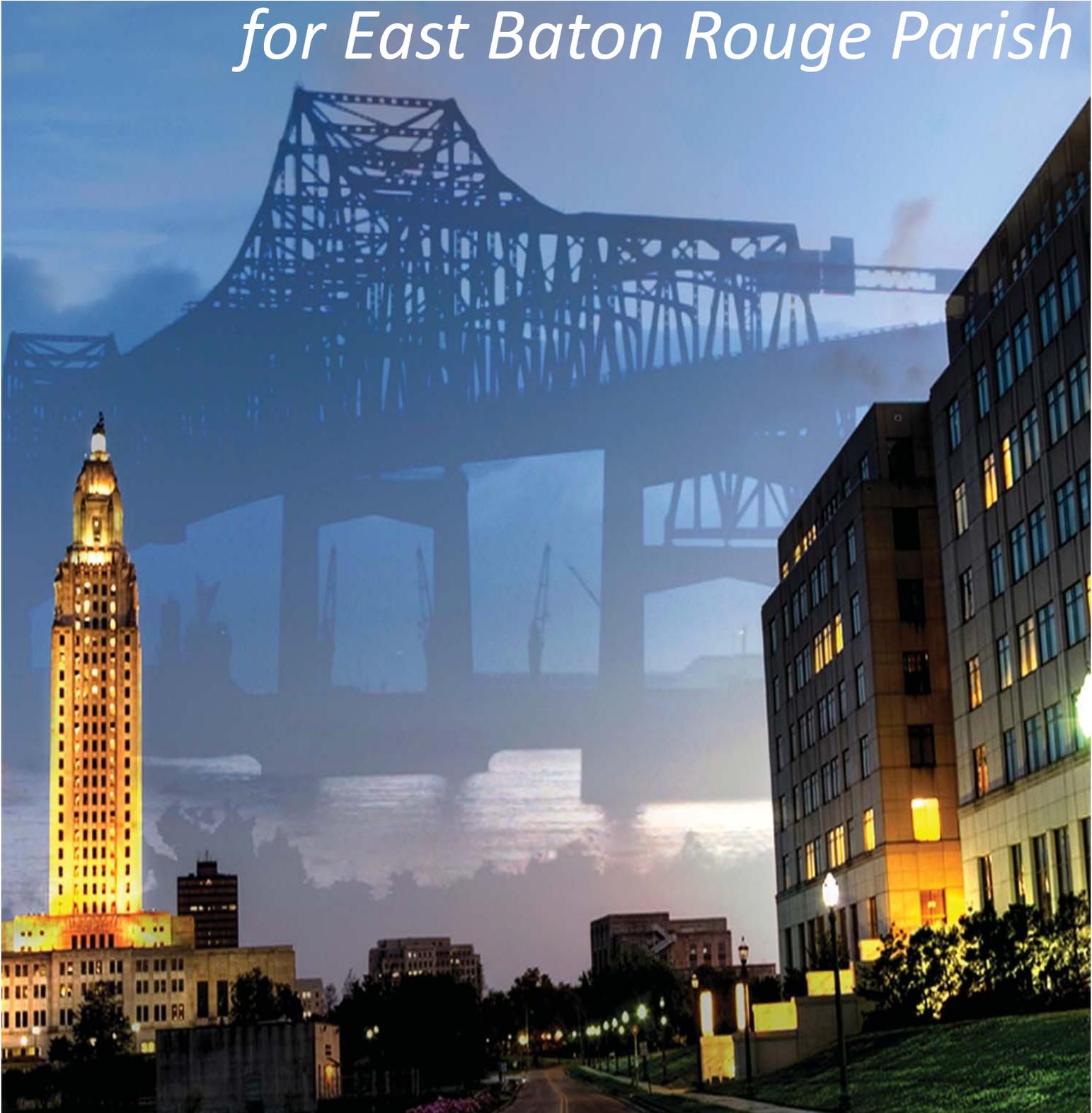


# *A Vision*

*for East Baton Rouge Parish*





# A Vision

## for East Baton Rouge Parish

### Moving the Horizon Plan Forward



More than 30 years ago, Baton Rouge set out to blaze new trails in changing the way the community was growing, changing and using its natural resources. City-Parish residents voted in 1988 to approve a mandate that would establish a comprehensive land use and development plan. The result was the Horizon Plan, a comprehensive land use and development plan that was formally adopted by the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council in April 1992. It has been successfully updated every five years since then.

The Horizon Plan has served as a guide for making decisions about land use and development within the City-Parish for nearly 20 years. Its primary emphasis was to identify major issues that influence future growth, to decide the actions necessary to address these issues, and to propose specific strategies that will help the City-Parish use its natural resources wisely and efficiently.

Residents have expressed concern about abandoned and declining areas. The hurricanes of 2005 exacerbated the issue, as an influx of new residents created additional development and service pressures on East Baton Rouge Parish. The combination of current trends and the devastation of these storms underscored the need for additional comprehensive planning – to create an environment for positive change and future sustainability. Mayor Holden accelerated the regular update of the Horizon Plan, and in 2008 commissioned the new comprehensive plan update called FUTUREBR. One of the key elements of FUTUREBR is a strong commitment to public involvement that has continued since adoption. Thousands of Parish residents and stakeholders have given input on their vision for the future.

The plan covers the entire unincorporated area of East Baton Rouge Parish, as well as the city of Baton Rouge. The “vision” of FUTUREBR provides an overview of the goals to be achieved through implementation.



## The Comprehensive Plan Elements include:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Community Design and Neighborhoods
- Housing
- Environment and Conservation
- Parks and Recreation
- Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Public Services

*A clear vision for East Baton Rouge's future allows residents, business owners, stakeholders and visitors an opportunity to embrace the City's shared aspirations.*





## Input for the Vision

If it is to take hold and endure, a vision for the Parish must resonate in the hearts and minds of its residents. It must embody the collective civic values and ideals drawn directly from its citizens. In developing the Vision, the FUTUREBR team involved hundreds of residents in workshops and open houses, and thousands contributed their opinion in online surveys in 2009 and 2010. Through this inclusive outreach process, residents explored ideas, expressed opinions, and identified potential future strategies for shaping the Parish's future.

FUTUREBR included seven community workshops – two were parishwide, four were at a neighborhood scale, and one had a transportation focus. Attendance totaled nearly 800 at these workshops, marking a significant community interest in future planning. The workshop concepts were tested in land use scenario options, and the best results are reflected in this vision. In addition, the planning commission held 15 district open houses – and 350 citizens attended these to hear about work in progress, offer critiques and suggestions, and interact with the planning team in an informal setting. Of those participating, at least two-thirds were first-time participants in the City-Parish's planning processes. Finally, nearly 3,400 people participated in an online survey to provide input on the final policy decisions that shape the Vision and Plan.

The FUTUREBR update included ten community workshops in 2017 and 2018 with hundred of citizens reviewing the Plan and providing comments.



## A Future Vision of the Parish

A snapshot of Baton Rouge’s shared vision shows a community that is known for sustainability – in economic, environmental and social equity terms. Baton Rouge’s downtown is strong and vibrant day and night. It’s the heart of the region, with abundant opportunities for living, working and recreation.

Neighborhoods throughout the Parish are thriving and citizens have housing options that are safe, and affordable to a variety of income levels. Every neighborhood has attractive open spaces and residents have many desirable options for getting around, including walking, biking, riding transit and driving. The Mississippi River and other waterways are protected and optimized for multiple uses.

The Parish has an exemplary K-12 school system that offers educational opportunities for all residents. The Parish’s colleges and universities are national leaders in a variety of fields and are surrounded by successful neighborhoods that are well-linked with downtown and other parts of the City. The Parish’s economy is prosperous, with a mix of traditional industries and new business sectors. The Parish is renowned for embracing and cultivating new talent and ideas whether in the arts, business or the public realm.



*To take hold and endure, a vision for the East Baton Rouge Parish must resonate in the hearts and minds of residents. It has to embody the collective, civic values and ideals drawn directly from citizens.*

## Core Values and Dreams

A diverse group of residents and stakeholders representing all parts of East Baton Rouge Parish provided input through workshops, open houses, interviews, focus groups and survey discussions. Respondents consistently cited the following core values and aspirations they believed should be the foundation for building a vision for East Baton Rouge Parish.

**Prosperity:** All residents have access to a thriving economy with job opportunities in growing diverse businesses.

**Equity:** All residents have access to a good education, public services, housing and job opportunities.

**Diversity:** The City is known for embracing diversity and acceptance of other cultures, ethnicities and groups.

**Safety:** People feel safe where they live, work and play.

**Strong Neighborhoods and Communities:** Neighborhoods in all areas of the City-Parish are desirable places to live and have a range of housing types and nearby amenities to serve residents.

**Convenient Transportation:** People and goods have new choices, as well as improved existing ways to move throughout the parish.

**Healthy Environment:** Natural resources are protected and conserved to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for current and future residents.

**Sustainability:** The future reflects the creativity and resiliency of East Baton Rouge's young residents and offers a sustainable place for youth to thrive – with a focus on building a future based on fiscal, physical,

*Great cities don't just happen. Great cities require considerable discussion, citizen participation, leadership and creativity.*

## Implementation

There is much to celebrate about East Baton Rouge Parish. There is a history of entrepreneurial spirit, tremendous resiliency, and wonderful communities and neighborhoods. Natural resources and open spaces are valued. Residents want the best for their children, including exemplary school systems, opportunities for advanced education and training, and a strong economy that helps families and all Parish residents. There's a desire to reinvigorate the City's downtown and its economy, to attract and retain young people so that they have opportunities to succeed and raise their families, and to connect communities with diverse transportation options. These sentiments lie at the heart of what the FUTUREBR seeks to nurture and improve.

While a vision provides the long-term goals, a comprehensive plan provides a framework for accomplishing these goals. The FUTUREBR Plan guides housing, economic development, transportation, land use, the environment, community design and other areas through the decision-making processes. It should remain viable for 20 years or more with updates every five to 10 years to reflect changing conditions.

Finally, the City-Parish will track its progress in achieving the Vision with a monitoring program. A monitoring program uses parishwide and local indicators, such as the proportion of new development that is infill and redevelopment, miles of trails completed, or number of homes within walking distance of transit, to measure implementation performance of a plan.



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