



3. The Process

OPEN HOUSE**Thu, July 9**

Open House
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Jena Town Hall

CHARRETTE**Fri, July 24**

Kick-off Presentation
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Choctaw Tribal Center

Sat, July 25

Visioning Session
8:30 am - 12:30 pm
Jena Town Hall

July 26 - 28

Open Design Studio
9:00 am - 9:00 pm
Jena Town Hall

Mon, July 27

Drop-in Open House
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Jena Town Hall

Wed, July 29

Final Presentation
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Jena Town Hall



Jena's Vision

history | community | landscape

The Jena Town Plan is a blueprint that outlines how the town plans to develop in the future, addressing issues such as transportation, open space, housing and land use.

GET INVOLVED! COME JOIN US!

The Jena Town Plan will have an important impact on the community's future and your lives as citizens. Please come and participate, your viewpoint is very important. This is your plan, come help create it. For more information visit www.jenavision.blogspot.com

Flyer advertising the dates and times for key public events for the charrette and preceding open house.

Pre-Charrette

The Town of Jena worked closely with Code Studio and the Center for Planning Excellence to create a comprehensive outreach process for the preparation and development of the Town Plan. Throughout this process, the Town has made great strides in getting the public involved. This chapter outlines the public involvement process, including the creation of the Core Support Group, public meetings conducted, and findings from the public meetings.

Core Support Group

A 16 member group was created to be the champions and sounding board for the consultant team during the nine month planning process. This group is comprised of individuals that represent the demographic and stakeholder make-up of the Town. Representatives include those from business and industry, realtors, the school system, faith-based organizations, large land owners, and special interest groups. The group met with the consultant team during each team visit and participated in all public meetings.

Public Outreach

A variety of outreach methods were used to obtain the maximum amount of public input and participation. The following list outlines those methods:

- Over 500 fliers were distributed at businesses, community meeting places, and to individuals.
- Approximately 400 individuals received meeting announcements and flyers through e-mail.
- Core Support Group members made phone calls and sent e-mails to their networks outlining upcoming meetings and workshops.
- Yard signs with meeting information were posted at various locations throughout Town.
- Mayor Murphy McMillin was interviewed on the radio about public meetings.
- Public meetings were announced on the local radio station four times each day.
- Several feature articles and public meeting schedules were printed in The Jena Times.



In addition, social networking tools were used to reach a broader crowd. The Jena Town Plan has a Facebook (www.facebook.com/JenaTownPlan) and a Twitter page (www.twitter.com/jenavision) and a weblog (www.jenavision.blogspot.com) that are used for meeting announcements plan updates and other information. The Facebook page has approximately 491 followers. Facebook users were encouraged to make comments, post pictures of special places in Jena and respond to posted information. Twitter was used to remind people about public meetings. The weblog was set up as a way to provide up-to-date project information and to solicit additional input. The blog continues to serve as a way to distribute project documents and photos, including copies of the plan.

Kick-Off Meeting

In May 2009, key members of the consultant team conducted a preliminary site visit to Jena. The purpose of the trip was to tour the Town and meet with Town staff. A tour of the Town was led by the Mayor. The tour helped familiarize the consultant team with the area.

Kick-Off Open House

The first public open house was held on July 9th, 2009 in the Jena Town Hall. Approximately 30 citizens attended a presentation given by the consultant team. The presentation introduced members of the general public to the project, explained the charrette process, and included some “food for thought” on best practices in traditional town plan-

ning, transportation, sustainability, urban design, and smart growth. In addition to the open house, members of the consultant team met with a variety of focus groups representing the Merchants Association, Choctaw Indians, XTO Petroleum, Justiss Oil, Little River Development, realtors, Billy Wood Ford Dealership, LaSalle General Hospital and Town staff.



Approximately 30 citizens attended an opening presentation at Jena Town Hall in July 2009.

Charrette

A “charrette” is a multiple day, collaborative planning and design workshop. Charrettes are inclusive by nature and are designed to build consensus from the outset, providing a collaborative forum to bring all parties together and focus on a common goal. The hands-on nature of the charrette, the opportunity to interact with differing perspectives, and the short feedback loops allow issues to be identified and resolved early on in the process. In

addition, the charrette provides an educational opportunity for all participants. The charrette process not only produces invaluable information for the consultant team but it enables the community to realize how much consensus exists for key issues in a constructive format. Ultimately, stakeholder involvement and ownership will make the adoption and implementation of the plan far more feasible.

A six day charrette was held at Jena Town Hall from Friday July 24th to Wednesday July 29th, 2009. The charrette included the following public events:

- **Kick-off Presentation**, Friday July 24, 6:00 - 7:00 pm, Choctaw Tribal Center.
- **Visioning Session**, Saturday July 25, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm, Jena Town Hall.
- **Open Design Studio**, Sunday July 26 to Wednesday July 29, 8:00 am - 9:00 pm, Jena Town Hall.
- **Drop-in Open House**, Monday July 27, 6:00 - 8:00 pm, Jena Town Hall.
- **Final Presentation**, Wednesday July 29, 7:00 - 8:00 pm.

Stakeholder Interviews

Throughout the charrette, the consultant team held a series of stakeholder meetings with the following groups: DOTD, Jena school principals, Kiwanis, Dresser Rand, Catahoula-LaSalle Bank, realtors, Garan, Inc., Ace Hardware, Southern Heritage Bank, Sabine State Bank, LaSalle General Hospital, Justiss Oil, Chevy Dealership, McCartney Oil, Mac’s Supermarket, Champlin’s Furniture, and Reid’s Jewelry.



On Saturday morning, approximately 60 people gathered at Jena Town Hall to roll up their sleeves and play “planners” for the day.

DAY 1: FRIDAY



Kick-off Presentation

The week-long charrette began at the Choctaw Tribal Center on Friday, July 24 at 6:00 pm. The presentation was held at the Choctaw Tribal Center to engage citizens from Trout, Good Pine, and Midway, since these communities were underrepresented in the previous open house. During this presentation, the consultant team summarized the information that had been gathered to date and invited the participants to the other charrette meetings throughout the upcoming week as well as offering “food for thought” about the future of Jena and highlighting principles of traditional town planning.

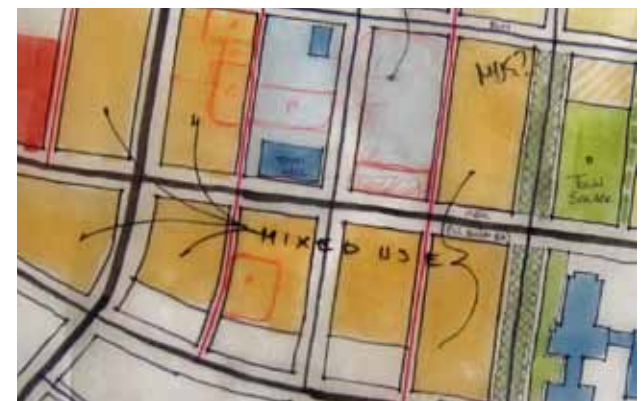
DAY 2: SATURDAY



Visioning Session

On Saturday morning, approximately 60 people gathered at the Jena Town Hall to roll up their sleeves and play “planners” for the day. Following a brief introductory presentation, participants divided into six groups, and gathered around tables with a facilitator. The groups worked on large maps of the area that included Trout, Midway and Good Pine, drawing diagrams and sketches to convey the character of the area today and describe what they would like to see in the future (results from each table are presented in full at the end of this document). To conclude the session, each group selected a

DAY 3: SUNDAY



spokesperson, who presented their table’s ideas to the larger group. Information and ideas from the session provided the foundation for the consultants to build on throughout the week. On Saturday afternoon, the charrette team worked through the maps the hands-on groups generated, consolidating issues and formalizing an initial set of planning principles that could be used to guide future development.

Open Design Studio

From Sunday through Wednesday, the team worked on-site in Town Hall. The studio was open to the public each

DAY 4: MONDAY



day, and people were encouraged to drop by the studio to see the work in progress, discuss the project, ask questions, and bring up new ideas for consideration.

Drop-In Open House

On Monday evening, the general public was invited back to Town Hall for a drop-in open house. Throughout the evening, approximately 40 people toured the studio, met with the charrette team, reviewed draft plans and sketches, and listened to an informal presentation. The purpose of the open house was to receive feedback from the general public before beginning final production.

DAY 5: TUESDAY



Final Production

On Tuesday and Wednesday, the charrette team worked to finalize drawings and concepts. Team members finished maps, inked and rendered hand drawings, fine-tuned computer visualizations, and compiled economic data—all to be presented at the closing presentation.

Final Presentation

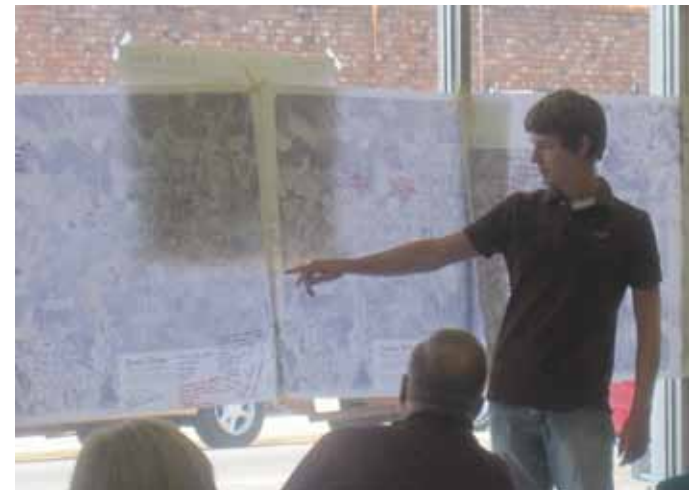
On Wednesday evening, approximately 100 citizens squeezed into Jena Town Hall to watch the closing presentation of the charrette. The consultant team presented a summary of the week's events, which included illustra-

DAY 6: WEDNESDAY



tive drawings, before and after computer visualizations and an economic development strategy. After the presentation, participants were encouraged to review the plans and offer further suggestions on draft concepts, which were on display throughout the room.

Selected photos from the charrette.



Top Issues

The goal of the charrette was to bring together a variety of area residents to discuss the future of Jena. Throughout the week, the team paid careful attention to the comments and ideas. From this input, the team noted patterns and commonalities. During the week and throughout the various sessions, the response that participants produced was remarkably consistent. Of the many ideas expressed, the most widely shared included:

Getting Around

- Keep Highway 84 going through downtown.
- Connect creeks with a system of trails.
- Need bike paths and better sidewalks.
- Pay attention to Sycamore.
- Deal with truck traffic.
- Improve connections between City Park and downtown.

The Heart of Town

- Protect and enhance downtown.
- Develop a unique downtown.
- Attract more business to downtown.

- Make downtown more walkable.
- Slow traffic down.

Enjoying Yourself

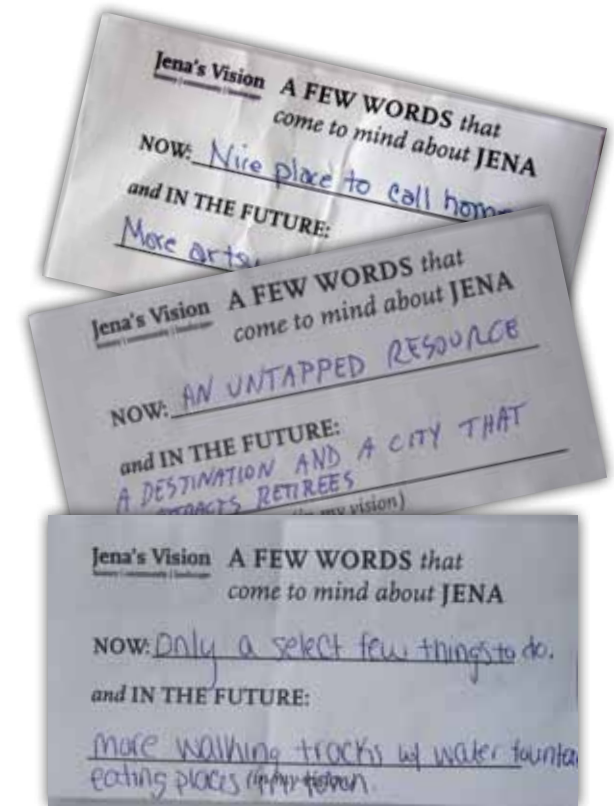
- Need a recreation/community center.
- Need venues for teenage and young adult entertainment.
- Reuse old buildings to fulfill recreational needs.
- Create opportunities for water recreation.

Places to Live

- Need additional housing options.
- Better quality, more affordable housing.
- Consider opportunities for assisted living.
- Invest more in existing housing stock.
- Attract regional housing opportunities.

Places to Work

- Need day care facilities in Town.
- Need quality sit-down restaurants.
- Retain the younger generation.
- Capitalize on the hunting and fishing industry.



Comment cards filled out by charrette attendees.

Post-Charrette

In the months following the charrette, The Town of Jena has worked diligently to keep the planning concepts developed during the charrette at the forefront of the community's mind. Copies of the illustrations and computer visualizations developed during charrette were made available for public review and comment at Jena Town Hall and on the project website (www.jenavision.blogspot.com).

On September 2, about five weeks after the charrette was held, the consultant team met with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) regarding the alignment and character of Highway 84. The meeting was attended by the Mayor, CPEX representatives, members of the consultant team, a member of the El Camino Real commission, and more than ten representatives of DOTD (including both engineers and planners from the Central office as well as representatives from the District office). The discussion covered a variety of topics, including the strategy for including the Town's preferred alignment for Highway 84 in further planning (Stage 1: Planning and Environmental Study), circulation issues for trucks at the Highway 84 and LA 127 intersection, and alternative, context sensitive cross-sections for

the roadway that would vary from typical state standards. The Town's proposed pilot project in front of Town Hall was discussed, and a site visit by DOTD arranged. The meeting closed with a discussion of next steps for the Highway 84 project—which mostly focused on accumulating adequate funding for the Stage 1: Planning and Environmental Study. The results of the discussions were quite encouraging. DOTD's staff reflected changing attitudes nationally regarding character of roadways. Specifically, high-level staff committed to continue to work with the Town through the design of the roadway—citing the effectiveness of a the Town's planning process in swaying their ability to modify specific cross-sections of the roadway.

After allowing time for the charrette concepts to sink in, the consultant team returned to Jena on September 24, 2009, to facilitate a public open house to receive additional input. Approximately 65 people gathered at Jena Town Hall to see an overview of the proposed plan outline and discuss new planning concepts generated after the charrette. Following the presentation, participants asked questions about the proposed outline and implementation strategy. During the meeting, the Mayor

discussed the Town's proposed streetscape pilot project in front of Town Hall. As a first implementation step, the Town has secured funding to construct the recommended streetscape improvements for Oak Street in front of Town Hall.

In addition, Jena was recently selected as one of eleven Louisiana Development Ready Communities. This pilot program is one of the Louisiana Economic Development (LED) strategies to strengthen the economic competitiveness of municipalities, parishes and regions statewide. Experienced community and economic development professionals will assist each pilot community in completing the four-part process (community assessment, strategic planning, leadership development and marketing a community). In addition to customized training, the selected communities will benefit from community research data and a community visit by a site selection consultant. Upon successful conclusion of the program, Jena will be designated "development ready" by the State of Louisiana. This designation is intended to assist communities in attracting new business opportunities.