

Chapter Eight

Implementation

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”¹

- Thomas A. Edison

This plan sets forth a vision as to how Zachary should develop over the next 20 years – and beyond. With the vision in place, the community must now direct its attention and resources toward plan implementation. Each of the goals, policies, and recommended action statements identified throughout this plan must be turned into specific programs, initiatives, and/or new standards. This element establishes priorities and sets forth a process to ensure the plan is implemented and kept current over time.

The comprehensive plan should be a “living document,” that is, a document that is frequently referred to for guidance in decision-making with regard to land development and public investments in infrastructure and services. It is in that context that this is the Chapter that breathes life into the rest of the Comprehensive Plan, by setting out a practical, prioritized, and sequenced implementation program. The key objective of this chapter is to integrate the different elements of the plan together in such a way as to provide a clear path for sound decision-making.

Implementation is not just about a list of action items. It is a challenging process that will require the commitment of the City’s elected and appointed officials, staff, residents, business owners, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LaDOTD), Zachary Community School District, Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC), Baton Rouge Area and Zachary Chambers of Commerce, environmental organizations, and other organizations and individuals who will serve as champions of the plan.

Purpose

Implementation is an essential step in the plan development process. It requires the commitment of the City’s leadership, including the Mayor and City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, other City boards and commissions, and City staff. It is also necessary for there to be close coordination with and joint commitment with each of the above described agencies and organizations that significantly influence Zachary and its growth.

Each chapter of this plan outlines specific issues to be addressed to achieve what is envisioned by community residents. In response are a large number of recommended actions that relate to regulatory changes, programmatic initiatives, and capital projects. While these recommendations are comprehensive and intended to be accomplished over the 20-year horizon of this plan, near-term strategies must be put in place to take the first step toward implementation. These strategies must be prioritized, with decisions as to the sequencing of activities, the capacity to fulfill each initiative, and the ability to obligate the necessary funding. Those deemed as top priorities and viewed as feasible in the short-term are placed in a five-year action plan. In addition to implementing these targeted strategies, the broader policies set

forth by the plan text and maps may be used in making decisions related to the physical and economic development of the community.

The purpose of this chapter is to integrate the elements of the plan to provide a clear path for sound decision making. This chapter outlines the organizational structure necessary to implement the plan, strategic directions and priorities for implementation, and a process for regular evaluation and appraisal of the plan to ensure it is kept relevant and viable.

Responsibility for Implementation

Simply setting out an implementation framework in this Chapter is not enough to ensure that the action items of this plan will be carried out. These action items should be consulted frequently, and should be widely used by decision-makers as a basis for decisions regarding:

- ◆ The timing and availability of infrastructure improvements;
- ◆ City-initiated and owner-initiated annexations;
- ◆ Proposed development and redevelopment applications;
- ◆ Special use permits;
- ◆ Zone change requests;
- ◆ Expansion of public facilities, services, and programs;
- ◆ Annual capital budgeting;
- ◆ Zoning and subdivision code re-writes and amendments;
- ◆ Intergovernmental coordination and agreements; and
- ◆ Operations, capital improvements, and programming related to individual City departments.

To be successful, the City must utilize this plan on a daily basis, and it must be integrated into ongoing governmental practices and programs. The recommendations must be referenced often and widely used to make decisions pertaining to the timing and availability of infrastructure improvements; proposed development applications; zone change requests; expansion of public facilities, services, and programs; and annual capital budgeting, among other considerations.

Each Council member, staff person, and member of boards, commissions, and committees has an obligation to use this plan in guiding their decisions. The plan is designed to guide the growth and economic development of the community. It is intended to guide staff – of all departments – in managing their individual activities, annual work programs, and capital projects.

The primary means of implementation include:

1. *Preparation of new land development regulations to ensure a quality and character of development that reflects the community's vision.* The revision of the zoning and subdivision ordinances will improve land use compatibility, conserve natural resources and open space, preserve the character and integrity of neighborhoods and other valued areas, improve the efficiency of facility and service provision, and contribute to a fiscally responsible pattern of urban growth.
2. *Formation of policies by City staff, Planning and Zoning Commission, and the directions of the City Council.* As new development is proposed, staff and the City's advisory boards, together with the City Council, must abide by the policies and recommendations of this plan. The text of this plan, coupled with the land use, growth, and thoroughfare plans, provide the requisite guidance for achieving that envisioned by the residents and stakeholders of this community.

3. *Regular updates to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifying capital projects for street infrastructure; water, wastewater, and drainage improvements; park, trail, and recreation facility provisions; and other public buildings and municipal services.* These capital improvements must be coordinated with the objectives of this plan and implemented consistent with the future land use and growth plans, thoroughfare plan, parks and recreation system plan, and other relevant plans and policies.
4. *Identification and implementation of special projects, programs, and initiatives to achieve organizational, programmatic, and/or developmental objectives.* These may include further studies, detailed area plans, such as individual neighborhood and/or special district plans, or initiating or expanding upon key City programs. These tend to be ministerial in function, which may support or influence physical improvements or enhancements, but themselves focus on community betterment.

Implementation Strategies

Shown in **Table 7.1, Summary Action Plan** is the key near-term strategies for implementing this plan. Additional detail may be found within the respective plan chapters. These strategies highlight the steps to be taken by the City, often in coordination with other jurisdictions, organizations, or agencies. This tabulation is designed to be kept up-to-date and used on an ongoing basis as part of the regular review process. Each year, the projects that are substantially complete should be removed, with the corresponding years advanced one year and a fifth year of programmed actions added. In this way, this action plan may keep the City Council apprised as to the progress of implementation.

Implementation Program									
Action Recommendations	Lead Organization	Priority					Type of Action	Timeline	
		1	2	3	4	5			
Primary Action Items									
Priority No. 1									
Amend the land development regulations including the zoning, sign, and landscaping ordinances and the subdivision regulations.	PZ, CC	✓					LDR		
Priority No. 2A									
Prepare a fiscal impact model to gauge the feasibility and implications for public finances of new development and annexation activity in the Preferred Growth Areas.	Org 2						SPS		
Priority No. 2B									
Conduct an annexation study to include a facility needs assessment for the preferred growth areas. The needs evaluation should include provision of municipal services and facilities as well as utility capacity requirements.	Org 1						SPS		
Priority No. 2C									
Adopt a utility extension policy subject to the criteria of this plan. Subsequently commission an impact fee study.	Org 2						PPI		
Priority No. 2C									
Negotiate an Intergovernmental agreement with EBRP to realign the Zone of Influence, conduct joint development review, and/or amend the Horizon Plan consistent with this plan.	Org 3						PPI		

Action Agenda

Implementation Program									
Action Recommendations	Lead Organization	Priority					Type of Action	Timeline	
		1	2	3	4	5			
Priority No. 3A									
Enhance local economic development efforts through a commitment for increased funding, in accordance with the recommendation of Chapter 7, Economic Development.	Org 8						CIP		
Priority No. 3B									
Develop a formal economic development incentives policy.	Org 7						CIP		
Priority No. 3C									
Identify and acquire land for a business park.	Org 8						CIP		
Priority No. 4A									
Prepare a Downtown Master Plan including a preliminary municipal facility plan and land acquisition strategy, fringe area plan, and urban form study.	PIB, CC						SPS		
Priority No. 4B									
Prepare a historic preservation plan for the historic and garden districts including preservation guidelines and construction standards.	PZ, CC						LDR		
Priority No. 4C									
Study the warrant for designation of Downtown as a registered historic district. As warranted, designate a Downtown Historic District.	Org 7						PPI		
Priority No. 4D									
Create a Business Improvement District (BID) for Downtown improvement projects.	Org 8						PPI		
Priority No. 5									
Prepare a master drainage study and plan.	Org 7						SPS		
Priority No. 6A									
Prepare a traffic engineering and design study for LA 64 to identify Transportation Systems Management (TSM) improvements.	Org 3						SPS		
Priority No. 6B									
Construct TSM improvements along LA 64.	Org 4								
Priority No. 7A									
Commission a corridor design study and plan for gateway treatments and streetscape enhancements along LA 19 South and LA 64 West.	Org 1						SPS		
Priority No. 7B									
Construct gateway and roadway enhancement improvements along LA 19 South.	Org 2						CIP		

Implementation Program									
Action Recommendations	Lead Organization	Priority					Type of Action	Timeline	
		1	2	3	4	5			
Priority No. 8A									
Commission a pedestrian mobility study and plan to prepare a comprehensive network of trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes.	Org 5						SPS		
Priority No. 8B									
Construct the priority pedestrian mobility improvements.	Org 6						CIP		
Priority No. 9									
Commission a mobility study to investigate design options and alternative alignments for a LA 64 bypass.	Org 4						SPS		
Priority No. 11									
Negotiate agreements with BREC and the Zachary Community School District for joint acquisition, development, and maintenance of park spaces.	Org 5						SPS		
Priority No. 12A									
Acquire land for construction of a new community park east of Downtown.	Org 6						CIP		
Priority No. 12B									
Design and construct a community park each of Downtown.	Org 7						CIP		
Priority 13									
Adopt a policy requiring LEED construction of municipal buildings and facilities.	Org 8								

Plan Administration

During the development of the plan, community leaders in government, business, civic groups, and others came together to inform the planning process. These leaders, and new ones to emerge over the horizon of this plan, must maintain their commitment to the ongoing implementation of the plan’s policies – and the periodic updating of the plan to adapt to changing conditions or unforeseen events.

Education and Training

Comprehensive plans are relatively general in nature, but they are still complex policy documents that account for interrelationships among various policy choices. As such, educating decision-makers and administrators about plan implementation is an important first step after plan adoption. As the principal groups that will implement the plan, the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and City department heads should all be “on the same page” with regard to priorities, responsibilities, and interpretations. Consequently, an education initiative should be undertaken immediately after plan adoption, which should include:

- ◆ A discussion of the individual roles and responsibilities of the Council, Commission, Board, or individual staff members.
- ◆ A thorough overview of the entire Comprehensive Plan, with emphasis on the parts of the plan that relate to each individual group.
- ◆ Implementation tasking and priority setting, with allow each group to establish a one-year and three-year implementation agenda.
- ◆ Facilitation of a mock meeting in which the use of the plan and its policies and recommendations is illustrated.
- ◆ A question and answer session.

Role Definition

As the elected officials, the City Council will assume the lead role in implementing this plan. Their chief responsibility is to decide and establish the priorities and timeframes by which each action will be initiated and completed. In conjunction with the Mayor, they must manage the coordination among the various groups responsible for carrying out the plan's recommendations. Lastly, they are also responsible for the funding commitments required, whether it involves capital outlay, budget for expanded services, additional staffing, further studies, or programmatic or procedural changes.

The City Council will take the lead in the following general areas:

- ◆ Act as a "champion" of the plan.
- ◆ Adopt and amend the plan by resolution, after recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- ◆ Adopt new land development regulations to implement the plan.
- ◆ Rezone property proactively.
- ◆ Approve interlocal agreements that implement the plan.
- ◆ Establish the overall action priorities and timeframes by which each action item of the plan will be initiated and completed.
- ◆ Consider and set the funding commitments that will be required.
- ◆ Offer final approval of projects and activities and the associated costs during the budget process, keeping in mind the need for consistency with the plan and its policies.
- ◆ Provide policy direction to the Planning and Zoning Commission and staff.

The Planning and Zoning Commission will take the lead in the following general areas:

- ◆ Host the education initiative described in the Education and Training section above.
- ◆ Periodically obtain public input to keep the plan up to date, using citizen meetings, hearings, surveys, or other methods, to obtain advice on the planning process, plan, and implementation.
- ◆ After holding one or more public hearings to discuss potential recommendations, make recommendations to the City Council with regard to plan updates and plan amendments.

All departments are responsible for administering this plan, specifically as it relates to their function within the organization. Many departments were involved in the plan development process and are, therefore, familiar with its content and outcomes. They must now be enrolled as implementers to ensure their budgets and annual work programs are in line with the plan.

City Staff will take the lead in the following general areas:

- ◆ Manage day to day implementation of the plan.
- ◆ Support and implement capital improvements planning efforts.
- ◆ Manage the development of new land development regulations.
- ◆ Conduct studies and develop additional plans.
- ◆ Review applications for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan when required by the Idaho Statutes or the City's land development regulations.
- ◆ Negotiate the specifics of interlocal agreements.
- ◆ Administer collaborative programs and ensure open channels of communication with implementation partners.

Plan Implementation Board

While the Planning and Zoning Commission will play a critical role in implementing the plan, it cannot expend all of its efforts toward ensuring continued implementation of the plan. As such, a Plan Implementation Board should be appointed by City Council with the purpose of assisting the Planning and Zoning Commission and ensuring that programs and activities are carried out to implement the plan. The Board's role is to refine and prioritize the implementation plan and initiate action over the short term on the basis of annual work programs and five-year projected timeframes.

It is recommended that the Citizens' Delegation continue to function in a new role and serve as the Plan Implementation Board, along with other members of the community (as deemed necessary). The Citizens' Delegation was instrumental in developing the plan and is familiar with its policies and recommended strategies. Having the members of the committee continue in this capacity will bring continuity and consistency to the planning process and will allow for an effective transition into plan implementation.

Responsibilities of the Board would include the following:

1. Refine the strategies outlined in the plan and identify specific actions beyond the information provided in this general plan.
2. Determine methods or programs to be used to implement the proposed actions, specifically identifying which agencies and/or departments will be responsible for their implementation, coordinating with City staff to estimate costs and identify proposed sources of funding, and establishing timeframes in which the recommended actions will be accomplished.
3. Prepare and present to the Planning and Zoning Commission a recommended list of programs and actions to be implemented annually, as well as a prioritized list to be implemented over a five-year period.

Plan Amendment

This plan must remain flexible and allow for adjustment to change over time. Shifts in political, economic, physical, and social conditions and other unforeseen circumstances will influence the priorities of the community. As growth continues, new issues will emerge, while others may no longer be relevant. Some action statements may become less practical, while other plausible solutions will arise. To ensure that it continues to reflect the vision and remains relevant and viable over time, the plan must be revisited on a routine basis, with regular amendments and warranted updates.

Revisions to the plan are two-fold: minor plan amendments should occur bi-annually and more significant updates handled every five years. Minor amendments may include revisions to the land use and growth plan or thoroughfare plan as the development pattern unfolds. Major updates will involve reviewing the base conditions and growth trends; re-evaluating the goals, policies, and recommendations; and formulating new ones in response to changing needs and priorities.

Annual Progress Report

A progress report should be prepared annually by the Planning and Zoning Commission, with the assistance of the Plan Administrator, and presented to the Mayor and City Council. This ensures that the plan is regularly reviewed and modifications are identified for the minor plan amendment process. Ongoing monitoring of plan consistency with the City's ordinances must be an essential part of this effort.

The Annual Progress Report should include:

- ◆ Significant actions and accomplishments during the past year, including the status of implementation for each programmed task.
- ◆ Implementation constraints, including those encountered in administering the plan and its policies.
- ◆ Proposed amendments that have come forward during the course of the year, which may include revisions to the plan maps, or other recommendations, policies, or text changes.
- ◆ Recommendations for needed actions, programs, and procedures to be developed and implemented in the forthcoming year, including a recommendation of projects to be included in the CIP, programs and initiatives to be funded, and priority coordination needs with public and private implementation partners.

Bi-annual Amendment Process

Plan amendments should occur on a bi-annual basis, allowing proposed changes to be considered concurrently so that the cumulative effect may be understood. The proposed amendment must be consistent with the goals and policies set forth in the plan. Careful consideration should also be given to guard against site-specific plan changes that could negatively impact adjacent areas and uses or detract from the overall vision and character of the area. Factors that should be considered include:

- ◆ Consistency with the goals and policies of the plan.
- ◆ Adherence with the future land use, growth, thoroughfare, and parks and trails plans.
- ◆ Compatibility with the surrounding area.
- ◆ Impacts on infrastructure provision.
- ◆ Impact on the ability to provide, fund, and maintain adequate services.
- ◆ Impact on environmentally sensitive and natural areas.
- ◆ Contribution to the vision of the plan and character of the community.

Five-Year Update/Evaluation and Appraisal Report

An evaluation and appraisal report should be prepared every five years. This report should be prepared by the Plan Administrator, with input from various City departments, Planning and Zoning Commission, and other boards and committees. The report involves evaluating the existing plan and assessing how successful it has been in implementing the vision and goals. The purpose is to identify the successes and shortcomings of the plan, look at what has changed, and make recommendations on how the plan should be modified. The report should review baseline conditions and assumptions about trends and growth

indicators, and it should evaluate implementation potential and/or obstacles related to any unmet goals, policies, and recommendations. The result of the evaluation report will be a revised master plan.

More specifically, the report should identify and evaluate the following:

1. Summary of plan amendments and major actions undertaken over the last five years.
2. Major issues in the community and how these issues have changed over time.
3. Changes in the assumptions, trends, and base studies including the following:
 - a. The rate at which growth is occurring relative to the projections put forward in the plan.
 - b. Shifts in demographics and other growth trends.
 - c. The area of urban land that is designated and zoned and its capacity to meet projected demands.
 - d. City-wide attitudes and whether changes necessitate amendments to the vision and goals.
 - e. Other changes in the political, social, economic, or environmental conditions that dictate a need for plan amendment.
4. Ability of the plan to continue to successfully implement the vision.
 - a. Individual statements or sections of the plan must be reviewed and rewritten to ensure that the plan provides sufficient information and direction to achieve the intended outcome.
 - b. Conflicts between goals and policies that have been discovered in the implementation and administration of the plan must be resolved.
 - c. The action agenda should be reviewed and major actions accomplished should be highlighted. Those not accomplished should be re-evaluated to ensure their relevancy and/or to revise them appropriately.
 - d. The timeframes for implementing the individual actions should be re-evaluated. Some actions may emerge as a higher priority given new or changed circumstances, while others may become less important.
 - e. Based upon organizational, programmatic, and procedural factors, as well as the status of previously assigned tasks, the implementation task assignments must be reviewed and altered to ensure timely accomplishment.
 - f. Changes in laws, procedures, and missions may impact the ability to achieve the goals. The plan review must assess these changes and their impacts on the success of implementation, leading to any suggested revisions in strategies or priorities.