
COVINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Stakeholder Meeting: Land Use; Transportation; Env. Quality, Sustainability, & Hazard Mitigation
8:00 am – 11:00 am; 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Date: December 5, 2019
Project Number: 1805
Meeting Date: November 5, 2019
Location: Covington City Hall (317 N Jefferson Ave, Covington, LA 70433)

Team Members Present:

- Blake Crow (DBA)
- Taylor Fehmel (DBA)
- Tim Jackson (Meyer)

Notes:

- Post office serves 60k people
- Include traffic counts in the comp plan
- Include Complete Streets
 - City has never officially adopted it
- Prevent Planning Commission waivers
- Use the City of Lafayette as a reference for effective bump outs at intersections
- The City can be better at communicating with residents about online access and where to find when and where studies have been completed for viewing (ex. Complete Streets plan)
- The shops at Claiborne Hill use the Trace to get to Work
- Manchac Greenway
 - Striping along Highway 21 to connect Madisonville to the Trace
 - “Ring around the Lake”
 - Covington connection to Madisonville
 - Mandeville connection to Covington
- SSA Study
 - Bus to private schools
 - Look at RPL
 - Lots of private schools in Covington
 - Idea: Stagger when schools are let out
- Projects need to be comp plans, otherwise hard to receive funding in the future
 - Last update was in 2015
 - 2020 parish hearings SDMI will be taking place- expires in July
 - City is being proactive about it
- Hazard mitigation from city center to Lacombe
 - Old courthouse
- City has own plan on how to emergency plans
 - Mayor is the “incident commander”
 - Identified neighbors with one access point
- Transportation opportunities
 - COAST- Council On Aging

- Senior housing & Stark will pick you up and drive you
 - Need to book two weeks in advance; service stops at 5 pm
- Public transportation needs expansion (ex. Residential access to doctors)
- Used to have public bus from Downtown Covington to NOLA
 - Greyhound
 - Trailways
- Idea: Park and ride
 - Parish looked into bus systems w/ park and ride-- RCP did the design
 - Covington to BR
 - Mississippi to Covington
- Not a ton of connections East - West
- 14k cars come through Covington a day
- 10k residents but 18k jobs
- Sustainability Issues
 - Need to house jobs - people who work here can live here
 - Construction
 - Boat builder
 - Plumbers
 - Nursing
 - CNA's
 - Soft training
 - Summertime programming
 - Technical high schools
- Hazard mitigation grant funds
 - Raising generators
 - Raising houses
- Parish is responsible for allocating funding if there is a disaster
 - City can go to parish to advocate for a specific project
 - Parish can keep 100% of funds for hazard mitigation if desired
- West 30s
 - Habitat for Humanity has done work in the West 30s. HH will demo the house if they can buy it, but ownership is hard to track
 - VOA - volunteers had residents go through succession problems, no clear titles
 - Family Homes
 - Cannot use CBD grants on these houses because of entry forms
 - Johnny Appleseed Project
 - APA
 - Gentrification
 - Pressure for affordable housing
 - Abandoned properties
 - Nonprofit buying to reno or redo and then the people who were originally living there cannot afford to buy it
 - West 30s Redemption
 - Ryan Burns
 - Bar Association to work with Individual Owners

- It is Civil Law Pro-bono work
- Delgado CC moved out of town, downfall in trade education
 - Need place for soft skills training
 - Part time educational component
- City has stronger tree regulations than parish does
 - Look into making adjustments in setbacks
 - Can reduce parking and planting to 30% to save a live oak
 - Can make adjustments in setbacks
- Sierra Club
 - Honey Island Chapter
 - Margie Victors
 - David Campbell
 - Plant trees and become solar energy independent
- Canopy Ordinance
 - I-Tree (Ask Keith for it)
 - Needs to be updated
 - Residential, keep 50% of the 6" trees on the site, depends on the tree
 - Live Oak—you cannot cut it down, regardless of the situation
- Map of Old Covington Tree Canopy Study should be made
- Lots of new trees are planted
 - But planted in fill
 - Change planting standards, what they can be planted in and space allocation
- Bogue Falaya has river testing updates
- Pipes in city are aging in older sections
 - Top of the concrete pipes have completely eroded
 - We can't have septic in the area because of clay; package plants
 - Flower Estates & Tammany Hills have individual sewers, go into the river
 - There are private sewers near creeks and large lots
 - 2" force main
 - Idea: grinder pump into City Sewer instead of into the river
- What is the city's sewage treatment plant capacity? (Ronald Reagan Highway)
 - What can it handle in the future
 - Use to pump into the creek
 - Now city has installed check valves
 - But no one can swim in the rivers
 - Parish Issue? Cannot start Blueways Project because rivers are not swimmable
 - MS-4
 - City has to clean water before released for recharge
 - Impact fee for development
 - Pond at the end of Tyler St
 - Policy needed for packaged plants
 - No individual sewers
 - This is how Mandeville was able to annex so many properties
 - All new subdivisions are connected to city sewer

- Had problem with I&I but they are fixing it in the older sections
- Curbs
 - 1982- everything was curbed
 - 2009 new code that wants to get rid of curbs
- The state building code allows slab on grade houses, the City cannot get rid of them
 - But we can change how the footing are laid
 - Only option is to change fill requirements
- Flooding and Drainage
 - City needs an updated map of floodzone
 - End of Tchefuncte River has biggest issues
 - Overall Covington has good positive drainage
 - Has a good flood ordinance by may want to increase the requirements
 - Lots of water coming in from the developments north of town
 - Lots of erosion behind River Forest
 - NRCS did a bank stabilization design
 - Repetitive Loss Map
 - They square off the shapes because cant be pinpointed
 - If flood continues, O zone, Savannahs, and Covington Point may be included
 - If structures become substantially damaged the owners will need to look into flood insurance
 - Simpson Creek
 - Runs through peoples yards and ROW
 - Thompson Creek
 - Private and ROW
- Parking Regulations
 - Covington can look at NOLA's new commercial development parking regulations
 - Currently no mandated detention rules
 - Only have to do it if needed variances
- Rattlesnake Hwy Development was done incorrectly
 - Its on the Scenic Highway website for "what not to do"
- There is more vacant land than on the current map
 - More Vacant in the West 30s
 - East Side has empty lots- Poole Family, its already platted
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- Bike/Ped Safety
 - Look into permanent reflectors and visibility on all streets
 - Safety priority even in residential areas
 - Speed humps – look at Lafayette
 - Emergency vehicles do not like them
 - Other traffic calming strategies
 - Roads that have deep ditches need safety reflectors
 - Lee Road
 - Night reflector markings on Route 21
 - Bicycling in Covington
 - Blue bikes

- More road stripping
 - Sidewalks
 - No where for residents to get to Walmart
 - Really need to connect what we have now
 - Old Landing is not connected via sidewalk
 - Maybe swap with four way stops?
- Transportation
 - Never want to make private roads in Covington
 - Parking Meter
 - Idea: Park Mobile app
 - 2 hour parking
 - Small businesses can have parking in front of their stores
 - Boston Street & Tyler
 - Test alternative with flashing red light instead
 - Parking on one side
 - Light at Lee Lane is a problem for rush hour traffic
 - Future DOT roundabouts
 - Need to really look at where they are proposing
 - Do not want one at off ramp and Boston St
 - Put it on columbia instead
 - Lots of traffic at Winn Dixie
 - Traffic at Fulsome
 - Do not want Four lanes of traffic anywhere in the city
 - Context: want to look at a new gateway into town
 - RPC did a study on entrances and gateways
 - Want to keep Covington an “Island”, not sprawl
 - Work, Eat, Bank, Live Here
 - Want a new comprehensive study to reconfigure and preserve
 - Buffer zones
 - Creeks
 - People are buying up lots and destroying the land at creek edges
- Development
 - Burns Family
 - West side development
 - Create a development plan together
 - Form based codes for affordability
 - Single
 - Double quad
 - Lot sizes- how do we put an infill ordinance, overlay
 - The growth north
 - South Part of Town
 - Add apt in the back
 - 15th and New Hampshire
 - Old Sanitarian
 - Its shut down but zoned multi-family
- Environmental

- Grids on top of creeks policy to turn streets into drainage greenways --- maybe recreation
- Idea: Village Center on north side of town?
 - No, want to keep center of town where it is
- Mixed house types, do not have that opportunity with current zoning
- Look at River Ranch in Lafayette as an example
 - T& D ordinance
- Parish Tax sharing
 - Sewer & water is a way to grow
 - Municipal overlay zone
- Need for regulations different than the parish
- Subdivisions can go under municipal zone
 - New canopy trees when new development
 - Certain percentage of stormwater with new development
- Projected Growths
 - What age groups are coming in
 - Elderly need houses
 - Smaller houses so young people and old people can live
- Young professionals
 - Silk Stocking district
 - Building big houses on small lots, need to look at the regulations
- Need more opportunities for “transitional rental houses”
- 1400 sqft lot- duplexes are impossible to build here with current zoning
- Kids are aging and moving out and not coming back
 - More things to do in bigger cities
 - What can keep them here?
 - 35 year old families
 - Things to do, with good school districts
 - Want to keep the people working in institutions living here
 - Oil services related companies moving in
 - Some commute into Covington but its rare
- Where can the city loosen up the stringent regulations
 - Jankey Ave, opportunities for mixed housing
 - Fee simple townhomes on
 - 28th and 29th
 - Harrison and Van Burren (old concrete site owned by the parish, may be an opportunity)
 - 21st and Taylor
 - Jeff and 11th
 - 7th Ave
 - 9th Ave
 - Whole town was multi family when it first started
 - Infill duplexes are ideal, zoning so you do not realize they are there and they do not stand out
- Zoning is not the same on both sides of the street, need to look at changing

- Can future developments be built to 'look' like the old sections, same standards
 - Example: Village and Savannahs, does not look like Covington
 - Stop production of "cookie-cutter" houses
- What to do about derelict lots or abandoned lots
 - Example: Mr. Pittman's property across from St. Peters
- Creation of a Community Development Office
 - Recommendation of an additional task service
 - Parishwide and citywide—residents do not know the work that the government is doing for them
- Land Use
 - Rezone infill developments for other purposes
- Parish used to test water quality often, do they still do that? If so, where can we get the data?
- Northshore Community Foundation: nonprofit, do a ton of grant writing
- Look into public transportation again
 - Can we sustain it, even limited corridors?
 - Implementation
- Sterling Properties Center City
 - People without jobs can get to work
- Bike path down I-90
- Neighborhood Navigator/Coordinator
- Environmental
 - Used to dredge rivers
 - Stopped and Zone A is not Zone b
 - Slow down the water into the river with GI
- Policy for retention ponds in new developments
- Gutters, downspouts, French drains
- Neighbors raise houses and the other neighbor becomes affected and floods
- What to do about old infrastructure
 - Columbia & Lockwood
- Comprehensive stormwater study/drainage study
 - Smoke tests for sewage
- Collins St: the manhole covers were improperly put on
- Water Oak: should not be planted anywhere, "30 yrs to grow 30 yrs to die"

Sincerely,

Taylor Fehmel
Associate

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