes;
- ◆ Suburban character of neighborhoods with moderate and larger sized lots and homes;
- ◆ Scattered areas of estate residential around the periphery of the community; and
- ◆ Agricultural and natural areas.

## Character Types

The range of community character types and their functions are as follows:

### Natural Character

Natural areas surrounding Zachary have been left undeveloped mainly due to their constraints of urban development, such as the extent of flood ways and floodplain areas surrounding the community. These areas offer great opportunity for development clustering, allowing the resources to be protected while providing for attractive, low impact development environments.

### Agriculture Character

The character of this rural area is dominated by low intensity agricultural cropland and pastures; where homes are customarily an accessory to agriculture. The landscape is accented by a few farmsteads, outbuildings, and in some cases a virtually unbroken flat horizon, which contribute to its rural character

## Countryside Character

This type of rural character includes sparse residential acreages commingled with agriculture, which are increasingly prevalent in the ex-urban areas (the areas beyond the city limits) where the first signs of suburbanization are present. There are many emerging examples of a countryside character around Zachary, raising the importance for growth management.

## Estate Character

This character type is prevalent around the outlying, peripheral areas of Zachary, and increasingly so as more development encroaches within the rural landscape. An estate character requires low density



There are large estate areas around Zachary, such as the "North Vernon" area.

development on larger properties (typically one acre or larger), thereby producing a visual openness. As a result of larger lot sizes, open space and vegetation are intended to be the dominant views. The buildings are to be apparent, yet secondary to the landscape. Depending on the size of the home and its percent of coverage and location on the lot, the estate character may more closely resemble a larger version of the typical suburban character. To achieve an estate character, the design of subdivisions must actively seek to imitate more rural areas through the use of rural street cross sections without sidewalks, vast open space throughout the development, the use of rural fence types and/or hedgerows to divide properties, the preservation or planting of native vegetation along property boundaries, and generous building setbacks on all sides.

## Suburban Character

This character type is very different from the urban type. The distinguishing factors of a suburban character are an increased open space – both on individual sites and cumulatively throughout a development – and the preservation or use of vegetation within and between developments. This helps to create a more even balance between building mass and "green mass." Rather than creating a sense of enclosure by buildings, as in an urban environment, trees and vegetation form a very different sense of enclosure. Therefore, open space and vegetative cover are essential elements in creating a suburban space.

The physical distinction between a suburban and urban character is the level of use intensiveness or magnitude of activity affecting adjacent uses. Suburban environments are sought as relief from more intensive urban settings, thereby leading to the popularity of contemporary neighborhoods denoted for their larger lots, privacy fences, and open areas.

All too often, the open space that contributed to the suburban character of a neighborhood is abutting land that is not yet developed and open views that are not yet closed. As in the case of many



neighborhoods in Zachary, particularly those that are on the edge of the City or those that currently abut vacant land, the adjacent views that contribute to the rural small-town character are temporary, rather than permanent. The natural open space and views of the landscape are “borrowed” from the adjoining land. Consequently, as additional development occurs abutting these existing neighborhoods, the character will change. This is an important consideration as to the design of new subdivisions and whether they use the adjacent land or incorporate permanent open space into the development to sustain its original character.

In many of the newer suburban character neighborhoods in Zachary, a large percentage of the homes have views of “open space” across the street or behind their lots. Most of this space, however, is borrowed until it is developed, which often leads to a dissatisfaction of homeowners when there are proposals to develop the adjacent land. Therefore, to maintain these views and achieve the community character expressed as desirable by the residents, this borrowed open space must be incorporated into each development. One means of achieving this character is by clustering development, thereby maintaining an equal or higher density while preserving permanent open space.

### Auto-Urban Character

This character type is most commonly associated with a highway-oriented commercial or business strip. Fast food restaurants, gas stations, and strip shopping centers like those found along LA 64/Zachary-Deerford Road and increasingly along LA 964 are the dominant commercial images of an auto-urban character. Higher density residential uses such as attached and multiple-family housing and manufactured home communities also have this character due to their density, limited open space, relative amount of impervious surface devoted to buildings and parking lots, and increased building enclosure.

The primary difference in urban and auto-urban characters is the role of the automobile in its site design. Rather than buildings oriented to the street, as in an urban setting like that found in Downtown, auto-urban environments are characterized by large parking lots surrounding the buildings.

Although the development intensity of auto-urban areas is usually less than that found within an urban setting, this is commonly due to lower land values and design preference, as opposed to development regulations. Auto-urban uses require a significant amount of space for high levels of automobile dependent interaction, i.e. large surface parking lots with multiple points of ingress/egress. As a result, buildings are constructed at the back of the site nearest neighboring uses and away from their roadway frontage. Auto-urban uses also have a greater reliance on site access, thereby adding to the number of driveways and access points. The result is expansive parking areas that dominate the front setback and, thus, the character of the development.



The development along the City's major corridors exhibits an auto-urban character due to their large front setbacks, expanses of parking, limited landscape surfaces, and extensive signage.

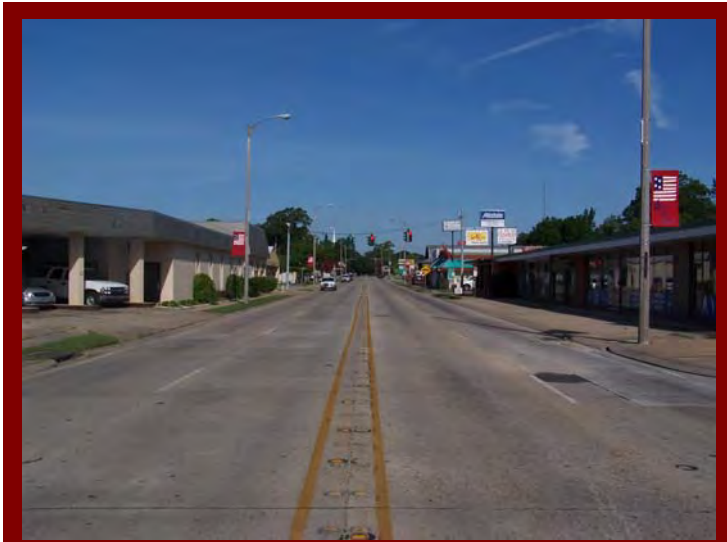
The impact of accommodating motor vehicles, as is typical of contemporary development, is a primary determinant in the character of an auto-urban environment. Auto-urban uses, with very few exceptions, consume more land for streets, parking, and other vehicular use areas than is covered by buildings, which commonly exceeds a two-to-one ratio. This type of development design demands large sites and proximity to a high-volume arterial roadway, which diminishes the importance of architecture and results in reduced open space and commonly, elimination of natural features.

### Urban Character

Urban areas are historically the center of commerce, culture, and entertainment in the community. The features that contribute to an urban character similar to that found in Downtown are the proximity of

uses to the public ways, with little or no building setbacks, and a strong pedestrian orientation at the sidewalk level. An urban center is designed with an intensity of use to draw people into close contact, where congestion and personal encounters are both expected and essential for a vibrant community center.

Urban spaces are “architectural,” meaning that they are enclosed by buildings. In other words, the distance across a space, e.g. the width of a downtown street in relation to height of the block face, is essential for creating an “urban” environment. This environment is formed Downtown as a result of the building face abutting a moderately wide pedestrian pathway (sidewalk), a roadway narrowed by parking on both sides, and a narrow or nonexistent grass strip between the sidewalk and street.



Although the width of LA 64 breaks down the sense of enclosure in the historic downtown areas, there it is urban in character due to the build-to line and the placement of parking areas to the side and rear.