



Tangipahoa Parish

Comprehensive Plan





KENDIG KEAST
COLLABORATIVE

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Honorable Gordon Burgess, Parish President
Tangipahoa Parish
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October 23, 2008

Dear President Burgess:

We are pleased to submit this final comprehensive plan document. The project commenced upon execution of our Professional Services Agreement, dated March 2, 2007. The plan was completed with a unanimous recommendation of approval by the Steering Committee on April 24, 2008, a recommendation of approval by the Parish Council on May 12, 2008, and adoption by the Planning Commission on June 9, 2008. The Planning Commission subsequently adopted minor amendments to the plan on July 8, 2008.

This document is the first-ever comprehensive plan for Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana. It is designed to provide policy guidance for the Parish as it grows and develops over the next 20 to 25 years. The plan was developed over the course of approximately one year, and reflects and responds to extensive input from a broad cross-section of Parish residents about their vision for the future and their choices about how to get there.

This plan would not have been possible without your outstanding leadership and the leadership of the Parish Council: Hon. Bobby Cortez, Hon. Carlos D. Notariano, Hon. Howard G. "Buddy" Riddel, Hon. Michael Petitto, Hon. Ronnie Bankston, Hon. Carlo S. Bruno, Hon. Lionel Wells, Hon. Debbie Edwards, Hon. Tennis Rick, and Hon. Tom Tolar. You and the Council recognized that the Parish was at a pivotal point in its history and that only through considered planning would it be able to identify and affirmatively choose the future its residents seek.

The Plan is, at its heart, a statement of policy of the Parish Planning Commission. It will be implemented in a variety of ways, among them the adoption of ordinances by the Parish Council that regulate subdivisions and land use. The Planning Commission will have a continuing role in implementing the Plan through its day-to-day application of these ordinances, and through periodic updates to the Plan itself. Thanks to Planning

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Commissioners Lucy Bellavia; Luke Binner; Charlie Bollinger; Lamar Fredrick; Glen Graff; James Harper; Robert LaBee; George Peltier; and Kenny Williams for their work and continuing commitment towards preserving and protecting the things that make Tangipahoa Parish special.

This Plan was a community effort. Leading the effort "in the trenches" was the Land Use Steering Committee, a representative group of committed Parish residents who assisted the Planning Commission in the development of the Plan. The Committee came together for meetings month after month to learn planning concepts, principles, and trade-offs; identify and discuss issues; and ultimately to make judgments about how the Parish ought to grow for the next 25 to 30 years. The members of the Land Use Steering Committee are: James Harper (Chair); Jeff Smith (Vice Chair); Ron Whittington (Secretary); Richard Barker (ex officio); Lesli Bolner; Randy Bracy; Francis Cefalu; Lanny Conerly; Bobby Cortez; Dickie Davis; Joe Distefano; Greg Drude; Roy T. Dufreche; Joey Galofaro; Nancy Galofaro; Jack R. Gautreaux; Donald Gore; Charles L. Guerin; Charlie L. Harrison Jr.; Thomas Holton; George Hyde; Russell Jackson; Maurice Jordan; Gaston Lanaux; Bobby Lee; Clyde Martin; Ed Moreland; Ron Morgan; George Perkins; Gail Pittman-McDaniel; Pamela Ramsay; Danny Ridgel; Beverly W. Robertson; Weldon Russell; Betty Stewart; George Tiley; Pat Tobler; Rickey Umbach; Carl R. Wells; Mike Whitlow; Osa Betts Williams; Larry J. Wilson; and Stanley Young.

In addition to the involvement of the Steering Committee, many residents and business operators in the Parish offered their ideas and understandings to the effort. Residents, dairymen, foresters, miners, builders, developers, fire chiefs, water and sewer district representatives, homeowners, mayors, pastors and ministers, staff members, realtors, bankers, economic development professionals, and others are thanked for their service to the Parish by participating in Citizens' Congress meetings and focus groups.

Special thanks also goes to Richard Barker, Consulting Parish Planner, who provided outstanding logistical support and tireless advocacy for the effort and the concepts embraced by the Steering Committee -- including appearances on local television and radio shows, evening and weekend meetings with citizen groups, and coordination with Parish staff and officials; to Alyson LaPuma, Parish Planner, who now has the hard job: establish the Office of Parish Planning and become the central point of contact for implementation of this Plan; and to Maurice Jordan, Parish Engineer, who oversaw the Parish street inventory and participated in numerous meeting about the plan.

Last, but certainly not least, special thanks to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Center for Planning Excellence, and North Shore Foundation for their essential involvement in funding, promoting, assisting, and facilitating this effort, and for helping to ensure that this plan is integrated into the LOUISIANA SPEAKS regional planning framework.

Hon. Gordon Burgess

October 23, 2008

Page 3 of 3

Kendig Keast Collaborative is pleased to have been engaged in the development of this vision, and in turn, planning for the long-range well-being of this fine Parish. We wish you continued success.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BRET C. KEAST".

Bret Keast

Vice President

Acknowledgments

Parish President

Honorable Gordon Burgess

Parish Council

Honorable Bobby Cortez, Honorable Carlos D. Notariano, Honorable Howard G. "Buddy" Riggel,
Honorable Michael Petitto, Honorable Ronnie Bankston, Honorable Carlo S. Bruno, Honorable Lionel
Wells, Honorable Debbie Edwards, Honorable Tennis Rick, and Honorable Tom Tolar

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George Peltier; and Kenny Williams

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Lesli Bolner; Randy Bracy; Francis Cefalu; Lanny Conerly; Bobby Cortez; Dickie Davis; Joe Distefano;
Greg Drude; Roy T. Dufreche; Joey Galofaro; Nancy Galofaro; Jack R. Gautreaux; Donald Gore; Charles L.
Guerin; Charlie L. Harrison Jr.; Thomas Holton; George Hyde; Russell Jackson; Maurice Jordan; Gaston
Lanaux; Bobby Lee; Clyde Martin; Ed Moreland; Ron Morgan; George Perkins; Gail Pittman-McDaniel;
Pamela Ramsay; Danny Ridgel; Beverly W. Robertson; Weldon Russell; Betty Stewart; George Tiley; Pat
Tobler; Rickey Umbach; Carl R. Wells; Mike Whitlow; Osa Betts Williams; Larry J. Wilson; and Stanley
Young

Special Thanks

Richard Barker, Consulting Parish Planner; Alyson LaPuma, Parish Planner; Maurice Jordan, Parish
Engineer; Camille Manning-Broome, CPEX; Herpreet Singh, CPEX; Alison Cascio, CPEX; Baton Rouge
Area Foundation; Center for Planning Excellence ("CPEX"); North Shore Foundation; U.S. Department of
Agriculture; Parish residents, dairymen, foresters, miners, builders, developers, fire chiefs, water and
sewer district representatives, homeowners, mayors, pastors and ministers, staff members, realtors,
bankers, economic development professionals, and all of the participants in Citizens' Congress meetings
and focus groups

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Table of Contents

Preface – Purpose and Process

1.0 Purpose	1
2.0 The Planning Process	2

Chapter 1 – Introduction & Vision

1.0 Introduction.....	1
2.0 The Vision.....	2
3.0 Why Plan?.....	3
4.0 Planning Versus Zoning	4
5.0 What's In This Plan?.....	6

Figure 1-1: Subdivision Construction.....	1
Figure 1-2: Rural Road.....	2
Figure 1-3: Farming in the Parish Countryside	3
Figure 1-4: Conservation Development	5

Chapter 2 – Community Profile

1.0 A Brief History of Tangipahoa Parish	1
2.0 Socioeconomic Profile	3
3.0 Implications.....	10

Figure 2-1: Tangipahoa Parish.....	1
Figure 2-2: Downtown Hammond.....	2
Figure 2-3: I-12 / I-55 Interchange	2
Figure 2-4: FEMA Trailers in Hammond	3
Figure 2-5: Population and Projections to 2020	4
Figure 2-6: Age of Principal Farm Operators	6
Figure 2-7: Household Income Distribution.....	6
Figure 2-8: Educational Attainment.....	7
Figure 2-9: Private Sector Employment.....	8
Figure 2-10: Natural Area in Tangipahoa Parish	11

Table 2-1: Age and Race – Neighboring Parishes	5
Table 2-2: Age and Race – Parish, State, and U.S.....	5

Chapter 3 – Growth Capacity and Public Facilities

1.0 General.....	1
2.0 Fiscal Sustainability.....	1
3.0 The Parish Government “Tipping Point”	6

4.0 Growth Management Strategy	8
5.0 Growth Management Strategy: Goals and Recommendations.....	25
6.0 Streets.....	26
7.0 Streets: Goals and Recommendations	27
8.0 Water.....	28
9.0 Wastewater.....	29
10.0 Water and Wastewater: Goals and Recommendations.....	30
11.0 Drainage	30
12.0 Drainage: Goals and Recommendations	31
13.0 Solid Waste.....	31
14.0 Safety and Security.....	32
15.0 Safety and Security: Goals and Recommendations	34
Figure 3-1: Fiscal Sustainability: “The Bottom Line”	2
Figure 3-2: The Costs of Streets	3
Figure 3-3: The Importance of Fire Protection	6
Figure 3-4: “The Tipping Point”	7
Figure 3-5: The Strategy	9
Figure 3-6: Historical Development Pattern.....	10
Figure 3-7: “Urban” Areas	11
Figure 3-8: “Suburban” Areas	11
Figure 3-9: Protection Areas	12
Figure 3-10: Rural Areas.....	13
Figure 3-11: Gravel Road in Tangipahoa Parish.....	13
Figure 3-12: Examples of Traffic Sheds	16
Figure 3-13: Comparison on Traffic Sheds, Levels of Service C and E	17
Figure 3-14: Water and Sewer Utility Sheds.....	19
Figure 3-15: Alternative Development Patterns – Clustering	21
Figure 3-16: Alternative Development Patterns – Hamlet	23
Figure 3-17: Cluster Open Space, Density, and Lot Size.....	24
Figure 3-18: Road Ditch Bioswales	31
Figure 3-19: ISO Fire Rating System Factors	33
Table 3-1: Fiscal Sustainability of Illustrative 80-Unit Subdivision of \$270,000 Homes.....	5
Table 3-2: Traffic Shed Comparison – Impact of Lane Width.....	18
Chapter 4 – Community Character and Land Use	
1.0 Generally	1
2.0 Use and Character.....	1
3.0 Community State and Scale	5
4.0 Community Form.....	6
5.0 Community Character Classification and Type.....	7

6.0 Existing Character	12
7.0 Future Character.....	14
Figure 4-1: Well-Designed Apartments.....	3
Figure 4-2: Commercial Character	3
Figure 4-3: Character Elements	4
Figure 4-4: Well-Designed Density	4
Figure 4-5: State and Scale.....	5
Figure 4-6: Community Form.....	6
Figure 4-7: Communities Along Highway 51.....	6
Figure 4-8: Community Character Continuum.....	7
Figure 4-9: True Urban Versus Auto-Urban Character.....	8
Figure 4-10: Suburban Character Type.....	9
Figure 4-11: Suburban Estate Character Type	10
Figure 4-12: Countryside Character Type.....	10
Figure 4-13: Agricultural Character Type	11
Figure 4-14: Natural Character Type	11
Figure 4-15: Borrowed Open Space.....	15
Figure 4-16: Cluster Development	19
Map 4-1: Existing Character Atlas	after 12
Map 4-2: Existing Character Atlas, Area 1	after 12
Map 4-3: Existing Character Atlas, Area 2	after 12
Map 4-4: Existing Character Atlas, Area 3	after 12
Map 4-5: Existing Character Atlas, Area 4	after 12
Map 4-6: Existing Character Atlas, Area 5	after 12
Map 4-7: Existing Character Atlas, Area 6	after 12
Map 4-8: Existing Character Atlas, Area 7	after 12
Map 4-9: Existing Character Atlas, Area 8	after 12
Map 4-10: Existing Character Atlas, Area 9	after 12
Map 4-11: Existing Character Atlas, Area 10	after 12
Map 4-12: Existing Character Atlas, Area 11	after 12
Map 4-13: Existing Character Atlas, Area 12	after 12
Map 4-14: Existing Character Atlas, Area 13	after 12
Map 4-15: Existing Character Atlas, Area 14	after 12
Map 4-16: Future Character	after 12
Table 4-1: Existing Community Character Types	12
Table 4-2: Existing Parish Residential Character Methodology.....	13
Table 4-3: Future Character Districts	14
Table 4-4: Regulatory Incentive Strategy	17

Chapter 5 – Housing

1.0 Generally	1
2.0 General Housing Characteristics	2
3.0 Housing Affordability	4
4.0 Housing Strategy.....	7
5.0 Housing Strategy: Goals and Recommendations	15
Figure 5-1: Measuring a Post-Katrina Housing Market.....	2
Figure 5-2: Housing Value in Tangipahoa Parish Over Time.....	5
Figure 5-3: The Housing Strategy	8
Figure 5-4: The Housing Palette.....	8
Figure 5-5: Multiplex Buildings	10
Figure 5-6: Katrina Cottages I and II	11
Figure 5-7: Modern Modular Housing.....	12
Table 5-1: Permits Issued, 1994 to 2006	3
Table 5-2: Value of Permits Issued, 1994 to 2006	3
Table 5-3: 2006 Median Household Income Limits	5
Table 5-4: HUD Income Classifications.....	6
Table 5-5: Home Loan Threshold by Income Level, 2006.....	6

Chapter 6 – Transportation

1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Key Issues and Strategic Objectives.....	4
3.0 Transportation Concepts.....	5
4.0 Transportation Decision-Making	8
5.0 Regulatory Tools for Transportation Management.....	12
6.0 Regulatory Tools for Transportation Management: Goals and Recommendations	19
7.0 Transportation Supply.....	21
8.0 Transportation Supply: Goals and Recommendations	23
9.0 Transportation Demand Management.....	24
10.0 Transportation Demand: Goals and Recommendations.....	24
11.0 Physical Management of the Transportation System.....	25
12.0 Physical Management of the Transportation System: Goals and Recommendations ..	29
13.0 Designing Roads for Mobility, Safety, and Community Aesthetics.....	30
14.0 Road Design: Goals and Recommendations	31
15.0 Public Transportation	32
16.0 Public Transportation: Goals and Recommendations.....	34
17.0 Bicycle Transportation Infrastructure	34
18.0 Bicycle Transportation Infrastructure: Goals and Recommendations	35
19.0 Transportation System Analysis	36
20.0 Transportation System Analysis: Goals and Recommendations.....	43
21.0 Thoroughfare Plan	43

22.0 Typical Cross Sections	44
23.0 Operational Deficiencies.....	44
24.0 Parish Transportation Priorities	45
Drawing 6-1: Current Subdivision Local Road Cross Section..... <i>after 45</i>	
Drawing 6-2: Current Subdivision Local Road Cross Section (w/ Barrier Curb) <i>after 45</i>	
Drawing 6-3: Current Subdivision Local Road Cross Section (w/ Roll-Over Curb). <i>after 45</i>	
Drawing 6-4: Major Collector Road Cross Section..... <i>after 45</i>	
Drawing 6-5-1: Sample Urban Minor Arterial Road Cross Section..... <i>after 45</i>	
Drawing 6-5-2: Sample Rural Minor Arterial Road Cross Section <i>after 45</i>	
Drawing 6-6-1: Sample Urban Principal Arterial Road Cross Section..... <i>after 45</i>	
Drawing 6-6-2: Sample Rural Principal Arterial Road Cross Section <i>after 45</i>	
Figure 6-1: Amtrak	2
Figure 6-2: Initial Paved Road Program.....	3
Figure 6-3: Monthly Average Gas Prices in the Gulf Region Since 1992	6
Figure 6-4: Relationship of Mobility and Accessibility to Street Classification	22
Figure 6-5: Arterial with Frequent Curb Cuts	23
Figure 6-6: Resurfacing of Roadway.....	26
Figure 6-7: Roadway Utilizing Varying Methods of Access Management	27
Figure 6-8: Sample Signal.....	27
Figure 6-9: Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan: Transportation Systems	33
Figure 6-10: Tangipahoa Parish Block Level Trip Density	38
Map 6-1: 2030 Traffic Without Urban Growth Boundary	<i>after 42</i>
Map 6-2: 2030 Traffic With Urban Growth Boundary.....	<i>after 42</i>
Map 6-3: 2030 Hammond/Ponchatoula Area Traffic Without Urban Growth Boundary	<i>after 42</i>
Map 6-4: 2030 Hammond/Ponchatoula Area Traffic With Urban Growth Boundary	<i>after 42</i>
Map 6-5: Thoroughfare Plan.....	<i>after 42</i>
Table 6-1: Tangipahoa STIP Projects.....	10
Table 6-2: Tangipahoa Parish Daily Person Trips per Household	37
Table 6-3: Scenario Comparison; No Change in Travel Behavior	40
Table 6-4: Scenario Comparison; Increased Mobility Creating Increased Demand.....	41
Table 6-5: Roadway Deficiencies.....	42

Chapter 7 – Environmental Conservation

1.0 Introduction.....	1
2.0 Resource Cycles	3
3.0 Management Approach.....	6
4.0 Protecting and Enhancing Agriculture and Forestry	8

5.0 Protecting and Enhancing Agriculture and Forestry: Goals and Recommendations.....	12
6.0 Flood Protection and Flood Damage Prevention.....	12
7.0 Flood Protection and Flood Damage Prevention: Goals and Recommendations	16
8.0 Water Quality	17
9.0 Water Quality: Goals and Recommendations	22
10.0 Ecosystem and Habitat Conservation	24
11.0 Ecosystem and Habitat Conservation: Goals and Recommendations.....	37
12.0 Historic Resources.....	40
13.0 Historic Resources: Goals and Recommendations	41
Figure 7-1: Pogo Cartoon	2
Figure 7-2: The Water Cycle	3
Figure 7-3: Impacts of Development	4
Figure 7-4: The Carbon Cycle.....	5
Figure 7-5: The Nitrogen Cycle	6
Figure 7-6: Consequences of Excessive Nitrogen Loading.....	6
Figure 7-7: Alternative Agriculture	10
Figure 7-8: Shorelines, 2006 – 2010	14
Figure 7-9: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System	19
Figure 7-10: Raw Sewage in the Ditch.....	20
Figure 7-11: Stream Siltation.....	21
Figure 7-12: Mercury Advisory	21
Figure 7-13: Citizen-Based Initiatives and Agency Efforts.....	23
Figure 7-14: Agriculture and Class 2 Soils.....	27
Figure 7-15: Comparison of Per-Unit Impervious Cover	31
Figure 7-16: Threatened Natural Communities	36
Figure 7-17: Street Trees	39
Table 7-1: Soil Types in Tangipahoa Parish.....	28
Table 7-2: Threatened Natural Communities.....	35
Table 7-3: Resource Protection Standards.....	38
Table 7-4: Historic Resources.....	40
Chapter 8 – Economic Development	
1.0 Overview and General Strategies	1
1.1 Context.....	2
1.2 Economy of Tangipahoa Parish	4
1.3 The Business of Economic Development	8
1.4 Parish Competitiveness	8
1.5 Parish Competitiveness: Goals and Recommendations.....	16
1.6 Good and Bad Business	17
1.7 Good and Bad Business: Goals and Recommendations.....	20
1.8 Economic Development Program	20
1.9 Business Development	23

1.10 Business Development: Goals and Recommendations	24
2.0 Specific Economic Sectors.....	25
2.1 Tourism.....	26
2.2 Tourism: Goals and Recommendations	27
2.3 Agriculture and Forestry	28
2.4 Agriculture and Forestry: Goals and Recommendations.....	32
2.5 Mining.....	33
2.6 Mining: Goals and Recommendations	33
2.7 Retail.....	34
2.8 Retail: Goals and Recommendations	34
2.9 The Megasite	35
2.10 The Megasite: Goals and Recommendations	36
 Figure 8-1: U.S. Manufacturing Employment Since 1960	4
Figure 8-2: Typical Wal-Mart Distribution Center.....	6
 Table 8-1: Agricultural Versus Nonagricultural Employment.....	2
Table 8-2: Tangipahoa Parish Employment, 2000 to 2006	6
Table 8-3: Educational Attainment	12
Table 8-4: Impact of Increased Home Value on Property Tax	18

Chapter 9 – Implementation

1.0 Introduction.....	1
2.0 Methods and Responsibilities for Implementation.....	2
3.0 Plan Administration.....	3
4.0 Education and Training	3
5.0 Role Definition	4
6.0 Intergovernmental Coordination	5
7.0 Recommended Strategies for Intergovernmental Coordination.....	6
8.0 Implementation Strategies	6
9.0 New Ordinances and Amendments	9
10.0 Capital Projects	10
11.0 Programmatic Initiatives	11
12.0 Plans and Studies.....	12
13.0 Plan Amendment.....	14
14.0 Annual Progress Report	17
 Table 9-1: Summary Action Plan.....	7

Appendix A – Public Participation

1.0 Introduction.....	A-1
2.0 Structure of the Public Participation Program	A-3
3.0 What We Heard	A-4

Figure A-1: Composite.....	A-4
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Executive Summary

1.0 | Introduction and Vision

Tangipahoa Parish faces considerable challenges in preserving its heritage, managing its character, upgrading and maintaining its infrastructure, creating good jobs and sustaining a sound tax base, and overcoming its housing constraints. Indeed, the Parish is literally and figuratively at a crossroads, and this Plan sets the course for the Parish based on the desires of its residents and leadership.

It is said that “the best way to predict the future is to create it.” The purpose of this Plan is to express the shared vision of the Parish’s residents, business and land owners, and public officials – one that they will support with action over the next 20 years. The Plan is intended to provide the Parish with a sound basis for making choices that will affect its growth and development.

The vision for the future of the Parish is a straightforward proposition that sums up the input of the residents who attended the public participation sessions:

**“We want the Parish to
be like it was, only better.”**

Very broadly, to be “like it was,” the Parish should develop along the pattern of its historic roots – as a mix of traditional cities, towns, and villages with identifiable edges that are located within a rural setting. To protect this essential character, the vision entails two principles for decision-making:

- ◆ First, the Parish’s cities, towns, villages, and named unincorporated places will be the center of gravity for residential development and most non-agricultural economic development.
- ◆ Second, non-agricultural development that does occur in the countryside will take forms that respect agricultural neighbors.

In order to make things “better,” the Parish must:

- ◆ Improve the efficiency of new development with respect to its demands on public resources and infrastructure; embark on a fiscally responsible capital improvements program; and fairly allocate its costs and benefits.
- ◆ Improve and diversify the economic opportunities for all Parish residents, and work toward providing decent, accessible housing for all segments of the market.
- ◆ Improve the environment of the Parish by ending practices that cause unnecessary harm.
- ◆ Enhance natural resource-based recreational opportunities. ◎ in a manner that does not interfere with (and is otherwise compatible with) the Parish’s working rural landscapes.

2.0 | About the Parish

- ◆ The Census estimates that Tangipahoa Parish’s population is 115,398 people (2007).
- ◆ Even before the jarring effects of Hurricane Katrina, Tangipahoa Parish was experiencing the normal growth pressures of a rural parish at the edge of a metropolitan region.

Growth Capacity Action Items

- ◆ Establish urban growth areas and preservation areas for resources, agriculture, and forestry.
- ◆ Calibrate development to the capacity of available infrastructure (e.g., through “traffic sheds”).
- ◆ Designate rural areas where minimal services will be provided.
- ◆ Require development in rural areas to have a rural character.
- ◆ Develop a marketing plan and strategic plan for the Megasite.
- ◆ Develop special area plans for Loranger, Robert, and Natalbany.

- ◆ Tangipahoa Parish's economy has evolved from predominately agriculture and forestry in the early years to government, health care, retail and services, and manufacturing.
- ◆ Nonetheless, agriculture and forestry are important industries to the Parish in terms of its heritage, culture, character, and revenues. Almost one-quarter of Tangipahoa Parish's land area is in agricultural production.
- ◆ The available data suggest that the Parish should seek a balance of jobs and housing in order to reduce commute times and provide opportunities for its significant disadvantaged populations. Moreover, in order to maximize the effectiveness of opportunities for single mothers, affordable, quality day care and after-school care are also critical needs.
- ◆ Southeastern Louisiana University is a significant asset, providing educational and employment opportunities for thousands of residents. SLU's participation in the local economy should be encouraged to the maximum possible extent.
- ◆ The Parish's abundant natural resources not only provide the basis for a \$70 million agricultural and forestry economy, but they also provide all residents of the Parish with prized recreational opportunities, beautiful natural character, and environmental quality. Among these resources are numerous picturesque rivers and creeks that are a significant component of the Parish's quality of life. Land use policies should be designed and implemented to protect these resources.
- ◆ The Parish's agricultural community is aging, and there is little evidence that younger farmers are entering the industry to replace them. Land uses that support the agricultural industry and enhance its profitability and alternatives for re-use of agricultural land (for alternative agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses) are needed. These needs are especially critical for the dairy industry.

3.0 | Growth Capacity and Public Facilities

The Parish has plenty of land and water to support growth. However, the people of the Parish want to preserve and protect the Parish's cherished rural and “small town” character. Moreover, the revenue structure of the Parish is such that it cannot afford to support scattered suburban growth in rural areas. Consequently, the sustainability of the Parish is primarily a question of maintaining its fiscal health. Fortunately, environmental sustainability, protection of rural areas, and other challenges related to sprawling growth are addressed by the same strategies that protect the public treasury.

The strategy for managing the public treasury, maintaining the Parish's character, protecting farming and forestry, and improving the environment is to maintain a “rural Parish model.” The recommended growth management strategy is constructed on four legs:

Figure ES-1, Community Character Continuum

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

- (1) Direct almost all new growth to locations where it does not compromise the fiscal integrity of the Parish or the character of the area in which it is located;
- (2) Limit growth outside of these designated areas to the capacity of available infrastructure, fairly allocating the right to develop land;
- (3) Respect the property rights and economic realities of rural landowners by providing options to developers in order to help them make rural projects fit into the context in which they are located; and
- (4) In general, leave the role of providing urban and suburban services to the cities, towns, and villages.

This strategy is an affirmation that the unincorporated areas of the Parish will remain rural, and that the Parish government will, in general, continue to provide a rural level of services.

4.0 | Community Character and Land Use

Community character relates to the visual balance between the natural and built environments. It is a continuum that ranges from the most intense urban center to the pristine natural area. For the purposes of this Plan, there are three broad-brush “classifications” of community character: urban, suburban, and rural. Within these “classifications” are several character “types” that describe a finer grain of community character experience. See **Figure ES-1, Community Character Continuum**.

The Plan calls for “urban” and “suburban” development to occur within urban growth areas and around already developed areas, and for “rural” development to occur elsewhere in the unincorporated Parish. Generally, the strategies to accomplish this objective are:

- ◆ Use the value that is created by agriculture, silviculture, countryside residential, and limited estate residential

Community Character and Land Use Action Items

- ◆ Establish urban growth areas and preservation areas for resources, agriculture, and forestry.
- ◆ Develop a marketing plan and strategic plan for the Megasite.
- ◆ Develop special area plans for Loranger, Robert, and Natalbany.

Figure ES-2, Cluster Development



The term **cookie-cutter zoning** is used because it forces a design approach similar to stamping cookies out of dough, like the top illustration. Clustering, as in the bottom illustration, allows for better design and better protection of rural and estate character types.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

development to protect and reinforce the rural character of the unincorporated Parish;

- Cooperate with the municipalities to focus urban and suburban growth in the Southern part of the Parish (in the cities), and to a lesser extent in the freestanding cities and towns of the Northern parts of Parish;
- Ensure that the “megasite” develops with a critical mass of self-supporting, high-quality development that includes housing for the anticipated workforce; and
- Encourage the ultimate incorporation of the more densely populated unincorporated areas of the Parish.

A variety of development types are recommended to provide developers with a number of options to meet market demands in a manner that is consistent with the character of the surrounding community.

- **Farmsteads** are operating farms that include a home for the farmer, as well as allow farmers to conduct other businesses that are compatible with farm operations.
- **Equestrian** development is residential development in which lots are large enough for horses to be kept and common open space areas are provided for riding.
- **Cluster development** is single-family residential development on lots that are at least one and one-half acres, with at least 40 percent delineated common open space. *See Figure ES-2, Cluster Development.*
- **Conservation cluster** development is single-family residential development on smaller lots with at least 50 percent delineated open space.
- **Preservation cluster** development is single-family residential development on smaller lots with at least 75 percent delineated open space.

- **Planned development** is like cluster development in many ways, but planned development includes two or more housing types on lots that, on the whole, average 12,000 to 20,000 square feet in area.
- **Village and Hamlet** developments are small-lot, mixed-use developments on large parcels of land, of which most of the area is set aside as permanent delineated open space.

- ◆ Single-family development is traditional, non-agricultural residential development on large lots.

With respect to the urban growth boundaries, the Parish should work with the municipalities to develop interlocal agreements regarding how development will be approved, served, and ultimately annexed. The agreements should provide (at a minimum), that urban growth boundaries involve:

- ◆ Annexation to the municipality within a limited number of years;
- ◆ Connection to municipal water and wastewater systems;
- ◆ Impact fees for schools;
- ◆ Natural resource protection that is at least as protective as the standards that are set out in this Plan in **Chapter 7, Environmental Conservation**;
- ◆ Provisions for workforce housing, so that the urban workforce is not pushed into the countryside and subjected to long, costly commutes; and
- ◆ Minimum densities that accommodate projected growth, promote vital urban communities, and reduce urban sprawl.

5.0 | Housing

It is becoming increasingly difficult for households to afford to live in Tangipahoa Parish. Estimates from the 2006 American Community Survey indicate that the median value of a home in Tangipahoa Parish was approximately \$116,300, representing a 36.1 percent increase above the median value in 2000 (\$85,400). During the same six year period, median household income increased only 12.5 percent, leaving a substantial gap between the growth in housing value and household income. Indeed, the vast majority of new homes under construction between 2000 and 2006 are likely out of reach to the average Parish household.

Often, people leave densely populated areas in search of more affordable housing. However, recent studies show that much of the

Housing Action Items

- ◆ Revise subdivision regulations to promote clustering and allow a variety of housing types.
- ◆ Provide technical assistance to form and manage Community Development Corporations to build housing for economically disadvantaged households.
- ◆ Identify areas as candidates for future disaster relief sites; strategically plan for faster disaster recovery, including transitioning to permanent housing.

Figure ES-3, The Housing Palette

Single				
	Single Family	Lot Line	Village House	Patio House
Two-Family				
	Twin House	Duplex		
Attached				
	Atrium House	Townhouse	Weak-Link	
Multi-Family				
	Multiplex	Duplex Townhouse	Apartment	

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

"affordability" this more distant housing is offset by increased transportation costs. As more people move into the unincorporated areas, the unimproved (or improved but unable to keep up with growth) transportation network increasingly becomes congested, adding to commute times and travel costs.

The key housing objective is to provide decent, affordable housing to all segments of the market. One way is to allow the development of a variety of housing types through the use of a "housing palette," which would allow mixed-housing projects to be constructed as-of-right according to standards that protect community character. **Figure ES-3, The Housing Palette**, illustrates a housing palette.

Another way to promote housing affordability is to allow for (and even encourage) the development of expandable housing, such as the "Katrina Cottage," discussed in the LOUISIANA SPEAKS plan; and of high-quality manufactured, modular, panelized, pre-cut, and hybrid housing types. Standards should be established to ensure design quality for neighborhoods that include these housing types.

Finally, there are households in the Parish that are severely disadvantaged with respect to opportunity for upward mobility in housing. Many have little choice but to live in rental housing that is substandard. Low incomes and poor (or no) credit prevent these families from entering the housing market.

Many of the most disadvantaged households would benefit greatly from programs that provide sufficient assistance to overcome the initial barriers to entry into the housing market. To that end, the Parish should support the formation of non-profit community development corporations. By way of example, the City of Shreveport, Louisiana has a program called "Faith Builders," which is designed to train an experienced cadre of faith-based non-profit developers. The program includes 48 hours of classroom instruction and 12 field hours of hands-on work.

Another housing challenge is post-disaster recovery. The Parish should identify areas in advance for housing for disaster victims, and for the development of permanent housing to transition people more quickly from trailers and other transient housing types.

6.0 | Transportation

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, and through the earlier LOUISIANA SPEAKS planning process, the people of the Parish have said that retaining rural character is a high priority. They have also said that:

- ♦ Perceived deficiencies in the current state of the support services and infrastructure in the Parish should be addressed; and
- ♦ Environmental quality (especially water quality) should be protected and enhanced.

Major transportation infrastructure is not the key problem with Parish mobility, due in part to the Parish's strategic location, but also due to the fact that most of the interstate transportation infrastructure is built and maintained by State and Federal agencies, or is

owned, maintained and operated by private companies (*e.g.*, CN Railroad). Interstate highways, ports, airports, and railroads do not receive much funding from local sources.

It is the Parish highways, local streets, sidewalks, bike lanes and paths, and transit services that must be predominantly supported by local funding. These are generally the weak links in the transportation system, although many smaller state roads are also in poor condition. They are the elements of Tangipahoa Parish's transportation system that need to be addressed so that its citizens can all access economic opportunity, travel safely, and have better use of the extensive interstate transportation network that crisscrosses the Parish.

The Parish should approach transportation from the perspective of mobility rather than street infrastructure. Mobility is a broader issue that involves the distance a person must travel and the choice of how to get there. Improving mobility involves linking land use and transportation decisions, locating housing closer to places of work, improving connectivity among neighborhoods, designing places that offer a range of choices for how to move around, and increasing the efficiency of street networks through operational improvements (*e.g.*, signal timing, intersection improvements, and so forth).

The Parish should work toward a sustainable program of comprehensive, continuous and coordinated long-range transportation planning. The Parish should be proactive, in order to:

- Better articulate Parish needs in discussions with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development on major capital projects;
- Better anticipate capital needs and optimize effectiveness of the Parish bond program for transportation investment;
- Widen streets only as a part of a comprehensive, multifaceted program to enhance mobility; and
- Provide a sound basis for public-private partnerships with developers in regard to transportation investment that benefits their projects.

The Parish should also pursue a group of related strategies to enhance mobility, including:

- Implementing the Urban Growth Boundary strategy by working with the cities, towns, villages, and special districts to establish interlocal agreements to focus growth in and around areas that are already developed.
- Studying the areas described in **Table 6-5, Roadway Deficiencies** (*see Chapter 6, Transportation*) and develop a prioritized capital improvements program to address these deficiencies as the urban growth boundary strategy is implemented.
- Evaluating the traffic impacts of new development, or at least larger developments.
- Conducting a preliminary analysis of whether impact fees are appropriate.
- Establishing a functional classification system to facilitate consistent understanding and clear expectations about the future role of existing streets. Then, the Parish should establish recommended cross-sections, protect the intended function of the

streets by managing access based on their intended function, and include appropriate dedication requirements in the subdivision regulations.

- ♦ Promote bicycling by requiring a minimum width of clear roadway surface in areas suited for bicycle use and designing bicycle facilities to provide the most direct and safest connection between established destinations.
- ♦ Seeking partnerships to develop and share geographic information and to provide transit service among municipalities.
- ♦ Ensuring that parish decision-making preserves and encourages the potential for future commuter rail service in the East-West and North-South directions.

The Parish program for mobility should be cognizant of the fact that Parish streets are resources for its working landscape. That is, farmers and foresters must use them to access fields and bring products to market in heavy trucks. Damage to substandard streets from reasonable agricultural and forestry use of Parish streets should be considered a cost of maintaining the rural landscape, and should not be assessed against the farmers and foresters.

Figure ES-5, Pogo Cartoon



Source: Walt Kelly, Pogo (1971)

Finally, the Parish should upgrade the character of its transportation corridors through:

- ♦ Basic sign regulations that reduce sign clutter; and
- ♦ Street tree requirements in subdivisions and key areas in the urban growth areas.

7.0 | Environmental Conservation

Anecdotal and statistical data show that the natural environment is what attracts people to Tangipahoa Parish, and is what has kept them there for generations. Indeed, the Parish's abundant natural resources are essential ingredients of its quality of life. As such, a growth trajectory that results in the destruction of large areas of natural and agricultural resources will cause many of today's residents to move on to other places, chasing the lifestyle they lost. See **Figure ES-5, Pogo Cartoon**. Yogi Berra once put the sentiment of those residents this way:

"Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded."

Public resources are scarce. Therefore, the recommended approach to environmental resource management in the Parish is a combination of market-driven and regulatory techniques. The Parish should use the power of the market in a variety of innovative ways to sustain its rural economy by protecting its agriculture, forestry, and mining uses and the industries that support them.

Protecting and enhancing agriculture, forestry, and mining supports the traditional rural lifestyles of the Parish residents – a key objective of this Plan. It also makes fiscal sense, because farming, forestry, and mining are not heavy users of public facilities and services, and therefore, tend to generate more in taxes than they demand in expenditures. Finally, agriculture and forestry can protect and conserve environmental resources through appropriate land management techniques and best management practices.

The first part of the strategy for protecting agriculture is to *vigorously protect the right to farm*. Implementing zoning regulations should protect the right to farm (including raising timber) in rural areas; allow for fire management, application of fertilizers and pesticides; and limit the potential conflicts between agricultural operations and non-agricultural development by ensuring that new non-agricultural development provides adequate buffering on its own land. Since some existing forestry parcels are small, zoning regulations should be carefully tailored to allow for their continuing use for forestry, although some additional regulation within the urban growth area may be warranted to strike an appropriate balance to ensure compatibility with urban and suburban development.

Yet sustaining agriculture will require more than just protective planning (and zoning). It will also require a combination of thinking “outside the box,” some risk-taking, and a lot of hard work. This Plan recommends that the Parish help its farmers by encouraging:

- ♦ A strategic approach for adding value to existing agricultural and forestry products;
- ♦ Diversifying agricultural production;
- ♦ Strategies for reducing the costs of agricultural inputs, such as energy and feed;
- ♦ Promoting eco- and agro-tourism in rural areas;
- ♦ Seeking funding to create a strategy and infrastructure for biofuels development;

Environmental Conservation Action Items

- ♦ Include resource protection and improved wastewater treatment in subdivision regulations.
- ♦ Revise floodplain regulations and strengthen flood protection provisions.
- ♦ Promote agro- and eco-tourism.
- ♦ Promote study of biofuels and development of biofuels infrastructure.
- ♦ Hire an additional staff member for environmental enforcement (completed in 2008).
- ♦ Encourage water-saving technologies and Xeriscaping by setting an example in Parish buildings and on Parish properties.
- ♦ Collect household hazardous waste quarterly in all areas of the Parish.
- ♦ Request FEMA research regarding flooding under climate change scenarios.
- ♦ Identify and protect historic resources.
- ♦ Identify locations for a canoe/kayak trail on the Tangipahoa River.

Economic Development Action Items

- ◆ Implement the urban growth boundary strategy to promote critical masses of economic activity.
- ◆ Improve character of Parish by adopting limited set of sign regulations.
- ◆ Develop agriculture and forestry “bill of rights” as a charter amendment proposal.
- ◆ Promote diversity of agricultural production.
- ◆ Promote eco- and agro-tourism.
- ◆ Promote study of biofuels and development of biofuels production infrastructure.
- ◆ Strengthen ties to University, Technical College, and K-12 schools to maximize leverage of Parish non-monetary assets and bulk purchasing power.
- ◆ Establish a “buy local” program.
- ◆ Encourage energy efficiency.
- ◆ Develop programs to expose Parish youth to career alternatives.

There are other significant environmental challenges in the Parish, including:

- ◆ Sea level rise that could turn the swamp at the southern end of the Parish into open water by the year 2100, backing up streams and causing additional flood hazards.
- ◆ Water quality of the Tangipahoa River and its tributaries, which currently suffer from high bacteria levels, siltation, and mercury contamination.
- ◆ Development that does not respect the natural resources, features, or contours of the land, resulting in loss of the assets that contribute to the Parish’s rural character.

To address these challenges, the Parish should tighten its floodplain management and flood damage prevention ordinances; step up enforcement of stormwater and erosion control ordinances and ordinances regarding illegal dumping; and adopt regulations that require some or all of the natural resources (e.g., open water, wetlands, floodplains, forests, threatened natural communities, and steep slopes) on a site to be protected.

Finally, the Parish should take steps to identify and protect its historic resources, and to link them to tourism promotions.

8.0 | Economic Development

The multifaceted economic development strategy is to “keep it green,” diversify economic activity, set the stage for opportunity (including developing human resources and improving educational quality), keep growth compact, grow from within, and keep eyes open for outside opportunities.

As to “keeping it green,” the highly visible, “green” component of the economy must be strengthened and sustained. That is because Parish’s agricultural, forestry, and resource-based heritage is the key to its cherished rural character. To maintain that character against the pressure of non-agricultural residential development will require support for -- and diversification of -- the Parish’s agricultural and resource-based pursuits.

Diversification is also important. Although agriculture and forestry must be sustained and enhanced, downward trends in agricultural employment are not likely to reverse themselves. As such, the Parish must nurture and attract other opportunities for residents who do not directly participate in the agricultural economy.

The Parish must set the stage for opportunity. As the Parish grows, jobs must be created for the people who enter the labor force. Likewise, people need the opportunity to advance to more skilled work for better pay (and children need exposure to a variety of career fields). If these factors are not present, children will leave in search of opportunity in other locations, or will stay in the Parish, but may be stuck in a cycle of poverty.

Economic opportunity is just one part of the equation. Social opportunity is also important. It is relatively easy for young people to move in search of a better quality of life, a more diverse population, more excitement, and new and different experiences. Some eventually come back. Many do not.

Compact growth creates a critical mass for economic activity. Therefore, it is very important that the Parish's new residents live in and near the municipalities. If large numbers of new residents are dispersed into the countryside, they will also disperse economic energy. They will also almost certainly make life more difficult for the Parish's community of farmers and foresters, whose hard work is the key to preserving the essential character of the Parish.

In sum, there is no "magic bullet" that will solve the economic development challenges of the Parish, and the Parish should not rely heavily on the long-shot of attracting a big company to provide a fast boost to the Parish economy. Instead, the Parish should focus on the very real magic it already has -- in the ingenuity, spirit, and work ethic of the Parish residents. Indeed, downtown Hammond and Ponchatoula are vibrant places that are built on the sweat and elbow grease of Parish residents -- not the investment of corporate money from somewhere else. As a result, these places are the "real deal" -- unique centers of gravity that attract people from all over the region. They are also a highly visible reminder of how a series of small successes can bring big changes.

Still, the Parish should not abandon all efforts to attract large employers that are well-suited to do business in the region. However, those efforts should be undertaken in the context of a larger strategy that is centered on developing and growing local business. Priority should be given to agricultural pursuits and supporting industries that keep farms in production. Thoroughbreds and recreational horses, nurseries, value-added food products, alpacas, ostriches, methane digesters, and, ultimately, biofuels crops (such as switchgrass) and related support and processing industries are just a few of the potential opportunities for agricultural diversification.

With respect to specific economic sectors, the Parish should promote:

- Tourism, by promoting the Parish as an eco- and agro-tourism destination, identifying additional attractions in the Parish for the Tourist Commission to promote, developing a canoe/kayak trail on the Tangipahoa River, and ensuring that bed and breakfast uses continue to be allowed in the rural areas.
- Agriculture and forestry, by vigorously protecting the right to farm; using regulation to protect agriculture and forestry from encroachment by incompatible uses; allowing equestrian development in the countryside; and encouraging value-added industries, biofuels infrastructure, and agricultural diversification.

- ◆ Mining, by ensuring that the industry is not over-regulated, but that land is restored to a useful condition when mining operations are completed.
- ◆ Retail, by ensuring an adequate supply of land for commercial development in and near municipalities.

“Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.”

~ Peter Drucker.

9.0 | Implementation

To be successful, the Parish must utilize this plan constantly and consistently, and it must be integrated into ongoing governmental practices and programs. The recommendations must be referenced often and widely used to make decisions pertaining to the timing and availability of infrastructure improvements; proposed development/redevelopment applications; zone change requests (after land development regulations are adopted); expansion of public facilities, services and programs; and annual capital budgeting, among other considerations.

The primary means of implementation include:

- ◆ **Re-drafting of the subdivision regulations and preparation of new land development regulations** to ensure a quality and character of development that reflects the Parish's vision and promotes the Parish's fiscal well-being. The subdivision ordinance, in particular, must be re-written to improve use compatibility, conserve natural resources and open space; and other land development regulations should be drafted promptly in order to preserve the character and integrity of the countryside, existing neighborhoods, and valued areas, improve the efficiency of facility and service provisions, and contribute to a fiscally responsible pattern of urban growth.
- ◆ **Decision-making that considers this Plan.** As new development and improvements are proposed, Parish staff and the Planning Commission, together with the Parish Council, are obligated to consider the policies and recommendations of this plan.
- ◆ **Regular updating of a capital improvement program (“CIP”);** a five-year plan identifying capital projects for street infrastructure; water, wastewater, and drainage improvements; recreation facilities; and other public buildings and municipal services. These capital improvements should be consistent with this plan
- ◆ **Identification and implementation of special projects, programs, and initiatives to achieve organizational, programmatic, and/or developmental objectives.** These may include further studies, detailed plans, or initiating or expanding upon existing programs. These tend to be more managerial in function. That is, they may support or influence physical improvements or enhancements, but they are generally focused on other aspects of community betterment.

The Plan includes a large number of interrelated recommendations. The top priorities (to complete within one to two years from adoption of the Plan) are:

- ◆ Revise the subdivision regulations to: encourage clustering; improve wastewater treatment; improve fire safety; provide for right-of-way dedications and enhanced connectivity (to implement the thoroughfare plan); allow family divisions with minimal process (while preventing abuse); allow farmworker housing on-site; provide for bicycle travel; and, to the extent allowed by state law, enhance natural resource protection when land is developed.
- ◆ Develop and adopt zoning regulations that: protect farming, forestry, mining, and other rural industries and areas (and encourage diversification of rural industries); protect existing neighborhoods; require non-agricultural development to provide its own buffers/open spaces; provide incentives for clustered development, hamlets, and villages; require adequate fire protection; encourage housing diversity; include the revised subdivision regulations; and manage access to streets.
- ◆ Develop agriculture/forestry “bill of rights” as a charter amendment proposal.
- ◆ Establish urban growth areas and areas that are protected for farming and forestry.
- ◆ Adopt a limited set of sign regulations to protect the character of interchanges and major intersections.
- ◆ Establish a regular schedule for street maintenance.
- ◆ Strengthen ties to the University and Parish schools to maximize leverage of Parish non-monetary assets and bulk purchasing power to improve education.
- ◆ Develop a strategic plan for the Megasite to ensure workforce housing, infrastructure, services, utilities, and coordination with nearby local governments.

Preface

Purpose and Process

1.0 | Purpose

Tangipahoa Parish is confronted with considerable challenges in preserving its heritage, managing its character, upgrading and maintaining its infrastructure, creating good jobs and sustaining a sound tax base, and overcoming its housing constraints in the coming years. The Parish is literally and figuratively at a crossroads and, in undertaking this planning effort, is proactively choosing its future.

It is said that “the best way to predict the future is to create it.” The purpose of this Plan is to express the shared vision of the Parish’s residents, business and land owners, and public officials – one that they will support with action over the next 20 years. The Plan is intended to provide the Parish with a sound basis for making choices that will affect its growth and development.

1.0.1 | Expressing a Shared Vision. Arriving at a shared vision is no easy task. Tangipahoa Parish is a diverse parish. There are potentially competing interests between the north (predominately rural in character) and the south (predominately developed) with regard to planning.

Many people who live and farm in the north end of the Parish have historically been distrustful of planning, in part because it has not been very relevant to them, and in part because they assume that it will reduce the value of their land – a problem if they need to cash in on their equity to continue their agricultural operations, or if they just want to sell their land at a good price and retire.

Many people on the south end of the Parish want to preserve the agricultural heritage of the Parish, protect its natural resources, and upgrade its economy, infrastructure, and services. They view planning as an important way to accomplish these objectives.

That said, there is much common ground between the north and south ends of the Parish. The north end can accommodate development that serves the objectives of both ends of the Parish. The key issues, addressed in this Plan, are the form, intensity, and function of that development.

Without a solid plan, suburban development will continue in the rural areas of the Parish. Ultimately, the number of conflicts between incompatible nonagricultural development and agricultural operations or rural industries will increase, and because of the increasing population of nonagricultural residents, farming and forestry will likely be the victims of the competition.

Indeed, it is notable that for the thousands of examples of “urban sprawl” into rural areas, there is not one documented example of “rural sprawl” back into developed urban areas. Put simply, uncontrolled suburban development in the rural areas will, in time,

“We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.”

~Charles Kettering, Inventor

overcome the rural economy. Such an outcome does not serve the interests of anyone in the Parish.

1.0.2 | Focus on Implementation. This Plan is more than a collection of overly-general and lofty sounding goals like “provide affordable, quality housing for all residents.” Such statements provide little direction because they simply re-state a perceived problem, without setting priorities or direction. By contrast, this Plan reflects the hard, informed choices that the community has made (and a framework for choices the community will make) in order to achieve its goals.

Consequently, for the Plan to be effective, issues must be researched and analyzed, solutions and alternatives evaluated, and a realistic and feasible plan of action put in place to achieve a desired result. The evaluation of alternatives for resolving issues – and the selection of one or more strategies that are both reasonable and acceptable – are essential elements of the community planning process. All alternatives have costs, whether through regulations that impose costs on developers, future businesses, and homeowners; through increased taxes borne by the entire population; or through the physical and economic consequences felt by present and future generations.

Once the costs associated with alternative strategies are clarified, the Parish must then reach consensus on the best ways to implement the Plan in a fair and equitable manner. In some cases, the process of selecting the best implementation strategy may warrant modification of the original goal, so that the community will tolerate the associated costs.

Ultimately, there is no reason to create a Comprehensive Plan unless it serves as a policy framework that allows the Parish to achieve its shared vision for the future. Success depends upon an understanding of the Parish’s assets and strengths, but also an honest assessment of its problems and challenges. Implementation is always difficult, but it is easier when it builds on the community’s assets to address its liabilities.

2.0 | The Planning Process

Public participation and education are central to the planning process. In March, 2007, five focus group discussions were conducted, with interests from the agricultural community, the civic and environmental community, the economic development community, the homebuilders, and the public service providers, to obtain their perspectives with regard to the opportunities and challenges of the Parish into the future. Subsequently, a meeting of the steering committee was held and a presentation made to the Forestry Forum. Later in the process, additional meetings were held with dairy operators, foresters, miners, and economic development professionals.

In May, 2007, six Citizens’ Congresses were held at locations throughout the Parish. The purpose of these meetings was to gain broad public input into the planning process and to educate the public about the purposes of the Plan. Hundreds attended. A summary of these meetings is provided in **Appendix A, Public Participation**.

A series of eight steering committee meetings were conducted between the end of May 2007 and the end of April 2008, in order to reach consensus on policy issues and provide input regarding Plan elements as they were developed. This plan reflects the discourse at those meetings.

Several workshops with the Parish Planning Commission and Parish Council were also held, to keep them up-to-date about the Plan as it developed. Additional citizen outreach included radio interviews, newspaper articles, e-mail feedback, and telephone calls to the consultant team. The plan elements were posted on the project web site (www.tangiplanning.com) and placed in the Parish's libraries as they were developed.

Chapter One

Introduction and Vision

1.0 | Introduction

It is remarkable that in 1945, Charles Ascher, then planner and director of the Urban Development Division of the Federal National Housing Agency observed:

There is no dearth of land on the fringes of most cities. Land appears to be available in large tracts, easily assembled, at reasonable prices. There is no cost for tearing down old structures. There are often fewer controls in the outlying townships, no building code, no zoning regulation. These factors attract the builder to the fringe land.

The families who are to live in the new homes are also attracted to the fringe in search of human values for themselves and their children: openness, greenery, play space, and community feeling. Low taxes are accepted happily, without too much thought for the inadequacy of services that go with them.

This search is sometimes an illusion. If too few neighbors arrive, services remain inadequate. Streets remain unpaved, there is no good high school within easy reach. If the fringe land becomes more intensely developed, the demand for urban services -- police protection, better schools -- drives up the cost of government. The empty lots are no longer for softball games. The commuting grind may become wearing after a while.

Meanwhile, slums and blighted areas in the centers of cities rot.

By 1950, Tangipahoa Parish, including its towns, was home to just over 50,000 residents, which amounted to just over 60 people per square mile. For the next 40 years, as suburban and exurban sprawl ate up the countryside all over the United States, Tangipahoa Parish maintained its community character. That character, broadly speaking, is that of a rural Parish with towns that historically provided access to the rail and supported the local resource-oriented industries.

Change in the rural areas of Tangipahoa Parish (outside of the immediate influence of the towns) is a relatively recent phenomenon. Census 2006 estimates show a total population of 113,137 persons and a housing stock in the Parish of 44,190 units. More than 1,290 building permits for single-family homes were issued for the rural parts of the Parish in 2006, and more than 7,000 single-family lots were proposed for sale as of early 2007. *See, e.g., Figure 1-1, Subdivision Construction.*

Figure 1-1, Subdivision Construction



Pictured above is one of the many subdivisions that were already under construction in the Parish's countryside as this Plan was developing.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 1–2, Rural Road

A rural road in the Parish countryside.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

In many ways, Tangipahoa Parish has been fortunate in that, until very recently, it did not experience the type of pressure that Mr. Ascher spoke of more than 60 years ago. In the meantime, many tools have been developed and refined to get out ahead of the development pressure and use the power of the market to preserve and enhance community character. This plan is the first step for the Parish in this respect.

2.0 | The Vision

If one drills down all that was said at the Citizens' Congress meetings, focus group sessions, and steering committee meetings during the early stages of the planning process, the following vision statement emerges:

"We want the Parish to be like it was, only better."

Very broadly, the vision for the physical character of the Parish is rooted in the development forms that came from its agricultural and silvicultural heritage; that is, a mix of traditional cities, towns, and villages with identifiable edges that are located within a rural setting. See **Figure 1-2, Rural Road**, and **Figure 1-3, Farming in the Parish Countryside**. That essential character is what attracts people to the Parish in the first place (or, in the case of families that have been in the Parish for many generations, what keeps them here).

To protect the essential character of the Parish, the vision entails two principles for land use decision-making:

- ◆ First, the Parish's cities, towns, villages, and named unincorporated places will be the center of gravity for residential development and most non-agricultural economic development.
- ◆ Second, non-agricultural development that does occur in the countryside will take forms that respect agricultural neighbors.¹

These two principles will help ensure that the Parish's future form reflects and respects its past development pattern. However, the vision does not stop there. Merely redirecting growth according to the two principles above will certainly help, but will not, by itself,

¹ For example, clustered development that preserves open space and rural character or new villages or hamlets that are located on large parcels with adequate buffers between agricultural and non-agricultural uses could be developed under certain conditions.

make the Parish “better” than it is now. In order to make things “better,” the residents and business owners of the Parish agree that the Parish must:

- ♦ Improve the efficiency of new development with respect to its demands on public resources and infrastructure; embark on a fiscally responsible capital improvements program; and fairly allocate its costs and benefits.
- ♦ Improve and diversify the economic opportunities for Parish residents, both in the rural areas and the urban/suburban areas, including the provision of decent, accessible housing for all segments of the market.
- ♦ Improve the environment of the Parish by ending practices that unnecessarily deplete resources, such as clear-cutting sites for residential development and failing to employ best management practices for soil erosion control.
- ♦ Enhance natural resource-based recreational opportunities within the Parish.

3.0 | Why Plan?

During the Citizens’ Congress meetings, it became evident that a key point of agreement among the Parish’s residents is that they generally want to maintain the character of the Parish as it used to be; that is, before the recent surge of subdivision development in the countryside. Almost unanimously, the people of the Parish that participated in the planning process agreed that unrestricted and uncoordinated growth is a threat to that character.

Participants also recognized that recent explosive growth is overburdening the infrastructure of the Parish. For example, in many parts of the Parish, streets are not designed to carry modern rural traffic, let alone the suburban traffic that is being loaded onto them. It follows that overburdened infrastructure leads to fiscal stress for the Parish, which, under state law, has limited ability to increase its revenue streams to keep up with the demands of its residents.

It is evident that the Parish’s growing pains will not go away on their own. Indeed, the development patterns that are causing the growing pains are products of the status quo. Consequently, in the absence of planning, they will likely get worse. That is so because there is almost

Figure 1–3, Farming in the Parish Countryside



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

“**Neither** a wise man
nor a brave man lies down
on the tracks of history to
wait for the train of the
future to run over him.”

~ Dwight D. Eisenhower

no framework in place to ensure that new development is sensitive to the character and function of the community.

Yet, planning is not a “magic bullet” that will alleviate all of the Parish’s growing pains. Instead, it is a way to get out in front of development pressure and use the forces of the market to improve the character and quality of life of the Parish. Put simply, planning allows the Parish to be proactive, rather than reactive, about development. A plan with foresight and preparedness can also call out longstanding issues in the Parish and provide consensus-based strategies to address them.

Once the plan identifies the policies and strategies for being proactive about growth, a variety of measures will be needed to implement them. These include amendments to Parish ordinances, capital improvements programs, and intra- and inter-governmental coordination. The implementation measures are needed in order to translate the policies and strategies into action.²

4.0 | Planning Versus Zoning

Planning is different than zoning. Planning is a way to set up the policies of the Parish with respect to land, land development, and infrastructure. Zoning is one way, among others, to implement those policies by translating them into specific rules.

The planning effort did not begin with any particular implementation tool in mind. However, through extensive outreach efforts, it became clear that zoning is an implementation measure that has broad-based support in all parts of the Parish -- among its urban residents and its farmers, dairymen, and timber interests alike -- provided that it is carefully crafted and does not go “too far.”

Basically, zoning creates districts within the Parish. Within each district, different rules are set for development. When zoning is used as a plan implementation tool, the districts and rules are crafted to carry out the vision and policies of the plan.

A key concern of many in the Parish is the impact zoning could have on the business and lifestyle of the Parish’s rural areas. In these areas, an ethic of good stewardship has

maintained the landscape for generations -- without material restrictions on the way the land is used. Consequently, the idea of zoning the Parish’s rural areas has historically been met with resistance from those who live there. Indeed, for generations, it has just not been relevant.

Zoning is relevant now. Indeed, it is plain that the ethic of good stewardship is no longer enough to preserve and maintain the character, lifestyle, and economy of the Parish’s rural areas. That is so because

“He that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils; for time is the greatest innovator.”

~ Francis Bacon, 1597.

² Several strategic interim measures were recommended during the planning process in order to address immediate needs with respect to public safety, infrastructure, the environment, and the character of the Parish. These measures were based upon early input from the community, and may ultimately be brought forward, enhanced, or supplanted during implementation depending upon the policy directives of the final plan.

those who purchase land in the rural areas for the purpose of development will naturally treat the land as a commodity, rather than a resource.

The economics of development for non-agricultural uses are such that land is a thing to be bought, built upon, and sold. In other words, unlike agriculture, which depends upon the land to grow crops or trees or raise livestock year after year, development depends upon the land only as a place to put buildings. Once the lots or buildings are sold, the developer typically has no continuing interest in the land.

That is not to say that development is bad. To the contrary, development provides needed housing, employment centers, shopping areas, recreation, and so forth. It is also not to say that development that incorporates principles of good stewardship is not possible or not done.³ It is simply to say that, generally, the nature of the development business is different from the agricultural business -- and that difference is impacting the landscape of Tangipahoa Parish.

Fortunately, zoning is a tool that can be used in many ways.⁴ It can incorporate the key principles of good stewardship of the land and the rules for being a good neighbor to the Parish's traditional rural uses (silviculture, dairy farming, crops, etc.). In this way, zoning can protect agriculture and forestry from the inadvertent and often serious harms caused by those who are unfamiliar with their stewardship ethics. It can be a way for the Parish to say "no" to obviously insensitive or inefficient development patterns, or to say, "yes, but . . ." and condition the development upon standards that prevent it from interfering with agricultural uses.

Figure 1-4, Conservation Development



Example of a conservation development, a way to preserve resources and realize high-value development potential. In this case, development pods surround native prairie vegetation, and forest separates the development pods. The homes sit on relatively small lots (this block is not yet built-out).

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

³ Indeed, in many areas of the Country, creative developers are building conservation and cluster subdivisions that are outstanding examples of combining principles of good stewardship with residential development.

⁴ Many participants in the Citizens' Congresses observed that zoning in other places has hurt agriculture by over-regulating it and interfering with its operations. Yet, in much the same way a hammer can be used to either pound or pull a nail, zoning can be used to protect or disadvantage agriculture. It all depends upon how the tool is used. Experience shows that a plan that protects agriculture can be implemented by zoning that protects agriculture.

5.0 | What's In This Plan?

The plan contains nine chapters that address various facets of growth and development in the Parish:

- ◆ Chapter One, *Introduction and Vision*, sets out the context of the planning effort, the general vision for the Parish, and the differences between planning and zoning.
- ◆ Chapter Two, *Community Profile*, provides an overview of the Parish's history, geography, economy, and demographics, and their respective implications for this plan and the future of the Parish.
- ◆ Chapter Three, *Growth Capacity and Public Facilities*, provides an analysis of the existing infrastructure of the Parish and its capacity to support additional growth and strategies for development of needed Parish infrastructure.
- ◆ Chapter Four, *Community Character and Land Use*, sets out a recommended generalized land use plan to protect the character of the various areas of the unincorporated Parish and implement the other components of this plan.
- ◆ Chapter Five, *Housing*, provides an analysis of the housing stock and housing needs of the Parish and strategies for achieving a balance between them.
- ◆ Chapter Six, *Mobility*, provides an analysis of the current transportation systems of the Parish (all modes) and strategies for upgrading those systems, including a thoroughfare plan.
- ◆ Chapter Seven, *Environmental Conservation*, provides an analysis of the environmental resources of the Parish and strategies for protecting them from unnecessary degradation.
- ◆ Chapter Eight, *Economic Development*, provides an analysis of the Parish's key economic assets and industries and strategies for building upon the Parish's economic strengths and opportunities.
- ◆ Chapter Nine, *Implementation*, provides a prioritized list of implementation steps to put the strategies of the plan to work for the Parish.

Chapter Two

Community Profile

1.0 | A Brief History of Tangipahoa Parish

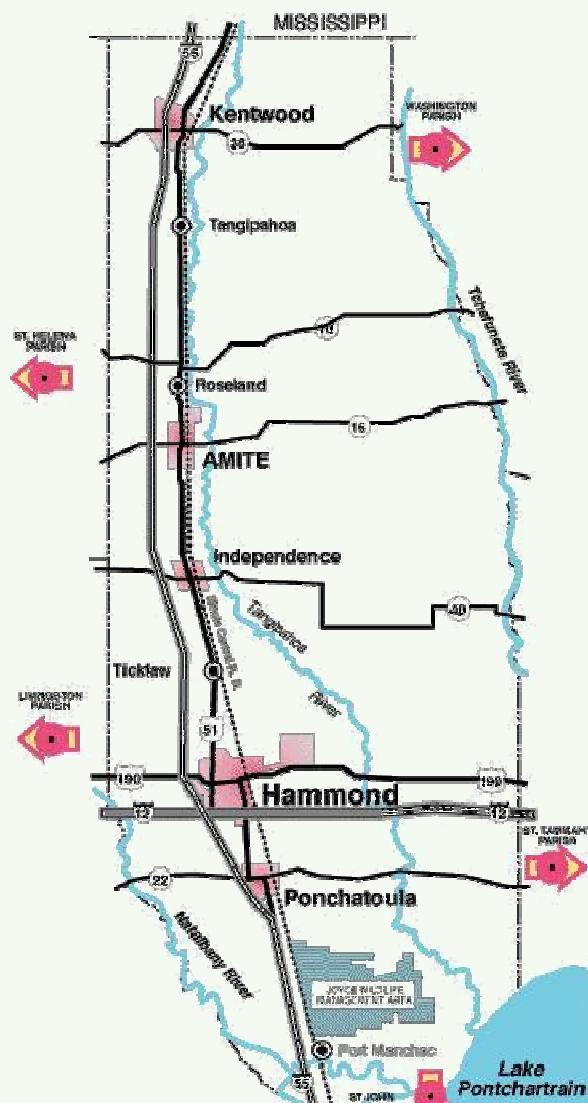
1.0.1 | Tangipahoa Parish Opens for Business. In 1853, the New Orleans Jackson and Great Northern Railroads were completed, connecting Manchac to the Mississippi state line. At that time, the railroads crossed four parishes: Washington, St. Tammany, St. Helena, and Livingston. The courthouses of these parishes – which were quite important to businesses – were far away from the new rail lines. Consequently, as the railroads attracted development, business interests sought to create a new parish – one which would embrace the railroads from the lake to the state line and provide a much-needed courthouse along the railroad. In March of 1869, an area 51 miles long and 18 miles wide (803 square miles) was carved out of territory from Washington Parish, St. Tammany Parish, St. Helena Parish, and Livingston Parish. Tangipahoa Parish (population 7,928) was formed. See **Figure 2-1, Tangipahoa Parish.** The new courthouse was established in Amite City.¹

1.0.2 | Early Growth. In the early days, the growth of the Parish was fueled by forest products, agriculture, and manufacturing – each heavily dependent upon the railroad. It is, therefore, no surprise that the historic towns in the Parish are all centered along the railroad corridor. Stations were established at 10-mile intervals (from south to north: Manchac, Ponchatoula, Tickfaw, Amite, and Tangipahoa).

¹ Morris, Irene. "Out of Four-One: Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana 1869-1969." (Tangipahoa Parish History Committee)

<http://www.tangipahoa.org/NewsInfo/parish_history.pdf> (last visited May 2, 2007).

Figure 2-1, Tangipahoa Parish



TANGIPAHOA PARISH

Source: www.enlou.com

Figure 2-2, Downtown Hammond



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 2-3, I-12/I-55 Interchange



Source: www.southeastroads.com

All of the Parish's other incorporated towns along the railroad were also established in the 1800s, including Independence (1830s), Hammond (1860s), Kentwood (1891), and Roseland (1892). Built at a time when cars were almost unknown, these towns grew in relatively compact forms. Traditional architecture is still found throughout the Parish. See **Figure 2-2, Downtown Hammond**.

1.0.3 | Interstate Access. In the early 1970s Interstate 55 (La Place to Chicago) and Interstate 12 (a northern by-pass for Interstate 10 that runs from Baton Rouge to Slidell) were completed across the Parish. See **Figure 2-3, I-12/I-55 Interchange**. Both roads generated new demand for highway commercial uses along interchanges (e.g., gasoline, convenience retail, lodging, auto service, etc.) to serve distance travelers. They also opened the Parish up for settlement by commuters and people from northern states. Indeed, in the 10 years following the opening of I-55 and I-12, population sharply increased in the Parish.²

1.0.4 | Hurricane Katrina. Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana on August 29, 2005. It impacted more than 100,000 square miles, left 200,000 Louisiana residents homeless, wiped out 300,000 jobs, and took more than 1,500 casualties. Although it did not come directly across Tangipahoa Parish, the Parish experienced sustained winds of 60 to 90 m.p.h. and gusts from 90 to 120 m.p.h.

Because of its quick physical recovery and its close proximity to New Orleans, the population of Tangipahoa Parish jumped 6.6 percent, almost overnight. By contrast, annual growth during the Parish's "boom" period between 1970 and 1980 was 2.25 percent.

Statistics cannot do justice to the profound effects of Hurricane Katrina. However, they are important to the plan because they help to differentiate between short-term, disaster-related events and long-term trends. With that in mind, the best available data suggest that in the immediate wake of Hurricane Katrina:

² Tangipahoa Parish grew 10.8% from 59,454 in 1960 to 65,875 in 1970. From 1970 to 1980, the Parish grew to 80,698, an increase of 22.5%.

- ◆ Population jumped from 106,152 to 113,137.³
- ◆ The number of verified employers in the Parish dropped from 1,954 to 1,922; then quickly rebounded to 2,002 by the fourth quarter of 2005 and kept growing (to 2,089 by the fourth quarter of 2006).⁴
- ◆ 2,417 new jobs were created (between March 2005 and January 2007).⁵
- ◆ Sales tax revenues spiked as thousands of new residents set up households from scratch – buying homes, new cars, appliances, and clothing.⁶
- ◆ School enrollment (which had not been more than 18,901 since 1998) increased to 19,214.⁷ In 2006, it climbed again to 19,581.
- ◆ Hundreds of FEMA trailers were brought to Tangipahoa Parish to provide housing for residents who were displaced from other areas. *See Figure 2-4, FEMA Trailers in Hammond.*

2.0 | Socioeconomic Profile

2.0.1 | Generally. One objective of planning is to allow people to make informed choices about how to use land based on their shared values and considered judgment about the benefits and burdens of the decisions for existing and future residents. The purpose of this socioeconomic profile is to provide a better understanding of who lives in the Parish, how and where they earn a living, and the types of services they require.

The profile that follows is based on the best available data at the time of publication. The last detailed Census estimates were released in 2005. Since then, Hurricane Katrina caused massive numbers of people to move.

The Census Bureau recently updated population estimates in order to account for those who

Figure 2-4, FEMA Trailers in Hammond



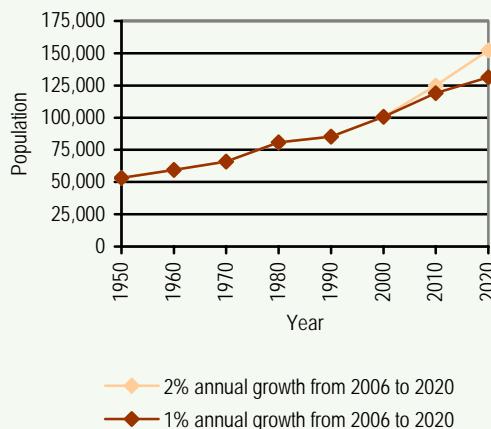
Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

moved into the Parish after Hurricane Katrina. However, details such as race, income, poverty, household size, and the like have not been updated. Yet, this assessment includes the 2005 estimates (pre-Katrina) for these details because: (1) there is no evidence of an exodus of people from Tangipahoa Parish; and (2) in the context of a Parish with more than 106,000 residents, the sudden influx of 7,000 new residents is very unlikely to shift any particular demographic characteristic more than five percent. Still, it is recommended that the demographic information in this Chapter be revisited upon the release of the 2010 Census data to verify the accuracy of the Chapter's assumptions and projections.

2.0.2 | Population.

- Following the growth spike between 2005 and 2006 that is attributable to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the population of Tangipahoa Parish is expected to resume a moderate pace of growth that is comparable to the pre-Katrina growth rates of the 1990s and early 2000s – between one and two percent annually. See **Figure 2-5, Population and Projections to 2020**.
- Southeastern Louisiana University ("SLU"), located in Hammond, is a growing university with an enrollment of close to 17,000 students. Just under three percent of them came to the university from outside of Louisiana. While the number of traditionally college-age people in Louisiana is expected to decline slowly over the next few years, SLU's attractiveness to nontraditional students (*e.g.*, 27 percent have children, 43 percent travel more than 30 miles one-way to attend class, and 33 percent are employed more than 30 hours per week) is expected to continue to fuel its growth.
- According to year 2000 Census data, 35 percent of the Parish's residents lived in its incorporated areas or named places. These areas account for five to six percent of the land area of the Parish.

Figure 2-5, Population and Projections to 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (to year 2006); Kendia Keast Collaborative

2.0.3 | Demographics.

- The median age of the residents of Tangipahoa Parish is 32.2, less than the national median age of 36.4 and less than St. Tammany Parish (36.8) and Livingston Parish (33.7). See **Table 2-1, Age and Race – Neighboring Parishes**, and **Table 2-2, Age and Race – Parish, State, and U.S.**
- A greater proportion of the Parish's population is under 24 than elsewhere in the country, pulling down the median age.

- Each and every Census-defined age group over 24 in the Parish represents a smaller proportion of population in Tangipahoa Parish than elsewhere in the country.

Table 2-1:
Age and Race - Neighboring Parishes⁸

Characteristic	Tangipahoa Parish	St. Tammany Parish	Livingston Parish
Median Age	32.2	36.8	33.7
White	69.9%	84.4%	94.8%
Black	28.5%	10.8%	4.4%
Other	1.6%	4.8%	0.8%
Hispanic (any race)	1.8%	3.2%	Not reported

Table 2-2:
Age and Race - Parish, State, and U.S.⁸

Characteristic	Tangipahoa Parish	Louisiana	U.S.
Median Age	32.2	35.4	36.4
White	69.9%	63.7%	74.7%
Black	28.5%	32.5%	12.1%
Other	1.6%	3.8%	13.2%
Hispanic (any race)	1.8%	2.8%	14.5%

2.0.3 | Demographics.

- There are approximately equal numbers of men and women in the Parish.
- The racial makeup of the Parish is comparable to that of the State as a whole. 69.9 percent of the Parish residents are white, 28.5 percent black, and 1.6 percent reported a different race. 1.8 percent of the Parish is Hispanic (any race).
 - In the unincorporated areas of the Parish, 79 percent of the residents are white and 19 percent of the residents are black.⁹
- 22.9 percent of the Parish's residents are disabled (predominately the Parish's elderly residents) – much higher than the national figure of 14.9 percent.
- The average age of a principal farm operator in Tangipahoa Parish was 54.2 in 2002, up from 52 in 1997.¹⁰
- As of 2002, fewer young people were operating farms in the Parish. Between 1997 and 2002, there was an increase in the number of farmers who were older than 60

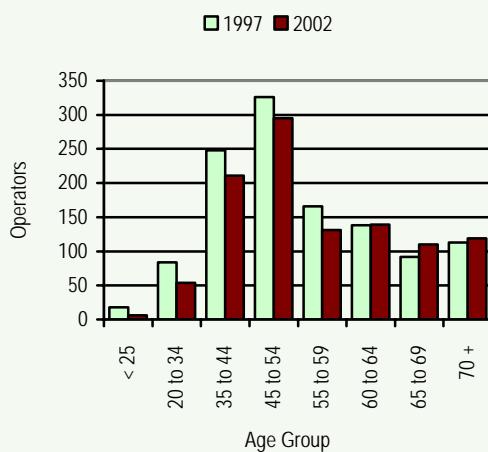
⁸ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 Population Estimates

⁹ Source: 2000 Census data. 2005 estimates were not available for the Parish's towns and unincorporated CDPs.

¹⁰ Source: USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service. Year 2007 Census of Agriculture figures will not be available until early 2009.

Figure 2–6, Age of Principal Farm Operators

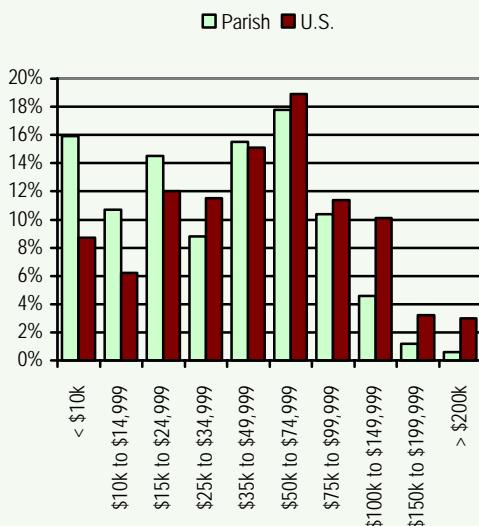
Principal Farm Operator by Age Group



Source: USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service

Figure 2–7, Household Income Distribution

Percent of Households by Income Category: Tangipahoa Parish/U.S.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 Population Estimates

and decreases in the number of farmers in every younger age group. See **Figure 2–6, Age of Principal Farm Operators**.

2.0.4 | Household Composition.

- The average household size in Tangipahoa Parish (2.66) is slightly larger than the national average of 2.59. However, it is similar to the State of Louisiana (2.62) and is slightly smaller than St. Tammany (2.73) and Livingston Parish (2.80).

2.0.5 | Income and Poverty.

- In general, families in Tangipahoa Parish earn less money than their counterparts statewide and nationwide. Median family income in the Parish is \$42,478; in the state, \$45,730; and in the nation, \$72,585.
- Similarly, households (which may include singles or unrelated individuals) also earn less than their state and national counterparts. Median household income in the Parish is \$14,461, compared to \$38,887 in the state and \$46,242 in the nation.¹¹
- Tangipahoa Parish has almost double the national proportion of households that earn less than \$10,000 annually. Households that earn \$10,000 to \$14,999 annually are also over-represented in the Parish compared to the rest of the country. See **Figure 2–7, Household Income Distribution**.
- Indeed, poverty is prevalent in Tangipahoa Parish. Pre-Katrina data show that 22.4 percent of the population is under the poverty line. This proportion is higher than the state (19.6 percent), the nation (13.3 percent), and neighboring Livingston and St. Tammany Parishes (11.4 and 9.7 percent, respectively).
 - Poverty in Tangipahoa Parish appears to be most prevalent among women and young people.

¹¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 Population Estimates

However, the quality of existing data on the distribution of poverty in the Parish is very low.

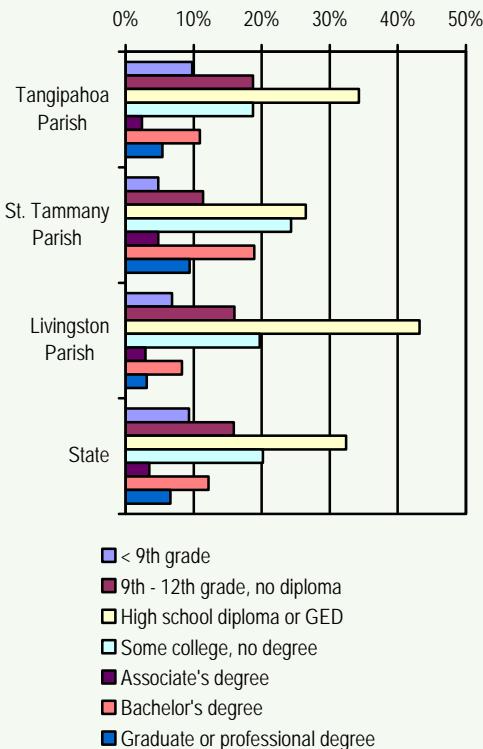
- 2000 Census data suggest that 44 percent of the people who are under the poverty line in the Parish live in its incorporated or named places.
- 52 percent of the people who live in the Village of Tangipahoa are under the poverty line. These residents also have the longest commute times in the Parish (see Commuting, below).
- ♦ Neighboring Parishes Livingston and St. Tammany have higher income levels than Tangipahoa. Livingston's per-capita and household incomes were \$16,282 and \$38,887, respectively; St. Tammany's were \$22,541 and \$47,883, respectively.

2.0.6 | Education.

- ♦ Educational attainment in Tangipahoa Parish is generally lower than surrounding parishes and the state. 28.5 percent of people over 25 in the Parish have not earned a high-school diploma, compared to 15.8 percent in the nation, 25.2 percent in the state, 22.8 percent in Livingston Parish, and 16.2 percent in St. Tammany Parish.
- ♦ 16.3 percent of the people over 25 in the Parish have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 27.2 percent in the nation, 18.7 percent in the state, 11.4 percent in Livingston Parish, and 28.3 percent in St. Tammany Parish. *See Figure 2-8, Educational Attainment.*
- ♦ Tangipahoa Parish is home to Southeastern Louisiana University, which has almost 17,000 students enrolled. 36 percent of them come from families in which neither parent attended college.
- ♦ Tangipahoa Parish had a seven percent high-school dropout rate in school year 2004-2005, which was the same as the State of Louisiana. However, the neighboring parishes had lower high-school dropout rates (St. Tammany Parish, 4.1 percent; Livingston Parish, 3.9 percent).¹²

Figure 2-8, Educational Attainment

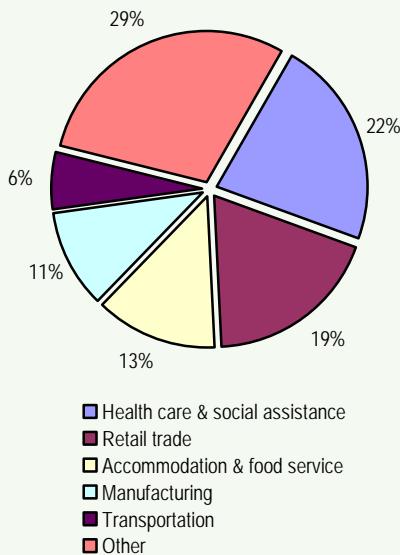
Educational Attainment of People Who Are More Than 25 Years Old



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 Population Estimates

¹² Source: Louisiana Department of Education, data for 2004-2005 school year.

Figure 2–9, Private Sector Employment



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2003 County Business Patterns

2.0.7 | Economy.

- ◆ Tangipahoa Parish's civilian labor force was estimated at 49,070 in 2005. Then, the unemployment rate was 11.3 percent. Among the employed, there were:
 - 32,014 wage and salary workers;
 - 9,001 government workers; and
 - 2,502 self-employed workers.
- ◆ According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2003 County Business Patterns report, just over 29,000 people worked in the private sector of Tangipahoa Parish in 2003. The annual payroll was approximately \$632 million.
- ◆ Almost two-thirds of the private sector employees in the Parish work in the following industries: (*see Figure 2–9, Private Sector Employment*)
 - Health care and social assistance, 22.1 percent;
 - Retail trade, 18.8 percent;
 - Accommodation and food services, 12.9 percent; and
 - Manufacturing, 10.6 percent.

- ◆ Across all sectors, Tangipahoa Parish generated \$2.29 billion in sales in 2002.
- ◆ Manufacturing, wholesale, and retail trades produced the following:
 - \$671.3 million in manufacturers' shipments.
 - \$373.9 million in wholesale sales.
 - \$1.06 billion in retail sales (\$10,324 per capita).
 - \$112.2 million in accommodation and food service sales.¹³
- ◆ Much of Tangipahoa Parish is rural, and although it accounts for approximately three percent of the overall economic output of the Parish, the rural economy is important to the Parish's heritage, culture, and character.
 - In 2002, the Parish had 118,386 acres of farmland (almost 185 square miles, nearly one-quarter of the area of the Parish). There were 1,065 farms.
 - In 2002, the Parish produced \$56.7 million worth of food products. 85 percent of that value was livestock, poultry, and related products (including milk, meat, and feed). The market value of the dairy products component was \$35 million, down from \$39.8 million five years earlier.

¹³ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, State & County QuickFacts

- In 1997, three farms produced forestry products. There were 42 by 2002.
- In 2004, Tangipahoa Parish's forestry industry produced: 14.8 million board feet of sawtimber; 121,415 cords of pine and hardwood pulpwood; and 95,041 cords of chip and saw. The total stump value was \$13.2 million.
- In 2003, the Parish received approximately \$312,000 in tax revenue from the forestry industry.
- ♦ The backbone of Tangipahoa Parish's agricultural economy is the "family farm." 96 percent of the Parish's farms are owned by individuals, families, or closely-held family corporations.
- ♦ Major employers in the Parish are:
 - The Tangipahoa Parish School District – the largest single employer in the Parish with 2,295 employees.
 - North Oaks Medical Center.
 - Southeastern Louisiana University.
 - Sanderson Farms, Inc.
 - Jitney Jungle Distribution Center.
 - Wal-Mart Distribution Center.

2.0.8 | Commuting.

- ♦ In terms of how they got to work in 2005:
 - 82 percent of Tangipahoa Parish's workers drove alone;
 - 10 percent carpooled;
 - 3.6 percent worked at home; and
 - The rest walked, took public transportation, or commuted to work by some other means.
- ♦ The average commute was 28.9 minutes, higher than the average of 24.9 for the state and the national average of 25.1. However, the average commute time reported in 2005 was down slightly from 29.5 in 2000.
 - Within the Parish, residents in the Village of Tangipahoa commute an average of 36.1 minutes to work (2000 data). This is the longest commute time of any of the Parish's incorporated places.
- ♦ There is no reliable data at the time of publication as to the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Parish's commuting patterns.

2.0.9 | Housing.

- ◆ In 2005, there were an estimated 44,490 housing units in Tangipahoa Parish. Just under one-quarter of those units were mobile homes.
- ◆ Before Hurricane Katrina, 13.3 percent of the Parish's housing units were vacant. Of the occupied units:
 - Two-thirds are owner-occupied.
 - One-third are renter-occupied.
- ◆ There is no reliable post-Katrina data on occupancy. However, a slight increase in renter-occupied housing is expected for the short term.
- ◆ In 2000, the U.S. Census reported that the median rent in Tangipahoa Parish was \$427, lower than the state and the neighboring parishes of St. Tammany and Livingston. Anecdotal evidence suggests that rental housing rates have increased sharply since Hurricane Katrina, to \$800 to \$1,200 per month.¹⁴
- ◆ There were building booms in the 1970s (10,392 units) and 1990s (9,833 units).
- ◆ Housing development in the unincorporated Parish outpaces housing development within its incorporated towns.¹⁵

3.0 | Implications.

- ◆ Even before the jarring effects of Hurricane Katrina, Tangipahoa Parish was experiencing the normal growth pressures of a rural parish at the edge of an urban metropolitan region. The 7,000-plus new residents that came into the Parish "overnight" after Katrina emphasized that pressure.
- ◆ Tangipahoa Parish's economy has evolved from predominately agriculture and forestry in the early years to government, health care, retail and services, and manufacturing. Yet, agriculture and forestry are still important industries to the Parish in terms of its heritage, culture, character, and revenues. Almost one-quarter of Tangipahoa Parish's land area is in agricultural production.
- ◆ The Parish is literally and figuratively at a crossroads. It must decide whether its rural economy will be protected from suburban encroachment (which, left unchecked, will eventually displace the agricultural uses) or whether it is acceptable

¹⁴ Source: Vogel, Helen, "Students with Dependents Still Looking for Affordable Housing." Hammond Daily Star (Dec. 21, 2006).

¹⁵ Source: Anna Kleiner, Ph.D., "The Value of Preserving Tangipahoa's Agricultural Land, a Report to Tangipahoa Future Network, Inc. and the Agricultural Summit Planning Committee." (February 2005) / Tangipahoa Parish Government.

for the northern part of the Parish to change in character from predominately rural to predominately suburban or “exurban.”¹⁶

- ◆ The Parish has the opportunity to plan for a regional role of its own choosing. That is, whether it will be a “bedroom community” for commuters who work elsewhere, or an employment center for commuters from other places, or whether it will provide a balance of jobs and housing that allows for its residents to live near where they work.
 - It appears that the “bedroom community” role would have consequences that would be felt disproportionately by the Parish’s low-income residents, especially single women with children. There is evidence that, in the post-Katrina environment, rental rates in the Parish have increased sharply, putting additional stress on large numbers of households that were already spending a disproportionate share of their incomes on housing. Many of these households cannot afford to own or operate a car, which, in the “bedroom community” context, is critical to economic opportunity.
 - The employment center role has consequences for community character in that the existing development pattern is mostly residential and agricultural, and most Parish roads are not suited to high levels of peak hour traffic. Creating new markets of a magnitude that would shift the Parish’s regional role to employment center would require massive public investment.
 - The available data suggest that the Parish should seek a balance of jobs and housing in order to reduce commute times and provide opportunities for its significant disadvantaged populations. Moreover, in order to maximize the effectiveness of opportunities for single mothers, affordable, quality day care and after-school care are also critical needs.
- ◆ Southeastern Louisiana University is a significant asset, providing educational and employment opportunities for thousands of residents. SLU’s participation in the local economy should be encouraged to the maximum possible extent.
- ◆ The Parish’s abundant natural resources not only provide the basis for a \$70 million agricultural and forestry economy, but they also provide all residents of the Parish with prized recreational opportunities, beautiful natural character, and environmental quality. *See Figure 2-10, Natural Area in Tangipahoa Parish.*

Figure 2-10: Natural Area in Tangipahoa Parish



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

¹⁶ “Exurban” development is not quite suburban and not quite rural. It is generally located further away from cities than suburban development. The pattern of development becomes a mix of non-agricultural uses with operating farms. Ultimately, exurban areas become suburban.

- Among these resources are numerous scenic rivers and creeks that are a significant component of the Parish's quality of life. Land use policies should be designed and implemented to protect these resources.
- ◆ The Parish's agricultural community is aging, and there is little evidence that younger farmers are entering the industry to replace them. Land uses that support the agricultural industry and enhance its profitability and alternatives for re-use of agricultural land (for alternative agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses) are needed. These needs are especially critical for the dairy industry.

Chapter Three

Growth Capacity and Public Facilities

1.0 | General

From a strictly environmental perspective, there is plenty of potential capacity for responsible building in Tangipahoa Parish. That is, land and water are abundant resources. However, there are a number of factors that interoperate to limit the capacity of the Parish to accommodate new development while maintaining its physical infrastructure, fiscal integrity, and quality of life.

- ◆ The Parish government's ability to generate revenues is limited. The Parish is principally funded by a one percent sales tax, a very modest property tax, and user fees. Due to the limited availability of funds, total expenditures of Parish government in 2006 were just \$442 per resident.¹ That is just \$1.21 per day per person.
- ◆ In the rural areas of the Parish, most streets are not designed for suburban levels of traffic. Without significant new revenue sources or cost-reducing technologies, the expansion, improvement, and maintenance of streets in the Parish to accommodate scattered suburban development are not likely to be fiscally sustainable endeavors.
- ◆ Wastewater treatment in many areas of the Parish is inadequate. Many areas of the Parish do not have sanitary sewers, and small package plants and individual treatment systems are, on the whole, not working well.
- ◆ Potable water service is provided throughout the Parish, but in most locations, the system is not designed to provide suburban levels of fire protection.

“In communities across the nation, there is a growing concern that current development patterns -- dominated by what some call ‘sprawl’ -- are no longer in the long-term interest of our cities, existing suburbs, small towns, rural communities, or wilderness areas. Though supportive of growth, communities are questioning the economic costs of abandoning infrastructure in the city, only to rebuild it further out.”

~ Smart Growth Network

2.0 | Fiscal Sustainability

2.0.1 | The Bottom Line is the “Bottom Line.” Growth capacity in Tangipahoa Parish is largely a question of fiscal sustainability. The Parish has followed a conservative and responsible “pay as you go” approach for years. Still, there is simply not enough revenue available to the Parish to upgrade its streets and bridges to address their current deficiencies, let alone bring rural roads up to suburban standards. Put simply, the recent

¹ Parish government does not include schools, water districts, or sewer districts. It does include roads and bridges, fire protection in some areas, public health, law enforcement and courts, animal control, and other services.

surge of growth in the Parish has put it in a position where it is increasingly difficult to reconcile the ethic of fiscal responsibility with the approval of scattered suburban development.²

Figure 3-1, Fiscal Sustainability: “The Bottom Line”

- There is not enough money available to the Parish to upgrade all of its streets to modern standards.
- Scattered suburban growth makes the problem worse. Most scattered growth in the countryside does not pay its own way.
- That means that existing and new residents pay the price with worse streets as more cars use them and competition increases for scarce road and bridge dollars.
- The good news is that growth can pay its own way if it is relatively compact and properly located.
- Therefore, the planning objective is to use existing infrastructure and have a critical mass of development in a compact area to achieve economies of scale.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Consequently, the “bottom line” (so to speak) is that the growth strategy of the Parish should be to ensure that, generally, it will not spend more to support a proposed subdivision than the subdivision pays in taxes (e.g., sales tax and property tax) and fees. As the pressure increases to scatter subdivisions across the countryside, any other strategy will certainly result in fiscal distress for Parish government by compounding annual losses. But the good news is, even in the face of difficult resource constraints, growth in the Parish can pay its own way, *if*:

- It is located in an area that is compact enough to share the costs of improving and maintaining the same infrastructure; *and*
- There is a sufficient amount of development in the area to create economies of scale for infrastructure and services (like that which occurs in a Town or City). See **Figure 3-1, Fiscal Sustainability: “The Bottom Line.”**

Unless there is a radical change in the Parish’s desire, authority, and ability to raise taxes and change its revenue structures (both extremely unlikely), it is especially important that growth be designed and located to pay its own way over the long-term. There are three ways to do this. First, direct growth to areas of existing infrastructure, like the incorporated municipalities and more densely populated unincorporated “places,” like Natalbany, where capacity is either planned or already in place. Second, direct growth to areas where a critical mass of development is planned and infrastructure will be installed in a cost-effective way to support it. Third, require that developers provide infrastructure improvements that are sufficient to support new development in other areas.

2.0.1 | New Development Does Not Always Pay for Itself.

2.0.1.1 | Sales Tax Generated by New Residents. Sales tax revenues are relatively unstable compared to other revenue sources. Therefore, short-term increases in sales tax revenues

² Errol Flynn once described the dilemma this way -- “My problem lies in reconciling my gross habits with my net income.”

should generally not be used to pay for (or justify) scattered development. For example, after Hurricane Katrina, sales tax revenues in Tangipahoa Parish jumped.³ Yet, so did the Parish's expenses. According to the Hammond Star, "Utility bills for parish buildings have doubled, gasoline costs for public vehicles have risen, jail expenses are climbing and so are costs for schools, roads, ditches and other government services." Moreover, it is likely that sales tax receipts will level off as the post-hurricane purchases of replacement durable goods (*e.g.*, cars and appliances) levels off. As such, this Plan suggests that the Parish continue to follow the time-tested advice of Confucius:

"When prosperity comes, do not use all of it."

Take the following example, which, to illustrate the point, only accounts for streets (also see generally, **Figure 3-2, The Cost of Streets**). In the example, the same 80 unit residential subdivision is constructed in three locations: next to a City, two miles from a City, and five miles from a City. The units have a market value of \$120 per square foot, (which is slightly higher than existing construction in the Parish) and an average floor area of 2,250 square feet, for a total per-unit market value of \$270,000. For these units, a conventional 30-year mortgage payment at a favorable 6.75 percent annual interest rate would be \$1,400 (assuming a 20 percent downpayment). Assuming the average annual utility bill in the Parish of \$2,861,⁴ the households in the subdivision would generally earn about \$65,577 per year.⁵

³ Hammond Star. "Sales Tax Revenue Jumps 50 Percent in Month's Time" January 12, 2006.

⁴ Average utilities, fuel, and public services expenditures for Tangipahoa Parish in 2006. Source: ESRI Business Information Systems.

⁵ The household income assumes that the purchasers will not opt to be "housing challenged" (and in an era of more stringent lending practices, lenders may not let them), so they will spend roughly 30 percent of their incomes on mortgage payments and utilities. Accordingly, here, household income is calculated as: [(\$16,800+\$2,861)/30%], which equals \$65,577.

Figure 3-2, The Cost of Streets

In Tangipahoa Parish, 75 percent of sales tax revenues are allocated to streets and bridges. In the two Parish funds that pay for streets and bridges, sales tax receipts make up about 90 percent of the available revenues (in other words, about 10 percent of the money spent on streets and bridges comes from other sources). The 2007 budget for streets was about \$10 million.

In 2007, 40 percent of the Parish's \$33,902,011 in total expenditures was allocated to roads and bridges. It is estimated that just overlaying all of the Parish roads (not to mention expanding rights-of-way, improving drainage, and installing lighting in key areas) is well in excess of a \$75 million project. During the period from 2003 to 2006, the cost of soil cement and two-inch overlay approximately doubled – from \$70,000 to \$75,000 per mile to \$125,000 to \$150,000 per mile. Liquid asphalt prices rose 42 percent nationwide between 2005 and 2006. Not only is asphalt very expensive, but gasoline and diesel prices of more than \$3 per gallon also increase street paving costs.

Once streets are developed or improved, they must be maintained. The Asphalt Pavement Association recommends overlays every 10 to 15 years. Of course, the more the street is used, the more maintenance it will need.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

This is important to Parish streets because nine out of ten dollars spent on Parish streets comes from the Parish sales tax. Therefore, the more money the household earns, the more money will presumably trickle down to the roads and bridges fund. Turning again to the numbers, of the \$65,577 in average household earnings in the subdivision, the households are expected to spend \$16,800 on their mortgage payments, another \$7,480 on car payments and insurance, and \$7,335 on food (groceries), clothing, and utilities. This leaves \$33,950 to spend on things that are subject to sales tax.

If every dollar of that \$33,950 is spent in the Parish (which is unlikely because many people commute to other Parishes to earn \$65,000+ salaries, many donate money to churches and charities, and some save and invest), the one-percent Parish sales tax would produce just \$339.50 per year per household. Of that \$339.50, 75 percent is allocated to streets and bridges, which amounts to \$254.62. That is just 70 cents per day per household (once established) for streets.

2.0.1.2 | Sales Tax Generated by Home Construction. Of course, sales tax is also collected on the materials used to build the home – a one-time payment that is not insubstantial. Yet this payment may not be enough to cover necessary street improvements, especially if they include right-of-way acquisition (estimated by the Parish Engineer to be roughly \$80,000 per mile on average). Turning again to the numbers, 20 to 25 percent of the cost of a new home is typically allocated to land, and the other 75 to 80 percent for the building. As such, in the “best case” scenario with regard to sales tax, the \$270,000 home will include a \$216,000 building (80 percent of the market price).⁶

The cost of the building includes materials, labor, and a reasonable return to the builder for its investment and risk. The materials component (*e.g.*, wood, siding, wire, plumbing, shingles, etc.) is typically about 50 percent of the building’s market value. Accordingly, assuming in the “best case” – that is, that all the materials are purchased in the Parish, subject to its one-percent sales tax, each unit produces \$1,013 “out of the box” in one-time sales taxes that are allocated to streets.⁷

What all of that data and analysis shows is that in Tangipahoa Parish, the 80-unit project of \$270,000 homes will pay its own way with regard to street only if it is near “town,” where necessary street improvements are minimal and the rights-of-way are already established. By contrast, the project will not pay its own way if it is more than two miles from “town.”⁸ See Table 3-1, Fiscal Sustainability of Illustrative 80-Unit Subdivision of \$270,000 Homes.

⁶ \$54,000 is allocated to the lot (including earthwork, etc.).

⁷ The total sales tax per unit is \$1,350. The street allocation is 75 percent of the total, or \$1,013.

⁸ “Town” refers not only to the Parish’s incorporated municipalities, but also to any other settlement where rights-of-way are sufficient and streets are in reasonable condition already.

Table 3-1: Fiscal Sustainability of Illustrative 80-Unit Subdivision of \$270,000 Homes			
Location	Near Town	2 Miles from Town	5 Miles from Town
"Out of the box" sales tax for streets	\$81,000 (\$1,013 / unit)	\$81,000 (\$1,013 / unit)	\$81,000 (\$1,013 / unit)
Annual sales tax for streets	\$20,370 (\$254.62 / unit)	\$20,370 (\$254.62 / unit)	\$20,370 (\$254.62 / unit)
Right-of-way acquisition and improvement cost	Marginal or None	\$450,000	\$1,125,000
Fiscally sustainable? ⁹	Yes. The project pays for 1/3 mile of acquisition and improvements of right-of-way "out of the box."	No. Even if the "out of the box" sales taxes are applied and a 20-year bond payable from expected additional sales tax revenues is floated at a favorable 5 percent rate for the balance, these more distant projects will not pay their own way.	

2.0.1.2 | Property Tax. The “big picture” with regard to fire protection is similar to the picture for streets. The key difference is that fire protection in the Parish is principally funded by property taxes. For example, Rural Fire District No. 2 collects 19.14 mills on the assessed value of property in its jurisdiction.

The assessed value of property in Louisiana is nowhere near its market value. Louisiana law provides that for residential property, assessed value is 10 percent of the market value of the land, plus 15 percent of the market value of the building. The law also provides that the first \$75,000 of a residential homestead’s market value is not taxable. The tax structure simply does not produce the revenues that are needed to supply suburban homes with high-quality suburban services.

Turning back to the illustrative subdivision, only \$195,000 of the \$270,000 home’s market value is taxable. Assuming 20 percent of the value is land and 80 percent is building, and then applying the State’s rule that 10 percent of the land value is taxable and 15 percent of the building value is taxable, the Fire District’s 19.14 mills generates just \$523 per unit per year. That is just \$1.43 per day per unit for fire protection. The 80-unit hypothetical project would provide approximately \$41,800 per year to the Fire District.

Like other infrastructure and services, fire protection funds are more efficiently used when the service area is relatively compact and contains enough development to achieve an economy of scale. Alternatively, fire protection funds can be efficiently spent when the expectation for fire protection is low, as in a sparsely developed rural environment. If development at suburban intensities is spread out over a large area, then more stations, more access to water, and more firefighters are needed on a per-home basis. Although Louisiana is not a state that is well known for wildfires, experience from other states shows that relatively dense development and inadequate fire protection can be a disastrous combination. This is a matter of significant concern to many of the Fire Chiefs in the Parish. See **Figure 3-3, The Importance of Fire Protection.**

⁹ With regard to “paying its own way” for streets.

**Figure 3-3,
The Importance of Fire Protection**



Above is an aerial view of the Oakland/Berkeley Hills Tunnel Fire in 1991. The statistics for this fire indicate that over 2,900 structures were damaged or destroyed—most within a few hours—and 25 people perished, including both firefighters and civilians. The fire was so damaging because the density of development significantly increased over time -- without adequate fire protection/suppression measures to accompany it. Consequently, a fire that may have otherwise burned out destroyed -- and was even fueled by -- development.

Source: Fire Hazard Zoning Field Guide

Operating a fire station with minimal paid staff (let alone building and equipping it) costs at least \$150,000 per year. Ideally, every development would be located within 1.5 miles of a fire station, and development should not be located more than seven miles from a fire station. Here again, if the hypothetical project is located near an existing fire station, the \$41,800 in property taxes that it generates each year goes further toward providing necessary fire protection and basic life support.

It has long been known that the cost of providing public facilities and services to a dispersed community is greater than providing the same facilities and services to a compact one. Streets and fire service are but two examples. Yet there is another side to the cost of scattered development in a rural Parish -- the "Tipping Point."

3.0 | The Parish Government “Tipping Point”

3.0.1 | A “Point of No Return.” There is a tipping point at which a Parish changes from a rural service provider (providing only basic services to support its minimal population and natural resource-based industries) to a suburban service provider (providing an enhanced set of infrastructure and services – modern streets and drainage, more libraries and cultural opportunities, more parks and playgrounds, greater fire and life safety protection, and so forth). See **Figure 3-4, The “Tipping Point”** (next page). After the “tipping point” is reached, government becomes a growth enterprise. The upshot is that “tipping point” is also a point of no return.

3.0.2 | Crossing the “Tipping Point.” Take, for example, East Baton Rouge Parish. The 2007 total budgeted expenditures for the City-Parish consolidated government is \$594,630,000. There are approximately 359,000 people in Baton Rouge and the unincorporated Parish, so East Baton Rouge Parish spends about \$1,656 per year per resident. By contrast, the total Tangipahoa Parish Council budgeted expenditures for 2007 are \$33,902,011. Total population of the unincorporated part of the Parish (2006) is estimated by the U.S. Census as 76,650. Therefore, the Parish spends about \$442 per resident – a little over one-quarter of the expenditures of the urbanized East Baton Rouge Parish.

It is also revealing to analyze dollars spent per square mile of land area. The unincorporated area of Tangipahoa Parish is 788.2 square miles. As such, its 2007 budget is \$43,011 per square mile. By contrast, East Baton Rouge Parish, less Zachary, Baker, and Central is 373.3

square miles in area. That means that East Baton Rouge Parish spends \$1,592,901 per square mile. Tangipahoa Parish budgets 97 percent less in Parish Government expenditures per square mile than East Baton Rouge Parish consolidated government.

St. Tammany Parish is also instructive. The Parish has been experiencing explosive growth since the 1960s, and now has an estimated 174,253 people living in its 813.2 square-mile unincorporated area. St. Tammany Parish government's 2006 estimated total Parish government expenditures were \$120,396,879. That is \$691 per person and \$148,053 per square mile – that is 56 percent more per person than Tangipahoa Parish, and more than twice as much as Tangipahoa Parish spends per square mile.

Additionally, to fund and deliver suburban services, St. Tammany Parish has comparatively large number of special districts (*e.g.*, for water works, sewers, recreation, etc.), each with a governing commission. That is so because Louisiana law allows special districts to raise and spend money that Parish government cannot. So in order to provide a higher level of service, Parish government must fragment. This often makes delivering coordinated, efficient services inordinately complex and frustrating for all involved.

3.0.3 | Avoiding the “Tipping Point.” To be sure, Tangipahoa Parish residents want better streets and better fire protection. Some want improvements like regional parks. However, there is no indication that the people of Tangipahoa Parish want the Parish to go past the “tipping point” and become suburban. In fact, time and time again, residents stated that they “did not want Tangipahoa Parish to become like St. Tammany Parish.”

“It should be noted that reaching – and passing – the “tipping point” is a natural consequence of unplanned growth. That is, if scattered growth is allowed to continue, at some point it will invite enough voters into the countryside to outnumber the traditional rural residents. Experience shows that the new voters will demand suburban services. Ironically, in this way, if the Parish fails to plan ahead it will ultimately force itself into the business of providing suburban services.”

It is very important that all residents of the Parish realize that reaching -- and passing -- the “tipping point” is a natural consequence of unplanned growth. In other words, inaction will not help to put off the day when the “tipping point” is reached. In fact, it will accelerate it.

Figure 3-4, “The Tipping Point”

- At some point (“the tipping point”), Parish government shifts from provider of rural services to provider of suburban services.
- Suburban services require more buildings, more personnel, more infrastructure, more equipment, more maintenance, and more service offerings than rural services.
- Consequently, after the “tipping point,” the Parish must raise and spend far more money (per resident and per square mile) than it does before the “tipping point” is reached.
- There is no documented example of a Parish or county government that has passed the “tipping point” and then gone back to being a rural services provider.
- The good news is that the Parish can choose what its role is going to be by planning for it.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

“It should be noted that reaching – and passing – the “tipping point” is a natural consequence of unplanned growth. That is, if scattered growth is allowed to continue, at some point it will invite enough voters into the countryside to outnumber the traditional rural residents. Experience shows that the new voters will demand suburban services. Ironically, in this way, if the Parish fails to plan ahead it will ultimately force itself into the business of providing suburban services.”

That is so because if scattered growth is allowed to continue, at some point it will invite enough voters into the countryside to outnumber the traditional rural residents. Experience shows that the new voters will demand suburban services. When those new voters take control of the political arena, the Parish will inevitably be forced into the business of providing suburban services.

Consider that in 2006, Census estimates show that 75 percent of the residents (three out of four) of St. Tammany Parish lived in the unincorporated Parish. By comparison, in Tangipahoa Parish, 67 percent of the residents (two out of three) lived in the

unincorporated area. The numbers are provided for comparative purposes only. There is no absolute quantitative formula for predicting when the tipping point will be reached. Still, although Tangipahoa Parish’s tipping point may not be imminent, it is very likely that it is within the horizon of this Plan.

Put simply, the Parish has an important decision to make. If it wants to continue to be a rural service provider, it must affirmatively plan for that outcome, and implement strategies that will help it achieve that outcome. Such strategies are likely to include a modest addition of new staff to implement programs to help maintain the rural Parish model.

On the other hand, even if the Parish makes a different choice, that is, to become a suburban service provider, it ought to plan ahead so that it can provide those services in a fiscally responsible and sustainable way. In other words, even if the Parish goes into the business of providing suburban services, the pattern of development that is permitted in the Parish will have a significant impact on the Parish’s ability to provide those services. Indeed, the concepts of using existing infrastructure and developing “critical masses” if new infrastructure is to be constructed are equally valid, whatever the range of responsibility that the Parish government decides to undertake.

4.0 | Growth Management Strategy

4.0.1 | A Strategy Constructed on Four Legs. The recommended growth management strategy is constructed on four legs:

- (1) Direct almost all new growth to locations where it does not compromise the fiscal integrity of the Parish or the character of the area in which it is located;
- (2) Limit growth outside of these designated areas to the capacity of available infrastructure, fairly allocating the right to develop land;
- (3) Respect the property rights and economic realities of rural landowners by providing options to developers in order to help them make rural projects fit into the context in which they are located; and

- (4) In general, leave the role of providing urban and suburban services to the cities, towns, and villages (avoid crossing the “tipping point.”). See **Figure 3-5, The Strategy**.

This strategy is an affirmation that the unincorporated areas of the Parish will remain rural, and that the Parish government will, in general, continue to provide a rural level of services.

4.0.2 | Directing Growth.

4.0.2.1 | Grow In and Near Municipalities and Other Densely Settled Areas. In order to maintain the fiscal integrity of the Parish, as well as its rural character, rural economy, and rural government, most non-agricultural growth must be directed to appropriate locations. These are locations where new development will:

- ◆ Be consistent with the desired character of the area; and
- ◆ Pay its own way with regard to the new and improved infrastructure that it will require.

This is a logical planning solution – identify areas for near- and long-term urban growth, as well as areas for resource protection. This solution, recently dubbed either “smart growth” or “sustainable development,” was beginning to be rediscovered by urban planners in the late 1960s. Ironically, those planners could have looked to Tangipahoa Parish as an outstanding example of what many now call “smart growth.” Indeed, the Parish had already been “growing smart” for 100 years. See **Figure 3-6, Historical Development Pattern.**

4.0.2.2 | A History of Market-Driven “Smart Growth.” The “directing growth” leg of the growth management strategy is based on the premise that if the Parish wants to have a rural future, it should look to what delivered that character for more than 100 years – compact growth in incorporated places. Of course, the Plan recognizes that the individual, private-sector necessities that drove the “smart growth” forms in the 1800s (recall that the Parish itself was carved out of its neighbors in order to bring the courthouse closer to places of business) are now just practicalities as far as individuals are concerned. At the same time, the development forms that were of relatively little consequence to Parish government 100 years ago have become necessities with regard to the integrity of the public treasury.

At the time when compact urban form in the Parish was driven by the necessities of individuals in the private-sector, the system naturally provided a sufficient supply of land at

Figure 3-5, The Strategy

- Direct growth to places where it fits in with the character of the area and pays its own way with regard to the infrastructure it requires.
- Limit growth outside of these areas so that it does not overwhelm existing infrastructure.
- Respect the property rights and economic realities of rural landowners by providing development options that create value.
- Continue the Parish government role as a rural service provider (resist creating demand for a suburban level of services in the unincorporated Parish).

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 3–6, Historical Development Pattern



Downtown Hammond



Typical established residential street



U.S. 190 at U.S. 51 in Hammond

Tangipahoa Parish was “growing smart” for 100 years before transportation cheap and convenient transportation began to change the Parish’s land use patterns.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

the outskirts of town for continuation of the compact urban form. The market accounted for the high cost of transportation and communication with distant areas.

It is often said that “no good deed goes unpunished.” In the present day, a combination of improvements in technology, mobility, and massive government subsidy of infrastructure have removed many of the true costs of scattered development from the decision-making of the individual in the private-sector. In an unregulated market, the removal of these factors from private decision-making will fuel scattered development because of its perceived lower costs. But of course, all of the costs are still there – and increasing every day. They are just hidden from the market because they appear to have been assumed by others.

So the trick is for government to drive down its costs while not undoing its “good deeds,” which, to be fair, have resulted in many significant improvements to our quality of life. To do so, the government must lay out a set of predictable rules for how it maximizes the “bang” for each public “buck” spent on infrastructure. And in order to ensure that it does not undermine its policy by allowing more development in outlying areas than it can serve, the government must set out the rules for how much can be developed in particular areas.

Such rules must be carefully crafted in order to avoid unintended consequences for the private market, such as creating unnecessary scarcity, which drives up the cost of land, which, in turn, drives up the cost of housing and the cost of doing business. Put simply, the challenge is to ensure that an adequate supply of land is available to meet future development needs. In this respect:

- Too tight a supply of residential land can lead to sprawl because the market will move to areas that are not served with sewers and larger lots will meet the excess demand.
- By contrast, in the commercial context, sprawl is encouraged by too great a supply of land available for commercial development. Abundant commercial land at low prices discourages reinvestment and redevelopment.

4.0.2.3 | Mechanics of Directing Growth. The Plan recommends that the Parish establish four planning areas: (1) “urban” (developed) areas; (2) “suburban” (developing) areas; (3) “rural” (holding) areas; and (4) “preservation” areas. This is a simple technique for directing growth to appropriate locations (the urban areas and the suburban areas). Indeed, the technique has a proven track record in other parts of the country. Each of the four planning areas is discussed in turn below.

Urban Areas. Urban areas already have the infrastructure in place to support – or to be efficiently expanded to support – more development. Generally, new development in urban areas takes the form of infill development and redevelopment, but a portion of the areas designated as “developed” areas may also be buildable “green fields.” Typically, the “green fields” portion of the urban areas will be less than 25 percent. **Figure 3-7, “Urban” Areas**, illustrates developed areas for a hypothetical community.

In the context of Tangipahoa Parish, urban areas could be designated that would include municipalities and parts of the unincorporated Parish. The eight cities and towns in Tangipahoa Parish would likely all be considered as urban areas, even though there are varying amounts of vacant land within their borders. These places account for a little more than five percent of the Parish’s total land area. Part or all of other small unincorporated communities (*e.g.*, Robert, Loranger, and Natalbany), larger subdivisions, and industrial sites could also be designated urban areas.

Suburban Areas (a.k.a. “Growth Areas,” “Development Districts,” “Urban Growth Areas,” and “Urbanizing Areas”). An area or areas on the fringe of the urban area should be identified as suburban areas, where new growth is to be directed. These are the areas where the communities have planned (or will plan) expansions of roads, water, and sewer services. In some communities, these areas will also include planned expansion of low-density development.

Suburban areas have a defined boundary, frequently called an “urban growth boundary,” outside of which infrastructure expansion and the density and intensity of development are limited. The size of the suburban area should be on the order of 20 to 30 years of development potential in order to prevent unnecessary interference with the private market. **Figure 3-8, “Suburban” Areas**, shows a hypothetical suburban area. There are two areas shown, one around each of the two urban areas.

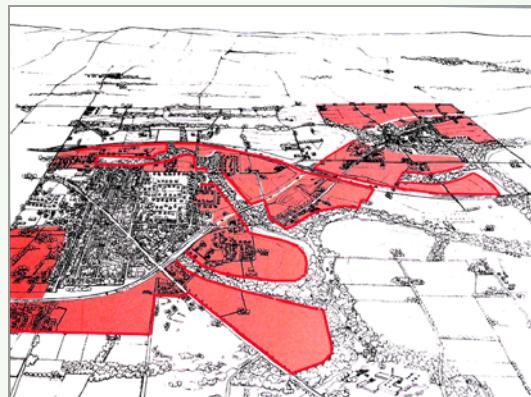
Figure 3-7, “Urban” Areas



Two “urban” areas are shown in red.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 3-8, “Suburban” Areas



“Suburban” areas are shown in light red; the urban growth boundary is indicated with a dark red line.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

In the context of the Parish, past development patterns suggest that 20 to 30 years of development potential could be located within a land area that would not likely need to exceed even five percent of the Parish. Such an area could be generally located within one mile of existing cities, towns, and places, and would readily accommodate the needs of 125,000 more people.¹⁰ The Parish might plan for a number of suburban areas to be phased in over the horizon of this Plan.

Suburban areas should be re-assessed every five years to ensure that an adequate supply of land is provided for 20 years' worth of new development. Such areas should be expanded into the rural areas (discussed below) well before they are 50 percent developed. Expansions should be carefully considered to ensure that newly added areas can be efficiently provided with public services.

Indeed, there are several potential barriers to the efficient extension of services. One obvious example is a natural barrier, such as a river. Another (often less obvious) example is that, on the fringes of the Parish's cities, towns, and places, the large lots that are served by on-site sewers may create a barrier to future expansion of the utilities. That is so because the residents of the large lots do not want to pay special assessments for the sewer or improved water lines (which can run thousands of dollars per home). Consequently, the municipalities (or other service providers) can't afford to subsidize the extension of service.

Protection Areas. In nearly all communities, there are areas of floodplain, wetland, or other natural areas that need to be protected. Some of these areas are hazardous for development, or unreasonably hazardous to others if they are developed. As such, they should be protected in order to protect public health and safety.

Figure 3-9, Protection Areas



Protection areas (in this example, floodplains), are shown in green.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

There are national standards that protect wetlands. Yet other resources may also be found worthy of protection. These are areas where development should be limited or not allowed at all. **Figure 3-9, Protection Areas**, shows the protection area that, in the example, is comprised of floodplains and stream corridors.

In Tangipahoa Parish, it is estimated that 15 percent of the land area is in Lakes Pontchartrain and Maupas, wetlands of those lakes, numerous small lakes, and the Tangipahoa River. Floodplains and isolated wetlands take up a small additional amount of the Parish's land area. There are also some areas of the Parish where residents favor a protection area for agriculture, forestry,

¹⁰ If a line is drawn one mile from the boundaries of existing cities, towns, and places, and the 100-year floodplains are excluded from the area within its bounds, the area between the line and existing boundaries would be approximately the same area as is currently developed.

and other resource-based industries – areas in which non-agricultural residential development would not be allowed.

Rural Areas. After the first three areas are identified, there will be a significant area of land that is not designated. How to deal with this land is generally less clear than how to deal with the other three areas. That is so because it is assumed that, at some future time, the area will be ready for growth. However, in the meantime, it is not fiscally prudent to extend utilities and services there. **Figure 3-10, “Rural” Areas**, illustrates a typical rural area.

The traditional strategy in rural areas was to make the cost of developing higher in the rural areas than in areas that are more suitable for development by shifting the cost of the infrastructure needed to support new development from the government to the development, or to restrict development so that it does not overwhelm existing infrastructure. See **Figure 3-11, Gravel Road in Tangipahoa**

Parish. That way, new residents who choose to live in the developed or developing areas would pay their own way. Put differently, the market would account for more of the true cost of development in remote areas.

The general rule of thumb is that rural zoning with minimum lot sizes in excess of 20 acres per dwelling unit, discourages all but the hobby farmer, and keeps large parcels intact for future development. The rural areas may also provide several other development options so that landowners can realize some of their nonagricultural land value, without having nonagricultural development sprawl across the countryside.¹¹ Further protection for farming and forestry operations may be provided in protection areas.

In Tangipahoa Parish, the urban, suburban and protection areas would likely add up to about 30 percent of the Parish's land area (some of the municipalities may have enough land within their current borders so that they could have a rural area as well). Logically, the other 70 percent of the Parish should remain in agricultural or forestry use (or its natural condition) for the near-term to mid-term future.

Figure 3-10, “Rural” Areas



This figure shows about 60 percent of the land area in the “rural” areas (orange).

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 3-11, Gravel Road in Tangipahoa Parish



Gravel roads do not support very much development before they become overwhelmed (and degraded) by the traffic that development creates.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

¹¹ These alternatives will be discussed in the following sections of this Chapter.

4.0.3 | Calibrating Development to Available Infrastructure.

4.0.3.1 | The “Traffic Shed” Concept. The second leg of the growth management strategy is to limit growth outside of designated areas to the capacity of available infrastructure, fairly allocating the right to develop land. One way to accomplish this objective is through a technique called “traffic sheds.” Traffic sheds are a way to calibrate the amount of new development to the number of cars the adjacent street can carry, and then to give each land owner their fair share of that development potential based on the amount of land that they own. The same model can be applied to other types of infrastructure as well (*e.g.*, water and sewer services).

Traffic sheds can either be used in their own right as a regulatory tool, or as an analytical tool that informs other land development regulations. Either way, in general, the model works as follows (a traffic shed is used to illustrate the concept):

- ♦ The area of land served by rural roads is calculated and the capacity of those roads is measured.
- ♦ “Traffic sheds” are established based on functionally related rural roads and the areas that they serve.
- ♦ On the one hand, the traffic shed concept can be used to evaluate and support permitted densities in a land development regulation program, such as subdivision controls or zoning districts.
- ♦ On the other hand, if the traffic shed concept is used as a regulatory tool in its own right, then:
 - The existing development capacity of the traffic sheds is allocated to the landowners within them in proportion to the size of their respective land holdings within the traffic shed.¹²
 - If a landowner wants to develop more than his or her share of the capacity of the traffic shed, the owner can do so, provided that: (1) the owner improves the street that serves the traffic shed, in which case the owner is entitled to the additional capacity that the owner creates; (2) the owner builds a new road, creating a new traffic shed that benefits the owner; and/or (3) the owner buys development rights from another owner in the same traffic shed.

If a developer buys rights from another owner, then the owner of the parcel from which rights were purchased would record a legal document showing that the rights were sold. The owner would not be able to develop the units that were the subject of the sale. However, the owner could still develop: (1) any and all rights that the owner has not sold to someone

¹² The capacity of each street is measured using standard engineering principles. Since the number of car trips for various land uses is predictable, the amount of development that a particular street can support can be mathematically calculated. When the remaining development capacity of the street is determined, that capacity is allocated to adjacent landowners in proportion to the amount of land that they have that is served by the street.

else; (2) the landowners' fair share of any new rights that may be created by any new publicly-funded improvement to the traffic shed when those rights are created; and (3) any new rights that are created by the landowner either improving the existing street or building new streets to add capacity to serve the landowner's property.

The system outlined above works equally well with streets as with public water and sewer systems. Each is more specifically discussed in turn below.

4.0.3.2 | Implementing Traffic Sheds. The rising cost of street improvements are not currently factored into the cost of new homes in Tangipahoa Parish's countryside. The traffic shed approach puts the cost of streets back into the private investment decision. That is, where there is capacity, development costs are lower. Where there is no capacity, streets must be built or improved by the developer, and the cost of those streets is then factored into the price of the home.

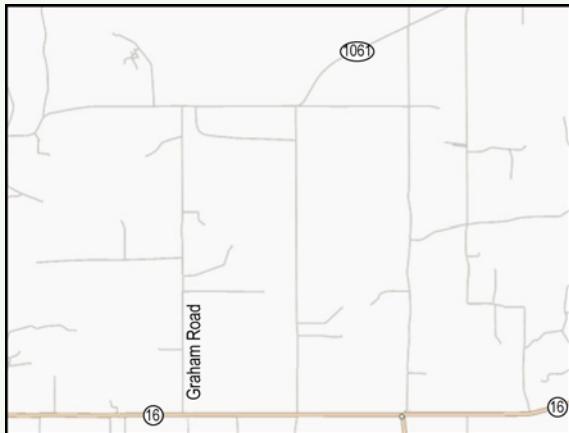
The traffic shed works on the basis that each landowner gets a proportionate share of the capacity of the road based on the amount of land they own. This avoids the problem that other common approaches (such as adequate public facilities ordinances and concurrency management) have, namely that under those approaches, when capacity is exhausted, development stops. Perhaps more importantly, it also allows the market to make the improvements that are necessary to enhance the capacity of the street system. The market naturally creates the improvements when economic forces are strong enough to justify building the homes and the upgraded streets that will be needed to serve them.

Three pavement types are present in Tangipahoa Parish: concrete or asphalt, chip and seal (tar and gravel), and gravel or dirt. An important variable in the analysis is the level of service (LOS), which is a six-level scale ranging from LOS A (free-flowing traffic) to LOS F (system failure). The maximum capacity of a road is LOS E; however, this is a severely congested condition that makes travel highly unpleasant.

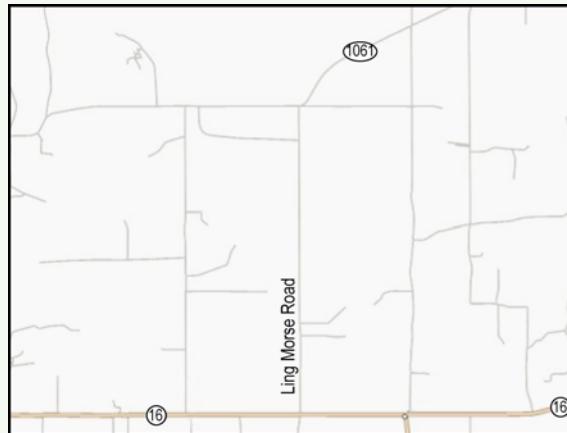
Six areas were selected in various parts of the Parish to illustrate the traffic sheds concept. The traffic sheds were selected to illustrate a variety of shed sizes. These are displayed in **Figure 3-12, Examples of Traffic Sheds**, and **Figure 3-13, Comparison of Traffic Sheds, Levels of Service C and E** (on the previous 2 pages). For illustrative purposes, **Figure 3-13, Comparison of Traffic Sheds, Levels of Service C and E** assumes that each traffic shed is served by a two-lane street with seven-foot wide lanes, ditches or other obstructions two feet from the pavement, 80 percent of traffic going in the same direction during peak hours (*e.g.*, 7 AM to 9 AM), very light peak hour truck traffic, and 20 percent of the street in no passing zones. By showing the number of homes each of three types of street surfaces could support under these conditions, **Figure 3-13, Comparison of Traffic Sheds, Levels of Service C and E** shows the impact of upgrading the surface of the street on the capacity of the traffic shed. **Figure 3-13, Comparison of Traffic Sheds, Levels of Service C and E** also shows how smaller traffic sheds can support greater densities of residential development.

The specifics of the road, such as lane width, presence of obstructions, sight distances for passing, and direction of travel have very significant impacts on capacity. **Table 3-2, Traffic Sheds Comparison – Impact of Lane Width**, shows how increasing lane width from seven

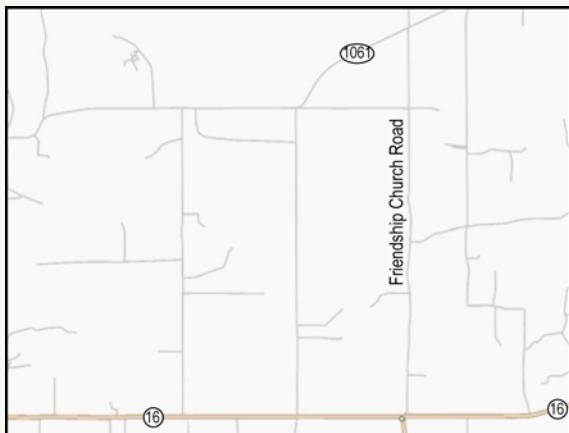
Figure 3-12, Examples of Traffic Sheds



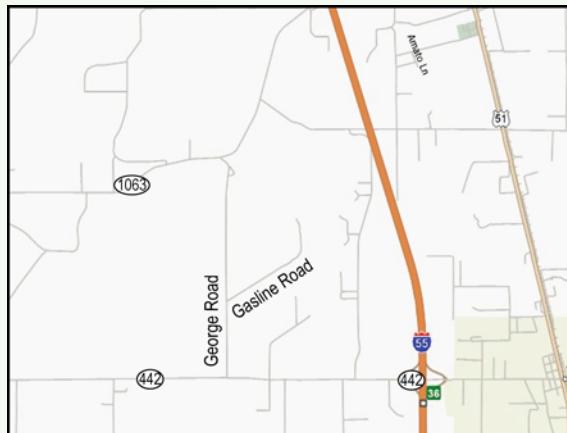
Graham Road (TS1)



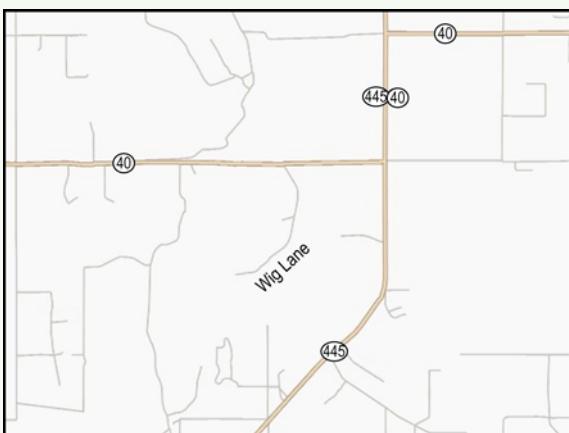
Ling Morse Road (TS2)



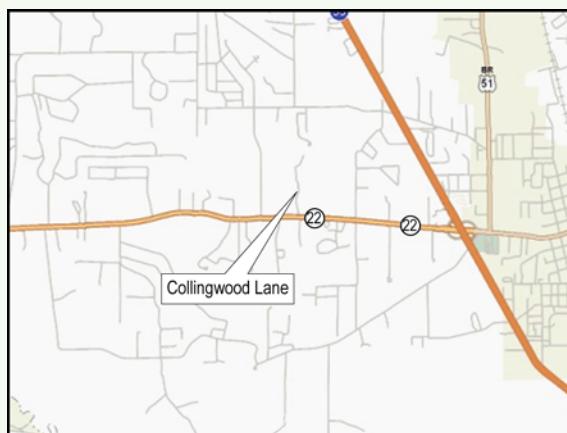
Friendship Church Road (TS3)



George Road (TS4)



Wig Lane (TS5)



Collingwood Lane (TS6)

All streets pictured at the same scale. Areas pictured are for demonstration purposes only.

Source: www.mapquest.com; Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 3-13, Comparison of Traffic Sheds, Levels of Service C and E

Traffic Shed Comparison, Based on Level of Service C					
Traffic Shed	Acres	Pavement Type	Peak Capacity	Permitted Intensity	
				Units per Acre	Acres per Unit
Graham Road (TS1)	3,100	Asphalt	170 cars	0.06	18.21
		Tar and Chip	27 cars	0.01	113.35
		Gravel	4 cars	<0.01	850.15
Ling Morse Road (TS2)	1,600	Asphalt	170 cars	0.11	9.40
		Tar and Chip	27 cars	0.02	58.51
		Gravel	4 cars	<0.01	438.79
Friendship Church Road (TS3)	1,440	Asphalt	170 cars	0.12	8.46
		Tar and Chip	27 cars	0.02	52.65
		Gravel	4 cars	<0.01	394.91
George Road (TS4)	900	Asphalt	170 cars	0.19	5.29
		Tar and Chip	27 cars	0.03	32.91
		Gravel	4 cars	<0.01	246.82
Wig Lane (TS5)	400	Asphalt	170 cars	0.43	2.35
		Tar and Chip	27 cars	0.07	14.63
		Gravel	4 cars	0.01	109.70
Collingwood Lane (TS6)	130	Asphalt	170 cars	1.31	0.76
		Tar and Chip	27 cars	0.21	4.75
		Gravel	4 cars	0.03	35.65

Traffic Shed Comparison, Based on Level of Service E					
Traffic Shed	Acres	Pavement Type	Peak Capacity	Permitted Intensity	
				Units per Acre	Acres per Unit
Graham Road (TS1)	3,100	Asphalt	759 cars	0.25	4.08
		Tar and Chip	122 cars	0.04	25.40
		Gravel	16 cars	<0.01	190.52
Ling Morse Road (TS2)	1,600	Asphalt	759 cars	0.48	2.11
		Tar and Chip	122 cars	0.08	13.11
		Gravel	16 cars	0.01	98.33
Friendship Church Road (TS3)	1,440	Asphalt	759 cars	0.53	1.90
		Tar and Chip	122 cars	0.09	11.80
		Gravel	16 cars	0.01	88.50
George Road (TS4)	900	Asphalt	759 cars	0.84	1.19
		Tar and Chip	122 cars	0.14	7.38
		Gravel	16 cars	0.02	55.31
Wig Lane (TS5)	400	Asphalt	759 cars	1.90	0.53
		Tar and Chip	122 cars	0.31	3.28
		Gravel	16 cars	0.04	24.58
Collingwood Lane (TS6)	130	Asphalt	759 cars	5.84	0.17
		Tar and Chip	122 cars	0.94	1.07
		Gravel	16 cars	0.13	7.99

These examples assume 7 ft. travel lanes; 80%/20% peak hour directional split; obstructions or ditches 2 ft. from pavement; 20% no passing zones; and very light truck traffic. Acreages and assumptions are provided for illustrative purposes, and are not intended to be used for regulatory or analytical purposes.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Table 3-2: Traffic Shed Comparison – Impact of Lane Width ¹³							
Traffic Shed	Acres	Pavement Type	Level of Service	Peak Capacity	Permitted Intensity		Maximum Units on 40-Acre Hypothetical Parcel
					Units per Acre	Acres per Unit	
Collingwood Lane (TS6) (see Figure 11)	130	Asphalt (12-foot lanes)	E	2140 cars	16.46	0.06	658
			C	725 cars	5.58	0.18	223
		Asphalt (7-foot lanes)	E	759 cars	5.84	0.17	233
			C	170 cars	1.31	0.76	52
		Tar and Chip (7-foot lanes)	E	122 cars	0.94	1.07	37
			C	27 cars	0.21	4.75	8
		Gravel (7-foot lanes)	E	16 cars	0.13	7.99	5
			C	4 cars	0.03	35.65	1

LOS C was chosen for the example because in most cases, communities seek to have LOS C – or better (*i.e.*, B or A) - on their arterial roadways, although LOS D is often the best practical condition for urban areas. The determination as to the level of service used is a policy matter to be discussed and determined by the Parish Council. For the purposes of this assessment, the analysis for both pavement types was conducted at LOS C and LOS E.

The analysis demonstrates that, where the road network is weak because of large traffic sheds the impact on the capacity for development is significant. In the examples (**Figure 3-12, Examples of Traffic Sheds, and Figure 3-13, Comparison of Traffic Sheds, Levels of Service C and E**), the width, obstructions, and other variables were held constant to provide consistent comparative analysis. As demonstrated by the results displayed in **Figure 3-13, Comparison of Traffic Sheds, Levels of Service C and E**, the traffic shed system rewards developers who make the wise decision to locate on a smaller traffic shed with good roads. It is also an incentive to the developer to make improvements that increase the capacity of the road, rather than waiting for the Parish to make improvements at the taxpayers' expense. *See Figure 3-12, Examples of Traffic Sheds, Figure 3-13, Comparison of Traffic Sheds, Levels of Service C and E, and Table 3-2, Traffic Sheds Comparison – Impact of Lane Width.*

Implementation of a traffic shed program requires the following steps:

- ◆ Prepare a traffic shed map and accurately measure the area of each traffic-shed.
- ◆ Collect all the data on width of lanes and the other factors needed to determine capacity. (A Parish street inventory is currently underway.)
- ◆ Determine policy on the levels of service to be used for each of the roadways.
- ◆ Acquire traffic counts or estimate the volume of traffic through dwelling unit counts in each traffic-shed.

¹³ These examples assumes 80%/20% peak hour directional split; obstructions or ditches 2 ft. from pavement; 20% no passing zones; and very light truck traffic. Acreages and street conditions are for illustrative purposes only and should not be used for analytical or regulatory purposes.

- ◆ Develop an “equivalency table” that converts residential units to nonresidential uses or floor area to account for multiple development types in the traffic shed.
- ◆ Coordinate with the Parish engineer to address pavement-based roadway design capacities.

4.0.3.3 | Water Utility Sheds. The shed concept may be applied to public utilities as well. See **Figure 3-14, Water and Sewer Utility Sheds**. For example, if a water main provides service to an area, the amount of development that the pipe can support (assuming that overall water supply is not a limiting factor) can be calculated based on the estimated water demand, the diameter of the pipe, the fire service demands, and the available pressure. Just like a traffic shed, the development potential for individual parcels can be calculated using straightforward equations based on their “fair share” of the available capacity of the water main. Moreover, if an individual owner or developer wants to build more, all of the same options are available (*i.e.*, build another pipe, expand the existing pipe, or buy someone else’s right to develop).

In some manner, the shed concept already applies to water services in Tangipahoa Parish. That is, several water districts require developers to extend and then dedicate lines to new development. Yet the Plan recommends taking the concept a step further, in that:

- ◆ The capacity and location of existing water and sewer lines should be a known quantity, so that development options and costs can be known in advance.
- ◆ The size and composition of water mains should support fire service that is adequate to serve the development that is anticipated.
- ◆ Wastewater treatment should be in centralized systems (with rights to service allocated using the shed concepts) that are managed by entities that have the training and resources to ensure environmentally responsible operation.

Figure 3-14, Water and Sewer Utility Sheds

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- Wastewater treatment should be in centralized systems (with rights to service allocated using the shed concepts) that are managed by entities that have the training and resources to ensure environmentally responsible operation.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Of course, in some places, private wells are a reasonable alternative to public water supply. Water utility sheds would thus, have to be designed to allow the baseline density of development that can be served by private wells on any parcel within the water utility shed. In other words, development within the water utility shed would only be limited by the capacity of the water main if it is designed to be connected to it, and only the rights to the water main would be able to be bought and sold among owners.

4.0.3.3 | Sewer Utility Sheds. Sewer utility sheds could be created in much the same fashion. However, to be practical, the sewer utility shed must be combined with a shift in policy away from the use of individual treatment systems and small package plants. This shift in policy, recommended and further detailed in **Chapter 7, Environmental Conservation**, of this Plan, is based on the need to protect the Parish's water resources from contamination.

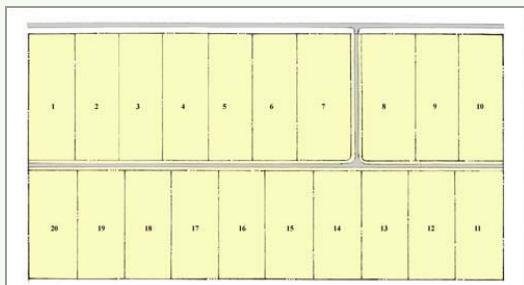
The Plan recommends reducing the number of units in a subdivision that triggers a requirement for either public sewer or a community sewer treatment system. If community sewer systems are used, they should include land-based treatment, such as spray fields or constructed wetlands, before wastewater is discharged into a public servitude. That way, nutrients and bacteria can be effectively – and consistently – removed (or significantly reduced) before the water reaches the Parish's streams and rivers. Ideally, a public sewer district would operate all of the new community systems.

Like water utility sheds, sewer utility sheds should contain a baseline density based on a minimal amount of development that would be permitted to use individual treatment systems. A public sewer pipe with excess capacity would create a "sewer utility shed" that would work like a traffic shed. Moreover, landowners could create their own "sewer utility sheds" by developing land-based systems for their own developments. If they build excess capacity, they could sell resulting development rights to neighboring landowners.

4.0.4 | Development Options: Clustering, Hamlets, and Villages.

4.0.4.1 | Respecting Property Rights. The third leg of the growth management strategy is to "respect the property rights and economic realities of rural landowners by providing options to developers in order to help them make rural projects fit into the context in which they are located." The Plan recognizes that the agricultural economy is often volatile, that farmers in Tangipahoa Parish are aging, and that as a result, rural landowners need to be able to realize some of the non-agricultural value of their land.

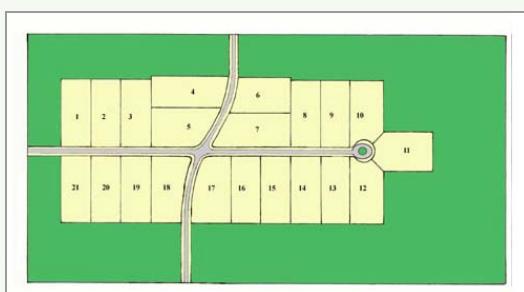
The Plan seeks to balance the interest of the Parish in fiscal sustainability with the financial security of the rural landowners. As such, the Plan recommends that the Parish adopt regulations that allow for development forms that maximize value for development within the rural areas (within traffic sheds). The regulations should provide a density bonus for development that is clustered to provide large amounts of open space, as well as opportunities for owners of large parcels to create mixed-use rural hamlets and villages that are surrounded by greenbelts.

Figure 3-15, Alternative Development Patterns – Clustering

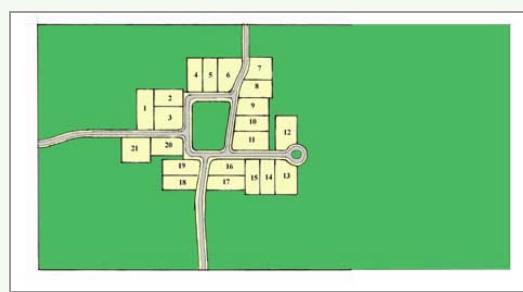
conventional subdivision



cluster subdivision



conservation cluster subdivision



preservation cluster subdivision

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

One way to do this is through performance zoning. Under performance zoning, lot size is not the primary element of district control, as in conventional subdivision and zoning regulations. Instead, density and open space are typically the most significant controls.¹⁴ The recommended system is much more flexible than conventional zoning. For example, clustering residential development should be permitted as a matter of right.

4.0.4.2 | Clustered Development. Making clustering a permitted use is important to preserving rural character. One of the problems with conventional zoning is the “cookie cutter” effect, shown in **Figure 3-15, Alternative Development Patterns – Clustering**. Making the most out of a parcel of land that is to be developed requires carving it up into lots in a way that is comparable to stamping cookies out of dough. As a result, when a rural landowner sells, the entire property is converted into lots. The rural use (farming, ranching, or forestry) is lost.

With clustering, only a portion of the land is used for development and the remainder can stay in the rural use. **Figure 3-15, Alternative Development Patterns – Clustering**, shows

¹⁴ Performance zoning can also provide controls that are based on pollutant loading rates, often using open space and density as proxies.

several forms of clustering (cluster, conservation cluster, and preservation cluster), juxtaposed against conventional “cookie cutter” development. Preservation clustering, with a minimum of 80 percent open space, is a very effective growth management technique that is more respectful of private property rights than large-lot zoning. Similarly, conservation clustering (slightly larger lots and slightly less common open space) also concentrates development on a small portion of the site, leaving the majority of the site for rural uses.

Combining non-agricultural development potential with the ability to continue a rural use provides more value to the original landowner. Performance zoning also allows rural landowners to operate (or continue to operate) other rural businesses, which, again, increases rural land values. Since farms and ranches already have many buildings, the additional uses do not displace rural uses.

When cluster (including conservation and preservation cluster) development is combined with the traffic shed model, incentives can be developed to encourage land consolidation, or cooperation between landowners for land that is served by multiple gravel roads. In this fashion, the developers who build on one of these roads by clustering land in both traffic sheds would effectively be reducing the number of roads that need to be patrolled and maintained or improved. If the proper set of incentives and disincentives is used, the total need for road improvements could be reduced by more than one half.

4.0.4.3 | Hamlets and Villages. The development options of hamlet or village allow for the creation of new, mixed-use settlements on large parcels (*e.g.*, a section), as pictured in **Figure 3-16, Alternative Development Patterns – Hamlet**. Hamlets and villages contain small-scale commercial uses that draw business from the hamlet or village and surrounding community. That makes hamlets and villages a good way to preserve a “green belt” around existing development, as well as to provide rural housing opportunities.

For example, if a section (640 acres) adjacent to Robert is developed as a village, a compact center could be developed near an existing developed area, containing all of the development for the section (one square mile). Since the open space ratio is, in the example, 92 percent, approximately 589 acres would be preserved as open space. Depending upon how the property is configured, the village would be a good start to containing sprawl around Robert and defining an edge to the community.

With the range of development alternatives that are available, the Plan recommends that larger-scale projects have greater incentives because they are more likely to provide economies of scale that promote fiscal sustainability. Taking the cluster model as the “base density” that is desired, **Figure 3-17, Cluster Open Space, Density, and Lot Size**, provides an example of the incentives and disincentives that can be used in this type of system. If the system is used in conjunction with the traffic shed system, the lower of the two gross densities would control.

4.0.5 | The Rural Parish Model. The fourth leg of the growth management strategy is, “In general, leave the role of providing urban and suburban services to the Cities and Towns (avoid crossing the ‘tipping point.’).” In other words, the Parish should stay a “rural parish.” There are three strategies for staying on the “rural parish” side of the tipping point.

4.0.5.1 | Promote Annexation. Put simply, the first (and most effective) strategy is to promote annexation of new development and partially developed areas. The Parish should coordinate with the incorporated areas of the Parish so that development within their adjacent “suburban” areas will, as a general rule, be annexed. This ensures that the services that the homeowners will demand will be provided by a local government that is better equipped (both in terms of existing facilities and services and the ability to raise revenues) to provide them.¹⁵ It will also put off the day when suburban residents in the unincorporated Parish demand suburban amenities and services – to the detriment of the Parish’s agricultural landowners.

With the range of development alternatives that are available, the Plan recommends that larger-scale projects have greater incentives because they are more likely to provide economies of scale that promote fiscal sustainability. Taking the cluster model as the “base density” that is desired, Figure 3-17, Cluster Open Space, Density, and Lot Size, provides an example of the incentives and disincentives that can be used in this type of system. If the system is used in conjunction with the traffic shed system, the lower of the two gross densities would control.

¹⁵ The incorporated cities and towns in the Parish have a two percent sales tax – double that of the Parish.

Figure 3-16, Alternative Development Patterns – Hamlet



conventional subdivision



hamlet

The plan at the top shows a conventional subdivision that covers the entire site, consuming all the land, and eliminating natural features that had contributed to the site’s appeal. A small pond at the center is hidden behind lots, off-limits to most residents.

In contrast, the plan at the bottom shows a hamlet. A variety of lot sizes is used to accommodate the same number of units, while preserving substantial areas as commonly managed open space. The pond is preserved as an accessible amenity that is linked to a trail. More connections and linkages between streets make travel distances throughout the development shorter. Additionally, the sparse arrangement of homes around the perimeter allows an attractive, unobstructed view of the surrounding rural character.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 3–17, Cluster Open Space, Density, and Lot Size

Use	Open Space Ratio	Gross Density	Average Lot Size	# of Homes on 100-Acre Parcel	Incentive
Very Large Lot	0%	0.05 units/acre	20 acres	5 units	-58%
Large Lot	0%	0.09 units/acre	10 acres	9 units	-25%
Cluster	70%	0.12 units/acre	2 acres	12 units	base
Conservation Cluster	80%	0.15 units/acre	1 acre	15 units	25%
Preservation Cluster	85%	0.21 units/acre	20,000 sf.	21 units	75%
Hamlet	90%	0.25 units/acre	9,000 sf.	25 units	108%
Village	92%	0.35 units/acre	5,000 sf.	35 units	192%

For this example, assume that a rural density of one house per 10 acres was suitable to discourage scattered development South of LA Hwy. 16, and one house per 20 acres was suitable to discourage scattered rural development North of LA Hwy. 16. There could be a series of different available alternatives to these large lots, such as: rural cluster, conservation cluster, preservation cluster, hamlet, and village. These should all be permitted uses in a Parish zoning code, subject to performance standards.

Under such a system, there is a substantial disincentive to subdivide a site into very large lot or large lot development (20 or 10 acre). The average density in the district would be achieved by the base, which would be a cluster subdivision. The other four options have bonus incentives of 25 to 192 percent, in order to provide more open space and better preserve rural uses. Density should be further limited by the available capacity of the traffic shed in which the property is located, although in some locations, zoning standards will be a more significant limit to density than the traffic shed.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

4.0.5.2 | Encourage Incorporation; Provide “Tiered” Levels of Service. The second strategy is related to the first. It is to identify the populated settlements within the Parish (including but not limited to Census designated places) and, if feasible, encourage them (or parts of them) to incorporate. This strategy could be complemented with a well-defined, tiered system of providing governmental services. That is, the Parish could establish several zones (which would correspond to the “suburban,” “rural,” and “preservation” areas), within which different levels of governmental services would be offered. For example, in the preservation areas, services would be limited to basic law enforcement and rescue services, and containing fires. Preservation areas may include not only natural resource areas, but also agriculture and forestry operations in areas where scattered development is a major threat and landowners want the preservation designation.

In rural areas, services would be limited, but more extensive than in the preservation areas. Law enforcement, rescue services, and fire protection would have better response times. Public water and sewer services would be more readily available.

In suburban areas, services would be essentially urban, and would be best provided either by independent service providers in coordination with this Plan or municipalities through intergovernmental and/or pre-annexation agreements. For the most part, these areas would ultimately be annexed into the adjacent city or town.

4.0.5.3 | Coordinate with Independent Service Providers. The Plan recognizes that there are service providers within the Parish over which the Parish Council has limited direct control. There are many fire districts with independent boards, and many providers of water and sewer service. The Plan recommends that the Parish coordinate with these entities with regard to its growth management strategy, so that they can also focus their resources on areas that are designated for development. Ideally, the special districts would also coordinate with municipalities, perhaps (in the case of water districts) providing wholesale water and interconnects in the water system.

The Plan recommends careful application of the tiered level of service strategy. It should not be used in a way that excludes annexation and incorporation. That is so because if an unincorporated urban service area grows too large -- or is expanded due to pressures unrelated to planning -- then the tiered strategy will tend to push the Parish over the "tipping point."

The third strategy is related to the implementation of the traffic sheds program. This strategy is to use level of service "C" as the adopted level of service of the Parish. Level of service "C" is more consistent with the rural character of the Parish countryside. In the traffic shed model, it also restricts development density more than level of service "E" because it tolerates fewer cars on the street.

5.0 | Growth Management Strategy: Goals and Recommendations

5.0.1 | Goal: Direct new development to areas where it: (1) can be provided with appropriate infrastructure and services in a fiscally responsible manner; and (2) does not compromise the character of its surroundings.

5.0.2 | Recommended Actions.

5.0.2.1 | Establish urban growth boundaries in cooperation with cities and towns; establish preservation areas for resources, agriculture, and forestry. The Parish is rural, and it should direct its urban, auto-urban, and suburban growth to the cities and towns that are equipped to provide full urban services (developed and developing areas), with few exceptions. The Parish should provide for resource-related preservation areas for agriculture and forestry, and rural, estate, and hamlet/village rural communities. **See Chapter 4, Land Use and Community Character.** The cities and towns have full urban services today, and are equipped to expand those services to newly developing areas. The Parish does not have the resources to provide these services. It should enter into agreements with the Cities for urban growth boundaries and preservation areas.

5.0.2.2 | Establish a traffic-shed system for allocating growth capacity. Much of the rural road network in Tangipahoa Parish, both Parish and State, does not meet current national

standards for rural roads. This is a major limiting factor because developments do not provide the revenue needed by the Parish to bring these roads up to standard. The carrying capacity of the existing road system sets limits to the acceptable density in any area. Within the unincorporated area, traffic sheds shall be established designating the service area of each road. Regulations would restrict the landowners in any traffic shed to their proportionate share of the available capacity.

5.0.2.3 | Designate rural areas where minimal services will be provided. In the rural area, the Parish shall create resource-related rural areas for agriculture, forestry, and major environmental areas. It shall also provide for rural or exurban housing that maintains the countryside character and protects rural hamlets or villages. A limited area for estate residential development should be provided, where urban services are neither required nor provided.

5.0.2.4 | Protect rural character. The character districts are designed to create the desired character by requiring clustering with very high open space ratios (conservation and preservation developments). Landscaping should be used to screen development and to provide a rural setting and pleasing residential environment.

6.0 | Streets

It is important to acknowledge the influence of public investments on private development decisions. As so often stated by real estate professionals, “the three most important factors in real estate development are location, location, and location.” The value of location is derived, at least in part, by the presence and availability of infrastructure, such as streets and utilities. Therefore, where there are readily accessible facilities, land values tend to escalate and development follows in turn.

6.0.1 | Zachary Taylor Parkway. Escalating land values are an important consideration with regard to the possibility that the Zachary Taylor Parkway will someday be funded and constructed. In the absence of planning and land development regulation, the development of such a significant transportation facility will likely attract significant non-agricultural development. Even with plans and regulations in place, it will take disciplined leadership to hold the line on non-agricultural development of the Zachary Taylor Parkway corridor through the now rural Wilmer and Chesbrough areas of Tangipahoa Parish. That is so in part because the Parish has already committed much energy regarding the future character of the Zachary Taylor Parkway corridor at I-55.

6.0.2 | Industrial Megasite. In June 2007, four and one-half square miles of the Fluker area were officially certified as an “industrial megasite,” an area that is said to be ready for prompt industrial development. The site is currently mostly undeveloped, flat land that has been used for pine tree harvesting and hunting. It is considered by its advocates to be ideal for automobile manufacturing or other, similar large industrial projects.

The site is also located within the Congressionally-designated “GO Zone,” which is the subject of an aggressive set of temporary tax credits and incentives for industrial and technology development.¹⁶

Additional discussion and recommendations for the Megasite are provided in **Chapter 8, Economic Development**. The economic development potential of the industrial Megasite is significant, and could provide much needed opportunities for residents of the Village of Tangipahoa and its immediate area. With respect to the strategies in this Chapter (other strategies are set out in other Chapters, by topic), the Plan recommends:

- ◆ The Megasite should be attractive to industries that provide good jobs. That is, it should be well-landscaped, well served with good streets, drainage, and utilities, and have attractive, high-quality construction. A marketing plan should be developed to identify and attract targeted companies that are of a caliber that will attract and create additional quality industries.
- ◆ A special area plan for the Megasite should be created. It should provide for:
 - Quality aesthetics.
 - A realistic phasing plan for development over 30 or more years to maximize the public leverage of private dollars. Phasing plans should create series of relatively compact critical masses of development that support required infrastructure.
 - Use of different parts of the Megasite for different purposes.
- ◆ A more specific strategic plan should be created for developing the Megasite and its surrounding area. The strategic plan should include provisions for workforce housing, public infrastructure, services, and utilities, and financing mechanisms that leverage private investment. The strategic plan should also include provisions for coordinating with nearby local governments to provide housing and services to support economic development in the Fluker area.

6.0.3 | Street Inventory. In general, Tangipahoa Parish is crisscrossed with Parish streets that are, by modern standards, inadequate in terms of pavement, drainage, lighting, and/or right-of-way. The Parish has developed a street inventory, which could be used as a starting point for a traffic shed analysis.

7.0 | Streets: Goals and Recommendations

7.0.1 | Goal: The Parish will be proactive about protecting its rural areas from pressures that could come if the Zachary Taylor Parkway is funded and constructed.

7.0.2 | Recommended Action. Land development regulations that implement the Comprehensive Plan shall be created, and shall include provisions to protect community

¹⁶ Source: “Industrial megasite in Tangipahoa Parish receives official certification.” Southeastern Louisiana University. <http://www.selu.edu/news_media/news_releases/2007/june/megasite.html>; see generally <<http://www.gozoneguide.com/>>.

character along the Zachary Taylor Parkway in a manner that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the strategic plan that is recommended below.

7.0.3 | Goal: Maximize the economic and social benefits of the Megasite.

7.0.4 | Recommended Actions.

7.0.4.1 | Marketing Plan and Special Area Plan. The Parish shall develop a marketing plan and a special area plan for the Megasite to ensure that the site attracts industries that provide good jobs, promote further economic development, and maximize the leverage of public investments.

7.0.4.2 | Strategic Plan. The Parish shall also develop a strategic plan for workforce housing; public infrastructure, services, and utilities that connect to the Megasite; financing mechanisms that leverage private investment; and provisions for coordinating with nearby local governments to provide housing and services to employees of the Megasite.

7.0.5 | Goal: Be proactive about which Parish streets will be used to support new non-agricultural development.

7.0.6 | Recommended Actions.

7.0.6.1 | Create a traffic shed program. The Parish should undertake a traffic shed analysis in the rural areas in order to provide transportation-based information to evaluate permitted densities in the regulations that will implement this Plan. If the results of the study warrant it, the Parish should consider adopting a regulatory program based on traffic sheds.

7.0.6.2 | Develop spatial databases and improve coordination among service providers. The Parish shall work with water and sewer providers and fire districts to create a consolidated geographic information systems (GIS) database to identify areas where additional development would be the most cost-effective.

8.0 | Water

8.0.1 | Potable Water Providers. Potable water is provided throughout the unincorporated Parish by four water districts. In the unincorporated areas, water systems are typically funded with USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) low-interest loans and/or grants, which are repaid by connection fees and service charges.

8.0.2 | Potable Water Sources. In general, potable water supply in the Parish comes from groundwater. Water supply, at the source, is plentiful. There are 43 community water systems and 21 non-community water systems in the Parish.¹⁷ Community water systems are systems that serve municipalities or residential developments.¹⁸ Non-community water systems are systems that serve nonresidential uses, such as schools, hospitals, restaurants, and day care centers.¹⁹

¹⁷ Source: Tom Fagan, Parish Manager, Tangipahoa Parish Environmental Health (August 2007).

¹⁸ See Louisiana Revised Statutes § 40:5.8(1) (2007).

¹⁹ See Louisiana Revised Statutes § 40:5.8(2) (2007).

8.0.3 | Relationship to Fire Protection. One of the key issues regarding water in the unincorporated Parish is that USDA loans do not provide funds for fire protection. Accordingly, while water service is available in many areas in the Parish, it is generally not sufficient service in terms of volume, pressure, or pipe strength to provide suburban levels of fire protection. As suburban-type subdivisions have scattered across the Parish, the ability of the Parish to protect homes from fire has decreased.

8.0.4 | Facilities Mapping and Management. Another issue among water suppliers is that information on the various water systems is not generally digitized, and although the utilities generally know where their larger mains are, there is little readily available data (e.g., computer-aided design or geographic information systems) on pipe size and location. This information is useful for identifying appropriate areas for development, and for coordinating among the service providers. As such, to the extent possible, the Parish should collaborate with its suppliers on developing spatial data about the Parish's water systems in a format that is compatible with developing Parish data on parcel lines and streets.

9.0 | Wastewater

9.0.1 | Wastewater Service Providers. In the unincorporated Parish, wastewater is processed by Tangipahoa Sewer District #1, small community package plants, and individual treatment systems. Tangipahoa Sewer District #1 operates approximately 21 facilities (plants, package plants, and other systems) that are scattered around the Parish, many of which were donated to the district by developers. Generally, the systems are not interconnected.

As such, at present, there is no significant public wastewater treatment facility providing service to the unincorporated areas of the Parish. Typically, wastewater is processed using individual treatment systems or small community package plants (some of the package plants are operated by the sewer district). In many areas of the Parish, poorly drained soils prevent the use of traditional septic systems, so above-ground aeration systems are used.

9.0.2 | Wastewater Infrastructure. The impact of relatively poor wastewater treatment in the Parish is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 7, Environmental Conservation**. However, it is clear that the current infrastructure for wastewater treatment is not up to the task. As such, as it relates to growth capacity, the Plan recommends that wastewater systems be consolidated to community systems with land-based treatment to the maximum extent feasible.

With respect to financing improvements of the wastewater system, the general rule is that the last developer to tie into a system that is at capacity must pay for improvements to the plant to create the capacity. In some cases, this is preferable to the developer to building one or more systems on-site. In other cases, it is an incentive to use individual systems or small package plants. In any case, the Plan questions whether allocating all of the costs of capacity increases and plant upgrades to the "last in line" is consistent with the shared values of the Parish, and suggests that the strategies of this Chapter will help the Parish to better plan for service delivery in a way that distributes costs more efficiently and fairly.

10.0 | Water and Wastewater: Goals and Recommendations

10.0.1 | Goal: Improve water service to “suburban” areas so that it includes adequate pressure and pipe materials for fire protection.

10.0.2 | Recommended Action. Use land development regulations and utility sheds to ensure that development in the suburban and rural areas pays its own way with regard to providing adequate fire protection.

10.0.3 | Goal: Reduce reliance on individual wastewater treatment systems.

10.0.4 | Recommended Actions.

10.0.4.1 | Direct development to areas of tertiary treatment. Development should be directed to areas where tertiary treatment can be provided. Inventory areas of available public sewer service where there is available plant capacity, or where plant capacity can be cost-effectively increased. The availability of public sewer service should be factored into the determination of which areas will be designated as “suburban” areas.

10.0.4.2 | Use conservation and preservation clusters served by advanced, land-based community systems. Development in the rural areas should be clustered, and should be served with community wastewater systems that include land-based treatment such as constructed wetlands.

10.0.5 | Goal: Improve information sharing among the Parish and utility service providers.

10.0.6 | Recommendation. Coordinate with utilities to ensure that spatial data is developed in formats that maximize their usefulness for planning, service delivery, and intergovernmental coordination.

11.0 | Drainage

Much of the Parish is flat and poorly drained. The typical stormwater conveyance system in the unincorporated Parish is a roadside ditch, which conveys runoff and, too often, poorly treated wastewater. The roadside ditches convey water into streams with very little treatment, which degrades water quality in the streams and rivers of the Parish. In addition, there are many ditches in the Parish that are too close to the street and too steep for safe operation of the street.

There are two principal policy issues with respect to drainage in the Parish. First is water quality. Second is public safety.

In order to improve water quality, the Plan recommends improving Parish ditches by reducing their slope to one foot of rise per three feet of run, providing a flat bottom of at least one foot in width, and planting the ditches with nutrient-absorbing native grasses (“bioswales”), as displayed in **Figure 3-18, Road Ditch Bioswales**. The Plan also recommends on-site stormwater retention and detention, with constructed wetland treatment for water before it leaves the site into a public servitude.

In order to enhance public safety, a set of standard street cross sections is needed that provides for more distance between the edge of pavement and the ditch. Street cross sections would be dedicated and improved through plat dedications as new development comes on line.

12.0 | Drainage: Goals and Recommendations

12.0.1 | Goal: Improve quality of stormwater runoff before it reaches streams, rivers, and lakes.

12.0.2 | Recommendation. The Parish shall adopt land development regulations that require “bioswales” and on-site stormwater detention and retention, with water filtered through a constructed wetland before outflow to the public servitude.

12.0.3 | Goal: Improve public safety on Parish streets.

12.0.4 | Recommendation. The Parish shall amend its subdivision regulations to require dedication and improvement of a fair share of perimeter right-of-way. Improvements shall include locating the ditch a safe distance from the travel lane, and sloping the ditch at no more than one foot of rise per three feet of run.

13.0 | Solid Waste

Tangipahoa Parish Regional Solid Waste Facility accepts residential and commercial solid waste. It also accepts Type III waste, which is defined as construction and demolition debris and Type II asbestos, which is defined as non-friable asbestos. The facility does not accept any other waste that is defined as hazardous.

The general rule is that people produce 4.6 pounds of solid waste (garbage) per day. With an average household size of 2.66, Tangipahoa Parish homes produce 12.24 pounds per day, or 4,466 pounds per year. If Tangipahoa Parish grows at a two percent annual rate, it will add about 12,180 households by 2020. If current consumption patterns continue, the new households in the Parish will generate an 54.4 million more pounds of trash every year.

The Solid Waste Facility’s current permitted capacity is 120,000 to 140,000 tons of waste per year for the next three years. The facility is surrounded by approximately 80 acres of land into which the facility can be expanded. Based on a demand level of 120,000 to 140,000 tons of waste per year, the solid waste facility projects having sufficient capacity until sometime between 2027 and 2032.²⁰

²⁰ The Solid Waste Facility’s estimates of 120,000 to 140,000 tons per year of solid waste generation in the Parish are consistent with estimates that are based on multiplying 4.6 pounds of waste per person by annual projected population to 2032, assuming 1 percent and 2 percent annual population growth.

Figure 3-18, Road Ditch Bioswales



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

14.0 | Safety and Security

14.0.1 | Sheriff. The Tangipahoa Parish Sheriff's main office is located in the Parish Court House in Amite and handles all of the criminal, civil and tax division operations, as well as police protection throughout the Parish. Tangipahoa is under 24-hour patrol by the criminal division, which presently has 183 regular deputies and 56 auxiliary deputies. The department has 65 cars and six boats to patrol the Parish.

14.0.2 | Fire. In the rural areas of Tangipahoa Parish, fighting fires has historically been a matter of containment, and volunteer fire departments provided good service to the sparsely developed countryside. Generally, the Insurance Services Office's (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating for the unincorporated Parish was favorable (four or five on a 10-point scale, with one being the best and 10 being unacceptable). There is a strong correlation between the ISO PPC rating and the ability of the fire department to save lives and property. Factors that the ISO PPC rating accounts for are set out in **Figure 3-19, ISO Fire Rating System Factors.**

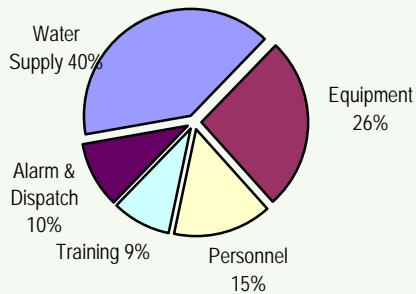
Recently, the Parish's fire service providers have been stretched thin, for several reasons. First, access to sufficient water supply for fighting fires in relatively dense subdivisions is a problem in many areas of the Parish. There have been few controls on scattered development, so fire hydrants, fire-rated pipe, and adequate fire flows have not been required. Some relatively dense residential subdivisions are not served by fire hydrants.

Second, scattered development increases the distance that must be traveled to provide service (which is particularly stressful on volunteers who do not get reimbursed for fuel costs). In many cases, the trip is made more difficult because of inadequate streets. It is very possible that a truck will have to haul water across miles of inadequate streets, then go back across the same streets to fill again one or more times before the fire is extinguished.

Third, in addition to the geographic dispersal, demand has increased. Fire chiefs report that since Hurricane Katrina, there has been approximately a 75 percent increase in service calls across the Parish. For example, the Eighth Ward Volunteer Fire Department reported 331 calls in 2003, 397 in 2004, 522 in 2005, 637 in 2006, and 332 for the first six months of 2007.

To protect lives and property in developing areas of the Parish (and keep favorable ISO ratings), better access to water supply, preferably through adequately sized, fire-rated lines in areas of relatively dense development, is critical. In addition, in particularly fast-growing areas, paid firefighters are needed to augment the volunteer staff.

Figure 3-19,
ISO Fire Rating System Factors



The level of service for fire protection is based on national standards set out by the ISO. The ISO fire rating system is complicated, but in general the rating relates to available water supply, equipment, personnel, training, and alarm and dispatch systems.

Of these, water supply is the most important single factor. The rating system compares the water supply available at representative areas of the community with the amount of water that would be needed to fight a building fire there. There are also some specific minimum requirements for water delivery that a jurisdiction must meet to achieve certain ratings.

The second most important factor for the fire rating system is fire equipment. The rating system considers specific minimum equipment requirements, plus additional equipment standards that are based on the numbers and types of structures in the community, plus regular testing of equipment.

The third most important factor is personnel and training. This refers to the number of firefighters that are available for an initial response and the speed at which they can respond. It also refers to the initial and ongoing training of the firefighters.

The fourth factor is the alarm and paging system.

Source: League of Minnesota Cities

15.0 | Safety and Security: Goals and Recommendations

15.0.1 | Goal: Maintain or Improve ISO PPC Rating.

15.0.2 | Recommendations. The recommendations presented earlier in this chapter will help to improve fire service by promoting compact development in areas where water service and streets are sufficient to provide cost-effective service.

15.0.2.1 | Improve systems in new subdivisions. All suburban, auto-urban, and urban development shall have water service that provides full fire suppression capabilities. Subdividers shall install fire-rated (C900) pipes, loop water systems, and install regularly spaced hydrants in developments with lot sizes less than 10 acres. Adequate pressure to provide the necessary level of fire protection to the type and spacing of buildings in the subdivision shall be provided.

15.0.2.2 | Provide rural residents and estate residents (very large lots) with a rural water supply. This is inadequate to fight fire, so the Parish should strongly consider the adoption of a building code or zoning requirement that all new construction that is not served with fire-rated pipes, hydrants, and adequate pressure be sprinklered. The cities and towns are best equipped to do this, and they should have growth boundaries within which they agree to serve all development. The industrial megasite, when developed, should be served by stations built by the developer and dedicated to the fire district of the Parish's choice.

Chapter Four

Community Character and Land Use

1.0 | Generally

Tangipahoa Parish is special because, notwithstanding the current growth pressures in the countryside, it is a place with a solid foundation in “smart growth.” This Chapter provides an approach to regulating new development in the Parish to ensure that the historic foundation is respected and the desired rural character in the unincorporated Parish is preserved and protected. First, it explains why regulations that are based primarily on land use are not an effective way to protect character. Second it defines various aspects of community character. Third, it sets out and explains character classifications and districts that will guide the development of implementing regulations, including zoning districts. Finally, it provides strategic direction for protecting the Parish’s rural character by:

- Reducing the number of homes developed in unincorporated areas and ensuring that patterns of new development are compatible with their surroundings;
- Directing growth to areas where it makes fiscal sense;
- Working with the municipalities to ensure that new urban and suburban growth is in the municipalities or promptly annexed;
- Creating special districts around named places to prevent sprawling development; and
- Creating a strategic plan for developing a new community at the megasite.

2.0 | Use and Character

2.0.1 | Generally. At the Citizens’ Congress meetings which informed this Plan, Tangipahoa Parish’s residents repeatedly said that they value the Parish’s rural character and lifestyle. Those residents who live in the Parish’s cities and towns said that they like the “small town” feel of their communities, as well as the rural countryside that surrounds them. Throughout the Parish, many people feel that growth is threatening the community’s character and the residents’ quality of life. One participant at the May 16, 2006 Citizens’ Congress meeting referred to growth in the Parish as “scary.” See **Appendix A, Public Participation**, at page A-41.

One of the major goals of land use controls has always been to protect the character of existing neighborhoods.¹ Indeed, Section 33:4780.42, Louisiana Revised Statutes, which authorizes the Parishes to adopt zoning regulations, provides:

¹ In the seminal zoning case of *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, 272 U.S. 365 (1926), in which the United States Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of zoning, the Court observed that, “A nuisance may be merely a right thing in the wrong place -- like a pig in the parlor instead of the barnyard.” Sixty-four years later, a Florida appellate court observed, “[A]mong the interests

Purpose of regulations

[Zoning] [r]egulations . . . shall be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan and designed to lessen congestion in the public streets, secure safety from fire, promote health and the general welfare, provide adequate light, avoid undue concentration of population, facilitate adequate transportation, water supply, sewerage, schools, parks, and meet other public requirements. Such regulations shall be made with reasonable **consideration of the character of a district** and its peculiar suitability for particular uses and with a view to conserving the values of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout the parish.

Although nearly every controversial land use hearing includes a discussion about the impact of the proposed use on the neighborhood or community's character, there is little in the way of shared vocabulary when it comes to describing, technically, what "character" means. That is, in order to speak of, plan for, and regulate based on character, one must first break character down into identifiable (and preferably quantifiable) elements, and then reconstruct it into recognizable character types (e.g., "urban," "suburban," "estate," "rural," or "natural").

2.0.2 | Defining Character. Most communities throughout the country have not gone through the exercise of identifying what character means. Instead, they rely on land use and density or lot size for both planning and regulation of land, and assume that these relate to character. Yet land use, density, and lot size are not design terms, and therefore, by themselves, they are poor indicators of character.

The reason that use and density persist as the predominant regulatory items dates back to the early days of zoning. The early approaches to zoning were heavily focused on the use of land, which in the early 1900s was assumed to be a proxy for the character of the district. For example, in the *Euclid v. Ambler* case (81 years ago), the Court railed against apartment houses in single-family neighborhoods, stating, "very often the apartment house is a mere parasite, constructed in order to take advantage of the open spaces and attractive surroundings created by the residential character of the district."

Much has changed with regard to the use of land over the last 81 years. Auto-dominated landscapes have proliferated, former commercial corridors have transformed into regional thoroughfares, new housing products have taken shape, and big-box and "category-killer" retail have emerged as major land uses.

2.0.2.1 | Design. As a result of the evolution of land use over the last 81 years, it is well understood that the impact of an apartment house on the character of a neighborhood has far more to do with the design of the building than with the mere fact that it is a

deemed legitimate for exercise of the state's police power are such matters as: (1) protection of aesthetic interests, . . . (2) preservation of residential or historical character of a neighborhood, . . . and (3) protection of environmentally sensitive areas and pollution control . . ." *Glisson v. Alachua County*, 558 So. 2d 1030 (Fla. 3d DCA 1990).

multifamily use. See **Figure 4-1, Well-Designed Apartments**. Likewise, as can be seen in **Figure 4-2, Commercial Character**, a commercial use may take on very different visual characters, even though by definition the use is identical.

Figure 4-1, Well-Designed Apartments



The multifamily units shown in the top photo are surrounded on two sides by single-family residential development, some of which is shown in the bottom photo. The design of the project and the quality and character of shared open spaces ensures compatibility. Prices in the neighborhood range from affordable units in the mid \$150,000s to well over \$1 million.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 4-2, Commercial Character



Pictured above (both photos) are restaurants. Although technically the uses are the same in both photos, the character of the uses is very different.

One of the uses is located on an auto-dominated commercial strip near I-55. The other is located in Downtown Hammond. The relationship of the uses to the street (and sidewalk), the location of their parking areas relative to the street and building entrances, and their architectural styles (e.g., “logo buildings” versus stylized architecture that is compatible with surrounding buildings) distinguish their respective visual characters from each other.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

2.0.2.2 | Other Character Elements. While it is true that density plays a role in community character, character also includes a number of other elements that have at least equal dignity. Indeed, open space, landscaping, streetscape, overhead utilities, signage, and architectural design greatly alter the appearance of commercial land uses with similar intensity, as shown in **Figure 4-3, Character Elements**.

Figure 4-3, Character Elements



The top picture is a landscaped path through the Wal Mart parking lot in Englewood, Colorado. There are no overhead utilities, signage is limited, and there is public art in the parking lot.

The bottom picture is Wal Mart in Amite. The site has reasonable stormwater detention areas, but there is minimal landscaping in the parking lot, and the building is unadorned.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 4-4, Well-Designed Density



Pictured above (both photos) is Highlands Garden Village, a development that includes a variety of housing types, including affordable rental apartments, “co-housing,” single family homes of various types and sizes, condominiums, and assisted care living facilities for seniors.

The project is located on the former site of a small amusement park.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

For residential projects, the difference in the character of development of equal density can be even greater. Often a project with as much as twice the density of its neighbors can be designed to be a “good neighbor,” and in many cases, a “better neighbor” in terms of character than a poorly conceived plan at a density that is comparable to adjacent development. The landscaping, architecture, and streetscape are all factors that can be used by a skilled designer to achieve the desired character using a wide range of densities or housing types. *See Figure 4-4, Well-Designed Density* (on previous page).

This Chapter explains a system of planning based on character. This system approaches character at several different design-related perspectives. The first perspective is referred to as “state and scale.” State and scale have to do with the size and extent of a community. The second perspective is community form. Community form relates to how developed areas relate to each other and to their rural surroundings (if they have rural surroundings). The third perspective is community character, which has to do with the experience of the community “on the ground.” The classes and types of community character reflect – and drive – the residents’ lifestyle and the design of development.

3.0 | Community State and Scale

Community state and scale refers to the size and extent of a community. Generally, state and scale are measured on a continuum that ranges from rural (very low population and building density) to crossroads community to hamlet to village to town to city to metropolis. *See Figure 4-5, State and Scale.*

In Louisiana, any contiguous unincorporated land area with more than 200 residents may petition for a special election to incorporate.² Louisiana law classifies incorporated places as follows:

Municipal corporations shall be divided into three classes: cities, towns, and villages. Those having five thousand inhabitants or more are cities; those having less than five thousand but more than one thousand are towns; and those having one thousand or fewer inhabitants are villages.³

Figure 4-5, State and Scale

Rural Area	Crossroads Community	Hamlet	Village	Town	City	Metropolitan Area
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Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

² See Section 33:1, *et seq.*, Louisiana Revised Statutes (2007).

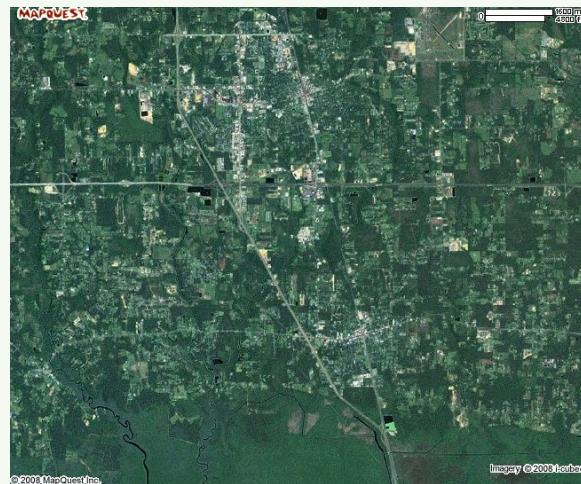
³ See Section 33:341, Louisiana Revised Statutes (2007).

Figure 4-6, Community Form



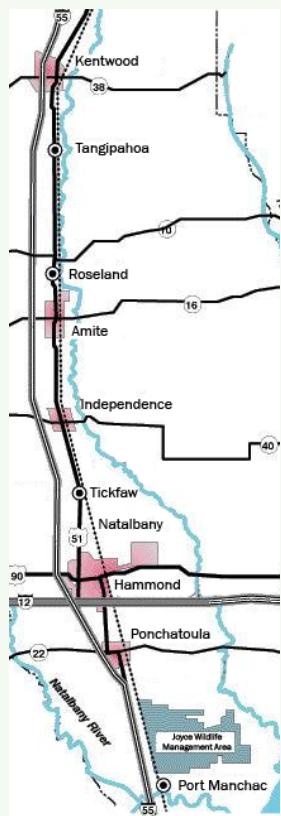
Amite is a free-standing community, surrounded by countryside.

Source: mapquest.com



Hammond and Ponchatoula are composite communities that appear to run together.

Figure 4-7,
Communities Along
Highway 51



Source: www.enlou.com

4.0 | Community Form

There are two basic forms of communities: **free-standing** and **composite**. A freestanding community is separated from its neighbors and is surrounded by rural areas. Free-standing communities have identifiable edges that contribute to their individual identity. By contrast, composite communities are formed when communities grow together, and become relatively difficult to identify individually. See **Figure 4-6, Community Form**.

Tangipahoa Parish includes both forms of communities. From north to south, Kentwood, Tangipahoa, Independence, and Tickfaw are free-standing communities, although growth of the unincorporated places of Genessee and Natalbany will likely ultimately connect Tickfaw to Hammond along the Highway 51 corridor. The towns of Roseland and Amite are mostly free-standing, but growth on the north side of Amite is reaching the southern boundary of Roseland, along the Highway 51 and Duncan/Holloway Road corridors. See **Figure 4-7, Communities Along Highway 51**.

Hammond sits at the crossroads of Interstate 55 and Interstate 12. It is also crisscrossed by Highways 51 and 190. These major thoroughfares tend to attract development. Therefore, it is not surprising that Hammond is quickly evolving into a composite community with Ponchatoula to the South; Natalbany, Genessee, and ultimately Tickfaw, to the North. Growth along the I-12 corridor will also likely result in bringing the fast-growing Robert area into the Hammond composite community.

5.0 | Community Character Classification and Type

Community character relates to the visual balance between the natural and built environments. It, too is a continuum. It ranges from the most intense urban center to the pristine natural area. For the purposes of this Plan, there are three broad-brush “classifications” of community character: urban, suburban, and rural. Within these “classifications” are several character “types” that describe a finer grain of community character experience. See **Figure 4-8, Community Character Continuum**.

Figure 4-8, Community Character Continuum



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

5.0.1 | Urban Character Classification. The “urban character” classification, in its most general sense, represents environments that are visually dominated by man-made elements; that is, buildings, streets, parking areas, and other structures (like public art, outbuildings, water towers, etc.). Although in this classification man-made features always dominate the visual experience, the “urban character” classification represents a continuum from more to less visual dominance of man-made features. Along that continuum are two character types: true urban character and auto-urban character.

5.0.1.1 | True Urban Character. The **true urban** character type is “architectural,” that is, it is defined by buildings and the sense of enclosure in the outdoor spaces that the buildings create. Landscaping in urban areas usually takes the form of relatively small gardens or sodded areas, planters, and regularly-spaced street trees. Such landscaping is generally intended to compliment the buildings, rather than hide them. The open spaces in urban areas are not “wide open,” as would be the case in a rural environment. Rather, urban open spaces have well defined edges (usually buildings and streets, but sometimes water bodies or rail corridors), and an architectural, rather than a natural, character. Such

spaces include courtyards, plazas and squares, and landscaped medians, and may also include the narrow front yards of urban single-family homes.

True urban character is “pedestrian friendly” because streets are well connected and blocks are relatively short; a variety of uses are located close together (making walking trips more productive); there is generally some protection from sun and the elements by way of awnings, arcades, street trees, and the like; and perhaps most importantly, the walk provides a worthwhile experience for the pedestrian in terms of being around other people and seeing interesting things, like shop window displays or architectural details. Although the “New Urbanist” movement embraces these characteristics, they are, in fact, nothing new at all. Most of Tangipahoa Parish’s municipalities had these characteristics by the late 1800s.

Figure 4–9, True Urban Versus Auto-Urban Character



The top photo shows the “true urban” character of downtown Hammond.

The bottom photo shows the “auto-urban” character outside of downtown Hammond, driving toward I-55.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

5.0.1.2 | Auto-Urban Character. With the proliferation of the automobile as the predominant form of transportation in the mid- to late-twentieth century, traditionally urban uses scattered along streets that were designed to move large numbers of cars. A new character type emerged, which instead of being largely oriented to the pedestrian, was oriented to the movement and parking of cars. This Plan refers to this character type as **auto-urban**.

Like true urban character, auto-urban character is visually dominated by man-made features. The difference is that many of the features are there for the convenience of cars; for example, wider streets and paved parking in front yards. Moreover, since the environment is typically experienced from inside a vehicle traveling at 30 or more miles per hour, auto-urban commercial uses typically want signage that can be readily recognized from a distance. The impact of these factors on community character are shown in **Figure 4–9, True Urban Versus Auto-Urban Character**.

Open space in auto-urban environments is generally larger-scale than open spaces in urban environments. Auto-urban open spaces typically include drainage basins and swales, landscaped medians, green spaces in parking areas, green spaces in front yards of homes and businesses, and neighborhood parks. Unlike open spaces in places with a true urban character, open spaces in auto-urban environments are usually not well-defined by buildings or other man-made vertical elements. They are also not typically well-organized to create a “sense of place.” Moreover, true to the auto-dominated nature of

the character type, the few auto-urban public open spaces that are used by people (*e.g.*, parks) are typically destinations that are reached by car.

All that said, and although in Tangipahoa Parish most of the auto-urban development has resulted in the “uglification” of commercial corridors, ugliness is not part of the definition of auto-urban character. Indeed, despite the existing condition in the Parish, the auto-urban character type is not meant to be pejorative. It is possible to develop auto-urban areas that are well-designed, functional, and attractive. This fact is especially important because as a practical matter, the dominance of the automobile as a key mode of transportation in Tangipahoa Parish for the foreseeable future cannot be brushed aside. Moreover, while the appearance of auto-urban corridors could probably be improved, there does not appear to be a critical mass of economic energy in the Parish to support redevelopment of its auto-urban commercial areas into intense, mixed-use, transit-oriented “nodes.”

5.0.2 | Suburban Character Classification. Generally, the suburban character classification is characterized by a more even visual balance between vegetation and buildings. There are two types of character within the suburban classification: **suburban** and **suburban estate**.

5.0.2.1 | Suburban Character. The **suburban** character type is experienced as a relatively even balance of man-made and natural features; or, put another way, as a balance between “building mass” and “green mass.” Landscaped open space that is visible from the public street is perhaps the single most important determinant of suburban character. Landscaping (generally in the form of street trees), not buildings, provides enclosure and definition to the street. See **Figure 4-10, Suburban Character Type**.

Related to the significance of landscaped open space is another physical distinction between the suburban and the urban (or auto-urban) character types. That is the intensity of the use (or the magnitude of the activity) of land, and the resulting potential impact of the use of one lot on the use of another. Suburban land is less intensively used than urban land, with more landscaping and lower-scale buildings than in urban settings.

Historically, suburban environments have been valued as an escape from more intensive urban settings. In Tangipahoa Parish, many residents in and around the municipalities were attracted to their neighborhoods by large lots, big trees, peace, and quiet.

**Figure 4-10,
Suburban Character Type**



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

5.0.2.2 | Suburban Estate Character. The **suburban estate** character type is similar to the suburban character type. However, it is characterized by larger lots (typically more than three acres). In the suburban estate character type, buildings are apparent, yet subordinate to landscaping in the visual environment.

The suburban estate character type mixes suburban character with rural character, with rural street sections, large open spaces within developments, rural fence types (like post and rail) or hedgerows to divide properties, preservation or planting of native vegetation along property boundaries, and generous building setbacks on all sides. See **Figure 4-11, Suburban Estate Character Type**.



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

5.0.3.1 | Countryside Character. The **countryside** character type represents that part of the rural character classification in which buildings and the built environment have the most significant impact on the landscape. The countryside character type is more dominated by open space and the natural landscape than suburban estate. See **Figure 4-12, Countryside Character Type**.

Typically, countryside areas include sparse residential acreages, with are often located in ex-urban areas. The emergence of countryside areas often brings an ultimate transition from rural to suburban character. If the countryside character type is to be maintained, then very low gross densities have to be maintained, and buildings should be screened from adjacent rights-of-way by extensive landscaping.

Yet even though very low gross densities are necessary to maintain countryside character, relatively high net densities (homes per buildable acre of land) can be consistent with the countryside character, provided that the built area is surrounded by a large amount of open space and screened from the public right-of-way by extensive landscaping. Put another way, a cluster of homes on two acre lots that are surrounded by common open space, set back a good distance from the public right-of-way to reduce their visual impact, and screened by landscaping to further reduce their visual impact, is consistent with countryside character. So is a development of 20,000

Figure 4-12,
Countryside Character Type



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

square-foot lots, provided that even more open space and landscaping are provided. Finally, small hamlets (surrounded by vast open spaces) that provide a mix of housing and services have traditionally been a part of the countryside.

5.0.3.2 | Agricultural Character. The agricultural character type is less influenced by buildings than the countryside character type. Residential buildings in this character type are relatively few and far between (or are tightly clustered and set back from the street). Farmsteads are often (but not always) set back far from the public right-of-way and surrounded by trees so that they are almost invisible to passers by. In agricultural areas, buildings do not generally materially interfere with the perception of open space. See **Figure 4-13, Agricultural Character Type.**

That said, some large structures are natural components of the rural environment. Some of these structures, such as barns and grain elevators, are visually related to the surrounding agricultural use. Others are community-serving uses such as churches, or rural industries such as sawmills and packing sheds. With respect to other man-made aspects of the rural environment, areas with rural character generally have modest public infrastructure: narrow streets, few public services, limited water supply, limited fire protection, and on-site wastewater treatment.

5.0.3.3 | Natural Character. The natural character type has virtually no buildings or structures. It is essentially land that is left in its natural, undisturbed state. Examples of natural areas include forests, open (not cultivated) fields, wetlands, and water bodies. See **Figure 4-14, Natural Character Type.**

5.0.4 | Special Classifications. There are several special use-based districts that do not lend themselves well to the community character scale. These districts are special because they are typically difficult to “fit” into any other character district without introducing significant incompatibility. In Tangipahoa Parish, the special districts are: airport, industrial, and institutional.

Although all of these uses are often located in rural areas to prevent them from interfering with suburban and urban communities, they are not part of the character and function of the traditional agricultural landscape (except those that process agricultural products). Therefore, they are treated separately by this Comprehensive Plan.

Figure 4-13,
Agricultural Character Type



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 4-14, Natural Character Type



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

All of the special districts are needed in the Parish. The community character strategy to address them is to buffer them from other districts, and improve the quality of development within these special districts.

6.0 | Existing Character

6.0.1 | Generally. Maps 4-1 to 4-15, **Existing Character Atlas**, show the existing character for the Parish and its municipalities. In these maps, the level of detail in the municipalities was not the same as for the Parish. That is because the main purpose of this Plan is not to get detailed information on, nor provide detailed recommendations for, the incorporated places. Rather, the purpose is to allow future planning in the Parish to be sensitive to the general conditions in the municipalities, and to encourage the Parish and the municipalities to cooperate with regard to land use policy, regulation, and service provision.

All four community character classifications are found in the unincorporated Parish, but the “urban” classification is entirely represented by the auto-urban character type (“true urban” is present only in the historic downtown areas of many of the Parish’s municipalities). Within the four community character classifications, the following character types that are mapped in the Parish are shown on **Maps 4-1 to 4-15, Existing Character Atlas**, and in **Table 4-1, Existing Character Types**.

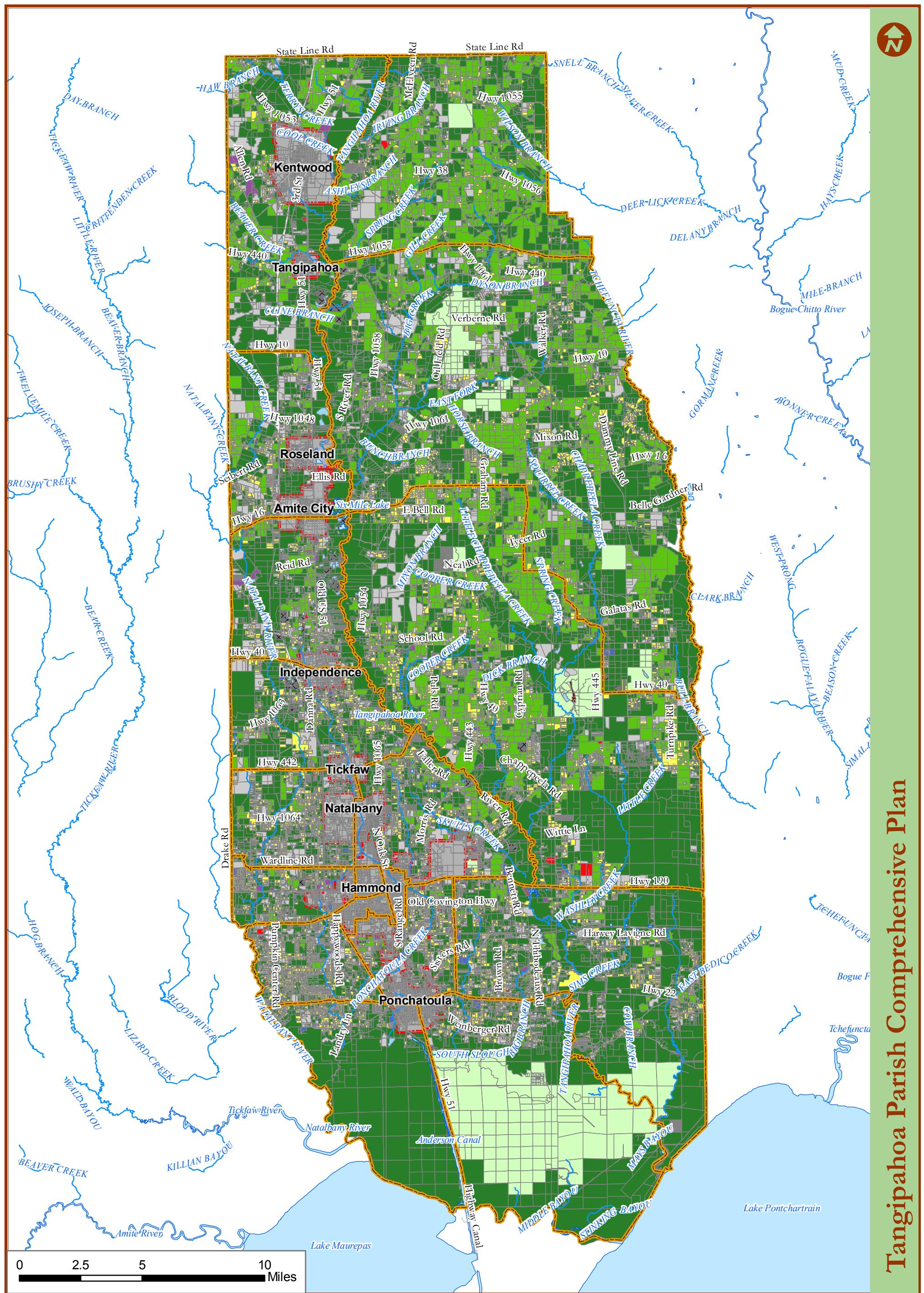
Table 4-1:
Existing Community Character Types

Classification	Type	Sub-type	Mapped for
RURAL	Natural	Vacant	Parish
		Vacant, Forested	Parish
		Water	Parish
	Agriculture	Dairy, Crops, Livestock	Parish
		Mining	Parish
	Countryside	State and Regional Parks	Parish
SUBURBAN	Suburban Estate	n/a	Parish
	Suburban	n/a	Parish
URBAN	Auto Urban	Residential	Parish
		Manufactured Homes	Parish
		Commercial	Parish and Municipalities
		University	Municipalities
		n/a	Municipalities
SPECIAL	Airport	n/a	Parish and Municipalities
	Industrial	n/a	Parish and Municipalities
	Institutional	n/a	Parish
OTHER ⁴	Municipal Residential	n/a	Municipalities

⁴ “Other” is not a character classification, but a very generalized indication of land use within the municipalities, provided to facilitate coordination among the plans of the Parish and its municipalities. “Municipal Residential” refers to several character types within the municipalities, including auto urban residential, suburban residential, and suburban estate residential.



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan



Legend

Existing Land Use	Estate	Airports	Census Tract Boundary
Vacant	Yellow	Maroon	Black line
Vacant, Forested	Yellow	Mining	Black line with diagonal hatching
Agriculture	Light Green	Auto-Urban Residential	Orange
Parks	Light Green	Industrial	Purple
		Manufactured Homes	Light Orange
		Institutional	Blue
		Auto-Urban Commercial	Red
		Places	Red cross symbol
		Parcel Boundaries	Blue cross symbol
		Major Waterbodies	Blue wavy line
		Rivers and Streams	Blue wavy line with red outline
		Streets	Black line



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan

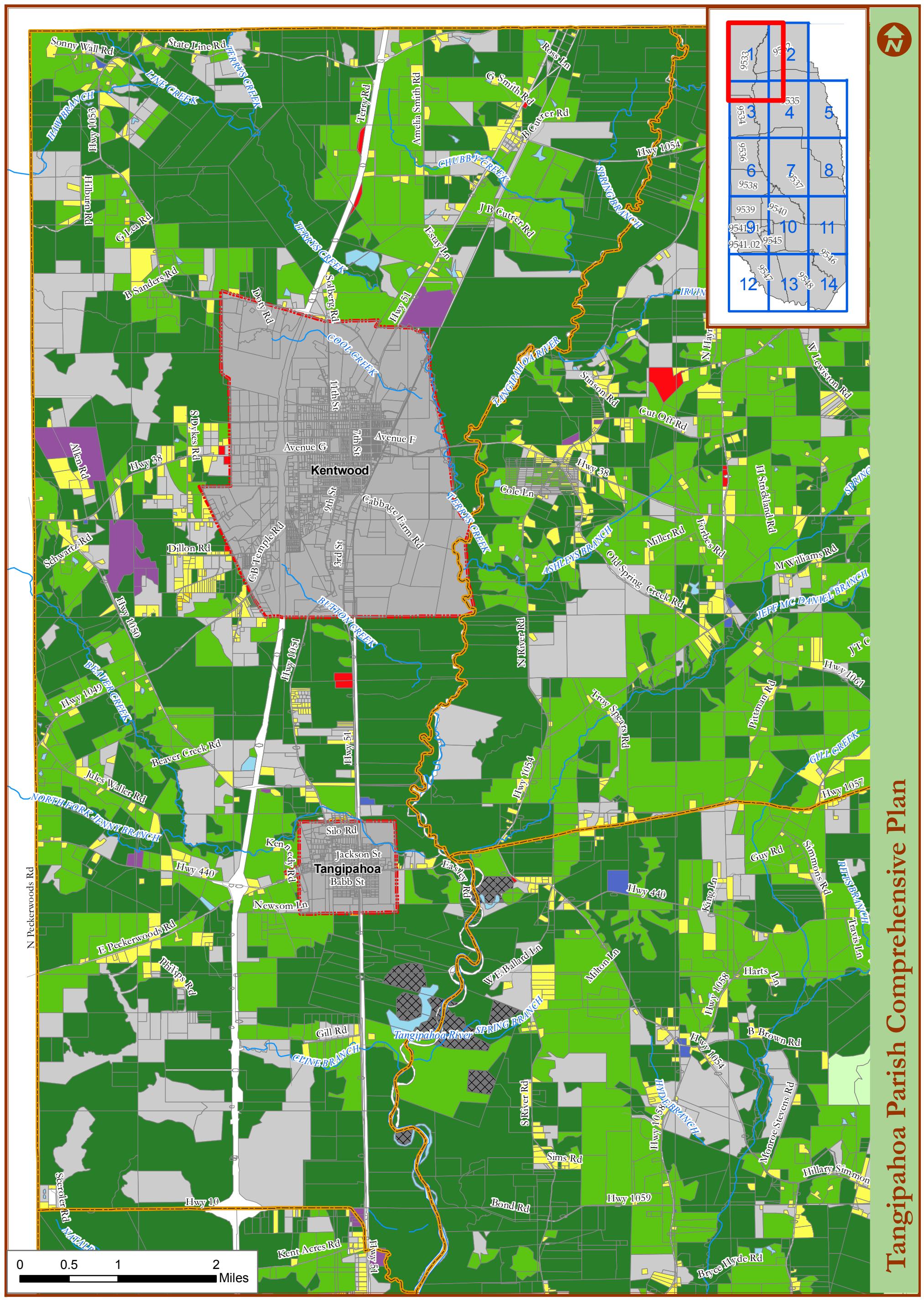


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Map 4-1 Existing Character Atlas



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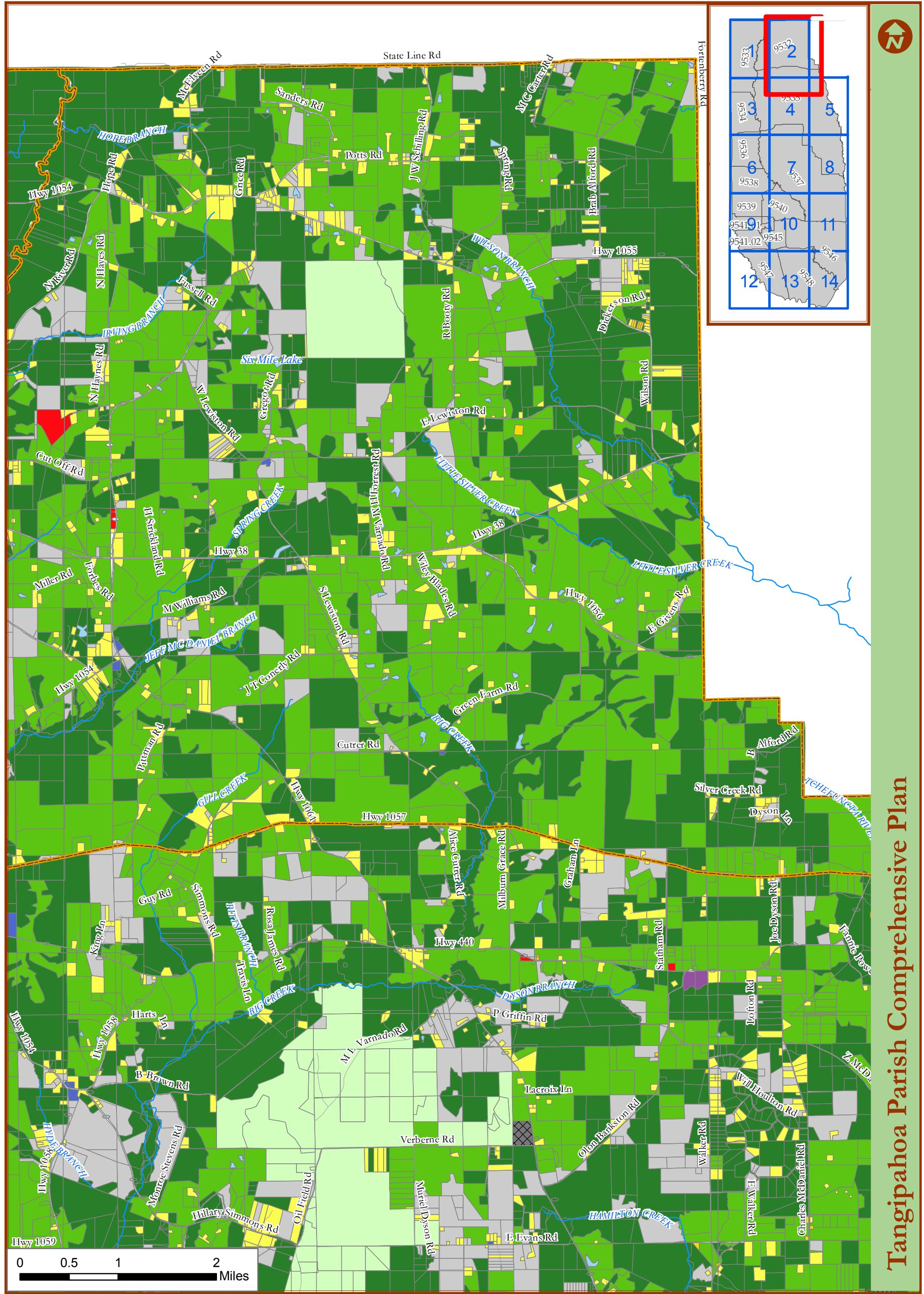
Map 4-2 Existing Character Atlas
Area 1



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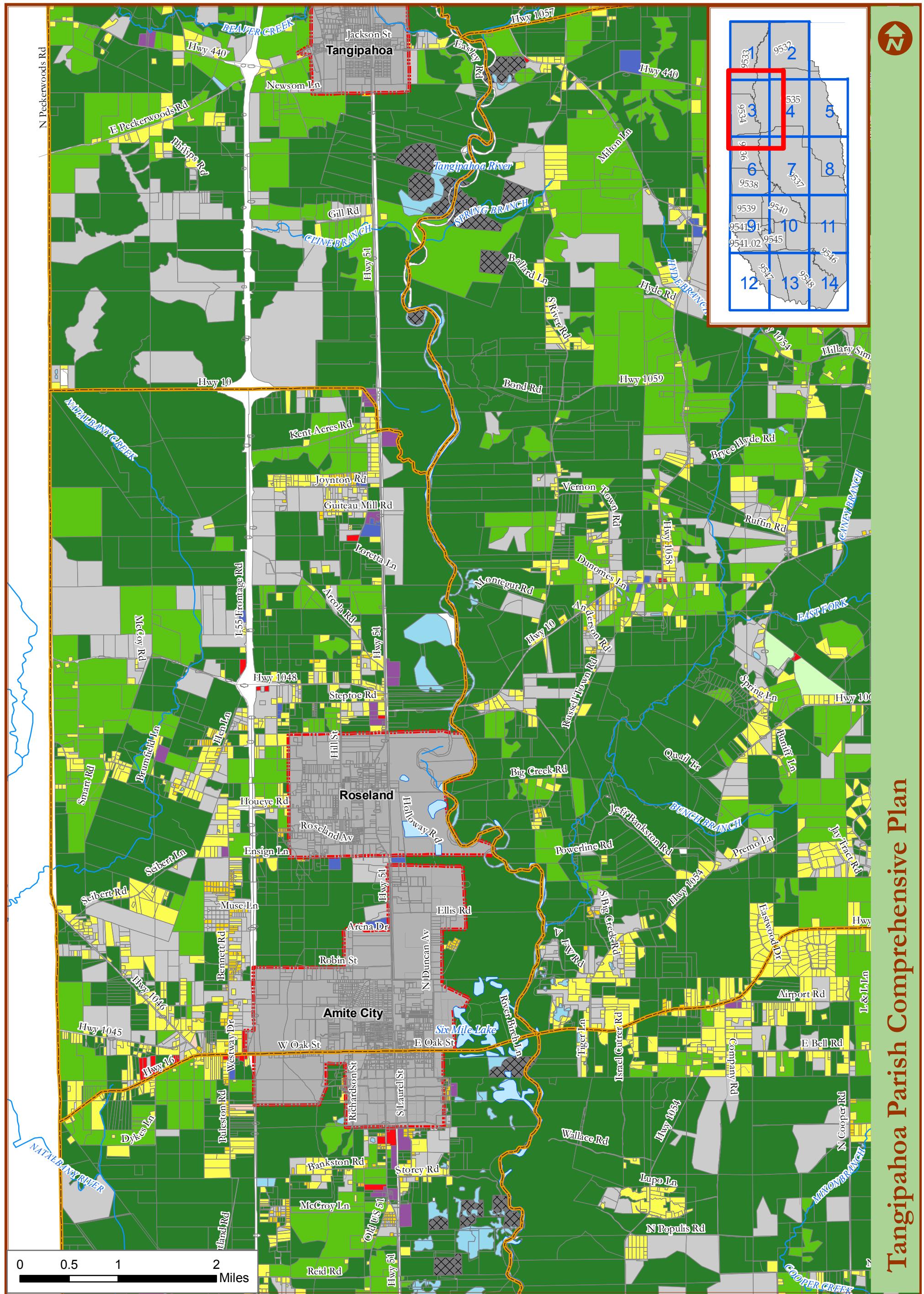
Map 4-3 Existing Character Atlas
Area 2



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Legend

Existing Land Use	Estate	Airports
Vacant	Suburban	Mining
Vacant, Forested	Auto-Urban Residential	Places
Agriculture	Industrial	Parcel Boundaries
Parks	Manufactured Homes	Institutional
	Auto-Urban Commercial	Major Waterbodies
		Water
		Rivers and Streams
		Streets



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan

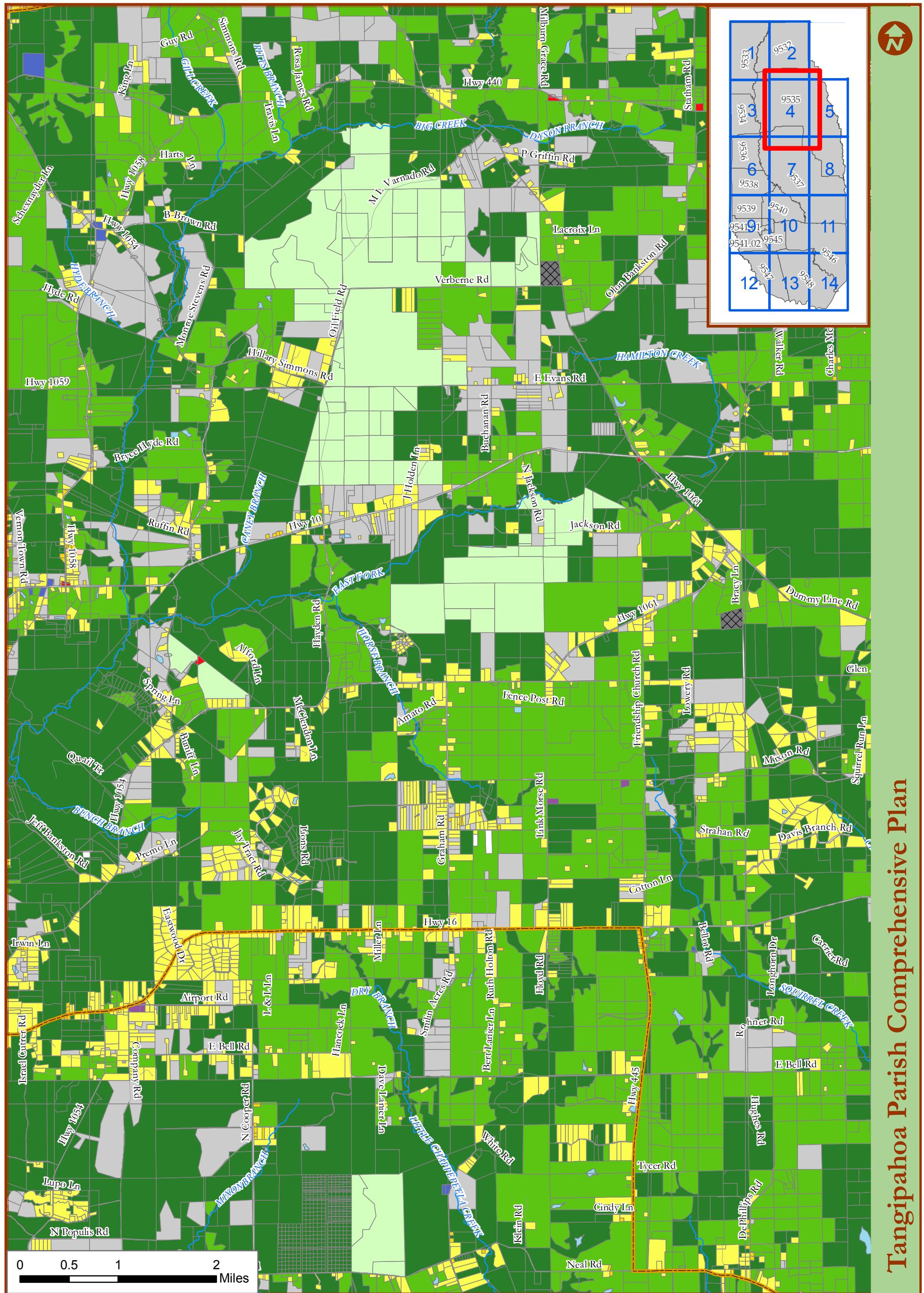
Map 4-4 Existing Character Atlas
Area 3



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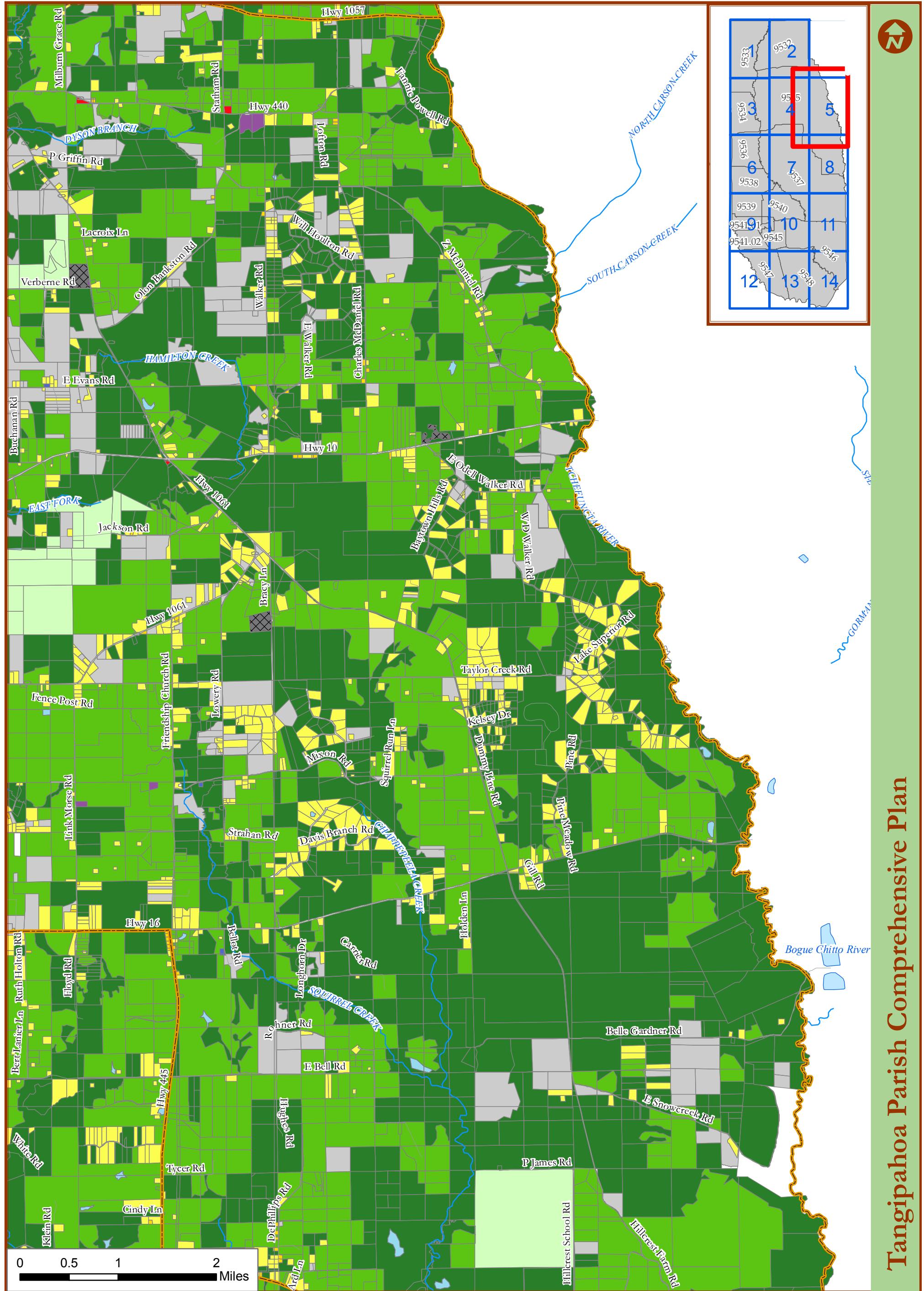


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Map 4-5 Existing Character Atlas
Area 4



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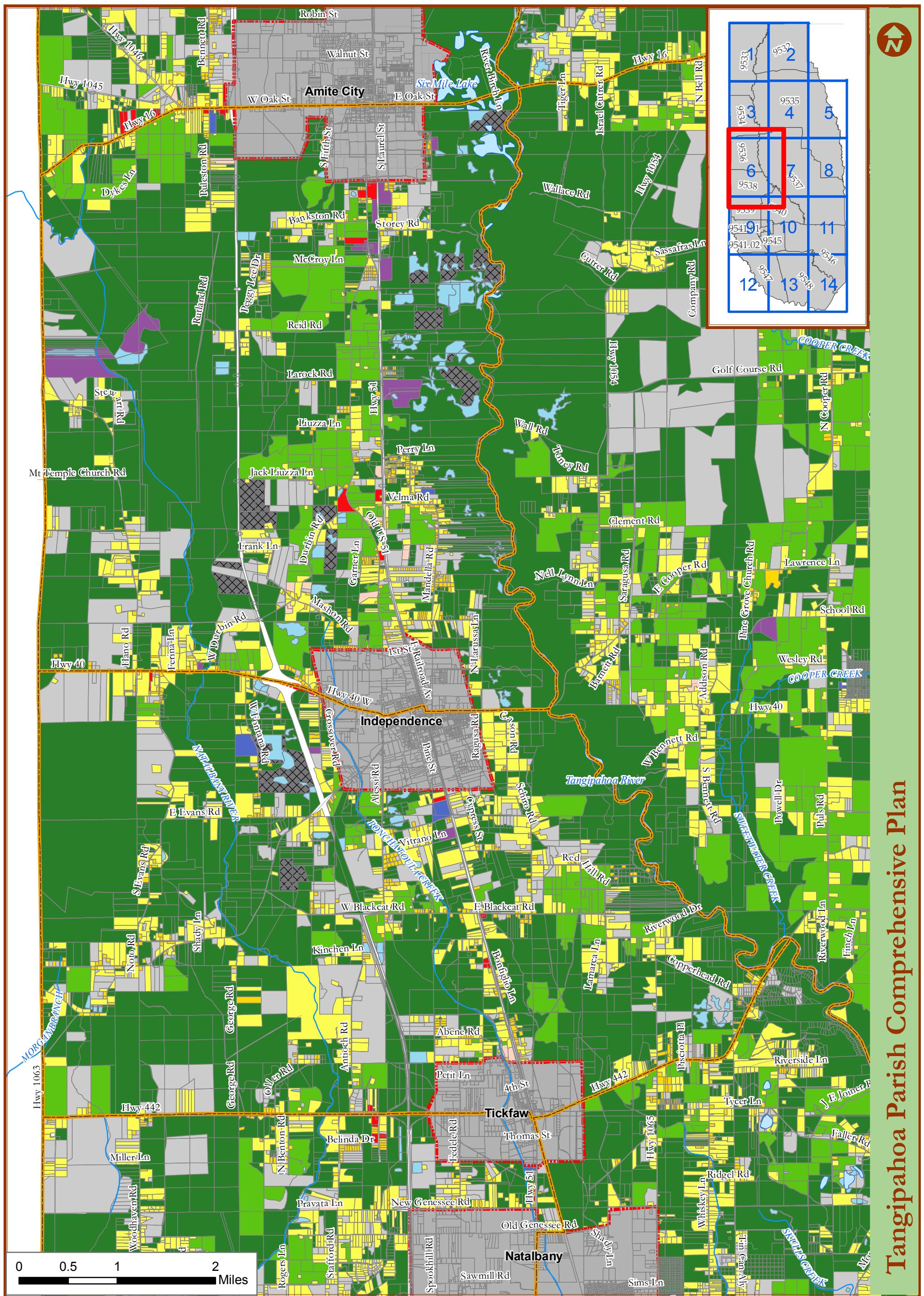
Map 4-6 Existing Character Atlas Area 5



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Legend

Existing Land Use	Estate	Airports	Census Tract Boundary
Vacant	Suburban	Mining	Places
Vacant, Forested	Auto-Urban Residential	Industrial	Parcel Boundaries
Agriculture	Manufactured Homes	Institutional	Major Waterbodies
Parks	Auto-Urban Commercial	Water	Rivers and Streams
			Streets



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan

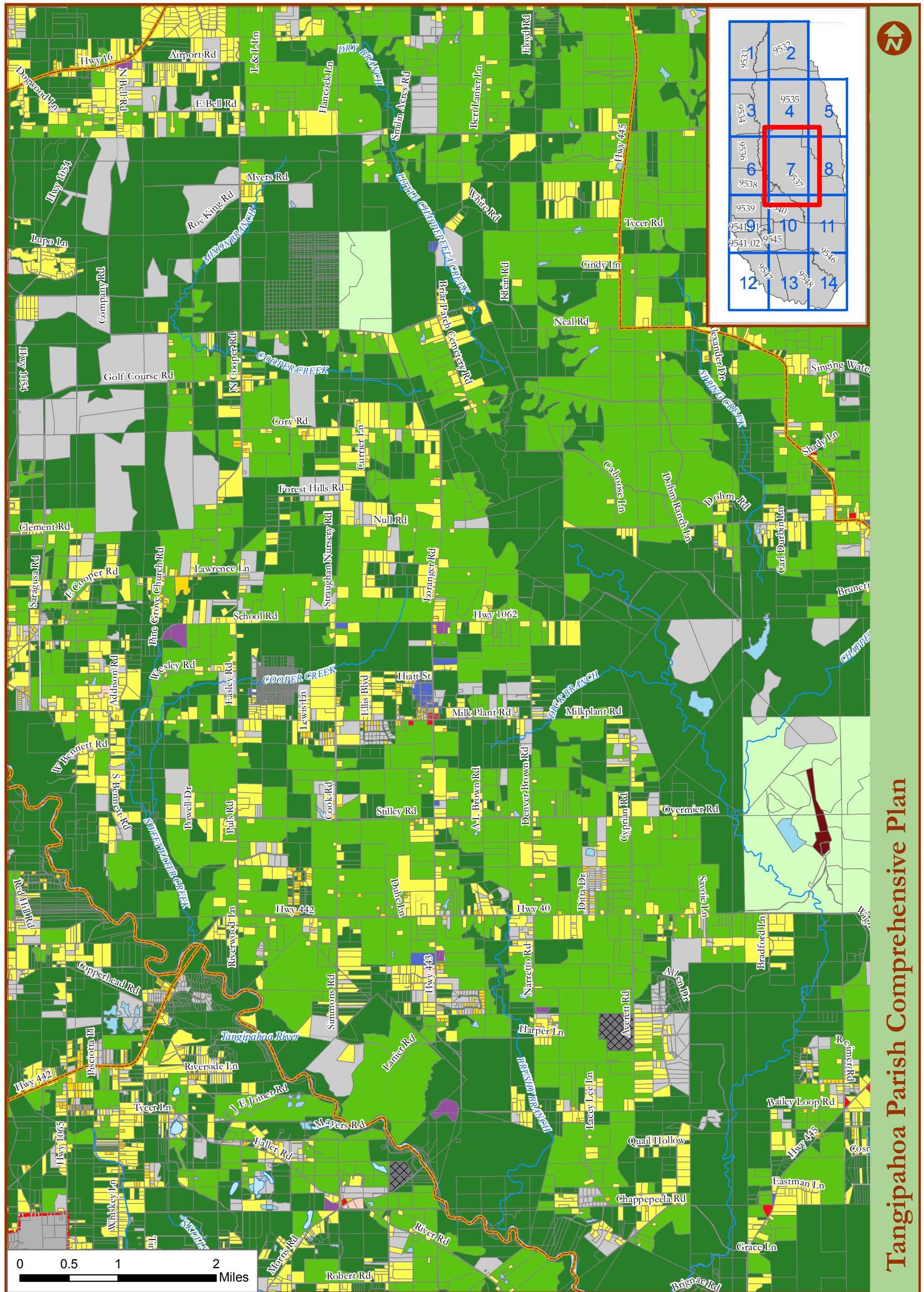
Map 4-7 Existing Character Atlas
Area 6



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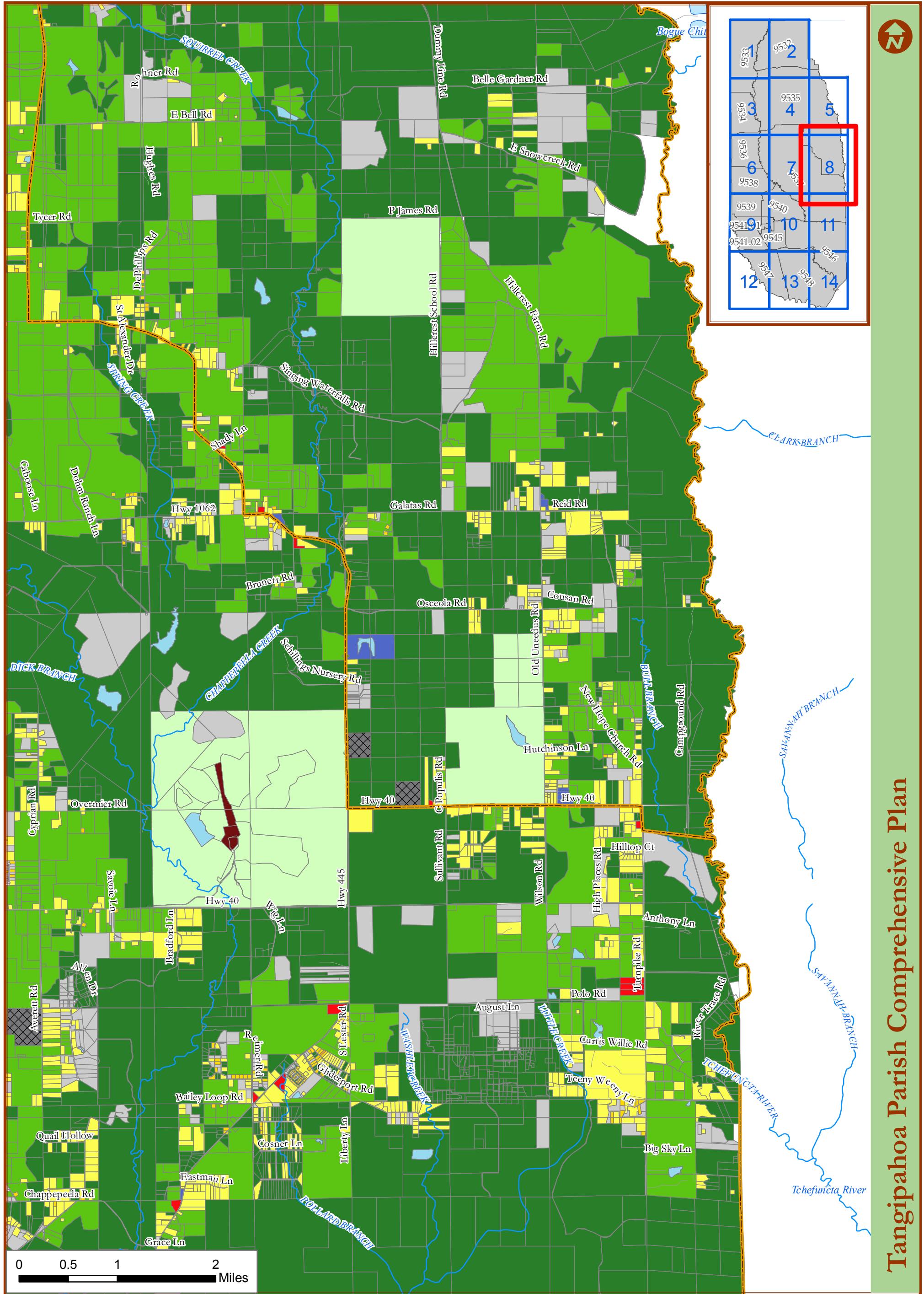
Map 4-8 Existing Character Atlas
Area 7



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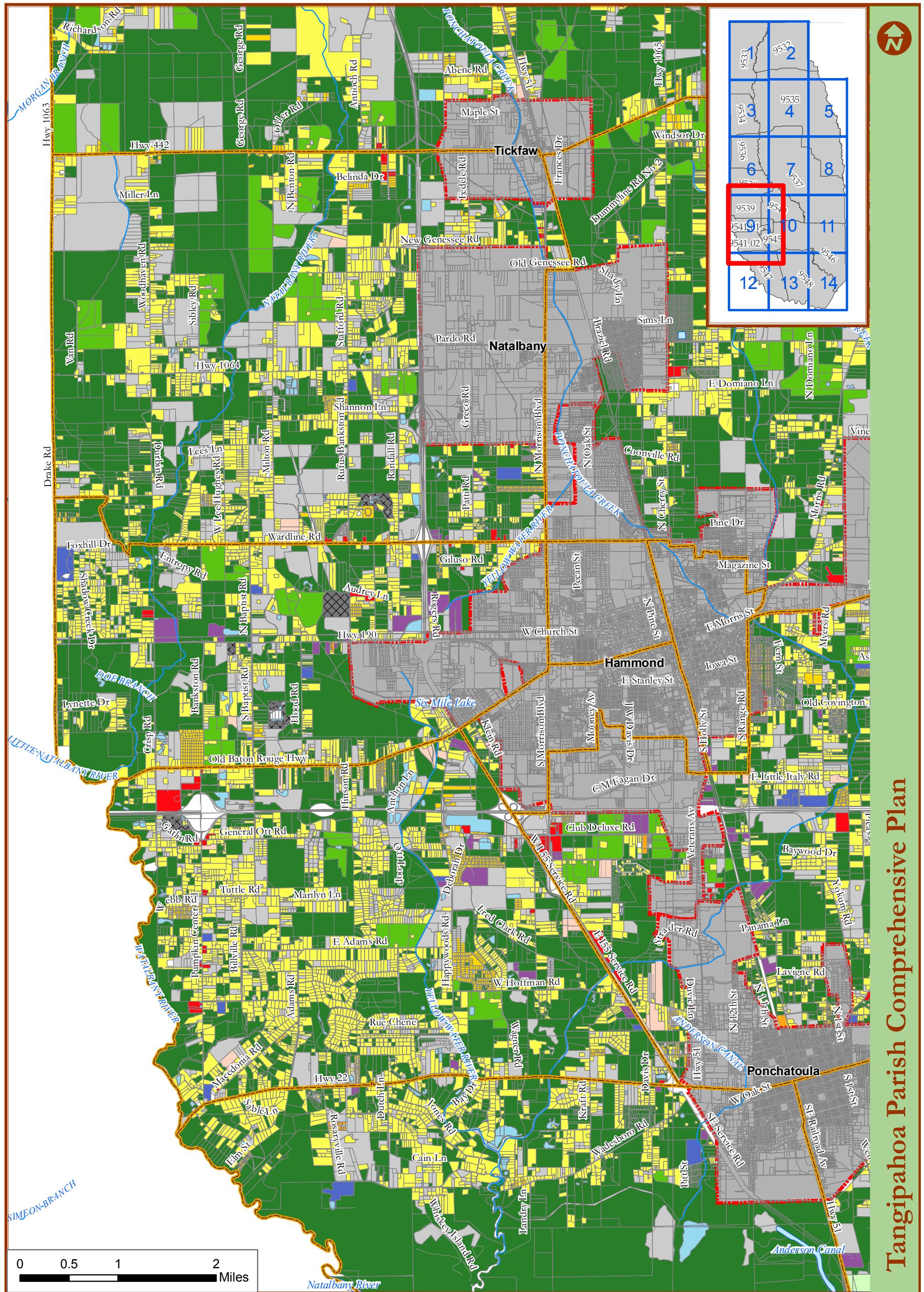
Map 4-9 Existing Character Atlas
Area 8



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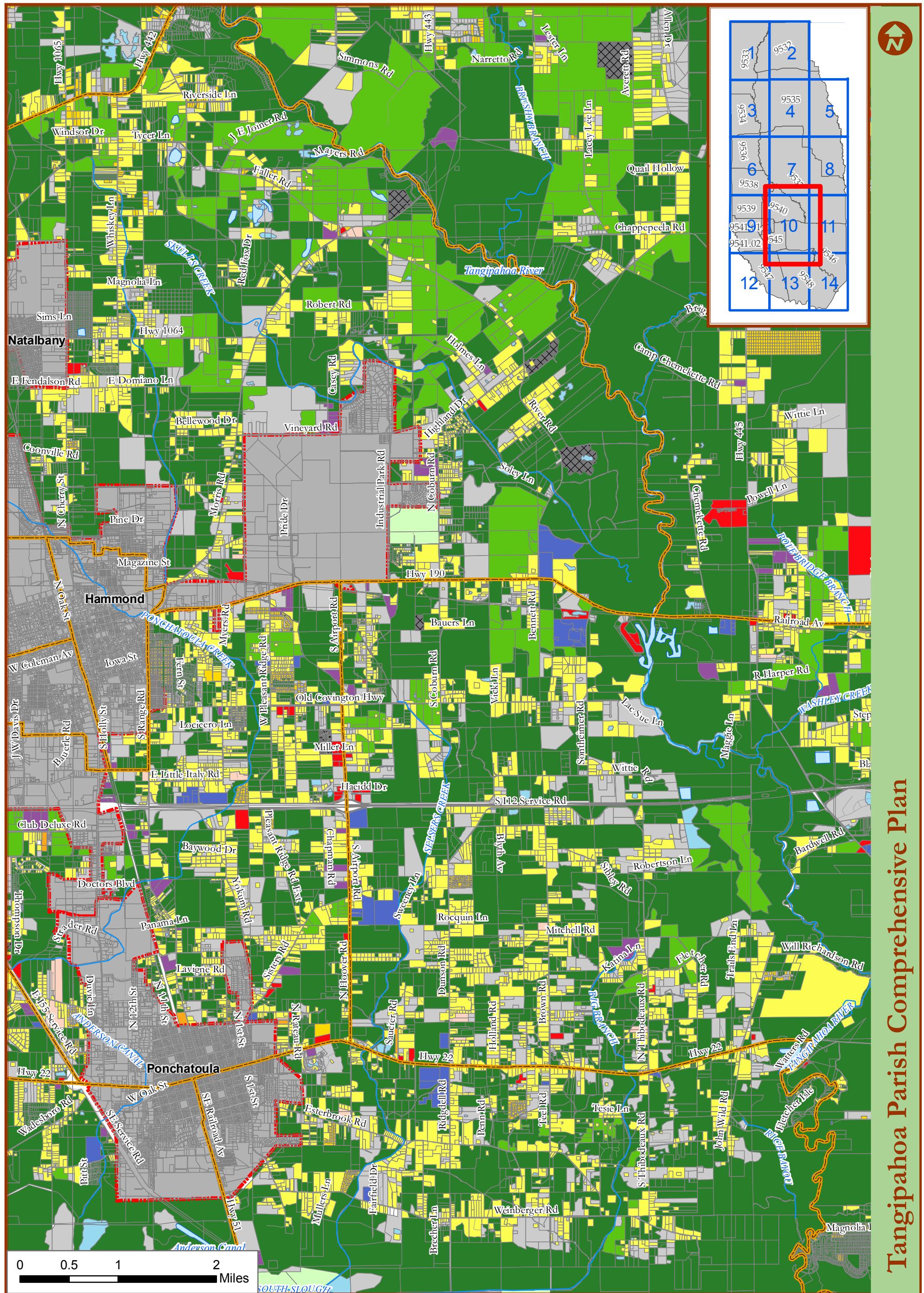
Map 4-10 Existing Character Atlas
Area 9



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Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan



Legend

Existing Land Use	Estate	Airports	Census Tract Boundary
Vacant	Suburban	Mining	Places
Vacant, Forested	Auto-Urban Residential	Industrial	Parcel Boundaries
Agriculture	Manufactured Homes	Institutional	Major Waterbodies
Parks	Auto-Urban Commercial	Water	Rivers and Streams



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan

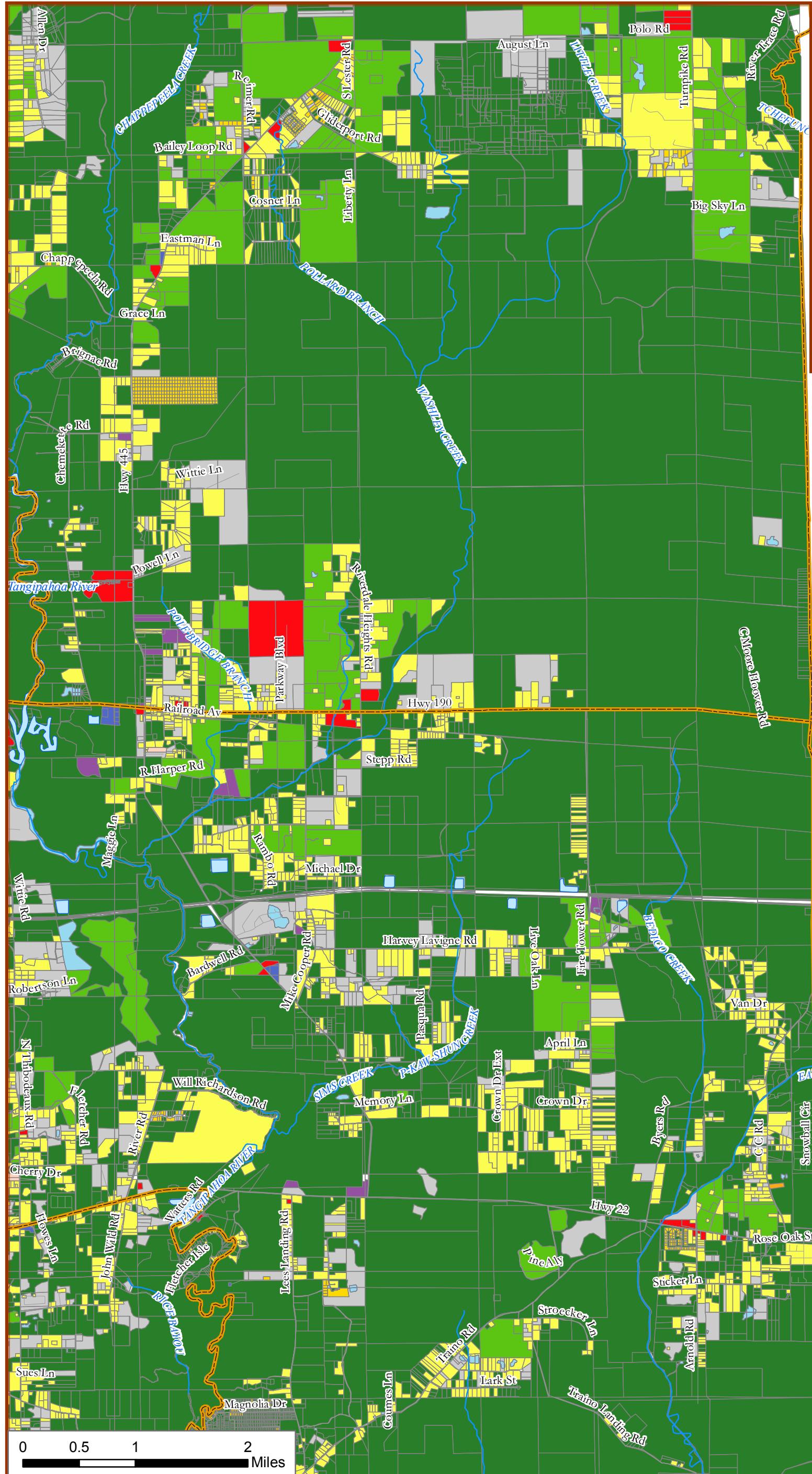
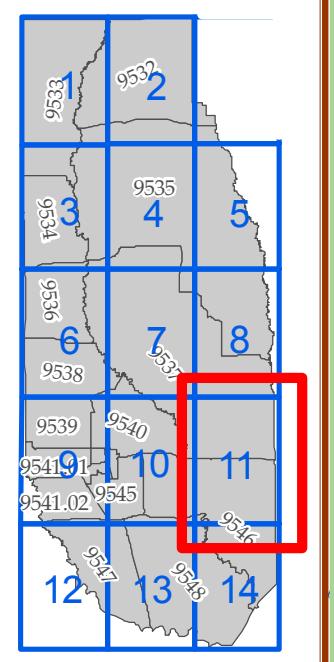
Map 4-11 Existing Character Atlas
Area 10



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Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan



Legend

Existing Land Use	Estate	Airports
Vacant	Suburban	Mining
Vacant, Forested	Auto-Urban Residential	Places
Agriculture	Industrial	Parcel Boundaries
Parks	Manufactured Homes	Institutional
	Auto-Urban Commercial	Major Waterbodies
		Water
		Rivers and Streams
		Streets



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan

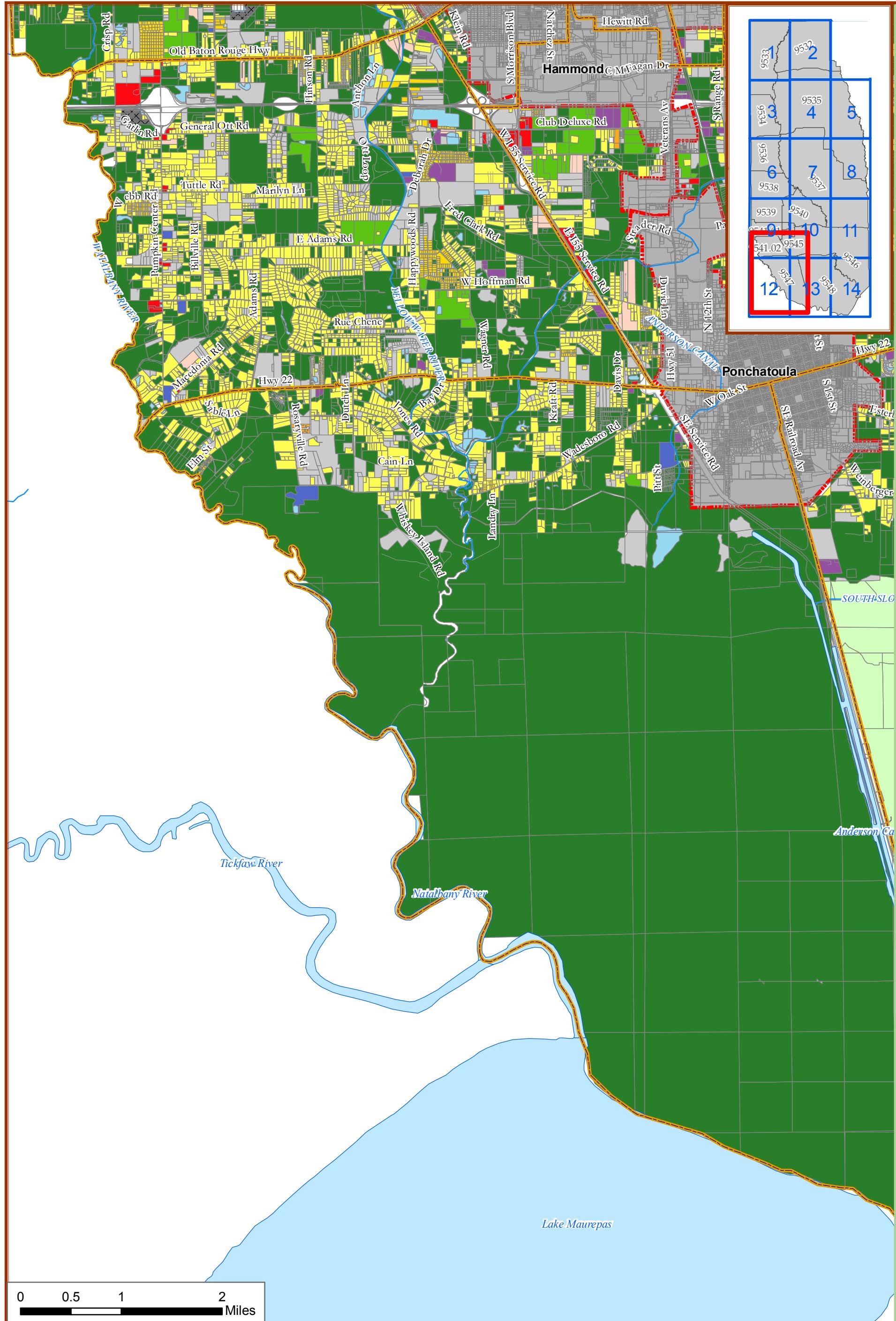
Map 4-12 Existing Character Atlas
Area 11



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Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan



Legend

Existing Land Use	Estate	Airports	Census Tract Boundary
Vacant	Yellow	Mining	Places
Vacant, Forested	Light Yellow	Industrial	Parcel Boundaries
Agriculture	Green	Manufactured Homes	Major Waterbodies
Parks	Light Green	Auto-Urban Residential	Rivers and Streams
		Auto-Urban Commercial	Water
			Streets

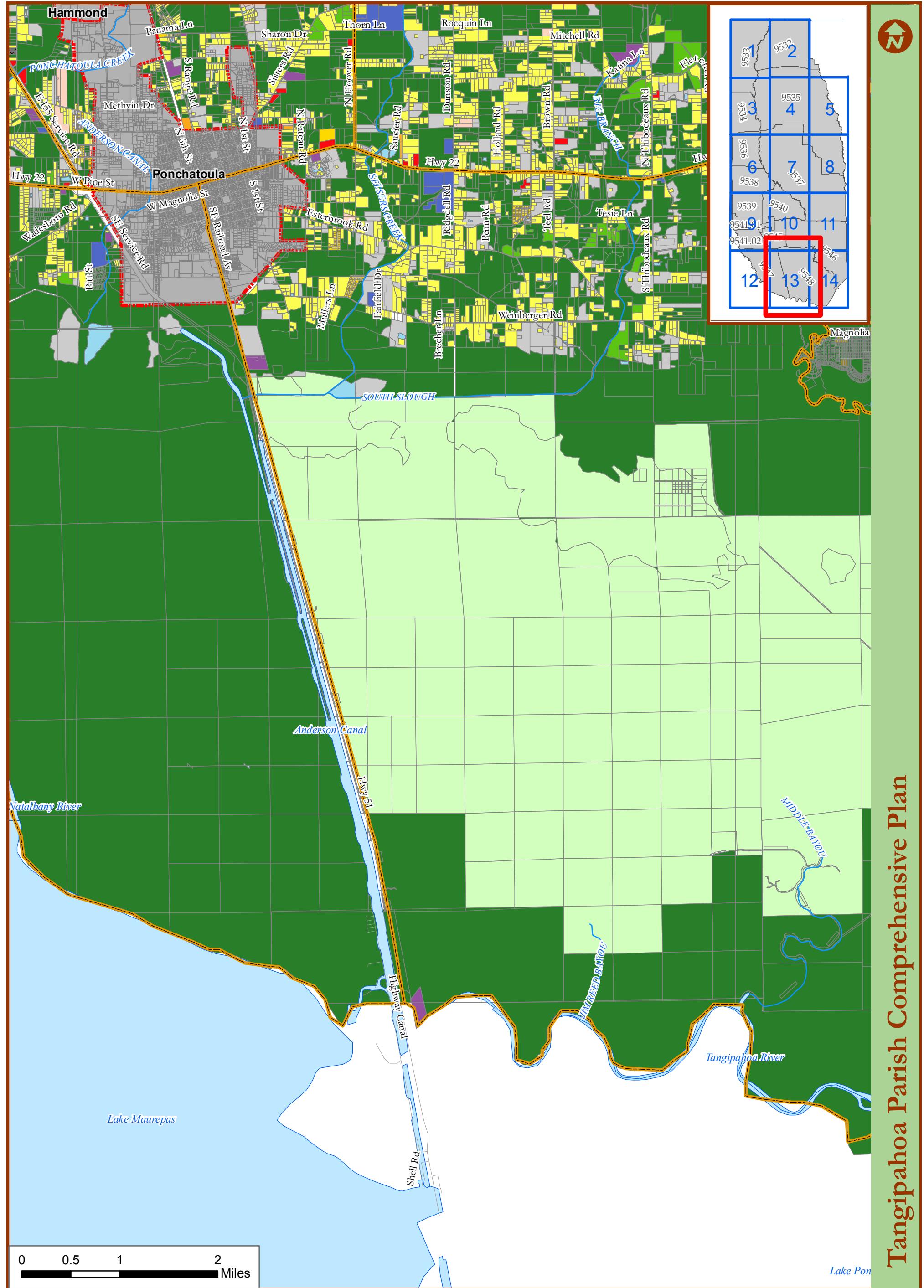


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Map 4-13 Existing Character Atlas
Area 12



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Map 4-14 Existing Character Atlas Area 13

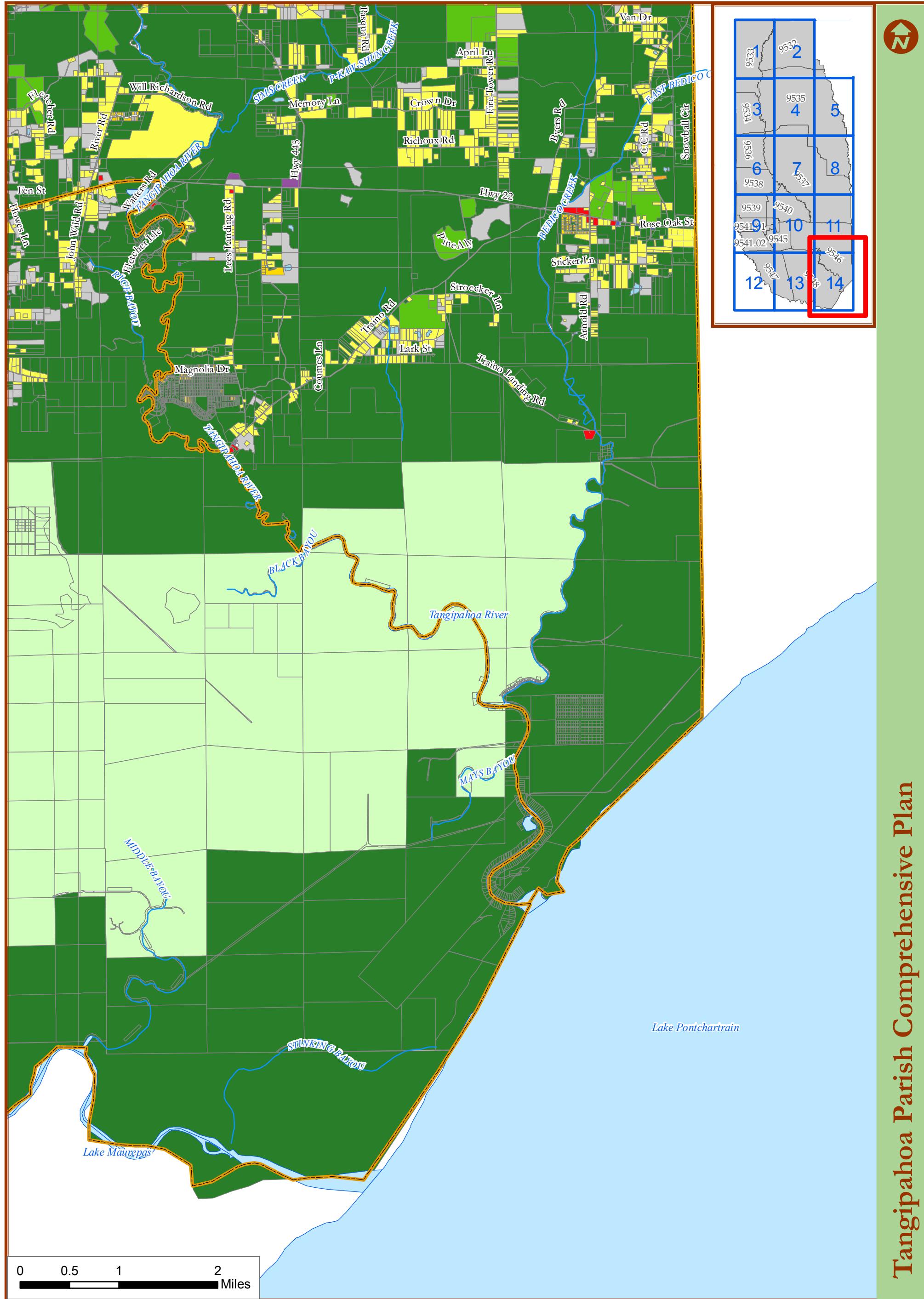


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Map 4-15 Existing Character Atlas
Area 14



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6.0.2 | Methodology. Tangipahoa Parish is a large Parish, encompassing approximately 790 square miles of land and 33 square miles of water.⁵ Only five percent of the total area of the Parish is incorporated as cities, towns, and villages. Because the area of land covered by this Plan is so large, it was not possible to verify the character of each parcel on the ground. Instead, character classifications and types were first identified using aerial photography, parcel maps, and available maps of state and regional parks, and then the draft existing character maps were circulated to steering committee members for comment and revision.

At this level, residential areas were identified based on the presence of residential buildings on the available aerial photos. The character of those residential areas of the Parish was identified principally based on lot size, as indicated on the parcel maps. The relationship between lot size and existing character classification is shown in **Table 4-2, Existing Parish Residential Character Methodology**.

Table 4-2: Existing Parish Residential Character Methodology	
Character Type	Lot Size
Agriculture	More than 10 acres
Estate	1.2 to 9.99 acres
Suburban	Up to 1.2 acres; mobile home lots of 1 acre or more.
Auto Urban	Apartments, townhomes and most mobile home parks

Non-residential uses were identified on the aerial photos and available park maps, and classified according to their apparent use and condition (e.g., natural, agricultural, countryside, auto-urban commercial, auto-urban university, airport, industrial, and institutional).

The existing character maps were used to evaluate alternative growth strategies using the *Strategic Analysis: Vision Evaluation System* (“SAVES”), a growth modeling software package developed by Kendig Keast Collaborative to project the impacts of future growth on public facilities. The SAVES model counts and project housing units based on assumed gross densities, which correspond to the entries in **Table 4-2, Existing Parish Residential Character Methodology**. In order to develop an appropriate growth model, a two-acre home site was identified as “estate” on each 10+ acre parcel where there is an existing home. This identification allowed future land use changes from agricultural to residential to be evaluated, which provides a more accurate computation and projection of population and demand for dwelling units.

Since planning for the municipalities is beyond the scope of this Comprehensive Plan, a simplified set of classifications was used. The classifications used for municipalities, shown in **Table 4-1, Existing Community Character Types**, are intended to help

⁵ Source: U.S. Census 2000.

coordinate growth at the edges of the incorporated places within the Parish and to identify the location of the downtown core areas within the municipalities.

7.0 | Future Character

7.0.1 | Generally. A central objective of the Parish is to protect and enhance the Parish's rural character. Generally, the strategies to accomplish this objective are:

- ◆ Use the value that is created by agriculture, silviculture, countryside residential, and limited estate residential development to protect and reinforce the rural character of the unincorporated Parish;
- ◆ Cooperate with the municipalities to focus urban and suburban growth in the Southern part of the Parish (in the cities), and to a lesser extent in the freestanding cities and towns of the Northern parts of Parish;
- ◆ Ensure that the "megasite" develops with a critical mass of self-supporting, high-quality development that includes housing for the anticipated workforce; and
- ◆ Encourage the ultimate incorporation of the more densely populated unincorporated areas of the Parish.

To ensure that new development fits into the Parish's expectations with regard to community character and fiscal and environmental sustainability, the future character districts differ from the existing character districts. The future character types for the Parish are set out in **Table 4-3, Future Character Districts**, and on **Map 4-16, Future Character**.

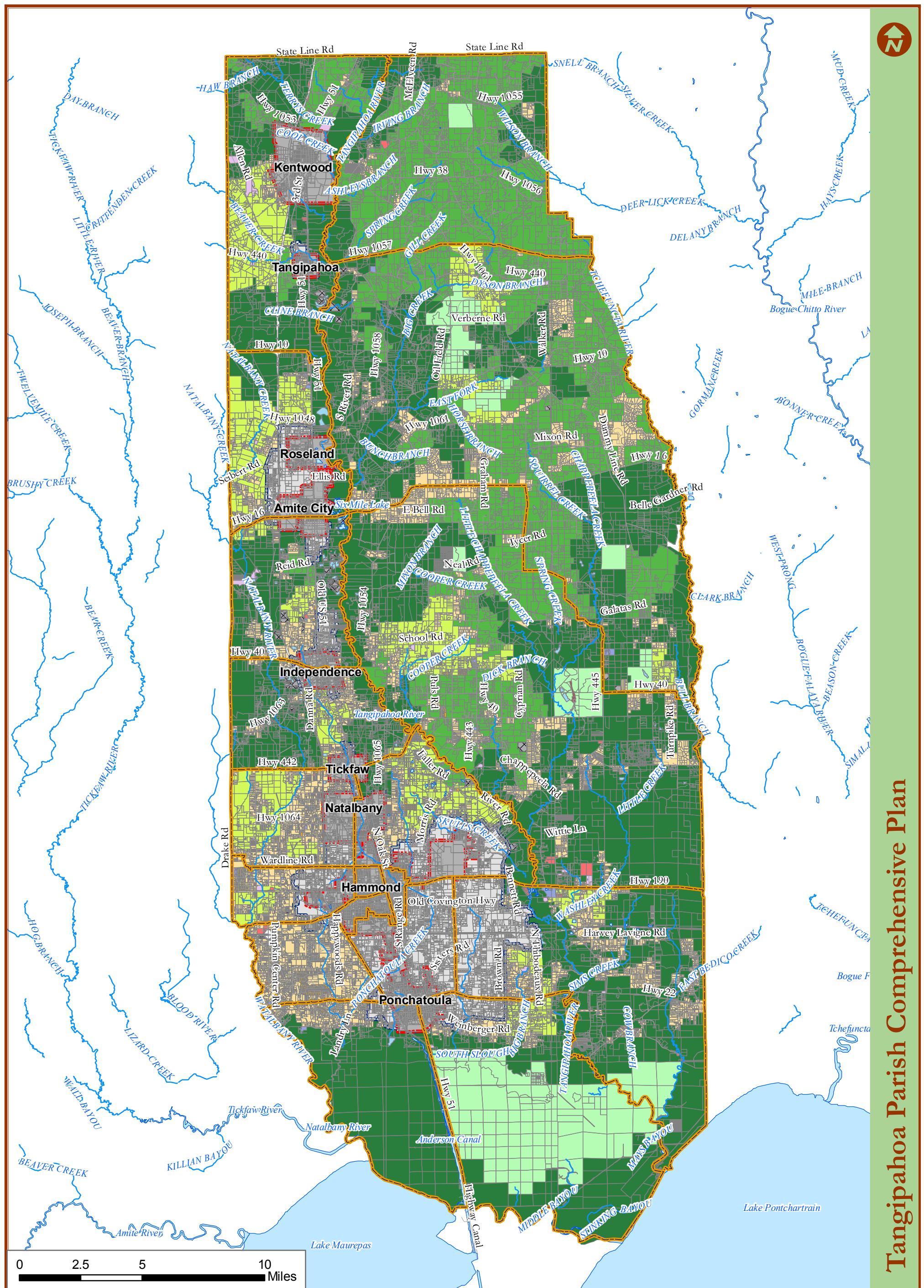
Table 4-3:
Future Character Districts

Classification	Type	Future Character District
RURAL	Agriculture	Forestry
		Agriculture
	Countryside	Residential
		State and Regional Parks
SUBURBAN	Estate	Estate
SPECIAL	Expansion Area	Expansion Area
	Megasite	New Community

7.0.2 | Forestry and Agriculture. The forestry and agriculture future character districts are intended to maintain the agricultural economy of the parish, which is predominately based on dairy, crops, and silviculture. Ideally, no residential uses other than for the farm operator and farm workers would be permitted within the forestry and agriculture districts. However, the Plan is intended to be practical, and recognizes that agriculture and forestry uses may need a development option. Therefore, residential uses are permitted, but are limited to cluster options that protect the rural character of the districts. The forestry district would be implemented with somewhat different provisions



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan

Map 4-16 Future Character



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Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana

than the agriculture district. The forestry district will provide for the industrial elements that support forestry, when they are located on a suitably sized parcel.

There are many residents of the Parish who prefer an “ex-urban” lifestyle. In some cases, the pattern of ex-urban development does not disrupt the agricultural economy. However, in other cases, ex-urban development is simply the first stage of urbanization, and the area that is developing in an ex-urban form ultimately transitions to an estate or suburban character. *See Figure 4-15, Borrowed Open Space* (next page). The existing character of ex-urban development in the Parish is generally countryside and estate.

7.0.3 | Countryside. The countryside district is an ex-urban residential district with the purpose of allowing country living and at the same time maintaining the area’s rural character and function. That is, countryside development would be scaled and buffered to permit surrounding land to be used actively for silviculture or agriculture.

7.0.4 | Estate. There are areas of the Parish where enough development has occurred to establish an estate character. Those existing patterns are recognized by the estate district, which is intended to promote or maintain estate character. Another purpose is to provide for development opportunities along the edges of municipalities, while ensuring that, during the period between development and annexation, they do not develop to an extent that would disproportionately stress Parish-provided services.

7.0.5 | Special Planning Areas. Finally, there are several areas of the Parish that need special planning. The first group of areas that need special planning includes the Parish’s named “places” and the areas on the fringes of the Parish’s municipalities. These places are more densely settled than the agricultural areas, but are not incorporated into Villages, Towns, or Cities. They include Robert, Natalbany, and Loranger, and the areas adjacent to the Parish’s municipalities. The “expansion area” district is intended to surround the municipalities and named “places,” and to provide a way to help maintain and enhance their identity (and prevent inefficient sprawl patterns) by, to the extent possible, helping them keep a free-standing community form.

Comprehensive Plan

Figure 4-15, Borrowed Open Space

We perceive open space without respect to property lines.

Therefore, in a large lot subdivision, neighbors “borrow” open space from each other. That is, if the rear yard is 50 feet deep, then back yard neighbors each “borrow” 50 feet of open space from each other – perceiving 100 feet of open space between buildings.

Consequently, when a subdivision is located next to a farm for forest, the residents of the subdivision “borrow” the open space from the farm or forest owner. They don’t pay the owner for it, but they enjoy its value, and often strenuously object to the development of the farm or the clear cutting of the forest on the grounds that it will “destroy the character of their neighborhood.”

When the farm develops, some of the homeowners will leave and look for other homes near farms or forests in order to enjoy the open space that they provide.

This Plan recommends that the Parish avoid these problems by requiring the open space that the homeowners want (and that is consistent with the area) on the site of the residential development.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

The second special planning area is the “megasite.” This Plan recommends that a special area plan be drafted and adopted for the growth and development of the megasite, and as such, specific regulations for the megasite are not proposed. However, this Plan does recommend that the megasite be developed with a mix of uses that includes housing for employees of the businesses that are expected to locate there.

7.0.6 | Relationship to Implementation. Within the future character districts set out in **Table 4-3, Future Character Districts**, implementation of this Plan should include zoning districts that particularly address existing neighborhoods and the mining industry.

With regard to existing neighborhoods, one problem that often plagues communities when they first become zoned is that many existing lots do not conform in area or setbacks to the zoning districts. Smaller lots are already scattered throughout the Parish. Normally, zoning would make these properties non-conforming, which may subject them to unnecessary process if they seek to rebuild after a disaster or if the owner seeks mortgage financing.

As such, this Plan recommends that a zoning district called “neighborhood conservation” be included in implementing regulations to preserves the standards under which the developments were built, so that they do not become non-conforming. This district will only to be mapped to where there are existing small lots, and will not be used for new subdivisions. Likewise there is some scattered commercial development, which would need a similar commercial designation that protects the existing uses that are considered desirable for the Parish.

Finally, mining is common – and appropriate – in the Parish, and a mining district is recommended that will control and protect this use while protecting Parish roads and adjacent uses. Areas where there are high-quality deposits should be zoned with a district that allows mining. The district regulations should require buffers between the mine and adjoining uses. They should also provide for the future re-use of the site. In many cases, lakes that formed in excavated areas may create desirable residential addresses. Land treatment systems or public sewers must be used for such developments in order to protect groundwater.

7.0.7 | Using the Market and New Development to Protect Rural Character. The Parish intends to maintain the rural character and function of its unincorporated areas, to limit its expenditures to the provision of rural roads and basic rural services, to limit the number of independent special districts that are necessary to provide other public services (*e.g.*, fire protection and wastewater treatment) to unincorporated Parish residents, and to protect its natural resources and waterways from unnecessarily damaging development practices and inadequate wastewater treatment facilities. That will require limiting non-agricultural development in the unincorporated areas. *See Chapter 3, Growth Capacity and Public Facilities.* Still, the Parish recognizes the need to allow non-agricultural development in the countryside to allow its farmers and foresters an alternative way to realize value from their land. As such, the Parish intends to use the market to provide quality development that is consistent with the rural character of the

unincorporated parish, including the protection of delineated open spaces that contribute to the Parish's rural character.

Implementation of the market-based strategy requires regulations that allow development of either very large lots or clusters of smaller lots that are surrounded by open space and meaningful buffers along property lines that abut farm, forestry, and mining operations.⁶ **Table 4-4, Regulatory Incentive Strategy** (next page), sets out how the Parish should use development density incentives to permanently preserve contiguous areas of open space. Put another way, for all the districts there is an incentive to cluster to maximize the rural character of an area after it is fully developed. These regulations should be used in conjunction with traffic sheds (*see Chapter 3, Growth Capacity and Public Facilities*), so that the roads that service the development are not overwhelmed by it.

Table 4-4:
Regulatory Incentive Strategy⁷

District and Development Type	Lot Area (average)	Open Space Ratio (delineated space)	Gross Density (units / acre)	Minimum Site Area
<i>Agriculture</i>				
Farmstead	40 acres	0.00	0.025	40 acres
Equestrian	5 acres	0.60	0.07	100 acres
Preservation Cluster	2 acres	0.75	0.10	25 acres
Planned	20,000 sf.	0.90	0.14	120 acres
Hamlet	12,000 sf.	0.92	0.18	400 acres
<i>Forestry</i>				
Farmstead	40 acres	0.00	0.025	40 acres
Conservation Cluster	60,000 sf.	0.75	0.14	25 acres
Planned	15,000 sf.	0.90	0.18	120 acres
Hamlet	8,000 sf.	0.92	0.22	400 acres
<i>Countryside</i>				
Single Family ⁸	10 acres	0.10	0.08	10 acres
Equestrian	5 acres	0.40	0.10	100 acres
Conservation Cluster	3 acres	0.50	0.14	25 acres
Preservation Cluster	20,000 sf.	0.85	0.21	100 acres
Hamlet	8,000 sf.	0.90	0.28	400 acres

⁶ In setting the intensity of land use, this Plan provides for a wide range of development options. They recognize the need for developers to have flexibility in meeting the market so each of the proposed character areas has multiple development options.

⁷ The districts listed in the table provide for rural uses, but not for industrial or major employment uses. These uses should be located within urban growth boundaries or on the megasite, both of which are discussed in later sections of this Chapter.

⁸ The single-family option is not available in a conventional form, because there are open space needs that must be met in each subdivision. These include bufferyards, storm water management, recreation (in larger subdivisions), and in some cases wastewater treatment facilities. Thus, the single family option typically has an open space ratio (OSR) attached to it.

Table 4-4: Regulatory Incentive Strategy ⁷				
District and Development Type	Lot Area (average)	Open Space Ratio (delineated space)	Gross Density (units / acre)	Minimum Site Area
<i>Estate</i>				
Equestrian	5 acres	0.20	0.14	60 acres
Single-Family	3 acres	0.10	0.26	50 acres
Cluster	1.5 acres	0.40	0.32	25 acres
Conservation Cluster	20,000 sf.	0.60	0.58	50 acres
Planned	12,000 sf.	0.70	0.68	100 acres
<i>Expansion Area⁹</i>				
Single-Family	2 acres	0.50	0.20	20 acres
Conservation Cluster	1 acres	0.60	0.37	25 acres
Planned	15,000 sf	0.70	0.55	(¹⁰)

The table shows the district and use, lot area (average), open space ratio, gross density, and minimum site area. The listed uses are farmstead, equestrian, cluster, conservation cluster, preservation cluster, planned, hamlet, and single-family.

- ◆ Farmsteads are operating farms that include a home for the farmer, as well as allow farmers to conduct other businesses that are compatible with farm operations. The wider range of uses permitted on farmsteads is intended to help keep land in agricultural use and increase the economic productivity of the farm unit.
- ◆ Equestrian development is residential development in which lots are large enough for horses to be kept and common open space areas are provided for riding.
- ◆ Cluster development is single-family residential development on lots that are at least one and one-half acres, with at least 40 percent delineated common open space. See **Figure 4-16, Cluster Development**.
- ◆ Conservation cluster development is single-family residential development on smaller lots with at least 50 percent delineated open space.
- ◆ Preservation cluster development is single-family residential development on smaller lots with at least 75 percent delineated open space.

⁹ These standards should apply only to the expansion areas around the named places. Areas within the urban growth boundary (discussed on page 20) should generally be more intense. The density and intensity of the areas within the urban growth boundary should be negotiated with the municipalities based on their capacity to provide services.

¹⁰ The site must be 50% of the expansion area, and must provide adequate sewer capacity for the entire expansion area.

- Planned development is like cluster development in many ways, but planned development includes two or more housing types on lots that, on the whole, average 12,000 to 20,000 square feet in area. For descriptions of the housing types, see **Chapter 5, Housing.**
- Hamlet development is small-lot, mixed-use development on large parcels of land, of which more than 90 percent is set aside as permanent delineated open space. The open space may be used for agricultural purposes, and provides a clearly defined “green belt” that creates a sense of identity for the place and protects the surrounding rural character.
- Single-family development is traditional, non-agricultural residential development on large lots.

The lot area column shows the average lot area for residential uses in the permitted development type. Averages are used, in some cases to allow for a variety of lot sizes (to prevent monotony and provide for different price points) within a reasonable range, and in other cases to allow for development of a variety of housing types (e.g., in planned and hamlet development).

The open space column refers to the percentage of the overall development site that must be set aside for delineated, open space when the site is developed. This open space is platted and set aside in perpetuity for open space uses, which may include leasing the land back to a farmer for agricultural use. It may be owned by a homeowners’ association, or dedicated to the Parish or a conservation trust for management.

The gross density column shows the gross density, that is, the number of homes that can be built per acre of the overall development site. For example, if the gross density is 0.025 units per acre, then for every 40 acres of land, one home may be built.

The minimum site area column is the minimum size of the development site that is required for a developer to choose a particular option. For example, to build a hamlet in an agriculture, countryside, or forestry district, a developer would have to control at least 400 acres.

Figure 4-16, Cluster Development



The term **cookie-cutter zoning** is used because it forces a design approach similar to stamping cookies out of dough, like the top illustration. Clustering, as in the bottom illustration, allows for better design and better protection of rural and estate character types.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

7.0.8 | Cooperating with Municipalities; Urban Growth Boundaries. Chapter 3, **Growth Capacity and Public Facilities**, sets out the reasons and overall strategy for maintaining a rural Parish. The ultimate success of that strategy requires the Parish and its municipalities to cooperate and coordinate their growth strategies. Key to that coordination is the establishment and delineation of urban growth boundaries around the cities, towns, and villages, where suburban and urban development is encouraged and where the municipalities can provide the infrastructure to support this growth.

The urban growth boundary is shown in **Map 4-16, Future Character**. It is sized to accommodate 150 percent of the Parish's projected 2030 population. The extent of the area is therefore large enough to ensure that the market for land to accommodate development and annexation is not restricted by an artificially over-restricted supply of land.

This Plan recommends that the unincorporated area within the urban growth boundary be zoned and administered by the municipalities. However, the Parish should not turn over control of these areas until interlocal agreements are executed between the Parish and its municipalities that ensure that the minimum standards for development set out in this Plan are adhered to. These minimum standards include:

- ◆ Annexation to the municipality within a limited number of years;
- ◆ Connection to municipal water and wastewater systems;
- ◆ Impact fees for schools;
- ◆ Natural resource protection that is at least as protective as the standards that are set out in this Plan in **Chapter 7, Environmental Conservation**;
- ◆ Provisions for workforce housing, so that the urban workforce is not pushed into the countryside and subjected to long, costly commutes; and
- ◆ Minimum densities that accommodate projected growth, promote vital urban communities, and reduce urban sprawl.

The Parish should not require specific densities within the urban growth boundaries. However, the growth areas are expected to accommodate 85 percent of the Parish growth for the next 30 to 40 years. Based on the projected growth, a target population is set for each community. Then, the community can adopt zoning with any mix of land uses and densities it desires to accommodate the growth. The target populations and floor areas would be set with each community and reflected in the interlocal agreements with the Parish, and expansions of urban growth boundaries would be agreed to only when:

- ◆ The supply of developable land within the boundary fell below a 15-year projected demand; and
- ◆ The municipality meets or exceeds the minimum intensity requirements that were established in the interlocal agreement.

The interlocal agreements should also include equitable revenue-sharing arrangements as appropriate. That is because, as shown in **Chapter 3, Growth Capacity and Public Services**, not all development in the Parish is fiscally problematic. Indeed, from a fiscal perspective, development that is close to the municipalities is generally the most desirable in terms of generating net revenue for the Parish. Therefore, where the establishment of an urban growth boundary and program for annexation may otherwise cause fiscal losses to the Parish, revenue-sharing agreements should be put into place to mitigate the loss. These agreements should take into account the cost-savings to the Parish as a result of turning over service responsibilities to the municipality.

7.0.9 | The Megasite. The completion of Route 10 from the Mississippi River bridge through Tangipahoa Parish will expand the potential for the megasite, and for a northern economic development area. There is no municipality in the area that has the potential to provide services and housing to such an economic development area. The Parish thus needs a new community district to apply to the megasite, and perhaps to other areas in the distant future.

The district should be designed so that it is a mixed-use community district that will have a balance between business and residential areas to encourage people to live near where they work. Further, it should be designed in a manner such that if north-south commuter rail service can be established, workers would have an incentive to commute to the megasite by rail. Great care is needed to ensure that the types of businesses that locate in the megasite create high-paying jobs that do not overburden schools or social services. These businesses are the types that are needed to provide for real economic growth and opportunity for all Parish residents.

The new community district should be required to have a master plan that provides for housing and jobs to be kept in balance. Further, it must be a plan that permits the first development to be integrated into the final community plan.

7.0.10 | Densely Populated Unincorporated Areas. The rural area of the Parish contains a number of small unincorporated places that range from a few homes near a crossroads to named small communities that offer services to a surrounding area. None of the smaller areas have public sewer systems, so they are generally unsuited to become villages or towns in the near future. They can, however, provide for growth in the rural area in a manner that allows other services to be provided efficiently.

Development standards for expanding these communities allow for growth, and also places ultimate limits on that growth by ensuring that each of these communities ultimately is surrounded by a green belt. The 50 to 70 percent required open space in the expansion areas (see Table 4-4, Regulatory Incentive Strategy) should be located on the outer edges of the development, away from existing development. The requirement for permanent open space allows the Parish to use the market to protect the character and fiscal integrity of its more densely populated areas.

The extent of the designated expansion area should be related to creating a critical mass of development that can support community facilities like public sewer, public water, fire

protection, and police protection. In addition, in some cases, where the boundaries of the district would create major inequities or unreasonable open spaces, the Parish should consider allowing for the transfer of development rights from one part of the site (outside the boundary) to the other (inside the boundary).

Chapter Five

Housing

1.0 | Generally

Given the regional context of Tangipahoa Parish and the influx of population after the hurricanes, housing alone may have the greatest impact on the physical, social, and economic future of the Parish. Policy choices that are made with regard to housing strike deep into how and where residents will live, work, play, shop -- and invest. For most residents of the Parish, owning the right home is a big part of fulfilling the "American Dream."

In addition, many property owners believe that the option to build homes on their land as one of their many property rights. Yet in the interest of the community, the Parish must protect its own resources and strike a balance between ensuring the availability of quality, affordable housing and protecting the long-term fiscal and environmental interests of the Parish and its residents. A series of considerations play a critical role in finding balance.

- ◆ The Parish is growing and the housing stock is increasing.
- ◆ Potential residents are attracted to the Parish's quality of life and relatively low cost of living. The majority of interest at this time is in the southern portion of the Parish.
- ◆ Hurricane Katrina shifted the housing market and resulted in visible changes to the Parish. New and displaced residents seek an opportunity to transition from FEMA trailers and temporary rental circumstances into more permanent housing. *See Figure 5-1, Measuring a Post-Katrina Housing Market* (next page).
- ◆ The cost of housing has risen throughout Louisiana, and households are turning to Tangipahoa Parish as an "affordable" alternative surrounded by "country" atmosphere. Median housing prices in the Parish rose until the fourth quarter of 2006, leveled off, and consistent with national trends, began to decline through the fourth quarter of 2007. The degree to which the national downward trends in housing prices will play out in the Parish is not known.
- ◆ The perceived "affordability" of housing in the Parish is offset by "hidden" costs associated with increased household transportation costs, and increased costs to the Parish to ensure adequate utilities, roadways and services. This is particularly the case for new development that is located in the rural areas of the Parish, beyond the immediate limits of communities such as Hammond and Ponchatoula.

"In their search for lower cost housing, working families often locate far from their place of work, dramatically increasing their transportation costs and commute times.

Indeed, for many such families, their transportation costs exceed their housing costs."

~ Center for Housing Policy. "A Heavy Load: The Combined Housing and Transportation Burdens of Working Families"

Figure 5–1, Measuring a Post-Katrina Housing Market

Accurately assessing the long term trends of the housing market is typically a complex task with consideration given to buying habits, economic conditions, physical constraints, and a host of “externalities” – unexpected occurrences such as the impact of oil or timber costs. Hurricane Katrina represents an externality of an epic scale – one event that can literally transform an area, its economic outlook, and its housing market.

New data is emerging that attempts to provide a glimpse into the post-Katrina housing market. Building permits, sales prices, and a recent update to the American Community Survey (2006) provide an increasingly clearer image. However, it will likely be years before the full impacts on the housing market can be determined.

This Plan addresses the post-Katrina housing market based upon recognizable and readily available trends and patterns, as well as feedback gained through public discussion. It attempts to deal with the immediate needs for housing, but in a manner that meets the long term needs of Tangipahoa Parish.



FEMA Trailers

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

- As discussed in detail in **Chapter 3, Growth Capacity and Public Services**, as growth occurs in the rural areas, roads and infrastructure are exceeding their capacity. At the same time, increasing residential presence in rural areas pressures services such as schools, fire protection, and law enforcement.
- The increases in cost require additional revenue. Regardless of the source (impact fees, bonds, tax increases), increased public services increase a household’s “indirect” housing costs.
- As further discussed in **Chapter 3, Growth Capacity and Public Services**, this Plan’s growth management strategies favor an approach that protects and enhances the natural and rural character of the Parish; and promotes growth in proximity to areas with sufficient utilities and services to support it. This approach helps to ensure fiscal and environmental sustainability and protection of the Parish’s cherished rural character.

2.0 | General Housing Characteristics

2.0.1 | Tangipahoa Parish has been steadily growing and continues to do so following the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Between 1994 and 2002, the number of building permits for new single family homes issued annually by Tangipahoa Parish ebbed and flowed between 335 (issued in 1995) and 468 (issued in 1999).¹ New residential development accelerated between 2003 and 2005, and in 2005, 615 permits were issued for new single family homes.

In 2006, the first full year following the aftermath of Katrina, the number of new single family home building permits exploded to 1,294 – double the

¹ Source: Consecutive Building Permits Reports, posted annually by the Tangipahoa Parish Permits Office.

number issued in the prior year. Moreover, while the number of permits grew by more than 100 percent, the total value of the homes for which permits were requested grew by over 177 percent to a total of \$204,780,000.

2.0.2 | Municipalities throughout the Parish also witnessed accelerated new construction between 2005 and 2006, although the majority of new single family homes continue to be built in the unincorporated areas. In keeping with prior trends, communities in the southern portion of the Parish recorded the largest numbers of building permits. Hammond saw requests for building permits, particularly for new single family homes and residential renovations, expand substantially. During the same time, Ponchatoula saw substantial increases in permits for new construction of single family and multifamily buildings. In the northern portion of the Parish, the number of permits for new single family homes grew from a modest three in 2005 to 50 in 2006. See **Table 5-1, Permits Issued, 1994 to 2006**, and **Table 5-2, Value of Permits Issued, 1994 to 2006**.

Table 5-1:
Permits Issued, 1994 to 2006²

Year	Single Family	Multifamily	Remodel/Addition	Shed/Barn	Used Manufactured Housing	New Manufactured Housing	Building Permit Fees	Total ³
1994	371	16	34	--	--	--	518	4,569
1995	335	17	34	--	--	--	487	4,223
1996	416	27	48	--	--	--	583	5,359
1997	410	25	51	--	--	--	620	5,217
1998	436	36	38	--	--	--	654	6,185
1999	468	26	39	--	--	--	676	7,619
2000	377	19	21	--	--	--	544	7,270
2001	370	31	34	--	674	241	1,469	7,266
2002	396	52	36	--	500	202	1,314	7,257
2003	501	48	46	--	500	185	1,497	7,706
2004	505	80	30	--	429	135	1,375	7,819
2005	615	113	24	--	523	274	1,755	8,884
2006	1,294	146	51	180	--	--	2,016	11,206

Table 5-2:
Value of Permits Issued, 1994 to 2006²

Year	Single Family	Multifamily	Remodel/Addition	Shed/Barn	Used Manufactured Housing	New Manufactured Housing	Building Permit Fees	Total*
1994	\$28,100	\$955	\$524	--	--	--	\$83,498	\$117,981
1995	\$25,004	\$2,751	\$820	--	--	--	\$106,376	\$138,635
1996	\$32,081	\$4,544	\$1,351	--	--	--	\$115,183	\$154,980
1997	\$36,743	\$3,691	\$1,518	--	--	--	\$110,153	\$151,667

² Source: Tangipahoa Parish Permit Office

³ Includes building permit, billboard, bingo, driveway, electricity, garbage, logging, manufactured housing, and flood determination.

Table 5-2: Value of Permits Issued, 1994 to 2006*								
Year	Single Family	Multifamily	Remodel/Addition	Shed/Barn	Used Manufactured Housing	New Manufactured Housing	Building Permit Fees	Total*
1998	\$41,448	\$4,028	\$892	--	--	--	\$128,132	\$176,658
1999	\$45,924	\$2,333	\$1,181	--	--	--	\$119,738	\$178,739
2000	\$38,412	\$1,194	\$674	--	--	--	\$86,920	\$110,281
2001	\$37,923	\$1,945	\$1,017	--	--	\$10,150	\$166,447	\$233,839
2002	\$42,638	\$4,007	\$975	--	--	\$8,467	\$162,592	\$223,607
2003	\$57,997	\$3,819	\$1,107	--	--	\$7,494	\$227,497	\$292,707
2004	\$61,221	\$11,930	\$735	--	--	\$6,109	\$218,129	\$280,789
2005	\$73,780	\$19,345	\$8,444	--	--	--	\$262,790	\$331,845
2006	\$204,780	\$21,475	\$1,526	\$2,662	--	--	\$500,576	\$616,616

According to the 2006 American Community Survey (an estimate of local statistics based upon Census 2000 and local trends), the number of housing units in Tangipahoa Parish has grown from 40,794 units in 2000 to 47,519 units in 2006 (including units in unincorporated and incorporated areas of the parish).⁴ Of those, an estimated 41,386 units were occupied by homeowners or renter households.

2.0.3 | The vast majority of homes in Tangipahoa Parish are owner-occupied, although estimates indicate a decline in ownership following Hurricane Katrina, from 73 percent in 2000 to 68 percent in 2006. While this is likely a temporary setback, the slide in homeownership came in the wake of a period of rising home prices.

2.0.4 | The majority of housing in Tangipahoa Parish is single family detached homes and manufactured housing constructed in the last 40 years. Statistics indicate that 63.1 percent of the housing stock in 2006 was comprised of single family detached units. Mobile homes and manufactured housing comprised an additional 20.7 percent, leaving only slightly more than 16.2 percent of remaining housing units to be comprised of single family attached homes, duplexes and multifamily structures. Similarly, roughly 76.4 percent of units were constructed after 1970, while more than half (55%) were built after 1980.

3.0 | Housing Affordability

3.0.1 | It is becoming increasingly difficult for households to afford to live in Tangipahoa Parish. Estimates from the 2006 American Community Survey indicate that the median value of a home in Tangipahoa Parish was approximately \$116,300, representing a 36.1 percent increase above the median value in 2000 (\$85,400). During the same six year period, median household income (as stated by the Bureau of the Census) increased only 12.5 percent, leaving a substantial gap between the growth in housing value and household income. Unfortunately, as illustrated in **Figure 5-2, Housing Value in Tangipahoa Parish Over Time** (previous page), the vast majority of new homes under construction between

⁴ Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2006 American Community Survey, Tangipahoa Parish.

2000 and 2006 appear to be out of reach to the average current resident of Tangipahoa Parish.

3.0.1.1 | Measuring “Affordability.” Lenders have historically suggested that a household should not spend more than 30 percent of its annual income toward housing costs. In Tangipahoa Parish, approximately 30.6 percent of all households with a mortgage were beyond the suggested threshold. In fact, 22.7 percent were paying greater than 35 percent of their annual income toward housing costs. Among renters, more than 29.7 percent of households were dedicating more than 35 percent of their annual income toward housing. Defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development as “cost-burdened,” these households that are paying more than 35 percent of their incomes for housing must often forego other critical needs, or choose to sacrifice quality of life in another manner.

Housing “affordability” is, of course, a relative term that is based upon the annual income of the household. To better determine affordability, as well as general need, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has grouped households into a series of classifications based upon income. As noted in **Table 5-2, 2006 Median Household Income Limits**, and **Table 5-3, HUD Income Classifications**, categories range from High Income (greater than 120 percent of the median household income) to Extremely Low Income (less than 30% of the median household income). To place affordability into context, **Table 5-4:**

Home Loan Threshold by Income Level, 2006, indicates the maximum value of a home that is affordable to individuals at the top of each HUD classification, as well as for the median household for Tangipahoa Parish.

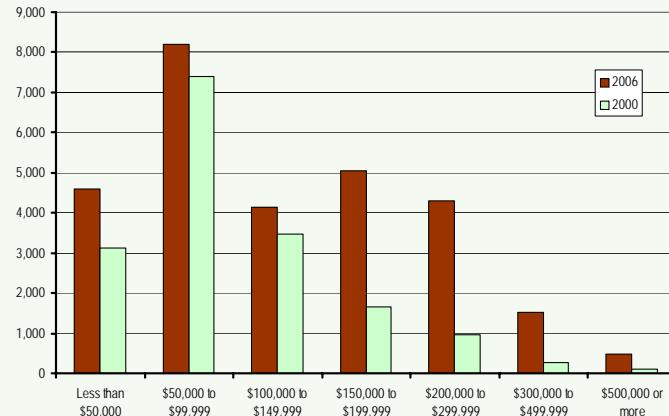
Table 5-2:
2006 Median Household Income Limits⁵

Percent of Median	Annual Income
120	\$39,690
100	\$33,075
95	\$31,421

⁵ Source: 2006 American Community Survey.

Figure 5-2, Housing Value in Tangipahoa Parish Over Time

Housing Value by Number of Units in Tangipahoa Parish, 2000 and 2006



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Comprehensive Plan

Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana

**Table 5-2:
2006 Median Household Income Limits⁵**

Percent of Median	Annual Income
80	\$26,460
50	\$16,538
30	\$9,923

**Table 5-3:
HUD Income Classifications⁶**

Classification	Annual Income
High Income	Above \$39,690
Middle Income	\$31,421 to \$39,689
Moderate Income	\$26,460 to \$31,420
Low Income	\$16,538 to \$26,459
Very Low Income	\$9,923 to \$16,537
Extremely Low Income	Below \$9,923

**Table 5-4:
Home Loan Threshold by Income Level, 2006⁷**

		FHA Regular Loan (6% interest)			VA Regular Loan (6% interest)			Conventional Loan (6.25% interest)		
% of Median	Income	Max. Sales Price	Loan Amount	Monthly Mortgage Pmt.	Max. Sales Price	Loan Amt.	Monthly Mortgage Pmt.	Max. Sales Price	Loan Amt.	Monthly Mortgage Pmt.
120	\$39,690	\$123,084	\$122,078	\$960	\$126,595	\$129,190	\$959	\$150,811	\$128,189	\$1,091
100	\$33,075	\$102,570	\$101,732	\$800	\$105,496	\$107,658	\$799	\$125,676	\$106,824	\$910
95	\$31,421	\$97,441	\$96,645	\$760	\$100,220	\$102,275	\$759	\$119,391	\$101,483	\$864
80	\$26,460	\$82,056	\$81,385	\$640	\$84,396	\$86,127	\$639	\$100,541	\$85,460	\$728
50	\$16,538	\$51,287	\$50,868	\$400	\$44,591	\$45,505	\$338	\$62,840	\$53,414	\$455
30	\$9,923	\$30,773	\$30,521	\$240	--	--	--	\$37,705	\$32,049	\$273

Notes:

- 1. Assumes a married couple with two dependents
- 2. Assumes no minimum credit card payment, car payment or other monthly obligation

As shown in the **Table 5-2, 2006 Median Household Income Limits**, and **Table 5-3, HUD Income Classifications**, a family earning the median household income for Tangipahoa Parish in 2006 could afford to purchase the average home (valued at \$116,300, as previously indicated) – but only using a conventional loan (which would require the buyer to produce more than \$23,000 in cash at closing). The same family would be unable to purchase the average home using a typical FHA Loan or VA Loan without additional assistance or a substantial downpayment. It is quite possible that within a relatively short period of time, the cost of an average home will be completely beyond the financial reach of the median household.

⁶ Source: US Department of Housing and Urban Development, based upon 2006 median income.

⁷ Source: Affordability Calculator available at www.ginniemae.gov based on 2006 Median Household Income.

3.0.1.2 | The Difficult Search for Affordability. The search for affordable housing has often driven working class households to move farther away from employment centers to cheaper, rural land. Indeed, many of today's suburbs came from a desire in a segment of the housing market to escape the urban environment for what they perceived as a more cost effective, idyllic environment.

Yet recent studies show that much of the "affordability" this more distant housing is offset by increased transportation costs. As more people move into the unincorporated areas, the unimproved (or improved but unable to keep up with growth) transportation network increasingly becomes congested, adding further to commute times and travel costs.

The Center for Housing Policy, in coordination with the Center for Neighborhood Technology, notes that households throughout the country with a median income of between \$20,000 and \$35,000 spend roughly 54 percent of their annual income on housing and transportation costs – if they live in the central city. The same households located away from employment centers pay roughly 70 percent of their annual income to cover combined housing and transportation costs. For households earning between \$35,000 and \$50,000 the percentage of annual income spent on housing and transportation if living away from employment drops to 51 percent, but remains a very substantial cost burden, particularly in comparison to those living in or near an employment center.

Yet the opportunities for decent, affordable housing in or near the municipalities do not exist for many of the Parish's disadvantaged rural residents because there are few decent, affordable products available. The needs of this market segment could potentially be met by community development corporations, which are non-profit companies that provide housing in economically distressed areas with the support of grants and gifts. At present, there are no community development corporations in the Parish.

4.0 | Housing Strategy

4.0.1 | Generally. Chapter 3, Growth Capacity and Public Services, proposed strategies aimed at growth and development patterns focusing on public fiscal and physical responsibility. Those same strategies can be enhanced to assist in maintaining affordable and desirable housing (in effect, assisting private fiscal and physical responsibility). A focus on development of housing in proximity to employment centers that also offer adequate infrastructure and strong service delivery will reduce transportation costs and minimize the long term costs associated with improvement and maintenance of streets and utilities. Improving the overall affordability of the housing stock, without reducing housing quality, allows for improved living conditions and, for some, may help the household transition from poverty to relative prosperity. As noted in **Figure 5-3, The Housing Strategy**, this Plan's strategy for housing is based upon the premise of ensuring affordability, maintaining quality, creating opportunities for positive transition, and establishing sustainable development patterns.

4.0.2 | Increasing Housing Choice. The housing stock in Tangipahoa Parish is almost exclusively comprised of two types of housing: single family detached homes (including

Comprehensive Plan

Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana

Figure 5–3, The Housing Strategy

- Increase affordability through expanded housing choice.
- Establish opportunities for site and community transition.
- Promote context sensitive manufactured housing.
- Build “living environments” such as neighborhoods and villages, rather than subdivisions and strip lots.
- Develop the majority of housing near employment centers.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Figure 5–4, The Housing Palette

Single				
	Single Family	Lot Line	Village House	Patio House
Two-Family				
	Twin House	Duplex		
Attached				
	Atrium House	Townhouse	Weak-Link	
Multi-Family				
	Multiplex	Duplex Townhouse	Apartment	

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

manufactured homes) and apartments – with apartments a very distant second choice. For the most part, housing throughout the Parish follows a traditional model – a single home located in the center of a site with ample space for side yards, a front yard, and a rear yard.

While not surprising, the lack of diversity in housing contributes to issues regarding affordability. Diversity improves variety and allows for transition in housing to occur. In fact, housing can be divided into a variety of different categories, as shown in **Figure 5–4, The Housing Palette**. The list of housing types exhibits the variety of housing options that are available beyond the traditional single family home or apartment complex. All of the housing options presented are appropriate to Tangipahoa Parish in some fashion.

4.0.2.1 | Single-family. Single family house is the traditional home. It is the most common housing type in Tangipahoa Parish. The structure is detached from and represents the only dwelling unit on a parcel. Single family homes can be designed affordably by adjusting location on the site to allow innovative techniques such as **lot line** development (where one wall of the home is situated on the side lot line), through alternative construction practices, home design, and financial incentives.

Single family houses may also include an accessory unit. These remain similar in appearance to the traditional single family house; however, a second unit within the structure can be leased to individuals or families. Historic homes often designed secondary unit features into the structure in order to lease space or for use by domestic assistants. Home design

eventually evolved away from this practice as leasing portions of a home became “undesirable.” Today the practice is being reconsidered as a means of improving affordability that further creates a stable environment for renters away as an alternative to apartments.

Single family houses may also be designed to include a cottage on the same lot. Like the home with a secondary unit, accessory cottages were once commonplace and are only recently beginning to witness resurgence – thanks in large part to the move to recapture many discarded, but useful, practices in housing. Commonly referred to as a “Granny Flat,” the accessory cottage or above garage apartment inserts renters into the stable environment of homeownership. Additionally, the unit provides added income to the homeowner and makes the cost of the home more affordable.

4.0.2.2 | Two-family. Two Family Homes (Twin Houses and Duplexes) are fairly rare (as new product) in today’s housing market; however, they do provide a viable alternative to the single family home, and updated designs make them more attractive to the community and the marketplace. Both can be designed to appear as large scale single family structures with multiple stories and provide opportunities for both renters and owners.

4.0.2.3 | Attached. Attached housing types include atrium homes, weak-link townhouses, and traditional townhouses (also called rowhouses). These homes are built in configurations where they share side walls. Atrium homes have an atrium in the middle of the home, to provide private open space and natural light. Weak-link townhouses have one- and two-story sections, and are joined at the one-story section. Townhouses offer the reduced construction cost that come with attached structures while also permitting a sense of independence. For a time, townhouses fell out of favor, as designers sought to move away from the perceived “gritty” design of the urban environment. However, like other forms of housing, townhouses have once again gained popularity as an alternative to single family homes and apartments.

Like multi-family housing types, townhouses are typically an urban (or possibly suburban) solution, rather than a pattern found in a rural setting. Townhouses are appropriate in urban growth areas and near the center of larger rural hamlet developments.

4.0.2.4 | Multi-family. Multi-family types include multiplex, duplex townhouse, and apartment. Smaller multi-family structures such as triplexes and quad-plexes can be designed to fit into a wide variety of environments, ranging from rural to urban. **Figure 5-5, Multiplex Buildings**, shows how smaller multiplexes can be designed to fit in well with single-family buildings.

Larger multi-family types, like duplex townhomes (which provide two dwelling units in the footprint of a townhouse) and apartments are most appropriate within the growth boundaries of communities such as Hammond, Ponchatoula, or Amite, in locations that are close to employment opportunities and are adequately served with utilities and other public services. These housing types can offer affordability through the reduced construction cost per unit and greater density. The apartment housing type (which also includes

Figure 5–5: Multiplex Buildings

Duplex Units, Southside Park in Sacramento, California



Six Unit Structures, The Farm, Soquel California

condominiums and “flats”⁸) can be divided into four sub-types; walk-up, low-rise, mid-rise, and high-rise.

4.0.2.5 | Courtyard Housing. This category offers the benefits of a row house, with the added “twist” of entry through a courtyard. Courtyard homes may be incorporated into innovative development techniques to include playgrounds, a community center or a forested green space. Like Multifamily Homes, Courtyard Homes must be designed to fit into the context of the surrounding setting.

4.0.2.6 | Mixed Use Housing. Mixed use housing can offer a variety of commercial retail and entertainment activities and proximity to a variety of resources such as parks, schools and work. Mixed use buildings are not shown in the housing palette, but are an important housing type in developments that allow non-residential use. For example, the commercial center of a rural hamlet should be developed with vertically mixed-use buildings and “live-work” units that provide a residence in the back (or second floor) of the building, with internal access to a showroom or workplace that is accessible from the street. Mixed use housing would be appropriate at key locations in the “megasite,” where the infrastructure to support a critical mass of activity is planned. It would also be appropriate within the urban growth boundaries of Hammond and Ponchatoula if there is sufficient energy in the market to support it.

4.0.2.7 | The Expandable Home and Emergency Home/Granny Flat. As discussed, affordability is relative. Affordability is also fluid. Households that currently require a smaller or more affordable home may, in the future, be able to upgrade.⁹ One means of upgrading is to simply move to a new location. Another

⁸ While popular in other countries, flats – ownership or control of a substantial portion of a single story in a multiple story structure - have never been as abundant in the United States. Nevertheless, flats offer an additional alternative when considering affordable housing opportunities and, when designed appropriately, could potentially be incorporated into a hamlet or village design.

⁹ In fact, this is how the U.S. housing market has historically functioned; people “move up” the housing market by using the equity in their existing home to purchase a new one. This structure depends upon a steady supply and demand for “starter homes,” that is, homes with an entry-level price point that brings new buyers into the market.

way to upgrade is by expansion and new construction on the same site.

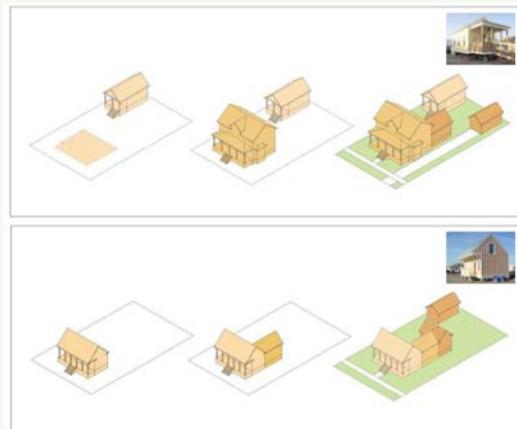
The notion of the expandable home dovetails with the need for transitional housing, which was a particularly critical issue raised during the *Louisiana Speaks* process. People who lost their homes needed a temporary housing solution that provided an opportunity to rebuild or expand as time and resources permitted. In response, two designs were incorporated into the award-winning *Louisiana Speaks: Pattern Book*.¹⁰ The smaller option, Katrina I, proposed construction of a very small structure (308 square feet) that would initially serve as an emergency home, located at the rear of the person's lot. See **Figure 5-6, Katrina Cottages I & II, Transitional Housing for People Displaced by Hurricane Katrina**.

Similar techniques can improve both short term affordability and long term sustainability of the local housing market by recognizing the need for households to grow and ensuring that structures are allowed to evolve and remain marketable. Moreover, the concept of a "growing home" reflects the concept that a household can continue to build upon and grow one of its biggest investments.

4.0.2.8 | Manufactured Homes. Factory-built housing has an historic reputation as a "cheap," visually unappealing, temporary solution for housing – an image that is perpetuated by the continued presence of FEMA trailers in the Parish. Over the course of several decades, however, factory-built housing has diversified and now has the capacity to be a very compatible neighbor to existing housing. Today's factory-built housing has been improved to meet increasing demands for quality, safety, flexibility, and visual appeal, while retaining affordability when compared to traditional "site-built" construction methods.

When developed in a manner appropriate to the expectations of the community, factory-built housing has the potential to provide quality, affordable housing and to effectively blend in and enhance the surrounding area. Efforts by the factory-built housing industry to meet the demands of homebuyers and communities while keeping homes affordable are paying off. In fact, in 2000 more than one in five new homes purchased in the United States was a factory-built home. In fact, the National Association of Home Builders anticipates that, as the housing industry evolves, more new homes will incorporate prefabricated, pre-assembled materials.

Figure 5-6: Katrina Cottages I & II, Transitional Housing for People Displaced by Hurricane Katrina



*Source: Louisiana Speaks: Pattern Book
Urban Design Associates*

¹⁰ *Louisiana Speaks: Pattern Book*, Urban Design Associates

A variety of construction techniques are used in supplying factory-built housing, including:

- ♦ **Manufactured housing.** Manufactured housing is constructed entirely within the confines of a factory, removed from the elements. Such housing is constructed to the requirements of the "HUD Code" that was developed to ensure that homes transported across one or more states were held to a single, specific construction standard.

Once transported to a site, a manufactured home may be placed on a permanent slab or on a more temporary foundation. Generally speaking, the wheels and hitch are removed. In the case of a multi-section home, the portions of the home are attached at the site. Any structural additions to a manufactured home must meet local or state building requirements.

- ♦ **Modular housing.** Modular housing is a hybrid between manufactured and traditional housing that commonly results in a home that meets or supersedes the quality of common "site-built" homes. The large majority of a modular home is constructed in the stable environment of the factory and transported to the site by truck. Unlike manufactured housing, modular housing is not supported by a steel chassis and therefore cannot travel using its own "trailer hitch and wheels." It is designed from initiation as a permanent home. See **Figure 5-7, Modern Modular Housing.**

More important, modular housing is required to meet local building codes and other related regulations. This is particularly important in Tangipahoa Parish because of the ability to require increased reinforcement against wind events such as tropical storms or hurricanes.

- ♦ **Panelized housing.** Also commonly known as "sectional housing" is constructed at the factory as a series of units that include windows, doors, wiring, plumbing, and other elements of the structure. Like modular housing, panelized housing is assembled on the site, but as a series of linked panels. Also similar to modular housing, the panelized home must be constructed to local building codes.
- ♦ **Pre-cut housing** is only partially prepared at the factory. After all materials are cut in accordance with a specific construction schedule, they are packaged and delivered in a kit with all other components of the house to the location of the home. Beyond this, the pre-cut home is assembled in much the same

Figure 5-7: Modern Modular Housing



Source: www.hivemodular.com;
www.hoopamodular.com

manner as any other “site-built” home, but with greater efficiency. When completed, the home must meet all requirements of the appropriate local or state building code.

- ♦ **Other hybrid systems.** As conventional, site-built housing and factory-built housing practices progressively intermingle, the housing industry continues to develop new, hybrid systems that seek to take advantage of the benefits of construction in a factory setting while adapting to the unique needs of the individual site. Concrete homes, for example, have been tested as an alternative for decades, however, it has only been recently that forms have been sufficiently developed that allow such homes to be developed effectively. While concrete homes benefit from significant reductions in heating and cooling costs, they are generally slightly more expensive to construct than conventional homes utilizing a wood or steel frame. A more recent development, Structural Insulated Panel System (SIPS), applies a new technology to panelized housing by replacing traditional wall systems with a durable foam and frame system. While this system may become a viable option for future development, it is currently offered by only a few manufacturers with a very limited number of floor plans. Like concrete construction, savings is based on long term reduction in heating and cooling cost rather than initial price of purchase.

Other factory-built components are being successfully integrated into factory-built homes and, in some cases, site-built homes. Many of these components improve efficiency, but others impact aesthetics or cost. Engineered lumber and steel skeleton systems, for example, are proving to be viable alternatives to typical wooden framing. Hinged roof systems allow manufactured housing to now meet differing pitch requirements. Perhaps most significant, manufactured housing designs now provide an option for a second story.

A common misperception is that factory-built housing is “cheap” because materials and quality of construction are below those of “site-built” homes. Yet, the majority of savings accrued through use of factory-built housing stems from the construction process. Factory-built housing resembles an assembly line approach that permits efficient construction under mass production conditions and without the concern for weather or vandalism. As indicated by the Manufactured Housing Institute, factory-built housing is also more cost-effective because construction workers are trained specialists that are not required to travel from one job site to the next or coordinate with other specialists, such as plumbers or electricians. Also, because of the mass production, assembly line approach, the factory is able to assemble more units and materials are purchased at a reduced rate.

4.0.3 | Living Environments. The majority of housing developed today follows traditional subdivision or strip lot development patterns. Little, if any, consideration is given to surrounding context or building a “sense of community”. As opposed to subdivisions, “living environments” recognize that the majority of the most successful residential places have particularly obvious characteristics.

4.0.3.1 | A Living Environment is “place” oriented, rather than “site” oriented. In rural communities such as the villages and hamlets proposed in Chapters 3 and 4, the intent is to

achieve a small, tight-knit cluster of homes surrounded by natural and agricultural space. The clustered homes are intended to be walkable, typically with a street and streetscape that is as appealing to the pedestrian as the driver. The character of the village or hamlet quickly erodes if these critical elements are removed. For example, if the surrounding area begins to develop, rather than retaining the initial agricultural character, then the sense of a rural village also changes and the setting becomes suburban.

4.0.3.2 | Sense of place is defined by a clear edge. Boundaries or edges of a clustered neighborhood or village should be recognizable, but not impassible. In a rural setting, this can be as simple as the clear delineation between the residential area and the surrounding natural environment. Adjacent to a community such as Amite, however, the edge becomes more difficult to convey through open spaces, particularly given that the intent is connectivity and enhancing proximity. However, edge can be created through architectural style, landscaping, or through gateways that validate a sense of entry and exit. Most important, an edge need not indicate that a neighborhood is a fortress, but rather as a clearly recognizable entity.

4.0.3.3 | A Living Environment should have a focus. A node can be a gathering point, such as a park or village green, community center, school, or daily commercial activity. The node, like edges and gateways, should be obvious and should include the character necessary to make it unique or important to the particular living environment.

4.0.3.4 | Pedestrian and vehicular movements are given the appropriate level of importance. It is not possible or desirable to eliminate automobile traffic, despite the desire of most of the people in the Parish to create and enhance walkable environments. On the other hand, development patterns and design of the streetscape play a major role in shaping the sense of a community as either pedestrian or automobile-oriented. In a pedestrian oriented cluster or hamlet, automobile lanes may be narrow or supplemented by bike lanes or on-street parking. Trails and sidewalks can be given greater priority with consistent and well-protected crosswalks. Street trees can delineate pedestrian and automobile travel spaces.

4.0.3.5 | Housing types should be appropriately mixed to allow for diversity that is context appropriate. "Life cycle" housing has become an increasingly popular method of introducing dynamic character to a neighborhood and allowing families to remain in one general area even though their housing needs evolve. Moreover, incorporation of units such as "granny flats," duplexes, or even limited multi-family structures also increase the social diversity of the neighborhood. At the same time, alterations to the mix of residential types must be taken in context with consideration given to impacts on the roadway, open space requirements, and other needs.

4.0.3.6 | Design neighborhoods with a focus on context. Typical subdivision and strip lot development processes focus on maximizing the number of lots rather truly building upon surrounding amenities or offering the best designed lots. The process of designing a living environment, such as a preservation cluster (*see Chapter 4, Community Character and Land Use*), is radically different. Focus is first and foremost upon identifying the characteristics of the site that must be preserved, such as floodplains, followed by other important traits such

as unique viewsheds. Initial identification of key traits may also include areas that the developer wishes to avoid, such as a neighbors' view of forested areas. Design of the development then focuses upon placement of lots, streets and other amenities in a manner that builds upon the character of the site, the surrounding area and the intended residential "themes."

5.0 | Housing Strategy: Goals and Recommendations

5.0.1 | Goal: Complete efforts to mitigate the impacts of Hurricane Katrina on the Parish housing supply, and initiate future disaster preparedness plans

5.0.2 | Recommended Actions.

5.0.2.1 | Identify areas within Tangipahoa Parish as candidates for future disaster relief sites. Tangipahoa Parish has played host to many seeking refuge from Hurricane Katrina and, if similar events occur in the future, it is likely that, due to its location along I-12 and, especially I-55, it will do so again. Rather than react to pending or past disaster, the Parish would be well-served to identify and protect alternative critical sites that could be utilized for staging and for temporary housing. These sites should be distributed so that if some are disabled because of direct storm impacts, alternatives could be used instead.

5.0.2.2 | Establish a Strategic Plan for disaster recovery with a focus upon hastening the transition from emergency housing to permanent shelter. To date, some households in Tangipahoa Parish remain in FEMA trailers rather than in permanent homes. Any strategic plans designed to address future storm events should address this issue, including locations and streamlined services for receiving temporary housing and acquiring permanent shelter. Any strategic plan should also incorporate guiding principles designed to ensure that temporary and permanent housing is completed in a manner that respects the vision of the Comprehensive Plan for the Parish.

5.0.3 | Goal: Encourage transitional housing as a means of promoting affordability and homeownership.

5.0.4 | Recommended Actions.

5.0.4.1 | In establishment of development regulations, ensure the flexibility to allow transitional housing by right with the intent of use as a portion of a larger unit or as a granny flat. The authorization to place a temporary structure on site is somewhat common among development regulations. Concerns have historically been raised about the amount of time allowed before the primary structure is complete, as well as the continued use of the temporary structure as a second residence. A time limit can be placed on the completing the larger structure, however, the time should be long enough to allow the transitional housing to be a viable, affordable alternative.

5.0.4.2 | In establishment of development regulations, establish regulations addressing bulk and location of transitional housing. While transitional housing should be encouraged, it should also be regulated to ensure that it is, in fact, transitional rather than permanent. Regulations that restrict transitional housing should be minimal in order to allow for design

flexibility, and should address minimum floor area, minimum lot size, lot placement (toward the rear of the site with sufficient room for a larger footprint), and setbacks. Building codes will ensure that the facility includes minimal requirements such as electricity and plumbing.

5.0.4.3 | Promote transitional housing, such as the Katrina cottages described in Louisiana Speaks, as part of an effort to address remaining victims of Hurricane Katrina and end the need for FEMA trailers in Tangipahoa Parish. An effort to end the use of FEMA trailers in Tangipahoa Parish should include a clear timetable for project completion. Transitional housing should only be considered one facet of a local program designed to stabilize homeownership in the parish.

5.0.5 | Goal: Add diversity to the local housing stock, particularly in a manner that is appropriate to the rural character of unincorporated Tangipahoa Parish

5.0.6 | Recommended Actions.

5.0.6.1 | In establishment of development regulations, create incentives designed to encourage housing diversity, particularly in a manner that utilizes multiple residential types as part of a single project. Incentives are a critical component of development regulations designed to encourage desired development patterns. Diversity of the local housing stock will improve affordability by increasing housing choice. While some diversity may be required to ensure a minimal amount of housing choice, extensive housing choice should be a function of the market. Incentives allow for the Parish to express a desire for diversity without dictating more than a minimum standard.

5.0.6.2 | In establishment of development regulations, allow the flexibility for construction of one additional unit per lot by right, assuming the addition of the unit can still allow the site to meet all other regulations. Prior to traditional zoning, granny flats and in-home additional units were commonplace. Traditional zoning has been used over its history as a tool to restrict lots to a single residential structure. A flexible, market friendly approach to development regulations in Tangipahoa Parish could permit the opportunity for one additional unit by right, assuming other requirements related to size, maximum floor area, parking, and location can be met.

5.0.6.3 | Encourage alternative site design to promote affordable and work-force housing, including zero-lot line development, reduced setbacks, reduced street widths, reduced lot size, mixed use development, cluster housing, and increased density. Ironically, the majority of techniques for improving diversity and affordability also promote creativity in site design. By adding flexibility in requirements, the development community can freely adapt to market trends while also seeking methods of making housing more affordable. For example, traditional subdivision requirements typically require a minimum lot size. A simple switch to an average lot size allows for fluctuation in lots to create smaller, more affordable sites alongside larger, so-called “market-rate” sites. The result is a design that can better react to the context of the site while also creating more affordable homes.

5.0.7 | Goal: Promote growth that is appropriate to the character and capacity of the surrounding environment**5.0.8 | Recommended Actions.**

5.0.8.1 | Encourage development to locate within urban growth boundaries. While sufficient land is available throughout the Parish for substantial amounts of large lot development, statistics have proven that the most appropriate and fiscally responsible approach to growth begins within or adjacent to existing communities such as Hammond or Ponchatoula. Workforce housing, in particular, benefits from proximity to employment centers and increased walkability may result in reductions for both vehicle miles traveled and total number of household trips per day.

5.0.8.2 | Require substantial new development that is more distant from existing communities to provide adequate facilities, services and a mix of uses. Large scale development offers the opportunity to either positively or negatively impact the surrounding area and the fiscal sustainability of the Parish. It is in the best interest of the Parish to promote development at a scale that will either blend well into the surrounding rural character or pave the way for development of a new community (such as the “megosite”), including potential for incorporation.

5.0.8.3 | In establishment of development regulations, support the concept of density bonuses for improved infrastructure and services, particularly when in proximity to existing communities. The ability to add additional units to a development project is one of the most productive methods that government can offer a builder or developer in order to recover the added costs associated with taking on major improvements.

5.0.8.4 | In establishment of development regulations, require site design characteristics that represent minimum standards. Not all standards should be left to the market. Connectivity between neighborhoods, for example, is a concept that has historically been fought by developers around the country, particularly if the developer perceives that negative impacts will result from connecting to adjacent sites. Connectivity, however, is crucial for emergency services and also improves movement throughout the neighborhood and community. Consequently, development regulations should require minimum connectivity with incentives to encourage additional interaction.

5.0.8.5 | Encourage cluster development patterns in rural projects that do not have the “critical mass” of development to provide improved streets, utilities and service delivery. As noted in **Chapter 3, Growth Capacity and Public Services**, cluster development allows for preservation of substantial, contiguous open space while also creating a sense of rural “place.” The cluster development pattern is representative of historic rural development patterns in which tight-knit clusters evolved into villages and, ultimately, into incorporated communities.

5.0.9 | Goal: Encourage high quality factory-built housing in Tangipahoa Parish as a positive and affordable housing alternative that meets local character requirements**5.0.10 | Recommended Actions.**

5.0.10.1 | In establishment of development regulations, create minimal residential architectural standards that apply to ALL new single family residential structures. The majority of communities use development regulations to limit the location and quantity of manufactured housing. However, the manufactured housing industry has proven capable of creating housing that can successfully blend into most neighborhoods – and do so in a manner that is most often more affordable than traditional, “stick-built” housing. Minimum residential architectural standards simply ensure that any housing, including manufactured housing, does consider its neighborhood context.

5.0.10.2 | Upgrade the character of manufactured home subdivisions. Too often, the character of manufactured home subdivisions is overly crowded due to tiny lots and diagonal lotting patterns that increase the visual impact of the manufactured homes on the street. There is a place for manufactured home subdivisions in the Parish, but such subdivisions should provide extensive open space and landscape buffering so that they fit into the surrounding rural character.

5.0.10.3 | Allow farms to provide farmworker housing on-site. While most of the Parish’s workforce is non-agricultural and should therefore be encouraged to live in or near the Parish’s municipalities, the Parish should take steps to ensure that there are affordable housing opportunities for people who work in the agriculture, forestry, and mining industries to live close to their jobs in the rural areas of the Parish. The hamlet development option allows housing types that will provide some of the necessary housing. In addition, this Plan recommends that farmers who can demonstrate a need for on-site farmworker housing should be entitled to provide such housing with minimal administrative hassles, provided that standards are met to ensure its compatibility with the surrounding rural character.

5.0.11 | Goal: Provide safe, decent housing that is attainable to all segments of the housing market.

5.0.12 | Recommendations.

5.0.12.1 | Work with civic and faith-based groups to identify leaders who could form a non-profit community development corporation. The Parish should form a blue-ribbon committee of builders and leaders of civic and faith-based groups to identify those who could form a non-profit community development corporation to provide decent, affordable housing opportunities in appropriate locations for the Parish’s disadvantaged residents.

5.0.12.2 | Provide a forum to train potential leaders about how to form and operate a community development corporation. The Parish should work with the blue-ribbon committee to organize a forum to train potential leaders about how to form and operate a community development corporation. The City of Shreveport, Louisiana has a program called “Faith Builders,” which is designed to train an experienced cadre of faith-based non-profit developers. The program includes 48 hours of classroom instruction and 12 field hours of hands-on work, it has demonstrated successes, and it could be used as a model for a similar program in Tangipahoa Parish.

Chapter Six

Transportation

1.0 | Introduction

1.0.1 | Generally. New and expanded transportation routes have traditionally opened up new areas for development in the United States. From wagon roads, to railroads, to highways and interstates, development has followed transportation improvements. And for many decades, development was seen as a good thing, regardless of whether there was damage to the existing environment or the character of the affected communities. As the population of the United States has mushroomed, available buildable land has dwindled. Consequently, the pressure on the environment has reached critical levels in many areas (e.g., air quality, water quality and water availability, soil erosion, and so forth).

“We treasure our rural lifestyle, small community living, the dairy industry, and Southeastern University.”

~ LOUISIANA SPEAKS, Summary of what Tangipahoa Parish residents value most about their community.

Not surprisingly, many people have begun to question the wisdom of continuing to encourage the uncontrolled development of rural areas. Indeed, many of the country's remaining rural communities have begun to seek ways to coordinate transportation, land use, and economic development policies in order to protect the rural environment and its quality of life, while still allowing for sustainable living and economic opportunity to serve rural residents.

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, and through the earlier LOUISIANA SPEAKS planning process, the people of Tangipahoa Parish have said that retaining the current rural character of the parish is a high priority for them. They have also said that:

- ◆ Perceived deficiencies in the current state of the support services and infrastructure in the Parish should be addressed; and
- ◆ The quality of the environment, especially water quality, should be protected and enhanced.

1.0.2 | Historical Perspective and Major Transportation Assets. Historically, Tangipahoa Parish's transportation resources have strongly influenced land uses and have had a generally positive impact on the parish's economic development. Prior to the arrival of European explorers, the Native American tribes along the Gulf Coast used a trail that led from the current day Pensacola, Florida and Mobile, Alabama regions through Pass Manchac to the Mississippi River and along the Natchez Trace, then northward as far as the Great Lakes Region. The trail was a trading route that connected the local tribes to resources through a trading network over a thousand miles long.

In 1702, the Choctaw Indians showed the route to Bienville as the shortest route from Mobile to the Mississippi River -- avoiding the long twists and turns, sand bars and log jams on the

lower river. French and Spanish colonists also used Pass Manchac as a major trading route for almost one hundred years before the area became part of the United States in 1810.

1.0.2.1 | Rail. The water route from the Gulf of Mexico, into Lake Pontchartrain and through Pass Manchac later became the stimulus for the construction of a railroad to link the Pass (and hence, the Gulf of Mexico) north to the forested hills of the Florida Parishes, and eventually north to Chicago and the Great Lakes. In 1853, the New Orleans, Jackson and Great Northern Railroad (now CN) was completed from Pass Manchac to the Mississippi border, with stations located every ten miles along the line.

Manchac was the first stop, then north to Ponchatoula, Tickfaw, Amite, and Tangipahoa, until the end of the line at Osyka, Mississippi. The completion of the railroad stimulated development of the forested areas along the line, with major industries locating near the railroad to take advantage of the combination of raw materials and transportation infrastructure. Within ten years, there was already a cotton batting and gin factory, sawmills, the Southern Car Works, and accompanying residential development along the railroad line.

From 1869 (when Tangipahoa Parish was formed) to 1899, railroads, large and small, mushroomed all across the country, using many different track gauges, making transfers from one rail line to another difficult. Then, in one day -- July 29, 1881 -- all of the track running from New Orleans to Chicago was changed to a single gauge. Tangipahoa Parish was connected to the rest of the nation via rail.

For hundreds of years, water routes had been the major transportation routes in the region. However, after the Civil War, rail became the most important transportation link in the Parish. In the heyday of rail, which lasted until the 1930s, the parish was crisscrossed with a network of about a dozen short line railroads serving sawmill and other industries throughout the Parish, and also connecting passengers to the rest of the state and nation via rail.

Figure 6-1, Amtrak



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Most of the historic towns in Tangipahoa are centered along the original rail line that served the agricultural, silvicultural and mining industries of the parish. Still today, the rail line not only connects the people and businesses of Tangipahoa Parish to Port Manchac, but also connects them south to New Orleans and its deep-water port, and north to the rest of the country. A second rail line connects them west towards Baton Rouge.

Tangipahoa Parish has an Amtrak stop in Hammond, which means that, unlike most of the rural parishes (and counties) of the state and nation, Tangipahoa Parish still has passenger rail service. See **Figure 6-1, Amtrak**.

1.0.2.2 | Port. Although the significance of barge traffic has declined over the years, Port Manchac still functions as a

significant water transportation link for large bulk commodities. The port has rail, water, and highway connections, coupled with storage facilities on site. This connectivity can give Tangipahoa Parish an economic edge over many other rural areas.

1.0.2.3 | Streets. Due to the many rivers and streams that had to be crossed, construction of roads in the Parish was slow throughout its early history. The cost of road construction was prohibitive in rural areas, so the roads that did exist were not paved. Consequently, after hard rains, they were impassable.

Like the rest of Louisiana, Tangipahoa Parish's first road-building boom came after Huey Long took office in 1928. His "No Christmas in the Country" speech, outlining the difficulty that farmers throughout the state had in getting their produce to market on unpaved roads in a state known for its rain and mud, stimulated the state legislature to begin a major road construction effort in rural Louisiana. **See Figure 6-2, Initial Paved Road Program.** In 1928, the state had only 300 miles of paved roads. By 1931, there were over 1,500 miles of paved roads. At the end of 2000, Louisiana had over 60,000 miles of paved public roads, with over 75 percent of those miles in rural areas. In the 1970s, Interstates 55 and 12 were completed, crossing in Hammond and connecting Tangipahoa Parish to the national interstate system going both north-south and east-west.

In addition to interstate auto and freight travel provided by these two interstate highways, the two interstate routes connect Tangipahoa to the rest of the country by intercity bus service. Since 1999, the number of intercity bus stops within the State of Louisiana has decreased by 83 percent, but Tangipahoa Parish still has Greyhound bus service in Hammond that connects the parish east-west and north-south following the two interstate highways in the parish.

1.0.2.4 | Airport. In addition to rail, water, and interstate highway connections, Tangipahoa Parish also has a general aviation airport, Hammond Northshore Regional

Airport, on the eastern edge of Hammond, north of US 190. The airfield was first constructed in the early days of air flight to serve the small planes of the day. However, significant improvements were made to the airfield by the United States military during

Figure 6-2, Initial Paved Road Program



Source: Louisiana State Museum

World War II, so that larger aircraft could be accommodated. Fortunately, the Parish had the foresight to continue the operations of the airfield when it was returned to civilian jurisdiction after the war.

The airport has recently undergone a major runway expansion to increase its capacity to serve today's larger aircraft. It is open to general, corporate, and military aircraft. In 2003, the United States Customs office established an office in Hammond so that they could take advantage of the new longer runway and the convenience of the airfield. The airfield also has low minimums for approach, making it possible for planes to descend to 200 feet without seeing the ground, a plus for small corporate planes. It also has dual lighted runways (6,502 feet x 100 feet and 5,001 feet x 150 feet), a full service FBO (Fixed Base Operations -- *i.e.*, a gas station for planes), and hanger space that makes it possible to handle large aircraft.

The Hammond Northshore Regional Airport does not have regular commercial passenger service, but the Louis Armstrong International airport is less than an hour away for most residents of the parish. The Hammond Northshore Regional Airport is another example of the excellent interstate connections of the Tangipahoa Parish transportation system that support commercial and business development, and could be leveraged for further economic development.

As a result of these multi-modal transportation connections, Tangipahoa Parish has far more transportation assets relative to interstate and interparish transportation than any other rural parish in Louisiana -- not to mention the vast majority of rural counties in the nation. However, it is the quality of the transportation within the Parish that tends to impede Tangipahoa Parish's residents, businesses, and visitors in terms of accessing the major interstate transportation networks and destinations within the parish.

2.0 | Key Issues and Strategic Objectives

Major transportation infrastructure is not the key problem with Parish mobility, due in part to the Parish's strategic location, but also due to the fact that most of the interstate transportation infrastructure is built and maintained by State and Federal agencies (or support by major grants from those sources), or is owned, maintained and operated by private companies (*e.g.*, CN Railroad). Interstate highways, ports, airports, and railroads do not receive the majority of their funding from local sources.

It is the Parish highways, the local streets, the sidewalks, the bike lanes and paths, and the transit services that must be predominantly supported by local funding. These are generally the weak links in the transportation system, although in some cases, the smaller state roads are also in poor condition. They are the elements of Tangipahoa Parish's transportation system that need to be addressed so that its citizens can all access economic opportunity, travel safely, and have the ability to utilize the extensive interstate transportation network that crisscrosses the parish.

Planning for the transportation system should support the achievement of many of the other goals of the parish and its residents. The transportation system should support the goals of:

- ◆ **Protecting lives** by providing safe routes to schools, work, shopping, and other household destinations, by providing safe and efficient emergency routes for both hurricane/disaster evacuation and emergency responder (*e.g.*, police, fire, and ambulance) access to all areas of the Parish, and by reducing automobile-train accidents at railroad crossings. A well designed, built and maintained transportation system can help to ensure the safety the residents and visitors.
- ◆ Increasing **economic development opportunities** by improving residents' access to jobs, and by facilitating freight transport to and from businesses and industries.
- ◆ **Protecting the environment** and ensuring continued **eco-recreation** opportunities by maintaining the rural character of the Parish and providing judicious access to its environmental resources.
- ◆ Managing growth to **Maintain the Parish's rural lifestyle** and quality of life while allowing for population growth and promoting economic development.
- ◆ Ensuring **fiscal soundness** of the Parish Government by the most efficient use of funds and the development of new revenue sources to meet expanding needs.

The purpose of this Chapter is to address all of these broader goals by laying the framework for an integrated multi-modal transportation system that not only uses current resources to begin the process of improving the transportation system, but also addresses the need for a continuing process for addressing future needs in the most fiscally prudent manner possible.

3.0 | Transportation Concepts

3.0.1 | Interrelationships Among Transportation, Quality of Life, and Cost of Living.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, transportation has been the number two expense for households (after housing) for at least the last two decades. In 2003, the Bureau reported that transportation costs were 19.1 percent of all household expenditures -- and 2003 was prior to the recent dramatic increase in gas prices.¹ In fact, in 2003, gas prices in the Gulf region peaked at \$1.61 per gallon, but averaged only \$1.46.² In 2007, they peaked at \$3.09, and averaged \$2.67. The rise was much faster than inflation -- the 2007 price of gasoline in comparable 2003 dollars (that is, accounting for inflation since 2003) averaged \$2.34 per gallon. In other words, in **real terms**, the price of gas in the Gulf region is up 60 percent in the last four years. See **Figure 6-3, Monthly Average Gas Prices in the Gulf Region Since 1992** (next page).

3.0.1.1 | High Transportation Costs Disproportionately Burden Low and Moderate Income Families. Rising transportation costs have a disproportionately greater impact on low-to-moderate-income families, especially those who live long distances from jobs, colleges and vocational training centers, retail centers, and medical facilities, and have no access to (or no practical use for) less expensive non-auto modes of transportation (*e.g.*, transit, bicycle, or

¹ Center for Neighborhood Technology, analysis of 1984-2003 Consumer Expenditure Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics <<http://www.bls.gov/cex>>

² Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy. <<http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/oog/ftparea/wogirs/xls/pswrgvwrgc.xls>>

Figure 6–3, Monthly Average Gas Prices in the Gulf Region Since 1992

Source: United States Dept. of Energy

walking) to get to essential destinations. Take, for example, a person in the northern part of the parish whose full-time wage at a job in the southern part of the parish is \$10.00 per hour. Assuming a 10-year old light truck, which (generously) gets about 20 miles per gallon, the 60-mile daily roundtrip to and from work uses about three gallons. At the January 2008 average price of \$2.98 per gallon, the worker spends \$44.70 per week just to pay for gas to get to work.³ Add the cost of maintenance, insurance, and gas for other trips, and the costs add up very quickly.

3.0.1.2 | High Transportation Costs Indirectly Reduce Parish Revenues. Indeed, as it stands, most low to moderate income families (those earning less than \$50,000 per year) generally have almost no discretionary money to spend. Therefore, a rise in essential transportation costs means cutting back in other areas -- as well as reducing any miles traveled for non-essential tasks.⁴ Sometimes increased travel costs can also mean reducing essential travel for

³ If gasoline reaches \$4.00 per gallon, which some analysts project will happen in 2008, the cost will be at least \$60.00 per week, or 15 percent of the pre-tax income of a (hypothetical) worker who earns \$10.00 per hour, 40 hours per week.

⁴ On its face, high transportation costs lower demand on streets, helping the Parish road system function better. But this effect is at the expense of working families and the overall economic health of the Parish. Put simply, putting additional stress on its low- to moderate-income families is not how the Parish wants to manage the use of its transportation system.

work, school, grocery shopping, and medical visits. As reducing travel negatively impacts essential requirements for work, school, food, and health care, most families must reduce elsewhere, most often in the area of retirement savings, emergency savings, preventative medical expenses, post-secondary education, and recreation. They also eat out less, use less telephone and cable service, buy fewer clothes, and essentially spend less in all areas.

In the broader sense, when fewer people obtain post-secondary education, the quality of the workforce declines, which can have a negative impact on luring new higher-wage businesses and industries to the Parish. Less money spent on preventative health care, especially by the households least likely to have health insurance, can mean greater health care costs to treat advanced medical conditions. And less retirement and emergency savings can mean a larger segment of the senior population will be dependent upon government subsidies for survival and fewer households have the means to weather a family crisis without government aid.

Finally, with regard to direct impacts on Parish revenues, the Parish does not impose a sales tax on motor fuels. Consequently, the more of a household's budget that gasoline or diesel consume, the fewer dollars the household will spend on things that generate Parish sales taxes. This is particularly ironic because the sales tax is the primary source of money for streets in the Parish.

3.0.1.3 | In Rural Areas, People Who Cannot Afford Cars Tend to Have Limited Access to Economic Opportunity. In urban areas, low to moderate income families without reliable auto transportation may use transit, carpooling, bicycling, or walking to get to jobs, retail centers, grocery stores, medical facilities, and to visit family and friends. But, in 2000, in the Parish's rural areas (most of the Parish), there were 1,816 households that did not have access to an automobile. That is eight percent of all of the rural households. Transit service in the rural areas is expensive – if it is available at all -- (currently \$14.00 per round trip in Tangipahoa), and bike lanes, and walking paths are essentially non-existent outside of some of the newly developed sub-divisions. With regard to carpooling, the health or reliability of one driver may affect the ability of several employees to get to work. These transportation challenges make it very difficult for low income households to break the cycle of poverty.

3.0.2 | Transportation and Land Use. The transportation system and the pattern of land uses within the community and the region influence each other, both positively and negatively. When land use patterns are more urban, with a mix of uses -- residential, retail, commercial, industrial and institutional -- in relatively close proximity, then it becomes economically feasible to have multiple transportation options, rather than just cars (e.g., local transit, bike lanes and paths, sidewalks, and even high-speed commuter rail. When land use patterns are more rural (or dispersed into low-density areas) with long distances between households and destination uses, then transportation choices are almost entirely limited to auto travel, with a tiny fraction of trips by limited, subsidized paratransit or demand-response transit.

New or improved transportation facilities -- especially highways and rapid transit routes -- encourage development. Likewise, new development almost always puts pressure on

governments to provide new or improved transportation facilities. These related principles could lead one to believe that "if you don't improve the streets, they won't come." Yet recent events in the Parish prove that simply not improving streets, by itself, does not forestall residential development.⁵ However, substandard transportation infrastructure can impede businesses from locating in an area, or cause economic obstacles to expansion of existing businesses.

3.0.3 | Link Between Transportation and Economic Development. Transportation, and economic development are interrelated, and coordination (or lack thereof) of public policy and decision-making related to these resources has a significant impact on the economic health of the parish. For example:

- ◆ The network of rural streets is key to getting the Parish's agriculture, forestry, and mining products to market;
- ◆ Ports, rail lines, and connecting highways can help to encourage industrial development;
- ◆ Well designed and located arterials can help to encourage retail and service development; and
- ◆ Safe and scenic transportation infrastructure can encourage tourism and related uses.

4.0 | Transportation Decision-Making

4.0.1 | Shared Responsibilities for Planning, Coordinating, Building, and Maintaining the Transportation Infrastructure -- in Both Urbanized and Rural Areas (Roles of Federal, State, MPO, Parish, and Municipal Governments). The vast majority of the transportation infrastructure in any community (other than rail lines) is designed, built, maintained and owned by public agencies or governmental bodies, while generally, the majority of land uses are designed, built, maintained and owned by private individuals or corporations. Therefore, the means by which governments (on behalf of the public) mange these two resources is both quite different and, at the same time, inter-related.

Land use patterns are most often controlled through the use of subdivision regulations, zoning regulations, environmental regulations, and building codes. The development of the transportation system is controlled primarily by federal, state, regional, and local funding priorities that are established in transportation plans, agency regulations, and constrained by funding resources and priorities. The government controlled processes often include a great deal of public input in the planning phase and (unfortunately) very little to no input in the implementation phase.

The interconnectivity of these two resources – land use and transportation -- is reflected in subdivision regulations that require roadway and right-of-way dedication, in construction

⁵ Of course, a complete lack of transportation infrastructure can protect delicate environments such as wetlands and old growth forests by making them completely inaccessible to development and exploitation.

standards, and in transportation plans that provide access to new developments. The problem is that there has traditionally been very little intentional use of transportation plans to support community land use goals, and very little requirement that new developments be constrained by community transportation plans.

As a result, new developments are often built in areas without planned infrastructure improvements. These ultimately create a public call to re-prioritize limited transportation dollars in order to fix the problems that were created by allowing the new development without coordinated transportation infrastructure in the first place. This re-prioritizing is often either not possible (due to prior commitment of funds), or results in extremely expensive transportation projects (where land values have risen or emergency time schedules must be implemented to fix a crisis situation).

Also, because the planning, design, fund acquisition and building of new transportation infrastructure usually takes many years -- even decades -- the lack of coordination with land development means that safety is often jeopardized, and opportunities for obtaining less expensive rights-of-way are lost due to the transportation infrastructure improvements always lagging behind the increase in demand.

4.0.2 | Comparison of How Transportation, Land Use, and Economic Development are Managed or Influenced by the Government and Private Sectors. Decisions concerning transportation infrastructure and operations in Tangipahoa Parish are made by three different but related “owners” who have putative responsibility for a particular set of transportation facilities.

4.0.2.1 | DOTD. The first group is the State of Louisiana as represented by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (“DOTD”). DOTD administers all federal aid for highway and transit projects, is responsible for building, operating and maintaining a state system of major roadways and has regulatory oversight of transit operations. In general, DOTD funds and is responsible for all roadways that have a U.S. or State designation, including the Interstate highways. DOTD operates within a decision-making framework that is heavily controlled and constrained by state and federal regulations. The development timeline on a project often is measured in decades and has many highly formal steps including the requirement for environmental analysis of project impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”).

The State of Louisiana, working with local and regional policy makers, publishes a State Transportation Improvement Program (“STIP”), defining projects scheduled for implementation. A copy of the Tangipahoa Parish projects identified in the STIP is provided in **Table 6-1, Tangipahoa STUP Projects**.

Table 6-1: Tangipahoa STIP Projects					
Phase	Let Date	Project Name	Route	Description	Estimated Cost Range
Construction	2007-2008	LA 10 - LA 1049	I-55	Rubbblize and Overlay	\$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000
Construction	2007-2008	I-12 Weigh Station Lighting	I-12	Install High Mast Lighting	\$250,000 to \$500,000
Construction	2007-2008	LA 1040 (Hammond)			
Construction	2007-2008	City to Acquire R/W	LA 1040	Realignment in City of Hammond	\$1,000,000 to \$2,500,000
Construction	2007-2008	Add Utilities to FY 08			
Construction	2007-2008	District 62 Signal Upgrades		Signal Upgrades	\$1,000,000 to \$2,500,000
Construction	2007-2008	US 190 - LA 1062	LA 443	Cold Plane, Stab. Base and Overlay	\$5,000,000 to \$7,500,000
Construction	2007-2008	US 190 Drainage Improvements	US 190	Drainage Improvements	\$500,000 to \$1,000,000
Construction	2007-2008	LA 10 - LA 440	LA 1061	Chip Seal, Single	\$100,000 to \$250,000
Construction	2008-2009	I-55 @ US 190	I-55	Ramp Improvements	\$500,000 to \$1,000,000
Construction	2008-2009	I-12 @ US 51 Business W.B. Off Ramp	I-12	West Bound Off Ramp	\$250,000 to \$500,000
Construction	2008-2009	N.Jct LA 442 - .90 Miles N.of LA 16	US 51	Cold Plane and Overlay	\$500,000 to \$1,000,000
Construction	2008-2009	.90 Miles N. of LA 40 - LA 16	US 51	Cold Plane and Overlay	\$1,000,000 to \$2,500,000
Construction	2008-2009	Beaver Creek Bridge	LA 1051	Bridge Scour Repair	\$250,000 to \$500,000
Construction	2009-2010	I-12 & U.S.51 Bus Interchange Imp.	I-12	Interchange Improvements	\$500,000 to \$1,000,000
Construction	2010-2011	Gill Cr. & Creek Bridges	LA 440	Bridge Replacement	\$1,000,000 to \$2,500,000
Engineering	2007-2008	Beaver Creek Bridge	LA 1051	Bridge Scour Repair	\$0 to \$100,000
ROW	2006-2007	Gill Cr. & Creek Bridges	LA 440	Bridge Replacement	\$250,000 to \$500,000

Generally, decisions are based upon existing traffic levels and condition of pavement or structure. Priority focus is on upkeep and repair of the existing 16,000 miles of State-maintained roadway. Maintenance and repair efforts are selected and prioritized based on technical input from the various DOTD District Offices (District 62, in the case of Tangipahoa Parish). Impetus for new roadways typically comes from constituent groups such as parish or municipal governments or economic development agencies.

It is important to note that the DOTD does not currently acknowledge the eligibility of a project as a candidate for inclusion in its program until the sponsor (usually a metropolitan planning organization or local government) has submitted a "Phase 0 Feasibility Report." This report, considered the birth certificate for a State project, is a

document that defines the preliminary project scope and limits, provides a draft purpose and need for the project, and evaluates any community, environmental or physical constraints that might represent fatal flaws to project implementation.

4.0.2.2 | Local Government. The second group of decision makers is local parish and municipal governments. This group is responsible for local parish roadways and city streets. It has a much shorter timeline in trying to stay abreast of transportation demand, even despite funding constraints. Projects are typically identified through technical evaluation by parish staff, through consultation with the DOTD district, and often through requests from policy makers and developers to address anticipated needs created by projects.

One of the major changes in transportation decision-making anticipated to affect Tangipahoa Parish local governments in the near future is the fact that the area around the cities of Hammond and Ponchatoula is likely to be designated an “urbanized area” by the U.S. Census Bureau after the 2010 Census. This designation will require the local governments to act in partnership to establish a regional board called a Metropolitan Planning Organization (“MPO”).

The role of the MPO is to coordinate transportation planning among the various local jurisdictions and to prepare both a short-term and long-term highway and transit funding program for inclusion in the State transportation program. The existence of an MPO raises an area’s profile in the State transportation planning process, but small MPOs, standing alone, have relatively little clout (and funding is seldom adequate to maintain the required staffing, especially in the early years of organizational development).

Tangipahoa Parish’s local governments may find it beneficial to collaborate with one of the larger MPOs in the region, such as the New Orleans or Baton Rouge MPOs, to outsource agency start-up and initial staffing until sufficient capacity is developed for a stand-alone operation. Working with one of the larger MPOs provides increased political profile and access to established technical resources that would take years to develop independently.

4.0.2.3 | The Private Sector. The third group responsible for development of transportation infrastructure is private developers. This group operates under a timeline that is “fast-forward” compared to the state and federal programs. The other major difference in the decision making of this group is that they often see the transportation infrastructure needed to support their site plans not as an asset, but as a liability because transportation facilities consume usable land, and their costs can impact the risk-return balance of a development. Often the developer is interested in soliciting public investment in the transportation system to support a development, particularly when the facility serves and is impacted by multiple other landowners.

It is critical that Tangipahoa Parish put in place a set of planning practices and processes that promotes meaningful coordination and communication among these three groups in order that the burdens and benefits of transportation infrastructure development be shared equitably among all stakeholders. There are a variety of tools available to help in framing a process for the three groups to work together to provide a coordinated transportation

system to the citizens of Tangipahoa Parish. Some of these mechanisms are described in the following section.

5.0 | Regulatory Tools for Transportation Management

5.0.1 | “The Toolbox.” During the course of the comprehensive planning process, a variety of mechanisms were discussed that have the potential to assist the parish in integrating land use planning and decision making with transportation planning and capital investment. Each of the items in this toolbox has strengths and weaknesses as far as helping the Parish to address and manage the critical link between private development and public investment in transportation (e.g., streets). The toolbox includes:

- ◆ Public investment.
- ◆ Performance zoning.
- ◆ Traffic sheds.
- ◆ Transferable development rights.
- ◆ Clustered development.
- ◆ Public acquisition of property (land banking).
- ◆ Private streets (residents pay the costs of development and maintenance of their streets).
- ◆ Adequate public facilities ordinances.
- ◆ Traffic impact analysis.
- ◆ Traffic impact fees.

5.0.1.1 | Public Investment. Direct public investment in the transportation system is a tried and true method of funding roadway improvements and addressing transportation deficiencies. However, because of the long implementation threshold, and the even longer debt repayment cycle of most bond programs, successful public investment in transportation infrastructure requires an ongoing, forward thinking, and collaborative planning process.

Collaboration is important because most transportation investments require funding partners. For major projects, the funding partner is typically the State or Federal government. If the project is a smaller project, but is targeted to provide benefit to specific economic development or land use activities, then it is often equitable to include private sector funding partners to participate in project financing.

Still, the Parish should be cautious about the traditional approach to public investment in transportation, that is, that widening streets is the “automatic” way to reduce congestion. Long experience has shown that the capacity of streets will quickly get used up, so “building out of congestion” can be a futile exercise. The Parish should use a combination of strategies that includes street widening only when it has a place in the implementation of an overall strategy that is multifaceted.

5.0.1.2 | Performance Zoning. Performance zoning is a system that emphasizes protecting and maintaining community character, rather than emphasizing isolating different land uses from each other. Performance zoning allows for development that reduces impacts on transportation infrastructure, for example, by:

- ◆ Promoting clustered development, which reduces the overall number of miles of roads that must be constructed and maintained;
- ◆ Calibrating the scale of uses to the design of the roads that serve them (*e.g.*, a convenience store could be located on a small road, but a big-box retailer would have to be located on an arterial);
- ◆ Requiring subdivisions to connect to each other, so that people have more alternative ways to move around, and so that some trips do not need to be on arterials; and
- ◆ Promoting mixed-use hamlets and villages at transportation nodes that are able to accommodate them. These developments help reduce the number of miles that rural residents have to drive to reach essential goods and services, and provide alternative housing choices in the countryside.

5.0.1.3 | Clustered Development. Traditional zoning ordinances establish minimum lot sizes, setbacks and widths that developers must follow in designing residential developments. As a result, developers tend to subdivide entire tracts of land into large lots that consume almost all of the available land. For example, a 50-acre parcel that is zoned for minimum lot sizes of 5 acres will be divided into eight or nine five-acre lots (some of the land will have to be used for streets). When zoning regulations are revised to allow for cluster development, either as part of a comprehensive performance zoning code or a stand-alone element in an otherwise conventional subdivision or zoning code, the ordinance will allow the lots to be smaller so that the balance of the tract can be reserved as open space. The cluster development regulations could also provide an incentive to cluster, by allowing a few additional lots to developers that choose the cluster option.

The three basic goals of clustering units onto smaller lots are: preservation of community character by preserving open space, protecting ecologically sensitive habitat, and preserving agricultural land. Preserving open space also preserves the community's options for establishing the best use of the undeveloped space.

Clustered development can make walking, bicycling, and transit more feasible (and thereby reduce auto trips), but to do so, requires reasonable access to nonresidential uses (either on-site, as in the hamlet or village concept, or off-site, in a nearby location) or transit service (which can be facilitated by increasing the number of homes with pedestrian access to transit stops).

5.0.1.4 | Traffic Sheds.⁶ Traffic sheds are a way to tie the amount of development in an area to the ability of the area's roads to handle the traffic that the development produces, or to simply evaluate the amount of pressure new development is likely put on an area's roads.

⁶ Traffic sheds are discussed in detail in Chapter 3, Growth Capacity and Public Facilities.

As a regulatory tool, traffic sheds are a way to keep transportation supply (the capacity of the roads) and demand (the amount of traffic) in balance, by recognizing the limits of the supply that exists, and ensuring that new demands do not overwhelm the supply.

Traffic engineers have developed ways to calculate the maximum number of cars per hour that roads can handle, depending upon their design, dimensions, and materials. The decision about whether the road should be free-flowing (the traffic engineers call this "Level of Service A") or standstill traffic ("Level of Service F"), or something in-between, is a policy decision for the parish. Once the parish sets standards for how much traffic is tolerable on its rural roads, the amount of development that will generate tolerable levels of traffic on the existing road network can be fairly readily calculated. That amount of development is then spread out across the area so that every landowner has a fair share, based on the amount of land they own. If they do not want to use their development rights to build, landowners could sell their development rights to other landowners within the traffic shed.

Traffic sheds work best in areas where the majority of traffic flows in one direction. To implement the approach requires the calculation of traffic shed boundaries, the calculation of traffic generation, and uniform application. After the program is set up, effective implementation is the hard part. Tracking development within the traffic sheds, evaluating the impacts of road improvements on their capacity, and tracking transfers of development rights among property owners in the traffic shed could become significant administrative responsibilities. Unless the Parish chooses to impose a fee for tracking transfers of development rights, it will receive no direct financial resources to support that part of the program.

"TDR programs are effective only in the relatively rare instance when a variety of forces converge to create a healthy market for the transferred development rights."

That said, used as an analytical tool, traffic sheds help decision-makers and the public to visualize the relationship among roads, planning, and development approval decisions. With this tool, policy makers can see the likely effects on an entire area of the Parish when decisions are made to approve new development, increase road capacity (e.g., by widening roads, removing obstructions near the roads, paving, and the like), or amend regulations with regard to densities or permitted land uses.

5.0.1.5 | Transferable Development Rights. Transferable development rights ("TDR"), are a way to allow people in rural areas to realize some of the development value of their land without actually developing it. In effect, it allows them to voluntarily sell the right to develop to someone else, who voluntarily purchases it to apply to different property in order to develop at a greater density than would otherwise be allowed.⁷ In this way, TDR programs are supposed to use market forces to pay for such land use policies.

⁷ Under the law, the ownership of each piece of land is actually a "bundle of rights" that is linked to that land. Among these rights are: the right to possess, the right to exclude others, the right to use, the right to modify, the right to build/develop, the right to lease/sell, the right to grant easements, the right to sub-divide, the right to harvest the minerals under the land, the right to reasonable use of water, and the right to the air above the land. Many of these rights can be transferred separately.

Transportation benefits are generally secondary. Still, well executed and managed TDR programs can operate to protect the character and function of rural roads by reducing development in rural areas and shifting it to more urbanized areas.

Generally, TDR programs operate in tandem with zoning or subdivision ordinances to manage growth and control urban sprawl into rural areas. Parish ordinances would divide the parish into “sending areas” and “receiving areas.” In each area, a level of density is established, usually the higher density “receiving areas” are in or near the already urbanized areas (inside the urban growth areas), and the lower density “sending areas” cover the more rural areas (outside of the urban growth areas).

Landowners in the “sending areas” are allowed to transfer/sell their development rights to landowners in the “receiving areas” to create an even higher density. The transfer/sale of development rights is strictly voluntary and the price is set by market forces. The program is intended to allow rural landowners to be compensated for helping the Parish achieve its goal of maintaining its rural character.

A TDR program can affect transportation policy by limiting the sprawl of new development into areas without the transportation infrastructure to support that development. The parish can establish sending and receiving areas based on both the current condition of its transportation infrastructure and its plans for future expansion and enhancement of that infrastructure.

TDR programs are not a “magic bullet.” In practice, **TDR programs are effective only in the relatively rare instance when a variety of forces converge to create a healthy market for the transferred development rights**, that is, when:

- ◆ Greater densities than are otherwise allowed in receiving areas are desired because a market exists for the higher density, and the receiving area’s decision-makers are firmly committed to implementing the program by:
 - Denying requests to simply re-zone “receiving” land for higher densities (making the application of TDRs to the property essentially worthless); or
 - Allowing objecting neighbors to block proposed development that uses TDRs as “too dense,” even though the rules of the program would allow it;
- ◆ The price of land in the receiving area is relatively high, making it more cost-effective to buy a TDR than to simply purchase additional land to achieve a certain development yield;
- ◆ The price of the TDR is sufficient to entice the rural landowner to sell it, and the developer of land in the receiving area to buy it;
- ◆ The transaction costs to the private sector are low (usually through a “TDR bank” that is administered by the local government or a regional entity);

- ◆ The local government that has jurisdiction over the receiving area is committed to the program (*i.e.*, it does not simply rezone property to a higher density, allowing developers to forego purchasing TDRs to accomplish that objective); and
- ◆ The people in the receiving area are committed to the program, so that neighborhood opposition to density does not make the use of TDRs impractical.

Setting up a successful TDR program requires extensive analysis and great commitment on behalf of all of the local governments involved in the program, including the addition of staff to administer the program. Accordingly, this Plan recommends establishing such a program only if: (1) considered analysis shows that a market for TDRs could be established; and (2) the affected local governments make firm commitments to effective implementation. Alternatively, if the State of Louisiana were ever to establish a TDR program that would allow transfers to major Cities (*e.g.*, New Orleans or Baton Rouge) from rural Parishes, Tangipahoa Parish should join that program.

5.0.1.6 | Purchase of Property or Conservation Easements (Land Banking). In some areas, local governments and/or non-profits have created land banks to purchase development rights from rural landowners in order to protect certain areas from development, either as part of a larger TDR program or as a stand-alone effort. Often these are areas that have special scenic, recreational or environmental qualities that provide benefits to the local community as a whole when they are preserved. Governments usually fund land banking programs through the establishment of a dedicated tax, and manage the land banking process through a community board. Nonprofit organizations fund land banking through private donations, foundation grants and public/private partnerships.

An alternative to outright purchase of property is purchase of conservation easements. Conservation easements are a way to purchase development rights and then extinguish them (they are not applied to other property). Conservation easements are legal documents that can contain whatever provisions are appropriate. Usually, land subject to conservation easement can still usually be used for rural pursuits like farming or forestry.

Land banking can have a positive impact on traffic congestion by creating or maintaining low density development with its correspondingly lower need for transportation infrastructure.

5.0.1.7 | Private Streets. Where streets are private, residents pay the costs of development and maintenance of their own streets. Although sometimes useful in the short-term as an interim solution, private streets often have residual consequences. Frequently, private streets have been under-designed in terms of capacity and/or durability (pavement material and thickness). These conditions become problems for the parish in terms of public safety (fire, medical and police access), and if the parish ultimately takes over the street as a public use facility as the area grows, it is stuck with the responsibility of improving the streets. As such, if the parish chooses to allow private streets, it should ensure that they are developed to public street standards and should require legal assurances that they will be maintained.

5.0.1.8 | Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances. An adequate public facilities ordinance is a self-imposed requirement on the Parish that it will not approve site development plans unless the infrastructure is in place to support their demands on public facilities (such as sewer, water, transportation, etc.) or on public services (such as police and fire protection and schools). These ordinances are different from the traffic shed approach in that they are “first come, first served,” while the traffic shed approach spreads the development rights out among the landowners, regardless of when they choose to develop. This difference can lead to some draconian and politically unpalatable results.

Regulations that require concurrent development of the transportation infrastructure supply with development demand provide a high degree of service and benefit to the community and are, in many places, considered a best practice. However, they work best in a location that has a captive audience (developers that just can’t go anywhere else), or have such as strong “brand name” that developers can still recover a profit regardless of the costs. Moreover, without exemptions for urbanized areas, where infrastructure capacity is more expensive to expand, adequate public facilities ordinances can actually cause urban sprawl.⁸

Concurrency requirements mean that development applications must include professional impact assessments on facilities that are affected. They also create an attendant need for personnel to review those concurrency studies and administer a “concurrency management system” that monitors: the total capacity of facilities, existing demand, committed demand, and available capacity. In short, the step to such requirements is a big one.

5.0.1.9 | Traffic Impact Analysis. A traffic impact analysis is a technical study that determines how the construction of a proposed development will affect the traffic on the surrounding roadways. A traffic impact analysis also determines what changes in the roadways (or in the project, for example, changes in density or design) would be necessary to maintain traffic flows if the proposed development was constructed. Traffic impact analysis can be an alternative or a supplement to the traffic shed concept (and could apply in areas where traffic sheds are impractical). Governmental jurisdictions can require that a traffic impact analysis be made by a certified traffic engineer prior to approval of new development projects.

With the traffic impact analysis in hand, the regulating agency can then either require that the developer pay for the transportation improvements required by the increased traffic flow from the development, or deny the development approval if the impact is too great. One weakness of traffic impact analysis is that it often focuses only on one transportation mode – vehicles – and does not address transit, bike or pedestrian transportation impacts of the development. In addition, if a traffic impact analysis process is too tightly focused it may put priority only on the local impact of the additional traffic created by the development, and not consider how the development will impact the overall highway network, that is, how traffic patterns will change across the entire network of roadways due to development.

⁸ Florida’s strict “concurrency” requirement, which required adequate public facilities to be developed concurrently with new development, fueled sprawl, and ultimately led to amendments in the law that exempted certain urbanized areas from the requirement.

Therefore, these analyses tend to work best when an area has a strong comprehensive planning process to provide system-wide context for the site analysis.

There are two approaches to implementing traffic impact analyses into the site plan approval process. The first approach is to require the developer to hire a traffic engineer to perform analysis that will be presented to the parish. The strength of this approach is that the logistical burden is on the developer to carry out the process. The weakness of this approach is that the professional doing the analysis has client obligations to the developer not the parish and the parish still has to fund staff or a contractor to review the analysis with costs that are hard to cover through permitting fees.

The second approach is to have the developer pay a fee to have the parish perform the traffic impact analysis. Theoretically this approach puts no additional financial burden on the developer, who had to pay for the analysis in the first approach as well, and in practice is less expensive, because the parish can contract for lower costs due to quantity. The strength of this approach is that, whether it is a staff member or contractor, the professional doing the analysis is answerable to the parish as the client, and therefore parish (and the public's) interests remain paramount. The weakness in this approach is that the logistical burden for securing services and completing the analysis falls on the parish, and, without the developer's incentive to get it done quickly, the process can bog down.

Finally, if a traffic impact analysis program is to be implemented, it should be standards-based. That is, thresholds should be developed to evaluate whether the anticipated impacts of a development are acceptable (approvable) or not. These thresholds provide for consistent decision-making and avoid potentially unfair treatment. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development is currently proposing a requirement that traffic impact analysis be performed for large developments requesting access to state maintained facilities. The Parish should coordinate with the DOTD planning section to ensure compatibility of programs.

5.0.1.10 | Impact Fees. Impact fees are a mechanism for assessing developers for the impacts their development proposals are anticipated to have on the transportation system. Impact fees are established based on careful, technical study of the per-unit (or per square foot, for nonresidential uses) impact on the transportation system and the public cost of providing service to the new residential or commercial use, based on the share of the use's demand on the parish's planned capital improvements (not operations or maintenance) that will serve the use. Once the fees are established, they are generally charged as building permits are issued. Impact fees must be spent on infrastructure that benefits the new development to the extent of the development's impacts, and not on fixing existing deficiencies. As such, impact zones are established and separately accounted for, so collections in each zone are spent in the same zone, ensuring that the expenditures benefit the new residents or businesses.

Impact fees are often helpful, but like TDRs, they are also not a "magic bullet." For example, for residential uses, impact fees are normally passed on to consumers as part of the price of the home. Likewise, for commercial uses, impact fees are normally passed on to businesses as part of the rent. As such, if impact fees are considered, they should be evaluated not only

in terms of their revenue potential, but also in terms of their impact on low-income households and small businesses.

Moreover, since impact fees can only be used for capital improvements, the continuing costs of maintenance must be covered in another fashion. Unlike water and sewer utilities, there is no revenue source that is directly tied to the use of the parish's public streets. Therefore, even if the impact fees cover 100 percent of the cost of improvements, new development can still create fiscal stress if the cost of maintenance exceeds the available revenue from sales tax generated by the project's residents (through spending) or businesses.

Finally, impact fees must be returned if they are not spent within a certain period of time. Therefore, if an impact zone is not rapidly developing, the Parish may be compelled to collect and then return money. Consequently, even though the impacts of a new development occur, and even though a fair share of the cost of addressing them is paid for, the Parish might not collect enough funds to address them before time limits are reached.

6.0 | Regulatory Tools for Transportation Management: Goals and Recommendations

6.0.1 | Goal: Strengthen the link between transportation planning, land use planning, and land development in the Parish

6.0.2 | Recommended Actions.

6.0.2.1 | Plan Ahead. The Parish should work toward a sustainable program of comprehensive, continuous and coordinated long-range transportation planning. A proactive approach will allow the parish to:

- ◆ Better articulate parish needs in discussions with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development on major capital projects;
- ◆ Better anticipate capital needs and optimize effectiveness of the Parish bond program for transportation investment;
- ◆ Widen streets only as a part of a comprehensive, multifaceted program to enhance mobility; and
- ◆ Provide a sound basis for public-private partnerships with developers in regard to transportation investment that benefits their projects.

6.0.2.2 | Use Traffic Sheds as an Analytical Tool, and Consider Using Them as a Regulatory Tool. Analyzing the comprehensive plan outcomes in terms of traffic sheds provides a useful tool for conceptualizing the relationship between land use and transportation. This approach also provides the basis for including some scenario-based planning into the plan implementation process in order to better inform decisions and assist matching transportation decisions to community goals.

6.0.2.3 | Adopt Regulations that Allow for Clustered Development and Hamlet/Village Development. Clustered development has the most potential to reduce the number of vehicle trips when it is combined in a mixed-use development where essential services are

within walking or biking distances from the residences (e.g., in hamlets or villages). Clustered development can also reduce vehicle trips when the development is on or near a transit line if and when regular transit service becomes available. Finally, even without a nonresidential component, clustered development reduces the number of miles of streets that must be constructed and maintained.

6.0.2.4 | Require Abutting Subdivisions to Connect to Each Other. Subdivision regulations should require abutting subdivisions to connect to each other.

6.0.2.5 | Preserve the Opportunity for Alternative Modes of Transportation. As part of its transportation strategy, Tangipahoa Parish should be proactive in integrating alternative transportation facilities and opportunities for alternative transportation modes into its planning as it implements the land use plan recommendations related to clustered development and other growth management land forms.

6.0.2.6 | Identify Areas that May be Appropriate for Purchase of Property or Conservation Easements and Evaluate Whether Such a Program is Prudent. Purchase of property or easements to reduce development in the rural areas can help to lower localized travel demand. However, it creates a competing demand for limited public funds, and therefore should be used only where there are multiple objectives to be served, or where the interest in reducing travel demand is significant enough to justify the expense. If the Parish were to decide to establish a land bank or similar device, a public/private partnership might be the best method of funding the acquisition of the land or conservation easements. Several organizations (for example, the Nature Conservancy) regularly work with local governments on such partnerships.

6.0.2.7 | Use Private Streets Judiciously. Although private streets have some usefulness as a transitional approach, Tangipahoa Parish should use this mechanism with restraint and move more toward encouraging public-private partnerships that keep roads in public maintenance but provide financial participation (either direct or in-kind) from the developer.

6.0.2.8 | If Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances are Considered, Care Should be Taken to Ensure that They Do Not Cause Urban Sprawl. The Parish should be cautious about implementing regulations that cause more problems than they solve, or that quickly over-commit the time and resources of Parish staff. Instead, the Parish should take an incremental approach in which it uses the planning process to analyze the adequacy of the transportation system to meet Parish needs, and considers any identified deficiencies in its policy decisions on a case-by-case basis according to specified standards. One mechanism for this approach is described in the section on traffic impact analysis.

6.0.2.9 | Consider a Traffic Impact Analysis Program. Whether or not traffic sheds are implemented as a regulatory tool, the traffic impacts of new development, or at least larger developments, should be evaluated to determine their impacts on the nearby transportation network, and, at the very least, to minimize their impacts by improving project design. Given that the DOTD is considering a similar program related to right-of-access requests, an

adequate professional pool of qualified analysts will soon develop to support implementation of the program.

6.0.3 | Goal: Be fair about who pays for streets and street improvements -- and how much

6.0.4 | Recommendation.

6.0.4.1 | Conduct a Preliminary Analysis of Whether Impact Fees May Be Appropriate for the Parish. Impact fees may be a helpful component to an overall strategy for funding needed infrastructure. However, they have practical limitations, and may also compete with other Parish priorities. The Parish should consider whether an impact fee program should be used in conjunction with other tools to manage and improve its transportation system to respond to the demands of new development. The analysis should be conducted in light of the planned capital improvements (which should be evaluated in terms of their potential to create demand for infrastructure that will ultimately result in a net drain on parish resources due to the expense of operations and maintenance), and the likely impacts on low-income households and small businesses.

7.0 | Transportation Supply

The Thoroughfare Plan is designed to illustrate the ultimate build-out scenario for proposed major streets in the capital improvement program. This is intended to provide a conceptual framework of what the completed major street system will become. This section describes the facilities included in the Thoroughfare Map by a method called “functional classification.” Functional classification is useful in this context because it not only describes the type and scale of a street, but it also provides some insight into a street’s purpose and mobility impacts.

7.0.1 | Functional Classification. Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Obviously, individual roads and streets do not operate independently of one another. The use of a functional classification system helps decision makers set priorities based on the role each street is intended to play in the overall system.

The relationship between the availability of access to destinations and the suitability for long-distance travel is the key to the establishment of functional classes. Local streets provide access to homes and smaller businesses. Freeways provide limited access and uninterrupted travel for extended distances. In between these two extremes are the arterials and collector streets, which provide intermediate levels of access. **Figure 6-4, Relationship of Mobility and Accessibility to Street Classification,** illustrates the relationship of mobility and access to the basic functional classes.

7.0.2 | Roadway Design Issues. The overall function of a roadway is influenced by more than its available capacity. Elements such as land use, maintenance, and access management play crucial roles. It is important that all aspects of the Parish’s transportation system are given adequate consideration when reviewing street designs and locations.

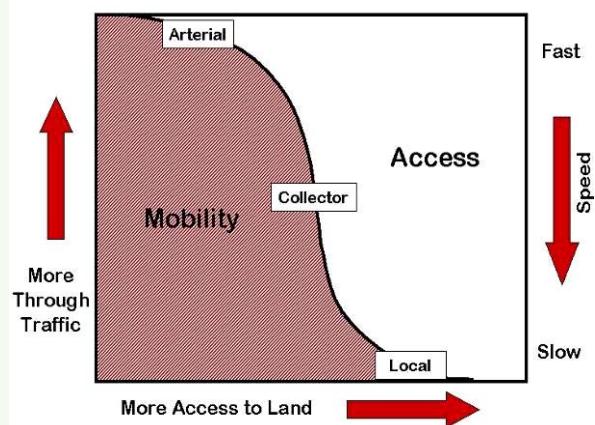
There are many possibilities available during the design and configuration of future roadways. Fiscal limitations influence such elements as right-of-way acquisition, the number of lanes constructed, and even if and when certain roadway segments will be built. As such, many streets are built in phases. Where a four-lane street is planned, but current traffic demand does not warrant the construction of four lanes; right-of-way is preserved for the build-out condition, two travel lanes are constructed initially, and two additional lanes are built later. Similar limitations can postpone roadway improvements to add needed traffic capacity.

Local streets can be designed to discourage overuse, such as extensive through traffic. Local networks can have limited points of entry, defined entry points, traffic calming devices (such as traffic circles), curvilinear street designs, and narrow roadway widths. Identifying the purpose of a roadway (that is, its functional classification) is a first step toward a successful design.

Traffic volumes and land use are two more important elements of roadway classification and design. Of course, these elements are interrelated and can change over time. For example, a rural road could one day become an arterial, providing critical access to a commercial development, drastically changing the daily traffic volumes and requiring improvements to the street to realize its new role.

The functional classification should represent both existing and future roadway conditions. This classification is made at the time of preliminary platting on new developments. With respect to specific roadways, alignments or developments, it is always advisable to review each proposed roadway as it impacts the entire network. Roads do not act in a "stand alone" manner and should not be designed as single elements. Special attention should be paid to the placement and spacing of collector roadways within new developments to help disperse traffic evenly.

Figure 6-4, Relationship of Mobility and Accessibility to Street Classification



Source: Alliance Transportation Group

7.0.2.1 | Arterial Streets. As depicted earlier in **Figure 6-4, Relationship of Mobility and Accessibility to Street Classification**, arterial streets are designed to accommodate higher speed and through traffic. They are intended to promote regional mobility goals more than local accessibility. Typically, arterial spacing is optimized at about one-half mile between facilities.

Too much access to arterial streets (through frequent curb cuts) compromises their flow (because traffic in the right lane frequently slows and stops for turns). See **Figure 6-5, Arterial With Frequent Curb Cuts**. Consequently, access to these streets should be carefully managed, and internal access among parcels that front on arterials should generally be required.

7.0.2.2 | Collector Streets. Collector streets serve as the intermediary roadway between local streets and higher volume arterials. Collector streets often operate as minor arterials, regardless of their classification. Such is typically the case in the early stages of an area's transition from the rural to metropolitan form.

Where there are opportunities, strong consideration should be made to designate future roadways, both arterial and collectors, to facilitate internal accessibility and movement. For example, subdivisions with "stubbed out" streets should be encouraged by Parish officials to communicate with adjacent property owners to complete the connections.

In undeveloped sections of Tangipahoa Parish, staff should place a strong emphasis on the creation of interconnecting roadways, particularly minor (neighborhood) collector streets. Several existing developments may benefit greatly from additional new (or completed) roads to arterials and commercial areas.

Figure 6–5, Arterial With Frequent Curb Cuts



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

8.0 | Transportation Supply: Goals and Recommendations

8.0.1 | Goal: Establish a functional classification system to facilitate consistent understanding and clear expectations about the intended future role of existing streets

8.0.2 | Recommendations.

8.0.2.1 | Adopt a Functional Classification System. The Parish should adopt a functional classification system for its streets. That way, it can identify in advance the expected role of its streets as they are improved (see **Thoroughfare Plan**).

8.0.3 | Goal: Protect the intended function of Parish streets

8.0.4 | Recommendations.

8.0.4.1 | Implement Access Management on Arterials and Collectors. Access should be managed as needed to ensure that the expected roles of Parish arterials and collectors are not compromised. It is easier to manage access as large parcels develop than to retrofit an access management program over small developed parcels that are not likely to redevelop in the near future. Arterials should have more limited access than collectors; and minor collectors should have more limited access than local streets, even though they will have comparable dimensions.

8.0.4.2 | Require Cross-Access Among Subdivisions and Commercial Parcels. Subdivisions should include stub-out streets to connect collector systems to other subdivisions as they develop. Commercial developments along arterials should be required to provide cross-access to adjacent commercial developments.

9.0 | Transportation Demand Management

Travel Demand Management techniques include encouraging mixed-use developments and shared travel to and from large economic centers. In addition, programs to encourage carpooling, vanpooling, job sharing, or telecommuting are often useful in reducing the number of peak hour trips.⁹ The objective is to reduce overall travel demand, which results in a reduction in the need or desire for extra trips. Instead of reducing demand, distributing it evenly through the day (to take advantage of unused capacity) is a secondary goal.

In the case of shared jobs, modified work shifts, and telecommuting, any reduction in the number of 8:00 AM start times for work shifts will reduce the number of morning peak hour commute trips. Similar scheduling for evening and weekend shifts is also recommended. Around its more densely populated areas (municipalities and named “places”), the Parish should consider its role in peak hour traffic generation, and whether it could implement these programs and then educate local businesses so that they can voluntarily participate.

In the case of ride sharing, efficiencies can be obtained by reducing drive alone travel through carpooling and vanpooling for both work trips and other travel purposes. Although this pattern will happen (and has happened) naturally as gas prices increase, it can be helped along by programs that encourage sharing a ride both to help the community meet transportation goals as well as to help the community save both public and private financial resources.

10.0 | Transportation Demand: Goals and Recommendations

10.0.1 | Goal: Over the long-term, slow the growth in the total number of vehicles using the roadway system, particularly during peak travel periods

10.0.2 | Recommended Actions.

10.0.2.1 | Set an Example for, and then Work With, Local Businesses to Reduce Peak Hour Demand. The Parish should consider whether it can implement modified shifts to reduce the number of people who work for the parish that have to leave for work during morning peak travel hours. Then, the Parish should educate major employers about the benefits of such a program.

10.0.2.2 | Work With, Local Businesses to Reduce the Number of Vehicles on the Road through Shared Ride Programs. The Parish should work with the business community to promote carpooling and vanpooling for employers with large numbers of employees on a single shift, using benefit to the community and cost savings as incentives to motivate participation.

⁹ These strategies attempt to reduce peak hour trips, that is, trips during periods in the morning and afternoon when roads are most congested, because most roads are designed to accommodate the peak hour demand and have plenty of available capacity the during the rest of the day.

11.0 | Physical Management of the Transportation System

11.0.1 | The Balanced Transportation System. As the cost of transportation infrastructure increases and the timelines for project implementation lengthen, it is apparent that a community cannot simply build its way out of its congestion problem. As the transportation planning profession and the public at large have become more sophisticated about transportation, the benefits of a balanced, multi-modal transportation system have become increasingly obvious. It has also become apparent that efforts to operate and maintain the existing system in a way that optimizes the value it delivers to the community is as important, if not more important, than expanding the system's physical capacity.

This section will examine some of the issues that go beyond building new roads, to explore various lower cost systems management approaches for promoting and implementing alternatives to the automobile, managing the existing system towards sustainability, and better incorporating the transportation system into the community landscape to improve mobility and accessibility.

11.0.2 | Alternative Modes of Travel. In the United States, the automobile is the dominant form of travel, and therefore receives most of the attention in transportation planning. In most communities, the land use patterns are designed around the assumption that everyone has an automobile available. Little attention is paid to other options until traffic congestion impacts the quality of life of those who drive cars and begins to affect the economic sustainability of the community.

Although the automobile is an important asset for mobility and personal independence, it is not always the best choice for every trip, and is often not an option for some portions of the population. There is a role for alternative forms of transportation, and they are best achieved when integrated into the transportation plan at an early stage of development rather than retrofitted after the system is essentially completed. Although this section does not provide specific project recommendations, it is offered to help guide the discussion of alternatives to automobile travel that can be worked into a balanced transportation system to provide the community with a broader range of options.

11.0.3 | Physical and Electronic Management Techniques. Traffic management techniques involve more than the efficient throughput of vehicles on roadways. Management practices should integrate the interests of all affected parties, including the traveling public, the commercial community, and the economic and environmental concerns at large.

Traffic management is a broad inclusive topic, encompassing resource utilization, infrastructure, personnel, and data management. It is not merely the traffic engineering tasks performed by a locality. Strong consideration must be given to the issues associated with larger-scale transportation planning. These considerations include, but are not limited to public safety, economic development, congestion management, travel demand, and environmental constraints.

What follows is a brief outline of practices employed by local governments to maintain and manage various elements of their transportation infrastructure. Some of the examples are taken from larger, established cities with considerable resources. Others are recommended

**Figure 6-6,
Resurfacing of Roadway**

Source: Alliance Transportation Group

practices that apply to any size locality. The suggested or recommended practices at the end of this section are specifically directed to the challenges facing Tangipahoa Parish.

11.0.3.1 | Physical Infrastructure. Maintenance of physical infrastructure is a critical aspect of transportation management. Most local infrastructure management agencies prefer to schedule routine repairs and inspections instead of patching and repairing “bad locations.” A schedule for inspection, cleaning and street repairs will enable parish personnel to efficiently use limited resources. A calendar for repairs and reviews will also provide valuable information to concerned citizenry.

Regularly scheduled roadway resurfacing is necessary to provide uniform improvements to the existing roadways. See **Figure 6-6, Resurfacing of Roadway.** Older roads, especially those built according to discontinued standards, should be reviewed with an eye to

upgrading deficient sections to modern standards. When an existing roadway or section is placed under a new jurisdiction, this is the best time to document the condition, date of construction and estimated necessary repairs.

The use of streets should be considered in the determination of how and when they will be maintained. For example, streets that are used to haul timber are easily damaged if they are not constructed and maintained to withstand the weight of the trucks. Since forestry is such an important component of the program to protect the rural areas of the Parish, the Parish should take care to provide the thickness of pavement that is necessary for forestry use in areas where the streets will be used to haul timber. At a minimum, if surfaces are constructed to a lower standard, then the Parish should not assess fines or collect damages from foresters who put the streets to a reasonable, traditional use -- hauling timber.

Overlays and patches should be carefully constructed to cover the entire roadway surface. This helps prevent uneven transitions between lanes and excessive wearing. Patches should be placed and inspected to insure a smooth transition from the existing roadway surface across the new patch. If new or existing grates and inlets are involved, care should be taken to reseat the grate so that its top surface is flush with the new pavement surface. In locations with bicycle lanes (or anticipated bicycle travel), bicycle compatible grates should be installed to avoid accidents and pinched tires.

11.0.3.2 | Access Management. Access is the availability of entrances into a commercial or residential development. Access management is the conscious restriction or regulation of the number of access points from a development to the adjacent roadway network. See **Figure 6-7, Roadway Utilizing Varying Methods of Access Management.** Most discussions of access management involve the placement and number of driveway curb cuts, although the application can also include the location, size and function of interior service roads.

When too many access points are allowed, especially near intersections, conflicting vehicle movements result. In the interest of providing safe and reasonable access to a site, planners should review development plans with respect to the entire impacted corridor and not the single development. Wherever possible, cooperation and consultation between adjacent landowners is encouraged to avoid conflicting designs.

11.0.3.3 | Effective Signage and Markings. Intersection signage is critical to properly informing drivers during approaches and while traversing intersections. Stop bars, crosswalks, signal heads, and movement prohibitions should be well marked and these markings should be routinely inspected and retouched. In locations with high volumes of pedestrians, bicyclists or school age children, special signage should be placed to alert drivers. Signage and street markings should be placed according to the guidelines of the Louisiana Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices ("MUTCD").

11.0.3.4 | Electronic Infrastructure. Managing transportation infrastructure is no longer limited to concrete pavements and asphalt. Recent improvements in operations and data collection methods have led to digital controls and integrated computer networks to help maintain the flow of traffic.

Older technologies are being systematically replaced with newer options. In-pavement magnetic loops are being phased out, while video detection and automatic detection devices for pedestrians and bicycles are gaining popularity. Traditional incandescent bulbs for signal heads are being replaced by more efficient, longer-lasting, and brighter light emitting diodes ("LEDs"). **See Figure 6-8, Sample Signal.** New technologies offer increased durability and lower overall operation and maintenance costs.

11.0.3.5 | Signal Timing. The timing and phasing of individual signalized intersections should be reviewed periodically, especially in areas of rapid development or increased commercial activity. Most intersections should be reviewed for appropriate timing and phasing every six months, with more heavily traveled intersections should be reviewed more frequently. The signal heads and controls should be uniform wherever possible to facilitate ease of coordination and minimize confusion on the part of those accessing and servicing the hardware. In locations of due east or west travel, back plates and directional signal heads should be considered. Locations with concerns about wind and severe weather concerns should be designed with appropriate mast arm and pole dimensions.

Figure 6-7, Roadway Utilizing Varying Methods of Access Management



Source: Alliance Transportation Group

Figure 6-8, Sample Signal



Source: Alliance Transportation Group

11.0.3.6 | Signal Optimization. Timing and signal coordination within a roadway network is also important to the overall functioning of the through and local traffic. When signals are poorly timed in relation to other nearby signals, the result is generally increased congestion, poor flow, and long queues awaiting access to a specific intersection; in short, frustrated drivers and increased air pollution. As traffic volumes continue to increase, signal coordination can designate high priority traffic “corridors” for major roadways, increasing their throughput.

11.0.3.7 | Signal Preemption. Signal preemption plans allow emergency services personnel (Fire and ambulance drivers) to operate a specific timing plan for each signalized intersection in the network. The preemption equipment is placed in each vehicle and upon operation will provide radio access to the intersection timing controls. The emergency vehicle is presented the “green ball” while opposing traffic is stopped.

11.0.3.8 | Intelligent Transportation Systems. Several facilities in the southern portion of Tangipahoa Parish, primarily I-12 and I-55 are included in the Metropolitan New Orleans Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Plan. This plan describes a system of ITS resources and sets a consistent ITS architecture based on state and national standards. Tangipahoa Parish should coordinate with DOTD and the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission to explore ways to leverage the existence of this system to support operational improvements.

11.0.3.9 | Geographic Information Systems. Geographic information systems (computer software that allows data to be linked to a map) should be used to collect and analyze information to improve the operation of the Parish’s transportation system. Efficient data management is advantageous to transportation system administration. Many local governments have personnel who monitor and update the assembled information so that staff can effectively use the resource. Computerized databases for reported accidents, damaged streets, missing or broken signage, sidewalks, street lights and traffic signals can be integrated and shared across departments. In addition, proper data management can assist in the application process for federal funds.

Several software applications are available for cataloging and documenting data. It is helpful if similar or compatible data management applications are used across parish departments allowing for easy information exchange. A strategic partnership with the University could be established to develop this resource. The Parish should investigate the potential to establish a collaborative effort to collect and analyze the following data:

- ♦ **Accident Records.** Traffic accident studies are helpful in documenting areas of concern. Several traffic engineering studies and review processes use accident information to determine possible courses of action. Accident patterns and frequency are used extensively to determine areas within a parish that need careful review or infrastructure improvements. Many localities record the reported accidents for graphic display to provide a visual clue to travel flow patterns and high volume locations in the area.

- ♦ **Volume Studies.** Documenting volumes on streets enables tracking of changing travel patterns. This information is especially useful when implementing transportation management strategies like traffic sheds or traffic impact studies, and for policy maker inquiries about excessive traffic on residential streets.

With respect to developing Parish geographic information systems, the Parish should follow the Louisiana Geographic Information Systems Council standards, in order to ensure interoperability among agency GIS data sets.

11.0.3.10 | Emergency Response Routes. Emergency services personnel depend upon well-functioning streets to do their jobs. Route maps for emergency and public safety services are helpful for planning purposes. The maps should list primary and secondary response routes.

Designating primary and secondary response routes will help planners and engineers evaluate proposed changes from the perspective of impact to EMS. To protect the integrity of their emergency services, certain localities declare elements of the EMS response routes to be off-limits for invasive or aggressive traffic management techniques.

11.0.4 | Modifying Driver Behavior. Driver behavior can be a cause for numerous traffic and transportation related problems. Drivers attempting to avoid congested intersections can compound the problem by using smaller roads to access their final destinations. Inadequate signage and enforcement can lead to habitual traffic violations such as speeding on local streets, running red lights, and rolling stops through intersections.

It is useful for local governments to have a means to influence driver behavior. Many local governments attempt to inform their citizenry in public education efforts instead of aggressive law enforcement. The following sections discuss methods available to influence driver behavior, both in global and individual applications.

11.0.4.1 | Police Enforcement. Consistent and reliable enforcement of the traffic laws will help to address numerous popular and public concerns about traffic issues. In areas with complaints about speeding, excessive traffic volumes, reckless or inconsiderate driving, a responsive police force can do much towards gaining the public's trust and compliance. Focused speed studies (using radar trailers and traffic counters) can be combined with a willing and accessible police department to discourage speeding.

11.0.4.2 | Speed Studies. Speed studies are useful in documenting travel speeds along critical roadways. When speed studies are conducted, using radar technology, a reliable database of travel speeds is created allowing for fairly sophisticated modeling and analysis.

12.0 | Physical Management of the Transportation System: Goals and Recommendations

12.0.1 | Goal: Maximize the use of existing transportation infrastructure

12.0.2 | Recommendations.

12.0.2.1 | Promote a Balanced, Multimodal Transportation System. Plan for transportation improvements, especially in urban growth areas, that allow for non-vehicular modes of travel and that promote transit service should it become available.

12.0.2.2 | Establish a Schedule for Street Maintenance. Establish a routine schedule for periodic street maintenance to reduce the incidence of emergency repairs.

12.0.2.3 | Continuously Evaluate Signal Timing and Signal Optimization. Routine evaluation of signal timing and optimization will improve the function of segments of parish streets that have traffic signals.

12.0.2.4 | Seek Partnerships to Develop and Share Geographic Information. The parish should work with Southeastern Louisiana University, the municipalities, and regional and state agencies to develop and share geographic information systems data that can be used to implement transportation management strategies. These systems should use Louisiana Geographic Information Systems Council protocols and standards.

12.0.2.5 | Consider the Agriculture and Forestry Use of Streets in the Maintenance Program. The Parish program for mobility should be cognizant of the fact that Parish streets are resources for its working landscape. That is, farmers and foresters must use them to access fields and bring products to market in heavy trucks. As such, the Parish should take care to provide the thickness of pavement that is necessary for forestry use in areas where the streets will be used to haul timber. At a minimum, damage to substandard streets from reasonable agricultural and forestry use of Parish streets should be considered a cost of maintaining the rural landscape, and should not be assessed against the farmers and foresters.

13.0 | Designing Roads for Mobility, Safety, and Community Aesthetics

13.0.1 | Generally. Public perception of an area is influenced by the quality and character of its street system. People find poorly designed thoroughfares cumbersome. Street design affects community character as much as the functioning of the transportation system. A well-designed thoroughfare can provide reduced travel times, increased safety, and convenient access, as well as make the trip more pleasant because of the quality and character of adjacent uses. Street design can also control vehicle speed and influence noise levels. The physical design of the roads plays a role in the efficiency, economic viability, and quality of life.

If possible, streets should provide a quality travel experience. That is, where resources permit, they should not be cluttered with poor quality signage, a tangle of utility wires on poorly maintained poles, and untended, poorly designed drainage ditches. These conditions impede economic development by discouraging investment. They also make travel times seem longer because the journey is less pleasant than it could be.

Once the Parish adopts a functional classification system for streets, it should develop a set of representative cross-sections for streets that include the elements and amenities that are

recommended by this Plan (*e.g.*, sidewalks, where appropriate; more gently sloped drainage ditches; and utilities). These standard cross-sections should be used to guide decisions about right-of-way development and required dedications from subdivision developers.

13.0.2 | Determinants of Design. Many elements are considered in the physical design of a street. Issues such as the functional classification of the street, its surrounding land use, and physical terrain help determine the ultimate design. Indeed, generally, the actual or planned use of the surrounding land is the most influential factor in the design of the street. Land use affects the amount, type, and time of traffic. For example, an elementary school generates traffic in a very different pattern than a commercial district.

Functional classification identifies the intended function of the street. Related to land use, the functional classification of a street is based on the amount and type of traffic it should carry. Logically, a street that services houses has a much different traffic load than a freeway, and should be designed and constructed accordingly. The same logic applies to more closely related functional classifications.

Pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users should be provided for in advance, as they make up an integral part of the transportation system (especially in the urban growth areas). It is more cost effective to initially plan for these components rather than retrofit them into an existing roadway.

13.0.3 | Right-of-Way Issues. Right-of-way is the term used to describe the publicly owned space or easement within which the street and its supporting elements (*e.g.*, drainage areas, sidewalks, and medians) are built. The availability of right-of-way can be a determinant or a result of street design. Limited or poorly planned right-of-way can restrict the inclusion of necessary design elements and restrict the future use of the street.

When designing a transportation facility, all future users, including adjacent land uses, need to be considered in the allocation of the final width of the right-of-way. Retrofitting transportation elements into constrained corridors is very costly and should be avoided.

14.0 | Road Design: Goals and Recommendations

14.0.1 | Goal: Upgrade the character of arterials, especially in the urban growth areas and areas slated for industrial development or major employment centers

14.0.2 | Recommendations.

14.0.2.1 | Establish recommended cross-sections for each street functional classification. Cross-sections should include sufficient room for paved lanes, shoulders, drainage, sidewalks and bicycle lanes (where appropriate), street trees, and utilities.

14.0.2.2 | Require street trees along arterial streets within the urban growth areas and areas slated for industrial development or major employment centers. Regularly spaced street trees are a significant upgrade to the character of just about any corridor. In areas where the parish's character is more heavily influenced by buildings than by rural uses, street trees should be planted to maintain the "green" character of the parish, and to mitigate the visual impact of buildings on the landscape.

14.0.2.3 | Adopt a limited set of sign regulations, aimed at avoiding sign clutter. Sign clutter is principally a problem for the Parish's municipalities. However, the Parish should take steps to ensure that sign clutter does not become an issue in unincorporated areas. That is not to say that signs should be strictly regulated, but only to say that a limited set of rules (e.g., number of signs and maximum height) should be put in place to ensure that the character of the Parish's streets does not degenerate to the character that is evident around many of the Interstate interchanges in the southern part of the parish.

14.0.2.4 | Plan in advance for future pedestrian, bicycle, and transit use. In some areas, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit traffic is unlikely in the immediate future. However, especially in the urban growth area, these modes of travel should be planned for in advance, so that retrofitting to accommodate these modes is not necessary.

14.0.2.5 | Update dedication requirements in the subdivision regulations to implement the new cross-sections. As new cross-sections are developed, the Parish should include appropriate dedication requirements in its subdivision and land development regulations.

15.0 | Public Transportation

15.0.1 | Generally. Public transportation is the organized movement of large numbers of people between destinations. Mass transportation service is most useful in regions with well-defined travel patterns, limited infrastructure, and centralized land development patterns. In addition, public transportation may be the only choice for various populations, such as people who are too young to drive, people with developmental disabilities, people who cannot afford to own and operate cars, older people who are uncomfortable driving, and, in some cases, other households with fewer vehicles than licensed drivers. Low-income households, students, retired people, and others who seek to economize their transportation dollars, are also potential public transportation users.

The City of Hammond has recently started public transportation service. Public transportation could be part of Tangipahoa Parish's future, especially in the southern portion of the Parish, if there is concentrated growth within an urban growth boundary. The Parish should seek assistance from Hammond in this effort as part of the overall urban growth boundary strategy.

There are several transit options besides fixed route service that have application in regions of the size and scale of Tangipahoa Parish. These might include demand response or circulator service for particular districts or special populations. Some service is already provided, and the potential to improve that service should be investigated.

In addition, while approaching the issue of public transportation, Tangipahoa Parish should consider not only its internal travel needs, but also its position in the regional transportation system. Decisions related to land use and transportation infrastructure within the Parish could have a major impact on the effectiveness of the regional service.

15.0.2 | Benefits of Public Transportation. The benefits of mass transportation are numerous. For regions experiencing rapid economic and residential growth, and thus, high

demand for efficient access to major business centers, mass transportation offers a proven solution to many issues. The use of a single vehicle (or chain of vehicles) to move many people reduces congestion, automobile emissions and parking demand. An efficient mass transportation network increases the utility of existing roadways, especially where there is limited right-of-way for additional lanes. Where efficient public transportation networks operate, land uses can become more dense, helping to create a vibrant, identifiable commercial and/or residential urban district.

15.0.3 | Rail Transportation

Systems. The advantages of rail-based transportation systems are numerous. Trains (and related vehicles) offer the ability to transport more riders and goods for less energy. In regions with highly developed urban corridors, rail transportation can serve more passengers in the same right-of-way at a far greater capacity than private vehicles. The expense of rail systems limits their widespread application; however, when properly designed, rail transportation can provide the highest return on investment of all available transportation options. Tangipahoa Parish is connected to the nation via an Amtrak station in Hammond.



15.0.3.1 | Commuter Rail. Commuter rail typically serves relatively high-speed travel routes that cover long distances with few intermediate stops. Commuter rail networks are designed to integrate local transportation options (light rail, bus service, etc.) with distant residential developments. Because of the focus on long distance travel, peak hour service to the exclusion of off-peak and the infrequent stops, station locations within 15 miles of a central city are not optimal performers for commuter rail except in the heaviest demand corridors. That said, the LOUISIANA SPEAKS plan identifies Tangipahoa Parish as a location for potential East-West commuter rail at some point in the future, beginning with a secondary transit line that connects to Hammond on a route between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, and, if population growth exceeds projections, connecting Hammond to Covington along I-12. See **Figure 6–9, Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan: Transportation Systems** (previous page). The Parish should avoid actions that could thwart the potential for transit along these corridors.

and the North-South CN corridor, which might also be used for transit, when the time for any of those opportunities comes.

16.0 | Public Transportation: Goals and Recommendations

16.0.1 | Goal: Improve access to public transportation

16.0.2 | Recommendations.

16.0.2.1 | Form Partnerships to Expand Bus Transit. Evaluate whether a partnership can be formed with Hammond to expand its transit service to the urban growth area around the City.

16.0.2.2 | Protect the Potential for Future Commuter Rail Transit. Ensure that parish decision-making preserves and encourages the potential for future commuter rail service in the East-West and North-South directions. Although commuter rail is likely a distant future for the Parish, actions taken now can reduce costs later.

17.0 | Bicycle Transportation Infrastructure

17.0.1 | Generally. Linking schools, community centers, recreational facilities and residential subdivisions with well-marked and accessible bikeways will enable the citizens of the Parish to access key destinations by bicycle. Streets should be designed to allow bicyclists to ride in a manner that complies with the motor vehicle code.

17.0.2 | Bikeways. “Bikeway” is the term used to describe any facility for use by bicycles, tricycles or other variable design. The term is for general descriptions, or recommended routes. It does not imply a specific dimension, design or orientation, other than to distinguish the path in question from one that specifically prohibits the use of bicycles (such as a sidewalk). In practice, nearly every street surface can be considered a bikeway. However, bikeways are commonly marked, either with stripes or signage.

17.0.2.1 | Bicycle Lane. A common form of bicycle facility that is relatively easy to implement is the “bicycle lane” -- a five-foot wide striped section of roadway with stencils and signage designating it for bicycle use. The bicycle lane is useful in designating a specific route and location for bicycle traffic. The designation of bicycle lanes along commuter routes may help to raise the awareness of bicycling in the minds of drivers.

Bike lanes are appropriate on urban arterials and major collectors in the urban growth area. They may be appropriate in some rural areas, along streets where bicycle travel and demand is substantial. Bike lanes on urban arterials and major collectors should generally be well marked to call driver attention to their use by bicyclists.

17.0.2.2 | Shared Street. On a shared street, bicyclists and motorists share the travel lanes. Unless the lane is wide enough, a motorist should cross over into the next travel lane to pass a bicyclist. Shared streets are common on neighborhood streets and on rural roads.

17.0.2.3 | Wide Outside Lane. Where shoulder bikeways or bike lanes are warranted but cannot be provided due to severe physical constraints, a wide outside lane may be provided

to accommodate bicycle travel. A wide lane (14 or more feet) usually allows an average size motor vehicle to pass a bicyclist without crossing over into the adjacent lane.

17.0.2.4 | Recreational and Shared-Use Paths. These paths are open to bicyclists, joggers and walkers, and are usually connected to a larger recreational facility, such as a park or athletic field.

17.0.3 | Design of Bicycle Facilities. Bicycle facilities should be designed and built according to an established set of engineering guidelines and standards. Several texts provide recommended dimensions and markings for bike paths, lanes and intersections.¹⁰ The dimensions of all facilities should remain as consistent as possible, and the design of facilities should match their intended uses. Although not all portions of the route need be striped, broken or discontinued routes that block bicycle access are strongly discouraged.

The following list is provided to help structure the bikeway design process:

- ◆ **Identify the Users.** A route network connecting homes with local schools will need to be clearly marked, and properly maintained to account for the anticipated younger age(s) of the riders. If numerous riders are expected, consider increased use of crossing guards or police presence to ensure that approaching motorists see the bicyclists.
- ◆ **Determine the Access Points.** For restricted access routes, such as exclusive use paths, determining where access will be encouraged may influence the number of riders. Likewise, the prohibition of parking or vehicle through movements may influence the popularity of certain routes.
- ◆ **Establish Standards.** For example, should bicycle lanes be installed along a residential collector street, the width of the lanes should be preserved in a similar application elsewhere. Similarly, the design of neighborhood access to and from recreational areas or public spaces should be done with the expectation of repeated installations. The preservation of standards can raise issues of funding and maintenance that should be considered prior to final design approval.

18.0 | Bicycle Transportation Infrastructure: Goals and Recommendations

18.0.1 | Goal: Include bicycles in transportation system design and street upgrades within urban growth areas

18.0.2 | Recommendations.

¹⁰ Some of these sources include: ITE Technical Committee 6A-55, REVIEW OF PLANNING GUIDELINES AND DESIGN STANDARDS FOR BICYCLE FACILITIES, (Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1997); US DOT, Federal Highway Administration, IMPLEMENTING BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, (Publication No. FHWA 98-105); Transportation Research Board, National Research Council, SPECIAL REPORT 209, HIGHWAY CAPACITY MANUAL 3d Ed., Chapter 14 (on Bicycles) (updated 1994).

18.0.2.1 | Design Using Minimum Pavement Widths. In key areas where bicycle use is reasonably anticipated over the planning horizon, a minimum width of clear roadway surface should be provided for bicyclists. Failure to do so obligates cyclists to compete with motor vehicles, placing the bicyclist at greater risk.

Bicycle facilities should provide a minimum of five feet clear width for travel per direction. In the case of bi-directional paths (such as recreational trails), a clear space of twelve feet is recommended. In the case of roadside facilities, such as marked bike lanes, the width of the gutter pan can be used to determine the five-foot clear width.

18.0.2.2 | Provide Access to Critical Destinations. To function within an existing transportation network, bicycle facilities should be designed to provide the most direct and safest connection between established destinations. For example, rather than requiring cyclists to travel through a surface roadway network of signalized intersections, bicycle friendly (and car inaccessible) alleyways and bridges can be used to provide improved access. Surface streets that previously ended in cul-de-sacs can be interconnected with curb cut ramps and paved paths. These options should be integrated, where possible, into new development, especially within the urban growth area, and within hamlets and villages.

19.0 | Transportation System Analysis

19.0.1 | Generally. To help inform the comprehensive plan dialogue on transportation, the project team performed a transportation system analysis of the Parish. The objective of the analysis is to identify anticipated roadway capacity deficiencies likely to occur if plans were not made to address the increasing transportation demand resulting from accelerating development.

The analysis uses data on Parish land uses and the parish transportation system assembled as part of the comprehensive planning process, combined with U.S. Census data, results of the (2005) National Household Transportation Survey, materials and resources obtained from the Regional Planning Commission for the New Orleans Metropolitan area, and other available public and private sources.

The analysis uses a travel demand sketch-planning model developed for Tangipahoa Parish as a part of the comprehensive planning effort to identify current and future travel patterns; to identify anticipated capacity deficiencies; and to compare, for discussion purposes, the comparative impacts of various future land use patterns and development concepts.

The following sections describe the travel demand modeling tools developed, how they were applied, and the results of the analysis.

19.0.2 | Tangipahoa Parish Travel Demand Model. To assist in the analysis of the Tangipahoa Parish transportation system, Alliance Transportation Group, Inc. developed a sketch planning model to provide traffic forecasts under various future land use scenarios. This section provides a description of the Tangipahoa Parish Travel Demand Sketch Planning Model and the process used to carry out model development. Throughout the development process, priority has been given to optimizing the predictive value of the

model sets, resulting in a complete set of sketch planning tools that are useful for future year traffic forecasts and analyses.¹¹

The architecture of the Tangipahoa Parish Model includes all of the functional components of a standard travel demand model.¹² However, because local data on trips are not readily available as model inputs, the model is considered a “sketch model” because it relies on national averages and parameters borrowed from places of similar size and character.

19.0.2.1 | Trip Rates. Using national and local data, trip rates were estimated for households in Tangipahoa Parish. The trips are divided into home-based work trips (HBW), home-based non-work trips (HBNW), and non-home-based trips (NHB). They are presented in **Table 6-2, Tangipahoa Parish Daily Person Trips per Household.**

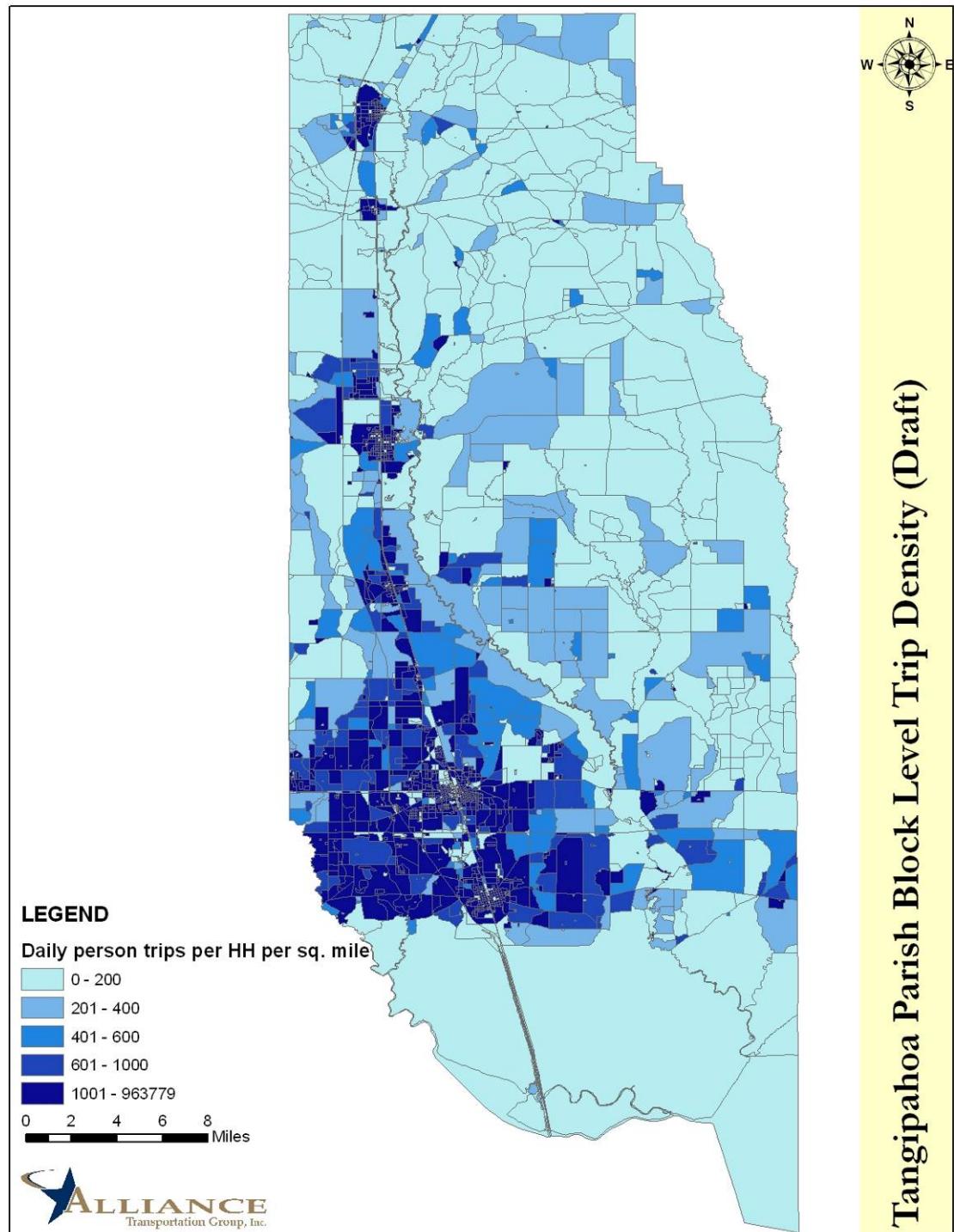
Table 6-2: Tangipahoa Parish Daily Person Trips per Household							
HH Size	Total	HBW		HBNW		NHB	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
1	3.9	0.6	16%	2.2	57%	1.1	27%
2	7.3	1.1	15%	4.1	56%	2.1	29%
3	10.8	1.5	14%	6.0	55%	3.4	31%
4	14.4	1.8	13%	7.8	54%	4.7	33%
5 +	17.9	2.1	12%	9.5	53%	6.2	35%
Total	9.4	1.3	14%	5.2	55%	3.0	31%

¹¹ Alliance Transportation Group designed the Tangipahoa Parish Travel Demand Model to be a flexible, dynamic tool that could evolve and grow along with the needs of the region. The model is a complete set of sketch planning tools capable of performing the required transportation systems planning analyses. The model is designed to assist in carrying out conceptual level planning activities for the Comprehensive Plan. The study area is the entirety of Tangipahoa Parish.

The Tangipahoa sketch planning model applies trip tables based on a matrix estimation procedure to the study area roadway network. TransCAD® traffic assignment routines are used by the model to evaluate various roadway alternatives.

¹² These components include: traffic analysis zones (TAZs) depicted in a GIS polygon layer; TAZ attributes including base year and forecast year demographic variables; base year and forecast year highway network geography depicted in a GIS line layer; link based network attributes for the base and forecast years; and a streamlined user interface to facilitate use of the model to evaluate base and forecast year scenarios.

Figure 6-10, Tangipahoa Parish Block Level Trip Density



Source: Alliance Transportation Group

19.0.2.2 | Highway Network and Traffic Analysis Zones. The two basic building blocks of a travel demand model are the networks and the traffic analysis zones (TAZs). The networks represent the transportation system, including different categories of roads (such as freeways, arterials, collectors, ramps, etc.). The TAZs are geographical areas that link land uses with the transportation system.

19.0.2.3 | Network Attributes. Network attributes define how the transportation system interacts with its various components, given a specific demand. These technical parameters are used during the execution of the travel demand models.¹³

The model development process resulted in the construction of a functional, flexible travel demand sketch planning model with components effectively scaled to current data availability and the analysis needs of the Parish. The model was calibrated and validated using a strategic approach based on consistent architecture, resulting in a sketch planning tools that are useful for future year analysis.¹⁴

19.0.3 | Impacts of Alternative Growth Scenarios. The Tangipahoa Parish Travel Demand Sketch Planning Model was used to measure how the current transportation system is likely to perform in the future. The travel demand model predicts the locations and severity of problems likely to occur given anticipated growth trends. This look at future transportation system performance is called a “capacity deficiency analysis.” The two components of this analysis are the anticipated 2030 land use scenarios and a highway network that assumes that no improvements will be made to the existing system, beyond those that are underway and nearing completion.

The analysis was performed for two land use scenarios. The first scenario was a base case growth scenario under which growth was guided only by anticipated market forces. The second scenario was a growth management scenario under which a growth boundary is established by the parish designed to guide 85 percent of new growth to locate within a limited area generally adjacent to current urban areas.

Table 6-3, Scenario Comparison; No Change in Travel Behavior, shows a set of summary statistics obtained from the model showing transportation system performance under the two alternative land use scenarios. The establishment of an urban growth boundary (UGB)

¹³ The attributes define the volume delay equations that are used in traffic assignment to divert traffic; the capacity of the roadway; and the initial speeds (free flow speeds) present on each of the links. The Facility Type and Number of Lane attributes combined with the Area Type attribute from the TAZ layer are used in conjunction with the speed/capacity lookup table to populate the speed and capacity fields.

¹⁴ The criteria used for validation of the Tangipahoa Parish Travel Demand Sketch Planning Model are based on current FHWA and NCHRP guidance and standards and represent reasonable measures for determining the accuracy and reliability of the model. As implemented, the Tangipahoa Parish Travel Demand Sketch Planning Model is a complete set of sketch planning tools capable of performing conceptual level transportation systems planning analysis of various land use scenarios to support development of this Chapter.

consolidates travel activity, thereby reducing the distance people have to travel to meet their needs or accomplish their objectives. As **Table 6-3, Scenario Comparison; No Change in Travel Behavior**, shows, without the urban growth boundary, the approximately 770,000 trips that travelers are anticipated to make throughout Tangipahoa Parish result in 7,567,836 vehicle miles of travel and 180,040 vehicle hours of travel. With the urban growth boundary in place, the improved mobility provided by the higher functional class of roadways being used and the improved access provided by the proximity of available destinations results in an improvement that, for the same 770,000 trips, reduces vehicle miles traveled to 7,341,227 miles and vehicle hours traveled to 173,850 hours. With the UGB in place, the average trip distance in the Parish drops from 9.7 miles per trip to 9.4 miles per trip. The average trip time drops from 13.9 minutes to 13.4 minutes.

Table 6-3: Scenario Comparison; No Change in Travel Behavior			
Scenario	Measure	Location of Trips	
		Parish-Wide	Within Urban Growth Boundary
Without UGB	Total Vehicle Miles Traveled	7,567,836 miles	3,975,243 miles
	Total Vehicle Hours Traveled	180,040 hours	85,412 miles
	Average Trip Length	9.7 miles	7.42 miles
	Average Trip Time	13.9 minutes	9.6 minutes
	Average Speed	32.9 mph	34.2 mph
With UGB	Total Vehicle Miles Traveled	7,341,227 miles (3.0% reduction)	3,363,184 miles (15.4% reduction)
	Total Vehicle Hours Traveled	173,850 hours (3.4% reduction)	74,362 (12.9% reduction)
	Average Trip Length	9.4 miles (3.1% reduction)	6.28 miles (15.4% reduction)
	Average Trip Time	13.4 minutes (3.6% reduction)	8.3 minutes (13.5% reduction)
	Average Speed	33 mph (0.3% increase)	34 mph (0.6% reduction)

Within the Urban Growth Boundary itself, the figures are similar. Without the urban growth boundary requirement, the area that would have been defined as the growth boundary produces 535,386 trips with an average trip distance of 7.42 miles and an average trip time of 9.6 minutes. With the urban growth boundary requirement in place, these same 535,386 trips would have an average trip distance of 6.28 miles, and an average trip time of 8.3 minutes. These mobility improvements would result in a reduction of vehicle miles traveled for these trips from 3,975,243 miles to 3,363,184 miles, and a reduction of vehicle hours traveled from 85,412 hours to 74,362 hours, even though there is some marginally increased congestion at some locations.

There is a paradox in achieving this improved mobility and access. Although people who live in rural areas tend to make longer trips because of the widely distributed destinations, people who live in more urban settings tend to make more total trips (accomplishing less on each trip). The increased proximity of activity centers and destinations provided by the consolidated development pattern within the urban growth boundary, combined with the

improved mobility of bigger and better roads, have real potential to induce additional trips. The model shows that the change in travel behavior that may result from having convenient access could increase total trips from 770,000 to 807,000. The impacts of the increased number of trips are shown in **Table 6-4, Scenario Comparison; Increased Mobility Creating Increased Demand**. In short, history shows that more convenient travel means more travel.

Table 6-4: Scenario Comparison; Increased Mobility Creating Increased Demand			
Scenario	Measure	Tangipahoa	Urban Growth Boundary
Without UGB	Total Vehicle Miles Traveled	7,567,836 miles	3,975,243 miles
	Total Vehicle Hours Traveled	180,040 hours	85,412 miles
	Average Trip Length	9.7 miles	7.42 miles
	Average Trip Time	13.9 minutes	9.6 minutes
	Average Speed	32.9 mph	34.2 mph
With UGB	Total Vehicle Miles Traveled	7,599,643 miles (0.4% increase)	4,203,980 miles (5.8% increase)
	Total Vehicle Hours Traveled	179,970 (roughly equal)	92,952 miles (8.8% increase)
	Average Trip Length	9.4 miles (3.1% reduction)	6.28 miles (15.4% reduction)
	Average Trip Time	13.4 minutes (3.6% reduction)	8.3 minutes (13.5% reduction)
	Average Speed	33 mph	34 mph

Accordingly, the additional trips that could occur due to better mobility could actually consume the gains with regard to vehicle miles traveled and vehicle hours traveled that are realized by shortened trip distances and quicker travel times. The results shown in **Table 6-4, Scenario Comparison; Increased Mobility Creating Increased Demand**, indicate that the change in land use pattern to adopt a growth boundary could add a small incremental improvement to Parish travel as a whole, while (systemically) the impacts on the urban areas inside the growth boundaries is relatively inconsequential. For the most part, at the system level, the outcomes of the two land use scenarios are statistically identical.

That said, the urban growth boundary approach produces meaningful benefits under either scenario:

- ◆ First, most of the additional trips will be related to increased economic activity in the Parish that will contribute to the public revenue stream.
- ◆ Second, as transportation costs continue to increase, people will have more -- and better -- options. For example:
 - There will be better, more meaningful opportunities to combine trips (because destinations are closer together) to reduce fuel costs.
 - If development within the urban growth boundaries is designed with the types of mixed uses that promote increased pedestrian, bicycle, and shared ride trips, then people will have the choice not to drive -- but economic activity will continue because mobility will not be substantially impaired.

Both of these examples will lead to fewer trips, fewer vehicle miles traveled, and fewer vehicle hours traveled than are set out in **Table 6-4, Scenario Comparison; Increased Mobility Creating Increased Demand.**

- Third, however the mobility improvements are utilized, the cost of providing and maintaining other public services (*e.g.*, police, fire, libraries, etc.) is still reduced substantially under the urban growth boundary scenario.

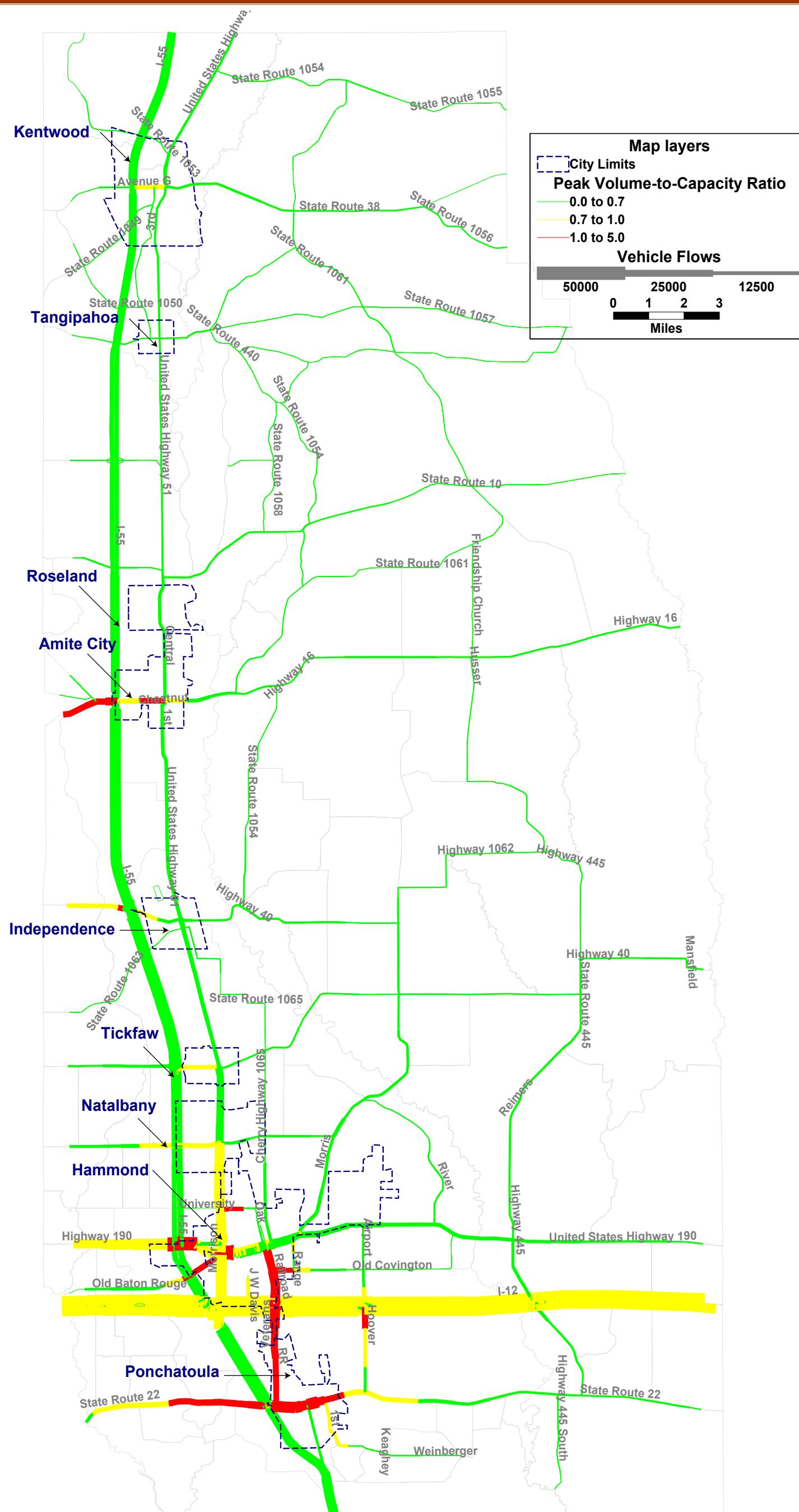
The vehicle miles traveled and vehicle hours traveled estimates provided in **Table 6-3, Scenario Comparison; No Change in Travel Behavior**, and **Table 6-4, Scenario Comparison; Increased Mobility Creating Increased Demand**, assume that the traveling public will continue its tendency to auto based travel with a strong tendency to drive alone. However, that could change over the long term. Indeed, as stated in the examples above, if the opportunity to use non-auto choices is provided by design, and the impact of increased fuel prices changes driver behavior, then economic benefit would still occur (due to savings in travel costs and available options for mobility), but many of the new trips would be strung together or would use alternative transportation, whether it be walking, ride sharing, or transit.

19.0.4 | Capacity Deficiency Analysis. At the individual facility level, the capacity deficiency analysis resulted in the identification of several locations that would be expected to operate in a substandard manner given the anticipated growth scenarios for 2030. The results of this analysis are depicted graphically in **Maps 6-1, 2030 Traffic Without Urban Growth Boundary; 6-2, 2030 Traffic With Urban Growth Boundary; 6-3 2030 Hammond/Ponchatoula Area Traffic Without Urban Growth Boundary; and 6-4, 2030 Hammond/Ponchatoula Area Traffic With Urban Growth Boundary**. A list of the identified roadway segments is provided in **Table 6-5, Roadway Deficiencies**.

Table 6-5: Roadway Deficiencies		
Street	From	To
2030 Projected Deficiencies Without Urban Growth Boundary		
Highway 22	West of I-55	Railroad Street in Ponchatoula
Highway 22/W Pine St/Hwy 51	I-55	Railroad/BRUS 51
Highway 22/E Pine St/Hwy 51	Railroad Street/BRUS 51	E. Rateau Rd
Hwy 3158/N. Hoover Rd	I-12	US 190/Thomas Street
Railroad	Hwy 22	S. Range Street
Hwy 1067/Old Covington Road	Railroad Street	Sisters Road
US 190/W Thomas Street	Point west of I-55 where 190 changes from 4 to 2 lanes	Point east of I-55 where US 190 changes from 4 to 2 lanes
US 190/W Thomas Street	Morrison Blvd/US 51	W Thomas - Morris Ave split
Hwy 1040	Just west of I-55	Railroad
W University Avenue	N. Morrison Blvd	N. General Pershing
Hwy 16	St. Helena Parish Line	I-55
Hwy 16	Campo Lane	US 51/Railroad
2030 Projected Deficiencies With Urban Growth Boundary (includes above, plus streets below)		
Hwy 3158/N. Hoover Rd	Sister Road	Dietz Road

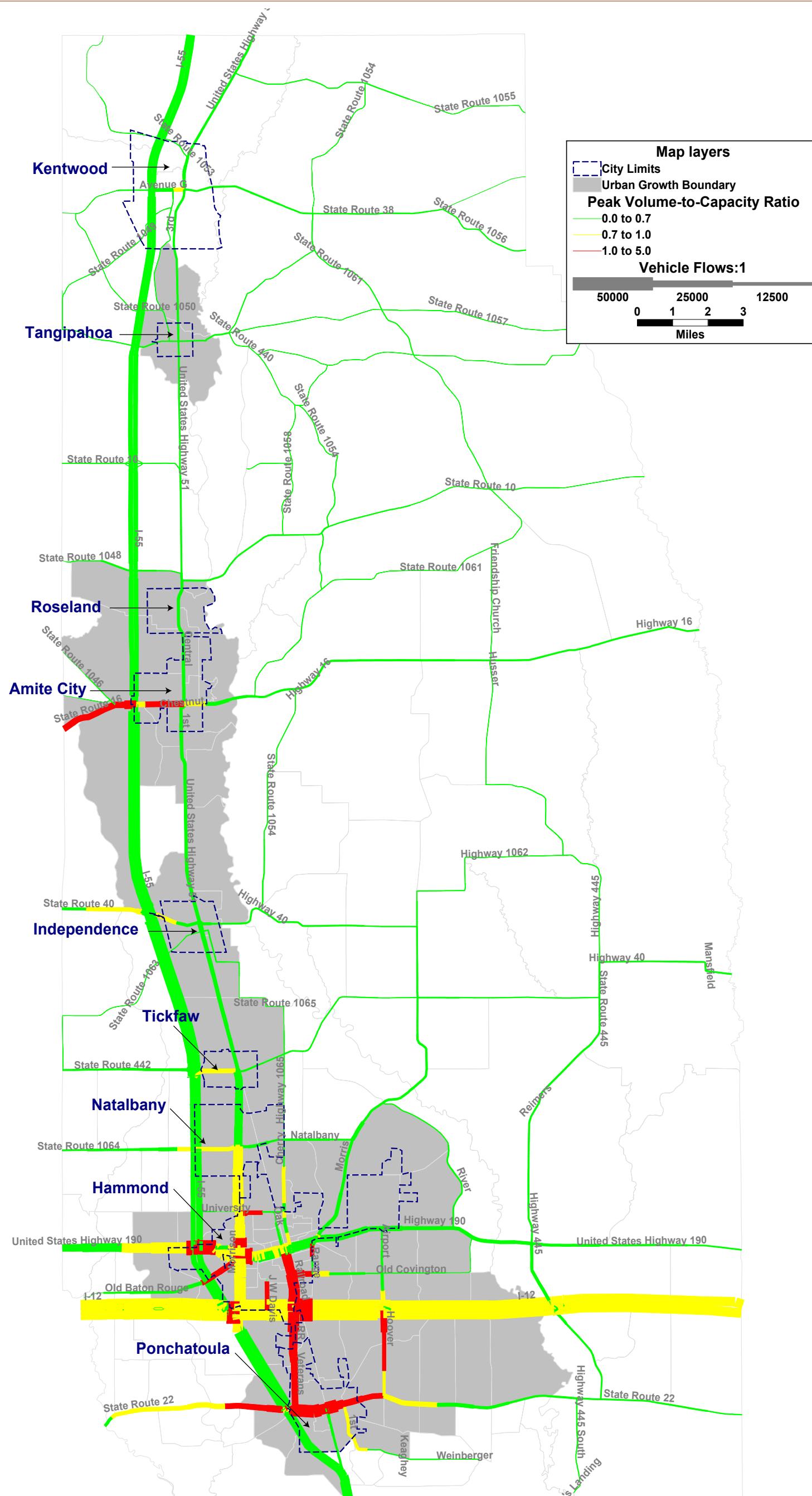


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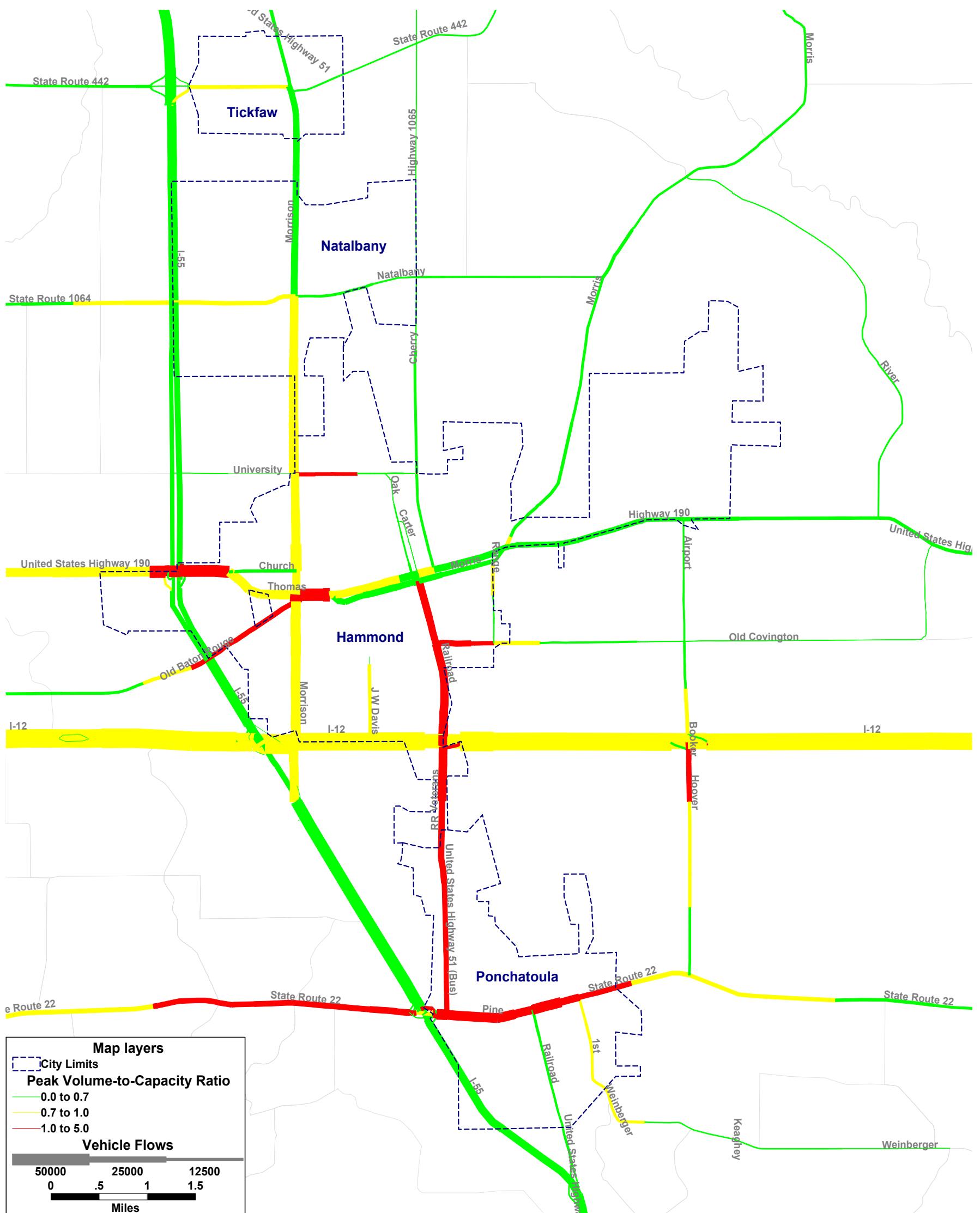
Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan



Note: Volume-to-capacity ratio indicates capacity sufficiency and is a measure of Level of Service.
Low values reflect uncongested areas and high values reflect congestion.

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Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan



Note: Volume-to-capacity ratio indicates capacity sufficiency and is a measure of Level of Service. Low values reflect uncongested areas and high values reflect congestion.



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan

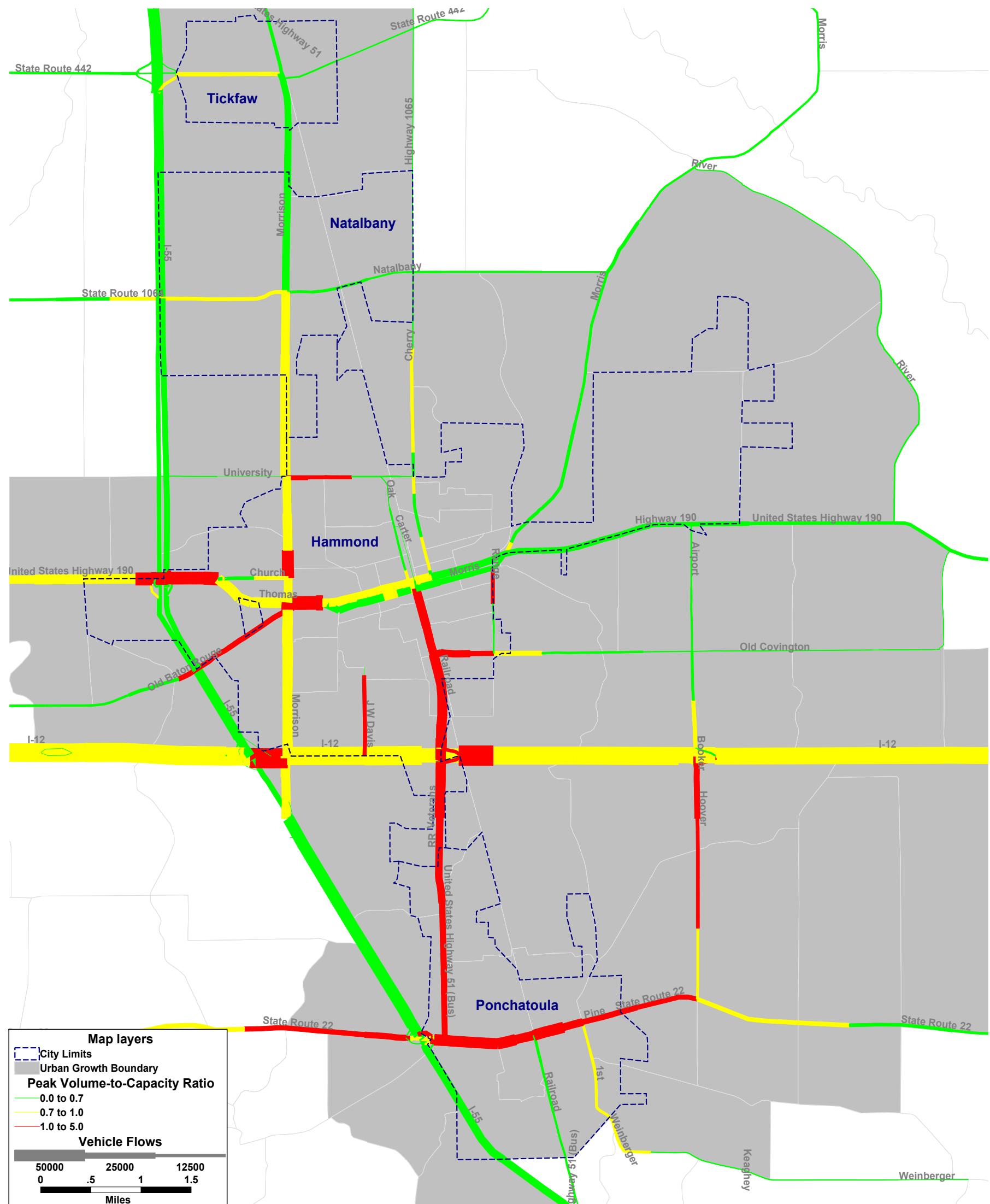
**Map 6-3, Hammond/Ponchatoula Area
Traffic without Urban Growth Boundary**



KENDIG KEAST
COLLABORATIVE



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan



Note: Volume-to-capacity ratio indicates capacity sufficiency and is a measure of Level of Service.

Low values reflect uncongested areas and high values reflect congestion.

Table 6-5: Roadway Deficiencies		
Street	From	To
I-12	Just east of Railroad	
I-12	I-55	S. Morrison Road
Jw Davis Drive	I-12	Phoenix Square
US 51/N. Morrison	Just north of Hwy 3260 intersection	
S. Range Street	A few blocks south of US 190	

Table 6-5, Roadway Deficiencies, shows that the urban growth boundary strategy creates more identifiable demands for transportation improvements than the continuation of the existing condition. That is so, in part, because the local street improvements that will be required in the unincorporated Parish to support new development are not considered by the model. It is also due to the fact that scattering development throughout the Parish scatters the transportation impacts, making improvement needs, though likely to arise, difficult to precisely identify through modeling.

It should be noted that these capacity improvements do not represent the totality of transportation improvements that the Parish should undertake. The analysis does indicate, however, that many of the traffic problems being experienced in Tangipahoa Parish today may be less about total roadway corridor capacity and more about operational deficiencies in the existing transportation system.

20.0 | Transportation System Analysis: Goals and Recommendations

20.0.1 | Goal: Improve mobility and travel mode choice in the Parish

20.0.2 | Recommendations.

20.0.2.1 | Make Operational Improvements. The Parish and the municipalities should study how operational improvements, such as signal timing, access management, signal optimization, signage, and so forth, could improve mobility in the Parish with relatively low levels of investment.

20.0.2.2 | Implement the Urban Growth Boundary Strategy. Work with the Cities, Towns, Villages, and special districts to implement the urban growth boundary strategy through interlocal agreements.

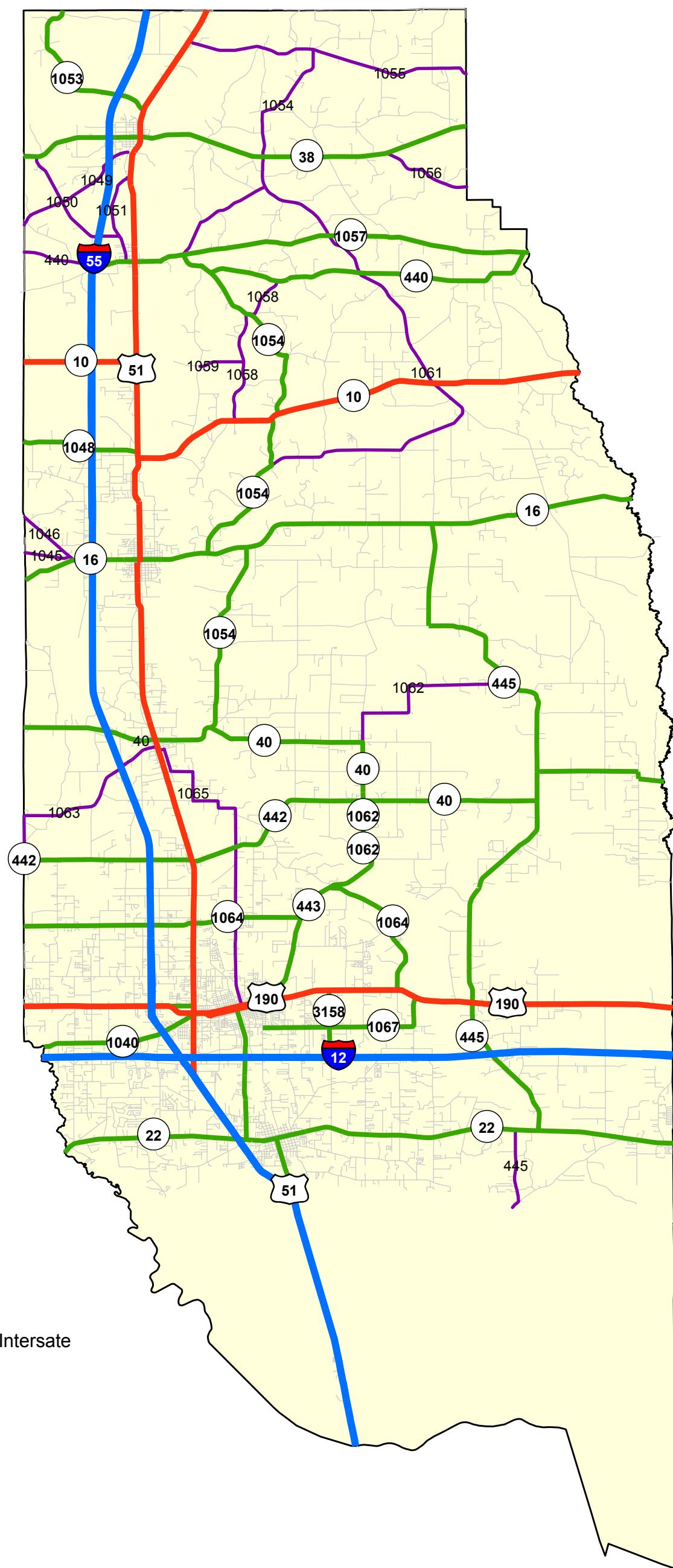
20.0.2.3 | Address Targeted Projected Infrastructure Deficiencies. The Parish should study the areas described in **Table 6-5, Roadway Deficiencies**, and develop a prioritized capital improvements program to address these deficiencies as the urban growth boundary strategy is implemented.

21.0 | Thoroughfare Plan

Map 6-5, Thoroughfare Plan, provides a comprehensive system of major transportation facilities, stratified by their functional role in the Tangipahoa Parish transportation system. The Thoroughfare Plan is designed to connect to and coordinate with the existing



Tangipahoa Parish Comprehensive Plan



thoroughfare plans of the municipalities and the functional class designations of the roadways are defined in a manner consistent with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) classification system used by DOTD.

Based on the limited capacity that the Parish currently has to finance and implement major transportation improvements, the Thoroughfare plan does not propose the construction of major new roadways. However, based upon the 2030 capacity deficiency analysis, a set of candidate locations to be considered for capacity improvements is provided.

Many of the locations are within municipal boundaries, but have been included to provide a comprehensive portrait of the roadway capacity issues anticipated by 2030 given likely growth in the Parish. The list is stratified into two parts. The first is a set of locations that should be considered for capacity improvement regardless of the adopted land use plan. The second set of locations includes those roadway segments that should be considered for capacity improvements if the parish growth boundary concept is implemented.

It should be noted that these capacity improvements do not represent the totality of transportation improvements that the Parish should undertake. The analysis does indicate, however, that many of the traffic problems being experienced in Tangipahoa Parish today may be less about total roadway corridor capacity and more about operational deficiencies in the existing transportation system. These include having too many access points near each other, signal timing that is not optimized, signals spaced too close together, and so forth.

22.0 | Typical Cross Sections

As the Parish begins to work more closely with developers to implement the land use plan and identify corridors to preserve alignments for roadways such as minor arterials and major collectors to provide additional connectivity among land uses, the Parish should add these new roadways to the Thoroughfare Plan. To aid in establishing some standard criteria for these new functional classes and facilitate their inclusion in the plan, a set of typical cross section diagrams is provided in **Drawings 6-1 to 6-6-2, Cross Sections** (at the end of this Chapter). These should serve as a basis for cross-section requirements in the Parish's subdivision and zoning regulations as they are developed.

23.0 | Operational Deficiencies

Operational deficiencies are points of poor transportation system performance, attributable to bottlenecks, choke points from uncontrolled loading onto the system from adjacent land uses, or inadequate intersection capacity that prevents optimal performance of a roadway that otherwise has the capacity to meet demand. The Parish is currently experiencing operational deficiencies at various locations and is likely to experience additional operational deficiencies as it grows, particularly at signalized intersections or along segments of routes with high numbers of access points from adjacent land uses.

Many of these operational deficiencies can be addressed through low-cost, short-term transportation system management improvements. These types of improvements would include improved signal timing, coordination of traffic signal progression along corridors,

flare-outs at intersections to accommodate turn lanes (to increase intersection capacity and throughput), and access management controls on ingress and egress points of adjacent land uses.

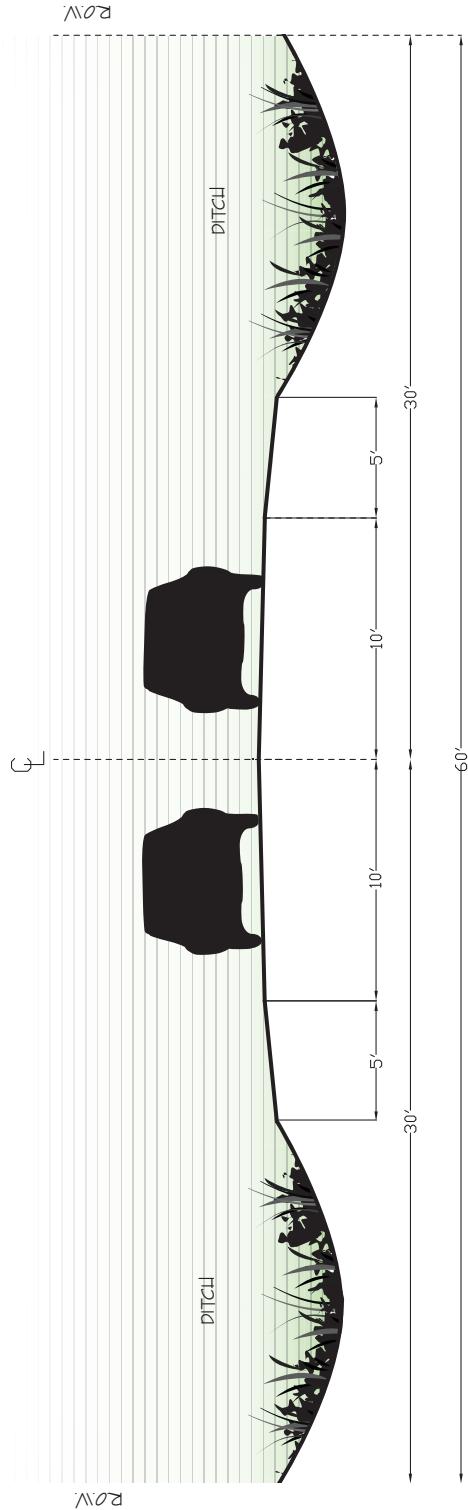
However, because identifying workable solutions is so directly related to the design and function of adjacent land uses, it is not possible to generalize a set of project improvements in this plan. The most effective approach to developing workable operational deficiencies (and a strategy that the Parish should undertake) is the implementation a traffic impact analysis (TIA) program that identifies the impact of adjacent land uses on the roadway and can be used as the basis for an operational analysis to help identify workable solutions.

24.0 | Parish Transportation Priorities

The effective programming and implementation of major transportation infrastructure improvements cannot be accomplished without a clear idea of the land use and development goals being supported. Apart from isolated opportunities to leverage the State Program, the cost and development timeline of large scale transportation infrastructure improvements are often prohibitive. To advance the Parish's objectives to provide a transportation system that meets community needs, it is recommended that Tangipahoa Parish place a priority on:

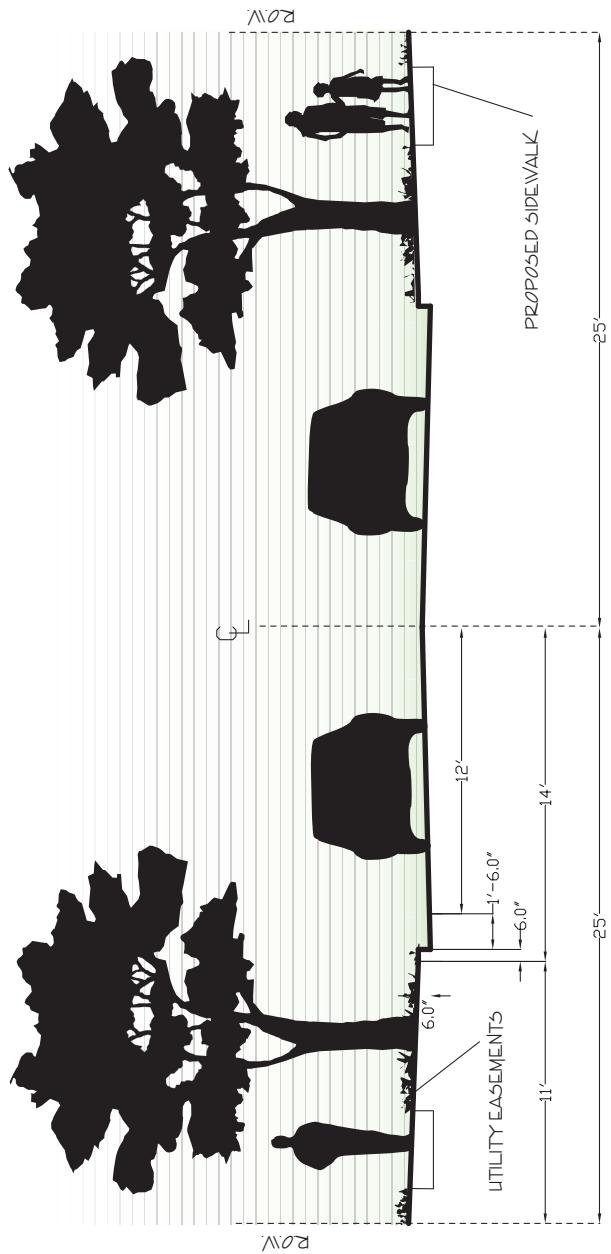
- ◆ Building a strong comprehensive planning program with clear land use and transportation goals supported by tools and resources such as traffic impact analyses to help clarify the interactions of transportation and land use decisions.
- ◆ Building partnerships with developers to coordinate land use and transportation investment and promote shared, equitable contributions to implementing the transportation system. This partnership will be particularly important in preserving corridors for and identifying likely alignments for a connector system of collector roadways to join compatible land uses.
- ◆ In the short-term, focus on operational improvements and transportation system management projects to improve localized transportation performance.
- ◆ Continue to pursue strategic long term goals for major infrastructure implementation to support economic development through a collaborative partnership with DOTD to identify projects that are likely to address future needs and provide local funding for Phase 0 feasibility studies for a select set of priority projects in order to gain them entrée into the State Transportation Improvement Program.

This phased and tiered approach will allow Tangipahoa Parish to strengthen its transportation planning capacity in the near-term, while maintaining a long-term strategic vision for the future of the Parish.

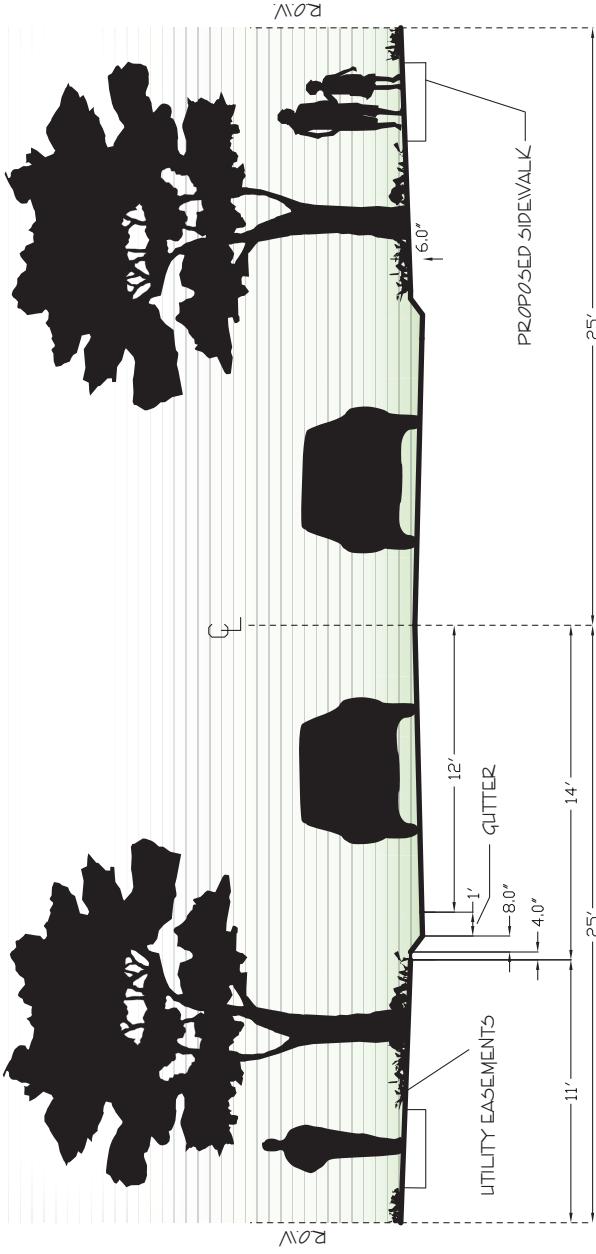


DRAWING 6-1: CURRENT SUBDIVISION LOCAL ROAD CROSS SECTION
TOTAL MINIMUM RIGHT OF WAY LENGTH 60 FT.



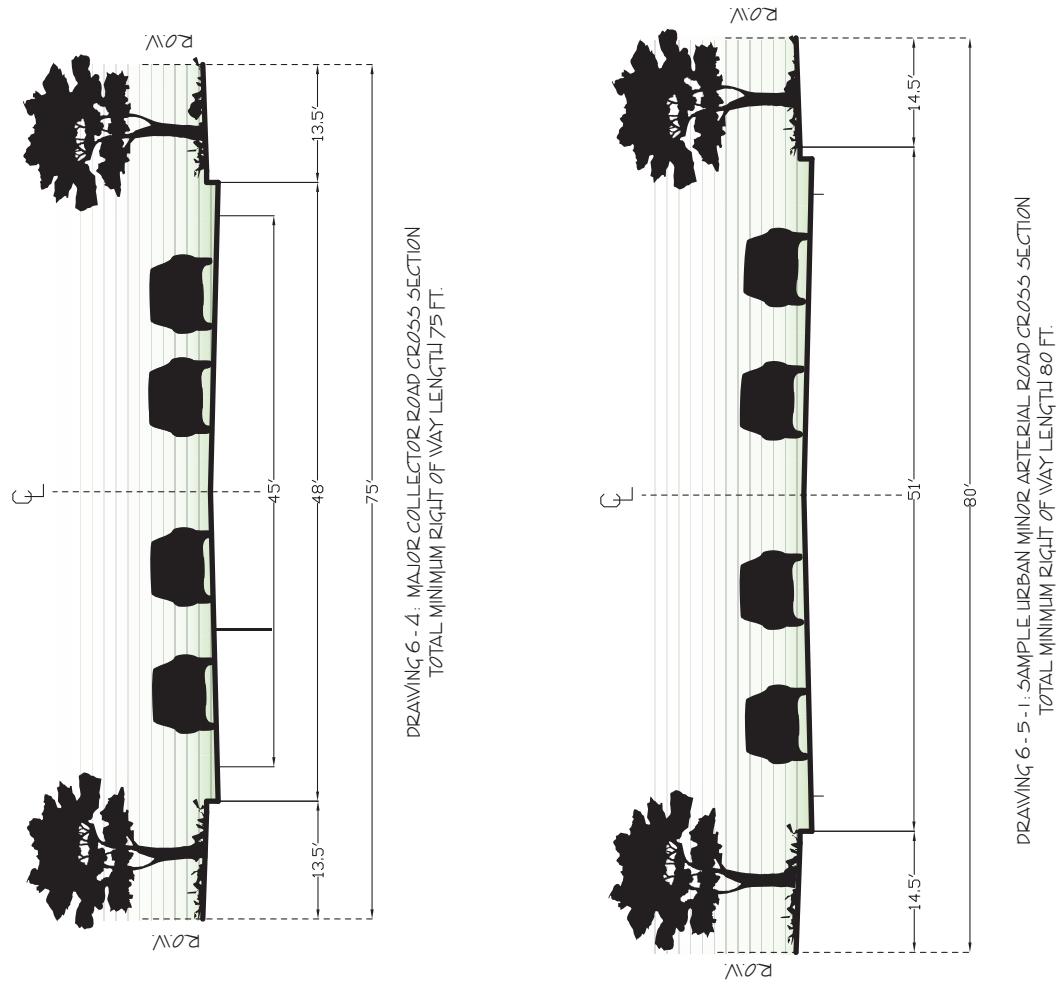


DRAWING 6-2 : CURRENT SUBDIVISION LOCAL ROAD CROSS SECTION (WITH CURB)
TOTAL MINIMUM RIGHT OF WAY LENGTH 50 FT. (BARRIER CURB)

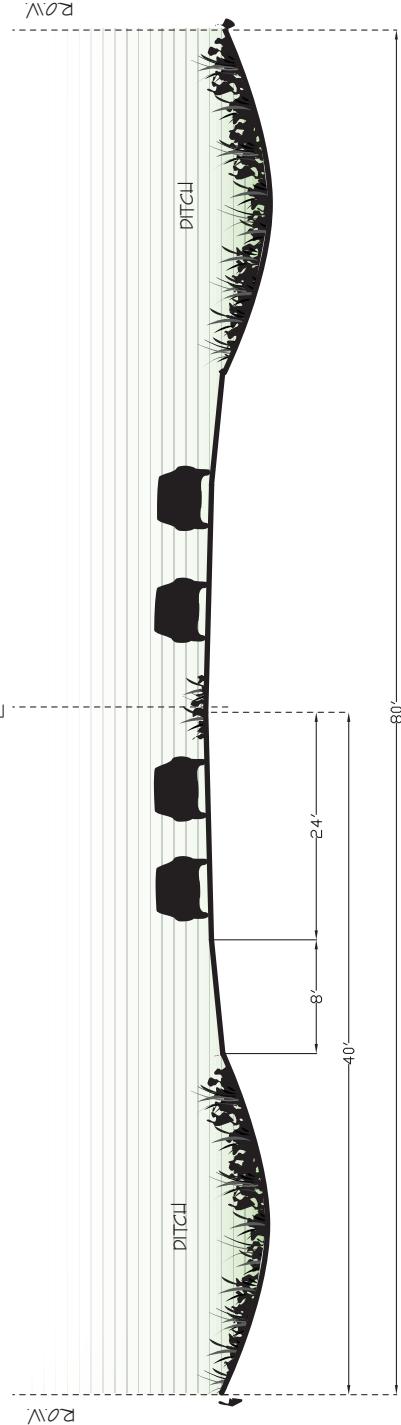
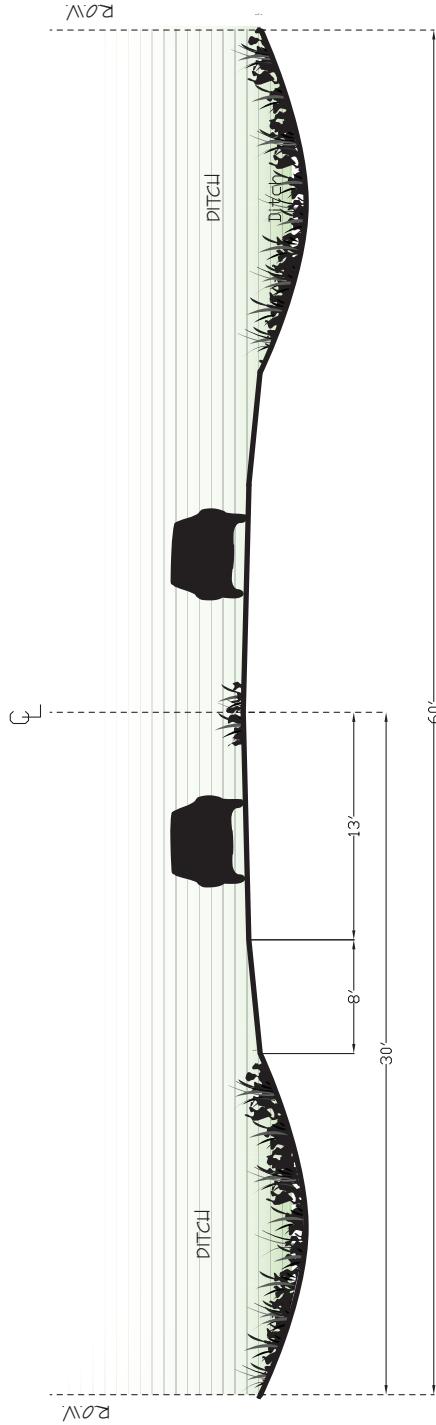


DRAWING 6-3 : CURRENT SUBDIVISION LOCAL ROAD CROSS SECTION (WITHOUT CURB)
TOTAL MINIMUM RIGHT OF WAY LENGTH 50 FT. (ROLL-OVER CURB)



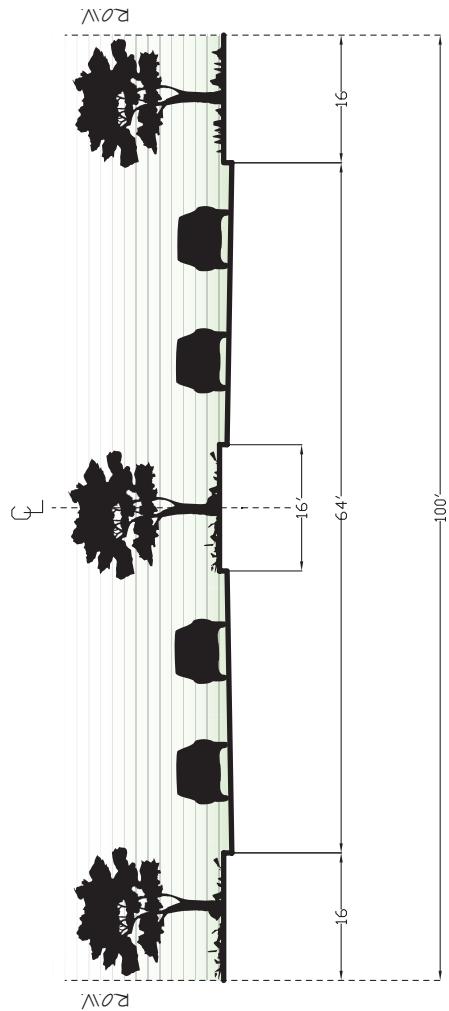


DRAWING 6-5-2
SAMPLE RURAL MINOR ARTERIAL ROAD CROSS SECTION



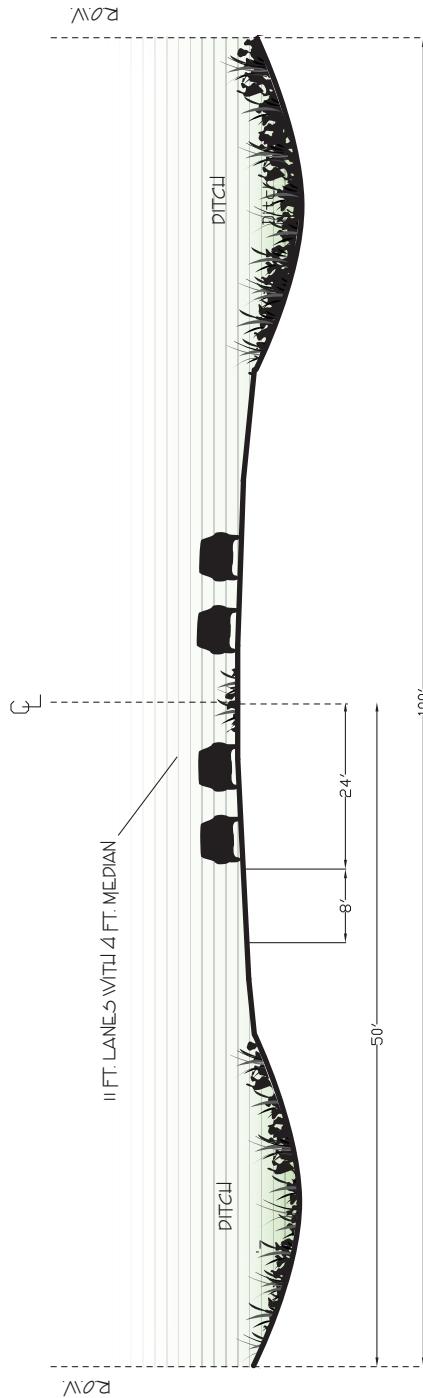
ALLIANCE
Transportation Group, Inc.



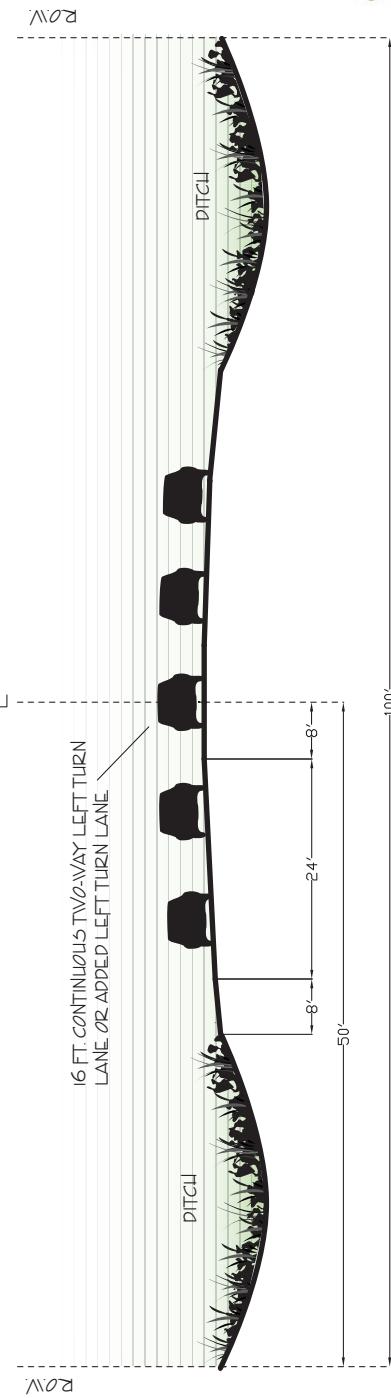


DRAWING 6-6-1 SAMPLE URBAN PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL ROAD CROSS SECTION
TOTAL MINIMUM RIGHT OF WAY LENGTH 100 FT.

DRAWING 6-6-2
SAMPLE RURAL PRINCIPAL ARTERIAL ROAD CROSS SECTION



TOTAL MINIMUM RIGHT OF WAY LENGTH 100 FT (RECOMMENDED FOR LOW VOLUME)



NOTE: 100 FT. ROW ALLOWS FOR FUTURE EXPANSION. 8 FT. SHOULDER IS RECOMMENDED FOR EMERGENCY PARKING AND ROAD EXPANSION.



Chapter Seven

Environmental Conservation

1.0 | Introduction

"Yep, son, we have met the enemy and he is us."

~ Pogo, 1971

Every development, including agriculture, changes the natural environment, with specific consequences for air, energy, and water – all essentials for human health. As such, environmental conservation planning must consider not only the resources that can be mapped, but perhaps more importantly, the major natural cycles that are affected by our actions. That is why this Chapter suggests a multi-level, multi-faceted approach to environmental conservation.

Anecdotal and statistical data show that the natural environment is what attracts people to Tangipahoa Parish, and is what has kept them there for generations. However, the Parish's traditional rural and "small-town" way of life simply will not last unless its natural resources are protected, enhanced, and sustainably managed. Put simply, the Parish's abundant natural resources are essential ingredients of its quality of life. Therefore, a growth trajectory that results in the destruction of large areas of natural (including agricultural) resources will inevitably cause today's Parish residents to move on to other places, chasing the lifestyle they lost. Yogi Berra once put the sentiment of those residents this way:

"Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded."

Marketing data for the Parish provides an interesting insight with regard to how important the natural environment is to the daily life of the Parish's residents. According to ESRI Business Information Systems (a leading provider of demographic and market data), 68 percent of the population of Tangipahoa Parish in 2006 was grouped into two very similar "LifeMode Groups," which ESRI calls "Factories and Farms" and "American Quilt."¹ For households in the "Factories and Farms" group, "lifestyle reflects their locale, emphasizing home and garden care, fishing and hunting, pets, and local clubs." Similarly, in "American Quilt" households, "the rural lifestyle is also evident, with fishing and hunting (and power boats) and a preference for pickups and country music."

Yet the natural environment of the Parish is not just about lifestyle and recreation. In perhaps a less visible way, the natural resources of Tangipahoa Parish provide:

- ◆ The basis for the Parish's \$70 million agricultural and forestry economy;
- ◆ A line of defense against flooding and other natural disasters;

¹ A "LifeMode Group" is a way that ESRI Business Information Systems groups people with statistically similar social and economic characteristics and lifestyle preferences. "Factories and Farms" and "American Quilt" are the company's shorthand names for two of the "LifeMode Groups."

- ◆ Cleaner air;
- ◆ Drinking water for much of Southeastern Louisiana;
- ◆ Habitat for threatened and endangered species and ecosystems; and
- ◆ The potential for bio-fuels that could provide an economically viable, renewable source of motor fuel and electricity.

The geology of the Parish is a key to understanding why land is used as it is today and why resources are located where they are. The rolling land in the northern parts of the Parish is the oldest, dating back some two to three million years. This so-called "high terrace" comprises about 24 percent of the Parish. It rolls from about 340 to 60 feet above sea level. The parent material of this area is naturally low in fertility, which explains why much of it is used for grazing pasture or forest. Proceeding southward, central Tangipahoa Parish lies upon the "intermediate terrace," which has similar characteristics to the "high terrace," though its elevation is lower. The Deweyville Terraces are the lowest, at only a few feet above existing floodplains.

As important as it is, the natural environment in Tangipahoa Parish is threatened by the activities of its residents, including:

- ◆ Urbanization of natural and agricultural lands;
- ◆ Development practices that fail to appropriately prevent and treat runoff into streams;
- ◆ The combined effect of underperforming, malfunctioning, and outmoded individual sewage treatment systems (estimated to be numbered in the thousands) and package plants;

- ◆ Farming practices that fail to capture and cycle nutrients on-site;
- ◆ Litter and illegal dumping;
- ◆ Urban runoff; and
- ◆ Toxic releases from industries. See **Figure 7-1, Pogo Cartoon**.

And of course, there are also circumstances beyond the Parish's control that also impact its environment, including:

- ◆ Hurricanes and other severe weather events;
- ◆ Global markets for agricultural and forestry products and federal agricultural subsidies, which influence the sustainability of agricultural operations in the Parish; and
- ◆ Global climate change.

Figure 7-1, Pogo Cartoon



Source: Walt Kelly, *Pogo* (1971)

Although these global forces are beyond the Parish's control, there are practices and techniques for reducing their potential consequences. In recognition of the limited availability of public funds for acquisition and enforcement, the strategies in this Chapter are intended to provide ways to help ensure that the Parish's resources are protected by using the market to fund resource protection. In this way, the protection of the Parish's natural resources is closely tied to the economic development strategy presented in **Chapter 8, Economic Development**. Although they are intended to be ultimately self-sustaining, some of these strategies may require a "kick start" through grant funding, tax abatement, or other public involvement.

2.0 | Resource Cycles

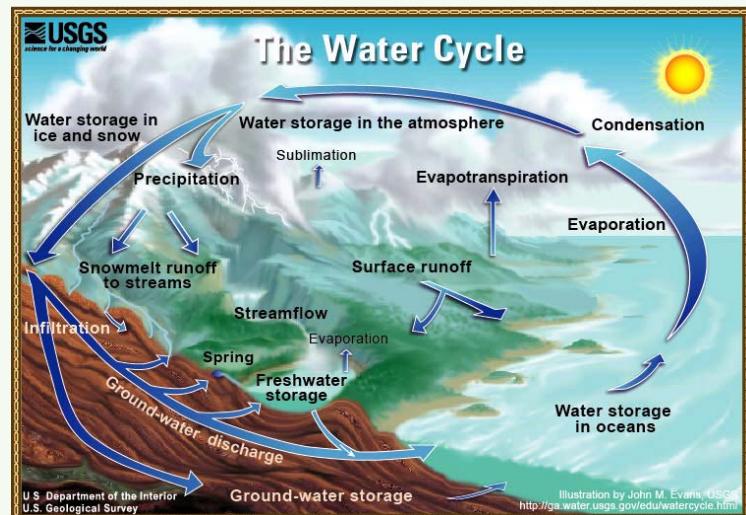
2.0.1 | Generally. The environment is not just a collection of individual mappable resources, it is a dynamic system that maintains a degree of balance through feedback mechanisms. The water we drink, air we breathe, and nutrients that allow plants and animals to grow are cycled through the environment. An understanding of these cycles is critical to managing resources in a meaningful and comprehensive way.

2.0.2 | Water Cycle. The water cycle provides a good starting point for this understanding because the impacts of development on water are easily understood. They are almost immediately visible in flooding and polluted and degraded streams – all of which have occurred in Tangipahoa Parish. The water cycle is also a good starting point because many of the actions that promote water quality or reduce flooding also are beneficial for air quality, energy, and global warming.

The water cycle is shown in **Figure 7-2, The Water Cycle**. It can be pictured as a loop in which water falls on land and then moves on in three key ways – evapotranspiration, infiltration, and runoff:

- ◆ Evapotranspiration includes water that is held on the ground or leaves and evaporates back into the air, as well as water that is taken up from the ground by the roots of plants and then transpired back to the air through their leaves.
- ◆ The infiltration component describes water that soaks into the ground. It is divided into two parts – shallow recharge and aquifer recharge. Shallow

Figure 7-2, The Water Cycle



Source: U.S. Geological Survey

recharge provides water to the shallow water table, which then feeds the low flow condition of streams. Aquifer recharge adds water to deep aquifers, which are used as a source of potable water.

- ♦ Runoff is water that runs across land, enters streams, and flows to major water bodies, where it ultimately evaporates to eventually fall again as rain.

Natural pervious surfaces, forest or grassland (which existed before urbanization) established the balance over several thousand years. There was maximum recharge of the groundwater, minimum runoff, and minimum pollutant loadings. Transpiration (the cycling of water through plants) was also at a maximum. Put another way, in natural conditions, trees and the leaves and twigs they drop soak up rainfall and allow for maximum recharge and minimum run-off. The water that does run-off under natural conditions slowly flows overland to the stream.

The time it takes for water to complete the cycle is highly variable, with evapotranspiration returning to the atmosphere nearly immediately, while water that reaches deep aquifers maybe sequestered for hundreds or thousands of years. Run-off typically reaches large bodies of water in hours to weeks. With no interference, climate variations cause natural variations in each part of the cycle from year to year, but significant changes generally take thousands of years.

Development modifies the environment significantly, and can alter the balance significantly in just a few years. The consequences can be significant. The most immediate impact is on flooding.

Figure 7-3, Impacts of Development



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

That is so because impervious surfaces – roads, buildings, sidewalks, patios and other hard surfaces – shed almost all of the rain that falls on them.² This immediately alters the natural balance between evapotranspiration, recharge, and runoff, increasing runoff relative to the other two. **See Figure 7-3, Impacts of Development.** Even surfaces that remain pervious (such as lawns) are altered through the construction process, so that they behave differently than natural grasslands. Due to construction activities, the landscaped areas generate more runoff and less recharge or evapotranspiration than the natural areas generated.

Simply cutting the trees increases run-off volume and speed as it reaches the stream. Streets and storm sewers further speed the run-off, making the peak flows higher. When the total amount of run-off is increased and the

² Commercial or industrial areas are often nearly 100 percent impervious, while residential areas can range from less than five percent impervious area on a five acre house site to 40 percent or more on a 6,000 square foot lot.

rate of run-off is also increased, there are relatively fast surges of flood water instead of gradual flows (which could infiltrate or evaporate before flooding becomes serious). Consequently, for any given storm event, post-development flooding downstream will increase, with areas that previously were not flooded becoming inundated. The frequency of flooding also increases.

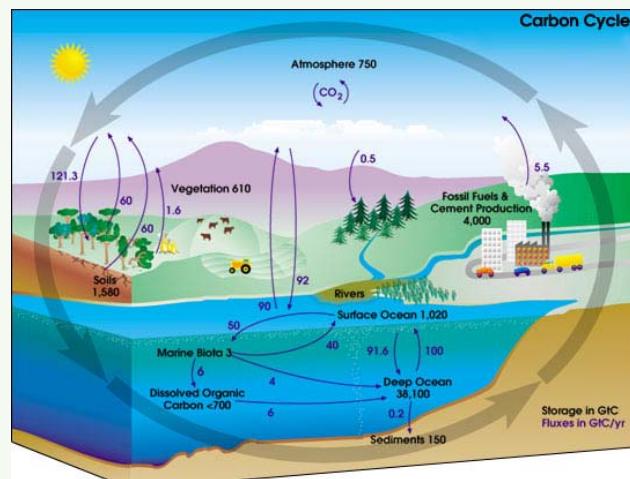
The change in the hydrograph creates a series of secondary impacts. In the natural condition, erosion was slow, because the vegetation generally had time to stabilize areas that were damaged by large storm events. In this way, stream banks are typically set by storms that occur on average every two years, washing away new vegetation. An increase in total run-off and a higher peak storm flow erodes stream banks faster, resulting in increased siltation. This damages the habitat and can kill off some species.

In addition, the increased run-off comes largely at the expense of infiltration, so low flows (ground water discharges) decrease. At the upper end of a watershed, reductions of low flows means that sections of the stream will dry-up, making the stream ephemeral.³ Down the water shed, the low flows impact stream temperature and water quality, and their reduction degrades the habitat.

2.0.3 | Carbon and Oxygen Cycles. The earth has come to a point where the life processes of plants and animals interacting with large-scale geologic phenomena have created a dynamic balance. Animals' respiration changes oxygen to carbon dioxide, which plants rely upon during photosynthesis to fix the carbon they need from the air or water. Plants return the favor by giving off oxygen. See **Figure 7-4, The Carbon Cycle** (which shows major carbon "producers" and "sinks").

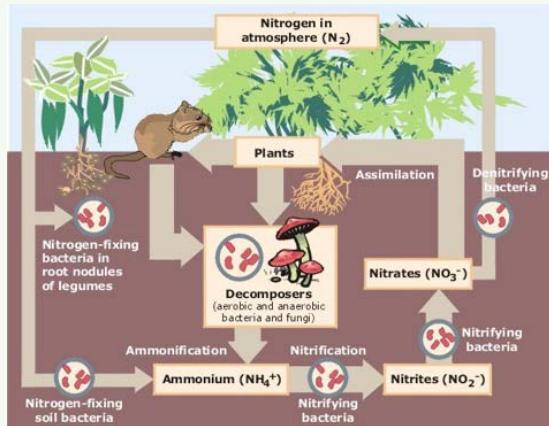
This dynamic equilibrium has been disturbed by man's burning of fuels, primarily fossil fuels, oil, and coal. As a result, air quality has suffered, even though many regulations have been put in place to try to correct the problem. More seriously, the entire world balance has been upset, and carbon in the atmosphere is increasing, resulting in global warming. The forests that moderate the water cycle are also sinks that retain carbon for various periods of time. Thus, forest cover is a positive for both water and air.

Figure 7-4, The Carbon Cycle



Source: NASA

³ Meaning water flows only part of the year or for short periods during the year.

Figure 7-5, The Nitrogen Cycle

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Figure 7-6, Consequences of Excessive Nitrogen Loading

The bottom-dwelling plants of a marine ecosystem that received high rates of nitrogen input. Note that there are few plant species, and that their leaves are covered by a thick layer of algae.

Source: R. Howarth; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

2.0.4 | Nutrients and Chemicals. There are multiple nutrient cycles for nitrogen and phosphorus in particular. See, e.g., **Figure 7-5, The Nitrogen Cycle.** These cycles were in dynamic equilibrium before development. Habitats adapted to the conditions and limitations that these natural cycles imposed. In nutrient-poor areas, plant material adapted to the scarcity of the nutrients.

Again, these cycles have been disrupted by human activity. Sewers and individual treatment plants are a major source of nutrient and chemical contamination. So are farming operations that are not using Best Management Practices. For example, runoff from dairy farms that do not use lagoons for waste treatment are known sources of nutrient contamination in the Parish's streams and rivers. Even lawn care can disrupt nutrient cycles.

For example, the desire for green lawns results in the use of fertilizers that are applied at rates that far exceed what the lawns and the area's naturally-occurring plants can use. Rain washes the excess nutrients into streams, where they create water quality problems, contribute to algae blooms, and in the worst case, kill desirable naturally-occurring species. See **Figure 7-6, Consequences of Excessive Nitrogen Loading.** In the same manner, pesticides have been found to reach both streams and groundwater.

3.0 | Management Approach

3.0.1 | Generally. The recommended approach to environmental resource management in the Parish is a combination of market-driven and regulatory techniques, proposed in light of the anticipated effects of global climate change on Gulf Coast states, and the emerging understandings about (and technologies for) biofuels crops and biofuels production. The strategy also recognizes that some resources are renewable and others are finite, and that natural systems must be considered at a number of levels. As Chief Seattle put it more than 150 years ago:

"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect."

It is beyond question that human activities alter natural systems, which, in turn, affect human health and safety.

Some of our actions cause serious environmental damage, with dramatic consequences for our health and safety. For example, developing in floodplains and storm surge areas has caused significant degradation of aquatic ecosystems that provide food, water, economic opportunity, and flood protection.

Other actions restore and enhance natural systems that provide food, resources, and quality of life for people. For example, permanent protection of floodplains and sensitive resources, removal of invasive exotic vegetation, use of renewable energy, conservation of water, and prescribed burning of fire-dependent forests provide environmental benefits that are returned as social and economic benefits.

Parish growth means that land will be converted from natural communities to human communities. Though these types of communities differ greatly, both can be drastically altered when a change in the other occurs. In this way, every development changes that intricate relationship. Understanding that these impacts exist is the first critical element in natural resources planning. Indeed, sound planning, what is now often referred to as sustainable development or “smart growth,” must ensure that as growth occurs, the unintended consequences of human actions do not damage or destroy the environment to the degree that public health, safety, and quality of life is impacted.

3.0.2 | Mapped Resources and Natural Cycles. There are two approaches to analyzing natural resources. The first is to identify environmental units that can be (relatively) easily mapped, and to identify their sensitivity to human activity and their relative importance as resources. The process of determining the sensitivity of the resources to disturbance and the damage done by the disturbance requires that each mapped resource be specifically analyzed and a protection goal developed. In some cases the mapping units can be overlaid upon each other, which, of course, adds to the complexity of the analysis.

Another approach begins with identifying natural cycles; that is, comparing the predevelopment balance to the consequences of development. The object is to be able to diagnose the degree and direction in which a cycle is changed by development. With respect to natural cycles analysis, the primary cycles of concern are hydrologic (water), air (oxygen and carbon), and nutrients. See **Resource Cycles**, above.

The environmental unit and natural cycle approaches are not mutually exclusive. In fact, mapping is essential to both. The natural cycle approach is highlighted in this Plan in order to reduce the risk that a mapped resource will be examined out of context, which could result in neglect of important elements of environmental management. For example, it is easy to consider forests as aesthetic or wildlife habitat, while their contribution to the water and carbon cycles may be much more important. Indeed, from a cycle standpoint, forests are the best land use cover for both the hydrologic and the carbon cycle. That is so because forests tend to minimize run-off, maximize aquifer recharge, sequester carbon better than other systems, and capture nutrients that would otherwise lead to water pollution and aquatic habitat degradation.

3.0.3 | Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation. Once the probable consequences of development are understood, there are a variety of approaches to dealing with them. At one

extreme, we can **ignore** the problem. For example a house can be built in the floodplain, even though it may eventually be flooded. Damage, clean-up costs, and restoration are the direct costs of this decision. At the other extreme, if the probability of flooding is understood, these costs can be **avoided** by not building a house in a flood-prone area.

Minimization and **mitigation** are intermediate approaches. Minimization reduces the risks; for example, by building the house on pylons so that it sits above flood elevations. Mitigation of risk generally applies to areas where past planning decisions have allowed homes to be built in areas that are now subject to flooding. Levees are an example of mitigation. Typically, mitigation costs are spread among a large number of taxpayers, either in the Parish, regionally, state-wide, or even nationally. The three planning strategies – **avoidance**, **minimization**, and **mitigation** – all have a place in Parish resource planning.

That said, this Plan recommends that avoidance and minimization strategies be given the greatest priority. The reason for this is simple – these strategies are largely free, whereas mitigation is often extremely expensive. Of course, mitigation is still important. Indeed, all growth brings some negative environmental impacts, and thus some mitigation will be needed. Sewer treatment plants, sanitary landfills, levees, and storm water systems are several examples of mitigation.

4.0 | Protecting and Enhancing Agriculture and Forestry

4.0.1 | Generally. Protecting and enhancing agriculture and forestry supports the traditional rural lifestyles of the Parish residents – a key objective of this Plan. It also makes fiscal sense, because farming and forestry are not heavy users of public facilities and services, and therefore, tend to generate more in taxes than they demand in expenditures. Finally, it can protect and conserve environmental resources through appropriate land management techniques and best management practices.

Land use strategies for protecting agriculture and forestry operations are provided in **Chapter 3, Growth Capacity and Public Facilities**; **Chapter 4, Community Character and Land Use**; and **Chapter 5, Housing**. Those strategies are in large measure about drawing boundaries for urban and suburban development so as not to displace agriculture. The agriculture and forestry protection strategies of this Chapter go a step further by providing measures and strategies to actively support farming and forestry. Because the sustainability of the rural economy by definition requires it to be profitable, the strategies involve economic development activities that are focused on the Parish's traditional industries.

Although forestry is generally doing well in the Parish, other agricultural pursuits (especially dairy farming) have been stressed in recent years due to rising energy and feed costs combined with relatively low average commodity prices. Indeed, sustaining agriculture in the Parish will require more than just protective planning (and zoning). It will require a combination of thinking "outside the box," some risk-taking, and a lot of hard work. This Plan recommends that the Parish help its farmers by encouraging:

- ◆ A strategic approach for adding value to existing agricultural and forestry products;
- ◆ Diversifying agricultural production, and
- ◆ Strategies for reducing the costs of agricultural inputs, such as energy and feed.

4.0.2 | Adding Value. The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service observes that creativity and innovation are important to increasing farmers' incomes. In their words:

As farmers struggle to find ways to increase farm income, interest in "adding value" to raw agricultural products has grown tremendously. The value of farm products can be increased in endless ways: by cleaning and cooling, packaging, processing, distributing, cooking, combining, churning, culturing, grinding, hulling, extracting, drying, smoking, handcrafting, spinning, weaving, labeling, or packaging. Today, more than ever, adding value means "selling the sizzle, not the steak." The "sizzle" comes from information, education, entertainment, image, and other intangible attributes.

* * *

Besides offering a higher return, value added products can open new markets, create recognition for a farm, expand the market season, and make a positive contribution to the community. However, adding value is not a panacea for all the problems rural America is facing. It is a long-term approach, not a "quick fix." It requires the willingness and ability to take on risk, as well as adequate capital, management skills, and personal skills – such as the ability to interact with the public – to succeed.⁴

Although it is not the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan to develop a specific value-added marketing strategy for the Parish's farmers, the following is offered as "food for thought," so to speak:

- ◆ The Parish should help coordinate resources to research and promote opportunities for locally-owned food processing and local-brand marketing. A good start would be putting together a working group of Parish farmers, the Tangipahoa Economic Development Foundation, SLU Small Business Development Center, and LSU AgCenter representatives to do the necessary due diligence. This recommendation is based on the following observations:
 - According to marketresearch.com, the global packaged food industry grew 3.5 percent annually between 2001 and 2005, and is expected to grow 3.6 percent annually between 2005 and 2010.⁵

⁴ Born, Holly and Janet Bachmann. ADDING VALUE TO FARM PRODUCTS: AN OVERVIEW. ATTRA, 2006 <<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/valueovr.pdf>> This publication contains helpful information and a list of resources for people who are interested in starting food businesses.

⁵ The packaged foods and meats market consists of the total revenues generated through the sale of bakery and cereal products, canned food, chilled food, confectionery, dairy food, dried food, frozen

- Louisiana is internationally known for its exceptional food. Yet there are relatively few nationally available brands of packaged food that mark this distinctive culinary heritage.
- Many classic Louisiana recipes, especially dessert recipes, are dairy-rich.
- In many national chain supermarkets, the availability of Louisiana-style foods is very limited: spices by Chef Paul Prudhomme, Emeril, and Tabasco, and boxed products branded by Zatarain's. There is a narrow range of other so-called "Cajun" boxed and frozen products stocked in national supermarket chains. However, these tend to come from places like California, Minnesota, and even Canada.
- ♦ Implementing regulations should encourage agro- and eco-tourism in agricultural and forestry areas in order to provide additional economic opportunities for farmers and owners of forested lands. According to the USDA, "Nature-based outdoor recreational activities on private lands, including agro- and eco-tourism, have grown dramatically in the past 20 years."⁶ Hunting (especially deer, game birds, squirrels, and rabbits) and bird watching are examples of outdoor recreation that could provide value for rural landowners.
- ♦ The Parish should encourage the local development and production of biofuels. This recommendation is discussed further in the discussion regarding "Reducing Input Costs" below.

**Figure 7-7,
Alternative Agriculture**



Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

Of course, promoting food businesses and agro-tourism involves money and risk. Potential sources of assistance and funding to help offset the costs and risks are listed in **Chapter 8, Economic Development**.

4.0.3 | Diversification and Multiple Cropping. Another way to help keep farming sustainable is to diversify the products that are produced on local farms and to increase yields by multiple cropping. Some "food for thought":

- ♦ Nurseries are an emerging agricultural pursuit in the Parish. See **Figure 7-7, Alternative Agriculture**.

food, ice cream, meat, fish and poultry, oils and fats, pasta and noodles, ready meals, sauces, dressings and condiments, savory snacks, soup and spreads. Source: PACKAGED FOODS & MEATS: GLOBAL INDUSTRY GUIDE (summary page, last visited 10/31/07) <<http://www.marketresearch.com>>

⁶ The LSU AgCenter observes, "While past generations looked to towns and cities as destinations for tourism, today's travelers are seeking the authentic experiences found in the rural South. Innovative, interactive opportunities to experience nature through hunting, fishing, birding, hiking, camping, biking, horseback riding, canoeing and photography are among the experiences offered by rural communities. The quiet country atmosphere enjoyed by generations of rural residents may become one of the hottest vacation destinations in America."

- ◆ Raising horses is an emerging agricultural industry in the Parish.
- ◆ The LSU AgCenter suggests that shiitake mushroom production on hardwood logs can provide supplemental income to farmers and forest owners.⁷

4.0.4 | Reducing Input Costs. Fuel is a significant input cost for farming operations, and rising gas and diesel prices are hurting the region's farmers. Yet the Parish produces significant amounts of biomass (and has the capability to produce more) that could be used to produce ethanol and biodiesel fuels that could offset the cost of conventional petroleum products. ⁸According to Kelsey Short, director of the Agriculture, Forest and Food Technology Division of Louisiana Economic Development, "Biofuels [are] poised for explosive growth." The LSU AgCenter notes that in addition to the leftovers from agricultural harvesting and processing, "with Louisiana's fertile soils and mild climate, there is always the potential to grow crops expressly for energy."⁹

This Plan recommends that the Parish actively seek funding to create a strategy for biofuels development.¹⁰ Elements that should be considered include the feasibility of:

- ◆ Developing a regional biofuels complex that would produce cellulosic ethanol from timber wastes and biodiesel from non-conventional oilseeds and animal fat.
- ◆ Using Chinese Tallow as an input into both processes as part of a short-term eradication strategy.¹¹
- ◆ Producing algae as a biofuel (ethanol) crop, using waste from dairy operations as an input.¹²
- ◆ Producing switchgrass as an ethanol crop.

⁷ See PRODUCING SHIITAKE, THE FANCY FOREST MUSHROOM, available from the LSU AgCenter.

⁸ On November 1, 2007, MSNBC Live reported that analysts predict that gasoline will reach \$4.00 per gallon in 2008.

⁹ BIOMASS ENERGY RESOURCES IN LOUISIANA (LSU AgCenter Research Information Sheet 102, Nov. 2006)

¹⁰ The Bioenergy Feedstock Information Network <<http://bioenergy.ornl.gov/main.aspx>> provides information about how to evaluate the feasibility of biofuels production.

¹¹ Chinese Tallow is an invasive exotic species that is a high-energy input for biodiesel. It is reported that, while soybeans produce only 23 gallons of biodiesel fuel per bushel, the equivalent mass of Chinese Tallow produces 500 gallons. However, there is no current infrastructure for harvesting and pressing Chinese Tallow seeds, and the oils that are produced are solid at room temperature, which means that special handling is required to transport and process the oils.

¹² One model of such a facility is being developed in Arizona by XL Renewables. The company claims that its facility will produce ten times more renewable energy than it consumes, and will also produce milk and high-quality animal feed. For more information, see <<http://www.xlrenewables.com>>.

5.0 | Protecting and Enhancing Agriculture and Forestry: Goals and Recommendations

5.0.1 | Goal: Strengthen the agricultural economy of the Parish by promoting value-added industries and activities, diversification of farm products and multiple-cropping, and the development of biofuels

5.0.2 | Recommended Actions.

5.0.2.1 | Promote value-added industries. In this regard, the Parish should ensure that any implementing zoning regulations allow and encourage value-added industries to enhance its agricultural economy. It should also support local “branding” efforts to enhance the status of the Parish (and potentially the region) in food and dairy markets.

5.0.2.2 | Promote eco- and agro-tourism. The Parish should ensure that any implementing zoning regulations allow and encourage:

- ♦ Eco- and agro-tourism in rural areas; and
- ♦ Appropriate fire management of fire-dependent natural communities to enhance bird and game habitat.

5.0.2.3 | Vigorously protect the right to farm. Implementing zoning regulations should protect the right to farm (including raising timber) in rural areas, and should limit the potential conflicts between agricultural operations and non-agricultural development by ensuring that new non-agricultural development provides adequate buffering on its own land.

5.0.2.4 | Promote the development of biofuels in the Parish. The Parish should:

- ♦ Actively seek funding to create a strategy and infrastructure for biofuels development;
- ♦ Include in its implementing regulations a site with appropriate zoning for biofuels refining that is strategically located to promote access to and from areas where biofuels crops and inputs are being produced;
- ♦ Include seed oil extraction, algae farming, and practices that combine farming with biofuels production as specifically permitted agricultural uses; and
- ♦ In conjunction with the establishment of a biofuels infrastructure, consider flex-fuel and diesel-powered vehicles when new purchases and replacements are programmed for the Parish fleet.¹³

6.0 | Flood Protection and Flood Damage Prevention

6.0.1 | Generally. According to soil maps available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Frequently flooded soils or floodplains

¹³ Obviously other considerations will also be necessary, including price and the availability of maintenance service.

account for 11 percent of the Parish's total land area. Generally, they run from north to south at or slightly above sea level along the Tangipahoa, Natalbany, Tchefuncte, and other creeks and rivers. Without human intervention, these areas flood for long periods of time, most often between December and May, depositing sediment and preventing large-scale flooding downstream. Another 4.3 percent of the Parish consists of soils that are occasionally flooded.

The estuary portion of the Parish is the wetland and floodplain of Lake Pontchartrain, which accounts for about 14.3 percent of the Parish. These soils are swamps or other wetlands which have water depths of up to one foot most of the year, with soils that are subject to subsidence if exposed, and therefore, unsuited to any development. Thus, a total of nearly one third the Parish is either wetland or subject to flooding.

Attention to the water cycle is very important. Indeed, flood damage is one of the most common consequences of building in the wrong place, without regard to the water cycle. The 2005 hurricanes underscored the importance of understanding the natural environment with regard to the location of homes and businesses.¹⁴

The hurricanes also highlighted one of the likely impacts of global warming, that is, that the average intensity of hurricanes will increase.¹⁵ Moreover, the Union of Concerned Scientists predicts that by 2100, ocean levels around Louisiana will be 24 to 47 inches higher than they are today. They base their estimate on eight to 31 inches of subsidence per century and a mid-range sea level rise scenario. They note that even a relatively small increase in sea level (a few inches to a foot) could move the shoreline inland tens of feet along low-lying, flat coastal areas.¹⁶

Of course, Louisiana is still recovering from the devastation wrought by hurricanes. The 15 percent of Tangipahoa Parish that is coastal marsh and swamp, and the coastal Parishes on the delta spared Tangipahoa Parish from significant flooding and tidal surge damage. Yet that protection is in jeopardy.

USGS radiocarbon dating of peat moss has indicated that sea level on both lakes rise at a rate of at least half a foot per century. This historic factor does not account for global warming, which could result in a rise in sea level of two to four feet over the next 100 years – three times the historic change. **Figure 7-8, Shorelines, 2006 and 2100** (next page), shows the current shoreline of Louisiana, compared to that which would result from a three foot rise in sea level. As shown, a three foot sea level rise would put Tangipahoa Parish on the coast.

Research is needed to determine the likely future storm surge levels. Such research should be conducted as soon as feasible, and an interim flood level should be used to establish the minimum elevation of future structures. A request should be placed with the Federal

¹⁴ Hurricane Katrina destroyed 89 homes in Tangipahoa Parish, principally in low-lying areas. Of course, flood damage in other low lying areas of the State was catastrophic.

¹⁵ Source: Union of Concerned Scientists. A well-documented primer on the predicted impacts of global warming on hurricanes is available on-line. See GLOBAL WARMING 101: HURRICANES IN A WARMER WORLD. <http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/science/hurricanes-and-climate-change.html>

¹⁶ Source: Union of Concerned Scientists. See <http://www.ucsusa.org/gulf/gcstatelou_cli.html>

Figure 7-8, Shorelines, 2006 and 2100

2006



2100

Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to establish the new flood levels, even if as an interim regulation.

The scientific models produce mixed results with regard to the likely effect of global warming on rainfall in upland areas of the Gulf Coast. However, at least one model predicts that average annual stream flows in the Tangipahoa River will be 48 percent higher during the period between 2000 and 2050 than they were during the period between 1938 and 1999; and the projected peak flows of the river are expected to nearly double.¹⁷ Models also show that:

- ◆ The average temperature will likely increase three to 10 degrees (Fahrenheit) in the winter and three to seven degrees in the summer. The July heat index (a measure that combines temperature and humidity) could rise by 10 to 25 degrees.
- ◆ The additional heat will increase the capacity of the air to hold moisture, and the increased moisture in the air will likely make rainfall events more intense when they occur. In addition, dry periods between storms will likely be longer than they are today.
- ◆ Rising sea level will make flooding more problematic, regardless whether storm intensity or frequency increases.¹⁸

6.0.2 | Preventing Flood Damage. The general approach to flood damage today is to avoid building in the floodplain, or if construction does occur in the floodplain, to elevate structures to (or above) the “base flood elevation.” The base flood elevation is the height of a flood that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year. However, the base flood elevation is mapped using historical information, and does not take into account projections regarding changes in climate or land use (which, in the case of the Southern portion of the Parish, is especially important).¹⁹

If the peak flows of the Tangipahoa River during the next 50 years are, in fact, nearly double those of the last 61 years, then it follows that the “base flood elevation” as currently measured is not up to the task of protecting life and property from flood damage in Tangipahoa Parish. This is important now because new construction in the Parish is expected to last at least 50 years.

¹⁷ See Khairy, Wael M. “Chapter 10: Assessing and Modeling Flood Event and Climate Change in the Gulf Coast Region,” in INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON THE GULF COAST REGION (2003). <<http://www.usgcrp.gov/usgcrp/Library/nationalassessment/gulfcoast/default.htm>>

¹⁸ Source: Union of Concerned Scientists. See <http://www.ucsusa.org/gulf/gcstateLou_cli.html>

¹⁹ See IS THE 1% CHANCE FLOOD STANDARD SUFFICIENT? Report of the 2004 Assembly of the Gilbert F. White National Flood Policy Forum, National Academies Keck Center, Washington, D.C., Sept. 21-22, 2004. <http://www.floods.org/Foundation/Files/2004_Forum_Report_Final_Color.pdf>

For this reason, the Plan recommends that the Parish strengthen its flood hazard reduction regulations.²⁰ The regulations currently require residential development to be constructed so that its lowest floor is elevated to or above the base flood elevation. With regard to nonresidential development, the lowest floor can be lower than the base flood elevation, provided that it is water-tight and engineered to handle moving flood waters. These regulations are the common floodplain “boilerplate,” which meets the minimum requirements for the Parish and its residents to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Because of the limitations in calculating and projecting the base flood elevation, they are not directly related to public safety or environmental resource conservation.

Many other communities have opted to increase the level of protection beyond the NFIP’s minimum requirements. Indeed, according to the National Flood Policy Forum:

About 1,000 communities, representing about two-thirds of the flood policy base nationwide, are going beyond the minimum requirements of the [National Flood Insurance Program], as evidenced by their participation in the Community Rating System. Many of them are exceeding the one percent standard in some way.²¹

7.0 | Flood Protection and Flood Damage Prevention: Goals and Recommendations

7.0.1 | Goal: Strengthen flood damage prevention measures

7.0.2 | Recommended Actions.

7.0.2.1 | Amend Tangipahoa Parish Code of Ordinances, Section 10-62, Specific Standards for Certain Areas. The amendments should strengthen flood damage avoidance and mitigation standards as follows:

- ◆ Provide an incentive to cluster development outside of natural floodplain areas that serve flood protection and significant biological functions, as well as areas of expected future flooding (see the following goal regarding developing a better understanding of future flood potential).

²⁰ Chapter 10, Tangipahoa Parish Code of Ordinances. Section 10-3 provides that the stated purpose of the Chapter is: “to promote the public health, safety and general welfare and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas by provisions designed to: (1) Protect human life and health; (2) Minimize expenditure of public money for costly flood control projects; (3) Minimize the need for rescue and relief efforts associated with flooding and generally undertaken at the expense of the general public; (4) Minimize prolonged business interruptions; (5) Minimize damage to public facilities and utilities such as water and gas mains, electric, telephone and sewer lines, streets and bridges located in floodplains; (6) Help maintain a stable tax base by providing for the sound use and development of floodprone areas in such a manner as to minimize future flood blight areas; and (7) Insure that potential buyers are notified that property is in a flood area.

²¹ See IS THE 1% CHANCE FLOOD STANDARD SUFFICIENT?

- ◆ Provide for increased elevation of the first floor of both residential and commercial structures that cannot be constructed outside of areas of expected future flooding, phased as follows:
 - Until revised flood maps that are based on models that account for future land use and climate change, six inches above the base flood elevation of a 500-year flood.
 - When revised flood maps are available, six inches above the revised base flood elevation.
- ◆ Ensure that no new street that is needed for emergency access will be impassible due to floodwater depths during the design storm used for the other floodplain regulations.
- ◆ Prohibit the development of uses in the floodplain that are likely to create environmental hazards or other public safety risks if they are flooded.
- ◆ Require that fill within the floodplain be mitigated through the creation of at least equal compensatory storage.

7.0.2.2 | Environmental Enforcement. The Parish should provide additional enforcement resources for stormwater pollution prevention program permits to prevent soil erosion and destruction of floodplain vegetation near stream beds. As water pollution is one of the most significant environmental problems in the Parish, this Plan suggests that at least one additional staff member should be hired for this purpose.

7.0.2.3 | Best Management Practices. Step up educational efforts with regard to agricultural and forestry best management practices to avoid erosion of soils near stream beds. The Parish could coordinate with state agencies and local trade groups to distribute information.

7.0.3 | Goal: Develop a better understanding of the impacts of climate change on potential flooding in the Parish

7.0.4 | Recommended Actions.

7.0.4.1 | Research. Promote research into the probable extent and elevation of floodwaters under likely climate change scenarios through Year 2100.

7.0.4.2 | Revise. Revise the standards of Chapter 10 (or its successor) based on new research and continued compliance with NFIP minimum requirements.

8.0 | Water Quality

8.0.1 | Generally. Water resources in the Parish are derived from the Southeastern Louisiana aquifer system (also referred to as the Southern Hills aquifer system). This aquifer lies between the Mississippi River, the Pearl River, Lake Pontchartrain, and Vicksburg, Mississippi. Tangipahoa is part of the main recharge area for this aquifer, which serves the Parishes of East Baton Rouge, West Feliciana, East Feliciana, St. Helena, Livingston, Washington, and St. Tammany.

According to well monitoring data collected by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the southern part of the Parish (from about Roseland southward) experienced a one foot per year drop in ground water levels between 1990 and 2000. Perhaps even more concerning is that the aquifers in the southern part of the Parish can be as deep as 1,000 to 2,500 feet below the surface. The northern half of the Parish in the upland terraces is shallower, with well depths ranging from 150 to 250 feet.

In 2000, the Southern Hills Aquifer System average daily withdrawal was about 290 million gallons, 49 percent of which went to public supplies, and 39 percent of which went to industry. In 2000, the Tangipahoa Parish withdrew between 10 and 50 million gallons per day. As water levels drop in Tangipahoa Parish's aquifers, the risk of salt water intrusion on freshwater underground resources becomes increasingly more likely.

Salt water intrusion is as of yet not present in Tangipahoa north of the Baton Rouge Fault Line. This fault line runs just south of Pontchatoula, through the Joyce Wildlife Management Area, and is the dividing line between undrinkable ground water infiltrated by the Gulf and fresh groundwater. Nearby parishes such as East Baton Rouge are, however, experiencing salt water intrusion, which is worsening with greater ground water withdrawals.

8.0.2 | Surface Water. According to the Environmental Atlas of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin (produced by USGS):

"Human activities are largely responsible for these adverse impacts on the environmental quality of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin. Since the late 1940's, growth and development has increased runoff that changed and destroyed many habitats. Stormwater discharges, inadequate wastewater treatment and agricultural activities have significantly degraded water quality. Natural processes, combined with human activities, have caused the loss of thousands of acres of wetlands. In 1962, the first "no swimming" signs appeared along the south shore of Lake Pontchartrain due to high levels of pollution. By the mid-1980's, almost every river, bayou or lake in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin was polluted and no longer fully supported their designated uses."²²

The Tangipahoa River is a designated wild and scenic stream (Louisiana Scenic Streams Program). The river is important to the Parish's heritage and has significant recreational value.²³ Yet a 1987 graduate student thesis concluded that the Tangipahoa River did not meet water quality standards for primary contact recreation.

Since then, much hard work has been done to restore water quality in the Tangipahoa River. Studies of the watershed have revealed that the bacterial content of the river is impacted by a roughly even split between the consequences of inadequate (or non-existent) residential

²² <<http://pubs.usgs.gov/of/2002/of02-206/intro/intro.html>>

²³ Before the Tangipahoa River was closed to contact recreation uses in 1988, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation reports that it supported an estimated 179,000 annual recreation days (e.g., swimming, tubing, canoeing, and fishing), valued at \$798,000.

wastewater treatment and agricultural practices that have failed to prevent bacteria and other pollutants from entering into rivers and streams.

Bacteria are not the only water quality problem in the Parish. Siltation, principally caused by runoff from unprotected construction sites, clouds Parish waters, reduces dissolved oxygen, and kills off native fish and aquatic plants. Mercury, a highly toxic heavy metal, is also a problem. Virtually all of the Parish's waterways are listed as "impaired waterbodies" by Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) because of unacceptably high levels of mercury.

Degradation of streams can begin when five percent of the watershed becomes impervious cover and becomes a major problem when 10 percent of the watershed becomes impervious cover. Normal suburban and urban development quickly exceeds this level of imperviousness. Suburban and urban runoff carries a whole range of pollutants: oils, dirt, chemicals, and fecal material that wash off the roads, parking lots, lawns, drainage ditches, and roofs. The impact of this runoff is the reason why the Federal government is requiring local governments to come to grips with managing storm water. *See Figure 7-9, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.*

8.0.3 | Fecal Coliform. In 1988, due to high fecal coliform bacteria levels, the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Health and Hospitals posted signs at road crossings, warning the public against swimming or tubing in the Tangipahoa River. At that time, approximately 273 of the State's 800 dairies drained into the river's watershed. Residential development in the unincorporated Parish was not at today's levels, but even then, significant numbers of homes and camps discharged sewage into roadside ditches that drain into the Tangipahoa River.

In 1988, one-fifth of the dairies in the area did not have the resources to install adequate on-site waste treatment facilities. A Nonpoint Source Interagency Committee was formed, which created interagency agreements and submitted an application for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Water Quality Initiative Program funding to improve water quality in the middle Tangipahoa watershed. That application resulted in \$1.1 million of cost-share funds to assist in the installation of no-discharge lagoon systems in the watershed's dairies. Approximately 200 of the 273 dairymen (73 percent) agreed to participate in the dairy lagoon program. The Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation continues to seek and secure funding for cleanouts and decommissioning of these lagoons.

Figure 7-9, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

Polluted stormwater runoff is a leading cause of impairment to the nearly 40 percent of surveyed U.S. water bodies that fail to meet water quality standards.

The NPDES Stormwater Program is a mandate of the Clean Water Act that deals with non-farm sources of stormwater pollution. NPDES permits require controls that prevent pollutants from entering water bodies.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Figure 7-10,
Raw Sewage in Ditch



Source: Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation

previously unknown systems, there are now there are an estimated 22,600 known systems. These are a combination of mechanical aeration systems and septic tanks. More existing systems are discovered every year as a result of inspections; and, of course, more systems are “in the pipeline,” so to speak.

The hard work of Federal, State, and local agencies, concerned individuals, and public interest groups has improved water quality in the river. LDEQ reports measurable water quality improvements at two of the three monitoring stations along the river. Funding, construction, and technical assistance for wastewater treatment lagoons on dairies, as well as educational programs for homeowners are credited for these improvements.²⁴

Still, there is more work to do. Despite coordinated, targeted education and outreach efforts, and a program for inspecting individual sewer systems that is nearly 20 years old, the Parish continues to discover a relatively steady stream of systems that are failing to perform adequately.²⁵ See **Figure 7-10, Raw Sewage in Ditch**. The seven people who are responsible for inspection (six of whom, among their other responsibilities, inspect systems when new electric utility accounts are established; and one of whom makes regular inspections of known systems that are more than two years old) are kept very busy.

Before 1988, there were 2,059 known individual sewage systems in the Parish. Due to new construction since 1988, and the inspection program (established in 1988) that identified

²⁴ According to the LPBF, “LDEQ’s Ground Water Protection Division within the Office of Water Resources has participated in oversight activities such as soil core borings and observance of lagoon construction in order to ensure that the lagoon systems were sited in areas where soils have sufficient clay content. Design specifications for these systems were developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES).”

²⁵ According to the LPBF, “During the Spring of 1993, meetings were held with parish officials and county extension service staff, parish sanitarians, NRCS, and state water quality staff, to discuss the targeted areas to be included in the education programs. Target audiences were prioritized for various public outreach activities and economic alternatives were discussed and investigated for the low income areas in the parish, who could not afford acceptable treatment alternatives.”

The problem with individual sewage systems is rooted in the fact that 84 percent of the Parish soils are listed as being very limited or not suitable for septic tanks, so above-ground mechanical aeration treatment with discharges into ditches is typical. Despite the dedication of Parish and State staff, monitoring and inspecting more than 22,000 individual systems is difficult. Indeed, it is currently not possible to conduct annual inspections of every known system – an effort that would require the Parish's seven inspectors to inspect between eight and nine systems per day, every single day of the year. This would leave no time at all for these staff persons to address any of their other responsibilities, which are numerous. Even bi-annual inspections of each system are not possible. Assuming 300 working days per year, seven inspectors (who have other responsibilities) would have to inspect 5.4 systems per work day to meet a bi-annual inspection schedule.

Moreover, currently, developers are building package plants that discharge to small streams and even ditches, which is a major problem. While dilution is no longer accepted as a means of treatment, even with very high levels of nutrient removal and treatment the effluent is unsuited to be the sole source of water in a stream. Large-scale municipal plants and regional treatment plants avoid the problem by being required to discharge to streams with flows that can accept the discharges from the treatment plants.

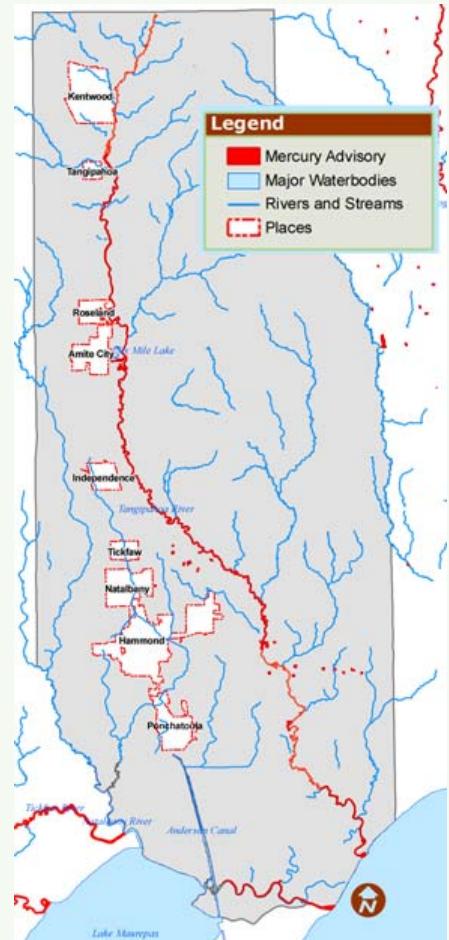
8.0.4 | Siltation. Siltation of the creeks and rivers in Tangipahoa Parish is a major problem that is principally attributable to poor development practices. Many development sites are being prepared without adequate protections to prevent erosion into nearby ditches, streams, and rivers. Small soil particles get suspended in the running water, which clouds the Parish's rivers. *See Figure 7-11, Stream Siltation.* At a minimum, clouded waters are less hospitable to aquatic plants, which reduces the population of invertebrates (e.g., shellfish, worms, etc.), and in turn, reduces the population of fish that feed on invertebrates. In addition, when the particles that cause the turbidity include organic materials, they deplete the waters' dissolved oxygen, killing fish and invertebrates.

8.0.5 | Mercury. According to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health, Section of Environmental Epidemiology and Toxicology (March 2006), the Tangipahoa River and the Tickfaw River drainage basins are under a mercury advisory. That means that people are advised to not eat more than four one-half pound fish meals per month from these waters. *Figure 7-12, Mercury Advisory,* shows waters that are subject to the mercury advisory.

Figure 7-11, Stream Siltation



Figure 7-12, Mercury Advisory



Source: Louisiana DEQ

However, due to the hazards that mercury presents, especially to children, users of these waterways should not rely on Figure 7-11, but should instead contact the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality for the most current updates and advisories.

Mercury in Tangipahoa Parish's rivers, fish, and shellfish is a complex problem. Mercury comes from many sources, and rain containing mercury from distant places may pollute waterways. For example, it is believed that coal-fired power plants are emerging as the most significant source of industrial mercury pollution in the state. There are no coal-fired power plants in the Parish.

Other potential sources of mercury contamination from within the Parish are:

- ◆ Areas where now-banned fungicides and slimicides that contained mercury were used, stored, mixed, and potentially spilled;
- ◆ Areas where lumber was treated with mercury-containing fungicides (PMA), and where treated lumber was extensively used; and
- ◆ Old mercury manometers (pressure meters) used in natural gas production and transmission.

9.0 | Water Quality: Goals and Recommendations

9.0.1 | Goal: Reduce per capita use of groundwater

9.0.2 | Recommendations.

9.0.2.1 | *Encourage the use of water-efficient technologies.*

- ◆ The Parish should set an example by outfitting all public buildings with water-saving toilets, and should publicize the water savings.
- ◆ The Parish should encourage its water suppliers to offer rebates to customers who install water-efficient appliances and toilets.
- ◆ The Parish should make information about water conservation (much of which is available from other governmental units, or readily adaptable to suit Parish needs) available at all Parish customer-service counters.

9.0.2.2 | *Provide educational material regarding natural landscaping techniques that reduce the need for irrigation.* The LSU AgCenter provides a number of resources about natural landscaping, as well as reducing the impacts of lawn care. The Parish should provide these materials (or summaries of them) in paper form at customer service locations.

9.0.3 | Goal: Reduce fecal coliform levels in Parish waterbodies to well below 200 mpn²⁶

9.0.4 | Recommendations.

9.0.4.1 | *Implementing Regulations.* Regulations to implement this Plan should reduce the

²⁶ Mean probable number of bacteria colonies per 100 ml water.

Parish's dependence on individual sewage treatment systems, and improve wastewater treatment, as follows:

- ◆ The Subdivision Ordinance provides that individual sewerage systems "must discharge into an approved public servitude." For subdivisions that are larger than eight lots, individual sewerage systems should first discharge into a constructed wetland, which should then discharge into an "approved public servitude."
- ◆ Land treatment systems should be used instead of small package plants. There are two basic approaches, both of which have large lagoons that aerate the waste for several weeks as the primary treatment. Water is then filtered and treated. Final treatment is by irrigating farmland or forest with the effluent or by running the water through a constructed wetland with an eventual outfall to stream or ditches.
- ◆ In some areas where a large-scale public sewer system can be provided in a reasonable amount of time, small package plants are an acceptable interim facility. If the package plant will be phased out and removed and development tied into a regional or municipal system within less than 10 years, it is reasonable to approve small package plants.

9.0.4.2 | Participate in Existing Efforts. The Parish should leverage the resources provided by citizen-based initiatives and the efforts of other agencies (see **Figure 7-13, Citizen-Based Initiatives and Agency Efforts**) in order to:

- ◆ Improve enforcement through better reporting; and
- ◆ Periodically revise environmental standards to improve their effectiveness, as may be supported by field research.

9.0.4.3 | Seek Funding for Additional Staff and/or More State Staff to Work in the Parish. There are currently seven inspectors in the Parish (two of whom are Parish employees and five of whom are State employees) who have among their many responsibilities the inspection of individual sewer systems. In order to conduct more regular inspections, to locate currently unknown systems, and to

Figure 7-13, Citizen-Based Initiatives and Agency Efforts

Given constitutional and statutory constraints on raising revenue, the Parish has limited financial ability to hire and equip a large environmental enforcement staff. Yet, reflective of the importance of the environment to their lifestyle preferences, many residents are working hard to protect and enhance the Parish's waterways and other natural resources. For example, groups of volunteers monitor water quality along the Tangipahoa River.

In addition, there are a number of public and private entities that are working to improve water quality in the Parish's waterways, including, but not limited to:

- Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation;
- Citizen's for a Clean Tangipahoa;
- Tangipahoa-St. Helena Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD);
- Tangipahoa River Task Force;
- Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality;
- Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals; and
- EPA Region 6.

Source: Kendig Keast Collaborative

deal with new construction, the Parish would ideally have 12 to 20 dedicated inspectors who would average four to six inspections per workday. Although finding funding for 12 to 20 new staff members is a very difficult task, the Parish should support requests to the State for additional Department of Health and Hospitals employees to work in the Parish.

9.0.5 | Goal: Reduce siltation of Parish waterways

9.0.6 | Recommendations.

9.0.6.1 | Education. Participate in current outreach efforts regarding best management practices for preventing siltation of waterways. For example, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provides public outreach materials that could be displayed and made available to the public in printed form at the Parish main office and permit office. These materials include posters about best management practices during construction.

9.0.6.2 | Enforcement. Increase compliance with stormwater pollution prevention program standards. Part of this effort involves education (see above recommendation). Another part involves enforcement. The additional staff recommended on page 17 to enforce stormwater pollution prevention program standards would also implement this recommendation.

9.0.7 | Goal: Reduce mercury levels in Parish waterways

9.0.8 | Recommendations.

9.0.8.1 | Education. Work with waste managers to reduce mercury contamination due to household sources by providing for quarterly household hazardous waste collection.

9.0.8.2 | Public Facilities. Assess the historical use of mercury-treated lumber in the Parish's public facilities. Seek funding for clean-up activities where necessary.

9.0.8.3 | Implementing Regulations. Require industries that use or produce mercury-containing products to locate outside of the floodplain.

10.0 | Ecosystem and Habitat Conservation

10.0.1 | Generally. Tangipahoa Parish seeks to develop in a manner that is sustainable over time and best protects, conserves, or improves the quality of water, air, and habitats. With this objective in mind, there are four approaches to resource management: avoidance, minimization, mitigation, and exploitation. *See Management Approach, above.*

For most of human history, exploitation has been the rule. As a result, we have fouled our air and water, and altered the natural flow of water and silt in the Mississippi's delta. Indeed, the dead zone in the Gulf off the Mississippi River delta is the direct result of too great a nutrient and pollution load from rural and urban sources and levees and dams that altered the flow of water. It is now clear that the exploitation approach has prevailed to the point of changing the global climate.

That is not to say that there has been no progress in more responsible planning. The Tangipahoa River is making a comeback as a result of effective mitigation strategies. This progress serves as model, demonstrating that with a sound understanding of the

environment and natural systems, it is possible to continue businesses, provide homes, and protect the environment at the same time.

Sound environmental planning gives primary emphasis to two of the other three approaches – avoidance and minimization. Avoidance is the decision to avoid creating a negative environmental impact by selecting a different location or developing in a different manner. Minimization is the selection or design of a development so as to minimize damage. Maximizing the use of these two strategies lessens the need for costly mitigation.

10.0.2 | Ecosystem Types. At a very broad scale, the Parish is divided into two types of ecosystems: Estuary and Coastal Plain. Within these broader classifications are a number of unique and threatened natural communities. These communities provide habitat for a number of threatened and endangered plant and animal species.

10.0.2.1 | Estuaries. Estuaries are totally flooded almost all year. For the purpose of this Plan, the “estuaries” ecosystem is divided into Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain and their associated wetlands. Lake Pontchartrain is an estuary with a surface elevation of 3.56 feet above mean sea level at Pass Manchac.²⁷

Only a small portion of the piedmont (the estuarine area in the southern portion of the Parish) drains through small watersheds directly into the coastal zone. The rivers and contributory streams (both perennial²⁸ and ephemeral) and their floodplains make up a major portion of the Parish’s coastal plain. They are a well-established drainage pattern that rather efficiently drains much of the Parish. Indeed, all of the streams have associated floodplains that handle flows beyond the stream channels during storms. Deep channels may occur in these streams because of heavy rainfalls, hurricanes, a gentle topography and the absence of bedrock conditions.

This area is subject to considerable change in the future. According to the more conservative estimates, global warming could result in a one to three foot rise in sea level by the end of the 21st century. A three foot rise in sea level would totally alter the tidally-influenced Lake Pontchartrain environment, drowning most of the wetlands, and extending areas of inundated soils (which ultimately could develop into biologically functioning wetlands) into what is currently upland coastal plain. Such a rise would also totally eliminate the barrier; the current delta environment that helps to dissipate hurricane surges.

Given a relatively rapid projected rise in sea level, it is unclear how rapidly a new shore line would stabilize and what configuration (open beach or barrier island or wetlands) would evolve in that time frame. Therefore, this Plan recommends that the Parish allow only small water-dependent uses to be built in the coastal plain adjacent to the estuary in order to minimize future property losses. Put another way, the Parish should not permit the construction of significant uses or structures that would have to be relocated as they are flooded.

²⁷ 1983 to 2001 tidal epoch.

²⁸ Meaning water flows year-round.

10.0.2.2 | Coastal Plain. The upland portion of the coastal plain consists of a series of terraces formed as sea levels dropped to the current levels after the last ice age. The current topography is the result of weathering of the land and the forming of a well-defined drainage pattern of streams that drain areas that extend well into Mississippi. The result is a gently rolling topography, with the Tangipahoa, Natalbany, and Tchefuncte Rivers being the Parish's primary natural drainageways. Most of the lakes in the Parish are man-made, primarily from gravel mining and dairy operations, but there are a few natural ponds.

Outside of the floodplains are areas with soil patterns that typically have high water tables. While these areas are not mapped as floodplains, some flooding or overland flow is likely to occur in these areas during major storms. As such, these areas should be managed cautiously, because as development occurs (bringing impervious surfaces and artificial storm drainage), there will be more storm water run-off and it will move faster than it does under natural conditions. After development, swales and ephemeral streams carry more water. These areas connect to perennial streams, wetlands, and floodplains (which are all part of the drainage system of the Parish), which are then forced to handle the additional volume.

The soils of the coastal plain support three general categories of forests: Eastern Gulf flatwoods, mixed woodlands, and tree plantations. There are also extensive areas in agriculture. The NRCS soil survey lists only one soil type that might be described as moderately steep: Smithdale fine sandy loam. However, this soil type constitutes only 0.3 percent of the Parish. *See Table 7-1, Soil Types in Tangipahoa Parish* (page 28). Its slopes of 12 to 20 percent make it a resource that requires special treatment if it is to be developed.

A generic listing of the natural resources of the Parish is as follows:

- ◆ Water bodies
- ◆ Wetlands
- ◆ Floodplains
- ◆ Mature Forests
- ◆ Young Forests
- ◆ Steep slopes (> 12 percent)

There are three other resource types that have a policy component: riparian buffer, agriculture, and mining.

10.0.2.3 | Riparian Buffer. This buffer is intended to protect water bodies, and in some cases wetlands, from damaging pollutants. It is an area of 50 to 300 feet in width along the edge of the water body or wetland where natural vegetation is left in place to serve as a filter strip. Trees and grasses in this area take up nutrients, such as nitrates and phosphorous, that create problems in streams, both from overland flow and subsurface flows. While many of the broad floodplains in Tangipahoa would exceed the riparian buffer width, they will be needed on the upper end of the watershed where there are no floodplains. In addition, certain uses can use additional buffering.

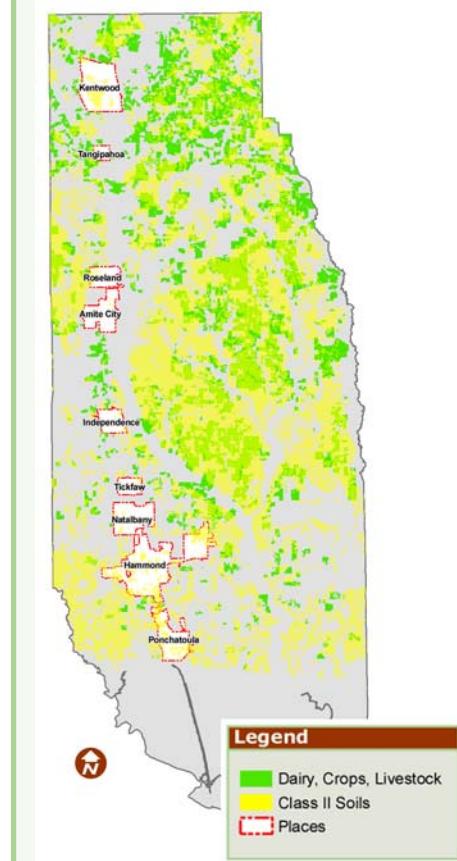
10.0.2.4 | Agriculture. In addition to the recommendations set out in earlier sections of this Chapter (which do not have a spatial component), the quality of the land for agriculture can be a big factor in determining the locations for heightened protection of agriculture. Tangipahoa Parish does not contain any “Class 1” agricultural soils (the most productive type), but about 27.4 percent of the soils are Class 2 soils that are also very important for agriculture. *See Table 7-1, Soil Types in Tangipahoa Parish. Figure 7-14, Agriculture and Class 2 Soils,* is a composite of land in agriculture and the Class 2 agricultural soils.

The sixth column in **Table 7-1, Soil Types in Tangipahoa Parish**, shows the Agriculture Capability Class. This classification shows, in a general way, the suitability of soils for most kinds of field crops.²⁹ The soils are grouped according to their limitations for field crops, the risk of damage if they are used for crops, and the way they respond to management. Capability classification is not a substitute for interpretations designed to show suitability and limitations of groups of soils for rangeland, forestland, or engineering purposes.

Capability classes, the broadest groups, are designated by the numbers 1 through 8. The numbers indicate progressively greater limitations and narrower choices for practical use. The classes are defined as follows:

- ◆ Class 1 soils have slight limitations that restrict their use.
- ◆ Class 2 soils have moderate limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices.
- ◆ Class 3 soils have severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require special conservation practices, or both.
- ◆ Class 4 soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants or that require very careful management, or both.
- ◆ Class 5 soils are subject to little or no erosion but have other limitations, impractical to remove, that restrict their use mainly to pasture, rangeland, forestland, or wildlife habitat.

Figure 7-14, Agriculture and Class 2 Soils



Source: USDA NRCS; Kendig Keast Collaborative

²⁹ United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, 1961.

Comprehensive Plan

Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana

- ◆ Class 6 soils have severe limitations that make them generally unsuitable for cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to pasture, rangeland, forestland, or wildlife habitat.
- ◆ Class 7 soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuitable for cultivation and that restrict their use mainly to grazing, forestland, or wildlife habitat.
- ◆ Class 8 soils and miscellaneous areas have limitations that preclude commercial plant production and that restrict their use to recreational purposes, wildlife habitat, watershed, or esthetic purposes.

Capability subclasses are soil groups within one class. They are designated by adding a small letter, e, w, s, or c, to the class numeral, for example, 2e. In class 1 there are no subclasses because the soils of this class have few limitations. Class 5 contains only the subclasses indicated by w, s, or c because the soils in class 5 are subject to little or no erosion.

**Table 7-1:
Soil Types in Tangipahoa Parish**

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Acres	Percent	Depth to Water Table (cm)	Agriculture Capability Class and Subclass* (non-irrigated)	Dwellings without Basements **	Dwellings with Basements **	Small Commercial **	Septic Systems ***
RS	Ruston-Smithdale association, rolling	64,371.20	12.20%	> 200	3e (Ruston) 4e (Smithdale)	Not Limited	Not Limited	Somewhat Limited ⁷	Somewhat Limited ^a
OG	Ouachita, Ochlockonee, and Guyton soils, frequently flooded	62,717.00	11.90%	> 200	4w	Very Limited _{1, 4}	Very Limited _{4, 1}	Very Limited _{4, 1}	Very Limited _{c, a, e, b}
MP	Maurepas muck	57,617.30	10.90%	0	8w	Very Limited _{3, 6, 4, 1, 5}	Very Limited _{3, 6, 4, 1, 5}	Very Limited _{3, 6, 4, 1, 5}	Very Limited _{c, d, b, g, f}
Tg	Tangi silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	49,587.50	9.40%	53	3e	Somewhat Limited ¹	Very Limited ₁	Somewhat Limited ¹	Very Limited ^{a, b}
To	Toula silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	43,323.40	8.20%	53	2e	Somewhat Limited ¹	Very Limited ₁	Somewhat Limited ¹	Very Limited _{a, j, b}
Go	Guyton silt loam	34,458.40	6.50%	23	3w	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited _{a, b}
Ta	Tangi silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	33,326.60	6.30%	53	2e	Somewhat Limited ¹	Very Limited ₁	Somewhat Limited ¹	Very Limited ^{a, b}
Aa	Abita silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	31,868.90	6.00%	69	2w	Somewhat Limited ¹	Very Limited ₁	Somewhat Limited ¹	Very Limited ^{a, b}
W	Water	23,615.60	4.50%	>200		Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated
Mt	Myatt fine sandy loam	16,871.70	3.20%	15	3w	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited _{b, a}

Table 7-1:
Soil Types in Tangipahoa Parish

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Acres	Percent	Depth to Water Table (cm)	Agriculture Capability Class and Subclass* (non-irrigated)	Dwellings without Basements **	Dwellings with Basements **	Small Commercial **	Septic Systems ***
Ca	Cahaba fine sandy loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	14,624.10	2.80%	>200	2e	Not Limited	Not Limited	Not Limited	Very Limited ^{e, a}
My	Myatt fine sandy loam, occasionally flooded	14,478.10	2.70%	15	4w	Very Limited _{4, 1}	Very Limited _{4, 1}	Very Limited _{4, 1}	Very Limited ^{c, b, a}
Gy	Guyton silt loam, occasionally flooded	11,632.40	2.20%	23	4w	Very Limited _{4, 1}	Very Limited _{4, 1}	Very Limited _{4, 1}	Very Limited ^{c, a, b}
Bg	Brimstone-Guyton silt loams	11,116.00	2.10%	23	3s (Brimstone) 3w (Guyton)	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ^{b, a}
Rn	Ruston fine sandy loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	9,257.80	1.80%	>200	2e	Not Limited	Not Limited	Not Limited	Somewhat Limited ^a
Fu	Fluker silt loam	8,278.00	1.60%	31	2w	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ^{a, b}
Ab	Abita silt loam, 2 to 5 percent slopes	7,365.20	1.40%	69	2e	Somewhat Limited _{2, 1}	Very Limited _{1, 2}	Somewhat Limited _{2, 1}	Very Limited ^{a, b}
Ma	Malbis fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	5,851.00	1.10%	99	3e	Not Limited	Somewhat Limited ₁	Somewhat Limited ₇	Very Limited ^{b, a}
St	Stough fine sandy loam	5,468.00	1.00%	23	2w	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Very Limited ^{b, a}
Sa	Savannah silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	4,851.70	0.90%	53	2e	Somewhat Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Somewhat Limited ₁	Very Limited ^{b, a}
BB	Barbary muck	3,841.30	0.70%	0	8w	Very Limited _{3, 4, 1, 5}	Very Limited _{3, 4, 1, 5}	Very Limited _{3, 4, 1, 5}	Very Limited ^{c, a, b, d}
Pa	Pits-Arents complex, 0 to 5 percent slopes	3,593.00	0.70%	>200		Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated
KE	Kenner muck	2,606.00	0.50%	0	8w	Very Limited _{3, 6, 4, 1, 5}	Very Limited _{3, 6, 4, 1, 5}	Very Limited _{3, 6, 4, 1, 5}	Very Limited ^{c, a, d, b, f}
Sm	Smithdale fine sandy loam, 12 to 20 percent slopes	1,673.10	0.30%	>200	6e	Very Limited ₇	Very Limited ₇	Very Limited ₇	Very Limited ^{e, i, a}
Pt	Prentiss fine sandy loam	875.8	0.20%	61	2w	Somewhat Limited ₁	Very Limited ₁	Somewhat Limited ₁	Very Limited ^{b, a}
Ch	Cahaba fine sandy loam, 3 to 6 percent slopes	226.9	0.00%	>200	2e	Not Limited	Not Limited	Somewhat Limited ₇	Very Limited ^{e, a}

**Table 7-1:
Soil Types in Tangipahoa Parish**

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Acres	Percent	Depth to Water Table (cm)	Agriculture Capability Class and Subclass* (non-irrigated)	Dwellings without Basements **	Dwellings with Basements **	Small Commercial **	Septic Systems ***
Ha	Harahan clay	1.7	0.00%	61	3w	Somewhat Limited ¹	Very Limited ¹	Somewhat Limited ¹	Very Limited ^{a,b}

* Soil subclasses

e the main hazard is the risk of erosion unless close-growing plant cover is maintained
w water in or on the soil interferes with plant growth or cultivation (in some soils the wetness can be partly corrected by artificial drainage)
s the soil is limited mainly because it is shallow, droughty, or stony

** Development Limitations

¹ Depth to saturated zone
² Shrink-swell
³ Ponding
⁴ Flooding
⁵ Organic matter content
⁶ Subsidence
⁷ Slope

*** Septic Drainage Limitations

^a Slow water movement
^b Depth to saturated zone
^c Flooding
^d Ponding
^e Seepage, bottom layer
^f Subsidence
^g Filtering capacity
^h Slow water movement
ⁱ Slope
^j Depth to cemented pan

10.0.2.5 | Mining. The rural areas of Tangipahoa Parish produce gravel, sand, and clay. Most of this production is located in the red clay hills, which begin ten to 12 miles north of I-12 and extend north from there. In general, clay from these sites is delivered to construction sites along the I-12 corridor where it is used to make the flat, moist soils in the southern part of the Parish more suitable for development.

10.0.3 | Strategy: Avoidance Using Land Use, Character, and Patterns of Development. It is a given that there will be at least some negative environmental consequences from development, and that there will be substantial development in the Parish. The challenge is to manage that growth in a manner that helps to maintain a high quality environment. Although the general mix of land uses (*e.g.*, residential, retail, business, and industry) is relatively fixed, there is a great deal of choice as to the character of that development and the pattern used in design. For example, the Parish can encourage low density sprawl or urbanized centers.

Land use can help planners predict the likely impact of development. For example, commercial, industrial, and high density residential uses tend to have the highest impervious surface ratios (ISR).³⁰ When we look at land use on a per acre or density basis, the apparent result is that low intensity uses are better because they generate less run-off or pollutants per acre. Yet, in planning for growth at the macro-scale, this is not a good measure.

Put another way, **Chapter 2, Community Profile**, indicated a projected growth of 4,100 dwelling units by 2011. As such, in planning for each land use option, a far better measure is

³⁰ Impervious surface ratio is the amount of impervious area on a lot (like conventional roofing or paving) divided by the total area of the lot.

the environmental impact per 1,000 dwellings. From this perspective, a completely different picture emerges:

- For residential development, the greater the density, the lower the pollutant load per 1,000 dwellings. This occurs because even though per-acre impacts increase, doubling density means consuming of half the land for the same number of units. The efficiency more than offsets the increase in runoff per acre. *See Figure 7-15, Comparison of Per-Unit Impervious Cover.*
- With regard to non-residential uses a somewhat similar result occurs, but for a different reason. Many non-residential uses approach 100 percent impervious cover. For example, the downtown areas of most of the Parish's cities is near 100 percent impervious. Other commercial, office, and industry uses have ISRs of 0.7 to 0.9. For the most part, non-residential uses do not increase in impervious ratios as total floor area increases. As such, although a two or three story office building has a higher floor area ratio (FAR) than its one-story counterpart, it covers the same percentage of the site with building and parking. Therefore, it consumes less land for a given amount of commercial space.

As was discussed in **Chapter 4, Community Character and Land Use**, residential uses have four general patterns of development: conventional (or "cookie cutter") development, cluster, conservation clusters, and preservation clusters. The cookie cutter development pattern chops the entire property into lots, whether they be single-family, attached, or multi-family types. This pattern totally destroys the site's natural resources. Further, it has highest level of impervious cover per dwelling unit.

Cluster development would provide from 15 to 49 percent open space (good cluster plans generally have between 25 and 40 percent open space). A conservation development requires a minimum of 50 percent open space. Thus, both cluster and conservation clusters have an excellent ability to preserve open space and are excellent for minimization, and on some sites, avoidance. A fourth pattern is the preservation cluster, which has a minimum of 80 percent open space. In the Countryside, Forestry, and Agriculture character types recommended in **Chapter 4, Community Character and Land Use**, the conservation and preservation clusters ought to be heavily used.

Indeed, the more a development designer clusters, the easier it is to avoid destroying specific natural resources that should be protected on the site. By making maximum use of

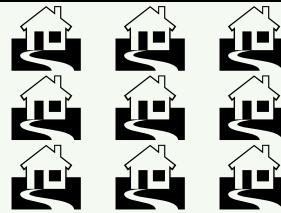
Figure 7-15, Comparison of Per-Unit Impervious Cover

Community A:
1 Acre, 3 Houses



**21,400 ft.³ of runoff per acre, or
7,133 ft.³ of runoff per unit.**

Community B:
1 Acre; 9 Houses



**42,900 ft.³ of runoff per acre, or
4,767 ft.³ of runoff per unit (better).**

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

clustering in maintaining the rural character of the unincorporated areas of the Parish, and encouraging higher density urban and suburban development to locate in and near cities, the total impact of the projected growth on the environment will be minimized. That in turn means less money will have to be spent to mitigate the adverse impacts.

This Plan does not have legal force in the cities. However, it suggests that the cities, too, should use the same approach of promoting clustering. More importantly, they should encourage higher intensity urban non-residential over auto-urban development to reduce the total impervious needed to handle the growth.

10.0.4 | Strategy: Avoidance Using Specific Resource Protection. There are a number of resources that exist in the Parish which have values for preservation and protection.

10.0.4.1 | Open Water (Streams, Lakes and Ponds). This category includes both the drainage system of streams and rivers and fixed bodies of water. The rivers that flow through the Parish are fed by numerous streams. Lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas are the region's two major waterbodies but there are many smaller waterbodies (most of which are quite small and nearly all of which are man-made).

Development within water bodies, be it infrastructure development (e.g., roads and bridges), dredge-and-fill activities, or temporary construction activities that cross streams, is always problematic. During construction, water quality is often severely degraded. The quantity of runoff may be increased, its path may be blocked, or both. For example, a road that crosses a stream can reduce the stream's and floodplain's ability to move floodwaters, which causes additional upstream land to flood. Because of the adverse consequences of development in water bodies it must be avoided to the maximum practicable extent.

The two major lakes are already off limits to all but major regional roads or utilities. It is likely that long-term climate change will raise their levels by three feet in the coming 100 years, making it even more unwise to permit building in these areas, and in fact, threatening the structures that are already there.

The smaller lakes and ponds are all classified as wetlands, many are also within the floodplains. In general, except for mined properties, they are generally so small that leaving them untouched in a development is unlikely to adversely impact the development. To the contrary, their preservation will enhance property values because views of water are amenities that generally bring added value to the lots.

For rivers and creeks, crossings will be needed for roads and utilities. However, these should be designed to ensure that damage during construction is minimized, and flows are maintained during storm events to protect upstream properties. Since crossings are very expensive, avoiding the need for them is in the best interest of the developer.

10.0.4.2 | Wetlands. There are three major classes of wetlands in the Parish: estuarine, riverine, and palustrine.

- ◆ The largest area is the estuarine wetlands adjoining Lake Pontchartrain. These are permanently flooded and influenced by tidal connections to the Gulf of Mexico via Lake Pontchartrain.
- ◆ Riverine floodplains occur along the Parish rivers and creeks.
- ◆ Palustrine wetlands are upland depressions.

Much of the estuarine as well as riverine and palustrine wetlands are forested wetlands or swamps. That is, they are dominated by bald cypress, water tupelo, and black willow, although some are dominated by shrub/scrub vegetation. The swamps in the coastal plain are on Maurepas soil complex, which is generally too unstable for commercial timber harvesting. As such, these areas should remain undeveloped.

Sustainable timber harvesting should be permitted on the other forested wetlands, provided the soils will support the harvesting equipment. Other wetlands, particularly those on Kenner soils, are fresh water and the natural vegetation is emergent grasses and reeds, which are also below water most of the year. All of these areas should remain open space with no development other than essential access to isolated properties. A variety of recreational and some timbering uses should be permitted in the protected open space.

The cost of development in wetland areas is high. Draining or filling has undesirable off-site consequences:

- ◆ Wetlands are natural storm water detention facilities, so filling them displaces storm waters, raising the level of flooding.
- ◆ Wetlands are also areas where water is cleaned, trapping suspended particulate matter, and fixing nitrogen wastes and other pollutants. Destruction of wetlands thus, reduces water quality.

10.0.4.3 | Floodplains. Floodplains cover a significant portion of the Parish's upland area. At some point in time, most uses built in the floodplain will be damaged by a flood. The damage to life and property averaged about \$316.7 million annually in Louisiana between 1994 and 2003.³¹ Damage to life and property can be avoided by staying out of the FEMA designated "100-year" floodplain.

A safety margin is also strongly recommended. First, the 100-year flood is an arbitrary standard, there are also 250- and 500-year floods that can be projected.³² Another problem is that as development occurs, up stream impervious surfaces can add to downstream flooding, so that a 50-year storm creates the same flooding as a 100-year storm did in the past. Thus, safety suggests providing all buildings outside the floodplain with additional freeboard or elevation to insure some protection for extreme events.

³¹ Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Annual Flood Damage Reduction Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2003.

³² There is not a record that goes back far enough to determine actual 250 or 500 year floods and with global warming they could in fact be much worse than predicted.

While it is possible to build on piers to prevent the building from being flooded, it increases the cost of the housing. In addition, emergency vehicles cannot reach such areas when roads are flooded. Private sewer systems would likewise be flooded.

All too often the homes built in floodplains are low priced, so the poorest families, least able to deal with flooding, are the ones placed at risk. Thus, it is unwise to permit any development other than essential road crossings, small recreational buildings and shelters, and boat launches to be located in the floodplain. Floodplain areas should be permanently protected as open space where recreation and agriculture are allowed.

10.0.4.4 | Forests. Forest is used as a generic term for a wide range of areas of woody plants. The Parish has areas of forest, woodlands, groves, and tree rows that are different in scale, with forests being the largest and tree rows being the smallest. Tree rows are either remnants from clearing the land for agriculture, or areas between properties or along roads or streams where trees have re-grown in the absence of farming.

Forests, woodlands, and groves are the most desirable land cover from storm water, water quality, and air quality perspectives. The discussion on natural cycles points out the major reasons for valuing this resource. In addition to the natural cycle benefits, forests are a renewable resource of considerable commercial value. Even in urban areas, trees have a great value in creating an attractive environment. In addition, trees mitigate micro-climate impacts of urbanized areas, reducing cooling needs during the summer and thus, saving energy. Forests are also habitats for wildlife. Accordingly, when land is developed for uses that are not related to agriculture or forestry, every effort should be taken to preserve forests for these and other values.

There are multiple ways to classify forests on age, type, or habitat values. There are two major forest conditions based on the age of the forest (mature and young), which can be determined by the size of the trees. Although not considered here as a forest, natural succession creates an area covered by young trees that are just becoming established. These are old fields undergoing succession, or, in some cases, areas being reforested after a timber harvest.

The Parish's forests can be classified into three types:

- ♦ Coniferous (long leaf, slash, and loblolly pines) and
- ♦ River bottom deciduous forests dominated by sweetgum, red and white oak, elm, pecan, green ash, willow, sycamore and cottonwood, and
- ♦ Mixed coniferous and deciduous.

Land cover maps list swamps as forest but they are classified here as wetlands even though they are forested. While this information is valuable, particularly for silviculture, all three types have nearly equal environmental value.

For habitat values there is another approach to the classification of forest that is based on the extent of the forest. This approach separates forests into two areas: edge and core. The edge forest is one that attracts species that like both woodland and open land habitat for food,

shelter, and nesting. The core area is further into the forest and buffered by the edge area. Species in the core area rarely venture into open areas, staying instead in the core for protection from predation by open land or edge species.

In general, a core forest would have a minimum of 100 acres. The edge would be the outer 100 feet, or small forests that do not meet the edge and area requirements (for example a 60 acre forest would be an edge forest). The edge/core condition has nothing to do with run-off or water quality.

Unlike the first three resources, there is no regular hazard to building in a forested area.³³ Nor are there significant added costs for cutting and mass grading a forest, and particularly for mature forests, the costs of clearing and grading may be offset by timber sales. Consequently, some developers will seek to clear cut forested areas for development.

Yet counter-balancing the value of clear cutting to the developer is the value of the lot. A forested lot can demand a higher sales price. Even where a site has scattered trees, lots with mature trees as opposed to newly planted trees will sell faster and command a higher price. As a result, cluster development that preserves some forest land will produce higher value development. The conservation or preservation clusters are the superior method of development in forested areas, as they maximize the preservation of the resource amenity. At any given density, areas of the resource will be protected as both an environmental strategy and a means of enhancing the character and value of the development.

The degree of protection is recommended to vary between young and mature, with young areas given less protection because they are less sensitive to nearby disturbances than mature forests. In addition, the protection level would be varied by the type of zoning, that is, whether it be rural, sub-urban, or urban in character. In rural areas, preservation clusters are the best development option. The estate and suburban character types suggest both

conservation and preservation cluster development options, where more than 50 percent open space is preserved. Zoning for urban intensity in forested areas should generally be avoided. That is so because in order to provide an urban character, only trivial amounts of open space can be provided without damaging the urban fabric by spreading it too far apart.

10.0.4.5 | Threatened Natural Communities. Tangipahoa Parish is home to a number of rare and unique natural communities, several of which are in danger of extinction. They are listed in **Table 7-2, Threatened Natural Communities**, and pictured in **Figure 7-16**,

Table 7-2:
Threatened Natural Communities

Natural Community	State Rank	Global Rank
Eastern Longleaf Pine Savannah	Extremely Rare / Critically Imperiled	Critically Imperiled
Eastern Upland Longleaf Pine Forest	Rare to Extremely Rare / Critically Imperiled	Imperiled to Critically Imperiled
Shortleaf Pine/Oak-Hickory Forest	Rare / Imperiled	Very Rare / Imperiled
Small Stream Forest	Rare / Vulnerable	Very Rare / Vulnerable
Hardwood Slope Forest	Rare but Apparently Secure	Very Rare / Imperiled

³³ Fire is a hazard in forested areas only during periods of drought conditions.

Figure 7-16, Threatened Natural Communities

Eastern Longleaf Pine Savannah



Eastern Upland Longleaf Pine Forest



Shortleaf Pine/Oak-Hickory Forest



Small Stream Forest



Hardwood Slope Forest

Source: Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Threatened Natural Communities. Threatened natural communities should not be destroyed.

Briefly, these natural communities are described as follows:

- ♦ Eastern Longleaf Pine Savannah is found in Tangipahoa, Washington, and St. Tammany Parishes. This natural community is poorly-drained marshland with sparse longleaf pines. It depends on periodic fire for sustainability. Eastern Longleaf Pine Savannah provides habitat for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.
- ♦ Eastern Upland Longleaf Pine Forest is also found in Tangipahoa, Washington, and St. Tammany Parishes. There are 3,500 acres of longleaf pine forest in Tangipahoa Parish Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). It provides habitat for many threatened species, and depends upon periodic fire for sustainability. Because it depends upon fire for sustainability, fire prevention and fire suppression have harmed the WMA tract that is owned by the School Board.
- ♦ Shortleaf Pine/Oak-Hickory Forest is generally found on dry hills in central and northern Louisiana, but is also scattered about the Florida Parishes. These forests depend upon fire every five to 15 years to maintain the shortleaf pine stands. They

provide habitat for many threatened species, including the Bald Eagle and red-cockaded woodpecker.

- Small Stream Forests are seasonally flooded wetland forests that are located next to large creeks and small rivers. They help trap nutrients and improve water quality. They are found in the Florida Parishes and in the Upper and Lower West Gulf Coastal Plains.
- Hardwood Slope Forests are found on slopes that rise out of stream floodplains in the Eastern and Western Gulf Coastal Plains. Pine trees are infrequent in these forests, so they do not depend upon fire for sustainability. They provide habitat for several endangered species.

10.0.4.6 | Steep Slopes. Slopes are a potential source of significant erosion when cleared for development. None of the slopes in Tangipahoa Parish are so steep as to cause development problems other than erosion. Moreover, the more significant slopes that do exist in the Parish are found on less than 0.3 percent of its land area.

In order to reduce the potential for erosion, areas of significant slopes that are located near streams should be protected, and the Parish should prohibit mass grading and earth moving that significantly alters topography. Because there are so few areas with significant slopes, it should be relatively easy to avoid disturbing or destroying them during the development process.

11.0 | Ecosystem and Habitat Conservation: Goals and Recommendations

11.0.1 | Goal: Protect Ecosystems and Habitat

11.0.2 | Recommendations.

11.0.2.1 | Avoidance Strategy – Resource Protection Standards. The identification of protection level for natural resources is a means of ensuring that they are protected. In subdivision or zoning regulations, an open space ratio should be assigned to each identified resource. This sets a standard that provides direction for the designers of development.

In other words, project designers know that a percentage of the site must be set aside to leave the natural area untouched. Then, they can decide whether and how to cluster development to recapture the density that would be lost to a “cookie-cutter” design.

Recommended open space ratios for each resource and community character district are set out in **Table 7-3, Resource Protection Standards**.

Table 7-3: Resource Protection Standards					
Resource	Agriculture	Forestry	Countryside	Estate	All non residential; expansion areas; and Megasite
Open Water	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Wetlands	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Floodplains	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Forest, Mature	0.65	0.85	0.75	0.70	0.40
Forest, Young	0.50	0.80	0.65	0.60	0.30
Threatened Natural Communities	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Steep Slopes > 12%	0.40	0.75	0.60	0.60	0.50

11.0.2.2 | Minimization Strategies. There are other techniques that may prove useful in some cases where large non-rural uses are required to be located in the unincorporated area of the Parish.

- ◆ Green roofs are more expensive than regular construction; however, they provide additional insulation, which reduces energy costs for heating and air conditioning. While many consider this a new technology, it has been used for many years and most of the early problems have been solved. For new construction, the use of green roofs should result in a reduction in the amount of stormwater facilities that need to be constructed to meet standards. The cost of these should be subtracted from the added roof construction costs to get a true picture of the costs.
- ◆ Pervious pavements are also available. In some cases, these are pervious asphalt or concrete. In other cases, such as with pavers, they can be designed to allow some rainwater infiltration. For rarely used parking areas, it is possible to use paving blocks with holes for grass or other groundcovers. These will allow the greatest infiltration, but have the least ability to support traffic and are sometimes difficult for pedestrians and disabled access.
- ◆ Street trees are another technique for minimization. Tree canopy plays an important role in reducing the runoff from small storm events. While it is a long-term strategy, street trees have an effect of reducing runoff. A mature tree can have a canopy with a diameter of 40 to 70 feet. Thus, if street trees are planted, they will arch over the street (Figure 6.1). The growth of trees to a canopy of 40 foot diameter, as shown, is a process that can take decades. But it is a good investment – a tree canopy that arches over the street will capture all the rain from some storm events, and will also improve community character.

At 50-foot spacing, the trees cover 58 percent of the impervious areas – streets, curb, and sidewalk. A 33-foot spacing covers 89 percent of the street. See **Figure 7-17, Street Trees** (next page). The design of the street cross-section is critical to this strategy. Where the

sidewalks abut the curb line, street trees are generally less effective. This is so because the width of impervious area is increased, so it will take longer for the canopy to spread across the street, and depending upon the distance from trunk to trunk across the pavement, the canopy may not fully cover the street at maturity.

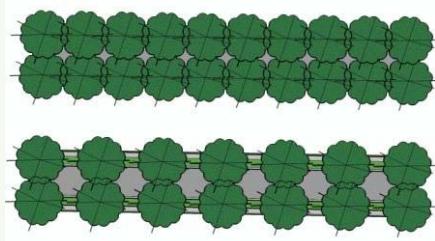
11.0.2.3 | Mitigation Strategies. The best efforts at avoidance and minimization will still leave some adverse impacts. Mitigation is needed to clean up the adverse impacts:

- ◆ This Plan calls for directing suburban and urban development toward the cities. However, even in the rural areas a suitable means of sewage treatment is needed. The Parish must have regulations that mitigate the sewage problem. For individual systems, the best solution is to have sufficient area on the lot to ensure that loading rates for bacteria and nutrients on a per-acre basis can be absorbed and cycled by natural systems. These systems need sufficient elevation above ground water levels so that plants can take up the nutrients.
- ◆ For cluster development, some sort of treatment system is needed. Even with very high levels of treatment (beyond what small package plants can deliver) discharging to small or even ephemeral streams is undesirable because these streams have such low flows (and often, no flows) that even a small increase in nutrient loads will damage them. Accordingly, land treatment is recommended. Land treatment does not involve normal discharges into streams. Instead, it involves an initial processing of the waste with final nutrient removal either by spraying the effluent on the land or moving it into a constructed wetland. In both methods the effluent is applied at a rate that the plant material utilizes the nutrients.³⁴

11.0.2.4 | Education. The Parish should take steps to educate its residents about the value of its natural systems. Although the Parish schools are not subject to this Plan, they should include local environmental education in the curriculum (if they do not already do this).

The Parish should also encourage landowners to participate in the Louisiana Natural Areas Registry Program. This program encourages voluntary conservation of biologically unique lands. Registration is voluntary and does not occur without the owner's consent.

Figure 7-17, Street Trees



Pictured above are street trees spaced 33 feet on-center (top) and 50 feet on-center (bottom)

³⁴ These systems have several advantages over package plants. First, there is no possibility of there being an upset or failure because the systems operate by a long term treatment with weeks of capacity rather than hourly or daily capacity. Second, even prolonged power failures do not result in plant failures. Third, land treatment systems use less energy and fewer chemicals than package plants. Fourth, for agricultural or forestry uses, the irrigation method has value in providing nutrients that enhance productivity. As such, while land treatment systems are land intensive, they are an excellent option in rural and estate areas where there is ample land.

Registration of a site is publicized only if the landowner approves. Directions to the site are not published and registration provides no rights of public access.

The State provides the following services, and others, to registrants free of charge:

- ◆ An annual ecological check-up on the health of the plants, animals, or habitat of special concern.
- ◆ Preparation of a management plan, if needed, to assure the continued health of the natural area.
- ◆ Consultation on how to protect the area should a transfer of ownership or other change become necessary.
- ◆ A quarterly newsletter with information on the registry program, featured habitats and species found throughout Louisiana, Federal and State cost-share funding programs, and helpful management suggestions.³⁵

12.0 | Historic Resources

12.0.1 | Generally. Tangipahoa Parish is home to 31 landmarks and districts that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most are in incorporated places. The Parish's national register historic resources are listed in **Table 7-4, Historic Resources**.

Table 7-4: Historic Resources			
Resource Name	Address	City	Listed
Arcola Presbyterian Church	Church St.	Arcola	10/22/1982
Blythewood	205 Elm St.	Amite	6/25/1982
Camp Moore	Off LA 440	Tangipahoa	8/21/1979
Carter House	South of Hammond on Happywoods Rd.	Hammond	8/11/1982
Cate House	111 N. Magnolia St.	Hammond	5/20/1998
Downtown Amite Historic District	Roughly along Central Ave., Oak St., and Mulberry St.	Amite	3/19/1998
Dykes Log Cabin	17250 State Line Rd.	Kentwood	9/12/2002
Episcopal Church of the Incarnation	111 E. Olive St.	Amite	10/8/1980
Epney	Off LA 445	Amite	6/21/1984
Grace Memorial Episcopal Church	100 W. Church St.	Hammond	2/23/1973
Green Shutters	Franklin St.	Tangipahoa	8/11/1982
Greenlawn	200 E. Chestnut St.	Amite	5/31/1980
Hammond High School	500 E. Thomas	Hammond	10/18/1996
Hammond Historic District	Roughly bounded by Magnolia, Robert, Cherry, and Morris Sts. (Cypress St. added 9/14/2002)	Hammond	2/12/1980
Independence Historic District	Roughly bounded by LA 40, 5th St., Anzalone, and E. and W. Railroad Aves.	Independence	10/5/1982
June House	408 E. Coleman Ave.	Hammond	3/31/1983
Kent, Charles Adolph, Sr., House	701 Ave. E	Kentwood	10/10/1985
Loranger Methodist Church	Allman Ave. and Magnolia Blvd.	Loranger	10/5/1982

³⁵ See <<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/experience/naturalheritage/naturalareasregistry/>>

Table 7-4: Historic Resources			
Resource Name	Address	City	Listed
McGehee Hall, Southeastern Louisiana State University	Southeastern Louisiana University	Hammond	1/18/1985
McGehee House	1106 S. Holly St.	Hammond	11/2/1982
Mount's Villa	Off LA 22	Ponchatoula	1/31/1985
Nesom, G.W., House	50023 LA 51 N	Tickfaw	8/29/1997
Nichols House	2 mi. W. of Ponchatoula on LA 22	Ponchatoula	5/31/1980
Oaks Hotel	SW Railroad Ave.	Hammond	12/9/1979
Pass Machac Light	West end of Lake Pontchartrain	Ponchatoula	7/9/1986
Ponchatoula Commercial Historic District	Roughly bounded by 5th, 7th, Hickory and Oak Sts.	Ponchatoula	10/5/1982
Reed Farmstead Log Dependencies	LA 445	Husser	1/21/1993
Stevenson House	113 S. Pine	Hammond	11/17/1982
Tangipahoa Parish Training School Dormitory	Off LA 38	Kentwood	7/27/1979
Tangipahoa School	Jct. of Jackson and Tarpley Sts.	Tangipahoa	8/1/2003
Zemurray Gardens Lodge Complex	LA 40 (boundary increase 7/18/1985)	Loranger	10/3/1983

13.0 | Historic Resources: Goals and Recommendations

13.0.1 | Goal: Identify and protect historic resources in the Parish

13.0.2 | Recommendations.

13.0.2.1 | Education. Establish a volunteer board to identify additional historic resources in the unincorporated Parish and provide readily available educational materials to the owners with regard to programs and tax incentives that may be used to protect the resources.

13.0.2.2 | Coordination. With the owners' consent, provide maps of historic resources so that they can be linked to eco- and agro-tourism programs.

Chapter Eight

Economic Development

1.0 | Overview and General Strategies

This Chapter is about how to ensure that the Parish economy expands with the growth of its population so that people and families can improve their quality of life and so that children have an opportunity to build a future for themselves in the Parish. The first part of this Chapter summarizes the strategic direction for economic development. The second part, beginning on page 24, makes recommendations with respect to specific industries and the Megasite.

“Anyone who believes exponential growth can go on forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist.”

~ Kenneth Boulding

1.0.1 | “Keep it Green.” Tangipahoa Parish’s agricultural, forestry, and resource-based heritage is the key to its cherished rural character. To maintain that character against the pressure of non-agricultural residential development will require support for -- and diversification of -- the Parish’s agricultural and resource-based pursuits. In other words, the highly visible, “green” component of the economy must be strengthened and sustained.

1.0.2 | Diversify. Trends in agricultural employment are not likely to reverse themselves. Indeed, the output per agricultural worker in 2008 far exceeds the output per worker in 1948. Although specialized agricultural pursuits, like nurseries, are relatively labor-intensive, most others are not. Consequently, the Parish must nurture and attract other opportunities for residents who do not directly participate in the agricultural economy.

1.0.3 | Set the Stage for Opportunity. As the Parish grows, jobs must be created for the people who enter the labor force. Likewise, people need the opportunity to advance to more skilled work for better pay. If these two factors are not present, children will leave in search of employment and opportunity in other locations. If this happens, the local economy will likely suffer.

Economic opportunity is just one part of the equation. Social opportunity is also important. It is relatively easy for young people to move in search of a better quality of life, a more diverse population, more excitement, and new and different experiences. Some eventually come back. Many do not.

Clearly, the Parish should not try to be everything to everyone. However, its assets could be positioned to attract a population with more diverse backgrounds and interests. Greater diversity may create some “growing pains” as people get used to each other, but it is likely to attract greater economic opportunity for everyone.

1.0.4 | Keep Growth Compact. It is very important that the Parish’s new residents live in and near the municipalities. If large numbers of new residents are dispersed into the countryside, they will almost certainly make life more difficult for the Parish’s community of farmers and foresters, whose hard work is the key to preserving the essential character of the Parish. It will also disperse economic energy.

1.0.5 | Grow from Within. In sum, there is no “magic bullet” that will solve the economic development challenges of the Parish, and the Parish should not rely heavily on the long-shot of attracting a big company to provide a fast boost to the Parish economy. Instead, the Parish should focus on the very real magic it already has -- in the ingenuity, spirit, and work ethic of the Parish residents.

Indeed, downtown Hammond and Ponchatoula are vibrant places that are built on the sweat and elbow grease of Parish residents -- not the investment of corporate money from somewhere else. As a result, these places are the “real deal” -- unique centers of gravity that attract people from all over the region. They are also a highly visible reminder of how a series of small successes can bring big changes.

1.0.6 | Keep Eyes Open for Outside Opportunities. The Parish should not abandon all efforts to attract large employers that are well-suited to do business in the region. However, those efforts should be undertaken in the context of a larger strategy that is centered on developing and growing local business. Priority should be given to agricultural pursuits and supporting industries that keep farms in production. Thoroughbreds and recreational horses, nurseries, value-added food products, alpacas, ostriches, methane digesters, and, ultimately, biofuels crops (such as switchgrass) and related support and processing industries are just a few of the potential opportunities for agricultural diversification.

1.1 | Context

1.1.1 | Regional Context. Many rural areas around the country have experienced a dramatic economic decline as agriculture and forestry employment has declined. This, in turn, can cause an overall decline in consumer spending and a shrinking of the local economy. Some parts of the Parish have been affected by this phenomenon.

However, the Parish’s regional context, with the more urbanized and diverse economy in the area of Hammond (including Southeastern Louisiana University), the relatively close proximity to New Orleans and Baton Rouge, and the presence of the intersection of I-12 and I-55, have provided a back-stop for the local economy. In short, over time, many agricultural and forestry workers have found employment in other industries in the region.

The trend away from agriculture and forestry as a major employer is consistent with other parts of the country, but is, nonetheless, striking. Agriculture and forestry jobs accounted for more than half of Tangipahoa Parish’s total employment in 1940. By 1970, employment in these industries was closer to nine percent of overall Parish employment. In 2000, the figure fell to just over one percent. **Table 8-1, Agricultural Versus Nonagricultural Employment,** shows the Parish-wide employment figures from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 8-1:
Agricultural Versus Nonagricultural Employment

Year	1940	1970	2000
Total Employment	14,795	21,229	40,689
Agriculture and Forestry	7,591	1,935	462
Nonagricultural	7,204	19,294	40,227

1.1.2 | National and International Context. There are national trends that form the larger context for developing an economic development strategy:

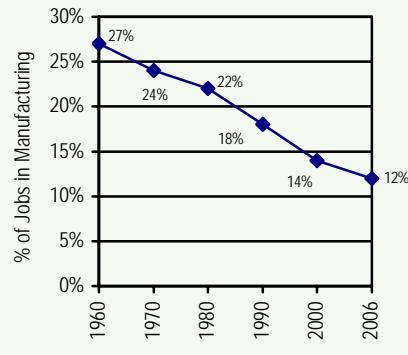
- ◆ The manufacturing-based economy of the 1900s has transitioned to a largely service-based economy.
- In 1960, 27 percent of the U.S. labor force worked in the manufacturing sector. That percentage declined to 12 percent in 2006 (the last year for which data are available). In fact, in absolute numbers, more than one million fewer people worked in the U.S. manufacturing sector in 2006 than in 1960.
- According to the Economic Policy Institute, since 1997, the U.S. trade deficit with China has resulted in approximately 2,166,000 U.S. job opportunities being lost from the U.S. economy (1.8 million of them since 2001). Seventy-five percent of these lost job opportunities were in manufacturing. The State of Louisiana accounts for an estimated 11,300 of the total jobs lost to China since 2001.¹
- In Tangipahoa Parish, the 2006 Census estimates estimate that nine percent of the workforce is employed in manufacturing, down from 10.9 percent in 2000. The proportion of the workforce in manufacturing is slightly lower in Tangipahoa Parish than the United States as a whole.
- ◆ A somewhat related phenomenon is affecting agriculture nationally. An aging population of farmers, many without firm succession plans, is combining with a long-term trend to larger and larger farms.
- Tangipahoa Parish has an aging population of farmers, but appears to buck the national trend regarding farm size.
- Almost all of the farms in the Parish are still family farms.
- ◆ Existing small businesses are the most significant sources of jobs.²

For the last three decades the nation's economy has been undergoing a profound change. In the 1960s and 1970s, a relatively large percentage of the workforce was employed in industries that produced a manufactured product. In general, they were fairly well paid for this work. As **Figure 8-1, U.S. Manufacturing Employment Since 1960**, shows, there has been a precipitous decline in the national industrial workforce.

¹ Scott, Robert E. COSTLY TRADE WITH CHINA: MILLIONS OF U.S. JOBS DISPLACED WITH NET JOB LOSS IN EVERY STATE. (Economic Policy Institute Briefing Paper #188, revised Oct. 9, 2007). Data were not available at the Parish level.

² Nationally, more than 99 percent of all businesses are small, with an average of one location and 10 employees. In 2004, the most recent year for which firm size data are available, small firms of less than 500 employees accounted for all net new jobs. Small firms employed just over half of the private sector workforce and generated more than half of the nonfarm gross domestic product. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, THE SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMY FOR DATA YEAR 2006: A REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT, at 1.

**Figure 8-1, U.S.
Manufacturing
Employment Since 1960**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The service sector has grown substantially, but the employment growth in the service sector has not been an even trade with the decline of the manufacturing sector. That is so because service sector jobs generally pay lower wages and have fewer benefits than skilled industrial jobs. This is an emerging problem, because so much of what is consumed now comes from abroad, while the U.S. workforce has less and less money to spend on manufactured goods.

Cheap energy and a generally strong dollar have kept the price of imported goods low for much of the last 40 years. However, energy is not cheap anymore (therefore increasing the cost of producing and distributing products), and the dollar has fallen precipitously against foreign currencies in recent years (and, consequently, it has less value to foreign manufacturers than it used to). Both trends suggest that imported goods (most of what we buy) are soon going to be getting more expensive.

While increasing prices on imported goods may cause some hardship in the short run, it may ultimately be an opportunity to bring some manufacturing jobs back to the U.S. from abroad. Still, while many economic development bodies focus much of their attention on the attraction of large new plants (automobile plants, for example), it should be recognized that the most important source of new jobs in the economy will almost certainly continue to be existing small businesses and business start-ups.

1.2 | Economy of Tangipahoa Parish

The economy of the Parish can be divided into two main categories: basic industries and other sectors. Basic industries are those that grow, harvest, or mine basic goods -- food, fiber, or minerals. All the other sectors sell, manufacture, ship, or provide other services. Tangipahoa Parish continues to have a number of basic industries that occupy a large part of the Parish's land area.

“Burn down our cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country.

~ Williams Jennings Bryan (1860-1925)

Yet, because of automation, it is unlikely that the economic future of the Parish will be *directly* tied to employment in the farm and forestry industries. The employment demands of farming and forestry are significantly lower than they were 60 to 70 years ago. But, **the preservation of the special character and quality of life of the Parish fundamentally depends upon the sustainability and profitability of its farming and forestry operations.** And the special character and quality of life of the Parish are two essential keys to its economic future.

1.2.1 | Basic Industries. Agricultural and forestry employment has been steadily declining, consistent with national trends. See **Table 8-1, Agricultural Versus Nonagricultural Employment.** Indeed, agriculture,

forestry, and mining employed an estimated workforce of only 228 people in 2006. Yet, they occupied up to 75 percent of the Parish's land area, preserving its rural character and demanding little in the way of Parish services.³

The U.S.D.A. Census of Agriculture counted 1,065 farms in Tangipahoa Parish in 2002. Of those, 530 (just under 50 percent) had a land area of less than 50 acres. These farms do not generally provide the exclusive means of support for the families that operate them -- only 51 percent of the farmer operators listed agriculture as their primary occupation in 2002. This is not particularly surprising in light of the fact that only 25.5 percent of the farms had sales of over \$25,000.

Some in the agriculture and forestry sectors are doing fairly well. However, many farmers are struggling. Their struggle is the Parish's struggle. That is so because, in the simplest of terms, the best way to keep the Parish's agriculture (and forestry) operations from being converted to other uses is to help them to stay profitable -- to produce a reasonable return for the investment of hard work, money, and risk that they require. This is a dynamic proposition -- even if today's farmers and foresters are satisfied with their income and lifestyle, younger generations may be enticed to seek their fortunes elsewhere if it looks like their hard work and risk tolerance will produce better returns in another industry.

Mining has increased dramatically in the last two years, in part because of the effect of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on the pace of construction in the Parish. For these businesses, the resource base and proximity to their customers are critical. Preserving the rural character of the Parish will help to ensure that the resources for these basic industries will not be lost.

Two other basic industries are emerging in the Parish: horse breeding and nurseries. These industries provide additional opportunities to keep the countryside "green." They also provide potential for the development of supporting businesses including builders, veterinarians, trainers, transportation, supplies, and more.

1.2.2 | Other Sectors. Although basic industries are important to the character and heritage of the Parish, the economic reality is that the Parish must look to build its employment base in the other sectors of the economy. Those sectors have higher employment demands and greater opportunity for individual economic advancement, especially for those who enter the labor force with little to invest other than hard work.

Over the past seven years, employment in the Parish has grown an estimated 8.4 percent. In total, an estimated 2,823 employees were added to the employed workforce during this time period. That growth was not even across business sectors. Indeed, one sector in particular -- retail and wholesale -- actually lost employees (down 10 percent from 2000 to 2006), while the transportation and warehousing sectors showed a 183 percent increase. Construction employment, which grew 37 percent, drove the agricultural, mining, construction, and

³ The land area was calculated as the proportion of land classified as agriculture, forest, or mining to the overall land area of the Parish. Of course, not all the forested areas are actually being used for forestry, so the actual proportion of land in these uses is likely to be less than 75 percent.

utilities sector up 32 percent. The rest of the sectors hovered near 10 percent increases. *See Table 8-2, Tangipahoa Parish Employment, 2000 to 2006.*

Table 8-2: Tangipahoa Parish Employment, 2000 to 2006							
Sector	11 21-23 Agriculture, Forestry, Mining, Utilities, Construction	31-33 Manufacturing	42-45 Retail Wholesale Trade	48-49 Transportation and Warehousing	51-56 Information, Finance, Real Estate, Professional, Management, and Administration	60-90 Education, Health Care, Arts, Accommodations, Other Services, Public Administration	All Sectors (Totals)
Average 2000-2006	1,776	2,803	8,039	1,073	3,018	15,748	32,540
Highest Quarter	2,525	3,537	9,323	1,469	2,974	20,226	39,731
2000	1,777	2,720	8,858	543	3,071	16,579	34,013
2001	1,628	2,593	8,431	795	3,388	16,108	33,499
2002	1,405	2,685	7,698	1,087	3,225	14,611	31,727
2003	1,578	2,867	8,072	1,199	3,200	16,115	33,547
2004	1,840	2,425	7,853	1,232	3,540	13,651	31,004
2005	1,852	3,297	7,384	1,231	3,463	14,974	32,920
2006	2,353	3,035	7,975	1,429	3,423	18,198	36,024
Pct. 2006 employment	6.5%	8.3%	21.9%	3.9%	9.4%	50.0%	100.0%
Gain/Loss 2000-2006	577	315	-883	886	310	1,619	2,823
Pct. Change	32.5%	11.6%	-10.0%	163.1%	10.0%	9.8%	8.4%

Figure 8-2, Typical Wal-Mart Distribution Center



Source: www.walmartfacts.com

The increase in transportation and warehousing employment was largely due to the opening of the Wal-Mart warehouse and distribution facility, one of two in the State of Louisiana. *See Figure 8-2, Typical Wal-Mart Distribution Center.* Thus, it is too soon to anticipate significant additional employment in this sector in the coming years. That is so, in part, because the retail and wholesale sectors are closely related to regional population growth, and, therefore, so is the demand for warehouse and distribution services.

Warehousing and transportation is a sector that Hammond and Ponchatoula should seek to attract by making an effort to ensure that there are adequate sites available for these uses at locations near the interstate interchanges. That way, other operations similar to the Wal-Mart distribution center that may be looking for sites in the region can be encouraged to choose Tangipahoa Parish because adequate sites with ready Interstate access are available quickly. Hammond is marketing its business park at the interchange of I-12 and University and, more generally, its five well-lit Interstate interchanges, many of which are located near vacant or underutilized land.

Warehousing and transportation is the sector that immediately stands out with regard to recent employment growth; however, within the various broad sectors, there are a few sub-sectors that have also experienced significant growth. For example, finance and insurance experienced 102 percent growth between 2000 and 2006. During that time, the finance and insurance sub-sector also grew nationally.

Although recent downturns in the housing market may have stalled the employment trends in the finance and insurance sectors temporarily, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics still projects that this sector will grow 13.2 percent nationally between 2006 and 2016.⁴ Perhaps some of the growth in the short term will be in areas of processing refinance loans and workouts for financially stressed borrowers as relief comes in from the federal government and other financial institutions. Either way, as the sector grows nationally, it will likely grow in Tangipahoa Parish, as well.

Professional, scientific, and technical employment grew by 14 percent from 2000 to 2006. This is a sector that the Parish, Southeastern Louisiana University, Louisiana Technical College, and the Parish and municipal economic development entities should, collectively, actively promote. Jobs in the professional, scientific, and technical sector tend to be higher paying than many other sectors and, thus, tend to be very good for the local economy.

Not surprisingly, employment in the real estate category increased between 2000 and 2006. However, significantly tighter credit markets are causing a decline of this sector nationally, which could continue through 2008.⁵ The immediate threat to this part of the employment market in the Parish is underscored by the recent report in the New York Times that the proportion of sub-prime mortgages (loans to people with relatively poor credit or little income or employment documentation) in the Parish is estimated at 32 percent.⁶ This downturn will also affect construction and, with it, mining.

Health care showed a healthy (so to speak) 17 percent employment growth between 2000 and 2006. Health care is an area that is important to promote, because the jobs are generally skilled jobs, and, more importantly, quality health care makes the whole community more attractive for business investment.

Employment in the accommodations and food service sector grew by 25 percent. This sector is a natural for the Parish in terms of servicing transportation workers along the I-12 and I-55 corridors, as well as visitors to Southeastern Louisiana University. The sector can be further encouraged by enhancing tourism and festivals (already popular among the Parish's

⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics. TOMORROW's JOBS. <<http://www.bls.gov/oco/pdf/oco2003.pdf>>

⁵ On January 14, 2008, one major lender, Citigroup, announced up to \$24 billion in write downs for bad mortgages and other credit-related losses. According to CNBC.com, Citigroup plans to cut 17,000 to 24,000 jobs in 2008. Similarly, Merrill Lynch is expected to write down \$12 billion to \$15 billion and shed approximately 800 jobs. According to a Reuters News Service article published January 4, 2008, 20,000 jobs were lost in the United States mortgage industry in the last two months of 2007.

⁶ An interactive map of the proportion of sub-prime mortgages by county across the U.S. is on line at <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2007/11/03/weekinreview/20071103_SUBPRIME_GRAPHIC.htm?adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1200075914-8ILDRSTDke+BJKWKTFJmZg#>

municipalities). However, care is needed with regard to this sector, as many of the jobs are lower wage jobs. As such, these jobs should not be as heavily recruited as jobs in other sectors.

1.3 | The Business of Economic Development

1.3.1 | Generally. Attracting economic development involves hard work in a highly competitive arena. The process generally starts at the state level (some states offer significant assistance in developing new business). However, local governments also often have staff and programs (many communities have several staff members whose sole responsibility is to promote economic development). In most instances, the economic development business is primarily oriented to attracting either totally new facilities or medium to large companies that are seeking to expand or relocate.

One often-used technique for economic development is to offer incentives, usually tax rebates, subsidized financing, or below-market rent on government-owned land. Given the tax structure which limits the funds that are available to the Parish, this approach will probably have limited viability over the time horizon of this plan.

Limited Parish incentives mean that the private sector will likely seek to play a larger role in economic development, generally through Chambers of Commerce. The real estate community also often plays a significant economic development role. So does the electric utility. However, private sector economic development entities, while helpful, have slightly different objectives than public sector entities. For example, the power company wants to supply power to major new customers. A major new customer for the power company could be a great benefit to the Parish, but the benefit is not guaranteed. That is because the power company's interest is not as comprehensive as the Parish's interest, so the company may not ask whether the new customer will be a net asset or net liability to the community.

"We have been blessed with a state that is well positioned to capitalize on global demand for emerging technologies, such as ethanol, nuclear power, solar power, wind power, marine/tidal energy, and fuel cells."

~ Economic Growth Advisory Council, Environment Working Group. FINAL REPORT (January 2008).

1.4 | Parish Competitiveness

1.4.1 | Generally. In setting forth an economic development strategy, it is important to look at the Parish's strengths that make it attractive. But it is also important to recognize and address the Parish's weaknesses. Economic development is a competitive environment, with communities competing against each other to attract business. Businesses (with the exception of retail) are largely free to locate where they want. Retail is driven by "rooftops" (that is, the number of homes in an area). Whether it is a restaurant, dry cleaner, car lot, or big box retailer, all retail businesses locate based on the size of the market and the location of competitors. Accordingly, for retail-oriented uses, if the Parish meets the threshold market conditions, there is little else for the Parish to do, other than ensuring that there is adequate land available for the uses.

On the other hand, manufacturers and office-type employers typically have a range of location options in a fairly broad radius. If both north-south and east-west access is important, they may have several potential locations over a couple hundred miles at interstate interchanges. Other companies may be looking at locations all over the country (as was the case when Boeing chose Chicago over sites in several other states for their international headquarters).

As the Parish assesses its strengths and weaknesses, it should do so with an eye toward enhancing (and guarding against erosion of) its strengths and eliminating its weaknesses.

1.4.2 | Environment. Historically, natural resources were the basis of the Parish's economy. The resource-based rural economy and the centralized rail line drove a compact development pattern in the Parish's historic cities and towns. Although cheap transportation shaped a more sprawling development pattern from the mid-20th to early 21st century, many expect that market forces (principally expensive transportation) will push people back into developed areas. This will make the Parish's historic cities (which were designed for multimodal access) even more attractive.

Today, the relationship between economic development and the environment is different than it was in the 19th and early 20th centuries, but it is nonetheless very important. The former model is based simply on using the land to produce raw materials for products. Now, another dimension is taking shape. That is, it is increasingly obvious that a sustainable, high-quality potable water supply, clean air, clean soil, and healthy plants and animals are also major links between the environment and economic development. Tangipahoa Parish's forests, sustainably harvested, can also remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

Over the long term, current modeling shows that Louisiana will be one of relatively few places that will be "wetter" as a result of global climate change. Good stewardship of the Parish's watersheds will help protect this resource, which will have increasing value as other areas tend to dry out. Over the mid-term, many of rural lands of the Parish are suitable for growing crops that can be used to make biofuels. Recent research shows that some biofuels technologies may actually reduce the amount of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere ("carbon negative"). This is just one example of a situation where resource-based industry and environmental protection can go hand-in-hand.

Finally, due to high fuel costs, there is an increasing movement in many regions of the country to buy agricultural products that are grown or raised nearby. Rural areas of the Parish can and do supply a variety of crops, products, and livestock to meet this market in the nearby cities and towns.

1.4.3 | Transportation. Regional and interstate transportation is one of the Parish's strong points, with both north-south (I-55) and east-west (I-12) interstate highways and a major north-south rail line (Canadian National) which is also an Amtrak passenger train route. These (especially the interstates) have been major elements in the growth of southern Tangipahoa Parish. Indeed, it is easy to see that the pattern of growth in the Parish since

1970 has largely been determined by the two Interstates. It is a pattern that is similar to the way that development occurred in the Parish after the railroad connected to New Orleans.

The creation of an additional east-west road that can carry regional intrastate traffic would obviously enhance regional mobility through the Parish, but that mobility could come with significant cost to the character and agricultural function of the northern part of the Parish. Specifically, the proposed improvement to Route 10 in the northern part of the Parish (also known as Zachary Taylor Parkway, or "ZTP") would strengthen the transportation situation by providing a second major regional east-west corridor. However:

- ◆ There is some apparent momentum, but no firm commitment or funding source to build this road; and
- ◆ The road would put intense pressure on the northern areas of the Parish to develop with nonagricultural uses, **a result that is contrary to a key objective of this Plan.**

As such, if ZTP is ultimately funded and constructed across the Parish, the Parish should take early steps to mitigate the effects on its northern areas (especially the northeastern areas):

- ◆ First, the Parish should adopt and stand by zoning regulations that are protective of the farming and forestry operations that are there now.
- ◆ Second, if ZTP reaches a stage of committed funding, the Parish should identify strategic locations for providing access across the parkway for the use of farming and forestry operations and adopt a map of those areas as an amendment to this plan. Then the Parish should assert its right under State law to have its plan considered when ZTP is designed.⁷

If ZTP is constructed across the Parish, there will be increased demand for an alternative to I-55 for north-south travel from Port Manchac to Kentwood. Because Route 51 runs through the downtowns of every municipality in the Parish, its function is largely that of a collector or minor arterial (*see Chapter 6, Transportation*, for further discussion about street classification).

In the future, the Canadian National railroad corridor could offer relief from dependence on I-55. It has great potential to provide transit service for all the Parish towns and cities because all of them were located along the railroad in the 1800s. The railroad could be

⁷ Section 33:109, Louisiana Revised Statutes, *Legal Status of Official Plan*, might allow for Planning Commission review of ZTP construction: "if the public way . . . is one the authorization or financing of which does not . . . fall within the province of the local legislative body, then the submission to a planning commission shall be by the board, commission, or body having such jurisdiction, and a planning commission's disapproval may be overruled by such board, commission, or body by a vote of not less than two-thirds of its membership." Section 33:109.1, Louisiana Revised Statutes, *Relationship Between Local Master Plans and the Plans of the State and Other Political Subdivisions*, requires at the very least that this plan be considered: "Whenever a . . . planning commission has adopted a master plan, state agencies and departments shall consider such adopted master plan before undertaking any activity or action which would affect the adopted elements of the master plan."

improved for use by commuter rail that ties the various communities together, providing an effective way for people to get to work in the Parish as fuel costs rise.

Careful planning would be needed for such improvements, and they are likely a long way off, but concentrating higher density residential development in this corridor, along with employment centers, could vastly improve the potential to attract good employers. It would also keep development compact, cutting down on the need for services. Although current economic conditions would not support commuter rail, the provision of commuter rail service (at least within the Parish) in the future should be a long-term goal for the Parish. An interim step could be taken by providing fixed-route, inter-City bus service along Highway 51 and Highway 51 Business Route.

1.4.4 | Quality of Life. The Parish has two things of great importance with regard to quality of life. The rural areas of the Parish are very attractive as a place to live, and the Parish commitment to preserve its rural character will continue to provide an outstanding living environment to those who are attracted to a rural landscape. The two most populated cities, Hammond and Ponchatoula, have both worked to provide downtown environments that are exciting places to shop and eat. This work should continue, along with efforts to revive residential areas near the downtowns, to strengthen these centers and to redevelop vacant and underutilized properties in and near the downtowns with mixed-use products that reinforce the downtown areas.

The highway corridors into the downtowns and near interstate interchanges should have additional design controls, as these areas are poor entries to the downtowns. Indeed, they exhibit none of the quality and attractiveness of the downtown and historic residential areas. Many of the historic residential areas have tree-lined streets, homes on generously-sized lots, and exceptional character.

Upgrading the commercial corridors is important because attractive residential communities with quality downtowns are a significant element in attracting businesses and entrepreneurs to the Parish. Executives tend to look for communities that have strong character and identity. All the Parish's municipalities should evaluate their community character and take steps to upgrade that character to become more attractive to new businesses.

To this end, the Parish should encourage its municipalities to cooperate with each other with regard to creating land development regulations that are easy to use and have consistent language and format. A cohesive vocabulary and format for land development regulation in the Parish (not to be confused with consistent substantive regulations among the municipalities -- a program which is not recommended) will help business people choose where to locate within the Parish by allowing them to make easy comparisons among municipal regulations to find the best "fit."

1.4.5 | K-12 Schools. The quality of K-12 schools is an important element in attracting businesses. Often, families with the resources to start new businesses seek locations with notable schools. Moreover, education is a key for having a base of skilled employees.

In this context, although there are areas in which residents claim to have the best schools in the region, the performance of the Tangipahoa Parish schools in terms of their overall statewide ranking is a problem. For people from outside the community who have resources to invest, reputation and perception have the same status as reality.

That is, if the readily available numbers (which are accessible from a distance over the Internet) do not look "good," the Parish will not often get the chance to answer a potential new business owner's deeper questions about the qualitative aspects of the school system (e.g., students that have discipline, values, a strong work ethic, and good behavior, development of talents that do not show up on standardized tests, and so forth). In this light, the data show that, overall, the district is a modest 33rd out of 68 districts in the State of Louisiana. Moreover, most of the Parish schools are ranked below the 50th percentile statewide.

Although the presence of the Louisiana Technical College – Hammond campus is quite helpful in preparing people for jobs, if the Parish wants to increase its attractiveness to high quality businesses, it must improve the quality (and therefore, reputation) of its K-12 schools and send more of its children to college or technical school. That way, the numbers would show a larger pool of "skilled" employees at all levels. Children of the Parish would also have more opportunity to learn skills that will help them to start and run businesses.

That is not to say that there is no other way to learn job skills than school. Indeed, some will go through high school, college, and advanced degrees and learn little in the way of useful job skills. Others will drop out of school and earn millions. However, the general rule is beyond debate -- more educational attainment statistically means more income. Not surprisingly, employers who offer higher paying jobs typically only interview those who have relatively high levels of education.

Table 8-3, Educational Attainment, shows educational attainment in Tangipahoa, Louisiana, nearby states, and the United States as a whole. Tangipahoa Parish is below all the state and national averages. As to the surrounding states, only Mississippi has lower educational attainment numbers than Louisiana.

Table 8-3: Educational Attainment							
Education	Tangipahoa Parish	Louisiana	Texas	Mississippi	Alabama	Georgia	United States
Bachelors degree or more	16.3%	18.7%	23.2%	16.9%	19.0%	24.3%	24.4%
High School graduate	71.5%	74.8%	75.7%	72.9%	72.5%	78.6%	80.4%

This is a major hurdle to overcome. For the Parish to be more competitive for good jobs, it needs to significantly improve its school system in order to turn out higher-achieving students to the Parish workforce. This is particularly important because education is playing an increasing role in economic development as industrial jobs are being sent off shore to countries with low wage scales. Many good jobs for which workers could historically train "on-the-job" have simply left the country. The "middle" is increasingly squeezed, and what

remains are the lowest paid service jobs and jobs that require high-level skill sets and education. If the Parish cannot provide the workforce at the higher end of the pay scale, it will find itself able to attract and develop primarily the lowest paying jobs that demand little in the way of skills.

The good news is that the hard work that overcoming these hurdles will take is already underway. For example, Southeastern Louisiana University and the Tangipahoa Parish School District are working together in many ways:

- ◆ The School District operates the very successful lab school at the University.
- ◆ University students in teaching majors must complete one semester of student teaching in order to graduate. Of the May, 2008 graduating class (96 students expected to graduate), nearly half are student teachers in Tangipahoa Parish.
- ◆ In 2006, the School District began implementation of a magnet school program, which started in one school from pre-kindergarten to third grade, and has already been extended to two schools and expanded to also include fourth grade. Students from the University are training teachers to screen students for the programs; professors are monitoring the magnet program; and the business community is very supportive.
- ◆ The University and the School District have an innovative middle-school counseling program that is a model for other communities.
- ◆ The University is working on establishing a professional development center for educators, to be more proactive about meeting training needs.
- ◆ The University is working with the School District using a Wallace Foundation grant to identify and train future educational leaders (principals) to ensure that succession of school leadership maintains and improves educational quality. This very successful program has received national recognition.
- ◆ The School District and the University have open discussions regarding how to improve educational quality, and the support of the business community is solid.

All of that said, this Plan recognizes that Parish government does not control the schools. However, to the extent that the Parish government can also get involved to work with the schools to achieve the objective of improving education, it should do so. For example:

- ◆ Parish government may be able to help the school board save money through joint purchasing arrangements or joint fleet management. It may also be able help the school board save money by concentrating residential development to reduce busing costs. Money the school board saves on basic operations and transportation could be used to provide better opportunities to students.
- ◆ Parish government may be able to assist in the creation and implementation of innovative educational programs.

For example, in Loveland, Colorado, the local high school combined its construction and mathematics courses in an innovative, contextualized model for teaching. Since construction is a major industry in and around Loveland, the program attracted many sponsors. The program produces graduates who have solid math skills and a foundation in green building techniques, construction, and leadership/employability skills. The Parish could work with other agencies to create similar programs to link biology classes to farming or environmental protection; physical science to watershed management; and so forth. Such an effort could be dovetailed into the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's ("LDEQ") anticipated workforce development program.⁸

Summer programs that keep middle and high school students busy and expose them to a variety of potential career fields are also recommended. The School District should work with the University and Technical College to develop programs that provide "hands-on" academic experiences in a collegiate environment. For example, for several years, Florida Atlantic University held a summer program called "Technology Connection," in which middle and high-school students would spend a week on campus learning about engineering. Students were engaged with creative problem solving exercises, design contests, and other activities. Their schoolteachers were also trained as a part of the program to use these innovative activities in the classroom.

Such summer programs (and related year-round activities) are particularly important in the Parish because many of the most disadvantaged children have little exposure to potential careers other than the sports that they see on television or the job that their mother or father has. Anecdotally, professional sports and nursing were the two most common responses to one community leader when he asked disadvantaged young people, "what do you want to be when you grow up?" While professional sports can be a great career, it is a field that is only open to a tiny fraction of the population, so such aspirations are easily frustrated. Programs should be developed to enhance exposure to a variety of careers and career paths, financial management skills, and entrepreneurial skills. Junior Achievement is one example of an organization that may be a source of ideas and programming.

1.4.6 | Colleges and Universities. The presence of the Southeastern Louisiana University and Louisiana Technical College – Hammond are a real plus as they provide:

- ◆ A quality source of professional and technical employees and continuing education opportunities;
- ◆ Enriched educational offerings;
- ◆ A larger client base for restaurants and shops than would otherwise be present in towns of this size; and
- ◆ Cultural opportunities into the area that would otherwise not be present.

⁸ LDEQ is working on a workforce development program to address its challenges in attracting and maintaining qualified personnel.

Southeastern Louisiana University is also home to the Small Business Development Center, which, since 2002, has:

- ◆ Assisted 125 start-ups or expansions with capital (average one every two weeks).
- ◆ Helped secure over \$8.3 million in loans and equity capital raised.
- ◆ Obtained funding for 78 percent of its projects.
- ◆ Created or retained 434 jobs.
- ◆ Trained over 2,000 businesses and staff throughout the Northshore.

The University and Technical College are important to the community in building the general retail economy, but also in providing activities that make the community more competitive in seeking new employers. The City and Parish need to encourage the creation of new jobs that can employ graduates and attempt to create new jobs based on the skills of faculty and students.

The Parish should also work with the University to find ways to develop University research in social science, natural science/ecology, and technology into business opportunities. One area in which University involvement would be particularly beneficial is the development of biofuels technologies. The Parish should support the development of a biofuels research center and related academic courses at Southeastern Louisiana University.

Finally, as described in Section 1.4.5, the University and Technical College should increase their outreach into the community in terms of exposing middle and high school students to college programs and career options. Summer camps; "hands-on," participatory exercises led by college professors in K-12 classrooms; field trips are a few examples of how this connection could be made.

1.4.7 | Other Cultural and Recreational Activities. In addition to cultural opportunities offered by the College and University, many of the Parish's municipalities have annual festivals that draw in tourists and celebrate the communities' heritage:

- ◆ Hammond has Fanfare, a month-long event that has a multi-million dollar impact on the local economy;
- ◆ Ponchatoula has the Strawberry Festival;
- ◆ Independence has the Independence Italian Festival; and
- ◆ Amite has the Oyster Festival.
- ◆ Kentwood has the Dairy Festival.

The Parish has large areas of state parks, but there are not many attractions in these facilities. Creating a major canoe and kayak trail and experience on the Tangipahoa River would be a significant recreational asset that would not only contribute to the Parish's quality of life, but also could attract additional tourism.

1.5 | Parish Competitiveness: Goals and Recommendations

1.5.1 | Goal: Improve the competitiveness of the Parish as a place for economic development.

1.5.2. | Recommendations.

1.5.2.1 | Ensure an adequate and readily available supply of land in and near municipalities for commercial development. However, in order to ensure a healthy retail market, the Parish and its municipalities should be cautious about creating an over-supply of retail land by zoning too much land for commercial development. When an area is “over-retailed,” the quality and character of the retail development tends to decline.

1.5.2.2 | Protect the agricultural and forestry industries in the northeastern part of the Parish from the pressures that could come if Zachary Taylor Parkway is funded and constructed. Zachary Taylor Parkway has some potential to provide benefits to the Parish, but if the project is going to be completed across the Parish, the Parish should adopt protective zoning to protect the rural areas in the northeastern area from nonagricultural development and to ensure cross-access for northeastern area farmers and foresters.

1.5.2.3 | Plan for commuter rail along the CN tracks. Although the CN tracks are unlikely to provide commuter rail in the near future, the Parish should encourage development that would ultimately support commuter rail. Transit-oriented development patterns have the added benefit of efficient, compact, walkable forms, which have many benefits (discussed elsewhere in this Plan) even when rail transit is not yet available.

1.5.2.4 | Encourage municipalities to adopt regulations to upgrade the character of commercial corridors and interstate interchanges. The Parish should encourage its municipalities to adopt regulations to reduce sign clutter and improve landscaping within commercial corridors and interstate interchanges in order to attract higher-quality development.

1.5.2.5 | Encourage municipalities to develop a common language and form for land development regulations. The Parish should encourage its municipalities to work together on establishing a common vocabulary for rules that regulate the use and development of land and a common format for land development regulations. This does not mean the rules should be the same in all communities. It only means that the rules should use similar words and similar organization so that the differences can be readily identified and so that developers who work in one community can easily work in another.

1.5.2.6 | Collaborate with the school board to save money on operations and transportation. Although the Parish government does not control school board expenditures, if it can help the school board save money on non-educational expenses, then the opportunity exists for the school board to reallocate that money to improve opportunities for students.

1.5.2.7 | Collaborate with the school district and others to develop innovative new programs to enhance academic performance and career skills. The Parish should work with the school district and public and private sector entities to develop innovative programs that combine core curriculum subjects with practical applications.

1.5.2.8 | Collaborate with the school district, the technical college, the University, the business community, and civic organizations to create "hands-on" opportunities for children to explore career options and pathways to college. The Parish should take steps to encourage its academic institutions at all levels to work towards showing more students the advantages of a college or technical education and showing them the path to get there. Additionally, the Parish should encourage these groups to create programs to expose children to a variety of career options.

1.5.2.8 | Maintain a close relationship with the University. The Parish should encourage the creation of new jobs and businesses that use the talents of the faculty and students of Southeastern Louisiana University. The Parish should also work closely with the University to use the talents of faculty and students to conduct studies and specific planning exercises for the benefit of the Parish. Such relationships provide excellent benefits for both the Parish and the University.

1.5.2.9 | Identify locations for developing a canoe/kayak trail on the Tangipahoa River. The Parish has few regional parks that are not state or private facilities. One of the things that residents brought up during the Citizens' Congress meetings was the desire for more access to the Tangipahoa River. The Parish should identify appropriate locations for access to the river and develop a canoe/kayak trail. This will promote "eco-tourism," as well as provide desired recreational opportunities for Parish residents.

1.6. | Good and Bad Business

1.6.1 | Not All Jobs Are Created Equally. Nationally, the tendency of economic development agencies is to seek quantity, that is, the maximum number of jobs, over quality, that is, the nature of the jobs. The theory is that the more jobs that are attracted, the greater the visibility, the greater the success. However, not all jobs are equal. Indeed, there is a huge difference between minimum or low-wage jobs and skilled jobs in terms of their impact on the community.

Minimum wage jobs usually result in a net loss for the Parish and municipalities (the only exception is where there is a clear path -- and a reasonable chance -- for upward mobility). Families who rely on these jobs must spend a major portion of their income on housing, transportation, and food, and, thus, have little discretionary spending. What money is available tends to be spent at discount stores.

By contrast, higher wage earners have far more discretionary spending. For example, they tend to buy new cars rather than used ones. Generally, they purchase more and dine out more, thus increasing sales taxes and promoting local businesses. They generally spend a lower percentage of their income on housing, more often own their own homes, and pay more in real estate taxes. Still, the sales tax component is far more important than the real

estate tax component. See **Table 8-4, Impact of Increased Home Value on Property Tax.** Thus, the wage scales paid by a business are very important in any community, but more so in Louisiana than in most other states because the Louisiana tax structure does not provide a sound base to support growth.

Table 8-4: Impact of Increased Home Value on Property Tax					
Market Value of Home	Homestead Deduction	Assessed Value of Home	Parish Tax (3.06 mills)	School Board Tax (4.06 mills)	Change in Revenue
\$75,000	\$75,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	-
\$100,000	\$75,000	\$2,500	\$7.65	\$10.15	Base
\$150,000	\$75,000	\$7,500	\$22.95	\$30.45	200%
\$200,000	\$75,000	\$12,500	\$38.25	\$50.75	67%
\$250,000	\$75,000	\$17,500	\$53.55	\$71.05	40%
\$500,000	\$75,000	\$42,500	\$130.05	\$172.55	142%

1.6.2 | Not All “Growth” is Good. After Hurricane Katrina, the Parish had a sudden rush of population growth. Such rapid expansion (generally, growth of more than two percent per year) generally creates a few winners -- particularly those who are involved in the industries that accommodate growth (*e.g.*, real estate professionals, large builders, heavy equipment dealers, retail property owners, and owners of large tracts of land that are sold for development). But almost everyone else loses something.

For example, while business owners may see rapid expansion as an opportunity for more profit, many find themselves even more strained, as rents increase and more competitors move into the area. In many cases, gross revenues increase, but net revenues decline. Similarly, employees may see rapid expansion as a way to bring in more and better jobs. However, rapid expansion also brings in more people to compete for those jobs (driving down wages), as well as higher costs for housing (as competition for housing increases) and other essentials. In short, the opportunities that the community thinks may come with rapid growth may not, in fact, be realized.

Although it is expected that the pace of growth will slow to pre-Katrina levels (less than two percent per year) in the coming years, the illustration above is provided to caution the Parish about getting caught up in the notion that all growth is good. That is, although nearly all new development has an attractive component, some projects will fail to pay their own way over the long term.

Many places that do not carefully consider long-term impacts of expansion experience a vicious cycle where poorly conceived growth is paid for with more growth, which also fails to pay for itself, but on an even larger scale. Then, when local officials seek new revenues to pay for the impacts of the waves of growth, a chorus arises in the community to raise the money from “somebody else,” that is, *even more growth*.

1.6.3 | Paying the Costs of Growth. The sales tax is not adequate to support all the services that new nonagricultural development needs. Therefore, there is a problem with regard to who will provide the services to the new residences. The growth strategy and urban growth

boundary are related strategies for more efficiently using public resources to provide needed services.

The economic development program should be focused, not only on the number of new jobs, but also on:

- ◆ The quality of the jobs; and
- ◆ The business's demand for local goods and services (which keeps money in the local economy).

Higher wage jobs bring greater purchasing power, and greater purchasing power generally means more sales tax revenue. Businesses that buy goods and services locally also have a bigger impact on sales tax revenues. Under the current tax structure, more sales tax revenue is the key to generating more revenue for schools -- a very important consideration for economic development.⁹

1.6.4 | Increasing the “Multiplier.” The “multiplier effect” for a new business, that is, its impact on the local economy through its purchases of local goods and services, is dependent on its business relationships within the community. Businesses need support from accountants and other professionals, suppliers of office materials and furniture and, in some cases, products that they use in assembly or other parts of the firm’s business.

For manufacturing facilities, the best situation is where most of the business's supplies are purchased locally. This keeps a major portion of the wages in the community. If all the parts for a product are shipped in and then merely assembled and shipped out, only a fraction of the product's value will be reflected in local wages. National and international corporations' shareholders are mostly elsewhere, so profits do not show up in local expenditures, whereas a locally owned business's profits stay longer in the local economy.

Encouraging people and businesses to “buy local” should apply to all areas of the local economy, even in ways that are not immediately obvious. For example, energy efficiency helps local businesses keep money in the community. When a customer in Tangipahoa Parish pays their utility bill, the money leaves the Parish right away.¹⁰ Moreover, “a penny saved is a penny earned.” In other words, the net profit of a business is revenues minus expenses, so less expenses means more net profit. More net profit for local businesses means more money that can be spent in the community. The same applies to government. In fact, on January 30, 2008, Governor Jindal signed Executive Order BJ 2008 - 8, *Executive Branch – Green Government*, which requires state agencies to conserve energy and reduce waste.

Some industries also tend to create local niche economies. For example, dairies need supplies, feed, veterinarians, and other services, but a critical mass of dairies is required to

⁹ In the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the School Board collected \$33,195,490 in sales tax revenue.

¹⁰ The Plan recognizes that Entergy, the electric service provider for the Parish, is actively involved in economic development. Therefore, some of the money could eventually come back. However, the multiplier effect of the money spent on inefficiently used power is far less than spending the same money on wages for a local employee or supplies from a local business.

reach economies of scale. Likewise, there are a number of businesses that are attracted to areas with critical masses of horses, including veterinary services, boarding and stables, arenas, equestrian-oriented housing development, and feed and tack stores.

In sum, it is critical to look past the number of jobs created to the quality of the jobs created and to the manner in which a company or industry interacts with the community's other businesses and industries. Some industries are good for the Parish and others will result in losses. As such, proposed new large-scale development should be evaluated using an impact study that looks at the jobs that are created, the salaries, likely firm spending in the community, and services needed by the business and families employed by the business.

1.7 | Good and Bad Business: Goals and Recommendations

1.7.1 | Goal: Promote the creation of "good jobs" that provide a net benefit to the community and an opportunity for worker advancement

1.7.2 | Recommendation.

1.7.2.1 | Require impact studies for major new commercial and industrial development, except in basic industries. The Parish should be very careful not to get stuck in a cycle of growth in which it uses future growth to pay for the deficiencies created by recent growth. Such a cycle will degrade the rural and small-town quality of life that the Parish treasures. As such, the Parish should closely scrutinize major new commercial and industrial development to ensure that it creates meaningful opportunities and promotes the development of other new local businesses.

1.7.3 | Goal: Seek to maximize the multiplier effect of local businesses

1.7.4 | Recommendations.

1.7.4.1 | Encourage people and businesses to "buy local." Buying local products and services keeps money in the local economy and strengthens the community by improving personal and business relationships. The Parish should evaluate its purchases and "buy local" whenever practical and should publicize that effort to encourage people and businesses to do the same.

1.7.4.2 | Encourage critical masses of rural industries, including alternative crops and livestock. Land development regulations should be carefully drafted to ensure that districts do not break up areas in which a critical mass of rural industries exists or is expected to emerge.

1.7.4.3 | Encourage energy efficiency. The Parish should use, and should encourage business owners to use, energy-efficient technologies. For example, compact fluorescent (CF) light bulbs reduce energy consumption for lighting by approximately 75 percent and last 10 times longer than conventional light bulbs. Recent advances in fluorescent technology (and greatly expanded markets) have lowered prices on CF bulbs. One major retailer's web site advertises a six-pack of 26 Watt (100 Watt equivalent) bulbs for \$15.16, or about \$2.53 each.

1.8 | Economic Development Program

The Parish should encourage an economic development program that has the following general characteristics:

1.8.1 | Work with Local Businesses. The first effort should be to work with local businesses to determine their problems and needs and areas where the Parish or its municipalities could do things to facilitate growth of local business. Small- to medium-sized businesses and startup businesses are the best and most promising source of new jobs.

It is often the case that local government can provide relatively inexpensive assistance to these businesses. Things like minor road repairs, solving drainage issues, assistance with State or Federal agencies, improving police patrol, and creating small grant and low-interest revolving loan programs for building upgrades can have very positive effects. The Parish should designate a small business ombudsman (perhaps a person who works with a chamber of commerce or economic development foundation), who should contact Parish businesses on a regular basis. In addition to solving minor problems, this small effort shows community interest and gives the businesses a feeling of being valued.

1.8.2 | Monitor Economic Development. A second major initiative should be to develop an evaluation system that can be used to assess the value of new or expanded employment and to discourage the development of uses that have much higher costs to the community than they bring in revenues (unless there is a compelling non-economic reason to bring the use in that offsets its costs). This should be a program that allows the input of the employer as to jobs, salary ranges, purchasing practices, and other things that are important to determining whether the business will be a net positive or negative. An economic consultant will be needed to develop the program. It should be designed to be kept current and to address both Parish and municipal concerns and locations so that it can be used over time with minimal need to update.

1.8.3 | Improve the Character and Quality of Highly-Visible Locations. While the cities of Hammond and Ponchatoula have been working hard to revitalize their downtowns, no similar effort has been made to make the entryways to these cities attractive. Consequently, the entrances are unattractive and undifferentiated from the entrance to thousands of other communities.¹¹ Signage, lighting, a lack of landscaping, and dated corporate architecture are all blighting influences.

As such, the third major initiative should be to get the business community behind streetscape projects and sign regulations that require the replacement of large unattractive and distracting signs with lower, better looking monument signs. This is an effort that first needs to recognize that there is nothing attractive about the main corridors other than the traffic volume. If a business comes to town to evaluate it as a potential location, the current condition of the municipalities' gateways does nothing to set a positive image for the

¹¹ In fact, when three pictures of sign clutter in the Parish and one picture from Texas were shown together during a Steering Committee meeting in January, 2008, no one at the meeting noticed that one of the pictures was from somewhere else.

municipalities or, for that matter, the Parish. The business community needs to understand this problem, improve existing properties, and support regulations that ensure that new development becomes a community asset.

1.8.4 | Continue to Develop and Coordinate the Databases of Available Sites. The Tangipahoa Parish Economic Development Foundation provides a contact for businesses seeking sites in the Parish. Other entities, such as the Hammond Industrial Development Board, also maintain information about available sites. This Plan recommends that a single database be maintained and accessed by all of the Parish's economic development entities, with map-based web access for interested businesses. Ideally, this should be a collaborative project among the various entities and Southeastern Louisiana University, and should not require government involvement.

1.8.5 | Make Quality Economic Development Easier. The Parish and its municipalities can support the economic development effort by having a streamlined permitting system for new businesses that are evaluated as being beneficial to the Parish in terms of their overall contribution to the economy. In general, the Parish should not spend public dollars chasing businesses, particularly traveling around in pursuit of business. That is because, for the time being, Louisiana is ranked next to last in the nation in terms of its support for economic development.¹² Most of the "Go Zone" incentives (substantial Federal tax incentives and low interest bond financing for investment in areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina) have expired already, and others will soon expire, and, therefore, these incentives will not play a major role during the horizon of this Plan. As such, until the State climate for major economic development investment improves, local efforts will face very difficult odds.

1.8.6 | Seek Support from the Business Community. One of the problems that Tangipahoa Parish (and Louisiana as a whole) faces is a lack funding for local government to provide the services that are taken for granted in other states. The way that local government is financed in Louisiana has created a situation in which Parishes and municipalities must often rely on a host of special service districts to pay for and deliver services. This creates a situation where the Parish cannot afford intensive development, and the municipalities want retail and business development (which generate sales taxes), but not residential development (which demands services, but does not generate much tax revenue).

The fact is that, absent new residential development, retail cannot grow, and there will not be housing for new workers. **Chapter 3, Growth Capacity and Public Facilities**, outlines a growth strategy. If there is to be economic growth in Tangipahoa Parish, then the business community needs to support the strategy outlined in Chapter 3 because it will create a more stable financing mechanism to attract good businesses that are accustomed to receiving top quality services from local government.

¹² Only West Virginia received a "report card" worse than Louisiana. Mississippi had similar general scores to Louisiana. Mississippi, however, scored better than Louisiana on six of the 12 categories on the "report card," while Louisiana scored better than Mississippi on only two categories. Source: Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) 2007 Report Card.

1.9 | Business Development

1.9.1 | Continue to Recruit Major Employers, But Be Cautious About Devoting a Disproportionate Share of Parish Resources to that Recruiting Effort. Economic development is about increasing the attractiveness of the jurisdiction as a place to do business. Communities across the state -- and, indeed, the nation -- are in competition for new jobs. Most states, including Louisiana, have economic development agencies that focus on bringing major new industries or enticing existing business to relocate or expand. Cities and counties in other states often become directly involved in the recruitment of industry to the extent of funding the development of industrial parks with streets and utilities so that they can offer a business a property to begin construction immediately.

The competition is fierce. Ten years ago, it was estimated that 25,000 economic development committees around the country competed for just 500 major plant sitings each year, leaving 98 percent of them (or more) disappointed. Now, the competition has spread even further around the world, reducing every locality's chances at attracting major investment by a single, large company. In short, the Parish should not lose its hope of major, single-user industrial development, but it should not use extensive public resources on the "long shot."

1.9.2 | Focus on Attracting, Retaining, and Developing Small Business. Indeed, since small business provides the vast majority of all jobs in the Parish (only a handful of private employers in the Parish have more than 400 employees), a practical and prudent strategy is to encourage the growth and development of small business. For Tangipahoa Parish, where the central planning objective is preserving rural character, the primary nonagricultural economic development mission -- that is, the effort to create more "good" jobs -- is, generally, to encourage businesses to locate and expand in the Parish's municipalities. For businesses that generate sales taxes, the municipalities and the Parish share a common desire for the businesses to locate in the municipalities because the municipalities and the Parish both get the benefit of the sales tax generated. For businesses that do not generate substantial sales taxes, local government must assume that the jobs created will result in greater spending at area stores.

1.9.3 | What Attracts Business.

- ◆ *A high-quality workforce.* Most businesses are vitally concerned about an available workforce that can provide employees with the skills that the businesses require. In an era of declining industrial employment, the Parish needs to place a premium on the education and skills of its workforce. While some industries that may relocate to Tangipahoa Parish would relocate part of their workforce, it is abundantly clear that a shortage of skilled workers will discourage high tech industries.
- ◆ *Location, location, and location.* Access for trucks, and, in some cases, rail, is very important for the industrial sector, but for service and other sectors, rapid access for employees and shoppers is key.
- ◆ *Timeliness, certainty, and cost.* Another common requirement for new business is a site that is available for immediate construction or lease. Surprisingly, in a number of communities across the nation, there is not a ready supply of land that is available

and has suitable services and infrastructure. The cost of extending services, both in cost and time, is very often critical to the decision to relocate.

- ♦ *Quality of life.* The importance of quality of life is well known to industry, but all too often, it is ignored by public officials. This is very important, particularly for employers that provide high wage jobs. These firms look for a location where their executives want to live.

While executives and businesses often complain about the cost of land, design regulations, or other factors that make the construction of a new building more expensive, they generally want to move into a place where property values are high and improving and where the character and use of neighboring property is predictable. Few businesses want to make a large investment in a new building if the investment can be devalued by a poorly conceived adjoining use.

Zoning is considered a positive element because it offers a means of protecting investments in land. Indeed, one of the nation's most successful industrial parks, the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina, began with very tough development standards imposed by the developer. It immediately attracted high-quality tenants of big national corporations. The quality of the environment or lifestyle extends to schools, parks, cultural activities, shopping, and a variety of other factors that make for a quality living environment.

1.10 | Business Development: Goals and Recommendations

1.10.1 | Goal: Continue to seek major industrial development at the Megasite

1.10.2 | Recommendations.

1.10.2.1 | Continue to work with the Tangipahoa Parish Economic Development Foundation and State economic development agencies to seek a major industrial employer for the Megasite. The Parish should continue to seek major industrial development at the Megasite. However, it should be cautious about devoting a disproportionate share of its business development energy in this area. Moreover, new industries should be evaluated for their costs to the Parish, as well as their benefits for Parish residents.

1.10.3 | Goal: Maintain, attract, and develop businesses in and near municipalities and the Megasite

1.10.4 | Recommendations.

1.10.4.1 | Adopt land development regulations for the urban growth areas that promote business development near existing municipalities. Businesses should generally be located in and near municipalities. Currently, there is no zoning outside of the Cities to create stability and predictability about how land will be used. A zoning code that tells business people the locations where nonagricultural business development is encouraged -- and provides simple rules for the character of

“It may seem paradoxical to hold that a policy of building restriction tends to a fuller utilization of land than a policy of no restriction; but such is undoubtedly the case. The reason lies in the greater safety and security to investment secured by definite resources.”

~ Edward M. Basset

that development -- will help to upgrade the character and quality of business near the municipalities.

1.10.4.2 | Adopt land development regulations that protect farming and forestry and allow a wide range of related businesses on farm property. It is apparent that the Parish's basic industries need protection from encroachment by nonagricultural uses, especially residential subdivisions. Land development regulations should be adopted to protect farmers and foresters from "bad neighbors." Those regulations should maximize the farmers' and foresters' ability to put their land to productive use by allowing farmsteads to be the location of a wide variety of businesses that are consistent with the character of the rural areas.

1.10.4.3 | Encourage farmers and foresters to meet regularly to discuss ways to develop their industries and to hear from others who are using innovative techniques to become more profitable. Many of the Parish's farmers and foresters already know each other. The Plan recommends that the Parish encourage them to meet on a regular basis to discuss ways to develop their industries. The Parish should help by providing space (and coffee) and by bringing in farmers and foresters from elsewhere who are applying creative ideas to make their operations more profitable.

1.10.4.4 | Encourage the work of the Tangipahoa Economic Development Foundation and encourage regular meetings and coordination among Parish economic development entities. The TEDF provides a number of services to businesses, including a database of potential sites for development, a database of assistance programs, and coordinating with local authorities. Other economic development organizations in Tangipahoa Parish include:

- ◆ Louisiana State Department of Economic Development
- ◆ SLU Small Business Development Center
- ◆ Tangipahoa Parish Tourist Commission
- ◆ Entergy Louisiana Economic Development
- ◆ Municipal Chambers of Commerce and Community Development Organizations, including:
 - Kentwood Community Development, Inc.
 - Hammond Chamber of Commerce
 - Hammond Industrial Development Board
 - Hammond Downtown Development District Authority
 - Ponchatoula Chamber of Commerce

2.0 | SPECIFIC ECONOMIC SECTORS

The balance of this Chapter provides recommendations with regard to various economic sectors in the Parish including tourism, agriculture and forestry, mining, and retail.

2.1 | Tourism

Tourism is an important element because it brings in visitors that purchase food, rent rooms, and otherwise bring additional sales to the community. These are imported dollars that do not carry with them the level of service demands that accompany permanent residences.

Tangipahoa Parish has the Tangipahoa Parish Tourist Commission, which is funded by a State Trust Fund.¹³ It provides information for tourists, meeting organizers, and travel writers about the many things to see and do in the Parish. Among the attractions promoted by the Tourism Commission are:

- ◆ Amato's Winery, Independence, a family-owned and operated business specializing in dry, semi-sweet and sweet strawberry wine made from local strawberries.
- ◆ America's Antique City, Ponchatoula, an historic downtown environment that has many antique dealers.
- ◆ Camp Moore Confederate Museum and Cemetery, Tangipahoa, which includes numerous artifacts, documents, and displays that help explain the Civil War and the importance of Camp Moore and the soldier's life during that time.
- ◆ Florida Parishes Arena, Amite, is a multi-purpose facility, designed to host agriculture-related activities, horse shows, livestock shows, craft shows, flea markets, car shows, concerts, rodeos, meetings, company picnics, and any other event that would be accommodated in an open air arena.
- ◆ Freedom Ranch LLC, Independence, is also known as "Little Italy." They raise Huacaya Alpacas, sell a complete line of Alpaca clothing and gifts, and offer custom embroidery and textile printing.
- ◆ Global Wildlife Center, Folsom, is a 900-acre home to many rare, endangered and extinct in the wild animals from all over the world. The Center offers guided wagon tours.
- ◆ Downtown Hammond is alive with activities, restaurants, boutique stores, and apartments. Almost the entire downtown area has been renovated to restore the vigor and vitality of downtown life.
- ◆ The Italian Bakery, Independence, has a wide variety of Italian baked goods, using recipes that have been handed down from generation to generation.

¹³ RS Title 47, Section 302.17. *Disposition of certain collections in Tangipahoa Parish.*

B. The monies in the Tangipahoa Parish Tourist Commission Fund shall be subject to annual appropriations by the legislature. The monies in the fund shall be available exclusively for use by the Tangipahoa Parish Tourist Commission. All unexpended and unencumbered monies in the fund shall be invested by the treasurer in the same manner as the monies in the state general fund, and all interest earned shall be deposited into the state general fund.

- ◆ Kliebert's Alligator and Turtle Farm, Hammond, is dedicated to the preservation of the American Alligator. They have thousands of alligators and have been raising them for nearly two decades. The farm offers tours of the production facilities for the turtles and a bird sanctuary with egrets and herons nesting in trees over the alligator nests.
- ◆ Louisiana Furniture Industry Association, Ponchatoula, features Louisiana's finest builders of signature grade furniture and accessories, as well as fine art from around Louisiana.
- ◆ Maize Quest - Corn Maze, Brunett Farms, Loranger.
- ◆ The Ponchatoula Country Market, Downtown Ponchatoula, is a collection of craftsmen who offer quality items such as quilting, florals, ceramics, wood items, stained glass, dolls, baby items, and collectors' items that includes jewelry, paper, glass, ceramic, metal and cloth. In addition to these crafts, the Country Market also has a wide selection of locally produced jellies, jams, and a variety of sweets.
- ◆ Southern Acres Riding Farm, Loranger, offers western riding through wooded trails along Cooper and Chappel Creek.
- ◆ The Swamp Walk, between Ponchatoula and Manchac, is a primitive boardwalk into the heart of the Joyce Wildlife Management Area Swamp -- one of the largest uninhabited swamps of Louisiana.
- ◆ Taste of Bavaria Bakery and Restaurant, Ponchatoula, is a Bavarian bungalow nestled in the woods and rolling terrain that features a bakery with freshly baked breads and European style pastries and full-service restaurant facilities.

The Parish should also seek to attract people in the emerging niche sector of eco-tourism that involves service. That is, tourists visit natural areas and volunteer to do tasks such as building and maintaining trails, repairing meadows, helping archaeologists, and eradicating non-native vegetation. For example, the Sierra Club organizes "volunteer vacations" all over the country, where participants can see and learn about (from experts) natural areas and then help to restore them in various ways.¹⁴ The Parish should contact the Sierra Club or other groups that run such programs and work with them to establish a "volunteer vacation" program to help remove exotic vegetation from the Tangipahoa River.

2.2 | Tourism: Goals and Recommendations

2.2.1 | Goal: Increase tourism in the Parish

2.2.2 | Recommendations.

2.2.2.1 | Identify additional attractions in the Parish for the Tourist Commission to promote. Many of the Parish's tourist attractions are relatively small. Therefore, a critical

¹⁴ See <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/service.asp>

mass of attractions will help increase their draw. In this regard, the more businesses that the Tourist Commission can promote, the better.

2.2.2.2 | Develop a canoe/kayak trail on the Tangipahoa River. This will promote "eco-tourism," as well as provide desired recreational opportunities for Parish residents and is, therefore, also a recommendation regarding improving the Parish's competitive position for economic development.

2.2.2.3 | If land development regulations are adopted for the rural Parish, ensure that they allow Bed and Breakfast as a use in rural areas. Bed and breakfasts in the countryside provide an alternative use of agricultural land that does not compromise the surrounding character of the community.

2.2.2.4 | Promote the Parish as an agro- and eco-tourism destination. The same abundant natural resources and attractive countryside that contribute to the quality of life of Parish residents make the Parish attractive to tourists. Indeed, more than half of the attractions currently promoted by the Tangipahoa Parish Tourist Commission are agro-tourism or eco-tourism destinations, and there are many others that are not mentioned. Since a growing number of tourists book their trips on-line, the Tangipahoa Parish Tourist Commission should recommend itineraries for agro- and eco-tourists and should step up its efforts to promote on-line booking.

2.3 | Agriculture and Forestry

The agriculture and forestry industries in the Parish are a collection of dairies (especially in the northern part of the Parish), nurseries, horses, crops, tree farms, and others.

2.3.1 | Dairies. Dairying is a family business in Tangipahoa Parish. Indeed, many families have been in the dairy business in Tangipahoa Parish for generations. As of early 2008, the average dairy herd is about 120 cows, mostly Holsteins.

Dairy cows cost about \$2,000 each, and startup costs (land and equipment) are high for new dairies. Moreover, the cost of production is high (for example, feed is expensive, and the land in the Parish is not fertile enough to grow large amounts of feed on site). The high costs and high risks do not correspond to high returns compared to other investments. Consequently, it is extremely unlikely that people will move in from elsewhere to open a new dairy in the Parish. Indeed, most dairy farmers worry that their children will not continue with their family tradition.

To maintain dairies in the Parish over time, the risks and costs must be mitigated so that the returns will entice the next generation to stay in farming. Dairy farmers share information at their cooperative near Kentwood and are generally receptive to new ideas that make their farms more productive or profitable.

One area with some potential is to encourage the development of one or more methane digesters in the northern part of the Parish. Methane digesters are tanks or covered lagoons that process cow manure and other organic material. The methane that is produced can be sold or used to generate electricity on the farm; the solid matter left behind is a valuable soil

amendment; and the liquids become an easily applied fertilizer with plant-available nutrients and low pathogen levels.

At this point, a methane digester may not be a practical investment for an individual farm because they typically need a herd of at least 400 cows to be viable. Yet according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's AgStar program:

Although the majority of systems are still farm owned and operated, using only livestock manure, other approaches are emerging. These include the commingling of high strength organic wastes (e.g., food waste, ag waste, cheese whey) to increase gas production per unit volume of reactor; third party owned/operated systems; centralized systems handling manure from multiple farms; and direct gas sales to customers or gas utilities.

Of these, one or more centralized systems located to efficiently process waste from a critical mass of animals would likely be the most practical solution. Ideally, at least one of the facilities would be located at a facility that produces ethanol or biodiesel, as well.

With outside funding assistance, methane digesters could potentially help reduce operating costs of the participating dairies or provide a source of additional income through sales of methane, electricity, soil, and fertilizer.

Even if the economics of dairying become more favorable, unless the physical needs of the dairies are respected, they will not be able to continue. For example, as cows are moved from one field to another, they must often cross Parish or State roads. As such, the Parish must ensure that development patterns do not cause irreconcilable conflicts between cars and cows.

2.3.2 | Nurseries. In Louisiana and the nation, nursery production of ornamental trees and shrubs is up in recent years. According to the LSU AgCenter, from 1995 to 2003, sales of nursery and greenhouse crops by Louisiana growers (state-wide) increased from about \$105 million to about \$122 million. In the services sector, sales by horticultural services firms (such as landscapers) increased from \$146 million in 1995 to \$266 million in 2001.

The trends suggest that the nursery industry represents a potential opportunity for farmers who are seeking another source of income. In 2005, the LSU AgCenter estimated that Louisiana's green industry was responsible for about \$2.2 billion in gross sales, provided nearly \$1.2 billion in personal income to business owners and employees, and contributed nearly \$1.7 billion to the gross state product. Of course, changing from one type of agriculture to another is not necessarily an easy task, but resources are available to help interested farmers.

Nurseries have another advantage for the rural economy -- they are labor intensive compared to many other agricultural pursuits and also contribute to wholesale, retail, and service jobs. The LSU AgCenter estimated that, state-wide, the "green" industry was the source of approximately 56,700 jobs in 2005.

In previous years, the LSU AgCenter printed a wholesale nursery plant locator list for Tangipahoa, Washington, and St. Tammany Parishes. According to the AgCenter, the effort

resulted in fifteen participating nurseries increasing their sales. The Parish should encourage the placement of a wholesale nursery plant locator on the internet.

2.3.3 | Strawberries and Other Crops. Tangipahoa Parish is by far Louisiana's leader for strawberry production, with 320 acres planted with berries in 2007. Although the number of acres in production is relatively small, the value of the crops is high. In fact, in 2006, statewide strawberry production contributed more than \$13 million to the state's economy. Strawberry growers also usually grow other crops such as tomatoes, bell peppers, eggplant, squash, cucumbers, and cabbage.

Farms that produce strawberries are generally located around Ponchatoula and Hammond. There, even though crop values are high, the value of land for nonagricultural development is also high, and, consequently, many farmers have sold their land for development.

2.3.4 | Bamboo. Bamboo is both decorative and useful. In many parts of the world it is food, animal fodder, the primary construction material and is also used for making a wide variety of useful items. Several species of commercially valuable bamboo will grow in Tangipahoa Parish. By way of example (and not limitation):

- ♦ *Phyllostachys Edulis* (Moso bamboo) is useful for "plyboo" (like plywood), flooring, and paneling; and for blinds, rafters and joists, livestock fodder, strings, paper pulp, and ornamental plantings. It grows in full sun to a height of 75 feet, and withstands cold temperatures to zero degrees Fahrenheit.
- ♦ *Phyllostachys Nigra* (Black bamboo) is used for "plyboo," flooring, and paneling; decorative trim and inlay; furniture; and ornamental plantings. It also grows in full sun, to a height of 30 feet, and withstands the same cold temperatures as Moso bamboo.¹⁵

As illustrated above, bamboo farming and processing could be alternative agricultural and support industries in Tangipahoa Parish.

2.3.5 | Horses. There are several farms in the Parish that raise, train, board, and sell horses. These farms not only provide horses and services that generate value to the farmer, but also could become part of an agro-tourism network (e.g., riding trails, rentals, etc.). In some cases, raising horses may be an alternative or supplement for a transitioning dairy farm. A key advantage is that horse breeding requires a similar skill set to dairying (e.g., large animal husbandry). Additionally, the areas of Tangipahoa Parish that historically have been productive for dairy farms are also good locations for breeding and raising racehorses.¹⁶

According to the American Horse Council:

- ♦ The Louisiana horse industry produces goods and services valued at \$1.6 billion.
- ♦ The national industry has a \$2.4 billion impact on the Louisiana economy when the multiplier effect of spending by industry suppliers and employees is taken into

¹⁵ Source: <http://www.americanbamboo.org>

¹⁶ Interview with Dr. Jay Addison, March 5, 2008.

account. Accounting for off-site spending of spectators would result in an even higher figure.

- ◆ 54,200 Louisianans are involved in the industry as horse owners, service providers, employees, and volunteers. Even more participate as spectators.
- ◆ The Louisiana horse industry directly provides 5,500 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs. Spending by suppliers and employees (in Louisiana and other states) generates additional jobs in Louisiana for a total employment impact of 24,300.
- ◆ There are 164,000 horses in Louisiana, over 70 percent of which are involved in showing and recreation.

Louisiana has four race tracks. State law includes provisions to encourage the racing industry, and a portion of the purses for accredited Louisiana-bred horses taking first, second, or third place at a state track goes to the breeder and stallion owner.¹⁷ Since a breeding mare can be owned by someone other than the person who takes care of it, farmers can get into the industry gradually, provided that the farmers have clients who need someone else to care for and raise their horses.

Whether they are bred for racing or recreation, horses tend to become a center of gravity for other industries. Veterinarians, trainers, feed and tack suppliers, training grounds, arenas, and stables/boarding facilities are just examples of the additional business related to the horse breeding industry. Moreover, recreational riders will likely be attracted to equestrian communities (very low-density housing with large open common areas for riding). These communities can be built in a way that preserves and protects the rural environment over the long term.

2.3.6 | Other Livestock. There is at least one farm in the Parish that raises alpacas. Alpacas are well known for their extraordinary wool. Alpacas may also be an alternative livestock for a transitioning farm. Among the other alternative livestock animals that could potentially be farmed in the Parish are emus or ostriches. These animals are tolerant of weather extremes and are growing in popularity for their lean red meat, leather, feathers, and oil.

2.3.7 | Forestry. The forestry industry is not declining in Tangipahoa Parish. Moreover, every major forest products company in Louisiana has agreed to abide by the recommendations of the Louisiana Forestry Association's Sustainable Forestry Initiative to ensure a continuing sustainable forest harvest. The initiative involves all aspects of forestry, including growing, nurturing and harvesting of trees, soil conservation, air and water quality protection, and wildlife and fish habitat management.

Even with best management practices in place, in some nearby Parishes, regulation that is not sensitive to forestry needs and market timing has virtually shut the industry down. The lesson learned is that the keys to the sustainability of the industry in Tangipahoa Parish are preventing residential encroachment upon forestry lands, maintaining the current

¹⁷ See Section 4:165, Louisiana Revised Statutes (2008).

permitting system (which the Parish and the industry considers to be working well), and, potentially, adding a “farming and forestry bill of rights” to the Parish Code or Charter.

2.4 | Agriculture and Forestry: Goals and Recommendations

2.4.1 | Goal: Protect and support agriculture and forestry

2.4.2 | Recommendations.

2.4.2.1 | Vigorously protect the right to farm. Until recently, the Parish did not have to do anything to protect the right to farm. However, the recent influx of new residents who are not farmers (and likely do not understand the needs of farmers) will almost certainly lead to increasing conflict between homeowners and farmers. The Parish should vigorously protect the right of its farmers to continue farming.

2.4.2.2 | Use land development regulations to protect agriculture and forestry from residential encroachment. It is anticipated that this Plan will be implemented with land development regulations. These regulations should prevent development that would interfere with farming operations. Where development is allowed, it should be forced to provide its own rural amenities, instead of assuming that neighboring property is there to provide views, forests, and so forth.

2.4.2.3 | Use land development regulations to allow for the creation of equestrian communities in the countryside. Recreational and racing horses provide an opportunity for the rural economy in Tangipahoa Parish. Equestrian communities provide a base of customers to encourage a “critical mass” to more fully develop equine-related businesses. Therefore, they should be allowed in the Parish with appropriate standards to ensure that they reinforce the character and function of the rural areas.

2.4.2.4 | Encourage the development of value-added industries to support agriculture and forestry. Industries that use agricultural inputs or that serve agricultural operations are key to supporting the Parish’s farmers and foresters. They also create jobs for the rural economy. As such, these industries should be supported.

2.4.2.5 | Encourage the development of bio-fuels infrastructure. The Parish produces biomass that could be used to make bio-fuels. The Parish should encourage the development of bio-fuels infrastructure by allowing it to locate close to the resources that it processes.

2.4.2.6 | Encourage farmers to diversify. Farming is a relatively risky business, and it is clear that certain segments of the market are declining in Tangipahoa Parish. The Parish should encourage its farmers to diversify and should work with the LSU AgCenter and others to provide information to farmers about economical ways to do so (e.g., alternative livestock, supplementary operations, multiple cropping, etc.).

2.4.2.7 | Designate certain areas for cow crossing and ensure that cows are given priority to cars in those areas. Farmers sometimes need to move their animals across the street to other pastures. Where this practice is prevalent, the Parish has some existing signage to indicate it. However, the Parish could take this a step further and celebrate its heritage with public art

that highlights the cattle crossing and advises people in advance that delays should be expected. The public art would contribute to the agro-tourism theme.

2.4.2.8 | Ensure that any regulations that apply to rural areas allow and encourage a wide variety of agricultural pursuits and supportive industries. Right now, most of the Parish's farmers have other businesses, many of which are located on a farmstead. Land development regulations should not interfere with these businesses, nor should they interfere with the creation of new businesses on the farmstead.

2.4.2.9 | Adopt a "farming and forestry bill of rights," potentially into the City Charter by referendum. Foresters need to occasionally cut, burn, and spray their tree crops – practices that are objectionable to suburban homeowners. The Parish should consider a referendum that integrates a "farming and forestry bill of rights" into the Parish Charter, in order to protect forestry over the long term, before the number of households in the unincorporated Parish increases even more. The text for the "farming and forestry bill of rights" should be developed with full participation of foresters, farmers, and other participants in the rural economy.

2.5 | Mining

Gravel, sand, and clay are mined in Tangipahoa Parish. Most of this activity takes place in the red clay hills, which begin ten to 12 miles north of I-12 and extend north from there. Clay from these sites is delivered to construction sites along the I-12 corridor where it is used to make the soils more suitable for development.

The Parish does not mine enough sand, clay, and gravel for the CN railroad to transport it. The only alternative is to move these products by truck. Consequently, high fuel costs place an economic limit on the distance between mine and construction site. The upshot is that residential development in the southern areas of the Parish must co-exist with mining.

2.6 | Mining: Goals and Recommendations

2.6.1 | Goal: Protect mining in the Parish, but ensure that mined land is transitioned to other uses when the operations are complete

2.6.2 | Recommendations.

2.6.2.1 | Ensure that land development regulations allow for mining of clay, gravel, and sand in areas where these resources exist, close to developing areas. The Parish's mines are an important regional asset for construction and should be allowed to continue to operate, even as nearby areas develop.

2.6.2.2 | Adopt land development regulations that require mine pits to be appropriately graded after mining operations cease, so that they become amenities instead of hazards. Although mining operations should be protected, mines should not become hazards after the operations cease. As such, land development regulations should require appropriate grading after operations cease in order to make the mine an amenity instead of a hazard.

2.7 | Retail

Generally, retail development should follow economic development. That is, good jobs create income and wealth, which fuels retail growth. As such, as far as economic development goes, simply encouraging retail is not a sustainable strategy. However, retail is considered here because: (1) sales tax is the principal source of governmental revenue in the Parish, and (2) retail is a major employer in the Parish.

According to ESRI Business Information Systems, in 2006, 8,845 people were employed in the retail sector, accounting for 24.3 percent of all employees in the Parish. Retail sales in the Parish (including food and drink) were estimated at more than \$1.28 billion in 2006. Estimated retail expenditures of Parish residents were just over \$806.7 million. On the whole, Tangipahoa Parish had a “surplus” of retail and was a net importer of retail dollars from other places. This was good for the Parish budget.

Obviously, because of the hurricanes, 2006 was not a representative year. Indeed, in the six months between July and December of 2006, the Parish Council had collected just over \$8.3 million in sales tax for the 2006-2007 tax year. By comparison, between July and December 2007, the Parish had collected just under \$8.1 million, representing a reduction in sales compared to the same time period during the prior year of \$10.4 million in taxable sales.

Tax year 2007-2008 sales have exceeded pre-hurricane levels. By December 2005, the Parish had collected just under \$7.1 million in sales tax for the 2005-2006 tax year. That means in the six months between July and December 2007, there were approximately \$50 million more in taxable retail sales than during the same period in 2005.

Although the data from 2006 is not indicative of current conditions, it does suggest that most segments of the retail market in the Parish are saturated. However, there are a few parts of the market in which people left the Parish in 2006 to shop elsewhere. These include furniture stores, electronics and appliances stores, and books, periodicals, and music stores.

The available data indicate that much of the retail market is probably saturated. This underscores the point that, with the exception of a few classes of retailers (*e.g.*, electronics and book stores), further development of retail stores in the Parish will largely depend upon increases in the disposable income of Parish residents.

Currently, Hammond is the center of Parish retail. Over the horizon of this Plan, it is expected that retail sales in other municipalities will increase. Because the Parish collects the same sales tax on retail sales inside and outside of its incorporated places, this Plan recommends that retail stores be located principally in municipalities (or near them, in locations where they can be annexed). That way, public benefit can be maximized.

2.8 | Retail: Goals and Recommendations

2.8.1 | Goal: Locate most retail development in or near municipalities

2.8.2 | Recommendation.

2.8.2.1 | *Land development regulations should direct most of the intensive retail development into or near municipalities.* For the most part, municipalities should be the

location for retail uses. Exceptions should be provided to allow for small-scale retail to serve basic needs of residents of relatively dense unincorporated places and to allow farmsteads to be used for a variety of business ventures.

2.9 | The Megasite

The Megasite is a 2,917-acre tract near Fluker, in the path of the conceptual alignment of the Zachary Taylor Parkway. This site is well positioned to capture truck-related industry by having access to both I-55 and Route 10, which provides a major regional east-west highway crossing the Mississippi, while avoiding the congestion in the Baton Rouge area. It is only two miles from the Canadian National rail line, and an extension could potentially be provided to the site. The Megasite is positioned to be attractive for major industrial uses.

From an economic development standpoint, there are serious concerns that need to be addressed to ensure the Megasite becomes a major asset to the Parish. As an employment site, it will not produce much in the way of sales tax revenues. Because it is well north of the primary growth area of the Parish, housing and access will be important issues.

That is so because the vast majority of jobs will be new jobs, and workers will need housing. With energy prices rising, it is important to provide short commutes or alternatives to each worker driving to work in a single occupancy vehicle. Because there is a very long lead time, the Parish should plan for real, relatively intense mixed-use development, where many of the workers can live within an easy and short commute. The owners of the site should join with the Parish in seeking plans to use the CN rail corridor for commuter rail.

The Megasite seems to promise large economic gain at no cost. However, there is no such thing as a “free lunch.” Reliance on the sales tax means that for the Megasite to be beneficial to the Parish, a means of funding all needed infrastructure and services must be in place for the long term. This means the creation of a special service district similar to those proposed in the Urban Growth area.

The special service district will be needed not only for the Megasite employment area, but also to provide a planned community or communities that provide for the new housing and shopping for the workers. There needs to be a plan developed not only for the site, but also for where the workers will live and shop. If the workforce simply scatters over the Parish and its various communities, it is inevitable that the Parish will be forced into a situation where it must make major road improvements to bring the scattered workforce to their jobs, a cost that will not be met by the sales tax revenues generated by the project.

If there is a single taxing district that operates like the one anticipated for growth areas around the municipalities, the potential adverse impacts to the Parish will be limited, and the Megasite will offer an outstanding opportunity for the Parish.

2.10 | The Megasite: Goals and Recommendations

2.10.1 | Goal: Ensure that the Megasite develops in a well-planned manner, providing workforce housing and supporting shops and services

2.10.2 | Recommendations.

2.10.2.1 | *Plan for development of the Megasite with one or more mixed-use communities.*

The Parish should develop a special area plan for the Megasite that includes one or more mixed-use communities to ensure that the Megasite provides for the housing, shopping, and service needs of a large share of its workforce.

2.10.2.2 | *Support the creation of a special district to develop infrastructure for the Megasite when there is committed private development.*

The Parish should support the creation of a special district to develop infrastructure for the Megasite, but should do so only when there are sufficient committed development dollars from the private sector to justify the effort.

Chapter Nine

Implementation

1.0 | Introduction

The first eight chapters of this plan articulate a vision about how Tangipahoa Parish should develop over the next 20 years and beyond. With the vision in place, the Parish must direct its efforts and resources to implement the plan. Each of the goals and recommended action statements identified throughout this plan must be brought forward and developed into specific programs, initiatives, and/or new standards. The purpose of this chapter is to:

- ◆ Establish priorities and set out a process for implementation and periodic plan revisions; and
- ◆ Integrate the elements of the plan together to provide a clear path for sound decision-making.

This chapter outlines the organizational structure necessary to implement the plan, strategic directions and priorities for implementation, and a process for regular evaluation and appraisal of the plan to ensure it is kept relevant and viable.

Implementation is an essential step in the planning process. It requires the commitment of the Parish's leadership, including the Parish President and Councilmembers, Planning Commission, other Parish boards and commissions, and Parish staff.

It is also necessary for there to be close coordination with and joint commitment from other organizations that significantly influence the Parish and its growth, including:

- ◆ The Cities of Hammond and Ponchatoula;
- ◆ The Towns of Amite; Independence; Manchac; Roseland; and Kentwood;
- ◆ The Villages of Tangipahoa and Tickfaw;
- ◆ The Parish's special districts (e.g., Water District; Sewer District; Road Districts; Road Lighting Districts; Recreation Districts; etc.);
- ◆ Southeastern Louisiana University
- ◆ Louisiana Technical College, Hammond Branch;
- ◆ The Tangipahoa Parish School District;
- ◆ Tangipahoa Parish Economic Development Foundation;
- ◆ Chambers of Commerce; the Tourist Commission; and the Hammond Industrial Board;
- ◆ Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality; and
- ◆ Residents, businesses, churches, and civic organizations.

Each chapter of this plan outlines specific issues to be addressed to achieve the vision of the Parish's residents. A large number of actions are recommended that relate to regulatory changes, program initiatives, and capital projects. While these recommendations are comprehensive and intended to be accomplished over the full horizon of this plan, near-term strategies must also be put in place to take the first step toward implementation.

The near-term strategies must then be prioritized, with decisions as to the sequencing of activities, the capacity to fulfill each initiative, and the sources and ability to obligate the necessary funding. Top priorities are those that are viewed as feasible in the short term are placed in a five-year action plan. In addition to implementing the specific recommendations, the Parish should use the broader policies of the plan text and maps when making decisions related to the physical and economic development of the community.

2.0 | Methods and Responsibilities for Implementation

To be successful, the Parish must utilize this plan constantly and consistently, and it must be integrated into ongoing governmental practices and programs. The recommendations must be referenced often and widely used to make decisions pertaining to the timing and

availability of infrastructure improvements; proposed development/redevelopment applications; zone change requests (after land development regulations are adopted); expansion of public facilities, services and programs; and annual capital budgeting, among other considerations.

The plan is designed to guide the growth and economic development of the community. The Parish President, each Councilmember, staff person, and member of boards, commissions, and/or committees must consider this plan when making decisions related to growth and development. In some ways, the plan goes further than just land use, and in those ways it is intended to guide staff – of all departments – in managing activities, annual work programs, and capital projects.

The primary means of implementation include:

- **Re-drafting of current subdivision regulations and preparation of new land development regulations** to ensure a quality and character of development that reflects the Parish's vision and promotes the Parish's fiscal well-being. The subdivision ordinance, in particular, must be re-written to improve use compatibility, conserve natural resources and open space; and other land development regulations should be drafted promptly in order to preserve the character and integrity of the countryside, existing neighborhoods, and valued areas, improve the efficiency of facility and service provisions, and contribute to a fiscally responsible pattern of urban growth.
- **Decision-making that considers this plan.** As new development and improvements are proposed, Parish staff and the Planning Commission, together with the Parish Council, are obligated to consider the policies and recommendations of this plan. The text of this plan, coupled with the future character and thoroughfare plans, provide guidance for achieving the vision of the residents and stakeholders of the Parish.

- **Regular updating of a capital improvement program (“CIP”);** a five-year plan identifying capital projects for street infrastructure; water, wastewater, and drainage improvements; recreation facilities; and other public buildings and municipal services. These capital improvements should coordinate with the objectives of this plan, and be implemented consistent with the future character map, the thoroughfare plan, and other relevant plans and studies.
- **Identification and implementation of special projects, programs, and initiatives to achieve organizational, programmatic, and/or developmental objectives.** These may include further studies, detailed plans, or initiating or expanding upon existing programs. These tend to be more managerial in function. That is, they may support or influence physical improvements or enhancements, but they are generally focused on other aspects of community betterment.

3.0 | Plan Administration

Community leaders must take “ownership” of this plan, and maintain their commitment to its ongoing, successful implementation. Parish Government, including the President, Council, boards and commissions, and staff, as well as local committees and organizations have essential roles in the implementation of this plan. The plan puts everyone “on the same page” with respect to what should be done to reach the vision of the Parish residents. With a common starting point, education, networking, communication, and coordination will be keys to guiding all involved to work in the same direction.

4.0 | Education and Training

A necessary first step is to conduct individual training workshops with the Planning Commission,¹ Parish Council, and department heads, as well as others who have a role in plan implementation. These are the groups who, individually and collectively, will be responsible for implementation. The importance of their collaboration, coordination, and communication cannot be overstated. The training initiative should include:

- Discussion of the roles and responsibilities of each individual entity, and its function as to plan implementation.
- A thorough overview of the entire plan, with particular emphasis on the segments that most directly relate to their charge.

¹ The Planning Commissioners are obligated to receive at least four hours of training on their “duties, responsibilities, ethics, and substance of the position to be held” Section 33:103.1, *Training Requirements; Commission and Advisory Board Members*, Louisiana Revised Statutes (2008). The Parish could seek an opinion as to whether the training recommended by this plan would count towards those required hours.

- ◆ Implementation tasking and priority setting, allowing each group to establish their own one-, two-, and five-year agendas, in coordination with the strategic agenda of the Parish.
- ◆ Facilitation of a mock meeting to exhibit effective use of the plan and its policies and recommendations.
- ◆ A concluding question-and-answer session.

5.0 | Role Definition

The Parish Council and Planning Commission will assume the lead roles in implementing this plan. Their chief responsibility is to decide and establish the priorities and timeframes by which each action will be initiated and completed. Although the plan is adopted by resolution of the Planning Commission, the Parish Council must decide which programs will be funded (whether they involve capital outlay, budget for expanded services, additional staffing, further studies, or programmatic or procedural changes) and which ordinances will be adopted to implement the plan.

The hierarchy and roles of implementation are as follows:

5.0.1 | Parish Council.

The Parish Council will:

- ◆ Establishes overall action priorities and timeframes by which the actions of the plan will be initiated and completed.
- ◆ Appropriate funds to the Planning Commission² and consider and set the funding commitments for this plan's implementation measures.
- ◆ Offers final approval of projects/activities and associated costs during the budget process.
- ◆ Provide policy direction to the Planning Commission and Parish staff.

5.0.2 | Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission will:

- ◆ Recommend to Parish Government an annual program of actions to be implemented, including guidance as to the timeframes and priorities.
- ◆ Prepare an Annual Progress Report for submittal and presentation to the Parish Government (see Bi-annual Amendment Process later in this chapter for more detail).
- ◆ Ensure decisions and recommendations presented to the Parish Council are consistent with the plan's policies, objectives, and recommendations. This relates particularly to decisions for subdivision approval; and when land development regulations are in place, site plan review, zone change requests, and ordinance amendments.

² See Sections 33:102, *Grant of Power to Parishes and Municipalities*; and 33:105, *Staff and Finances*, Louisiana Revised Statutes (2008).

- Help to ensure that the plan is considered in the decisions and actions of other entities.
- Amend, extend, or add to the plan as necessary and appropriate.³

5.0.3 | Parish Departments and Plan Administrator. All departments are responsible for administering this plan, specifically as it relates to their function within the organization. The Parish Engineer and Parish Planner were involved in the plan development process and are, therefore, familiar with its content and outcomes. They must now be enrolled as implementers. Their budgets and annual work programs should be in line with their responsibilities for implementing this plan. The Parish Planner shall be the Plan Administrator, and in that role will provide a central point of contact for coordination of the various efforts to implement the plan.

6.0 | Intergovernmental Coordination

Increasingly, jurisdictions are acknowledging that issues are regional, rather than local, in nature. Watersheds and other ecosystems, economic conditions, land use, transportation patterns, housing, and the effects of growth and change are issues that cross the boundaries of the community and impact not only the Parish, but also its municipalities, unincorporated places, and surrounding parishes and the State of Mississippi. As a result, the economic health of Tangipahoa Parish is partly reliant upon its various communities and regional neighbors.

Perhaps of greatest importance to the effective implementation of this plan is recognition that all levels of government and the private sector must participate. Cooperation is more important than it ever was due to increasing service demands, increasing costs, and ever-limited resources. Coordinating with the Parish's municipalities and utility providers allows for more efficient service provision. That is why the plan recommends that the Parish, its municipalities, and its utility providers enter into interlocal agreements to direct growth toward existing built areas, where it can be most efficiently served.

Continued unplanned, scattered growth will have major consequences for the Parish and its ability to provide adequate services and meet the expectations of its existing and future residents. The type and quality of this development not only impacts the character of the Parish, but also impacts its resources, as new, non-agricultural residents living throughout the unincorporated areas will demand the same levels of service, but at very different costs to the Parish depending upon where they are located. Instead of trying to meet demands that involve costs that increase faster than the Parish can generate revenue, the Parish must work with its municipalities to decide the appropriateness and cost efficiency of providing services in different locations.

Strong intergovernmental cooperation will be very important to the effective implementation of this plan. Each of the governmental entities and agencies share common interests and goals, including enhancing economic development, providing for

³ See Section 33:106, *General Powers and Duties*, Louisiana Revised Statutes (2008).

quality housing, services and infrastructure needs. These goals can be more effectively achieved through mutual cooperation and coordination.

7.0 | Recommended Strategies for Intergovernmental Coordination

- ◆ Develop interlocal agreements with Hammond and Ponchatoula to direct growth toward existing built areas and promote annexation. These agreements must address service provision and revenue sharing to ensure that they do not simply ask the municipalities to accept the financial burden of growth without any corresponding benefits.
- ◆ Develop interlocal agreements with the Parish's towns and villages to accomplish a similar result. These agreements should be based on the same values, but should be simpler to implement and administer.
- ◆ Involve the Tangipahoa Parish School District in development decisions.
- ◆ Work with the municipalities to plan for their respective growth areas. The plans must include a future character plan and specific recommendations as to ordinances (or ordinance additions and changes) to better manage development. The dynamics of this work will depend upon the details of the interlocal agreements, which must work within the limitations of state law.

8.0 | Implementation Strategies

Shown in **Table 9-1, Summary Action Plan**, are the essential strategies for implementation (more detail is provided within the individual chapters of this plan). These strategies highlight the steps to be taken by the Parish, often in coordination with other jurisdictions, districts, entities, organizations, or agencies.

This table is intended as a quick reference to that outlined below. It is designed to be kept up-to-date and used on an annual basis as part of the regular review process. Each year, the projects that are substantially complete should be removed, with the corresponding years' projects and programs advanced one year, and a fifth year of programmed actions added. In this way, this table may be used on an ongoing basis and provided to the Parish Government to keep it informed with regard to the progress of implementation.

Type of Action / Action Statement	Budget Timeframe			Entity Responsible
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	5+ Years	
New Ordinances and Amendments				
Adopt Zoning Regulations that: Protect farming, forestry, mining, and other rural industries and areas (and encourage diversification of rural industries); Protect existing neighborhoods; Require non-agricultural development to provide its own buffers/open spaces; Provide incentives for clustered development, hamlets, and villages; Require adequate fire protection; Encourage housing diversity; Include the revised subdivision regulations; and Manage access to streets.	X			Parish Council; Planning Commission; Parish Planner; Parish Engineer
Revise Subdivision Regulations to: Encourage clustering; Improve wastewater treatment; Improve fire safety; Provide for right-of-way dedications and enhanced connectivity (implement the thoroughfare plan); Allow family divisions with minimal process (while preventing abuse); Allow farmworker housing on-site; Provide for bicycle travel; and, to the extent allowed by state law: Enhance natural resource protection when land is developed.	X			Parish Council; Planning Commission; Parish Planner; Parish Engineer
Establish urban growth areas and areas that are protected for farming and forestry	X			Parish Council; Planning Commission; Municipalities
Develop “ farming and forestry bill of rights ” as a charter amendment proposal	X			Parish Council or Civic Organization or Trade Association
Adopt a limited set of sign regulations to protect the character of interchanges and major intersections	X			Parish Council; Planning Commission
Use traffic sheds to control development in areas with low-capacity streets		X		Parish Council; Planning Commission
Adopt a traffic impact analysis ordinance		X		Parish Council
Adopt levels of service for Parish streets		X		Parish Council; Planning Commission
Revise floodplain regulations to strengthen flood damage protection measures			X	Parish Council; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Planning Commission
Capital Projects				
Establish a regular schedule for street maintenance	X			Parish President; Parish Council; Parish Engineer
Study the projected infrastructure deficiencies and develop a capital improvements program		X		Parish President; Parish Council; Parish Engineer
Programmatic Initiatives				
Strengthen ties to the University and Parish schools to maximize leverage of Parish non-monetary assets and bulk purchasing power to improve education	X			Parish President; Southeastern Louisiana University President; School Board President and Superintendent
Provide technical assistance for the formation and training of Community Development Corporations within Tangipahoa Parish to build housing for economically disadvantaged people			X	Parish Planner (organization of training sessions); Faith-Based and Community Service Organizations (formation of CDCs, implementation)

Table 9-1:
Summary Action Plan

Type of Action / Action Statement	Budget Timeframe			Entity Responsible
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	5+ Years	
Research/draft/execute interlocal agreements wherein: The urban growth areas will be recognized by municipalities; Most new development will occur in or near municipalities; Municipalities will provide services within the urban growth areas; To the extent allowed by law, municipalities will have land use control in the urban growth areas, and will ultimately annex most new development; Funding mechanisms will be set up to pay for and maintain infrastructure and services.		X		Parish President; Mayors of Municipalities; Parish Council; Municipal Councils; Special District Administrators and Boards
Adopt a tiered level of service strategy for services (e.g., more services closer to cities, fewer services away from cities)		X		Parish Council; Planning Commission
Make operational improvements to Parish streets (e.g., signal timing, "intelligent transportation systems," etc.)			X	Parish Council; Parish Engineer
Establish a " buy local " program			X	Chambers of Commerce
Form partnership with Hammond to improve bus transit to other areas of the Parish			X	Parish Council; City of Hammond
Hire one additional staff member for environmental enforcement	DONE			Parish Council
Implement quarterly household hazardous waste collection in all areas of the Parish			X	Garbage District No. 1 (Parish Council)
Promote eco- and agro-tourism in the Parish			X	Convention and Visitors Bureau; Planning Commission; Parish Council; Municipal Chambers of Commerce
Establish travel demand management programs at Parish; reach out to businesses			X	Parish Council; Parish Planner
Plans and Studies				
Develop a strategic plan for the Megasite to ensure workforce housing, infrastructure, services, utilities, and coordination with nearby local governments	X			Tangipahoa Parish Economic Development Foundation; Planning Commission
Conduct a traffic shed study to evaluate the capacity of rural streets to handle additional development		X		Planning Commission
Identify locations for developing a canoe/kayak trail on the Tangipahoa River		X		Planning Commission; Convention and Visitors Bureau
Identify and protect historic resources in the Parish		X		Planning Commission; Convention and Visitors Bureau
Conduct a preliminary impact fee analysis to determine whether impact fees are feasible and practical in the unincorporated Parish		X		Planning Commission; Parish Council
Develop a marketing plan and special area plan for the Megasite to ensure good jobs and maximize leverage of public dollars		X		Tangipahoa Parish Economic Development Foundation
Conduct a study of natural areas to identify high conservation-value sites for acquisition of land or conservation easements; and to evaluate whether acquisition is prudent			X	Planning Commission; Convention and Visitors Bureau
Conduct a water and sewer utility shed study			X	Water and Sewer Districts; Parish Council
Develop special area plan for Loranger			X	Planning Commission
Develop special area plan for Robert			X	Planning Commission
Develop special area plan for Natalbany			X	Planning Commission

Type of Action / Action Statement	Budget Timeframe			Entity Responsible
	0-2 Years	3-5 Years	5+ Years	
Request FEMA research regarding probable extent and elevation of floodwaters under likely climate change scenarios			X	Parish President; Parish Engineer; Parish Planner
Identify areas as candidates for future disaster relief sites; strategically plan for faster disaster recovery, including transitioning to permanent housing			X	Planning Commission; Parish Planner
Conduct a transfer of development rights study			X	Planning Commission

9.0 | New Ordinances and Amendments

9.0.1 | Subdivision Regulations. Currently, the Parish controls the development of land principally through subdivision regulations. These regulations have been the subject of several recommended amendments recently, but they suffer from being a patchwork of well-intentioned provisions drafted over time by different authors. The regulations have no consistent organization and there is little consideration regarding how each part relates to each other part.

As such, the subdivision regulations should be promptly re-drafted to address as many items in this plan as possible. The re-drafted subdivision regulations would be a temporary measure to be implemented while more comprehensive land development regulations are developed. Then, the subdivision regulations would be folded into the more comprehensive ordinances and amended as appropriate to address any issues that arise during their implementation.

9.0.2 | Land Development Regulations. The recommended land development regulations would create districts that protect agriculture, forestry, and natural resources, while allowing alternative uses of the land that provide a way for farmers and foresters to sell their land for limited, well-designed non-agricultural development that does not compromise the rural character of the Parish. It is particularly important that the new land development regulations do not interfere with traditional rural uses like farming, forestry, and mining. To this end, the land development regulations should be drafted over the course of 12 to 18 months, allowing for extensive public input to ensure that traditional rural uses are afforded the highest level of respect.

Generally, the land development regulations should include provisions that:

- ◆ Base districts on community character rather than use and lot size, with several development options allowed within each district. Use correlating standards for density/open space (residential) and intensity/landscape surface (non-residential) to preserve rural character.
- ◆ Require buffering of non-agricultural uses from basic industries (e.g., farming, forestry, and mining), with the requirements for the bufferyards placed upon the non-agricultural use.

- ◆ Permit clustered and planned developments as a permitted development option, subject to development and performance standards to ensure that rural character is maintained.
- ◆ Establish a straightforward review and approval process that expedites compliant applications. With clearly outlined performance standards, the process may be eased with greater reliance on sound administration of a well-written ordinance.
- ◆ Ensure that farm property can be subdivided for family members, but include measures to prevent abuse of such provisions (*e.g.*, use of the provisions to avoid substantive subdivision requirements for developments to be put on the market).
- ◆ Incorporate resource protection standards for protection stream channels, open areas, slopes, natural forest ecosystems (not tree farms) and other natural features. A two-tier approach is recommended:
 - First, identify (list) the resources and establish protection levels in terms of the amount of open space required for protection.
 - Second, provide a density bonus to offset potential losses in development yield.

These strategies ensure that protection is consistently achieved without imposing an inordinate loss of development potential. It is most efficient to combine all resource protection measures into performance standards that use a site capacity calculation to alerts developers as to the impact the natural resources have on the potential yield of the site. A site capacity calculation links the resources to the maximum allowable density on the site.

- ◆ Provide site standards for landscaping, screening, parking, and site design for development that does not involve agriculture, forestry, or mining.

9.0.3 | Farming and Forestry Bill of Rights. The Parish should consider a charter amendment to create a “farming and forestry bill of rights,” to reinforce the rights of farmers and foresters now, so as the Parish grows (which usually ultimately involves political “climate change”) the Parish’s commitment to these industries will be codified in a place that is more stable (harder to amend) than the Code of Ordinances.

10.0 | Capital Projects

10.0.1 | Streets. **Table 6-5, Roadway Deficiencies**, on pages 40 and 41 of **Chapter Six, Transportation**, recommends that the Parish review a number of particular areas that are anticipated to need improvements by 2030 due to increased demands that will likely be placed upon them. The Parish and the affected municipalities should conduct a more detailed study regarding when these improvements will be needed, how much they will cost, and how the costs will be fairly distributed. These projects should then be prioritized (*e.g.*, do this one first, this one second, etc.), or tied to certain operational conditions (*e.g.*, do this improvement if this street segment reaches this level of service . . .), or tied to certain building scenarios (*e.g.*, do this improvement when x number of

homes and/or x number of square feet of commercial space are built in location $y \dots$). Tying the improvements to additional development makes the task of fairly allocating costs to new development easier.

10.0.2 | Canoe/Kayak Trail. The Parish should identify appropriate locations for access to the Tangipahoa River and develop a canoe/kayak trail.

11.0 | Programmatic Initiatives

11.0.1 | Growth Management. The plan for growth management is, generally, to direct growth to areas of existing development. Implementation of this strategy is essential if the Parish is to realize fiscally responsible future development, preserve its character, protect its agricultural and resource-based heritage, protect sensitive resources, and effectively control its destiny. The interlocal agreements described in the Intergovernmental Coordination sections of this chapter are the key to implementing this strategy.

These agreements will require high-level consensus building among the Parish, its municipalities, and its rural services providers, and a rigorous financial and legal analysis to ensure that they have solid foundations. The objective is to implement the urban growth area strategy of this plan as optimally as possible under the existing statutory and constitutional constraints. If those constraints prove to be too cumbersome, or if amendments to state law would create material benefits to the arrangement, then the Parish should approach its legislative delegation with appropriate statutory amendments to realize the greatest possible potential for effective intergovernmental coordination in the urban growth areas.

The interlocal agreements recommended by this plan are intended to be long-term arrangements to manage and direct growth in the Parish to appropriate areas, in order to minimize the negative impacts to the Parish's and Cities' fiscal health to the greatest practicable extent. They would continuously ensure that a 20-year supply of land will be available for residential and commercial development.

11.0.2 | Environmental Conservation.

11.0.2.1 | Environmental Enforcement. The Parish should provide additional enforcement resources for stormwater pollution prevention program permits to prevent soil erosion and destruction of floodplain vegetation near stream beds. As water pollution is one of the most significant environmental problems in the Parish, at least one additional staff member should be hired for this purpose. In addition, the Parish should support requests to the State for additional Department of Health and Hospitals employees to work in the Parish to perform inspections of wastewater systems.

11.0.2.2 | Water Quantity and Water Quality. The Parish should encourage the use of water-efficient technologies, to reduce groundwater withdrawals and reduce per capita sewer flows and discharges.

- ◆ The Parish should set an example by outfitting all public buildings with water-saving toilets, and should publicize the water savings.
- ◆ The Parish should encourage its water suppliers to offer rebates to customers who install water-efficient appliances and toilets.
- ◆ The Parish should make information about water conservation (much of which is available from other governmental units, or readily adaptable to suit Parish needs) available at all Parish customer-service counters.

11.0.3 | Economic Development.

11.0.3.1 | Encourage Communication. The Parish should continuously encourage communication among farmers, economic development professionals and entities, civic groups, and so forth. Social networks generate business ideas and opportunities, and lead to stronger economic networks.

11.0.3.2 | Buy Local. The Parish should seek local business sources for its operational needs, and should promote the “buy local” theme throughout the Parish.

11.0.3.3 | Be Efficient. The Parish should use, and should encourage business owners to use, energy-efficient technologies, and should minimize its generation of solid waste, as is now the practice of State government.⁴

11.0.3.4 | Work with the School District. The Parish should strengthen its ties to the School District. First, School District representatives should be given the opportunity to comment on new development before it is approved. Second, the Parish should collaborate with the School District to try to save money on operations and transportation. Third, the Parish should work with the School District to create innovative educational programs that combine core curriculum subjects with vocational and “real-world” training and experience and exposure to potential career fields.

11.0.3.5 | Seek Support from the Business Community. This plan encourages business development. Parish should educate the business community about the objectives and implementation techniques of this Plan and seek their support.

11.0.4 | Coordination. The Parish should seek to establish a clearinghouse, preferably at Southeastern Louisiana University, for geospatial information from various entities in the Parish to be used for continuing coordination and planning purposes.

12.0 | Plans and Studies

12.0.1 | Floodplain Studies. Climate change will change the timing and volume of rainstorms. This will likely affect the extent of areas that are subject to flooding. Since the current floodplain evaluation techniques look back in time instead of forward, the Parish should request and promote research into the probable extent and elevation of

⁴ Executive Order BJ 2008 - 8, *Executive Branch – Green Government*, requires state agencies to conserve energy and reduce waste.

floodwaters under likely climate change scenarios through Year 2100. The Parish should then revise its floodplain regulations based on new research and continued compliance with National Flood Insurance Program minimum requirements.

12.0.2 | Identify Areas within Tangipahoa Parish as Candidates for Future Disaster Relief Sites. Tangipahoa Parish has been host to many seeking refuge from Hurricane Katrina and, if similar events occur in the future, it is likely that, due to its location along I-12 and, especially I-55, it will do so again. Rather than react to pending or past disaster, the Parish would be well-served to identify and protect alternative critical sites that could be utilized for staging and for temporary housing. These sites should be distributed so that if some are disabled because of direct storm impacts, alternatives could be used instead.

12.0.3 | Strategic Plan for Disaster Recovery with a Focus Upon Hastening the Transition from Emergency Housing to Permanent Shelter. To date, some households in Tangipahoa Parish remain in FEMA trailers rather than in permanent homes. Any strategic plans designed to address future storm events should address this issue, including locations and streamlined services for receiving temporary housing and acquiring permanent shelter. Any strategic plan should also incorporate guiding principles designed to ensure that temporary and permanent housing is completed in a manner that respects the vision of the Comprehensive Plan for the Parish.

12.0.4 | Traffic-Shed Study for Analysis, or as a Basis for Allocation of Growth Capacity. The carrying capacity of the existing road system sets natural limits to the acceptable density in any area. Within the unincorporated area, traffic sheds should be designated, showing the service area of each road. At a minimum, these traffic sheds should be used as a tool to evaluate capacity, as a tool to inform decision-making. If necessary, they could also be used as a basis for regulations that would restrict the development of properties within individual traffic sheds to their proportionate share of the available capacity.

12.0.5 | Strategic Plan for the Megasite. The Parish shall also develop a strategic plan for workforce housing; public infrastructure, services, and utilities that connect to the Megasite; financing mechanisms that leverage private investment; and provisions for coordinating with nearby local governments to provide housing and services to employees of the Megasite.

12.0.6 | Marketing Plan and Special Area Plan for the Megasite. The Parish shall develop a marketing plan and a special area plan for the Megasite to ensure that the site attracts industries that provide good jobs, promote further economic development, and maximize the leverage of public investments.

13.0 | Plan Amendment

13.0.1 | Stay Flexible, But Maintain Consistent Policy Direction. This plan must remain flexible. It must allow for adjustment in response to or in anticipation of change over time. Shifts in political, economic, physical, and social conditions, and other unforeseen circumstances will affect the Parish's priorities. As growth continues, and as laws, economies, and natural systems change, new issues will emerge -- and current issues may become irrelevant. Some action statements may become less practical while other plausible solutions will arise. To ensure that it continues to reflect the vision and remains relevant and viable over time, the plan must be revisited on a routine basis, with regular amendments and warranted updates.

“Nobody trips over mountains. It is the small pebble that causes you to stumble. Pass all the pebbles in your path and you will find you have crossed the mountain.”

~ Author Unknown

There are no statutory limitations on the timing or frequency of plan amendments, except the requirements for public notice and hearing. However, the interest in flexibility should not displace the interest in consistent policy direction. That is, unless there is a compelling reason to amend the plan more frequently, the Parish should, as a matter of policy, limit consideration of minor amendments to the plan to once every four to six months. More significant updates should be done every five years. If a private-sector request for a plan amendment is denied, it should not be re-considered in substantially the same form for at least 12 months from the date of denial.

Minor amendments may include revisions to the future character map (especially in the growth areas) and thoroughfare plan as the development pattern unfolds. Major updates will involve reviewing the base conditions and growth trends; re-evaluating the goals and recommendations; and formulating new ones in response to changing needs and priorities.

13.0.2 | Criteria for Minor Amendments. As a matter of policy, plan amendments should be timed so that they allow for proposed changes to be considered together. Amendments should generally be considered not more than three times per year. Such scheduling allows for the cumulative effect of proposed amendments to be better understood.

Proposed amendments must be consistent with the goals and policies of the plan. Careful consideration should also be given to guard against site-specific plan changes that could negatively impact adjacent areas and uses or detract from the overall vision and character of the area. Factors that should be considered when granting a minor amendment include:

- ♦ Cumulative impacts when considered with other approved amendments;
- ♦ Consistency with the goals and policies of the plan;
- ♦ Consistency with the future character map, thoroughfare map, and other plans that may be developed;
- ♦ Compatibility with the surrounding area;

- ◆ Impacts on infrastructure and public funds;
- ◆ Impact on the ability to provide, fund, and maintain adequate services;
- ◆ Impact on environmentally sensitive and natural areas; and,
- ◆ Contribution to the vision of the plan and character of the community.

13.0.3 | Criteria for Major Amendments. An evaluation and appraisal report should be prepared every five years. This report should be prepared by the Plan Administrator, with input from various Parish departments; the Planning Commission; municipalities that are participating in the growth management program through interlocal agreement; water and sewer providers; and other boards, entities, and committees. The report involves evaluating the existing plan and assessing how successful it has been in implementing the Parish's vision and goals.

The purpose of the evaluation and appraisal report is to identify the successes and shortcomings of the plan and implementation efforts, look at what has changed, and make recommendations on how the plan or implementing programs should be modified. The report should review baseline conditions and assumptions about trends and growth indicators, and it should evaluate implementation potential and/or obstacles related to any unmet goals and recommendations. The result of the evaluation report will be a revised comprehensive plan.

The report should identify and evaluate the following:

- ◆ Plan amendments and major actions undertaken over the last five years.
- ◆ Major issues in the community and how these issues have changed over time.
- ◆ Changes in the assumptions, trends, and base studies including the following:
 - The rate at which growth is occurring relative to the projections put forward in the plan;
 - Shifts in demographics and other growth trends;
 - The area of "growth area" land, and its capacity under applicable regulations to meet projected demands;
 - Parish-wide attitudes and whether changes necessitate amendments to the vision and goals; and
 - Any other changes in the political, social, economic, or environmental conditions that dictate a need for plan amendment.
- ◆ Ability of the plan to continue to successfully implement the Parish's vision.
- ◆ Individual statements or sections of the plan must be reviewed and rewritten to ensure that the plan provides sufficient information and direction to achieve the intended outcome.

- ◆ Conflicts between goals and policies that have been discovered in the implementation and administration of the plan that must be resolved.
- ◆ The action agenda should be reviewed and major actions accomplished should be highlighted.
- ◆ Those not accomplished should be re-evaluated to ensure their relevancy and/or to revise them appropriately.
- ◆ The timeframes for implementing the individual actions should be re-evaluated. Some actions may emerge as a higher priority given new or changed circumstances, while others may become less important.
- ◆ Based upon organizational, programmatic, and procedural factors, as well as the status of previously assigned tasks, the implementation task assignments must be reviewed and altered to ensure timely accomplishment.
- ◆ Changes in laws, procedures, and missions may impact the ability to achieve the goals. The plan review must assess these changes and their impacts on the success of implementation, leading to any suggested revisions in strategies or priorities.

13.0.4 | Amendment Procedures. The procedure for plan amendments is set out in Section 33:108, *Procedures of Commission; Adoption of Plan*, Louisiana Revised Statutes (2008). The pertinent parts of the statute are set out below:

- ◆ A commission may adopt a plan as a whole by a single resolution or may by successive resolutions adopt successive parts of a plan, said parts corresponding with major geographical sections or divisions of the parish . . . or with functional subdivisions of the subject matter of the plan, and may adopt any amendment or extension thereof or addition thereto.
- ◆ Before the adoption of a plan or any such part, amendment, extension, or addition, a commission shall hold at least one public hearing thereon. A parish planning commission shall give notice of the purpose, time, and place of the public hearing by one publication in a newspaper of general circulation throughout the parish at least ten days prior to the date set for the hearing.
- ◆ The adoption of a plan or of any such part or amendment or extension or addition shall be by resolution of a commission. The resolution shall refer expressly to the maps and descriptive and other matter intended by a commission to form the whole or part of a plan, and the action taken shall be recorded on the map and plan and descriptive matter by the identifying signature of the chairman or secretary of the commission.
- ◆ Certified copies of the plan or part thereof shall be filed with the division of administration, with the local legislative body and with the clerk of court of the parish

14.0 | Annual Progress Report

A progress report should be prepared annually by the Planning Commission, with the assistance of the Plan Administrator, and presented to Parish Government. This ensures that the plan is regularly reviewed and modifications are identified for the minor plan amendment process. Ongoing monitoring of plan consistency with the Parish's ordinances is an essential part of this effort.

The Annual Progress Report should include:

- Significant actions and accomplishments during the past year, including the status of implementation for each programmed task.
- Implementation constraints, highlighting those that are not anticipated by the plan itself, that are encountered in administering the plan and its policies.
- Proposed amendments that have come forward during the course of the year, which may include revisions to the plan maps, or other goals, recommendations, or miscellaneous text changes.
- Recommendations for needed actions, programs, and procedures to be developed and implemented in the forthcoming year, including a recommendation of:
 - Projects to be included in the capital improvements program;
 - Programs and initiatives to be funded; and
 - Priority coordination needs with public and private implementation partners.

Appendix A

Public Participation

1.0 | Introduction

Tangipahoa Parish has, to this point, been largely immune from the social and market forces that tend to overrun and homogenize other areas of the country. It is a place where from almost every vantage point one gets a feeling of the community's history and heritage. It was immediately apparent in the public participation meetings that the sense of history and heritage is also shared by a large number of the Parish's residents.

Independence and self-determination are deeply rooted in Parish culture. Indeed, it is no surprise that one of the Parish's towns is named for this trait -- "Independence." Accordingly, among the people who live in the Parish's diverse 803 square mile landscape, there is no shortage of opinions with regard to the challenges and opportunities of the Parish for the next 20 to 25 years. A healthy dialog was conducted at all of the public meetings.

What may be surprising to many is that the opinions expressed by the Parish's residents regarding its present circumstances and desired future were quite consistent. That is, regardless of region, occupation, or lifestyle, the participants in the Citizens' Congress discussion agreed about much more than they disagreed about.

First, the Parish's public infrastructure sorely needs to be upgraded, especially its roads, wastewater treatment, and drainage systems. A corollary to this view, often expressed, is that new nonagricultural development in the countryside should pay for sufficient infrastructure improvements to offset the new demands created by the development. Funding of needed improvements was often expressed as one of the foremost challenges for the Parish.

Second, the Parish's residents want to protect the Parish's special character, which is predominately a mix of established traditional towns set within a tranquil rural environment. To that end:

- ♦ The Parish's agriculture, dairy, and silviculture industries must be protected against encroachment by insensitively designed residential subdivisions (especially suburban-styled conventional subdivisions). Any plan-implementing programs that affect areas of predominately agriculture or silviculture uses must put the interests of agriculture, silviculture, and supportive industries ahead of nonagricultural uses.

"Ironically, rural America has become viewed by a growing number of Americans as having a higher [quality of life] not because of what it has, but rather because of what it does not have!"

~Don A. Dillman
Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, January 1977

"Suburbia is where the developer bulldozes out the trees, then names the streets after them."

~Bill Vaughn
Columnist and Author

- ◆ Regulations are needed to improve the function, character, and quality of commercial development and to direct it to appropriate areas.
- ◆ In terms of protecting community character and implementing the Comprehensive Plan, there is broad-based support all around the Parish for zoning, provided that it is thoughtfully implemented in a way that protects agricultural or forestry operations (rather than interfering with them) and that gives landowners flexibility to make alternative uses of their land.

“How wonderful that we have met with a paradox. Now we have some hope of making progress.”

~Niels Bohr
Nobel Prize Winning Physicist

Third, the Parish’s abundant natural resources are a key reason why people stay in the Parish for generations. These resources have withstood much, but they are not invincible, and therefore must be used and managed wisely in the future. For example:

- ◆ Among the Parish’s abundant natural resources are numerous scenic rivers and creeks that are a significant component of the Parish’s quality of life. Land use policies should be designed and implemented to protect these resources. Best management practices for agriculture and silviculture that are currently in use are one step, but similar practices should be developed for (or imposed on) nonagricultural suburban and exurban development.
- ◆ The Parish should develop natural resource-based recreational opportunities, such as enhanced public access to the Tangipahoa River.
- ◆ Many residents identified litter and illegal dumping as significant problems that threaten the character and environment of certain areas of the Parish.

Fourth, many of the Parish’s rural roads are evolving from agricultural support roles to commuting routes, creating conflicts between agricultural and nonagricultural users. That is, the agricultural use of the road may involve moving equipment or livestock across the road at early hours, blocking commuters want to use the road to get to work. This conflict must be thoughtfully addressed in the comprehensive plan’s transportation strategy.

Fifth, although the Parish Council does not have authority over schools, school improvements were often identified as a pressing need in the Parish because education is viewed as the key to economic development and individual opportunity. Many participants favor taking steps to improve the educational, economic, transportation, and housing opportunities of the Parish’s low income residents.

Finally, there is the urgent issue of fire protection. Although this issue did not come up much during Citizens’ Congress meetings, the fire chiefs that were interviewed warned that in many places in the Parish, the water lines are inadequate for protecting suburban development from fire. In many cases, trucks would have to haul water in from other places in order to fight a fire. Fire insurance ratings are updated periodically, and the fact that the rural part of the Parish has grown faster than its fire protection infrastructure could result in a jump in insurance rates after the next review.

2.0 | The Structure of the Public Participation Program

Public participation is essential to tailoring a comprehensive plan to help a community move in the direction of its shared values. Therefore, the planning effort was front-loaded with extensive public outreach efforts, including focus group discussions with various commercial, environmental, and civic interests, and "Citizens' Congress" meetings with residents and businesspeople from around the Parish. **Composite Figure A-1** (next page) shows the geographic distribution of where the participants live and work.¹

Focus groups and individual meetings included:

- ◆ The Cattlemen's Association
- ◆ Tangipahoa Futures Network
- ◆ Economic Development Organizations
- ◆ Homebuilders
- ◆ Forestry Association
- ◆ Lake Ponchartrain Basin Foundation

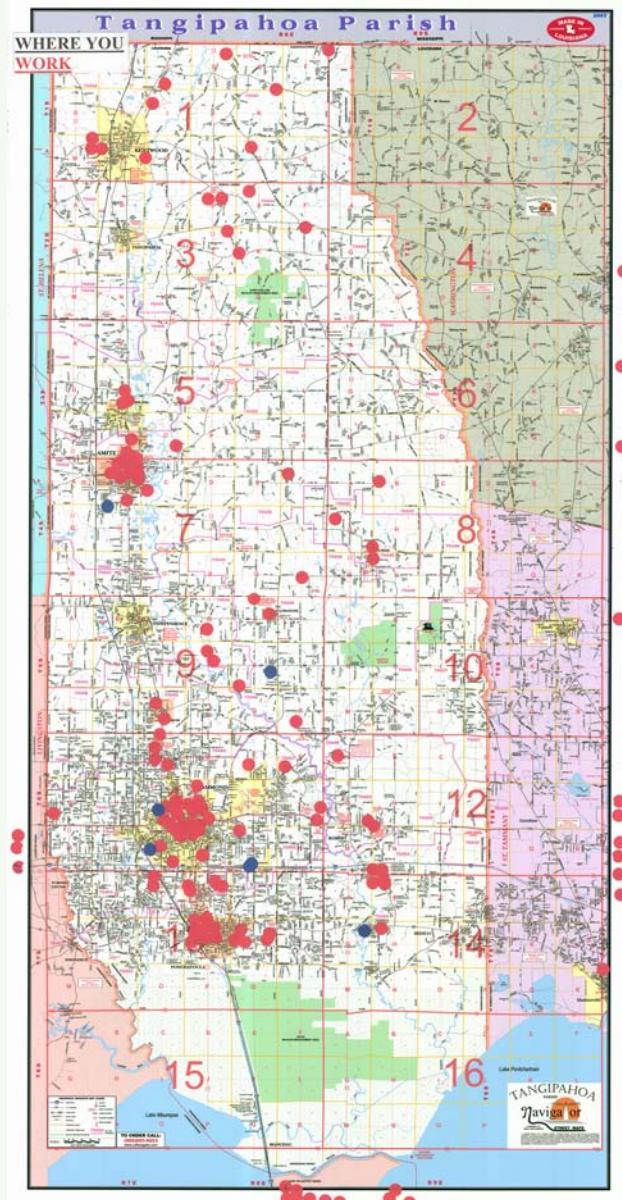
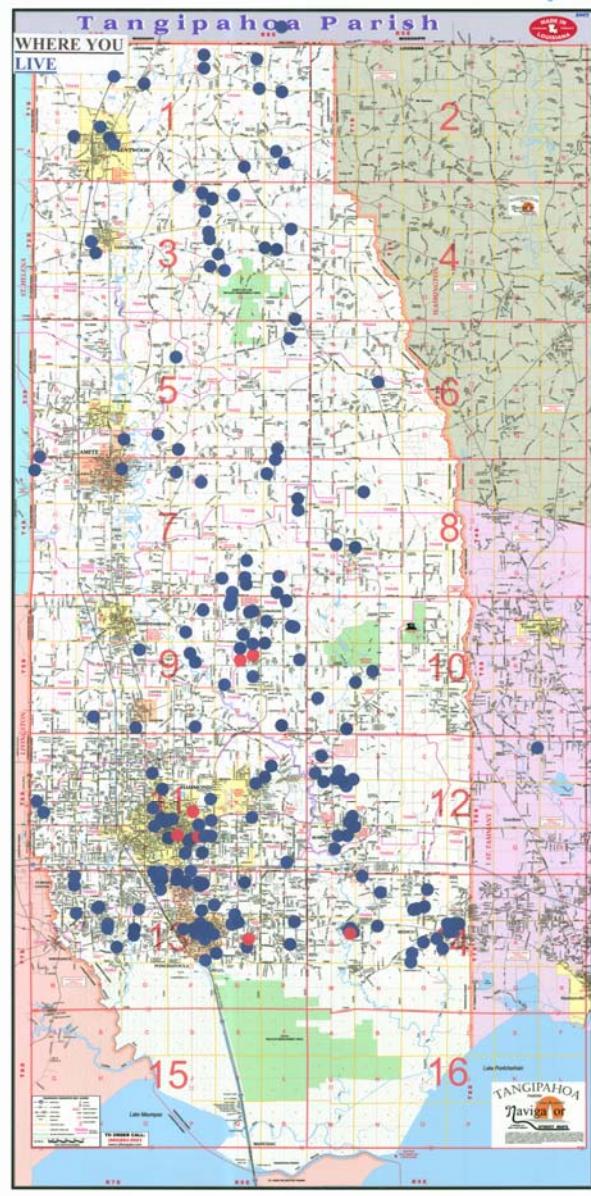
"Citizens' Congress" meetings were held:

- ◆ At Jewel M. Sumner High School in Kentwood on May 8, 2007.
- ◆ At the Tangipahoa Parish Annex Building in Amite on May 9, 2007.
- ◆ At the Champ Cooper Elementary School in Ponchatoula on May 15, 2007.
- ◆ At the Ponchatoula Jr. High Auditorium in Ponchatoula on May 16, 2007.
- ◆ At the Loranger High School Cafeteria in Loranger on May 22, 2007.
- ◆ At the Tangipahoa Parish Health Unit in Hammond on May 23, 2007.
- ◆ By the last Citizens' Congress meeting, hundreds of people from all around the Parish (and, in some cases, the region) took the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding the future of the Parish. These participants were encouraged to participate further by:
 - ◆ Telling their friends, neighbors, and family about the process.
 - ◆ Submitting written comments at Citizens' Congress meetings or via the project web site (<http://www.tangiplanning.com>).
 - ◆ Attending Steering Committee meetings (the schedule of which is posted on the project web site).
 - ◆ Contacting Steering Committee members and Parish Councilmembers.

¹ Participants at each of the Citizens' Congress meetings were asked to put a red dot on the location of their workplace on one map and a blue dot on the location of their place of residence on the other map. People who lived or worked outside of the Parish put their dots on the side of the Parish closest to their residence or workplace.

3.0 | What We Heard

What follows is the lengthy documentation from each of the meetings that were held between March 21 and May 23, 2007:



Composite Figure A-1

Source: Mapman, LLC, Covington, LA. Used by permission.

March 21, 2007: Cattlemen's Association Focus Group

Attending: 12 members of Cattlemen's Association, Richard Barker (Tangipahoa Parish), Gordon Burgess (Tangipahoa Parish), Lane Kendig (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Todd Messenger (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Herpreet Singh (CPEX), Zach Broussard (CPEX)

Cattlemen's concerns-

- ◆ Don't want the government to regulate or put restrictions on land that is for sale (i.e., if someone wants to buy land and put homes on it, don't want to tell them they can't).
- ◆ Some farmers want to farm for the long-term.
- ◆ The majority of farmers know that they can't farm forever.
- ◆ "As farmers, we have a feel for the land. Once you pour concrete, you can't farm that land anymore."

Lane Kendig Response-

- ◆ One thing you'll be asked to decide during this process is, "Do you want growth to occur in a rational pattern or in random pattern, knowing there is more land available to support growth than is needed?"
- ◆ If you want to preserve agriculture, there has to be a decision about how much development can go into an area and how much can the Parish afford to support random growth, the upkeep of roads, etc.

Cattlemen's concerns-

- ◆ Timber and agriculture people want protection of property rights, but where there is growth they prefer "rural growth," not "crowded or urban growth."
- ◆ Realize that no one is making more land – we need to look at developing a plan that gets us most money for the land we have now because dairy is getting squeezed out from west and north (Texas, Alabama, etc).
- ◆ Don't think there will be any dairy farmers left in TP Parish in 15 Years (approximately 150 dairy farmers today; over 300 just 20 years ago). No one knows the future of agriculture in the Parish.
- ◆ Dairies are a \$325 to 400 million industry in Louisiana. 90% of them are in or near Tangipahoa Parish.
- ◆ Know there should be some kind of plan; what would New York City be without Central Park? Someone had the foresight to plan ahead for that space, and now it's an important part of the city.

"As farmers, we have a feel for the land. Once you pour concrete, you can't farm that land anymore."

~Cattlemen's Association Member
March 21, 2007 Cattlemen's Focus Group

- ◆ Farmers want to protect agriculture. They see it as the backbone of T.P. BUT, they believe that they have to be able to grow houses, just in case. In some cases, they need to sell land for residential development in order to continue their agricultural operations.
- ◆ For many, the land is their retirement and legacy to their grandchildren. They want to maximize the value of the land. What happens if I want to sell my farm?
- ◆ LA is 4th in the nation for natural resources. Should manage them better for the benefit of people.
- ◆ Wastewater is a huge problem. Sewage drains into ditches. Who will pay for sewers?
- ◆ A representative from the timber industry said that he wants the option to continue with his business, but also needs the flexibility to break up the land without regulations that would prevent it.
- ◆ Another participant said that agriculture and timber want protection from other uses. Development that does occur should be rural in character, so that the current appearance of the rural areas of the Parish is maintained.

Lane Kendig Response-

As a matter of policy, the Parish must ultimately decide how important development potential is, versus preservation of agricultural and timber operations.

March 21, 2007: Tangipahoa Future Network Focus Group

Meeting Organizer: Frank Neelis

Attending: Approximately 30 members of Tangipahoa Future Network, and/or individuals invited by Tangipahoa Future Network, Richard Barker (Tangipahoa Parish), Lane Kendig (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Todd Messenger (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Herpreet Singh (CPEX), Zach Broussard (CPEX)

Q- Is comprehensive planning done whether or not the community implements it with zoning?

A- The final plan will look different if it is going to be implemented with zoning as opposed to other strategies. The plan is based upon what we hear from the community, including how the community wants the plan to be implemented.

Q- At the public interview, a member of your firm told the audience that some ordinances may be implemented early on to put protections in place while community struggles with big "z" [zoning] word. Is that still the case?

A- We will work with the Parish to identify some immediate needs through a special focus project.

Q- Intergovernmental communication between rural and urban areas has been an issue—is part of scope of work to deal with that disconnect?

A- We have dealt with that (there is not a specific chapter to deal with this) but understand the issue needs to be explored as a means to implementation. Trust and mutual understanding is a big part of issue/process to factor in early. Key things will be for cities to try to participate in this process.

Q- Is it a challenge for your firm that we're in a post-Katrina situation?

A- Rapid growth is relative. We have worked in other communities experiencing rapid growth at even higher levels than Tangipahoa is experiencing post-Katrina.

Q- It's important for us to maintain rural character as we create a plan; how will you work with us on that?

A- This area is not unique in that there are ranges of feelings here. For example, one farmer wants to continue legacy of farming vs. one who has 2 daughters that aren't interested in continuing to farm. This is the huge dilemma for rural areas: There are two viewpoints of land 1) commodity and 2) resource to be husbanded for generations.

One challenge for rural areas will be to determine what the balance is and what strategies tilt the balance in either direction. There are a lot of options for rural areas—we can lay out the options, but the Parish has to make the decisions.

Q- How much opportunity for broad-based public participation will there be?

A- There will be many opportunities for public participation. We will hold 1) focus/stakeholder group meetings like this one, 2) Steering Committee meetings will be open to the public, and 3) We will have community/citizen congress meetings throughout the Parish. It will be/is important to have maximum participation early on because if "z" word is not acceptable, then plan we develop will look very different than if "z" word is acceptable.

Q- When will we know about how zoning will be used?

A- Early on in process— we will provide a technical growth management paper that weighs issues; this will set the direction for how much the plan will be geared to zoning versus other implementation methods. We will look at what range of zoning will work for Parish to determine what the manageable set of implementation strategies will be. These could include zoning, taxes, Impact fees and other solutions.

Q- There are two distinct parts of Parish (the North and the South). Is it feasible for one plan to make different recommendations for each part of Parish?

A- Don't think it's a good strategy to divide areas because if north does not have a strategy, it will be difficult to achieve things in significant areas. However, we can use "performance-based" strategies to impact development output.

Comment-We would like to see the site plan review process amended for Parish to include some additional components.

Q-Will creeks be looked at in relation to illegal dumping practices in the Parish?

A- We will look at full range of environmental issues and see how far Parish/community wants to take it. A whole range of natural resources exists in Parish, and the environmental chapter of the plan will make recommendations for those resources. We can't inventory each and every site, but if illegal dump sites is an issue we can look at regulations. But a regulation is only as good as enforcement.

Q- Have you had experience working with environmental organizations?

A- We work with any group interested in planning process. We ask that every group attend the Steering Committee meetings and seek out who on that committee could best articulate the group's views. We also ask all groups to direct us to maps, papers that help our understanding of issues, etc.

Comment- The Lake Ponchartrain Basin Foundation would like to provide documents/data for this process.

Q- The Lake Ponchartrain Basin Foundation worked closely with St. Tammany Parish to create a great plan, but years later the plan has not been translated to regulations or enforcement where there are regulations. Will regulations be an outcome of the process?

A- As part of this particular process, regulations will not be written. However, we will constantly bring the conversation back to the topic of the community's goals and how to implement those goals.

Comment- We use sales tax as a funding source, this would be a good source to escrow construction funding taxes to ensure development pays it's way.

A- We will certainly recommend a solid capital improvements plan for the Parish.

Additional comments:

- ◆ Interim Ordinances. Interim ordinances to help the community deal with current pressing problems may be in order. This analysis is part of the scope of the project.
- ◆ The consultant was provided with a master street plan and workforce housing study for Hammond. Several participants said that they would like to see Hammond have better coordination with the Parish, and would like a mechanism in place for such coordination. The consultant will encourage the Cities to participate in the process.
- ◆ It was noted that the early Parish planning commission had a more regional focus, and that that focus is not the same anymore. Hammond could not get support for sign controls outside of the City.
- ◆ Municipalities should participate in decisions on permits near their borders.
 - ◆ Culture and rural areas are important. The challenge is for rural areas to strike a balance between "land as commodity" and land as resource approaches.
- ◆ The consultant will need to know early on what the tolerance for various implementation strategies is. KKC will produce a document of alternative implementation strategies to help the community test this tolerance level.

- ◆ Right now, the building permit process in the Parish only relates to compliance with the building code. There is no open space requirement, no parking requirements, no limits on signs. This creates problems, e.g., the WalMart distribution center was not required to have a staging area for its trucks because there was no mechanism for it. Now the trucks park on the street until they're scheduled to be unloaded. There is very little done now with regard to commercial sites.
- ◆ Dump sites near creeks are a big environmental issue, e.g., Ponchetula Creek at Range Road.
- ◆ Participants want to see people from Hammond, Amite, Kentwood, and suburban Tangipahoa in the process.
- ◆ How will environmental groups be integrated into the process? Any interest group that is interested will be kept in the process. These groups can help identify resources and provide information and maps. Lake Ponchartrain Basin Foundation has 8 months of data to share on water quality. They will also help to recruit people to participate in meetings.
- ◆ It is perceived that there is a high resistance to density on the North Shore.
- ◆ Funding – Parish's major revenue source is sales tax. Construction generates a lot of sales tax, creating a boom in revenue during a construction boom. This should be allocated to fund things that address the impacts of growth. Escrows?
- ◆ Existing gravel roads have very low capacities.
- ◆ Subdivision process should take care of road and drainage problems. Example: right now, Range Road has 15 new subdivisions in a few miles of 2-lane road.
- ◆ The Parish has to figure out how to provide infrastructure.
- ◆ Can the Parish put the costs of the gravel roads on the landowners?
- ◆ The planning process will raise the hard questions and force them to be dealt with.
- ◆ Will implementation of a plan hurt housing affordability? Will programs that promote affordability create NIMBY problems?
- ◆ Is there any application or extension of St. Tammany Parish's "green print" in order (Green Print was done by the Trust for Public Lands).
- ◆ The process will have to build trust.
- ◆ E-mail notices of meetings will be provided to all who have submitted e-mail addresses.
- ◆ A web site will be set up for this project to gather information. A survey may be inadequate to deal with the complex range of issues.

March 21, 2007: Economic Development Focus Group

Meeting Organizer: Margeurite Walter

Attending: Approximately 20 people who are active in Economic Development in Tangipahoa Parish, Richard Barker (Tangipahoa Parish), Gordon Burgess (Tangipahoa Parish), Lane Kendig (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Todd Messenger (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Herpreet Singh (CPEX), Zach Broussard (CPEX)

Q-What is your comment to, "I don't want anyone telling me what to do with my land."

A-We have already heard that comment today; we hear it a lot in all communities. Our job is to provide flexible plans, but also to ensure that one person is not burdened by another's decisions. We encourage our clients to be as permissive as possible without adverse impacts on neighbors and the public fisc.

Q- We want to know we have infrastructure to support growth, particularly from economic development standpoint.

A- The planning process will:

- ◆ Ask the community what its goals are.
- ◆ Lay out all the options available.
- ◆ Ask the community which options they are comfortable with.
- ◆ Relay to the community if the options they choose will help them meet the goals, or if the options they choose will not help them meet the goals.

The Community then has to decide if it wants to select stronger options or if it wants to modify its goals. The key question is, "who pays?"

Q-Is implementation a separate contract?

A-Implementation does happen after a plan is created. However, we will create a plan that is geared toward implementation from the beginning. Ultimately, we want to help you get consensus on the plan so it will be adopted and later implemented. If the plan requires zoning for implementation, we'll tell everyone at every meeting.

Comment from Mr. Burgess: I want to make clear to the Parish that zoning will come later, but this plan will provide a roadmap for the Parish to get to zoning.

Q- If we do zoning, we want significant flexibility to make modifications on the fly.

A- The Parish must distinguish between real, valuable opportunities and a landowner or developer who is just making money by rezoning without implementing the Plan.

Q-What would a Comprehensive Master Plan encompass?

A-The Comprehensive Plan will make recommendations on where commercial, housing, etc., should go. It will make these recommendations based on "community character." Identifying "community character" helps you decide what general character you want to

achieve in different areas, as opposed to if you want housing or if you want commercial. This will allow broader categories of land use. The Plan will also deal with environment, transportation, natural resources, housing, public facilities and infrastructure, etc.

Q-Will the plan be for the Parish and municipalities?

A-We will create a plan for the Parish, and cannot speak for municipalities. However, we can address cooperation between municipalities and the Parish, and encourage municipalities to participate in the process. We may want to invite municipal representatives to a special meeting to hear from them and encourage participation.

Comment- To attract large businesses, we have to provide them with protection that where they'll locate will be a good investment for the long-term. This protects the quality of life for a company's employees and it protects the company's investment.

Response- Zoning is protective.

Comment-At the edge of towns, we have city regulations meeting Parish regulations; this is creating "tin-shed-ally" growth areas. I would like the plan to address "transitional areas." Can we do extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)? How can we improve character?

Comment-Would like to better address density issues in terms of the blend of housing and commercial development and "spotty" development. The Parish and the Cities and Towns should cooperate.

Comment-From the university standpoint, we want to make this area attractive for employees, students and businesses.

Comment-The north-south divide in the Parish is going to be a daunting task to address.

Q-Can the plan be accomplished without zoning?

A-If there are specific things you want the plan to do, it's difficult to get there without zoning. If zoning is ruled out by the community, you'll have to decide how to achieve specific outcomes with other strategies, and we will lay out for you what the strategies are.

Q-There is an election coming up; how will this impact the success of implementing the plan?

A-If the citizenry is really behind the planning process and the plan, political turnover should not prevent the plan from moving forward. That's part of why it's so important for everyone to attend meetings, participate, spread the word.

Comment- Density is not being addressed in Parish or city. 5-acre sites are being built as apartments, just because they're 5-acre sites. There is no discernable pattern for land use. There are areas that are coming at us faster than we know how to deal with. Development is

"To attract large businesses, we have to provide them with protection that where they'll locate will be a good investment for the long-term. This protects the quality of life for a company's employees and it protects the company's investment."

~ Focus Group Participant

March 21, 2007 Economic Development Focus Group

being “dropped in.” Zoning? Permit process? We could put a hog farm on University Avenue – our “million dollar mile.”

Comment- There is a difference between the north side of the Parish and the south side. The north side hasn’t historically liked the “z” word. North, rural, south suburban.

Response- There are some experiences that are novel, but many have been faced by other communities. If zoning is ruled out, we would have to decide how to achieve certain goals without zoning. We’ll try to give an idea regarding how far we can go with different approaches. Ultimately, we don’t determine what’s best for Tangipahoa Parish. Tangipahoa Parish does.

Q- Can we put “tools” in place before final adoption to address immediate problems?

A- We will provide interim strategies for dealing with the problems that are perceived to be most pressing.

Comment- Can there be integration of the Parish and municipalities? Historically, they don’t cooperate very much. Participants want tight cooperation. Eight of eight municipalities have zoning.

Q- What order do we work in?

A- We won’t just go chapter by chapter because we need to deal with the “Z” word up front.

Comment- St. Tammany Parish, prior to Katrina, had more “progressive” growth.

Response- We will look to St. Tammany for its neat things and bad things (e.g., traffic) and see what lessons can be learned.

Administrative Comments by Consultant:

- ♦ The consultant will put out a compendium of all the different GM strategies, so that the public can decide their tolerance for each tool w/respect to the goals.
- ♦ Time frame for the Comprehensive Plan is 12-15 months
 - ♦ 25,000 more people in Parish than in Sept. ’05 (a guess)
 - ♦ Infrastructure and public services are strained.
 - ♦ TP was just not prepared.
 - ♦ Need building permit data from municipalities.
 - ♦ Katrina and Rita make projections dicey.
- ♦ Other meetings?
 - ♦ Every time we come back, we’ll have meetings and encourage all municipalities to participate. Cities need to continue to be involved in the process.
 - ♦ Someone from Hammond has given us Hammond plans, but we haven’t had specific meetings with Cities yet.

- ♦ How will we collect data?
 - ♦ People are sharing information with us.
 - ♦ Environmental group
 - ♦ City fathers
 - ♦ Economic development groups?
- ♦ How long will data collection take?
 - ♦ First 3 months (we'll do other stuff during this time, too).
 - ♦ Input all the way through the process.
- ♦ Get word out. We need to plan the Parish like it's one City. Can we move from design to implementation? Smart growth – want to make sure that quality of life is addressed, not just land use.
- ♦ Get everyone in one room.
 - ♦ Steering Committee meets tomorrow night (March 22) at 6:30 p.m. – everyone should attend. For Steering Committee to do the best job, they need citizen input.

March 22, 2007: Homebuilder's Association Focus Group

Meeting Organizer: Beverly Robertson

Attending: Approximately 25 developers, realtors, home-builders. Richard Barker (Tangipahoa Parish), Bobby Cortez (Tangipahoa Parish), Gordon Burgess (Tangipahoa Parish), Lane Kendig (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Bret Keast (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Todd Messenger (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Herpreet Singh (CPEX), Alison Cascio (CPEX)

Comment-Would like to see better engineering; sewer and water board should be affiliated with the Parish to have some provision for Parish management. Would be good to consolidate the board with the water district. Need a major plan, district-wide, for water and sewer.

Comment-Want to know what lands are really buildable, what areas already have infrastructure, and what areas should be developed in the future. This will help with figuring out what land to purchase for development.

Q (by consultant)-Who does the sewer board answer to?

A-The Parish Council appoints them, but they don't listen to the council; the board barely survives financially.

Comment-The problem is that you're developing a piece of property, the council keeps changing lot sizes, etc. There is no consistency. We can't do affordable anymore.

Comprehensive Plan

Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana

"If there's a Parish road going to the property, how can you tell the owner he can't develop it? If road is not wide enough, that's a Parish problem, not the landowner's problem."

~ Focus Group Participant

March 22, 2007 Homebuilder's Association Focus Group

Response- The key problem is not lot size, it is getting to the lots (infrastructure). Let market take care of lot size, as long as there's infrastructure to support them. The plan will include a growth assessment, land use component, public facilities/services, transportation (network and roadway standards), economic development, and housing.

Comment- Some builders do not like to build in St. Tammany because of impact fees.

A-It is the consultant's job to look at the tools available for Parish to guide where growth goes or to have a mechanism to provide adequate infrastructure. This is the crux of the problem – how much zoning is right, and how much of other strategies are right to get a balance.

Q-Is it possible to do a zoning plan that alleviates fears of dairy and cattlemen?

A-We would address how the industry can evolve in a way that sustains it; for instance nurseries, etc. We can and will make recommendations, but the real job is to show you/inform you of options so you can make decisions. The planning process will:

- ◆ Ask the community what its goals are.
- ◆ Lay out all the options available.
- ◆ Ask the community which options they are comfortable with.
- ◆ Relay to the community if the options they choose will help them meet the goals, or if the options they choose will not help them meet the goals.
- ◆ The Community then has to decide if it wants to select stronger options or if it wants to modify its goals.

Q- If there's a Parish road going to the property, how can you tell the owner he can't develop it? If the road is not wide enough, that's a Parish problem, not the landowner's problem.

A- The market doesn't price your land on the roads and water service. Government has to have a way of allocating growth in a rational fashion. We'll look at all the tools that are out there and figure out how:

- ◆ To control where growth goes; or
- ◆ To figure out where the infrastructure is going to go.

30% of Parish roads are gravel (50-60 cars per peak hour). 50-60 cares means 50 to 60 homes can be supported by the road. Lots of roads have only 8 or 9 ft. lanes. Ditches are prevalent, too.

Q- Is part of the job to make recommendations as we go along?

A- We will make recommendations. Richard is already working with chief engineer, public works, and planning commission regarding subdivisions (townhouses).

Q- Developers have to think way ahead and plan around what's going on or pay in advance?

A- We're going to recommend a land-use plan that protects your investment. Zoning is one of the best ways to protect your investment.

Q- Where does sales tax from home materials go?

A- It doesn't pay the way for the house – schools, fire, police, water, sewer, roads, etc. 25% of the 1% sales tax has to fund Parish government. Staff and buildings will be needed to run a zoning code. Also, the Parish has a 5-year capital outlay plan. Some of the council members are talking about giving developers alternatives, such as widen roads, pay fees, add roads, etc.

Comment- Find out what's going on with the roads before you start spending money on development.

Comment- Several builders think zoning is a good thing. How do we protect people in the Cities from unzoned County land? We need to protect the outskirts of the communities now. Plan policies will have to have intergovernmental coordination that works.

Comment- As long as builders and developers know, 5 years in advance, to plan whatever is going to be affordable on their property.

Comment- We have "good" problems, for example, industry is looking at Tangipahoa Parish.

Comment- Need to understand where agriculture is going. Nurseries are doing better than dairies.

Q- What is Lane's take on impact fees?

A- It would not be difficult to run the tab up high. Parish roads can't sustain suburban development, and they cost big bucks per mile. Schools are all at capacity; school impact fees that charged the full cost of the impact could be huge. Impact fees are far better than adequate facilities ordinances, which can put growth in the wrong places and shut down growth in the right places. Also, impact fees generally start lower than the actual cost of the impacts. There should also be an enterprise fund for water and sewer.

Q- Can we bridge the urban-rural divide?

A- I think we can. Almost everywhere in the Country there's a battle between incorporated and unincorporated. It is often a very wasteful battle. We would like to suggest intergovernmental cooperation.

Other comments –

- ◆ TP Parish has a 5-year Capital Improvements Program now.
- ◆ Some cities have zoning.
- ◆ Builders have a concern for use compatibility – zoning vs. non-zoning.
- ◆ Zoning must also meet needs of cattlemen and dairy farmers.
- ◆ Can urban and rural co-exist?
- ◆ There is general support for zoning.
- ◆ There is concern about impact fees.

Administrative Comments by Consultant:

- ◆ Consultant will do a growth assessment
 - ◆ Regulations in place now
 - ◆ Deficiencies and opportunities
 - ◆ Land assessment identifying public facilities and services and development
 - ◆ Transportation – standards for roads, network of roads
 - ◆ Economic development
 - ◆ Housing
 - ◆ Natural resources
 - ◆ Implementation
- ◆ Rural parishes and counties that get launched into the growth game always have the types of problems we've discussed.
- ◆ We need to educate the general public so that they understand what we're doing. Community meetings are part of the process. Participants need to bring people to the process.
- ◆ One of our early products will be a "shopping list" of techniques regarding how to deal with these problems. The public will have to help strike the balance.
- ◆ Builders should tell us if there's something that doesn't fit the market.
- ◆ Meeting tonight (March 22, 2007) at 6:30 in council chambers.

March 22, 2007: Parish Staff and Public Services Focus Group

Meeting Organizer: Beverly Robertson

Attending: Parish Engineer, Technical Coordinator of Sheriff's Office, 911 Director, Water District, Health Department, Assessor's Office, Fire Chief, Other Sheriff's Office members, Mapping/Assessor's Office (Appx.12 Parish Staff), Richard Barker (Tangipahoa Parish),

Bobby Cortez (Tangipahoa Parish), Gordon Burgess (Tangipahoa Parish), Lane Kendig (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Bret Keast (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Todd Messenger (Kendig Keast Collaborative), Herpreet Singh (CPEX), Alison Cascior (CPEX)

Fire Safety / 911 Service

911 is tasked for all addresses in the Parish and municipalities. There needs to be coordination with the 911 office on decisions regarding street naming; otherwise it can become difficult to serve the community and can be hazardous. Duplicative street names are an issue not only for safety and fire service, but also for updating CAD maps. Same issue (duplicative names) exists for subdivision naming. 911 recommends:

- ♦ addressing policy Parish wide – thru 911 address office
- ♦ eliminate duplicate street names
- ♦ create a street name guide
- ♦ coordinate with 911 – include in development review process
- ♦ Street signs are not consistent with 911 maps; they need to be
- ♦ Intergovernmental agreement – Parish plus all cities plus depts., agencies
- ♦ Require digital plats – for assessors

911 has an up-to-date GIS map in ArcView; the Sheriff's dept. uses 911 map as base. 2005/06 aerial data exists – 1998 in Parish.

There is inadequate fire protection for many suburban uses in the rural parts of the Parish because there is insufficient water service and no hydrants. Even where there are hydrants, some suction trucks can tear up the water lines that are in place. Need to use special "soft suction" trucks.

Parish should require hydrants in subdivisions and/or fire sprinklers in the homes. Right now, apartments in rural areas aren't required to have fire sprinklers installed.

Mapping

Would like Planning Commission to require developers to provide digital maps to all appropriate parties (i.e. 911, Sheriff's Office, Assessor) before approving subdivisions.

Water

Parish has 8 water systems. There are also private water systems throughout the Parish. Some of those that are not part of the Parish-system have no water mains; the hydrants are not hooked up to any water lines. Many subdivisions have no hydrants for fire protection. There may be too many water service providers; combining some of them may be helpful.

Water supply in Parish is not sufficient; want to require developers to put adequate water lines and hydrants in.

Other comments included:

- ◆ Tangipahoa Parish Water District is fiscally sound.
- ◆ Wear spots.
- ◆ Keeping pace is difficult – 10,000 lots on map.
- ◆ Capacity is good for the next 5 years. Added well and tank recently.
- ◆ Pipeline issues.
- ◆ No provisions for fire system requirements – lack of fire flows pressures.
- ◆ Rural water systems – behind.
- ◆ Need map of water system boundaries; one doesn't exist now.
- ◆ Need larger mains.
- ◆ 900 pipe should be required there when annexed; alternatively require sprinklering.
- ◆ RSC 2006 required statewide – Jan 08 - \$ implication (La. Legislature just passed a law that increased costs – a statewide building code RSC 2006. Anyone below the 110 wind speed line has to have their house drawn by an engineer – soon will be the whole Parish).
- ◆ Setbacks could be an alternative; no setbacks required from roads now.
- ◆ Consultant will be given a list of the individual water systems. There's a map of wells, but not district boundaries. Consultant will have to contact each District for mapping.

Parish Facilities

New 911 office opened two years ago; will expand again within 5 years.

Permitting is getting new office space as well.

The plan should address new public/Parish facility needs and locations.

- ◆ Nonresidential may build lot of record, metes/bounds – no requirements, no plat required
- ◆ Working on road standards now
- ◆ No subdivision on roads less than 18' wide

Sewer

Sewer run-off is going into roadside ditches; new developments have sewer systems for the community, but it runs off. During storms sewer runs off to ditches and the sewer backs up because the ditches don't have the capacity for storm water and sewerage run-off.

- ◆ Regarding sewer run-off in ditches:
 - ◆ State law says sewer run off has to go to public ROW. If not the road right-of-way, it goes to a ditch in the back that goes to the ditch in the front.

- ◆ Nowhere for it to go from there
- ◆ Large number of package or individual wastewater treatment systems; prefer public, central system.
- ◆ At least consolidate several nearby subdivisions
- ◆ DPW does not currently require a servitude on lateral roads.
- ◆ A Parish inspector inspects all sewer systems over 2 years old. Very few systems are dedicated to the sewer board.

Infrastructure

- ◆ The Wal-Mart Distribution Center has no holding site for delivery trucks; so when their trucks arrive earlier than scheduled, they wait on the shoulder of the road creating a problem for the roads and drivers. No reviews required Wal-Mart to have a staging area for trucks.
- ◆ Parish should build a comprehensive Capital Improvements Plan (only roads are included now).
- ◆ Nonresidential may build lot of record, metes/bounds – no requirements, no plat required
- ◆ Working on road standards now
- ◆ Parish is doing a detailed inventory of its roads now. New regulations would prohibit subdivisions on roads less than 18 feet wide. If you the developer wants to build a subdivision, then the developer must pay for the street improvements.

Drainage

- ◆ Drainage district has two meetings/month. Averaging five developments per meeting. There's only so much you can do. You're just controlling the rate of flow from the development, not controlling the amount of water.
- ◆ Drainage district is interested in impact fees
- ◆ 10-yr pre/post storm existing standard, revisiting requirements now. Want to require an adverse impacts analysis, not just pre- and post-development flows.
- ◆ Impacts to natural flows is a consideration
- ◆ No major drainage capital projects are programmed now, just major maintenance projects. Everything is gravity-fed now.

Public Services and Law Enforcement

- ◆ Law enforcement needs addresses to be posted on the homes themselves.
- ◆ Health/permitting getting ready for new building
- ◆ Add law enforcement and fire to subdivision sign-off – intradepartmental review (tech review committee)

- ♦ Add ex-office members to planning commission representing police, fire, etc.
- ♦ There's more traffic and more crime. Law enforcement level of service dropped post-Katrina.
 - ♦ Need to enhance radio coverage area.
 - ♦ No money to hire more officers. Staffing is a major issue
 - ♦ 50-60,000 calls at Sheriff's Office, up from 20-30,000
- ♦ Public service providers don't get notified regarding plats – there's a sign-off list on subdivisions (should include fire department (doesn't now)), also need to have law enforcement. Maybe put a representative of police and fire on the planning commission as an ex officio member? Subdivision review committee?

General Comments

- ♦ Commercial – often no subdivision, so doesn't get any attention by anyone other than the building official.
 - ♦ There are no commercial restrictions at all.
 - ♦ If a company buys a lot of record, then there is really no process. Government will have to start addressing things at the front-end.
- ♦ St. Tammany Parish is more expensive. People are coming here from St. Tammany Parish, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans. Residents feel like they're being hurt by these people from somewhere else.

March 22, 2007: Steering Committee²

Attending: Tangipahoa Steering Committee; Richard Barker, Lesli Bolner, Randy Bracy, Lanny Connerly, Bobby Cortez, Dickie Davis, Joe Distefano, Greg Drude, Roy Dufreche, Jack Gaulteaux, Donald Gore, Charles Guerin, Thomas Holton, George Hyde, Russell Jackson, Gaston Lanaux, Clyde Martin, Ron Morgan, Gail Pittman, Pamela Ramsay, Weldon Russell, Michael Saucier, Jeff Smith, George Tiley, Rickey Umbach, Carl Wells, Osa Williams, Larry Wilson

Guests: Kendig Keast Consultants – Lane Kendig (LK), Brett Keast (BK), Todd Messenger, Robbie Miller

CPEX Staff: Herpreet Singh, Allison Cascio, Zach Broussard

I. Call to Order

- ♦ Bobby Cortez (BC) started off the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves

² Minutes of meeting, augmented with additional notes from Kendig Keast Collaborative.

- ◆ Richard Barker (RB) stated that this is the kick off meeting with the consultants and then introduced Lane Kendig, Brett Keast, and Todd Messenger of Kendig Keast Collaborative
- ◆ RB then asked the members of the Steering Committee (SC) to stand.
- ◆ RB stated that all members were to have received a binder of information and organizational purposes.

II. Roll Call

- ◆ Roll was called and members were asked to stand so the consultants could match names to faces

III. Welcome of Guests

- ◆ RB introduced Brett Keast (BK)
- ◆ BK stated that the process was going to involve a lot of public input and encouraged everyone to spread the word and invite others to future meetings
- ◆ BK said the binders contained background information
- ◆ BK stated that this would be a continuous process, and they would be sending information to SC for constant feedback
- ◆ BK reiterated the importance of SC members studying the information Kendig Keast would compile, because the SC members know the Parish best and their feedback will be necessary
- ◆ BK said he is focused on implementation and what it takes to get to that point by public opinion
- ◆ BK stated that it is the very beginning of the process and that Kendig Keast Collaborative just got in yesterday and had some meetings with public bodies and also got a tour of the Parish this morning
- ◆ BK said that in the next few weeks they would be getting a project schedule together so that dates could be reserved
- ◆ BK also said that they were going to have public meetings throughout the Parish
- ◆ BK reiterated the importance of engaging others in the process
- ◆ BK stated that meetings would be informal and informative and also helpful to gather as much info as possible
- ◆ BK stated that tonight would be the first step in getting the process started and to start getting input from the SC members
- ◆ BK stated that differences in opinions would be a big part of the process but that's what gets things to work
- ◆ BK introduced Lane Kendig (LK)

- ◆ LK stated that a comprehensive plan will lay out what citizens wants the Parish to look like in 20-30 yrs.
- ◆ LK stated that plans are only as good as the implementation strategies that accompany them.
- ◆ LK stated that in all decisions to be made, there will be costs and it will be a struggle at times to decide which costs are worthwhile.
- ◆ LK stated that this evening would be to try to hear from everyone; what is each person's most important objective of the plan. What do they want to happen; what are their expectation
- ◆ LK also expressed interest in what are the fears of what will happen; fear of the obstacles in the way
- ◆ LK also asked what you think is the best implementation strategy to achieve the goals
- ◆ BK stated that at the end, the binder would contain what the plan would be; next is what is going to be looked at
- ◆ BK said that he first wanted to tackle land use; then where you want the Parish to grow and what can the Parish support in a fiscally smart manner
- ◆ BK also said that there would be a special project focus about an immediate response to the changes since Katrina
- ◆ BK asked: Do you have the structure to sustain growth; police, fire, etc.? These will be looked at in the plan.
- ◆ BK asked: Is the infrastructure sufficient and how does it improve? This will be looked at in the plan.
- ◆ BK asked: how do you meet the Parish needs of housing; affordable and keeping character? This will be looked at in the plan.
- ◆ BK stated that there would be an environmental study to find out what areas are the most valuable or necessary to conserve.
- ◆ BK also stated that they would look at recent economic growths and trends
- ◆ BK said that there would be a focus on the implementation strategy and the best way to get the best job done
- ◆ Thomas Holton asked what the consultants opinion was about the Parish when they toured – LK and BK said that their opinion about what to change and what to preserve would be molded by the people, but from looking at the Parish there is room for improvement

IV. Adoption of Minutes of Committee Meeting dated 1/25/07

- ◆ Secretary is stepping down as minute taker and new secretary will be inducted at next meeting

*V. Public Input**1. Question 1- What are your biggest/most important concerns?*

- ◆ Lenny Connerly - anything to improve quality of life; infrastructure, etc. but not infringe on the rights of property owners
- ◆ Gail Pitman- from the north; protect the rural quality of life in the north, unlike it is in the south; preserve what is left
- ◆ Osa Williams- educator; school reform in the Parish will be driven by economic development; better facilities will bring more people and school reform and development is a major part of the growth; must tie in with infrastructure plans for water/sewer/streets.
- ◆ George Hyde- from north; want to get plan moving; won't make everyone happy; wants to get to the bottom line and get things done; low rank in quality of life but fourth in natural resources – land, water; needs to benefit the people; there will be opposition from landowners; education needs to be improved greatly; wants to get the best job done for the most people and as quickly as possible.
- ◆ Member – south part; biggest challenge is to create a cohesiveness around the Parish (especially around the commercial areas) and tying infrastructure to make them work together; sporadic pattern of new developments creates more traffic problems.
- ◆ Roy Dufreche - Quality of life; preservation of quality; natural resources could be used for recreational opportunities
- ◆ Thomas Holton- Preserving freedom of property owners with flexibility; ordinances are sometimes set in stone and give no flexibility in special situations; they need to be flexible to accommodate; zoning, land management, and ordinances need to accommodate certain situations. Common sense application.
- ◆ Jeff Smith- New urbanism is quality of life issue with all situations; transportation and circulation between home, work, and play; smart growth to keep this aspect; protect affordable housing and give option for those who don't have cars. Transit.
- ◆ Randy Bracy- northern part; rural life preservation; control growth by encouraging it but not too much and in a smart way; too much is as adverse as not enough. Asked what authority does SC have – BK stated that the group is a working group where group will give input; KK will bring back a proposal; then group will tweak it to their liking; LK stated that you are an advisory group and that elected officials would ultimately have the decision; the group would give their decisions to officials and strongly express desire that this is what the consensus of the people of the Parish want; KK is the knowledge base of the process and the people are the knowledge base of the Parish; BK stated that the police jury would be included so that they know what is going on during the entire process

“Too much growth is as adverse as not enough.”

~ Randy Bracy
Steering Committee Member

- ◆ Weldon Russell– complimented Barker and Burgess; stated that the SC is an advisory group to the Planning Commission; legislation was negligent in planning; 2 million dollars in surplus is available and that group should ask legislation for some of the money; no money was delegated to Parishes for master planning so most don't have master plans; also expressed concern with the amount of authority the group has; wants group to form public policy so that the public knows what is going on; planning commission needs to adopt group as the official Steering Committee to them; should be recommended at the same time that the planning commission should recognize that the group would be the permanent Steering Committee to allow for evolution; need to adopt rules of order/have officers so that order is kept and things are kept moving smoothly; gravel is finite resource and large trucks running on inadequate roadways – BK then stated that the role of the SC would be thought of during and after the process and also stated that the lack of structure is not uncommon
- ◆ Russell Jackson– property and land owner rights; take into account not only large land owners but also small land owners; making them work together so that conflicts of character do not occur next to each other; look at needs in terms of infrastructure, education, protection, etc. Jefferson Parish and St. Tammany Parish were lured by development and did not look ahead far enough regarding supporting infrastructure. Hwy 40 is magical. South of 40 has some infrastructure. North of 40 does not. We need more structure.
- ◆ Rickey Umbach– For zoning in some fashion because development (including a water tower) has come up next to him; more development is happening; wants ways to protect people in similar situation. Zoning is protective.
- ◆ Charles Guerin– Plan should bring some organization to the Parish, but still allow for choices; when developers and industry come in, they don't get to choose where they develop, but they are presented with different choices; gives the power to Parish, not developers.
- ◆ Dickie Davis– West side; rural and has dairy farmers; mega-site in Parish could be coming in the north; what is going to happen when the building and developing starts to happen before plan is complete; already behind b/c development has begun. Phone company is struggling to keep up with the Parish's development.
- ◆ Joe Distefano– Land owners property rights; if they want to sell for development, why can't they?
- ◆ Robbie Miller– Incorporate new technology but still maintain rural character. Need radio/cell for police and fire protection, but do not want a bunch of towers.
- ◆ Clyde Martin– What are the means to finance the growth and building of the infrastructure.
- ◆ Debbie Edwards– Ponchatoula; has diverse developments on her side of town, upscale, middle scale, mobile homes, apts. And doesn't see how to stop it; it is slowly

becoming realized that zoning is becoming more and more necessary; how are you going to go back to areas that have already been messed up. There is now rather strong support for zoning.

- ♦ Parish engineer – Trying to devise regulations to control developments and subdivisions and are waiting for planning commission to give them suggestions. Parish is processing 15 to 20 subdivisions per month. Need stronger regulations for residential and commercial development.
- ♦ Greg Drude– Growth areas in the Parish are where the better performing schools are. Want an acceptable public school system. Economic growth follows schools. Schools drive businesses because they drive houses; restrictions to control density, road setbacks, etc. are needed Parish-wide to preserve quality of life.
- ♦ Beverly Robertson– Need organization for the quickly progressing process; how many people commute to New Orleans or Baton Rouge, etc.; how can those people be represented and involved in the process; want to preserve what the Parish is known for. People can unite behind trees, rivers, hills, recreation. Does Tangipahoa Parish want to be a bedroom community or a full-service balanced community?
- ♦ Jack Gautreaux– Quality of life preservation; not a lot of time because of the rapid speed of sprawl and development; need to get plan completed and into implementation quickly.
- ♦ Larry Wilson– Transportation intrusion is major concern; concerned with preservation of quality of life because zoning doesn't seem to achieve that; there should be a common goal and want when ordinances are implemented. Still, zoning helps in terms of preventing neighbors from doing things that hurt each other. It's tough to not know what your neighbor will do. Regulation should reflect what people want; should look at trying to subdivide Parish into districts to better suit each area.
- ♦ Member – Recreation should be emphasized. The Ponchatula recreation district is a good example. Break up the Parish into various recreation districts to allow people in the different areas to make recreation choices.
- ♦ Member – How to find balance if owner wants to do whatever they want with land – sell to developer or preserve rural – how do you control who does what.
- ♦ Member – Private land owner rights.
- ♦ Gaston Lanaux– Urban sprawl is major problem for everything; how do you protect farmers that want to keep farming, or if they don't; educate people who come in; if people move in to look at his trees in his tree farm, they need to know that he will be farming them and they can't stop him; want flexibility in ordinances; reiterated that everything that would be put on the plan would go to a vote of the people.
- ♦ George Tiley – Minimization of regulations for farmers because it infringes on the rights of the farmers/land owners; it ends up costing them more; minimize conflict between different areas and concentrate on compromises.

- ◆ Ron Morgan – Where will funds come from; sales tax is a fast reactor as far as roads etc. are concerned; property tax is slow reactor; process is being funded with these types of taxes; as growth continues there will be lower millage rates which will help fund progress but it will be slow process.
- ◆ Member – Many new developments but not a lot of new roads; need to plan ahead and plan where roads will be to accommodate.
- ◆ RB – Quality of life seems to be major concern with all; have looked at the Parish and it has very unique qualities; process is not an easy one but if everyone works together and sticks with process it will pay off.
- ◆ BK stated that as more meetings are held, that a better structure would be put in to make the meetings more orderly to be fair to all. BK asked if people would tell what are some of the solutions.
- ◆ 2. Question 2 – What solutions do you recommend at this point?
- ◆ George Hyde – Is not in support of referendum on Comprehensive Plan; they are here representing the people; it should be up to the land owners; stated that his input would be heard.
- ◆ Osa Williams - Need to work with all the municipal governments so that the plan and goals are common and complimentary; need dialogue between governments.
- ◆ Donald Gore – St. Tammany does have some good progress; landscape codes to make development more aesthetically pleasing; master plan and regulations to allow for density control and property rights, but do it in a responsible manner.
- ◆ Weldon Russell – Need an overlay for I-55; surface revamp.
- ◆ Member – How do you control growth not only in the long term, but also short term – BK answered that it is scope to look at short term solutions.
- ◆ Member – Performance zoning to protect rural areas and controls growth in urban areas; density is good when it is well designed; mixed-use is also good because of walkable community.
- ◆ Member – Quickly move through process to save land.
- ◆ George Hyde - Use sales taxes to pay for a bulk of the process; don't use a ton of permits to pay for it.
- ◆ Osa Williams – Educate Parish's people to help them better understand why the Parish needs a comprehensive plan; do some sort of public outreach for education.
- ◆ Member – Fund to compensate landowners for losses due to restrictions, so they are not persuaded to sell if property values fall.
- ◆ Thomas – Flexible zoning to allow for higher property values; strictly agricultural land will not get as much money.

- ◆ Member – Consolidate where the permits come from so the process can be done in one spot.
- ◆ Member – Funding.
- ◆ Member – Consolidation of sewer and water districts.
- ◆ Member – Control density by having restrictions and requirements in the appropriate areas; get politicians on board with the program so that it is not a struggle to get the plan adopted.
- ◆ Member – Zoning but with lots of flexibility for certain situations.
- ◆ Weldon Russell – There needs to be a public policy of what is going on in scope of work by committee.
- ◆ Joe Distefano– Widen roads with the increase surplus from sales and property taxes.
- ◆ Member – Use the public meetings to get all peoples opinions.
- ◆ Member – Density around cities – better control of growth (PUD), green spaces, restrictions.
- ◆ Gaston Lanaux – Make sure officials are talking to state about state owned roads that are sub-standard; hit them up to take care of them and get them involved (Morris, 445, 40, etc.).
- ◆ Member – More money and where it comes from (state, local, federal), better infrastructure, better schools.
- ◆ Gordon Burgess– Property taxes are dedicated funds; Parish only gets 4% of property tax. Many or most of the bad roads are actually state roads. The Parish is working with the legislature, but there isn't any money coming for the roads. State roads are in bad condition; new roads are mainly paid for by Parish.
- ◆ George Hyde– Lots of roads are crossing Tangipahoa River, and east west corridors need to be improved.
- ◆ Joe Distefano– Will people vote on plan? - Yes
- ◆ Member – Get councilmen and planning board members to start attending meeting.
- ◆ HS encouraged members to contact their councilmen to get involved.
- ◆ HS asked BK for next steps.

VI. Next Steps

- ◆ BK stated that a schedule of all public meetings would be sent out as well as some immediate deliverables
- ◆ Kendig Keast has begun and will continue demographic research for an “existing conditions” report.
- ◆ Special project for interim measures will be started.

- ♦ Kendig Keast will create a report of key issues. All materials will go to the Steering Committee, the Council, the Planning Commission, a web site, the library, and to anyone who requests them.
 - ♦ BC stated that a schedule of Steering Committee meetings has been set and he asked if the Consultants would use that schedule.
 - ♦ BK said that they would try to accommodate to those dates.

VII. Adjourn

- ♦ BC motioned for adjournment
- ♦ Motion seconded
- ♦ Motion carried

March 23, 2007: Forestry Association Meeting

There will be six community council meetings in the next 60 days where input will be taken on the plan. The plan will be developed iteratively.

General Issues

- ♦ How does the Parish set aside right-of-way?
- ♦ How does the Parish accommodate housing needs?
- ♦ Economic development that does not compromise the integrity of the Parish?
- ♦ Implementation will be addressed up-front in the process.
- ♦ A participant from St. Tammany Parish said that implementation is key. Implementation was not stressed in St. Tammany, so their plan is "on the shelf." Ordinances must be adopted that provide what the citizens want.
- ♦ Politicians have to be on-board with the process.
- ♦ One participant questioned the need to expand I-10 to a 300-ft. right-of-way. 40 acres of land is consumed per mile to achieve the width. The farmers want space and tranquility.
- ♦ Schools are the key to economic development and quality of life.

Comments

- ♦ The size, composition, authorization, and purpose of the steering committee is not well understood by some members of the public. Trust is an issue with some due to perceived political purposes.
- ♦ The need for four lanes on Hwy. 10/Zachary Taylor Parkway, and its impact (including the impact of its wide right-of-way) on agriculture was questioned.

May 8th and 9th, 2007: Citizens' Congress Meetings*General Issues*

- ◆ Highway 40 narrow drives, no shoulders, ditches
- ◆ Evacuation – no mobility, Old Hwy 51 or N/S roads
- ◆ Road Conditions – Amite to Kentwood – I55, dangerous, Roselyn to Kentwood – Poor
- ◆ Priorities are urban areas
- ◆ Northern discrepancy – Hwy 12 also
- ◆ St. Tammany Employment – rideshare, park-n-ride
- ◆ Zachary Taylor Pkwy – need 4-lane, 300' ROW?
- ◆ Benefits others vs. T. Parish
- ◆ 40 acre loss over 1 mile
- ◆ Interchange locations decided?
- ◆ Widen curves
- ◆ Clear intersections
- ◆ Turn lanes
- ◆ Placement of road signs, obscure views
- ◆ Need more jobs, industry
- ◆ Types of uses – concern for intensiveness
- ◆ Greenspace
- ◆ Pollution
- ◆ Drainage
- ◆ Noise
- ◆ Large trucks on small roads
- ◆ Road restrictions
- ◆ Water service – poor quality at times, interruptions periodically, town well, odor problems – health
- ◆ Conservation
- ◆ Parish-wide well system – more
- ◆ Contamination notices – runoff? Dairy, septic – must have
- ◆ T. river now open to recreation
- ◆ Drainage overflow of roads at culverts

- ◆ Litter problems
- ◆ Residential sewage discharge – comprehensive approach – septic, release to ditch is not properly treated, packing plants
- ◆ No recycling, no drop-offs, hazardous materials
- ◆ Prefer underground utilities
- ◆ No high-speed internet
- ◆ Better cell service needed
- ◆ No cable TV
- ◆ Attract local business – drive 30+ miles, don't sacrifice quality of life, be picky, preserve family farms – source of income, mega-site – 2900 ac (Parish), power, keep ind. Along interstate/RR
- ◆ Constraints – infrastructure, school crowding, available housing – suitable, diverse, medical – 1 hospital in Amite
- ◆ Litter
- ◆ Jobs, quality in north end – need to upgrade character to attract employers
- ◆ Aesthetics through town are "inconsistent" need upgrade
- ◆ Kentwood main street is a "ghost town"
- ◆ Illegal dumps
- ◆ Too many dogs (coyotes) in town
- ◆ Grocery in McComb or Hammond
- ◆ Some drive far to go to work
- ◆ SS too rough, S1 too crowded
- ◆ Grocery closer (Amite close enough), close to interstate
- ◆ Aesthetics – Tangi has lots of abandoned trailers and cars, remove when abandoned
- ◆ Dairy industry – protect, low milk price, high beef price, high fuel cost
- ◆ Dairy value-added business should be allowed
- ◆ North end is rural – don't want to sell off to residential sub-divider
- ◆ Livingston/Ascension – developers should pick up costs of development up front
- ◆ Some areas restricted for residential large lots – wide lots
- ◆ Don't want people to spread out into the country
- ◆ How to keep dairy farmers busy – need continuing right to practice forestry – need fire, cutting, chemicals

- ◆ Natural resources recreation – “go to Mississippi”
- ◆ No access to river – boat launch
- ◆ Bring Mississippi folks here to recreate
- ◆ Clean river out
- ◆ Build boat ramp near river
- ◆ Hunting, fishing, horseback riding, all on private land now or management area – quail research
- ◆ Hunting season very short
- ◆ Bike ride a couple times/year, dangerous on hilly curvy roads, bike lanes?
- ◆ Publicize recreation
- ◆ No ballparks, etc. for kids, no joint use with schools
- ◆ Summer baseball/softball in town
- ◆ Campground (quiet, family supervised)
- ◆ Keep development below 16
- ◆ Manage expectations of people moving to the North – North is rural lifestyle
- ◆ Nursing homes/assisted living – facilities needed, no vacancies in Kentwood/Amite, affects peoples future plans
- ◆ Retirement/continuing care “village” with commercial
- ◆ Dairies in decline – re-use
- ◆ Make it “fit” into existing character
- ◆ State “retirement” designation
- ◆ Satellite college in Kentwood
- ◆ Support of dairy industry, protect as a business, regs, respect, function/role of all farming
- ◆ Lower property tax on active farms
- ◆ Restrict borrow pit use, surface mining/gravel pits
- ◆ Recreation – rivers/lakes/fishing – poor access now, Everyone goes to Mississippi to fish and shop
- ◆ Zachary Taylor Parkway – protect against hazardous industries, gravel is where it is, be careful not to over-regulate, so are trees and other resources
- ◆ Impacts aren’t the same everywhere

- ◆ Already state and fed regulations on rural industry (e.g., agriculture, forestry, extraction) operations
- ◆ Schools – preserve good system, building puts pressure on schools, student/teacher ratios
- ◆ Protect grandkids inheritance, lifestyle – laid back, open, peaceful, low crime, fresh air, trees wildlife, Tangipahoa River, hills
- ◆ Allow bicycling – narrow roads are dangerous
- ◆ Walking trails
- ◆ No public transportation
- ◆ Road conditions – school busses
- ◆ I-55 improvement
- ◆ Narrow but gen. good condition/safety
- ◆ No link between roads/development, subdivision approved w/o adequate roads, more significant over time in North
- ◆ Improve E/W routes, also more routes, 5 across river in North now
- ◆ Speed enforcement
- ◆ Lack of shoulders, poorly maintained, over growth
- ◆ How are improvement paid for? – industry
- ◆ SH 1057 – bus safety, log/chip trucks
- ◆ Truck routes – restrict
- ◆ Hwy 10 – major truck route – hazardous materials
- ◆ Zachary Taylor – not fenced, splitting properties, control desired
- ◆ Discharge to ditch – odor, mosquito, getting worse, crosses property lines, state allows, treatment beds allowed but more money, may be applicable on North, min 3 acre percolation, treatment plant allowed on $\frac{1}{2}$ acre
- ◆ Rural water – ** capacity, accommodate growth, ** no fire protection, identified ponds, can't use pool water, sprinkler?
- ◆ Industry on North
- ◆ Constraints – schools – parental involvement, labor – medical shortage, public relations, good paying jobs, Fluker mega-site would benefit, incentives necessary, outdoor rec./tourism – Mississippi is a good example – fishing, trails, parks
- ◆ Issues – Littering (roadside dumping/salvage yards)
- ◆ Salvage yards in North end

- ◆ Wrecking yards close to street
- ◆ Buildings falling down – main street (ugly, unsafe, not secure) – buildings on 51
- ◆ Non-agricultural development in rural areas = conflict
- ◆ Ag use of roads could conflict with residential
- ◆ Pressure on agricultural support industries/services – need critical mass of agriculture to survive
- ◆ Regulations should promote character
- ◆ Regulation shouldn't disadvantage owner
- ◆ Country life preserved with as few restrictions as possible
- ◆ Protect what's here now
- ◆ Less chance of distance commute from North end, little industry
- ◆ Most new subdivisions are 16 south
- ◆ Multi-acre lots 3-10 minimum
- ◆ 2 acres if you can dump sewage into public ditch
- ◆ 3 acres if you can't
- ◆ 120 feet on ½ acre frontage
- ◆ Overflow pipes into ditch – state law, should improve
- ◆ Widen 51? Very heavily used
- ◆ Roads need improvement
- ◆ Enterprise zones??
- ◆ Municipalities concerned about development that is contiguous to them, want to cooperate
- ◆ Subdivisions – 1640 – 40 homes/12 acres, too much, notices may not work, land value impact, open space, resource protection, traffic “moonscaping” of sites, changes of topography, drainage
- ◆ White flight killing Parish with population (eg. Covington)
- ◆ Want “Mayberry” quality of life
- ◆ Outside developers aren't concerned about long-term
- ◆ No radical changes in topography
- ◆ OK to build higher density near the towns
- ◆ Density should not be out of character with it's surroundings
- ◆ Rules right now are not sensitive to context, also only a few requirements

- ◆ Municipalities would like to see more green space
- ◆ Subdivision regulations stopped? Went from 75' to 80' or 85' lot width; developers objected to larger lot sizes
- ◆ Dairy farms being pushed out
- ◆ Influx from New Orleans is still happening
- ◆ 51 is overburdened; changing regional function, few signals
- ◆ 61 LI homes on 12-25 acres, was commercial land
- ◆ No predictability of use of property
- ◆ Traffic signals?? Hwy 16 – 1 way pairs, Amite (downtown) with on-street parking
- ◆ No public transportation, work, social service, intra-Parish, mobility challenge, impacts money opportunities
- ◆ Approx 60% of Sanderson farms employees live in the North end
- ◆ Bike paths and trails along roads/Tammany Trace
- ◆ Interstates need repairs
- ◆ Horse trails
- ◆ Bike/vehicle conflicts
- ◆ Council on aging has transportation
- ◆ Commuter rail (probably sufficient ROW)
- ◆ Roads need shoulders
- ◆ Impacts of development should be paid by re: roads
- ◆ If impact fees, have family subdivision/minor development exceptions
- ◆ Safety-roads aren't good enough for EMS/fire
- ◆ Administration/staff support

Utilities

- ◆ overflow pipes to ditches – ought to improve – at least improve the ditches to prevent standing water
- ◆ Underground power lines
- ◆ Conservation to reduce needs/green build
- ◆ Tax credits for green build
- ◆ Potential problem with water table drawdowns
- ◆ Different experiences with water quality

- ◆ No recycling, some drop-offs
- ◆ Ditch maintenance issues, can make for poor drainage
- ◆ River and creeks improving, but can get polluted
- ◆ Clear cutting makes siltation an issue
- ◆ Fill impacts drainage/floodplain regulations

Economic Development

- ◆ need educated workforce, better schools, vo-tech training
- ◆ Hammond vo-tech is good training resource
- ◆ Need vo-tech at high schools
- ◆ Major industrial site/NASCAR will create "instant city"
- ◆ High land costs, high housing costs
- ◆ Post-disaster plan, pre-disaster prep
- ◆ How to transition from FEMA trailers
- ◆ Positive attitude re: recovery
- ◆ No recovery resources; agriculture people are self-reliant
- ◆ SLU small business development center is a resource
- ◆ Louisiana works is another

Recreation

- ◆ Shopping is done elsewhere
- ◆ Need recreational facilities – putt putt golf courses, river access, limit 4 wheelers along creeks, trespassing
- ◆ Public recreational facilities are needed to prevent trespassing on private property
- ◆ Fishing? Tangipahoa river isn't very good fishing now
- ◆ Roadkill/animal control
- ◆ Larger shelter
- ◆ Prevent abuse
- ◆ Affordable spay/neuter
- ◆ "Plan for towns, leave rural areas alone
- ◆ Density "gradient", higher near cities
- ◆ Cities near interstate, allow for slow development to river
- ◆ Large lots on other side

- ◆ Husser, Wilmer, etc, - village development, Hamlet
- ◆ If zoning, be delicate
- ◆ Who determines how implemented? Referendum or council
- ◆ Crime prevention, security
- ◆ Litter

May 16, 2007: Citizens' Congress Meeting

Land Use and Community Character/Natural Environment

- ◆ Want to grow "as a community" plan together instead of do to each other
- ◆ Like lifestyle – 3 acres. Horses, ducks, dogs, chickens
- ◆ Problems to health b/c of burning trash – environmental hazards
- ◆ Use compatibility from lot-to-lot within subdivisions (ex. junk cars and trash) want to address community pride, aesthetics
- ◆ Life-long resident (grew up in N., live in S.) want to see government reform in Parish so inaction is not an approach
- ◆ Want to see development happen w/ public input and coordination b/t water/sewer/fire/transportation, etc,
- ◆ Need some immediate measures for before plan is done
- ◆ "subdivisions popping up like mushrooms", too many lots/acre and being built off narrow inadequate roads
- ◆ Came here to get away from congestion/crowd
- ◆ Provisions to assess developers' impact on roads and who will pay for impacts?
- ◆ Developer builds and leaves and we pay
- ◆ Can't stop burning leaves all together unless there's a way to dispose
- ◆ Rural areas need $\frac{1}{2}$ acre – 1 acre minimum lot size
- ◆ OK for smaller lots in less rural and non-rural areas
- ◆ Keep rural setting
- ◆ Moved here post-Katrina and brought family, anticipate more family to come
- ◆ Highway 22 needs improvements; supposed to be scenic but looks junky, blighted buildings
- ◆ Need recycling
- ◆ Don't want Parish to grow without constraints and guidelines

- ◆ Get neighbors to join us w/what's happening
- ◆ Have felt welcomed to community want to be a good citizen (moved post-Katrina)
- ◆ Important to upgrade Hwy 22
- ◆ New developments should require impact fees for environmental impacts
- ◆ Stop clear cutting Parish
- ◆ Developers should pay for infrastructure
- ◆ Developers should be required to replace trees
- ◆ Keep rural character (appropriate density)
- ◆ Need interim development controls prior to completion of this Comprehensive Plan
- ◆ Make developers share burden of developments now
- ◆ Time for change in Parish; where are elected officials to hear us
- ◆ Need our neighbors out to speak
- ◆ What will happen to capacity of our schools with all these new subdivisions?
- ◆ Want places for communities to bring recycling
- ◆ Compost instead of leaf-burning
- ◆ Can't smell pine trees anymore because of leaf-burning
- ◆ New development is bringing traffic – congestion
- ◆ Want to preserve open space and see buffers
- ◆ Frustrated; need action now worried about life south of Hwy 12
- ◆ Developers need to be held responsible
- ◆ Building hundreds of homes in Pumpkin (enter area, is impacting water pressure)
- ◆ Developers need to be responsible for filling in ditches (is affecting drainage)
- ◆ Waterways being destroyed (live near canal)
- ◆ Traffic is terrible
- ◆ Zoning is (Z-word) – need to reach compromise so it protects agricultural interests and urban interests where they are
- ◆ Need compatible uses
- ◆ Animal control dept. has not expanded in 10 years, need permitting
- ◆ Need to attract jobs to Parish
- ◆ Want plan to protect property values for future generations

- ◆ From Lake Maurepas to I-12 = fast growing area but no land put aside for future schools, fire, police, etc.
- ◆ Erratic growth along Hwy 22 – sewer plant on scenic highway
- ◆ Will greenprint plan be incorporated into Comprehensive Plan
- ◆ Address infrastructure
- ◆ Need public access to waterways (recreation)
- ◆ Connect to Tammany Trace bikeway
- ◆ Transparency in process is being questioned (there is a perception)
- ◆ Who will vote on this? Council? Citizens? Need the answers
- ◆ Planning Commission has “no teeth.” Parish Council needs to give Planning Commission some authority to deny bad development
- ◆ Don’t want developers to control zoning regulations
- ◆ Recycling drop-offs and junk car collection
- ◆ Subdivision regulations – how are they bad if people are moving in? cause traffic/water/sewer problems
- ◆ Can’t blame council for state road problems
- ◆ Land costs are inflated
- ◆ Need to better regulate subdivisions ex. What’s allowable on a narrow road
- ◆ You can do responsible development that preserves quality of life
- ◆ Home inspections are a lax situation, no accountability
- ◆ Can Comp Plan address issues Q- like leaf-burning/trash/recycling A- Yes, but not through zoning
- ◆ Many homes are burning trash, construction debris, not just trash, there’s no accountability at local level
- ◆ Urgency exists in city development, not rural – could there be 2 plans
- ◆ Put some “quick and dirty” techniques into play
- ◆ Drafts on website! SC members on website!
- ◆ Website! Draft copies of plan chapters, contact info for SC members, comment area on website
- ◆ Need political candidate to state positions on planning
- ◆ More coverage needed in local paper
- ◆ Parish needs grant administration

Neighborhoods

- ♦ Lights needed
- ♦ Overload on water
- ♦ One way in and one way out
- ♦ Design
- ♦ More parks
- ♦ Bike paths – connect neighborhoods
- ♦ Walking paths
- ♦ Shopping – residential
- ♦ Clothing stores
- ♦ Under-developed
- ♦ Dist 810 – gravel paved
- ♦ Road interest
- ♦ Speed limits
- ♦ Gridlock airport road
- ♦ No infrastructure
- ♦ Subdivision by school
- ♦ Traffic
- ♦ River impact
- ♦ Arterials NS EW
- ♦ People or infrastructure
- ♦ Who pays?
- ♦ Sewers
- ♦ 20 years unpaved
- ♦ Drainage
- ♦ Zoning
- ♦ 190 – 44S – 4 lanes
- ♦ Ditch cross section
- ♦ Over crowded schools
- ♦ South H.S.

- ◆ Impact on road trucks and cars
- ◆ Economic impacts
- ◆ Specific plans
- ◆ Existing communities
- ◆ Rural qualities
- ◆ Regional vision
- ◆ Mass transit
- ◆ Impact fees
- ◆ Rail system
- ◆ Fire ins.
- ◆ Metro fire service
- ◆ State roads
- ◆ Utilities
- ◆ Power
- ◆ Litter
- ◆ Hwy 22 – tomorrow schools
- ◆ Truck traffic
- ◆ Interchange @ Firet road
- ◆ Road drainage width
- ◆ Road barriers
- ◆ Crime
- ◆ Public input on development
- ◆ Money
- ◆ Environment
- ◆ Multiple jurisdictions
- ◆ Intergovernmental coordination
- ◆ Turn lanes
- ◆ Over-developed

*Community Character**Likes*

- ◆ Family
- ◆ Green space
- ◆ People (honest)
- ◆ Plan need plan with force of law
- ◆ Trust for public land green space
- ◆ Streets – too narrow, poor circulation, more E/W and N/S major routes
- ◆ Space, peace, and quiet
- ◆ Rural
- ◆ 2.5 acre lot sizes – good size
- ◆ no zoning, people can do what they want
- ◆ country element
- ◆ good education, high quality schools
- ◆ low crime rate, know your neighbors

Dislikes

- ◆ Traffic
- ◆ Drainage
- ◆ Sprawl – no planning
- ◆ Uncontrolled development
- ◆ Lack of control country area
- ◆ Variance of subdivisions
- ◆ Need proactive law
- ◆ Need to upgrade existing laws
- ◆ Community sewer plants
- ◆ Condition of / access to Tangipahoa river

Growth

- ◆ Scary
- ◆ Will change character
- ◆ Zoning can be OK – concerned with uncontrolled growth

- ◆ Property overvalued
- ◆ Plan for wider roads
- ◆ Need political vision
- ◆ Reactive, not proactive when it comes to roads; don't benefit community as a whole, developer catch more attention from the Parish
- ◆ Certain trans. Rules are set but not followed
- ◆ Development without proper infrastructure
- ◆ Need a balance between property rights and some regulation and planning
- ◆ Developers come here because they can develop with less restriction
- ◆ Charge developers – impact fees
- ◆ Someone has to pay for infrastructure
- ◆ St. Tammany was at same place as Tangipahoa Parish 30 years ago
- ◆ Lot sizes are getting too small – not rural
- ◆ Too much density for a rural area
- ◆ No enforcement of requirement for developers to install working fire hydrants
- ◆ Pressure varies by area and time of day
- ◆ "5" fire rating; could drop if improvements aren't made – insurance cost will go up
- ◆ All live outside of municipalities *
- ◆ Access issues for fire tank/ water trucks, roads and bridges not adequate
- ◆ One way in/out issues
- ◆ NFPAI NFPA101 = codes, require 2 in/out access
- ◆ Causes traffic
- ◆ Illegal dumping and litter are a big problem

Environmental Issues

- ◆ No wildlife, development/subdivision driving them away; lost of habitat
- ◆ Loss of wetlands
- ◆ Issues with developing on wetland and money charged to develop wetlands
- ◆ Building = increased impervious cover making drainage worse
- ◆ Growth OK, but needs to be planned for ex. Fayetteville, GA beautiful
- ◆ Runoff – construction runoff- clay in rivers and streams
- ◆ All septic tanks

- ◆ More development = more sewage in rivers; rivers are starting to get cleaner
- ◆ Maintenance of ditches from septic tank runoff needs to be improved

Recreation

- ◆ Rails to trails, Tammany Trace in St. Tammany, Tangipahoa Parish tried this several years ago
- ◆ Need shoulders on roads!
- ◆ School bus access, need turn around at ends of roads
- ◆ Roads too narrow
- ◆ Use schools after hours for recreation – tax payers are paying for facilities but HS gated on weekends
- ◆ Coordinate all agencies – drainage, schools, law enforcement, etc.

General Issues

- ◆ Economic development drive by interstates and highways
- ◆ Need to control this growth
- ◆ Pre-Katrina 300 calls/year – 8th ward, Post-Katrina 600 calls/year – 8th ward
- ◆ Fire dept funding issues, equipment needs
- ◆ Schools need to accommodate working parents, after care
- ◆ Flooding due to construction, lack of planning
- ◆ Flood study and traffic study everything is improved
- ◆ Drainage, funding for fire dept
- ◆ Developers should pay for amenities and infrastructure – no zoning!
- ◆ Drainage and roads, improve traffic flow
- ◆ Allow for rural land uses
- ◆ Who will enforce these rules; the plan? No enforcement currently
- ◆ Concern over small lot sizes, too dense, worried about schools, worried about crime
- ◆ Drainage
- ◆ Have infrastructure in place before the growth and development comes in
- ◆ School over-crowding, already have portables/ plus buildings
- ◆ Follow regulations in place
- ◆ Too many variances are being granted for new development
- ◆ Impact fees for new development

- ◆ Roads, need shoulders, need striping
- ◆ Regulate type of people by regulating the type of homes built
- ◆ Lighting on streets, streets too narrow especially for trucks, busses
- ◆ Need shoulders, roads narrow
- ◆ Drainage and flooding worse with new development
- ◆ Enforcement before development comes
- ◆ Roads need to be widened
- ◆ Hurricane protection, Tangipahoa Parish had high winds during Katrina
- ◆ Evacuations
- ◆ Education cannot accommodate influx of students
- ◆ Ditches – ROW = 1 ft back side of ditch
- ◆ Parish lacks ROW for road improvements
- ◆ Ditches dangerous/too close to travel lanes
- ◆ Culverts/concrete over ditches to widen roads; create shoulders
- ◆ Rewrite subdivision regulations to require wider roads and minimum lot sizes
- ◆ Grandfathering? To protect from new subdivision regulations and allow for continued rural uses
- ◆ Developers need to be involved in this planning process
- ◆ Plan needs to be expedited – need plan now
- ◆ Manage commercial and residential land uses
- ◆ Keep large lot sizes in rural areas
- ◆ Houses that are close together present additional five hazards
- ◆ No variances for developers
- ◆ Now = subdivisions being built with 42 units on 13.5 acres
- ◆ Buildings south of I12 cannot be used as shelter according to Red Cross
- ◆ Need evacuation shelter North of 190 – staging area for fire department

May 22, 2007: Citizens' Congress Meeting

Infrastructure

- ◆ North-South light rail system, linked to New Orleans (for work, evacuation) – possibly on existing tracks
- ◆ Hwy 16 subdivision development – traffic safety issue

- ◆ Water (city and private water systems) entities not working together – better coordination needed
- ◆ Water lines (fire protection) not adequate in rural areas
- ◆ Mobility planning needed (haphazard traffic layout)
- ◆ Alternative routes, signal time improvements
- ◆ Public transportation needed
- ◆ Patterns that reduce generation of traffic
- ◆ Intersection improvements
- ◆ Land use regulations including impact fees
- ◆ Sewage system needed in rural areas – better management using grids + larger plants
- ◆ Developers should practice best management practices (sewage, run off)
- ◆ Better storm water management practices (including diversity of landscaping material and preservation of trees)
- ◆ Land use plans needed to promote business
- ◆ Drainage retention (commercial –on-site)
- ◆ Park system (land preservation)
- ◆ Protect rivers + conservation areas needed
- ◆ Protect transportation routes (should be aesthetically pleasing)
- ◆ Economic development through eco-tourism
- ◆ 51-business at I-12 – hydraulic requirements and traffic requirements
- ◆ Balance between single family housing and multi-family (see a mismatch)
- ◆ Ban cookie cutter developments – buffer zone and landscaping requirement
- ◆ Parking requirements
- ◆ Street lighting
- ◆ Tonnage requirements on road
- ◆ No barriers on roads
- ◆ Subdivision access through other subdivisions
- ◆ Inadequate drainage in new subdivisions developments
- ◆ Bike paths needed
- ◆ Developers destroying natural resources – respect natural topography
- ◆ Implementation of plan

- ◆ Ordinance – can not drain on others land (retaining practices needed)
- ◆ Question regarding moratorium on big subdivision developments
- ◆ Contractor licenses for infrastructure (electrical, plumbing, etc...)
- ◆ Review Parish ordinances to make sure smart growth principles may occur regarding development
- ◆ Tree preservation (majority) without affecting timber industry
- ◆ Drainage issues (majority)
- ◆ Roads = #1
- ◆ Regional parks (majority)
- ◆ Protecting agriculture industry (majority)

Community Character "Quality of Life"

- ◆ Tangipahoa roots
- ◆ Hammond – small town atmosphere, safe
- ◆ Trees, greenery, natural resources, hills of Kentwood
- ◆ More space (subdivision lots are too small, but like larger lots)
- ◆ Extension of species – enjoy wildlife and diversity
- ◆ Cross sections of interstate make travel easily accessible
- ◆ North, south, east and west interstate system
- ◆ Distinctive culture (arts and university)
- ◆ Educational system – good

Dislikes

- ◆ Unkempt property
- ◆ Enforce landscaping laws
- ◆ Social injustice
- ◆ Noise (cut down buffer zones along highway)
- ◆ Trees are better than large concrete structures (regarding buffers)
- ◆ Need better run-off
- ◆ Sewage network
- ◆ Litter problem (more enforcement including larger fines)

- ◆ Illegal dumping (enforcement and prosecution)
- ◆ Need recycling program, and education regarding such – turn into economic development

Land Use

- ◆ Protection of land next door (residential from commercial)
- ◆ Identify areas for conservation areas
- ◆ Acre limit on unincorporated land – subdivision developments
- ◆ Control density in subdivision developments (using lot size)
- ◆ Aesthetics important – trees
- ◆ Affordable housing
- ◆ Mixed use developments (aesthetically pleasing)
- ◆ Cooperation between developers and small cities to have well planned communities (keeping character)
- ◆ More diversity on planning commission and Steering Committee (diverse backgrounds)

Recreation

- ◆ Bike trail connection around Lake Pont. (also throughout city)
- ◆ Planned subdivision developments – better land sue
- ◆ Adequate access roads in place before neighborhood development connect existing grid patterns to new developments
- ◆ Grocery store located near communities
- ◆ Regulations on signage (aesthetically pleasing, small signs)
- ◆ Islands of trees in parking lots and storm water management best practices used
- ◆ Mixed use land use
- ◆ Improve character of new building (commercial)
- ◆ Need recreation area for children near school (needs to be finished)
- ◆ Need community center for local population
- ◆ Trail ride, bike, walk – important
- ◆ Property along river is private – need more access, but do not want to interfere with land rights
- ◆ State park

Quality of Life

- ◆ Low crime rate
- ◆ Good school district
- ◆ Little traffic
- ◆ Small population
- ◆ Place attachment
- ◆ Enjoy rural character
- ◆ Quiet
- ◆ Retirement

Dislikes

- ◆ Noise from overcrowding
- ◆ Roads
- ◆ Sewage
- ◆ Public water
- ◆ Inadequate school buildings
- ◆ Overcrowding of schools
- ◆ Unplanned development

Housing

- ◆ 3 or 4 homes on acre; prefer one house on acre(s)
- ◆ Inadequate utilities (sewage)
- ◆ Better inspections regarding sewage
- ◆ Lax enforcement (permits, sewage)
- ◆ Post Hurricane
- ◆ Traffic issues
- ◆ Larger population
- ◆ Rural agriculture to suburban area is worrisome
- ◆ Worried people will complain of farming practices (rural to suburban)
- ◆ Low tonnage on residential roads/areas
- ◆ Traffic issues (ex: speed) in neighborhoods
- ◆ Roads need to be constructed correctly

- ◆ Parish roads are at end of useful life
- ◆ Concern that increased population will deplete water table
- ◆ Inadequate water lines (concern for fire fighters)
- ◆ Outside city limits do not have water lines
- ◆ What is the carry capacity of the land?
- ◆ Preserve agricultural environment
- ◆ High cost driving farmers to close
- ◆ Control litter problem (on river)
- ◆ Handel recreational areas with respect
- ◆ Litter enforcement

May 23, 2007: Citizens' Congress Meeting

Quality of Life: Assets

- ◆ Two interstates – can sleep in quite town and access cities easily
- ◆ University
- ◆ Like greenspace – is disappearing
- ◆ Like quiet small town feel
- ◆ Natural resources (Manchac, Ponchartrain)
- ◆ Ned to keep resources safe/clean
- ◆ Area is safe
- ◆ Good hunting/fishing
- ◆ Towns/cities have thriving downtowns – Hammond downtown is functional
- ◆ Columbia theater is asset
- ◆ Ponchatoula = “Mayberry” where people know each other
- ◆ Need good teamwork between Chamber, Downtown and elected officials
- ◆ Good people here, diverse backgrounds people from all state of life
- ◆ Like unzoned, unregulated areas – rural areas (to keep land diverse)
- ◆ Moved to Ponchatoula because clean environment, old town styles of Hammond/Ponchatoula; like people, clean atmosphere, attitudes and beliefs on north side of lake
- ◆ Diversity of land use exists here – working lands (farming), university, silviculture, towns

Dislikes

- ◆ Traffic
- ◆ Polluted waterways – all water bodies
- ◆ Too many subdivisions
- ◆ Improper sewage treatment and site run-off
- ◆ Drainage is a problem (all ditches do not drain properly/standing water)
- ◆ No shoulders on roads/too narrow
- ◆ Ditches not properly cleaned/maintained
- ◆ Subdivision density where it doesn't fit
- ◆ Too much clear cutting for developments
- ◆ Not against development but want to see guidelines and impact studies
- ◆ 1 way in and 1 way out of subdivisions that all filter onto narrower roads with no consideration for hurricane evacuation needs or traffic at peak hours = GRIDLOCK on massive scale; need to have more than one way in/out + wider roads to outlet on
- ◆ Street connectivity between neighborhoods
- ◆ Litter + illegal dumping (off all our bridges)
- ◆ Sewer run-off causing major problems (from individual septic systems)
- ◆ Need immediate actions now
- ◆ Want to see impact fees now
- ◆ To get from 1 subdivision to another have to empty out on narrow major arteries – need wider roads and connectivity
- ◆ Developers have no rules to consider impact of traffic – developers should have to consider traffic impact
- ◆ Need to assess adequate infrastructure (where is it? Where is it lacking?)
- ◆ Need to stop planning only for today and plan for tomorrow
- ◆ Can the Parish apply for FEMA money?
- ◆ Want to see areas between municipal and Parish areas have transitional planning (cooperation between Parish and municipalities) where development will impact both cities/towns and Parish/unincorporated
- ◆ Buffer zones between unincorporated and incorporated areas – need to include Parish entities (like water, sewer)

- ♦ Need to hear what immediate solutions there are
- ♦ Developers aren't doing anything illegal – need Parish planning + zoning to be held accountable for making good decisions (and council)

Housing

- ♦ Smart growth housing approached + mixed uses (incorporate housing with businesses; walkability)
- ♦ Residential + housing is separated from streets by green buffers (ex: Woodlands) especially around cities "stranglehold of special tax districts" is a problem
- ♦ Need work force affordable housing; keep jobs/salaries in balance with housing
- ♦ Transportation between where housing is versus work force (price/location)
- ♦ Should have multi-family where it fits but want more single family; also want housing that people can age in and maintain
- ♦ Trailer homes next to subdivisions – compatibility of housing types
- ♦ There is a limited market for duplex/multi-family housing (especially near hospital, etc.)
- ♦ Can there be partial zoning (ex: south could have zoning; north less?)
- ♦ Low income/workforce housing is problem retirement housing not problem in south Parish

Economic Development

- ♦ Big grocery store needed in east side of Hammond
- ♦ Agriculture land values are rising to where they're not affordable to continue agriculture uses – need a way to protect the value of these lands/tools
- ♦ Don't have high paying industries here
- ♦ Need to take advantage of university
- ♦ Film industry/capture
- ♦ Ecotourism – recreation, hiking, trails, etc.
- ♦ NASCAR – will be an asset for north Parish
- ♦ NASCAR will be loud
- ♦ NASCAR brings traffic, hotels, restaurants, low paying jobs; ideally need industries that will have year-round employment base
- ♦ Need cooperation between cities, Parishes, state to attract industry that is year-round
- ♦ Need expiration dates on approval process for developer projects
- ♦ Two golden rules: "unto others" vs "those with gold rule" need to pick one

- ◆ Use formula to make developers inventory trees and replace or find replacement of trees – migrate clear-cutting
- ◆ Sustainable forestry practices
- ◆ Need Parish agricultural office to promote agriculture
- ◆ Value-added agriculture (ex: food processing, organic farming) but need critical mass to sustain
- ◆ Industry – tech dept, nursing – strong at Southeastern – need to attract those industries (incubator) and link to university robotics department at university (more active high end economic development attraction)
- ◆ Need wider roads and shoulders
- ◆ 30 ft ROW too small for current development need larger ROWs
- ◆ There could be some resistance from property owners to give up acreage for ROW but could be convinced
- ◆ Need early investments in right of way plus thoroughfare planning
- ◆ Traffic impact fees
- ◆ Trafficsheds – need to create/allocate development at trafficsheds
- ◆ Key issues: wastewater, roads, uncontrolled growth, drainage and sewage
- ◆ Downtown revitalization
- ◆ Economic development attraction boils down to education
- ◆ Have tools to encourage arts, need to use it/develop it

Infrastructure

- ◆ Hard to monitor/control private sewer need regionalized sewer system plus willing to pay to for it
- ◆ Tomorrow/10am is a meeting regarding water/sewer for Parish
- ◆ Control of run-off from construction/illegal practices by developers
- ◆ Lack of public facilities (water, safety, roads, schools, etc.)
- ◆ School districting issue (too large but lack of tax base) taxing district not contiguous with school district
- ◆ Parish giving out too many permits for mobile homes
- ◆ Cost for permits is too low – control growth
- ◆ Unplanned development (many subdivisions are being proposed and developers are not paying impact fees)
- ◆ Impact fees – needed?

- ◆ Larger minimum lot?
- ◆ preserve farms – 20 acre lot?
- ◆ Annexation for subdivisions
- ◆ Are developers/contractors acting responsibly regarding existing infrastructure in planned areas?
- ◆ Concern of whether development restrictions are too late
- ◆ What would zoning manage growth? (interest by many)
- ◆ Someone against zoning due to past negative experiences (as a dairy farmer)
- ◆ Purchase of developmental rights by Parish government
- ◆ Want restrictions on vehicle weight on neighborhoods
- ◆ Heavy commercial traffic in inappropriate areas
- ◆ Enforcement of restrictions on property (and visa versa – respect of restrictions)
- ◆ Conflict on uses of road (agriculture, residential)
- ◆ No more dirt pits
- ◆ Should have minimum development standard (ex: paving, dirt pits)
- ◆ Interest in town centers/community growth centers (rest, other businesses)
- ◆ 45,000 acres of timberland
- ◆ Loranger school district attracts development
- ◆ Fee attached to building permits – school impact fees needed
- ◆ Context too sensitive development
- ◆ Impact fees should be dedicated to impacted development area
- ◆ Should we stop people from moving here?
- ◆ Understand fiscal issues related to districts (large area district with a lot of roads but due to small population, get few funds)

Likes

- ◆ Country, few people
- ◆ Rural character
- ◆ Farming- needs to be preserved
- ◆ Sense of family, good neighbors

Dislikes

- ◆ Loss of security; crime is up
- ◆ Urban sprawl – lack of character/loss of property value)
- ◆ Infrastructure costs are up due to new subdivisions; increased density
- ◆ Water quality is down due to new developments
- ◆ Decreased food production due to loss of farmland
- ◆ Utilities are strained
- ◆ Change of customs, loss of Christian values
- ◆ Emergency services stretched thin – need support from local government; demand has increased from 300 calls/year to 1,000 calls/year
- ◆ New subdivision – sufficient water supply; adequate pressure
- ◆ Water quality – too many wells
- ◆ Need full time paid firemen
- ◆ Emergency services need to be restructured – EMS, fire
- ◆ Impact fees fro developers to help fund infrastructure services
- ◆ Need immediate impact fees; especially to support fire protection
- ◆ Firefighters need to be on Parish payroll, on salary – 6 employees
- ◆ Landscape of Parish has changed not the county anymore
- ◆ Need parks, green space
- ◆ Parks lower on the list – need EMS, schools, infrastructure
- ◆ Need lower density – lower requirements on units per acre
- ◆ Moratorium until plan is adopted
- ◆ Growth occurring too quickly need to slow growth, limit it and plan for it
- ◆ Need to streamline data for Parish
- ◆ Re-vamp tax Parish districts – need a Parishwide taxing district; Loranger is not receiving its' share of revenues
- ◆ Conservation easements on rural properties
- ◆ Good zoning laws to protect rural character
- ◆ Want low density development 10-20 acres/no traditional neighborhoods
- ◆ Roads too narrow
- ◆ Traffic gridlock around schools – EMS couldn't reach school area if needed

- ◆ Parish cannot maintain all the new roads with new subdivision
- ◆ Construction activity hurting roads – dirt trucks, etc..
- ◆ Need daycare, pre-school, and medical facilities to accommodate growth nearby rather than having to go into Hammond/Independence
- ◆ Moratorium, immediate protections

Economic Development

- ◆ Agriculture should remain as focus of economic development
- ◆ Develop agriculture industries – adapt to new markets
- ◆ Look into biofuels – sugarcane and corn
- ◆ Start green/biofuels here in Tangipahoa Parish
- ◆ Super project – will create jobs, regional impacts of super projects; value added industries in super project site; production facilities in Tangipahoa Parish to sustain the agricultural industry
- ◆ Roads – potholes; maintenance
- ◆ Roads – too narrow
- ◆ Litter on roadways
- ◆ Respect for the landscape
- ◆ LA worst roads/infrastructure in the country
- ◆ Need to plan ahead for infrastructure before development comes
- ◆ EMS access hindered by narrow roads
- ◆ Narrow roads can add to scenic/rural nature
- ◆ Need sewage in Loranger – now only septic
- ◆ Improve existing infrastructures – water mains and fire protection flows
- ◆ Limit businesses, etc. coming into Loranger – address the quality and nature of the business
- ◆ Housing pressure not as big of an issue
- ◆ Need to protect ag and support the industry
- ◆ Need live/work opportunities in the Parish
- ◆ Good quality schools in Loranger – school pride
- ◆ Changes in school system – concern for demographics of school are changing; more discipline problems now; overcrowding; big city problems

- ◆ Gas – commuting because prices are high; green house gases; effects of future market on existing exurban development (energy prices)
- ◆ Markets may begin to slow – many houses on the market
- ◆ Moratorium? – All in agreement that development should be put on hold until there's a plan
- ◆ Noise pollution (incompatible uses)
- ◆ Dealing with LULUS and NIMBYS (land uses and halfway houses)
- ◆ Wildlife – habitat and loss
- ◆ Hunting; recreational threats
- ◆ Recreation as economic development – eco-tourism
- ◆ Principally – ag support – consensus of group to protect ag land in favor of development

Summary of Key Issues

- ◆ Population explosion
- ◆ Fire protection
- ◆ Infrastructure
- ◆ Cultural changes
- ◆ Quality of life
- ◆ Low density housing
- ◆ Control growth – moderate growth
- ◆ Traffic noise
- ◆ Water – no meters on wells
- ◆ Decreased density
- ◆ Protect agriculture
- ◆ Rural character
- ◆ Face change