

Land Use Planning and Zoning: What's the Difference?



A presentation for Participants of the Lafourche Parish
Coastal Hazards Workshop

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Outline of What We'll Cover

Definitions

Elements and Steps of the Comprehensive Land Use Planning Process

Implementation Strategies for a Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Main Points from Louisiana's Zoning and Planning History

Differences between Planning and Zoning

Importance of Planning

Strategies for discussing Land Use Planning

Three Key Messages

Comprehensive land use planning is a public and democratic process that defines goals and objectives to achieve a community's vision.

**COMMUNITY
VISION**

Land use plans and zoning maps, when consistent with a comprehensive plan, can protect the health, welfare and safety of community residents.

**CITIZENS'
SAFETY**

Now is a great time to engage in comprehensive land use planning to prepare for future storm scenarios, protect public safety and ensure wise investment of public and private dollars.

**IT'S NEVER
TOO LATE!**

Definitions

What is a land use?

A type of activity that occurs on a parcel of land

Natural Areas



Wildlife habitats
Wetlands
Water Supplies
Coastal Regions
Floodplains
Conservation Areas

Working Landscapes



Farms
Forests
Recreation Areas
Mineral Extraction Lands

Built Environments



Residential
Commercial
Industrial
Institutional
Public Space

What is a comprehensive plan?

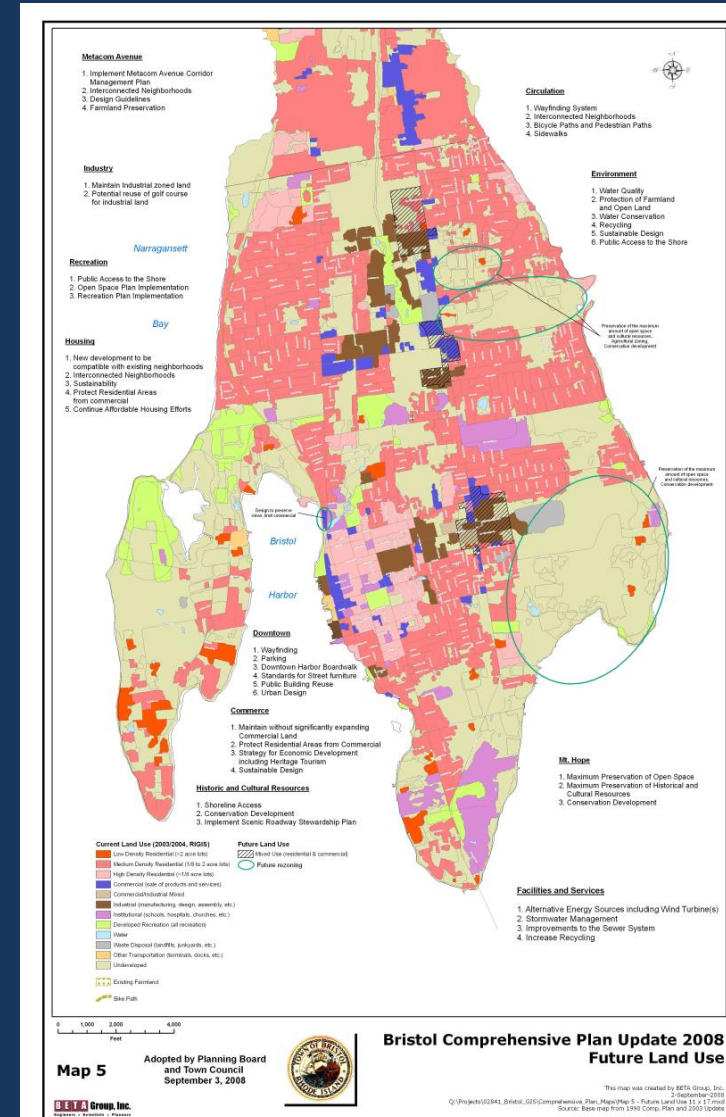
Comprehensive Plan = Land Use Plan = Community Master Plan = General Plan

“Blueprint” for growth and development of a community over a certain time frame (~ 10-20 years)

Describes the current situation and future vision:

- land uses of a jurisdictional or geographical area
- socioeconomic makeup of the population
- estimated future population growth
- vision and goals of what the community wants to be

“The purpose of the local comprehensive plan is to direct the coordinated, efficient and orderly development of the local government and its environs that will, based on analysis of present and future needs, best promote the public health, safety, morals and general welfare.” (APA Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook)



What's in a comprehensive plan?

Elements of a comprehensive plan:

- Statement of overall purpose of the plan and background data about the **community**
- Community vision – **recommendations for future development**, roads, utilities, parks and community facilities
- Local policies, goals, and objectives for **future growth**
- Strategies for farmland, forest, and natural area **preservation**
- Strategies for **job and tax base growth**
- Maps, graphics and text describing **existing and future land uses** as decided by each local community
- An **action plan** (implementation strategy) to guide the community towards making the vision a reality
- Provisions to **monitor progress** of the plan

Physical Landscape

Geology, Topography,
Hydrology, Critical Areas,
Wetlands

Social Elements

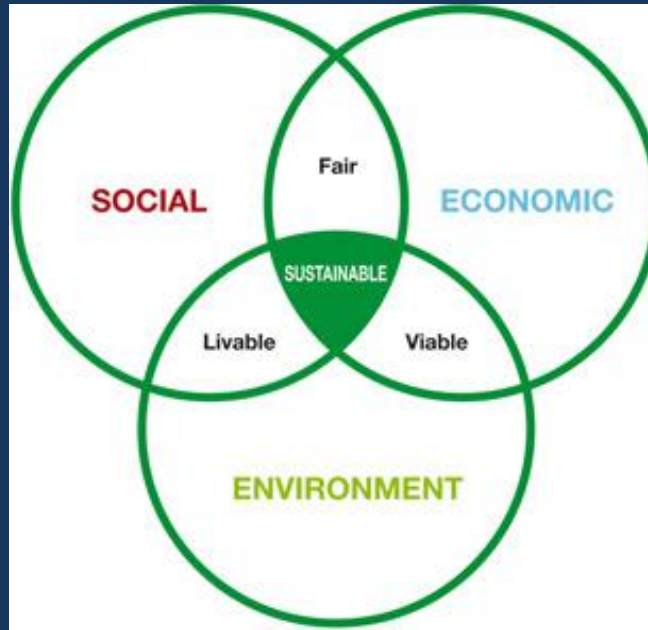
Housing, Demographics,
Recreational Facilities

Economic Systems

Transportation,
Historic/Industrial/Business
Districts, Neighborhoods,
Infrastructure

What is Sustainable Development?

Sustainable development is the process by which humans meet their present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



Sustainability in comprehensive land use planning:

- long-term health of natural environments
- productive working landscapes
- efficient public investments
- durable built environments
- prosperous economies
- equal access to a quality environment

How do we get to a comprehensive land use plan?

Through the land use planning process - an activity that requires the input of community members to:

1. Identify land capabilities and constraints
2. Consider where private and public developments and infrastructure should be located.

The land use planning process:

- Includes a visioning process that helps the community think towards the future
- Creates a framework for decision-making that's in line with the community vision
- Requires commitment and engagement from the local government, local citizens and entities with a vested interest in the community

Terrebonne Parish: Vision 2030

TERREBONNE PARISH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



HOUMA-TERREBONNE
Regional Planning
Commission



VISION 2030

TERREBONNE'S PLAN FOR ITS FUTURE

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VISION 2030: Terrebonne's Plan for Its Future

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Vision 2030
Building Sustainable Communities

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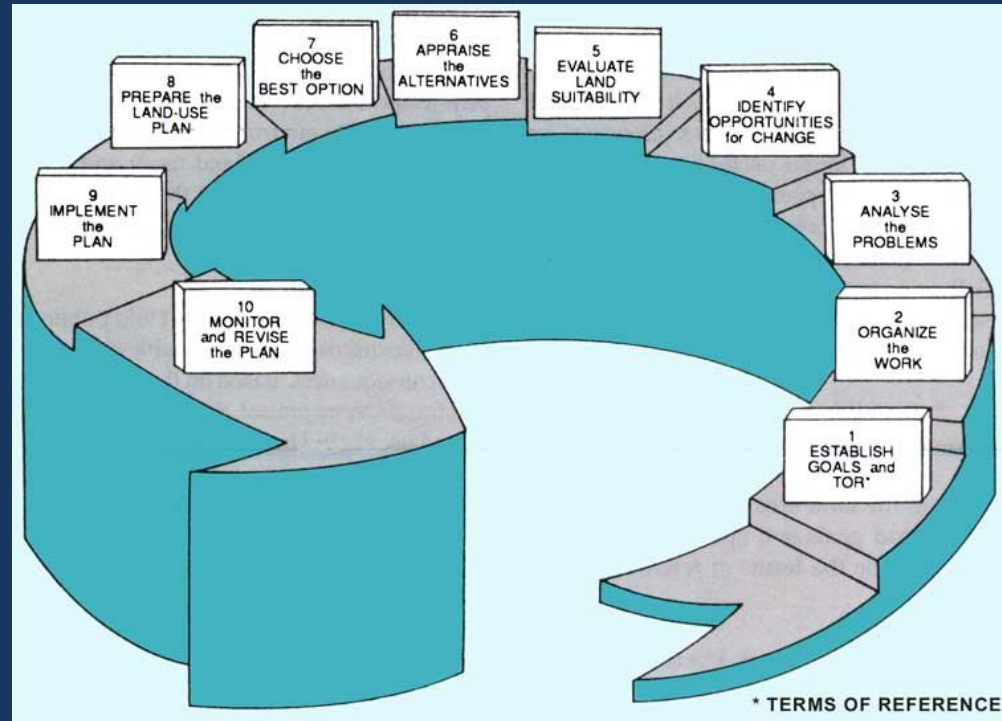
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What are the steps of the comprehensive land use planning process?

1. Decision to plan – willingness to commit time, energy and money
2. Information gathering (planners, stakeholders, citizens, local govt.)
3. Problem identification
4. Analysis of problem
5. Development of goals and objectives
6. Identification of alternative solutions
7. Selection of an action plan
8. Implementation
9. Monitoring and feedback
10. Adjustment of solution



How do we implement a comprehensive land use plan?

Zoning ordinances –meant to separate potentially conflicting land uses and to implement future land use goals

- **Text** describing the rules for each zoning district
- **Map** showing the location and boundaries of zoning districts

Land use zones affect where building activity can occur.

What if we already have zoning but no comprehensive plan?

That puts some restrictions on the land use plan, but it is still worthwhile to have a land use plan to guide future zoning.



Houma Zoning Districts Map

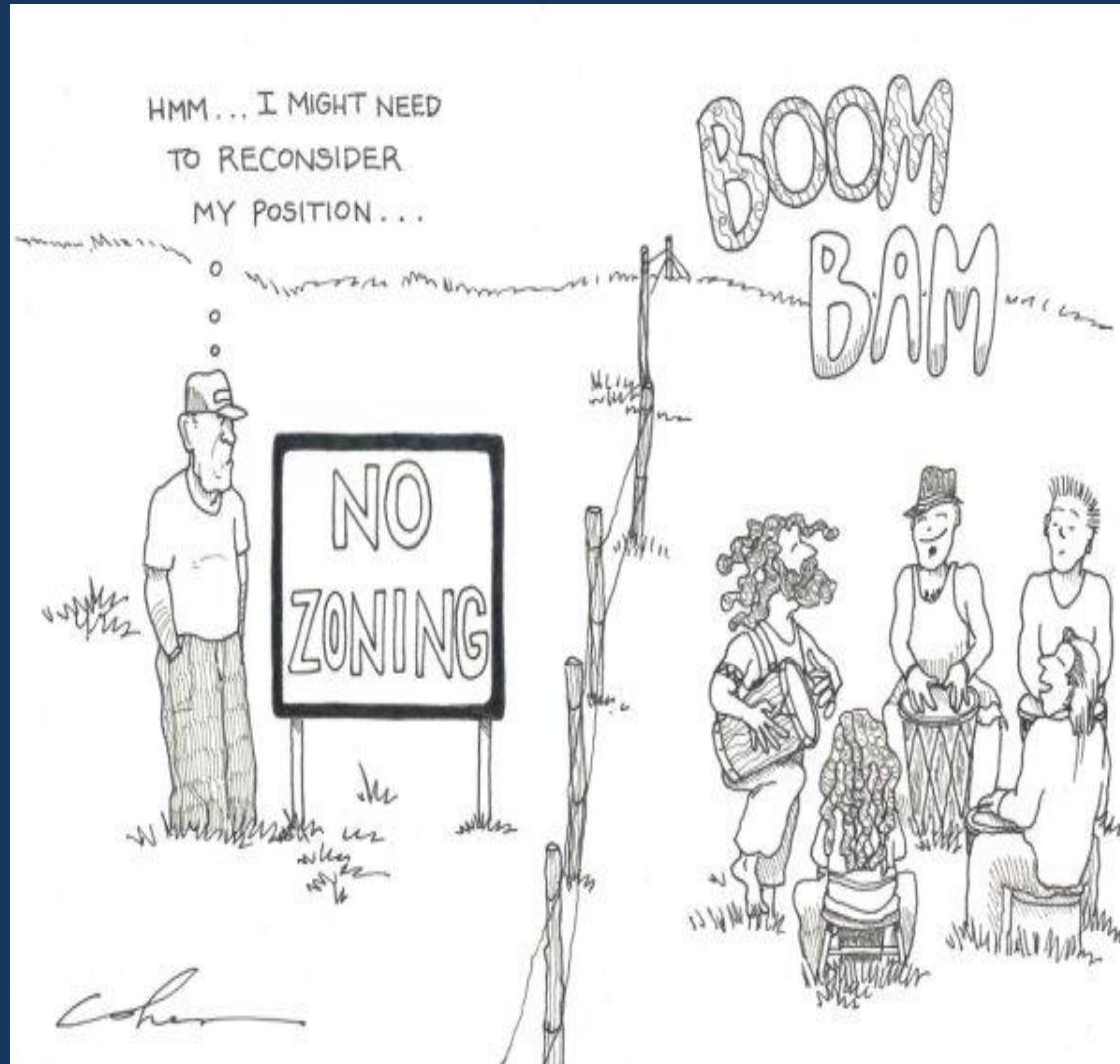
Zoning can be useful!

There should be a clear link between zoning ordinance requirements and the goals of the comprehensive plan.

Zoning is not limited to built development.

Zoning ordinances are not static – they can be amended, modified and appealed by the public.

- Zoning regulations must respond to needs for changes to protect public health and welfare
- An informed public will ensure that zoning remains a public process



How do we implement a comprehensive land use plan?

Subdivision and Land Development Regulations

- To establish rules for proper design and layout of lots, necessary roads, sewage disposal, drinking water supplies, stormwater drainage, retention of open space and vegetation
- Important to consider for new areas slated for development that might be in hazardous areas or subject to changes in flooding and storm surges

Capital Improvements Program

- To anticipate the location and amount of public service needs and to provide adequate services at a reasonable cost
- 5 to 10 years into the future

Development Proposal Review

- To look for consistency with comprehensive land use plan, zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and any other development regulations (i.e., building codes)

If each layer of regulation is consistent with the next, then the community has a better chance of achieving future development goals and objectives.

Generalized Stages in Development and Hazard Mitigation Planning

- 1) Comprehensive, General and Community Plans**
- 2) Local Zoning**
- 3) Subdivision of Land**
- 4) Infrastructure Improvements**
- 5) Lot Purchase**
- 6) Home Construction**
- 7) Hazard Noticed – Remedial Options Evaluated**

Early Planning



Late Planning

Planning and Zoning in Louisiana

Main Points to Louisiana's History

1926 – Louisiana adopts Standard State Zoning Enabling Act (SZEA)

1946 – Louisiana adopts Standard City Planning Enabling Act (CPEA)

Zoning power granted to municipalities before planning power was granted

Zoning and planning power granted to municipalities long before parishes

No requirement for planning prior to zoning or land use regulation

No clear definition of comprehensive plan

Language of the CPEA focuses on urban issues

No provisions for flood protection, hazard mitigation, or environmental preservation

Current Status in Lafourche Parish

Lafourche Parish Planning Council (legislatively authorized in 1981)

Section 19:1 from Lafourche Code of Ordinances

E. Preparation of Administration of Master Development Plan.

The Commission shall prepare a master developmental plan for physical development of and provision of services to the Parish of Lafourche, which plan shall be submitted to the parish governing authority for approval by resolution. The commission may study the availability of land for development, and the demands placed on it by human habitation. **The master developmental plan will provide the basic policy guidelines for the zoning ordinance**, for consideration of major public investments in land development, and for encouraging alternative private land development.

Now is a great time to engage in comprehensive land use planning in Lafourche Parish!

Recap of Differences

Land Use Planning Process

- A public process to gather information on current land use and demographics
- To look at future population trends for growth and identification of potential problems
- To decide on a vision for future development and growth
- To come up with strategies to achieve those goals and objectives

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

- Graphics, images, and text describing the current situation and where the community wants to go
- Suggested elements?

Zoning Ordinance

- Text and maps codifying the land use elements and districts of the master plan
- Legal mechanism

Why is it important to plan?

In any low-lying or coastal area, there is risk of loss.

Changing insurance programs will have financial implications for coastal communities.

Plans can provide full disclosure of hazards associated with environmentally sensitive areas, which could save money in the long run.

Hazard Mitigation and Community Resilience

What if a parish already has zoning ordinances but no comprehensive land use plan?

Through the public process, the local government can always change and amend zoning ordinances.

Strategies for Talking about Land Use Planning

Opportunity for **citizen involvement** in the development of growth goals and objectives

Opportunity to **prepare** for insurance changes

Opportunity for coastal parishes to receive **RESTORE Act funds**

Opportunity for **public input to governmental action** for probable land use regulation



Conclusion

1. Comprehensive land use planning is a public and democratic process that defines goals and objectives to achieve a community's vision.
2. Land use plans and zoning maps, when consistent with a comprehensive plan, can protect the health, welfare and safety of community residents.
3. Now is a great time to engage in comprehensive land use planning to prepare for future storm scenarios, protect public safety and ensure wise investment of public and private dollars.

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