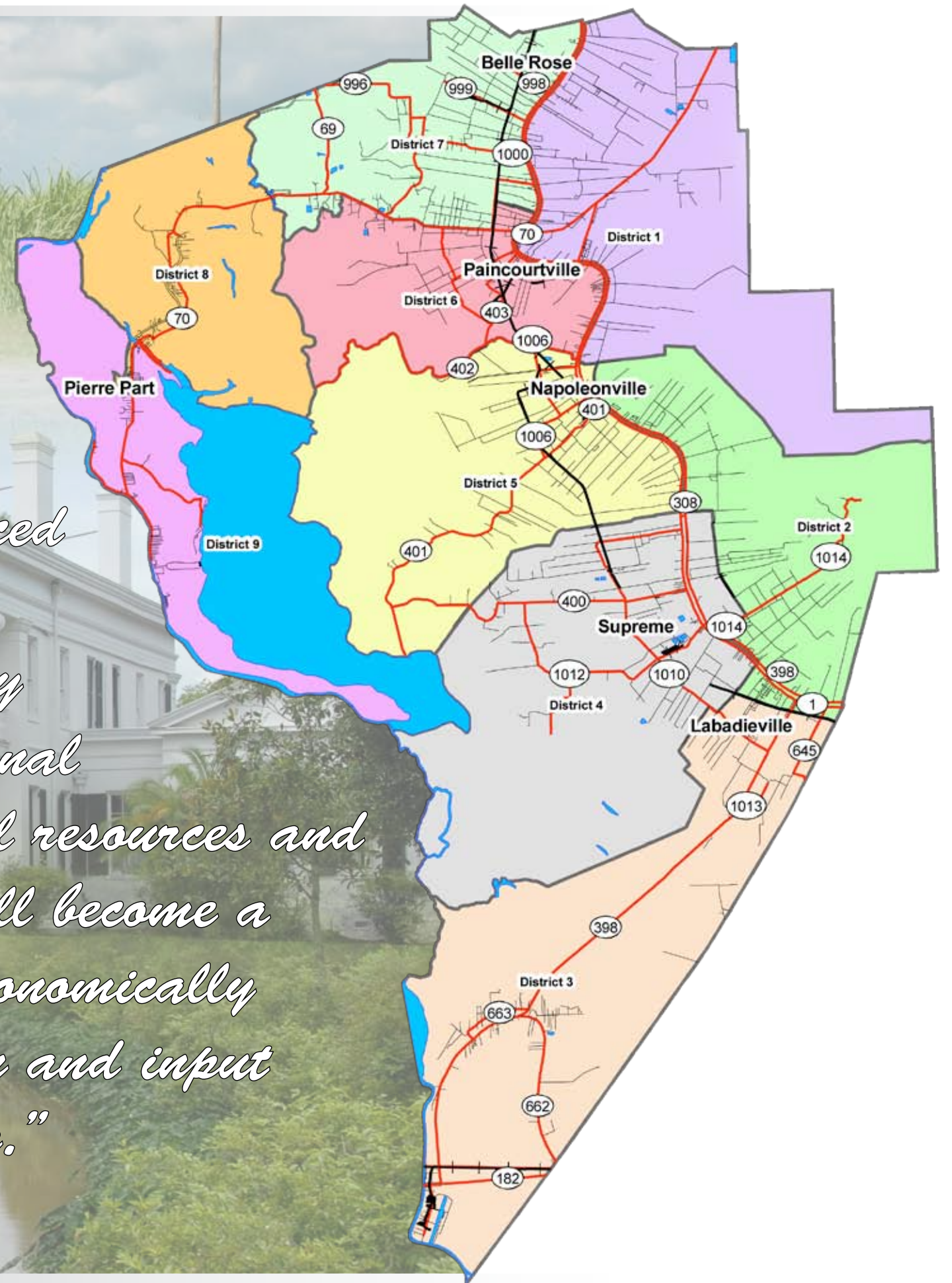


Assumption Parish Comprehensive Plan 2008



Assumption Parish Vision Statement

"Assumption Parish will continue to develop a healthy community atmosphere and a desirable quality of life for its residents by ensuring a balanced mix of residential and commercial development, quality education, necessary infrastructure, employment and recreational opportunities while preserving its natural resources and pleasing rural character. The Parish will become a growing, visually attractive, safe and economically stable community striving for cooperation and input from its citizens and business community."





South Central Planning & Development Commission

5058 W. Main Street; Houma, LA 70360-4900 • Post Office Box 1870; Gray, LA 70359
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Friday, May 01, 2009

Mr. Martin Triche
Parish President
Assumption Parish Police Jury
P.O. Box 520
Napoleonville, Louisiana 70390

Re: ***The Assumption Parish Comprehensive Plan***

Dear Mr. Triche:

I want to first say thank you and the Police Jury for allowing South Central Planning & Development Commission to assist the Parish of Assumption in the facilitation of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. It has truly been a rewarding experience for all our staff that were involved in the process. Not only did we get to meet and get to know some wonderful people of Assumption Parish, we also learned how important the future is in hearts and minds of those who participated in the process.

Many times, we as professional planners don't really get to see the true character of those we are assisting, but in this process in most instances we were drawn into conversations with citizens who openly expressed support for planned development in their Parish. As such, the completion of the Comprehensive Plan now shows the Police Jury how the citizenry desires to see their community grow and the Comprehensive Plan is the road map for future growth in Assumption Parish.

Again, we want to thank you for the opportunity to serve Assumption Parish in this most rewarding process, and we look forward to assisting the Police Jury in furthering the goals and strategies delineated within the Assumption Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,


Kevin P. Belanger, CEO

Dale J. Hymel, Jr.
CHAIRMAN
President
St. James Parish Council

Michel Claudet
VICE CHAIRMAN
President
Terrebonne Parish Council

Mark Atzenhoffer
SECRETARY-TREASURER
Business Appointment
Lafourche Parish Council

Kevin Belanger
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Ron Animashaun
Gerald Boudreaux
John Boudreaux
Malissa Boudreaux
Nelson Carter
Irving Comeaux
Lester Daggs
Larry Howell
John LaFleur
James Larrison
Honoray Lewis
Heidi Mattingly
Scott Sternfels
Kim Torres

Thank You Planning Process Precipitants

The following Assumption Parish residents assisted in the development of the Assumption Parish Comprehensive Plan by attending one or more Focus Group meetings:

Donna Alleman, Ron Animashaun, Michele Aucoin, Jimmy Babineaux, Vicki Babineaux, Carlos Bassa, Faye Blanchard, Michael Blanchard, Gerald Boudreaux, John Boudreaux, Malissa Boudreaux, Neal Boudreaux, Booster Breaux, Nelson Carter, Irving Comeaux, Lester Daggs, Mike DuBois, Frank Elliott, Sandi Fernandez, Anne Marie Gauthreaux, Clayton Gautreaux, Paul Giroir, Tammy Girouard, Larry Howell, John LaFleur, Angela Landry, C. J. Landry, Morgan Landry, James Larrison, Sherlyn Larrison, Honoray Lewis, Rick Louque Gary Martin, Janelle Martin, Heidi Mattingly, Ella Metrejean, Leslie Misset, Bobby Naquin, Douglas Ohmar, Jessica Ourso, Rodney Rhodes, Brian Richard, Darrel Rivere, Jerry Rivere, Renard Southall, Ronald Southall, Ken St. Germain, Leo Sternfels, Scott Sternfels, Henry Templet, Wade Templet, Kim Torres

Special Thanks to:

Mart J. Black, AICP
President/CEO
Planning Concepts & Strategies, Inc.
P.O. Box 3751
Houma, LA 70361
(985) 637-8017

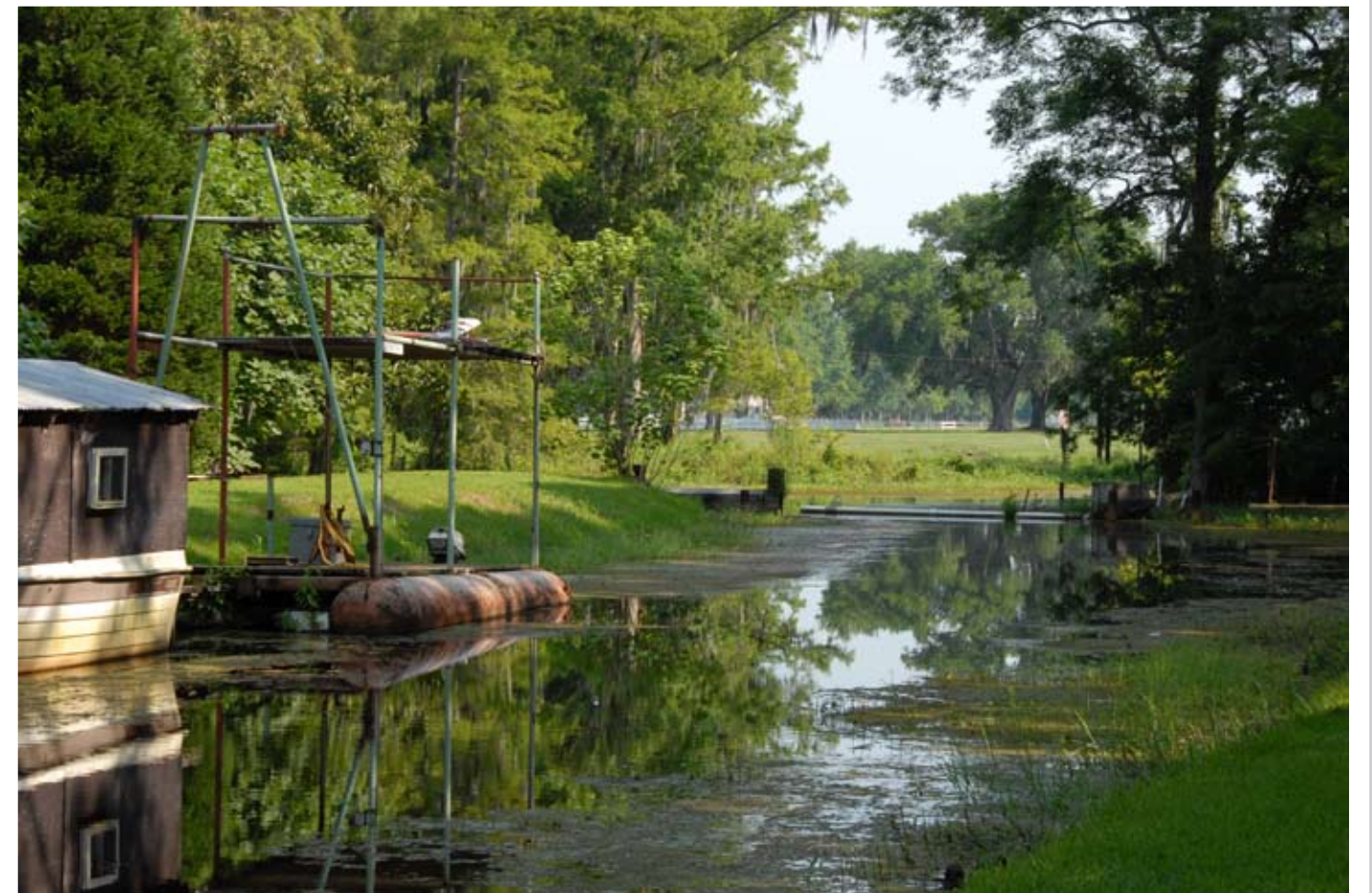


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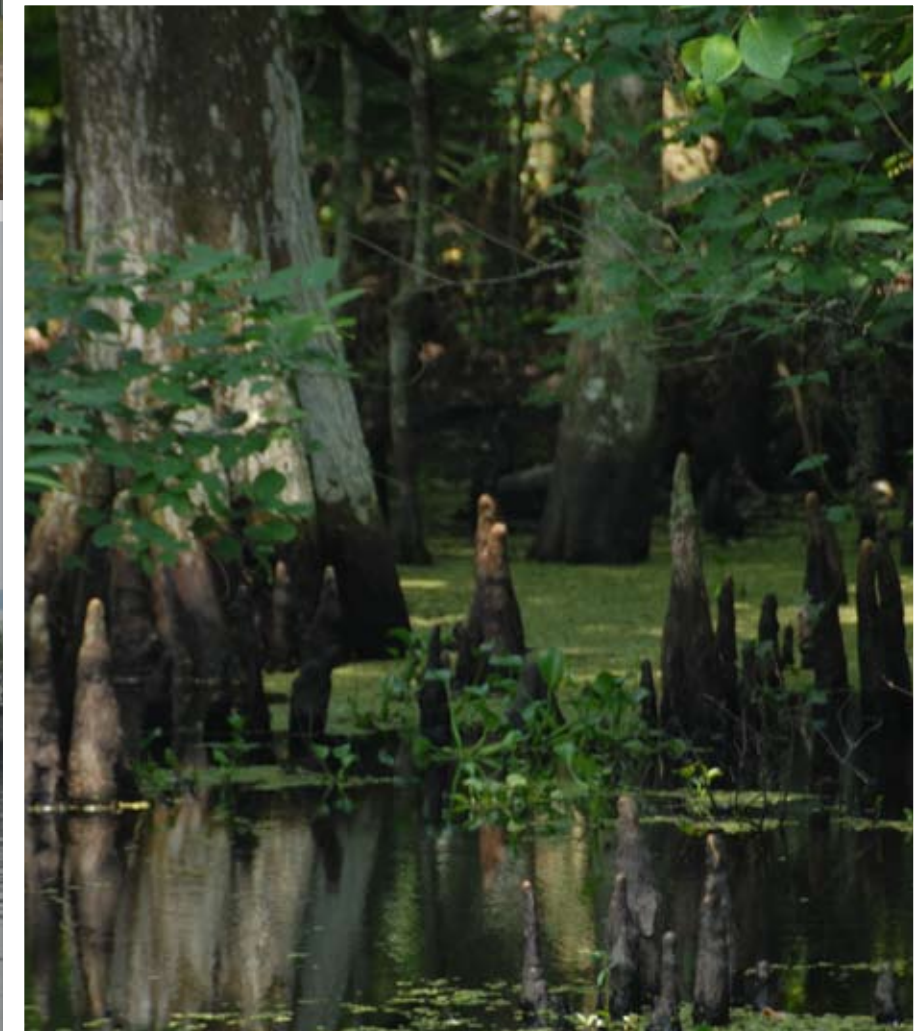
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Assumption Parish Police Jury
P.O. Box 520
4813 Highway 1
Napoleonville, Louisiana 70390
(985) 369-7435



South Central Planning & Development Commission
P.O. Box 1870, Gray, LA 70359
5058 W. Main Street, Houma, La 70360
(985) 851-2900



Introduction to Comprehensive Planning

Introduction

In 2006 the citizens of Assumption Parish began a comprehensive planning process leading to the adoption of a new Comprehensive Plan for the Parish. The Steering Committee, comprised of Assumption Parish residents, led the process with the general public playing a significant role in shaping the plan. By participating in the discussion of comprehensive planning issues, the people of Assumption Parish have helped to make this document relevant and useful. Additionally, the broad public input and citizen participation experienced during this planning process will help to insure community-wide support of the new Assumption Parish Comprehensive Plan.

As stated in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan recently issued in May 2007 by the Louisiana Recovery Authority, the “greatest contributions will be made by individuals” and communities “who take the initiative to change and to lead. It is in your power to... get involved with planning for your [community].” Louisiana Speaks envisions a statewide planning structure with significant citizen oversight to review planning activities at all levels—state, regional, parish and municipal—and to monitor progress toward benchmarks spelled out in each jurisdiction’s Comprehensive Plan. The Assumption Parish Comprehensive Plan is an example of citizen participation that will lead to citizen oversight and monitoring of progress toward achieving benchmarks to make the plan a reality.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a guide or blueprint for the physical development of an area or region over a specified period of time, usually 20 to 25 years. Because it is developed from public input, it provides the community with a shared vision. The plan is actually the community writing its own guide for future growth and development. The community can use its Comprehensive Plan to help ensure the wise use of limited public funds, guiding its leaders in the allocation of public resources to support desired future development patterns.

What does a Comprehensive Plan contain?

The Comprehensive Plan may contain various elements, depending on the needs of the community. Louisiana law specifies the minimum contents of such a plan in Louisiana Revised Statute (*LRS*) 33:106. While the community may include other considerations, its plan must “...provide a general description or depiction of existing roads...” and other public thoroughfares and public rights-of-way and corridors along with public property falling within the jurisdiction and control of the local government. The plan may also include various materials and descriptions that support recommendations for land use, transportation, public buildings and schools, open space and recreation facilities, public housing, redevelopment of blighted areas, and utilities. Louisiana law, therefore, allows a community sufficient flexibility to tailor a Comprehensive Plan to meet its unique needs. In terms of format, the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan (*May 2007*) recommends a broad general structure, with the community vision leading into the body of the plan, which contains key plan elements such as land use, economic development, natural hazards,



housing, transportation; urban design, critical and sensitive areas; and infrastructure. The final section focuses on plan implementation and monitoring according to the “Louisiana Speaks Strategic Implementation Plan—Policy Guide 2: A Statewide Framework for Local Comprehensive Planning” of September 2007.

Although the Comprehensive Plan may suggest methods to be used in its implementation, such implementation requires separate action to adopt the special “tools” necessary. Other than the specific considerations afforded the Comprehensive Plan in revised statutes, full implementation of the Plan requires the adoption by ordinance of other measures or regulatory “tools” that may include, among others, a zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, floodplain management regulations, building codes, nuisance abatement, historic preservation, and capital programming. The Planning Commission will consider these tools and make recommendations to the Police Jury regarding the measures they believe to be most appropriate for Assumption Parish.

Who is authorized to develop such a plan?

Comprehensive Planning in Louisiana remains optional. However, under Louisiana law (*LRS* 33:102) each parish and municipality is granted the authority to “make, adopt, amend, extend, add to, or carry out...” comprehensive plans formulated in accordance with the statute. Local governing bodies are also authorized to “...create by ordinance planning commissions with the powers and duties...” described in the statute and to appropriate funds to support the commission. Although Assumption Parish does not yet have a planning commission, the Police Jury is likely to establish one to oversee the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan. The 14-member Steering Committee, appointed by the Police Jury for the specific purpose of drafting this Comprehensive Plan, is the precursor to the Assumption Parish Planning Commission.

In 2004 the Louisiana Legislature elevated the legal status of an adopted master or comprehensive plan by requiring local governing bodies to consider the plan “...before adopting, approving, or promulgating any local laws, ordinances, or regulations which are inconsistent with the adopted elements of the master plan” (*LRS* 33:109 B). In addition, state agencies and departments must give the adopted local plan due consideration when undertaking any action or project that would impact the plan and its elements. This means that a community has the ability to ensure due consideration of the adopted Comprehensive Plan when proposed local or state actions conflict with the plan or its elements.

Louisiana Revised Statutes 33:106.

§106. General powers and duties

B.(1) Any such plan shall provide a general description or depiction of existing roads, streets, highways, and publicly controlled corridors, along with a general description or depiction of other public property within the jurisdiction that is subject to the authority of the commission.

(2) Any such plan, with the accompanying maps, plats, charts, and descriptive matter may include a commission’s recommendations for the development of the parish or municipality, as the case may be, including, among other things, the general location, character, and extent of railroads, highways, streets, viaducts, subways, bus, street car and other transportation routes, bridges, waterways, lakes, water fronts, boulevards, parkways, playgrounds, squares, parks, aviation fields, and other public ways, grounds, and open spaces; the general location of public buildings, schools, and other public property; the general character, extent and layout of public housing and of the replanning of blighted districts and slum areas; the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned or operated, for water, light, sanitation, communication, power, transportation, and other purposes; and the removal, relocation, widening, narrowing, vacating, abandonment, change of use, or extension of any of the foregoing ways, grounds, open spaces, buildings, property, utilities, or terminals.



Comprehensive Planning Process

This Comprehensive Plan – a blueprint – gives Assumption Parish an agenda that they can follow to achieve the Parish’s vision of the future. It will help local elected officials and appointed boards, federal and state agencies and community groups allocate resources efficiently by giving direction for expenditure of public funds on infrastructure, services and programs. In order to create this blueprint, in January 2006 the Assumption Parish Police Jury contracted with South Central Planning and Development Commission (SCPDC) to serve in a technical advisory role to help the Parish create a Comprehensive Plan.

On August 23, 2006, the Police Jury officially appointed 14 parish residents to the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. Thereafter the Steering Committee met regularly with its Technical Advisor during the next four months, making preparations to introduce the comprehensive planning process to the people of Assumption Parish. These and all Comprehensive Planning meetings were advertised as being open to the general public and posted in accordance with the State’s open meeting law.

These months of preparation included research and analysis of the characteristics of Assumption Parish to provide a better understanding of the community’s growth in terms of population, age characteristics, school attendance, income, employment, unemployment and local economy. The planning team assessed the community’s resources and needs; mapped its physical geography and existing land uses and projected its population growth and possible future development patterns. This data provided a necessary background and starting point for the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

With this basic work completed and evaluated, the Steering Committee began the public outreach phase of the planning process. After an initial “kick-off” meeting in October, a series of public meetings were held on three consecutive Tuesdays in November 2006. These meetings were designed to gather information from parish residents in order to better understand the needs and desires of the community. More than 70 Assumption Parish citizens attended these meetings and shared their thoughts and opinions about what they believed to be important for the future of Assumption Parish.

At these meetings attendees were encouraged to participate in one or more of the five Focus Groups. Each Focus Group dealt with a subject which would become an element (or chapter) of the Comprehensive Plan—Land Use, Infrastructure, Public Facilities, Housing, Aesthetics and Community Design. This level of public participation assured a broad spectrum of perspectives on various issues important to the community, and helped in determining goals and objectives for each of the five elements.

At the first meeting participants were asked to identify, discuss, and prioritize issues surrounding each of the Focus Group topics. In the second round of meetings, each group discussed and agreed upon strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) for their topic. In the final round of focus group meetings, participants developed goals, objectives and strategies based on the findings of the first two meetings. The products of these Focus Group sessions have been key elements in the development of this Comprehensive Plan. The Project Team wishes to extend its deepest appreciation to the members of the Steering Committee and to Focus Group participants for their dedication and desire to move Assumption Parish forward.

In January 2007 the Steering Committee began meeting to review and evaluate the results of the focus group meetings. The Steering Committee’s first task was to use information and insights gathered at those public meetings along with technical expertise and professional resources to articulate an overall “Vision Statement” for the future of the Parish. The Steering Committee approved the following as the plan’s guiding Vision Statement:

“Assumption Parish will continue to develop a healthy community atmosphere and a desirable quality of life for its residents by ensuring a balanced mix of residential and commercial development, quality education, necessary infrastructure, employment and recreational opportunities while preserving its natural resources and pleasing rural character.

The Parish will become a growing, visually attractive, safe and economically stable community striving for cooperation and input from its citizens and business community.”

The Steering Committee’s next task was to draft the elements of the Comprehensive Plan, using for guidance the Vision, which describes the community’s dream for its future. To accomplish this task and produce a plan containing all the elements discussed, the Steering Committee utilized all the information and insights gathered at the previous public meetings, along with the professional expertise of its Technical Advisor. This plan, therefore, contains goals and objectives for each focus group topic to achieve the Parish’s Vision for itself.

Comprehensive Planning Process-Flow Chart Description

Begin and Organize the Comprehensive Planning Effort
Steering Committee Meetings

Public Input
Kick Off Meeting
Focus Groups Meetings
Technical Advisors use information/insights from all public meetings to ...

Draft an overall “Vision Statement” with Steering Committee
and then,

Formulate goals and objectives for each focus group element necessary to achieve the plan’s overall Vision

Develop strategies and identify tools to use in accomplishing the goals

Determine most appropriate strategies/tools for Assumption Parish

Incorporate the Vision, Goals & Objectives and Strategies & Tools into a draft Comprehensive Plan

Begin Public Meetings
draft plan presented to public for comments

Revise Plan as necessary

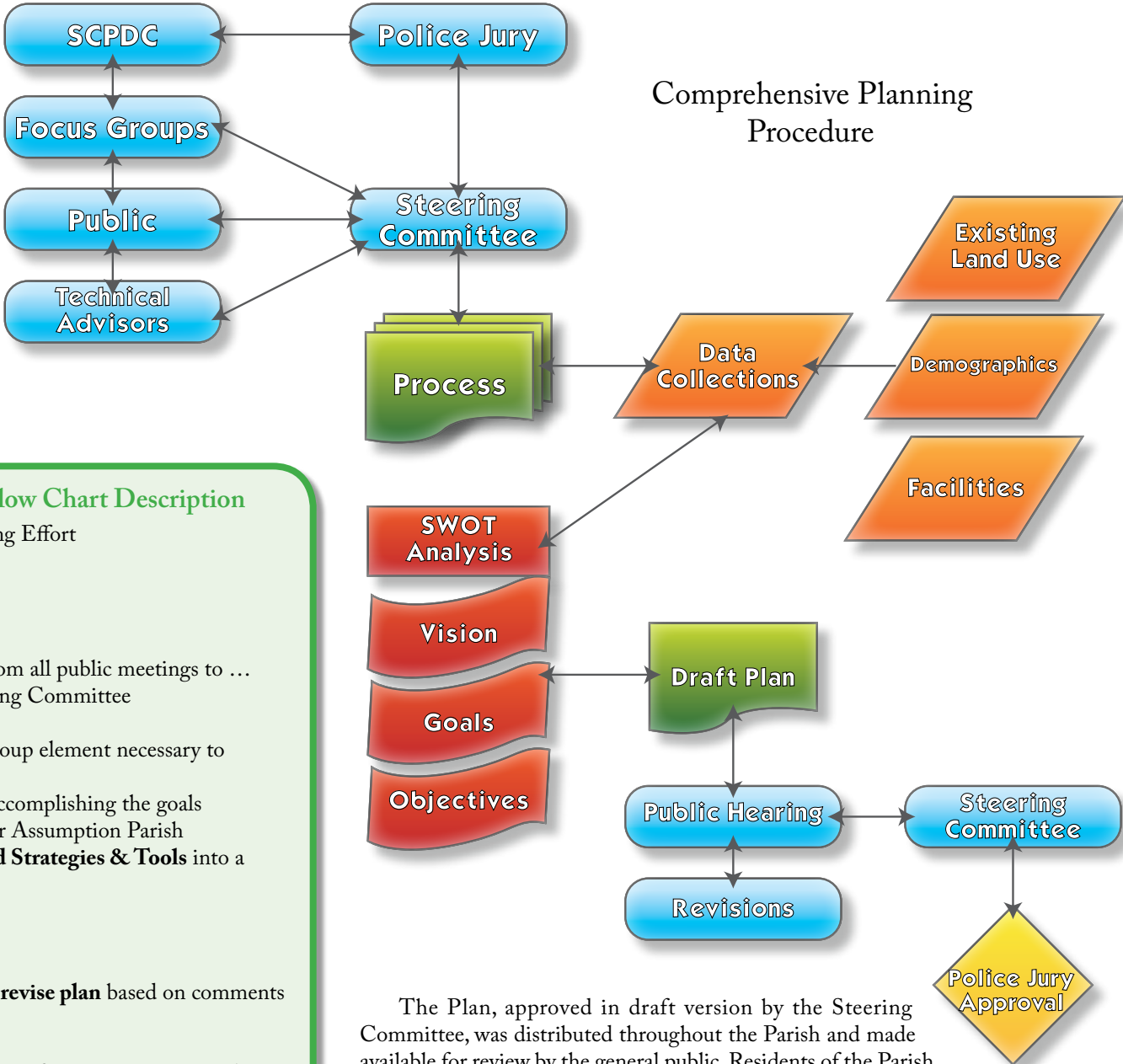
Steering Committee and Technical Advisors to revise plan based on comments received during public meeting phase

Prepare Final Document
Steering Committee approves final plan document for presentation to Police Jury

Police Jury takes delivery of plan from Steering Committee and begins review and public hearings

Police Jury formally adopts Comprehensive Plan

In crafting the Comprehensive Plan the Steering Committee worked to ensure all its various elements reinforced each other. The Land Use Element becomes the foundation of the plan showing the general distribution, location and characteristics of current and future land uses. This element is designed to guide decisions about the type and location specific land uses in the Parish. Other elements of the plan flow from the Land Use Element and share many of the same assumptions. Once the Land Use Element was completed the process of formalizing and adopting goals and objectives was repeated for each of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan.



The Plan, approved in draft version by the Steering Committee, was distributed throughout the Parish and made available for review by the general public. Residents of the Parish have made use of opportunities to comment in person at public hearings, and by mail or e-mail. After the public review period ended, the Steering Committee used the information gathered to finalize the Comprehensive Plan which was then presented to the Police Jury for formal review and adoption.

This document is Assumption Parish’s Comprehensive Plan. It has been crafted through an exhaustive planning process which has involved a great deal of public participation in addition to research and supporting data. It is, therefore, the single community document that is capable of inspiring, motivating and guiding the people of Assumption Parish as they work together to achieve their community “Vision” for the future.

Inventory and Analysis

A thorough analysis of the resources of Assumption Parish begins with an understanding of local dynamics represented by history, geography, demographics, culture, employment, industries and other factors that make the area unique. The information provided here is a picture in time—a “snapshot”—of the Parish at this particular moment in its history. The historical perspective helps to shape the context within which conclusions about the future are formed.

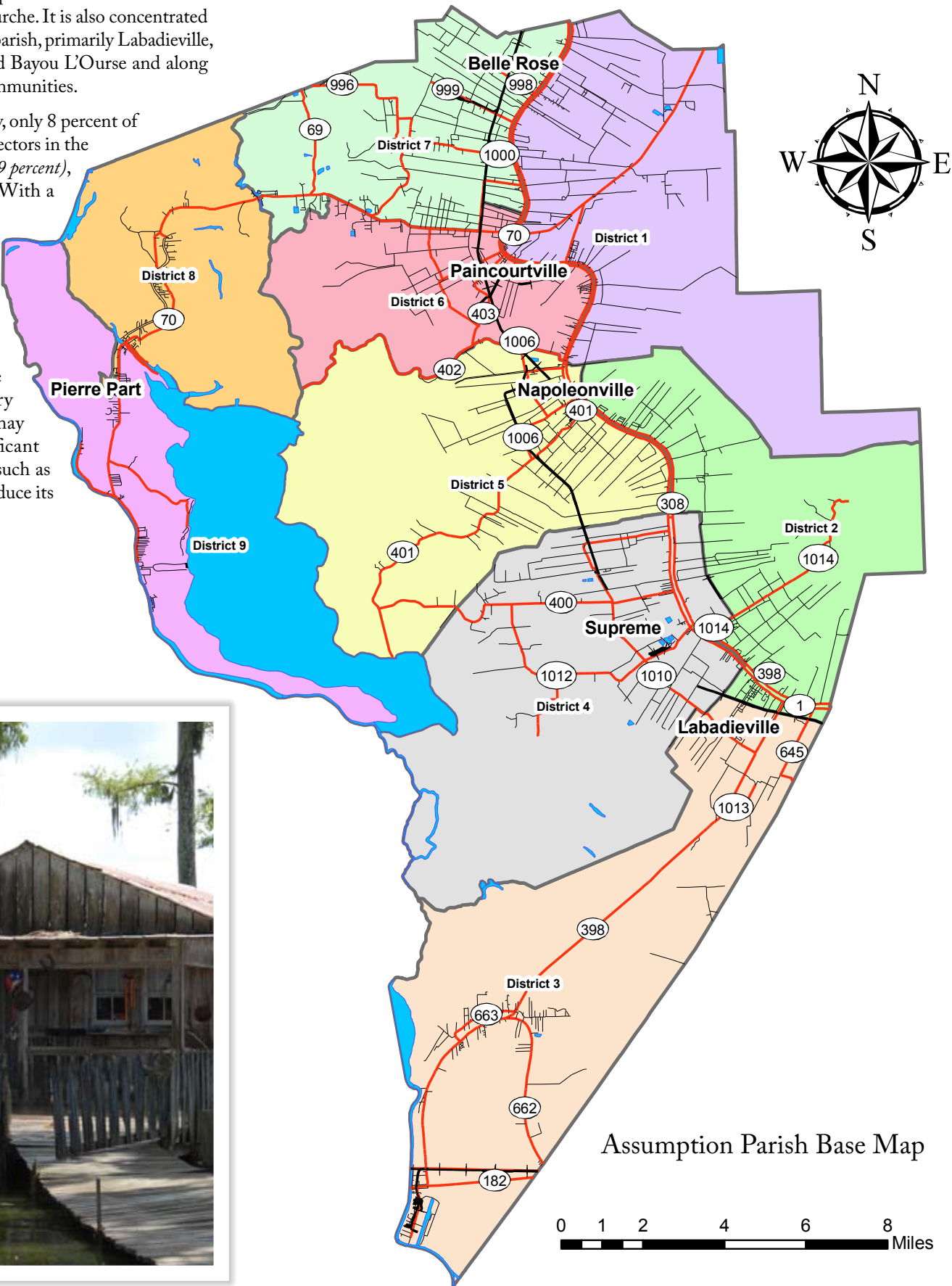
From its original inhabitants to the present-day descendants of pioneers, Assumption Parish has a proud and rich history. Evidence of its earliest “citizens” is found in the Indian mounds near Lake Verret. Built in 1793 The Church of the Assumption is the oldest church in the state and predates the official establishment of Assumption Parish in 1807. This provides evidence that the population of the Parish was increasing at this time. Napoleonville is officially incorporated in 1878, 46 years after its founding. In 1905 the damming of Bayou Lafourche relieved citizens from the threat of annual floods, and rapid development along this important waterway took place. Chemical plants along the Mississippi River provided alternate employment opportunities for Assumption Parish citizens, but World War II helped to improve both the local and state economy suffering through the Great Depression. Major highway construction, notably Interstate 10 beginning in 1960, eventually provided Assumption Parish residents with indirect access to high-speed transportation. Additional growth in the 1970s brought about Assumption’s first Comprehensive Plan.

The population of Assumption Parish over the last 100 years has fluctuated as the local economy changed. The Parish’s highest population may have occurred in the early 1900s when the local logging industry needed many workers to harvest vast areas of timber before the advent of mechanized logging. With the decline of this industry and the rise of agriculture in the parish, an economic endeavor requiring less labor overall, the population of the parish declined sharply as former residents sought work elsewhere. The 1910 census recorded nearly 25,000 people in Assumption Parish. By the 1920 census, this number had fallen to about 17,000 and even lower by the 1930 census. Only recently has the population of the parish climbed to levels last seen since 1910. Since 2000 the parish has exhibited a fairly stable population of approximately 23,200 persons, although the population spiked to more than 24,500 in October 2005 as a result of the “Katrina effect” that was experienced by other parishes in the region largely unaffected by this storm. In the ten years from 1990 to 2000, the population of the parish appears to have “aged” somewhat as a decline in the 20 to 34 age cohort was matched by an increase in the older age cohorts. This is a state, regional, and national trend, associated with the so-called “Baby Boomer” generation. It is concluded that, unless influenced by unforeseen, major events or developments, the population of Assumption Parish will not grow significantly over the next several decades.

Population in Assumption Parish has historically clustered near the parish’s “main avenue of commerce” which has been until modern times Bayou Lafourche. With the

construction of state highways along this waterway connecting Assumption with other parishes, population patterns have not changed dramatically. Population is still concentrated along the higher ground which hugs the banks of Bayou Lafourche. It is also concentrated in “nodes” which correspond to the named communities in the parish, primarily Labadieville, Napoleonville, Plattenville, and in Pierre Part, Belle Rose and Bayou L’Ourse and along the major ridges which support roadways leading to these communities.

Although largely thought of as an agricultural community, only 8 percent of the workforce is employed in this sector. Larger employment sectors in the parish include wholesale trade (19.4 percent), construction (15.9 percent), manufacturing (15.3 percent), and retail trade (12.7 percent). With a mobile labor force, other opportunities in the region are open to Assumption Parish workers. These include opportunities along the future Interstate 49 corridor; the growing marine fabrication industry tied strongly to deep-water oil and gas extraction; and continued industrial growth along the Mississippi River in Ascension and St. James parishes, to name some. Nevertheless the sugar cane industry in Assumption Parish will continue and may even grow if sugar cane becomes a significant component in the production of bio-fuels, such as bio-diesel, as the nation looks for ways to reduce its dependency on foreign oil.



Parish History

The original inhabitants who lived along the banks of Bayou Lafourche in the area of what was to become Assumption Parish are said to have been the Indian tribes of the Chetimatches, Washas and Chawashas. Indian mounds that have been in existence at least 4,000 years are still to be found in the interior of the parish near Lake Verret.

Fernando Desoto discovers the mouth of the Mississippi River in 1541 and soon after settlers made Louisiana their home. The recorded history of Assumption Parish dates back to 1699, when French explorers under Bienville were the first white men to explore the Bayou Lafourche valley. Some 13 years later, in 1712 the first settlement of New Orleans was established.

The French and Spanish began to settle along Bayou Lafourche during the middle of the 1700s between the present towns of Napoleonville and Donaldsonville. In 1751 sugar cane was introduced into the colony by the Jesuits and planted on their farm in New Orleans. Today it is easy to see the importance of this event, as Assumption Parish is a major producer of sugar cane.

While Louisiana was under Spanish rule Canary Islanders known as Islenos were sent in 1779 and 1780 by Governor Bernardo de Galvez to the locality near Plattenville called Valenzuela Post.



The population increased as exiled French Acadians from Nova Scotia settled in the area. However the 1755 to 1765 dates quoted by many historians is a misstatement. The Acadians who settled in the area of Bayou Lafourche below the church at Plattenville came to Louisiana in 1785 after having returned to France for some time following the "Grand Dérangement". Later German immigrants would also come to call the Parish their home. Many of their descendants are numerous in Assumption Parish today.

Plattenville apparently was a population center prior to 1793. Residents there had unsuccessfully petitioned for the erection of a Catholic church several times before "The Church of the Assumption" was built in the year 1793.

The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 brought the Parish along with the whole of the Louisiana Territories under the control of the rapidly expanding United States of America. Named in honor of "The Church of the Assumption", the oldest in the state, Assumption Parish was created by an act of the legislature of Orleans territory, as the 8th parish of the territory in 1807, five years before Louisiana entered the Union. In 1812, the territory of Orleans became the state of Louisiana.

In all of the southern parishes of Louisiana tow-paths developed along the bayous leading gradually to route called "cordelle roads." Assumption Parish was included in the general road law of 1818 which called for mandatory road construction along waterways and of bridges and their maintenance under supervision of the Parish Police Jury.

By an act of the State Legislature in 1819 Assumption and other Parish Police Juries begin to organize and administer a parish school system. Within less than 50 years there were ten public schools established in the Parish.

Early settlers stayed close to Bayou Lafourche but, after Louisiana achieved statehood, many Anglo-Americans bought large farms and came to the Parish with their slaves. One



such family, the Pugh's of North Carolina, arrived in the 1820's and eventually owned several of the area plantations.

In 1832, Louis Monginot bought a quarter-mile square of land along the bayou for \$2,000 and subdivided it into town-like markings. Legend has it that Monginot had been a soldier under Napoleon Bonaparte and named the community in honor of the "Little General." However, records suggest that the town was probably named for the Napoleon family, which was instrumental in the community's early development.

Although officially incorporated on March 11, 1878, Napoleonville has always served as the parish seat. The first courthouse was built in 1818. Fires in 1884 and 1894 destroyed practically all of the existing town. The present courthouse was built in 1895 and features Spanish architecture seldom seen in such structures in south Louisiana.

By 1850, although there were some wandering Indians in Assumption Parish, the Chitimacha had all departed.



The congregation of Christ Episcopal Church in Napoleonville was established in 1852. Its picturesque edifice in the Gothic Style was commandeered by Union forces during the Civil War. In October of 1862, a Union Army of 3,000 troops was confronted at Georgia Plantation near Labadieville by a smaller Confederate unit. Out-manned and out-maneuvered, the Confederate unit was quickly overcome.

In 1858 a chapel was built at Pierre Part. The first church burned, and subsequent buildings were destroyed by storms in 1909 and 1915. A floating chapel, Our Lady Star of the Sea, was dedicated in 1936.

The first telephone reached Napoleonville in 1884. The operator was Louis Corde. Corde was long in public service, as a postal employee, alderman, and mayor. Under his administration as municipal chief a water works and the bridge at the parish seat were built. He was also one of the organizers of Napoleonville's first bank.

Formerly a Mississippi River outlet, Bayou Lafourche was dammed at Donaldsonville in 1905. Historically the name Lafourche is from the French word for "fork", and alluded to the bayou's large outflow of Mississippi River water. Taming the bayou vastly affected the hydrology of Assumption Parish and the entire central Louisiana coastline.

In 1928 Gov. Huey P. Long spurs construction of bridges across the Mississippi River, including the Sunshine Bridge. This helped to foster the growth of chemical plants on river near Assumption Parish.

The effects of the Great Depression hit Louisiana, but the start of World War II in 1941 helps pull Louisiana out of the depression.

In 1960 Construction begins on Louisiana's two east-west highways, I-10 and Interstate 20.



1700

1750 French and Spanish settle between Napoleonville and Donaldsonville
1785 Acadians from Nova Scotia settle near Plattenville

1785 Acadians from Nova Scotia settle near Plattenville

1800

1803 The United States makes the Louisiana Purchase.
1807 Assumption becomes the 8th parish of Orleans territory

1832 Louis Monginot begins community of Napoleonville
1878 Napoleonville officially incorporated

1900

1905 Damming of Bayou Lafourche

1928 Gov. Huey P. Long spurs construction of bridges across the Mississippi River

1959 Salt dome mining begins in Assumption Parish

1960s Advent of chemical plants on Mississippi River

1980s Closure of sugar refineries in Assumption Parish.

Today

Natural Resources

Situated in the bayou country of the south-central portion of Louisiana, Assumption Parish lies just west of the Mississippi River about 30 miles south from Baton Rouge and 60 miles west of New Orleans. The total area of the Parish is 236,962 acres, with water covering 21,654 acres.

Much of Assumption Parish is laced with bayous. The highest land in the Parish is located along the banks of Bayou Lafourche where elevations range from 15 to 20 feet above sea level, forming a natural levee. Lake Verret, Grassy Lake and Lake Palourde form the western boundary of the Parish.

Early settlers stayed close to Bayou Lafourche, but after Louisiana achieved statehood, many Anglo-Americans bought large farms and came to the Parish with their slaves. The land's use changed from the small, individual plots farmed by the Acadians to large plantations run by the Anglo-Americans.

As a result sugarcane became the main crop and remains so to this day. In proportion to this area, Assumption Parish produces more sugar than any other Parish in Louisiana. Most of the soils in the Parish not subject to flooding have been used in the production of sugar cane. Many thousands of acres are flooded, however, because of their low elevation and lack of adequate outlets. Most of the flooded soils are in woodland. The most valuable land of the Parish lies along Bayou Lafourche, extending back some 80 to 100 acres.

Although Assumption Parish is essentially flat. The terrain is very diverse in its ecosystems. Some areas are environmentally sensitive and as such are not suitable for any type of development. Other areas are suitable for development but have additional requirements imposed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (*FEMA*), for flood prone areas. These differences in the terrain help drive the types of land-uses throughout the Parish.

In addition to the land uses, the availability of employment opportunities also helps to shape the Parish. Farming and industrial activity, including sugar processing and refining, impact the local economy. Assumption Parish is conveniently situated near the industrial activity of both the Mississippi River region and the Gulf of Mexico coastal area surrounding Morgan City to the south. These provide residents with many different employment opportunities. For example, there are fishing, manufacturing, agriculture, oil exploration, medical, and other industries within commuting distance.

These are some of the factors that help to shape the Parish. Considering these factors provides added insight into existing conditions and lays the foundation for the development of a Comprehensive Plan.



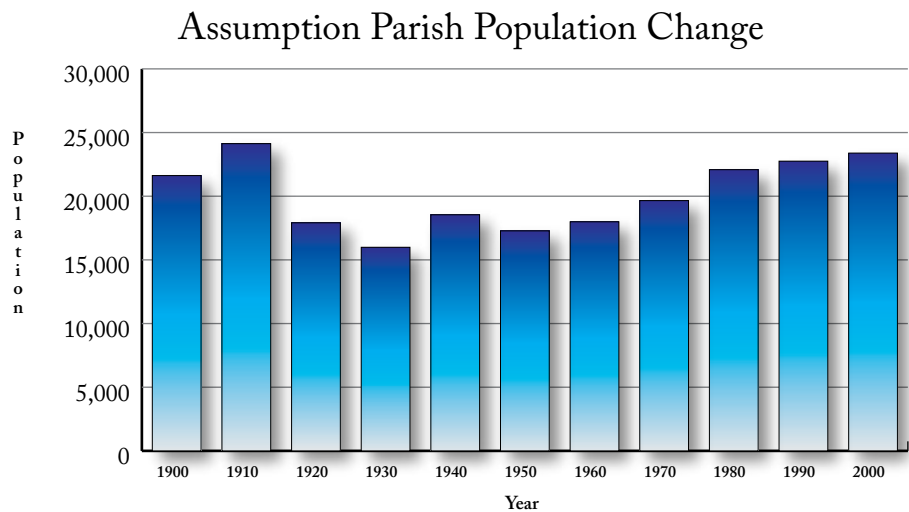
Demographics

The demographic characteristics of Assumption Parish presented in this section are Total Population, Population by Age, and Public School Enrollment.

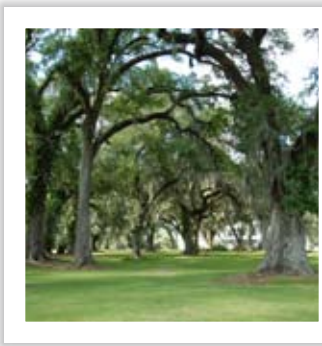
Assumption Parish: 100-year profile from 1900 to 2000

In 1900 Assumption Parish had a population of 21,620 persons. The 2000 Census reported a population of 23,388 persons, an increase of 1,768 persons during this 100-year period.

The following graph depicts population changes in Assumption Parish over the past century.



LOUISIANA Population of Counties by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990
Compiled and edited by Richard L. Forstall, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census



The data reveal a significant decline in population that began after 1910 and that only started to reverse in the 1960s. Population numbers are just now returning to the levels Assumption Parish previously experienced in the early 1900s. Only in the last few decades did the number of persons residing in Assumption Parish return to levels last seen in the 1900 and 1910 census. These changes are attributable to the changing nature of the economy locally as well as globally. Logging was important to the area in the early 1900s, and population spikes followed accordingly as many hands were needed to manually harvest the timber before the advent of the industrial age in the south. As the land was cleared, logging became less lucrative and the land was turned over to farming. This new economy required less manpower on a daily basis. Additionally, the move towards mechanized farming required fewer and fewer people to bring the crop to market. Employment trends shifted yet again as the farming economy lost prominence to the advent of the oil and chemical industry.

1990 to 2000 US Census Bureau Population Counts

In 1990 the United States had a total population of 248,709,873. This figure grew by 32.7 million persons (13.1 percent) to 281,421,906 in the year 2000.

In Louisiana the 1990 population was 4,219,973 and it grew by 249,003 persons (5.6 percent) to 4,468,976 in the year 2000. Over this same period of time the population of the region encompassing Assumption Parish grew at a rate of 7.9 percent.

For the purposes of this Plan the “region” is defined as Assumption Parish and the Parishes that border on Assumption - Iberville and Ascension parishes to the north, St. James and Lafourche parishes to the east, Terrebonne and St. Mary parishes to the south, and St. Martin and Iberia parishes to the west.

In 1990 the population of the region encompassing Assumption Parish was 486,098. Over the next ten years this number grew by 38,279 people to a total regional population of 524,377 in 2000. This represents a growth rate of 7.9 percent.

In 1990 the U.S. Census Bureau reported the population of Assumption Parish to be 22,753. By the year 2000 this figure had increased by 635 persons (2.8 percent) to 23,388 persons.

Population Growth from 1990 to 2000

	1990 Census	2000 Census	Change from 1990 to 2000	Growth from 1990 to 2000
National Total	248,709,873	281,421,906	32,712,033	13.2%
Louisiana Total	4,219,973	4,468,976	249,003	5.9%
Regional Total	486,098	524,377	38,279	7.9%
Assumption Total	22,753	23,388	635	2.8%

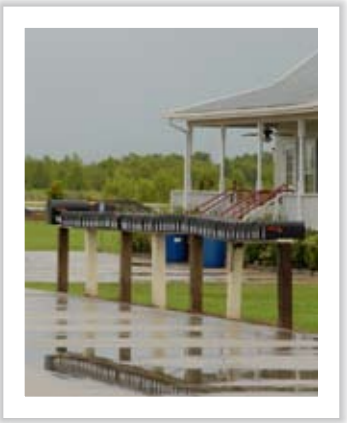
Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Data Set #1: 1990 Summary Tape File 1 (STF 1) - 100-% data - Data Set #2: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-% Data

2000 to 2005 US Census Bureau Population

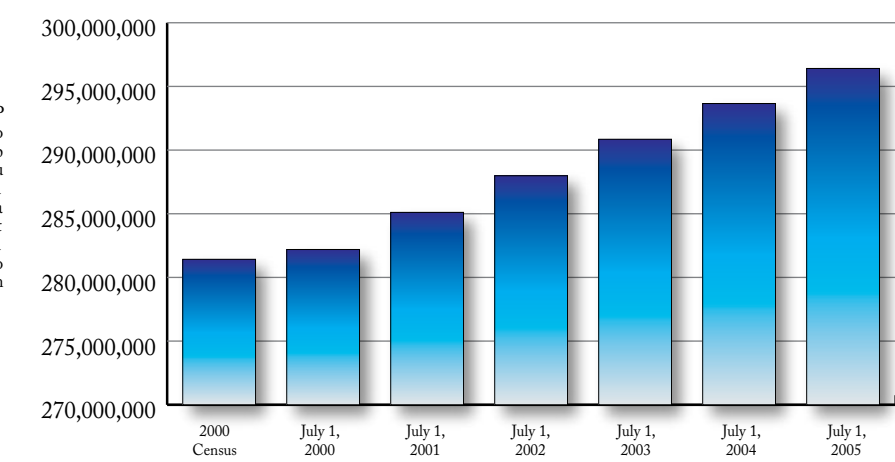
The Population Division of the U.S. Census Bureau releases annual population estimates for the nation, the states, and the counties or parishes within the states. These estimates approximate changes in the population that happen between regular decennial censuses. The following estimates for the nation, the state, the region and Assumption Parish depicted in the graphs shown in this section are derived from information found in “Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties of Louisiana: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005 (CO-EST2005-01-22)” released by the U.S. Census Bureau on March 16, 2006.

Population estimates for the years 2000 to 2005 show a steady increase in the number of people residing in the United States. The 2000 census counted 281,421,906 persons, and by 2005 the U.S. population was estimated to have grown to 296,410,404.

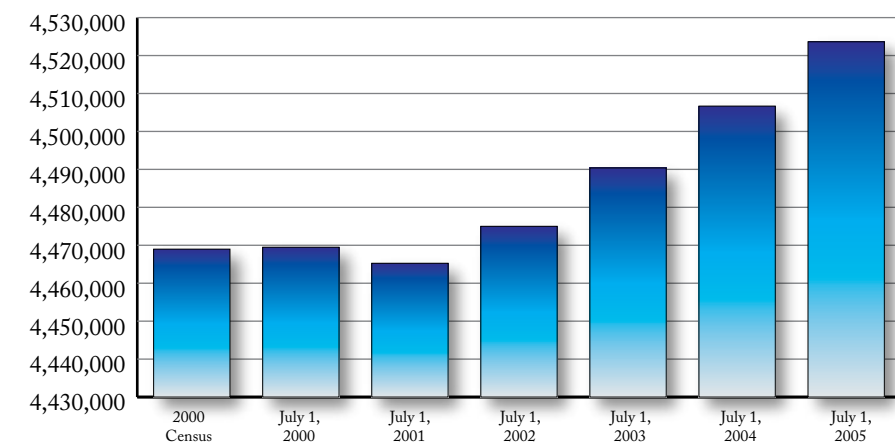
The Louisiana Population estimates for the years 2000 to 2005 show a slight dip in 2001 and then a steady rise through 2005. The 2000 census counted 4,468,976 residents of the state of Louisiana and by 2005 that population was estimated to be 4,523,628.



United States - Annual Population Estimates 2000 to 2005

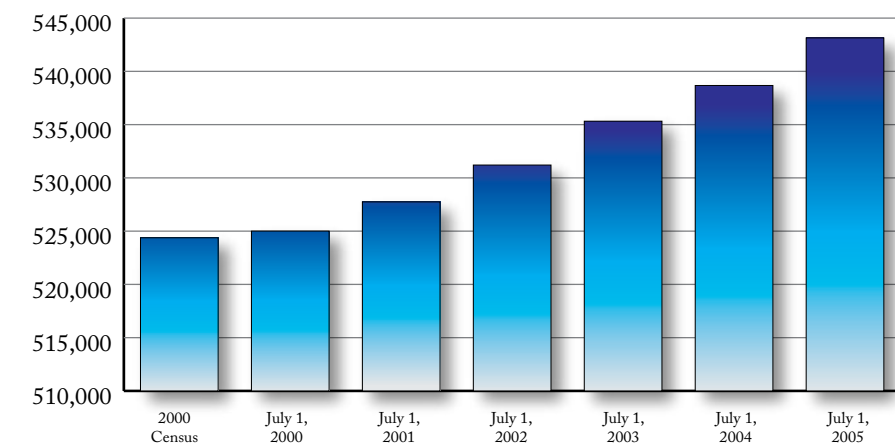


State Totals - Annual Population Estimates 2000 to 2005



The following graph depicts the 5-year estimated population change in the nine parish region that includes Assumption Parish and all its bordering parishes. The 2000 census counted 524,377 residents, and by 2005 the estimated number of persons living in the region had increased to 543,141.

Regional Totals - Annual Population Estimates 2000 to 2005



While the region has enjoyed slow but steady growth, the Assumption Parish has not shared in that growth. Population estimates for the years 2000 to 2005 show a decrease of 192 persons from 23,388 at the 2000 census to 23,196 estimated in 2005.

These estimates reverse a trend of slowly increasing population in Assumption Parish since 1950 as seen in the historic population figures detailed in the earlier 100-year profile. It appears that Hurricane Katrina has not change this new trend.

Population Growth Between 2000 and 2005

	2000 Census	July 1, 2000	July 1, 2001	July 1, 2002	July 1, 2003	July 1, 2004	July 1, 2005
Assumption Parish	23,388	23,384	23,232	23,208	23,229	23,206	23,196

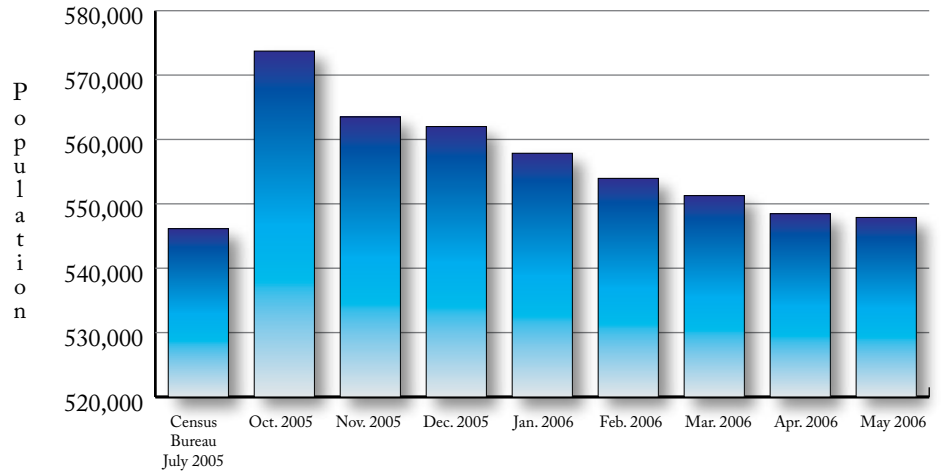
Since the Hurricanes of 2005

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health was tasked with identifying cities and parishes in Louisiana that experienced large increases in population due to hurricane evacuations.

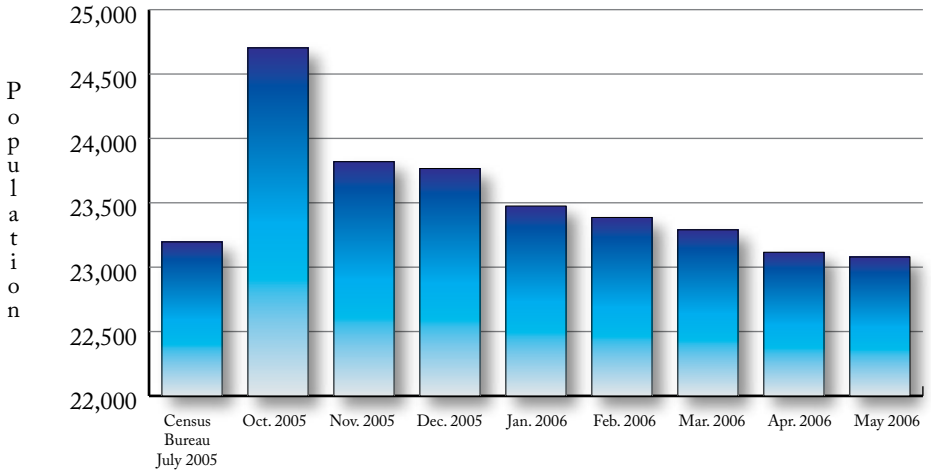
For guidance and suggestions on how to best proceed with post disaster population estimates, DHH contacted the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and population analysis experts at the University of Florida. These conversations led to the use public school enrollment data for estimating changes in population post Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

As the re-population of devastated areas began and short term changes in some Louisiana communities' population stabilized for the mid and potentially long-term, the population estimates by DHH has served as a means of identifying population changes in communities. These estimates and updated information may be found at <http://www.gnocdc.org>.

Post Katrina Regional Population Estimates



Post Katrina Assumption Parish Population Estimates



Population-Age

In 1990 the United States had a total population of 248,709,873 persons. Known as the baby boomers the vast majority of the population was in the 25 to 34 year, 35 to 44 year, and 45 to 54 year age groups. In 2000, the United States had a total population of 281,421,906 persons. Once again the vast majority of the population was in these same age groups. The 25 to 34 year age group decreased in population while the 35 to 44 year and 45 to 54 year age groups increased in population over the decade of 1990 to 2000. It should be noted that this trend can be seen at the national, state, regional and parish levels.

Population Age According to Census

	1990 Census		2000 Census	
	Number	%	Number	%
Under 5 years	1,860	8.2%	1,635	7.0%
5 to 9 years	2,076	9.1%	1,883	8.1%
10 to 14 years	2,176	9.6%	1,926	8.2%
15 to 19 years	1,808	7.9%	1,980	8.5%
20 to 24 years	1,721	7.6%	1,518	6.5%
25 to 34 years	3,685	16.2%	3,032	13.0%
35 to 44 years	3,058	13.4%	3,672	15.7%
45 to 54 years	2,177	9.6%	3,088	13.2%
55 to 59 years	904	4.0%	1,192	5.1%
60 to 64 years	824	3.6%	917	3.9%
65 to 74 years	1,433	6.3%	1,408	6.0%
75 to 84 years	814	3.6%	862	3.7%
85 years and over	217	1.0%	275	1.2%
Total	22,753	100.0%	23,388	100.0%

Assumption Parish is no exception to this baby boomer trend. The population of the Parish grew from 22,753 persons in 1990 to 23,388 persons in 2000. As on the national and region level, the vast majority of the population was in the 25 to 34 year, 35 to 44 year and 45 to 54 year age groups both in 1990 and in 2000. Following the national trend the 25 to 34 year age group in Assumption Parish decreased in population during the ten years between the 1990 and the 2000 Censuses. Meanwhile, as the baby boomers age, the 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 year age groups increased in population over the same time span.

2000 School Enrollment

All persons enrolled in school	6,255	100%
Nursery school, Preschool	386	6.2%
Kindergarten	429	6.9%
Elementary School Grades 1-8	3,401	54.4%
High School Grades 9-12	1,373	22.0%
College of Graduate School	666	10.6%

Population - Dependency

In Assumption Parish 28.5 percent of the population was under 18 years of age in 2000, compared to 27.3 percent of the total in Louisiana and 25.7 percent in the U.S.

In 2000 60.7 percent of the population was 18 to 64 years old, compared to 61.1 percent of the total in Louisiana and 61.9 percent in the U.S.

In 2000 10.9 percent of the population was 65 or older, compared to 11.6 percent of the total in Louisiana and 12.4 percent in the U.S.

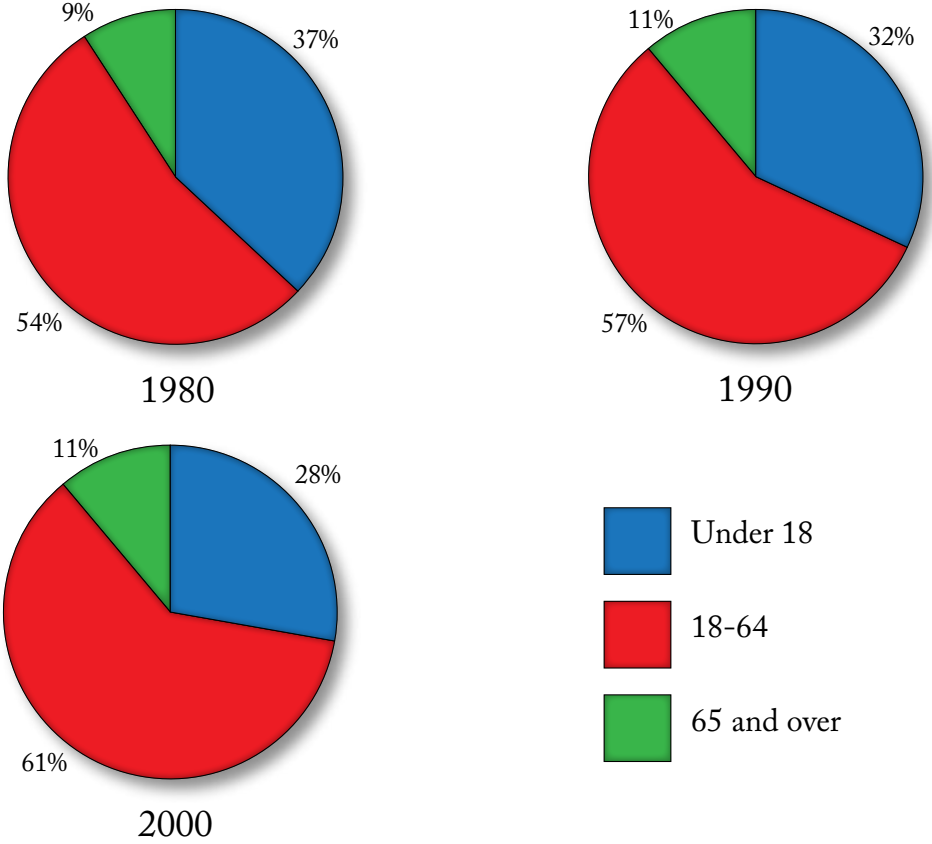
Assumption Age Structure

2000 Census	Under 18	18-64	65 and over
Assumption	28.5%	60.7%	10.9%

Demographics and chart courtesy of the Foundation for the Mid South

Age Structure of the Population

Assumption Parish, Louisiana, 1980 - 2000



Conclusion

In conclusion, Assumption Parish population will not exhibit significant growth over the next few decades, barring unforeseen events or developments that could impact the local economy. One possible exception is the proposed cargo airport and multi-modal transportation facility to be located just north of Assumption Parish. If this facility becomes a reality—and its development is highly doubtful at this time—the population of Assumption could grow noticeably as employees seek nearby locations in which to reside.

Assumption Parish Population Density

Belle Rose

Belle Rose is a census-designated place with a population of 1,944 at the 2000 census. Belle Rose is the home to the Lula Raw Sugar Factory and the Belle Alliance Plantation built in 1847 by Charles Anton Kock. The CDP has a total area of 5.4 square miles.



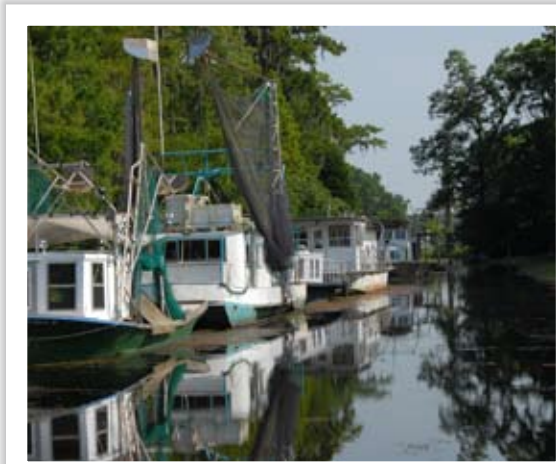
Pierre Part & Belle River

Pierre Part, a census-designated place with a population of 3,239 (2000 census), was founded by Acadian settlers after they were expelled from Canada. Pierre Part was predominately a fishing community until the Great Depression when many men in the town found work in the logging, levee building, and petroleum industries. The CDP has a total area of 3.0 square miles and is located in the western part of the parish.



Bayou L'Ourse

Bayou L'Ourse is a community in the southern area of the parish with a population of about 1,700. It is the home of McDermott Fabrication and the Bayou L'Ourse Nature Trail.



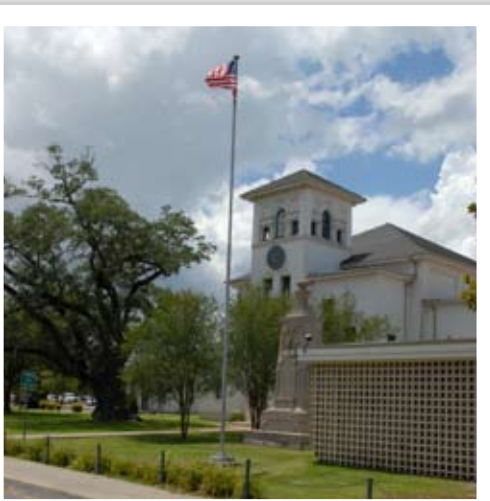
Plattenville, Paincourtville & Bertrandville

Plattenville is one of the earliest settlements in Assumption. The Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was built there in 1793, the oldest in the state. Assumption Parish was named after this church in 1807. Paincourtville is a census-designated place (CDP) with a population of 884 in the 2000 census. Paincourtville was named, tradition says, after an early traveler was unable to buy a single load of bread there and called the area "short of bread town." The CDP is home to St. Elizabeth's Church, built in 1840, which is known for its large church bell which is set in special steel scaffolding outside of the church as it is too large for either of the church's two towers. Paincourtville has a total area of 1.6 square miles.



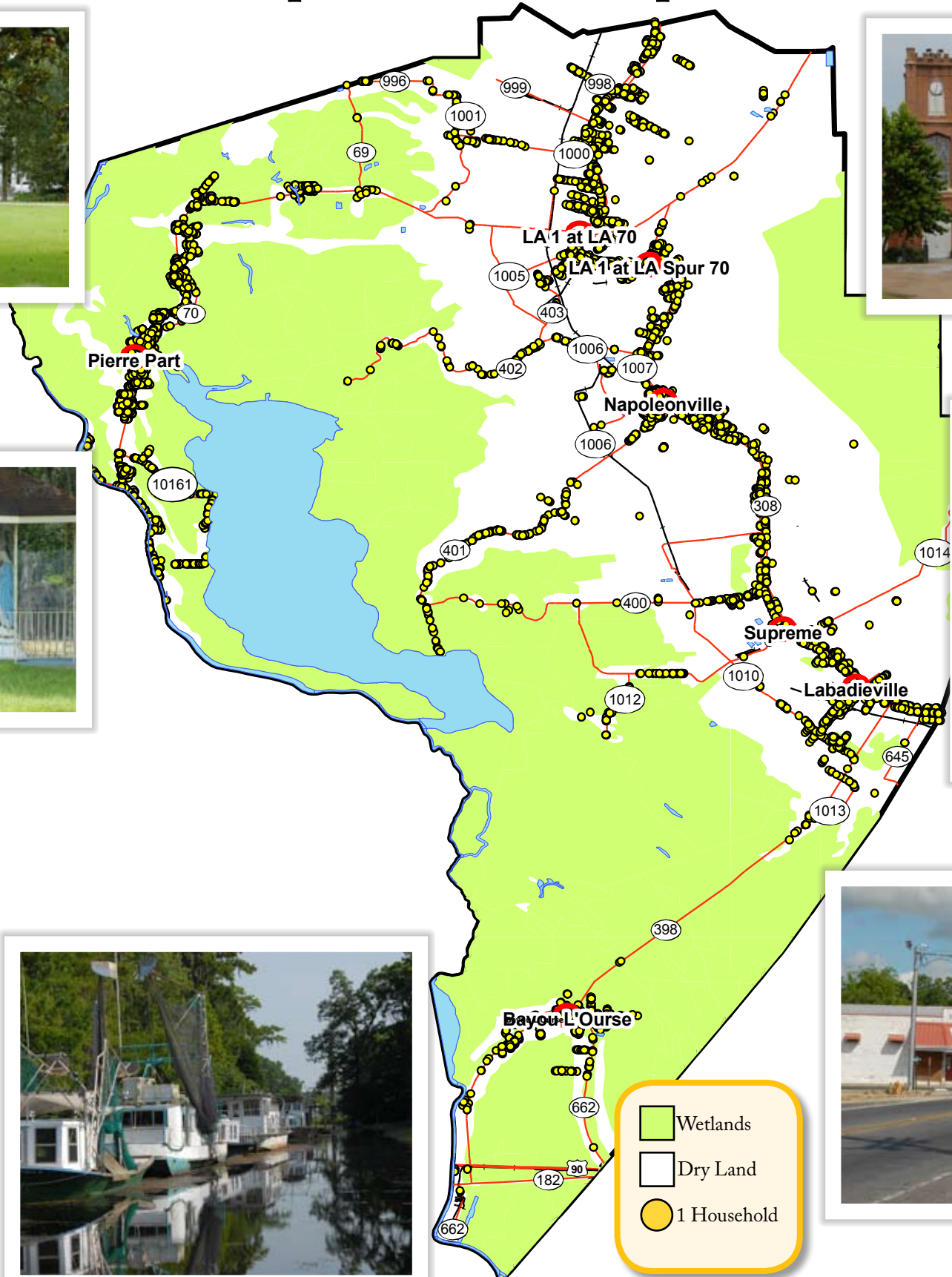
Napoleonville

Napoleonville, the parish seat, is the only incorporated community in the parish. The population was 686 during the 2000 census. The village is located along the banks of Bayou Lafourche and the first permanent settlements were made in the middle of the 18th century by both French and Spanish settlers. The population grew between 1755 and 1764 as exiled Acadians entered the area. Tradition says the area was named by a French settler who had served in the French army under Napoleon Bonaparte. The village has a total area of 0.2 square miles, all land.



Labadieville

Labadieville (pop. 1,811), a census-designated place located along Bayou Lafourche, was originally called "Brulee Labadie." Tradition says that the area was named after French settler Jean Louis LaBadie. Historically, the area was home to the Washi Indian tribe. After 1750, however, the population swelled with French, Spanish, Acadian, Islenos, and German settlers. The CDP is home to the St. Philomena Catholic church, built in 1847, and was also the scene of a battle on Oct. 27, 1862 during the Civil War. Labadieville has a total area of 3.9 square miles.



Economic Resources

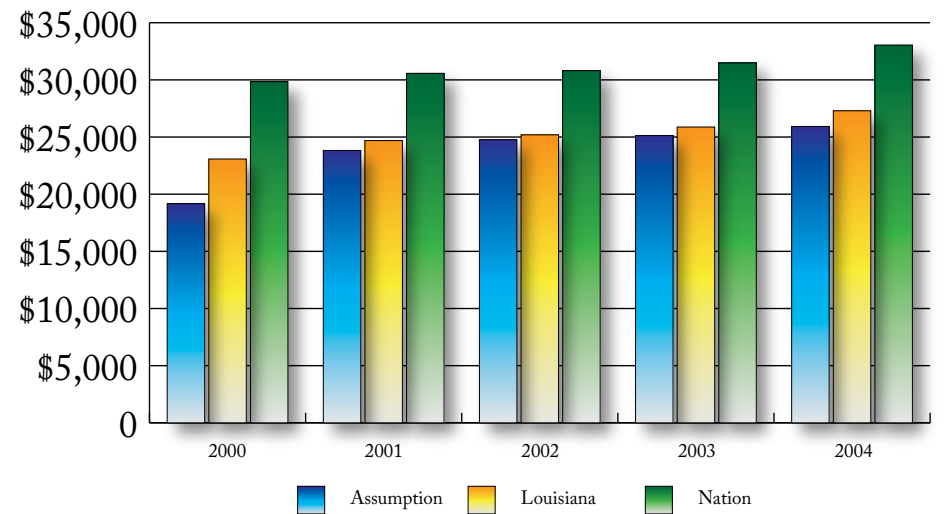
The economic characteristics of Assumption Parish presented in this section include personal income, unemployment/employment, employment by industry and by occupation. Data used are both historical and the latest available.

Per Capita Personal Income

The U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Affairs defines “personal income” as the income that is received by persons from all sources. It is calculated as the sum of wage and salary disbursements, supplements to wages and salaries, proprietors’ income with inventory valuation and capital consumption adjustments, rental income of persons with capital consumption adjustment, personal dividend income, personal interest income, and personal current transfer receipts, less contributions for government social insurance.

In computing “per capita personal income” (PCPI), Bureau of Economic Affairs uses the Census Bureau’s annual, midyear population estimates. This measure of income is calculated as the personal income of the residents of a given area divided by the resident population of the area.

Per Capita Personal Income



2004 Per Capita Personal Income

In 2004 Assumption Parish had a PCPI of \$25,926. This PCPI ranked 16th in the state and was 95 percent of the state average (\$27,297) and 78 percent of the national average (\$33,050). The 2004 PCPI reflected an increase of 3.2 percent from 2003. The 2003-2004 state change was 5.5 percent and the national change was 5.0 percent.

Ten years earlier, in 1994 the PCPI of Assumption was \$14,405 and ranked 51st in the state. The 1994-2004 average annual growth rate of PCPI was 6.1 percent. The average annual growth rate for the state was 4.0 percent and for the nation was 4.1 percent.

2003 Per Capita Personal Income

In 2003 Assumption Parish had a PCPI of \$25,127. This PCPI ranked 16th in the state and was 97 percent of the state average (\$25,877) and 80 percent of the national average (\$31,484). The 2003 PCPI reflected an increase of 1.5 percent from 2002. The 2002-2003 state change was 2.7 percent and the national change was 2.2 percent.

Ten years earlier, in 1993 the PCPI of Assumption Parish was \$13,492 and ranked 48th in the state. The 1993-2003 average annual growth rate of PCPI was 6.4 percent. The average annual growth rate for the state was 4.0 percent and for the nation was 4 percent.

2002 Per Capita Personal Income

In 2002 Assumption Parish had a PCPI of \$24,763. This PCPI ranked 13th in the state and was 98 percent of the state average (\$25,194) and 80 percent of the national average (\$30,810). The 2002 PCPI reflected an increase of 3.9 percent from 2001. The 2001-2002 state change was 2.0 percent and the national change was 0.8 percent.

Ten years earlier, in 1992 the PCPI of Assumption Parish was \$13,005 and ranked 45th in the state. The 1992-2002 average annual growth rate of PCPI was 6.7 percent. The average annual growth rate for the state was 4.2 percent and for the nation was 4.0 percent.

2001 Per Capita Personal Income

In 2001 Assumption had a PCPI of \$23,825. This PCPI ranked 13th in the state and was 96 percent of the state average (\$24,692) and 78 percent of the national average (\$30,574). The 2001 PCPI reflected an increase of 24.3 percent from 2000. The 2000-2001 state change was 7.0 percent and the national change was 2.4 percent.

Ten years earlier, in 1991 the PCPI of Assumption Parish was \$12,571 and ranked 40th in the state. The 1991-2001 average annual growth rate of PCPI was 6.6 percent. The average annual growth rate for the state was 4.5 percent and for the nation was 4.4 percent.

2000 Per Capita Personal Income

In 2000 Assumption Parish had a PCPI of \$19,169. This PCPI ranked 30th in the state and was 83 percent of the state average (\$23,079) and 64 percent of the national average (\$29,845). The 2000 PCPI reflected an increase of 1.9 percent from 1999. The 1999-2000 state change was 4.8 percent and the national change was 6.8 percent.

Ten years earlier, in 1990 the PCPI of Assumption was \$11,905 and ranked 38th in the state. The 1990-2000 average annual growth rate of PCPI was 4.9 percent. The average annual growth rate for the state was 4.3 percent and for the nation was 4.4 percent.

Although Assumption Parish per capita personal income has grown as a percentage of both state and U.S. PCPI since 2000, it still lags behind both in this important economic measure. For example, Assumption Parish PCPI has increased from 83 percent of state PCPI in 2000 to 95 percent in 2004. Compared with U.S. figures, Assumption PCPI was 64 percent of the national per capita personal income in 2000, increasing to only 78 percent of this total in 2004.

These data were collected from the U.S. Department of Commerce - Bureau of Economic Affairs’ website: <http://www.bea.gov/bea/regional/bearfacts/action.cfm>

Unemployment

When compared to the United States (5.5 percent in 2004 and 5.1 percent in 2005) and the State of Louisiana (5.7 percent in 2004 and 7.1 percent in 2005), Assumption Parish (8.3 percent in 2004 and 9.8 percent in 2005) displays a higher unemployment rate. Assumption Parish also has a higher unemployment rate when compared to the East South Central U.S. region, which includes Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee (5.6 percent in both 2004 and 2005) and to the West South Central US, which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas (5.8 percent in 2004 and 5.4 percent in 2005). This information was obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics at their web site <ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/la/laucnty05.txt> and <ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/la/laucnty04.txt>



Regional Unemployment for 2004 and 2005

Parish	Unemployment Rate	
	2004	2005
Ascension Parish	6.0%	6.3%
Assumption Parish	8.3%	9.8%
Iberia Parish	6.1%	6.8%
Iberville Parish	8.9%	9.1%
Lafourche Parish	4.8%	5.9%
St. James Parish	9.6%	10.6%
St. Martin Parish	5.4%	5.9%
St. Mary Parish	8.6%	9.0%
Terrebonne Parish	5.0%	6.6%

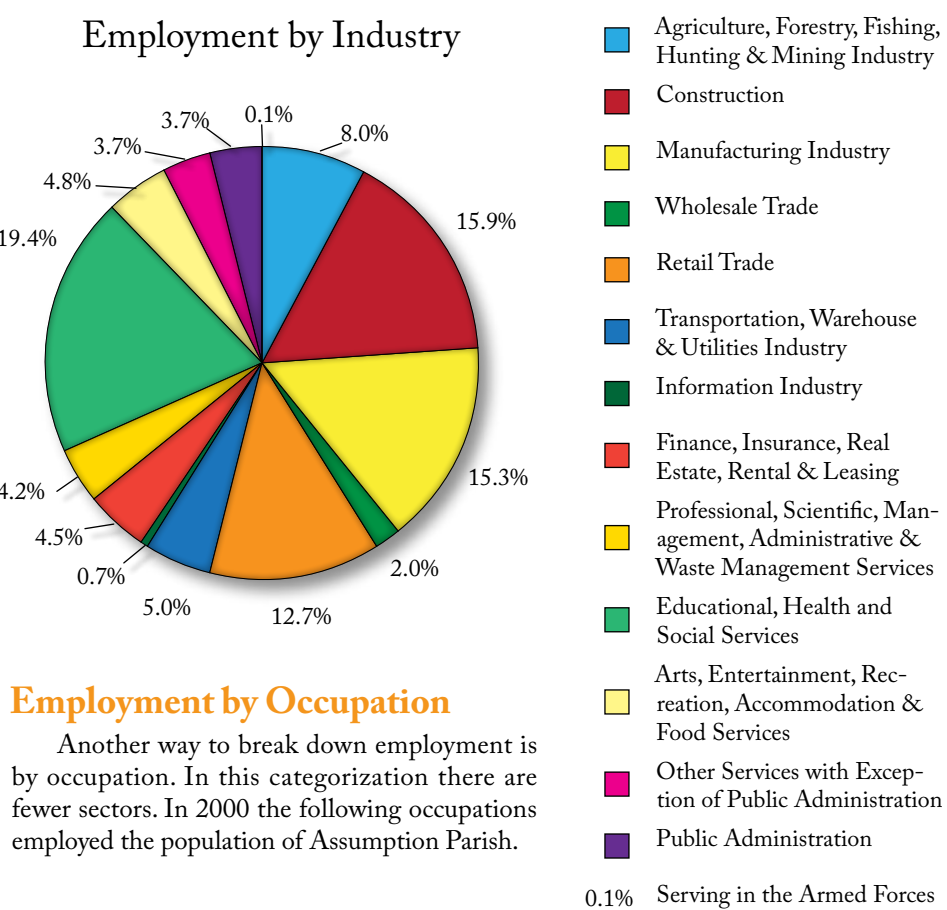
Employment

Louisiana State University’s Louisiana Population Data Center has summarized the following employment and economic data from the 2000 U.S. Census (see: <http://lapop.lsu.edu/reports.html>).

In 2000 of the 17,517 persons 16-years-old and older in Assumption Parish 9,773 persons (55.8 percent) were in the labor force while 7,744 persons (44.2 percent) were not considered to be in the labor force. Of the 9,773 persons in the labor force 8,868 were employed while 905 (9.8 percent) were unemployed. Of the 8,868 persons listed as employed 12 persons were serving in the Armed Forces and therefore not counted in the following employment by industry or employment by occupation breakdown.

Employment by Industry

In 2000 the agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining industries employed 8 percent of the labor force, accounting for a total of 712 persons. Another 1,411 persons (15.9 percent) were listed as employed by the construction industry. Manufacturing jobs employed 1,354 persons (15.3 percent). Wholesale trade accounted for 173 persons (2 percent) while retail trade employed another 1,127 persons (12.7 percent). Five percent (5 percent), or 442 people, were employed in the transportation, warehousing and utilities industries. Only 66 persons (0.7 percent) worked in the information industry. Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing category employed a total of 398 persons (4.5 percent). Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services accounted for 373 persons (4.2 percent). Educational, health and social services employed 1,717 persons (19.4 percent). Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services employed 429 persons (4.8 percent) while other services with the exception of public administration provided employment for 329 persons (3.7 percent). Our last industry category public administration employed 325 persons (3.7 percent).



Another example of a regional economic factor is the growth of the marine fabrication sector, particularly in nearby Lafourche, Terrebonne, and St. Mary parishes, that is tied to the area’s oil and gas industry. This sector is growing and experiencing a need for skilled labor. To the extent that Assumption residents can help to fill these labor needs and possibly attract others to relocate to Assumption to take advantage of relatively low housing costs, local employment will be impacted by this factor.

Industrial growth along the Mississippi River, particularly in Ascension and St. James parishes, is another regional influence on Assumption Parish. If industry continues to grow, more employment opportunities will become available for residents of Assumption Parish. Also, the new riverboat casino in Amelia could generate economic growth not only in direct employment, but in the growth of businesses that supply vessel and casino operations. Some of those businesses could be located in Assumption Parish.

An example of a future regional economic influence—and potentially a very significant one—is the proposed multi-modal, cargo airport just north of Assumption Parish. If this facility is built, although highly doubtful at the time of publication, it will generate a great deal of economic growth in the region, and Assumption Parish will undoubtedly benefit from this.

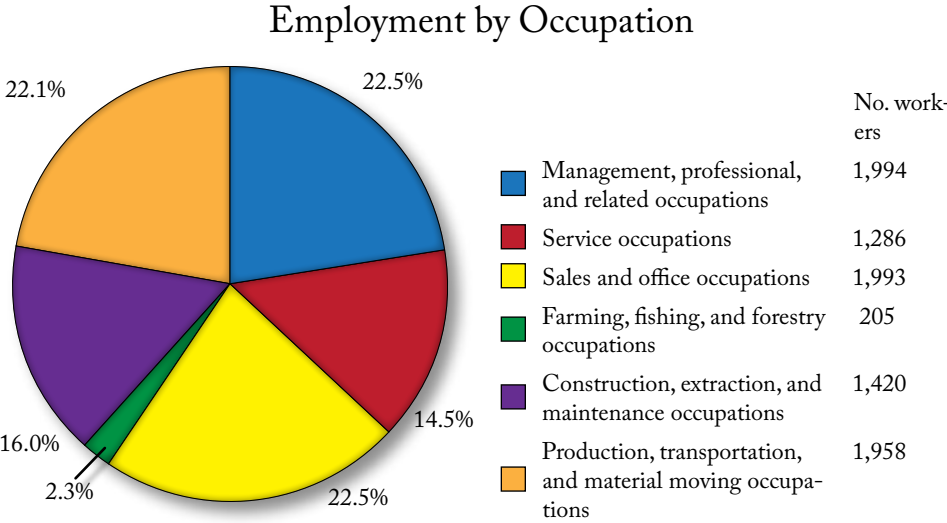
Economic Features

Many economic features can be identified in Assumption Parish. These include not only employment centers, but cultural features that generate tourism and recreation. These features are the industrial areas around Bayou L’Ourse in the southern part of the Parish, and the salt dome in the north; vast areas under cultivation (sugar cane); Madewood Plantation and other historic properties in Napoleonville and throughout the parish; historic and scenic Bayou Lafourche; the School Board complex and Assumption High School in Napoleonville; the Assumption Parish Government Complex in Napoleonville; recreational opportunities centered on and around Lake Verret; sugar cane mills; as well as numerous fall festivals and holiday events. Assumption Parish can improve its economic health by maximizing opportunities for growth in the cultural and eco-tourism sector of the local economy.



Employment by Occupation

Another way to break down employment is by occupation. In this categorization there are fewer sectors. In 2000 the following occupations employed the population of Assumption Parish.



Regional Influences

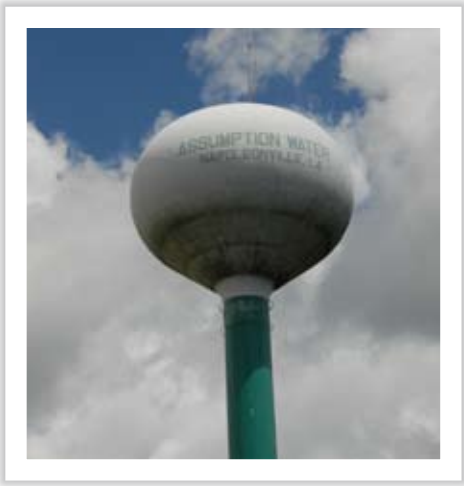
Economic conditions and employment in Assumption Parish may be impacted by regional factors, some of which currently exist, and some that might develop later. An example of the former is the US 90 (future I-49) corridor currently running through the southern tip of Assumption Parish. This is a major transportation corridor now, but its regional and national significance will be enhanced as segments between New Orleans and the Canadian border are built. Such a transportation facility could bring additional business and industry to Assumption Parish, resulting in employment and population growth, particularly in the Bayou L’Ourse.



Infrastructure

Development History

In 1750 French and Spanish settlers came to the area known today as Napoleonville to relocate from the old world. The area offered a familiar climate and bountiful land. Jesuit Fathers are credited to bringing sugar to Louisiana from the Caribbean after large crops were grown. In proportion to its area, Assumption Parish produces the most sugar of any parish of Louisiana. Their settlement location was crucial to their survival. By locating their homes along Bayou Lafourche’s ridges , settlers found some safety from the seasonal flooding and enriched soils to grow crops. In 1807 Assumption Parish was founded and is an original parish of the Louisiana Territory. Its parish seat was, and still is today, Napoleonville. On April 8, 1878 the Town of Napoleonville was incorporated by Mayor L.U. Folse. Much of South Central Louisiana can trace it roots from the beginnings of Assumption Parish.

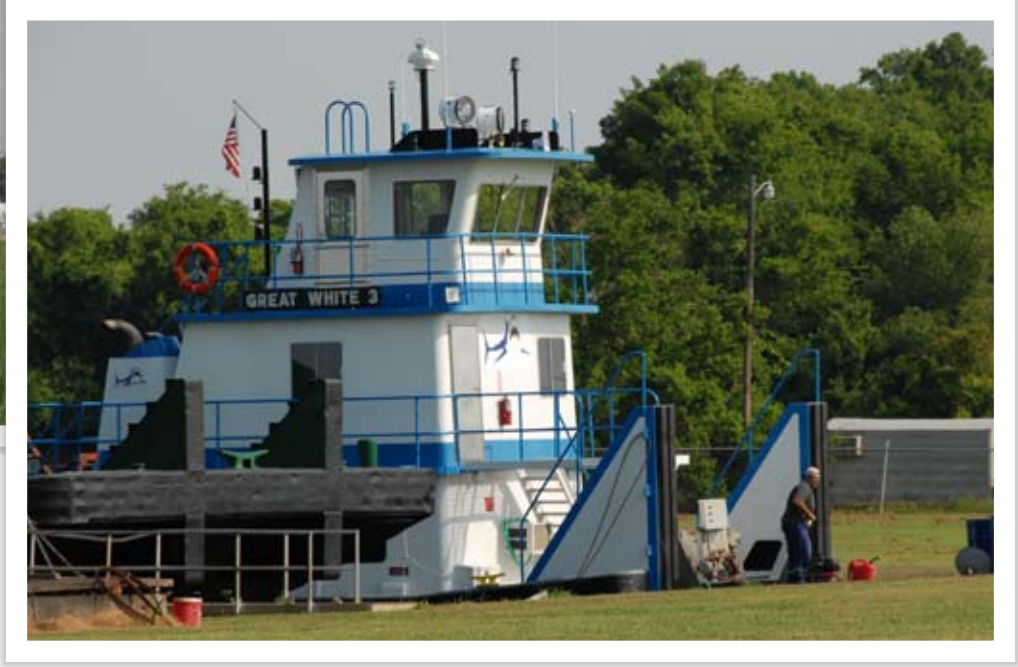
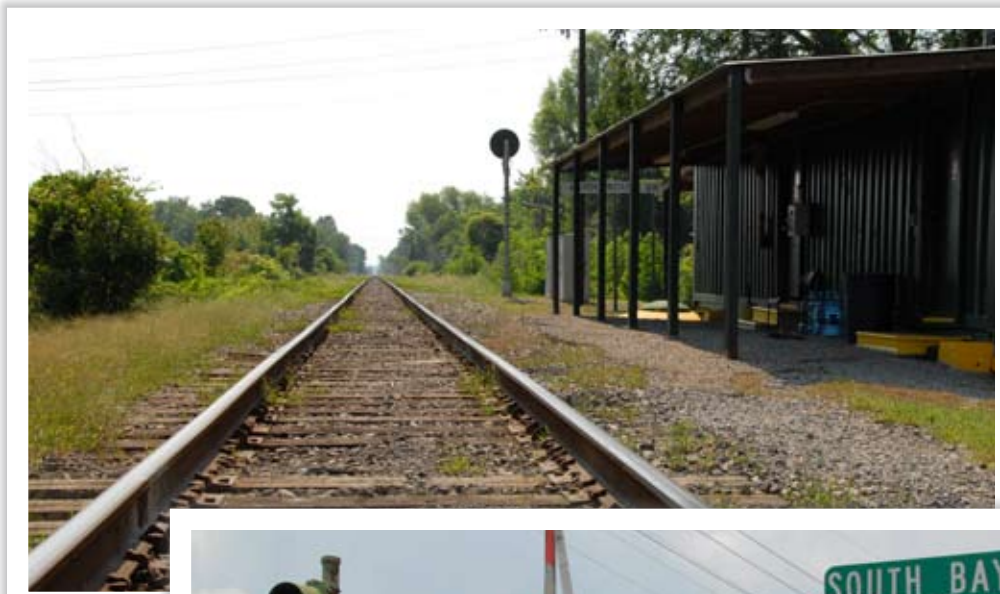


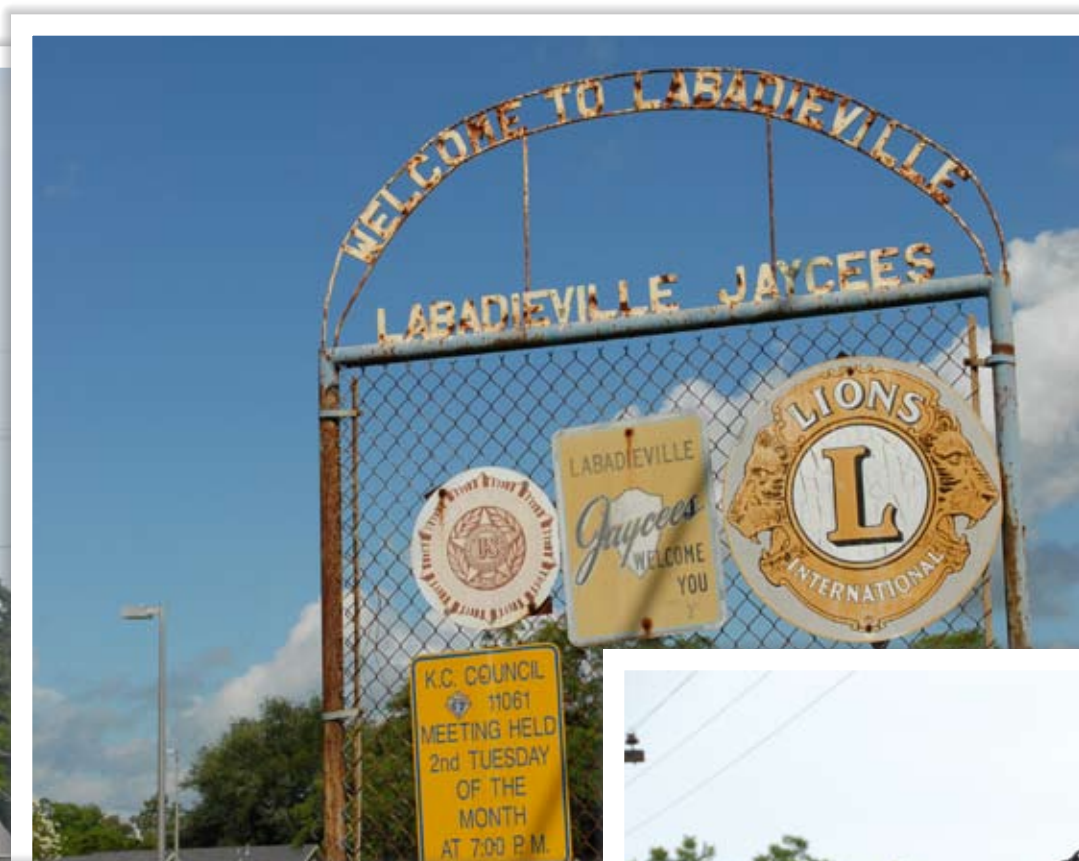
Earlier Infrastructure

In the early days the main mode of transportation was by water along the Mississippi River and Bayou Lafourche. During the nineteenth century many steamboats ferried passengers and cargo up and down Bayou Lafourche. However, large paddle boats were confined to areas between the Mississippi and the Lafourche Crossing. Although Thibodaux was incorporated in 1830, much of its supplies and influx of people were ferried through Assumption Parish. The Parish saw vast changes as the Industrial Revolution began throughout a period from the early 1800s to the early 1900s. The first railroad was the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1890, which ran east and west. In 1903 the Donaldsonville and Napoleonville Railway was formed to provide movement of goods up and down Bayou Lafourche, and it was later succeeded by the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Today, the remaining rail lines do not provide much access for many businesses in Assumption Parish to utilize. Water, electrical, fire protection, and communication distribution infrastructure developed over time, starting in the incorporated area of Napoleonville and later expanding out into the rural areas of the Parish.

With the advent of the steam engine most plantations along Bayou Lafourche typically had their own sugar mill because it was too costly to carry their crops long distances to another location. However, during the mid-1800s the steam engine was developed and utilized as a means of providing localized transportation by steam driven trucks, and it caused some merging of plantations to locate larger mills, typically at a maximum distance of 10 miles. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, when the internal combustion engine and electric generation were beginning to be established, economies of scale mills pushed the mills even further away from a plantation, typically as far as 25 miles away. Today, with the existence of greater machinery to haul and harvest, most mills attract crops grown as far as 75 miles distance. Not only did the Industrial Revolution change the face of where mills were located it also changed where people were located. With the advent of the mechanized sugar cane harvester and planter, the need for labor was greatly reduced by approximately fifty percent. The majority of the population lives where employment is located, and when the majority of the workforce in Assumption Parish is within the farming industry one can easily see that the infrastructure needs can change quickly. That is why it is so important to have a Comprehensive Plan that understands the local economy and where development is likely to happen, so that adequate infrastructure can be strategically placed to facilitate growth.

Infrastructure Elements	
Freight Rail	
Union Pacific, Louisiana Delta & Southern Pacific Railroads	
NAVIGABLE WATERWAYS	(Distance in Miles)
Port of Baton Rouge*(45X45)	55
Port of South LA (45X45)	47
Port of Morgan City (14X14)	49
Port of West St. Mary (14X14)	71
AIRPORTS	
Baton Rouge Metro (commercial)	75
Lafayette Regional	75
MOTOR FREIGHT	
5 major freight lines	
Terminal facilities not in parish.	
MARKET ACCESS HIGHWAYS	
U.S. Highway 90	
LA Highways 1, 308, 70	
EMPLOYMENT INCOME	
Total Personal	\$601,629
Per Capita Personal	\$25,926
Median Household	\$35,231





Elements of the Plan

Comprehensive Plans are driven by the needs of the community and the insights and long-term vision of the citizens who play a role in the Plan's development. Assumption's Comprehensive Plan has been developed in the same manner. From the very beginning, with the appointment of a citizen Steering Committee by the Police Jury, the Plan has been shaped by public discussion and consensus in open, public meetings. The Focus Group meetings held in late 2006 heightened the level of public participation. Over a three-week period, 15 publicly advertised meetings were conducted to focus on specific fundamentals that comprise the essential core of this Plan. Three meetings were devoted to each of the five plan components, which included Land Use, Infrastructure, Public Facilities, Housing, and Aesthetics and Community Design.

In the first of three rounds of Focus Group meetings, participants discussed the various issues surrounding their particular subjects. After lengthy discussion, led by a trained facilitator, participants were asked to prioritize the various issues agreed upon. When the ranking exercise was completed, some of the issues rose to higher priority than others. In the second round of meetings, facilitators presented a summary of the result from the previous meeting, and then guided participants through a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (*SWOT*) analysis exercise. This gave participants the opportunity to focus on the Parish's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats inherently related to the particular issue. Discussion during the exercise also enabled participants to gain a deeper understanding of the problems facing the community. The final set of Focus Group meetings gave participants the opportunity to contribute to shaping goals, objectives and strategies to address the most important issues in each of the plan's five essential components.

Focus Groups

The Focus Group effort got underway with a parishwide kick-off meeting held at Assumption High School on October 17, 2006. SCPDC staff gave an overview of the process as well as the reasons for undertaking this comprehensive planning effort. Chief among these was the current lack of a coherent statement of public policy for the physical development of the Parish. Lacking such guidance, Assumption Parish officials often have a limited basis for decisions regarding land use as they respond to development and growth pressures. Such a comprehensive plan and public policy statement, sanctioned under state law (*LRS 33:106*), would set the framework for successful and sustainable community development in the Parish. As noted in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan, the experience of making land use decisions without an established planning process is common among many small Louisiana communities. Having a comprehensive plan establishes a structured process that is understandable to the public and which can stand up to scrutiny from the public and the courts.



Focus Group meetings were held over a three week period in November 2006. These meetings took place on November 7th, 14th, and 21st at Assumption High School in Napoleonville. On each date, separate groups discussed five broad topics. Participants were encouraged to move from room to room to share their insights on the various topics.

Each meeting afforded participants with opportunities to focus on specific aspects of the elements. The first Focus Group meeting participants identified issues, came to a consensus on them, and prioritized them. Outcomes from the first meetings were used in the SWOT analyses conducted in the second meetings. The third and final meetings concentrated on developing goals, objectives and strategies for each topic area. The meetings brought parish residents together and offered them the opportunity to have their voices heard on issues of concern to the Parish. This eventually led to general consensus on an overall direction for the Parish in the form of goals, objectives and implementation strategies. The output of all these Focus Group meetings has assisted the Steering Committee in formulating specific elements of the Plan. The incorporation of participants' recommendations into the Assumption Parish Comprehensive Plan is an indication of bottom-up approach, based on the will and desires of the

Land Use

A land use map of Assumption Parish provided the backdrop and starting point for the discussion in each of the three Land Use Focus Group meetings. Emerging land use issues of importance to the group included the so-called "bunk house" temporary housing for immigrant workers and protection of existing land uses in the Parish. Both of these issues relate to land use regulation and controls. Participants voiced concerns that some developments could be detrimental to existing uses. They showed some inclination to support mixed-use development, a Smart Growth concept.

Infrastructure

A community's infrastructure helps retain current residents and attract new residents while playing an important role in economic development. A good infrastructure is the most important government-provided contributor to economic development. Infrastructure is also a key part of the "bundle" of goods and services "attached" to each home and structure in the community. The extent and condition of the infrastructure can have a significant impact on home sales and values and on the overall attractiveness of the community in general.

Public Facilities

Public facilities include all those provided by parish government and other governmental and quasi-governmental agencies. These include schools, hospitals, recreation centers/fields, libraries, government offices, and community centers. Such facilities have significant impact on "quality of life" issues in the parish. This is particularly true in cases where governmental agencies do not adequately discharge their responsibilities to both provide and maintain the facilities.



Housing

The condition of a community's housing stock is an indicator of the community's overall economic health. The general rule is that the better the condition of local housing, the better the condition of the local economy. Local government is not usually regarded as a housing developer, but local government policies, programs, or actions (*or lack thereof*) can directly impact the local housing market and the ability of housing developers to address market needs. A Housing Element is included in the Comprehensive Plan because of housing's overall impact on the parish's economy, employment, and the tax base.



Aesthetics and Community Design

The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes preserving the character of Assumption Parish. Fostering a "sense of place" is very important both for preserving and sustaining development. Historic preservation emerged as a top priority to Focus Group participants, followed closely by a general clean-up of the community including its waterways. Assumption Parish's scenic, natural beauty abounds throughout the Parish. The rural character of its development takes full use of these natural resources.

Land Use Element

Introduction

A Steering Committee comprised of 14 very dedicated citizens has guided the development of this, the Land Use Element, as well as the other elements of the Assumption Parish Comprehensive Plan. The planning process has been well publicized and has enjoyed a good measure of public participation. However, it has been the Steering Committee, at its monthly public meetings, which has made the decisions necessary to bring this Plan to a successful conclusion. The Steering Committee will put its stamp of approval on the plan document, which will then be presented to the Assumption Police Jury for consideration, public hearings, and ultimately adoption.

The Land Use Element of a comprehensive plan is comprised of two basic parts: identification and description of existing land uses; and definitions of desired future land use categories with broad generalized conception of appropriate locations. The existing land use component shows with the greatest possible degree of accuracy existing land uses in the Parish. It is a snapshot taken at a certain time, but it provides the basis for the community's initial "look" at itself. With this as the starting point, the community can begin a more in depth evaluation of its land use relationships, begin to verbalize priorities, analyze its land use strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and develop land use goals, objectives and strategies for itself within the context of an over-arching vision for the community. The preliminary work outlined above provides the community with a good foundation for developing the future land use element of the plan. This section offers a projection and a visual and physical interpretation of the future landscape as it could be shaped within the context of the communities shared vision.

Existing Land Use

Existing land use patterns in Assumption Parish provided the background for the Land Use Focus Group's work. As shown in the Existing Land Use Map, the Parish's dominant land use feature is open or undeveloped land. Much of the land is under cultivation and some is forested. Lake Verret, in the western part of the parish, is a prominent water feature. Development has historically followed the high ridges along Bayou Lafourche. Land extending back from the bayou has remained in cultivation with conversion to residential and other uses occurring at a slow rate except for properties with highway frontage. In these areas the predominant land use is residential. Commercial uses are scattered, but more prominent in nodes located at highway intersections and along highway frontages, particularly in the more developed communities of Labadieville, Napoleonville, and Platenville. Much of the Parish's industrial land uses are concentrated in the southwest corner of the parish near U.S. Highway 90.

Issues and Priorities

Against this backdrop, the Land Use Focus Group began its work. At the initial meeting the group was told that its work products would lead to the creation of a future land use map of the Parish. Participants were asked to identify areas of the Parish where they expect growth, as well as areas to which growth should be directed. The map based on group input was later presented to the Steering Committee for its consideration.

The first task was discussion and ranking of land use issues. The group initially identified 21 issues for discussion. The broad list ranged from sewerage in Pierre Part, to improving transportation, to a proposed landfill. After it was asked to prioritize only the most important issues, the group significantly reduced the list.

Of the two highest priority items, one pertained to a controversial residential use, the so-called "bunk house", for temporary housing of immigrant workers in the parish. The other had to do with protection of existing land uses. Discussion indicated that a relationship between the two issues. In that participants were concerned that the lack of land use controls could bring about development detrimental to existing residential areas. As

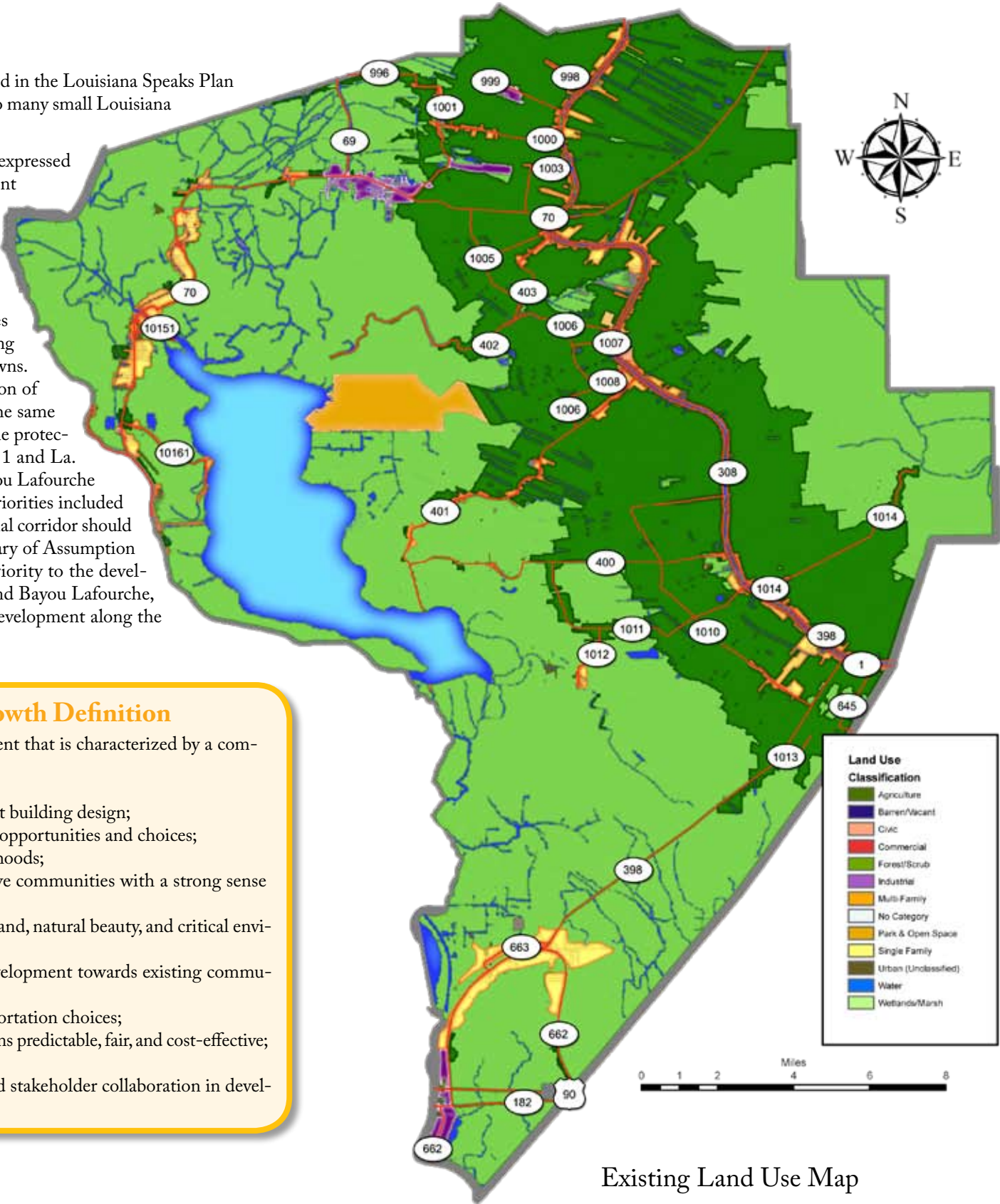
stated above, these concerns align with issues raised in the Louisiana Speaks Plan regarding the limited land use controls common to many small Louisiana communities.

An interesting side note is that participants expressed some inclination to promote mixed use development in already developed areas of the Parish. This is a Smart Growth concept endorsed in the Louisiana Speaks Plan, which also suggests increased infill development in such areas. The Louisiana Speaks Plan defined infill as "the construction of new housing, workplaces, commercial businesses and other facilities within the boundaries of existing urbanized areas." The definition includes small towns. This approach offers an alternative to the separation of land uses as in traditional Euclidean zoning. At the same time, Focus Group participants wanted to see some protection for residential land uses along La. Highway 1 and La. Highway 308, the two highways that bracket Bayou Lafourche and form the arterial spine of the Parish. Other priorities included the development of La. Highway 70 as a commercial corridor should the proposed new airport on the northern boundary of Assumption Parish materialize. Participants also gave high priority to the development of recreational areas along Lake Verret and Bayou Lafourche, as well as appropriate land uses and waterfront development along the bayous of the Parish.

Smart Growth Definition

Smart growth is development that is characterized by a common set of principles:

- Mix land uses;
- Take advantage of compact building design;
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
- Create walkable neighborhoods;
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas;
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities;
- Provide a variety of transportation choices;
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective; and
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.



Existing Land Use Map

SWOT Analysis

In its second meeting on November 14, 2006, the Land Use Focus Group conducted a SWOT analysis regarding land use in the Parish. In addition to discussion and analysis of general land use issues, the session covered impacts specific to residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, and agricultural land uses. These are summarized in the accompanying SWOT lists.

Focus Group participants agreed that Assumption Parish has significant identifiable strengths in each land use category. The common thread linking the discussion of strengths is the perception that Assumption is an attractive community with a good reputation, recreational opportunities, room for growth on relatively high ground, and strong agricultural and industrial bases. In identifying weaknesses, participants pointed to lack of a comprehensive community sewerage system, related water quality issues, drainage concerns and lack of parishwide zoning. Participants also saw limited services and housing choices for senior citizens as a weakness.

Participants recognized a number of upcoming opportunities for the Parish. Enhancement of water features could spur recreational development. The new casino boat in Amelia could help foster expanded opportunities in housing and commercial development. Commercial and industrial expansion might be brought about by the proposed new airport just north of the Parish. Adoption of a zoning ordinance could also create opportunity by providing protection to existing residential and commercial development, thereby preserving preferred development patterns in the parish.

From the threat discussion, it is interesting that a zoning ordinance written in a manner as to disturb existing desired development patterns is seen as a threat. Other major threats included unplanned development intruding upon the residential nature of La. Highway 1 and La. Highway 308 and a proposed regional landfill. Participants were also concerned about potential noise pollution from the proposed airport, the fact that the Parish receives no direct tax revenues from the new casino boat since it is located outside of Parish boundaries, and free trade agreements and new regulations that could adversely impact the sugar cane industry. Additional issues raised were, the new state mandated building codes, and immigrant worker housing in the parish.

Recreation

Strengths

- Beautiful, natural water features (lakes, bayous and swamps)
- Abundant potential for quality recreational opportunities
- Pierre Part’s reputation as good community for active retirement

Weaknesses

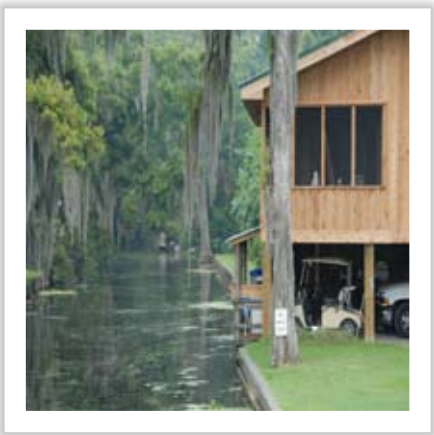
- Sewerage capacity and pollution (particularly in Pierre Part)
- Recreation and accompanying support service revenue not going into the Parish
- Lack of playground and park locations

Opportunities

- Create parks and dedicated open spaces particularly along water features
- Develop recreation spots along Lake Verret
- Creatively develop waterfront along Bayou Lafourche, Bayou L’Ourse, etc.

Threats

- Water issues and water quality



Residential

Strengths

- Reputation as good communities with room for growth in several areas
- Desirable bedroom community residential with acreage available
- High land elevation near bayous
- Employment and industry within commuting distance
- Close proximity to major urban areas (Houma, New Orleans and Baton Rouge)

Weaknesses

- Drainage problems along La. Highway 1 near Canebrake Canal
- Sewerage capacity and pollution concerns (particularly in Pierre Part)
- Lack of support services for seniors

Opportunities

- Casino provides opportunity for supporting residential development

Threats

- Labor camps and bunk houses (lack of a sense of security, safety, policing)
- Unplanned development disturbing the residential nature of La. Highway 1 and La. Highway 308
- Water issues and water quality
- Proposed landfill
- Airport creating noise pollution
- Casino development (Bayou L’Ourse will provide residential support and services but will not receive tax revenue from the casino)



Commercial

Strengths

- Good agricultural base and agricultural related industries
- Potential airport development planned
- Racetrack

Weaknesses

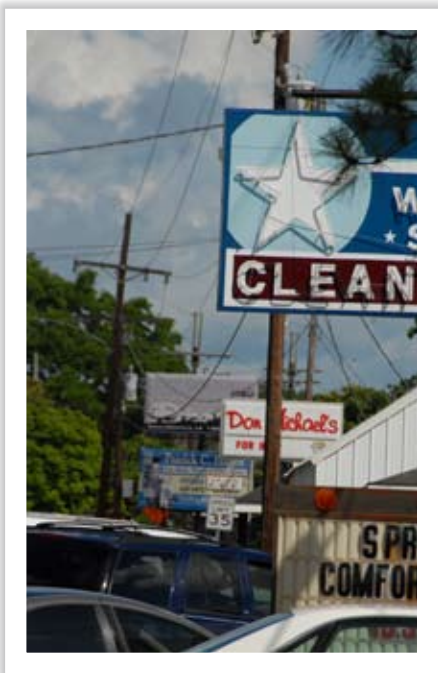
- Drainage problems along Baker Canal

Opportunities

- Capitalize on the development of the proposed airport by planning commercial and industrial corridor
- Develop recreation spots along Lake Verret
- Develop waterfront along Bayou Lafourche
- Casino provides opportunity for supporting commercial development
- Provide support services for seniors so that they do not have to move away as they age (i.e. an assisted living facility)
- Promote and provide added services and amenities for recreational users and tourists

Threats

- Lack of preparation for the area affected by the proposed airport development



Industrial

Strengths

- Good agricultural base and agricultural related industries
- Mcdermott and industrial area in Bayou L’Ourse

Weaknesses

- None listed

Opportunities

- Capitalize on the development of the proposed airport by planning commercial and industrial corridors
- Bayou L’Ourse area has multi-modal transportation available (rail, four-lane highway and inter-coastal waterway)

Threats

- Free trade agreements



Agricultural

Strengths

- Good agricultural base and agricultural related industries

Weaknesses

- None listed

Opportunities

- None listed

Threats

- Airport creating no-fly zones preventing crop dusting of cane fields
- Free trade agreements
- No financially viable replacement crop for sugar cane



Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The third and last meeting of the Land Use Focus Group centered on development of goals, objectives, and strategies. Output from the Focus Groups suggests that participants saw themselves, from the beginning, as representatives of all citizens of Assumption Parish. As such, they were concerned about “getting it right.” They wanted to preserve and enhance the charming rural character that is associated with the parish and yet provide for growth such that a desirable mixture of land uses can be achieved. Perhaps most important of all—and indicative of Smart Growth principles and congruent with the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan—is the desire to focus land use growth in areas already served by infrastructure in order to maximize public investment in such infrastructure. Public infrastructure is concentrated in the traditional communities of the Parish, including Napoleonville, Labadieville, Pierre Part and Plattenville. Encouraging building rehabilitation, redevelopment and infill development in these communities would take maximum advantage of existing infrastructure and help to revitalize these areas. Although Assumption Parish does not have significant regulatory barriers to such development, accommodating such development may take some adjusting in concepts shared by the community and its leaders regarding how the community should develop. Such an approach can also counteract the disinvestment many Louisiana communities have experienced in recent decades.

Overall Land Use Goal

Achieve an appropriate mixture of land uses to meet the needs of current and future residents, by encouraging land development patterns that are compatible with existing development, that are supportive of cost effective delivery of public services and infrastructure and that assure an ongoing quality of life for residents.

The man land use goals proposed by the Focus Group were synthesized into an “Overall Goal Statement” for the Land Use Element and adopted by the Steering Committee. The generalized goals and accompanying objectives and strategies are presented below.

Efficient Land Use

Objective:

To Assure an adequate base for proactive land use decisions in Assumption Parish, by developing and adopting policies which maximize the benefits and minimize negative impacts from development within the parish

Strategies:

- Adopt and update a comprehensive plan for the Parish on a regular basis, approximately every five to seven years depending on growth.
- Adopt effective land use regulations to reduce conflicts, hazards, nuisances and environmental degradation.
- Support “Smart Growth” principles in appropriate areas of the Parish.
- Update existing parish subdivision regulations to incorporate best practices for efficient land uses.
- Streamline parish regulatory practices and permitting to reduce extra time and resources expended.
- Update as appropriate and continue to implement the parish hazard mitigation plan.
- Continue to enforce floodplain management regulations so property owners continue to be eligible for inexpensive flood insurance under the federal program.
- Continue to enforce state mandated building codes especially as relates to hurricane impact zones and the appropriate levels of protection recommended.
- Promote best management and prevention measures for potential groundwater pollution sources, including septic tanks, wells and underground petroleum storage tanks.
- Participate where appropriate and cooperate with federal and state groundwater protection programs.
- Provide continued protection for environmentally significant waterways, such as Bayou Lafourche, through public education programs and controlled adjacent development.

Effective Public Services and Facilities

Objective:

To encourage land use decisions which capitalize on the public investment in infrastructure

Strategies:

- Maximize efficiency of public services, utilities, and infrastructure by encouraging higher densities in appropriate locations and infilling in developed areas.
- Prohibit the extension of capital improvements into agricultural areas when such improvements would lead to increased development pressures.
- As technologies evolve, the parish should evaluate alternatives to conventional package sewage treatment plants, both to service existing development and to serve such growth as may occur. Such alternative technologies should be “low tech” in nature, and appropriate to a rural environment where monitoring, testing and operational costs are minimal.
- Take into consideration the fiscal impacts of necessary capital improvements such as roads, schools, water and sewer service when land use decisions and plans are made.
- The Comprehensive Plan, and in particular its Land Use Element shall be considered by Parish Government and all its agencies, commissions and boards and authorities in their respective policy deliberations when related to physical development activities.
- Ensure that recreational opportunities are considered in capital projects whenever possible.
- Update existing parish subdivision regulations to minimize/eliminate development in the flood plains of the Parish.
- Support “Smart Growth” principles in appropriate areas of the parish.
- Through appropriate land use regulations promote clustered land uses (*at major intersections/crossroads, for example*) with higher densities that can be more efficiently served by utilities and infrastructure.
- Encourage infilling in developed communities to take advantage of existing public services and infrastructure. This could be done with a revolving loan fund.
- Designate appropriate areas of the Parish to encourage “Smart Growth” develop provisions that will encourage a more efficient mix of land uses, maximize utility and infrastructure efficiency.
- Develop, maintain and publicize a detailed database of available vacant properties (*not in agriculture*) in the Parish.
- Encourage new commercial and industrial developments in appropriate locations in the Parish by offering land use and tax incentives.



- Seek to establish a historic district in Napoleonville and in other appropriate areas of the Parish.
- Promote downtown Napoleonville as the cultural and entertainment center of the Parish.
- Develop local incentives to promote unique, locally owned and small businesses in the parish, particularly in historic districts.
- Prepare, adopt and implement unique and distinctive signage, banners and landscape plans at each “gateway” into the Parish.
- Encourage “rural character” preservation in appropriate areas of the parish through large minimum lot size.
- Preserve and enhance scenic views in the parish.
- Promote the establishment of one or more citizen supported rural historic districts to protect recognized properties of historic value located outside town settings. Such a district could include historic buildings and surrounding historic landscapes and even estate grounds.
- Ensure that proposed development is compatible with the architectural attributes of nearby or adjoining historic properties, neighborhoods and districts.
- Support signage and other recognition of important historical sites.
- Support “Smart Growth” principles in appropriate areas of the parish.
- Adopt effective land use regulations to reduce conflicts, hazards, nuisances and environmental degradation.
- Provide continued protection for environmentally significant waterways, such as Bayou Lafourche, through public education programs and controlled adjacent development.



Variety of Land Uses

Objective:

To achieve a desirable mixture of land uses to meet the residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, open space, cultural and public service needs of Assumption Parish residents.

Strategies:

- Encourage clustered land uses to promote higher densities where appropriate to attract needed retail uses in the Parish.
- Encourage mixed-use development in appropriate areas to provide opportunities for jobs and housing balance at the neighborhood level.
- Promote and protect agriculture as the primary land use in rural areas of the Parish.
- Encourage expansion and extension of public utilities and other growth-inducing provision of public facilities to promote infill development. This strategy will serve to minimize development pressures on prime agricultural lands.
- Seek to secure open-space easements when land is under pressure of being converted to more intensive land uses. Such easements will serve to protect important scenic, recreational, historic open-space, wooded and agricultural and wildlife habitats.
- Encourage infill residential development within existing communities, allowing for the broadest possible range of housing choices, styles and configurations within the context of a rural community.
- Discourage residential strip development along public roadways. These may create traffic hazards and detract from the overall scenic value of the Parish.
- Direct commercial and non-agricultural industry and business into existing commercial areas or areas designated for such growth.
- Locate primary shopping areas on major arterial roadways, at major intersections, and in downtown Napoleonville.
- Locate high intensity uses in designated areas along commercial corridors.
- Anticipate, through proper planning, for the growth impacts to areas of the Parish likely to be impacted by the proposed airport.

- Take advantage of the economic incentives available through a program administered by the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area. These incentives should help to promote tourism, eco-tourism and cultural/historical tourism as suitable forms of economic development and should help to ensure that such tourism-oriented development is compatible with the rural and agricultural character of the Parish.
- Support “Smart Growth” principles in appropriate areas of the Parish
- Provide continued protection for environmentally significant waterways, such as Bayou Lafourche, through public education programs and controlled adjacent development.
- Develop incentives to retain existing businesses
- Develop, maintain and publicize a detailed database of available vacant properties (*not in agriculture*) in the Parish.
- Encourage new commercial and industrial developments in appropriate locations in the Parish by offering land use and tax incentives

Future Land Use

Following the three Land Use Focus Groups meetings, the Steering Committee reviewed the results in order to better understand land use in the Parish. The task at hand for the Steering Committee was to develop the future land use section based on the overall vision for the parish as well as output from the Land Use Focus Group. In combining all these elements, the Steering Committee became committed to an approach to future land use that both conformed to the Vision and met the goals established in the Focus Group deliberations. The Steering Committee determined that the Plan would contain land use categories adequately defined to ensure conformity with the Vision and goals. The Steering Committee approved the following land use categories and definitions:

Open Land: Open water, flood hazard areas, wetlands, forest areas, and similar land not under cultivation.

Agricultural Band: Land currently or traditionally under cultivation. Very low density residential uses and land uses associated with farming and agriculture are allowed. This land should be conserved to preserve Assumption Parish’s rural character. Public parks are allowed in the Agricultural Band.

Residential: Two basic types of residential land uses are identified. The first is large lot or very low density single-family residential. The second type is medium to high density residential development associated with subdivisions, mobile home parks, and duplex developments. Space for public facilities, churches and schools could also be provided within this land use category.

Mixed Use Node: This is a designated area allowing higher density, mixed use development where residential (*single and multi-family*), office and support commercial, retail and personal services land uses are encouraged. Mixed land uses are also encouraged in the same structure, such as residential uses on the second floor with retail on the first floor; or in the case of existing communities such as Napoleonville, adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Nodes are typically located around existing major transportation intersections and in existing communities to take advantage of in-place infrastructure. Space for public facilities, churches and schools could also be provided within this land use category.

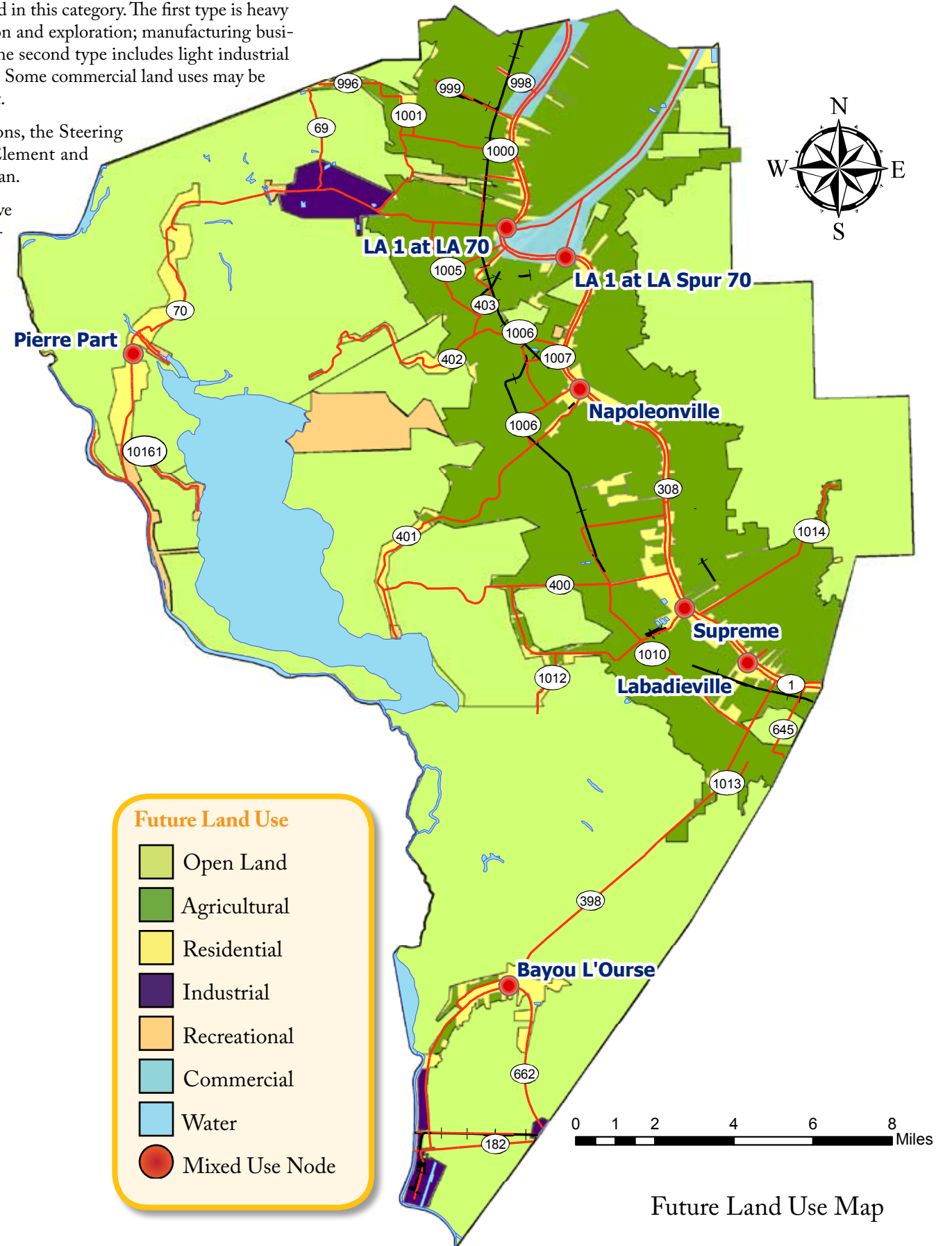
Commercial: These areas are designed to support more intense commercial development, such as shopping centers, etc., to the possible exclusion of other land uses. These areas are designed to take advantage of special conditions or circumstances that may present opportunities for directed commercial growth. Space for public facilities, churches and schools could also be provided within this land use category.

Recreational: This type of land use is focused primarily on camp-type residential development. This category does allow ancillary and supporting recreational land uses, such as boat launches, bait stores, bed and breakfast homes, restaurants, motels, etc., and supporting commercial/retail development (*convenience stores and retail shops, etc.*). Space for public facilities, churches and schools could also be provided within this land use category.

Industrial: Two types of land uses are included in this category. The first type is heavy industrial uses associated with oil and gas extraction and exploration; manufacturing businesses; marine fabrication and boatbuilding, etc. The second type includes light industrial uses such as warehousing and distribution facilities. Some commercial land uses may be permitted in these areas, but residential uses are not.

Utilizing the land use categories and definitions, the Steering Committee recommends this Future Land Use Element and Map for the Assumption Parish Comprehensive Plan.

The land use portion of this Plan will help preserve the Parish’s rural character. It contains sufficient flexibility to allow Assumption Parish to grow and to respond to development pressures as they arise by guiding any new development into the areas of the Parish identified as appropriate for development.



Infrastructure Element

Introduction

Infrastructure is a catch-all term that encompasses the community's roads and streets, utility networks, drainage and levee systems, etc... Good infrastructure facilitates the movement of goods, people, and services throughout the community. It provides essential services such as water (*for drinking, industrial and business uses and fire protection*), wastewater treatment and a power grid and distribution system. Infrastructure also facilitates the movement of ideas through communication within a community and beyond.



It has been said that building and maintaining adequate infrastructure is one of the most critical contributions a community can make to its own economic development. As such, infrastructure is the most important government-provided element of good economic development. It is also the backbone of a growing, healthy community. The ability to successfully maintain existing infrastructure and extend infrastructure as needed indicates that the community possesses the capacity to successfully compete for its share of new business and industry.

When a family makes a decision to purchase a home and property in a community, that decision is based on much more than the physical property purchased. Attached to the property is a "bundle" of the community infrastructure that can make the property and home more or less desirable and will consequently impact property value and price. This "bundle" attached to each piece of property contributes to the community's ability to retain current residents and to attract new residents. In short, adequate infrastructure is absolutely necessary to building a strong, vibrant community.

As noted in the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan, important decisions about how to invest public dollars will increasingly require greater capacity for planning, coordination and implementation at the state, regional and local levels. Louisiana Speaks recommends state matching funds and technical assistance to help large and growing localities build capacity. Although Louisiana Speaks does not call for such assistance to smaller communities like Assumption Parish, the Parish has independently taken the initiative to build its planning capacity. This Comprehensive Plan represents a significant first step in that process.

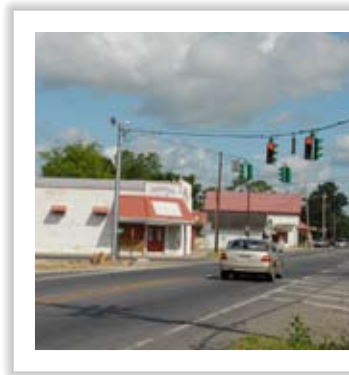
With this in mind, the Steering Committee asked citizens of Assumption Parish to participate in Focus Groups to analyze the extent and condition of the Parish's existing infrastructure. The first session, on November 7, 2006, identified issues relevant to the Parish infrastructure. The topics included highways, public transit, railroads, public docks/boat launches, levees, water and wastewater plant facilities, power transmission and communications. With the major topics selected, the second Focus Group meeting performed a SWOT analysis for each.

Issues and Priorities

Highways

Growing traffic and diminishing roadway capacities are not at present major concerns for Assumption Parish. The parish's two major roadways, La. Highway 1 and La. Highway 308, have sufficient excess capacity, according to Focus Group participants. Issues regarding maintenance and safety on these two important roadways, however, did concern the group. Participants felt that the lack of adequate shoulders along La. Highway 308 in particular was an issue that needed to be addressed. This issue took on added significance when discussion turned to the possibility of establishing a couplet highway system utilizing La. Highway 1 and La. Highway 308 along Bayou Lafourche. Roadway shoulders would be extremely important in such a scenario. However, the necessary rights-of-way for should expansion

and improvement may be problematic and expensive to acquire. Participants also voiced concerns about the serious impact on farmland of a potential new roadway system through the parish running parallel to either La. Highway 1 or La. Highway 308. Such a roadway system has been discussed in the past in the context of hurricane evacuation for Assumption and other parishes. As noted previously, both highways are major evacuation routes for areas south of the Parish.



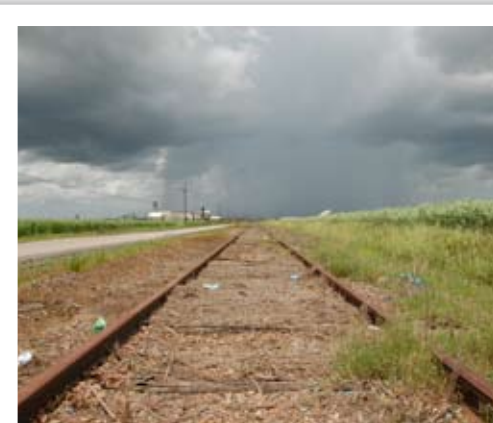
Public Transit

Focus Group participants reported that high labor demand areas in the parish were currently being served by van pools. Public transit in general, however, was not seen as a pressing need for the parish at this time. The Focus Group declined to pursue public transit and develop it as a plan element.

Railroads

Participants discussed potential for extending rail service into the Napoleonville area to stimulate growth. Since the Parish does not have passenger rail service at present, the desired growth would be economic, related to additional agricultural or manufacturing expansion as a result of added rail freight capacity.

This is a possible scenario. Rail service could offer efficient and inexpensive transportation to other end-user markets for agricultural products and manufactured goods, such as farming machinery. As is usual with rail expansion of this nature, short line rail operators would have to show demonstrated capacity to make a profit in order to justify the expansion. Another issue discussed was the construction of additional tracks for the existing Missouri Pacific rail line, which parallels U.S. Highway 90, as this line was in near constant use.



Public Docks/Boat Launches

Given Lake Verret's growing recreational significance for the region, Focus Group participants identified a need for additional public access and boat launching facilities along the lake's west side. The issue with public boat launches is not confined to Lake Verret, Participants suggested locating public boat launches at a number of other locations. With the expansion of boat launch facilities also comes the need for additional parking to accommodate vehicles and boat trailers.



Levees

Focus Group participants were concerned about two levee projects: the on-going Morganza-to-the-Gulf hurricane protection levee system, and the proposed Donaldsonville-to-the-Gulf levee improvement project. Concerns focused on the proposed alignment of each levee system and possible impacts on Assumption Parish. Participants noted that residents of Assumption Parish have never had official opportunities to provide input in the planning of these two government-sponsored projects.

Water Plant and Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Like most communities, the Parish has water-related issues. These include drinking water, water for business and industrial uses, and water for fire protection, as well as effluent discharge. The Focus Group considered Assumption Parish's current water supply system capacity to be adequate. However, improving water flow for fire protection purposes was an issue in most parts of the Parish. This is of particular concern for those areas that are not located near a water source like Bayou Lafourche.

Bayou Lafourche is the primary source of water for the residents of Assumption Parish, as well as for residents of a number of parishes. Clearly, the health of this waterway should be given primary importance. Focus Group members expressed concerns about water pollution in the bayou. Both pollution from non-point sources and untreated (*or very poorly treated*) wastewater effluent discharge eventually find their way into Bayou Lafourche. Participants were eager for better inspections, more effective controls, and regulations that would require new developments to be built with community wastewater treatment plants.

Electric Utilities

Focus Group members pointed out that the current electric power provider has built a system distribution grid in the Parish that has suffered few outages. The system was judged to be adequate for current and anticipated needs.

Communications

The Focus Group recognized a communication issue that was seen as constraining growth and progress in the Parish. In some areas of Assumption Parish, a call to the other side of the Parish is charged long-distance rates. Participants suggested that local government should foster competition between phone service providers and cable TV companies with the goal of equalizing rates throughout the Parish. Some mentioned the need for a fiber optic network throughout the Parish.

At the final Focus Group session, participants were asked to rank or prioritize the issues and needs discussed. The two highest ranked priorities were highway maintenance and communications competition.

SWOT Analysis

The November 14, 2006 Focus Group session provided participants with an opportunity to better understand the breadth of the priority issues discussed in the previous session. The guided SWOT analysis allowed participants to develop greater understanding of each issue in terms of the Parish's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It is interesting to note that the single most-mentioned "threat", as well as a frequently mentioned opportunity, was the proposed multi-modal airport whose runways could impact the northern part of the Parish. These issues prompted the Steering Committee to request and subsequently receive a presentation from the Executive Director of the Louisiana Airport Authority regarding the proposed facility's potential impact on the Parish. A summary of the SWOT analysis' coverage of several key topics is provided in the following lists.

Railway

- Strengths

 - Available right-of-ways
 - Open land
 - Large Tracts held by single landowners

Weaknesses

 - Currently disjointed
 - Lack of landowner interest
 - Lack of incentives
 - Lack of industry

Opportunities

 - Proximity to adjacent rail lines in St. Mary and Ascension parishes

Threats

 - Development of the multi-modal airport facility



Highways

- Strengths

 - Available capacity
 - No traffic jams
 - Few traffic signals
 - Few accidents

Weaknesses

 - Lack of shoulders
 - Lack of effective maintenance
 - Dual La. District Maintenance

Opportunities

 - Creation of Tri-Parish Maintenance District
 - Available existing right of ways
 - Face to face meetings with

Threats

 - Increasing environmental constraints
 - Hurricane evacuation
 - Development of the multi-modal airport facility
 - Off road activity near highways



Public Transit

- Strengths

 - Current providers—COA & ARC—are adequate for medical transit
 - Character of community lends for carpooling

Weaknesses

 - None listed

Opportunities

 - None listed

Threats

 - Industrial development would create need for public transit

Public Docks

- Strengths

 - Available docks throughout the Parish
 - Docks in good condition

Weaknesses

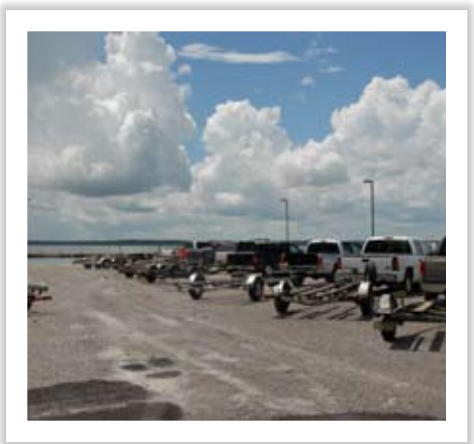
 - Limited parking
 - Lack of availability of amenities (gas, equipment, etc..)
 - Greater available public docks (West Lake Verret)

Opportunities

 - Encourage business opportunities to provide amenities

Threats

 - Increased cost of liability
 - Increased cost of maintenance



Sewer Plants

- Strengths

 - None listed

Weaknesses

 - Lack of compliance of maintenance
 - Lack of knowledge of NPS affects

Opportunities

 - Better DHH initiatives to allow individuals to inspect their own systems
 - Encouragement of community facilities
 - Better coordination of sewer systems

Threats

 - Degradation of water quality

Levees

- Strengths

 - Self-supporting levee districts
 - Provides lower insurance premiums

Weaknesses

 - Lack of public information of future levee alignments

Opportunities

 - Voice through CP
 - Greater land use opportunities

Threats

 - Bad placement negates land development
 - Increased cost of parish capital investment (Pumps, etc...)

Water Plant Facilities

- Strengths

 - Half Capacity
 - Availability throughout Parish

Weaknesses

 - Lack of water flow for fire protection

Opportunities

 - Explore impact fees

Threats

 - Development of multi-modal airport facility can create more need of capacity improvements

Communications

- Strengths

 - Several cell towers
 - Digital cable is typically available parish-wide
 - Regional Homeland Security Office

Weaknesses

 - Computer response to complaints
 - "Dead zones" for cell communications
 - Note enough broadband width
 - Multiple phone exchanges

Opportunities

 - Competition

Threats

 - Terrorists attacks
 - Natural disasters
 - Vulnerability of assets



Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The final Focus Group session, held on November 21, 2006, tasked participants to frame realistic goals for infrastructure improvement in the Parish. Participants were also asked to develop measurable objectives to achieve the stated goals, and to propose strategies to would facilitate achieving these objectives. The strategies suggest possible methods and actions steps for advancing toward the stated objectives. These, in turn, lead to achievement of the goals. It is understood that achieving the major goals contained in the Plan may require many years. Nevertheless, the infrastructure plan working in conjunction with the future land use element provides policy makers with guidance regarding decisions that affect both. The goals, objectives, and strategies outlined by the Focus Group are shown below.

Highways

Improve the overall safety of all of the highways within Assumption Parish.

Objective :

To create a Tri-Parish Maintenance District to include Assumption, Lafourche, and Terrebonne parishes.

Strategy:

- Encourage parish officials to request, by resolution, that they be part of the ongoing Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) maintenance process and funding.
- Participate in a regional coordinated effort to discuss the value and need for a stronger single voice by legislators.

Objective:

To create an LADOTD maintenance plan document for highways in the Parish which will be provided to the Parish to enable it to monitor the timely meeting of maintenance plans and schedules.

Strategy:

- Send, by resolution, a request to be part of the ongoing LADOTD maintenance process by meeting with district officials in determining and setting a maintenance plan and schedule.

Objective:

To provide better control of off road activity near certain level functional class roads.

Strategy:

- Consider the passage of an ordinance prohibiting certain off-road activity when it has been found to be a safety issue to motorists (burning, harvesting and loading).

Railways

Promote the added usage of railways within Assumption Parish.

Objective:

To develop more railways in the proximity of Napoleonville to encourage development.

Strategy:

- Meet with parish and LADOTD officials to explore issues surrounding the trade strategy of the CAFTA and NAFTA to determine potential expansion of rail lines.
- Meet with current rail service providers to gauge future plans for additional rail lines.
- Meet with other Parish leaders of Lafourche, St. Mary, and Terrebonne to determine needs of their parishes and how it might influence alignments in Assumption.

Objective:

To convert existing abandoned railway rights-of-ways to trails for preservation.

Strategy:

- Work with assessor to establish ownership of rights-of-way.



- Encourage the Police Jury to seek federal and state funding for preservation

Public Docks

Provide safe public docking throughout Assumption Parish for recreation and commercial purposes that improves the safety and welfare of Assumption Parish residents and visitors.

Objective:

To provide for more public docks in the west Lake Verret area.

Strategy:

- Identify and acquire additional land to provide a public dock along the west side of Lake Verret.
- Seek Federal (Breaux-Wallop) and State (Recreational) funding for acquisition of land.

Objective:

To provide for additional public docks in the Belle River area

Strategy:

- Acquire additional land to provide a public dock in Belle River.

Objective:

Encourage entrepreneurs to provide added amenities near the public docks (ice, fuel, bait, tackle, etc...).

Strategy:

- To provide emphasis and awareness of the SCPDC's Revolving Loans funds among entrepreneurs trying to provide the added amenities.
- To examine the potential to provide tax incentives for entrepreneurs.



Wastewater Treatment Plants

Provide for the improved quality of discharge through an affordable and efficient systems to better provide for the health of Assumption Parish.

Objective:

To encourage the DHH to implement better maintenance regulatory initiatives regarding private sewer treatment plants.

Strategy:

- Show the ill effects of the current system on water quality and encourage a possible pilot program to improve owner maintenance.
- Encourage DHH to create educational awareness of ill effects of Non-Point Source (NPS) and examine stiffer penalties for violators.

Objective:

To encourage developers to install community sewer systems at time of development.

Strategy:

- Consider adoption of an ordinance requiring developers of subdivisions above a certain number of lots to install community sewer systems, devise a method to coordinate maintenance of these systems and coordinate with other community sewer systems in the vicinity.

Levees

Provide adequate levee systems that provide for the health, safety and welfare of all of the citizens of Assumption Parish.

Objective:

To have a voice in the alignment of federal and state levees like the Morganza-to-the-Gulf and Donaldsonville-to-the-Gulf projects.

Strategy:

- Build support for the U.S. Highway 90 levee alignment that allows for adequate water shedding of the Donaldsonville to the Gulf Levee system, and have the Police Jury provide a supporting resolution.

Water Treatment Plants:

Provide safe and efficient water systems that meets the needs of Assumption Parish for the next 20 years.

Objective:

To provide for adequate water flow through existing, new and upgraded water lines.

Strategy:

- Provide increased flow in areas needing improved water supply for fire protection.

Communications:

Provide and upgrade communications systems to protect the health, safety, and general welfare for all of the citizens of Assumption Parish.

Objective:

To consolidate all of the long distance telephone exchanges within Assumption Parish to help reduce costs and inefficiency.

Strategy:

- Work closely with all providers to determine their system constraints and encourage public discussions to resolve issues.

Objective:

To inventory communication assets and offer an awareness plan to educate citizens in case of terrorist attack and or natural disaster related activities.

Strategy:

- Work closely with the Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) and fire departments to develop an awareness plan regarding community assets.

Objective:

To zip codes throughout Assumption Parish to improve postal delivery to the citizens of the parish.

Strategy:

- Work through the Parish's congressional delegation to re-establish mail routing.



Public Facilities

Introduction

The Public Facilities Element of this Comprehensive Plan evaluates the current state, as well as future plans for the buildings and spaces used by public agencies to provide services to the citizens of Assumption Parish. Typically, these facilities include schools, public health centers, recreational facilities, government offices, libraries, community centers, and all other public facilities that support the community. The envisioned “quality of life” in Assumption Parish is sustained in large measure by local government’s responsible discharge of its duties relative to the provision and maintenance of these public facilities. The inclusion of this element in the plan will assist policy makers as they work to assure uninterrupted provision of public services through the public facilities so important to Assumption Parish.

Issues and Priorities

The first Public Facilities Focus Group meeting began with participants identifying several types of public facilities they believed Assumption Parish needed. A library in Belle Rose was one such facility. This began further discussion on the state of the current library system. Later, the group agreed that a parishwide recreation center was needed. The Focus Group believed that such a facility should be multi-purpose and provide year round services, unlike the existing ball parks that only operate at certain times of the year. The one existing community center in the Parish was deemed inadequate. The possibility of using schools, churches, and the LSU Ag-Center facility in addition to the community center was discussed. Other participants mentioned that museums and parks were useful as both attractions for visitors and places for children’s recreation activities.

When the discussion turned to health facilities and access to health care, participants brought up the concept of a mobile health unit to serve areas of the Parish where access to the hospital and health unit (*both facilities are located in Napoleonville*) is limited. On another topic, the Group indicated that current government offices and facilities were adequate and serving the community well. Finally the Group turned to what it considered the “big” topic of discussion: schools. It did not take long to reach agreement that Assumption High School, the only high school in the Parish, was overcrowded and improvement was necessary in the immediate future. The Focus Group discussed a need for a GED facility and a permanent primary school for the Bayou L’Ourse community.

At the end of this session, focus group participants agreed on the following issues, ranked in order of priority:

1. The overcrowding of Assumption High
2. A centralized multipurpose recreational facility
3. Mobile Health Unit
4. A permanent elementary school for Bayou L’Ourse
5. Library in Belle Rose
6. A museum highlighting historical Assumption Parish



SWOT Analysis

The Public Facilities Focus Group began its second meeting by discussing the state of the school system. It was suggested that a large, indoor community facility was needed to host Assumption High graduation ceremonies during inclement weather. This sparked discussion which led eventually to the agreement that any new facility should be multi-purpose in nature and accommodate a community recreational component.

The group then conducted its SWOT Analysis with regards to Public Facilities. The following items were identified.

Schools

Strengths

- Small sizes with little overcrowding (*except for Assumption High School*)
- Unique, community specific schools
- Well-maintained facilities
- Local staff
- Single high school leads to no competition for resources

Weaknesses

- Lack of technology and resources
- Lack of property taxes for funding
- Single high school merges communities but can lead discipline problems
- Napoleonville Primary’s proximity to the jail

Opportunities

- Single high school can foster parish-wide unity
- Airport may increased tax base
- St. Mary Casino may increase tax base
- Diversified student population

Threats

- Residents unwilling to pass new taxes
- Unfunded mandates
- Increase in population leads to need for more services



Recreation

Strengths

- Ballparks in every community
- Fishing and water activities
- Abundance of land

Weaknesses

- Separate parks force teams to travel to for biddy basketball
- No soccer program
- Very few parks
- Lack of quality in existing parks
- Lack of awareness of available parks

Opportunities

- Fishing attracts outside interests
- Recreation center for all ages
- Natural Resources
- Rest areas with facilities in scenic areas

Threats

- Rest areas & bathrooms to enjoy nature
- Funding



General

Strengths

- Individual communities have a sense of pride
- Land availability

Weaknesses

- Community are spread out and looks for community benefit as opposed to parish-wide benefit
- Lack of weather-safe high school graduation facility

Opportunities

- Create a multi-use facility
- Improve and refurbish existing Ag-Center to accommodate other uses
- Create a parish festival that brings communities together and highlights Assumption Parish

Threats

- St. Mary Casino leads to overcrowding in certain communities
- Increased need for services as population grows
- Lack of retail stores means sales tax revenue is generated outside of the Parish
- General lack of mass communication (*few residents read the local papers, no local radio stations, etc.*)
- Ag-Center tax renewal



Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The final Public Facilities Focus Group meeting was held on November 21, 2006. Building on the results of the first two sessions, participants were asked to frame goals for the improvement of the parish's public facilities, to develop objectives that would aid in achievement of the goals, and to propose strategies that would help to "operationalize" the objectives. The goals, objectives, and strategies outlined below are designed to provide guidance to policy makers who must make decisions regarding current and future needs.

Schools

Goal: An educational environment that facilitates a positive learning experience and with sufficient capacity to meet the needs of all students in the parish.



- Objective:
- To devise a plan that increases capacity and meets the immediate problem of overcrowding at Assumption High School.
- Strategies:
- Develop a funding plan that is feasible, easy to understand, and attractive to voters.
 - Build either a second high school or add permanent buildings to Assumption High School.
 - Revamp current school system structure, i.e. move ninth graders to middle schools.

- Objective
- Provide a permanent facility for Bayou L'Ourse Primary.
- Strategies:
- Develop a funding plan that is feasible, easy to understand, and attractive to voters.

- Objective
- To devise a plan that anticipates the growing trends of technology in the classroom and readies Assumption Parish to keep pace with children across the state and nation.
- Strategies:
- Develop a feasible funding plan that can be approved by the voters.
 - Meet with School Board to incorporate existing technology plan into comprehensive planning.

- Objective
- Build a permanent structure in the Bayou L'Ourse community.
- Strategies:
- Develop a feasible tax plan that is passable.

Recreational Facilities

Goal: Fully functional recreational facilities capable of meeting the activity requirements and needs of parish citizens and facilities that will attract others to the Parish.



- Objectives:
- Build a multi-sport and multi-use facility that can accommodate sports and activities year round.

- Strategies:
- Develop a feasible tax plan that can be approved by the voters.
 - Pursue funding through available grant programs.
- Objectives:
- Increase the size and quality of local parks within each separate community.
- Strategies:
- Develop a feasible tax plan that can be approved by the voters.
 - Team with basin project to improve facilities around the Atchafalaya Basin.
 - Pursue grant programs as potential additional funding.
- Objectives:
- Add facility improvements such as restrooms and benches to sites featuring the parish's natural resources, i.e., lakes and bayous, to increase their attractiveness.
- Strategies:
- Develop a feasible tax plan than can be approved by the voters.
 - Team with Atchafalaya Basin projects to improve facilities around Assumption Parish.
 - Seek grant opportunities to supplement funding.

- Objectives:
- Increase awareness of existing park services.
- Strategies:
- Develop a plan to coordinate all recreational services in the parish.
 - Evaluate opportunities for creating an economically feasible marketing plan for area parks.

- Objectives:
- Unify current systems to create a more seamless system, which will reduce inefficiencies and create more access to current activities offered.
- Strategies:
- Develop plan to coordinate all recreational services in the Parish.

Healthcare

Goal: Accessible, high quality health care for every citizen of Assumption Parish.



- Objectives:
- Obtain a mobile health unit that can move around the parish providing outreach, screenings, and some specific medical treatment in parts of the community that cannot easily travel to the hospital and health unit.
- Strategies:
- Investigate grants that could fund a mobile health unit.
 - Work with the existing Assumption Parish Health Unit to develop a plan that incorporates the new unit.
- Objectives:
- Fund transportation to existing hospitals
- Strategies:
- Seek additional funding through grant programs.
 - Investigate other sources of funding for transportation programs designed to help patients who travel to hospitals from surrounding parishes.

Library

Goal: An educated community through access to information and educational materials.

- Objectives:
- Build library in Belle Rose in order to have at least one library in every community within the Parish.
- Strategies:
- Develop a feasible tax plan that can be approved by the voters.
- Objectives:
- Build library in Bayou L'ourse to have at least one library in every community within the Parish.
- Strategies:
- Develop a feasible tax plan that can be approved by the voters.

Community Center

Goal: A public facility that provides adequate capacity for various types of community gatherings.

- Objectives:
- Locate and evaluate existing facilities to determine if they can be upgraded and/or remodeled to meet long term community needs; or build future public facilities, such as a recreational facility, so that it can accommodate other community needs. This will require a thorough understanding of the various needs for such facilities that may arise in the community.
- Strategies:
- Work with Ag-Center for possible upgrades that make this facility more multi-purpose.
 - Develop proposed recreational center as a joint community center and design facility accordingly.
 - Form coalition between various agencies and community groups to discuss sharing resources
 - Seek grant programs for additional funding.

Cultural Tourism

Goal: A public facility that benefits the parish by becoming an integral part of its shared vision of the future.

- Objectives:
- Establish a museum that highlights historical Assumption Parish as an attraction for both visitors and locals.
- Strategies:
- Team up with Atchafalaya Basin programs for joint venture.
 - Investigate unused historic buildings for possible museum.
 - Investigate possible grant programs to preserve heritage.
 - Plan local festival that highlights Assumption Parish's heritage that also benefits museum.
- Objectives:
- Partner with other programs to provide a cohesive plan to attract visitors and outside revenue to the parish.
- Strategies:
- Team up with Atchafalaya Basin programs for joint venture.
 - Investigate unused historic buildings for possible museum.
 - Investigate possible grant programs to preserve heritage.
 - Plan local festival that highlights Assumption Parish's heritage and that also benefits museum.

Housing Element

Introduction

The condition of the community’s housing is an indication of the overall economic viability of the community. Although local governments are generally not housing developers, the programs and actions (*or inaction*) of local governments can directly impact the housing market. This can be done through policies that promote housing development, encourage a range of housing choices to accommodate all income levels, age groups, and special needs. Local government can also adopt policies that encourage development or redevelopment of housing for low and moderate-income residents and initiate programs designed to maintain or rehabilitate the community’s existing housing stock. All these policies should provide opportunities for the development of the types of housing the Parish is expected to need over a 20-year planning horizon. These housing types may include traditional single-family detached residential structures, as well as multi-family units, including duplexes and townhouses, manufactured homes, mobile homes, and accessory apartments. Units might be owner-occupied, as well as rental, and condominium ownership arrangements.

There are several good reasons to include housing in the Comprehensive Plan. First, housing costs are the single largest household expenditure for most residents, averaging anywhere from 27 percent to 30 percent of annual incomes. By comparison, transportation costs consume about 18 percent and food about 12 percent of annual incomes. Second, the great majority of Assumption Parish households are owner-occupied, and it is likely that these homes are their owner’s most valuable asset and largest investment. Third, households in the low-income range have great difficulty finding adequate housing that can accommodate their needs within their financial means. Fourth, housing plays a critical role in state and local economies. Housing contractors, attorneys, real estate, financial, and insurance workers account for a great deal of local employment and taken together may contribute



as much as 15 percent to the state’s gross product. Finally, housing is also a major source of revenue for the local community in the form of property taxes. Therefore, by considering housing-related issues as part of a comprehensive planning process, the community can be better prepared to meet their future housing needs.

Housing in Assumption Parish was identified as a subject for Focus Group attention early in the planning process. Focus Group participants were encouraged to verbalize priorities, analyze local housing strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, and develop housing goals, objectives and strategies for the community within the context of its overall vision. Participants were provided information on the status of housing in the Parish taken from census information.

Issues and Priorities

At its first meeting participants were given an overview of the housing situation in Assumption Parish. Data used for the presentation came from 2000 census data. Their initial task was to discuss housing issues and to arrange these issues in a priority ranking.



The Housing Focus Group initially identified several broad housing-related topics to begin discussion. These included: housing conditions in the parish; housing adequacy (*in terms of overcrowding*); affordability; subdivision/land development regulations; housing mix; need for public housing developments; and location of public housing developments. Discussion began on the issue of housing adequacy, but then changed to housing availability as this issue was clarified. Eventually participants discussed housing conditions in the parish, particularly for low income and elderly residents. After much discussion, members of the Housing Focus Group agreed on the following issues, giving them priority in descending order of importance:

1. Low-income housing conditions were deemed unacceptable for this income group and for the elderly in general.
2. Lack of rental housing, both apartments and single-family units.
3. Housing market in general is depressed due to lack of population growth, resulting in little turnover in housing.
4. High cost of available land impacting viability of residential development.
5. Post-Katrina insurance and other government regulations making it difficult to develop land for residential purposes.



Assumption Parish Housing & Related Data

	USA	Louisiana	Parish
Median Household Income (2003)	\$43,318	\$33,792	\$31,168
Persons Below Poverty (2003)	12.50%	18.10%	21.80%
Population (2000)			23,388

Assumption Population in Occupied Housing Units

Unit	Number
In owner-occupied housing units:	19,672 (85%)
In renter-occupied housing units:	3,516 (15%)

Total Housing Units

Type	Number
Occupied housing units:	8,239 (86%)
Owner-occupied:	6,921 (84%)
Renter-occupied:	1,318 (16%)
Vacant housing units:	1,396 (14%)
For rent:	83 (6%)
For sale only:	62 (4%)
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use:	727 (52%)

Population Per Occupied Housing Unit

Unit	Number
Per owner-occupied unit:	2.84
Per renter-occupied unit:	2.67

Structures by Year Built

Type	Year Built
Owner-occupied housing unit:	44% between 1970-89
	59% between 1960-89
	70% between 1950-89
	4% since 1999
Renter-occupied housing unit:	33% in last 26-36 years
	47% in last 26-46 years
	66% in last 26-56 years
	1% since 1999

Vacant Housing Units

Units	Number
One unit detached	840 (60%)
Mobile home:	431 (31%)
Year vacant structure built:	45% between 1970-80

Median Housing Value

Type	Median Value
Owner-occupied housing unit:	\$78,800
Median gross rent:	
Renter-occupied housing unit:	\$368

Householders 65 Years and Older

Type	Number
Occupied housing unit:	1,834
Owner-occupied:	1,621 (88%)
Less than 1.01 occupants per room:	1,798 (98%)
No vehicle available:	455 (25%)
Below poverty level:	451 (25%)

Households Below Poverty Level

	Owner	Renter
Number:	1,218	484
Lacking complete plumbing facilities:	38 (3%)	23 (5%)
1.01 or occupants per room:	158 (13%)	72 (15%)
Built 1939 or earlier:	85 (7%)	59 (12%)
Some form of income assistance (SSI; other public):	482 (39%)	156 (32%)
No telephone service:	102 (8%)	96 (20%)

SWOT Analysis

The second meeting of the Housing Focus Group focused on a SWOT Analysis. The topics of this analysis are summarized in the below

Focus Group participants identified several housing strengths. Among them were an abundance of land for housing, though most of this was under cultivation at this time, and land values for housing in Assumption Parish much less expensive than surrounding populated areas in other parishes. Regarding weaknesses, participants cited a shortage of housing rental units, both multi-family and single-family units, the lack of mobile home parks and subdivisions, and the parish's lack of amenities which support residential development, such as convenient supermarkets, restaurants, and entertainment venues including movie theaters.

Opportunities for housing expansion also abound. Focus Group participants listed several including abundant suitable ground, overall attractiveness of the Parish for residential growth, rental and transient housing growth around Lake Verret in response to recreational opportunities and heritage-type economic development, and preservation of historic properties. The housing market in the Parish was seen to be threatened by rising housing prices in certain areas of the Parish, flat population growth, the new building codes and sharp rise in insurance rates, and the relative lack of amenities that would attract population growth and housing.

Housing

Strengths

- Abundant high land suitable for housing development (*though most is under cultivation*)
- High quality, visually appealing housing
- Mostly owner-occupied housing with families
- Great geographic location relative to other growing major cities/parishes in the region
- Proximity to watersports, both fresh and salt water
- Land values for lots and housing relatively much cheaper than surrounding areas.
- Availability of contractors to build houses (*short wait times*)
- Increasing housing values (*function of supply and demand*)

Weaknesses

- Shortage of housing rental units, both apartments and single family units
- Most land for housing is not on the market or is on the market at very high prices
- Large portion of existing housing stock is aging
- Poor housing conditions for low-income and elderly persons
- Mobile homes are affordable housing of choice now, but mobile homes depreciate over time unlike stick-built housing
- Lack of mobile home parks and mobile home subdivisions
- Low median income at this time
- Lack of amenities in the Parish to support residential development and population growth (*i.e. lack of grocery stores, movie theatres, restaurants, etc.*)
- Lack of housing mix in the Parish
- Section 8 housing is deteriorating quickly
- Some available land not suitable for building without pilings, etc.

Opportunities

- Casino boat and industrial expansion should create opportunities for housing expansion to accommodate expected workers
- Recreational opportunities around Lake Verret associated with Atchafalaya Basin Program and economic development opportunities associated with Atchafalaya National



Heritage Area could help to expand housing—particularly rental and transient units—in the Parish

- Preservation of historic housing sites and return to market using outside financial assistance
- High ground around Napoleonville suitable for development.
- The Parish still has available land for development and housing that is less expensive than surrounding areas
- Attract residential development, but preserve “rural” character of the Parish
- Attract people to Assumption Parish from surrounding growing parishes

Threats

- Flat population growth rate may restrain housing development
- Lack of housing forces many new families to relocate outside the Parish
- Rising housing prices in Pierre Part due to arrival of retirees
- New building codes and increased cost of inspection (*short term*)
- Requirement for licensed and insured contractors under new building codes
- Lack of amenities in the Parish to support residential and population growth
- Sharply increasing commercial insurance adversely impacting apartments, multi-family and other rental properties.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Building on the results of the first two sessions, participants in the third and last Focus Group meeting concentrated on crafting goals, objectives, and strategies for housing development in Assumption Parish. The over-arching issue guiding the deliberations of this session was to increase the parish housing mix to better serve residents and attract new people to Assumption Parish. Two generalized housing goals were developed along with numerous objectives and strategies.

To further expand upon these housing goals, Focus Group participants developed a series of objectives for each goal. These objectives pointed to the need not only for a Comprehensive Plan, but also for the adoption of appropriate land use controls over time. Participants also developed a variety of strategies that might be used to achieve the stated objectives. For each objective a list of possible implementing strategies is provided.

Housing and Parish Rural Character

Encourage a mix of adequate, abundant and affordable housing types throughout the parish while maintaining the Parish's pleasing and attractive rural character.

Objective:

To encourage clustered multi-family residential developments near major highway intersections or on the fringes of developed areas.

Strategies:

- Adopt of a Comprehensive Plan with a strong Land Use Element.
- Establish appropriate land use controls and other tools to help implement the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element over time.
- Develop and implement a community wastewater treatment plan and requirements for the Parish as a whole or for specific areas.
- Make information available to entrepreneurs and encourage them to take advantage of existing tax incentives through the Atchafalaya Basin and National Heritage Area programs and the Gulf Opportunity Zone (*GO Zone*) program as these relate to housing creation or expansion.
- Provide adequate, permanent housing choices for new employees expected to be generated by the Amelia casino boat and expanding industrial concerns Bayou L'Ourse.



Objective:

To encourage appropriate residential infill development in existing subdivisions and built-up areas of the Parish

Strategies:

- Adopt of a Comprehensive Plan with a strong Land Use Element.
- Establish appropriate land use controls and other tools to help implement the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element over time.
- Develop and implement a community wastewater treatment plan and requirements for the Parish as a whole or for specific areas.
- Identify lots throughout the Parish that could be donated to Habitat for Humanity for housing sites and approach owners about donation.
- Provide adequate, permanent housing choices for new employees expected to be generated by the Amelia casino boat and expanding industrial concerns Bayou L'Ourse.

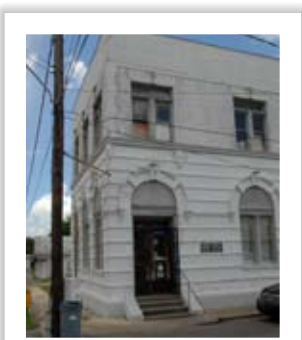


Objective:

To apply for Historic District designation in Napoleonville and in other appropriate areas of the Parish

Strategies:

- Encourage façade improvements as appropriate and conversion of suitable historic structures to residential and or mixed use buildings.
- Implement a parishwide code enforcement program and building condemnation policy and program for severely blighted or dilapidated structures



Objective:

To encourage development of attractive manufactured home and mobile home parks or subdivisions in appropriate locations in the Parish

Strategies:

- Adopt of a Comprehensive Plan with a strong Land Use Element.
- Establish appropriate land use controls and other tools to help implement the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element over time.
- Develop and implement a community wastewater treatment plan and requirements for the Parish as a whole or for specific areas.
- Take immediate steps to secure adequate and permanent housing choices for new employees expected to be generated by the Amelia casino boat and expanding industry in the Bayou L'Ourse area.

Objective:

To encourage higher density single-family residential development set back from existing roadways in order to use less land and to reduce infrastructure costs

Strategies:

- Adopt of a Comprehensive Plan with a strong Land Use Element.
- Establish appropriate land use controls and other tools to help implement the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element over time.
- Develop and implement a community wastewater treatment plan and requirements for the Parish as a whole or for specific areas.
- Discourage additional batture development (*residential or commercial*) and take steps to ensure public access to Bayou Lafourche at appropriate locations throughout the parish. This will help to preserve the Parish's rural character.
- Provide adequate, permanent housing choices for new employees expected to be generated by the Amelia casino boat and expanding industrial concerns Bayou L'Ourse.

Objective:

To encourage large lot (*one acre minimum*) single-family residential development along highways in appropriate locations to help retain openness and rural character of the Parish.

Strategies:

- Adopt of a Comprehensive Plan with a strong Land Use Element.
- Establish appropriate land use controls and other tools to help implement the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element over time.
- Discourage additional batture development and take steps to provide public access to Bayou Lafourche at appropriate locations throughout the Parish.



Objective:

To encourage Habitat for Humanity to build single-family housing units in the Parish.

Strategies:

- Identify lots throughout the parish that could be donated to Habitat for Humanity for housing sites.
- Implement a parishwide code enforcement program and a building condemnation policy for severely dilapidated structures.



Objective:

To promote bed-and-breakfast type housing and other transient housing in the Pierre Part area to take advantage of recreational and other opportunities around Lake Verret.

Strategies:

- Adopt of a Comprehensive Plan with a strong Land Use Element.
- Establish appropriate land use controls and other tools to help implement the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element over time.
- Make information available to entrepreneurs and encourage them to take advantage of existing tax incentives through the Atchafalaya Trace Commission, The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Atchafalaya Basin Program and the GO Zone program as these relate to housing creation or expansion.

Low Income Housing

Ensure an adequate number of decent low-income and elderly housing units for needy Assumption Parish residents.

Objective:

To provide adequate, decent low-income housing for needy residents.

Strategies:

- Adopt of a Comprehensive Plan with a strong Land Use Element.
- Establish appropriate land use controls and other tools to help implement the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element over time.
- Adopt a process to encourage an appropriate mix of affordable housing units within the various land use categories.
- Identify suitable sites for affordable housing units.
- Enhance the Assumption Parish Housing Authority's role to encourage coordinated efforts with other agencies to provide housing opportunities for all citizen's of the Parish.
- Grow and maintain housing provided under the Section 8 program.

Objective:

To assist local Council on Aging to provide adequate housing for the elderly.

Strategies:

- Adopt of a Comprehensive Plan with a strong Land Use Element.
- Establish appropriate land use controls and other tools to help implement the Comprehensive Plan's Land Use Element over time.
- Adopt a process to encourage an appropriate mix of housing units for the elderly within the various land use categories.
- Identify suitable housing sites for the elderly.
- Encourage development of assisted living facilities in the parish working with Housing Authority and Council on Aging.

This housing element will not only help to preserve the parish's rural character, but it will also respond to growth by ensuring an adequate housing mix to meet future needs. The key strategies for housing appear to be the adoption of a comprehensive plan and appropriate land use controls to support the Plan's Land Use Element.



Aesthetics & Community Design

Introduction

The Aesthetics and Community Design Element concerns preserving the look and feel of the place residents call home. It concentrates on those natural and man-made elements that remind people they are in Assumption Parish. This element of the Comprehensive Plan begins to address what can be done to keep the Parish’s “sense of place” for future generations while accommodating new growth.



There are good reasons to include Aesthetics and Community Design in the Assumption Parish Comprehensive Plan. Most importantly, perhaps, it helps us to recognize and acknowledge the desire to continue to secure a “quality of life” that defines the area. Residents believe their quality of life is tied directly to fostering and encouraging the “sense of place” that they already believe is present in much of their community.

Historically, buildings in Assumption Parish were designed for the climate and included raised homes, large porches, etc. Many new homes mimic this architecture and thus the Parish has its own special look. With an emphasis on family and community, the villages and neighborhoods that have grown along the bayous of the parish have great scenic and historic value. The Parish has large expanses of open green space due to the many farms and agricultural enterprises. The abundance of bayous, lakes, and canals and many square miles of wooded areas and swampland provide hunting, fishing and water sports opportunities for residents and visitors to Assumption Parish.

Obviously, it takes many individual elements to create the look and feel of the place that current and future residents will want to call home. Some of the aesthetics and community design factors that combine to create a “sense of place” and to influence a “quality of life” include historic preservation, encouraging certain building designs, improving village centers, protecting valuable landscapes and scenic value of the bayous, beautification and litter abatement, signage regulations, removal of derelict buildings, and replanting of trees and vegetation, to name a few.

Issues and Priorities

At its first meeting the Aesthetics and Community Design Focus Group revealed a concern about several interrelated issues—historic preservation, beautification and business development. Focus Group discussion linked image, cleanliness and appearance of the Parish to business development and tourism. There was a discussion about access to and public space at scenic, outdoors areas such as Lake Verret and adjacent to area bayous. The Group discussed the historic quality of Napoleonville and other sites in the Parish. They also discussed attempts to publicize what the Parish has to offer, such as recreational opportunities and the racetrack, but they noted a lack of lodging and restaurants to keep the tourists in Assumption.

The Group identified the need for other small business development, such as a grocery store in Napoleonville. Lack of sidewalks was identified as a problem in some communities. It was noted that neighbors talk to each other more when they walk along sidewalks. There was also discussion about the impact of the proposed I-49 on the community’s future. As highway improvements continue more people will be using La. Highway 70 through the Parish as it will connect I-10 to the I-49 corridor. The Group believed the community needs to plan for the future development of La. Highway 70, La. Highway 308 and La. Highway 1.

They also noted a lack of motels, restaurants and shopping centers along these highways. These routes need to be attractive and contribute to the “sense of place” in the community.

At the end of this session the Focus Group agreed on the following issues, and then ranked them in order of priority as indicated by the number of votes each item received.

1. Historic preservation
2. Clean-up what we have, including the lakes and bayous, address derelict buildings and junk cars. This will lead to community pride and will promote tourism.
3. Small businesses needed
4. Beautification
5. Sidewalks
6. Feeling of community
7. Promote an image of the Parish as a whole. Get word out about what we have here, e.g. B&B’s, the Racetrack, etc.
8. Promoting and emphasizing the natural beauty of the Parish
9. Preservation of lakes, bayous and wetlands
10. Small gathering places (*in addition to larger parks and recreational places*) where people can sit and see the lake, bayous, etc.
11. Access to the area, I-49 to I-10 via La. Highway. 70 will have an impact on the area and impact existing land/community in Pierre Part/Belle River. Must plan for currently undeveloped land between Ascension and Bayou Lafourche
12. Need places where visitors/tourists can stay

SWOT Analysis

The second meeting of the Focus Group concentrated on a SWOT analysis of aesthetics and community design issues.

One person commented that the reasons and procedures involved in previous building demolitions have been poorly understood or announced within the community. People do not always know the historic value of a property to different groups of people and this should be evaluated in historic preservation and clean up efforts.

Many of the group’s comments seemed to be focused on economic development issues and they proceeded to conduct a quick and brief SWOT analysis on that topic. Both aesthetic and community design and economic development issues are presented below.

Aesthetics and Community Design

Strengths

- Bayou Lafourche’s scenic and recreational value
- Lake Verret’s scenic and recreational value
- Sense of community gets work accomplished
- Historic places (*Rainbow Inn, Napoleonville, various churches, etc.*)
- Wildlife (*i.e. 62 pairs of nesting bald eagles*)
- Pierre Part’s access to outdoor and fishing activities
- Bedroom community
- Good industrial partners
- National Guard

Weaknesses

- Lack of amenities to attract tourists
- Lack of grocery stores, hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts and restaurants
- No tourist organization or information center
- Poor communication and interaction within the Parish between communities



- No economic development organization
- No new jobs
- No technical training center
- Small number of skilled trade workers (*plumbers, etc.*)
- No historic preservation plan
- Leadership is not focused on clean-up and a perceived lack of public and private support for cleanup.
- Apparent lack of training for tree trimming along roadways leading to debris on the road
- Residents lack knowledge about historic property values and preservation techniques
- Lack of self promotion

Opportunities

- Casino development in Amelia area
- La. Highway 70 corridor
- Wildlife (*birdwatching, eco-tourism, etc.*)
- Proposed Airport and Transportation Center
- Programs with funding – grants
- Prisoners and community service workers
- National Guard clean-up programs
- Existing traditional neighborhoods
- Industrial growth on the River front Atchafalaya Basin Groups

Threats

- Unknown development outcomes for La. Highway 70 between Bayou Lafourche and Ascension Parish
- Non-native vegetation clogging streams and impacting native plants and wildlife
- Untreated or improperly treated sewage effluent discharged into waterways
- Amount of water flowing through Bayou Lafourche
- Lack of technical training
- Loss of historic places
- Erosion along bayous and lakes
- Uncertain levee location

Economic Development

Opportunities

- Casino development in Amelia area
- La. Highway 70 corridor
- Wildlife (*birdwatching, eco-tourism, etc.*)
- Proposed Airport and Transportation Center
- Programs with funding (*grants, etc.*)
- Prisoners and community service workers
- National Guard clean-up programs
- Existing traditional neighborhoods
- Industrial growth on the river front
- Atchafalaya Basin Groups

Threats

- Unknown development outcomes for La. Highway 70 between Bayou Lafourche and Ascension Parish
- Non-native vegetation clogging streams and impacting native plants and wildlife
- Untreated or improperly treated sewage effluent discharged into area waterways
- Amount of water flowing through Bayou Lafourche
- Lack of technical training
- Loss of historic places
- Erosion along bayous and lakes
- Uncertain levee location

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

At the final Aesthetics and Community Design Focus Group meeting, the group used the results of the previous meetings to prepare goals, objectives and strategies. The strategies suggest possible methods for pursuing the stated objectives. These, in turn, lead to achievement of the goals. While it is understood that it may take many years to achieve these goals, the Aesthetics and Community Design Element of the Assumption Parish Comprehensive Plan provides policy makers with guidance regarding what can be done to achieve those goals. The goals, objectives, and strategies outlined by the Focus Group are listed below.

Historic Preservation

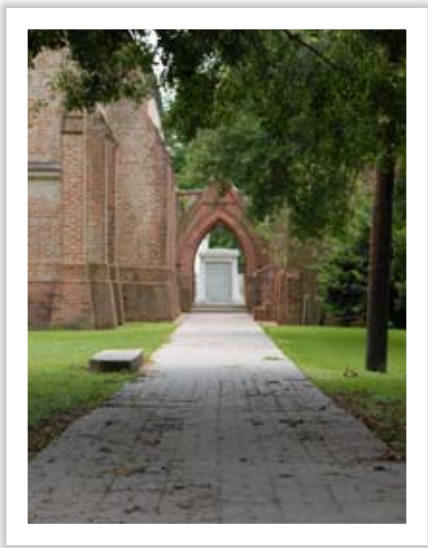
Preserve and enhance the natural and historic resources of Assumption Parish

Objective:

To clean up unauthorized waste disposal areas, abandoned and junked vehicles, boats and materials, and abandoned and dilapidated structures in order to improve the overall appearance of Assumption Parish.

Strategy:

- Review existing litter and nuisance abatement ordinances for improvements.
- Develop a community beautification and clean-up plan that defines issues and sets priorities for clean-up campaigns.
- Identify funding and community resources such as the National Guard or Coast Guard (*waterways*) that may help implement clean up campaigns.
- Identify staff responsibilities for carrying out clean up efforts.



Objective:

To develop a historic preservation effort.

Strategy

- Review past efforts, state laws and programs, and efforts of other communities in creating historic preservation programs.
- Make recommendations for undertaking historic preservation efforts.
- Identify potential funding sources and partners.
- Investigate feasibility of creating a Main Street Program for Napoleonville.

Objective:

To improve access to and conservation of natural resources.

Strategy

- Develop a sustainability agenda that conserves Assumption’s natural resources as a source of cultural, economic and recreational opportunities for generations to come.
- Create scenic overlooks along Lake Verret, Bayou Lafourche and other areas.
- Identify funding opportunities and partners.
- Improve flow of water in Bayou Lafourche.

Economic Development

Promote economic diversity and job creation that is compatible with the natural and cultural resources of Assumption Parish.

Objective:

To develop an economic development agenda.

Strategy:

- Create a forum for the ongoing discussion and identification of the economic development needs of Assumption Parish.
- Create a funding mechanism for staffing an economic development position.
- Hire an economic development staff.
- Investigate multi-agency shared funding for the position.
- Create an action plan of programs and projects that will support existing and new industry and business.
- Develop a marketing scheme that promotes the Parish’s assets.



Objective:

To support the continued development of existing regional industrial clusters in order to create and sustain a competitive advantage for economic growth and job creation.

Strategy:

- Facilitate and promote development of and diversification within the Parish’s agricultural and food, manufacturing and oil and gas clusters.
- Attract job creating industries.
- Promote technical training.
- Identify infrastructure needs to sustain and grow existing industries.

Objective:

To facilitate and promote development of Assumption’s small business and tourism industries.

Strategy:

- Identify potential tourist destinations.
- Identify public and private services and projects that will support tourism development.
- Develop a program of incentives and assistance programs to promote small business development needed to attract and support tourism.

Objective:

To make better use of existing resources.

Strategy:

- Clean-up Assumption Parish’s current assets.
- Promote renovation and reuse of existing business buildings.

Labor Force

Provide a labor force qualified to meet the needs of the region’s employers

Objective:

To improve technical and skilled training opportunities for Parish residents.

Strategy:

- Work with local industry and business leaders and educators to identify industry and business training needs.
- Develop a plan for providing priority training programs that will place people in jobs.
- Create a job training center.





Implementation of Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

This document represents the combined efforts of the citizens of Assumption Parish, the appointed Steering Committee and the parish's technical advisor, SCPDC and its consultant. This group, lead by the Steering Committee, produced a Vision Statement which outlines several broad goals for the parish.

- A healthy community atmosphere and desirable quality of life
- Quality education
- Necessary infrastructure
- Economic stability

Overall, these general goals correspond closely to the major goals outlined in the state's Vision 2020 plan for economic development. The major goals stated in the document, were to make Louisiana a learning enterprise, to build a thriving, more balanced, economy and to improve quality of life. Vision 2020, like the Assumption Comprehensive Plan, included a SWOT analysis of strengths and opportunities that could contribute to the state's success, as well as weaknesses and threats that could stand in the state's way. Under each of the major goals, Vision 2020 established objectives and set benchmarks to measure progress in improving education, supporting business and industrial development, and improving the statewide standard of living while protecting the environment and supporting sustainable development. Assumption Parish's goals parallel the state's and should help to move the parish toward a future in harmony with state objective.

The cluster-based approach to economic development taken in Vision 2020 focused on existing industrial clusters important to the current Louisiana economy, as well as emerging clusters with potential for growth. While Assumption currently has very little industrial activity actually in the Parish, a significant number of parish residents commute to work outside the Parish. Major employers are concentrated in clusters like petrochemicals, shipbuilding and fabrication, and transportation and Logistics active in neighboring St. Mary and Ascension parishes and in St. James Parish along the Mississippi River.

Land use and infrastructure are key elements of this Plan. However, the Steering Committee and parish residents who participated in developing the Plan did not limit

Assumption Vision Statement

Assumption Parish will continue to develop a healthy community atmosphere and a desirable quality of life for its residents by ensuring a balanced mix of residential and commercial development, quality education, necessary infrastructure, employment and recreational opportunities while preserving its natural resources and pleasing rural character. The Parish will become a growing, visually attractive, safe and economically stable community striving for cooperation and input from its citizens and business community.



themselves to discussion and projection of future physical improvements. The Plan also encompasses policy guidelines, as goals, objectives and recommendations. Some of these echo Vision 2020, address quality of life issues which will help to foster sustainable economic and community development

Why is sustainability so important?

The idea of sustainability gives a community some control over the elements necessary for its long-term viability. Sustainability has four key and mutually re-enforcing components. These are education, economic development, infrastructure, and quality of life. Each element is vitally important. Although it is possible to argue over which should come first, the fact is that all are necessary, inter-related, and inter-dependent. How can new development occur without supporting infrastructure? Can growth and job creation happen without a healthy economy? Can a community without a strong economy afford to provide the amenities that enhance quality of life? Lacking a pleasant quality of life, will the community be able to attract new residents and grow? Can community capacity and leadership, both vital to sustainability, be developed in the absence of a quality educational system? These questions—and more importantly, the community's responses to them — define the task ahead for the people of Assumption Parish.

Sustainability is the over-arching goal of the previously referenced BTNEP and its 1996 plan. The plan focuses on coordinating regional planning and citizen involvement to safeguard human and wildlife habitat and water quality and to foster the development of businesses sensitive to the fragile environment.

Implementation

The easy part—this plan document—is in hand. The more challenging task, and the one of much longer duration, is implementing the Plan. The purpose of the plan is to provide guidelines that will assist decision-makers over time. Orderly implementation of the Plan requires the development of a process that specifies necessary strategies, tasks, responsibilities, time lines and benchmarks. Without such process, it will be difficult to sustain public and official enthusiasm for the Plan after it is adopted. The public must be able to see a connection between the Plan and on-going development and projects in the Parish.



Key Components of Sustainability

- Education
- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Quality of Life

The process leading to the implementation of this comprehensive plan requires several steps. It will fall to the Steering Committee to serve as the plan's initial "champions" in taking the official steps leading to adoption. Significant steps in this process are outlined and described below:

1. **Adopt the Comprehensive Plan.** Assumption Parish's last Comprehensive Plan was published in 1973. Much has changed in the ensuing 35 years. The earlier plan has not been periodically updated, but even had it been, to stay useful a plan requires a major overhaul after about 20 years, and sometimes sooner.
2. **Appoint an Assumption Parish Planning Commission.** The Planning Commission will have the overall responsibility for implementing the Comprehensive Plan, either directly through the land development process or indirectly through recommendations to the Police Jury.
3. **Recruit other local agencies to the Implementation Team.** Many local agencies are stakeholders in the Comprehensive Plan. They should be encouraged to partner with the Planning Commission to participate in supporting implementation of the Plan.
4. **Develop action steps.** The Implementation Team, lead by the Planning Commission, should develop the policies, projects, strategies, initiatives, etc., necessary to implement the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The Parish should also consider adopting a number of planning "tools" to assist in this process. Foremost among these could be a parish zoning ordinance to guide land use decisions in the direction of the future land use element in the Comprehensive Plan. The Parish might also consider revising and updating the existing subdivision regulations, developing a major street plan, and a capital improvement plan. Each of these tools addresses a specific element important to implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.
5. **Develop a master schedule for implementation.** This schedule will be more detailed in the first few years of plan implementation and less specific in later years. However, as time goes on and milestones are achieved, periodic revision of the master schedule, with specific details, would be helpful.
6. **Go to work.** The Implementation Team should periodically evaluate and report progress. This should be done in a public forum to keep the community both informed and enthusiastic. Over time, the team may undertake an evaluation of the plan, recommend any necessary revisions, and, after adoption, begin the implementation process anew.

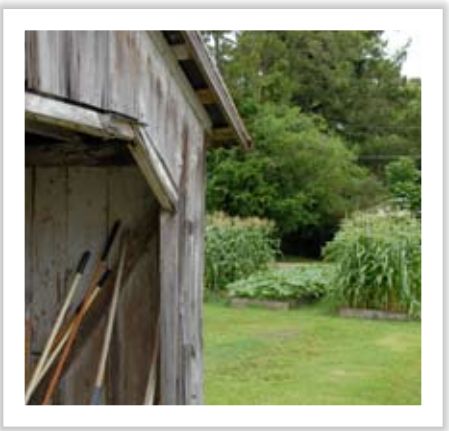
At some point, Assumption Parish may want to consider establishing an economic development agency or authority. This can be done by local legislative act, but such an agency enabled by state law generally has broader powers. The economic development entity could work with the Planning Commission on initiatives such as attracting new businesses and workforce training.

Strategy Development

The Implementation Team should work together in developing suggested strategies for implementing the plan. Some examples of the types of ideas the planning process has already helped generate regarding land use are listed below. For each strategy selected, the Implementation Team could develop time lines and assign responsibility. Some of the strategies may need legislation or new regulations to in order to achieve the intended purpose. As stated at the beginning of this section, the development of a good Comprehensive Plan is challenging, but effective implementation of the plan is far more challenging and goes on for a much longer time.

Strategies Suggested for “Sense of Place”:

- Purchase property at several locations along Bayou Lafourche for public access purposes, including parks, boat launches, etc.
- Seek grants to develop appropriate recreational/cultural facilities on acquired bayou-side land.
- Encourage the organization of both parish-wide and local festivals to promote the unique “sense of place” of communities within the Parish. Festivals could be held on the Parish’s newly acquired bayou-side lands.
- Encourage re-establishment of the Madewood Arts Festival or other festival at Madewood Plantation.
- Encourage owners of appropriate properties to seek National Historic Register designation.
- Develop local incentives to promote unique, locally owned small businesses in the Parish, particularly in historic districts.
- Develop a range of other strategies to help revitalization downtown Napoleonville and Labadieville. Recommended strategies include:
 - Work with the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation of the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism to apply for state and or federal historic district status for the downtown areas of Napoleonville and Labadieville and other appropriate areas.
 - Work with the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation of the Louisiana Department to Culture, Recreation and Tourism on the concept of developing a Louisiana mini-Main Street Program for small communities like Napoleonville and Labadieville that may not be large enough to qualify for the state’s current Main Street program.
 - The Main Street Program’s goal is to foster revitalization through rehabilitation of historic structures, small business development, promotion of downtown areas as cultural and entertainment centers. The Main Street model is one of the few economic development programs designed for small communities. A version of the program for very small Louisiana communities would be another helpful variation on the national model. Louisiana has already developed an urban variation on the Main Street model in an initiative used in recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina to help revitalize some New Orleans neighborhoods.
- Prepare, adopt and implement unique, distinctive signage and landscape plans to each “gateway” into the Parish. This could include the Main Street program communities.



- Encourage “rural character” preservation in appropriate areas of the Parish by requiring large minimum lot sizes in those areas.
- Preserve and enhance scenic views in the Parish.
- Promote the establishment of one or more resident supported rural historic districts to protect recognized properties of historic value located outside the town setting. Such a historic district could include historic buildings and surrounding historic landscapes and even estate grounds.
- Ensure that proposed development is compatible with the architectural attributes of nearby or adjoining historic properties, neighborhoods and districts.
- Support signage and other methods of recognizing important historical sites.

Strategies for Efficient Land Use:

- Promote clustered development through appropriate land use regulations (*for example, at major intersection/crossroad nodes*). Such development would allow for higher density settlement patterns that can be more efficiently served by utilities and infrastructure
- Encourage infilling of vacant land in developed communities to take advantage of existing public services and infrastructure. Some communities have established revolving loan funds for this purpose.
 - The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan defines infill construction in its Policy Guide 5: Identifying and Removing Obstacles to Infill (November 2007). Infill is new construction within the boundaries of an existing urbanized area. It could be implemented in conjunction with the mini-Main Street program as an addition tool to help promote revitalization of downtown Napoleonville and Labadieville while taking advantage of existing public infrastructure in both communities. Utilizing existing infrastructure reduces the cost of development to the Parish.
 - As stated in the Louisiana Speaks Plan, infill can help counteract the disinvestment many Louisiana communities have experienced in recent decades. Infill can also help counter tendencies toward developmental sprawl, which can impact rural communities like Assumption Parish with land prices significantly lower than those in surrounding parishes. Rural communities experiencing such development often have very limited, if any, ability to regulate development or land use.
- Designate appropriate areas of the parish, such as Napoleonville and Labadieville, for targeted “Smart Growth” development. This concept, promotes a more efficient mix of land uses to maximize utility and infrastructure efficiency and promotes a healthier life style
- Develop incentives to retain existing businesses
- Develop, maintain and publicize a detailed database of available, vacant, properties (*not in agriculture*) in the parish.
- Offer land use and tax incentives to encourage new commercial and industrial development in appropriate locations the Parish.
- Update existing parish subdivision regulations to incorporate best management practices for efficient land uses
- Update the Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis, approximately every five to seven years, depending on population growth or change in the parish.
- Streamline parish regulatory practices and permitting to reduce turnaround time and resources expended.



Strategies for a Variety of Land Uses:

- Encourage clustered land uses where higher densities will be attractive to encourage additional retail activity in the parish. (*See above regarding the infill strategy*)
- Encourage mixed-use development in appropriate areas such as downtown Napoleonville and Labadieville to provide opportunities for a balance of jobs and housing at the neighborhood level.
- Promote and protect agriculture as the primary land use in rural areas.
- Encourage the expansion and extension of public utilities and other growth-inducing public infrastructure to promote infill development. Utilizing vacant land in already developed areas will help to minimize development pressure on the parish’s prime agricultural lands.
- Secure open space easements in areas under pressure to convert to more intensive land uses. Such easements will help protect important scenic, recreational, historic open-space, wooded and agricultural and wildlife habitats.
- Encourage residential infill development within existing communities. This will allow the broadest possible range of housing choices, styles and configurations within the context of Assumption Parish’s rural communities.
- Discourage residential strip development along public roadways. Such development may create traffic hazards and detract from the overall scenic value of the Parish.
- Direct commercial and non-agricultural industry and business into existing commercial areas or areas designated for such growth.
- Locate primary shopping areas on major arterial roadways, at major intersections, and in downtown Napoleonville.
- Locate high intensity uses in designated areas along commercial corridors.
- Anticipate the growth impacts and areas of the parish likely to experience the impact of the proposed LTC airport.
- Take advantage of the economic incentives available through the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area (*Atchafalaya Trace Commission*) to help promote tourism, eco-tourism and cultural and historical tourism as suitable forms of economic development and to help ensure that such development does not detract from the rural and agricultural character of the Parish.



Strategies to Avoid hazards, nuisances, and environmental degradation:

- Adopt and enforce building codes appropriate to the hurricane zone and in accordance with the International Building Codes.
- Develop and adopt subdivision regulations to minimize or eliminate development in the flood plain areas of the Parish
- Adopt effective land use regulations to reduce conflicting land uses and nuisances.
- Support “Smart Growth” based development principles in appropriate, more populated areas of the Parish such as Napoleonville and Labadieville.
- Update as appropriate and continue to implement the parish hazard mitigation plan.

- Prohibit land uses that have significant, adverse environmental impacts which can neither be eliminated nor minimized. This is in accordance with the Louisiana Speaks recommendation to promote linkages between the local comprehensive plan and state and federal disaster mitigation planning.
- Promote best management and prevention measures for potential groundwater pollution sources, including septic tanks, wells and underground petroleum storage tanks.
- Participate and cooperate with federal and state groundwater protection programs where appropriate.
- Encourage low density growth to minimize threats to life and property in flood hazard areas without public sewage disposal systems.
- Continue to enforce floodplain management regulations so that property owners continue to be eligible for inexpensive flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Program (*NFIP*).
- Recognize Bayou Lafourche’s significance as an environmental resource and source of drinking water for much of the region. Provide for the Bayou’s protection by encouraging greenbelts along its banks, through a public education program, and by controlling development along the bayou.

Strategies for Effective Public Services:

- Maximize efficiency of public services, utilities and infrastructure by encouraging higher density development in appropriate locations and infill development in already built up areas.
- Prohibit the extension of capital improvements into agricultural areas when such improvements would lead to increased development pressures.
- Evaluate alternatives to conventional package sewage treatment plants, both to service existing development and to serve any new growth. Recent advances in alternative technologies offer “low tech” solutions appropriate to a rural environment because they offer significant reductions in monitoring, testing and operational requirements and costs.
- Take into consideration the fiscal impacts of necessary capital improvement such as roads, schools, water, and sewer service when making land use decisions and plans.
- Consider the Comprehensive Plan, especially its Land Use Element, in any policy deliberations related to physical development activities by parish government and all its agencies, commissions, boards and authorities.
- Ensure that recreational opportunities are considered in capital projects whenever possible.

The Implementation Team will need to assign responsibility for each selected strategy to some agency, entity, or person. Such assignment should include discussion of tentative timelines for completion or achievement. This arrangement will help maintain accountability and facilitate charting of progress.

Funding Options

Funding sources for plan implementation can be found in three general categories. These are local funding sources, state funding sources and federal funding sources. A definitive list of funding programs in each category is difficult to build, since new programs are created periodically and old ones are changed or eliminated. Perhaps the best way to match needs with a funding source is to first identify a specific need for funding and then attempt to match it to a suitable funding program through an internet search. Both the Office of Governor and the Office of Lt. Governor oversee funding programs designed to achieve specific objectives. Some of these pertain to economic development, and others focus on recreation or historic preservation. Both offices should be contacted for program information. Other state agencies and departments should not be overlooked.

The table below presents only a representative listing of potential funding sources in each category. A fourth funding category worth considering is the private investment sector which includes local business and industry, as well as large, private foundations. Many of the latter provide funding throughout the country for projects that address special needs. In some cases, private investment funding from regional and even national sources may also be available.

An additional option may be requesting the state of Louisiana to develop a small and rural communities planning initiative to provide funding and technical assistance for comprehensive planning. The Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan issued in 2007 recommends that comprehensive plans be required only for large and growing communities.

Potential Funding Sources for Plan Implementation
Local Sources
Local government capital improvement program funds
Local business and industry
State Sources
Capital Outlay Program
Various tax abatement programs
Various matching grant programs
Programs related to historic districts or preservation
Federal Programs
Rural Development program through USDA
Continuing Authorities Program through USACOE
NRCS
Special Appropriations
Other Sources
Private Foundations

Requiring plans for smaller communities would constitute an unfunded mandate and a burden most cannot afford. However Assumption Parish, though not required to develop a comprehensive plan, took the initiative to do so without financial assistance because the Parish recognized the existence of important issues it wished to address. A small communities’ initiative would recognize that a critical mass of population may be only one of the significant issues facing Louisiana communities. Such an initiative could address pressures on small communities arising from the tendency to leapfrog more expensive land close to population centers in favor of less expensive rural land, typically subject to fewer land use controls.

Conclusion

Assumption Parish stands on the threshold of a new future. Reaching that future will require the systematic implementation of the new Vision, carefully crafted by the citizens of the Parish. This Comprehensive Plan is a first and very significant step toward the new Vision. Full implementation will require additional administrative tools that parish government should move to develop as quickly as possible. Without established and accepted procedures in place, this Plan could become nothing more than an exercise—a document that sits on a shelf—with no hope for full and effective implementation.

At a minimum, the Assumption Parish Government should move toward the development and ultimate adoption of a suitable zoning ordinance tailored to the Parish’s needs as articulated in this Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Parish’s existing subdivision regulations should be re-evaluated within the context of the Comprehensive Plan. Finally, the Parish should develop a Capital Improvements Plan linked to the Comprehensive Plan to help ensure decisions regarding infrastructure and other capital improvement expenditures in the Parish are made in the most efficient and effective manner.

With the expected adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, Assumption Parish begins a new era. The citizens of the parish can look forward to the brighter, more attractive future envisioned in this Plan, which they themselves have helped create. Although the years ahead will be challenging, the Comprehensive Plan can help guide and focus efforts to make the Plan’s promised rewards a reality.



Vision Statement

Assumption Parish will continue to develop a healthy community atmosphere and a desirable quality of life for its residents by ensuring a balanced mix of residential and commercial development, quality education, necessary infrastructure, employment and recreational opportunities while preserving its natural resources and pleasing rural character. The Parish will become a growing, visually attractive, safe and economically stable community striving for cooperation and input from its citizens and business community.

