

# Lafayette council approves new development code; rezones entire city

## Suite of policies rezones entire city

RICHARD BURGESS | [RBURGESS@THEADVOCATE.COM](mailto:RBURGESS@THEADVOCATE.COM)

May 06, 2015

[1 Comments](#)

The City-Parish Council signed off Tuesday on a major overhaul of Lafayette's development regulations, with a majority of six councilmen brushing aside calls from a minority of three to delay voting on the wide-ranging changes.

The [Unified Development Code](#) is a suite of new policies, zoning classifications and regulations that emerged from a series of workshops and public forums over the past four years.

One goal of the UDC is to give private developers a more streamlined process for project approval, but the new regulations also call for stricter standards for roads, ditches and inspections and could shape the future character of Lafayette.

Denser developments will be allowed within the city limits, and the new codes allow for mixing homes, apartments, offices and retail shops in a way not generally allowed under the old regulations.

"A lot of what we have today is from the 1970s," City-Parish Chief Development Officer Carlee Alm-LaBar said.

### MORE ON THIS TOPIC

- [Our Views: Our cousins, here or there](#)
- [Network planned to link French-speaking communities in North America from Quebec to Lafayette](#)
- [Liberian Ambassador Jeremiah C. Sulunteh grateful to Lafayette and fellow countryman for aid](#)
- [Broussard official says Durel's terms for LUS expansion are unacceptable](#)
- [Durel: LUS Fiber to offer Internet service beyond Lafayette city limits](#)

She said the UDC will "create a more predictable neighborhood and a business-friendly environment."

The new regulations also pave the way for more so-called infill projects by allowing developers to build on smaller lots to fill in vacant gaps in the city's core.

The potential for more density was a major sticking point for a group of about 20 residents who turned out to oppose the proposed codes.

“Is this what the citizens of Lafayette want? High-density living?” asked Joyce Linde, with the Tea Party of Lafayette.

She said the city should be more concerned with adding more roads rather than making accommodations for dense, walkable developments.

Resident Joseph Dugas told council members that he fears the dense developments allowed under the codes could worsen traffic and hinder growth.

“You are about to drastically alter Lafayette’s zoning and land use without critical due diligence,” he said.

Most of the residents who addressed the council opposed the UDC, but 12 people submitted cards to the council clerk expressing support.

The only supporter to actually address council members was Ryan Pecot, a senior leasing executive with the regional commercial development company Stirling Properties.

Pecot said Lafayette’s existing development code is cumbersome and can sometimes discourage quality projects.

“It’s not efficient. It’s not easy. It’s very antiquated,” Pecot said. “We are competing with other municipalities that make development easier.”

Councilmen William Theriot, Andy Naquin and Jared Bellard pushed unsuccessfully to delay Tuesday’s vote.

“There are still a lot of questions being asked,” Naquin said. “I think it’s still fresh and new and it’s very sweeping, and I think we need to take a harder look at this.”

The council rejected a motion by Naquin to delay the vote for 60 days and a subsequent motion by Bellard to delay the vote for 30 days. Voting against the delays and in support of the UDC were councilmen Kenneth Boudreaux, Brandon Shelvin, Keith Patin, Don Bertrand, Kevin Naquin and Jay Castille.

The UDC is not set to go into effect until December.

One of the most immediate changes will be in zoning.

The UDC rezones the entire city, replacing 18 classifications with 12 new ones.

The new classifications are similar to the old ones, but generally allow for more mixed use.

Individual property owners will have a chance in the coming months to dispute the new zoning classifications.

Follow Richard Burgess on Twitter, [@rbb100](https://twitter.com/rbb100).