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## LCG reveals comprehensive plan vision statement

Two-year-old Zach Delhomme sat on a picnic blanket under the shade of an oak tree with his **parents** as he snacked on fresh fruit, a cookie and ice cubes Saturday morning.

His parents, Lafayette residents Chance and Kristi Delhomme brought Zach to the Horse Farm property to enjoy the 100 acres slated to become a passive park and a centerpiece of Lafayette while they shared input for the comprehensive plan, which will guide the city's growth during the next two decades.

Lafayette Consolidated Government officials unveiled the comprehensive plan's vision statement to the public Saturday during the event at the Horse Farm. The vision statement will steer the remainder of the comprehensive plan's creation, including yet-unknown policies and regulations that will be adopted to **achieve** the vision outline in the statement.

"It's a great thing for Lafayette, and they're taking the right approach to it," said Chance Delhomme, who was among the more than 1,000 Lafayette residents who provided input to create the plan's vision statement.

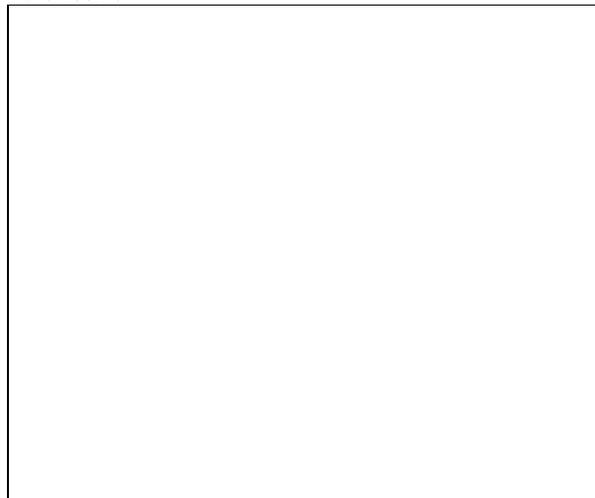
A TV under a tent at the Horse Farm

showed members of the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Committee, or CPCAC, reading the vision statement, and people who came to ask questions about the plan and share opinions placed stickers next to favorite parts of the vision statement, which was also shown on display board. The parts of the statement discussing Lafayette's entrepreneurial spirit, connectivity, green spaces, vibrant culture and family-friendly atmosphere attracted the most stickers.

"It's been so wonderful to see so many people interested in our community," said CPCAC member Marilyn McDonald, who came to the Horse Farm with her husband, Scott. "It's the people's plan, and that's exciting. This is for the future — for our kids and grandkids."

A crowd of bicycle riders at the Horse Farm were near a display board with a question that **read**: "What is your personal vision for Lafayette in 2035?" One note on that board said, "It's amazingly comfortable today under these trees," while others asked for

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more sidewalks, dog parks and community involvement.

Lafayette Police Department officers showed two of the law-enforcement agency's horses, Gunny and Slim, to visitors who were allowed to pet the animals. City-Parish President Joey Durel has envisioned housing LPD's horses on the property, giving the community a chance to see officers in a different light.

"This vision statement comes from ideas on which almost everybody agreed," said John Fernsler, a project manager with Wallace Roberts and Todd, the firm hired to create Lafayette's comprehensive plan. "The next step is the reality check — we've said we want to be this great place, but where are we headed now and what do we have to do to get there."

Kevin Blanchard, CPCAC chairman, said officials haven't set dates for the next round of community forums or other events related to the comprehensive plan.

"The next step," Blanchard said, "is to start looking at what our future will look like [if] we do nothing, and we'll start making decisions about what our priorities are."

The Horse Farm, currently owned by the [University](#) of Louisiana at Lafayette and formally known as UL's Equine Center, is slated to become a 100-acre passive park in the middle of the city. LCG is giving UL a smaller public park, Johnston Street's Youth Park, as part of the \$6.6 million purchase price for the local government to take

control of the property.

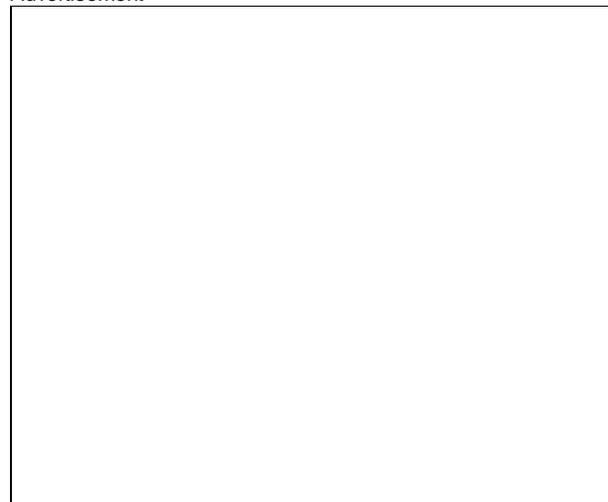
The passive park will be aimed at activities like hiking and biking rather than organized sports, and UL will put the money it receives for the property in a restricted account that may be used only for land acquisition near its campus.

The University of Louisiana System's board of supervisors approved the deal June 18. Durel has said he expects to sign the agreement with UL officials in early July. The City-Parish Council will consider final approval of the Horse Farm deal during its meeting Tuesday.

Durel said officials will also need another two months to finalize a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement, or CEA, with the Community Foundation of Acadiana, which will oversee the Horse Farm's maintenance and operations. The council will ultimately have to approve that CEA and other matters tied to the Horse Farm's future.

Durel previously said he expects all of the

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paperwork for the Horse Farm deal to be completed by this fall, and he hopes to have the park open to the public before he leaves office in three-and-a-half years.

This past year, Durel signed a \$1.2 million contract with the Philadelphia-based consulting firm to create the comprehensive plan. That **cost** will pay only to have the plan created.

"The comprehensive plan is going to be a good guideline for the City-Parish Council and the administration to use since it's the community's plan," Chance Delhomme said. "It's a great thing for the city, and we're looking forward to raising our kid here."

**The vision statement for Lafayette's Comprehensive Plan begins with a preamble, which should be read from the perspective of a Lafayette resident in 2035 who looks back at how the community grew.**

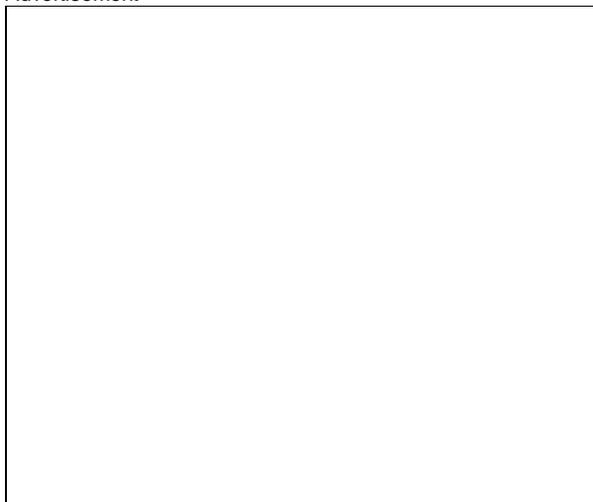
"In 2035, Lafayette is one of the nation's most exceptional communities, renowned for its rich Cajun and Creole heritage, its creative scene and culture of innovation, and its authentic joie de vivre," the vision statement's preamble reads. "Fueled by its desirable quality of life, its highly educated workforce and the community's entrepreneurial spirit, Lafayette has attracted substantial **investment** and growth. This growth has been managed and absorbed in a manner that allowed Lafayette to retain its small town neighborliness and unique way of life. "The Lafayette Comprehensive Plan has galvanized the community and has guided our political **leadership** in their decision making, keeping us on track and making steady progress toward realizing our vision. Through a bold collaboration and an on-going conversation among our engaged citizenry and our local government and institutional partners, we have realized our Vision by leveraging our assets, correcting shortcomings and balancing our priorities for what makes our community outstanding."

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