

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

LAND USE ELEMENT

Public Notice in the Advertiser: September 28, 2008

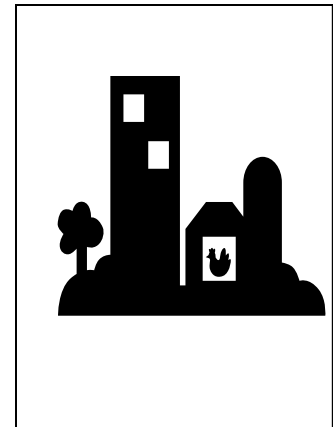
Public Hearing Date: October 9, 2008

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:



Lafayette Consolidated Government
Traffic & Transportation Department



Metropolitan Planning Organization
Comprehensive Planning Division

3.1 FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE

The foundation principle for the Lafayette Land Use Plan is performance-based and is applicable to all local governmental jurisdictions.

Commentary: Traditional zoning regulations are not a viable option for land use regulation for the entire Parish of Lafayette. The intention is to provide for property rights protection while also protecting adjacent property owners from incompatible land uses, and to protect residents and property owners by ensuring quality land development practices throughout Lafayette Parish. Performance-based standards are the foundation of the Land Use Plan. These standards offer maximum flexibility to the property owner while ensuring quality compatible development. Performance Based Standards seek to mitigate the effects of non-compatible uses while offering flexibility to the property owner. Unlike zoning, Performance Based Development Standards do not prohibit certain land uses rather, they encourage protection from non-compatible uses by utilizing performance standards. These standards include provisions for adequate infrastructure as well as buffer and setback standards.

3.2 EQUITABLE ASSESMENT

All land parcels of and other related properties, except those properties exempt by state law, are to be assessed equitably by the Lafayette Parish Assessor.

Commentary: Equitable tax assessments are crucial for the economic health of municipalities. The tax assessor shall be clear and consistent in the assessment of all property within its legal authority.

3.3 ANNUAL REVIEW OF TAX EXEMPTION

All tax exemptions and special tax classifications on property shall to be reviewed annually and shall be accurately applied.

Commentary: When properly applied, tax abatements, tax increment financing (TIF) and other tax incentives can aid development and redevelopment efforts within the Parish. However, these incentives should be used appropriately and applied accurately. There are clear and specific state and local guidelines that must be met in every case. Government officials should review all tax classifications annually to ensure proper adherence to state and local laws.

3.4 LAND USE DATA ACCESIBLE VIA INTERNET

Land use data for each land parcel in Lafayette Parish, including but not limited to descriptions, land use, zoning (if applicable), assessed values, and ownership, shall be accessible via the Internet.

Commentary: Access to timely and accurate land use information enables Parish residents to become actively involved in the planning process. Furthermore, access to

such information empowers Parish residents to make informed decisions about their property. Today it is not enough for governments to have such information available upon request to anyone who takes time to visit his local planning and tax assessment offices. Rather, government should be proactive in providing such information to the public in a way that is efficient and convenient to its residents. This could mean providing such information via the Internet or World Wide Web. The Parish is currently working on improving its Geographic Information System (GIS), which will allow government officials to provide detailed and accurate mapping of land use, zoning, and other key environmental features. In the future the Lafayette Consolidated Government should seek to provide planning documents, GIS maps, and assessment information via the Internet.

3.5 DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY DESIGNATION

Land use development intensity designations depend upon available infrastructure (unless owners / developers provide new infrastructure facilities). Both commercial and residential land uses shall follow an incorporated community's design requirements for infrastructure improvements if within a municipality, or within 2,000 feet of an incorporated community's boundary.

Commentary: The amount of development intensity allowed shall be based on the capabilities and capacities of available infrastructure and the development level designation identified within the Future Development Guide. Additional development intensity may be permitted if infrastructure systems are improved with private funds to acceptable levels to accommodate the increased intensity and the development area is appropriately buffered from adjoining less intense development areas.

3.6 DISCOURAGE "LEAPFROG" DEVELOPMENT

"Leapfrog" development throughout the Parish is discouraged.

Commentary: The importance of maintaining a contiguous and compact pattern of development cannot be overstated, as its benefits are numerous. This type of development pattern results in the preservation of agricultural land, lowers infrastructure costs and requirements, reduces pollution and minimizes environmental damages typically associated with urban growth. Infill development should be encouraged where possible to preserve the continuous and compact nature of the Parish and surrounding municipalities. Future Parish growth management strategies and policies should seek to capitalize on the historical patterns of development in the Parish. New development areas should adjoin existing development where possible and practical.

3.7 INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Public infrastructure investments shall be prioritized into the following identified growth areas:

- a) Growth area 1: Within a municipality's corporate boundaries;

- b) Growth area 2: The area within 2,000' of a municipality's corporate boundaries;
- c) Growth area 3: Major arterial corridors specifically identified on the Lafayette Consolidated Government's Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan;
- d) Growth area 4: Balance of the Parish outside of the areas noted in areas 1 through 3.

Commentary: Infrastructure should be in place prior to or concurrent with development. To date, infrastructure needs have not kept pace with development within the Parish. This situation will have a negative impact on the future of the Parish, affecting the health, safety and welfare of its residents. All government entities need to promote policies encouraging new development in areas adequately served by existing or planned utility service. Unfortunately, the sporadic nature of the development patterns of the past twenty years makes it very difficult to plan for future utility extensions. Moreover, the level of service of current utilities has suffered throughout the Parish due to the burdens placed on Parish government and municipalities by the non-contiguous growth patterns. Clear and definable growth areas are not growth boundaries. Development can still occur in the balance of the Parish. However, if development occurs in advance of adequate infrastructure, the developer must provide for the construction and/or extension of service to the new development.

3.8 DISCOURAGED DEVELOPMENT

Proposed developments outside of Growth Areas 1, 2, and 3 shall be discouraged until adequate infrastructure is available.

Commentary: Growth areas 4 are defined by prevalent and important growth management issues. These include natural resource issues such as wetlands and habitat conservation, open space and agricultural preservation, and pollution control. Development is also discouraged by the environmental and physical characteristics or limitations in these areas such as floodplains, wetlands or steep slopes and/or geopolitical boundary locations.

3.9 TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and/or tax abatements shall be utilized as tools for encouraging and discouraging Land Use Plan goals and objectives.

Commentary: Incentives such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or tax abatements are tools for meeting the Land Use Plan goals and objectives. A thorough analysis of tax evaluations and valuations of property is needed to determine if there is enough potential revenue to use TIF. Because property valuations are lower in Lafayette Parish than in many other parts of the country, use of TIF and tax abatements may not be practical. Therefore, tax incentives including TIF and abatements should be carefully considered according to the size of the development and its potential cumulative impact and net benefit to the surrounding area and Parish.

3.10 REDEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Redevelopment of established urban areas and arterial corridors identified on the Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan for higher density uses shall be encouraged with a list of principal incentives.

Commentary: New development does not occur in the absence of a practical incentive. The profit motive drives commercial property owners and developers. All Parish municipalities need to be sensitive to the needs of various types of businesses. Meeting these needs is an essential element in developing a sound strategy to encourage quality compatible development within the Parish's urban areas and arterial corridors.

3.11 PRESERVATION INCENTIVES

Establish incentives to preserve older structures of historic value and/or cultural interest.

Commentary: Older structures, particularly historic buildings, should be preserved. These structures are a big part of local culture and civic identity. There are a number of federal programs available for the preservation of older buildings. Lafayette Consolidated Government and other Lafayette Parish municipal governments need to take a more active role in the preservation of these structures. This means developing a list of practical strategies and incentives aimed at saving these structures from demolition and decay as well as promoting their adaptive reuse.

3.12 RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT

Commercial development in Lafayette Parish is strongly recommended at the intersections of major and or minor arterial streets identified on Lafayette Consolidated Government's Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan. Nodal development shall be a defining characteristic of Lafayette Parish land use. Nodes are not necessarily exclusively commercial land uses. However, it is intended that nodes be of higher density than surrounding land uses.

Commentary: The commercial linear development pattern that has persisted throughout the Parish should not continue. This linear or "strip" development pattern has led to increased gridlock and traffic congestion along most of the Parish's major arterial roads, especially on Johnston Street.

3.13 NODAL DEVELOPMENT

Nodal development shall be limited to within one-quarter mile of intersections of major and minor arterials and identified on Lafayette Consolidated Government's Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan.

Commentary: Size and intensity of nodes may vary. A number of alternative design options for nodes should be considered to address different design issues, including opportunities to promote multiple modes of circulation and access, site planning issues,

building design issues, and site improvement issues. However, the size of potential nodes should be regulated to meet the original intent of the policy.

3.14 MINIMUM WIDTH TO DEPTH RATIOS

Minimum width to depth ratios should be established for properties within the designated commercial nodes.

Commentary: Shallow lots and “piano key” lots are a major obstacle to implementing a successful access management system. These lots prevent the incorporation of cross access easements and/or frontage and reverse frontage roads. More importantly, because of the lack of cross access opportunities, these lots have individual drives onto the main roadway. This problem persists in many of the major arterial corridors within the Parish, especially on Johnston Street. There may be opportunities to consolidate lots by property owners or enter into joint use access agreements by the property owners in order to comply with this recommendation. Lafayette Consolidated Government and other local governments should adopt policies that regulate this type of development, including mandating minimum lot frontages for new commercial development for designated commercial nodes and developing model joint use and access documents for property owners/developers to consider in planning the development of property.

3.15 DISCOURAGED COMMERCIAL NODAL DEVELOPMENT

Commercial nodal development outside of the designated boundaries shall be discouraged through the following:

- a) Controlling curb cuts to a maximum of one per 1,000 to 1,300' property line frontage on major and minor arterials indicated within Lafayette Consolidated Government's Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan and in conjunction with joint use (access) agreements between adjacent property owners / developers.
- b) Fifty foot planted screening and landscaping improvements are to be provided along major and minor arterials identified in Lafayette Consolidated Government's Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan for commercial land uses outside designated nodes.

Commentary: Commercial development beyond designated nodes shall not be prohibited, but when it occurs, it shall meet requirements of nodal development with regard to access and compatibility. Additional requirements would be included to discourage such development including strict adherence to the Lafayette Consolidated Government's Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan for access management plan contained in the Transportation Element of this Comprehensive Master Plan; curb cuts must be strictly controlled and joint use or access agreements between adjacent properties are to be utilized whenever possible.

3.16 DEVELOPED SITE PLAN DESIGNS

Lafayette Consolidated Government and other municipalities shall develop a number of typical site plan designs by January 2010 that guide developers, owners, contractors, planners, engineers, builders and architects in their planning of sites within designated commercial nodes. These design option(s) should include but not be limited to:

- a) the internal circulation of pedestrian, transit, bike and auto traffic;
- b) parking;
- c) landscaping;
- d) structure setbacks;
- e) scale and bulk of commercial establishments that visually blend with and enhance surrounding areas.

Commentary: Practical guidelines and examples should be followed when building in designated commercial nodes. These examples include the aforementioned design options. These options should be flexible to allow the property owner / developer with feasible options that meet the intent of the policy. The distribution of these typical plans should be distributed to the building and architectural professionals of Lafayette Parish and made available to other developers.

3.17 REDUCE PARKING SPACES

Parking spaces for commercial locations shall be reduced and/or a maximum number of spaces should be established for various business types. This will serve to increase green space defined within the performance buffer requirement.

Commentary: Green space should be incorporated into site planning. The intent of the policy is to facilitate the introduction and/or substitution of green spaces for parking spaces within commercial properties. New and existing parking areas should be properly buffered and/or screened. Often sites are “overparked”: the number of spaces is predicated on the maximum number of spaces needed for only a few days of the year. This practice results in massive areas of unused impervious concrete which increase storm water run off and represents additional cost by the developer / owner.

3.18 PERFORMANCE BASED LAND USE

Performance Base Land Use, 1980, by Lane Kendig shall be the recommended standard reference associated with the Land Use Plan, and the buffering criteria established herein, unless specifically identified within the text or exhibits of this element

Commentary: Lane Kendig’s, 1980, Performance Base Land Use, book is the essential reference for utilizing buffers with land uses. Consistent criteria, which meet the needs of the Parish are necessary. These criteria were adapted and incorporated into the Urban Development Intensity Level (UDIL) classification system.

3.19 BUFFER REQUIREMENTS

Lafayette Consolidated Government shall establish buffer requirements in the Lafayette Consolidated Government's land development regulations, (i.e. Subdivision Regulations / Development Code), in areas where new development conflicts with existing development, except in areas identified for industrial or light industrial uses in the Land Use Plan.

Commentary: Buffers can include plant materials such as hedges, native trees, shrubs, grassed berms, bike paths, nature trails, and/or fences developed according to criteria identified in the Development Intensity Matrix. Coulees and boulevards may also be used as buffers in combination with landscaped areas. Local landscape ordinances should be developed/updated to establish and include criteria necessary to implement buffering standards proposed by the Comprehensive Master Plan.

3.20 BUFFERS AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY LEVELS

Buffers between land uses and the buffer's dimensions shall be determined by the relative difference in Urban Development Intensity Levels (UDIL) of the respective land use.

Commentary: Use of the Urban Density Intensity Levels (UDIL) is a recommended tool to guide the future growth of Lafayette Parish. The UDIL system is a tool in the planning of better compatibility between and among land uses, especially between residential and non-residential uses. Certain land uses have similarities in intensity of use and can be compatible neighbors. Other land uses are very different from one another and do not make well-suited neighbors. This UDIL system is designed to promote the clustering of compatible land uses. Where the land use intensity levels are focused, they are generally inclusive, and it is intended that the UDIL will become an integral part of the development process throughout the Parish.

The intensity of a land use is based on several factors, including the density of the activity, the amount of traffic it generates, and the physical size and nature of the buildings associated with its use. Density is important in preserving the aesthetic and cultural integrity of areas. Parks and homes are often located next to each other, but not next to large shopping malls, because the mall is too dense to be a good neighbor to the homes and parks. Traffic generation is also vital in determining compatible land uses. Land uses that generate high levels of traffic do not make good neighbors to uses that create low traffic demands. The neighborhood and mall example applies here as well. A mall generates large amounts of traffic and requires large streets and vast parking, whereas neighborhoods need only small streets and little parking. Finally, the physical size and nature of buildings is considered in determining compatibility. Issues of scale, height, orientation, and massing are considered in deciding which types of uses will work well together. Large, bulky buildings, (as compared to residential uses with smaller, landscaped homes) often characterize industrial land uses. Placing these uses next to one another creates a poor visual environment and diminishes the overall aesthetic appeal of lower intensity areas. Using physical characteristics to determine compatibility helps to preserve and protect such important components of communities.

Buffers must be established and applied to new development incompatible with existing or typical development that surrounds it when the new development is located within a Development Level 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4 area as indicated on the Future Development Guide. In addition, buffers would be required when a more intense Development Level adjoins a lesser intense Development Level, for example a Development Level 2 area adjoins a Development Level 3 area. Buffers would not be required for industrial uses when located within Development Level 5 unless they adjoin a Development Level 4.

3.21 BUFFER CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Buffers shall be constructed or provided and maintained by the developer/landowner creating the conflict with a pre-existing land use, with the exception of industrial uses developed outside of identified industrial areas. In these cases maximum buffers are to be provided even if the adjacent land is not in use or is classified as agricultural.

Commentary: The land use elements should not place undue or unnecessary or unfair hardship on property owners. Therefore, all standards and policies will be administered uniformly and fairly. This means that buffers should be built and maintained by the developer/landowner who created the conflict with the pre-existing land use. There is one exception to this rule: high intensity industrial land uses (UDIL 5) developed outside of designated UDIL areas will be required to provide maximum buffers even if the adjacent land use is vacant or agricultural. These industrial uses (UDIL 5) are characterized by excessive noxious hazards, or noise and/or heavy traffic generation.

3.22 TYPES OF BUFFERS

Buffers shall include hedges, native tree and shrub species, berms, biking paths, nature trails, and /or fences as developed and specified. Coulees and boulevards may also be used as buffers in combination with landscaped areas.

Commentary: It is important to provide a variety of landscape and hardscape buffers to mitigate the effects of adjoining incompatible land uses. Most buffers provide a physical barrier that directly screens views and/or noise from adjacent uses including hedges, trees, shrubs, berms and fences. There is a practical use of other buffers including biking paths, nature trails, coulees and boulevards.

3.23 PERFORMANCE BUFFER STANDARDS

Performance buffer standards shall be incorporated within Parish and municipal landscape ordinances.

Commentary: The Subcommittee recommends that performance-based buffer standards outlined in this Land Use Plan be incorporated with the existing and future Parish and municipal landscape ordinances. For this reason, these standards were designed to be flexible enough to be used in combination with current Lafayette Consolidated

Government's landscape standards. The municipalities of Carencro, Scott, Duson, Broussard and Youngsville should incorporate these landscape ordinances.

3.24 NEW DEVELOPMENT IMPACT ON WATERSHED AREAS

Mitigation of new development is to be addressed by the construction of regional storm water retention/detention facilities. The impact of new development on watershed areas must be minimized. To establish such a program for this specific purpose, funding for these new drainage facilities and related maintenance should be established based on developer participation and dedicated millages and/or utility fees. It is anticipated that this program will be initiated by a lead agency as noted in the Drainage Element. This lead agency will establish policies and financing to construct and maintain storm water facilities.

Commentary: A primary concern for Parish residents is the protection of watersheds. Large developments within the Parish utilize detention ponds or lakes to capture excess stormwater runoff. Most developments in the Parish drain directly into the coulee system. Currently, roughly 50% of the Parish is developed. As future development occurs, more impervious surfaces are created, and storm water runoff into the coulee system increases. Unfortunately, this system is already overloaded. At the pace of current development, the likelihood of flood events will significantly increase. Development impact on watersheds be minimized and/or mitigated by the construction of retention /detention facilities. These facilities should be financed and maintained by local government through incorporation of utility fees.

3.25 STORM WATER DETENTION/RETENTION FOR RECREATION

Regional storm water retention/detention facilities should be planned for recreational purposes.

Commentary: The Parish does not have major water bodies and resources large enough to be utilized for recreation purposes. The construction of major retention/detention facilities should provide significant recreational amenities and opportunities that do not exist at present.

3.26 MUST CONNECT TO MUNICIPAL WATER AND SEWER

All developed land uses must connect to municipal water and/or sewer facilities if available. Alternately the developer / owner shall operate and maintain the system subject to an inspection and permitting program. After such a system is permitted, it will be inspected at least annually to ensure proper operation. The cost to maintain this program is recommended to be borne by dedicated user permit and/or inspection fees. The Lafayette Consolidated Government shall contract with the appropriate state agency for LCG to perform the inspection of these facilities in lieu of the state responsibility for the oversight of water and sewerage facilities.

Commentary: The amount of development intensity allowed shall be based on the capabilities and capacity of local infrastructure. Additional development intensity may be allowed if infrastructure systems are improved with private funds to acceptable levels of service to accommodate the increased intensity. Individual or private on-site sewage systems must meet appropriate federal, state, and local standards. More importantly, the developer must provide for a means to fund on-going maintenance, repair and operation of these systems for this purpose. In other words, the developer needs to demonstrate that these systems will be constructed, maintained and properly inspected for the life of the development.

3.27 DEVELOPMENT WITHIN COMMERCIAL NODES

Commercial development within commercial nodes shall accommodate corresponding intersection design standards identified in Lafayette Consolidated Government's Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan.

Commentary: There is a need for proper intersection design standards. New development and redevelopment projects must accommodate these standards to ensure the safe and efficient flow of traffic through Lafayette's transportation corridors.

3.28 GRADE SEPARATED INTERCHANGES

Grade separated interchanges have a substantial impact on adjacent land uses at selected planned arterial intersections and should be more aggressively pursued and implemented.

Commentary: The safe and efficient flow of traffic throughout the Parish is dependent upon adherence of proper access management techniques and good intersection and interchange design.

3.29 RAISED GREEN MEDIANS, BIKEWAYS, SIDEWALKS

New major arterials shall be constructed with raised green medians and combined bikeway/sidewalks on one side of the roadway separated from the curb to accommodate tree plantings wherever possible. Electrical facilities shall be placed underground along major arterials.

Commentary: A good access management plan should utilize median improvements to increase traffic flow and reduce the number of potential vehicular conflicts. Well-designed and efficient medians are one of the most important features of a safe and efficient roadway. Additionally, a raised median along major arterials provides an opportunity to provide aesthetic landscape improvements including street trees, shrubs and groundcover. A combined bikeway/sidewalk on one side of the roadway separated from the curb to accommodate additional landscape improvements should also be incorporated.

Overhead utility transmission and distribution lines should be placed underground along these new major arterials. Today communities are finding ways to place underground many utilities, including cable, telephone and power lines. Unfortunately, many of the overhead power lines along major arterials are main feeder lines. Before being located underground, these feeder lines must be encased in large concrete vaults and large switch boxes need to be placed intermittently to provide service to adjacent lines and properties. Because of this expense, it is very hard to relocate existing utilities along older major arterials. Therefore, it is important that utilities be located underground at time of construction of the roadway facility and adjacent developments.

3.30 CORRIDOR PRESERVATION PLAN AND PROGRAM

A Corridor Preservation Plan and Program shall be established for planned arterials identified in the Lafayette Consolidated Government's Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan that is comprehensive in scope and focuses on defining rights-of-way, land use, access management, and adequate building setbacks and adequate funding in advance of construction.

Commentary: The first step in promoting a safe, efficient, and aesthetically pleasing roadway is to establish a Corridor Preservation Plan and Program for future arterials. This Plan must be comprehensive in scope and should focus on promoting an effective access management plan that incorporates the functional and aesthetic concerns of the roadway and adjacent properties. Additionally, the program needs to anticipate future land use demands and plan accordingly. This means adopting policies that integrate access management solutions before development occurs as well as planning for the needs of existing developments.

3.31 ENCOURAGE LOWER DEVELOPMENT COSTS

Lafayette Consolidated Government and all local municipalities should work with development associations on a regular basis to coordinate and establish methods and procedures to encourage lower land development costs and construction of affordable housing.

Commentary: Collaborative problem-solving between the development community, local service providers and local governments is essential. Lafayette is blessed with a number of development associations which can assist in establishing tools, strategies, and policies to encourage lower development costs and to promote more affordable housing throughout the Parish.

3.32 COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS

The Community Foundation of Acadiana (formerly the Legacy Foundation of Acadiana) or other community foundations should be used as a resource to facilitate the implementation of the goals and objectives of this Comprehensive Master Plan.

Lafayette IN a Century (LINC) Comprehensive Master Plan

Commentary: The Community Foundation of Acadiana will play an important role within the community. The flexibility and combination of private philanthropy with public interest may provide Lafayette Parish with a dynamic resource in this community foundation. The potential for improved quality of life programs and organization is unlimited locally. Community foundations have proven to be powerful enhancers to their areas around the country. The Greater Baton Rouge Community Foundation is a classic example of what can be achieved.