



# Planning News

City of Baton Rouge-Parish of East Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Fall 2011

## STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

On October 25, 2011 approximately 75 citizen planners and officials from across the City-Parish gathered in the House Chambers of the Old State Capitol to hear the Mayor-President release the final component of the FUTUREBR Update to the Comprehensive Plan, the FUTUREBR Strategic Implementation Plan. The Strategic Implementation Plan is the FUTUREBR team's recommendation to the Mayor-President for priority, near-term implementation strategies of the FUTUREBR Comprehensive Plan. The Mayor-President, as the City's chief executive officer, will evaluate these recommendations, present priorities and objectives to the Metropolitan Council, and make funding recommendations on how to achieve these priorities and objectives.

Thousands of East Baton Rouge Parish citizens have participated in the FUTUREBR process and they have clearly expressed a desire for change. The Strategic Plan identifies four priority strategies—targeted for completion within a one to three year timeframe—that the FUTUREBR team recommends for immediate action. These initial strategies are based on specific goals outlined within each of the Plan elements. Targeted goals from the Plan, along with a timeline for completion and their respective lead agencies, are identified for each strategy. The Strategic Plan prioritizes projects and programs that should be funded through the operating budget and helps inform future bond election priorities. In addition to guiding future funding decisions, the Strategic Plan provides a framework to enable and promote public-private partnerships that will benefit the City-Parish and its residents.

The Strategic Plan will be updated every one to two years as progress is made, and will be incorporated in the City-Parish's work program.

The four Strategies recommended are:

1. Develop a new Transportation Plan and system;
2. Create an Urban Renewal Program and establish Mid City as a pilot project;
3. Align the Unified Development Code with the policies of FUTUREBR; and
4. Create a balanced housing strategy and a Thriving Neighborhoods Program.

These Strategies will be accomplished through partnerships and cooperation between many City-Parish Departments and external agencies and organizations. The Mayor-President announced the creation of a FUTUREBR Implementation Team which will guide the implementation process. This Team consists of the directors or executive officers of the City-Parish Planning Commission, the East Baton Rouge Redevelopment Authority, the Office of Community Development, the Downtown Development District, the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance and the Center for Planning Excellence.

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## **THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**By Tara Wicker**

**Planning Commission  
Chairman**

In August 2004, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was established to protect, enhance, and perpetuate resources that represent distinctive and significant elements of the City-Parish's historical, cultural, social, economic, political, archaeological, and architectural identity.



Since the creation of the HPC, the Commission has designated Drehr Place and Spanish Town as local historic districts and St. Joseph's Academy and Pastime Restaurant as local historic landmarks.

On October 19, 2011, the Metropolitan Council adopted revisions to the Unified Development Code (UDC) related to Section 3.5 (Historic Preservation Commission) and Section 3.6 (Demolition and Relocation of Historic Buildings in the Downtown Development District). Major revisions include a new staff level review process, demolition and relocation of structures criteria, a new process with procedures for Demolition by Neglect, and removal of dual approval process for a demolition or a relocation of structures request for those properties located in the Downtown Development District (DDD).

### **Staff Level Review**

Prior to these revisions the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process required all properties locally designated to obtain ap-

proval for a COA from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The new regulations now provide a staff level process which allows all exterior renovations that do not necessitate a building permit to be reviewed by the Planning Commission Staff and a member from the Historic Preservation Commission. Subsequently, the new staff level process facilitates the CAO process by reducing review time and application fees. However, those exterior renovations that require a building permit will still undergo review by the HPC at a public hearing.

### **Demolition and Relocation**

The Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) process for both demolition and relocation has also been revised to provide application criteria. A COA for demolition or relocation must be reviewed by the Commission at a public hearing. A COA must be obtained before demolition or relocation of any designated landmark, building, or structure in a local historic district/landmark. The HPC now has the authority to approve or deny a COA for a permit to demolish or relocate a structure, building, object, or work of art from, to, or within a local historic district/landmark.

### **Dual Approval Process**

In Section 3.6, Demolition and Relocation of Historic Buildings in the Downtown Development District (DDD), the section removed the dual process for designated local historic district within the DDD. All demolitions and relocations in a designated local historic district will be reviewed by the HPC. All other demolition or relocations within the DDD will be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

The newly adopted revisions to Section 3.5 (Historic Preservation Commission) and Section 3.6

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### **Planning Commission**

Tara Wicker, Chairman; W.T. Winfield, Vice Chairman, Darius Bonton, P.E., Kathleen Callaghan, Dr. James Gilmore, Jr., Audrey Nabors Jackson, Laurie Marien, Martha Jane Tassin

### **Planning Commission Staff**

**Administration:** Troy L. Bunch, Director; Ellen Miller, Assistant Director; Ryan Holcomb, Planning Project Coordinator; Annette Chambliss, Administrative Assistant; Jane Wooldridge, Senior Clerical Specialist

**Advance Planning and Research:** Lael Holton, Manager; Barrett Chaix, Lenise Lyons, and Stephen Mayer, Planners; Jonique Marcelin, Clerical Staff

**Current Planning:** Glenn Hanna, Acting Manager; Vance Baldwin, Christopher Ferris, Tiffany Johnson-Wells, and Collin Magee, Planners; Marie Hopkins; Clerical Staff

**Geographic Information System:** Warren Kron, Jr., GIS Coordinator; Indah Kusuma, Justin Priola, Karrie Sept, and Quang Tran, GIS Analysts; Jeremy Bunner, and Markyta Holton, Interns



## THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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While the Planning Commission will continue to oversee the day to day implementation of the Plan, the Mayor-President's office will be tasked with creating the implementation priorities, overseeing the coordination of City-Parish Departments related to the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and the creation of funding strategies and mechanisms. To facilitate this function, the Mayor-President announced his intention to fill the vacant Assistant Chief Administrative Officer position with a dedicated Comprehensive Plan Manager. This position will work directly with the Implementation Team to ensure consistent and steady implementation of FUTUREBR.

The Strategic Implementation Plan is an excellent first step in putting FUTUREBR into action, and not just leaving it on the shelf. Copies of the Strategic Implementation Plan may be obtained from the Planning Commission offices, or on the web at [www.futurebr.com](http://www.futurebr.com).

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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Buildings in the Downtown Development District) Furthermore, the ordinance clearly defines and outlines what the role of the HPC is for all historic properties. With the new revision the HPC should see more interest for local designation on Baton Rouge historic neighborhoods and structures.

### Demolition by Neglect

Demolition by Neglect was another revision adopted by the Metropolitan Council in October. The process to revise the Demolition by Neglect regulations was initiated in 2010 when the Metropolitan Council appointed a Committee to review improvement opportunities to the Demolition by Neglect ordinance. The new Demolition by Neglect section defines demolition by neglect and how historic properties should be persevered. Before a property can be deemed "neglected", several steps are required including a review by the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the HPC. The property owner is involved throughout the process and allowed to discuss the matter before the HPC.

## Notes from the Director



### PLANNING COMMISSION NOW ACCEPTS ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

**By Troy L. Bunch,  
Planning Director**

The Planning Commission Staff, as part of its continuing efforts to improve the quality and efficiency of customer service, has recently begun accepting credit cards as a method of payment for the fees it collects. The Planning Commission office receives payments for a number of the applications it processes, as well as for services such as issuing of zoning verification letters and staff-level reviews. For years, the only forms of payment the Planning Commission could accept were checks or money orders. Under the previous system, the speed of service was limited by a customer's ability to appear at the Planning Commission office in person or have a check mailed to the office.

As of October, 2011, the Resource Center in the Planning Commission office is equipped with a credit card terminal to facilitate the ease of payment and provide flexibility and expedited service to its customers. In addition to widening payment options, the new credit card terminal enables immediate transactions with customers who are not present in the office, saving time for customers as well as Planning Commission staff. This time savings and flexibility will hopefully serve to further improve the quality of service and level of customer satisfaction.

The Planning Commission staff is eager to assist customers with any questions or suggestions for improving customer service. Additional information about the electronic payment system may be obtained from the Planning Commission at (225) 389-3144 or via e-mail at [planning@brgov.com](mailto:planning@brgov.com).

## PLANNING AHEAD

- December 7 Metropolitan Council Zoning Meeting**  
4:00 p.m., Governmental Building, Room 348
- December 12 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting**  
5:00 p.m., Governmental Building, Room 348
- January 18 Metropolitan Council Zoning Meeting**  
4:00 p.m., Governmental Building, Room 348
- January 23 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting**  
5:00 p.m., Governmental Building, Room 348
- February 13 Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting**  
5:00 p.m., Governmental Building, Room 348
- February 15 Metropolitan Council Zoning Meeting**  
4:00 p.m., Governmental Building, Room 348

Visit the Planning Commission  
on the internet at  
[www.brgov.com/dept/planning](http://www.brgov.com/dept/planning).

## Field Notes

June 13-17, 2011, Warren Kron, GIS Coordinator attended the URISA Leadership Academy in St. Louis, MO.

July 21, 2011 Lenise Lyons, Special Studies Coordinator and Justin Priola, Senior GIS Analyst attended the CONNECT Coalition Policy Forum.

November 1-4 2011, Warren Kron, GIS Division Coordinator, attended the GIS-Pro 2011 URISA conference in Indianapolis, Indiana.

## Staff Spotlight

Glenn Hanna, Land Development Coordinator, was "Employee of the Month" for September 2011.

Justin Priola, Senior GIS Analyst, was "Employee of the Month" for October 2011.

Annette Chambliss, Senior Administrative Specialist, was "Employee of the Month" for November 2011.

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**City-Parish Planning Commission**  
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