



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



## Zachary Louisiana



### *Comprehensive Plan*



KENDIG KEAST  
COLLABORATIVE



# Zachary Louisiana



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





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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.

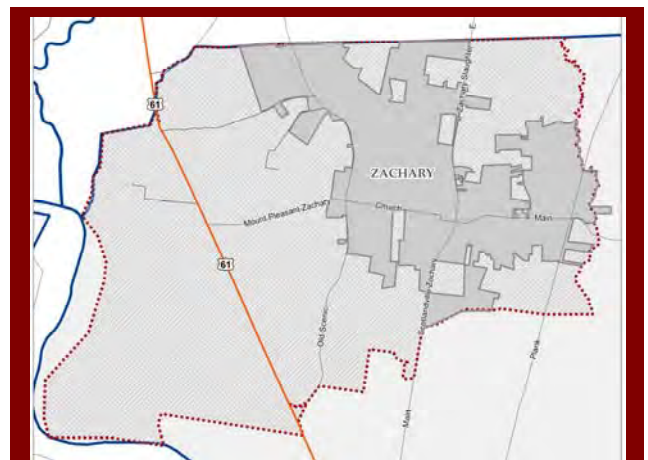
## Purpose of this Master Plan

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...**

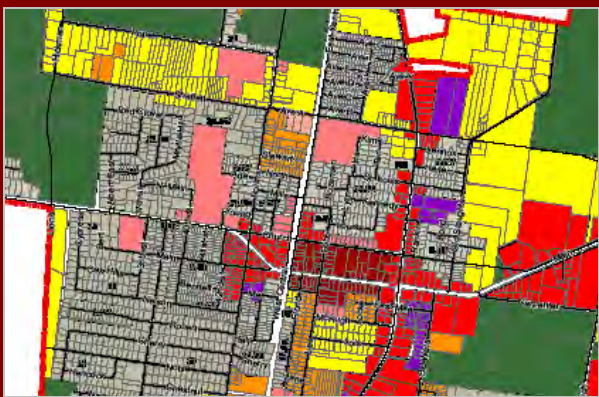
the process of identifying issues and needs, establishing goals and objectives, and determining the most effective means by which these ends may be achieved.

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).

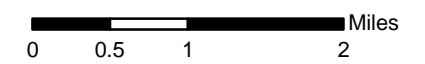
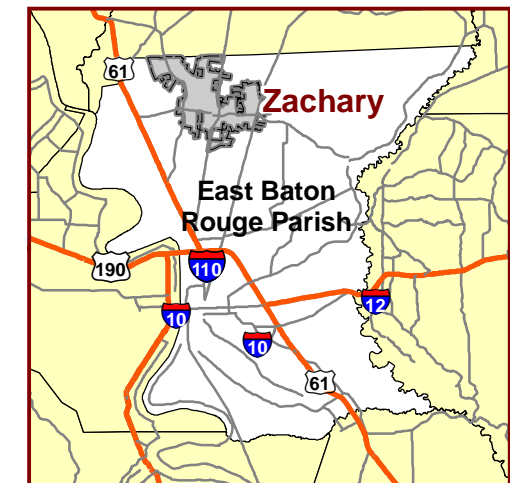
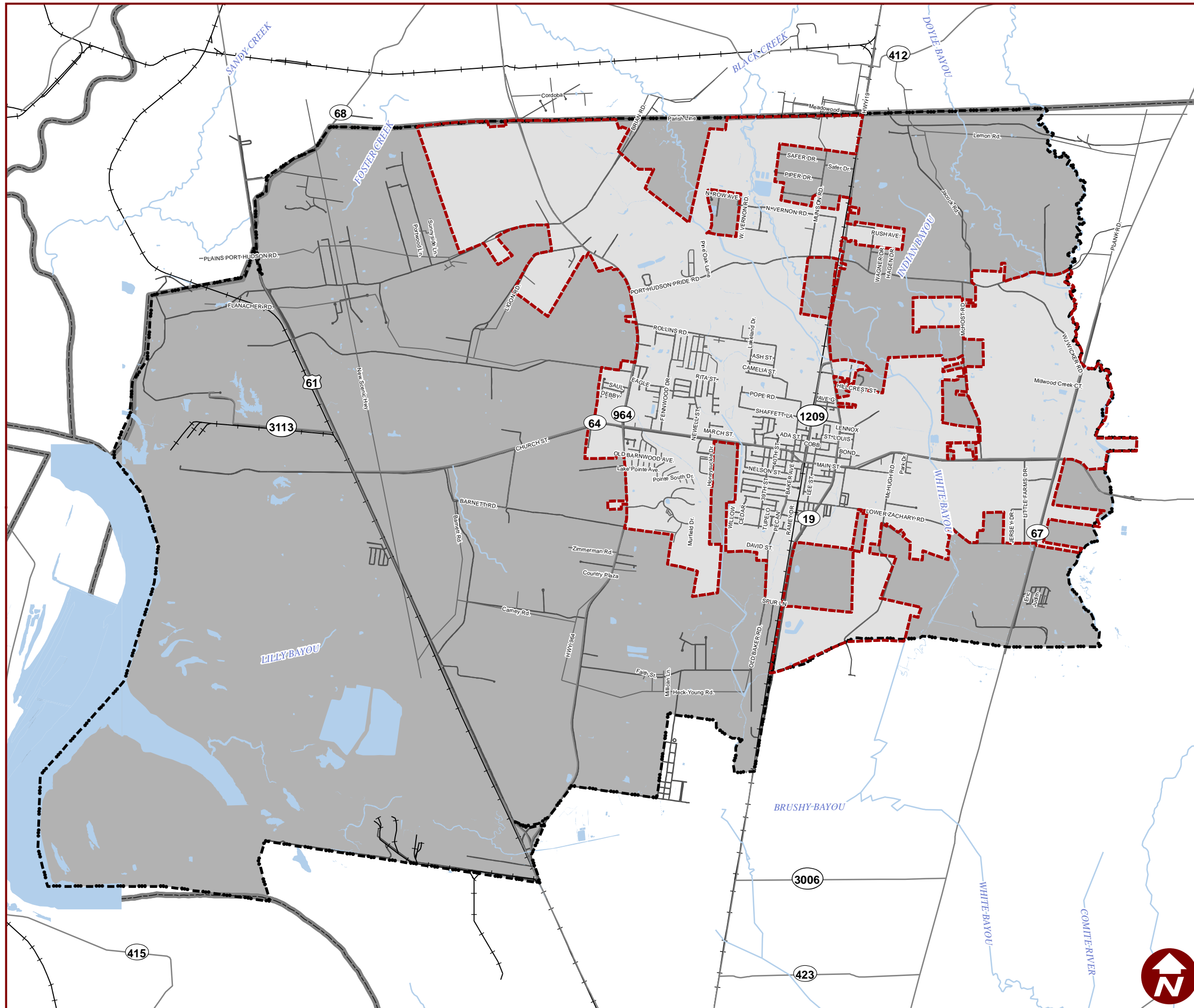
It is important to relate the function of this plan to the implementing regulations. This plan establishes the overall policies for future land use and growth patterns, protection areas, community character, roads and utilities, parks and open space, economic development, and other aspects of community 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



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## 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.



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- ✓ **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.

---

<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.

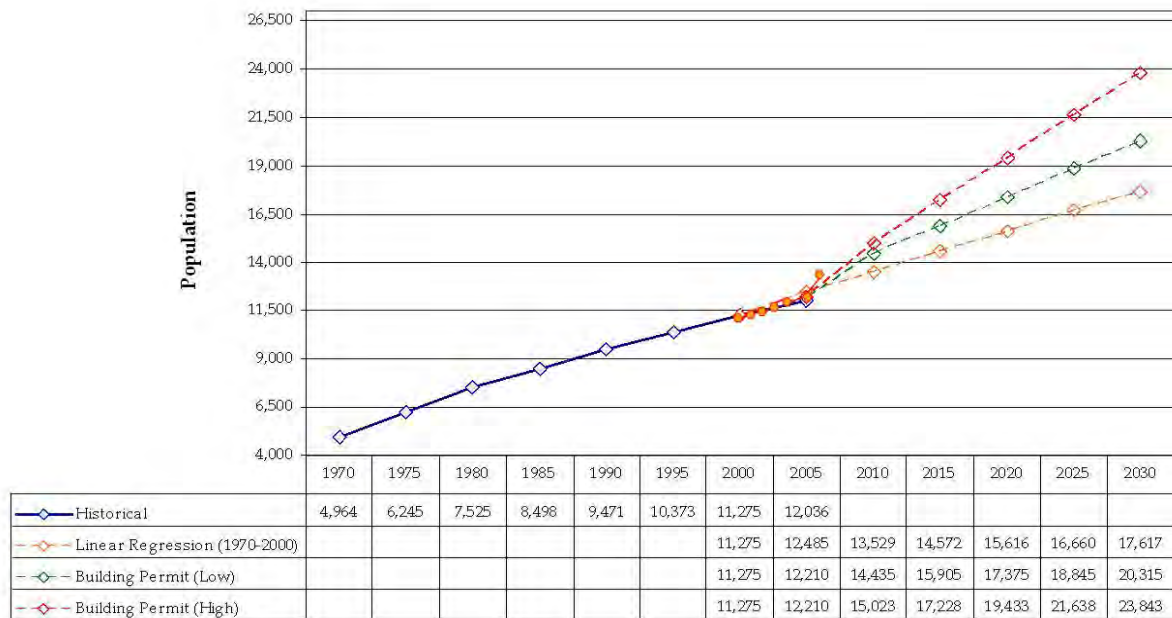
**Population**

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*



**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

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.



### 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

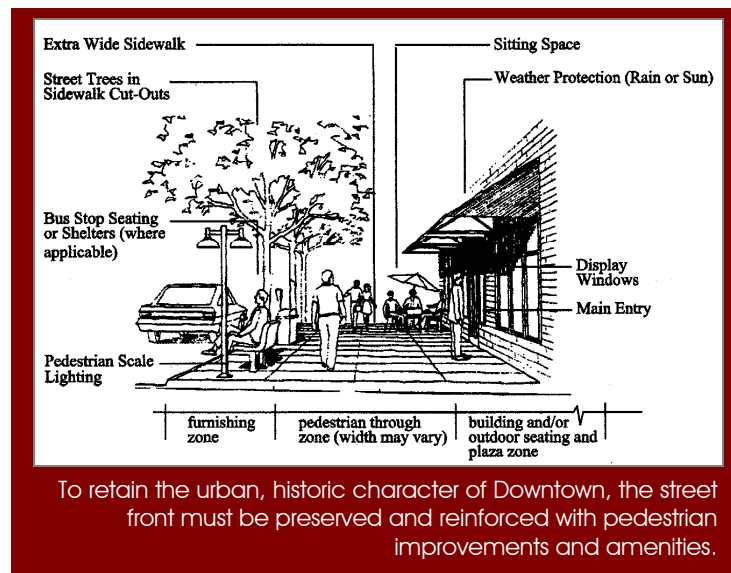
1. Create an Urban Commercial district to preserve an urban character, including requirements such as zero front and side yard setbacks; provision for vertical mixed-use; and building form standards relating to building scale and massing, building exteriors, site lighting, and signs and awnings. There 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>

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

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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

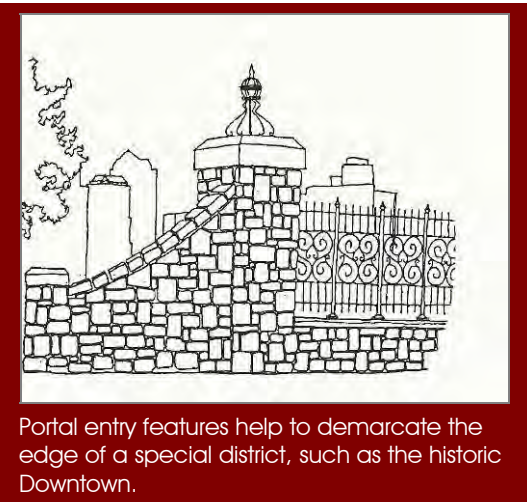


The last remaining vacant property near Downtown offers a potential to create a traditional "Main Street" environment. This could serve as a community gathering place, as well as a mixed-use economic center for the greater Zachary area.



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

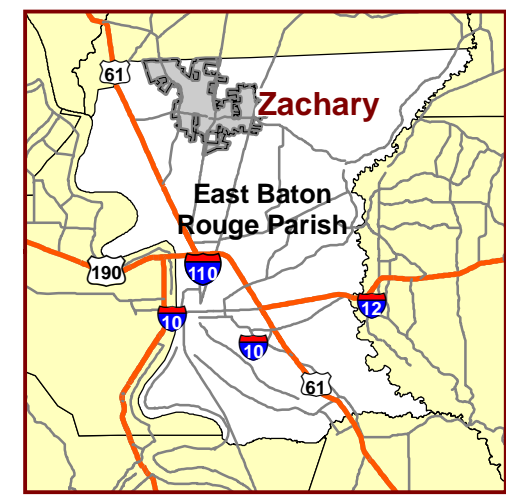
Currently, the City is divided into 23 zoning districts as follows:

- ◆ 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;

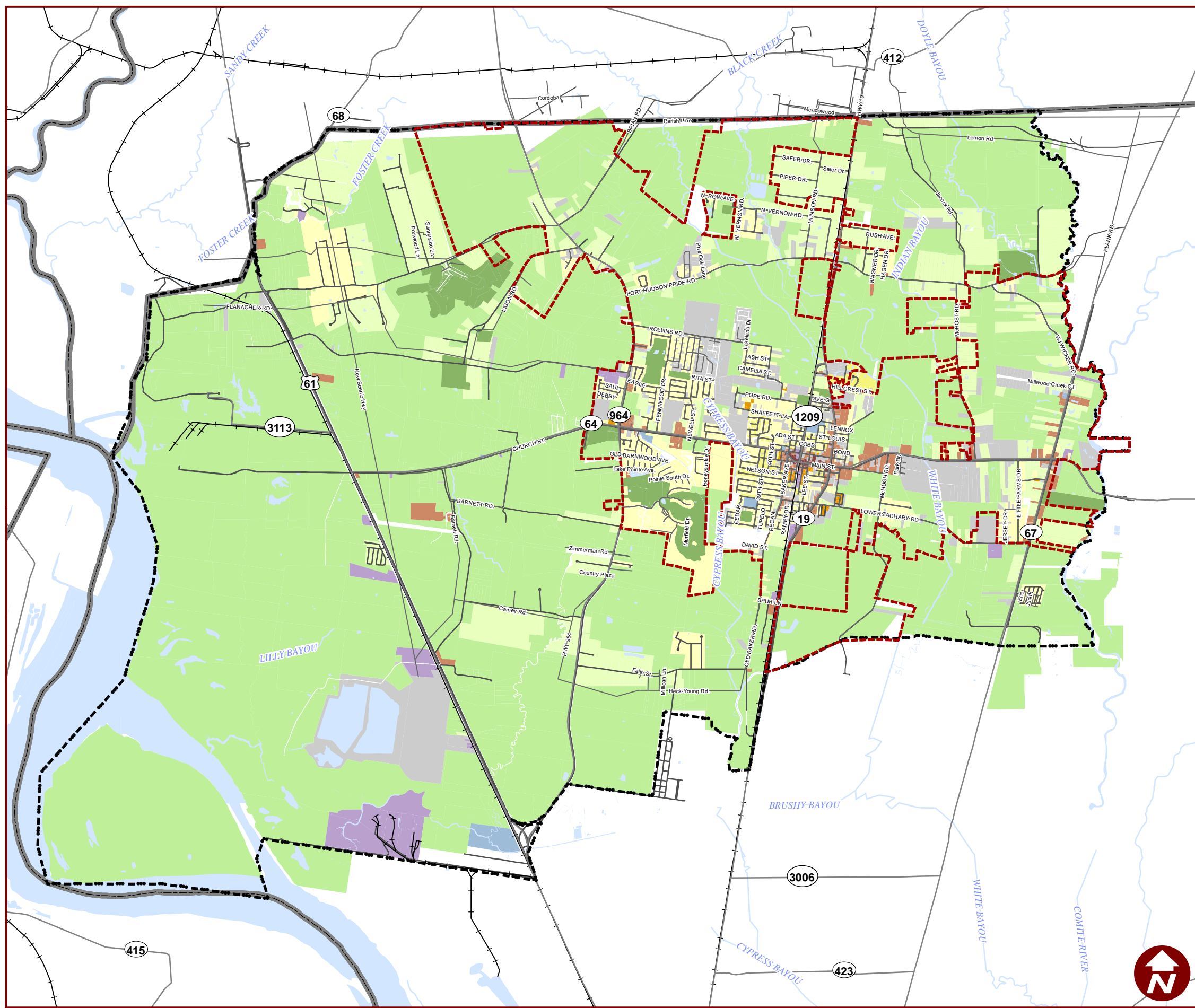


# Map 2.1 Existing Land Use Character

- 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

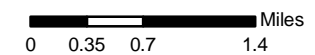
-  100-Year Floodplain
-  500-Year Floodplain

### Thoroughfare Plan

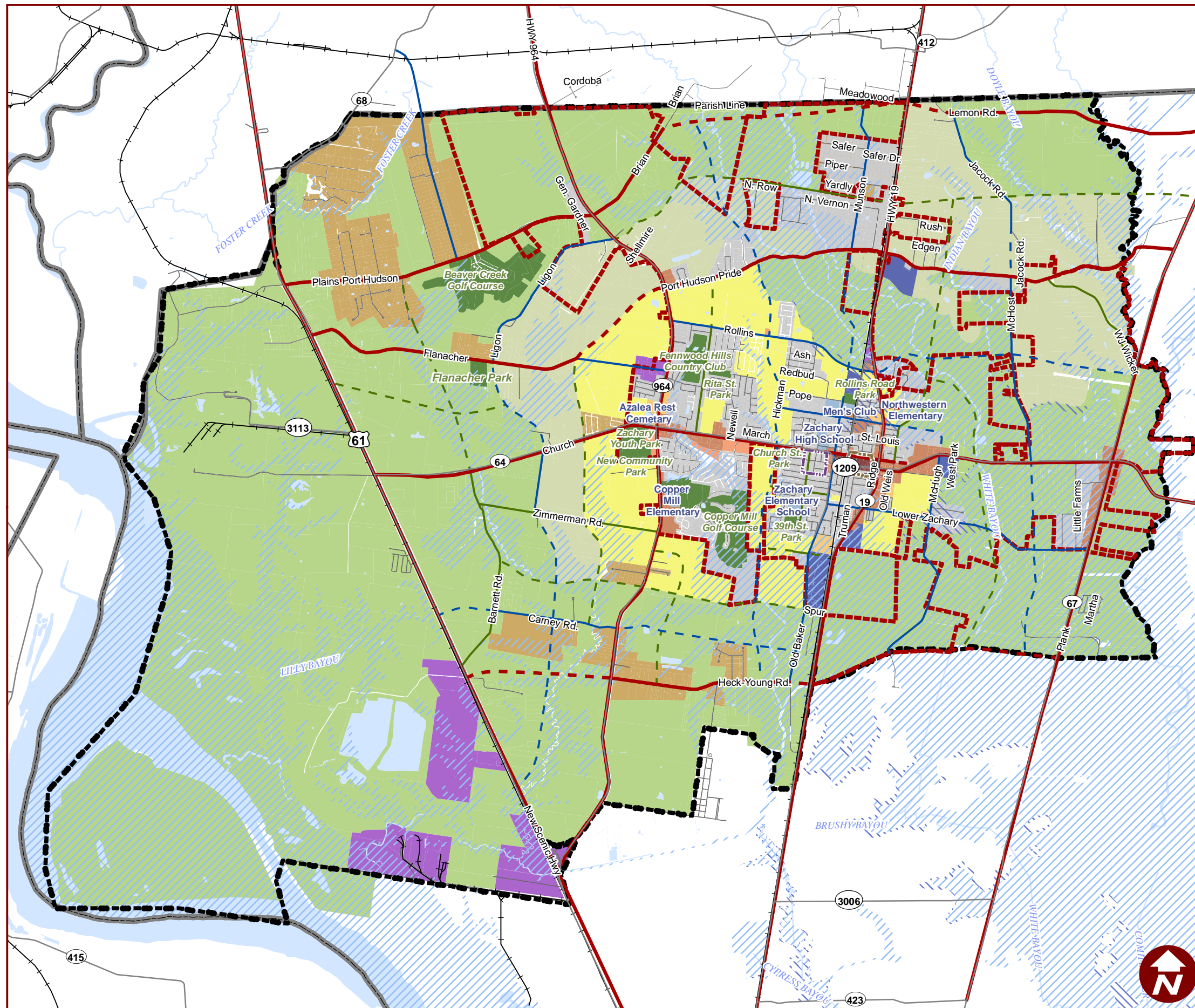
-  Principal Arterial
-  Principal Arterial, Planned
-  Minor Arterial
-  Minor Arterial, Planned
-  Collector
-  Collector, Planned

### Boundaries, Water, & Infrastructure

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



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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

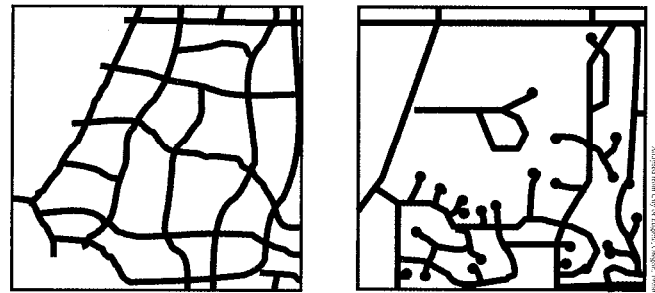
Providing quality housing and neighborhoods is fundamental to create a desirable place to live. In fact, residents supported this premise through their articulated desires for attractive, pedestrian-friendly, and well-connected neighborhoods. Comments related to housing and neighborhoods were voiced 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.