

Chapter 7

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

The year-long process of developing this plan culminates in the identification and prioritization of next steps – how do we turn this 20-year blueprint into a reality? This chapter evaluates the “who,” “what,” “when,” and “how” into near-, mid-, and long-term action agendas.

Implementation is a team effort, requiring the commitment and leadership of elected and appointed officials, staff, residents, business and land owners, and other individual and collective influences that will serve as champions of this plan. This includes close coordination and joint commitment from local, regional, and state partners that significantly impact the future and growth of Breaux Bridge, including:

- Breaux Bridge Chamber of Commerce
- State of Louisiana
- Louisiana Economic Development
- SMILE Community Action Agency
- St. Martin Economic Development Authority
- St. Martin Parish Government
- St. Martin Parish Tourist Commission
- St. Martin Parish School District
- Other organizations, agencies, and groups.

In order to maintain long-term relevance, the Comprehensive Plan is designed as a living document – adaptable to political, social, and economic trends that may alter the priorities and fiscal outlook of the community. This chapter identifies incremental procedures for monitoring and reporting successes achieved, difficulties encountered, new opportunities and challenges that emerge, and any other circumstances that may require an amendment to plan priorities. In taking these steps, the city will continue to offer guidance and direction for the ongoing development, redevelopment, and enhancement of the community over the next 20 years - and beyond.

Action Agenda

Breaux Bridge's community vision, as expressed through this Comprehensive Plan, can be subdivided into a series of action initiatives. Each item encapsulates a number of subtasks, which are to be further defined by the Implementation Task Force referenced on page 7.3.

At the conclusion of the plan development process, members of the City Council were asked to identify and rank near-, mid-, and long-term initiatives that originated from various sections of the plan: Community Character and Land Use; Growth Management, Utilities, and Infrastructure; Housing and Neighborhoods; and Economic Development. The result of this prioritization exercise is documented in **Table 7.1, Action Agenda** (at the end of this chapter). Important elements of this table include:

- **Prioritization** – The action items are categorized as near-term (1 to 2 years), mid-term (3 to 5 years), and long-term (more than five years) initiatives.
- **Action Type** – For the purposes of this plan, there are five general types of plan implementation methods: development regulations and standards; capital improvement programming; special projects, programs, and initiatives; coordination and partnerships; and specific plans and studies (see the inset on the following page for details).
- **Lead Agency** – This section identifies which City department(s) or function(s) would likely lead a task. A variety of local and regional partners would be supporting this effort, with the potential for cost-sharing, technical assistance, direct cooperation (potentially through interlocal agreements), or simply providing input and feedback on a matter in which they have some mutual interest. In particular, whenever potential regulatory actions or new or revised development standards are to be considered, participation of the development community is essential to promote consensus and gain acceptance.
- **Funding Sources** – This final column is reserved for use by City management and department heads to identify potential funding options. An obvious source is through the City's own annual operating budget, as well as multi-year capital budgeting, which is not only for physical construction projects, but also for funding significant studies and plans that are intended to lay the groundwork for phased capital investments and construction over a period of years. An "Other Governments" column is included along with a "Grants" column because grants are often applied for and awarded through a competitive process, but St. Martin Parish or another government agency might choose to commit funds directly to an initiative along with the City. On the other



hand, “Grants” can also come from foundations and other non-government sources. Finally, the “Private/Other” column is meant to underscore the potential for public/private initiatives, as well as corporate outreach and volunteerism, faith-based efforts, and other community and volunteer contributions (e.g., churches, civic and service groups, etc.).

This table should be consulted in conjunction with the City’s annual budget process, during CIP preparation, and in support of departmental work planning. Progress on the near-term items, in particular, should be the focus of the first annual progress report one year after Comprehensive Plan adoption, as described on page 6.6 of this chapter. Then, similar to multi-year capital improvements programming, the entire Action Agenda list in *Table 7.1*—and all other action items dispersed throughout the plan chapters—should be revisited annually to decide if any additional items are ready to move into the next near-term action timeframe.

Plan Administration

During the development of the plan, representatives of government, business, neighborhoods, civic groups, and others came together to inform the planning process. These community 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 to the periodic updating of the plan to adapt to changing conditions or unforeseen events.

Implementation Task Force

Within a month of plan adoption, the City Council should appoint a six- to eight-member Implementation Task Force with the express purpose of initiating and coordinating plan implementation. Members should be represented by the City Council, Planning Commission, Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and business community. A member of City staff will function as the plan administrator, facilitating access to department directors, financial data, and other technical input and guidance.

The group is charged with identifying:

- Specific sub-tasks for each initiative of the Action Agenda, resulting in a two-year (near-term) and five-year (mid-term) priority and implementation agenda;
- Roles and responsibilities to the City Council, Planning Commission, other advisory bodies, and City staff members, including potential community partners; and
- Estimated costs and potential funding sources associated with each action initiative.

The Implementation Task Force should present these findings to City Council within three months of plan adoption, which will help to maintain the



momentum of plan development. City Council and other governing bodies can use the Task Force's report for overall budget and resource decisions, as well as to establish benchmarks for departmental performance.

Education and Training

Due to the broad scope of this plan, an education initiative should be undertaken in conjunction with the findings of the Implementation Task Force to ensure that the decision-makers and implementers have a consistent vision with regard to priorities, responsibilities, and interpretations of the plan. This will include:

- A thorough overview of the entire Comprehensive Plan, with emphasis on the parts of the plan that relate to each individual group.
- A discussion of the individual roles and responsibilities within and outside of City government;
- An in-depth question-and-answer session, with support from planning personnel or the planning consultant, City Attorney, City Engineer, and other key staff.
- Facilitation of a mock meeting in which the use of the plan and its policies and recommendations is illustrated.

Plan Amendment Process

As the community evolves, new issues will emerge while others will no longer be as relevant. The plan must be regularly revisited to confirm that the plan elements are still applicable, and the associated planning themes and action statements are still appropriate. On an annual basis, it is essential that implementation priorities are evaluated to recognize accomplishments; highlight areas where further attention and effort is needed; and determine whether some items have moved up or down on the priority list given changing circumstances and emerging needs.

It should be kept in mind that early implementation of certain items, while perhaps not the uppermost priorities, may be expedited by the availability of related grant opportunities, by a state or federal mandate, or by the eagerness of one or more partners to pursue an initiative with the City. On the other hand, some high-priority items may prove difficult to tackle in the near term due to budget constraints, the lack of an obvious lead entity or individual to carry the initiative forward, or by the community's readiness to take on a potentially controversial new program.



Annual Progress Report

The Planning Commission, with the assistance of staff, should prepare an annual progress report or “report card” for presentation to the Mayor and City Council. This document will ensure the plan is consistently reviewed and that any modifications or clarifications are identified for the minor plan amendment process. Ongoing monitoring of consistency between the plan and the City’s implementing ordinances and regulations should be an essential part of this effort.

The Annual Progress Report should highlight the following items:

- Significant actions and accomplishments during the past year, including the status of implementation for each near-term programmed task in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Obstacles or problems in the implementation of the plan, including those encountered in administering the land use and annexation plans, as well as any other elements of the plan.
- Proposed amendments that have come forward during the course of the year, which may include revisions to the individual plan maps or other recommendations or text changes.
- Recommendations for needed actions, programs, and procedures to be developed and implemented in the coming year, including recommendation of projects to be included in the City’s CIP, other programs/projects to be funded, and priority coordination needs with public and private implementation partners.

City staff should supplement this report with specific performance measures and quantitative indicators that reflect annual progress and change over the last year. Examples might include:

- Acres of new development (plus number of residential units and square footage of commercial and other non-residential space) approved and constructed in conformance with this plan and related City codes.
- Various measures of service capacity (gallons, acre-feet, etc.) added to the City’s major utility systems as indicated in this plan and associated utility master plans—and the millions of dollars allocated to fund the necessary capital projects.
- The estimated dollar value of operating cost savings from reduced energy and water use, heating/cooling, etc., from green building practices and related conservation efforts in new and existing City facilities.
- Acres of parkland and miles of trail developed or improved in accordance with this plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2011).
- Indicators of City efforts to ensure neighborhood integrity as emphasized in this plan (e.g., code enforcement activity, results of neighborhood-

focused policing, number of zone change and/or variance requests denied that were found to be contrary to neighborhood interests, etc.).

- New and expanded businesses and associated tax revenue gains through the economic development initiatives and priorities cited in this plan.
- Indicators of the benefits of redeveloped sites and structures (appraised value, increased property and/or sales tax revenue, new residential units and retail and office spaces in urban mixed-use settings, etc.) as envisioned through this plan.

Annual Amendment Process

Most substantive amendments to the Comprehensive Plan should be considered and acted on annually, allowing for proposed changes to be considered concurrently so that the cumulative effect may be understood (although some interim amendments during the year may be straightforward as the City's Future Land Use and Character Plan is refined in conjunction with specific land development approvals). When considering a plan amendment, the City should ensure the proposed amendment is consistent with the principles and policies set forth in the plan regarding character protection, development compatibility, infrastructure availability, conservation of environmentally sensitive areas, and other community priorities. 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 character of the area. Factors that should be considered in deciding on a proposed plan amendment include:

- Consistency with the principles and policies set forth in this plan.
- Adherence with the **Map 4.5, Future Land Use and Growth Plan**, as illustrated in Chapter 2.
- Compatibility with the surrounding area, including Inglewood and the unincorporated parts of St. Martin Parish.
- Impacts on infrastructure provision including water, wastewater, drainage, and the transportation network.
- Impact on the City's ability to provide, fund, and maintain services.
- Impact on environmentally sensitive and natural areas.
- Whether the proposed amendment contributes to the overall direction and character of the community as captured in the plan (plus ongoing public input).

Five-Year Update – Evaluation and Appraisal Report

Every fifth year, the plan and subsequent amendments warrant a more thorough evaluation and appraisal. The purpose of the Five-Year Update is to identify the successes and shortcomings of the plan, look at what has



changed over the last five years, and make recommendations on how the plan should be modified in light of those changes. Unlike the Annual Progress Report, City Staff should take the lead in preparing this more comprehensive review, gathering input from annual progress reports, various City departments, the Planning Commission, and other boards and commissions. A public review and comment period ensures community participation and input.

This report should review baseline conditions and assumptions about trends and growth indicators evaluated at plan adoption. It should also evaluate implementation potential and/or obstacles related to any unmet action recommendations. The evaluation report and process should result in an amended Comprehensive Plan, including identification of new or revised information that may lead to updated planning themes and/or action recommendations. More specifically, the report should identify and evaluate the following:

- Summary of major actions and interim plan amendments undertaken over the last five years.
- Major issues in the community and how these issues have changed over time.
- Changes in the assumptions, trends and base studies data, including:
 - The rate at which growth and development is occurring relative to the projections put forward in the plan.
 - Shifts in demographics and other growth trends.
- Citywide attitudes and whether apparent shifts, if significant, necessitate amendments to the stated priorities or strategies of the plan.
- Other changes in political, social, economic, technological, or environmental conditions that indicate a need for plan amendments.
- Ability of the plan to continue to support progress toward achieving the community's goals. The following should be evaluated and revised as needed:
 - Individual statements or sections of the plan must be reviewed and rewritten, as necessary, to ensure that the plan provides sufficient information and direction to achieve the intended outcome.
 - Conflicts between policies and recommendations that have been discovered in the implementation and administration of the plan must be addressed and resolved.
 - The Action Agenda must be reviewed and major accomplishments highlighted. Those not completed by the specified timeframe should be re-evaluated to ensure their continued relevance and/or to revise them appropriately.
 - As conditions change, the timeframes for implementing the individual actions of the plan should be re-evaluated where necessary.

Some actions may emerge as a higher priority given new or changed circumstances while others may become less important to achieving the goals and development objectives of the community.

- 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, as needed, to ensure timely accomplishment of the plan's recommended actions.
- Changes in laws, procedures, and missions may impact the ability of the community to achieve its 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.

