

# General Advisory Panel (GAP) Smart Growth Recommended Priorities

Submitted to the Lafayette City-Parish Planning Commission

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## 1<sup>ST</sup> SMART GROWTH PRIORITY:

### Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities

- 1<sup>st</sup> Use priority funding areas to direct development toward existing communities.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Adopt a “fix-it-first” policy that sets priorities for upgrading existing facilities.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Facilitate programs to encourage home renovation and rehabilitation in existing neighborhoods and support community based organizations involved in revitalizing neighborhoods.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Designate a vacant properties coordinator to use code enforcement, provide incentives, and develop partnerships to minimize and abate vacant properties.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Create economic incentives for businesses and home owners to locate in areas with existing infrastructure and develop asset-driven market analysis to encourage commercial and retail investment in underserved communities.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Locate civic buildings in existing communities rather than in Greenfield areas.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Modify average cost-pricing practices in utilities to better account for costs of expanding infrastructure in greenfield areas.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Encourage the creation of a business improvement district and develop a revolving loan fund to support local independent businesses.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Encourage infill by adopting innovative stormwater regulations and practices.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> SMART GROWTH PRIORITY:

### Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective

- 1<sup>st</sup> Make zoning codes and other land development regulations simple to use and easy to read.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Implement a process to expedite plan and permit approval for smart growth projects.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Display zoning regulations and design goals in pictorial fashion to better illustrate development goals.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Engage political support for improved coordination on approval of smart growth projects.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Streamline brownfield redevelopment approval processes.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Incorporate by-right smart growth redevelopment into existing communities' master plans.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Establish a regional-level "smart growth cabinet." Create an "incentives expert" for developers and businesses when an area has been designated for development/redevelopment and encourage demand for smart growth through consumer incentives.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Create pattern books to streamline construction and enhance project marketability.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Remove parking from the development equation through public-private partnerships to build community parking facilities.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> SMART GROWTH PRIORITY:

#### Mix Land Uses

- 1<sup>st</sup> Adopt smart growth codes to parallel existing conventional development codes.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Create opportunities to retrofit single-use commercial and retail developments into walkable, mixed-use communities. Encourage the redevelopment of single uses into mixed use developments and adopt comprehensive plans and sub-area plans that encourage a mix of land uses. Use innovative zoning tools to encourage mixed-use communities and buildings and use enhanced zoning techniques to achieve a mix of land uses.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Convert declining shopping malls and strip commercial and accommodate the reuse of closed, decommissioned, or obsolete institutional uses.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Provide incentives for ground-floor retail and upper-level residential uses in existing and future development and organize a variety of land uses vertically and horizontally.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Zone areas by building type, not use.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Provide examples of mixed-use development at scales that are appropriate to the community.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Use flex zoning to allow developers to easily supply space in response to market demands and use floating zones to plan for certain types of undetermined uses.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Locate neighborhood stores in residential areas using Champagne's in the Saints Street Neighborhood of the City of Lafayette as an example.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> SMART GROWTH PRIORITY:

##### Walkable Communities

- 1<sup>st</sup> Develop a pedestrian master plan.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Adopt design standards for streets that ensure safety and mobility for pedestrian and non-motorized modes of transport and adopt design standards for sidewalks.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Use trees and other green infrastructure to provide shelter, beauty, urban heat reduction, and separation from automobile traffic. Beautify and maintain existing and future walkways. Add awnings/covered walkable areas. Where possible multi-use sidewalks of at least 8 feet.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Identify economic opportunities that stimulate pedestrian activity.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Require building design that makes commercial areas more walkable by connecting walkways, parking lots, greenways, and developments. Situate parking to enhance the pedestrian environment and facilitate access between destinations.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Provide Americans with disabilities easy access to sidewalks, streets, parks and other public and private services and use modern technology to increase pedestrian safety. Encourage safe pedestrian routes to transit. Make places walkable for aging populations in response to new demographics and special needs and design communities so that kids can walk to school.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Concentrate critical services near homes, jobs, and transit.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Use visual cues and design elements to indicate pedestrian rights of way and minimize conflicts.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Require traffic-calming techniques where traffic speed through residential and urban neighborhoods is excessive.

## 5<sup>th</sup> SMART GROWTH PRIORITY:

### Take Advantage of Compact Building Design

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ensure ready access to open space in compactly developed places.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Encourage developers to reduce off-street surface parking. Stress “cover parking” and handicap access parking.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Organize a compact development endorsement program. Use compact development coupled with onsite best management practices to improve environmental outcomes.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Ensure a sense of privacy through the design of homes and yards and use compact design to create more secure neighborhoods.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Use density bonuses to encourage developers to increase floor-to-area ratio (FAR).
- 6<sup>th</sup> Match building scale to street type in zoning and permit approval processes.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Ensure that big box stores locating in existing urban centers are appropriately scaled and designed.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Strategically reduce or remove minimum lot size requirements.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Employ a design review board to ensure that compact buildings reflect desirable design standards.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Subdivide vacant warehouse space into residential units.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Use traditional neighborhood design.
- 12<sup>th</sup> Manage the transition between higher and lower density neighborhoods.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Create compact office parks and corporate campuses.

## 6<sup>th</sup> SMART GROWTH PRIORITY:

### Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

- 1<sup>st</sup> Implement a program to identify and dispose of vacant and abandoned buildings and adopt special rehabilitation building codes to regulate the renovation of existing structures.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Integrate smart growth and housing programs and give priority to smart growth projects and programs that foster smart growth in the allocation of federal housing and community development block grant (and other) funds.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Revise zoning and building codes to permit a wider variety of housing types.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Develop smart growth funds to promote development in underserved neighborhoods and create a housing trust fund.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Create a regional program to encourage all communities to include a fair share of affordable and moderate range housing and encourage through incentives that some portion of every new housing development beyond a given threshold size is offered at a price that will be affordable to low-income residents.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Educate realtors, lenders, and home buyers on the use of resource efficient mortgages.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Educate developers of multifamily housing units and nonprofits on the use of limited appreciation of profit, without limiting equity.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Use housing to engender 24-hour urban centers in revitalization plans.

## 7<sup>th</sup> SMART GROWTH PRIORITY:

### Provide a Variety of Transportation Options

- 1<sup>st</sup> Require sidewalks in all new developments.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Plan and permit road networks of neighborhood-scaled streets (generally two or four lanes) with high levels of connectivity and short blocks. Consult early with emergency responders when developing smart growth plans.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Address parking needs and opportunities.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Adjust existing transit services to take full advantage of transit-supportive neighborhoods and developments and provide riders with customized transit information.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Make sure transportation models and surveys accurately reflect all modes of transportation and connect transportation modes to one another.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Collaborate with employers and provide information and incentives for programs to minimize or decrease peak-hour congestion impacts.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Create comprehensive bicycling programs (such as T.R.A.I.L.S.).
- 8<sup>th</sup> Integrate good movement and delivery into smart growth.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Modify roadway level-of-service standards in areas served by transit on a case by case basis.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Transform park-and-ride lots into multiuse facilities.

## 8<sup>th</sup> SMART GROWTH PRIORITY:

### Preserve Open Space, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas

- 1<sup>st</sup> Design and implement an information-gathering and education program.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Adopt a green infrastructure plan.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Support tree preservation through public-private partnerships.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Create a network of trails and greenways.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Establish priority-setting criteria for open space acquisition and expand use of innovative financing tools to facilitate acquisition and preservation. Provide a number of financing techniques to preserve open space.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Design and implement incentive tools that preserve open space and use innovation permitting approaches to protect critical environmental areas.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Link land conservation with other smart growth principles and coordinate local, state, and federal planning on land conservation and development.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Use land management techniques and acquisition to protect drinking water sources.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Incorporate land conservation into transportation planning.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Take advantage of nature's ecoservices.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Partner with nongovernmental organizations to acquire and protect land and allow land trusts to compete for conservation funds.

## 9<sup>th</sup> SMART GROWTH PRIORITY:

### Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place

- 1<sup>st</sup> Plant trees throughout communities and preserve existing trees during new construction.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Create community neighborhood squares and create active and secure open spaces.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Establish revolving loan funds for historic preservation and create a state tax credit to encourage adaptive reuse of historic or architecturally significant buildings.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Create special improvement districts for focused investment.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Use transportation enhancement funds to create places.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Revitalize Bayou Vermilion frontage.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Enact clear design guidelines so that streets, buildings, and public spaces work together to create a sense of place.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Use distinctive public transit to increase the attractiveness of neighborhoods.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Make retail centers distinctive and attractive destinations.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Highlight cultural assets through public art and event nights and create opportunities for community interaction.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Define communities and neighborhoods with visual cues and use asset-based tools and resident engagement to reflect values.
- 12<sup>th</sup> Simplify and expedite permitting regulations to allow vendors to offer sidewalk service. Vendors would be welcomed and encouraged as long as the sidewalk itself is not obstructed.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Preserve scenic vistas through the appropriate location of telecommunications towers and no billboards.

## 10<sup>th</sup> SMART GROWTH PRIORITY:

### Encourage Community and Stake Holder Collaboration in Development Decisions

- 1<sup>st</sup> Use quick-response teams to gain approvals for smart growth developments.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Seek technical assistance to develop a public participation process.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Cultivate relationships with schools, universities, and colleges and engage children through education and outreach.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Develop community indicators to make sure that development is meeting community goals.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Work the media to disseminate planning and development information on a consistent basis.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Incorporate opinions and interests often and routinely into the planning process. Use third-party groups to make sure a range of stakeholder views is expressed and use nonprofit groups as smart growth consultants.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Create and distribute free videos to illustrate local planning goals. Use color coded maps to establish a planning and zoning framework for future planning decisions and illustrate complex concepts with photographs and imagery.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Bring developers and the development community into the visioning process.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Conduct place audits to determine barriers and opportunities for smart growth.
- 10<sup>th</sup> Hold design charrettes to resolve problematic development decisions.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Use conventional methods and forums to educate nontraditional, as well as traditional, stakeholders about the development and decision-making processes.
- 12<sup>th</sup> Require government to create public access to tax and lien information on all adjudicated properties to facilitate the rehabilitation of distressed properties.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Use a "kick the tires" trip to take local governmental officials and residents to visit smart growth communities in the region, state and country.
- 14<sup>th</sup> Establish context-sensitive design training courses that focus on community-involvement strategies for traffic engineers. We call this "Tony Training".
- 15<sup>th</sup> Conduct visioning exercises to determine how and where a neighborhood will grow.