

Chapter 7

Implementation Recommendations and Plan Maintenance

To achieve the recommendations and to execute the policies defined within the *City of Bay St. Louis Comprehensive Plan Update, 2007*, the City can utilize the following implementation approaches:

- Construction of physical facilities;
- Provision of services;
- Regulation of land use and development;
- Project review; and
- Fiscal policies.

Various tools are available to implement these approaches. The following is a brief description of the tools that the City can utilize to achieve the policies defined within the Comprehensive Plan and to achieve the recommendations listed within the Comprehensive Plan.

Implementation Tools

Annual Budget

Most local governments implement recommendations and policies defined within their Comprehensive Plans through their annual budget process. Decisions are made during the budget process time to fund services, operational budgets for implementation of programs, operational budgets for the implementation of land use and development regulations and to fund capital expenditures. Short term yearly work programs developed by department directors should be related to and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and its policies.

Among projects in the Comprehensive Plan which will likely be part of the budgetary process are:

- Additional fire and police staff in keeping with population growth; and
- Library improvements.

Among operational budgets for the implementation of land use and development regulations are:

- Code enforcement;
- Building inspection; and
- Planning staff.

Capital Improvement Program

A Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a budgeting process which plans expenditures of major public improvements for a prescribed time frame into the future. However, a CIP is usually a five year program which prescribes expenditures for a five year period for major capital investments. These can be gas, water and sewer lines or fire trucks.

The CIP can be utilized to achieve recommendations within a plan. For example, the City can utilize the CIP program funds for the purchase of fire trucks as they are retired. And the CIP can be utilized to execute policy. For example, the City can guide commercial growth along Highway 603 by developing a shared point of access to and from Highway 603 for businesses to share, encouraging commercial development in those areas adjacent to these points of access.

Among the benefits of the CIP is that it can ensure that the city's capital projects are consistent with community objectives, anticipated growth, and financial capabilities. A CIP also helps the city stay focused on objectives. The public can be kept informed of projects funded through the CIP, and with projects defined through the CIP, pressure is reduced to fund projects not included in the Comprehensive Plan. Another major benefit of the CIP is that it facilitates more efficient administration and management. The coordination of necessary capital improvements can reduce scheduling problems, conflicting and overlapping projects, and over emphasis on any single function or geographic area. Finally, the CIP can spread the cost and the implementation of a large, costly project over several years, there by reducing any dramatic changes in the City's tax structure and level of bonded indebtedness can be avoided when capital projects are planned and spaced over several years.

Among projects which could be included in a Capital Improvement Program:

Near Term (within Five Years)

- Well construction
- Fire Station on Highway 603
- New Fire Truck- Pumper
- Sewer line improvements to address Inflow & Infiltration
- Expand City Building Offices
- Renovate Old City Hall for Community Use
- Complete Renovation of Valena C. Jones Complex for Community Use
- Establish Farmer's Market at Soccer Complex
- Build Downtown Harbor

Long Term (Six to Twenty Years)

- New Fire Truck –Pumper (2)
- Replace Fire Trucks as needed
- Establish Police Substation on Highway 603

Intergovernmental Agreements

Intergovernmental agreements are agreements between government entities to provide shared services to benefit all entities. For example, The Hancock County Library System has an agreement with the Hancock County Board of Supervisors and the City of Bay St. Louis to provide library services in Bay St. Louis. The City also has agreements with the Hancock County Utility Authority to provide wastewater treatment. The Hancock Water and Sewer District provides water and wastewater collection to residents in the newly annexed area. The Hancock County Emergency Management Agency provides emergency management services to the City of Bay St. Louis. Hancock County E-911 provides emergency dispatch of calls to the City's fire department and police department. Finally, the Hancock County Solid Waste District provides solid waste collection for residents of the City of Bay St. Louis.

Intergovernmental agreements can be utilized for a variety of services. The Comprehensive Plan does not recommend any specific services, but this tool can be an effective tool. The Citizen Advisory Council recommended that both the City of Bay St. Louis and the City of Waveland, establish an agreement with the County for planning services.

Adequate Public Services

The City may require that public services be available when needed to serve new development. This may be implemented with the adoption of an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. The ordinance would define specific levels of service and that new development would only be allowed when the service is available and adequate at the prescribed level of service. The intent of the ordinance would be to insure that there is adequate service capacity for new development without sacrificing the level of service provided to pre-existing development. The ordinance would allow for mitigation of existing deficiencies of services at the time of development.

Zoning Regulations

Zoning is a land use regulation which was originally designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents within a community by

“The dividing of a county or a municipality into districts and the establishment of regulations concerning the use of lands within those districts, and the placement, spacing and size of buildings¹.”

Zoning regulates activities; minimum lot sizes; placement and the spacing of structures on a lot by establishing minimum required front yards, back yards and side yards; maximum percent of a lot that can be built upon or covered with an impervious coverage; maximum building height; the amount and design of off street parking; the size, shape and the location of signs; the minimum floor area of single-family homes; and design review.

¹ Lars T. Anderson. Guidelines for Preparing Urban Plans. American Planning Association Planners Press, 1995, p.153.

Zoning, as it is typically accepted and utilized, can preserve the status quo within a community, and thereby protect the investment of existing property owners. Zoning can also be used to guide development in undeveloped areas, providing developers with rules and guidelines of what is expected and anticipated.

A form of zoning that the City may desire to consider is Smart Code. Smart Code is a form based code or regulation in which the focus is not on the land use or function, but how the function compliments the public space. The Code may be appropriate to encourage the continued mixed uses and densities of the City's Downtown area and Depot District.

Subdivision Regulations

A subdivision regulation is an

“An ordinance adopted and administered by a local government, which regulates the division of land into two or more lots, tracts, or parcels, for the purpose of sale, development or lease².”

Subdivision regulations address the design standards for the subdivision of land, the improvements required as part of the subdivision of land, and the administrative procedures followed by the local government to review the subdivision of the land.

Subdivision regulations are important because they ensure that clear legal records are kept of land transfers. The regulations also allow properties to be described in lots and blocks as opposed to metes and bounds.

Subdivision regulations define minimum design standards that ultimately reflect the character of the community. The size of the lots, location of the lots to roadways and the location of roadways within the subdivision, over the long-term will reflect the character of the community.

The design standards within subdivision regulations prescribe the standards and quality of the on-site improvements that are required to be installed by the developer or subdivider. The standards include the type and size of water and sewer piping, the size and composition of roadways, and the location and capacity of drainage systems. The enforcement of these regulations ensures that the new property owners within the subdivision have adequate access to public services, and protects existing residents within the city from having to pay the cost of new development.

Additionally, environmental resources can be identified during the site planning process and the city can require the developer to consider and to plan the site with these resources in mind. Conservation Development techniques can be adopted into the subdivision regulations.

Historic Preservation

The City adopted a historic preservation ordinance for certain neighborhoods within the city. The City is currently in the process of developing a plan for the preservation of historic structures within these neighborhoods. The City may also establish grant or low-

² Ibid, p. 154.

interest loan program to work in conjunction with the regulatory program or in the place of the regulatory program to encourage the preservation of historic structures.

Community Design and Appearance

The City may choose to adopt community design and appearance standards to assist with establishing a consistent design within commercial areas of the City. Design review provides for the review and regulation of the design of buildings and their sites. It often includes structural elements, exterior facades, heights, setbacks and roof lines and exterior materials. Sometimes design standards also address color.

Construction Codes

Construction codes provide a standard upon which to build safe structures. Adoption of up to date versions of the International Building Code and International Property Maintenance Code will greatly assist the City in their efforts to insure safe housing within the City. It can also be utilized as an effective tool to maintain neighborhoods.

Plan Maintenance

By its nature, the Comprehensive Plan is a document which reflects the desires of the community. These desires can change over time, influenced by the economic conditions of the region, changes in technology and, in some cases, impacts from large scale changes within the local area or the region. The Comprehensive Plan should be a dynamic document, which is monitored yearly to update the changes in the community, success or lack of success at meeting goals and addressing policies, and to reflect the costs and revenues of development to the community.

Ideally, the plan should also be reviewed yearly to incorporate any special topic or area plans that are developed within the City, the County or the Region. The plan should also incorporate a process to amend the land use plan to reflect the changing desires of the community, and finally the plan should be updated every five years

Benchmarking

The City should consider a plan to monitor development within the Wards, but also specifically monitor redevelopment within designated neighborhoods. Comparing redevelopment in the designated neighborhoods with development within the City at large and within the wards, will place redevelopment activities within the designated neighborhoods within a larger context. Thereby, the success or lack of success in redevelopment activities can be compared to the City and the ward to determine a relative recovery rate.

The neighborhoods that should be designated for monitoring include:

- (A) An area in Ward 1 from Riverside Street west, bounded by Blakemore on the South. Within this area there were 44 single family homes in 2005. In 2006, tax records recorded one structure, and during the 2008 land use survey, planners identified 3 new homes and two parcels that had travel trailers.

(B) An area in Ward 1 from Dunbar Avenue west to Riverside Street, bounded by Blakemore on the South. Within this area there were 38 single family homes in 2005. In 2006, tax records recorded three single family homes, and during the 2008 land use survey, planners identified four new homes, one home under construction and one parcel with a travel trailer on the parcel. About 13% of the homes in this neighborhood had been rebuilt or were under construction.

(C) An area in Ward 1 from Julia Street to Fox Street, bounded on the west by Dunbar Avenue. Within this area, there were 120 single family homes in 2005. In 2006, tax records indicate that there was one residential structure, and during the 2008 land use survey, planners identified one new home, three homes under construction and six travel trailers within this area.

(D) An area in Ward 5 -An irregular area from 6th Street to 17th Street, and from 2nd Avenue to C Avenue. Tax records from 2005 identified 34 single family homes, 14 mobile homes and one duplex within this area. In 2006, tax records recorded twenty-two single family homes, one duplex and five mobile homes. Planners identified one new mobile home and two parcels that had travel trailers.

(E) An area in Ward 6 located west of Bayou View Drive to Swan Street, between 20th Street and Bayou View Drive. Tax records from 2005 identified five single family homes within this area. In 2006, tax records recorded one structure, and during the 2008 land use survey, planners identified one residence under construction, one residence completed and two travel trailers.

(F) An area in Ward 6 from Bayou View Drive West, along 1st Street to Central Avenue to Fourth Street to Bayou View Drive, to 9th Street and back to Bayou View Drive West. Within this area there were seven single family homes in 2005. In 2006, tax records recorded four single family homes, and during the 2008 land use survey, planners identified four single homes. Recovery is relatively strong within this area, there are a number of vacant lots within this area and these lots were vacant prior to Hurricane Katrina.

The monitoring program should be undertaken yearly and should document the following items:

Neighborhood Monitoring

The number of single-family residential units
The number of multi-family residential units
The number of commercial businesses
The number of non-profit or public buildings
Amount of Vacant land within the area
The number of demolitions within the area
Changes in tax valuation within the area
Changes in land ownership

City Wide Monitoring

Number of new single family homes, documented by permits and COs

Number of new multi-family structure and number of units, documented by permits and Certificates of Occupancy
Number of new commercial buildings, documented by permits and Certificates of Occupancy
Number of new non-profit or public buildings
Number of vacant lots in existing subdivisions
Amount of vacant land within the City, by zoning type
Commercial vacancy rate

Additionally, business vacancies should be monitored yearly in the downtown area, the Depot District and along U.S. Highway 90 and MS Highway 603.

Land Use Plan Amendments

The Future Land Use Plan and Map and the Future Transportation Plan and Map are guides for the long range development of the City of Bay St. Louis. These plans identify areas suitable for growth and identify the type of growth that may be suitable for areas of the City. Amendments to the plan should be anticipated, but should also be limited in scope and in nature. Amendments to the Land Use Plan can create unintended consequences that may place policies determined to be important to the community and defined within the Comprehensive Plan at odds with conditions created by multiple uncoordinated Land Use Plan amendments.

Market conditions within the City or the region may change and major infrastructure investments may be made by entities other than the local government that may allow for different patterns of growth. Therefore, a process should be established for amendment to the Future Land Use and the Future Transportation Plans.

Review the Comprehensive Plan and Update

The Comprehensive Plan should be updated every three to five years depending on the changes occurring within the community. At this time the Planning Commission and the City Council will review the goals and policies established within the plan and determine if there is a need for change to the policies and amend the goals and policies.

Ideally, the City should review their success in implementing the plan, determine the changes within the community that make the re-evaluation of the vision, the goals and the policies necessary, review the city's finances and the ability of the City to implement needed public investments that are documented in the adopted plan, determine the community's goals and support of policy in the adopted plan, and update the plan to reflect any changes in federal and state laws or in funding programs that may require advance planning.

After these elements have been considered and updated, changes to goals and policies should be considered and drafted and a public hearing will be required to incorporate these changes into the City's Comprehensive Plan.