
COVINGTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Stakeholder Meeting: Economic Development
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Date: December 5, 2019
Project Number: 1805
Meeting Date: October 22, 2019
Location: Covington City Hall (317 N Jefferson Ave, Covington, LA 70433)

Team Members Present:

- Jennifer Day (GCR)
- Blake Crow (DBA)

Notes:

- Trends
 - Shared office space; occupational home business licenses; pop-ups
- Most annexation is commercial
 - Savannahs converted two commercial properties to single-family residential
 - Oak Alley was institutional, owned by missionaries
- Blight surveys in 1994 with West 30s plans
- Economic Bases
 - Medical industry is booming: retirement, fixed wages, social security
 - Service industry is imported from Hammond and Metairie
 - Technology is very behind; there are two hot desk locations
 - Need an incubator for small business, federal contracts, DBE, etc.
 - 2% of businesses have 50+ employees
- History of zoning
 - 1970 CZO allowed attached garage apartments (A3)
 - 1981-1983 rezoned to new density base (RS1, RS2)
 - Pre-storm movement to bring back garage apartments
 - City Council eliminated accessory dwelling units
 - Now there is a need for multigenerational
 - Loopholes exist (ie. breezeway to attach two structures)
- Maintenance costs make CZO-aligned rentals unaffordable for the landlord
- Artist community is supported by volunteers, not paid staff
- The community does not want any large footprints
- There are many opportunities for existing businesses to partner
 - Requires collaboration, maybe with St Tammany Parish
 - Could share storage
- Vacant property owned by parish
 - Center for seniors is proposed; possible environmental issues
 - Concrete factory
- Law firms are taking up retail space downtown
- It was a battle to keep the courthouse and hospital in Covington
- Brick and mortar stores are difficult to keep open with limited space and rising rent

- Delgado was not supported and left town as a result
 - There are no longer any higher education institutions; the closest is in Lacombe
- New commercial development requires parking lot connectivity
 - The vehicular barrier helps Covington keep its character
- New residential development creates pods of communities outside of downtown grid
- Potential exists to use natural resources for alternative energy
- 2016 flood: Army Corps wanted to dredge the river; residents protected it; still residents who live on the river do not allow access to other community members; limits tourism
- Hidden gems (place making):
 - Navigational pilot school; art association; empty theater; Hyde Park
 - Events, though micro or short-term, can evoke pride in government, mayor; there are many repeat attendees
- Murals are supported as long as they are vetted; strong interest in community involvement
- Tourism is not marketed in a coordinated effort
 - Sales tax-based economy, not property tax
 - Common idea: "Enjoy yourself then get out"

Sincerely,

Blake Crow

Blake Crow
Senior Associate

Dana Brown & Associates, Inc.
bcrow@danabrownassociates.com