

**GROWTH CENTER COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS
REPORT**



GROWTH CENTER 23

**PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF BATON ROUGE/ PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE**

Greenwell Springs Road Regional Branch Library
11300 Greenwell Springs Road March 6, 2007

The Horizon Plan, with the support of the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council, advocates the implementation of community planning in the designated Growth Centers of the Parish. This community planning initiative began in 2003 and will continue through 2007.

It is important that the Horizon Plan continues to reflect the vision that City-Parish residents have for their Parish while responding to current development conditions in the City-Parish. The Horizon Plan identifies a comprehensive plan for the orderly growth of the Parish by identifying where particular land use categories are appropriate. This Community Planning process in the designated Growth Centers involves a study of Horizon Plan land use categories and elements of community design, with the intention of increasing citizen participation in identifying the issues of concerns about growth and design in the Parish. This Community Planning in the Growth Centers involves no change or recommendations for change of zoning districts or the allowable uses within them.

WHAT IS A GROWTH CENTER?

Growth Centers are areas of concentrated activity such as retail, office, public facilities, a range of residential development, cultural, and recreational activities linked with a variety of transportation choices such as vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian.

Regional Growth Centers include regional shopping centers, institutions, high-density office and residential complexes, medical centers and other major activities serving the entire parish.

Community Growth Centers include community shopping centers, medium to high-density office and residential complexes, public and recreational facilities and similar activities serving community areas.

Growth Center 23 is a Community Growth Center.

WHEN WERE GROWTH CENTERS DESIGNATED?

Growth Centers were originally designated in the 1992 Horizon Plan. The Planning Commission studied these areas in more detail for the first update of the Horizon Plan 1992-1997, and exact boundaries were delineated for each Growth Center. For the second update of the Horizon Plan, 1998-2002, these boundaries were studied and amended or re-affirmed with input from the community during the Neighborhood/Subarea Planning Process.

GROWTH CENTER PUBLIC MEETINGS

The purpose of the public meetings is to give residents, patrons, and business owners an opportunity to participate in planning for their Community or Regional Growth Center. Elements to be studied in each Growth Center include **transportation, land use, environmental features, and design**. Topics for discussion at the meetings include Horizon Plan land use, bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities, landscape improvements, and possible design guidelines for future construction in Growth Centers.

GROWTH CENTER ELEMENTS

A variety of elements working together to create the daily experience include living, working, eating, and shopping within the Growth Center. The elements have been identified for the purpose of this report as transportation, land use, environment, and design. Details contained within these elements include roads, sidewalks, shopping, services, architectural features, and natural resources. Following is a brief inventory of elements in Growth Center 23.

TRANSPORTATION

Public Transportation

The Capital Area Transit System Route 57- Sherwood- Siegen is the closest route to the area but ends at Sherwood and South Choctaw.

Bicycle/Pedestrian Amenities

Greenwell Springs Road, North Sherwood Forest, Toledo Bend Drive, and Catalina Drive are included on the Baton Rouge Bike Map. Greenwell Springs Road and a North Sherwood Forest are classified as Low Ease of Use on the Baton Rouge Bike Map. Toledo Bend and Catalina, both residential are considered High Ease of use streets.

Major Street Plan

Greenwell Springs Road, North Sherwood Forest, and South Choctaw Drive are included on the Major Street Plan. Greenwell Springs Road (4/100), and South Choctaw Drive (4/100) are classified as completed or programmed on the Major Street Plan. North Sherwood Forest (5/125) is classified as additional pavement and/or right-of-way- required. North Sherwood Forest (5/125) is included on the Major Street Plan as future pavement or right of way required.

Capital Improvement Program

The City-Parish Capital Improvements Program contains Capital Improvement Projects, Transportation Improvement Programs, Community Development Projects and Federal Aid Projects that are either currently under construction, under design or complete.

Program	Improvement Type	Status
North Sherwood Forest- S. Choctaw to Greenwell Springs	Roadway widening to 5-lanes	Under design 2003/2007 Horizon Plan 5-year update

12/16/2007

Green Light Plan

On October 15, 2005 the citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish voted to extend the one-half of one percent (1/2%) sales and use tax for street and road improvements. The proposition extended the so-called "pot-hole" tax for an additional 23 years until 2030 and allow for 70% of the proceeds to be used for transportation improvements including the construction of new roads, widening of existing roads, and intersection and signalization improvements, along with the necessary engineering, construction management, and drainage requirements for these projects. Should additional funds become available through higher than anticipated revenues, project cost under-runs, or other external sources, the program provides for a list of supplemental projects.

There are no projects on the Green Light Plan in Growth Center 23.

LAND USE

Horizon Plan Land Use Categories

Residential Estate/ Agriculture (RE/A)

Includes areas of rural character, agricultural lands, significant natural areas and single-family residential uses.

Low Density Residential (LDR)

Includes areas where single-family detached housing will be the predominant land use.

Medium Density Residential (MDR)

Includes areas where small single family, two-family and multi-family housing of a spacious character, and garden and town homes will be predominant.

High Density Residential (HDR)

Includes areas where multi-family housing, high-rise housing structures and very small, tightly spaced single-family housing will be predominant.

Neighborhood Office (NO)

Includes areas of small offices, professional offices and personal services to serve the needs of surrounding residential areas.

General Office (GO)

Includes areas where large or multi-storied professional, general administrative or non-retail sales offices are located.

Neighborhood Commercial (NC)

Includes areas of small retail stores, such as corner groceries, cafes and drugstores, to serve the needs of surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Light Commercial (LC)

Includes a variety of commercial and miscellaneous service activities generally serving a wide area and located primarily along existing major thoroughfares.

Heavy Commercial (HC)

Includes a variety of commercial and miscellaneous service activities, such as hotels, shopping malls and department stores, which are relatively large in size, generate a large volume of traffic or impact large areas of land and existing development.

Commercial Warehousing (CW)

Includes facilities characterized by extensive warehousing and frequent heavy trucking activity, but not involved in manufacturing or production.

Industrial (I)

Includes areas where manufacturing, chemicals, refining, warehousing, open storage and similar industrial facilities will be the predominate uses.

Public/Semi-Public (PSP)

Includes areas where governments, educational, religious and charitable uses will be the primary land use activities.

Transportation, Communication and Utilities (TCU)

Includes areas where railroad, trucking, aviation, ports, automobile parking, communication and utility facilities will be dominant.

Recreation (R)

Includes parks, recreational activities, amusements, group camps, cultural activities, and public assembly facilities.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Includes areas where developments under the Planned Unit Development (PUD) provisions of the Unified Development Code have been approved by the Planning Commission. Development in these areas will follow a unified site design plan for a mix of compatible land uses, clustering of buildings, increased densities and common open space.

LAND USE ANALYSIS

Existing Land Use

The existing land use for Growth Center 23 is a mix of Industrial; Commercial; Office; High Density Residential; Medium Density Residential; Low Density Residential; Public/Semi-Public; Vacant; and Transportation, Communications, and Utilities.

The current (2007) approximate percentages of existing land use in Growth Center 23 are as follows:

Existing Land Use	Estimated percentage of existing land use
Commercial	39%
Vacant	30%
Low Density Residential	6%
Medium Density Residential	8%
Public/Semi Public	7%
Industrial	5%
High Density Residential	2%
Office	2%
Transportation, Communications and Utilities	1%
Total	100%

Zoning

The Existing Zoning for Growth Center 23 is a mix of M1 (Light Industrial), C2 (Heavy Commercial), C1 (Light Commercial), B1 (Transition), A2 (Single Family), and A1 (Single Family)

There has been one request to rezone a property from (A1) to Light Commercial Three (LC3) Case **60-04**, the property was located on Greenwell Springs Road near North Sherwood Forest; it was denied by the Planning Commission.

The current (2007) approximate percentages of Zoning in Growth Center 23 are as follows:

Zoning	Estimated percentage of existing zoning
M1 (Light Industrial)	47%
C2 (Heavy Commercial)	38%
C1 (Light Commercial)	10%
B1 (Transition)	2%
A2 (Single Family Residential)	1%
A1 (Single Family Residential)	2%
Total	100%

Horizon Plan

The Horizon Land Use for Growth Center 23 is a mix of Industrial; Heavy Commercial; Light Commercial; Public/ Semi-Public; Neighborhood Office, High Density Residential; General Office; and Low Density Residential.

The current (2007) Horizon Plan land use in Growth Center 23 is as follows:

Horizon Plan Land Use	Estimated percentage of Horizon Plan Land Use
Industrial	43%
Heavy Commercial	37%
Light Commercial	11%
Public/ Semi-Public	3%
Neighborhood Office	2%
High Density Residential	2%
General Office	1%
Low Density Residential	1%
Total	100%

ENVIRONMENT

Conservation Areas

The Horizon Plan identifies potential Conservation Areas for the City-Parish as areas generally associated with bottomland hardwood forests, upland or flatland forests and areas of frequent flooding within the 100-year flood plain.

There are no Conservation Areas in Growth Center 23.

Water and Natural Area Associations

Hurricane Creek is north of Growth Center 23, Robert's Canal is West of Growth Center 23. The Comite River is to the North of the Growth Center. The Baton Rouge Engineer Depot Outfill Canal is to the Southeast.

DESIGN

Architectural Character

Growth Center 23 has a mixture of architectural qualities. Brick, block and tin utilitarian commercial buildings comprise the majority of the buildings in the Growth Center. The major roads in the Growth Center have above ground unconsolidated utilities.

Landscape Character

Growth Center 23 has a varied landscape character. Additional landscaping features could be added at subdivision entrances and the major intersections. The Greenwell Springs Road median is available for landscaping. Many parking lots are treeless and unshaded. Many of the undeveloped properties have a variety of tree canopy.

Signage Character

Signage throughout the Growth Center includes wall signs, monument signs, and pole signs. Off-premise signs are also located in the Growth Center.

Unique Features

Unique features in Growth Center 23 include a cemetery, daycare centers, a storage center, and the Greenwell Springs Branch Regional Library.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Growth Center 23 Demographic Information		
	1990	2000
Population		
Population by Race		
White	67.4%	29.4%
Black	29.4%	64.4%
Asian	1.5%	4.1%
Hispanic or Latino	1.5%	1.2%
Median Family Income	\$36,141	\$41,161
Educational Attainment		
Those 25 years and older		
High School	83.4%	84%
Bachelor Degree	17.7%	22.9%
Housing Units		
Total	3,238	3,267
Owner-Occupied	73.2%	79.3%
Not Owner-Occupied	26.8%	20.7%
Median Value Owner Occupied Unit	\$68,500	\$87,900
Mean Travel Time to Work	21.5 minutes	25.4 minutes

Source: US Dept. of Commerce, 1990 Census of Population and Housing; 2000 Census of Population and Housing

Design Tools Available for Growth Centers

Driven by an interest in quality of life in their communities, the citizens of Baton Rouge called upon the City-Parish Government in the 1992 Horizon Plan to establish a system for designation of urban design districts or corridors within the parish.

The Planning Commission can provide additional information regarding tools and features available for those interested in a community design program for their Growth Center. Community design programs, including urban design overlays and guidelines, are an effective way for local citizens to create and maintain built environments that satisfy both individual and community needs.

Urban Design Overlay District

Urban Design Overlay District refers to a traditional overlay ordinance that does **NOT** change the underlying zoning category, i.e. all permitted uses remain the same, but rather imposes additional requirements relating to concerns such as green space, landscape, and architectural features.

The purpose of an Urban Design Overlay District is to provide requirements or incentives intended both to protect a specific resource or area and encourage development to a desired standard of aesthetic quality.

Features of an Urban Design Overlay District may include:

Landscape buffers
Building articulation
Parking
Building materials
Lighting
Signage
Bicycle/Pedestrian design

Model Process to Establish an Urban Design Overlay

- Form a committee composed of Metro Council representatives from the area, residents, property owners, business owners, developers, architects, engineers, landscape architects, planners, and other interested parties.
- Define the purpose of the proposed Urban Design Overlay
- Identify the area to be covered by the proposed Urban Design Overlay
- Specify the boundaries of the proposed Urban Design Overlay
- Establish specific requirements of the proposed Urban Design Overlay
- Proposed Urban Design Overlay is presented to Planning Commission
- Proposed Urban Design Overlay is presented to the Metropolitan Council

Additional information regarding Growth Centers and Urban Design is available from the Planning Commission at 225-389-3144 or from the website www.brgov.com/dept/planning.