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TECHNICAL REVIEW & APPROACHES REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the findings of a technical review of the existing Shreveport and Caddo Parish Zoning and Subdivision Regulations performed by Camiros. The purpose of this review is three-fold: first, the review allows for a more in-depth understanding of the current development regulations; second, it allows for the identification of additional issues not identified during meetings and interviews with staff and stakeholders; and third, it introduces concepts and approaches that set direction for substantive revisions to be included in the new Unified Development Code (UDC).

This document also outlines how the UDC will bring together the City and Parish zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations for those areas under the MPC’s jurisdiction (Planning Area), which are currently separate documents. The creation of this new UDC will result in a single document that sets the regulations for the entire Planning Area.

A good UDC combines rational substantive controls with fair procedures, which, when reasonably applied, assure a pattern of development and redevelopment that protects the existing character of the Planning Area where warranted, and facilitates change where desired. The regulations must be well organized, easy to use, and have standards and procedures that are clear and regulate effectively. It must allow for predictable results and fulfillment of the objectives articulated in the recently adopted Master Plan.

To ensure that the new UDC makes a positive impact on Shreveport-Caddo’s built environment, the following objectives have been established:

▷ Implement the policies of the Planning Area’s Master Plan, Shreveport-Caddo 2030 Master Plan.
▷ Create a UDC that is intuitive and user-friendly, and transparent, predictable, and consistent in application.
▷ Integrate land use and urban design goals into objective design controls that are easy to understand and administer.
▷ Allow the majority of development in the Planning Area to occur by right, and reduce the number of special approvals, nonconformities, and variances.
▷ Create standards that allow investors to respond creatively to market demand while meeting public expectations for future development.
▷ Increase the transparency of development approval through clear processes and approval standards and predictable timeframes.

The objectives outlined above and the issues addressed within this report were identified through discussions with staff and stakeholders, and a review of the regulations against best practices. It provides a broad assessment of current difficulties within the regulations and preliminary approaches to resolving them.
TECHNICAL REVIEW & KEY APPROACHES

This report focuses on regulatory issues and potential revisions identified during the technical review. This is not intended to identify every needed change, as some will be minor changes that clean up the regulations and create a user-friendly document, while others are more detailed revisions that will need to be worked out during the drafting process. This report highlights key issues and revisions that constitute substantive changes to current regulations, and offers conceptual approaches to resolving them. Specific regulations will continue to evolve as the UDC is drafted.

Next Steps...

This report serves as the preliminary drafting direction for Shreveport-Caddo’s new Unified Development Code. The intent is to obtain general consensus on the direction of the proposed revisions. This report is intended to be general in nature, as the details of the specific regulations will be determined in subsequent drafts of the UDC.
ORGANIZATION

The geographic applicability of the UDC should be clearly defined.

The Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) has jurisdiction over a defined Planning Area that is composed of the City of Shreveport and an area of up to five miles outside of the City boundaries in Caddo Parish. It is important to note that the UDC does not control all areas of the Parish found within the five-mile boundary but rather those that have been adopted as part of the MPC’s Planning Area. Therefore, when the UDC speaks to applicability – because this will be one document that covers both the City and Parish – this area of applicability should be clearly explained and defined. A map of the Planning Area can also be included as an appendix to the UDC.

The UDC should follow a logical system of compartmentalization.

The UDC should follow a consistent, structured pattern from beginning to end. A key way to improve the organizational structure of the UDC and, in turn, its ease of use, would be to employ a system of compartmentalization. This is a technique whereby items of information are grouped together by regulatory category and purpose.

Compartmentalization substantially reduces, if not eliminates, the need for a general or supplementary regulations article – the current Article 9 – as the regulations within that section are grouped with similar regulations in their respective articles. Bulk and yard standards would be located within zoning district regulations. A use standards article would contain standards for principal and temporary uses. The sign article would contain all sign regulations, and so forth. This system also avoids lengthy sections, which users can find daunting and frustrating.

The following is a proposed structure for the new UDC that uses this organizational technique:

▷ Article 1. Title, Purpose, & Transition Rules
▷ Article 2. Rules of Measurement & General Definitions
▷ Article 3. Zoning Map & Districts Generally
▷ Article 4. Zoning District Regulations
▷ Article 5. Principal & Temporary Uses
▷ Article 6. Use Standards
▷ Article 7. On-Site Development Standards
▷ Article 8. Off-Street Parking & Loading
▷ Article 9. Signs
▷ Article 10. Landscape & Tree Preservation
▷ Article 11. Stormwater Management
▷ Article 12. Right-of-Way & Access Standards
▷ Article 13. Subdivision Standards
▷ Article 14. UDC Administrators
▷ Article 15. UDC Application Process
▷ Article 16. Zoning Approvals
▷ Article 17. Subdivision Approvals
▷ Article 18. Nonconformities
▷ Article 19. Enforcement
▷ Article 20. Annexation Rules
The UDC would benefit from greater use of illustrations and matrices.
The UDC should illustrate a variety of regulations, which will more effectively communicate information to users. Numerous additional regulations and terms would benefit from graphics including, but not limited to:

▷ Measurement rules, such as building height, yard location, grade, etc.
▷ Design standards
▷ Lot types and dimensions
▷ Parking, sign, and landscape regulations
▷ Accessory structure regulations, such as fences, detached garages, etc.

Graphics are not limited to the examples cited above. Additional regulations, design concepts, and terms will require illustration as they are developed during the drafting process.

The UDC would also benefit from the use of matrices. Matrices can summarize a number of UDC requirements, such as district regulations, permitted encroachments, and parking requirements.

Internal consistency in terminology and “voice” should be maintained.
The integrity of land use regulation hinges on the internal consistency of the various details. Consistent terminology should be used throughout the UDC. As a simple example, early in the revision process the decision should be made whether to use the term setback or yard when referring to the minimum required dimension. In addition, because different authors have written different sections of the existing regulations, it has become an amalgam of different “voices,” which reflects the background of authors - attorneys, planners, board or commission members, engineers, etc. An overall rewrite will eliminate this type of inconsistency.

The UDC should clearly explain the rules of measurement.
The rules of measurement for the various dimensional controls are found throughout the UDC; some live within definitions, others are found within district standards, and yet more are found in the supplementary regulations article. The rules of measurement for building height, yard location, grade, lot width, rules for unique lot configurations, how to measure dimensions on sloped lots, etc. should be brought together in one section so that their application is clear. The majority of these standards would be illustrated to make them understandable to the user.

All terms used in the UDC should be defined.
We recommend that all definitions of general terms be located in a single article (the proposed Article 2) and all use definitions be located within the use article (the proposed Article 4). All existing definitions will be evaluated, updated for clarity, and checked for any internal conflicts. Any undefined terms will be added. This is especially important with a revised use structure, where all uses should be defined.
USES

The modern generic use approach should be used to address allowed uses within the districts.

A complete revision is proposed of how uses are addressed within the zoning districts based upon the concept of “generic uses.” A generic use approach to the listing of uses is established by combining similar specific uses into a broader use category. For example, barber shops, beauty parlors, shoe repair shops, and tailors would be addressed in the use “personal services establishment,” which would then allow similar uses, such as pet grooming establishments, dry cleaners, and nail salons.

Currently, the MPC employs a specific use based approach. This type of approach is disfavored in modern practice because of its required detail and inability to respond to new and emerging uses. Inherent in a specific use based approach is the requirement that every possible use desired must be specifically included in the use list or by virtue of its exclusion it is prohibited. Modern practice has moved toward the generic use approach because of two main benefits. First, it eliminates the need for extensive and detailed lists, and the use sections of the UDC become easier to use. Secondly, the generic use approach provides the Zoning Administrator with greater flexibility to review and permit those uses that are desirable, but not specifically listed, within the broader context of a generic use definition.

With the generic use approach, definitions take on additional importance. First, each use must be defined. These definitions may include examples of that use, and specifically exclude those uses that are not part of the generic use definition. For example, the definition for “retail goods establishment” would specifically state that “adult bookstores” are not considered a “retail goods establishment.” This means that the use of an “adult bookstore” must be separately and specifically allowed within a district in order to locate there; it cannot come under the umbrella of “retail goods establishment.” The second important element of generic use definitions is the rule that any use that is listed and defined separately cannot be considered part of a generic use category. For example, if the UDC specifically defines “drive-through facilities” as a principal use, a “drive-through facility” is prohibited in a district unless it is specifically listed as an allowed use; i.e. it is not automatically allowed as part of a restaurant or bank.

Uses should be tailored specifically to the purpose of the district.

The uses allowed in each district should be evaluated and updated. Uses must correspond to the purpose, form, and function of each district. Certain uses that serve the Planning Area as a whole, such as utilities and above-ground infrastructure, would be allowed in all districts. The revision process will include a full evaluation and resorting of uses allowed in each district.

The current use of a pyramid or cumulative use approach does not allow for such tailoring of uses, as it accumulates uses by district. For example, all uses permitted in the B-1 District are permitted within the B-2 District, with the addition of several new uses listed specifically in the B-2 District. The pyramid approach creates a confusing structure where the user must rely on the listing of uses in other districts in order to determine what is allowed in the district of interest. The elimination of such an approach is recommended.

Certain uses should require use standards to regulate impacts.

Related to the above approach, the UDC should incorporate use standards for certain uses that have additional impacts or are linked to federal or state regulations. Use standards should be based on specific impact mitigation or design concerns. It should be noted that while many special approval uses will have related use standards, others will nonetheless be judged only against the approval standards with no additional standards.

Hours of operation for uses should be refined to relate to the use, rather than the district.

The current regulations take a unique approach to regulating hours of operation within the commercial districts by assigning each district specific hours of operation. In order to modify those hours, approval of a variance is required. This can create issues for new businesses that do not normally operate within these timeframes as well as unique situations such as 24-hour ATMs that require a variance, even if unmanned. We recommend eliminating hours of operation tied to districts.
Hours of operation for uses can be controlled in a number of ways that are more tailored to the nature of the
use. The following techniques are the most common used to control hours of operation; it is likely that all three
would be used in combination to be most effective.

I. Hours of operation can be tied to required licenses or permits, which are typically outside the purview of
the UDC, such as liquor licenses or business licenses.

II. Where a use requires special approval, hours of operation can be made a condition of approval, which
allows for a more tailored approach that balances the needs of the business with mitigating impacts on the
neighboring area.

III. For certain uses with significant impacts and/or concerns, hours of operation could be built into the UDC
as part of the use standards for that particular use, which would be found in the proposed Article 5 (Use
Standards). The hours of operation standard for a particular use can be further refined by district. For
example, if the UDC would like to control the hours of operation for “Use X” by district, the use standard
for “Use X” in the proposed Article 5 would read: “The permitted hours of operation for Use X are 7:00 AM
until 10:00 PM, with the following exceptions: in the B-2 District, the permitted hours of operation for Use X
are 7:00 AM until 12:00 AM Midnight.”

**Certain use categories should be re-evaluated and refined, and new uses added to the use permissions.**

In addition, a number of existing uses should be re-evaluated and some new uses should be required to be
added to the UDC. These include:

- **Alcohol-Related Uses**

  One of the key use issues is how to address alcohol-related uses. These include alcoholic beverage
  outlets (ABO) such as liquor stores, as well as restaurants that serve alcohol and bars. Part of the issue
  is that current use categories and definitions conflict with Chapter 10 (Alcoholic Beverages) of the
  Code of Ordinances. Aligning these definitions would go a long way toward improving understanding,
  and making enforcement easier.

  **Retail Sale of Alcoholic Beverages.** The retail sale of alcoholic beverages should be distinguished
  as its own principal use, which would allow general retail sales to be treated more permissively and
  alcohol sales more restrictively as a use requiring special approval. Liquor stores can be contentious
  in certain areas so this distinction allows the governing bodies better control over where alcohol sales
  may locate. For example, allowing all retail to sell alcohol by zoning may force some establishments
  that do not sell alcohol into a special approval process, causing surrounding neighborhoods to worry
  about alcohol sales, even if alcohol sales are not actually included. Distinguishing alcohol sales as its
  own principal use could avoid this type of situation. Any zoning regulation on alcohol sales must be
  coordinated with the Planning Area’s required licenses and a cross-reference to Chapter 10 (Alcoholic
  Beverages) of the Code of Ordinances should be included in the use standards.

  **Restaurants and Bars.** Restaurants and bars should also be clearly and separately defined in the UDC.
  The UDC should reflect the definition for restaurant, bar, and dual service restaurant/bar. Feedback
  from stakeholders indicates that the current “60% food receipts to 40% alcohol receipts” distinction
  for restaurants is working and the yearly permit reviews provide a sufficient means of enforcement
  and definition. Like retail sales of alcohol, a cross-reference to Chapter 10 (Alcoholic Beverages) of the
  Code of Ordinances should be included in the use standards.

  **Overlay Districts.** In addition, alcohol uses are also controlled through overlay districts. In some cases,
  as alcohol uses are re-evaluated and the districts restructured, the need for overlay district controls
  on alcohol may be eliminated. An example of this in the zoning ordinances is the SPI-2 Industrial Park
  Overlay District in both the City and Parish that restricts alcohol, which could be integrated into a base
district. Additional alcohol-related overlays are found within Chapter 10; where those are still needed,
they should be moved to the UDC.
Multi-Purpose Center

A current use that has proved problematic recently is that of a multi-purpose center. One of the main problems is that a “multi-purpose center” is an undefined use. These centers are used for temporary events, such as dances and live entertainment, and often cause problems because the ordinances do not regulate them. Part of this would be addressed under a new approach to regulating live entertainment uses (described below). The other part of this approach is to define and allow for legitimate venues that are rented out for special occasions. The use of “reception hall” could be added to the UDC and defined as an establishment that is reserved by groups in advance for banquets or meetings where food and beverages may be served as well as live entertainment for guests. In addition, a reception hall is not open to the general public and no admission may be charged or tickets offered in advance. The reception hall use will be defined as distinctly different from the operation and function of the City’s recreation/community centers, which will also be defined in the UDC.

Live Entertainment

Live entertainment should be specifically regulated in its various iterations. By refining the different types of live entertainment, issues such as the illegal conversion of restaurants into nightclubs can be more easily enforced. Live entertainment should be distinguished as either the primary use of a site, such as a live performance venue or nightclub, or as a secondary use of a site, such as a performance space connected to a bar or restaurant.

One approach is to look at live entertainment as three distinct categories. The following definitions describe how live entertainment can be regulated. By making such distinctions, where certain types of live entertainment can be allowed can also be more specific.

1. **Live Performance Venue.** A facility for the presentation of live entertainment, including musical acts and DJs, theatrical plays, stand-up comedy, and similar performances. Performances are scheduled in advance and tickets are required for admission and must be available for purchase in advance, though tickets may be purchased at the venue’s box office on the day of the performance. A live performance venue is only open to the public when a live performance is scheduled. A live performance venue may include classroom space utilized during hours it is not open to the public for a performance. A live performance venue may include concession stands, including sale of alcohol, but only when it is open to the public for a performance.

2. **Nightclub.** An establishment that provides entertainment of a participatory nature by providing a place for dancing through pre-recorded music or DJs, designed with an area designated as a dance floor, including any stage area; however portions of the floor area may be set up for alcohol service, including a bar counter, with or without stools, and other seating areas. A nightclub is only open to the public when it is providing such entertainment and admission (cover charge) is generally charged for admittance.

3. **Live Entertainment – Secondary Use.** A live performance, performed live by one or more persons including, but not limited to, musical acts and DJs, theatrical plays, performance art, stand-up comedy, and magic, included as part of the operation of a bar, restaurant, amusement facility, or similar use. This would also include live performances of a participatory nature, such as dancing; i.e., where a restaurant converts to a nightclub in the nighttime hours. As a secondary use, the other principal use operating on the site must be open to public during hours when no performance is scheduled. Live entertainment - secondary use must be approved separately as a principal use. Live entertainment - secondary use does not include: 1) periodic entertainment

The online version of the Caddo Parish Ordinance also has the L Liquor District; this district has since been repealed and the online version of the ordinance requires an update.
at educational facilities or places of worship, performances at cultural facilities, performances at reception facilities, performances at weddings, and similar events; or 2) incidental entertainment, which is defined as background music provided at a bar or restaurant where no cover is charged.

▷ Corner Stores

The UDC should accommodate historic neighborhood commercial uses by creating a special use for neighborhood commercial establishments. The Planning Area has a number of residential neighborhoods that traditionally developed with limited commercial services integrated into residential areas, typically called “corner stores.” Although these structures are part of the residential fabric, pursuant to the current regulations, most are considered nonconforming, disallowing property owners to reopen previously closed corner stores or requiring a series of special approvals. In order to allow them to continue, the UDC can incorporate a use of “established neighborhood commercial” that would be allowed within certain districts. A series of design standards and impact controls would be included as required standards, as well as a tailored list of allowable uses within the established neighborhood commercial use category to prohibit more intensive commercial uses or problematic uses, such as the retail sales of alcoholic beverages.

▷ Mobile Homes

The current mobile home definition specifically includes modular homes as a type of mobile home. This is inaccurate as modular is a type of construction and the resulting structure is required to meet all building codes. Once installed on the site, a modular home is typically indistinguishable from other residences. The same applies to the categorization of “factory built housing” as a mobile home; these are also a type of residential dwelling construction. A mobile home - also called a manufactured home - should refer specifically to those units that initially have trailers installed as a part of the structure, whether or not that is maintained after installed on a site, and are required to meet HUD Codes, rather than local building codes. By clarifying the definition, we can better regulate mobile home development. This includes refinement of the dimensional and design standards current for the current R-MHS (mobile home subdivisions) and R-MHP (mobile home parks) Districts to ensure safe and well-designed parks and subdivisions. The UDC should also clarify that if a property owner wanted to install a mobile home within a single-family zoning district, which is not within the R-MHS District, that it is required to be a permanent installation. This requires complete removal of axles and towing equipment, and a permanent foundation like other residential structures, as well as any other applicable building code regulations.

▷ Group Homes

One of the concerns we heard from stakeholders was the clustering of group homes within certain neighborhoods. It is important to remember that these facilities do need to be treated similarly – in terms of permitted locations - to residential dwellings. Louisiana statute requires group homes to be allowed by-right in all zoning districts that allow multi-family dwellings: “In order to achieve uniform statewide implementation of the policies of this Title and of those of the mental retardation law and of the mental health law, it is necessary to establish the statewide policy that community homes are

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2From Wikipedia:

“Modular buildings and modular homes are sectional prefabricated buildings, or houses, that consist of multiple sections called modules. “Modular” is a method of construction (v. “stick-built” and other methods such as off-site construction. The modules are six sided boxes constructed in a remote facility, then delivered to their intended site of use. Using a crane, the modules are set onto the building’s foundation and joined together to make a single building. The modules can be placed side-by-side, end-to-end, or stacked, allowing a wide variety of configurations and styles in the building layout.

Modular buildings, also called prefabricated buildings, differ from mobile homes, which are also called manufactured homes, in two ways. First, modular homes do not have axles or a frame, meaning that they are typically transported to their site by means of flat-bed trucks. Secondly, modular buildings must conform to all local building codes for their proposed use, while mobile homes, made in the United States, are required to conform to federal codes governed by HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development). There are some residential modular buildings that are built on a steel frame (referred to as on-frame modular) that do meet local building codes and are considered modular homes, rather than mobile homes.”
permitted by right in all residential districts zoned for multiple-family dwellings.” (Since the time the statute was put in effect, federal protections have expanded the definition of disabled to include those recovering from drug and/or alcohol addiction.) However, statutes do allow for spacing – “In no case shall a community home be placed within a one thousand foot radius of another community home.” We can incorporate such spacing standards for group homes to prevent further clustering of such uses; however, allowances should be included for existing group homes that do not meet this spacing requirement to continue without nonconforming status.

Permissions for single-family residential dwelling conversions into multi-unit dwellings should be considered.

An issue that is of some concern is the conversion of older large single-family dwellings, such as the mansions on Fairfield, into multi-unit residences. There are pros and cons to allowing for this. The benefit is that it allows for owners of large homes to continue to maintain the structure because of additional income and encourages the preservation of these buildings.

However, conversions do increase the density of neighborhoods initially designed as single-family. One approach is to create standards that allow for conversion in specific instances. First, it would need to be determined in which zoning districts this should be allowed. Then standards would be set based on structure gross floor area, lot size, and unit size to determine when this could happen, as well as ensuring the proper amount of parking is provided. The intent is to limit this to only larger structures with very specific standards for conversions.

Consider allowing accessory dwelling units in residential zoning districts.

The current ordinances do not address accessory dwelling units (ADUs), a housing option that can be used to create housing density while respecting the scale of single-family neighborhoods and provide an option for owners of larger properties to supplement their income for maintenance of the home. ADUs, also known as “granny flats” or “mother-in-law apartments,” create density to help support commercial and transit uses, and often serve to house multiple generations of the same family, potentially improving the health of the elderly as well as the maintenance of existing housing stock.

The Planning Area could allow ADUs in single-family residential districts provided that they meet delineated use standards that help manage the impact of ADUs on neighboring properties. These standards could include requiring one of the dwelling units to be occupied by the property owner, limiting ADUs to one per lot, requiring a minimum lot size to establish an ADU, defining a maximum ADU square footage, indicating permitted locations on the lot (whether the ADU may be within an accessory structure and/or part of the principal structure), setting design requirements, and requiring a certain amount of parking. Further, if desired, the UDC could regulate whether ADUs are required to rent only to family members of the owner of the principal dwelling, or if they would be allowed to rent the accessory unit to the public at large.

Non-residential adaptive reuse permissions should be included to preserve significant structures in the Planning Area.

These provisions would be focused on the adaptive reuse of existing non-residential buildings, such as schools, churches, and cultural facilities, in residential districts. The conversion of these structures into compatible uses, such as multi-family dwellings or office uses, should be considered. Standards can be integrated into the districts that specifically deal with the impacts felt from higher intensity uses locating in low intensity neighborhoods. The intent is to encourage the retention and renovation of sound existing structures, ensure that any uses that located within them remain compatible with adjacent residential, and require the area to maintain its character.

A wide range of temporary uses should be addressed in the UDC.

The current UDC addresses few temporary uses, typically regulated as a general temporary use within the district use permission. A more thorough approach would be beneficial. Temporary uses are a key avenue to entrepreneurship, allowing new business owners to start “small” – through temporary uses like food trucks or pop-up retail spaces. It also fosters a creative environment allowing artists to sell and display their wares.
In addition, some are just practical uses common to a community, such as garage sales, storage pods, and construction related uses. A comprehensive set of temporary uses should be included in the UDC with controls on their function – identifying in which districts they are allowed, timeframes, siting, and operational plans. The following temporary uses should be included:

▷ Temporary outdoor entertainment events
▷ Temporary retail sales events
▷ Temporary holiday events (haunted houses, Christmas tree sales, etc.),
▷ Garage/yard sales
▷ Farmer’s markets
▷ Farmstands
▷ Mobile food trucks and trailers
▷ Temporary emergency shelters/temporary housing
▷ Construction-related temporary uses (dumpsters, on-site construction offices)
▷ Real estate model units
▷ Temporary storage pods
▷ Temporary classrooms

In addition, a temporary use permit should also be created so that uses can be better regulated for impacts and to ensure that a temporary use is not functioning, in fact, as a permanent use. This would also allow for easier enforcement. For example, temporary outdoor entertainment events often occur and are currently unregulated. These temporary events bring impacts such as traffic, noise, and security issues. With a temporary use permit, mitigation measures can be required as part of the permit approval and could control the duration of the event and enforce violations more effectively and efficiently as the permit would lay out the clear rules for how the event must be conducted. In addition, temporary uses on public property are currently reviewed by the Event Task Force; where appropriate, the task force may be integrated into the review and approval process for certain temporary uses on private property.

The elimination of the Extended Use Overlay District should be considered.

As stated earlier, the uses allowed in each district will be evaluated and tailored to the purpose, form, and function of each district. In addition, new uses to address persistent issues such as corner stores and adaptive reuse will also be added to the UDC. If the use permissions within the districts better relate to the district, both existing and any potential new districts, the Extended Use Overlay District may no longer be needed.

This would help further the goals of consistency and predictability of the application of the UDC. The Extended Use Overlay District (E Overlay District) creates a number of difficulties toward this goal. The use of this type of overlay district essentially creates a loophole in that any use can be allowed anywhere, which contradicts the often held and correct assumption that a property owner should expect only those uses allowed in the district would locate within his/her neighborhood. However, the Extended Use Overlay District circumvents this and allows any use to locate anywhere if the district is mapped. It also creates issues for mapping as the E Overlay District is mapped over a significant number of single parcels to allow one use. This veers dangerously close to spot zoning.

With the elimination of the E Overlay District and with a revised use and district structure in place, in many cases, the need for the E Overlay District may be eliminated. In those cases where it remains and allows a use prohibited within the district, the use should be deemed nonconforming and allowed to continue until it is discontinued for a certain period of time. If desired, special permissions for the nonconforming uses created by the elimination of the district can be included to allow for more flexibility in timeframes for discontinuance and expansion of the use, acknowledging their previous status as an E Overlay District use.
ZONING DISTRICTS

New districts may be needed to address development differences between the City and the Parish.

As two separate ordinances, Shreveport and the areas of Caddo Parish within the Planning Area maintain similar sets of districts, with the following exception of the B-4 District and the SPI-1, SPI-3, and SPI-4 Overlay Districts that are only in the City. These sets of districts will need to be merged in the UDC. With analysis of the zoning map, development patterns, and application of the district dimension and use regulations, it is likely that additional districts may be needed to address specific areas of the City and specific areas of the Parish. This would also allow for a more refined use mix within these parts of the Planning Area reducing the reliance on overlays.

Dimensional regulations will be reviewed and revised as appropriate, in particular for the districts.

Throughout the drafting process, we will review the dimensional regulations for all districts, including lot size, yards, and lot coverage, and compare them to existing conditions and redevelopment objectives. If needed, we will recommend adjustment of these controls to continue development consistent with existing character. For instance, currently all residential districts but the R-1H District contain a required front yard of 30 feet - a more suburban setback standard. In analyzing existing development patterns, there are a number of areas where a 30 foot front yard requirement may potentially be prohibiting the creation of a “walkable, urban neighborhood feel.” Dimensional regulations must be re-evaluated across all districts to ensure that the suburban/urban distinction in district structure is creating a suburban/urban distinction on the ground.

In addition, with refined district standards, the need for current supplementary standards in Article 9 can be eliminated, such as the excess height requirement that allows all structures, except those in B-4 District, to increase their height over the district maximum.

Design standards can be added to appropriate districts to ensure the quality of new development.

In order to ensure quality new development, certain districts and uses should incorporate basic design standards. The key to successful design standards is to accurately convey the aesthetic desires of the community, protect key physical resources from inappropriate alterations, and maintain the flexibility needed to solve difficult design issues and allow innovative new development. Good design standards result in infill development that maintains existing character where desired and implements desired redevelopment patterns established by land use policies. We recommend that at a minimum the following uses and districts incorporate design standards:

▷ Multi-family and townhouse developments
▷ Commercial development, including mixed-use developments
▷ Office/Research and Development campus design standards
▷ Riverfront and lakefront development

EXAMPLE IMAGE
The intent is not to control the architecture of new development but rather to address basic building design: façade articulation, fenestration, public entrance design, prohibited building materials, and similar. Standards should be written so that they are more objective in nature than subjective, for easy review and administration.

This could be accomplished in part or in whole – depending on the purpose of the district – through form-based coding techniques. Form-based coding controls speak to urban form, including the relationship of buildings to each other, to streets and to open spaces. This approach to zoning could just as easily be called “place-making” because it allows for shaping of building and development to achieve community character objectives. It is an important tool to implement design and development policy. It can provide a design framework within which development can be coordinated to create a physical and visual environment that meets local quality-of-life goals. Form-based controls can add performance requirements that establish or maintain a community’s image and set a clear design policy, reflecting the vernacular architecture and desired streetscape, and establishing the overall physical character of the area.

A form-based code focuses on building the compatible components of a district, rather than focusing primarily on rules for the compatible development of individual lots. Thus, form-based codes stress a more comprehensive physical compatibility that includes both adjacent buildings and the public realm. Form-based codes, being concerned about the visual and physical contextual relationship between properties and the public realm, demonstrate how these standards should be applied based on the site configuration and the general building form. This will also lead to a more predictable development environment, as all the requirements are clearly described within the code and so long as compliance is achieved, special reviews and approvals are no longer necessary.

In order to be specific and clear about how the standards should be applied on individual sites as well as in contextual relationships, form-based codes moved from the typical legalistic and written form of coding to a very graphic format. This emphasis on graphical depiction has engendered a new format for code development that tries to present as much of the regulatory requirements in drawings and tables rather than text.

The existing residential districts generally work well, but a number of areas have been identified where refinement of dimensional standards, consolidation of similar districts, and the creation of new districts could improve their application.

Currently, residential districts across both the City of Shreveport and Caddo Parish appear to generally reflect on-the-ground development patterns. An initial analysis indicates high levels of conformity based on lot area requirements across residential districts. The only indication of a substantial amount of nonconformity that has been identified is in the R-A District in the City of Shreveport, where just under 50% of parcels are conforming based upon lot area standards. This appears, however, to be caused by new annexation or subdivision that has yet to be appropriately rezoned. Similarly, required yards generally work well throughout the residential districts, though our sample analysis has indicated there are some select instances of nonconformity to current required yards, suggesting that fine-tuning may be necessary in some of the districts.

> Though they are currently in two separate ordinances, Shreveport and Caddo Parish maintain regulations for the same set of residential districts. Though the districts are the same in name across the City and Parish, there are a number of differences in their application that must be reconciled in the UDC. Required rear yards are a good example of this type of difference. The City requires 15 feet, whereas the Parish requires a minimum rear yard of 25 feet. A proportional yard based on lot depth could unify the district standards while achieving the desired result in both development contexts, allowing the development pattern desired to continue. A rear yard standard of a minimum of 20% of lot depth is typical, and would accommodate every lot in the sample of the R-1D District analyzed, for
instance. In this sample, the median rear yard was approximately 44% of lot depth, and the smallest rear yard was approximately 20% of lot depth (lots sampled from both the City and the Parish). Further testing would be conducted to confirm any potential standard during drafting.

▷ The creation of an R-E Residential Estate District should be considered to accommodate large rural residential parcels in the City and Parish. This type of residential development is currently accommodated through a provision in the Caddo Parish R-A District, which allows for development on parcels of 25,000 square feet (outside of the Cross Lake Watershed). This is a major difference between the R-A District in the Parish and the R-A District in the City, which requires a minimum lot area of one acre for a single-family dwelling. It is recommended that the UDC focus the R-A District on larger development parcels, unifying the lot area standard of one acre across the City and the Parish. A new R-E District could replace the current R-1A District, which allows for large parcel residential development, but is very narrowly mapped (less than 2% of parcels in the Parish and zero parcels in the City) and contains nearly identical standards to the existing R-A District in Caddo Parish.

▷ Where districts are not strongly differentiated from one another, they should be considered for consolidation. The R-1 (TH) and R-2 (TH) Districts, for example, contain relatively minor differences in terms of dimensional requirements, and appear to generate a very similar development pattern on-the-ground. It is recommended that these districts be combined under the slightly denser standards of the R-2 (TH) District, with the incorporation of siting and design standards to address potential compatibility issues with surrounding development.

▷ The R-1C and R-1D Districts should also be considered for consolidation into one district. Currently, the R-1C District requires a minimum lot area of 9,000 square feet, while the R-1D District requires a minimum lot area of 7,200 square feet. Looking at our sample of these two districts, however, reveals a median lot area of 10,233 square feet for the R-1C and 10,308 square feet for the R-1D. Our analysis also reveals close similarities in terms of median lot width and depth, as well as front, rear and side yards.

▷ Currently, the multi-family districts (R-2 and R-3 Districts) may not be working to create significant residential density where desired in the City and the Parish. One option is to eliminate multi-family from the current R-2 District, focusing the R-2 on single-family, townhouse, and two-family dwellings; these appear to be the predominant dwelling types currently found in the R-2 District. This should be complemented by revising the standards in the R-3 District to allow for the creation of a more urban/denser residential environment where appropriate.

▷ The R-4 District for high-rise multi-family development should also be evaluated, particularly in regard to the zoning map. Currently, there are two areas of R-4 District in the City that are developed and only one contains a multi-story structure. The Parish contains a small number of individual and grouped parcels zoned R-4, though there is no clear direction that can be understood from how the district is currently applied. We recommend re-evaluating the R-4 District as currently mapped, and considering mapping the district more aggressively to create residential density in key areas.

The commercial districts should reflect the form and function of commercial areas.

The distinction between the commercial districts needs to be further refined to meet specific development objectives. The commercial districts could be restructured to directly regulate development intensity, use mix, and/or functionality related to whether the commercial district serves the community or the larger region. The standards should also recognize that the physical character of a site varies from smaller lots on corridors occupied by small-scale commercial uses to larger sites for regional retail development – for example, portions of Youree Drive located closer to the City center are very different from those located at Youree Drive and 70th Street. The physical attributes of these areas make their regulatory needs different.

There are also numerous overlay districts, which create an additional layer of regulation that users may not be aware of and make the Ordinance difficult to understand. These overlay districts seem to have been created to address specific issues, including commercial development along select corridors and the interstate. While the
intent of these overlays are important, the myriad of regulations that apply to a lot creates an Ordinance that is difficult to use and interpret. While overlay districts are useful, their application should be limited so that they specifically address certain issues that are unique to certain areas. In order to make the Ordinance user-friendly, certain overlay districts (the SPI-3 and SPI-4) should be consolidated into the base districts or even made into base districts themselves.

**The downtown district should be refined to reflect the different characters within its boundaries.**

The downtown is currently covered by one district – the B-4 District – but is really a series of character areas. The recommendation is to establish multiple downtown subdistricts that relate to the function, scale, and use of different downtown areas. The subdistrict structure is able to respond to the different character elements of downtown. While each subdistrict has a particular emphasis in terms of regulating height, density, and use, all subdistricts would be linked by elements of mixed-use and street level pedestrian character. Revisions to the downtown district would be guided by the following objectives:

▷ Preserve and enhance downtown office market
▷ Increase retail space downtown
▷ Encourage mixed-use where appropriate
▷ Create active street frontage
▷ Update parking ratios, including parking alternatives or flexibilities
▷ Preserve historic structures
▷ Create an active pedestrian environment
▷ Improve downtown sign controls

A key issue will be to link the casino areas to downtown, as difficult as casinos are not eager to encourage their patrons to leave. A subdistrict that provides services ancillary to gaming, such as entertainment or retail, should be investigated. Such a subdistrict should facilitate assembly and development of large sites that might accommodate integrated development and mixed-uses.

In order to establish the subdistrict structure as well as the appropriate regulations for each, the following are the areas of analysis:

▷ **Boundaries:** The current boundaries of the B-4 District do not match the “real” boundaries of what is considered the downtown. Therefore, the B-4 District overall should be adjusted. Following this, the subdistrict areas will be delineated within that B-4 District boundary.

▷ **Use:** Different areas within the downtown may require different use permissions.

▷ **Dimensional Standards:** For the downtown, proper controls on density and height are essential

▷ **Design:** As described in the commercial district, the UDC will integrate design standards. For the downtown, key design elements would include controls such as the establishment of build-to lines to maintain streetwall continuity, regulations on ground floor transparency, requirements for ground floor uses, plaza and open space design, and identification of character streets.

▷ **Parking:** How parking will be handled in the downtown is an essential issue. One of the key elements of the strategy to creating a vibrant downtown is to limit surface parking lots as they create “dead space.” Further construction of large parking structures or vast parking lots should be discouraged unless substantially fronted by active ground floor uses.
Neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown and in other select locations within the Planning Area have suffered from a lack of reinvestment, creating large areas of vacant or underdeveloped land within the central core. Development of these areas over time is critical to reduce the potential “hole in the donut” scenario and reduce urban sprawl. Inducement of new development focused on the inner core is vastly more cost efficient because of the availability of underutilized sunk investment, and the ability to preserve the existing development pattern rather than further the development of far flung, disparate parts.

A key challenge is to stimulate reinvestment and redevelopment in the core of the Planning Area to help initiate redevelopment within areas that have seen substantial clearance and abandonment. As indicated in the Master Plan the fiscal and social heath of the Planning Area will continue to be challenged until investment patterns are altered to stop outward sprawl and encourage more compact growth. While zoning alone cannot achieve this, it can help when aligned with techniques to assemble land for reinvestment and allocate funds for infrastructure improvement. If undertaken with an eye to certain markets it can help to stimulate and redirect new development that is currently occurring within the fringes of the Planning Area towards the core.

One approach is to couple zoning with establishment of an underutilized land holding facility such as a land bank. The land bank could provide a place where land owned by the public sector, non-profits, and elements of the private sector in search of redevelopment could be held and used for development under certain conditions that meet the goals of the community. Zoning and the land bank could also be tied to a financing mechanism, such as a tax increment financing (TIF) district, special service area (SSA), or other tool which could provide funds targeted to infrastructure and community facility investments needed to provide the necessary public context to support redevelopment.

These three elements – control of land, regulation of land use and development, and the ability to build supporting infrastructure are the key elements of any redevelopment action. This combination is needed whether tied to specific public-private partnership activities or merely establishing the context for an individual private initiative.

One approach to utilizing these tools to facilitate new development might be as follows:

1. New development and investment in the core for areas of a minimum size - for example, one block - might be initiated by the City or a private party who has a substantial ownership interest in the land (e.g. perhaps as small as owning 60% of the parcels or the land area)

2. Upon application, the MPC prepares a subarea plan for the area to address:
   - Land use pattern
   - Street and block configuration
   - Guidelines for site development
   - Development character in terms of building type and design attributes

3. The subarea plan is then adopted as a Master Plan amendment, subject to approval by the majority of landowners in the subarea.

4. A TIF, SSA, or other development financing district is put in place to cover the area and provide resources for infrastructure improvement.

5. If land is privately owned, development could then proceed. If all or portions of the land are in the land bank, those sites can be provided to a developer upon establishment of an agreement as to the use of the sites, timing of development, and/or appropriate agreements regarding housing affordability.
Key natural resources should be protected, which may warrant the creation of certain open space and overlay districts.

The Planning Area has a significant amount of open space and sensitive natural areas. Due to the amount of land area occupied by these uses, an appropriate alternative would be to create specific open space and natural resource districts. Specifically the following districts are recommended:

▷ **Open Space.** An open space district would encompass parks and playgrounds throughout the Planning Area. The use structure would also acknowledge that public parks serve multiple functions, not just recreation; therefore, other uses like outdoor entertainment venues, park cafes, special events, indoor recreation centers, and similar should be allowed. This type of district offers two benefits. The first is that the use within the district is protected as only active and passive recreation areas are allowed. The second is that, if someone desired to change to the use of that area, a rezoning is required, allowing the governing body control over the future land use of that parcel.

▷ **Natural Areas.** Similar to an open space district, a natural areas district can be crafted that is more restrictive in terms of development, such as requiring green streets and green stormwater infrastructure, and use to protect and conserve existing natural areas. There may be a need to create multiple types of natural area districts so that the level of development and use restriction can be tailored to the nature of the area.

▷ **Watersheds.** Overlay districts for the Cross Lake Watershed and the 12 Mile Bayou Watershed would help to protect the water quality of these sensitive resources. The recommendation to make them overlays stems from the fact that they cover wide areas that vary in development nature. For example, the western portion of Cross Lake Watershed tends to more natural features such as wetlands, while the other portions are more developed.

▷ **Riverfront.** A riverfront district could facilitate development along the river that maintains views and access to this valuable asset. Site design is the key aspect of regulation. The special aspect of riverfront zoning regulation should address how structures are sited and how they facilitate continuous access to the river. This might best be done through the use of a riverfront overlay district that contains design requirements that address these objectives. In order to create such an overlay district, several policy issues will need to be resolved. The boundaries of the overlay district will have to be established, as well as key locations for view corridors and viewsheds.

▷ **Lakefront.** A Cross Lake district may also be useful to control unique development conditions of lakefront development as well as protection of the lake itself.

New districts may be needed to facilitate more mixed-use development.

The Master Plan has set goals for redevelopment that encourage mixed-use development. By creating specific mixed-use districts for new development, as well as refining existing districts, the variety of scales and types of mixed-use development can be addressed. Mixed-use occurs both at the level of a single site – ground floor retail with apartments above – to new large-scale redevelopments, such as neighborhood centers and urban villages/town centers. Having the proper districts in place helps to mitigate concerns regarding potential negative impacts, such as inadequate parking, poor site circulation, and improper site design, at the outset of the proposal because the developer knows what is expected. It can also encourage more development of this type because the standards and requirements are predictable.

An institutional zoning district can better address the development needs and concerns of educational and medical campuses.

Current institutional uses are found within other districts, such as residential or commercial, that are not tailored to the needs of large-scale campus uses. Many communities address these types of uses through their own district and, in some cases, special approval processes that offer the campuses more flexibility while addressing the issues around the edges where the campus abuts other districts.
While the current institutions likely understand how to work with current zoning, the development of districts or a process that directly addresses the needs of these facilities should be considered. All universities and other campus type development, such as hospitals, develop and maintain their campus plans. It could serve the needs of the Planning Area and the institutions if zoning regulations were in place that could efficiently accommodate these plans. As part of the rewrite process, specific zoning for campus developments can facilitate implementation of accepted campus plans, establish processes that are flexible enough to accommodate evolving changes and expansion in campus plans, and establish campus development regulations that clearly indicate the scope of such development, requirements for transitions and connections between campus activities and adjacent neighborhoods as well as basic siting requirements like multi-modal circulation and open space, and procedures for addressing concerns raised between the institution, the governing bodies, and adjacent neighborhoods.

One approach is an Institutional Master Plan. The plan could have a flexible structure that establishes approval processes for an overall development program and staged site plan approval for projects as they enter the development stage. Guidelines and criteria for site plan approval would be established as part of the initial program approval, and would build off of guideline and standards categories established within the UDC. The extent of the approval approach would be broader than that usually ascribed to zoning as it would address the complete development pattern within the campus including access, street system, parking location, landscape, urban design and sustainability, as well as the usually controls over building location, bulk and use. It is important to this approach that these users be involved in the zoning rewrite process to ensure their input and that the proper balance is maintained.

SITE DEVELOPMENT

All development standards of general applicability should be summarized in one section.

There are a number of site development standards that will apply to development throughout the Planning Area. In order to make it easier for those improving their lots to understand what is required of them, these should be brought together in one section of the UDC. These standards typically include:

- Maximum number of principal structures on a lot
- Number of principal uses on a lot
- Corner visibility
Special exceptions or requirements to district regulations

Environmental performance standards

Utility placement, including regulations that encourage utilities that may be installed aboveground to be installed underground

**Permitted accessory structures and uses should be clearly defined and regulations should reflect property owner’s needs.**

Limited regulations on accessory structures and uses are located in the ordinances. They are not listed specifically and just handled generally as “accessory structures.” A full range of common accessory structures and uses should be included to address the specific impacts of each.

The revision should include specific regulations for each type of use and structure, including the maximum size and height, the yards in which they are permitted to locate, any required impact controls such as screening, and minimum setbacks. In addition, it is recommended to eliminate the following current standards for the primarily residential districts as they create development difficulties and do not reflect modern needs of property owners:

- More than one detached accessory structure should be permitted without special approval. Currently only one detached structure is allowed. A better way to regulate is by lot coverage, permitted yard location, and minimum setback. For example, a homeowner may have a detached garage, a small shed, and a gazebo, located so that they do not create impacts to adjacent property owners.

- Similarly, a detached structure is limited to 450 square feet. This may create issues for larger detached accessory structures, such as garages or greenhouses, and would be better regulated through lot coverage, permitted yard location, and minimum setback.

- The construction and design of detached structures should be regulated by accessory structure type, rather than by structure size. The current ordinances require all structures of 200 square feet or more to be constructed of similar materials and in a similar method as the principal structure. While a similar design as the principal structure is desirable for a detached garage – of any size – this would be difficult with a store-bought shed or coldframe structure. It is better to require this by the type of structure rather than a size threshold.

Common accessory structures and uses that are regulated include the following:

- Amateur (HAM) radio equipment
- Arbor
- Carport
- Coldframe
- Compost
- Deck
- Farmstand
- Fences
- Garage
- Gazebo and pergola
- Greenhouse
- Home occupation
- Mechanical equipment
- Outdoor sales and display
- Outdoor storage
- Patio
▷ Personal recreational game court
▷ Rain barrels and cisterns
▷ Refuse and recycling containers
▷ Retaining wall
▷ Satellite dish antenna
▷ Shed
▷ Solar panels (private)
▷ Swimming pool
▷ Trellis
▷ Vehicle charging station
▷ Water features
▷ Wind turbine (private)

The accessory structure section of an ordinance is where a number of new sustainable development techniques are regulated. Examples within the accessory structures list above include private solar and wind energy systems, rain barrels and cisterns, and composting.

The accessory use section of the UDC should address the keeping of live animals on site.

Over recent years, there has been significant interest in the keeping of animals and livestock on site for private use on private property, such as chickens, bees, and fish farms. In addition, because the Planning Area includes both urban and rural areas, there is also a need to regulate the keeping of larger animals outside of agricultural zoning, such as horses and goats. The UDC should address these types of accessory uses and include regulations on where they are permitted and standards to mitigate their impacts on adjacent property owners. In addition, these need to be similarly regulated when part of community gardens.

▷ **Chicken Coops.** The UDC can allow for chicken coops and chicken runs, with regulations that limit the number of chickens allowed on a lot, prohibition on roosters, limit the location to rear yards, require storage of chicken feed in predator/rodent-proof containers, and other maintenance requirements.

▷ **Apiaries/Bee-Keeping.** Similar to chickens, there has been also been significant interest lately to allow apiaries for private use on private property. The UDC can allow for a set number of hive structures and colonies, with regulations for structure siting, fencing, water, swarm control and queen replacement to ensure proper set up and maintenance.

▷ **Aquaponics.** Private fish farms are also of interest to some property owners. These should be regulated as to location, requirements for full and/or partial enclosure, and the like.

▷ **Keeping of Livestock.** There are areas within both the City and the Parish where larger livestock is kept. When the lot is primarily a residential use (i.e. agriculture is not the principal use), standards are needed for where these would be allowed, minimum lot sizes, location of enclosures, maximum number of animals, etc.

The UDC should be updated to include exterior lighting controls.

The current ordinances have no standards for exterior lighting. In the update, a full range of exterior lighting standards should be created. Tailored lighting standards are typically required for certain districts, such as higher intensity for Downtown versus lower intensity for residential districts, and for certain uses, such as gas stations and outdoor recreation fields. In addition, standards will need to be tailored for the urban areas of the Planning Area versus more rural areas. Many of the “best practice” standards on appropriate exterior lighting are based on information gathered, and model UDC standards created, by the International Dark-Sky Association, a non-profit organization that seeks to minimize light pollution and conserve energy. These standards provide a model for exterior lighting regulations, but will be adjusted as needed so that they can be easily administered and would not require technical expertise beyond the capacity of the MPC. Special lighting circumstances, such as that for recreational fields where taller pole heights and sensitivities to surrounding uses are needed, will also be specifically addressed.
Clear permitted encroachment regulations should be included to address common architectural features.

Architectural features typically encroach to some degree into required yards; currently, only a few projecting architectural features are addressed. This section should be expanded to include the wide variety of architectural features seen in modern development. The benefit of permitting such encroachments is that it encourages key architectural elements, such as eaves and cornices that create shadowing on building facades. Without such allowances, the structure would have to set back further into the lot to accommodate them, which would decrease the building area and discourage their inclusion. Common architectural features include:

▷ Awning and canopy
▷ Balcony
▷ Bay window
▷ Chimney
▷ Eaves
▷ Entryways
▷ Exterior stairwells
▷ Fire escapes
▷ Ornamental features
▷ Porch
▷ Sills, belt course, cornices
▷ Steps and stoops
▷ Sun shades

The UDC should clarify the requirements for various types of easements.

Standards should define the requirements for easements, as well as the means to maintain such easements such as a homeowner’s association, deed restriction, covenant, or other acceptable arrangement. The following types of easements will be evaluated for their appropriateness in the Planning Area: 1) utility easements, including, but not limited to, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water, gas, telecommunication, cable television, and electric; 2) stormwater easements, where a new development is traversed by a waterway, intermittent stream, or drainage way, which must be a sufficient size to protect the waterway, intermittent stream or drainage way; 3) conservation easements, where a new development is required to protect certain natural resources, agricultural areas, or similar elements; and 4) waterbody easements, where a development contains a linear or non-linear water body (channels, lakes, ponds, and wetland).

OFF-STREET PARKING

The off-street parking standards, including vehicle, bicycle, and loading facilities, should be updated.

It is important that parking requirements address the demand for parking and the realities of existing conditions. The updated parking requirements should address the full range of off-street parking facility elements. In order to be comprehensive, this section should address the following:

▷ Permitted location of off-street parking for all districts, including remote lots and valet
▷ Parking lot design (surfacing, curbing, marking, etc.) and minimum parking space and aisle dimensions
▷ Parking flexibilities
▷ Required number of off-street spaces by use
▷ Bicycle parking requirements
Location and design of off-street loading
Storage of commercial and recreational vehicles

Development standards for parking areas should be updated and enhanced.

Parking regulations should consider the design and appearance of parking areas. Some of these are already addressed in the ordinance but these can further be enhanced to create attractive and safe parking areas, including the following:

▷ The number of curb cuts allowed for residential and non-residential uses should be included in the UDC. Existing curb cut regulations and policies should be integrated into the UDC.

▷ Standards should be added in regard to maximum driveway sizes for residential and non-residential uses. Like curb cuts, existing regulations and policies should be integrated.

▷ Standards should be included for parking lots over a certain size that require pedestrian walkways in parking lots to ensure safe pedestrian circulation through parking lots, as well as connections between parking lots.

▷ The UDC should allow the construction of parking lots with pervious paving, such as pervious pavers, grass-crete, gravel-crete, and other paving materials that allow for water percolation. Pervious paving should be allowed for residential areas for use as driveway and parking pad surfaces, but for non-residential uses, it may not be ideal to have 100% pervious paving of parking lots. In non-residential development, pervious paving is better suited for overflow areas, emergency access drives, and more remote parking areas (i.e., parking spaces developed above the minimum required).

▷ Surfacing with gravel should generally not be allowed in urban areas as it creates two negative impacts - it runs off the drive area and can clog sewers and, if a gravel area is not regularly resurfaced, the area can compact and become as impervious as asphalt.

▷ Residential driveway standards should include permissions for driveways designed with wheel strips.

▷ Design regulations for parking structures should be added. These regulations include design standards for garage facades facing a street, façade articulation and screening of the ground floor and any rooftop parking, and maintenance of a vehicular clear sight zone at any entry/exit points to prevent conflicts with any other vehicles and pedestrians. With clear standards, the current requirement for Planning Commission approval can be eliminated.

The UDC should allow off-site parking locations for non-residential uses.

In order to create more flexibility for development, the UDC should allow for off-site parking lots for non-residential uses. Currently only the B-4 District is afforded this ability, and parking is not required in that district. Most ordinances allow an off-site parking lot for a use to locate within 300 to 600 feet of the site by right within a number of commercial districts. This should be a two-tiered provision so that if the off-site lot is owned by the same use, the permission is by right, and, if it is leased, the proof of such permission can be easily provided, such as a lease rather than a recorded instrument. The UDC should also specify that valet parking services - where cars are moved to a dedicated lot - is exempt from any distance requirements.
The MPC should consider parking exemptions to address the realities of developed areas.

The only parking exemption in the current ordinance is for the B-4 District. In the more urban areas of the Planning Area, areas that are already built-up may have trouble accommodating the required amount of on-site parking. Therefore, additional districts or uses may benefit from parking flexibilities. Examples of such exemptions include:

- Based upon how the zoning districts are revised, it may be appropriate to exempt additional districts from parking requirements. For example, if a neighborhood commercial district is created that addresses small clusters of existing commercial uses integrated into residential neighborhoods, typically such districts were developed without parking and should be exempt.

- Certain neighborhood commercial uses – like corner stores - have been developed without any room on the lot for parking, so existing structures that lack parking should be exempted. This may also apply to select residential areas.

- Exemptions can be based on the size of a business – for example, exempting the first 2,500 square feet from parking calculations – in order to provide relief for new developments on small lots. This would require only larger structures to provide parking.

- Parking facilities that provide car-share spaces could be given a reduced parking bonus. At a minimum, car share spaces should count toward required minimum parking.

Parking ratios (parking spaces per use) should be revised to reflect local demand, including parking maximums where appropriate.

It is important that parking requirements address both the Planning Area’s actual demand for parking and the realities of existing conditions. A table that establishes requirements for a certain amount of off-street parking for each use listed within the districts should be created. It is also recommended that the parking ratios be determined by objective standards, such as physical space, whether gross square footage or rated capacity, rather than by number of employees.

It is also recommended to consider parking maximums for parking lots for certain types of large-scale uses, such as large retail centers and office parks, in order to prevent excess parking and the negative effects of over-paving, such as urban heat islands and stormwater run-off. To add more flexibility, requests to exceed the parking maximum should be required to provide features that mitigate the negative effects of the additional pavement, such as permeable paving, bioswales, constructed wetlands, parking lot landscape that exceeds the required plantings, and/or other techniques.

Finally, special development types, such as strip retail centers and shopping centers, are better served by specialized parking requirements that calculate the required parking based on the gross floor area of the development as a whole, rather than as a collection of individual uses. Because uses turnover frequently, parking calculations for these developments can move between conformance and nonconformance. A single calculation based on gross floor area would better allow these developments to manage parking and maintain and attract new tenants.

A by-right shared parking flexibility should be established.

In addition to the current permission for uses to share a parking facility, a by-right shared parking regulation should be included based on a formula that calculates how much parking is actually needed by the uses when developed collectively, based on their intensity of use during the hours of the day. Mixed-use developments, multi-use office parks, and similar types of development, as well as property owners that establish cross-access easements, would be eligible for this type of shared parking. (Retail centers as described earlier would not be eligible for this flexibility.) The following is an example of such a standard:
The required number of spaces for each use is calculated according to parking requirements.

The required number of spaces for each use is then applied to the percentages for each timeframe, according to the appropriate land use category, as shown in the table below, to determine the number of required spaces. This is done for each time category.

The numbers are summed for all land uses within each timeframe and the highest sum total in a timeframe is the required number of spaces. Due to the percentages, this is less than would be required by simply summing the requirements at 100%.

**EXAMPLE OF SHARED PARKING EQUATION – FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Weekday</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Weekend</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>7am-6pm</td>
<td>6pm-Mid</td>
<td>Mid-7am</td>
<td>7am-6pm</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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<td>Hotel/Motel</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td>Office</td>
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<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial/Laboratory</td>
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<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>60%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This table would be adjusted to reflect the new use structure and parking demand for the Planning Area. (The above table is an example only.)

**The UDC should require bicycle parking for certain developments.**

Like many cities, the Master Plan speaks to a multi-modal approach to transportation and mobility within the Planning Area. Bicycling is a mode of transportation that will continue to rise in popularity, particularly if the City and Parish undertake serious investment in bicycle infrastructure, such as bicycle lanes. Similar to vehicular parking requirements, certain uses should be required to provide bicycle parking. Generally, those uses are multi-family dwellings, larger retail and offices, schools, and institutional campuses. Required bike spaces should be regulated in terms of both short-term and long-term bike parking.

**The UDC should provide design and siting requirements for bicycle parking.**

When bike parking is required, proper design of such facilities should be included such as the distinctions between the design of short-term and long-term bike parking.

- Bike parking facilities should provide racks or lockable enclosed lockers where the bicycle may be safely locked or stored. This will need to be defined for both long-term and short-term spaces.

- The UDC should provide flexibility for smaller sites by allowing racks to be placed in the public right-of-way where space is available. The property owner would need to make suitable arrangements with the appropriate governing body to allow bike racks in the public right-of-way.

- For residential uses, required bicycle parking should allow a variety of options for placement, such as in garages, storage rooms, and other resident-accessible secure areas, and exclude space within dwelling units or on balconies.

- Large office or institutional developments should be required to incorporate facilities for bicyclists, such as showers and locker rooms. Where these facilities are provided, a reduction in the number of required parking spaces should be offered.
The required amount of current loading standards should be updated and include comprehensive design standards.

The number of loading spaces is an important element of new development and should continue to be required by use type, which should be updated to link to the new use structure. However, the current ordinance requires loading spaces for a number of small developments that may cause problems for small lot developments. Loading spaces should be required for larger developments that frequently have large truck deliveries. Also, in order to encourage the preservation and reuse of older existing structures, the UDC should include loading exemptions for structures where no loading areas were originally provided.

Design standards should address permitted location, such as distance from street intersections, yards where loading spaces may locate, surfacing requirements, and required screening. Dimensional requirements should also be standardized rather than large versus small spaces.

SIGNS

The sign regulations should be updated to be responsive to districts.

Current sign standards may not offer an effective means of controlling signs. Sign permissions need to be evaluated and tailored to the form of each district and regulated by sign type. For example, in a local commercial district, a wall sign and a projecting sign, with the proper sign area limitations, can enhance the pedestrian environment. Each sign type serves a different purpose; that is, the projecting sign for the pedestrian passing by and the wall-mount for those driving by or walking across the street looking perpendicular at the façade. Sign area limitations should be brought within reasonable maximums and proportioned to the type of development anticipated in the district. In all cases, the evaluation of existing sign area and height is critical to the determination of proposed controls, which will require further public input. A proposed approach to the sign chapter is outlined in this section.

A general standards section should address a number of provisions applicable to all signs.

General standards that should be included are the following:

- **Prohibited sign locations.** The UDC should clearly state where signs cannot be erected or mounted, including egress/ingress locations, architectural features, and corner visibility areas. This section should also state that signs cannot be placed on public or private property without permission.

- **Construction standards.** These standards should address wind pressure and direct load minimums, permitted glass and lettering materials, mounting requirements, etc. Related provisions within the building code can be cross-referenced here.

- **Maintenance requirements.** Maintenance requirements should require repair and/or removal of unsafe or damaged signs, and upkeep of the sign structure and the area around the sign (litter removal, painting of rusted areas, etc.).

- **Limitation on items of information.** If desired, a standard can be included to limit the number of items of information placed on a sign. A typical limit is six items of information. This prevents sign clutter and addresses safety issues, such as driver distraction.
Illumination regulations. Sign illumination regulations should be expanded to include all aspects of illuminated signs. Sign illumination standards typically cover permissions for the types of signs that may be internally and/or externally illuminated, standards for uplighting and downlighting signs, which can be tailored to district and sign type, and permissions for neon, especially for the use of neon as a window sign. These standards are intended to prevent the nuisance effects of glare and light trespass, as well as the aesthetic character of districts. The use of LED sign accents on signs that are not electronic signs will also need to be addressed. (Electronic message signs are addressed separately in this report.)

Measurement of sign area, sign height, and other dimensional requirements would be addressed in the rules of measurement.

The prohibited sign types should be clearly described in the UDC.

This section would be an expansion of the current prohibited sign section to ensure that all undesired sign types are identified, including:

- Animated signs
- Select attention-getting devices
- Flashing signs
- Moving signs
- Painted and illegally affixed signs
- Portable signs
- Signs that interfere with traffic
- Temporary off-premise signs

The exempt signs section should be expanded to be more specific and to provide better control over these signs and more guidance to UDC users.

Certain signs should be exempt from sign permit requirements. These would be distinguished by temporary and permanent exempt signs. A proposed set of these sign types include (some are already considered exempt):

Permanent exempt signs:
- Building directory signs
- Bulletin boards
- Directional signs within parking lots
- Flags
- Government signs
- Home occupation signs
- Memorial plaques
- Nameplates
- Parking lot information signs (restricted users, tow information, etc.)
- Public information signs

Temporary exempt signs:
- Attention-getting devices
- Banners
Exhibition Banners (These are large scale banners used by institutional uses, such as a museum mounting them against the façade to advertise an exhibit)

Construction signs

Political/Non-commercial message signs

Real estate signs (sale/lease)

Temporary window signs

Even though these signs are exempt from permits, standards would be needed for each type including maximum size and height, required setback, number per lot, permitted display period for temporary signs, sign construction materials, and those districts and/or uses allowed to install them. Each type of sign should also be defined.

In particular, the display period of temporary signs needs to be properly regulated so that they do not become de-facto permanent signs and so that the permitted display period relates more specifically to the type of temporary sign. Rather than blanket permissions, temporary signs would be distinguished by type and then assigned permitted display periods as applicable. Display periods for certain types of temporary signs should also be limited to the number of times they can be erected per year, with a minimum break between displays.

The regulations for permanent signs should be refined to address the full range of permanent signs, and regulate them based on the form and scale of each district.

Permanent sign regulations should address all aspects of the sign’s character and location - maximum height and sign area, minimum setback, vertical clearance, maximum projection, etc. In addition, how signs are allocated to corner buildings and multi-tenant centers must also be evaluated. A very important element will be to determine where the different sign types will be allowed. Currently, the ordinances generally regulate signs as either being within a residential district or within a non-residential district, which is not a clear enough distinction based on the character of different commercial areas. For example, pole signs may be appropriate in a regional commercial district but not within a neighborhood commercial one; refining permissions by district would allow the UDC to prohibit them in some districts while allowing them within others. In addition, the maximum size of signs - whether height and/or area - could also be tailored to the different districts. Some of this is in the current ordinances - such as permissions for roof signs by district - but not at the proper level of refinement for all sign types.

Based upon permanent signs found within the Planning Area, it is anticipated that the following types of permanent signs would be allowed and regulated as follows:

- **Awnings and Canopies:** Projection and vertical clearance maximums, percentage of printing allowed on sign face, illumination, permitted materials (canvas or canvas-like material).
- **Balloon Signs:** Sign area, height, location, number of signs permitted, permitted display period. An additional issue is whether these should continue to be allowed.
- **Freestanding Signs - Pole and Monument:** Height, sign area, setback, minimum street frontage required, number of signs permitted, illumination.
▷ **Projecting Signs:** Sign area, projection and vertical clearance maximums, number of signs permitted, illumination.

▷ **Marquees:** Construction requirements, projection and vertical clearance standards, illumination.

▷ **Menuboards:** Height, sign area, setback, number of signs permitted, illumination.

▷ **Roof Signs:** Sign area, maximum projection above roofline, number of signs permitted, illumination.

▷ **Sidewalk/A-Frame Signs:** Sign area, height, location, number of signs permitted.

▷ **Wall Signs:** Sign area, projection maximum, number of signs permitted, illumination. Wall signs should be controlled by a proportional control, such as one square foot per linear foot of façade. Wall signs should also include a special provision for building identification signs located at the top of high-rise buildings.

▷ **Window Signs:** Sign area.

In looking at the current maximum height and area limitations for many permanent signs, and in particular pole and monument signs, the allowances are very permissive and allow large signs in both residential and non-residential districts.

**Electronic message signs should be addressed within the UDC.**

Current regulations for electronic message signs, also called digital or LED signs, are limited and do not effectively control their impacts. A clear definition of this type of sign is necessary, with clear permissions for where they would be allowed. These types of signs should be properly defined, and permitted or prohibited in districts as appropriate. These types of regulations include:

▷ Districts and/or uses permitted such signs

▷ Number of signs allowed per lot

▷ Type of sign construction (freestanding, wall, marquee): the regulations applicable to the sign type would apply to the electronic sign

▷ Maximum percentage of sign devoted to the electronic component

▷ Message changeover delay

▷ Operational controls

▷ Maximum illumination

▷ Prohibition of flashing, scrolling, and animation

**Billboard regulations should be updated.**

Billboard regulations should address the aesthetic concerns of the Planning Area and stakeholders and be consistent with federal regulations. Current standards appear to comply with those regulations and are comprehensive in their scope. However, the current ordinances are silent on whether or not electronic billboards are permitted. If these are to be permitted in the Planning Area, a series of standards for illumination, brightness, and minimum duration of message should be crafted. Additionally, to encourage electronic billboards, a required “trade-off” of nonconforming existing billboards can be included. For example, if three nonconforming billboards are taken down, one new electronic billboard can be erected. This creates an incentive to remove nonconformities.

**The UDC could establish a provision for “classic signs.”**

There may also be a need for a “classic sign” designation. This type of provision preserves specific historic and/or unique signs within the Planning Area, and protects those signs from nonconformity status. To this end, the City, a designation process for classic signs is established that would remove these specifically designated signs from nonconformity status, and allow them to continue and be repaired, maintained, and moved.
**Landscape & Tree Preservation**

Current landscape requirements should address all aspects of site development to properly beautify, screen, and buffer.

The contribution of landscape to the visual quality of the built environment cannot be overemphasized. In addition to its aesthetic benefits, green space provides environmental benefits. The current landscape sections contain landscape requirements for street frontages and parking lots but this does not cover the full range of landscape requirements that an ordinance should require for the proper levels of beautification and screening.

The UDC should be organized around landscape requirements for:

▷ **Landscape yards.** Landscape yards should be required for all multi-family dwellings of a certain number of dwelling units, mixed-use developments, and non-residential uses that maintain a setback along the street of ten or more feet. This would be similar to the current street frontage requirement but a landscape yard provides more flexibility to tailor the plantings to the design of the façade of the building.

▷ **Perimeter of parking lots.** Where a parking lot abuts the street, requirements should be in place to screen the cars from the right-of-way (again, similar to current street frontage requirements but more tailored). This requirement could be an ornamental fence and shrubs planted every three feet to ensure proper screening. This could also be substituted with a pedestrian-scale wall. These types of requirements provide better screening of the cars and create a more defined streetwall.

▷ **Interior of parking lots.** Rather than the current requirement of 25 square feet of landscape per parking space, there should be specific interior parking lot requirements, including a minimum number of landscape parking lot islands and a minimum percentage of overall landscape for larger parking lots. This improves the appearance of large parking lots and provides environmental benefits.

▷ **Buffer yards and screening.** Buffer yard requirement should be required for larger, more intensively used sites. There are no buffer yard requirements within the current ordinances. Buffer yards are planting areas typically required for more intensive uses that abut less intensive uses, such as a residential district abutting a heavy commercial district. Buffer yards create transitions between incompatible uses or districts and mitigate light, noise, dust, and other impacts created by more intensive uses. Because some of the urban areas of the Planning Area are built with residential and commercial uses located very close together, buffer yards are not appropriate in all situations. It is recommended that these be limited to larger sites within the commercial and industrial districts.

▷ **Street tree plantings.** In order to create an urban canopy along as well as beautify the right-of-way, street tree plantings can be required for new development. Typically, street tree plantings require one tree every 25-30 feet. Flexibility would be built into the requirement so that street trees may be clustered or spaced differently when appropriate or exemptions from the planting requirement when there is insufficient space in the right-of-way.
Requirements would be tailored to districts and/or uses to avoid onerous requirements or the creation of nonconformities. Also, the above requirements would be encouraged to incorporate various stormwater management techniques.

As described in the Master Plan, the UDC should incorporate a tree preservation requirement.

In order to effectively facilitate the preservation of the Planning Area’s tree canopy, a tree preservation requirement can be integrated into the UDC. Simply put, such a regulation requires all trees with a diameter at breast height of over six inches - or a similar standard to define what constitutes a significant tree - to be maintained. Any removal of such a tree without permission is a violation of the UDC.

Because some trees will need to be removed, the appropriate authority must approve removal once it is verified that it is necessary. These are typically in cases of public health issues, disease or pest infestation, damage to existing structures, and the like. A tree preservation regulation requires replacement of such removed tree on the property, though some ordinances allow tree planting in adjacent areas or as part of open space plantings. In limited circumstances would replacement not be required, such as a lack of a suitable location on the site for a replacement tree or that the site already has sufficient trees so that additional trees are not necessary.

The Downtown should not be exempt from landscape requirements.

While the Downtown is intended to be a densely developed environment with buildings close to the street, it should not be exempt from all landscape requirements. In particular the B-4 District should be required to comply with all perimeter and interior parking lot landscape requirements as well as the street tree requirement.

Installation and maintenance standards for landscape should be further detailed to ensure proper implementation of landscape requirements.

Basic landscape installation and maintenance standards should be included as part of the UDC. Limited standards are already within the ordinance, but should be updated with further detail such as native planting requirements, prohibited species, and required species diversity. These standards are important because they assure a significant landscape impact by controlling the type of plantings and the level of maturity required for plant types at the time of installation. Plantings that are too young can result in an insufficient level of landscape improvements during the first several years of a project and may not perform the intended screening and beautification functions until the plants mature, or may result in landscape that does not survive the first growing season. Landscape standards should incorporate sustainable landscape design techniques such as native landscape requirements, prohibitions on invasive exotics, species diversity requirements, and drought-tolerant landscape requirements.
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

A stormwater management performance standard should be required for new development.

A performance-based standard should be added to the UDC to greatly enhance on-site stormwater management. Updated landscape requirements and paving limitations will go a long way toward preventing run-off, but an additional performance standard can increase the sustainability of sites. One option is to require all new construction on lots of 10,000 square feet or more in area to capture the first inch of rainwater onsite. The stormwater management regulations would also describe various ways to meet these requirements through a combination of stormwater best management practices (BMPs). The intent is to craft this Article to be flexible in terms of how stormwater management is achieved and allow for developments to take advantage of new technology as it comes online.

The UDC should also allow for community-based stormwater management systems.

Designed on a smaller scale, a community-based stormwater management system allows neighbors on adjacent properties to construct an on-site water management system to be shared between their properties, and requires an agreement between neighbors as to access, operation and maintenance of the system. For larger multi-tenant developments or new residential subdivisions, this allows for shared, integrated stormwater management.

RIGHT-OF-WAY & ACCESS STANDARDS

The UDC should include comprehensive right-of-way standards.

The benefit of creating a UDC is that it includes the relationship of the private realm to the public realm. This comprehensive look allows for an integrated approach to land development. The standards of this Article will apply to any right-of-way that is reconstructed or newly constructed. They will reflect traditional urban development patterns and accommodate multi-modal transportation (auto, bike and pedestrian) where appropriate, and reflect how residents move about their neighborhood. Separate right-of-way and access standards would also be included for more rural areas of the Planning Area. More specifically, this Article would include the following:

▷ Right-of-Way Standards. The recommended approach to right-of-way reconstruction or development is to adopt a “Complete Streets” approach. A “Complete Street” is defined as right-of-way facilities that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users; persons with disabilities, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders are able to safely move along and across a

EXTRA IMAGE
complete street. When right-of-way is reconstructed or newly constructed, it should be designed in a way that accommodates multi-modal transportation (auto, bike and pedestrian) where appropriate and reflects how residents move about their neighborhood and the larger Planning Area. The right-of-way standards should include a series of right-of-way widths and design requirements, implementing Complete Streets principals as appropriate to the larger character of the area. These requirements will apply to reconstructed or newly established streets, subject to approval by the City or Parish Engineer.

▷ **Sidewalks.** The pedestrian way is measured from the curbline to the property line of the abutting property. This is the portion of the right-of-way that typically includes the parkway and sidewalk. In order to facilitate better design of these area, the subdivision regulations should clearly describe each component of the pedestrian way. Depending on the character of the area, not all will be applicable. Typically these are: 1) maintenance zone - the area between the public sidewalk and the building façade; 2) pedestrian zone - the sidewalk used for pedestrian travel; 3) parkway zone - that portion used for street trees, landscape, transit stops, street lights, outdoor dining, and site furnishings, as well as used by people getting accessing cars parked at the curb; and 4) extension zone - the optional element of the sidewalk area where pedestrian zone may be extended into a parking lane, such as by a bulb-out.

▷ **Block Designs.** Maximum block lengths work to establish walkable neighborhoods. In particular, this is important in more urban neighborhoods to ensure that the existing fabric is maintained.

**New developments and public improvements should plan for connectivity both within the development area and to adjacent areas.**

Connectivity also contributes to achieving the Master Plan’s goals toward becoming a more multi-modal Planning Area. The UDC can implement connectivity standards in a number of ways. As described above are requirements for sidewalks and bicycle lanes, but the regulations should also include requirements for greenway connections between open space and natural areas, road access to adjacent properties or subdivisions, and direct connections to abutting rights-of-way.

**SUBDIVISION**

**Align subdivision regulations with new zoning district standards.**

The creation of the UDC allows for the update of both the zoning and subdivision regulation so that both sets of regulations work together to facilitate the development patterns established within the Planning Area. Once zoning district lot sizes are established with the intent of preserving the existing or desired lotting patterns, subdivision requirements for lots should be that of the district. This would mean the elimination of the requirement for 50 foot lot widths for residential subdivisions and the corner lot specifications. However, the regulations of the State Board of Health and Caddo Parish Health Unit should still control if a larger lot size is required.

**The UDC can include a concurrency requirement to limit sprawl.**

Another strategy to encourage balanced growth is the adoption of a concurrency requirement. A concurrency requirement requires all proposed development to meet a series of standards that ensure that public facilities and services necessary to support development are available to serve the development. Concurrency facilities can include: roads, potable water, electricity, sanitary sewer, solid waste disposal, police/fire/emergency, schools, and community facilities (libraries, recreation centers, museums, etc.). Many concurrency requirements establish a concurrency management system, which sometimes includes a certificate of concurrency issued along with development approval. Essentially, this is a secondary development review process that looks specifically at these elements. Developments that do not meet minimum standards are not approved.
The subdivision requirements should address the two types of subdivision that occur in the Planning Area – those within established urban areas and new developments in rural and/or undeveloped areas.

Subdivision is, quite simply, the process of dividing a lot. While the process is simple, it can have great impact. Currently, the subdivision regulations are divorced from the existing development pattern in developed areas and may not sufficiently address new development in greenfield areas. In the UDC, subdivision should be aligned with district development standards with public realm standards that reinforce the desired character of the districts and area.

As described in the Master Plan, a conservation design subdivision option should be added.

Conservation design subdivision is intended to preserve environmentally sensitive areas while allowing for residential development. The intent is to work with – rather than against – the natural land features. The central idea of Conservation Design is to cluster residential development within the larger development space and leave the remainder of the site as natural areas or open space, either common open space shared by the community or preserved in its natural state. Conservation design typically requires a perimeter buffer along the edge of the development, a minimum development size, required minimum open space for the development (typically 40% of the total site area), and spacing requirements between residential clusters within the development.

Conservation design subdivision helps to achieve numerous environmental and ecological benefits, including wildlife management and habitat preservation, water quality protection, greater aquifer recharge, and environmentally sensitive sewage treatment and disposal. Natural areas preserved in conservation subdivisions provide important habitat for wildlife to dwell and travel through. Greenways provide cover and sheltered corridors for various species. Conservation subdivisions provide larger areas of natural vegetation that act as buffers to help filter stormwater flowing into wetlands and waterbodies, trapping pollutants and excessive nutrients contained in stormwater runoff. Buffers also offer important infiltration and "recharge" benefits because they help maintain adequate flows of filtered water to underground aquifers. Reduced impervious surfaces significantly reduce the size and number of stormwater detention basins needed on the site. This lowers infrastructure costs and frees land for other uses. Conservation subdivisions also offer greater opportunities to implement environmentally sensitive sewage treatment and disposal systems known as "alternative systems." Because of reduced lot sizes, individual septic systems may no longer fit on each lot – alternatives must be found. It is possible to use shared septic systems and/or a common leach field, and to locate that leach field outside of lot lines.

While generally included in unified development codes in the subdivision section because the core elements are based upon how land is divided and controlled, certain elements such as common open space requirements, increased landscape requirements, and the like, would be found in other portions of the UDC.
ADMINISTRATION

The administrative sections of the UDC should be reorganized to make the processes easier for applicants to follow.

Currently, administrative responsibilities and procedures are found in different articles. In order to make the various applications and their respective processes and requirements user-friendly, the following reorganization is proposed:

UDC Administrators
This Article would list the powers and duties of all boards and officials involved in UDC administration. By listing all boards and officials for all applications, the process is clarified (i.e., the user can easily reference who recommends and who approves). The following boards and officials will be included:

▷ City Council
▷ Parish Commission
▷ Metropolitan Planning Commission
▷ Zoning Board of Appeals
▷ Zoning Administrator
▷ Planning Director
▷ City Engineer
▷ Parish Public Works Director
▷ Water and Sewerage Director

In addition to those administrators named above, any other departments or officials that issue UDC-related administrative approvals would also be listed.

Application Process
This Article would contain the rules for processing the various zoning applications within the UDC. These administrative procedures will be consistent with Louisiana law and grouped into the following three sections:

▷ Applications
▷ Notice
▷ Public hearing

Approvals
All applications and approvals would be found in this Article, with the exception of subdivision approvals that are located within their own article. We anticipate that the following applications would be included:

▷ Amendments (text and map)
▷ Use approvals
▷ Variance
▷ Administrative modifications
▷ Site plan review
▷ Planned unit development
▷ Interpretation
▷ Appeals
To the degree possible, the following structure would be used for each application:

- Purpose
- Applicability
- Authority
- Procedure
- Approval Standards
- Appeal

Approvals by the City and those by the Parish should be clearly distinguished.

Because the UDC will bring together the City and Parish zoning and subdivision ordinances into one document, this creates certain situations where final approval of an application may be granted by the City Council or the Parish Commission, depending on where the parcel is located. Each application should clarify how applications are approved when the subject property is located is the City or within the MPC's jurisdiction in Caddo Parish.

A completeness review should be included as part of the filing of applications provision.

It is recommended that a completeness requirement be added to the UDC in order to eliminate the submittal and processing of incomplete applications. A completeness requirement only checks to see if all required submittals have been included in the application. An example of such a requirement is as follows:

The Zoning Administrator will determine whether a submitted application is complete. The Zoning Administrator will notify the applicant as to whether or not the application is complete within 15 days of receipt, and will not process the application until all deficiencies are remedied. Once the Zoning Administrator determines that the application is complete, the application will be scheduled for consideration.

This would allow interested members of the public to review the complete application prior to the hearing and would help to eliminate postponements on the basis of incomplete submittals. It should be noted that payment of fees is considered part of completeness review.

A key part of an effective completeness review is that the submittal requirements for each application be clearly spelled out. As part of the creation of the UDC, submittal requirements for each application will be drafted.

An optional pre-application review should be included as part of the filing of applications provision.

It is recommended that applicants be allowed to conduct a pre-application review with the Zoning Administrator and any additional staff he/she deems appropriate to provide input on an application. This is conducted prior to any formal application or payment of fees, and all decisions are not binding with respect to any official action that may be taken on the application.

Approval standards and timeframes for the different applications should be updated.

Each of the applications, in particular amendments, variances, and uses, should have a set of approval standards. Current standards for each application should be updated for consistency with Louisiana case law and clarified. In addition, timeframes for review and hearing of the different applications should be included so that applicants can better predict the processing of their applications.

The process for text amendments should be clarified as to who is the final approval authority.

Because the ordinances for the City and the Parish will be combined into one UDC, it is unclear how text amendments will be approved. As separate ordinances, amendments to the Shreveport ordinance text are approved by the City Council and those to the Caddo Parish ordinance text are approved by the Parish Commission. With the creation of one process, it needs to be determined how text amendments will be
approved moving forward. This issue requires further discussion with staff as well as legal review to determine the proper process. (This issue is not applicable to map amendments where approval bodies are determined by whether the property is in the City or the Parish.)

Approval of uses within the districts should be simplified.

Currently, there are six different types of use approvals: 1) permitted uses; 2) uses approved by the MPC; 3) uses approved by the MPC in a public hearing; 4) special exception uses approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals; 5) uses approved by the Planning Director; and 6) uses allowed within the Extended Use Overlay District. Earlier in this report, there was a recommendation to eliminate the E Overlay District. This section will focus on the approval processes outside of use approvals related to that overlay.

As explained within the discussion of the E Overlay District, if the use permissions within the districts better relate to the district - both existing and any potential new districts - the need for numerous types of approvals may no longer be necessary. However, certain uses will still need special review and approval because of their potential impacts. One approach is to simplify the use structure into two types of uses – permitted uses and special uses. Most cities use this approach, where a special use approval requires a public hearing. In the Planning Area, this can be structured so that the MPC approves special uses in a public hearing. This would eliminate special exception uses by the Zoning Board of Appeals. It is also recommended to eliminate the Planning Director approval of uses.

In addition, certain uses that are permitted by right are still subject to approval of a special development plan by the MPC. These types of uses can be reassigned as either special uses or uses subject to the proposed site plan review process described below.

Administrative approvals by the Planning Director should be renamed “administrative modifications.”

In order to better define the powers of the Planning Director to modify certain dimensional standards, the process to do so should be renamed “administrative modifications.” In particular, if the approval of uses by the Director is no longer part of the use approval processes, the remaining powers are those of an administrative variance. A renaming would reduce confusion for UDC users.

A site plan review process should be incorporated into the process.

A site plan review process could help to ensure that the new development meets the intent of land development regulations, Master Plan policies, and the character of Shreveport-Caddo. This would be a way to address how new development fits into both the larger context of the Planning Area and the micro-level of the site specifically. There are three key issues related to instituting a site plan review process. These are:

What developments are subject to administrative site plan review?

Many communities require all developments, except for single-family and two-family dwellings, to receive site plan review and approval. In addition, a number of communities require all special uses to receive site plan review as part of the approval. It is our recommendation that, at a minimum, all new construction of multi-family, townhouse, and non-residential developments, including mixed-use, be subject to site plan review.

What are the standards for site plan review?

A typical list of criteria used for evaluating site plans include the following categories: site design (the location, arrangement, size, design and general site compatibility of buildings, lighting and signs), landscaping, screening and open space (proper buffering, sustainable design techniques, drainage, and preservation of existing natural resources), and circulation systems and off-street parking (adequate and safe access to the site for motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists, traffic movements, and design off-street parking lots or garages to minimize adverse impacts). Design review of structures could also be integrated into this process as well. If design standards are part of the districts, as zoning regulations, they would also be reviewed in this process.
Who will review applications?

A Site Plan Review Committee can be created and comprised of key MPC staff and/or City and Parish staff, which could be based on the geographic location of the property or use. This can also be refined so that certain developments are reviewed by the Site Plan Review Committee comprised of internal staff, while other specific developments are reviewed by the MPC.

A zoning text interpretation process should be added to the UDC.

Every municipality has an informal process for text interpretations, but the UDC should include a formal process for documenting text interpretations. No UDC can adequately or clearly address every possible aspect of regulation, so this process allows the Zoning Administrator to render a written interpretation upon request. This results in a record of interpretation requests, which leads to the predictable and consistent application of the regulations. (The current regulation that requires the Zoning Board of Appeals to interpret the zoning map should remain within the Board’s powers.)

Eliminate the distinctions between the Planned Building Groups and Residential Planned Unit Developments and create one Planned Unit Development (PUD) option.

Rather than maintain special separate approvals for Planned Building Groups and Residential Planned Unit Developments, a more flexible and easily administrated option is to create a single planned unit development procedure. This would be a single development application that would be considered a special use in certain districts, eliminating the distinctions between Residential PUDs and Planned Building Groups.

This type of PUD is a development guided by a total integrated design plan in which one or more of the zoning regulations are modified to allow flexibility and creativity in site and building design and location, in accordance with general guidelines that accrue benefits to the Planning Area and the public interest. PUDs are typically included in ordinances as a distinct category of special use. In particular, the planned unit development technique is intended to allow for flexibility in the application of zoning requirements based upon detailed review of individual proposals for significant developments in exchange for additional benefits to the Planning Area and the public. This special regulatory technique is included in ordinances in recognition of the fact that flexibility may be needed in the application of required yard and bulk regulations, and occasionally use regulations, for the development or redevelopment of areas that lend themselves to an individual, innovative planned approach.

PUD should function as an effective mechanism for leveraging high quality development.

A key aspect of a PUD is that public benefits and amenities to enhance the Planning Area are required in exchange for PUD approval. There should be a give and take between the developer and the local governing body within the proposal. PUD provisions should define the types of amenities or elements desired in exchange for flexibility and bonuses offered through the PUD process. It is important to remember that, because of its inherent flexibility, the PUD process can become a surrogate for the variance process. When a property owner does not want to meet existing district requirements, they often request a PUD where they do not have to demonstrate a hardship or practical difficulty, as would be required under a variance. Therefore, it is key to list which amenities are required to qualify for such exceptions so that petitioners cannot circumvent basic zoning district requirements without providing measured benefits to the Planning Area.

Examples of some of the public amenities and benefits that can be considered in determining whether an exception should be granted include:

- Use of sustainable design and architecture, such as green roofs, white roofs and other energy efficient design concepts, new building technologies, and approval of buildings as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or LEED-equivalent structures.
- Community amenities including plazas, formal gardens, places to congregate, outdoor seating, public art, and pedestrian and transit facilities.
- Preservation of natural areas and site design that is sensitive to environmental features.
- Green stormwater infrastructure, such as permeable parking lots/paving, additional tree preservation requirements, bioswales, rainwater harvesting, etc.
- Additional open space and recreational amenities such as recreational open space and playgrounds, including athletic fields, dog parks, and natural water features and conservation areas.
- Additional public infrastructure improvements in addition to the minimum required by the planned unit development, such as new or repaved streets, provision of bicycle paths, installation of gutters and sewers, and traffic control devices to improve traffic flow.
- Senior housing set-aside.
- Affordable housing set-aside.
- Provision of public car and/or bike share facilities.

This is not a definitive list but rather a potential list of public amenities and benefits. In some cases, the actual development may be a public benefit. For example, in areas where there is a demand for senior housing, a senior housing PUD can be considered a public benefit.

**PUD requires a multi-step approval process, with numerous points of public input.**

While a PUD is a special use, the approval process is not simply that of a special use. Because of the complex nature of the application, there are additional steps that require review and approval and offer opportunities for public input. An outline of such a process is provided below.

- **Pre-Application Meeting with MPC Staff.** Prior to the formal filing of an application for a PUD, the applicant meets with MPC staff to discuss the proposed development. The purpose of the pre-application meeting is to make advice and assistance available to the applicant before preparation of the concept plan or preliminary plan.

- **Concept Plan.** Before submitting a formal application for a PUD, the applicant presents a concept plan to the MPC for the purpose of obtaining information and guidance prior to entering into binding commitments or incurring substantial expense. Any opinions or advice provided at the meeting are not binding with respect to any official action on the subsequent formal application.

- **Preliminary Plan.** Following the concept plan, the detailed preliminary plan is submitted, where the MPC would hold a formal public hearing on PUD application and special use permit. The MPC recommendation would be forwarded to the City Council or Parish Commission, as appropriate, for approval or denial.

- **Final Plan.** Because all issues and concerns with the PUD should be resolved during the preliminary plan and the public hearing that takes place as part of that approval, the final plan approval is intended to be a technical confirmation of the approved preliminary plan. If there are numerous changes between the approved preliminary plan and the final plan, then the plan requires resubmittal as a new application. Typically the MPC staff reviews the final plan for conformance with the approved preliminary plan, which is then forwarded on to the City Council or Parish Commission, as appropriate, for approval or denial.

**NONCONFORMITIES**

Nonconformity regulations should be updated to specifically address the variety of potential nonconforming situations.

In any ordinance update, the intent is to eliminate as many nonconformities as possible. Many are eliminated when new or revised districts are tailored to existing conditions or remapping of districts is undertaken, however, some properties and uses will remain nonconforming. Therefore, the nonconformities article should be rewritten for clarity and include provisions for nonconforming uses, structures, site characteristics, and lots.
The updated provisions should clearly spell out what types of changes and/or alterations are permissible. The following are the types of nonconformities the UDC should address:

▷ **Nonconforming Structure.** A nonconforming structure is an existing, legal structure that does not conform to the standards of the district where it is located, created either prior to the effective date of this UDC or, as of the effective date of this UDC and any subsequent amendment, is made nonconforming.

▷ **Nonconforming Use.** A nonconforming use is the existing, legal use of a structure or land that is not allowed within the district, created either prior to the effective date of this UDC or, as of the effective date of this UDC and any subsequent amendment, is made nonconforming.

▷ **Nonconforming Site Characteristic.** A nonconforming site characteristic is an existing, legal site characteristic, such as landscape, fences or walls, lighting, or parking, that does not comply with the standards of this UDC, created either prior to the effective date of this UDC or, as of the effective date of this UDC and any subsequent amendment, is made nonconforming. This would be a new category of nonconformity for the Planning Area.

▷ **Nonconforming Lot.** A nonconforming lot is an existing lot of record that does not comply with the lot dimension standards of this UDC, created either prior to the effective date of this UDC or, as of the effective date of this UDC and any subsequent amendment, is made nonconforming.

▷ **Nonconforming Sign.** A nonconforming sign is an existing, legal sign that does not comply with the sign standards of this UDC, created either prior to the effective date of this UDC or, as of the effective date of this UDC and any subsequent amendment, is made nonconforming. Nonconforming signs should also contain provisions specifically for permanent versus temporary signs. Temporary signs can be more aggressively regulated; for example, all temporary signs can be required to come into conformance within 60 days of the effective date of the UDC.

**Flexibilities should be added to the nonconforming structure regulations for additions and enlargements.**

The nonconforming structure regulations can be made more flexible with the addition of two provisions:

▷ Nonconforming structure regulations should clearly state that only the dimensional element of the structure that is nonconforming is not permitted to be expanded. For example, if a structure is nonconforming in terms of overall height, but seeks to build an addition that is not in violation of the district height limit, that addition can be built so long as it conforms to all other regulations without any special approvals.

▷ The UDC should allow the nonconforming walls (with some limitations) of existing nonconforming dwellings that are nonconforming in terms of the side or rear wall to be extended. This type of provision is very useful in allowing additions to existing homes, as it encourages continued investment in existing older neighborhoods, preserves the existing housing stock, and is a way to reward property owners who continue to invest in their homes, particularly older homes. Where a dwelling is deemed nonconforming because of encroachment into the required interior side or rear yard, the structure may be enlarged or extended vertically or horizontally along the same plane as defined by its existing perimeter walls, so long as the resulting structure does not increase the degree of the existing nonconformity or otherwise violate this UDC. (See diagram on next page)

**Nonconforming uses in all districts should be subject to the same time period of discontinuance.**

Currently, nonconforming uses are subject to different discontinuance timeframes depending on district and/or use. For easier administration, this should be simplified to one timeframe for all nonconforming uses. It is recommended that this period be one year.
New regulations for nonconforming site characteristics should be added.

Rather than render a structure nonconforming because of a site characteristic, flexibility should be built into the UDC by creating a separate nonconformity category for elements such as landscape, fences or walls, lighting, or parking. The regulations would allow normal maintenance and incidental repair to a nonconforming site element, but prohibit repairs or reconstruction that would create any new nonconformity or increase the degree of the previously existing nonconformity. The regulation would also spell out when nonconforming site elements must be brought into conformance when a new principal structure is constructed on a site, an existing principal structure is increased in floor area by a certain amount, an existing parking lot is fully reconstructed or expanded, or, in specific circumstances, such as when 50% or more of the length of a nonconforming fence is reconstructed.

Nonconforming lot provisions should be included.

The current ordinance does not address nonconforming lots. While modifications to district regulations would bring many lots into conformity, there would still be some that are nonconforming. In order to acknowledge the varied development pattern throughout the Planning Area, each existing legal nonconforming lot should be allowed to develop with a use permitted within the district and subject to all other dimensional requirements with the exception of lot area and lot width.

Nonconforming sign regulations should be clarified.

It is recommended that the UDC incorporate the following nonconforming sign regulations. These would both assist in clarifying how nonconforming signs may be maintained and lead to the gradual elimination of nonconforming signs.

- A nonconforming sign and sign structure may remain in use, so long as it remains otherwise lawful, meets the requirements of this UDC. The sign face of an existing nonconforming sign may be replaced, but the structure cannot be altered to accommodate such change.
No nonconforming sign and sign structure may be relocated, in whole or in part, to any other location on the same or other lot, unless the entire sign and sign structure conforms to all regulations of the zoning district in which the sign is relocated.

No nonconforming sign can be altered or enlarged in a way that increases the nonconformity of the sign or sign structure. This in no way precludes normal maintenance and cleaning or changing of the sign face.

In the event that any nonconforming sign and sign structure is damaged or destroyed to the extent of more than 50% of its value prior to the damage, the sign and sign structure cannot be restored or repaired unless it conforms to all applicable regulations for the district. A nonconforming sign and sign structure that is removed from a site cannot be restored unless it conforms to all applicable regulations for the district.

Any nonconforming sign that is located on property that has failed to maintain a valid business license or that becomes vacant and unoccupied for a period of 180 days or more is deemed to be abandoned. Abandoned nonconforming signs are prohibited and must be removed by the owner of the sign or the property owner of the premises. No approvals may be issued for buildings with nonconforming abandoned signs until such signs are removed. No business license may be issued for businesses with nonconforming abandoned signs after the date that such nonconforming signs are required to be removed or come into conformance.

ANNEXATION

The UDC should include a procedure for annexation of unincorporated land into the City of Shreveport.

In order to assess proposed annexations into the City of Shreveport from the surrounding Parish, some basic standards for evaluating the annexation should be added to the UDC. Generally, these standards for evaluation would look at the following:

- Consistency with the Master Plan
- Contiguity with City parcels
- Environmental impact
- Availability of public services and facilities, including evaluation of any private streets
- Proposed improvements
- Ability to comply with the UDC

In addition, the article would include a procedure for annexation approval, including the appropriate zoning designation for the area.