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Public forums could guide Lafayette's future growth

**Residents' input may influence Lafayette plan**

**BY RICHARD BURGESS**

Acadiana bureau

May 13, 2013

2 Comments

LAFAYETTE — The future of Lafayette could be shaped by residents who show up at forums on Tuesday and Wednesday to help craft a plan to guide growth here. Lafayette's "comprehensive plan" could lead to a series of new regulations, guidelines and incentives that encourage some types of development and discourage others. City-parish government is in year two of working on the plan. The effort has evolved from generalized discussions about Lafayette's idealized future to very specific questions, such as how to reconcile competing demands on the budget for road work and public safety and precisely what areas of the parish are best suited for new commercial and residential development. A key goal is to come to terms with what the city's consultants estimate will be the addition of 90,000 new residents by 2030, about a 40 percent increase of the parish's 2010 population of 221,578. That's in line with historical population growth in Lafayette Parish, which from 1990 to 2010 saw its population increase 35 percent, from 164,762 to 221,578, according to census figures.

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Lafayette needs to prepare for the stress those new residents will put on roads, land and public services, like fire and police protection, said Kevin Blanchard, chairman of the citizens committee guiding the development of the plan.

"We have to take a step back and reassess the situation," Blanchard said.

The input from the forums this week will be used to develop a draft version of the comprehensive plan, which will be brought back to the public later this year for further input, said Cathie Gilbert, a city-parish planner who is helping manage the project.

City-parish government awarded a \$1.2 million contract to the planning firm of Wallace, Roberts & Todd to oversee the creation of the comprehensive plan.

The Tuesday forum is set for 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Rosa Parks Transportation Center at 101 Jefferson St. in downtown.

The Wednesday forum is set for 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Heymann Performing Arts Center, 1373 S. College Road.

The forums will be in an open-house format, and residents may come and go as they choose to work through a series of stations set up to gather public input.

"It will probably take most people about an hour," Gilbert said.

For information, visit <http://www.planlafayette.org>.

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 Comments (2)

1) Comment by TommyRucker - 05/13/2013

When is someone going to come up with a PLAN that will get the job done at the cheapest cost to the people who are working or have worked very hard to try to provide a decent living for themselves and their families. The truth is, we cannot afford to do all the things these 'plans' are calling for as we are producing less and consuming more. There once was a time when the federal government had money go spend on infra structure, hospitals, etc. but those days are over as we are approaching 17 TRILLION in debt. Do you think we are just going to write the debt off??? it is time for LESS, not more government simply because we cannot afford it. These may be good ideas but we cannot afford them. it is time to go back to the BASICS. We cannot afford most of this stuff and we don't have people we can trust nor have confidence in to get the job done.

2) Comment by TommyRucker - 05/13/2013

Hopefully this will not lead to MORE corruption, increased taxes and more waste. The problem has never been a plan as plans can easily be developed. The problem is the PEOPLE who are implementing the plan and the quality of people, the integrity of the people in government who will implement WHATEVER PLAN is at an all time LOW and until we get better people running government, people that can be trusted and we have confidence in (confidence that they will provide the best service and structures at the best prices), then it will not matter what plan is developed or selected. People do not trust or have confidence in government leaders today as there is to much corruption and self serving out there.

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