

LAND USE 101

LINC Citizens Committee
Thursday, January 28, 2010

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

def: *A comprehensive plan is a written document that identifies the vision, goals, objectives, policies, and strategies for the growth and development of a community while enhancing quality of life.*

A Land Use Plan is a component of the Comprehensive Plan.

What is Land Use?

- Refers to how the land is generally used – whether it is residential, commercial, industrial, open space, etc.
- One definition states that "land use planning is defined as the process of protecting and improving the environments in a city through the proper use and development of land."¹
- Land use planning is a process for determining how land will be used, both now and in the future.

¹ Leung, Hok Lin (1989), *Land Use Planning Made Plain*

What does a Land Use Plan do?

Addressing Land Use conflicts.

- Ensure that a concrete plant isn't located next to a residence
- Ensure that tax revenues are invested wisely
- Ensure that flooding does not occur in new developments

How to solve these issues?

- Set goals as a community and neighborhood
- Determine how to reach those goals

What is a Land Use Plan?

A Policy Document

- **Guides Decision Making**
 - Guides government decisions on infrastructure expansion and improvement – i.e., Capital Improvement Program
 - Provides a reference for rezoning and development decisions
- **Informs Property Owners and Developers**
 - Informs property owners of the plans for infrastructure expansion
 - Allows developers to reference adopted area plans when developing proposals and determining site locations
- **Facilitates communication and cooperation among various stakeholders**

Why land use planning?

A Framework for Decision-Making

- Offers guidance to city staff, Planning Commission, City Council, developers, businesses, residents, and others on what land uses are encouraged and discouraged in the area.
- Establishes a **common understandable vision** that encourages investment by local and global businesses.

Why land use planning?

Balance and Certainty

- A land use plan offers residents and businesses a clearer picture of the type of development that is desired by the community.
- This **greater level of certainty** can help promote business investment opportunities and economic growth, and foster neighborhood stability.
- Finally, land use planning helps protect property values.

Planning in Louisiana

Plans in place

- **Baton Rouge**
- **Monroe**
- **Pointe Coupee**
- **Covington**
- **Saint Tammany Parish**
- **East Feliciana Parish**

and in progress

- **New Orleans**
- **Shreveport**
- **Ascension Parish**
- **Hammond**
- **Livingston Parish**
- **Tangipahoa Parish**

Background

- 1997** HNTB Consultants contracted to prepare a land use plan for \$350,000
- 2001** LINC Steering Committee develops land use recommendations
- 2007** Planning Commission adopts the Steering Committee's recommendations
- 2009** Planning Collaboration Ordinance adopted
- 2010** LINC Citizen's Committee established

Definitions . . .

A word cloud of urban planning and development terms. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape, with varying font sizes and colors. The largest words are 'Infill Development', 'Urban Design', 'Mixed-Use Development', 'Urban Sprawl', 'Walkability', and 'Smart Growth'. Other prominent words include 'Adequate Infrastructure', 'Complete Streets', 'Nodal Development', and 'SmartCode'. Smaller words include 'Euclidean Zoning', 'Buffers', 'Growth Boundary', 'Overlay District', 'UDILs', 'Louisiana Land Use Toolkit', and 'Performance-Based Land Use'.

Infill Development Urban Design
Euclidean Zoning Buffers Growth Boundary Mixed-Use Development
Adequate Infrastructure Overlay District UDILs Urban Sprawl
Complete Streets Nodal Development SmartCode Walkability
Louisiana Land Use Toolkit Smart Growth
Performance-Based Land Use

Urban Sprawl

def: *The spreading outwards of a city and its suburbs to low-density, auto-dependent development on rural land, with associated design features that encourage car dependency.*

As a result, some critics argue that sprawl has certain disadvantages, including:

- *Long transport distances to work*
- *High car dependence*
- *Inadequate facilities – health, cultural, recreational, entertainment, schools, etc.*
- *Higher per-person infrastructure costs*



Adequate Infrastructure

def: *Infrastructure includes **hard services** like roads, water, sewer, etc. and **soft services** like education, fire protection, law enforcement, recreation programs, libraries, etc.*

*The level of infrastructure necessary to support growth requires the determination of **adequate** public facilities and services. This determination is part of the land use planning process.*

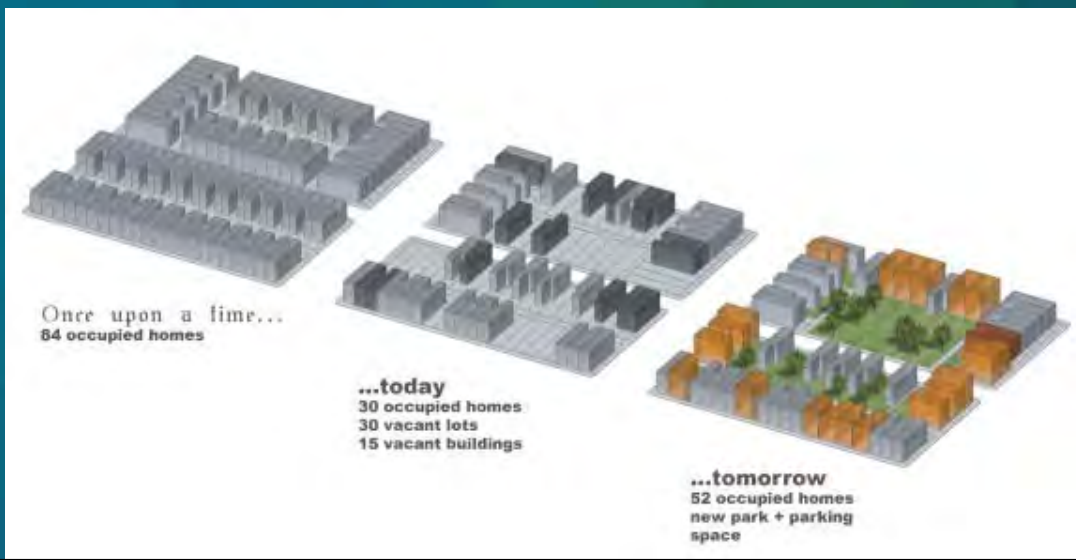
Focusing on adequate infrastructure for new development:

- Allows a community to maintain control over the timing and sequence of new development.*
- Requires the community to link its comprehensive land use plan with its capital improvement program.*
- **Encourages contiguous and infill development** because of their proximity to existing urban infrastructure and services.*

Infill Development

def: *Building and developing in vacant areas in city centers or urban settings, which promotes the betterment of these city centers, uses existing infrastructure, and leaves rural areas and open spaces undeveloped.*

Advocates state that infill development can reduce traffic congestion, save open space, create more livable communities, and reduce public costs.



Mixed-Use Development

def: *The practice of allowing more than one type of use in a building or set of buildings. This can mean some combination of residential, commercial, industrial, office, institutional, or other land uses.*

Mixed use guidelines often result in residential buildings with street-front commercial space.

*Retailers have the assurance that they will always have customers living right above and around them, while residents have the benefit of being able to **walk a short distance** to get groceries and household items, or see a movie.*

*Public safety is enhanced by a **24/7 population**.*



Walkability

def: *A measure of how friendly an area is to walking. Usually a 5 minute walk or ¼ mile distance to essential services (grocery, cleaners, bank, pharmacy, etc.) is the general rule of thumb for walkability.*

Walkability has many health, environmental, and economic benefits.

Factors influencing walkability include adequate sidewalks, traffic and road conditions, land use patterns, building accessibility, built form, and safety, among others.



Complete Streets

def: *Roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users.*

Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transport users of all ages and abilities are able to safely and comfortably move along and across a complete street.



Nodal Development



def: *A complete, compact, mixed-use community that includes places to live, work, learn, play, shop and access services and concentrated at the intersections of major streets.*

These communities are called nodal developments because they act as nodes, or hubs, for both the residents living in the center itself and for people in nearby communities.

Like old-fashioned village centers, good nodal developments include a mix of residential, commercial and service elements in a small, walkable area.

Urban Design

def: *The planning and design of cities focusing on the 3-D form and function of **public and private spaces**.*

Public space includes spaces that are used freely on a day-to-day basis by the general public, such as streets, plazas, parks, and public infrastructure.

Some aspects of privately owned spaces, such as building facades or domestic gardens, also contribute to public space.



What is Smart Growth?

- Create **Range of Housing** Opportunities and Choices
- Create **Walkable** Neighborhoods
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder **Collaboration**
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong **Sense of Place**
- Make Development Decisions **Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective**
- **Mix Land Uses**
- **Preserve** Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- Provide a Variety of **Transportation Choices**
- Strengthen and Direct Development Towards **Existing Communities**
- Take Advantage of **Compact Building Design**

Concepts to consider when developing a Land Use Plan

- **Urban Sprawl**
- **Adequate Infrastructure**
- **Infill Development**
- **Mixed-Use Development**
- **Walkability**
- **Complete Streets**
- **Nodal Development**
- **Urban Design**
- **Smart Growth**