

# Development and Planning – 2016 and 2017 Overview

## The Department in 2016

In January 2016 when the current administration took office, the Planning, Zoning, and Development Department was facing many challenges. A new code, a new director, (shortly thereafter) new attorneys, a negative reputation in some development circles, and several organizational structure challenges were among the list of items to be addressed.

From the 2016 plan: “The critical issues identified during the campaign include varying quality of customer service by the department, lack of access to in progress development information by development professionals (information systems), and inefficiencies in workflow or staffing.”

The team of approximately 50 employees worked to address those challenges through an emphasis on customer service, improving information and communications with the development communities and neighborhoods, a relentless effort to ensure the smooth implementation of the UDC, and an objective look at organizational structure.

These two years have seen steady growth and development of the department, and the department is ready for the next set of challenges.

## 2016-17 Highlights

- Smooth implementation of the Unified Development Code with continued amendments as needed
- Provided for cross training of inspectors
- Oversaw more than 1,700 flood damage permits
- Publication of first Development Guide
- Presented several development workshops for neighborhoods and development community
- Reorganization of department to meet several goals
  - Alignment of neighborhood and historic preservation efforts
  - Streamlined UDC regulatory authority to one division
  - Better enforcement of regulations
  - Improved land use planning by linking with long term planning
- Alcohol code revisions and proposal to remove bar “moratorium”
- Awarded several MPO grants and administered I-49 TIGER grant, resulting in several capital projects in the corridor
- Made several key hires to improve department capacity

# Development and Planning – 2018 Overview

## The Department headed into 2018

The challenge set before the department and the director in early 2016 was to help Lafayette Parish become a development-friendly community.

The highlights on the previous page demonstrate the efforts made to that end. The vast majority of the 2016-17 activities involved alignment within the department as well as an operational focus on customer service.

The activities impacting development today are spread out across three departments (D&P, Public Works, and LUS), with the Fire Department and Legal Department participating as well. However, the Development and Planning Department is the only department tasked with the explicit and specific goals of being development-friendly and planning for the community's future. The next phase of improvement involves tighter integration of all processes related to development that currently cross department lines in order to meet the goals and tactics identified in the following pages.

The plan pages do not necessarily reflect items that would be considered "business as usual." That is to say, the efforts to draft this plan revolved less around how to maintain what is working well today and instead focused on what can be added to or how existing efforts can be enhanced.

## 2018 Plan Development Process

- Reviewed 2016-2017 internal plan
- Communicated with external stakeholders through regular monthly meetings
- Voluntary staff electronic survey completed by approximately half of the department
- Half day session with department leadership to develop attached plan
- Draft presentation to mayor-president
- Collected feedback from all department employees

## Next steps

- Collect feedback from additional stakeholders on goals, tactics, and proposed direction
- Assign responsibility for each action item to someone in the department, identifying external dependencies
- Communicate internally and externally the goals and tactics of the department
- Report progress towards the identified goals/tactics

# The 2018 plan describes how Development and Planning's mission, vision, and strategic priorities fit together to drive the department and community forward.

## Our vision:

A well-planned community that provides for its citizens well being through excellent development

## Our mission:

To build efficient, fair, and inclusive planning and development processes that provide reliable and positive outcomes for both community members and the development community.

## Challenges to advancing mission to fulfill our vision

Lack of trust from customers and stakeholders both in government generally and in the department specifically

Limited staff capacity, both in number and in some cases, training

Poor coordination between departments and agencies that impact the development of the city and parish

## Our priorities to address challenges

Provide excellent  
**Customer Service**

Improve  
**Access to Information**

Facilitate  
**Better Planning**

# Based on feedback with stakeholders and staff, we identified three strategic priorities for our 2018 business plan.

## Strategic Priorities:

- **Provide excellent customer service**
- Improve access to information
- Facilitate better planning

## Goals/Key tactics for 2018

- Ensure ease of customer transactions
  - Accept credit cards
  - Accept payment at ANC office location
  - Update and streamline forms across department
  - Allow for fully digital submissions
  - Implement new phone system
  - Build Development and Planning standalone website
  - Support smooth implementation of Trak-It software
- Ensure staff organization structure best facilitates meeting customer needs
  - Integrate engineering expertise into D&P operations, either through reorganization or interdepartmental agreements
  - Continue centralization of permitting functions with additional changes proposed in 2018-19 budget
  - Move ANC staff to Clifton Chenier campus
  - Continue cross-certification of code inspectors
  - Utilize temporary staff in Compliance Division to maximize limited resources

# Based on feedback with stakeholders and staff, we identified three strategic priorities for our 2018 business plan.

## Strategic Priorities:

- **Provide excellent customer service (continued)**
- Improve access to information
- Facilitate better planning

## Goals/Key tactics for 2018

- Improve staff training to meet customer needs
  - Provide customer service training to all staff
  - Engage in quarterly staff training regarding UDC to improve subject matter expertise across department
- Improve efficiency and predictability for customers in cost, timing and code interpretation
  - Set benchmarks for plan review timelines and report progress
  - Facilitate codes inspectors remaining in field all day
  - Strengthen LUS/PW integration of development review to improve predictability for customers in development projects
  - As department changes and integration improves (e.g. recent re-org), review pre-app practices for potential improvements

# Based on feedback with stakeholders and staff, we identified three strategic priorities for our 2018 business plan.

## Strategic Priorities:

○ Provide excellent customer service

○ **Improve access to information**

○ Facilitate better planning

### Goals/Key tactics for 2018

- Provide customers and the public with up to date and accurate information about their projects
  - Support implementation of Etrak-It
  - Improve internal procedures to ensure completeness of Trak-it and Etrak-it information
  - Publish staff reports for all public hearings (BOZA, Zoning Commission)
  - Institute new signage for public hearings
  - Complete Certificate of Occupancy transition and improve documentation to prevent reissues when possible
- Institute proactive internal and external communications on community, government, and department information
  - Provide monthly department-wide communications
  - Working with the Administration, develop and implement proactive communications related to stormwater management
  - Continue to host classes for neighborhoods and professionals
  - Ensure staff responsibilities are clearly defined, internally and externally
- Improve mapping practices across department, allowing automation of processes
  - Obtain access to complete and real time parcel based map from Assessor's office
  - Work with the GIS Division to standardize GIS layer naming protocol, develop mapping and data collection goals, and improve departmental use of maps in decision making, developing a D&P working committee if needed
  - Develop "hot spot" map to identify problem areas to address
  - Provide GIS training to relevant staff

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## Strategic Priorities:

- Provide excellent customer service
- Improve access to information
- **Facilitate better planning**

### Goals/Key tactics for 2018

- Using PlanLafayette as a guide, drive overall improvements of city and parish planning and development efforts
  - Continue improvements to policies related to stormwater management to protect property across parish
  - Begin land management program to support objectives ranging from stormwater and economic development (e.g. regional detention, adjudicated properties, Old Federal Courthouse, etc.)
  - Improve the zoning map through revisions to the zoning map, administrative rezonings, and stronger review of rezoning cases
  - Institute annual update of the Lafayette Transportation Plan, integrating bike and pedestrian planning
  - Continue collaboration with Community Development Department to maximize alignment between Consolidated Plan and other planning efforts
  - Begin efforts for public outreach for major PlanLafayette amendments (summer 2019), including the development of a parcel based future land use plan
- Improve enforcement across areas of responsibility
  - Ensure effective establishment of the Compliance Division supporting fair enforcement of regulations and coordination across departments
  - Build relationships with District Attorney and City Court to establish procedures for effective enforcement
  - Work with legal and police departments to strengthen enforcement of alcohol code

# Based on feedback with stakeholders and staff, we identified three strategic priorities for our 2018 business plan.

## Strategic Priorities:

○ Provide excellent customer service

○ Improve access to information

○ **Facilitate better planning (continued)**

## Goals/Key tactics for 2018

- Ensure alignment of (both explicit and unintended) economic development incentives and services, both internal and external, to provide for desired development
  - Assist in prioritization and development of Public Works projects by emphasizing values of return on investment and multi-purpose infrastructure (also, by more clearly linking economic development, transportation, and land use)
  - Strengthen economic analysis of annexation review
  - Assist in alignment of revitalization loan fund and acquisition fund with overall planning efforts
  - Work with external agencies, including LEDA and One Acadiana, to align incentives and activities with comprehensive plan target areas
  - Work with LUS to align and update servicing map with overall development strategy of city and parish
- Continually refine codes and ordinances to ensure successful development and practices that support the continued improvement of Lafayette
  - Adopt UDC amendments including, but not limited to, buffers, MN/CM/CH suburban/urban, and signs
  - Review interaction of zoning, environmental quality, and property management regulations to close gaps to improve neighborhood public health and safety (e.g. pool fences)
  - Revise noise ordinance