



5.0 The Future: How Should the Parish Grow?

Infrastructure improvements, development guidelines and future land use plans influence the appearance of a community dramatically. Communities do have a choice in how they direct and shape growth. Some of these choices are represented in where one chooses to live, work and play. Other choices are reflected through policy recommendations (contained within the Comprehensive Plan) incorporated into a formulated planning process designed to guide future growth.

The following “general development models” represent two divergent future possibilities. Both models represent two realistic scenarios for future development within the parish.

5.1 The Linear Development Model

The Linear Development Model concentrates most of the intensive land uses, such as commercial, office, industrial and mixed use, along major and minor arterials. Lower intensity uses, such as residential, public and semi-public uses, are located in the spaces between these corridors.

Advantages of this urban form include:

- * The highest intensity land uses will be located along the transportation corridors most able to handle additional traffic.
- * Concentrating development along corridors will create more efficiency in services.
- * Compatibility with existing development patterns. Corridor development is a common urban form in American suburbs and will be easier to implement in a “highway-grid” framework.

Disadvantages of this form include:

- * Congestion in corridors can become problematic. Frequently, the transportation corridors become over-developed. A lack of alternative access routes may exacerbate this problem.
- * No identifiable “town center.” Linear development can become repetitive and nondescript. With no identifiable center, a community will lack a central focus.
- * Total dependence on the automobile. Corridor-type development is not practical for pedestrian access. Almost all trips must be made by automobile.
- * Maximum exposure between incompatible land uses. Long, narrow strips of high-intensity uses will produce a maximum amount of perimeter areas adjacent to lower-intensity uses.

5.1.1 Applied Linear Development Model

In Lafayette Parish, the major transportation corridors include Ambassador Caffery Parkway, University Avenue, Pinhook and Kaliste Saloom roads, Congress, Cameron and Johnston streets, as



well as Evangeline Thoroughway, I-49 and I-10. Currently, these corridors receive almost all of the new commercial, retail, office, mixed-use, multi-family and industrial development within the parish. In all cases, high intensity uses are in the form of strip malls along the entire length of these corridors.

Since the 1970's, these corridors have lured land uses away from the traditional town centers. Acadiana Mall is a prime example of this. In the 1970's, this mall located along Ambassador Caffery Parkway. At the time, there was very little commercial development within this area. Substantial commercial development has occurred along Johnston Street, Ambassador Caffery Parkway, and Kaliste Saloom Road. Increasing development along these corridors has encouraged further dependence on the automobile.

The Linear Development Model represents the development of the parish since the 1970's. It must be noted that there can be good forms of linear development. If linear development is the preferred option, Lafayette Consolidated Government must provide substantial improvements into the transportation network, including provision of strong and consistent access management programs, beautification and buffering standards, as well as a provision for increased funding for future roadway improvements in newer corridors.



Traffic backs up on Johnston Street during a typical rush hour. A combination of over-development, lack of access control and no alternative routes have contributed to gridlock on Lafayette's commercial corridors.

5.2 The Clustered Development Model

The clustered development model promotes compact high intensity developments (such as commercial, retail, office, multi-family and industrial) around the intersections of major arterials and designated "nodes." Less intense uses, such as single-family developments, parks and open space are set in the areas between these major nodes.

Advantages of this urban form include:

- * Protection and preservation of natural resources. Compact development preserves agricultural and rural lands. With less extension of public infrastructure, the impact upon the natural landscape and resources are minimized.



The clustered development model concentrates high-intensity developments around intersections of major arterials.



- * Promotes less costly development. Clustered developments make fewer demands upon public infrastructure improvements, especially upon future utility extensions.
- * Preservation of civic identity. Designated nodes or areas of interest such as, the Oil Center, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and downtown are preserved.
- * Preservation of neighborhood identity. Neighborhood identity is preserved through use of buffers and development boundaries.



Advantages of the clustered model include improved mobility and fewer land use conflicts.

- * Fewer land use conflicts. Incompatible land uses are buffered from each other and there is a general guide for the location of all land uses and their intensities.
- * Potential for more parks and open space. This type of compact development requires less land, leaving more room for open space and parks.
- * Improved mobility of traffic. Clustered developments share a few consolidated access points allowing easier mobility through major arterial corridors.

Disadvantages of this form include:

- * Education of community. LCG and surrounding municipalities need to educate developers and the general public on the advantages of clustered development.
- * Land acquisition. It may be difficult and costly to acquire the necessary parcels or easements to create greenbelts, parks, trails and boulevards.
- * High maintenance costs. Greenbelts, parks, trails and boulevards can be costly for the city to maintain.

5.2.1 Applied Clustered Development Model

5.2.1.1 Natural Systems

Lafayette Parish is beginning to see significant development on the floodplains, especially to the southwest. In the future, all floodways should be designated as greenways. Additionally, the parish is advantaged by an extensive coulee system, drainage-ways and the Bayou Vermilion. Future devel-



opments within these areas should incorporate these environmental systems carefully to create a system of greenways, parks and open space to the greatest extent possible.

5.2.1.2 Built Environment and Community Character

Lafayette is blessed with a unique heritage that is reflected within its built environment and community character. These traditional development types still can be found in the traditional town centers of Lafayette, Carencro, Scott, Duson, Broussard and Youngsville. However, commercial “strip” developments have taken some of the emphasis away from these traditional areas. Today, Ambassador Caffery Parkway, Johnston Street and other major commercial corridors lack local distinction.



Downtown Lafayette, along with other town centers, provide a unique character and sense of place not found in recent suburban developments.

The LINC Land Use Subcommittee stated Lafayette Consolidated Government’s development guide and policies should emphasize and preserve the unique characteristics of its local communities. The subcommittee unanimously recommends that the policies contained within this plan should be built around the clustered development model. New high-intensity developments should be concentrated around major intersections and designated nodes. Infrastructure improvements, including the extension of water and sewer lines would be prioritized within the designated core areas of the parish.

5.3 Policy Concepts

Once the subcommittee selected its preferred development option (the clustered development model), the project team created a list of potential policy concepts to help implement its vision for the future of the parish. Some of the following policy concepts were selected by the subcommittee and integrated into the plan recommendations in Chapter 8. Other policy concepts were considered by the subcommittee and deemed not applicable to the parish.

The following concepts represent all of the concepts taken under the subcommittee and project team’s advisement.

5.3.1 Setting Policies

Traditionally, land use controls revolve around the subdivision process and zoning methods, but many local governments have sought alternative ways to guide growth through flexible policies, strategies and tools. The following examples outline several alternate and preferred policies. These



policies are not intended to be final products, but are intended to provide a framework for discussion of critical issues that will help this committee and the community to make an informed choice about the future direction of the parish.

5.3.2 Planned Unit Developments

PUDs require all future developments outside the city limits to comply with design and public facility standards, requiring a more comprehensive and complete review of new subdivisions than current subdivision regulations (*see Figure 5.1 Example PUD*).

Requiring all new large-scale developments to be submitted as PUDs will give the Planning Commission a better system by which to judge the infrastructure and facilities provided by the developer. PUD regulations will provide requirements that are more detailed for roads, water and sanitary sewer services and open spaces.

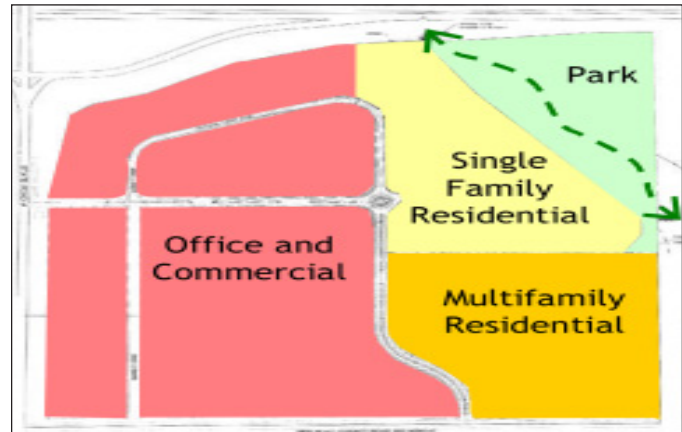


Figure 5.1 Example PUD PUDs are an excellent way to encourage efficient and compatible development of large-scale tracts.

PUD regulations can coincide with existing subdivision regulations and generally are applied to large-scale developments. They create special policies, which may include, clustered development and density transfer systems to deal with new, large-scale residential or mixed use developments.

5.3.3 Transfer of Developments Rights / Purchase of Development Rights Program

TDR and PDR programs seek to conserve agricultural and open space by transferring or selling the development rights from one parcel to another. The property to be conserved (sending property) agrees to give up the right to develop its land in return for some agreed upon amenity (set purchase price or tax abatement). The development right then can be transferred or sold to another property (receiving property) that seeks to develop a particular plot of land at a greater intensity than is otherwise allowed. This system provides a way to conserve valuable rural land while creating a mechanism that can support higher density developments and urban in-fill projects.

Presiding governmental body creates sending and receiving areas, in which TDR/PDR transfers may occur, by targeting specific sending areas that are in need of conservation and receiving areas that can benefit from in-fill and higher density developments. TDR/PDR programs require a financing body to regulate the purchase and sale of development rights. It is possible for private lending institutions to provide this service, but often city or parish governments must act as the financier for transactions.



5.3.4 Development Impact Fees

Impact fees are levied against developers at the time a building permit is issued to finance the extension of urban infrastructure and services into the subject property. The local governing body responsible for issuing building permits administers the fees. Fees can be levied for any capital improvement, including roads, parks, water and sewer facilities. They also can be used to upgrade or expand existing facilities. Impact fees often are administered as a flat rate fee for all new properties constructed outside of areas in which services are currently available.



Subdivision regulations should be amended to include provisions concerning densities, buffer zones and environmental considerations for new developments in the parish.

Developers are likely to pass on these fees to homeowners, so prices should reflect cost to homeowners, not developers. Funds generated from impact fees should be dedicated to the cost of financing capital improvements.

5.3.5 Development Agreements

Development agreements are a negotiated contract between a locality and developers in which the locality agrees not to enact new local development regulations in exchange for the developer agreeing to development conditions. This type of contract keeps the parish from enacting new development restrictions and ensures that the developer will abide by the contract terms. The contract can mandate public infrastructure prior to development, require certain densities and buffers, or other land use measures that might not be desired for the entire parish.

The parish must make such contracts legal. Development agreements must be signed with all potential developers. Such agreements can address specific site concerns, but they also have the potential to create a burden on staff and are risky because the development agreement only binds those who sign it.

5.3.6 Subdivision Regulation Amendments

The Lafayette Parish Subdivision Regulations currently give requirements for the establishment of new developments outside the city of Lafayette corporate limits, with consideration given to the adequacy and sufficiency of new water, sewer and transportation services, as well as building setbacks. These regulations need revision, and should include additional requirements concerning densities, buffer zones, environmental considerations and compatibility issues for new developments. Currently, there is no method to ensure that such land use factors are being considered. New requirements should be consistent with the development guidelines set forth in the Land Use Master Plan and Policy Plan for Lafayette Parish.



5.3.7 Areas of Influence - Staged Growth Controls

Staged growth controls establish growth areas in small increments, limiting development to the appropriate area in a given time frame. This approach limits growth not by type or extent of development, but by location. Staged growth controls can be created in several forms, but all seek to guide growth incrementally based on designated growth zones.

5.3.7.1 Types of Staged Growth Controls

* **Water/Sewer extension.** Restricts the areas in which water and sewer service will be extended in any given time frame. Developments within the areas of influence may proceed only if water and sewer are extended to the area at that time. Thus, developments are following water and sewer extensions.



Urban-style development should occur concurrent with water and sewer extensions.

- * **Annual growth quota.** Establishes a maximum number of building permits that may be issued in any given year based on the amount of new development that can reasonably be serviced by public facilities and infrastructure. Growth quotas do not regulate the location, type, or intensity of development and offer no priority for the type of permits issued.
- * **Targeted growth areas.** These are areas defined by prevalent and important growth management issues. These can include natural resource issues, such as wetlands and habitat conservation, open space and agricultural preservation and pollution control. It also can be based on physical growth conditions (such as poor soils, steep slopes or floodplains) and/or geopolitical boundary locations.

5.3.8 Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances

APFOs require the developer to show that adequate facilities exist to support a proposed project, considering both existing and programmed infrastructure. The parish must determine a minimum Level of Service standard for each utility before adoption of an APFO.

Once the LOS is determined, future developments must adhere to identified standards including, but not limited to the following:

- * Developing where there is current capacity or service (or)
- * Paying for the construction (and/or) extension of service to new development.



5.3.9 Performance-Based Development Standards

Performance-based development standards mitigate the effects of non-compatible land uses while offering maximum flexibility to the property owner. The standards do not prohibit certain types of uses and do not make specific parcel-by-parcel recommendations. Rather, they provide a realistic and flexible system that makes provisions for compatibility of land uses and land use types.

5.3.10 Urban Development Intensity Levels

The UDIL system is the recommended approach to establishing a future development guide for Lafayette Parish. It is based on the concept that certain land uses have similarities in intensity of use and are compatible, while other land uses have a different level of intensity and may not be compatible.



Light industrial warehousing is being developed outside of the urban fringe. This is beginning to cause conflicts with rural residences in the area.

For example, duplexes, apartments, condominiums and some office uses have a significantly higher density and generate more traffic than single-family residences. Yet, these uses are not nearly as intensive as shopping centers or highway commercial uses. Therefore, it makes sense that land use categories with roughly similar land use intensities should be grouped together in order to minimize the impacts of traffic, infrastructure demand and aesthetics (*see Chapter 6, Development Intensity Guidelines*).

5.3.11 Special Assessment Districts

Special assessment districts are geographically defined areas in which taxes or fees are collected to finance continuing operation, maintenance or upgrading of capital facilities that will benefit the taxed area directly. This program type goes one step farther than an impact fee because it addresses expansion and capital facilities maintenance issues. This is appealing to property owners because they are assured their tax dollars are being used to directly benefit them because fees collected through a special assessment tax are designated for improvements within the district. It also lowers the amount of new infrastructure cost the general citizens as a whole pay in new subdivisions.

- * Communities in several states, including Maryland and Texas, have used such policies to help ensure fair taxation among the citizenry.
- * Special assessment districts can be used in conjunction with impact fees, exactions or many other land use program policies.

5.3.12 Shadow Platting

Shadow platting requires a landowner developing land outside of municipal services areas to pro-



duce a plat map for the entire area in which it is located. The plat map is a proposed subdivision scheme showing future lots and is consistent with anticipated future subdivision and density requirements. This requires landowner cooperation and serves as a guide for future development in the unincorporated area. Shadow platting can limit the amount of development that occurs outside municipal boundaries by ensuring that it is consistent with anticipated land use needs. This will keep large-lot developments from occurring in a typical sprawling fashion and generally deals with land at the scale of 80 to 100 acres at a time.



Shadow platting requires a property owner to develop a plan for the entire parcel of land, not just the part that is currently being developed.

5.3.13 Fiscal Impact Analysis

This requires a developer to conduct a study illustrating the financial impacts that the development will have on the community. This will reflect the total costs to the community, including public infrastructure improvements, environmental damage and any other costs associated with the creation of the new subdivision. This can help the city or parish to determine the level of impact fee that should be administered, dictate whether the proposal should be approved or what regulatory action should be taken with regard to the development.

This policy can be a burden on the developer and there must be staff available to review the extensiveness and legitimacy of the analysis. There also is an added administrative burden with this approach, which requires that any other land use tools be consistent with and include the findings of the fiscal impact analysis in its approach.

5.3.14 Conservation Easements

Conservation easements allow landowners to dedicate development rights from their land to the city or a third party, ensuring that the land will be protected from future development. By donating the easement, a property owner likely will lower their land taxes by reducing its overall value. This allows a landowner in rural areas to protect his or her ability to continue living on land while preserving open space.