



## Future Land Use & Development Plan – Part 2

# *Future Land Use & Development Goals and Objectives*

## Introduction

Communities throughout Louisiana are facing new challenges to long-term sustainability and resiliency. Due to the impacts of recent natural events, cities are tackling difficult questions related to the kind of growth that should happen within and adjacent to their boundaries. Morgan City has, for decades, built upon its unique geographic advantages to remain a prominent center for water-based shipping and manufacturing. The Atchafalaya River and Intracoastal Canal are its economic engines, and Lake Palourde provides the opportunity for quality water-based recreation. Collectively, these waters define what Morgan City was and what it will be for decades to come.

While **Part 1** of this *Future Land Use and Development Plan (FLUDP)* focused on existing conditions and characteristics, **Part 2**, establishes areas of future land use/character and details development goals and objectives to achieve the quality and character of development that is desired by the community. A subsequent document, entitled the *Morgan City Zoning and Land Development Code (ZLDC)*, will provide the regulatory framework that will guide investment in such a way that it meets the goals of this FLUDP.

The FLUDP recognizes that, for a community surrounded on three sides by water, land is a valuable resource, and, therefore, how it is developed and redeveloped in the short-term should be carefully considered within the context of a long-term vision based on sustainable growth and reinvestment. In doing so, the recommendations included herein aim to guide decision-making and development policy by appropriately balancing the economic, social, and environmental health of Morgan City.

The FLUDP uses a character-based approach to describe future land use. In that regard, it is not sufficient to create a plan based simply upon general land uses. For example, much of the City can be described as

**Sustainability** refers to the use of resources to meet the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It also refers to actions or strategies that provide the maximum collective benefit to environmental, social, and economic systems.



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“single-family residential.” However, this moniker neglects the varying character of neighborhoods based on lot size, building intensity, setbacks, scale, site design, etc. Similarly, “commercial” areas vary greatly from the traditional Downtown, to retail areas developed over the past three decades. The FLUDP recognizes these differences and establishes future land use policy based on the belief that how land is used and what development looks like must be addressed together in order to help Morgan City continue to evolve as a desirable place for residents, businesses, industries, institutions, and visitors to invest.

## Planning Considerations

The potential for the development landscape to evolve in the next twenty years is a function of several planning considerations. These considerations include both inherent characteristics as well as those dictated by public policy and local decision making. In either case, they must be understood in order to establish a future direction for community growth that properly leverages public and private investment within the context of a viable vision.

### Growth and Diversification of Economy

Despite not growing as predicted in the 1970s, the City’s local economy did diversify. One of the larger businesses that were central to this diversification was the Teche Regional Medical Center, a 165-bed hospital that serves the approximate 54,000 residents of the City and greater St. Mary Parish. The development of this hospital subsequently spurred complimentary development of offices along several blocks of Brashear Avenue. The result has been a modest, yet deliberate transformation of this portion of the City into a concentrated center for white-collar employment. Still today, this area has adequate vacancy to receive additional development, putting little immediate pressure on other portions of the City to do so. From a public standpoint, it is important for the City to continue to facilitate opportunities to further diversify the economy in this area and others.

Given the factors of a reduction in population, the limited sites available for water-based industry, and adequate lands to accommodate future employment-based development, it is unlikely that large areas of undeveloped lands will be absorbed in the next twenty years. However, as described in the *Balancing Development with Natural Resource Protection* section below, investment in flood mitigation infrastructure along the





shores of Lake Palourde may open up several acres for new development.

### Revitalization and Redevelopment Opportunities

One opportunity for investment may lie in areas that are already developed but do not meet contemporary market demands. Based on the condition of infrastructure or structures, high levels of structural or parcel vacancy, or obsolescence, the City may consider targeted redevelopment in order to transform underperforming portions of the City that are already served by public infrastructure and services. As further detailed in the *Implementation* section of this plan, a Neighborhood Development and Improvement Program was recommended and suggested targeted areas for investment.

### Balancing Development with Natural Resource Protection

Being a coastal community, Morgan City shares an especially close relationship with the resources, ecosystems, and characteristics that make up its environment. It has been traditionally successful in balancing two important aspects of a sustainable city; preservation of the natural resources that make it a unique place, and capitalization on resources that provide its economy with specific competitive advantages. Because of its investment in community infrastructure, the City is especially well-equipped to manage threats of severe natural events and flooding. However, as mentioned in **Part 1, Existing Conditions & Characteristics**, recent natural events demonstrated that there still is need for continued progress. Developing appropriate long-term priorities should be ultimately aimed at creating a sustainable and resilient development environment, from basic infrastructure to individual site and building design.

This approach may continue with the construction of a new levee along Lake Palourde that will open new land for development. The cumulative result of the investment in flood mitigation is that a majority of the City is at no to minimal risk of flood damage, enabling it to stay competitive with other communities and preserve much of its local character.

The current system of transportation, water, sewer, utility and telecommunications infrastructure generally ends at the development footprint. Any new areas of development would require new investment in such amenities in order to realize the full potential of yet undeveloped lands. From the public standpoint, all new infrastructure



investment by the City should be designed and constructed using resilient and sustainable techniques, while being sensitive to the area's unique natural resources.

Private sector development proposals will also have a profound impact on the future landscape in Morgan City. One such development proposal for the Hellenic property seeks to capitalize on the planned levee investment along Lake Palourde. This property is the most substantial piece of developable property in the City, and is large enough to warrant careful consideration of land use and character as it will create an entirely new community within Morgan City. As information about the proposed project, and other new private-sector development, emerges, the FLUDP must be amended to integrate its vision and impacts, and to guide development in a manner that is consistent with the policies and principles of this plan and that contributes positively to the community's character, resiliency, sustainability, and the area's natural resources.

## Creating a Vision-Based Plan

**Part 1, *Existing Conditions & Characteristics***, and the sections above, establish the planning context for the FLUDP. This context is based upon an analysis of existing development and an understanding of contemporary planning philosophies and methodologies. However, in order to be successful, the plan must also be based on a local vision. To establish the vision, several meetings were conducted with City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, City staff, local stakeholders, and residents.

As part of the original kick-off meeting with the Planning and Zoning Commission, residents and other stakeholders, the following guiding principles were brought to light during that meeting.

### Procedures and Enforcement

- The FLUDP and ZLDC must be directly linked so that there is consistency through the development approval process.
- Plans and policies must be crafted so that they can be easily enforced.
- Appropriate standards and mechanisms must be in place to ensure that variances are not used as a way of arbitrarily skirting development regulations.





- The plan and regulations must be simple so that it is easily understood and there is little room for arbitrary interpretation.

#### **Sustainability and Character**

- Development in the historic district is highly regulated. Other areas of the City may benefit from a more regulatory approach to development and design.
- Development planning and regulation must carefully consider what is realistic in various neighborhoods based on lot characteristics, intended land use, and localized socioeconomic factors.
- Plans and policies should focus on the preservation of existing neighborhoods, especially those most at risk of negative change.
- Planned residential areas need development standards to ensure they are compatible with the surrounding context.
- Regulations should reflect development models that are specifically intended to minimize damages created by flooding.

These outcomes provided the guidance for the creation of the development goals and objectives found in the next section.

### **Development Goals and Objectives**

The information provided up to this point describes the existing and future land use and development context providing the foundation for future investment. This section establishes land use and development goals and objectives by which the appropriateness of proposed development may be measured. Subsequent sections of this plan reflect these goals and objectives, and the new ZLDC will provide the beginnings of a regulatory framework for their implementation.

The following goals and objectives are a result of several factors, including technical analysis of existing land use and development characteristics, previous planning, and initial input provided by City staff, elected officials, members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, and various community stakeholder and residents.

#### **Goal #1. Foster long-term sustainability and resiliency.**

Any investment in the private or public realms should be made with the intent of creating a more sustainable model of growth for the City. Attaining the following objectives will fortify the community as it anticipates future economic and environmental conditions:





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1. **Continue Morgan City's history of investment in flood mitigation infrastructure.** The portions of Morgan City that are protected by flood mitigation infrastructure are almost entirely built-out. In order to open new lands for development, new infrastructure must be built to provide the same level of protection and to provide for future development that is both sustainable and resilient.
2. **Consider the costs and benefits of infrastructure and services to new development areas.** Generally, sustainable development seeks to build first on lands currently served by public infrastructure. With new development proposed for the Hellenic property, the City should assess the long-term costs and benefits of development prior to the installation of new infrastructure.
3. **Assess the viability of existing building types in areas at risk of flooding.** Recent natural events have brought to light the fragility of development throughout southern Louisiana. In areas of Morgan City that are susceptible to flooding, development should be required to integrate flood mitigation techniques in order to minimize damage and recovery time following significant events.
4. **Create revitalized and stable neighborhoods.** Investing in existing development is imperative to make sure that residents have stable, safe neighborhoods that bolster livability. Compatible infill development and housing/infrastructure rehabilitation help to stabilize and strengthen existing neighborhoods, while proactive enforcement and sound regulations may be adopted to sustain development character and protect against the encroachment of adjacent, incompatible development activities. Also, investing in housing, infrastructure, and public services in at-risk or disinvested neighborhoods can help keep them at a quality living standard.
5. **Establish a sustainable economic model for development and maintenance.** Long-term economic sustainability is dependent on several factors. In order to maintain the population and grow it over the coming years and decades, housing and neighborhoods must be preserved and improved in order to offer a quality of life equal to or better than the surrounding cities and parish. Other aspects of sound investment, such as the reuse of existing commercial buildings, helps achieve other sustainable goals such as efficient land utilization, enhanced access to local services, and building resource conservation. Lastly, economic strategies must be established that help assess the costs, benefits, and feasibility of various decisions related to investments in infrastructure, housing, and economic development.



## Goal #2. Create actionable land use and development policies.

In general, land use and development policies must be clear and effective. In this respect, the FLUDP and ZLDC should attain the following objectives:

1. **“Keep it simple.”** The plan and regulations must be easily understood by residents, staff, and elected officials. Creating policies that are overly complex or technical will create roadblocks to consistent administration, entitlement, and enforcement.
2. **Craft policies and regulations to provide a clear means of enforcement.** Policies and regulations must include proper mechanisms for enforcement. Otherwise, they will simply be rules “on the books” that are easily neglected.
3. **Create better standards and criteria to mitigate variances.** Variances are intended to provide relief from undue hardship based on unique conditions. They are not to be used for waiving development regulations on sites that are able to conform to the district standard.

## Goal #3. Recognize the varying neighborhood conditions throughout the City.

Morgan City is not uniform. It has varying residential areas, commercial corridors, employment areas, and open spaces. As such, land use and development policies must reflect these varying conditions by attaining the following objectives:

1. **Consider local parcel and block characteristics.** The potential for various types of development is a function of the characteristics of the property on which it sits. Simply stated, permitted development types must “fit” their site capabilities.
2. **Tailor policies to reflect local socioeconomic characteristics.** Aside from physical characteristics, local socioeconomic factors dictate the ability of neighborhoods to conform to different levels of regulation. For example, requiring enclosed boat or recreational vehicle parking in low- to moderate-income areas puts substantial financial strain on residents. Development policies must consider this and possibly require varying levels of regulation to see workable outcomes.



#### Goal #4. Address specific aspects of community character.

As described throughout this document, Morgan City is a community of varying character. In recognizing this, the FLUDP must carefully consider the unique aspects of each area and aim to preserve those that are valued by attaining the following objectives:

1. **Create regulations that strengthen local character.** Front setbacks, spacing between structures, parking access and location, building scale, site coverage and imperviousness, and open space are all critical aspects of character in the private realm. Development regulations must look beyond basic land use permissions and yard requirements to foster development that is more specifically appropriate to the existing built and environmental contexts.
2. **Understand that a “one size fits all” approach does not create consistent or better outcomes.** Areas north of Brashear are generally single-family residential. However, on either side of Sixth Street, the character is much different. Lot dimensions, building width, parking management, setbacks, and building materials collectively result in a different feel from one neighborhood to another. This is also true in commercial areas, such as the contrast between Highway 182 and the historic development on Front Street. The FLUDP and ZLDC must recognize these differences and regulate appropriately.
3. **Address characteristics unique to Morgan City.** The water-based lifestyle in Morgan City makes it unique compared to many other communities. Boat and recreational vehicle storage is a viable issue in many neighborhoods. These and other locally specific issues must be addressed in order to draft land use and development policies appropriate for Morgan City.

#### Goal #5. Create attractive gateways and corridors throughout the City.

Morgan City’s gateways are its front door – the first impression people get as they enter and exit the community. As such, they deserve special attention. Attaining the following objectives will ensure they look and operate at a level expected of residents:

1. **Identify priority gateway areas.** The points of entry to a city establish a “brand” and set the expectations for visitors and passers-by. Morgan City has invested in many of its gateways. However,





other points of entry, such as the east end of Highway 182, lack any significant announcement. In all the gateway areas, private development and public investment must be coordinated in order to bolster the image and quality appearance of the community.

2. **Create attractive development in prominent corridors.** Morgan City has several highly travelled corridors, including Highway 182, Victor II, East Boulevard, and others. Land use and development policies must play a role in making them more attractive and, therefore, more desirable for quality uses that serve local needs.
3. **Balance automotive access and multi-mobility.** Many of Morgan City's corridors focus on moving traffic. However, in the interest of enhanced character and functionality, policies should consider access management and multi-modal mobility (i.e., pedestrians and bicycles) in order to create more attractive and safer environments for all users.
4. **Minimize the impacts on adjacent residential areas.** There are several blocks where commercial and industrial development has visibly taken a toll on adjacent and abutting residential areas. Development regulations should address buffering and screening requirements based on the intensity and compatibility of adjacent uses and built forms.

## Future Land Use and Development Plan

The above goals and objectives establish direction for future development and redevelopment of Morgan City. In this section, the FLUDP translates them into a vision for the community's future. It is important to reiterate that the FLUDP is based on both use and character. In this light, it provides recommendations for appropriate uses, compatible development forms, and public investments that create synergy with private investment.

## Future Development Character Types

Just as there is existing land use and character types described in **Part 1, Existing Conditions & Characteristics**, there must be a menu of future development types established that captures both an appropriate use mix and development character in different parts of the City. Many of the future land use classifications are based on existing use and character types, recognizing that much of what is now in place will remain in the foreseeable future and warrants conservation. Other classifications reflect new development models that are for the purpose of slowly transforming the development environment to one that



reflects the City's vision for preserving or enhancing its character. The following future land use classifications describe the characteristics of development envisioned throughout Morgan City.

### *Downtown (Core + Fringe)*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is intended to preserve the traditional, historic pattern and character of development in the downtown core and its fringe areas. This requires modest to no setbacks with an emphasis on the streetscape and front building facades, on-street or centralized parking, and uses that provide for local service without compromising the value and livability of the fringe neighborhoods.

#### *Characteristics:*

- Typically one or two (up to three) stories in building height, with a preference for two-story facades to create street enclosure desired for a pedestrian-oriented downtown environment.
- High percentage of lot coverage.
- Maximum zero front and side yard setbacks in the Downtown Core with modest setbacks and allowance for zero setbacks on block corners in the Downtown Fringe.
- Land use includes a mix of restaurant, local or specialty retail, and institutional and civic uses, with office or residential units on upper floors (as applicable) in the Downtown Core, complimented by surrounding residential uses and in-home businesses by limited or conditional uses. Existing industrial uses may remain either as a nonconforming use, subject to ordinance provisions, or may be a conforming use via a conditional use permit. Newly established industrial uses on properties other than those already established are not permitted.
- Comprehensive sidewalk network with a strong pedestrian orientation.
- Unique streetscape design that reflects a historic character, with parkway greening in the Downtown Fringe areas.
- On-street parking or centralized lots that remove the need for private on-site parking.
- Heightened focus on the materials and quality appearance of front building facades and their relationship to the sidewalk and street.
- Building use, scale, and spacing that is sensitive to neighboring residential uses.





### *Traditional Neighborhood*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is intended to preserve, stabilize, and improve the integrity and value of the City's long-tenured neighborhoods. This includes reinvestment in and rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure and housing stock, and mitigating incompatible uses and nonconforming situations.

#### *Characteristics:*

- Small to modest lot sizes with widths ranging from 30 to 50 feet.
- Due to narrow lot widths, home spacing generally ranges from 10 to 15 feet.
- No or limited on-lot parking accessed by an alley in some locations, with permitted on-street parking to lessen the need for on-lot parking.
- Land use is predominantly site-built single family dwellings, with scattered mobile or manufactured homes, multi-family dwellings, and nonresidential uses. Existing manufactured homes on individual lots and existing nonresidential uses may remain either as a nonconforming use, subject to ordinance provisions, or may be a conforming use via a conditional use permit.
- A traditional neighborhood development (TND) may be established on vacant or redeveloped property, subject to ordinance provisions.
- Building heights are one and two stories.
- Block pattern is on a grid providing maximum connection within and accessibility between adjacent neighborhoods and districts.
- Comprehensive neighborhood infrastructure including sidewalks, marked and signed crosswalks, curb and gutter streets, street lighting, neighborhood parks, and community-based services.
- On-street parking that lessens the requirements of private off-street parking.

### *Conventional Neighborhood*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is intended to conserve the compatibility and character of existing, stable neighborhoods by managing the uniformity of land use, the scale and placement of accessory buildings, the type and scale of housing, and preventing or mitigating the encroachment of incompatible uses.



*Characteristics:*

- Standard lot sizes with widths ranging from 50 to 70 feet.
- Home spacing generally ranges from 15 to 30 feet.
- Driveways and garages or carports provide on-lot parking.
- Land use is site-built single family dwellings with no other unit types or uses.
- A new conventional neighborhood must have a minimum open space ratio of 12 percent to provide common open space (conservation areas, parks, greenways, or waterways) and storm drainage.
- Building heights are one and two stories.
- Block pattern is on a grid or has curvilinear streets but maintains maximum connection within and accessibility between adjacent neighborhoods and districts.
- Comprehensive neighborhood infrastructure including sidewalks, marked and signed crosswalks, curb and gutter streets, street lighting, neighborhood parks, and community-based services.
- Available but minimal on-street parking due to adequate lot widths and sizes to accommodate on-lot parking. On-street parking is used for additional vehicles and visitors.

*Planned Neighborhood*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is intended to provide a new living option for Morgan City residents in a planned neighborhood environment with access and views or open spaces in a walkable, mixed use community.

*Characteristics:*

- Large lot (minimum 80 to 90 feet width) or small lots and mixed housing types clustered around a minimum of 20 percent common open space or recreational amenities (conservation areas, parks, greenways, waterways).
- Home spacing may vary according to the mixture of housing types and the amount of open space.
- Building heights are predominantly one and two stories, with heights up to four stories on the interior of the community.
- Driveways and garages or carports provide on-lot parking.
- Planned neighborhood-serving nonresidential uses may be integrated within the development, subject to design standards.



- May include water-based recreation or marina development, including boat launches and related entertainment and commercial services.
- Comprehensive neighborhood infrastructure including sidewalks, marked and signed crosswalks, curb and gutter streets, street lighting, neighborhood parks, and community-based services.
- Block pattern is on a grid or has curvilinear streets but maintains maximum connection within and accessibility between adjacent neighborhoods and districts.
- Street and lot patterns that maximize access to and views of open spaces.

### *Mixed Neighborhood*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is intended to provide attainable and affordable housing opportunities in quality, safe living environments. It may include individual or mixed housing types including two family and multi-family dwellings or manufactured homes subdivisions or communities by limited or conditional use.

### *Characteristics:*

- Series of lots or blocks developed with single or mixed residential unit types. Uses may include two-family and multi-family dwellings, and manufactured homes subdivisions or communities by limited or conditional use.
- Building heights are predominantly one and two stories, with heights up to four stories on the interior of the community.
- Parking is clustered in small lots adjacent to the dwellings, with a majority placed within the interior of the community.
- Structures may be duplexes or apartment buildings, typical one to two stories in height
- Basic neighborhood infrastructure including sidewalks, marked and signed crosswalks, curb and gutter streets, street lighting, on-site pocket parks, and trails or pathways linking the dwellings, parking, and open space areas.
- Common open space must be integrated throughout the community and broadly accessible.
- Block pattern may be integrated into surrounding neighborhood grid or may limit connections and create internal street network.
- A peripheral bufferyard is required with the extent of landscaping and screening subject to the use and character of adjacent development.





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### *Traditional Corridor*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is intended to preserve and enhance the unique pattern and character of development along and adjacent to West Highway 182 (from U.S. 90 west to Fourth Street), while observing and protecting the value and integrity of the abutting and nearby neighborhoods.

#### *Characteristics:*

- Buildings include commercial structures and residences adapted for commercial use.
- Limited or no building setbacks, with a high building coverage ratio.
- Uses are commercial in nature, including office, retail, and service-oriented businesses.
- On-street parking that may be complemented by private, on-lot parking, subject to site development standards.
- Abutting street cross-section is a decorative boulevard with parkway landscaping.
- Signage is small-scale and limited to building-mounted signs or ground-mounted monuments.
- Comprehensive pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks, marked and signed crosswalks, and street lighting.

### *Gateway Corridor*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is intended to enhance the visual appearance and quality of development along this highly visible corridor as means for improving community character and identity.

#### *Characteristics:*

- Sites include both individual and multi-tenant structures surrounded by parking and vehicular use areas.
- Use of a build-to line (maximum setback) to provide a consistent building setback adjacent to the corridor.
- Uses are local/regional commercial retail, offices, and service-oriented businesses. Existing heavy commercial or industrial uses may remain either as a nonconforming use, subject to ordinance provisions, or may be a conforming use via a conditional use permit.
- Higher standard of building materials and architecture on all facades, increased site landscaping and screening, higher ratio of landscape surface area, and buffering of adjacent and abutting uses.



- Signage is moderated scaled and limited to building-mounted signs or ground-mounted monuments. Pole signs may be permitted adjacent to Highway 90, subject to standards.
- On-site drainage is either underground or by detention/retention that is designed as a site amenity.
- Consolidated driveways, cross access between adjacent properties, and a clearly demarcated parkway frontage.
- Comprehensive pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks, marked and signed crosswalks, signalization, and street lighting.
- Decorative streetscaping including enhanced landscaping in parkways (and boulevards, where applicable), improve street lighting standards, underground utilities, and other site amenities.

### *Local Service Corridor*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is to provide for business and industry supporting uses while enhancing the corridor environs through improved building standards and heightened screening and buffering of outdoor uses, display, and storage.

### *Characteristics:*

- Auto-oriented commercial and industrial corridor including a mix of development types
- Uses are commercial and industrial in nature, including retail and service-oriented commercial businesses and storage, warehousing, and manufacturing industrial buildings and properties.
- Parking and vehicular use areas within the front setback are of an improved, dust-free surface.
- Basic streetscaping including a landscaped parkway and screening of parking and vehicular use areas.
- Buildings are wood or steel framed structures with decorative building materials on the front façade and wrapped on each side façade a distance of 20 percent of the building length.
- Sites largely include individual but may include multi-tenant structures surrounded by parking and vehicular use and /or outdoor storage yards.
- Signage is moderately scaled and limited to building mounted signs and ground-mounted monuments.
- Display of equipment and materials is limited to a defined site area.
- Outdoor storage and display areas are screened from public view, including along and within view of public rights-of-way.



*Professional and Retail District*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is to provide for the retail, service, and professional sectors of the local economy. It is intended to be a quality, well planned district with improved building and site standards.

*Characteristics:*

- Buildings are set back from the street with parking and vehicular use areas in the front and to the side of the building.
- Uses include single and multi-tenant professional offices, medical-related clinics and institutions, retail, restaurants, entertainment, and other commercial establishments.
- Properties have a higher ratio of landscape surface area and increased site landscaping.
- Service areas are screened from public view.
- Buildings are constructed of decorative materials with 360 degree architecture.
- Signage is moderately scaled and limited to building mounted signs and ground-mounted monuments. Signage is coordinated via a master sign plan for multi-tenant buildings.
- Parking areas are screened and well landscaped.
- Buildings are mostly one and two stories but may be taller when not adjacent to existing or future neighborhoods.
- Site access is well managed and coordinated with adjacent sites to include cross and joint access.
- Comprehensive pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks, marked and signed crosswalks, signalization, and street lighting.
- Decorative streetscaping including enhanced landscaping in parkways (and boulevards, where applicable), improve street lighting standards, underground utilities, and other site amenities.
- On-site drainage is either underground or by detention/retention that is designed as a site amenity.

*Neighborhood Industrial*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is intended to provide for lighter industrial uses that are not oriented around the waterfront and which may be in closer proximity to other land uses.

*Characteristics:*

- Uses in this district are lesser scaled and less intensive than those in the Maritime Industrial district.



- These uses are intermixed with surrounding neighborhood lots or blocks and are thus, accessible by streets used for neighborhood access and circulation. Building and site standards must be applied to minimize or mitigate the impacts on adjacent less intensive land uses.
- Where these uses abut or are in direct proximity to less intensive uses, particularly neighborhoods, substantial buffering is warranted.
- Most industrial activity occurs indoors.
- Outdoor storage and display areas are screened along all adjacent properties and streets.

### *Maritime Industrial District*

*Purpose:* This future land use district provides for industrial uses and activities that rely on and benefit from their waterborne access to the Atchafalaya River and the Intracoastal Canal. This district is largely separated from other land uses by way of the floodwall along the river and by Railroad Avenue.

#### *Characteristics:*

- Uses in this district are intensive in terms of their scale, level of activity, and potential impacts (e.g., light, noise, vibration, odor, etc.) on neighboring uses. Uses may include manufacturing, assembly, and warehousing, with many activities occurring outdoors.
- Where industrial uses abut or are in near proximity to less intensive uses, particularly neighborhoods, substantial buffering is warranted.
- Large portions of individual sites may be used for outdoor storage.
- Outdoor storage and display areas are screened along adjacent streets.

### *Open Space*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is for publicly owned properties that are dedicated for the use as permanent open space.

#### *Characteristics:*

- These open space areas are dedicated to long-term passive and/or active public access and use.
- Uses include public parks, cemeteries, school grounds and athletic facilities, public harbors, boat ramps, etc.



### *Conservation Area*

*Purpose:* This future land use district is for the conservation and protection of these low-lying and environmentally sensitive lands.

*Characteristics:*

- These conservation areas are dedicated for long-term passive use and preservation of natural habitats.
- Limited use of these areas may include low-impact recreational facilities, boat launches, walking and biking trails, and flood mitigation infrastructure.

Illustrated in **Map 2.1, *Future Land Use and Development Plan***, are the differing areas of type, pattern, and character of future development within the City limits.

## **Sustainability and Resiliency Development Practices**

Sustainability and resiliency are key components to the long-term health of Morgan City. One aspect of this is the efficient day-to-day operation of the City under normal circumstances. The other aspect is the ability to withstand and quickly recover from major natural events. Appropriate sustainable development practices include:

### **Diversification of energy production and distribution infrastructure.**

Major natural events have the potential to damage or destroy energy production and distribution infrastructure. By exploring renewable energy sources and providing appropriate redundancies in the distribution network, Morgan City will be better equipped to recover quickly from significant events.

**Preservation of important natural resources.** Preserving natural areas in and around the City offers several benefits. First, it sustains the integrity of wildlife ecosystems that are a unique aspect of the local context. Secondly, they provide locations for the impacts of natural events to be mitigated and slowly treated and released back into the environment. Development patterns should recognize undeveloped and open space areas as important assets in recovery and sustainability.

### **Equitable policies for neighborhood stabilization and conservation.**

Frequently, disadvantaged populations bear the brunt of development impacts because they lack the resources necessary to affect change in and around their neighborhood. Land use and development policies





should provide additional protections to those populations that are disadvantaged or at risk.

**Multi-modal access throughout the City.** Whether for a healthy lifestyle or for means to access goods and services after a storm, multi-modal mobility is essential for creating a sustainable city. Automotive, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit must be balanced when designing the transportation network and infrastructure.

**Appropriate densities for development and redevelopment.** Increasing density provides several sustainable benefits, from bringing more people closer to vital goods and services, to preserving valuable natural resources and open areas. Future development practices should recognize the benefits of density through various patterns, such as development and mixed-use development.

**Appropriate paving materials.** Impervious surfaces create several negative impacts, including a urban heat island effect, greater stress for storm water management systems, and reduced landscaping and green space. Development should preserve or increase pervious surfaces in order to mitigate impacts with no additional strain on external infrastructure systems.

**Responsive development forms.** New development should incorporate building forms, construction techniques, and materials that minimize the damage to structures and property and facilitate quick recovery and habitability after significant events.

**Development restrictions for at-risk areas.** Development should be prohibited in areas that are at risk for significant flooding. Such areas can be preserved by permitting greater densities in areas more suitable for sustainable development.

## Plan Implementation

The ability to attain the land use and development vision described in this document and represented by the FLUDP is dependent upon the coordination of policies, resources, and strategies. This section provides recommended actions designed to create synergy among City government, the development community, and citizens of Morgan City.

### Update Development-Related Regulatory Policies

In order for development to occur in accordance with this plan, the development regulations must be amended so that they permit and



encourage appropriate types of development. The new ZLDC will be a substantial step in this process. However, the City must consider other codes and standards, such as the municipal building code, public works and engineering standards, and their role in helping to achieve a sustainable future.

### **Identify Priority Development Projects**

It is unreasonable to think that the City has the resources to quickly achieve all the goals of this plan. Prioritizing key projects will help decision-makers determine where to focus resources in order to affect short-term change in accordance with the long-term vision. These key projects may benefit from public investment in property, infrastructure, or other investments that result in a project that goes above and beyond what the development community would otherwise provide. Priority development projects should be designated based on their ability to:

- Enhance the long-term sustainability of the community;
- Conform to the long-term vision of this plan;
- Catalyze additional private investment;
- Provide long-term fiscal return on the City's investment;
- Enhance the image and appearance of the City; and
- Provide valued services to residents.

### **Establish a Public Realm Capital Improvement Program**

In addition to the private development activities described above, the City must consider its role in providing appropriate public realm amenities to maximize the impact of new development or redevelopment. Coordinated investment offers the greatest likelihood of creating an environment that is conducive to quality, sustainable development. The City may find it prudent to invest in the following:

- Roadways that open key development areas and appropriately link to existing development;
- Water and sewer infrastructure that guide investment and reinvestment toward strategic areas of the City, such as deteriorating neighborhood areas or important commercial areas with the opportunity for adaptive reuse of existing structures;
- Aesthetic improvements (i.e., landscaping, hardscaping, lighting, gateways, etc.) that strengthen the appearance and identity of important corridors and gateways; and





- Telecommunication infrastructure that attracts employment-intensive development and provides for more local community wealth.

### Institute a City-wide Neighborhood Development and Improvement Program

Quality of life begins with neighborhoods. They are what people most identify with in their everyday lives. Morgan City's neighborhoods vary greatly in their history, socioeconomic characteristics, conditions, and values. City leadership must be proactive in making every neighborhood equitable in terms of its basic services and infrastructure. In many parts of the City, these may already be in place. In others, it may require investment or reinvestment. In others still, it may require redevelopment in order to create a community that can offer competitive housing and adequate local services. To establish a starting point, this section includes three components:

1. neighborhood improvement categories that provide a framework for assessing block-by-block conditions;
2. a map that illustrates the locations of the neighborhood improvement categories; and
3. a matrix that identifies actions within each neighborhood improvement category based on public investment, programs and strategies, and development regulations.

#### Neighborhood Improvement Categories

**Conservation Areas** - Neighborhood blocks that have comprehensive neighborhood infrastructure, relatively well-maintained housing stock, and little to no indication of deterioration of lots or structures. Minimal investment is required to bring these blocks to a quality living standard.

**Stabilization Areas** - Neighborhood blocks that are generally sound, but showing early signs of stress or disinvestment. Modest investment may be required to address basic infrastructure improvements, lot and property maintenance, or superficial structural enhancements.

**Improvement Areas** - Neighborhood blocks that include a broad range of conditions from sound to deteriorated. More substantial investment is required to improve neighborhood infrastructure, and to address structural and aesthetic issues for portions of the housing stock while maintaining the general character of the existing neighborhood.

**Redevelopment Areas** - Neighborhood blocks that include high levels of lot and structural vacancy and dilapidation. Deterioration in these blocks is



Conservation Areas warrant good standards to preserve character and to maintain and quality, livable environment.



Stabilization Areas must be monitored to ensure a high quality of life is maintained for residents.





such that structures may need to be razed and replaced with new housing or public investment that significantly alters the traditional character of the neighborhood for the sake of a modern housing stock and community amenities and services.

Displayed in **Map 2.2, *Neighborhood Improvement Plan***, is the recommended areas of conservation, stabilization, improvement, and redevelopment. The subsequent matrix identifies advisable investments, programs, strategies, and regulatory provisions that may be used for each category to ensure a high quality of life for all citizens of Morgan City.

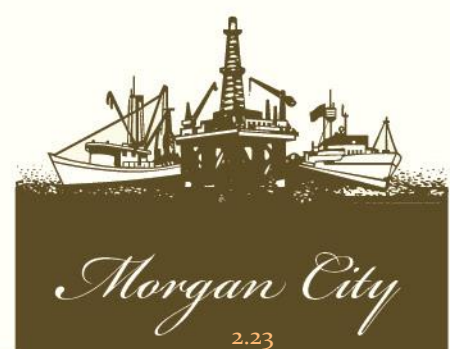
**Neighborhood Improvement Program Matrix**

Investment Types	Conservation Areas	Stabilization Areas	Improvement Areas	Redevelopment Areas
<b>Public Investment</b>				
Maintain existing neighborhood infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, drainage, etc.)	●	●	●	●
Install/repair/reconstruct basic neighborhood infrastructure (i.e. sidewalks, lighting, etc.)		●	●	●
Acquire dilapidated lots for redevelopment, infill development or creation of neighborhood parks or gardens or other compatible neighborhoods service uses			●	●





Investment Types	Conservation Areas	Stabilization Areas	Improvement Areas	Redevelopment Areas
<b>Programs &amp; Strategies</b>				
<i>Organization &amp; Maintenance</i>				
Continue “neighborhood self-maintenance” through formalized neighborhood organizations	●	●	●	●
Provide technical assistance for the establishment of formalized neighborhood organizations, where applicable	●	●	●	●
Identify and empower community leaders to create neighborhood awareness and organization			●	●
Establish and enforce neighborhood and/or property maintenance standards		●	●	●
Create advocacy and education programs for housing maintenance and health	●	●	●	●
Establish low interest loan pools and neighborhood grants for improvement projects		●	●	●
<i>Public Health and Safety</i>				
Enhance targeted policing of known crime “hot spots”		●	●	●







Investment Types	Conservation Areas	Stabilization Areas	Improvement Areas	Redevelopment Areas
Enhance neighborhood-based policing			●	●
Strengthen enforcement standards and resources for abandoned vehicles, lot maintenance, vehicle parking violations, junk storage, etc.	●	●	●	●
<i>Housing &amp; Development</i>				
Create a residential rehabilitation tax abatement program			●	●
Establish a rental housing conversion grant program			●	●
Create an infill development grant program, together with infill compatibility guidelines		●	●	●
Create a portfolio of financial assistance programs for housing investment (i.e. low-interest or revolving loans, CDBG funds, public subsidy, etc.)		●	●	●
Create a neighborhood development corporation to purchase, rehab, or redevelopment stressed lots and structures			●	●





Investment Types	Conservation Areas	Stabilization Areas	Improvement Areas	Redevelopment Areas
Establish a public land bank to prime larger areas for housing or community service redevelopment				●
<b>Regulatory Actions</b>				
Craft residential conservation standards to tightly match existing housing stock	●	●	●	
Accommodate a range of market-responsive housing types based on varying parcel and block characteristics			●	●
Permit low-impact non-residential uses in existing structures		●	●	
Establish adequate buffer requirements for commercial and industrial development adjacent to neighborhoods	●	●	●	●
Limit the use of manufactured homes for infill housing development		●	●	
Prohibit the use of manufactured homes for infill housing development	●			●

