

**Lafayette City-Parish Planning Commission  
Lafayette IN a Century (LINC)  
Comprehensive Master Plan**

**HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD  
ELEMENTS**

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**Public Notice in the Advertiser:** September 28, 2008

**Public Hearing Date:** October 9, 2008

**City Parish Planning Commission Adoption Date:**  
October 27, 2008  
**Resolution No. 2008-04**

**Clerk of Court Recordation Date:** April 8, 2009

**Certified Transmittal Date to State Planning Office:**



**Local Government Transmittal Dates**

**Lafayette Consolidated Government:**

**City of Broussard:**

**City of Carencro:**

**City of Duson:**

**City of Scott:**

**City of Youngsville:**



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Lafayette Consolidated Government  
Traffic & Transportation Department



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Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Comprehensive Planning Division

**PREFACE**

1. Neighborhoods are the critical building blocks of our community and should be planned, developed, enhanced, and protected.
2. Neighborhoods are our barometer on quality of life issues.
3. Lafayette Parish neighborhoods must be safe and healthy environments to raise and nurture succeeding generations.
4. Housing is a basic and fundamental need of all citizens and should be a primary community concern and focus.
5. “Affordable housing” is defined as owner-occupied residential units for the employed minimum-income family.
6. Housing in Lafayette Parish should be located in defined and viable neighborhoods with adequate infrastructure and services.

## **2.1 PLANS**

The Lafayette Parish Comprehensive Master Plan should be developed and implemented on a defined and organized neighborhood level through the preparation and adoption of neighborhood plans.

Commentary: Residential land use comprises the largest single developed classification in the Parish. Obviously, this is where we live, where our children play, and increasingly where we may work in the future. We must plan the Parish on a realistic and viable neighborhood level. We can not allow our older neighborhoods to deteriorate and we must not allow new neighborhoods to be built without adequate basic services, infrastructure, planning, and citizen involvement. There should be two pilot neighborhood comprehensive plans in the Parish: The LINC North Neighborhood Pilot and the LINC South Neighborhood Pilot programs. This effort has already demonstrated some positive community responses. Even negative reactions to these neighborhood pilot plans and programs should be considered beneficial to public awareness and involvement.

## **2.2 BORDERS**

Existing and future neighborhoods should be clearly defined with natural and manmade borders to help plan, organize, and support the area.

Commentary: The North/South LINC Neighborhood Pilot Areas were located in high growth areas of the Parish where substantial public and private investments have already been made or committed. Each area measures approximately two square miles. This may or may not be the ideal geographic size, but could be a starting point for a Parish-wide model program.

## **2.3 CONFORM WITH PARISH PLAN**

Neighborhood plans shall be developed in conformity with the overall Parish-wide Comprehensive Master Plan framework.

Commentary: Planning decisions must be directed to the most appropriate level. Decisions that have limited impact on the Parish as a whole should be made on the advice and in consultation with the neighborhood primarily affected. On the other hand, planning decisions that affect the City-Parish as a whole should not be overly influenced by a single neighborhood's needs or interests.

## **2.4 "ADEQUATE" INFRASTRUCTURE**

Existing and future neighborhoods shall be planned with "adequate" infrastructure improvements including sewer, water, electrical, communication, drainage, streets, and parks. Adequate services to be determined by other Comprehensive Master Plan elements of Utilities, Land Use, Conservation and Environment, and Transportation.

Commentary: Once a new subdivision has been constructed, it will be there for a long time. Start multiplying the subdivisions and what follows may be drainage problems, traffic congestion, low water pressure, and sewage problems. We sometimes call this development “progress.” What we may be doing is setting ourselves up for major public and private costly remedies to resolve such uncoordinated growth problems. Lafayette experiences the same “leapfrog” development activities that most urban areas experience. Too much development is built beyond adequate infrastructure because it is cheaper. It is cheaper because there is inadequate or minimal infrastructure. This pattern should be reversed.

## **2.5 COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING**

To ensure that Lafayette Parish neighborhoods are safe and secure Community Oriented Policing shall be available to all neighborhoods.

Commentary: Law enforcement has changed over the last fifty years. Police no longer walk the streets, but drive in high powered technological units that respond to needs in minutes. But neighborhoods have lost something in the technological divide. Law enforcement may have lost its connectivity to the community, its neighborhoods, and its residents in the process. The old traditional “Officer Bill” who walked our neighborhoods in the past and who knew the residents and they knew him should be reconsidered as an integral part of a safe and secure neighborhood program. Our neighborhoods should not be walled enclosures. Community Policing has been tested and found to be a workable and viable solution to neighborhood security. Police who “walk the beat” have demonstrated locally in some of our older neighborhoods an effectiveness that is both traditional and community-oriented. At the very least the option should be available.

## **2.6 PARKS/SQUARES/GREEN SPACES**

Neighborhood parks/squares/green spaces should be planned and developed for both existing and future neighborhoods in the Parish and as a general rule within a ten-minute brisk walk from every residence.

Commentary: Lafayette City and Parish Government and the Lafayette Consolidated Government have invested heavily in the development of regional and community-wide parks and recreation facilities. The recommendation here is for smaller public areas or squares, well situated within the heart of residential neighborhoods that compensate for smaller lot subdivisions and a general lack of open areas. Committee members note that most families must transport their children to area parks when all that is needed is more immediate and available open space. Children should not have to cross one or more major thoroughfares or travel several miles to reach open space. With increasing urban development in Lafayette Parish there must be a corresponding program to provide open public spaces for people. The new River Ranch development provides us with a model.

## **2.7 LINC NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS**

Designated LINC Neighborhoods shall be organized and coordinated through neighborhood organizations following an organizational structure acceptable to the City-Parish Planning Commission, the Neighborhood Pride Section of the Department of Community Development and the Planning Division of the Department of Traffic and Transportation with administrative support coordinated through Lafayette Consolidated Government.

Commentary: Effective and viable neighborhoods require resident and property owner interests and involvement. Neighborhood organizations are absolutely necessary in developing community awareness and understanding. The LINC Neighborhood North and South Pilot Program should be utilized as a model method of organizing citizens to be actively engaged in their neighborhoods through an organizational structure that has been tried and tested over the years. Organizational adjustments should be considered, but the basic outline must be clearly established for long term associations. Local government is and should be a partner in the neighborhood process. However, since government has limitations a team approach is recommended. The Community Development Department of the Lafayette Consolidated Government provides neighborhood organizational support services for existing organizations and is a good example of neighborhood partnerships.

## **2.8 FUNDING FOR DESIGNATED LINC NEIGHBORHOODS**

Permanent funding for Designated LINC Neighborhoods should be established and sustained if they are to be successful and durable as long term institutions. Neighborhood organizations must have coordinated resources to direct and manage as local neighborhood priorities are determined and implemented. A variety of funding tools shall be identified and provided as options for neighborhood consideration and use including local government.

Commentary: There exist several neighborhood organizations within the City and Parish of Lafayette that have managed to remain active for over thirty years. One of the essential items that have helped keep these organizations engaged and productive is money. Working with and through local government, fund raisers, grants and dues, these neighborhood organizations have made long-term impacts within and for their communities.

## **2.9 NEW DESIGNATED LINC NEIGHBORHOODS**

New Designated LINC neighborhoods should be established and reinforced with a sense of identity or place.

Commentary: Residents need to identify with their neighborhood and community. As Lafayette Parish continues to expand its suburban growth pattern, neighborhood plans should help to associate new subdivisions with their immediate area and organization.

**2.10 INCORPORATE DRAINAGE AND DETENTION**

Designated LINC Neighborhood Plans shall incorporate drainage areas including bayous, coulees, canals, retention and detention facilities, parks, streets (existing and planned) and a variety of land uses that will protect and enhance existing and future property values.

Commentary: Neighborhood development must include an option for mixed uses which if designed correctly, taking into account the character, context and scale of the surrounding neighborhood, can provide unique opportunities for employment, shopping, housing, and public gathering space. It is desired that Designated LINC Neighborhoods should have a diversity and balance of land uses.

**2.11 DESIGN AROUND THOROUGHFARE PLAN**

Lafayette Parish should plan and design its future neighborhoods around the adopted Lafayette Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan.

Commentary: The City and Parish have had a thoroughfare plan since 1955. Numerous studies in the past have identified the need to protect future arterial corridors at critical locations. Neighborhood residents do not react favorably to arterial development through established residential areas. Yet the pattern continues, and the process allows new subdivisions to be built in the path of future thoroughfares. The I-49 Connector through the Lafayette Urban Center has provided the first serious opportunity for local, state and federal support of a corridor preservation program in Lafayette Parish. It is poor planning to allow new neighborhoods to be built and then follow with needed arterial construction. The cycle needs to be reversed.

**2.12 PRESERVE AND ENHANCE IN I-49 CORRIDOR**

Lafayette Consolidated Government and Lafayette Parish shall preserve and enhance older neighborhoods identified in the I-49 Connector Corridor Study for recommended improvements and maintenance programs.

Commentary: These neighborhoods will be the front door of the Lafayette community with direct access to downtown, the airport, the Oil Center, the University of Louisiana and the Cajundome Complex. This area should be the best we can make it and not allowed to deteriorate. The displacement of approximately 150 residents will have a significant impact on these neighborhoods and the Lafayette community as a whole. Neighborhood revitalization is a critical need for the corridor.

**2.13 AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The single most important permanent need for housing in Lafayette Parish is the availability of affordable housing. Local government shall take the initiative to facilitate private/public investment in this critical community need and at the earliest possible date.

Implementation strategies shall identify available options to provide the working poor with housing opportunity.

Commentary: There are government programs in existence (some federally funded, some locally funded) which are currently available to assist low income families to purchase or build a home. There are even private programs, such as Habitat for Humanity. But these efforts are a drop in the bucket compared to the overwhelming need. The problem of adequate affordable housing is not only a local program but national in scope. However, something must be done and soon. While Lafayette Parish has enjoyed a great deal of new housing activity over the last several years, the free market has not produced affordable housing. Homes are not being constructed in the \$50,000 - \$60,000 range for low salaried working couples. The First Time Home Buyers Program is not meeting the need for this modest income market.

#### **2.14 COMPATIBLE HOUSING DESIGNS IN I-49 CORRIDOR**

Prototype housing designs should be developed compatible with the existing housing found in the older neighborhoods located in the I-49 Connector Corridor Housing Study. These designs should be formulated into a number of selected specification options (1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom and 4 bedroom) with plans for a test bid construction program.

Commentary: Athens, Texas is the location of a state of the art modular housing units being built by an international corporation at half the cost of current construction methods. The efficiency of the operation indicates that assembly line modular units will be the future of new housing. Specifications are needed to meet the displacement housing of over 150 residents for the I-49 Connector alone.

#### **2.15 AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES**

Affordable housing initiatives are recommended first priority in the I-49 Connector Corridor Neighborhoods.

Commentary: The need for affordable housing is a Parish-wide problem, but that priority should focus on the I-49 Connector Neighborhoods due to the number of residents to be displaced. Secondary consideration should be provided to other older neighborhoods within the Parish as funding becomes available.

#### **2.16 AFFORDABLE HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND**

An Affordable Housing Assistance and Development Fund for Lafayette Parish should be established under the umbrella of the new community foundation (Acadiana Legacy Foundation).

Commentary: The establishment of the area community foundation is a great opportunity. It is hoped that this vital community asset will open new opportunities for advancing

resources to meet the challenge of affordable housing needs in the Parish now and well into the century.

**2.17 HOUSING COMMITTEE FOR I-49 CONNECTOR CORRIDOR**

A Housing Committee should be established comprised of 5-7 members from the existing neighborhood organizations affected by the I-49 Connector construction and answerable to the Planning Commission of the Lafayette Consolidated Government to facilitate alternative low cost housing construction. LCG, along with other involved agencies will be responsible for preparing a package 2-unit bid construction program that will be tested on eight (8) I-49 Connector prototype affordable housing designs with each bidder constructing one identical 2 bedroom and one identical 3 bedroom units within the I-49 Connector neighborhoods. This activity will serve as an experiment of cost containment and options for an expanded affordable housing program as part of the I-49 Connector effort. The I-49 Connector Project should be the community incubator for affordable housing initiatives throughout the Parish.

Commentary: Collaboration with a number of local builders, developers and housing professionals took place. All stated they could not conceive of building the type and style of housing identified in the I-49 Connector Study in the affordable housing price range of \$50,000 to \$60,000. This is the challenge today and certainly for the future. Alternatives will have to be developed if traditional stick building construction cannot meet affordable housing objectives. Private/public partnerships, non-profit organizations, local, state and federal programs may all have to put their shoulders to the wheel on this affordable housing objective in the Comprehensive Master Plan. Testing initiatives and creative ideas will certainly be needed for this program.

**2.18 AFFORDABLE HOUSING FINANCING**

A consortium of voluntary financial institutions should be established to pool and provide affordable housing financing exceptional to standard lending practices and restraints (including government programs) with special arrangements which will accommodate the needs of the borrower.

Commentary: There are area banks interested in coordinating this proposed consortium to help solve the problem of affordable housing needs.

**2.19 PROMOTE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND JOB TRAINING**

Local government should continue to facilitate community-based and/or non-profit organizations that promote affordable housing and related job training efforts.

Commentary: There are existing federally-sponsored affordable housing programs managed locally through the Lafayette Consolidated Government Department of Community Development. The available government funding and restrictions meet only

a fraction of the Parish needs for affordable housing. These government programs should be continued and expanded.

**2.20 HOUSING ASSISTANCE MARKETING**

Affordable housing assistance programs both existing and proposed should be marketed regularly and consistently through public service announcements, brochures, displays, and updated through the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Commentary: Resources that exist today and may exist through the Comprehensive Master Plan in the future should be actively marketed. Affordable housing assistance programs will not help unless people are aware that such help is available.

**2.21 HOUSING EDUCATION MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

A Housing Education Maintenance Program (HEMP) should be a mandatory requirement for all affordable housing loans.

Commentary: It was noted by several members of the committee that problems exist at all economic levels with people who do not know how to maintain their homes. However, special emphasis must be placed on new home owners who do not have any previous experience with home ownership.

**2.22 INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR HOUSING OVER 50 YEARS OLD**

Local government and the private sector should establish incentive programs to protect and preserve housing over fifty years old for residential or practical alternative uses suitable to the older neighborhoods in which many of these houses are located. Houses identified on national, state or local historic registers should receive special priority, consideration and financial assistance for the owners. There are several dozen such historic properties in the Parish in serious need of structural stabilization and rehabilitation.

Commentary: Many older homes in Lafayette Parish are in need of special and costly maintenance and updating but continue to meet the housing needs of many families. Countless numbers of these owner occupied houses are in need of funding for new energy efficiencies and structural protection. Federal funding is limited but does exist for financial assistance to qualified owners in targeted areas, but a much broader program is needed throughout the Parish. Historic houses are an asset to the Parish and should be preserved. Tax abatements, utility abatements, special grants and/or financing programs are suggested.

### **2.23 HOME AND YARD MAINTENANCE PROGRAM FOR ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED**

A home and yard maintenance program for the elderly and handicapped should be established and available to all Parish homeowners with limited incomes through public and private resources.

Commentary: We all know elderly and handicapped residents who are struggling to maintain yards and homes on limited fixed incomes. Many of these citizens must give priority to food, utilities and medical needs; this results in deteriorating houses and yard maintenance. Deteriorating houses and yards have a negative impact on the neighborhoods in which they are located. General assistance must be made available to this segment of our community now and in the future and certainly for the aging “baby boomers” generation.

### **2.24 NONTRADITIONAL HOME OWNERSHIP MODELS**

Traditional single family home ownership should be considered a primary goal of local affordable housing initiatives, but a consortium of voluntary financial institutions should establish nontraditional home ownership models like limited equity cooperatives and land trusts, which are recommended in the I-49 Connector Study Corridor Preservation Plan.

Commentary: Though many people are familiar with condominiums, there are other options to home ownership that may prove beneficial and should be tested. Mixed use developments which are being highly promoted around the country may provide opportunity to experiment with new housing ownership scenarios that might prove economical and satisfactory.

This consortium should be a catalyst for researching and testing new directions in nontraditional home ownership.

### **2.25 AFFORDABLE UTILITIES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

Affordable Housing should be designed and constructed for affordable utilities and maximum energy efficiency.

Commentary: Low maintenance is a necessity for affordable housing. Utilities are a critical factor and must be limited to the minimum cost level practical.

### **2.26 UNIVERSAL DESIGN HOUSING**

Universal design housing should be encouraged and available to some degree in all neighborhoods of the Parish.

Commentary: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has focused attention and resources on accommodating the accessibility needs of the handicapped. Residential units for the handicapped are needed throughout the Parish now and even more so in the very

near future as the “baby boomers” continue to age. Some advance planning for this growing elderly population is needed.

**2.27 PORCHES**

Porches. Incentives should be established to promote construction of functional porches on all new housing in the Parish conducive to the climate and social needs of the area.

Commentary: Porches are not nostalgic sentimental aesthetics attached to housing, but practical, social, efficient and climate-friendly facets to local housing and neighborhoods. Porches were specifically identified as a special housing consideration in the I-49 Connector Study. This recommendation is not intended as a regulatory requirement for new construction, but a suggestion to home buyers, builders and developers that functional porches are encouraged in the design and construction of new homes as a practical accommodation to the culture and climate of the area.

**2.28 MINIMUM HOUSING STANDARDS**

Minimum Housing Standards shall be established and enforced within each governmental jurisdiction throughout the Parish.

Commentary: The need for minimum housing standards was demonstrated by the number of housing units found to be without some of the minimal facilities most committee members considered necessary for human habitation in modern America. Only within the corporate limits of the City of Lafayette and the unincorporated areas of the Parish were minimal housing standards identified and enforced. Lacking minimal housing standards was determined to be unacceptable for the Parish and its municipalities.