

DIVISION OF PLANNING

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
AND URBAN STUDIES**

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROJECT
PHASE III
Housing Data Report
Parks and Recreation Element
Economic Development Element
Plan Implementation Element**

**UNO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
AND URBAN STUDIES**

**Wendel Dufour, Director
UNO Division of Planning**

Tim Jackson, AICP, Planner

St. John Parish Land Use Plan
Phase III

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I St. John the Baptist Parish Housing Data Report¹

This housing data report intends to provide a snapshot of some key aspects of current housing in St. John Parish, including a review of U.S. Census population and housing data, current real estate prices, and the impact of future population on need for housing.

The Housing Data Report is divided into three sections. Section I looks at an overview of U.S. Census data dealing with population and housing demographic data for St. John Parish. Section II delves deeper into housing specific statistics for St. John Parish, and Section III reviews the population projections for St. John as well as discussing some of the economic factors that will impact the need for housing in St. John over the next several years.

This report is intended to provide the statistical basis for development of a formal Housing Element to the St. John the Baptist Comprehensive Plan. The St. John Comprehensive Plan currently encompasses the following elements:

- Citizen Participation
- Land Use
- Economic Development
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Implementation

Future elements to the plan should be incorporated in 2009.

¹ Because there is so little development on the Westbank of St. John Parish, this report focuses on data for the Parish as a whole. While it is important to understand housing dynamics on both the East and Westbanks, the data has not been disaggregated for this report. It is recommended that should the Parish decide to undertake a formal Housing Element data summaries and housing projections should be disaggregated for the East and Westbank of St John.

I. U.S Census Data Review

Future demand for housing will directly relate to several population variables. Below is a review and discussion of several demographic factors that will impact both the demand for and the type of housing the Parish will likely need to consider in order to accommodate future population.

Summary of Population Data for St. John Parish

The United States Census reports that the St. John Parish population grew by nearly 30,000 residents for the period 1950 to 1990. The 57-year population number and yearly percentage growth patterns for St. John Parish are outlined in Table 1. This data shows that, between 1950 and 1990, St. John Parish's population grew generally by about 27% per year during that span. However, between 1990 and 2000 population growth dropped off precipitously to only 7.6%. The population growth rate has accelerated since between 2000 and 2007 with an increase of nearly 11%. However, recent Census estimates indicate the Parish's population has declined slightly (-1.45% through 2008).

Table 1: Population Summary 1950-2007 for St. John Parish

Year	Population	Population Change 1950- 2007	% Change 1950-2008
1950	14,861	-	N/A
1960	18,439	3,578	24.08%
1970	23,813	5,374	29.14%
1980	31,924	8,111	34.06%
1990	39,996	8,072	25.29%
2000	43,044	3,048	7.62%
2007	47,684	4,640	10.78%
2008	46,994	-690	-1.45%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Racial/Ethnic Composition

Between 1990 and 2000 a robust shift occurred in the racial and ethnic composition of St. John Parish. As Table 2 shows, white population declined by nearly 10% during that period while other racial and ethnic minorities – particularly African-Americans - showed significant increases.

Census data also shows that the Under 18 demographic has declined slightly while the number residents over 18 have increased. Females in St. John continue to outnumber males with the gap widening slightly through 2000.

Table 2: Summary Race, Ethnicity, and Age St. John Parish 1990-2000

Demographic Characteristics	Population		% Change 1990-2000
	1990	2000	
Total Population	39,996	43,044	7.62%
RACE/ETHNICITY			
White	25,039	22,633	-9.61%
Black	14,419	19,268	33.63%
Amer. Ind./Alaskan	100	112	12.00%
Asian/Pacific Island	158	229	44.94%
Other	280	371	32.50%
2 or More Races	N.A.	420	
Hispanic/Latino	954	1,230	28.93%
AGE			
Under 18 Years	13,648	13,427	-1.62%
18 to 64 Years	23,519	26,261	11.66%
65 years and Over	2,829	3,356	18.63%
SEX			
Male	19,577	20,893	6.72%
Female	20,419	22,151	8.48%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Summary of General Household Characteristics

In 2000, St. John Parish had 14,283 households, an increase of nearly 1,600 households, or about 12.4% more than in 1990. As Table 3 below shows, 1, 2, and 3 person households increased in number from 1990, while all other categories of household size decreased in both number and percentage of total occupied households. These three categories actually increased by almost 1,700 households eclipsing the total number of new households added. Losses among larger households offset the gains. This likely resulted in the household size decrease for all households in St. John Parish.

As noted earlier, St. John's population is becoming older, and this increase in smaller households could be the result of 'empty nesters' as well as new households who have not begun having children or who are staying in St. John Parish.

Table 3: Household Size Characteristics in St. John Parish 1990 - 2000

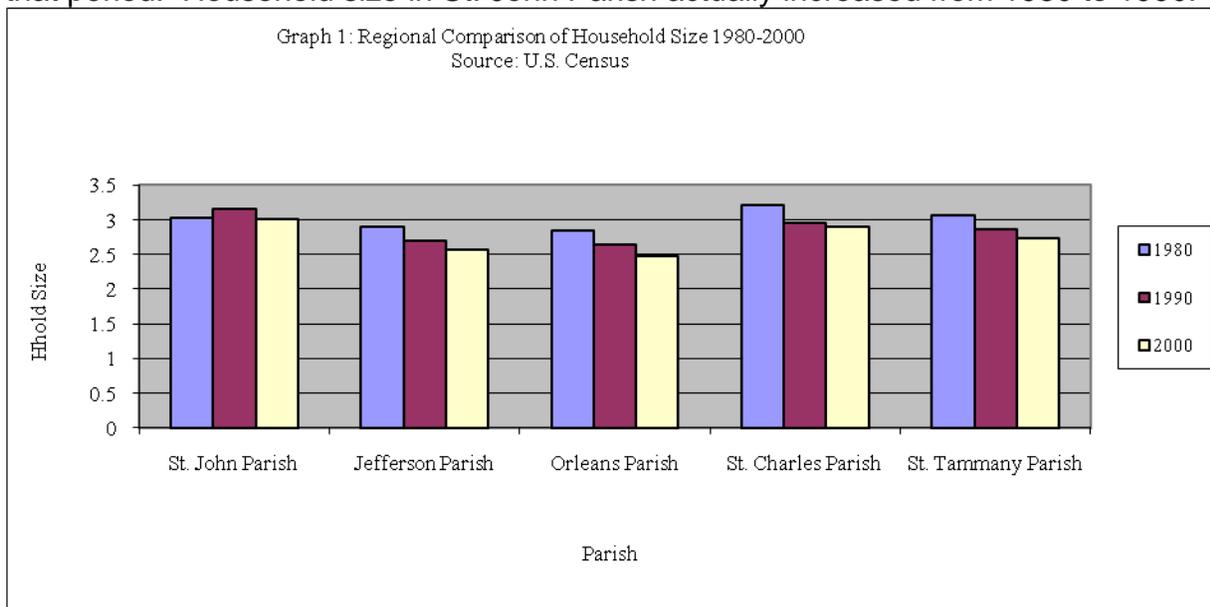
	1990	2000	Change	% Total 1990	% Total 2000	% Change
1 person	2,060	2,502	442	16.21%	17.52%	21.46%
2 persons	3,012	3,871	859	23.69%	27.10%	28.52%
3 persons	2,583	2,980	397	20.32%	20.86%	15.37%
4 persons	2,791	2,748	-43	21.96%	19.24%	-1.54%
5 persons	1,391	1,326	-65	10.94%	9.28%	-4.67%
6 persons	524	510	-14	4.12%	3.57%	-2.67%
7 or more	351	346	-5	2.76%	2.42%	-1.42%
Total	12,712	14,283	1,571	100.0%	100.0%	12.36%
Household Size	3.15	3.01	-	-	-	-4.22%

Source: U.S. Census

Household Size and Married Families with Children

Along with the drop in numbers of households with more than 3 children, average household size decreased as well from 1990. As expected, household size in St. John Parish has declined as well, dropping from 3.15 to 3.01 persons per household.

As Graph 1 below shows, the trends in household size St. John Parish is different than surrounding Parishes. For the years 1980 to 2000 parishes in the Metro New Orleans area, with the exception of St. John Parish, all showed decreasing household sizes over that period. Household size in St. John Parish actually increased from 1980 to 1990.



Both St. John and St. Charles Parishes have the highest per household averages among major southeast Louisiana Parishes, likely due to the attractiveness of those areas to young families with children. While both St. John and St. Charles saw declines

in household size from 1990, overall they both have household size averages that approach 3 persons per household.

Breaking down household size by occupancy status in St. John Parish shows that owner occupied households are generally larger than renter households – 3.03 as compared to 2.79 (see Table 4). Since owner occupancy in St. John approaches 75%, this brings the average household size close to 3 persons per household, highest in the area.

Table 4: Owner and Renter Household Size St. John Parish

<i>St. John the Baptist</i>	1990	2000	Change	% Change
All Occupied Units	3.13	2.98	-0.15	-4.79%
Owner Occupied	3.18	3.03	-0.15	-4.72%
Renter Occupied	2.97	2.79	-0.18	-6.06%

Source: U. S. Census

In addition to the decline in household size, there has been a decline in the number of married-couple families with children under age 18, as Table 5 illustrates. The number of households identified as married-couple families with children under age 18 declined by 13.85% since 1990, while the number of families with no children under age 18 increased by nearly 23%.

Aggregate counts for that period show that while in 1990 there were almost 1,800 more married households with children in St. John, that margin dropped to only slightly more than 400. These numbers seem to suggest that not only are childless married couples increasing, but that married couples with children may be leaving the Parish, or not moving in, or even divorcing. It could also indicate a burgeoning population of young married couples who haven't yet decided to start families. However, should this overall trend continue, along with continued increasing percentages of older residents, it is likely that overall household size will continue to decline in the coming years.

Table 5: Married Couple Families with Children

	1990	2000	Change	% Change
Married-Couple Families with Children				
Married-couple family:	8,001	8,035	34	0.42%
With own children under 18 years	4,896	4,218	-678	-13.85%
No own children under 18 years	3105	3,817	712	22.93%
Source: U.S. Census				

Household Income

The 1999 median household income in St. John Parish as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census was \$38,435. In 1989 the parish wide median household income was \$27,916.

After adjusting for inflation, 1989 median income was only \$931 less than the 1999 median income.

Table 6: Change in Median Household Income of St. John the Baptist Parish, LA

	1989**	1999	Change: 1989-1999	
			\$	%
St. John the Baptist Parish	\$38,907	\$39,456	\$549	1.4%
South Region	\$35,955	\$38,790	\$2,835	7.9%
United States	\$40,275	\$41,994	\$1,719	4.3%

* CPI for 1999/CPI for 1989 = 1.34 per URBN 6020 data

** Adjusted to 1999 dollars

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

In fact, comparing the 2000 median of \$39,456 to the inflation adjusted 1980 median income of \$46,098, shows that in fact, incomes in St. John Parish slightly increased by 1.4%. Conversely, incomes in the South region rose by nearly 8% over the same ten year period. There are other indicators worth mentioning.

Table 7: Percentage of Household Income By Race

Household Income Range	White	African-American	Other Including Hispanic
Less than \$10,000	40.6%	57.6%	1.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	39.8%	58.0%	2.2%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	51.8%	45.2%	3.0%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	51.4%	46.4%	2.2%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	55.1%	43.8%	1.1%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	53.5%	45.7%	0.8%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	55.8%	42.8%	1.4%
\$40,000 to \$44,999	64.6%	33.9%	1.5%
\$45,000 to \$49,999	65.1%	33.2%	1.7%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	61.9%	31.3%	6.9%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	64.4%	33.7%	1.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	76.8%	20.8%	2.5%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	74.3%	25.7%	0.0%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	72.3%	25.4%	2.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	69.1%	30.9%	0.0%
\$200,000 or more	85.3%	14.7%	0.0%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

III. Summary of Housing Data for St. John Parish

Housing Units

This section focuses on housing statistics for St. John Parish. The types of housing found in St. John Parish include: single-family, mostly in the form of detached houses in subdivisions; two-, three-, and four-family, that is, doubles or duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes; and multifamily, commonly called apartment complexes, which contain five or more units. Table 11 below presents a breakdown of housing units in St. John Parish by tenure and vacancy.

Table 11: Housing Units by Tenure and Vacancy in St. John Parish

	1990	2000	% Change
Total Housing Units	14,255	15,532	8.96%
<i>Occupied Units</i>	12,710	14,283	12.38%
Owner Occupied	10,128	11,573	14.27%
Renter Occupied	2,582	2,710	4.96%
<i>Vacant Units</i>	1,545	1,249	-19.16%
Home Owner Vacancy	1,095	908	-17.08%
Rental Vacancy	450	341	-24.22%
Source: U.S. Census			

In 2000 St. John Parish had 15,532 housing units of which 14,283 were occupied. This represents an increase of nearly 9% or 1,277 in the number of occupied housing units during the ten year period beginning in 1990.

Just about 75% of all housing units were owner-occupied in 2000. This is the highest rate among South shore Metro New Orleans parishes; while renter occupied units accounted for about 17.4% of total units. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of owner-occupied units increased in St. John while the percentage of renters actually declined slightly.

Table 11 also identifies overall vacancy rates for St. John and for owner and renter housing units. Overall, vacancy rates dropped by over 19% between 1990 and 2000, with the highest percentage decrease occurring among rental units

Post-Katrina, there was a rush by many to find available housing. With relatively little damage to the housing stock from Katrina, many of the vacant units were snapped up. Local real estate experts generally report there are few available vacant property units parish wide.

Table 12 below identifies the breakdown of housing units by type for St. John Parish between 1990 and 2000. Single detached units make up the largest percentage of units

in St. John – nearly 72%. Surprisingly, the next largest percentage of units are those classified as mobile homes at 11.66%. Given the rural nature of St. John, it is not too surprising to see above average numbers of mobile homes. Mobile homes have been controversial in St. John due to the feeling of many residents that they are being permitted in areas where they don't belong and will detract from the quality of life in the neighborhood.

Table 12: Housing Units by Type in St. John Parish 1990-2000

All Units	1990	%	2000	%	Unit Change 1990-2000	% Change 1990-2000
1 Unit	11,088	68.54%	12,076	71.96%	988	8.91%
2 Unit	464	2.87%	420	2.50%	-44	-9.48%
3 or 4 Units	634	3.92%	576	3.43%	-58	-9.15%
5 + (Multi-Family)	455	2.81%	411	2.45%	-44	-9.67%
Mobile home	1,830	11.31%	1,957	11.66%	127	6.94%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	161	1.00%	92	0.55%	-69	-42.86%
Vacant	1,545	9.55%	1,249	7.44%	-296	-19.16%
Total Units						

Numbers of two, three, four, and five plus units have all declined by between nine and ten percent over the last ten years. Vacant units have also declined during that period.

Housing Values and Rents

Often housing values can be very fluid in communities due to rapid changes in national, state, or local economic factors. While U.S. Census data can often provide insight to changes in values over time, pinpointing when those shifts occur is difficult given the decennial nature of the U.S. Census.

Table 13 below presents the U. S. Census reported value for owner-occupied housing units. The data indicate that nearly 72% of owner-occupied housing units are valued under \$100,000. This indicates that there should be more units affordable for residents with lower to middle incomes. Combining this data with previous analysis indicates that much of the lower value housing is in the form of mobile homes. The land use survey identified over 1,600 individual mobile home sites in St. John Parish. Many of these function as defacto low income housing in St. John.

Table 13: Owner Occupied Housing Unit Value 2000

	2000	%	Cumulative % 2000
Total:	11,569		
Less than \$10,000	424	3.66%	3.66%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	316	2.73%	6.40%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	151	1.31%	7.70%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	191	1.65%	9.35%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	226	1.95%	11.31%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	238	2.06%	13.36%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	266	2.30%	15.66%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	535	4.62%	20.29%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	822	7.11%	27.39%
\$60,000 to \$69,999	1,261	10.90%	38.29%
\$70,000 to \$79,999	1,498	12.95%	51.24%
\$80,000 to \$89,999	1,250	10.80%	62.05%
\$90,000 to \$99,999	1,075	9.29%	71.34%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	1,250	10.80%	82.14%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	1,010	8.73%	90.87%
\$150,000 to \$174,999	450	3.89%	94.76%
\$175,000 to \$199,999	169	1.46%	96.22%
\$200,000 to \$249,999	240	2.07%	98.30%
\$250,000 to \$299,999	137	1.18%	99.48%
\$300,000 to \$399,999	24	0.21%	99.69%
\$400,000 to \$499,999	23	0.20%	99.89%
\$500,000 to \$749,999	0	0.00%	99.89%
\$750,000 to \$999,999	6	0.05%	99.94%
\$1,000,000 or more	7	0.06%	100.00%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Table 14 identifies the rents reported for 2000 and the changes from reported 1990 rents. Again, while this data is helpful in tracking longitudinal changes, local sources are better for identifying current trends. The data does suggest that in the early part of the decade, the distribution of rents remained similar to the 1990 numbers. Obviously, inflation led to some increases in the number of units in some ranges, but in general there were no large shifts in the numbers of units in a given price range. There was, however, a nearly 6% increase in the total number of rental units in St. John Parish.

Table 14: 1990 to 2000 Reported Rents in St. John Parish

	1990	%	2000	%	Chge.	Change	1990 Cumlitive	2000 Cumlitive
Total	2,571		2,714		143	5.6%		
With cash rent:	2319	90.2%	2,373	87.4%	54	2.3%		
Less than \$100	143	5.6%	253	9.3%	110	76.9%	5.6%	9.3%
\$100 to \$149	104	4.0%	120	4.4%	16	15.4%	9.6%	13.7%
\$150 to \$199	183	7.1%	142	5.2%	-41	-22.4%	16.7%	19.0%
\$200 to \$249	142	5.5%	141	5.2%	-1	-0.7%	22.2%	24.2%
\$250 to \$299	182	7.1%	154	5.7%	-28	-15.4%	29.3%	29.8%
\$300 to \$349	313	12.2%	280	10.3%	-33	-10.5%	41.5%	40.2%
\$350 to \$399	251	9.8%	318	11.7%	67	26.7%	51.3%	51.9%
\$400 to \$449	243	9.5%	297	10.9%	54	22.2%	60.7%	62.8%
\$450 to \$499	203	7.9%	217	8.0%	14	6.9%	68.6%	70.8%
\$500 to \$549	187	7.3%	123	4.5%	-64	-34.2%	75.9%	75.4%
\$550 to \$599	107	4.2%	78	2.9%	-29	-27.1%	80.0%	78.2%
\$600 to \$649	98	3.8%	109	4.0%	11	11.2%	83.9%	82.2%
\$650 to \$699	18	0.7%	24	0.9%	6	33.3%	84.6%	83.1%
\$700 to \$749	46	1.8%	20	0.7%	-26	-56.5%	86.3%	83.9%
\$750 to \$999	90	3.5%	64	2.4%	-26	-28.9%	89.8%	86.2%
\$1,000 +	9	0.4%	33	1.2%	24	266.7%	90.2%	87.4%
No cash rent	252	9.8%	341	12.6%	89	35.3%	100.0%	100.0%
Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S Census								

Current Trends in Real Estate Prices

As stated previously, the U.S. Census data is somewhat dated, given the fluid nature of real estate prices as evidenced by what happened in Southeast Louisiana post-Katrina. The best method to identify current real estate prices and trends is to consult the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) dataset. The MLS is used by professional realtors to market and track properties that are offered for sale. MLS data give the best real-time view of real estate prices.

Additionally, the UNO Real Estate Market Data Center (REMDC) tracks real estate trends in Southeast Louisiana and along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The REMDC provides detailed information on rents for various unit types.

This data was used as the basis to identify current trends in sales for St. John Parish. Although the population of St. John Parish did not increase tremendously between 1990 and 2000, statistics reveal that the value of housing has increased significantly. As stated earlier, housing values for owner-occupied housing units have risen sharply over the last few years, as have rents. However, incomes have not kept pace with the increase in housing costs.

Table 15 below presents data from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census on the value of owner occupied housing and the reported rents by income group and the percentage of households who pay more than 30% of their income in housing costs. The data indicates that higher percentages of both renter and owner households in the lower income ranges are paying over 30% of their income towards housing costs.

Table 15: Percentage of Households Paying Over 30% Toward Housing Costs

Selected Monthly Renter Costs by Income		%	Selected Monthly Owner Costs by Income		%
Total:	2,714	100.00%	Total:	9,954	100.00%
Less than \$10,000:	692	25.50%	Less than \$10,000:	887	8.91%
Less than 20 %	46	6.65%	Less than 20 percent	58	6.54%
20 to 24 %	56	8.09%	20 to 24 %	17	1.92%
25 to 29 %	6	0.87%	25 to 29 %	37	4.17%
30 to 34 %	35	5.06%	30 to 34 %	42	4.74%
35 % or more	308	44.51%	35 % or more	534	60.20%
Not computed	241	34.83%	Not computed	199	22.44%
\$10,000 to \$19,999:	567	20.89%	\$10,000 to \$19,999:	1,013	10.18%
Less than 20 %	35	6.17%	Less than 20 %	325	32.08%
20 to 24 %	22	3.88%	20 to 24 %	81	8.00%
25 to 29 %	88	15.52%	25 to 29 %	80	7.90%
30 to 34 %	45	7.94%	30 to 34 %	92	9.08%
35 % or more	346	61.02%	35 % or more	435	42.94%
Not computed	31	5.47%	Not computed	0	0.00%
\$20,000 to \$34,999:	627	23.10%	\$20,000 to \$34,999:	1,679	16.87%
Less than 20 %	179	28.55%	Less than 20 %	700	41.69%
20 to 24 %	153	24.40%	20 to 24 %	148	8.81%
25 to 29 %	96	15.31%	25 to 29 %	245	14.59%
30 to 34 %	73	11.64%	30 to 34 %	202	12.03%
35 % or more	13	2.07%	35 % or more	384	22.87%
Not computed	113	18.02%	Not computed	0	0.00%
\$35,000 to \$49,999:	352	12.97%	\$35,000 to \$49,999:	1,734	17.42%
Less than 20 %	220	62.50%	Less than 20 %	840	48.44%
20 to 24 %	70	19.89%	20 to 24 %	439	25.32%
25 to 29 %	0	0.00%	25 to 29 %	209	12.05%
30 to 34 %	0	0.00%	30 to 34 %	152	8.77%
35 % or more	0	0.00%	35 % or more	94	5.42%
Not computed	62	17.61%	Not computed	0	0.00%

\$50,000 to \$74,999:	360	13.26%	\$50,000 to \$74,999:	2,450	24.61%
Less than 20 %	302	83.89%	Less than 20 %	1,978	80.73%
20 to 24 %	5	1.39%	20 to 24 %	308	12.57%
25 to 29 %	0	0.00%	25 to 29 %	106	4.33%
30 to 34 %	0	0.00%	30 to 34 %	42	1.71%
35 % or more	0	0.00%	35 % or more	16	0.65%
Not computed	53	14.72%	Not computed	0	0.00%
\$75,000 to \$99,999:	86	3.17%	\$75,000 to \$99,999:	1,341	13.47%
Less than 20 %	74	86.05%	Less than 20 %	1,148	85.61%
20 to 24 %	7	8.14%	20 to 24 %	150	11.19%
25 to 29 %	0	0.00%	25 to 29 %	31	2.31%
30 to 34 %	0	0.00%	30 to 34 %	6	0.45%
35 % or more	0	0.00%	35 % or more	6	0.45%
Not computed	5	5.81%	Not computed	0	0.00%
\$100,000 or more:	30	1.11%	\$100,000 to \$149,999:	715	7.18%
Less than 20 %	30	100.00%	Less than 20 %	678	94.83%
20 to 24 %	0	0.00%	20 to 24 %	25	3.50%
25 to 29 %	0	0.00%	25 to 29 %	12	1.68%
30 to 34 %	0	0.00%	30 to 34 %	0	0.00%
35 % or more	0	0.00%	35 % or more	0	0.00%
Not computed	0	0.00%	Not computed	0	0.00%
			\$150,000 or more:	135	1.36%
			Less than 20 %	122	90.37%
			20 to 24 %	0	0.00%
			25 to 29 %	6	4.44%
			30 to 34 %	0	0.00%
			35 % or more	0	0.00%
			Not computed	7	5.19%

Source: U.S. Census

Often a better indication is current real estate data regarding sales price and current asking prices in the area. While this data is often not available to the general public, licensed real estate agents and brokers can obtain sales data for Metro New Orleans through the Multiple Listing Service².

Using sold data from the MLS from January 1st through July 2009 the average single-family home in St. John Parish sold for \$157, 875 or about \$93 per square foot. Table

² Real Estate Brokerage Firm Urban Evolution provided detailed analysis of real estate data for this project.

16 below breaks down average sale price and average price per square foot for each condition category on the Eastbank of St. John Parish³. Urban Evolution also found that housing prices post-Katrina peaked in 2006 averaging \$168,472 and declined to \$157,425 in 2008. This indicates that generally, prices have held in St. John while in other Parishes and particularly around the country real estate has declined by upwards of 20-40%.

Table 16: Average Sale Price for Single-Family Homes in 2009 (Through July 2009)

Condition	Units	Avg. Price	Avg. Per/Sq.Ft.
New	10	\$171,882.0	\$119.3
Excellent	80	\$174,207.0	\$102.8
Very Good	45	\$146,033.0	\$84.5
Average	12	\$132,056.0	\$70.1
Fair	8	\$92,125.0	\$58.5
Poor	1	\$80,000.0	\$61.9
Parish Total	156	\$157,875.0	\$93.2

Source: Urban Evolution, LLC

³ There are only 3 MLS recorded sales through July 2009 on the Westbank of St. John Parish.

II. Review of Population and Housing Projections in St. John Parish

Review of Population Projections for St. John Parish

As part of the Phase II Task II St. John Parish comprehensive planning process, the Parish engaged the UNO Division of Planning to prepare a series of population projections looking out to 2020 to assist in determining the likely amount of new land required to accommodate the anticipated development. The key basis for that determination is the forecast of the likely 2020 population for St. John Parish. For planning purposes most communities rely on the official population projections that are provided by the State of Louisiana Population Data Center (SPDC).

In preparing the recommended 20-year population projection, UNO supplemented the official SPDC projections with an independent analysis using the following methodologies: a.) cohort survival, b.) arithmetic, and c.) geometric⁴. The projections from each of these were matched against those developed by the State Population Data Center (official State population forecast provider) to determine the likely future population in five year increments for St. John Parish. The results from that analysis are provided in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Summary of Population Projections to 2020

	Census Population Estimate	Cohort Survival Analysis	State Data Center	Arithmetic	Geometric
2005	46,293*	46,667	44,990	44,568	44,654
2010	n/a	50,899	46,700	46,092	46,324
2015	n/a	53,628	48,360	47,616	48,057
2020	n/a	57,804	49,890	49,140	49,855

* U.S Census Estimate

The summary of population projections was compared to the 2005 U.S. Census population estimate for 2005 to identify the most accurate method for projecting future population. This comparison identified the Cohort Survival projections as the most accurate basis for projecting the population to 2020.

UNO projects that by 2020, St. John Parish's population is forecast to reach 57,804 residents, an increase of 14,760 people over the 2000 population, or about a 34% increase during the 20-year planning period. This represents a steady growth rate of about 1.7% per year.

⁴ A detailed analysis of these techniques is provided in Appendix ???

Factors Affecting Future Population Growth

Shifting Age and Household Demographics

Despite the sustained population growth in St. John Parish over the last eight years, there are some factors that could impact whether the Parish can sustain that growth. These factors are part demographic; part planning related; and part economic. One of those variables is the shifting age demographics in St. John Parish.

Table 9 below identifies the ten-year shifts among all age cohort populations in St. John Parish, both on a comparative and cohort survival basis. A couple of interesting notes is that the biggest losses came among the 0-9 and 25-34 cohorts, suggesting smaller numbers of young children and those who are college age or just out of college. While significant percentage gains occurred among older cohort groups, a large increase also occurred in the 15-19 age group. The overall trend seems to be toward a slightly older population, however the aging is not occurring as quickly as some local and national trends suggest.

Table 9: Age Cohort Survival Analysis 1990 – 2000 for St. John Parish

<i>Age Cohort</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>% Chng. 90-00</i>	<i>10 Yr Chng.</i>
0-4	3,838	3,463	-375	-9.77%	N.A.
5-9	4,371	3,692	-679	-15.53%	N.A.
10-14	3,636	3,874	238	6.55%	36
15-19	2,881	3,837	956	33.18%	-534
20-24	2,589	2,721	132	5.10%	-915
25-29	3,628	2,699	-929	-25.61%	-182
30-34	4,038	3,118	-920	-22.78%	529
35-39	3,525	3,612	87	2.47%	-16
40-44	2,631	3,588	957	36.37%	-450
45-49	2,021	3,240	1,219	60.32%	-285
50-54	1,596	2,503	907	56.83%	-128
55-59	1,209	1,907	698	57.73%	-114
60-64	1,204	1,434	230	19.10%	-162
65-69	1,003	1,006	3	0.30%	-203
70-74	683	925	242	35.43%	-279
75+	1,143	1,425	282	24.67%	422
	39,996	43,044	8,253	N/A	-2,281

Figures in red identify population loss

Another way to measure shifting age demographics is by examining household retention rates for specific age groups. The retention factor measures the survival rate of households over a ten year period. It is calculated by dividing the number of households in a specific age group in 2000 by the number of households in that same

age group in 1990, i.e. households in the 35 to 44 age group in 2000 would be divided by the number of households in the 25 to 34 age group in 1990. A retention factor greater than one indicates growth within that age group while a factor less than one indicates household loss over the ten year period. Additionally, since it is impossible to calculate a retention factor among households 15 to 24, the retention factor is expressed as the percentage change in that age group from 1990 to 2000.

Table 10 presents the retention factors for households by age groups for St. John Parish as well as surrounding Parishes for comparison purposes. All but three age groups in St. John Parish have retention factors less than one, indicating that fewer households remain in that age group cohort than in 1990. The data also show that St. John and St. Tammany Parish's are the only two Parishes to see an increase in households over 45. This suggests that St. John Parish is doing a much better job of holding on to residents as they age.

While St. Tammany Parish outpaces every other Parish in both overall household retention and growth in every age category breakdown, St. John Parish has the second highest overall household growth and retention factor among those Parishes surveyed with an overall factor of 1.12. Additionally, St. John has the second highest retention and growth among most key growth household age groups including the 15-24, 25-34, 35-44, and 45-54 household cohorts. For older households statistics place St. John about par with retention rates for the other south shore parishes surveyed.

Table 10: Retention Factors for Selected Metro Parishes 1990-2000

	<i>St. John</i>	<i>Jefferson</i>	<i>Orleans</i>	<i>St. Tammany</i>	<i>St. Charles</i>
<i>*15 to 24 years</i>	24.68%	4.51%	15.45%	28.54%	12.60%
25 to 34 years	5.20	4.03	3.25	6.46	4.70
35 to 44 years	1.08	1.07	1.05	1.64	0.99
45 to 54 years	1.05	0.94	0.92	1.23	0.91
55 to 64 years	0.86	0.90	0.88	1.06	0.82
65 to 74 years	0.83	0.85	0.79	1.09	0.63
75 and over	0.55	0.55	0.42	0.60	0.50
Household Growth Factor	1.12	1.07	1.00	1.37	1.00
<i>*Percentage Increase from 1990 to 2000</i>					
Source: U.S. Census and UNO CUPA					

Overall, the data underscores the broader picture that south shore Metro Parishes are experiencing slow or stagnant growth while St. Tammany on the north shore is experiencing rapid growth in almost all age groups. Since this is Census 2000 data and obviously does not include the impact resulting from Katrina and other hurricanes, the results of the upcoming 2010 Census need to be monitored very closely to identify where shifts have occurred in household age characteristics.

The recommended St. John Parish population projections are based on what is known about current demographic trends. Since population and housing are not completely

independent of each other, the above discussion portends some important housing realities which will need to be addressed. For example, as the population generally ages, household sizes will continue to decline, resulting in the need for more housing units. These units will likely need to serve a population that will either not be able or desire to handle the upkeep on a traditional lot -based home, but rather will be looking for alternatives such as town homes and condominiums. Also, elderly and/or assisted living facilities will be in much greater demand. Where to put these types of facilities will be an important issue in the near future.

Internal population dynamics are just one of many factors which could impact the future need and demand for housing in St. John Parish.

Economic Development and the New Mississippi River Bridge

Key to the growth in St. John Parish is the continued expansion of an economic base that provides solid employment opportunities and commercial and retail opportunities that meet the needs of all parish residents. The economic development element to the comprehensive plan has more detailed information regarding job creation statistics and other economic development related items.

There is ample land for economic development in St. John Parish, including land on both the East and Westbanks of the Parish. The current major employers in the Parish are industrial based, and growth in the petroleum refining and petro-chemical industries are important to establishing a solid job base in St. John Parish. Other sectors are also expected to show job creation over the next 10 years, including the retail/service sector, trade sector, information sector, and the manufacturing sector.

One of the long-term keys to economic development in St. John Parish is access to the Westbank. During discussions with the public, significant frustration was voiced regarding the lack of economic activity on the Westbank of St. John Parish. Residents feel neglected by parish leaders because very few retail or service outlets are available to residents. Access has always been a major issue, with basically only one small ferry in St. John to carry cars and people to the Eastbank.

Until recently, the closest Mississippi River crossing available was the Luling bridge. However, a new Mississippi River bridge crossing has opened on the western edge of St. John Parish connecting State Hwy. 3127 to the Eastbank and I-10. This could have long-term growth impacts by linking land on the Westbank of St. John to the growing suburban areas East of Baton Rouge.

National and Regional Economic Development

There are also broader economic issues which affect the conditions that drive population growth and thus new housing development. On a national scale, there continues to be significant unrest regarding the overall health of the U.S. economy. Key government statistics place the overall economy in recession; unemployment nationally

is the highest in almost 30 years; credit markets are nearly frozen; access to credit is severely limited and when available is usually only available to those with high credit scores; the stock markets – while showing recent rebounds – are still trading at levels about 30-40% lower than their highs; real estate prices have plummeted nationally triggering a foreclosure crisis exacerbated by the overall economic malaise; among other concerns.

In terms of housing those able to obtain credit are finding interest rates at historic lows. But credit terms are keeping many out of the buying market thus severely weakening demand in the overall market.

The national downturn has been somewhat limited in Southeast Louisiana due to soaring oil prices during the latter part of 2007 and most of 2008, but has not completely bypassed the region. However, recently oil prices have plummeted, significantly reducing the amount of money flowing into the state coffers. U.S. involvement in the Middle East and the impact that will have on the relative potential for another upheaval in price for crude oil will need to be monitored.

As a result of the late economic slowdown, the federal government enacted a massive stimulus package geared toward housing and public infrastructure. Some tax breaks are included, but unlike the early '00-'01 stimulus, is not weighted heavily in favor of tax cuts.

According to the UNO Real Estate Market Data Center's 2004 Real Estate Market Analysis⁵, the Metro New Orleans employment sector grew by only .69% between 1980 and 2000, by far the lowest among most major Southern urban areas. By contrast Orlando, Atlanta, and Tampa all ranked among the top 30 urban areas in the U.S. for employment growth. Local economic forecasts in the report offer a mixed bag for future economic growth in Southeast Louisiana. The report notes that since 1990, among the key base industries that have been the engines of growth in this region, oil and gas employment has shrunk by 48%; ship and boat building fell by 23%; and warehousing and transportation employment fell by 21% while increasing nationally by 21%. Overall, the Real Estate Market Data Center also provided information showing that the New Orleans Metro area ranked 287th overall in employment growth between 1980 and 2000.

On the local economic front, according to the same report, the Southern manufacturing sector should improve as the weak U.S. dollar continues to make U.S. exports attractive. While the U.S. has recently incurred record trade deficits, as more foreign countries increase U.S. imports, those local employment sectors that rely on exports will see an improving employment outlook. Additionally, increasing exports will likely increase local jobs in shipping and transportation industries, a past growth engine for our region.

⁵ University of New Orleans Real Estate Market Data Center: New Orleans and the South Central Gulf Real Estate Market Analysis, January 2004, Volume 36.

Further, the report notes that in the Metropolitan New Orleans region, the major local industries which grew from 1980 to 2000 include health care, which grew by 22%, and the tourism and leisure industry, which grew by 44%.

Conclusion

It is difficult to predict exactly what impact the slowing economy will have for population growth and housing demand in St. John Parish. With many predicting a possible long-term recession, many developers are unable to obtain financing or adequately gauge future demand. While southeast Louisiana remained somewhat insulated from the national economic crisis due to activities related to hurricane reconstruction, short to medium-term overall economic health remains uncertain.

II Parks and Recreation Element

I. Introduction

St. John the Baptist Parish is a fast growing community that has seen significant development in recent years. Many new residential subdivisions have been built over the last twenty years, primarily in the LaPlace area, but growth can be seen in other parts of the Parish as well. In the "St. John Parish Future Land Use Plan" by the University of New Orleans, College of Urban and Public Affairs, projections for future residential population in the Parish expect an increase from the 2000 level of 43,044 to as much as 57,804. This increase in population is creating new demands on Parish services and infrastructure, including recreational infrastructure.

The goal of this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan is to enhance the quality of life of the citizens of St. John the Baptist Parish by improving the level of recreational facilities and services. This report inventories existing facilities and services, addresses the future needs of the Parish and outlines several options for reaching those goals.

The guidelines presented here are park and recreation space standards that are applicable nationwide for planning, acquisition, and development of park, recreation, and open space lands, primarily at the community level. These standards should be viewed as a guide. They address minimum, not maximum, goals to be achieved. The standards are interpreted according to the particular situation to which they are applied and specific local needs. A variety of standards has been developed by professional and trade associations which are used throughout the country. The standard derived from early studies of park acreages located within metropolitan areas was the expression of acres of park land per unit of population. Over time, the figure of 10 acres per 1,000 population came to be the commonly accepted standard used by a majority of communities. Other standards adopted include the "percent of area" approach, needs determined by user characteristics and participation projections, and area use based on the carrying capacity of the land. The fact that some of the standards have changed substantially is not an indication of their obsolescence. Changes are a measure of the growing awareness and understanding of both participant and resource (land, water, etc.) limitations. Parks are for people. Park, recreation, and planning professionals must integrate the art and science of park management in order to balance such park and open space resource values as water supply and air quality.

I. The Importance of Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Local communities reap many benefits from their parks, recreation and open space infrastructure. Not only do these sites provide an aesthetically pleasing place for citizens to spend their leisure time, there are more tangible benefits as well.

Research by the American Planning Association and other organizations has shown that communities with well-planned recreational opportunities, including parks and playgrounds, reap economic development benefits:

- Real property values are positively affected.
- Local tax revenues are increased.
- Affluent retirees are attracted and retained.
- Knowledge workers are attracted to the community and retained.
- Home buyers are attracted to buy homes.

In addition, parks and green space:

- Create safer neighborhoods.
- Can help revitalize residential and commercial areas.
- Help build a sense of community.
- Help children learn.
- Contribute to the overall health of citizens by providing safe opportunities for physical activity.

II. Methodology

In order to determine the specific recreation needs of St. John the Baptist Parish, the consultants utilized several sources of information. These included demographic information from the U.S. Census Bureau; previous population projections for the Parish; interviews with the Parish Administration and Council; interviews with various Parish Department heads, in particular the Recreation Department Director; interviews with the Parish Recreation Board; citizen input at public meetings; and a cataloging of existing recreation sites in the Parish and the facilities and condition of those facilities and equipment at each site.

A. Public Forums

On November 19, 2008, two focus group meetings were held to discuss housing issues. The groups consisted of residents, builders, developers, real estate brokers, non-profit service agencies and others. Because housing issues are intertwined with other quality of life issues, there was considerable discussion of recreation in the Parish by these community leaders.

Four public forums were also held to gather additional public comment on recreation and housing issues. These forums were held at the Parish Percy Hebert Building on December 1, two at the Edgard Courthouse on December 2 and February 9, 2009, and at the Garyville-Mt. Airy Magnet School on December 4, 2008.

B. Questionnaires

For additional public input, a Recreation Questionnaire was developed and distributed to various groups and individuals. A copy of the questionnaire is found in the appendix section of this report. Approximately two dozen people responded to the questionnaire and their opinions shed additional light on the recreation issue.

C. Previous Studies and Reports

In addition to public input, several previous reports and studies were reviewed to provide background information on recreation in general and specific projects. There is no previous "Recreation Master Plan" for St. John Parish. However, several "master plans" for specific facilities and sites have been done in recent years. The studies below are the most recent:

1. “St. John the Baptist Community Center Complex – Design Program”, Sizeler Architects, 2000. This study focused specifically on the then proposed (now open) community center at Highway 59 Park. Though focused on this building in particular and recreation in general, there was good research and a number of applicable goals included in the program.
2. “Regala Park Master Plan”, Meyer Engineers, Ltd., February 2007. This plan evaluated the existing facilities at Regala and proposed a number of improvements and some new facilities, including a new gymnasium. The total cost of these recommended improvements was \$5,306,000 with the gymnasium, and \$829,000 without the new gymnasium.
3. “Program and Master Plan – West Bank Recreational Complex”, by Greg Cantrell, Inc., and Meyer Engineers, Ltd., Feb. 2007. Like the Regala plan, this master plan laid out the program for improvements at the west bank facility. Unlike the Regala site, this site was vacant and all improvements started from scratch. The plan called for a number of facilities for various sports, including baseball, soccer, a skate park, a playground and more, to service the residents of the west bank of St. John Parish. As of the publication of this Recreation Plan, the only improvements at this site have been three baseball fields, built in part with funds from a Baseball America grant.
4. Recreation and Open Space Standards by the National Recreation and Park Association (Lancaster, 1990) - The standards most widely accepted by local governments for recreation and open space facilities are from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The NRPA has a hierarchical classification system of parks based on size, service area and other features. It also recommends standards for nineteen specific recreational activities, such as tennis and baseball.

All of this information – previous reports and studies, public input, focus groups, questionnaires, interviews - all helped determine the goals, objectives and specific recommendations of this report.

III. Demographic Profile

A demographic profile can give important information regarding the potential market of users of the current and potential recreational facilities, the type of facilities and services that may be needed. The information on the following tables was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and the University of New Orleans.

Population – St. John the Baptist Parish

1990 Census	40,584
2000 Census	43,044
2007 Estimate	47,684

2000 Population by Age		Percentage	
		<u>St. John Parish</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Under 5 years	8.0	6.8%	
18 years and over	68.8	74.3%	
65 years and over	7.8	12.4%	
Median Age of Total Population (2000)		<u>St. John Parish</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
		31.7	35.3

Households

2005 Household Estimate	15,079
2000 Households	14,283
1990 Households	12,916
% Annual Household Growth 1990-2000	9.6%
1990 Households	
With 1 Person	16.2
With 2 Persons	23.7
With 3 Persons	20.3
With 4 Persons	22.0
With 5 Persons	10.9
With 6 Persons	4.1
With 7 + Persons	2.7
2000 Average Household Size	2.98
Average Age of Total Population	32.6
Median Age of Total Population	31.7

IV. Playgrounds and Parks – Existing

St. John the Baptist Parish has a number of parks and playgrounds that are being used, depending on the facility, at varying levels by the public. It is important that an inventory of existing facilities be made as a baseline before any recommendations as to where the Parish need to go can be made. Below is a list of existing parks and playgrounds owned by the Parish and operated by the St. John Parish Recreation Department.

A. East Bank Recreational Facilities

1. Cambridge Park – Cambridge Park is one of several smaller yet very important recreational facilities in St. John Parish. Important because, due primarily to its location, it reaches its “market” easily. Located in a residential area of :LaPlace on a local street, it is easily accessible to families and children on bicycles
 - Walking / Jogging Path
 - Lighting
 - Playground Equipment
 - Basketball Court (uncovered)
 - Putting Green

2. Greenwood Playground – Greenwood, like Cambridge, is a small to moderate sized facility located in a residential neighborhood near several schools. As a result, it is well used by the community. Below are the amenities and attractions at Greenwood:
 - Walking / Jogging Path
 - Lighting
 - Playground Equipment
 - Tennis Courts (2)
 - Shelters (2)
 - Water Fountain
 - Paved Parking lot

3. Highway 51 Park - Located on U.S. Highway 51 in LaPlace, Highway 51 Park is one of the parish’s newest parks. It is very popular with walkers and joggers due to its location and its amenities, especially the walking / jogging path. It is also highly visible and adjacent to the Community Center and the St. John Parish Public Library. Existing amenities include the following:

- Walking / Jogging Path
 - Lighting
 - Playground Equipment
 - Soccer Fields (4)
 - Shelters (2)
 - Water Fountain
 - Rest Rooms
 - Paved Parking lot
4. Regala Park – Regala Park is intended to be the Parish’s flagship recreational site. It is a large facility, approximately 30 acres, off of Airline Highway in Reserve, not easily accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists, it is nonetheless well used because of its wide-ranging amenities, listed below. In addition, it is adjacent to the Frank Lapeyrolerie Senior Center and the Southeast Louisiana War Veterans facility.
- Walking / Jogging Path
 - Lighting
 - Playground Equipment
 - Baseball Fields (4)
 - Soccer Field (1)
 - Basketball Courts (2) - uncovered
 - Outdoor Swimming Pool
 - Shelters (2)
 - Water Fountain
 - Concession Stand
 - Rest Rooms
 - Racquetball Courts (2)
 - Paved Parking lot
5. Belle Pointe Playground – Belle Pointe is located on the western edge of LaPlace, on Jackson Street near Airline Highway. It was the first Parish playground or park with a walking / jogging path. The path proved to be so popular and such a draw for the park, the Parish began installing walking / jogging paths at other parks.

- Walking / Jogging Path
 - Lighting
 - Playground Equipment
 - Restrooms
 - Water Fountain
 - Basketball Court (covered)
6. Ezekial Jackson Playground - Located in the heart of Garyville, Ezekial Jackson is popular and well-used by area residents.
- Walking / Jogging Path
 - Lighting
 - Shelter
 - Concession Stand / Restroom
 - Baseball Fields (2)
 - Playground Equipment
 - Paved Parking Lot
 - Basketball Court (uncovered)
7. Stephanie Wilkings Playground – the Parish’s newest facility, it serves a neighborhood in LaPlace that was previously underserved. Because of its limited size, it cannot add very many amenities but it serves a specific niche in the community.
- Playground Equipment
8. Emily C. Watkins (formerly Woodland) Playground – An older park in an older part of LaPlace, near the Mississippi River, it serves its immediate neighborhood. Its amenities are:
- Walking / Jogging Path
 - Shelter
 - Basketball Court (uncovered)
 - Playground Equipment

B. West Bank Facilities

1. West Bank (Second Ward) Sports Complex
- Baseball Fields (3)

2. Harold Scott Rousset (Castle Drive)

- Walking / Jogging Path
- Restrooms
- Swimming Pool
- Shelter
- Basketball Court (uncovered)
- Playground Equipment

3. Wallace Bridge Park

- Walking / Jogging Path
- Playground Equipment

In addition to facilities owned and operated by St. John the Baptist Parish, there are a number of privately-owned and operated recreational sites as well as some by other governmental agencies. Private and parochial schools, as well as private recreational clubs, with sports fields, gymnasiums, and other recreational facilities have been an important component of the Parish's recreation infrastructure. Riverlands Country Club and Belle Terre Country Club have the only golf courses in the Parish. They are both membership driven.

C. Natural Recreational Resources

One of Louisiana's nicknames is the "Sportsman's Paradise" and this applies to St. John Parish as well. The Parish has large areas on both sides of the river that are wetlands and undevelopable but otherwise afford many outdoor and natural recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. The Parish has miles of shoreline along both Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas with a Parish-owned boat launch at each and a small un-named rest area at Lake Maurepas. The Manchac Swamp is a beautiful natural area that is also an economic development resource where swamp tours attract visitors to the Parish. These lakes and natural areas offer unlimited opportunities for outdoor recreation – hunting, fishing, and water sports.

St. John Parish manages two natural recreation areas – Peninsula Park and Sunset Park. To provide access to these natural and beautiful areas, and to Lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas, for hunters, fishermen or other outdoor sporting activities, the Parish prides several boat launches:

- Reserve Boat Launch
- Peavine Boat Launch

- Ruddock Boat launch
- Pleasure Bend Boat Launch.

For outdoor enthusiasts who are landlubbers, St. John Parish has committed resources to the multi-jurisdictional Pontchartrain Trace, or the “Ring Around the Lake”. The Parish, in cooperation with LA DOTD and the Regional Planning Commission, will begin construction of the first phase of the Levee Path on the Mississippi River from the St. Charles Parish line to LaPlace, with future phases not only continuing upriver on the levee but also branching north toward Manchac and providing the link to future phase in Tangipahoa and St. Tammany Parishes to eventually provide a continuous multi-purpose bicycle and pedestrian path around Lake Pontchartrain, in accordance with the RPC’s Pontchartrain Trace Master Plan. Comments from the citizens at the public forums and meeting indicated the residents of the Parish favor this kind of recreational and transportation opportunity.

VI. Strengths and Needs

St. John Parish is fortunate in that it has approximately eleven established parks and playgrounds relatively evenly distributed geographically and demographically throughout the Parish. Three of the eleven parks are relatively large in area – Regala, Highway 51, and the Westbank Recreational Complex. The other eight smaller community parks are distributed throughout the Parish and are generally centrally located within the communities they serve.

The Parish has also over the years, especially since 2002, spent considerable public funds making improvements to many of those facilities. Much of that came through a 2001 bond election where \$18 million was approved, primarily for streets, drainage and recreation projects. Approximately \$2.0 million was spent on recreation projects throughout the Parish with these funds. As a result, many of the parks and playgrounds have new equipment, amenities and facilities.

Using the Recreation and Open Space Standards recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), St. John should have approximately 480 acres of “close-to-home” recreation, park and open space. The recommendation by NRPA is between 6.25 and 10.5 acres per 1,000 population. With 521 acres for “Arts, Entertainment and Recreation” (based on UNO’s Land Use Survey of the Parish in 2002), the Parish slightly exceeds this recommendation, at least with current population estimates. However, it should be pointed out that approximately 295 of these acres are used by two private golf courses in LaPlace – Belle Terre Country Club and Riverlands Country Club. Actual land owned and operated as public recreation now comes to approximately 226 acres. Using the minimum recommendations of the NRPA, the Parish needs a total of 298 acres (6.25 acres per 1,000 population for 47,684 estimate 2007 population). This is approximately 75% of what is recommended by the NRPA standards for the existing population meaning the Parish is not far off of these recommendations and with the population expected to increase over the next decade, the Parish should develop a long-term strategy for acquiring additional property for recreation.

Though the Parish has done a good job with its recreation facilities, there are a number of needs that the Parish must address to continue providing quality recreational facilities and programs. Many of these needs were identified or confirmed through the public input elements of this plan.

1. Despite recent improvements, a number of parks and playgrounds have older equipment and buildings that need repair or replacement. The Parish Department of Parks and Recreation recently added additional staff members to help in this area. More help may be necessary to maintain all of the Parish facilities.
2. Though St. John organized youth sports teams have a history of success in regional and national venues, numerous comments at the public meetings and on the questionnaires indicate there is a need and desire by the public for the expansion of organized youth sports leagues and teams in all sports – more sports, more teams, more leagues.
3. More Adult Recreation programs - Approximately 60% of the Parish's population is between the ages of 18 and 65. Public input heard during this planning process stated that the residents of the Parish, east and west banks feel more activities and programs are needed for this age group.
4. One of the opportunities the Parish should take advantage of, identified by the housing focus groups and confirmed by other data, is the growing baby-boomer retiree market. One way to help capture that market is to provide quality of life assets targeted to that group, including recreation programs and facilities.
5. Additional recreational land and facilities - The Division of Planning at UNO projects the population of the Parish to increase by as much as 10,000 people in the next 10-15 years. To accommodate this growth, and to address existing deficiencies, an additional **±130 acres** will be needed for arts, entertainment and recreation by 2025 to comply with the minimum NRPA recommendations of 6.25 acres per 1,000 population. The Parish should be looking for additional property now to meet these future needs, primarily in the most likely areas for population growth – primarily the LaPlace area but also Reserve/Garyville and the west bank of the Parish.

V. Goals and Priorities

In order to make the most efficient use of revenue sources, it is important for the Parish to establish goals and priorities. Gathering input from citizens through focus groups and public meetings, as well as meetings and discussions with Parish officials, the Parish Recreation Board and the Parks and Recreation Department, the following general goals have been established:

1. To enhance the quality of life for all citizens of the Parish.
2. To provide parkland and recreational facilities which are convenient to all neighborhoods and meet the needs of a diverse population.
3. To enhance current recreational facilities and programs offered by the St. John the Baptist Parish Department of Parks and Recreation.
4. To find innovative ways to fund operations, maintenance and improvements at Parish recreational facilities.
5. Provide a diversity of recreation programs and facilities to meet the needs of all citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations will help the Parish meet the general goals stated above.

1. The Parish should continue development of the three large facilities:
 - a. West Bank Recreation Complex – the baseball fields are in operation. The Parish should begin development to diversify the recreation opportunities on the west bank – park lighting, basketball, playground and tot lot facilities should be the next priorities.
 - b. Highway 51 Park - This park, located in the middle of the most populated part of the Parish – LaPlace – should be the marquis facility in the Parish. It has the space and the access necessary to make it a successful and popular destination. Located next to the Community Center further adds to its importance.
 - c. Regala Park – Regala serves most of the western part of the east bank. It has diversity in current facilities, though some maintenance or replacement is necessary on the rest rooms and concession building. There has been a small but steady call for a new gymnasium at Regala,

as called for in the 2007 Regala Park Master Plan by Meyer Engineers. Regala is also adjacent to the Frank Lapeyrolerie Senior Center and the War Veterans Center. Patrons of these two facilities would be greatly served by adding senior and handicapped-appropriate facilities at Regala such as additional walking paths and stretch stations.

2. Renovate and rehabilitate existing parks and facilities to address the issues of aging and outdated recreational infrastructure: These parks and playgrounds, such as Belle Pointe in LaPlace, Ezekial Jackson in Garyville and Harold Scott Roussel in Edgard, serve a majority of the citizens of the Parish. They are convenient, accessible and are well-used by the citizens in their vicinity. It is therefore critical to maintain these parks as well as add new or replace equipment, facilities and landscaping.
3. Utilize the Mississippi River levee on both banks as a transportation link and a recreational resource. This idea was expressed in several public forums and on the questionnaires. Studies of other communities with similar facilities show a definite positive effect on quality of life issues and economic development opportunities.
 - a. Proceed with the Mississippi River Levee Path for bicyclists, pedestrians, skaters and other users. That project is in the design stage with construction funds in place.
 - b. Extend the levee path through the Parish on both sides of the river as funds become available.
 - c. Implement the RPC's "Ring Around the Lake Master Plan" by linking the levee path with the multi-Parish network described in the master plan, as funds become available.
4. Identify additional potential park / playground sites to prepare for future growth and the corresponding recreational needs of these future citizens of the Parish. The Future Land Use Plan by UNO suggests as much as 439 additional acres may be necessary by 2020 to meet the demand of increased population. Parts of LaPlace appear underserved by existing facilities. One site in the Belle Terre area (as suggested in one of the public forums) with other sites scattered in areas of future residential growth, primarily on the east bank of the Parish. Though less populated than the east bank, the west bank of the Parish has a much dispersed population. Two additional neighborhood type parks should be considered for the west bank.

5. Transportation and access are important to recreation in any community. Part of enhancing existing facilities and creating new parks is to make them easily accessible to local citizens.
 - a. Sidewalks and bike paths linking schools, parks and playgrounds to neighborhoods are critical. A example of this is the path behind Glade subdivision providing access to Highway 51 Park.
 - b. Adequate parking facilities at existing and new facilities must be provided.
 - c. Implement a sidewalk enhancement program to repair and replace existing sidewalks in neighborhoods.
 - d. Enact or enforce regulations that require new developments, commercial and residential, to provide pedestrian access linked to adjacent developments.
6. The St. John Parish Department of Parks and Recreation should increase its organized youth sports program to include more sports, such as soccer and tennis, and more teams and leagues for all youth sports.
7. Increase sports and recreation programs for adult leagues and programs. Besides team sports such as softball and basketball, many communities also offer arts and cultural programs through the recreation department. There is a growing need for this in St. John Parish and public input was loud and clear that it is a priority in many neighborhoods.
8. Enhance the Parish's outdoor recreation facilities by improvements at the boat launches on Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Maurepas, expanding the rest areas and facilities there, provide more boat trailer parking and other improvements to attract outdoor recreation enthusiasts.,
9. Increase programs and facilities for elderly citizens and retirees.
10. Establish appropriate funding levels for the Parish's Parks and Recreation system.
 - a. Predictable and adequate funding levels to meet capital and operating needs.
 - b. Leverage public funding with outside sources (grants, industry sponsorship of facilities, etc.), such as Marathon's sponsorship of Ezekial Jackson Park.

POLICIES:

1. Expand the budget and staff of the Department of Parks and Recreation in order to expand programs and facilities for all age groups.
2. Forge relationships between the Parish and other entities, such as the School Board, the YMCA, private recreational facilities and clubs, to share facilities in order to make more efficient use of limited funds and facilities by all parties.
3. Enforce SECTION 27:168. REQUIRED RESERVATION AND DEDICATION OF PUBLIC SITES of the St. John the Baptist Parish Subdivision Regulations. This section reads “All subdividers requesting approval for subdivisions containing five (5) lots or more shall dedicate land or pay fees in lieu of dedication for the purpose of providing green space or parks to the residents of St. John the Baptist Parish.” In the past, this has been enforced to varying degrees. In some cases, one lot out of a subdivision is reserved for a neighborhood pocket park. On other occasions developers were allowed to use the 5% for additional green space that beautified the development but provided no recreation amenities. There have been a few cases where the fee in lieu of dedication was collected but it is unknown if these funds were used for recreation improvements. The Parish should set up a fund specifically for this purpose and encourage or require the fee in lieu of dedication for developments in the LaPlace area to provide needed funds for park improvements. These improvements, besides possible property acquisition for new or expanded parks, could also be used for public green space, new trees, park benches and gazebos. For future subdivision developments in areas that are now vacant and where there are currently no parks, the land dedication requirement may be more appropriate than the fee option.
4. Utilize all available and appropriate public property for additional recreation and open space/green space. For instance, there are many drainage canals and ditches in the Parish whose banks could be landscaped and beautified, and in some instances have walking/jogging/bicycle paths installed.
5. Utilize the recommended standards of the National Recreation and Park Association when planning specific new facilities or expanding existing ones.

VI. Potential Funding Sources

Funding for recreation projects has always been difficult for many local governments. With the current global economic crisis, funding becomes an even larger challenge. Recreation projects in St. John have been funded through a number of sources over the years, including Parish-wide bond money, grants from the LA Department of Community Projects, Rural Development Office and others. Funding for the Parks and Recreation Department comes from dedicated video-poker funds. However, the economic turndown has affected this revenue stream as well. Some of the other funding sources have dried up and other avenues of funding must be found.

1. Special Taxing Districts

This method works like other taxing districts such as water or utility districts, school districts, development districts, etc., which are creations of the State of Louisiana. A designated area likely to reap the benefits of a park or other recreational facility or facilities would be taxed in some way, i.e., a sales tax or property tax millage, with those funds only to be used for capital projects, operations and maintenance of recreational facilities within the district. Pelican Park near Mandeville is operated by such a district, Recreation District #1. A similar district and park are being planned in eastern St. Tammany Parish near Slidell and a special district is being discussed by St. Tammany Parish and the municipalities along the Tammany Trace to help fund the operation and maintenance of the Tammany Trace.

2. Community Wide Sales or Property Tax (Bond Issues)

Some communities have a sales tax or property tax millage dedicated to specific recreational and/or bike facilities and programs. Many of the recent recreational projects built in the last few years in St. John Parish were funded by a 2002 bond election. Such a tax requires a vote of the public but would demonstrate the willingness, or unwillingness, of the community to pay for its amenities. However, a recent 2008 bond initiative that included \$2.5 million in funds for recreation and a new gymnasium was recently passed by voters.

3. Recreational Impact Fees

Impact fees are becoming more popular around the country to finance infrastructure improvements. Impact fees are one-time fees paid as the proportionate share of the capital costs of providing major facilities and services for new residents, not existing ones. Impact fees are not widely used in Louisiana, for a number of reasons, but in high growth states such as Florida,

parks and recreational facilities are some of the more popular uses for impact fees. With so much new development in St. John Parish, a strong case can be made that new recreational facilities are needed to accommodate future residents.

4. The Governor's Office of Community Projects

Many recreational projects in St. John Parish were funded by various grant programs administered by the LA Governor's Office of Community Projects, formerly run as the Governor's Office of Rural Development. A grant program allocating funds to each Parish, the Rural Development Grant Program was discontinued a few years ago.

5. Recreational Trails Program – As its name implies this program is for trails, paths and other strictly recreational projects, as opposed to the Enhancement Program which is primarily transportation related. The program is administered by the Office of State Parks in the Lieutenant Governor's Office Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. Funding from this program is part of the funding mix for Phase 1 of the Mississippi River Levee Path, soon to be constructed.

6. Enhancement Program

Federal Transportation funds have been a part of the funding matrix in some St. John Parish recreation projects, particularly the Mississippi River Levee Path. The **Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991** (Public Law 102-240; **ISTEA**, pronounced *Ice-Tea*) is a United States federal law that posed a major change to transportation planning and policy, as the first U.S. federal legislation on the subject in the post-Interstate Highway System era. It presented an overall intermodal approach to highway and transit funding with collaborative planning requirements, giving significant additional powers to metropolitan planning organizations. Signed into law on December 18, 1991 by President George H. W. Bush, it expired in 1997. It was preceded by the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987 and followed by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and most recently in 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

The "Enhancement" program of ISTEA and its subsequent reauthorizations sets aside a pocket of funds specifically to pay for alternative transportation projects, including bike and pedestrian paths whose primary purpose is transportation but which can also be used recreationally. Enhancement program funded the very successful "Tammany Trace" rails to

trails program in St. Tammany Parish which greatly contributed to the Parish's economic development and quality of life. It is hoped that this model will be duplicated in some way with the Mississippi River Levee Path, soon to begin construction in St. John Parish, The recently passed "Economic Stimulus Package" by President Obama's administration and Congress seems to have included SAFETEA-LU and its programs in its funding.

7. Other Grant Programs

There are numerous grant programs administered by a multitude of groups, some non-profits and foundations. The "Baseball America" program, a division of Major League Baseball, financed some baseball field improvements at the West Bank Sports Complex in Edgard. The U.S. Soccer Foundation also has a grant program to assist local soccer programs, with specific assistance to help build facilities. One program, funded jointly with NikeGO, awards a total of ten \$100,000 grants each year by the Foundation to support the creation of 50 soccer fields under a five-year program. Detailed information on these financial assistance programs and other programs can be found on their website at www.ussoccerfoundation.org.

There are other state and federal programs that can help finance infrastructure and facilities but generally have specific parameters for eligibility. Most grant programs have a local match requirement, usually a 25-50% split.

8. Corporate or Community Sponsors

Many corporations like to contribute to the communities they serve by contributing to local causes. Even national and multi-national corporations, such as Wal-Mart, have programs for local support. An example in St. John Parish is Marathon Oil's support of improvements at Ezekiel Jackson Playground in Garyville. Other local businesses could be offered the chance to participate in sponsoring a specific project at Regala, for instance, such as refurbishing the swimming pool area or funding the tennis court replacement.

9. Land Use Regulations

Most communities, including St. John Parish, have zoning regulations and subdivision regulations. These can be amended to require developers to provide property or other performance standards related to recreational facilities. If current regulations address these issues, they should be enforced fully in order to provide the required and desired facilities.

As discussed earlier in this report, St. John's Subdivision Regulations currently require all developments over a certain size to dedicate 5% of the total development to green space. The Parish could amend these regulations to provide incentives for the developer to contribute to a dedicated recreational fund for that area in lieu of the dedicated green space. Those dedicated funds could then be used to finance improvements at whatever recreation facility is closest and likely to be used by the new residents, or to acquire additional property if necessary.

10. Public Property Leases

St. John Parish could lease small pieces of the various park sites and other Parish property to cellular and PCS providers to locate their towers and other equipment. The lease agreements provide the Parish with a predictable, and fairly substantial, funding source for the life of the lease, usually 10-15 years. The funds are then used to finance operations and maintenance of adjacent or nearby Parish recreational facilities. The Parish could solicit these by sending letters to or contacting all providers offering tower sites at Parish parks.

III Economic Development Element

In 2007, St. John Parish adopted a 20-Year Land Use Plan as the blue-print for the subsequent development of a Parish wide Comprehensive Plan. The Plan included goals, objectives, and policies that identified, among other things, an economic development element as an important factor in helping the Parish promote and sustain business and industry Parish-wide.

Among other things, the economic development element establishes an economic vision for the community and expressed support for the core goal of growing the local economy. Implementation of the Economic Development Element is essential to the preservation and enhancement of the quality of life in St. John Parish. Economic development provides the community with the means to shape its destiny by ensuring that adequate levels of public services will be provided in the future.

The Parish's 2007 Plan establishes a 20-year path for how future development should be encouraged and evaluated. The Economic Development Element sets forth policies, which if successfully implemented, will maintain a healthy jobs-housing balance and provide for a diversity of quality businesses and jobs. Attracting and retaining quality jobs and development, preserving and enhancing the local economy, including agriculture, and maintaining the viability of the petrochemical industry.

However, these plans should be updated periodically, through a "periodic review process", or as new elements are added these elements should focus on including any updated information.

St. John Parish government, representative business organizations, and other stakeholders contributed significantly towards development of the Economic Development element to the 2007 Plan. Cyclical economic conditions underscore the need to continuously evaluate local economic development opportunities.

The following statement reflects the general course set by the 2007 Plan and Economic Development element and summarizes the perspectives of the Parish and citizens on economic development:

St. John Parish's community and its economic future will take advantage of opportunities created by dynamic markets and competitive forces. The Parish will benefit from leveraging existing strengths into new economic power by providing the environment for strong workforce development. The focus of St. John Parish's Economic Development strategy is to grow a strong, diverse, high-wage, economy that creates jobs at a rate in excess of population growth while maintaining and enhancing community identity and our quality of life.

Industrial recruitment and other economic development activities will support existing and emerging industrial clusters that have a significant knowledge-based component. Clusters targeted to drive the future economy are petrochemical, telecommunications, knowledge-based service industries, life sciences, healthcare, and expansion of locally owned businesses. There will also be an emphasis on the retention and expansion of existing businesses as the baseline for additional job creation.

To grow targeted industries and support the desired pattern of growth, St. John Parish must increase the inventory of prime commercial and industrial lands. The inventory should include an increase in the number of larger parcels that individually and collectively accommodate knowledge-based campus development and the clustering of targeted industries.

Economic development should be increasingly supported by master-planned and mixed-use developments in select areas that incorporate both traditionally defined manufacturing uses as well as office or commercial uses, and in some cases residential. The focus on a knowledge-based economy will increase the demand for campus-style development.

The development and marketing of a designated area containing high-technology and knowledge-based industries (conceptually referred to as the “Discovery Corridor”) will support the continued growth of existing high-technology firms and encourage more knowledge-based industries.

To be competitive for economic growth and investment, the development process must be redesigned to support shorter timelines, more predictability, and cost effectiveness.

Local and state governments must focus infrastructure investments in areas designated as nodes of growth to support economic development. These investments can be supported by new public sector finance mechanisms sufficient to allow for infrastructure investment in advance of development and to direct growth to identified nodes.

The future economy of St. John Parish will be characterized by an increasing percentage of individuals who both live and work in the Parish. Expanded opportunities and partnerships between education and business will provide an engaged citizenry and an educated workforce for existing and start-up companies. Our community will continue to recognize the expanding importance of our region and the significant economic benefit to be gained through regional cooperation and diversity.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Economic development planning cannot be conducted in isolation. The economy plays a vitally influential role in determining whether or not the broad array of objectives and the strategic vision for the overall Parish Plan will be realized.

Economic development programs may not be successful without supporting land use, transportation, and capital facility initiatives. Therefore, the intent is to formulate a broad network of interdependent policies within the St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan that are mutually supportive. The Economic Development Element has been designed as an integral part of the Parish’s 20-Year Plan. Recognizing the reciprocal benefits derived from strategies based on well coordinated policies, St. John Parish has ensured that its economic development initiatives are part of a complementary network of Comprehensive Plan policies (e.g., Land Use, Transportation, Parks, Recreation and

Open space, Implementation, along with future Elements). They also support other goals expressed in the plan and the long-range vision for the Parish.

St. John Parish and the other regional jurisdictions should work to promote economic development as a way to stabilize the tax base. The emphasis is to create wealth for individuals and the community through aggressive job creation and diversified tax base opportunities.

II. BACKGROUND AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to set forth the framework and guidelines by which a balanced and stable economic base will be pursued. In formulating future plans, the Parish recognizes that a dynamic and diversified local economy is important for a community's identity, quality of life, and its tax base. This section summarizes the existing information on historical and existing employment patterns, evaluation of current and projected socioeconomic trends, and characterization of these issues as a basis for the policies contained in the next section.

In 2008, the St. John the Baptist Parish Economic Development department commissioned a detailed economic study and forecast for the Parish titled Economic Growth Outlook 2009 - 2017. This report was compiled by Bob Folse of Economic and Business Research Services and was completed in February of 2008. The report is a detailed analysis of the existing and projected future economic activity in St. John Parish. This report forms the information base for the Economic Development Element.

Summary of Findings from Economic Growth Outlook 2009 – 2017

This report focused on the principle forces shaping population and economic growth in St. John Parish. The report identified several key findings that will help shape growth in St. John over the next 10 years. The Executive Summary provided a thorough overview of the report. The entire report is included as Appendix A to the Economic Development Element and is inclusive of all charts, graphs, and tables. Below is a broad summary of findings from the Executive Summary of this economic outlook report.

- The local economy is shaped by three main industrial sectors in addition to a broad range of expanding service, manufacturing industries, and retailing, as listed below
 - Petroleum/petrochemicals Processing
 - Maritime related transportation and warehousing
 - Construction Industries
 - Primary and Fabricated Metals
 - Food processing, retail trade
 - Health care and social assistance
 - Accommodation and food service, other service industries

These industrial sectors account for approximately 85% of employment, 92% of all earnings, and represent a broadening and more diversified range of industries impacting St. John's economy.

- Post-Katrina (2005-2007), employment increases from business expansion were most evident in the following sectors:
 - Manufacturing sector – 136 jobs

- Retailing sector – 235 jobs
 - Accommodation and Food Service sector – 193 jobs
 - Wholesale trade sector – 160 jobs
 - Information sector – 179 jobs
 - Professional and technical service sector – 129 jobs
- Nearly \$4 billion from the private sector has been invested in new capital investments in St. John since 2000 including new or expanded manufacturing plant and equipment, terminal/storage facilities, laboratories, and other capital assets. This has led to almost 1,200 permanent jobs and about 8,700 temporary construction jobs
 - Estimates put the Parish’s post-Katrina population in 2007 at 50,000, up from an estimate of 46,150 in 2005. This growth appears to have slowed as a result of the tightening mortgage money markets. Overall, this population growth exceeds that of all Southeast Louisiana Parishes except one – St. Tammany.
 - St. John Parish has attracted an above average proportion of middle to upper middle income households since 2000. Slightly more than 56% of all households in St. John have incomes ranging from \$35,000 to \$125,000 as compared to 51% of households for the New Orleans Metropolitan area and 54% of households nationwide.
 - The median age of St. John Parish’s population is 32 years, significantly lower than both the median age of the New Orleans Metropolitan area and national population which average 35 years. This indicates an overall parish profile of a generally younger population.
 - St. John is experiencing a demographic trend toward the development of an adult labor force with a higher educational achievement consistent with the requirements of an expanding and more diversified industrial base.
 - St. John Parish’s ability to retain and attract skilled blue and white collar workers to fill the requirements of its growing and more diversified industrial base is obviously one of its strengths that will foster continued economic development
 - Overall employment growth in St. John Parish is projected to average slightly more than 6% annually over the five year period 2007 – 2012, reaching a total of about 20,000 jobs. This represents an increase of about 4,800 jobs during that period.
 - Industries expected to produce most of the employment growth in the Parish over the next 5 years (2008 – 2012) are:
 - Retail industries – 690 jobs
 - Manufacturing Industries (primarily petroleum/petrochemical and food processing industries) – 450 jobs

- Administrative and Waste Services (primarily contract employment for construction, petroleum/petrochemical, and waste remediation industries) – 440 jobs
- Accommodation and food service – 400
- Construction industries – 380 jobs
- Transportation and warehousing industries – 350 jobs
- Continuing the diversified employment growth pattern of 2007 – 2012, the projection for the following 5 years (2012 – 2107) indicate continuing employment increases among the leading growth industries:
 - Retail industries – 700 jobs
 - Accommodation and food services – 500 jobs
 - Transportation and warehousing – 450 jobs
 - Construction industries – 400 jobs
 - Health care and social assistance – 400 jobs
 - Manufacturing industries – 350 jobs
 - Other service industries – 250 jobs

Industrial and Commercial Land Analysis

The industrial and commercial land demand and supply has a direct impact on employment. Estimates are that St. John Parish’s population and jobs base will continue to increase over the next ten years. Improving the present jobs/population ratios will require a proportionate amount of usable industrial and commercial property to maintain a strong tax base. If present economic and population forecasts are accurate, there will be significant additional land required for economic and residential development over the next 10 years

Table 1: Existing Land Use in St. John Parish

LBCS Land Use Category	Acres	% of Total
Residential	3,615.87	7.37%
General Sales or Service	428.84	0.87%
Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade	2,579.93	5.26%
Transportation, Communication, Information, and Utilities	1,207.74	2.46%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	521.01	1.06%
Education, Public Admin., Health Care, and Other Institutional	529.09	1.08%
Construction-Related Businesses	47.99	0.10%
Mining and Extraction	0	0.00%
Fishing, Hunting, Forestry, and Agriculture	17,519.62	35.73%
Not In Use	22,579.29	46.05%
Total	49,029.37	100.00%

According to the land use survey there are currently about 3,000 acres of land devoted to commercial and industrial/manufacturing activities in St. John Parish. Of that total, about 2,580 acres are being used for industrial/manufacturing purposes, or about 85% of total economic land use. This seems normal given the data included in the Parish's economic outlook.

If population growth meets the expectations outlined in the Parish's economic growth report, there will need to be significant additional commercial land developed to meet the future demand for retail and service activities. This will be key to the Parish maintaining a strong tax base.

A review of the current zoning in St. John indicates that there is ample zoned land available for future commercial or industrial development. Table 2 provides a breakdown of zoned land in St. John Parish. There are over 3,000 acres zoned commercial, or about 6.45% of total land. This represents nearly ten times the amount of land currently used for commercial purposes in St. John Parish.

Table 2: Zoning in St. John Parish

Zoning	Total Acres	% of Total
C-1	793.97	1.62%
C-2	93.18	0.19%
C-3	2,278.05	4.64%
I-1	1,192.85	2.43%
I-2	962.46	1.96%
I-3	8,830.06	17.99%
MHD	2.26	0.00%
MHP	52.50	0.11%
PUD	32.87	0.07%
R-1	23,715.15	48.32%
R-2	58.51	0.12%
R-3	113.19	0.23%
R-4	350.87	0.71%
Rural	10,603.60	21.60%
	49,079.51	100.00%

The 2002 industrial land inventory revealed that the Parish's total industrial land base is approximately 10,985 acres, or about 22.4% of total available land. This indicates an excess supply of zoned industrial land of about 8,300 acres.

Focused Public Investment Planning

One thing that will be important for future commercial and industrial development is the status of infrastructure for the land zoned commercial and industrial. While having land appropriately zoned for new commercial or industrial development is important, perhaps more important is the status of the infrastructure to that land. If the Parish is going to encourage new commercial and industrial development, it is

imperative that the Parish begin immediately planning the development of infrastructure for this land.

Since St. John developed their land use plan in 2007, parish leaders have made a commitment to focus on economic development and balancing jobs and housing in the parish. Parish leadership is committed to encouraging economic development and particularly the creation of high-wage jobs.

It is clear that existing revenue streams might not be sufficient to keep up with demands for public services and facilities. Transportation policy, or a lack thereof, has led to the myriad of traffic problems in some corridors. Park acquisition and improvements are not keeping up with population and employment growth.

In the past, St. John dispersed its capital improvements expenditure throughout the parish providing partial solutions to many areas, but not complete solutions to problem areas. Given the limited resources available for infrastructure, the parish needs a more strategic approach to investment of public funds, focused on capital improvements in some select areas rather than spreading capital improvements throughout the parish. A particular geographical area will produce acceptable levels of service for development in that area. Such areas can be said to contain “fully-served” land because all public facilities meet or exceed future development standards. If these areas are planned for employment development, then the parish will also be achieving one of its economic development goals.

St. John parish should develop a Focused Public Investment Plan (FPIP) which would allow the parish to target infrastructure improvements in areas that require the least cost to provide fully served land that is ready for industrial or commercial development by businesses providing good paying jobs. The FPIP does not dilute public investment by spreading it thinly in every part of the parish at the same time. The FPIP should also avoid public investments in areas that promote undesirable development.

St. John Parish has identified several Public Investment Areas (PIAs) through previous zoning that will be the industrial land geographical targets of the FPIP. PIAs are areas that concentrate the location of public facility capacity in order to produce fully served land suitable for economic development.

III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

The St. John Parish Land Use Plan contained a series of policies for economic development. The intent of this Economic Development Element is to build on the policies already in place, provide more specific direction for implementation of economic development goals, and coordinate with other elements of the comprehensive plan.

St. John Parish Economic Development Vision Statement:

“St. John Parish will grow as a high-wage economy that creates jobs at a rate in excess of population growth, and an increasing percentage of the population will both live and work in St. John Parish. There will be an emphasis on emerging industrial clusters that have a significant knowledge-based component, while continuing an emphasis on retention and expansion of existing businesses. Economic growth will be supported by master-planned and mixed-use developments in areas with adequate infrastructure, which will also be the primary focus for infrastructure investments that support economic development.”

Parish-Wide Planning Goals and Policies

GOAL 1: Enhance the Overall Economic Development Climate in St. John Parish.

- A. Goal 1 Policies
 - 1.1 The Parish will demonstrate its commitment to long-term economic growth by promoting a diverse economic base, providing opportunity for all residents, including unemployed and disadvantaged persons. Growth which helps to measurably raise the average annual wage rate of community residents and preserves the environmental quality and livability of our community, is viable growth and will improve the lifestyle of St. John Parish residents.
 - 1.2 The Parish will demonstrate their commitment to the retention of those enterprises, which have created the economic base of the Parish, and promote their continued growth in a predictable environment, which encourages investment and job growth.
 - 1.3 The Parish will encourage long-term growth of businesses of all sizes, because economic diversification and stratification are important factors in overall job growth for the Parish.
 - 1.4 The Parish will promote productivity and quality among its businesses to meet world and market standards for their products and services.
 - 1.5 The Parish will encourage higher educational levels for residents, and improvements in the measurable performance of high school graduates compared with other counties in the state.

- 1.6 The Parish may give priority assistance to employers who will increase the standard of living in the community.
- 1.7 The Parish will plan for long-term economic growth, which enhances the capacity of existing air shed for job-generating activities.
- 1.8 The Parish will provide for orderly long-term commercial and industrial growth and an adequate supply of land suitable for compatible commercial and industrial development.
- 1.9 The Parish will encourage the recruitment of new business employers to absorb the increasing labor force, and to supply long-term employment opportunities for Parish's residents who are currently employed outside of the Parish and for new residents.
- 1.10 The Parish will work with other regional partners to establish specific common benchmarks that will measure the region's overall economic viability. These benchmarks will be included in the Parish's Comprehensive Plan and are encouraged to be included in each jurisdictions comprehensive plan.
- 1.11 Encourage use of a multi-modal transportation system that facilitates the reduction of travel times and reduces the need for additional road construction within the region.
- 1.12 Following consultation with interested local governments, the Parish may, designate, consistent with state requirements, major industrial developments and /or master planned developments across jurisdictions to foster economic development for St. John Parish and the region. Appropriate or required Intergovernmental Agreements consistent with the provisions of the state law shall accompany such designation.

GOAL 2: Continue to identify targeted industries to guide public policy, infrastructure development, workforce training, and other economic development initiatives.

B. Goal 2 Policies

- 2.1 Encourage long-term business investments that generate net fiscal benefits to the region, protect environmental quality, and are consistent with the objective of higher wage jobs for St. John Parish residents.
- 2.2 Encourage public and not-for-profit partnerships with private business interests in generating economic development projects that would not otherwise occur without the cooperation of all sectors.
- 2.3 Promote a diverse economic base, providing economic opportunity for all residents, including unemployed, under-employed, and special needs populations.

2.4 Provide priority assistance to employers who pay a family wage and thereby improve the region's standard of living.

GOAL 3: Assure an adequate supply of prime industrial sites to meet market demands for industrial development over the planning horizon to create an environment conducive for the startup, growth, expansion and retention of “targeted” industries.

C. Goal 3 Policies

3.1 In cooperation with the Parish’s Economic Development Department, maintain a minimum ten-year supply of prime industrial land based on average absorption rates over the last five years.

- Designate the necessary acreage of vacant prime industrial land for the 20-year planning period.
- Discourage removal of land from the inventory that results in a less than 10-year supply of prime industrial sites.
- Update inventories of industrial lands at least every ten years to reestablish the 20- year supply of industrial lands.
- Encourage industrial land banking of large sites and “future urban reserve areas” to preserve large parcels at key locations for future industrial sites.
- New industrial sites that are part of a major industrial land bank shall be required to have a minimum of 75 acres.

3.2 Designate sites for industrial use at locations that will be accessible from major multimodal transportation sources (rail and marine facilities) and roadways of arterial classification or higher, potentially served with utilities, and free of major environmental constraints such as unsuitable soils, floodplains, archaeological sites, and wetlands. Coordinate public investment capital facilities planning expenditures to assure development of these lands.

3.3 Maintain an adequate inventory of properties designated for industrial use and that are suitable for a mix of business and industrial park, light and heavy industrial uses; include properties developed by both private and public entities; and provide access to multimodal transportation services including motor freight, rail, and marine facilities.

3.4 Restrict rezoning of primary, secondary, and tertiary industrial parcels for non-industrial use by preserving industrial land exclusively for those permitted uses in the industrial zone classification.

3.5 Consider amending the Comprehensive Plan Map and rezoning of prime, secondary and tertiary industrial or employment center lands to non-industrial or non-employment center uses, only after the Parish determines that (1) such lands cannot feasibly be improved to prime industrial status due to physical conditions (such as topography, critical

lands, street patterns, public services, existing lot arrangement, etc.), (2) a non-industrial or non-employment center designation and zoning is more appropriate in light of new circumstances and applicable planning policies, or (3) after other replacement sites within the Parish of equal or greater industrial potential have been designated industrial on the Comprehensive Plan Map and zoned to achieve no net loss of business park, office campus, and industrial lands.

GOAL 4: Provide commercial sites adequate to meet a diversity of needs for retail, service, and institutional development in St. John Parish.

D. Goal 4 Policies

- 4.1 In cooperation with local officials, maintain an adequate supply of commercial lands on the East and Westbanks of St. John Parish, based on average absorption rates of the last five years plus an appropriate market factor.
 - Designate sufficient commercial land for the 20-year planning period within St. John Parish.
 - Discourage removal of commercial land from the inventory that results in a less than 10-year supply of commercial sites.
 - Update inventories of commercial lands at least every ten years.
 - Encourage infill and redevelopment of underutilized commercial sites.
- 4.2 Locate convenience-oriented retail and service developments adjacent to residential neighborhoods.
- 4.3 Encourage commercial and mixed-use developments to locate on current or planned transit corridors; encourage transit-oriented site planning and design.
- 4.4 Develop and maintain design guidelines to ensure that commercial projects are developed with minimal impact on surrounding land uses, are consistent with related community appearance/design guidelines, and assure pedestrian as well as vehicular access.
- 4.5 Permit home occupations that are consistent with the character of adjoining residential properties and neighborhoods.
- 4.6 Encourage responsible waterfront development for commercial uses where environmentally and economically feasible.

GOAL 5: Provide a continuum of educational opportunities responsive to the changing needs of the work place locally and regionally to help.

E. Goal 5 Policies

- 5.1 Encourage continuing education, skills upgrading, mentoring, and lifelong learning programs suitable for large and small employers.
- 5.2 Consider incentives to link proposed industrial development projects with job training, education, and housing programs.
- 5.3 Encourage improvement of the region's educational network, including K-12 and higher education.
- 5.4 Support development of a Community College in St. John Parish that will focus on education and training for employment opportunities in St. John Parish.

GOAL 6: Encourage infrastructure development and services necessary to serve new industrial development.

F. Goal 6 Policies

- 6.1 Coordinate the Capital Facilities Elements of local jurisdiction's plans so that infrastructure funding and construction is consistent with parish-wide policies for industrial development.
- 6.2 Prioritize infrastructure development in advance of need to areas that are suitable for industrial development:
 - When siting a regional/corporate office development, land use compatibility, effectiveness, and family-wage jobs created shall be considered; and,
 - Emphasis on infrastructure for development should be placed to serve major industrial areas with proximity to the I-10 corridor.
- 6.3 Encourage port infrastructure improvements along the Mississippi River in order to expand support for deep-water vessels and industries dependent upon regional import-export trade.

GOAL 7: Maintain and enhance opportunities for resource-based industries located on rural lands in St. John Parish.

G. Goal 7 Policies

- 7.1 Encourage resource-based industries, including agricultural, forestry, and aggregate materials, which are consistent with maintaining rural lands in the parish as consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement.

7.2 Implement programs to encourage agricultural and forestry management of rural tracts consistent with sound environmental practices.

GOAL 8: Provide incentives for “targeted” industries to guide public policy, infrastructure development, work force training, and other economic development initiatives. Incentives for targeted industries should focus on identified clusters for which the region has a strategic advantage and those supported by existing infrastructure and workforce base.

H. Goal 8 Policies

8.1 Undertake parish sponsored planning efforts in targeted areas to address industrial development and related commercial, open space, recreation, and critical land issues.

8.2 Conduct pertinent wetland delineation studies and master plans to identify areas for industrial, commercial, open space, recreation, and environmental uses, to include wetland banking.

IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR ST. JOHN PARISH

The following is a recommended set of strategies needed to implement the identified economic development goals and policies. The strategies are not in any particular order, but are rather designed to give Parish officials a wide array of strategies to choose from. As always, funding and priorities change, so the strategies should be viewed as flexible since it is likely that changing conditions will result in the need to shift strategies in the future.

- Expand the St. John Parish Economic Development Department to include at least one person focused on business and industrial retention and recruitment; and add additional staff as necessary
- Focus on existing clusters where the region has a strategic advantage, are supported by existing infrastructure, and for which the parish can provide a ready labor force
- Identify existing new and emerging industrial clusters that offer the potential for growth within the local and regional economy. Refine the locational and supportive requirements for each cluster and recommend programs and public sector actions necessary to support growth in that sector.
- Fund regional targeted industry recruitment programs to attract new business investments in St. John Parish.
- The Parish's Economic Development Office should partner with local University Business Development Centers on the creation of Parishwide strategies and programs to support targeted industries.
- Support the expansion of technical and professional training capabilities in St. John Parish by developing partnerships with regional educational institutions to support workforce development for targeted industries. In cooperation with Delgado Community College, support establishment of a regional training center that offers career progression for those seeking advanced training in high-technology fields. Continue to support vocational skills training through the St. John Parish public education system.
- Support creation of a Parish-wide Workforce Development Council to spearhead creation of a workforce development plan for the next 20 years.
- Increase the industrial land base to allow for large-acreage sites (greater than 75 acres) and support aggregation of land for large master-planned, mixed-use development on industrial lands.
- Support retail commercial development and residential development in order to create employment centers.
- Allow for the development of a broader scope of non-retail office commercial uses on designated industrial lands to allow for the location of targeted industries. Routinely update the zoning ordinance to reflect the emerging market and economic demand for industrial development.

- Designate additional industrial land inventory in areas designated as nodes of growth sufficient to accommodate industrial clusters, particularly on the east and west ends on the Westbank of St. John Parish.
- Make targeted infrastructure investment in advance of business growth to guide development and to facilitate the development process.
- Create larger sites (greater than 75 acres) for industrial and corporate park development by using public sector mechanisms (e.g., ports and public development authorities) to aggregate smaller parcels.
- Establish industrial land banks in areas that have the capability and potential to support the development of targeted industrial clusters.
- Create and designate an area to be called the "Discovery Corridor" to further the growth of high technology and knowledge-based industries. Create a sub-area and infrastructure development plan in cooperation with the private sector to promote desired development and business within the corridor.
- Support the development of new broad-based funding mechanisms to finance infrastructure investments in support of focused industrial development and recoup investments as development occurs.
- Encourage inter-jurisdictional revenue sharing to support targeted investment in certain industrial clusters.
- Support the improvement of the efficiency of the permit review process and a 60- to 90-day permit review for all priority projects
- Regularly benchmark local development review processes against competitor Parishes with similar targeted industries with the intent to match or beat benchmarks for Parishes competing for like investments.
- Update Parish development regulations to allow designation of those commercial and industrial development proposals that result in significant economic benefits (including job creation, high-wage jobs, investment, and public revenue generation) as 'Projects of Parish-wide Significance. For such projects:
 - Develop expedited permitting processes and coordination mechanisms to facilitate economic development
 - Create project advocates or permit teams within municipal permit authorities that provide individualized support and coordination
 - Establish a 60- to 90-day development review process benchmark
 - Conduct training sessions for public officials and staff on economic development to educate individuals regarding private sector perspectives of land development.
- Encourage and support public efforts that empower efficient development:
 - Create and fund a publicly owned and operated wetland mitigation bank to provide a convenient and efficient mechanism to convert low-value

wetlands that impinge upon the development of industrial and commercial properties

- Create sub-area plans for each node of growth to the level that developmental and environmental permits are available in a timely and efficient manner.
- Create processes that allow pre-qualification of individual sites so development and environmental permits are available in a timely manner.
- Support transportation improvements and expansion of the interstate corridors to increase freight mobility and movement of the regional labor pool including any initiatives to develop regional high speed rail service to St. John Parish.
- Support continued cooperation between regional port authorities to increase investment that improves the transportation of goods and services to export markets.
- Encourage the recruitment and location of compatible targeted industries, especially knowledge-based, high-wage businesses to St. John Parish.

IV IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This implementation element is one of the Elements of the St. John the Baptist Comprehensive Plan. This is the last of the five elements completed as part of the culmination of the first three phases of the overall Parish comprehensive planning process. This element includes a compilation of programs tied to recommendations from the other elements to implement the goals, objectives and policies developed so far in the preceding elements.

The Implementation Element establishes actions that should be undertaken to implement the comprehensive plan such as:

- Identify proposed changes to applicable zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and official maps.

- Describe how each of the other elements of the comprehensive plan will be integrated and made consistent with other elements of the plan.

- Include a mechanism to measure St. John Parish's progress towards achieving the recommendations of the plan. Include a process for amending and updating the plan. The comprehensive plan should be updated no less than once every 5 years.

- Sets forth the required procedure for adoption or amending the comprehensive plan, which includes:
 - Adoption of a written public participation plan designed to foster public participation in the development of a comprehensive plan or a plan amendment.
 - Approval of a recommended plan by a resolution approved by a majority of the full membership of the St. John Planning Commission and Parish Council
 - Distribution of the draft plan and elements for review and comment to citizens, business interests, elected officials, and anyone else with an interest in St. John Parish. The Comprehensive Plan should be posted on the Internet and in public libraries serving the Parish
 - Adoption of the plan by an ordinance adopted by a majority of the full membership of the St. John Planning Commission and Council

PLAN INTERPRETATION

The St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan provides a guide and regulatory framework for the physical development of St. John Parish that reflects the community's vision for a desirable community. Plan policies are identified by number at the end of each chapter. Because of the general nature of the Comprehensive Plan policies, conflict between

and among these policies is possible. The following general rules of construction are intended to be used in interpreting the overall components of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Policies are intended to be read as mutually supportive, and all are intended to be read together so that each has meaning.
- When conflicts arise between policies, the policy which is more specific shall prevail.
- The 20-Year Plan Map, or future proposals to amend the 20-Year Plan Map, should reflect and be based upon the 20-Year Plan policies in the text.
- When conflicts arise between the 20-Year Plan policies and the 20-Year Plan Map, the Map shall prevail.
- The 20-Year Plan is consistent with the statewide goals and carries out in more detail the Community Framework Plan. The 20-Year Plan also contains strategies which, in contrast to policies, are not intended to be directive but are suggested as a means to carry out the Plan. Other strategies to carry out the plan may also be available, and in some cases preferred.

PLAN REVIEW AND ADOPTION

For any planning process, it is good practice to hold public informational meetings and hearings on recommended plans before their adoption. Such actions provide an additional opportunity to acquaint residents and landowners with the recommended plan and to solicit public reactions to the plan recommendations. The plan should then be modified to reflect any pertinent new information and to incorporate any sound and desirable new ideas advanced at these meetings. Accordingly, a public hearing will be held before the Planning Commission and Parish Council prior to adoption. The Parish will provide a public notice of the hearing in accordance with the requirements of the ordinance adoption process, and will distribute the draft plan report to all members of the Planning Commission and Council, plus any other pertinent parties in St. John Parish Government.

An important step in plan implementation is the formal adoption of the recommended plan by the Planning Commission and Council. Upon such adoption, the plan becomes the official guide to be used by Parish officials and staff in making development or redevelopment decisions. The plan should serve as the basis on which all development proposals, such as rezoning requests, subdivision plats, and certified survey maps, are reviewed.

Only those zoning actions or land divisions that are consistent with the plan should be approved. A public participation plan for development of this comprehensive plan was prepared in 2002.

PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

Changes to long-range planning documents are inevitable. Although the Future Land Use Map is often the focal point of comprehensive plans, plan amendments may include changes to the text or any of the maps included in the comprehensive plan. Text amendments may include:

- Changing, adding, or modifying a goal, objective, policy, or program in any of the element chapters in response to changing conditions or new information.
- Adding or changing the land use plan categories in the *Land Use Element* to provide for a category of development that is not incorporated into the current set of categories.
- Updating inventory information such as land use or zoning information. (land use updates should continue to utilize the Land Based Classification System – LBCS)
- In addition to text amendments, the land use plan map may be amended to change the designation, and therefore the allowable uses, on a parcel or parcels of land.
- Other maps in the plan may be amended or updated to reflect updated information, such as updated floodplain mapping or inventories of natural resources or community facilities.

Rationale and Justification for Plan Amendment

Adjustments to this plan should be made as required by changing conditions. Consequently, one of the important tasks of plan implementation is a periodic reevaluation to ensure the plan continues to properly reflect current conditions. It is recommended that a general plan reevaluation take place on an annual basis by the St. John Parish Planning Department because the Parish will continue to evolve and change over the comprehensive plan design period. Periodic monitoring and updating of the plan will be an integral part of the plan because the Parish is a dynamic rather than static community.

A more comprehensive review of the plan is recommended every five years. It is recommended that the five-year comprehensive review utilize, to the extent practicable, an up-to-date data base. St. John Parish should consider an extension of the plan for an additional five years with every five-year update to continually accommodate 20 years of growth.

Factors contributing to the possible need to amend this plan are due to the long-range nature of this type of document. These factors are set forth in this chapter to provide the necessary guidance in conducting a plan amendment. The important aspect of plan amendment, however, is that it should not be taken lightly. A plan amendment should be undertaken after careful study and by reason of one of the following factors:

1. **Projections and Forecasts:** Plans are based on projections or forecasts because plans deal with future situations. If projections or forecasts are in error, or require modification due to the emergence of new data, then this plan may need to be adjusted. The plan should be monitored based on the preparation of new projections or forecasts. Comparisons should then be made between what was projected or forecast and what is actually happening. If warranted and deemed necessary by the Parish Council upon recommendation of the Planning Commission, this plan should be amended to accommodate the new projections or forecasts.
2. **Assumptions:** A number of assumptions have been made upon which this plan and its various elements are based. Assumptions may have to do with demographics, capital investment, or national policy. For example, during the late 1960s and early 1970s a dramatic shift in birth rates occurred. Any plans based on the assumption that the birth rate of the 1950s would continue were dramatically affected by the change in birth rates which actually occurred. As stated earlier, the plan should be reviewed on an annual basis, which will afford an opportunity to reexamine the accuracy of any assumptions upon which this plan was based.
3. **Data Error:** An error in planning data differs from an assumption in that the faulty information is quantifiable. A new arterial street may be under construction and designed to meet certain specifications. A construction error, new Federal standards, or other factors may result in the street not being placed or functioning as planned. This, too, requires a plan reassessment and, perhaps, a plan amendment.
4. **New Issues:** Issues may evolve that were not critical or foreseen when this plan was initially developed. For example, community character is an issue that tends to stay in the background until it is almost too late to save it. New issues may require modification of plan goals, objectives, policies, or programs --or the creation of new plan goals, objectives, policies, or programs --to effectively deal with new issues. New factors affecting current issues can also present situations where this plan may have to be amended.
5. **Comprehensiveness:** The various elements of this plan are designed to guide future City actions and specific growth decisions. This plan recognizes, however, that some elements may benefit from more detailed study and analysis. For major issues that require greater analysis than offered by this plan, a plan amendment may be justified. The amendment may be authorized by the Plan Commission at any time.
6. **Data Updates/Emergence of New Data:** The maps, tables, and statistics upon which this plan is based are factual in nature but may change through time (for example, when new decennial Census data is released). Thus, a general annual review of this plan is necessary and, where deemed

appropriate by the Planning Department, amendments to this plan should be proposed to keep data current.

Plan Amendment Process

It is critical to have and to follow guidelines when determining if an amendment to the plan is appropriate. All projections and assumptions should be reviewed in detail at meetings where City officials and citizens are provided information on new factors which might affect this plan. Officials and citizens should be asked to submit any additional concerns of their own. This plan should be revised in a manner similar to its original development, with citizen participation prior to any change.

Amendments to this plan should generally follow the same procedure as that followed for the adoption of this plan, including adoption of a public participation plan, a public hearing, approval of the plan amendment by the Planning Commission, adoption of the amendment by an ordinance of the Parish Council, and distribution of the plan amendment to interested parties, including citizens, business leaders, and government officials. It is recommended that the Parish use this recommended process and prepare and adopt a public participation plan to be used for all plan amendments.

Amendments to the St. John Parish Future Land Use Map

The Parish Council, upon recommendation of the Plan Commission, may consider (but is not obligated to approve) amendments to the Future Land Use Map. The Planning Commission and Parish Council in their review and consideration of proposed Plan amendments may examine the following questions and issues (in addition to the six factors: projections, assumptions, data error, new issues, comprehensiveness, and data updates/emergence of new data) for approving a land use plan amendment:

1. Is the proposed amendment consistent with the vision, goals, objectives, policies, and programs of this plan?
2. Will the proposed amendment benefit the Parish as a whole?
3. Is the proposed amendment compatible with surrounding land uses?
4. Are existing Parish facilities and services, including transportation facilities, adequate to serve the type of development associated with the amendment?
5. If applicable, will the proposed amendment enhance economic development within the Parish?

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS

As previously noted, the comprehensive plan Implementation Element includes a compilation of recommended actions to implement the recommendations set forth in the other completed plan elements. Recommended actions for St. John Parish to undertake for implementing the comprehensive plan are presented in Table XIV-1. It is intended that these be addressed in the early years of the planning program. After five

years, the recommended actions should again be reviewed and re-prioritized based on changing conditions.

CONSISTENCY BETWEEN ST. JOHN PARISH'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCES

In order for St. John Parish elected and appointed officials engaged in the development management process to have the optimum capacity to manage development, it is important that all existing and future development management regulations be consistent with the St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- Parish zoning ordinance and maps
- Parish subdivision regulations
- Parish sign, landscaping, or design regulations
- Future Parish development regulations

Once the St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan is adopted, it can be used as a guide to be sure that implementation of local zoning, subdivision, and official mapping ordinances do not conflict with the recommendations of the comprehensive plan. If a conflict is found or would result from a proposed action, the Parish has the option of amending comprehensive plan; however, plan amendments should follow the guidelines presented in this chapter and not be made arbitrarily.

Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map Amendments

It is the Parish's intent that the Zoning Ordinance be one of the primary implementing tools of this Plan. As such, it should substantially reflect and promote the achievement of plan goals, objectives, policies, and programs. A zoning ordinance is the legal means for both guiding and controlling development within the Parish, so that an orderly and desirable pattern of land use can be achieved which conforms to the plan and balances individual property rights with community interests and goals. The Zoning Ordinance contains provisions for regulating the use of property, the size of lots, the intensity of development, site planning, the provision of open space, and the protection of natural resources.

Following adoption of this plan by the Parish Council, the Planning Department should begin to initiate appropriate amendments to the zoning map to bring the map into conformance with the concepts and proposals included in this plan, particularly the land use plan map (Map VIII-8 in Chapter VIII).

Although one option would be to amend the zoning map to bring the map into strict conformance with the land use plan map, this approach has disadvantages. Those disadvantages include zoning that could potentially accommodate "leapfrog" urban development (enclaves of urban development separated by agricultural or other rural uses), and/or development in areas that have not yet been provided with sanitary sewer, water, streets, or other necessary services.

Another disadvantage might be the creation of nonconforming uses in areas that are already developed, where the plan proposes redevelopment for another use. Conversely, the zoning map should not permit the establishment of new uses that are not consistent with the land use plan map or other recommendations of the comprehensive plan, such as allowing residential development to occur in areas planned for industrial use.

To avoid the potential pitfalls outlined in the preceding paragraph, the Parish will use the following approach to update its zoning map:

- Areas of existing development (other than agricultural uses) will be placed in a zoning district that is consistent with the land use designation shown on the Future Land Use map
- Areas that are currently in agricultural use, and zoned for such use, but shown on the land use plan map for future urban development will remain in agricultural zoning. Rezoning that would accommodate residential, commercial, industrial, or other urban use will be undertaken when a property owner submits a request for rezoning that specifies the proposed use of the property and, where required by the zoning ordinance, a proposed site plan; and where Parish officials determine that utilities and other governmental services needed to serve the proposed development are in place and the proposed use is consistent with this comprehensive plan and other local ordinance requirements.
- Areas that are currently in agricultural use and designated for agricultural use on the land use plan map will be zoned agricultural.
- Primary environmental corridors and other natural resource areas shown on the land use plan map will be placed in a conservancy or other appropriate zoning district (such as a park or rural residential zoning district).

Subdivision Ordinance

The St. John Parish Subdivision Ordinance is intended to be another implementing tool of this plan. It, too, should substantially reflect and promote the achievement of plan goals, objectives, policies, and programs. The Subdivision Ordinance is a legal means to regulate the division of land into smaller parcels. It provides for Parish oversight of the creation of new parcels and helps to ensure that new development is appropriately located; lot size requirements specified in the Zoning Ordinance are observed; street rights-of-way are appropriately dedicated or reserved; access to arterial streets and highways is limited in order to preserve traffic-carrying capacity and safety; adequate land for parks, drainage ways, and other open spaces is appropriately located and preserved; street, block, and lot layouts are appropriate; and adequate public improvements are provided.

CONSISTENCY AMONG PLAN ELEMENTS

The comprehensive plan currently includes Land Use, Economic Development, and Parks, Recreation, and Open space elements. These and any future elements should be consistent with the comprehensive plan vision and goals as well as with each other.

Any new elements should be reviewed to insure that any goals or policies are consistent with the overall plan goals and each of the plan elements.

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Annual Report on Plan Implementation

It is recommended that St. John Parish undertake a general plan reevaluation on an annual basis, as described in Part 2 of this Element. The annual reevaluation should include a report on plan implementation and progress in implementing the plan during the previous year. The report should summarize how the comprehensive plan was used to direct policy decisions made by Parish officials and staff and whether circumstances have changed that have necessitated amendments to the comprehensive plan. The annual report should also include a list of all plan amendments approved by the Parish Council during the year.

Comprehensive Update of the Plan and Maintenance of Inventory Data

St. John Parish should conduct a formal review of the plan at least once every five years, as recommended under Part 2 of this Element. Based on this review, changes or updates should be made to sections of the plan that are found to be out of date and goals, objectives, policies, or programs that are not serving their intended purpose. Any changes or updates should follow the formal process for plan amendments. The Parish should also work with the various Parish Departments and Agencies to maintain and update applicable inventory data compiled as part of the comprehensive planning process.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

Successful implementation of the St. John Comprehensive Plan will result from many individual actions by the Parish, other public jurisdictions, and private decision-makers over the course of many years. The Plan Implementation Program (Exhibit 7-1) identifies the tasks that are most likely to achieve the goals and objectives of this Plan and included elements.

When preparing the annual budget, the Plan Implementation Table may be reviewed and updated to reflect community accomplishments, new approaches to community issues, changing conditions, shifting priorities, and new demands. The task order in the exhibit does not represent an order of priority, nor is the list intended to be exhaustive or all inclusive – the Parish and other public and private entities will take numerous actions throughout the life of this Plan to achieve the community goals. The Plan Implementation Table is intended to identify those tasks that are most critical to the implementation of the Plan over the next several years.

The tasks outlined in the table do not reflect the many consultations, meetings, hearings, reports and correspondences that will, depending on the task, need to be undertaken to achieve each item. However, as a general rule, the Plan encourages the Parish to seek input and comment from all stakeholders during the work on any task outlined in the Implementation Table.

St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan Implementation Table

Strategy	Action	Who is Responsible
<p>Modify Parish Development Regulations to Make Them Consistent with Comprehensive Plan</p>	<p>Review and revise the zoning, subdivision and other development related regulations to implement the following items listed (a to z), in addition to resolving existing deficiencies in organization, procedures, standards and definitions:</p>	<p>Parish Presidents Office, Parish Council, Planning Dept., Parish Attorney, Planning/Zoning Commission. Also involve Public Works, Code Enforcement, and other Parish Departments or Consultants as appropriate.</p>
	<p>a. expanded standards for buffers between incompatible land uses</p>	
	<p>b. minimum level of service standards for streets, sidewalks, streetlights, utilities and storm water</p>	
	<p>c. procedures and standards to ensure that public improvements are completed or guaranteed prior to recording a plat</p>	
	<p>d. neighborhood commercial development standards that address scale, design and parking and enhances compatibility with neighborhoods</p>	
	<p>e. a planned development district that provides incentives for community amenities, mixed-use development and the other criteria established in policy 1.4.8</p>	
	<p>f. landscaping standards addressing multi-family and non-residential development</p>	
	<p>g. sign standards that reduce clutter and improve business visibility</p>	
	<p>h. commercial center development standards that provide convenience for pedestrians, automobile-based users and users of other modes of transportation</p>	

St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan Implementation Table		
Strategy	Action	Who is Responsible
	<p>i. zoning that allows a mix of residential unit types, in a single development, by right</p> <p>j. conditions for the continuation of existing non-conforming uses that are compatible with existing neighborhoods</p>	
Maintain Land Use Database	Establish baseline land use data, coordinate with other geographic data sources, and establish a process by which changes in land use are monitored and recorded, on an ongoing basis, and used for analysis, reports and public information.	Planning Dept. and Code Enforcement
Develop a Housing Element for the Comprehensive Plan	Prepare a housing element for the Comprehensive Plan, which is integrated with the existing Plan policies, coordinated with local public and private sector housing organizations that identifies the likely amount and types of housing required to support residential development in St. John Parish.	Parish President, Parish Council, Planning Dept., consultants as necessary
Develop an Urban/Community Design Element	Develop an Urban/Community Design element as a component of the Comprehensive Plan that focuses on design aesthetics.	Parish President, Parish Council, Planning Dept., consultants as necessary
Maintain the 5-Year Capital Budget	Incorporate Comprehensive Plan policies and priorities into the 5-year Capital Budget that includes detailed project descriptions, funding sources and project timelines.	Parish President, Parish Council Planning, Public Utilities, Public Works, any department with budgetary authority
Prepare Sub-Area Plans	Develop Sub-Area or Neighborhood Plans through a citizen-based land use, design and facilities planning process, for the following subareas:	
	a. Airline Hwy. Design Study	
	b. Garyville	
	c. Reserve	
	d. Edgard/Westbank	

St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan Implementation Table		
Strategy	Action	Who is Responsible
Prepare a Community Design Element	Develop a Community Design element as a component of the Comprehensive Plan.	Planning Department, Planning Commission, Parish President, Parish Council
Adopt Level of Service Standards	Develop and adopt level of service standards for community facilities and services, including but not limited to, water, sewer, drainage, libraries, parks, public safety, and Parish roads, to be used in capital planning, budgeting and growth management.	Public Works, Planning, Library, Fire, Parks and other affected service providers, Planning Commission, Parish Council
Conduct Long Range Facilities Planning	Establish a long-range capital planning program that is based on the build-out of the Land Use Map, reflects adopted level of service standards and guides the Capital Budget and the long-range Capital Improvements Plan.	Public Works, Planning, Library, Fire, Parks and other affected service providers, Planning Advisory Board, Parish Council
Evaluate Infrastructure Funding	Evaluate the Parish's infrastructure funding strategies and adjust as necessary	Finance, Public Works, Parish Council, Parish President
Coordinate Capital Budget Review Process	Establish evaluation and amendment procedures to coordinate the Capital Budget with the facilities improvement plans of private utilities and other providers, Comprehensive Plan elements and adopted sub-area plans.	Public Works, Planning Department, Parish President, Parish Council
Prepare a Transportation Element to the St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan	Prepare a Transportation Element to the Comprehensive Plan.	Public Works, Planning Department, Regional Planning Commission New Orleans, Planning Commission, Parish President, Parish Council
Adopt a Minimum Housing Code	Adopt a Housing Code to address minimum conditions for the safety of residents and property.	Planning Department, Inspection and Codes Enforcement, Parish Council, Parish President
Adopt a Minimum Housing Code	Adopt a Housing Code to address minimum conditions for the safety of residents and property in St. John Parish.	Planning Dept, Parish President, Code Enforcement, Consultants as Necessary

St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan Implementation Table		
Strategy	Action	Who is Responsible
Establish appropriate funding levels for the Parish's Parks and Recreation System to Meet Capital and Operating Needs.	Develop a plan for stabilizing and creating adequate funding for the Parks and Recreation Department using traditional and innovative funding techniques.	Parish President, Parish Council, Parks and Recreation, Consultants as Necessary
Renovate and Repair Existing Recreation Facilities in St. John Parish To Address Issues of Aging and Outdated Infrastructure	Where necessary repair and renovate the existing park and recreation sites in St. John Parish:	Park and Recreation Dept., Parish President, Parish Council, Public Works
Complete Planning and Construction for Westbank Recreation Complex	Complete the design and construction of the Westbank Recreation Complex	Park and Recreation Dept., Parish President, Parish Council, Public Works, Consultants as Necessary
Proceed with the Mississippi River Levee Path for bicyclists, pedestrians, skaters and other users.	Complete the design of the Mississippi River Levee Path and proceed with construction since funds are in place.	Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Parish President, Consultants as Necessary
Implement the RPC's "Ring Around the Lake Master Plan" by linking the levee path with the multi-Parish network described in the master plan.	Identify and seek funds to extend and link the Mississippi River Levee Path with the multi-Parish network outlined in the "Ring Around the Lake Master Plan"	Parish President, Parish Council, Parks and Recreation, Planning, Consultants as Necessary
Department of Parks and Recreation should increase its organized youth sports program	Develop a plan and funding strategy to increase youth sport opportunities and to increase the number of leagues and teams	Parish President, Parish Council, Parks and Recreation, Consultants as Necessary
Increase programs for elderly citizens and retirees	Develop a plan and funding strategy to increase public recreational facilities and opportunities for adult and elderly citizens in St. John Parish	Parish President, Parish Council, Parks and Recreation, Consultants as Necessary
Plan for New Recreation Facilities Based on Increased Population	Develop a strategy to address the need for new recreation facilities as outlined in the Parks and Recreation Element to the St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan	Parish President, Parish Council, Parks and Recreation, Consultants as Necessary

St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan Implementation Table

Strategy	Action	Who is Responsible
Improve The overall economy and job base of St. John Parish	Focus on existing industrial and business clusters where the Parish has a strategic advantage are supported by existing infrastructure, and for which the parish can provide a ready labor force.	Economic Development, Parish President, Parish Council, Consultants as Necessary
	Fund Parish and regional targeted industry recruitment programs to attract new business investments and locations in St. John Parish.	Economic Development, Parish President, Parish Council, Consultants as Necessary
	Identify existing, new and emerging industrial sectors that offer the potential for growth within the local and regional economy. Refine the locational and supportive requirements for each industry cluster and recommend programs and public sector actions necessary to support growth in that sector.	
	Facilitate continued cooperation between regional port authorities to increase investment that improves the transportation of goods and services to export markets.	
	Partner with local University Business Development Centers on the creation of Parishwide strategies and programs to support targeted industries.	
	Support transportation improvements and expansion of the interstate, road, and rail corridors to increase freight mobility and movement of the regional labor pool.	

St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan Implementation Table

Strategy	Action	Who is Responsible
Improve The overall economy and job base of St. John Parish	Expand the Parish's Economic Development Department to assist in retention and recruitment.	Parish President, Economic Development, Consultants as Necessary
	Develop a strategy for the recruitment and location of compatible targeted Industries, especially knowledge-based, high-wage businesses to St. John Parish.	
	Encourage retail commercial development and residential development in order to create employment centers that link jobs and housing.	Parish President, Economic Development, Planning, Consultants as Necessary
	Support the development of new broad-based funding mechanisms to finance infrastructure investments in support of focused industrial development and recoup investments as development occurs.	Parish President, Economic Development, Planning, Public Works, Consultants as Necessary
	Create and designate a sub-area to further the growth of high technology and knowledge-based industries. Create a sub-area and infrastructure development plan in cooperation with the private sector to promote desired development and business within the corridor.	
	Allow for the development of a broader scope of non-retail office commercial uses on designated industrial lands to allow for the location of targeted industries.	

St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan Implementation Table

Strategy	Action	Who is Responsible
Create More Flexible Zoning Regulations and Permitting Procedures for Commercial and Industrial Uses	Update Parish development regulations to allow designation of those development proposals that result in significant economic benefits (including job creation, high-wage jobs, investment, and public revenue generation) as 'Projects of Parish-wide Significance. For such projects:	Economic Development, Planning, Parish President, Consultants as Necessary
	a. Develop expedited permitting processes and coordination mechanisms to facilitate economic development.	Economic Development, Parish President, Planning Economic Development, Parish President, Planning
	b. Improve the efficiency of the permit review process and develop a 60- to 90-day permit review for all priority projects.	
	c. Create processes that allow pre-qualification of individual sites so development and environmental permits are available in a timely manner.	
Increase the numbers and skills of the St. John Parish Workforce	Support the expansion of technical and professional training capabilities in St. John Parish by developing partnerships with regional educational institutions to support workforce development for targeted industries.	Parish President, Economic Development, Parish Council, Educational Partners, Consultants as Necessary
	Create a Parish-wide Workforce Alliance Board to spearhead creation of a 20 – year workforce development plan.	

St. John Parish Comprehensive Plan Implementation Table

Strategy	Action	Who is Responsible
<p style="text-align: center;">Increase the numbers and skills of the St. John Parish Workforce</p>	<p>In cooperation with Delgado Community College or other educational partners, support establishment of a regional training center in St. John Parish that offers career progression for those seeking advanced training in high-technology fields.</p> <p>Support continued vocational skills training through the St. John Parish public education system.</p>	<p>Parish President, Economic Development, Parish Council, Educational Partners, Consultants as Necessary</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Encourage And Support Public Efforts That Empower Efficient and Environmentally Supportive Development:</p>	<p>Create and fund a publicly owned and operated wetland mitigation bank to provide a convenient and efficient mechanism to convert low-value wetlands that impinge upon development.</p>	<p>Update the zoning ordinance to reflect the emerging market and economic demand for industrial development.</p>