

Lafayette, Louisiana

SEPTEMBER 2019

Communities across the country have opted to introduce pedestrian-oriented zoning provisions into their zoning and land use regulations to foster increased community walkability. This study identifies best practices and lessons learned in adopting and implementing New Urbanist and pedestrian-oriented zoning. Information for each community was gleaned through key informant interviews with planning officials and documentary/Internet research. Fifteen communities across the United States were selected as case studies for this project from a larger, nationwide study of pedestrian-oriented zoning; profiles were developed for 13 out of the 15 communities and are presented herein.

Current Pedestrian-Oriented Planning and Zoning Provisions

In 2015, Lafayette Parish adopted a [Unified Development Code](#) to implement planning recommendations enumerated in the 2014 [PlanLafayette](#) comprehensive plan. The Unified Development Code applies to the City of Lafayette and the unincorporated areas of Lafayette Parish. Generally speaking, [Unified Development Codes](#) combine traditional zoning with other design and land use regulations, and serve to streamline the development process and to remove inconsistencies and outdated policies.

Lafayette's Unified Development Code introduced several new pedestrian-oriented zoning categories such as the [Downtown District](#), [Mixed-Use Neighborhood](#), [Mixed-Use Center](#), [Planned Developments](#), and [Commercial Mixed-Use Districts](#). Each of these districts prioritize the pedestrian experience by bringing the building to the street, moving parking to the side or behind the building, and reducing open space and parking requirements in order to promote vibrant and walkable corridors.

All properties located within the Commercial Mixed-Use, Mixed-Use Neighborhood, and Commercial-Heavy Districts are categorized as [Development Type "A" or "B"](#). The distinction between the two categories is determined by whether or not the property meets specific zoning criteria. The criteria includes having 1.) on-street parking; 2.) adjoining streets with speed limits less than 35 mph; 3.) streets with minor arterial collectors or local streets; 4.) at least one different land use within the district; and 5.) density within a quarter mile radius of the property that is not single-family residential.

Properties that meet 4 out of 5 criteria are identified as "A" Developments and receive development incentives such as reduced parking and open space requirements. "A" Developments are more



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urban in nature and encourage the development of mixed-use projects with pedestrian-oriented frontage build-out requirements. "A" Developments foster Lafayette's vision of moderate-density, mixed-use development. Properties that do not meet the 4 out of 5 criteria for "A" Development standards can still employ the A development type if they wish to develop in a way that is more pedestrian-oriented.

The Catalyst for Adopting Zoning Changes

Lafayette adopted the Unified Development Code in order to streamline the zoning and development process. The new, pedestrian-oriented zoning districts were included in the code to achieve a stated desire for more mixed-use, moderate-density developments in the City of Lafayette.

Perceived Impacts Since Implementing Zoning Changes

Increased Pedestrian-Oriented Infrastructure

Since implementing zoning changes, Lafayette has modified several four-lane roads to create space for new bike lanes and on-street parking in order to promote an urban, pedestrian-friendly environment.

Increased Mixed-Use Zoning Designation

Since implementing the Unified Development Code, the city has worked to rezone over 700 properties around the downtown area from old, outdated zoning to mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly zoning designations.

LAFAYETTE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	
Total Population	242,485
Median Household Income	\$52,265
Median Age	35.1
% Households with related children <18	32.1%
% White (non-Hispanic)	68.7%
% Black (non-Hispanic)	26.1%
% Hispanic	4.8%
Average Temperature December/July	54/82°F
Source: Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2013-2017); The Weather Channel, 2019	

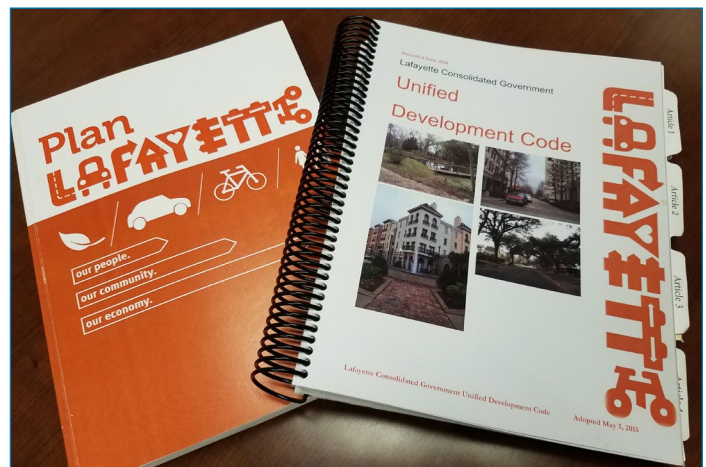


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Lessons Learned & Recommendations

Planning officials in Lafayette identified key lessons learned in the process of adopting and implementing pedestrian-oriented zoning provisions, as well as overarching recommendations for other communities who may wish to explore similar zoning provisions.

SIMULTANEOUS DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING OVERHAUL

Lafayette benefitted from developing the PlanLafayette comprehensive plan concurrently with the new Unified Development Code. This approach allowed support to approve the Unified Development Code as it was implementing action items in PlanLafayette.

DEVELOP FROM THE “INSIDE-OUT”

Planning officials stressed the importance of focusing on the main economic development driver in their community: the downtown. Key informants recommend targeting pedestrian-oriented zoning provisions in downtown districts as a starting point to adopt and implement zoning changes to establish walkable, revitalized community areas.

PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTATION ON A BUDGET

Residents of Lafayette pay low property taxes, meaning the city has limited funds for large-scale infrastructure improvements. Despite this, the city has implemented budget-friendly pedestrian improvements such as adding bike lanes and on-street parking through street striping initiatives.

CHALLENGES

One barrier to implementing pedestrian-oriented zoning provisions was retrofitting for walkability in built-out sections of the community that historically did not require sidewalk connectivity. To combat this challenge, Lafayette has undergone analyses of existing sidewalk networks in order to prioritize sidewalk projects in areas that currently lack connectivity and are in close proximity to pedestrian generating zoning districts.

Resources for Further Information

Lafayette Consolidated Government Unified Development Code

<http://www.lafayettela.gov/comprehensiveplan/pages/unified-development-code.aspx>

Lafayette Unified Development Code, Article 2, Districts, Development Type “A” and Development Type “B,” pg.7

<http://www.lafayettela.gov/PZD/Documents/Unified%20Development%20Code.pdf>

PlanLafayette 2035, Comprehensive Plan

<http://www.lafayettela.gov/comprehensiveplan/pages/the-plan.aspx>

Unified Development Ordinances, American Planning Association

<https://www.planning.org/divisions/planningandlaw/propertytopics.htm#Unified>

SUGGESTED CITATION

A Reimann and JF Chriqui. Pedestrian-oriented Zoning in Action: A Community Snapshot-Lafayette, Louisiana. Chicago, IL: Illinois Prevention Research Center, 2019. Available: <https://go.uic.edu/zoning-for-walkability-profile-Lafayette>.



Illinois Prevention Research Center