

It's still happening

Planning Commission keeps Horizon Plan moving on-track

Implementation Framework

Once a comprehensive or master plan has presented the existing conditions, the needs assessment and a community's desires for the future, generally it then poses a set of goals and objectives. As a rule, these goals and objectives are followed by an implementation schedule or program. The master plan also includes action oriented elements as the planning process culminates.

The goals and objectives of the master plan represent the community's vision and values. They may also be presented as vision statements or policy recommendations. Once established, a schedule for achieving them must be set and assigning responsibility to the appropriate individual or organization for accomplishment must be made.

In order to evaluate the progress towards implementation of a plan, a monitoring mechanism or structure must be in place. This can be achieved through the local governing authority, planning commission or through an implementation committee.

When the Horizon Plan was adopted in April, 1992, a similar planning process took place. Included in the final plan were seven elements: Land Use; Transportation; Infrastructure (Drainage, Solid Waste and Wastewater); Recreation and Open Space; Conservation and Environment; Housing; and Public Services, Public Buildings and Health and Human Services. Goals and objectives were outlined for each element, and 258 "Action Items," or strategies, were developed to carry forward the purposes in the Horizon Plan (see Planning Commission Information Bulletin Number 2: "The Horizon Plan"). As of the most recent Horizon Plan Update in 2007, there is a total of 363 Action Items.

Implementation Committee Established

Members of the community and public officials recognized

the scope of the Horizon Plan was so broad that oversight and implementation would need to be inclusive of all levels of government as well as the community. To address this concern and ensure that the broadest possible input and coordination would occur, a committee was structured to include both administrative and legislative branches of government and the public.

Initially, the Metropolitan Council established the Horizon Plan Implementation Committee (HPIC) by adopting Resolution Number 32410 (May 13, 1992). This resolution established the membership and responsibility of the Committee.

The Horizon Plan Implementation Committee was charged with the responsibility to "review and evaluate the Horizon Plan and shall make appropriate recommendations to the Metropolitan



Council relative to what should be done to implement said plan in a timely manner."

During its tenure the HPIC addressed a variety of issues relevant to the plan including but not be limited to:

- Evaluate funding alternatives
- Establish program/project alternatives
- Develop/implement a community information program
- Implement a Capital Improvements Program
- Foster public/private partnership
- Interface with other governmental agencies/ entities
- Build consensus/coalition for program implementation throughout the community

Role of the Assistant Planning Director

Because the position of Assistant Planning Director was soon to become vacant due to retirement, the Horizon Plan Implementation Committee recognized an opportunity to ensure that the Horizon Plan would have the necessary staff to assist in the coordination of the plan. After a national search and review of over 150 candidates, a new Assistant Planning Director was hired in April 1993, and the systematic implementation of the Horizon Plan was underway.

The new Assistant Planning Director worked with the Committee to develop a mission statement; develop a work program for the plan; contact the Lead Agencies; determine staffing requirements for implementation; establish evaluation procedures; and establish an update process for the plan.

Over the following six years the HPIC provided direction for the coordination of the work program for the Horizon Plan. In

December 1997, the first Five-Year Update of the Horizon Plan was completed. Through this update it became apparent that a successful process for the implementation of the plan was in place and that the committee realized their role for implementation and oversight had become administrative.

Responsibility Assigned to the Planning Commission

In March, 1998, the HPIC forwarded a resolution to the Metropolitan Council requesting that the committee be dissolved and the function of oversight of the implementation of the Horizon Plan be turned over to the Planning Commission. After much deliberation the Metropolitan Council adopted Resolution Number 38809 on July 8, 1998. This resolution rescinded the establishment of the HPIC and authorized the Planning Commission to assume the duties and responsibilities formerly assigned to the committee. Coordination of the work program for the Horizon Plan will now be accomplished by the Planning Commission Staff under the direction of the Planning Commission.

Horizon Plan Work Program

A work program was established for the first five years of the Horizon Plan. The 258 Action Items were initially assigned to 27 Lead Agencies to implement the plan. In 1997, the first Five-Year Update of the Horizon Plan was completed and the number of Action Items were increased to 288 and the number of Lead Agencies increased to 34. As a result of the third, and final, Five-Year Update in 2007, 13 Action Items were deleted and 88 were added, bringing the total to 275. The number of Lead Agencies was decreased to 33. The table below illustrates a portion of this work program.

Horizon Plan Work Program				
Action Item	Short Title	Lead Agency	Action Year	Status
LU4.B	UD Guidelines	Planning Commission	1995	Ongoing
LU4.D	Streetscape Design Plan	Planning Commission	1995	Ongoing
LU5.B	Federation CA Promotion	Planning Commission	1992-93	Ongoing
LU5.F	Implement Neigh. Plans	Planning Commission	1995	Ongoing
LU5.G	Improve Aesthetics	Department of Public Works	1996	Ongoing
LU5.H	Business Area Revital.	Planning Commission	1995	Ongoing
LU5.I	Subarea Plans	Planning Commission	1997	Ongoing
LU8.A	Revital. Growth Centers	Downtown Development District	1992-93	Ongoing
LU9.A	Amend UDC	Planning Commission	1992-93	Ongoing
LU9.C	Staff for LU9.B	Department of Public Works	1992-93	Ongoing

Evaluation and Review

Through both the Horizon Plan and the work program, various methods and intervals of monitoring occur. These include a monthly review of Horizon Plan amendments or issues; a bi-annual Evaluation and Appraisal Report (June and December), a year-end meeting with the Lead Agencies and a Five-Year Update Process.

Monthly review involves Horizon Plan land use plan amendments, Major Street Plan amendments and text amendments. These are presented to the Planning Commission for a public hearing and approval then forwarded to the Metropolitan Council for another public hearing and final adoption. Many of these amendments are processed through rezoning or subdivision cases.

The bi-annual Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) includes the status of each Action Item as reported by the individual Lead Agencies. The Year-End EAR also includes the Horizon Plan Work Program for the new year. These reports enable the Planning Commission to gauge the effectiveness of each of the Action Items and to determine any impediments to implementation.

Sponsored by the Planning Commission, the annual Lead Agency meeting is held in December and provides the opportunity for all the participating agencies to share the progress being made concerning their role in the implementation of the Horizon Plan. This meeting also provides the opportunity for the Planning Commission to encourage the participating agencies to continue their efforts related to the plan by presenting a comprehensive view of the Horizon Plan activities.

The Five-Year Update Process is a requirement set forth by the Horizon Plan (see Planning Commission Information Bulletin Number 16: "Five-year Update Process Underway"). The update gives the Planning Commission an opportunity to determine the validity of the Horizon Plan's original goals and determine what new policies or actions need to be adopted to forward the implementation of the plan.

These evaluation and review activities reflect the dynamic nature of the Horizon Plan. The plan is a flexible document designed to guide growth and development in East Baton Rouge Parish. The Planning Commission plays a vital role to improve the quality of life for the citizens of the Parish. By forwarding the implementation of the plan and continuing oversight, the Planning Commission ensures that the plan adapts to changing conditions and does not sit on the shelf collecting dust.

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